

UPSC Daily Current Affairs | One Liners 18-08-2026

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Polity & Governance

Har Ghar Jal - 2026

- Over 2 lakh villages certified 'Har Ghar Jal' under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM, launched 2019).
- **Progress** - Household coverage rose from 3.23 cr (16.7%) to 15.91 cr (82.24%).
- **Impact** - 12.68 cr new rural households provided tap water; improved safe drinking water access.



International Relations and Issues

Strait of Hormuz Shipping Route Agreement

Iran and Oman align on routes, but final deal pending amid US blockade concerns.

- **Agreement** - Iran-Oman reached understanding on shipping routes through Strait of Hormuz.
- **Status** - Joint statement under discussion; deal not yet finalised.
- **Conditions** - Iran says reopening depends on US ending blockade, threats, and breaches.
- **Significance** - Ensures safe passage, sovereignty protection, with input from defence, security, environment authorities.



Economy

Trading of Major Minerals on Exchange - 2026

Government to allow exchange-based trading of iron ore, bauxite, limestone, manganese from next financial year.

• **Framework** - Indian Bureau of Mines as nodal regulator; Coal Controller Organisation for coal exchange.

• **Features** - Electronic platform, quality verification, market surveillance; ensures transparency and price discovery.

• **Initiatives** - Four Critical Mineral Parks (AP, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra) focusing on lithium and nickel under National Critical Mineral Mission.

MINERAL EXCHANGE RULES, 2026

Building an Organized & Transparent Mineral Trading Ecosystem

NOTIFIED ON
30 JUNE 2026
Ministry of Mines

Regulated. Transparent. Efficient.
A New Era of Mineral Trading in India.

STRONG REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	ORGANIZED TRADING PROCESS	FAIR PRICE DISCOVERY & SAFE SETTLEMENT	MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS, ONE ECOSYSTEM
Ministry of Mines is the apex rule-maker. Indian Bureau of Mines acts as the Authority for registration, approvals, pricing mechanism & oversight.	- Electronic seller & buyer bids - Matching & price discovery - Contract award - Physical dispatch - Sampling & assay - Delivery to buyer - Final payment & settlement backed by Settlement Guarantee Fund	Independent algorithms, accredited assaying agencies, delivery-based contracts and final settlement through Settlement Guarantee Fund ensure trust and transparency.	Exchange operator, members (buyers & sellers), assaying agencies, logistics partners, banks, auditors, state governments and end users work together in a connected system.

KEY THRESHOLDS & PARAMETERS	KEY BENEFITS
₹50 CRORE Minimum net worth for exchange 25 YEARS Registration tenure 90 DAYS Time for disposal of registration application 6 MONTHS For existing platforms to register or cease operations 5% 49% 25% Equity caps for members/clients and other persons - Defined application, annual & renewal fees	- Transparency in price discovery - Efficient & secure settlement - Better market access & liquidity - Stronger oversight & accountability - Ease of doing business in the mineral sector

A STEP TOWARDS A MORE TRANSPARENT, EFFICIENT & ACCOUNTABLE MINERAL MARKET

Environment

Rewilded Blackbucks in Gujarat's Banni

20 blackbucks released on India's 80th Independence Day to restore native grassland ecology.

- **Event** - 20 blackbucks (5 males, 15 females) rewilded in Banni Grasslands, Kutch.
- **Support** - Initiative by Gujarat Forest Department with Vantara (GZRRC) technical aid.
- **Ecological Impact** - Strengthens native herbivore community, predator-prey balance, and grassland resilience.
- Government approved translocation of 500 blackbucks, 100 chinkara across Gujarat.

20 BLACKBUCKS
REWILDED IN BANNI GRASSLANDS

VANTARA SUPPORTS CONSERVATION INITIATIVE IN GUJARAT

Twenty blackbucks, including 5 males and 15 females, have been rewilded in Gujarat's Banni Grasslands of Kutch with support from Vantara and the Gujarat Forest Department. The initiative aims to restore native herbivore populations and strengthen the grassland ecosystem.

20 BLACKBUCKS
5 males and 15 females translocated from Vantara, Jamnagar.

LOCATION
Released in the Banni Grasslands, Kutch, Gujarat.

HEALTH & CARE
Animals underwent health screening, quarantine and veterinary checks before release.

AIM
To restore native herbivore populations and support ecological balance in grasslands.

COLLABORATION
Initiative supported by Vantara and the Gujarat Forest Department.

Part of Gujarat's larger plan to translocate **500 blackbucks** and **100 chinkaras** to strengthen wildlife populations and support long-term conservation.

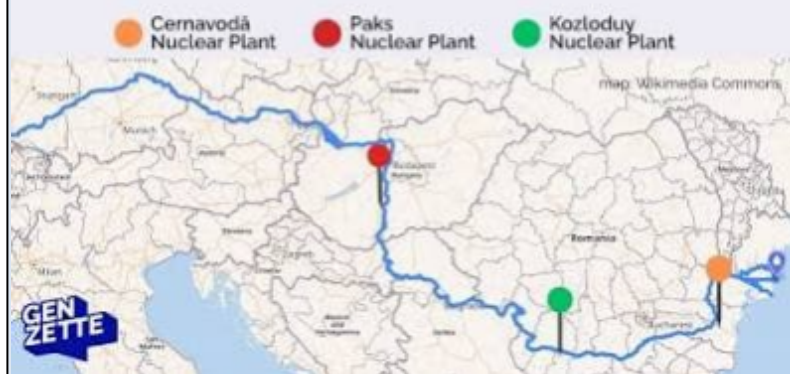
Cernavoda Nuclear Reactor Shutdown - 2026

- **Event** - Romania shut down second reactor at Cernavoda plant due to Danube's record-low water levels from severe drought.
- **Impact** - Plant normally supplies 20% of national electricity; govt assures supply via alternative sources & imports.

The Other Nuclear Plants On the Danube

Hungary's **Paks** nuclear plant restarted two of its four reactors after rising river levels allowed operations to resume.

Bulgaria could face similar problems if river levels fall another 30 cm, but the Kozloduy plant's design currently allows it to operate at full capacity.



GARUD Binoculars - 2026

India Optel Ltd launched indigenous GARUD high-resolution binoculars for civil market.

- **Specs** - 8x magnification, 7.6° wide field of view, +/- 5 Diopter Adjustment and All weather.
- **Significance** - Embodies Aatmanirbhar Bharat; defence-grade optics for civilian use.
- **Applications** - Birdwatching, wildlife, forestry, marine, travel, sports, security.



India's First Virtual Zoo - 2026

Recently, India's 1st virtual zoo was inaugurated

- **Location** - Indore Zoo, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Features** - 14-D cinema and virtual jungle safari under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- **Purpose** - Tech-enabled wildlife and nature learning for children, tourists.



India's First Fully Commercial Earth Observation Sat Constellation

IN-SPACE approves PPP project led by Allied Orbits consortium.

- **Approval** - IN-SPACE authorises PPP agreement.
- **Consortium** - Led by Allied Orbits Pvt Ltd with Pixxel, Dhruva Space, PierSight, SatSure.
- **Timeline** - 1,200 crore investment; 12 satellites by 2029.
- **Constellation** - 5 ultra-high-res optical, 3 multispectral, 2 hyperspectral, 2 SAR X-band satellites.

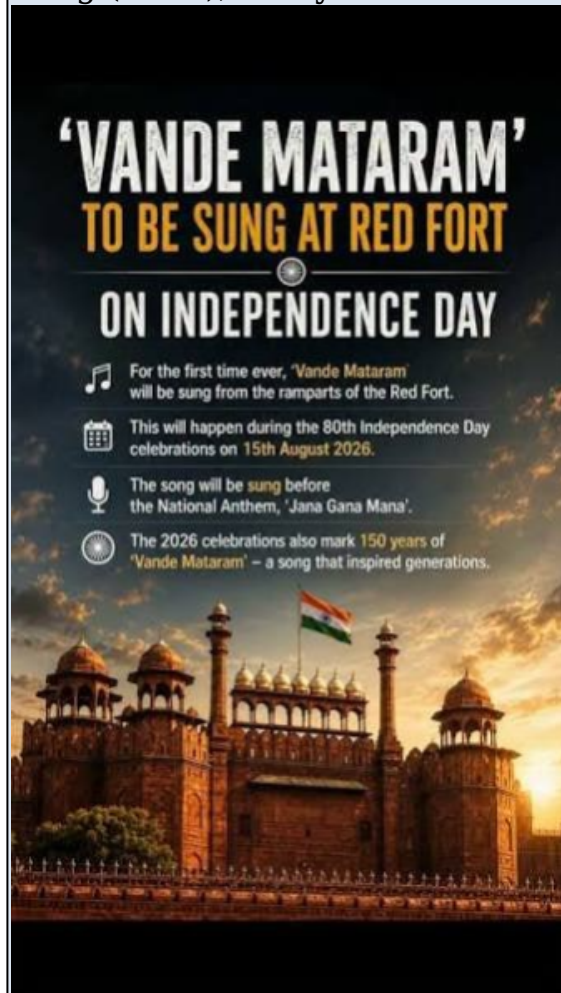


Miscellaneous

Vande Mataram at Red Fort - 2026

Recently, for the first time, Vande Mataram rendered during 80th Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort.

- **Highlights** - Army band played tune; guests sang; floral ramparts & IAF helicopters showered petals with flags.
- **Legacy** - Written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1875); adopted as National Song (1950); 150-year commemoration.



VIHAAN - First-Pass Silicon Success

Design Linked Incentive (DLI) backed Aheesa Digital Innovations achieves broadband chip milestone using indigenous VEGA microprocessor.

- **VIHAAN** - A networking System-on-Chip (SoC) purpose-built for Fibre Broadband

- **Achievement** - VIHAAN SoC taped out on Republic Day, validated on Independence Day 2026.

Taped out - The final design phase of an integrated circuit (microchip) is complete.

- Part of India's Semicon 2.0 mission.

