WEEKLY PIB COMPILATION

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1. 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.

QUICK FACTS

Document	Delhi Master Plan 2047 (MPD-2047), unveiled 20 August 2026 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
Also present	Secretary, Department of Capital Development, MoHUA, Ms D. Thara; Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi, Shri Rajeev Verma; Vice Chairman, Delhi Development Authority, Shri N. Saravana Kumar
Headline housing target	around 40 lakh new affordable housing units
Two planning approaches	area-based redevelopment for existing brownfield areas; Right-of-Way (RoW)-based planning for greenfield areas
Land Pooling	nearly 200 sq km of planned urban expansion, around 12 lakh new homes, 600 km road network
Heritage	about 1,500 heritage assets to get Cultural Resource Management Plans; a Heritage Incentive of 50 TDR is introduced for the first time
Green-blue	about 1,700 hectares of Yamuna floodplain to be restored through 13 major projects, with a 52 km cycle track along the floodplain
Regulatory simplification	133 use premises reduced to 45, with a negative-list approach for residential, commercial and industrial use zones

- Unveiled by Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs and Power Shri Manohar Lal, with Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta
- First notified land pooling sector ready for implementation: Sector 8B, Zone P-II, in the villages of Gadi Khasro and Ibrahimpur
- Regularisation of residential buildings in 1,511 unauthorised colonies on an 'as is where is' basis, without layout plans, giving ownership security to around 45 lakh residents
- Delhi's master plans are prepared under the Delhi Development Act, 1957; the first was promulgated in 1962 and the plan in force before this one, MPD-2021, was notified in February 2007

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.

QUICK FACTS

Occasion	80th Independence Day, 15 August 2026; address delivered from the ramparts of the Red Fort, New Delhi.
Central framework announced	'Sapt Dhara' — seven streams of strength for the next five to seven years.
Goal restated	Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047, the centenary of Independence.
Nuclear target restated	100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047, enabled by the SHANTI Act.

- The address stated that 25 crore citizens have moved out of poverty and that India, once counted among the 'Fragile Five', is now the fastest-growing major economy.
- Vande Mataram was sung from the Red Fort on 15 August for the first time since Independence; the year marks 150 years of the National Song.
- Social security coverage cited as rising from about 25 crore people before 2014 to about 100 crore.
- Fresh appeal made for implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

2. Economy

7 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.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS), notified by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
Outlay	Rs 62,500 crore
Tenure	five years, FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31; TS2 applicants may be granted a gestation period of one year
Two target segments	TS1 - incentivising mobile phone manufacturing; TS2 - supporting Indian mobile phone brands
Incentive rates	2.25 to 5 per cent under TS1; 5 per cent for Indian brands under TS2 plus 3 per cent for Indian design and R&D
Additional incentive	up to 1.5 per cent for domestic sourcing of key components and sub-assemblies in both segments
Who can apply	mobile phone manufacturers, including Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) providers, registered in India; sales and incentives are computed brand-wise
Stated outcomes	cumulative production of about Rs 39 lakh crore and around 60,000 direct jobs

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.

QUICK FACTS

Crop	makhana or fox nut, botanically Euryale ferox, an aquatic crop of shallow ponds, lakes and wetlands; the edible part is the seed, which is roasted and popped
Growing states named in the release	Bihar, West Bengal and Assam; India is the world's largest producer
National Makhana Board	announced in the Union Budget 2025-26, formally launched in Bihar on 15 September 2025, headquartered at Purnea
Annual tranches approved	Rs 30 crore for 2025-26 and Rs 90 crore for 2026-27
Production 2025-26 (Second Advance Estimates)	80,590 MT at 2.34 MT per hectare
Bihar 2025-26	60,000 MT at 2.00 MT per hectare — nearly three-fourths of Indian output and 80-85 per cent of global supply
Improved varieties named	Swarna Vaidehi and Sabour Makhana-1
Exports 2025-26	7,264.89 MT valued at Rs 19,296.08 lakh; about 40 per cent of output is exported

- Central Sector Scheme for the Development of Makhana: Rs 476.03 crore for 2025-26 to 2030-31
- Production 2024-25 (final estimate, Horticulture Statistics Unit, DA&FW): 63,910 MT at 2.03 MT per hectare

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.

QUICK FACTS

Parent law	the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, amended by the MMDR Amendment Act, 2026
Core change	states are barred from imposing tax, cess or other levy on mineral rights or mineral-bearing lands except as prescribed by the Centre, through a newly inserted provision (Section 9D)
State levies at present	around 14 types, including royalty, auction premium, dead rent, District Mineral Foundation payments, GST and transit fees; some state taxes on mineral-bearing lands run as high as 20 per cent
Revenue position stated by the government	about 90 per cent of mining-sector revenue accrues to states, and this continues after the amendment
Retrospective element	a tax, cess or levy not paid or collected by a state before the amendment commenced is treated as invalid

- The Amendment Bill was passed by both Houses of Parliament on 13 August 2026
- States' share in total mineral revenue (coal and non-coal) reached around Rs 1,14,549.28 crore in 2025-26, up by roughly 28 percentage points over the decade
- State mineral revenue is stated to have risen about 354 per cent over the last decade to around Rs 82,366 crore in 2025-26
- Since the 2015 auction regime began, states have received more than Rs 7 lakh crore from the mining sector including coal
- Minor minerals — nearly 50, including sand, gravel, clay, silica, granite, marble, gypsum and laterite — are NOT affected; states retain full regulatory and taxing power over them

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.

QUICK FACTS

Parent law amended	the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, India's principal mining statute, administered by the Ministry of Mines.
Key provision	new Section 9D bars any tax, cess or other levy by a State Government on mineral rights or mineral-bearing lands, whether computed on mineral quantity, mineral value, royalty or any other basis.
Escape valve	such levies are permitted only in accordance with conditions or restrictions prescribed by the Central Government, for which Section 13 of the MMDR Act has been amended to give the Centre rule-making power.
Past demands	levies not paid or collected before commencement are treated as invalid; sums already deposited or recovered are not liable to be refunded.
Untouched	nearly 50 minor minerals, including sand, gravel, clay, silica, granite, marble, gypsum and laterite, remain completely under State Government control.
Untouched	royalty, auction premium and District Mineral Foundation collections continue as before.
Scale of the levy problem cited	States impose around 14 taxes, charges and fees on mining, and some had begun taxing mineral-bearing lands at rates as high as 20 percent.

– Parliament passed the Bill in August 2026 — Lok Sabha on 12 August and Rajya Sabha on 13 August 2026 — and President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent.

India's Trade Agreements in Use: FTA Export Gains and Rising Origin Certification

18 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder reports that India's trade-agreement strategy has moved from signing new pacts to using the market access they created, measured by export growth to partner markets, rising preferential Certificate of Origin issuance and a wider range of products shipped.
- India's combined merchandise and services exports reached a record US$ 863.1 billion in FY 2025-26, of which merchandise was US$ 441.8 billion and services US$ 421.3 billion; April-June 2026 exports were estimated at US$ 232.73 billion, up 11.37 percent year on year.
- The UAE was India's largest single FTA export destination in FY 2025-26 at US$ 37,359.11 million, followed among FTA groupings by ASEAN at US$ 38,416.33 million and SAFTA at US$ 25,774.68 million.
- Newer agreements are already generating origin certification: 7,885 preferential Certificates of Origin under the India-EFTA TEPA since October 2025 and 783 under the India-Oman CEPA since June 2026, helped by e-CoO 2.0, self-declaration of origin and the Trade Connect platform.
- Around ten further agreements are under discussion, including negotiations with the Eurasian Economic Union, Peru, Chile, Israel, Canada and the Maldives, while the India-Korea CEPA and India-Sri Lanka ETCA are being upgraded.

QUICK FACTS

India's exports, FY 2025-26	US$ 863.1 billion combined merchandise and services — merchandise US$ 441.8 billion, services US$ 421.3 billion.
April-June 2026	combined exports estimated at US$ 232.73 billion, an 11.37 percent rise over the same quarter of the previous year.
Largest single FTA export market, FY 2025-26	the UAE, at US$ 37,359.11 million.
Largest FTA grouping market	ASEAN at US$ 38,416.33 million; SAFTA followed at US$ 25,774.68 million.
Preferential Certificates of Origin	7,885 issued under the India-EFTA TEPA since it took effect in October 2025 and 783 under the India-Oman CEPA since June 2026.
Duty-free coverage	nearly 99 percent of Indian exports under the India-UK CETA, 99 percent under the India-UAE CEPA, 99.6 percent under the India-EFTA TEPA and 100 percent of Australian tariff lines under the India-Australia ECTA.
Pipeline	about ten agreements under discussion, including with the Eurasian Economic Union, Peru, Chile, Israel, Canada and the Maldives.

– Services account for nearly 30 percent of India's employment, which is why recent agreements bargain hard on professional mobility.

India's Coconut Sector: World's Top Producer, Record Exports and a New Promotion Scheme

18 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder maps India's coconut sector, on which about 30 million people including roughly 10 million farmers depend, and which the release describes as moving from a cultural symbol to a globally prominent industry.
- India ranks first in world coconut production with 31.24 percent of the global total and third in area with 17.90 percent; output in 2024-25 was 20,301.22 million nuts from 2.19 million hectares, at an average productivity of 9,249 nuts per hectare.
- Kerala has the largest area under coconut at nearly 7.54 lakh hectares, Tamil Nadu leads production, and Andhra Pradesh records the highest productivity, followed by West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.
- Coconut product exports reached Rs 7,038.35 crore, or US$ 794.70 million, in 2025-26 — a 62 percent jump over Rs 4,349.03 crore the previous year, against just Rs 25.3 crore in 2001-02 — with activated carbon dominating export volumes.
- The Union Budget 2026-27 announced a Coconut Promotion Scheme to tackle pest outbreaks, root wilt disease and ageing plantations, as part of a wider Rs 350 crore allocation for high-value agriculture that also covers cashew and cocoa.

QUICK FACTS

Dependence	about 30 million people, including roughly 10 million farmers, mostly small and marginal cultivators.
Global standing	first in production (31.24 percent of the world total) and third in area (17.90 percent).
State leaders	Kerala in area (about 7.54 lakh hectares, producing 5,149.87 million nuts), Tamil Nadu in production, Andhra Pradesh in productivity.
Exports 2025-26	Rs 7,038.35 crore (US$ 794.70 million), up 62 percent from Rs 4,349.03 crore; the figure was Rs 25.3 crore in 2001-02.
Nodal institution	the Coconut Development Board, set up on 12 January 1981 under the Coconut Development Board Act, 1979, headquartered at Kochi under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, working across 22 States and Union Territories; Rs 147.21 crore released for its activities in 2025-26.
MSP for the 2026 season	milling copra Rs 12,027 per quintal (up Rs 445) and ball copra Rs 12,500 per quintal (up Rs 400); NAFED and NCCF are the central nodal procurement agencies.
New scheme	the Coconut Promotion Scheme announced in the Union Budget 2026-27, within a Rs 350 crore allocation for high-value agriculture covering coconut, cashew and cocoa.

– Production 2024-25, as per Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare statistics: 20,301.22 million nuts from 2.19 million hectares; productivity 9,249 nuts per hectare.

ECMS crosses 106 approved projects worth Rs 69,548 crore; 38 plants in production

17 Aug

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology approved 31 more proposals under the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) on 17 August 2026, taking the cumulative total to 106 approved projects.
- Cumulative approved investment now stands at Rs 69,548 crore, against the Rs 59,350 crore originally envisaged for the scheme, with projected production of Rs 5,34,101 crore and 74,628 direct jobs across 15 States.
- Of the 106 approved projects, 38 plants have begun manufacturing and 16 more are at advanced stages of construction or machinery installation.
- The new approvals bring the first-ever domestic manufacturing of filters, coils and speakers, and of raw materials such as acetylene black and electrolyte additives used in lithium-ion cells.
- Capacity in several segments now exceeds domestic demand — optical transceiver-SFP at about 350%, relays at 200% and anode material at about 110%.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS), implemented by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
Tenure	six years, with an optional one-year gestation period
Original targets	Rs 59,350 crore investment, Rs 4,56,500 crore production and 91,600 direct jobs over the scheme's tenure
Position on 17 August 2026	106 projects approved, Rs 69,548 crore investment, Rs 5,34,101 crore projected production, 74,628 direct jobs, 30 products, 15 States
Approvals of 17 August 2026	31 proposals, Rs 6,844 crore, plus Rs 1,033 crore additional investment by an existing approved applicant
Event partner	the Electronic Industries Association of India (ELCINA), established in 1967 as India's first electronics hardware industry association
Coverage of the scheme	printed circuit boards, passive components, electro-mechanical components, sub-assemblies, camera modules, optical transceivers and capital goods

– Approved by the Union Cabinet on 28 March 2025 and notified on 8 April 2025, with an outlay of Rs 22,919 crore

3. Polity & Governance

1 article

31st Southern Zonal Council at Mahabalipuram takes up water sharing and asset division

20 Aug

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah chaired the 31st meeting of the Southern Zonal Council at Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu on 20 August 2026.
- The meeting was attended by the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, the Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, the Lieutenant Governors of Puducherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Administrator of Lakshadweep.
- The Home Minister said 70 Zonal Council meetings have been held since 2014 and 1,445 of 1,869 issues — about 80% — have been resolved, against an average of two and a half meetings a year in 2004-2014 and six a year now.
- The southern States agreed to resolve pending inter-State water disputes through mutual dialogue, with joint meetings involving the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Inter-State Council; Andhra Pradesh and Telangana agreed to settle the division of assets and liabilities in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Other agenda items were Fast Track Special Courts for rape and POCSO cases, the school dropout ratio — currently 9.5 nationally, against a target below 3 — malnutrition and stunting, and the Ministry of Home Affairs' three-year roadmap for a drug-free India.

QUICK FACTS

Event	31st meeting of the Southern Zonal Council, Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, 20 August 2026
Chaired by	Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah, who is ex-officio Chairman of all five Zonal Councils
Five Zonal Councils exist	Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern; the North Eastern Council is separate, created by the North Eastern Council Act, 1971
Southern Zonal Council members	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana
Attendance	Chief Ministers C. Joseph Vijay (Tamil Nadu), Chandrababu Naidu (Andhra Pradesh), D. K. Shivakumar (Karnataka) and V. D. Satheesan (Kerala); Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu (Telangana); Lieutenant Governors K. Kailashnathan (Puducherry) and Admiral (Retd.) D. K. Joshi (Andaman and Nicobar Islands); Administrator Praful Patel (Lakshadweep)
Zonal Council record since 2014	70 meetings, 1,445 of 1,869 issues resolved (about 80%)
Meeting frequency	an average of 2.5 a year in 2004-2014, now six a year
North India water sharing	five of eight river water issues had persisted since the pre-British era; a final agreement was reached five months before this meeting
School dropout ratio	9.5 nationally, with the Home Minister setting a target below 3

- Zonal Councils are statutory bodies created by the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 — not constitutional bodies
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep are not members of any Zonal Council; they are special invitees to the Southern Zonal Council
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has prepared a three-year roadmap for a drug-free India

4. Defence

1 article

India and Japan sign Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security Cooperation

20 Aug

- Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh and Japan's Minister of Defense Shinjiro Koizumi held the Japan-India Defence Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi on 20 August 2026 and signed a Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security Cooperation between the two defence ministries.
- The Memorandum frames cooperation between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Indian Navy, including information sharing on Maritime Domain Awareness, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- The two sides agreed to explore joint development in naval shipbuilding and design, to use India's production capacity under Make in India, and to conclude a ship repair arrangement providing reciprocal repair facilities.
- The shipborne UNICORN integrated communications antenna system was described as the first defence equipment transfer project between the two countries; DRDO and Japan's ATLA will deepen R&D cooperation and a Defence Industry Forum is to be convened.
- A new Working Group at Director-General / Joint Secretary level was created to coordinate operational, intelligence, equipment, technology and industrial cooperation, and the two sides agreed to accelerate arrangements for the fourth Japan-India 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo this year.

QUICK FACTS

Event	Japan-India Defence Ministers' Meeting, New Delhi, 20 August 2026
Participants	Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and Mr Shinjiro Koizumi, Minister of Defense of Japan
Document signed	Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Security Cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Ministry of Defence of India
Coverage of the Memorandum	Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and Indian Navy cooperation, Maritime Domain Awareness information sharing, Search and Rescue, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
R&D partners named	DRDO on the Indian side and the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) on the Japanese side; a Defence Industry Forum is to be convened
New mechanism	a Working Group headed at Director-General / Joint Secretary level for integrated coordination across operations, intelligence, equipment, technology and industry

- First defence equipment transfer project between the two countries: the shipborne UNICORN integrated communications antenna system
- Veer Guardian 26, the India-Japan air exercise, is scheduled this year and will for the first time bring Japan Air Self-Defence Force fighter aircraft to India
- The first trilateral naval PASSEX involving Japan, India and Indonesia was conducted in February 2026
- The second tabletop exercise of the Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN) is scheduled at Japan's Ministry of Defense in September this year
- The fourth Japan-India 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting is to be convened in Tokyo this year
- Koizumi laid a wreath at the National War Memorial, received a Tri-Service Guard of Honour, and visited the Western Naval Command at Mumbai and INS Chennai; he also called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi

5. Environment

2 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.

QUICK FACTS

Project	Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP), transferring water from the Ken basin to the Betwa basin
Status	first priority project under the National Perspective Plan for Interlinking of Rivers to enter implementation
Main structure	Daudhan Dam, 96.7 m high, on the Ken river in Panna and Chhatarpur districts of Madhya Pradesh, about 40 km from Khajuraho
Link canal	216.465 km long, taking off near Daudhan Dam and merging into Barua Sagar near Jhansi
Other components	Lower Orr Project, Kotha Barrage and Bina Complex Multipurpose Project
Total cost	Rs 44,605 crore
Foundation stone laid	25 December 2024; scheduled completion: 2030
Implementing vehicle	Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA), a special purpose vehicle set up after the tripartite Memorandum of Agreement of 22 March 2021 (World Water Day) between the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh

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.

QUICK FACTS

Document	Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) of India — the first of its kind
Launched	17 August 2026, at a UNCCD COP17 side event in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Under the aegis of	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
Published and organised by	Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)
Collaborators	IUCN, Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM), Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and the Space Applications Centre (SAC), ISRO
Ecosystems covered	Himalayan and Terai grasslands, the Thar and Banni landscapes, Deccan savannas, rocky plateaus, ravines, scrublands, coastal ecosystems and desert landscapes
Thematic sections	pastoralism, fire ecology and carbon sequestration

– UNCCD COP17 ran from 17 to 28 August 2026 under the theme 'Restoring Land'

6. Schemes & Committees

3 articles

PM-AASHA Explained: Four Price-Support Components and Rs 7,200 Crore for 2026-27

21 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder of 21 August 2026 sets out the architecture of Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA), the umbrella framework for delivering the Minimum Support Price and curbing distress sales, launched in September 2018.
- PM-AASHA has four components - Price Support Scheme (PSS), Price Stabilization Fund (PSF), Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) and Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) - each triggered by different crop and market conditions.
- Budget allocation has risen from an actual expenditure of Rs 5,437.99 crore in 2024-25 to Rs 6,941.36 crore in 2025-26 and Rs 7,200 crore in 2026-27.
- From the 2024-25 procurement year, PSS procurement of pulses, oilseeds and copra is allowed up to 25 per cent of a State or UT's production, but Tur, Urad and Masur may be procured up to 100 per cent of State production to cut import dependence.
- Procurement is executed by NAFED and NCCF with State governments, increasingly through PACS and FPOs, with biometric farmer authentication and pre-registration built into recent reforms.

QUICK FACTS

Full name	Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)
Launched	September 2018, by the Government of India, as an umbrella price-assurance framework
Objective	ensure remunerative prices for farmers while keeping prices stable for consumers, and reduce distress sales
Four components	Price Support Scheme (PSS), Price Stabilization Fund (PSF), Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) and Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)
Budget allocation 2026-27	Rs 7,200 crore
Crops under PSS	pulses, oilseeds and copra
Central nodal agencies	NAFED and NCCF, acting on the request of State governments

– PSF, though merged into PM-AASHA, continues to be managed by the Department of Consumer Affairs

PMJVM: 4,172 Van Dhan Kendras sanctioned, 12.48 lakh tribal gatherers linked

20 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder issued on 20 August 2026 sets out how the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) is restructuring the minor forest produce trade, on which India's 10.4 crore Scheduled Tribes depend for 20-40% of their annual income.
- Under PMJVM, 4,172 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras have been sanctioned and 2,911 are functional, reporting sales of about Rs 168 crore as on 31 July 2026; 12.48 lakh tribal members are linked to them.
- Minimum Support Price has been notified for 87 minor forest produce items; since 2013-14 State agencies have procured 2,67,954 metric tonnes of MFP worth Rs 693.98 crore.
- The legal backbone is the Forest Rights Act, 2006, which defines minor forest produce and grants collection and disposal rights, and the PESA Act, 1996, which vests ownership of minor forest produce in tribal Gram Panchayats in Scheduled Areas.
- TRIFED, the apex tribal marketing cooperative under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, procures at the notified MSP through State implementing agencies irrespective of the prevailing market price.

QUICK FACTS

Scheme	Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM), launched in 2021-22; nodal ministry is the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, implemented through TRIFED
Van Dhan Vikas Kendras sanctioned	4,172; functional: 2,911; reported sales about Rs 168 crore (as on 31 July 2026)
Tribal members linked to VDVKs	12.48 lakh
MFP procured by State agencies since 2013-14	2,67,954 metric tonnes worth Rs 693.98 crore

- Scheduled Tribes number 10.4 crore and draw 20-40% of annual income from Minor Forest Produce (MFP)
- MSP notified for 87 MFP items under the mission
- One VDVK = 15 Self Help Groups, roughly 300 tribal members; at least 60% of members must belong to Scheduled Tribe communities
- Van Dhan Yojana, launched on 14 April 2018, is the component of PMJVM that runs the VDVK model
- Over 5,000 haats (weekly markets) exist in tribal areas and are the primary MFP procurement points; they are being modernised in phases
- Working capital is arranged through banks, financial institutions and the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)

Bharat Taxi: India's first cooperative ride-hailing platform crosses 8 lakh drivers

17 Aug

- A PIB Backgrounder issued on 17 August 2026 profiles Bharat Taxi, India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform, established on 6 June 2025 under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.
- It was set up by eight national-level cooperative institutions — NCDC, IFFCO, NABARD, KRIBHCO, Amul (GCMMF), NAFED, NDDB and NCEL.
- The platform runs a zero-commission, surge-free model: drivers, called Sarathis, retain their full fare earnings and pay a subscription instead of a per-ride commission.
- As of 25 July 2026 it had nearly 8 lakh registered Sarathis and about 41 lakh registered customers across Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Mumbai, Jaipur, Kanpur and Pune, with a nationwide presence targeted by 2029.
- Sarathis become member-owners by buying shares of Rs 100 each — ownership rights come with shares worth Rs 500 — and have reserved seats on the Board of Directors.

QUICK FACTS

Established	6 June 2025
Registered under	the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002
Founded by	eight national-level cooperative institutions
Model	zero commission, no surge pricing, no platform or convenience fee; revenue comes from a driver subscription
Status as of 25 July 2026	nearly 8 lakh registered Sarathis, about 41 lakh registered customers
Target	nationwide presence by 2029
Policy vision it is placed under	'Sahkar se Samriddhi' (prosperity through cooperatives), the guiding vision of the Ministry of Cooperation

- Bharat Taxi — India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform
- Drivers are called 'Sarathis' and are member-owners, under the slogan 'Saarthi Hi Maalik'

7. Summits & Conferences

2 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.

QUICK FACTS

Outcome document	BRICS Tourism Ministers' Communique 2026, the Jaipur Declaration, adopted by consensus in Jaipur, Rajasthan
Chaired by	Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
Participation	nine BRICS member states at the tourism meeting, with Tourism Ministers from Brazil, Iran, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates and Heads of Delegation from China, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Russia
Same-day ministerials	12th BRICS Communications Ministers' Meeting at Pune, chaired by Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia; 14th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Ministerial at Chennai, opened by Dr. Jitendra Singh
Upcoming	BRICS Youth Ministers' Meeting on 22 August and Sports Ministers' Meeting on 23 August 2026 at Visakhapatnam, chaired by Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, involving all 11 BRICS member countries
Bilateral outcome	India-Brazil MoU on telecommunications and ICTs, signed by Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and Mr. Frederico de Siqueira Filho, Minister of Communications of Brazil
Chairship theme 2026	'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'

- Four thematic priorities of the BRICS Tourism Working Group: Artificial Intelligence and Tourism; Sustainability and Responsible Tourism; Tourism Skilling and Capacity Building; and Tourism Exchanges and Seamless Travel Facilitation

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.

QUICK FACTS

India's BRICS Chairship 2026 theme	'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'
Energy Track sub-theme	— Energy for All
Youth Summit thematic tracks	Education, Entrepreneurship & Future Readiness; Inclusive Development & Youth Wellbeing; Sustainability & Environmental Responsibility; People-to-People Cooperation & Youth Engagement
Next step	BRICS Youth Ministers' Meeting on 22 August 2026 at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
Eighth BRICS Youth Energy Summit	held virtually on 17 August 2026 by the Ministry of Power, more than 100 participants, more than 20 youth panelists
Energy Summit priority areas	Energy Security and Sustainability; Energy Access and Equity; Technology and Innovation
Organisations that joined the Energy Summit	BRICS Youth Energy Agency, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), the International Solar Alliance and IRENA
2nd BRICS 2026 Tourism Working Group	Jaipur, Rajasthan, chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Tourism; the 1st TWG was held virtually on 25 May 2026
Tourism thematic priorities	Artificial Intelligence and Tourism; Sustainability and Responsible Tourism; Tourism Skilling and Capacity Building; Tourism Exchanges and Seamless Travel Facilitation
'Friends of MY Bharat'	a digital module for Indian-origin youth abroad, announced at the Gandhinagar Youth Summit, with a 'Know Your India' section

- BRICS Youth Council Meeting and BRICS Youth Summit: 19 August 2026, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, organised by the Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- Youth Council deliberated a Draft Joint Declaration and a BRICS Youth Cooperation Framework
- BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting scheduled for 21 August 2026

8. 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.

QUICK FACTS

Report	UDISE+ (Unified District Information System for Education Plus) 2025-26
Data platform run by	Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education
Coverage in 2025-26	14.67 lakh schools, 1.03 crore teachers, 24.72 crore students
Average school	about 7 teachers and 169 students
Overall Pupil-Teacher Ratio	24:1, against the NEP 2020 benchmark of 30:1
Secondary stage GER	71.7%; Middle stage GER: 89.6%
Girls	48.4% of total enrolment; women: 54.9% of all teachers

- UDISE+ online data collection began in 2018-19, replacing the earlier manual UDISE system that ran from 2012-13
- The report is structured on the NEP 2020 5+3+3+4 stages, not the old primary/upper-primary classification