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What Is EPFO VISHWAS 2026? Benefits, Eligibility and Key Features Explained

The VISHWAS 2026 scheme, which is a one-time scheme introduced by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), is aimed at helping all employers in resolving their issues which have been pending for a long time with regard to the damages and penalties. This scheme has been launched by the Ministry of Labour & Employment with the aim of minimizing litigation, encouraging the compliance voluntarily, and increasing coordination in the management of social security in India. The VISHWAS scheme, which was started on June 29th, has introduced new penalties that are lower than the existing penalties applicable in most of the cases.

What is VISHWAS 2026?

VISHWAS 2026 is an initiative to resolve the disputes that has been started by the Employees Provident Fund Organisation under the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

This scheme aims to resolve the disputes regarding damages caused under Section 14B of the Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, and also penalties that are levied under Section 128 of the Code on Social Security, 2020.

The scheme has been notified by the way of G.S.R. 525(E), on 29 June 2026 as part of the EPF Scheme, 2026 and is valid for the six months from the date of notification.

What Was the Reason for EPFO to Launch VISHWAS 2026?

The main goal of the scheme is to settle the disputes that have been unresolved for the long time while motivating organizations to conform to the EPF rules voluntarily.

The main aims are,

- Reducing the cases of disputes regarding the EPF compensations and fines
- Helping employers fulfill rules without any pressure
- Resolving cases faster
- Supporting the employees
- Making the settlement easy with the help of technology
- Improving social protection administration in India

EPFO proposes lenient fine rates to enable organizations to pay fines instead of going through long disputes.

Which Cases are Eligible to be Covered Under the Scheme of VISHWAS 2026?

The scheme has four categories of cases as mentioned below,
Cases Still Running Before the Courts

Cases involving disputes for which judgment has been pronounced in the respect of the imposition of penalty of damages are being challenged in courts and tribunals.

Cases of Final Orders Assigned for Recovery

Cases which involving final orders of penalty or damages passed but with recovery being still pending or only partially completed. This includes Recovery Certificate (RC) cases.

Issuance of Notices but Pending Final Orders

Cases issued notices but there is no final orders have yet been passed.

Cases Where Notices have not been Issued

Even cases in which there are no notices issued are covered under the scheme.

Lower Penalty Rates as per VISHWAS 2026

A major benefit of the scheme is significant reduction in penalty and damage rates for defaults occurring prior to 14th June 2024.

Following the revised rates are,

Period of Default	Discounted Penalty Rate
Less than 2 months	0.25% per month
Between more than 2 months and up to 4 months	0.50% per month
More than 4 months	1.00% per month

The purpose of these concessional rates is to expedite resolution of outstanding disputes.

Eligibility Criteria for Employers

In order to benefit from the provisions of the VISHWAS 2026, certain requirements must be fulfilled.

Employers must have to,

Ensure the complete deposit of statutory interest applicable in terms of Section 7Q of the EPF & MP Act, 1952 or Section 127 of the Code on Social Security, 2020 before applying for the scheme.

Provide an undertaking stating that no more appeals will be initiated in respect of the disputes settled under the scheme.

Apply for the scheme within the time period prescribed.

If the eligibility requirements are not complied with, an employer may become ineligible for getting benefits under VISHWAS 2026.

Cases Exempted from the Scheme

Certain groups of cases have also been excluded from the VISHWAS 2026, such as,

- Cases where liability to pay has already been settled.
- Cases arising out of cases of dishonest conduct or deliberate misstatement of facts.
- Cases where statutory interest has not been deposited fully under the provisions.
- These exclusions ensure that the scheme helps only genuine cases in complying voluntarily.

How to Apply for EPFO VISHWAS 2026

The applications under this scheme should be submitted online through the portal of EPFO for the employers.

The digital procedure involves the,

- Logging in through Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) or through e-Sign.
- Online submission of application.
- Digital verification of documents.
- Processing of EPFO electronically.
- Issue of the orders of the settlement from the EPFO site.

It is expected that this paperless procedure will help in removing the delays from the system and ensuring efficient work.

Dedicated Cells for VISHWAS to Help Employers.

EPFO has created dedicated VISHWAS Cells at its Zonal, Regional, and District offices to ensure smooth implementation of the initiative.

These cells will,

- Help the employers in filing the applications.
- To verify the documents.
- To process the application.
- To ensure timely resolution of issues.
- To guide them through the entire process.

The EPFO has issued guidelines for the same which include monitoring of the operations from Zonal and Headquarters

Cabinet Approves Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS): Key Features, Incentives, Benefits and Expected Impact

Union Cabinet chaired under the leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS). The plan has a financial backing of ₹62,500 crore, intending to boost the local manufacturing, increase value addition, enhance supply chain efficiency, promote Indian brands and positioning India as a global leader in mobile manufacturing. The development comes right after the completion of the successful Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Plan for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing, indicating the government's effort on the Make in India initiative.

What is the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)?

The Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) is a newly launched scheme by the central government in India.

This scheme has been approved by the cabinet of ministers on 15th July, 2026. Under this scheme, the government aims at developing the mobile phone manufacturing sector through performance linked rewards.

The purpose of MPMS is to help India achieve advanced mobile phone manufacturing skills and capabilities in the field of making mobile phone components, product development, R&D, and brand creation.

The scheme is aimed at making India operational in achieving results of the project over five years from 2026-27.

The Introduction of MPMS

India has evolved to become the second-largest mobile phone producer in the world in terms of share, as 99% of mobile phones manufactured in India are sold within the country. Although a rapid growth has been seen in the mobile phone manufacturing in the past ten years, improving value addition and technology capabilities remains one of the agenda items. The MPMS objective was to,

- Enhance mobile phone manufacturing capabilities
- Boost local production of major components
- Lower reliance on imported goods
- Create a resilient supply chain
- Support Indian investor trusting in innovation
- Facilitate indigenous design and research
- Boost the position of the India in the electronics manufacturing industry.

The introduction of the scheme was also coherent with the long-term objective of the making India as a trustworthy destination for manufacturing worldwide.

Key Features of Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)

The most recently sanctioned scheme introduces several incentives that are designed to promote tech development and creativity in manufacturing processes.

Budgeting

- Total amounts of budget: ₹62,500 crore

Scheme Duration

- Five years
- From the fiscal year 2026-2027 to fiscal year 2030-2031

Incentives for the Eligible Sales

Manufacturers will be reimbursed according to the following,

- 2.25% to 5% on qualified sales of mobile phones which are built in India.
- Incentive rates are determined by the category and performance standards.



Additional Incentives for Domestic Sourcing

In order to stimulate local production, companies may receive the,

- Up to 1.5% more incentives connected to local sourcing of the specific components of production.
- This is due to the intention to create a more developed supply chain in electronics and decrease dependence on imports.

Fundraising from Indian Industries

- Thus, in order to increase self-sufficiency in tech progress, the government may give additional funding for companies that spend money on product design and R&D initiatives.
- Some Indian brands might gain access to an additional 3% of the reimbursement for qualified sales.

How MPMS Builds on the Success of the PLI Scheme

The implementation of the PLI scheme has led to several significant achievements

Numerous global smartphone manufacturers set up operations in India.

Exports of mobile phones reached an all-time high level.

India was able to establish itself in various global electronics supply chains.

Significant manufacturing facilities were brought into operation which created a large number of jobs, especially for population in rural parts of India.

The new scheme called MPMS will enhance the results achieved by the PLI scheme.

India's First Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train: Features, Safety, Route and Global Significance

Indian railways set to launch India's first Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train, the train was developed with domestic technology and with the assistance of the hydrogen ecosystem located in Jind, Haryana, the train that produces electricity on board with the help of hydrogen fuel cells with the only by-product being water vapour. The train can take around 2,600 passengers, all advanced multi-layer safety systems, along with nearly zero emissions, are installed on board the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train, which can be regarded as the India's movement towards clean energy provision and technological advancement in order to make the railway system greener.

About First Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train in India

India's Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train is a next-gen railway vehicle that generates electricity onboard using the hydrogen fuel cells instead of conventional diesel engines or above-ground electric systems.

In comparison with the normal trains, hydrogen stored in the tanks onboard the train reacts with oxygen to produce electricity through PEM (Proton Exchange Membrane) Fuel Cells.

This is used to operate the engines of the train, and the only output is steam, which makes it one of the cleanest technologies for the railways.

This project symbolizes a giant step towards the sustainable and low carbon transport in India.

What Makes This Train an Important Symbol for Indian Railways?

Indian Railways has made significant strides in to electrifying over 99% of its broad gauge network, which has substantially cut down the use of diesel.

The Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train enhances this transition even further by,

- Stopping carbon emissions during its operation.
- Generating electricity while on the board.
- Aiding India in transition to clean energy.
- Proving the capability the technology sector of the country possesses.
- Contributing to the National Green Hydrogen Mission.
- Creating a new possibility in supporting with the Net Zero goals of the country.

It marks a new era in the history of the railway propulsion system from steam to diesel, and now to electric and hydrogen propulsion system.

How Does a Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train Function?

Instead of just utilizing fossil fuel combustion like diesel trains do, the train has a miniature power plant that is made up of the Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) Fuel Cells.

The procedure is as follows the,

- Hydrogen from the storage tanks on the train enters the fuel cell.
- Oxygen is sourced from the air.
- Electrochemical reaction takes place.
- Electricity is generated.
- Electricity is sent to the traction motors.
- Only steam and heat are emitted as by-products.

Unlike the diesel engines, there is no fire, no emissions and no waste products.

To summarize,

- Hydrogen + Oxygen → Electricity + Steam + Heat

Technical Specifications of India's Hydrogen Train

The Commissioning of the new Hydrogen Train has been accomplished for the mass passenger transport from one place to other.

Key Features

- Train Structure: 10 cars
- Passenger Capacity: Approximately 2,600 passengers
- Power Cars: 2 Hydrogen Power Cars
- Trailer Cars: 8
- Power Production: 1,200 kW (1,600 hp) per Power Car

- Total Power: 2,400 kW
- Operating Speed: 75 km/h
- Maximum Design Speed: 110 km/h

This technology positions the hydrogen train to be bigger than other hydrogen passenger trains currently operating throughout the globe which generally consist of only two to four cars.

Route and Operations

Initially, this train will be running in the segment from Jind to Sonipat under the Northern Railway.

Major Stations in the Route

- Jind Junction
- Jind City
- Pandu Pindara Junction
- Gohana Junction
- Bhambhewa
- Butana
- Mohana
- Sonipat
- Sonipat New

The 89 kilometers section has been identified for the assessment of the performance, safety, and efficiency of the hydraulic passenger trains under normal railway conditions.

India's First Hydrogen Refuelling Facility in Jind

A major highlight of the project is the establishment of the largest hydrogen refuelling centre for trains in India at Jind in Haryana.

The integrated centre comprises of the,

Hydrogen Production

Hydrogen is obtained through electrolysis, the process of splitting the water into the hydrogen and oxygen with the help of electricity.

Hydrogen Storage.

The created hydrogen is stored in specially designed containers.

Compression.

Hydrogen is compressed by applying a pressure of around 500 b.

Refuelling

The hydrogen used to refuel the train comes from two dispensers operating at 350 bar at the same time so that both motor cars are refuelled.

Storage Capacity

The capacity of the centre is approximately of 3000 kg which is enough to cater to the regular needs for train operations.

Safety Approaches with the Advanced Multi-Level Systems

Hydrogen being highly combustible necessitates ensuring safety.

Indian Railways has put in the multiple independent safety mechanisms for the safety of people and its operations.

Main Safety Components

- Regular hydrogen leak detection.
- Flame detection devices.
- Smoke detecting devices.
- Heating monitoring devices.
- Hydrogen shutting off devices.
- Continuous ventilation aimed at avoiding gas accumulation.
- Fire prevention devices.
- Water spraying systems.
- Out of ordinary mode of operation.
- Real-time monitoring systems within the cabin of a train.

Altogether these sets of protective mechanisms follow the internationally recognized rule of defence in depth that provides for a comprehensive safety solution rather than relying on only one element.

Global Safety Regulations

The hydrogen ecosystem is also designed according to the world-wide accepted standards such as the,

- NFPA-2
- ISO 19880 Series

The system also meets the legal requirements provided by PESO.

The project has undergone the procedure of independent assessment of safety by a third party organization TÜV SÜD, Germany, which is widely recognized testing and certification authority worldwide before it is brought to actual work.

Cabinet Approves National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026): Key Features, Benefits, Objectives and Impact

After the approval of the National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 for self-reliant India (NIPU-2026) by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs led by Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This new scheme aims to promote the investment in gas-based urea manufacturing, reduce import dependency, enhance transparency in project economics, and boost India's fertilizer production self-sufficiency. By substituting the prior investment policy for NIPU-2026, the government aims to modernize the urea industry in line with its ambitious self-reliant India plan.

What Is the National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026)?

The National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026) is the latest investment policy brought by the Department of Fertilizers with the aim to promote the establishment of new gas-based urea manufacturing plants in different parts of the country.

The policy intends to draw investment from both private and public sectors by providing a transparent and viable means for establishing modern urea production facilities, replacing the earlier New Investment Policy (NIP)-2012, which expired in the October of 2019.

The main aim of this policy is to increase the domestic urea production along with gradually reducing India's dependence on imported fertilizers.

What Was the Rationale Behind the Implementation of NIPU-2026?

Urea, it is a type of fertilizer that plays a key role in the agricultural productivity, it is widely consumed throughout India.

Despite an increase in the domestic supply over the years, demand remains as higher than supply, which leads to the import of huge quantities.

The government has thus brought forth the initiative of NIPU-2026 in order to do the following,

- Increase the level of the domestic urea production
- Attract investments towards new production facilities
- Diminish dependency on the imports
- Enhance transparency in the returns received from the investment
- Boost up the level of fertilizers' dependence in India
- As well as comply with the objectives regarding the Atmanirbhar Bharat project

The Department of Fertilizers has been approached by the different organizations with suggestions relating to the establishment of new plants producing urea, which illustrates the necessity of the development of new investment policies.

Key Features of the NIPU-2026

The NIPU-2026 policy has several features which are different from the earlier investment model.

The first two features of the policy are the following,

Formation of the New Gas-Based Urea Production Units

The emphasis of the policy is on the formation of new gas-based urea production units that utilize energy-efficient and environmentally friendly technologies.

The separation of fixed and variable costs.

The most important change introduced by NIPU can be described as the separation of fixed and variable costs. This change allows for the following:

- Assuring transparency of project economics;
- Ensuring fairness in cost estimation;
- Improving investment financial planning;

RoE as a mechanism

NIPU-2026 introduces a structured RoE mechanism.

According to the received band of RoE,

- Minimum (Floor): 12%;
- Maximum (Ceiling): 16%;

which offers more assurance to investors and guarantees efficient allocation of funds.

Reduction of currency exposure risk

To reduce the risks which are connected with currency fluctuations, NIPU-2026 envisages the conversion of fixed costs into Indian Rupees after four years taking into consideration exchange rates in force at that time.

Advantages of New Policy

The government anticipates that NIPU-2026 will provide several economic and strategic advantages.

Increased Native Production

The launch of new production units is likely to enhance the production capabilities of urea across the country resulting in fulfilling the needs of agriculture for urea.

Lowered the Import Dependency

The increase in local production of urea will reduce reliance on imported urea, hence improving the nation's fertilizer security.

Savings

The government claims that the revised policy is predicted to save over ₹250 crores per new plant established within the framework of NIPU-2026 as compared to those plants that were built based on NIP-2012.

Enhanced Confidence of Investors

The costs being transparent as well as having guaranteed Return on Equity and protection from exchange rate fluctuations are likely to make the investment within fertilizer sector attractive.

Support for Atmanirbhar Bharat

The domestic production promotion measures aimed at to minimizing the number of imports and facilitating self-reliance make a direct contribution towards attaining the goal of the government to make the country self-sufficient.

Background: From NIP-2012 to NIPU-2026

All new plants that will be generated after the formal adoption of the policy will be included under the NIPU-2026 plan.

The New Investment Policy (NIP)-2012 has been implemented for drawing investment in the urea sector through,

- Greenfield projects
- Brownfield expansion
- Restoration of closed plants
- Enhancing the capacity of the existing units

The NIP-2012 has led to,

- Setting up the new six urea manufacturing units
- Creation of four new units through joint ventures of public sector
- Establishment of two units by the private players

The investment window under NIP-2012 came to a close in October, 2019 and there was a need for a new policy in order to meet future requirements.

National Affairs

- Vice President **C. P. Radhakrishnan** inaugurated the **Mannam Smrithi Mandapam** and unveiled the statue of **Mannathu Padmanabhan** at the Mannam International Centre in New Delhi. The memorial honours the renowned **social reformer, freedom fighter, and founder of the Nair Service Society (NSS)**, who worked for **education, equality, and social upliftment**. The Vice President praised his vision of **justice, dignity, and inclusiveness**, saying it transcended caste and regional boundaries. He also participated in the **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam** campaign by planting a sapling, promoting **environmental conservation** and community service.
- India will observe the **3rd NAMASTE Day** on **14 July 2026**, celebrating three years of the **National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme**. Led by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, the initiative promotes **mechanised sanitation**, eliminates **manual scavenging**, and ensures the **safety, dignity, and welfare** of sanitation workers. Nationwide events will include **health camps, PPE awareness, mechanised equipment demonstrations, skill training, and welfare benefit distribution**. Launched in **2023-24**, the scheme supports an inclusive sanitation ecosystem by improving workplace safety and enhancing the social and economic well-being of sanitation workers.
- **ONGC** successfully drilled its **second geothermal well** in **Puga Valley, Ladakh**, reaching a depth of **1,000 metres** at an altitude above **14,000 feet**. Developed through the **ONGC Energy Centre**, the project supports India's **first 1 MW pilot geothermal power plant**. Following the success of the first well, it confirms the region's geothermal potential for generating **24x7 clean energy**. The project aims to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, strengthen **energy security** in remote Himalayan regions, and contribute towards India's target of **500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030**.
- As **Digital India** completed **11 years**, the **eSaras** platform emerged as a major initiative promoting **rural entrepreneurship**. Developed by the **Digital India Corporation** under **MeitY** with the **Ministry of Rural Development**, it enables **Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and rural entrepreneurs** to sell products nationwide through **ONDC-enabled applications**. Supporting over **8.99 crore SHG members** and **1,400+ products**, the platform provides **digital payments, logistics, multilingual support through BHASHINI**, and market access. It also contributes to the government's target of creating **6 crore Lakhpati Didis by 2029**.
- **Bharat Tex 2026** will be held at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, from **14-17 July 2026**, showcasing India's complete textile value chain. Organized by the **Bharat Tex Trade Federation** with support from the **Ministry of Textiles**, the event is inspired by PM Narendra Modi's **5F Vision—Farm, Fibre, Factory, Fashion, and Foreign**. It is expected to host over **1,600 exhibitors, 7,000 global buyers, and 1.3 lakh visitors**, promoting **trade, investment, sustainability, innovation, exports**, and strengthening India's position as a **global textile manufacturing and sourcing hub**.
- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, along with **CERT-In, CSIRT-Fin, and SISA**, released the **Digital Threat Report 2025-26** to strengthen cybersecurity in India's **Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI)** sector. The report highlights rising threats from **AI-powered cyberattacks, credential theft, cloud exploitation, social engineering, and supply chain attacks**. It introduces a **Cyber Failure Anatomy Framework** and recommends an **18-month cybersecurity roadmap** emphasizing **continuous monitoring, stronger security controls, collaboration, and proactive cyber resilience** to safeguard India's expanding digital financial ecosystem.
- **MeitY**, in collaboration with the **Drone Federation India (DFI)**, launched **NIDAR 2.0** under the **SwaYaan Initiative** for **2026-27** to promote indigenous drone technology. The competition offers prizes worth over **₹65 lakh**, startup incubation, internships, cloud credits, and technical support. It includes **Drone Innovation** and **Component Innovation** tracks focusing on **autonomous drones, disaster response, medical delivery, GPS-denied navigation, indigenous flight controllers, and VEGA processor-based electronics**. The initiative supports **Atmanirbhar Bharat** by strengthening India's drone and semiconductor ecosystem.
- The **Government of India** has officially renamed the **Central Vista redevelopment area** as the **Kartavya Bhawan Area (Kartavya Bhawan Complex)**. Union Minister **Manohar Lal** directed all ministries to discontinue using the term **Central Vista** in official documents. The renamed area includes **Kartavya Path, Kartavya Bhawans**, the upcoming **Common Central Secretariat**, and future government offices. The decision follows the **2022 renaming of Rajpath to Kartavya Path** and reflects the government's objective of replacing colonial-era names with terminology symbolizing **public service, national identity, and democratic values**.

- **India Post** achieved its highest-ever **Q1 FY2026-27** revenue of **₹4,009 crore**, registering **22% year-on-year growth**. Announced during the **Quarterly Business Review Meeting** chaired by **Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia**, the performance reflects India Post's transformation into a **digitally empowered, customer-centric** organisation. **Citizen Centric Services** recorded the highest growth (86%), followed by **Parcel Services (50%)**, **Mail Services (42%)**, and **International Business (34%)**. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal emerged as top-performing circles, while operational efficiency significantly improved through sharp reductions in **nil business transactions**.
- The Central Government plans to introduce the **Prevention of Insult to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026** during the **Monsoon Session of Parliament**. The proposed law seeks to extend legal protection to **Vande Mataram**, making its insult or obstruction a punishable offence, similar to the **National Flag** and **National Anthem**. The amendment will define the meaning of **"insult"** and **"obstruction"** while ensuring constitutional safeguards, including **freedom of speech**. The move recognizes the National Song's historic contribution to India's **freedom movement** and reinforces efforts to preserve **national symbols** and patriotic values.
- **ICAR** unveiled the **Viksit Krishi Vision 2047** roadmap to modernize Indian agriculture through **technology, sustainability, and climate resilience**. The plan aims to establish **100 Climate Smart Villages**, reach **100 million farmers**, and launch **digital knowledge platforms**. ICAR also released **43 new crop varieties**, **17 agricultural technologies**, and **14 research publications**. The roadmap promotes **AI, robotics, precision farming**, and commercialization of innovations to enhance **productivity, farmer incomes, and food security**, supporting **Viksit Bharat 2047**.
- **Indian Railways** will introduce India's first **Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train** on the **Jind-Sonipat** route under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission**. Powered by **Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) fuel cells**, the train emits only **water vapour** and **heat**. Designed for around **2,600 passengers**, it includes a **3,000 kg hydrogen refuelling facility** at Jind. Developed using **indigenous technology**, the project supports **Net Zero** goals and promotes **clean mobility** and **sustainable rail transport**.
- The Government launched **Going Global: A Practical Guide for Indian MSMEs**, prepared by **CTIL-IIFT** and **CII**, to help MSMEs enter **international markets**. The guidebook covers **export planning, trade intelligence, market access, sustainability standards, Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), Rules of Origin, and trade remedies**. It aims to strengthen **MSME exports** by reducing trade barriers and improving export awareness.
- **NITI Aayog** released the first **Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)** to assess the investment readiness of all **36 States and Union Territories** using **84 indicators** across **eight key pillars**. Designed as a **benchmarking tool**, the index encourages reforms to improve **investment ecosystems** rather than create competition. **Gujarat** emerged as the **top-performing large state** with a score of **56.6**, followed by **Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha**, while **Goa** led the **Union Territory** category. Since no state crossed the **60-mark**, the report highlights the need for improvements in **governance, infrastructure, business climate, and regulatory reforms** to achieve **Viksit Bharat**.
- The **National Conference on Responsible Business Conduct (NCRBC) 2026** was held in **New Delhi** with the theme **"ESG-led Transformation for Viksit Bharat."** Organized by the **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)** under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**, the conference focused on integrating **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** principles into India's development strategy. Experts emphasized **transparent ESG reporting, AI-enabled reporting, corporate governance, responsible supply chains, and prevention of greenwashing** to promote **sustainability and inclusive growth**.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Advanced Mother and Child Centre** and **Advanced Neurosciences Centre** at **PGIMER Chandigarh** and laid the foundation for a **150-bed Critical Care Block** under **PM-ABHIM**. The projects will strengthen **maternal care, pediatric services, neurology, neurosurgery, medical education, and research**. The Prime Minister also highlighted achievements such as **AIIMS expansion, Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, eSanjeevani consultations, and new medical colleges**.



- India received approval to develop its first **Urban Night Safari** at **Kukrail Reserve Forest, Lucknow**. The **₹1,510-crore** project, spread across **855 acres**, will include **natural wildlife enclosures**, a **Day Zoo**, **eco-friendly safari vehicles**, **forest trails**, and **educational centres**. The safari will house species like **Asiatic Lions**, **Bengal Tigers**, **Leopards**, **Hyenas**, **Flying Squirrels**, and **Gharials**, promoting **wildlife conservation**, **eco-tourism**, and **environmental education**.
- India commissioned its first **Deep Geothermal Wells** at **Puga Valley, Ladakh**, with two wells drilled to **1,000 metres** by the **ONGC Energy Centre**. The project aims to support a **1 MW pilot geothermal power plant**, with recorded temperatures of **135°C** indicating strong **geothermal potential**. The initiative promotes **renewable energy**, **24×7 clean power**, and **sustainable energy generation**.
- Uttar Pradesh** became India's **second-largest state in rooftop solar installations** under the **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana**. The state recorded over **6.74 lakh installations** with a capacity of **2.28 GW**, behind **Gujarat**. The programme has boosted **clean energy adoption**, reduced **electricity costs**, and generated around **85,000 jobs** in the **solar sector**.
- President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated **Saushrutam 2026**, a three-day international seminar at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi, on 15 July 2026 to mark **Sushruta Jayanti**. She also inaugurated the institute's MRI section and paid tribute to Acharya Sushruta, widely regarded as the Father of Surgery. Highlighting his pioneering contributions to plastic surgery and surgical science, she emphasized integrating Ayurveda with modern scientific research and evidence-based medicine. The seminar encourages innovation, ethics, and global collaboration in Ayurvedic research while strengthening Ayurveda's role in modern healthcare.
- The Ministry of Heavy Industries has invited bids for **10 GWh Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) battery manufacturing** under the ₹18,100 crore PLI Scheme. This final allocation phase aims to complete the target of establishing **50 GWh domestic battery capacity**, with around 40 GWh already allotted. Launched in 2021, the scheme supports next-generation batteries essential for electric vehicles and renewable energy storage. It seeks to reduce import dependence, strengthen domestic manufacturing, improve energy security, and accelerate India's clean energy transition through advanced battery technology.
- Indian Railways launched the **Reform Express** initiative, introducing eight major freight reforms to modernise logistics and improve freight efficiency. With this, **17 of the planned 52 reforms** have been completed. The reforms include simplified licensing for container train operators, expansion of containerised cargo movement, freight tariff rationalisation, and the Rail Bhoomi Portal for digitised land acquisition. These measures aim to lower logistics costs, encourage private sector participation, improve multimodal connectivity, and strengthen India's freight infrastructure while enhancing the competitiveness of rail transport.
- The Union Cabinet approved **Semicon 2.0** with an outlay of **₹1.27 lakh crore** to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem. Building on Semicon 1.0, the programme focuses on chip design, fabrication, packaging, research, and workforce development. Semiconductors are vital for AI, electric vehicles, telecom, healthcare, and defence industries. The initiative seeks to reduce dependence on imported chips, promote innovation, attract investments, and establish India as a trusted global semiconductor manufacturing hub while supporting long-term technological self-reliance.
- The Union Cabinet approved two major highway projects worth over **₹25,400 crore** under the Varanasi Decongestion Plan. The projects include elevated corridors along the Varuna and Ganga rivers, reducing travel time and improving connectivity. A 910-metre cable-stayed bridge and a 1.32-km travelator-equipped foot overbridge linking Kashi Vishwanath Temple are also planned. Implemented by NHAI under the Hybrid Annuity Model, the projects aim to ease congestion, enhance tourism, improve urban mobility, and strengthen Varanasi's transport infrastructure.
- The **Central Government** will introduce the **Prevention of Insult to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026** during the **Monsoon Session**. The Bill extends legal protection to **Vande Mataram**, making its **insult** or **obstruction** punishable, similar to the **National Flag** and **National Anthem**. It defines key terms while protecting **freedom of speech** under the Constitution. The move recognizes **Vande Mataram's** historic role in India's **freedom movement** and aims to preserve **national symbols**, **patriotic values**, and respect for the **National Song**.
- ICAR** launched **Viksit Krishi Vision 2047** to modernize agriculture using **AI**, **robotics**, **precision farming**, and **climate-smart technologies**. The roadmap targets **100 Climate Smart Villages**, reaching **100 million farmers**,

and introduces **43 crop varieties**, **17 agricultural technologies**, and **14 research publications**. It promotes **digital knowledge platforms**, innovation commercialization, improved **farmer incomes**, **food security**, and sustainable farming. The initiative supports the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047** by creating a technology-driven and climate-resilient agricultural ecosystem.

- **Indian Railways** will introduce India's first **Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train** on the **Jind-Sonipat** route in **Haryana** under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission**. Powered by **PEM Fuel Cells**, the train emits only **water vapour** and **heat**, making it eco-friendly. It accommodates **2,600 passengers**, features advanced safety systems, and includes a **3,000 kg hydrogen refuelling facility**.

Developed using **indigenous technology**, the project supports **Net Zero**, **clean mobility**, sustainable transport, and innovation in hydrogen-powered rail infrastructure.

- The Government launched **Going Global: A Practical Guide for Indian MSMEs**, prepared by **CTIL-IIFT** and **CII**, to strengthen **MSME exports**. The guide covers **export planning**, **trade intelligence**, **market access**, **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)**, **Rules of Origin**, sustainability standards, and global compliance. It addresses regulatory challenges, improves export awareness, reduces trade barriers, and enhances global competitiveness. The initiative aims to help **Indian MSMEs** expand into international markets and contribute significantly to India's export growth.

States in the News

- **Ahmedabad** created a **Guinness World Record** by planting **3.61 lakh saplings** in just **one hour**, making it the world's largest **Miyawaki plantation drive**. Organised by the **Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)** at **Bhadaj**, the campaign involved over **25,000 volunteers**, including students, NCC cadets, officials, police personnel, and citizens. Spread across **91,006 square metres**, the plantation included **35 indigenous tree species** using the **Miyawaki method**, which creates dense forests quickly. The initiative enhances **green cover**, **biodiversity**, **climate resilience**, and **ecological restoration**, surpassing the previous global record.
- The **West Bengal Government** has renamed **16 August** as **Ayushman Diwas**, replacing **Khela Hobe Diwas**, to increase awareness about the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**. Announced by Chief Minister **Suvendu Adhikari**, the observance will feature **awareness campaigns**, **outreach programmes**, and **public events** highlighting the scheme's **₹5 lakh annual cashless health insurance** for eligible families. Earlier, the day promoted sports under **Khela Hobe Diwas**. The change reflects the state's renewed focus on **healthcare awareness**, **affordable treatment**, and **improved access to medical services**.
- The **Andhra Pradesh Government** launched the **Pillale Sampada (Children are Wealth)** initiative to encourage **balanced population growth** and address future demographic challenges. Chief Minister **N. Chandrababu Naidu** emphasised the importance of **human resources** for sustainable development amid declining fertility rates. The initiative focuses on **maternal healthcare**,

child nutrition, **Anganwadi strengthening**, **women's empowerment**, **workplace childcare**, and **education support** through the **Talliki Vandanam Scheme**, providing **₹15,000 per child**. Linked to the **Swarna Andhra 2047** vision, it aims to create a healthy, educated, and productive future workforce.

- Spain-based **Submer Group** announced a **\$2 billion investment** in **Madhya Pradesh** during the **MP Tech Growth Conclave 3.0**. The project includes a **semiconductor manufacturing facility** and a **1-gigabyte data centre**, creating nearly **5,000 direct jobs**. Supported by quick land allocation in **Acharpura Industrial Area**, the investment will strengthen India's **semiconductor mission**, digital infrastructure, exports, and advanced cooling technology manufacturing. The initiative reinforces Madhya Pradesh's emergence as a key destination for **high-tech manufacturing** and supports India's ambitions of becoming a global semiconductor hub.
- **Tamil Nadu** successfully completed all five phases of the **Secure Our City (SOC) Campaign** in **Chennai** to improve urban safety through community-based surveillance. Led by **Securecam India**, the initiative installed **free CCTV systems** across residential areas, schools, and public spaces. Over **800 homes** in **SM Nagar** and **600 households** in **Karpagam Avenue** benefited from the programme. Covering several neighbourhoods, the campaign aims to enhance **women's safety**, **crime prevention**, **emergency response**, **community participation**, and protection of vulnerable groups through technology-driven public safety initiatives.

- **Uttarakhand** inaugurated its first **Geographical Indications (GI) Products Gallery** at the **Forest Training Academy, Haldwani**. The gallery showcases over **30 GI-tagged products**, including **Munsiyari White Rajma, Berinag Tea, Aipan Art, Ringal Bamboo Craft, Tamta Copperware, and Buransh Sharbat**. The initiative promotes authentic regional products, preserves traditional knowledge, and enhances market opportunities for farmers and artisans. Uttarakhand had earlier achieved a milestone by receiving **18 GI tags in a single day in 2023**, strengthening its cultural and agricultural identity.
- The **Union Territory of Ladakh** will establish **Autonomous Hill Development Councils (AHDCs)** in all **seven districts**, expanding beyond **Leh and Kargil**. The councils will oversee **education, healthcare, tourism, land administration, infrastructure, taxation**, and district development planning. Ladakh also proposed a **Union Territory-level coordination framework**, possibly under a customized **Article 371** arrangement. The initiative aims to strengthen **grassroots democracy, decentralised governance, administrative efficiency**, and balanced regional development following the creation of **five new districts** in the Union Territory.
- The **Bihar Government** launched the **Mukhyamantri Bihar Heli-Tourism and Air Tourism Service Scheme 2026** to improve tourism connectivity. The government will provide subsidies of up to **₹15,422 per ticket**, making helicopter travel affordable. Services will begin from **18 July 2026**, connecting **Patna** with **Rajgir, Valmikinagar, and Maa Mundeshwari Temple (Kaimur)**. Ticket prices start from **₹2,100**. The initiative aims to boost **religious, heritage, eco-tourism**, improve regional connectivity, and promote Bihar's cultural and natural attractions.
- The **GI Registry** granted **Geographical Indication (GI)** status to **Unjha Cumin (Jeera)** and **Unjha Fennel (Saunf)** from **Mehsana district, Gujarat**. The recognition protects these spices from imitation while enhancing **branding, exports, consumer confidence**, and farmers' incomes. The certification was secured through efforts of **Unjha APMC, Gujarat Department of Horticulture, SDAU, and EDII**. Gujarat, India's leading cumin producer, further strengthened its portfolio of GI-certified agricultural products, boosting value addition across the spice supply chain.
- According to the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, India recorded over **12.7 lakh cyber fraud complaints** involving losses exceeding **₹10,178 crore** during the first half of **2026**. **Uttar Pradesh** reported the highest number of complaints (**1.85 lakh**), followed by **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Bihar**. Major scams included **digital arrests, fake investment schemes, OTP fraud, UPI fraud, fake customer care, job scams, courier fraud, and social media impersonation**. Citizens were advised to enable **two-factor authentication**, avoid sharing banking credentials, and report cyber fraud immediately through **helpline 1930**.
- **Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar** announced India's first **government-backed Artificial Intelligence University** during **Google I/O Connect India 2026** in Bengaluru. The university will promote **AI education, research, innovation, skill development**, and industry collaboration while preparing professionals for emerging AI-driven sectors. The state will also establish an **AI Hub** to support startups, incubation, and research partnerships. The initiative aligns with Karnataka's vision of becoming an **AI-native State**, integrating AI into **governance, healthcare, education, agriculture**, and public services while strengthening collaboration with **Google** on responsible AI development.
- During his official visit to **Indonesia**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** presented traditional Indian gifts to **President Prabowo Subianto** and **Speaker Puan Maharani**. The gifts included **Manohari Gold Tea from Assam, Uttarakhand's Aipan Art, Kashmiri Papier-Mâché Bowl, Repoussé Silver Plate, and Odisha Ikat Silk**. These items showcased India's **tea heritage, handicrafts, handloom traditions**, and cultural diversity. The initiative strengthened **India-Indonesia cultural diplomacy**, promoted Indian artisans, and highlighted centuries-old craftsmanship while reinforcing the close historical and cultural ties between both nations.
- During his visit to **Australia**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** gifted traditional Indian handicrafts and cultural artefacts to Australian leaders. The collection included a **Dhokra Boat Sculpture, Premium Indian Coffee Box, Colonial Cousins Vinyl Record, Kashmiri Embroidered Stole, Madhubani Painting, Marble Inlay Box, and Rajasthani Wooden Elephant Sculpture**. These gifts represented India's **tribal art, coffee heritage, music, embroidery, painting**, and handicraft traditions. The initiative promoted **Indian artisans, regional craftsmanship**, and cultural diplomacy while strengthening bilateral relations and people-to-people connections between **India and Australia**.

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** presented traditional Indian handicrafts to **New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon** and **Opposition Leader Chris Hipkins** during his official visit. The gifts included a **Dhokra Tree of Life sculpture**, **Traditional Uttarakhandi Cap**, **signed hockey stick**, and **Lucknow Zari Zardozi wall hanging**. These represented **tribal metal art**, **Himalayan traditions**, **sporting achievements**, and India's rich embroidery heritage. The initiative showcased India's diverse cultural legacy, promoted local artisans, and strengthened **India-New Zealand cultural diplomacy** through meaningful people-to-people engagement.
- India and the **Maldives** successfully completed the **first round of negotiations** for a proposed **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** from **29 June–7 July 2026**. The virtual discussions covered **eight negotiation tracks**, focusing on **market access**, **investment**, **tourism**, **digital payments**, **MSMEs**, and **startup cooperation**. Both countries also agreed to expedite negotiations on a **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)**. The talks coincided with the **60th anniversary of diplomatic relations**, while bilateral trade reached **USD 771.76 million in 2025–26**, reflecting growing economic cooperation.
- India reiterated its support for **Palestine's full UN membership** and reaffirmed its commitment to the **two-state solution** during meetings in **Brussels** and **New York**. **External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar** announced new humanitarian assistance, including a **specialty medical hospital**, **artificial limb centre**, and **vocational training institute**. India also pledged continued support to **UNRWA**, which provides education, healthcare, and relief services to Palestinian refugees. The announcement reflects India's long-standing commitment to **peace**, **humanitarian assistance**, and development cooperation in **West Asia**.
- **Ukraine** and **nine European nations** launched a new **anti-ballistic missile defence coalition** during its inaugural meeting in **Paris**. The coalition includes the **United Kingdom**, **France**, **Germany**, **Italy**, **Spain**, **Netherlands**, **Denmark**, **Norway**, and **Sweden**. It aims to develop common missile defence capabilities, strengthen defence industry cooperation, and reduce dependence on external suppliers. A major initiative, **Project Freyja**, will combine **Ukraine's battlefield experience** with European technology to develop advanced missile interception systems, enhancing regional security amid growing missile threats.
- India is hosting the **12th BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting** in **Hyderabad** on **15–16 July 2026** under its **BRICS Chairship**. Chaired by **Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya**, the meeting focuses on **social security**, **labour market formalisation**, **women's workforce participation**, **skills development**, and **digital public infrastructure** for worker welfare. Guided by the theme "**Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability (BRICS)**", the meeting aims to strengthen labour cooperation among BRICS nations and build a resilient future workforce.
- The **India–United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** came into effect on **15 July 2026**, targeting bilateral trade of **USD 100 billion by 2030**. The agreement provides **zero-duty access** for Indian exports such as **textiles**, **apparel**, **leather**, **jewellery**, and **plastics**, while protecting India's automobile sector through safeguards. Alongside CETA, the **Double Contribution Convention (DCC)** will benefit over **75,000 Indian professionals** by preventing double social security contributions, generating annual savings exceeding **USD 600 million** and strengthening bilateral economic cooperation.
- The draft **Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2025** aims to modernize apartment governance and align it with **RERA**. It proposes **joint ownership** of land and common areas, establishes **Apartment Owners Councils**, and creates a redevelopment framework requiring **75% owner consent**. Buildings must obtain **structural safety certificates** every **five years**. The reforms aim to improve **transparency**, reduce disputes, and strengthen **residents' rights**.
- The Uttar Pradesh Government launched **Kaushal Setu** and **Kaushal Sarathi** to strengthen **vocational training** and improve **employment opportunities**. **Kaushal Setu** digitizes training centre registration, while **Kaushal Sarathi** connects students with **courses**, **skill centres**, and **jobs**. **UPSDM** also partnered with industries for training in **AI**, **robotics**, and **textiles** to improve **youth employability**.
- The **Andhra Pradesh Government** notified the **Common Zoning Regulations (CZR), 2026** to establish a uniform **land-use** and **urban planning** framework. The regulations reduce land-use categories from **16 to 9** and introduce a **negative-list zoning** approach, improving **ease of doing business**, **transparent land-use management**, and **sustainable urban development**.

- **Maharashtra** accelerated implementation of the **National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA)** under the **Digital India Programme**. The **₹48 crore** project will digitize legislative proceedings across **Mumbai and Nagpur** under the vision of **"One Nation, One Application."** It aims to improve **paperless governance, legislative efficiency, transparency, and public accessibility**.
- **Kolkata Metro** is set to introduce **driverless train operations** on its Green and Purple Lines after receiving safety clearance from the Commissioner of Railway Safety. The Green Line includes India's first underwater metro tunnel beneath the Hooghly River. Using Communication-Based Train Control (CBTC) and **Grade of Automation-4 (GoA-4)** technology, trains will operate without onboard drivers under centralised monitoring. Advanced safety systems such as platform screen doors, obstacle detection, and smart signalling will ensure secure operations, making Kolkata one of India's leading cities in automated metro transport.
- The draft **Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2025** aligns apartment governance with **RERA**. It proposes **joint ownership** of land and common areas, **Apartment Owners Councils**, standardized property definitions, redevelopment with **75% owner consent**, and mandatory **structural safety certificates every five years** for older buildings. Applicable to complexes with **eight or more units**, the Bill aims to improve transparency, protect residents' rights, reduce disputes, and ensure safe urban housing.
- The **Uttar Pradesh Government** launched **Kaushal Setu** and **Kaushal Sarathi** to improve **vocational training** and employment. **Kaushal Setu** digitizes registration of training centres, while **Kaushal Sarathi** connects students with courses, skill centres, and jobs. **UPSDM** signed partnerships for training in **AI, robotics, and textiles**. The initiative strengthens **industry-academia collaboration**, builds industry-ready skills, improves transparency, and enhances youth employability for long-term economic development.

International Affairs

- **14 Nations Reaffirm South China Sea Arbitration Ruling (90 Words)**
Fourteen countries, including the **United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, and the Philippines**, reaffirmed the **2016 South China Sea Arbitration Award** under **UNCLOS**, rejecting **China's Nine-Dash Line claims**. Issued on the ruling's **10th anniversary**, the joint statement described the tribunal's decision as **final and legally binding**. The countries expressed concern over increasing tensions, coercive maritime activities, and threats to regional stability. They reaffirmed support for **freedom of navigation, peaceful dispute resolution, international law, and a rules-based maritime order** in the strategically important **South China Sea**.
- India announced the **Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ)** allocation procedure under the **India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, effective from **1 June 2026**. Issued by the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**, the notification allows concessional tariffs on specified imports such as **dates, marble, aluminium products, petrochemicals, copper weld wire, and LDPE**. Eligible importers must obtain a valid **Certificate of Origin** from Oman. The TRQ mechanism aims to facilitate bilateral trade while balancing domestic industry interests.
- The **United Nations** released its first scientific report on **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, urging governments to strengthen global AI governance. Prepared by the **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI**, the report highlights AI's opportunities, risks, and growing **compute divide** dominated by the **United States and China**. It covers **AI applications, security, human rights, environmental concerns, governance, and economic impacts**. For India, the report stresses expanding domestic computing infrastructure through the **IndiaAI Mission** to ensure technological self-reliance and global competitiveness.
- **Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi**, President of **Zanzibar**, visited India to strengthen cooperation in **education, healthcare, trade, investment, and technology**. He attended the **63rd Convocation of IIT Madras**, highlighting the success of the **IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus (2023)**. The visit reinforced **India-Tanzania relations** and India's role in **South-South Cooperation**.
- **Andy Burnham** has been confirmed as the new **Leader of the UK Labour Party** and is expected to become the **Prime Minister of the United Kingdom**, succeeding **Sir Keir Starmer**. He pledged to restore **public trust**, strengthen **public services**, promote **regional development**, expand **local government autonomy**, and support **inclusive economic growth**.

- **Serhii Korotshykyi** was appointed **Prime Minister of Ukraine** following a government reshuffle led by **President Volodymyr Zelenskyy**. Formerly **CEO of Naftogaz**, he will focus on **energy security, economic stability, public services**, and protection of **critical infrastructure** during the ongoing **Russia-Ukraine conflict**.
- India hosted the **5th BIMSTEC National Security Advisers' Meeting** in New Delhi on 16 July 2026, bringing together senior officials from all seven member countries. Discussions focused on cyber security, terrorism, transnational crime, trafficking, satellite cooperation, and intelligence sharing. The meeting highlighted India's commitment to regional security cooperation and collective action against emerging threats. It also strengthened collaboration among Bay of Bengal nations to promote peace, stability, and secure digital infrastructure in the region.
- India played a prominent role at the **49th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC49)** held in Geneva by leading the adoption of seven international food standards. The Indian delegation, headed by FSSAI CEO Rajit Punhani, chaired standards on dried coriander seeds and fresh curry leaves while co-chairing guidelines on vanilla, cardamom, and food-processing water safety. India also proposed global standards for cashew kernels, reinforcing its leadership in food safety, international trade, and global standard-setting.
- **Zanzibar President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi** visited India to strengthen cooperation in **education, healthcare, trade, investment, and technology**. He attended the **63rd IIT Madras Convocation** and highlighted the success of the **IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus (2023)**. The visit reinforced **India-Tanzania strategic ties**, promoted **South-South cooperation**, educational collaboration, infrastructure support, and capacity building while enhancing economic, cultural, and diplomatic engagement between the two nations.

Banking/Economy/Business News

- **Jio Platforms Ltd.** appointed **Pankaj Pawar** as its new **Chief Executive Officer**, replacing **Kiran Thomas**, ahead of its proposed **IPO**. Pawar, a Reliance veteran since **2000** and Managing Director of **Reliance Jio Infocomm**, brings over **30 years** of telecom experience. The leadership change was disclosed in the **Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP)** filed with **SEBI**. The company plans to raise nearly **USD 4 billion (₹37,700 crore)**, potentially making it **India's largest IPO**.
- **Policybazaar** appointed **Amitabh Bachchan** as its **Insurance Awareness Ambassador** to promote **health and term insurance** across India. The campaign supports **IRDAI's Insurance for All by 2047** vision and encourages families to prioritise financial protection. Under the theme '**Parivaar Sabse Pehle**', the initiative aims to increase insurance awareness in both urban and rural areas. Bachchan's trusted image will help promote **financial planning, insurance penetration**, and social security, encouraging timely insurance decisions for Indian households.
- India's **merchandise trade deficit** widened to **\$30.43 billion** in **June 2026**, rising from **\$28.21 billion** in May and **\$19.10 billion** a year earlier. Merchandise exports declined to **\$40.41 billion**, while imports stood at **\$70.84 billion**. The widening deficit was driven by high imports of **crude oil, machinery, electronics**, and precious metals alongside slower export growth. The trend may increase pressure on the **current account deficit, rupee stability**, and inflation, highlighting the need to strengthen exports and manufacturing competitiveness.
- India's **Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation** increased to **9.87%** in **June 2026** from **9.68%** in May due to rising prices of **food products, basic metals, chemicals**, and mineral oils. **Retail inflation** also rose to **4.38%**, while the **Consumer Food Price Index** reached **5.32%**. Although **fuel inflation** moderated due to lower crude oil prices, manufacturing inflation remained elevated. Persistent food and commodity price pressures continue to pose inflation risks for the Indian economy.
- **EaseMyTrip** signed an **MoU** with the **Jharkhand Tourism Department** to promote the state's **religious, cultural, eco-tourism**, and tribal heritage. The partnership will market destinations including **Baidyanath Dham, waterfalls, forests, wildlife parks**, and heritage sites through digital campaigns and the **EasyDarshan** platform. The initiative aims to increase tourist arrivals, generate employment, support local businesses, and strengthen Jharkhand's tourism economy by showcasing authentic travel experiences and improving digital visibility across India.
- **MRF Ltd.** was named **India's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand** in the **Brand Finance India 100 - 2026** report. It also ranked as the **third strongest tyre brand globally** with a **Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 87.7/100**. The recognition reflects MRF's strong financial performance, market leadership, customer trust, and brand value. Established in **1946**, MRF manufactures tyres for automobiles, aircraft, agricultural machinery, and commercial vehicles, reinforcing its leadership in India's automotive sector.

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** launched India's first **Index of Services Production (ISP)** with **2024-25** as the base year. Covering **19 formal service sectors**, the index will provide monthly data for policymaking and economic monitoring. The first report showed **14 sectors** recording double-digit growth in **April 2026**, led by **Accommodation & Food Services (37.2%)**, **Retail (30.8%)**, and **Administrative Services (28.7%)**. The index uses **GST data, administrative records**, and surveys, with monthly releases scheduled on the **29th**.
- India's **net direct tax collections** increased by **16.4%** to **₹6.51 lakh crore** as of **13 July 2026**, according to the **Income Tax Department**. **Corporate tax** collections reached **₹2.40 lakh crore**, while **non-corporate taxes** rose to **₹3.85 lakh crore**. **Gross direct tax collections** stood at **₹7.74 lakh crore**, with refunds increasing to **₹1.22 lakh crore**. Rising tax compliance, stronger corporate earnings, and higher market activity contributed to the increase, strengthening India's fiscal position.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** introduced a prudential framework for **Specified Non-Financial Assets (SNFAs)**, effective **1 October 2026**. Applicable to **banks, NBFCs, RRBs, SFBs, and AIFs**, the framework standardizes **asset acquisition, valuation, recovery, and disposal**, improving **transparency and financial governance**.
- The Digital India BHASHINI Division signed an MoU with **Punjab National Bank** to introduce AI-powered multilingual banking services. Under the **BHASHINI for Seva/Sanchalan** initiative, customers will access banking services in their preferred Indian languages using AI translation, speech technologies, and language models. The integration aims to improve digital banking accessibility, particularly in rural and regional areas, while supporting Digital Public Infrastructure and advancing financial inclusion through language-friendly banking solutions.
- The Government revised the **Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED)** on petroleum product exports with effect from **16 July 2026**. Export duty on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) was increased, while petrol duty was reduced. The changes aim to ensure adequate domestic fuel availability, discourage excessive exports during periods of high crude oil prices, and strengthen India's energy security amid global geopolitical uncertainties. Domestic excise duties on petrol and diesel remain unchanged.
- The **RBI Financial Inclusion Index** increased from **67 (FY25)** to **70 (FY26)**, reflecting wider access to **banking, digital payments, insurance, pensions, investments, and postal financial services**. Introduced in **2021**, the index measures **Access, Usage, and Quality**. Growth was driven by increased adoption of formal financial services, supporting **financial inclusion, digital finance, inclusive growth**, and efficient delivery of government welfare benefits.
- A **FICCI-Deloitte** report projects India's **Food Processing Industry** to reach **USD 600 billion by 2030**. With only **12-13%** of agricultural produce currently processed, the sector offers major opportunities for **value addition**, reducing post-harvest losses, and increasing farmer incomes. Growth will be supported by **AI, smart logistics, precision agriculture**, exports, urbanization, and government initiatives, strengthening India's global competitiveness and food processing ecosystem.

Books & Authors News

- **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla** released his memoir, **"The Second Orbit: Belief of a Man... Dreams of 1.4 Billion Hearts,"** narrating his journey from **Indian Air Force fighter pilot** to astronaut aboard the **Axiom-4 Mission** to the **International Space Station (ISS)**. Unveiled by **Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh**, the book highlights astronaut training, mission preparation, and India's growing space ambitions. It also honours **Rakesh Sharma** while inspiring young Indians to pursue **STEM education** and contribute to future human space exploration.
- Vice-President **C. P. Radhakrishnan** released **"The Voice of Justice: Justice Gavai Speaks"**, edited by **Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar** and published by **Thomson Reuters** with **CLEA**. The book compiles speeches and reflections of former **Chief Justice B.R. Gavai** on **constitutional governance, judicial philosophy, social justice, and the rule of law**. During the event, the Vice-President emphasised the Constitution as a **living document** and urged greater **pro bono legal services** to improve access to justice.

Appointments/Resignations

- **Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala** has been appointed **Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**. A renowned **oceanographer**, he has contributed to **satellite oceanography, climate services, tsunami warning systems, and disaster risk reduction**. As Director of **INCOIS**, he helped establish the **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre**.

Defence News

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** deployed **Rafale fighter jets** to Australia for **Exercise Pitch Black 2026**. Hosted by the **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**, the exercise enhances **interoperability, air combat training, and Indo-Pacific defence cooperation**.
- **Operation Southern Readiness 26-2** is jointly conducted by the **Indian Navy** and the **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)** to improve **maritime security, interoperability, and combat piracy, terrorism, and illegal trafficking, reinforcing a rules-based maritime order**.
- The Indian Navy will commission **INS Malvan**, the second **Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)** built by **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)** with **80% indigenous content**. It strengthens **coastal surveillance, anti-submarine warfare, maritime security, and supports Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.

Awards and Recognitions

- India achieved a historic feat at the **56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) 2026** in **Colombia**, with all five team members winning **gold medals**. India jointly topped the medal tally with **China, Kazakhstan, Russia, South Korea, and Taiwan**. The medalists were **Kanishk Jain, Riddhesh Bendale, Rishit Garg, Shresth Suraiya, and Svarit Joshi**. Trained by **HBCSE**, the team continued India's decade-long record of winning only **gold or silver medals**, reinforcing India's excellence in international science education.
- Renowned **Tamil poet and lyricist R. Vairamuthu** received the **60th Jnanpith Award (2025)**, India's highest literary honour, becoming the **third Tamil writer** to receive the award after **Akilan and Jayakanthan**. Presented in **New Delhi** by **Dr. Karan Singh**, the award includes **₹11 lakh, a bronze statue of Goddess Vagdevi, and a citation**. Vairamuthu was recognised for his exceptional contribution to **Tamil literature**, including works such as **Kallikattu Ithikasam**, which won the **Sahitya Akademi Award**.

Sports News

- **Linda Noskova** won her **first Grand Slam title** by defeating fellow Czech **Karolina Muchova 6-2, 5-7, 6-3** in the **Wimbledon 2026 women's singles final**. At just **21 years old**, she became the **ninth consecutive first-time Wimbledon women's champion**. The victory extended the **Czech Republic's dominance** at Wimbledon after titles by **Marketa Vondrousova (2023)** and **Barbora Krejickova (2024)**. Noskova dedicated the emotional victory to her late mother, while Muchova was praised for her fighting spirit. The historic **all-Czech final** highlighted the remarkable strength and depth of Czech women's tennis on the global stage.
- **World No. 1 Jannik Sinner** successfully defended his **Wimbledon men's singles title**, defeating **Alexander Zverev** in four sets for his **10th consecutive win** over the German. In the women's final, **Linda Noskova** claimed her **maiden Grand Slam title** after defeating **Karolina Muchova**, becoming the **ninth straight first-time women's champion**. **Henry Patten & Harri Heliovaara** won the **men's doubles**, **Guo Hanyu & Kristina Mladenovic** secured the **women's doubles**, while **Marcelo Arévalo & Jelena Ostapenko** captured the **mixed doubles** title, making **Wimbledon 2026** a memorable championship.
- Indian pacer **Kranti Goud** created history by becoming the **first female cricketer** to feature on the prestigious **Lord's Honours Board** after claiming a brilliant **five-wicket haul** against **England Women**. She dismissed **Tammy Beaumont, Maia Bouchier, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Alice Capsey, and Lauren Bell**, becoming the **15th Indian bowler** to earn the honour. Joining legends like **Kapil Dev, Bishan Singh Bedi, Ishant Sharma, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, and Jasprit Bumrah**, Goud's achievement marked a landmark moment for **Indian women's cricket** and showcased its growing prominence on the international stage.

- **Yastika Bhatia** became the **first woman cricketer** to score a **Test century** at **Lord's Cricket Ground**, smashing **113 runs** against **England Women**. After scoring just **12 runs** in the first innings, she produced a remarkable comeback by reaching her century in **145 balls**. The knock earned her a place on the prestigious **Lord's Honours Board** and marked her **maiden international century**. Yastika also joined legendary Indian batters including **Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly, Dilip Vengsarkar, Vinoo Mankad, and Mohammad Azharuddin** with a Test hundred at Lord's.
- Indian shooter **Neeru Dhanda** won the **women's trap gold medal** at the **ISSF Shotgun World Cup 2026** in **Lonato, Italy**, securing **India's first shotgun gold** of the season. She topped qualification with **121/125** before defeating former world champion **Carole Cormenier of France** in a thrilling final. The victory marked **Dhanda's first individual ISSF World Cup medal**, adding to her **mixed trap bronze** won earlier in **Almaty**. Her outstanding performance underlined India's growing strength in **international shooting** and women's trap events.
- Former **England captain Heather Knight** announced her retirement from international cricket after the historic **Women's Test against India at Lord's**, ending an outstanding **16-year career**. She played **320 international matches**, scored **7,988 runs**, and led England to victory in the **2017 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup**. Knight will now serve as **General Manager of London Spirit** in **The Hundred**. Her retirement marks the end of one of England's most successful careers and a significant chapter in women's cricket.
- India scripted history by defeating **England** by **270 runs** in the **first-ever Women's Test at Lord's Cricket Ground**. **Yastika Bhatia** became the **first woman** to score a **Test century at Lord's**, while **Kranti Goud** became the **first female bowler** to feature on the prestigious **Lord's Honours Board** after claiming a **five-wicket haul**. Led by **Harmanpreet Kaur**, India's comprehensive victory showcased the team's dominance and marked a landmark achievement for **Indian women's cricket** on the iconic stage.
- Delhi unveiled '**Mayur**', the official mascot of the **22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championship 2026**, scheduled from **27 July to 2 August** at **Thyagraj Stadium**. Inspired by **India's national bird, the peacock**, the mascot symbolises **unity, diversity, friendship, and sportsmanship**. Around **35 Commonwealth nations** are expected to participate. Unveiled by **Chief Minister Rekha Gupta**, the championship is jointly organised by the **Delhi Government** and the **Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI)**, showcasing Delhi as a global sporting destination.

Summits & Conferences News

- The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** organised the **All India Conference of Senior Most Secretaries of Water Resources Departments** in **New Delhi** under the chairmanship of **C. R. Patil**. The conference focuses on **water governance, irrigation efficiency, dam safety, reservoir management, Catch the Rain campaign, State Water Reforms Framework, and Model State Water Awards**. Senior officials from States, Union Territories, the **Central Water Commission**, and the **National Dam Safety Authority** participated to strengthen **Centre-State coordination** and accelerate reforms for sustainable **water conservation and long-term water security**.

Schemes News

- The **Uttar Pradesh Government** launched the **UP Khet Suraksha Yojana 2026** to protect crops from **stray cattle, nilgai, and wild boars**. Eligible farmers will receive up to **60% subsidy**, with assistance of **₹1.43 lakh per kilometre** for installing **solar-powered electric fencing**, while **SC/ST, small, and marginal farmers** may receive up to **70% subsidy**. The fencing uses **safe low-voltage electric pulses** that deter animals without causing harm. The initiative aims to reduce crop losses, improve farm productivity, promote **renewable energy**, and strengthen **rural livelihoods**.
- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** introduced the **Amnesty Scheme 2026**, providing a **one-time six-month compliance window** for organisations operating **Exempted Provident Fund Trusts**. The scheme enables eligible establishments to complete pending legal formalities by applying retrospectively through EPFO Regional Offices. It aims to improve **governance, transparency, regulatory compliance, and employee social security** while protecting retirement savings. By encouraging uniform compliance across employer-managed PF trusts, the initiative reduces legal uncertainty, strengthens confidence among employees, and enhances the overall administration of provident fund systems.

- The **Uttar Pradesh One District One Product (ODOP) Scheme 2026** continues promoting **traditional industries, artisans**, and local entrepreneurs across all **75 districts**. Beneficiaries receive loans up to **₹25 lakh**, **25% margin money subsidy**, skill development, marketing support, and export assistance. The scheme promotes iconic products such as **Varanasi silk, Lucknow chikankari, Moradabad brassware, Kannauj perfume, and Bhadohi carpets**. It aims to preserve cultural heritage, generate employment, improve product quality, and expand domestic and international market opportunities.
- The **Delhi Government** renamed its proposed **Mahila Samridhhi Yojana** as **Delhi Lakshmi Yojana** before its expected launch around **Raksha Bandhan 2026**. The scheme proposes **₹2,500 monthly financial assistance** to eligible women through the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** system. It aims to strengthen women's **financial independence and social security**. Final eligibility criteria, documentation, and registration details are yet to be announced. The initiative remains one of the government's major welfare commitments for economically weaker women.

Science and Technology News

- Japan's **JAXA** successfully completed the first **lift-off and landing test** of the **RV-X reusable rocket** at the **Noshiro Rocket Testing Center**. The prototype completed a **40-second flight**, reaching **10-11 metres** before landing safely after horizontal movement. Developed to test **rocket recovery, precision landing, guidance, and reusable launch technologies**, the programme aims to reduce future space launch costs. After over **160 combustion tests**, the successful demonstration strengthens Japan's role in reusable space transportation and supports the international **CALLISTO reusable rocket project** with **France and Germany**.
- **ISRO** successfully completed three major qualification tests for the **Gaganyaan Crew Module**, validating the **Crew Module Uprighting System (CMUS)**, **Crew-Service Umbilical Unit (CSU-2)**, and **Apex Cover separation system**. These systems ensure **safe splashdown, flotation, parachute deployment, re-entry, and astronaut recovery** during India's first human spaceflight mission. Conducted on **12 July 2026**, the tests significantly improve mission readiness and confirm the reliability of critical safety mechanisms. The achievement marks another milestone towards launching **Gaganyaan**, India's first indigenous **human spaceflight mission to Low Earth Orbit**.
- Scientists at the **Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS)**, Bengaluru, developed a self-powered wearable ammonia gas sensor capable of detecting concentrations as low as **319 ppb**. Built using a **VO_x/VS₂** heterostructure, the flexible sensor operates efficiently at room temperature without external heating. It offers high sensitivity, stability, and real-time alerts, making it useful for industrial safety, healthcare, environmental monitoring, and smart textile applications while consuming minimal energy.
- Former ISRO Chairman **S. Somanath** joined **Agnikul Cosmos** as an observer on its Board of Directors. The Chennai-based private space startup is preparing for **Mission 02**, which focuses on reusable launch technologies and booster recovery. Somanath's expertise in launch vehicle development will strengthen collaboration between India's public and private space sectors, supporting innovation, commercial space activities, and the country's ambitions to become a leading global space power.

Important Days News

- **World Youth Skills Day** is observed on **15 July 2026** with the theme "**Skills for a Shared Future.**" Established by the **United Nations General Assembly** in 2014, the day promotes **technical, vocational, digital, and life skills** among young people. It highlights **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, and employability. The 2026 theme emphasises **AI, digital transformation, green economy skills**, innovation, and collaboration among governments, industries, and educational institutions to build a future-ready workforce and achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- **World Listening Day** is observed annually on **18 July** to promote **mindful listening, acoustic ecology**, and awareness of **natural and human-made soundscapes**. Established by the **World Listening Project** in 2010, it commemorates **Raymond Murray Schafer** and encourages **noise pollution reduction, environmental conservation, and sound awareness**.

- Jagannath Rath Yatra 2026 was celebrated on **16 July** in Puri, Odisha, marking the annual journey of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra from the Jagannath Temple to the Gundicha Temple. The festival features massive wooden chariots, traditional rituals such as Pahandi, Hera Panchami, Bahuda Yatra, and Suna Besha, and attracts millions of devotees. It symbolizes devotion, equality, and spiritual unity while remaining one of the world's largest religious festivals.
- World Snake Day is observed annually on **16 July** to raise awareness about the ecological importance of snakes and encourage wildlife conservation. Established in 2009, the observance highlights the role of snakes in maintaining ecological balance by controlling rodent populations. India is home to nearly **300 snake species**, many protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The day also aims to dispel myths and promote scientific understanding of snakes.
- World Day for International Justice** Observed annually on **17 July**, the **World Day for International Justice** commemorates the **Rome Statute (1998)** that established the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. The day promotes **human rights, rule of law**, accountability, justice for victims, and international cooperation against **genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity**, and **aggression**.

Obituaries News

- Former **Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani** passed away at the age of **74**. Serving as Emir from **1995 to 2013**, he transformed Qatar through the development of the **North Field gas reserves**, expansion of **LNG production**, and establishment of the **Qatar Investment Authority**. He also launched **Al Jazeera** and laid the foundation for hosting the **2022 FIFA World Cup**. Following his death, **Qatar declared national mourning**, while leaders including **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** paid tribute to his visionary leadership and lasting global legacy.
- Sir Garfield Sobers**, one of cricket's greatest **all-rounders**, passed away at the age of **89**. The **West Indies** legend scored **8,032 Test runs**, took **235 Test wickets**, made a then-world record **365***, and became the first cricketer to hit **six sixes in an over** in **first-class cricket**. He was **knighted in 1975** and inducted into the **ICC Hall of Fame**, leaving behind an extraordinary cricketing legacy.

Static Takeaways

Aspect	Details
Bihar	CM: Samrat Chaudhary, Governor: Arif Khan, Capital: Patna
Jharkhand	CM: Hemant Soren, Governor: Santosh Gangwar, Capital: Ranchi
Kerala	CM: VD Satheesan, Governor: R Arlekar, Capital: Thiruvananthapuram
Odisha	CM: Mohan Majhi, Governor: Haribabu Khambhupati, Capital: Bhubneshwar
Assam	CM: Himnata Sarma, Governor: Laxman Aacharya, Capital: Dispur
Karnataka	CM: DK Shivakumar, Governor: Thawar Chand Gehlot, Capital: Bengaluru
Maharashtra	CM: Devendra Fadnavis, Governor: Jishnu Dev Verma, Capital: Mumbai
Andhra Pradesh	CM: Chandrababu Naidu, Governor: Abdul Nazeer, Capital: Amravati
Madhya Pradesh	CM: Mohan Yadav, Governor: Mangubhai Patel, Capital: Bhopal
Meghalaya	CM: Konrad Sangma, Governor: C. H. Vijayashankar, Capital: Shillong
Tamil Nadu	CM: Joesph Vijay, Governor: R Arlekar, Capital: Chennai
France	President: Emmanuel Macron

Aspect	Details
England	Prime Minister: Keir Starmer
United States	President: Donald Trump
Germany	Chancellor: Friedrich Merz
Italy	Prime Minister: Georgia Meloni
RBI	Chairman: Sanjay Malhotra
SEBI	Chair person: Tuhin Kanta Pandey

