



August - 19

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ A new freshwater crab species, *Ghatiana karnataka*, has been scientifically described from Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka.
 - *Ghatiana karnataka* is the 15th species of the *Ghatiana* genus recorded from the Western Ghats and is among the species endemic to Karnataka.
- ❖ India Optel Limited (IOL), under the Department of Defence Production, has launched indigenous GARUD High-Resolution Binoculars for the civil market, developed and manufactured by Ordnance Factory, Dehradun.
- ❖ Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has secured a ₹10,000–15,000 crore order to build India's largest single-cluster Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure facility in Chennai, featuring an NVIDIA B300-based AI Factory for United States-based Together AI.
- ❖ Three India-based skydivers—Jamsheer Thanalot (Kerala), Abhishek Rawat (Uttar Pradesh) and Isha Raj (Bihar)—joined 65 skydivers from 38 nationalities in a Guinness World Record skydive over Benghazi, Libya.
- ❖ Chennai-based Aheesa Digital Innovations has achieved first-pass silicon success for its indigenous broadband System-on-Chip (SoC) VIHAAN, built on RISC-V (Reduced Instruction Set Computer-V) architecture and powered by the 64-bit VEGA processor developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
- ❖ India's first virtual zoo has been opened at the Indore Zoo in Madhya Pradesh, along with a 14-D cinema and a virtual jungle safari.
- ❖ The National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) launched CYBER KUSHTI 2026 Hackathon on 15 August 2026 to promote cybersecurity and artificial intelligence skills.
 - NIELIT is an autonomous scientific society under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

TAMIL NADU NEWS

Digital Property Registration

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister launched compulsory 'Presence-less Registration' for the first-time registration of housing plots and apartments.
- ❖ Buyers, sellers and witnesses can submit documents online without visiting the Registrar's Office.



- ❖ Aadhaar cards of the buyer, seller and witnesses will be uploaded and verified online.
- ❖ Registrars must register the documents within 24 hours, or send them for correction or reject them.
- ❖ Each page will have a Quick Response (QR) code, and a changing five-colour endorsement will help prevent fake documents.
- ❖ After registration, the digital document will be available in the beneficiary's login, while certified copies can be collected after 60 days.

TN govt takes property registration fully online for first sales

Tamil Nadu has ushered in a change in property registration, making online, presence-less registration mandatory from Monday (August 17) for first-sale plots and flats, aimed at cutting visits to sub-registrar offices and improving transparency.

Legal Status for Tamirabharani

- ❖ The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has declared Tamil Nadu's Tamirabharani (Porunai) River a deity, giving it the status of a legal person to protect it from pollution.
- ❖ The ruling was made in the Sivanupandian v. District Collector, Tirunelveli case in July 2026.
- ❖ The case highlighted pollution caused by funeral rites and waste dumping along the riverbanks.
- ❖ In just three weeks, authorities collected around 90 tonnes of clothes, 2 tonnes of ash and 3 tonnes of other waste from the river.
- ❖ The court directed State officials to ensure that specific protective conditions are followed to prevent further pollution.
- ❖ The decision is linked to the principle of Earth Jurisprudence, which gives greater legal importance to the rights and protection of nature.
- ❖ Earlier, the Uttarakhand High Court had declared the Ganga and Yamuna legal persons in 2017, but the Supreme Court later stayed the order because of practical and administrative difficulties.

- ❖ In 2023, the Supreme Court held that extending legal personality to non-human and non-living entities was not possible in the case discussed in the article.
- ❖ The Tamirabharani ruling therefore takes a different legal route by recognising the river as a deity while seeking to protect it from pollution.

Madras High Court declares River Tamirabarani a legal person and deity in ecological ruling



NATIONAL NEWS

Draft SHANTI Rules 2026

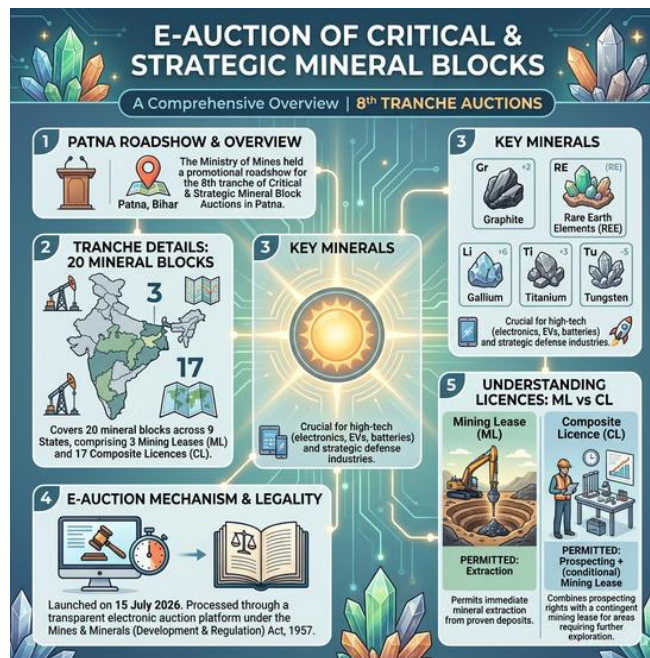


- ❖ The Department of Atomic Energy issued the draft Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy (SHANTI) Rules, 2026, on August 14, 2026.
- ❖ The draft rules set requirements for nuclear liability, insurance and financial security of nuclear installation operators.
- ❖ Operators will have strict, no-fault liability for nuclear damage, including damage during nuclear material transport.

- ❖ Financial security must remain valid until spent fuel is removed from storage pools.
- ❖ The rules also cover foreign reactor technology, captive power, hydrogen production, process heat and medical isotope production.

E-Auction for Mineral Blocks

- ❖ The Ministry of Mines held a roadshow in Patna, Bihar for the 8th tranche of Critical and Strategic Mineral Block Auctions.
- ❖ The tranche covers 20 mineral blocks across nine states, comprising 3 Mining Leases and 17 Composite Licences.
- ❖ Minerals include graphite, rare earth elements, lithium, vanadium, gallium, titanium and tungsten, crucial for high-tech and strategic industries.
- ❖ The auction was launched on 15 July 2026 through an e-auction mechanism under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.
- ❖ A Mining Lease permits mineral extraction, while a Composite Licence combines prospecting rights with a mining lease for areas requiring further exploration.



Power Sector Cybersecurity Rules 2026

- ❖ The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) notified the Cyber Security in Power Sector Regulations, 2026 under the Electricity Act, 2003, effective from 1 April 2027.

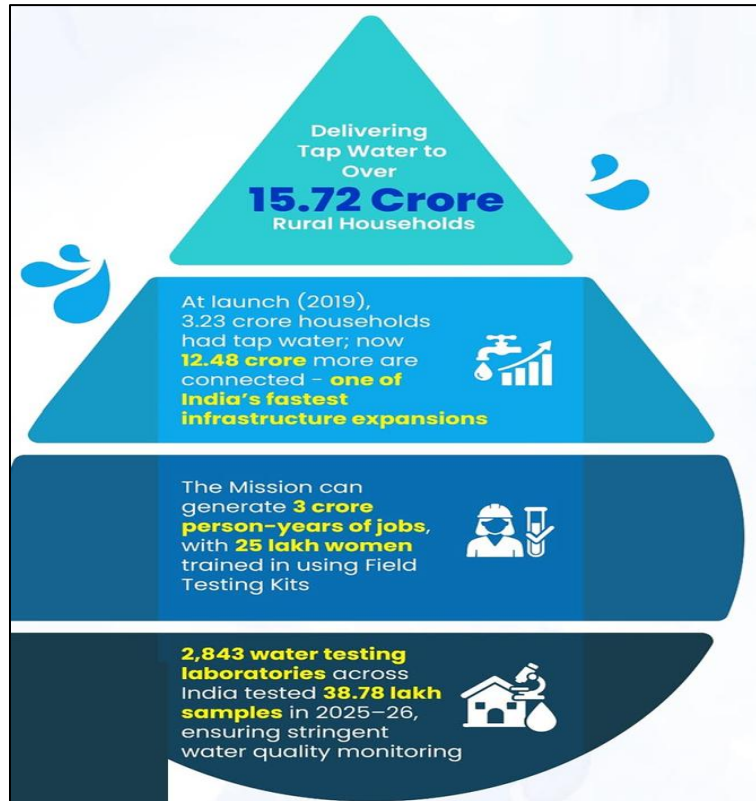
- ❖ The rules cover power generators, captive plants and energy storage systems with 50 megawatts (MW) or more capacity, along with power exchanges and over-the-counter trading platforms.
- ❖ Computer Security Incident Response Team–Power (CSIRT-Power) is the nodal agency, and cyber incidents must also be reported to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).
- ❖ General cyber incidents must be reported within six hours, while cyber sabotage of critical systems must be reported within 24 hours.
- ❖ The rules require Operational Technology (OT) systems to be separated from Information Technology (IT) systems and sensitive power-sector data to be securely stored within India.



Har Ghar Jal Milestone

- ❖ More than 2 lakh villages have been declared 'Har Ghar Jal' certified under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- ❖ The Jal Jeevan Mission was launched on 15 August 2019 to provide safe and adequate drinking water to every rural household.
- ❖ The number of rural households with tap-water connections has increased from 3.23 crore to 15.91 crore since the scheme began.
- ❖ More than 12.68 crore additional rural households have received tap-water connections under the mission.

- ❖ The coverage increased from 16.7% at launch to the present level, according to the Ministry of Jal Shakti.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Hormuz Shipping Route Agreement



- ❖ Iran and Oman reached an agreement on a shipping route map for traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.



- ❖ The Strait of Hormuz lies between Iran and Oman and connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- ❖ Iran and Oman began bilateral maritime negotiations on 18 June 2026 after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on safe navigation routes.
- ❖ The technical plan involved Iranian defence, security and environmental authorities along with Omani representatives.
- ❖ The International Maritime Organization (IMO) reported 65 confirmed vessel incidents and 17 seafarer deaths in the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Middle East by 11 August 2026.
- ❖ The Strait is an important route for oil tankers and commercial vessels moving between the Persian Gulf and international waters.

ECONOMY NEWS

Second List of Upper Layer NBFCs by RBI

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released a list of 17 large (upper layer or UL) non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) for the year 2026-27.
- ❖ The list includes Tata Sons, subjecting them to enhanced regulatory requirements for at least five years and mandatory listing within three years of identification.
- ❖ Other companies that figure in the list are REC Ltd, Power Finance Corporation Ltd, Indian Railways Finance Corporation Ltd, Bajaj Finance, Shriram Finance, Tata Capital, LIC Housing Finance and Cholamandalam Investment & Finance, Muthoot Finance, Aditya Birla Capital, Housing & Urban Development Corporation, Mahindra Financial Services, L&T Finance, Bajaj Housing Finance, HDB Financial Services and Piramal Finance.
- ❖ The central bank's framework categorises NBFCs in Base Layer (NBFC-BL), Middle Layer (NBFC-ML), Upper Layer (NBFC-UL) and Top Layer (NBFC-TL) and provides the criteria to identify the NBFCs in the Upper Layer.
- ❖ As per the RBI's framework of Scale Based Regulation, the UL will comprise those NBFCs that are specifically identified annually by it as warranting enhanced regulatory requirements as stringent as commercial banks.
- ❖ The UL consists of NBFCs having asset size of ₹1,00,000 crore and above as per the latest audited balance sheet for the financial year.
- ❖ In terms of the framework, once an NBFC is classified as NBFC-UL, it will be subject to enhanced regulatory requirements, at least for a period of five years from its classification in the layer, even in case it does not meet the criteria in the subsequent years.

- ❖ Non-Banking Financial Companies are financial institutions registered under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- ❖ NBFC is a financial company that provides banking services like loans, credit, and investments.
- ❖ It does not hold a full bank license.
- ❖ They cannot accept demand deposits like banks or issue self-drawn cheques.
- ❖ Deposits with NBFCs are not insured by government backing like bank deposits.
- ❖ They are registered under the Companies Act and regulated by the Reserve Bank of India.



NBFC Upper Layer List 2026-27 is Out

17 NBFCs now sit in RBI's strictest regulatory tier — with a five-year lock-in that outlasts the numbers that got them there.

17	2	5 yrs
NBFCs classified in the Upper Layer for 2026-27	Continue in UL under the 5-year lock-in, despite not meeting this year's criteria	Minimum enhanced-regulation period once classified

- 01 Tata Sons stays in — for now**
Included in the list "without prejudice" to its pending deregistration application, which RBI says remains under examination.
- 02 Scale triggers UL, not vintage**
Recently listed entities like **HDB Financial Services** and **Bajaj Housing Finance** feature — asset size decides classification, not how long a company has been public.
- 03 The 5-year rule has real bite**
PNB Housing Finance and **Sammaan Capital** no longer meet this year's criteria — but continue under enhanced NBFC-UL norms regardless, per the lock-in framework.

FAST-DS Scheme for Small Taxpayers

- ❖ The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified the Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers–Disclosure Scheme (FAST-DS) Rules, 2026, which came into force on 16 August 2026.
- ❖ FAST-DS is a one-time voluntary disclosure scheme introduced under Chapter IV of the Finance Act, 2026.
- ❖ It allows eligible taxpayers to disclose certain undisclosed foreign assets, undisclosed foreign income, or undeclared foreign assets by paying the specified tax or fee.
- ❖ The scheme aims to provide a legal mechanism for eligible small taxpayers to disclose specified foreign holdings or income.

- ❖ Taxpayers can submit declarations under the scheme only until 31 December 2026; no declaration will be accepted after this date.



ENVIRONMENT NEWS

Blackbuck Conservation – Gujarat



- ❖ Twenty blackbucks (15 females, 5 males) were rewilded in Banni Grasslands, Kutch, Gujarat, after translocation from Vantara, Jamnagar.

- ❖ Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*) is a South Asian grassland antelope, classified as Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List.
- ❖ In India, it receives Schedule I protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ Banni Grasslands are a major arid and semi-arid ecosystem supporting native herbivores such as blackbuck, chinkara and nilgai.
- ❖ Gujarat's wider conservation programme aims to translocate 500 blackbucks and 100 chinkaras to restore native herbivore populations.

STATE NEWS

CBDC-Based Food Subsidy Transfers



- ❖ Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli have become the first Union Territories (UTs) to provide food subsidy transfers to eligible beneficiaries through Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)-based Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
- ❖ The subsidy will be transferred directly to beneficiaries' Digital Rupee (e₹) wallets instead of conventional bank accounts.
- ❖ Payments can be made using Quick Response (QR) codes on smartphones or One-Time Passwords (OTPs) on feature phones.
- ❖ The initiative is the first large-scale use of CBDC in a Central Government welfare programme and follows pilot projects in Gujarat and Puducherry.
- ❖ CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency) is a sovereign digital currency issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



- ❖ The system aims to improve transparency, traceability and financial inclusion in food subsidy delivery under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).

