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Current Affairs Today, August 13, 2026

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Current Affairs Today, August 13, 2026

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President Droupadi Murmu gave assent to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026, extending statutory protection to Vande Mataram. A Russia-linked “shadow fleet” tanker’s oil spill reached Oman’s Al Hallaniyat coastline, and the NAVYA vocational-training programme for adolescent girls continued expanding toward its pilot target. August 13 is also International Left-Handers Day and World Organ Donation Day.

VANDE MATARAM GETS STATUTORY PROTECTION: PRESIDENT MURMU ASSENTS TO NATIONAL HONOUR AMENDMENT

*President **Droupadi Murmu** gave assent to the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026**, extending to the National Song **Vande Mataram** the same statutory protection currently given to the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana.*

Background

The **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** originally penalised insults to the National Flag, the Constitution, and the National Anthem, but carried no equivalent protection for Vande Mataram, which the Constituent Assembly gave parity of status with the National Anthem via a resolution of **January 24, 1950**, without itself becoming the National Anthem. Parliament passed the amendment Bill in late July 2026 (Lok Sabha, July 30; Rajya Sabha, July 29), and this presidential assent formally completes its passage into law. This closes an arc Ujiyari has tracked since early August: a Union Home Ministry advisory reiterating Vande Mataram’s protocol status (Aug 10 edition), and its use as a backdrop in the Tamil Nadu Assembly’s own state-song resolution (Aug 10 edition).

What Changes

Intentional disruption of, or interference with, the singing of Vande Mataram is now a criminal offence carrying up to three years’ imprisonment plus a fine, mirroring the existing anthem provision. The amendment criminalises active disruption, not mere non-participation, a distinction relevant to precedent set in *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala* (1986), where the Supreme Court held that silent non-participation in anthem-singing on grounds of conscience does not amount to disrespect.

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PREVENTION OF INSULTS TO NATIONAL HONOUR (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2026:

Original Act: 1971; covers National Flag, Constitution, National Anthem

Vande Mataram given parity with National Anthem: Constituent Assembly resolution, January 24, 1950

Lok Sabha passage: July 30, 2026; Rajya Sabha: July 29, 2026; presidential assent: August 2026

Penalty: up to 3 years' imprisonment plus fine, for intentional disruption

Relevant precedent: *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala* (1986), silent non-participation is not an offence

SHADOW-FLEET TANKER'S OIL SPILL REACHES OMAN'S AL HALLANIYAT COASTLINE

Oil from the **Caroline Bezengi**, a Russia-linked "shadow fleet" tanker damaged in a suspected explosion off Yemen on **June 8, 2026** before running aground near Oman's **Al Hallaniyat Islands** around **June 30, 2026**, has reached the country's central coastline, prompting salvage operations.

Background

The Al Hallaniyat Islands (formerly the Kuria Muria Islands), a marine protected reserve in the Arabian Sea off Oman's southern coast, host coral reefs and turtle-nesting beaches. The tanker, disabled off Yemen and subsequently drifting or under tow, ran aground near Al Hallaniyat roughly three weeks later. It was reportedly carrying close to a million barrels of Russian crude, part of a fleet of ageing, poorly-insured vessels used to evade Western sanctions on Russian oil exports. Greenpeace estimates the spill's extent at roughly 600 square kilometres, against a lower official Omani estimate of around 400 square kilometres.

Why It Matters for India

Al Hallaniyat sits close to Arabian Sea shipping lanes India's own west-coast trade depends on, and "shadow fleet" tankers, exempt from standard insurance and maintenance oversight, pose a **disproportionate** spill risk along routes India's crude and LNG imports also use, a live concern for India's own coastal disaster-preparedness planning.

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AL HALLANIYAT OIL SPILL:

Location: Al Hallaniyat Islands (formerly Kuria Muria Islands), Arabian Sea, off southern Oman

Vessel: Caroline Bezengi, Russia-linked “shadow fleet” tanker

Damaged off Yemen, suspected explosion, June 8, 2026; ran aground near Al Hallaniyat around June 30, 2026

Spill extent: Greenpeace estimate ~600 sq km; Omani official estimate ~400 sq km

IIHT SUTRA 2026: FIRST NATIONAL CONCLAVE OF INDIAN INSTITUTES OF HANDLOOM TECHNOLOGY

*The Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, held **IIHT SUTRA 2026**, the first national conclave of India’s Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology, at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.*

Background

Themed “IIHTs: Weaving the Future of the Indian Handloom Sector, Educate, Innovate, Transform,” the conclave was inaugurated by Union Textiles Minister **Giriraj Singh**, with Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles **Pabitra Margherita** as Guest of Honour. MoUs were signed with Grasim Industries, NITRA and IIM Sambalpur covering curriculum design, internships, testing and research. The event follows Ujiyari’s National Handloom Day coverage on August 7, extending that theme into a concrete institutional-capacity initiative.

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IIHT SUTRA 2026:

Organiser: Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles

Venue: Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi

Chief Guest: Giriraj Singh; Guest of Honour: Pabitra Margherita

MoUs signed with: Grasim Industries, NITRA, IIM Sambalpur

NAVYA VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS EXPANDS TOWARD ITS PILOT TARGET

NAVYA (*Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls*), a joint initiative of the Ministries of Women and Child Development and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, continues expanding toward its pilot enrolment target under PMKVY 4.0.

Background

Launched in 2025 under **PMKVY 4.0**, NAVYA targets girls aged 16-18 in underserved, tribal and aspirational districts, training them in non-traditional and emerging sectors such as digital marketing and cybersecurity, alongside a life-skills module covering hygiene, POSH/POCSO awareness and financial literacy. Its pilot target is **3,850 girls across 27 districts in 19 states**, scaled up from an initial 2025 cohort of roughly nine districts across nine states. The scheme is a direct policy response to the trade-wise gender gap in India's ITI system that Ujiyari's August 12 coverage of Skill Development Minister Jayant Chaudhary's op-ed examined in depth.

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NAVYA:

Full form: Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls

Nodal ministries: Women and Child Development + Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Implemented under: PMKVY 4.0

Pilot target: 3,850 girls, 27 districts, 19 states; scaled up from an initial 2025 cohort of roughly 9 districts across 9 states

OBSERVANCES

International Left-Handers Day (35th observance in 2026) is marked annually on August 13, raising awareness of the everyday challenges left-handed people face in a right-hand-designed world.

World Organ Donation Day, observed globally on August 13, is distinct from India's own **National Organ Donation Day**, observed August 3, which commemorates India's first successful deceased-donor heart transplant in 1994. Do not conflate the two dates.

 FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA**AUGUST 13 OBSERVANCES:**

International Left-Handers Day: annual, since 1992; 2026 is the 35th observance

World Organ Donation Day: global observance, August 13

India's National Organ Donation Day: separate observance, August 3, marking India's first deceased-donor heart transplant (1994)

Sources: GKToday, PIB, Press Information Bureau

Source: Current Affairs Today, August 13, 2026 — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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