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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. India hosts BRICS Environment Working Group Meeting 2026.

[18 AUG 2026] -



India hosted the BRICS Environment Working Group meetings on 17-18 August 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal ministry coordinating the meeting on environmental cooperation among BRICS countries.

Key Highlights:

- BRICS Environment Working Group meetings are being held on 17-18 August 2026.
- The venue is Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal ministry for the meeting.
- Representatives and environment ministers from BRICS countries are participating.
- The meeting focuses on environmental cooperation among BRICS member countries.

Additional Information:

- BRICS was established in 2006 as BRIC.
- South Africa joined BRICS in 2010.
- Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and United Arab Emirates joined the grouping in January 2024.
- The first formal BRICS Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009.
- Bharat Mandapam is located at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi and was the main venue of the 18th G20 Summit in 2023.

2. Suryapath Tiranga completes historic global relay.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Ministry of Culture concluded the first edition of Suryapath Tiranga global relay on 15 August 2026. The initiative linked 54 Indian missions across the world following the path of the sun and celebrated 150 years of Vande Mataram.

Key Highlights:

- Suryapath Tiranga was organised under Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 campaign.
- The global relay linked 54 Indian missions across the world.
- The relay continued for over 19 hours.
- It began at 1:30 AM IST in Suva, Fiji.
- It concluded at 8:30 PM IST in San Francisco, USA.
- Missions across Pacific, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas participated.
- The relay commemorated 150 years of India's National Song, Vande Mataram.

Additional Information:

- Vande Mataram was composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in the 1870s.
- Rabindranath Tagore first sang it at the 1896 Indian National Congress session.
- Vande Mataram was formally adopted as India's National Song on 24 January 1950.
- Har Ghar Tiranga was launched under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- National Flag was designed by Pingali Venkayya and adopted on 22 July 1947.

3. PM Modi unveils Sapta Dhara seven-point roadmap for Viksit Bharat 2047.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Sapta Dhara seven-point reform framework for Viksit Bharat 2047 during his Independence Day address on 15 August 2026. The roadmap covers manufacturing, agriculture, technology, infrastructure, defence, green economy and cultural strength.

Key Highlights:

- Sapta Dhara is a seven-point roadmap for Viksit Bharat 2047.
- Manufacturing Power aims to make India a trusted global supply-chain partner.
- Agriculture and Food Processing focuses on exports of millets, spices and organic produce through trade agreements.
- Technology and Innovation targets leadership in Made in India 6G, Artificial Intelligence and quantum technology.
- Gati Shakti and Infrastructure focuses on high-speed rail connectivity and port-led development.
- Defence and Security focuses on self-reliance, drones, hypersonic technologies and cyber security.
- Green and Blue Economy promotes renewable energy, green hydrogen, energy storage, fisheries and coastal tourism.
- Soft Power and Culture focuses on Yoga, Ayurveda, gaming, animation and visual-effects sectors.

Additional Information:

- Viksit Bharat 2047 aims to make India a developed nation by 100th anniversary of independence.
- Independence Day 2026 marked the 80th anniversary of Indian independence.
- The announcement was made during PM Modi's 13th consecutive Independence Day address.

4. India Post completes first-ever drone delivery of Tiranga.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya M. Scindia inaugurated the first-ever drone delivery of the Tiranga by India Post on 16 August 2026. The initiative is part of modernisation efforts of Department of Posts under Ministry of Communications.

Key Highlights:

- India Post completed the first-ever drone delivery of the National Flag.
- The initiative was inaugurated by Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia.
- The delivery was carried out by Department of Posts.
- It marks a technological milestone in postal delivery services.
- The initiative is part of modernisation efforts under Ministry of Communications.

Additional Information:

- Department of Posts is also known as India Post.
- India Post was established on 1 October 1854.
- India Post headquarters is at Dak Bhawan, New Delhi.
- India Post functions under Ministry of Communications.

5. PMIS Industry Awards held in New Delhi.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Ministry of Corporate Affairs organised PMIS Industry Awards in New Delhi on 16 August 2026 to honour companies that created meaningful internship opportunities under Prime Minister Internship Scheme. Mahindra and Mahindra Limited received the Overall Industry Champion award.

Key Highlights:

- PMIS Industry Awards were organised by Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- The awards recognised companies providing quality internship opportunities to youth.
- Mahindra and Mahindra Limited received Overall Industry Champion award.
- ONGC, NTPC and Western Coalfields Limited were recognised as Top PSU Partners.
- Reliance Industries, Infosys and Dr Reddy's Laboratories were Top Private Partners.
- HDFC Bank received Pre-Internship Excellence Award.
- Shriram Finance received Internship Management Excellence Award.
- IBM India received Innovation in Program Implementation Award.

Additional Information:

- Prime Minister Internship Scheme provides industry-linked training and practical experience to youth.
- The scheme targets internship opportunities in India's top 500 companies.
- Interns receive monthly stipend and a one-time grant for incidental expenses.
- Ministry of Corporate Affairs administers Companies Act, 2013 and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- Ministry of Corporate Affairs headquarters is in New Delhi.

6. Guinness World Record set during Indian Independence Day celebration in New Jersey.

[18 AUG 2026] -



A Guinness World Record for the Largest Flagpole Number was set at Veterans Memorial Park in Parsippany, New Jersey, on 15 August 2026. More than 1,300 United States flags were arranged to form the number 250, with Indian tricolours placed around the formation during 80th Indian Independence Day celebrations and the 250th anniversary of the United States.

Key Highlights:

- The world record was set for the Largest Flagpole Number.
- The event was held at Veterans Memorial Park in Parsippany, New Jersey.
- More than 1,300 US flags were arranged in the shape of number 250.
- Indian tricolours surrounded the formation.
- The event marked 80th Indian Independence Day and 250th anniversary of the United States.
- Indian Consulate in New York and Federation of Indian Associations led the event.
- The 44th India Day Parade was held on Madison Avenue, Manhattan.

Additional Information:

- Federation of Indian Associations was founded in 1970.
- FIA is among the largest umbrella diaspora organisations in the United States.

- New York Tri-State Area includes New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.
- Indian landmarks and US landmarks such as Niagara Falls and Empire State Building were illuminated in tricolour.

7. Jal Jeevan Mission completes seven years with 82 percent rural tap water coverage.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Jal Jeevan Mission completed seven years on 16 August 2026 with rural tap-water coverage rising from 16.7 percent in 2019 to over 82 percent. The mission has expanded Functional Household Tap Connections across rural India under Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Key Highlights:

- Rural tap-water coverage increased from 16.7 percent in 2019 to over 82 percent by August 2026.
- Rural household tap connections increased from 3.23 crore in 2019 to more than 15.8 crore.
- The mission achieved over 65 percent growth in rural coverage in seven years.
- The service standard is 55 litres of water per person per day through Functional Household Tap Connections.
- The mission is implemented by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Additional Information:

- Jal Jeevan Mission was launched by Prime Minister on 15 August 2019.
- The mission aims to provide safe drinking tap water to every rural household.
- Ministry of Jal Shakti was established in May 2019.
- The ministry was formed by merging Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

8. Tributes paid to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on eighth death anniversary.

[18 AUG 2026] -



President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries paid homage to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his eighth death anniversary at Sadaiv Atal memorial in New Delhi on 16 August 2026.

Key Highlights:

- Tributes were paid at Sadaiv Atal memorial in New Delhi.
- President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage.
- Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were present.
- Atal Bihari Vajpayee was elected to Lok Sabha ten times.
- He served as a Rajya Sabha member two times.
- He was awarded Bharat Ratna in 2015.

Additional Information:

- Atal Bihari Vajpayee served as Prime Minister three times: 1996, 1998-1999 and 1999-2004.
- He was the first non-Congress Prime Minister to complete a full five-year term.
- He was co-founder and first President of Bharatiya Janata Party.
- His birth anniversary, 25 December, is observed as Good Governance Day.
- Pokhran-II nuclear tests and Kargil War took place during his tenure.

SPORTS**1. Magnus Carlsen wins Esports World Cup chess title for second consecutive year.**

[18 AUG 2026] -



World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen won the Esports World Cup chess title for the second consecutive year by defeating Denis Lazavik in Paris, France, on 16 August 2026. Carlsen, representing Team Liquid, remained undefeated throughout the competition.

Key Highlights:

- Magnus Carlsen won Esports World Cup chess title for second consecutive year.
- He represented Team Liquid in the tournament.
- He defeated Belarusian Grandmaster Denis Lazavik by 2-0 in the final.
- Carlsen remained undefeated throughout the competition.
- Denis Lazavik finished second.
- Hikaru Nakamura of USA finished third after defeating Alireza Firouzja 4-1.
- The championship used a best-of-three sets format.

Additional Information:

- Magnus Carlsen is from Norway.
- He is a five-time World Chess Champion.
- His peak FIDE rating is 2882, the highest in chess history.

DEFENCE**1. PM highlights Raksha Shakti as pillar for Viksit Bharat 2047.**

[18 AUG 2026] -



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day address from the Red Fort on 15 August 2026, identified Raksha Shakti as one of the seven streams of power for achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047. He emphasised self-reliance, advanced defence production and modern security preparedness.

Key Highlights:

- Raksha Shakti was identified as a major pillar for Viksit Bharat 2047.
- India aims to move from being a defence technology market to a global supplier of advanced defence technology.
- Priority areas include drones, anti-drone systems and hypersonic defence technologies.

- Defence production has increased nearly four times during the last 12 years.
- Defence exports have grown nearly 50 times.
- Indian-made weapons are exported to around 100 countries.
- Mission Sudarshan Chakra aims to protect critical infrastructure such as refineries, banks and data centres.
- The address also highlighted greater leadership opportunities for women in the Defence Forces.

Additional Information:

- Viksit Bharat 2047 is the roadmap to make India a developed nation by the centenary of independence.
- National Defence Academy is the world's first tri-service academy.
- NDA is located at Khadakwasla, Pune, Maharashtra.
- NDA was established in 1954.
- Red Fort was commissioned by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in 1638.

2. Ministry of Defence signs Rs 1,577 crore contracts for Loiter Munition Systems.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Ministry of Defence signed contracts worth Rs 1,577 crore on 16 August 2026 for procurement of Loiter Munition Systems for Indian Army. The procurement is aimed at strengthening Army operational capability and promoting Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence production.

Key Highlights:

- Ministry of Defence signed contracts worth Rs 1,577 crore.
- The contracts are for procurement of Loiter Munition Systems for Indian Army.
- The procurement will strengthen operational capability of Indian Army.
- It supports Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing.

Additional Information:

- Loiter Munition Systems are weapons that can remain in an area before identifying and striking a target.

- Ministry of Defence is responsible for national defence and armed forces administration.
- Indian Army is the land-based branch of Indian Armed Forces.

3. HAL partners with BEML and Adani for LCH Prachand fuselage production.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Hindustan Aeronautics Limited signed agreements with BEML and Adani Defence Systems and Technologies Limited on 14 August 2026 to manufacture fuselage structures for Light Combat Helicopter Prachand. The agreements support production of 156 Prachand helicopters ordered for Indian Armed Forces.

Key Highlights:

- HAL signed agreements with BEML and Adani Defence for LCH Prachand fuselage structures.
- BEML will manufacture 48 fuselage structures under an order worth Rs 184 crore.
- Adani Defence will manufacture 42 fuselage structures.
- The agreements support production of 156 Prachand helicopters for Indian Armed Forces.
- This is the first integration of private industry into helicopter fuselage structure production.
- Production is taking place at HAL new manufacturing facility in Tumakuru, Karnataka.
- Two additional production lines will be established to improve manufacturing capacity.

Additional Information:

- HAL was established in 1940 as Hindustan Aircraft Limited.
- HAL headquarters is in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- HAL works under Ministry of Defence.
- LCH Prachand is India's first indigenous multi-role combat helicopter.
- LCH Prachand can operate at altitude of 5,000 metres.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. NIELIT launches CYBER KUSHTI 2026 national cybersecurity and AI hackathon.

[18 AUG 2026] -



NIELIT under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology launched CYBER KUSHTI 2026 on 16 August 2026. It is a national-level cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence hackathon designed to assess judgment-based threat scoring and accuracy.

Key Highlights:

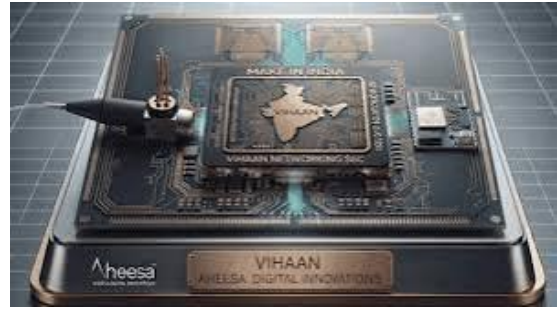
- CYBER KUSHTI 2026 integrates Artificial Intelligence with cybersecurity.
- It gives priority to human judgment and accuracy in threat scoring, instead of only detection speed.
- The first online round, Akhada, will be held on 15 September 2026.
- Fifty teams will advance from Akhada to the next round.
- The Dangal round will be held online on 24 September 2026 and select ten finalist teams.
- The final round, Kesari, will be held on 9 October 2026 at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.
- Finalist teams will present and defend their assessments at NCCDFI 2026.

Additional Information:

- NCCDFI stands for National Conference on Cyber Security, Digital Forensics and Intelligence.
- NCCDFI brings together government, law-enforcement agencies, judiciary, industry, academia, researchers and students.
- The third NCCDFI edition will be organised by NIELIT in New Delhi on 9-10 October 2026.

2. Aheesa Digital Innovations achieves first-pass success with VIHAAN chip.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Chip-design startup Aheesa Digital Innovations achieved first-pass silicon success with VIHAAN, a broadband chip powered by the indigenous VEGA Microprocessor, on 16 August 2026. The chip was developed under the Design Linked Incentive Scheme of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Key Highlights:

- Aheesa Digital Innovations achieved first-pass silicon success with VIHAAN chip.
- First-pass success means that the chip design worked in its first manufacturing run.
- VIHAAN uses indigenous VEGA Microprocessor core.
- VEGA is based on open-standard RISC-V architecture.
- The chip is designed for broadband connectivity and high-speed data communication.
- The project is supported under Design Linked Incentive Scheme of MeitY.
- It supports the India Semiconductor Mission for building domestic chip-design and intellectual-property ecosystem.

Additional Information:

- VEGA Microprocessor was developed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing.
- VEGA is part of the Government of India Microprocessor Development Programme.
- C-DAC was established in 1988 and is headquartered in Pune, Maharashtra.
- Design Linked Incentive Scheme offers financial support of up to 50 percent of eligible semiconductor-design expenditure.
- C-DAC is the nodal agency for implementation of the scheme.

3. PSA launches RSVC-AMRIT platform for rural innovation.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India launched the RuTAG Smart Village Centre AMRIT platform on 16 August 2026 to strengthen technology transfer and rural development. The platform was designed and developed by NABARD.

Key Highlights:

- RSVC-AMRIT platform was launched to strengthen rural innovation.
- The platform was designed and developed by NABARD.
- It will simplify the transfer of technology to rural stakeholders.
- The platform aims to improve rural-sector value chains.
- It will support agricultural marketing through integrated digital technology.
- The project involves Office of PSA, NITI Aayog and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- It is intended to support rural entrepreneurs and village-based innovation.

Additional Information:

- NABARD was established on 12 July 1982 under NABARD Act, 1981.
- NABARD is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- NABARD was recommended by the B. Sivaraman Committee.
- Office of Principal Scientific Adviser was established in 1999 by Cabinet Secretariat.

4. BSNL launches digital initiatives for 80th Independence Day.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited launched several customer-focused digital initiatives and infrastructure projects on 15 August 2026 to mark the 80th Independence Day. These include additional 4G sites, revised mobile plans, high-speed broadband and a new selfcare mobile application.

Key Highlights:

- BSNL ordered 26,300 additional 4G Base Transceiver Station sites for rural and remote areas.
- Re 1 Freedom 2.0 offer provides 1 GB data per day, 100 SMS and unlimited calls for 24 days to new customers.
- Validity of Rs 2,399 prepaid plan was increased by 47 days to 412 days.
- Fibre Freedom Plan costs Rs 1,111 per month and provides 200 Mbps speed with 5,000 GB data.
- Free Entertainment TV provides access to 500 live channels through Tango TV.
- BSNL launched Selfcare New app with AI chatbot, voice search and payment-history features.
- BSNL partnered with Polycab for manufacturing ONTs, routers and cameras under Hardware-as-a-Service model.

Additional Information:

- BSNL is a Central Public Sector Undertaking under Ministry of Communications.
- BSNL was established on 1 October 2000.
- BSNL headquarters is in New Delhi.

GENERAL & OTHER NEWS

1. CBDT notifies FAST-DS for disclosure of foreign assets.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Central Board of Direct Taxes notified the Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers - Disclosure Scheme Rules, 2026, known as FAST-DS, on 16 August 2026. The scheme offers a one-time opportunity to declare undisclosed foreign income and assets within prescribed conditions.

Key Highlights:

- FAST-DS will operate from 16 August 2026 to 31 December 2026.
- Declared assets must be valued as on 31 March 2026.

- Category 1 covers undisclosed foreign income or assets valued up to Rs 1 crore.
- Category 1 requires 30 percent tax and an additional 30 percent payment in place of penalty.
- Category 2 covers certain foreign assets up to Rs 5 crore acquired while the taxpayer was non-resident or from income already offered to tax.
- Category 2 provides immunity from penalty and prosecution on payment of a flat Rs 1 lakh fee.
- Valid declarations provide protection from prosecution and additional penalties under Black Money Act, 2015.
- The scheme does not apply to assets that are proceeds of crime under PMLA, 2002.

Additional Information:

- CBDT administers direct-tax laws in India.
- CBDT functions under Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
- CBDT is a statutory body under Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963.
- Black Money Act, 2015 imposes 30 percent tax on undisclosed foreign income and assets for Indian residents.

2. CBDC-based DBT launched in Chandigarh for transparent PDS.

[18 AUG 2026] -



Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched a Central Bank Digital Currency based Direct Benefit Transfer system for Public Distribution System in Chandigarh on 16 August 2026. The pilot uses e-RUPI digital vouchers for transparent delivery of food subsidies.

Key Highlights:

- CBDC-based DBT system was launched for Public Distribution System in Chandigarh.
- The pilot uses e-RUPI digital vouchers for food-subsidy delivery.
- The objective is to ensure transparent and leak-proof distribution of food subsidies.
- The project was developed with Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and RBI.

- It uses blockchain-based CBDC for real-time transaction settlement.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Department of Fertilizers are exploring similar subsidy models.

Additional Information:

- PDS provides essential food items to eligible beneficiaries at subsidised prices.
- CBDC is the digital form of a nation's official currency issued by central bank.
- RBI is India's central bank and regulates monetary policy and banking system.

3. CCRAS-NIIMH signs MoU to digitise rare medical manuscripts.

[18 AUG 2026] -



CCRAS-NIIMH signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sevadhi Museum and Indological Research Institute on 16 August 2026 to preserve and digitise rare ancient medical manuscripts and Indological research documents. The initiative functions under Ministry of AYUSH.

Key Highlights:

- CCRAS-NIIMH signed MoU with Sevadhi Museum and Indological Research Institute.
- The objective is preservation and systematic digitisation of rare medical manuscripts.
- Fragile physical texts will be converted into high-resolution digital formats.
- The initiative will improve global research access to traditional Indian medical knowledge.
- The project is governed by Ministry of AYUSH.

Additional Information:

- NIIMH is located in Hyderabad.
- It is a premier institute for documenting and showcasing Indian Medical Heritage.
- NIIMH functions as a subordinate unit of Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences.
- Ministry of AYUSH was established on 9 November 2014 and is headquartered in New Delhi.

- AYUSH stands for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.