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Daily news summary**UPSC daily news summary - 24 August 2026**

UPSC Civil Services • 24 August 2026 • Prelims and Mains

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Key policy developments include legislative reforms for quasi-judicial tribunals, structural shifts in state mining framework notifications, and strategic infrastructure and space technology initiatives.

COMBINED SUMMARY

- **Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026:** Passed by Parliament to establish the **National Tribunal Commission** (NTC) following Supreme Court invalidations of previous appointment frameworks.
- **MMDR Act Notification:** Central government notifies amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act amid federal revenue-sharing concerns from mineral-rich States.
- **Transfer of Prisoners Framework:** Delhi government proposes implementing the Transfer of Prisoners (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2025 to enable inter-State custody transfers for high-risk undertrials.
- **NITI Aayog Youth Skilling Report:** Highlights 8.7 crore Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) youth using 78th NSS Round data.
- **Gaganyaan Crew Escape System:** ISRO advances testing of the 'puller' architecture designed for launch emergency aborts.
- **Piped Natural Gas (PNG) Adoption Push:** Petroleum Ministry directs States to deploy district-level officers to enforce single-connection rules and accelerate city gas distribution networks.

1. TRIBUNAL REFORMS BILL 2026 NATIONAL TRIBUNAL COMMISSION**WHY IN NEWS**

- Parliament passed the Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026, establishing the **National Tribunal Commission** (NTC) as an overarching regulatory body for quasi-judicial tribunals.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF TRIBUNAL REFORMS?

- The **Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021** previously governed the selection, appointment, and tenure conditions of members across various tribunals.

- In November, the Supreme Court struck down core provisions of the 2021 Act for violating judicial independence and **separation of powers** by granting executive control over appointments.
- The Supreme Court mandated the creation of an independent statutory body to oversee appointments and administrative functioning.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE 2026 LEGISLATION

- **Repeals the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021** and establishes the **National Tribunal Commission** (NTC) as an independent apex regulator.
- Transfers member appointment and selection oversight from executive ministries to the NTC framework.
- Standardizes terms of service, tenure, and disciplinary procedures across specialized benches such as NCLT and Consumer Courts.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Addresses structural deficiencies in quasi-judicial functioning while upholding **Article 50 (Separation of Powers)**.
- Aims to reduce pendency of litigation in High Courts and the Supreme Court by streamlining tribunal administration.

KEY TERMS

- **Quasi-judicial Body:** An entity other than a court authorised to hold hearings and conduct adjudication on specialized regulatory disputes.
- **Separation of Powers:** A constitutional doctrine preventing concentration of authority by keeping legislative, executive, and judicial branches distinct.

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PRELIMS FACTS

- Tribunal Reforms Bill 2026 repeals the 2021 Act to establish the **National Tribunal Commission**.

MAINS DISCUSSION

- Evaluate the role of the **National Tribunal Commission** in safeguarding judicial independence and operational efficiency.

KEY DATA

- **New Entity:** **National Tribunal Commission** (NTC) - Independent regulatory authority mandated by the judiciary to handle tribunal appointments.
- **Repealed Act:** **Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021** - Struck down by Supreme Court due to executive dominance over judicial appointments.

[Official source](#)

2. MINES AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATION ACT NOTIFICATION

WHY IN NEWS

- The Central Government has officially notified rules under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, raising federal fiscal concerns among States.

WHAT IS THE MMDR ACT, 1957?

- Central statute regulating the allocation, prospecting, and mining leases of major and minor minerals in India.
- Administered by the Ministry of Mines, it sets royalties, auction frameworks, and statutory payments like the **District Mineral Foundation** (DMF).

KEY PROVISIONS AND UPDATES

- Notifies standardized operating procedures for mineral concessions and auction protocols across major mineral blocks.
- Formalizes royalty collection procedures and revenue distribution mechanics between the Centre and state exchequers.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **Federalism angle:** Mineral-bearing States debate state taxation boundaries versus central statutory royalty ceilings.
- **Mining efficiency:** Impacts revenue realization and resource extraction timelines across key economic sectors.

KEY TERMS

- **Mineral Royalty:** Statutory payment made by a mining leaseholder to the state for extracting non-renewable mineral resources.
- **District Mineral Foundation:** Non-profit trust set up in mining districts to work for the interest and benefit of persons affected by mining operations.

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PRELIMS FACTS

- MMDR Act 1957 is the principal statute for mineral leasing and royalty frameworks in India.

MAINS DISCUSSION

- Analyze the constitutional balance of fiscal powers between the Union and States regarding mineral resources.

KEY DATA

- **Parent Act:** Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 - Primary law governing regulatory control and leasing of mineral resources in India.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Mines - Central authority responsible for national mineral legislative policy.

[Official source](#)

3. TRANSFER OF PRISONERS ACT UNDERTRIALS INTER-STATE CUSTODY

WHY IN NEWS

- The Delhi government has proposed adopting the Transfer of Prisoners (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2025 to enable the inter-State transfer of high-risk undertrial prisoners.

WHAT IS THE EXISTING LEGAL FRAMEWORK?

- The **Transfer of Prisoners Act, 1950** governs the relocation of convicted prisoners between States.
- The 1950 Act lacks explicit provisions for shifting undertrial prisoners, whose custody remains strictly bound to regional judicial remand warrants.

PROPOSED STRUCTURAL CHANGES

- Adopts the Transfer of Prisoners (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2025 to extend inter-State relocation powers to undertrial gangsters and organized criminals.
- Requires mutual consent of involved State governments or approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to execute custody transfers.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Fills a regulatory lacuna in law enforcement by preventing organized crime networks from operating within localized prison systems.

- Strengthens prison administration while ensuring procedural oversight for judicial remand custody.

KEY TERMS

- **Undertrial Prisoner:** An accused person who is kept in judicial custody during the investigation or trial period prior to conviction.
- **Remand Warrant:** A formal order issued by a judicial magistrate directing the detention of an accused in prison custody.

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PRELIMS FACTS

- **Transfer of Prisoners Act, 1950** applies centrally to convicted prisoners, necessitating specific state amendments for undertrials.

MAINS DISCUSSION

- Discuss the legal and human rights implications of transferring undertrial prisoners across state jurisdictions.

KEY DATA

- **Parent Act:** **Transfer of Prisoners Act, 1950** - Central legislation governing inter-state prison transfers, historically limited to convicted inmates.
- **Applicable Legislation:** Transfer of Prisoners (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2025 - Model amendment expanding transfer powers to include high-risk undertrials.

[Official source](#)

4. NITI AAYOG NEET YOUTH SKILLING VIKSIT BHARAT REPORT

WHY IN NEWS

- **NITI Aayog** released 'Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047', assessing youth engagement through national sample survey data.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

- Estimates that 8.7 crore (87 million) Indian youth aged 15-29 are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET).

- Calculations are derived from data collected during the 78th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted in 2021.

STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identifies lack of disposable income and sunk costs from prior education as primary barriers preventing NEET youth from taking paid vocational courses.
- **Categorizes the demographic into five target segments:** school learners, tertiary students, formal/informal workers, NEET youth, and women.
- Recommends targeted subsidised skilling interventions and micro-incentives to enable self-employment.

KEY TERMS

- **NEET Youth:** Demographic classification representing young individuals currently not engaged in education, employment, or formal training.
- **Demographic Dividend:** Economic growth potential resulting from shifts in a population's age structure, specifically when the working-age population is larger than the non-working ratio.

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PRELIMS FACTS

- NEET classification includes individuals aged 15-29 missing from formal workforce or educational enrollments.

MAINS DISCUSSION

- Examine the structural barriers facing NEET youth in India and suggest reforms to align vocational training with market demand.

KEY DATA

- **Report Title:** Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047 - **NITI Aayog** strategic policy document evaluating workforce transition roadmap.
- **Data Source:** 78th **Round of National Sample Survey (2021)** - Official NSS round referenced for national youth employment metrics.
- **NEET Youth Estimate:** 8.7 crore (8.7 million) - Key statistical benchmark for national labor policy design.

[Official source](#)

5. ISRO GAGANYAAN CREW ESCAPE SYSTEM PULLER DESIGN

WHY IN NEWS

- ISRO detailed the technological components of the Gaganyaan Crew Escape System (CES), highlighting its automated launch abort mechanisms.

WHAT IS THE CREW ESCAPE SYSTEM?

- Emergency safety mechanism designed to rapidly pull the crew module away from the launch vehicle during an emergency or launch trajectory failure.
- Utilizes high-thrust solid motor boosters capable of automatically activating within milliseconds upon fault detection.

KEY TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Employs a 'puller' design architecture, where escape motors are mounted above the module to pull it clear rather than pushing from beneath.
- Designed to withstand extreme gravitational forces while ensuring safe splashdown recovery via automated parachute systems.

KEY TERMS

- **Crew Escape System:** An autonomous safety abort mechanism designed to rescue spaceflight personnel in event of launch vehicle failure.
- **Puller Design Architecture:** An escape design configuration where abort engines are placed ahead of the payload to pull it clear of the rocket.

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PRELIMS FACTS

- ISRO's Gaganyaan utilizes a puller-type **Crew Escape System** to isolate astronauts during launch aborts.

MAINS DISCUSSION

- Detail the indigenous safety technologies developed by ISRO for human spaceflight missions.

KEY DATA

- **Mission Name:** Gaganyaan - India's flagship human spaceflight mission targeting low Earth orbit.

- **Developer:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) - National space agency developing indigenous launch abort system technologies.

[Official source](#)

6. PETROLEUM MINISTRY PNG ADOPTION LPG TRANSITION DISTRICT OFFICERS

WHY IN NEWS

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas directed States to appoint district-level officers to accelerate the transition from LPG to Piped Natural Gas (PNG).

WHAT IS THE PNG TRANSITION FRAMEWORK?

- Central policy initiative to expand City Gas Distribution (CGD) networks, transitioning urban households from cylinder LPG to continuous PNG.
- Promotes energy efficiency, lowers logistical costs associated with cylinder distribution, and enhances fuel safety.

NEW OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

- Mandates appointment of district-level nodal officers to streamline inter-departmental clearances for pipeline laying.
- Enforces regulatory limits preventing households in operational PNG zones from retaining active dual LPG connections.

KEY TERMS

- **Piped Natural Gas (PNG):** Methane-rich natural gas distributed continuously to domestic and commercial end-users via pipeline infrastructure.
- **City Gas Distribution (CGD):** Regulatory framework governing natural gas supply networks across designated Geographical Areas (GAs).

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PRELIMS FACTS

- City Gas Distribution networks deliver domestic PNG under geographical authorizations granted by PNGRB.

MAINS DISCUSSION

- Assess the policy measures required to build resilient domestic energy distribution infrastructure in urban centers.

KEY DATA

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas - Central ministry overseeing natural gas distribution policy and LPG mandates.
- **Primary Policy Goal:** Single Connection Policy in PNG Areas - Regulatory measure aimed at eliminating dual usage and curbing LPG subsidy leakage.

[Official source](#)

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