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Current Affairs - 10 September 2025

NEPAL'S GEN Z PROTESTS

Unprecedented protests erupted across Nepal on September 8, 2025, after the government banned major social media platforms.

What began as peaceful demonstrations by thousands of youth soon turned violent, with at least 19 dead and over 400 injured. Protesters stormed Parliament and targeted politicians' homes, prompting curfews in Kathmandu and other cities.

As the Gen Z-led agitation intensified for a second day, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli resigned, his secretariat confirming the decision amidst mounting pressure.

Protesters on Nepal's Streets and the Reasons Behind Their Anger

- The protesters are primarily **Generation Z youth** — those born between 1996 and 2012.
 - With the age group of 16-25 years, Gen Z youths accounted for 20.8 per cent of total population and 90 per cent of its 30 million people using the internet.
- Teens and young adults, frustrated with politics and governance, have taken to the streets in large numbers.
- **Corruption and Nepotism**
 - Gen Z has expressed deep anger at **Nepal's entrenched corruption** and the impunity enjoyed by politicians since the republic's formation in 2008.
 - The extravagant lifestyles of politicians' children, mocked as "**Nepo Babies**" and "**Nepo Kids**," became a flashpoint of resentment online.
- **Immediate Trigger: Social Media Ban**
 - The government's decision to ban 26 major social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X, and YouTube, cut off Gen Z's primary platform for expression and solidarity.
 - Authorities accused these platforms of failing to register with Nepali regulators and of being misused for hate speech, misinformation and fraud.



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- **Protests and Violence**

- The discontent culminated in mass protests on Monday. Police and security forces opened fire, killing 19 and injuring hundreds.
- The unrest represented the most forceful youth uprising in years.
- While the protesters had no detailed charter, they demanded lifting of the social media ban, which was fulfilled.
- More broadly, they sought an **end to corruption, social inequality, and lack of job opportunities.**

India's Concerns Over Nepal's Crisis

- India is closely watching Nepal's turmoil with concern, mindful of its sensitive political alignments in the country.
- Having once lost goodwill with the monarchy and Nepali Congress by backing Maoists, New Delhi now faces a delicate balancing act.
- Recently, PM Modi chaired a Cabinet Committee on Security meeting to assess the situation, stressing that the violence was "heart-rending" and reaffirming that Nepal's stability, peace, and prosperity remain of utmost importance to India.

Analysis: Nepal's Crisis Beyond Oli's Resignation

- The recent violence in Kathmandu, where protesters torched Parliament, ministerial homes, and media offices, reflects deep structural failures in Nepal's democratic experiment.

The Road Ahead: Reform or Ruin

- The Gen Z protests have exposed Nepal's **political bankruptcy and systemic failures.** Yet, their drift toward violence and institutional destruction threatens democracy itself.
 - For meaningful change, Nepal's leaders must channel this energy into building credible alternatives, policy frameworks, and constructive institutions.
 - Without this, the movement risks destabilising an already fragile state without delivering sustainable solutions.
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DECODING THE HARAPPAN LANGUAGE: GOVT MEET PLANNED

The Union Ministry of Culture will host a conference in New Delhi from September 11 to 13, bringing together archaeologists, scientists, and experts from diverse fields to present findings on the undeciphered Harappan script, a mystery since its discovery in the 1920s.

The event is being organised by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), an autonomous body under the Culture Ministry.

The Enigma of the Indus Valley Script

- Since its discovery in the 1920s by Sir John Marshall's team, the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) has remained undeciphered.
- The civilisation, flourishing between 2600–1900 BCE, covered nearly 800,000 sq. km across present-day Pakistan and north-west India, making it the world's largest urban culture of its time, with advanced trade, taxation, and drainage systems.
- **Nature of the Inscriptions**
 - Indus inscriptions appear on seal stones, terracotta tablets, and occasionally on metal, often combining pictograms with animal or human motifs.
 - Scholars continue to debate the total number of signs in the script.
 - Estimates vary widely: archaeologist S.R. Rao suggested 62 signs in 1982, Finnish Indologist Asko Parpola proposed 425 signs in 1994, while Bryan K. Wells estimated 676 signs as recently as 2016.
- **Debates on Linguistic Roots**
 - The script's linguistic base remains unresolved.
 - Sir Alexander Cunningham, who first reported a Harappan seal, linked the script to Brahmi — the ancestor of over 200 South and Southeast Asian scripts.
 - Other scholars supported this Brahmi connection.
 - However, Parpola rejects this, arguing instead that Brahmi evolved from the Aramaic script used in the Persian Empire, distancing it from Harappan origins.



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The Politics of Deciphering the Harappan Script

- The search for decoding the Harappan script is not just an academic pursuit but one heavily shaped by political and cultural narratives in India.
- Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin has offered a \$1 million award for anyone who can credibly decipher the script.
- A Dravidian-origin conclusion would allow the political party in Tamil Nadu to claim that the subcontinent's oldest civilisation has southern roots rather than being exclusively northern in origin.
- On the other hand, various groups view the Harappan script as a means to counter the Aryan migration theory.
- They argue that Harappans were Vedic people, pointing to the **Ghaggar-Hakra** (linked to the Saraswati River of the Rig Veda) as central evidence.
- If proven, the script's language would be Sanskrit, strengthening the Vedic-Harappan continuity argument.

EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION (ESIC) INITIATIVES



Employees' State
Insurance Corporation
(ESIC) Initiatives

- The SPREE-2025 (Scheme for Promoting Registration of Employers and Employees) will remain operational till 31st December 2025.
- Under this scheme, industries and employees who are not yet associated with ESIC can register through the ESI Portal, Shram Suvidha Portal, and Company Affairs Portal without the demand of old dues.
- Employers registering under SPREE-2025 will be considered covered from the date of their registration or the date declared by them, and newly registered employees will start receiving ESI health and social security benefits from the date of registration



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- The **focus** of this scheme is **on voluntary compliance rather than punitive measures**, as it seeks to reduce litigation, encourage formal registration, and foster a climate of mutual trust and cooperation between employers and employees.

AMNESTY Scheme-2025:

- It will be in effect from **1st October 2025 to 30th September 2026**.
- This **one-time dispute resolution initiative** has been designed to **settle issues related to damages, interest, and coverage under the ESI Act**.
- The scheme seeks to **provide employers with an opportunity to resolve pending disputes** and strengthen compliance, thereby **reducing the number of lawsuits** and ensuring the smooth delivery of social security benefits to employees.
- Under the scheme, the **regional directors** have been **empowered to withdraw cases** where contributions and interest have been paid, and also to withdraw cases filed against insured persons over five years ago where no notices were issued.
- For the first time, **disputes along with cases involving damages and interest regarding coverage are included**.

SWACHH VAYU SURVEKSHAN (SVS) 2025



- SVS is an **annual survey** conducted by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** under the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.
- It is structured as a rigorous, multi-tiered evaluation mechanism, founded on comprehensive due diligence under the NCAP.
- The programme is conducted annually for **130 cities under NCAP to promote healthy competition among cities** and encourage them to take expeditious actions to **improve air quality**.



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- The SVS assesses cities on **eight key parameters**, including **road dust mitigation, solid waste management, vehicular and industrial emission control, C&D waste handling, and public awareness**, as well as measurable **improvements in particulate matter levels**.

Highlights of SVS 2025:

- **Indore topped the list of million-plus-population cities in the SVS 2025. Jabalpur and Agra/Surat followed.**
- It has put **Navi Mumbai at 4th position, Kanpur at 5th, Bhopal at 6th, Allahabad at 7th, Chandigarh at 8th, Ahmedabad, Pune, and Nagpur at 10th, Varanasi and Raipur at 11th, Lucknow at 15th, Hyderabad at 22nd, Mumbai at 25th, Jaipur at 26th, Delhi at 32nd, Bengaluru at 36th, Kolkata at 38th, and Chennai at 41st** in the list of million-plus-population cities.
- **Amravati secured first rank in the 3-10 lakh population category, followed by Jhansi and Moradabad (joint second rank) and Alwar (third rank).**
- In the third category of cities (**population under 3 lakh**), **Dewas (MP) secured first rank, followed by Parwanoo (Himachal Pradesh) and Angul (Odisha).**
- **PM10 levels went down in 103 out of the 130 cities under NCAP.**
- **Mumbai registered the highest decline of 44% in PM10 level in 2024-25 compared to 2017-18. It was followed by Kolkata (37%), Hyderabad and Bengaluru (26% each), Delhi (15%), and Chennai (12%) among the six big metro cities.**
- Though a total of **22 out of the 130 cities have met the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS)** by reporting annual average PM10 concentrations of less than 60 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), **Chennai is the only big metro that met the acceptable limit, recording an annual average of 58 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.**



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WHAT IS AN AVALANCHE?



- An avalanche is a **large amount of snow** that **quickly moves down a slope**.
- An avalanche can be **deadly** because it will **bury or sweep away anything in its path**.
- Large amounts of **sliding rocks, earth, or other materials** may also be called **avalanches**. But these are **often known as landslides**.
- **Many different conditions** make an avalanche possible.
 - An avalanche is more **likely to happen on a slope without trees or large rocks**. These things help to keep snow in place.
 - A **weak layer of snow** also makes an avalanche likely.
- Once the conditions are right, **several things can start an avalanche**.
 - **Heavy snowfall, strong wind, and rising temperatures** all can **loosen snow** on a slope.
 - **Falling rocks or ice** also can cause snow to slide.
 - **Even the movement of a skier, a snowboarder, or a snowmobile** can trigger an avalanche.
- There are **two main types of snow avalanches—sluffs and slabs**.
- **Sluff** avalanches occur **when the weak layer of a snowpack is on the top**.
- A **slab** avalanche occurs when the **weak layer lies lower down in a snowpack**.

When an avalanche stops, the snow becomes solid like concrete, and people are unable to dig out.
- People caught in avalanches can die from suffocation, trauma, or hypothermia.
- People in mountainous areas **protect themselves from avalanches in several ways**.
 - **Special fences** help to hold snow in place.
 - **Barriers** help to stop sliding snow or change its direction.
 - **Explosives** help to **clear snow** from places where avalanches are likely to occur.



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BHIL TRIBE



- Bhils are considered as **one of the oldest tribes in India** and identified as one of the **Dravidian racial tribes** of Western India and belong to the **Australoid group of tribes**.
 - They are the **most widely distributed tribal groups in India**.
 - **Origin of name:** The name 'Bhil' is derived from the **word villu or billu**, which according to the Dravidian language is known as Bow.
 - **Distribution of Bhil Tribe**
 - They are mainly divided into two main groups: the **central and eastern or Rajput Bhils**.
 - The **central Bhils** are found in the mountain regions in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan.
 - Bhils are also found in the **north eastern parts of Tripura**.
 - **Occupation:** Nearly all of the **Bhil engage in agriculture**, some using the slash-and-burn (jhum) method but most employing the plow.
 - **Language:** They **speak Bhili** (blend of Gujarati and Marathi), which is an Indo Aryan language.
 - **Beliefs and customs of Bhil Tribe**
 - Almost all Bhils practice ethnic religions that have been highly influenced by Hinduism.
 - Most of them worship local deities like **Khandoba, Kanhoba, Bahiroba**, and Sitalmata. Some worship the **Tiger God called 'vaghddev'**.
 - **Main festivals:** The Baneshwar fair is the main festival celebrated among the Bhils. This fair is held during the period of Shivratri and is dedicated to **Baneshwar Mahadev** also known as Lord Shiva.
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UNIVERSAL POSTAL CONGRESS



- It is a **United Nations specialized agency** and the **postal sector's** primary forum for international cooperation.
- It was established by the **Treaty of Bern of 1874**. It is the second oldest international organization worldwide.
- **Functions of Universal Postal Congress**
 - It **coordinates postal policies** among member nations in addition to the worldwide postal system.
 - It sets the rules **for international mail exchanges** and makes recommendations to stimulate growth in mail, parcel and financial services volumes and improve the quality of service for customers.
- **Governance Structure:** It consists of four bodies,
 - **The Congress:** It is the supreme authority of UPU and meets every four years.
 - **The Council of Administration:** It ensures the continuity of the UPU's work between Congresses, supervises its activities and studies regulatory, administrative, legislative and legal issues.
 - **The Postal Operations Council:** It is the technical and operational mind of the UPU and consists of **48 member countries** elected during Congress.
 - **The International Bureau:** Fulfilling a secretariat function, the International Bureau provides logistical and technical support to the UPU's bodies.
- **Member countries of Universal Postal Congress**
 - Any member country of the United Nations may become a member of the UPU.
 - Any **non-member country** of the **United Nations** may become a UPU member, provided that its request is approved by at **least two-thirds of the member countries of the UPU**.
 - **Member countries:** At present it consists of **192 member countries**.
- **Headquarters:** Bern, Switzerland.