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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. West Bengal hosts first Kaushal Mahotsav in Balurghat.

[21 AUG 2026] -



Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship organised West Bengal first Kaushal Mahotsav in Balurghat on 19 August 2026. The event was held with National Skill Development Corporation and Government of West Bengal to create employment opportunities for youth of Dakshin Dinajpur.

Key Highlights:

- West Bengal first Kaushal Mahotsav was organised in Balurghat.
- The event focused on employment opportunities for youth of Dakshin Dinajpur.
- More than 7,500 interviews were conducted during the event.
- More than 4,500 candidates were shortlisted.
- More than 7,000 job opportunities were provided.
- Over 50 employers participated from manufacturing, retail, logistics, healthcare, hospitality and banking sectors.
- Major recruiters included Royal Enfield, Wipro, Axis Bank, Tata Projects, TVS Supply Chain and Barbeque Nation.
- Dr Sukanta Majumdar attended the event, supported by Jayant Chaudhary.

Additional Information:

- Skill India Mission was launched in 2015.
- Skill India Mission aims to provide market-relevant training to over 40 crore people.
- National Skill Development Corporation was established in 2008 as a Public-Private Partnership entity.
- NSDC is headquartered in New Delhi.
- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was formed on 9 November 2014.

2. NHAI expands online FASTag Local Pass facility to 121 toll plazas.

[21 AUG 2026] -



National Highways Authority of India expanded online FASTag Local Pass facility to 121 toll plazas on 19 August 2026. Eligible residents living within 20 km radius of toll plaza can purchase monthly passes through Rajmargyatra Mobile App for unlimited travel through the designated plaza during the month.

Key Highlights:

- NHAI extended online FASTag Local Pass facility to 121 toll plazas.
- Commuters can subscribe to monthly passes through Rajmargyatra Mobile App.
- Residents within 20 km radius of eligible toll plaza can use the service.
- Pass provides unlimited travel through designated plaza in the specific month.
- Eligibility is checked through consent-based DigiLocker and VAHAN data.
- GIS-based verification is used to avoid manual documentation and improve accuracy.
- First facility was launched in July 2026 at Mundka-Bakkarwala Toll Plaza on UER-II in Delhi.
- The facility expanded to over 120 additional locations after successful pilot rollout.

Additional Information:

- NHAI was established under NHAI Act, 1988.
- NHAI functions under Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- NHAI headquarters is in New Delhi.
- FASTag uses Radio Frequency Identification technology for electronic toll collection.
- FASTag became mandatory for all four-wheelers from 15 February 2021.

3. 210 Indian peacekeepers awarded UN Medal in South Sudan.

[21 AUG 2026] -



A total of 210 Indian peacekeepers were awarded United Nations Medal on 17 August 2026 for exceptional service under United Nations Mission in South Sudan. The recognition ceremony was held in Juba, capital of South Sudan.

Key Highlights:

- United Nations Medal was awarded to 210 Indian peacekeepers.
- The recipients included six women and seven staff officers.
- Personnel served under United Nations Mission in South Sudan.
- Recognition ceremony was held in Juba, South Sudan capital.
- Indian peacekeepers were honoured for medical emergencies and civilian protection.
- The contingent maintained 24-hour guard duty and conducted night patrols in conflict-affected areas.
- Indian peacekeepers are often called Blue Helmets.

Additional Information:

- India has contributed more than 200,000 personnel to 49 of 71 UN peacekeeping missions since 1948.
- India deployed first all-women contingent to UN peacekeeping mission in 2007.
- First all-women Formed Police Unit was deployed to Liberia.
- UNMISS headquarters is in Juba, South Sudan.
- South Sudan became independent in 2011 and is a landlocked country in East-Central Africa.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**1. QpAI opens quantum processor manufacturing facility in Bengaluru.**

[21 AUG 2026] -



QpAI inaugurated an 8-inch quantum foundry at its new 70,000 sq ft research and development centre in Bengaluru on 19 August 2026. The facility is designed for semiconductor-scale manufacturing of quantum processors containing up to 10,000 physical qubits.

Key Highlights:

- QpAI inaugurated an 8-inch quantum foundry in Bengaluru.
- The facility is located within new 70,000 sq ft research and development centre.
- It is dedicated to semiconductor-scale quantum processor manufacturing.
- The foundry can manufacture processors with up to 10,000 physical qubits.
- This is an increase from QpAI current capability of 128 qubits.
- The facility will support mass production of quantum processors for high-performance computing.
- It will also develop and integrate specialised quantum-AI solutions.

Additional Information:

- QpAI is a full-stack quantum computing startup.
- QpAI is headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Quantum computing is based on principles of quantum mechanics.
- Quantum processors can handle complex calculations beyond traditional binary systems.

2. Chhattisgarh signs agreement for Amended BharatNet Program.

[21 AUG 2026] -



Digital Bharat Nidhi and Government of Chhattisgarh signed an agreement on 19 August 2026 to implement Amended BharatNet Program under State-led model. The program will be executed through Chhattisgarh State BharatNet Infrastructure Limited with Government of India support of Rs 3,942 crore.

Key Highlights:

- Digital Bharat Nidhi and Chhattisgarh Government signed agreement for Amended BharatNet Program.
- Project will be implemented through Chhattisgarh State BharatNet Infrastructure Limited.
- Government of India approved financial support of Rs 3,942 crore.
- The program will cover 11,682 Gram Panchayats.
- It will upgrade 4,048 Phase I Gram Panchayats from linear to ring topology.
- It includes 5,964 Phase II Gram Panchayats and 1,670 newly created Gram Panchayats.
- The program will provide connectivity to 8,328 villages on demand basis.
- It aims to provide more than three lakh rural home fibre connections.
- The program supports telemedicine, e-Governance, online education and digital payments in remote areas.

Additional Information:

- Digital Bharat Nidhi was earlier known as Universal Service Obligation Fund.
- It was established on 1 April 2002.
- It was renamed Digital Bharat Nidhi under Telecommunications Act, 2023.
- DBN works under Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications.
- Union Cabinet approved Amended BharatNet Program on 4 August 2023.

GENERAL & OTHER NEWS

1. PSB Confluence 2026 concludes with actionable banking strategies.

[21 AUG 2026] -



The two-day PSB Confluence 2026 organised by Department of Financial Services concluded on 19 August 2026. The event developed growth strategies for Public Sector Banks and Public Financial Institutions to improve competitiveness for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Key Highlights:

- PSB Confluence 2026 was organised by Department of Financial Services.
- It focused on growth strategies for Public Sector Banks and Public Financial Institutions.
- A month-long youth outreach campaign for citizens above 16 years will begin on 2 October 2026.
- The campaign will be coordinated by Indian Banks Association.
- A common digital platform will provide banking services, skilling and entrepreneurship support.
- Seven strategic themes were discussed for greater competitiveness under Viksit Bharat 2047.
- Priority Sector Lending will receive granular monitoring to identify credit gaps.
- Focus areas include digital onboarding, RuPay-UPI integration, FPO financing, storage, logistics and horticulture infrastructure.

Additional Information:

- Department of Financial Services works under Ministry of Finance.
- DFS exercises control over Public Sector Banks, Public Financial Institutions and insurance sector.
- Indian Banks Association was established on 26 September 1946.
- IBA is headquartered in Mumbai.
- Viksit Bharat 2047 aims to make India a developed nation by 2047.

2. Centre begins major overhaul of National Testing Agency.

[21 AUG 2026] -



Ministry of Education initiated comprehensive restructuring of National Testing Agency on 19 August 2026 following

irregularities in national-level entrance examinations. The overhaul includes personnel changes, enhanced examination security, four-tier question-paper review and legal reforms against unfair means.

Key Highlights:

- Ministry of Education initiated restructuring of National Testing Agency.
- The action followed irregularities in national-level entrance examinations.
- Six hundred experts associated with examination preparation process were removed.
- NTA will induct 20 to 25 new officials within three weeks.
- The development follows termination of 47 NTA officials in July 2026.
- CISF teams will provide physical security for NTA offices.
- A four-tier checking system will be introduced for all question papers.
- New checks aim to remove factual, typographical and translation errors.
- Public Examinations Prevention of Unfair Means Amendment Bill 2026 will provide fast-track courts and time-bound trials for paper-leak cases.

Additional Information:

- National Testing Agency was established in November 2017.
- NTA is an autonomous testing organisation registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- NTA headquarters is in New Delhi.
- NTA works under Ministry of Education.
- CISF was established in 1969 and works under Ministry of Home Affairs.

3. Tumakuru Industrial Hub to attract Rs 7,000 crore investment.

[21 AUG 2026] -



Karnataka government announced development of Tumakuru as a major industrial manufacturing node under Bengaluru-Chennai Industrial Corridor on 17 August 2026. The hub is

expected to attract Rs 7,000 crore investment and generate more than 88,000 jobs by its scheduled completion in 2027.

Key Highlights:

- Tumakuru is being developed as industrial manufacturing node under Bengaluru-Chennai Industrial Corridor.
- The project is expected to attract Rs 7,000 crore investment.
- It is expected to create more than 88,000 jobs.
- A total of 1,736 acres is earmarked for Tumakuru Node.
- Jindal Aluminium is anchor investor with 151 acres allocation.
- Three hundred acres are allocated for Japan Industrial Township.
- Two hundred acres are reserved for MSMEs and 41 acres for institutional use.
- Project is scheduled for completion in 2027 and has 30 percent physical progress.
- Target sectors include food and beverages, textiles, electronics, chemicals, general engineering and logistics.

Additional Information:

- Bengaluru-Chennai Industrial Corridor links Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- It is one of 11 industrial corridors being developed in India.
- National Industrial Corridor Development Programme covers 11 corridors and 20 smart cities across 13 states.
- Total project cost of NICDP is Rs 50,759 crore.
- PM MITRA Scheme develops Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks.

4. PM CARES Fund corpus rises 18 percent to Rs 8,452 crore.

[21 AUG 2026] -



PM CARES Fund released audited financial statements for FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 on 19 August 2026. The total corpus increased by 17.8 percent from Rs 7,173.03 crore to Rs 8,452.07 crore despite decline in domestic and foreign donations.

Key Highlights:

- PM CARES Fund corpus rose 17.8 percent in FY 2024-25.
- Corpus increased from Rs 7,173.03 crore in FY 2023-24 to Rs 8,452.07 crore.
- Domestic donations declined nearly 30 percent to about Rs 479.05 crore.
- Foreign donations declined over 18 percent to about Rs 0.93 crore.
- Interest income from fixed deposits was Rs 469.38 crore.
- Refunds from implementing agencies totalled Rs 324.66 crore.
- Fund spending during FY 2024-25 was Rs 87.85 lakh, about 0.01 percent of corpus.
- Expenditure was mainly for PM CARES for Children Scheme.

Additional Information:

- PM CARES Fund was established on 27 March 2020 as public charitable trust.
- Prime Minister chairs the fund.
- Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs and Finance are ex-officio trustees.
- Fund is financed through voluntary contributions without budgetary support.
- PM CARES for Children Scheme was launched in May 2021 for children who lost parents or legal guardians to Covid-19.

5. RSSDI launches Diabetes Rural Outreach Portal and VISHWAS video library.

[21 AUG 2026] -



Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India launched Diabetes Rural Outreach Digital Portal and VISHWAS video library on 15 August 2026. The initiatives aim to improve diabetes awareness, early screening, lifestyle modification and long-term care in rural regions through digital health resources.

Key Highlights:

- RSSDI launched Diabetes Rural Outreach Digital Portal and VISHWAS initiative.
- VISHWAS is a Diabetes Awareness Video Library for grassroots health awareness.

- The portal supports beneficiary registration, treatment documentation and long-term follow-up.
- It can generate anonymized real-world data for future public-health strategies.
- The platform includes colloquial languages for better community access.
- Program has been implemented in about 30 villages across several states.
- National RSSDI members adopt villages to bring specialist expertise to underserved areas.
- Initiative is led by Dr Banshi Saboo and Dr Anuj Maheshwari.

Additional Information:

- RSSDI is largest organisation of diabetes care professionals in Asia.
- RSSDI was established in 1972 by Prof M M S Ahuja.
- It focuses on scientific research and diabetes management in India.
- About 70 percent of India citizens are below age of 40.
- Initiative supports India@2047 vision for healthier developed nation.

6. SEBI launches Incident Reporting and Cyber Suraksha Portals.

[21 AUG 2026] -



Securities and Exchange Board of India launched Incident Reporting Portal and Cyber Suraksha Portal on 19 August 2026 to strengthen cybersecurity framework of Indian securities market. The portals improve cybersecurity breach reporting, information sharing and institutional response to cyber-attacks.

Key Highlights:

- SEBI launched Incident Reporting Portal and Cyber Suraksha Portal.
- Incident Reporting Portal provides structured and timely reporting of cybersecurity breaches by market intermediaries.
- The portal aligns with Financial Stability Board Format for Incident Reporting Exchange standard.

- It aims to reduce friction and improve consistency in cross-border incident reporting.
- Cyber Suraksha Portal is central hub for cybersecurity knowledge and vulnerability warnings.
- It shares policy measures and actionable insights from cyber incidents.
- The initiatives aim to build capability to anticipate, withstand, respond, recover and learn from cyber-attacks.
- The portals promote learn-and-protect model for financial ecosystem.

Additional Information:

- SEBI was established as statutory body on 12 April 1992 under SEBI Act, 1992.
- SEBI headquarters is in Mumbai.
- Financial Stability Board was established in 2009 to monitor global financial system.
- FSB headquarters is in Basel, Switzerland.
- FIRE standard harmonizes cyber incident reporting across jurisdictions.

7. YES Bank launches women-focused YES Essence Credit Card.

[21 AUG 2026] -



YES Bank launched YES Essence Credit Card on 19 August 2026 as lifestyle and health-oriented financial product for women. The card targets young professionals, salaried customers and digitally active women with reward, healthcare and lifestyle benefits.

Key Highlights:

- YES Bank launched YES Essence Credit Card for women.
- The card targets young professionals, salaried customers and digitally active women.
- It offers accelerated reward points for dining, grocery, shopping, beauty and travel.
- Milestone rewards can reach up to 10,000 YES Rewardz points.
- The card provides annual preventive health check-up.
- It includes specialised cancer marker screening for cardholders.

- Lifestyle benefits include buy-one-get-one movie tickets and complimentary coffee at selected malls.
- Cardholders receive welcome vouchers for fashion, beauty and fitness brands plus birthday vouchers.

Additional Information:

- YES Bank was established in 2004.
- YES Bank headquarters is in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- YES Bank tagline is Experience our Expertise.
- Benefits are subject to applicable terms and fees decided by bank.

8. Qatar Post and India Post launch PosTransfer UPI remittance service.

[21 AUG 2026] -



Qatar Post and India Post launched PosTransfer remittance service on 15 August 2026 to enable direct money transfers from Qatar to UPI-enabled accounts in India. The initiative is supported by NPCI International Payments Limited and establishes a digital remittance corridor for Indian diaspora in Qatar.

Key Highlights:

- Qatar Post and India Post launched PosTransfer remittance service.
- The service enables direct transfers to UPI-enabled accounts in India.
- Customers initiate transfers at Qatar Post outlets using recipient UPI ID.
- Recipients need to activate foreign inward remittances facility on UPI app.
- Minimum transaction amount is QAR 10.
- Maximum transaction amount is QAR 4,000, subject to Rs 1 lakh equivalent cap per transaction.
- A flat fee of QAR 15 is charged for each transaction.
- The corridor is first of planned PosTransfer-powered-by-UPI remittance corridors.

Additional Information:

- NPCI International Payments Limited is wholly owned subsidiary of NPCI.

- NIPL was established in 2020 to internationalise UPI and RuPay.
- Universal Postal Union was established in 1874 through Treaty of Bern.
- UPU is specialised agency of United Nations headquartered in Bern, Switzerland.
- India Post was founded on 1 October 1854 and is headquartered in New Delhi.