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Weekly Current Affairs

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## National

### 1.NFR, IIT-Guwahati Join Hands to Replace Plastics with Biodegradable Materials

In a significant step toward promoting environmental sustainability, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has partnered with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Guwahati to replace single-use plastics with biodegradable materials. As a pilot project, the collaboration has developed compostable bed-roll bags for use on trains. These eco-friendly bags, which are ISO 17088-compliant, are designed to degrade quickly, reducing landfill waste and the railway's overall carbon footprint. The initiative is a model for scalable, greener operations across the Indian railway network.

### 2. ISRO Inaugurates Space Laboratory in Remote Arunachal Pradesh District

In a significant step toward democratizing access to space science education, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has inaugurated a new space laboratory in a remote region of Arunachal Pradesh. The facility, located in the Shi-Yomi district, aims to provide students with hands-on experience in space science and technology. This initiative is part of ISRO's broader efforts to foster curiosity and innovation among the youth in underserved areas. The laboratory will serve as a hub for learning and innovation, inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers from the region.

### 3. Seventh Death Anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Observed

On August 16, 2025, India marked the seventh death anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. A founding member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Vajpayee was a revered statesman, poet, and orator who served as Prime Minister three times. His legacy is remembered for his efforts in promoting good governance, his role in the 1998 Pokhran-II nuclear tests, and his visionary leadership in infrastructure projects like the Golden Quadrilateral. Tributes were paid to him at his memorial, 'Sadaiv Atal', in Delhi, by several dignitaries, including the Prime Minister and the President.

### 4. India's Russian Oil Imports Surge to 2 Million Barrels per Day in August

India's energy sourcing strategy continued to tilt towards Russian crude in August 2025, with imports climbing to 2

million barrels per day (bpd). This surge, up from 1.6 million bpd in July, means Russia now accounts for a significant portion of India's total crude imports. The increase is driven primarily by attractive discounted rates offered on Russian crude, which helps India manage domestic fuel prices and control inflation. This strategic diversification also reduces India's traditional over-reliance on Middle Eastern suppliers, enhancing its overall energy security.

### 5. NHAI Launches FASTag Annual Pass for Seamless Highway Travel

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched a new scheme, the FASTag Annual Pass, to streamline toll payments for frequent highway commuters. Priced at INR 3,000, the pass allows private vehicles to make up to 200 trips on designated National Highways or remains valid for one year, whichever comes first. The initiative, launched on August 15, is aimed at reducing travel time and hassle by eliminating the need for repeated wallet top-ups. This new pass is a major step toward enhancing the efficiency and convenience of highway travel across India.

### 6. PM launches high-level demographic initiative to address illegal immigration concerns

On August 15, 2025, during his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Modi warned of a planned conspiracy aiming to alter India's demographic fabric through illegal immigration, especially in border and tribal regions. He accused infiltrators of usurping opportunities from Indian youth, targeting women, misleading tribal communities, and grabbing land. To counter this urgent threat, he announced the formation of a high-powered demographic (demography) mission tasked with strategizing and acting within a defined timeframe to protect national security and demographic integrity.

### 7. Prime Minister emphasizes upcoming generation reforms under GST framework

Prime Minister Modi has pushed forward a landmark "next-generation" overhaul of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system, urging state governments to support the draft proposal circulated by the Centre ahead of Diwali. The reform seeks to simplify the current multi-slab structure into just two main tax rates—5% and 18%—with a special 40% bracket for luxury and "sin" goods, laying the foundation for a unified single-rate GST by 2047. The initiative positions tax relief for consumers and streamlined compliance as core goals of this reform agenda.

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## 8. RBI unveils Artificial Intelligence roadmap for strengthening India's financial ecosystem

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revealed a strategic roadmap called FREE-AI (Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of AI) to responsibly integrate artificial intelligence into the financial ecosystem. The committee, led by IIT Bombay's Pushpak Bhattacharyya, delivered 26 recommendations across six key pillars—infrastructure, capacity, policy, governance, protection, and assurance. It proposes building indigenous AI models, establishing a multi-stakeholder oversight committee, creating an AI fund, embedding AI in platforms like UPI, and encouraging lenient first-error supervision—all aimed at striking a balance between innovation and risk management.

## 9. MNRE directs wind power firms to adopt domestic supply chains and data centers

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has issued an updated policy mandating that wind turbine manufacturers source critical components—such as blades, towers, gearboxes, generators, and specialized bearings—from domestic, government-approved suppliers. The policy also enforces strict data localisation, requiring operational data to be stored within India and forbidding real-time transfers abroad. Additionally, manufacturers must establish R and D and operational data centres in India within a year. Technical inspection teams will ensure compliance, and limited exemptions apply to select ongoing or near-term projects.

## 10. India to set benchmark in global data quality standards, says CEA Nageswaran

At a Ministry of Statistics conference on August 14, 2025, India's Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran asserted that the nation is poised to set global benchmarks in data quality—standards that developed countries might eventually follow. Emphasizing rising concerns about data accuracy worldwide, he highlighted India's deep-rooted statistical tradition and fast-evolving digital infrastructure as key enablers. The announcement underscores India's ambition to lead in international data governance and to address data quality challenges proactively.

## 11. Extreme Weather Events in Jammu and Kashmir

The Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir recently faced a tragic flash flood. The incident occurred in the remote village of Chasoti, near the popular Machail Mata

temple, following a cloudburst and torrential rainfall. The flash flood tragically claimed the lives of at least 65 people and left dozens injured. Local authorities, with the assistance of the Indian Army and the State Disaster Response Force, launched a massive rescue operation to locate survivors and provide aid. The event highlights the growing vulnerability of the Himalayan region to extreme weather phenomena due to climate change.

## 12. Decline of Naxalite Violence Amid Global Terror Threats

Recent developments show a sharp decline in ideologically-driven Naxalite militancy in India. This decline is attributed to a multi-pronged strategy by the government, including a more robust security presence, intelligence-based operations, and developmental initiatives in affected areas. This contrasts sharply with persistent and evolving global terrorism threats, especially those inspired by groups like the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, which are now leveraging digital platforms and lone-wolf tactics. The data underscores the success of India's internal security policies in containing a long-standing domestic threat.

## 13. India's Deep Ocean Mission Achieves Record 5,002m Human Dive

India has scripted history in its quest to explore the ocean's mysteries. Under the Deep Ocean Mission, a human-crewed submersible vehicle, MATSYA 6000, successfully descended to a record depth of 5,002 meters in the Bay of Bengal. This dive marks a significant technological milestone, making India the fourth country in the world to successfully carry out a deep ocean human mission. The mission aims to explore resources like polymetallic nodules and advance India's capabilities in deep-sea technology.

## 14. Ajay Kumar Bhalla Appointed Nagaland Governor with Additional Charge

The Union Government has appointed Ajay Kumar Bhalla, the incumbent Union Home Secretary, to assume the additional charge of the Governor of Nagaland. This appointment follows the unfortunate demise of the previous Governor, La Ganesan, who passed away on August 15. Bhalla, a seasoned bureaucrat, will carry out the responsibilities of the governor's office in addition to his current duties. This move ensures a smooth transition and continuity of governance in the state of Nagaland during this interim period.



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## 15. Region-Specific Antivenoms

Snakebite envenoming remains a critical health challenge in India, especially in regions where the standard polyvalent antivenom is less effective. Recent calls from herpetologists and health experts emphasise the urgent need for region-specific antivenoms. The current national antivenom is made from the venom of the 'Big Four' snakes—the Indian cobra, common krait, Russell's viper, and saw-scaled viper—but is less effective in states like Assam and other parts of the Northeast, where bites from other species like the monocled cobra and green pit vipers are more common. The government is now considering a proposal to establish regional venom centres to address this gap.

## 16. Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis Cases in Kerala

Kerala's Kozhikode district recently reported three consecutive cases of primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM), a rare but highly fatal brain infection. One victim, a nine-year-old girl, succumbed to the illness, while two others, a three-month-old infant and a 40-year-old man, remain critically ill. Health officials confirmed that the infection is caused by the 'brain-eating amoeba' *Naegleria fowleri*, which enters the body through the nose, typically from contaminated freshwater bodies. The district administration has issued a public health advisory to avoid bathing or swimming in stagnant water sources to prevent further cases.

## 17. Veterinary Blood Transfusion Guidelines

The Government of India is advancing veterinary healthcare by proposing standardised guidelines for blood transfusion and blood banking in animals. The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, has released a draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to formalise these practices, which are currently unregulated and inconsistent. The move aims to improve emergency and critical care for the country's vast livestock and companion animal population, establishing criteria for donor animals and setting up a coordinated national network of blood banks.

## 18. Jalalabad Renamed Parashurampuri

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has approved renaming Jalalabad in Shahjahanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, to Parashurampuri, honouring Lord Parashuram. Announced on August 20, 2025, by Union Minister Jitin

Prasada, the decision reflects local belief that the town is Parashuram's mythological birthplace. The move, seen as cultural reclamation, replaces a name associated with "ghulami" and strengthens regional Sanatan traditions. A gazette notification will soon formalize the change, ensuring its use in official records, signage, and administrative references.

## 19. West Bengal Launches Shramshree Scheme for Migrant Workers

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched the 'Shramshree' Scheme to support Bengali migrant workers returning home after facing linguistic or regional discrimination in other states. The scheme provides ₹5,000 monthly aid for up to one year, job cards for rural employment, and direct benefit transfers. It also includes skill development training for long-term jobs, along with self-employment opportunities through government-backed loans and entrepreneurship support. Eligibility requires being a Bengali migrant worker returning to West Bengal with a valid bank account.

## 20. New Constitution Amendment Bill: PM, CMs Removal After 30-Day Detention

The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, introduced in Lok Sabha by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, mandates automatic removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, or ministers detained for 30 consecutive days on serious criminal charges carrying at least five years' punishment. It amends Articles 75, 164, and 239AA, ensuring resignation or cessation by the 31st day, with reappointment allowed post-release. Aimed at promoting accountability and clean governance, it has sparked debate over possible political misuse and erosion of constitutional safeguards.

## 21. Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan: World's Largest Tribal Leadership Drive Launched

The Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan, launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on August 19, 2025, is the world's largest tribal leadership programme aimed at strengthening grassroots governance. Covering 1 lakh tribal villages, it seeks to create 20 lakh change leaders under the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. Guided by Sewa, Sankalp, and Samarpan, the initiative promotes participatory planning, capacity building, and inclusive development. Key components include Adi Sewa Kendras, Governance Lab Workshops, and Vision 2030 Tribal Action Plans, ensuring sustainable tribal empowerment.

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## 22. Indian Railways Installs First Removable Solar Panels at BLW Varanasi

Indian Railways has commissioned India's first removable solar panel system between railway tracks at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), Varanasi, marking a major step in green transport. The 70-metre system, with 28 panels generating 15 kWp, was inaugurated on August 19, 2025. Its removable design ensures operational flexibility. Alongside, Indian Railways launched a new freight route transporting 3,851 tonnes of industrial salt from Bhuj to Dahej and commissioned India's first 2x25 kV electric traction system at Nagda-Khachrod, boosting sustainability and efficiency.

## 23. Press Registrar General Launches 'Press Sewa' Portal for Easy Registration

The Press Registrar General of India (PRGI) launched the 'Press Sewa' portal to streamline the registration of newspapers and periodicals. Introduced by Yogesh Baweja, the portal ensures faster approvals, transparency, and ease of doing business for publishers. Key features include simplified digital applications, automatic approval within 60 days if no response is received, and grievance redressal without intermediaries. It benefits especially small and regional publishers by reducing delays, enhancing accountability, and supporting the government's Digital India and Ease of Doing Business reforms.

## 24. Lok Sabha Clears Bill to Set Up IIM Guwahati in Assam

The Lok Sabha has passed the Indian Institutes of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2025, approving the establishment of IIM Guwahati in Assam with a central grant of ₹550 crore. The move aims to expand premier management education in the Northeast, addressing long-standing regional demands. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan highlighted Guwahati's role as an educational hub and catalyst for regional growth. With 21 IIMs already functioning, this new institute will boost opportunities, research, entrepreneurship, and inclusive development in the region.

## 25. Cabinet Clears Online Gaming Bill to Regulate E-Sports, Ban Betting

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Online Gaming Bill, 2025, aimed at regulating India's digital gaming sector. The Bill promotes e-sports and social gaming by recognizing

them as legitimate activities, while strictly prohibiting online betting, money-based gaming, and related advertisements. It introduces a regulatory authority, financial restrictions on fund transfers, and strict penalties for violations. The legislation seeks to curb online fraud, protect consumers, and encourage growth of India's e-sports industry, boosting innovation and job creation.

## 26. Centre Rolls Out 'Anna-Chakra' Tool in 30 States to Boost PDS Efficiency

The Government of India has implemented the "Anna-Chakra" Supply Chain Optimisation Tool in 30 States/UTs to modernize the Public Distribution System (PDS). Designed to streamline food grain logistics with data-driven algorithms, it reduces transit costs, delivery time, and wastage while saving about ₹250 crore annually. The tool also lowers carbon emissions, improves transparency, and ensures faster ration delivery. Covering over 800 million beneficiaries, it enhances fiscal efficiency, food access, and administrative monitoring. Implementation in Manipur remains pending.

## 27. Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project

The Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project in Arunachal Pradesh is moving forward with a recent public hearing held for environmental clearance. The 1,200 MW project, planned on the Lohit River in the Anjaw district, is being developed by THDC India Limited. During the hearing, officials addressed concerns of over 350 project-affected persons from 33 villages. The project, with an investment of over ₹14,000 crore, is expected to provide significant employment opportunities and contribute to local area development, while also bolstering India's hydropower capacity.

## 28. Renaming Jalalabad In Uttar Pradesh

The Ministry of Home Affairs has approved the renaming of Jalalabad town in Shahjahanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, to Parashurampuri. The decision, which honors the Hindu deity Lord Parashuram, the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu, was met with praise from local officials and residents. The renaming is a part of a broader move by the state government to restore names with historical or mythological significance and to correct names with a colonial or Mughal past. The state government is now expected to issue a formal gazette notification for the change.

## 29. India's New Online Gaming Bill



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The Government of India introduced and swiftly passed The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha. The bill aims to create a clear legal framework for India's rapidly growing online gaming sector by promoting and regulating e-sports, social gaming, and educational games. A key provision of the new legislation is the complete prohibition of online money games, betting, and gambling, which are now strictly banned. The bill also establishes a new regulatory authority to oversee the sector and ensure the protection of vulnerable populations, particularly the youth.

### 30. Satish Golcha Appointed as New Delhi Police Commissioner

Senior IPS officer Satish Golcha has been appointed as the new Commissioner of Delhi Police, replacing his predecessor after a brief 21-day tenure. The 1992-batch officer, who was previously serving as the Director General of Tihar Jail, is known for his decisive leadership and expertise in law and order. The appointment was made by the Ministry of Home Affairs and is seen as a move to strengthen the city's policing and security apparatus. Golcha has a distinguished career, having held several key positions within the Delhi Police.

### International

#### 1. India's crude imports from Russia hit 2 million barrels per day in August

In August 2025, India ramped up its crude oil imports from Russia to a record 2 million barrels per day, marking a significant rise from 1.6 million bpd in July. This surge accounted for about 38% of India's total estimated 5.2 million bpd of crude imports. Despite escalating U.S. tariffs targeting Russian oil buyers, Indian refiners have taken a "business-as-usual" stance, driven by cost efficiency and energy security. Imports from traditional suppliers like Iraq and Saudi Arabia declined, reflecting a strategic shift toward discounted Russian crude.

#### 2. India declines to accept Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling

On August 14, 2025, India firmly rejected a ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague concerning the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The Ministry of External Affairs stated that India never recognized the arbitration body's legality or jurisdiction, calling its decisions "baseless" and "void." It reiterated that the IWT remains in abeyance until Pakistan ceases supporting cross-border terrorism, citing the Pahalgam attack as

justification. The reaction underscores India's assertion of sovereign rights over river waters amid continued Indo-Pak tensions.

#### 3. Western Australia witnesses unprecedented coral bleaching event

A record-breaking marine heatwave spanning from August 2024 to May 2025 triggered the worst-ever coral bleaching along Western Australia's coast, affecting a vast 1,500 km stretch from Ningaloo to Ashmore Reef. This event was deemed the longest, largest, and most intense in WA's history, with coral mortality ranging from 11% to over 90% in many areas—far exceeding the 8 DHW (Degree Heating Weeks) fatal threshold, reaching up to 30 DHW in some locales.

#### 4. US-Russia Talks Impact India's Russian Oil Imports

The 2025 US-Russia summit in Alaska ended without a ceasefire agreement for Ukraine, a result that has geopolitical and economic ramifications. While the summit saw no major breakthrough, a lack of new sanctions on Russia from the US has left the door open for countries like India to continue their energy trade. Russian President Vladimir Putin emerged politically stronger while US President Donald Trump showed no immediate intent to restrict India's Russian oil imports. This dynamic allows India to continue sourcing discounted crude, which is crucial for managing its domestic energy costs and maintaining its strategic energy policy.

#### 5. Bering Strait Shipping Cooperation Amid Political Strains

Recent research reveals that mariners navigating the Bering Strait are largely adhering to the 2018 shipping guidelines, established through a joint U.S.-Russia initiative under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). The study, which analyzed vessel transit data, shows that ships are consistently using the recommended lanes and avoiding sensitive ecological zones. This continued cooperation is particularly significant given the current political strains between the U.S. and Russia. It suggests that despite diplomatic tensions, both nations recognize the need to cooperate on shared issues of environmental protection and navigational safety in the strategically important Arctic waterway.

#### 6. Frank Caprio, Nicest Judge in the World, Passes Away at 88

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Frank Caprio, fondly known as the “Nicest Judge in the World” and the face of Caught in Providence, passed away at 88 after battling pancreatic cancer. Born in 1936 to Italian immigrants, he rose from teaching to becoming Providence’s chief municipal judge in 1985. His compassionate and humorous rulings earned global recognition, with clips garnering billions of views. Remembered for saying, “I wear a heart under my robe,” his legacy lies in delivering justice with kindness, empathy, and humanity.

## 7. Dubai Unveils One Freezone Passport for Global Investors

Dubai has launched the “One Freezone Passport”, a unified licensing system that allows companies to operate across all free zones under a single license. Introduced by the Dubai Free Zones Council, the initiative reduces costs, eliminates duplicate licensing, and simplifies compliance, boosting ease of business. It supports the Dubai Economic Agenda D33, aiming to double GDP by 2033. The reform is expected to attract greater foreign investment, foster

## 8. Dubai Launches AI-Powered Passenger Corridor

Dubai International Airport (DXB), the world’s busiest international hub, has introduced an AI-powered passenger corridor under its “Travel Without Borders” initiative. This innovation allows travelers to clear immigration in just 14 seconds without presenting documents, using facial recognition and biometric data. Supporting up to 10 passengers at once, it eliminates passport counters and enhances efficiency and security. Initially launched in Terminal 3, it aims to phase out traditional passport control, reflecting Dubai’s vision for frictionless, intelligent, and secure smart travel.

## 9. To promote cultural ties, a six-day Indian Film Festival began in Sri Lanka.

The festival, inaugurated by the Governor of Sri Lanka’s Eastern Province at the Eastern University, showcases six Indian films in different languages, reflecting the cinematic diversity of India. Organized in collaboration with the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, the event aims to strengthen people-to-people connections, promote cultural diplomacy, and highlight the global appeal of Indian cinema.

It also encourages youth participation, academic collaboration, and mutual appreciation of artistic traditions.

## 10. Lipulekh Pass Dispute

India announced the resumption of border trade with China through the Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand, a move that drew a strong objection from Nepal. Kathmandu claimed the area as its own territory, citing historical maps and treaties. India firmly rejected Nepal’s objections, calling the claims ‘untenable’ and ‘not based on historical facts.’ The Lipulekh Pass, located at the tri-junction of India, China, and Nepal, is a strategically important corridor for India’s border infrastructure and is also a route for the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage. India has reiterated its willingness to resolve the boundary issue through constructive dialogue.

## 11. Iran Conducts “Sustainable Power 1404” Missile Drills in Gulf of Oman

Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has conducted a large-scale missile drill named ‘Sustainable Power 1404’ in the Gulf of Oman and the northern Indian Ocean. The two-day exercise, which involved surface and subsurface naval units, air defence systems, and missile batteries, was a show of military readiness amidst heightened geopolitical tensions in the region. The drills aimed to test Iran’s defensive capabilities and signal its strategic intent in a key maritime chokepoint. The name ‘1404’ refers to the current year in the Persian calendar.

## 12. Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka to Visit India

Fiji’s Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka is set to visit India from August 24–26 to deepen bilateral ties. This marks his first visit to India in his current capacity. During his trip, he is scheduled to hold a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss a wide range of issues, including economic cooperation, development assistance, and shared strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. PM Rabuka will also deliver a speech on ‘Ocean of Peace’ at the Indian Council of World Affairs, underscoring the shared vision of a stable and secure maritime region.

## Sports

### 1.Real Madrid Named World’s Most Valuable Football Club in 2025

For the second consecutive year, Real Madrid has been named the world’s most valuable football club brand. According to the ‘Football 50-2025’ report by Brand Finance, the club’s brand value rose to EURO 1.921 billion. The report highlights that Real Madrid’s brand strength, driven by record revenues and a global fan base, has



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been a key driver of its continued commercial success. The club also maintained its position as the strongest football brand for the fourth year in a row, reaffirming its status as a global powerhouse in the sports industry.

## 2. Mohamed Salah Wins Record Third PFA Player of the Year Award

Liverpool star Mohamed Salah created history by becoming the first footballer to win the PFA Player of the Year award three times (2018, 2022, 2025). In the 2024–25 season, he scored 29 goals and provided 18 assists, leading Liverpool to the Premier League title, 10 points clear of Arsenal. Salah also clinched the Golden Boot, Playmaker Award, and Premier League Player of the Season, achieving a historic treble in one campaign. Other winners included Morgan Rogers, Mariona Caldentey, and Olivia Smith.

## 3. India to Host Asian Open Speed Skating Trophy 2025 for First Time

India will host the Asian Open Short Track Speed Skating Trophy 2025 for the first time, from 20–23 August 2025 at Maharana Pratap Sports College, Dehradun. Organized by the Ice Skating Association of India (ISAI), the event will feature nine race categories, attracting participants from over 11 Asian nations, including China, Japan, and Singapore. This marks India's debut in global winter sports, boosting infrastructure, global recognition, tourism, and inspiring young athletes to pursue winter sports professionally.

## 4. Ahmedabad to Host Three Major International Sports Events in 2025

Ahmedabad is set to host three major international sports events in 2025, solidifying its position as a key sporting hub in India. The city will welcome athletes and fans for the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championship, the Asian Aquatics Championship, and the AFC Under-17 Asian Cup Football Qualifiers. This move is part of India's broader strategy to host major international tournaments and showcase its upgraded sports infrastructure. The events will bring elite athletes from across the world and boost the city's sports tourism and economy.

### Ranks/Reports/Indices

## 1.S and P Global Ratings upgrades India's sovereign credit rating to BBB from BBB-

On August 14, 2025, S and P Global Ratings upgraded

India's long-term sovereign credit rating from BBB- to BBB (Stable Outlook)—its first upgrade in 18 years—citing the country's economic resilience, robust growth, and strong fiscal consolidation. The move includes an improved short-term rating to A-2, and the transfer and convertibility assessment to A-, signaling enhanced external financial robustness. The upgrade, amid global trade tensions and U.S. tariffs, underscores investor confidence and could lower borrowing costs while attracting long-term foreign capital.

### Science and tech/Space/Defence

## 1.Four-company consortium to develop India's first private commercial earth observation satellite network

A consortium of four Indian space startups—PixxelSpace (Bengaluru), PierSight Space (Ahmedabad), SatSure Analytics India, and Dhruva Space—has been selected by IN-SPACe under the EO-PPP model to build and operate India's first fully indigenous commercial Earth-Observation satellite constellation. With an investment exceeding Rupees 1,200 crore over five years, the project will deploy a 12-satellite network equipped with SAR, multispectral, hyperspectral, and panchromatic sensors. Operated wholly by the consortium using Indian launch and ground infrastructure, the initiative aims to ensure sovereign geospatial data for applications spanning agriculture, climate, disaster management, security, and more.

## 2. Genetically Engineered Bacteria Enable Self-Powered Biosensors

Recent advances in synthetic biology and bioelectrochemistry have led to the development of self-powered chemical sensors using genetically engineered bacteria. A team of researchers from Imperial College London and Zhejiang University developed a system where bacteria can generate their own power by harvesting electrons from their metabolic activities. This innovation allows the biosensors to detect a wide range of chemicals, from pollutants to medical biomarkers, without the need for an external power source. This breakthrough has significant potential for applications in environmental monitoring and implantable medical devices.

## 3. Indian Phoenix Palms

Recent botanical research has uncovered a new species of palm in India and reclassified existing ones within the genus Phoenix. The newly identified species, named Phoenix kishorei, was discovered in the tropical forests of

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the Northeast. These findings stem from revisiting the 17th-century work of colonial botanists and using modern molecular analysis. The reclassification of the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) and the wild date palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*) clarifies their distinct genetic identities, enhancing our understanding of India's unique biodiversity.

#### 4. AI-Designed Antibiotics Combat Drug-Resistant Superbugs

Artificial intelligence (AI) has recently enabled scientists from MIT to create two new antibiotics capable of killing drug-resistant bacteria. Using generative AI algorithms, the research team designed more than 36 million possible compounds and identified two promising candidates, named NG1 and DN1. These new antibiotics are structurally distinct from any existing drugs and combat bacteria by novel mechanisms, making them effective against infections like drug-resistant gonorrhoea and MRSA. This breakthrough, published in the journal *Nature*, marks a significant advancement in the global fight against antibiotic resistance.

#### 5. Universal Rule of Biodiversity Patterns Discovered Globally

Recent research has revealed a universal pattern in how biodiversity arranges itself within the world's major biogeographical regions. Published in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, the study demonstrates that species distribution follows an 'onion-like' layered model. This model shows dense and unique biodiversity at the core of a region, which then grades outward into porous, mixed margins with more common species. This discovery challenges earlier assumptions that species distribution inside each region was random and chaotic, providing a new, predictable framework for global conservation strategies.

#### 6. Native Plants Alter Assam's Dibru-Saikhowa Ecosystem

The riverine ecosystem of Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (DSNP) in eastern Assam is undergoing significant changes. A recent study reveals that native plants, particularly trees like *Bombax ceiba* (Simalu) and *Lagerstroemia speciosa* (Ajar), are proliferating and transforming the park's grasslands into forests. This is happening in conjunction with the spread of invasive species and accelerated by recurrent floods from the Brahmaputra River. This transformation poses a serious threat to the park's unique biodiversity, especially to its

population of feral horses and other grassland-dependent species like the Bengal florican.

#### 7. Over 500 Humanoid Robots Compete at World Robot Games in Beijing

The world's inaugural World Humanoid Robot Games kicked off in Beijing, bringing together over 500 humanoid robots from 16 countries. The three-day event, held at the National Speed Skating Oval, features a range of competitions that test the robots' speed, skill, and dexterity. From athletics events like the 100-metre hurdles and a 1500-metre race to practical tasks like medicine categorization, the games are a testament to the rapid advancements in robotics and AI. The event, a first of its kind to focus exclusively on human-like robots, highlights China's ambition to lead the global robotics industry.

#### Miscellaneous

##### 1. Neeraj Ghaywan's 'Homebound' Wins Big at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2025

Acclaimed filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan has once again captured the spotlight, with his latest drama *Homebound* sweeping the top honors at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2025. The film, which explores themes of belonging and displacement, won both the Best Film and Best Director awards. This significant win solidifies Ghaywan's reputation as a director with a keen eye for social commentary. The film's success was part of a strong showing for Indian cinema at the festival, which also recognized other talents.

##### 2. Microsoft Tops TopBrand 2025 Global Brands List; NVIDIA and Apple Follow

At the 19th China Brand Festival, the TopBrand Union unveiled its 2025 Global Brands list, with Microsoft securing the top position. This ranking marks a significant achievement for the tech giant. Following closely were NVIDIA in second place and Apple in third. The list, compiled by Brand Finance, assesses brands based on factors like brand value, brand strength, and overall business performance. Microsoft's ascent to the top reflects its continued innovation in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and software services, which has solidified its global market position.

##### 3. India's Exports to US Surge 20% in July; Bilateral Trade Hits New High



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India's trade ties with the United States reached a new high in July 2025, as goods exports to the US surged by 19.94% to USD 8.01 billion. This strong growth, based on data from the Commerce Ministry, contributed to the US retaining its position as India's largest trading partner. The rise in exports, which has been consistent since April this year, reflects increasing demand for Indian goods in the American market. The two countries are also negotiating a bilateral trade agreement, with a US team visiting India for talks, signaling a strengthening economic partnership.

#### 4. India's Forex Reserves Surge to USD 693.62 Billion

In a strong sign of external sector stability, India's foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 4.74 billion in the week ending August 8, reaching a total of USD 693.62 billion. This increase, as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), was primarily driven by a rise in foreign currency assets. The surge in reserves provides a crucial buffer against external shocks and helps the RBI manage the value of the Indian rupee. The robust level of reserves enhances market confidence and strengthens India's position in the global financial landscape.

#### 5. Foxconn's Bengaluru Plant Begins iPhone 17 Production

In a landmark development for India's electronics manufacturing sector, Foxconn's new facility in Bengaluru has officially commenced production of the iPhone 17. The plant, which is part of Foxconn's plan to diversify its global manufacturing base, is now set to become the second-biggest iPhone manufacturing unit outside of China. This move, supported by India's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, reinforces India's position as a key global manufacturing hub. The increased production capacity will not only create thousands of jobs but also strengthen the country's economic and technological standing.

#### 6. Tata Sons Shareholders Unanimously Approve Noel N Tata's Appointment as Director

In a significant corporate development, the shareholders of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, have unanimously approved the appointment of Noel N Tata as a director. The decision was made during the company's recent Annual General Meeting (AGM). Noel Tata, the half-brother of former chairman Ratan Tata and father of Leah Tata, brings a wealth of experience from his previous roles within the Tata Group, including his tenure as the Chairman of Trent and Titan. His

appointment is expected to provide strategic guidance and strengthen the leadership of one of India's most respected conglomerates.

#### 7. SBI to Impose Nominal Charges on Online IMPS Transfers Above INR 25,000

State Bank of India (SBI) has announced that it will impose nominal charges on online Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) transfers exceeding INR 25,000 from August 15, 2025. According to the new policy, IMPS transfers within the INR 25,001 to INR 5 lakh bracket will now incur a charge of INR 5 + GST. The bank stated that this move is aimed at managing the operational costs associated with high-value transactions. This change marks a shift from the previous policy where all IMPS transfers, regardless of the amount, were free of charge.

#### 8. Six-Day Indian Cinema Festival Kicks Off in Sri Lanka

A six-day Indian cinema festival has commenced in Sri Lanka, aiming to strengthen cultural ties and people-to-people connections between the two nations. The festival, which opened at the Trincomalee Campus of Eastern University, is showcasing a curated selection of six Indian films in various languages. Inaugurated by Governor of the Eastern Province, Prof. Jayantha Lal Ratnasekera, the event is a collaborative effort to highlight the diversity and rich history of Indian cinema, celebrating its 111-year journey. The festival serves as a platform for cultural exchange through the powerful medium of film.

#### 9. India's Sustainable Aviation Fuel Production to Start at Panipat

India is set to begin commercial production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) at its Panipat refinery in Haryana by December 2025. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the country's largest fuel refiner and retailer, announced that the new unit will have an annual capacity of 35,000 tonnes. This output is sufficient to meet India's entire SAF blending requirement for international airlines by 2027, when a 1% blending mandate is expected to come into force. The production will utilize used cooking oil (UCO) as its primary feedstock, marking a significant step towards a greener aviation sector.

#### 10. S&P Upgrades India's Credit Rating After 18 Years

S&P Global Ratings upgraded India's long-term sovereign credit rating from BBB- to BBB after 18 years, citing robust growth, fiscal consolidation, and policy stability. The outlook is stable, with GDP growth projected at 6.8% for 2025-2028. Strong domestic demand, infrastructure

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spending, and reforms in ease of doing business supported the upgrade. Despite US tariff pressures, India's low trade dependency ensures resilience. S&P also upgraded ratings of major banks and NBFCs, reflecting improved financial stability and investor confidence in India's economy.

## 11. Top 2025 Hurun India Family Business List

The Ambani family has topped the 2025 Barclays Private Clients Hurun India Most Valuable Family Businesses list for the second consecutive year, with Reliance Industries valued at ₹28.2 lakh crore, nearly one-twelfth of India's GDP. They are followed by the Birla family (₹6.47 lakh crore) and the Jindal family (₹5.7 lakh crore). The combined top three valuations equal the GDP of the Philippines. The report highlights strong growth in energy, financial services, IT, and metals, showcasing India's dynamic wealth creation.

## 12. Manika Vishwakarma Wins Miss Universe India 2025

Manika Vishwakarma from Ganganagar, Rajasthan, was crowned Miss Universe India 2025 at a grand event in Jaipur. She will represent India at the 74th Miss Universe pageant to be held in Thailand later this year. Earlier, she won Miss Universe Rajasthan 2024, which paved her path to the national stage, where she competed against 50 contestants. Manika's achievement continues India's strong legacy at Miss Universe, following past winners like Sushmita Sen (1994), Lara Dutta (2000), and Harnaaz Sandhu (2021).

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## 14. Sadbhavana Diwas 2025: Promoting Peace & Harmony

Sadbhavana Diwas 2025, observed on August 20, commemorates the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Also known as Communal Harmony Day, it highlights the importance of peace,

tolerance, goodwill, and national integration in India's diverse society. The day reminds citizens of the need to fight communalism, foster brotherhood, and promote secular values. Celebrated by institutions, government bodies, and the public, it carries forward Rajiv Gandhi's vision of a progressive, inclusive India rooted in unity, harmony, and shared responsibility.

## 15. India and EAEU Sign Terms of Reference for FTA Negotiations

In a significant economic move, India and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) have signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) to begin negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The EAEU comprises Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. The signing of the ToR provides a formal framework for the negotiations and is expected to unlock untapped trade potential, enhance investments, and diversify India's export markets. The FTA is seen as a key step in strengthening India's economic partnership with the bloc, which has a combined GDP of over \$5 trillion.

## 16. RBI Appoints Indranil Bhattacharyya as New MPC Member

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Indranil Bhattacharyya as a new member of its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). The decision, announced by the RBI, comes ahead of the crucial October policy meet. Bhattacharyya, an Executive Director at the central bank, will serve as an ex-officio member of the six-member committee, replacing his predecessor. The appointment ensures a smooth transition and provides continuity to the MPC, which is responsible for setting the country's key interest rates and maintaining price stability.