

Weekly Current Affairs 2nd August to 8th August 2026

CONTENTS

NATIONAL.....	2
INTERNATIONAL	13
AWARDS AND HONOURS.....	14
SCIENCE AND TECH.....	15
IMPORTANT DAYS	17
STATIC	18
OBITUARY.....	19
SPORTS	19



IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

MNS chief Raj Thackeray alleges ₹18 crore annual donation “theft” at Siddhivinayak Temple

In the News: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray alleged that approximately ₹18 crore in donations was being siphoned off annually from Mumbai’s Shree Siddhivinayak Ganapati Temple. The allegation was based on a letter reportedly written by eight trustees concerning theft from temple donation boxes.

Key Points:

- **Basis of the Allegation:** Thackeray claimed that the temple’s weekly donation collections increased from below ₹50 lakh to nearly ₹1.5 crore after the alleged theft was detected. He maintained that this difference indicated that around ₹18 crore had earlier been diverted every year.
- **Trust’s Response:** Temple Trust Chairman Sada Sarvankar stated that nine employees had been arrested and cases had been registered wherever required. He also said that the temple’s annual income had increased from ₹114 crore to ₹182 crore due to measures taken by the trust.
- **Government-Controlled Trust:** The Siddhivinayak Temple is administered by a government-controlled statutory trust. Its functioning is governed by the Shree Siddhi Vinayak Ganapati Temple Trust (Prabhadevi) Act, 1980, enacted by the Maharashtra Legislature.
- **Purpose of the 1980 Act:** The legislation reconstituted the temple trust and provided for its management by a committee under government supervision. It also permits the trust to utilise surplus resources for facilities for devotees and wider public welfare activities.

PM Modi Launches ‘Nasha Mukh Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan’

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the nationwide “Nasha Mukh Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan” on August 2, 2026. He emphasised that achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047 requires a physically healthy, mentally strong and drug-free young population.

Key Points:

- **100-Week Campaign:** The initiative has been designed as a 100-week Jan Bhagidari movement against substance abuse. Activities involving sports, fitness, meditation, art, culture and public awareness will be organised every Sunday during the campaign period.
- **Nationwide Participation:** More than one crore young people joined the launch through over 28,000 locations and took the Nasha Mukti Pledge. Participants included students, National Service Scheme members, MY Bharat volunteers, NGOs and spiritual organisations.
- **Role of MY Bharat:** The campaign is being promoted through Mera Yuva Bharat, an autonomous body under the Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. MY Bharat was launched on October 31, 2023, to promote youth-led development and nation-building.
- **Kashi Declaration:** The national initiative developed from an earlier pilot effort in Varanasi and is supported by more than 125 spiritual organisations and NGOs under the Kashi Declaration. The declaration advocates a multi-sectoral approach involving families, educational institutions, civil society and rehabilitation services.

4th Tri-Services Future Warfare Course Begins in New Delhi

In the News: The fourth edition of the Tri-Services Future Warfare Course commenced at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi on 3 August 2026. The four-week programme aims to prepare military officers and strategic stakeholders for emerging technologies, multi-domain operations and changing forms of warfare.

Key Points:

- **Organising Institutions:** The course is being conducted under the aegis of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff. It is being coordinated by the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, or CENJOWS.
- **Participants:** Officers from the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force are participating in the course. Representatives from government organisations, academia, defence industries and strategic think tanks are also involved.
- **Technology Focus:** The curriculum covers artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, autonomous systems, cyber warfare and information warfare. It also examines cognitive warfare and other technology-enabled military challenges.
- **Operational Domains:** Participants will study future operations across the land, maritime, air and space domains. Special emphasis is being placed on grey-zone operations and integrated multi-domain warfare.

Glaw Lake Becomes Arunachal Pradesh's First Ramsar Site, India's 101st

In the News: Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced the designation of Glaw Lake as a Ramsar Site on 3 August 2026. It became Arunachal Pradesh's first Ramsar Site and raised India's total number of Wetlands of International Importance to 101.

Key Points:

- **Location:** Glaw Lake is situated within the Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. It is a pristine freshwater lake located in the biodiversity-rich Eastern Himalayan region.
- **Ecological Features:** The lake is fed by perennial mountain streams and is surrounded by dense natural vegetation. More than 150 tree species and 49 orchid species have been recorded within the wetland and its catchment.
- **Importance of Designation:** Ramsar status provides international recognition to wetlands with significant ecological value. The designation supports biodiversity conservation, water security, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods for dependent communities.
- **Ramsar Convention:** The Convention on Wetlands was adopted in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 and entered into force in 1975. It provides an international framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- **India and the Convention:** The Ramsar Convention entered into force for India on 1 February 1982. Keoladeo National Park and Chilika Lake were India's first two wetlands to be placed on the Ramsar List.

Lok Sabha Passes Supreme Court Judge Strength Bill

In the News: The Lok Sabha passed the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, on 3 August 2026. The legislation seeks to increase the sanctioned number of Supreme Court judges, excluding the Chief Justice of India, from 33 to 37.

Key Points:

- **Proposed Strength:** The Bill proposes four additional positions for Supreme Court judges. Once implemented, the Court's total sanctioned strength will become 38, comprising 37 judges and the Chief Justice of India.
- **Parent Legislation:** The Bill amends the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956. Parliament uses this legislation to prescribe the maximum sanctioned number of judges in the Supreme Court apart from the Chief Justice.
- **Replacement of Ordinance:** The Bill seeks to replace the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026. The Ordinance had been promulgated on 16 May 2026 to provide for the same increase in judicial strength.
- **Previous Increase:** The Supreme Court's strength was last increased through the 2019 Amendment. That legislation raised the number of judges, excluding the Chief Justice, from 30 to 33.
- **Effect of the Bill:** The legislation increases the sanctioned strength of the Court but does not itself appoint individual judges. After Lok Sabha approval, the Bill must complete the remaining parliamentary and constitutional stages before becoming an Act.

Exercise ROTOR CLAP III Concludes in Rajasthan

In the News: The Indian Air Force concluded the week-long Exercise ROTOR CLAP III at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan, on 1 August 2026. The exercise focused on strengthening helicopter operations against emerging drone and unmanned aerial threats.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Theme:** ROTOR CLAP III was conducted under the theme “Counter-UAS,” referring to Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems. It sought to validate operational concepts for responding to hostile drones in modern battlefields.
- **IAF Participation:** Helicopter units from across the Indian Air Force participated in the exercise. Nearly all major helicopter platforms operated by the IAF demonstrated their combat and battlefield-support capabilities.
- **Operational Missions:** The helicopters conducted precision strikes, reconnaissance, troop insertion, battlefield support and casualty evacuation. They also undertook coordinated missions against simulated aerial and ground-based threats.
- **Capabilities Tested:** The exercise evaluated mission planning, rapid response, interoperability and coordination among different helicopter platforms. Tactics, techniques and procedures for integrated helicopter operations were also assessed.
- **Exercise Location:** The Pokhran Field Firing Range is located in Rajasthan’s Jaisalmer district and is one of India’s major military training areas. Its desert terrain allows live operational drills under demanding simulated battlefield conditions.

UPSC and SSC Reforms 2026: Government Introduces Faster Recruitment, AI Verification and Transparent Exams

In the News: The Union Government informed the Rajya Sabha about administrative and technology-based reforms introduced in recruitment conducted by the Union Public Service Commission and Staff Selection Commission. The measures aim to shorten recruitment cycles, prevent impersonation, improve vacancy utilisation and make examinations more transparent.

Key Points:

- **Recruitment Agencies and Nodal Department:** UPSC and SSC function under the administrative control of the Department of Personnel and Training, or DoPT. UPSC primarily recruits officers for higher civil services, while SSC conducts recruitment for various Group B and Group C posts in the Union Government.
- **Reduction in SSC Recruitment Time:** SSC has reduced its average recruitment cycle from approximately 15 to 18 months to about 6 to 8 months. This has been achieved through computer-based examinations, fewer examination stages and faster processing of results and documents.
- **SSC e-Dossier and Sliding Mechanism:** SSC has introduced a secure e-Dossier system for tamper-resistant digital transmission of candidates’ documents. Its Sliding Mechanism Framework enables merit-based post upgradation and seeks to fill vacancies that may otherwise remain unoccupied after the first allocation.
- **UPSC Technology Reforms:** UPSC has shortened its recruitment cycle from more than 15 months to about 13 months. Important changes include a Modular Online Application Portal, AI-based verification of Civil Services Examination attempts, mandatory face authentication and provisional answer keys with a representation mechanism.
- **Transparency and Candidate Support:** SSC publishes tentative and final answer keys, allows objections at a reduced challenge fee and releases marks online. UPSC has expanded examination centres, established a candidate helpdesk and guaranteed centre choice for Persons with Disabilities.

Glaw Lake Becomes Arunachal Pradesh’s First Ramsar Site, India’s Tally Reaches 101

In the News: Glaw Lake in Arunachal Pradesh was designated as India’s 101st Ramsar Site. It became the first wetland from Arunachal Pradesh to receive recognition as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Key Points:

- **Location of Glaw Lake:** Glaw Lake is a freshwater lake located within the Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. Situated in the Eastern Himalayas, it is fed by perennial mountain streams and surrounded by rich natural vegetation.
- **Ecological Importance:** The lake and its catchment support more than 150 tree species and 49 orchid species. Its recognition highlights its importance for Himalayan biodiversity, freshwater security, ecological balance and the conservation of sensitive mountain habitats.
- **India's Ramsar Tally:** With Glaw Lake's inclusion, the total number of Ramsar Sites in India increased to 101. India's Ramsar network has expanded considerably from 26 designated sites in 2014, indicating greater attention to wetland identification and protection.
- **About the Ramsar Convention:** The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. It was adopted in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, and wetlands recognised under the treaty are included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Hurun India Women Leaders List 2026: Meena Bindra Tops Rankings, Avani Lekhara Becomes Youngest in Top 10

In the News: The second edition of the Candere Hurun India Women Leaders List was released in July 2026, recognising 117 women across 12 leadership categories. BIBA founder Meena Bindra led the Indian Fashion and Lifestyle category, while Paralympian Avani Lekhara became the youngest leader among the top ten category leaders.

Key Points:

- **Meena Bindra's Recognition:** Meena Bindra, the 83-year-old founder of BIBA, headed the Indian Fashion and Lifestyle category. The ranking noted BIBA's annual revenue of approximately ₹758 crore and recognised her contribution to building a major Indian ethnic-wear brand.
- **Avani Lekhara's Achievement:** Avani Lekhara, aged 24, ranked sixth among the leading category winners and was the youngest person in the top ten. She headed the Olympic and Paralympic Medallists category on the strength of her three Paralympic medals.
- **Size and Scope of the List:** The 2026 edition featured 117 women, compared with 97 in 2025, representing a 21 percent increase. The number of categories expanded from nine to twelve, covering business, startups, sports, journalism, literature, fashion and social impact.
- **Self-Made Women Leaders:** Of the 117 honourees, 98, or approximately 84 percent, were classified as self-made. Together, the women represented around ₹39 lakh crore in enterprise value, market capitalisation and personal wealth.
- **Important Ranking Distinction:** Avani Lekhara was the youngest person among the top ten category leaders, but not the youngest honouree on the complete list. Para-archer Sheetal Devi, aged 19, was the youngest overall, while entrepreneur Rajni Bector, aged 86, was the oldest.

Supreme Court's Gender-Sensitivity Guidelines for Trial Judges

In the News: The Supreme Court approved guidelines prepared by an expert committee of the National Judicial Academy for handling sexual-offence and other sensitive cases. The guidelines were framed after the Court noticed insensitive language, stereotypes and victim-blaming observations in judicial orders that could re-traumatise survivors.

Key Points:

- **Background of the Guidelines:** The process arose from Suo Motu Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 1 of 2025 concerning an Allahabad High Court order in a POCSO and attempted-rape case. The Supreme Court found that the order contained insensitive descriptions and had reduced the seriousness of the charges.
- **National Judicial Academy Committee:** The Supreme Court asked the National Judicial Academy in Bhopal to prepare the guidelines. The expert committee was chaired by former Supreme Court judge Justice Aniruddha Bose and included former judges, legal practitioners, police officials, academicians and social-sector experts.

- **Gender-Neutral Judicial Language:** Judges have been advised to use respectful, neutral and legally relevant expressions. Terms carrying stereotypes or moral judgment, such as “helpless woman” or descriptions questioning a survivor’s character, should be replaced with terms such as survivor, complainant or victim.
- **Protection During Trial:** Courts should conduct sexual-offence trials in camera, maintain confidentiality and provide access to legal assistance and pre-trial counselling. Video links, screens and vulnerable-witness deposition centres may be used to prevent traumatic confrontation between the survivor and the accused.
- **Control Over Cross-Examination:** Trial judges should intervene when questioning becomes insulting, intimidating or unrelated to the case. Questions concerning a survivor’s clothing, previous sexual history, lifestyle or delayed reporting should not be used to determine consent or credibility.
- **Purpose of the Guidelines:** The framework seeks to prevent secondary victimisation while preserving the accused person’s right to a fair trial. Judicial reasoning must rest on testimony, medical evidence, forensic material and surrounding circumstances rather than patriarchal assumptions or moral perceptions.

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026

In the News: The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 25, 2026 by the Ministry of Home Affairs. It proposes a legal framework for managing foreign contributions and assets belonging to organisations whose FCRA registration has ceased. The Bill amends the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.

Key Points:

- **When Registration Ceases:** An organisation’s FCRA certificate may cease after cancellation, voluntary surrender, rejection of renewal or failure to apply for renewal before expiry. The new provisions will also cover assets created wholly or partly from foreign contributions received earlier.
- **Designated Authority:** The Union government may appoint a Designated Authority to supervise, manage or dispose of foreign contributions and related assets. Such property may initially vest provisionally in the Authority and may later be vested permanently under prescribed conditions.
- **Use of Vested Assets:** Permanently vested assets may be transferred to a Union or state government entity or sold for public purposes. Proceeds from their disposal will be deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India, while the religious character of any place of worship must be preserved.
- **Key Functionaries:** The Bill defines key functionaries as persons exercising substantial control over an organisation’s management or financial affairs. Functionaries of a defunct organisation will be required to inform the government and assist in identifying foreign-funded assets.

Bankers Books Evidence Bill, 2026 Explained: Key Changes, Electronic Records

In the News: The Bankers’ Books Evidence Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 3, 2026 and passed by the House on August 5. It seeks to replace the Bankers’ Books Evidence Act, 1891 and modernise the admissibility of banking records in judicial proceedings. Its principal focus is the recognition and authentication of electronic banking records.

Key Points:

- **Replacement of Colonial Law:** The proposed legislation replaces the 1891 Act, which allowed certified copies of bank entries to be used as evidence without producing original books. The new Bill updates this framework for present-day digital banking systems.
- **Electronic Records:** Digital or electronic bank records will be admissible when they are certified as true copies or appropriately derived from the original system. The certification must establish that the record has not been altered without authorisation.
- **Integrity of Data:** Banks must certify that no system malfunction, tampering or other event has affected the accuracy of the record. This requirement is intended to strengthen evidentiary reliability in cases involving online transactions and digital account statements.

- **Appearance of Bank Officers:** A bank officer will ordinarily not be required to produce original records or appear as a witness. A court may require such appearance only for a special cause, including doubts about authenticity, interrupted record-keeping or failure to comply with an inspection order.

Indian Statistical Institute Bill Introduced in Lok Sabha

In the News: The Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 3, 2026 by Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh. It seeks to replace the Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959 and modernise the institution's governance structure. The Bill retains ISI's status as an institution of national importance.

Key Points:

- **Institutional Status:** The Bill proposes to incorporate ISI as a body corporate with perpetual succession and an independent legal identity. It may hold property, enter contracts and perform functions associated with an institution of national importance.
- **Visitor of the Institute:** The President of India will serve as the Visitor of ISI. The Visitor will have powers associated with reviewing the functioning of the institution and ensuring conformity with the proposed law.
- **Board of Governors:** The Board of Governors will be the principal executive and policy-making body. Its chairperson may be an eminent person from academia, industry, public policy, education or statistical sciences, and the Board will remain accountable under the statutory framework.
- **Academic Council:** An Academic Council headed by the Director will function as the principal academic body. It will include full-time professors and faculty members and will oversee teaching, research, courses and academic standards.
- **Expanded Academic Scope:** The original 1959 law primarily covered statistics, while subsequent amendments expanded ISI's mandate to mathematics, quantitative economics and computer science. The 2026 Bill seeks to accommodate newer fields such as data science and emerging statistical disciplines.

SC Extends 10 km Mining Buffer Rule to Wetland Reserves Across India

In the News: The Supreme Court clarified that its restriction on mining within ten kilometres of the Asan Wetland Conservation Reserve in Uttarakhand would apply to wetland conservation reserves across India. Mining within this zone will require approval from the competent wildlife and environmental authorities. The clarification arose during proceedings concerning a reserve in Himachal Pradesh.

Key Points:

- **Original Direction:** In February 2024, the Supreme Court had restrained mining within ten kilometres of the Asan Wetland Conservation Reserve without permission from the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife or the Ministry of Environment.
- **Nationwide Application:** The Court clarified that similar protection cannot be restricted to one wetland or one state. Wetland conservation reserves situated in comparable ecological regions must receive equivalent protection, subject to verification by the competent authorities.
- **Nature of Restriction:** The direction is not an unconditional prohibition on every mining activity within ten kilometres. Mining may be considered only after statutory examination and approval by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife or the environment ministry.
- **Asan Wetland:** The Asan Conservation Reserve is located in Uttarakhand and is recognised as a Ramsar site. Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention adopted in 1971.
- **Legal Framework:** Conservation reserves are a category of protected area under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The category was introduced through the 2002 amendment to protect government-owned land adjoining national parks, sanctuaries and wildlife corridors.

Money Bill route pending before Supreme Court, Government chooses it to raise strength of judges

In the News: Parliament completed consideration of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 in August. The Bill increases the sanctioned strength of Supreme Court judges from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India, taking the total strength from 34 to 38. Its certification as a Money Bill has renewed debate because the constitutional validity of similar classifications remains pending before the Supreme Court.

Key Points:

- **Increase in Strength:** The Bill amends the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 and adds four judges to the Court. Article 124(1) of the Constitution permits Parliament to prescribe the number of Supreme Court judges by law.
- **Ordinance Route:** Before the Bill was introduced, the President promulgated an ordinance on May 16, 2026 under Article 123. The legislation seeks to replace that ordinance and give permanent statutory effect to the increased strength.
- **Money Bill Procedure:** Under Articles 109 and 110, a Money Bill can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha. The Rajya Sabha may recommend changes within 14 days but cannot amend or reject it, and no joint sitting is provided for resolving disagreement.
- **Reason for Classification:** The additional judges will involve salaries, allowances and administrative expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India. This financial consequence formed the basis for treating the legislation as a Money Bill, although its principal subject concerns judicial strength.
- **Pending Constitutional Issue:** A seven-judge Constitution Bench is yet to settle the wider question of when legislation may validly be certified as a Money Bill. The dispute concerns the meaning of the word “only” in Article 110 and the extent to which the Speaker’s certification may be judicially reviewed.

RBI Plans to Introduce Polymer Banknotes from FY28

In the News: Recent reports indicate that the Reserve Bank of India is preparing to bring polymer banknotes into circulation from around the beginning of FY28, meaning 2027 to 28, subject to successful field trials. The Centre has approved trials involving ₹10 and ₹20 polymer notes. The official parliamentary position remains that regular issuance will follow only after the trials are successfully completed.

Key Points:

- **Denominations and Trial Size:** The government has approved the introduction of 100 crore pieces each of ₹10 and ₹20 polymer notes for field trials. Together, this means two billion notes with a total face value of about ₹3,000 crore will be tested under real circulation conditions.
- **Legal and Institutional Process:** RBI submitted the proposal following a recommendation of its Central Board under Section 25 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. The provision is important because the form, design and material of banknotes require Central Government approval after considering the RBI Central Board's recommendations.
- **Why Polymer Notes:** Polymer banknotes are expected to have a considerably longer life than conventional paper based currency because they are more resistant to moisture, dirt and repeated handling. RBI has cited international studies showing greater durability, which could reduce the recurring cost of replacing soiled and damaged notes.
- **Paper Notes Will Continue:** The government has clarified that polymer banknotes are proposed to circulate alongside existing paper banknotes. There is currently no proposal to withdraw paper currency or replace India's entire banknote stock with polymer based notes.

Centre Deploys Outbreak Team as Chandipura Virus Probe Expands in Gujarat and Rajasthan

In the News: The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare deployed a **National Joint Outbreak Response Team, NJORT**, to assist Gujarat and Rajasthan following a rise in Chandipura virus disease cases. Gujarat reported 184 suspected cases among children below 15 during the monsoon period, with 35 laboratory confirmed infections and 22 deaths reported by early August. The response focuses on epidemiological investigation, laboratory testing and vector control.

Key Points:

- **About Chandipura Virus:** Chandipura virus, or CHPV, belongs to the genus **Vesiculovirus**, family **Rhabdoviridae** and order **Mononegavirales**. It is an arbovirus capable of causing rapidly progressing acute encephalitis, particularly among children.
- **Discovery in India:** The virus was first identified in **1965 at Chandipur village in Maharashtra**. ICMR and the National Institute of Virology have studied the pathogen for decades, particularly following major outbreaks of encephalitis among children in western and central India.
- **Transmission and Risk Group:** CHPV is primarily associated with vector transmission involving **sandflies**, while mosquitoes and ticks may also act as vectors. WHO notes that children below 15 years are particularly vulnerable and that no confirmed human to human transmission has been reported.
- **Disease and Treatment:** Infection can begin with fever and progress rapidly to vomiting, convulsions, altered consciousness, coma and **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome, AES**. There is currently no specific approved antiviral treatment or vaccine, so early detection and intensive supportive care remain important.
- **Government Response:** The NJORT is supporting surveillance, diagnostic investigation and containment in the affected states. Vector control, insecticide spraying, public awareness, timely referral of AES cases and improved laboratory surveillance are among the principal measures recommended during outbreaks.

Lok Sabha Passes Taxation and Other Laws Amendment Bill, 2026

In the News: The Lok Sabha passed the **Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026** on 6 August 2026. The legislation contains tax and investment related changes aimed at supporting domestic electronics manufacturing, attracting foreign capital and improving tax certainty. It also proposes changes relating to digital payment regulation and replaces the earlier Income tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026.

Key Points:

- **Investment and Manufacturing Focus:** The Bill seeks to strengthen India's position as a manufacturing and investment destination through tax incentives, particularly for the **electronics manufacturing sector**. It also contains measures intended to make India more attractive to foreign cloud service companies and overseas investment funds.
- **Foreign Investment Funds:** The proposed changes relax several conditions governing certain **Eligible Investment Funds** seeking favourable tax treatment in India. The objective is to reduce barriers for global fund managers and encourage greater management of foreign capital from India.
- **REITs and InvITs:** The legislation also changes tax provisions relating to **Real Estate Investment Trusts and Infrastructure Investment Trusts**. Certain dividend distributions received through Special Purpose Vehicles are proposed to receive revised tax treatment, with related changes concerning the Minimum Alternate Tax framework.
- **Digital Payments and MDR:** The Bill amends the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**, giving the government greater flexibility over the future regulatory framework for Merchant Discount Rate on notified digital payment modes. Importantly, passage of the Bill does not itself mean that a new charge is immediately imposed on every UPI transaction.
- **Legislative Status:** Passage by the Lok Sabha is only one stage in the law making process. The Bill must also clear the **Rajya Sabha** and receive the **President's assent** before becoming an Act, subject to the constitutional procedure applicable to the legislation.

SC Extends Protection Against Domestic Cruelty to Live-in Relationships

In the News: In *Dr. Lokesh B.H. & Ors. v. State of Karnataka & Anr.*, decided on 3 August 2026, the Supreme Court held that Section 498A of the IPC can apply to qualifying live in relationships that are in the nature of marriage. The Court stressed that the relationship must possess marriage like characteristics and an intention to marry. The ruling was delivered by Justices Sanjay Karol and Nongmeikapam Kotiswar Singh.

Key Points:

- **Important Case Details:** The judgment is reported as 2026 INSC 784 and concerns the scope of the expression "husband" under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. The Court adopted a purposive interpretation rather than restricting protection only to women whose marriages were formally valid.
- **Scope of Section 498A:** The Court held that Section 498A may cover a live in relationship qualifying as a relationship in the nature of marriage, provided an intention to marry forms an intrinsic part of the relationship. The corresponding domestic cruelty provision under the present criminal law is Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.
- **Not Every Live in Relationship Covered:** The judgment does not mean that every informal or temporary relationship automatically attracts Section 498A. The complainant must establish sufficient prima facie material showing that the relationship possessed the character of a marriage and involved the relevant intention contemplated by the Court.
- **Safeguards Against Arrest:** The Court simultaneously stressed safeguards against indiscriminate arrests in domestic cruelty cases. Police authorities must comply with the principles laid down in *Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar*, particularly before resorting to custodial action merely because a complaint has been filed.

Who Is Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth? IAF's First Woman Fighter Pilot to Become a 'Top Gun'**In the News:** Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth has become the first woman fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force to successfully complete the elite Fighter Combat Leader (FCL) Course. The course is conducted at the IAF's Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TACDE) and prepares experienced fighter pilots to lead complex air-combat missions.

Key Points:

- **Historic FCL Qualification:** Bhawana Kanth became the first Indian woman fighter pilot to complete the Fighter Combat Leader Course, popularly associated with the "Top Gun" designation. The programme trains fighter pilots in advanced aerial combat tactics, mission leadership and operational planning.
- **First Batch of Women Fighter Pilots:** Kanth was commissioned into the IAF fighter stream in 2016 along with Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh. They formed the first group of women inducted into the fighter stream after the Government opened it to women on an experimental basis.
- **Earlier Combat Milestone:** In 2019, Kanth became the first woman fighter pilot in the IAF qualified to undertake combat missions by day. She completed the operational syllabus on the MiG-21 Bison after having flown her first solo MiG-21 sortie in 2018.
- **Recognition:** Bhawana Kanth, Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh were jointly honoured with the Nari Shakti Puraskar for pioneering women's entry into fighter aviation. The award is India's national recognition for outstanding contributions towards women's empowerment.

UPI Charges Bill 2026 Passed By Lok Sabha: What Does It Mean for UPI Users?

In the News: The Lok Sabha has passed the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which includes changes to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. The amendment creates a legal framework under which the government may permit banks and payment service providers to levy charges on specified electronic payment systems, potentially including UPI. It does not itself impose an immediate UPI charge.

Key Points:

- **Actual Bill:** The measure widely described in headlines as the “UPI Charges Bill” is part of the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026. It amends provisions governing India’s payment and settlement ecosystem rather than creating a standalone UPI law.
- **Parent Legislation:** The relevant parent law is the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, which provides the statutory framework for regulation and supervision of payment systems in India. The Reserve Bank of India plays the central regulatory role under this framework.
- **No Immediate User Fee:** Passage of the amendment does not mean every UPI transfer becomes chargeable immediately. It provides enabling authority for charges to be permitted, while the actual structure and implementation would depend upon subsequent notification or regulation.
- **MDR in Focus:** The development has renewed attention on Merchant Discount Rate (MDR), the fee associated with processing digital payments that is generally borne by merchants. The existing zero-MDR regime has played an important role in encouraging widespread UPI acceptance.
- **UPI Institutional Background:** UPI is operated by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and functions within the broader regulatory oversight of the RBI. It enables instant bank-to-bank digital payments through interoperable payment applications.

India Maps 27 Arunachal Pradesh Locations Officially

In the News: The Government of India has assigned standardised official names to 27 locations in Arunachal Pradesh through an updated Survey of India map. The locations include mountain passes and a high-altitude lake, with the exercise aimed at removing cartographic ambiguity in the border region.

Key Points:

- **Survey of India:** The updated nomenclature has been incorporated into maps produced by the Survey of India, India’s national mapping agency. Standardised geographical naming is important for administration, defence mapping, navigation and official territorial records.
- **Border Context:** Arunachal Pradesh lies along the eastern sector of the India-China boundary. China refers to the State as “Zangnan” or “South Tibet”, a territorial claim that India has consistently rejected while maintaining that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India.
- **China’s Renaming Exercises:** China has issued several batches of so-called standardised names for places in Arunachal Pradesh since 2017. India has repeatedly rejected these unilateral renaming exercises.
- **McMahon Line:** Much of the eastern sector boundary dispute relates historically to the McMahon Line, drawn during the Simla Convention of 1914. India treats it as the boundary in the eastern sector, while China disputes its validity.

Lok Sabha Passes MSME Amendment Bill

In the News: The Lok Sabha has passed the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026. The legislation principally seeks to strengthen mechanisms dealing with delayed payments to MSMEs and facilitate faster recovery and dispute resolution.

Key Points:

- **Parent Law:** The Bill amends the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006. The parent legislation provides the legal framework for promotion, development and competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises.
- **Delayed Payments:** A central objective of the amendment is faster adjudication of payment disputes involving MSME suppliers. Delayed payment is a major liquidity concern because capital remains blocked after goods or services have already been supplied.

- **Facilitation Councils:** The existing MSMED framework provides for Micro and Small Enterprises Facilitation Councils (MSEFCs) to deal with delayed-payment disputes. The amendment seeks to strengthen this dispute-resolution architecture.
- **Recovery of Awards:** The amendment seeks stronger mechanisms for enforcement of arbitral awards and settlement agreements. This is intended to prevent prolonged disputes from depriving MSMEs of urgently required working capital.
- **TReDS Linkage:** Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) is an RBI-regulated electronic platform that facilitates financing of MSME trade receivables. It helps MSMEs convert unpaid invoices into working capital more quickly.

How Bombay High Court picked apart trial court's acquittal of Tarun Tejpal

In the News: The Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court overturned the 2021 acquittal of former Tehelka editor-in-chief Tarun Tejpal in the 2013 sexual assault case. The High Court found serious errors in the trial court's assessment of evidence and reversed the acquittal.

Key Points:

- **Reversal of Acquittal:** Tejpal had been acquitted by a Sessions Court in Goa in 2021. The Goa government challenged that judgment before the Bombay High Court, which reassessed the evidentiary findings of the trial court.
- **No 'Perfect Victim' Standard:** The High Court criticised reliance on stereotypical expectations about how a survivor of sexual violence should behave. Credibility cannot be rejected simply because a survivor's conduct does not conform to an assumed behavioural pattern.
- **Apology Emails:** Tejpal's apology emails became an important evidentiary issue in the appeal. The High Court considered them along with the survivor's testimony and other surrounding evidence.
- **Survivor's Testimony:** The High Court treated the complainant's testimony as significant and criticised the manner in which the trial court had evaluated her conduct and credibility.
- **Appellate Principle:** An appellate court may interfere with an acquittal where the lower court's conclusions are legally unsustainable, perverse or based on serious misappreciation of evidence.

Why Centre says 'creamy layer' cannot apply to SC/ST quotas

In the News: The Centre has told the Supreme Court that the creamy-layer principle should not automatically be extended to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). In an affidavit opposing petitions seeking such exclusion, the government argued that SC/ST reservation addresses deep-rooted historical and social discrimination rather than economic disadvantage alone. It also maintained that any wider change in this reservation policy should primarily be a legislative or policy decision.

Key Points

- **What is the Creamy Layer?:** The creamy layer refers to the relatively advanced sections within a reserved category that may be excluded from reservation benefits. The concept was developed mainly for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) through the Supreme Court's *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* judgment of 1992. For competitive exams, remember: Indra Sawhney → OBC reservation + creamy-layer principle.
- **Centre's Main Argument:** The government argues that discrimination against SCs and STs does not disappear merely because an individual achieves economic prosperity. SC/ST reservations are rooted in historical caste-based discrimination, exclusion and social disadvantage. The Centre has therefore opposed using income alone to determine eligibility for SC/ST reservation benefits.
- **Jarnail Singh Judgment, 2018:** An important exam nuance is *Jarnail Singh v. Lachhmi Narain Gupta*. In 2018, a five-judge Constitution Bench applied the principle of creamy-layer exclusion to SC/ST reservation in promotions. Thus, questions must distinguish between the Centre's present policy stand and earlier judicial rulings concerning promotion quotas.

- **Davinder Singh Case, 2024:** In *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh*, a seven-judge Bench, by 6:1 majority, permitted sub-classification within Scheduled Castes for distributing reservation benefits more equitably. Several judges also favoured excluding advanced sections, but the principal issue before the Bench was sub-classification. The judgment overruled the earlier *E.V. Chinnaiah* position against such sub-classification.

INTERNATIONAL

OPEC+ Approves 188,000 BPD Oil Output Increase for September

In the News: OPEC+ approved an increase of approximately 188,000 barrels per day in its oil-production quotas for September 2026. The decision was taken on 2 August and completes the phased reversal of a major layer of voluntary production cuts introduced in 2023.

Key Points:

- **Participating Countries:** The increase was agreed upon by Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Algeria, Kazakhstan and Oman. These seven core OPEC+ producers have been coordinating monthly changes in voluntary output levels.
- **Rollback of Cuts:** The September increase completes the reversal of voluntary production cuts totalling 1.65 million barrels per day. These reductions had originally been introduced in 2023 to support stability in the global petroleum market.
- **Other Cuts Continue:** A separate layer of production cuts amounting to approximately two million barrels per day remains in force. These cuts date from 2022 and are scheduled to continue until the end of 2026.
- **OPEC+ Structure:** OPEC+ consists of OPEC members and allied oil-producing countries, including Russia. The wider grouping currently comprises 21 participating countries, while production changes are often coordinated by a smaller group of major producers.
- **OPEC Background:** OPEC was established at the Baghdad Conference in September 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Its Secretariat and headquarters are located in Vienna, Austria.

Massachusetts and Boston Declare August 15 as 'India Day'

In the News: Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey and Boston Mayor Michelle Wu have recognised August 15 as India Day, coinciding with India's Independence Day. The 2026 proclamations highlight India's democratic heritage and the contributions of the Indian American community to the social, economic and cultural life of Massachusetts and Boston.

Key Points:

- **Date and Significance:** India celebrates Independence Day on 15 August, marking independence from British colonial rule in 1947. The 2026 observance marks the 79th anniversary of independence and forms the historical basis for recognising August 15 as India Day.
- **Officials to Remember:** **Maura Healey** is the Governor of Massachusetts, while **Michelle Wu** is the Mayor of Boston. For competitive examinations, Massachusetts is a state in the northeastern United States, and Boston is both its capital and largest city.
- **Indian American Contribution:** The proclamations acknowledge the contribution of the Indian diaspora to areas such as healthcare, science, technology, education, entrepreneurship and public service. The recognition also reflects the sizeable and institutionally active Indian community in the New England region.
- **India US People to People Ties:** Such proclamations are examples of subnational diplomacy and diaspora engagement between India and the United States. Cultural celebrations, educational exchanges, business connections and Indian community organisations form an important people to people component of the wider bilateral relationship.
- **Ceremonial Recognition:** An "India Day" proclamation should not be confused with the creation of a new legal public holiday. Massachusetts gubernatorial proclamations are ceremonial recognitions, and August 15 is not listed among the Commonwealth's regular legal holidays for 2026.

Sheikh Hasina's return to the spotlight: What this means for India-Bangladesh ties

In the News: Former Bangladesh Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina** made her first media interaction since her 2024 ouster at an event hosted by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia in New Delhi on 5 August 2026. She said she intended to return to Bangladesh in December and called for the ban on her Awami League to be lifted. Bangladesh strongly criticised the event, adding new tension to already sensitive relations with India.

Key Points:

- **Background to Hasina's Stay in India:** Sheikh Hasina left Bangladesh for India on **5 August 2024** after a student led uprising brought her government to an end. She has remained in India since then, making her presence an important and sensitive issue in bilateral relations.
- **Political Situation in Bangladesh:** Bangladesh is currently governed by Prime Minister **Tarique Rahman**, whose Bangladesh Nationalist Party came to power following elections in February 2026. The BNP is a longstanding political rival of Hasina's Awami League.
- **Legal Proceedings Against Hasina:** A Bangladesh court sentenced Hasina to death in absentia in November 2025 over allegations connected with the crackdown during the 2024 uprising. Hasina has rejected the charges and verdict, describing the proceedings as politically motivated.
- **Extradition Issue:** Dhaka has repeatedly sought Hasina's return from India, while New Delhi has stated that Bangladesh's extradition request is being examined through the relevant legal and judicial processes. The issue therefore combines foreign policy considerations with questions of domestic and international legal procedure.
- **Impact on Bilateral Relations:** Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry described Hasina's media interaction from Indian soil as damaging to efforts to reset relations. India and Bangladesh nevertheless retain extensive interests in border management, trade, transport connectivity, energy, river management and regional security, giving both governments incentives to prevent the Hasina issue from dominating the entire relationship.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Annapurni Subramaniam Wins COSPAR Vikram Sarabhai Medal 2026

In the News: Indian astrophysicist Professor Annapurni Subramaniam received the COSPAR Vikram Sarabhai Medal 2026 at the 46th COSPAR Scientific Assembly in Florence, Italy. She was honoured for her outstanding contribution to space research in developing countries. She became the first Indian woman and the fourth Indian recipient of the medal.

Key Points:

- **About the Recipient:** Annapurni Subramaniam is the Director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru. Her research focuses on stellar evolution, star clusters, nearby galaxies and space-based astronomical observations.
- **About the Medal:** The Vikram Sarabhai Medal was instituted in 1990 in honour of the founder of India's space programme. It is jointly awarded by the Committee on Space Research and the Indian Space Research Organisation.
- **Major Contributions:** Subramaniam served as a calibration scientist for the Ultra-Violet Imaging Telescope aboard AstroSat. She has also contributed to research on blue straggler stars, ultraviolet astronomy and the Thirty Meter Telescope project.
- **Indian Recipients:** Earlier Indian recipients include U. R. Rao, Gurbax Singh Lakhina and Anil Bhardwaj. Subramaniam is the fourth Indian and the first Indian woman to receive the prestigious medal.
- **About COSPAR:** The Committee on Space Research was established in 1958 and operates under the International Science Council. It promotes international cooperation and the exchange of scientific information in space research.

\Meet World's Youngest Male Professor: Nathan Thomas Broke a 306-Year-Old Guinness World Record at Just 18

In the News: Guinness World Records has recognised Nathan Thomas of the United States as the world's youngest male professor. He assumed a teaching position at the age of 18 years and 346 days, breaking a record that had remained unchallenged for around 306 years.

Key Points:

- **Record Details:** Thomas became a professor at Miami Dade College in Florida on 21 August 2023. He taught a C programming course for engineering students, many of whom were close to his own age.
- **Previous Record Holder:** The earlier record belonged to Scottish mathematician Colin Maclaurin. He became a mathematics professor at the University of Aberdeen in 1717 at the age of 19.
- **Academic Journey:** Thomas entered Miami Dade College through dual enrolment at the age of ten and later transferred to Florida International University. By eighteen, he had completed bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering.
- **Comparison with Female Record:** Thomas was younger than Alia Sabur when she became the youngest female professor in 2008. Sabur had assumed the position at the age of 18 years and 362 days.
- **Present Pursuit:** Thomas currently teaches online while pursuing a Juris Doctor degree at the University of Miami School of Law. He aims to work in intellectual property law connected with science and technology.

SCIENCE AND TECH

ICAR Develops First Fully Annotated Pigeonpea T2T Genome

In the News: The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has developed India's first fully annotated telomere-to-telomere reference genome of the pigeonpea variety 'Asha'. The genome has also been recognised as a global reference genome for pigeonpea research. It is expected to support the development of climate-resilient, high-yielding and nutritionally superior pulse varieties.

Key Points:

- **Crop and Scientific Name:** Pigeonpea, commonly known as arhar or tur, is scientifically called *Cajanus cajan*. It is an important pulse crop and a major source of dietary protein, contributing significantly to India's nutritional and food security.
- **Meaning of T2T Genome:** A telomere-to-telomere genome provides a nearly complete DNA sequence from one end of a chromosome to the other. It includes complex regions such as telomeres and centromeres, which are often missing from conventional draft genome assemblies.
- **Genome Composition:** The newly developed genome contains approximately 752.65 million DNA base pairs and represents all 11 pigeonpea chromosomes. It includes 11 centromeres, 22 telomeres and thousands of protein-coding genes.
- **Role of ICAR-NIPB:** The research builds on earlier work by the ICAR-National Institute for Plant Biotechnology, New Delhi. In 2011, the institute published the world's first draft genome of a pulse crop using the same 'Asha' variety.

SpaceX Falcon 9 Rocket Stage Believed to Crash into Moon: What Happened and Why It Matters

In the News: A spent SpaceX Falcon 9 upper stage struck the Moon on 5 August 2026 near the Einstein crater region. The impact, which astronomers had predicted months in advance, has now been supported by before and after images captured by South Korea's Danuri lunar orbiter. The event has created an unusual scientific opportunity to study artificial lunar impacts and the growing challenge of tracking hardware in cislunar space.

Key Points:

- **What Actually Hit the Moon:** The object was not an operational Falcon 9 rocket but a discarded upper stage, catalogued as 2025-010D. Scientific estimates placed its mass at around 3,900 kg, making it a substantial piece of human made space hardware.

- **Origin of the Rocket Stage:** The stage came from a Falcon 9 launch on 15 January 2025 that sent lunar spacecraft toward the Moon, including Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost lander. After completing its launch role, the stage remained in space and its evolving trajectory was subsequently tracked by astronomers.
- **Impact Details:** Scientists predicted the collision for about 06:34 to 06:35 UTC on 5 August 2026, near the Einstein crater region. The stage was expected to strike at approximately 2.43 km per second, equivalent to roughly 8,700 km per hour.
- **Role of Danuri:** South Korea's Danuri, or Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter, captured before and after observations showing the newly disturbed impact area. Danuri is South Korea's first lunar orbiter and is operated by the Korea Aerospace Research Institute, KARI.

Gaganyaan Mission Achieves Major Milestones, First Uncrewed Flight Targeted for Q4 2026

In the News: ISRO has completed several important qualification tests for systems associated with India's Gaganyaan human-spaceflight programme. Recent achievements include tests of Crew Module systems, separation arrangements and parachute-related systems, while preparations continue for the first uncrewed mission.

Key Points:

- **Mission Objective:** Gaganyaan is India's programme to demonstrate indigenous capability to conduct a human spaceflight mission. The eventual crewed mission is intended to place Indian astronauts in Low Earth Orbit and return them safely to Earth.
- **Crew Module Tests:** ISRO has qualified important elements of the Crew Module Uprighting System, Crew Module-Service Module separation arrangement and other structural systems needed during re-entry and recovery.
- **Parachute System:** Gaganyaan's Crew Module deceleration system uses multiple parachutes of different types, including Drogue, Pilot and Main parachutes. These systems are critical for ensuring a safe descent and landing.
- **Joint Effort:** Important parachute tests involve collaboration among ISRO, DRDO, the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army. Such tests validate crew-safety systems under demanding operational conditions.
- **First Uncrewed Mission:** The G1 mission is intended to demonstrate the spacecraft and mission systems before astronauts are flown. The first uncrewed flight has been targeted for Q4 2026, subject to completion of qualification and safety reviews.

India Successfully Test-Fires Agni-4 Ballistic Missile from Odisha

In the News: India successfully test-fired the Agni-4 ballistic missile from the Integrated Test Range in Odisha. The launch validated operational and technical parameters and was conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command (SFC).

Key Points:

- **Missile Category:** Agni-4 is an indigenously developed surface-to-surface ballistic missile belonging to India's Agni family. It forms an important component of India's strategic deterrence capability.
- **Range:** The missile has a reported strike range of around 4,000 km. It occupies an important position within the Agni series between shorter-range missiles and longer-range variants.
- **Test Facility:** Agni missile trials are conducted from the Integrated Test Range in Odisha, an important Indian facility used for developmental and operational missile tests.
- **Strategic Forces Command:** The Strategic Forces Command is responsible for managing India's strategic nuclear forces. It functions within the institutional structure of India's Nuclear Command Authority.
- **Agni Programme:** The Agni series originated under India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) associated with DRDO. The family includes multiple ballistic missiles providing different strategic ranges.

Astrobase Unveils India's First Private 800 kN Rocket Engine

In the News: Bengaluru-based Astrobase Space Technologies has unveiled “Everest”, which it describes as India's first privately developed 800-kilonewton Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC) LOX-methane rocket engine. The engine is being developed for reusable medium-lift launch vehicles and represents a major step in India's expanding private-space ecosystem.

Key Points:

- **Everest Rocket Engine:** Everest produces about 800 kN of vacuum thrust and uses liquid oxygen (LOX) and methane as propellants. Astrobase lists a throttle capability of about 50% to 110% and says the engine is designed for multiple operating cycles. These numbers are especially relevant for science and technology MCQs.
- **Full-Flow Staged Combustion Technology:** Everest uses the Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC) engine cycle, considered among the more complex high-performance liquid-rocket architectures. Methane-based engines are attractive for reusable launch systems because of their operational and combustion characteristics. LOX-methane is commonly called a methalox combination.
- **Additive Manufacturing:** Astrobase says core components of the engine are manufactured using 3D-printing or additive manufacturing. Such manufacturing can reduce the number of separate components and enable complex engine geometries. The company has also installed industrial-scale 3D-printing capability for high-thrust engine production.
- **Future Launch Vehicle:** Astrobase is developing a two-stage reusable launch vehicle powered by LOX-methane engines. Its published specifications target around 3 tonnes of payload to a 500-km Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and return-to-launch-site recovery. These remain development targets rather than demonstrated operational capability.
- **Role of IN-SPACe:** Astrobase was selected under IN-SPACe's Technology Adoption Fund for development of its indigenous 800-kN engine. IN-SPACe stands for Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre and is an autonomous single-window nodal agency under the Department of Space for promoting and authorising private space activities.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Clouded Leopard Day 2026: Date, Theme, Facts, Conservation Status and India's New Action Plan

In the News: International Clouded Leopard Day was observed on 4 August 2026 to raise awareness about clouded leopards and the threats affecting their survival. India marked the occasion by highlighting its Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan, which focuses mainly on habitats and populations in Northeast India.

Key Points:

- **Date and Origin:** International Clouded Leopard Day is observed annually on 4 August. It was started in 2018 by wildlife keepers at Howletts Wild Animal Park in the United Kingdom.
- **Theme for 2026:** No single officially recognised global theme was announced for 2026. Awareness activities broadly focused on habitat conservation, scientific monitoring and community participation.
- **Species and Conservation Status:** The mainland clouded leopard is scientifically known as *Neofelis nebulosa*, while the Sunda clouded leopard is *Neofelis diardi*. Both species are listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.
- **India's Conservation Action Plan:** India's plan focuses on priority landscapes in Northeast India and promotes habitat restoration, protection of wildlife corridors and scientific population monitoring through camera traps and genetic analysis.
- **Major Threats and Measures:** Clouded leopards face threats from habitat loss, hunting and illegal wildlife trade. The action plan promotes anti-poaching measures, community-based conservation, climate-resilient habitat management and cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Hiroshima Day 2026

In the News: Hiroshima Day is observed on August 6, 2026, marking the 81st anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. The annual Peace Memorial Ceremony was held at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. A moment of silence and the ringing of the Peace Bell took place at 8:15 a.m., the time of the bombing.

Key Points:

- **Historical Background:** On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped the uranium-based atomic bomb known as “Little Boy” on Hiroshima. The bomb was carried by the B-29 bomber *Enola Gay*.
- **Human Impact:** The bombing destroyed a large part of the city and caused extensive deaths from the explosion, burns and radiation. Approximately 140,000 people are estimated to have died in Hiroshima by the end of 1945.
- **2026 Ceremony:** The programme included the placement of names in the Register of the Deceased Atomic Bomb Victims, silent prayer, ringing of the Peace Bell and the reading of Hiroshima’s Peace Declaration. Representatives of governments and international organisations attended the commemoration.
- **Hibakusha:** Survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings are known as *Hibakusha*. Their testimonies have played a significant role in global campaigns for nuclear disarmament and in preserving the historical memory of the bombings.
- **2026 Message:** The commemoration focused on remembrance, nuclear disarmament and opposition to growing reliance on nuclear deterrence. Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui urged world leaders to move away from policies that legitimise the continued possession of nuclear weapons.

International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples 2026

In the News: The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed every year on 9 August. The UN's 2026 observance focuses on the theme “Honouring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being.” The day highlights the rights, cultures, traditional knowledge and contributions of Indigenous communities worldwide.

Key Points

- **Date and Origin:** The Day is observed annually on 9 August. The UN General Assembly established the observance through Resolution 49/214 of 23 December 1994. The date commemorates the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982.
- **Theme for 2026:** The official 2026 theme is “Honouring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being.” It highlights the contribution of Indigenous midwives to maternal care, traditional knowledge, cultural continuity and community well-being. The theme is a likely direct current-affairs question.
- **UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights:** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted on 13 September 2007. It is associated with UN General Assembly Resolution 61/295 and recognises principles relating to self-determination, culture, traditional lands and Indigenous institutions.
- **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:** The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was established by ECOSOC through Resolution 2000/22 in July 2000. It consists of 16 independent experts and advises the UN system on Indigenous issues concerning development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights.

STATIC

Operation Safed Sagar: How the IAF Dominated the Skies During the Kargil War

In the News: Operation Safed Sagar returned to focus during the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas commemorations in July 2026 and recent public discussion of the IAF's role in the 1999 conflict. It was the codename for the Indian Air Force's air campaign during the Kargil War, undertaken in support of the Army's Operation Vijay.

Key Points

- **Launch of Operation Safed Sagar:** The Indian Air Force formally entered combat through Operation Safed Sagar on 26 May 1999. Its objective was to strike hostile positions, supply routes and concentrations occupying high-altitude areas in the Kargil sector. The Indian Army's corresponding campaign was known as Operation Vijay.
- **Aircraft Used:** The IAF employed aircraft including MiG-21s, MiG-23s, MiG-27s and Mirage 2000s in various roles during the campaign. Mirage 2000 aircraft became particularly important for precision attacks against fortified high-altitude positions. MiG-29s were also employed for fighter protection and air superiority tasks.
- **Mirage 2000 and Precision Bombing:** Mirage 2000 fighters were adapted to conduct precision strikes using laser-guided bombs. Their attacks against strategically important positions such as Tiger Hill demonstrated the value of precision-guided munitions in high-altitude warfare. Operation Safed Sagar marked an important stage in the evolution of IAF precision-strike capability.
- **Restriction on Crossing the LoC:** India imposed the important operational restriction that its aircraft would not cross the Line of Control (LoC). This was intended to limit escalation while Indian forces sought to clear positions on the Indian side. For exams, remember the combination: military force + strategic restraint + respect for the LoC.
- **Kargil Vijay Diwas Connection:** India observes Kargil Vijay Diwas on 26 July every year to commemorate the successful culmination of the 1999 Kargil operations. In 2026, India marked the 27th anniversary of the victory. A useful exam mapping is: Army – Operation Vijay; Air Force – Operation Safed Sagar; Kargil Vijay Diwas – 26 July.

OBITUARY

Veteran Nepalese mountaineer Purja dies in avalanche on Broad Peak in PoK

In the News: Renowned Nepal-born British mountaineer Nirmal “Nims Dai” Purja died after an avalanche struck his expedition on Broad Peak in the Karakoram range. The avalanche hit the 10-member international expedition while it was climbing the 8,047-metre mountain in Pakistan-administered Gilgit-Baltistan.

Key Points:

- **Project Possible:** Purja gained global recognition in 2019 after climbing all 14 mountains higher than 8,000 metres in 189 days, or approximately six months and six days. He completed the challenge under his “Project Possible 14/7” initiative.
- **Military Background:** Before becoming a professional mountaineer, Purja served in the Brigade of Gurkhas in the British Army. He later joined the Special Boat Service, the special forces unit of the United Kingdom’s Royal Navy.
- **Historic Winter Ascent:** Purja was part of the Nepalese team that completed the first successful winter ascent of K2 in January 2021. K2, the world’s second-highest peak, had been the last of the fourteen eight-thousanders to remain unclimbed during winter.
- **Documentary Recognition:** His record-setting 2019 expedition was featured in the Netflix documentary *14 Peaks: Nothing Is Impossible*. The documentary brought international attention to the achievements and contributions of Nepalese high-altitude climbers.
- **About Broad Peak:** Broad Peak is approximately 8,047 metres high and is the world’s twelfth-highest mountain. It lies in the Karakoram range near K2 and is exposed to avalanches, falling ice, extreme altitude and rapidly changing weather conditions.

SPORTS

Tejaswin Shankar Creates History with India’s First-Ever Commonwealth Games Decathlon Medal

In the News: Indian athlete Tejaswin Shankar won the bronze medal in the men’s decathlon at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. With this performance, he became the first Indian athlete to win a Commonwealth Games medal in the decathlon.

Key Points:

- **Final Result:** Tejaswin accumulated 7,976 points to finish third. Grenada’s Lindon Victor won the gold medal, while Canada’s Damian Warner secured silver in the combined athletics event.

- **Decathlon Format:** The decathlon consists of ten track-and-field disciplines contested over two days. These include the 100 metres, long jump, shot put, high jump, 400 metres, 110-metre hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and 1,500 metres.
- **Second Commonwealth Medal:** This was Tejaswin's second Commonwealth Games medal. He had earlier won bronze in the men's high jump at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022.
- **Overcoming Injury:** The achievement came despite a flare-up of a long-standing knee injury that had prevented him from recording a valid jump in the high jump final. He later received medical clearance and competed through pain in the ten-event decathlon.
- **Key Performance:** Tejaswin recorded a personal best of 7.82 metres in the decathlon long jump. He protected his bronze-medal position in the concluding 1,500-metre race, finishing ahead of England's Sammy Ball in the overall points standings.

Commonwealth Games 2030: Glasgow Hands Over Games Flag to Ahmedabad

In the News: Ahmedabad formally assumed the role of the next Commonwealth Games host during the closing ceremony of the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games on 2 August. Glasgow handed over the Games to Ahmedabad, officially branded by Commonwealth Sport as "Amdavad 2030."

Key Points:

- **Closing Ceremony:** The closing ceremony was held at The Hydro in Glasgow and marked the formal transition to the 2030 host city. Indian Olympic Association President P.T. Usha was pictured handing the Games flag to Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra.
- **Host Ratification:** Amdavad was formally ratified as the 2030 host at the Commonwealth Sport General Assembly on 26 November 2025. Delegates representing 74 Commonwealth nations and territories approved India's bid.
- **Centenary Edition:** The 2030 Commonwealth Games will commemorate 100 years of the competition. The inaugural edition was organised as the British Empire Games in Hamilton, Canada, in 1930.
- **Sports Programme:** Between 15 and 17 sports are expected to feature at Amdavad 2030. Confirmed disciplines include athletics, swimming, table tennis, bowls, weightlifting, artistic gymnastics, netball and boxing, along with several integrated Para events.
- **India as Host:** The 2030 edition will bring the Commonwealth Games back to India for the first time since Delhi hosted the event in 2010. It will also serve as a major test of India's ability to organise global multi-sport competitions.

Sriganganagar's Basant Wins Silver at World Athletics U20 Event

In the News: Rajasthan's Basant Kumar Meghwal created history by winning the silver medal in men's high jump at the World Athletics U20 Championships 2026 in Eugene, Oregon, USA. The 19-year-old cleared 2.21 metres, becoming the first Indian high jumper to win a medal at the World U20 Championships.

Key Points:

- **Historic Performance:** Basant Kumar Meghwal cleared **2.21 m** in the men's high-jump final. He won silver after clearing the height on his second attempt. The achievement was historic because no Indian high jumper had previously won a World Athletics U20 Championships medal.
- **Gold and Bronze Winners:** Algeria's Younes Ayachi won gold, while Great Britain's Otis Poole took bronze. All three athletes cleared 2.21 m and failed at 2.24 m, so the medals were determined by countback. Ayachi cleared 2.21 m on his first attempt, Basant on his second and Poole on his third.
- **About Basant Meghwal:** Basant is from the Anupgarh area of Rajasthan's Sriganganagar district and was 19 at the championships. His 2.21-m performance matched his lifetime-best level, and he had also won gold at the Asian U20 Athletics Championships earlier in 2026.
- **About World Athletics U20 Championships 2026:** The championships were held from 5–9 August 2026 at Hayward Field, University of Oregon, in Eugene. It was the 21st edition of the World Athletics U20 Championships. Oregon had previously hosted the global U20 meet in 2014.

- **India's Other Medallists:** India's Ashish Yadav won silver in the men's javelin throw, while Shahnavaz Khan secured bronze in the men's long jump. Along with Basant's silver, India reached three medals at the championships. Shahnavaz recorded a best jump of 7.84 m.

