

## Current Affairs - 15 September 2026

### HINDI DIWAS - HOW THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY RESOLVED THE LANGUAGE QUESTION

- Hindi Diwas is observed every year on **September 14** to commemorate the decision of the Constituent Assembly on September 14, 1949, regarding the official language of the Union.
- After prolonged and contentious debates, the Assembly adopted the compromise commonly known as the **Munshi-Ayyangar formula**.

#### **Background: The Language Question in the Constituent Assembly**

- At Independence, India was a highly multilingual country, with Hindi being the most widely spoken language while numerous regional languages were used across different parts of the country.
- English, despite being spoken by less than 1% of Indians, remained the language of **colonial administration, law and higher official communication**.
- The central questions before the Constituent Assembly were:
  - Whether English should be replaced by an Indian language?
  - Which language should receive official status at the Union level?
  - Whether Hindi should replace English immediately or through a transition?
  - How could linguistic diversity be reconciled with national unity?
- The debate broadly divided members into Hindi-speaking representatives, representatives of non-Hindi-speaking regions and moderate Congress leaders.

#### **Evolution of Hindi and English**

- The constitutional arrangement envisaged a **15-year transition period**, during which the Union could progressively increase the use of Hindi.
- The Constitution also recognised **14 other languages** in the Eighth Schedule at the time.
- States were permitted to select a regional language or English for their internal administration, while English continued to play an important role in communication between States.

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- However, when the 15-year transition period ended in **1965**, Hindi had not become sufficiently widespread in Union government functioning.
- The prospect of replacing English with Hindi generated strong opposition in several **non-Hindi-speaking States**, particularly in southern India. Protests and violent agitations during the 1960s demonstrated the political sensitivity of the language question.
- The **Official Languages Act, 1963**, provided for the continued use of English alongside Hindi for official purposes. Thus, the constitutional framework evolved into a **dual-language arrangement** rather than establishing Hindi as the exclusive language of Union administration.

### Constitutional Framework

- The language provisions are primarily contained in **Part XVII of the Constitution**.
  - **Article 343**: Official language of the Union.
  - **Articles 344-345**: Language-related arrangements involving the Union and States.
  - **Articles 346-347**: Communication between States and recognition of languages.
  - **Article 348**: Language used in the Supreme Court, High Courts and legislation.
  - **Article 350A**: Facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage.
  - **Article 350B**: Special Officer for linguistic minorities.
  - **Article 351**: Directive for development of Hindi.
- Thus, India's constitutional language policy seeks to balance **Hindi's development with multilingualism and linguistic rights**.

### Significance

- Hindi Diwas is significant not merely as a celebration of the Hindi language but as a reminder of the constitutional compromise that helped accommodate India's linguistic diversity.
- The Constituent Assembly's experience demonstrates that linguistic policy in a diverse democracy requires consensus-building rather than simple majoritarianism.
- It also illustrates the flexibility of the Indian constitutional system, where an initial transition plan could evolve in response to social and political realities.

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### EL NIÑO AND FOOD INFLATION: WHY FOOD PRICES MAY RISE AND STAY ELEVATED

India's southwest monsoon this year has been erratic and deficient, largely because of a strengthening El Niño.

The combined effect of a weak monsoon, a likely very strong El Niño in the coming months, and escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia and Russia-Ukraine could push up food inflation, which has so far remained relatively under control.

#### Overall Monsoon Picture

- Cumulative all-India rainfall was 14.7 per cent below the LPA as of September 13.
- 24 of the country's 36 meteorological subdivisions recorded deficiency above 10 per cent.
- The southern states and Marathwada & Vidarbha in Maharashtra, were worst affected.
- Rainfall was largely confined to Odisha, Chhattisgarh, eastern Madhya Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

#### Impact on Kharif Crops

- The headline sowing figure looks reassuring. Total kharif acreage stood at 1,096.5 lakh hectares as of September 11, only 1.4 per cent below the 1,112.5 lakh hectares of the same period in 2025.
- But three better indicators tell a more worrying story.
  - **Fertiliser sales:** Sales of di-ammonium phosphate, muriate of potash and complex fertilisers were significantly lower in April–July 2026 than a year earlier.
  - **Market prices:** Wholesale prices have risen sharply over last year, reflecting bullish trader expectations of a smaller crop.
  - **Production forecasts:** The US Department of Agriculture projects India's rice output falling to 147 million tonnes from last year's record 154 mt, and maize to 50 mt from 55.1 mt.
- The uneven temporal distribution and spatial distribution of rainfall are likely to lower yields even where sowing has been completed.

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### El Niño Outlook

- El Niño is currently in a strong state, with sea surface temperatures (SST) in the equatorial Pacific off Ecuador and Peru about 1.8°C above normal.
- The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration projects:
  - Over 90 per cent chance of a very strong El Niño (SST more than 2°C above normal) from September to January.
  - Strong conditions (more than 1.5°C above normal) till March.
  - Weak-to-moderate conditions (0.5°C to 1.5°C above normal) till May.

### Threat to the Rabi Season

- El Niño suppresses rainfall and raises temperatures in India. A very strong event could produce a **short, warm winter**.
- The rabi crops most at risk include wheat, rapeseed-mustard, chana, masoor, matar, potato, onion, garlic, jeera, saunf and dhaniya.

### Global Price Pressures Are Building

- The West Asia conflict has **not yet caused** a dramatic spike in global food prices, unlike Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.
- This is because back-to-back bumper crops in 2024-25 & 2025-26 produced record wheat, rice, maize, sugar, soyabean, rapeseed and palm oil. That cushion is now eroding:
  - The **FAO Food Price Index** stood at 133.3 points in August, the highest since November 2022, though below the all-time high of 160.2 in March 2022.
- The FAO vegetable oil index in August was the highest since June 2022; the cereals index touched a 27-month high.
- Running down of stocks, disrupted trade logistics from geopolitical tensions and a strengthening El Niño could push global prices further upward.

### Conclusion

A deficient and uneven monsoon, a strengthening El Niño threatening the rabi season, and tightening global markets for cereals and edible oils point in one direction: food inflation is set to return and stay elevated.

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### SARAL AI



- It converts research published in its journals **into engaging and accessible videos.**
- It is an **AI-based platform** that demystifies and converts complex research publications and patents into podcasts, short videos, posters, business briefs.
- It is an initiative of **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** New Delhi.
- **Features:**
  - Researchers upload research papers **via arXiv links or direct LaTeX files.** The system automatically extracts content and figures.
  - **AI Script Generation:** System generates engaging presentation scripts using advanced AI models like Gemini and GPT for educational content.
  - **Voice Synthesis:** System **converts scripts to natural-sounding audio** narration with support for multiple Indian languages including Hindi.
  - **Video Production:** System automatically creates professional presentation videos combining slides, narration, and visual elements. The video can be shared on social media
  - **Multilingual Support:** It **presentations and rich social media** content in **18 Indian languages**, enabling wider dissemination of scientific knowledge across the country.

### INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR PROMOTION OF DOMESTIC PNG CONNECTIONS



- It is aimed at accelerating the growth of active **domestic Piped Natural Gas (PNG)** connections across the country.
- **Nodal ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- It enables households to **access clean, safe and affordable cooking gas** through piped supply.

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- It provides incentives to **City Gas Distribution (CGD) network** entities for converting unbilled connections into active, billed connections.
- It was **launched in 2026**, and seeks to encourage **City Gas Distribution (CGD) entities** to connect more households to piped natural gas.
- CGD networks are developed by entities authorised by the **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB)**.
- **Working:**
  - The scheme will be implemented in **two tranches over a six-month period**.
  - A minimum number of domestic **connections have been fixed for every Geographical Area**, with eligible CGD entities required to add billed domestic connections above the prescribed threshold during the performance period.
  - For each such incremental connection, the entity earns an additional **allocation of 200 Standard Cubic Metres (SCM)** of gas.

### CHINA'S PROPOSAL FOR A BRICS OPEN-SOURCE AI ECOSYSTEM AND INDIA'S POSITION

At the BRICS Summit in New Delhi, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed setting up a **BRICS open-source artificial intelligence (AI) community**. China offered to support cooperation among member countries on developing and deploying large language models (LLMs), AI training and a common digital cloud platform.

- Xi said China would take the lead in establishing a "**BRICS AI open source community**". The proposal has several components:
  - Cooperation on large language models.
  - Specialised AI seminars and training courses.
  - An open ecosystem for AI.
  - A separate BRICS digital ecosystem cloud platform.
- He also proposed AI application cooperation centres with groupings including BRICS, ASEAN and the African Union.

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### Why China Is Promoting Open AI Models?

- The proposal comes as Chinese companies release a growing number of **open-weight AI models**.
- DeepSeek and Alibaba's Qwen family of models can be downloaded and run by developers on their own infrastructure, subject to their licences.
- This differs from **closed models**, which are generally accessed through APIs controlled by companies such as OpenAI, Anthropic and Google.
- China has increasingly linked open AI with access for developing countries. It argues that AI should be more affordable and accessible globally.

### Where India Fits?

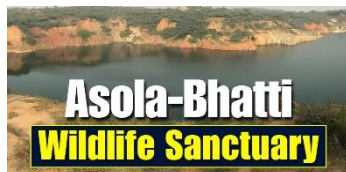
- India and China both aspire to lead the Global South, though Beijing currently holds a clear edge in AI capabilities.
- India has repeatedly called for wider access to AI resources:
  - At the AI Impact Summit earlier this year, the government pushed for broader access to compute, datasets, models and AI infrastructure, especially for developing countries.
  - Through the **IndiaAI Mission**, India is investing public money in domestic AI capacity, including subsidised compute infrastructure and support for Indian foundation models and datasets.

### Unanswered Questions

- For now, there is no formal BRICS open-source AI platform. Xi's announcement remains a Chinese proposal.
- Neither the New Delhi Declaration nor other summit documents specify:
  - Which models would be used;
  - Where common cloud infrastructure would be hosted;
  - How data would be handled;
  - Which countries would participate

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### ASOLA-BHATTI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



- It is strategically located in **Haryana**.
- It lies on the **Southern Delhi Ridge** of the Aravalli hill range.

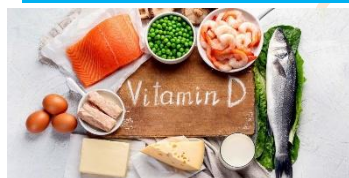
- **Flora:**

- The **semi-arid forest vegetation** of the Aravali region provides homes to certain plant species.
- It includes **dhak** (flame of the forest), **babool** (Acacia), **khejri**, and various shrubs and grasses that are well-adapted to dry conditions.

- **Fauna:**

- It is home to a wide variety of animals, including the **Indian leopard**, **jackal**, **Indian blue bull**, sambar deer, wild boar, and mongoose.
- It is also a **birdwatcher's paradise**, with many species of birds spotted here, including the **Indian peafowl**, **crested serpent-eagle**, and Indian roller.
- Reptiles such as the monitor lizard, Indian cobra, and Russell's viper can also be found here.

### KEY FACTS ABOUT VITAMIN D



- Vitamin D (also referred to as **calciferol**) is a **fat-soluble** vitamin that is **naturally present in a few foods**, added to others, and available as a dietary supplement.
- Also known as the **sunshine vitamin**, it is **produced endogenously** when **ultraviolet (UV) rays from sunlight strike the skin** and trigger vitamin D synthesis.
- During periods of sunlight, vitamin D is **stored in fat** and then **released** when sunlight is not available.

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- **Very few foods naturally contain** vitamin D. Most people get vitamin D in their diet from foods that are fortified. This means that vitamin D is added to the food. These foods may include milk, cereal, and yogurt.
- Foods that naturally have vitamin D include **egg yolks, saltwater fish, and liver.**
- The amount of vitamin D you need each day depends on your age.
- **Why is Vitamin D so important?**
  - Vitamin D **promotes calcium absorption** and helps **maintain adequate levels of calcium and phosphorus** in the blood, which is **necessary for healthy bones** and
  - Without sufficient vitamin D, bones can become thin, brittle, or misshapen.
  - Vitamin D has other roles in the body, including **reduction of inflammation** as well as **modulation of such processes as cell growth, neuromuscular and immune function**, and glucose metabolism.
- **Vitamin D Deficiency:**
  - **In children**, vitamin D deficiency **causes rickets**, a disease in which the **bones become soft, weak, deformed, and painful.**
  - **In teens and adults**, vitamin D deficiency **causes osteomalacia**, a disorder that **causes bone pain** and muscle weakness.
  - Vitamin D deficiency may be **more common in people with higher skin melanin content (darker skin)** and who **wear clothing with extensive skin coverage.**
- **Can Vitamin D be Harmful?**
  - **Very high levels** of vitamin D in your blood can **cause nausea, vomiting, muscle weakness, confusion, pain, loss of appetite, dehydration, excessive urination and thirst, and kidney stones.**
  - **Extremely high levels** of vitamin D can cause **kidney failure, irregular heartbeat, and even death.**