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Current Affairs Today, August 10, 2026

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The Tamil Nadu Assembly unanimously made Tamil Thaaai Vazhthu mandatory at official functions and raised paddy and sugarcane procurement prices. India gifted five peacocks to the UN in Geneva, reviving a 1981-era tradition, while the Competition Commission of India hosted BRICS competition regulators in Udaipur. DGFT digitised export-obligation paperwork, a Bengaluru eVTOL startup won a regulatory approval, a new fungal species was described from India's Northeast, a wildfire shut an Indonesian national park, Colombia swore in a new president, and two Indian-origin prodigies rewrote British chess history.

TAMIL NADU ASSEMBLY MAKES TAMIL THAAI VAZHTHU MANDATORY AT GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

*The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution on August 10, 2026, moved by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, mandating that the state song **Tamil Thaaai Vazhthu** ("Invocation to Mother Tamil") be sung first, ahead of any other song, at the start of official government functions.*

Background

The resolution requires the song at programmes held in educational institutions, universities, government offices, and public sector undertakings across Tamil Nadu, and was backed by both the opposition DMK and the AIADMK, giving it cross-party support. Vijay framed the move as consistent with, not opposed to, national unity, calling it an expression of "unity in diversity" rather than a challenge to the Union. The resolution comes soon after the Union Home Ministry issued a fresh advisory asking states to "strictly comply" with its January 28, 2026 directive that the National Song **Vande Mataram** be played before the National Anthem at official events, setting up an implicit contrast between the Centre's and Tamil Nadu's protocol preferences.

Background on the Song

Tamil Thaaai Vazhthu was originally written by **Manonmaniam Sundaram Pillai** (1855-1897) as an invocatory verse in his 1891 play *Manonmaniam*; a popular musical setting was later composed by M.S. Viswanathan. It was informally treated as Tamil Nadu's state song for decades before being formally notified as such by the state government on **December 17, 2021**.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

TAMIL THAAI VAZHTHU RESOLUTION:

Passed unanimously, Tamil Nadu Assembly, August 10, 2026; moved by CM C. Joseph Vijay

Backed by opposition DMK and AIADMK

Written by Manonmaniam Sundaram Pillai (1891, play *Manonmaniam*); formally notified as TN's state song December 17, 2021

Comes amid a Union Home Ministry advisory reiterating its January 28, 2026 directive on playing Vande Mataram before the National Anthem

TAMIL NADU HIKES PADDY AND SUGARCANE PROCUREMENT PRICES

In the same Assembly session on August 10, 2026, Chief Minister Vijay announced increased state procurement incentives for paddy and a higher total sugarcane price, moved under Rule 110 of the Assembly's procedural rules.

Key Data

For paddy, the state incentive rises to **Rs 289 per quintal** for the fine grade and **Rs 159 per quintal** for the common grade, taking total procurement prices to **Rs 2,750** and **Rs 2,600 per quintal** respectively (state incentive layered over the Centre's Minimum Support Price). For sugarcane, against the Centre's Fair and Remunerative Price of **Rs 3,290.50 per tonne**, Tamil Nadu added a special state incentive of **Rs 709.50 per tonne**, taking the total procurement price past **Rs 4,000 per tonne** for the first time in the state's history.

UPSC Angle

The announcement illustrates the layered MSP-plus-state-bonus procurement architecture used by several states to supplement central price support (GS3: agricultural pricing policy), and was explicitly made despite the state citing a constrained fiscal position, an angle relevant to Centre-state [fiscal federalism](#) (GS2) and agrarian distress debates.

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TN PADDY AND SUGARCANE PRICES (AUG 10, 2026):

Paddy incentive: Rs 289/quintal (fine) and Rs 159/quintal (common); total price Rs 2,750 and Rs 2,600/quintal

Sugarcane: Centre's FRP Rs 3,290.50/tonne + TN incentive Rs 709.50/tonne; total crosses Rs 4,000/tonne for the first time

Announced under Rule 110 of the Tamil Nadu Assembly

INDIA GIFTS FIVE PEACOCKS TO UN GENEVA, REVIVES 1981-ERA "PEACOCK DIPLOMACY"

*India presented five young peacocks, four blue peafowl and one rare white male, to the United Nations Office at Geneva on **August 7, 2026**, reviving a tradition begun by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1981.*

Background

India's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, **Ambassador Arindam Bagchi**, formally handed over the birds to UN Geneva Director-General **Tatiana Valovaya**, with Geneva Bioparc zoo director **Dr. Tobias Blaha** overseeing their care. In 1981, Indira Gandhi had sent a breeding pair of peacocks from Delhi Zoo to the Palais des Nations aboard her personal aircraft; that lineage had dwindled to a single surviving, rarely-seen bird by 2026. The new arrivals will spend roughly three months acclimatising before release into the UN's Ariana Park grounds, and the blue-and-white colouring was noted as echoing the UN's own signature colours.

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INDIA'S PEACOCK GIFT TO UN GENEVA:

Presented August 7, 2026; 5 peacocks (4 blue, 1 rare white)

By Ambassador Arindam Bagchi to UN Geneva DG Tatiana Valovaya

Revives Indira Gandhi's 1981 gift of a breeding pair from Delhi Zoo

Release site: Ariana Park, Palais des Nations, Geneva

CCI HOSTS MEETING OF HEADS OF BRICS COMPETITION AUTHORITIES IN UDAIPUR

*The Competition Commission of India (CCI) hosted the Meeting of Heads of BRICS Competition Authorities on **August 8, 2026**, at Taj Fateh Prakash Palace, Udaipur, under India's ongoing 2026 BRICS Chairship.*

Key Data

CCI Chairperson **Ravneet Kaur** underscored the shared responsibility of BRICS competition regulators to preserve competitive markets for consumer welfare and innovation. Delegates adopted a joint statement committing to promote fair competition in renewable-energy markets and greater information-sharing on competition issues linked to the energy transition, alongside findings of a collaborative study, "Emerging Competition Landscape in the Renewable Energy Sector in BRICS." India holds the BRICS Chairship for 2026 (its fourth time chairing the grouping) under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," having launched the chairship logo and website on January 13, 2026.

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BRICS COMPETITION AUTHORITIES MEETING:

Held August 8, 2026, Udaipur, Rajasthan; hosted by the Competition Commission of India (CCI)

CCI Chairperson: Ravneet Kaur

Joint statement focus: fair competition in renewable-energy markets

India's 2026 BRICS Chairship theme: "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability" (India's 4th BRICS chairship)

DGFT SCRAPS PHYSICAL DUTY-PAYMENT CHALLANS FOR EODC APPLICATIONS

*The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) issued a Trade Notice dated **August 5, 2026**, removing the requirement to submit physical duty-payment challans with Export Obligation Discharge Certificate (EODC) applications under the Advance Authorisation (AA) and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) schemes, effective for voluntary duty payments made on or after **August 1, 2026**.*

Key Provisions

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DGFT EODC DIGITISATION:

Trade Notice dated August 5, 2026; effective for payments from August 1, 2026

Applies to Advance Authorisation (AA) and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) schemes

Enabled via DGFT-ICEGATE API-based data exchange (Customs duty-payment data)

Removes physical challan requirement for Export Obligation Discharge Certificate (EODC) applications

SARLA AVIATION'S 'SHUNYA' EVTOL GETS DGCA DESIGN ORGANISATION APPROVAL

*The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) granted Design Organisation Approval to Bengaluru-based **Sarla Aviation** on **August 8, 2026**, during the inauguration of the startup's new headquarters, attended by Union Civil Aviation Minister **K. Ram Mohan Naidu**.*

Key Data

The approval covers Sarla Aviation's electric vertical take-off and landing (**eVTOL**) air taxi, named '**Shunya**', designed to carry a pilot and six passengers using electric motors for both vertical lift and forward propulsion. The minister said testing is expected to intensify through 2027, with the government's target of commercial electric air-taxi flights in India by **2028**. Sarla Aviation is backed by venture investors including Accel, Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath, Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal, Swiggy co-founder Sriharsha Majety, and IndiGo Ventures.

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SARLA AVIATION 'SHUNYA' EVTOL:

DGCA Design Organisation Approval granted August 8, 2026

Aircraft: 'Shunya', pilot + 6 passengers, electric vertical take-off and landing

Government's target for commercial air-taxi flights in India: 2028

Backers include Accel, Nikhil Kamath, Binny Bansal, Sriharsha Majety

NEW FUNGAL SPECIES RUSSULA GRISEOPURPURATA DESCRIBED FROM MEGHALAYA AND WEST BENGAL

Researchers from the Department of Botany, **Gauhati University**, Assam, described a new mushroom species, ***Russula griseopurpurata***, collected from **West Bengal and Meghalaya**, in a paper published in *Phytotaxa* (Vol. 768, No. 4, pp. 219-231) on **August 5, 2026**.

Key Data

The species grows in association with the **sal tree** (*Shorea robusta*) and belongs to subsection *Cyanoxanthinae* within subgenus *Heterophyllidia* of the family Russulaceae. It was described and confirmed as new using both morphological study (a medium-sized, greyish-to-purple cap that cracks with age) and molecular phylogenetic analysis, standard practice in modern fungal taxonomy.

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RUSSULA GRISEOPURPURATA:

Described in *Phytotaxa* 768(4): 219-231, published August 5, 2026

Collected from West Bengal and Meghalaya; grows with sal (*Shorea robusta*)

Family Russulaceae; subgenus *Heterophyllidia*, subsection *Cyanoxanthinae*

Authored by researchers at Gauhati University, Assam

WILDFIRE SPREADS ACROSS INDONESIA'S BROMO TENGGER SEMERU NATIONAL PARK

A wildfire that broke out around **August 3, 2026** inside Indonesia's **Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park**, East Java, had burned roughly **520-550 hectares** by its eighth day, prompting authorities to close the park to all tourists from the evening of **August 8, 2026**.

Background

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BROMO TENGGER SEMERU WILDFIRE:

Started around August 3, 2026; park closed to tourists from August 8, 2026

Area burnt: approximately 520-550 hectares by day eight

Location: Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, East Java, Indonesia

Contributing factor cited: El Nino-linked dry season intensity

ABELARDO DE LA ESPRIELLA SWORN IN AS COLOMBIA'S 36TH PRESIDENT

Abelardo de la Espriella, a right-wing lawyer, was sworn in as the **36th President of Colombia** on **August 7, 2026**, at Santiago de Cali University in Cali, breaking with the tradition of holding the inauguration in Bogota.

Background

De la Espriella, 48, won the presidency after defeating Historic Pact candidate **Ivan Cepeda** in the run-off on **June 21, 2026**, campaigning on a hardline approach to armed groups, cuts of up to 40% in government spending, and reviving Colombia's oil and gas industry. He was sworn in by Senate President **Honorio Henríquez** of the Democratic Center party, with **Jose Manuel Restrepo** as Vice President, and takes over from outgoing left-wing President Gustavo Petro amid Colombia's fragile internal peace process with armed groups.

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COLOMBIA'S NEW PRESIDENT:

Abelardo de la Espriella, sworn in August 7, 2026, as Colombia's 36th President

Vice President: Jose Manuel Restrepo

Defeated Ivan Cepeda (Historic Pact) in the run-off, June 21, 2026

Inaugurated in Cali (not Bogota); succeeds Gustavo Petro

PERSONS IN NEWS: CHESS PRODIGIES REWRITE BRITISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP HISTORY

*At the **2026 British Chess Championships** in Coventry, which concluded on **August 9, 2026**, 17-year-old **Shreyas Royal** became the youngest-ever winner of the overall British Chess Championship, while 11-year-old **Bodhana Sivanandan** became Britain's youngest-ever **Women's Chess Champion**, both of Indian origin.*

Background

Royal, who became Britain's youngest-ever grandmaster in 2024, won the open title half a point clear of Michael Adams and Luke McShane, breaking a record previously held by Adams. Sivanandan won the women's title via a rapid tie-break playoff against Irish Woman Grandmaster Trisha Kanyamarala, finishing the tournament with just one defeat, in Round 6, against Royal himself. Organisers billed the event, in its 122nd year, as the biggest in the championship's history, with over 1,750 entries and a record GBP 34,000 open-championship prize fund.

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2026 BRITISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS (CONCLUDED AUGUST 9, 2026, COVENTRY):

Shreyas Royal (17): youngest-ever winner of the overall British Chess Championship; Britain's youngest-ever grandmaster (2024)

Bodhana Sivanandan (11): youngest-ever British Women's Chess Champion; beat Trisha Kanyamarala in a rapid playoff

122nd edition; over 1,750 entries; record GBP 34,000 open prize fund

IN BRIEF

Union Home Ministry advisory on Vande Mataram protocol. The Ministry reiterated its January 28, 2026 directive asking states and union territories to strictly play the National Song before the National Anthem at official events, a backdrop cited in Tamil Nadu's own resolution on Tamil Thaa Vazhthu.

India's BRICS Chairship 2026 continues through the year. India assumed the rotating BRICS Chairship on January 1, 2026 for the fourth time, with the CCI's Udaipur meeting one of several sectoral events under the chairship calendar ahead of the leaders' summit.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 1: Language and identity politics in federal India (Tamil Thaa Vazhthu); volcanic and forest geography of Southeast Asia (Bromo Tengger Semeru); taxonomy and biodiversity documentation (new *Russula* species).

GS Paper 2: Centre-state relations and linguistic federalism; India's cultural and soft-power diplomacy (peacock gift to UN Geneva); India's BRICS Chairship and plurilateral regulatory cooperation (CCI-hosted meeting); comparative government transitions (Colombia's presidential inauguration).

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA (COMBINED)

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Tamil Thaa Vazhthu resolution and TN price hikes: August 10, 2026
- India's peacocks arrive at UN Geneva: August 7, 2026
- CCI hosts BRICS Competition Authorities meeting, Udaipur: August 8, 2026
- DGFT EODC Trade Notice: dated August 5, 2026, effective August 1, 2026
- Sarla Aviation DGCA Design Organisation Approval: August 8, 2026
- Russula griseopurpurata* described: *Phytotaxa*, August 5, 2026
- Bromo Tengger Semeru wildfire began: ~August 3, 2026; park closed August 8, 2026
- Abelardo de la Espriella sworn in, Colombia: August 7, 2026
- 2026 British Chess Championships concluded: August 9, 2026, Coventry

INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONS:

- Tamil Nadu CM: C. Joseph Vijay; CCI Chairperson: Ravneet Kaur
- India's envoy to UN Geneva: Ambassador Arindam Bagchi; UN Geneva DG: Tatiana Valovaya
- Colombia's new President: Abelardo de la Espriella; VP: Jose Manuel Restrepo
- Civil Aviation Minister: K. Ram Mohan Naidu

Sources: PIB, DGFT, UN News, PRS Legislative Research

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