

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

SHEKHAWATI HAVELIS



- Havelis are old mansions or large townhouses constructed around an open courtyard.

- The name comes from the Arabic hawali, a "private space," since they were originally enclosed family dwellings.

- This type of building is found throughout India, but particularly in northwestern India (Rajasthan, Punjab, and Gujarat).
- These multi-story houses—frequently constructed by royalty or merchants—have central courtyards (generally with fountains) that bring in light and ventilation in the hot climate of India.
- Originally busy family residences, numerous havelis now are "living museums" of India's history, restored as heritage hotels or cultural centers.

About Shekhawati Havelis:

- Located in the northeastern Rajasthan, the Shekhawati region is often associated with its magnificent havelis covered in intricate wall paintings.
- Towns and villages across the region feature historic mansions whose façades, courtyards and interiors showcase detailed frescoes.
- These paintings depict a fascinating mix of themes, ranging from Hindu mythology and royal and local traditions to scenes influenced by everyday life and changing times.
- Some artworks also reflect the arrival of modern technology and foreign influences, creating a distinctive visual record of the region's history.
- The havelis themselves are equally notable for their architectural details, including ornate gateways, balconies, courtyards, carved elements, and decorative façades.
- Together, the buildings and paintings create a unique urban landscape that sets Shekhawati apart from other heritage regions of Rajasthan.

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

WHAT IS A VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK (VPN)?



- It is a **service** that creates a **secure, encrypted connection** between a **user's device** and the **internet**.
- It works by creating an encrypted connection, often called a **tunnel**, between a device and a secure server operated by the VPN provider.
- By routing web traffic through the isolated digital tunnel, it **hides the user's actual IP address** and **protects their data from unauthorized interception**.
- This ensures **privacy and data security** when accessing corporate networks or utilizing public internet connections.
- VPNs **protect data from hackers, mask IP addresses**, and are commonly **used for secure remote access and bypassing geographic restrictions**.
- However, **VPNs don't provide total anonymity**, as **ISPs can still see the size of incoming and outgoing traffic**, but **not the content**.

What are VPNs used for?

- **Regular internet users and organizations use VPNs for virtual privacy.**
 - Organizations deploy VPNs to **ensure authorized users can access their data center** using encrypted channels.
 - VPNs also enable users to **connect to a database** from the same organization located in a different area.
- VPNs provide **remote employees, gig economy freelance workers, and business travelers** with **access to software applications hosted on proprietary networks**.
- When an internet user surfs the web, an attacker could access information, including browsing habits or IP addresses. **VPN use banned for two months in Jammu-Kashmir's Doda.**

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

INDIA'S DRUG-RESISTANCE CRISIS: WHY ANTIBIOTIC OVERUSE IS ONLY PART OF THE PROBLEM

A new study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has found that infections caused by **antibiotic-resistant** Gram-negative bacteria are deadlier and costlier to treat than infections caused by drug-susceptible strains.

India's antimicrobial resistance (AMR) crisis goes well beyond antibiotic overuse. Delayed diagnosis, hospital transmission and weak infection control are equally responsible.

Understanding Gram-Negative Bacteria and Carbapenems

- Gram-negative bacteria have a thin peptidoglycan cell wall and an outer membrane containing lipopolysaccharides. They stain pink or red during Gram staining.
- They cause infections in the lungs, urinary tract, wounds and bloodstream. Common hospital pathogens in this group include *Escherichia coli* (E. coli), *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Acinetobacter baumannii* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.
- Carbapenems are a powerful class of antibiotics used for serious infections. They are often the last line of defence.
- When bacteria become resistant to carbapenems, doctors are left with very few effective medicines.

The Hidden Economic Burden

- The study's cost figures are conservative. Researchers looked only at the cost of antibiotics available under the Jan Aushadhi scheme.
- They excluded ICU charges, bed costs, diagnostics, procedures, supportive care and consultation fees.
- Even on this narrow measure, antibiotic costs for resistant infections were 1.1 to 2 times higher. The true burden on patients, families and the healthcare system is likely far greater.

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

Antibiotics Cannot Replace Infection Prevention

- More than 85 per cent of bloodstream infections in the study were healthcare-associated.
- Hospitals must place **infection prevention and control** at the centre of their AMR response.
- This includes hand hygiene, prevention of device-associated infections, appropriate insertion and early removal of invasive devices, environmental cleaning, surgical infection prevention and surveillance of healthcare-associated infections.
- Antimicrobial stewardship is equally vital. The answer to rising resistance is not stronger antibiotics.
- It is to prevent infections, diagnose them quickly and use the narrowest effective antibiotic for the shortest appropriate duration.

The Way Forward: An Integrated Response

- **First**, India must move from isolate-based surveillance to integrated surveillance that links laboratory results with patient outcomes, mortality and treatment.
- **Second**, faster and more accurate diagnostics are needed to distinguish bacterial from non-bacterial illness and detect resistance early.
- **Third**, antimicrobial stewardship must become routine clinical practice, not an optional programme.
- **Fourth**, infection prevention must receive as much attention as prescribing.
- **Finally**, India needs responsible access to newer antimicrobials, backed by stewardship, so these drugs remain effective when truly needed.

Conclusion

The ICMR study confirms that carbapenem resistance is a serious threat to survival and a heavy economic burden. India's AMR crisis cannot be solved by discovering a new antibiotic each time an old one fails.

Preventing infections, diagnosing them early and preserving existing antibiotics must become the core of national health policy.

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

INDIA'S OPPORTUNITY TO PUT BRICS BACK TOGETHER

- The 18th BRICS Summit will be held in New Delhi on September 12–13, 2026. India is the chair this year.
- In this context, former BRICS Sherpa T.S. Tirumurti argues that BRICS has drifted far from its original purpose.
- The Delhi summit gives India a chance to bring coherence back to the expanded grouping and restore its reform-oriented agenda.

BRICS Was Built for Reform, Not Rivalry

- BRICS was formed to give Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa a **greater voice in global governance**, especially in financial and economic institutions.
- Its aim was a more equitable multilateral order. India was an enthusiastic early participant and saw the group as a vehicle for real reform.
- India hosted its **first BRICS Summit in 2012** (the fourth overall) under the theme "Global Stability, Security and Prosperity."
- The Indian presidency helped lead to the **creation of the New Development Bank** (BRICS Bank). India also pushed for integrating a counter-terrorism architecture into BRICS' work.

China Changed the Direction of BRICS

- China saw BRICS differently. It treated the group as a **counterpoise to Western dominance** and as a platform to amplify its own global ambitions.
- In 2010, BRICS countries accounted for nearly 20 per cent of world GDP, which made the group useful for China.
- Through BRICS-Plus and BRICS Outreach, China sought to reach the Global South and position itself as the second pole in a future bipolar world.
- This year's theme for India's chairship rests on four pillars — **Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability**. It draws on PM Modi's vision of "Humanity First" and a "people-centric" approach.

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

The Struggle Between "Non-West" and "Anti-West"

- India wants BRICS to remain a "non-West" group. Some members are pushing to make it "anti-West."
- This pressure is growing because of several developments: China's competition with the US for global leadership, Russia's war in Ukraine, and Iran being bombarded by the US and Israel.
- India's own position has become harder. Brazil and India face punitive tariffs from US President Donald Trump. The US Congress is considering legislation to penalise countries importing Russian oil.
- Fortunately, many other BRICS members share India's view. They want change in the global order, but **not geopolitical realignment** with China and Russia. They benefit from engaging with multiple actors across camps.

BRICS as the Voice of Global South Middle Powers

- At Davos, the Canadian Prime Minister spoke of West-centric middle powers coming together. Global South middle powers are different, and BRICS is the only credible organisation of such powers.
- It has weaknesses: China is hardly a middle power and holds disproportionate influence, and some deserving middle powers are absent.
- India and China need to find greater synergy on emerging global issues even as their bilateral differences are contained. Despite these limitations, BRICS has great geopolitical and geo-economic potential.

Conclusion

- BRICS has drifted from reform towards rivalry, and expansion has weakened its cohesion.
- As chair of the Delhi Summit, India must revive the grouping's original purpose of reformed multilateralism, protect the consensus principle, and keep BRICS "non-West" rather than anti-West.
- This serves India's core interest of multi-alignment. If India does not lead, others will.

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

DIGITAL HAWALA - TECHNOLOGY'S NEW FRONTIER IN MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERROR FINANCING

- The centuries-old hawala and other underground banking systems are undergoing **rapid** technological **transformation**, dubbed as digital hawala.
- This is highlighted in the latest report of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), titled “Investigating Professional Money Laundering, Underground Banking, and the Use of Hawala and Other Similar Service Providers”.
- It identifies the **fusion** of traditional hawala with virtual assets, fintech platforms, encrypted communication and artificial intelligence (AI) as a major emerging threat.

From Traditional Hawala to ‘Digital Hawala’:

- **Hawala** is an informal value-transfer mechanism in which money or value can be transferred across borders without conventional banking channels, often relying on trust, brokers and settlement through cash, trade or other transactions.
- **Digital hawala** refers to the technology-enabled evolution of informal value-transfer networks using encrypted communication, fintech platforms, virtual assets, AI and digital infrastructure.

Challenges:

- **Structural weaknesses:**
 - Lack of reliable data on the scale of underground banking;
 - Inconsistent terminology, particularly the varied use of the term “hawala”;
 - Difficulty in cross-border information sharing;
 - Increasing use of virtual assets and digital platforms; and
 - Fragmented enforcement across jurisdictions.
- **For law enforcement:**
 - Digitalisation has weakened traditional investigative methods based on tracing personal relationships and physical cash movements.

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

e-FAST INDIA INITIATIVE



- The e-FAST India (Electric Freight Accelerator for Sustainable Transport - India) is a NITI Aayog government–industry platform focused on moving **medium- and heavy-duty freight towards zero-emission vehicles.**

- It brings together **government and industry stakeholders.**
- It includes OEMs, logistics service providers, financiers, shippers and charge point operators - **to accelerate the transition to zero-emission freight in India**, particularly in the **medium- and heavy-duty vehicle segments.**

What is Platform for Aggregating Clean Transport (PACT)?

- It is a flagship initiative under the **e-FAST India platform.**
- It is designed to aggregate **freight demand from shippers**, Logistics Service Providers (LSPs) and other ecosystem stakeholders and translate it into deployment opportunities across identified freight corridors.
- It brings together shippers, LSPs, vehicle manufacturers, financiers, charge point operators (CPOs) to **improve demand visibility, support charging infrastructure planning** and strengthen the commercial case for **electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (e-MHDVs).**

MINDORO BLEEDING-HEART PIGEON



Recently, Mindoro bleeding-heart pigeon was reappeared after 20 years which confirmed that it is still surviving in the wild.

- It is a ground-dwelling pigeon endemic to **Mindoro, Philippines.**
- It is one of seven species of bleeding-hearts, or “bleeding-heart” doves, five of which are endemic to the Philippines.

Current Affairs - 08 September 2026

- **Behaviour:** It is **ground-dwelling** and usually takes flight only when threatened.
- Males and females look almost identical.
- **Conservation Status**
- **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered (CR)
- **Threats:** It is threatened by **hunting and habitat loss**.
 - Its habitat is affected by **slash-and-burn agriculture, agricultural use, rattan harvesting, marble quarrying.**

BHITARKANIKA NATIONAL PARK



- **Located:** It is located in **Odisha**.
- It is surrounded by the **Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary**. **Gahirmatha Beach** and Marine Sanctuary lie to the east, and separates a swamp region covered with a canopy of mangroves from the Bay of Bengal.
- It is India's second largest **mangrove ecosystem after the Sunderbans**.
- It nestles in the estuary of **Brahmani, Baitarani, and Dhamra rivers**.
- **Vegetation:** The vegetation and species of the sanctuary are those that are mainly found in the tropical and subtropical intertidal regions.
- It is also **designated as a Ramsar site**.
- **Flora:** Mangrove species, casuarinas, and grasses like the indigo bush.

Fauna:

- It is home to the largest congregation of **saltwater crocodile** in the country.
- The Gahirmatha Beach is the largest colony of the **Olive Ridley Sea Turtles**.
- It is also home to numerous animals like hyenas, wild boar, Chitals, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Wild Boar, Jungle cat, Wild Pigs, etc.