

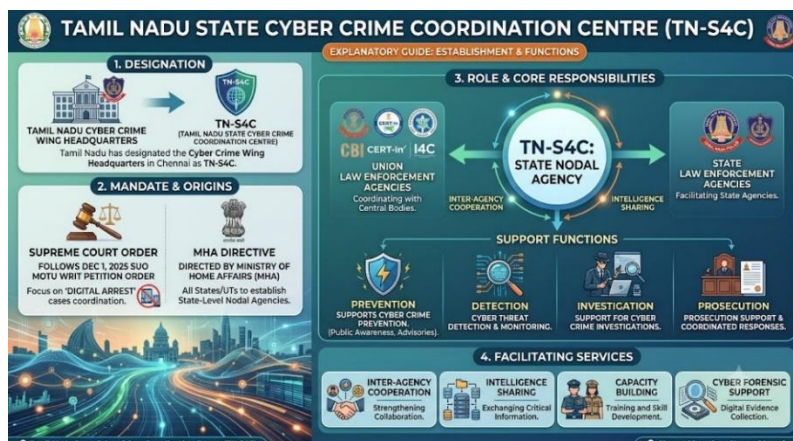
August - 23

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Indian scientists developed RK-251, a “smart” cancer drug designed to activate mainly inside cancer cells, potentially reducing damage to healthy cells.
 - The drug, developed by scientists from Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST) and Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-Guwahati), is activated by high Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) levels in cancer cells and releases the anticancer compound NBDHEX.
- ❖ China’s private space company LandSpace successfully recovered the first stage of its Zhuque-3 orbital rocket.
- ❖ Ecuadorian diplomat Ivonne Baki has been nominated by Tonga as a candidate for the next United Nations (UN) Secretary-General.
- ❖ World Photography Day is observed on August 19 every year to recognise photographers and the role of photography in preserving important moments.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "HOME."
- ❖ International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism is observed every year on August 21 to honour, remember and pay tribute to victims of terrorism and promote their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is “Healing through Memory.”

TAMIL NADU NEWS

Tamil Nadu Cyber Crime Centre



- ❖ Tamil Nadu has designated the Cyber Crime Wing Headquarters as the Tamil Nadu State Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (TN-S4C) at Chennai.

- ❖ The centre will serve as the State nodal agency for coordination between Union and State law enforcement agencies in cyber crime matters.
- ❖ It will support prevention, detection and investigation of cyber crimes, along with prosecution support and coordinated responses.
- ❖ The move follows a Supreme Court suo motu writ petition order of December 1, 2025, particularly concerning coordination on “Digital Arrest” cases.
- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had directed States and Union Territories to establish such centres as State-level nodal agencies.
- ❖ TN-S4C will facilitate inter-agency cooperation, intelligence sharing, capacity building and cyber forensic support.

NATIONAL NEWS

PNG Connection Incentive Scheme



- ❖ The Centre has approved an incentive scheme to accelerate domestic Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections across India.
- ❖ The scheme will start from 1 September 2026 and aims to expand household PNG connections through City Gas Distribution (CGD) companies.
- ❖ India currently has 1.74 crore domestic PNG connections.
- ❖ Eligible CGD entities will get an additional 200 Standard Cubic Metres (SCM) of lower-priced domestic Administered Price Mechanism (APM) gas for each additional billed connection above the area-specific threshold.

- ❖ The scheme will run in two tranches for six months and is expected to reduce the investment payback period for PNG connections from about 10 years to around 3 years.
- ❖ Other measures include National PNG Drive 2.0, faster approvals, standardised Right-of-Way (RoW) charges and a unified digital portal for new PNG connections.

Census 2027 Disability Categories

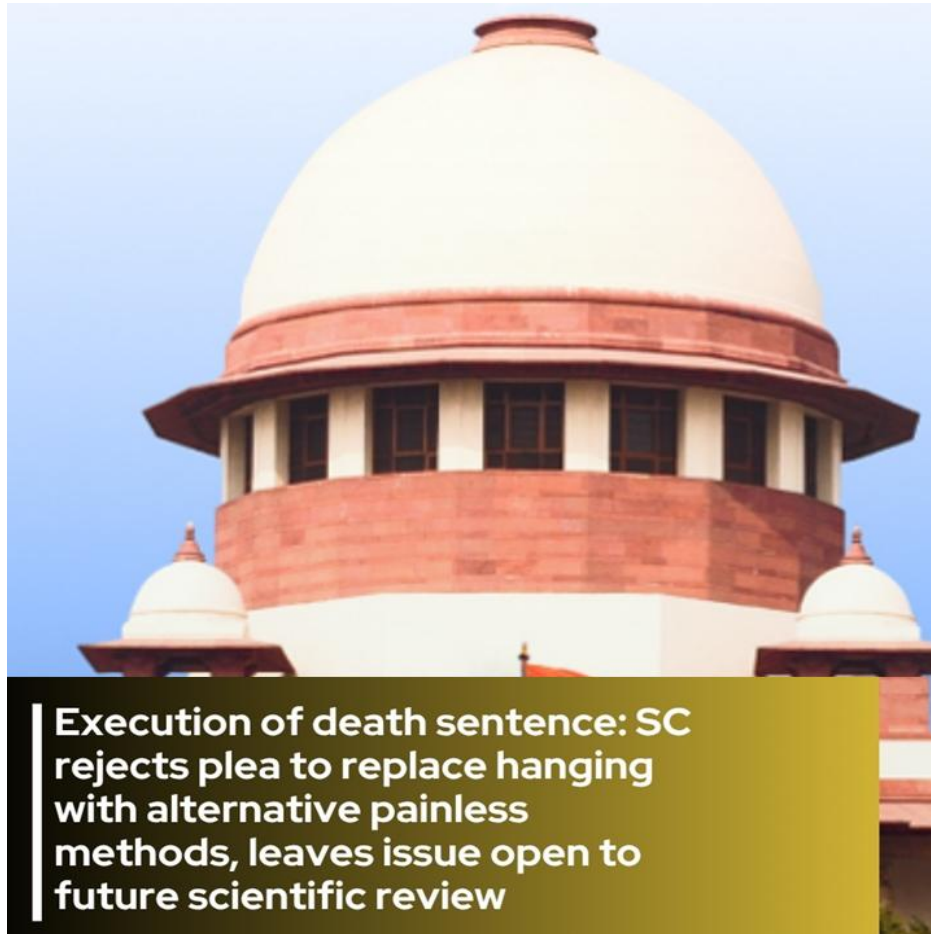
Only 9 disability categories
in Census 2027 form, rights
groups want all 21



- ❖ Disability rights groups have raised concerns that the Census 2027 questionnaire proposes only 9 broad disability categories, instead of individually recording all 21 disabilities recognised under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016.
- ❖ The proposed categories include seeing, hearing, speech, mobility, intellectual disability, mental illness, acid attack, chronic neurological disease and blood disorder.
- ❖ The 2011 Census recorded 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, accounting for 2.21% of India's population, based on six disability categories.
- ❖ The RPwD Act, 2016 expanded recognised disabilities from 7 to 21, including autism spectrum disorder, specific learning disability, dwarfism and multiple disabilities.

- ❖ The Office of the Registrar General of India (ORGI) said the nine categories are broader groups covering specific disabilities and that the questionnaire allows recording up to three disabilities based on severity.

SC Verdict on Death Penalty



- ❖ The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of hanging as a mode of executing the death penalty, holding that it does not violate Article 21 or the right to dignity.
- ❖ The Court relied on the 1983 judgment in *Deena v. Union of India*, which had upheld hanging, and noted that Parliament retained hanging under Section 393(5) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).
- ❖ The Court held that constitutional protection continues for prisoners sentenced to death, even during execution, and that the long-drop method must be carried out with decency and without brutality or degradation.

- ❖ The Law Commission's 187th Report (2003) had recommended lethal injection as an alternative method, but the Court noted that such recommendations are not binding on Parliament.
- ❖ The Court left the issue open for future reconsideration if new scientific or empirical evidence fundamentally changes the basis of the earlier Deena ruling.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

BRICS Youth Energy Summit 2026

- ❖ India hosted the 8th BRICS Youth Energy Summit virtually under its BRICS Chairship.
- ❖ The summit focused on Energy Security and Sustainability, Energy Access and Equity, and Technology and Innovation.
- ❖ The theme was "Energy for All", with India's broader BRICS Chairship theme being "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."
- ❖ Discussions covered energy diversification, resilient supply chains, innovative financing and digitalisation of energy systems.
- ❖ The summit was followed by the BRICS Youth Council Meeting and Youth Summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.



BRICS Tourism Working Group Meeting

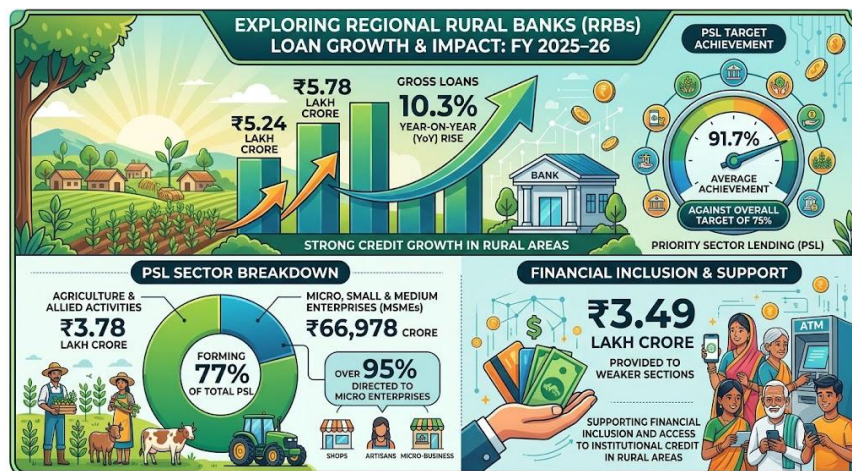
- ❖ The 2nd BRICS 2026 Tourism Working Group Meeting was held in Jaipur, Rajasthan under India's BRICS Chairship.
- ❖ The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
- ❖ It focused on India's theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."
- ❖ Four priority areas were discussed: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Tourism, Sustainable and Responsible Tourism, Tourism Skilling and Capacity Building, and Tourism Exchanges and Seamless Travel Facilitation.

- ❖ It followed the 1st BRICS 2026 Tourism Working Group Meeting, held virtually on 25 May 2026.
- ❖ The subsequent BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting adopted the BRICS Tourism Ministers' Communiqué 2026, known as the Jaipur Declaration, by consensus.
- ❖ The Jaipur Declaration provides a framework for cooperation in AI-enabled tourism, sustainable tourism, skill development and seamless travel, while also encouraging tourism investment, infrastructure and people-to-people exchanges.



ECONOMY NEWS

Regional Rural Banks Loan Growth

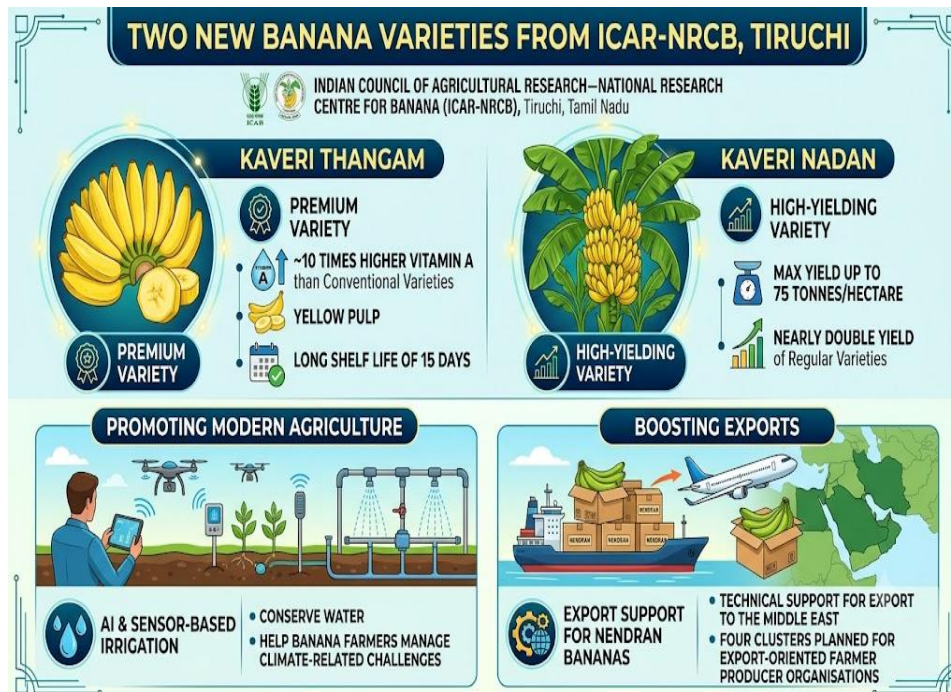


- ❖ Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) recorded a 10.3% year-on-year (YoY) rise in gross loans to ₹5.78 lakh crore in FY 2025–26, up from ₹5.24 lakh crore.

- ❖ Their average achievement under the Priority Sector Lending (PSL) target reached 91.7% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC), against the overall target of 75%.
- ❖ Agriculture and allied activities accounted for the largest share, with ₹3.78 lakh crore, forming 77% of total PSL.
- ❖ Credit to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) stood at ₹66,978 crore, with over 95% directed to micro enterprises.
- ❖ RRBs provided ₹3.49 lakh crore to weaker sections, supporting financial inclusion and access to institutional credit in rural areas.

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

ICAR-NRCB - Two New Banana Varieties

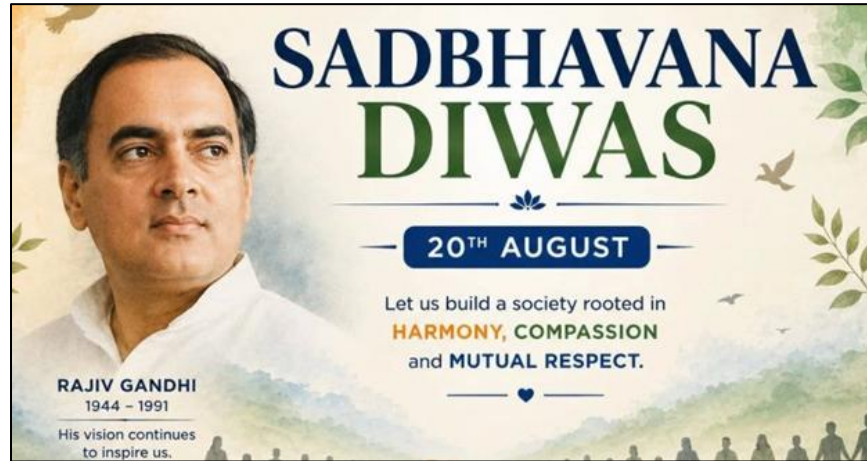


- ❖ The Indian Council of Agricultural Research–National Research Centre for Banana (ICAR-NRCB) in Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu, released two new banana varieties — Kaveri Thangam and Kaveri Nandan.
- ❖ Kaveri Thangam is a premium variety with nearly 10 times higher vitamin A than conventional varieties, yellow pulp and a shelf life of 15 days.
- ❖ Kaveri Nandan is a high-yielding variety that can produce up to 75 tonnes per hectare, nearly double the yield of regular varieties.
- ❖ ICAR-NRCB is also promoting artificial intelligence (AI) and sensor-based irrigation to conserve water and help banana farmers manage climate-related challenges.

- ❖ The centre will provide technical support for exporting Nendran bananas to the Middle East, with four clusters planned for export-oriented farmer producer organisations.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Sadbhavana Divas 2026 – August 20



- ❖ Sadbhavana Diwas is observed to mark the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and promote national integration, communal harmony, peace and goodwill.
- ❖ Rajiv Gandhi was born on 20 August 1944 in Bombay (now Mumbai), Maharashtra.
- ❖ He was the son of Indira Gandhi and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru.
- ❖ He became Prime Minister on 31 October 1984 after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and served until 2 December 1989.
- ❖ At the age of 40, Rajiv Gandhi became the youngest Prime Minister of India.
- ❖ Before entering politics, he worked as a commercial pilot with Indian Airlines.
- ❖ The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, was introduced during his tenure to improve access to and the quality of education.
- ❖ The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) system was introduced in 1986 to provide quality education, particularly to talented students from rural areas.
- ❖ The 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985 introduced the Anti-Defection Law and added the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution.
- ❖ The 61st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1988 reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 years, increasing the participation of young people in elections.



- ❖ Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) was established in 1986 during his tenure to provide telecommunications services in Delhi and Mumbai.
- ❖ He was assassinated on 21 May 1991 at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu during an election campaign.
- ❖ He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, in 1991.
- ❖ Sadbhavana Diwas highlights the values of emotional unity, communal harmony, peaceful coexistence and resolving differences through dialogue and constitutional means.

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