WEEKLY PIB COMPILATION

15 Aug – 21 Aug 2026

SSC · BANKING · RAILWAY EDITION

34 key articles · 13 categories · 7 days

Compiled from Press Information Bureau releases, Government of India

IN THIS ISSUE

Awards & Honours	2
Important Days	1
Ranks & Reports	1
Summits & Conferences	6
Schemes & Committees	2
Defence	2
Science & Tech	4
Environment	3
Banking & Finance	1
Economy	6
National	2
Polity & Governance	3
History & Culture	1

HIGHLIGHTS

RANKS & REPORTS — 17 Aug | p. 4
UDISE+ 2025-26: 24.72 crore students, pupil-teacher ratio improves to 24:1

SUMMITS & CONFERENCES — 21 Aug | p. 4
BRICS Tourism Ministers Adopt Jaipur Declaration as India's 2026 Chairship Ministerials Converge

SUMMITS & CONFERENCES — 19 Aug | p. 5
India's BRICS 2026 Chairship: Youth Summit, Energy and Tourism Tracks

ENVIRONMENT — 21 Aug | p. 9
Ken-Betwa Link Project: Daudhan Dam, Rs 44,605 Crore Cost and 2030 Deadline

ECONOMY — 21 Aug | p. 10
Rs 62,500 Crore Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme Notified to Succeed Electronics PLI

ENVIRONMENT — 17 Aug | p. 10
India launches first Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems at UNCCD COP17

ECONOMY — 19 Aug | p. 11
Makhana Sector: National Board, Rs 476 Crore Scheme and Record Output

NATIONAL — 20 Aug | p. 13
Delhi Master Plan 2047 unveiled with 40 lakh new affordable homes and TOD focus

Contents

#	Category	Articles	Page
1	Awards & Honours	2 articles	3
2	Important Days	1 article	3
3	Ranks & Reports	1 article	4
4	Summits & Conferences	6 articles	4
5	Schemes & Committees	2 articles	6
6	Defence	2 articles	7
7	Science & Tech	4 articles	8
8	Environment	3 articles	9
9	Banking & Finance	1 article	10
10	Economy	6 articles	10
11	National	2 articles	13
12	Polity & Governance	3 articles	14
13	History & Culture	1 article	15

Tap a category to jump to it.

1. Awards & Honours

2 articles

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.

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.

2. Important Days

1 article

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.

3. Ranks & Reports

1 article

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.

4. Summits & Conferences

6 articles

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

5. Schemes & Committees

2 articles

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.

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.

6. Defence

2 articles

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.

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.

7. Science & Tech

4 articles

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.

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.

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.

8. Environment

3 articles

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.

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.

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.

9. Banking & Finance

1 article

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.

10. Economy

6 articles

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.

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.

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 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.

11. National

2 articles

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.

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.

12. Polity & Governance

3 articles

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.

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.

13. History & Culture

1 article

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.