CURRENT AFFAIRS PULSE

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Tap a category to jump to it.

1. Sports

2 articles

Tejaswin Shankar, Yamini Maurya, Neeraj Chopra Add Four CWG 2026 Medals for India

01 Aug

- PM Modi congratulated four Indian athletes for medals won on 1 August 2026 at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow: Tejaswin Shankar (decathlon bronze), Yamini Maurya (judo 57 kg silver), Neeraj Chopra (javelin silver) and Yash Vir Singh (javelin bronze).
- India's javelin event produced a silver-bronze sweep, with Neeraj Chopra continuing his run of major-event medals — Commonwealth gold (2018), Olympic gold (2021) and Olympic silver (2024).
- India closed the Glasgow Games with its best-ever campaign: 39 medals overall (13 gold, 17 silver, 9 bronze), finishing 4th, led by a record seven boxing golds.

India Finishes Fourth at Glasgow 2026 With 39 Medals; Best-Ever Para Games Show

03 Aug

- India finished fourth in the medal tally at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow, Scotland, winning 39 medals — 13 gold, 17 silver and 9 bronze — as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha placed a felicitation on record in the House on 3 August 2026.
- Indian para-athletes recorded their best-ever performance at the Commonwealth Para Games with 7 medals: 3 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze.
- Women won 8 of India's 13 gold medals, across boxing, weightlifting, judo and para athletics, with five Indian women boxers taking gold.
- Indian weightlifters competed in 11 weight categories and returned 8 medals — one gold, six silver and one bronze — with Mirabai Chanu becoming the first Indian weightlifter to win three consecutive Commonwealth Games gold medals.
- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports presented cash awards of Rs 30 lakh to gold medallists, Rs 20 lakh to silver and Rs 10 lakh to bronze medallists at a felicitation for the weightlifting squad.

2. Awards & Honours

5 articles

Ajit Doval Receives Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 in Pune

01 Aug

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah presented the Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 to National Security Advisor Ajit Doval in Pune on 1 August 2026, marking the 106th death anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
- Doval is India's longest-serving NSA, in office since 2014, and is credited as the founding architect of the Multi Agency Centre (MAC), India's counter-terrorism intelligence-sharing hub.
- The award, instituted in 1983 by the Tilak Smarak Mandir Trust, is conferred annually on 1 August; past recipients include PM Narendra Modi, Pranab Mukherjee, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Sudha Murty.

Twelve Rat Miners Receive Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak for Silkyara Tunnel Rescue

05 Aug

- Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari conferred the Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak on 12 rat miners for their role in the Silkyara Tunnel Rescue Operation.
- The investiture ceremony was held in New Delhi in the presence of the Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways and the Managing Director of NHIDCL.
- The rescue drew on the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, NHIDCL, the Border Roads Organisation, the Indian Army, the Government of Uttarakhand and technical specialists.
- Engineering solutions deployed included vertical drilling alongside other approaches.
- The operation was monitored at the highest level, with resources mobilised for the safe evacuation of the trapped workers.

President approves 78 gallantry awards and 89 Mention-in-Despatches for Independence Day 2026

14 Aug

- President Droupadi Murmu approved 78 gallantry awards, including 13 posthumous, to personnel of the Defence Forces and Central Armed Police Forces on the eve of Independence Day 2026.
- The breakdown is 9 Kirti Chakras (7 posthumous), 1 Bar to Shaurya Chakra, 19 Shaurya Chakras (1 posthumous), 5 Bars to Sena Medal (Gallantry), 36 Sena Medals (Gallantry) with 5 posthumous, 3 Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry) and 5 Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry).
- A further 89 Mention-in-Despatches were approved — 75 for the Indian Army, 4 for the Navy and 10 for the Air Force — spanning operations including Rakshak, Hifazat, Orchid, Meghdoot, Snow Leopard, Talash and Chakravyuh.
- Separately, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced 1,057 Gallantry and Service Medals for Police, Fire, Home Guard and Civil Defence and Correctional Services personnel — 301 Medals for Gallantry, 92 President's Medals for Distinguished Service and 664 Medals for Meritorious Service.
- Honorary commissions were also announced: on the Army side 438 Honorary Captains and 1,803 Honorary Lieutenants on the active list, with 1,365 Honorary Captains, 485 Honorary Lieutenants, 4,225 Honorary Subedar Majors, 776 Honorary Subedars and 5,897 Honorary Naib Subedars after retirement.

National Sports Awards 2025 Announced: 17 Arjuna Awardees, Five Dronacharya Coaches

18 Aug

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2025, conferring the Arjuna Award for outstanding performance on 17 sportspersons across athletics, badminton, boxing, chess, hockey, kabaddi, rowing, shooting and para disciplines.
- A separate Arjuna Award (Lifetime) went to footballer I. Arumainayagam, the category that honours those who continue to promote sport after retiring from active competition.
- Five coaches received the Dronacharya Award — three in the Regular category (athletics, boxing, shooting) and two in the Lifetime category (boxing, wrestling).
- The Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar 2025, meant for corporate bodies and NGOs that promote sport, went to a single entity: the Army Paralympic Node, Pune.
- Selections were made by a committee chaired by former Supreme Court judge Justice (Retd.) Arun Kumar Mishra, with sportspersons, sports journalists and administrators as members; candidates self-applied through a dedicated online portal.

President to confer National Teachers Awards on 48 school teachers on 5 September

21 Aug

- President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu will confer the National Teachers Awards on 48 school teachers at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 5 September 2026.
- The 48 awardees come from 27 States, 7 Union Territories and 6 organisations of the Central Government, and include 26 men and 22 women; they were selected through a three-stage process at district, state and national levels by the Department of School Education & Literacy.
- Online self-nominations were invited from 15 June 2026 to 20 July 2026; the ceremony will be telecast on Doordarshan and the Ministry's SWAYAM PRABHA channels and streamed live at webcast.gov.in/moe.

3. Appointments

1 article

Three Top Defence Appointments: New Deputy Naval Chief, CGDA and Deputy Air Chief

01 Aug

- Three senior officers took charge in India's defence establishment on 1 August 2026: Vice Admiral AN Pramod as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, Smt Alka Nangia Arora as Controller General of Defence Accounts, and Air Marshal Tejpal Singh as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff.
- Vice Admiral Pramod succeeds Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti and Air Marshal Singh succeeds Air Marshal Awadhesh Kumar Bharti — both predecessors superannuated on 31 July 2026 after 38-39 years of service.
- Smt Arora, a 1991-batch IDAS officer, becomes CGDA — the civilian head of the Defence Accounts Department and Principal Accounting Officer for the Ministry of Defence.

4. Important Days

5 articles

12th National Handloom Day to Be Held on 7 August 2026, President as Chief Guest

01 Aug

- The Ministry of Textiles will observe the 12th National Handloom Day on 7 August 2026 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, New Delhi, with President Droupadi Murmu as chief guest.
- 22 awards for 2025 — 3 Sant Kabir Handloom Awards and 19 National Handloom Awards — will be conferred, alongside four commemorative postage stamps.
- National Handloom Day, observed since 2015, marks the anniversary of the Swadeshi Movement launched on 7 August 1905.

President to Present 22 Handloom Awards on 12th National Handloom Day

06 Aug

- The 12th National Handloom Day will be observed on 7 August 2026 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, New Delhi, with President Droupadi Murmu as Chief Guest.
- 22 awards will be conferred - 3 Sant Kabir Handloom Awards and 19 National Handloom Awards for 2025 - along with the release of four commemorative postage stamps.
- National Handloom Day was instituted in 2015 and is observed on 7 August to commemorate the launch of the Swadeshi Movement on that date in 1905.

- The Fourth All India Handloom Census 2019-20 counted 35.22 lakh handloom weavers and allied workers across 31.45 lakh households, of whom over 72 per cent are women.
- Support runs through the National Handloom Development Programme, whose interventions have raised weaver earnings sharply - electronic jacquards lifted average monthly income from Rs 9,600 to Rs 15,000.

Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 Launched, Dedicated to 150 Years of Vande Mataram

06 Aug

- The Union Minister of Culture and Tourism launched the Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 campaign, to be observed nationwide from 9 to 17 August 2026.
- The campaign began in 2022 under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and has since become an annual national tradition.
- This year's edition is dedicated to 150 years of India's National Song, Vande Mataram, with mass singing forming an integral part of the celebrations.
- The Ministry of Culture has developed a five-step online tutorial to help citizens learn the correct rendition of the National Song.
- A new initiative, SURYAPATH TIRANGA, was announced as a symbolic global Tiranga relay connecting Indian Missions abroad.

Partition Horrors Remembrance Day 2026 Observed in Delhi, Amritsar and Kolkata

15 Aug

- The Ministry of Culture observed Partition Horrors Remembrance Day on 14 August 2026 with commemorative programmes in Delhi, Amritsar and Kolkata, alongside observances across States and Union Territories.
- The main Delhi observance was held at Central Park, Connaught Place, with a Partition Horrors Exhibition of archival material, photographs, maps and personal narratives, a documentary screening, the release of a poetry compilation and a Silent March; the exhibition material was also made available for display at railway stations and other public spaces.
- Amritsar's programme was held at Guru Nanak Dev University with the Union Minister of Culture and Tourism as chief guest, while Kolkata hosted a two-day programme on 13-14 August 2026 at the Newtown Convention Centre in collaboration with the Government of West Bengal, and IGNCA regional centres held programmes in Jammu & Kashmir, Bengaluru and Ranchi.

National Sports Day 2026 Marks Dhyan Chand's 121st Birth Anniversary

29 Aug

- National Sports Day was observed on 29 August 2026 to commemorate the 121st birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand, with the national event held at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, India Gate, New Delhi.
- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr Mansukh Mandaviya and Union Minister of Law and Justice Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal led the celebrations, which began with floral tribute at Major Dhyan Chand's statue.
- The celebrations centred on the nationwide 'Ek Ghanta Khel Ke Maidan Mein' initiative, urging citizens and especially young people to dedicate at least one hour to sports and physical activity - presented by the Minister as a push for the Fit India Movement.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended greetings to sports lovers and paid homage to Major Dhyan Chand, saying the dedication, passion and determination of sportspersons make the nation proud.
- Cricket, football and tug of war were among the activities; the cricket competition featured Ministry XI, SAI XI, Media XI and Influencers XI, with Ministry XI beating Media XI in the opening match.

5. Ranks & Reports

3 articles

Panchayat Advancement Index 2.0 Covers 2.59 Lakh Gram Panchayats Across 33 States

04 Aug

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has renamed the Panchayat Development Index (PDI) as the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI), a composite framework measuring the incremental performance of Gram Panchayats on the localisation of Sustainable Development Goals.
- A total of 2.59 lakh Gram Panchayats and equivalent bodies across 33 States and Union Territories have been onboarded for PAI 2.0 covering FY 2023-24.
- Not a single Gram Panchayat in any State or Union Territory secured the top A+ grade in PAI 2.0; Tripura recorded the largest number of A-grade Panchayats at 943.
- Under the Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, 36,81,750 elected representatives and other stakeholders have been trained on LSDG themes between FY 2022-23 and FY 2026-27 (as on 10 July 2026).
- For FY 2026-27, 1,56,019 Gram Panchayats had taken a 'Sankalp' for preparing their development plans as on 29 July 2026.

UDISE+ 2025-26: 24.72 crore students, pupil-teacher ratio improves to 24:1

17 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder issued on 17 August 2026 decodes the UDISE+ 2025-26 report on Indian school education, which covers 14.67 lakh schools, 1.03 crore teachers and 24.72 crore enrolled students.
- The overall pupil-teacher ratio stands at 24:1, comfortably inside the 30:1 benchmark recommended by the National Education Policy 2020; stage-wise it ranges from 10:1 at the Foundational stage to 21:1 at the Secondary stage.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio at the Secondary stage improved to 71.7% while the Middle stage held at 89.6%; dropout fell to 1.8% (Preparatory) and 7.0% (Secondary), with the Middle stage rising marginally to 3.6%.
- Zero-enrolment schools fell 29% to 5,663 and single-teacher schools fell about 3% to 1,00,843, pointing to teacher rationalisation and school consolidation.
- Girls form 48.4% of enrolment and women 54.9% of the teaching workforce; 69.9% of schools now have computers and 67.4% have internet connectivity.

NITI Aayog Skilling Blueprint Clarifies 8.7 Crore NEET Youth Are Not Unemployed

25 Aug

- NITI Aayog released 'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047', a blueprint for a skilling architecture aligned to the goals of a developed India by 2047.
- The report identifies five key segments of learners and workforce, one of which is NEET youth in the 15-29 age group — Not in Education, Employment or Training.
- NITI Aayog clarified that the report's figure of 8.7 crore NEET youth has been misread as a count of the unemployed. NEET refers to those NOT SEEKING employment; the unemployed form a separate category drawn from a different population base, so the figure cannot be added to the unemployment rate.
- The NEET estimate rests on the NSS 78th Round, collected in FY 2020-21 during the COVID-19 pandemic, when education and employment were disrupted; the youth NEET percentage is significantly lower in the most recent PLFS round (PLFS 2025).
- Ahead of the report's publication, the government had already begun implementing its key reforms through the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, including the Rs 600 crore Integrated Scheme in Skilling Architecture (ISSA) announced in the Union Budget 2026-27.

6. Summits & Conferences

14 articles

India Chairs BRICS Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting at Lucknow

02 Aug

- The meeting of Heads of National Statistical Offices of BRICS countries was scheduled for 3-4 August 2026 at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, under India's Chairship.
- India's BRICS Chairship in 2026 carries the overarching theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability (BRICS)'; within the statistics track India adopted the theme 'Quality Statistics as Driver of Change'.
- BRICS members have published a Joint Statistical Publication since 2010, with a Snapshot BRICS JSP added in 2020; the statistics track holds a Technical Meeting of NSOs and a Meeting of Heads of NSOs every year, the 2026 Technical Meeting having been held on 16-17 April 2026.
- The track's four priority areas are strengthening the core BRICS statistical products, innovation and reform in national statistical systems, data dissemination and accessibility, and strengthening macroeconomic and sectoral statistics.
- Two half-day side events were organised alongside - 'Unlocking the Potential of Administrative Data' on 3 August and 'AI Readiness in the Evolving Data Ecosystem' on 4 August 2026.

India's BRICS Chairship: Education Ministers Meet in Bhubaneswar, Statisticians in Lucknow

04 Aug

- Under India's BRICS chairship 2026, the Ministry of Education is hosting the 13th BRICS Education Ministers' Meeting and the 3rd Senior Officials' Meeting in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from 5 to 7 August 2026.
- India's chairship theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', reflecting the approach articulated by the Prime Minister at the 2025 BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro.
- The two-day meeting of Heads of BRICS National Statistical Offices concluded at Lucknow on 4 August 2026 under the theme 'Quality Statistics as a Driver of Change', with more than 350 participants.
- The BRICS TVET Cooperation Alliance Research Symposium and Joint Management Committee meeting was held in New Delhi on 3-4 August 2026, convened by NSDC under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- MoSPI and BPS-Statistics Indonesia signed a Letter of Intent on the sidelines of the Lucknow meeting to strengthen cooperation in official statistics.

India Hosts BRICS Industry, Education and Creative Economy Meets Under 2026 Chairship

06 Aug

- India held three BRICS ministerial-track events on 6 August 2026 under its BRICS Chairship, themed 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- The Tenth BRICS Industry Ministers' Meeting in Jaipur concluded with a Joint Declaration and adopted a Framework for Cooperation in the SME Working Group and Terms of Reference for a new Working Group on the Photovoltaic Industry.
- India proposed a BRICS Incubator Network and a BRICS Startup Innovation Fund to support innovation-led growth.
- BRICS WAVES Bazaar opened in Mumbai with over 500 delegates from BRICS member and partner countries, positioning the creative or 'Orange' economy as a cooperation area.
- The 3rd BRICS Senior Education Officials Meeting in Bhubaneswar finalised the draft Education Ministers' Declaration, including Guiding Principles on Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

XI BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting Adopts Bhopal Declaration Under India's Chairship

08 Aug

- The XI BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting concluded in Bhopal under India's BRICS Chairship with the adoption of the Bhopal Declaration.
- Fourteen countries took part — 10 BRICS member countries and 4 partner countries — with 55 delegates in all.
- The Declaration covers creative industries, UNESCO multinational nominations, restitution of cultural property, traditional knowledge systems and creators' rights in the context of Artificial Intelligence.
- India announced a pilot Voluntary Artist Registry to facilitate cultural exchange across BRICS.
- The Culture Track ran through three working group meetings — virtual in April, Varanasi in June and Bhopal in August 2026.

CCI Hosts BRICS Competition Authorities in Udaipur; Joint Statement Adopted

09 Aug

- The Competition Commission of India organised the Meeting of Heads of BRICS Competition Authorities on 8 August 2026 in Udaipur, Rajasthan, under India's BRICS Chairship 2026.
- A Joint Statement titled 'Strengthening Cooperation to Promote Fair Competition, including in Renewable Energy Markets' was adopted.
- CCI steered a collaborative BRICS study on the 'Emerging Competition Landscape in the Renewable Energy Sector in BRICS', whose findings were presented at the meeting.
- CCI Chairperson Ravneet Kaur said competition law interventions must remain principled, evidence-based and anchored in the core objectives of competition law.
- Brazil's competition authority CADE briefed participants on the Xth BRICS International Competition Conference, to be held in Brazil in 2027.

India Hosts BRICS ICT Track in Pune, 17-21 August 2026, Under Its 2026 Chairship

15 Aug

- The Department of Telecommunications will organise the BRICS ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) Track in Pune from 17 to 21 August 2026 as part of India's BRICS Chairship for 2026.
- The Track's theme is 'Innovate, Cooperate and Transform (ICT) for a Resilient Future', and it carries three events over five days.
- The 7th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group for Cooperation in ICTs runs 17-19 August 2026; the Digital BRICS Forum and Expo is on 20 August 2026; the 12th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting is on 21 August 2026.
- Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia will represent India at the Ministers Meeting.
- Priority areas include universal and affordable connectivity, trusted and human-centric digital environments, digital skilling, artificial intelligence, next-generation communications, Digital Public Infrastructure, cybersecurity and child online protection.

BRICS 2026: India chairs environment, ICT and youth tracks ahead of New Delhi Summit

17 Aug

- Three BRICS workstreams under India's Chairship converged on 17 August 2026: the Environment Working Group and Climate Contact Group met at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi; the 7th ICT Working Group opened at Pune; and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the BRICS youth calendar.

- The New Delhi meeting was chaired by Tanmay Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with delegations from Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, South Africa and the UAE.
- India's Chairship theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability'; the environment track has run on four priorities - sustainable lifestyles, afforestation and forest fire management, circular economy, and adaptation.
- The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting was scheduled in New Delhi for 18 August 2026; the BRICS Youth Council and Youth Summit for 19-20 August at Gandhinagar; and the Youth Ministers' Meeting for 22 August at Visakhapatnam.
- India's environment track alone recorded 21 virtual thematic and negotiation meetings, 10 bilateral consultations, 2 thematic dialogues and 2 technical webinars during the Chairship.

12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting Adopts Joint Statement, Launches Four Compendiums

18 Aug

- The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting, held in New Delhi under India's BRICS Chairship 2026, concluded with the consensual adoption of a Joint Ministerial Statement and the launch of four Knowledge Compendiums prepared by the BRICS Environment Working Group.
- Union Environment Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav said India's Chairship places the concerns of the Global South at the forefront and redefines BRICS as 'Building Resilience and Innovation for Cooperation and Sustainability', pursued with a people-centric approach and a spirit of 'Humanity First'.
- India set out four Chairship priorities: promoting sustainable lifestyles; afforestation, forest fire management and disaster resilience; circular economy; and adaptation.
- The Joint Ministerial Statement comprises four Outcome Documents — terms of reference for a network of BRICS institutions on sustainable lifestyles, BRICS principles on integrated landscape management, a common understanding on forest fire preparedness and response, and BRICS principles on people-centric, community-based adaptation built on traditional knowledge.
- The Minister cited Mission LiFE and Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam as examples of combining ecological restoration with public participation, and pointed to India's new Nationally Determined Contribution for 2031-2035 as evidence of raised climate ambition alongside development and energy security.

India's BRICS 2026 Chairship: Youth Summit, Energy and Tourism Tracks

19 Aug

- India held the BRICS Youth Council Meeting and BRICS Youth Summit at Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 19 August 2026 under its BRICS Chairship, organised by the Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- India's BRICS Chairship 2026 runs under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability' — an acronym that itself spells BRICS — with the Energy Track carrying the sub-theme ' ' (Energy for All).
- The Youth Council took up a Draft Joint Declaration and a BRICS Youth Cooperation Framework ahead of the BRICS Youth Ministers' Meeting at Visakhapatnam on 22 August 2026.
- The Eighth BRICS Youth Energy Summit was held virtually on 17 August 2026 with over 100 participants, joined by the BRICS Youth Energy Agency, SEforALL, the International Solar Alliance and IRENA.
- The 2nd BRICS Tourism Working Group met at Jaipur, and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports announced 'Friends of MY Bharat', a digital module connecting Indian-origin youth abroad to MY Bharat's programmes.

India hosts 12th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting under its 2026 Chairship

20 Aug

- India will host the 12th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting on 21 August 2026 under its BRICS Chairship, chaired by Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister of Communications.
- The meeting sits under India's overarching Chairship theme, 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', and the ICT Track theme, 'Innovate, Cooperate and Transform (ICT) for a Resilient Future'.
- Agenda items include emerging technologies, Digital Public Infrastructure, future networks, cybersecurity, capacity building and inclusive digital connectivity, with an explicit focus on the wider Global South.
- The Department of Telecommunications has been leading discussions under the BRICS Working Group for Cooperation in ICTs, including a proposal for BRICS Capacity Building Centres.
- The Minister will also visit the Digital BRICS Forum Expo; the meeting builds on the 11th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting held under Brazil's Chairship in 2025.

BRICS Tourism Ministers Adopt Jaipur Declaration as India's 2026 Chairship Ministerials Converge

21 Aug

- The BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting under India's Chairship concluded in Jaipur on 21 August 2026 with the adoption by consensus of the BRICS Tourism Ministers' Communique 2026, known as the Jaipur Declaration.
- The same day saw the 12th BRICS Communications Ministers' Meeting in Pune and the 14th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Ministerial Meeting in Chennai, with the Youth and Sports Ministers' Meetings set for Visakhapatnam on 22 and 23 August.
- India and Brazil signed a Memorandum of Understanding on telecommunications and ICT cooperation on the sidelines of the BRICS ICT Track meeting in Pune.
- India's BRICS Chairship 2026 runs under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- Eleven countries are now full BRICS members; the tourism meeting itself saw participation from nine member states.

BRICS adopts Chennai Declaration on science and innovation under India's chairship

22 Aug

- The 14th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Ministerial Meeting, chaired by India, adopted the 'Chennai Declaration' unanimously; the announcement was made in the closing session by Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences.
- Also called the Chennai Consensus, the document places a 'people-centred and humanity-first' approach at the heart of BRICS STI cooperation, with emphasis on sustainable development, resilient and high-quality growth, social inclusiveness and the use of innovation to improve quality of life.
- It records progress towards operationalising the BRICS Global Research Advanced Infrastructure Network (BRICS GRAIN) and welcomes the Action Plan and Terms of Reference of the Task Force on research infrastructures and mega-science projects.
- It also welcomes the BRICS Science and Research Repository as a digital public good mapping institutions, researchers, outputs, datasets and infrastructure, and backs the Young Scientist Forum, Young Innovator Prize, the STI Entrepreneurship Partnership and the BRICS Youth Startup Platform.
- The meeting endorsed the BRICS STI Calendar of Activities for 2026-2027; the next STI Ministerial is scheduled under China's chairship in 2027.

BRICS Youth Ministers' Meeting concludes at Visakhapatnam with Joint Statement

22 Aug

- The BRICS Youth Ministers' Meeting, organised by the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, concluded at Visakhapatnam on Saturday, 22 August 2026, presided over by Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya with MoS Raksha Nikhil Khadse and Secretary (Youth Affairs) Sunil Paliwal.
- The meeting adopted a Joint Statement covering education, training and skills; youth entrepreneurship; science, technology and innovation; social and cultural participation, social work and volunteering; poverty, hunger and inequality; health and sports; youth, environment and sustainability; interfaith youth dialogue; youth exchange; and youth inclusion.
- It capped the BRICS youth engagements under India's 2026 chairship, following the BRICS Youth Summit and BRICS Youth Council Meeting held at Gandhinagar, Gujarat, on 19-20 August 2026; delegates joined an 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' plantation drive and visited the Thotlakonda Buddhist monastery, and Mandaviya held bilateral meetings with his South African and UAE counterparts.

BRICS Sports Ministers adopt Joint Declaration at Visakhapatnam under India's 2026 Chairship

23 Aug

- The BRICS Sports Ministers' Meeting 2026 concluded at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, on 23 August 2026 with the adoption by consensus of the BRICS Sports Joint Declaration.
- The meeting was held under India's BRICS Chairship 2026, whose theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- Three initiatives were advanced: a BRICS Working Group on Sports Technology; a BRICS Sports Manufacturing Conclave, with Udaipur proposed as host for its inaugural edition in November 2026; and BRICS Traditional and Indigenous Sports Demonstration Games, proposed for Ahmedabad on 12-13 October 2026 as a non-competitive, culturally focused event.
- The Union Minister announced a forthcoming scheme for the promotion of Sports Goods Manufacturing Clusters and invited global manufacturers to 'Make in India, Play in India and Grow with India'.
- Ahead of the proceedings, ministers and dignitaries from Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, the UAE, Iran and South Africa joined a BRICS Friendship Cycling Event held as the 87th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle, which ran at more than 18,000 locations nationwide.

7. Schemes & Committees

10 articles

PM Surya Sarovar Yojana Approved for 5,000 MW Floating Solar with Storage

02 Aug

- The Government approved the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY) on 31 July 2026 to develop 5,000 MW of Floating Solar Photovoltaic capacity with co-located energy storage, at an outlay of Rs 5,070 crore.
- Each project must carry storage of at least two hours, adding up to 10,000 MWh, so that solar output can be shifted to peak demand hours; the scheme runs from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.
- The scheme rests on a National Institute of Solar Energy assessment putting India's floating solar potential at about 102.18 GWp across reservoirs and inland water bodies, against a current floating solar base of only about 700 MW.
- India's installed solar capacity reached 162.15 GW on 30 June 2026, up more than fiftyfold from about 3 GW in 2014, with 44.61 GW added in FY 2025-26 alone.
- Solar module manufacturing capacity rose from 2.3 GW in 2014 to about 172 GW as of 31 March 2026, and total non-fossil fuel capacity reached 283.46 GW.

PM Launches 100-Week Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan

02 Aug

- The Prime Minister launched the 'Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' on 2 August 2026 by video conference, with more than one crore young people joining from over 28,000 locations.
- The campaign runs on a 100-Week Action Plan: every Sunday for 100 weeks carries activities around art, culture, sports, meditation, spirituality and service, taking the de-addiction message to new participants.
- It began as a pilot in Kashi (Varanasi) in 2025 and became a national project through the Kashi Declaration, drawn up with more than 125 spiritual organisations along with social organisations and NGOs.
- The campaign is anchored in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and delivered through MY Bharat, which connects over 2.3 crore youth, along with NSS volunteers and educational institutions.
- The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and Labour and Employment, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, the Minister of State Smt Raksha Nikhil Khadse, 26 Governors and the Chief Ministers of 11 States joined the launch.

Revamped Khelo India Scheme Gets Rs 36,441 Crore Outlay for 2026-27 to 2030-31

03 Aug

- The Union Cabinet has approved a revamped Khelo India Scheme which, together with an enhanced Assistance to National Sports Federations component, carries a combined outlay of Rs 36,441 crore for the period 2026-27 to 2030-31.
- The expanded design adds Khelo India Feeder Schools, Khelo India Utkrishta Vidyalayas, an Emerging Khelo India Athletes category that widens the structured athlete pool nearly ten-fold, a National Coach Accreditation Board and a unified digital platform for athlete, infrastructure and funding data.
- As of July 2026 the scheme had approved 349 sports infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,176 crore, set up 1,067 Khelo India Centres, supported 267 academies and backed 2,745 Khelo India Athletes.
- The scheme is aligned with Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 and the National Education Policy 2020, and is meant to support the 2030 Commonwealth Games, India's Olympic and Paralympic hosting ambitions and the goal of placing India among the world's leading sporting nations by 2036.

VB-G RAM G Rolled Out Nationwide From 1 July 2026 With 125-Day Job Guarantee

04 Aug

- The Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, known as VB-G RAM G, has been implemented in rural areas across the entire country with effect from 1 July 2026.
- It provides a statutory guarantee of 125 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual work, against 100 days under MGNREGA.
- Permissible works are specified in Schedule I of the Act under four heads: water-related works, core rural infrastructure, livelihood-related infrastructure, and special works to mitigate extreme weather events.
- Under Section 5(4), State Governments may provide additional days of employment beyond the statutory guarantee from their own resources.
- Interim allocations of Rs 6,252.03 crore for Madhya Pradesh and Rs 4,420.32 crore for Maharashtra have been made, with first instalments of central share released.

KAPAS KANTI Cotton Mission Approved at Rs 5,659 Crore for Five Years

04 Aug

- The Mission for Cotton Productivity, called KAPAS KANTI, was approved on 5 May 2026 with an outlay of Rs 5,659.22 crore for five years, from 2026-27 to 2030-31.

- It runs through four components implemented by DARE (Rs 555.05 crore), the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Rs 3,804.17 crore), the Cotton Corporation of India (Rs 1,000 crore) and the National Jute Board (Rs 300 crore).
- Component-I(B) initially covers 140 potential districts across 14 major cotton-growing States, and Component-II provides for 50 cotton testing laboratories in PPP mode.
- Separately, 170 companies have been approved under the PLI Scheme for Textiles, which as of 31 March 2026 had drawn Rs 8,117.64 crore of investment, Rs 11,241 crore of turnover and 33,427 jobs.
- Bharat Tex 2026, held 14-17 July 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, drew 6,090 overseas buyers from 138 countries and 1,647 exhibiting companies.

Cabinet Approves GOBARdhan Scheme with Rs 23,731 Crore Outlay for Compressed Biogas

06 Aug

- The Union Cabinet on 6 August 2026 approved GOBARdhan, the National Circular Bioenergy Scheme, with an outlay of Rs 23,731 crore for FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36.
- The scheme is administered by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, consolidating a Compressed Biogas (CBG) ecosystem previously spread across four ministries.
- It fixes an administered CBG price of Rs 2,110 per MMBTU (about Rs 105 per kg) with a minimum ten-year horizon, and capital assistance of up to Rs 2 crore per tonne per day of installed capacity.
- A notified CBG Obligation trajectory requires City Gas Distribution entities to blend 3% in FY 2026-27, 4% in FY 2027-28 and 5% from FY 2028-29 in CNG (transport) and PNG (domestic) segments.
- The scheme targets a nearly ten-fold rise in domestic CBG output, forex savings of over Rs 40,000 crore and more than 1.5 lakh jobs over the decade.

Jal Shakti issues data sharing policy for Sujalam Bharat rural water DPI

20 Aug

- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, issued the Policy on Data Sharing, Interoperability and Stakeholder Access under the Sujalam Bharat Digital Public Infrastructure on 20 August 2026.
- The policy sets a secure, federated and interoperable framework for sharing rural drinking water data among the Department, States and Union Territories, Gram Panchayats, government organisations and authorised sectoral stakeholders.
- It relies on common identifiers, standardised metadata, interoperable registries and secure digital services, and adopts a tiered, purpose-limited data-access framework with safeguards for privacy, personal data protection and cybersecurity.
- Approved stakeholders may build solutions for operation and maintenance, water quality monitoring, predictive maintenance, geospatial planning, Digital Twins and AI-enabled decision support.
- On the same day the Department held a national workshop on capacity building under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 for Gram Panchayats, Village Water and Sanitation Committees and Sujalam Shakti Groups, where eight training modules developed by the National Jal Jeevan Mission were reviewed.

Rural Development launches National Campaign on Entrepreneurship-II under DAY-NRLM

21 Aug

- The Ministry of Rural Development launched the 'National Campaign on Entrepreneurship-II' under DAY-NRLM for three months, from 21 August to 21 November 2026, widening the first phase to cover farm enterprises, non-farm enterprises and the marketing of SHG products.

- Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Sh. Rohit Kansal, also released the first edition of 'Sankalp Shakti', the Rural Enterprise Technical Bulletin of DAY-NRLM, which will now be a monthly publication.
- The campaign is pitched at the vision of 6 crore Lakhpati Didis, and shifts emphasis to intensive enterprise handholding, formalisation, producer institutions and simpler implementation processes.
- Community cadres CRP-EPs and Business Development Service Providers will be recognised as 'Udyam Sakhis'; e-commerce onboarding will run through ONDC, GeM and other digital platforms.
- Launched on 21 August, observed globally as World Entrepreneurs Day; attended in person by Rural Development Secretaries of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal and Goa, and virtually by Mission Directors of 34 State Rural Livelihoods Missions.

EPFO's Employees' Enrolment Campaign 2026 open until 31 October for uncovered workers

22 Aug

- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has urged establishments to use the Employees' Enrolment Campaign, 2026 (EEC 2026), notified with effect from 29 June 2026.
- The campaign is a one-time opportunity to enrol employees who remained outside EPF coverage during the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2026, and it closes on 31 October 2026.
- Eligible employees must be alive and continuing in employment with the establishment on the date of declaration.
- Relaxations include waiver of the employee's share of contribution where it was not deducted earlier, subject to the campaign's conditions.
- Enrolment is entirely online: a Face Authentication-based Universal Account Number is generated through the UMANG App for each declared employee, and contributions are remitted through the Electronic Challan-cum-Return (ECR).

Mission Rangeen Machhli 2031 Released at Lakshadweep Fisheries Outreach; Tuna and Seaweed Push Announced

31 Aug

- The Department of Fisheries held a Fisheries Outreach Programme at Agatti, Lakshadweep, on 31 August 2026, where the Vice-President released 'Mission Rangeen Machhli 2031', a Strategic Action Plan for Ornamental Fisheries Development.
- Lakshadweep has an estimated fisheries potential of over 1 lakh tonnes including about 94,000 tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species, but current harvest stands at only about 15,000 metric tonnes.
- Fisheries development projects worth over Rs 62 crore have been approved for Lakshadweep under PMMSY; 16 deep-sea fishing vessels costing about Rs 1.2 crore each have been sanctioned with full financial assistance.
- Lakshadweep has been notified as a Seaweed Cluster and a Seaweed Bank approved with ICAR-CMFRI; 575 seaweed cultivation units are being promoted with an investment of about Rs 2 crore.
- India's fish production rose from 95.7 lakh tonnes in 2013-14 to 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, with seafood exports at a record Rs 73,890 crore in 2025-26.

8. Defence

10 articles

Navy's Fifth and Final Diving Support Craft, DSC A24, Launched at Titagarh

01 Aug

- DSC A24 (Yard 329), the fifth and final ship of the Diving Support Craft (DSC) project, was launched at Titagarh, Kolkata, on 1 August 2026, completing a 5-ship order the Navy placed with Titagarh Rail Systems Limited (TRSL) in February 2021.
- The catamaran-hulled vessel, displacing 300-400 tonnes and built to Indian Register of Shipping naval rules, augments the Navy's diving support, underwater inspection, salvage and coastal deployment capability.
- About 70% of main and auxiliary equipment is indigenously sourced, making the DSC project a flagship Aatmanirbhar Bharat / Make in India defence-shipbuilding example.

Agni-4 Ballistic Missile Successfully Test-Fired from Chandipur, Odisha

06 Aug

- The medium-range ballistic missile Agni-4 was successfully test-fired on 6 August 2026 from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, Odisha.
- The launch validated all operational and technical parameters of the weapon system.
- The test was carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command, jointly with the DRDO.

Defence production hits Rs 1.78 lakh crore, exports Rs 38,424 crore in FY 2025-26

14 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder issued for the 80th Independence Day places India's defence production at a record Rs 1.78 lakh crore in FY 2025-26, with Defence PSUs and other public entities supplying about 76% and the private sector 24%.
- Defence exports rose from Rs 686 crore in FY 2013-14 to Rs 38,424 crore in FY 2025-26 — a 56-fold rise reaching more than 80 countries; DPSUs contributed Rs 21,071 crore (54.84%) and private firms Rs 17,353 crore (45.16%).
- The stated targets are Rs 3 lakh crore of annual defence production and Rs 50,000 crore of exports by 2029.
- Ten Positive Indigenisation Lists covering 5,521 items had been notified till May 2026 — five each by the Department of Military Affairs and the Department of Defence Production.
- In a parallel Akashvani address on the eve of Independence Day, Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh said the Defence Acquisition Council granted Acceptance of Necessity worth over Rs 8.75 lakh crore in the past year and that India now has 145 defence exporters.

Exercise MAITREE-XV: Indian Army contingent departs for India-Thailand drill

17 Aug

- The Indian Army contingent departed on 17 August 2026 for Thailand for MAITREE-XV, the 15th edition of the India-Thailand joint military exercise.
- The exercise runs from 18 to 31 August 2026 at Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp, Surat Thani, Thailand; the previous edition was held at the Foreign Training Node, Umroi, Meghalaya, in September 2025.
- Each side fields 85 personnel - India represented primarily by troops of 9 Gorkha Rifles and Thailand by the 3rd Battalion, 25th Infantry Brigade, 5th Division - for company-level training in jungle and semi-urban terrain.
- The drill focuses on joint counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter; Exercise MAITREE was instituted in 2006.

Defence Ministry Notifies Sixth Positive Indigenisation List of 405 Items

18 Aug

- The Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence has notified the sixth Positive Indigenisation List, covering 405 strategically important items with an estimated business potential of Rs 3,070 crore.
- The list comprises Line Replaceable Units, sub-systems, sub-assemblies, spares, components and raw materials — 16 items belonging to the Indian Coast Guard and 389 to Defence Public Sector Undertakings.
- Items span the Advanced Light Helicopter, Light Utility Helicopter, Su-30MKI, Light Combat Aircraft and AL-31FP engine, the T-72, T-90 and BMP-II armoured platforms, warships, the Konkurs-M, Invar and MRSAM missile systems, radars, sonars, fire control and satellite communication systems, and High Explosive Anti-Tank ammunition.
- Each item carries an indicative indigenisation timeline and is listed on the SRIJAN portal; once developed domestically it will be procured from Indian industry, with DPSUs and the Coast Guard using the 'Make' procedure and in-house development, and MSMEs expected to participate.
- SRIJAN, launched in August 2020, has carried offers of more than 33,000 defence items up to June 2026, including 5,012 under the first five lists; over 15,700 items have been indigenised, giving import substitution of about Rs 9,000 crore over five years.

Navy receives 'Mangrol', third anti-submarine shallow water craft from Cochin Shipyard

22 Aug

- 'Mangrol', the third Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi, was delivered to the Indian Navy on 21 August 2026.
- The craft has over 80 per cent indigenous content and is equipped for underwater surveillance, anti-submarine warfare in coastal waters, Low-Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO) and mine warfare; it is propelled by waterjets and carries torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets, and advanced radars and sonars.
- The name comes from Mangrol, a coastal town and minor port in Junagadh district of Gujarat and a prominent harbour for the marine fishing industry, and revives the name of an earlier Indian Naval minesweeper, INS Mangrol, which served until 2004.

IAF concludes Exercise Pitch Black in Australia and Udara Shakti in Malaysia

22 Aug

- The Indian Air Force announced on 22 August 2026 that it had concluded participation in two international flight engagements - Exercise Pitch Black 2026 in Australia and Exercise Udara Shakti 2026 in Malaysia - in a single back-to-back deployment.
- At Pitch Black 2026, hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force, the IAF deployed its frontline Rafale aircraft and flew Large Force Employment (LFE) missions alongside air forces from over 20 participating nations.
- The contingent then deployed directly to Subang, Malaysia, for Exercise Udara Shakti 2026, flying combat sorties with and against the Royal Malaysian Air Force's Su-30MKM and F/A-18 Hornet aircraft.
- Both engagements included subject matter expert exchanges (SMEE), maintenance practices and mission planning exchanges, aimed at interoperability and at strengthening defence partnerships across the Indo-Pacific.

Goa Shipyard Hands Over ICGS Ajit as Navy Prepares to Commission Diving Support Vessel Nipun

25 Aug

- Goa Shipyard Limited formally handed over ICGS Ajit (Yard 1277), a Fast Patrol Vessel, to the Indian Coast Guard on 25 August 2026, built with more than 65 per cent indigenous content.
- ICGS Ajit is 51.43 metres long and 8 metres wide, displaces 330 tonnes at a draught of 2.5 metres, exceeds 27 knots and has an endurance of 1,500 nautical miles, with a crew of 6 officers and 35 sailors.

- The vessel is powered by twin marine diesel engines driving controllable pitch propellers - described by the shipyard as a first-of-its-kind feature in this class of Fast Patrol Vessels - along with an integrated machinery control system.
- Separately, the Indian Navy announced it will commission Nipun, the second Nistar-class Diving Support Vessel, on 31 August 2026 at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. Indigenously designed and built by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam, it was delivered to the Navy on 30 July 2026.
- Nipun is a purpose-built platform for deep-sea diving and underwater intervention, with specialised diving, station-keeping and medical facilities, and will augment the Navy's submarine rescue capability.

Samarthak, Navy's first indigenous Multi-Purpose Vessel, delivered by L&T Kattupalli

27 Aug

- Samarthak, the first Multi-Purpose Vessel (MPV) built by Larsen & Toubro Ltd at Kattupalli, was delivered to the Indian Navy on 27 August 2026.
- The ship carries over 75 per cent indigenous content and has been conceived primarily as a versatile trial and evaluation platform for naval weapons and sensors.
- It is also engineered for maritime surveillance and reconnaissance, offshore patrolling and support to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations; the name 'Samarthak' means 'The Proponent'.

INS Nipun, Second Nistar-Class Diving Support Vessel, Commissioned at Mumbai

31 Aug

- The Indian Navy commissioned INS Nipun, the second Diving Support Vessel of the Nistar class, at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, on 31 August 2026.
- The ceremony was presided over by Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Chief of the Naval Staff, in the presence of Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command.
- The ship was indigenously designed and built by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam, and supports saturation, air and heliox diving, remotely operated underwater systems, dynamic positioning, and an onboard life-support and medical complex.
- It can support submarine rescue operations, a capability the Chief of the Naval Staff said only a handful of navies possess, positioning India as the 'Preferred Submarine Rescue Partner' in the region and adding to its capacity for underwater salvage and HADR missions.
- INS Nipun will be based on the West Coast under the Western Naval Command; its motto is 'Far Beneath, Few Beyond', and the crew's watchwords are 'Nischay, Nirbhay, Nipun'.

9. Science & Tech

12 articles

PFBR at Kalpakkam Attains First Criticality, Opening Stage Two of Nuclear Programme

05 Aug

- The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu attained first criticality on 6 April 2026.
- The PFBR is the forerunner of the second stage of Homi Bhabha's three-stage nuclear power programme.
- It uses Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide fuel with a Uranium-238 blanket to breed fissile Plutonium-239, generating more fuel than it consumes.

- It is India's first commercial fast reactor, with the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research as principal architect.
- Nearly 90 per cent of the reactor's equipment and systems were manufactured domestically.

Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission Recognised by WHO SEARN in Pharmacovigilance

05 Aug

- The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission has been recognised by the WHO South-East Asia Regulatory Network as a Regional Centre of Excellence in Pharmacovigilance and a Technical Centre in Quality of Medicines.
- The recognition came at SEARN's 10th Anniversary Meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 4-5 August 2026.
- SEARN was established by the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office in 2016 to strengthen regulatory systems across Member States.
- The network operates through thematic working groups on quality assurance, pharmacovigilance, clinical trials oversight, regulatory preparedness and medical device regulation.
- IPC functions under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and publishes the Indian Pharmacopoeia along with Indian Pharmacopoeia Reference Substances.

Government R&D Spending Crosses Rs 1.17 Lakh Crore but Stays at 0.41% of GDP

06 Aug

- The Department of Science and Technology's 'Research and Development Statistics 2025-26' report records government R&D expenditure rising from Rs 87,813.47 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 1,17,861.21 crore in 2023-24.
- As a share of GDP, however, government R&D expenditure has stayed flat, moving between 0.41 and 0.45 per cent across the same five years and ending at 0.41 per cent in 2023-24.
- The Ministry of Science and Technology runs 71 research institutions across three departments - DST, DBT and DSIR/CSIR.
- Combined allocation to these three departments rose from Rs 7,357.10 crore in FY 2021-22 to Rs 8,934.81 crore in FY 2025-26.
- Patents received peaked at 893 in FY 2023-24 before falling to 347 in FY 2024-25 and 251 in FY 2025-26.

Param Pragya AI Supercomputing Facility to Be Inaugurated at IIT Delhi Sonipat

07 Aug

- The Prime Minister will inaugurate Param Pragya, an AI-powered high-performance supercomputing facility established at the Sonipat campus of IIT Delhi, on 8 August 2026.
- The facility is expected to strengthen the institute's work in artificial intelligence, data science, advanced computing and interdisciplinary research.
- The inauguration takes place at IIT Delhi's 57th Convocation, where over 3,000 graduating students, including 587 PhD scholars, will receive their degrees.

Semicon 2.0 and IndiaAI Mission Drive India's Chip-to-AI Build-Out

13 Aug

- Semicon India 2.0 was approved in July 2026 with a Rs 1,27,500 crore outlay, scaling up the Rs 76,000 crore Semicon 1.0 programme across six pillars — chip design, equipment and materials, fabrication, advanced packaging, R&D and talent.
- Twelve semiconductor projects have been approved across six states with investment commitments above Rs 1.64 lakh crore; three facilities have already begun commercial production.

- The IndiaAI Mission, with an outlay of about Rs 10,372 crore, had expanded shared compute to more than 45,000 GPUs as of June 2026, and 237 projects had used 93.18 lakh subsidised GPU hours by August 2026.
- Twenty indigenous foundation model proposals — 12 large multimodal models and 8 small language models — were selected from 506 applications; AI Kosh hosted over 14,000 datasets and 331 AI models as of July 2026.
- India was ranked third globally in the Stanford Global AI Vibrancy Report 2025 and joined the Pax Silica coalition on resilient silicon supply chains at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

GERD Rises to 0.84% of GDP as ANRF and Rs 1 Lakh Crore RDI Fund Anchor Research Push

13 Aug

- Gross expenditure on research and development rose from Rs 1,32,567.01 crore, or 0.66% of GDP, in 2019-20 to Rs 2,44,767.81 crore, or 0.84% of GDP, in 2023-24, as per the DST's Research & Development Statistics 2025-26.
- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation, established under the Department of Science and Technology, provides strategic direction for research across the sciences and runs the MAHA and PAIR programmes; a Research, Development and Innovation Fund with a Rs 1 lakh crore corpus over six years is to catalyse private investment in sunrise and strategic sectors.
- India has more than 2.40 lakh DPIIT-recognised startups, over half of them from Tier-II and Tier-III cities; it ranks third globally in scientific publications and sixth in patent filings.
- India's Global Innovation Index rank improved from 81st in 2015 to 38th in 2025.
- The INSPIRE Programme supported 49,805 students under INSPIRE-MANAK, 24,276 under INSPIRE-SHE, 3,364 INSPIRE Fellowships and 477 Faculty Fellowships in 2025-26; the government stated that INSPIRE-SHE has not been shelved but is under redesign.

DLI-Backed Startup Achieves First-Pass Silicon With 'VIHAAN' Broadband Chip on VEGA Processor

15 Aug

- Aheesa Digital Innovations, a Chennai-headquartered fabless startup supported under the Design Linked Incentive Scheme, has achieved first-pass silicon success with 'VIHAAN', a networking System-on-Chip built for fibre broadband using the indigenous VEGA microprocessor.
- VIHAAN was taped out on Republic Day and reached first-pass silicon on Independence Day this year; production tape-out is targeted for 2027.
- The company raised about Rs 40 crore earlier this year from the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Fund Management Corporation through the Tamil Nadu Emerging Sector Seed Fund, alongside private investors.
- Companies supported under the DLI Scheme have collectively achieved more than 30 chip-design tape-outs and raised over US$100 million in venture funding; under the Chips to Startup programme, 245 designs have been taped out by 71 academic institutions.
- Chip-design tools have been made available to 455 organisations — 350 academic institutions and 105 startups — and the release places semiconductor design at up to 50 per cent of value addition across the semiconductor chain.

Principal Scientific Adviser Launches NABARD's RSVC-AMRIT Rural Technology Platform

15 Aug

- Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood launched the RSVC-AMRIT platform, developed by NABARD with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA).
- AMRIT is the digital backbone of the RuTAG Smart Village Centre (RSVC) ecosystem, supporting the full lifecycle from technology discovery and validation to deployment tracking, collaboration, monitoring and knowledge management.

- NABARD, whose Chairman Dr. Shaji Krishnan V. attended the launch, currently supports 8 RSVCs and intends AMRIT to grow into a national repository of rural innovations, technologies and best practices.

SEMICON India 2026 Set for Yashobhoomi as Semicon 2.0 Enters Implementation

18 Aug

- The fifth edition of SEMICON India will be held from 17 to 19 September 2026 at Yashobhoomi, the India International Convention and Expo Centre in Dwarka, New Delhi, and will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 17 September.
- It is organised jointly by the India Semiconductor Mission under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and SEMI, the global semiconductor industry association, on the theme 'Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem'.
- Twelve projects have been approved under Semicon 1.0, three of which have begun commercial production, and the Union Cabinet has since approved the next phase, Semicon 2.0, built on six major pillars.
- On the design side, state-of-the-art tools have been provided to more than 332 academic institutes and 105 start-ups, and 24 start-ups have been approved under the Design Linked Incentive scheme.
- The exhibition is expected to draw over 500 exhibitors including 240-plus international companies, 150-plus international speakers, delegations from more than 40 countries, six country pavilions and ten State government pavilions across 15,000 square metres.

NCPOR hosts 8th BRICS Ocean and Polar Science working group meeting in Goa

20 Aug

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences held the 8th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology (OPST) at Goa from 12 to 14 August 2026, hosted by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) during India's BRICS Presidency.
- Delegations from Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates agreed on collaborative work in coastal resilience, a joint polar ocean biodiversity study, milestones for the 5th International Polar Year and capacity building for young researchers.
- India will use its Presidency year to finalise the Working Group's roadmap and a short-term action plan; the meeting was chaired by NCPOR Director Dr Thamban Meloth and its concluding session was addressed virtually by MoES Secretary Dr T. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala.

CSIR-NAL Unveils Indigenous NJ-05, NJ-50 and NJ-100 Micro and Small Gas Turbine Engines

25 Aug

- CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL) unveiled three indigenous micro and small gas turbine engines - NJ-05 with 5 kg thrust, NJ-50 with 50 kg thrust and NJ-100 with 100 kg thrust - at the SSB Auditorium, CSIR Headquarters, New Delhi.
- The engines are intended for tactical unmanned aerial vehicles, drone interceptors and compact missile systems, addressing a class of propulsion India has largely imported.
- The scientific team, led by Shri R. Prathapanayaka, attributed the development to advances in high-RPM turbomachinery and high-temperature combustion technologies.
- Air Marshal Tejinder Singh, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), was Chief Guest; Dr N. Kalaiselvi, Director General CSIR and Secretary DSIR, and Dr Abhay A. Pashilkar, Director CSIR-NAL, also spoke.
- CSIR-NAL's Director described the laboratory's evolving role as a multi-stage integrator for India's drone ecosystem, and said Indian industry including aerospace start-ups can manufacture these engines at scale.

Notifications Issued for All Six Pillars of the Semicon 2.0 Scheme

31 Aug

- Notifications for all six pillars of the Semicon 2.0 Scheme were issued, with Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw setting out the government's plan for the next phase of India's semiconductor ecosystem.
- The six pillars — Design; Machines and Materials; Setting up more Fabs; Strengthening the ATMP/OSAT industry; Research and Development; and Talent Development — cover 10 categories in all and extend fiscal and infrastructure support across the whole value chain.
- The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) is the nodal agency: it will invite applications, carry out technical and financial appraisal, recommend applicants and oversee implementation, with C-DAC assisting on the design and deployment categories.
- Projects will generally run up to six years, the scheme stays open for applications for three years, and a mid-term assessment follows after three years of implementation.
- Vaishnaw said India met its target of 85,000 semiconductor engineers in four years against a ten-year timeline and has set a fresh target of one lakh more, that students from Tier-II and Tier-III cities have designed over 250 chips, and that the ecosystem is expected to create 50,000-60,000 direct jobs.

10. Environment

9 articles

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

03 Aug

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav announced on 3 August 2026 the designation of Glaw Lake in Arunachal Pradesh as India's 101st Ramsar Site.
- It is Arunachal Pradesh's first Ramsar Site — a high-altitude freshwater lake in the Wakro Circle of Lohit district, lying within the Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary in the Eastern Himalayas.
- India's Ramsar network has grown from 26 sites in 2014 to 101, the Minister said, describing the designation as a step for biodiversity conservation, water and climate security and sustainable livelihoods.
- The wetland and its catchment support more than 150 tree species and 49 orchid species.

India Crosses 300 GW Non-Fossil Power Capacity, Over 60% of Its 2030 Target

09 Aug

- India crossed 300 GW of non-fossil fuel based installed electricity generation capacity as on 31 July 2026 — over 60% of the 500 GW targeted by 2030.
- The breakdown is solar 164.59 GW, wind 58.14 GW, hydro 57.24 GW, bio-power 11.75 GW and nuclear 8.78 GW, totalling 300.50 GW.
- Non-fossil sources now account for over 54% of India's total electricity generation capacity of around 552 GW.
- A record 55.29 GW of non-fossil capacity was installed during 2025-26, including 44.6 GW of solar and 6 GW of wind.
- Enlisted capacity under the ALMM for solar PV modules has crossed 200 GW, up from just 2.3 GW in 2014.

Asiatic lion population rises from 523 in 2015 to 891 in 2025; range expands to 35,000 sq km

10 Aug

- Marking World Lion Day 2026, the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, stated that the Asiatic Lion population has risen from 523 in 2015 to 891 in 2025.
- The lion range has expanded from around 30,000 sq km in 2020 to nearly 35,000 sq km.
- Project Lion was announced by the Prime Minister on 15 August 2020 for long-term conservation of the species.
- Project Lion follows a landscape-level approach covering habitat enhancement, disease monitoring and veterinary support, scientific population tracking, technology-aided interventions, biodiversity protection, benefit sharing and community involvement.
- The Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, and the Prime Minister separately highlighted the role of forest officers, frontline workers and local communities in the recovery.

Groundwater Assessment 2025: recharge 449 BCM, extraction 247 BCM, extraction stage 60.63%

10 Aug

- As per the Dynamic Ground Water Resources Assessment, 2025, India's total Annual Ground Water Recharge is 449 Billion Cubic Metres, Annual Extractable Ground Water Resource is 408 BCM, and Annual Ground Water Extraction for all uses is 247 BCM.
- Of the 247 BCM extracted, 215 BCM (87%) goes to irrigation, 28 BCM (11%) to domestic use including drinking water, and 4 BCM (2%) to industry.
- The national Stage of Ground Water Extraction — the ratio of annual extraction to annual extractable resource — is 60.63%, and nine States/UTs exceed the national average: Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh and Karnataka. 281 districts are above the national average.
- The Central Water Commission's Assessment of Water Resources of India, 2024 put average annual per capita water availability for 2021 at 1,573.19 cubic metres.
- The Annual Ground Water Quality Report, 2025 finds groundwater generally potable, with nearly 99% of monitoring stations showing quality suitable for irrigation; in Bihar, of 584 samples analysed, electrical conductivity exceeded permissible limits in 5, fluoride in 39 and nitrate in 78.

World Elephant Day 2026: India Counts 22,446 Wild Elephants Across 33 Reserves and 150 Corridors

12 Aug

- World Elephant Day is observed on 12 August; India holds nearly 60% of the world's wild Asian elephants.
- The DNA-based Synchronous All India Population Estimation of Elephants (SAIEE) 2021-25 puts India's wild elephant population at 22,446.
- India protects elephants through 33 Elephant Reserves covering 80,777 sq km across 14 States and 150 validated corridors.
- Railway mitigation has cut train-hit elephant deaths from 26 in 2013 to 12 in 2024.
- The Gajah Suchana app holds DNA profiles of registered captive elephants, and the Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024 regulate their movement.

World Elephant Day Marked at Visakhapatnam With Rs 500 Crore Southern Conflict Plan

13 Aug

- National celebrations of World Elephant Day 2026 were held at Visakhapatnam, where the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change conferred the Gaj Gaurav Awards 2026.
- India has 33 Elephant Reserves, 150 scientifically identified elephant corridors and nearly 60% of the world's wild Asian elephant population.

- A Regional Action Plan for Human-Elephant Conflict in Southern India — covering Karnataka, Keralam, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu — was released with support of Rs 500 crore from the Government of India.
- Project Elephant, launched in 1992 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, has completed more than three decades; a publication titled '30 Giant Steps' marking milestones from 2020 to 2026 was released.
- The 23rd Steering Committee Meeting of Project Elephant was held at Visakhapatnam, and a nationwide awareness campaign with the National Museum of Natural History reached over 20 lakh students from 21,450 schools.

India launches first Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems at UNCCD COP17

17 Aug

- India launched its first-ever Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) of India on 17 August 2026 at the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- The Guide documents India's grasslands, savannas, deserts, scrublands, ravines, rocky plateaus and coastal open ecosystems, with thematic sections on pastoralism, fire ecology and carbon sequestration.
- It was published by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with IUCN, the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management, ICFRE and ISRO's Space Applications Centre.
- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, in a video message, said grasslands, scrublands and ravines have long been judged by the absence of trees and dismissed as 'wasteland' despite sheltering endemic species and sustaining pastoral communities.
- Discussions linked restoration of these ecosystems to India's Land Degradation Neutrality targets and called for better land-degradation assessment and landscape-level planning.

CAQM Direction 102 phases out new diesel and petrol light goods vehicles in Delhi-NCR

19 Aug

- The Full Commission of the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM), at its 29th meeting on 18 August 2026 chaired by Rajesh Verma, approved Direction No. 102 mandating a phased shift to cleaner Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) in Delhi-NCR.
- LGVs are only about 1.2% of the active vehicle stock but contribute roughly 3.3% of particulate matter emissions from the total active fleet, which is the stated reason for singling them out.
- Registration of Diesel/Petrol/CNG N1 LGVs will be restricted from 1 January 2027 in Delhi and 1 July 2027 in five High Vehicle Density districts; N2 LGV restrictions begin 1 January 2028 and run in three tranches to 1 January 2029.
- Direction No. 103 folds CPCB's Environmental Guidelines for Stone Crushing Units, 2023 into the Consent to Operate conditions of NCR stone crushers, backed by video surveillance, PM2.5/PM10 sensors and wheel washing.
- The Commission also approved Rs. 3,25,56,393 for four air-pollution R&D projects over two years and noted Environmental Compensation of Rs. 61.85 crore imposed on six thermal power plants for missing 2024-25 biomass co-firing targets.

Ken-Betwa Link Project: Daudhan Dam, Rs 44,605 Crore Cost and 2030 Deadline

21 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder issued on 21 August 2026 sets out the status of the Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP), the first project under the National Perspective Plan for Interlinking of Rivers to reach the implementation stage.
- Water is transferred from the Ken basin to the Betwa basin through the 96.7-metre-high Daudhan Dam in Panna and Chhatarpur districts of Madhya Pradesh and a 216.465-km link canal ending at Barua Sagar near Jhansi.

- Total project cost is Rs 44,605 crore; the foundation stone was laid on 25 December 2024 and completion is scheduled for 2030.
- Stated benefits: irrigation for 10.62 lakh hectares, drinking water for about 62 lakh people, 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar power.
- The project carries a full set of statutory clearances - Wildlife (2016), Environmental (2017), Tribal Affairs (2017) and Forest (2023) - and an Integrated Landscape Management Plan for the Greater Panna Landscape prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India.

11. Banking & Finance

5 articles

CBDC-Based Food Subsidy: Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli to Get Programmable Digital Rupee Transfers

12 Aug

- CBDC-based Direct Benefit Transfer under PMGKAY will be launched in Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli on 14 August 2026.
- They become the first Union Territories to deliver food subsidy to all eligible PMGKAY beneficiaries as programmable Digital Rupee tokens in CBDC wallets.
- The rollout builds on earlier pilot implementations in Puducherry and Gujarat and marks complete saturation of eligible beneficiaries in the two UTs.
- Beneficiaries will use the tokens to buy foodgrains from empanelled merchants through a traceable real-time digital payment mechanism.
- The model is presented as a proof of concept and a scalable template for other States and Union Territories.

Financial Inclusion Snapshot: FI Index at 70, 58.66 Crore PMSBY Enrolments, UPI at 2,365 Crore Monthly Transactions

12 Aug

- The RBI's Financial Inclusion Index rose from 43.4 in March 2017 to 70.0 in March 2026.
- India has over 1.81 lakh bank branches and 17.36 lakh Business Correspondents, with 99.92% of villages having a banking outlet within 5 km.
- Cumulative Direct Benefit Transfer stands at Rs 52,89,019 crore across 320 schemes and 56 ministries as on 10 August 2026.
- PMSBY has 58.66 crore gross enrolments and PMJJBY 27.78 crore as on 30 June 2026.
- UPI processed 2,365.8 crore transactions worth Rs 29,87,880.49 crore in July 2026, across 741 live banks.

CBDC-based food subsidy transfer launched under PMGKAY in Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli

14 Aug

- The Government launched Central Bank Digital Currency-based Direct Benefit Transfer under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana in the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli on 14 August 2026.
- Food subsidy is credited as programmable Digital Rupee tokens into a beneficiary's CBDC wallet instead of a conventional bank account, and can then be spent only at empanelled merchants on foodgrains — smartphone users paying by QR code and feature-phone users through an OTP-based mechanism.

- The two UTs become the first in the country to operationalise food subsidy transfers to all eligible PMGKAY beneficiaries in CBDC form; earlier pilots ran in Gujarat from 15 February 2026 and Puducherry from 26 February 2026.
- The launch was led by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi with Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria and Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan; the government describes it as the first large-scale application of CBDC in a Central Government welfare programme.
- Supporting figures cited: DBT has saved over Rs 4 lakh crore by reducing leakages; more than 59 crore Jan Dhan accounts hold deposits exceeding Rs 3.10 lakh crore; and UPI processed over 2,400 crore transactions worth more than Rs 30 lakh crore in July 2026, accounting for nearly 49% of global real-time digital payment transactions.

Qatar-India postal remittance on PosTransfer powered by UPI goes live

17 Aug

- A postal remittance corridor from Qatar to India, built on PosTransfer powered by UPI, became operational at Qatar Post outlets on 15 August 2026.
- It was built by Qatar Post, India Post, the Universal Postal Union's Interconnection Platform (UPU-IP) and NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL).
- A sender walks into a Qatar Post outlet, supplies the recipient's UPI ID and identification details, and the money is credited instantly to the recipient's UPI-enabled bank account in India.
- Transactions run from QAR 10 to QAR 4,000, capped at the equivalent of Rs 1,00,000 per transaction, on a flat charge of QAR 15.
- India Post is negotiating further PosTransfer powered by UPI corridors with other national postal operators.

Regional Rural Banks Post Record Rs 10,176 Crore Net Profit in FY 2025-26

25 Aug

- A review meeting on Regional Rural Bank performance, chaired by the Secretary, Department of Financial Services, recorded an all-time high consolidated net profit of Rs 10,176 crore for RRBs in FY 2025-26, up from Rs 6,820 crore in FY 2024-25.
- The total business of all 28 RRBs crossed Rs 13.5 lakh crore, surpassing the business level of a few individual Public Sector Banks; 28 RRBs now operate 22,273 branches across 26 States and 3 Union Territories, covering about 700 districts.
- Gross and Net Non-Performing Assets fell to all-time lows of 5.3 per cent and 2.1 per cent respectively, while the Credit-Deposit Ratio reached an all-time high of 75.2 per cent.
- RRBs opened over 54.98 lakh new Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts during FY 2025-26 and met all targets and sub-targets prescribed under Priority Sector Lending.
- The meeting was attended by the Chairman of NABARD, the Chairpersons of all 28 RRBs, officials of the Department of Financial Services, Sponsor Banks, the Reserve Bank of India and SIDBI; sponsor banks were urged to strengthen their RRBs' IT infrastructure.

12. Economy

12 articles

Samudra Manthan: Rs 84,084 Crore National Offshore Exploration Scheme Targets 600 MMTOE

03 Aug

- Samudra Manthan, the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, was approved on 31 July 2026 with a Phase-I outlay of Rs 84,084 crore up to FY 2030-31 to open up India's deepwater and ultra-deepwater hydrocarbon basins.
- It works through four components: Rs 28,534 crore for 2D and 3D seismic data acquisition and AI-assisted reprocessing, Rs 43,200 crore to drill 60 deepwater and ultra-deepwater wells on a risk-sharing basis, Rs 10,000 crore for shared offshore infrastructure and Rs 2,000 crore for an Oil and Gas Manufacturing and Services Zone.
- The scheme targets an addition of over 600 MMTOE of reserves, taking the resource base from 1.6 billion to 2.2 billion tonnes of oil equivalent, and raising annual domestic production from about 62 MMTOE to 80 MMTOE.
- It follows a decade of licensing reform — HELP and OALP in 2016, the shift from production sharing to revenue sharing contracts, and the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 — and the opening of over one million sq km of the Exclusive Economic Zone after more than 99 per cent of 'No-Go' areas were removed.

Centre Notifies Inventory-Based Cross-Border E-Commerce Export Framework Under FTP 2023

05 Aug

- The Government operationalised the Inventory-based Cross-border E-Commerce Export Framework under the Foreign Trade Policy 2023 through Notification No. 27/2026-27 and Public Notice No. 25/2026-27, both dated 5 August 2026.
- It follows an FDI Policy amendment through Press Note No. 3 (2026 Series), which permits inventory-based e-commerce operations exclusively for exports.
- Eligible e-commerce entities may undertake export-only inventory operations through a registered Exporter-on-Record, which procures from Indian Sellers-on-Record against confirmed overseas orders.
- Export inventory may be procured only against confirmed export orders, must be segregated and tracked through a digital repository, and cannot be diverted to the domestic market.
- The framework lets Indian sellers delegate customs formalities, destination-country compliance, testing, certification, packaging, fulfilment and reverse logistics to the Exporter-on-Record.

E-Samudra Launched as Single Digital Window for India's Maritime Services

08 Aug

- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched E-Samudra in Mumbai, a comprehensive digital platform integrating services for seafarers, shipping companies, ports and other maritime stakeholders.
- The platform was inaugurated at a national stakeholder interaction organised by the Directorate General of Maritime Administration under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- E-Samudra brings maritime services into a single digital window with end-to-end workflows, online payments, real-time tracking and digitally issued certificates.
- India's active seafarer workforce grew from about 1.03 lakh in 2013 to more than 3.23 lakh in 2025.
- India is the second-largest supplier of seafarers globally and the world's leading ship recycling destination.

India Becomes the World's Leading Ship Recycling Nation with 35.4% Global Share

11 Aug

- India became the world's leading ship recycling nation in 2025, according to UNCTAD.

- India's global market share rose from 30.1% in 2024 to 35.4% in 2025.
- Recycling volume grew from 1.86 million gross tonnes to 2.99 million gross tonnes, close to 60% growth.
- The Maritime India Vision 2030 target of becoming the world's leading ship recycling nation was achieved five years ahead of schedule.
- The Alang-Sosiya cluster in Gujarat accounts for about 98% of India's ship recycling activity.

India's Power Capacity Touches 552 GW; Non-Fossil Share Crosses 54 Percent

13 Aug

- India's total installed power capacity stood at around 552 GW in July 2026, up from 249 GW in 2014, with non-fossil capacity at 300.50 GW as on 31 July 2026 — over 54% of the total.
- Solar leads the renewable mix at 164.59 GW (31 July 2026), followed by wind at 58.14 GW, hydro at 57.24 GW, bio-power at 11.75 GW and nuclear at 8.78 GW.
- Four large approvals in 2026 reshape the pipeline: a Rs 37,500 crore surface coal/lignite gasification scheme (May 2026), the Rs 5,070 crore Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana and the Rs 84,084 crore 'Samudra Manthan' offshore exploration scheme (both 31 July 2026), and the Rs 23,731 crore GOBARdhan circular bioenergy scheme (6 August 2026).
- The 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam achieved first criticality on 6 April 2026, and India targets 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047 with Rs 20,000 crore earmarked for Small Modular Reactors.
- Coal still meets nearly 55% of primary energy needs and over 70% of electricity generation; production was 1,040.08 MT in FY2025-26 against 609.18 MT in FY2014-15, while thermal plants' coal imports fell about 27.4% to 45.4 MT.

NITI Aayog Report Picks Chemicals, Textiles, Telecom Gear and Solar PV for Manufacturing Push

13 Aug

- NITI Aayog has released 'Key Sectors to Position India as a Global Manufacturing Hub', analysing four sectors — chemicals, textiles, telecom and networking equipment, and solar photovoltaic manufacturing — with reports on eight more sectors to follow.
- The study runs in four phases: shortlisting sectors by relative attractiveness, a three-pronged assessment of market potential, competitiveness and strategic relevance, international benchmarking, and actionable recommendations.
- Textiles contribute about 2% of national GDP, 11% of manufacturing gross value added and 9% of merchandise exports, employ more than 45 million people and made India the sixth-largest textile exporter with US$ 37.7 billion of exports in fiscal 2025.
- India is the world's second-largest telecom market with over 1.2 billion subscribers, about 85% telecom penetration and nearly 75% internet usage; the National Telecom Policy 2025 targets doubling the sector's GDP contribution and exports and creating one million jobs by 2030.
- India had 106 GW of installed solar capacity by March 2025 and needs about 174 GW more to reach the 2030 target of 280 GW; the domestic PV market of Rs 32,400 crore is projected to grow at 17-20% CAGR to fiscal 2030.

MMDR Amendment Act, 2026 Bars Fresh State Levies on Mineral Rights

18 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder explains the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026, which amends the MMDR Act, 1957 to create a uniform fiscal framework for minerals by barring State Governments from imposing fresh taxes, cesses or levies on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands except on conditions prescribed by the Central Government.
- The change is made through a new Section 9D. Section 13 is simultaneously amended so that the Central Government can frame the rules laying down those conditions and restrictions.

- Levies not paid or collected by a State before the amendment takes effect become invalid, but amounts already deposited or recovered are not refundable.
- States are stated to retain nearly 90 percent of mining-sector revenue, which reached about Rs 1,14,549.28 crore in 2025-26, and the roughly 50 minor minerals such as sand, gravel, granite and marble stay entirely under State control.
- The Backgrounder situates the Act in a decade of mineral-sector reform: auctions since 2015, the National Critical Mineral Mission with a Rs 16,300 crore outlay, 656 District Mineral Foundations and a nearly 200-fold rise in exploration activity.

Government Approves Incentive Scheme to Expand Domestic PNG Connections from September 2026

18 Aug

- The Government has approved an Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections, effective from 1 September 2026, to speed up the conversion of unbilled connections into working ones and extend piped natural gas to new areas.
- India currently has 1.74 crore domestic PNG connections. Eligible City Gas Distribution entities will receive an additional 200 standard cubic metres of domestically produced, lower-priced APM gas for every incremental billed domestic PNG connection achieved above a threshold set for their Geographical Area.
- The scheme runs in two tranches over six months. The extra APM gas replaces costlier imported LNG that CGD entities buy for their CNG transport segment, cutting their gas-sourcing costs.
- The resulting savings are expected to shorten the payback period on capital spent per domestic PNG connection from about ten years to roughly three.
- It sits alongside an Accelerated Approval Framework and standardised right-of-way charges under the Natural Gas and Petroleum Distribution Order, 2026, a push for States to cut VAT on natural gas to 5 percent, National PNG Drive 2.0 and a unified PNG registration portal under development.

Makhana Sector: National Board, Rs 476 Crore Scheme and Record Output

19 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder released on 19 August 2026 sets out the status of India's makhana (fox nut) sector, which is anchored by the National Makhana Board announced in the Union Budget 2025-26 and formally launched in Bihar on 15 September 2025.
- A Central Sector Scheme for the Development of Makhana carries an outlay of Rs 476.03 crore for 2025-26 to 2030-31, with Rs 30 crore approved for 2025-26 and Rs 90 crore for 2026-27.
- India's makhana output is placed at 63,910 MT in 2024-25 (final estimate) and 80,590 MT in 2025-26 (Second Advance Estimates); Bihar alone produced 60,000 MT in 2025-26.
- Bihar accounts for nearly three-fourths of Indian production and about 80-85 per cent of global supply, concentrated in the Kosi basin districts of Supaul, Saharsa and Madhepura.
- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade created a separate HSN code for popped makhana in 2025; India exported 7,264.89 MT worth Rs 19,296.08 lakh in 2025-26.

MMDR Amendment Act 2026: Centre Curbs State Levies on Mineral Rights

19 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder issued on 19 August 2026 explains the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026, which restricts state levies on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands in order to create a uniform and predictable fiscal regime for major minerals.

- The government's position is that states currently impose about 14 kinds of taxes, charges, fees and levies on mining — some taxes on mineral-bearing lands running as high as 20 per cent — and that this cascades into the cost of steel, cement, power and infrastructure.
- The Act is stated not to reduce state revenue: states continue to receive royalty, auction premium, District Mineral Foundation payments and their share of GST, and roughly 90 per cent of mining revenue keeps accruing to them.
- Minor minerals — nearly 50 of them, including sand, gravel, clay, silica, granite, marble, gypsum and laterite — remain entirely with the states, whose regulatory and taxing powers over them are untouched.
- The backgrounder also compiles a decade of mineral-sector data: 723 major mineral blocks auctioned across 17 states since 2015, a record 212 in FY 2025-26, and India ranking second globally in limestone, third in zinc, fourth in iron ore and fifth in bauxite.

MMDR Amendment Act 2026 notified, restricting State levies on mineral rights

20 Aug

- Steel Authority of India Limited welcomed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026, notified by the Central Government on 17 August 2026.
- SAIL described the amendment as providing greater clarity and uniformity in mineral taxation and levies and as addressing pending retrospective levies, giving the mining industry fiscal predictability.
- The amendment restricts States from imposing tax, cess or other levies on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands except as the Central Government may prescribe, and invalidates unpaid or unrecovered levies accrued before it takes effect, while amounts already paid are not refunded.
- It responds to the Supreme Court's nine-judge ruling of 25 July 2024 in Mineral Area Development Authority v. Steel Authority of India, which held by 8:1 that royalty under the MMDR Act, 1957 is not a tax and that States may tax mineral rights and mineral-bearing land under Entries 49 and 50 of the State List.
- SAIL, which runs substantial captive iron ore and coal mines, expects improved mine viability to let it sell additional iron ore into the domestic market and strengthen supply to the Indian steel industry.

Rs 62,500 Crore Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme Notified to Succeed Electronics PLI

21 Aug

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) on 21 August 2026 with a budgetary outlay of Rs 62,500 crore.
- It succeeds the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing, whose tenure ended on 31 March 2026, and runs for five years from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.
- The scheme has two target segments: TS1 incentivises mobile phone manufacturing generally at 2.25 to 5 per cent, while TS2 supports Indian-owned brands at 5 per cent with an additional 3 per cent for Indian design and R&D.
- An extra incentive of up to 1.5 per cent is available in both segments for domestic sourcing of key components, provided such components are localised for at least 25 per cent of the units made in a financial year.
- Expected outcomes are cumulative production of about Rs 39 lakh crore over the scheme period and around 60,000 direct jobs.

13. National

11 articles

India Declared Free of LWE-Affected Districts as Naxal Violence Falls to Record Low

01 Aug

- India became effectively free of Left Wing Extremism-affected districts on 31 March 2026 — a target set on 24 August 2024 and achieved on schedule, per a PIB Backgrounder released 1 August 2026.
- LWE-affected districts fell from 126 in 2014 to zero in 2026; the 'most-affected' category fell from 35 districts to zero over the same period.
- Naxal-related violent incidents fell from 870 (2014) to 33 (as on 29 July 2026); fatalities fell from 310 to 11 over the same period.
- The transformation combined security operations (SAMADHAN doctrine, elite forces), infrastructure expansion (roads, mobile towers, banking), and welfare/rehabilitation for surrendered cadres.

CBN Dismantles Inter-State Counterfeit Drug Network in Bihar Under Operation Vajra

01 Aug

- Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN), Madhya Pradesh Unit, dismantled an inter-state counterfeit-drug and spurious-medicine network in Gaya and Masaurhi (Patna), Bihar, under 'Operation Vajra', following the mastermind's arrest on 22 July 2026.
- The operation seized 8 illegal godowns and dismantled an illicit manufacturing unit, recovering 21,373 unauthorised Buprenorphine ampoules along with Tramadol tablets, Codeine syrup, and lakhs of counterfeit non-NDPS medicine units.
- CBN's Madhya Pradesh Unit has booked 90 cases and arrested 121 suspects in the current calendar year, including 3 illicit lab busts.

India Records 20,138 Organ Transplants in 2025; NOTTO Launches e-Pratyaropan Platform

03 Aug

- The 16th Indian Organ Donation Day was observed on 3 August 2026 at a national event organised by the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in New Delhi.
- The NOTTO Annual Report 2025-26 records 20,138 organ transplants in 2025 — the highest ever in a single year, a fourfold rise from 4,990 in 2013 and 6.5 per cent above the 18,911 recorded in 2024.
- India ranks third worldwide in total organ transplants after the United States and China, and retains first position globally in living donor transplants; deceased donor transplants rose more than fourfold from 837 in 2013 to 3,526 in 2025.
- The occasion saw the launch of the Jug Jug Jiyo Abhiyaan awareness campaign, the e-Pratyaropan unified digital platform and the NOTTO mobile application, and the release of the National Brain Stem Death Certification Guidelines and the National Guidelines on Swap Transplantation.
- Aadhaar-verified organ donation pledges have crossed five lakh since the national digital pledge portal was launched in 2023, with over 2.58 lakh citizens pledging during the year.

India notifies 11 more international ports for e-Visa entry, taking the total to 88

10 Aug

- The Government of India has notified 11 more International Ports enabling e-Visa holder foreigners to enter India — nine land ports and two airports.

- With this addition, the total number of International Ports allowing entry of e-Visa holders rises to 88, comprising 37 airports, 38 seaports and 13 land ports.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs noted that India processes approximately 95% of e-Visa applications in less than 72 hours.
- The Ministry framed the step as part of a series of measures to liberalise, streamline and simplify the visa regime while strengthening technological infrastructure for internal security.

80th Independence Day to mark 150 years of Vande Mataram, sung from Red Fort for first time

10 Aug

- India will mark its 80th Independence Day on 15 August 2026, with the Prime Minister leading celebrations from the Red Fort, Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh announced at a press conference on 10 August 2026.
- As 2026 marks 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', the National Song will be sung from the ramparts of the Red Fort for the first time, on the Prime Minister's arrival, before he unfurls the National Flag and addresses the nation.
- The celebrations carry two themes — '150 Years of Vande Mataram' and 'Yuva Shakti for Viksit Bharat@2047'; 2,500 NCC cadets and MY Bharat volunteers will form on Gyanpath opposite the rampart, and an Indian Air Force Mi-17 will carry a commemorative banner and shower flower petals.
- Approximately 5,000 Special Guests have been invited across categories ranging from PM Internship Scheme interns and Startup India Seed Fund startups to PM SVANidhi street vendors, PM Vishwakarma artisans and urban sanitation workers, along with over 1,500 Delhi-based people in traditional attire from various States and UTs.
- Band performances by the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, NCC and central armed police forces are being held at 343 locations pan-India from 8 to 15 August 2026, and the seating enclosures have been named after major lakes of India — after Republic Day 2026 named them after rivers.

80th Independence Day at Red Fort to Mark 150 Years of Vande Mataram

13 Aug

- The 80th Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort on 15 August 2026 commemorate 150 years of the National Song 'Vande Mataram' and the theme 'Yuva Shakti for Viksit Bharat@2047'.
- 'Vande Mataram' will be rendered at the Red Fort celebrations for the first time — sung by all present after the Rashtriya Salute, and again by NCC cadets and MY Bharat volunteers at the close of the Prime Minister's address.
- The Indian Army is the coordinating service this year; the Guard of Honour comprises one officer and 24 personnel each from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Delhi Police.
- Flag hoisting will be synchronised with a 21-Gun Salute by the 1721 Field Battery (Ceremonial) using indigenous 105 mm Light Field Guns, with two IAF Mi-17 helicopters showering flower petals.
- About 2,500 NCC cadets and MY Bharat volunteers will form the words on Gyanpath, and around 5,000 special guests drawn from scheme beneficiaries and workers have been invited.

PM's 80th Independence Day Address Sets 'Sapt Dhara' Roadmap for Viksit Bharat 2047

15 Aug

- Addressing the nation from the Red Fort on the 80th Independence Day, the Prime Minister set out a seven-part framework called 'Sapt Dhara' — seven streams of strength meant to drive India towards a developed nation by 2047.
- The seven streams are manufacturing power, agriculture and food production, technology and innovation, Gati Shakti connectivity, defence power, the green and blue economy, and India's soft power.

- The address carried a 12-year performance ledger: defence production up nearly 4 times, electronics manufacturing 7 times, railway coach production 21 times, mobile phone production 35 times and digital transactions about 100 times.
- Ambition targets were framed for the private sector too — 50 Indian companies in the Fortune 500 within a decade, one Indian bank among the world's top five, and one or two Indian pharmaceutical firms among the world's five largest.
- The Prime Minister appealed to all political parties to implement the 33 per cent women's reservation, and Vande Mataram was sung from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day for the first time, in the year marking 150 years of the National Song.

Delhi Master Plan 2047 unveiled with 40 lakh new affordable homes and TOD focus

20 Aug

- Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs and Power Manohar Lal unveiled the Delhi Master Plan 2047 (MPD-2047) on 20 August 2026, in the presence of Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta.
- The plan envisages around 40 lakh new affordable housing units, including about 18 lakh along metro corridors in Transit-Oriented Development zones and about 7 lakh from relaxed redevelopment norms.
- The Land Pooling Policy is commissioned for nearly 200 sq km of planned urban expansion creating around 12 lakh new homes and a 600 km road network, with DDA building 30-metre and wider roads upfront.
- MPD-2047 uses two approaches — area-based redevelopment for brownfield areas and Right-of-Way-based planning for greenfield areas — and regularises residential buildings in 1,511 unauthorised colonies on an 'as is where is' basis, covering around 45 lakh residents.
- It also provides for conservation of about 1,500 heritage assets with a first-ever 50 TDR heritage incentive, restoration of nearly 1,700 hectares of Yamuna floodplain through 13 projects, and a Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority for integrated transport planning.

Centre restricts all Chlorpheniramine-Phenylephrine FDCs for children below four

22 Aug

- The Government has restricted the manufacture, sale and distribution of all Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs) containing Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Phenylephrine Hydrochloride, requiring a warning that these medicines shall not be used in children below four years of age.
- The notification was issued under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and takes effect from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.
- It follows the recommendations of an Expert Committee and the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), which noted risks to children under four and the availability of safer alternatives.
- An earlier notification dated 15 April 2025 [S.O. 1717(E)] had restricted certain such FDCs; the new notification extends the requirement to all formulations containing the two ingredients.
- Manufacturers must display the warning 'Fixed Dose Combination shall not be used in children below four years of age' on the label, the package insert and all promotional literature.

India Post launches upgraded Dak MITRA and Dak Sewa apps, opens 14 redesigned post offices

24 Aug

- The Department of Posts released upgraded versions of the Dak MITRA and Dak Sewa mobile applications and inaugurated 14 renovated post office buildings on 24 August 2026.

- Dak MITRA — Mobile Interface for Transactions and Rural Assistance — is a unified operational platform for more than 1.4 lakh Branch Post Offices, running on Android handheld devices so Branch Postmasters can carry out paperless, real-time postal and financial transactions.
- Dak Sewa gives citizens 24x7 access to tracking, booking, complaints, post office and PIN code locators and financial calculators, in 23 Indian languages through BHASHINI.
- Both were built indigenously by the Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology on the Advanced Postal Technology platform, as part of the DoP IT 2.0 modernisation programme.
- Post office buildings are being redesigned under a Design Manual prepared with the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi: 40 post offices across 17 states were taken up as a proof of concept, 27 are complete, and the programme is to be extended to 60 more this financial year.

Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026 notified; IST becomes the legal time reference

30 Aug

- The Department of Consumer Affairs notified the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026 on 27 August 2026.
- The Rules make Indian Standard Time the common time reference across the country for legal, administrative, commercial and other official purposes.
- They come into force 180 days after publication in the Official Gazette, giving departments and businesses time to reconfigure systems.
- The Rules provide for use of NavIC and other approved Indian timing sources, reducing dependence on foreign satellite-based time.
- Under the 'One Nation, One Time' initiative, a White Rabbit technology-based IST dissemination demonstration network was commissioned at the Regional Reference Standard Laboratory, Bengaluru, in July 2026.

14. Polity & Governance

8 articles

PRAHAAR: India's First National Counter Terrorism Policy Rests on Seven Pillars

12 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs unveiled PRAHAAR as India's first comprehensive National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy on 23 February 2026.
- It is built on seven pillars covering prevention, response, internal capacity, rule of law, conditions conducive to terrorism, international alignment, and recovery and resilience.
- The framework formalises real-time intelligence sharing through the Multi Agency Centre and a coordinated chain of command with forces such as the National Security Guard.
- It targets terror financing by tracing crypto wallets, choking dark web crowdsourcing and seizing assets, in line with Financial Action Task Force standards.
- An Annual Anti-Terror Conference organised by the NIA under the Ministry of Home Affairs is one of the layered oversight mechanisms.

Government removes the 12-minute-per-hour television advertisement cap in force since 2006

14 Aug

- The Government has decided to remove the 12-minute-per-hour advertisement duration cap for television channels, introduced in 2006 under the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994.
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting cites structural change in the sector: there were 62 television channels in 2006 against more than 900 now, and cable television has moved from analog with limited carriage capacity to fully digital platforms — cable, DTH, HITS and IPTV — carrying 300 to 500 channels or more.
- The stated reasons are adequate competition within the television industry and between television and digital media, where no advertisement cap applies, creating what the Ministry calls a non-level playing field.
- The decision takes effect from the date the amendment to the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 is notified in the Gazette.

ECI launches Electoral Literacy Clubs 2.0 on ECINet; CEC addresses Patna conference

17 Aug

- The Election Commission of India launched Electoral Literacy Clubs 2.0 at a conference on 'Electoral Literacy Clubs and ECINet' at Gyan Bhawan, Patna, addressed by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.
- ELC 2.0 recasts the clubs as structured, digitally enabled and year-round platforms in schools, colleges and universities, running on a dedicated ELC portal within the ECINet digital platform; a new logo and the tagline 'Learn Democracy. Lead Democracy.' were unveiled.
- The CEC also met Booth Level Officers at the Rajgir International Convention Centre, Nalanda, during a two-day Bihar visit on 16-17 August 2026 that included field visits in Madhubani, Vaishali and Nalanda.

CIC launches AppCoMS 2.0 portal for RTI second appeals and complaints

17 Aug

- The Central Information Commission launched AppCoMS 2.0, an upgraded Appeal and Complaint Management System, on 17 August 2026; it was launched by Chief Information Commissioner Sh. Raj Kumar Goyal.
- The portal handles Second Appeals and Complaints under the Right to Information Act, 2005, end to end - registration, scheduling of hearings, and issuance and uploading of decisions. AppCoMS was first introduced by the Commission in September 2016.
- New features include user accounts for applicants, Central Public Information Officers and other stakeholders linked to email and mobile number, access to case timelines and documents, and the use of Digital Signature Certificates for signing and issuing notices and orders.

Union Cabinet clears a sitting bench of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court in Ladakh

20 Aug

- The Union Cabinet decided to enable a bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir to sit in Ladakh, a decision welcomed by Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah on 20 August 2026.
- The stated purpose is to improve access to justice for citizens in remote areas of Ladakh by cutting the time needed to reach the courts, with the Government reiterating its commitment to Ladakh's development and to constitutional safeguards.
- Ladakh has had no High Court of its own since 2019: under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir became the common High Court for both the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh.

- That common court was renamed the 'High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh' by the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2021, signed on 16 July 2021.
- Article 214 provides a High Court for each State, while Article 231 lets Parliament establish a common High Court for two or more States or Union Territories — the provision that makes an arrangement like this possible.

Medical Devices Rules amended: loan licence dropped for outsourced sterilisation, EU added as stringent regulator

24 Aug

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has amended the Medical Devices Rules, 2017 on two counts, notified through the Official Gazette, to simplify compliance in the medical device sector.
- Rule 44 has been amended so that a manufacturer outsourcing sterilisation to another facility that already holds a valid licence under the Rules no longer needs a separate loan licence for that activity; a six-month transition period applies to the accompanying labelling requirement.
- Rule 63 has been amended to add the European Union to the list of recognised stringent regulatory jurisdictions whose approval can waive clinical investigation requirements for medical devices without a predicate device.
- The list previously recognised the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Japan; with the EU added, it now runs to six jurisdictions.
- The stated aims are reduced duplication and compliance cost for manufacturers without in-house sterilisation, faster patient access to advanced devices, and stronger international regulatory convergence.

President appoints three judicial officers as judges of Himachal Pradesh High Court

27 Aug

- The President, exercising power under the Constitution and after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, appointed Shri Chirag Bhanu as a Judge of the Himachal Pradesh High Court and Shri Bhupesh Sharma and Shri Yogesh Jaswal as Additional Judges of that Court.
- All three are serving judicial officers elevated to the bench, and the appointments were notified by the Ministry of Law and Justice on 27 August 2026.
- The notification illustrates the two distinct constitutional routes to a High Court bench: Article 217 for a permanent Judge and Article 224 for an Additional Judge appointed for a fixed period not exceeding two years.

Bihar and Jharkhand sign Sone river water-sharing MoU, ending 25-year dispute

31 Aug

- Bihar and Jharkhand signed a Memorandum of Understanding on sharing the waters of the Sone river, in the presence of Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah, resolving a dispute the release describes as nearly 25 years old.
- Also present were Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, the Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar and the Union Home Secretary.
- The agreement is expected to secure irrigation and drinking water for the Bihar districts of Bhojpur, Buxar, Rohtas, Kaimur, Aurangabad, Arwal, Gaya and Patna, and for Palamu, Garhwa and adjoining areas of Jharkhand.
- This is the FOURTH inter-state water agreement of 2026 brokered through the Inter-State Council mechanism, after the Narmada Award dues settlement (7 July 2026), the Rajasthan-Haryana Yamuna Water Project agreement (29 June 2026) and the six-state Kishau Multipurpose Project consensus (16 June 2026).
- The significance for polity is the route taken: a negotiated MoU under the Inter-State Council (Article 263) rather than adjudication by a tribunal under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

15. History & Culture

3 articles

India Hosts UNESCO Heritage Committee at Red Fort; Deepavali Becomes 16th ICH Element

06 Aug

- India hosted the 20th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (20.COM) at the Red Fort, New Delhi, from 8 to 13 December 2025.
- It was the first time India hosted the Intergovernmental Committee under the UNESCO 2003 Convention, and coincided with the twentieth anniversary of India's ratification of that Convention.
- About 1,200 delegates from around 130 countries attended the Session.
- Deepavali was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, becoming the 16th Indian element on the lists.
- Chhath Mahaparva has been sent to UNESCO as a multinational nomination prepared jointly with Mauritius.

Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 Records 8.24 Crore Selfies as Suryapath Relay Spans 54 Missions

15 Aug

- The fifth edition of Har Ghar Tiranga ran from 9 to 17 August 2026 under the Ministry of Culture, with 150 years of Vande Mataram as its organising theme.
- More than 8.24 crore Tiranga selfies were uploaded to the campaign portal; this year's selfie download also carries the lyrics and tune of Vande Mataram.
- A new global element, Suryapath Tiranga, saw the National Flag hoisted in sequence at 54 Indian Missions and Posts following the path of the rising sun — from Suva in Fiji at 1:30 AM IST to San Francisco at 8:30 PM IST, spanning more than 19 hours.
- A Tiranga Bike Rally of Members of Parliament was flagged off from Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, by Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan on 12 August, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram.
- Mass singing of both Vande Mataram and Jana Gana Mana formed part of the programmes at missions abroad, and industry bodies including FICCI, Assocham and CII joined the domestic campaign.

Sarnath Becomes India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site

26 Aug

- The Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on 25 July 2026 at the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee held in Busan, South Korea.
- It is India's 45th World Heritage property, taking the country's tally to 37 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed site — sixth in the world and second in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The inscribed property has two components: the Chaukhandi Stupa, and the Archaeological Remains of Sarnath, which include the Dhamek Stupa, Dharmarajika Stupa, Mulagandhakuti Vihara and the Ashokan Pillar.
- Sarnath was nominated under criteria (iii) and (vi) — enduring spiritual significance as one of the four principal Buddhist pilgrimage destinations, and direct association with the Buddha's first sermon.
- The site had been on India's Tentative List since 1998; the nomination dossier went to the Committee in January 2025, followed by an eighteen-month process including an ICOMOS evaluation mission.