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Current Affairs Today, August 3, 2026

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Current Affairs Today, August 3, 2026

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A consolidated roundup of the news that matters for UPSC and State PCS preparation on August 3, 2026. Three by-election results, a monthly manufacturing indicator, a payments-policy reversal and a rare coordinated currency intervention led the day. Items carrying a dedicated deep-dive article in today's edition are summarised here in brief; the remaining items are covered in full.

THREE BY POLL RESULTS DECLARED

Results for by-elections held on July 30 were declared on August 3, 2026, with Prashant Kishor winning Bankipur, the Congress taking Datia and the BJP retaining Manjalpur.

Key Data

- **Bankipur** (Bihar): **Prashant Kishor**, Jan Suraj Party, **64,151** votes; margin about **19,000**. The party's **first-ever MLA**, ending a BJP hold since **1995**.
- **Datia** (Madhya Pradesh): **Ghanshyam Singh**, Congress, **66,757**; margin **6,016**.
- **Manjalpur** (Gujarat): **Satish Govindbhai Patel**, BJP, **55,481**; margin **30,630**.

A full deep-dive on the results and the by-election framework follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS2, Representation of the People Act and electoral processes. See the full article for detail.

MANUFACTURING PMI EASES TO 53.5

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI, compiled by S&P Global, fell to 53.5 in July 2026 from 54.2 in June, the weakest since August 2021.

Key Data

- The **57th consecutive month above 50**; the flash estimate had been 53.9.
- Softer **domestic demand** dragged on output, orders and hiring; **export orders strengthened**.
- Input cost inflation eased to a **five-month low**.

A full deep-dive on diffusion indices and what a falling PMI above 50 actually means follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, leading indicators and industrial activity. See the full article for detail.

FINANCE MINISTRY PROPOSES MDR ON LARGE-MERCHANT UPI

The Finance Ministry proposed amending Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, replacing the blanket zero-MDR requirement with an enabling power to notify which payment modes stay exempt.

Key Data

- MDR on UPI and RuPay debit was abolished from **January 2020**.
- Merchants with annual turnover up to **Rs 1.5 crore** expected to remain exempt; large-merchant UPI MDR proposed at not above **0.5 per cent**.

A full deep-dive on who funds India's payment rails follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, digital payments economics and fiscal cost. See the full article for detail.

US AND JAPAN CONFIRM FIRST JOINT YEN INTERVENTION SINCE 1998

The US Treasury and Japan's Finance Ministry confirmed on August 3, 2026 a coordinated intervention to support the yen, conducted the previous Friday.

Key Data

- Announced by US Treasury Secretary **Scott Bessent** and Japanese Finance Minister **Satsuki Katayama**.
- Yen strengthened over **1 per cent** to about **155.20** per dollar, from a 40-year low near **164** in July.
- The first coordinated US-Japan yen-buying operation since **1998**.

A full deep-dive on intervention mechanics and the impossible trinity follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS3, exchange rate management. See the full article for detail.

FRESH SURVEY FINDS NO MANUAL SCAVENGERS

A nationwide survey under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 identified no person engaged in manual scavenging, alongside progress reported under the NAMASTE Scheme.

Key Data

- **89,915** sewer and septic tank workers profiled; **87,037** PPE kits distributed; **753** safety device sets supplied.
- The **2018** survey had identified **44,217** manual scavengers.
- **Manual scavenging** and **hazardous cleaning** are distinct statutory categories; a sewer death falls in the second.

A full deep-dive on the definitional gap follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS1/GS2, social justice and scheme measurement. See the full article for detail.

CONSENT-BASED DRUG SCREENING PROPOSED AT PREMIER INSTITUTIONS

The Centre proposed voluntary, anonymised urine drug screening for incoming students at IITs, IIMs and one Central University in 2026-27, under the NCB's Vision Document on Narcotics Control 2026-29.

Key Data

- Later phases target about **170** centrally funded institutions and roughly **10 lakh** students over three years.
- Nodal agency: **Department of Higher Education**.
- Distinct from the **Nasha Mukh Yuva** campaign launched 2 August under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

*A full deep-dive on consent under institutional power **asymmetry** follows later in today's edition.*

UPSC Angle

GS2 privacy and GS4 consent ethics. See the full article for detail.

INDIA-CHINA BORDER TRADE RESUMES AFTER SIX YEARS

Seasonal border trade restarted on August 1, 2026 through Nathu La, Shipki La and Lipulekh, suspended since 2020.

Key Data

- At **Shipki La** in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, sixteen traders made a 72-hour crossing, moving goods by pickup and then by mule.
- **Nathu La** is in Sikkim, **Lipulekh** in Uttarakhand; trade is seasonal and largely by barter.

A full deep-dive on functional cooperation amid an unresolved boundary question follows later in today's edition.

UPSC Angle

GS2 India-China relations; GS1 Himalayan passes. See the full article for detail.

NITI AAYOG REPORTS 94,000 GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS CLOSED IN A DECADE

A NITI Aayog report covered on August 3, 2026 found roughly 94,000 government schools closed over the past decade, alongside a fall of 2.26 crore in enrolment.

Key Data

- Government schools fell from **11.07 lakh** in 2014-15 to **10.13 lakh** in 2024-25, roughly **25 closures a day**.
- The government attributes this to falling birth rates and **deliberate** consolidation of low-enrolment schools; critics read it as a retreat from public provision.
- Relevant framework: the **RTE Act, 2009** neighbourhood-school norm, **Article 21A**, and NEP 2020's **school complexes** model.

UPSC Angle

GS2, right to education and school **consolidation**; the distance-to-school effect on girls' and SC/ST enrolment.

SUPREME COURT JUDGE FLAGS COLLEGIUM OPACITY

Justice Ujjal Bhuyan of the Supreme Court, speaking at a public event on August 1, 2026, criticised the lack of transparency in judicial appointments and called for public discussion of candidates under consideration.

Key Data

- The collegium system rests on the **Second Judges Case (1993)** and **Third Judges Case (1998)**.
- The **NJAC** and the 99th Constitutional Amendment were struck down in **2015**.
- The **Memorandum of Procedure** governing appointments has remained unfinalised since that judgment.

UPSC Angle

GS2, judicial appointments, judicial independence versus accountability. Note this is a judge's public remark, not a ruling.

US INVITES BANGLADESH TO JOIN PAX SILICA

US Special Envoy Sergio Gor proposed that Bangladesh join Pax Silica during a meeting with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in Dhaka on August 1, 2026.

Key Data

- **Pax Silica** was launched in **December 2025**, led by the US Department of State, covering secure supply chains in **critical minerals**, semiconductors, electronics and AI.
- **India joined in February 2026** at the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, having been outside the founding group.
- Bangladesh has **not joined**; this was an invitation.

UPSC Angle

GS2, minilateral technology groupings in India's neighbourhood; GS3, semiconductor and critical-mineral supply chains.

FOURTH TRI-SERVICES FUTURE WARFARE COURSE BEGINS

The fourth edition of the Tri-Services Future Warfare Course began at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi on August 3, 2026.

Key Data

- A **four-week** course conducted under **Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff**, coordinated by the **Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS)**.
- Curriculum spans AI, quantum technologies, cyber and cognitive warfare, autonomous systems, space and maritime domains, and grey-zone and multi-domain operations.
- Participants drawn from all three Services plus government, academia, industry and think-tanks.

UPSC Angle

GS3, jointness and theaterisation; cross-domain military education as a precondition for theatre commands.

INDIA TO HOST SECOND BRICS ANTI-CORRUPTION WORKING GROUP MEETING

The Department of Personnel and Training announced on August 3, 2026 that Hyderabad would host the second BRICS Anti-Corruption Working Group meeting under India's 2026 BRICS Presidency.

Key Data

- India holds the **BRICS Presidency for 2026**; DoPT is the nodal agency.
- The agenda covers cross-border corruption, **asset recovery**, illicit financial flows and transparency in governance.
- BRICS now has **11 member countries**.

UPSC Angle

GS2, international anti-corruption cooperation, UNCAC and fugitive economic offenders.

VISHWESH NEGI NAMED AMBASSADOR TO IRAN

The Ministry of External Affairs announced on August 3, 2026 the appointment of Vishwesh Negi as India's next Ambassador to Iran.

Key Data

- A **2002-batch Indian Foreign Service** officer, currently serving as a Joint Secretary in the MEA.
- The posting carries weight for **Chabahar port** and the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.

UPSC Angle

GS2, India-Iran relations; the tension between connectivity ambitions and sanctions exposure.

ANCIENT DNA CONFIRMS SMALLPOX ARRIVED IN THE AMERICAS WITH COLONISTS

A study published in Science on July 30, 2026 recovered the first ancient variola virus genomes from the Americas, sequenced from two individuals buried in northern Chile.

Key Data

- The genomes belong to an **extinct lineage, CAM9**, that diverged from medieval European strains, providing direct genetic proof that smallpox arrived with European colonisation rather than pre-dating it.
- Burials dated between the **late 15th and early 17th century**; lead institution **Trinity College Dublin**.
- Smallpox remains the **only human disease eradicated**, declared in **1980**.

UPSC Angle

GS1, colonialism and demographic collapse in the Americas; GS3, palaeogenomics and pathogen evolution.

MAITHILI SHARAN GUPT'S 140TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

The 140th birth anniversary of Rashtrakavi Maithili Sharan Gupta, born 3 August 1886, was marked with a national seminar and Kavi Sammelan at Bundelkhand University, Jhansi.

Key Data

- Born at **Chirgaon, Jhansi**; titled “**Rashtrakavi**” by **Mahatma Gandhi** for *Bharat-Bharati* (**1912**).
- Major works include *Saket*, which retells the Ramayana from **Urmila's** perspective, *Yashodhara*, *Panchavati* and *Jayadrath Vadh*. A **Padma Bhushan** recipient.
- Popularised **Khari Boli** as the vehicle of modern Hindi poetry, displacing Braj Bhasha.

UPSC Angle

GS1, modern Indian literature and the national movement; the Khari Boli shift in Hindi literary history.

Source: Current Affairs Today, August 3, 2026 — Ujjayanti.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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