WEEKLY PIB COMPILATION

15 Jul – 21 Jul 2026

SSC · BANKING · RAILWAY EDITION

43 key articles · 14 categories · 7 days

Compiled from Press Information Bureau releases, Government of India

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Tap a category to jump to it.

1. Sports

2 articles

PV Sindhu Wins Japan Open 2026, First Indian to Take the Title

19 Jul

- PV Sindhu won the women's singles title at the Japan Open 2026 on 19 July. She is the first Indian to win the tournament.
- She beat World No. 3 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan 21-17, 21-17 in the final.
- The Japan Open is one of the BWF World Tour's Super 750 events.

National Anti-Doping Act 2022 and 2025 Amendment Brought Into Force

17 Jul

- The Centre notified the commencement of the National Anti-Doping Act, 2022 and the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025, announced on 17 July 2026 — India's anti-doping regime now runs on statute.
- The Acts align India's framework with the World Anti-Doping Code and meet its obligations under the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport.
- They give statutory backing to testing, results management, education, intelligence and investigations across all sports.
- The 2025 amendment was passed to meet WADA's objection to government control: it guarantees NADA's operational independence and strips the National Board of oversight over it.

2. Awards & Honours

1 article

72nd National Film Awards Announced: Article 370 Best Film; Mammootty, Kartik Aaryan Share Best Actor

18 Jul

- 72nd National Film Awards (for films of 2024) were announced on 18 July 2026. Article 370 (Hindi) won Best Feature Film, Bhangaar Best Non-Feature Film and Ram-Nami Best Documentary
- Best Actor was shared by Mammootty (Bramayugam, Malayalam) and Kartik Aaryan (Chandu Champion, Hindi). Yami Gautam won Best Actress for Article 370
- Randeep Hooda won Best Debut Film of a Director for Swatantrya Veer Savarkar. Amaran won Best Direction (Rajkumar Periasamy) and Kalki 2898 AD won Best Popular Film
- Top awards carry the Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus) and Rs 3 lakh. Most craft and acting awards carry the Rajat Kamal (Silver Lotus) and Rs 2 lakh
- Jury chairs: Jayaraj (Feature), Aseem Sinha (Non-Feature), A. Chandrasekhar (Writing on Cinema)

COMPLETE WINNERS LIST: 72ND NATIONAL FILM AWARDS (2024)

Award	Film (language)	Awardee	Medal
Feature Films			
Best Feature Film	Article 370 (Hindi)	Jio Studios & B62 Studios (producers); Aditya Suhas Jambhale (director)	Swarna Kamal
Best Debut Film of a Director	Swatantrya Veer Savarkar (Hindi)	Randeep Hooda	Swarna Kamal
Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment	Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu)	Vyjayanthi Movies; Nag Ashwin Singireddy	Swarna Kamal
Best Feature Film Promoting	Captain Miller (Tamil)	Sathya Jyothi Films; Arun Matheswaran	Rajat

Award	Film (language)	Awardee	Medal
National, Social and Environmental Values			Kamal
Best Children's Film	35 - Chinna Katha Kaadu (Telugu)	S Originals & Waltair Productions; Nanda Kishore Emani	Swarna Kamal
Best Direction	Amaran (Tamil)	Rajkumar Periasamy	Swarna Kamal
Best Actor in a Leading Role (shared)	Bramayugam (Malayalam) / Chandu Champion (Hindi)	Mammootty / Kartik Aaryan	Rajat Kamal
Best Actress in a Leading Role	Article 370 (Hindi)	Yami Gautam	Rajat Kamal
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Bhakshak (Hindi)	Sanjay Mishra	Rajat Kamal
Best Actress in a Supporting Role (shared)	Maharaja (Tamil) / Mithya (Kannada)	Sachana Namidass / Ropashree Varkady	Rajat Kamal
Best Child Artist (shared)	Mithya (Kannada) / 35 - Chinna Katha Kaadu (Telugu) / Onko Ki Kothin (Bengali)	Athish S Shetty / Arundev Pothula / Riddhiman Banerjee, Tapomoy Deb, Gitashree Chakraborty	Rajat Kamal
Best Male Playback Singer	Gharat Ganpati (Marathi)	Abhay Jodhpurkar (Navasachi Gauri Mazi)	Rajat Kamal
Best Female Playback Singer	A. R. M (Malayalam)	Vaikom Vijayalakshmi (Angu Vaana Konilu)	Rajat Kamal
Best Cinematography	Bramayugam (Malayalam)	Shehnad Jalal	Rajat Kamal
Best Screenplay (Original)	Pushpa: The Rule Part-02 (Telugu)	Bandreddi Sukumar	Rajat Kamal
Best Screenplay (Adapted)	Swargandharva Sudhir Phadke (Marathi)	Yogesh Deshpande	Rajat Kamal
Best Screenplay (Dialogue)	Lucky Baskhar (Telugu)	Venky Atluri	Rajat Kamal
Best Sound Design	Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 (Hindi)	Manas Choudhury	Rajat Kamal
Best Editing	Amaran (Tamil)	R. Kalaivannan	Rajat Kamal
Best Production Design	Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu)	Nitin Zihani Choudhary	Rajat Kamal
Best Costume Design	Pushpa: The Rule Part-02 (Telugu)	Deepali Noor & Sheetal Sharma	Rajat Kamal
Best Make-up	Committee Kurrollu (Telugu)	P Ravi Kumar	Rajat Kamal
Best Music Direction (Songs)	Article 370 (Hindi)	Shashwat Sachdev	Rajat Kamal
Best Music Direction (Background)	Amaran (Tamil)	G. V. Prakash Kumar	Rajat Kamal
Best Lyrics	Maidaan (Hindi)	Manoj Muntashir (Jaane Do)	Rajat Kamal
Best Choreography	Stree 2 (Hindi)	Vijay Ganguly (Aaj Ki Raat)	Rajat Kamal
Best Action Direction	Maharaja (Tamil)	Anl Arasu	Rajat Kamal
Special Mention	Captain Miller (Tamil) / Meiyazhagan (Tamil)	Dhanush (actor) / Suren G. (sound mix)	Certificate
Best Feature Film in Each Language			
Assamese	Juiphool	Jadumoni Dutta	Rajat Kamal
Bengali	Chalchitra Ekhon	Anjan Dutt	Rajat Kamal
Gujarati	Maaran	Cineman Productions; Abhishek Jain	Rajat Kamal

Award	Film (language)	Awardee	Medal
Hindi	Srikanth	Super Cassettes Industries & Chalk N Cheese Films; Tushar Hiranandani	Rajat Kamal
Kannada	Mithya	Paramvah Pictures & KRG Studios; Sumanth Bhat	Rajat Kamal
Konkani	Mog Asum	Radheshyam Pipalwa & Agnelo Angelo Braganza	Rajat Kamal
Malayalam	Feminichi Fathima	1001 Stories & AFD Cinemas; Fasil Muhammed	Rajat Kamal
Manipuri	Sunita	Yumnam Ajit Singh	Rajat Kamal
Marathi	Mukkam Post Bombilwadi	Vivek Films & Mayasabha Karamanuk Mandali; Paresh Mokashi	Rajat Kamal
Odia	Lahari	Jhilik Motion Pictures; Amartya Bhattacharyya	Rajat Kamal
Tamil	Raayan	Sun TV Network; Dhanush	Rajat Kamal
Telugu	Committee Kurrollu	Pink Elephant Pictures & Shree Radha Damodara Studios; Yadhu Vamsee	Rajat Kamal
Garhwali (non-Eighth Schedule)	Dholi	SC Pharmachem; Dinesh P. Bhonsle	Rajat Kamal
Tulu (non-Eighth Schedule)	IMBU	Pichchar Studio; Shivadhwaj Shetty	Rajat Kamal
Non-Feature Films			
Best Non-Feature Film	Bhangaar (Marathi & English)	Sumira Roy	Swarna Kamal
Best Debut Film of a Director	Angen (Santhali)	Ravi Raj Murmu	Swarna Kamal
Best Biographical / Historical Reconstruction / Compilation Film	Kakori (Hindi)	KSR Brothers & Minti Mishra; Kamlesh K Mishra	Rajat Kamal
Best Arts / Culture Film	Main Nida (Hindi)	Sampreshan Multimedia; Atul Pandey	Rajat Kamal
Best Documentary	Ram-Nami (Hindi)	BBP Studio Virtual Bharat; Bharatbala Ganapathy	Rajat Kamal
Best Non-Feature Film Promoting Social and Environmental Values	Piplantri: A Tale of Eco Feminism (Hindi, Rajasthani & English)	Johnsons Suraj Films International; Suraj Kumar	Rajat Kamal
Best Animation Film	Touched as Water (Silent)	JB Productions; Joshy Benedict	Rajat Kamal
Best Short Film (up to 30 min)	Hamsafar (Marathi)	Anushka Motion Pictures; Abhijeet Arvind Dalvi	Rajat Kamal
Best Direction	Statue of Unity - Ekta ka Prateek (Hindi)	Aanand L Rai	Swarna Kamal
Best Cinematography	Life in Loom (English, Tamil, Hindi, Assamese & Bengali)	Edmond Ranson	Rajat Kamal
Best Sound Design	Blue (Tamil)	T S Hari Hara Sudhan	Rajat Kamal
Best Editing	NDA (Hindi)	Manvir Jasrotia	Rajat Kamal
Best Music Direction	Parat 41 degree-chya Magavar / On the Trail of 41 degree (Marathi)	Shivpal Singh Kang	Rajat Kamal
Best Narration / Voice Over	Little Planet: A Tale of Frogs (English)	Soundarya Jayachandran	Rajat Kamal
Best Script	Obur (Hindi & Kashmiri)	Faraz Ali	Rajat Kamal
Special Mention	Bhadra-Kali Natakam (Malayalam) / Chola Dora aur Sui (Hindi)	Ananda Jyothi (Jose Antony) / Jaymin Modi & Lokesh Ghai	Certificate
Best Writing on Cinema			

Award	Film (language)	Awardee	Medal
Best Book on Cinema	Naaniruvude Nimagaagi Naadiruvude Nanagaagi: Kannada Cinemada Thathva matthu Rajakeeya (Kannada)	Kenchanuru Pradeep Kumar Shetty (publisher: Mirror Pusthaka)	Swarna Kamal
Best Film Critic	Hindi	Sanjeev Shrivastava	Swarna Kamal

Source: PIB release PRID 2286143, 18 July 2026. Cash prizes: Swarna Kamal awards Rs 3,00,000 (Rs 1,00,000 for Writing on Cinema); Rajat Kamal awards Rs 2,00,000; shared awards split the prize.

HEADLINE WINNERS: 71ST VS 72ND EDITION

Category	71st (films of 2023)	72nd (films of 2024)
Best Feature Film	12th Fail	Article 370
Best Actor	Shah Rukh Khan (Jawan) and Vikrant Massey (12th Fail)	Mammootty (Bramayugam) and Kartik Aaryan (Chandu Champion)
Best Actress	Rani Mukerji (Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway)	Yami Gautam (Article 370)
Announced	1 August 2025	18 July 2026

71st edition: announced 1 August 2025, presented 23 September 2025. Its Dadasaheb Phalke Award (for 2023) went to Mohanlal.

3. Appointments

2 articles

Harjit Singh Grewal takes charge as Chairman, National Commission for Minorities

21 Jul

- Harjit Singh Grewal, a Punjab BJP leader, assumed office as Chairman of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) on 21 July 2026, for a three-year term.
- S. Munawari Begum, already a Member, took over as Vice Chairperson on 20 July 2026; Glenn Souza Ticlo joined as the Member for the Christian community.
- The chair had been vacant since Iqbal Singh Lalpura's term ended in April 2025.
- NCM is a statutory body under the NCM Act, 1992, for the six notified minorities — Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains.

Dr Srinivasa Kumar Tummala Appointed Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, for Two Years

16 Jul

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved Dr Srinivasa Kumar Tummala as Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), for two years.
- He was head of the IOTWMS Secretariat of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in Perth, Australia. Earlier, from August 2020, he was Director of INCOIS, Hyderabad.
- He was Project Manager for India's tsunami early warning system at INCOIS, set up after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

4. Ranks & Reports

1 article

NITI Aayog's First Investment Friendliness Index: Gujarat Tops, Five States 'Top Performers'

17 Jul

- NITI Aayog released its first Investment Friendliness Index (IFI): Gujarat ranks first, and Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Odisha are the five 'Top Performers'.
- The index covers all 28 states and 8 UTs on 8 pillars and 84 indicators, mixing secondary data with an investor perception survey.
- Peer-group toppers: Gujarat (Large States), Uttarakhand (Hilly and North-Eastern States), Goa (UTs and City States).
- It was announced in the Union Budget 2025-26 after the PM asked NITI Aayog at the 9th Governing Council meeting (July 2024) to draft an Investment-Friendly Charter.

RESULTS

Group	1st	2nd	3rd
Overall / Large States	Gujarat (56.6)	Maharashtra (53.7)	Tamil Nadu (53.3)
Hilly and North-Eastern States	Uttarakhand	Assam	Himachal Pradesh
UTs and City States	Goa	Delhi	Chandigarh

Source: PIB release of 17 July 2026 for ranks; scores from the NITI Aayog report as reported by ThePrint and Drishti IAS. Goa (53.1) and Odisha (52.4) complete the five Top Performers.

5. Summits & Conferences

1 article

12th BRICS Labour Ministers' Meeting in Hyderabad Adopts Declaration, Launches BRICS CONNECT

15 Jul

- The 12th BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting was held in Hyderabad on 15 July 2026 under India's BRICS Chairship. It adopted the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Declaration.
- India launched BRICS CONNECT, a platform for technical cooperation, knowledge exchange and capacity building on labour market intelligence, skills forecasting, digital employment services and social security.
- The ILO Director-General said India's social protection system now reaches 1 billion people.
- The Declaration has four priorities: social security and formalisation; women's workforce participation; employability and skills mapping; digital technologies for all workers, including gig and platform workers.

6. Schemes & Committees

12 articles

Mission Golden Spice: Rs 175.45 crore value-chain project for Meghalaya's GI-tagged Lakadong turmeric

21 Jul

- Mission Golden Spice — the Integrated Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Enhancement Project — was launched by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and Meghalaya on 21 July 2026 with an outlay of Rs 175.45 crore.
- It runs five years (2025-2030) in two phases: value-chain strengthening, then expansion and scale-up.
- Targets for 2030: raise farm-gate prices from Rs 30-40 a kg to about Rs 80, and expand the crop from about 2,500 ha to nearly 7,500 ha.
- Lakadong turmeric, from the Jaintia Hills, carries a GI tag (No. 741, awarded 2023) and has 7-10% curcumin, per the release.

SVAMITVA: drone survey done in 3.30 lakh villages, 3.24 crore property cards; scheme extended to September 2026

21 Jul

- The SVAMITVA Scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj — drone and CORS mapping of village abadi land to give owners a Record of Rights — has been extended till September 2026.
- Nationally, drone survey is complete in 3.30 lakh villages and 3.24 crore property cards have been prepared for 1.97 lakh villages (Lok Sabha reply, 21 July 2026).
- Uttar Pradesh has finished drone survey in all 90,573 notified villages; about 1.20 crore cards are prepared for ~75,000 villages (83%) and 1.01 crore distributed (as on 13 July 2026).
- An impact evaluation by IIM Ahmedabad found bank loans against property cards and Gram Panchayat property-tax collections both rose after the scheme.

STATE-WISE PROGRESS

State/UT	Notified villages	Drone flying completed	Villages with cards prepared	Property cards prepared
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	186	186	141	7,409
Andhra Pradesh	13,321	13,321	1,067	5,30,351
Arunachal Pradesh	3,647	3,647	0	0
Assam	946	946	0	0
Chhattisgarh	15,791	15,791	3,921	3,20,313
Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman Diu	80	80	75	4,397
Delhi	31	31	30	8,575
Goa	410	410	410	6,72,646
Gujarat	14,951	14,900	11,624	18,62,759
Haryana	6,260	6,260	6,260	25,15,646
Himachal Pradesh	15,196	14,285	364	5,419
Jammu and Kashmir	4,497	4,497	2,130	81,305
Jharkhand	757	240	0	0
Karnataka	27,753	26,098	5,071	10,60,363
Kerala	597	597	0	0
Ladakh	232	232	225	18,788
Lakshadweep	10	10	10	13,563
Madhya Pradesh	43,014	43,014	40,731	68,19,402
Maharashtra	37,819	37,729	23,657	39,70,943

State/UT	Notified villages	Drone flying completed	Villages with cards prepared	Property cards prepared
Manipur	2,555	209	0	0
Mizoram	568	568	101	14,962
Odisha	2,724	2,724	43	3,596
Puducherry	96	96	92	2,801
Punjab	12,083	10,966	386	53,591
Rajasthan	36,277	35,975	17,085	15,68,136
Sikkim	1	1	0	0
Tamil Nadu	3	3	0	0
Telangana	5	5	0	0
Tripura	898	19	898	5,71,783
Uttar Pradesh	90,573	90,573	75,424	1,20,31,301
Uttarakhand	7,441	7,441	7,441	2,78,229
TOTAL	3,38,722	3,30,854	1,97,186	3,24,16,278

Source: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Annexure-I to the reply (figures as published, including Tripura's). The reply also carries district-wise tables for each State, not reproduced here.

Coal Gasification at 22.6 MTPA of 100 MT Target; Rs 37,500 Crore Scheme Opens for Bids

20 Jul

- The Ministry of Coal held the Pre-Application Conference on 20 July 2026 for the Rs 37,500 crore Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects, which the Union Cabinet approved on 13 May 2026. Applications close on 7 September 2026.
- The National Coal Gasification Mission targets 100 MT of coal gasification by 2030. About 22.6 MTPA is operational or under implementation: Jindal Steel ~8, Talcher Fertilisers ~2.6 and eight projects under the Rs 8,500 crore scheme ~12.
- The new scheme pays up to 20% of eligible Plant and Machinery cost, against 15% of capex under the 2024 scheme. It is expected to gasify ~75 MTPA of coal, draw Rs 2.5-3 lakh crore of investment and create ~50,000 jobs.

SMILE Beggary Scheme to Expand to 295 Cities, Rehabilitate 35,000 by 2030-31

20 Jul

- SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise), the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's umbrella scheme launched in February 2022, will extend its beggary sub-scheme from 216 to 295 cities by FY 2030-31.
- The plan for 2026-31, approved through the Standing Finance Committee, sets a target of rehabilitating 35,000 persons engaged in begging. Over 10,200 have been rehabilitated so far.
- The next phase focuses on metropolitan cities and on religious, tourist and historical places, towards a "Bhiksha Vritti Mukt Bharat" (Begging-Free India).
- Rehabilitation centres and shelter homes are registered and tracked on the SMILE-Beggary National Portal.

e-Shram Crosses 31.78 Crore Registrations; 15 Central Schemes Integrated

20 Jul

- e-Shram, launched on 26 August 2021 by the Ministry of Labour and Employment to build the National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW), had 31,78,31,749 registrations as on 14 July 2026, according to a Lok Sabha reply on 20 July 2026.
- Uttar Pradesh leads with 8.46 crore registrations, followed by Bihar (3.25 crore) and West Bengal (2.67 crore). Lakshadweep has the fewest, 2,876.

- Through the eShram "One-Stop-Solution" (launched 21 October 2024), 15 central schemes are integrated. The largest overlaps with registered workers are ONORC (24.46 crore) and AB-PMJAY (15.10 crore).
- The Code on Social Security, 2020, in force since 21 November 2025, gives gig and platform workers a statutory definition and an aggregator-funded social security route.

E-SHRAM REGISTRATIONS BY STATE/UT (14 JULY 2026)

Rank	State/UT	Registrations
1	Uttar Pradesh	8,45,90,721
2	Bihar	3,24,68,736
3	West Bengal	2,67,08,321
4	Madhya Pradesh	1,95,17,182
5	Maharashtra	1,86,61,199
6	Rajasthan	1,55,09,348
7	Odisha	1,37,65,895
8	Gujarat	1,25,87,229
9	Karnataka	1,11,31,253
10	Jharkhand	98,68,987
11	Tamil Nadu	98,30,406
12	Andhra Pradesh	88,80,562
13	Chhattisgarh	86,67,514
14	Assam	78,82,288
15	Kerala	61,47,650
16	Punjab	59,82,423
17	Haryana	54,43,732
18	Telangana	47,05,625
19	Delhi	36,73,210
20	Jammu And Kashmir	36,63,498
21	Uttarakhand	31,24,417
22	Himachal Pradesh	20,31,768
23	Tripura	9,07,613
24	Manipur	4,75,935
25	Meghalaya	3,76,827
26	Nagaland	2,48,529
27	Arunachal Pradesh	2,20,860
28	Puducherry	2,00,131
29	Chandigarh	1,92,374
30	Goa	90,653
31	The Dadra And Nagar Haveli And Daman And Diu	76,372
32	Mizoram	73,747
33	Sikkim	51,478
34	Ladakh	36,365
35	Andaman And Nicobar Islands	36,025
36	Lakshadweep	2,876
—	Total	31,78,31,749

Source: Ministry of Labour & Employment, Lok Sabha written reply, 20 July 2026. The release lists States alphabetically; ranked here.

E-SHRAM REGISTRANTS ENROLLED IN OTHER SCHEMES (14 JULY 2026)

Scheme	Enrolments	Ministry
One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)	24,46,15,089	Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution
Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)	15,10,06,017	Health & Family Welfare
Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)	8,53,50,770	Finance (Dept of Financial Services)
Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G)	6,20,45,737	Rural Development
Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)	3,96,28,336	Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)	2,25,52,084	Finance (Dept of Financial Services)
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G)	98,40,347	Rural Development
Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PMSVANidhi)	32,66,698	Housing & Urban Affairs
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)	32,04,450	Women & Child Development
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U)	24,95,467	Housing & Urban Affairs
Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)	11,75,748	Rural Development (NSAP)
Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)	1,68,147	Rural Development (NSAP)
Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)	23,967	Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying

Source: Annexure-II of the reply. It lists 13 schemes; the reply says 15 are integrated in all.

PM Dedicates 75 Redeveloped Amrit Bharat Stations Across 20 States

18 Jul

- PM Narendra Modi dedicated 75 stations redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) across 20 States in July 2026 (PIB release, 18 July 2026). Combined cost: about Rs 1,570 crore
- This was ABSS's second nationwide dedication, after 103 stations across 18 States and UTs on 22 May 2025. Madhya Pradesh had the most stations (13), followed by Rajasthan (8)
- ABSS was launched by the Ministry of Railways in December 2022. It covers 1,340 stations; redevelopment was complete at 261 as on the date of the release
- Each redeveloped station reflects local heritage: Coonoor honours the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Kalka is the gateway to the Kalka-Shimla line, and Sanchi is built around its UNESCO-listed Buddhist heritage

THE 75 STATIONS, STATE-WISE

State (stations)	Stations
Andhra Pradesh (3)	Cumbum, Mangalagiri, Rayanapadu
Assam (1)	Majbat
Bihar (1)	Shivnarayanpur
Chhattisgarh (3)	Balod, Champa Junction, Sarona
Gujarat (4)	Bhaktinagar, Godhra Junction, Porbandar, Pratapnagar
Haryana (2)	Kalka, Narwana
Himachal Pradesh (1)	Amb Andaura
Jharkhand (2)	Muri Junction, Piska
Karnataka (4)	Alnavar Junction, Badami, Bantawala, Koppal
Kerala (6)	Angamali for Kaladi, Chalakudi, Nilambur Road, Parappanangadi, Thalassery, Tirur
Madhya Pradesh (13)	Ashoknagar, Balaghat, Beohari, Bhind, Chhindwara, Harpalpur, Junnar Deo, MCS Chhatarpur, Nainpur Junction, Sanchi, Shivpuri, Tikamgarh, Vidisha
Maharashtra (2)	Baramati, Nandura
Odisha (7)	Balangir, Baripada, Barpali, Bimalgarh Junction, Kesinga, Paralakhemundi, Talcher
Punjab (4)	Jalandhar Cantt, S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), Sri Anandpur Sahib, Sri Muktsar Sahib

State (stations)	Stations
Rajasthan (8)	Barmer, Dausa, Deeg, Gangapur City, Gotan, Jaisalmer, Khairthal, Somesar
Tamil Nadu (3)	Chennai Park, Chinna Salem, Coonoor
Telangana (1)	Hi-Tech City
Uttar Pradesh (7)	Aishbagh Junction, Dhampur, Fatehpur, Modinagar, Panki Dham, Shamli, Vindhyachal
Uttarakhand (1)	Harrawala
West Bengal (2)	Haldibari, Jalpaiguri Road

Source: PIB release PRID 2286165, 18 July 2026 (complete list, 75 stations).

Modified UDAN: Rs 28,840 Crore for 100 Airports, 200 Helipads Over FY27-FY36

17 Jul

- Modified UDAN (Regional Connectivity Scheme) runs for 10 years, FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36, with an outlay of Rs 28,840 crore — it plans 100 new airports from unserved airstrips and 200 modern helipads.
- Viability Gap Funding for airlines gets Rs 10,043 crore; support lasts up to five years, tapers from year three, and route exclusivity is capped at three years.
- Nine-year tally of UDAN (as of 15 July 2026): 679 routes, 95 airports/heliports/water aerodromes, 3.58 lakh flights and over 1.68 crore passengers.
- Operational airports in India rose from 74 in 2014 to 165 as of 15 July 2026.
- Alliance Air began Daman's first direct air link (Daman-Delhi) on 16 July 2026 from the new NAMO Airport, a civil terminal at Indian Coast Guard Air Station Daman.

EPFO Launches VISHWAS, 2026 to Settle Section 14B Damages and Penalty Disputes

17 Jul

- EPFO has launched VISHWAS, 2026, a one-time scheme to settle damages/penalty disputes under Section 14B of the EPF & MP Act, 1952 and Section 128 of the Code on Social Security, 2020.
- The scheme was notified by G.S.R. 525(E) on 29 June 2026 as part of the EPF Scheme, 2026, and stays open for six months from that date.
- For defaults before 14 June 2024, damages are recalculated at 0.25%, 0.50% or 1.00% a month depending on how long the default lasted.
- Employers must first pay all statutory interest and give up any further appeal; fraud cases are excluded, and applications are filed online.

PM-NAPS North-East apprenticeship intervention extended for 2026-27 with 30,000 target

17 Jul

- MSDE extended the Special Intervention for apprenticeship in the North-Eastern Region under PM-NAPS for FY 2026-27, to be run by IIE Guwahati.
- Target raised to 30,000 apprentices (15,000 outside the NE, 15,000 within it) with an outlay of Rs 57.58 crore.
- The May 2025 pilot engaged 23,470 apprentices against a 26,000 target; NE apprenticeships rose 51% over FY 2024-25.

Cabinet Approves Semicon 2.0 with Rs 1,27,500 Crore Outlay

15 Jul

- The Union Cabinet approved Semicon 2.0 with a budget outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore to build the full semiconductor value chain in India.

- It rests on six pillars: design, machines and materials, more fabs, ATMP/OSAT, R&D towards advanced nodes, and talent.
- Under Semicon 1.0, 12 units worth over Rs 1.64 lakh crore were approved; Micron, Kaynes and CG Semi have begun commercial production.
- India's first fab is due to be commissioned in 2028; the target is a USD 200 billion domestic semiconductor market by 2035.

Cabinet Approves Rs 62,500 Crore Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)

15 Jul

- The Union Cabinet approved the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) with an outlay of Rs 62,500 crore for FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.
- It pays 2.25% to 5% on eligible sales, up to 1.5% extra for domestic sourcing of components, and 3% extra for design and R&D by Indian brands.
- MPMS follows the PLI Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing, whose tenure ended on 31 March 2026.
- India is the world's second-largest mobile phone maker, and mobile phones became India's largest export item in FY 2025-26.

World Youth Skills Day 2026: MSDE Unveils Skilling Initiatives, NCVET–ASQA Sign Letter of Intent

15 Jul

- World Youth Skills Day (15 July) 2026, theme 'Skills for a Shared Future': MSDE released IndiaSkills Competition 2026-27 Guidelines (63 skill categories), launched the WorldSkills India Champions Club and a multi-skilled caregiver programme under PMKVY.
- NCVET (India) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) signed a Letter of Intent on quality assurance in TVET, as an outcome of the Prime Minister's visit to Australia.
- A proposed Skills Outcomes Fund of about Rs 530 crore, housed in NSDC, will pay against verified certification, placement and retention outcomes for over 2 lakh youth.
- MSDE constituted a Committee on Gender Mainstreaming and extended the NAPS apprenticeship pilot in the North Eastern Region.
- A PIB backgrounder put PMKVY 4.0 at 28.17 lakh trained (30 June 2026) and NAPS at 54.41 lakh apprentices since 2016.

7. Agreements & MoUs

2 articles

India Becomes 123rd Party to WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

20 Jul

- India became a Party to the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS) on 20 July 2026, the 123rd WTO Member to deposit its Instrument of Acceptance.
- The AFS was adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), Geneva, June 2022, and entered into force on 15 September 2025 after two-thirds of Members accepted it.
- It bans subsidies to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and to fishing of overfished stocks; aquaculture and inland fisheries are outside its scope.

- India cites its EEZ fisheries rules of 2025 and PMMSY as the domestic framework for implementing it.

India-UK CETA and Double Contribution Convention Enter into Force

15 Jul

- The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Agreement on Social Security (Double Contribution Convention) entered into force on 15 July 2026.
- Indian goods get zero-duty access on about 99% of tariff lines, covering almost 100% of India's export value to the UK; India offers concessions on 89.5% of its tariff lines.
- The Double Contribution Convention exempts Indian professionals on temporary UK assignments from paying social security in both countries for up to five years.
- The first Certificates of Origin under CETA were issued on DGFT's eCoO 2.0 platform on a self-certification basis; over 50 consignments worth more than USD 140 million shipped on day one.
- The agreement was signed on 24 July 2025 at Chequers after 14 formal negotiating rounds that began in January 2022.

8. Defence

2 articles

Ex-Agniveers get 50% of CAPF Constable (GD) and Assam Rifles Rifleman vacancies

21 Jul

- A new Ex-Agniveer category now gets 50% of vacancies in Constable (GD) recruitment in the CAPFs and Rifleman recruitment in the Assam Rifles.
- Ex-Agniveers get 3 years' relaxation in the upper age limit (5 years for the first batch) and exemption from the PST, PET and written examination.
- A dedicated Ex-Agniveer wing has been set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs to coordinate their further progression.
- The quota rises from the 10% announced on 18 June 2022; the first batch of Agniveers had not yet completed its four-year term as of 21 July 2026.

IAF Joins Exercise Pitch Black 2026 at Darwin; Rafale Makes Pitch Black Debut

19 Jul

- The IAF is taking part in Exercise Pitch Black 2026, the Royal Australian Air Force's biennial multinational air combat exercise, from 20 July to 7 August 2026.
- The IAF is flying Rafale fighters, supported by C-17 Globemaster III and IL-78 air-to-air refuelling aircraft. It is the Rafale's first appearance at Pitch Black.
- The IAF also took part in the 2018, 2022 and 2024 editions.

9. Science & Tech

8 articles

CDSCO Approves Qdenga, India's First Dengue Vaccine, for Ages 4 to 60

21 Jul

- CDSCO granted marketing authorisation to Qdenga, Takeda's live-attenuated tetravalent dengue vaccine — the first dengue vaccine approved in India.
- It is approved for people aged 4 to 60 in two 0.5 ml subcutaneous doses given three months apart (0 and 3 months).
- Qdenga is made by Takeda GmbH, Germany, and will be imported by Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India; a pivotal Phase III study was run in Indians aged 4-60.
- The vaccine is approved in 42 countries including the EU and UK, carries WHO prequalification, and over 24 million doses have been distributed worldwide.
- The vaccine adds to the vector control, surveillance and case management already run under the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme.

Skyroot's Vikram-1 Reaches Orbit: India's First Privately Developed Orbital Rocket

18 Jul

- Vikram-1, built by Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace, reached Low Earth Orbit on 18 July 2026 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. It is India's first privately developed orbital launch vehicle, and Skyroot is the first Indian private company to make an orbital launch from Indian soil
- The mission is called Mission Aagaman. Vikram-1 is a four-stage rocket that can place 350 kg in LEO. It has an all-carbon-composite structure and a 100% 3D-printed liquid engine on its Orbital Adjustment Module
- It follows Skyroot's suborbital Vikram-S (Mission Prarambh, November 2022), which was India's first private rocket and the first private launch authorised by IN-SPACe
- The reforms behind it: Indian Space Policy 2023, IN-SPACe as the single-window authoriser, NSIL as ISRO's commercial arm, and the 2024 FDI caps of 74% (satellites), 49% (launch vehicles) and 100% (components) under the automatic route
- India's space economy is about USD 8.4 billion and is projected at USD 40-45 billion by 2030 and USD 100 billion by 2040. Space startups grew from 1 in 2014 to over 400 in 2026

White Rabbit-Based IST Dissemination Network Commissioned at RRSL Bengaluru

18 Jul

- A White Rabbit technology-based Indian Standard Time (IST) Dissemination Demonstration Network was commissioned at the Regional Reference Standard Laboratory (RRSL), Bengaluru, on 16 July 2026 under the 'One Nation, One Time' initiative
- It was built jointly by the Department of Consumer Affairs, CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) and ISRO, and distributes UTC(NPLI)-traceable IST using Precision Time Protocol (PTP)-based White Rabbit technology
- Secure IST dissemination between RRSL Bengaluru and NSE Chennai has already been verified, with SEBI, NSE and BSNL as partners; the target users are banking, stock markets, telecom, power, transport and digital governance
- The legal backing is the Legal Metrology Act, 2009: the Draft Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025 were released for comments on 15 January 2025

India's First Hydrogen Train Flagged Off on 90 km Jind–Sonipat Route in Haryana

17 Jul

- India's first hydrogen-powered train was flagged off by the Prime Minister at Jind, Haryana on 17 July 2026, running the 90 km Jind–Sonipat route.
- The 10-coach, roughly 3,200 hp (2,400 kW) trainset was built by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai — the PM called it the world's most powerful and longest hydrogen train.
- It is the first of the 35 trains Indian Railways plans under 'Hydrogen for Heritage' for heritage and hill routes.
- The same event dedicated or laid foundations for projects worth about Rs 14,700 crore, including the Haryana section of the Delhi–Amritsar–Katra Expressway and two medical colleges.
- The PM said railway electrification rose from about 30% (1925–2014) to nearly 99%, and cited Khelo Bharat Niti, Khelo India and TOPS ahead of the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

NITI Aayog Bioeconomy Roadmap: $691 Billion by 2035, Six National BioMissions, Rs 50,000 Crore Fund

16 Jul

- NITI Aayog released the 'Roadmap for Building India as a Leading Bioeconomy Powerhouse by 2035', targeting $691 billion by 2035 and $2.6 trillion by 2047, up from $195.3 billion (4.8% of GDP) in 2025.
- It proposes six National BioMissions: GeneIndia, AgriBio 2.0, BioX Foundry, One Health Grid, Marine Biotechnology and BioPharmaNext.
- A Rs 50,000 crore BioEconomy Growth Fund is proposed, carved out of the existing Rs 1 lakh crore RDI framework.
- At the launch, Dr Jitendra Singh announced India's first Engineering Biology graduation course. The roadmap builds on the BioE3 Policy of 2024.

THE SIX PROPOSED NATIONAL BIOMISSIONS

BioMission	Focus
GeneIndia	Health: affordable cell and gene therapies
AgriBio 2.0	Agriculture: climate-resilient crops and bio-inputs
BioX Foundry	Industrial biotechnology: AI-enabled biofoundries
One Health Grid	Pandemic preparedness: integrated disease surveillance
Marine Biotechnology	Blue economy: marine bio-products
BioPharmaNext	Next-generation biopharma: biologics, biosimilars, vaccines, advanced therapeutics

Source: NITI Aayog release, PRID 2285858

ICAR's 98th Foundation Day: 386 varieties in a year, indigenous ASF vaccine, 100 Climate Smart Villages goal

16 Jul

- ICAR marked its 98th Foundation Day (observed every 16 July) in New Delhi on 16 July 2026; India's first indigenous African Swine Fever vaccine, developed by ICAR-NIHSAD Bhopal, was among the releases.
- In 2025-26 ICAR developed 386 improved varieties across 44 crops: 94% are climate-resilient and 29 are biofortified. On the day, 43 varieties, 17 technologies and 14 publications were released.
- Goals set by the Agriculture Minister: 100 Climate Smart Villages and ICAR technologies reaching 100 million farmers by the centenary, plus Rs 10,000 crore of internal resources by 2029.
- 72 MoUs were signed with 51 industry partners to commercialise ICAR technologies.

24-Million-Year-Old Kewda (Pandanus) Fossil Leaves Found in Assam's Makum Coalfield: BSIP Study

15 Jul

- Four fossil leaves of the kewda (Pandanus) family, about 24 million years old, were found in the Tikak Parbat Formation of the Makum Coalfield, Assam — showing the lineage has survived in India for at least 24 million years.
- The study, by Harshita Bhatia and Gaurav Srivastava of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), Lucknow, an autonomous DST institute, was published in the journal Geobios.
- It links older Pandanus fossils from Europe and North America (85-66 million years ago) with younger ones from tropical Asia and Australia, marking India as a refuge for ancient tropical plants.

Biomedical Research Career Programme Phase-III Launched with Rs 1,500 Crore DBT-Wellcome Outlay

15 Jul

- Phase-III of the Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP) was launched on 15 July 2026 with Rs 1,500 crore: Rs 1,000 crore from the Department of Biotechnology and Rs 500 crore from the Wellcome Trust, UK.
- It is run through the DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance and funds fellowships and research grants from early-career to senior scientists.
- Since 2008, BRCP has supported more than 500 researchers across more than 200 institutions.
- India's bioeconomy grew from USD 10 billion (2014) to over USD 195 billion (2025) and is targeted at USD 300 billion by 2030.

10. Environment

3 articles

Five new lichen species of genus Allographa described from the Western Ghats by ARI Pune

21 Jul

- MACS-Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune described five new lichen-forming fungi of genus Allographa from the Western Ghats: A. keralensis, A. nayakae, A. paraconsanguinea, A. persistinspersa and A. semicarbonisata.
- It is the first comprehensive molecular phylogenetic study of Allographa from the Western Ghats, using three DNA markers (mtSSU, nrLSU, RPB2); published in Mycological Progress.
- Allographa (family Graphidaceae, 200+ species) are 'script lichens' whose sensitivity to pollution and habitat change makes them indicators of forest health.
- A. keralensis is named after Kerala; A. nayakae honours Indian lichenologist Dr Sanjeeva Nayaka.

JSJB 2.0 Reports 1.5 Crore Recharge Structures; Catch the Rain Drive Runs to 4 August

19 Jul

- Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain (JSJB: CTR) was launched on 1 June 2026. It merges the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative with the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign.
- JSJB 2.0 reported more than 1.5 crore groundwater recharge structures against a target of 1 crore by 31 May 2026. Physical verification is still under way.
- JSJB 1.0 (1 April 2024 to 31 May 2025) reported more than 27 lakh structures against a target of 10 lakh.

- After the PM's appeal in the 135th Mann Ki Baat (28 June 2026), a nationwide water-conservation drive is running from 4 July to 4 August 2026.

PARIVARTAN Guidelines Approved: Rs 9,585 Crore Scheme to Replace Old Trucks and Buses in Delhi-NCR

16 Jul

- MoHUA approved the operational guidelines for the Rs 9,585 crore PARIVARTAN scheme, which the Cabinet approved on 3 June 2026. The scheme replaces old trucks and buses in NCR with BS-VI or electric vehicles.
- MoRTH implements the scheme, with funds routed through the NCRPB. Incentives include MV tax concession, registration-fee waiver, 5% interest subvention, a minimum 8% OEM discount, fuel vouchers and one-time assistance for EVs.
- Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi have notified 10-year MV tax concessions. 11 OEMs holding over 95% of the commercial-vehicle market signed MoUs.
- Benefits will flow through one digital platform linked to VAHAN, V-Scrap, DigiELV and PFMS.

11. Banking & Finance

2 articles

UPI Crosses 55.49 Crore Users; FY26 Transactions Hit Rs 314 Lakh Crore

20 Jul

- UPI had 55.49 crore users onboarded as of June 2026, the Ministry of Finance told the Lok Sabha on 20 July 2026, citing NPCI.
- In FY 2025-26, UPI processed 24,161.69 crore transactions worth Rs 314.23 lakh crore, against 4,595.61 crore worth Rs 84.16 lakh crore in FY 2021-22.
- UPI now runs in 12 live corridors; the latest are Greece (P2P, May 2026), Nepal (P2P, June 2026) and Cambodia (P2M, June 2026).
- Security measures include risk-based transaction limits, NPCI's Comprehensive UPI Information Security Framework (CUISF) 2025 and the Mobile Application Security Framework.

UPI IN FIVE FINANCIAL YEARS

Financial Year	Volume (crore)	Value (Rs lakh crore)
2021-22	4,595.61	84.16
2022-23	8,371.44	139.15
2023-24	13,112.95	199.95
2024-25	18,586.60	260.56
2025-26	24,161.69	314.23

Source: Ministry of Finance Lok Sabha reply, 20 July 2026. FY26 over FY25 works out to about 30% volume growth and about 21% value growth; volume is about 5.3 times the FY22 level.

WHERE UPI IS LIVE ABROAD

Country	Live for	Partner institution	Live since
Bhutan	P2M	RMA Bhutan	July 2021
Singapore	P2M	NETS Singapore; HitPay Payment Solutions; LiquidPay Group	August 2021
UAE	P2M	Mashreq Bank (NeoPay); Network International; Magnati	April 2022
Singapore	P2P	BCS PayNow	February 2023
France	P2M	LYRA Network	February 2024

Country	Live for	Partner institution	Live since
Mauritius	P2M	Bank of Mauritius	February 2024
Sri Lanka	P2M	Lanka Pay Pvt. Ltd.	February 2024
Nepal	P2M	FonePay Payment Services Ltd.	March 2024
Qatar	P2M	Qatar National Bank	September 2025
Greece	P2P	Eurobank S.A.	May 2026
Nepal	P2P	Nepal Clearing House Limited (NCHL)	June 2026
Cambodia	P2M	Acleda Bank PLC	June 2026

Source: Ministry of Finance Lok Sabha reply, 20 July 2026. P2P = person-to-person remittance; P2M = person-to-merchant payment.

Rural Credit Backgrounder: GLC Target Rs 32.50 Lakh Crore, 28 RRBs, KCC Interest-Subvention Limit Now Rs 5 Lakh

16 Jul

- A PIB backgrounder put the FY 2025-26 Ground Level Credit target for agriculture at Rs 32.50 lakh crore, more than four times the Rs 8 lakh crore of FY 2014-15.
- As on 8 July 2026, KCC applications stood at over 1,178 lakh in cooperative banks, about 739 lakh in commercial banks and over 365 lakh in RRBs. The loan limit under MISS is now Rs 5 lakh.
- India has 28 RRBs after the 'One State, One RRB' merger and 11 small finance banks. 61,842 PACS have moved to common ERP software.
- NABARD's May 2026 RECSS found 77.2% of rural households reporting higher consumption, and about 51% borrowing only from formal sources.

12. Economy

3 articles

Index of Core Industries Rebased to 2022-23; Iron Ore Added as Ninth Industry

20 Jul

- The Index of Core Industries (ICI) has moved to base year 2022-23 from 2011-12, and iron ore has been added — core industries now number nine, not eight.
- Electricity carries the highest weight in the new series (30.932), followed by refinery products (22.572) and steel (17.584).
- ICI grew 5.0% in June 2026 (provisional), led by iron ore (43.9%); April-June 2026 growth was 3.6%.
- The old 2011-12 series is discontinued; the index will now be released on the 20th of the following month.

WEIGHTS: OLD VS NEW SERIES

Sector	Weight, base 2011-12 (%)	Weight, base 2022-23 (%)	June 2026 YoY growth (%)
Electricity	19.85	30.932	9.8
Refinery products	28.04	22.572	-4.7
Steel	17.92	17.584	4.6
Crude oil	8.98	7.43	-4.2
Coal	10.33	5.596	1.4
Iron ore	not included	4.905	43.9
Cement	5.37	4.41	9.8
Natural gas	6.88	3.841	-7.4
Fertilizers	2.63	2.731	-3.3

Sector	Weight, base 2011-12 (%)	Weight, base 2022-23 (%)	June 2026 YoY growth (%)
Overall	100	100	5.0

Source: PIB release of 20 July 2026 (new weights and June 2026 growth); old weights from the OEA 2011-12 series. June 2026 figures are provisional.

CCEA Approves National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026), Successor to NIP-2012

15 Jul

- The CCEA approved the National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 for Atmanirbhar Bharat (NIPU-2026), proposed by the Department of Fertilizers, to attract investment in new gas-based urea plants.
- NIPU-2026 separates fixed and variable costs, sets a Return on Equity band of 12% to 16%, and converts fixed cost into rupees after four years to cut foreign-exchange risk.
- The changes are estimated to save over Rs 250 crore per plant compared with NIP-2012.
- NIP-2012 produced 6 new urea units (4 PSU joint ventures, 2 private); its investment window closed in October 2019.
- India has 33 operating urea units with 269.42 LMT capacity, and imports cover the gap between output and demand.

Coal Ministry Opens Online Registration for Coal Exchanges under Coal Exchange Rules, 2026

15 Jul

- On 15 July 2026 the Ministry of Coal launched the online portal for applications to register Coal Exchanges, moving the reform from rules to operation.
- The Coal Controller Organisation (CCO) is the authority that registers and oversees Coal Exchanges; a registration stays valid for 25 years.
- Coal Exchanges were enabled by the MMDR Amendment Act, 2025, which introduced Mineral Exchanges; the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 supply the framework.
- Applicants register, upload documents, pay fees through the BharatKosh portal and track their application online at coalcontroller.gov.in/coalexchange.

13. National

1 article

Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 in force since 15 March 2026; seafarer safeguards and Gulf advisories

21 Jul

- The Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 came into force on 15 March 2026, replacing the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.
- It adds statutory safeguards for abandoned seafarers and tighter oversight of Recruitment and Placement Services.
- The Directorate General of Maritime Administration issued advisories from January to June 2026 restricting deployment of Indian seafarers to Iran and Gulf conflict areas.

14. International

3 articles

President Murmu makes first-ever Indian presidential visit to North Macedonia

21 Jul

- Droupadi Murmu became the first President of India to visit North Macedonia (Skopje, 20-21 July 2026), the second leg of State Visits to Moldova, North Macedonia and Romania.
- She held talks with President Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, addressed the Assembly of North Macedonia and opened an India-North Macedonia Business Forum.
- India will double ITEC training slots for North Macedonia, including AI courses. North Macedonia intends to join the ISA, CDRI and Global Biofuels Alliance.

Murmu Makes First-Ever Indian Presidential Visit to Moldova; ITEC Slots Doubled

20 Jul

- President Droupadi Murmu reached Chisinau on 20 July 2026, the first visit ever by an Indian President to Moldova, on the first leg of a State Visit to Moldova, North Macedonia and Romania.
- India doubled ITEC training slots for Moldovan professionals, including specialised courses in AI and emerging technologies, and invited Moldovan diplomats to AI and cyber-diplomacy courses at the Foreign Service Institute.
- The two Presidents agreed to deepen cooperation in agriculture, logistics, health and pharma, renewable energy, Digital Public Infrastructure and AI; Murmu also opened the India-Moldova Business Forum with President Maia Sandu.

Codex Commission adopts India-hosted CCSCH standards for large cardamom, coriander and vanilla

16 Jul

- The 49th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC49, Geneva, 6-10 July 2026) adopted Codex standards for large cardamom, coriander and vanilla.
- All three were finalised at the 8th session of the India-hosted Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH8, Guwahati, October 2025); the Spices Board is CCSCH's Secretariat.
- India was accepted as Co-Chair, with the European Union as Chair, of a new Electronic Working Group on risk analysis for new food products.
- Large cardamom is indigenous to India's North-Eastern Himalayan region; India is among the largest producers and exporters of coriander, but imports much of its vanilla.