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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 14-08-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Rajasthan to Launch India's First Drone-Based Artificial Rain Trial

Rajasthan will conduct India's first drone-based artificial rain experiment at Ramgarh Dam, replacing traditional aeroplane-assisted cloud seeding with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Around 60 drones will disperse special chemicals into rain-bearing clouds to stimulate droplet formation and potentially cause rainfall.

The initiative is a joint project between the state agriculture department and technology firm GenX AI, headquartered in the US and Bengaluru.

The trial was originally scheduled for July 31 but was postponed due to heavy rain alerts.

Multiple operational readiness tests have been carried out in Jaipur before the launch.

The public will be allowed to witness the event.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), India Meteorological Department, district authorities, and the agriculture department.

Drones will fly at very high altitudes to conduct cloud seeding over Ramgarh Dam.

It involves dispersing particles such as silver iodide into clouds to accelerate the formation of ice crystals or water droplets.

BANKING

ICICI Lombard Collaborates with Mahindra Finance

ICICI Lombard General Insurance has formed a strategic partnership with Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited to distribute motor insurance products.

The partnership aims to leverage Mahindra Finance's extensive rural and semi-urban network to expand insurance penetration across India.

Mahindra Finance customers will get access to ICICI Lombard's complete motor insurance portfolio.

The collaboration focuses on financial inclusion by targeting over 11 million Mahindra Finance customers with integrated insurance solutions.

HDFC Bank and VinFast Auto India Collaborate for Auto and Inventory Financing

VinFast Auto India,a Vietnamese multinational automotive company has partnered with HDFC Bank to provide auto and inventory financing for its exclusive dealer network.

The collaboration is formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two companies.

This is VinFast's first partnership with a banking institution in India.

The partnership aims to offer a seamless suite of credit solutions ahead of VinFast's upcoming launch in India.

VinFast plans to launch its VF7 and VF6 electric vehicle models in India before the festival season in 2025.

SEBI Plans Unified Access Portal for Verified Foreign Investors

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed a single-window gateway for trusted foreign investors called SWAGAT-FI—Single Window Automatic & Generalised Access for Trusted Foreign Investors.

The primary goal is to simplify regulatory compliance and boost foreign investment in India.

SWAGAT-FI will make India's capital markets more accessible to a select group of foreign investors who are objectively verified as low-risk.

The initiative targets entities like government-owned funds, central banks, sovereign wealth funds, multilateral entities, and highly regulated public retail funds, which account for over 70% of foreign portfolio investors' (FPI) assets under custody.

SWAGAT-FI aims to provide eligible investors a streamlined, single-window registration process for both FPIs and Foreign Venture Capital Investors (FVCIs), reducing paperwork, cost, and regulatory complexity.

Existing FPIs meeting SWAGAT-FI criteria will also be allowed to opt in for easier compliance.

A key feature is extending the registration continuance and KYC review period for these trusted investors from three years to ten years.

Jack Ma's Ant Financial Sells Entire 5.84% Stake in One97 Communications for ₹3,803 Crore

Jack Ma's Ant Financial exited One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, by selling its entire 5.84% stake for approximately ₹3,803 crore.

Following the stake sale, One97 Communications' shares declined by about 1.45% on NSE and 1.23% on BSE.

The stake was sold by Ant Group through its affiliate Antfin (Netherlands) Holding BV.

Ant Group, formerly known as Ant Financial, is an affiliate of the Chinese conglomerate Alibaba Group.

After this exit, the mobile payments company Paytm became 100% Indian-owned.

DEFENCE

Indian Navy to Commission Advanced Stealth Frigates Udaygiri and Himgiri

The Indian Navy is set to commission two advanced frontline frigates, Udaygiri (F35) and Himgiri (F34), simultaneously on 26 August 2025 at Visakhapatnam.

This is the first time two major surface combatants from two prestigious Indian shipyards—Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata—will be commissioned together.

Udaygiri is the second ship of the Project 17A stealth frigates and also the 100th ship designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau.

Both frigates are stealthy, versatile, and indigenous, displacing around 6,700 tons, about 5% larger than the predecessor Shivalik-class but with a sleeker form and reduced radar cross-section.

It is powered by Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion, featuring diesel engines and gas turbines driving controllable-pitch propellers, managed through an Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS).

It is armed with supersonic Surface-to-Surface Missiles, Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles, a 76 mm gun, 30 mm and 12.7 mm Close-in Weapon Systems, and Anti-submarine/Underwater weapons.

The construction involved an extensive industrial ecosystem with support from over 200 MSMEs, generating around 4,000 direct and 10,000 indirect jobs.

The commissioning reinforces the Navy's commitment to self-reliance in ship design and construction, following other indigenous platforms commissioned in 2025 such as INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, INS Vaghsheer, INS Arnala, and INS Nistar.

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

RBI Approves Merger of Hinduja Leyland Finance with NDL Ventures

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the merger scheme of Ashok Leyland's subsidiary Hinduja Leyland Finance with NDL Venture.

Ashok Leyland will proceed with further steps like regulatory, shareholder, and other approvals for the merger.

The merger aims to strengthen the financial position with combined assets exceeding Rs 29,000 crore.

The merger supports Ashok Leyland's plan for a public listing of Hinduja Leyland Finance via a reverse merger, enhancing shareholder value.

NDL Ventures has been registered as an NBFC with the RBI, a key step for merger completion.

Hinduja Leyland Finance continues to grow despite a slight delay in listing; its subsidiary, Hinduja Housing Finance, is the fourth-largest affordable housing finance company.

AGREEMENT & MoU

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited Signs MoUs with Global Tech Giants

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has signed MoUs with Ericsson India, Qualcomm Technologies, Cisco Systems, and Nokia Solutions and Networks India to launch advanced training programs in 5G, AI/ML, networking, and other digital technologies at the Bharat Ratna Bhim Rao Ambedkar Institute of Telecom Training (BRBRAITT), Jabalpur.

This initiative is part of the Telecom Innovation, Research and Training Centre (TIRTC) plan, aimed at creating a national hub for telecom-specific R&D talent and supporting product innovation, prototyping, and entrepreneurship, aligned with Skill India and Atmanirbhar Bharat

Ericsson India will establish a 5G Centre of Excellence at BRBRAITT, offering hands-on 5G training and online modules via the Ericsson Educate Program, targeting 2,000+ students annually with infrastructure support from BSNL.

Qualcomm Technologies Inc. will set up the Qualcomm Institute for 5G and AI training, providing premium online content, live sessions, internships, and sponsoring training for the first 100 participants in the inaugural year.

Cisco Systems will leverage the Cisco Networking Academy Program to train in networking, cybersecurity, and IT infrastructure, offering free online curriculum and tools to non-profit

educational institutions nationwide.

Nokia Solutions and Networks India will establish a 5G Centre of Excellence and AI/ML Lab at BRBRAITT, training 300 students annually in 5G radio, core networks, and AI/ML applications, with joint certification from Nokia and BRBRAITT.

The collaborations support national missions including Digital India, Skill India, Make in India, Startup India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat, while positioning Jabalpur as a key national technology training hub.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Organ Donation Day

Every year World Organ Donation Day is celebrated on the 13th of August to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation and encourage people to donate their organs after death.

This year, 2025, the theme for World Organ Donation Day is “Answering the Call”.

In 1954, the first successful organ donation took place in the United States.Ronald Lee Herrick donated his kidney to his twin brother Richard J. Herrick and he was the world’s first organ donor. Dr. Joseph Murray was the doctor who carried out this successful kidney transplantation.

The doctor was honored with Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for bringing advances in organ transplantation in the year 1990.

The world overcomes unawareness and improves organ donation initiatives based on their conditions and capacity.

Since 2010, India celebrates National Organ Day on 27th November to promote organ donation under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare by National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO).