

## Weekly One Liners 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2026

### PM Modi's Australia Visit Delivers 18 Major Outcomes, Deepening Defence, Energy, Technology and Education Ties

Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia has contributed to a major achievement in India-Australia relations, with 18 agreements and initiatives being unveiled at the Third Annual Summit between Australia and India. These agreements, which cover wide areas such as defence, maritime security, clean energy, critical technologies, education, skill development, research and cultural cooperation, indicate that this is one of the broadest expansions of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

#### New Phase in India-Australia Strategic Partnership

The summit has reaffirmed that the strategic significance of India-Australia ties is growing in complicated geopolitical circumstances.

Both countries agreed on the need for collaboration in defense, trade, technology, energy security, education and innovation while restating the commitment to the common vision of a free, open, inclusive and rule-based Indo-Pacific region.

The 18 results reflect the long-term intention to cooperate in matters crucial for regional stability and growth.

#### List of Outcomes During PM's Visit to Australia

1. Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation (JDDSC)
2. Maritime Security Cooperation Roadmap (MSCR)
3. India-Australia Joint Declaration on Energy Security
4. Finalization of the Administrative Arrangement of the India-Australia Civil Nuclear Agreement
5. Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies, and Supply Chains (PACTS)
6. MoU between Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and MBC of Australia
7. Indian Military Officer in Australian Defence College (2028-29)
8. MoU on Mining and METS Center of Excellence
9. Flinders University Branch in Bengaluru
10. Letter of Intent between NCVET and ASQA
11. Restoration of Three Indian Artifacts
12. Starting of Rooftop Training Academy
13. MoU on Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation (ACITI) Partnership
14. MoU between Geoscience Australia and Geological Survey of India
15. Traditional Knowledge Digital Library Access Agreement
16. MoU between CSIR and University of Melbourne
17. MoU between SRFTI Kolkata and Griffith Film School
18. Victoria University Campus in Gurugram

#### Importance of These Initiatives

The outcomes resulting from the third India-Australia Annual Summit go beyond the concept of international cooperation.

These agreements mean better cooperation in vital sectors, which include,

- Defense and Indo-Pacific security
- Switch to renewable energy
- Civil nuclear energy cooperation
- Artificial Intelligence and cybersecurity initiatives
- Mineral ministry cooperation
- Education and skill development cooperation
- Research
- Cultural heritage protection

These activities are aimed at to strengthening India's strategic relations and ensuring stability, technological progress, and sustainable growth in the region.

### New EPF Withdrawal Rules 2026: 3-Day Claim Settlement, 25% Balance Rule, Online Process & Latest EPFO Changes

The Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has introduced major reforms under the its new EPFO 3.0 digital initiative, and making the Provident Fund (PF) withdrawals faster, simpler and digital. These EPF Withdrawal Rules 2026 will bring the some o the significant changes which include 3-day claim settlements, a higher ₹5 lakh auto-processing limit, simplified withdrawal categories, and the a 25% minimum balance retention rule. Here is everything you need to know about the new EPF Withdrawal Rules 2026.

#### What Are the New EPF Withdrawal Rules 2026?

The EPFO has streamlined the withdrawal process, replacing the multiple withdrawal categories with a simplified structure and expanded digital services.

This new framework aims to make the partial withdrawals smooth and easier, while ensuring that employees to retain some portion of their retirement savings until retirement or final settlement..

#### Major Highlights of EPF Withdrawal Rules 2026

##### 3 Day Online Claim Settlement

The eligible online PF advance claims with the Aadhaar-linked and verified KYC will now be processed within just three working days, and this significantly reduces the earlier processing period of around 7 to 20 days.

##### Mandatory 25% Balance Retention

As per the new rules, employees must retain at least 25% of their total EPF balance while they remain employed.

##### 12-Month Uniform Service Requirement

Previously, different withdrawal purposes required around 3 to 7 years of service; now most partial withdrawal benefits become available after completing 12 months of EPF membership and making the system more employee-friendly.

Three Simplified Withdrawal Categories

More than 13 separate withdrawal reasons have now been merged into the three easy-to-understand categories which are,

- Essential Needs
- Housing Needs
- Special Circumstances

#### **Auto-Settlement Limit Increased to ₹5 Lakh**

The limit for the automatic online claim processing has also increased from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh, it allows eligible claims below this amount to be settled without any manual verification.

#### **Three New EPF Withdrawal Categories**

##### **1. Essential Needs**

This category covers the important personal and family requirements.

##### **Medical Expenses**

Members can withdraw up to 100% of the withdrawable balance (subject to the mandatory 25% balance retention) for the treatment of themselves or immediate family members. There is no restriction on the number of the medical claims.

##### **Education**

Employees can make up to 10 education-related withdrawals during their EPF membership. Eligible members can withdraw up to 100% of the withdrawable balance after completing the 12 months of service.

##### **Marriage**

Members can withdraw the funds for the marriage expenses up to five times during their career, but it is subject to eligibility conditions.

##### **2. Housing-Related Needs**

Employees can withdraw their EPF savings for the,

- Purchasing land
- Buying a house
- House construction
- Home renovation
- Home loan repayment

Members can also claim housing advances up to five times during their EPF membership after the completion 12 months of service.

##### **3. Special Circumstances**

This category covers situations such as,

- Financial hardship
- Factory closures
- Emergencies declared by the EPFO Central Board

Eligible members can make up to total two withdrawals per financial year.

#### **Understanding the New 25% Minimum Balance Rule**

One of the major reforms under the EPF Scheme 2026 is the introduction of the mandatory retirement savings protection mechanism.

Employees cannot withdraw their entire EPF balance while they remain employed in a service.

##### **Example**

If your total EPF balance is ₹4 lakh,

- Minimum balance to remain in the EPF: ₹1 lakh (25%)
- Maximum amount available for the withdrawal: ₹3 lakh (75%)

The retained 25% continues earning the EPF interest until retirement or any final settlement.

#### **How to Apply for EPF Withdrawal Online**

Members can submit their online claims through the EPFO Member e-Sewa Portal.

##### **Step 1**

Log in using your,

- Universal Account Number (UAN)
- Password
- Captcha

##### **Step 2**

Verify that your KYC is complete.

And ensure the following are approved,

- Aadhaar
- PAN
- Bank Account

##### **Step 3**

Go to,

Online Services → Claim (Form 31, 19, 10C & 10D)

##### **Step 4**

Verify the users registered bank account.

##### **Step 5**

Choose PF Advance (Form 31).

##### **Step 6**

Select the withdrawal category and enter the total required amount within your eligible withdrawal limit.

##### **Step 7**

Authenticate the application via using the Aadhaar OTP sent to the registered mobile number.

Once it get verified, your online claim will be submitted.

#### **Rules for Unemployment and Final Withdrawal**

This revised EPF rules also clarify withdrawal after leaving the employment.

##### **After One Month of Unemployment**

Employees can withdraw up to 75% of their EPF balance.

##### **After 12 Months of Continuous Unemployment**

The remaining 25% can also be withdrawn through the final settlement.

##### **Full EPF Withdrawal**

Members can withdraw total 100% of their EPF corpus in cases such as,

- Retirement (age 55–58, as applicable)
- Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)
- Permanent disability
- Permanent overseas migration

#### **Benefits of the New EPFO 3.0 Reforms**

The latest EPFO reforms offer several advantages for employees,

- The faster online claim settlements.
- It will reduce the paperwork through Aadhaar-based verification.
- Easier access to the PF savings after just one year of service.
- Higher automatic processing limit of ₹5 lakh.



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- Simplified withdrawal rules with fewer categories.
- Better protection of retirement savings through mandatory balance retention.

### India and New Zealand Sign 10 Agreements, Launch Strategic Partnership Roadmap to 2030

India and New Zealand have upgraded their relationship into a Strategic Partnership by launching an ambitious Roadmap for 2030 and signing of total 10 agreements and MoUs for cooperation in various areas, such as defence, trade, maritime security, disaster management, agriculture, tourism, sports, culture, and scientific research. The announcement made during Honorable PM Modi's official visit to the New Zealand, it signifies the commitment of both countries to bolster trade and cultural relations.

### Strategic Partnership between New Zealand and India: A New Phase

The two countries have officially taken the next steps by forming the India-New Zealand Strategic Partnership.

Both the nations now in the process of finalizing the Strategic Partnership Roadmap to 2030, which has outlined activities in various critical areas, such as,

- Defense and security
- Trade and investment
- Maritime partnership
- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Sports
- Culture
- Education
- Scientific cooperation
- Global cooperation

The roadmap will pave the way for the future bilateral collaboration.

### List of 10 Agreements Signed During Visit

1. Memorandum of Arrangement on Maritime Cooperation between the Ministry of Defence of India and the New Zealand Defence Force
2. Implementation Arrangement concerning cooperation in matters of Hydrography and Nautical Cartography between India and New Zealand
3. Arrangement concerning the provision of Mutual Logistics Support between the Indian Navy and the New Zealand Defence Force
4. Arrangement on establishing a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism between India and New Zealand
5. Memorandum of Cooperation between the National Disaster Management Authority of India and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) of New Zealand
6. Memorandum of Cooperation in the fields of Animal Husbandry and Dairying between the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying of India and the Ministry of Primary Industries of New Zealand

7. Memorandum of Arrangement in the field of Tourism between the Ministry of Tourism of India and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment of New Zealand
8. India-New Zealand Joint Action Plan on Sport
9. Memorandum of Arrangement for development of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC), Lothal at Gujarat between NMHC and New Zealand Maritime Museum
10. Arrangement on Cultural Cooperation between Ministry of Culture of India and Ministry of Culture and Heritage of New Zealand

### Announcements on the Sidelines of Visit

- India-New Zealand Strategic Partnership and Roadmap to 2030
- Doubling Bilateral Trade to NZ\$7 billion or ₹35,000 crore by 2030
- Establishing Maritime Security Dialogue
- New Zealand nominates Maritime Security as priority pillar under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)
- New Zealand Joining Global Biofuels Alliance
- Launch of the Kiwifruit Action Plan and Establishment of 2 Centres of Excellence for Kiwifruit in Nagaland and Uttarakhand
- MoU between the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa and University of Canterbury, NZ
- MoU between National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli (NIFTEM-K) & Massey University, New Zealand

### National Affairs

- India hosted the **BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting** in Guwahati, Assam, led by the **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**. Delegates from the expanded **11-member BRICS** discussed challenges including **synthetic drugs**, **darknet trafficking**, **New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)**, and **cryptocurrency-based money laundering**. India presented its **Vision Document on Narcotics Control 2026–2029**, emphasizing **technology-driven investigations**, **border surveillance**, **intelligence sharing**, and **international cooperation**. The summit is expected to adopt a **Joint Declaration** to strengthen coordinated global action against transnational narcotics networks.
- India crossed **104 crore linked digital health records** under the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**, connected to over **93 crore ABHA accounts**. The **Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)** is a **14-digit digital health ID** that securely links patients with **hospitals**, **doctors**, **laboratories**, **pharmacies**, and **insurance providers**. The initiative enables **paperless healthcare**, preserves complete **medical history**, and improves continuity of treatment. The government aims to expand the **digital public health ecosystem** by integrating healthcare facilities nationwide, ensuring **secure**, **accessible**, and **efficient digital health services** for all citizens.

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **CG Semi Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) Facility** at **Sanand, Gujarat**, under the **Semicon India Programme**. The facility strengthens India's **semiconductor ecosystem** by supporting **chip packaging, assembly, testing, and quality assurance**. Developed through collaboration with **India, Japan, and Thailand**, it will initially manufacture **20 crore semiconductor units annually**, with plans to increase capacity to **500 crore units**. The project supports **high-tech manufacturing**, reduces import dependence, promotes **self-reliance**, and advances India's ambition of becoming a **global semiconductor hub**.
- India registered **125 new Geographical Indication (GI) tags** during **2025–26**, raising the total to **822 registered GI products**. **Madhya Pradesh** led with **26 registrations**, followed by **West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, and Jharkhand**. The new registrations include **traditional handicrafts, agricultural products, tribal heritage, and indigenous knowledge**, helping preserve regional identity while improving exports and market value. **Handicrafts account for 53%** and **agricultural products 31%** of all GI registrations. The initiative strengthens protection of authentic regional products and promotes India's cultural and economic heritage.
- India ranked **125th** among **197 countries** in the **Global Passport Index (GPI) 2026**, despite achieving its highest-ever score of **45.1**. Published by **Global Citizen Solutions**, the index evaluates passports based on **mobility, quality of living, and investment opportunities**. India ranked **136th in mobility, 118th in quality of living, and 94th in investment potential**. Indian passport holders currently enjoy **visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to around 26 destinations**, while visas remain necessary for several major countries. **Sweden** secured the top position in the 2026 rankings.
- The **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** facilitated the first export of premium **Areko cherries** and **Scentrose plums** from **Jammu & Kashmir** to the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**. The **one-metric-tonne shipment**, sourced from **Shopian and Pulwama**, reached **Abu Dhabi and Dubai**. Farmers reportedly earned nearly **60% higher returns for cherries** and **120% higher returns for plums** compared to domestic markets. The initiative aims to expand India's **fresh fruit exports**, improve farmers' incomes, strengthen **horticulture exports**, and establish Jammu & Kashmir as a leading premium fruit-exporting region.
- Union Home and Cooperation Minister **Amit Shah** announced the establishment of a **Cooperative Life Insurance Company** and expansion of the **Bharat Taxi** platform to **500 cities** within two years during the **Ministry of Cooperation's fifth Foundation Day**. The insurance company aims to strengthen the **cooperative sector**, promote **financial inclusion**, and improve insurance access.
- **Bharat Taxi**, operating under a **cooperative model**, currently has **6.37 lakh drivers** and **35.77 lakh customers**. The initiative also promotes **organic farming**, entrepreneurship through **PACS**, and nationwide cooperative-led economic development and employment generation.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated India's first **greenfield refinery-cum-petrochemical complex** at **Pachpadra, Rajasthan**, developed with an investment of **₹79,450 crore** by **HPCL** and the **Government of Rajasthan**. The facility has a **9 MMTA crude refining capacity** and **2.4 MMTA petrochemical production capacity**, producing fuels and petrochemical products. The project will reduce **petrochemical imports**, strengthen **energy security**, generate employment, and support downstream industries. It also promotes the **Petrochemical and Plastic Park**, transforming western Rajasthan into a major industrial and manufacturing hub.
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** designated the **Natural History Museum (NHM), Mizoram University**, as India's **21st Designated Repository** under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**. Recommended by the **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)**, the repository preserves authenticated **biological specimens**, supports **species identification**, and strengthens biodiversity conservation. Located in the **Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot**, the museum houses over **500 specimens** covering plants, fungi, insects, reptiles, amphibians, and fishes. The recognition enhances **biodiversity documentation**, ecological restoration, scientific research, and collaboration with regional conservation institutions.
- The **Union Government** extended two new **National Pension System (NPS)** life-cycle investment options to employees of **Central Autonomous Bodies (CABs)**. The **LC-75 High Fund** allows up to **75% equity exposure** for long-term wealth creation, while the **Aggressive Life Cycle Fund** provides about **50% equity exposure**, gradually reducing risk after **45 years of age**. Previously available only to Central Government employees, the options improve **retirement planning**, increase investment flexibility, align portfolios with individual financial goals, and enhance the attractiveness of NPS through the **Central Recordkeeping Agency (CRA)** platform.
- **Kamarajar Port Limited (KPL)** in **Tamil Nadu** became India's **second port** after **Visakhapatnam Port** to achieve an **18-metre operational draft** following completion of the **₹440-crore Capital Dredging Phase VI Project**. The upgrade enables handling of fully loaded **Capesize vessels** carrying up to **1,70,000 DWT**, improving cargo capacity and operational efficiency. Enhanced channel depth, berth infrastructure, and navigational facilities will reduce **logistics costs**, improve **vessel turnaround time**, strengthen **EXIM trade**, and significantly enhance India's **global maritime competitiveness**.

- **Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra** signed a landmark agreement to resolve long-pending financial disputes related to the **Sardar Sarovar Project** and **Indira Sagar Project** under the **Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT)** Award. The agreement addresses **cost-sharing, rehabilitation expenses, land compensation, interest liabilities**, and pending dues among participating states. Signed in the presence of **Amit Shah** and **C. R. Patil**, it strengthens **cooperative federalism**, improves **inter-state water governance**, and supports sustainable irrigation, hydropower generation, and drinking water management across the Narmada basin.
- The Government approved nationwide implementation of the **Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU)** scheme with an investment of **₹60,000 crore** over five years. The initiative will modernize **1,000 Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** through upgraded laboratories, digital infrastructure, advanced equipment, revised curricula, and stronger placement support. It also establishes **five National Centres of Excellence (NCoEs)** using a **hub-and-spoke model**. The scheme aims to create an **industry-ready workforce**, strengthen vocational education, enhance employability, and promote industry-academia collaboration.
- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** launched **Tribex**, India's first dedicated **digital learning platform** for **tribal arts, culture, languages, and traditional knowledge**. Inaugurated by **Jual Oram** in **Bhubaneswar**, the platform currently offers **20 free certificate courses** and plans to expand beyond **100 courses**. It also introduces **UGC-recognised postgraduate diploma programmes** in tribal studies, museology, textiles, and sustainable livelihoods. Supported by an **MoU with Sampurnanand Sanskrit University**, Tribex promotes **digital documentation**, research, skill development, employment opportunities, and preservation of India's rich tribal heritage.
- **IIM Bangalore** announced its **first overseas campus** at the **Singhasari Special Economic Zone (SEZ)** in **Malang, Indonesia**, under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**. Developed through an **MoU with PT Intelegensia Grahatama**, the project will begin with **executive education and leadership programmes**, followed by full **management degree courses**. Academic focus includes **Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation, Healthcare Management, Climate and Sustainability, and Global Supply Chain Management**. The initiative strengthens **India-Indonesia educational cooperation** and expands the global presence of Indian higher education institutions.
- India's **energy storage requirement** is projected to reach **888 GWh by 2035–36**, according to the latest **India BESS Market Review** and **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)** estimates. The requirement includes **80 GW/321 GWh** from **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** and **94 GW/567 GWh** from **Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs)**. Installed BESS capacity is expected to exceed **10 GWh** by 2026, while **lithium-ion cell manufacturing** may reach **110 GWh by 2030**. The expansion supports **renewable energy integration, grid reliability**, and India's long-term **clean energy transition**.
- India has become the **world's largest Retail and FMCG Global Capability Centre (GCC) hub**, hosting **180 GCCs** employing over **2.72 lakh professionals**. Major companies including **Walmart, Tesco, Target, H&M, L'Oréal, and Lowe's** operate technology, analytics, finance, and supply-chain centres in India. **Bengaluru** leads GCC employment, followed by **Delhi NCR** and **Hyderabad**. Rapid adoption of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** has increased demand for specialists in **Large Language Models (LLMs), GenAI Ops, MLOps, and data analytics**, strengthening India's position as a global technology and innovation hub.
- India hosted the **13th ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) Joint Committee Meeting** in **New Delhi** to accelerate the review of the **India-ASEAN trade pact**. Representatives from all **10 ASEAN member states** discussed **Customs Procedures, Trade Facilitation, Market Access, and Rules of Origin** to strengthen regional trade. Co-chaired by **Nitin Kumar Yadav** and **Mastura Ahmad Mustafa**, the meeting assigned time-bound tasks for pending negotiations. **ASEAN** accounts for nearly **11% of India's global trade**, with bilateral trade reaching **USD 128 billion** during **2025–26**.
- The **Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering & Winter Sports (JIM & WS)** successfully completed a mountaineering expedition to the **Mt Khyam Tso Massif** in **Ladakh**. The team summited **Peak Pt 5901 m, Peak Pt 6090 m, Peak Pt 5944 m**, and finally **Mt Khyam-III (6,018 m)** despite extreme weather conditions. Expedition leader **Col. Hem Chandra Singh** also achieved the **first-ever paragliding flight from 5,600 metres**. The expedition showcased India's mountaineering excellence, technical expertise, and commitment to exploring the remote Himalayan region.
- **Jaipur** secured the **6th position globally** in the **Happy City Index 2026**, becoming the **only Indian city** in the global top ten. The ranking recognizes excellence in **governance, healthcare, education, mobility, environmental sustainability, innovation, and quality of life**. Jaipur's success reflects its balance between preserving **cultural heritage** and promoting **smart city development**, improved civic amenities, tourism, handicrafts, and economic opportunities. The recognition highlights India's growing emphasis on **sustainable, livable, and citizen-centric urban development**.

- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** launched **CITES 2.01 (Centralised IT Enabled Services)**, migrating nearly **340 million member accounts** to a unified national platform. Introduced by **Mansukh Mandaviya**, the system enables **centralised claim processing, real-time tracking**, and faster digital services through a single portal. The **EPF interest rate** for **FY2025–26** remains **8.25%**, while the **auto-settlement limit** has increased from **₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh**. Future features include **UPI-based PF withdrawals** and withdrawal of up to **75% of PF balance**.
- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** notified **Navi Mumbai International Airport** as India's **42nd designated drug import port** under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**. The notification strengthens the country's pharmaceutical import infrastructure by providing an additional regulated entry point for medicines. Issued after consultation with the **Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB)**, the decision improves **healthcare logistics**, enhances **supply chain efficiency**, reduces congestion at existing ports, and strengthens regulatory oversight while supporting India's growing pharmaceutical sector.
- Union Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** launched the **PRAGATI (Promoting Regenerative Agriculture, Growth, Agri-Entrepreneurship and Transformative Innovation)** initiative to strengthen **sustainable agriculture** and rural livelihoods. The programme aims to develop **20,000 agri-entrepreneurs** and benefit **20 lakh small and marginal farmers** through **regenerative farming, digital technologies, soil testing, mechanisation, and financial literacy**. Initially covering **eight states**, the initiative is supported by organizations including the **PepsiCo Foundation, SBI Foundation, and Gates Foundation**, promoting climate-resilient and technology-driven agriculture.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, accompanied by Indonesian President **Prabowo Subianto**, visited the **Prambanan Temple Complex** in **Yogyakarta** and launched an **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** restoration project. The **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, built in the **9th century**, is Indonesia's largest **Hindu temple complex**, dedicated to the **Trimurti—Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma**. The restoration project symbolizes centuries-old **India–Indonesia cultural ties**, strengthens heritage conservation, and promotes bilateral cooperation in preserving historic monuments and shared civilizational traditions.
- India launched the **Letter of Authorisation (LoA) regime** to promote **sustainable deep-sea fishing**, strengthen the **Blue Economy**, and improve fishermen's livelihoods. The framework allows regulated fishing in the **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** and high seas, reducing pressure on coastal fisheries while expanding seafood exports. Supporting **Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs)** and cooperatives, the initiative enhances marine resource management. Simultaneously, **Odisha** launched the **Deep Sea Fishing Mission 2026–2036** with **₹2,295.45 crore** to develop fisheries infrastructure, aquaparks, export facilities, and modern markets, boosting India's marine economy and sustainable fisheries growth.
- The **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** discovered **thorium-bearing deposits** in **Gundlupet, Karnataka**, spread across nearly **700 acres**, with **20 acres** identified for mining. Found in **monazite**, the deposits contain **thorium, rare earth elements**, and uranium. Thorium can produce **uranium-233**, making it an important future **nuclear fuel**. India already possesses among the world's largest thorium reserves. The discovery strengthens strategic mineral security, supports future **advanced nuclear reactors**, and enhances resource assessment. Operating under the **Ministry of Mines**, GSI continues geological exploration to advance India's long-term nuclear energy programme.
- The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** will establish India's first **Centre for High Altitude Medicine and Public Health Research** at **Keylong, Himachal Pradesh**. The centre will research **altitude physiology, acute mountain sickness (AMS), HAPE, HACE**, disaster medicine, climate-sensitive diseases, maternal health, nutrition, and mental health. It will use **telemedicine, drone-based healthcare, digital surveillance**, and collaborate with **DRDO, AFMS**, and academic institutions. Located above **2,500 metres**, the facility will strengthen healthcare, emergency response, and scientific research in India's Himalayan and border regions through advanced mountain medicine.
- The **AISHE Reports 2022–23 and 2023–24** revealed record **higher education enrolment** of **4.5 crore**, rising **31.5%** since 2014–15. The **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** increased to **30**, while **female enrolment** reached **2.24 crore** with a **GER of 31.2**. The **Gender Parity Index (GPI)** remained above **1.08** for the seventh consecutive year. **STEM enrolment** crossed **one crore**, with women forming **44%** of students. Faculty strength reached **17.32 lakh**, reflecting progress under **NEP 2020** toward inclusive, quality-driven higher education and expanded access nationwide.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change inaugurated the **Centre of Excellence on Human-Wildlife Conflict** at **WII-SACON, Coimbatore**. The centre will serve as a national hub for **research, policy support, capacity building, and innovation** to address **human-wildlife conflicts**. It will use **Artificial Intelligence (AI), satellite mapping, and predictive analytics** for conflict mitigation. The **National Human-Wildlife Conflict Portal** and a status report on wildlife conflicts were also launched, promoting **scientific conservation, evidence-based policymaking, and protection of both wildlife and human communities**.

- **NABARD** facilitated **Geographical Indication (GI)** registration for **28 new products**, increasing its total supported GI products to **176**. The newly registered items include **handicrafts, handloom textiles, bamboo crafts, pottery, paintings, and musical instruments** from several states. Governed by the **Geographical Indications of Goods Act, 1999**, GI protects products linked to specific regions. NABARD has also established **GI Facilitation Centres** and a **GI Store**, benefiting over **13,000 artisans** and creating more than **50,000 direct employment opportunities**.
- The **Union Health Ministry** amended the **Drugs Rules, 1945** to strengthen regulation of **alcohol-based medicinal formulations**. Products containing more than **12% v/v ethyl alcohol** in quantities above **30 ml** will now require manufacturing and sale licences under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**. These medicines have been included under **Schedule H1**, making them **prescription-only drugs** with mandatory pharmacy records. The revised rules aim to prevent misuse of medicinal products as intoxicants while ensuring legitimate medical use from **January 2027**.
- The **Department of Posts (DoP)** and **TRAI** signed an MoU to conduct India's largest **rural telecom network performance survey** covering **5.68 lakh villages**. Using an **Android-based application, Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDSs)** will assess mobile services of **Airtel, Jio, Vodafone Idea, and BSNL** across all states and Union Territories. The initiative will identify **network gaps**, evaluate service quality, and provide data for **evidence-based policymaking**, helping strengthen **Digital India**, improve rural connectivity, and guide telecom infrastructure investments.

### States in the News

- The **Delhi Government** launched **Mission Kayakalp** to modernize infrastructure in **government schools** and improve learning environments. Announced by **Chief Minister Rekha Gupta**, the initiative includes repairing school buildings, upgrading **laboratories**, improving **sanitation**, installing **RO drinking water systems**, enhancing accessibility for **children with disabilities**, and developing **green campuses**. The mission also encourages participation from the **Education Department, district administrations, CSR initiatives**, social organizations, and local communities. Mission Kayakalp aims to provide **safe, inclusive, modern, and high-quality educational infrastructure** for students across Delhi.
- The **Arunachal Pradesh Government** launched an emergency **helicopter relief operation** to assist **flood-affected villages** in **Lower Siang district** after floods and landslides disrupted road connectivity. A **Skyone Airways Mi-172 helicopter** transported **11.5 metric tonnes** of **PDS rice**, medicines, and essential supplies from **Pasighat** to **Koyu**, while evacuating **four critically ill patients** for treatment. The operation covered several isolated villages and involved the **Civil Aviation Department**, district administration, and disaster management authorities,

- demonstrating the crucial role of **air connectivity** in rapid humanitarian assistance during natural disasters.
- The **Uttar Pradesh Cabinet** approved the **Startup Policy 2026** to strengthen innovation and help achieve the state's **\$1 trillion economy target by 2030**. The policy introduces a **₹1,000 crore Startup Fund**, **₹15 lakh seed funding**, **₹50 lakh strategic project support**, **₹10 lakh prototype grants**, and **₹2 lakh annual cloud reimbursement**. Special incentives are provided for **AI, Machine Learning, Robotics, and Aerospace startups**, including **patient capital up to ₹100 crore**. The policy also promotes inclusive entrepreneurship through financial support for incubators and underrepresented entrepreneurs.
  - The **Uttar Pradesh Cabinet** approved the **Data Centre Policy 2026** to establish the state as a global hub for **green and AI-ready data centres**. The policy aims to attract over **₹2 lakh crore investment** and create **2 GW** of data centre capacity. It offers incentives for **GPU-based technologies, Tier III and Tier IV data centres**, and additional subsidies for projects in **Bundelkhand and Purvanchal**. The initiative is expected to generate **50,000 construction jobs** and **7,500 operational jobs**, while strengthening cloud computing, AI, fintech, digital governance, and technology-driven industries.
  - The **Uttar Pradesh Cabinet**, led by **Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath**, approved renaming **Jalalabad town** in **Shahjahanpur district** as **Parashurampuri** after receiving approval from the **Central Government**. The decision recognizes the town's historical and religious association as the believed birthplace of **Lord Parashuram**, the **sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu**. The government stated that the new name better reflects the region's **cultural heritage** and traditional identity. Following Cabinet approval, concerned departments will complete the required **administrative and legal formalities** for official implementation.
  - **Sirsa Kinnow** became **Haryana's first fruit** to receive a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, recognizing its unique quality and regional origin. The **GI Registry, Chennai**, granted the registration to the **Kharisuverian Farmer Producer Company**. Famous for its **sweet taste, high juice content, large size, and bright colour**, Sirsa Kinnow benefits from the region's favourable climate. The **GI tag** provides legal protection against imitation, strengthens branding, improves domestic and international market access, enhances farmers' incomes, and reinforces Haryana's position as an important horticulture-producing state.
  - The **West Bengal Government** approved a **₹313.3 crore** implementation package for the **Pradhan Mantri Cha Shramik Protsahan Yojana (PMCSPIY)** to improve the welfare of over **3 lakh tea garden workers** in **North Bengal**. The package allocates **₹177 crore** for education, **₹72 crore** for healthcare, and **₹63 crore** for infrastructure, including **321 worker rest sheds**. The scheme will be implemented through the **North Bengal Development Department** with support from the Health Department and district administrations, improving education, healthcare, and living conditions of tea workers.



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- **Gujarat** is constructing its first **air-filled inflatable rubber dams** using **South Korean technology** at **Rajvasana** and **Pathakwadi**, with a combined investment exceeding **₹162 crore**. Equipped with automated **SCADA systems** and durable **high-tensile rubber bladders**, the dams will improve **irrigation, groundwater recharge, water storage, and flood control**. The **Rajvasana dam** will irrigate over **3,420 hectares**, while the **Pathakwadi project** will benefit around **650 hectares**. Designed with a lifespan of approximately **30 years**, these dams offer efficient and low-maintenance water resource management.
- The **Tripura Government** made the full rendition of **Vande Mataram** and **Jana Gana Mana** compulsory in all **government, government-aided, private schools, and recognised madrassas**. Every school day will begin with the **National Song**, followed by the **National Anthem**, with students and staff standing at attention. The directive follows **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** guidelines and was approved by the **Tripura Council of Ministers**. The initiative aims to strengthen **patriotic values**, respect for national symbols, and awareness of India's constitutional heritage among students.
- **Uttarakhand** became India's **sixth fully literate state** under the **ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society)** programme and **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**. Approved by the Governor, the achievement places Uttarakhand alongside **Mizoram, Goa, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, and Sikkim**. Chief Minister **Pushkar Singh Dhami** credited the milestone to collective public participation and reaffirmed commitment to **digital literacy, financial literacy, continuing education, and lifelong learning**, promoting inclusive educational development across the state.
- **Tamil Nadu** recorded India's highest **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** in higher education at **52.3%** during **2023–24**, far above the national average of **30%**, according to **AISHE**. Female **GER** reached **53.1%**, exceeding the male **51.6%** for the third consecutive year. Around **35.8 lakh** youth were enrolled in higher education, supported by **2,18,656 faculty members**, representing **12.6%** of India's teaching workforce. The achievement highlights sustained progress in educational access, women's participation, quality institutions, and inclusive development, reinforcing Tamil Nadu's leadership in higher education nationwide.
- The **Government of Andhra Pradesh** will develop a **greenfield airport** in **Srikakulam** under the **UDAN Scheme**, improving regional connectivity in north coastal Andhra Pradesh. The airport will be constructed over **1,383 acres** in two phases following an agreement between **AAI** and **APADC**. Under the modified **UDAN 2026–2036**, with an outlay of **₹28,840 crore**, India plans **100 new airports**. The project complements the upcoming **Bhogapuram International Airport**, although concerns remain regarding agricultural impacts in the **Uddanam** coconut-growing region highlighted by local stakeholders and opposition groups.
- The **Gujarat Government** unveiled the **Viksit Gujarat – Data Centre Policy 2026–29** to attract investments in **AI, cloud computing, and hyperscale data centres**. The policy provides **capital subsidies, power tariff support, SGST reimbursement**, electricity duty exemptions, stamp duty benefits, and simplified approvals. Backed by **69 GW** installed power capacity, nearly **47 GW** renewable energy, **Dholera SIR, GIFT City**, and strong logistics, Gujarat aims to become India's digital infrastructure hub. The initiative addresses growing demand for secure data processing while strengthening digital economy and technology investments.
- The **Delhi Government** will introduce the **Pink Saheli Smart Card** from **1 August 2026** for women travelling free on **DTC** and **Cluster buses**, replacing paper-based pink tickets. Women must tap the smart card while boarding to avail the benefit. Around **50 registration centres** have been established for enrolment. The initiative aims to **digitise free bus travel**, improve **transparency**, reduce **paper usage**, simplify ticket verification, enhance operational efficiency, and prevent misuse of the scheme.
- The **Jharkhand Government** launched the **AI Policy 2026–31** to transform the state into an **AI-driven technology and governance hub**. The policy proposes **₹1,150 crore** public investment to attract over **₹10,000 crore** in private investment, establish **50+ Global Capability Centres (GCCs)**, support **1,000 AI startups**, and generate over **one lakh AI-enabled jobs**. Key initiatives include the **Chief Minister's Data Intelligence Platform (CM-DIP)**, **Health and Nutrition Vigilance System (HNVS)**, and **Critical Minerals Administration System (CMAS)**.

### International Affairs

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** began a **six-day diplomatic tour** of **Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand** from **6–11 July 2026** to strengthen India's **Indo-Pacific partnerships**. In Indonesia, he will meet **President Prabowo Subianto** and review the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**. In Australia, discussions with **Prime Minister Anthony Albanese** will focus on **defence, trade, critical technologies, and education**. The New Zealand visit includes talks with **Prime Minister Christopher Luxon** on **economic cooperation**. The tour reinforces India's **Act East Policy, MAHASAGAR Vision**, and commitment to a **free and inclusive Indo-Pacific**.

- India is chairing the **Ninth Session of the UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on Consumer Protection Law and Policy** in Geneva. Led by **Nidhi Khare**, the meeting focuses on strengthening **global consumer protection**, international cooperation, and policy coordination. A major highlight is the launch of the **UN Principles for Consumer Product Safety**, adopted by the **UN General Assembly** in **December 2025**. India is showcasing initiatives such as the **National Consumer Helpline** and **AI-powered e-Jagriti platform**, highlighting its leadership in **digital consumer grievance redressal** and international consumer policy.
- India and **Indonesia** strengthened their **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** by signing **14 agreements** covering **defence, trade, maritime security, space, education, digital payments, healthcare, critical minerals, and telecommunications**. Indonesia agreed to procure **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles** and **Astra Beyond-Visual-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (BVRAAMs)** worth over **US\$600 million**. Both countries reaffirmed support for a **free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific**, emphasizing **ASEAN Centrality**, maritime cooperation, international law, and stronger regional security, further deepening bilateral strategic and defence ties.
- India and **Rwanda** strengthened defence relations during the **2nd Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC)** meeting in **New Delhi**. Building on the **2018 Defence Cooperation Agreement**, both nations adopted an implementation plan covering **military training, joint exercises, defence manufacturing, military medicine**, and institutional capacity building. The Rwandan delegation also interacted with **India's defence industry** and visited the **Army Hospital (Referral & Research)**. The meeting reinforces **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, expands defence technology collaboration, strengthens military healthcare cooperation, and reflects India's growing strategic engagement with African partners.
- Switzerland** announced that the **Geneva AI Summit 2027** will be held on **21–22 June 2027** alongside the **ITU AI for Good Global Summit**. The event will gather **world leaders, researchers, technology companies, and international organisations** to discuss **AI governance, innovation, ethics, AI safety, and responsible artificial intelligence**. Building on previous global AI summits, the conference aims to promote **human-centric, inclusive, and trustworthy AI** while reinforcing **Geneva's** role as a global centre for multilateral diplomacy and international policymaking.
- India and **Myanmar** held the **23rd National-Level Border Coordination Meeting** in **New Delhi**, reviewing security along the **1,643-km shared border**. Both countries agreed to strengthen cooperation against **terrorism, insurgency, narcotics trafficking, arms smuggling, human trafficking, wildlife crime, and cybercrime** through enhanced intelligence sharing and operational coordination. Discussions also covered the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project** and the **India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway**, supporting India's **Neighbourhood**.
- According to media reports, **OpenAI** plans a wider rollout of **GPT-5.6** after completing evaluation under a new **U.S. Department of Commerce** framework for **frontier AI systems**. The review assessed **cybersecurity, national security, AI safety**, and misuse risks under a **2026 Executive Order** establishing oversight for advanced AI models. The framework seeks to balance **innovation** with safeguards against cyber threats, misinformation, military misuse, and hostile actors. Official confirmation from **OpenAI** and **U.S. authorities** had not yet been issued.
- India and **Kyrgyzstan** inaugurated the **International Centre for Civilizational Studies – Manas and Mahabharata** in **Bishkek** to promote comparative research, cultural diplomacy, and academic collaboration. The centre will study the **Mahabharata** and the **Manas Epic**, encouraging interdisciplinary work in literature, philosophy, history, and international relations. Agreements with **seven Kyrgyz universities** will support faculty exchanges, joint research, and educational programmes. The event also marked the release of the first **Hindi translation** of the **Manas epic**, strengthening centuries-old cultural and civilizational ties between both countries through education and scholarship.
- India and **Australia** launched **PACTS (Partnership for Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains)** during the Third Annual Summit in Melbourne. The initiative promotes cooperation in **cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, critical minerals, digital resilience**, and defence research through collaboration among governments, industry, universities, and innovators. Built around **five strategic pillars**, PACTS aims to strengthen secure supply chains, technology commercialization, and innovation. Alongside it, both countries launched the **Australia–Canada–India Technology and Innovation Partnership (ACITI)** to promote trilateral cooperation in advanced technologies and research.
- Prime Ministers **Narendra Modi** and **Anthony Albanese** reaffirmed the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** during the Third India–Australia Annual Summit in Melbourne. Both leaders reviewed progress since 2020 and committed to concluding the **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** to expand trade and investment. Discussions covered **defence, critical minerals, clean energy, cybersecurity, space, civil nuclear cooperation**, education, renewable energy, and research. Australia also announced the return of ancient Indian artefacts, strengthening cultural ties alongside strategic cooperation and reinforcing a stable, rules-based Indo-Pacific partnership.

- India and Australia signed an agreement granting **IP Australia** access to the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)** developed by **CSIR** and the **Ministry of AYUSH**. Australian patent examiners will use TKDL as **prior art** to prevent wrongful patents on traditional knowledge. Established in **2001**, the database contains over **5.2 lakh formulations** from **Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Sowa Rigpa, and Yoga**. Australia becomes the **18th patent office** with access to TKDL.
- India and New Zealand elevated their ties to a **Strategic Partnership** and set a target to double bilateral trade to **₹35,000 crore (NZ\$7 billion)** by **2030**. The countries adopted the **Strategic Partnership Roadmap 2030**, focusing on **trade, agriculture, clean energy, education, innovation, skills, and sports**. The recently concluded **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** is expected to strengthen economic cooperation. New Zealand also announced **\$20 billion investment** in India to boost long-term economic engagement.
- A **UN Women** report highlighted a severe **humanitarian funding crisis**, stating that over **one million women and girls** lost access to essential assistance due to declining donor support. The survey of **855 women-led organisations** found that **40%** risk closure within a year, while many have reduced staff and services. Funding shortages have affected **gender-based violence protection, reproductive healthcare, education, and shelters**, prompting calls for increased global investment in women-led humanitarian organisations.
- Andy Burnham** is set to become the next **Prime Minister of the United Kingdom** after securing support from **322 Labour MPs**. Under **Labour Party** rules, a rival candidate requires **81 nominations**, making Burnham's leadership almost certain. He is expected to succeed **Keir Starmer**, who resigned following Labour's poor local election performance. The leadership transition is expected to reshape the party's strategy and restore public confidence ahead of future national elections.
- India and New Zealand adopted the **Strategic Partnership Roadmap to 2030**, signing **10 agreements** covering **defence, maritime security, disaster management, agriculture, education, tourism, culture, and scientific research**. Key outcomes include **defence logistics cooperation, Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, Animal Husbandry Agreement, Kiwifruit Centres of Excellence in Nagaland and Uttarakhand**, and expanded **Indo-Pacific cooperation**. Both countries also pledged to enhance **trade, renewable energy, Antarctic research, and academic collaboration**.

### Banking/Economy/Business News

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** will launch the **Index of Services Production (ISP)** with **2024–25** as the base year, providing India's first monthly indicator for measuring the **formal services sector**, which contributes nearly **53% of Gross Value Added (GVA)**. Using the **Laspeyres Volume Index** methodology, the index will complement the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** and support timely policy decisions. Compiled using **GST data**, administrative records, and sectoral statistics, the ISP will significantly strengthen India's economic monitoring framework.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved the appointment of **Mahesh Muralidhar Pai** as the **Managing Director & CEO** of **South Indian Bank** for a **three-year term** beginning **1 October 2026**. Currently serving as **Chief General Manager** at **Canara Bank**, Pai has nearly **30 years of banking experience** across **digital banking, treasury, foreign exchange, retail banking, MSME finance**, and corporate strategy. He will succeed **P. R. Seshadri**, strengthening leadership at the Thrissur-based private sector bank.
- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** revised India's **FY2026–27 GDP growth forecast** to **6.4%**, slightly lower than its earlier estimate, while raising the **FY2027–28 forecast** to **6.7%**. The revision reflects higher **global energy prices**, geopolitical tensions, and increased import costs. Despite these challenges, India remains the **fastest-growing major economy**, supported by strong **domestic demand** and a resilient **services sector**. The IMF also lowered its **global growth forecast** to **3.0%**, citing elevated commodity and energy prices.
- Federal Bank** received its first international **investment-grade credit rating** from **S&P Global Ratings**, earning **BBB-/Stable** long-term and **A-3** short-term ratings. The recognition reflects strong capitalization, disciplined **risk management**, diversified funding, healthy financial performance, and stable business operations. An investment-grade rating improves investor confidence, lowers funding costs, enhances international credibility, and provides better access to global capital markets. The milestone strengthens Federal Bank's competitive position among internationally recognized financial institutions while supporting future business expansion and sustainable financial growth.
- The **World Bank** approved **\$890 million** for **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana**, including an **\$820 million IBRD loan**, **\$60 million Clean Technology Fund loan**, and **\$10 million grant**. The programme targets rooftop solar installations in **one crore households**, mobilizing **\$4.2 billion** in private investment and creating **1.7 million jobs**. It also strengthens **DISCOMs**, financial institutions, and vendors for large-scale implementation. The initiative supports India's **net-zero 2070** target, renewable energy expansion, energy security, and affordable electricity through residential solar power adoption.

- The Government exempted eligible **GIFT City IFSC** maritime units from obtaining licences under **Section 11 of the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025** for chartering foreign vessels used in **EXIM trade**. The reform aims to promote **maritime leasing, ship financing, and maritime services**, while improving the **ease of doing business**. Existing **cabotage rules** remain unchanged. The move is expected to attract global investment and strengthen **GIFT City** as an international maritime and financial services hub.
- India extended the **anti-dumping duty** on **seamless steel tubes and pipes** imported from **China** until **27 January 2027**. The decision followed a **sunset review** by the **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)**, which concluded that removing the duty could harm domestic manufacturers. Applicable to products under **Customs Tariff Heading 7304**, the measure protects the Indian steel industry from **unfairly priced imports** and supports fair competition.
- **Indian Potash Limited (IPL)** and **Jain Irrigation Systems Limited** signed an MoU to promote **drip irrigation** for **sugarcane cultivation** in **Gujarat**. The partnership covers **field surveys, system design, installation, farmer training, and fertigation support**. Farmers will receive assistance for adopting **Micro Irrigation Systems**, including access to **credit and government grants**. The initiative aims to improve **water-use efficiency**, increase **crop productivity**, promote **sustainable agriculture**, and strengthen India's **biofuel feedstock ecosystem**.

### Appointments/Resignations

- The **Central Government** appointed new heads of three major police institutions after approval by the **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet**. **Alok Kumar Mittal** became **Director General of BPR&D**, **Amit Garg** was appointed **Director of NCRB**, and **Sujeet Pandey** became **Director of SVPNPA, Hyderabad**. These appointments aim to strengthen **police modernization**, improve **crime data management**, and enhance **IPS officer training**. **BPR&D** functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, while **NCRB** manages national crime records and **SVPNPA** trains Indian Police Service officers.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** appointed **Sanjeev Jain**, a **2008-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer**, as **India's Ambassador to North Korea (DPRK)**. Previously serving as Ambassador to **Cabo Verde**, Jain brings extensive diplomatic experience in strengthening India's bilateral relations. He will assume charge after completing necessary diplomatic formalities. His appointment is expected to enhance **India-North Korea diplomatic engagement**, support India's broader **foreign policy objectives**, and strengthen cooperation on regional and international issues through continued diplomatic dialogue and strategic

### Defence News

- **Adani Defence & Aerospace** began foundation work for a **₹2,500 crore missile manufacturing facility** at **Pali, Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh**. The project will manufacture **medium and long-range missile systems**, along with **composite propellants, TNT, and other explosive materials**. Scheduled for completion within **three years**, it is expected to create around **5,000 direct and indirect jobs** while engaging more than **50 MSMEs**. The facility strengthens **India's defence manufacturing ecosystem**, supports **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, and enhances the country's indigenous missile production capabilities.
- **INS Mahendragiri (F38)**, the **sixth indigenous stealth frigate** under **Project 17A (Nilgiri-class)**, will be commissioned into the **Indian Navy** on **11 July 2026** at **Visakhapatnam**. Built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited** with over **75% indigenous content**, the warship features **surface-to-air missiles, surface-to-surface missiles, electronic warfare systems, anti-submarine capabilities, and a CODOG propulsion system**. It will join the **Eastern Fleet**, strengthening India's maritime security and supporting the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiative in defence manufacturing.
- Indonesia decided to import India's indigenous **Astra Beyond-Visual-Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM)** during bilateral discussions between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **President Prabowo Subianto**. Developed by **DRDO** and manufactured by **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)**, **Astra** is India's first indigenous long-range air-to-air missile. The agreement also includes expanded cooperation through **BrahMos missile supplies, Indonesia-specific Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)**, and development of **Sabang Port**. The deal strengthens **India's defence exports**, supports **Make in India**, and enhances strategic cooperation in the **Indo-Pacific** region.
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully flight-tested the **Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR)** at the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha**. The rocket accurately demonstrated its **minimum operational range of 60 km**, successfully completing all planned manoeuvres and hitting the target with high precision. Developed by **ARDE, HEMRL, DRDL, and RCI**, the LRGR enhances the **Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL)** system with advanced **guidance, navigation, and precision strike capabilities**, strengthening India's **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** defence programme.
- The **CSIR-NAL** completed the design phase of the indigenous **Saras MkII 19-seater twin-turboprop aircraft**, marking a major milestone in India's aviation programme. Designed for **regional connectivity** under the **UDAN Scheme**, it features a **pressurised cabin, glass cockpit, digital avionics, autopilot, and command-by-wire flight controls**. **HAL** will support prototype manufacturing and component production, while the **maiden flight** is scheduled for **December 2027**. The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has indicated an initial requirement of **15 aircraft**, strengthening indigenous aerospace capability, civil aviation, and defence transport operations across India.

### Awards and Recognitions

- The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** received the **Gold Award** at the **National Awards for e-Governance 2026** for its **AI-powered mental health platform, ICMR-MINDS**. The award recognized innovation in delivering **citizen-centric healthcare services** through **Artificial Intelligence**. The platform uses an **AI-based Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS)** to assist frontline healthcare workers with **mental health screening, assessment, treatment recommendations, and follow-up care**. Featuring **multilingual support, offline functionality, and real-time dashboards**, ICMR-MINDS aims to improve accessible and evidence-based mental healthcare across India.
- Acharya Ranchhodlal Goswami** of **Ahmedabad** was selected for the **Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar 2025** by the **Sangeet Natak Akademi** for preserving **Haveli Sangeet**. The **16th-generation Acharya** of the historic **Goswami Haveli** has composed over **2,200 devotional verses**, authored **eight books**, contributed to **Gujarat University's Haveli Sangeet curriculum**, and continues doctoral research in music. The award recognizes his efforts in preserving the **550-year-old Pushtimarg devotional music tradition**, an important component of India's classical musical heritage.
- The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** won the prestigious **WSIS Prize 2026** for **Samriddh Gram**, an integrated **phygital** rural service delivery model powered by **BharatNet**. Awarded under **Action Line C6**, the initiative establishes **Samriddhi Kendras** delivering healthcare, education, agriculture, financial inclusion, governance, and digital services through village-level centres. Supported by BharatNet's connectivity to over **2.17 lakh Gram Panchayats**, the project was selected after evaluation by the **ITU** and over **2.2 million global votes**, showcasing India's leadership in **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** and inclusive rural digital transformation.

### Schemes News

- The **UP Mahila Samarthya Yojana** empowers rural women through **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** under the **Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (UPSRLM)**. The scheme offers **free skill training, a ₹15,000 revolving fund, entrepreneurship assistance, and market linkages** through **Cluster Level Enterprises (CLEs)**. Eligible beneficiaries include women aged **18–60 years**, with priority for **BPL families, SC/ST communities, women with disabilities, and Aspirational Districts**. The initiative promotes **financial inclusion, women-led enterprises, self-employment, sustainable livelihoods, and socio-economic development** across rural Uttar Pradesh.

- The **Uttar Pradesh Government** will implement the **UP Nishulk Boring Yojana 2026** to improve irrigation by providing **free agricultural borewell installation** and subsidised **pump sets up to 5 HP** for eligible farmers. Originally launched in **1985**, the scheme targets **small, marginal, and SC/ST farmers**, reducing dependence on monsoon rainfall and improving groundwater access. Applications can be submitted through the **Uttar Pradesh Minor Irrigation Department** after document verification. The initiative is expected to strengthen irrigation infrastructure, enhance crop productivity, improve rural livelihoods, and reduce farming costs across the state.
- The **UP Mahila Udyam Nidhi Yojana 2026** provides financial assistance of **₹50,000 to ₹10 lakh** at around **4% interest** to women entrepreneurs for establishing or expanding **micro and small enterprises**. Loans up to **₹2 lakh** are available without collateral. Priority is given to **Self-Help Group (SHG) members, widows, women with disabilities, and minority women**. The scheme promotes **women entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, employment generation, and economic empowerment** across Uttar Pradesh.

### Sports News

- Brazilian football legend **Neymar Jr.** retired from **international football** after Brazil's **2–1 FIFA World Cup 2026** Round of 16 defeat to **Norway** at **MetLife Stadium**. Ending a **16-year international career**, Neymar scored Brazil's only goal through a **late penalty**. He retires as **Brazil's all-time leading men's scorer** with **80 goals** and **59 assists** in **130 appearances**. His achievements include the **2013 FIFA Confederations Cup** and **2016 Olympic Gold Medal**, although a **FIFA World Cup title** remained elusive throughout his distinguished international career.
- Australia** defeated **England** by **seven wickets** to win the **ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026** final at **Lord's Cricket Ground**, securing a record **seventh championship**. England scored **150/4**, led by captain **Nat Sciver-Brunt's** unbeaten **58**, but Australia comfortably chased **153/3** in **17.1 overs**. **Beth Mooney** anchored the innings with **64 runs** and earned the **Player of the Match** award, while **Phoebe Litchfield** contributed **48 runs**. The victory further strengthened Australia's legacy as the most successful team in **Women's T20 World Cup** history.
- Vaibhav Sooryavanshi** became the **youngest cricketer** to represent **India** in international cricket at **15 years and 99 days**, debuting in a **T20I** against **England** at **Old Trafford**. He surpassed **Sachin Tendulkar's** long-standing record of debuting at **16 years and 205 days**. Vaibhav also became India's **youngest men's T20I debutant**, highlighting the country's emerging cricket talent pipeline. However, the overall record for the **youngest men's T20I international** remains with **Romania's Marian Gherasim**, while **Ireland's Joshua Little** previously held the record among **Full ICC Members**.

- **Charles Leclerc** won the **2026 British Grand Prix** at **Silverstone**, claiming his **ninth Formula One** victory for **Ferrari** after an action-packed race. A **late Safety Car**, triggered by **Max Verstappen's** crash, locked the final standings. **George Russell** finished second for **Mercedes**, while **Lewis Hamilton** secured third despite a post-race investigation. **Lando Norris** placed fourth for **McLaren**, and **Kimi Antonelli** dropped to sixteenth following mechanical issues and penalties. Ferrari's strong strategy and consistent pace secured a memorable victory in one of the season's most dramatic races.
- India will become the **first country** to outfit its athletes in **jute-viscose blended apparel** at an international multi-sport event during the **Commonwealth Games 2026** in **Glasgow**. Developed by the **National Jute Board (NJB)**, **Gloster Jute Mills**, and **NIFT**, the uniforms are made from **100% biodegradable fabric** promoting sustainable textiles and **Make in India**. India's **124-member contingent** will wear the eco-friendly apparel during official ceremonies, highlighting innovation, environmental sustainability, value-added jute products, and India's commitment to green manufacturing.
- The **FIFA World Cup 2026** reached the **quarterfinal stage** after completion of the Round of 16. **France, Morocco, Spain, Belgium, Norway, England, Argentina, and Switzerland** advanced to the last eight. Quarterfinal fixtures include **France vs Morocco, Spain vs Belgium, Norway vs England, and Argentina vs Switzerland**, scheduled from **10–12 July 2026 (IST)**. The winners will contest two semifinals before the final. The remaining matches promise intense competition as teams battle for football's most prestigious international title.
- Seventeen-year-old **Aswath S** from **Kanyakumari** became **India's 98th Chess Grandmaster** after securing his final **Grandmaster norm** at the **2026 Pune International Grandmaster Round Robin**. He earned the title by defeating **FM Kannan Vaidyanathan** in the final round, finishing with **7 points from 9 games**. Earlier, he achieved Grandmaster norms at the **Grenke Open** and **Budapest First Saturday GM Tournament**, while crossing the required **2500 FIDE rating**, further strengthening India's growing reputation as a global chess powerhouse.
- **Telangana** will host the **8th Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) 2026**, providing a national platform for young athletes to showcase their talent. Organised under the **Khelo India Programme** by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, the Games aim to identify future champions, strengthen grassroots sports, and prepare athletes for international competitions. The event will attract thousands of participants, coaches, and officials, boosting **sports tourism**, economic activity, and youth participation. Telangana's selection reflects its growing sports infrastructure and supports India's long-term vision of developing a strong sporting culture.

- Former Indian captain **Sourav Ganguly** was inducted into the prestigious **ICC Hall of Fame**, becoming the **12th Indian cricketer** to receive the honour. Recognised for his fearless leadership, Ganguly transformed Indian cricket by leading the team to the **2003 ICC Cricket World Cup Final** and nurturing future stars including **MS Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh, and Virender Sehwag**. During his career, he played **113 Tests** and **308 ODIs**. The honour celebrates his outstanding achievements, leadership, and lasting contribution to making India one of cricket's strongest international teams.

### Science and Technology News

- Japan's **Hayabusa2 spacecraft**, operated by **JAXA**, successfully completed a high-speed flyby of asteroid **Torifune (2001 CC21)** on **5 July 2026**. Travelling at **5 kilometres per second**, it passed approximately **800 metres** from the asteroid's centre to study its **surface, structure, and temperature**. The mission supports **planetary defence research** by testing advanced **navigation, precision guidance, and rapid reconnaissance technologies**. Following its successful **Ryugu sample-return mission** in 2020, Hayabusa2 will continue its extended mission toward asteroid **1998 KY26**, targeted for **2031**.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully completed the first ground test of the **Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments (SOLVE)** under the **Gaganyaan Mission** at **Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota**. The test validated the vehicle's **solid propulsion system**, designed to evaluate **crew module recovery, parachute deployment, and safe water landing** from **10–17 km altitude**. Using modified **PSLV-based propulsion** and advanced nozzle technology, SOLVE strengthens preparations for India's first indigenous **human spaceflight mission**, enhancing **crew safety** and space mission reliability.
- **China** conducted a **Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM)** test in the **South Pacific**, marking its first known submarine-based strategic missile launch from a **nuclear-powered submarine** since **1982**. The missile carried a **dummy warhead** and was launched during the **Joint Sea-2026** naval exercises with **Russia**. The test drew concern from **Australia, New Zealand, and Japan**, while highlighting China's expanding **sea-based nuclear deterrence capabilities**. The launch also renewed attention on the **Treaty of Rarotonga (1985)**, establishing the South Pacific as a **nuclear-free zone**.
- Chinese AI startup **DeepSeek** is developing a custom **AI inference chip** to reduce dependence on foreign semiconductor technology. Manufactured in collaboration with **SMIC**, China's leading semiconductor foundry, the chip is designed primarily for **AI inference**, enabling efficient text, image, and prediction generation. DeepSeek's **V4-Pro** and **V4-Flash** models are optimized for **Huawei Ascend processors**, supporting China's domestic AI ecosystem amid international export restrictions. The initiative strengthens China's semiconductor self-reliance, advances indigenous AI hardware, and supports long-term technological independence.

- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** approved **Vepdegestrant (Veppanu)** as the world's first **PROTAC-based medicine** for **ER-positive, HER2-negative, ESR1-mutated advanced breast cancer**. Developed by **Arvinas** and **Pfizer**, the drug demonstrated superior performance in the **Phase 3 VERITAC-2 trial**, improving **progression-free survival** compared with **fulvestrant**. The FDA also approved **Guardant360 CDx** as a companion diagnostic for detecting **ESR1 mutations**. This approval marks a major breakthrough in **targeted cancer therapy** through innovative **protein degradation technology**.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully conducted the **Integrated Main Parachute Airdrop Test-05 (IMAT-05)** for the **Gaganyaan Mission** at **Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh**. A simulated **crew module** was dropped from **2.5 km** using an **Indian Air Force IL-76 aircraft**, validating the complete **parachute deployment sequence** and safe descent. Conducted jointly by **ISRO, DRDO, the Indian Air Force, and the Indian Army**, the successful test strengthens preparations for the **Gaganyaan G1 mission** and India's first indigenous **human spaceflight programme**.
- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** has assigned **IIT Madras** and **C-DAC** to manage the **National Bridge Health Monitoring Software**, supporting the **Bridge Health Monitoring System (BHMS)**. Using advanced sensors, the system monitors bridge stress, vibration, movement, and load for improved structural safety. A nationwide **digital bridge inventory** must be completed by **30 September 2026** by agencies including **NHAI, NHIDCL, BRO, and state PWDs**. The initiative enables centralized data analysis, preventive maintenance, improved bridge safety, and efficient long-term infrastructure management across India.
- **Novo Nordisk India** launched **Awikli (insulin icodec)**, the world's first **once-weekly basal insulin** for adults with **Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes**. The therapy reduces injections from **365 to 52 annually**, improving patient convenience and treatment adherence. Delivered through the **FlexTouch** device, Awikli provides stable glucose control throughout the week. Clinical results from the **ONWARDS-1 Trial** showed better **HbA1c reduction**, improved **Time in Range**, and fewer hypoglycaemia concerns than daily insulin. The innovation is significant for India, which has over **101 million** diabetes patients.
- Scientists used **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to decode structured communication among **sperm whales**, identifying **156 distinct codas** resembling a phonetic communication system. Conducted under **Project CETI (Cetacean Translation Initiative)**, the research analysed recordings from about **400 whales** collected between **2005 and 2018**. Published in **Nature Communications**, the study identified communication features including **rubato** and **ornamentation**, suggesting sophisticated vocal patterns. Researchers also developed **AI-powered bio-loggers** and

**autonomous underwater gliders** to collect behavioural data, demonstrating AI's growing role in marine biology and animal communication research.

### Important Days News

- **World Zoonoses Day 2026** was observed on **6 July** to raise awareness about **zoonotic diseases** transmitted between **animals and humans**. The day commemorates **Louis Pasteur's** successful administration of the **first rabies vaccine** on **6 July 1885**. According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, nearly **60% of human infectious diseases** originate from animals. The observance promotes the **One Health approach**, emphasizing collaboration among **medical professionals, veterinarians, and environmental experts**. Key preventive measures include **vaccination, surveillance, hygiene, safe food handling, and public awareness**.
- India observed the **125th birth anniversary of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee** on **6 July 2026**, honouring his contributions as a **political leader, educationist, and nationalist**. Born in **1901**, he became the **youngest Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta** in **1934**, introducing significant educational reforms. After Independence, he served as **Minister for Industry and Supply** in India's first Union Cabinet and founded the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh** in **1951**, later evolving into the **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**. He strongly advocated **national integration** and the principle of **"One Nation, One Constitution."**
- **World Population Day** is observed annually on **11 July** to raise awareness about **population issues, reproductive health, family planning, gender equality, and sustainable development**. The **2026 theme** is **"Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people: today and in the future."** Established by **UNDP** in **1989**, the observance encourages investment in **education, healthcare, reproductive rights, and youth empowerment**. Governments and organisations conduct awareness programmes promoting **inclusive growth, women's empowerment, and sustainable population management**.

### Obituaries News

- **Padma Shri** awardee **Girish Bharadwaj**, popularly known as the **"Bridge Man of India,"** passed away at the age of **76**. A **mechanical engineer** and grassroots innovator, he constructed over **140 low-cost suspension bridges** across **Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, and Odisha**, connecting remote villages to schools, hospitals, and markets. His first bridge, built in **1989** across the **Payaswini River**, pioneered affordable engineering for difficult terrains. Bharadwaj's work transformed rural connectivity and remains a lasting symbol of **inclusive infrastructure, innovation, and sustainable community development**.

**Static Takeaways**

| Aspect                | Details                                                                            |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gujarat               | Governor: Acharya Devrat, Chief Minister: Bhupendra Patel, Capital: Gandhinagar    |
| Maharashtra           | Governor: Jishnu Dev Verma, Chief Minister: Devendra Fadnavis, Capital: Mumbai     |
| Bihar                 | Governor: Arif Khan, Chief Minister: Samrat Chaudhary, Capital: Patna              |
| Rajasthan             | Governor: Haribhau Bagde, Chief Minister: Bhajanlala Sharma, Capital: Jaipur       |
| Haryana               | Governor: Ashim Kumar Ghosj, Chief Minister: Nayab Saini, Capital: Haryana         |
| Delhi                 | Governor: Tarnjit Singh, Chief Minister: Rekha Gupta, Capital: New Delhi           |
| West Bengal           | Governor: R N Ravi, Chief Minister: Suvendu Adhikari, Capital: Kolkata             |
| Odisha                | Governor: Haribabau Khambhupati, Chief Minister: Mohan Majhi, Capital: Bhubneshwar |
| Saudi Arabia          | Head of Country: Mohammed Bin Salman                                               |
| USA                   | President: Donald Trump Capital: Washington D.C.                                   |
| Israel                | Prime Minister: Benjamin Netanyahu Capital: Jerusalem                              |
| Australia             | Prime Minister: Anthony Albanese                                                   |
| New Zealand           | Prime Minister: Luxon Christopher                                                  |
| Japan                 | Prime Minister: Sane Takaechi, Capital: Tokyo                                      |
| Reserve Bank of India | Governor: Sanjay Malhotra                                                          |
| OpenAI                | Founder: Sam Altman                                                                |
| ICC Chairman          | Jay Shah                                                                           |





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