

Daily Current Affairs

 Date : 04 July 2026



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RAJASTHAN



HPCL Retail Outlets in Rajasthan



Key Points:

- Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma recently inaugurated a new flagship HPCL retail outlet at Pachpadra (Mandapura) in Balotra.
- Additionally, the Rajasthan government approved a major expansion plan to set up 304 new HPCL petrol pumps across the state with an investment of ₹400 crore.
- This new flagship retail outlet (fuel station) in Pachpadra offers advanced fueling facilities alongside additional services such as a modern food plaza and clean public amenities.
- Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) is a leading 'Maharatna' public sector oil and gas company in India. Headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, it is a subsidiary of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). HPCL holds a market share of approximately 20.5% in the Indian energy sector.



NEWS IN SHORTS ⚡

S. No.	News
1.	Pratham Bhalla: Honoured at the UK Parliament ■ Young social activist Pratham Bhalla has honoured been with the 'World Book of Records' award during a special ceremony held at the UK Parliament in London. ■ He received this international award for his outstanding contributions to social development, community empowerment, and social welfare. ■ Pratham Bhalla completed his MBA from the University of Rajasthan and received his early schooling at St. Paul's School, Ajmer.
2.	Sirohi District's 'Roshni Abhiyan' ■ The 'Roshni Abhiyan' is being implemented in Sirohi district with the aim of reducing anaemia among adolescent girls and young girls. ■ First phase of the campaign: 15 July to 15 October 2026. ■ Main objective: To conduct regular health check-ups for female students in classes 9 to 12, test haemoglobin (Hb) levels, and improve their nutrition. ■ Activities: Under the campaign, monthly haemoglobin screening is being conducted, and Iron-Folic Acid (IFA) tablets, Albendazole (deworming medicine), and multivitamins are being distributed.
3.	Launch of the book 'Rajasthan mein Sahkarita' ■ The book 'Rajasthan mein Sahkarita', authored by Assistant Registrar Dr. Jaiprakash Yadav with a focus on the national scope of the cooperative movement, was launched by Shri Gautam Kumar Dak, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Cooperatives and Civil Aviation, at the Apex Bank auditorium. The event took place during the 'Krishak Samman Samaroh'.



NATIONAL



Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, 2026



Why in News?

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment has notified the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, 2026, under the implementation of the Code on Social Security, 2020; this will replace the EPF Scheme, 1952.



Key Points:

Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, 2026

- The Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, 2026, is India's new statutory provident fund scheme that will replace the existing scheme.
- It has been notified under the Code on Social Security, 2020, to modernize provident fund administration while retaining existing retirement benefits.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- **Executive Authority:** Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).

Objectives:

- To provide financial security and retirement savings to employees.
- To implement the Code on Social Security, 2020, through a modern provident fund framework.

Indian Governance and State System

VB-G RAM G Act



Why in News?

- The Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025, has come into effect from July 1.



Key Points:

- Recently, India has replaced MGNREGA, 2005 with the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) in line with Viksit Bharat @2047 to modernize the rural employment policy.
- **VB-G RAM G Act, 2025**
- It was passed by Parliament in December 2025 to replace the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005.
- It shifts the focus from an independent welfare intervention to an integrated instrument of development and resilient infrastructure.



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Key Features of VB-G RAM G

- **Increase in Guaranteed Wage Employment Days:** The VB-G RAM G Act increases the number of guaranteed wage employment days from 100 to 125.
- **Break in employment guarantee during agricultural season:** Under the VB-G RAM G Scheme, a break of 60 days is provided in the scheme to ensure availability of agricultural labor during the peak sowing and harvesting season in agriculture.
- **Sharing of funding burden by states:** In a departure from MGNREGA, the VB-G RAM G Act proposes a greater share of states in funding the rural employment programme.
- Unlike MGNREGA, where the central government paid 100% of the wage bill, 40% of the funding burden under the VB-G RAM G scheme has now been passed on to the states.
- The exceptions are the North-Eastern and Himalayan states and Union Territories (UTs) with legislature, where the central government will bear 90% of the financial burden. As far as Union Territories without legislature are concerned, the entire financial burden will be borne by the Central Government.
- **Top-down resource allocation approach:** It also reverses the MGNREGS model of central allocation based on labor budgets of states, with the Center now determining the transfer of resources.

Viksit Bharat G RAM G Act 2025

DIGNITY, SAFETY & SOCIAL SECURITY AT WORKSITES

WORKSITE FACILITIES – A LEGAL GUARANTEE

- Clean drinking water at every worksite
- Shade and rest areas to protect from heat
- First-aid kit at every worksite

WOMEN-FRIENDLY WORKSITES

At worksites with 5+ children below 5 years, a woman worker will be appointed for childcare and paid at the prescribed wage rate.

WORKER SAFETY & SOCIAL SECURITY

- Free medical treatment in case of accidents
- Accommodation
- Treatment
- Medicines
- Daily allowance equal to half the wage rate
- In cases of death or permanent disability, ex-gratia assistance will be payable as per Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Mandatory Janata Boards
- Geo-tagging of assets
- Real-time dashboards
- Mobile-based monitoring
- Strengthened social audits

Source: Ministry of Rural Development

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- **Rural Employment Guarantee Cards to replace Job Cards:** VB-G RM G Act provides continuity for existing MGNREGS workers, whereby their e-KYC verified job cards will remain valid till the new Rural Employment Guarantee Cards are issued by the States.
- **Timely Payment and Penalties:** Wages should be paid weekly or within 15 days of closing of the attendance list and delay will be compensated at the daily rate of 0.05% of the outstanding wages.
- **Standard Allocation to States:** Under the draft objective criteria for Standard Allocation Rules, 2026, the Central Government will decide the annual fund allocation for each State based on specified objective criteria, using the Sixteenth Finance Commission's horizontal transfer formula as the basis for distribution of funds among the States.
- **New wage rates for unskilled manual workers:** Under the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, the Center is empowered to fix wage rates for unskilled manual work and can set different rates for different sectors, ensuring that they are not lower than the MGNREGA wages.
- **Unemployment Allowance:** If employment is not provided within 15 days, it is mandatory to pay one-fourth of the notified salary for the first 30 days and half thereafter.

MODEL QUESTION:

- Q. “The new approach to fiscal and resource allocation under the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 changes the dynamics of fiscal federalism.” Evaluate critically.



INTERNATIONAL



16th India-Japan Annual Summit



Why in News?

- Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi undertook her first official state visit to New Delhi for the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit.



Key Points:

16th India-Japan Annual Summit:

- The 16th Annual Summit marks a significant milestone in bilateral coordination between two of Asia's largest democracies and economic powerhouses. Against the backdrop of deep volatility in global energy markets and heightened maritime security tensions in the Indo-Pacific region, the summit focused on establishing stable and mutually beneficial supply chains.

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- The bilateral framework formally aligns Japan's updated 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' strategy with India's 'Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative' and 'Ocean Doctrine' to support a rules-based maritime order.

Key Outcomes of the Summit:

Defence and Maritime Security:

- **UNICORN Antenna Agreement:** India and Japan agreed on the technical aspects of the UNICORN project, marking their first joint Defence technology co-development initiative.
- **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:** Both sides decided to hold the fourth India-Japan 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo before the end of 2026.
- **Naval Cooperation:** The leaders expanded naval ties through JAIMEX exercises and agreed to cooperate on naval maintenance, repair, and overhaul under the 'Make in India' initiative.

Economic Security and Supply Chains:

- **Joint Economic Security Framework:** Both countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in sectors such as semiconductors, critical minerals, clean energy, information and communication technology (ICT), and pharmaceuticals.
- **High-Tech Trade Facilitation:** They agreed to relax export controls, promote secure technology trade, and encourage local currency transactions.

Energy and Clean Energy Transition:

- **CBG Initiative:** The India-Japan “cooperative Biogas for Growth” initiative was launched to support India's target of establishing 1,000 biogas plants.
- **Odisha Green Energy Project:** Cooperation was confirmed for Odisha's green hydrogen and clean ammonia production project.
- **Energy Security Cooperation:** An agreement on energy resilience regarding strategic petroleum reserves was signed, while Japan supported India's IEA membership.

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Technology and Infrastructure:

- **AI Strategic Dialogue:** A new AI strategic dialogue has been established to foster cooperation on trustworthy and secure artificial intelligence.
- **High-Speed Rail Partnership:** Japan reaffirmed its support for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train and future high-speed rail projects.
- **Regional Infrastructure Projects:** Advanced projects supported by JICA include the Mumbai Metro, Bengaluru Metro, and initiatives in healthcare, education, and horticulture.

Strategic Opportunities:

- **Accelerating \$1 Trillion Investment Inflow:** The summit paved the way for large-scale capital investment by Japan into Indian states, supporting the national goal of a developed India.
- **Modernization of India-Japan CEPA:** It involves reviewing of 15-year-old Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that offers an opportunity to diversify trade and reduce commercial tariffs.
- **Development of the North-Eastern Region:** Japan's support aids in creating industrial value chains that connect India's North-East with the Bay of Bengal and BIMSTEC regions.
- **Democratizing the Alternative Hardware Ecosystem:** Collaborative R&D under the Sakura Science Exchange and joint space missions like LUPEX (Lunar Polar EXploration) help India reduce reliance on single-vendor technology monopolies.
- **Integration of Tier-II and Tier-III small businesses:** The recently launched India-Japan SME Forum offers Indian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) the opportunity to integrate directly into advanced Japanese corporate supply chains.

Model question:

- Q. In the context of the recently concluded 16th India-Japan Annual Summit, critically evaluate the efforts made through the bilateral framework of both nations to strengthen the rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region.

Nord Stream Pipelines



Why in News?

- German prosecutors have accused Ukrainian state officials of ordering the explosive attack on the Nord Stream gas pipelines in 2022.



Key Points:

Nord Stream Pipeline

- Nord Stream is a set of major natural gas pipelines between Russia and Germany.
- It runs through the Baltic Sea.
- **Pipelines:** Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2.
- **Significance:**
 - o It ensures energy security for Europe, particularly Germany.
 - o It provides a direct and reliable gas supply from Russia, bypassing transit countries.

MCQ

Q. With reference to the Nord Stream Pipelines, consider the following statements:

1. It is a major marine pipeline system for the transport of natural gas between Russia and Germany.
2. This pipeline route passes along the bed of the Black Sea.
3. Both Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 are critical infrastructure for the energy security of Europe (especially Germany).

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None of the above



ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY



Borjuli Wetland



Why in News?

- Borjuli Wetland has been notified as a Biodiversity Heritage Site.



Key Points:

Borjuli Wetland

- **Location:** Sonitpur district, Assam.
- It is known for harboring several varieties of wild rice (*Oryza rufipogon*).
- This wild rice species is disease- and pest-resistant and can tolerate flood and saline water conditions.

Biodiversity Heritage Site

- These are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems that possess rich biodiversity and include specific components—for example, high endemism, the presence of threatened species, etc.
- Notifications are issued by the State Government in consultation with local bodies under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- The National Biodiversity Authority, under the Ministry of Environment, advises the State Government on selection and management.

MCQ

Q. Under which law are 'Biodiversity Heritage Sites' notified in India?

- (a) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- (b) Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- (c) Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- (d) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Vikram-1: India's First Private Orbital Rocket



Why in News?

- Hyderabad-based space technology startup Skyroot Aerospace has announced the launch date for the maiden test flight of Vikram-1, designated as 'Mission Prarambh'.



Key Points:

Vikram-1: India's First Private Orbital Rocket

- Vikram-1 is a seven-story, multi-stage orbital launch vehicle designed to carry small satellites into Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
- **Developed by:** This rocket has been entirely designed, developed, and manufactured by the Hyderabad-based private space startup Skyroot Aerospace.
- Skyroot recently achieved 'unicorn' status, with a valuation exceeding \$1.1 billion.

Objective of Mission Prarambh:

- **Goal:** Named 'Prarambh' (meaning 'Beginning'), this mission marks the entry of India's private sector into the global orbital launch arena.
- **Target Orbit:** The objective of this flight is to place a payload weighing up to 350 kg into a Low Earth Orbit at an altitude of 450 km and an inclination of 60 degrees.

GAGAN: Precision Navigation in Indian Skies



Why in News?

- India has achieved a significant milestone in the field of satellite navigation, as GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation) has become the first Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) to be certified for the equatorial region.

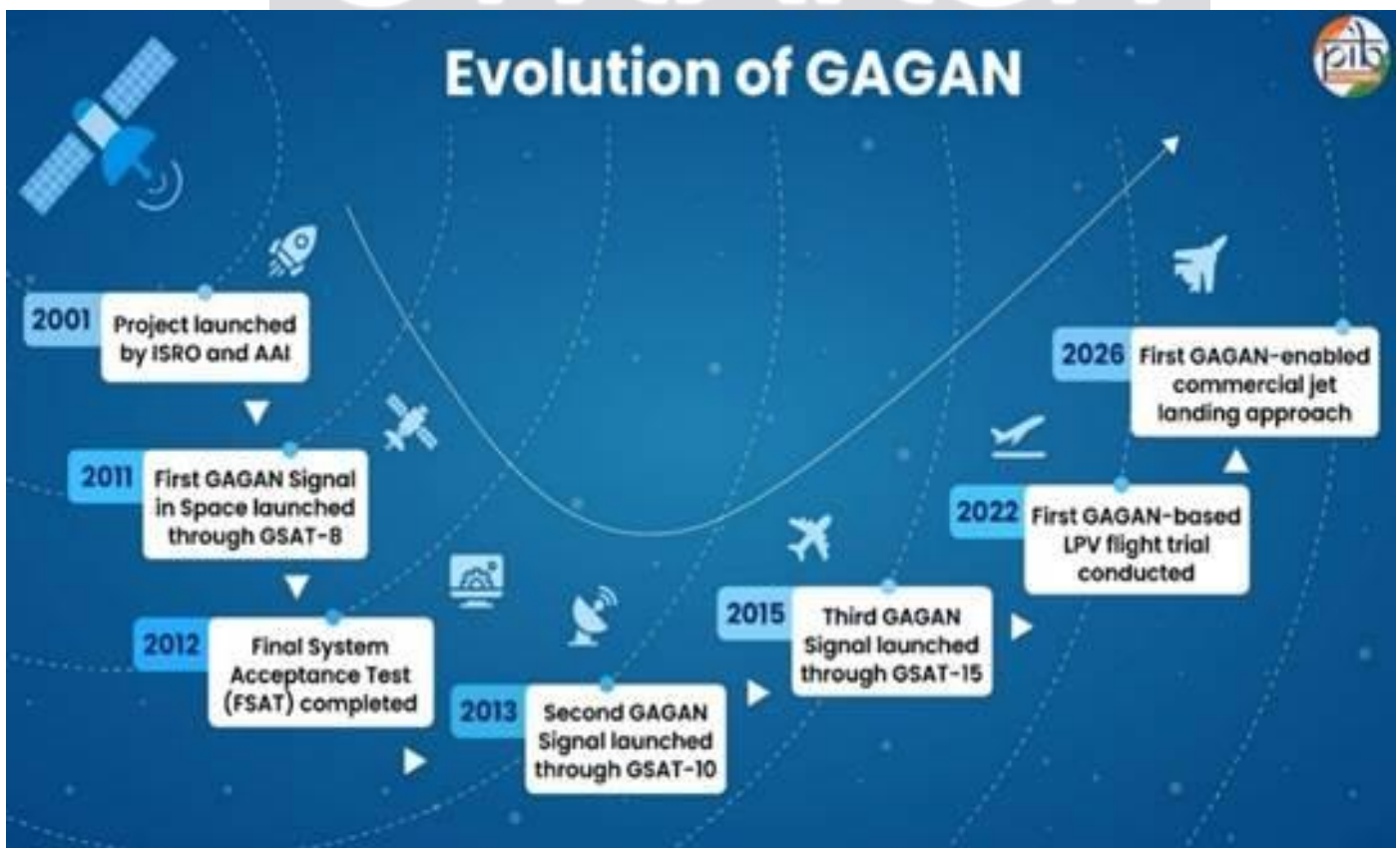


Key Points:

- The DGCA recently conducted India's first satellite-based landing system approach on a commercial aircraft using GAGAN.

GAGAN

- GAGAN is India's indigenous Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS), jointly developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Airports Authority of India.
- Operational since 2015, this system enhances the accuracy, availability, and integrity of GPS signals by providing real-time correction information.



Significance

- It is the first SBAS which is certified for the equatorial region, where ionospheric disturbances affect satellite navigation.
- It enhances resilience against GPS spoofing and jamming.
- It strengthens India's indigenous navigation capabilities under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.
- It places India among the select few nations that possess an operational SBAS.

Beyond aviation, GAGAN also supports:

- Maritime navigation
- Intelligent transport and fleet management
- Railway operations
- Disaster management
- Defence, telecommunications coordination, and geospatial mapping.

Did you know?

- GAGAN's integrated architecture is a crucial component of India's comprehensive satellite navigation program. Alongside GAGAN, India has also developed an indigenous regional navigation satellite system: Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).

GAGAN	NavIC
Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS)	Independent regional navigation satellite system
Improves GPS through real-time corrections and integrity information	Provides positioning, navigation and timing services
Supports civil aviation across the Indian Flight Information Region	Coverage area includes India and a region up to 1500 km beyond Indian boundary

Green Ammonia and Methanol



Why in News?

- Recently, an Indian company signed long-term offtake agreements with leading Japanese companies for green ammonia and green methanol.



Key Points:

Green Ammonia

- It is a pungent-smelling gas primarily used in the manufacture of fertilizers.
- **Production:** Produced using the Haber-Bosch process, which involves combining hydrogen and nitrogen.

Green Methanol

- Methanol is a colorless liquid.
- **Uses:** Primarily used in the production of other chemicals such as formaldehyde, acetic acid, and plastics.
- It can serve as a fuel source for engines; however, it is expensive, flammable, and requires a fuel tank twice the size of that needed for its oil-based counterpart.
- **Production:** Green methanol is produced from low-carbon sources like biomass or through carbon capture.