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The 7th BRICS ICT Working Group meeting concluded in Pune under India's BRICS chairship, Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi visited Mumbai's Western Naval Command ahead of bilateral defence talks, Regional Rural Banks posted strong credit growth, and the Education Ministry extended Yuva Sangam Phase VII registration.

7TH BRICS ICT WORKING GROUP MEETING CONCLUDES IN PUNE

*The 7th BRICS ICT Working Group meeting, held August 17-19, 2026 in Pune under India's 2026 BRICS chairship, advanced cooperation on **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**.*

Background

Discussions covered a proposed **BRICS DPI Repository**, pilot projects on DPI solutions, submarine cable network cooperation, and draft Terms of Reference for new Digital Applications and Digital Governance Expert Groups, showcasing India's **Aadhaar-UPI-DigiLocker** stack. The meeting's theme was **"Innovate, Cooperate and Transform (ICT) for a Resilient Future."** A Digital BRICS Forum & Expo follows on August 20, and the 12th BRICS Communications Ministers' Meeting on August 21.

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7TH BRICS ICT WORKING GROUP MEETING:

Dates: August 17-19, 2026, Pune; theme: "Innovate, Cooperate and Transform (ICT) for a Resilient Future"

Focus: BRICS DPI Repository, submarine cable cooperation, Digital Applications/Governance Expert Groups

JAPANESE DEFENCE MINISTER KOIZUMI VISITS WESTERN NAVAL COMMAND, MUMBAI

*Japanese Defence Minister **Shinjiro Koizumi**, on his maiden visit to India, inspected a Guard of Honour at **Western Naval Command, Mumbai**, and visited the stealth destroyer **INS Chennai**, on **August 19, 2026**.*

Background

Koizumi laid a wreath at the Gaurav Stambh memorial and held discussions with Navy Chief **Admiral Krishna Swaminathan** and the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, ahead of formal bilateral defence talks with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Delhi on August 20. **INS Chennai** is a Kolkata-class (Project 15A) stealth destroyer.

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JAPAN DEFENCE MINISTER'S INDIA VISIT:

Minister: Shinjiro Koizumi; visited Western Naval Command, Mumbai, August 19

Reviewed: INS Chennai (Kolkata-class, Project 15A stealth destroyer)

Bilateral talks with Rajnath Singh: August 20, 2026, Delhi

REGIONAL RURAL BANKS POST STRONG CREDIT GROWTH IN FY2025-26

*The **Ministry of Finance** highlighted that **43 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)**, following amalgamation, now function as scheduled commercial banks under RBI supervision, recording notable credit growth in **FY2025-26**.*

Background

RRBs are established under the **Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976**, with equity shared **50% Centre, 35% sponsor bank, 15% state government**.

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RRB CREDIT GROWTH, FY2025-26:

43 RRBs operational, scheduled commercial banks under RBI supervision

Equity structure: 50% Centre, 35% sponsor bank, 15% state government

YUVA SANGAM PHASE VII REGISTRATION EXTENDED TO AUGUST 31

The **Education Ministry** extended registration for **Yuva Sangam Phase VII**, originally closing August 18, to **August 31, 2026**.

Background

Open to youth aged **18-30**, including students, NSS/NYKS volunteers and young professionals, the programme offers 5-7 day educational-cultural exchange tours to paired states and Union Territories under the **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** initiative, hosted by 20 nodal higher-education institutions.

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YUVA SANGAM PHASE VII:

New deadline: August 31, 2026; eligible age: 18-30

Parent initiative: Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat; 20 nodal HEIs hosting

Sources: *PIB, ANI*

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