

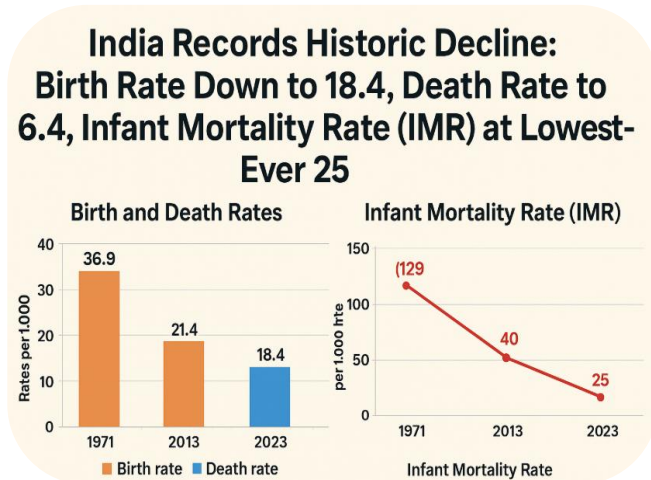


# **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**> 09 SEPTEMBER 2025**

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### 1. India's Birth & Death Rates Halve in 50 Years; Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) Drops to Record Low of 25 in 2023.



According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2023, India has achieved a major demographic milestone with both Crude Birth Rate (CBR) and Crude Death Rate (CDR) halving since 1971, while the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has fallen to its lowest-ever level of 25 per 1,000 live births.

- The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) declined from 36.9 in 1971 to 18.4 in 2023, marking a steep fall of more than 50% in five decades. In just the last 10 years, CBR dropped from 21.4 (2013) to 18.4 (2023).
- The Crude Death Rate (CDR) also showed sharp improvement, falling from 14.9 in 1971 to 6.4 in 2023. A decade earlier, in 2013, the death rate stood at 7.0, highlighting steady improvements in healthcare and life expectancy.
- The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), which measures the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births, dropped from a staggering 129 in 1971 to just 25 in 2023. Between 2013 and 2023 alone, IMR declined significantly from 40 to 25,

reflecting stronger maternal and child health programs.

#### Key Points:-

- Rural IMR remains higher at 28, while urban areas recorded a much lower 18, underlining healthcare disparities despite overall progress.
- Bihar reported the highest birth rate at 25.8 per 1,000, while Andaman & Nicobar Islands recorded the lowest at 10.1. For death rates, Chhattisgarh was the highest at 8.3, whereas Chandigarh had the lowest at 4.0.
- India's TFR has fallen to 1.9 in 2023, below the replacement level of 2.1, indicating that India is moving toward population stabilization. Rural TFR has touched 2.1, while urban TFR is lower at 1.6.

### 2. Union Minister Manohar Lal Launches "Angikaar 2025" to Strengthen PMAY-Urban 2.0 Implementation Across 5,000+ Cities.



In September 2025, Union Minister Manohar Lal, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), launched the "Angikaar 2025" campaign in New Delhi to enhance awareness, beneficiary outreach, and on-



ground implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban 2.0 (PMAY-U 2.0).

- The Angikaar 2025 campaign will be conducted nationwide from 4th September to 31st October 2025, covering more than 5,000 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to ensure uniform participation.
- As part of the initiative, PMAY-U Awas Diwas will be celebrated on 17th September 2025, commemorating the first anniversary of PMAY-U 2.0, which was launched in September 2024.
- A flagship anchor event, “PM Awas Mela – Shehri”, will be organised at district headquarters and in larger cities at the Municipal Corporation level, creating beneficiary–government interaction platforms.

#### Key Points:-

- The campaign activities will roll out in two phases — the first phase from 17th to 27th September 2025, followed by the second phase between 16th and 31st October 2025, allowing flexibility for local administrations.
- Angikaar 2025 aligns with PMAY-U 2.0 goals of ensuring housing for all in urban areas, with special focus on sustainability, inclusivity, and beneficiary empowerment.
- By targeting 5,000+ ULBs, Angikaar 2025 marks one of the largest nationwide housing awareness campaigns, demonstrating MoHUA’s effort to strengthen urban housing delivery systems under the leadership of Manohar Lal.

### 3. India Plans ₹11 Lakh Crore (USD 125 Billion) Push to Expand High-Speed Road Network by 2033.



India is set to invest a massive ₹11 lakh crore (approx. USD 125 billion) to significantly expand its high-speed road infrastructure over the next decade, adding 17,000 km of access-controlled roads built for speeds up to 120 km/h. The initiative, aimed at reducing logistics costs and improving connectivity, targets completion by 2033.

- Approximately 40% of the new high-speed road network is already under construction, with that portion scheduled for completion before 2030. Work on the remaining corridors is expected to begin by 2028 and conclude by 2033.
- The expanded network will support speeds of up to 120 km/h, offering motorists faster and safer journeys compared to conventional highways.
- The investment mirrors ambitious road expansion by other major economies—China’s 180,000 km of expressways since the 1990s and the U.S.’s 75,000 km of interstate highways—underscoring India’s intent to modernize infrastructure at par with global peers.

#### Key Points:-

- As of March 2025, India’s national highway network spans over 146,000 km, yet only about 4,500 km qualify as high-

speed roads. The new plan aims to close this gap significantly.

(ii) The initiative is expected to slash logistics costs and bolster GDP growth by enhancing efficiency in freight movement and connectivity across regions.

(iii) The ambitious plan will rely on hybrid financing mechanisms—such as Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) and Hybrid Annuity Models (HAM)—to attract robust private sector participation in infrastructure delivery.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. Japan's 102-Year-Old Kokichi Akuzawa Becomes the Oldest Person to Climb Mount Fuji Again.



On August 5, 2025, Kokichi Akuzawa, aged 102, made history by becoming the oldest person to summit Mount Fuji, a record officially recognized by Guinness World Records, six years after setting the same record at age 96.

- Akuzawa completed the 12,388-foot (3,776-meter) climb over three days, supported by his 70-year-old daughter, her husband, and close friends.

- In preparation, he trained for three months, waking up at 5 a.m. for hour-long walks and ascending smaller mountains each week in Nagano Prefecture.

- Despite battling heart conditions, shingles, and injuries from a fall, Akuzawa persevered, driven by both passion and emotional support.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Akuzawa now holds the Guinness World Record for the oldest person to summit Mount Fuji—a title first earned in 2019 at age 96, and now reclaimed at 102 years old.

(ii) He candidly admitted that he was “really tempted to give up halfway through,” but reached the summit thanks to encouragement from his family and friends.

(iii) A former engine design engineer and later livestock artificial inseminator until age 85, Akuzawa continues to find purpose in volunteering and painting, with aspirations to paint Mount Fuji’s sunrise as a tribute to his extraordinary journey.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### 1. Microfinance Industry Network (MFIN) Releases 54th Micrometer Report: MFIs' Disbursements Drop 24% YoY to ₹22,805 Crore in Q1 FY26.



In September 2025, the Microfinance Industry Network (MFIN), the umbrella body for Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), released the 54th edition of its quarterly report Micrometer as of 30 June 2025. The report highlighted a significant decline in disbursements and client base across the sector, reflecting stress in microfinance lending.

- The 54th edition of Micrometer revealed that the Assets Under Management (AUM) of MFIs stood at ₹1,34,574 crore as of 30 June 2025, including owned portfolio worth ₹1,11,849 crore and managed portfolio worth ₹22,725 crore. However, this reflected a 16.4% decline compared to 30 June 2024, and a 5.4% decline compared to 31 March 2025.

- The client base of MFIs also contracted from 4.5 crore to 3.8 crore accounts during the same period, showing weakening outreach of microfinance operations. This contraction aligns with the funding and disbursement slowdown noted in the sector.

- In Q1 FY26, MFIs disbursed loans worth ₹22,805 crore, which represents a 24% year-on-year decline compared to the same quarter of FY25. The disbursement was spread through 41.5 lakh loan accounts, highlighting reduced

lending momentum across the microfinance sector.

#### Key Points:-

(i) On the funding side, MFIs received a total of ₹12,781 crore in debt funding during Q1 FY26, a 23.6% decline compared to the corresponding quarter in FY25.

(ii) The report further noted that the average loan amount disbursed per account in Q1 FY26 was ₹54,956, representing an increase of 16.5% compared to the same quarter of FY25. While the overall disbursement volume fell, the rise in ticket size indicates lenders are offering larger loans per borrower despite reduced outreach.

(iii) The release of the 54th Micrometer report underscores challenges for the microfinance sector, with shrinking AUM, lower disbursements, and a falling client base, but with a trend towards higher per-loan disbursement values.

## 2. Amazon Acquires Axio for USD 200 Million to Expand Digital Lending in India.



In September 2025, Amazon India completed the acquisition of fintech company Axio (formerly Capital Float) for around USD 200

million (₹1,762 crore) after securing approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This marks one of Amazon's largest investments in India's financial sector, strengthening its digital lending business.

- The founders Sashank Rishyasringa and Gaurav Hinduja will continue leading Axio, which will now function as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Amazon.
- Axio has been powering Amazon Pay's Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) services for the past six years, and this acquisition formalizes and deepens the partnership.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) With the acquisition, Amazon gains an NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company) license, enabling it to directly offer lending products to consumers and small businesses in India.
- (ii) The deal allows Amazon to expand its financial services ecosystem by introducing new credit products and enhancing its footprint in India's rapidly growing digital lending market.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

### 1. BHEL Signs 10-Year MoU with Horizon Fuel Cell Technologies to Develop Hydrogen Fuel Cell Trains in India.



In September 2025, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MoHI), signed a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Singapore-based Horizon Fuel Cell Technologies. The agreement aims to develop and commercialize hydrogen fuel cell-based trains tailored to India's rail market, supporting the shift towards clean and sustainable mobility.

- The partnership focuses on creating zero-emission hydrogen-powered trains, where hydrogen fuel cells generate electricity onboard.
- These trains will provide an alternative to diesel locomotives, which currently account for nearly 30% of Indian Railways' traction fleet, and complement electrification efforts.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) This marks BHEL's entry into hydrogen-based transport technologies, diversifying from its core strengths in power and heavy engineering. The deal positions BHEL in a growing global hydrogen economy projected to be worth USD 500 billion by 2030, with rail transport identified as a key application sector.
- (ii) The collaboration aligns with the National



Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM), approved in January 2023 with an initial outlay of ₹19,744 crore, which targets 5 million metric tonnes per annum of green hydrogen production by 2030. Hydrogen rail applications are considered a priority under NGHM for decarbonising heavy transport.

(iii) The MoU combines BHEL's expertise in propulsion systems, electric locomotives, and heavy manufacturing with Horizon Fuel Cell Technologies' global leadership in fuel cell stacks and hydrogen power systems, ensuring indigenous development backed by proven international technology.

## 2. NGEL Signs MoU with VOC Port to Establish India's First Green Hydrogen Fuelling Station at Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.



In September 2025, NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL), a subsidiary of NTPC Limited, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority (VOCPA) to set up a Green Hydrogen Fuelling Station at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu. With this project, VOC Port becomes the first Indian port to host such a facility, marking a milestone in India's clean energy transition.

- The MoU was formally signed by Kishore Kumar Hota, Chief General Manager (CGM) of NTPC, and A. Ganesan, Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME) of VOCPA, in the presence of Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW).

- Under this agreement, NGEL will introduce hydrogen-based Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) trucks at the port. These trucks will gradually replace fossil fuel-powered vehicles, contributing to reduced emissions and improved energy security.

### Key Points:-

(i) The hydrogen fuelling station at Tuticorin makes VOC Port the first port in India to establish such infrastructure, aligning with global trends of adopting hydrogen as a clean fuel for heavy-duty transport and port operations.

(ii) This initiative supports India's vision of creating green shipping hubs across its coastal economic corridors. The project also strengthens Tamil Nadu's role in India's renewable energy leadership, while boosting regional economic development.

(iii) The project directly contributes to India's net-zero emission target by 2070 and reinforces commitments under India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It highlights the role of ports in reducing the carbon footprint of logistics and maritime transport.

## MOUs and Agreement

1. PNB Signs ₹21,000 Crore MoU with Rajasthan Govt under 'Rising Rajasthan' Initiative.



On 7 September 2025, Punjab National Bank (PNB) signed a ₹21,000 crore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Rajasthan to finance development projects under the state's 'Rising Rajasthan' economic growth initiative.

- PNB's Managing Director & CEO, Ashok Chandra, described the partnership as a matter of pride, highlighting how the bank's extensive branch network, strong digital infrastructure, and varied product suite will support Rajasthan's socio-economic progress.
- Rajasthan's Chief Minister, Bhajanlal Sharma, announced the signing on X (formerly Twitter), calling it a significant stride toward realizing the vision of a "Developed Rajasthan", and signifying the strategic intent behind the collaboration.
- During his Jaipur visit, Ashok Chandra also distributed 2,000 loan sanction letters to women entrepreneurs at a self-help group (SHG) distribution event attended by nearly 3,000 SHG members.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The MoU establishes a structured financing mechanism to back eligible development projects in Rajasthan, fortifying PNB's role in advancing regional

infrastructure and economic growth.

- (ii) PNB's townhall engagement with staff and inspection of local branches and ATMs in Jaipur underscored ongoing efforts toward digital banking adoption, improving customer outreach, and enhancing service excellence for its 18.5 crore customers.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

### 1. Andrew Michael Holness Re-elected as Jamaican Prime Minister for a Historic Third Term.



In September 2025, Andrew Michael Holness, leader of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), was re-elected as the Prime Minister of Jamaica for the third consecutive term after securing a majority in the parliamentary elections held on September 3, 2025. This marks the first time in Jamaica's political history that a leader has served three straight terms as Prime Minister.

- In the 2025 General Elections, the JLP secured 34 parliamentary seats, while the opposition People's National Party (PNP), led by Mark Golding, won 29 seats. This gave JLP a clear mandate to continue governance.



- As per the results, JLP will also nominate 13 out of 21 senators in the Jamaican Senate, strengthening its legislative influence.
- The 2025 General Election was the 19th since the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944, continuing Jamaica's democratic tradition.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Andrew Holness entered politics in 1997 at the age of 25, becoming one of the youngest Members of Parliament (MPs). He has since held ministerial portfolios in Housing, Education (2005–2011), and served as Education Minister until 2007.
- (ii) Holness became Jamaica's youngest Prime Minister in 2011 at the age of 39, succeeding Bruce Golding. He was re-elected to a full term in 2016, followed by another victory in 2020, and now a third consecutive win in 2025.
- (iii) His third consecutive win reinforces his position as the longest-serving PM from JLP, setting a historic precedent for leadership continuity and political stability in Jamaica.

## SPORTS

### 1. Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Launches Mascot 'Jalveer' and Logo for 11th Asian Aquatics Championship 2025 in New Delhi.



On 5 September 2025, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS), unveiled the mascot 'Jalveer' and official logo for the 11th Asian Aquatics Championship 2025 at an event in New Delhi. The launch was attended by Mona Chokshi, Secretary-General of the Swimming Federation of India (SFI), and Virendra Nanavati, Senior Vice President of SFI.

- The championship will be hosted at the newly built Veer Savarkar Sports Complex in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, from 28 September to 11 October 2025, marking the first time India is hosting this prestigious aquatics event.

- The mascot Jalveer, an aquatic superhero, represents energy and courage. Its name combines 'Jal' (water) and 'Veer' (brave), while the logo integrates the Asiatic Lion with symbols of swimming, diving, water polo, and artistic swimming.

- More than 1,000 athletes from over 30 countries are expected to participate across multiple aquatic disciplines, making it one of the largest aquatics gatherings in Asia.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The event is being organized under the guidance of MYAS and the Sports Authority

of Gujarat (SAG), showcasing India's capacity to host international sporting events of global standards.

(ii) The competition acts as a qualifying event for the 2026 Asian Games in Japan, offering Indian athletes an opportunity to secure their place at the continental level and demonstrate their talent against international competitors.

(iii) The championship aligns with Gujarat's long-term sports strategy, including the Ahmedabad Sports City project, and positions India as a future hub for major multi-sport events such as the 2030 Commonwealth Games (CWG) and the 2036 Olympic Games bid.

## AWARDS

### 1. Indian Filmmaker Anuparna Roy Wins Best Director in Orizzonti Section at 82nd Venice Film Festival.



At the 82nd Venice Film Festival, Indian filmmaker Anuparna Roy won the Best Director award in the prestigious Orizzonti section for her independent film *Songs of Forgotten Trees*, which portrays the struggles of two migrant women in Mumbai.

- The Orizzonti section, chaired by French filmmaker Julia Ducournau, highlights innovative and independent cinema from around the world, with Roy's entry being the only Indian film selected this year.

- Veteran U.S. filmmaker Jim Jarmusch clinched the Golden Lion for Best Film for *Father Mother Sister Brother*, a cross-cultural exploration of family set across New Jersey, Dublin, and Paris.

- The Silver Lion award went to *The Voice of Hind Rajab*, directed by Tunisia's Kaouther Ben Hania, based on the tragic real-life story of a Palestinian girl killed in the Gaza war.

### Key Points:-

(i) Italian actor Toni Servillo was awarded Best Actor for his role as a weary president in Paolo Sorrentino's political drama *La Grazia*, while Chinese actress Xin Zhilei won Best Actress for her moving performance in *The Sun Rises On Us All*.

(ii) American filmmaker Benny Safdie received Best Director in the main competition for *The Smashing Machine*, a character-driven drama that impressed the jury.

(iii) A Special Jury Prize was conferred upon Italian director Gianfranco Rosi for *Below the Clouds*, a black-and-white documentary that drew praise for its artistic and socio-political depth.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 1. UN Observed World Duchenne Awareness Day 2025 on September 7.

# UN Observed World Duchenne Awareness Day 2025 on September 7

In September 2025, the United Nations (UN) marked the second annual observance of World Duchenne Awareness Day (WDAD) on 7 September, dedicated to raising global awareness about Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) and Becker Muscular Dystrophy (BMD). The 2025 theme was “Family: The Heart of Care”, highlighting the crucial role of families in supporting individuals affected by these rare genetic disorders.

- WDAD was initiated in 2014 by Elizabeth Vroom and Nicoletta Madia of the World Duchenne Organization (WDO). It gained formal recognition in November 2023, when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/78/12, declaring 7 September as WDAD, with official observance beginning in 2024.

- On WDAD, thousands of red balloons are released worldwide, symbolizing solidarity, hope, and remembrance for individuals living with DMD/BMD. The initiative also serves to mobilize governments and health systems for early diagnosis and better treatment frameworks.

- The first UN-recognized WDAD was observed on 7 September 2024, making the 2025

observance the second official global commemoration under UN auspices.

## Key Points:-

(i) Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) is a rare, progressive, X-linked genetic disorder caused by mutations in the dystrophin gene, leading to severe muscle weakness. BMD is a milder variant with later onset. Together, these conditions significantly impact mobility and lifespan.

(ii) Globally, about 1 in 5,000 newborn boys is affected by DMD. In most countries, diagnosis occurs after age 4, with an average diagnostic delay of around 2.5 years, worsening prognosis. Early detection remains a key challenge.

(iii) Without treatment, individuals with DMD rarely live beyond their late teens. However, with current standards of care, many can live into their 30s or even 40s, supported by advanced therapies, physiotherapy, and respiratory interventions.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**1. China Showcases JL-1 Nuclear-Capable Air-Launched Ballistic Missile at 2025 Victory Day Parade.**





In September 2025, the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) of China unveiled the JL-1 (Jinglei-1) Air-Launched Ballistic Missile (ALBM) during the Victory Day Parade at Tiananmen Square, Beijing. The event marked the missile's first public display and highlighted the growing importance of China's advanced air-based nuclear strike capabilities.

- The JL-1 is mounted on the H-6N bomber, a modernized aircraft designed for long-range missions with mid-air refueling features, enabling extended operational reach.
- With a range of nearly 8,000 km, the missile provides China with the ability to strike distant targets across continents, strengthening its global strategic posture.
- Its design originates from the DF-21 ballistic missile family, adapted for air-launch platforms to expand strike flexibility beyond land-based systems.

### Key Points:-

- The JL-1 supports both nuclear and conventional payloads and is integrated with a Maneuverable Re-entry Vehicle (MARV) to bypass missile defenses and enhance strike precision.
- By introducing the JL-1, China has reinforced the air-leg of its nuclear triad, ensuring survivability and credible deterrence alongside land and sea-based nuclear forces.
- Other advanced systems displayed included the JL-3 SLBM, DF-61 & DF-5C ICBMs, GJ-11 stealth drone, AJX002 submarine drone, and LY-1 laser weapons, along with AI-enabled robotic systems, signaling China's focus on modernized,

multi-domain warfare.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

**1. COAS General Upendra Dwivedi Launches Book "Operation Sindoor" by Retd. Lt. Gen. K.J.S. Dhillon.**



In September 2025, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi launched the book "Operation Sindoor: The Untold Stories of India's Deep Strikes Inside Pakistan", authored by Retired Lieutenant General K.J.S. Dhillon, at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi.

- The book has been published by Penguin Random House India, one of India's leading publishing houses.
- It specifically documents India's military response to the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, covering operational planning, execution stages, and decision-making processes.
- The narrative provides rare operational insights into India's cross-border deep strikes, detailing precision strategy and leadership choices made during high-pressure situations.

### Key Points:-

- "Operation Sindoor" highlights India's

strategic clarity, force application, and military professionalism in counter-terror operations.

(ii) The book underlines the Indian Army's whole-of-nation approach, integrating military actions with diplomatic and narrative management objectives.

(iii) By unveiling sensitive but significant operational details, it serves as a historic record of the IA's evolving doctrine in counter-terror and cross-border strikes.

**Static GK**

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<b>NTPC Limited</b>	Founded: 1975	Headquarters: New Delhi
<b>Jamaica</b>	Capital: Kingston	Currency: Jamaican Dollar
<b>China</b>	Capital: Beijing	President: Xi Jinping
<b>Swimming Federation of India (SFI)</b>	President : R N Jayaprakash	Headquarters: Ahmedabad, Gujarat
<b>World Duchenne Organization (WDO)</b>	Chairman : Elizabeth Vroom	Headquarters : Netherlands
<b>Rajasthan</b>	Chief minister: Bhajan Lal Sharma	Governor: Haribhau Bagade