

Highlights of 17 August 2026 Current Affairs

- In his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the **Saptadhara** seven-point reform framework—spanning manufacturing, agriculture, technology, connectivity, defence, green/blue economy, and soft power—to drive the *Viksit Bharat 2047* vision. Key national initiatives announced include a mission-mode AI skilling drive for over one crore youth, free DPI-led exam coaching, a major overhaul of the civil defence system to safeguard critical infrastructure against modern warfare, and rapid deployment under **Mission Sudarshan Chakra**.
- The Income Tax Department notified the Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers-Disclosure Scheme (FAST-DS), offering a one-time window from **August 16 to December 31, 2026**, for individuals to declare unreported foreign holdings valued as of **March 31, 2026**. Aimed at students, tech workers with foreign ESOPs, and returning NRIs, the scheme covers undisclosed assets up to **₹1 crore** (at an effective **60% levy**: 30% tax + 30% additional fee) and previously taxed or non-resident acquired assets up to **₹5 crore** (for a flat **₹1 lakh fee**), granting immunity from penalties and prosecution under the Black Money Act.
- Three-time National Award-winning Bengali filmmaker Raja Sen passed away at the age of 71 at SSKM Hospital following prolonged health complications, including cardiac, lung, and renal failure. Known for bridging literary classics with screen adaptations, his acclaimed repertoire includes his directorial debut *Damu* (1996, National Award for Best Children's Film), *Atmiyo Swajan* (1999, National Award for Best Film on Family Welfare), *Suchitra Mitra* (1992, National Award for Best Arts/Cultural Film), and *Desh* (2002) starring Jaya and Abhishek Bachchan.
- Reliance Industries Limited (led by Anant Ambani, Executive Director) announced a strategic intent to partner with British aerospace giant Rolls-Royce to co-develop, manufacture, and sustain an indigenous high-thrust combat jet engine for India's 5th-generation **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**. The partnership plans to establish a dedicated **Aerospace Gas Turbine Complex** in India to build sovereign propulsion capabilities across the entire lifecycle. This private-sector initiative enters a strategic space alongside state-led proposals—such as the Gas Turbine Research Establishment's (GTRE) proposed joint venture with France's Safran Aircraft Engines—providing India with alternative tracks to address longstanding aero-engine dependencies.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a nationwide sports talent hunt targeting children aged **5 to 15 years**. Aimed at building a competitive athlete pool for India's proposed bid to host the **2036 Olympic Games**, the program will use basic fitness battery tests and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools across rural, semi-urban, and school ecosystems. The initiative seeks to expand India's medal footprint beyond its traditional strongholds into high-medal disciplines like aquatics, cycling, rowing, and gymnastics. This nationwide drive will complement existing grassroots frameworks such as the Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) program and the elite-level Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).
- A three-judge Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant directed the 19 remaining States and Union Territories to consider declaring **cancer a "notifiable disease"** and file compliance affidavits.

- The order—issued during the hearing of a PIL filed by Dr. Anurag Srivastava— noted that only 17 of India's 36 States and UTs currently mandate cancer reporting based on Parliamentary Standing Committee recommendations.
- **Significance of "Notifiable" Status:** Mandatory reporting requires all public/private diagnostic centers, pathology labs, and hospitals to report every confirmed cancer case.
- **Policy Objectives:** Mandatory notification aims to address fragmented epidemiological data (where ICMR's registry currently covers ~10% of India's population), eliminate rural data blind spots, standardize screening guidelines, and facilitate structured resource allocation for early diagnosis and treatment.