

## Current Affairs Capsule (22/July/2026)

### National News

#### Coal Ministry Releases First Annual Scientific Mine Closure Report

The Ministry of Coal will sign a technical cooperation agreement with Germany's Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on 22 July 2026 to promote scientific mine closure, environmental restoration, and sustainable post-mining land development. The partnership will facilitate knowledge exchange, institutional capacity building, and adoption of global best practices for rehabilitating closed coal mines. Scientific mine closure includes land stabilisation, ecosystem restoration, water management, vegetation recovery, and sustainable future land use. The initiative will strengthen existing programmes such as RECLAIM, L.I.V.E.S., and SUVIKALP. During the event, the Ministry will also release its first AAROH (Annual Report on Mine Closure), documenting the scientific closure of 42 coal mines since Independence. The programme aligns with India's commitment to responsible mining, environmental sustainability, and long-term community development.

### State News

#### Maharashtra Approves India's First AI-Powered Bird Sanctuary Project

Maharashtra is developing India's first AI-powered bird sanctuary at the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary. The state government has approved a ₹45 crore Eco-Nature Park featuring an artificial intelligence-based bird detection and monitoring centre. The AI system will identify bird species, track movements, and collect ecological data in real time. Located near Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, Thane Creek is an important wetland ecosystem and attracts thousands of migratory birds, including flamingos. The project will include birdwatching towers, nature trails, interactive displays, and educational facilities. The initiative aims to combine advanced technology with wildlife conservation while promoting sustainable eco-tourism and improving scientific monitoring of bird populations.

#### Madhya Pradesh Uniform Civil Code Bill 2026

The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet approved the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill 2026, making it the fourth Indian state after Uttarakhand, Gujarat, and Assam to introduce such legislation. The Bill aims to create common civil laws related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, maintenance, and live-in relationships. It proposes mandatory marriage registration, registration of live-in relationships within one month, equal inheritance rights for sons and daughters, and a common standard of monogamy. Practices such as polygamy, triple talaq, and nikah halala are prohibited under the proposed law. However, Scheduled Tribes and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups are exempted to protect their customary traditions. The Bill is based on Article 44 of the Indian Constitution.

#### Mission Golden Spice Boosts Meghalaya's Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain

The Government of India and Meghalaya launched Mission Golden Spice – Integrated Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Enhancement Project to boost the production, processing, branding, and export of GI-tagged Lakadong Turmeric. Started on 21 July 2026 with an investment of ₹175.45 crore, the five-year mission aims to expand cultivation from 2,500 hectares to 7,000 hectares by 2030. Lakadong Turmeric is globally valued for its high curcumin content of 7–12%. The project will benefit over 17,500 farmers, mostly women, by improving income, processing facilities, and market access. It also aims to develop a ₹100 crore turmeric economy and increase exports to markets like the US, Europe, Japan, and Gulf countries.

### International News

#### France Bans Social Media Access for Children Under Fifteen

France has approved a landmark law that will ban children under 15 from accessing social media platforms from January 2027, making it the first European country to introduce such nationwide restrictions. The legislation, backed by President Emmanuel Macron, requires mandatory age verification for all users. From September 2026, children under 15 will be prohibited from creating new social media accounts, while age verification for all existing users will become compulsory in January 2027. The law aims to protect children's mental health, reduce cyberbullying, prevent exposure to harmful content, and improve online safety. While widely supported, the move has raised concerns over privacy, data protection, and enforcement. France's decision may influence similar child online safety policies across Europe and other regions.

### **Kanishka Narayan Becomes UK's First Artificial Intelligence Minister**

Kanishka Narayan, a British politician of Indian origin, has become the United Kingdom's first Minister for Artificial Intelligence. Born in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, and raised in Cardiff, Wales, he represents the Vale of Glamorgan constituency. A graduate of Oxford University and Stanford University, Narayan has experience in technology policy and public service. Appointed in July 2026, he will oversee the UK's AI strategy, including AI safety, innovation, regulation, and digital transformation. His responsibilities include supporting AI research, startups, infrastructure development, and ethical AI governance. His appointment highlights the increasing importance of artificial intelligence in economic growth and public administration while recognizing Indian-origin leadership in global technology policymaking.

### **President Murmu Visits North Macedonia to Strengthen Bilateral Relations**

President Droupadi Murmu made the first-ever bilateral visit by an Indian President to North Macedonia on 21–22 July 2026, marking a milestone in relations since diplomatic ties began in 1995. Both countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in trade, technology, tourism, healthcare, and skill development, with a goal of doubling bilateral trade from USD 133 million (2025). Key sectors include IT, AI, digital technologies, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, textiles, tourism, and film production. India also announced doubling ITEC training slots for North Macedonian professionals in AI and emerging technologies. The two nations extended their healthcare cooperation MoU for five years, held an India–North Macedonia Business Forum, and discussed collaboration through the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), and Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA).

### **Banking News**

### **EnKash Launches India's First UPI-Enabled Digital Meal Card**

EnKash has launched India's first UPI-enabled Meal Card, integrating employee meal benefits with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to enable seamless payments by scanning eligible UPI QR codes. Available in both physical and virtual formats, the prepaid card supports tap, swipe, scan, and online transactions through the RuPay network. Following revised Income Tax Rules effective 1 April 2026, employees can receive a tax-free meal allowance of up to ₹8,800 per month (₹1,05,600 annually). Accepted at over 5 lakh food and grocery outlets and platforms like Swiggy, Zomato, and Blinkit, the card also offers employers instant issuance, bulk wallet reloading, spending controls, and real-time tracking. The innovation strengthens India's digital payments ecosystem and cashless economy.

### **Economy News**

### **India's Fertiliser Exports Rise Fifty-Two Percent During FY26**

India's fertiliser exports increased by nearly 52% between FY24 and FY26, rising from 0.31 million tonnes to 0.47 million tonnes. The growth was driven mainly by exports of potassium sulphate, superphosphates, organic fertilisers,

and other specialised products. Brazil emerged as the largest buyer, with exports rising significantly during the period. However, India continues to depend heavily on imports, especially for urea, DAP, and MOP fertilisers. Imports increased to 28.17 million tonnes in FY26. The country relies on overseas sources for raw materials like natural gas, rock phosphate, and potash. While export growth strengthens India's position in global fertiliser markets, reducing import dependence remains important for agricultural security and stable food production.

### Appointments News

#### Amit Diwan Named Hines Asia-Pacific and Middle East Head

Global real estate investment company Hines appointed Amit Diwan as the Head of Asia-Pacific and Middle East operations. Earlier serving as Head of Hines India, Diwan brings nearly 25 years of experience in real estate investment and development. He will now manage regional strategies, investments, partnerships, and cross-border operations. The appointment reflects Hines' focus on expanding in high-growth markets across Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. The company operates across multiple countries and manages assets worth billions globally. Diwan succeeds Jon Tanaka, who will lead strategic projects in Japan and Korea. His appointment highlights the growing role of Indian professionals in global leadership positions and the importance of regional real estate markets.

### Defense News

#### Paras Semiconductors to Build ₹6,200 Crore OSAT Facility

Paras Semiconductors Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of Paras Defence and Space Technologies, has signed an MoU with the MP State Electronics Development Corporation to establish a ₹6,200 crore greenfield semiconductor packaging and OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test) facility in the Indore-Ujjain region of Madhya Pradesh. The project supports the India Semiconductor Mission by strengthening domestic semiconductor assembly, packaging, and testing capabilities. The facility will use advanced technologies such as 3D integration, chiplet integration, hybrid bonding, wafer bumping, and flip-chip assembly. Expected to create over 2,500 direct jobs, it will boost regional industrial development and reduce dependence on imported semiconductor services. Initially serving defence, space, sensor, and optical sectors, the facility also plans to expand into AI chip packaging.

#### Operation Southern Readiness 26-2: Indian Navy Hosts Multinational Maritime Exercise

The Indian Navy has launched Operation Southern Readiness 26-2 at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi, marking the first time the multinational maritime training exercise is being hosted in India. Conducted under Combined Task Force 154 (CTF 154) of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), the four-day programme brings together 254 participants from 26 countries, along with 74 facilitators, international organisation representatives, and maritime experts. The exercise focuses on improving naval cooperation, operational readiness, and interoperability among participating nations through practical training, discussions, and simulator-based learning. The event highlights India's growing role in regional maritime security and strengthens international cooperation to address emerging challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.

### Schemes News

#### Rajasthan's MAAY Scheme Offers ₹25 Lakh Annual Health Coverage

The Mukhyamantri Ayushman Arogya Yojana (MAAY) is Rajasthan's flagship health insurance scheme providing cashless treatment coverage of up to ₹25 lakh per family annually. Formerly known as Mukhyamantri Chiranjeevi Swasthya Bima Yojana, the scheme covers more than 1,700 medical and surgical procedures through government and private hospitals. It also provides accident insurance benefits and includes pre- and post-hospitalisation expenses. Eligible families receive free registration, while paid-category families contribute ₹850 annually. The scheme covers

all members listed on the Jan Aadhaar Card, including newborns, without any age limit. MAAY aims to reduce medical expenses, improve healthcare access, and protect families from financial hardship caused by major illnesses.

## Science & Tech News

### ICMR Transfers Three Indigenous Healthcare Technologies to Industry Partners

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has transferred three indigenous medical technologies to Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd. and Biological E Ltd. under its Medical Innovations Patent Mitra initiative to promote commercialisation of publicly funded research. The technologies include SHetA2, a novel therapeutic candidate for HPV-related cervical precancer (CIN), licensed to Emcure, and two vaccine platforms licensed to Biological E—a fusion protein-based typhoid vaccine and a recombinant multivalent vaccine targeting *Salmonella typhi*, *Salmonella paratyphi*, and *Shigella*. Developed by ICMR institutes, these innovations aim to improve disease prevention, strengthen India's biotechnology and vaccine sectors, reduce dependence on imports, and accelerate the translation of research into affordable healthcare solutions under the Make in India initiative.

### IIT Kanpur Establishes Green Hydrogen Research Centre ECOGEN

IIT Kanpur is set to establish the Centre of Excellence on Innovative and Integrated Ecosystem for Green Hydrogen (ECOGEN) to advance research and development in green hydrogen technologies. Approved under the Uttar Pradesh Green Hydrogen Policy 2024, the centre will act as a research hub connecting scientific innovation with industrial applications. ECOGEN will focus on hydrogen production using renewable energy, advanced storage solutions, hydrogen utilisation, and integration with existing energy systems. The initiative aims to develop cost-effective hydrogen technologies, support India's clean energy transition, reduce carbon emissions, and contribute to net-zero goals. It will also encourage industry collaboration, skill development, and sustainable energy solutions while strengthening Uttar Pradesh's position in the green hydrogen sector.

### Scientists Discover Five New Allographa Lichen Species in Western Ghats

Researchers from MACS Agharkar Research Institute, Pune, discovered five new species of Allographa, a lichen-forming fungus genus, in the Western Ghats. Announced on 21 July 2026, the study represents the first comprehensive molecular research on Allographa species from the region. The newly identified species include Allographa keralensis, A. nayakae, A. paraconsanguinea, A. persistinspersa, and A. semicarbonisata. Scientists used field surveys, morphological studies, chemical analysis, and DNA sequencing to confirm the discoveries. Since lichens act as indicators of environmental health, the findings will support biodiversity conservation, ecosystem monitoring, and scientific understanding of species evolution in one of the world's richest biodiversity hotspots.

### AI-Assisted Discovery Challenges Decades-Old Jacobian Conjecture in Mathematics

A reported AI-assisted breakthrough has challenged the Jacobian Conjecture, a major unsolved mathematical problem proposed by Eduard Ott-Heinrich Keller in 1939. On 20 July 2026, mathematician Levent Alpöge of Harvard University and Anthropic announced that the AI model Claude Fable 5 identified a counterexample—a polynomial map with a constant non-zero Jacobian determinant that lacks a polynomial inverse, contradicting the conjecture. The result was reportedly verified using SymPy, the Lean proof assistant, and reviewed by mathematicians. If independently validated through peer review, it could reshape research in algebraic geometry, polynomial mapping, and computational mathematics. The development also highlights AI's growing role in generating mathematical insights, testing hypotheses, and assisting formal proof verification while complementing human researchers.

## Sports News

### Finnie: Mascot of Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games

Finnie has been introduced as the official mascot of the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games. Inspired by Scotland's national animal, the unicorn, Finnie is a magical character named after the iconic Finnieston Crane, a famous Glasgow landmark. The mascot blends Scottish folklore, local heritage, and modern creativity to represent the culture and spirit of the host city. Finnie will play an important role in promoting the Games through community programmes, educational activities, and fan engagement initiatives. Commonwealth Games mascots help build a unique identity for each edition by connecting local traditions with global audiences while encouraging tourism, participation, and memorable experiences for athletes and spectators.

### **Rohith Krishna Wins Menuires International Chess Championship Gold Medal**

Indian Grandmaster S. Rohith Krishna won the gold medal, while Grandmaster Raja Rithvik secured silver at the Menuires International Chess Championship 2026 in France. Both players remained unbeaten and scored 7 points from 9 rounds. Rohith Krishna claimed the title through a superior tie-break score of 43, while Raja Rithvik finished with 41.5. The tournament was held from 11–18 July 2026 in Les Menuires, France, featuring 86 participants in a nine-round Swiss format. Raja Rithvik's notable achievement included defeating French Grandmaster Maxime Lagarde in the final round. The result highlights India's growing strength in international chess and the continued success of Indian Grandmasters on the global stage.

### **Important Days News**

#### **World Brain Day 2026 Promotes Brain Health Access for All**

World Brain Day 2026 was observed on 22 July with the theme "Brain Health: Access for All." Led by the World Federation of Neurology, the day focuses on increasing awareness about neurological disorders and promoting equal access to brain healthcare. The campaign highlights prevention, early diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, education, and policy support. Neurological diseases such as stroke, migraine, and epilepsy are major causes of disability worldwide. In India, stroke accounts for a significant share of neurological disease burden. World Brain Day encourages governments, healthcare professionals, and communities to improve brain health services and reduce inequalities in neurological care. The observance began in 2014 after the WFN declared 22 July as an annual awareness day.

#### **National Flag Day 2026 Celebrates Adoption of India's Tiranga**

National Flag Day 2026 will be observed on 22 July 2026 to commemorate the adoption of the Indian National Flag (Tiranga) by the Constituent Assembly on 22 July 1947. The day celebrates the national symbol that represents India's independence, sovereignty, unity, and constitutional values. The Tiranga also honours the sacrifices of freedom fighters who carried the flag during the struggle against British rule. The flag consists of saffron, white, and green bands with the Ashoka Chakra at the centre, symbolizing courage, peace, prosperity, and progress. Over the years, the flag evolved through various designs before the present version was adopted. National Flag Day promotes awareness about respecting the Tiranga and understanding its historical significance.

