

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

SAUDI EAST-WEST PIPELINE SHUTDOWN: A NEW THREAT TO GLOBAL OIL SUPPLIES AND INDIA'S ENERGY SECURITY

Saudi Arabia temporarily shut its **East-West oil pipeline**, also called **Petroline**, after multiple attacks on the network. The attacks hit the Riyadh and Madinah regions and caused an unspecified number of injuries. This comes at a time when global oil supplies are already strained by disruption in the Strait of Hormuz.

A Dangerous New Front

- The pipeline attack coincided with Yemen's Houthi rebels seizing the strategically vital **Mayun Island** at the entrance to the Red Sea.
- Iran-backed Houthi forces have tightened their grip around the **Bab el-Mandeb** and **Red Sea shipping route**.
- Together, these developments mark a dangerous expansion of the wider war with Iran and threaten the very route Saudi Arabia has relied on since Persian Gulf shipping effectively halted.

What the East-West Pipeline Is?

- Runs roughly 1,200 km across **Saudi Arabia**, from the **Abqaiq oil processing centre** in the oil-rich east to the **Red Sea port of Yanbu** in the west.
- Operated by Saudi Aramco.
- Allows crude to move overland to the Red Sea, **bypassing the Strait of Hormuz**.
- Built partly as a hedge against disruption of oil flows through Hormuz.
- From Yanbu, tankers bound for Asia sail through the Bab el-Mandeb, while those headed west use the Suez Canal.

Why Hormuz Matters?

- The Strait of Hormuz is the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman. Before the West Asia war began over six months ago (late February), it carried a fifth of global oil flows.
- It is the main outlet from the Persian Gulf, on which Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE have depended to reach global markets, especially China and India.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

The Pipeline's Role During the Hormuz Crisis

- Petroline can carry around 7 million barrels per day (bpd), of which about **5 million bpd is available for export** and the rest feeds domestic refineries.
- Before the war, the pipeline ran at a fraction of capacity as exports through Hormuz were normal. Once maritime traffic through the chokepoint ground to a halt, Aramco began pumping far more oil through Petroline.
- Actual flows in recent months are estimated at 4–5 million bpd, which represents 4–5 per cent of global oil supplies. The pipeline has thus served as a vital safety valve.
- Its targeting shows that alternative routes themselves can become targets in a regional conflict.

The Worry for India

- Saudi Arabia has traditionally been among India's top crude suppliers.
- Despite falling supplies during the Hormuz crisis, Saudi oil still accounted for 7–8 per cent of India's total oil imports in recent months, most of it shipped from Yanbu.
- The first **impact will be on supplies**, forcing Indian refiners to find replacement volumes.
- This is manageable given India's diversified import slate. The **bigger headache is higher prices for alternative barrels**.
- **India's Rising Oil Import Bill**
 - India's crude import bill surged over 56 per cent year-on-year in April–July to \$63.4 billion, even though volumes rose only slightly to 81.9 million tonnes from 81.5 million tonnes.
 - India is the world's third-largest crude consumer and imports over 88 per cent of its requirement.
 - Every **10 per cent rise in oil prices widens the current account deficit by about 0.4 per cent of GDP**.
 - Higher energy imports affect the trade balance, current account, inflation and the rupee. An oil shock acts as an external tax on the Indian economy.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

NEW DELHI DECLARATION - EMERGING GLOBAL SOUTH AGENDA AT BRICS

2026

- BRICS members adopted the New Delhi Declaration at the **18th BRICS Summit** after marathon negotiations, particularly over the language concerning the West Asia conflict.
- Consensus was significant as BRICS foreign ministers had failed to issue a joint statement in May amid differences between Iran and the UAE.
- India, as the host and chair, played a crucial diplomatic role in **reconciling divergent positions** and ensuring that geopolitical disagreements did not derail the summit outcome.

West Asia:

- **Consensus without attribution:** Rather than assigning responsibility for the conflict, BRICS adopted broader language acceptable to competing positions within the grouping. The declaration calls for -
 - Maximum restraint and avoidance of actions that aggravate the conflict.
 - **Dialogue** and **diplomacy** for a durable peace.
 - Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.
 - Protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.
 - Continuity of trade, supply chains and energy flows.
- **Nuclear security and safeguards:** BRICS also expressed serious concern over attacks on civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, and stressed the need for **nuclear safety** even during armed conflicts.

Terrorism - Significant Indian Diplomatic Gain:

- BRICS strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and specifically condemned the April 2025 **Pahalgam terrorist attack**, in which 26 people were killed.
- It highlighted terror financing, safe havens, extremism and radicalisation among youth, international counter-terrorism cooperation, **zero tolerance** for terrorism, and rejection of **double standards** in countering terrorism.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

Trade - Opposition to Unilateral Protectionism:

- Against the backdrop of rising tariffs and trade tensions, BRICS opposed unilateral coercive measures **inconsistent with international law**, the UN Charter and WTO.
- It called for a fair, stable and predictable trading environment conducive to sustainable development.

De-dollarisation - Practical Steps, No Common Currency:

- BRICS did **not** announce a **common BRICS currency**. Instead, it adopted a gradual approach towards greater use of local currencies.
- Thus, the focus is on payment-system **interoperability** and financial **diversification** rather than an immediate common currency.

AI and Global South:

- BRICS identified Artificial Intelligence (AI) as both an economic opportunity and a governance challenge for the Global South.
- The grouping also welcomed India's hosting of the **AI Impact Summit** in February 2026.

Indian Imprint on the Declaration:

- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** A proposed BRICS repository for DPI and pilot projects could facilitate sharing of India's DPI experience with partner countries.
- **Health:** The declaration supports a BRICS Training Hub Network and Centres of Excellence on mental well-being, with NIMHANS, Bengaluru, serving as the coordinating centre.
- **Development cooperation:** Other initiatives include -
 - BRICS Task Force on Growth and Development.
 - BRICS–New Development Bank Knowledge Portal.
 - Cooperation on infrastructure and public-private partnerships.
 - Strengthening the BRICS insurance ecosystem.

Conclusion:

- The New Delhi Declaration demonstrates **BRICS'** attempt to function as a platform for **Global South cooperation** amid geopolitical fragmentation.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

BANK EMPLOYEES STRIKE - PLI SCHEME, FIVE-DAY WORK WEEK AND KEY DEMANDS

- Public sector bank employees across India went on strike on **September 11**, despite the government agreeing to put the proposed **Performance-Linked Incentive (PLI)** scheme on hold.

Background: The PLI Scheme for Bank Employees

- The Department of Financial Services introduced a revised **Performance-Linked Incentive scheme in November 2024**, applicable to public sector bank employees for **2025-26**.
- A major feature of the revised system was that it applied only to **Scale IV officers and above**.
- Eligible senior officers could receive PLI of up to **365 days of basic pay**, depending on individual performance.
- Bank employee unions opposed this structure on the grounds that it created a significant disparity within the workforce.
- Under the existing formula applicable to the wider workforce, PLI was linked to **15 days of basic pay plus dearness allowance**. The unions therefore considered the new arrangement discriminatory because of its substantially different treatment of senior officers.

Why Did Bank Employees Oppose the New PLI Scheme?

- The unions argued that the revised PLI scheme departed from the 2020 agreement between bank unions and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).
- Under that arrangement, PLI was to be linked to the overall performance of individual banks and applied uniformly to employees and officers.
- The revised scheme, by contrast, placed greater emphasis on the individual performance of Scale IV officers and above. This difference became one of the principal reasons behind the strike call.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

Other Major Demands

- **Five-Day Work Week**
 - The most prominent unresolved demand, apart from the PLI issue, is implementation of a five-day work week for bank employees.
 - Bank employees had proposed in 2024 that daily working hours be increased by 40 minutes so that the total number of working hours per week would not decline.
 - The proposal has remained pending with the government. The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) stated that the meeting did not produce positive movement on this issue, leading it to continue with the strike.
- **Pension-Related Demands**
 - Employees have also sought a uniform dearness allowance formula for all pensioners.
 - Another demand is that employees covered under the National Pension System (NPS) should be given an option to shift to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).
- **Other Employee Welfare Issues**
 - The unions have also raised issues concerning revision of ex-gratia payments and medical facilities for retired employees, among other employee-related concerns.

Government's Response

- A delegation of bank employees met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and officials of the Department of Financial Services.
- Following the meeting, the Ministry of Finance announced that the PLI scheme would be put on hold pending further discussions.
- However, the UFBU acknowledged the decision while maintaining that no progress had been made on the five-day work week. Consequently, the strike remained in place.

Conclusion

- The bank employees' strike highlights the challenge of balancing **banking-sector productivity, employee compensation and institutional reforms** with the need to ensure uninterrupted access to essential financial services.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026



SOUTH ASIA WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT NETWORK

- It is an **intergovernmental law enforcement** support body of South Asian countries.
- **Member Countries:** It comprises eight South Asian countries namely: **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.**
- It was **officially launched in 2011** during the second meeting of South Asia Experts Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade **held in Paro, Bhutan.**
- **Aim:** SAWEN aims to **combat wildlife crime through cooperation**, collaboration, coordination, capacity building and communication.
- **Secretariat:** It was formally established in **Kathmandu, Nepal, in 2011.**
- **Objectives**
 - To take **initiatives for bringing harmonization and standardization** in laws and policies of member countries concerning conservation of wild fauna and flora
 - To document **the trend of poaching and illegal wildlife trade**, and related threats to the natural biodiversity within and across countries in the region
 - To strengthen **institutional responses to combat wildlife crime** by promoting partnership with relevant institutions for research and information sharing, training and capacity building, and technical support
 - To encourage member countries **to prepare and implement their National Action Plans** to combat wildlife crime and to collaborate towards effective implementation of such plans
- **Governance Structure:**
 - It consists of a **General Assembly** as an **apex body** of SAWEN comprising minister of the concerned ministry or his/her senior level government delegate.
 - **Executive Committee (EC):** It consists of all principal focal persons of the member countries.
 - **Secretariat:** It is headed by **Secretary General** to perform day to day activities.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

RAMANATHASWAMY TEMPLE



The Prime Minister recently welcomed BRICS leaders against a backdrop featuring Tamil Nadu's iconic Ramanathaswamy temple.

- It is a **Hindu temple** dedicated to **Lord Shiva** located on **Rameswaram Island** in the state of **Tamil Nadu**.

History:

- The **first stone temple** was built here by the **Chola kings** in the **12th century**, and **additions** were made by **kings of the Pandya dynasty** and the **rulers of Vijayanagar**.
- **Krishna Deva Raya** of **Vijayanagara** came here in **1513** after conquering **Lanka** and made magnificent gifts to the temple.
- The **Sethupati kings of Ramnad** became the **guardians** of the temple **during the rule of the Nayakas**, and they finally completed the temple.
- The Temple is **one of the 12 Jyothirlinga** temples, where **Shiva** is worshipped in the form of a **Jyotirlingam**, meaning "pillar of light".
 - Of the 12 Jyotirlingas, 11 are in the north, and **only Ramanathaswamy is in the south**.
- It is **one of the four Char Dham shrines**. The other three are **Dwaraka**, **Puri**, and **Badrinath**, all located in the north.
 - It is the **only temple** dedicated to **Lord Shiva** among the **four Char Dham shrines**.

Architecture:

- The temple is renowned for its stunning **Dravidian architecture**, characterized by towering **gopurams** and intricate carvings.

Current Affairs - 13 September 2026

- Like all ancient temples in South India, there is a **high compound wall (madil)** on **all four sides** of the temple premises.
- The temple has the **longest corridor among all Hindu temples in India**.
- The temple's interior features **extensive halls between enormous colonnades on platforms**.
- The **colossal granite walls** are marked by **intricate carvings** and depictions of Hindu deities.

BUXA TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is located in the Alipurduar district of West Bengal.
- It lies within the **Indo-Malayan biodiversity region**.

Borders: The northern boundary of the Reserve lies along the **international border with Bhutan**. The eastern side of the Reserve forms the **interstate boundary with Assam**, demarcated by **River Sankosh**.

- It includes **Terai, Bhabar and sub-Himalayan ecosystems** within a single protected landscape.

Rivers: It is drained by rivers such as **Raidak, Sankosh and Jayanti**, which originate in Bhutan.

Vegetation: The forests of the reserve can be broadly classified as the '**Moist Tropical Forest**'.

Fauna: It is home to elephant, gaur, sambar, spotted deer, barking deer and hog deer etc.