WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS COMPILATION

08 Aug – 14 Aug 2026

UPSC EDITION

32 key articles · 12 categories · 7 days

Curated from official releases, national dailies and ministry sources

IN THIS ISSUE

National	4
International	6
Economy	4
Banking & Finance	3
Polity & Governance	6
Defence	1
Science & Tech	2
Environment	2
Awards & Honours	1
Important Days	1
Business	1
History & Culture	1

HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL — 14 Aug | p. 3
Centre Notifies 40 Census 2027 Questions; Caste Enumerated After 1931

NATIONAL — 12 Aug | p. 3
DDA Approves Draft Master Plan for Delhi-2047, Replacing the Stalled MPD-2041

INTERNATIONAL — 13 Aug | p. 5
Putin Makes First Visit to Disputed Kuril Islands, Japan Protests

BANKING & FINANCE — 12 Aug | p. 10
Food Subsidy to Move on Programmable Digital Rupee in Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli

ENVIRONMENT — 13 Aug | p. 17
CAG Audit Finds Green India Mission Missed Forest-Cover Target by 97.57%

ENVIRONMENT — 12 Aug | p. 17
Centre Redefines Ganga Floodplain Norms with Three-Zone Regulatory Regime

AWARDS & HONOURS — 12 Aug | p. 18
Deepak Dhar Awarded 2026 ICTP Dirac Medal, Second Indian to Receive It

IMPORTANT DAYS — 12 Aug | p. 19
World Elephant Day 2026: India's DNA-Based Census Puts Wild Elephants at 22,446

Contents

#	Category	Articles	Page
1	National	4 articles	3
2	International	6 articles	5
3	Economy	4 articles	8
4	Banking & Finance	3 articles	10
5	Polity & Governance	6 articles	12
6	Defence	1 article	15
7	Science & Tech	2 articles	16
8	Environment	2 articles	17
9	Awards & Honours	1 article	18
10	Important Days	1 article	19
11	Business	1 article	20
12	History & Culture	1 article	21

Tap a category to jump to it.

1. National

4 articles

Centre Notifies 40 Census 2027 Questions; Caste Enumerated After 1931

14 Aug

- The Union Government notified 40 questions on 14 August 2026 for the Population Enumeration phase of Census 2027.
- Question 10 is an open-ended entry for 'Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST)/Caste' - the first comprehensive enumeration of all castes in independent India.
- The schedule seeks identification details including Aadhaar, voter ID, driving licence and passport numbers, along with digital literacy, bank accounts and place of Covid-19 vaccination.
- Population Enumeration begins on 17 August 2026 in Ladakh and the snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand; the rest of India follows in February 2027.
- Census 2027 is India's 16th census and its first digital census, conducted under the Census Act, 1948.

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

08 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs issued national security guidelines on 8 August 2026 regulating solar, wind and hybrid renewable energy projects near India's land frontiers.
- New projects are banned outright within 1 km of the International Border, the Line of Control and the Line of Actual Control.
- The belt up to 50 km from these borders is classified as a sensitive area where every project needs MHA security clearance on a case-by-case basis.
- Projects between 1 km and 20 km of the International Border additionally require a No Objection Certificate from the Ministry of Defence.
- Developers cannot hire staff from Pakistan, China or Bangladesh without prior central government permission, and must fund security measures including anti-drone systems.

QUICK FACTS

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

2. International

6 articles

Putin Makes First Visit to Disputed Kuril Islands, Japan Protests

13 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

Lebanon Becomes First Middle East Country to Abolish the Death Penalty

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

Magnitude 7.4 Earthquake Devastates Western Colombia, Strongest This Century

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

3. Economy

4 articles

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

11 Aug

- The RBI's 101st Survey of Professional Forecasters, conducted in July 2026, raised India's FY27 real GDP growth forecast to 6.6% from 6.5%.
- Retail inflation for FY27 was revised up to 5% from 4.9%; both changes are of 10 basis points.
- The current account deficit forecast was sharply narrowed to 1.4% of GDP from 2.1%, aided by stronger exports.
- For FY28 the panel sees 7% growth with 4.5% inflation — a combination economists call a 'Goldilocks' economy.
- The RBI's own August 2026 policy projection of 6.7% for FY27 remains 0.1 percentage point above the panel's.

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

11 Aug

- The Centre's debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 58.2% in FY26, missing the government's own target of 56.1% by 210 basis points.
- Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary disclosed the figures in Parliament.
- Outstanding liabilities have nonetheless fallen from 61.5% of GDP in FY21 to 58.2% in FY26.

- The FY27 target is 55.6%, requiring a further reduction of about 260 basis points.
- The fiscal deficit has narrowed sharply from 9.2% of GDP in FY21 to 4.4% in FY26 on provisional actuals.

QUICK FACTS

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

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

09 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

4. Banking & Finance

3 articles

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

13 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

Food Subsidy to Move on Programmable Digital Rupee in Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli

12 Aug

- India is set to launch a Central Bank Digital Currency-based Direct Benefit Transfer system for food subsidies under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana on 14 August 2026.
- Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli will be the first Union Territories to fully operationalise food subsidy transfers through programmable Digital Rupee tokens credited straight to beneficiaries' CBDC wallets.
- The tokens carry built-in conditions restricting their use to designated foodgrains bought from empanelled merchants through QR code scans, creating an end-to-end digital record of the subsidy.
- The model bypasses conventional bank transfers entirely, since the subsidy moves as central bank money into a wallet rather than as a credit into a commercial bank account.
- Earlier CBDC pilot initiatives ran in Gujarat, Puducherry and Chandigarh; the launch event involves Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Minister of State Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya, with the Dadra & Nagar Haveli phase to be launched remotely from Chandigarh.

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

5. Polity & Governance

6 articles

Parliament Passes MMDR Amendment Bill Restricting State Taxes on Mineral Rights

13 Aug

- Parliament completed passage of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 on 13 August 2026, when the Rajya Sabha cleared it; the Lok Sabha had passed it on 12 August 2026.
- The Bill was introduced on 10 August 2026 by the Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, and becomes law on Presidential assent under Article 111.
- It restricts States from levying independent taxes, cesses or levies on mineral rights and mineral-bearing land except as authorised under central guidelines, and invalidates past State levies that remain unrecovered or undeposited - without requiring refund of amounts already collected.
- Leaseholders may add further minerals, including lithium, cobalt, graphite, nickel, gold and silver, to an existing lease without extra payment, and the cap on sale of minerals from captive mines is removed.
- The Bill was opposed on the ground that it curtails the fiscal powers of States, effectively reversing the Supreme Court's 2024 ruling that States may tax mineral rights.

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

6. Defence

1 article

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

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

7. Science & Tech

2 articles

Government Charts 100 GWe Nuclear Roadmap With Five SMRs by 2033

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

NASA Invites ISRO to Join Moon Base Programme Under Artemis Accords

11 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

8. Environment

2 articles

CAG Audit Finds Green India Mission Missed Forest-Cover Target by 97.57%

13 Aug

- A CAG performance audit of the National Mission for a Green India (GIM), tabled in Parliament on 13 August 2026, found the mission achieved only 0.03409 million hectares of forest-cover increase against a target of 1.4 million hectares — a shortfall of 97.57%.
- On improving the quality of existing forest and tree cover the mission reached 0.114 million hectares against the same 1.4 million hectare target, a shortfall of 91.87%.
- Budgetary support over the decade 2015-16 to 2024-25 was Rs 1,149.14 crore, only 47.88% of the approved outlay of Rs 2,000 crore under the 12th Plan plus Rs 400 crore from the 13th Finance Commission.
- GIS-based checks of sampled plantation sites showed no discernible change attributable to the mission at about 70% of them; eight states and UTs did not maintain annual accounts.
- The audit covered 16 states and Union Territories and matters because GIM is the forestry arm of India's NDC pledge to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent by 2030.

QUICK FACTS

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

Centre Redefines Ganga Floodplain Norms with Three-Zone Regulatory Regime

12 Aug

- The Union Jal Shakti Ministry issued the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities (Second Amendment) Order, 2026 on August 7, 2026, gazetted on August 10.
- It defines the 'Active Floodplain' for the first time as land inundated by a flood with a one-in-five-year return period.
- A 'Regulatory Zone' covers areas flooded once every 5 to 25 years, where construction needs clearances.
- A 'Warning Zone' covers outer areas flooded once every 25 to 100 years, also subject to clearances.
- The blanket no-construction clause of the original 2016 order is replaced by a stratified, approval-based regime.

QUICK FACTS

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

9. Awards & Honours

1 article

Deepak Dhar Awarded 2026 ICTP Dirac Medal, Second Indian to Receive It

12 Aug

- Indian theoretical physicist Prof. Deepak Dhar was awarded the 2026 Dirac Medal by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics.
- He shares it with Bernard Derrida, Marc Mezard and Haim Sompolinsky for work on statistical mechanics and complex physical systems.
- He is only the second Indian to receive the medal, after string theorist Ashoke Sen in 2012.
- The medal, first awarded in 1985, is given annually on Dirac's birthday, August 8, and carries US $5,000.
- By statutory rule it is not awarded to current Nobel Laureates, Fields Medallists or Wolf Prize winners.

QUICK FACTS

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

10. Important Days

1 article

World Elephant Day 2026: India's DNA-Based Census Puts Wild Elephants at 22,446

12 Aug

- World Elephant Day was observed on 12 August 2026 with the theme 'Bringing the world together to help elephants'.
- The observance was launched in 2012 to draw global attention to threats facing African and Asian elephants.
- India's Synchronous All India Elephant Estimation (SAIEE) 2021-25 puts the wild elephant population at 22,446.
- Karnataka leads with 6,013 elephants, followed by Assam (4,159) and Tamil Nadu (3,136).
- India maintains 33 Elephant Reserves across 14 states and about 150 identified elephant corridors.

QUICK FACTS

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

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

11. Business

1 article

N Chandrasekaran Will Not Seek Second Term as Tata Sons Chairman

12 Aug

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

QUICK FACTS

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

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

12. History & Culture

1 article

Quit India Movement Day 2026 Marks 84 Years of the August Kranti

08 Aug

- Quit India Movement Day, also called August Kranti Diwas, was observed on 8 August 2026, marking 84 years since the movement was launched in 1942.
- The Quit India Resolution was passed by the All India Congress Committee at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay, on 8 August 1942, where Mahatma Gandhi gave the 'Do or Die' call.
- The phrase 'Quit India' is attributed to Congress leader Yusuf Meherally, while Gandhi's own call to the nation was 'Do or Die'.
- British authorities arrested Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Azad in the early hours of 9 August 1942, triggering a leaderless mass uprising.
- The day has no officially announced national theme; it is observed to honour the sacrifices of freedom fighters.

QUICK FACTS

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

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