

# Daily Current Affairs

## 26 August 2026

### Onam 2026

- The Onam festival of 2026 is celebrated throughout the state of Kerala through colorful flower decoration, sumptuous feast, cultural shows, and community meetings. It is one of the major festivals of Kerala, celebrated for 10 days from Atham to Thiruvonam.
- Thiruvonam this year celebrated on Wednesday, August 26, 2026. The Onam festival is celebrated in the month of Chingam of the Malayalam calendar, falling between August and September.
- Onam festival relates to King Mahabali. This legendary monarch was known as generous, wise and devoted to his subjects. In particular, during the reign of Mahabali people lived prosperous and happy.
- However, as Mahabali's reputation kept spreading among the gods who were afraid of his rising power and asked for help from Lord Vishnu. Vishnu appeared before Mahabali in the figure of Vamana – a dwarf Brahmin.
- Mahabali gave all the lands that Vamana could cover with three steps. In order to accomplish the wish of the king, Vishnu took a colossal size and took possession of the whole earth in one step, and the sky in the other. Mahabali had nothing to give the last step and offered his head.
- Vishnu put his foot on the king's head and sent him to hell. However, appreciating Mahabali's devotion and generosity, Vishnu gave him the privilege to return to earth once a year.
- Traditionally, Onam is related to this annual return of King Mahabali.



## **e-Shram Portal Completes 5 Years**

- The e-Shram portal will complete five years on 26 August 2026, which is quite an important milestone in the journey of India towards making social security systems strong for the workers of the unorganized sector.
- The e-Shram portal was launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in 2021 to make India's first Aadhaar based National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW).
- The portal which started as a registration portal for workers became a more comprehensive digital portal for various welfare schemes related to social security, employment, skilling, apprenticeship, and pension. Till August 2026, 31.89 crore workers have registered themselves on the portal.
- The e-Shram Portal was introduced on 26 August 2021 with the aim of establishing a national database of the unorganised workers. It is a product of National Informatics Centre (NIC) and provides the registered worker with an unique 12-digit Universal Account Number (UAN).



## Hijab, Religious Freedom and Institutional Dress Codes

- The Allahabad High Court's dismissal of a student's plea to wear a hijab with her uniform in *Sukaina Rizvi v. State of U.P.* (2026) has renewed the constitutional debate surrounding religious freedom, institutional discipline, and school dress codes.
- The dispute arose when a minor student at Tagore Public School in Prayagraj sought to wear a headscarf in addition to the prescribed school uniform. In *Sukaina Rizvi v. State of U.P.* (2026), the Allahabad High Court ruled that wearing a headscarf is not an essential religious practice in Islam, upholding the school's uniform policy.
- This case sits at the intersection of individual religious rights under Article 25 and the administrative autonomy of educational institutions.
- Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees the freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion. However, this right is not absolute and remains subject to public order, morality, and health.
- In school settings, courts read Article 25 alongside principles of equality and non-discrimination, balancing a student's desire for religious expression against an institution's mandate to maintain a neutral learning environment.



## HAL and Safran Sign Aravalli Helicopter Engine Contract

- HAL and Safran Helicopter Engines signed a final contract in Bengaluru on 26 August 2026 to develop and produce a new high-power turboshaft engine for 13-tonne helicopters. The agreement was signed through **SAFHAL Helicopter Engines Pvt. Ltd. (SAFHAL)**, a joint venture between HAL and Safran Helicopter Engines.
- The new engine has been named Aravalli after the Indian mountain range. It is designed for the 3,500 to 4,000 shaft horsepower power class, which places it in the high-power segment of helicopter propulsion systems. The contract covers design, development, manufacture, supply, and lifecycle support of the engine.
- The Aravalli engine has been selected for HAL's planned Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and its naval variant, the Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH). The IMRH is a 13-tonne class helicopter programme, and the DBMRH is intended for shipborne operations in the Indian Navy.
- HAL has stated that the programme may support civil aviation uses such as offshore transport, utility missions, and VVIP transport. The programme also includes plans to develop domestic Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul capabilities for the engine family.



## India–Japan Startup Roundtable in Tokyo

- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal today highlighted India's emergence as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, with nearly 250,000 startups established over the last decade, at the India–Japan Startup Roundtable held in Tokyo.
- He said India's large domestic market, deep STEM talent pool, digital public infrastructure and rapidly expanding innovation ecosystem make it an attractive destination for Japanese technology, investment and innovation partnerships.
- The India–Japan Pitching Series has already connected 65 Indian startups with around 100 Japanese corporations and facilitated more than 30 business tie-ups.
- She noted that the participation of a 222-member Indian business delegation provides an opportunity to forge new and enduring partnerships between the two innovation ecosystems.
- Venture capital investors identified AI, semiconductors, healthcare, space, defence, advanced manufacturing and deep technology as major areas for future India–Japan investment. Investors also noted the visible transition of India's startup ecosystem from predominantly internet and software businesses towards manufacturing- and technology-intensive enterprises.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

**1. Onam is primarily associated with which state of India?**

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Kerala
- C. Karnataka
- D. Andhra Pradesh

**Answer: B. Kerala**

**2. In 2026, Thiruvonam was celebrated on which date?**

- A. 24 August 2026
- B. 25 August 2026
- C. 26 August 2026
- D. 27 August 2026

**Answer: C. 26 August 2026**

**3. According to the traditional legend, Onam is associated with the return of which king?**

- A. Harshavardhana
- B. Mahabali
- C. Vikramaditya
- D. Rajaraja Chola

**Answer: B. Mahabali**

**4. The e-Shram Portal was launched by which ministry?**

- A. Ministry of Rural Development
- B. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- C. Ministry of Labour and Employment
- D. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

**Answer: C. Ministry of Labour and Employment**

**5. What type of identification number is provided to workers registered on the e-Shram Portal?**

- A. 10-digit Worker ID
- B. 12-digit Universal Account Number
- C. 16-digit Labour Card Number
- D. 14-digit Social Security Number

**Answer: B. 12-digit Universal Account Number**

**6. The Sukaina Rizvi v. State of U.P. case discussed which major constitutional provision?**

- A. Article 14
- B. Article 19
- C. Article 21
- D. Article 25

**Answer: D. Article 25**

**7. The 'Aravalli' engine is being developed by HAL in collaboration with:**

- A. Rolls-Royce
- B. Safran Helicopter Engines
- C. General Electric
- D. Pratt & Whitney

**Answer: B. Safran Helicopter Engines**

**8. The Aravalli engine is intended for which helicopter programme?**

- A. LCA Tejas
- B. IMRH
- C. AMCA
- D. LUH only

**Answer: B. IMRH**

**IMRH stands for: Indian Multi-Role Helicopter.**

**9. The India–Japan Startup Roundtable mentioned in the article was held in:**

- A. New Delhi
- B. Mumbai
- C. Tokyo
- D. Osaka

**Answer: C. Tokyo**

**10. Which of the following was identified as a promising area for India–Japan startup and investment cooperation?**

- A. Deep technology
- B. Coal mining only
- C. Traditional textiles only
- D. Petroleum refining only

**Answer: A. Deep technology**