CURRENT AFFAIRS PULSE

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Monthly Current Affairs Compilation

Curated from official releases, national dailies and ministry sources

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1. National

10 articles

West Bengal Begins Digital Self-Enumeration for India's 16th Census

01 Aug

- West Bengal began the digital self-enumeration phase of India's 16th Census on 1 August 2026.
- Residents can submit household details through a mobile application or the official census portal between 1 and 15 August 2026.
- The houselisting phase in the state will run from 16 August to 14 September 2026, with enumerators visiting households for verification.
- The 16th Census is India's first fully digital census, with the self-enumeration portal available in 16 languages.
- The Census was postponed from 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and is being conducted across 2026 and 2027.

QUICK FACTS

Census	India's 16th Census, referred to as Census 2027
State	West Bengal
Self-enumeration window	1 to 15 August 2026
Houselisting phase	16 August to 14 September 2026
Mode	mobile application and official census portal
Languages available on the portal	16
Distinction	India's first fully digital census

– Postponed from 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic

India Plans Rs 45,000 Crore Railway Upgrade Along China, Pakistan and Bangladesh Borders

03 Aug

- India plans to spend up to Rs 45,000 crore, about $4.7 billion, on railway projects in border areas adjoining China, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- The investment is to be rolled out over the next 18 to 24 months.
- It covers new railway lines and platforms as well as upgrades to existing networks.
- Projects will span Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and other northeastern states.
- The programme is expected to account for nearly 22 per cent of India's total railway infrastructure spending over the next two years.

QUICK FACTS

Outlay	up to Rs 45,000 crore, about $4.7 billion
Timeframe	rolled out over the next 18 to 24 months
Scope	new railway lines and platforms, plus upgrades to existing networks
States covered	Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and other northeastern states
Share of railway infrastructure spending	nearly 22 per cent over the next two years
Borders addressed	China, Pakistan and Bangladesh

Government Tells Rajya Sabha Fresh Survey Found No Manual Scavengers

03 Aug

- The Union Government informed the Rajya Sabha that a fresh nationwide survey found no manual scavengers.

- The survey was conducted under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.
- The Act defines a manual scavenger narrowly, as a person engaged in manually cleaning, carrying or disposing of human excreta from insanitary latrines.
- That definition is distinct from hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks, which continues to cause deaths.
- The finding has been contested by activists who point to continuing deaths during sewer and septic tank cleaning.

QUICK FACTS

Statement made to	the Rajya Sabha
Finding	a fresh nationwide survey identified no manual scavengers
Governing law	the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013

- The 2013 Act replaced the earlier Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993
- Manual scavenging is defined in relation to insanitary latrines
- Hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks is a separate category under the same Act

India Assigns Standardised Names to 27 Places and Features in Arunachal Pradesh

07 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh assigned standardised names to 27 places and geographical features on Survey of India maps on 7 August 2026.
- The 27 sites comprise 21 land areas and villages, 4 mountain passes, 1 high-altitude lake and 1 war memorial.
- The passes named are Thag La, Dzo La, Riza La and Pukur La; the lake is Sambho Sarovar and the memorial is the Sher-e-Thapa Memorial.
- The Ministry of External Affairs reaffirmed India's sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh on the same day.
- The Survey of India is the national mapping agency and the oldest scientific department of the Government of India.

QUICK FACTS

Date of the exercise	7 August 2026
Agencies involved	Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh and the Survey of India
Number of sites named	27
Composition	21 land areas and villages, 4 mountain passes, 1 high-altitude lake, 1 war memorial
Passes named	Thag La, Dzo La, Riza La and Pukur La
Lake named	Sambho Sarovar
Memorial named	Sher-e-Thapa Memorial, honouring Trilok Singh Thapa, a war hero of the 1962 conflict
Settlements named include	Longju, Maja, Bisa, Jairampur, Shivaji Nagar and Kamlang Nagar

MHA Bars New Renewable Energy Projects Within 1 km of India's Borders

08 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs issued national security guidelines on 8 August 2026 regulating solar, wind and hybrid renewable energy projects near India's land frontiers.
- New projects are banned outright within 1 km of the International Border, the Line of Control and the Line of Actual Control.
- The belt up to 50 km from these borders is classified as a sensitive area where every project needs MHA security clearance on a case-by-case basis.
- Projects between 1 km and 20 km of the International Border additionally require a No Objection Certificate from the Ministry of Defence.

- Developers cannot hire staff from Pakistan, China or Bangladesh without prior central government permission, and must fund security measures including anti-drone systems.

QUICK FACTS

Issuing authority	Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India
Date of guidelines	8 August 2026
Sectors covered	solar, wind and hybrid renewable energy projects
Blanket ban zone	within 1 km of the International Border (IB), Line of Control (LoC) and Line of Actual Control (LAC)
Sensitive zone	up to 50 km from the IB, LoC and LAC, requiring MHA security clearance
States and UTs affected	Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh
Nodal ministry for applications	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)

India Adds 27 Standardised Arunachal Place Names to Official Survey of India Maps

11 Aug

- The Centre has formally identified 27 places and geographical features in Arunachal Pradesh by their standard names on official Indian maps.
- The names were standardised and incorporated into Survey of India maps after consultation with the Arunachal Pradesh government.
- The additions include the strategic passes Dzo La, Riza La and Thag La, Sambho Sarovar lake and the Sher-e-Thapa Memorial.
- Twelve villages and localities were also included, among them Longju, Jaswant Garh, Jairampur and Kamlang Nagar.
- The move follows repeated Chinese attempts to assign its own names to locations in the state, which Beijing calls 'Zangnan'.

QUICK FACTS

Count	27 places and geographical features standardised on official maps
Announced by	the Ministry of Science and Technology, after consultation with the Arunachal Pradesh government
Incorporated into	Survey of India maps — India's national mapping agency, headquartered at Dehradun
Mountain passes added	Dzo La, Riza La and Thag La
Other features	Sambho Sarovar lake and the Sher-e-Thapa Memorial
Villages and localities	Longju, Maja, Bisa, Jaswant Garh, Jairampur, Sunpura, Kamlang Nagar, Shivaji Nagar, Padma, Jyotinagar, Pritnagar and Teritnagar

DDA Approves Draft Master Plan for Delhi-2047, Replacing the Stalled MPD-2041

12 Aug

- The Delhi Development Authority approved the draft Master Plan for Delhi-2047 on 12 August 2026, at a meeting chaired by Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu with DDA Vice-Chairman N Saravana Kumar in attendance.
- The plan replaces the earlier draft Master Plan for Delhi-2041, which the DDA had cleared on 28 February 2023 but which was never notified and missed several central deadlines, and is aligned with the Viksit Bharat @ 2047 vision.
- It permits commercial construction in 70 peripheral villages, relaxes developmental protections on a portion of the Yamuna floodplain, and changes land use for a metro depot for the Rithala-Kundli corridor at Narela.
- Land pooling rules were eased: landowners may now approach the DDA directly, and the 2019 requirement that 70 per cent of landowners in a sector form a cooperative consortium has been removed.
- The DDA also cleared a uniform redevelopment policy for structurally deficient DDA-built two-storey units over 50 years old, giving them redevelopment rights equal to vacant residential plots, and amended the Unified Building Bye-Laws, 2016; the draft now goes to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for final notification.

QUICK FACTS

Approved on	12 August 2026, by the Delhi Development Authority
Chaired by	Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu, who is ex-officio Chairman of the DDA
Also present	DDA Vice-Chairman N Saravana Kumar
Replaces	the draft Master Plan for Delhi-2041, cleared by the DDA on 28 February 2023 but never notified
Aligned with	the Central Government's Viksit Bharat @ 2047 vision
Next step	submission to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for final notification
Reported scale	about 20 lakh new houses, with land in 105 villages to be developed through land pooling

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.

QUICK FACTS

Question 10	open-ended field for 'Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST)/Caste'
Legal basis	the Census Act, 1948; conducted by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India

- 40 questions notified on 14 August 2026 for the Population Enumeration phase of Census 2027
- Census 2027 is the 16th census of India and the first to be conducted digitally
- Phase 1, the House Listing and Housing Census, began on 1 April 2026
- Phase 2 begins 17 August 2026 in Ladakh and snow-bound areas; February 2027 for the rest of India

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.

QUICK FACTS

Occasion	India's 80th Independence Day, 15 August 2026, Red Fort, Delhi
Speaker	Prime Minister Narendra Modi, delivering his 13th consecutive Independence Day address
Record context	Jawaharlal Nehru holds the longest run at 17 consecutive addresses (1947-1963)
Duration	about 75 minutes — his shortest Independence Day speech in four years
Theme of the celebrations	'Yuva Shakti for Viksit Bharat@2047'
Headline announcement	'Saptadhara', seven streams of national strength
Cultural first	Vande Mataram rendered from the Red Fort, marking 150 years of the national song
Claim highlighted	25 crore people have come out of poverty
Ceremonial	21-gun salute by the 1721 Field Battery (Ceremonial) using indigenous 105 mm Light Field Guns; guard of honour from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Delhi Police

FSSAI Proposes Red Hexagon Warning Labels for Packaged Foods High in Sugar, Salt and Fat

29 Aug

- FSSAI has proposed mandatory front-of-pack warning labels for packaged foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat, setting out the plan in an affidavit before the Supreme Court.
- The warnings would appear as bold red hexagonal symbols reading HIGH FAT, HIGH SUGAR, HIGH SALT or HIGHLY SWEETENED BEVERAGE on the principal display panel.
- Nutrient thresholds are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024, issued by ICMR-NIN.
- Phase I covers products crossing thresholds for two or more target nutrients; Phase II extends it to products crossing even one.
- The proposal replaces FSSAI's earlier plan for a star-rating system, the Indian Nutrition Rating, which had failed to build stakeholder consensus.

QUICK FACTS

Regulator	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the statutory food regulator under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
Symbol	bold red hexagonal warning marks on the front (principal display panel) of the pack.
Declarations	HIGH FAT, HIGH SUGAR, HIGH SALT and HIGHLY SWEETENED BEVERAGE, including combined labels for products high in two nutrients.

- Proposal placed before the Supreme Court in a compliance affidavit, in response to a court direction.
- Font size of the warning must be at least one point larger than that used in the back-of-pack nutrition information table.
- Thresholds drawn from the Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024 (ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition).
- Staple items such as milk, ghee, edible oils, sugar, jaggery and honey are expected to remain exempt.
- The underlying case is a Public Interest Litigation by 3S and Our Health Society, a Kerala-based non-profit, heard by Justices J B Pardiwala and K Vinod Chandran.

2. International

22 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.

QUICK FACTS

Date of resumption	1 August 2026
Passes reopened	Nathu La (Sikkim) and Shipki La (Himachal Pradesh)
Duration of suspension	nearly six years, from 2020
Causes of the suspension	the COVID-19 pandemic and India-China border tensions
Trading days	Monday to Thursday, continuing until November
Gate opening time	7:30 am IST
Daily transaction cap per trader	Rs 2 lakh
Registered traders issued passes this year	38
Altitude of Nathu La	about 4,545 metres above sea level
Location	links Sikkim with Yadong county in Xigaze prefecture, Tibet; about 54 km east of Gangtok

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.

QUICK FACTS

Formal name	Mecca Joint Defence Agreement; commonly the Mecca Defence Pact
Signatories	Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan
Date and place	7 August 2026, at Mecca
Core provision	an armed attack on any one signatory is to be regarded as an attack on all three
Objective	to strengthen collective deterrence and defence cooperation
Precursor	the Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) of September 2025
Transparency	the detailed text has not been made public

Damascus Court Sentences Bashar al-Assad to Death in Absentia for War Crimes

11 Aug

- The Fourth Criminal Court in Damascus sentenced ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to death in absentia on August 11, 2026.
- The convictions were for crimes against humanity, war crimes and premeditated murder.
- His brother Maher al-Assad was also sentenced to death in absentia; both live in Russia, where they received asylum.
- Atef Najib, Assad's maternal cousin and former political security chief for Daraa, was sentenced in person.
- Nine former regime and security officials received death sentences in the case.

QUICK FACTS

Court	Fourth Criminal Court, Damascus — Syria's capital and largest city
Date of judgment	August 11, 2026; proceedings were aired live on state television
Presiding judge	Fakhareddine al-Aryan
Convicted in absentia	Bashar al-Assad and his brother Maher al-Assad, both resident in Moscow
Convicted in person	Atef Najib, former political security chief for Daraa province and Assad's maternal cousin
Total death sentences in the case	nine former regime and security officials

Lebanon Becomes First Middle East Country to Abolish the Death Penalty

11 Aug

- Lebanon's Parliament voted on August 11, 2026 to abolish the death penalty, the first country in the Middle East to do so in law.
- Capital punishment is replaced by life imprisonment with aggravated hard labour.
- The law commutes the sentences of roughly 84 to 85 prisoners on death row.
- It codifies a de facto moratorium in place since January 17, 2004, when Lebanon last carried out an execution.
- The Hezbollah parliamentary bloc voted against the repeal.

QUICK FACTS

Date of vote	August 11, 2026, in Lebanon's 128-member Parliament
Session called by	Speaker Nabih Berri
Replacement punishment	life imprisonment with aggravated hard labour
Retroactive effect	commutes sentences of about 84-85 death row prisoners
Last execution in Lebanon	January 17, 2004

- Justice Minister Adel Nassar called it a historic step; the European Union welcomed the decision

Magnitude 7.4 Earthquake Devastates Western Colombia, Strongest This Century

11 Aug

- A magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck western Colombia on August 10, 2026, with the epicentre at San Jose del Palmar in Choco province.
- The Colombian Geological Service described it as the most powerful earthquake to hit the country this century.
- Initial reports counted at least 111 deaths, with the toll rising past 130 as rescue operations continued.
- Cali, Pereira, Quibdo and Manizales were among the worst-affected cities, and Colombia declared an emergency.
- Colombia lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire, where the Nazca and Caribbean Plates subduct beneath the South American Plate.

QUICK FACTS

Date	August 10, 2026
Magnitude	7.4
Epicentre	San Jose del Palmar, Choco province, roughly 250 miles west of Bogota
Assessment	the most powerful earthquake to strike Colombia this century, per the Colombian Geological Service
Cities affected	Cali, Pereira, Quibdo and Manizales; five capital cities placed on red alert
Reported impact	hundreds injured, dozens of buildings collapsed, several airports suspended operations

Russia Imports Gasoline From India for the First Time Amid Refinery Strikes

12 Aug

- Russia imported gasoline from India in 2026 for the first time in history, amid a domestic fuel shortage.
- The shortage followed repeated Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian refineries.
- The first cargo loaded 42,000 tonnes at the Vadinar refinery in Gujarat on June 18, 2026 and was routed via the Egyptian port of Damietta.
- Vadinar is operated by Nayara Energy Ltd., which has Rosneft-backed ownership links.
- Russia's crude oil processing averaged 3.6 million barrels per day in July 2026, about a third below normal seasonal levels.

QUICK FACTS

Loaded	42,000 tonnes at the Vadinar refinery, Gujarat, on June 18, 2026
Route	trans-shipped at Damietta, Egypt, before continuing towards Russia
Vadinar operator	Nayara Energy Ltd., with Rosneft-backed ownership links
Russian crude processing, July 2026	3.6 million barrels per day, about one-third below the normal seasonal level

- First-ever Indian gasoline cargo reached Russia in August 2026
- Russia's possible monthly gasoline import requirement: up to 400,000 tonnes from multiple countries, per industry estimates

Colombia Earthquake: 7.4 Magnitude Quake in Chocó Kills 254, Thousands Missing

12 Aug

- A 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck western Colombia on August 10, 2026, with the epicentre near San José del Palmar in Chocó.
- As of August 12, at least 254 people had died, more than 2,600 were injured and nearly 3,900 were reported missing.
- The quake occurred at a depth of about 100 kilometres and damaged around 1,600 buildings and nearly 5,000 homes.
- An economic emergency was declared, allowing temporary economic and tax measures without congressional approval.
- The United States announced $15.5 million in emergency aid and the European Union activated Copernicus satellite services.

QUICK FACTS

Date	August 10, 2026; magnitude 7.4 Mw
Epicentre	near San José del Palmar, Chocó, western Colombia; depth about 100 km
Worst-affected areas	Chocó, Pereira and Cali
Toll as of August 12	254 dead — including 101 in Pereira and 95 in Cali — over 2,600 injured, nearly 3,900 missing
Damage	around 1,600 buildings damaged; nearly 5,000 homes affected
International response	$15.5 million in US emergency aid; the EU activated Copernicus satellite services

Putin Makes First Visit to Disputed Kuril Islands, Japan Protests

13 Aug

- Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the disputed Kuril Islands for the first time, travelling to Iturup, one of the chain's southernmost islands.
- He visited a fish processing plant, a hospital and a school, spoke to residents and met Sakhalin regional governor Valery Limarenko.
- Japan protested immediately: Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi called the Northern Territories 'an inherent part of Japan's territory' and the visit 'absolutely unacceptable'.
- The four southernmost islands were taken by the Soviet Union in 1945, and the dispute has kept Russia and Japan from signing a World War II peace treaty for eight decades.
- The archipelago runs about 1,300 km from Kamchatka to Hokkaido, separating the Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific Ocean.

QUICK FACTS

Who	Russian President Vladimir Putin, on his first ever visit to the Kuril Islands
Where	Iturup, known in Japan as Etorofu, one of the southernmost islands of the chain
What he did	visited a fish plant, a hospital and a school; met residents and Sakhalin Oblast governor Valery Limarenko
Japan's response	formal protest; PM Sanae Takaichi called the visit 'absolutely unacceptable'
Japanese name for the four disputed islands	the Northern Territories

- Administered by Russia as part of Sakhalin Oblast
- Seized by the Soviet Union in 1945, in the closing days of the Second World War

Iran and Oman Agree on Strait of Hormuz Shipping Route Map

15 Aug

- Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei announced on 15 August 2026 that Iran and Oman had agreed on a shipping route map for the Strait of Hormuz after weeks of technical negotiations.
- The talks followed a memorandum of understanding on safe navigation signed on 18 June 2026, and involved Iran's foreign, defence, security and environment authorities along with Omani representatives.
- Tehran described the arrangement as an independent bilateral understanding between the two coastal states that does not alter either country's sovereignty over the waterway.
- Iran said a full return to normal commercial shipping still depends on the United States lifting its naval blockade and ending military pressure, and on compensation for what it called breaches of commitments.
- The International Maritime Organization had cited 65 confirmed vessel incidents and 17 seafarer deaths in the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Middle East by 11 August 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Announced on	15 August 2026, by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei
Parties	Iran and Oman — the two coastal states bordering the Strait of Hormuz
Subject	a shipping route map for traffic through the Strait
Origin	a memorandum of understanding on safe navigation routes signed on 18 June 2026
Status	agreement reached on the route map; the wording of a joint Tehran-Muscat statement was still being discussed
Iran's condition for full normalcy	an end to the US naval blockade and military pressure, plus compensation

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.

QUICK FACTS

Elected	Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, 23rd President of Bangladesh
Date of election	20 August 2026; oath taken 21 August 2026
Result	255 votes against 88 for Oli Ahmad (Liberal Democratic Party)
Turnout	343 valid votes cast out of 349 eligible MPs; six did not vote
Venue	chamber of the Jatiya Sangsad, Dhaka; voting from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Result announced by	Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin
Oath venue	Darbar Hall, Bangabhaban - the President's official residence in Dhaka
Predecessor	Mohammed Shahabuddin (22nd President, April 2023 - 24 July 2026)

Tanker With 16 Indians Hijacked in Gulf of Aden as Somali Piracy Resurges

20 Aug

- On 20 August 2026 the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported that a tanker transiting westwards in the Gulf of Aden had been boarded by six armed persons about 136 nautical miles east of Al Mukalla, Yemen, and was being redirected towards Somalia.
- The vessel, reported as the Seamull and also listed as Sibu 1, is a tanker of about 32,238 DWT and 25 years of age, sailing under an Eritrean flag that has been reported as false; it has been under United States sanctions since December 2025 over the carriage of Iranian petroleum.
- It carried 20 crew, of whom 16 were Indian nationals, along with one Syrian, one Sudanese and one Iraqi; Indian authorities reported the Indian crew members safe.
- It was the second hijacking in the region within days: the Cameroon-flagged general cargo ship Lutuf was seized on 17 August 2026 by eight armed men off Marraya on the Puntland coast of Somalia, with six Indians among its ten crew - taking the number of Indian seafarers held on the two vessels to 22.
- UKMTO is a British Royal Navy-sponsored organisation set up in Dubai in 2001 and moved to Portsmouth in 2014; it is the primary point of contact between merchant vessels and military forces in West Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

QUICK FACTS

Date and place	20 August 2026, about 136 nautical miles east of Al Mukalla in Yemen's Hadhramaut, in the Gulf of Aden; distress calls were broadcast between 10:10 and 10:12 local time
UKMTO statement	the tanker had been boarded by six armed persons who were in control of the vessel and redirecting it to Somalia
Vessel	tanker reported as Seamull, also listed as Sibu 1; about 32,238 DWT, 25 years old, sailing under an Eritrean flag reported as false
Crew	20 in all, including 16 Indians, one Syrian, one Sudanese and one Iraqi; Indian crew reported safe
Second incident in days	the Cameroon-flagged cargo ship Lutuf was hijacked on 17 August 2026 off Marraya, Puntland, by eight armed men operating from a mothership, with six Indians among ten crew
UKMTO	British Royal Navy-sponsored, formed in Dubai in 2001, relocated to Portsmouth in 2014, staffed by 15 civilian watchkeepers and three managers

Trump Announces 50% Tariff on Canadian Vehicles, Parts and Steel From 2027

24 Aug

- United States President Donald Trump announced on 24 August 2026 a 50% tariff on Canadian cars, trucks, automotive parts and steel, to take effect on 1 January 2027.
- The announcement followed the collapse of bilateral trade talks in Washington on 21 August and the coming into force on 22 August of 50% tariffs on a broad range of Canadian goods under Section 338 of the US Tariff Act, 1930.
- Those 22 August tariffs covered roughly 5% of Canada's exports to the United States; existing US duties on non-US automobiles and parts stood at 25%, so the new measure would double the top rate on Canadian autos.
- Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Canada would retaliate 'dollar for dollar' from 8 September 2026, targeting US steel, dairy, appliances, agricultural equipment, pulp and paper and electronics.
- Section 338 is unusual in that USMCA origin gives no exemption - covered goods pay the duty even when they qualify for preferential treatment under the trade agreement.

QUICK FACTS

Announced by	US President Donald Trump, 24 August 2026
Rate and coverage	50% on Canadian cars, trucks, automotive parts and steel; US-built vehicles exempt
Effective date announced	1 January 2027
Existing rate being doubled	25% on non-US automobiles and parts
Canada's response	Prime Minister Mark Carney promised dollar-for-dollar retaliation from 8 September 2026
Canadian retaliation list	US steel, dairy, appliances, agricultural equipment, pulp and paper, electronics
Backing from the provinces	Ontario Premier Doug Ford publicly supported the retaliation, calling the US terms bad for the auto, steel and manufacturing sectors

India and China Hold 25th Round of Special Representatives Border Talks

25 Aug

- The 25th round of Special Representatives talks on the India-China boundary question was held in Beijing on 25 August 2026.
- National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, India's Special Representative, co-chaired the round with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, China's Special Representative, during a two-day visit that began on 24 August.
- The round took place ahead of an expected visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to New Delhi for the BRICS summit.

QUICK FACTS

Event	25th round of Special Representatives (SR) talks on the India-China boundary question.
Date and venue	25 August 2026, Beijing.
India's Special Representative	National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, who has held the office of NSA since 2014.
China's Special Representative	Foreign Minister Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

- Doval was on a two-day visit beginning 24 August and was also scheduled to call on Chinese Vice President Han Zheng.

– The previous round, the 24th, was held in August 2025.

US Removes Syria from State Sponsors of Terrorism List After 47 Years

25 Aug

- The US Department of State rescinded Syria's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism on 24 August 2026, ending a listing that had run since 29 December 1979.
- On the same day the Department revoked the Specially Designated Global Terrorist designation of the al-Nusrah Front, also known as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).
- The Office of Foreign Assets Control removed HTS from its Specially Designated Nationals List and revoked Syria General License 25.
- Cuba, Iran and North Korea remain the only countries on the US State Sponsors of Terrorism list.
- The move followed a 45-day congressional review that began after Secretary of State Marco Rubio notified Congress on 8 July 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Action	Syria's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism rescinded by the US Department of State on 24 August 2026
Duration of designation	from 29 December 1979 — nearly 47 years, the longest of any country on the list
Same-day action	SDGT designation of al-Nusrah Front / Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham revoked
OFAC action	HTS removed from the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List; Syria General License 25 revoked
Process	45-day congressional review, triggered by Secretary of State Marco Rubio's notification to Congress on 8 July 2026
Countries still listed	Cuba, Iran, North Korea

Flash Flood Sweeps Nepal's Bhote Koshi and Trishuli Valleys After Himalayan Ice Avalanche

26 Aug

- A sudden flash flood swept down the Bhote Koshi and into the Trishuli river system on 26 August 2026, devastating Nepal's Rasuwa district and putting Nuwakot, Dhading, Gorkha and Chitwan on alert.
- The surge was traced to a massive ice avalanche in the high Himalaya that fell into the Lhende Khola, a headwater stream on the Nepal-Tibet frontier; a seismic signal was recorded, but the United States Geological Survey assessed the waves as consistent with a landslide rather than a tectonic earthquake.
- By 27 August the confirmed death toll in Nepal had passed 150 with more than 750 people missing, including 133 Indian nationals; three deaths were reported on the Chinese side.
- Six hydropower stations in the Trishuli basin were damaged, the Rasuwagadhi customs post and the Gyirong border crossing were wrecked, and roughly 19 bridges and 40 km of road were destroyed.
- India placed Bihar and Uttar Pradesh on alert as the wave moved downstream into the Gandak, with about 20 NDRF teams on standby and the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu issuing emergency helplines.

QUICK FACTS

Event	flash flood down the Bhote Koshi into the Trishuli river system, 26 August 2026
Trigger	a large ice avalanche near the Langtang Lirung massif falling into the Lhende Khola, close to the Nepal-Tibet border
Districts hit or alerted in Nepal	Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Gorkha, Chitwan; Gyirong county in Tibet was also affected
Toll as of 27 August 2026	more than 150 dead in Nepal and three in China; over 750 missing, including 133 Indians
Infrastructure	six hydropower stations damaged, about 19 bridges and 40 km of roads destroyed
India's response	Bihar and Uttar Pradesh alerted for the Gandak, roughly 20 NDRF teams on standby, embassy helplines opened in Kathmandu

Meta Settles US States' Child Safety Case for Over $17 Billion

26 Aug

- Meta agreed on 26 August 2026 to pay more than $17 billion over a decade to settle child-safety claims brought by 47 US states, Washington DC and other territories, ending a federal trial.
- The states alleged that Facebook and Instagram were designed to keep young users compulsively engaged, that Meta misled the public about the harms, and that it collected data from children under 13 in breach of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), 1998.
- For the settlement's first five years Meta will apply a combined two-hour daily limit for under-18 users across Facebook and Instagram, a 'night mode' block from midnight to 6 am, and notification curbs at night and during school hours.
- Other changes include a non-personalised feed option, likes and reactions hidden by default, curbs on cosmetic-procedure filters and stronger age assurance — some as defaults, others opt-in.
- Meta denies wrongdoing; the settlement records no finding of liability, sets no standard of care, and leaves the Section 230 question unresolved.

QUICK FACTS

Settlement amount	more than $17 billion, payable over the next decade.
Plaintiffs	a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from 47 US states, plus Washington DC and other territories.
Central allegation	the platforms' design — endless feeds, recommendation algorithms, notifications and social metrics such as likes — was built to maximise compulsive engagement by young users.

- The settlement ended the states' federal trial without any judgment on Meta's underlying liability.
- COPPA, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, is a 1998 US federal law enacted before Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or TikTok existed.
- Thousands of related cases remain pending; the agreement explicitly does not serve as precedent elsewhere.

India Flies Second Relief Consignment of 37.5 Tonnes to Flood-Hit Nepal

27 Aug

- India flew a second consignment of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief material to Nepal on 27 August 2026, sending 37.5 tonnes of supplies aboard an Indian Air Force C-17 Globemaster.
- The first tranche of 10 tonnes - tents, blankets, hygiene kits, solar lamps and medicines - had gone in a C-130J Hercules on 26 August, hours after the flash flood struck.
- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced both consignments, and the Ministry of External Affairs said India remains in continuous touch with Nepalese authorities.
- Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to the Chief Ministers of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and the NDRF and local agencies were placed on alert in Indian districts along the Nepal border.
- The flood began on 26 August when an ice-and-rock avalanche near the Tibet border dammed a tributary and the natural dam burst, sending water down the Bhote Koshi-Trishuli system through Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts.

QUICK FACTS

Second consignment	37.5 tonnes of HADR material, medicines and food packets, flown 27 August 2026 by an IAF C-17 Globemaster
First consignment	10 tonnes - tents, blankets, hygiene kits, solar lamps, medicines - flown 26 August 2026 by an IAF C-130J Hercules
Announced by	External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar; MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal reiterated India's commitment to all feasible assistance
Indian domestic response	NDRF and local agencies on alert in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh border districts after Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to both Chief Ministers
Disaster	flash flood of 26 August 2026 in Nepal's Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts, along the Trishuli valley
Cause	an ice-and-rock avalanche dammed a tributary near the Tibet border and the natural dam later burst
Toll as officially reported	Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority put the toll at 359 dead in its bulletin of 27 August, with hundreds still unaccounted for

PM Modi to Visit Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for the 26th SCO Summit

27 Aug

- The Ministry of External Affairs announced on 27 August 2026 that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on a four-day visit.
- He will make a State Visit to Tashkent on 29-30 August at the invitation of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, his fourth visit to Uzbekistan.
- He will then attend the 26th SCO Heads of State Summit in Bishkek from 31 August to 1 September 2026.
- Kyrgyzstan holds the 2025-26 SCO chairmanship, with the summit themed around 25 years of the SCO and sustainable peace, development and prosperity.
- A bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected on the sidelines, and the Prime Minister is to attend the opening of the sixth World Nomad Games.

QUICK FACTS

Announced by	Ministry of External Affairs, 27 August 2026
Uzbekistan leg	State Visit to Tashkent, 29-30 August 2026, at the invitation of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev
Kyrgyzstan leg	26th SCO Heads of State Summit at Bishkek, 31 August to 1 September 2026
SCO chair for 2025-26	Kyrgyzstan
India's stated priorities at the summit	security, connectivity and opportunity
Also on the programme	the opening of the sixth World Nomad Games in the Kyrgyz Republic

Trump Announces US Deal for Majority Control of Venezuela's Oil Reserves

28 Aug

- On 28 August 2026 US President Donald Trump announced that the United States had entered an agreement giving it majority control of more than 65 billion barrels of Venezuela's proven oil reserves, calling it the biggest oil deal in world history.
- Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the arrangement would bring nearly $100 billion of private investment into Venezuela; Trump said it came at no cost to American taxpayers and would more than double United States oil reserves.
- The announcement named Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodriguez, who took office in January 2026 after Nicolas Maduro was removed from power and taken to face criminal charges in a United States court.
- Venezuela holds roughly 303 billion barrels of proven crude reserves, the largest of any country and about 17 per cent of the world total, but its output has collapsed after years of underinvestment and infrastructure decay.
- Chevron, the only major American oil company still operating in Venezuela, reported gross output of about 280,000 barrels per day from its joint ventures with the state firm PDVSA and sees room for up to 50 per cent growth by the end of 2028.

QUICK FACTS

Announced by	US President Donald Trump, 28 August 2026
What it covers	majority US control of more than 65 billion barrels of Venezuela's proven oil reserves
Investment projected	nearly $100 billion of private investment into Venezuela, per Secretary of State Marco Rubio
Venezuelan counterpart named	interim President Delcy Rodriguez, in office since January 2026
Venezuela's total proven reserves	about 303 billion barrels, the largest of any country in the world
Trump's claim	the deal comes at no cost to American taxpayers and would more than double US oil reserves

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.

QUICK FACTS

Date and place	30 August 2026, Kuksaroy Presidential Palace, Tashkent
Leaders	Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev
Outcome	ties elevated from Strategic Partnership to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
Trade target	USD 5 billion a year by 2030, a roughly fivefold increase

– This was Prime Minister Modi's fourth visit to Uzbekistan, and came as the existing strategic partnership completed 15 years

US Strikes Larak Island in Hormuz; Iran Hits Jordan and UAE Bases

31 Aug

- United States forces struck two Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps rocket launchers on Larak Island in the Strait of Hormuz on 30 August 2026, their first military action against Iran in about a month.
- Washington said the launchers were being prepared to fire rockets carrying sea mines into the strait, and that the strike was meant to stop Iranian forces from mining the waterway.
- Hours later the IRGC launched a combined missile and drone operation named Punishment of the Aggressor against the King Hussein and Al Azraq bases in Jordan; Jordan said it intercepted eight missiles at dawn with no injuries, and Iran also struck US military assets in the United Arab Emirates.
- The exchange came as the war involving the United States, Israel and Iran entered its seventh month, with the Strait of Hormuz - which carries about a quarter of the world's seaborne oil - at the centre of the fighting.

QUICK FACTS

Date of US strike	30 August 2026, on Larak Island in the Strait of Hormuz.
Target	two IRGC rocket launchers; the US said they were being readied to fire rockets carrying sea mines into the strait.
Casualties	the IRGC reported unspecified Iranian military and civilian casualties; no US casualties were reported.
Iranian response	Operation Punishment of the Aggressor, a missile and drone strike on the King Hussein and Al Azraq bases in Jordan, plus strikes on US assets in the UAE.
Larak Island	about 49 sq km, in the Strait of Hormuz roughly 45 km south-east of Bandar Abbas.

– Jordan's armed forces said eight missiles that entered its airspace at dawn were intercepted, with no injuries.

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.

QUICK FACTS

Date of the decisions	31 August 2026, two decisions issued together
Forum	the Court of Arbitration constituted under Annexure G of the Indus Waters Treaty, sitting at The Hague with the Permanent Court of Arbitration as its Registry
Core holding	the Treaty remains fully in force; it cannot be suspended or terminated unilaterally
Interim measures	India to refrain from concreting the Ratle dam wall and power-intake structure above specified levels and to report changes in the construction schedule
Duration of the measures	until 90 days after the Neutral Expert's final decision, expected around July 2027
India's position	the Court is illegally constituted, its award is null and void, and the abeyance decision stands

3. Economy

18 articles

GST Collections Rise 15.4% to Rs 2.11 Lakh Crore in July 2026

01 Aug

- Gross GST collections in July 2026 rose 15.4% year-on-year to Rs 2.11 lakh crore, the fastest growth in 14 months.
- Growth was driven by imports: GST on imports jumped 28.8% to Rs 66,511 crore, against 10.1% growth in domestic revenue at Rs 1.45 lakh crore.
- Net GST revenue after refunds rose 15.8% to Rs 1.81 lakh crore; total refunds were Rs 29,968 crore, up 13.1%.
- Cumulative April-July collections for FY 2026-27 stood at Rs 8.43 lakh crore, up 10.1%.
- Haryana led state growth at 25%, while Himachal Pradesh recorded the steepest fall at -22%.

QUICK FACTS

Gross GST collections, July 2026	Rs 2.11 lakh crore
Year-on-year growth	15.4%, the fastest in 14 months
Domestic GST revenue	Rs 1.45 lakh crore, up 10.1%
GST on imports	Rs 66,511 crore, up 28.8%
Net GST after refunds	Rs 1.81 lakh crore, up 15.8%
Total refunds	Rs 29,968 crore, up 13.1%

– April-July FY 2026-27 cumulative gross collections: Rs 8.43 lakh crore, up 10.1%

Centre Front-Loads Rs 1.09 Lakh Crore Tax Devolution to States

01 Aug

- The Union Government released an additional instalment of Rs 1,09,019 crore as tax devolution to state governments on 1 August 2026.
- The transfer was advanced ahead of the regular monthly devolution due on 10 August, to help states step up capital and development spending.
- Uttar Pradesh received the largest share at Rs 17,908 crore, followed by West Bengal at Rs 7,986 crore and Maharashtra at Rs 7,022 crore.
- Tax devolution is the constitutionally mandated transfer of a share of the Centre's divisible pool to states on Finance Commission recommendations.
- The 16th Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya, retained the states' share of the divisible pool at 41% for the 2026-31 award period.

QUICK FACTS

Amount released	Rs 1,09,019 crore (about Rs 1.09 lakh crore)
Nature	an additional instalment, advanced ahead of the regular transfer due on 10 August
Purpose	to strengthen state finances and accelerate capital and developmental expenditure
Largest recipient	Uttar Pradesh, Rs 17,908 crore
Second and third	West Bengal Rs 7,986 crore, Maharashtra Rs 7,022 crore
Governing body	Finance Commission, constituted under Article 280
Current award	16th Finance Commission, 2026-27 to 2030-31

India's Manufacturing PMI Falls to 53.5 in July, Lowest Since August 2021

03 Aug

- The HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 53.5 in July 2026, its lowest reading since August 2021.

- The index remained above 50, so manufacturing conditions continued to improve, but at the slowest pace in nearly five years.
- New orders grew at their second-weakest pace in more than four years as firms reported tougher market conditions.
- Hiring also slowed, though export orders improved after a slump in June.
- A PMI reading above 50 signals expansion and below 50 signals contraction.

QUICK FACTS

Index	HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)
July 2026 reading	53.5
Significance of the reading	lowest since August 2021

- The index stayed above the 50 mark, indicating continued expansion
- New orders grew at their second-weakest pace in over four years
- Hiring slowed during the month
- Export orders improved after June's slump

Government Opens LIC Offer for Sale of Up to 6.5% Stake at Floor Price of Rs 382

04 Aug

- The Government of India opened an Offer for Sale (OFS) in Life Insurance Corporation of India on 4 August 2026 for non-retail investors, with retail bidding on 5 August.
- The OFS covers a base 2.5% stake with a green shoe option of a further 4%, taking the maximum sale to 6.5% of LIC's equity.
- The floor price was fixed at Rs 382 per share, roughly 10% below LIC's 3 August closing price, and the stock fell sharply when bidding opened.
- A full sale would raise about Rs 31,000 crore and cut the government's holding from 96.5% to about 90%.
- The sale is driven by SEBI's minimum public shareholding requirement, for which LIC has time until 16 May 2027 to reach a 10% public float.

QUICK FACTS

Instrument	Offer for Sale (OFS) on the stock exchanges
Seller	Government of India (promoter of LIC)
Base offer	2.5% of equity; green shoe option: additional 4%; maximum 6.5%
Floor price	Rs 382 per share
Discount	about 10% to the 3 August 2026 closing price of Rs 424.35
Non-retail (institutional) bidding day	4 August 2026
Retail and eligible employee bidding day	5 August 2026
Expected mobilisation if fully subscribed	about Rs 31,000 crore
Government stake	96.5% before the sale, falling to about 90% if the green shoe is fully exercised

Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill 2026 Introduced to Draw Global Capital

04 Aug

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha on 4 August 2026.
- For offshore funds, the qualifying conditions for an Eligible Investment Fund are cut from 13 to five, so that fund management from India does not create a business connection here.

- Tax exemption for foreign companies supplying machinery and tooling to Indian electronics contract manufacturers is extended by 10 years, taking the total incentive period to 15 years up to FY 2040-41.
- For data centres the Bill removes multiple approval requirements and permits leased data centre models, aimed at large AI data centre investment.
- The Bill also carries the amendment to Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 that would allow MDR on notified digital payment modes.

QUICK FACTS

Bill	Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026
Introduced in	Lok Sabha, 4 August 2026
Introduced by	Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman
Three stated themes	attracting foreign capital, promoting Make in India, simplifying tax compliance
Offshore funds	conditions for an Eligible Investment Fund reduced from 13 to five
Electronics	exemption for foreign suppliers of machinery and tooling extended by 10 years, to a total of 15 years up to FY 2040-41
Covered electronics	mobile phones, laptops, personal computers, tablets and servers
Data centres	multiple approval requirements removed, leased data centre models permitted
Follow-up	the Central Board of Direct Taxes issued a set of FAQs explaining the proposals

Government e-Marketplace Completes 10 Years, Crosses Rs 20 Lakh Crore in Value

09 Aug

- The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) completed 10 years of operations on 9 August 2026.
- GeM has facilitated a cumulative Gross Merchandise Value of over Rs 20 lakh crore through more than 3.78 crore orders.
- The first Rs 10 lakh crore took over eight years; the next Rs 10 lakh crore was achieved in under two years.
- Micro and Small Enterprises on the platform secured orders worth over Rs 9.07 lakh crore, forming 45.6% of cumulative GMV.
- An IIT Delhi study estimated monetised benefits of Rs 86,571.69 crore and net social savings of Rs 1,76,411.46 crore.

QUICK FACTS

Platform	Government e-Marketplace (GeM)
Launched	2016; completed 10 years on 9 August 2026
Parent ministry	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Purpose	online public procurement of goods and services by government buyers
Cumulative Gross Merchandise Value (GMV)	over Rs 20 lakh crore
Cumulative orders	more than 3.78 crore
Users	ministries, departments, public sector units and other government organisations

RBI's 101st Forecasters' Survey Raises FY27 Growth Forecast to 6.6%

11 Aug

- The RBI's 101st Survey of Professional Forecasters, conducted in July 2026, raised India's FY27 real GDP growth forecast to 6.6% from 6.5%.
- Retail inflation for FY27 was revised up to 5% from 4.9%; both changes are of 10 basis points.
- The current account deficit forecast was sharply narrowed to 1.4% of GDP from 2.1%, aided by stronger exports.
- For FY28 the panel sees 7% growth with 4.5% inflation — a combination economists call a 'Goldilocks' economy.

- The RBI's own August 2026 policy projection of 6.7% for FY27 remains 0.1 percentage point above the panel's.

QUICK FACTS

Survey	101st round of the RBI's Survey of Professional Forecasters (SPF), conducted July 2026
FY27 real GDP growth	6.6% (previous round: 6.5%)
FY27 retail inflation	5% (previous round: 4.9%)
FY27 current account deficit	1.4% of GDP (previous round: 2.1%)
FY28 outlook	7% growth with 4.5% inflation

– The SPF is a bi-monthly external survey; it is not the RBI's own forecast

Centre's Debt-to-GDP Ratio at 58.2% in FY26, Overshooting 56.1% Target

11 Aug

- The Centre's debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 58.2% in FY26, missing the government's own target of 56.1% by 210 basis points.
- Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary disclosed the figures in Parliament.
- Outstanding liabilities have nonetheless fallen from 61.5% of GDP in FY21 to 58.2% in FY26.
- The FY27 target is 55.6%, requiring a further reduction of about 260 basis points.
- The fiscal deficit has narrowed sharply from 9.2% of GDP in FY21 to 4.4% in FY26 on provisional actuals.

QUICK FACTS

FY26 debt-to-GDP ratio	58.2%
FY26 target	56.1% — missed by 210 basis points
FY27 target	55.6%, requiring a further cut of about 260 basis points
FY21 debt-to-GDP	61.5%, showing a decline over five years
FY26 fiscal deficit	4.4% of GDP (provisional actuals), down from 9.2% in FY21
Disclosed by	Pankaj Chaudhary, Minister of State for Finance

US Now Supplies 67% of India's LPG Imports as Hormuz Risk Redraws Energy Routes

12 Aug

- The Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas stated that 67% of India's LPG imports now originate from the United States.
- India is the world's second-largest LPG importer, consuming over 34 million metric tonnes annually.
- Nearly 90% of India's historical LPG imports passed through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Saudi Aramco Contract Price rose from about $543 per tonne in February 2026 to around $790 per tonne in June 2026.
- OMC under-recoveries exceeded Rs 59,000 crore as of July 2026.

QUICK FACTS

US share of India's LPG imports	67%
India's position	world's second-largest LPG importer; annual consumption over 34 million metric tonnes
Historical route dependence	nearly 90% of LPG imports passed through the Strait of Hormuz
Gulf benchmark	Saudi Aramco Contract Price, roughly $543/tonne in February 2026 to about $790/tonne in June 2026
US benchmark	Mont Belvieu propane
Households served	over 33 crore active domestic LPG households

– Long-term contracts signed by state-run OMCs in 2026: around 2 million tonnes of US LPG

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.

QUICK FACTS

Report	'The Great Transshipment Scam: Global Evasion and Economic Costs'
Published by	White House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy (OTMP), headed by trade adviser Peter Navarro
Release date	13 August 2026
Scope	more than 40 countries flagged for elevated illegal transhipment risk
India's classification	Tier 1, 'Diversified Scale Leaders'
Other Tier 1 names	Canada, the European Union, Israel, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan
Tier 2	Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand, described as 'closely integrated' with China
Tier 3	Cambodia, Panama and the UAE, flagged for 'weak customs enforcement'
India-specific charge	the Pune-Gujarat-Chennai belt as a corridor for pumps and compressors (HS codes 8413-8414)
Enforcement plan	artificial-intelligence systems to detect, track and penalise shipments routed through such networks

Retail Sugar Price Climbs to Rs 55.70 a Kg; Centre Rejects Ethanol Link

20 Aug

- Retail sugar prices in India rose from Rs 48.18 per kg on 20 July 2026 to Rs 55.70 per kg on 20 August 2026, according to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- The Ministry set out five reasons for the rise - lower domestic production, weather damage to the cane crop, festive-season demand, tighter global supplies, and speculation and hoarding - and expressly rejected the argument that diversion of sugarcane to ethanol was responsible.
- Sugar output for the season is now estimated at about 30.6 million tonnes against an initial estimate of 34.3 million tonnes, the shortfall being attributed to Red Rot and Top Borer disease and to waterlogging from excess rainfall.
- International prices moved from USD 474 a tonne on 30 June 2026 to USD 552 a tonne on 20 August 2026, a rise of more than 16 per cent.
- The government's case is that the share of sugar diverted to ethanol has fallen from about 12 per cent in 2022-23 to around 9 per cent in 2025-26, and that roughly three-fourths of India's ethanol now comes from grains, mainly maize, rather than from sugarcane.

QUICK FACTS

Retail sugar price	Rs 48.18 per kg on 20 July 2026, Rs 55.70 per kg on 20 August 2026
Estimated sugar production for the season	about 30.6 million tonnes, against an initial estimate of 34.3 million tonnes
World prices	USD 474 a tonne on 30 June 2026 to USD 552 a tonne on 20 August 2026, up more than 16 per cent
Share of sugar diverted to ethanol	about 12 per cent in 2022-23, around 9 per cent in 2025-26

- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution cited five causes and rejected the ethanol-diversion explanation

- Crop damage attributed to Red Rot and Top Borer disease and to waterlogging from excess rainfall
- A stock limit of 400 tonnes was imposed on sugar dealers across the country until 30 November

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.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)
Notified by	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
Outlay	Rs 62,500 crore
Tenure	five years, FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31
Incentive on eligible sales	2.25 per cent to 5 per cent, at differentiated rates
Extra incentive	up to 1.5 per cent for domestic sourcing of key components and sub-assemblies

- Two target segments - TS1 (mobile phone manufacturing) and TS2 (Indian mobile phone brands)
- Union Cabinet had approved the scheme on 16 July 2026

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.

QUICK FACTS

Date of change	24 August 2026, with immediate effect.
Issuing authority	Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).
Policy shift	from 'Prohibited' to 'Free' for wheat, durum wheat and specified wheat flour products.
Products covered on the flour side	atta, maida, semolina (rava), wholemeal atta and resultant atta.

- Notification No. 35/2026-27 covers wheat and durum wheat; Notification No. 34/2026-27 covers wheat flour products.
- Wheat exports had been prohibited since 13 May 2022; flour products since August 2022.

PPPAC Clears Leasing of 11 AAI Airports to Private Players in Five Bundles

25 Aug

- The Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee has given in-principle approval to leasing 11 Airports Authority of India airports to private players for a 50-year concession period.
- The 11 airports have been grouped into five bundles, with estimated private investment of Rs 8,622 crore.
- The bidding parameter will be a per-passenger fee for domestic travellers; the international passenger fee is fixed at twice the domestic rate.
- AAI will retain air traffic control and communication, navigation and surveillance services; concessionaires must retain at least 60% of existing AAI staff.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation has proposed a one-year joint management period after handover.

QUICK FACTS

Approving body	Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC), in a meeting chaired by the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs
Number of airports	11, grouped into five bundles
Concession period	50 years
Estimated private investment	Rs 8,622 crore
Highest-investment bundle	Bhubaneswar-Hubballi at Rs 2,725 crore
Bidding parameter	per-passenger fee for domestic travellers, with the international rate at twice the domestic rate
Retained by AAI	air traffic control and communication, navigation and surveillance (CNS) services

RBI Bulletin Calls Economy Resilient as MPC Lifts FY27 Growth Forecast to 6.7%

25 Aug

- The Reserve Bank of India released its August 2026 Bulletin on 25 August 2026; its State of the Economy article judges the Indian economy resilient to global headwinds despite renewed US tariffs and geopolitical friction in West Asia.
- The Monetary Policy Committee left the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent in August 2026 - a fourth consecutive hold - and retained its neutral stance under Governor Sanjay Malhotra.
- The MPC raised its GDP growth forecast for 2026-27 from 6.6 per cent to 6.7 per cent and lowered its CPI inflation projection from 5.1 per cent to 5 per cent.
- The article credits buoyant domestic demand, a broad-based manufacturing recovery, resilient services, a July revival of the southwest monsoon that lifted kharif sowing towards normal, easier liquidity and returning foreign capital.
- The risks it flags are renewed US tariffs, West Asian geopolitics feeding into crude prices, food inflation pushing headline CPI possibly to 5.9 per cent in Q3 of 2026-27, and a merchandise trade deficit that widened in July partly on electronic goods.

QUICK FACTS

Publication	the Reserve Bank of India's monthly Bulletin for August 2026, released 25 August 2026; the assessment appears in its State of the Economy article
Headline judgement	the economy is showing notable resilience despite global headwinds
Repo rate	unchanged at 5.25 per cent in the August 2026 review, a fourth consecutive hold, with a neutral stance retained
RBI Governor	Sanjay Malhotra
Growth forecast for 2026-27	raised from 6.6 per cent to 6.7 per cent
CPI inflation projection for 2026-27	lowered from 5.1 per cent to 5 per cent
Warning	headline inflation could rise to 5.9 per cent in Q3 of 2026-27

- Global uncertainty has moderated for a fourth consecutive month, and financial market volatility in emerging markets has eased

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.

QUICK FACTS

Total reserves	$729.3 billion, an all-time high, for the week ended 21 August 2026.
Weekly increase	$12.4 billion.
Previous record	$728.5 billion in the week ended 27 February 2026.
Import cover	more than 11 months of merchandise imports.
Data source	the RBI's weekly statistical supplement, released on Fridays.

– India ranks fourth globally in foreign exchange reserves, after China, Japan and Switzerland.

India Weighs Qualified MFN Clause in Overhaul of Investment Treaty Model

31 Aug

- The Union government is reported to be considering a Qualified Most Favoured Nation provision as part of a broader restructuring of India's bilateral investment treaty framework.
- Rather than restoring the open-ended MFN clause dropped from the 2015 Model BIT, a qualified version would keep non-discrimination but limit which third-country treaty provisions an investor may import.
- The draft also proposes cutting the period for which an investor must pursue domestic remedies before international arbitration from five years to as little as one, and doubling post-treaty protection from five years to ten.
- The stated aim is to answer the objections of partners such as the European Union without reopening the exposure that followed India's first adverse investment-treaty award.

QUICK FACTS

Proposal	a Qualified MFN provision in a remodelled Indian bilateral investment treaty (BIT) framework.
ISDS change proposed	the domestic-remedies period falls from five years to as little as one year.
Survival clause	protection after a treaty expires would double from five years to ten.
Also proposed	a wider definition of what counts as a protected investment.
Context	the current Model BIT dates from 2015 and deliberately left out an open-ended MFN clause and a full fair and equitable treatment standard.

– Qualified MFN retains non-discrimination but specifies which provisions may be imported, whether the clause applies retrospectively, whether settled disputes may be reopened, and what categories of treatment are covered.

India's GDP Grows 7.8% in Q1 FY27, Beats RBI's 7% Estimate

31 Aug

- India's real GDP grew 7.8% in Q1 of FY 2026-27 (April-June 2026), ahead of the RBI's 7% projection and of private forecasts of 7.1-7.3%.
- Real GDP rose to Rs 81.36 lakh crore from Rs 75.46 lakh crore in the same quarter of FY26; nominal GDP grew 10.3% to Rs 88.27 lakh crore.
- Real Gross Value Added grew faster than GDP, at 8.2%, against 7% a year earlier.
- Services led with 10% growth; investment was the standout, with Gross Fixed Capital Formation up 20.4%.

- The estimates were released by the National Statistics Office under MoSPI on 31 August 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Real GDP	Rs 81.36 lakh crore, up from Rs 75.46 lakh crore in Q1 FY26
Nominal GDP growth	10.3%, taking nominal GDP to Rs 88.27 lakh crore from Rs 80 lakh crore
Real Gross Value Added (GVA) growth	8.2%, up from 7% a year earlier; real GVA at Rs 73.82 lakh crore
Nominal GVA	Rs 80.53 lakh crore

- Real GDP growth in Q1 FY27 (April-June 2026): 7.8%
- Released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on 31 August 2026
- Beat the RBI's 7% projection, a Moneycontrol poll at 7.3% and the Reuters survey median of 7.1%

4. Banking & Finance

10 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.

QUICK FACTS

Reform	introduction of the Closing Auction Session (CAS)
Effective from	3 August 2026
Regulator	Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
Exchanges covered	NSE and BSE
Applies to	Category I stocks — those on which futures and options contracts are available
Category II stocks	all others, which retain the existing method
Old method	closing price computed as the volume-weighted average price (VWAP) of trades in the last 30 minutes
New method	a single equilibrium price at which the maximum quantity of shares can be executed
CAS window	3:15 PM to 3:35 PM
Category II stocks continue trading to	3:30 PM
Index and stock F&O contracts	trading extended to 3:40 PM

– Continuous trading for Category I stocks now ends at: 3:15 PM

Bill in Lok Sabha Clears the Way for MDR on UPI and RuPay Payments

04 Aug

- The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, introduced in the Lok Sabha on 4 August 2026, proposes to amend Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
- Section 10A currently imposes a blanket bar on any charge for prescribed electronic payment modes, which is what made UPI and RuPay debit card transactions zero-MDR from January 2020.
- The amendment replaces the blanket bar with a framework under which the Central Government notifies which payment modes stay exempt from MDR.
- The Bill does not itself levy any charge; a levy would require a separate government decision, and MDR is paid by merchants, not by consumers.
- UPI recorded about Rs 29.9 lakh crore across more than 23 billion transactions in July 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Vehicle	Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, introduced in the Lok Sabha on 4 August 2026
Provision amended	Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act, 2007
Present position	zero MDR on UPI and RuPay debit card transactions since 1 January 2020
Proposed position	the Central Government may notify, by executive order, which electronic payment modes remain exempt
Immediate effect on charges	none — the Bill enables, it does not impose
Who pays MDR	the merchant, to the bank or payment service provider; not the customer
UPI volume, July 2026	over 23 billion transactions worth about Rs 29.9 lakh crore

– UPI and RuPay are both operated by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)

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.

QUICK FACTS

Decision	policy repo rate left unchanged at 5.25%
Vote	unanimous
Stance	'neutral', retained
MPC meeting dates	3-5 August 2026
Announced by	RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra
Real GDP growth projection for FY 2026-27	revised up to 6.7% (from 6.6%)
CPI inflation projection for FY 2026-27	revised down to 5.0% (from 5.1%)
Inflation path	headline inflation expected to peak in the October-December 2026 quarter before easing
Next MPC meeting	5-7 October 2026

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.

QUICK FACTS

Regulator	Reserve Bank of India
Instrument	nine circulars issued on 6 August 2026, together called the Amendment Directions
Effective date	1 January 2027
Originally proposed date	1 October 2026, deferred for lender transition
Permitted hours for recovery calls and visits	8:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Notice before first physical visit	at least one day
Call recording retention	minimum six months
Agent certification body	Indian Institute of Banking and Finance (IIBF)

– Transition period for previously exempt lenders: one year from 1 January 2027

Parliament Passes Bankers' Books Evidence Bill 2026, Replacing 1891 Colonial Law

11 Aug

- Parliament has passed the Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026, replacing the Bankers' Books Evidence Act of 1891.
- The Rajya Sabha cleared it by voice vote on August 10, 2026; the Lok Sabha had passed it on August 5, 2026.
- The Bill gives explicit legal recognition to electronic and digital bank records as admissible evidence in court.
- Its definition of bankers' books covers cloud storage, off-premises servers, backups and disaster recovery systems.
- It also shields bank officials from unnecessary court summonses where the bank is not a party to the dispute.

QUICK FACTS

Bill	Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026
Replaces	Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 1891 — a law nearly 135 years old
Lok Sabha passage	August 5, 2026
Rajya Sabha passage	August 10, 2026, by voice vote
Piloted by	Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman
Core change	a technology-neutral framework recognising electronic and digital records

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.

QUICK FACTS

What	CBDC-based Direct Benefit Transfer of food subsidy under PMGKAY
Scheduled launch	14 August 2026
Where	Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli - the first UTs to fully operationalise the model
Instrument	programmable Digital Rupee (e-Rupee) tokens credited to beneficiaries' CBDC wallets
How it is spent	designated foodgrains from empanelled merchants, through QR code scans
Earlier CBDC pilot initiatives	Gujarat, Puducherry and Chandigarh
Launch participants	Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and MoS Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya

- Pralhad Joshi is to launch the Dadra & Nagar Haveli phase remotely from Chandigarh

UPI Completes Ten Years as Debate Reopens on Who Pays Its Costs

13 Aug

- The Unified Payments Interface completed ten years in August 2026 — it was piloted on 11 April 2016 by RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan with 21 member banks and opened to the public on 25 August 2016.
- UPI now carries about 86% of India's non-cash digital transactions; the country recorded 28,174 crore digital transactions in 2025-26, with over 55 crore users and 703 participating entities on the UPI network.
- July 2026 was UPI's biggest month ever: 2,366 crore (23.66 billion) transactions worth Rs 29.88 lakh crore, up 22% in volume year-on-year.
- Parliament cleared the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 on 10 August 2026, rewriting Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 — an enabling provision that ends the blanket statutory bar on a Merchant Discount Rate, though no charge has been imposed.
- Running the ecosystem costs the industry roughly Rs 20,000 crore a year; the payments industry wants an MDR of 0.3-0.6% only on transactions above Rs 2,000 to large merchants, which are 4% of merchant payments by number but 68% by value.

QUICK FACTS

Pilot launch	11 April 2016 in Mumbai by RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, with 21 member banks. Public rollout through bank apps: 25 August 2016.
Users	over 55 crore individuals; ecosystem participants: 703 banks, payment service providers and third-party application providers.

- UPI (Unified Payments Interface) is India's real-time, interoperable retail payment system, built on the Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) rails and operated by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- It works through a Virtual Payment Address (UPI ID) or a QR code, so the payer never needs the receiver's account number or IFSC.
- Share of India's non-cash digital transactions in 2025-26: about 86%, out of 28,174 crore total digital transactions.
- MDR (Merchant Discount Rate) is the fee a merchant pays on a digital transaction, shared among the acquiring bank, the issuing bank and the network. It has been zero on UPI and RuPay debit cards since 1 January 2020.
- Parliament passed the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 on 10 August 2026, amending Section 10A of the PSS Act, 2007.

UPI Completes Ten Years, Handling Half the World's Real-Time Payments

25 Aug

- The Unified Payments Interface completed ten years of public operation on 25 August 2026, having been opened to users through bank apps on that date in 2016.
- Annual transaction volume rose from 1.78 crore in FY 2016-17 to more than 24,162 crore in FY 2025-26, and value from about Rs 0.07 lakh crore to roughly Rs 314 lakh crore.
- UPI was live in 11 countries and accounted for close to half of all real-time payment transactions worldwide, the largest such system by volume.

QUICK FACTS

- UPI completed ten years of public operation on 25 August 2026.
- It was piloted on 11 April 2016 in Mumbai by then RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan with 21 member banks, and opened to the public when banks began releasing UPI apps from 25 August 2016.
- Built and operated by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), under the regulatory oversight of the Reserve Bank of India.
- It allows instant inter-bank transfer initiated from a mobile device using a virtual payment address, mobile number or account details.
- It supports both person-to-person and person-to-merchant payments and operates around the clock through the year.

PM Jan Dhan Yojana Completes 12 Years with 59.09 Crore Accounts

28 Aug

- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana completed 12 years on 28 August 2026, having been launched on 28 August 2014 as the National Mission for Financial Inclusion.
- As on 19 August 2026 the scheme had 59.09 crore accounts holding deposits of Rs 3,16,514 crore, about Rs 3.17 lakh crore.
- Deposits have grown about 12.8 times over the twelve years while the number of accounts grew about 2.3 times.
- Women hold 32.92 crore accounts (55.7 per cent) and 45.95 crore accounts (77.8 per cent) are in rural and semi-urban areas.
- 41.29 crore RuPay cards have been issued, and the average balance per account stands at Rs 5,356, up about 3.4 times.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), the National Mission for Financial Inclusion
Launched	28 August 2014; completed 12 years on 28 August 2026
Implementing department	Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance
Accounts as on 19 August 2026	59.09 crore
Deposits as on 19 August 2026	Rs 3,16,514 crore (about Rs 3.17 lakh crore)
Core design	a zero-balance basic savings account with no minimum balance requirement

HDFC Bank CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan to Retire on 26 October, Declines Reappointment

29 Aug

- Sashidhar Jagdishan, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of HDFC Bank, has decided not to seek reappointment and will retire from the bank on 26 October 2026.
- He conveyed the decision to the bank on 29 August 2026, and the Board of Directors took note of it at its meeting the same day after failing to persuade him to reconsider.
- Jagdishan has led India's largest private sector bank since October 2020, when he succeeded Aditya Puri, and his current term was the result of a three-year extension approved by the Reserve Bank of India.
- The board said it would fast-track the selection of a successor so that the appointment is completed well before the retirement date; any new MD and CEO requires prior RBI approval.
- The announcement follows a turbulent year of governance at the bank, including the resignation of part-time chairman Atanu Chakraborty in March 2026 and an internal review into deposits mobilised from the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation.

QUICK FACTS

Who	Sashidhar Jagdishan, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, HDFC Bank.
What	he has declined to seek reappointment and will retire from the bank on 26 October 2026.
When announced	the decision was conveyed to the bank on 29 August 2026 and noted by the Board of Directors at its meeting the same day.
Tenure	MD and CEO since October 2020, succeeding Aditya Puri; the term now ending followed a three-year extension approved by the RBI.
Predecessor	Aditya Puri, who led the bank from its inception until October 2020 and was the longest-serving chief executive of any Indian private bank.
Defining event of his tenure	the merger of HDFC Ltd into HDFC Bank, effective 1 July 2023, the largest merger in Indian corporate history.
Board response	the selection of a successor is to be fast-tracked and completed well before the retirement date.
Current part-time chairman	Rajiv Kumar, whose appointment for three years was approved by the RBI with effect from 15 July 2026.

5. Polity & Governance

27 articles

Justice Ujjal Bhuyan Questions Absence of Reasons in Supreme Court Collegium Resolutions

01 Aug

- Supreme Court judge Justice Ujjal Bhuyan publicly questioned the lack of transparency in recent Collegium recommendations on 1 August 2026.
- He noted that the last three Collegium resolutions recommending judicial appointments were issued without any reasons.
- He argued that citizens have a right to know who their judges will be and how those appointments were arrived at.
- The remarks were made at the launch of the Judicial Transparency Index report by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy.
- The Collegium is a judicially evolved system with no explicit mention in the Constitution, created through the Three Judges Cases.

QUICK FACTS

Speaker	Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, judge of the Supreme Court of India
Date	1 August 2026
Occasion	launch of the Judicial Transparency Index report by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy
Central concern	the last three Collegium resolutions recommending appointments carried no reasons at all
Earlier practice	resolutions typically contained at least brief, if formulaic, explanations
Other issues flagged	confidentiality over deliberations on elevations and transfers, rare disclosure of reasons for rejecting or deferring candidates, and absence of publicly accessible selection criteria beyond the Memorandum of Procedure
Stated risk	erosion of public trust and the possibility of unsuitable candidates entering the judiciary
Collegium composition (Supreme Court)	the Chief Justice of India and the four senior-most judges

Lok Sabha Passes Bill Raising Supreme Court Judge Strength from 34 to 38

03 Aug

- The Lok Sabha passed the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, on 3 August 2026, in under ten minutes and without debate.
- The Bill raises the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court from 34 to 38 judges, including the Chief Justice of India.
- It increases the number of judges other than the Chief Justice from 33 to 37.
- The Bill replaces the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026, and takes effect retrospectively from 16 May 2026.
- Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal cited pendency of cases as the reason for the increase.

QUICK FACTS

Bill	Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026
Passed by	Lok Sabha, on 3 August 2026
Manner of passage	in under ten minutes, without debate
New sanctioned strength	38 judges including the Chief Justice of India
Previous strength	34 judges including the Chief Justice
Judges other than the CJI	raised from 33 to 37
Replaces	the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026
Retrospective effect from	16 May 2026
Piloted by	Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice

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.

QUICK FACTS

Law	Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Act, 2026
Status	in force following Presidential assent and gazette notification
Assented to by	President Droupadi Murmu
Tabled in the Legislative Assembly	13 March 2026
Passed by the Assembly	16 March 2026
Passed by the Legislative Council	17 March 2026
Prior notice required before conversion	60 days to the district magistrate

- Maharashtra is the 13th state to enact such a law

Rajya Sabha Passes MSME Development (Amendment) Bill 2026 to Tackle Delayed Payments

04 Aug

- The Rajya Sabha passed the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026 on 3 August 2026; it had been introduced in the House on 28 July 2026.
- The Bill amends the MSMED Act, 2006 to speed up payments to MSMEs, simplify dispute resolution and decriminalise compliance failures.
- Central Public Sector Enterprises must settle all MSME procurement invoices through the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS).
- Mediation before MSME Facilitation Councils must conclude within 90 days of the first hearing, with arbitration to begin within 30 days if it fails.
- Fixed statutory investment thresholds are removed, empowering the Centre to classify MSMEs by notification, and registration becomes voluntary.

QUICK FACTS

Bill	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026
Introduced in the Rajya Sabha	28 July 2026
Passed by the Rajya Sabha	3 August 2026
Parent Act amended	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006
Ministry	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
Classification	fixed statutory investment thresholds removed; the Centre may classify by notification using investment in plant and machinery or equipment, and turnover
Registration	made voluntary, through a Central Government digital platform, with states permitted to run their own portals
TReDS	mandatory for Central Public Sector Enterprises to settle MSME invoices
Mediation	to be completed within 90 days of the first hearing
Arbitration	to commence within 30 days if mediation fails; award within 90 days of completion of pleadings
Adjudicating authority	Development Commissioner (MSME); appeals lie to the MSME Secretary

Supreme Court Issues Nationwide Directions to Curb Digital Arrest Scams

04 Aug

- The Supreme Court issued a detailed set of nationwide directions on 4 August 2026 to strengthen action against digital arrest scams, in suo motu proceedings titled In Re: Victims of Digital Arrest Related to Forged Documents.
- The Reserve Bank of India was directed to prepare and circulate, within four weeks, a Standard Operating Procedure for banks on mule accounts and accounts linked to cyber-enabled fraud.
- States and Union Territories must operationalise the Grievance Redressal Module and the Money Restoration Module framed under the Ministry of Home Affairs SOP of 2 January 2026, and notify State Cyber Crime Coordination Centres within four weeks.
- The Court noted that the e-Zero FIR mechanism was functional in only 19 states and that just 14 states had notified their Cyber Crime Coordination Centres.
- Complaints on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal fell from 1,23,672 in 2024 to 58,249 in 2025 and to 16,377 by 30 June 2026, with about Rs 18.05 crore restored to victims in 36,290 cases.

QUICK FACTS

Court	Supreme Court of India, bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant
Date of directions	4 August 2026
Case	suo motu proceedings titled In Re: Victims of Digital Arrest Related to Forged Documents
Origin	a senior-citizen couple from Ambala, Haryana defrauded of Rs 1.05 crore by scammers using forged orders of the Supreme Court, the Bombay High Court and the Enforcement Directorate
Direction to the RBI	circulate an SOP on mule accounts within four weeks, including a grievance redressal mechanism, a money restoration module and public awareness measures, with a copy to the Registrars General of all High Courts
Direction to states and UTs	operationalise the Grievance Redressal and Money Restoration Modules under the MHA SOP dated 2 January 2026
Also directed	notify State Cyber Crime Coordination Centres within four weeks and adopt the e-Zero FIR mechanism in consultation with I4C
Compliance gap noted	e-Zero FIR functional in 19 states; only 14 states had notified Cyber Crime Coordination Centres
Idea under consideration	a technological 'kill switch' to cut off or flag unusually long video calls, on which the views of amicus curiae Senior Advocate N.S. Nappinai were sought
Next hearing	16 September 2026, with a fresh consolidated status report to be filed

Supreme Court Extends Mandatory Third-Party Cover to Four Years for Cars, Six for Two-Wheelers

05 Aug

- The Supreme Court has directed that the mandatory third-party insurance bought at the time of purchase be extended by one year for new vehicles.
- New private cars must now carry four years of third-party cover instead of three, and new two-wheelers six years instead of five.
- The Court directed the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India to issue the necessary instructions immediately.
- The bench cited the Report of the Standing Committee on Finance for 2024-25, which found that nearly 56% of vehicles on Indian roads are uninsured.
- The Court also asked the Centre to run a pilot project denying fuel to vehicles without valid third-party insurance, and listed the matter for compliance on 18 August 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Court	Supreme Court of India
New private cars	mandatory third-party cover at purchase raised from 3 years to 4 years
New two-wheelers	mandatory third-party cover at purchase raised from 5 years to 6 years
Regulator directed to act	Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)
Problem cited	nearly 56% of vehicles on Indian roads are uninsured, per the Report of the Standing Committee on Finance, 2024-25
Additional proposal	a pilot project linking fuel supply to valid third-party insurance — 'no insurance, no fuel'
Compliance affidavits due	14 August 2026
Next listing	18 August 2026

Centre Tells Supreme Court Creamy Layer Cannot Be Extended to SCs and STs

06 Aug

- The Centre informed the Supreme Court on 6 August 2026 that the creamy layer concept cannot be extended to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as it has been to OBCs.
- The government argued that SC/ST reservation rests on past discrimination, social backwardness, caste and tribe status and inadequate representation — not on economic criteria alone.
- It contended that applying an income-based exclusion would require a comprehensive review and extensive empirical study.
- The Centre also submitted that framing such a policy is beyond the judicial domain and belongs to the executive and Parliament.
- The petition follows the Supreme Court's 2024 ruling permitting sub-classification within the SC and ST categories.

QUICK FACTS

Date	6 August 2026
Forum	Supreme Court of India
Issue	whether the 'creamy layer' principle applied to OBCs can be extended to SCs and STs
Centre's position	it cannot be extended in the same manner
Grounds cited	past discrimination, social backwardness, caste and tribe status, inadequate representation, persistent social disadvantage
Procedural objection	the petition seeks a mandamus directing the executive to frame policy in a particular manner, which the Centre argued is beyond the judicial domain
Background	the Supreme Court's 2024 judgment permitting sub-classification within SCs and STs

Supreme Court to Examine Whether DPDP Act Dilutes the Right to Information

07 Aug

- On 7 August 2026 the Supreme Court sought the Centre's response on petitions challenging the amendment of the RTI Act through the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

- The Court granted the Centre two weeks to reply, issued notice, and declined an interim stay.
- The challenge centres on Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act, which amended Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, 2005.
- The amendment removed the 'larger public interest' override, broadly exempting all personal information from disclosure.
- The Court also agreed to examine whether the Act curtails investigative journalism, while clarifying that journalists cannot be treated as a special category.

QUICK FACTS

Date of hearing	7 August 2026
Court	Supreme Court of India
Provision challenged	Section 44(3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023
Provision amended by it	Section 8(1)(j) of the Right to Information Act, 2005
Court's orders	notice issued, Centre given two weeks to respond, interim stay declined
Core question	whether a later central law is repugnant to an earlier central transparency law
Second question	whether the Act separately curtails investigative journalism

Centre Tells Supreme Court Creamy Layer Cannot Be Extended to SC/ST Quotas

11 Aug

- The Union Government filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court opposing a PIL seeking to extend the creamy layer exclusion to SCs and STs.
- The creamy layer test currently applies only to Other Backward Classes.
- It was formalised by the judiciary in Indra Sawhney (1992) and reaffirmed in Ashoka Kumar Thakur (2008).
- SC and ST reservation derives from Articles 341 and 342, based on historical social backwardness and untouchability.
- The debate revived after a seven-judge Constitution Bench allowed sub-classification within SCs/STs, with four judges favouring extension of the creamy layer.

QUICK FACTS

Context	Union Government affidavit in the Supreme Court opposing a Public Interest Litigation
Creamy layer	a filter excluding relatively affluent members of a reserved category from quota benefits
Current applicability	Other Backward Classes only, for public employment and educational admissions
Income benchmark used for OBCs	Rs 8 lakh annual family income
Constitutional basis for SC/ST lists	Articles 341 and 342
Key precedents	Indra Sawhney (1992) and Ashoka Kumar Thakur (2008)

Lok Sabha Passes Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill to Rename the State 'Keralam'

11 Aug

- The Lok Sabha passed the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 by voice vote on August 11, 2026, amid Opposition protest.
- The Bill renames the state of Kerala as 'Keralam' and was introduced in the House on August 10, 2026.
- It follows a unanimous resolution of the Kerala Legislative Assembly and Union Cabinet approval in February 2026.
- The change is made under Article 3 of the Constitution and amends the First and Fourth Schedules.
- It must still be passed by the Rajya Sabha and receive the President's assent to become law.

QUICK FACTS

Bill	The Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 — Bill No. 155 of 2026
Introduced in Lok Sabha	August 10, 2026
Passed by Lok Sabha	August 11, 2026, by voice vote amid Opposition protest
Constitutional basis	Article 3
Schedules amended	the First Schedule and the Fourth Schedule
Pending	Rajya Sabha passage and Presidential assent

Tamil Nadu Assembly Resolution Seeks Permanent Freeze on Lok Sabha Strength at 543

12 Aug

- Tamil Nadu moved a government-sponsored resolution in its Legislative Assembly on August 12, 2026 seeking a permanent freeze on Lok Sabha strength at 543 seats.
- The resolution asks that states which implemented population control measures not lose parliamentary weightage in any future delimitation.
- It seeks immediate implementation of 33 per cent women's reservation in the 2029 Lok Sabha election, calculated on the existing 543 constituencies.
- It demands that the Lok Sabha to Rajya Sabha representation ratio remain at 2.2:1.
- Lok Sabha seat allocation has been based on the 1971 Census since the 1977 delimitation.

QUICK FACTS

Date and place	August 12, 2026, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, Chennai
Demand	permanent freeze on Lok Sabha strength at 543 elected seats
Also sought	retention of existing proportional representation of seats between states
Women's reservation	33 per cent from the 2029 Lok Sabha election, calculated on the existing 543 constituencies
Ratio demanded	Lok Sabha to Rajya Sabha representation at 2.2:1
Preceding step	a consultative meeting of Tamil Nadu MPs at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai, on August 8, 2026, attended by 19-20 of the state's 57 MPs

Inquiry Report on Justice Varma Tabled; All Three Charges Held Proved

12 Aug

- The report of the Inquiry Committee constituted under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 into allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma was laid before the Lok Sabha, along with the oral and documentary evidence recorded.
- The committee found all three articles of charge proved - unexplained currency at his official residence, failure to preserve material evidence, and evasive and misleading explanations.
- The three-member committee comprised Supreme Court judge Justice Aravind Kumar, then Bombay High Court Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar, and senior advocate B.V. Acharya.
- The case began with a fire on the night of 14-15 March 2025 at the judge's official residence in New Delhi, during which burnt and half-burnt currency notes were reported found in a storeroom.
- No judge of the higher judiciary has ever been removed under Article 124(4), which requires a special majority in both Houses of Parliament.

QUICK FACTS

What happened	the Inquiry Committee's report was laid before the Lok Sabha together with the oral and documentary evidence
Finding	all three articles of charge held proved
Committee	Justice Aravind Kumar (Supreme Court, presiding), Justice Shree Chandrashekhar (then Chief Justice, Bombay High Court), and senior advocate B.V. Acharya
Trigger	a fire on the night of 14-15 March 2025 at the judge's official residence in New Delhi, after which burnt and half-burnt currency notes were reported found
Parliamentary step already taken	146 Lok Sabha MPs moved a removal motion in August 2025

- Statute under which the committee was constituted: the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968
- The committee rejected the argument that the judge's withdrawal from the inquiry should terminate the proceedings

Lok Sabha Refers FCRA Amendment Bill 2026 to 31-Member Joint Committee

12 Aug

- On 12 August 2026 the Lok Sabha adopted a motion referring the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, amid opposition protests demanding the Bill's withdrawal.
- The motion was moved by Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai; the JPC will have 31 members - 21 from the Lok Sabha nominated by Speaker Om Birla and 10 from the Rajya Sabha nominated by Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan.
- The committee must report to the Lok Sabha by the last day of the first week of the 2026 Winter Session of Parliament.
- The Bill, introduced on 25 March 2026 by the Ministry of Home Affairs, creates a Designated Authority to take over the foreign contributions and assets of organisations that lose FCRA registration.
- It also widens the liability of 'key functionaries', cuts maximum imprisonment from five years to one year, and requires prior central government approval before any FCRA offence can be investigated.

QUICK FACTS

Event	Lok Sabha referred the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to a Joint Parliamentary Committee on 12 August 2026
Motion moved by	Nityanand Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs
Committee strength	31 members - 21 Lok Sabha + 10 Rajya Sabha
Nominating authorities	Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla; Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan
Report due	by the last day of the first week of the 2026 Winter Session
Bill introduced	25 March 2026 in the Lok Sabha, by the Ministry of Home Affairs
Parent law amended	Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010
Opposition objection	Congress MP K.C. Venugopal argued the Bill could target minorities and NGOs; Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju rejected this and noted the Opposition had itself sought committee scrutiny

Parliament Passes MMDR Amendment Bill Restricting State Taxes on Mineral Rights

13 Aug

- Parliament completed passage of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 on 13 August 2026, when the Rajya Sabha cleared it; the Lok Sabha had passed it on 12 August 2026.
- The Bill was introduced on 10 August 2026 by the Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, and becomes law on Presidential assent under Article 111.
- It restricts States from levying independent taxes, cesses or levies on mineral rights and mineral-bearing land except as authorised under central guidelines, and invalidates past State levies that remain unrecovered or undeposited - without requiring refund of amounts already collected.

- Leaseholders may add further minerals, including lithium, cobalt, graphite, nickel, gold and silver, to an existing lease without extra payment, and the cap on sale of minerals from captive mines is removed.
- The Bill was opposed on the ground that it curtails the fiscal powers of States, effectively reversing the Supreme Court's 2024 ruling that States may tax mineral rights.

QUICK FACTS

Bill	Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026
Parent law amended	the MMDR Act, 1957, India's principal mineral law
Introduced	10 August 2026 by Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy
Lok Sabha	passed 12 August 2026; Rajya Sabha: passed 13 August 2026
Government's position	uniform mineral rates nationwide; States retain powers over 49 minor minerals

– Becomes law on Presidential assent under Article 111 of the Constitution

Supreme Court Issues Directions to Curb Black Money and Voter Inducement in Elections

17 Aug

- On 17 August 2026 the Supreme Court issued a set of directions to curb the use of unaccounted cash and voter inducement in elections, in State of Karnataka and Another v. Prathik Parasrampuria.
- The bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N. Kotiswar Singh held that a choice influenced by external inducement is no longer the voter's own choice, and that black money in elections strikes at the core of democracy.
- Key directions: cash or asset seizures must be reported to the jurisdictional District Magistrate or court within 24 hours with written reasons showing a prima facie electoral nexus, and seizures above Rs 10 lakh must be forwarded to income-tax authorities.
- Investigating officers must endeavour to complete investigations within one year of FIR registration, with quarterly status reports to the Election Commission through nodal officers, and High Courts may designate special courts for the speedy trial of cases against candidates and sitting legislators.
- Crucially, withdrawal of a criminal case against an election candidate now requires the approval of the concerned High Court; a compliance report is due by 18 November 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Judgment date	17 August 2026
Case	State of Karnataka and Another v. Prathik Parasrampuria
Citations	2026 INSC 868; 2026 LiveLaw (SC) 816; 2026 SCC OnLine SC 1587
Bench	Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice N. Kotiswar Singh
Origin	an appeal against a Karnataka High Court order quashing a 2014 FIR over cash allegedly hoarded for bribing voters
Seized in the search	Rs 20,48,355 in cash, along with a laptop, cheque books, loose cheque leaves and a pen drive

– The FIR was registered on 11 April 2014 under Sections 171-E and 188 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860

– The Court widened the case beyond the FIR and issued notice to the Election Commission of India, the Union Government and all States and Union Territories

– Data before the Court from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections: 3,87,430 FIRs, of which 1,66,044 - about 42.9 per cent - ended in conviction

– Compliance report to be filed by 18 November 2026

Amicus Tells Supreme Court 4,192 Criminal Cases Pending Against MPs and MLAs

17 Aug

- An affidavit by amicus curiae Vijay Hansaria told the Supreme Court that 4,192 criminal cases against sitting and former MPs and MLAs were pending as of July 2026.

- The data was filed in the long-running public interest litigation of Ashwini Upadhyay seeking speedy trials of legislators, in which the Court had ordered dedicated special courts in 2017.
- 251 of 543 Lok Sabha members and 75 of 233 Rajya Sabha members have declared criminal cases; 14 of 28 Chief Ministers face criminal charges.
- Special courts disposed of 1,243 cases in 2025 but 1,050 fresh cases were registered, so the backlog barely moves; Uttar Pradesh alone has 1,171 pending trials.

QUICK FACTS

What	a status affidavit by the amicus curiae on criminal cases against legislators, reported on 17 August 2026
Filed by	senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, amicus curiae, through advocate Sneha Kalita
In which case	the public interest litigation of Ashwini Upadhyay seeking expeditious trial of criminal cases against MPs and MLAs
Headline finding	4,192 cases pending against sitting and former legislators as of July 2026
Origin of the special courts	the Supreme Court's order of 14 December 2017, which directed dedicated fast-track courts for legislators' cases
Monitoring	on 9 November 2023 the Court directed High Courts to constitute special benches to supervise these trials

– The affidavit runs to 96 pages and is filed periodically to track whether the special-court experiment is working

Supreme Court Upholds Hanging as India's Lawful Mode of Execution

18 Aug

- On 18 August 2026 the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of execution by hanging, dismissing a public interest litigation that challenged it as cruel and violative of dignity under Article 21.
- A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta held that the petitioner had placed no material sufficient to displace the three-judge precedent in Deena v. Union of India (1983).
- The provision upheld is Section 393(5) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, which corresponds to Section 354(5) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- The Court noted that Parliament consciously retained hanging while overhauling the criminal laws, and that Law Commission reports are recommendatory and cannot override a statute.
- The Court clarified that its dismissal does not foreclose future constitutional scrutiny if compelling scientific or medical evidence displaces the factual basis of Deena.

QUICK FACTS

Date of order	18 August 2026
Bench	Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta (two judges)
Petitioner	advocate Rishi Malhotra, by way of public interest litigation
Provision upheld	Section 393(5), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (earlier Section 354(5), CrPC 1973)
Precedent relied on	Deena v. Union of India (1983), a three-judge bench, later affirmed in Shashi Nayar v. Union of India (1992)
Ground of challenge	right to die with dignity under Article 21
Alternative sought	lethal injection, electrocution, lethal gas or shooting
Court's caveat	the dismissal does not bar a future challenge on stronger scientific evidence

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.

QUICK FACTS

Instrument	Citizenship (Third Amendment) Rules, 2026, notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs
Provision affected	Section 6B of the Citizenship Act, 1955, inserted by the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019
New deciding authority	the District Collector
Coverage	Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and the non-tribal areas of Assam and Tripura
Mechanism replaced	Empowered Committees and District Level Committees introduced on 11 March 2024
Companion order	MHA order of 19 August 2026 transferring pending applications to Collectors
Rescinded	administrative orders of 20 February 2026 and 2 March 2026, with actions already taken saved

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.

QUICK FACTS

Decision	Union Cabinet approval for a bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in Ladakh
Date	20 August 2026
Announced by	Union Home Minister Amit Shah
Existing seats of the High Court	Srinagar and Jammu; Ladakh will be the third
Pending cases before the High Court	44,557 (Parliament data dated 30 July 2026)
Cases pending over ten years	more than 6,100
Court infrastructure in Ladakh	only five of ten subdivisions had it - Zanskar, Sankoo, Khaltsi, Nubra and Drass (Law Ministry reply, late 2025)

– Ladakh became a Union Territory on 31 October 2019

Supreme Court Sets Up Five-Member Panel to Probe Police Excesses in Student Protests

20 Aug

- The Supreme Court uploaded an order on 20 August 2026 constituting a five-member High-Powered Enquiry Committee (HPEC) to conduct an independent fact-finding probe into alleged police excesses during student protests.
- The order was passed on 18 August 2026 by a three-judge bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice V. Mohana.
- The committee is chaired by retired Supreme Court judge Justice R. Subhash Reddy and includes two former High Court judges, a former CBI Director and a retired Director General of Police.
- It covers the student demonstrations of 20 July 2026 at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and in Bihar, linked to protests over alleged examination paper leaks including NEET.
- The panel must treat alleged targeted violence, harassment and molestation of female protesters as its top priority and submit periodic interim findings instead of one final report.

QUICK FACTS

Body	High-Powered Enquiry Committee (HPEC), five members, constituted by the Supreme Court of India
Order passed	18 August 2026; uploaded: 20 August 2026
Bench	CJI Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi, Justice V. Mohana
Chairperson	Justice R. Subhash Reddy, former judge of the Supreme Court
Events covered	student demonstrations of 20 July 2026 at Jantar Mantar, Delhi, and in Bihar
Trigger of the protests	allegations of paper leaks in examinations including NEET
Reporting pattern	periodic interim findings, not a single final report
Next listing before the Supreme Court	10 September 2026

Nine-Judge Bench Refines the 1978 'Triple Test' for Defining Industry

20 Aug

- A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court delivered judgment on 20 August 2026 on the meaning of 'industry' under Section 2(j) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.
- By a 5:4 majority the Bench held that the classic 'triple test' laid down in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa (1978) requires further refinement.
- By a separate 6:3 majority the Bench held that the reference seeking reconsideration of the 1978 judgment was validly made and maintainable.
- The reformulated test will operate prospectively; pending disputes under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 will continue to be decided on the original 1978 definition.
- The Court held that the 1978 interpretation will not govern the term 'industry' under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020.

QUICK FACTS

Judgment date	20 August 2026; verdict reserved on 19 March 2026 after three days of continuous arguments
Bench strength	nine judges, led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant
Provision at issue	Section 2(j), Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, which defines 'industry'
Precedent revisited	Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa (1978), a seven-judge decision
Split on merits	5:4 in favour of refining the triple test
Split on maintainability of the reference	6:3 in favour
Dissenting on merits	Justices B.V. Nagarathna, Dipankar Datta, Ujjal Bhuyan and Joymalya Bagchi
Reference case	State of Uttar Pradesh v. Jai Bir Singh

Centre Forms Committee to Draft Permanent Political Solution for Gorkha Hills

22 Aug

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a tripartite stakeholder meeting at Sukna near Siliguri on 22 August 2026 with the West Bengal government and hill parties on a permanent political solution for the Gorkha issue.
- The Centre constituted a committee headed by Pankaj Kumar Singh — former Director General of the Border Security Force, former Deputy National Security Adviser and the Centre's interlocutor on the issue since October 2025 — to work out the modalities and draft an agreement.
- The committee is to hold political dialogue across the hills, the Terai and the Dooars and submit its proposal to the Union Home Ministry.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari attended, along with hill leaders including Gorkha Janmukti Morcha president Bimal Gurung and Gorkha National Liberation Front president Mann Ghisingh.
- Amit Shah said any settlement would be within the framework of the Constitution and assured central funding; the meeting fell on the anniversary of the 1988 Darjeeling accord signed on 22 August that year.

QUICK FACTS

Meeting	tripartite stakeholder talks at Sukna, in the Darjeeling foothills near Siliguri, 22 August 2026
Chaired by	Union Home Minister Amit Shah, with West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari
Committee head	Pankaj Kumar Singh, the Centre's interlocutor since October 2025, former BSF Director General and former Deputy NSA
Mandate	examine stakeholder concerns across the hills, Terai and Dooars, finalise modalities and draft an agreement for a Permanent Political Solution
Reports to	Union Ministry of Home Affairs

– Hill leaders present included Bimal Gurung (Gorkha Janmukti Morcha) and Mann Ghisingh (Gorkha National Liberation Front)

Supreme Court to Set Up Special Bench on Centre's OBC Creamy Layer Plea

25 Aug

- On 25 August 2026 a Supreme Court Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana, agreed to consider setting up a special Bench to hear the Centre's plea for clarification of the judgment in Union of India v. Rohith Nathan.
- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the court that the Department of Personnel and Training had filed an urgent application seeking directions from a Bench headed by Justice P. S. Narasimha, who delivered the judgment.
- The judgment, delivered on 11 March 2026 by Justices P. S. Narasimha and R. Mahadevan, held that creamy-layer status among OBCs cannot be decided on parental income alone and that the status and rank of the parent's post must be considered.
- It struck down the effect of a 2004 clarificatory letter that had allowed the salary of a parent in a public sector undertaking or the private sector to be counted, holding that an executive clarification could not amend the binding DoPT office memorandum of 8 September 1993.
- The Centre argues that applying the ruling retrospectively from the Civil Services Examination of 2012 onwards would unsettle cadre allocations, state cadres and inter-se seniority across many batches, and has asked that it not disturb the allocation of 958 recommended candidates of CSE 2025.

QUICK FACTS

Date	25 August 2026, when the Supreme Court agreed to consider constituting a special Bench.
Bench that heard the mentioning	Chief Justice Surya Kant with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana.
For the Centre	Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, on an urgent application by the Department of Personnel and Training.
The judgment in question	Union of India v. Rohith Nathan, delivered on 11 March 2026 by Justices P. S. Narasimha and R. Mahadevan.
Core holding	creamy-layer exclusion must be primarily status-based; salary alone cannot exclude a candidate without regard to the nature or rank of the parent's post.
Instrument struck at	paragraph 9 of the clarificatory letter of 2004, which had brought the salary of PSU and private-sector employees into the reckoning without establishing post equivalence.
Immediate concern	958 candidates recommended in CSE 2025 were due to begin their Foundation Course.
Reach of the ruling so far	22 judgments have applied the Rohith Nathan principle and fresh petitions have been filed before the Central Administrative Tribunal.

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.

QUICK FACTS

New official name	Keralam, the Malayalam name of the State
Law	The Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act, 2026, No. 18 of 2026
Constitutional route	Article 3, altering the First Schedule
Gazette notification and date of commencement	25 August 2026
Presidential assent	14 August 2026, by President Droupadi Murmu

SC Judge's Letters on Rajasthan Acting Chief Justice Revive Collegium Question

26 Aug

- Supreme Court judge Justice Sandeep Mehta wrote to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant in letters dated 2, 10 and 17 August 2026, seeking that the Rajasthan High Court be headed by a Chief Justice from outside the state.
- The letters, reported on 26 August 2026, allege manipulation of case listings, misuse of administrative powers and threats to fellow judges by Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, and describe his acting tenure as unusually long.
- The CJI said in a press statement the same day that allegations against a sitting judge must go through the established institutional mechanism and cannot by themselves be treated as findings.
- Justice Sharma has been Acting Chief Justice since late September 2025, a tenure of nearly a year, and the Collegium must now decide how to treat at least four names for High Court judgeships that he has recommended.
- By convention an Acting Chief Justice does not send such recommendations, because vetting candidates needs familiarity with the Bar and time that a short tenure does not allow.

QUICK FACTS

Who wrote	Justice Sandeep Mehta, judge of the Supreme Court and formerly of the Rajasthan High Court.
To whom	Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, with copies to the Collegium and the President.
Subject	Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, Acting Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court since 28 September 2025, due to retire on 26 September 2026.
CJI's response, 26 August 2026	allegations must be handled through the institutional mechanism; an allegation is not a finding, and the judge concerned must have a fair opportunity to respond.
The immediate institutional question	whether the Collegium should act on at least four judicial appointment recommendations sent by an Acting Chief Justice.

- Letters dated 2, 10 and 17 August 2026; reported publicly on 26 August 2026.
- Constitutional basis for an Acting Chief Justice: Article 223 of the Constitution.

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.

QUICK FACTS

Instrument	Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026
Notified by	Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Date of notification	27 August 2026
Enabling provision	Section 52 of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009
Comes into force	180 days after publication in the Official Gazette, around March 2027

- IST is UTC plus 5 hours 30 minutes; India does not observe daylight saving time

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.

QUICK FACTS

Rule notified	Registration of Allied and Healthcare Professionals Regulations, 2026, by NCAHP; published in the Gazette on 31 August 2026 and in force from publication
Registers	a Central Register and State Registers; State Councils handle registration where they are functional
Validity	five years; renewal application due six months before expiry, or the Central Register shows the professional as inactive
CPD	minimum 15 hours a year, 75 hours per five-year cycle
Fees (Central Register)	Rs 2,000 to register, Rs 1,000 to renew
Coverage	57 recognised allied and healthcare professions, such as physiotherapists, medical laboratory professionals and dietitians
Parent law	National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021; administrative ministry: Health and Family Welfare

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)

6. Defence

5 articles

Defence Ministry Issues Rs 1 Lakh Crore Tender for 60 Transport Aircraft

12 Aug

- The Ministry of Defence issued a Request for Proposal on 12 August 2026 for 60 multirole transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force, in a programme valued at about Rs 1 lakh crore.
- The aircraft sought are in the 18-tonne to 30-tonne cargo category and are meant to replace the Indian Air Force's ageing Soviet-origin Antonov An-32 fleet.
- Indian companies will lead the programme in partnership with foreign original equipment manufacturers; about 20% of the aircraft are to arrive in fly-away condition and the remaining 80% are to be built in India through joint ventures.
- Indigenous content must begin at a minimum of 40% and rise past 60% in a phased manner, alongside domestic production lines and Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul facilities.
- Indian firms in the fray include Tata Advanced Systems, the Mahindra Group, Adani Defence & Aerospace, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and Reliance Defence.

QUICK FACTS

Quantity	60 multirole transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force
Estimated programme value	about Rs 1 lakh crore
Category sought	18-tonne to 30-tonne cargo-carrying capacity
Aircraft being replaced	the Antonov An-32, a Soviet-origin twin-turboprop tactical transport inducted from 1984
Chief of the Air Staff	Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh

– Request for Proposal issued by the Ministry of Defence on 12 August 2026

DRDO Invites Private Firms as Development-cum-Production Partners for Missiles

18 Aug

- DRDO issued an Expression of Interest on 18 August 2026 through Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad, inviting Indian private firms to become long-term partners in missile and guided bomb production.
- The proposal uses the Development-cum-Production Partner model: DRDO keeps design and development, the private partner takes prototype integration, qualification and series production.
- It covers strategic weapon systems including the Agni series, submarine-launched systems and hypersonic missiles under development.
- Applicants must hold defence manufacturing and PESO licences, show a net worth above Rs 34 crore and profitability in at least two of the last five years, with a minimum annual turnover of Rs 100 crore.
- DRDO plans to select at least two companies for each weapon project, with bulk production orders of 50 to 100 units; proposals close on 24 September 2026 after a technical discussion on 2 September.

QUICK FACTS

Issued by	DRDO, through Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, for the Missile and Strategic Systems cluster
Date	18 August 2026
Instrument	Expression of Interest (EoI) to shortlist Development-cum-Production Partners (DcPPs)
Systems covered	Agni-series missiles, future strategic variants, submarine-launched systems, hypersonic missiles and guided bombs
Eligibility	defence manufacturing licence and PESO licence; net worth above Rs 34 crore; profit in at least two of the last five years; minimum annual turnover of Rs 100 crore
Partners per project	at least two companies
Production scale	bulk orders of 50 to 100 units
Timeline	technical discussion on 2 September 2026; proposals close 24 September 2026

Rajnath Singh Clears Transfer of All DRDO Conventional Missile Technologies to Industry

25 Aug

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved the transfer of technology of all conventional missile systems developed by DRDO to the Indian defence industry on 25 August 2026.
- The Ministry of Defence described the decision as the shift of these systems from development to large-scale industrial production within the country.
- Eligible Indian companies may manufacture the systems after meeting qualification, certification and regulatory requirements; DRDO continues to support technology absorption.
- The approval opens component, sub-system, fabrication, testing and maintenance work to micro, small and medium enterprises.
- It follows the October 2025 decision that opened development and manufacture of missiles, artillery shells and ammunition to the private sector.

QUICK FACTS

Decision date	25 August 2026; approving authority: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh
Scope	transfer of technology (ToT) of ALL conventional missile systems developed by DRDO
Recipients	eligible Indian defence industry firms, subject to qualification, certification and regulatory clearance

- Conventional means non-nuclear - strike, air-defence and tactical roles; strategic systems are not covered
- MSMEs gain entry through components, sub-systems, fabrication, testing and maintenance support
- Builds on the October 2025 policy opening missiles, artillery shells and ammunition to the private sector

HAL and Safran Sign Final Contract for Aravalli Helicopter Engine

26 Aug

- HAL and Safran Helicopter Engines signed the final contract in Bengaluru on 26 August 2026 to develop and produce the Aravalli turboshaft engine.
- The contract is executed through SAFHAL Helicopter Engines Pvt. Ltd., the 50:50 joint venture of the two companies.
- The Aravalli is in the 3,500-4,000 shaft horsepower class and is named after the Aravalli mountain range.
- It will power the 13-tonne Indian Multi-Role Helicopter and its naval variant, the Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter.
- The IMRH is planned to replace the armed forces' Russian-origin Mi-17 medium-lift helicopters.

QUICK FACTS

Engine	Aravalli, a new-generation turboshaft named after the Aravalli mountain range
Power class	3,500 to 4,000 shaft horsepower
Signed	26 August 2026, at Bengaluru
Executing entity	SAFHAL Helicopter Engines Pvt. Ltd., a 50:50 HAL-Safran joint venture
Platforms	Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH)

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.

QUICK FACTS

Announced by	Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, on 28 August 2026.
FY 2025-26 baseline	defence production Rs 1.78 lakh crore, defence exports Rs 38,424 crore, both record highs.

- OGEL is a standing, one-time export authorisation, first introduced in 2019.
- It lets an eligible exporter self-generate export authorisations for multiple consignments of specified defence items instead of applying consignment by consignment.
- Three OGEL SOPs merged into one; validity extended from two years to three.
- Country coverage expanded from 41 countries to all countries, barring negative or sensitive nations and those under UN Security Council sanctions or arms embargoes.
- Stakeholder consultation dropped for non-lethal equipment (except to sensitive destinations) and for items going to international tenders and exhibitions.

7. Science & Tech

14 articles

Over 120 Scientists Resign from ISRO Centres as Private Space Sector Draws Talent

03 Aug

- Reports indicate that between 100 and 120 scientists and technicians have resigned from ISRO centres in recent months.
- Nearly 80 left the UR Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru and around 20 the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.
- Departures include personnel associated with the Chandrayaan-3 and SpaDeX missions.
- The principal driver is India's rapidly growing private space sector, with over 400 space start-ups.
- The Department of Space issued an order on 14 July 2026 requiring resignations of Group A scientific staff on critical missions to be centrally approved.

QUICK FACTS

Scale	between 100 and 120 scientists and technicians resigned in recent months
UR Rao Satellite Centre, Bengaluru	nearly 80 departures
Missions affected	personnel associated with Chandrayaan-3 and SpaDeX
Driver	higher salaries and opportunities in the private space sector
India's private space ecosystem	over 400 start-ups
Government response	Department of Space order of 14 July 2026 centralising approval of resignations and VRS for Group A staff on critical missions

– Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram: around 20 departures

Chandipura Virus Outbreak in Gujarat Claims 22 Children During Monsoon Season

04 Aug

- Twenty-two children have died in Gujarat during the current monsoon season in an outbreak of Chandipura virus.
- Of 184 suspected cases, 35 children tested positive, with 11 sample results pending as of 3-4 August 2026.
- All confirmed patients are below 15 years of age; six children who tested positive have recovered and been discharged.
- Chandipura virus is an arbovirus of the genus Vesiculovirus, family Rhabdoviridae, transmitted mainly by sandflies, and causes acute encephalitis syndrome.
- It was first identified in 1965 in Chandipura village of Nagpur district, Maharashtra.

QUICK FACTS

Virus	Chandipura virus (CHPV)
Family and genus	Rhabdoviridae; Vesiculovirus
Vector	sandflies (an arbovirus, meaning arthropod-borne)
Principal clinical presentation	acute encephalitis syndrome (AES)
Deaths in the current Gujarat monsoon season	22 children
Suspected cases	184; confirmed positive: 35; results pending: 11 (as of 3-4 August 2026)
Age profile	all confirmed patients below 15 years
Recovered and discharged	six children; seven under super-specialist care
Hospitals involved	civil hospitals at Gandhinagar, Sabarkantha-Himmatnagar, Patan, Rajkot and Bhavnagar
First identified	1965, at Chandipura village, Nagpur district, Maharashtra

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.

QUICK FACTS

Developed by	the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, through ICAR-NIHSAD
Released and dedicated to the nation	4 August 2026
Dedicated by	Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Type of vaccine	live attenuated, based on the MA-104 cell line
Basis	a novel attenuated ASF virus Genotype II strain with specific gene deletions, created from an Indian field isolate
Key advantage	MA-104 is a widely available cell line, unlike the patented proprietary lines other ASF vaccines depend on
Target animals	healthy pigs above eight weeks of age
Dosage	1 ml intramuscular injection, with a booster 14 days later
Testing carried out	sterility, purity, safety, genetic stability, immunogenicity, protective efficacy and virulence reversion studies, plus field validation with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying
Disease background	African Swine Fever emerged in India in 2020 and has caused widespread losses to the pig farming sector
Global context	only a limited number of ASF vaccines are commercially licensed worldwide, with Vietnam among the few countries to have commercialised one

IXPE Finds Best Evidence Yet for Vacuum Birefringence Around a Magnetar

05 Aug

- A study published in Nature on 5 August 2026 reported the strongest evidence so far for vacuum birefringence, a prediction of quantum electrodynamics that empty space behaves like a crystal when an extreme magnetic field passes through it.

- The evidence comes from the radio-emitting magnetar 1E 1547.0-5408, observed for more than 140 hours between March and April 2025 by NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE), together with NASA's NICER telescope and Murriyang, CSIRO's Parkes radio telescope in Australia.
- The X-ray emission showed a polarisation degree of about 65 per cent at 2 keV, rising to nearly 80 per cent at certain rotation phases - almost three times higher than in comparable sources and higher than standard emission models can produce.
- The polarisation direction was found locked to the magnetar's magnetic field in the same way as its radio waves, the second signature the team looked for, and this was the first coordinated radio and X-ray polarisation measurement of a magnetar.
- The prediction being tested dates to 1936, when Werner Heisenberg and Hans Heinrich Euler derived it from quantum electrodynamics; the magnetic fields needed are far beyond anything a laboratory can produce, which is why magnetars serve as the natural laboratory.

QUICK FACTS

Result	the strongest evidence yet for vacuum birefringence, published in Nature on 5 August 2026.
Object	1E 1547.0-5408, a radio-emitting magnetar.
Instruments	NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE), NASA's Neutron star Interior Composition Explorer (NICER), and Murriyang, CSIRO's Parkes radio telescope in Australia.
Observation	more than 140 hours between March and April 2025 - the first coordinated radio and X-ray polarisation measurement of a magnetar.
Measurement	X-ray polarisation of about 65 per cent at 2 keV, rising to nearly 80 per cent at some rotation phases, roughly three times that of comparable sources.
Second signature	the polarisation direction stayed locked to the magnetic field, matching the behaviour of the radio waves.
Theory	predicted in 1936 by Werner Heisenberg and Hans Heinrich Euler from quantum electrodynamics - a 90-year-old prediction.
IXPE	a NASA mission in partnership with the Italian Space Agency, launched on 9 December 2021.

NASA Invites ISRO to Join Moon Base Programme Under Artemis Accords

11 Aug

- NASA has invited ISRO to join its Moon Base programme under the Artemis Accords framework.
- The invitation was discussed at the 9th India-US Civil Space Joint Working Group meeting, held at ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru on August 5-6, 2026.
- India signed the Artemis Accords on June 21, 2023.
- Both sides agreed to advance cooperation on open scientific data sharing.
- The expanded cooperation follows the July 2025 launch of the joint NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission.

QUICK FACTS

Forum	9th meeting of the India-US Civil Space Joint Working Group (CSJWG)
Venue and dates	ISRO headquarters, Bengaluru, August 5-6, 2026
Addressed by	Dr. V. Narayanan, Chairman of ISRO and Secretary, Department of Space; and Sergio Gor, US Ambassador to India
Co-chairs	M. Sankaran (UR Rao Satellite Centre), Dr. Wesley Brooks (US side) and Kathleen Karika, NASA Associate Administrator

- India signed the Artemis Accords on June 21, 2023
- Artemis Accords launched by the United States in 2020

Government Charts 100 GWe Nuclear Roadmap With Five SMRs by 2033

12 Aug

- In a written reply in the Lok Sabha on 12 August 2026, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh set out the government's roadmap for a self-reliant nuclear energy ecosystem built around the target of 100 GWe of nuclear capacity by 2047.
- The Nuclear Energy Mission, announced in the Union Budget 2025-26, carries a Rs 20,000 crore outlay and a target of at least five indigenously designed Small Modular Reactors operational by 2033.
- The strategy is two-pronged: large indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors of 700 MWe and advanced designs at greenfield sites, plus SMRs at brownfield sites including retiring fossil-fuel plants, captive industrial plants and off-grid remote locations.
- BARC is developing three demonstration designs — the 220 MWe Bharat Small Modular Reactor (BSMR-200) and the 55 MWe SMR-55, both cleared in principle for Tarapur in Maharashtra, and a High Temperature Gas Cooled Reactor of up to 5 MWth for hydrogen production at BARC Visakhapatnam.
- The legal basis is the SHANTI Act, 2025, passed in December 2025, which ended the state monopoly, allowed domestic private participation and foreign direct investment up to 49%, and gave statutory authority to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board.

QUICK FACTS

Occasion	written reply by Dr Jitendra Singh in the Lok Sabha, 12 August 2026
Target	100 GWe of nuclear power capacity by 2047, under the Nuclear Energy Mission announced in the Union Budget 2025-26
Outlay	Rs 20,000 crore for research, development and deployment of Small Modular Reactors
Milestone	at least five indigenously designed SMRs to be operationalised by 2033
Present position	India operates 24 reactors with an installed capacity of about 8,780 MW, roughly 3% of national electricity generation

– Civil reactors are operated by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL); the regulator is the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)

Draft SHANTI Act Rules Open Nuclear Power to Private and Foreign Players

15 Aug

- The Department of Atomic Energy issued draft rules under the SHANTI Act, 2025 on 14 August 2026, setting out how private and foreign players may enter nuclear power.
- The SHANTI Act repealed the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, ending roughly six decades of exclusive state control.
- A single composite licence will cover construction, ownership, operation and decommissioning, and cannot be split; foreign-designed reactors must be certified in their country of origin.
- Foreign direct investment of up to 49% is permitted through joint ventures, and operators must hold insurance or financial security against nuclear damage.
- The government told the Lok Sabha on 12 August 2026 that India is targeting 100 GWe of nuclear capacity by 2047 under the Nuclear Energy Mission.

QUICK FACTS

Law	Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025
Presidential assent	20 December 2025, by President Droupadi Murmu
Draft rules issued by	Department of Atomic Energy, on 14 August 2026
Laws repealed	Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010
Foreign investment	up to 49% FDI through joint ventures
Licence design	one composite licence covering building, owning, operating and decommissioning — it cannot be applied for, granted or split activity by activity
Capacity target	100 GWe by 2047 under the Nuclear Energy Mission (stated in the Lok Sabha on 12 August 2026)
Interim build-out	indigenous 700 MWe reactors plus five Small Modular Reactors by 2033
First private movers	Adani Power incorporated Rawatbhata-Raj Atomic Energy Ltd and Coastal-Maha Atomic Energy Ltd on 2 May 2026

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.

QUICK FACTS

Chip	VIHAAN, a broadband networking System-on-Chip (SoC) for optical fibre customer premises equipment
Designer	Aheesa Digital Innovations, a fabless semiconductor startup based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Processor core	VEGA, the indigenous 64-bit RISC-V processor developed by C-DAC
Backing	Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme of MeitY, under the Semicon India Programme
Milestone	first-pass silicon success announced on 15 August 2026; the chip was taped out on 26 January 2026
Next step	production tape-out targeted for 2027

QpiAI Opens 8-Inch Quantum Chip Foundry in Bengaluru Under National Quantum Mission

17 Aug

- QpiAI inaugurated an 8-inch quantum processing unit manufacturing facility at Jakkur, Bengaluru, on 17 August 2026.
- The foundry is Phase 2 of the company's 70,000 sq ft research centre and can fabricate flip-chip superconducting processors of up to 128 physical qubits.
- Lithography, etching, patterning, assembly and packaging will all be carried out on site, keeping quantum hardware production within India.
- Phase 3 targets a single QPU with 10,000 physical qubits, using 3D chip-stacking.
- QpiAI is one of eight startups selected under the National Quantum Mission, approved in 2023 with an outlay of about Rs 6,003.65 crore.

QUICK FACTS

Capacity	flip-chip superconducting processors of up to 128 physical qubits, plus peripheral chips and sensors
On-site processes	lithography, etching, patterning, assembly and packaging
Phase 3 target	a single QPU carrying 10,000 physical qubits

- Facility inaugurated at Jakkur, Bengaluru, on 17 August 2026
- An 8-inch (200 mm) quantum processing unit fabrication line, described as Asia's largest quantum chip foundry
- Phase 2 of QpiAI's 70,000 square foot research and development centre

WHO Sends 70,000 Ervebo Doses to DR Congo Amid Fastest Ebola Outbreak on Record

20 Aug

- The World Health Organization and its partners announced on 20 August 2026 that the Democratic Republic of the Congo will receive 70,000 doses of the Ervebo Ebola vaccine.
- Of these, 50,000 doses go to front-line and health workers on WHO expert advice, while 20,000 are reserved for a Phase 3 trial testing whether the vaccine works against the Bundibugyo virus driving the outbreak.
- The outbreak, declared in mid-May 2026 and now spread across six provinces of eastern Congo, had recorded 5,208 confirmed cases and 2,476 deaths, and is spreading about three times faster than the 2014-16 West Africa epidemic.
- Ervebo is licensed against Zaire ebolavirus, not Bundibugyo virus, so its use here rests on early laboratory and animal data suggesting it may offer some cross-protection.
- A first consignment of 16,250 doses reached Kinshasa on 22 August 2026.

QUICK FACTS

Announced by	the World Health Organization and partners, on 20 August 2026.
Quantity	70,000 doses of Ervebo for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
Split	50,000 doses for front-line and health workers; 20,000 for a Phase 3 clinical trial against the Bundibugyo virus.
Manufacturer of Ervebo	Merck.

- The outbreak was declared in mid-May 2026 and now covers six provinces of eastern Congo.
- Ebola was first identified in 1976, in southern Sudan and in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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.

QUICK FACTS

Announcement	23 August 2026, third National Space Day celebrations, Ahmedabad
Announced by	V. Narayanan, Chairman, ISRO and Secretary, Department of Space
Station	Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS), targeted for completion by 2035
Status	first module approved; first module launch targeted for 2028
Planned mass	about 52 tonnes across five modules
Orbit	low Earth orbit, 400-450 km altitude, inclination about 51.5 degrees
Launch vehicles	LVM3 and LVM3-SC
Crew	3-4 astronauts nominally, up to 6 for short durations
Cabinet approval	18 September 2024, as an expansion of the Gaganyaan programme

Andhra Pradesh Clears India's First Quantum and AI University Campus at Amaravati

27 Aug

- A CRDA Authority meeting chaired by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu approved India's first dedicated Quantum and AI University campus at Amaravati.
- The campus will be established by NIELIT, a deemed-to-be university under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, on 8.5 acres.
- The project is costed at Rs 730.70 crore over five years and is to be funded entirely by Government of India grant-in-aid through MeitY.
- Academic programmes are to begin in September 2026 from a temporary facility at Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, while the permanent campus is built.
- The campus targets about 8,250 learners in five years, of whom about 1,650 through degree programmes and 6,600 through skilling and certification.

QUICK FACTS

Decision taken at	a CRDA Authority meeting chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu
Location	Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, on 8.5 acres
Established by	NIELIT, a deemed-to-be university under MeitY
Cost	Rs 730.70 crore over five years, fully funded by Government of India grant-in-aid through MeitY
Start of academic programmes	September 2026, from a temporary facility at Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur
Five-year learner target	about 8,250, with annual intake reaching about 3,913 by the fifth year

Aditya-L1 Spots Pre-Flare Brightenings Hours Before Major Solar Flares

29 Aug

- Scientists using India's Aditya-L1 solar observatory reported small, short-lived brightenings in the Sun's chromosphere that appear hours before a major flare and cluster around the spot where the flare later erupts.
- The study examined seven M- and X-class flares and identified 102 pre-flare transients in the Mg II h (2803 A) images taken by the Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT).
- About 28 per cent of these transients had matching X-ray signatures in data from the SoLEXS and HEL1OS payloads, linking chromospheric activity to the corona above it.
- The work was led by the Manipal Centre for Natural Sciences with ISRO and other Indian institutes and was published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

QUICK FACTS

Finding	transient brightenings in the solar chromosphere appear hours before major flares and cluster near the future flare site.
Spacecraft	Aditya-L1, India's first dedicated solar observatory, stationed at the Sun-Earth Lagrange point L1.
Payloads used	SUIT (near-ultraviolet imaging), SoLEXS (soft X-ray spectrometer) and HEL1OS (hard X-ray spectrometer).
Sample	seven M-class and X-class flares; 102 pre-flare transients detected.
Journal	Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society (MNRAS).
Lead institution	Manipal Centre for Natural Sciences, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, with ISRO/DoS.

Copyright Office Rejects AI System DABUS as Author, but Finds the Artwork Original

31 Aug

- The Copyright Office of India rejected an application naming the AI system DABUS as the author of an artwork, in an order passed on 31 August 2026.
- The application, by US computer scientist Stephen L. Thaler, sought registration of the work 'A Recent Entrance to Paradise'.
- The Registrar of Copyrights, Unnat P. Pandit, held that DABUS is neither a natural nor a juristic person and so cannot be an author.
- The Office nevertheless found that the work itself crossed the threshold of originality under Section 13 of the Copyright Act, 1957.
- The order separates originality from authorship: an AI-generated work may be original, but its author must be the person who caused it to be created.

QUICK FACTS

Decided by	the Copyright Office of India; order passed on 31 August 2026 by the Registrar of Copyrights, Unnat P. Pandit
Applicant	Stephen L. Thaler, a computer scientist based in the United States
Work	the artistic work 'A Recent Entrance to Paradise'
AI system named as author	DABUS, the Device for the Autonomous Bootstrapping of Unified Sentience
Held	DABUS cannot be recorded as author because it is neither a natural person nor a juristic person
Also held	the work crossed the statutory threshold of originality under Section 13 of the Copyright Act, 1957
Governing provision on authorship	Section 2(d)(vi), under which the author of a computer-generated work is 'the person who causes the work to be created'

– On the facts pleaded, Thaler himself is the person who caused the work to be created

8. Environment

11 articles

Centre Extends Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Area Expert Panel by One Year

01 Aug

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change extended the tenure of the expert committee headed by former Director General of Forests Sanjay Kumar until July 2027.
- The committee, constituted in 2022, was set up to resolve state-specific objections to notifying Ecologically Sensitive Areas in the Western Ghats.
- The draft notification proposes declaring about 56,825 sq km of the Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area.
- Gujarat and Goa have largely agreed with the proposals; Maharashtra has sought fresh reviews; Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu continue to raise unresolved issues.
- The Western Ghats run through six states and the notification has remained unfinalised since the Kasturirangan committee reported.

QUICK FACTS

Decision	tenure of the Sanjay Kumar expert committee extended by one year, to July 2027
Extended by	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
Committee constituted	2022
Chair	Sanjay Kumar, former Director General of Forests
Mandate	address state-specific concerns on Western Ghats ESA notification
States covered	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu

– Area proposed as ESA in the draft notification: about 56,825 sq km

Record Wildfires Sweep Southern Europe, Bringing Fire Clouds into Focus

03 Aug

- Intense wildfires swept across southern Europe, particularly Greece, Spain, France, Portugal and Italy.
- Hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest were destroyed and record peacetime evacuations were ordered.
- The fires have drawn attention to pyrocumulonimbus clouds, or fire clouds, generated by the blazes themselves.
- The pattern of abrupt swings between very wet and very dry conditions is described as climate whiplash.
- Mediterranean summers are structurally dry, which makes the region's vegetation highly fire-prone.

QUICK FACTS

Countries most affected	Greece, Spain, France, Portugal and Italy
Damage	hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest destroyed
Displacement	record peacetime evacuations
Phenomenon in focus	pyrocumulonimbus (PyroCb) or fire clouds
Underlying pattern	climate whiplash, abrupt swings between wet and dry extremes
Regional context	Mediterranean climate produces hot, dry summers

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.

QUICK FACTS

Site	Glaw Lake (Glow Lake), Arunachal Pradesh
Status	India's 101st Ramsar Site; the first in Arunachal Pradesh
Announced by	Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav, on 3 August 2026
District	Lohit, near the town of Wakro
Protected area	inside Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary
Elevation	about 1,168 metres above sea level; area about 8 sq km, circumference about 5 km
Type	high-altitude natural freshwater lake in the Eastern Himalayas
Hydrology	fed by perennial high-altitude streams; source of the Kamlang River
Biodiversity	over 150 tree species, 49 orchid species, and all four big cats found in India

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.

QUICK FACTS

Announced by	the Central Government, August 2026
New additions	heatwave and lightning
Notified disasters before the change	12
Notified disasters after the change	14
Recommending body	the 16th Finance Commission
Funding consequence	access to the main 80% SDRF relief allocation, in place of the restricted 10% local-disaster window
Additional unlock	the 20% State Disaster Mitigation Fund for resilience infrastructure
Scale of the problem	4,853 heatwave cases reported across the country since March 2026

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.

QUICK FACTS

Date	7 August 2026
Location	Biswanath Wildlife Division, Kaziranga National Park, Assam
Release site	Jatayu Soft Release Centre, Tewaripal, Biswanath district
Birds released	five Slender-billed Vultures and five White-rumped Vultures
World first	the first-ever release of captive-bred Slender-billed Vultures fitted with GSM-GPS satellite transmitters
Source facility	Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), Rani, Assam
Acclimatisation	three months at the Jatayu Aviary, per internationally accepted soft-release protocol
Tagging	colour identification rings and GSM-GPS satellite transmitters
Technical partner	Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)

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.

QUICK FACTS

Order	River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities (Second Amendment) Order, 2026
Issued	August 7, 2026 by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti; gazetted August 10, 2026
Framework	under the National Mission for Clean Ganga, part of the Namami Gange programme
Namami Gange outlay	Rs 30,000 crore
New terms introduced	'Active Floodplain', 'Regulatory Zone', 'Warning Zone'
Official characterisation	a correction of legal inconsistencies in the 2016 order

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.

QUICK FACTS

Audit body	Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG); report tabled in Parliament on 13 August 2026
Scheme audited	National Mission for a Green India (GIM), run by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Audit scope	16 states and Union Territories, covering 2015-16 to 2024-25
Headline finding	97.57% shortfall against the forest-cover increase target examined
Second finding	91.87% shortfall against the forest-quality improvement target
Funding finding	only 47.88% of the approved outlay was actually released
Cause identified	poor planning, weak convergence with other schemes, chronic underfunding and weak monitoring

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.

QUICK FACTS

Programme	Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme; 20 per cent blending reached by March 2025

- E20 = petrol blended with 20 per cent anhydrous ethanol, minimum Research Octane Number (RON) 95
- Nationwide mandatory sale from 1 April 2026; notification issued 17 February 2026
- Pure unblended petrol (E0) phased out from retail outlets
- Only vehicles manufactured after April 2023 carry factory-fitted ethanol-compatible fuel systems
- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has told Parliament that no formal inter-ministerial assessment has quantified how much of the fleet is genuinely E20-compatible

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.

QUICK FACTS

Event	12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting, New Delhi
Date	18 August 2026, under India's BRICS Chairship 2026
Chaired by	Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Outcome	Joint Ministerial Statement adopted by consensus, plus the launch of four knowledge compendiums
Target of the statement	the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
Language used	'unilateral, punitive, discriminatory and protectionist' measures not in line with international law
Climate finance ask	triple adaptation finance by 2035, with more grants and concessional finance
India's Chairship theme	'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'

- Supported by ministers and senior representatives of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, the UAE, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Ethiopia

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.

QUICK FACTS

Non-fossil installed capacity	300.50 GW as on 31 July 2026
Non-fossil share of total capacity	more than 54%
Record annual addition in 2025-26	55.29 GW of non-fossil capacity

- Total installed generation capacity on the same date: about 552 GW
- Progress towards the 500 GW by 2030 target: more than 60%
- Domestic solar PV module manufacturing capacity under the ALMM crossed 200 GW in 2026

Barrier Lake on Nepal-Tibet Border Overflows, Halting Flood Rescue Operations

28 Aug

- A landslide-dammed 'barrier lake' on the Nepal-Tibet border began overflowing on 28 August 2026, forcing rescue teams on both sides to pull back from the flood zone.
- The lake had formed two days earlier, when debris from an ice-and-rock collapse blocked a river channel near the confluence of the Chhochen Khola and Purepu Tsangpo, on the Lhende river system.
- China's Ministry of Water Resources put the impounded volume at 1.5-2 million cubic metres on 27 August; by 28 August it had swelled past 2.5 million cubic metres and the water level had risen about 0.6 metre.
- The Nepali Army suspended helicopter search-and-rescue in Rasuwa district for 90 minutes, and Chinese rescue personnel withdrew about one kilometre to safe ground in Gyirong County, Shigatse.
- Officials later assessed the overflow as far smaller than the original 26 August flood, but the episode showed how a secondary hazard can freeze an entire relief operation.

QUICK FACTS

Event	landslide-dammed barrier lake began overflowing on 28 August 2026
Location	Nepal-Tibet border — Rasuwa district (Nepal) and Gyirong County, Shigatse (Tibet Autonomous Region, China)
Formation	debris from the 26 August ice-and-rock collapse dammed the channel near the Chhochen Khola-Purepu Tsangpo confluence, on the Lhende river system
Volume	1.5-2 million cubic metres on 27 August, rising past 2.5 million cubic metres on 28 August
Water level rise on 28 August	about 0.6 metre
Response	Nepali Army paused helicopter rescue for 90 minutes; Chinese teams withdrew about 1 km to a safe zone

– Warnings issued by China's Ministry of Water Resources and Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA)

9. Schemes & Committees

6 articles

Delhi Launches Lakshmi Yojana Portal for Rs 2,500 Monthly Assistance to Women

01 Aug

- The Delhi government launched the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana portal on 1 August 2026, opening online applications for the scheme.
- Eligible women will receive monthly financial assistance of Rs 2,500.
- Women aged 21 to 60 from families with annual income up to Rs 2.5 lakh qualify; those with more than three living children are excluded.
- The first instalment is to be paid on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan to applicants who complete verification.
- Rs 5,110 crore was allocated in the Delhi Budget for 2026-27, with more than 17 lakh women expected to benefit.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Delhi Lakshmi Yojana
Portal launched	1 August 2026
Benefit	Rs 2,500 per month to eligible women
Age eligibility	21 to 60 years
Income ceiling	annual family income up to Rs 2.5 lakh
Exclusion	women with more than three living children
Budget allocation	Rs 5,110 crore in the 2026-27 Delhi Budget
Expected beneficiaries	more than 17 lakh women
First instalment	on Raksha Bandhan, after verification

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).

QUICK FACTS

Scheme name	Samudra Manthan — National Offshore Exploration Scheme, named after the churning of the ocean in Indian legend.
Ministry	Petroleum and Natural Gas. Type: Central Sector Scheme (fully funded by the Union Government).
Cabinet approval	31 July 2026, outlay Rs 84,084 crore, running up to FY 2030-31.
Government support	up to 50% of the cost of drilling deepwater exploration wells.
Expected outcome	reserve accretion of over 600 MMTOE.

– Announced allocation on 15 August 2026 from the Red Fort: Rs 85,000 crore for accelerated implementation.

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.

QUICK FACTS

Rollout date in West Bengal	16 August 2026, observed as Ayushman Diwas
Position	36th State/UT to implement AB-PM-JAY, and the last to join
Coverage claimed by the State	about 1.5 crore families, nearly 6 crore people
Hospitals empanelled in the State	about 1,930
Annual cover	Rs 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary hospitalisation
State companion scheme	Mukhyamantri Swasthya Bima Yojana for residents not covered by AB-PM-JAY
Transition	Swasthya Sathi to run in parallel for two to three months before phased withdrawal

– Eligible families recorded by the National Health Authority at the MoU stage: about 1.43 crore

e-Shram Completes Five Years With 31.89 Crore Unorganised Workers Registered

26 Aug

- The e-Shram portal completed five years on 26 August 2026, with 31.89 crore unorganised workers registered.
- Launched in 2021 by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, it is India's first Aadhaar-seeded National Database of Unorganised Workers.
- Every registrant receives a 12-digit Universal Account Number; the database was built by the National Informatics Centre.
- Women account for 54.28% of registrations and 55.21% of registered workers are aged 18-40; about 11.5 lakh platform workers have enrolled.
- The e-Shram One-Stop Solution, launched on 21 October 2024, integrates 15 social security and welfare schemes into the portal.

QUICK FACTS

Portal	e-Shram, the National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)
Launched	26 August 2021, by the Ministry of Labour and Employment
Developed by	National Informatics Centre (NIC)
Registrations as of August 2026	31.89 crore workers
Identifier issued	a unique 12-digit Universal Account Number (UAN)
Platform and gig workers enrolled	about 11.5 lakh
One-Stop Solution launched	21 October 2024, integrating 15 schemes

PM-SETU Industry Conclave in Lucknow Draws Over Rs 1,500 Crore Commitments

30 Aug

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, with the Government of Uttar Pradesh, held the PM-SETU Industry Conclave in Lucknow to draw industry deeper into the upgrading of Industrial Training Institutes.
- Approved industry partnership proposals under PM-SETU now represent more than Rs 1,500 crore of committed industry-led investment across seven ITI clusters in five states.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh urged defence public sector undertakings to come on board, and Skill Development Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jayant Chaudhary attended along with Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak.
- The National Skill Development Corporation signed an MoU with the Lucknow Cantonment Board to set up a Shaurya Academy preparing youth for the Armed Forces, police and other uniformed services.

QUICK FACTS

Event	PM-SETU Industry Conclave, held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
Organisers	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with the Government of Uttar Pradesh.
Full form	PM-SETU is Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs.
Headline number	over Rs 1,500 crore of committed industry-led investment across seven clusters in five states.
Key announcement	NSDC-Lucknow Cantonment Board MoU for a Shaurya Academy for uniformed-services aspirants.
Scheme design	hub-and-spoke, with 200 hub ITIs linked to about 800 spoke ITIs, covering 1,000 government ITIs in all.

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.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Semicon 2.0, the second phase of the Semicon India Programme, notified on 31 August 2026.
Outlay	Rs 1,27,500 crore; approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2026 and notified now with the detailed guidelines.
Structure	six pillars across ten categories - design; machines and materials; fabrication units; ATMP and OSAT; research and development; talent development.
Silicon wafer fabs	40 per cent fiscal support on eligible capital expenditure, minimum investment Rs 20,000 crore.
Compound, display and other specialised fabs	35 per cent fiscal support.
Deployment-Linked Incentive	9 per cent of net sales for up to five years, capped at Rs 30 crore per application and Rs 120 crore per company, for new IPs, chips and SoCs with no prior sales.
Product design support	seed funding of up to Rs 15 crore or 50 per cent of project cost for startups and MSMEs, with equity co-investment beyond that; royalty financing for other eligible companies.
Strategic chips panel	co-chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser and the National Security Adviser.
Targets	about Rs 4 lakh crore of investment and Rs 2 lakh crore of production; 1,00,000 more

semiconductor engineers to be trained, on top of the 85,000 already trained.

- ATMP is assembly, testing, marking and packaging; OSAT is outsourced semiconductor assembly and test.

10. Agreements & MoUs

3 articles

India and Japan Sign Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security

20 Aug

- India and Japan signed a Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security Cooperation in New Delhi on 20 August 2026.
- It was signed during talks between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Japanese counterpart Shinjiro Koizumi.
- The arrangement frames cooperation between the Indian Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.
- It covers maritime domain awareness, search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, reciprocal logistics and port access.
- The two sides also agreed to work on undersea mine countermeasures, a ship repair arrangement and joint naval shipbuilding and design.

QUICK FACTS

Instrument	Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security Cooperation
Signed	New Delhi, 20 August 2026
Signatories	Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (India) and Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi (Japan)
Services covered	Indian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force
Scope	maritime domain awareness, search and rescue, HADR, ship visits, joint exercises, personnel exchange, reciprocal logistics
Additional areas	undersea mine countermeasures, ship repair arrangement, joint naval shipbuilding and design under Make in India
Strategic frame	Free and Open Indo-Pacific; India's MAHASAGAR vision

India and Mauritius Sign Five-Year Fuel Pact; IOC to Meet Entire Import Need

20 Aug

- On 20 August 2026, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri met Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam in Port Louis, where a government-to-government MoU on oil and gas cooperation was exchanged and a long-term fuel supply agreement was concluded.
- The five-year sales and purchase agreement is between Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) and the State Trading Corporation (STC) of Mauritius, under which IOCL will supply the island's entire import requirement of motor spirit (petrol), high speed diesel and aviation turbine fuel.
- It is the first long-term supply agreement concluded by an Indian public sector oil marketing company outside South Asia in recent years.
- The G2G MoU covers petroleum product supply, training and capacity building for Mauritian officials, and cooperation in biofuels.
- On 21 August, Puri and Mauritius Energy and Public Utilities Minister Patrick Gervais Assirvaden broke ground on a 27,500-tonne (27.5 TMT) marine bunker fuel storage facility of IndianOil (Mauritius) Ltd at Mer Rouge, Port Louis, and jointly launched a Biofuels Country Landscape policy framework developed under the Global Biofuels Alliance.

QUICK FACTS

Indian signatory	Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL); Mauritian signatory: State Trading Corporation (STC), the state importer of petroleum products
Duration	five years; coverage: the entire import requirement of Mauritius for petrol (motor spirit), diesel (high speed diesel) and aviation turbine fuel

- Date of the meeting and exchange of documents: 20 August 2026, Port Louis, during Hardeep Singh Puri's 20-21 August official visit to Mauritius
- Alongside it, a government-to-government MoU on oil and gas cooperation was exchanged with Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam
- First long-term supply agreement by an Indian PSU oil marketing company outside South Asia in recent years

– Groundbreaking on 21 August for a 27.5 TMT marine bunker fuel storage facility at Mer Rouge, Port Louis, developed by IndianOil (Mauritius) Ltd at an investment of about USD 25 million

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.

QUICK FACTS

Event	Bihar-Jharkhand memorandum of understanding on sharing the waters of the Sone river.
Date and venue	31 August 2026, Kartavya Bhavan, New Delhi.
Signatories	Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil, Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren.
Presided over by	Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah. Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary was also present.
Allocation	Bihar 5.75 MAF, Jharkhand 2.0 MAF, total 7.75 MAF.
Origin of the dispute	the creation of Jharkhand in November 2000, which left undivided Bihar's 1973 share with two claimants and no formula.
Mediating machinery	a committee chaired by the Central Water Commission under the Ministry of Jal Shakti; the breakthrough came at the Eastern Zonal Council meeting in Ranchi on 10 July 2025.

– Bihar's Cabinet, then headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, approved the draft agreement on 13 January 2026.

11. Summits & Conferences

4 articles

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.

QUICK FACTS

Event	16th BRICS Trade Ministers' Meeting
Concluded on	7 August 2026
Venue	Sawai Man Mahal, Jaipur, Rajasthan
Held under	India's BRICS Chairship 2026
Chaired by	Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal
Also present	Minister of State Jitin Prasada and Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal
Next stage	outcomes go to BRICS leaders at the upcoming summit in New Delhi

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.

QUICK FACTS

Event	17th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the UNCCD
Venue and dates	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 17 to 28 August 2026
Theme	'Restoring Land, Restoring Hope'
Parties	197 - 196 countries plus the European Union

- 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

Amit Shah Inaugurates 9th National Security Strategies Conference in New Delhi

24 Aug

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the two-day 9th National Security Strategies (NSS) Conference-2026 in New Delhi on 24 August 2026.
- The hybrid conference drew more than 850 participants from the Intelligence Bureau, the Ministry of Home Affairs and central and state police forces.
- Shah directed agencies to run AI-based analysis on Multi-Agency Centre platforms and build Standard Operating Procedures to counter security threats.
- He ordered strict measures against border infiltration and asked state police chiefs to detect and deport illegal migrants.
- Day one covered counter-terrorism, Pakistan-sponsored proxy warfare, cybercrime and narcotics; day two took up sub-aerial threats, blue economy security, information warfare and bio-security.

QUICK FACTS

Event	9th National Security Strategies (NSS) Conference-2026, inaugurated 24 August 2026, New Delhi
Inaugurated by	Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah
Format	hybrid (physical plus virtual), two days, over 850 participants
In person	Ministers of State for Home Affairs, Union Home Secretary, Deputy NSAs, heads of CAPFs and CPOs
Virtually	DGsP of States and UTs, cutting-edge-level young police officers and domain experts

– Before the inauguration Shah laid a wreath at the Martyrs' Column for Intelligence Bureau personnel killed in the line of duty

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.

QUICK FACTS

Event	18th BRICS Summit
Dates and venue	12-13 September 2026, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
India's chairship theme	'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'
Chairship assumed	1 January 2026 - India's fourth, after 2012, 2016 and 2021
Run-up	over 350 meetings and high-level engagements across 25 Indian cities
Milestone	twenty years since the grouping was formed as BRIC in 2006

– Bharat Mandapam also hosted the leaders' sessions of India's G20 Presidency in 2023

12. Ranks & Reports

5 articles

NITI Aayog Report Flags Closure of 94,000 Government Schools in a Decade

03 Aug

- A NITI Aayog report has found that around 94,000 government schools closed over the last decade, an average of about 25 a day.
- Government school enrolment fell by 2.26 crore students over the same period.
- The share of government schools in total enrolment declined from 71% in 2005 to 49.24% in 2024-25.
- Closures have largely occurred through school rationalisation, the merger of low-enrolment schools with others nearby.
- Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh account for the largest numbers, raising concerns about access, equity and compliance with the Right to Education Act, 2009.

QUICK FACTS

Source	a NITI Aayog report
Daily average	about 25 schools
Decline in government school enrolment	2.26 crore students
Principal mechanism	school rationalisation, merging low-enrolment schools with nearby ones
States leading the closures	Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh
Concerns raised	educational access, social equity and compliance with the Right to Education Act, 2009

- Government schools closed over the last decade: about 94,000
- Share of government schools in total enrolment: 71% in 2005, down to 49.24% in 2024-25

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.

QUICK FACTS

Total organ transplants in India, 2025	20,138 — an all-time high
Source	NOTTO Annual Report 2025-26, released during the 16th Indian Organ Donation Day
Comparison	18,911 transplants in 2024; 4,990 in 2013
Global position	third in total transplants after the United States and China
Highest transplants by region	Delhi-NCR with 4,564
Highest deceased organ donation	Tamil Nadu with 266 deceased donors
Pledges	over 2.58 lakh in 2025; cumulative Aadhaar-verified pledges have crossed 5 lakh since the portal began in 2023

- Indian Organ Donation Day is observed on 3 August
- India remains first in the world in living donor organ transplants

- Tamil Nadu has 172 transplant centres, the most of any state

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.

QUICK FACTS

Report	'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047', released by NITI Aayog in August 2026
NEET youth	8.7 crore Indians aged 15-29 not in education, employment or training
Share	about 11 per cent of the 15-29 age group
Data source	78th round of the National Sample Survey, conducted in 2021
NITI Aayog	set up 1 January 2015; Chairperson is the Prime Minister; Vice-Chairperson Ashok Kumar Lahiri

- About 88 per cent of NEET youth are engaged in domestic work and caregiving
- Only 8.25 per cent of graduates are employed in roles matching their qualifications
- Fewer than one in 12 secondary schools currently offer vocational subjects

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.

QUICK FACTS

Report	'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047', released by NITI Aayog in August 2026
Data source for the estimate	78th round of the National Sample Survey, 2021
People trained since 2014-15	over 7.67 crore

- NEET youth (aged 15-29, not in education, employment or training): an estimated 8.7 crore
- Graduates in jobs matching their qualifications: 8.25%
- Secondary schools offering vocational subjects: fewer than one in twelve

Higher Education Enrolment Crosses 4.5 Crore in a Decade, GER Reaches 30 Per Cent

30 Aug

- The Ministry of Education released a decadal performance review of Indian higher education on 30 August 2026, drawing on All India Survey on Higher Education data from 2014-15 to 2023-24.
- Total enrolment rose 31.5 per cent from 3.42 crore to 4.50 crore, and the Gross Enrolment Ratio climbed from 23.7 to 30.0 against the NEP 2020 target of 50 per cent by 2035.
- PhD enrolment grew the fastest of any level, up 192.9 per cent from 1.17 lakh to 3.43 lakh, while integrated programmes rose 301.4 per cent.
- Female GER reached 31.2 against a male GER of 28.9, exceeding it for the seventh consecutive year, and the Gender Parity Index improved from 0.92 to 1.08.
- Persistent gaps remain in graduate employability and in the enrolment of women with benchmark disabilities.

QUICK FACTS

Released by	Ministry of Education, on 30 August 2026
Data source	All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), comparing 2014-15 with 2023-24
Total enrolment	3.42 crore to 4.50 crore, a rise of 31.5 per cent
Gross Enrolment Ratio	23.7 to 30.0
Universities	760 to 1,289, a rise of 69.6 per cent
Colleges	38,498 to 48,246, a rise of 25.3 per cent
Standalone institutions	12,276 to 15,221, a rise of about 24 per cent
Faculty strength	up 17.6 per cent to 17.32 lakh, of which 44.9 per cent are women
International students	42,293 to 58,134, a rise of 37.5 per cent
Annual out-turn of graduates	up 24.1 per cent, crossing 1.09 crore

13. Awards & Honours

2 articles

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.

QUICK FACTS

Award	ICTP Dirac Medal 2026
Recipient	Prof. Deepak Dhar, with Bernard Derrida, Marc Mezard and Haim Sompolinsky
Field cited	statistical mechanics and complex physical systems
Named after	Paul A. M. Dirac, the British physicist
Established	1985; awarded annually on Dirac's birthday, August 8; cash prize US $5,000
Indian milestone	Dhar is the second Indian recipient, after Ashoke Sen in 2012

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.

QUICK FACTS

Arjuna Award	17 sportspersons across athletics, badminton, boxing, chess, hockey, kabaddi, rowing, shooting and para-sport
Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna	no recipient selected for 2025
Arjuna Award (Lifetime)	I. Arumainayagam, football
Dronacharya Award	3 coaches in the regular category, 2 in the lifetime category
Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar	Army Paralympic Node, Pune

- Announced on 18 August 2026 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the award year 2025
- Selection committee chaired by Justice (Retd.) Arun Kumar Mishra, former judge of the Supreme Court of India

14. Appointments

1 article

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.

QUICK FACTS

Officer	Varsha Ashok Aglawe
Post	Director General, Geological Survey of India (GSI)
Number in sequence	54th Director General
Milestone	first woman to lead GSI
Predecessor	Asit Saha (27 July 2024 to 31 July 2026)
Joined GSI	1992, after service with the Indian Bureau of Mines
Previous post	Additional Director General and Head of Department, Eastern Region, Kolkata
Specialisation	palaeontology and palynology

15. Sports

5 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.

QUICK FACTS

Games	Commonwealth Games 2026, Glasgow
Boxing finals day	1 August 2026
India's boxing haul	7 gold, 3 silver
Record	the most boxing golds won by any country at a single Commonwealth Games
India's previous best editions	Delhi 2010, Gold Coast 2018, Birmingham 2022

– India also won 16 medals across all sports on 1 August

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.

QUICK FACTS

Games	Commonwealth Games 2026, Glasgow, Scotland
Duration	23 July to 2 August 2026
India's final position	fourth in the medal standings
India's total medals	39
Breakdown	13 gold, 17 silver, 9 bronze
Best discipline	boxing, with a record seven gold medals
Next edition	Amdavad (Ahmedabad), India, in 2030

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.

QUICK FACTS

Occasion	closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games 2026, Glasgow, on 2 August 2026
Flag handed over to	India, for the 2030 Commonwealth Games at Amdavad
Received by	Neeraj Chopra and Indian Olympic Association president P.T. Usha
India's flagbearer in the athletes' parade	boxer Jaismine Lamboria

- The 2030 edition marks the centenary of the Commonwealth Games
- The first Games were held at Hamilton, Canada, in 1930
- It will be India's second time hosting, after New Delhi 2010

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.

QUICK FACTS

Event	final of the 16th edition of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup.
Date and venue	30 August 2026, Belfius Hockey Arena, Wavre, Belgium.
Result	Germany 1, Spain 0. Scorer: Michel Struthoff, 44th minute.
Tournament	15-30 August 2026, co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands, 16 teams.
Germany's titles	2002, 2006, 2023 and 2026 - four in all.
Pakistan's titles	1971, 1978, 1982 and 1994 - also four, so the two are now level at the top.
Bronze medal	Argentina beat the Netherlands 2-1 on the same day. Tomas Domene scored in the 41st minute, Floris Middendorp equalised in the 49th and Matias Rey struck the winner in the 59th.

- India finished eighth, losing the seventh-place classification match to Belgium 4-3 in a shootout on 28 August after a 3-3 draw.

Lionel Messi Retires From International Football After 207 Caps, 125 Goals

31 Aug

- Lionel Messi announced his retirement from the Argentina national team on 31 August 2026, through a statement on social media.
- He leaves as Argentina's most-capped player and all-time top scorer with 207 appearances and 125 goals across a career that began in 2005.
- The decision followed Argentina's 1-0 defeat to Spain in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final at MetLife Stadium on 19 July 2026, lost in extra time.
- His honours with Argentina include the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the 2021 and 2024 Copa America, the 2022 Finalissima and the 2008 Olympic gold.

- Only Cristiano Ronaldo, with 146 goals, has scored more in men's international football; Messi will continue at club level with Inter Miami.

QUICK FACTS

Announcement date	31 August 2026, via a statement on social media
International appearances	207 - a record for Argentina
International goals	125 - a record for Argentina
Career span	2005 to 2026
Trigger	Argentina's 1-0 loss to Spain in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final on 19 July 2026

- Second-highest men's international goalscorer, behind Cristiano Ronaldo's 146
- Continues to play club football for Inter Miami in Major League Soccer

16. Important Days

1 article

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.

QUICK FACTS

Theme for 2026	'Bringing the world together to help elephants'
India's wild elephant population	22,446 (SAIEE 2021-25)

- Observed annually on 12 August; first observed in 2012
- Project Elephant launched in 1992 as a centrally sponsored scheme
- Asian elephant is India's National Heritage Animal, declared in 2010
- 33 Elephant Reserves spread across 14 states; roughly 150 corridors identified

17. Business

1 article

N Chandrasekaran Will Not Seek Second Term as Tata Sons Chairman

12 Aug

- N Chandrasekaran announced on August 12, 2026 that he will not seek a second term as Tata Sons Chairman.
- He continues in office until his current term ends on February 20, 2027, and has asked the board to begin succession.
- The Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust had recommended a five-year extension, but the board did not back it unanimously.
- The announcement comes days before the Tata Sons AGM on August 18, 2026.
- He joined the Tata Group in 1987, led TCS from 2009 and became Tata Sons Chairman in 2017.

QUICK FACTS

Announcement date	August 12, 2026
Current term ends	February 20, 2027 — he remains chairman until then
Tata Sons AGM	August 18, 2026
Trusts involved	Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust, which had recommended a five-year extension
Career	joined the Tata Group in 1987; CEO and MD of TCS from 2009; Tata Sons Chairman from 2017

– Tata Sons is the principal investment holding company of the Tata Group

18. State News

3 articles

Uttar Pradesh Tables Rs 59,019 Crore Supplementary Budget for 2026-27

04 Aug

- Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna tabled a supplementary budget of Rs 59,019.54 crore for 2026-27 in the state Assembly on 4 August 2026.
- Capital expenditure accounts for more than Rs 41,620 crore of the total and revenue expenditure for more than Rs 17,388 crore.
- The industrial development department received the largest share at more than Rs 22,000 crore, followed by agriculture at over Rs 15,300 crore and energy at over Rs 7,000 crore.
- Rs 12,591 crore was allocated across various heads under the VB-G RAM G rural employment scheme.
- With the annual budget of Rs 9.12 trillion presented on 11 February 2026, the state's total budget for the year now exceeds Rs 9.71 trillion.

QUICK FACTS

State	Uttar Pradesh
Tabled on	4 August 2026, in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly
Presented by	Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna
Size of the supplementary budget	Rs 59,019.54 crore
Capital expenditure component	more than Rs 41,620 crore
Revenue expenditure component	more than Rs 17,388 crore
Industrial development department	more than Rs 22,000 crore
Agriculture	more than Rs 15,300 crore
Energy	more than Rs 7,000 crore
Medical	more than Rs 1,980 crore
VB-G RAM G rural employment scheme	Rs 12,591 crore across various heads

- Annual budget 2026-27, presented 11 February 2026: Rs 9.12 trillion
- Total budget size for the year after this supplementary: more than Rs 9.71 trillion

Tamil Nadu Tables Maiden TVK Budget with Rs 44,527 Crore for School Education

05 Aug

- Tamil Nadu Finance Minister N. Marie Wilson tabled the state Budget for 2026-27 in the Legislative Assembly on 5 August 2026 — the maiden Budget of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam government led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay.
- School education received the single largest highlighted allocation at Rs 44,527 crore, with social welfare allocated Rs 9,818 crore.
- The Budget sets a liquor cess target of Rs 16,000 crore in additional revenue and frames a long-term goal of a 1.5 trillion dollar state economy.
- Rs 300 crore was earmarked for modernising 3,734 government schools and Rs 129 crore for the 'Super Clean, Super Campus' scheme covering an initial 10,000 government schools.
- Rs 125 crore was set aside for infrastructure under the Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Model Schools initiative, which will run free residential schools for Classes IX to XII.

QUICK FACTS

State	Tamil Nadu
Budget year	2026-27
Presented on	5 August 2026, in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly
Presented by	Finance Minister N. Marie Wilson
Government	Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay
Status	the first Budget of the TVK government
School education allocation	Rs 44,527 crore
Social welfare allocation	Rs 9,818 crore
Liquor cess revenue target	Rs 16,000 crore in additional revenue
Long-term economic goal stated	a 1.5 trillion dollar state economy

Meghalaya Assembly Unanimously Passes Resolution Against Uranium Mining

27 Aug

- The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution rejecting uranium exploration, mining and ore-processing in the state, with all 60 MLAs voting in favour.
- The resolution was moved by Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma and urges the Union Government, the Department of Atomic Energy and Uranium Corporation of India Limited not to permit or undertake any uranium mining operation in Meghalaya.
- It targets the long-stalled Kylleng-Pyndengsohiong-Mawthabah (KPM) project in the West Khasi Hills, where sandstone-hosted uranium reserves were established by the Atomic Minerals Directorate in 1992.
- Opposition rests on health and contamination fears and on Meghalaya's Sixth Schedule land regime, under which land and the minerals beneath it are largely under community, clan and private ownership.
- The stand sets state consent and customary land rights against the Centre's search for domestic uranium for the nuclear power programme.

QUICK FACTS

What	Resolution against uranium exploration, mining and ore-processing in Meghalaya
Where and when	Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, adopted on 26 August 2026
Moved by	Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma
Support	unanimous - all 60 MLAs of the House
Addressed to	Government of India, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL)
Project at issue	Kylleng-Pyndengsohiong-Mawthabah (KPM) uranium project, West Khasi Hills
Deposit areas named in the debate	Domiasiat, Lostoin, Mawthabah and Wahkaji in the South West Khasi Hills belt

19. History & Culture

2 articles

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.

QUICK FACTS

Observed on	8 August every year, as August Kranti Diwas
2026 observance	the 84th anniversary of the movement
Movement launched	8 August 1942 at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC)
Venue	Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay — today August Kranti Maidan, Mumbai
Also known as	Bharat Chhodo Andolan, the August Movement, August Kranti
Gandhi's clarion call	'Do or Die' (Karo ya Maro)

- The phrase 'Quit India' is attributed to Congress leader Yusuf Meherally
- No official national theme is announced for the observance

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.

QUICK FACTS

Composer/author	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay)
First published	1875, in Bankim's own Bengali journal Bangadarshan
Novel it belongs to	Anandamath, serialised from 1881 and published as a book in 1882
Constituent Assembly, 1950	accorded 'equal honour and status' with Jana Gana Mana
Year-long commemoration	7 November 2025 to 7 November 2026, inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 7 November 2025
First-ever rendition from the Red Fort	15 August 2026, India's 80th Independence Day

- Set to music and first sung at a Congress session: Rabindranath Tagore, 1896 Calcutta session
- Congress Working Committee resolution of 29 October 1937: only the first two stanzas to be used at public functions
- Union Cabinet approved nationwide 150th-anniversary celebrations on 1 October 2025