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Weekly Current Affairs

August 2026 - Week 3

17 - 23 August 2026 | Exam Revision Notes

35+ Topics · 10 Sections · ~30 Min Read

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Dear Aspirants,

Greetings from ReadingRoomz! This week featured India's 80th Independence Day announcements, landmark AP developments in craft preservation, higher education reform, and industrial policy, along with key national and international events across environment, science, and sports.

Read each topic carefully, note the key facts, and revise before your next practice session. Consistency is your greatest weapon. **Every small step today brings you closer to your dream tomorrow.**

— Team ReadingRoomz | contact@readingroomz.com

Table of Contents

1. International	Hara Forests – Persian Gulf Mangroves Under Threat Belgium's Largest Wildfire – High Fens
2. National	Independence Day 2026 – PM Modi's Key Announcements Ladakh High Court Bench
3. Andhra Pradesh	Craft Wood Banks (Six Clusters) BC Reservation in Local Bodies (34% RLBs) Four Higher Education Bills BHAVYA – Six Industrial Parks
4. Economy	India's Makhana Sector – World's Largest Producer National Makhana Board ₹476.03 Crore Scheme
5. Science & Technology	NASA Invites ISRO to Moon Base Programme Artemis III & IV Friedreich's Ataxia
6. Environment	Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Odisha – Tigers Locally Extinct (2022 Estimation) Village Relocation Inquiry
7. Schemes	PM-AASHA – Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan Four Components ₹7,200 Crore (2026–27)
8. Awards & Honours	National Sports Awards 2025 – Arjuna Award (17) Dronacharya Award Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar
9. Committees & Conferences	COP17 – UNCCD, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia India's First Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems
10. Person in News	Gurajada Venkata Apparao – Kanyasulkam Historian Sumit Sarkar (1939–2026)

1. International Current Affairs

Hara Forests of the Persian Gulf - Mangroves at Strait of Hormuz Under Threat

The **Hara forests**, located around the **Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf**, are mangrove forests dominated by the **grey mangrove (*Avicennia marina*)**. These mangroves survive in highly saline water through **specialised root-based salt filtration mechanisms**. Recent satellite images have revealed a major environmental threat to these forests due to West Asia conflicts.

Largest Wildfire in Belgium - High Fens (Hautes Fagnes) Nature Reserve; ~3,000 Hectares

Belgium battled its **largest wildfire on record** in the **High Fens (Hautes Fagnes) Nature Reserve** in eastern Belgium near the German border. By **17 August 2026**, the fire had scorched around **3,000 hectares**. Around **500 firefighters** and emergency personnel, supported by aircraft and neighbouring European countries, were deployed.

Why Difficult to Fight: The High Fens is characterised by peatlands, forests and heathland. Fires can penetrate peat and continue smouldering below the surface, making containment extremely difficult.

2. National Current Affairs

Independence Day 2026 - PM Modi's Key Announcements; India's 80th Independence Day

PM Narendra Modi addressed the nation from the **Red Fort on India's 80th Independence Day, 15 August 2026**, announcing major initiatives as part of India's push towards **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

Announcement	Key Detail
AI Skilling	1 crore youth to be trained in AI skills over the next year
Free Online Coaching	Free online coaching network for examination aspirants using Digital Public Infrastructure
Sports Talent Hunt	Nationwide hunt for children aged 5-15 years; specialised training with focus on Olympic disciplines
Civil Defence Network	New Civil Defence network to prepare citizens for modern security threats (refineries, banks, data centres, factories)
Semiconductors	Three plants already initiated; chip exports begun; more plants expected in 7-8 years
Nuclear Energy Target	100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047; five new reactors to be started within this decade
Lakshpati Didi	Earlier target of 3 crore achieved; new target: 6 crore Lakshpati Didis (SHG women with annual income ≥ 1 lakh)

AP Relevance – Kovvada Nuclear Power Project: India's 100 GW nuclear target has special significance for Andhra Pradesh. Kovvada in Srikakulam district is an in-principle approved nuclear power site. The planned Kovvada Nuclear Power Project consists of six units of 1,208 MW each, proposed with US technology and cooperation.

Union Cabinet Approves High Court Bench in Ladakh - Section 75, J&K; Reorganisation Act 2019

The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of a **Bench of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh** in the Union Territory of Ladakh. This improves access to justice for people in remote areas.

Key Legal Points: This does NOT create a separate High Court for Ladakh | Section 75 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 provides for a common High Court for both UTs of J&K; and Ladakh | Ladakh is a Union Territory without a legislature | Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh: Vinai Kumar Saxena.

3. Andhra Pradesh Current Affairs

AP Launches Craft Wood Banks - Six Clusters; Kondapalli, Etikoppaka, Bobbili Veena and More

AP launched the **Central Craft Wood Bank at Dowleswaram, East Godavari** on **15 August 2026** to supply timber to **~5,000 artisan families** across **six traditional handicraft clusters**. Around **40 species of wood** to be made available. Forest Department plans stocks for **~five years**. Key feature: **QR-code-based traceability** (source, species, age).

Craft Cluster	District	Craft / Wood
Kondapalli	NTR	Kondapalli toys – Tella Poniki wood
Etikoppaka	Anakapalli	Etikoppaka toys – Ankudu wood
Settigunta / Lakshmigaripalli	Annamayya	Traditional woodcraft / toys
Madhavamala	Tirupati	Wood carving – multiple species
Udayagiri	Nellore	Traditional wooden cutlery
Bobbili	Vizianagaram	Bobbili Veena – jackfruit wood

AP Cabinet Approves BC Reservation - 34% in Rural Local Bodies; 33.33% in Urban Local Bodies

AP Cabinet (CM **N. Chandrababu Naidu**) approved on **18 August 2026**:

Decision	Detail
BC Reservation - Rural Local Bodies (RLBs)	34% — aligns with AP Panchayat Raj Act, 1994
BC Reservation - Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)	33.33%
SC & ST Reservations	Existing reservations remain unchanged
Election of Mayors	Direct election by voters for Mayors of Municipal Corporations
Chairpersons - Municipalities & Nagar Panchayats	Direct election by voters

AP Assembly Passes Four Higher Education Reform Bills - Nara Lokesh

AP Legislative Assembly **unanimously passed four higher education Bills** in August 2026. Introduced by HRD Minister **Nara Lokesh**.

Bill	Key Purpose
AP Higher Education Regulatory and Monitoring Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2026	Converts commission to committee; limits role to fee regulation; other functions to Higher Education Commissioner
AP Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026	Simplifies regulations; encourages private higher education investment
AP State Private Skill Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Bill, 2026	Framework for industry-linked skill universities; bridges education-workforce gap
AP State Educational Institutions Reservation in Teachers' Cadre Bill, 2026	Reservations in university faculty recruitment; 1,523 faculty posts in Phase 1

AP Proposes Six Industrial Parks under BHAVYA Scheme - Space City, Drone City, Aerospace, Textile

AP proposed **six sector-specific industrial parks** under the first phase of the Centre's **Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA)**. Submitted to the Central Government; under consideration through **Challenge Mode** selection.

Proposed Park	District
AP Space City	Tirupati
AP Drone City	Kurnool
Tekulodu Aerospace and Defence Park	Sri Sathya Sai
Makavaripalem Organic Food Park	Anakapalli
Renewable Energy Manufacturing Zone	Prakasam
Veldurthi Mega Textile Park	Palnadu

About BHAVYA: Full form - Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana | Implementing department: DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry | Total outlay: ₹33,660 crore | Target: 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across India over 6 years | Phase-I: 50 projects through Challenge Mode.

4. Economy

India's Makhana Sector - World's Largest Producer; National Makhana Board; ₹476.03 Crore Scheme

India is the **world's largest producer of makhana** (*Euryale ferox*), an aquatic crop grown in shallow ponds, lakes and wetlands. **Bihar** contributes nearly **80-85% of global supply**, concentrated in the **Kosi basin** districts of Supaul, Saharsa and Madhepura.

Detail	Fact
Scientific Name	Euryale ferox
India's Global Rank	World's largest producer
Bihar's Share	~80-85% of global makhana supply
Production (2024-25)	63,910 MT Estimated 2025-26: 80,590 MT (Bihar: ~60,000 MT)
National Makhana Board	Announced Union Budget 2025-26 Launched in Bihar on 15 September 2025
Central Sector Scheme	₹476.03 crore for 2025-26 to 2030-31 Focus: research, seeds, training, value addition, exports
Improved Varieties	Swarna Vaidehi and Sabour Makhana-1
Exports (2025-26)	7,264.89 MT Top markets: USA, Canada, UAE (together 77% of exports)

5. Science & Technology

NASA Invites ISRO to Join Moon Base Programme - Artemis Accords; Artemis III & IV

NASA invited **ISRO** to participate in its **Moon Base Programme** for long-term human presence near the **Moon's South Pole**. The South Pole is important: some areas receive extended sunlight, while permanently shadowed craters contain **water ice** — potential source of oxygen and rocket propellant.

Mission / Detail	Fact
Artemis III (Revised)	Crewed Earth-orbit demonstration mission planned for 2027
Artemis IV	First crewed lunar landing of the programme targeted for 2028
India Joined Artemis Accords	21 June 2023
Artemis Accords	Established in 2020 Principles for peaceful and sustainable civil exploration of the Moon, Mars, comets and asteroids Key principles: transparency, interoperability, emergency assistance, avoidance of harmful interference

Friedreich's Ataxia - Rare Inherited Genetic Disorder; Damages Nervous System and Heart

Friedreich's Ataxia (FRDA) is a rare inherited genetic disorder that **progressively damages the nervous system and the heart**. Commonly affects coordination, balance, speech, and movement. Symptoms typically begin during **childhood or adolescence**. A University of Oklahoma study explained why FRDA is found mainly in people of **European, North African, West Asian and South Asian ancestry**.

6. Environment

Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Odisha - High-Level Inquiry; Tigers Locally Extinct (2022 Estimation)

The Odisha Government constituted a **high-level inquiry committee** to examine the relocation of villages from **Satkosia Tiger Reserve (STR)** following allegations of procedural violations and forced eviction.

About Satkosia Tiger Reserve: Located along the Mahanadi River in Odisha | Comprises Satkosia Gorge and Baisipalli wildlife landscapes | Notified as a Tiger Reserve in 2007 | The 2022 All India Tiger Estimation recorded no tiger presence in Satkosia — described as having witnessed local extirpation of tigers.

7. Schemes

PM-AASHA - Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan; ₹7,200 Crore (2026-27)

PM-AASHA is the Government of India's flagship **price-support framework** for farmers, ensuring remunerative prices, strengthening MSP implementation, and reducing distress sales. Launched in **September 2018**. Budget for **2026-27: ₹7,200 crore** (up from ₹6,941.36 crore in 2025-26).

Component	How It Works
Price Support Scheme (PSS)	Physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and copra at MSP through NAFED and NCCF when market prices fall below MSP Tur, Urad and Masur: up to 100% of State production
Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)	No physical procurement; eligible farmers receive the MSP-market price difference directly in bank accounts (subject to prescribed limits)
Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)	Used mainly for perishable agricultural/horticultural commodities (tomato, onion, potato) where MSP does not apply
Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF)	Maintains buffer stocks of essential commodities to moderate price volatility

Digital Platforms: Aadhaar-enabled authentication | e-NAM | e-Samriddhi | e-Samyukti — used to improve transparency and efficiency in procurement operations.

8. Awards & Honours

National Sports Awards 2025 - Arjuna Award (17 Sportspersons); Dronacharya; Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the **National Sports Awards 2025** on **18 August 2026**. A total of **17 sportspersons** were selected for the **Arjuna Award for Outstanding Performance in Sports and Games 2025**.

Arjuna Award 2025	Sport
Tejaswin Shankar	Athletics
Muhammed Ajmal V	Athletics
Priyanka Goswami	Athletics
Treesa Jolly	Badminton
Pullela Gayatri Gopichand	Badminton
Narender	Boxing
Vidit Santosh Gujarathi	Chess
Divya Jitendra Deshmukh	Chess
Dhanush Srikanth	Deaf Shooting
Lalremsiami	Hockey
Rajkumar Pal	Hockey
Surjeet	Kabaddi
Pooja	Kabaddi
Rudransh Khandelwal	Para-Shooting
Ekta Bhyan	Para-Athletics
Arvind Singh	Rowing
Akhil Sheoran	Shooting

Arjuna Award (Lifetime) 2025: I. Arumainayagam — Football Dronacharya Award 2025 – Regular Category: Parveer Singh (Athletics) | Chhote Lal Yadav (Boxing) | Neha Nandkumar Chavan (Shooting) Dronacharya Award 2025 – Lifetime Category: Dharmendra Singh Yadav (Boxing) | Virender Kumar (Wrestling) Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar 2025: Army Paralympic Node, Pune

9. Committees & Conferences

COP17 - UNCCD; India Launches First Guide to Grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems; Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

India launched its **first-ever Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) of India** on **17 August 2026** at the **17th Conference of the Parties (COP17)** to the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**.

Guide Coverage: Documents India's major grasslands, savannas, deserts, scrublands, rocky plateaus, ravines and other open natural ecosystems | Includes: Himalayan and Terai grasslands, Thar and Banni landscapes, and Deccan savannas. About UNCCD: Established in 1994 | One of three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD) | Focuses on combating land degradation, desertification and drought | Secretariat: Bonn, Germany.

10. Person in News

Gurajada Venkata Apparao (1862-1915) - Pioneer of Modern Telugu Literature; Kanyasulkam

Detail	Fact
Born	21 September 1862, Rayavaram, Andhra Pradesh
Associated With	Vizianagaram Worked at Maharajah's College, Vizianagaram
Famous Play	Kanyasulkam — criticised child marriage, bride-price and exploitation of women through satire and realistic characters
Famous Poem	"Desamunu Preminchumanna" — a nation is defined by its people, not merely by its land
Literary Contribution	Advocated Vyavaharika Bhasha (spoken Telugu) in literary writing; promoted social consciousness and modernisation in Telugu literature

Historian Sumit Sarkar Passes Away - Age 87; Author of 'Modern India 1885-1947'

Sumit Sarkar, eminent historian of modern Indian history, passed away on **13 August 2026** at age **87**. His scholarship shaped the study of colonial India, nationalism, social history, and the freedom struggle. Major works: **Modern India 1885-1947** (colonial India and the Indian national movement) and **The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal** (Swadeshi Movement and Bengal Partition).