

RADIUS EDUCATION

20-08-2026



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TODAY NEWS HIGHLIGHT

- **India's impressive performance at the Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship 2026**
- **National Sports Awards 2025: Divya Deshmukh and Vedit Gujarathi among 17 sportspersons conferred Arjuna Award**
- **Airtel Payments Bank undergoes leadership change and pushes for financial inclusion**
- **India leases 2 MQ-9B SeaGuardian to strengthen maritime surveillance**
- **Asia's first desert night safari park to be developed in Gujarat**
- **James Webb Telescope discovers 'black hole star', sheds new light on the mystery of the early universe**
- **UAV mapping of cross-border land occupation along the India-Nepal border, aiming for technical solution in 3 years**
- **Indian Akshay Urja Diwas – India's commitment towards renewable energy and energy transition**

1. India's Stellar Performance at the Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship 2026

Vignesh Verma and Saranya Devi won gold medals in the Open and Girls' categories, respectively, at the Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship 2026 held in Mumbai. Vignesh Verma clinched the Open category title via a tie-break after finishing level on points, while Saranya Devi secured the top spot in the Girls' category. The championship was organized by the Maharashtra Chess Association on August 17, 2026, at the ITC Maratha Sheraton in Mumbai. This achievement highlights India's young chess talent and its sporting prowess on the international stage.



2. National Sports Awards 2025: 17 athletes, including Divya Deshmukh and Vidit Gujrathi, to receive Arjuna Award

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the winners of the National Sports Awards 2025 on August 18, 2026, with 17 athletes selected for the Arjuna Award. Several prominent athletes—including Divya Deshmukh, Vidit Gujrathi, Gayatri Gopichand, Treesa Jolly, and Tejaswin Shankar—were honored, while no athlete was selected for the Khel Ratna this year. The Dronacharya Award was conferred upon outstanding coaches in both regular and lifetime categories, while I. Arumainayagam was selected for the Arjuna Award for lifetime achievement.



3. Leadership Change at Airtel Payments Bank and Growing Focus on Financial Inclusion

Sunil Bharti Mittal, Non-Executive Chairman of Airtel Payments Bank, will retire on September 30, 2026, and Shabnam Sinha will take over as the new Chairperson starting October 1, 2026. Shabnam Sinha brings nearly four decades of experience in financial services, public policy, risk management, and financial inclusion. Airtel Payments Bank plays a pivotal role in digital banking, UPI, and expanding access to banking services in rural areas. The bank's expansion is driving financial inclusion, with rural banking centers and women banking correspondents playing a crucial role.



4. India Leases 2 MQ-9B SeaGuardians to Strengthen Maritime Surveillance

On August 17, 2026, the Ministry of Defence signed a contract worth approximately ₹1,943 crore with the US-based GA-ASI, under which the Indian Navy will lease two MQ-9B SeaGuardians for a period of 30 months. The MQ-9B SeaGuardian is a HALE RPAS designed for long-endurance Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions. This will bolster the Indian Navy's Maritime Domain Awareness and its capability to monitor maritime activities in the Indian Ocean Region. The lease model offers India operational experience with state-of-the-art technology, rapid capability building, and an opportunity for technical evaluation regarding future defence acquisitions.



5. Asia's First Desert Night Safari Park to be Developed in Gujarat

The Central Zoo Authority approved Asia's first desert night safari park in Juna Deesa, Banaskantha district, Gujarat, on August 12, 2026. Spanning approximately 103 hectares, the project will feature five night safari enclosures and a day-time zoo. The park plans to showcase around 2,700 animals and birds across approximately 83 species, with the Chinkara, Blackbuck, and Indian Wild Ass being the key attractions. With an outlay of ₹542.14 crore, this project will help promote wildlife conservation, environmental awareness, sustainable eco-tourism, and local employment.



6. James Webb Telescope Discovers 'Black Hole Star'; Sheds New Light on Early Universe Mysteries

A team led by Indian-origin astronomer Dr. Rohan Naidu identified an unusual 'Black Hole Star' named MoM-BH-1 using observations from the JWST; findings were published in Nature in August 2026. This object dates back to the early universe—approximately 660 million years after the Big Bang—and is estimated to harbor a black hole at its core with a mass roughly 100,000 times that of the Sun. Scientists believe its energy is generated by the accretion process of the central black hole rather than nuclear fusion, and this discovery could help elucidate the nature of 'Little Red Dots.'



7. UAV Mapping of Cross-Border Land Encroachment on India-Nepal Border; Technical Solution Targeted Within 3 Years

India and Nepal have agreed to conduct joint technical mapping of "cross-border occupation"—instances where citizens of one country are farming or residing on land within the other country's territory—using UAV-based aerial imagery. The objective is not to make immediate decisions regarding land ownership, but to generate reliable technical and scientific data concerning the status of the border and land use. Changes in river courses and the damage or disappearance of boundary pillars along the approximately 1,880 km-long India-Nepal border have created several technical challenges.



8. Indian Akshay Urja Day — India's Commitment to Renewable Energy and Energy Transition

Indian Akshay Urja Day is observed annually on August 20th with the aim of raising awareness about renewable energy sources. Clean energy sources such as solar, wind, hydropower, biomass, and green hydrogen play a pivotal role in India's energy transition. Renewable energy helps reduce dependence on fossil fuels and carbon emissions while promoting energy security and sustainable development. India has actively promoted clean energy through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance, the National Green Hydrogen Mission, and the PM-Surya Ghar Yojana.



1. Who won the gold medal in the Open category of the Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship 2026?

- A - Saranya Devi
C - Prishita Gupta

- B - Vignesh Verma
D - Shanamathi Shree

Vignesh Verma and Saranya Devi won gold medals in the Open and Girls' categories, respectively, at the Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship 2026 held in Mumbai. The championship was organized by the Maharashtra Chess Association on August 17, 2026, at the ITC Maratha Sheraton.



2. How many players were selected for the Arjuna Award in the National Sports Awards 2025?

- A - 15
C - 19

- B - 17
D - 21

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2025 on August 18, 2026; 17 players were selected for the Arjuna Award, while no player was selected for the Khel Ratna this year. Dronacharya Awards were presented to outstanding coaches, while I. Arumainayagam received the Arjuna Award for Lifetime Achievement, and the Army Paralympic Node, Pune, was awarded the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar.



3. Who will be appointed as the new Chairperson of Airtel Payments Bank?

- A - Sunil Bharti Mittal
C - Vidit Gujrathi

- B - Shabnam Sinha
D - Arun Jaitley

Sunil Bharti Mittal, the Non-Executive Chairperson of Airtel Payments Bank, will retire on September 30, 2026, and Shabnam Sinha will take over as the new Chairperson starting October 1, 2026. Amidst Sinha's extensive financial experience, the bank is playing a pivotal role in promoting digital banking, UPI, and financial inclusion in rural areas.



4. With which company did India sign a contract to lease the MQ-9B SeaGuardian?

- A - Boeing
C - General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

- B - Lockheed Martin
D - Northrop Grumman

The Ministry of Defence signed a contract worth approximately ₹1,943 crore with GA-ASI on August 17, 2026, under which the Indian Navy will lease two MQ-9B SeaGuardians for a period of 30 months. This HALE RPAS will strengthen ISR and Maritime Domain Awareness in the Indian Ocean Region and provide India with operational experience in state-of-the-art surveillance technology.



5. In which state has Asia's first desert night safari park been approved?

- A - Rajasthan
B - Gujarat
C - Maharashtra
D - Madhya Pradesh

The Central Zoo Authority approved Asia's first desert night safari park at Juna Deesa in Banaskantha, Gujarat, on August 12, 2026; it will be developed over 103 hectares at a cost of ₹542.14 crore. The project includes five night safari enclosures and a day-time zoo, showcasing approximately 2,700 animals and birds across 83 species to promote wildlife conservation and sustainable eco-tourism.



6. Observations from which instrument led to the identification of the 'Black Hole Star' MoM-BH-1?

- A - Hubble Space Telescope
B - James Webb Space Telescope
C - Chandra X-ray Observatory
D - Kepler Space Telescope

A team led by Indian-origin astronomer Dr. Rohan Naidu identified the 'Black Hole Star' named MoM-BH*-1 using JWST observations; it dates back to the early universe, approximately 660 million years after the Big Bang. It is estimated to harbor a black hole at its center with a mass about 100,000 times that of the Sun; its accretion process could help in understanding 'Little Red Dots' and the evolution of early supermassive black holes.



7. Which technology will India and Nepal use for mapping cross-border occupation?

- A - Sonar technology
B - UAV-based aerial mapping
C - Marine radar
D - Satellite radio communication

India and Nepal have agreed to conduct a joint technical mapping exercise using UAVs to document cross-border occupation—specifically regarding farming and habitation—along their shared border. The aim is to generate reliable data on the border and land use. This process will cover the approximately 1,880 km-long border with the collaboration of the BWG, SOC, and Joint Field Survey Teams, while sensitive areas such as Kalapani and Susta will be excluded from this exercise.



8. Which initiative has been launched to promote green hydrogen in India?

- A - National Green Hydrogen Mission
B - National Solar Mission
C - Jal Jeevan Mission
D - Swachh Bharat Mission

Indian Renewable Energy Day is observed annually on August 20th with the aim of raising awareness about renewable energy and promoting energy security and sustainable development. India is implementing initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance, the National Green Hydrogen Mission, and the PM-Surya Ghar Yojana to promote solar, wind, hydroelectric, biomass, and green hydrogen energy.



One Liner

1. Which technology will be used to map cross-border occupation along the India-Nepal border? - **UAV-based aerial mapping**
2. Observations from which space telescope were used to discover the 'Black Hole Star' MoM-BH-1? - **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)**
3. On which date is Indian Renewable Energy Day observed every year? - **August 20**
4. Who will be appointed as the new Chairperson of Airtel Payments Bank? - **Shabnam Sinha**
5. In which district of Gujarat will Asia's first Desert Night Safari Park be developed? - **Banaskantha**
6. For what duration has India leased two MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones for the Indian Navy? - **30 months**
7. How many players were selected for the Arjuna Award in the National Sports Awards 2025? - **17 players**
8. Who won the gold medal in the Girls' category at the 2026 Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship? - **Saranya Devi**
9. Which Indian player won the gold medal in the Open category at the 2026 Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship? - **Vignesh Verma**
10. How many players were selected for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna in the National Sports Awards 2025? - **None**