WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS COMPILATION

15 Aug – 21 Aug 2026

SSC · BANKING · RAILWAY EDITION

43 key articles · 16 categories · 7 days

Curated from official releases, national dailies and ministry sources

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Tap a category to jump to it.

1. Sports

1 article

Vignesh Vermula and Saranya Devi Win Asian Junior Blitz Chess Titles in Mumbai

17 Aug

- India won both blitz gold medals at the Asian Junior Chess Championships 2026 on 17 August 2026.
- Vignesh Vermula, seeded 23rd, won the Open blitz title on tie-break after finishing level on points.
- Saranya Devi, the ninth seed, won the Girls' blitz title, with Prishita Gupta second and Shanmathi Sree third.
- The championships are being held at the ITC Maratha, Mumbai, from 16 to 26 August 2026, hosted by the Maharashtra Chess Association.

2. Awards & Honours

3 articles

Lakshmanan Meyyappan Is Guinness World Record's Youngest Male Chartered Accountant

19 Aug

- Dubai-based Lakshmanan Meyyappan was recognised by Guinness World Records in February 2026 as the world's youngest male chartered accountant, at 16 years and 141 days.
- His qualification is the ACCA, awarded by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which he began at 15 and completed in about a year.
- He has since earned the CFA charter and is pursuing an MSc in Finance.
- He works as a senior research analyst at Century Financial in Dubai.
- His interest in accounting began during the COVID-19 lockdown after his Class 10 board examinations, guided by his mother, herself an ACCA member.

National Sports Awards 2025: 17 Arjuna Awards, No Khel Ratna Recipient

18 Aug

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2025 on 18 August 2026.
- Seventeen athletes were selected for the Arjuna Award, including chess players Divya Deshmukh and Vidit Gujarathi and high jumper Tejaswin Shankar.
- No sportsperson was chosen for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, India's highest sporting honour, for 2025.
- Former footballer I. Arumainayagam received the Arjuna Award (Lifetime), and five coaches received the Dronacharya Award across the regular and lifetime categories.
- The Army Paralympic Node, Pune won the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar 2025; the list was finalised by a committee chaired by Justice (Retd.) Arun Kumar Mishra.

Jitendra Singh confers 9th National Anubhav Awards on 15 retiring officials

17 Aug

- The 9th National Anubhav Awards were conferred on 15 selected awardees at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 17 August 2026 by Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

- The ceremony was held alongside the 60th Pre-Retirement Counselling Workshop, organised by the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare.
- A record 2,141 write-ups published on the Anubhav portal between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 were considered for the 2026 awards.
- The Handbook on Pension Mitra and the guidelines for the nationwide Digital Life Certificate Campaign 5 were released at the event.

3. Appointments

1 article

Shabnam Sinha to Succeed Sunil Bharti Mittal as Airtel Payments Bank Chairperson

17 Aug

- Airtel Payments Bank announced on 17 August 2026 that Shabnam Sinha will take over as chairperson.
- Sunil Bharti Mittal steps down from the bank's board on 30 September 2026, ending a decade as non-executive chairman since April 2016.
- Sinha's three-year term begins on 1 October 2026, cleared by the board and approved by the Reserve Bank of India.
- She is already an independent director on the bank's board and chairs its Special Committee of the Board for Monitoring Frauds.
- The bank reports over 121 million monthly active users, close to 30 million account holders and more than 5 lakh banking points.

4. Important Days

2 articles

Sadbhavana Diwas 2026 Marks Rajiv Gandhi's 82nd Birth Anniversary

20 Aug

- Sadbhavana Diwas, or Harmony Day, is observed on 20 August, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, born on 20 August 1944.
- Citizens take the Sadbhavana pledge to work for the emotional oneness of all Indians regardless of caste, religion, region or language.
- Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister on 31 October 1984 at the age of 40, the youngest person to hold the office in India.
- In the December 1984 general election the Congress won 404 of 514 seats, the largest tally any party has won in a Lok Sabha election.
- His tenure produced the 52nd Amendment Act, 1985 on anti-defection, the 61st Amendment Act, 1988 lowering the voting age to 18, and the National Policy on Education, 1986.

World Humanitarian Day 2026 Observed With Focus on Protecting Health Care

19 Aug

- World Humanitarian Day is observed every year on 19 August; the 2026 theme is 'Honouring fallen humanitarians and calling for greater protection of health care'.

- The campaign, run by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), centres on the families of fallen humanitarians and uses the call #ActForHumanity.
- The date marks the bombing of the Canal Hotel in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, in which 22 humanitarian workers were killed, including UN Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello.
- The UN General Assembly formally designated the day in 2008.
- 2024 remains the deadliest year on record for aid workers with 383 killed; 350 were killed in 2025, the second-highest toll ever.

5. Ranks & Reports

1 article

NITI Aayog Report Finds 8.7 Crore Young Indians Outside Work, Study or Training

20 Aug

- NITI Aayog's report 'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047' estimates that 8.7 crore Indians aged 15 to 29 are neither in education, employment nor training - the NEET group.
- That is about 11 per cent of the 15-29 age group; roughly 88 per cent of NEET youth are engaged in domestic work and caregiving.
- The report finds that only 8.25 per cent of graduates work in roles that match their qualifications, pointing to a weak link between formal education and employability.
- It recommends universal General Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills from Class 6 to Class 12 and structured vocational 'Kaushal Tracks' from Class 9, noting that fewer than one in 12 secondary schools currently offer vocational subjects.
- Other recommendations include making apprenticeships a primary route to employment, a unified digital tracking system for learner records, industry-aligned specialisations in higher education, and skills-first hiring in place of degree filters.

6. Summits & Conferences

5 articles

BRICS Tourism Ministers Adopt Jaipur Declaration Under India's Chairship

21 Aug

- BRICS Tourism Ministers adopted the BRICS Tourism Ministers' Communique 2026, known as the Jaipur Declaration, by consensus at Jaipur, Rajasthan, on 21 August 2026.
- The meeting was held under India's 2026 BRICS Chairship and chaired by Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism; representatives of nine BRICS member states took part.
- The declaration sets out four priority areas - AI and Tourism; Sustainability and Responsible Tourism; Tourism Skilling and Capacity Building; and Tourism Exchanges and Seamless Travel Facilitation.
- On artificial intelligence the communique backs safe, responsible and human-centred use for destination management, travel facilitation, visitor services and multilingual communication.
- It followed preparatory talks of the BRICS Tourism Working Group at Jaipur on 19 and 20 August 2026; India's 2026 chairship theme is 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.

BRICS environment talks open at Bharat Mandapam ahead of ministers' meeting

17 Aug

- The BRICS Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Working Group and the Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development began at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 17 August 2026.
- They set the stage for the 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting at the same venue on 18 August 2026, chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.
- The meetings are being held under India's BRICS Chairship 2026 theme, 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- India's priority areas for the session are sustainable lifestyles, afforestation and forest fire management, disaster resilience, circular economy and climate adaptation.

India Opens 7th BRICS ICT Working Group Meeting at Pune Under Its 2026 Chairship

17 Aug

- The 7th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group for Cooperation in ICTs opened at Pune on 17 August 2026.
- Pune is hosting the five-day BRICS ICT Track from 17 to 21 August 2026, organised by the Department of Telecommunications.
- DoT Secretary Amit Agrawal inaugurated the meeting under India's 2026 chairship theme, 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- The agenda covered inclusive digital environments, ICT start-ups, digital skills and trusted Digital Public Infrastructure.
- The Council of the BRICS Institute of Future Networks met alongside, reviewing study groups on AI, next-generation communications, Industry 4.0 and electromagnetic field exposure.

UNCCD COP17 Opens in Ulaanbaatar Under the Theme Restoring Land, Restoring Hope

17 Aug

- The 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification opened in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 17 August 2026 and runs to 28 August.
- The theme is 'Restoring Land, Restoring Hope'; Mongolia is the first country in East and Central Asia to host a UNCCD COP.
- Nearly 77 per cent of Mongolia's land is degraded, making the host itself a case study in the convention's subject.
- The UNCCD has 197 Parties - 196 countries and the European Union - and is the only legally binding international agreement on sustainable land management.
- Its central goal is Land Degradation Neutrality by 2030; India hosted COP14 in New Delhi in 2019.

India Hosts Eighth BRICS Youth Energy Summit Under Its 2026 Chairship

17 Aug

- India hosted the Eighth BRICS Youth Energy Summit virtually on 17 August 2026 under its BRICS Chairship.
- More than 100 participants took part, drawn from academia, government institutions and the energy ministries of BRICS member countries.
- The Energy Track theme was 'Sarveshaam Urjam' - Energy for All - set within India's Chairship theme, 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.
- More than 20 youth panellists spoke across three priority areas: Energy Security and Sustainability, Energy Access and Equity, and Technology and Innovation.

- The BRICS Youth Energy Agency, Sustainable Energy for All, the International Solar Alliance and IRENA were represented.

7. Schemes & Committees

6 articles

Rural Development Ministry Launches Entrepreneurship Campaign Phase II for SHG Women

21 Aug

- The Ministry of Rural Development launched the second phase of the National Campaign on Entrepreneurship on 21 August 2026, under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission.
- The three-month campaign runs from 21 August to 21 November 2026 and was timed to World Entrepreneurs Day, observed on 21 August.
- It targets training 5 lakh Self-Help Group women, formalising 50,000 rural enterprises, orienting 50,000 community cadres, adding 2 lakh members to producer groups and enterprises, and promoting agro-ecological practices among 20 lakh women.
- It also aims to onboard 25,000 SHG members onto digital commerce platforms such as ONDC and the Government e-Marketplace, and feeds the government's target of 6 crore Lakhpati Didis.
- Rohit Kansal, Secretary in the Department of Rural Development, launched the campaign and released the first issue of Sankalp Shakti, a monthly technical bulletin on rural enterprise promotion.

Friends of MY Bharat Launched at BRICS Youth Summit in Gandhinagar

19 Aug

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has launched 'Friends of MY Bharat', a digital module that lets youth of Indian origin living abroad register on the Mera Yuva Bharat platform.
- It was unveiled by Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Raksha Nikhil Khadse at the inaugural ceremony of the BRICS Youth Summit 2026 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- A 'Digital Compendium of Volunteering Practices' was released at the same ceremony.
- Registered members get volunteering opportunities in education, environmental protection, health awareness, disaster relief and cultural preservation, and a curated 'Know Your India' section.
- MY Bharat, launched by the Prime Minister on 31 October 2023, had crossed 2.22 crore registrations by July 2026.

Centre Approves APM Gas Incentive Scheme to Expand Domestic PNG Connections

18 Aug

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on 18 August 2026 approved the APM/NAPM Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections, which takes effect from 1 September 2026.
- City Gas Distribution entities will receive an additional 200 Standard Cubic Metres of lower-priced, domestically produced APM gas for every incremental billed domestic PNG connection achieved above a Threshold Level fixed for each Geographical Area.
- India has about 1.74 crore domestic PNG connections, but many carry meters without gas actually flowing or being billed; the scheme pays for conversion into active, billed connections rather than for connections merely installed.
- The cheaper domestic gas can substitute costlier imported LNG used in the CNG transport segment, cutting the payback period on household PNG investment from around 10 years to about 3 years.

- The scheme runs in two tranches over six months and is backed by an Accelerated Approval Framework, standardised right-of-way charges, a push for States to cut VAT on natural gas to 5 per cent, and National PNG Drive 2.0.

West Bengal Rolls Out Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, the Last State to Join

16 Aug

- West Bengal rolled out the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana from 16 August 2026, the day being observed in the State as Ayushman Diwas.
- It is the 36th and last State or Union Territory to implement AB-PM-JAY, having stayed outside the scheme since its launch in 2018.
- The State estimates around 1.5 crore families, nearly 6 crore people, will be covered, with about 1,930 hospitals empanelled.
- A parallel State scheme, the Mukhyamantri Swasthya Bima Yojana, covers eligible residents who do not qualify under AB-PM-JAY.
- The existing Swasthya Sathi scheme will run alongside for two to three months, with phased withdrawal after a review of operations and hospital empanelment.

PM Announces Rs 85,000 Crore for Samudra Manthan Offshore Exploration Scheme

15 Aug

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an allocation of Rs 85,000 crore for Samudra Manthan in the 80th Independence Day address from the Red Fort on 15 August 2026.
- Samudra Manthan is the National Offshore Exploration Scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, approved by the Union Cabinet on 31 July 2026 as a Central Sector Scheme running up to FY 2030-31 with an outlay of Rs 84,084 crore.
- The Union Government will bear up to 50% of the cost of drilling deepwater exploration wells, sharing the exploration risk that has kept private capital away.
- Offshore areas restricted as 'no-go' have been cut from 13.67 lakh sq km to 24,832 sq km, opening roughly 99% of India's coastal waters to exploration.
- The scheme is expected to catalyse reserve accretion of over 600 Million Metric Tons of Oil Equivalent (MMTOE).

NABARD and PSA Office Launch RSVC-AMRIT Rural Technology Platform

15 Aug

- The RSVC-AMRIT digital platform was launched on 15 August 2026, the 80th Independence Day, by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood.
- It was developed by NABARD in collaboration with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA) and serves as the digital backbone of the RuTAGe Smart Village Centre (RSVC) ecosystem.
- The platform is designed to support the full RSVC lifecycle — technology discovery, validation, deployment tracking, collaboration, monitoring and knowledge management.
- It is meant to bring innovators, technology providers, startups, validators, accelerators, implementation partners, funding agencies, academic institutions and rural communities onto one shared platform.
- NABARD currently supports eight RSVCs and expects AMRIT to grow into a national repository of rural innovations, technologies and best practices.

8. Defence

4 articles

Mangrol, Third Mahe-Class ASW Shallow Water Craft, Delivered to Indian Navy

21 Aug

- Cochin Shipyard Limited delivered Mangrol, the third Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft, to the Indian Navy at Kochi on 21 August 2026.
- It is the third of eight Mahe-class ASW SWCs being built by CSL, with more than 80 per cent indigenous content.
- The 78-metre craft uses diesel engine-waterjet propulsion, reaches 25 knots and carries lightweight torpedoes, indigenous ASW rockets and shallow-water sonars.
- It is named after Mangrol, a coastal town and minor port in the Junagadh district of Gujarat.
- The first two ships of the class, Mahe and Malwan, were delivered in October 2025 and March 2026.

Defence Ministry Notifies Sixth Positive Indigenisation List of 405 Items

18 Aug

- The Department of Defence Production notified the sixth Positive Indigenisation List on 18 August 2026, covering 405 defence items.
- The list carries an estimated domestic business potential of Rs 3,070 crore.
- Of the 405 items, 389 are linked to Defence Public Sector Undertakings and 16 to the Indian Coast Guard.
- Items cover spares and sub-assemblies for the ALH, LUH, Su-30MKI, Tejas, T-72, T-90 and BMP-II, and for Konkurs-M, Invar and MRSAM missiles.
- Item-wise details and indicative indigenisation timelines are hosted on the SRIJAN Defence Portal.

Nepal confers honorary General rank on Indian Army Chief Dhiraj Seth

17 Aug

- Nepal President Ram Chandra Paudel conferred the honorary rank of General of the Nepali Army on Indian Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth at Sheetal Niwas, Kathmandu, on 17 August 2026.
- The two armies have exchanged this honour since 1950; Nepal's Army Chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel received the honorary rank of General of the Indian Army from President Droupadi Murmu on 12 December 2024.
- General Seth, the 31st Chief of the Army Staff, took charge on 30 June 2026 and is on a 17-19 August official visit to Nepal.
- He was given a Guard of Honour at Nepali Army Headquarters, laid a wreath at the Army Pavilion in Tundikhel and handed over military and medical equipment to the Nepal Army.

Indian Army contingent leaves for MAITREE-XV exercise with Thailand

17 Aug

- The Indian Army contingent departed on 17 August 2026 for MAITREE-XV, the 15th edition of the India-Thailand bilateral military exercise.
- The exercise runs from 18 to 31 August 2026 at Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp in Surat Thani, Thailand, with 85 personnel from each side.
- India is represented by the 9 Gorkha Rifles and Thailand by the 3rd Battalion of the 25th Infantry Brigade, 5th Division.
- The company-level drill focuses on joint counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in jungle and semi-urban terrain under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

9. Science & Tech

2 articles

ICAR-NBAGR Registers 16 New Indigenous Breeds; India's Registered Total Reaches 262

21 Aug

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research registered 16 new indigenous livestock and dog breeds, taking India's total of registered animal breeds to 262 - 258 indigenous and 4 synthetic.
- The registrations were recommended at the 14th meeting of the Breed Registration Committee, held in New Delhi on 7 August 2026 under Dr Raghavendra Bhatta, Deputy Director General (Animal Science), ICAR.
- The 16 breeds span cattle, buffalo, goat, sheep, donkey, horse, pig, yak and dog, and come from 13 states and Jammu and Kashmir.
- Kerala's Periyar cattle - a dwarf hill breed long feared to be heading for extinction - and Tamil Nadu's Kombai guard dog are among the newly registered breeds.
- Registration is carried out by ICAR-NBAGR at Karnal, Haryana, which allots each accepted breed an accession number before gazette notification.

VIHAAN: India's Indigenous Broadband Networking Chip Clears First-Pass Silicon

15 Aug

- Chennai-based fabless startup Aheesa Digital Innovations achieved first-pass silicon success for VIHAAN, an indigenous broadband networking System-on-Chip, announced by MeitY on 15 August 2026.
- VIHAAN is built on the open RISC-V architecture and runs on C-DAC's indigenous 64-bit VEGA processor core, and is designed for fibre-to-the-home routers and optical network terminals.
- The chip was developed with support from the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme under the Semicon India Programme; production tape-out is targeted for 2027.

10. Environment

4 articles

Invasive Mealybug Drosicha turkistanica Hits Kashmir Poplar and Willow Plantations

20 Aug

- Drosicha turkistanica, an invasive sap-sucking insect, has been identified in poplar and willow plantations at Hanjipora in Pulwama district and in parts of South Kashmir including Kulgam and Anantnag.
- The specimen was scientifically identified by the ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bengaluru, from field samples collected at the Mountain Research Centre for Field Crops, Khudwani.
- The insect belongs to the order Hemiptera and the family Monophlebidae, whose members feed on plant sap through piercing and sucking mouthparts.
- Farmers first noticed snow-white, cotton-like masses on tree trunks nearly two years ago and mistook the infestation for a fungal infection.
- Horticultural authorities have linked its entry to imported planting material, and experts have warned against indiscriminate pesticide spraying.

E20 Petrol Goes Nationwide: The Legacy-Fleet and Fuel-Quality Debate

18 Aug

- E20 - petrol blended with 20 per cent anhydrous ethanol at a minimum Research Octane Number of 95 - became mandatory nationwide from 1 April 2026, notified on 17 February 2026.
- Unblended petrol (E0) has been withdrawn from retail pumps, leaving no lower-blend option for older vehicles.
- About 240 million of India's roughly 310 million petrol vehicles - close to 77 per cent, mostly two-wheelers - predate the April 2023 cut-off for E20-ready hardware.
- India reached 20 per cent average ethanol blending by March 2025, five years ahead of its original 2030 target.
- SIAM sent the government a communication on fuel contamination on 28 July 2026 and withdrew it in early August, saying the figures needed authentication, while reaffirming support for the programme.

BRICS Environment Ministers Reject EU Carbon Border Tax as Protectionist

18 Aug

- The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi adopted a Joint Ministerial Statement on 18 August 2026 opposing the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).
- The statement called carbon border adjustment mechanisms 'unilateral, punitive, discriminatory and protectionist' and said they undermine developing countries' climate efforts.
- The meeting was held under India's BRICS Chairship 2026 and was led by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav; four knowledge compendiums were also launched.
- The ministers sought greater climate finance, including a tripling of adaptation finance by 2035 and more grants and concessional funding.
- CBAM entered its definitive phase on 1 January 2026 and covers iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, hydrogen and electricity.

India Releases Its First Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems at COP17

17 Aug

- India launched its first-ever Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) of India on 17 August 2026.
- The launch took place at a side event of UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, held under the guidance of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The publication was brought out by ATREE with IUCN, the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management, ICFRE and ISRO's Space Applications Centre.
- It maps India's grasslands, savannas, deserts, scrublands, rocky plateaus, ravines and coastal open ecosystems, with chapters on pastoralism, fire ecology and carbon sequestration.
- The guide argues that conservation policy built around forests alone leaves open ecosystems — and the pastoral livelihoods that depend on them — unprotected.

11. Economy

3 articles

Centre Notifies Rs 62,500 Crore Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme for Five Years

21 Aug

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) with an outlay of Rs 62,500 crore.
- The scheme runs for five years, from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31, and pays incentives on eligible sales at differentiated rates of 2.25 to 5 per cent.
- An additional incentive of up to 1.5 per cent is available for sourcing key components and sub-assemblies domestically.
- It has two target segments - TS1 for mobile phone manufacturing and TS2 for Indian mobile phone brands, with Indian brands exempt from any threshold sales volume.
- The Government expects about Rs 39 lakh crore of cumulative production and around 60,000 direct jobs over the five years.

White House Report Places India in Tier 1 of China Transhipment Network

15 Aug

- The White House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy released a report titled 'The Great Transshipment Scam' on 13 August 2026, naming more than 40 countries as part of a 'shadow transhipment network' for Chinese goods.
- India was placed in Tier 1, labelled 'Diversified Scale Leaders', alongside Canada, the European Union, Israel, Japan, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan.
- The report singled out India's Pune-Gujarat-Chennai industrial belt as a route for China-linked pumps and compressors entering the US market.
- US Commerce Department analysis cited in the report estimated about $67 billion of US-bound goods were transhipped from China via Mexico, India and Vietnam in 2025, costing an estimated $28 billion in tariff revenue.
- The Global Trade Research Initiative rebutted the India charge with trade data showing large independent Indian exports in the same product categories.

CBDT Notifies Foreign Asset Disclosure Window for Small Taxpayers

15 Aug

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes notified the Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme, 2026 on 15 August 2026, framed under Chapter IV of the Finance Act, 2026.
- The online voluntary disclosure window runs from 16 August 2026 to 31 December 2026.
- Category 1 covers undisclosed foreign assets or income up to Rs 1 crore, taxed at 30% with a 30% penalty — an effective levy of 60%.
- Category 2 covers assets up to Rs 5 crore acquired from already-taxed income or during non-residence but left out of returns; these can be regularised for a flat fee of Rs 1 lakh.
- A valid declaration confers immunity from further tax demand, penalty and prosecution under the Black Money Act, 2015.

12. National

2 articles

Centre Bars Chlorpheniramine-Phenylephrine Cough Combinations for Children Under Four

18 Aug

- The Union Health Ministry, by a gazette notification dated 18 August 2026, barred the use in children below four years of all fixed dose combinations containing Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Phenylephrine Hydrochloride, including syrups and drops.
- The order was issued under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and follows an Expert Committee assessment considered by the Drugs Technical Advisory Board.
- Every such pack must now carry the warning: 'Fixed Dose Combination shall not be used in children below four years of age', on the label, package insert and promotional literature.
- It is an age-specific restriction, not a blanket ban on cough and cold medicines; it widens an order of 15 April 2025 that covered only specified formulations.
- It follows the ban on 16 irrational fixed dose combinations notified on 11 June 2026.

PM Unveils 'Saptadhara' Seven-Stream Roadmap in 80th Independence Day Address

15 Aug

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation from the Red Fort on 15 August 2026, India's 80th Independence Day.
- The centrepiece of the roughly 75-minute address was 'Saptadhara' — seven streams of national strength meant to drive India to Viksit Bharat by 2047.
- The seven streams are manufacturing, agriculture and food processing, technology and innovation, Gati Shakti, defence, the green and blue economy, and soft power.
- It was his 13th consecutive Independence Day address, the second-longest such run after Jawaharlal Nehru's 17.
- The celebrations carried the theme 'Yuva Shakti for Viksit Bharat@2047' and included the first-ever Red Fort rendition of Vande Mataram.

13. International

1 article

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir Elected 23rd President of Bangladesh

20 Aug

- Veteran Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was elected the 23rd President of Bangladesh on 20 August 2026 in a vote of Members of Parliament held inside the Jatiya Sangsad.
- He polled 255 votes against 88 for Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmad of the Liberal Democratic Party; 343 of the 349 eligible MPs cast valid votes and the result was announced by Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin.
- It was Bangladesh's first contested presidential election in 35 years - since 1991 the head of state had generally been chosen by consensus.
- The office fell vacant when the 22nd President, Mohammed Shahabuddin, resigned on 24 July 2026 citing ill health; Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed acted as President until the election.
- Alamgir, 78, was the BNP's longest-serving Secretary General and took the oath on 21 August 2026 at the Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban in Dhaka.

14. Polity & Governance

4 articles

Union Cabinet Approves High Court Bench for Ladakh

20 Aug

- The Union Cabinet on 20 August 2026 approved the establishment of a bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- The decision was announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who said it would spare litigants in Ladakh long journeys to reach the High Court.
- The High Court presently functions from Srinagar and Jammu; the Ladakh bench will be its third location.
- Parliament data dated 30 July 2026 recorded 44,557 cases pending before the High Court, of which more than 6,100 had been pending for over ten years.
- Ladakh has been a separate Union Territory since 31 October 2019 under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, but has continued to share a High Court with Jammu and Kashmir.

District Collectors Empowered to Grant Citizenship Under CAA in 8 States and UTs

19 Aug

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified the Citizenship (Third Amendment) Rules, 2026, empowering District Collectors to receive, scrutinise and decide citizenship applications under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- The change applies in eight States and Union Territories - Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and the non-tribal areas of Assam and Tripura.
- A separate MHA order of 19 August 2026 transfers pending Section 6B applications from the Empowered Committees and District Level Committees to the Collectors concerned.
- Collectors may now verify documents, hold any inquiry they consider necessary, administer the Oath of Allegiance and grant citizenship to applicants found fit and proper - replacing the committee mechanism set up on 11 March 2024.
- The notification also rescinded two administrative orders dated 20 February 2026 and 2 March 2026, while saving everything already done under them.

CIC Launches AppCoMS 2.0 for RTI Second Appeals and Complaints

17 Aug

- The Central Information Commission launched the upgraded Appeal and Complaint Management System (AppCoMS 2.0) in New Delhi on 17 August 2026.
- The portal handles Second Appeals and Complaints under the Right to Information Act, 2005 — registration, scheduling, notices and decision uploads.
- The original AppCoMS was introduced in September 2016.
- The upgrade gives Central Public Information Officers their own accounts to access case details and file documents, and integrates Digital Signature Certificates for signing notices and orders.
- Online filing of second appeals and complaints had resumed on 4 August 2026; submissions made between 4 and 16 August will be processed on the new system.

CEA Notifies Cyber Security in Power Sector Regulations, Effective April 2027

16 Aug

- The Central Electricity Authority has notified the Central Electricity Authority (Cyber Security in Power Sector) Regulations, 2026 under the Electricity Act, 2003, replacing voluntary advisories with binding statutory obligations.

- The regulations come into force from 1 April 2027 and cover generating companies, captive generating plants and energy storage entities of 50 MW and above, as well as power exchanges and over-the-counter electricity trading platforms.
- CSIRT-Power is designated the nodal agency for cyber security coordination in the power sector, working alongside CERT-In, the national incident response agency.
- General cyber incidents must be reported within six hours of detection; incidents amounting to cyber sabotage of critical systems must be reported within 24 hours.
- Operational Technology systems must be segregated from IT networks and the internet, and sensitive operational and historical data must be stored encrypted within India, including by third-party cloud providers.

15. State News

3 articles

Maharashtra Declares Snakebite a Notifiable Disease

18 Aug

- Maharashtra's notification making snakebite a notifiable disease came into effect on 18 August 2026.
- Every hospital, medical college and healthcare provider must now report suspected and confirmed snakebite cases and deaths to the district health officer or district surgeon.
- Reporting will run through the Health Management Information System (HMIS) and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).
- The move followed the deaths of three tribal schoolgirls bitten by a venomous snake at a residential school in Japtalai village, Gadchiroli district, on 9 August 2026.
- The Union Health Ministry had made snakebite envenomation a notifiable disease at the national level on 27 November 2024.

India's first virtual zoo opens to the public at Indore's Kamla Nehru zoo

17 Aug

- India's first virtual zoo opened to the public on 17 August 2026 at the Kamla Nehru Prani Sangrahalaya in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, a day after Chief Minister Mohan Yadav inaugurated it.
- The 8,000 square feet facility was built under a public-private partnership model at an estimated cost of Rs 4.5 crore.
- It houses a 3-D dome theatre, a 14-D cinema and a digital jungle safari, with entry priced at Rs 70 per person.
- The venue runs 16 shows a day of 20 minutes each, Tuesday to Sunday, from 10 am to 6 pm.

Karnataka Bans Analogue Paneer Sold as Paneer for One Year

17 Aug

- Karnataka's Food Safety Division notified an order dated 17 August 2026 prohibiting the manufacture, storage, transport, distribution and sale of analogue or non-dairy paneer marketed as 'paneer' anywhere in the state.
- The prohibition runs for one year, from 17 August 2026 to 17 August 2027, and was issued under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- Analogue paneer is a product in which milk fat or milk solids are wholly or partly replaced by vegetable oil, vegetable fat or other non-dairy ingredients.
- Standardised products such as processed cheese, frozen desserts and mixed fat spreads, which have their own prescribed standards, are outside the ban.

- Karnataka joins Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh in restricting analogue paneer; Himachal Pradesh acted on 20 August 2026.

16. History & Culture

1 article

Vande Mataram Sung From Red Fort for First Time as National Song Turns 150

15 Aug

- Vande Mataram was rendered from the ramparts of the Red Fort for the first time during India's 80th Independence Day celebrations on 15 August 2026.
- The rendition marked the 150th year of the national song, which Bankim Chandra Chatterjee first published in his journal Bangadarshan in 1875.
- A year-long nationwide commemoration approved by the Union Cabinet runs from 7 November 2025 to 7 November 2026.
- Rabindranath Tagore set the song to music and sang it at the 1896 Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress.
- The Constituent Assembly in 1950 gave Vande Mataram equal honour and status with the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana.