

UPSC Daily Current Affairs | One Liners 21-08-2026

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International Relations and Issues

SAVE America Act

President Donald Trump cites India's voter cards to make case for SAVE America Act.

- **Background** - Praised the Indian election system that "Over 646 million people participated in the recent general elections in India, and yet less than 1% voted through postal ballots."
- **Proposal** - Act seeks proof of citizenship to register, link voter ID cards to a biometric database, nationwide voter ID, limit voting by mail.
- **Debate** - Bill faces division in Congress; Senate adjourned without action.



US Debt Update 2026 - USD 40 Trillion

US government debt tops USD 40 tn, rising at historic pace.

- **Record** - Gross federal debt crossed USD 40 tn, up USD 3tn in a year.
- **Public Debt** - Now exceeds USD32tn, equal to US economy size.
- **CBO Forecast** - Debt to hit 120% of GDP by 2036.
- **Impact** - Servicing cost now exceeds defence spending; borrowing costs at multi-decade highs.
- **Policy** - Treasury doubling long-term debt purchases; Trump's tax cuts & defence hike add pressure.
- **Concern** - Analysts warn of vicious cycle of rising interest expense; daily debt rise USD 7.9bn.

Rank	Country	Debt-to-GDP Ratio (%)
1	Japan	229.6
2	Sudan	221.5
3	Singapore	175.6
4	Greece	146.7
5	Bahrain	142.5
6	Italy	136.8
7	Maldives	131.8
8	United States	125
9	Senegal	122.9
10	France	116.5

Economy

Tilapia Products Export - Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh became the 1st inland state in India to begin exports of value-added Tilapia products.

- **Cluster Approach** - Government developing 34 fisheries clusters under PMMSY for production, processing, exports.
- **Achievement** - Chhattisgarh initiated exports with 382 tonnes of Tilapia to USA.
- Tilapia hatchery produces quality seed and develops genetically improved black strain Tilapia.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Tilapia is also known as the *aquatic chicken*!

Like chicken, tilapia are adaptable to diverse farming systems, from small backyard ponds to large-scale aquaculture facilities. This flexibility, coupled with their affordability, delicious taste and fast growth rate, makes them a valuable protein source for communities worldwide

Coal's New Flex

India adds renewable capacity fast, but grid still relies on coal-fired plants; flexible thermal power needed.

- **Demand** - Peak demand rose from 135 GW (2013) to 270 GW (2026).
- **Renewables** - By Nov 2025, half of installed capacity non-fossil fuels; solar surpassed 160 GW, share 8.9% (2025-26).
- **Challenge** - Grid cannot absorb all clean power; coal plants designed for base-load, struggle with variable demand.
- **Duck Curve** - Solar peaks midday but demand peaks evening hence there is a steep gap.

Coal's flexible plan behind schedule

Plans are underway to make coal-fired plants flexible to integrate more renewable energy into the grid; but implementation is slow

Ongoing		Behind Schedule		
PILOT PHASE	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
 May 2023– December 2023	 July 2024– March 2026	 July 2026– March 2028	 July 2028– March 2029	 July 2029– March 2030
 10 Units	 91 Units	 100 Units	 101 Units	 191 Units
 5.85 GW	 51.08 GW	 46.82 GW	 37.21 GW	 55.76 GW

 Units	 Generation GW
Target: 493 Achieved: 10	Target: 196.7 Achieved: 0.8

Source: "Flex to Fix", Centre for Science and Environment, 2026

Sugar Import by India - 2026

India to import sugar for 1st time in 10 years, Government allows import of 10 lakh tonnes raw sugar.

- **Reason** - Low opening stock 35-40 lakh tonnes vs 50 lakh tonnes (2025); production fell to 296 lakh tonnes, lowest since 2019-20.
- **Consumption** - Annual demand 280 lakh tonnes; net production projected 290 lakh tonnes (2025-26).
- **Measures** - Stock holding limits on bulk consumers & dealers (Sept-Nov); weekly stock declaration mandatory.
- **Significance** - India ranks 2nd and also consumes a huge share of its own supply.

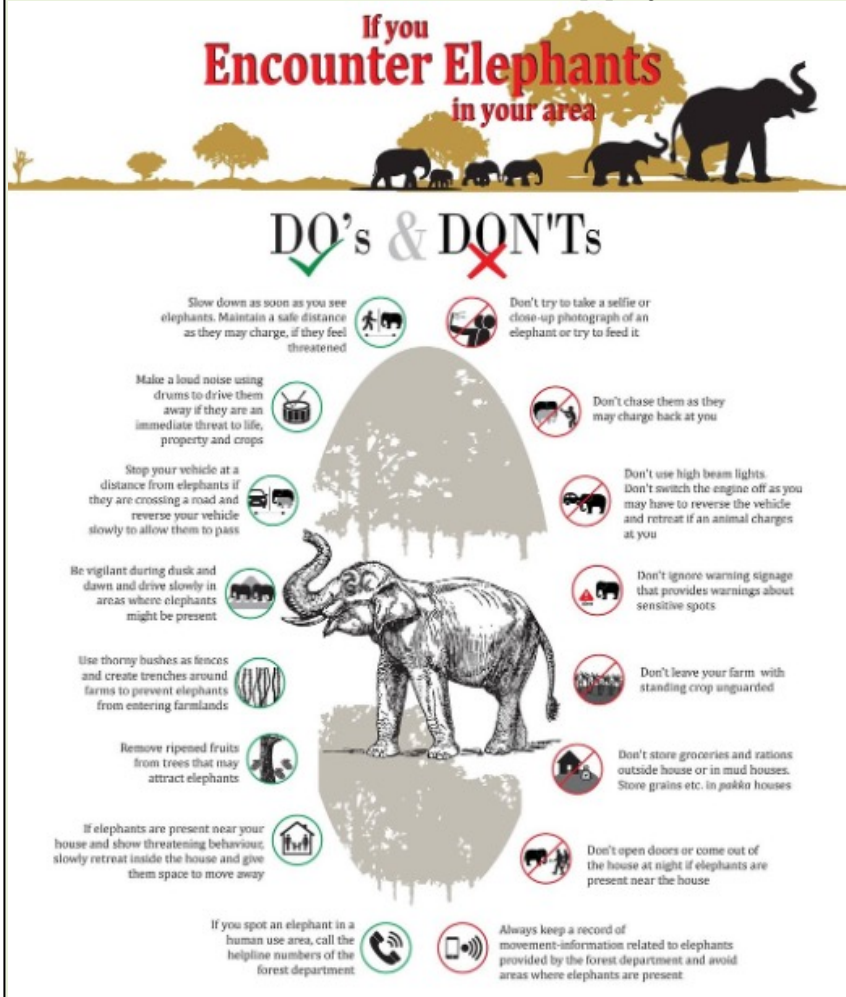


Environment

High-Risk Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) Areas in Southern Africa

A new study forecasts, HEC areas in Southern Africa could expand by 33%–100% by 2085.

- **Study** - Analysis on records from Namibia, Botswana, Angola, Zambia.
- **Drivers** - Human population growth, cropland expansion, climate-related drying.
- **Findings** - Crop raiding seasonal, wet-season conflict 10× higher; hotspots near Etosha NP, Zambezi Region, Okavango Delta.
- **Impact** - Expansion threatens 290,000 savanna elephants and rural livelihoods.
- **Need** - Proactive land-use planning, early-warning systems, community-based mitigation.
- **Global Context** - Human-wildlife overlap projected across 56% of world's land by 2070.



China's LandSpace Rocket

China's LandSpace lands rocket booster; joins SpaceX, Blue Origin with reusable tech.

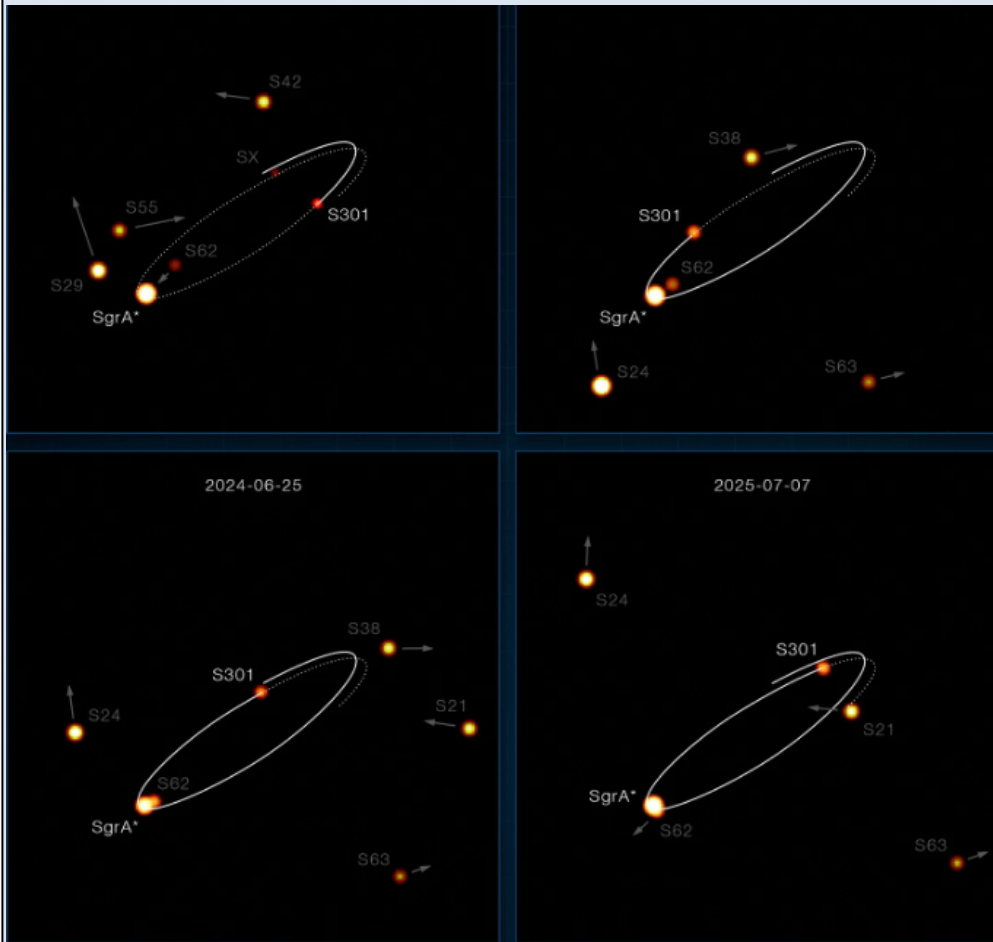
- **Event** - **Zhuque-3 rocket** 1st stage successfully landed in Gansu in 2nd attempt.
- **Significance** - China's 1st private firm to recover orbital-class booster.
- **Tech** - Stainless-steel body (heat-resistant, cost-efficient); runs on methane + liquid oxygen (cleaner fuel).
- **Purpose** - The ability to return, recover and reuse a booster is crucial to reduce cost.
- Make it easier to put satellites into orbit, turning space exploration into a commercially viable business similar to civil aviation.
- **Capacity** - Lifts 14.2 metric tons to LEO.



Fastest Star in Milky Way - S301

Recently, Astronomers detect fastest known star in Milky Way, S301.

- **Speed** - Travels at 25,000 km/s (8% of light speed), 100,000× faster than a plane.
- **Orbit** - Tight orbit around Sagittarius A*, completes in 8.7 years, distance Saturn-Sun.
- **Discovery** - Observed using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope Interferometer (ESO's VLTI) at the Paranal Observatory in Chile,
- Orbit traced since 2017, next close passage in 2031.
- **Significance** - Closest known star to central black hole; enables direct test of Einstein's relativity.
- **Impact** - Could measure black hole spin, opening new window on Milky Way evolution.



Mega-Earth GJ 523b

Recently, Scientists discover Mega-Earth GJ 523b, 2.5× Earth's size with core 23× Earth's mass.

- **Discovery** - Found by Wisconsin Center for Origins Research (WiCOR), , using NASA TESS, WIYN telescope, JWST.
- **Age** - 170 million years; first catalogued exoplanet by WiCOR.
- **Features** - Rocky, dense planet, massive core, avoided expected hydrogen-rich atmosphere.
- A mass 23 times Earth's, while the planet itself is about 60% the size of Neptune.
- **Puzzle** - Raises questions on planet formation, atmosphere loss, collisions, proximity to star.
- **Significance** - Defines Mega-Earth category, challenges ideas of rocky vs gas-rich worlds.



Miscellaneous

International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism - 2026

Observed annually on 21 August to honour victims and survivors of terrorism.

- **Established** - By UNGA Resolution 72/165 (2017).
- **2026 Theme** - “Healing Through Memory”; promotes victim-centred, trauma-informed remembrance.
- **Focus** - Protect victims from secondary harm, retraumatization, online abuse.
- Launch of “Building a Safer Internet for Victims of Terrorism”.

