

Weekly Current Affairs 23rd August to 29th August 2026

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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

FIR registered against Abhijeet Dipke for 'entering government school without permission, threatening teachers'

In the News: Police in Maharashtra's Latur district registered an FIR against Cockroach Janta Party convenor Abhijeet Dipke and others for allegedly entering a Zilla Parishad Urdu school at Jawali without permission, disrupting official work and threatening teachers. The visit was reportedly part of Dipke's "School Thik Karo" campaign highlighting problems in government schools.

Key Points:

- **Case and Location:** The FIR was registered at AUSA Police Station in Latur district, Maharashtra, following a complaint by a teacher of the Zilla Parishad Urdu school. Dipke and his associates allegedly entered classrooms, interacted with students and filmed the proceedings without permission.
- **BNS Provisions Invoked:** Police invoked Sections 132, 329(3), 351(2) and 356(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. These relate respectively to deterring a public servant from duty, house-trespass, criminal intimidation and criminal defamation.
- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita:** The BNS, 2023 replaced the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and came into force on July 1, 2024. It forms part of India's three new criminal laws along with the BNSS and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam.
- **FIR under New Criminal Procedure:** Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, Section 173 deals with information relating to cognizable offences. It permits such information to be given orally or electronically to the officer in charge of a police station.
- **Campaign Background:** Dipke has been visiting government schools in Latur under the "School Thik Karo" campaign, focusing on infrastructure and quality-related concerns. The allegations in the FIR remain subject to investigation and do not by themselves establish guilt.

SIR reports 16.38 lakh deceased voters, four times Karnataka's average annual deaths

In the News: Karnataka's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls identified about 16.38 lakh electors as deceased, a figure reported to be roughly four times the State's average annual number of deaths. Overall, more than 1.08 crore electors were classified under the Absent, Shifted, Duplicate, Dead and Others, or ASDDO, category.

Key Points:

- **Scale of ASDDO List:** Around 1.08 crore electors, or 19.54% of Karnataka's electorate, remained under the ASDDO category after the enumeration exercise. This included permanently shifted, deceased, absent or untraceable and duplicate electors.
- **Major Categories:** The ASDDO list included approximately 65.61 lakh permanently shifted electors, 16.38 lakh deceased electors, 15.28 lakh absent/untraceable electors and 7.07 lakh duplicate entries. The deceased figure may include names accumulated on the rolls over several years rather than deaths occurring during a single year.
- **Constitutional Authority:** Article 324 of the Constitution vests the superintendence, direction and control of electoral-roll preparation and elections in the Election Commission of India. Electoral-roll preparation is principally governed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950.
- **Draft and Claims Process:** Karnataka's draft electoral roll was scheduled for publication on August 24, 2026, followed by a claims-and-objections period up to September 23. An elector omitted from a draft roll has an opportunity to seek inclusion before finalisation.
- **Form 6:** Form 6, prescribed under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, is used for applying for inclusion of a name in an electoral roll. The SIR exercise is therefore not by itself the final determination of every flagged elector's eligibility.

India Launches First Non-GMO High-Expansion Popcorn Maize Hybrid

In the News: Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan launched India's first **non-GMO, high-expansion popcorn maize hybrid seed** at Musunuru in Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh. Developed by **Gourmet Popcornica**, the indigenous hybrid is aimed at reducing India's dependence on imported popcorn-maize seed technology and strengthening agricultural self-reliance.

Key Points:

- **Launch and Developer:** The hybrid was launched at the Gourmet Popcornica facility at **Musunuru, Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh**. Gourmet Popcornica developed the indigenous seed after India had relied significantly on imported hybrid technology for premium popcorn maize.
- **What Does Non-GMO Mean?:** Non-GMO refers to a crop that has not been produced through genetic modification techniques involving deliberate alteration of genetic material. A hybrid, however, can still be produced through conventional breeding by crossing selected parental lines.
- **Importance of High-Expansion Maize:** "Expansion" refers to the increase in volume when a popcorn kernel is heated and pops. High-expansion varieties are important for commercial popcorn production because they produce larger popped flakes and are preferred by the processing industry.
- **Role of ICAR-IIMR:** The **ICAR-Indian Institute of Maize Research (IIMR)** is India's premier national institute for maize research and is headquartered at **Ludhiana, Punjab**. Its mandate covers maize productivity as well as speciality corn, including popcorn, quality-protein maize and baby corn.
- **Self-Reliance in Popcorn Maize:** India's popcorn-maize ecosystem has expanded substantially through domestic breeding, scientific cultivation and processing. ICAR-IIMR and Gourmet Popcornica have also collaborated since 2021 on IIMR-bred popcorn hybrids, supporting import substitution and farmer-oriented value chains.

India Produces First 100% Indigenous AK-203 'Sher' Rifle

In the News: India has manufactured and successfully test-fired the first AK-203 'Sher' assault rifle made with 100% Indian components and input materials at the Korwa facility in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh. The rifle was produced by Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited as part of India's defence-indigenisation programme.

Key Points:

- **Manufacturing Facility:** The AK-203 is manufactured at Korwa in Amethi district, Uttar Pradesh, by Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited. The latest prototype achieved complete localisation through Indian components and input materials.
- **India-Russia Joint Venture:** IRRPL was established under a 2019 India-Russia Inter-Governmental Agreement. The Indian side holds 50.5% equity, while Rosoboronexport and Concern Kalashnikov together hold 49.5%.
- **Defence Contract:** In December 2021, the Ministry of Defence signed a contract for 6,01,427 AK-203 assault rifles. These rifles are intended to modernise the Indian Armed Forces' small-arms inventory and progressively replace older INSAS rifles.
- **Indigenisation Milestone:** The achievement represents an important step under Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing. It demonstrates greater localisation of weapons production and technology transfer within India.
- **AK-203 Features:** The AK-203 belongs to the Kalashnikov AK-200 series and uses the 7.62 × 39 mm cartridge. It is designed as a modern assault rifle for infantry and other combat units.

Tamil Nadu to Introduce TN-ARIVU Curriculum from 2027-28

In the News: Tamil Nadu has announced the introduction of the TN-ARIVU curriculum from the 2027-28 academic year for Classes I to XII. The framework will focus on analytical thinking, reasoning, innovation, entrepreneurship, upskilling, Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies.

Key Points:

- **Meaning of ARIVU:** TN-ARIVU stands for Analytical Thinking, Reasoning, Innovation, Venture and Entrepreneurship, and Upskilling. It seeks to promote reasoning, problem-solving, employability and future-oriented skills.
- **Three-Level Structure:** ARIVU Foundation will cover Classes I-V, ARIVU Discovery Classes VI-VIII, and ARIVU Edge Classes IX-XII. The stages progressively move from foundational skills to advanced employability and life skills.

- **TN-PAL Initiative:** Tamil Nadu will pilot Personalised Adaptive Learning for Classes VI-VIII in 500 government middle schools. AI-based assessments will be used to identify individual learning gaps and provide personalised practice.
- **Mathichudar Scheme:** The Mathichudar Scheme will focus on competency-based assessment and Higher-Order Thinking Skills for Classes VI-XII. It aims to strengthen conceptual understanding and analytical abilities among students.

Exercise Udara Shakti 2026

In the News: The Indian Air Force concluded its participation in Exercise Udara Shakti 2026, a bilateral air exercise with the Royal Malaysian Air Force, in August 2026. Conducted at Subang Air Base, Malaysia, the exercise focused on tactical air-combat training, interoperability and operational exchanges.

Key Points:

- **Participating Countries:** Udara Shakti is a bilateral air exercise between India and Malaysia involving the Indian Air Force and Royal Malaysian Air Force. It strengthens military cooperation and interoperability between the two countries.
- **Venue:** The 2026 edition was conducted at Subang Air Base in Malaysia. Personnel participated in joint field training, mission-planning exercises and Subject Matter Expert Exchanges.
- **Air-Combat Component:** Indian Air Force personnel conducted tactical engagements involving Malaysian Su-30MKM and F/A-18 Hornet aircraft. The exercises helped refine air-combat tactics and operational coordination.
- **Previous Edition:** Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 was held at Kuantan, Malaysia. India participated with Su-30MKI fighters, while Malaysia operated its Su-30MKM aircraft.
- **Link with Pitch Black:** Udara Shakti 2026 followed the IAF's participation in Exercise Pitch Black hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force. Pitch Black is a major multinational air-combat exercise.

India's 1st Non-GMO High-Expansion Popcorn Maize Hybrid Seed

In the News: Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan launched India's first indigenous non-GMO, high-expansion popcorn maize hybrid seed on August 24, 2026, at Musunuru in Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh. Developed by Gourmet Popcornica, the hybrid is aimed at reducing dependence on imported popcorn-maize seed technology and strengthening domestic agricultural innovation.

Key Points:

- **Nature of the Hybrid:** The newly launched seed is a non-genetically modified hybrid developed specifically for high-expansion popcorn. High expansion refers to the ability of kernels to produce a larger volume after popping, an important commercial quality parameter in the processed-food industry.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat Link:** Premium popcorn maize in India has depended significantly on imported seed technology. The indigenous hybrid is expected to reduce import dependence, conserve foreign exchange and strengthen domestic capabilities in seed research and development.
- **Farmer-Industry Network:** Gourmet Popcornica works with more than 17,500 farmers across eight States and covers nearly 40,000 acres. Its model links farmers with seed supply, cultivation support, processing, storage, packaging and organised market access.
- **Location to Remember:** The hybrid was launched at Musunuru in Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh. The State has emerged as an important centre for value-added agricultural production and food-processing activities.
- **Hybrid and GMO Distinction:** A hybrid crop is produced by crossing selected parental lines to combine desirable characteristics. A genetically modified organism, in contrast, involves deliberate alteration of genetic material through biotechnology; therefore, a hybrid need not be genetically modified.

Bihar Raises Concerns Over Renewal of Farakka Water Treaty

In the News: Bihar has raised concerns over renewal of the 1996 India-Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty in its existing form. State representatives have asked the Union Government to ensure that Bihar's future requirements for irrigation, drinking water and development are adequately considered before a fresh arrangement is finalised.

Key Points:

- **About the Treaty:** India and Bangladesh signed the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty on December 12, 1996. It provides a formula for sharing Ganga waters at Farakka during the lean season from January 1 to May 31, with allocations calculated in 10-day periods.
- **Bihar's Concerns:** Bihar has cited reduced lean-season water availability, declining groundwater levels and growing irrigation and drinking-water requirements. The State has argued that its future industrial and developmental needs should also be reflected in any renewed agreement.
- **Projected Requirement:** Bihar representatives have stated that the State may require about 2,000 cusecs of additional water by 2050. This figure represents the Bihar government's assessment and has been cited while seeking a fresh scientific evaluation of basin-State requirements.
- **Institutional Mechanism:** Implementation of the treaty is monitored through a Joint Committee comprising representatives of India and Bangladesh. Joint observations of water flows are undertaken at locations including Farakka in India and Hardinge Bridge in Bangladesh.
- **Farakka Barrage:** Located in West Bengal, Farakka is the last major control structure on the Ganga in India before the river enters Bangladesh. The barrage was developed primarily to augment flows in the Bhagirathi-Hooghly system and improve navigability of Kolkata Port.

Kerala Officially Renamed Keralam

In the News: The official name of the State of Kerala was changed to "Keralam" with effect from August 25, 2026, after the Union Home Ministry notified the commencement of the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act, 2026. President Droupadi Murmu had assented to the legislation on August 14, 2026. The change aligns the State's official English name with its Malayalam name, "Keralam".

Key Points:

- **Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act, 2026:** Parliament enacted the law to replace "Kerala" with "Keralam". The Lok Sabha passed the Bill on August 11, 2026 and the Rajya Sabha on August 12, followed by presidential assent on August 14. It became operational from August 25, 2026.
- **Constitutional Provision:** Alteration of the name of a State is undertaken under Article 3 of the Constitution. A Bill for this purpose can be introduced in Parliament only on the President's recommendation, and the President refers it to the concerned State Legislature for its views before introduction.
- **Constitutional Changes:** The Act substitutes "Keralam" for "Kerala" in the First Schedule and Fourth Schedule of the Constitution. Consequential changes are also made to references appearing in Articles 31A and 290A.
- **Background of Demand:** The Keralam Legislative Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution on June 24, 2024, seeking the change. The State argued that "Keralam" is the name traditionally used in Malayalam, while "Kerala" became the commonly used English form.
- **Legal Position:** A law made under Articles 2 or 3 for alteration of State boundaries or names is not treated as a constitutional amendment under Article 368 merely because it modifies the First or Fourth Schedule.

Indian Navy to commission second indigenous diving support vessel Nipun

In the News: The Indian Navy is scheduled to commission Nipun, its second indigenous Diving Support Vessel of the Nistar class, on August 31, 2026 at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. The vessel was delivered to the Navy by Hindustan Shipyard Limited on July 30, 2026 and will strengthen deep-sea diving and underwater rescue capabilities.

Key Points:

- **Nistar-Class Vessel:** Nipun is the second vessel of the Nistar class and has been indigenously designed and constructed by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam. The first vessel of the class, INS Nistar, was commissioned on July 18, 2025.
- **Specialised Role:** Nipun is designed for deep-sea diving, underwater intervention, salvage and rescue operations. Its modern diving systems allow sustained support to naval divers working in challenging underwater conditions.

- **Submarine Rescue Capability:** The vessel can function as a Mother Ship for the Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV). A DSRV is used to rescue and evacuate sailors from a distressed submarine trapped underwater.
- **Advanced Equipment:** The Nistar-class incorporates saturation-diving systems, remotely operated vehicles and specialised underwater equipment. The first vessel, Nistar, is capable of saturation diving up to **300 metres**, while its remotely operated vehicles can support operations at far greater depths.
- **Indigenisation:** Nipun represents the Navy's push towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence shipbuilding, with the vessel having a high level of indigenous content. Its construction demonstrates domestic capability in highly specialised naval platforms.

Sugar Price Surge in India

In the News: Sugar prices in India have risen sharply ahead of the 2026 festive season amid lower-than-expected production, crop damage and increasing demand. Government data showed the all-India average retail sugar price rising from ₹48.18 per kg on July 20 to ₹55.70 on August 20, before climbing further to ₹65.05 per kg on August 26, 2026."

Key Points:

- **Reasons for the Rise:** The Government attributed the price increase to lower sugar output, festive demand, weather-related crop damage, tightening international supplies and speculative hoarding. Sugarcane production has also been affected by Red Rot, Top Borer and waterlogging caused by excess rainfall.
- **Production Estimate:** Sugar production for the current season is estimated at about 306 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), considerably below the initial State estimates of around 343 LMT. India normally produces about 320–340 LMT annually against domestic consumption of around 280–290 LMT.
- **Duty-Free Imports:** To augment supplies, the Government permitted the duty-free import of 10 LMT, or one million tonnes, of raw sugar. This marks a significant policy intervention as India normally maintains a high import duty on sugar.
- **Anti-Hoarding Measures:** A stock limit of 400 tonnes was imposed on sugar dealers from August 1 to November 30, 2026. From September 1, bulk consumers are also barred from holding stocks exceeding 15 days of consumption, alongside physical stock verification at sugar mills.
- **Ethanol Link Clarified:** The Government stated that ethanol diversion was not responsible for the current price rise. Sugar diversion towards ethanol declined from about 12% in 2022-23 to 9% in 2025-26, while nearly three-fourths of India's ethanol is now produced from grains, particularly maize.

Census 2027: Ladakh Among First Regions to Begin Independent India's First Comprehensive Caste Enumeration

In the News: The Union Territory of Ladakh will conduct Population Enumeration from September 1 to September 30, 2026, ahead of most of India because of its snow-bound conditions. Since caste enumeration forms part of Phase II of Census 2027, Ladakh will be among the first areas where India's first comprehensive caste enumeration after Independence begins.

Key Points:

- **Two-Phase Census:** Census 2027 consists of Phase I, Houselisting and Housing Census, and Phase II, Population Enumeration. For most of India, Population Enumeration will take place in February 2027, while Ladakh and specified snow-bound areas follow an advanced schedule.
- **Special Schedule for Snow-Bound Areas:** Population Enumeration in Ladakh and notified snow-bound areas of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand will run from September 1–30, 2026, followed by a revisional round from October 1–5.
- **Caste Enumeration:** The Government has decided that enumeration of castes will form part of Phase II of Census 2027. Post-Independence censuses have regularly recorded Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but Census 2027 marks the first comprehensive nationwide caste enumeration after Independence.

- **India's First Fully Digital Census:** Census 2027 is being conducted using mobile applications and digital monitoring platforms. It also provides a self-enumeration facility, allowing citizens to submit information through an online portal before house-to-house enumeration.

Census Details: Census 2027 will be the 16th Census of India and the 8th after Independence. The nationwide reference date is March 1, 2027, whereas for Ladakh and specified snow-bound areas the reference date is October 1, 2026.

Gujarat Launches India's First Sports Genomics Programme

In the News: Gujarat has launched India's first state-level Sports Genomics Programme to integrate genetics with sports science, physiology and nutrition. The programme seeks to scientifically profile athletes and improve talent identification, training, recovery and injury management. It is being implemented as Gujarat strengthens its high-performance sports ecosystem ahead of major international events.

Key Points:

- **Implementing Agency:** The programme is being undertaken by the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC), which functions under the State Department of Science and Technology. It is being implemented in coordination with Gujarat's sports authorities.
- **Five-Year Programme:** Gujarat plans to analyse around 10,000 athlete samples over five years, at roughly 2,000 samples annually. The exercise is expected to cover athletes from about 10 sporting disciplines.
- **Athlete Genome Database:** A major proposed outcome is the Gujarat Athlete Genome Database, combining genetic, physiological and performance information. It can support scientific athlete profiling and evidence-based talent identification.
- **Use of Sports Genomics:** Sports genomics studies how genetic variations may influence endurance, power, recovery, injury susceptibility and response to training. The programme aims to use such information to develop more personalised training and nutrition strategies.

Ladakh to Get High Court Bench After President's Approval

In the News: President Droupadi Murmu promulgated a regulation on August 27, 2026 enabling sittings of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh within Ladakh. The measure followed the Union Cabinet's approval and seeks to provide easier access to higher judicial services for people living in the geographically remote Union Territory.

Key Points:

- **Name of Regulation:** The measure is called the Union Territory of Ladakh (Sitting of Bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh in Ladakh) Regulation, 2026. It was published in the Gazette of India Extraordinary on August 27, 2026.
- **Constitutional Provision:** The Regulation was promulgated under Article 240 of the Constitution, read with Section 58(2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. Article 240 empowers the President to make regulations for specified Union Territories.
- **Common High Court:** Ladakh is not getting a separate High Court. The measure allows the existing common High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh to hold sittings within the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- **Location of Sittings:** Judges and Division Courts may sit at a place in Ladakh appointed by the Chief Justice, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh. The Chief Justice retains administrative control over allocation of cases.
- **Purpose of the Move:** Residents of Ladakh have traditionally had to travel considerable distances for High Court proceedings. The new arrangement is intended to reduce travel, time and costs while improving access to constitutional and appellate remedies.

Tamil Nadu Notifies Three Elephant Corridors in Hosur Forest Division

In the News: The Tamil Nadu government has formally notified three elephant corridors in the Hosur Forest Division. Located within the Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary and adjoining forest areas, the corridors together cover more than

10,300 hectares and are intended to maintain elephant movement and habitat connectivity between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Key Points:

- **Three Corridors:** The notified corridors are Jawalagiri–Ulibanda–Thaggatti, Jawalagiri–Panai–Anchetty, and Billikkal–Jawalagiri. All are situated in the ecologically important Hosur landscape.
- **Largest Corridor:** Jawalagiri–Panai–Anchetty is the largest of the three, covering about 6,881.47 hectares and extending roughly 20.90 km. It constitutes the majority of the area covered by the notification.
- **Other Corridors:** Jawalagiri–Ulibanda–Thaggatti covers about 3,241.53 hectares over 18.5 km, while Billikkal–Jawalagiri extends around 2.2 km and covers approximately 196 hectares.
- **Ecological Importance:** Elephant corridors connect otherwise fragmented habitats and permit seasonal movement, feeding, breeding and genetic exchange. The Hosur landscape is especially important for trans-boundary elephant movement between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- **Legal-Land Status:** The three notified corridors already fall within reserve forests or protected sanctuary areas. Their recognition as corridors strengthens formal conservation planning and habitat connectivity.

INTERNATIONAL

Carney stands up to Trump: Likely fallout of US-Canada trade war

In the News: Canada-U.S. trade tensions escalated after negotiations collapsed and the United States imposed 50% tariffs on about \$20 billion worth of Canadian goods. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney rejected the proposed terms and announced matching retaliatory tariffs on selected U.S. goods beginning September 8, 2026.

Key Points:

- **Escalating Tariff Dispute:** The latest U.S. duties cover a range of Canadian exports and follow failed negotiations over sectors including steel, aluminium, automobiles and softwood lumber. Canada has announced a dollar-for-dollar tariff response to the new measures.
- **USMCA/CUSMA:** Trade among Canada, the U.S. and Mexico is governed by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, known in Canada as CUSMA. It entered into force on July 1, 2020, replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA.
- **2026 Joint Review:** The agreement contains a mechanism for a joint review in 2026, making the present dispute particularly significant for the future architecture of North American trade. CUSMA covers goods, services, investment, labour, environment and dispute settlement.
- **Canada's U.S. Dependence:** Roughly three-fourths of Canadian merchandise exports have traditionally gone to the United States, making Canada particularly exposed to prolonged tariff barriers. The dispute has consequently renewed Canadian efforts to diversify export markets and investment ties.
- **Historical Trade Framework:** Before USMCA, continental trade was governed by **NAFTA**, which came into force in 1994. The present confrontation therefore marks a significant strain on more than three decades of deep North American economic integration.

Eyes on Xi visit, 'early harvest' as Doval heads to Beijing

In the News: National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is visiting Beijing on August 24, 2026, ahead of the 25th round of India-China Special Representatives talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The engagement comes before the expected visit of President Xi Jinping to India for the BRICS Summit in September.

Key Points:

- **Special Representatives Mechanism:** India and China established the Special Representatives mechanism in 2003 to seek a political settlement of the boundary question. Ajit Doval represents India, while Politburo member and Foreign Minister Wang Yi represents China.

- **25th Round of Talks:** Doval and Wang Yi are scheduled to hold the 25th round of SR talks on August 25, 2026. Discussions are expected to cover boundary management, peace along the Line of Actual Control and progress towards boundary delimitation.
- **2005 Agreement:** A major framework is the Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question, signed in 2005. It calls for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution covering all sectors of the boundary.
- **'Early Harvest' Concept:** India and China have discussed exploring an early-harvest arrangement in boundary delimitation, potentially producing agreement in less contentious sectors before an overall settlement. An Expert Group under the WMCC has been associated with examining such possibilities.
- **Xi Jinping Visit:** Xi Jinping is expected to visit India for the BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 12–13, 2026. His previous visit to India was in 2019, when he attended the second India-China informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Mamallapuram.

US Launches Operation Economic Outcast Against Iran

In the News: The United States launched Operation Economic Outcast, a sanctions campaign targeting Iran and entities supporting its international economic networks. The initiative seeks to increase Iran's financial isolation and expand the application of secondary sanctions.

Key Points:

- **Lead Agency:** The campaign is being led by the US Department of the Treasury. Its objective is to disrupt financial and commercial networks through which Iran earns revenue and obtains technology.
- **Targeted Sectors:** The United States expanded sanctions exposure across sectors such as digital assets, technology, gold, aviation and shipping. Foreign entities engaging in specified sanctioned activities can face restrictions.
- **OFAC Role:** The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control is responsible for administering and enforcing major US economic and trade sanctions. OFAC designations can freeze assets under US jurisdiction and restrict transactions.
- **Legal Authorities:** US sanctions against Iran operate through several executive orders dealing with weapons proliferation, terrorism, cyber activities and specific sectors of the Iranian economy.
- **Secondary Sanctions:** Secondary sanctions can apply to non-US persons and companies engaging in prohibited transactions with sanctioned entities. This gives US sanctions significant implications for international finance, shipping and energy trade.

US Launches Operation Economic Outcast Against Iran

In the News: The United States launched "Operation Economic Outcast" on August 24, 2026, as a broad economic-pressure campaign against Iran. Led by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the initiative seeks to restrict revenue, procurement channels and international financial access linked to the Iranian regime, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and sanctions-evasion networks.

Key Points:

- **Lead Agency:** The operation is being spearheaded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent described it as a sustained, whole-of-government economic-pressure initiative undertaken at the direction of President Donald Trump.
- **Initial Sanctions:** The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned nearly 60 entities, individuals and vessels across multiple jurisdictions. The targets were linked to oil revenues, military procurement, cyber operations and networks allegedly used to evade existing sanctions.
- **Five Critical Sectors:** The United States expanded potential secondary-sanctions exposure to activities involving digital assets, technology, gold, aviation and shipping. These sectors were identified as important channels for revenue generation, procurement and international transactions.
- **Secondary Sanctions:** Secondary sanctions may affect non-U.S. persons or companies that conduct specified dealings with sanctioned Iranian actors. Such measures can restrict access to the U.S. financial system, giving American sanctions significant influence over international commercial activity.

- **IRGC Connection:** The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps remains a major focus of U.S. sanctions policy toward Iran. Washington has targeted IRGC-linked revenue, procurement and financial networks that it alleges support Iran's military and strategic programmes.

Mumbai Debuts in IWG 2026 Work From Anywhere Index With 77

In the News: Mumbai made its debut in the International Workplace Group's 2026 Work From Anywhere Index, becoming the only Indian city included in the ranking. The city recorded an overall score of 77 and ranked ahead of several prominent international destinations, including London and Miami.

Key Points:

- **Top-Ranked Cities:** Bangkok topped the 2026 index with a score of 106.5, followed by Tokyo with 96.5 and Barcelona with 95.5. Mumbai entered the fourth edition of the index with a score of 77.
- **Parameters Used:** The index assesses destinations on factors such as climate, broadband connectivity, accommodation, transport, food, culture and availability of flexible workspaces. It measures their suitability for combining remote work with travel and extended stays.
- **Mumbai's Performance:** Mumbai performed relatively well on parameters such as transport costs, climate, accommodation and availability of flexible workspaces. Its weaker areas included broadband quality, local events and some lifestyle-related indicators.
- **India's Flexible Workspace Market:** India had around 79.7 million sq. ft. of flexible workspace across its top eight cities in Q2 2025. By 2026, subsequent industry estimates reported that the sector had crossed the 100-million-sq.-ft. mark, reflecting rapid expansion.
- **About IWG:** International Workplace Group is a major global provider of flexible and hybrid workspace solutions. For competitive examinations, remember Bangkok as the 2026 topper, Mumbai's score of 77 and Mumbai being the only Indian city in the index.

Thailand Introduces New Amnesty Act

In the News: Thailand's Peaceful Society Promotion Act came into force on August 24, 2026, granting amnesty for a range of political offences linked to nearly two decades of political unrest. The law could benefit around 6,000 people, but excludes offences involving the monarchy, corruption and serious violence.

Key Points:

- **Period Covered:** The law applies to qualifying political offences committed between January 1, 2005 and July 15, 2025. Eligible persons may receive relief through release from imprisonment, termination of investigations, dismissal of proceedings or clearing of criminal records.
- **Major Exclusions:** The amnesty does not cover lèse-majesté offences, corruption or offences resulting in death or serious injury. This means several activists prosecuted in cases involving criticism of the monarchy remain outside its protection.
- **Article 112:** Thailand's lèse-majesté law is contained in Article 112 of the Criminal Code. It criminalises specified forms of insult, defamation or threat against the King, Queen, heir-apparent or Regent and has remained politically contentious.
- **Implementation Mechanism:** A committee chaired by the Prime Minister of Thailand is responsible for determining eligibility under the amnesty framework. The legislation was approved by lawmakers before being published in the Royal Gazette.

Trump Announces 50% Tariffs on Canadian Vehicles

In the News: U.S. President Donald Trump on August 24, 2026, threatened to raise tariffs on Canadian-made cars, trucks and automotive parts to 50% from January 1, 2027. The announcement followed the breakdown of bilateral trade negotiations and marked a further escalation in trade tensions between the United States and Canada.

Key Points:

- **Proposed Tariff:** The threatened 50% tariff would apply to Canadian cars, trucks and automotive parts from January 1, 2027. As of the announcement, the measure was a proposed future tariff and had not yet come into force.
- **Failed Trade Negotiations:** Talks had considered lowering the headline U.S. tariff on Canadian cars and light-duty trucks from 25% to 15%. Negotiations, however, failed to produce an agreement because of unresolved issues involving automobiles, steel, aluminium and heavier vehicles.
- **Integrated Auto Industry:** The United States and Canada have highly integrated automotive supply chains, with components frequently crossing the border during different stages of production. Higher tariffs could therefore raise manufacturing costs and disrupt production networks on both sides.
- **Canada's Response:** On August 25, 2026, Canada announced retaliatory tariffs covering approximately \$20 billion worth of U.S. imports. The measures were scheduled to take effect from September 8, 2026, as Ottawa responded to escalating American trade measures.
- **USMCA Framework:** Trade among the United States, Canada and Mexico operates under the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement, which replaced NAFTA in 2020. The automobile dispute is therefore relevant to questions on regional trade agreements, tariffs and North American supply chains.

SCO Summit 2026 in Bishkek: Dates, Venue, Agenda and Member States

In the News: Kyrgyzstan will host the 2026 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit in Bishkek, with the wider SCO and SCO Plus programme scheduled for August 31–September 1, 2026. The formal meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State is scheduled for September 1. The summit coincides with the organisation's 25th anniversary and is being held under Kyrgyzstan's chairmanship.

Key Points:

- **Dates and Venue:** The Council of Heads of State will meet in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, on September 1, 2026. Preparatory meetings have been conducted under the Kyrgyz chairmanship, with draft summit documents being finalised ahead of the leaders' meeting.
- **Major Agenda:** Cooperation against terrorism, separatism and extremism is expected to remain a major security focus. Leaders will also discuss regional stability, trade and economic cooperation, transport, energy security, environmental issues and broader international developments.
- **Bishkek Declaration:** Foreign Ministers have prepared the draft Bishkek Declaration on the 25th Anniversary of the SCO along with thematic statements and decisions for consideration by the leaders. Energy cooperation and energy-efficiency initiatives are also expected among the summit outcomes.
- **SCO Membership:** The SCO currently has 10 full members: Belarus, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan became full members in 2017, Iran joined in 2023 and Belarus became the tenth member in 2024.
- **Organisation Facts:** The SCO was founded in Shanghai in 2001, evolving from the earlier "Shanghai Five" mechanism. Its permanent Secretariat is headquartered in Beijing, while the Executive Committee of its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, or RATS, is based in Tashkent; Chinese and Russian are its official languages.

HAL and Safran Sign Deal to Develop Aravalli Helicopter Engine

In the News: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and France-based Safran Helicopter Engines signed a final contract with their joint venture, SAFHAL Helicopter Engines, for the development and production of the **Aravalli** helicopter engine. The new-generation engine will power HAL's upcoming Indian Multi-Role Helicopter and its naval variant. The programme is expected to strengthen India's indigenous aero-engine capabilities.

Key Points:

- **About Aravalli Engine:** Aravalli will be a new-generation high-power turboshaft engine in the **3,500–4,000 shaft-horsepower class**. It will be designed, developed, manufactured and supported through SAFHAL, combining HAL's helicopter experience with Safran's expertise in propulsion technology.
- **Helicopters to Use the Engine:** The engine has been selected to power HAL's proposed **13-tonne Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH)**. It will also power the **Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH)**, the naval variant being developed for maritime operations.

- **About SAFHAL:** SAFHAL Helicopter Engines Pvt. Ltd. is a joint venture between **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** and **Safran Helicopter Engines**. It has been created to develop advanced helicopter propulsion technologies and build long-term indigenous capabilities in design, manufacturing, testing and engine support.
- **HAL-Safran Cooperation:** Safran has a long association with Indian helicopter programmes. Its Artouste engines powered the Cheetah and Chetak helicopters, while the **Shakti engine family** powers platforms such as the Advanced Light Helicopter, Light Combat Helicopter and Light Utility Helicopter.

Meghalaya Assembly Passes Resolution Against Uranium Mining

In the News: The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution opposing **uranium mining and uranium ore-processing facilities** anywhere in the state. The resolution was moved by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma and received the support of all members of the Assembly. It reflects long-standing public concerns over mining in uranium-bearing areas of Meghalaya.

Key Points:

- **Unanimous Assembly Resolution:** The resolution was moved by Chief Minister **Conrad K. Sangma**, who also holds the Mining and Geology portfolio. All 60 members of the Meghalaya Assembly supported the move, giving it the status of a collective political position of the state.
- **KPM Uranium Project:** The resolution specifically opposes the proposed **Kylleng-Pyndengsohiong-Mawthabab Uranium Mining Project** in the West Khasi Hills region. The Assembly has urged authorities not to permit or pursue uranium mining or processing activities in Meghalaya.
- **Role of UCIL:** Uranium mining in India is undertaken primarily by the **Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL)**, a public-sector enterprise under the Department of Atomic Energy. The Meghalaya resolution asks the Union Government, Department of Atomic Energy and UCIL not to undertake such projects in the state.
- **Sixth Schedule Link:** Large parts of Meghalaya are governed under the **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution**, which provides special administrative arrangements for tribal areas. Land in these regions is frequently held under community, clan and customary ownership systems administered through Autonomous District Councils.
- **Land and Mineral Rights:** The Meghalaya government referred to the Supreme Court's ruling in the **All Dimas Students Union case**, which recognised that landowners in Meghalaya possess rights over both the surface and sub-soil, including minerals. This makes customary land rights particularly significant in debates over mining projects.

India to Host 18th BRICS Summit in Delhi

In the News: India will host the 18th BRICS Summit at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on September 12–13, 2026. Leaders of BRICS member countries, partner countries and outreach invitees are expected to participate. India holds the BRICS Chairship for 2026, its fourth term leading the grouping.

Key Points:

- **Venue and Chairship:** The summit will be held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, under India's BRICS Chairship. India assumed the chairship at the beginning of 2026 after Brazil and is coordinating the grouping's meetings and initiatives throughout the year.
- **Theme of BRICS 2026:** India's chairship is guided by the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability." It reflects a people-centric approach based on the idea of "Humanity First" and focuses on practical, development-oriented cooperation.
- **Current BRICS Membership:** BRICS has 11 full members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia. Pakistan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian states mentioned in the screenshot are not full BRICS members.
- **Evolution of BRICS:** The grouping began as BRIC, comprising Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa joined in 2011, after which it became BRICS. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE joined in the recent expansion, while Indonesia formally became a full member in January 2025.
- **Structure and Cooperation:** BRICS cooperation operates through three broad pillars: political and security cooperation, economic and financial cooperation, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges. India has conducted more than 350 meetings and high-level engagements across over 25 cities under its 2026 chairship.

- **Partner Country Category:** BRICS also has a separate partner-country category, created at the Kazan Summit. India's 2026 Ministry of External Affairs material records 10 partner countries, distinct from the 11 full members. Partner status allows participation in selected BRICS meetings but does not confer full membership or equal decision-making rights.
- **India and BRICS:** India is a founding member and previously held the BRICS Chairship in 2012, 2016 and 2021. The 2026 chairship is India's fourth, and the year also marks 20 years since the BRIC diplomatic process began in 2006.

NABARD and NaBFID Sign Pact for Rural Infrastructure

In the News: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly support infrastructure projects with significant rural impact. The partnership combines NABARD's rural-development expertise with NaBFID's specialised infrastructure-financing capabilities.

Key Points:

- **Purpose of the MoU:** The agreement provides a framework for **joint financing, knowledge sharing and innovative financing solutions**. It seeks to improve access to long-term and competitively priced funding for infrastructure projects capable of strengthening rural economies and value chains.
- **Priority Infrastructure Areas:** Cooperation will cover sectors including **water and sanitation, irrigation, post-harvest storage, cold chains, rural roads and bridges, terminal markets and warehousing**. Compressed biogas infrastructure is also among the areas identified for possible support.
- **About NABARD:** NABARD is India's apex development financial institution for agriculture and rural development. It was established under the **NABARD Act, 1981** and began operations in 1982, with responsibilities covering rural credit, infrastructure, institutional development and financial inclusion.
- **About NaBFID:** NaBFID is a specialised **Development Finance Institution** established under the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Act, 2021. Its mandate includes supporting long-term infrastructure financing and promoting deeper bond and derivatives markets in India.
- **Complementary Roles:** NABARD brings extensive experience in agriculture, rural infrastructure and rural financial systems, while NaBFID specialises in financing large infrastructure projects. Their partnership is intended to mobilise more institutional capital into projects that connect rural areas with wider markets and economic networks.

Trump Renames Lake Ontario as Lake America in US

In the News: U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing that Lake Ontario be referred to as "Lake America" for U.S. federal purposes. The order requires the new name to be used in federal maps, databases and official documents. Canada has rejected the change and continues to officially recognise the water body as Lake Ontario.

Key Points:

- **Scope of the Renaming:** The change applies only to official usage by the United States federal government. It does not legally require Canada, international organisations or other countries to adopt the name "Lake America". U.S. federal agencies are responsible for updating maps and geographic records.
- **About Lake Ontario:** Lake Ontario is the easternmost of the five Great Lakes of North America. It is bordered by the U.S. state of New York and the Canadian province of Ontario. Its waters ultimately drain into the Atlantic Ocean through the St. Lawrence River.
- **The Five Great Lakes:** The Great Lakes comprise Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario. Together, they form one of the largest freshwater systems on Earth. Lake Michigan is the only one located entirely within the United States, while the remaining four are shared with Canada.
- **Canada's Position:** Canadian authorities have rejected the new U.S. designation and continue to use the historic name Lake Ontario. Since the lake forms part of the international boundary between the two countries, its identity also has geographical and diplomatic significance.
- **Related U.S. Renaming Measures:** The move follows earlier U.S. federal decisions to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America and restore the name Mount McKinley for Denali. These measures form part of a broader policy of changing federal geographical names.

Nepal disaster: What is a glacier collapse and how does it happen?

In the News: A major glacier collapse near the Nepal-Tibet region triggered a destructive combination of ice, rock and debris movement through Himalayan valleys. The event caused severe flooding and disruption in downstream settlements. Authorities also monitored newly formed water bodies for the possibility of further flooding.

Key Points:

- **What Is a Glacier Collapse?** A glacier collapse occurs when a large mass of glacier ice suddenly detaches and rapidly moves downhill. On steep mountain slopes, the ice can gather rocks, snow and sediments, transforming into a fast-moving avalanche or debris flow.
- **How It Happens:** Glacier instability may increase when surface melting allows water to enter fractures within the ice. Steep slopes, weakening rock, changing snowfall patterns and thawing frozen ground can further reduce the stability of the glacier and surrounding mountain terrain.
- **Glacier Collapse and GLOF:** A glacier collapse is different from a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood, or GLOF. A glacier collapse involves the physical failure and movement of ice, while a GLOF occurs when water stored in a glacial lake is suddenly released after the failure of a natural barrier.
- **Himalayan Vulnerability:** The Himalayan region contains thousands of glaciers and glacial lakes across India, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Pakistan. Rapid changes in temperature, glacier retreat and unstable mountain slopes can increase the risk of avalanches, landslides and sudden floods.
- **Monitoring and Preparedness:** Satellite observation, remote sensing, automatic weather stations and early-warning systems are increasingly important in high-altitude regions. Cross-border information sharing is also necessary because many Himalayan river systems flow through more than one country.

Trump Announces Major Venezuela Oil Deal Involving About \$100 Billion Investment

In the News: U.S. President Donald Trump announced a major oil arrangement involving Venezuela in late August 2026. The agreement provides access to a group of Venezuelan oilfields containing enormous reserves and is expected to require roughly \$100 billion in private investment to revive ageing oil infrastructure.

Key Points:

- **Scale of the Deal:** The arrangement involves access to 17 strategic oilfields estimated to contain around 65 billion barrels of oil. It has been described as one of the largest oil-related arrangements announced in recent years.
- **\$100-Billion Figure:** The widely reported \$100-billion figure refers primarily to the scale of anticipated private investment needed to rehabilitate and expand Venezuela's oil industry. It is not simply a direct government-to-government payment.
- **Venezuela's Oil Importance:** Venezuela possesses the world's largest proven crude-oil reserves, exceeding 300 billion barrels. However, years of underinvestment, sanctions and deteriorating infrastructure have constrained production.
- **U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve:** Venezuelan oil obtained through the arrangement may also contribute to replenishing the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The reserve is maintained as an emergency crude-oil stockpile.
- **Key Concern:** The agreement faces scrutiny over investment risks, transparency, legal issues and the extensive infrastructure upgrades required. Significant increases in oil output may therefore take time.

ENVIRONMENT

Tamil Nadu Notifies Three New Elephant Corridors

In the News: The Tamil Nadu government notified three elephant corridors in the Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary landscape of the Hosur Forest Division. The corridors are intended to protect traditional elephant movement routes and strengthen habitat connectivity between forests of Tamil Nadu and neighbouring Karnataka.

Key Points:

- **Three Corridors:** The notified routes are Jawalagiri-Ulibanda-Thaggatti, Jawalagiri-Panai-Anchetty and Billikkal-Jawalagiri. These corridors provide important movement pathways for elephants between fragmented forest habitats in the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border region.
- **Location:** The corridors lie in the Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary and the Hosur Forest Division in northern Tamil Nadu. The landscape forms part of a wider forest belt used by elephants and other wildlife for seasonal movement, feeding and breeding.
- **Importance of Elephant Corridors:** Elephant corridors are narrow stretches of habitat connecting larger forest areas. They allow elephants to move safely between habitats, maintain genetic exchange between populations and reduce isolation caused by roads, settlements and other development.
- **Human-Elephant Conflict:** Protecting traditional movement routes can help reduce encounters between elephants and human settlements. Habitat fragmentation often forces elephants to enter agricultural areas, resulting in crop damage, property loss and risks to both people and animals.
- **Project Elephant:** Project Elephant is a Government of India initiative for the conservation of Asian elephants, their habitats and migration routes. It also focuses on reducing human-elephant conflict and improving the management of important elephant landscapes across the country.

SCIENCE AND TECH**India to Acquire US Javelin Missiles After 17-Year Wait**

In the News: The Indian Army signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance with the United States on August 28, 2026 for acquisition of the FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank guided missile system. The procurement will take place through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales mechanism after a long acquisition process.

Key Points:

- **Javelin System:** The FGM-148 Javelin is a man-portable, shoulder-launched anti-tank guided missile. Its fire-and-forget capability allows the operator to move after launch because the missile guides itself towards the target.
- **Official U.S. Package:** The U.S. had approved a possible package comprising Javelin missiles, command launch units, training and logistical support. The acquisition is being pursued under the Foreign Military Sales route.
- **Tank-Killing Capability:** Javelin can use a top-attack mode against tanks, striking the relatively thinner armour on the upper surface. It employs a tandem warhead designed to counter explosive reactive armour.
- **Long Procurement History:** India had been exploring acquisition of Javelin technology for more than a decade. Earlier negotiations did not immediately result in a final purchase, while India also procured Israel's Spike anti-tank guided missiles.
- **Make in India Possibility:** Raytheon and Lockheed Martin's Javelin Joint Venture has also explored cooperation with Tata Advanced Systems for possible co-production of Javelin rounds in India.

IMPORTANT DAYS**National Space Day 2026: Theme, History and Chandrayaan-3 Legacy**

In the News: India observed its third National Space Day on August 23, 2026, commemorating Chandrayaan-3's historic soft landing on the Moon on August 23, 2023. The 2026 theme focuses on innovation, collaboration and India's ambition to emerge as a major global space power.

Key Points:

- **2026 Theme:** The official theme is "Towards Viksit Bharat: Innovating, Collaborating and Aspiring to Global Space Leadership." ISRO centres organised workshops, exhibitions, lectures and outreach programmes around the theme.

- **Origin of National Space Day:** August 23 was designated National Space Day following the successful Chandrayaan-3 lunar landing on August 23, 2023. India celebrated the first National Space Day on August 23, 2024, making the 2026 observance the third edition.
- **Chandrayaan-3 Achievement:** The mission's Vikram lander successfully soft-landed near the Moon's southern polar region and subsequently deployed the Pragyan rover. India became the fourth country to soft-land on the Moon and the first to accomplish a landing in this region.
- **Shiv Shakti Point:** The Chandrayaan-3 landing site was named Shiv Shakti Point. The mission followed Chandrayaan-1, which provided important evidence concerning water molecules on the Moon, and Chandrayaan-2, whose orbiter continued scientific observations despite the lander's unsuccessful soft landing.
- **ISRO:** The Indian Space Research Organisation was established in 1969, succeeding INCOSPAR. Its headquarters is in Bengaluru, and Dr. V. Narayanan is the ISRO Chairman during the 2026 National Space Day observance.

World Sanskrit Day 2026: Date, History, Significance and Key Facts

In the News: World Sanskrit Day 2026 was observed on Shravana Purnima to promote the study, preservation and wider use of Sanskrit. The observance highlights the language's contribution to Indian philosophy, literature, science and cultural traditions. Educational and cultural institutions organise programmes related to Sanskrit learning and scholarship.

Key Points:

- **About the Observance:** World Sanskrit Day is also known as Sanskrit Diwas or Vishva Samskrita Divas. It is observed annually on Shravana Purnima according to the Hindu lunar calendar, so its corresponding Gregorian date changes from year to year.
- **Historical Background:** The observance was formally promoted by the Government of India to encourage Sanskrit education and preserve its literary heritage. Schools, universities and cultural institutions conduct lectures, recitations, seminars and language-related activities on the occasion.
- **Why Shravana Purnima?** Shravana Purnima has traditionally been associated with Vedic learning and the renewal of scholarly study. In ancient educational traditions, the period was considered significant for beginning or resuming the study of sacred texts and Sanskrit literature.
- **Importance of Sanskrit:** Sanskrit is the language of the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, classical philosophical works and a vast body of scientific and literary texts. It has also deeply influenced the vocabulary, grammar and literary traditions of many modern Indian languages.
- **Constitutional Position:** Sanskrit is one of the 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Government and academic institutions continue to promote Sanskrit through teaching, research, digitisation of manuscripts and translation initiatives.

National Sports Day 2026: Why India Celebrates August 29

In the News: India observed National Sports Day on August 29, 2026, commemorating the 121st birth anniversary of legendary hockey player Major Dhyan Chand. The day honours his contribution to Indian hockey while promoting sports participation, fitness and an active lifestyle.

Key Points:

- **Why August 29:** Major Dhyan Chand was born on August 29, 1905, in Allahabad, present-day Prayagraj. His extraordinary hockey skills earned him the popular title "Wizard of Hockey".
- **Olympic Achievements:** Dhyan Chand was part of Indian hockey teams that won Olympic gold medals at Amsterdam 1928, Los Angeles 1932 and Berlin 1936. He captained India at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.
- **National Recognition:** Dhyan Chand was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1956. India's highest sporting honour is now known as the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award.
- **2026 Celebration:** National Sports Day 2026 featured the nationwide "Ek Ghanta Khel Ke Maidan Mein" initiative. It encouraged citizens, particularly young people, to devote at least one hour to sports and physical activity.

SPORTS

Asian Games 2026: Dates, Venues, Sports, Schedule and Everything You Need to Know

In the News: The 20th Asian Games, officially known as Aichi-Nagoya 2026, will be held in Japan from September 19 to October 4, 2026. Aichi Prefecture and Nagoya City are the principal co-hosts, with competitions spread across multiple venues.

Key Points:

- **Edition and Host:** Aichi-Nagoya 2026 will be the 20th edition of the Asian Games. The Olympic Council of Asia awarded the hosting rights to Aichi-Nagoya in 2016.
- **Dates and Duration:** The Games will be held from September 19 to October 4, 2026. Athletes from Asian National Olympic Committees will compete across a wide range of Olympic and Asian sports.
- **Sports Programme:** The official programme includes 43 sports across multiple competition venues. Cricket will be played in the T20 format, while esports will also feature in the programme.
- **Notable Sports:** Padel and Teqball are among the newer disciplines included in the Games. Teqball combines elements of football with a curved-table format similar to table tennis.
- **Mascot and Slogan:** The official mascot is HONOHON, inspired by a flame and the cultural identity of Aichi-Nagoya. The official slogan of the Games is "IMAGINE ONE ASIA".

Praggnanandhaa Becomes First Indian to Win Grand Chess Tour

In the News: Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian player to win the Grand Chess Tour after defeating American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana in the 2026 final. His victory marked another major achievement for Indian chess and strengthened his position among the leading players in world chess.

Key Points:

- **Historic Achievement:** Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian player to win the overall Grand Chess Tour title. The victory added to India's growing presence in elite international chess, following the success of several young Indian Grandmasters in recent years.
- **Final Against Caruana:** Praggnanandhaa defeated Fabiano Caruana of the United States in the championship match. He recovered strongly during the rapid and blitz portions of the contest after facing an early deficit in the overall match score.
- **Grand Chess Tour Format:** The Grand Chess Tour combines tournaments played under classical, rapid and blitz time controls. Players accumulate points across selected events, while leading performers advance to the final stages of the competition.
- **About Praggnanandhaa:** Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa is a Chennai-born Indian chess Grandmaster. He achieved the Grandmaster title at a very young age and later emerged as one of India's strongest players through consistent performances against leading international opponents.
- **Rise of Indian Chess:** India has developed a strong generation of chess players including Praggnanandhaa, D. Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi and others. The country's growing depth in chess has resulted in major achievements across individual and team competitions.

US Open 2026 Prize Money: Record \$108 Million Purse Announced, Full Breakdown

In the News: The United States Tennis Association announced a record total player-compensation package of \$108 million for the 2026 US Open. The announcement made it one of the largest prize-money pools in professional tennis. Payments were increased across singles, doubles and qualifying competitions.

Key Points:

- **Record Prize Purse:** The total player-compensation package for the 2026 US Open was fixed at \$108 million. The increased purse covers players across several rounds and categories and reflects the growing commercial value of Grand Slam tennis.

- **Singles Champions:** The men's and women's singles champions are set to receive equal prize money. Equal payment for male and female champions has long been an established feature of the US Open and remains an important part of the tournament's prize structure.
- **Support Across Rounds:** Prize money has also been increased for players eliminated in the earlier rounds of the main draw and qualifying competition. This provides greater financial support to a wider group of players rather than concentrating compensation only among finalists.
- **About the US Open:** The US Open is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments, along with the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon. It is played in New York at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.
- **Arthur Ashe Stadium:** Arthur Ashe Stadium is the main show court of the US Open and is located within the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. It is named after American tennis legend Arthur Ashe and is among the largest tennis stadiums in the world.

