



August - 29

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The 14th India-Thailand joint military exercise Maitree will be held at the Foreign Training Node in Umroi, Meghalaya, returning to Indian soil after five years.
- ❖ The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has crossed ₹15 lakh crore in cumulative Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) since its launch in 2016.
- ❖ A bronze statue of legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar was unveiled at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai.
- ❖ The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has initiated its first all-women commando unit to promote gender equality.
- ❖ DRDO has successfully conducted the maiden flight tests of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS), a multi-layered air defence system comprising all-indigenous Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAM).
- ❖ The Union cabinet approved India's bid to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games (CWG) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
 - The country had last hosted the games in 2010, and it will now be pitted against Nigeria to play host for the 2030 edition.

TAMIL NADU NEWS

Cruise Tourism Expansion

- ❖ Cruise tourism in Tamil Nadu is being developed with feasibility studies planned for new destinations.
- ❖ Rameswaram and Kanniyakumari have been identified as the potential cruise tourism locations.
- ❖ A proposed cruise circuit includes Devipattinam, Kurusadai Island, Kunthukal, Villoondi Theertham, Agni Theertham, Kothandaramar Temple, and Arichal Munai.
- ❖ Floating jetties are under construction at Agni Theertham and Villoondi Theertham for tourist embarkation and disembarkation.
- ❖ Plans are underway to explore cruise connectivity between the mainland and various islands of the Andaman and Nicobar.
- ❖ International cruise link discussions have been initiated with Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

- ❖ A MoU has been signed between India and Malaysia to explore opportunities in the cruise tourism sector.
- ❖ Others are being planned with Indonesia and Thailand for regional cruise connectivity.
- ❖ Cordelia Cruise currently operates between India's west and east coasts and is expanding its presence on the east coast.
- ❖ A new Cordelia Cruise vessel is expected to be permanently stationed on the East Coast, with Chennai as the likely home port.



NATIONAL NEWS

Highway Toll System Under Review

- ❖ The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has raised concerns over the current highway tolling system.
- ❖ It was stated that tolls are often collected indefinitely, regardless of road quality, traffic volume, affordability, or recovery of project costs.
- ❖ The concept of perpetual tolling was introduced through a 2008 amendment to the Fee Rules.

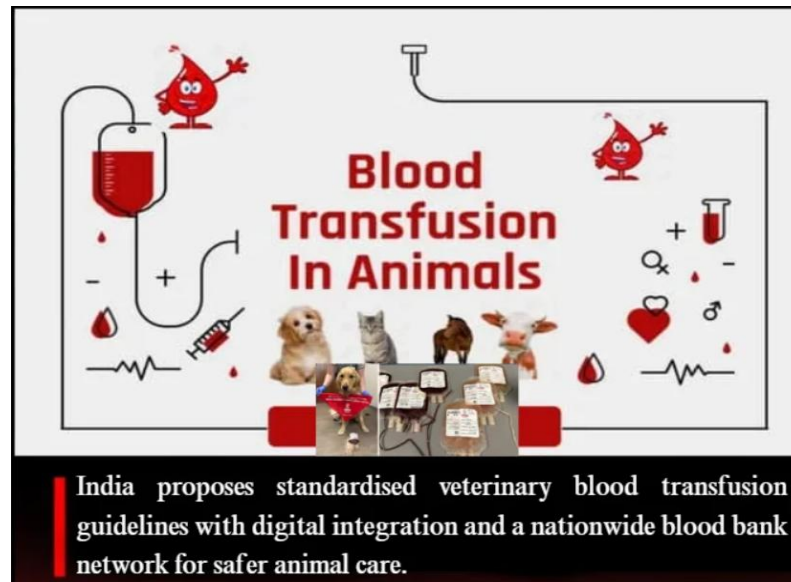
- ❖ Later, it was formalised by a 2023 amendment allowing toll collection even beyond the concession period.
- ❖ The PAC has recommended the creation of a tariff authority similar to the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) to ensure fair and transparent toll fixation, collection, and regulation.
- ❖ The PAC recommended automatic toll refunds or waivers where highways are incomplete.
- ❖ Rs 61,408 crore was collected as toll in 2024–25, compared to ₹55,882 crore in 2023–24, ₹48,032 crore in 2022–23, ₹33,929 crore in 2021–22, and ₹27,927 crore in 2020–21.



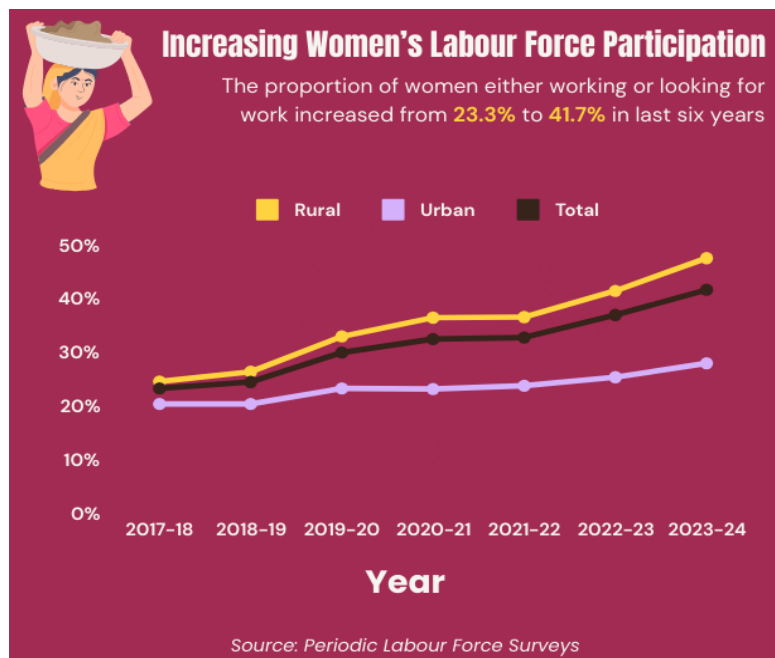
Guidelines for Veterinary Blood Transfusion and Blood Banks

- ❖ The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has issued new guidelines for blood transfusion and blood banks for animals in India.
- ❖ The guidelines mandate the establishment of state-regulated veterinary blood banks with biosafety standards.
- ❖ Mandatory blood typing and cross-matching will be required to prevent incompatibility during transfusions.
- ❖ The guidelines include donor eligibility criteria based on age, weight, vaccination status, disease screening, and donation intervals.
- ❖ An ethical framework emphasises voluntary, non-remunerated blood donations and informed consent.
- ❖ Standard operating procedures for transfusion monitoring, management of adverse reactions, and record-keeping are included in the guidelines.

- ❖ The guidelines introduce a National Veterinary Blood Bank Network with digital registries and real-time inventory management.
- ❖ The framework aims to provide safer, life-saving transfusions to animals in emergencies and critical care.
- ❖ The guidelines integrate One Health principles to manage zoonotic risks.



Women's employment rate in 2023-24



- ❖ Women's employment rate nearly doubled from 22% in 2017-18 to 40.3% in 2023-24, according to Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data.



- ❖ Female unemployment rate dropped from 5.6% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2023-24.
- ❖ Rural female employment increased by 96%, while urban female employment grew by 43%.
- ❖ Over 1.56 crore women joined the formal workforce in the last seven years, as per Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) payroll data.
- ❖ Gender budgets rose by 429% in the last decade, supporting women's entrepreneurship.
- ❖ Seventy central government schemes and over 400 state-level schemes promote female entrepreneurship.
- ❖ Nearly half of the startups registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) have at least one woman director.
- ❖ Women received 68% of total loans under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY).
- ❖ Forty-four per cent of beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme are women.
- ❖ Women-led MSMEs nearly doubled from 1 crore in 2010-11 to 1.92 crore in 2023-24.
- ❖ Women-owned proprietary establishments increased from 17.4% in 2010-11 to 26.2% in 2023-24.
- ❖ Women-led MSMEs generated over 89 lakh additional jobs for women between fiscal years 2021 and 2023.
- ❖ Employability of female graduates rose from 42% in 2013 to 47.53% in 2024.
- ❖ Women with postgraduate education have employment rates increasing from 34.5% in 2017-18 to 40% in 2023-24.
- ❖ India Skills Report 2025 forecasts 55% of Indian graduates to be globally employable.
- ❖ Over 16.69 crore unorganised women workers registered with the e-Shram portal, accessing government social welfare schemes.
- ❖ Nari Shakti is central to achieving 70% women workforce participation, a key goal for a developed India by 2047.

INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri

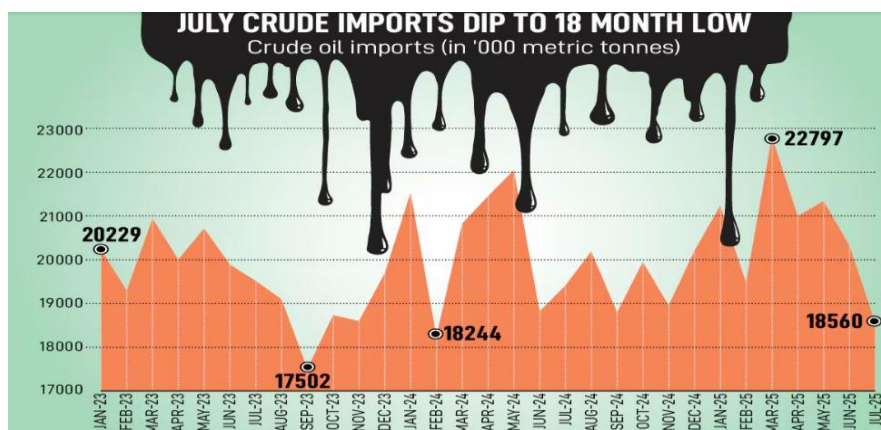
- ❖ INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri, multi-mission stealth frigates, were commissioned into the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam.
- ❖ The ships have over 75% indigenous content.

- ❖ These frigates strengthen the Indian Navy's role as first responder and preferred security partner in the Indian Ocean Region.
- ❖ Both ships join the Eastern Fleet to improve rapid response and secure sea lanes in the Bay of Bengal and beyond.



ECONOMY NEWS

India's crude oil imports in July



- ❖ India's crude oil imports dropped 8.7 per cent in July to 18.56 million metric tons, the lowest since February 2024.

- ❖ The country's fuel consumption also fell 4.3 per cent month-on-month to 19.43 million tons.
- ❖ Year-on-year, crude oil imports declined by 4.3 per cent from 19.40 million tons in July 2024.
- ❖ Imports of refined petroleum products fell 12.8 per cent to 4.31 million tons, while product exports decreased 2.1 per cent to 5.02 million tons.
- ❖ U.S. tariffs of up to 50 per cent on Indian goods, effective August 27, target India's purchase of Russian oil.
- ❖ Despite tariff threats, Indian refiners plan to continue buying discounted Russian oil for upcoming deliveries.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

X-Guard Fibre-Optic Towed Decoy System

**MEET RAFALE'S X-GUARD:
THE AI DECOY SYSTEM**

The X-Guard is a **fibre-optic towed decoy** **built** into the Rafale's Electronic Warfare suite.

Lightweight, reusable, and devastatingly effective.

KEY FEATURES:

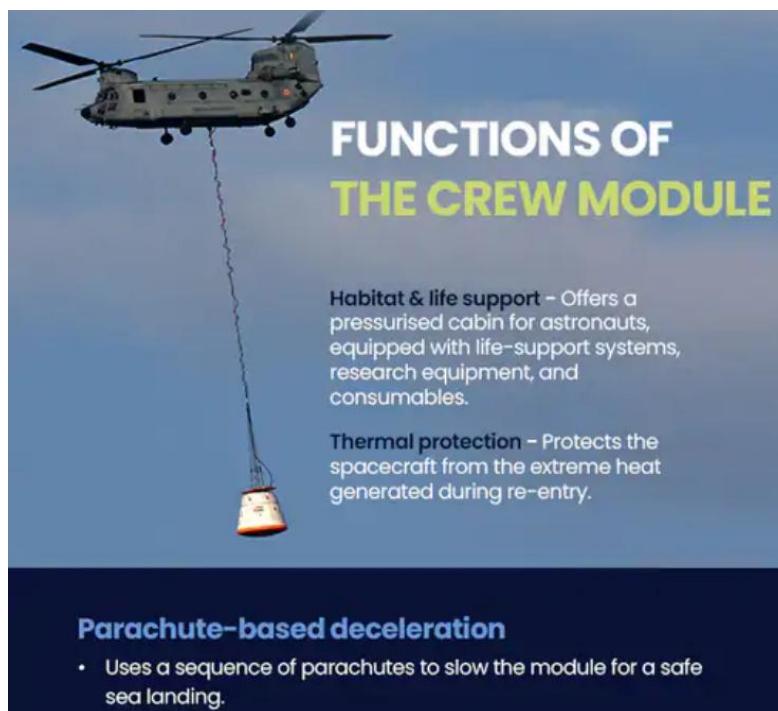
- DEPLOYS IN <2 SECONDS
- EMITS 500W 360° JAMMING SIGNAL
- CREATES REAL-TIME RADAR & DOPPLER ILLUSIONS
- FOOLS BOTH MISSILES AND ENEMY RADARS



- ❖ The Indian Air Force used the AI-enabled X-Guard Fibre-Optic Towed Decoy system on Rafale fighters during Operation Sindoor to confuse enemy radar and missiles.
- ❖ Developed by Israel's Rafael, the X-Guard mimics the Rafale's radar and electronic signatures to mislead threats.
- ❖ Pakistan Air Force's J-10C fighters targeted these decoys instead of real aircraft, causing false shootdown claims.
- ❖ The system works with Rafale's SPECTRA electronic warfare suite to provide layered defence against advanced missiles.

Air-Drop Test

- ❖ ISRO has successfully conducted the first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-01) at Sriharikota.
- ❖ It marked a major step in the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission.
- ❖ The test demonstrated the parachute-based deceleration system by dropping a 4.8-tonne dummy crew module from a height of 3 km.
- ❖ Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) led nearly 90% of the operations, in coordination with the Human Space Flight Centre, Satish Dhawan Space Centre, and the Indian Air Force.
- ❖ IADT-01 achieved the expected touchdown, providing critical data on parachute deployment and landing conditions, supported by extensive modelling and instrumentation.

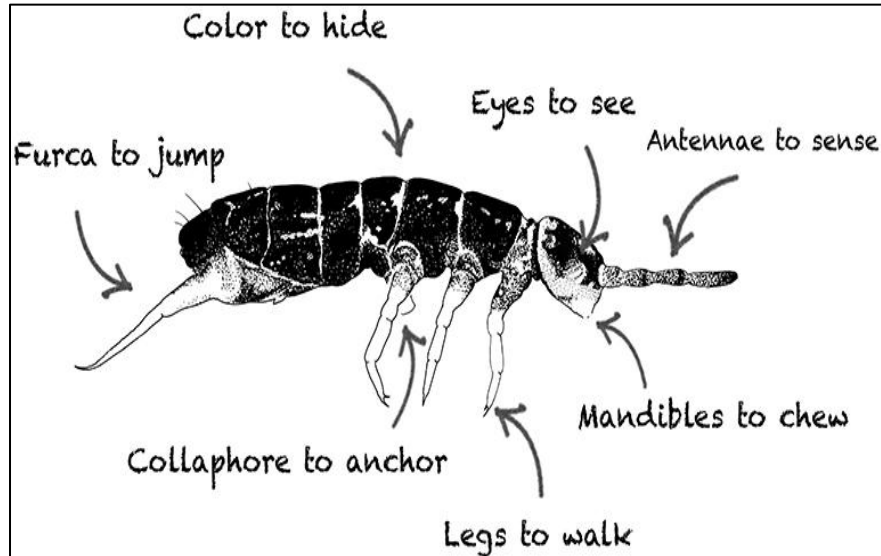


ENVIRONMENT NEWS

New springtail species in West Bengal

- ❖ Two new soil-dwelling springtail species, *Salina aurantiamaculata* and *Salina pseudomontana*, were discovered in Kolkata.
- ❖ These tiny arthropods play a vital role in breaking down organic matter, recycling nutrients, and maintaining healthy soil ecosystems.

- ❖ This discovery increases India's total Salina species to 17, with the last record made in 1979.
- ❖ Springtails are among the oldest land-dwelling hexapods and serve as important indicators of ecosystem health, pollution, and climate change.



PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

National Teacher Award 2025



- ❖ Revathy Parameswaran from P.S. Senior Secondary School, Mylapore, has been selected for the National Teacher Award 2025.
- ❖ Vijayalakshmi from Bharathiyar Centenary School, Tiruppur, has also been selected for the award from Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ A total of 45 teachers across India will receive the National Teacher Award 2025.
- ❖ The award ceremony will be held in New Delhi on September 5.
- ❖ Each awardee will receive a certificate of merit, a cash prize of ₹50,000, and a silver medal.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Sports Day 2025 - August 29

- ❖ It commemorates the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand.
- ❖ It was first observed in 1995 and has been nationally celebrated since 2012.
- ❖ The day also witnessed the launch of the Fit India Movement in 2019
- ❖ This year's celebration is led by Fit India Mission and organised as a three-day, nationwide sports, fitness movement from August 29-31.
- ❖ The theme of these events is 'Ek Ghanta, Khel ke Maidan Main'.



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Highest Rainfall in Jammu

- ❖ Jammu recorded 380 mm of rainfall in 24 hours, the highest since 1910.
- ❖ The last record was 270.4 mm recorded on September 25, 1988.
- ❖ This has also broken the record of 218.4 mm recorded on August 23, 1996.



- ❖ This figure is close to 403.1 mm - Jammu's monthly average for August.

