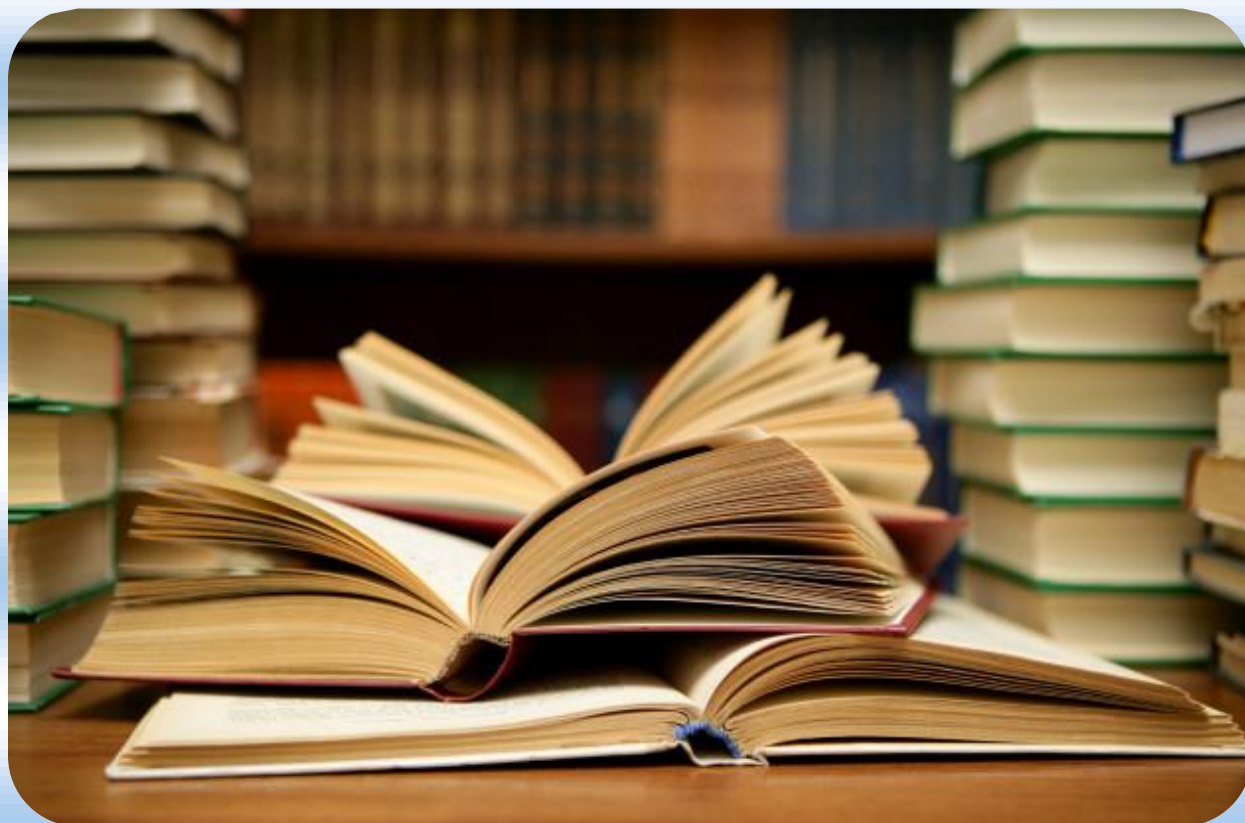


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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



AUGUST-2025

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Key Provisions of the Banking Laws (Amendment) Act, 2025 Come Into Effect from August 1

Major provisions of the Banking Laws (Amendment) Act, 2025 will come into effect from August 1, 2025, according to a government notification issued this week. The changes mark a significant push to strengthen governance standards, improve depositor protection and raise audit quality across India's banking sector. The Ministry of Finance, through Gazette Notification S.O. 3494(E) dated July 29, 2025, has notified the commencement of sections 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the legislation, which was enacted on April 15, 2025.

GST Collection Rises to ₹1.96 Lakh Crore, But Net Growth Slows

The Central government's gross revenue from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) grew to ₹1.96 lakh crore in July, up 7.5% from the collections in July last year, and 6% higher than the collections in June 2025. Refunds under the system, however, surged by nearly 67% to ₹27,147 crore in July 2025 as compared to July last year. "It's heartening to see GST refunds picking up, not just for exports but also for domestic supplies,".

India's First 'Make in India' Hydrogen Plant Sets a New Benchmark

Rajkot: Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) on Thursday commissioned the country's first 'Make in India' one megawatt (MW) green hydrogen plant, at Kandla. This is the first phase of a planned 10MW facility and is the first such development at an Indian port. Union shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the plant, calling it a "new benchmark" in the execution of green hydrogen projects. .

Western Railway Resumes Heritage Train on This 155-Year-Old Line

The hills of Madhya Pradesh are once again alive with the rhythmic clatter of the 155-year-old Patalpani–Kalakund heritage train. After a brief suspension due to declining tourist numbers, Western Railway has resumed the charming 9.5 km metre-gauge service



India Post Payments Bank Launches Aadhaar-Based Face Authentication for Digital Banking

India Post Payments Bank has started nationwide rollout of Aadhaar-based face authentication facility for customer transactions that is expected to make digital banking more secure and convenient especially for the elderly and differently abled people, according to a statement on Friday. The face authentication feature, developed under the framework of UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India), will enable customers to perform banking transactions using facial recognition, eliminating the need for physical biometric inputs like fingerprints or OTPs.

RBI Approves Merger of New India Co-operative Bank with Saraswat Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the merger of New India Co-operative Bank with the largest urban co-operative bank, Saraswat Co-operative Bank. The merger will be effective from August 4, 2025. Consequently, Saraswat Bank will assume all assets and liabilities of New India Co-operative Bank, and all its branches will operate as Saraswat Bank branches. Customers, including depositors of New India Co-operative Bank, will be treated as customers of Saraswat Bank from August 4, 2025, with their interests fully protected.

ISRO Prepares for BlueBird Satellite Launch with U.S. Collaboration

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is hoping to launch the Block 2 BlueBird communications satellite, developed by the U.S.-based AST SpaceMobile, in three to four months from now, chairman of the space agency V. Narayanan said in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, on Friday (August 1, 2025).



PM Modi's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' Sets Guinness World Record with 3.53 Crore Registrations

Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Ashwini Vaishnaw, and Jitin Prasada, on Monday (August 4, 2025) received the Guinness World Record for Pariksha Pe Charcha, an annual event led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



India's Palm Oil Imports Decline While Soyoil Shipments Surge to 3-Year High

India's palm oil imports fell in July because of cancellations in import contracts, while soyoil shipments surged to a 3-year high due to competitive prices and the delivery of delayed shipments from June, according to five dealers. Lower palm oil imports by India, the world's biggest buyer of vegetable oils, could lead to a stock buildup in top producers Indonesia and Malaysia and weigh on benchmark Malaysian palm oil futures.

India's Tea Production Falls 9% in June 2025 Amid Weather Woes and Pest Attacks

India's tea production dipped 9 per cent to 133.5 million kg in June as compared to the same month of the previous year, according to official data. In June 2024, the country had produced 146.72 million kg of tea, according to data released by the Tea Board. The decline in production was caused by adverse weather conditions and pest attacks, said the Indian Tea Association.

Fitch Lowers India's GDP Growth Forecast for FY26 to 6.3%

Fitch Ratings on Friday revised its GDP growth estimate for India to 6.3% for the financial year ending March 2026, down from its earlier projection of 6.4% made in April. The credit rating agency, however, said it sees a limited direct impact on Indian corporates from the higher tariffs imposed by the United States. In its latest India Corporates Credit Trends report, Fitch said the modest downgrade in growth expectations still reflects strong momentum in infrastructure spending, which should continue to fuel demand for core sectors.

LTIMindtree Bags ₹811.5 Crore PAN 2.0 Project from Income Tax Department

The income tax department has selected mid-sized information technology firm LTIMindtree Ltd for its project to upgrade technology infrastructure for managing Permanent Account Numbers (PANs), showed the government's public procurement portal. The Larsen & Toubro arm's quoted bid value was ₹811.5 crore exclusive of taxes, and the adjusted bid value was ₹792.55 crore exclusive of taxes.

Tata Motors' PB Balaji Appointed as New CEO of Jaguar Land Rover

Mumbai: Tata Motors group CFO PB Balaji's elevation as Jaguar Land Rover CEO comes with a clear mandate: tighten the balance sheet, inject a strong focus on winning customers, and make the iconic British automaker more agile in responding to demand-supply volatility in the global automotive market. His appointment signals a strategic reset by Tata Motors, aimed at integrating JLR more deeply into the group's broader growth plans.

RBI to Deliver \$5 Billion Dollar-Rupee Swap Without Rollover

The Reserve Bank of India will deliver a \$5 billion dollar-rupee swap maturing on Monday, with surplus rupee liquidity in the banking system leaving little need for a rollover, four bankers said. Delivering the swap without a rollover implies the RBI is selling dollars and absorbing rupees from the banking system - a move unlikely to disrupt money markets, with rupee liquidity currently in surplus, bankers said, requesting anonymity since they are not authorized to speak to the media.

UPI Sets New Record with 707 Million Daily Transactions: India's Digital Payments Boom Continues

New Delhi, The daily unified payments interface (UPI)-based transactions have crossed 700 million for the first time, touching 707 million, according to the latest National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) data. The feat was achieved on August 2. Over the past two years, the number of daily transactions has doubled, even though growth has slowed down in comparison to previous years.

Deloitte Pegs India's FY26 GDP Growth at 6.4–6.7% on Strong Domestic Demand

Deloitte India on Tuesday projected India's economic growth at 6.4-6.7 per cent in the current fiscal citing robust domestic fundamentals and expanding global opportunities. It, however, said that India must monitor its trade exposure and be prepared for the outcomes of geopolitical uncertainties. Strategic trade negotiations, notably with the UK in May and the ongoing talks with the US, and the highly anticipated deal with the European Union by the end of the year, will likely act as powerful multipliers of income, jobs, market access, and domestic demand.

JSW Steel and JFE Steel Join Hands for ₹5,845 Crore Expansion in Grain Oriented Electrical Steel

JSW Steel in strategic collaboration with its Japanese partner JFE Steel Corporation, today announced a significant expansion of manufacturing capacity for grain-oriented electrical steel (GOES) through their joint ventures JSW JFE Electrical Steel at Vijayanagar, Karnataka, and JSW JFE Electrical Steel Nashik, Maharashtra. The two partners will jointly invest approximately Rs 5,845 crore towards this expansion.

India's Business Confidence Index Rises to 149.4 in April–June

India's business sentiment saw a sharp uptick in the April-June quarter, with the Business Confidence Index (BCI) rising to 149.4 from 139.3 in the previous quarter, according to the latest Business Expectations Survey by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). The index is built on four key components: expectations of overall economic improvement over the next six months, anticipated improvement in firms' financial positions.

Policybazaar Fined ₹5 Crore by IRDAI for Misleading Insurance Promotions

Insurance watchdog IRDAI has penalised Policybazaar with a total of Rs 5 crore on accounting of violating 11 charges under various provisions of the Insurance Act and IRDAI (Insurance Web Aggregators) Regulations, 2017. Apart from regulatory breaches like KMPs (key managerial personnel) holding directorships in other companies without prior IRDAI approval, Policybazaar was found guilty of promoting products in a biased manner, and ranking various insurance products as top or best without “making available any material to the prospects to make an informed choice”, as per the IRDAI order.

Paytm Goes China-Free as Antfin Fully Exits with ₹3,800 Crore Stake Sale

China’s Ant Group plans to fully exit Indian digital payments company Paytm by selling its remaining shares through block deals, according to a term sheet viewed by Reuters on Monday. The total value of the sale could reach ₹3,800 crore. The term sheet shows that Ant Group, which is associated with Chinese multinational Alibaba Group, will offload its remaining 5.84 per cent stake in Paytm. The shares will be sold at a minimum price of ₹1,020 each.

Tata Motors Acquires Iveco for €3.8 Billion in Biggest Deal Since Corus

In what will be its largest acquisition since taking over luxury car maker Jaguar Land Rover in 2008, homegrown Tata Motors is acquiring Italian commercial vehicle (CV) company Iveco. Tata Motors will pay about €3.8 billion for Iveco, excluding the company’s defence business and the net proceeds from the defence business separation.



‘Bharat’ Taxi: Cooperatives Launch ₹300-Crore Ride-Hailing Platform to Rival Ola and Uber

India’s cooperative sector is set to challenge ride-hailing giants Ola and Uber with the launch of a taxi service under the brand Bharat by the end of this year, backed by Rs 300 crore authorised capital and having already onboarded 200 drivers across four states. The Multi-State Sahakari Taxi Cooperative Ltd, registered on June 6, represents a consortium of eight prominent cooperatives, including the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

IFC and HDFC Capital Launch \$1 Billion Fund for Green Affordable Housing in India

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has entered into an agreement with HDFC Capital Advisors to anchor a \$1 billion (about Rs 8,770 crore) real estate fund focused on green affordable housing in India. IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, will invest up to \$150 million (about Rs 1,320 crore), in the HDFC Capital Development of Real Estate Affordable and Mid-Income Fund (H-DREAM Fund), which will be managed by HDFC Capital.

AU Small Finance Bank Makes History: First SFB to Get RBI Nod for Universal Bank Status

AU Small Finance Bank shares will be in focus when the Indian stock market opens for trade on Friday. The Small Finance Bank (SFB) has received in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for transition from an SFB to a universal bank. This RBI nod came after the SFB's letter dated 3 September 2024, requesting a universal bank license from the Indian Central Bank.

India's Electronics Exports Soar Over 47% in Q1 FY26, Driven by Mobile Phones

India's electronics exports soared 47% year-on-year to \$12.4 billion in the first quarter of FY26, powered by a record-breaking performance in smartphone shipments, a 55% spike that underscores the country's rising strength as a global electronics hub. India's electronics industry has posted a powerful start to FY26, with total electronics exports jumping to \$12.4 billion in the April–June quarter, up from \$8.43 billion a year ago.

Tata AutoComp to Acquire Slovakia-Based IAC Group: Expanding Its Global Footprint

Auto components maker Tata AutoComp Systems on Thursday said it has signed a pact to fully acquire Slovakia-based IAC Group. The company, through its British subsidiary Artifex Interior Systems Limited (Artifex), has entered into a conditional agreement to acquire 100 per cent of the share capital of IAC Group (Slovakia). The strategic acquisition will strengthen the company's capabilities and will lay the foundation for deeper expansion across the UK and EU markets, Tata AutoComp said in a statement.

LIC Q1 FY26 Results: Net Profit Rises 5% to ₹10,987 Crore, Asset Quality Improves

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) reported a standalone net profit of Rs 10,987 crore for Q1 FY26. This marks a rise of 5 percent on-year from the Rs 10,461 crore net profit reported in Q1 FY25. The firm's net premium income also rose 5 percent year-on-year to Rs 1.19 lakh crore during the April-June quarter of financial year 2026. The insurer had earlier reported net premium income at Rs 1.14 lakh crore during the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year.

BharatGen AI to Support All 22 Scheduled Languages by June 2026: A Step Toward Digital Inclusivity

The government plans to support all 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution on the BharatGen AI platform by June 2026, minister of state for science and technology and earth sciences Jitendra Singh told parliament on Wednesday.



Aadhaar Face Authentication Hits Record 19.36 Crore Transactions in July 2025

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has announced a historic milestone for Aadhaar's face authentication technology, which recorded an all-time high of 19.36 crore transactions in July 2025. This marks a sharp rise from 5.77 crore transactions during the same month last year, reflecting its rapid adoption across sectors for both availing and delivering services. The growth trend has been consistent, with July's figures showing a 22% increase over June 2025.

PM's Mann Ki Baat Programme Earns Over ₹34 Crore Since 2014: Government

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann ki Baat' programme has earned a revenue of ₹34.13 crore since its inception, the government told the Rajya Sabha on Friday (August 8, 2025).



IndiaAI and National Cancer Grid Launch Program to Boost AI Innovation in Cancer Care

IndiaAI Independent Business Division (IBD), in collaboration with the National Cancer Grid (NCG), has announced the launch of the Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH) Grant Program, the Ministry of Electronics & IT said in a release. This initiative seeks to support the development and deployment of innovative Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions to strengthen cancer screening, diagnostics, treatment support, and healthcare operations across India.

Net direct tax collection falls 3.95% to ₹6.64 lakh crore in FY26

India's net direct tax collections declined 3.95% year-on-year to Rs 6.64 trillion in the period from April 1 to August 11, data from the Income Tax Department showed on Tuesday. This decline was largely due to a rise in tax refunds issued during the period. Meanwhile, on a gross basis, before accounting for refunds, direct tax collections stood at Rs 7.99 lakh crore—a 1.87% drop from Rs 8.14 lakh crore collected during the same period last year.

Cabinet Approves ₹4,600 Crore Semiconductor Manufacturing Projects in Odisha, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh

In a significant push to India's chip-making ambitions, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday approved four new semiconductor manufacturing projects with a total investment of Rs 4,600 crore under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM).

JioFinance App's New Tax Filing Module: Affordable, Smart, and TaxBuddy-Powered

Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) on Monday said taxpayers can take assistance of JioFinance App for filing their returns as it has launched planning and filing module on its platform. Aimed at making tax planning and income tax return (ITR) filing simpler, smarter, and more affordable, the new feature has been developed in partnership with TaxBuddy, an online tax filing and advisory service, JFSL said in a statement.

President Droupadi Murmu's Address on the Eve of the 79th Independence Day

My Dear Fellow Citizens, I extend my heartiest greetings to all of you on the eve of Independence Day. It is a matter of pride for all of us that Independence Day and Republic Day are celebrated by every Indian with zeal and enthusiasm.



Centre Unveils Two-Slab GST Overhaul: 5% and 18% Rates, 40% for Sin Goods

The Centre is considering a significant overhaul of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) structure, proposing a simplified regime with just two main tax slabs of 5% and 18%, along with a special 40% rate for luxury and sin goods, PTI reported citing sources. As part of the rejig, about 99% of items currently taxed at 12% are likely to be moved to the 5% bracket, the sources told PTI. Similarly.

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

Filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan's moving drama Homebound dominated the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2025 awards night, bagging the coveted honours of best film and best director. Ghaywan's movie, starring Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jetwa and Janhvi Kapoor, triumphed at the annual gala, which honours the best of Indian cinema on a global stage, on Friday night.

'SabhaSaar', the AI Tool for Gram Sabhas

The Centre is set to unveil an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered tool to automatically generate minutes of meetings of gram sabhas, the primary body of the Panchayati Raj system, consisting of all registered voters of a gram panchayat. Named 'SabhaSaar', it will be rolled out in Tripura on Independence Day, August 15, and thereafter made available to other states, said a government official.

FPIs Infuse ₹4,469 Crore into Indian Debt Markets in August, Exit ₹20,975 Crore from Equities

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) have been net sellers in August so far, offloading equities worth Rs 20,975 crore. In this holiday-truncated week, FPIs sold Indian equities in each of the four trading sessions. They sold shares worth Rs 10,173 crore during the week. On Friday, FIIs outflows stood at Rs 1,926.8 while the domestic institutional investors were net buyers at Rs 3,896 crore.

Manika Vishwakarma Crowned Miss Universe India 2025, to Represent India at 74th Miss Universe in Thailand

The Miss Universe India 2025 winner is Manika Vishwakarma from Rajasthan. She won the coveted crown on Monday, August 18. Meanwhile, Tanya Sharma from Uttar Pradesh is the first runner-up, Mehak Dhingra from Haryana is the second runner-up, and Amishi Kaushik is the third runner-up.



Ex-Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal Launches AI Startup 'Parallel' to Build a Web for Machines

When Elon Musk took over Twitter (now X) in 2022, Parag Agrawal abruptly stepped down from his position as CEO and left the company to pursue something new. Three years later, Agrawal is back with a new venture that is unsurprisingly focused on AI.



Greenfield Airport at Kota-Bundi Approved; Boost to Connectivity and Growth in Rajasthan

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the Airports Authority of India's (AAI) proposal to develop a greenfield airport at Kota-Bundi, Rajasthan, at an estimated cost of ₹1,507 crore. According to an official statement, 440.06 hectares of land have been transferred by the Rajasthan government to AAI for the project, which will be suitable for operation of A-321 type aircraft.

India's GDP Growth Projected at 6.7% in Q1 FY2026 By ICRA, Surpassing RBI Estimate

India's GDP growth projection is at 6.7 per cent in the first quarter of the current financial year which is higher than the RBI estimates of 6.5 per cent, according to rating agency ICRA. The agency noted that however GDP expansion has eased from 7.4 per cent in Q4 FY2025, while it outpaces the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC's) recent forecast of 6.5 per cent. The rating agency also said the growth in gross value added (GVA) is expected to ease to 6.4 per cent in Q1 FY2026 from 6.8 per cent in Q4 FY2025.

India Post Unveils IT 2.0: Advanced Postal Technology to Power Digital India

The India Post has rolled out Rs 5,800-crore Advanced Postal Technology across the country that will transform it into world-class public logistics organization by enabling mobile-ready services and real time decision making, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Tuesday. The Advanced Postal Technology (APT) based infrastructure gives India Post access to new technology layers like modern logistics companies.

India's Core Sector Grows 2% in July 2025: Steel and Cement Lead the Charge

India's core sector output increased by 2% in July 2025. The production of steel, cement, fertilizer and electricity recorded positive growth in last month, as per data released by government. The final growth rate of the index of India's eight core industries for June was observed at 2.2%, earlier reported as 1.7%. The eight core industries include coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizers, steel, cement and electricity. The Index of Core Industries reflects the combined and individual performance in terms of output by these eight core industries that make up 40.27% of the total weight of India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

S&P Upgrades India's Credit Rating After 18 Years; Growth Outlook Stays Strong Despite US Tariffs

S&P Global Ratings on Thursday raised India's long-term sovereign credit rating by one notch to BBB from the lowest investment grade of BBB-, with a stable outlook. This is the country's first sovereign upgrade by S&P in 18 years. S&P cited India's economic resilience, sustained fiscal consolidation, and improved quality of public spending. The move places India in the same rating category as countries like Mexico, Indonesia, and Greece.

India Successfully Test-Fires Agni-5 Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile

India has said it successfully test-fired an intermediate-range ballistic missile that, when operational, should be capable of carrying a nuclear warhead to any part of China. The Agni-5 missile was successfully launched in India's eastern Odisha state on Wednesday, and authorities said it "validated all operational and technical parameters".



CCPA Imposes ₹10 Lakh Penalty on Rapido for Misleading Advertisements and Unfair Trade Practices

New Delhi: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of ₹10 lakh on ride-hailing platform Rapido for running misleading advertisements and engaging in unfair trade practices, the consumer affairs ministry said on Thursday. The authority also directed the company to reimburse customers who were denied compensation under its campaign "Auto in 5 minutes or Get ₹50," according to a PTI report. CCPA's probe found Rapido's promises of "Auto in 5 minutes" and "Guaranteed Auto" to be false and misleading.

India's Flash PMI Hits Record 65.2 in August 2025

India's private sector economy recorded its fastest growth since the start of survey data in December 2005, with the headline HSBC Flash India Composite PMI Output Index rising over four points to 65.2 from 61.1 in July, according to S&P Global on Thursday. Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said, "The Services flash PMI touched an all-time high of 65.6, led by a sharp pick up in new business orders, both export and domestic.

India's Interest Bill Nearly Tripled in a Decade to ₹12.76 Trillion in FY26

New Delhi: India's interest payments on outstanding debt have nearly tripled over the past decade and are projected to rise to ₹12.76 trillion in FY26, finance ministry data showed. The surge reflects elevated borrowing costs as the government has continued to service loans contracted at higher rates, especially during the pandemic years, despite a moderation in bond yields since FY24.

Indian Government Raises ₹1.42 Lakh Crore Through Asset Monetisation Till FY25

The government has raised Rs 1,42,758 crore through different modes of asset monetisation up to FY25, Parliament was informed on Thursday. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, said the projected financial contribution of asset monetisation for the current fiscal year is Rs 30,000 crore. The government monetises highway assets through three modes - Toll Operate & Transfer (ToT).

India Suspends 11% Cotton Import Duty Till September 30 to Support Garment Industry

Indian textile industry can import cotton without duty till the end of December this year, said a statement from the Finance Ministry on Thursday (August 28, 2025). The government announced on August 18 that the 11% import duty will be suspended till September 30 when the current cotton marketing season will end. The statement on Thursday (August 28, 2025) said that in a move to support exporters, it has decided to extend the duty-free import till December 31, 2025.

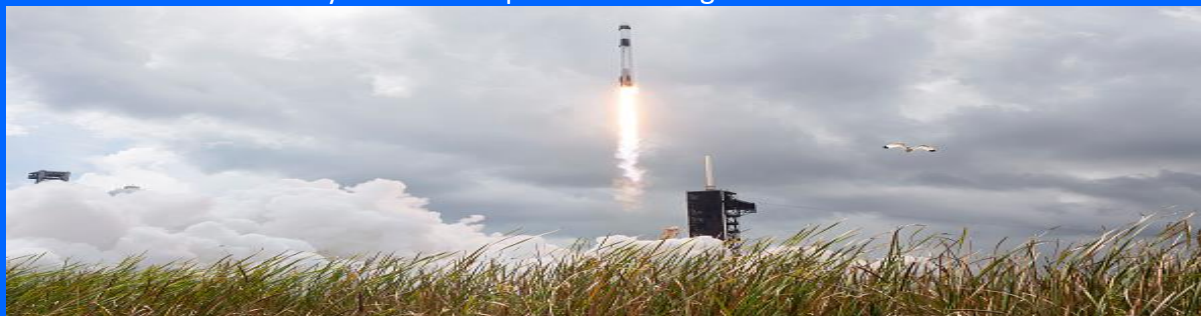
ICICI Bank Reduces Minimum Balance Requirement After Public Outrage

In a U-turn, ICICI Bank has slashed the minimum monthly average balance (MAB) requirement to ₹15,000 from the earlier steep hike of ₹50,000, citing "valuable feedback" from customers. The minimum balance requirement for its new savings bank accounts opened on or after August 1 was raised five times to ₹50,000. "Following valuable feedback from our customers, we have revised these requirements to better reflect their expectations and preferences.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

SpaceX Launches NASA's Crew-11 Mission to the International Space Station

An international crew of four astronauts launched toward the International Space Station from Florida on Friday aboard a SpaceX rocket, embarking on a routine NASA mission that could be the first of many to last a couple months longer than usual.



Hong Kong Rolls Out Stablecoin Regulations to Lead Global Digital Finance

Hong Kong is taking a decisive step forward in regulating certain types of cryptocurrencies, as it prepares to enforce the Stablecoins Ordinance from August 1. The new regulations come amidst an explosion of interest in stablecoins and their promising applications in both personal finance and international business.



Illinois Bans ChatGPT and AI from Providing Therapy

The rise of AI in healthcare is inevitable, but its role must be clearly defined and carefully regulated. Illinois has taken a groundbreaking step by banning AI platforms like ChatGPT from delivering therapy or mental health assessments without supervision by licensed professionals. Signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker, this legislation addresses growing ethical and safety concerns surrounding AI's expanding role in mental healthcare. While AI tools offer efficiency and accessibility, they lack the empathy, nuanced understanding, and accountability essential for sensitive mental health support.

WHO Classifies Hepatitis D as Cancer-Causing: Why the Hepatitis B Vaccine Is Your Best Shield

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently announced the reclassification of hepatitis D as cancerous, emphasising the urgency for preventing viral hepatitis, which is a growing public health crisis.



Azerbaijan and Armenia Sign Historic Peace Deal at White House Summit

The leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia signed an agreement aimed at ending decades of conflict as they were hosted by President Donald Trump at the White House on Friday. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan shook hands after the US president described the event as "historic".



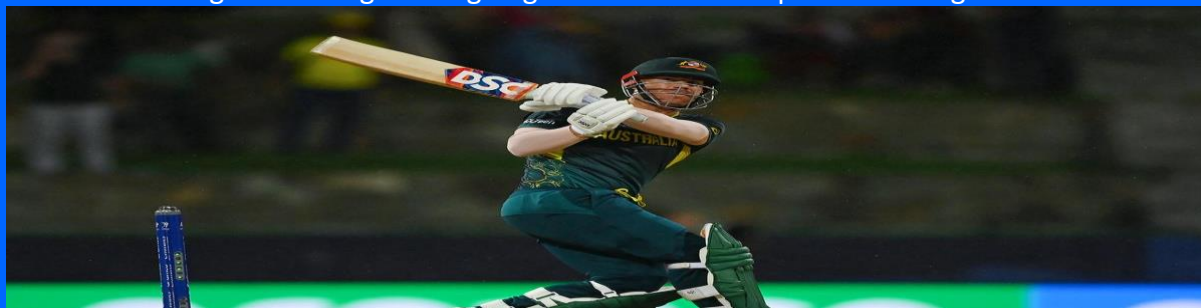
India's Annu Rani Wins Gold at International Wiesław Maniak Memorial

National record holder Annu Rani registered her first 60m-plus throw in more than a year as she won the javelin competition title at the 8th International Wieslaw Maniak Memorial meet in Szczecin, Poland, on Wednesday.



David Warner Overtakes Virat Kohli in T20 Cricket Runs

Australian veteran David Warner, who is still active in the T20 circuit following retirement from international cricket, overtook Virat Kohli to become the fifth-highest run-getter in T20 cricket. Warner achieved this feat during his side, the London Spirit's match against Manchester Originals during the ongoing The Hundred competition in England.



Australia to Recognise Palestinian State at UN in September

Australia will recognise a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly in September, following similar moves by the UK, France and Canada, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said. Albanese said Australia received commitments from the Palestinian Authority (PA) including to demilitarise, hold general elections and continue to recognise Israel's right to exist.

Nepal Offers Free Climbing on 97 Himalayan Peaks to Boost Tourism

Nepal will make 97 of its Himalayan mountains free to climb for the next two years in a bid to boost tourism in some of its more remote areas. It comes as permit fees to summit Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, during peak season will go up to \$15,000 (£11,170) from September - the first increase in nearly a decade.



US National Debt Hits Record \$37 Trillion Amid Rising Government Spending

U.S. national debt reached record \$37 trillion. The national debt eclipsed this new milestone years sooner than pre-pandemic projections. The Congressional Budget Office's January 2020 projections predicted the U.S. reaching the milestone after fiscal year 2030. But the debt grew faster than expected as the COVID-19 pandemic shut down much of the U.S. economy and the Trump and Biden administrations borrowed heavily to stabilise the national economy.

Putin-Trump Alaska Summit Concludes Without Ukraine Peace Deal

This time yesterday, Donald Trump was welcoming Vladimir Putin onto American soil, smiling and shaking hands with the Russian leader on the Alaskan tarmac, before the pair headed down a red carpet and into talks on "pursuing peace" in Ukraine. In the end, no breakthrough was found on stopping the conflict, and our Russia editor in Anchorage says a shift in Trump's position into seeking lasting peace without an initial ceasefire will please Vladimir Putin.

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

India's purchase of Russian oil has risen to 2 million barrels per day (bpd) in August, as refiners continue to prioritise economic considerations in their sourcing decisions. As much as 38% out of an estimated 5.2 million barrels per day of crude oil imported in the first half of August came from Russia, according to global real-time data and analytics provider Kpler.



Dubai Launches AI-Powered Passenger Corridor to Replace Immigration Counters

Dubai International Airport (DXB), the world's busiest hub for international travel, has introduced a new upgrade that could change how passengers move through airports. An AI-powered passenger corridor now allows travellers to clear immigration within seconds, without presenting a passport or boarding pass.



Over 500 Humanoid Robots Compete at World Robot Games in Beijing, Showcasing Speed, Skill, and Stumbles

A quick left hook, a front kick to the chest, a few criss-cross jabs, and the crowd cheers. But it is not kickboxing prowess that concludes the match. It is an attempted roundhouse kick that squarely misses its target, sending the kickboxer from a top university team tumbling to the floor. While traditional kickboxing comes with the risk of blood, sweat and serious head injuries, the competitors in Friday's match at the inaugural World Humanoid Robot Games in Beijing faced a different set of challenges.

Dubai Launches 'One Freezone Passport' to Streamline Business Licensing and Attract Global Investment

Dubai has introduced 'One Freezone Passport', a new scheme that allows companies licensed in one free zone to expand operations into other free zones across the emirate without requiring an additional licence. Globally renowned luxury brand, Louis Vuitton, has become the first corporate member under this scheme, as reported by The Khaleej Times. The programme, introduced by the Dubai Free Zones Council (DFZC), is introduced to streamline business expansion and reduce regulatory barriers.

Trump Appoints Sergio Gor as US Ambassador to India and Special Envoy for South, Central Asia

Trump nominates Sergio Gor: US President Donald Trump has chosen Sergio Gor, head of the White House Presidential Personnel Office, as his pick for ambassador to India. Gor, 38, is considered very close to Trump, and his nomination comes at a time New Delhi's ties with the US are facing unprecedented stress.

