

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

NITI AAYOG REPORT FLAGS LARGE GAP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIAN YOUTH

- NITI Aayog's report 'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047' has found that an estimated 8.7 crore Indians aged 15 to 29 were neither studying, working nor undergoing training, prompting recommendations to overhaul India's skilling approach.

The Core Problem: Degrees Without Jobs

- The most striking finding is the weak link between formal education and employment.
- Only 8.25% of graduates are employed in roles that match their qualifications.
- This means the vast majority of degree holders are either working in unrelated fields or unable to find suitable work at all.

Why Cost Becomes a Barrier?

- For students from low-income households, adding a paid skilling course on top of college fees and private tuition is often unaffordable.
- This leaves little room to invest in additional training alongside a conventional degree.
- The consequences follow two paths. Some graduates take up formal employment simply to secure an income and support their families, accepting whatever provides stability even when it is low-paying.

Bringing Skilling Into Schools

- NITI Aayog's central recommendation is to **move skilling into the school system rather than treating it as an option after formal education is complete.**
- It has proposed universal General Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills from Class 6 to Class 12, along with structured vocational pathways called **Kaushal Tracks** from Class 9. These tracks would offer deeper vocational specialisation based on local and national demand.
- For Classes 10 and 12, the report suggests including vocational subjects in the board subject scheme with equal weightage, and allowing state boards to accept the revised scheme for certification.

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

Reforming Higher Education

- The recommendations extend well beyond schools.
- For higher education, the report calls for a shift away from generic degrees towards applied, industry-aligned specialisations. It advocates greater use of apprenticeships and work-integrated degree and diploma programmes.
- It also proposes flexible, modular and earn-while-you-learn options, recognising that many students cannot afford to study full-time without an income.

The Apprenticeship Gap

- Apprenticeships have been identified as another missing link between education and employment.
- Schemes such as the **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme** and the **National Apprenticeship Training Scheme** have expanded access. However, the report notes that participation remains uneven and opportunities are fragmented across sectors and regions.
- To address this, it suggests expanding apprenticeship opportunities through incentives for MSMEs and creating a unified platform so that credible opportunities are easier for young people to find.

Focusing on Future Sectors

- The report calls for greater attention to sectors expected to generate demand, including green industries and electric vehicles, while also providing reskilling for workers in declining occupations.
- A key shift it proposes is in how success is measured. Training should increasingly be linked to measurable employment outcomes rather than participation numbers alone.

What Different Groups Need?

- The report tailors its recommendations to the constraints each group faces.
 - For NEET youth and women, it emphasises affordable or subsidised training options backed by dedicated financial support, since financial constraints bind most tightly here.
 - It also stresses the importance of enabling people to learn while earning.
-

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

MOBILE PHONE MANUFACTURING SCHEME (MPMS) - FROM ASSEMBLY HUB TO INDIAN-OWNED BRANDS

- India has emerged as a major global mobile-phone manufacturing hub, but much of the value captured in the sector remains concentrated in assembly and foreign-owned brands. The MPMS therefore attempts to address the “**assembly versus value creation**” gap by incentivising both manufacturing scale and ownership of technology, intellectual property and brands.
- The earlier PLI-LSEM helped establish India as a major manufacturing and export base.
- The next challenge is to **deepen the ecosystem** so that more components, design capabilities, patents and economic value are generated domestically.

Two-Pronged Architecture:

- **Scale-up of mobile manufacturing:**
 - The first component targets mobile-phone manufacturers and Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) companies.
 - Applicant companies must be incorporated in India and have recorded at least ₹10,000 crore turnover in FY 2025-26.
 - Existing brands must achieve incremental sales over a progressively rising threshold - ₹5,000 crore in FY27, rising annually to ₹25,000 crore in FY31.
- **Building Indian-owned mobile brands:**
 - The Government wants India not merely to manufacture smartphones for global companies but to develop Indian-owned brands comparable with leading international players.
 - To qualify as an Indian brand, the company must meet conditions relating to -
 - Incorporation in India;
 - Indian ownership of trademark and intellectual property;
 - Management control by Indian citizens;

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

- More than 51% Indian ownership/control; and
- In-house design and R&D capabilities in India.
 - The Government is reportedly working with Indian companies to develop such brands, with the objective of bringing a strong indigenous product to market.
- The Government estimates that MPMS -
 - Could generate around ₹39 lakh crore of cumulative production and about 60,000 direct jobs,
 - While strengthening technological sovereignty and Indian patents in design and R&D.

Key Structural Challenges:

- **Component ecosystem:** India remains dependent on imports for several high-value components and inputs.
- **Technology gap:** Manufacturing at scale does not automatically translate into ownership of core technologies.
- **Global competition:** Indian brands must compete with established firms possessing strong R&D, supply chains, consumer loyalty and distribution networks.
- **Cost competitiveness:** Higher domestic sourcing can initially raise production costs.
- **Innovation ecosystem:** Sustained investment in R&D, semiconductor technology, design and skilled manpower is essential.
- **MSME integration:** Benefits should eventually reach smaller domestic component manufacturers rather than remaining concentrated among large firms.

Way Forward:

- MPMS should be **integrated** with the India Semiconductor Mission, electronics-component ecosystem, skill development, R&D incentives and trade policy.
- **Greater support** for Indian design houses, startups and component manufacturers can help create an end-to-end electronics ecosystem.
- The real measure of success should therefore be domestic value addition, rather than merely the number of smartphones assembled in India.

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

U.S.-INDIA COMPARISON ON ELECTORAL SYSTEMS: TRUMP'S REMARKS ON VOTING ID RULES

U.S. President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social that India's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar had asked his administration how American elections function without a mandatory photo ID. Trump also noted that only 1% of India's 64.64 crore voters in the last general election voted by mail, unlike the widespread use of mail-in voting in the U.S.

He used this exchange to renew his push for Congress to pass the **Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE America) Act**, which would mandate documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration and a photo ID to vote.

How U.S. Elections Differ from India's?

- **Article I, Section 4** of the U.S. Constitution (the Elections Clause) gives State legislatures authority over the "times, places, and manner" of federal elections, while allowing Congress to alter such rules.
- Unlike India, the **U.S. has no national election authority** — the Federal Election Commission only regulates campaign finance, while registration, balloting, and counting are handled by county and municipal jurisdictions.
- **India's System**
 - India's system works differently. The Election Commission of India (ECI) **compiles electoral rolls** through house-to-house enumeration and has superintendence over the entire registration process.
 - Eligible electors receive an **Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC)**, though other documents like Aadhaar are also accepted at polling booths.

Is Non-Citizen Voting a Real Problem in the U.S.?

- Independent studies suggest non-citizen registrations in the U.S. are almost always accidental, with only a small fraction actually voting.
- The Trump administration's claims have faced scrutiny: after announcing in July that 2,78,000 non-citizens were found on rolls across four States (including 15,903 in

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

Nevada), the Department of Homeland Security later told Nevada officials it had identified just 185 potential non-citizens, describing the earlier figure as merely a "ceiling."

- Surveys do show broad public support for photo ID requirements at polling booths — but this falls short of the stricter citizenship-proof-at-registration requirement proposed under the SAVE America Act.

The SAVE America Act: Provisions and Opposition

- Passed by the House of Representatives in February along party lines, the SAVE America Act would require every new or updating voter to submit a passport, birth certificate, or naturalisation papers alongside a government photo ID.
- Mail-in voters would need to enclose a copy of their photo ID. States would cross-check names against U.S. Department of Homeland Security records, and election officials registering undocumented voters could face up to five years in prison.
- Analysts estimate that over 20 million eligible American citizens **lack ready access to a passport or birth certificate**, with young first-time registrants particularly affected.
- This concern has driven Democratic opposition, stalling the Bill in the Senate.

Parallel with India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

- India's ECI-led SIR process, aimed at "purifying" electoral rolls, requires **electors to self-enumerate** on forms distributed door-to-door, which are then scrutinised against records from the previous SIR conducted over two decades ago.
- All three phases of the SIR have shown anomalies — by phase 2, over 7 crore names were deleted, accompanied by a sharp fall in gender ratios across most States.
- An analysis found a religious skew in deletions in West Bengal, which affected electoral outcomes there. Despite these irregularities, the Supreme Court upheld the SIR as within the ECI's statutory mandate.
- Critics note a structural similarity between the two processes: both the SIR and the SAVE America Act **shift the burden of proving eligibility** onto individual electors, departing from earlier systems where officials proactively identified and enrolled eligible citizens.

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

WHAT IS AN ENDOSCOPIC CAMERA?



- It is a device used to **view, capture, and record videos in small, hard-to-reach places of the human body with limited to no visibility.**
- It allows doctors to **visualize the surgery or diagnostic procedure on a larger medical-grade screen**, like a TV display, a computer monitor, or a stereoscopic viewing console.
- Most modern endoscope camera modules **utilize “chip-on-tip” technology**, where the **lens and imaging electronics are combined into a miniature package** located at the **end of the device.**
- Endoscopic cameras **illuminate the anatomical area through fiber optics or LEDs on the tip**, and the **image signal is transferred** out from the camera on an electrical cable.
- The light source must provide sufficient brightness and illumination angle to ensure **true-color properties and brilliant image presentation** to aid medical professionals in their diagnoses and procedures.
- There are **many types** of endoscopes used for diagnostic, preventative, and surgical applications:
 - **Cystoscope:** This is used to study the inside of the **bladder, urethra, urinary tract, and prostate** (in men) and is often inserted through the urethra.
 - **Laryngoscope:** This is an endoscope used to view the **larynx or the voice box** and is inserted through the mouth.
 - **Otoscope:** The otoscope is designed for visual examination of the **eardrum** and the passage of the outer ear.
 - **Gastroscope:** This is used to check the **upper part of the digestive system**, which includes the inside of your **throat, food pipe (esophagus), and stomach.**
 - **Arthroscope:** An arthroscope is an endoscope that's **inserted into the joint** through a small incision near the site.

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

- **Laparoscope:** A laparoscope is inserted through the abdomen to study the **stomach, liver, abdominal organs, and female reproductive organs** such as the fallopian tubes, uterus, and ovaries.
- **Duodenoscope:** This is a long flexible endoscope inserted through the mouth to the **top of the small intestine (duodenum)**.
- It has **revolutionized numerous fields** due to its ability to **inspect** internal or **hard-to-reach areas** without requiring invasive procedures.
- Its use has expanded across various sectors such as **industry, research, and even security**.

WHAT IS POLYSILICON?



- Polysilicon, also known as **polycrystalline silicon** or simply poly-Si, is **composed of multiple tiny crystals or grains of silicon**.
- It is composed of multiple **smaller silicon crystals fused together in a haphazard manner**.
- Polysilicon is **highly pure** and **generates** almost as much energy as **pure mono-crystalline silicon**.
- Because of this, polysilicon is **crucial to the solar industry** as it plays a key part when **manufacturing solar cells** that are used in solar panels.
- To produce solar modules, polysilicon is **melted at high temperatures to form ingots**, which are then **sliced into wafers and processed into solar cells** and solar modules.
- It is also used in the semiconductor industry to manufacture integrated circuits and other electronic components.
- It is **produced by purifying metallurgical-grade silicon into a high-purity form**.
- **Global production is highly concentrated. China accounts for the large majority of solar-grade polysilicon output.**

Current Affairs - 23 August 2026

NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAMME



- It is one of India's largest livestock health initiatives launched in 2019.

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** where **100% of funds** are provided by the Central Government to the States/UTs.
- It is aimed at controlling and eradicating **Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)** and **Brucellosis** through nationwide vaccination and surveillance.
- The programme targets **100 % vaccination of all livestock against FMD twice a year** and one time vaccination against Brucellosis in 4-8 months old female bovine calves in their lifetime.
- Nodal Ministry:** Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (AH&D), **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.**

What is Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)?

- It is a highly **contagious viral vesicular disease** of cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats and pigs etc.
- FMD leads to reduction in milk yield, decreased growth rate, infertility, reduced working capacity in bullocks,

What is Brucellosis?

- It is a **reproductive disease of cattle and buffaloes** caused by bacterium *Brucella abortus*.
- It is characterized by fever, induces abortion at the last stage of pregnancy, infertility, delayed heat, interrupted lactation resulting in loss of calves, loss in production of meat and milk.
- Control of Brucellosis can be **achieved by a once-in-a-lifetime vaccination** of female bovine calves (4 – 8 months old).