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Current Affairs Today, July 18, 2026

18 July 2026 ·

REPORTS & SCHEMES

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Current Affairs Today, July 18, 2026

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

A roundup of the key current affairs for July 18, 2026, covering the items not taken up as separate deep-dive articles.

FAIRFAX EMERGES AS PREFERRED BIDDER FOR IDBI BANK

Canada's Fairfax Financial was reported as the preferred bidder for a majority stake in IDBI Bank.

Key Points

- **Fairfax Financial Holdings**, the Canadian group led by **Prem Watsa**, emerged as the preferred bidder to acquire about a **60.72 per cent** stake in **IDBI Bank** in a strategic disinvestment valued at around **Rs 52,932 crore**, subject to Reserve Bank of India and other regulatory approvals.
- The current promoters are the **Government of India** and the **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)**; the deal is being pursued through the **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)** and is billed as one of the largest foreign investments in an Indian bank.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

Bidder: Fairfax Financial (Prem Watsa), for about 60.72 per cent of IDBI Bank.

Value: about Rs 52,932 crore; pending RBI and regulatory nod.

Sellers: Government of India and LIC, via DIPAM.

JUNE PLFS BULLETIN HOLDS UNEMPLOYMENT AT 5.5 PER CENT

The monthly Periodic Labour Force Survey bulletin for June 2026 was released.

Key Points

- The **National Statistics Office (NSO)** reported the all-India unemployment rate for those aged 15 and above steady at about **5.5 per cent** in **June 2026**, under the newer monthly **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** series.

- Within the total, the **rural** unemployment rate eased to about **5.0 per cent** while the **urban** rate rose to about **6.6 per cent**, pointing to differing labour-market pressures across rural and urban India.

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Data: PLFS monthly bulletin, June 2026 (NSO).

Unemployment rate (15+): about 5.5 per cent all-India.

Split: rural about 5.0 per cent, urban about 6.6 per cent.

DR NANDINI AZAD WINS THE BHARAT SAMMAN

Dr Nandini Azad was honoured with the Bharat Samman 2026.

Key Points

- **Dr Nandini Azad**, a leader of the **Working Women's Forum**, received the **Bharat Samman 2026** for her lifelong work in women's empowerment, financial inclusion and grassroots development in southern India.
- The recognition highlights the role of self-help groups and grassroots women's organisations in expanding financial inclusion and livelihoods for informal-sector women workers.

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Awardee: Dr Nandini Azad, Working Women's Forum.

Award: Bharat Samman 2026.

Field: women's empowerment, financial inclusion, grassroots development.

NEW SPECIES AND A FOSSIL IN THE NEWS

Several new-species discoveries and a plant fossil were reported.

Key Points

- Researchers described a new monkey, the **Likweli monkey (Colobus congoensis)**, from the **Democratic Republic of the Congo's Lomami National Park**, and scientists reported a roughly **24-million-year-old Kewra (screw pine) fossil** from **Assam**.

- Closer home, the **Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)** described **two new solitary bee species** from the **Siang Valley in Arunachal Pradesh**, underlining the region's pollinator diversity.

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New primate: Likweli monkey (*Colobus congoensis*), DR Congo.

Fossil: about 24-million-year-old Kewra (screw pine), Assam.

Pollinators: two new solitary bee species, Siang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh.

NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY

July 18 is observed as Nelson Mandela International Day.

Key Points

- **Nelson Mandela International Day**, observed on **July 18** (Mandela's birthday), honours the anti-apartheid leader and first democratically elected President of South Africa, encouraging people to devote time to service; the **2026** theme is centred on combating poverty and inequity.
- Mandela's legacy of reconciliation and human dignity connects to themes of democracy, social justice and India's own long solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle.

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Day: Nelson Mandela International Day, July 18.

Person: Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid leader and first democratically elected President of South Africa.

2026 theme: combating poverty and inequity.

UPSC RELEVANCE

These items span GS Paper 2 (governance, institutions, international personalities) and GS Paper 3 (economy, disinvestment, employment data, biodiversity). Revise them as quick prelims pointers alongside the day's deep-dive articles.

FACTS CORNER

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IDBI Bank: Fairfax Financial preferred bidder for about 60.72 per cent, around Rs 52,932 crore, via DIPAM.

PLFS June 2026: all-India unemployment about 5.5 per cent (rural 5.0, urban 6.6).

Bharat Samman 2026: Dr Nandini Azad, Working Women's Forum.

New species: Likweli monkey (DR Congo), 24-million-year-old Kewra fossil (Assam), two new bees (Arunachal).

Nelson Mandela International Day: July 18; 2026 theme on poverty and inequity.

Sources: Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Press Information Bureau

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