



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JULY 16, 2026

INTERNATIONAL

PIO astronaut Anil Menon reaches ISS with 2 cosmonauts

- NASA astronaut Anil Menon and two Russian cosmonauts reached the International Space Station to hugs and handshakes in the early hours of Wednesday (India time) onboard Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft after a little over three-hour journey.
- The Roscosmos spacecraft carrying Menon and Russian cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina lifted off from Baikonur at 8.17 pm IST on Tuesday just as the orbital laboratory flew over the cosmodrome.
- After an eight-minute climb to the preliminary orbit, the Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft began a nearly three-hour chase to the International Space Station to dock at the Prichal module at 11.52 pm (IST).
- The astronaut then began a series of checks in the spacecraft and the space station before the opening hatch at about 2 am (IST).
- This marks Menon's first spaceflight and the second flight for the Russian cosmonauts, according to NASA. Incidentally, the live video feed from the space station was cut off at the time the hatch of the spacecraft was about to open due to loss of signal from the tracking and data relay satellites. The link was established 12 minutes later as the satellites were in range again.
- Menon's family, including astronaut wife Anna Wilhelm, and NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman, were at the Baikonur cosmodrome for the spaceflight.
- The trio joined NASA astronauts Jessica Meir, Jack Hathaway, and Chris Williams, European Space Agency astronaut Sophie Adenot, and Roscosmos

cosmonauts Sergey Kud-Sverchkov, Sergei Mikaev, and Andrey Fedyaev. Menon, Dubrov and Kikina's mission will last about eight months, and they are scheduled to return in April 2027.

- While on board the ISS, Menon will conduct a series of experiments to study the physiological toll of long-duration spaceflight and examine how microgravity affects blood flow, vein structure, and blood composition in astronauts. He will also help test technologies for producing intravenous fluids using the station's potable water system. Such capabilities could become critical during deep-space missions where medical supplies are limited.

NATIONAL

PM Modi to inaugurate revamped Park railway station tomorrow

The Park Station has been renovated at a cost of Rs 14.79 crore

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the redeveloped Chennai Park railway station through video conferencing on July 17.
- The station has been upgraded at a cost of Rs 14.79 crore as part of the Centre's Amrit Station Scheme. The prime minister will virtually inaugurate the revamped facility along with 74 other redeveloped railway stations across the country.
- The redevelopment includes a new station entrance with a canopy and landmark tower, a revamped booking office with waiting space, resurfaced platforms, additional platform shelters, and a new roof. Passenger amenities have also been upgraded, two lifts have been provided for access to the foot overbridge, while dedicated pedestrian walkways connect the station with the MRTS network.
- According to Southern Railway, the project has also focused on improving accessibility through barrier-free facilities for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, besides easing passenger movement within the station and between different modes of transport.

Water bodies desilt, recycle wastewater to tide over scarcity

- As more than 50 per cent of India's water reservoirs remain dry despite the onset of monsoon, water security must be tackled on both the supply and demand side, an advisor at TERI's water division said.
- According to data by the Central Water Commission, 166 major reservoirs across India currently hold 32.38 per cent of their overall capacity, a marginal improvement from last week's 26 per cent.
- Speaking about whether India's water storage and demand management initiatives can secure the country's water future amid climate change, Syamal Sarkar, a former IAS officer and advisor at the water division of The Energy and Resources Institute, said that it is essential to tackle water security from both sides, as demand across the domestic, industrial, and agricultural sectors exceeds supply.
- Speaking about the scale of demand, he pointed out that a person needs two to three litres of water a day for drinking, yet Delhi supplies about 165 litres per person per day, with the rest going towards bathing, washing, and other uses largely without being reused or recycled.
- "NITI Aayog projects that by 2050, India's water demand will be double the available supply," said Sarkar, adding that closing that gap will require both reducing demand through more efficient water management and raising storage beyond current levels.
- Asked what practical steps cities need to take on water infrastructure, given that bursts of heavy rain are making the old approach of waiting for a steady monsoon to fill dams increasingly unreliable, Sushmita Sengupta of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) said that cities need to start cleaning up local water bodies, managing wastewater properly, and rebuilding decentralised systems as a sustainable source of water.
- The country historically depended on decentralised sources - small-scale rainwater harvesting, lakes, ponds, and rivers - with cities traditionally built around a water body specifically to draw from it.

Cabinet Approves Semicon 2.0 to Boost India's Chip Ecosystem

- The Union Cabinet approved Semicon 2.0.
- The scheme has a total outlay of ₹1.27 lakh crore.
- It aims to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem.
- The initiative builds upon the success of Semicon 1.0.
- The programme focuses on chip design, fabrication, packaging and R&D.

- Workforce development is one of its six strategic pillars.
- Semiconductors are essential for AI, EVs, telecom, healthcare and defence.
- Under Semicon 1.0, 12 manufacturing projects were approved.
- Those projects involved investments worth ₹1.64 lakh crore.
- Semicon 2.0 seeks to make India a trusted global semiconductor hub.

STATE

CREDAI challenges NGT's Pallikaranai Ramsar curbs

- The umbrella body of real estate developers urged the Madras High Court to set aside the National Green Tribunal's order prohibiting approvals for construction within a one-kilometre "Zone of Influence" around the Pallikaranai Ramsar site, contending that the restriction is unscientific and has frozen development rights over vast stretches of land.
- The first bench of the Madras High Court, comprising Chief Justice SA Dharmadhikari and Justice G Arul Murugan, on Wednesday adjourned to August 3 the final hearing of a writ petition filed by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India Chennai challenging the NGT order.
- The confederation challenged the September 24, 2025, order of the green tribunal's Southern Zone directing the authorities not to grant any approvals or permissions within a one-kilometre "Zone of Influence" around the Pallikaranai Ramsar site.
- The association submitted that the adjoining areas are already substantially urbanised, with Metro Rail, IT parks, government offices, public utilities, and private patta lands, and argued that a zero-kilometre buffer for such areas would strike a balance between environmental protection and socio-economic realities.
- It further contended that the impugned order imposing a ban on activities up to one kilometre was wholly unscientific and improper, resulting in grave civil consequences by freezing vested development rights over vast tracts of land without acquisition or payment of compensation.
- The petitioner has sought a stay on the impugned order passed by the National Green Tribunal.

- During the hearing, the State government submitted that, in view of the NGT's order, the authorities were unable to process applications seeking planning permission for construction and informed the court that 47 applications are currently pending.
- After hearing the submissions, the bench adjourned the matter to August 3 for final hearing.

SCHEMES

Cabinet Approves Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme to Boost Make in India

- The Union Cabinet approved the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS).
- The scheme has a total outlay of ₹62,500 crore.
- It will be implemented for five years (2026–27 to 2030–31).
- MPMS aims to strengthen India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem.
- The scheme encourages higher domestic value addition in mobile phone production.
- Manufacturers will receive incentives ranging from 2.25% to 5% on eligible sales.
- Additional incentives are available for domestic component sourcing and Indian brands investing in innovation.
- The scheme seeks to reduce dependence on imported mobile phone components.
- It is expected to boost exports, create employment, and strengthen supply chains.
- MPMS supports the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Snake Day 2026

- World Snake Day is observed annually on 16 July.
- The day promotes awareness about the ecological importance of snakes.
- It was first recognized in 2009.
- Snakes help control rodent populations and maintain ecological balance.
- The observance encourages wildlife conservation and habitat protection.
- India is home to around 300 species of snakes.
- Many snake species are protected under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- More than 3,000 snake species are found worldwide.
- Most snake species are non-venomous and harmless to humans.
- The day aims to dispel myths and promote scientific understanding of snakes.

