



Weekly **Current Affairs**

16th to 22nd August 2026

NATIONAL NEWS



Sprite Tejas Express Becomes India's First Brand-Named Train



- The Lucknow–New Delhi Tejas Express is being branded as “Sprite Tejas Express” under a commercial branding arrangement.
- The branding rights have been given to Sprite, the soft-drink brand of The Coca-Cola Company.
- The train is operated by IRCTC and runs between Lucknow and New Delhi.

Karnataka Launches Sandhya Kiran Cashless Healthcare Cover



- It is primarily aimed at Karnataka State Government pensioners below 70 years of age.
- The main objective is to provide cashless medical treatment to eligible retired government employees and their families.
- The scheme is connected with recommendations of the 7th Karnataka Pay Commission concerning cashless healthcare for government pensioners.

Uttarakhand Approves High Court Relocation to Haldwani



- The Uttarakhand High Court is to be shifted from Nainital to Haldwani.
- The Uttarakhand High Court was established in 2000, following the creation of Uttarakhand (then Uttaranchal) as a separate state from Uttar Pradesh.
- The High Court is presently located in Nainital, in the historic Mallital area.

Chhattisgarh's Folk Festival – Hareli



- Hareli Tihar is one of the major traditional agricultural festivals of Chhattisgarh.
- It is particularly important for farmers and rural communities of Chhattisgarh.
- It is celebrated during the Shravan month, traditionally on Shravana Amavasya.

West Bengal Renames Kanyashree Scheme as Kanya Ratna Scheme



- The scheme is aimed at promoting girls' education and empowerment.
- Financial assistance of ₹1,000 is being provided to eligible girl students in 2026.
- The annual assistance is scheduled to increase to ₹2,000 from the 2027 academic year.

CCI Hosts BRICS Competition Authorities Meeting in Udaipur



- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) hosted the Meeting of Heads of BRICS Competition Authorities was held in Udaipur, Rajasthan.
- Ravneet Kaur is the Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- It was conducted under India's BRICS Chairship 2026.

Uttar Pradesh to Train 'Gau Mitras' for Cow Protection

- The Uttar Pradesh Government has announced plans to train around 10,000 'Gau Mitras' (Friends of Cows) across the state.

- The initiative aims to involve the younger generation, particularly Gen Z, in cow protection and cow-care activities.
- Shyam Bihari Gupta, Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Go Seva Commission, highlighted the initiative's focus on linking cow protection with rural prosperity and employment.

Parichha Dam Recognised as World Heritage Irrigation Structure



- Parichha Dam/Weir is located in Jhansi district, Uttar Pradesh.
- The recognition is given under the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) heritage programme.
- The structure is associated with the Betwa River irrigation system.

NABARD launches RSVC-AMRIT Platform for Rural Innovation



- RSVC-AMRIT was launched by Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.
- The platform was developed by NABARD in collaboration with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA).
- RSVC stands for RuTAGe Smart Village Centre. AMRIT is the digital backbone of the RSVC ecosystem.

NCW launched the 'Yashoda AI' initiative in Jalandhar



- The National Commission for Women (NCW) launched the YASHODA AI initiative in Jalandhar, Punjab to promote digital empowerment of women.
- The programme was taken to Lovely Professional University (LPU), Jalandhar.
- YASHODA stands for "Your AI Skills & Holistic Opportunities for Digital Advancement" AI is described as a national AI-literacy movement focused specifically on women. NCW Chairperson: Vijaya Rahatkar.

Maharashtra Declares Snakebite a Notifiable Disease



- Maharashtra declared snakebite a Notifiable Disease under the state public health framework.

- Reporting of every suspected, probable and confirmed snakebite case and death has been made mandatory.
- The order covers government hospitals, private hospitals, medical colleges and healthcare practitioners.

The 5th Tamil Nadu International Kite Festival org. in Mamallapuram



- The 5th Tamil Nadu International Kite Festival (TNIKF 5.0) was organised in Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram), Tamil Nadu.
- The 2026 edition was held at Thiruvadanthai Beach along the East Coast Road (ECR).
- The festival was organised by Global Media Box in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu.

BRO opened the Sungal Tunnel on the Jammu–Poonch Road

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has operationalised the 2.79-km Sungal Tunnel on the Jammu–Poonch road in Jammu & Kashmir.
- It has been constructed through the Kalidhar Range.
- The tunnel forms part of the strategically important Akhnoor–Rajouri–Poonch road corridor, also associated with NH-144A / Golden Arc Road.

India to Host SEMICON India 2026 in New Delhi

- SEMICON India 2026 will be held at Yashobhoomi (India International Convention & Expo Centre), New Delhi.
- It will be the fifth edition of SEMICON India.
- The event will bring together the global semiconductor and electronics ecosystem, including companies, innovators, policymakers and technology leaders.

HM Amit Shah to chair Southern Zonal Council



- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah chaired the 31st meeting of the Southern Zonal Council at Mahabalipuram/Kovalam, Tamil Nadu.
- Zonal Councils were established under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.
- The Southern Zonal Council comprises Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

India Launches Transshipment Cargo Operations



- Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu flagged off the expanded phase of India's

transshipment cargo reform at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport.

- The operation was launched at the Transshipment Excellence Centre (TEC) at Terminal 2 of Delhi International Airport.
- The initiative follows a successful Proof of Concept (PoC) phase.

West Bengal Hosts First Kaushal Mahotsav in Balurghat



- West Bengal hosted its first-ever Kaushal Mahotsav was held at Balurghat Stadium in Dakshin Dinajpur district.
- It was organised by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- The event was held under the broader vision of “Kaushal Bharat, Viksit Bharat.”

Razorpay Launched Vulcan, India's first AI payments foundation model



- Fintech company Razorpay launched Vulcan, described as India's first AI foundation model specifically built for payments.
- Vulcan is a transformer-based AI foundation model designed for the digital payments ecosystem.
- Vulcan was developed with technology support from NVIDIA and Amazon Web Services (AWS).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



András Baka Elected as Hungary's New President



- He is a former head of Hungary's Supreme Court.
- Baka succeeds Tamás Sulyok as Hungary's president.
- His nomination came from Hungary's ruling Tisza Party, led by Prime Minister Péter Magyar.

Pakistan's First Lunar Rover Named Jinnah-1



- Pakistan's first-ever lunar rover has been officially named Jinnah-1 by the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO).
- It will travel to the Moon as part of China's Chang'e-8 mission.
- The mission will target the Moon's South Polar Region.

Hakainde Hichilema was re-elected as President of Zambia



- Hakainde Hichilema has been re-elected as the President of Zambia for a second five-year term.
- Hichilema defeated Edgar Lungu in the 2021 election and took office as Zambia's 7th President.
- He contested the election under the United Party for National Development (UPND).

India-Armenia Sign MoU to Strengthen Defence Ties



- India and Armenia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Yerevan, Armenia, to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.
- The MoU focuses on cooperation in defence research, development, innovation and shared production.
- Rajesh Kumar Singh, Defence Secretary of India, represented the Indian side during the agreement.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



Sangeet Natak Akademi Award to Odissi Dancer Shubhada Varadkar



- Shubhada Varadkar is a renowned Odissi dancer and teacher.
- She trained under renowned Odissi guru Kelucharan Mohapatra.
- The Sangeet Natak Akademi is India's national academy for music, dance and drama.

General Dhiraj Seth gets Nepal's Honorary General Rank



- General Dhiraj Seth, Chief of the Indian Army, has been conferred the Honorary Rank of General of the Nepal Army.
- The honour was conferred by Nepal President Ramchandra Paudel.
- The investiture ceremony was held at Sheetal Niwas in Kathmandu.

Sumer Singh Bhati Wins UNCCD Rangeland Restoration Award 2026

- Sumer Singh Bhati is a traditional camel herder and conservationist from Sanwata village in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.
- He has been recognised for his long-term efforts to protect and restore the Degrai Mata Oran, a community-conserved grassland in the Desert.
- The Degrai Mata Oran covers about 10,000 hectares and serves as an important grazing landscape for livestock and a biodiversity-rich ecosystem.

210 Indian Peacekeepers Receive UN Medal in South Sudan

- 210 Indian peacekeepers, including 6 women and 7 Staff Officers, were awarded the prestigious United Nations Medal for their exceptional service with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- The medal ceremony was held in Juba, S. Sudan.
- UNMISS described the occasion as a proud moment for India's "Blue Helmets".

POWERGRID Wins PMIS Partner Company Award

- POWERGRID (Power Grid Corporation of India Limited) won the PMIS Partner Company Award in the category "Innovation in Exit Pathways."
- It is a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE). POWERGRID operates under the Ministry of Power, Government of India.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



S. Somanath Appointed to RBI Central Board



- S. Somanath, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), has been appointed to the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Anand Mahindra has also been reappointed as a Part-Time, Non-Official Director on the RBI Central Board for another four-year term.
- His appointment is for a four-year term.

Pradeep Rai Elected SCBA President



- Senior Advocate Pradeep Rai has been elected as the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) for the 2026–27 term.
- He succeeds Senior Advocate Vikas Singh, who served as SCBA President for the 2025–26 term.
- Meenesh Dubey was elected Joint Secretary, while Reepak Kansal was elected Treasurer.

BANKING NEWS



Airtel Payments Bank names Shabnam Sinha as new Chairperson



- She will succeed Sunil Bharti Mittal, the outgoing non-executive Chairperson.
- Her appointment is for a three-year term.
- In Airtel Payment bank, You can hold up to ₹2 lakh per account at the end of the day.
- She has experience with the World Bank and other international development institutions.

SPORTS



India wins maiden Commonwealth Fencing title



- India won its maiden overall title at the Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2026 in Lagos, Nigeria.
- India finished with a total of 35 medals. India's final medal tally comprised 13 Gold, 8 Silver and 14 Bronze medals.
- India won the prestigious Wilkinson Sword Trophy for the best overall performance.

Iga Swiatek wins Canadian Open women's singles title



- Iga Świątek of Poland won the Women's Singles title at the 2026 Canadian Open, defeating Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in the final.
- The final was played August 2026 in Toronto, Canada.
- Świątek won the final in straight sets, 6–2, 6–3.

Netherlands & Belgium to Host 16th Women's FIH Hockey World Cup



- The 16th FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 is being jointly hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands from 15 to 30 August 2026.
- Belgium is hosting the FIH Hockey World Cup for the first time.
- The women's competition is being played at Wagener Hockey Stadium, Amstelveen, Netherlands, and Belfius Hockey Arena, Wavre, Belgium.

Magnus Carlsen Retains Esports World Cup Chess Title



- Magnus Carlsen of Norway won the Chess title at the Esports World Cup 2026.
- He defeated Belarusian Grandmaster Denis Lazavik in the final.
- His successful title defence made him the first player to win the EWC chess title in two consecutive editions.

Vignesh Vermula & Saranya Devi win Asian Jr. Blitz titles for India



- Vignesh Advait Vermula won the Asian Junior Open Blitz Championship 2026 for India and Saranya Devi Narahari won the Asian Junior Girls Blitz Championship 2026 for India.
- Vignesh Vermula belongs to Telangana and Saranya Devi Narahari belongs to Andhra Pradesh.
- Both players won gold medals for India.

Rishabh Pant became the first Indian to hit 100 sixes in Test cricket



- Rishabh Pant became the first Indian and fourth player in the world to complete 100 sixes in Test cricket.
- He reached the milestone during the first Test between India and Sri Lanka.
- Pant achieved the feat in his 51st Test match.

Vivaan Vishal Shah Becomes 2026 Asian Junior Rapid Champion



- M Vivaan Vishal Shah from Gujarat, India, won the Open category title at the 2026 Asian Junior Rapid Chess Championship.
- Vivaan is an Indian chess player holding the FIDE Master (FM) title.
- The 2026 Asian Junior Rapid Chess Championship was held at ITC Maratha, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

DEFENCE & TECHNOLOGY



Bhawana Kanth becomes IAF's first woman Fighter Combat Leader

- Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth has created history in the Indian Air Force (IAF). She became the first woman IAF officer to complete the Fighter Combat Leader (FCL) course.



- The course was conducted at the Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TACDE).
- TACDE is located in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.

Saudi Arabia Launches Maritime Defence Coalition



- The coalition is intended to strengthen maritime security in the Red Sea region.
- Its main objective is to protect international shipping and energy routes.
- The coalition focuses particularly on the Red Sea, Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and Gulf of Aden.

Indian Army Departs for MAITREE-XV in Thailand



- Exercise MAITREE is a bilateral military exercise between India and Thailand.
- The 2025 edition was MAITREE-XIV, held at Umroi, Meghalaya.
- MAITREE-XV is the 15th edition of the India–Thailand Joint Military Exercise.

IN-SPACe Approves Commercial EO Satellite Constellation



- India's first indigenous, fully commercial Earth Observation Satellite constellation is being developed through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).
- IN-SPACe is India's space-sector regulator and facilitator for private-sector participation.
- IN-SPACe stands for Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre.

IISc releases SraVaani Voice AI Model



- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru has developed SraVaani 1.0, a multilingual speech-recognition AI model.
- SraVaani supports 65 Indian languages and dialects.
- It is designed to improve automatic speech recognition (ASR) for India's diverse linguistic landscape.