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Olive Greens Institute

TILL 1 OCTOBER 2026

PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of September 2026.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smarty along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.



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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



World Coconut Day : 02 September :-

World Coconut Day is observed every year on 2 September to highlight the economic, agricultural, nutritional and cultural importance of the coconut, often called the “Tree of Life.” The day commemorates the foundation of the International Coconut Community (ICC) in 1969, an intergovernmental organisation established under the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). India is a founding member of the organisation. The observance aims to promote sustainable coconut cultivation, processing, value addition, trade and the welfare of millions of farmers whose livelihoods depend on the crop.



International Day of Charity : 05 September :-

The International Day of Charity is observed every year on 5 September to encourage philanthropy, volunteering and humanitarian action aimed at reducing poverty, suffering and inequality. The United Nations General Assembly designated 5 September through Resolution 67/105, choosing the date to commemorate the death anniversary of Mother Teresa, who died on 5 September 1997. Born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in 1910, Mother Teresa came to India in 1928, became an Indian citizen in 1948 and founded the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata in 1950. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her work among poor and distressed people.



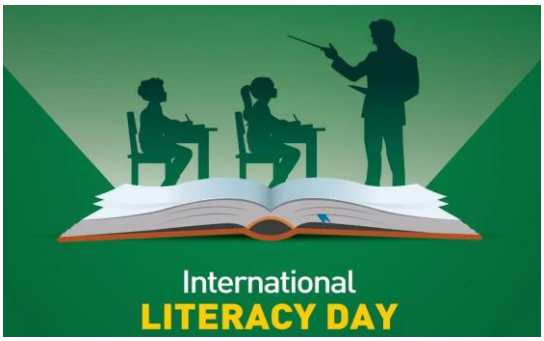
Teachers' Day (India) : 05 September :-

Teachers' Day is celebrated in India every year on 5 September to honour teachers and commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975), an eminent philosopher, educationist, scholar and the second President of India. The tradition began in 1962, when Radhakrishnan became President. When his students and admirers wanted to celebrate his birthday, he reportedly suggested that the day instead be observed as Teachers' Day, thereby giving it a wider social purpose. The National Awards to Teachers, instituted in 1958, further recognise outstanding educators for their contribution to improving education and enriching students' lives.



International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies : 07 September :-

The International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies is observed annually on 7 September to highlight the importance of clean air for human health, environmental protection and sustainable development. The United Nations General Assembly designated the day in 2019, and the first observance was held on 7 September 2020 under the theme “Clean Air for All.” The observance is particularly important because air pollution is closely linked with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, premature deaths, ecosystem damage and climate change. The official theme for the 2026 International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies is "Clean Air for Climate Action."



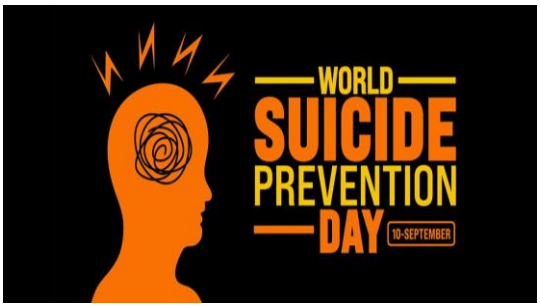
International Literacy Day : 08 September :-

International Literacy Day is observed every year on 8 September to highlight the importance of literacy as a fundamental human right and as a foundation for education, employment, equality and sustainable development. UNESCO proclaimed the day in 1966, and it was first celebrated internationally in 1967. In 2026, International Literacy Day marks its 60th anniversary. The theme is “Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity,” emphasizing how literacy can promote inclusion, support sustainable development and create better livelihood opportunities.



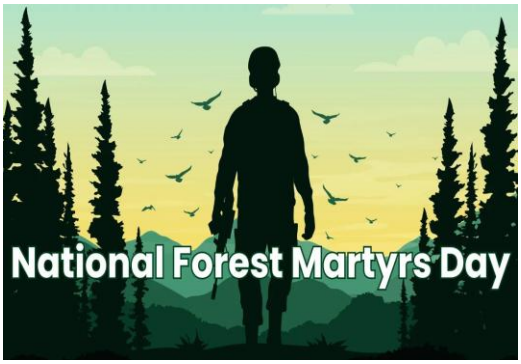
Himalaya Diwas : 09 September :-

Himalaya Diwas is observed every year on 9 September, particularly in Uttarakhand, to promote awareness about the conservation and sustainable development of the Himalayan ecosystem. The observance began in 2010 through the efforts of environmentalists and civil-society groups, including environmentalist Dr Anil Prakash Joshi and the Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO). The day has special significance because the Himalayas are not merely a mountain range but an essential ecological system supporting millions of people. The theme for Himalaya Diwas 2026 is “Global Warming and the Himalayas”.



World Suicide Prevention Day : 10 September :-

World Suicide Prevention Day is observed every year on 10 September to raise global awareness about suicide prevention, reduce stigma and encourage individuals, communities and governments to take action. The day was established in 2003 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), with the central message that suicide is preventable. For 2026, the day marks the final year of the three-year theme “Changing the Narrative on Suicide” (2024–2026), accompanied by the call to action “Start the Conversation.”



National Forest Martyrs Day (India) : 11 September :-

National Forest Martyrs Day is observed in India every year on 11 September to honour forest personnel and other individuals who have sacrificed their lives while protecting forests, wildlife and natural resources. The Government of India officially declared 11 September as National Forest Martyrs Day in 2013, recognising the courage and sacrifice of forest personnel across the country. The date has a deeper historical connection with the Khejarli sacrifice of 1730 in Rajasthan. The episode is regarded as one of India's earliest and most powerful examples of community-led environmental conservation.



November 27 Declared Child Marriage Prevention Day by UNGA :-

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution designating November 27 as Child Marriage Prevention Day. Presented by Dr. Fatima Maada Bio, First Lady of Sierra Leone, the resolution was supported by 193 member states. It aligns with India's Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat campaign, launched on November 27, 2024. The initiative addresses the global issue of child marriage, with UNFPA estimating 640 million women married in childhood and 12 million underage marriages annually. India's NFHS-6 data shows a decrease in underage marriages from 23.3% to 20.1%.



World First Aid Day 2026 : 12 September :-

World First Aid Day 2026 will be observed on Saturday, 12 September 2026. It is celebrated every year on the second Saturday of September to raise awareness about the importance of first-aid knowledge and encourage people to learn basic life-saving skills. The observance has been held annually since 2000, with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) playing a leading role in promoting first-aid education worldwide. First aid refers to the immediate assistance provided to a person who has suffered a sudden injury or illness before professional medical help becomes available.



International Chocolate Day : 13 September :-

International Chocolate Day is observed every year on September 13. The day celebrates chocolate and its long journey from an ancient Mesoamerican beverage to one of the world's most popular confectionery products. The exact origin of the September 13 observance is not clearly documented, but the date is widely associated with Milton S. Hershey, the American chocolate entrepreneur and founder of the Hershey Chocolate Company, who was born on September 13, 1857. Chocolate has a history stretching back thousands of years. Ancient Olmec, Maya and Aztec civilizations cultivated cacao and used its beans to prepare bitter beverages, often associated with rituals and social traditions.



Hindi Diwas : 14 September :-

Hindi Diwas is observed every year on 14 September to commemorate the historic decision of the Constituent Assembly on 14 September 1949, when Hindi written in the Devanagari script was adopted as the official language of the Union. The Constitution subsequently provided for this arrangement under Article 343, while Article 351 directs the Union to promote the spread and development of Hindi. Hindi Diwas has been observed annually since 1953, following the efforts of the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha. The day is significant not merely as a celebration of a language but also as an occasion to recognize Hindi's contribution to India's cultural and literary heritage and its role in communication across different regions.



Engineer's Day (India) : 15 September :-

Engineer's Day is observed in India every year on 15 September to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya (1861–1962), one of India's most distinguished engineers, administrators and nation-builders. He played a major role in advancing irrigation, water-supply and infrastructure systems and later served as the Diwan of Mysore. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1955 for his exceptional contribution to the nation. The day also highlights the wider contribution of engineers to India's development, from infrastructure and manufacturing to digital technology, artificial intelligence, semiconductors and emerging technologies. The official theme for Engineer's Day 2026 in India is "Smart engineering for a sustainable future through innovation and digitalization".



International Day of Democracy : 15 September :-

The International Day of Democracy is observed annually on 15 September to promote democratic values, human rights, participation, accountability and the rule of law. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 15 September as the International Day of Democracy in 2007, and the first observance took place in 2008. The day provides an opportunity to assess the condition of democracy around the world and encourage stronger participation by citizens, civil society and institutions. The theme for the International Day of Democracy 2026 is "When every voice counts, democracy delivers."



World Ozone Day : 16 September :-

World Ozone Day, officially known as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, is observed every year on 16 September to raise awareness about the importance of the ozone layer and the need to protect it from harmful chemicals. The day commemorates the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer on 16 September 1987. In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 16 September as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, with the observance beginning in 1995. The World Ozone Day 2026 theme is "Global action for a cooler planet – Celebrating 10 years of sustainable cooling under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol".



World Patient Safety Day : 17 September :-

World Patient Safety Day is observed every year on 17 September to raise global awareness about preventing avoidable harm to patients during healthcare and to promote safer, higher-quality medical services. The day was officially established in May 2019 by the 72nd World Health Assembly through Resolution WHA72.6 on "Global action on patient safety", making patient safety a global health priority. The first World Patient Safety Day was observed on 17 September 2019, with the theme "Patient Safety: a global health priority" and the slogan "Speak up for patient safety!". World Patient Safety Day 2026 is focusing on theme "safe care for noncommunicable diseases", under the slogan 'Safe care for life!'.



World Bamboo Day : 18 September :-

World Bamboo Day is observed every year on 18 September to increase global awareness about the environmental, economic and social importance of bamboo. The day was established in 2009 by the World Bamboo Organization (WBO) during the 8th World Bamboo Congress in Bangkok, Thailand. The declaration was also associated with the 113th anniversary of Thailand's Royal Forest Department. Bamboo is a rapidly renewable resource with applications ranging from construction, furniture and textiles to food, handicrafts and various industrial products. The theme for World Bamboo Day 2026 is "Bamboo Beyond Borders".



International Red Panda Day 2026 : 19 September :-

International Red Panda Day 2026 will be observed on Saturday, September 19, 2026. The day is observed annually on the third Saturday of September and was established by the Red Panda Network to increase public awareness about red pandas and support their conservation. The first observance was held in November 2010, before the date was shifted to the third Saturday of September from 2011 onward. The occasion is particularly important because the red panda is an endangered species facing threats including habitat degradation and fragmentation, poaching, and pressures associated with human development and forest-resource use.



RPF Raising Day : 20 September :-

RPF Raising Day is observed every year on 20 September to commemorate the establishment and transformation of the Railway Protection Force (RPF), which is responsible for protecting railway property, passengers and passenger areas across India. The history of railway security goes back to the 19th century, when individual railway companies employed guards to protect railway

property. The RPF received statutory status through the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957. Later, an important milestone came on 20 September 1985, when the force was formally given the status of an Armed Force of the Union through an amendment to the RPF Act.



International Day of Peace (UN) : 21 September :-

The International Day of Peace is observed every year on 21 September to strengthen the ideals of peace, non-violence and peaceful coexistence among nations and peoples. The United Nations General Assembly established the observance through Resolution 36/67 on 30 November 1981, with the first Peace Day observed in September 1982. Initially, it was linked to the opening of the UN General Assembly and was held on the third Tuesday of September. For 2026, the UN theme is "Invest in Peace: For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day."



World Alzheimer's Day : 21 September :-

World Alzheimer's Day is observed annually on 21 September to raise global awareness about Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, reduce stigma, and encourage better understanding, diagnosis, care and support for affected people and their families. The day was first marked on 21 September 1994 at the opening of Alzheimer's Disease International's annual conference in Edinburgh, chosen to coincide with ADI's 10th anniversary. Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), the international federation representing Alzheimer and dementia associations, coordinates the global observance. The campaign theme for World Alzheimer's Day 2026 is "The Earlier You Know, The More You Can Do."



World Rhino Day : 22 September :-

World Rhino Day is observed every year on September 22 to raise global awareness about the conservation of the world's five rhinoceros species: the black rhino, white rhino, greater one-horned (Indian) rhino, Sumatran rhino and Javan rhino. The observance was first announced by WWF-South Africa in 2010 and became an international campaign in 2011, helped by conservation advocates Lisa Jane Campbell and Rhishja Cota. The day draws attention to threats including poaching, illegal trade in rhino horn and habitat loss. The official theme for World Rhino Day 2026 is "Keep the Five Alive", with an associated focus on "Building a Future for Rhinos".



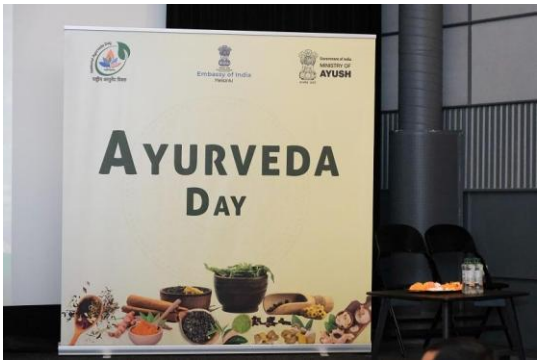
World Rose Day : 22 September :-

World Rose Day, also known as the Day for the Welfare of Cancer Patients, is observed on September 22 to express solidarity with people living with cancer and to promote compassion, hope and emotional support alongside medical treatment. The day is widely associated with the story of Melinda Rose, a 12-year-old Canadian girl diagnosed with the rare cancer Askin's tumour. Despite a very serious prognosis, she is remembered for bringing happiness and encouragement to other cancer patients during her illness. In India, the Cancer Patients Aid Association (CPAA) launched its Rose Day initiative on September 22, 1994, with the aim of connecting with cancer patients beyond the medical aspects of their illness.



International Day of Sign Languages : 23 September :-

The International Day of Sign Languages is observed every year on 23 September. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the day through Resolution A/RES/72/161 in December 2017, following a proposal from the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), and it was first celebrated in 2018. The date of 23 September was chosen because the WFD was established on that day in 1951. Sign languages are fully developed natural languages and are not simply visual versions of spoken languages. The 2026 theme is "Declaring Deaf People's Human Rights", highlighting access to national sign languages, education, information and public services.



Ayurveda Day : 23 September :-

Ayurveda Day is now observed annually on 23 September in India, following a major change announced by the Ministry of Ayush in 2025. Earlier, Ayurveda Day was celebrated on Dhanteras/Dhanvantari Jayanti, meaning its date changed every year according to the lunar calendar. A Gazette notification dated 23 March 2025 designated 23 September as the fixed annual date. Ayurveda Day is intended to promote awareness of Ayurveda, its traditional knowledge systems, preventive-health principles and its contemporary development through research and standardisation.



World Pharmacists Day : 25 September :-

World Pharmacists Day is observed every year on 25 September to recognise the contribution of pharmacists to healthcare, safe medicine use and patient well-being. The day was officially designated by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) in 2009, with 25 September chosen because it marks the anniversary of FIP's establishment in 1912. The first coordinated observance took place in 2010. For 2026, the theme is "Empowering pharmacists for healthier futures."



Antyodaya Diwas : 25 September :-

Antyodaya Diwas is observed on 25 September every year in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, who was born on 25 September 1916. The Government of India declared 25 September as Antyodaya Diwas in 2014, marking his 98th birth anniversary. The word Antyodaya broadly conveys the idea of the upliftment of the last person in society, particularly those who are economically and socially disadvantaged. Upadhyaya developed the philosophy of Integral Humanism and placed emphasis on ensuring that development reaches the most vulnerable sections. The day therefore highlights themes of inclusive development, social welfare, livelihood opportunities and service to disadvantaged communities.



World Contraception Day : 26 September :-

World Contraception Day is observed every year on 26 September to raise awareness about contraception, family planning and informed reproductive-health choices. The observance was launched in 2007 by a coalition of international family-planning organisations, with the broader vision of ensuring that every pregnancy is wanted and that people have access to reliable information and a range of contraceptive options. The day is significant because access to contraception can help prevent unintended pregnancies, support healthy birth spacing and allow individuals and couples to plan the timing and number of children.



World Environmental Health Day : 26 September :-

World Environmental Health Day is observed on 26 September every year to highlight the close relationship between environmental conditions and human health. The day was formally established by the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) on 26 September 2011 in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, making 2011 the foundational observance. The IFEH declaration recognised the importance of environmental factors such as clean air, safe drinking water, sanitation, food safety, housing, pollution control and disease prevention in protecting public health. The observance has since become an opportunity to draw attention to environmental-health challenges and the work of environmental-health professionals.



World Rivers Day 2026 : 27 September :-

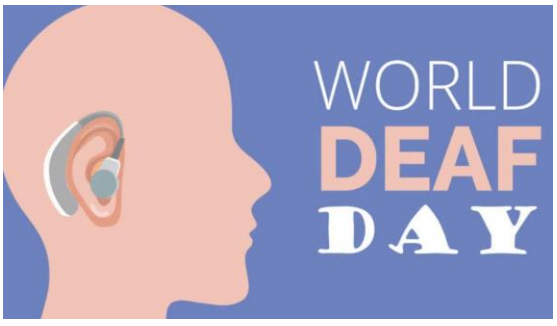
World Rivers Day 2026 will be observed on 27 September 2026, the fourth Sunday of September. The annual observance celebrates the world's rivers and draws attention to the ecological, social and economic importance of river systems. World Rivers Day grew out of the success of British Columbia's Rivers Day, first held in Canada in 1980 through the efforts of river advocate

Mark Angelo. The United Nations later recognized the broader international observance, helping it become a global event.



World Tourism Day : 27 September :-

World Tourism Day is observed every year on 27 September. The day was established by the World Tourism Organization in 1979 and was first celebrated in 1980. The date was selected because 27 September 1970 marked the adoption of the statutes of the organization, an important milestone in the development of international tourism. For 2026, the theme is “Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism”, focusing on how digital technologies and artificial intelligence are transforming travel planning, tourism services and visitor experiences. El Salvador is the host country for the 2026 celebrations.



International Day of the Deaf 2026 : 27 September :-

International Day of the Deaf is observed on the last Sunday of September, and in 2026 it falls on 27 September. The observance originated with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), which first celebrated the International Day of the Deaf in 1958. It was later expanded into the International Week of Deaf People, observed during the last full week of September. The occasion highlights the rights, achievements, languages and cultures of deaf people and promotes greater accessibility in education, communication, public services and employment. The year 2026 is particularly significant because the WFD is marking its 75th anniversary, having been founded in Rome on 23 September 1951 by representatives from 25 countries.



World Rabies Day : 28 September :-

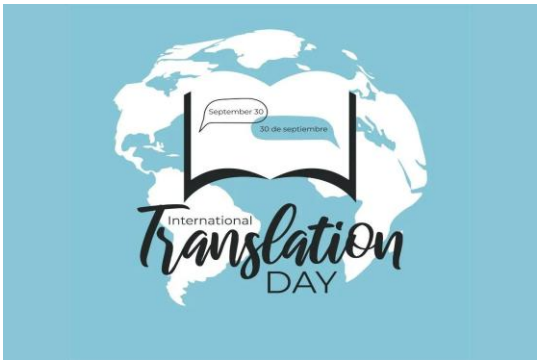
World Rabies Day is observed every year on 28 September to raise awareness about rabies, a vaccine-preventable viral disease that primarily spreads through the bite or scratch of an infected animal. The date also marks the death anniversary of Louis Pasteur, the French scientist whose pioneering work contributed to the development of the first successful rabies vaccine. The day was established in 2007 and is coordinated internationally to promote prevention, vaccination and timely post-exposure treatment. The theme for World Rabies Day 2026 is “Stronger Together.”



World Heart Day : 29 September :-

World Heart Day is observed every year on 29 September to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), their risk factors, prevention and the importance of timely treatment. It is led globally by the World Heart Federation (WHF) and brings together health organisations, governments, communities and individuals to promote better heart health. The idea of World Heart Day was introduced by WHF President Dr.

Antoni Bayés de Luna and launched in 1999 with support from the WHO and UNESCO. The first official World Heart Day was celebrated in 2000, initially on the last Sunday of September; from 2011, it moved to the fixed date of 29 September. For World Heart Day 2026, the campaign continues under "Don't Miss a Beat."



International Translation Day : 30 September :-

International Translation Day is observed every year on 30 September to recognise the important contribution of translators, interpreters, terminologists and other language professionals in connecting people and nations. The United Nations officially declared 30 September as International Translation Day through General Assembly Resolution 71/288, adopted on 24 May 2017. The resolution highlighted the role of professional translation in promoting dialogue, understanding, cooperation, development, peace and international security. The date has a historical connection with St. Jerome, a Christian scholar and Bible translator who is regarded as the patron saint of translators. The theme for International Translation Day 2026 is "Linguistic Diversity and Language Rights", with the subtitle "The Power of Being Understood."

2: Agreements



HAL and Safran Sign Final Contract for Indigenous 'Aravalli' 3,500–4,000 shp Helicopter Engine :-

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Safran Helicopter Engines have signed the final contract with their joint venture SAFHAL Helicopter Engines for the development and production of the Aravalli engine, a new 3,500–4,000 shaft-horsepower turboshaft engine. The engine is intended to power India's future medium-lift helicopter requirements, including platforms such as the Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and the Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH). The agreement is strategically important because helicopter engines are among the most technologically demanding components of rotary-wing aircraft, and India has historically depended substantially on foreign propulsion technology.



T-Hub Partners with Indian Army's Central Command to Accelerate Defence Startup Deployments :-

Hyderabad-based innovation ecosystem T-Hub has partnered with the Indian Army's Central Command to create a more direct pathway for defence startups to move from innovation and prototypes towards actual military deployment. Under the collaboration, the Army's operational requirements will be translated into problem statements, allowing startups to develop solutions for real-world defence challenges. The partnership is significant because one of the major difficulties faced by defence startups is the gap between

developing a technology and getting it tested, validated and adopted by the armed forces.



US and Venezuela Reach Historic Oil Deal :-

US President Donald Trump announced a landmark oil agreement with Venezuela, claiming it as the 'biggest oil deal in world history'. The deal involves expanded US participation in Venezuela's vast crude reserves, securing majority US control of over 65 billion barrels of oil. Trump stated that this agreement would double US oil reserves and lower gas prices. Venezuela's acting president Delcy Rodriguez described the agreement as historic, aimed at boosting investment in its hydrocarbons sector. The deal includes developing 17 strategic oil fields and significant investments, enhancing US-Venezuela relations.



India and Argentina Strengthen Economic Partnership at JTC Meeting :-

India and Argentina have reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing their strategic and economic partnership during the Fourth Meeting of the India-Argentina Joint Trade Committee. The meeting reviewed progress on a roadmap from Prime Minister Modi's 2025 visit and identified new trade and investment avenues. Bilateral trade reached USD 6.5 billion in 2025, with India as Argentina's fifth-largest trading partner. Discussions included reducing trade barriers, investment opportunities in mining and energy, and facilitating market access for Indian agricultural and pharmaceutical products. Emerging sectors like aviation and digital services were also highlighted for future cooperation.



India-Uzbekistan Elevate Ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership :-

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Uzbekistan, India and Uzbekistan announced the elevation of their Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The visit resulted in several agreements across sectors such as culture, healthcare, mining, tourism, and digital payments. Notably, a Cultural Exchange Programme for 2026-30 was signed, along with an MoU on cooperation in Ayurveda and traditional medicine. The two countries also agreed to establish an Economic and Financial Dialogue and signed a conservation agreement for ancient Buddhist sites in Uzbekistan.



Bihar and Jharkhand Resolve Sone River Water Dispute

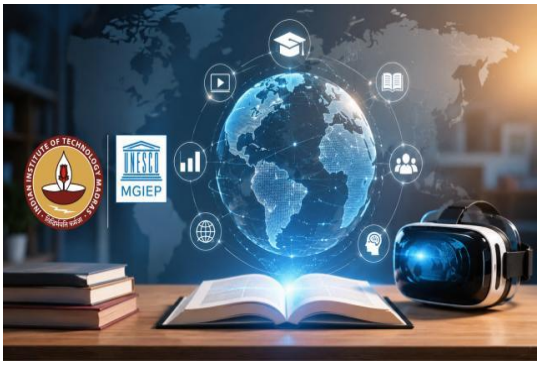
Bihar and Jharkhand signed a Sone river water-sharing agreement resolving a 25-year dispute since Jharkhand's creation in 2000. The agreement allocates 5.75 MAF to Bihar and 2.0 MAF to Jharkhand, totaling 7.75 MAF as per

the 1973 Bansagar Agreement. The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti mediated the agreement via a CWC committee, with a breakthrough at the Eastern Zonal Council meeting in July 2025 chaired by Amit Shah. The agreement is linked to the Sone canal system, which irrigates several districts in Bihar.



US and Australia Pledge $580 Million for Pacific Islands :-

The United States and Australia announced a combined $580 million support package for the Pacific Islands, aiming to counter China's influence in the region. Australia's contribution includes A$600 million to combat drug smuggling, enhance aerial surveillance, and train police and border officials. The US will provide $150 million, with $60 million allocated to address the global energy crisis by expanding fuel storage capacity. The funding announcements were made at the Pacific Islands Forum in Palau, amidst tensions over Taiwan's participation.



IIT Madras and UNESCO MGIEP Partner on AI in Education :-

IIT Madras and UNESCO MGIEP have signed a cooperation agreement to advance next-generation AI and immersive learning. The collaboration aims to develop open-source, low-cost tools for personalized learning, particularly in low-bandwidth areas. It combines UNESCO MGIEP's expertise in Social & Emotional Learning with IIT Madras' capabilities in AI, XR, and game design. The initiative includes joint research, faculty exchange, and SEL-integrated pedagogy, supporting UN SDG 4 on quality education.



India and Belgium Sign MoUs to Boost Bilateral Trade :-

India and Belgium have signed multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) during talks in New Delhi between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever. The agreements focus on renewable energy, defence-industrial cooperation, migration and mobility, semiconductors, and critical minerals processing. Aiming to double bilateral trade in the next five years, the MoUs include a technology partnership for projects like the Zorawar light tank. Additionally, the Belgian frigate LEOPOLD I is scheduled to visit India in November 2026.



Odisha Signs MoU for Rs. 2.10 Lakh Crore Investment in UAE :-

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UAE-based International Holding Company and the Adani Group to

explore 14 new projects worth Rs. 2.10 lakh crore. These projects aim to create approximately 8.68 lakh jobs and cover sectors like metal downstream industries, renewable energy, and healthcare. The MoU was part of a visit to Abu Dhabi to attract investment and expand trade links. Additionally, discussions included promoting exports of Odisha products and opportunities for UAE companies in Odisha's infrastructure projects.



India-Sri Lanka Sign Defence MoUs :-

India and Sri Lanka signed three defence Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in Colombo. The agreements, between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, cover the upgrade of six 40mm L70 air defence guns, cooperation with the National Cadet Corps (NCC), and academic exchanges at the National Defence College. Additionally, three Bailey Bridges built by Indian forces were inaugurated virtually. India also proposed an integrated real-time maritime surveillance grid.



IIT-Ropar Partners with Army for MTech in Defence Technology :-

IIT-Ropar and the Army Air Defence College in Gopalpur have signed a Memorandum of Agreement to offer an MTech program in Defence Technology for Indian Army officers. This agreement provides academic accreditation for officers undergoing the Long Air Defence Course at Gopalpur. The collaboration builds on a previous MoU from December 2022 between the Army Training Command and IIT-Ropar. Faculty from IIT-Ropar will mentor dissertations and research work as part of this initiative.



MoUs Signed for Modified UDAN Scheme with 22 States :-

The Ministry of Civil Aviation is set to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with 22 states for the next phase of the Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN. The modified scheme, running from 2026-27 to 2035-36, has a budget of ₹28,840 crore and aims to introduce 120 new destinations and serve 4 crore passengers. It includes a viability gap funding extension for five years and plans to develop 100 new airports from unserved airstrips and 200 modern helipads. A Challenge Mode and new Routes Bidding Round will also be launched.



India Signs UN Convention Against Cybercrime :-

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar signed the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, which aims to enhance global efforts to combat cybercrime. This

convention is the first comprehensive global treaty on cybercrime, providing countries with measures to prevent and address such offenses. It also seeks to improve international cooperation in sharing electronic evidence related to serious crimes. The convention, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2024, entered into force after receiving 40 member-state signatures. By the end of 2025, 93 countries had signed the treaty, addressing challenges posed by cybercriminals operating across jurisdictions.

3: Appointments



Satish Golcha Appointed as OSD, Directorate of Home Guards :-

Satish Golcha, former Delhi Police Commissioner, has been appointed as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) at the Directorate of Home Guards. From October 1, 2026, he will head the department as Director General following the superannuation of current DG Virender Singh on September 30, 2026. Golcha's appointment comes after his dismissal as Delhi Police Commissioner in July and subsequent posting at the LG office. Previously, he served as DG (Prisons) and Special Commissioner (Law & Order), and will continue to be included in the Delhi Police cadre for pay purposes.



Air Marshal Vivek Hande Appointed DGMS (Air) :-

Air Marshal Vivek Hande has taken over as the Director General Medical Services (Air). An alumnus of AFMC Pune and Tata Memorial Hospital Mumbai, Hande is a renowned gastroenterologist with a distinguished career in the Indian Armed Forces. He has previously held roles such as the commanding officer of INHS Asvini and Senior Consultant (Medicine). His appointment marks a significant milestone as he has served across all three services of the Indian Armed Forces, showcasing his extensive experience and leadership capabilities.



Dinesh Sharma appointed Lieutenant Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands :-

President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Dr. Dinesh Sharma as the next Lieutenant Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with his term beginning from the date he assumes charge. Sharma, 62, is a BJP Rajya Sabha member and former Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, and he previously served as Mayor of Lucknow. He succeeds retired Admiral D. K. Joshi, who had headed the Union Territory since October 2017. The appointment is significant because the strategically located archipelago has considerable importance for maritime security, connectivity and India's wider Indo-Pacific interests. It also marks Sharma's move from active parliamentary politics into a constitutional administrative role.



Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh Re-elected as APPU Secretary-General :-

Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh, a 1988-batch Indian Postal Service officer, has been re-elected unopposed as Secretary-General of the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) at the 14th APPU Congress in Bangkok. This marks his second consecutive four-year term, spanning January 2027 to December 2030. The APPU, an intergovernmental body of 32 member countries, is a Regional Union of the Universal Postal Union. His re-election reflects regional confidence in his leadership and underscores India's role in international postal cooperation.



Embassy Developments appoints Neel Virwani as Chief Business Officer :-

Neel Virwani has been appointed Chief Business Officer of Embassy Developments, with the appointment taking effect from 1 October 2026. The appointment has been approved by the company's board and shareholders, and Virwani will become part of its Senior Management Personnel. The move comes as Embassy Developments continues to expand its real-estate business and strengthen its leadership team. A Chief Business Officer role is particularly important in a growth-oriented property company because it can bring together commercial strategy, business development and market expansion.



Mohsin Raza appointed Chairman of Uttar Pradesh Minority Commission :-

Former Uttar Pradesh minister Mohsin Raza has been appointed Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Minority Commission, ending a vacancy that had lasted for more than two years. The state government has also named eight members to the commission, effectively reconstituting the body. The appointment is significant because the commission deals with issues concerning minority welfare and representation in Uttar Pradesh. The long vacancy had attracted criticism, making the restoration of leadership particularly notable. Raza's return to an institutional role also places him in a position where his experience in state-level politics and administration can influence the commission's priorities.



HDFC Bank reappoints V. Srinivasa Rangan and appoints Jimmy Tata as Whole-Time Directors :-

HDFC Bank has approved a significant set of leadership changes as it prepares for a transition at the top. The bank has reappointed V. Srinivasa Rangan as a Whole-Time Director for a one-year term beginning November 23, 2026, and appointed Jimmy Tata as a Whole-Time

Director for three years. At the same time, the board has forwarded two candidates to the Reserve Bank of India for the bank's next Managing Director and CEO, although the candidates have not been officially disclosed. The bank is also creating a fourth Whole-Time Director position, intended to strengthen oversight and succession planning.



Info Edge appoints Himanshu Agarwal as CFO and Whole-Time Director :-

Info Edge, the parent company of Naukri, 99acres, Jeevansaathi and Shiksha, has appointed veteran finance executive Himanshu Agarwal as its Chief Financial Officer. He is scheduled to take over on September 17, 2026, while interim CFO Ambarish Raghuvanshi continues to manage the function until then. Agarwal is currently Whole-Time Director and CFO at Cohance Lifesciences and has nearly 15 years of experience in senior finance roles. Before Cohance, he was CFO at Bennett Coleman & Co., with earlier finance leadership positions at companies including Huhtamaki, AkzoNobel India and AstraZeneca Pharma India.



AU Small Finance Bank appoints Anil Agarwal to lead Commercial & Institutional Banking :-

AU Small Finance Bank appointed Anil Agarwal as Senior Executive Group Head – Commercial & Institutional Banking. The appointment is part of a broader leadership strengthening exercise as the bank prepares for its next stage of expansion and its proposed transition from a small finance bank into a universal bank. Agarwal brings nearly three decades of experience, including more than 20 years at Axis Bank across financial institutions, government business, transaction banking, corporate banking and other institutional segments. His new mandate covers several important businesses, including wholesale liabilities, transaction banking, government banking, financial institutions and capital markets.



Sanjukta Parashar Appointed First Woman Head of CRPF's CoBRA :-

IPS officer Sanjukta Parashar has become the first woman to lead the CRPF's elite CoBRA unit. Known as the 'Iron Lady of Assam', she led anti-NDFB operations in Sonitpur, neutralising 16 militants and arresting 64. Parashar, from the 2006 Assam-Meghalaya cadre, has previously served in the Assam Police CID and NIA, handling major counter-terrorism cases. CoBRA specialises in jungle warfare against left-wing extremism, operating in states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Manipur.



Michael Kremer Appointed World Bank Chief Economist

Nobel laureate Michael Kremer has been appointed as the World Bank Group Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics. Kremer, who shared the 2019 Nobel Prize with Banerjee and Duflo for

his work on experimental approaches to poverty, will focus on bridging research with practical development outcomes under President Ajay Banga. He is known for his work on vaccines, deworming, and digital agriculture. Kremer co-founded Precision Development and Development Innovation Ventures.



President appoints 14 judicial officers as judges in four High Courts :-

President Droupadi Murmu appointed 14 judicial officers as Judges and Additional Judges in the Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Jharkhand, and Karnataka High Courts. The appointments, made after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, include Nivedita Anil Sharma and Nisha Sahay Saxena as Judges in the Delhi High Court. Other appointments include Sanjay Sharma and Bharat Parashar as Additional Judges in Delhi, and Yash Paul Bourney as a Judge in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court.



Luke J. Lindberg Appointed WFP Executive Director :-

Luke J. Lindberg has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). At 37, Lindberg takes over from Cindy McCain, who resigned due to health reasons. Previously, Lindberg served as the USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs and held leadership roles in South Dakota Trade and the US Export-Import Bank. He assumes leadership of WFP amid significant funding challenges, as the organization supports over 100 million people in 83 countries facing acute food insecurity.



Jayanti Prasad Appointed as IBBI Chairperson :-

Jayanti Prasad, a Whole-Time Member of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), has been given additional charge as the Chairperson of IBBI. He succeeds Ravi Mital, who retired earlier in the month. Prasad will hold the position until November 20, 2026, or until a new Chairperson is appointed. The IBBI is responsible for regulating insolvency professionals, agencies, and information utilities under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016, ensuring continuity in the insolvency resolution ecosystem.



Rajat Sharma Re-elected as NBDA President :-

Rajat Sharma, chairman and editor-in-chief of India TV, has been unanimously re-elected as the president of the News Broadcasters and Digital Association (NBDA) for the 2026-27 term. The NBDA, representing 29 leading news broadcasters with 130 channels and digital platforms, also welcomed Jayant Mammen Mathew of MM TV to its Board of Directors. Rachna Burman from the Times Group and Kshipra Jatana from Network18 were appointed as permanent directors.

4: Awards



Trump Awards Medal of Honor to Artemis II Crew :-

US President Donald Trump awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor to the Artemis II crew at NASA's Johnson Space Center. The ceremony highlighted the crew's achievements in space exploration. Trump also engaged in a conversation with crew members aboard the International Space Station and signed a commemorative plaque. The event underscores the importance of space exploration and the recognition of astronauts' contributions to advancing human presence in space.



PM Modi Awarded Uzbekistan's Highest Honour :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded Uzbekistan's highest honour, the 'Oliy Darajali Do'stlik' Order, by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The award recognizes Modi's contributions to strengthening bilateral ties. This accolade adds to Modi's extensive list of international honours, reflecting his influence on global diplomacy. During his visit, Modi also participated in a yoga session, showcasing the cultural ties between India and Uzbekistan. The session highlighted the growing popularity of yoga in Uzbekistan, adding a cultural dimension to Modi's diplomatic engagements.



Green Highways Excellence Awards 2026 Announced :-

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has announced the winners of the Green Highways Excellence Awards 2026 to promote healthy plantation practices along national highways. The awards were given in three categories: Avenue Plantations, Median Plantations, and Land Parcels. The top award for Avenue Plantations went to the Six Laning of Chilakaluripet Bypass in Andhra Pradesh. The awards, which began in 2025 under the Green Highways Policy, 2015, evaluated nominees based on survival rates and received 86 nominations this year.



Ig Nobel Prize 2026 Celebrates Unique Scientific Research :-

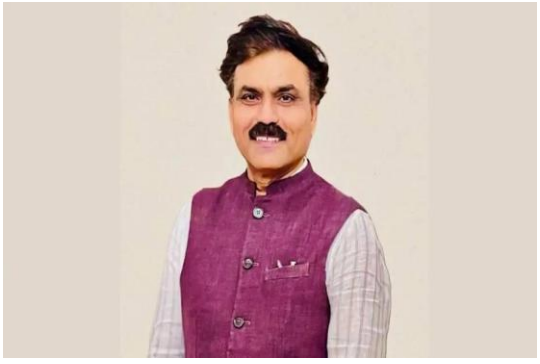
The 36th Ig Nobel Prize ceremony was held at the Zurich Convention Center, recognizing 10 quirky scientific studies. Indian scientists from inStem Bengaluru and

international collaborators won in Chemistry for studying nutrient-dense protein crystals in cockroach milk. Other notable research included technology exploring mosquito mouthparts for 3D printing and Physics analyzing splash-free urinal angles. The awards, known for celebrating unusual and humorous research, aim to make people think by highlighting unconventional scientific inquiries.



Five Oncology Students Win Roche India's 2026 LEAP Scholarships :-

Roche Pharma India has announced the five winners of the third edition of its Leading Engagements to Advance Patient Care (LEAP) programme, recognising innovative solutions developed by final-year oncology students. The programme attracted 355 submissions from more than 60 medical institutions across India, making it a significant competition for emerging oncology talent. Each winner receives a ₹3 lakh scholarship, certificate and medal. The winning ideas focus on practical problems in cancer care, including treatment adherence, access to care in rural areas, automated risk assessment for elderly patients and improved screening approaches.



Kishor Makwana Received Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Jan Seva Puraskar :-

Kishor Makwana, Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), awarded the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Jan Seva Puraskar. The award recognizes the NCSC's efforts in social justice, rights protection, and empowerment of Scheduled Castes. Nominated by the Prime Point Foundation and the Sansad Ratna Awards Jury, the award was presented at the 16th Sansad Ratna Awards in Delhi. This honor highlights the importance of equality, dignity, and institutional service in society.



Rani Mukerji Honored with Raj Kapoor Special Contribution Award :-

Renowned actress Rani Mukerji received the Raj Kapoor Special Contribution Award at the 62nd Maharashtra State Film Awards. The ceremony took place at Ravindra Natya Mandir, Prabhadevi, Mumbai, and the award was presented by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. This accolade recognizes her significant contribution to films and the film industry. Other awardees included Salim Khan, who received the Raj Kapoor Lifetime Achievement Award, and Prasad Oak, who was honored with the Chitrapati V. Shantaram Special Contribution Award.



DFS Wins 'Rajbhasha Kirti' Award for Language Innovation :-

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has been awarded the First Prize under 'Rajbhasha Kirti' for 2025–26, recognizing its innovative implementation and promotion of Hindi in official work. The award was presented by Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the 6th All India Official Language Conference and Hindi Diwas in Vashi, Navi Mumbai. Additional Secretary Shri Hari Har Mishra received the award, marking a significant achievement in promoting the use of the official language in government departments.



Sethuraman Panchanathan Wins Arthur M. Bueche Award :-

Sethuraman Panchanathan, a computer scientist, has been awarded the 2026 Arthur M. Bueche Award by the US National Academy of Engineering. He is the first Indian-American and Arizonan to receive this honor in over four decades. Panchanathan is recognized for his contributions to science, technology, innovation, and policy. He is a former Director of the US National Science Foundation and currently a University Professor at Arizona State University. Born in Chennai, he was educated in India and Canada.



Andhra Pradesh Student Himaja Lingampalli Wins India's James Dyson Award 2026 :-

Lingampalli Himaja, a BTech student from Shri Vishnu Engineering College for Women in Andhra Pradesh, has won the India national stage of the James Dyson Award 2026 for her invention, RUDHRA. The project is a voice-enabled Braille printing system designed to make Braille writing easier and more independent for visually impaired users. RUDHRA accepts spoken input, converts it into text and then generates the required reverse-Braille pattern before embossing it onto paper.



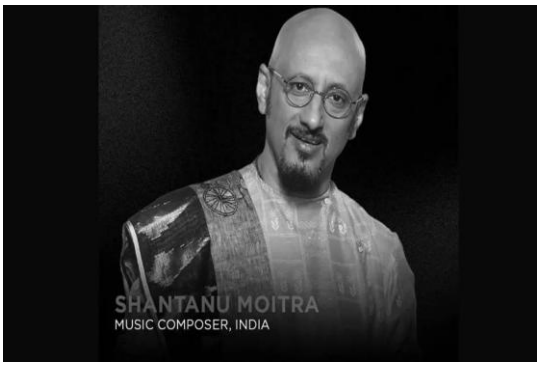
Mizoram Farmer to Receive FAO Award for Agrifood Systems Contribution :-

Z T Lalrithangi, a teacher-turned-farmer from Mizoram, will receive a United Nations award for her contributions to agriculture and rural development. Recognized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as one of the "FAO 100 Women Heroes in Agrifood Systems and Rural Development," Lalrithangi is one of two Indian women selected among 100 globally. Her successful strawberry cultivation in Lawngtlai district has been transformative, earning over Rs 10 lakh in 2025. The award will be presented at the World Food Forum in Rome from October 12-16, 2026.



Booker Prize 2026 Shortlist Announced :-

The shortlist for the Booker Prize 2026 has been announced, featuring six novels selected from 163 submissions. The contenders are M. John Harrison's 'The End of Everything', Marlon James's 'The Disappearers', Luke Kennard's 'Black Bag', Rebecca Perry's 'May We Feed the King', Elizabeth Strout's 'The Things We Never Say', and Douglas Stuart's 'John of John'. Marlon James and Douglas Stuart are previous winners, while Rebecca Perry is a first-time nominee. The winner will be announced on 9 November 2026 in London.



Shantanu Moitra to Receive National Lata Mangeshkar Award :-

Renowned music director Shantanu Moitra will be honored with the National Lata Mangeshkar Award 2026 by the Madhya Pradesh government. The award includes a tax-free cash prize of ₹5 lakh and a citation. The ceremony will take place on 28 September 2026 at the Lata Mangeshkar Auditorium in Indore, during a two-day event commemorating her birth anniversary. The event will also feature a musical programme titled “Amar Lata Hamari Lata...” and a performance by Sachet-Parampara. The programmes are open to the public and free of charge.



20 Artists Honored at 65th National Exhibition of Art :-

The Lalit Kala Akademi announced 20 awards at the 65th National Exhibition of Art, recognizing artists across painting, sculpture, drawing, and printmaking. The exhibition received 6,175 artworks from 2,495 artists, with 270 artworks selected for display. The award-winning artists include Chandra Shekhar Sain for 'My Entire World – I' in Terracotta and Gopal Chandra Naskar for 'The Tune of The Srimad Bhagavad Gita' in Acrylic. The exhibition not only celebrates artistic achievement but also strengthens India's creative economy by connecting artists with audiences and collectors.

5: Banking



ICICI Bank mobilises $17.88 billion under RBI’s FCNR(B) deposit scheme :-

ICICI Bank has disclosed that it mobilised approximately $17.88 billion (around ₹1.70 lakh crore) through the Reserve Bank of India’s special FCNR(B) deposit arrangement up to August 31. The bank also said its international branches and subsidiaries provided roughly $9 billion of loans against these deposits, while standby letters of credit worth about $3.63 billion were issued to other banks in connection with such lending. The RBI had introduced concessional foreign-exchange measures in June to attract overseas dollar inflows and support the rupee.



IPPB Launches New Digital Platforms on 9th Foundation Day :-

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) celebrated its 9th Foundation Day by unveiling new digital platforms to enhance access to payments, insurance, and investment services. The initiatives include the DakPay Sound Box for merchants, a Digital Insurance Technology Platform, and a Digital Mutual Fund Platform. These platforms aim to simplify digital payments and provide comprehensive financial services. As of March 2026, IPPB had a customer base of 13.25 crore, with significant rural representation. The bank also reported substantial digital transactions and facilitated numerous Aadhaar updates and enrollments.



UPI Payments Now Available in Uzbekistan :-

Indian travelers can now make UPI payments at merchant outlets across Uzbekistan using the national UZQR code. This development follows a commercial agreement signed between NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Uzbekistan's National Interbank Processing Centre (NIPC), operator of the HUMO system. The facility allows users to scan UZQR codes with existing UPI apps for direct transactions from Indian bank accounts. Supported by the RBI and the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, this initiative covers retail, hospitality, and services sectors, enhancing UPI's global reach.



RBI allows urban co-operative banks to join India's digital-payment fraud intelligence network :-

The RBI has amended investment rules to allow urban co-operative banks (UCBs) to acquire equity in the Indian Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation (IDPIC). The change enables eligible UCBs to obtain membership of the country's central digital-payment fraud intelligence platform. This is significant because co-operative banks increasingly participate in digital payments but may not always have the same technological infrastructure and fraud-monitoring capabilities as large commercial banks. Bringing them into a central intelligence framework should improve information sharing around suspicious transactions, fraud patterns and emerging digital-payment threats.



Banks propose FX swaps to help RBI absorb India's record liquidity surplus :-

Indian banks have proposed that the RBI use foreign-exchange sell/buy swaps to gradually absorb the extraordinary rupee liquidity created by the recent surge in foreign-currency deposits. Banking executives reportedly discussed the idea with the RBI after surplus liquidity reached approximately ₹9.7 trillion ($102.66

billion). The mechanism would allow the central bank to sell dollars and receive rupees, thereby taking excess domestic liquidity out of the banking system, before reversing the transaction later.



RBI Approves LIC's Stake Increase in ICICI Bank :-

The Reserve Bank of India has approved LIC to increase its shareholding in ICICI Bank up to 9.99%. As of June 30, 2026, LIC held a 4.35% stake in ICICI Bank. The approval is valid for one year under the Banking Regulation Act norms. This follows a similar approval for LIC to acquire a 9.99% stake in HDFC Bank. This strategic move unites India's largest state life insurer with one of its leading private commercial banks, enhancing LIC's footprint in the banking sector.



BNP Paribas and HSBC complete a major cross-border tokenised-deposit transaction :-

Global banking is moving another step toward blockchain-enabled transaction banking. BNP Paribas and HSBC have completed what has been reported as the first live multi-bank cross-border tokenised-deposit transaction involving foreign-exchange execution for a corporate treasury. Siemens transferred funds from its euro account at BNP Paribas in France to its sterling account at HSBC in the UK through Swift's new blockchain-based ledger. The significance goes beyond the individual transaction: tokenised deposits have often developed within separate bank-controlled systems, creating fragmented digital "islands."



New Bankers' Books Evidence Act to Modernize Legal Framework :-

The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026, set to replace the 1891 law, will come into effect on October 1, 2026. This new legislation provides a modern legal framework for using banking records as evidence in legal proceedings. It recognizes records maintained in various forms, including digital and cloud-based, and simplifies the certification process through manual, digital, or electronic signatures. The Act also clarifies the summoning of bank officials and empowers the Central Government to extend its provisions to specified financial entities, reflecting the rapid changes in banking practices and technology.



NPCI Introduces UPI Tap & Pay and My UPI Platform :-

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched UPI Tap & Pay and an AI-powered My UPI platform. Unveiled at the Global Fintech Fest 2026 by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, UPI Tap & Pay allows users to make contactless payments using NFC-enabled smartphones at PoS terminals without opening a UPI app. Transactions up to ₹5,000 are PIN-less. My UPI, built on NPCI's FiMI model, is an AI-powered conversational platform designed to enhance user interaction.



RBI Introduces MDR for Large-Value UPI Transactions :-

The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) for large-value UPI transactions to ensure the sustainability of India's digital payments ecosystem. This move aims to support investments in technology and infrastructure. While UPI transactions remain free for users, a nominal MDR of 0.4% will apply to person-to-merchant transactions above Rs 2,000. Transactions in essential sectors will attract a flat MDR of Rs 5. The RBI clarified that MDR is not a tax but a distribution among payment ecosystem participants to support UPI's growth and sustainability.



Apple Pay is expected to enter India with Axis Bank :-

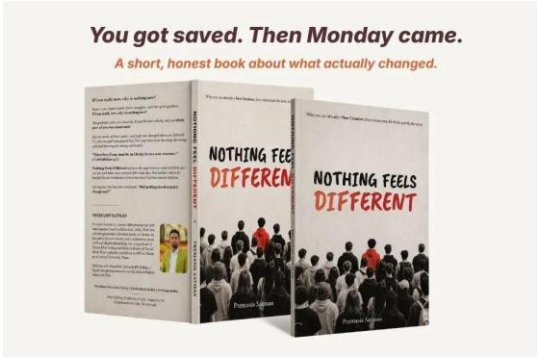
Apple is preparing to launch Apple Pay in India next month, with Axis Bank expected to be its first banking partner, according to Reuters citing three people familiar with the discussions. The service would initially support Axis Bank credit cards, while Apple is also in talks with HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank about expanding support. Apple Pay uses tokenised card credentials stored on Apple devices, enabling contactless payments without requiring a separate payment app. The development is notable because India already has a highly established digital-payments ecosystem dominated by UPI.



PhonePe Secures UAE Payment Licenses for Expansion :

PhonePe has received in-principle approval from the Central Bank of the UAE for Retail Payment Services and Card Schemes (RPSCS) and Stored Value Facilities (SVF). This marks PhonePe's first step towards international expansion. The company plans to collaborate with regional banks, licensed providers, and local tech vendors to support UAE domestic payment systems Aani and Jaywan. Final clearances are pending before the commercial launch of services in the UAE.

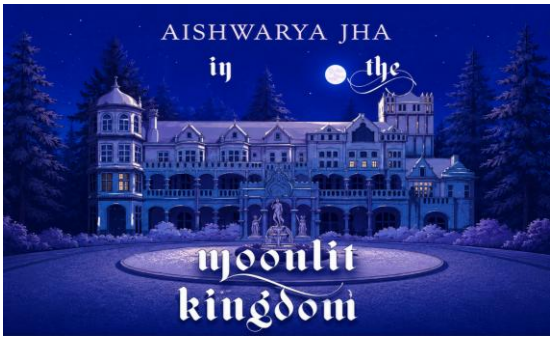
6: Books and Author



Hyderabad-based author Premasis Satman has released his first book, Nothing Feels Different :-

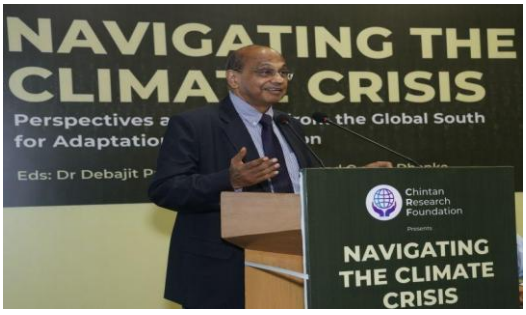
Hyderabad-based author Premasis Satman has released his first book, Nothing Feels Different. The short, nine-chapter book addresses a question the author says he has encountered repeatedly among Christian readers: why can everyday life appear exactly the same after someone comes to faith? Satman's argument is that people may be looking for change in the wrong place. He

develops a framework around spirit, soul and body, then connects it with ideas about renewing the mind, righteousness and faith. The book is deliberately written in plain English and aimed particularly at younger Indian readers who may find much existing devotional literature culturally distant.



In the Moonlit Kingdom — Aishwarya Jha combines a Bollywood dynasty, family secrets and a mysterious Himalayan town :-

A fresh Indian fiction release for September 2026, In the Moonlit Kingdom is the second novel from Aishwarya Jha, whose debut The Scent of Fallen Stars won the 2024 Ramnath Goenka Sahithya Samman for Fiction. The new novel is set in the mountain town of Munala, where the Chandra Singh family has been treated almost like royalty for generations. The death of the family patriarch brings his estranged daughter Meher back after eleven years, forcing her into the complicated world surrounding her former Bollywood-star stepmother Devyani and her brother Raghu. Bankruptcy, betrayal and old myths surround the family, while a miniature Swiss house left by Meher's father appears to contain a crucial secret.



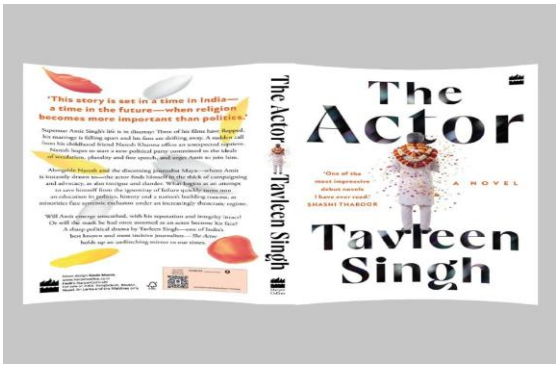
"Navigating the Climate Crisis" — A new Delhi-launched volume puts Global South experiences at the centre of climate policy :-

The Chintan Research Foundation launched Navigating the Climate Crisis: Perspectives and Actions from the Global South for Adaptation and Mitigation at the India International Centre in New Delhi. Edited by Dr Debajit Palit, Dr Akanksha Jain and Omkar Dhanke, the book brings together 22 articles by researchers and practitioners from the Global South. Its important contribution is the decision to treat climate change not simply as an environmental problem but as a development and inequality problem.



"The World Is Carried Within" — Manoj Mathew turns wildlife photography into a meditation on leadership and life :-

Senior hospitality executive Manoj Mathew launched his literary debut, The World Is Carried Within, in Bengaluru. The book is the first volume of The Third Eye Series and combines 18 literary essays with wildlife photographs taken by Mathew himself across places including Coorg, Nagarahole, Gokarna and Bentota. Rather than writing another conventional leadership book based on management theories, Mathew uses encounters with animals and birds as starting points for reflecting on human behaviour.



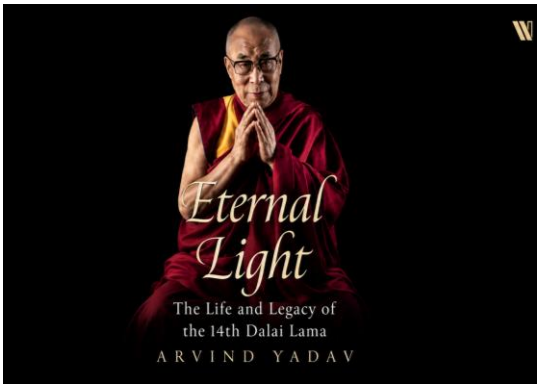
The Actor: A Novel — Tavleen Singh turns a fallen Bollywood star's political comeback into a sharp contemporary drama :-

Veteran journalist Tavleen Singh has a new political novel, The Actor: A Novel, among the latest books highlighted in Indian publishing coverage. The story follows Amit Singh, a Bollywood superstar whose career and personal life are collapsing at the same time: several films have failed, his marriage is deteriorating and public attention is moving elsewhere. His fortunes appear to change when his childhood friend Naresh Khanna invites him to join a new political movement built around secularism, plurality and free speech.



"Aparajita" — Arundhati Bhattacharya's Hindi memoir brings her leadership journey to a much wider Indian readership :-

The Hindi edition of former State Bank of India chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya's memoir, Aparajita, was officially launched at the Bombay Stock Exchange in Mumbai, with Mukesh Ambani as chief guest. Originally published in English as Indomitable: A Working Woman's Notes on Work, Life, and Leadership, the memoir chronicles Bhattacharya's professional journey and the challenges she encountered while becoming the first woman to chair SBI. The Hindi edition is significant because it makes those experiences accessible to readers well beyond the English-speaking corporate audience. Ambani described the book as more than a conventional autobiography, emphasising its lessons around resilience, responsibility, continuous learning and leadership.



"Eternal Light: The Life and Legacy of the 14th Dalai Lama" — A new biography revisits the Dalai Lama's journey from Tibet to India and the world stage :-

Journalist and author Dr Arvind Yadav launched Eternal Light: The Life and Legacy of the 14th Dalai Lama at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi. The 508-page biography traces the Dalai Lama's life from his childhood in Tibet and recognition as the 14th Dalai Lama through the 1959 exile to India, the creation of the Tibetan community in Dharamshala and his emergence as a global advocate for compassion, dialogue and non-violence. The timing of the Delhi launch was notable because it coincided with Chinese President Xi Jinping's arrival in the capital for the BRICS summit. The book therefore entered the public conversation at a particularly significant geopolitical moment.



"Yatra: From Sorrow to Joy" by Dr Krishna Avtar launched :-

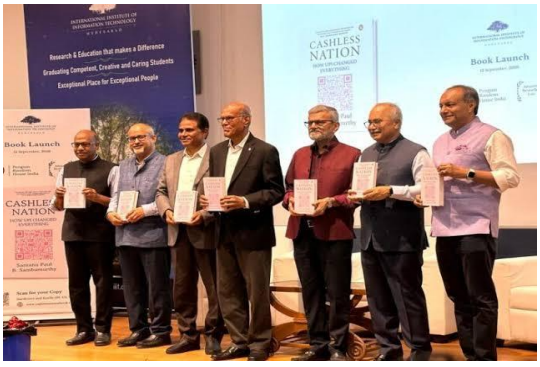
Yatra: From Sorrow to Joy was launched at Lok Bhavan in Dehradun by Uttarakhand Governor Lt Gen Gurmit Singh (Retd.). The author, Dr Krishna Avtar, is a senior neurologist who has spent more than three decades

working with patients and witnessing human suffering. The book brings together his medical experience with spiritual and philosophical reflection, asking readers to look at sorrow not simply as an obstacle but as an opportunity for self-understanding. Its central idea is that happiness is influenced not only by external circumstances but also by how people interpret their experiences.



"The Realm of the Goddess: The Madurai Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple" By The Hindu Launched :-

The Realm of the Goddess: The Madurai Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple is one of the most visually significant Indian publications released in September 2026. The Hindu Group has published the 252-page coffee-table book ahead of the Madurai Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple's kumbhabhishekam. Featuring more than 300 photographs, the book explores the temple's architecture, sculptures, festivals, saints and the contributions of Pandya, Chola, Vijayanagara and Nayaka rulers. It also brings together lesser-known stories, archival material and unusual details about the temple complex, including its Golden Lotus Tank, murals and historic damage to artworks.



"Cashless Nation: How UPI Changed Everything" By Santanu Paul & B. Sambamurthy Launched :-

Cashless Nation: How UPI Changed Everything received its global launch in Mumbai during Global FinTech Fest 2026. Written by Santanu Paul and B. Sambamurthy and published by Penguin Random House India, the book examines the development and wider impact of India's Unified Payments Interface. The subject is particularly significant because UPI has transformed how individuals, businesses and institutions conduct everyday payments, moving digital transactions far beyond traditional card and banking channels. The authors look at the technology, ecosystem and people behind this transformation rather than treating UPI simply as a payment application.

7: Defence



Defence Production Reaches ₹1.81 Lakh Crore as India's Defence Exports Cross ₹38,000 Crore :-

India's defence manufacturing sector has achieved another major milestone, with defence production reaching a record ₹1.81 lakh crore and defence exports crossing ₹38,000 crore. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh highlighted these figures while speaking about India's transformation from a major defence importer towards an increasingly important global defence manufacturing and exporting nation. The scale of growth is particularly significant when compared with the figures cited for the period before 2014: defence exports were around ₹600

crore, while defence production stood at approximately ₹40,000 crore.



HAL–Samtel Joint Venture Opens India's First Public-Private Defence Avionics Manufacturing Facility in Gurugram :-

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Samtel have opened a new defence avionics manufacturing and development facility in Udyog Vihar, Gurugram, through their joint venture, Samtel HAL Display Systems (SHDS). The facility has been described as India's first public-private facility of its kind for advanced defence avionics display systems. It will support the design, development, manufacturing, testing and quality assurance of sophisticated display technologies used in military aircraft and other defence platforms. The development is important because avionics are critical to modern combat aircraft, providing pilots with information through advanced cockpit displays and electronic systems.



India-Kuwait Joint Defence Committee Inaugural Meeting in Delhi :-

The first meeting of the India-Kuwait Joint Defence Committee (JDC) was held in New Delhi, marking a significant step in enhancing bilateral defence cooperation. The meeting, co-chaired by Joint Secretary Amitabh Prasad and Brigadier General Raed Alsakran, focused on various areas such as training, military exercises, and defence industry collaboration. This meeting operationalises objectives from the MoU on Defence Cooperation signed in December 2024. The Kuwaiti delegation also engaged with Indian defence industry representatives to explore potential mutual cooperation areas.



Turkiye and China Conduct Military Airlift to Pakistan :-

A secretive 60-hour military airlift by Turkiye and China into Pakistan has raised concerns among South Asian security planners. Conducted between 19th and 21st August, the operation involved continuous cargo flights to Pakistan's key airbases, reportedly to replenish military assets damaged during India's Operation Sindoor. The shipments allegedly included advanced drones, missile systems, and mission control units. This military build-up follows the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Turkiye, and Saudi Arabia, contrasting with Pakistan's ongoing economic challenges.



India Signs Javelin Anti-Tank Missile Procurement Deal with the United States :-

India and the United States have finalised an agreement for the procurement of the American Javelin anti-tank

guided missile system for the Indian Army. The Army has signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance under the US Foreign Military Sales framework, with the procurement reportedly being carried out through the Emergency Procurement route at a cost of around ₹292 crore. The Javelin is a man-portable, shoulder-launched, medium-range, fire-and-forget anti-tank weapon developed by the Javelin Joint Venture involving Lockheed Martin and RTX. It is designed to engage armoured vehicles, tanks and fortified positions and is particularly useful for infantry units operating in difficult terrain.



Taiwan Approves Drone Industry Development Act :-

Taiwan's National Defense Autonomy and Unmanned Vehicle Industry Development Act has been approved. The act allocates a six-year budget of NT$240 billion (~US$7.6 billion) to develop coastal surveillance, attack, and target-acquisition drones. The legislation, passed with a 60–50 vote, was supported by the KMT and TPP parties. It mandates oversight by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of National Defense, with strict penalties for using high-risk components, including those from China. This act aims to enhance Taiwan's defense capabilities.

Second Annual Trident Lecture Inaugurated by Raksha Rajya Mantri :-

Raksha Rajya Mantri Sanjay Seth inaugurated the second Annual Trident Lecture of CENJOWS at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. The theme was 'National Resurgence through the Lens of Defence Forces'. Seth delivered a Special Address on 'Leveraging the Potential of Next Generation for Nation Building'. Air Marshal Tejinder Singh provided a keynote on jointness and integration. Special addresses were also given by Lt Gen Raj Shukla (Retd) on civil-military fusion and Lt Gen Sandeep Jain on multi-domain operations. CENJOWS is a tri-services think tank established in 2007.



Aero India 2027 Scheduled in Bengaluru for February :-

The 16th edition of Aero India, Asia's largest air show, will be held at Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru from February 8 to 12, 2027. Organised by the Department of Defence Production under the Ministry of Defence, the event will feature global aerospace and defence companies, policymakers, and innovators. Aero India aims to showcase India's aerospace capabilities and promote business engagements, technology demonstrations, and international collaborations. The event supports the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative and will focus on expanding participation from Indian defence industries, including MSMEs and start-ups.



India and Belgium Strengthen Defence Cooperation :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Belgian Defence Minister Theo Francken discussed enhancing defence

cooperation between India and Belgium during a meeting in New Delhi. The discussions aimed at expanding industrial collaboration and leveraging Belgian technology with Indian skills. The meeting coincides with Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever's official visit to India, marking the first such visit in over 20 years. The two countries reviewed their defence relations and signed multiple MoUs to foster defence industrial cooperation, highlighting a shared commitment to a rules-based global order.



Air Marshal KAA Sanjeeb Takes Charge as AOM :-

Air Marshal KAA Sanjeeb assumed the role of Air Officer-in-Charge Maintenance (AOM) succeeding Air Marshal Sanjiv Ghuratia. Commissioned on 3 September 1988 in the Aeronautical Engineering (Mechanical) branch, he has previously held positions such as DG (Aircraft), DG (System), and ACAS (Maintenance Plans). Notably, he led the induction of the Indian Air Force's first IL-78 Flight Refueller and has been awarded the VSM in 2015 and AVSM in 2026.



India and Vietnam Strengthen Defence Cooperation :-

India and Vietnam reaffirmed their commitment to regional stability and peace through enhanced defence cooperation. Chief of Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth met with Lieutenant General Le Van Huong of the Vietnam People's Army in New Delhi. The discussions focused on deepening military-to-military engagement under the Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This engagement follows high-level defence talks aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation. The visit included a tribute to India's fallen soldiers at the National War Memorial and a ceremonial Guard of Honour for Lieutenant General Huong.



IAF Successfully Tests Khagantak-243 Glide Bomb :-

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully conducted a drop trial of the indigenous Khagantak-243 glide bomb from a Su-30MKI aircraft. The bomb, co-developed by JSR Dynamics and Bharat Electronics Limited, boasts a stand-off range of over 140 km when released from an altitude of approximately 12,000 meters. It features a cylindrical body, swivel glide wings, and advanced guidance systems. This successful test supports the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative by showcasing India's capability in developing indigenous defence technologies.



North Korea Commissions New Destroyer as Part of Nuclear Response System :-

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announced that a newly commissioned destroyer will be part of the country's nuclear response system. The destroyer, named 'Kang Kon', is intended to send a clear signal to North Korea's adversaries. Kim emphasized the expansion of naval nuclear capabilities and the protection of maritime sovereignty. The destroyer is part of North Korea's broader efforts to modernize its navy and enhance its strategic assets. The announcement coincides with joint military exercises by South Korea, the U.S., and Japan in nearby waters.



Exercise Veer Guardian 2026 Commences in Jodhpur :-

The second edition of Exercise Veer Guardian 2026, a bilateral air exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF), began at Air Force Station Jodhpur. Scheduled to run until September 22, the exercise aims to enhance interoperability, operational synergy, and mutual understanding between the two forces. The Japanese contingent arrived with two C-2 transport aircraft, focusing on joint training, professional exchanges, and learning each other's procedures, strengthening defense ties between India and Japan.



Indian Air Force Hosting Dronathon-2026 in Jaisalmer :-

The Indian Air Force is organising Dronathon-2026 at Pokhran Range, Jaisalmer, from 14 to 16 September 2026. This event will showcase advancements in Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS) through static displays and live demonstrations. Focus areas include surveillance, reconnaissance, autonomous operations, swarm technologies, and electronic warfare. Dronathon-2026 aims to identify contemporary solutions and evaluate their combat effectiveness, aligning with the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.



India-US Yudh Abhyas 2026 Military Exercise Commences :-

The India-US joint military exercise Yudh Abhyas 2026 began at Auli in Uttarakhand and Mahajan Range in Rajasthan recently. The exercise involves 600 troops from each country and focuses on mountain and semi-mountain operations, as well as Integrated Battle Groups. It includes the use of drones and autonomous systems for surveillance, along with demonstrations of

modern weapons. The exercise aims to enhance interoperability, exchange tactics, and discuss multi-domain technologies.



Keel Laid for Indian Navy's First Next-Gen Missile Vessel :-

The keel laying ceremony for the Indian Navy's first Next Generation Missile Vessel (NGMV) was held at Cochin Shipyard Limited, Kochi. Vice Admiral Sanjay Sadhu, Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition, attended the ceremony. The NGMVs, equipped with advanced weapons and sensor systems, aim to enhance the Indian Navy's combat capabilities. This project aligns with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, emphasizing indigenous development and manufacturing. The vessels will bolster India's naval strength in the Indian Ocean Region, reflecting the growing capabilities of the country's defence industry.

Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 Scheduled in Jodhpur :-

The Indian Air Force's second edition of Exercise Tarang Shakti is scheduled from September 26 to October 12, 2026, in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. This premier multinational air exercise focuses on joint aerial operations, tactical training, and interoperability. It aims to facilitate the exchange of operational practices and complex mission training with friendly air forces. The first edition of this exercise was held in 2024, marking an important step in enhancing collaborative defense capabilities.



MoD Contracts Bharat Dynamics for SAT-SAAW :-

The Ministry of Defence has signed an ₹810.79 crore contract with Bharat Dynamics Limited for 160 Satellite Smart Anti-Airfield Weapons (SAT-SAAW) for the Indian Air Force. The contract falls under the Buy (Indian-IDDM) category. The SAT-SAAW, designed by DRDO, can be launched from Jaguar, Hawk, and Su-30 MKI aircraft to neutralize airfields from long stand-off ranges. The indigenous content of the weapons is approximately 60%. Deliveries are scheduled for 2027-28 and 2028-29, enhancing the IAF's operational capabilities.



INS Sahyadri and INS Kulish Conclude ADMM-Plus Exercise :-

INS Sahyadri and INS Kulish concluded their participation in the 23rd ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Maritime Security Exercise at Subic Bay, Philippines. The exercise, co-chaired by Japan, included subject matter exchanges, operational synchronisation, and maritime activities like search and rescue operations. The event underscored the importance of multilateral engagement in strengthening maritime cooperation. India's participation reaffirms its commitment to regional maritime partnerships, aligning with its Act East Policy and MAHASAGAR vision.

8: Economy



Puducherry Presents ₹14,300-Crore Tax-Free Budget for FY 2026–27 :-

Puducherry Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented a ₹14,300-crore tax-free Budget for 2026–27. The budget does not introduce any new taxes, reflecting the administration's attempt to provide financial relief while continuing expenditure on welfare and development. Of the total allocation, around ₹12,115 crore has been earmarked for revenue expenditure, while ₹2,185 crore is allocated for capital expenditure, including infrastructure development.



Govt Initiates Union Budget 2027-28 Preparations with Pre-Budget Meetings :-

The Indian government has commenced preparations for the Union Budget 2027-28. The Finance Ministry has issued a Budget Circular detailing the framework and timelines for the budget-making process. Pre-Budget meetings are scheduled to start on October 12, 2026, with ministries required to submit expenditure projections by October 6. The exercise aligns with the government's goal of a developed India by 2047, emphasizing realistic budgetary projections. Ministries are advised to minimize additional resource requests, and Financial Advisers must ensure secure handling of budget data. This marks the beginning of the fiscal planning exercise for 2027-28.



India Plans Pilot Cargo Vessel on Arctic Northern Sea Route :-

India is set to launch its first pilot cargo vessel on the Arctic's Northern Sea Route in 2027, aiming to reduce distances to Northern Europe by up to 40%. This move is part of a larger connectivity project integrating the International North-South Transport Corridor, the Eastern Maritime Corridor, and the Northern Sea Route. The route, which lies within Russia's exclusive economic zone, offers a faster alternative to the Suez Canal but carries geopolitical risks due to Russia's control over access and transit fees.



FSSAI Proposes Mandatory Warning Labels on Packaged Foods :-

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has proposed mandatory front-of-pack warning labels

for packaged foods. The proposal, presented to the Supreme Court, includes red hexagonal labels indicating high fat, sugar, or salt content. The labels must be in a font size larger than the back-of-pack nutrition table, with thresholds based on the ICMR-NIN Dietary Guidelines 2024. The rollout is planned in two phases, initially for products exceeding two nutrients and later for any single nutrient. This replaces the earlier five-star rating plan.



NITI Aayog Launches PACT and ZET Marketplace :-

NITI Aayog launched the Platform for Aggregating Clean Transport (PACT) and Zero Emission Truck (ZET) Marketplace during the 5th e-FAST India Summit in New Delhi. PACT aims to aggregate freight demand from shippers and logistics providers, aiding in identifying viable deployment corridors and planning charging infrastructure. The ZET Marketplace connects e-truck manufacturers, logistics providers, charging operators, and financiers. Road transport accounts for about 70% of India's freight movement, making these initiatives significant for sustainable transport.



India Engages in Bilateral Agriculture Talks with Malaysia, Timor-Leste, Myanmar :-

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Malaysia, Timor-Leste, and Myanmar to discuss agricultural cooperation. The meetings, held during the 9th ASEAN–India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry, focused on strengthening research, technology, and food security. Discussions included potential MoUs, germplasm exchange, and trade opportunities. Timor-Leste expressed interest in India's support for agricultural development, while Myanmar and India discussed expanding trade in pulses, cotton, and dairy development.



NMHC Lothal Phase 1A Nears Completion with Global Collaborations :-

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal chaired a meeting on the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat, which has achieved 82% completion for Phase 1A. The project aims to establish Lothal as a center for maritime heritage and has attracted collaborations from 13 countries, including Portugal and the UAE. These partnerships will facilitate cultural exchanges and research. The project is set for completion by October 31, 2026, and plans for future phases include additional galleries and a Maritime Research Institute.



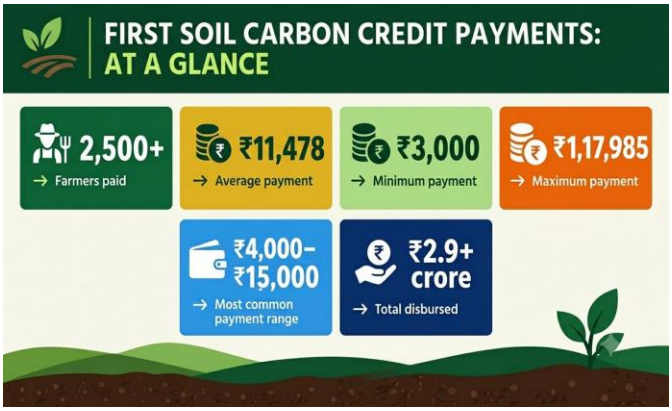
India Launches Incentive Scheme to Boost PNG Connections :-

India has introduced the Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections to expand access to clean cooking fuel. Effective from September 1, 2026, the scheme encourages City Gas Distribution (CGD) entities to increase active domestic Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections. With 1.74 crore connections already in place, the scheme aims to convert unbilled connections and expand networks. CGD entities will receive additional allocations of cheaper domestic APM gas for each new connection, reducing costs and enhancing commercial viability.



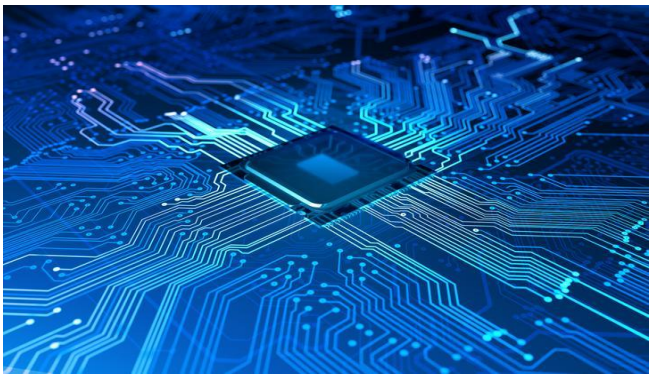
India and MERCOSUR Sign Protocol for Digital Trade :-

India and MERCOSUR have signed the First Additional Protocol to their Preferential Trade Agreement, legalizing electronic Certificates of Origin. This amendment to Article 16 of Annex III grants digital certificates the same legal validity as paper forms, significantly reducing transaction processing time and costs. The protocol, signed by Indian Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal and ambassadors of Uruguay and Paraguay, marks a significant step toward paperless cross-border trade, enhancing efficiency and bilateral economic cooperation.



India Initiates Soil Carbon Payments to Farmers in Punjab and Haryana :-

India has launched its agricultural carbon market at the farm level, with over 2,500 smallholder farmers in Punjab and Haryana receiving more than ₹2.9 crore in digital payments. These payments, initiated by Dr M. L. Jat at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, reward farmers for adopting regenerative practices under the 'Aadi' farmer carbon programme by Grow Indigo. The programme, covering over two million acres, aims to reduce greenhouse gases and improve soil health. Farmers receive payments based on carbon credits generated, with options for upfront payments or a share of net carbon revenue.



India's semiconductor market to exceed USD 200 billion by 2035 :-

According to an EY-IESA report, India's semiconductor market is projected to grow from USD 64 billion in 2026 to over USD 200 billion by 2035. The report highlights opportunities for domestic manufacturing and innovation, with consumer electronics, automotive, and industrial applications driving demand. The report also emphasizes the need for local semiconductor fabrication to meet rising domestic demand and suggests aligning state policies with national strategies to boost the sector.



Gwalior to Host Asia's First Telecom Manufacturing Zone :-

Gwalior is set to become a major telecom manufacturing hub with the establishment of Asia's first Telecom Manufacturing Zone (TMZ), involving an investment of approximately ₹5,500 crore. This initiative is expected to generate over 18,000 direct employment opportunities. The project will create a comprehensive industrial ecosystem with 24-25 telecom manufacturing units. Around 170 acres of land has been identified for the first phase, with more land to be allocated due to high investor interest. The project aims to strengthen Gwalior's position as an emerging telecom manufacturing hub.



India-New Zealand FTA to Begin on October 20, 2026 :-

The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will take effect on October 20, 2026, following its ratification. Initially signed on April 27, 2026, the agreement offers 100% duty-free access for Indian exports, including textiles, leather, and engineering goods. India will protect sensitive sectors like dairy and sugar. New Zealand will impose controls on certain products like apples and kiwi. The agreement includes a USD 20 billion investment pledge from New Zealand and provisions for 5,000 skilled visas, 1,000 working-holiday visas, and post-study work opportunities for STEM and doctoral scholars.



Piyush Goyal Proposes 1,000 Personnel to Aid Exporters :-

Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced a proposal for around 1,000 trained local personnel to support exporters at district and state levels. The announcement was made during a stakeholder workshop on Ease of Doing Business and trade reforms. The personnel will provide handholding support through industry chambers and regional associations. Goyal also highlighted the development of the Trade Connect platform, which will offer exporters information on tariffs, FTA opportunities, and export potential. The workshop included discussions on regulatory processes and trade facilitation measures.



RBI Issues Market Risk Capital Directions 2026 :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued the Minimum Capital Requirements for Market Risk Directions, 2026, aligning with revised Basel III standards. Effective from April 1, 2027, with transition scalars starting from April 2024, the directions use the Simplified Standardised Approach. Key changes include linking the trading book to High-Frequency Trading (HFT), revising Net Open Position (NOP) and forex rules, and updating interest-rate risk tables. The directions also revise the treatment

for debt mutual funds, ETFs, and credit-derivative hedges, including Total Return Swaps (TRS).



Maruti Suzuki Commissions Green Hydrogen Plant in Haryana :-

Maruti Suzuki India has commissioned its first Green Hydrogen electrolyser plant at Manesar, Haryana. The 300 kW pilot project, operational since 24 September 2026, produces green hydrogen through electrolysis using surplus solar energy. This hydrogen is blended with natural gas for use as process fuel in manufacturing operations. The initiative is part of Maruti Suzuki's broader clean-energy strategy, which also includes solar power, biogas, and battery storage. This development marks a significant step in the company's commitment to sustainable energy solutions.

9: International



India Sends 37.5 Tonnes of Humanitarian Aid to Flood-Hit Nepal Under Neighbourhood First Policy :-

India has stepped up humanitarian assistance to flood-hit Nepal by dispatching a second consignment of 37.5 tonnes of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) material, including medicines and food packets. The relief was transported by an Indian Air Force aircraft as Nepal continues to deal with the consequences of severe flooding and associated disasters. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said India remains in close and continuous contact with Nepalese authorities during the search-and-rescue phase.



India Sends Fourth Relief Flight to Flood-hit Nepal :-

India has dispatched its fourth relief flight to Nepal, providing essential supplies and technical assistance to aid in flood rescue and relief operations. The Indian Air Force's C-130 aircraft delivered 11 tonnes of assistance, including search and rescue equipment, forensic tools, and relief items like blankets and hygiene kits. India is also supporting infrastructure restoration, with equipment for modular steel bridges already sent. This effort is part of India's ongoing support to Nepal, which has received a total of 68.5 tonnes of relief material since the floods began.



India-Nepal Cooperation Deepens as Kathmandu Seeks Additional Power Imports Following Devastating Floods :-

The devastating flash floods that struck Nepal in late August 2026 have caused extensive damage to the country's hydropower infrastructure, prompting Kathmandu to seek electricity imports from India earlier than usual. Nepal normally imports power from India during the dry winter months, while exporting surplus hydropower during the monsoon. This year, however, flood damage has reduced Nepal's domestic generation capacity by an estimated 550 MW, while several hydropower projects and transmission-related infrastructure have been affected. Nepal has therefore sought advance approval to begin additional electricity imports from India from September.



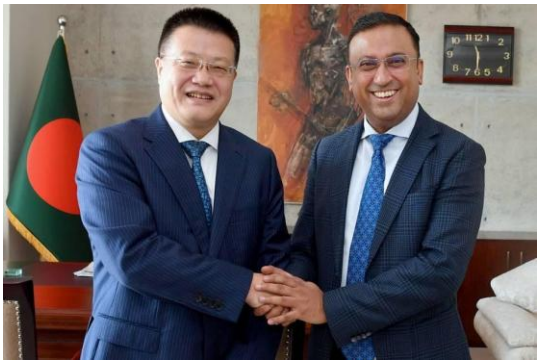
UAE to Investigate Banque Misr After US Flags Money Laundering Risks :-

The UAE Central Bank will conduct an urgent investigation into Banque Misr branches following a US Treasury alert about transactions linked to Iranian shadow banking networks. The US proposed revoking Banque Misr UAE's access to US financial institutions, potentially blocking dollar transactions. The UAE's examination will focus on transactions from January 2024 to June 2026 involving companies identified by the US. The Central Bank emphasized adherence to UAE laws and regulations, aiming to protect the country's financial system from reputational risks.



US Provides Over USD 3.6 Million Aid to Flood-Hit Nepal :-

The United States has extended over USD 3.6 million in humanitarian assistance to Nepal following devastating floods. This aid includes emergency food support for up to 10,000 households. The US Embassy in Kathmandu is collaborating with the Nepal government and humanitarian organizations to ensure effective distribution of aid. The assistance also includes emergency shelter, relief items, and water, sanitation, and hygiene support, with Catholic Relief Services and Caritas Nepal playing key roles in the relief efforts.



Bangladesh-China Prepare for First 2+2 Dialogue :-

Bangladesh and China are preparing for their inaugural 2+2 dialogue at the State Minister level, which mirrors similar formats with India, the US, Japan, Australia, and Russia. The discussions in Dhaka reviewed Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's June 2026 visit to China, focusing on projects like the Mongla Port modernization,

Teesta River management, and the China Economic & Industrial Zone in Chattogram. Over 30 Chinese firms have committed $500 million. Bangladesh reaffirmed its adherence to the One-China Principle, and China recognized Bangladesh as a strategic partner.



India Rejects Court of Arbitration's Indus Waters Treaty Award :-

India has rejected an award issued by the Court of Arbitration regarding the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), labeling the body as "illegally constituted". The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated that the Court was set up by the World Bank in violation of the treaty's terms. India has consistently refused to recognize the Court's jurisdiction and has not participated in its proceedings. The MEA emphasized that the Court's pronouncements will not influence India's actions on its projects and reiterated that India's decision to hold the IWT in abeyance remains effective.



US Halts Talks with Iran Over Attacks on Commercial Ships :-

US Vice President J.D. Vance announced that the US will not negotiate with Iran until it ceases attacks on commercial ships. The US aims to protect global energy supplies and prevent Iran from rebuilding its nuclear program through economic, military, diplomatic, and covert pressure. The Strait of Hormuz, a critical route for global energy shipments, remains a focal point. Vance emphasized the US's role in maintaining energy flow and stated that the absence of a global energy crisis reflects US efforts to protect shipping routes.



PM Modi Congratulates Giorgia Meloni on Milestone Achievement :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni for becoming Italy's longest-serving postwar prime minister. Modi praised Meloni's leadership and her role in strengthening the India-Italy Special Strategic Partnership. Meloni, who took office on October 22, 2022, surpassed the tenure of former PM Silvio Berlusconi. Earlier, Meloni had congratulated Modi on becoming India's longest-serving elected PM. Their recent meetings have focused on elevating bilateral ties and enhancing cooperation between India and Italy, reflecting a strong mutual rapport.



China's Diplomatic Pressure on Taiwan's Allies Intensifies :-

China is intensifying its diplomatic campaign to isolate Taiwan by pressuring its remaining allies, including small nations like Palau and Eswatini. At the Pacific Islands

Forum, several leaders skipped the summit due to Taiwan's attendance, underlining China's influence. In Africa, China has imposed a zero-tariff policy on all nations except Eswatini, Taiwan's last ally on the continent. These actions highlight China's strategic use of economic leverage to diminish Taiwan's global presence, affecting diplomatic relationships and regional dynamics.



Lahore Named SCO Tourism & Cultural Capital for 2026–27 :-

Lahore has been designated as the Tourism and Cultural Capital of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for 2026–27 during the SCO summit in Bishkek. The city was chosen for its rich Mughal, Sufi, and colonial heritage, including UNESCO sites like Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens. This designation aims to promote heritage tourism and cultural exchanges among SCO member countries. Pakistan has also assumed the SCO chairmanship with the theme “Turning Vision into Action: Connectivity, Innovation and Shared Prosperity.” SCO members include China, India, and Russia, among others.



Netanyahu Orders Dismantling of Unauthorized West Bank Settler Outposts :-

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered the dismantling of unauthorized settler outposts in the West Bank. This decision follows pressure from the U.S. to address settler violence against Palestinians. The order targets outposts established without official authorization, consisting of prefabricated caravans housing a small number of settlers. The move is part of efforts to address international concerns, as U.N. bodies and most governments consider all Israeli settlements in the West Bank illegal under international law. The dismantling aims to improve relations with the U.S. and address settler violence.



Far-Right AfD Wins Historic Victory in German State Election :-

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has won a historic victory in the Saxony-Anhalt state elections, securing 44% of the vote. This marks the first time a far-right party is within reach of power at the state level in Germany since World War Two. The AfD's platform includes restricting immigration, restoring ties with Russia, and quitting the euro. The victory reflects deep dissatisfaction with the ruling coalition and Chancellor Friedrich Merz's government. The election saw a high voter turnout of 77%, indicating significant public interest and engagement.



UNGA Passes 'Correct the Map' Resolution :-

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the 'Correct the Map' resolution with 164 votes in favor. The resolution addresses distortions in traditional Mercator map projections, which over-inflate polar regions. India supported the resolution, advocating for equal-area map projections to accurately reflect the true proportions of equatorial regions like Asia and Africa. Despite the resolution's broad support, the United States voted against it, and six countries, including Estonia and Georgia, abstained. This resolution aims to promote more accurate cartographic representations globally.



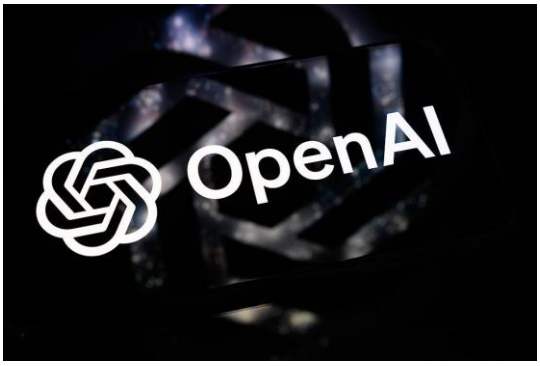
India Approves Electricity Export to Nepal Amid Flood Crisis :-

India's Ministry of Power has approved the export of up to 654 MW of electricity daily to Nepal until December 31, 2026. This decision aims to support Nepal in rebuilding its energy stability after recent severe flooding damaged its hydropower generation facilities. The supply includes up to 600 MW via the Muzaffarpur–Dhalkebar line and 54 MW through the Tanakpur–Mahendranagar line. This humanitarian support highlights India's commitment to aiding its neighbor in times of crisis.



EAM Jaishankar Visits Bhutan to Strengthen Bilateral Ties :-

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Bhutan from September 16-17 to enhance the close ties between the two nations. During the visit, he held talks with Bhutanese Foreign Affairs Minister Lyonpo D.N. Dhungyel and met Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay. The visit followed a series of high-level engagements, including PM Modi's visit to Bhutan in 2025. India has committed significant support to Bhutan's development, with bilateral trade exceeding $1.9 billion in FY 2024-25.



OpenAI and Microsoft Face Copyright Challenge Over AI Training :-

OpenAI and Microsoft are facing a copyright lawsuit as news outlets argue that their AI products substitute journalism, undermining their fair-use defense. Court filings reveal executives' statements acknowledging the substitutive nature of AI, which news organizations claim invalidate the companies' defense. The lawsuit, filed in Manhattan federal court, accuses the tech giants of using millions of articles without permission to train AI systems. This case highlights the ongoing debate over AI's use of copyrighted material and its implications for the journalism industry.



Pakistan Lists Masood Azhar in Most-Wanted Directory

Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency has included Masood Azhar, leader of Jaish-e-Mohammed, in its updated 'Red Book' of most-wanted fugitives. Azhar is listed at the 1,480th spot among 1,804 targets. The move, seen as a compliance effort ahead of the Financial Action Task Force's review, includes a bounty increase to seven million Pakistani Rupees. India dismissed the announcement as a tactical stunt. The listing aims to demonstrate Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism and avoid being placed back on the FATF 'Grey List'.



New Cat Species Leopardus tilcayo Discovered in Bolivia

A new feline species, Leopardus tilcayo, has been identified in Bolivia's Yungas cloud forest. This is the first new living cat species discovered in over a century. Locally known as 'tilcayo', the small cat measures approximately 46 cm in length and weighs between 1.4 to 2 kg. Genetic analysis confirms its separate lineage, diverging around 1.4 million years ago. The findings were published in the journal Current Biology.



Sri Lankan Court Sentences 15 for 2019 Easter Bombings

A Sri Lankan court has sentenced 15 individuals to over 200 years in prison each for their involvement in the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings. The attacks, carried out by the National Thawheed Jamaat group linked to ISIS, targeted churches and hotels, resulting in nearly 270 deaths and over 500 injuries. The court also ordered the confiscation of the convicts' properties. The trial, lasting nearly five years, saw 23,270 charges filed against 24 accused individuals, with 2,309 witnesses testifying. The verdict reflects the severity of the attacks and the extensive legal proceedings undertaken.



India and GCC Review Joint Action Plan, Launch FTA Negotiations :-

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) reaffirmed their close ties at the India-GCC Troika Ministerial Meeting in New York. The meeting reviewed the progress of the India-GCC Joint Action Plan 2024-28 and launched negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The FTA is expected to expand trade and strengthen economic integration between the two regions. The discussions covered areas such as trade, investment, energy, and cultural exchanges. The meeting highlighted the importance of the India-GCC partnership in fostering economic growth and ensuring regional stability.



India and Canada Aim to Elevate Bilateral Relations :-

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced plans to enhance India-Canada relations following discussions

with Canadian counterpart Anita Anand at the UN General Assembly. The two countries are working towards elevating their partnership, with Canadian PM Mark Carney noting progress in trade negotiations. Discussions include a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, highlighting the significance of bilateral ties across various domains. PM Modi is expected to visit Canada later this year, further strengthening diplomatic and economic connections.



Russia Supports India's Bid for UNSC Permanent Seat :-

Russia has expressed support for India's candidature for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized that any UNSC reform should not include additional seats for Western countries like Germany and Japan. Instead, he advocated for broader representation from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, specifically endorsing Brazil and India. Lavrov highlighted Russia's commitment to addressing global issues in collaboration with allies and strategic partners such as BRICS, SCO, and the Eurasian Economic Union.



US Military Completes Withdrawal from Iraq After 23 Years :-

The United States has completed its military withdrawal from Iraq, ending a 23-year presence that began with the 2003 invasion. The mission, which involved combat and advisory roles, officially concludes on September 30, 2026. The withdrawal follows an agreement between Washington and Baghdad. The US had previously shifted its focus from combat to advising and assisting Iraqi forces. Although troops are leaving Iraq, they are being redeployed to nearby regions like Jordan, signaling a strategic repositioning rather than a complete regional exit.



India Achieves 10th Place at WorldSkills Shanghai 2026

India secured the 10th position at the 48th WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai, winning six Silver Medals and 20 Medals for Excellence. The country improved from its 13th place finish at WorldSkills Lyon 2024. The competition saw participation from over 1,400 young competitors from around 70 countries. India's six Silver Medals were won in various skills, including Bakery, Dental Prosthetics, and Digital Interactive Media Design. The performance highlights the growing strength of India's young skilled professionals in global competitions. Minister Jayant Chaudhary praised the team's achievements and reaffirmed the government's commitment to building a future-ready skilling ecosystem.

10: Miscellaneous



HDFC Bank CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan to Step Down on 26 October 2026 :-

HDFC Bank Managing Director and CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan will step down from his position on 26 October 2026 after deciding not to seek another term. Jagdishan has led India's largest private-sector bank since 2020 and was expected by many to continue for a third term. His departure comes at a sensitive moment for the bank, which has been dealing with governance concerns, leadership changes and investor dissatisfaction following the 2023 merger with Housing Development Finance Corporation. The bank's board is now accelerating the search for a successor, with the possibility of considering candidates from outside the organisation.



IIMC Awards Postgraduate Degrees to IIS Officer Trainees :-

For the first time, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) awarded postgraduate degrees to Indian Information Service (IIS) Officer Trainees. The MA in Public Communication and Governance was conferred at a ceremony for trainees from the 2009, 2023, and 2024 batches. The event highlighted the role of IIS officers as a link between governance and citizens. The Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting emphasized the importance of communication in governance and the need for officers to adapt to technological advancements and address misinformation challenges.



US Journalist Sentenced for Acting as Illegal Agent for China :-

Thomas Weir Pauken II, an American journalist, was sentenced to two years in federal prison for acting as an illegal agent for China. Pauken, who worked for various Chinese news organizations, was accused of gathering sensitive information for the Chinese government. He pleaded guilty earlier this year and was sentenced to 36 months of supervised release with no overseas travel. The case is part of a series of federal prosecutions involving individuals accused of working for China without proper disclosure. Pauken received at least $100,000 for his activities, which included recruiting potential assets for China.



India Inaugurates National Workshop on Vulture Conservation :-

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav inaugurated a national workshop titled 'From Crisis to Recovery – Conserving India's Vultures' in Panchkula, Haryana, as part of International Vulture Awareness Day 2026. The workshop focused on creating Vulture Safe Zones and strengthening technical capacity for vulture recovery. It was organized by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Central Zoo Authority, and others. The event emphasized the ecological importance of vultures and called for a comprehensive approach to conservation, including safe veterinary practices and proper carcass management.



PM Modi hailed BAPS Temple Inauguration in Paris as Cultural Milestone :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the inauguration of the BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir near Paris as a significant milestone in India-France cultural relations. Addressing the event virtually, PM Modi emphasized the temple's role in enhancing India's cultural presence in Europe and strengthening ties with France. The temple, France's first traditionally designed stone Hindu temple, was built using intricately carved stones from India. PM Modi highlighted the temple's potential to serve as a center for community service and cultural exchange, further solidifying the strong bilateral partnership between India and France.



Mandaviya Highlights Labour Welfare at BOCW Conference :-

Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya emphasized the importance of workforce welfare for national development at the National Conference on Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) in Mumbai. He called for enhanced coordination between the Centre and states to optimize BOCW funds and improve worker welfare. Mandaviya also highlighted the global demand for skilled workers and urged for a focus on international labour mobility. With over 7 crore construction workers in India, the conference aimed to share best practices and strengthen social protection measures.



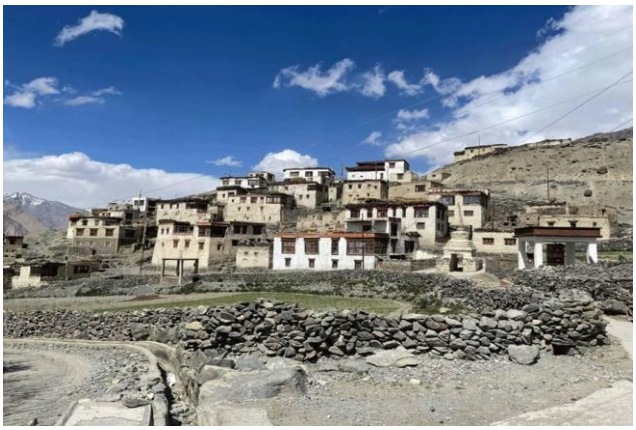
NCC Cadets Conclude Aparajita-Parang La Trek :-

Twenty NCC girl cadets completed the All India High Altitude Long Trek 'Aparajita - Parang La 2026'. They covered approximately 250 km over 30 days, crossing the Parang La Pass at an altitude of 5,578 meters from Spiti to Ladakh. The trek was flagged off by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and concluded at Karzok, flagged in by the Director General of NCC. This initiative aims to build leadership, teamwork, and endurance among the youth.

स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
सत्यमेव जयते

Health Ministry Issues Advisory on Stem Cell Therapy Regulation :-

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued an advisory to States and Union Territories on regulating stem cell therapy. The advisory, following a Supreme Court judgment, reiterates that stem cell therapy should be standard care only for conditions approved by the Ministry. Specifically, it restricts stem cell therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder to approved clinical trials. The advisory emphasizes compliance with the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research, 2017, and warns of consequences for non-compliance, including professional misconduct and penalties under the Clinical Establishments Act.



Kumik Named Ladakh's First Heritage Village Amid Water Crisis :-

Kumik in Zanskar was declared Ladakh's first Heritage Village by LG Vinai Kumar Saxena during the Ladakh Zanskar Festival. This recognition highlights the area's traditional architecture, Buddhist Kanjur manuscripts, and cultural customs. Kumik faces severe water scarcity due to depleting glaciers, leading to migration to Lower Kumik. The challenge remains to conserve heritage while ensuring sustainable community life amid environmental stress.



Aadhaar authentication mandatory for subsidised LPG refills from October :-

From October 1, 2026, Biometric Aadhaar Authentication (BAA) will be mandatory for domestic LPG consumers seeking subsidised refills. The government aims to ensure subsidies reach eligible households and prevent diversion of subsidised LPG for commercial use. As of September 19, 89.9% of consumers have completed BAA. Those who haven't can authenticate during delivery, at showrooms, or via mobile apps. Consumers without BAA can still receive LPG at market prices. The government has extended deadlines multiple times to facilitate the process.



World's Highest Flower Fields Inaugurated in Ladakh :-

The world's highest flower fields were inaugurated in Ladakh at Choglamsar and Stakna, located at an altitude of 10,600 feet. These fields cover 40 acres and host over 25 lakh plants, including Lilium and Gladiolus species.

The initiative aims to promote commercial floriculture as a livelihood for local farmers through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and cooperatives. The Choglamsar field was developed in just two months.



Vice President Launches SURM Framework at Water Week :-

Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan inaugurated the 9th India International Water Week in New Delhi, launching the Sustainable Urban River Management (SURM) Framework and AI-driven reservoir management. The event, themed 'Climate Resilient Water Management', aims to address water scarcity through technology and traditional wisdom. Radhakrishnan highlighted India's limited freshwater resources and called for integrated water management, including river-basin management and rainwater harvesting. He emphasized cooperation among states and praised Prime Minister Modi's leadership in promoting inter-state water-sharing agreements.



Census 2027: Over 32 Crore Families Covered in First Phase :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the completion of the first phase of Census 2027, with data collected from over 32 crore families across India. In his 'Mann Ki Baat' address, he urged citizens to participate actively, especially through the self-enumeration facility available in 16 languages. Modi highlighted inspiring participation stories from remote regions like Uttarakhand. The self-enumeration process is user-friendly, requiring no document uploads, and has already seen over 2.6 crore people register. Accurate census data is crucial for national planning and development.

11: National



Mule Accounts Used in Cyber Fraud Prompt AI Tool Deployment :-

Mule bank accounts have become a significant tool for cybercriminals to launder money obtained through online fraud. These accounts, often opened in the names of unsuspecting individuals, are used to receive and transfer illicit funds. Investigations have revealed that such funds are moved through multiple layers of mule accounts, complicating efforts to trace the real perpetrators. Authorities are now deploying AI tools to identify and block these accounts, highlighting the serious legal consequences for account holders involved in illegal transactions, even if they claim ignorance.



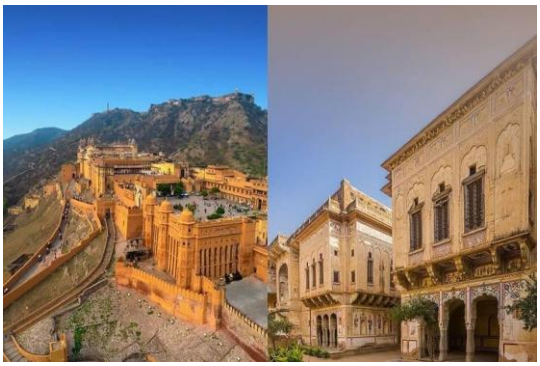
IPC Launches Nitrosamine Impurities Reference Standards :-

The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) launched seven Nitrosamine Impurities Reference Standards in Kolkata. These standards include NDMA, NDEA, NEIPA, NDBA, NMPA, NDIPA, and NMBA. The launch took place during the first interactive meeting at the Central Drugs Laboratory & Central Cosmetics Laboratory. Nitrosamines are genotoxic and carcinogenic impurities that can form during manufacturing or storage. These reference standards are crucial for the identification, quantification, and quality control of medicines, particularly those intended for chronic use.



India's Anti-Drug Strategy Enters Mission Mode for 2026-29 :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that India's fight against narcotics has entered 'mission mode' for the 2026-29 period. The government has set time-bound targets and over 200 action points under a four-pillar strategy to dismantle drug networks and reduce demand. The strategy includes intelligence-based enforcement, control of precursor chemicals, demand reduction, and capacity building. Shah emphasized the importance of a coordinated nationwide campaign, involving multiple security and enforcement agencies, to tackle the drug menace. The initiative aims to ensure a drug-free youth population by 2047.



Shekhawati Havelis Added to UNESCO Tentative List :-

The Shekhawati havelis of Rajasthan have been added to the UNESCO Tentative List. These historic mansions, located in 14 towns including Jhunjhunu, Mandawa, and Sikar, are renowned for their colourful façades, ornate frescoes, and grand architecture. The frescoes depict various themes such as religion, mythology, and social changes from the 19th to 20th centuries. Built by wealthy merchants, this tentative listing is expected to enhance protection and boost heritage tourism. The havelis are not yet World Heritage Sites, requiring further evaluation.



UIDAI Launches Aadhaar Face Authentication SDK :-

UIDAI introduced the Aadhaar Face Authentication SDK and Sandbox at the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai. The SDK supports native Android and iOS apps, enabling in-app eKYC with AI liveness detection and anti-spoofing features. The Sandbox allows banks and fintech companies to test authentication flows without external hardware. Partners can process authentications on their

own servers. Additionally, UIDAI released the 'Playbook on Ease of Onboarding'.



CEC Gyanesh Kumar Emphasizes Electoral Literacy Among Youth :-

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar highlighted the importance of students as future democratic leaders at the fifth regional conference on “Electoral Literacy Clubs and ECINET” in Ahmedabad. He stressed the need to enhance electoral literacy and democratic awareness among young citizens. The conference introduced ELC 2.0, aiming to transform Electoral Literacy Clubs into structured and digitally enabled platforms across educational institutions. This initiative seeks to promote continuous electoral literacy through the ECINET digital platform, targeting India's vast educational ecosystem, which includes approximately 15 lakh schools and nearly 25 crore students.



Kishau Dam Project Advances with Six-State MoU :-

A significant milestone for the Kishau Dam Project was achieved as Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand signed an MoU with the Centre. This ₹15,624 crore multipurpose project on the Tons River had been delayed for nearly eight years due to inter-state and financial challenges. The Centre will cover 90% of the water component cost. The project aims to generate 660 MW power and provide irrigation, drinking, and industrial water, while enhancing the Yamuna River's flow.



PM Modi Distributes Over 51,000 Appointment Letters at Rozgar Mela :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi distributed more than 51,000 appointment letters to newly appointed youth in various government organisations during the 20th Rozgar Mela. The event, held at 45 locations across India, aims to create employment opportunities and enhance youth participation in national development. The initiative has provided about 12.75 lakh appointment letters across government departments. The newly recruited candidates will join ministries such as Railways, Home Affairs, Health and Family Welfare, and Defence. This effort underscores the government's focus on employment generation and youth involvement in nation-building.



Indian Railways allocates ₹252 crore for Kavach 4.0 in Lucknow Division :-

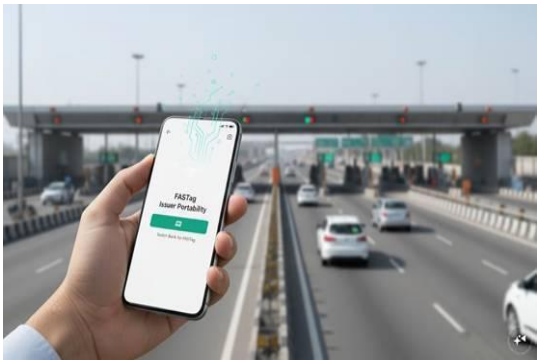
Indian Railways has sanctioned ₹252 crore for implementing Kavach Version 4.0 across 607.7 route kilometers in the Lucknow Division. Kavach is an

Automatic Train Protection system developed indigenously to enhance safety by preventing Signal Passing at Danger and automatically applying brakes when necessary. This initiative is part of Indian Railways' broader efforts to modernize train protection systems and improve operational safety using indigenous technology.



MEA Amends Passport Validity Rules for Minors :-

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has amended the Passports Rules, 1980, affecting the validity of ordinary passports for children under 15. As per the notification these passports are now valid for five years or until the child turns 18, whichever comes first. This change applies exclusively to 36-page ordinary passports issued to eligible minors, aiming to clarify the validity linked to age and duration for parents and guardians.



NHAI Launches OneTag for FASTag Portability :-

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has introduced the OneTag service on the Rajmargyatra app, enabling FASTag users to switch issuing banks without changing the physical sticker. Launched by Nitin Gadkari at the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai, the service facilitates bank switching through a process involving eligibility checks, OTP verification, and KYC completion. This initiative aims to enhance portability and choice for over 130 million FASTag users.



India Approves First Dengue Vaccine QDENGA :-

India has approved its first dengue vaccine, QDENGA (TAK-003), developed by Takeda. The vaccine is a live attenuated tetravalent type and received marketing authorization from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) in July 2026 for individuals aged 4 to 60. It protects against all four dengue serotypes and requires two doses three months apart. The vaccine is expected to be available in India's private sector by mid-2027 through Dr Reddy's Laboratories. The indigenous vaccine, DengiAll, is still in trials and not yet approved.



NAMASTE Scheme Validates Over 90,000 Sanitation Workers :-

The NAMASTE Scheme has validated 90,186 sanitation workers across all Indian states and union territories, aiming to improve safety and livelihoods through occupational safety, health insurance, and mechanization. The scheme has distributed over 87,000 PPE kits and conducted thousands of training programs.

It also supports mechanization through financial assistance under the Swachhta Udyami Yojana. The scheme's waste-picker component has profiled over 2.5 lakh individuals. These initiatives aim to create a safer working environment and sustainable livelihoods for sanitation workers.



BIS Certification Required for Smartphone Screen Protectors :-

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification has been made mandatory for smartphone screen protectors under IS 19348:2025. This requirement will be applicable to manufacturers and importers starting from April 1, 2027, with a transition period until March 31, 2027. The standard, notified by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) on September 21, 2026, covers aspects such as glass quality, strength, optical clarity, adhesives, coatings, and privacy films. The initiative aims to ensure the quality and safety of screen protectors.



Digital Communications Commission Dissolved by Government :-

The Government of India has dissolved the Digital Communications Commission (DCC) after nearly 37 years of operation. The decision, approved by the Cabinet aims to eliminate duplication in decision-making. Initially established as the Telecom Commission in April 1989 and renamed in October 2018, the DCC held its last meeting on September 3, 2026. Its functions will now be managed directly by the Telecom Secretary and higher authorities.



7th Edition of National Formulary of India Launched :-

The 7th edition of the National Formulary of India (NFI) 2026 was launched by Anupriya Patel at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi. Published by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission under the Ministry of Health, the NFI promotes the rational and safe use of medicines. The launch coincided with the 6th National Pharmacovigilance Week, held from September 17 to 23, 2026, under the theme “Promoting Rational Use of Medicines through Pharmacovigilance.” The previous edition was released in October 2021.



Delhi Approves DURGA Scheme for Women & Transgender E-Autos :-

The Delhi Cabinet has approved the DURGA scheme, aimed at empowering women and transgender persons through the provision of pink electric autos. In the first

phase, 1,300 e-autos will be distributed, with 1,170 designated for women and 130 for transgender individuals. Eligibility criteria include being a Delhi resident, aged 20-40, with a valid voter ID, LMV licence, and a family income of up to ₹5 lakh. The scheme also includes a three-year lock-in period for vehicle ownership. EV charging facilities have been prepared at 70 metro stations by DMRC.



FSSAI Penalizes Major Platforms for Food Safety Violations :-

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has initiated penal action against Amazon, Swiggy Instamart, BigBasket, Flipkart India, and Zepto for alleged food safety violations. Violations include misleading claims, misbranding, and selling prohibited foods. Notably, Happilo Premium Date Bites – Zesty Orange was flagged across all platforms. Additionally, Swiggy Instamart and BigBasket faced action over Milky Mist products, and Amazon, Swiggy Instamart, and BigBasket were reprimanded for listing Datura fruits and seeds.



Launch of Bhuj–Barauni Amrit Bharat Express :-

Indian Railways has approved the tri-weekly Amrit Bharat Express service connecting Bhuj in Gujarat to Barauni in Bihar, covering a distance of 2,532 km. The train operates on a schedule that includes departures from Bhuj on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, and returns on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. This non-AC service offers affordable long-distance travel with sleeper and unreserved coaches, passing through Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.



Gujarat to Develop Homestays in 100 Villages for Tourism Boost :-

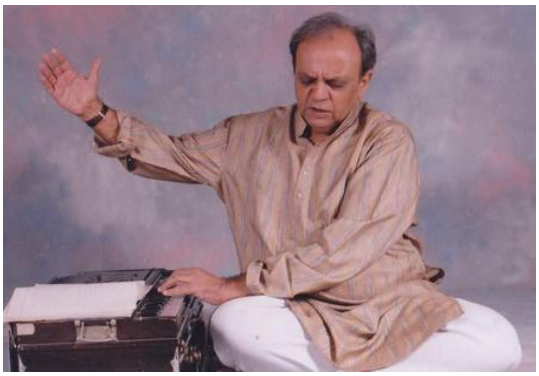
Gujarat announced plans to promote homestays in 100 villages under its 'Gujarat Tourism Year 2026-27' initiative, aiming to expand rural tourism and create employment. The announcement was made on World Tourism Day, with the launch of the Gujarat Film Shooting Permission Portal. The initiative includes skill development and improved hygiene in rural areas, with plans to train over 1,000 tourist guides. The state will also host global events like 'HYROX' and 'Ironman' to promote sports tourism. Eight MoUs were signed for collaborations in sports, technology, education, and skill development.

12: Obituaries



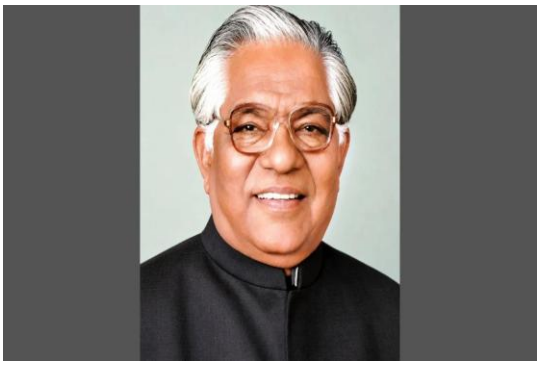
Jharkhand Minister Sudivya Kumar Sonu Dies of Heart Attack :-

Jharkhand minister and senior Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Sudivya Kumar Sonu died after suffering a heart attack. He represented the Giridih Sadar constituency and had won the Assembly seat in both 2019 and 2024. In the Hemant Soren government, he handled important portfolios including Higher and Technical Education, Urban Development and Housing, Tourism, Arts and Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs. Reports say he developed chest discomfort late at night and was taken to a hospital in Giridih, where he died.



Veteran Gujarati Composer and Singer Gaurang Vyas Passes Away :-

Gaurang Vyas, a prominent Gujarati composer, singer and music arranger, has died in Ahmedabad, prompting condolences from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Vyas was part of an important musical lineage as the son of celebrated composer Avinash Vyas, yet he developed his own identity through work in Gujarati cinema, folk music and light music. His career extended across several decades and included contributions to films such as Bhavni Bhavai along with many other Gujarati productions. His work also stretched beyond movies into devotional and folk music, helping preserve and modernise regional musical traditions.



Former Punjab Minister and BJP Veteran Bhagat Chunni Lal Dies at 94 :-

Bhagat Chunni Lal, former Punjab cabinet minister and veteran BJP leader, died in Jalandhar at the age of 94 after a prolonged period of ill health. He was one of the more established political figures in Jalandhar and represented the area as an MLA three times, winning elections in 1997, 2007 and 2012. During the Parkash Singh Badal-led SAD-BJP government, he handled portfolios including Local Government and Medical Education, as well as Forests, Wildlife and Labour, and also served as Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Assembly.



Mike McFarland, Celebrated Anime Voice Actor, Dies at 56 :-

American voice actor Mike McFarland died at the age of 56, after battling glioblastoma, a form of brain cancer. McFarland was particularly well known to anime audiences for his extensive English-dubbing career. His credits included Master Roshi and Yajirobe in Dragon Ball Z, Buggy the Clown in One Piece and Jean Kirstein in Attack on Titan. He also worked extensively in video games, contributing voices to franchises and titles such as World of Warcraft, Street Fighter and Fire Emblem Heroes.



Former Union Minister E. M. Sudarsana Natchiappan Dies at 78 :-

E. M. Sudarsana Natchiappan, former Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and veteran Congress leader, died in Sivaganga at 78. A lawyer by profession, Natchiappan entered politics through the Congress youth organisation and eventually represented Sivaganga in the Lok Sabha after winning the constituency in 1999. He later served two terms in the Rajya Sabha from 2004 to 2016. One of the significant parts of his parliamentary career was his work as chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice. Under his chairmanship, the committee examined the proposed Right to Information legislation and consulted officials, experts and civil-society representatives before recommending changes ahead of the RTI Act's enactment in 2005.



Inter Milan and Italy Football Legend Sandro Mazzola Dies at 83 :-

Sandro Mazzola, one of the defining footballers of Inter Milan's great 1960s side and a former Italy captain, died at the age of 83. Inter Milan announced his death, saying he had been dealing with a long illness. Mazzola spent his entire 17-year professional playing career with Inter, becoming closely identified with the club's most successful period. According to the Associated Press, he made 565 appearances and scored 158 goals, helping Inter win four Serie A titles and two European Cups. He also played 70 times for Italy, scoring 22 goals, and was part of the national team that won the 1968 European Championship and reached the 1970 World Cup final.



Veteran Bengali Actress Mithu Mukherjee Dies at 71 :-

Mithu Mukherjee, a prominent Bengali and Hindi film actress of the 1970s and 1980s, died in Mumbai at the age of 71. Reports said she died at a private hospital after battling cancer for nearly a year. Mukherjee entered cinema as a teenager with Shesh Parba in 1972 and gained wide recognition with Marjina Abdulla, before appearing in films including Nishi Kanya, Mouchak,

Swayamsiddha, Hotel Snow Fox, Bhagyachakra and Sandhi. She also worked in Hindi cinema, appearing in Khaan Dost, Safed Jhooth, Dillagi and Do Ladke Dono Kadke.



Dr G. Vijayaraghavan, Padma Shri Cardiologist and Echocardiography Pioneer, Dies at 84 :-

Dr G. Vijayaraghavan, the Padma Shri-winning cardiologist who helped pioneer 2D echocardiography in India, died in Thiruvananthapuram at 84. He and his colleagues established the first 2D echocardiography laboratory at Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, helping introduce an important non-invasive method for cardiac assessment in India. His research interests included endomyocardial fibrosis and other cardiovascular diseases, while his academic work contributed to the training of generations of medical professionals. Vijayaraghavan later served as vice-chairman of KIMS Hospital in Thiruvananthapuram. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2009 and received international professional recognition during his career.



Krishna Mukerji, Mother of Rani Mukerji and Former Playback Singer, Dies at 75 :-

Krishna Mukerji, mother of Bollywood actress Rani Mukerji and a former playback singer, died in Mumbai at the age of 75. The death was confirmed by Yash Raj Films on behalf of the family, which requested privacy while grieving. Krishna Mukerji had her own connection to the Indian film industry through playback singing, although she largely remained away from the public spotlight in later years. She was also known as an important personal influence in Rani Mukerji's life, and the actress had spoken about her mother's importance on several occasions.



Veteran Actor Mushtaq Khan Dies at 56 After Cancer Battle :-

Veteran Hindi-film actor Mushtaq Khan died in Mumbai at the age of 56, after being admitted to Nanavati Hospital when his health deteriorated. His death was confirmed by representatives of the film industry, including the Federation of Western India Cine Employees. Khan had a career spanning more than four decades, beginning with Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyoon Aata Hai in 1980. He went on to appear in hundreds of films, including Aashiqui, Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke, Sadak, Gadar: Ek Prem Katha, Hera Pheri, Welcome, Wanted, Stree and Gadar 2. He was especially remembered for his comic role as Ballu in Welcome.

13: Ranks & Reports



320 Indians Missing After Flash Floods in Nepal :-

Following devastating flash floods along the Nepal-Tibet border, 320 Indians are reported missing, and 400 are stranded on the Chinese side. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has stated that India is ready to assist Nepal in managing the crisis. Efforts are underway to contact and rescue the affected individuals. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has held meetings to review the situation, and India has dispatched 57.5 tonnes of emergency supplies to Nepal. The Indian embassy is coordinating closely with local authorities for further rescue operations.



India Achieves 80% Decline in Malaria Cases Over a Decade :-

India has witnessed a nearly 80% reduction in malaria cases and deaths from 2015 to 2025, according to the Union Health Ministry. The number of high-burden districts has decreased from 155 to 33. A high-level review meeting emphasized the need for sustained vigilance and area-specific strategies to prevent resurgence. The meeting focused on enhancing the 'Test, Treat and Track' strategy and improving surveillance systems. The progress aligns with India's commitment to eliminating malaria by 2030, as part of its Sustainable Development Goals.



Visakhapatnam Emerges as India's Third Major International Subsea Cable Landing Hub :-

Visakhapatnam is emerging as India's third major international subsea cable landing hub after Mumbai and Chennai, strengthening the country's digital connectivity on the eastern coast. Subsea fibre-optic cables carry the overwhelming majority of international internet, cloud, financial and data traffic, making cable landing stations critical components of modern digital infrastructure. Visakhapatnam's growing importance is closely connected with major investments in data centres and artificial-intelligence infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh. A cable landing facility can provide high-capacity, low-latency connections between India and major digital markets in Southeast Asia and beyond while also connecting international networks with domestic data centres and enterprise infrastructure.

Record 7.8 Crore ITRs Filed for AY 2026-27 by August 31

The Income Tax Department reported that over 7.8 crore Income Tax Returns (ITRs) were filed for the Assessment Year (AY) 2026-27 by August 31, marking a new record. This deadline was part of a revised schedule under the Finance Act, 2026, which extended the filing period for non-audit business and professional taxpayers to August 31. The department emphasized that taxpayers who miss the deadline can file a belated return until December 31, 2026. The revised schedule aims to provide additional time for compliance, reflecting changes in the Income-tax Act, 1961.



India Achieves 7.8% GDP Growth Amid Global Instability :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded India's 7.8% GDP growth rate, achieved despite global conflicts and supply chain disruptions. In a video message, PM Modi attributed this success to the collective resolve of the Indian people. He emphasized the importance of self-reliance and urged citizens to prioritize domestic products and services. The growth rate reflects India's economic resilience, with the services and secondary sectors showing significant progress. The Prime Minister's message highlighted the government's clear policies and intentions as key drivers of economic growth.



India's Services PMI Rises to 54.1 in August :-

India's services sector expanded at a faster pace in August 2026, with the HSBC India Services PMI rising to 54.1 from 53.3 in July. This growth was driven by resilient demand and a sustained rise in new business, while employment growth reached a 15-month high. Service providers reported increased new business inflows, supported by marketing initiatives and stronger customer demand. International demand also remained robust, with solid new export orders. The overall employment across the services sector increased significantly, with firms citing the need to support customer service and digital operations.



India's Sovereign Rating Upgraded by JCR :-

The Japan Credit Rating Agency upgraded India's long-term issuer ratings from BBB+ to A-, with a stable outlook. The country ceiling was also raised to A. The upgrade is attributed to factors such as a 7.7% GDP growth in FY2026, a non-performing loan ratio below 2%, GST reforms, and advancements in digital public

infrastructure. Despite the positive outlook, concerns over high government debt and fiscal relations persist.



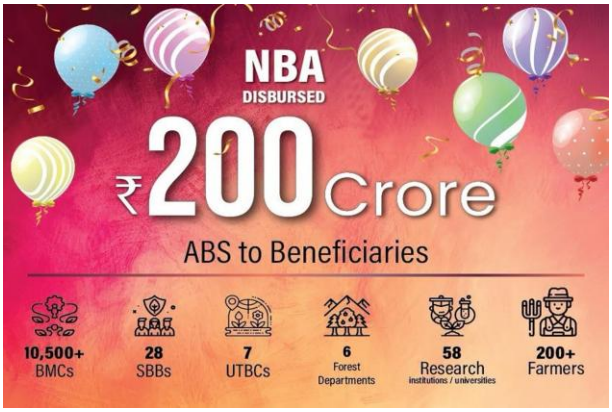
Nepal Floods Linked to Development Activities: Environmentalist :-

Environmentalist Sunita Narain linked recent flash floods in Nepal to continuous development activities in the Himalayas, criticizing the engineering mindset of altering natural landscapes. Speaking at the eighth International Conference on Sustainability Education, Narain highlighted the impact of back-to-back hydroelectric projects in the region. She emphasized the need to rethink development approaches in light of climate change and environmental challenges. Narain also cited Delhi's pollution issues, advocating for a complete overhaul of urban transport systems to address environmental problems effectively.



Gollala Gudi Temple Gains National Importance Status :-

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has designated the Gollala Gudi Temple in Palampet, Mulugu, Telangana, as a Monument of National Importance. This Kakatiya-era temple, located southwest of the UNESCO World Heritage Ramappa Temple, features a Trikutalaya structure with three sanctums. The central sanctum houses a Shiva Linga, and the temple is adorned with intricate Kakatiya-style carvings and sculptures. ASI plans to undertake roof repairs, flooring restoration, and improve visitor access to enhance its conservation.



NBA Achieves ₹200 Crore Milestone in Biodiversity Disbursements :-

The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has surpassed ₹200 crore in cumulative disbursements under India's Access and Benefit-Sharing framework. An additional ₹8.23 crore was sanctioned to 27 State Biodiversity Boards and five Union Territory Biodiversity Councils. The funds are linked to the utilisation of four major vegetable crops: bitter gourd, okra, chilli, and onion. Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are the largest recipients, with allocations based on crop cultivation data. The funds aim to support biodiversity conservation and community-oriented activities, reflecting India's commitment under international biodiversity agreements.



Medical Colleges Double, MBBS Seats Rise 177% Since 2014 :-

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda announced a significant expansion in India's medical education infrastructure, with medical colleges increasing from 387 to 858 since 2014. MBBS seats have surged from 51,348 to 1,42,464, marking a 177.45% increase. Postgraduate seats also rose from 31,185 to 86,287. This expansion aims to bolster India's health workforce, particularly in underserved areas. The government plans to create 1 lakh allied healthcare professionals over five years, supported by the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021. Additionally, 157 new nursing colleges are being established to enhance nursing education.



Moody's Raises India's GDP Forecast to 7% for FY27 :-

Moody's Ratings has revised India's GDP growth forecast for the fiscal year 2026-27 to 7%, up from 6%. The revision reflects India's economic resilience amid global shocks, including the Middle East conflict. Moody's noted strong private consumption and public infrastructure spending as growth drivers. However, it warned of inflation risks due to elevated oil prices and potential El Nino impacts. Despite these challenges, India is expected to outpace other G20 economies in growth, although fiscal constraints and debt affordability remain concerns.



Madhya Pradesh Sets World Record with Lamp Lighting on PM Modi's Birthday :-

Madhya Pradesh celebrated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday by lighting 3.55 crore 'Ashirwad Diyas' across the state, launching the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan'. The main event in Ujjain saw 33.27 lakh lamps lit, setting a world record. The ceremony, attended by BJP leaders and residents, symbolized public gratitude for PM Modi's service. The month-long campaign aims to promote public welfare and social participation throughout the state. The lighting event was part of a larger initiative to engage communities in developmental activities.



GIFT City Climbs in Global Financial Centres Index :-

GIFT City has improved its position in the Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI) 40, ranking 37th globally, a rise of 9 places. It also moved up 3 places to 26th in the FinTech rankings. It is the only Indian center among the top 15 in the Asia-Pacific region, with Mumbai also rising to 49th. The index evaluates 139 financial centers using 144 quantitative measures and over 39,000 assessments. The International Financial Services Centres Authority regulates GIFT City, which supports international financial services and cross-border transactions.

14: Schemes & Committees



India Reviews Agricultural Water Efficiency through 'Per Drop More Crop' Initiative under PM-RKVY :-

The government has highlighted the progress of the Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) initiative as part of its broader effort to improve water-use efficiency in Indian agriculture. More than 115 lakh hectares had been brought under micro-irrigation by July 2026 through measures promoting drip and sprinkler irrigation. The initiative is particularly important because agriculture accounts for more than 80% of India's available water use, while irrigation coverage remains incomplete across the country. PDMC provides financial assistance to farmers for installing micro-irrigation systems, with higher support available to small and marginal farmers.



Bihar Launches Vidya Sathi App for Students :-

The Bihar government has launched the Vidya Sathi App, a free online platform designed to provide continuous academic support to approximately 3 lakh students from Classes 9 to 12. The app covers 700 Saraswati Vidya Niketan model schools across 38 districts, offering live teacher interactions, personalized guidance, and digital study materials. Around 75,000 teachers will conduct one-on-one sessions, focusing on all subjects for Classes 9 and 10, and Board, JEE, and NEET preparation for Classes 11 and 12. This initiative complements classroom teaching and is accessible outside school hours.



PM SVANidhi Yojana Empowers 46% Women Beneficiaries :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted that women constitute 46% of the beneficiaries under the PM SVANidhi Yojana, which supports small business expansion. The scheme aids women like Babita Sharma from Ghaziabad, who transformed her roadside stall into a shop, and T.S. Ningamma from Bengaluru, who expanded her food cart business. The initiative is seen as a significant step towards women's empowerment, enabling better education for children and improved family financial conditions.



Assam CM Unveils Rs 50,000 Crore Infrastructure Vision

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a comprehensive Rs 50,000 crore infrastructure investment plan aimed at boosting the state's economic growth. This initiative includes advancements in cancer care, job creation, sports facilities, and international air connectivity. The infrastructure vision is part of a broader strategy to enhance Assam's physical and economic infrastructure. The Chief Minister emphasized the importance of expanding specialized medical facilities and improving access to advanced cancer care.



Himachal Pradesh Launches First Ozone-Based Water Project :-

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu inaugurated the state's first ozone-based drinking water treatment project in Dehra, Kangra, costing ₹46 crore. The project uses ozone gas for water disinfection and taste improvement, serving as a model for replication elsewhere. The Mukhyamantri Ka Apna Parivar Sukhi Parivar Yojana is underway, offering financial support and 300 free electricity units for poor families, launching on October 2. Additionally, the Rajiv Gandhi Van Samvardhan Yojana supports SHGs for plantation with incentives.



Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar v.5.0 Launched :-

The fifth edition of Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar (SSSS v.5.0) was launched, focusing on coastal cleanup activities from 12 to 19 September. The initiative covers India's 11,098 km coastline with cleanup drives at over 100 beaches. It is implemented under the Ministry of Earth Sciences' PRITHVI scheme. This edition introduces the first National Ocean Olympiad, a dedicated website, and a conservation pledge portal, concluding on International Coastal Cleanup Day.



Special Campaign Resolves 2,306 Pension Grievances :-

The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare successfully resolved 2,306 long-pending pension grievances during the third edition of its Special Campaign. Launched on July 7, 2026, the campaign aimed at addressing pension-related issues, achieving a redressal rate of 72%. The campaign identified 3,193 cases, including 1,062 target cases and 2,131 cases pending on the CPENGRAMS portal. Notable resolutions included significant arrear payments to various defence pensioners. The campaign highlights the growing use of online grievance mechanisms, aiding in bridging the digital divide for pensioners, especially in rural areas.



CSS Shield Initiative Launched to Support Bereaved Families :-

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launched the 'CSS Shield' initiative to support the families of deceased Central Secretariat Service (CSS) officers. This initiative aims to provide structured financial assistance to bereaved families, aligning with efforts to make government service systems more responsive. The 'CSS Shield' operates under the principle of 'Contribute for Family, Support with Dignity' and has already seen significant contributions from CSS officers. It aims to expand its scope to include scholarships for children of deceased officers as participation grows.



National Nutrition Month Launches in Varanasi :-

The ninth edition of Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) is set to launch in Varanasi, focusing on improving nutrition and health practices among pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children. The campaign, themed "Hamari Anganwadi Hamari Jimmedari," emphasizes community ownership of Anganwadi centres. Key priorities include promoting dietary diversity and ensuring nutritious meals under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme. The initiative also marks 10 years of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, highlighting its role in supporting maternal nutrition. The Poshan Tracker will monitor progress, covering nearly 13.99 lakh Anganwadi centres nationwide.



Launch of DILRMP 3.0 to Enhance Digital Land Records :-

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) 3.0, aiming to create a GIS-based digital land records ecosystem. With an outlay of ₹565.50 crore, the programme seeks to integrate land records, cadastral maps, and property registrations. A key feature is the introduction of Bhu-Aadhaar, a 14-digit unique identifier for land parcels, enhancing verification and reducing fraud. The initiative will also upgrade Sub-Registrar Offices into Registration Seva Kendras, improving citizen services.



PMMSY Marks Six Years of Transforming India's Fisheries Sector :-

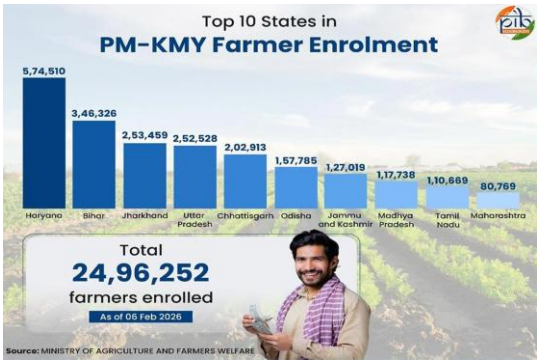
The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) has completed six years, significantly boosting India's fisheries sector. With an outlay of ₹20,750 crore, the scheme has enhanced infrastructure, technology, and sustainable growth. Fish production increased from 141.64 lakh tonnes in 2019–20 to 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024–25. Exports rose to ₹73,890 crore in 2025–26. PMMSY has created employment for 58 lakh people and supports nearly three crore livelihoods. Investments in

fishing harbours, cold chains, and aquaculture technology have strengthened the fisheries value chain, improving quality and market connectivity.



Chhattisgarh Approves Startup & NIPUN Mission :-

The Chhattisgarh Cabinet approved the Startup & NIPUN Mission with a budget of ₹500 crore over five years. The NIPUN initiative aims to enhance industry preparedness through youth upskilling. The plan includes Entrepreneurship Development Centres in all 33 districts, five industry centres of excellence, and 100 Emerging Technology Labs focusing on AI, IoT, big data, and blockchain. Additionally, free 10-acre land in Tendua, Nava Raipur, has been allocated for a ₹200-crore National Skill Training Institute.



Seven Years of PM-KMY: Pension Scheme for Farmers Marks Milestone :-

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY) celebrated its seventh anniversary in September 2026. Launched in 2019, the scheme provides a pension of ₹3,000 per month to eligible farmers over 60. It has enrolled 24,96,252 farmers nationwide as of February 2026. Haryana leads with 5.75 lakh enrolments, followed by Bihar and other states. The scheme, a Central Sector Scheme administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, operates on a contributory model with equal contributions from farmers and the government. It aims to enhance social security for small and marginal farmers.



Geo-Tagging of Rural Water Sources to Begin from October 2 :-

The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has advised States and Union Territories to start geo-tagging rural water supply sources and post-monsoon testing from October 2. This initiative, discussed during the 12th District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad, aims to enhance the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0. The meeting, chaired by DDWS Secretary Ashok K.K. Meena, emphasized community ownership and sustainable management of rural water systems. States and UTs are also encouraged to organize 'Jal Arpan' activities, symbolizing the transfer of drinking water assets to Gram Panchayats, to strengthen community involvement.

ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
सत्यमेव जयते



DDU-GKY 2.0 to Train 34,000 Rural Youth in October :-

The Ministry of Rural Development will launch training batches under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) 2.0 in October 2026. Covering 14 States and Union Territories, 1,164 training

batches will involve 34,920 rural youth. The scheme aims to train 3,57,112 youth by December 2027. DDU-GKY is a placement-linked skill training program for poor rural youth, with training durations ranging from three to 12 months. The Ministry is also implementing a digital portal for project lifecycle management and facilitating online payments through the Grameen Kaushal Portal.



Tamil Nadu Launches Gold Ring Scheme for Newborns

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay is set to launch the 'Thaimaaman Thanga Mothiram Thittam' on 28 September 2026 at Usilampatti Government Hospital, Madurai. The scheme provides a 1-gram, 22-carat gold ring to eligible newborns in government hospitals, with a unique serial number. It applies retrospectively from 22 June 2026, the CM's birthday, with an annual allocation of ₹755.83 crore for approximately 4.41 lakh rings. The initiative is inspired by the traditional 'Thaimaaman' gift custom and covers babies of permanent Tamil Nadu residents registered in the state pregnancy-monitoring system.



Ayushman Bharat Completes Eight Years, Expands Healthcare Access :-

Ayushman Bharat, India's flagship health scheme launched in 2018, marks eight years of operation, significantly transforming healthcare access. The scheme provides cashless hospitalization cover of up to ₹5 lakh per family annually, benefiting over 48.51 crore people. It has supported 13.25 crore hospital admissions, amounting to ₹2.03 lakh crore in treatment costs. The initiative has expanded to cover ASHAs, Anganwadi workers, and senior citizens, enhancing financial protection and healthcare access.

15: Science & Technology



ISRO Successfully Completes Gaganyaan Crew Module Water-Recovery Exercise in Arabian Sea :-

The reported water-recovery exercise for the Gaganyaan Crew Module represents an important aspect of India's preparations for human spaceflight: ensuring that astronauts and the spacecraft can be safely recovered after a sea splashdown. Gaganyaan's recovery architecture involves close coordination between ISRO and the Indian Navy, because the crew module is designed to return to Earth and land in Indian Ocean waters, including the Arabian Sea region. Earlier recovery trials have focused on validating procedures, recovery equipment, crew safety and the ability to handle the module under different sea conditions.



ISRO Prepares GISAT-1A Launch for September 4 :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing to launch GISAT-1A, also designated EOS-05, aboard the GSLV-F17 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. Current reports indicate a launch target of September 4, 2026, although operational launch windows can be adjusted depending on technical and weather conditions. GISAT-1A is a geostationary Earth-observation satellite designed to provide frequent imaging of the Indian subcontinent and surrounding areas. Its position approximately 36,000 km above Earth will allow persistent observation and rapid monitoring of phenomena such as cyclones, floods, forest fires, agricultural conditions and other environmental events.



VP Launches 'Gnani Artha', India's Sovereign AI Stack :-

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan launched 'Gnani Artha', a sovereign AI stack developed by GNANI AI, at Uprashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Comprising Evon 3.3 and Plexus, the stack showcases India's growing technological capabilities. The Vice President highlighted AI's potential to create new employment opportunities and drive economic growth. He emphasized the importance of technological self-reliance and India's progress in AI under initiatives like the IndiaAI Mission. The launch is part of India's journey towards technological innovation and global leadership.



New Plant Species Doronicum sanctum Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh :-

Researchers from CSIR-IHBT have discovered a new species of the sunflower family, Doronicum sanctum, in Arunachal Pradesh. This species was found near Chumi Gyatse Holy Waterfalls in Tawang district at elevations between 4,000 and 4,086 meters. It marks the first record of the Doronicum genus in Northeast India, previously known only from the Western Himalayas. Doronicum sanctum is distinguished by its yellow flowers, heart-shaped leaves, and pubescent ray cypselae. The species is named 'sanctum' in reference to the holy site of its discovery.



NASA Launches Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope :-

NASA successfully launched the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope using a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from Kennedy Space Center. The $4.3 billion mission aims to explore the universe with its 300-megapixel Wide Field Instrument, offering a field of view 100 times larger than the Hubble Telescope. The telescope will travel for three months to reach the Sun-Earth L2 point, approximately one million miles away. It is designed for

a five-year science mission, with communications supported by the TDRS and Deep Space Network.



German Startup Isar Aerospace Launches First Rocket from Europe :-

German startup Isar Aerospace successfully launched its first rocket, Spectrum, into space from Arctic Norway, marking the first commercial orbital flight from continental Europe. This milestone enhances Europe's access to space and strengthens Norwegian and European security. The Spectrum rocket, designed for small and medium-sized payloads, carried five small satellites. This launch marks a significant step for Europe's autonomy in space missions, with Isar Aerospace securing substantial funding from the European Space Agency for further development.



India Valve Registry Launched to Enhance Cardiac Care :-

Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan launched the India Valve Registry, a multicentre initiative to enhance evidence-based cardiac care. The registry, introduced at the India Valves 2026 meeting, aims to generate India-specific clinical data on heart valve interventions. It will systematically record patient data, treatments, and outcomes to improve clinical practices and patient care. This initiative underscores the importance of generating domestic clinical evidence and fostering collaboration among healthcare professionals. The registry will support research and provide a stronger evidence base for treating valvular and structural heart diseases in India.



Underwater Archaeology Exploration at Poompuhar Begins :-

The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology launched the third phase of underwater exploration off Poompuhar (Kaveripoompattinam). Covering approximately 250 square kilometers, the survey extends 2 kilometers offshore at depths of 2 to 60 meters and will conclude on September 23. Utilizing side-scan sonar, echosounders, and sub-bottom profilers, a 25-member team, including divers, is guided by Prof. K. Rajan and Dr. Yatish Kumar. This multi-phase project, linked to the Sangam-era port, is funded with ₹7 crore.



India Joins Multilateral Initiative for 6G Development :-

India recently joined a multilateral initiative to guide the development and deployment of 6G telecommunications networks. This initiative includes the United States and 24 other nations, focusing on security, competitiveness, and technological innovation

in advanced wireless systems. 6G represents the sixth generation of mobile communication technology, promising higher data speeds, lower latency, and enhanced machine-to-machine connectivity. The agreement followed discussions between US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and MoS Jitin Prasada.



India Launches ORV Sagar Manthan for Deep Ocean Mission :-

India recently launched the Ocean Research Vessel (ORV) Sagar Manthan at Kolkata. Built by GRSE, the vessel is designed for operations in the Southern Ocean under the Deep Ocean Mission. It costs approximately ₹840 crore and has a service life of 30 years. The vessel is equipped for deep-sea mineral exploration, seismic surveys, and the deployment of Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) and Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs). This launch marks a significant step in India's oceanographic research capabilities.



Google DeepMind Unveils AlphaGenome Atlas Database :-

Google DeepMind has launched the AlphaGenome Atlas, an open-access database. The database contains 1 petabyte of AI predictions, covering approximately 9 billion possible single-letter mutations in human DNA. It focuses on both coding and non-coding regions, which make up about 98% of the genome. The database introduces the AlphaGenome Variant Impact (AVI) score and is freely available for academic researchers, accessible through a browser-based interface without the need for coding skills.



Two New Amphibian Species Discovered in Mizoram :-

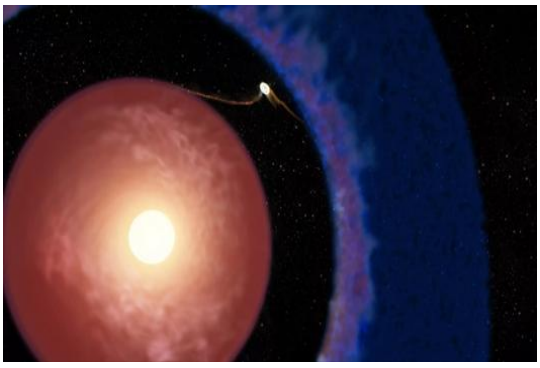
Scientists have discovered two new amphibian species in Mizoram: Duttaphrynus phawngpui, a toad found above 2,000 meters in Phawngpui National Park, and Ingerana aizawl, a frog discovered on the Mizoram University campus. The latter was previously misidentified as Ingerana borealis. This research involved Mizoram University, Cotton University, Help Earth, and Indonesian scientists. The discoveries were detailed in papers published on 13 and 14 September 2026, highlighting the rich biodiversity of the region.



51st Doppler Weather Radar Inaugurated in Sambalpur

India inaugurated its 51st Doppler Weather Radar at Jamadarpali, Sambalpur, Odisha, under Mission Mausam. This Make-in-India installation is the third in Odisha, following those in Paradip and Gopalpur. The radar covers a 250 km radius with a 150-metre resolution and updates every 10 minutes. It monitors 13 districts in

western Odisha and parts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, aiding early warnings for storms, lightning, hail, and heavy rain. It is particularly beneficial for agriculture and the Hirakud Reservoir.



Youngest Known Planet Elias 2-24 b Confirmed :-

Elias 2-24 b has been confirmed as the youngest known planet, with an age of less than 1 million years. Orbiting the star Elias 2-24, located about 450 light-years away, this Jupiter-mass gas giant is still embedded in its protoplanetary disk. The planet was confirmed using data from the Keck Observatory, ALMA, and the Very Large Telescope. The research, led by Andrea Bernardi, first inferred the planet's existence from a disk gap in 2017.



ISRO and ESA Extend Cooperation Agreement :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the European Space Agency (ESA) have extended their Cooperative Agreement until January 8, 2032. The agreement was formalized in Paris by Dr. V. Narayanan and Josef Aschbacher. Originally in force since January 2002, the collaboration focuses on human and robotic exploration, space weather, and sustainable outer space. The cooperation also continues in Earth observation, navigation, and space science, with an Earth observation pact signed in March 2026 and a human exploration joint statement in 2025.



Elon Musk Predicts Future of AI Compute in Space with Project Suncatcher :-

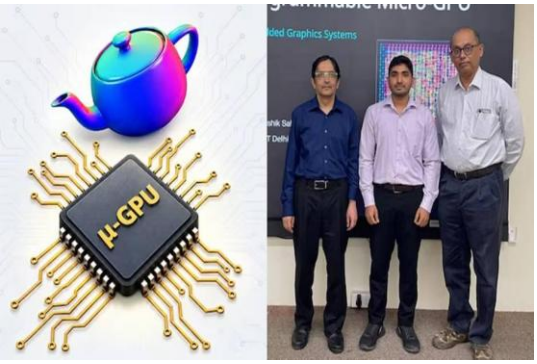
Elon Musk has predicted that most compute will move to outer space, coinciding with Google's announcement of Project Suncatcher, a 'moonshot' to test AI in space. Google plans to launch a prototype satellite on October 1 to evaluate Tensor Processing Units (TPUs) in orbit. The project explores scalable AI infrastructure in space, leveraging constant sunlight for solar power. Musk supports the initiative, envisioning AI data centers in orbit. The launch, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, aims to assess the viability of space as a location for AI compute.



DRDO's First High-Value Deep-Tech Project Signed :-

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has signed an agreement with Zero mK India Pvt Ltd for a high-value project under the Technology Development Fund. The project involves the indigenous development of a 20 mK dilution refrigerator, crucial for quantum computing and superconducting devices. This initiative aligns with the National Quantum Mission and aims to advance indigenous cryogenics technology. The

project is mentored by the Solid State Physics Laboratory.



IIT Delhi Unveils India's First Indigenous Micro-GPU :-

IIT Delhi's Electrical Engineering Department has developed India's first indigenous micro-GPU. Created by M.Tech students Nammi Akash and M. Ravi Teja under the guidance of Professors Jayadeva and Kaushik Saha, the micro-GPU is fully designed in RTL and mapped on Spartan-7 FPGA. It targets embedded systems like industrial displays and e-rickshaw navigators. Future plans include a scalable architecture on a 65 nm ASIC process, marking progress in indigenous graphics silicon.

16: Sports



India to Host Inaugural Women's Champions Trophy in February :-

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that the inaugural Women's Champions Trophy, initially scheduled in Sri Lanka, will now be held in India from February 14 to 28. The change in venue follows governance issues within Sri Lanka Cricket. The tournament will feature six teams: Australia, England, India, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sri Lanka, competing in a round-robin format with the top two advancing to the final. Matches will be hosted at the Cricket Club of India in Mumbai and Vadodara's International Cricket Stadium. This event marks a significant milestone for women's cricket in India.



Smriti Mandhana's Record Innings Leads India to Victory :-

Smriti Mandhana scored a record-breaking 124 runs off 64 balls, leading India Women to a 137-run victory over Hong Kong in the Women's Asia Cup 2026. India posted 193 for five, with Mandhana surpassing Mithali Raj to become the highest run-scorer in women's international cricket. Hong Kong was bowled out for 56, with Deepti Sharma taking three wickets. This victory highlights India's dominance in the tournament and Mandhana's significant contribution to the team's success.



Dhiraj Bommadevara Wins Archery World Cup Final, First Indian Man to Do So :-

Indian archer Dhiraj Bommadevara made history by becoming the first Indian man to win the Archery World Cup Final. He defeated Japan's Nakanishi Junya in a dramatic shoot-off in Saltillo, securing a 6-5 victory after the final was tied at 5-5. Dhiraj, ranked world No. 10, shot a perfect 10 in the shoot-off. This win marks a significant achievement for India in the men's recurve category, with Dhiraj following in the footsteps of Dola Banerjee, the only other Indian to win an individual World Cup Final gold in 2007.



India Wins Record-Extending Eighth Women's Asia Cup Title :-

India's women's cricket team secured its eighth Asia Cup title by defeating Sri Lanka by 72 runs in the 2026 final held in Dubai. The victory marked India's sixth win over Sri Lanka in an Asia Cup final. Openers Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana set a record-breaking 129-run partnership, contributing to India's total of 183/5. The Indian bowlers restricted Sri Lanka to 111, with Shree Charani taking four wickets. Shafali was the tournament's leading scorer, with 236 runs at a strike rate of 171.01.



India Sends Largest Team to WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 :-

A 70-member Team India has been flagged off to participate in WorldSkills Shanghai 2026, scheduled from September 22 to 27. The team will compete in 63 skills, including 11 new-age categories, marking the largest-ever contingent from India. The flag-off ceremony took place at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi, where Minister Jayant Chaudhary emphasized the importance of skill excellence and the vision of Viksit Bharat.



India Wins Silver in Women's 10m Air Rifle Team at Asian Games :-

India secured its first medal at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, winning silver in the women's 10m air rifle team event. The team, comprising Elavenil Valarivan, Sonam Maskar, and Vidarsa Vinod, achieved a combined score of 1898 points, finishing behind China. Elavenil and Sonam also advanced to the individual finals. Additionally, Suchika Tariyal assured India another medal by advancing to the semifinals in the women's traditional 60kg MMA event. Her victory over Mongolia's

Altanchimeg Baigalmaa marked a significant achievement for India in the Games.



Suchika Tariyal Wins Bronze Medal at the 2026 Asian Games :-

Indian mixed martial artist Suchika Tariyal has created a landmark moment at the 2026 Asian Games by winning the bronze medal in the women's 60 kg MMA category. The 36-year-old secured her medal after reaching the semifinal stage, where she faced Singapore's Teo Hui Hun. The semifinal was extremely close and went into overtime, but Tariyal was unable to progress to the final under the competition's weight-related rules. Her bronze nevertheless has historical significance because MMA is being included in the Asian Games for the first time in 2026, making her the first Indian athlete to win an Asian Games medal in MMA.



India's Savita Punia Becomes Most-Capped Indian Women's Hockey Player :-

Indian goalkeeper Savita Punia has become the most-capped player in the history of Indian women's hockey. She achieved the milestone during India's 17–1 victory over Indonesia in the 2026 Asian Games, taking her tally to 321 senior international appearances and surpassing the previous record of 320 held by former India striker Vandana Katariya. Savita has been one of the prominent figures in Indian women's hockey for many years and has served as captain of the national side.



India wins cricket gold at Asian Games with record score

India's women's cricket team secured a gold medal at the Asian Games 2026 by defeating Sri Lanka with a record 147-run victory. The final, held at Korogi Sports Park, saw India post the highest score in women's Asian Games cricket history, 216/3, led by Smriti Mandhana's 79 off 45 balls. Mandhana also became the first woman to complete 11,000 international cricket runs. The Indian bowlers then dismissed Sri Lanka for 69, with Deepti Sharma taking three wickets. This victory marks India's first gold medal at the ongoing games and their seventh overall.



India Wins Bronze in Women's Skeet at Asian Games 2026 :-

India secured a bronze medal in the women's skeet team event at the Asian Games 2026. The team, comprising Parinaaz Dhaliwal, Raiza Dhillon, and Maheshwari Chauhan, recorded a combined score of 331. China won gold with 347, and Kazakhstan took silver with 336. Jay Meena also made history by winning India's first-ever Asian Games medal in soft tennis.



India Wins Silver in Mixed 4x400m Relay at Asian Games 2026 :-

India's mixed 4x400m relay team secured a silver medal at the Asian Games 2026, marking the country's third consecutive medal in this event. The team, consisting of Manu TS, Poovamma MR, Vishal TK, and Vithya Ramraj, clocked a time of 3 minutes 14.46 seconds, finishing behind Bahrain, who set a Games record. Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the team for their exceptional performance, highlighting their speed, coordination, and determination. This achievement adds to India's strong start in athletics at the Games in Nagoya.



India Wins Silver in Asian Games Women's 50m Rifle 3P Team Event :-

India's Tilottama Sen, Vidarsa Vinod Kochalumkal, and Ashi Chouksey secured a silver medal in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions team event at the Asian Games 2026. The team scored a total of 1763 points, finishing behind China's 1773 points. Tilottama and Vidarsa also qualified for the individual final, with Tilottama finishing third and Vidarsa sixth in the qualification round. The team event required shooters to complete 20 shots each in kneeling, prone, and standing positions. The Indian team's performance highlights their strong showing in the shooting discipline.



India Shines at Asian Games 2026 with Kabaddi and Shooting Medals :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated India's athletes for their achievements at the Asian Games 2026. The Indian women's kabaddi team retained their gold medal by defeating Iran, while the men's team also secured gold against Iran. Prachi Choudhary won bronze in the women's 400m, and the squash duo Joshna Chinappa and Velavan Senthilkumar earned bronze in mixed doubles. The women's 50m rifle 3 positions team, comprising Tilottama Sen, Vidarsa Vinod Kochalumkal, and Ashi Chouksey, won silver, showcasing India's prowess in multiple sports.



India Wins Double Gold in Kabaddi at Asian Games :-

India's men's and women's kabaddi teams successfully defended their titles at the Asian Games, both securing gold medals against Iran. The men's team triumphed 40-34 in a tense final, marking their ninth overall gold in kabaddi at the Games. The women's team won 37-34, maintaining a lead established in the first half. This victory continues India's dominance in kabaddi, with the women having won gold in every edition except the 2018

Games. The teams celebrated with a victory lap, chanting 'Vande Mataram'.



Sawan Barwal Wins Silver in Men's Marathon at Asian Games 2026 :-

India's Sawan Barwal achieved a historic feat by winning the silver medal in the men's marathon at the Asian Games 2026, ending a 44-year medal drought for India in this event. Barwal, a national record-holder, maintained a strong position throughout the 42.195-kilometre race in Nagoya, finishing second. This marks India's first marathon medal since 1982 and the first by an Indian man on foreign soil. Barwal's performance adds to India's marathon medal tally, which includes previous wins by Chhota Singh and Surat Singh Mathur.

17: State



SCCL Begins Gold and Copper Exploration in Karnataka :-

Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has initiated exploration for gold and copper in Lingadahalli, Devadurga taluk, Raichur, Karnataka. The exploration covers an area of 199.13 sq km, allocated via an auction by the Union Ministry of Mines. This marks SCCL's first venture into critical and strategic minerals, expanding beyond its 136-year history in coal mining. Gold and copper are essential for various industries, including electronics and security, highlighting the strategic importance of this exploration.



Gujarat Assembly Session Dates Revised to September 9-11 :-

The Gujarat Legislative Assembly session, initially set to start on September 8, has been rescheduled to September 9-11. Governor Acharya Devvrat issued a fresh summons, adjusting the session dates. The session will address government business, Bills, and the Last Day Motion. Assembly Speaker Shankar Chaudhary announced that starred questions will be addressed during Question Hour on all three days. This change provides an opportunity for members to discuss constituency-related issues and government business, ensuring a comprehensive legislative agenda.



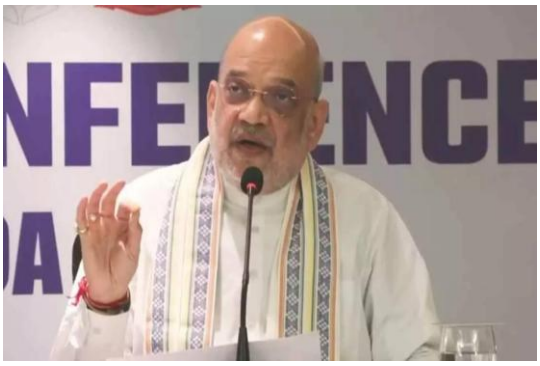
India Inaugurates First Green Forge Complex :-

India's first Green Forge Complex was inaugurated at BRIC-NABI in Mohali, Punjab. This state-of-the-art facility enables testing of genetically modified crops under controlled light, humidity, and temperature conditions before field trials. The complex is part of India's BioE3 policy aimed at biotechnology-led biomanufacturing and supports the country's growing bioeconomy. It is also linked to the proposed Chandigarh-Mohali Science and Innovation Cluster, marking a significant step in advancing India's agricultural and biotechnological capabilities.



Indore Metro Priority Corridor-2 Inaugurated, Network Expands :-

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal inaugurated the Indore Metro Priority Corridor-2, expanding the city's metro network to 16 operational stations. The new corridor, stretching approximately 11 km, was developed at an estimated cost of Rs 2,850 crore. This expansion aims to provide faster, safer, and more reliable transportation, enhancing connectivity between residential, commercial, and employment areas. The project is seen as a catalyst for economic growth, urban transformation, and social inclusion, while also offering environmental benefits by reducing traffic congestion and emissions.



Nasha Mukt Bharat 2029 Strategy Launched in Goa :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Nasha Mukt Bharat 2026–2029 roadmap in Panaji, Goa. The strategy aims to dismantle 100 international/interstate drug networks, destroy 100 illicit labs, and recover 100 fugitives. It focuses on operational enforcement, precursor/synthetic drug control, demand reduction, and institutional capacity. The initiative targets public outreach to 50 crore citizens and aims to recruit 1 lakh Nasha Mukt Mitras through platforms like NCC, NSS, and MY Bharat. Additionally, it plans to expand functional drug de-addiction centers across the nation to 1,751 facilities.



Odisha Approves New Shree Jagannath Temple Land Management Rules :-

The Odisha Cabinet has approved the Shree Jagannath Temple Land Management Rules, 2026, to enhance transparency and efficiency in managing temple land. The rules, replacing previous policies, introduce an online system for land settlement applications and

establish district-level committees for oversight. The Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee will issue No Objection Certificates for settlements. The framework includes GIS-based digital mapping of temple land and mandates valuation based on Benchmark Value or Average Land Sale Statistics. The rules aim to prevent fraudulent settlements and will be effective for two years.



UP Government Extends Doctors' Service Age to 70 :-

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced that government doctors can now serve until the age of 70 through reappointment. This decision, announced by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, aims to strengthen healthcare services in the state. Previously, doctors could serve until the age of 65. The health department is initiating the process to facilitate this change. This move is expected to provide better medical consultation and ease pressure on healthcare facilities, especially in rural areas where there is a shortage of specialist doctors.



MSME Technology Centre Inaugurated in Bengaluru :-

A new MSME Technology Centre was inaugurated in Bengaluru by Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje, aimed at boosting the technological capabilities of MSMEs, especially in the Electronics System Design and Manufacturing sector. Developed with a ₹156 crore investment, the centre will train around 10,000 trainees annually. It features advanced technologies like Surface-Mount Technology lines and CNC machines. The centre is expected to enhance the MSME ecosystem in electronics and aerospace, promoting entrepreneurship and contributing to India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision.



NSTFDC and HPCL Collaborate for Smart Classrooms in Rajasthan :-

The NSTFDC and HPCL have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish computer labs and smart classrooms in 29 Eklavya Model Residential Schools across Rajasthan. The ₹16.01 crore project aims to benefit over 10,000 Scheduled Tribe students annually by providing each school with four smart classrooms, a computer lab, tablets, and internet access. The initiative covers 11 districts and is expected to be completed within six months.



Gujarat Launches State Child Protection Policy 2026 :-

Gujarat has unveiled the State Child Protection Policy 2026, aiming to ensure a safe, dignified, and rights-based environment for children. The policy focuses on protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and discrimination while promoting education, healthcare, and holistic development. It adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and strengthens protection systems across various sectors, including schools, healthcare, and public spaces. Institutions working with children are required to train staff on child rights and adhere to a strict code of conduct.



Odisha to Develop 870-Acre Silicon Valley Near Cuttack

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced the development of an 870-acre Silicon Valley at Naraj near Cuttack to attract semiconductor and electronics investments. The site offers strategic connectivity and infrastructure, with access to major ports and highways. This initiative aims to establish a semiconductor and electronics ecosystem, leveraging the proximity to the Mahanadi River for industrial water needs. The state plans to build a wider ecosystem around semiconductor investments, aligning with ISM 2.0 policies to support equipment, materials, and supply chain development.



Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launches 'Nasha Mukt Punjab Yatra' :-

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan visited Punjab to inaugurate the 'Nasha Mukt Punjab Yatra', a campaign aimed at raising awareness against drug abuse. The event began with a visit to Takht Sri Damdama Sahib in Talwandi Sabo, followed by the official inauguration at Ravidassia Chowk. Chouhan also addressed a public rally and interacted with farmers and women from self-help groups at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Bathinda. The initiative is part of a broader effort to combat drug addiction in Punjab, focusing on community engagement and awareness.



Karnataka Approves Tulu as Additional Administrative Language :-

The Karnataka Cabinet has approved Tulu as the second additional administrative language in the Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts. The cabinet also approved a tourism policy for coastal and Malnad regions, treating tourism as infrastructure and offering greenfield incentives. Additionally, the Karnataka Marine Biotechnology Policy 2026-31 was cleared. Plans include upgrading a college to a Fisheries, Marine, and Blue Economy University, and a proposal to rename Dakshina Kannada district as Mangaluru, subject to public feedback.



Maharashtra Declares Drought in 265 Talukas, Announces Relief Package :-

The Maharashtra government has declared drought conditions in 265 out of 358 talukas due to deficient monsoon rainfall during the 2026 Kharif season. A comprehensive 12-point relief package for affected farmers and rural households has been announced. The package includes a full waiver of land revenue, restructuring of existing agricultural loans, and a stay on the recovery of agriculture-related bank loans. Additionally, there are exemptions on electricity bills for agricultural pumps and waivers of examination fees for students in affected zones. Measures for water conservation and food grain distribution have also been implemented.

18: Summits & Conferences



4th Indo-German Environmental Forum Co-Chaired by India and Germany :-

The 4th Indo-German Environmental Forum was co-chaired by Union Minister Bhupender Yadav and German Minister Carsten Schneider in New Delhi. The forum, themed 'Together For More Resilience', is the highest-level bilateral forum on the environment since 2008. It was organised by MoEFCC and BMUKN, focusing on Low-Carbon Industries, Biodiversity, Resource Efficiency & Circular Economy, Sustainable Finance, and Green Skills. Joint Working Groups on Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Circular Economy met earlier to deepen cooperation in sustainable technologies and the green economy.



India-World Bank Discuss Enhanced Partnership :-

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman met World Bank President Ajay Banga to discuss strengthening the India-World Bank partnership. The meeting, held during the G20 FMCBG Meeting, focused on mobilizing private capital and enhancing infrastructure credit. Discussions included a larger role for MIGA in India and establishing a Global Digital Public Infrastructure Knowledge Hub. Banga appreciated India's infrastructure transformation, and both leaders explored developing globally competitive tourism destinations under a new partnership framework.



BRICS IP Offices Meeting in New Delhi Enhances Cooperation :-

The 18th Meeting of the Heads of Intellectual Property (IP) Offices of BRICS countries concluded in New Delhi, focusing on strengthening multilateral cooperation in intellectual property. The meeting, hosted by India's Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, adopted Updated Operational Guidelines for IP BRICS to enhance cooperation and innovation. Key discussions included protecting traditional knowledge and improving patent examination processes. New initiatives like the BRICS Intellectual Property Awareness Series and IP BRICS FinTech Innovation Monitor were proposed to deepen cooperation.



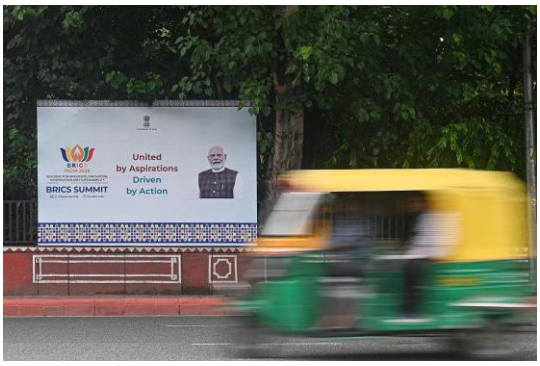
International Workshop on Tiger Landscapes Held in Delhi :-

An international workshop on Tiger Landscapes was inaugurated by Union Minister Bhupender Yadav in New Delhi. Themed “Tiger Landscapes – Conservation, Bioeconomy and Ecotourism,” it was organized by the International Big Cat Alliance, Asian Development Bank, and NTCA. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between IBCA and ADB focusing on landscape conservation, capacity building, and nature-positive financing. The workshop emphasized livelihood generation through tiger conservation.



Rajnath Singh Visited Sri Lanka for Bilateral Talks :-

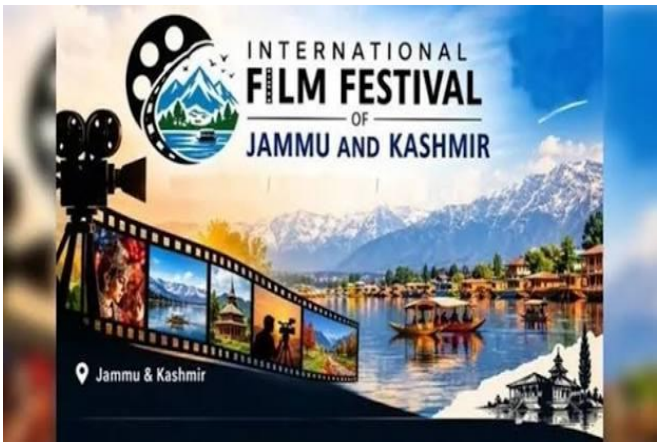
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Sri Lanka from September 8 to 10, leading a high-level delegation to discuss regional security, defence, and economic cooperation. The visit was aimed to strengthen the traditionally strong bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka, emphasizing India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy. Singh also engaged with the Indian diaspora in Colombo. This visit followed India's significant assistance to Sri Lanka during its economic crisis and underscores the commitment to enhancing maritime and defence partnerships.



India to Host 18th BRICS Summit in Delhi :-

The 18th BRICS Leaders’ Summit will be held in Delhi on September 12-13, marking the conclusion of India's 2026 chairship. Guided by the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability,' India's chairship focuses on strengthening resilience, harnessing

innovation, deepening cooperation, and advancing sustainable development. The expanded BRICS now includes 11 full members and several partner countries, representing a significant share of global population and economy. The summit will address global uncertainties, climate-related risks, and promote technological cooperation among member countries.



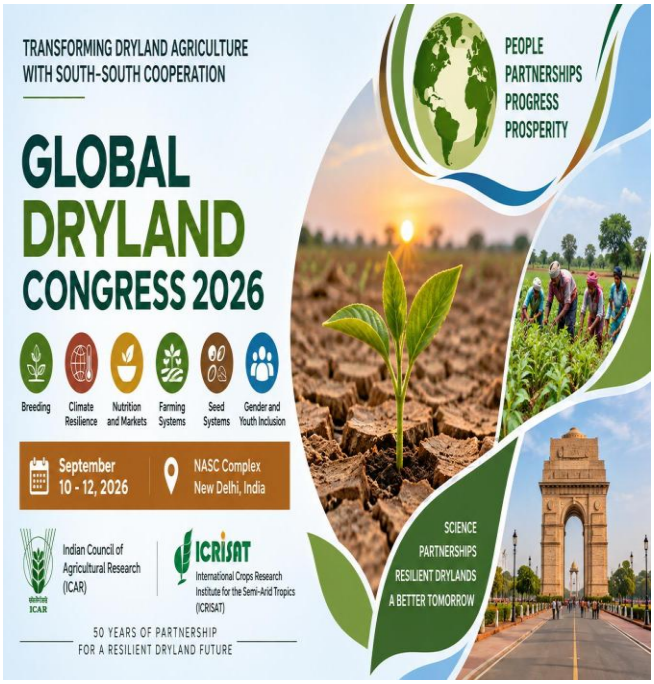
1st International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir Held :-

The first International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK) took place at Srinagar's SKICC. Organized by J&K's Department of Information and Public Relations and the National Film Development Corporation, the festival featured 135 films from 41 countries. India led with 64 entries, followed by France with 13. A unique highlight was the floating cinema on Dal Lake, allowing audiences to enjoy screenings from traditional shikaras, enhancing the cultural experience under the theme "Rang-e-Cinema."



International Space Summit Begins in Paris :-

The International Space Summit in Paris, co-chaired by France and Germany, aims to strengthen Europe's role in space amidst a competitive global landscape. Despite a lower turnout from European leaders and the absence of major U.S. tech firms like SpaceX and Blue Origin, the summit gathers 2,000 delegates from 120 nations. The event seeks broad declarations on space traffic and access, with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen delivering a keynote speech. France advocates for increased European autonomy in space, contrasting with Germany's openness to collaboration with U.S. companies.



Global Dryland Congress 2026 Held in New Delhi :-

The Global Dryland Congress 2026 was held in New Delhi, bringing together over 800 experts from Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The event, themed 'Transforming Dryland Agriculture with South-South Cooperation,' was organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). Participants discussed key themes such as climate resilience, nutrition, and gender inclusion. The Congress aimed to explore solutions for sustainable and climate-resilient dryland agriculture and concluded with the adoption of the Delhi Declaration on Dryland.



PM Modi Inaugurated SEMICON India 2026 in New Delhi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated SEMICON India 2026 on September 17, marking a significant event in India's semiconductor journey. The event, held at Yashobhoomi in New Delhi from September 17 to 19, will showcase India's growing semiconductor and electronics ecosystem. Organized by the India Semiconductor Mission, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and SEMI, the event will feature over 600 companies from 52 countries. With the theme 'Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem,' it aims to strengthen India's position in the global semiconductor value chain.



US and China Agree on AI Dialogue and Tariff Reductions :-

The United States and China have agreed to reduce tariffs on $30 billion worth of goods and initiate a dialogue on artificial intelligence (AI) following President Xi Jinping's visit to Washington. The tariff cuts will affect US exports like agricultural goods and imports such as small appliances. Both countries will also establish a trade council and extend the outcomes of previous talks. On AI, they agreed to hold discussions on the technology's risks and benefits and set up a communication channel for AI-related incidents.



India International Water Week 2026 Held in New Delhi

The 9th edition of India International Water Week (IIWW) took place in New Delhi, focusing on 'Climate Resilient Water Management'. Organized by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the event featured seven sub-themes covering governance, technology, and sustainability. It included participation from six Union Ministries, 16 States/UTs, and 11 partner countries, with 49 focused sessions and ministerial plenaries. Approximately 150 countries were invited to the event.

SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) Which types of offences are specifically excluded from Thailand's 2026 political amnesty law?

A) Tax evasion and cybercrimes
B) Drug trafficking and theft
C) Lese-majeste, corruption, and crimes causing death or serious injury
D) Traffic violations and property disputes

2) Which area was a focus of the 2nd India-New Zealand Defence Strategic Dialogue held in August 2026

A) Space exploration cooperation
B) Renewable energy projects
C) Strengthening maritime security
D) Bilateral trade agreements

3) Which digital tool was launched at the National Conclave on Tribal Languages and Museums in Mysuru to help access tribal welfare schemes?

A) e-Shram Portal
B) Tribal Connect
C) AI bot 'Jago'
D) Digital India App

4) What did India and Morocco agree to establish to explore expanding trade and a preferential trade agreement?

A) Special Economic Council
B) Bilateral Investment Treaty
C) Joint Working Group
D) Free Trade Zone

5) Which historic site did Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurate after redevelopment in Goa?

A) Vasco da Gama Fort
B) Azad Maidan
C) Hutatma Smruti Smarak at Patradevi
D) Goa Liberation Memorial at Panaji

6) Where is the 18th BRICS Summit scheduled to be held in September 2026?

A) Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi
B) Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
C) Yashobhoomi, New Delhi
D) Hyderabad International Convention Centre

7) Which two institutions signed an MoU to strengthen financing for rural infrastructure projects?

A) NABARD and NaBFID
B) SIDBI and EXIM Bank
C) RBI and NABARD
D) NaBFID and SEBI

8) ICGS Ajit belongs to which class of Indian Coast Guard vessels?

A) Samar Class
B) Vikram Class
C) Adamya Class
D) Sankalp Class

9) India's first Superfine PPT ATH manufacturing facility was commissioned by Hindalco in which state?

A) Gujarat
B) Odisha
C) Karnataka
D) Maharashtra

10) According to recent reports how many coal-fired power plants had critically low coal inventories?

A) 25
B) 35
C) 45
D) 55

11) What is 'Gnani Artha', which was launched by Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan in New Delhi?

A) A Sovereign AI Stack
B) A Quantum Computing Mission
C) A Semiconductor Fabrication Programme
D) A Digital Payment Platform

12) Who became the first Indian chess player to win the Grand Chess Tour title in 2026?

A) Gukesh D
B) R. Praggnanandhaa

C) Arjun Erigaisi
D) Vidit Gujrathi

13) Which conclave was organised by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in Mysuru to promote tribal-language preservation and museums?

A) National Tribal Innovation Summit
B) National Conclave on Tribal Languages & Museums
C) Adivasi Cultural Heritage Expo
D) Tribal Knowledge and Technology Forum

14) Who won the 2026 Formula One Dutch Grand Prix?

A) Kimi Antonelli
B) George Russell
C) Lando Norris
D) Lewis Hamilton

15) What is the proposed name of SpaceX's planned large rocket-launch complex in southern Louisiana?

A) Starbase Louisiana
B) Falcon Louisiana
C) Starship Delta
D) Mars Gateway Louisiana

16) Which of the following Nitrosamine Impurities Reference Standards was NOT among those launched by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission in August 2026?

A) NMPA
B) NAPA
C) NDMA
D) NDEA

17) What is the significance of the newly discovered plant species Doronicum sanctum in Arunachal Pradesh?

A) It is the tallest sunflower species in India
B) It is a medicinal herb used in Ayurveda
C) It is the first Doronicum species recorded in Northeast India
D) It is found only in the Western Ghats

18) The 'Aravalli' engine, jointly developed by HAL and Safran, is intended primarily for which class of Indian helicopters?

A) Light Utility Helicopters
B) Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
C) Attack Helicopters
D) 13-tonne Multi-Role Helicopters

19) What new system will the Indian government implement from September to improve sugar market availability?

A) Fortnightly quota allocation
B) Monthly production audits
C) Seasonal export restrictions
D) Daily price monitoring

20) What is the main focus of the Union Budget 2027-28 preparation as outlined in the latest Budget Circular?

A) Raising import tariffs
B) Aligning expenditure with the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision
C) Privatising public sector banks
D) Increasing subsidies for agriculture

21) What major step did India and Uzbekistan take to strengthen their bilateral relationship during PM Modi's 2026 visit?

A) Elevated ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
B) Launched a new currency swap arrangement
C) Signed a free trade agreement
D) Announced a joint space mission

22) What percentage of PM SVANidhi Yojana beneficiaries are women, as highlighted by PM Modi?

A) 25%
B) 60%
C) 80%
D) 46%

23) Which new shipping route is India planning to pilot a cargo vessel on in 2027 to reduce distances to Northern Europe?

A) Panama Canal
B) Suez Canal
C) Cape of Good Hope Route
D) Northern Sea Route

24) How much humanitarian assistance did the US provide to flood-hit Nepal in 2026?

A) USD 2.5 million
B) USD 500,000
C) Over USD 3.6 million
D) USD 1 million

25) What is the primary feature of the website www.bharatrajya.com, praised by PM Modi?

A) E-commerce for handicrafts
B) Mapping Indian rulers by year
C) Live weather updates
D) Online language translation

26) What is a key feature of the upgraded India-Uzbekistan Comprehensive Strategic Partnership?

A) Establishing a joint currency
B) Long-term uranium supply framework
C) Free trade agreement
D) Military base exchange

27) What was India's GDP growth rate in the first quarter of FY 2026-27?

A) 7.1%
B) 8.1%
C) 7.8%
D) 6.2%

28) Which two Indian states signed an MoU in 2026 to resolve a 25-year-old Sone River water-sharing dispute?

A) Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
B) Bihar and Jharkhand
C) Jharkhand and Odisha
D) Bihar and West Bengal

29) Where was the sixth edition of the World Nomad Games, attended by PM Modi, held in 2026?

A) Astana, Kazakhstan
B) Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
C) Dushanbe, Tajikistan
D) Tashkent, Uzbekistan

30) Which of the following is a key feature of the Semicon 2.0 scheme notified by the Indian government with a total financial outlay of ₹1,27,500 crore?

A) Exclusive focus on chip fabrication only
B) Subsidy for importing finished chips
C) Support across the entire semiconductor value chain
D) Scheme limited to foreign companies

31) What key change does the FSSAI's new proposal introduce for packaged food labelling in India?

A) QR codes linking to nutrition websites
B) Red hexagonal warning labels for high fat, sugar, or salt
C) Five-star rating system for all foods
D) Mandatory green labels for organic foods

32) Which NASA space telescope was launched on August 30, 2026, and what is notable about its capabilities?

A) Hubble Space Telescope; ultraviolet capability
B) Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope; 300-megapixel wide field instrument
C) James Webb Space Telescope; infrared imaging
D) Chandra X-ray Observatory; X-ray imaging

33) During her meeting with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, what did Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman invite him to?

A) G20 Climate Conference in Chennai
B) India-US Trade Expo in Mumbai
C) Economic & Financial Partnership meeting in New Delhi
D) BRICS Summit in Bangalore

34) What is a key feature of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement between Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan?

A) NATO-style collective defence clause
B) Ban on joint military exercises
C) Space technology sharing only
D) Exclusive naval cooperation

35) What is the primary purpose of ISRO's EOS-05 (GISAT-1A) satellite launched in September 2026?

A) Monitoring solar activity
B) Near-real-time imaging of the Indian subcontinent
C) Deep space exploration
D) Navigation and communication

36) Which theme has been chosen for the 4th Indo-German Environmental Forum held in New Delhi?

A) Together For More Resilience
B) Green Growth for All
C) Sustainable Development Goals
D) Climate Action Now

37) During Belgian PM Bart De Wever's first official visit to India, which sector is NOT specifically mentioned as a focus area for strengthening bilateral ties?

A) Defence and security cooperation
B) Renewable energy
C) Diamonds
D) Agricultural subsidies

38) What is the central theme of the second Annual Trident Lecture by CENJOWS inaugurated by Raksha Rajya Mantri Sanjay Seth?

A) India's Maritime Security Strategy
B) Defence Budget Reforms
C) Future of Artificial Intelligence in Warfare
D) National Resurgence through the Lens of Defence Forces

39) What recent humanitarian action did India undertake in Nepal following floods?

A) Launched a joint satellite for disaster monitoring
B) Sent a peacekeeping force to Kathmandu
C) Signed a new border agreement
D) Delivered around 74 tonnes of relief assistance and deployed a tunnel rescue team

40) Where was Himachal Pradesh's first ozone-based drinking water treatment project inaugurated?

A) Shimla
B) Dehra, Kangra
C) Solan
D) Mandi

41) Which two countries reaffirmed their commitment to regional stability and peace through recent high-level military discussions?

A) India and Vietnam
B) India and Australia
C) India and Japan
D) India and South Korea

42) The Quad Sherpas' meeting in New Delhi focused on which of the following areas?

A) Climate change and agriculture
B) Space exploration and tourism
C) Nuclear disarmament and arms control
D) Maritime security and critical technologies

43) Indian travellers in Uzbekistan can now make payments at merchant outlets using which technology?

A) Bitcoin wallets
B) RuPay debit cards
C) SWIFT wire transfers
D) UPI via UZQR code

44) What was the main focus of the BHASHINI Shilpi developer session held in Kathmandu?

A) Language AI and multilingual digital services
B) Renewable energy solutions
C) Blockchain and cryptocurrency
D) Space technology collaboration

45) What is the main goal of the MoU signed between Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and the Textiles Committee?

A) To ban import of foreign textiles
B) To boost procurement of recycled and upcycled textile products
C) To promote handloom exports only
D) To set up new textile mills in every state

46) How many school teachers were selected for the National Teachers Awards 2026?

A) 48

B) 61
C) 81
D) 26

47) Which new feature was introduced in the fifth edition of the Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar (SSSS v.5.0) initiative?

A) Plastic Ban Campaign
B) River Cleanup Marathon
C) National Ocean Olympiad
D) Mangrove Plantation Drive

48) What is a key benefit of the newly launched hub-and-spoke flights at Ahmedabad Airport?

A) Passengars complete customs and immigration at Ahmedabad
B) Free baggage allowance for all passengers
C) Flights available only on weekends
D) Direct flights to all international destinations

49) What is significant about AVM Shakti Sharma's promotion in the Indian Defence Forces?

A) First woman officer from non-medical cadre to become Air Vice Marshal
B) First woman to be awarded the Param Vir Chakra
C) First woman to become Chief of Air Staff
D) First woman to command a fighter squadron

50) What is a key feature of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement recently concluded in principle?

A) Only agricultural goods are included in the agreement
B) The agreement excludes any air connectivity provisions
C) India will maintain tariffs on all pharmaceutical products
D) 93% of Indian exports will receive duty-free access to the EU market

51) Which historical ensemble in Assam was added to UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative List?

A) Rangpur-Sivasagar Historical Ensemble
B) Majuli Cultural Landscape
C) Kamakhya Temple Complex
D) Manas Cultural Ensemble

52) Who is the current vice-chairman of the Western Zonal Council, as per the latest meeting held in Goa?

A) Union Home Minister
B) Maharashtra Chief Minister
C) Goa Chief Minister
D) Gujarat Chief Minister

53) What is a key objective of the inaugural iBRICS Summit 2026?

A) Signing defence agreements among BRICS nations
B) Launching a new BRICS currency
C) Establishing a BRICS free trade zone
D) Connecting sovereign capital with infrastructure and digital projects

54) Which river carried the floodwaters downstream during the devastating flash floods in Nepal in August 2026?

A) Koshi River
B) Bagmati River
C) Karnali River
D) Bhotekoshi River

55) Which institution's centenary celebrations did Prime Minister Modi attend on Teachers' Day 2026?

A) Jawaharlal Nehru University
B) Indian Institute of Science
C) Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC)
D) Banaras Hindu University

56) Which city is home to France's first traditionally designed stone Hindu temple, inaugurated by BAPS in 2026?

A) Paris
B) Marseille
C) Nice
D) Lyon

57) Which company achieved Europe's first commercial rocket launch to orbit from continental Europe in 2026?

A) Isar Aerospace
B) ArianeGroup

C) Rocket Lab
D) SpaceX

58) What was one of the main objectives of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Sri Lanka from September 8 to 10, 2026?

A) Signing a free trade agreement
B) Attending a trade expo
C) Inaugurating a new Indian embassy
D) Strengthening maritime and defence partnership

59) What reason did Iran's security official Rezaei give for not sinking U.S. vessels attempting to pass through the Strait of Hormuz?

A) Environmental risks from oil cargo
B) International diplomatic pressure
C) Technical inability
D) Lack of military authorization

60) Which Indian cricketer became the youngest to score 3,000 runs in women's T20Is during the 2026 Women's Asia Cup group stage?

A) Shafali Verma
B) Smriti Mandhana
C) Deepti Sharma
D) Harmanpreet Kaur

61) Which of the following projects was dedicated to the nation by PM Modi in Vadodara as part of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC)?

A) Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor
B) Delhi-Mumbai Expressway
C) Mumbai Metro Line 3
D) Sanand (N)-Makarpura section

62) Which initiative launched by KVIC in 2017 aims to promote scientific beekeeping among farmers and youth?

A) Honey Mission
B) Gramodyog Vikas Yojana
C) Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme
D) Khadi Vikas Yojana

63) What is a key benefit of Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems (RAS) in India's fisheries sector?

A) Operates only in coastal areas
B) Recycles up to 90-95% of water
C) Requires no investment
D) Eliminates the need for fish feed

64) Which city was named the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Tourism & Cultural Capital for 2026–27?

A) Lahore
B) Beijing
C) Tashkent
D) Samarkand

65) Air Marshal Vivek Hande recently assumed which key position in the Indian Armed Forces?

A) Director General (Organisation & Personnel)
B) Director General Hospital Services (Armed Forces)
C) Director General Medical Services (Air)
D) Chief of Air Staff

66) Who has been appointed to discharge the functions of the Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir during Manoj Sinha's leave?

A) Dinesh Sharma
B) Vinai Kumar Saxena
C) Sanjay Kumar Agrawal
D) Rajnath Singh

67) What is a key focus area of India-Morocco defence cooperation discussed during their inaugural Joint Defence Committee meeting held in New Delhi?

A) Nuclear disarmament
B) Defence manufacturing and technology collaboration
C) Space exploration
D) Maritime border disputes

68) Under which constitutional provision were eight High Court Chief Justices appointed by the Central Government in September 2026?

A) Article 324

B) Article 217
C) Article 356
D) Article 370

69) Which of the following is NOT a target of the Nasha Mukt Bharat 2029 roadmap launched in Goa?

A) Dismantling 100 drug networks
B) Establishing 100 new medical colleges
C) Recovering 100 fugitives
D) Destroying 100 illicit labs

70) Which organization received RBI approval to acquire up to a 9.99% stake in ICICI Bank in September 2026?

A) LIC
B) HDFC
C) SBI
D) Axis Bank

71) Which two air forces participate in Exercise Veer Guardian 2026?

A) Indian Air Force and Japan Air Self-Defense Force
B) Indian Navy and US Air Force
C) Indian Army and French Air Force
D) Indian Air Force and Royal Air Force

72) For what position was Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh re-elected in September 2026?

A) Director-General of India Post
B) Secretary-General of Asian-Pacific Postal Union
C) Chairperson of Universal Postal Union
D) President of International Postal Council

73) Which of the following is NOT among the railway projects approved by the Cabinet in September 2026?

A) Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train
B) Whitefield-Bangarapet third and fourth lines
C) Arakkonam-Renigunta third and fourth lines
D) Hosur-Omalur doubling

74) The third phase of underwater archaeology at Poompuhar focuses on exploring remains from which historical period?

A) Mauryan Empire
B) Sangam era port city
C) Chola dynasty capital
D) Gupta period

75) According to Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal, what is a key feature being negotiated in the India-US trade deal?

A) Exclusive trade in agricultural products
B) Preferential market access for both countries
C) Ban on e-commerce exports
D) Complete removal of all tariffs

76) What is a key feature of the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) 3.0 launched by the Union Minister for Rural Development?

A) Exclusive digitisation of urban properties only
B) Direct cash transfer to landowners
C) Mandatory biometric attendance for farmers
D) Introduction of 14-digit Bhu-Aadhaar for every land parcel

77) Which major infrastructure project was dedicated for public use by PM Modi in Vadodara, Gujarat, in September 2026?

A) Western Dedicated Freight Corridor sections
B) Eastern Peripheral Highway
C) Delhi-Meerut Expressway
D) Mumbai Metro Line 3

78) What is the main purpose of NITI Aayog's Platform for Aggregating Clean Transport (PACT)?

A) Develop new railway stations
B) Aggregate freight demand and support charging infrastructure planning
C) Provide subsidies for petrol vehicles
D) Monitor air quality in urban areas

79) What is the primary objective of the Indian Air Force's Dronathon-2026 event?

A) Launch a new fighter jet
B) Celebrate Air Force Day
C) Showcase and evaluate advancements in Unmanned Aerial Systems and Counter-UAS technologies
D) Recruit new pilots for the Air Force

80) Who has been announced as the Best Actress in a Leading Role for the 72nd National Film Awards?

A) Yami Gautam
B) Kangana Ranaut
C) Alia Bhatt
D) Deepika Padukone

81) What is the theme of Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2026?

A) Nutrition for All
B) Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari
C) Healthy India, Strong India
D) Empowering Mothers

82) Which key feature does the Aadhaar Face Authentication SDK launched in September 2026 offer?

A) AI-powered liveness detection and anti-spoofing
B) Fingerprint-only authentication
C) Offline paper-based verification
D) Mandatory external hardware for all users

83) What is a major component of the Chhattisgarh NIPUN Mission approved in September 2026?

A) Free public transport for youth
B) 100 Emerging Technology Labs
C) Healthcare insurance for all residents
D) Universal Basic Income

84) Which two organizations jointly organized the Global Dryland Congress 2026 in New Delhi?

A) FAO and WHO
B) ICAR and ICRISAT
C) World Bank and NABARD
D) NITI Aayog and UNDP

85) Which area was NOT covered by the India-Sri Lanka defence MoUs signed in September 2026?

A) Upgrade of air defence guns
B) NCC cooperation
C) National Defence College academic exchange
D) Joint naval shipbuilding

86) Which of the following organisations' country Chairs was invited to the 18th BRICS Summit outreach session to represent the Global South?

A) Pacific Islands Forum
B) ASEAN
C) European Union
D) NATO

87) What is the immediate focus area for Great Indian Bustard (GIB) conservation in Gujarat under the new action plan?

A) Lala–Rawa landscape
B) Sundarbans
C) Gir National Park
D) Kaziranga grasslands

88) Which site was declared Gujarat's first Biodiversity Heritage Site in January 2025?

A) Guneri Inland Mangroves
B) Narmada Wetlands
C) Kori Creek
D) Gir National Park

89) What percentage of global vaccine production does India account for, according to Union Minister Jitendra Singh?

A) 80%
B) 60%
C) 25%
D) 40%

90) Which initiative has BRICS countries agreed upon for the prevention and response to infectious diseases?

A) Digital Agriculture Network
B) BRICS Startup Innovation Fund
C) Integrated Early Warning System
D) BRICS Urban Mobility Hub

91) What is the maximum Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) that can be charged per UPI transaction above Rs 75,000 under RBI's new framework?

A) Rs 500
B) 0.4% of transaction value
C) Rs 300

D) Rs 5

92) Which river will have a 232.6-metre-high concrete gravity dam constructed under the Kishau Multipurpose Project?

A) Tons River
B) Bhagirathi River
C) Ganga River
D) Yamuna River

93) Which honor was awarded to Tamil scholar Solomon Pappaiah in 2021?

A) Padma Shri
B) Sahitya Akademi Award
C) Jnanpith Award
D) Bharat Ratna

94) Why did the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) fine Rapido ₹10 lakh?

A) For not providing helmets
B) For data privacy violations
C) For overcharging after rides
D) For misleading prompts and dark patterns

95) What is the main benefit of the newly developed lightweight stainless steel salt containers for railway transport in Gujarat?

A) They lower railway fares
B) They are used only for coal transport
C) They increase passenger capacity
D) They reduce salt moisture absorption

96) What is the primary purpose of the BJP's 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' launched in September 2026?

A) To launch a new government welfare scheme
B) To highlight Prime Minister Modi's 25 years of public service
C) To celebrate India's Independence Day
D) To prepare for upcoming state elections

97) What key change does the First Additional Protocol to the India–MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement introduce?

A) Establishes a free trade zone
B) Reduces tariffs on agricultural goods
C) Removes all customs duties
D) Legalizes electronic Certificates of Origin

98) How much electricity per day has India approved to export to flood-hit Nepal until December 2026?

A) 654 MW for 18 hours per day
B) 54 MW for 6 hours per day
C) 400 MW for 12 hours per day
D) 1000 MW for 24 hours per day

99) Which Indian naval ship participated in the 4th edition of Exercise Samudra Laksamana with the Royal Malaysian Navy?

A) INS Vikrant
B) INS Kolkata
C) INS Mysore
D) INS Shivalik

100) For which achievement did the Department of Financial Services receive the 'Rajbhasha Kirti' award for 2025–26?

A) Innovative implementation and promotion of Hindi in official work
B) Highest tax collection
C) Best digital banking services
D) Outstanding financial inclusion initiatives

101) Which of the following aircraft will Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) hand over to the Indian Air Force as part of its latest milestone?

A) MiG-29UPG fighters
B) Rafale multi-role fighters
C) Apache attack helicopters
D) LCA Tejas Final Operational Clearance twin-seater trainers

102) What is the primary objective of the six-month Certificate (Bridge) Course in Primary Teacher Education (PTE) launched by the Ministry of Education?

A) To train teachers in secondary school mathematics
B) To provide coaching for civil services aspirants
C) To strengthen professional competencies of in-service primary school teachers
D) To certify teachers in foreign languages

103) What is the main focus of the India-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 2026'?

A) Mountain and semi-mountain operations with Integrated Battle Groups
B) Naval warfare and anti-submarine drills
C) Airborne assault and paratrooper training
D) Desert warfare and tank battles

104) Bharat Forge has partnered with Pratt & Whitney Canada for which of the following projects?

A) Building naval submarines for the Indian Navy
B) Developing electric buses for urban transport
C) Integrating advanced turboprop engines into DRDO's HALE UAV
D) Manufacturing bulletproof vests for the army

105) What is the main benefit of the NSTFDC-HPCL MoU for 29 Eklavya Model Residential Schools in Rajasthan?

A) Free midday meals for all students
B) Establishment of computer labs and smart classrooms
C) Construction of new hostels
D) Recruitment of additional teaching staff

106) Who became the first woman to head the CRPF's elite CoBRA unit?

A) Meera Borwankar
B) Archana Ramasundaram
C) Sanjukta Parashar
D) Kiran Bedi

107) Where was the new toad species Duttaphrynus phawngpui discovered?

A) Gir Forest National Park
B) Silent Valley National Park
C) Phawngpui National Park
D) Kaziranga National Park

108) Kumik, recently declared Ladakh's first Heritage Village, is facing which major challenge?

A) Frequent landslides
B) Industrial pollution
C) Urban encroachment
D) Severe water scarcity

109) Dr Vasundhara Doraswamy, set to receive the Padmabhushan Guru Dr Saroja Vaidyanathan Excellence Award, is renowned for which classical dance form?

A) Kathak
B) Kuchipudi
C) Odissi
D) Bharatanatyam

110) Which Indian state introduced the State Child Protection Policy 2026 with a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse?

A) West Bengal
B) Maharashtra
C) Gujarat
D) Odisha

111) Who was appointed as the World Bank Group Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics in September 2026?

A) Ajay Banga
B) Michael Kremer
C) N Chandrasekaran
D) Abhijit Banerjee

112) What was GIFT City's global ranking in the Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI) 40 released in September 2026?

A) 15th
B) 26th
C) 37th
D) 49th

113) Where was India's 51st Doppler Weather Radar inaugurated in September 2026?

A) Paradip, Odisha
B) Raipur, Chhattisgarh
C) Gopalpur, Odisha
D) Sambalpur, Odisha

114) Which Indian-American computer scientist received the 2026 Arthur M. Bueche Award from the US National Academy of Engineering?

A) Ajay Banga
B) Sethuraman Panchanathan

C) N Chandrasekaran
D) Manu Bhaker

115) International Equal Pay Day, observed on 18 September, highlights which key global issue?

A) Climate change
B) Food security
C) Child labour
D) Gender pay gap

116) What does the Japan Air Self-Defense Force Chief's sortie in the Indian LCA Tejas signify?

A) End of India-Japan air exercises
B) Start of a new joint aircraft project
C) Retirement of the IAF Chief
D) Trust in India's indigenous fighter aircraft

117) Which institutions did the Japanese parliamentary delegation visit in Bengaluru as part of the India-Japan Visit Programme?

A) IIT Bombay, DRDO, and HAL
B) NIT Trichy, NTPC, and ONGC
C) IISc, ISRO, and BEL
D) IIM Ahmedabad, BARC, and NAL

118) What is the main objective of the SLINEX-26 maritime exercise between India and Sri Lanka?

A) Conducting anti-piracy operations
B) Establishing a joint naval command
C) Strengthening maritime cooperation and interoperability
D) Signing a new maritime trade agreement

119) Which film won the Best Feature Film award at the 72nd National Film Awards?

A) Article 370
B) Do Bigha Zamin
C) Mahabalipuram
D) Shyamchi Aai

120) What is the focus of Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) Phase II in rural India?

A) Sustaining ODF status and managing waste
B) Providing free electricity
C) Building new schools
D) Constructing new highways

121) In the 2026 Global Business Climate Survey by the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in India, which country ranked first among 41 markets for business climate?

A) Philippines
B) India
C) Poland
D) Vietnam

122) Which language was approved as an additional administrative language in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts by the Karnataka Cabinet in September 2026?

A) Tulu
B) Sanskrit
C) Kodava
D) Konkani

123) What was the central theme of SEMICON India 2026 held at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi?

A) Global Chip Manufacturing Summit
B) AI and High-Performance Computing
C) Semiconductors for a Digital Tomorrow
D) Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem

124) Which major CSR initiative by Coal India Limited has supported over 1,300 UPSC aspirants from mining districts?

A) Digital Vidya
B) NIRMAN scheme
C) Nanha Sa Dil
D) Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojana

125) Who became the first women's cricketer to complete 11,000 international runs during the Asian Games final against Sri Lanka?

A) Harmanpreet Kaur
B) Suzie Bates
C) Smriti Mandhana
D) Mithali Raj

126) Which of the following was a key feature of the Yudh Abhyas 2026 exercise conducted in Rajasthan?

A) Exclusive air force fighter jet maneuvers

B) Humanitarian relief drills after a cyclone
C) Joint live-fire drills with M777 Howitzers and Dhanush guns
D) Naval submarine operations in the Arabian Sea

127) What initiative was proposed to support exporters at district and state levels, as announced by the Commerce Minister?

A) Exclusive export-only industrial parks
B) Mandatory export quotas for MSMEs
C) Direct cash incentives to all exporters
D) A network of around 1,000 trained local personnel

128) What is the name of the first dengue vaccine approved for use in India?

A) QDENGA
B) Dengvaxia
C) DengiAll
D) Covaxin

129) Who has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme?

A) Greg Abel
B) Carl Skau
C) Howard Buffett
D) Luke J. Lindberg

130) What benefit is provided to eligible newborns under Tamil Nadu's 'Thaimaaman Thanga Mothiram Thittam' scheme?

A) A 1-gram, 22-carat gold ring
B) A savings bond worth ₹5,000
C) A silver anklet
D) Free health insurance for one year

131) Where is India's first Telecom Manufacturing Zone being planned?

A) Gwalior
B) Chennai
C) Vadodara
D) Lucknow

132) Who has been given additional charge as Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)?

A) Ravi Mital
B) Piyush Goyal
C) Jayanti Prasad
D) S. Jaishankar

133) What was the theme of World Rhino Day observed on 22 September 2026?

A) Rhinos for Future
B) Save the Horns
C) Keep the Five Alive
D) Protect Our Wildlife

134) Which two new working groups were formally established at the BRICS Heads of Tax Authorities Meeting in New Delhi?

A) Customs Regulations and GST Implementation
B) Tax Evasion and Digital Payments
C) International Taxation and Transfer Pricing; Revenue Statistics
D) Direct Taxation and Corporate Tax

135) What is a unique feature of the Bharat Taxi service launched in five Uttar Pradesh cities?

A) Only electric vehicles are used
B) It is exclusive to government employees
C) Drivers are owners under a cooperative model
D) It is operated by a private multinational company

136) Which commission was dissolved by the Indian government in September 2026 after nearly 37 years of functioning?

A) Competition Commission of India
B) Finance Commission
C) Planning Commission
D) Digital Communications Commission

137) The RBI's Minimum Capital Requirements for Market Risk Directions, 2026, align with which international standards?

A) IFRS standards
B) SOX compliance
C) Basel III standards
D) Basel II standards

138) From 1 April 2027, which product will require mandatory BIS certification under IS 19348:2025?

A) Laptop chargers

B) Wireless earphones
C) Mobile phone batteries
D) Smartphone screen protectors

139) Which organisation publishes the National Formulary of India (NFI)?

A) Central Drugs Standard Control Organization
B) Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission
C) National Board of Examinations
D) Medical Council of India

140) Until what year has the ISRO-ESA Cooperative Agreement been extended?

A) 2032
B) 2030
C) 2026
D) 2028

141) Which company was awarded a ₹810.79 crore contract by the Ministry of Defence for supplying 160 Satellite Smart Anti-Airfield Weapons (SAT-SAAW) to the Indian Air Force?

A) Bharat Electronics Limited
B) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
C) Bharat Dynamics Limited
D) Larsen & Toubro

142) PhonePe received in-principle approval from which country's central bank for Retail Payment Services and Card Schemes (RPSCS) and Stored Value Facilities (SVF) in September 2026?

A) Singapore
B) Australia
C) United Arab Emirates
D) United Kingdom

143) What is the main focus of the ₹200 crore agreement signed between the Technology Development Board and Agnikul Cosmos?

A) Launching a Mars exploration mission
B) Developing a reusable Agnibaan launch vehicle
C) Building a new satellite navigation system
D) Creating a national space observatory

144) By when must all government offices in Assam transition to a fully paperless e-Office system?

A) 1 July 2027
B) 1 January 2027
C) 31 March 2027
D) 1 October 2026

145) Which initiative did Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi inaugurate to promote innovation and service among youth in September 2026?

A) Digital India Hackathon
B) National Startup Mission
C) Skill India Innovation Drive
D) Seva First Innovation Challenge (SFIC)

146) What immediate relief measure did the Maharashtra government announce for farmers in 265 drought-affected talukas?

A) Subsidized seeds for all crops
B) Full waiver of land revenue
C) Permanent irrigation facilities
D) Free tractors for all farmers

147) During the UN High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Preparedness, what did India propose should be recognized as a global public good?

A) Universal health insurance
B) Free medical education
C) Digital public infrastructure
D) Patent-free pharmaceuticals

148) What key development was welcomed at the India-GCC Troika Ministerial Meeting held in New York in September 2026?

A) Creation of a joint space exploration mission
B) Launch of India-GCC Free Trade Agreement negotiations
C) Signing of a joint defence treaty
D) Establishment of a cultural exchange program

149) Which Indian athletes were specifically congratulated by President Droupadi Murmu for their medal-winning performances at the Asian Games 2026?

A) Tilottama Sen, Vidarsa Vinod Kochalumkal, Ashi Chouksey, Joshna Chinappa, Velavan Senthilkumar
B) Pooja, Sanju Devi, Nikita
C) Shafali Verma, Yugan Sakthivel, Bhavna Devi
D) Manu Bhaker, Tajinderpal Singh Toor, Savita Punia

150) What is the main objective of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) 2.0?

A) Building rural infrastructure projects
B) Offering free higher education to rural students
C) Providing placement-linked skill training to poor rural youth
D) Distributing agricultural subsidies to farmers

ANSWERS

1) Correct Answer: C

Thailand's Act on Promoting a Peaceful Society B.E. 2569 (2026) excludes Section 112 (lese-majeste), corruption, and crimes causing death or serious injury from amnesty. The law grants amnesty for certain political offences between January 2005 and July 2025. A nine-member committee led by the Prime Minister will assess eligible cases.

2) Correct Answer: C

The 2nd India-New Zealand Defence Strategic Dialogue focused on strengthening maritime security. The meeting was co-chaired by Indian and New Zealand defence officials in Wellington. Other key areas included joint military training, personnel exchanges, and defence staff college partnerships.

3) Correct Answer: C

The AI bot 'Jago' was launched to facilitate access to tribal welfare schemes. The conclave was inaugurated by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, CIIL, and KSTRI in Mysuru, Karnataka. The event also saw the launch of the revamped Adi Vaani platform and educational materials for tribal languages.

4) Correct Answer: C

India and Morocco agreed to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) to examine expanding trade and the feasibility of a preferential trade agreement. This was decided during the 7th Session of the India-Morocco Joint Commission. Bilateral trade stood at around $4 billion in 2025, with plans to double it in five years.

5) Correct Answer: C

Rajnath Singh inaugurated the newly re-developed Hutatma Smruti Smarak at Patradevi. The site is associated with Goa's liberation struggle against Portuguese rule. The event paid tribute to satyagrahis who sacrificed their lives. Singh highlighted the importance of national unity and the professionalism of Indian armed forces during Operation Vijay.

6) Correct Answer: B

India is scheduled to host the 18th BRICS Summit on 12–13 September 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. India is holding the BRICS chairship in 2026, making the summit particularly significant for India's diplomatic and multilateral engagement. The summit is expected to focus on cooperation in areas such as economic development, technology, trade, global governance and strategic issues.

7) Correct Answer: A

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) entered into an MoU aimed at strengthening financing for infrastructure projects having a significant rural-development impact. Areas of cooperation include rural roads, irrigation, warehousing, storage, cold-chain infrastructure and agricultural value chains.

8) Correct Answer: C

ICGS Ajit is an Adamya-class Fast Patrol Vessel of the Indian Coast Guard. The vessel was constructed by Goa Shipyard Limited and is the seventh vessel in the Adamya-class series. Fast Patrol Vessels play an important role in coastal surveillance, maritime security, patrolling and enforcement activities in India's maritime zones.

9) Correct Answer: C

Hindalco Industries commissioned India's first Superfine Precipitated Aluminium Trihydrate (PPT ATH) manufacturing facility at Belagavi in Karnataka. PPT ATH is a specialised material used in applications such as flame-retardant cables, polymer insulators and other products where fire resistance is important. The facility has an initial capacity of approximately 30,000 tonnes annually.

10) Correct Answer: C

Reports indicated that 45 coal-fired power plants in India were facing critically low coal inventories. Coal remains an important component of India's electricity-generation mix, particularly for thermal power plants. Heavy monsoon rainfall can affect coal mining and transportation, while high electricity demand can increase pressure on available stocks.

11) Correct Answer: A

Gnani Artha is a sovereign artificial intelligence stack developed by GNANI AI and launched in New Delhi by Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan. The initiative is aimed at strengthening India’s indigenous AI capabilities and creating technology that can address the country’s specific institutional and business requirements.

12) Correct Answer: B

R. Praggnanandhaa created history in 2026 by becoming the first Indian chess player to win the prestigious Grand Chess Tour title. He defeated American grandmaster Fabiano Caruana in the final after making a remarkable comeback. Praggnanandhaa has continued to strengthen India’s position in elite international chess through several major performances.

13) Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs organised the National Conclave on Tribal Languages & Museums in Mysuru, Karnataka. The event focused on preserving and revitalising tribal languages, strengthening tribal museums and documenting the rich cultural heritage of India’s tribal communities. Tribal languages are an important component of India’s linguistic diversity, but several face the risk of decline because of changing social and demographic conditions.

14) Correct Answer: C

McLaren driver Lando Norris won the 2026 Formula One Dutch Grand Prix at the Zandvoort circuit. Norris defeated championship leader Kimi Antonelli, who finished second, while George Russell secured third place. The result was important in the context of the 2026 Formula One championship because it allowed Norris to strengthen his position in the title battle.

15) Correct Answer: A

SpaceX announced plans for a major rocket-launch facility in southern Louisiana to be known as Starbase Louisiana. The proposed complex is intended to support large-scale Starship operations and future space missions. The project reflects SpaceX’s continuing expansion of its launch infrastructure in the United States.

16) Correct Answer: B

The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission launched seven Nitrosamine Impurities Reference Standards: NDMA, NDEA, NEIPA, NDBA, NMPA, NDIPA, and NMBA. These standards are crucial for identification, quantification, and quality control of medicines. Nitrosamines are known for their genotoxic and carcinogenic properties.

17) Correct Answer: C

Doronicum sanctum is the first record of the genus Doronicum from Northeast India. The species was discovered by CSIR-IHBT researchers in Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh. It grows near Chumi Gyatse Holy Waterfalls at 4,000–4,086 m elevation. The plant is distinguished by yellow flowers and heart-shaped leaves.

18) Correct Answer: D

The Aravalli engine is a 3,500–4,000 shp class turboshaft designed for 13-tonne Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and naval Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH). The contract covers design, development, manufacture, supply, and lifecycle support. IMRH is intended to replace Russian Mi-17 medium-lift helicopters.

19) Correct Answer: A

The government will replace the monthly sugar quota system with a fortnightly allocation system. Mills must sell at least 40% of their quota in the first week and the rest in the second week. This change aims to speed up

sugar movement and prevent hoarding. Physical verification found some mills holding more stock than declared. The new system allows closer monitoring and faster response to market changes.

20) Correct Answer: B

The Budget Circular emphasises aligning expenditure proposals with the government's objective of building a developed India by 2047 (Viksit Bharat @2047). Ministries and departments must submit realistic expenditure projections. The pre-Budget meetings begin on October 12, 2026. Strict confidentiality and secure data handling are mandated.

21) Correct Answer: A

India and Uzbekistan decided to elevate their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This upgrade reflects the growing depth and expanding scope of cooperation between the two countries. The talks covered areas like trade, investment, critical minerals, defence, and digital infrastructure. Both sides also agreed to set up a long-term uranium supply framework.

22) Correct Answer: D

Women account for approximately 46% of the beneficiaries of the PM SVANidhi Yojana. This means around 35 lakh women have expanded their businesses through the scheme. PM Modi cited examples of women who used the scheme to grow from small stalls to shops. The scheme supports street vendors with financial assistance.

23) Correct Answer: D

India plans to launch its first pilot cargo vessel on the Northern Sea Route in 2027. This Arctic maritime corridor reduces distances to Northern Europe by up to 40%. The route is part of a broader connectivity project linking major corridors. The corridor lies within Russia's exclusive economic zone, giving Moscow control over access and fees.

24) Correct Answer: C

The United States provided over USD 3.6 million in humanitarian assistance to Nepal after devastating floods. The aid included emergency food support for up to 10,000 households. Supplies such as food, blankets, mosquito nets, and foam sheets were delivered to affected communities.

25) Correct Answer: B

The website www.bharatrajya.com allows users to select any year and instantly see which ruler or dynasty governed different parts of India. It was created by Krishna Seshadri from Mumbai, who has an engineering background. The site aims to make Indian history more accessible and interesting.

26) Correct Answer: B

India and Uzbekistan agreed to establish a framework for long-term uranium supplies. This is significant for India's nuclear energy expansion strategy. Reliable international uranium supplies are vital due to India's limited domestic resources. The agreement also supports India's efforts to diversify strategic supply chains.

27) Correct Answer: C

India's GDP grew by 7.8% in the first quarter of FY 2026-27. This growth was achieved despite global uncertainties and economic concerns. The estimated real GDP at constant prices was Rs 81.36 lakh crore, up from Rs 75.46 lakh crore in the same quarter of the previous year. Strong economic growth helps bolster India's position globally.

28) Correct Answer: B

Bihar and Jharkhand signed a Memorandum of Understanding to resolve the Sone River water-sharing dispute. The agreement ended a nearly 25-year-old issue. It ensures water for irrigation and drinking purposes in several districts of both states. The signing was attended by Union ministers and both state chief ministers.

29) Correct Answer: B

The sixth World Nomad Games were held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from August 31 to September 6, 2026. PM Modi attended the opening ceremony alongside other SCO leaders. The event celebrates the sporting traditions and culture of nomadic civilizations. Over 100 countries participated, with India sending an 87-member contingent.

30) Correct Answer: C

Semicon 2.0 is designed to provide support across the entire semiconductor value chain, including design, fabrication, packaging, equipment, R&D, and talent development. The scheme aims to reduce dependence on overseas supplies and build domestic capabilities. A high-level panel will identify strategic chips for incentives.

31) Correct Answer: B

FSSAI proposes red hexagonal warning labels for foods high in fat, sugar, or salt. The labels must be on the front and use a font size at least one point larger than the nutrition table. The rollout will occur in two phases, first for products exceeding two nutrients, then for any single nutrient. This replaces the earlier five-star rating plan.

32) Correct Answer: B

The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope was launched on August 30, 2026. It features a 300-megapixel Wide Field Instrument with a field of view 100 times that of Hubble. The $4.3 billion NASA flagship separated 31 minutes after liftoff and will travel to Sun-Earth L2. Its five-year science mission will use TDRS and Deep Space Network for communications.

33) Correct Answer: C

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman invited Scott Bessent to the Economic & Financial Partnership meeting in New Delhi. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting. Bessent appreciated India's role in G7 plus and participation in critical mineral dialogues.

34) Correct Answer: A

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement includes a NATO-style collective defence clause. The agreement was signed by leaders of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. The agenda covers collective capability, troop interoperability, and joint defence production. This alliance aims to enhance international security and regional cooperation.

35) Correct Answer: B

EOS-05 (GISAT-1A) will provide near-real-time imaging of the Indian subcontinent every 30 minutes. It will be India's first imaging satellite in geosynchronous orbit (~36,000 km). The satellite will support applications in weather, agriculture, disaster management, and security. Its rapid imaging capability enables focused monitoring of priority targets every 5 minutes.

36) Correct Answer: A

The 4th Indo-German Environmental Forum is themed 'Together For More Resilience'. The forum is co-chaired by Indian and German ministers and is the highest-level bilateral forum on the environment since 2008. Focus areas include low-carbon industries, biodiversity, resource efficiency, sustainable finance, and green skills.

37) Correct Answer: D

The visit focuses on trade and investment, defence and security, renewable energy, technology, connectivity, and people-to-people ties. Diamonds, ports, and logistics are also mentioned as sectors for stakeholder meetings in Mumbai. The visit aims to deepen India-EU engagement and Belgium supports India's bid for permanent UNSC membership.

38) Correct Answer: D

The central theme is 'National Resurgence through the Lens of Defence Forces'. The event is inaugurated by Raksha Rajya Mantri Sanjay Seth at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. Special addresses include topics on jointness, civil-military fusion, and multi-domain operations. CENJOWS is a tri-services think tank established in 2007 under HQ IDS.

39) Correct Answer: D

India delivered about 74 tonnes of relief assistance to Nepal, including medical supplies and rescue equipment. A fifth Indian Air Force flight carried 5.5 tonnes of medical supplies and an 11-member specialised rescue team. The Indian tunnel rescue team moved its base to Syabrubesi to support ongoing operations. These efforts underscore India's commitment to regional humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

40) Correct Answer: B

The first ozone-based drinking water treatment project in Himachal Pradesh was inaugurated in Dehra, Kangra. The project cost ₹46 crore and uses ozone gas to disinfect water and improve taste. The model is planned for replication elsewhere in the state. It aims to enhance water quality for public health.

41) Correct Answer: A

India and Vietnam reaffirmed their shared commitment to regional stability and peace during discussions between senior military leaders. Lieutenant General Le Van Huong of Vietnam visited India and met Chief of Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth. The talks focused on strengthening defence cooperation and military-to-military engagement under the Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

42) Correct Answer: D

The Quad Sherpas' meeting in New Delhi reviewed progress in maritime security, economic prosperity, and critical and emerging technologies. The discussions aimed to advance cooperation and deliver concrete outcomes among India, Australia, Japan, and the United States. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) was also discussed.

43) Correct Answer: D

Indian travellers can now make UPI payments at merchant outlets in Uzbekistan by scanning the national UZQR code. This facility follows a commercial agreement between NPCI International Payments Limited and Uzbekistan's National Interbank Processing Centre. The system enables direct person-to-merchant transactions from Indian bank accounts.

44) Correct Answer: A

The BHASHINI Shilpi session in Kathmandu focused on Language AI and multilingual digital services. The event introduced Nepali developers and innovators to BHASHINI APIs for translation, speech recognition, and synthesis. It was organized by the Digital India BHASHINI Division under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

45) Correct Answer: B

The MoU aims to promote procurement of recycled and upcycled textile products by government buyers. The initiative supports a 'Waste-to-Value-to-Market' ecosystem using textile waste and second-hand clothes. The Textiles Committee will certify eligible producers, while GeM will create dedicated categories for such products.

46) Correct Answer: A

A total of 48 school teachers were selected for the National Teachers Awards 2026. The awards are conferred annually by the President of India on Teachers' Day. The selection process is rigorous, transparent, and conducted online at district, state, and national levels. The 48 awardees represent 27 States, seven Union Territories, and six central organisations.

47) Correct Answer: C

The fifth edition of Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar introduced the first National Ocean Olympiad. The initiative is a coastal cleanup drive covering over 100 beaches along India's 11,098 km coastline. It is implemented under the Ministry of Earth Sciences' PRITHVI scheme. Other new features include a dedicated website and a conservation pledge portal.

48) Correct Answer: A

The hub-and-spoke flights at Ahmedabad Airport allow passengers to complete customs, immigration, and baggage formalities at Ahmedabad itself. This service is provided via Air India's "Easy Connect" with two daily Ahmedabad–Delhi flights. It enables seamless international connections via Delhi within four hours. Ahmedabad is the third airport to offer this service after Varanasi and Amritsar.

49) Correct Answer: A

AVM Shakti Sharma became the first woman officer from a non-medical cadre in the Indian Defence Forces to be promoted to Air Vice Marshal. She was commissioned in the IAF Education Branch in 1994 and has over 32 years of service. She has established the IAF Chair of Excellence at IIT Kanpur and Pune University. She is also the first Tri-Services officer to command a Sainik School as Principal.

50) Correct Answer: D

The India-EU Free Trade Agreement will allow 93% of Indian exports duty-free access to the European market. This pact was concluded in principle after nearly two decades of negotiations. Labour-intensive sectors such as fisheries, textiles, and footwear are expected to benefit. India will eliminate tariffs on 86% of tariff lines, accounting for 93% of trade value.

51) Correct Answer: A

The Rangpur-Sivasagar Historical Ensemble of Assam has entered UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative List. The property represents the historical capital landscape associated with the Ahom dynasty, which ruled the Brahmaputra Valley for nearly six centuries.

52) Correct Answer: C

The Goa Chief Minister is the current vice-chairman of the Western Zonal Council. The vice-chairmanship rotates annually among the chief ministers of the member states. The council includes Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. Meetings are chaired by the Union Home Minister.

53) Correct Answer: D

The iBRICS Summit 2026 aims to connect sovereign capital with bankable infrastructure, energy, and digital capacity projects. Over 500 institutional investors, pension funds, and family offices managing over USD 1 trillion will participate. The summit is set to be held alongside the 18th BRICS Summit at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. It also plans to link national fast-payment networks like India's UPI and Brazil's Pix.

54) Correct Answer: D

The Bhotekoshi River carried the floodwaters downstream during the Nepal floods. The disaster was triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26. The river swept away homes, vehicles, roads, and bridges, and damaged hydropower projects. Major rescue operations focused on affected hydropower projects where hundreds were trapped.

55) Correct Answer: C

Prime Minister Modi attended the centenary celebrations of Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC). The event took place on Teachers' Day in the National Capital. SRCC was established in 1926 by Sir Shri Ram. The college is renowned for commerce, economics, and management education. The occasion underscored the role of educators in shaping generations and nation-building.

56) Correct Answer: A

The BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir was inaugurated near Paris in Bussy-Saint-Georges, Seine-et-Marne. This temple is the largest of its kind in mainland Europe and was built using intricately carved stones from India. Its consecration was part of a 13-day Festival of Culture and led by Mahant Swami Maharaj.

57) Correct Answer: A

Isar Aerospace, a German startup, launched its Spectrum rocket from Norway's Andoeya Spaceport. The launch carried five small satellites and an in-flight technology experiment. This was the first commercial rocket to reach orbit from continental Europe.

58) Correct Answer: D

Rajnath Singh's visit was aimed to further strengthen the traditionally strong and friendly bilateral relations, particularly in maritime and defence partnership. He lead a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs.

59) Correct Answer: A

Rezaei stated Iran refrained from sinking U.S. vessels because of environmental risks posed by their oil cargo. Traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has dropped sharply since Iran closed the waterway. Only seven to eight ships carrying essential goods for Iran are now transiting, compared to over 100 previously.

60) Correct Answer: A

Shafali Verma reached 3,000 runs in women's T20Is at 22 years and 220 days. She achieved this milestone in 2,182 balls, making her the fastest to the mark in terms of deliveries faced. The achievement came during India's group-stage match against Pakistan in the Women's Asia Cup.

61) Correct Answer: D

PM Modi dedicated three key sections of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC), including the Sanand (N)-Makarpura section. The WDFC aims to improve multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency. These sections cover 326 route kilometres and cost over Rs 20,700 crore.

62) Correct Answer: A

The Honey Mission was launched in 2017 to promote scientific beekeeping. It provides training, bee boxes, colonies, and toolkits to beneficiaries. Around 2.46 lakh bee boxes were distributed between 2017-18 and 2025-

26. The initiative produced about 5,500 metric tonnes of honey in 2025-26.

63) Correct Answer: B

RAS can recycle up to 90-95% of water, making fish farming possible in areas unsuitable for conventional aquaculture. The technology supports year-round, resource-efficient fish production. Under PMMSY, thousands of RAS units have been approved with significant investments. RAS enables production closer to urban and export hubs.

64) Correct Answer: A

Lahore was designated as the SCO Tourism & Cultural Capital for 2026–27. The selection was announced at the SCO summit in Bishkek. Lahore is recognized for its Mughal, Sufi, and colonial heritage, including UNESCO sites like Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens. The year-long programme will promote heritage tourism and cultural exchanges among SCO members.

65) Correct Answer: C

Air Marshal Vivek Hande took over as Director General Medical Services (Air). He is a renowned gastroenterologist and has served in all three services of the Indian Armed Forces. His previous roles include commanding INHS Asvini and serving as Senior Consultant (Medicine). He was also DG (Organisation & Personnel) in the Office of DG AFMS.

66) Correct Answer: B

Vinai Kumar Saxena, the Lt Governor of Ladakh, was appointed to discharge the functions of the Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor during Manoj Sinha's absence. Manoj Sinha is on an official visit to the US. Saxena will handle both Ladakh and J&K LG duties simultaneously. The appointment was announced by the President's Secretariat.

67) Correct Answer: B

Defence manufacturing and technology collaboration were highlighted as focus areas for India-Morocco cooperation. The inaugural Joint Defence Committee meeting was held in New Delhi. The Moroccan delegation interacted with Indian defence industries at DPSU Bhawan. Both sides agreed to explore co-production, joint ventures, and technology collaboration.

68) Correct Answer: B

The appointments were made under Article 217 of the Constitution. President Droupadi Murmu issued the order after Supreme Court Collegium approval. Eight Chief Justices were appointed or transferred, including to Patna, Calcutta, and Bombay High Courts. Article 217 governs the appointment of High Court judges and Chief Justices.

69) Correct Answer: B

The roadmap focuses on dismantling 100 international/interstate drug networks, destroying 100 illicit labs, and recovering 100 fugitives. It also aims to expand drug de-addiction centers to 1,751 facilities. Public outreach targets 50 crore citizens and recruits 1 lakh Nasha Mukt Mitras. The strategy emphasizes enforcement, demand reduction, and institutional capacity.

70) Correct Answer: A

LIC received RBI approval to increase its shareholding in ICICI Bank up to 9.99%. The approval was announced by ICICI Bank and is valid for one year. LIC previously held a 4.35% stake as of June 2026. This follows a similar approval for LIC to acquire 9.99% in HDFC Bank. The move connects India's largest state life insurer with a leading private bank.

71) Correct Answer: A

Exercise Veer Guardian 2026 is a bilateral air exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF). The second edition is scheduled from 9–22 September 2026 at Air Force Station Jodhpur. The Japanese contingent arrived with two C-2 transport aircraft. The exercise focuses on enhancing interoperability and operational synergy.

72) Correct Answer: B

Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh was re-elected unopposed as Secretary-General of the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU). His second consecutive four-year term will run from January 2027 to December 2030. The election took place at the 14th APPU Congress in Bangkok. APPU is an

intergovernmental body of 32 member countries and a Regional Union of the Universal Postal Union.

73) Correct Answer: A

The Cabinet approved five railway multitracking projects, including Arakkonam-Renigunta, Whitefield-Bangarapet, Hosur-Omalur, Salem-Karur-Dindigul, and Secunderabad-Kazipet sections. The total cost is around Rs 10,021 crore, covering 17 districts across four states. These projects are part of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

74) Correct Answer: B

The exploration off Poompuhar (Kaveripoompattinam) is linked to the Sangam-era port. The third phase covers around 250 sq km area, 2 km offshore, at depths of 2–60 meters. The 20-day survey uses advanced sonar and profiling equipment. The project is led by a 25-member team and funded with ₹7 crore. Discoveries could shed light on ancient maritime trade and urbanization in South India.

75) Correct Answer: B

A key feature of the India-US trade deal is ensuring preferential market access for both countries. India operates under MFN tariffs, while the US uses executive tariffs. The agreement aims to provide differentials and preferential access. Businesses in both countries are already engaging strongly. Preferential access can boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

76) Correct Answer: D

DILRMP 3.0 introduces Bhu-Aadhaar, a 14-digit Unique Land Parcel Identification Number for every land parcel. This aims to establish unambiguous property identity and help prevent land-related fraud. The programme also focuses on integrating georeferenced maps, property registrations, and court matters.

77) Correct Answer: A

Three sections of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor were dedicated for public use. The sections cover 326 route km and cost over Rs 20,700 crore. They provide direct freight connectivity to Mumbai's port. The projects are part of a package worth over Rs 35,000 crore. Enhanced freight corridors improve logistics and trade efficiency.

78) Correct Answer: B

PACT aggregates freight demand from shippers and logistics providers. It helps identify viable deployment corridors and supports charging infrastructure planning. The ZET Marketplace connects e-truck manufacturers, logistics providers, charging operators, and financiers. Road transport accounts for about 70% of India's freight movement.

79) Correct Answer: C

Dronathon-2026 aims to showcase advancements in Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Counter-UAS technologies. The event includes static displays and live demonstrations at Pokhran Range, Jaisalmer. Focus areas include surveillance, autonomous operations, swarm technologies, and electronic warfare.

80) Correct Answer: A

Yami Gautam will be honoured as Best Actress in a Leading Role for 'Article 370'. The 72nd National Film Awards ceremony is scheduled for 22 September 2026 at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat. The awards are among India's highest official cinema honours, instituted in 1954. The event will honour 92 winners at the Statue of Unity complex.

81) Correct Answer: B

The theme for Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2026 is "Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari" (Our Anganwadi, Our Responsibility). The initiative focuses on dietary diversity, protein intake, hot cooked meals, community ownership, and early childhood stimulation. It marks 10 years of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.

82) Correct Answer: A

The Aadhaar Face Authentication SDK enables in-app eKYC with AI liveness detection and anti-spoofing. It was launched by UIDAI at the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai. The SDK is designed for native Android and iOS apps. Banks and fintechs can test authentication flows in a sandbox environment without external hardware. This development aims to make digital onboarding more secure and accessible.

83) Correct Answer: B

The NIPUN Mission includes establishing 100 Emerging Technology Labs focusing on AI, IoT, big data, and

blockchain. The cabinet approved a ₹500 crore budget for five years. The initiative aims to upskill youth and boost entrepreneurship through district-level centres. Free 10-acre land in Nava Raipur was allocated for a National Skill Training Institute.

84) Correct Answer: B

The Global Dryland Congress 2026 was jointly organized by ICAR and ICRISAT. The event marked 50 years of partnership between these organizations. It was held at the National Agricultural Science Complex, New Delhi. The congress focused on transforming dryland agriculture with South–South cooperation. The conference concluded with the Delhi Declaration on Dryland (3D).

85) Correct Answer: D

The agreements covered upgrading six 40mm L70 air defence guns, NCC cooperation, and academic exchange between National Defence Colleges. Three Bailey Bridges built by Indian forces were inaugurated virtually. India also proposed an integrated real-time maritime surveillance grid. These steps aim to strengthen bilateral defence ties.

86) Correct Answer: B

Country Chairs of ASEAN, African Union, CELAC, Gulf Cooperation Council, and BIMSTEC were invited to the BRICS outreach session. The outreach aimed to ensure representation of key developing regions and share BRICS initiatives with Global South partners. The 18th BRICS Summit was hosted in New Delhi, focusing on resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainability.

87) Correct Answer: A

The immediate focus for GIB conservation is the approximately 200 sq. km. Lala–Rawa landscape. The action plan was released by Union Minister Bhupender Yadav and prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India with the Gujarat Forest Department. Conservation interventions include habitat restoration, grazing management, and predator-proof fencing.

88) Correct Answer: A

Guneri Inland Mangroves were declared Gujarat's first Biodiversity Heritage Site in January 2025. The site is notable as a rare ecosystem thriving away from the coast. The Guneri Inland Mangrove Village Biodiversity Management Committee was felicitated for its conservation efforts. This recognition highlights the importance of community participation in protecting unique habitats.

89) Correct Answer: B

India accounts for nearly 60% of global vaccine production. The country supplies vaccines to more than 100 countries worldwide. India's biopharmaceutical sector makes up about 30% of its bioeconomy. Its biotech startup ecosystem has grown rapidly, with 1,780 new startups established in 2025.

90) Correct Answer: C

BRICS countries have agreed on an Integrated Early Warning System for infectious diseases. This system aims to strengthen resilience by enabling timely identification of and response to health threats. Early Warning Data Integration Guidelines have also been prepared for disaster management. The initiative is part of a broader focus on resilience, innovation, and cooperation.

91) Correct Answer: C

The MDR is capped at Rs 300 per transaction for UPI payments of Rs 75,000 and above. The RBI introduced this framework to support the sustainability of the UPI ecosystem. For P2M transactions above Rs 2,000, a nominal MDR of 0.4% applies, but the cap is Rs 300 for high-value transactions. Essential sectors have a flat MDR of Rs 5 per transaction above Rs 2,000.

92) Correct Answer: A

The Kishau Multipurpose Project involves building a 232.6-metre-high dam on the Tons River. The Tons flows along the Uttarakhand-Himachal Pradesh border. The project will store 1,562 million cubic metres of water and irrigate about 97,000 hectares. It is declared a National Project, with the Centre bearing 90% of the cost.

93) Correct Answer: A

Veteran Tamil scholar, celebrated orator, and cultural icon Solomon Pappaiah passed away at the age of 90. Solomon Pappaiah received the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honor, in 2021. He was renowned for popularizing Pattimandram, moderating over 12,000 debates. He headed the Tamil Department at The

American College, Madurai, for more than three decades.

94) Correct Answer: D

The CCPA fined Rapido ₹10 lakh for misleading advertisements, unfair trade practices, and use of dark patterns such as 'Confirm Shaming' and 'Interface Interference'. Rapido prompted riders to pay more before confirming rides, creating a false sense of urgency. The fare slider design visually encouraged higher payments.

95) Correct Answer: D

The new lightweight stainless steel salt containers are designed to reduce moisture absorption during salt transportation. Salt from Gujarat, especially Kachchh, faces challenges due to moisture and wagon weight. The containers allow loading from the top and unloading from the side, improving efficiency.

96) Correct Answer: B

The BJP's 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' is launched to mark Prime Minister Modi's 25 years in public service. It runs from September 17 (his birthday) to October 17, 2026. The campaign highlights Modi's journey from his tenure as Gujarat chief minister starting in 2001. Public outreach and service-oriented programmes are planned nationwide.

97) Correct Answer: D

The protocol legalizes electronic Certificates of Origin for India–MERCOSUR trade. This is achieved by amending Article 16 of Annex III of the agreement. Digital certificates now have identical legal validity as paper forms. The change is expected to reduce transaction processing time and costs. It marks a significant step toward paperless cross-border trade between India and MERCOSUR countries.

98) Correct Answer: A

India's Ministry of Power approved exporting up to 654 MW of electricity daily for 18 hours to Nepal. The supply will last until 31 December 2026. It includes 600 MW via the Muzaffarpur–Dhalkebar line and 54 MW through the Tanakpur–Mahendranagar line. The decision supports Nepal's energy stability after severe flooding damaged hydropower facilities.

99) Correct Answer: C

INS Mysore participated in the 4th edition of Exercise Samudra Laksamana with the Royal Malaysian Navy. The exercise was held at Lumut from 9–12 September 2026. It included harbour exchanges and coordinated sea evolutions with Malaysian ships KD Lekir and KD Gagah Samudera. The operation builds on the 12th India–Malaysia Sub Committee Meeting.

100) Correct Answer: A

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) won First Prize under 'Rajbhasha Kirti' for innovative implementation and progressive use of Hindi in official work. The award was conferred by Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the 6th All India Official Language Conference and Hindi Diwas in Vashi, Navi Mumbai. Additional Secretary Shri Hari Har Mishra received the award on behalf of DFS.

101) Correct Answer: D

HAL will hand over LCA Tejas Final Operational Clearance (FOC) twin-seater trainers to the Indian Air Force. This event marks a significant step in India's journey towards self-reliance in aerospace and defence. The handover also includes HTT-40 Basic Trainer Aircraft for the IAF and Dhruv-NG helicopters for Pawan Hans.

102) Correct Answer: C

The bridge course aims to strengthen the professional competencies of in-service primary school teachers holding B.Ed. degrees. It is implemented through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and focuses on teaching skills for Classes I to V. The programme promotes child-centred and inclusive teaching practices.

103) Correct Answer: A

Yudh Abhyas 2026 focuses on mountain and semi-mountain operations with Integrated Battle Groups. The exercise began at Auli (Uttarakhand) and Mahajan Range (Rajasthan) with 600 troops from each side. It includes the use of drones and autonomous systems for surveillance and modern weapons demonstrations.

104) Correct Answer: C

Bharat Forge and Pratt & Whitney Canada are collaborating to integrate advanced turboprop engines into DRDO's High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE) UAV.

The partnership focuses on engine compatibility, performance, and installation. This supports the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative in aerospace and defence manufacturing.

105) Correct Answer: B

The MoU between NSTFDC and HPCL will provide computer labs and smart classrooms in 29 Eklavya Model Residential Schools in Rajasthan. The ₹16.01 crore project will benefit over 10,000 Scheduled Tribe students annually. Each school will receive four smart classrooms, a computer lab, tablets, and internet connectivity. The initiative covers 11 districts with completion targeted in six months.

106) Correct Answer: C

Sanjukta Parashar is the first woman to head CRPF's CoBRA unit. She is an IPS officer of the 2006 batch from the Assam-Meghalaya cadre. Parashar is known for leading anti-NDFB operations in Sonitpur, neutralising 16 militants and arresting 64. She has served in Assam Police CID and NIA, handling major counter-terrorism cases.

107) Correct Answer: C

Duttaphrynus phawngpui was discovered above 2,000 m in Phawngpui National Park, Mizoram's highest peak. The species was described in September 2026. The research involved Mizoram University, Cotton University, Help Earth, and Indonesian scientists. Another new frog species, Ingerana aizawl, was found on the Mizoram University campus.

108) Correct Answer: D

Kumik is facing severe water scarcity due to depleting glaciers. The village was declared Ladakh's first Heritage Village in September 2026. Recognition highlights its traditional architecture, Buddhist Kanjur manuscripts, and farming practices. Many families have migrated to Lower Kumik because of water shortages.

109) Correct Answer: D

Dr Vasundhara Doraswamy is a Bharatanatyam exponent. She will be honoured at Vysakhi Nrithyotsav in Visakhapatnam in September 2026. She has performed, researched, and taught for over 50 years. Doraswamy is noted for integrating Bharatanatyam with Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga. Her acclaimed choreographies include Panchali, Ganga Lahari, and Sama Veda.

110) Correct Answer: C

Gujarat launched the State Child Protection Policy 2026. The policy ensures a safe, dignified, and rights-based childhood for all children. It mandates staff training on child rights, POCSO Act, and Juvenile Justice Act. The policy covers schools, healthcare, care institutions, workplaces, public spaces, and the cyber world.

111) Correct Answer: B

Michael Kremer was appointed World Bank Group Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics. He is a Nobel laureate known for experimental approaches to poverty. Kremer has worked on vaccines, deworming, and digital agriculture. He co-founded Precision Development and Development Innovation Ventures.

112) Correct Answer: C

GIFT City was ranked 37th globally in GFCI 40, up 9 places from the previous edition. It also ranked 26th in FinTech rankings, rising 3 places. Mumbai was the only other Indian centre in the top 15 in Asia-Pacific, at 49th position. The index covers 139 centres using 144 quantitative measures and over 39,000 assessments.

113) Correct Answer: D

India's 51st Doppler Weather Radar was inaugurated at Jamadarpali, Sambalpur, Odisha. This is the third Doppler radar in Odisha after Paradip and Gopalpur. The radar covers a 250 km radius with 150-metre resolution and updates every 10 minutes. It monitors 13 districts of western Odisha and parts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

114) Correct Answer: B

Sethuraman Panchanathan received the 2026 Arthur M. Bueche Award from the US National Academy of Engineering. He is the first Indian-American and Arizonan to win this award in over four decades. Panchanathan is honoured for contributions to science, technology, innovation, and policy. He was born in Chennai in 1961 and educated in India and Canada.

115) Correct Answer: D

International Equal Pay Day is observed annually on 18 September to highlight the global gender pay gap of

around 20%. The UN and ILO emphasize that equal pay is a human right linked to gender equality and sustainable development. Causes of the pay gap include women's overrepresentation in informal work, unpaid care responsibilities, and the motherhood penalty.

116) Correct Answer: D

The Japan Air Self-Defense Force Chief's sortie in the LCA Tejas reflects faith and trust in India's homegrown fighter aircraft. This event took place during the India-Japan air exercise Veer Guardian 2026 at Air Force Station Jodhpur. The IAF Chief highlighted that such engagements promote mutual learning and deeper professional ties between the two air forces.

117) Correct Answer: C

The Japanese delegation visited the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) in Bengaluru. The visit was part of the India-Japan Visit Programme aimed at deepening cooperation in areas like AI, technology, space, defence, and startups. The delegation included prominent Japanese lawmakers such as Taro Kono.

118) Correct Answer: C

SLINEX-26 aimed to strengthen maritime cooperation, interoperability, and mutual understanding between the Indian and Sri Lankan navies. The 13th edition was held in Visakhapatnam from September 17 to 21. The Indian Navy participated with INS Kavaratti and INS Jyoti, while the Sri Lanka Navy is represented by SLNS Sindurala.

119) Correct Answer: A

Article 370 won the Best Feature Film award at the 72nd National Film Awards. The awards ceremony was held at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat. The National Film Awards are among the highest honours for cinema in India and were instituted in 1954. The awards recognise achievements in feature films, non-feature films, and writing on cinema.

120) Correct Answer: A

SBM-G Phase II focuses on sustaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) status and strengthening solid and liquid waste management at the village level. After achieving 100% sanitation coverage, the challenge shifted to regular use and maintenance of toilets and waste management. As of September 2026, India had 5.69 lakh ODF Plus villages. Behaviour Change Communication is central to ensuring sustained sanitation practices.

121) Correct Answer: B

India ranked first among 41 markets in the 2026 Global Business Climate Survey. The survey highlighted strong optimism in the Asia-Pacific, especially India and Vietnam. 44% of Swedish firms plan higher investments in India in 2026. India and the Philippines are top investment destinations in the Asia-Pacific region.

122) Correct Answer: A

Tulu was approved as the second additional administrative language in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts. The Cabinet also cleared a tourism policy for coastal and Malnad areas and a marine biotechnology policy. There is a proposal to rename Dakshina Kannada district as Mangaluru, with public feedback to be sought.

123) Correct Answer: D

The theme of SEMICON India 2026 was "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem." The event showcased India's expanding capabilities across chip design, manufacturing, packaging, and system-level applications. Over 600 companies from various countries participated, including start-ups and academic institutions.

124) Correct Answer: B

The NIRMAN scheme has supported more than 1,300 UPSC aspirants from mining districts. Coal India Limited has consistently exceeded its statutory CSR obligations, spending Rs. 7,276 crore since FY 2014-15. The company prioritizes CSR spending in project-affected and coal-bearing areas. Other initiatives include healthcare, education, skilling, and sports development.

125) Correct Answer: C

Smriti Mandhana became the first women's cricketer to reach 11,000 international runs. She achieved this milestone in the third over of the Asian Games final against Sri Lanka. Mandhana surpassed Mithali Raj's tally of 10,868 runs during the Asia Cup. She is also the leading run-scorer in T20I cricket across men's and women's cricket.

126) Correct Answer: C

The Yudh Abhyas 2026 exercise included joint live-fire drills using M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers, indigenous Dhanush guns, and Pinaka rocket launchers. This annual India-US bilateral exercise focuses on interoperability and operational coordination. The drills took place at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan.

127) Correct Answer: D

The Commerce Minister proposed a network of around 1,000 trained local personnel to support exporters at district and state levels. These personnel will provide handholding support and possess knowledge of regional languages. The initiative aims to facilitate export growth through both physical and digital mechanisms.

128) Correct Answer: A

QDENGA (TAK-003), developed by Takeda, is the first dengue vaccine approved for use in India. It received CDSCO marketing authorisation in July 2026 for ages 4–60. The vaccine protects against all four dengue serotypes and requires two doses three months apart. Its availability in India's private sector is expected by mid-2027.

129) Correct Answer: D

Luke J. Lindberg, a 37-year-old American, has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme (WFP). He succeeds Cindy McCain, who resigned for health reasons. Lindberg previously served as USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs. The WFP is currently assisting over 100 million people in 83 countries facing acute food insecurity.

130) Correct Answer: A

Eligible newborns in government hospitals receive a 1-gram, 22-carat gold ring with a unique serial number. The scheme applies retrospectively from 22 June 2026 and is inspired by the 'Thaimaaman' gift custom. About 1.28 lakh rings are ready for the first batch, with an annual allocation of ₹755.83 crore. The initiative aims to support newborns and promote traditional values.

131) Correct Answer: A

India’s first Telecom Manufacturing Zone is being planned at Gwalior (SADA + IT Park). The project involves an investment of ₹5,500 crore and is expected to generate over 18,000 jobs. The first phase will cover 170 acres and involve 24-25 manufacturers.

132) Correct Answer: C

Jayanti Prasad, the Whole-Time Member, has been given additional charge as IBBI Chairperson. He succeeds Ravi Mital, who retired earlier in September. The charge is effective till 20 November 2026 or until a new Chairperson joins. IBBI regulates insolvency professionals, agencies, and information utilities under the IBC 2016.

133) Correct Answer: C

The theme for World Rhino Day 2026 was “Keep the Five Alive”. The day aims to protect all five surviving rhino species from poaching, illegal trade, and habitat loss. The global rhino population is estimated at around 26,700 according to the IRF 2026 report. The five species include White and Black (Africa), Greater One-Horned (India-Nepal), Javan and Sumatran (Indonesia).

134) Correct Answer: C

The meeting established working groups on International Taxation and Transfer Pricing, and on Revenue Statistics. These groups will be led by India and serve as platforms for continued cooperation beyond individual BRICS Chairships. The meeting marked the culmination of India’s BRICS Chairship of the tax cooperation track.

135) Correct Answer: C

Bharat Taxi is based on the cooperative model with the principle 'Driver is the Owner.' This gives drivers a stake in ownership and participation in decision-making. The service was launched in Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Kanpur, and Prayagraj. More than 10 lakh Saarthis joined within six months, and earnings are credited directly to their accounts.

136) Correct Answer: D

The Digital Communications Commission (DCC), formerly known as the Telecom Commission, was dissolved after Cabinet approval in September 2026. The DCC was established in April 1989 and renamed in October 2018. Its functions are now handled by the Telecom Secretary and higher authorities.

137) Correct Answer: C

The RBI's new directions align with revised Basel III standards using the Simplified Standardised Approach. These directions will be effective from 1 April 2027, with transition scalars from April 2024. The draft was released in February 2023. Key changes include revised trading book linkage, NOP/forex rules, and updated interest-rate risk tables.

138) Correct Answer: D

BIS certification will be mandatory for smartphone screen protectors under IS 19348:2025 from 1 April 2027. The standard covers aspects like glass quality, strength, optical clarity, adhesives, coatings, and privacy films. This applies to both manufacturers and importers, with a transition period till 31 March 2027.

139) Correct Answer: B

The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission publishes the National Formulary of India (NFI). The 7th edition was launched in September 2026 by Anupriya Patel. The NFI promotes rational and safe use of medicines. It was released during the 6th National Pharmacovigilance Week. The NFI is an important reference for healthcare professionals in India.

140) Correct Answer: A

The ISRO-ESA Cooperative Agreement has been extended till 8 January 2032. The original agreement has been in force since January 2002. Focus areas include human and robotic exploration, space weather, and sustainable outer space. Continued cooperation enhances India's capabilities in space science and technology.

141) Correct Answer: C

Bharat Dynamics Limited received the contract for 160 SAT-SAAW. The weapon is an air-to-ground precision glide bomb designed by DRDO. It can be launched from Jaguar, Hawk, and Su-30 MKI aircraft. The contract includes approximately 60% indigenous content. The deal aims to enhance IAF capability and promote Aatmanirbharta.

142) Correct Answer: C

The Central Bank of the UAE granted PhonePe in-principle approval for RPSCS and SVF. This is PhonePe's first step towards international expansion. Final clearances are pending before commercial launch. PhonePe plans to partner with regional banks and local tech vendors. The company will support UAE domestic payment rails Aani and Jaywan.

143) Correct Answer: B

The agreement supports development of the reusable Agnibaan launch vehicle. The project aims to advance the technology from TRL-4 to TRL-8. It focuses on a fully reusable space transportation system, not just first-stage recovery. Features include a lightweight upper stage and semi-cryogenic propulsion. The initiative seeks to reduce launch costs and space debris.

144) Correct Answer: B

Assam has set 1 January 2027 as the deadline for all government offices to become fully paperless. The e-Office platform is already operational in all 58 Secretariat departments. The system includes electronic receipt, digital file creation, e-noting, and digital signatures. Expansion to directorates and district offices is ongoing.

145) Correct Answer: D

Pralhad Joshi inaugurated the Seva First Innovation Challenge (SFIC) at IISc Bengaluru. The initiative encourages youth to combine service ('Seva') with innovation. SFIC aims to identify real-life challenges and develop scalable solutions. It features two solution tracks and covers five national themes. The National Finale is scheduled for December 2026 in New Delhi.

146) Correct Answer: B

The Maharashtra government declared drought in 265 talukas and announced a full waiver of land revenue for affected farmers. This action was part of a comprehensive 12-point relief package following deficient monsoon rainfall in the 2026 Kharif season. Other measures include loan restructuring, electricity bill concessions, and water tanker deployment.

147) Correct Answer: C

India called for digital public infrastructure to be recognized as a global public good. This proposal was based on India's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, where digital solutions aided surveillance, vaccination, and health service continuity. The Union

Health Secretary highlighted India's efforts in expanding laboratory networks and emergency mechanisms.

148) Correct Answer: B

The meeting welcomed the launch of negotiations for an India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The FTA is expected to expand trade, strengthen economic integration, and diversify exports. The meeting was co-chaired by EAM S Jaishankar and attended by GCC leaders. Bilateral trade between India and GCC reached USD 178.66 billion in FY 2025-26.

149) Correct Answer: A

President Murmu congratulated Tilottama Sen, Vidarsa Vinod Kochalumkal, and Ashi Chouksey for winning silver in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions team event. She also praised Joshna Chinappa and Velavan Senthilkumar for their bronze in mixed doubles squash. The Indian shooting trio scored 1,763-90x, finishing behind China.

150) Correct Answer: C

DDU-GKY 2.0 aims to provide placement-linked skill training to poor rural youth. The scheme is a centrally sponsored initiative targeting employability. Around 70,000 rural youth are expected to begin training across 24 States/UTs from October 2026. Training courses are aligned with the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF).

SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

PSU banks more efficient than private peers: EAC-PM



Why in the News?

A recent working paper by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) has challenged the widely held perception that private sector banks are necessarily more efficient than public sector banks (PSBs).

Titled "Reforms, Efficiency, and Productivity of Indian Banking Sector in the Last Decade: A DEA Approach", the paper was authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Part-time Member of EAC-PM and Group Chief Economic Adviser at the State Bank of India, and Tapas Kumar Parida, an economist in SBI's Economic Research Department.

Efficiency of Different Bank Groups

PSBs recorded an efficiency level of 93.12% in FY2025-26, significantly higher than private banks at 86.02% and foreign banks at 85.88%.

However, over the entire 12-year period, foreign banks had the highest average efficiency at 88.98%, followed by PSBs at 88.53% and private banks at 85.62%. This indicates that the recent improvement of PSBs has been particularly strong rather than being uniformly superior throughout the period.

What is Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA)?

Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is a quantitative technique used to measure the relative efficiency of comparable organisations or Decision-Making Units (DMUs).

In the banking context, DEA examines how efficiently banks convert their inputs into outputs.

The study considers inputs such as:

- Fixed assets
- Borrowings
- Operating expenses
- Employee-related costs

These are compared against outputs such as:

- Deposits
- Advances
- Investments
- Net profit or loss

An efficiency score of 100% represents the efficiency frontier within the sample.

For example, a bank with an efficiency score of 80% could theoretically reduce its inputs by around 20% while maintaining the same level of measured output, relative to the best-performing banks in the sample.

Therefore, the DEA score should be understood as a measure of relative operational efficiency, and not as a direct measure of customer service, profitability, financial inclusion or overall banking quality.

Sharp Improvement in PSB Efficiency

One of the most important findings is the dramatic recovery of PSB efficiency after FY2020.

PSBs recorded an efficiency level of around 72.46% in FY2020, when the banking sector was facing considerable disruption. By FY2026, their efficiency had risen to 93.12%, representing an improvement of more than 20 percentage points.

Private banks also improved during the same period, with efficiency increasing from 78.03% in FY2020 to 86.02% in FY2026.

The study noted that PSBs were generally more efficient than private banks except during the FY2019-FY2022 period. This period coincided with major consolidation

and rationalisation of PSB operations, including changes in branches, employees and business structures.

The strongest relative performance of PSBs was observed during the last three years of the study—FY2023-24 to FY2025-26.

Factors Behind the Improvement in PSBs

The transformation in PSB efficiency has taken place alongside a series of structural reforms in India's banking sector.

1. Asset Quality Review

The Asset Quality Review (AQR) initiated by the Reserve Bank of India in 2015 forced banks to recognise stressed and non-performing loans that had previously remained under-recognised.

This exposed the extent of stress in bank balance sheets and created the foundation for subsequent corrective measures.

2. Recapitalisation of Public Sector Banks

The government provided capital support to PSBs to strengthen their balance sheets and improve their ability to absorb losses and resume credit growth.

Stronger capital positions also enabled banks to invest in technology and modernise their operations.

3. Bank Consolidation

A major structural change was the consolidation of PSBs. The merger of SBI's associate banks with SBI took place in 2017. In 2019, Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank were amalgamated.

In 2020, several large mergers consolidated 10 PSBs into four banks:

- Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India with Punjab National Bank
- Syndicate Bank with Canara Bank
- Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank with Union Bank of India
- Allahabad Bank with Indian Bank

These measures reduced the number of PSBs from 27 to 12.

The objective was to create financially stronger institutions with greater geographical reach, stronger capital bases and greater capacity to finance large-scale projects.

4. Technology and Digitalisation

Technology adoption has increasingly become an important driver of banking efficiency.

Digital banking, automation, data analytics and technology-led processes can reduce transaction costs, improve turnaround time and allow banks to serve a larger customer base with fewer physical resources.

The study also points towards Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and multilingual digital banking as potential areas for further productivity improvement.

Overall Banking Sector Efficiency

The improvement was not limited to PSBs.

The mean technical efficiency of scheduled commercial banks declined from 91.29% in FY2015 to 77.99% in FY2020, before recovering to 88.34% in FY2026.

The decline around FY2020 reflected a period of considerable stress and disruption in the banking system.

The subsequent recovery indicates an improvement in the ability of banks to convert their available resources into credit, deposits, investments and other measured outputs.

The study estimates that over the entire FY2015-FY2026 period, the banking sector operated at an overall technical efficiency of around 87.7%. In simple terms, this suggests that, relative to the study's benchmark, inputs could theoretically have been reduced by about 12.3% while maintaining the same measured output.

Banking Sector Health Has Also Improved

The improvement in operational efficiency has occurred alongside a broad strengthening of banking-sector fundamentals.

According to the latest EAC-PM assessment:

- **Gross NPA ratio:** declined to 1.68% in June 2026, from 11.5% in March 2018.
- **Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR):** stood at 17.78% in June 2026, compared with 13% in March 2013.
- **Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR):** stood at 126.94% in June 2026.
- **Return on Assets (RoA):** increased to 1.32%, compared with –0.2% in FY2018.

- **Return on Equity (RoE):** increased to 13.23%, compared with –1.9% in FY2018.

Credit and deposit growth have also strengthened. Scheduled commercial bank credit growth reached 19.3% in July 2026, while deposit growth stood at 15.4%, compared with 9% and 10.7%, respectively, in FY2015.

These indicators suggest that the improvement in efficiency has occurred alongside stronger asset quality, capital adequacy, liquidity and profitability..

Limitations and Concerns

Despite its important findings, the study's efficiency score should not be interpreted as proof that PSBs are universally superior to private banks.

1. Relative Measure

DEA measures efficiency relative to the banks included in the sample. A higher score does not necessarily mean that a bank is superior in every aspect of performance.

2. Choice of Inputs and Outputs

The results can vary depending on the inputs and outputs selected. DEA primarily captures resource-use efficiency and does not directly measure customer satisfaction, service quality or financial inclusion.

3. Efficiency vs Profitability

A bank may be operationally efficient without necessarily generating the highest profitability or shareholder returns. Efficiency and financial performance are related but distinct concepts.

4. Impact of Mergers

Bank mergers can temporarily reduce measured efficiency because of the costs of integrating branches, employees, technology platforms and organisational systems. Therefore, post-merger efficiency needs to be evaluated over a longer period.

5. Need to Balance Consolidation with Competition

Further consolidation may create stronger banks, but excessive concentration could reduce competition and potentially create institutions that are “too big to fail.” Hence, consolidation must be accompanied by strong regulation and competition safeguards.

India’s Jute Sector



Why in the News?

India remains the world’s largest producer of raw jute and a major global producer of jute products. The sector is strategically important for India’s rural economy as well as for promoting sustainable alternatives to petroleum-based synthetic materials.

India produced 94.03 lakh bales of jute and mesta in 2025–26. The jute sector supports the livelihoods of approximately 40 lakh farmers/farm families and provides employment to a large workforce in jute cultivation, processing and manufacturing. Government data also highlights the continued dependence of around 3.7 lakh workers and nearly 40 lakh farmers on the sector.

Importance of Jute in India

Jute is often described as the “golden fibre” because of its economic importance and characteristic golden-brown appearance. India has a strong presence across the jute value chain, from cultivation of raw jute to manufacturing of bags, yarn, textiles, floor coverings and other diversified products.

The latest *Indian Jute at a Glance* data indicates an average raw-jute production of about 9,646.81 thousand bales, equivalent to approximately 17.36 lakh tonnes, based on the preceding four years. The country had around 120 composite jute mills as of July 2025, although some were closed.

Major Jute-Producing States

Jute cultivation is concentrated primarily in the eastern and northeastern parts of India, where the warm and humid climate and availability of water are favourable for its cultivation.

West Bengal is the dominant jute-producing state, followed by states such as Assam, Bihar and Odisha. West Bengal also has the largest concentration of jute mills. As of July 2025, out of 120 composite jute mills, 89 were located in West Bengal, followed by Andhra Pradesh with 15 and Bihar with 4.

Jute Industry and Production

India is also a leading producer of jute goods globally, with the industry accounting for a substantial share of world production. The country manufactures both traditional products such as hessian and sacking and diversified products such as decorative fabrics, floor coverings, shopping bags and blended textiles.

The latest official data places the average production of jute goods from composite mills at around 1.157 million tonnes per year. Domestic demand is particularly important, averaging about 1.085 million tonnes annually, while average exports stand at around 173,550 tonnes per year.

Environmental Significance

Jute has gained renewed importance in the context of sustainable development and the reduction of plastic pollution.

Unlike many synthetic fibres, jute is:

- Biodegradable
- Renewable
- Recyclable
- Derived from a natural plant fibre
- Suitable for producing reusable packaging and consumer products

Its potential as an alternative to plastic-based packaging makes it relevant to India's efforts towards a circular economy, sustainable consumption and environmentally friendly production.

Government Support

The Government of India has taken several measures to strengthen the jute sector, particularly by improving productivity, supporting farmers and sustaining demand for jute products.

One important intervention is Jute-ICARE (Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise), which promotes improved agricultural practices among jute farmers. These include line sowing, improved weed management, distribution of certified seeds and microbial-assisted retting. According to the Office of the Jute Commissioner, such interventions have helped improve jute quality and productivity and have increased farmer income.

The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) also undertakes Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations to protect farmers against excessive price fluctuations. The government has provided financial support to JCI for procurement and price-stabilisation operations.

The Jute SMART platform has further brought greater transparency to government procurement of jute sacking bags by providing an integrated, web-based procurement system.

Mandatory Jute Packaging

The government also supports demand for jute through mandatory packaging requirements. Jute packaging is particularly important for foodgrains and other commodities, providing a stable domestic market for the industry.

The Office of the Jute Commissioner continues to administer production and supply arrangements for B-Twill jute bags supplied to government agencies. The regulatory framework includes prescribed quality standards for different categories of jute bags.

Challenges

Despite its importance, the Indian jute sector faces several challenges:

1. **Low productivity:** Productivity remains lower than its potential in several producing regions.
2. **Ageing machinery:** Some jute mills require technological modernisation to improve efficiency and product quality.
3. **Competition from synthetic substitutes:** Plastic and synthetic packaging can be cheaper and more uniform in certain applications.
4. **Price fluctuations:** Farmers remain vulnerable to fluctuations in raw-jute prices and production costs.

5. **Labour-related issues:** The traditional jute industry is labour-intensive and faces challenges related to productivity and modernisation.
6. **Need for product diversification:** Greater emphasis is required on high-value products such as geotextiles, technical textiles, lifestyle products and composite materials.

Way Forward

The future of India's jute sector lies in moving beyond conventional sacks and yarn towards high-value and diversified jute products. Greater investment in modern machinery, research and development, improved retting technology and product innovation can enhance competitiveness.

Promotion of jute geotextiles, agro-textiles, biodegradable packaging and technical textiles can create new domestic and export markets. The government's focus on improving raw-jute quality, diversification and sustaining demand can further strengthen the sector.

DCC approves satellite spectrum pricing for Jio, Starlink, OneWeb



Why in the News?

The Digital Communications Commission (DCC) has approved most of the recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) concerning the assignment and pricing of spectrum for certain satellite-based communication services. The decision is an important step towards operationalising commercial satellite broadband services in India and expanding high-speed connectivity beyond the reach of conventional terrestrial networks.

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) already lists Jio Satellite Communications Limited, OneWeb India Communications Private Limited and Starlink Satellite Communication Private Limited as holders of Unified Licence authorisation for Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite (GMPCS) services.

Background

Satellite communication can provide connectivity in areas where laying fibre-optic cables or establishing terrestrial mobile towers is difficult or economically unviable. This is particularly relevant for remote villages, islands, mountainous regions, disaster-affected areas, ships and aircraft.

TRAI issued its recommendations on 9 May 2025 on the terms and conditions for assigning spectrum for certain satellite-based commercial communication services. The recommendations covered NGSO-based Fixed Satellite Services providing data communication and internet services, among other categories.

TRAI subsequently responded to a DoT back-reference on the issue on 8 December 2025, showing that the spectrum-assignment framework underwent further regulatory examination before the latest DCC decision.

Major Players

Three companies have already secured GMPCS authorisation from the DoT:

- **Starlink Satellite Communication Private Limited** — associated with SpaceX's large Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellation.
- **OneWeb India Communications Private Limited** — uses the Eutelsat OneWeb LEO constellation.
- **Jio Satellite Communications Limited (JSCL)** — a Jio subsidiary that has been associated with SES's O3b mPOWER Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) constellation.

Thus, the regulatory framework could create a multi-operator satellite broadband market rather than leaving the emerging sector dependent on a single provider.

Spectrum Allocation Framework

Spectrum is a limited natural resource and is essential for communication between satellites, gateway stations and user terminals. TRAI's recommendations seek to

establish the conditions under which spectrum can be assigned to satellite-based service providers.

A major regulatory issue has been the level playing field between satellite and terrestrial telecom services. TRAI has noted that satellite-based access services can increasingly compete with terrestrial networks, particularly in Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) and broadband connectivity. It has therefore emphasised transparency, fair competition and avoidance of regulatory arbitrage.

Unlike traditional terrestrial mobile spectrum, where auctions have historically played a major role, satellite spectrum involves additional considerations such as international coordination, orbital characteristics, frequency reuse and interference management.

Importance for India

1. Bridging the Digital Divide

Satellite broadband can extend internet connectivity to geographically isolated and underserved regions where terrestrial infrastructure is difficult to deploy.

2. Connectivity in Remote Areas

Himalayan regions, islands, border areas, forests and sparsely populated regions can potentially benefit from satellite-based connectivity.

3. Disaster Management

Satellite networks can provide communication links when terrestrial infrastructure is damaged by floods, cyclones, earthquakes or other disasters.

4. Maritime and Aviation Connectivity

Reliable satellite links can support connectivity for ships, offshore installations and aircraft operating beyond the reach of conventional terrestrial networks.

5. Competition and Innovation

The entry of multiple operators can expand consumer choice and encourage development of new satellite-enabled communication services.

Challenges

- Despite the regulatory progress, satellite broadband faces several challenges. Spectrum interference and coordination remain important technical issues because multiple satellite constellations operate across overlapping frequency ranges. TRAI's framework therefore needs to maintain efficient spectrum utilisation while protecting existing users.
- The cost of user terminals and services can also affect adoption, particularly in lower-income and remote communities. In addition, satellite services must comply with India's licensing, security and regulatory requirements.
- There is also an ongoing need to maintain a fair regulatory balance between satellite and terrestrial telecom operators, particularly as satellite broadband increasingly enters markets traditionally served by fibre and mobile networks. TRAI itself has highlighted the importance of the principle of “Same Service, Same Rules” in addressing this issue.

Overall Significance

The DCC's approval represents an important regulatory milestone for India's emerging satellite broadband ecosystem. With Starlink, Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio Satellite Communications already holding GMPCS authorisations, the next phase will involve spectrum assignment, network deployment and fulfilment of other regulatory and security conditions.

For India, satellite communication can complement—not necessarily replace—fibre and terrestrial mobile networks by providing connectivity in locations where conventional infrastructure remains difficult to establish. The development is therefore significant for Digital India, rural connectivity, disaster-resilient communications and the broader expansion of India's digital infrastructure.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) August 2026 bulletin



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the August 2026 Monthly Bulletin of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) on 15 September 2026. The latest data show a further improvement in India's labour-force participation, with the rise being largely driven by rural areas, while urban participation remained broadly stable.

What is PLFS?

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO), MoSPI and serves as India's principal source of data on employment, unemployment and labour-force participation.

Since January 2025, the PLFS methodology has been modified to provide monthly estimates at the all-India level and quarterly estimates for rural and urban areas, in addition to annual estimates. The monthly bulletin uses the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach.

Key Indicators – August 2026

Indicator	August 2026	July 2026	Key change
Overall LFPR (15+ years)	55.6%	55.4%	↑ 0.2 percentage point
Rural LFPR	58.2%	58.0%	↑ 0.2 percentage point
Urban LFPR	50.4%	50.4%	Stable
Overall WPR	52.8%	52.5%	↑ 0.3 percentage point
Rural WPR	55.8%	55.4%	↑ 0.4 percentage point
Urban WPR	47.0%	47.0%	Stable
Overall UR	5.0%	5.1%	↓ 0.1 percentage point
Rural UR	4.1%	4.5%	↓ 0.4 percentage point
Urban UR	6.8%	6.7%	Marginal rise

The August survey covered 3,70,160 persons, including 2,11,353 persons in rural areas and 1,58,807 in urban areas.

1. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

The overall LFPR for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 55.6% in August 2026, compared with 55.4% in July.

The rural sector was the main contributor:

- **Rural LFPR:** 58.2%, up from 58.0% in July.
- **Urban LFPR:** remained unchanged at 50.4%.
- Compared with August 2025, overall LFPR increased by 0.6 percentage point, while rural LFPR rose by 1.2 percentage points, from 57.0% to 58.2%.
- In contrast, urban LFPR declined by 0.5 percentage point year-on-year, from 50.9% to 50.4%.

Thus, the latest figures indicate that the improvement in labour-force participation is more pronounced in rural India than in urban India.

2. Female Labour Force Participation

Female participation also showed improvement in August 2026.

The overall female LFPR increased to 34.8%, from 34.4% in July. Rural areas again accounted for much of the improvement:

- **Rural female LFPR:** 39.4%, up from 38.8%.
- **Urban female LFPR:** 25.4%, broadly stable compared with 25.3%.
- Year-on-year, overall female LFPR increased by 1.1 percentage points.
- Rural female LFPR increased by 2 percentage points, from 37.4% in August 2025 to 39.4% in August 2026.
- Urban female LFPR declined by 0.7 percentage point over the same period.

This indicates that the increase in women's participation in the labour force has been particularly visible in rural areas.

3. Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

The Worker Population Ratio, which measures the proportion of the population that is employed, also strengthened.

The overall WPR increased from 52.5% in July to 52.8% in August 2026.

- Rural WPR increased from 55.4% to 55.8%.
- Urban WPR remained unchanged at 47.0%.
- Compared with August 2025, rural WPR increased by 1.3 percentage points, from 54.5% to 55.8%.
- Overall female WPR increased to 33.0%, compared with 32.0% a year earlier.

The increase in overall WPR therefore largely reflects stronger employment participation in rural areas.

4. Unemployment Rate

The overall unemployment rate (UR) declined marginally to 5.0% in August 2026, from 5.1% in July.

The rural-urban picture was different:

- **Rural UR:** declined sharply from 4.5% to 4.1%.
- **Urban UR:** increased marginally from 6.7% to 6.8%.
- Rural unemployment at 4.1% was the lowest recorded since January 2026.
- Compared with August 2025, rural UR declined from 4.3% to 4.1%.

Significance

The August 2026 PLFS data point towards stronger labour-market participation in rural India, reflected simultaneously in higher rural LFPR and WPR and lower rural unemployment.

At the same time, the data reveal a rural-urban divergence: rural participation and employment indicators improved, whereas urban LFPR and WPR remained unchanged and urban unemployment edged upward.

The improvement in female LFPR, particularly in rural areas, is another notable feature of the latest data. However, LFPR measures participation in the labour force and should not by itself be interpreted as equivalent to the creation of high-quality or adequately paid employment.

NITI Aayog, Trade Watch Quarterly – April–June



Why in the News?

NITI Aayog released the 9th edition of its "Trade Watch Quarterly" on 16 September 2026, covering April–June 2026 (Q1 FY27). The report analyses global and Indian trade developments amid geopolitical tensions and changing trade policies, with a special thematic focus on India's metals and ores trade.

Key Highlights of the Report

- Global goods trade reached around $13.7 trillion in the first half of calendar year 2026, registering 12.5% year-on-year growth.
- Global services trade expanded by 10.5% during the same period.
- India's merchandise and services trade rose by 15.5% year-on-year in Q1 FY27 to $506.9 billion, compared with $438.9 billion in Q1 FY26.
- India's exports increased by 13% to $236.2 billion, while imports rose by 17.8% to $270.6 billion.

Thematic Focus: Metals and Ores

The report identifies metals and ores as strategically important to India's industrial economy, as they provide essential inputs for manufacturing, infrastructure, energy transition and advanced industries.

The global metals and ores market represents demand of approximately $2 trillion, comprising around $1.625 trillion in metals and articles and $371.5 billion in ores.

The analysis covers HS Chapters 26 and 72–83, including ores and concentrates, iron and steel, aluminium, copper, nickel, zinc, lead and other base metals.

India's Position in Global Metals Trade

India has established production capabilities in several minerals, including iron ore, zinc, chromite and bauxite. However, the country continues to depend significantly on imports for certain critical minerals such as manganese, copper and magnesite.

Some important trade figures for 2025 highlighted by NITI Aayog include:

Product	India's Exports	India's Imports
Iron & Steel	$9.9 billion	$16.5 billion
Articles of Iron & Steel	$10.6 billion	$5.7 billion
Copper & Articles	$2.9 billion	$11.8 billion
Aluminium & Articles	$6.8 billion	$9.9 billion
Nickel & Articles	$0.2 billion	$1.2 billion
Lead & Articles	$1.2 billion	$1.2 billion
Zinc & Articles	$0.8 billion	$1.0 billion

Thus, India remained a net importer of iron and steel as well as aluminium in 2025, while the country's dependence on imported critical minerals has become an important strategic concern.

Critical Minerals and Import Dependence

The report highlights the growing importance of critical minerals in the context of electric mobility, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and the global energy transition.

India's copper imports more than tripled to $11.8 billion in 2025. The country also remains fully import-dependent on nickel and cobalt, making diversification of mineral supplies and development of domestic processing capabilities important for long-term industrial resilience.

Domestic Mineral Resource Base

India has a diversified mineral resource base. The country's mining sector produces 95 minerals, comprising:

- 4 fuel minerals
- 10 metallic minerals
- 27 non-metallic minerals
- 3 atomic minerals
- 51 minor minerals

However, NITI Aayog notes that India's mining sector remains relatively underdeveloped in areas such as mineral processing, refining and downstream value addition. Mineral production is also geographically concentrated, with Odisha, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh accounting for more than three-fourths of total production in the selected minerals analysed.

Major Challenges

The report identifies several constraints affecting India's metals and ores competitiveness:

1. Import dependence on critical minerals

Growing demand for minerals such as copper, nickel and cobalt is increasing India's exposure to international supply disruptions and price fluctuations.

2. Limited downstream value addition

India possesses substantial mineral resources but needs greater capabilities in processing, refining and advanced materials manufacturing to capture more value from its mineral base.

3. High cost of green transition

The metals sector faces challenges related to the cost and availability of renewable electricity. These factors can affect the competitiveness of low-carbon steel and other energy-intensive metal products.

4. CBAM compliance challenges

India's steel exporters face additional compliance requirements in the European market due to the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). Limited accredited verification capacity and higher compliance costs can affect export competitiveness.

5. Import competition and market-access barriers

The report highlights competition from imported metals and high-value alloys, along with tariff and quota barriers in important markets such as the EU, US, Mexico and MERCOSUR.

Policy Recommendations

NITI Aayog has suggested several measures to strengthen India's metals and ores trade:

- Rationalise mineral auctions and review royalty and auction-premium structures.
- Accelerate mine development and operationalisation of mineral blocks.

- Strengthen rules-of-origin and melt-and-pour checks under FTAs.
- Consider targeted tariff-rate quotas where import surges threaten domestic capacity.
- Promote domestic production of strategic materials such as aerospace-grade steel, superalloys, aluminium and titanium.
- Encourage critical-mineral recycling and greater domestic processing.
- Improve access to renewable energy and strengthen India's preparedness for carbon-related trade requirements.
- Move from exporting primarily raw or basic materials towards higher-value processed and advanced materials.

Environment & Diversity

Panama has declared a state of emergency over falling water levels in the Panama Canal



Why in the News?

The Government of Panama has declared a national state of emergency due to the growing effects of the El Niño phenomenon, which is expected to cause rainfall deficits, higher temperatures and pressure on the country's water resources.

What is the Panama Canal?

The Panama Canal is an artificial waterway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Isthmus of Panama.

It is one of the world's most important maritime trade routes because ships using the canal can avoid the much longer journey around the southern tip of South America.

The canal operates through a system of locks and freshwater reservoirs. Ships are raised and lowered between different water levels as they pass through the canal.

Unlike a sea-level canal, the Panama Canal therefore requires a continuous and reliable supply of freshwater.

Why are Water Levels Falling?

The current water shortage is closely associated with the developing El Niño climate phenomenon.

El Niño involves unusually warm sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. It can alter global atmospheric circulation and rainfall patterns, producing drier-than-normal conditions in parts of Central America.

The Panama Canal Authority has been monitoring the El Niño risk since late 2025 and has implemented water-saving measures in anticipation of reduced rainfall.

Strategic Importance of the Panama Canal

The Panama Canal is strategically important for global maritime trade because it provides a much shorter route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Major categories of cargo transported through the canal include:

- Containerised goods
- Grain and agricultural commodities
- Liquefied natural gas (LNG)
- Petroleum and petroleum products
- Bulk commodities
- Automobiles and other manufactured goods

Any significant reduction in canal capacity can therefore affect global shipping schedules, freight rates and supply chains.

During periods of restricted transit, shipping companies may have to wait for available slots or choose alternative routes. Some vessels can potentially be diverted around the Cape of Good Hope, although such routes are substantially longer.

Impact on Panama's Water Security

The problem is not limited to international shipping.

Water from the canal watershed is also essential for domestic consumption. The Panama Canal Authority states that water resources connected with the canal support more than 50% of Panama's population.

Therefore, authorities have to balance three competing requirements:

1. Drinking water requirements
2. Water needed for canal operations
3. Water requirements of agriculture, industry and ecosystems

This makes water management a major national-security and economic issue for Panama.

Government's Emergency Measures

The national emergency declaration allows the government to strengthen preventive and response measures against the effects of El Niño.

According to SINAPROC, the anticipated effects include:

- Drought conditions in some river basins
- Declining levels in lakes and reservoirs
- Pressure on Panama Canal operations
- Reduced availability of water
- Possible effects on agriculture
- Higher temperatures
- Potential impacts on hydroelectric power generation

The emergency authorisation is valid until 30 June 2027, allowing government institutions to undertake special measures and procurement required to address the anticipated impacts.

Long-Term Solution: Río Indio Water Project

Panama is also pursuing longer-term solutions to reduce its dependence on existing water reserves.

A major proposal is the development of a new reservoir associated with the Río Indio project. The objective is to increase water security for both the Panama Canal and the country's population.

The project is intended to strengthen the country's ability to cope with climate variability and ensure that sufficient water is available for canal operations in the coming decades.

The Panama Canal Authority has described its broader Water Programme as a long-term effort to improve water security, reduce vulnerability to changing rainfall patterns and ensure the continued availability of water for both human consumption and canal operations.

Connection with Climate Change

The Panama Canal crisis also highlights the wider challenge posed by climate variability and climate change to infrastructure dependent on freshwater.

The 2023 drought demonstrated how rapidly declining rainfall can disrupt the canal's operations. Panama's authorities are now attempting to prepare in advance for future climate-related water stress rather than relying only on emergency restrictions after reservoirs have fallen sharply.

This is particularly significant because the Panama Canal is not simply a transport infrastructure project—it is also part of Panama's national water-management system.

Significance for India and Global Trade

For India, disruptions in the Panama Canal can have indirect implications because Indian businesses participate extensively in global maritime trade.

Longer shipping routes can result in:

- Higher freight and insurance costs
- Longer delivery times
- Greater fuel consumption
- Increased pressure on global supply chains
- Higher prices for some imported commodities

A new species of cat discovered in more than a century



Why in the News?

Scientists have described a new species of wild cat, Leopardus tilcayo, in Bolivia, marking the first identification of a new living feline species in more than a century. The discovery comes alongside reports of a newly described penguin species from subantarctic islands and a new snake species from New Guinea.

These discoveries highlight a striking paradox in biodiversity conservation: while species are being discovered and scientifically documented at an unprecedented pace, biodiversity loss and habitat destruction continue to threaten ecosystems worldwide. A 2025 study from the University of Arizona, as cited in the supplied article, reported that approximately 15% of all known species were described during the preceding 20 years.

Despite their scientific importance, many newly described species receive little public attention beyond the scientific and conservation communities. Their discovery underscores the need to strengthen biodiversity research, protect natural habitats, and improve public awareness of Earth's largely unexplored biological diversity.

About the Newly Discovered Species

1. Tilcayo Cat (Leopardus tilcayo)

The Tilcayo cat is a small, spotted wild feline identified in Bolivia's Yungas cloud forest, a biodiverse region along the eastern slopes of the Andes.

- Scientific name: Leopardus tilcayo
- Location: Yungas cloud forest, Bolivia, South America.
- Taxonomic group: Family Felidae; a member of the South American tiger-cat group.
- Distinctive features: Small body, light-brown fur and irregular dark rosette-shaped markings.

The species was formally described in September 2026 in the scientific journal Current Biology. Genetic analysis of 38 cats helped researchers establish that South America's tiger cats comprise multiple distinct species rather than a single species, leading to the recognition of Leopardus tilcayo. The discovery represents the first newly described living wild cat species in more than 100 years.

The discovery also draws attention to the conservation of the Yungas cloud forest, where deforestation, agricultural expansion, fires and mining threaten natural habitats. Researchers are working to establish the species' distribution and population status.

2. Newly Described Penguin Species



The reported identification of a new penguin species from a group of subantarctic islands highlights the continuing discovery of biodiversity in remote and ecologically distinctive regions.

Subantarctic islands are important breeding and feeding grounds for seabirds and other marine wildlife. Their geographical isolation and unique environmental conditions can contribute to the evolution of distinct species.

The discovery, as described in the supplied article, is particularly noteworthy because it represents the first new penguin species described in approximately a century. However, the species' scientific name, the island group and the study details could not be independently verified from the available sources.

3. New Snake Species from New Guinea



New Guinea, the world's largest tropical island, is recognised for its exceptional biodiversity and high levels of endemic species.

In April 2025, a study published in the scientific journal Zootaxa described new species of the tree-snake genus Dendrelaphis from the Milne Bay Islands of Papua New Guinea. The research addressed long-standing taxonomic confusion surrounding snakes in the Australo-Papuan region and highlighted gaps in knowledge about their distribution and classification.

The findings demonstrate how systematic field surveys, examination of museum specimens and taxonomic research can reveal previously undocumented diversity, even in groups of animals that have already been studied.

Biodiversity Discoveries: Key Highlights

- New species identification: Scientific research continues to reveal organisms that were previously unknown or incorrectly classified.
- Genetic analysis: DNA sequencing and genomic comparisons help distinguish closely related species that may appear almost identical.
- Remote ecosystems: Cloud forests, isolated islands and tropical forests remain important areas for biodiversity research.
- Conservation relevance: Newly described species can draw attention to threatened habitats and the need for targeted conservation measures.

About Species Discovery and Scientific Classification

The discovery of a species does not always mean that the organism has only recently appeared on Earth. In many cases, the species has existed for thousands or millions of years but remained undocumented or was previously classified as part of another species.

Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Species discovery	Recognition of an organism or distinct biological group not previously documented as a separate species.
Species description	Formal scientific documentation of a species, including its distinguishing characteristics and scientific name.
Taxonomy	The science of identifying, naming and classifying organisms.
Endemic species	A species naturally restricted to a particular geographical region.
Cryptic species	Distinct species that are difficult to distinguish based on external appearance alone.
Biodiversity	The variety of life at genetic, species and ecosystem levels.

Biodiversity Discovery and the 2025 University of Arizona Study

The supplied article refers to a 2025 University of Arizona study reporting that 15% of all known species were described during the preceding 20 years.

This figure highlights the scale of ongoing taxonomic research and the extent to which scientific understanding of Earth's biodiversity continues to evolve.

However, the exact study title, methodology and underlying dataset could not be independently verified here. The figure should therefore be treated as a claim reported in the supplied material rather than a fully verified global estimate.

Why Are Scientists Discovering New Species?

1. Advances in technology: DNA sequencing, genomic analysis and improved imaging techniques allow scientists to identify differences that were previously difficult to detect.

2. Exploration of under-studied regions: Remote forests, isolated islands, deep-sea environments and mountainous regions continue to yield new findings.

3. Re-examination of existing collections: Museum specimens and historical records can reveal that organisms previously grouped together actually belong to different species.

4. Improved taxonomic methods: New analytical techniques enable researchers to reassess species boundaries and revise older classifications.

5. Greater scientific collaboration: Cooperation between researchers, local communities, museums and conservation organisations expands access to specimens, field observations and traditional ecological knowledge.

Why Species Discoveries Matter

1. Strengthening Biodiversity Conservation

Formal identification is an important step in determining a species' distribution, population size, ecological requirements and conservation needs.

When a species is recognised as distinct, its conservation status may need to be reassessed. This can help researchers identify populations and habitats that require targeted protection.

2. Understanding Ecosystem Functioning

Every species occupies a role within its ecosystem, whether as a predator, pollinator, seed disperser, decomposer or prey species.

Documenting previously unknown species improves scientific understanding of food webs, ecological interactions and ecosystem stability.

3. Supporting Scientific Research

New species can provide valuable insights into evolution, adaptation, genetics and the history of life.

They may also contribute to research in fields such as medicine, agriculture and biotechnology, although practical applications are not guaranteed.

4. Recognising Local and Indigenous Knowledge

In many cases, communities living close to forests, mountains and islands have long been familiar with organisms that are new to formal scientific documentation.

Recognising local knowledge and involving communities in research can improve species identification and support more inclusive conservation practices.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite rapid progress in biodiversity research, several challenges remain.

1. Species Extinction Before Scientific Identification

Some species may disappear before scientists formally document them. Habitat destruction, climate change, pollution and overexploitation can eliminate populations before their biological characteristics are fully understood.

2. Limited Research Funding

Taxonomic research often requires long-term fieldwork, specialised laboratory facilities, museum collections and trained experts. Limited funding can slow the identification and documentation of new species.

3. Shortage of Taxonomic Experts

The identification of species requires specialised knowledge of anatomy, genetics, ecology and evolutionary relationships. A shortage of trained taxonomists can delay the publication of new species descriptions.

4. Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

Deforestation, mining, infrastructure development and agricultural expansion can destroy or fragment habitats, placing newly identified species at risk before their populations and ecological requirements are fully understood.

5. Limited Public Awareness

Many newly described species receive little media coverage and remain largely unknown outside scientific and conservation circles. This can limit public engagement and reduce awareness of the importance of biodiversity research.

Way Forward

- Strengthen taxonomic research: Increase funding for field surveys, genomic studies, museum collections and biodiversity documentation.
- Protect biodiversity hotspots: Prioritise the conservation of ecosystems with high species richness, endemism and habitat vulnerability.
- Expand international collaboration: Encourage cooperation among research institutions, governments, local communities and conservation organisations.
- Improve biodiversity databases: Support the systematic documentation and sharing of verified species records and distribution data.
- Promote public engagement: Communicate scientific discoveries through education,

museums, citizen-science initiatives and accessible media coverage.

- Integrate conservation with development: Ensure that infrastructure expansion and economic activities account for the ecological importance of sensitive habitats.

Karnataka Assembly rejects 7th ESA draft of Kasturirangan report



Why in the News?

The Karnataka Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council unanimously adopted a resolution on 22 September 2026, urging the Union Government to restrict the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) identified under the Kasturirangan Committee Report to notified forest areas and other actual forest land.

The resolution follows the Union Government's seventh draft notification, issued on 27 July 2026, proposing to designate 20,668 sq. km of the Western Ghats in Karnataka as an ESA.

The State has sought a one-year period to conduct a physical survey, reassess the proposed boundaries and address concerns relating to agricultural land, plantations, human settlements and land rights. It has also urged the Centre not to finalise the notification until the State submits its findings and consultations are held.

About the Western Ghats

The Western Ghats is a mountain range running parallel to India's western coast, passing through Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

- UNESCO World Heritage Site: The Western Ghats were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2012.
- Biodiversity hotspot: The region is known for its high species richness and endemism.
- Ecological importance: It plays a significant role in influencing monsoon rainfall, regulating river systems, conserving forests and supporting wildlife.
- Major rivers: The Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri river systems originate in or are closely associated with the Western Ghats.
- Threats: Deforestation, habitat fragmentation, mining, infrastructure expansion and climate change pose challenges to the region's ecological stability.

The Western Ghats are important for both biodiversity conservation and the livelihoods of communities dependent on agriculture, plantations, forests and tourism.

About the Kasturirangan Committee Report

The Kasturirangan Committee, formally known as the High-Level Working Group (HLWG), was constituted by the Government of India to examine the recommendations of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel headed by Madhav Gadgil and suggest a framework for conserving the Western Ghats while taking regional development needs into account.

The committee was chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Key Features

- Year of submission: 2013.
- Objective: To identify ecologically sensitive areas and recommend measures for protecting the Western Ghats.
- Approach: Use satellite-based land-use and vegetation analysis to distinguish ecologically sensitive natural landscapes from areas of human activity.
- Recommended coverage: Approximately 37% of the Western Ghats region, covering around 60,000 sq. km, was proposed as an Ecologically Sensitive Area.

- Conservation measures: Restrictions on certain environmentally damaging activities, including mining, quarrying and highly polluting industries.

The report sought to balance ecological protection with the economic and social needs of people living in the Western Ghats region.

Key Highlights of the Seventh Draft ESA Notification

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued the seventh draft notification on 27 July 2026, proposing to declare approximately 56,825.7 sq. km of the Western Ghats across six States as an Ecologically Sensitive Area.

State-wise proposed ESA coverage

State	Proposed ESA area
Gujarat	449 sq. km
Maharashtra	17,340 sq. km
Goa	1,461 sq. km
Karnataka	20,668 sq. km
Tamil Nadu	6,914 sq. km
Kerala	9,993.7 sq. km
Total	56,825.7 sq. km

Karnataka-specific coverage

- Area proposed: 20,668 sq. km.
- Districts covered: 10 districts.
- Villages covered: 1,449 villages.
- Taluks covered: 39 taluks.

The proposed area includes parts of Belagavi, Chamarajanagar, Chikkamagaluru, Kodagu, Hassan, Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada, Mysuru, Shivamogga and Udupi districts.

Major Concerns Raised by Karnataka

The State Legislature has expressed concerns that the proposed ESA boundaries do not adequately distinguish forest areas from agricultural and inhabited areas.

1. Inclusion of Agricultural and Plantation Land

The State has argued that agricultural land, horticultural land, coffee and other plantations, houses and public-use areas have been included in the proposed ESA.

It has sought the exclusion of these areas and urged that the ESA designation be limited to notified forests and other actual forest land.

2. Reliance on Satellite-Based Mapping

The State has questioned the use of satellite-based data to determine ESA boundaries without a comprehensive joint physical survey.

It has called for a survey based on individual land survey numbers to identify forests, agricultural land, settlements and ecologically sensitive areas more accurately.

3. Concerns Regarding Entire Villages

The resolution objected to the approach of including an entire village within the ESA merely because a portion of its geographical area falls within forest limits.

The State has questioned the scientific basis of this method and called for more precise demarcation.

4. Land Rights and Ownership Issues

The resolution highlighted unresolved matters concerning:

- Bagar Hukum land claims.
- Forest Rights Act claims.
- Deemed forests.
- Government land grants.
- Appeals and pending court cases.

The State has requested that these issues be examined before the final boundaries are determined.

Key Demands of the Karnataka Legislature

The unanimous resolution calls for the following measures:

1. Restrict the ESA to notified forests and other actual forest land, excluding agricultural and plantation areas, human settlements and public-use areas.
2. Grant the State one year to conduct a physical survey and submit its findings.
3. Establish a high-level committee headed by a retired judge to examine the shortcomings of the report and recommend modifications.
4. Conduct survey-number-wise demarcation of forests, settlements, agricultural land and ecologically sensitive areas.

5. Take land ownership, forest rights and pending legal matters into account while finalising the boundaries.
6. Provide alternative livelihood opportunities and financial assistance to farmers and workers who may be affected by restrictions.
7. Hold detailed consultations between the Union and State Governments before taking a final decision on the notification.

The State has also proposed the formation of gram panchayat-level committees to facilitate local participation in the survey and review process.

Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA): Meaning and Significance

An Ecologically Sensitive Area is a region identified for special environmental protection because of its ecological importance, environmental vulnerability or biodiversity value.

The designation is intended to regulate activities that may cause significant environmental degradation while allowing compatible activities to continue subject to applicable rules.

Activities regulated under ESA notifications

Activity	General regulatory approach
Mining and quarrying	Prohibited or restricted, depending on the notification
Sand mining	Subject to restrictions
Thermal power plants	New projects may be prohibited
Polluting industries	Subject to restrictions or prohibitions
Construction and township development	Regulated beyond specified thresholds
Agriculture and existing settlements	Treatment depends on the final notification and applicable provisions

The precise restrictions depend on the terms of the final notification. The seventh draft notification is a proposal and should not be treated as a final declaration.

Strategic and Environmental Significance

1. Conservation of Biodiversity

The Western Ghats contain a wide variety of ecosystems and endemic species. Protecting ecologically sensitive habitats can help maintain biodiversity and reduce habitat fragmentation.

2. Protection of Water Resources

The Western Ghats are a major source of several river systems and contribute to water availability for agriculture, drinking water and industry across peninsular India.

3. Climate Regulation

Forests in the region help store carbon, regulate local temperatures and influence rainfall patterns.

4. Livelihood Protection

Agriculture, plantation activities, livestock rearing, tourism and forest-based livelihoods support communities across the region. ESA demarcation can have implications for land use, investment and livelihood security.

5. Centre–State Coordination

The dispute highlights the need for cooperation between the Union and State Governments in environmental governance, particularly where conservation measures intersect with land ownership, local livelihoods and development priorities.

Challenges and Limitations

1. Balancing Conservation and Development

The central challenge is to protect ecologically important landscapes while addressing the needs of people who live and work in the Western Ghats.

2. Inaccurate Land Classification

Satellite-based mapping may not always reflect ground-level land use, ownership patterns or local ecological conditions. Physical surveys can help resolve such discrepancies.

3. Livelihood and Economic Concerns

Restrictions on mining, construction and industrial activities may affect local employment, investment and economic opportunities. Farmers and plantation owners have raised concerns about uncertainty regarding land use.

4. Inter-State Coordination

The Western Ghats extend across six States, each with different geographical conditions, land-use patterns and development priorities. Finalising a common conservation framework requires coordination among multiple governments.

5. Delays in Final Notification

Repeated draft notifications and disagreements over boundaries have delayed the finalisation of the ESA framework. Further surveys and consultations could extend the process.

Way Forward

- Scientific demarcation: Use ground surveys, satellite imagery and land records together to establish accurate boundaries.
- Stakeholder consultation: Involve local communities, farmers, tribal groups, environmental experts and local governments.
- Targeted conservation: Prioritise ecologically fragile forests, wildlife corridors and biodiversity-rich habitats.
- Livelihood support: Develop appropriate compensation, alternative livelihood and transition mechanisms for affected communities.
- Transparent governance: Make survey findings, boundary maps and the rationale for ESA inclusion publicly accessible.
- Cooperative federalism: Strengthen coordination between the Union and State Governments to reconcile conservation priorities with local development needs.

Governance

V-Dem's democracy index rates India at its lowest since 1975



Why in the News?

India's position in the latest Democracy Report 2026 released by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute has drawn attention after the country recorded its lowest Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) score since 1975. The report, based on data for 2025, ranked India 106th among 179 countries, with an EDI score of 0.38. V-Dem classified India as an "electoral autocracy" and identified it as one of the countries undergoing autocratization.

About V-Dem Institute

The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute is an independent research institute based at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. It provides a multidimensional assessment of democracy using a large set of indicators and country-level expert assessments.

The latest V-Dem Dataset Version 16, released in March 2026, contains hundreds of indicators and five high-level democracy indices. These measure different principles of democracy, including electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian democracy.

What is the Electoral Democracy Index?

The Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) measures the extent to which the electoral principle of democracy is achieved. It does not simply assess whether elections are held; rather, it considers whether citizens have meaningful opportunities to choose political leaders and whether political competition takes place in a free and fair environment.

Its major components include:

- **Elected officials** – whether political authority is exercised by elected representatives.

- **Clean elections** – the extent to which elections are free from systematic irregularities and manipulation.
- **Freedom of association** – the ability of political parties and civil society organisations to operate.
- **Freedom of expression** – the ability of citizens, opposition groups and the media to express political views.
- **Suffrage** – the extent to which adult citizens enjoy voting rights.

India's Position in the 2026 Report

According to the V-Dem Democracy Report 2026:

Indicator	India's position
Electoral Democracy Index	106th out of 179
EDI Score	0.38
Liberal Democracy Index (LDI)	105th
LDI Score	0.26
Regime classification	Electoral Autocracy

The report's country table records India's EDI score at 0.38 and LDI score at 0.26 for 2025.

The EDI score of 0.38 is significant because it represents India's lowest level since 1975, the year in which the Emergency was imposed. The latest assessment therefore places India's current democratic performance at a historically low level within V-Dem's long-term dataset.

India and the Trend of Autocratization

V-Dem places India among countries experiencing an ongoing process of autocratization, which refers to a sustained decline in democratic characteristics and institutions.

The 2026 report identifies India, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan as the four autocratizing countries in South and Central Asia. It also highlights India as one of the world's large-population countries undergoing this trend, alongside countries such as Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

According to V-Dem, autocratization is not necessarily an abrupt shift from democracy to dictatorship. It can occur gradually through the weakening of institutional safeguards, political competition, civil liberties and checks on executive power.

Liberal Democracy Index

V-Dem also uses the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI), which goes beyond electoral competition and examines the protection of individual and minority rights, rule of law and constraints on government power.

India ranked 105th on the LDI in the 2026 report, with a score of 0.26. Its EDI rank was slightly lower at 106th.

This distinction is important: a country can hold elections while still receiving a lower liberal-democracy score if institutional checks, rights protections and constraints on executive authority are assessed as weak.

Major Concerns Highlighted by the Assessment

The broader V-Dem framework draws attention to several dimensions relevant to India's democratic performance:

1. **Freedom of Expression**

Freedom of expression is an important component of electoral democracy because voters require access to diverse political information and competing viewpoints to make informed choices.

2. **Media Independence**

An independent media acts as a mechanism of accountability by scrutinising governments and providing space for competing political perspectives. Concerns over media independence therefore directly affect the quality of democratic competition.

3. **Civil Society and Political Competition**

Democratic systems depend not only on elections but also on the ability of opposition parties, civil society organisations and citizens to organise and participate in public life.

4. **Institutional Checks and Balances**

The liberal dimension of democracy places importance on constitutional constraints and institutional autonomy. Independent institutions help prevent excessive concentration of political power.

5. **Academic and Cultural Freedom**

The V-Dem assessment also tracks academic and cultural expression. Declining space for independent research, teaching and public debate can affect the broader

deliberative environment necessary for a functioning democracy.

Significance for India

India is the world's most populous country and one of the largest electoral democracies. Therefore, its classification as an autocratizing country has significance beyond its domestic political system.

The V-Dem report notes that several large and influential countries are undergoing democratic decline. Such developments can influence regional political trends and international institutions because major powers have the capacity to shape political developments beyond their own borders.

At the same time, the V-Dem assessment should be understood as one academic measurement of democracy, rather than an official determination of India's constitutional or political status. Different international democracy indices use different methodologies and can consequently produce different rankings.

The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)



Why in the News?

The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is expanding affordable healthcare beyond generic medicines by widening its basket to include surgical products, medical consumables, devices and supportive-care products. The expansion is intended to reduce the broader out-of-pocket expenditure faced by families for healthcare and caregiving.

As of 30 June 2026, 20,149 Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs) were operational across India. The PMBJP product basket comprised 2,110 medicines and 315 surgicals, medical consumables and devices, covering major therapeutic areas such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, anti-infective conditions, allergies and gastrointestinal disorders.

About PMBJP

The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) was launched in November 2008 by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, with the objective of making quality generic medicines available at affordable prices through dedicated Jan Aushadhi Kendras. The scheme is implemented by the Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI).

Medicines under the scheme are generally available at around 50–80% lower prices than branded medicines, helping reduce the financial burden of treatment.

Expansion Beyond Medicines

The PMBJP is increasingly evolving from a generic-medicine programme into a broader affordable healthcare-access platform. Its basket now includes:

- Surgical products
- Medical consumables
- Medical devices
- Nutraceuticals and supportive-care products
- Infant-care products
- Post-partum and elderly-care products

Recent expansion initiatives include baby diapers, baby wipes, feeding bottles, manual breast pumps, hot-water bags and infant feeding tubes under *Janaushadhi Bachpan*. For elderly and dependent persons, Jan Aushadhi Swabhiman provides a dedicated range of adult diapers.

Several additional supportive-care products are also under consideration or in the pipeline, including range-of-motion knee braces, sit-assist-to-stand walkers, medical steam vaporizers, foot-elevator pillows, pregnancy back-support belts and cervical collars.

Major Objectives

The key objectives of PMBJP include:

1. Providing quality medicines, medical devices and consumables at affordable prices.
2. Reducing out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare.
3. Promoting acceptance of generic medicines among the public.
4. Improving access to menstrual-health products.
5. Generating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities through Jan Aushadhi Kendras.

Recent Progress

- 20,149 Jan Aushadhi Kendras were operational as of 30 June 2026.
- The government has set a target of 25,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras by March 2027.
- The basket contains 2,110 medicines and 315 surgicals, medical consumables and devices.
- During 2021–22 to 2025–26, sales through JAKs amounted to ₹7,873.85 crore, generating estimated savings of approximately ₹37,200 crore for citizens.
- In FY 2025–26, medicines with an MRP value of ₹2,252.19 crore were sold through the scheme.

Quality Assurance

Affordability under PMBJP is accompanied by quality-control mechanisms. Medicines are procured from suppliers certified under WHO-GMP standards, while batches are tested at laboratories accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) before being dispatched to Jan Aushadhi Kendras.

Significance

The expansion of PMBJP reflects a shift from viewing healthcare expenditure only in terms of medicines to recognising the wider costs of healthcare and caregiving. Products required during childbirth, infant care, post-surgical recovery, rehabilitation and old-age care can become recurring expenses for households. Making such products available through the Jan Aushadhi network can broaden the scheme's role in reducing healthcare-related financial burdens.

History

Excavation at Vaishya Tekri, Ujjain, sheds light on Ashoka's Mauryan-era rule



Why in the News

An ongoing excavation at Vaishya Tekri in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, has renewed archaeological interest in the city's association with Mauryan Emperor Ashoka and the spread of Buddhism in ancient Malwa. The site contains the remains of a massive stupa that earlier excavations had associated with the Mauryan period. The renewed excavation, undertaken after nearly nine decades, is aimed at establishing the monument's chronology, construction history and cultural significance through fresh archaeological evidence.

What is Vaishya Tekri?

Vaishya Tekri is an ancient archaeological mound located at Undasa near Ujjain. It is believed to contain the remains of a large Buddhist stupa.

The site was first systematically excavated in 1938–39 by the Archaeological Department of the erstwhile Gwalior State. The excavation revealed that the mound was a substantial engineered structure rather than merely a natural elevation. The old excavation report described a stupa with an estimated base of around 350 feet in diameter and a height of at least 100 feet. By comparison, the Great Stupa at Sanchi is approximately 54 feet high.

Key Archaeological Features

- Located at Undasa, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.
- First excavated systematically in 1938–39.
- Represents a large stupa-like Buddhist monument.
- Earlier excavation estimated its base at around 350 feet.
- Estimated height was not less than 100 feet.
- Construction involved a rammed murum core and brick facing.
- Earlier excavations reported punch-marked and Avanti coins.
- A smaller mound known as Kumhar/Kumbhar Tekri lies nearby.

Evidence for a Mauryan-Period Date

The earlier excavation provided several clues for assigning the structure to the 3rd century BCE/Mauryan period. These included the dimensions and characteristics of the bricks as well as coin finds, including a punch-marked coin and a cast Avanti coin.

However, modern archaeological interpretation requires distinguishing between a Mauryan-period date and direct evidence of Ashoka's involvement.

The former has some archaeological basis, while the latter remains unproven. There is currently no known Ashokan inscription, pillar, securely identified relic deposit or donor inscription at Vaishya Tekri that conclusively states that Ashoka commissioned the stupa. Scholars have therefore called for further excavation before making a definitive Ashokan attribution.

Ashoka and Ujjain

Ujjain, ancient Ujjayini, was one of the most important cities of ancient central India. It served as the capital of Avanti and was an important commercial and strategic centre connecting the interior of the subcontinent with western India and the wider trade network.

Historical accounts associate Ashoka, before his accession to the Mauryan throne, with the administration of Avanti. He is believed to have served as the Mauryan viceroy at Ujjain, having been appointed by his father Bindusara. Historians have suggested that Ashoka spent several years in the region.

Ashoka's association with the region is also connected with Vidisha, an important ancient centre located on the route between Pataliputra and Ujjain.

According to traditional accounts, Ashoka met Devi of Vidisha, who is associated with the Buddhist tradition and is traditionally described as his consort. Their children are traditionally identified as Mahinda and Sanghamitta, who are associated with the transmission of Buddhism to Sri Lanka.

However, details of Ashoka's personal life come largely from later Buddhist traditions and should therefore be distinguished from evidence derived directly from contemporary inscriptions.

Vaishya Tekri and Buddhist Tradition

The significance of Vaishya Tekri extends beyond its possible association with Ashoka because it provides evidence for the presence and development of Buddhist religious activity in the Ujjain region.

Stupas were important Buddhist monuments associated with the commemoration of the Buddha, Buddhist teachers or sacred relics. During the Mauryan and post-Mauryan periods, the construction and expansion of stupas became an important component of Buddhist sacred architecture.

The presence of a large stupa at Ujjain is therefore consistent with the city's importance as an early centre of Buddhism in Malwa.

Another nearby archaeological mound, Kumhar/Kumbhar Tekri, has also been associated with traditions concerning Ashoka. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang, who travelled through India in the 7th century CE, recorded a tradition concerning a place near Ujjain associated with an alleged “hellish prison” built by Ashoka. Earlier archaeological work at Kumhar Tekri also identified remains associated with a burial-cum-cremation area dating to the 3rd century BCE.

Why Fresh Excavation Matters

The renewed excavation is important because the principal archaeological investigation of Vaishya Tekri was conducted almost 90 years ago. Archaeological methods have advanced substantially since then.

Modern excavation can help determine:

- the exact chronology of different construction phases;
- whether the monument was built entirely during the Mauryan period or expanded later;
- the original architectural design of the stupa;
- the nature of its relic or ritual deposits, if any survive;
- the relationship between Vaishya Tekri and nearby archaeological sites;
- patterns of Buddhist activity in ancient Ujjain; and
- whether there is any direct evidence linking the monument to Ashoka.

This distinction is crucial. A Mauryan-period Buddhist monument at Ujjain would strengthen the historical context of Ashoka's association with the city, but it would not automatically prove that Ashoka himself commissioned it.

Comparison with Sanchi

Vaishya Tekri has attracted particular attention because of its reported scale.

Feature	Vaishya Tekri	Great Stupa, Sanchi
Location	Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh	Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh
Broad period	Mauryan/early historic context	Originated in Mauryan period
Reported height	Around 100 ft	Around 54 ft
Reported base	Around 350 ft diameter	Much smaller
Significance	Major archaeological mound/stupa	UNESCO World Heritage Buddhist complex

The reported dimensions make Vaishya Tekri potentially larger than the Great Stupa at Sanchi. However, these figures originate from the 1938–39 excavation report, and therefore require verification through contemporary archaeological investigation.

Archaeological Caution

The most important takeaway from the latest excavation is that archaeological evidence must be separated from historical tradition.

The following can reasonably be stated:

Established/strongly supported:

- Vaishya Tekri is an ancient archaeological mound.
- Earlier excavations identified substantial structural remains.
- The monument was interpreted as a large stupa.
- Earlier evidence suggested a Mauryan/3rd-century BCE context.
- Ujjain had an important Mauryan-period role and is associated with Ashoka's viceroyalty.

Not yet conclusively established:

- That Ashoka personally commissioned Vaishya Tekri.
- That the monument was built specifically during Ashoka's tenure at Ujjain.
- That the mound contains an inscription directly identifying Ashoka as its patron.

Scholars have specifically cautioned against reaching a definitive Ashokan conclusion before the new excavation is completed and the archaeological evidence is properly analysed.

Significance for Indian History

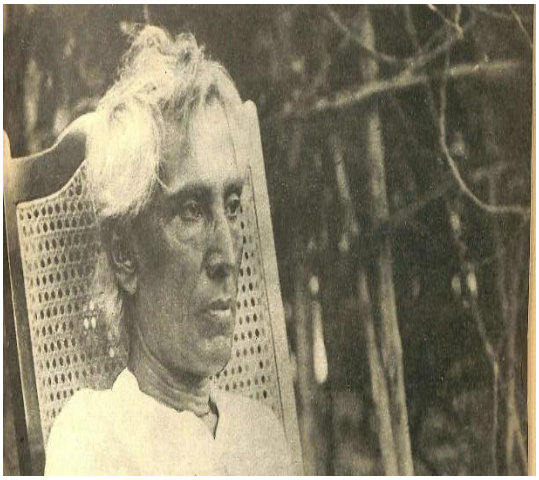
The excavation can potentially contribute to the understanding of Mauryan architecture, early Buddhism and urban development in ancient India.

If fresh archaeological evidence confirms the Mauryan chronology and reveals additional Buddhist remains, the site could significantly strengthen our understanding of how Buddhism developed beyond the better-known centres such as Sanchi.

It could also provide new insights into the relationship between political centres, trade routes and Buddhist institutions during the Mauryan period.

More importantly, the excavation demonstrates how archaeology can test historical traditions. Rather than simply confirming the traditional narrative surrounding Ashoka and Ujjain, the excavation has the potential to refine, qualify or even challenge existing interpretations.

Saratchandra Chattopadhyay



Why in the News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to renowned Bengali novelist and short-story writer Saratchandra Chattopadhyay on his 150th birth anniversary on 15 September 2026. The Prime Minister highlighted the enduring relevance of his literary works, noting that they have been translated into every Indian language and several foreign languages. He also emphasised Chattopadhyay's portrayal of 19th-century India, particularly rural Bengali society, and his engagement with social reform, women's rights and nationalism.

About Saratchandra Chattopadhyay

Saratchandra Chattopadhyay (1876–1938) was one of the most influential writers of modern Bengali literature. Born on 15 September 1876, he became widely known for his novels and short stories that dealt with ordinary people, social inequalities, family relationships and the position of women in society.

His writing was marked by a simple and accessible style, allowing his works to reach readers beyond the educated urban elite. His stories often portrayed the social realities of Bengal and examined the tensions between traditional social customs and changing ideas of society.

Major Literary Works

Some of his best-known works include:

- **Devdas** – A tragic love story that became one of his most widely recognised works and has been adapted into films in several Indian languages.
- **Srikanta** – A major novel presented through the experiences and travels of its protagonist, dealing with society, relationships and human nature.
- **Parineeta** – Explores love, social conventions and relationships against the backdrop of Bengali society.
- **Charitraheen** – Examines social morality, gender relations and the treatment of women.
- **Pather Dabi** – A nationalist novel dealing with revolutionary resistance to British colonial rule.
- **Datta** – Deals with questions of caste, marriage, social conventions and human relationships.

The continued translation of his works into different Indian languages is an indication of their wide literary and cultural reach. The Sahitya Akademi's records, for example, document translations of works such as *Devdas*, *Srikanta*, *Parineeta*, *Datta* and *Charitraheen* into Indian languages.

Social Reform and Women's Rights

A prominent feature of Chattopadhyay's literature was his sympathetic treatment of women and socially marginalised sections. His female characters frequently confronted restrictive social customs, unequal relationships and patriarchal expectations.

Through fiction, he questioned several established social practices and portrayed women as individuals with their own emotions, aspirations and agency. This social dimension is one reason his writings continue to be discussed not only as literature but also as reflections of the social history of his period.

The Prime Minister, in his tribute, specifically recalled Chattopadhyay's commitment to social reform and women's rights.

Nationalism and *Pather Dabi*

Chattopadhyay also engaged with the political atmosphere of colonial India. His novel Pather Dabi is particularly significant in this regard.

The novel presented revolutionary resistance against British rule and criticised colonial exploitation. It became highly controversial under the British government and

was proscribed in 1927. The Ministry of Culture's *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* repository notes that the book sold about 5,000 copies within a week of publication before being banned by the colonial authorities.

Thus, his literary contribution extended beyond social themes to questions of political freedom, nationalism and resistance to colonial rule.

Literary Style and Significance

Chattopadhyay's importance lies in his ability to combine simple storytelling with deeper social commentary. Rather than focusing only on historical events or elite characters, he frequently centred his narratives on ordinary individuals and their personal struggles.

His works provide a literary window into aspects of 19th- and early-20th-century Bengali society, including family structures, caste, gender relations, poverty, social customs and changing attitudes towards reform.

His popularity also extended well beyond Bengal. The Prime Minister noted that his works have been translated into all Indian languages and several foreign languages, demonstrating their continuing reach across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Cultural Legacy

Several of Chattopadhyay's works have had a lasting influence on Indian cinema, theatre and popular culture. *Devdas*, in particular, has been adapted repeatedly across different Indian film industries, while novels such as *Parineeta* and *Srikanta* have also received adaptations.

His writings continue to be studied for both their literary qualities and their depiction of social change. The Sahitya Akademi has also documented multiple translations of his works, reflecting their continued presence in India's multilingual literary tradition.

International Relations

Iran war pushes India's oil & gas import bill up 43%



Why in the News

India's net oil and gas import bill increased by 43.4% year-on-year to $57.8 billion during April–July 2026, compared with $40.3 billion during the corresponding period of 2025–26. The increase has occurred amid elevated international energy prices and disruptions in global energy supplies linked to the ongoing West Asia conflict and the disruption of flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

The development is significant because the increase in India's energy expenditure has occurred despite only a marginal rise in crude import volumes. India imported around 81.9 million tonnes of crude oil during April–July, compared with 81.5 million tonnes a year earlier—a rise of only about 0.5%. However, the crude import bill jumped 56.5% to $63.4 billion.

Role of the Strait of Hormuz

The **Strait of Hormuz** is one of the world's most strategically important maritime chokepoints. Its disruption has an outsized impact on global energy markets because large quantities of crude oil and LNG from the Persian Gulf pass through the waterway.

India is particularly exposed because West Asia remains an important source of its energy imports. During April–July 2026, around 40% of India's crude imports, 60% of LNG imports and 90% of LPG imports from the region moved through the Strait of Hormuz.

Consequently, disruption in the region creates a dual shock for India:

1. Supply-side pressure due to difficulty in transporting energy supplies.

2. Price-side pressure as tighter global supply pushes international prices upward.

Recent data also indicates that Asian oil flows through the Strait remained significantly below pre-conflict levels, underscoring the continuing vulnerability of regional energy markets.

India's Structural Import Dependence

India's biggest vulnerability remains its high dependence on imported crude oil. Crude import dependence stood at 88.3% during April–July 2026, almost unchanged from the previous year.

This means that even if domestic oil consumption does not increase substantially, a sharp rise in global prices can quickly translate into:

- a higher import bill;
- widening trade deficit;
- pressure on the current account;
- depreciation pressure on the rupee;
- higher transportation and production costs; and
- inflationary pressure across the economy.

The impact is particularly important because petroleum products have a large role in transportation, agriculture, manufacturing and logistics. Higher energy costs can therefore transmit into the prices of goods and services throughout the economy.

LNG and Petroleum Products

The vulnerability is not restricted to crude oil. India imports a substantial share of its natural gas requirement in the form of LNG. During April–July, LNG imports increased modestly to 11,867 million standard cubic metres, but the import bill rose to $5.6 billion, almost one-fourth higher than the previous year.

At the same time, petroleum product imports fell sharply in volume terms, partly because supplies of products such as LPG were affected by the West Asia disruption. India's substantial refining capacity, however, provides an important cushion: the country remains a net exporter of petroleum products, even while importing large quantities of crude oil.

Impact on India's Trade Balance

The increase in the energy bill has broader implications for India's external sector. During April–July 2026, the merchandise trade deficit widened considerably, while the increase in the net oil and gas import bill accounted for a substantial share of the deterioration.

This highlights the importance of energy prices for India's balance of payments and macroeconomic stability. When crude prices rise sharply, India must spend more foreign exchange to purchase broadly similar quantities of energy.

Measures to Strengthen Energy Security

India has already undertaken several measures to reduce vulnerability, but the latest episode shows that these efforts need to be deepened.

1. **Diversification of crude suppliers:**
   India has expanded purchases from countries outside West Asia, including Russia and other major producers. Diversification reduces dependence on any single geographical source, although it cannot completely eliminate exposure to global price movements.
2. **Strategic Petroleum Reserves:**
   India is developing strategic petroleum storage capacity to provide a buffer during major supply disruptions. Expanding these reserves can provide additional time for the government and refiners to adjust procurement.
3. **Expansion of domestic production:**
   Increasing domestic crude and natural gas production can reduce import dependence. However, India's domestic production remains insufficient to meet its rapidly growing energy requirements.
4. **Renewable energy transition:**
   Expansion of solar, wind, nuclear power and other low-carbon sources can gradually reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels. The current energy shock has further strengthened the economic case for accelerating the clean-energy transition.
5. **Electric mobility and energy efficiency:**
   Greater adoption of electric vehicles, public transport and energy-efficient technologies can

reduce petroleum consumption, particularly in the transport sector.

6. **Diversification of LNG sources and infrastructure:**
   Expanding LNG terminals, pipeline connectivity and alternative sourcing arrangements can improve resilience against disruptions affecting individual suppliers or routes.

Challenges

Despite these measures, India faces several constraints. Domestic oil production cannot be increased rapidly enough to replace imports in the short term. Renewable energy can reduce dependence on fossil fuels but cannot immediately substitute for crude oil in sectors such as aviation, heavy transport and petrochemicals.

Moreover, source diversification is not the same as energy independence. India may purchase crude from a wider range of countries, but international oil remains a globally traded commodity.

Way Forward

India needs to move from a strategy of import diversification to comprehensive energy resilience. This requires simultaneously increasing domestic production, expanding strategic reserves, strengthening alternative supply routes, accelerating renewable energy and reducing oil intensity through electrification and energy efficiency.

Trump administration seeks to restrict internships for international students (CPT rules)



Why in the News?

The Trump administration has moved to tighten rules governing internships and practical training for international students in the United States, particularly those studying on F-1 student visas.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) issued guidance to universities in August 2026 warning institutions to ensure that Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is authorised only when the practical training is genuinely an integral part of an established academic curriculum.

The August 24 guidance has caused several American universities, including UCLA and UC Berkeley, to pause or review certain CPT applications. The federal government has also warned that universities failing to comply with SEVP requirements could potentially lose their certification to enrol international students.

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a form of employment authorisation available to eligible F-1 international students in the United States.

It allows students to participate in practical work experiences such as:

- Internships
- Cooperative education programmes
- Alternative work-study programmes
- Other forms of practical training connected to their academic programme

CPT is intended to connect classroom learning with practical experience. However, the training must be integral to the student's established curriculum rather than simply being an unrelated employment opportunity.

The programme is administered through the student's educational institution, with the designated school official (DSO) responsible for authorising CPT in accordance with federal requirements.

What Has Changed?

The recent development is primarily a stricter interpretation and enforcement of existing CPT requirements.

SEVP's August 2026 communications have emphasised that CPT should be authorised only when the practical training is genuinely integrated into an established curriculum.

According to guidance issued to universities, the stricter interpretation means that CPT may need to be required for all students participating in the relevant academic curriculum, rather than being available simply because an individual student can receive academic credit for an internship.

Earlier Approach

Under earlier university practices and SEVP guidance, CPT could generally be considered integral to a student's educational programme when:

- The internship was required for completion of the degree; or
- The student received academic credit for the practical training.

Stricter Interpretation

Under the latest SEVP guidance, universities are being told to apply a narrower interpretation of "integral" to the curriculum.

This means that academic credit alone may no longer be sufficient in situations where the internship is not an established requirement of the curriculum.

Why is the US Government Tightening CPT?

The administration has expressed broader concerns regarding the integrity of foreign-student practical training programmes.

Federal regulators have raised concerns about possible misuse or abuse of CPT, including arrangements that may effectively function as employment rather than genuine curriculum-linked training.

The administration's broader regulatory agenda has also focused on:

- Protecting US workers from displacement
- Preventing misuse of immigration programmes
- Strengthening oversight of international students
- Improving compliance with immigration regulations
- Addressing alleged abuses involving practical training programmes

A separate DHS regulatory agenda for a forthcoming Practical Training rule states that the proposed changes are intended to address fraud and national-security concerns, protect US workers from displacement by foreign nationals and strengthen SEVP oversight.

Impact on International Students

The restrictions could make it more difficult for international students to undertake internships during their academic programmes.

Students whose courses do not make practical training a mandatory component may face greater difficulty obtaining CPT authorisation.

This could particularly affect students in fields such as:

- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Information Technology
- Business and Management
- Data Science
- Finance
- Biotechnology

For many students, internships provide an opportunity to obtain professional experience before graduation. Restricting access to such opportunities could therefore affect their career development and transition into the US labour market.

Impact on Indian Students

The development has particular relevance for Indian students because the United States remains one of the most important destinations for Indian students pursuing higher education.

Many Indian students pursue STEM and professional programmes where internships are an important component of gaining industry experience.

A tighter CPT regime could therefore:

- Reduce access to internships during study.
- Increase uncertainty regarding employment opportunities.
- Make university-specific CPT policies more important during the admission process.

- Increase the compliance burden on students and universities.
- Potentially influence students' decisions about studying in the United States.

Students may increasingly need to examine whether an internship is formally embedded in the curriculum before assuming that CPT will be available.

Impact on Universities

The new guidance also places greater responsibility on American universities and their Designated School Officials (DSOs).

SEVP has warned that failure to comply with federal requirements could put an institution's certification to enrol international students at risk.

As a result, universities are reviewing:

- Existing CPT policies
- Academic programme structures
- Internship requirements
- Course-credit arrangements
- Relationships with employers
- Documentation supporting CPT eligibility

Some universities have already paused or restricted certain CPT authorisations while they assess the new guidance. UCLA, for example, temporarily paused certain CPT authorisations while reviewing the federal guidance. UC Berkeley's international office described the new guidance as more restrictive than previous communications.

CPT vs OPT

It is important to distinguish CPT from Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Feature	CPT	OPT
Full Form	Curricular Practical Training	Optional Practical Training
Primary purpose	Practical training linked to curriculum	Temporary employment related to field of study
Timing	Generally during the academic programme	Generally after completion of studies, with some pre-completion OPT possible
Authorisation	Through the student's institution/DSO	USCIS employment authorisation
Connection	Must be integral to curriculum	Must relate to student's major/field
Recent concern	Stricter interpretation of curricular requirement	Broader policy scrutiny

Therefore, the latest CPT restrictions do not mean that all international students are prohibited from working in the United States. They specifically affect the eligibility and authorisation of practical training undertaken through CPT.

Concerns and Criticism

Universities and international-education advocates have expressed concerns that excessive restrictions could make US higher education less attractive to international students.

Internships are often an important part of the educational experience, particularly in technical and professional disciplines.

Critics argue that reducing access to practical training could:

- Make US universities less competitive internationally.
- Reduce industry-academic collaboration.
- Make it harder for international students to gain professional experience.
- Discourage talented foreign students from choosing American universities.
- Increase uncertainty for universities and employers.

At the same time, supporters of tighter regulation argue that practical-training programmes must remain genuinely educational and should not be used as a mechanism for circumventing normal employment and immigration rules.

US Senate passes Russia sanctions bill championed by Lindsey Graham



Why in the News?

The United States House of Representatives passed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 (H.R. 5334) on 16 September 2026 by a vote of 262–159. The Bill had earlier been approved by the US Senate on 7 August 2026 by 86–11 votes. It has therefore cleared both chambers of Congress and has been sent to US President Donald Trump for consideration and signature.

The legislation seeks to increase economic pressure on Russia over the Ukraine war and also strengthens sanctions-related provisions concerning Iran. One of its most significant provisions gives the US President authority to impose tariffs of up to 100% on imports from countries that continue purchasing Russian-origin crude oil or natural gas or are identified as facilitating sanctions evasion.

The legislation is particularly significant for India because Russia has become one of India's largest sources of crude oil. Russia accounted for an estimated around 52% of India's crude oil imports in July 2026, according to an analysis by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

About the Bill

The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 is a US legislative measure designed to intensify economic and financial pressure on Russia and extend certain sanctions authorities relating to Iran.

The legislation is named after the late US Senator Lindsey O. Graham, who had been one of the principal proponents of stronger measures against Russia. The Bill was introduced as H.R. 5334 in the 119th Congress.

Its provisions go beyond conventional sanctions against Russian individuals and entities. It also seeks to target countries and economic actors that continue to purchase Russian energy or assist in circumventing sanctions.

Key Provisions

1. Tariffs on Major Buyers of Russian Energy

One of the most consequential provisions concerns countries that purchase Russian-origin crude oil or natural gas.

The legislation provides authority for the US to impose duties of up to 100% ad valorem on goods imported into the United States from countries falling within the specified categories.

The measure focuses on countries that are among the five largest importers of Russian-origin crude oil or natural gas, subject to the conditions specified in the legislation.

2. Secondary Sanctions

The Bill introduces a form of secondary economic pressure, because countries purchasing Russian energy could potentially face consequences in their trade with the United States.

This is significant because the measure does not merely target Russian companies. It can also affect third countries that continue significant energy trade with Russia.

3. Sanctions on Russian Officials and Entities

The legislation provides for sanctions against specified Russian officials, financial institutions and other persons associated with the Russian government.

Such measures may include restrictions on property and financial transactions and visa-related sanctions.

4. Restrictions on Russian Energy and Investment

The legislation also contains provisions concerning US involvement with Russian energy and financial markets, including restrictions related to new investments in Russia and Russian sovereign debt.

It further seeks to restrict certain dealings involving securities of Russian government-owned or affiliated entities.

5. Iran-related Sanctions

The legislation also extends the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 for five years, thereby maintaining US sanctions authorities concerning specified activities linked to Iran's energy sector and weapons-related activities.

Why is India Concerned?

India is particularly exposed because of its substantial dependence on Russian crude oil.

Russia has emerged as a major supplier of crude to India following the disruption of global energy markets after the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the availability of Russian crude at competitive prices.

According to GTRI, Russia supplied approximately 48.6% of India's crude oil imports by value in June 2026, while its share was estimated at about 52% in July 2026.

India was also the second-largest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in July 2026, importing approximately €6.4 billion worth of Russian hydrocarbons, of which crude oil accounted for about €5.5 billion.

Therefore, any US decision to impose high tariffs on Indian exports could have implications for India-US trade, even though the Bill itself does not automatically impose a 100% tariff on Indian goods. The legislation provides the President with authority to impose such duties subject to the conditions in the Act.

Potential Economic Implications for India

- **Higher Import Costs**

If Indian refiners reduce purchases of Russian crude and shift towards alternative suppliers, the cost of crude imports could increase depending on global prices, freight rates and discounts offered by suppliers.

- **Pressure on Trade with the US**

If the US administration exercises the tariff authority provided under the legislation, Indian exports to the US could face higher duties.

This could affect sectors that depend significantly on access to the American market.

- **Impact on Refining Sector**

Indian refiners have developed procurement strategies around a diverse crude basket, including Russian supplies. Any rapid change in sourcing could require adjustments in procurement and refinery operations.

- **Global Oil Price Impact**

The impact would not necessarily be limited to India. If major buyers substantially reduce purchases of Russian oil, global crude flows could be rearranged, potentially affecting international prices and freight markets.

At the same time, current geopolitical disruptions have already contributed to elevated oil prices. Reuters reported on 18 September 2026 that Russian ESPO crude prices had risen above $120 per barrel, highlighting the volatility of the global oil market.

Significance for India-Russia Relations

Energy has become an important component of the broader India-Russia economic relationship.

India has continued to purchase Russian energy while simultaneously maintaining its engagement with the United States and other Western partners.

India and Russia have also strengthened mechanisms for settling bilateral trade in their respective currencies. In September 2026, Reuters reported that the rupee-rouble payment system was facilitating 96% of bilateral trade, reflecting efforts to reduce payment-related difficulties arising from sanctions and financial restrictions.

Thus, the new US legislation introduces another layer of complexity into India's effort to maintain strategic autonomy while safeguarding its energy and economic interests.

Way Forward for India

India can adopt a combination of measures to reduce vulnerability to external sanctions and supply disruptions:

- Diversification of crude suppliers across West Asia, Africa and other producing regions.
- Maintaining a flexible crude procurement strategy based on price, quality and availability.
- Strengthening Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) to manage temporary supply disruptions.
- Expanding domestic renewable energy, electric mobility and alternative fuels to reduce long-term dependence on imported crude.
- Continuing diplomatic engagement with both Russia and the United States.

- Strengthening mechanisms for rupee-based and alternative payment arrangements while remaining compliant with applicable international and domestic regulations.
- Expanding India's export markets to reduce excessive dependence on any single destination.

Overall Significance

The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 represents a significant expansion of US economic pressure on Russia and potentially on countries that continue substantial purchases of Russian energy.

For India, the most important aspect is the possibility of US tariffs of up to 100% on goods from major Russian energy buyers, although the tariff is not automatically imposed by the Bill itself and would depend on subsequent presidential action.

Polity

Congress urges PM to scrap caste census questionnaire



Why in the News

The Leaders of Opposition in both Houses of Parliament—Mallikarjun Kharge in the Rajya Sabha and Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha—have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that the existing questionnaire for caste enumeration under Census 2027 be scrapped and redesigned. They have argued that the present method of recording caste may not produce reliable and usable caste-wise population data.

The controversy intensified after the Union Government notified the 40-question schedule for the second phase of Census 2027 on 14 August 2026. Question No. 10 asks for the respondent's "Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST)/Caste", with the caste field designed as an open-ended entry rather than a pre-defined list. Enumerators are expected to record the caste or sub-caste as declared by the respondent.

Background: Caste Enumeration in Census

Caste enumeration has a long but politically sensitive history in India. The 1931 Census remains the last comprehensive Census in which caste data for the general population was tabulated and released. Although caste-related information was collected in the 1941 Census, it was not published in the same manner.

After Independence, the regular Census continued to enumerate Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but did not undertake a comprehensive caste count of the entire population.

The decision to include caste enumeration in the upcoming Census 2027 therefore represents a major departure from the post-Independence practice. It is expected to provide updated demographic information on caste groups after a gap of several decades.

What is the Controversy Over the Questionnaire?

The principal objection raised by Kharge and Rahul Gandhi concerns the open-ended format of Question No. 10.

Under this approach, respondents are not required to select their caste from a standardised national or state-wise list. Instead, the caste or sub-caste is entered according to the response provided by the individual.

The Opposition argues that this could create several problems:

- The same caste may have different names or spellings in different regions.
- A single community may be divided into multiple sub-castes or locally used names.
- Linguistic variations and differences in spelling may result in the same social group being recorded under several separate entries.

- Such fragmentation could make subsequent aggregation and classification of caste data difficult.
- The resulting database may therefore fail to provide an accurate picture of the numerical strength of individual communities.

Kharge and Gandhi have consequently demanded that the open-ended system be replaced with a standardised caste list, similar to the approach used for identifying notified Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. They have also suggested wider consultation with political parties, experts and the public before finalising a revised methodology.

Why Accurate Caste Data Matters

Reliable caste data has implications beyond simply determining the numerical size of communities. It can influence the design and evaluation of policies relating to:

- Reservation and affirmative action
- Education and scholarships
- Government employment
- Welfare schemes
- Representation in public institutions
- Social and economic development programmes
- Identification of disadvantaged and marginalised communities

The Opposition has particularly highlighted the concern that the current format may not directly establish the size of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) population, as the questionnaire does not contain a separate OBC category in the manner suggested by the critics.

Comparison with Bihar and Telangana

Kharge and Rahul Gandhi have cited the Bihar Caste Survey, 2022 and the Telangana caste survey, 2024 as examples of exercises that used more structured approaches to caste identification.

Their argument is that a pre-prepared list can help reduce duplication caused by alternative spellings, local names and sub-caste variations. They have asked the Centre to examine such state-level experiences while redesigning the national questionnaire.

However, state caste surveys and the Union government's decennial Census operate within different legal and administrative frameworks, so their methodologies cannot necessarily be adopted wholesale.

Government's Position

The controversy needs to be viewed in light of the government's earlier statements on the Census process. In March 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs stated that the questions for the second phase, including caste, would be finalised and notified according to the established procedure after considering inputs and suggestions from different ministries, departments, organisations and Census-data users.

The government subsequently notified the 40-question Population Enumeration schedule on 14 August 2026, making the caste question part of the second phase of Census 2027.

Previous Experience: SECC 2011

The debate also recalls the experience of the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011. Its open-ended caste data reportedly produced an extremely large number of distinct caste-name entries because of differences in spelling, nomenclature, sub-castes and local identities. This experience has become an important reference point in the current debate over whether an open-ended approach can generate clean and analytically useful caste data.

Significance

The controversy highlights a fundamental challenge in conducting a caste census in a country with thousands of caste, sub-caste, community and regional identities. An open-ended format may allow respondents greater freedom to self-identify, but it can also create difficulties in standardisation and data aggregation. On the other hand, a rigid pre-defined list may improve statistical consistency but could risk excluding emerging, locally recognised or differently identified communities.

Therefore, the central challenge is to balance self-identification, statistical accuracy, standardisation and social sensitivity.

Conclusion

The demand by Kharge and Rahul Gandhi to scrap the caste census questionnaire has brought the

methodology of caste enumeration to the centre of the Census 2027 debate. The issue is not merely about whether caste should be counted, but how it should be counted so that the resulting data is accurate, comparable and useful for public policy.

As India undertakes its first comprehensive caste enumeration in the post-Independence period, the credibility of the exercise will depend heavily on the quality of classification, enumeration and data validation. A carefully designed methodology can make Census 2027 an important source of evidence for understanding India's changing social and socio-economic structure.

Special Campaign 6



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) are preparing to participate in Special Campaign 6, scheduled from 2–31 October 2026. The campaign seeks to institutionalise Swachhata (cleanliness) and reduce pendency in Government offices, while giving greater attention to e-waste management, record management, office-space utilisation and disposal of pending matters.

The campaign will be preceded by a Preparatory Phase from 15–30 September 2026, during which Ministries and Departments will identify targets and prepare action plans. The implementation phase will run from 2–31 October 2026.

About Special Campaign 6

Special Campaigns are Government-wide initiatives aimed at improving cleanliness, reducing accumulated administrative pendency and making better use of public resources. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has been coordinating these campaigns since 2021. Special Campaign 6 continues the series of campaigns undertaken during 2021–2025.

At the broader Government level, the five earlier campaigns and subsequent monthly Secretariat Reforms monitoring had, up to July 2026, covered more than 24.20 lakh sites, weeded out or closed over 180.48 lakh files, and generated more than ₹5,102.91 crore through scrap disposal.

Major Focus Areas

1. Institutionalising Swachhata

The campaign seeks to move beyond periodic cleanliness drives and establish cleanliness as a regular administrative practice. Offices will focus on eliminating unnecessary material, improving workplace organisation and maintaining cleaner premises.

2. Disposal of Pending Matters

A major component is the liquidation of pending references and cases so that administrative decisions and citizen-related matters are processed in a timely manner.

Under MoHUA, the campaign will specifically cover pending matters such as:

- References from Members of Parliament
- References from State Governments
- Inter-Ministerial communications
- Parliamentary Assurances
- PMO references
- Public Grievances
- Public Grievance Appeals through CPGRAMS.

3. E-Waste Management

A significant new emphasis in Special Campaign 6 is the effective collection, segregation and disposal of e-waste. MoHUA has stated that e-waste activities will be

undertaken in accordance with the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022.

This is important because Government offices periodically replace computers, printers, networking equipment and other electronic devices. Proper disposal can prevent hazardous components from entering informal waste streams while also enabling recovery of recyclable materials.

4. Record Management

The campaign will encourage systematic examination and disposal of old and unnecessary records, while retaining records that have continuing administrative, legal or historical value. Better record management can reduce clutter, improve retrieval of important documents and make office processes more efficient.

5. Space Management

Unused and abandoned areas, accumulated files and obsolete materials can occupy valuable Government office space. Special Campaign 6 aims to identify such areas and make them available for productive use.

6. Cleanliness and Beautification

Along with internal office cleanliness, the campaign will cover beautification and improvement of office premises. MoHUA has also highlighted the participation of field and outstation offices involved in public service delivery. Organisations such as CPWD and NBCC are expected to support outdoor cleanliness, building facelift activities and e-waste awareness.

DFPD: Performance under Special Campaign 5.0

The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) has reported substantial outcomes from Special Campaign 5.0, conducted from 2–31 October 2025.

During the campaign:

- 1,23,853 files were weeded out.
- 49,830 sq. ft. of space was freed.
- ₹1.67 crore was generated through disposal of scrap material.

The department continued cleanliness and resource-utilisation activities even after the campaign. From November 2025 to August 2026, it freed an additional 72,577 sq. ft. of space through removal of old files, scrap auctions and cleaning of unused or abandoned areas. Scrap disposal during this period generated ₹25.95 lakh. In addition, 1,493 cleanliness drives were conducted across different offices and locations of DFPD and its organisations.

Special Campaign 6: Key Targets for DFPD

For Special Campaign 6, DFPD will focus on:

- Liquidation of pending references
- Better management of old records
- Optimum utilisation of office space
- E-waste disposal
- Cleanliness of Government premises
- Beautification and improvement of offices
- Efficient management of Government resources.

Significance

Special Campaign 6 represents an effort to link Swachhata with good governance and administrative efficiency. Its importance extends beyond physical cleanliness because the disposal of unnecessary files, reduction of pending matters and better use of office space can improve institutional productivity.

The emphasis on e-waste management also adds an environmental dimension to the campaign. At the same time, focusing on field and outstation offices can bring cleanliness and administrative reforms closer to citizens who interact directly with Government service-delivery institutions.

Health Ministry proposes CCTV surveillance at medical stores selling prescription drugs



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has proposed amendments to the Drugs Rules, 1945 to strengthen regulatory oversight of Schedule H, H1 and X drugs. The

proposal has been issued through Draft Gazette Notification G.S.R. 791(E), dated 8 September 2026. A key provision is the proposed mandatory installation of CCTV surveillance systems at medical-store sales premises.

The move seeks to address concerns regarding the unauthorised access, purchase and sale of prescription medicines, while creating a stronger mechanism for regulators to monitor transactions and investigate violations.

What are Schedule H, H1 and X Drugs?

These schedules contain medicines that require greater regulatory control because of their potential risks and the need for medical supervision.

- **Schedule H:** Drugs that are generally required to be sold only against the prescription of a Registered Medical Practitioner.
- **Schedule H1:** A more tightly monitored category of prescription medicines. Their sale is subject to additional record-keeping requirements.
- **Schedule X:** Drugs subject to particularly stringent controls, including special requirements relating to their storage, prescription and sale.

Thus, these categories are intended to ensure that medicines requiring professional supervision are not freely available for unrestricted self-medication.

Key Proposal: Mandatory CCTV Surveillance

Under the proposed amendment, medical stores would be required to install CCTV surveillance systems at their sales premises. The measure is intended to provide an additional layer of regulatory oversight over the sale of Schedule H, H1 and X medicines.

CCTV footage can potentially help authorities:

- Verify whether medicines were sold against valid prescriptions.
- Investigate complaints regarding unauthorised sales.
- Identify irregularities in the handling of controlled prescription medicines.
- Improve accountability of retail pharmacies.
- Provide supporting evidence during regulatory inspections or investigations.

The proposal is therefore designed to supplement existing prescription and record-keeping requirements rather than replace them.

Institutional Background

The proposal was first deliberated upon by the Drugs Consultative Committee (DCC) and was subsequently circulated to members of the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB). Following consideration, the DTAB recommended approval of the proposal.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has listed G.S.R. 791(E) among its 2026 Gazette notifications as the draft notification concerning mandatory CCTV surveillance at drug-sales premises.

Significance

1. Strengthens prescription-drug monitoring

The proposal would create an additional mechanism to monitor the retail sale of medicines that require prescription-based access.

2. Improves transparency

Recorded footage could help establish what occurred during a disputed or suspicious transaction, thereby improving accountability.

3. Helps tackle unauthorised sales

The government expects the measure to help curb the sale of Schedule H, H1 and X drugs without valid prescriptions.

4. Supports public health objectives

Unregulated access to certain prescription medicines can contribute to inappropriate self-medication, adverse drug reactions and other public-health concerns. Stronger retail-level oversight can complement existing pharmaceutical regulations.

5. Strengthens the pharmaceutical supply chain

The Ministry has stated that the proposed surveillance mechanism would improve transparency and accountability across the pharmaceutical supply chain.

Existing Regulatory Framework

The proposal builds upon the regulatory framework established under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Drugs Rules, 1945. The CDSCO continues to maintain the Drugs Rules and related amendments and notifications governing medicines in India.

The government has also been making other changes to Schedule H1 in 2026. For example, a 19 August 2026 draft notification proposed adding Flupentixol, Zopiclone, Gabapentin and Carisoprodol to Schedule H1, illustrating the continuing effort to strengthen controls over medicines requiring closer monitoring.

Concerns and Challenges

The proposal could also create implementation challenges:

- **Cost burden on small pharmacies:** Installation, maintenance and storage of CCTV footage could increase compliance costs.
- **Data-storage requirements:** A large number of pharmacies generating continuous footage would require adequate digital storage.
- **Privacy concerns:** Surveillance inside commercial premises needs appropriate safeguards regarding access, retention and use of recordings.
- **Enforcement capacity:** CCTV can be effective only if regulators have adequate mechanisms to inspect footage and act upon violations.
- **Implementation across diverse pharmacies:** Ensuring uniform compliance among pharmacies of different sizes and locations may require clear technical and operational standards.

Way Forward

The effectiveness of the proposed amendment will depend on clear technical standards, reasonable compliance requirements, protection of recorded data and effective regulatory enforcement. Cooperation among pharmacies, state drug-control authorities and central regulators will be important for implementation. As of September 2026, the measure remains a proposal/draft amendment, rather than a final rule. The Ministry has invited objections and suggestions from stakeholders and members of the public before finalisation.

Overall Significance

The proposed CCTV requirement represents a move towards technology-enabled pharmaceutical regulation. By combining existing prescription and record-keeping requirements with visual surveillance, the government seeks to make the retail sale of Schedule H, H1 and X medicines more transparent, traceable and accountable.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

Nuclear power operator plans new design unit to support pvt players



Why in the News

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is in the process of setting up a dedicated design and technical-support vertical to assist private companies and other utilities in deploying India's indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) technology. The proposal comes at a time when India is opening its civil nuclear sector to wider private participation under the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025.

Background: India's Nuclear Expansion

India has set an ambitious target of achieving 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047 under the Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat. As of 2026, India's installed nuclear power capacity stands at 8,780 MW from 24 reactors, contributing around 3.1% of total electricity generation in 2025-26.

The government's roadmap envisages increasing nuclear capacity to around 22 GW by 2031-32 through projects already under implementation. Beyond 2032, NPCIL is expected to add another 32 GW, largely through indigenous PHWRs and Light Water Reactors (LWRs). The remaining 46 GW is envisaged to come from other

public-sector entities, State Governments, private companies and joint ventures using different business models.

This makes the creation of an institutional mechanism for sharing nuclear design and engineering expertise particularly important.

What is the Proposed Design Vertical?

The proposed vertical will provide design, engineering and technological support to private companies and other utilities interested in establishing nuclear power projects based on indigenous technologies, particularly PHWRs.

A government roadmap on achieving 100 GW of nuclear capacity had already identified the need for a dedicated "Design and Site Support Agency" because NPCIL's own expansion programme could make it difficult for the corporation to provide technical hand-holding to every new entrant.

The proposed mechanism can therefore help in:

- Providing technical consultancy and design support.
- Facilitating deployment of standardised indigenous reactor designs.
- Assisting with engineering and site-related requirements.
- Supporting compliance with nuclear safety and regulatory requirements.
- Ensuring consistency in quality, safety and design standards.
- Reducing the learning curve for companies entering the nuclear sector for the first time.

The initiative represents a gradual transition from a single-operator model towards a multi-player nuclear ecosystem, while retaining strong government and regulatory oversight.

Why PHWR Technology?

The Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) is particularly important because it represents one of India's most mature indigenous nuclear technologies.

India has progressively developed and indigenised PHWR technology over several decades. The country now operates multiple PHWRs, including 220 MW, 540 MW and 700 MW-class reactors. NPCIL's latest generation includes the 700 MW PHWRs at Kakrapar and Rajasthan.

Key Advantages of PHWRs

1. Indigenous technology

India has extensive experience in designing, constructing and operating PHWRs, reducing dependence on foreign reactor technology.

2. Established domestic supply chain

A mature ecosystem of Indian manufacturers, engineering companies and specialised suppliers has developed around PHWR deployment.

3. Proven operating experience

NPCIL has decades of experience operating PHWR reactors. Its current fleet includes several PHWR units, while additional 700 MW PHWRs are under construction or at various stages of development.

4. Standardisation potential

The 700 MW PHWR design provides an opportunity for fleet-mode construction, where standardised reactor units can be deployed repeatedly. This can potentially reduce construction timelines and improve cost predictability.

5. Suitability for large-scale expansion

The government's nuclear roadmap specifically identifies indigenous PHWR technology as an important component of India's planned expansion to 100 GW.

SHANTI Act and Private Participation

The proposed NPCIL design-support mechanism follows the enactment of the SHANTI Act, 2025, which received Presidential assent on 21 December 2025.

The legislation provides a legal framework for private-sector participation in setting up nuclear facilities and undertaking activities related to the production, use and disposal of nuclear energy, subject to licensing by the Central Government and safety authorisation by the regulatory authority.

The Act also gives statutory recognition to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and establishes a revised framework for civil liability for nuclear damage.

However, private participation does not mean deregulation. Nuclear projects will continue to operate under stringent requirements relating to:

- Nuclear safety
- Security and safeguards
- Licensing
- Regulatory approval
- Nuclear liability
- Radioactive waste management

As of July 2026, the detailed rules under the SHANTI Act were still under the legislative process, with private-sector licence applications to be considered after the rules are notified.

Current PHWR Expansion

India is already expanding its indigenous PHWR fleet. NPCIL currently operates 24 nuclear reactors with 8,780 MW of installed capacity and is constructing seven reactors with a combined capacity of 6,100 MW, including 700 MW PHWR units at Rajasthan and Gorakhpur.

Several additional 700 MW PHWR projects are at preparatory stages, including projects at Kaiga, Chutka, Gorakhpur and Mahi Banswara.

NPCIL's own roadmap envisages its installed capacity reaching approximately 21,980 MW by 2031-32 as projects under various stages are completed.

Significance of the Move

1. Accelerates nuclear capacity addition

India's existing nuclear capacity of 8.78 GW is far below the 100 GW target for 2047. Bringing additional utilities into the sector can distribute the enormous investment and execution requirements.

2. Utilises India's indigenous expertise

Instead of every new entrant developing reactor expertise from scratch, the proposed design vertical can allow them to leverage India's accumulated PHWR knowledge.

3. Promotes Atmanirbhar Bharat

Greater deployment of indigenous PHWRs can strengthen domestic manufacturing, engineering and nuclear supply chains.

4. Reduces dependence on imported technology

India has historically faced challenges related to the cost, financing and regulatory complexity of imported large reactors. Indigenous PHWR deployment provides an alternative based on technology already developed and operated domestically.

5. Creates a multi-player nuclear ecosystem

The initiative could gradually transform nuclear power from a predominantly government-operated sector into an ecosystem involving NPCIL, other PSUs, State entities, private companies and joint ventures, while keeping nuclear safety under stringent regulatory control.

6. Supports clean and reliable electricity

Nuclear power provides low-carbon, round-the-clock electricity, complementing variable renewable sources such as solar and wind. The government therefore views expanded nuclear generation as important for energy security as well as its long-term net-zero pathway.

Challenges

Despite its potential, private participation in nuclear power faces several challenges.

High capital requirement: Nuclear projects require large upfront investment and have long construction and payback periods.

Regulatory complexity: Nuclear facilities require extensive safety assessments, licensing and regulatory approvals.

Nuclear liability: Although the SHANTI Act has revised the liability framework, investors will closely examine the commercial implications of nuclear accidents and insurance requirements.

Human-resource constraints: India will need a much larger pool of engineers, scientists, operators and specialised nuclear professionals to support rapid expansion.

Project execution: Land acquisition, environmental clearances, public acceptance, construction timelines and supply-chain readiness can affect project economics.

Financing: The scale of investment required for the 100 GW target is substantial, making access to affordable long-term finance crucial.

Way Forward

The proposed NPCIL design vertical can serve as an important technology bridge between India's public-sector nuclear expertise and emerging private-sector utilities. Its effectiveness will depend on clearly defining

responsibilities between technology providers, project developers and independent regulators.

India will also need to focus on standardisation of reactor designs, development of specialised human resources, domestic manufacturing capacity, predictable regulation and long-term financing mechanisms.

At the same time, the government is pursuing next-generation technologies. The Nuclear Energy Mission includes development of indigenous Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), with a target of operationalising at least five indigenous SMRs by 2033.

NASA Launches Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope



Why in the News?

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) successfully launched the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Florida.

The mission is one of NASA's major next-generation astrophysics missions and is designed to investigate some of the biggest unanswered questions about the Universe, dark energy, dark matter and planets beyond our Solar System.

Following launch, Roman began a roughly three-month journey of about one million miles (1.5 million km) to the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 2 (L2), where it will conduct its scientific observations.

About the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope

The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, earlier known as the Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST), is a NASA space observatory named after Nancy Grace Roman, NASA's first chief astronomer and a key figure in the development of the agency's space astronomy programme.

Often referred to as the "mother of the Hubble Space Telescope," Roman played an important role in establishing NASA's programme of space-based astronomical observatories.

The Roman Space Telescope is designed to combine wide-field observations with high-resolution infrared imaging, allowing scientists to survey enormous regions of the sky much faster than earlier space telescopes.

Its 2.4-metre primary mirror is approximately the same diameter as Hubble's, but its Wide Field Instrument can observe an area of sky at least 100 times larger than Hubble's infrared instrument in a single observation.

Major Scientific Objectives

1. Study of Dark Energy

One of Roman's most important objectives is to investigate dark energy, the poorly understood phenomenon associated with the accelerating expansion of the Universe.

Roman will use several independent techniques to examine how the expansion of the Universe has changed over cosmic history. These observations could help determine whether dark energy is constant or changes over time.

2. Understanding Dark Matter

Roman will also help scientists investigate dark matter, an invisible form of matter that does not interact strongly with light but whose gravitational effects influence galaxies and large-scale cosmic structures.

By mapping the distribution of galaxies and studying gravitational effects such as weak gravitational lensing, scientists can improve their understanding of how dark matter is distributed across the Universe.

3. Discovery of Exoplanets

Roman will conduct a large-scale survey for exoplanets, or planets outside our Solar System.

Its gravitational microlensing survey is expected to identify more than 1,000 exoplanets, particularly planets in relatively wide orbits that are difficult to detect through some conventional planet-hunting techniques.

The mission is also expected to contribute to a broader statistical census of planetary systems in the Milky Way.

4. Study of Galaxies and the Evolution of the Universe

Roman's enormous field of view will allow astronomers to survey billions of galaxies and cosmic objects.

These observations will help researchers study:

- Formation and evolution of galaxies
- Growth of massive black holes
- Formation of stars and planetary systems
- Exploding stars and other transient astronomical events
- Large-scale structure of the Universe

NASA expects Roman to measure light from roughly a billion galaxies over the course of its mission.

Major Instruments

Roman will carry two major scientific instruments:

- **Wide Field Instrument (WFI)**

The Wide Field Instrument is the mission's primary scientific instrument. It will provide wide-field imaging and spectroscopy in optical and near-infrared wavelengths.

Its exceptionally large field of view will allow Roman to survey large portions of the sky efficiently while maintaining image quality comparable to Hubble.

- **Coronagraph Instrument**

The Coronagraph Instrument is a technology-demonstration instrument designed to suppress the intense light from stars so that comparatively faint objects around them can be studied.

It will demonstrate advanced techniques for direct imaging and spectroscopy of individual nearby exoplanets and planet-forming disks.

Orbit: Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 2

After completing its journey, Roman will operate near the second Sun-Earth Lagrange point (L2), approximately one million miles from Earth.

L2 is particularly useful for space telescopes because the gravitational environment allows a spacecraft to maintain a relatively stable position with respect to Earth and the Sun while providing a broad and relatively unobstructed view of space.

Notably, NASA's James Webb Space Telescope also operates around L2, allowing the two observatories to complement each other scientifically.

Mission Duration

Roman has a planned primary mission lifetime of five years, with the possibility of an extended mission for another five years, subject to spacecraft condition and available resources.

The telescope is expected to generate an enormous public scientific data archive. Making processed data widely available will allow researchers around the world to conduct studies beyond Roman's primary science objectives.

BHUTAN BECOMES SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FIRST RABIES-FREE NATION, WHO CONFIRMS



Why in the News?

The World Health Organization (WHO) has validated Bhutan’s elimination of dog-transmitted human rabies as a public health problem, making Bhutan the first country in the WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve this milestone. The validation was announced on 4 September 2026 following an independent assessment of Bhutan’s surveillance systems, vaccination programmes and rabies-control measures.

Bhutan has maintained zero human deaths from dog-mediated rabies since June 2023. The WHO assessment included a review of national data and a field mission conducted in August 2026 to verify programme implementation and evidence on the ground.

About Rabies

Rabies is a vaccine-preventable zoonotic viral disease transmitted mainly through the saliva of infected animals, usually through bites or scratches. Once clinical symptoms appear, the disease is virtually 100% fatal. However, deaths can be prevented through timely wound washing, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), vaccination and, where indicated, rabies immunoglobulin (RIG).

Dogs remain the principal source of human rabies transmission, accounting for up to 99% of human rabies transmissions globally. Rabies causes an estimated 59,000 human deaths annually, with the overwhelming majority occurring in Africa and Asia.

Bhutan's One Health Approach

Bhutan's success is the outcome of more than a decade of sustained intervention based on the One Health approach, which recognises the interconnected health of humans, animals and the environment.

Key measures included:

- Mass vaccination of dogs to control rabies at its source.
- Dog population management to reduce the number of unvaccinated and free-roaming dogs.
- Integrated human and animal surveillance for early detection and response.
- Universal and free access to post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) across all 20 Dzongkhags (districts).
- Community awareness and participation in rabies prevention.
- Coordination between human-health and veterinary authorities.
- Participation of De-suung volunteers, known as the "Guardians of Peace", in dog vaccination, population management and community outreach.

Bhutan's experience demonstrates that rabies elimination requires simultaneous action on both sides of the transmission chain—vaccinating dogs to prevent transmission and ensuring rapid treatment of exposed people.

WHO Validation

WHO's recognition is not merely based on a period without reported cases. Countries seeking validation must provide evidence of sustained interruption of dog-to-human transmission, supported by:

- Effective rabies surveillance
- Laboratory diagnosis
- Animal vaccination
- Timely access to PEP
- Capacity to detect and respond to reintroduction of the disease

For Bhutan, the WHO-supported regional review involved a two-phase assessment, comprising a desk review of the national dossier followed by a field mission from 17–22 August 2026. The team visited health facilities, laboratories and programme sites, reviewed records and information systems, and examined the situation near the Bhutan–India border.

Importantly, Bhutan is now only the second country globally, after Mexico, to receive WHO validation for eliminating dog-mediated human rabies as a public health problem.

India's Target: Zero Human Deaths by 2030

Bhutan's achievement has particular relevance for India because the two countries share a long border and rabies-control efforts can benefit from cross-border cooperation.

India has adopted the goal of eliminating human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030, aligned with the global "Zero by 30" strategy developed by WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC).

India launched the National Action Plan for Dog Mediated Rabies Elimination (NAPRE) in 2021, alongside strengthening of the National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP). WHO notes that India accounts for a substantial share of the global burden of human rabies deaths, making elimination in the country critical to achieving the global 2030 target.

Way Forward for India

Bhutan's experience provides several lessons for India:

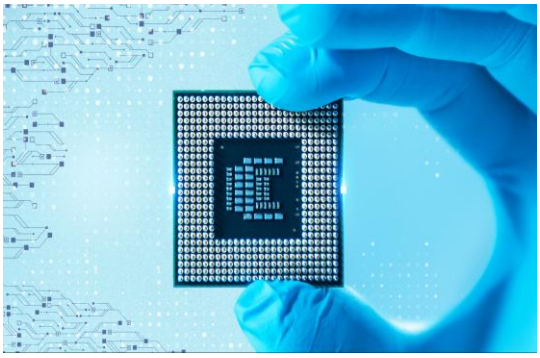
1. Mass dog vaccination must be sustained at high coverage levels.
2. Dog population management should complement vaccination rather than replace it.
3. PEP should remain rapidly accessible and affordable, particularly in rural and remote areas.
4. Human and animal surveillance systems need greater integration.
5. Local communities and municipalities should be actively involved in responsible dog management.
6. Inter-State and cross-border coordination is essential, particularly along international borders.
7. A strong One Health framework should bring together health, veterinary, local-government and community institutions.

Significance

Bhutan's WHO validation demonstrates that dog-mediated rabies elimination is achievable even in regions where the disease has historically been endemic. Its success provides a practical model for other South-East Asian countries, including India.

For India, the milestone strengthens the case for accelerating the "Zero by 30" agenda through simultaneous investment in dog vaccination, surveillance, dog population management, public awareness and timely human post-exposure treatment. The WHO has specifically highlighted Bhutan's achievement as evidence that strong leadership, intersectoral collaboration and community participation can break the cycle of dog-to-human rabies transmission.

SEMICON India 2026



Why in the News?

The fifth edition of SEMICON India 2026 was held from 17–19 September 2026 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, under the theme "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem." Jointly organised by the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) and SEMI, the event brings together governments, semiconductor companies, equipment manufacturers, investors, researchers, start-ups and academic institutions to accelerate the development of India's semiconductor and electronics ecosystem.

The 2026 edition reflects a shift in India's semiconductor strategy from policy formulation and project approvals towards commercial production, supply-chain development and ecosystem building. More than 600 companies from 52 countries are participating, with around 50,000 visitors, over 400 executives and 150 speakers expected at the event.

Theme: "Silicon to Systems"

The theme highlights India's ambition to develop a complete semiconductor value chain, rather than focusing only on chip fabrication.

The ecosystem covers the entire journey:

Semiconductor materials → Equipment → Chip Design → Fabrication → Assembly, Testing & Packaging → Electronics → End-use Systems

A special "Sand to Silicon to Systems" Value Chain Experience at SEMICON India 2026 demonstrates these interconnected stages and highlights the importance of domestic capabilities across the semiconductor industry.

India's Semiconductor Mission

India launched the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) to build a sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem within the country and reduce vulnerabilities arising from dependence on overseas supply chains.

Under the Semicon India Programme, 12 semiconductor projects have been approved so far. The programme covers areas such as semiconductor fabrication, ATMP/OSAT facilities, compound semiconductors and related ecosystem development.

The progress has now moved beyond announcements, with commercial semiconductor production beginning at

multiple facilities. SEMI noted before the event that 3 of the 12 approved projects had commenced commercial production.

Semicon 2.0: The Next Phase

A major focus of SEMICON India 2026 is the transition towards Semicon 2.0, which seeks to broaden India's semiconductor capabilities beyond the initial project-led approach.

The expanded strategy places greater emphasis on:

- Semiconductor design and domestic intellectual property
- Manufacturing and fabrication capacity
- Advanced packaging and OSAT/ATMP
- Semiconductor equipment and materials
- Research and Development
- Talent development and skilling
- Compound semiconductors and silicon photonics
- AI-enabled semiconductor infrastructure

According to the government's latest statements at the event, Semicon 2.0 has an expanded capital outlay of approximately $13.5 billion, compared with about $8 billion associated with the first phase.

Strengthening Semiconductor Supply Chains

Semiconductors require highly specialised materials, industrial gases, chemicals, manufacturing equipment and precision engineering. Therefore, establishing fabrication plants alone is insufficient for creating a resilient domestic ecosystem.

SEMICON India 2026 has highlighted partnerships aimed at localising critical inputs and services. For example, Tata Electronics announced collaborations involving high-purity gases, semiconductor chemicals, gas distribution systems, advanced materials and packaging components.

Such localisation can help reduce supply-chain vulnerabilities and create opportunities for Indian firms to participate in higher-value segments of the global semiconductor industry.

Focus on Chip Design and Talent

India already possesses a significant strength in semiconductor design and engineering services. SEMICON India 2026 is therefore placing considerable emphasis on converting this talent base into globally competitive semiconductor products and intellectual property.

Government figures presented during the event indicate that approximately 70,000 chip-design engineers have been trained over four years, against an earlier target of 85,000. The government is now targeting training for around 1 lakh students for the semiconductor industry.

The event also includes a Student Hackathon, Startup Pavilion and Workforce Development Pavilion, linking education, innovation and industry requirements.

International Participation

SEMICON India 2026 has a strong international dimension, reflecting the globally interconnected nature of semiconductor manufacturing.

The event includes country participation from Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore and Sweden, while representatives from more than 40–50 countries are participating across the broader event ecosystem.

International partnerships are particularly important because semiconductor manufacturing depends on specialised technologies and expertise distributed across several countries.

Major Investment and Industry Developments

The event has also witnessed significant industry commitments. Applied Materials announced plans to invest $5 billion in India over the next decade, with the investment directed towards areas including research, supply-chain development and workforce expansion.

Meanwhile, Micron's semiconductor assembly and test facility at Sanand, Gujarat, has become an important part of India's emerging semiconductor manufacturing landscape. The facility is intended to convert memory wafers into finished DRAM and NAND products and is expected to scale production substantially.

These developments demonstrate that India's semiconductor ambitions are increasingly connected to actual industrial capacity, rather than being limited to policy announcements.

Strategic Importance for India

1. Technological Self-Reliance

Semiconductors are foundational to smartphones, automobiles, telecommunications, defence systems, artificial intelligence, consumer electronics and modern industrial equipment. Developing domestic capabilities can reduce India's vulnerability to external supply disruptions.

2. Economic Growth

The semiconductor industry can generate investment across fabrication, packaging, materials, equipment, logistics, design and electronics manufacturing, creating opportunities for both large companies and MSMEs.

3. National Security

Modern defence platforms and strategic technologies depend heavily on advanced electronics and semiconductors. A resilient domestic ecosystem can strengthen the reliability of critical technology supply chains.

4. Integration with Global Value Chains

India's objective is not merely to manufacture chips for domestic consumption but to become an important participant in the global semiconductor value chain.

5. Employment and Skill Development

The growth of semiconductor manufacturing, chip design and advanced packaging will require engineers, technicians, researchers and specialised manufacturing professionals, creating demand for a highly skilled workforce.

Centre to pay Rs 2.9 crore to 2,550 Punjab, Haryana farmers who earned carbon credits



Why in the News?

More than 2,500 smallholder farmers in Punjab and Haryana are receiving over ₹2.9 crore through digital payments for adopting regenerative farming practices. The initiative marks an important shift in India's agricultural carbon market, as environmental improvements such as soil-carbon sequestration and reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions are being converted into an additional source of farm income. The first payments were initiated through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana, in September 2026.

About the Initiative

The payments are linked to 'Aadi', a farmer-carbon programme launched by Grow Indigo in 2019 with technical guidance from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Under the programme, participating farmers adopted climate-friendly agricultural practices during 2019–2022, including:

- Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) instead of conventional transplanted rice.
- Reduced tillage, which minimises soil disturbance.
- Crop-residue management, including practices that reduce the need for residue burning.
- Farming practices aimed at improving soil organic carbon and resource-use efficiency.

The first issuance covered approximately 30,000 acres and generated more than 50,000 carbon credits. Individual farmers reportedly received around ₹3,000–₹15,000, depending on the carbon credits attributed to their fields.

How Soil-Carbon Credits Work

Soil-carbon credits are generated when agricultural practices lead to measurable reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions or increased storage of carbon in agricultural soils.

The broad process involves:

Regenerative practice → Measurement of environmental outcomes → Independent verification → Carbon-credit issuance → Sale/monetisation of credits → Payment to farmers

In this case, the carbon outcomes associated with participating farms were measured and independently verified before the credits were issued. This creates a link

between farm-level practices and the carbon market, rather than treating carbon finance only as an industrial or corporate activity.

What is Regenerative Agriculture?

Regenerative agriculture is an approach to farming that seeks to improve soil health and ecosystem functions while maintaining agricultural productivity. It generally emphasises:

- Improving soil organic matter and soil health.
- Reducing excessive soil disturbance.
- Efficient use of water, fertilisers and other inputs.
- Better management of crop residues.
- Increasing carbon retention in agricultural soils.
- Reducing greenhouse-gas emissions from agricultural operations.

In Punjab and Haryana, practices such as DSR and residue management are particularly relevant because they can reduce resource requirements and address environmental concerns associated with conventional rice cultivation and crop-residue burning.

Significance

1. New source of supplementary farm income

The initiative demonstrates that farmers can potentially earn not only from agricultural produce but also from verified environmental outcomes. The ₹2.9-crore payment to 2,550 farmers represents an early example of carbon finance reaching individual cultivators.

2. Linking agriculture with carbon markets

India's carbon-market ecosystem is gradually expanding beyond industrial emissions to include land-based and agricultural interventions. Farm-level payments could create greater participation of small and marginal farmers in emerging carbon markets.

3. Reduction in crop-residue burning

Improved crop-residue management can reduce the practice of burning agricultural residue, which contributes to seasonal air-pollution episodes in northern India. The programme therefore potentially connects farmer incentives with environmental objectives.

4. Improvement in soil health

Practices such as reduced tillage and better residue management can contribute to maintaining soil organic matter and improving soil structure, thereby supporting longer-term agricultural sustainability.

5. Climate-smart agriculture

The initiative illustrates how climate mitigation and agricultural livelihoods can be linked through financial incentives, provided that environmental benefits can be reliably measured and verified.

Challenges

Despite its potential, agricultural carbon finance faces several challenges:

- **Measurement and verification:** Changes in soil carbon are difficult to measure accurately because soil characteristics vary spatially and over time.
- **Small payments per farmer:** The initial payments of roughly ₹3,000–₹15,000 are supplementary income rather than a replacement for conventional farm earnings.
- **Long verification cycles:** Carbon-credit projects require monitoring, verification and issuance before farmers can receive payments.
- **Market-price uncertainty:** The eventual value of agricultural carbon credits depends on demand, credit quality and carbon-market conditions.
- **Farmer awareness:** Smallholders need greater awareness of carbon markets, contractual arrangements and the practices required to generate credits.
- **Additionality and permanence:** Carbon projects must establish that the claimed emission reductions or carbon storage are genuinely attributable to the intervention and remain valid over the relevant period.

Security Issues

'Killer robots' are closer than ever, warn UN, ICRC



Why in the News

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Mirjana Spoljaric have renewed their urgent call for States to establish legally binding international rules governing autonomous weapon systems. In their joint appeal of 25 August 2026, they warned that the world is "dangerously close" to a moral red line—machines autonomously targeting humans.

What are Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems?

Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) are weapons that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further human intervention. They can use sensors and other environmental information to identify and respond to targets according to predefined parameters or target profiles.

The crucial distinction is between a weapon that is operated by a human and one in which the machine itself has substantial control over who or what is attacked, when the attack occurs and where force is applied.

Why are Autonomous Weapons a Concern?

The central issue is the loss of meaningful human control over life-and-death decisions.

The ICRC has identified several major concerns:

- **Civilian protection:** Autonomous systems may make mistakes in identifying or distinguishing legitimate military targets from civilians.
- **Predictability:** Complex systems, particularly those incorporating advanced AI, may produce effects that are difficult for operators to anticipate or explain.
- **Accountability:** When a machine independently selects and attacks a target, determining responsibility for an unlawful attack can become more complicated.
- **Escalation of conflict:** Greater automation could make the use of force faster and potentially lower the threshold for military escalation.
- **Ethical concerns:** Decisions involving human life could increasingly be delegated to software and machine processes.

AI and the Changing Nature of Warfare

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into military systems is increasing the degree of autonomy possible in weapons. The ICRC has warned that AI, particularly systems whose behaviour is difficult to predict, can increase the unpredictability of autonomous weapons and consequently heighten risks to civilians.

Autonomy is also developing across a spectrum. It can involve systems that assist with target identification and decision-making, as well as systems capable of selecting and engaging targets with progressively less human involvement.

Therefore, the debate is no longer limited to completely independent "killer robots"; it also concerns human-machine interaction and the amount of judgment retained by human operators.

What do the UN and ICRC Want?

The UN and ICRC are calling for a new international legal framework containing clear prohibitions and restrictions.

The ICRC has advocated a two-level approach:

1. Prohibitions

Autonomous weapons should be prohibited where:

- their effects cannot be sufficiently understood, predicted or explained; or
- they are designed or used to apply force directly against human beings.

2. Strict Regulation of Other Autonomous Weapons

For autonomous weapons that are not prohibited, international rules should establish safeguards such as:

- restrictions on the types of targets;
- limits on the duration, geographical area and scale of deployment;
- restrictions on situations in which civilians may be present;
- effective human supervision;
- the ability of humans to intervene and deactivate the system in a timely manner.

International Legal Framework

At present, there is no dedicated, universally binding treaty specifically regulating autonomous weapons. Discussions are taking place under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) through its Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The Group of Governmental Experts is continuing its work in 2026. Its meetings are considering possible elements of an international instrument and other measures concerning LAWS, including legal, military and technological dimensions.

The Seventh Review Conference of the CCW is scheduled for November 2026, which the ICRC identifies as an important opportunity to launch negotiations on a new protocol dealing with autonomous weapons.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

Autonomous weapons raise important questions under International Humanitarian Law, particularly the principles governing the conduct of hostilities.

The key principles include:

- **Distinction:** Parties must distinguish between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives.
- **Proportionality:** Attacks expected to cause excessive civilian harm in relation to the anticipated military advantage are prohibited.
- **Precautions in attack:** Parties must take feasible precautions to minimise civilian harm.

The challenge is whether increasingly autonomous systems can reliably operate within these principles, particularly in complex and unpredictable battlefields. The ICRC's 2026 position paper specifically examines how existing IHL applies to autonomous weapons while highlighting areas where additional rules may be necessary.

Why Human Control Matters

The UN-ICRC position is fundamentally based on preserving human judgment in decisions involving the use of force.

Human control allows an operator to consider factors that may not be fully captured by a machine's target profile—such as changing circumstances, civilian presence, surrender, deception or unexpected developments on the battlefield.

The concern is therefore not simply whether a machine is technically accurate. It is whether human beings retain sufficient judgment, control and responsibility when deciding to use lethal force.

Way Forward

A credible international framework should:

1. Establish a clear legal definition and scope of autonomous weapons.
2. Prohibit autonomous systems that directly target humans.
3. Prohibit systems whose effects are unpredictable or uncontrollable.
4. Establish minimum standards for meaningful human control.
5. Strengthen international cooperation on AI-enabled military technologies.
6. Ensure that technological development does not outpace international humanitarian law.

India seals deal to purchase Javelin anti-tank missile system from US



Why in the News?

India has finalised an agreement with the United States to procure the Javelin anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system for the Indian Army, marking India's formal entry as a Javelin customer. The Indian Army signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) through the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route on 28 August 2026.

The acquisition is intended to strengthen the Indian Army's anti-armour capability, particularly against tanks, armoured vehicles and fortified enemy positions. The procurement has been undertaken on a fast-track basis, with reports indicating a deal value of around $45.7 million (approximately ₹292 crore).

About the Javelin Missile System

The FGM-148 Javelin is a medium-range, man-portable, shoulder-launched, fire-and-forget anti-tank guided missile system developed and manufactured by the Javelin Joint Venture of Raytheon, an RTX business, and Lockheed Martin.

The system is designed primarily for infantry units, scouts and combat engineers. It can also be integrated with a variety of platforms, including vehicles, aircraft and watercraft. According to the US defence notification, the system has a maximum range of more than 4,500 metres.

The Javelin is particularly valued for its fire-and-forget capability. Once the operator locks onto the target and launches the missile, the missile's guidance system allows it to track the target without requiring continuous guidance from the operator.

Key Features

- **Fire-and-Forget Capability**

The Javelin uses a fire-and-forget guidance mechanism, allowing the operator to engage a target and immediately move to a safer position.

- **Man-Portable System**

The weapon is designed to be carried and operated by infantry personnel, making it suitable for highly mobile ground formations.

- **Anti-Armour Capability**

The missile is designed to engage tanks and other armoured systems, while also providing capability against fortified positions and other battlefield targets.

- **Top-Attack Capability**

One of the important characteristics of the Javelin is its ability to attack heavily protected armoured targets from above. This is particularly useful because the upper surfaces of many armoured vehicles generally have less protection than their frontal armour.

- **Extended Engagement Range**

The system has a range exceeding 4.5 km, providing infantry units with the ability to engage armoured threats from considerable stand-off distances.

What Does the India-US Deal Include?

The US had approved a potential sale of the Javelin system to India with an estimated value of $45.7 million. The approved package included:

- 100 FGM-148 Javelin rounds
- 1 Javelin missile for fly-to-buy purposes
- 25 Lightweight Command Launch Units (LwCLU) or Block 1 Command Launch Units (CLU)
- Basic skills trainers
- Missile simulation rounds
- Battery coolant units
- Technical manuals
- Spare parts
- Training and technical assistance
- System integration and testing
- Logistics and lifecycle support

The final procurement package and quantities can differ from the initially approved maximum package depending on India's final requirements and the signed sales agreement.

Procurement Route

The acquisition is being carried out through the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) mechanism, under which the governments of the two countries facilitate the transfer of defence equipment.

The Indian Army's signing of the Letter of Offer and Acceptance represents the formalisation of the procurement after the earlier US approval of the potential sale.

Reports have also indicated that the acquisition was undertaken through India's Emergency Procurement route, allowing the Army to accelerate the induction of urgently required anti-tank weapons.

Strategic Significance for India

- **Strengthening Anti-Tank Warfare**

The acquisition will strengthen the Indian Army's ability to counter modern armoured formations. Portable ATGMs provide infantry units with an important capability to engage tanks and armoured vehicles without depending entirely on tanks or large anti-armour platforms.

- **Enhancing Infantry Firepower**

The Javelin gives frontline infantry formations a sophisticated stand-off anti-armour weapon that can be deployed in diverse battlefield conditions.

- **High-Altitude and Difficult Terrain Operations**

For India, portable anti-tank weapons are particularly relevant because potential conflict environments include mountainous and difficult terrain, where the movement of heavy armoured platforms can be restricted.

- **Greater Tactical Flexibility**

The combination of portability, fire-and-forget operation and stand-off engagement allows small infantry teams to conduct anti-armour operations while maintaining greater tactical mobility.

India-US Defence Cooperation

The Javelin agreement represents another development in the expanding India-US defence partnership.

The United States has described the agreement as reflecting a defence relationship that is becoming deeper and more capable, while also highlighting opportunities for greater cooperation between the two countries' defence industries.

The acquisition therefore goes beyond the immediate purchase of missiles and contributes to the broader evolution of India-US military and defence-industrial relations.

Co-Production in India

A major development following the procurement agreement is the move towards local production of Javelin missiles in India.

On 30 August 2026, Tata Advanced Systems Limited and the Javelin Joint Venture, comprising Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, signed an MoU to explore establishing facilities in India for the final assembly and integration of Javelin All Up Round (AUR) missiles and production of components.

TASL has been selected as the Javelin Joint Venture's prime Indian partner for future in-country co-production efforts.

This development is significant for India's Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat objectives because it could gradually build domestic capabilities in the manufacture, integration and maintenance of advanced anti-tank weapon systems.

Technology and Industrial Benefits

The proposed co-production arrangement could provide several benefits:

- Strengthening India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.
- Expanding participation of Indian private-sector companies in advanced weapons production.
- Developing specialised manufacturing and integration capabilities.
- Creating opportunities for skilled employment.
- Reducing dependence on overseas supply chains over the longer term.
- Supporting India's emergence as a defence manufacturing hub.

However, the co-production initiative is currently an industrial cooperation framework, and the exact production arrangements, technology transfer and manufacturing timelines will depend on subsequent agreements.

Navy Chief: INS Nipun will enhance our critical underwater capabilities



Why in the News?

The Indian Navy commissioned INS Nipun, the second Nistar-class Diving Support Vessel (DSV), at the Naval

Dockyard, Mumbai. The commissioning ceremony was presided over by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Krishna Swaminathan.

The Navy Chief stated that INS Nipun will significantly strengthen India's specialised underwater capabilities, particularly in deep-sea diving, underwater intervention and submarine rescue. The vessel will operate under the Western Naval Command, giving the Navy dedicated diving-support capability on India's western seaboard.

About INS Nipun

INS Nipun is a specialised Diving Support Vessel (DSV) designed for complex operations beneath the sea. It is the second vessel of the Nistar class, complementing its sister ship INS Nistar, which operates from the Eastern Naval Command.

The induction of Nipun effectively strengthens India's ability to undertake specialised underwater operations on both the eastern and western coasts.

The vessel has been indigenously designed and constructed by Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL), Visakhapatnam. It was delivered to the Indian Navy on 30 July 2026 after extensive outfitting and trials.

Major Capabilities

INS Nipun is purpose-built for sustained underwater operations and incorporates several specialised systems.

1. Deep-Sea Diving

The vessel supports different forms of diving operations, including:

- Saturation diving
- Air diving
- Heliox diving

These capabilities allow trained naval divers to undertake prolonged and technically demanding operations at considerable depths.

2. Submarine Rescue

One of Nipun's most important roles is to support submarine rescue operations.

The vessel can support the Indian Navy's Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV), allowing it to respond to submarines in distress. This provides an important emergency-response capability because a disabled submarine may require specialised rescue equipment and trained personnel to reach and evacuate its crew.

The capability can also support distressed submarines belonging to partner nations, strengthening India's role as a regional submarine-rescue partner.

3. Underwater Intervention

INS Nipun is equipped with remotely operated underwater systems for inspection and intervention.

Such systems allow operations to be conducted underwater without exposing divers to every hazardous environment. They can support activities such as inspection, assessment and specialised underwater intervention.

4. Dynamic Positioning

The ship incorporates a dynamic positioning capability, enabling it to maintain its position accurately during specialised underwater operations.

This is particularly important when divers, underwater vehicles or rescue equipment are being deployed because even small changes in the vessel's position can complicate deep-sea operations.

5. Medical and Life-Support Facilities

The vessel has specialised life-support and medical facilities, which are essential for sustained diving and submarine-rescue missions.

These facilities improve the ability of the crew and divers to undertake complex operations for extended periods while maintaining necessary medical support.

Strategic Importance

Strengthening Underwater Warfare Support

The underwater domain is becoming increasingly important in maritime security. Submarines, underwater infrastructure and other subsea assets operate in an environment that is difficult to monitor and access.

INS Nipun provides the Navy with a dedicated platform for operations in this challenging domain and strengthens its ability to respond to underwater contingencies.

Two-Coast Underwater Capability

The commissioning of Nipun alongside INS Nistar provides India with specialised DSV capability on both coasts.

This improves the Navy's geographical reach and allows faster deployment of specialised diving and rescue capabilities depending on the location of an underwater emergency.

Submarine Rescue Preparedness

Submarine operations inherently involve complex risks. A submarine accident or technical emergency can require rapid rescue, particularly when the vessel is unable to surface.

The combination of DSVs and DSRVs therefore provides an important layer of operational safety and emergency preparedness for India's submarine fleet.

Regional Maritime Cooperation

The Navy Chief highlighted that these niche capabilities are available with only a handful of navies globally.

The ability to assist distressed submarines of friendly and partner countries can enhance India's position as a "Preferred Submarine Rescue Partner" in the region and contribute to maritime cooperation.

Role in Salvage and HADR

INS Nipun's utility extends beyond submarine rescue.

Its specialised underwater systems can support:

- Underwater salvage operations
- Inspection and intervention missions
- Recovery of underwater assets
- Deep-sea diving operations
- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) missions

Thus, the vessel can perform both military and non-combat functions during maritime emergencies.

Contribution to Aatmanirbharta

The construction of INS Nipun by Hindustan Shipyard Limited demonstrates India's growing ability to develop technologically sophisticated specialist naval platforms domestically.

The Ministry of Defence has described its induction as another step towards Aatmanirbharta in defence shipbuilding, while highlighting the contribution of Indian shipyards and the domestic industrial ecosystem.

This is particularly significant because specialist vessels such as DSVs require integration of complex diving, rescue, medical, positioning and underwater-intervention systems.

Motto and Naval Spirit

INS Nipun carries the motto "Far Beneath, Few Beyond", reflecting the specialised nature of its missions and the challenging environment in which its personnel operate.

The Navy Chief also urged the commissioning crew to uphold the values of "Nischay, Nirbhay, Nipun" — Resolve, Fearlessness and Professional Mastery, along with the core naval values of Duty, Honour and Courage.

India's Defence Acquisition Council clears ₹1.10 lakh crore worth of proposals for armed forces



Why in the News?

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN)—the in-principle administrative approval—for various capital acquisition proposals of the Indian Armed Forces worth approximately ₹1.10 lakh crore.

A major highlight of the decision is that around 98% of the approved procurements are planned to be sourced from Indian industry. The move provides another major push to Atmanirbhar Bharat, indigenous defence manufacturing and the development of India's domestic defence-industrial ecosystem.

What is the Defence Acquisition Council?

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) is the apex decision-making body for defence procurement in India. It is headed by the Defence Minister and plays a central role in determining the procurement requirements of the Armed Forces.

The Council considers proposals for acquiring new weapons, platforms, equipment and technologies and accords Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) when the requirement is considered necessary.

Importantly, an AoN is not the final contract or purchase order. It represents the government's in-principle administrative approval and is followed by subsequent stages of the defence acquisition process, including technical evaluation, commercial negotiations and contractual approval, depending on the procurement category.

Key Approvals for the Indian Army

For the Indian Army, the DAC approved procurement of a range of equipment intended to improve mobility, battlefield survivability, reconnaissance and combat support.

- **Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Recce Vehicles**

The CBRN reconnaissance vehicles will enable the Army to detect, identify, monitor and mark areas contaminated by chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents.

Such platforms are particularly important for operations in environments where the Armed Forces may face unconventional or hazardous threats.

- **High Mobility Vehicles**

High Mobility Vehicles (HMVs) will enhance operational mobility and logistics support, particularly in difficult and challenging terrains.

They can improve the Army's ability to move personnel, equipment and supplies in areas where conventional transportation systems may face limitations.

- **Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers**

The approval for Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers (MML) is aimed at strengthening the Army's capability to rapidly create defensive minefields.

Mechanised mine-laying systems can improve the speed and efficiency of minefield deployment while reducing the exposure of personnel to battlefield risks.

- **Advanced Light Helicopters**

The DAC has also approved procurement of Advanced Light Helicopters (ALHs) for the Army.

ALHs provide multi-role capabilities such as troop movement, logistics support, casualty evacuation and operations in difficult terrain. Their induction is expected to strengthen the Army's tactical mobility and support capabilities.

- **Trawl Tanks and Sarvatra Bridge System**

The Army will also acquire Trawl Tanks and the Sarvatra Bridge System.

These systems are intended to enhance the Army's ability to overcome obstacles and maintain mobility during combat operations. Bridging systems are particularly important for the rapid movement of troops and heavy vehicles across rivers, canals and other battlefield obstacles.

Key Approvals for the Indian Navy

The procurement package also seeks to strengthen the Indian Navy's surveillance and propulsion capabilities.

- **Arudhra Surveillance Radars**

The Navy has received approval for the procurement of Arudhra radars, an indigenous radar system developed for surveillance and tracking applications.

Modern surveillance radars are critical for maintaining situational awareness over India's maritime domain by detecting and tracking aerial and surface targets.

The increased induction of indigenous radar systems also strengthens India's domestic capability in defence electronics and radar technology.

- **Marine Gas Turbines**

The DAC has also approved the development/procurement of Marine Gas Turbines (MGTs) for naval propulsion.

Indigenous development of marine gas turbine technology is strategically important because propulsion systems are among the critical technologies required for modern warships. Greater domestic capability in this area can help reduce dependence on foreign suppliers and improve long-term maintenance and supply-chain security.

Key Approvals for the Indian Air Force

For the Indian Air Force (IAF), the approved proposals are aimed at strengthening aircraft capabilities as well as electronic warfare and secure communications.

The package includes measures relating to fighter and transport aircraft capabilities, along with Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammers (GBMPJs) and the Defence Forces Secure Access Card system.

- **Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammers**

Electronic warfare has become an increasingly important component of modern military operations.

Ground-based multi-purpose jammers can contribute to the disruption or degradation of adversary electronic systems and communications, thereby improving the survivability and operational effectiveness of friendly forces.

- **Defence Forces Secure Access Card**

The Defence Forces Secure Access Card system is intended to strengthen secure access and authentication within defence networks and systems.

With modern military operations becoming increasingly dependent on interconnected digital networks, secure communications and access-control mechanisms have become an important element of operational security.

Why is 98% Indigenous Procurement Significant?

The decision to source approximately 98% of the approved acquisitions from Indian industry represents a significant push towards defence indigenisation.

It is aligned with the government's broader Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, which seeks to reduce India's dependence on imported military equipment and develop a stronger domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Indigenous procurement can provide several strategic advantages:

- **Reduction in import dependence:** Greater domestic production reduces vulnerability to foreign supply disruptions.
- **Strategic autonomy:** Indigenous defence capabilities provide greater freedom in taking strategic and operational decisions.
- **Development of domestic industry:** Large defence orders create opportunities for public-sector undertakings, private companies, MSMEs and start-ups.
- **Employment generation:** Expansion of defence manufacturing can create skilled and semi-skilled employment.
- **Technology development:** Sustained domestic demand encourages investment in research, design and advanced manufacturing.
- **Export potential:** Development of competitive indigenous systems can strengthen India's position as a defence exporter.

The emphasis on domestic procurement also builds on India's broader rise in defence production. According to the Ministry of Defence, India's annual defence production reached a record ₹1.78 lakh crore in FY 2025–26, compared with about ₹46,000 crore in 2014.

HAL Hands Over Tejas Trainers, HTT-40s and Dhruv NG Helicopters to IAF, Pawan Hans



Why in the News?

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) handed over two Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Final Operational Clearance (FOC) twin-seater trainers and three Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40 (HTT-40) basic trainer aircraft to the Indian Air Force (IAF), along with four Dhruv Next Generation (NG) helicopters to Pawan Hans Limited (PHL), on 18 September 2026 in Bengaluru.

The event highlights India's efforts to strengthen indigenous aerospace manufacturing, enhance the operational capabilities of the armed forces, and expand domestic helicopter production for civilian applications.

Key Highlights

- Total aircraft and helicopters handed over: 9 platforms.

- LCA Tejas FOC twin-seater trainers: 2 aircraft, completing twin-seater deliveries under the FOC contract.
- HTT-40 basic trainer aircraft: 3 aircraft, marking the beginning of deliveries under the 70-aircraft contract.
- Dhruv NG helicopters: 4 helicopters delivered to Pawan Hans Limited, marking the entry of the civil-certified Dhruv NG into the civil aviation segment.
- Venue: Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Key dignitaries: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu.

About the Aircraft and Helicopters

1. Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas FOC Twin-Seater Trainer

The LCA Tejas is an indigenously developed, lightweight, multirole combat aircraft designed and manufactured by HAL. The twin-seater trainer variant is intended primarily to train pilots for operating the Tejas fighter aircraft.

Key features:

- Configuration: Two-seat, tandem cockpit arrangement for an instructor and trainee.
- Operational capability: Designed to support pilot training while retaining combat capabilities.
- Technology: Incorporates a fly-by-wire flight-control system, digital avionics and an advanced cockpit.
- Purpose: Helps pilots transition to the Tejas fighter platform and develop operational flying skills.

The handover of the two FOC-configured trainers completes the twin-seater deliveries under the existing FOC contract, strengthening the IAF's indigenous fighter training infrastructure.

2. Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40 (HTT-40)

The HTT-40, named Ankur, is an indigenously developed basic trainer aircraft designed by HAL for the initial stages of military pilot training.

It is intended to provide foundational flying skills before trainees progress to more advanced training aircraft and fighter platforms.

Key features:

- Category: Basic trainer aircraft.
- Engine: Single turboprop engine.
- Configuration: Two-seat aircraft for instructor-led training.
- Indigenous content: Approximately 57% indigenous content, as reported in September 2026.
- Contract: The first deliveries are part of a 70-aircraft contract for the IAF.

The delivery of the three HTT-40 aircraft marks the start of deliveries under the contract and is intended to strengthen the IAF's basic pilot training capacity.

3. Dhruv Next Generation (NG) Helicopter

The Dhruv NG is a next-generation, light, twin-engine, multirole helicopter developed and manufactured by HAL. The four helicopters handed over to Pawan Hans mark the introduction of the civil-certified Dhruv NG into the civil aviation segment.

Key features:

- Category: Light, twin-engine, multirole helicopter.
- Weight class: Approximately 5.5 tonnes.
- Operator: Pawan Hans Limited.
- Applications: Passenger transport, offshore operations, air ambulance services, and disaster relief.
- Significance: Expands the use of indigenous helicopters in civilian aviation and commercial operations.

The handover supports the expansion of India's domestic helicopter ecosystem and creates opportunities for the use of locally manufactured rotorcraft in civilian services.

About Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is a Government of India-owned aerospace and defence company under the Ministry of Defence.

HAL plays a major role in the design, development, manufacturing, repair and maintenance of aircraft, helicopters, engines and associated aerospace systems.

Its portfolio spans military aircraft, pilot training platforms, helicopters and civil aviation products. The September 2026 handover demonstrates its role in

supplying aircraft for both military and civilian applications.

Strategic and Economic Significance

1. Strengthening Aatmanirbhar Bharat

The delivery of domestically developed aircraft and helicopters supports India's efforts to reduce dependence on imported aerospace platforms and strengthen indigenous design, development and manufacturing capabilities.

2. Enhancing Pilot Training

The Tejas twin-seater trainers and HTT-40 basic trainers support different stages of the IAF's pilot training pipeline, from foundational flying skills to training on advanced combat aircraft.

3. Expanding Civil Aviation Capabilities

The delivery of four Dhruv NG helicopters to Pawan Hans strengthens the potential use of indigenous helicopters in passenger transport, offshore operations and emergency services.

4. Promoting the Domestic Aerospace Industry

The development and production of aircraft involve collaboration among manufacturers, component suppliers, engineering firms and research institutions. Such activity can support domestic supply chains and specialised employment.

5. Strengthening Public-Private Collaboration

The Union Government has emphasised the need for stronger public-private partnerships in aerospace manufacturing, alongside greater investment in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, autonomous systems and propulsion.

Challenges and Limitations

- Production timelines: Defence aircraft programmes require sustained coordination between manufacturers, suppliers and the armed forces to meet delivery schedules.
- Technological development: Indigenous aerospace manufacturing requires continued investment in engines, avionics, materials and advanced flight-control technologies.
- Maintenance and support: Long-term operational availability depends on spare parts, maintenance infrastructure, technical training and after-sales support.
- Scaling up production: Meeting large aircraft and helicopter orders requires reliable supply chains and sufficient manufacturing capacity.
- Civil aviation adoption: Wider use of indigenous helicopters depends on operational reliability, certification requirements, maintenance costs and demand from commercial operators.

Overall Significance

The handover of two LCA Tejas FOC twin-seater trainers, three HTT-40 basic trainers and four Dhruv NG helicopters on 18 September 2026 represents a milestone in India's indigenous aerospace manufacturing efforts.

The deliveries span three important areas: combat aircraft training, basic pilot training and civilian helicopter operations. They also reflect the growing role of HAL in supplying platforms for both military and civilian users.

The event reinforces the broader objective of Aatmanirbhar Bharat by supporting domestic aerospace production, technological development and the expansion of India's aviation ecosystem.

Trivia

Magsaysay honour for Myanmar activist, Singapore lawyer, Bangladeshi aid giver



Why in the News?

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation announced the 2026 Ramon Magsaysay Award recipients. The three awardees are Tommy Koh of Singapore, Bo Kyi of Myanmar and Runa Khan of Bangladesh.

The award recognises individuals whose work demonstrates selfless service, moral courage and transformative leadership in Asia. The 2026 awardees were recognised respectively for international diplomacy and the rule of law, the defence of political prisoners and human dignity, and humanitarian service to poor and climate-vulnerable communities.

The awards are scheduled to be formally presented at the Metropolitan Theatre in Manila on 15 November 2026.

About the Ramon Magsaysay Award

The Ramon Magsaysay Award is regarded as one of Asia's most prestigious honours and is often described as "Asia's Nobel Prize."

The award was established in 1957 in memory of Ramon Magsaysay, the former President of the Philippines who died in an aircraft accident that year. The first awards were presented in 1958.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) administers the award from Manila. It honours individuals and organisations whose work reflects "greatness of spirit" through selfless service to Asian societies. Since its establishment, the award has recognised more than 300 individuals and organisations.

Key Facts

Award	Ramon Magsaysay Award
Established	1957
First awarded	1958
Named after	Ramon Magsaysay, former President of the Philippines
Administered by	Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation
Headquarters	Manila, Philippines
2026 recipients	Tommy Koh, Bo Kyi and Runa Khan
Award ceremony	15 November 2026, Manila

1. Tommy Koh – Singapore

Tommy Koh, an 88-year-old Singaporean lawyer, diplomat and public servant, has been honoured for his contribution to international dialogue, cooperation and the rule of law.

He is particularly recognised for presiding over the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which culminated in the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982.

Contribution to International Law

UNCLOS is widely regarded as the principal international legal framework governing the world's oceans. It deals with issues including:

- Territorial seas
- Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)
- Rights over marine resources
- Navigation
- Continental shelves
- Maritime boundaries
- Settlement of disputes

The convention has therefore played a major role in establishing a rules-based framework for managing maritime spaces and resolving disputes between states.

Tommy Koh's recognition highlights the importance of multilateral diplomacy and international law in managing

disputes between countries, particularly in strategically important maritime regions such as the Indo-Pacific.

He is also a professor emeritus at the National University of Singapore and has represented Singapore at the United Nations during different periods of his diplomatic career.

Significance

Koh's award is significant because it recognises the role of dialogue, diplomacy and international legal institutions in promoting peaceful coexistence among nations.

2. Bo Kyi – Myanmar

Bo Kyi, a 61-year-old Myanmar democracy and human-rights activist, was honoured for his long-standing efforts to defend political prisoners and human dignity in Myanmar.

Bo Kyi himself was arrested following Myanmar's 1988 pro-democracy demonstrations and was imprisoned twice, spending a total of around seven years in detention.

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners

In 2000, Bo Kyi co-founded the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) with fellow former political prisoners.

The organisation works to:

- Document political imprisonment
- Record human-rights violations
- Support political prisoners
- Assist detainees and their families
- Keep international attention focused on political repression in Myanmar

The organisation's documentation has helped preserve evidence concerning political imprisonment and human-rights abuses under military rule.

Significance

Bo Kyi's recognition is particularly important in the context of Myanmar's continuing political instability and conflict following the 2021 military coup.

His work demonstrates how civil-society organisations and human-rights defenders can document violations and maintain international attention on victims, even under highly restrictive political conditions.

The award foundation described his work as a sustained pursuit of truth, accountability and justice.

3. Runa Khan – Bangladesh

Runa Khan, a 67-year-old Bangladeshi social entrepreneur and humanitarian, was honoured for her decades-long work among some of the country's poorest and most vulnerable communities.

She began her social-service journey by teaching poor children in 1979. In 2002, she founded Friendship Bangladesh, an organisation working with communities facing poverty, geographical isolation and climate vulnerability.

Work of Friendship Bangladesh

The organisation focuses on providing essential services to communities that are often difficult to reach, particularly people living in remote, river-eroded and climate-vulnerable areas.

Its activities include:

- Healthcare
- Education
- Women's empowerment
- Livelihood generation
- Climate-change adaptation
- Social justice
- Community development

Friendship has developed innovative models for taking essential services to remote communities. Its work combines humanitarian assistance with long-term development and empowerment.

India and the Ramon Magsaysay Award

India has historically had a strong presence among Ramon Magsaysay Award recipients.

Some prominent Indian awardees include:

- **Vinoba Bhave** – 1958
- **Mother Teresa** – 1962
- **Verghese Kurien** – 1963
- **Jayaprakash Narayan** – 1965
- **Satyajit Ray** – 1967
- **M. S. Subbulakshmi** – 1974
- **Kiran Bedi** – 1994
- **Arvind Kejriwal** – 2006
- **T. M. Krishna and Bezwada Wilson** – 2016
- **Sonam Wangchuk** – 2018

- **Ravish Kumar** – 2019

Thus, the award has historically recognised Indian contributions across social service, public administration, culture, education, journalism and grassroots development.

16th Aero India set for Bengaluru in February 2027



Why in the News?

The 16th edition of Aero India, Asia's largest air show and one of the world's leading aerospace and defence exhibitions, will be held at Air Force Station, Yelahanka, Bengaluru, Karnataka, from 8–12 February 2027.

Organised by the Department of Defence Production under the Ministry of Defence, the five-day event will bring together global aerospace and defence companies, policymakers, armed forces personnel, technology experts, innovators and industry stakeholders.

About Aero India

Aero India is a biennial international aerospace exhibition and air show organised by the Government of India at Air Force Station Yelahanka, Bengaluru.

The first edition was held in 1996, and the event has subsequently developed into a major global platform for aerospace and defence industries. Bengaluru has hosted every edition since the beginning of the show.

Key Highlights of Aero India 2027

Edition	16th Aero India
Dates	8–12 February 2027
Venue	Air Force Station, Yelahanka, Bengaluru
Frequency	Biennial
Organiser	Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence
Focus	Aerospace, defence, emerging technologies and innovation
Participants	Defence companies, armed forces, policymakers, innovators and international delegations
Official portal	Aero India 2027

What Will Aero India 2027 Showcase?

The exhibition will provide an opportunity to showcase state-of-the-art aerospace systems, defence platforms and emerging technologies.

Major areas expected to receive attention include:

1. Military Aviation

The event will showcase India's growing capabilities in:

- Fighter aircraft
- Transport aircraft
- Helicopters
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
- Air-defence systems
- Avionics and aerospace systems

2. Indigenous Defence Manufacturing

Aero India provides an important platform for showcasing India's progress towards Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence production.

Indian companies, DPSUs, MSMEs and start-ups can use the exhibition to display indigenous technologies and establish partnerships with global manufacturers. The Ministry of Defence has specifically highlighted opportunities for partnerships, investment, exports and technology collaboration.

3. Defence Exports

The event is increasingly important for India's ambition to become a significant defence exporter.

International delegations and foreign defence companies provide potential opportunities for Indian manufacturers to establish export relationships and enter global supply chains.

4. Emerging Technologies

Aero India also provides a platform for technologies that are transforming modern warfare and aviation, including:

- Artificial intelligence
- Autonomous systems
- Unmanned platforms
- Advanced sensors
- Electronic warfare
- Cyber technologies
- Space-related technologies
- Advanced materials

Business and Public Participation

Aero India 2027 will have a dedicated Business Zone containing exhibition halls, seminar and conference facilities, meeting rooms, chalet areas and static displays. The first three days are designated as Business Days, while the final two days are Public Days.

The Aero India Experience Zone will also be open to the general public from 9–12 February 2027.

The official visitor information states that the Experience Zone ticket is priced at ₹1,000 for Indian nationals and US$20 for foreign nationals, exclusive of GST.

Importance for India

1. Strengthening Defence Industrial Base

Aero India provides Indian defence manufacturers with an international platform to demonstrate their capabilities and connect with potential customers and partners.

2. Promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat

The participation of Indian MSMEs and start-ups can help integrate smaller domestic firms into the wider defence manufacturing ecosystem.

3. Boosting Defence Exports

International participation creates opportunities for Indian-made defence equipment to find new markets, supporting India's objective of increasing defence exports.

4. Technology Transfer and Collaboration

The exhibition facilitates interaction between Indian and foreign companies, creating possibilities for joint ventures, co-development, co-production and technology partnerships.

5. Defence Diplomacy

Aero India is also an important instrument of defence diplomacy. The participation of foreign governments, military delegations and defence companies enables India to deepen strategic relationships with partner countries.

6. Bengaluru as an Aerospace Hub

The continued selection of Bengaluru reinforces its position as one of India's major centres for aerospace research, defence production, aviation technology and engineering.

Strategic Significance

Aero India 2027 assumes additional significance because it will be the first edition after Operation Sindoor, placing greater attention on India's operational experience, indigenous defence systems and efforts to strengthen domestic defence production.

The event comes at a time when India is seeking to:

- Strengthen indigenous defence manufacturing
- Reduce dependence on foreign imports
- Increase defence exports
- Develop advanced aerospace technologies
- Integrate MSMEs and start-ups into defence supply chains
- Build international defence partnerships

Thus, Aero India is no longer merely an air show; it has evolved into a major platform for defence industrial policy, technology cooperation and strategic diplomacy.

70-member Team India Contingent Flagged Off for WorldSkills Shanghai 2026



Why in the News?

India has flagged off its largest-ever 70-member contingent for the 48th WorldSkills Competition, which will be held in Shanghai, China, from 22–27 September 2026. The Indian team will compete across 63 of the 64 skill categories at the global competition.

The send-off ceremony was organised by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in New Delhi on 15 September 2026. The contingent represents India's expanding capabilities in technical skills, craftsmanship, digital technologies and emerging industries.

About WorldSkills Competition

The WorldSkills Competition is a major international platform for showcasing excellence in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It is held every two years and brings together young skilled professionals from different countries and regions.

The 48th WorldSkills Competition will be hosted by Shanghai at the National Exhibition and Convention Center (NECC). More than 1,400 competitors from over 70 countries and regions are expected to participate across 64 skills.

The 2026 edition is notable for the scale of participation, with WorldSkills describing it as a potential record-setting event in terms of the number of competitors, skill competitions and venue size.

India's Participation

India's 70-member Team Skill India will participate in 63 skill categories, making this the country's largest-ever representation at the competition.

The Indian contingent includes young people from different educational and professional backgrounds, ranging from traditional trades to advanced technological fields. The team includes students, apprentices and young professionals.

According to recent reporting, the contingent represents 16 Indian states, with Karnataka having the largest representation, followed by Odisha and Tamil Nadu.

Debut in 11 New Skills

A major feature of India's participation in Shanghai will be its first-time participation in 11 skill categories.

These include:

- Aircraft Maintenance
- Dental Prosthetics
- Digital Interactive Media Design
- Heavy Vehicle Technology
- Industrial Mechanics
- Intelligent Security Technology
- Landscape Gardening
- Optoelectronic Technology
- Retail Sales
- Software Testing
- Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

This expansion demonstrates the increasing focus of India's skilling ecosystem on emerging technologies, advanced manufacturing, digital services and specialised occupations.

Significance for India

1. Showcasing Skilled Human Capital

WorldSkills provides an international platform for Indian youth to demonstrate their technical expertise, precision, creativity and problem-solving abilities.

2. Promotion of Vocational Education

India's participation helps strengthen the recognition of skill-based and vocational education as an important pathway for employment and career development.

3. Focus on Future Skills

India's entry into areas such as UAS, intelligent security technology, software testing and digital interactive media design reflects the changing requirements of modern industries.

4. Industry-Relevant Training

Competitions such as WorldSkills provide benchmarks for technical education and vocational training. Exposure to international standards can help improve training methodologies and industry alignment in India.

5. Supporting Viksit Bharat

The Government has linked the initiative with the broader vision of “Viksit Bharat – Kushal Bharat”, emphasising skilled, confident and innovative young Indians as an important component of India's development trajectory.

India and the Skill Development Ecosystem

The Indian contingent's preparation has involved participation in international skill-development events.

Earlier in 2026, India sent a 30-member team comprising 15 competitors and 15 experts to the Global Skills Challenge in Australia, which served as a preparatory platform for the Shanghai competition.

Such international exposure allows competitors and experts to familiarise themselves with competition conditions, benchmark performance and improve technical preparedness.

Overall Significance

India's largest-ever 70-member contingent at WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 reflects the widening scope of India's skill-development efforts—from traditional craftsmanship to AI-era technologies, digital services, advanced manufacturing, aerospace-related maintenance and unmanned systems.

With India competing in 63 out of 64 skills and making its debut in 11 categories, the Shanghai edition provides an important international platform for Indian youth to demonstrate technical competence and gain exposure to global standards in vocational skills.

Global Gender Gap Index 2026



Why in the News?

The World Economic Forum (WEF) released the Global Gender Gap Report 2026 on 16 September 2026, marking the 20th edition of the index. The report benchmarks gender parity across 145 economies on four dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.

India retained its 131st position, with its overall gender parity score improving marginally to 64.5%. Iceland continued to occupy the 1st position, with 93.0% of its gender gap closed.

About the Global Gender Gap Index

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) was introduced by the WEF in 2006 to measure the relative gaps between women and men rather than the absolute level of development of an economy.

The index assesses gender disparities through four major sub-indices:

1. Economic Participation and Opportunity
2. Educational Attainment
3. Health and Survival
4. Political Empowerment

The score ranges from 0 to 1, with a higher score indicating that a greater proportion of the gender gap has been closed. The 2026 edition uses the latest available data, although the underlying indicators may have different reference years.

Global Findings

The global gender gap in 2026 stands at 69.2% closed across the 145 economies covered. No economy has achieved complete gender parity.

At the current global pace of progress, the WEF estimates that around 120 years would be required to achieve full gender parity globally.

The four dimensions show considerable variation:

- **Health and Survival:** 96.9% of the global gap closed
- **Educational Attainment:** 96.2%
- **Economic Participation and Opportunity:** 61.7%
- **Political Empowerment:** only 22.1%

Thus, while gender gaps in education and health are comparatively narrow, substantial disparities continue in economic participation and political decision-making.

Top Performers

Iceland retained the top position with a score of 93.0%. It has remained at the top since the 2009 edition and is the only economy to have closed more than 90% of its overall gender gap.

The top five economies in 2026 are:

- Iceland – 93.0%
- Finland – 87.2%
- Norway – 85.7%
- Namibia – 84.5%
- United Kingdom – 84.2%

Other economies in the top 10 include New Zealand, Sweden, Australia, Germany and Ireland.

India's Performance

India has retained its 131st rank, with its overall parity score rising slightly to 64.5%. Since the first edition in 2006, India's overall score has improved by 4.3 percentage points, with much of the long-term improvement coming from Educational Attainment.

India's performance across the four sub-indices is significant:

Dimension	India's 2026 parity score
Economic Participation & Opportunity	41.2%
Educational Attainment	98.1%
Health & Survival	95.7%
Political Empowerment	24.0%
Overall	64.5%

India's Economic Participation and Opportunity score increased by 0.5 percentage points from the previous edition. However, it remains substantially below parity. The country's parity in professional and technical workers has improved considerably, rising from 26.6% in 2006 to 49.9% in 2026.

India and Political Empowerment

Political representation remains an important component of India's overall gender-gap score. The WEF's 2026 index shows that political empowerment is globally the weakest of the four dimensions, with only 22.1% of the global gap closed.

The index considers women's representation in parliament, ministerial positions and years with a female head of state over the previous 50 years. Globally, parity is highest in parliamentary representation, followed by ministerial representation, while the historical representation of women as heads of state remains particularly low.

Significance for India

India's performance demonstrates a mixed pattern across different dimensions of gender parity. Educational attainment is close to parity, while health outcomes are also relatively high. In contrast, the larger gaps in economic participation and political empowerment indicate areas where gender disparities remain more pronounced.

The WEF's 2026 report also examines emerging areas such as women's representation in senior leadership, high-value industries, financial markets and artificial-intelligence-related occupations. It highlights that women remain underrepresented in several of the roles carrying the greatest economic influence; women account for 19.1% of CEO positions globally, while fewer than one in five AI engineers are women.

Overall Significance

The Global Gender Gap Index 2026 provides a long-term assessment of gender parity over two decades. While global progress has continued, the report indicates that advancement is uneven across sectors and economies. For India, the 131st position remains unchanged, even as its overall score has improved slightly.

The findings underline the continuing importance of expanding women's economic opportunities, workforce participation, leadership representation and political participation, alongside maintaining progress already achieved in education and health.

72nd National Film Awards 2026 at Ekta Nagar



Why in the News?

The 72nd National Film Awards honoured Indian films certified during 2024. The winners were announced on 18 July 2026, and the awards were presented by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, on 22 September 2026 at Ekta Nagar, Kevadia, Gujarat. The ceremony

marked a significant milestone, as the awards were held outside New Delhi for the first time.

The awards recognised outstanding achievements in Indian cinema across feature films, non-feature films, technical categories, acting, direction and writing on cinema. Veteran actor Anant Nag was conferred the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2024 in recognition of his contribution to Indian cinema.

About the National Film Awards

The National Film Awards are among India's most prominent honours for excellence in cinema. Instituted in 1954, they are conferred annually by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

The awards aim to recognise artistic excellence, creativity, technical innovation and meaningful contributions to Indian filmmaking. They also celebrate the country's linguistic, cultural and regional diversity by honouring films and artists from different parts of India.

The awards cover three broad areas:

1. Feature Films: Recognition of full-length films across various languages and categories.
2. Non-Feature Films: Recognition of short films, documentaries and other non-feature cinematic works.
3. Writing on Cinema: Recognition of contributions to film criticism, research and literature related to cinema.

The awards also recognise individual achievements in acting, direction, music, cinematography, editing and other technical disciplines.

Major Award Winners

The 72nd edition honoured films and artists from different linguistic and cinematic backgrounds. The major awardees included:

Award Category	Winner
Best Feature Film	Article 370
Best Actor in a Leading Role	Kartik Aaryan (Chandu Champion) and Mammootty (Bramayugam)
Best Actress in a Leading Role	Yami Gautam (Article 370)
Best Direction	Rajkumar Periasamy (Amaran)
Best Debut Film of a Director	Randeep Hooda (Swatantrya Veer Savarkar)
Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment	Kalki 2898 AD
Best Non-Feature Film	Bhangaar
Best Documentary	Ram-Nami

Dadasaheb Phalke Award

The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest honour in the field of cinema. It is conferred in recognition of an individual's outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema.

For the 2024 award year, veteran actor Anant Nag received the honour at the 72nd National Film Awards ceremony. With a career spanning more than five decades, he has made significant contributions to Kannada cinema and Indian filmmaking through his work in films across different languages and genres.

Important Highlights

1. Recognition of Indian Cinema's Diversity

The awards acknowledged films from multiple Indian languages, highlighting the diversity of the country's film industry. Regional cinema, independent productions and mainstream commercial films received recognition across different categories.

2. Recognition of Technical Excellence

Apart from acting and direction, the awards recognise contributions in cinematography, editing, sound design, music, choreography and other technical areas. These categories highlight the collaborative nature of filmmaking and the role of technical professionals in cinematic storytelling.

3. Celebration of Regional and Non-Feature Films

The awards provide a national platform for films produced in different languages and formats. Non-feature films and documentaries are also recognised for their contributions to storytelling, cultural documentation and social awareness.

4. First Ceremony Outside New Delhi

The 72nd National Film Awards ceremony was held at Ekta Nagar, Kevadia, Gujarat, on 22 September 2026. The decision to take the ceremony beyond Delhi was presented as part of an effort to showcase India's cultural diversity and connect the awards with different regions of the country.

Significance of the National Film Awards

The National Film Awards play an important role in promoting quality filmmaking and recognising creative and technical contributions to Indian cinema.

- Promotion of cultural diversity: They provide national recognition to films from different languages, regions and cultural traditions.
- Encouragement of creativity: The awards recognise innovation in storytelling, direction, acting and filmmaking techniques.
- Recognition of independent cinema: Dedicated categories for non-feature films and documentaries provide visibility to works beyond mainstream commercial cinema.
- Preservation of cinematic heritage: Recognition of films and filmmakers contributes to the documentation and appreciation of India's cinematic history.
- Support for the film industry: National recognition can enhance the visibility of filmmakers, artists and technical professionals.

Overall Significance

The 72nd National Film Awards celebrated Indian cinema's artistic, cultural and technical achievements for the year 2024. The recognition of Article 370, Chandu Champion, Bramayugam and Amaran, along with the conferment of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award on Anant Nag, highlighted the range of contributions acknowledged by the awards.

The ceremony at Ekta Nagar also marked a change in the geographical setting of the event, reinforcing the awards' national character and their role in celebrating India's diverse cinematic traditions.

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