

## Current Affairs - 04 September 2026

### YOUTH POWER, AN ELECTORAL FORCE STILL IN THE MAKING

- India is witnessing an unprecedented **political and social focus on its youth**. Political parties, governments, think tanks, educational institutions and media organisations are increasingly engaging with **Generation Z and Generation Alpha**.
- This attention reflects concerns over education, employment, skills, examinations, political participation and accountability.

#### Growing Political Attention to Youth

- Governments have long introduced programmes for youth development covering employment, entrepreneurship, skill development, education, internships, sports and volunteering.
- The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** seeks to promote quality learning, innovation and empowerment, while the proposed **National Youth Policy 2026** aims to prepare young people for the digital age.
- However, policies alone cannot resolve the deeper challenges confronting young Indians. A major concern is the large population classified as **not in education, employment or training (NEET)**.
- The reported figure of 8.7 crore people aged 15–29 indicates a substantial amount of youthful potential without a productive anchor.

#### Youth as an Elusive Electoral Constituency

- India has the **world's largest youth population**, with around 65% of its population below 35 and approximately 23% of its electorate aged 18–29. Nevertheless, young voters have not emerged as a clearly identifiable electoral bloc.
- Indian elections have traditionally been influenced by **caste, community, class, occupation, religion and gender**.
- Dalits, minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and specific caste groups have often functioned as recognisable electoral constituencies.
- The **women's vote** has also become increasingly significant.

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### Digital Youth and Political Communication

- Political parties are adapting their communication strategies to reach young citizens through **social media, digital platforms** and informal political language.
- Leaders are increasingly attempting to communicate in a direct and conversational manner, while educational campuses have become important political spaces.
- However, **digital engagement** does not automatically translate into electoral participation. Young people may consume political content without voting or becoming politically organised.
- Genuine youth mobilisation therefore requires more than online visibility; it requires credible policies addressing their **employment, education, skills and aspirations**.

### Youth and India@2047

- The vision of a developed India by 2047 places young Indians at the centre of national development and describes them as the **Amrit Peedhi**.
- India's demographic advantage can become an economic and social asset only when young people get **quality education, productive employment & political representation**.
- Swami Vivekananda's emphasis on the power of youth remains relevant. The contemporary challenge is to transform youthful potential into **institutional, economic and democratic power**.

### Conclusion

- The growing focus on employment, education, skills, **digital participation and accountability** reflects changing expectations among younger citizens.
- Yet political attention does not necessarily signify the emergence of a consolidated youth vote. Caste, community, gender, region and **traditional political networks** continue to shape electoral behaviour.
- India's demographic advantage will ultimately depend on how effectively it educates, employs, empowers and politically integrates its young citizens.
- If this generation becomes an organised democratic force, it can move from being merely an electoral target to becoming a principal architect of **India@2047**.

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### INDIA'S GROWTH IS REAL - BUT STRUCTURAL REFORMS CANNOT BE DEFERRED

- India's recent growth is **genuine** and supported by multiple indicators, even after accounting for concerns over the GDP deflator, statistical revisions and methodology. However, strong growth should not become an excuse for complacency.
- To convert high growth into sustained, broad-based and high-income development, India must urgently **address structural constraints** in trade, investment, factor markets and the business environment.

#### **GDP Growth - The Numbers Are Credible:**

- **Strong headline growth:**
  - Real GDP growth was 7.8% in April–June 2026, compared with 7.3% in the corresponding quarter of 2025.
  - Nominal GDP grew by 10.3%, while the economy-wide price rise was only 2.3%.
  - Despite a difficult global environment marked by wars, tariffs and trade disruptions, India has continued to expand faster than many major economies.
- **Evidence beyond GDP statistics:**
  - The growth cannot be dismissed merely as a statistical artefact because several independent indicators corroborate it. **For example,**
    - **Consumption**, government expenditure and investment-to-GDP prices rose by about 4.4%, above consumer inflation of 2.3%.
    - Import prices increased by around 32%, while imports expanded in real terms.
    - **Excise duties** on petrol and diesel, fertiliser subsidies and other taxes/subsidies also influence measured GDP through the GDP deflator.
    - GST collections provide additional evidence: after the September rate reduction, GST collections in October–December rose 8.5% year-on-year in rupee terms, compared with 10.8% earlier.

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### The GDP Deflator Debate - Why the Criticism is Overstated:

- Critics argue that India's low inflation has mechanically inflated real GDP growth. However, the issue is more complicated.
- India's national accounts have moved towards **double deflation**, particularly for manufacturing and agriculture, where output and input prices are separately considered.
- This is methodologically preferable to relying simply on consumer prices.
- The GDP deflator is not the same as CPI inflation. GDP measures domestically produced output, whereas CPI reflects the prices paid by consumers and includes imported goods.
- Therefore, using CPI alone to challenge real GDP estimates can be misleading.

### The Real Challenge - Structural Reform:

- **Reforms that matter:**
  - The focus should therefore shift towards -
    - Trade liberalisation and greater global integration.
    - Reform of factor markets — land, labour and capital.
    - A more predictable investment regime.
    - Improved ease of doing business.
    - Greater availability and allocation of capital.
    - Avoiding protectionist policies that raise costs and weaken competitiveness.
  - India's experience with the 2015 Model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) illustrates the danger of excessive regulatory caution and investment uncertainty.

### Conclusion:

- India's growth performance is supported by consumption, investment, credit, GST collections and other real-economy indicators, making it difficult to dismiss GDP growth as merely a statistical illusion.
- The more important question is what India does with this growth. The message is therefore **two-fold**: defend credible statistics, but do not confuse strong growth with completed economic transformation.

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### WHAT IS AGRISTACK?



- It is a **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** for the farm sector.
- It is an initiative under the **Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM)** and was approved by the Union Cabinet in September 2024.
- It comprises **three foundational registries** or databases in the agriculture sector:
  - The Farmer Registry, Geo-referenced village maps, and the Crop Sown Registry, all created and maintained by the State Governments or Union Territories.
- **Farmer Registry:**
  - Under the AgriStack, farmers are given digital identities (Farmer ID), which are linked dynamically to the State's land records, livestock ownership, crops sown, demographic details, family details, schemes, and benefits availed.
  - **Target:** The government aims to create digital identities for 11 crore farmers.
  - The Centre has allocated **financial support** to states to create their respective registries under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment.
  - **Advantage:** A farmer would be able to access benefits and services digitally.
  - The Centre aims to complete the Farmer Registry with dynamic Records of Rights (RoR) synchronisation by March 2027. In the Northeastern States, the target was set to March 2028.
- **Crop Sown Registry:**
  - It includes details on crops planted by farmers.
  - This is recorded through mobile-based Digital Crop Surveys on the ground each season.
- **Geo-Referenced Village Map Registry:**
  - It comprises geographic information of land records linked with their locations (latitudes and longitudes).
  - The target is to cover all villages by March 2027.

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- Once fully implemented, Agristack will enable farmers to receive several benefits through a paperless and contactless digital ecosystem, including:
  - Paperless and contactless crop loan facilities.
  - Transparent and efficient crop insurance claim settlement.
  - Timely availability of agricultural inputs.
  - Personalized advisories on pests and diseases.
  - Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of government scheme benefits.
  - Procurement of agricultural produce at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

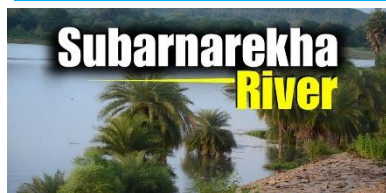
### BIO-NIVESH PLATFORM



- It is aimed at connecting biotechnology startups with investors and increasing private capital for innovations that are ready for scale-up and commercialisation.
- It is envisaged as a recurring platform, with subsequent editions proposed across different cities to broaden participation.
- It has been designed as a two-way engagement mechanism which enables innovators to understand the investment lens while giving investors deeper insight into the scientific, regulatory and development pathways of biotechnology.
- The inaugural BIO-NIVESH edition brought together 20 high-potential biotechnology and deep-tech startups and around 50 investors.
  - The first session featured direct startup-investor interactions, with startups selected on the basis of innovation, development stage, market potential, scalability and regulatory readiness.
  - The second session involved an interaction between minister, investors and startups on access to capital, commercialisation, scale-up and measures to support innovation-led growth.
- Significance: It would help build the bridge required to take promising ideas from research and entrepreneurship to industry, scale and markets.

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### KEY FACTS ABOUT SUBARNAREKHA RIVER



- It is an important **east-flowing river** in India, flowing through **Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal**.
- **Subarnarekha** means a "streak of gold" in English. The name is associated with the **traditional presence of gold particles in its riverbed**, particularly near its source.
- **Course:**
  - It **originates** near Nagri village in the Ranchi district of **Jharkhand**, at an elevation of 600 meters above sea level.
  - From here, it **flows eastward through** the **Chhotanagpur Plateau**, a region rich in mineral resources like copper.
  - As it moves across this plateau, the river **passes through Hundrugbagh Waterfall**, which marks its exit from the plateau.
  - After covering a distance of **395 kilometers**, the Subarnarekha finally **drains into the Bay of Bengal** at Kirtania port in **Odisha**.
- **Tributaries:** Along the way, it is joined by several important tributaries, including the **Kanchi, Kharkai, and Karkari**
- **Basin:**
  - Geographically, the Subarnarekha Basin lies between the **Damodar River to the north** and the **Brahmani and Baitarani rivers to the south**.
  - **To the west**, it's bordered by the **Chhotanagpur Plateau**, and **to the southeast**, it **flows into the Bay of Bengal**.
  - The basin extends over **States of Jharkhand, Odisha, and a comparatively smaller part in West Bengal**.
  - The basin is generally **influenced by the Southwest monsoon**, which onsets in the month of June and extends up to October.

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- **Dams and Reservoirs:** Getalsud Reservoir, Chandil Dam, Galudih Barrage, and Icha Dam.
- **Cities along its course:**
  - Ranchi (Jharkhand)
  - Jamshedpur (Jharkhand)
  - Chaibasa (Jharkhand)
  - Bhadrak (Odisha)
  - Kirtania Port (Odisha).

### WHAT IS THE 'RAKSHA' FRAMEWORK?



- It is a **comprehensive strategic framework** outlining India's road map and vision for defence diplomacy and global defence partnerships over the next 10 years.
- The document seeks to **strengthen India's strategic engagement with friendly nations** by aligning national security objectives with proactive international cooperation.
- It lays down an **actionable vision** aimed at promoting long-term stability, strengthening partnerships, and advancing India's role in an evolving global security environment.
- **Key pillars** highlighted in the strategic blueprint include:
  - **Strategic Partnerships:** Deepening bilateral and multilateral security cooperation.
  - **Capacity Building:** Enhancing joint military exercises, training programmes, and sharing best practices with friendly nations.
  - **Indigenous Exports:** Promoting Make-in-India defence platforms to establish the nation as a reliable global defence manufacturing hub.
  - **Maritime security:** Strengthening India's role as a Net Security Provider and First Responder in the Indian Ocean Region.

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### NORTHERN GOSHAWK



- It is a large, powerful bird of prey belonging to the Accipitridae family.

- **Distribution:** It is widely distributed across Europe, Asia, and parts of North America.
- **Habitat:** It is found in dense forests, particularly coniferous and mixed woodlands.

### Features

- **Appearance:** It has relatively short, broad wings and a long tail. Females are significantly larger than males.
- These are **partial migrants**, generally migrates between September and November and February to April in the spring.
- These **birds are diurnal** and are always found singly or in pairs.
- They are **highly territorial** and maintain their home ranges in display flights.
- These are powerful **hunters and mainly use a perch-hunting style;**
  - **Perch-hunting style** includes a series of quick flights low to the ground, interspersed with brief periods of scanning for unsuspecting prey from elevated perches (short duration sit-and-wait predatory movements).
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern