DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 19-08-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

India Post To Phase Out Registered Post Service From September 1

The Indian Postal Department plans to discontinue its Registered Post service starting on September 1, 2025.

The service, which has been operational for over 50 years, is being discontinued as part of a strategic plan to merge it with Speed Post.

The goal of this merger is to modernize and streamline postal operations.

Speed Post, which has been in use since 1986, offers better tracking, faster delivery, and improved operational efficiency.

The Registered Post service was priced at ₹25.96 plus ₹5 for every additional 20 grams, while Speed Post starts at ₹41 for parcels up to 50 grams, making it 20-25% more expensive.

Northeast Frontier Railway Partners with IIT-Guwahati

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has collaborated with IIT-Guwahati to develop and implement biodegradable alternatives to single-use plastics for railway operations and passenger services.

In the first phase, eco-friendly green bed-roll bags were introduced on trains, replacing conventional plastic bags used for distributing linen.

The biodegradable material was developed at IIT-Guwahati's in-house R&D facility.

The material is fully biodegradable and compostable, breaking down naturally in compost within a short duration.

It is designed to meet railway operational standards while ensuring environmental safety.

This initiative reduces the plastic footprint of Indian Railways and promotes sustainable waste management.

The project aligns with India's mission to phase out single-use plastics.

IIT-Guwahati researchers have been at the forefront of green technologies, including bio-polymers and eco-friendly packaging solutions.

The collaboration highlights the role of academic-industry partnerships in solving real-world problems.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Beijing To Host First World Humanoid Robot Games

The first World Humanoid Robot Games are taking place in Beijing, China, with over 500 humanoid robots from 280 teams and 16 countries

The competition features 26 events, including soccer, boxing, medicine sorting, and clean-up tasks.

This event is part of China's strategic efforts to develop robots powered by artificial intelligence.

The International Federation of Robotics (IFR) noted that China has made humanoids the "center of their national strategy" to showcase its technological competence and global competitiveness.

In March, China announced a one-trillion-yuan fund (€119 billion) to support technology startups in robotics and AI.

A robot in a 1,500-meter race completed the event in 6:29:37, which is significantly slower than the human record of 3:26:00.

The games are being held at the Beijing National Speed Skating Oval, built for the 2022 Winter Olympics

BANKING

S&P Upgrades Credit Ratings Of SBI, HDFC Bank, Tata Capital And Seven Other Companies

S&P Global Ratings upgraded the long-term issuer credit ratings for seven Indian banks and three financial institutions on August 15, 2025.

This upgrade followed S&P Global's earlier increase in India's sovereign credit rating.

The seven Indian banks whose ratings were upgraded are: State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank Ltd, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Union Bank of India, and Indian Bank.

The three finance companies that also received an upgrade are: Bajaj Finance, Tata Capital, and L&T Finance.

S&P Global attributes these upgrades to India's strong economic growth momentum, which is benefiting these domestically focused financial institutions.

The agency expects Indian banks to maintain adequate asset quality, good profitability, and enhanced capitalization over the next one to two years.

NSIC Signs Memoranda Of Understanding With Private Banks

The National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), a government enterprise under the Ministry of Micro,Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with several private sector banks on August 11, 2025.

The banks involved are Axis Bank, Dhanlaxmi Bank, Karnataka Bank, AU Small Finance Bank, and IndusInd Bank.

This collaboration is part of NSIC's MSME Credit Facilitation Program.

The primary goal is to provide handholding support to MSMEs and help them access the formal financial system.

The initiative aims for these banks to expand their outreach to deserving micro and small enterprises.

S&P Global Upgrades India’s Sovereign Rating To ‘BBB’

S&P Global has upgraded India’s sovereign credit rating to 'BBB' from 'BBB-', with the short-term rating also raised to 'A-2' from 'A-3'.

The outlook remains Stable.

This is India's first sovereign upgrade by S&P in 18 years, with the previous one occurring in 2007.

In May 2024, S&P had already revised its outlook on India from ‘Stable’ to ‘Positive’.

The upgrade is based on India's strong economic performance, with an average real GDP growth of 8.8% from FY22 to FY24, making it the fastest-growing major economy in the Asia-Pacific region.

The central government's fiscal deficit was 4.8% of GDP in FY25, with a target to reduce it to 4.4% in FY26.

Another rating agency, Morning Star DBRS, also recently upgraded India to “BBB”

Moody’s and Fitch continue to rate India at the lowest investment grade of Baa3 and BBB-, respectively.

Following the sovereign upgrade, S&P Global also raised the credit ratings of several public and private sector companies to 'BBB' from 'BBB-'. These include ONGC, Power Grid, NTPC, Tata Power, India Exim, and IRFC.

DEFENCE

India and Sri Lanka Hold 12th SLINEX-25 Naval Exercise

The 12th edition of SLINEX-25, a bilateral naval exercise between India and Sri Lanka, is being held from August 14-18, 2025.

The exercise is taking place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and involves two phases: a Harbour phase and a Sea phase.

The Indian Navy is represented by INS Rana (a guided missile destroyer) and INS Jyoti (a fleet tanker).

The Sri Lankan Navy is participating with SLNS Gajabahu and SLNS Vijayabahu.

The exercise, which began in 2005, aims to strengthen maritime cooperation and interoperability between the two navies.

This collaboration aligns with India's MAHASAGAR policy (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).

The 11th edition of SLINEX-24, was hosted by Visakhapatnam, India from 17-20 December 2024.

Indian Navy’s Newest Stealth Frigate INS Tamal Docks In Naples, Italy

INS Tamal, the latest stealth frigate of the Indian Navy, arrived in Naples, Italy, on August 13, 2025.

The frigate's visit took place during its return passage to India after its commissioning in Russia on July 1, 2025.

This visit highlights the deepening bilateral relations between India and Italy, which were elevated to a 'Strategic Partnership' in 2023.

Before its arrival in Naples, INS Tamal participated in a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Italian Navy's ITS Trieste.

The joint exercise included communication, maneuvers, and flying operations.

INS Tamal also celebrated India's 79th Independence Day in Naples on August 15, 2025.

Indian Navy Receives Ikshak (Yard 3027), Third Survey Vessel (Large) And 102nd Ship Designed By Warship Design Bureau

Ikshak (Yard 3027), the third of four Survey Vessel (Large) ships, 102nd ship steered by the Indian Navy’s Warship Design Bureau was delivered to the Indian Navy on August 14, 2025.

It was built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, and overseen by the

Warship Overseeing Team (Kolkata).

The contract for these four Survey Vessel (Large) ships was signed on October 30, 2018.

The first ship of this class, INS Sandhayak, was commissioned on February 3, 2024, and the second, INS Nirdeshak, on December 18, 2024.

These ships are designed for coastal and deep-water hydrographic surveys of port/harbour approaches and to determine navigational channels/routes.

Ikshak has a displacement of 3400 tons and a length of 110 meters.

It boasts an indigenous content of over 80% by cost, aligning with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'

Notably, Ikshak is the first Survey Vessel (Large) ship to be delivered with accommodation for women officers and sailors.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Microsoft Tops TopBrand 2025 Global Brands List

At the 19th China Brand Festival held in Shenzhen (August 7–11, 2025), the TopBrand Union released the Top 500 Global Brands List 2025.

The theme of the event was “AI and Global Expansion”, which saw participation from over 10,000 entrepreneurs, policymakers, and brand leaders worldwide.

Microsoft ranked 1st with a brand value of $1,062.505 billion, showcasing strength in AI, cloud computing, and enterprise software.

NVIDIA secured 2nd position with $1,046.760 billion brand value, driven by the AI chip revolution and next-gen technology dominance.

Apple ranked 3rd with $997.685 billion brand value, maintaining a strong consumer ecosystem despite competition.

Amazon, Alphabet (Google), Saudi Aramco, Walmart, Meta (Facebook), Berkshire Hathaway, and Broadcom completed the Top 10 Global Brands list.

Saudi Aramco emerged as the highest-ranked energy brand, while Broadcom’s inclusion highlighted the growing strength of semiconductors.

PetroChina (Rank 14) was the highest-valued Chinese brand in the list.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Neeraj Ghaywan’s Homebound Wins Big at IFFM 2025

Acclaimed filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan’s drama Homebound won Best Film and earned him the Best Director award at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2025 .

The film stars Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jetwa, and Janhvi Kapoor, praised for their authentic and emotionally powerful performances.

It explores belonging, identity, and displacement, highlighting the struggles of returning home after long absences; resonates globally with themes of nostalgia, alienation, and reconciliation.

Homebound has been selected as the Closing Film of IFFM 2025, to be screened on August 24, 2025.

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne is a prestigious international platform showcasing Indian cinema worldwide.

With Homebound, Ghaywan reaffirms his place as a socially conscious filmmaker, blending artistic storytelling with human concerns.