

Highlights of 19 August 2026 Current Affairs

- Indian chess players Vignesh Vermula and Saranya Devi Narahari won gold medals in the Open and Girls' categories respectively at the **Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship 2026**, held at the ITC Maratha Sheraton in Mumbai. The tournament was organized by the Maharashtra Chess Association and inaugurated by former BMC Commissioner Jayraj Pathak.
 - **Open Section:** 23rd seed **Vignesh Vermula** won gold after finishing tied at 6/7 points with compatriots Viresh Sharnarhi and Nandish V. S., clinching the title on superior tie-break criteria. Indian players dominated the event, securing the top five positions (including Akshay Borgaonkar in 4th and Madhavendra Pratap Sharma in 5th).
 - **Girls' Section:** 9th seed **Saranya Devi Narahari** clinched gold, while Prishita Gupta and Shanmathi Sree won silver and bronze respectively to secure a clean sweep for India. Top seed Lala Shohradova of Turkmenistan finished in 4th place.
- A team led by Hyderabad-born astronomer **Dr. Rohan Naidu** (a NASA Hubble and MIT Pappalardo Fellow) published a breakthrough study in *Nature* describing **MoM-BH-1**, an extraordinary "Black Hole Star" object observed via the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) just 660 million years after the Big Bang.
- Building on the foundational ₹76,000 crore outlay of Semicon 1.0 (India Semiconductor Mission), Semicon 2.0 expands central policy support to build a comprehensive semiconductor ecosystem across six key pillars:
 - **Design & IP Ownership:** Supporting domestic startups and MSMEs in developing native intellectual property (IP), system-level product designs, and chips.
 - **Equipment & Materials:** Incentivizing local manufacturing and R&D for semiconductor tools, specialty chemicals, target materials, and high-purity gases.
 - **Fabs:** Attracting additional commercial silicon, compound semiconductor, discrete component, and display fabrication facilities.
 - **Advanced Packaging (ATMP/OSAT):** Bringing cutting-edge assembly, testing, marking, and packaging technology nodes to India.
 - **Research & Development:** Promoting research into next-generation nodes in collaboration with leading global R&D centers.
 - **Talent Development:** Expanding university chip-design curricula and specialized technical training workforce pipelines.
- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the **National Sports Awards 2025**, honoring 17 sportspersons with the Arjuna Award. The selection committee was chaired by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Arun Kumar Mishra.
 - For the first time since 2014, no sportsperson was selected for India's highest sporting honor, the **Major Dhyani Chand Khel Ratna Award**.
 - Category-Wise Full Winners List
 - **1. Arjuna Award (17 Winners)**
 - **Athletics:** Tejaswin Shankar, Muhammed Ajmal V, Priyanka Goswami
 - **Badminton:** Treesa Jolly, Pullela Gayatri Gopichand
 - **Boxing:** Narender
 - **Chess:** Vidit Santosh Gujarathi, Divya Jitendra Deshmukh

- **Deaf Shooting:** Dhanush Srikanth
- **Hockey:** Lalremsiami Hmarzote, Rajkumar Pal
- **Kabaddi:** Surjeet, Pooja
- **Para-Athletics:** Ekta Bhyan
- **Para-Shooting:** Rudransh Khandelwal
- **Rowing:** Arvind Singh
- **Shooting:** Akhil Sheoran
- **2. Arjuna Award — Lifetime Achievement**
 - **Football:** I. Arumainayagam (1962 Asian Games Gold Medallist)
- **3. Dronacharya Award (Coaches)**
 - **Regular Category:**
 - Parveer Singh (Athletics)
 - Chhote Lal Yadav (Boxing)
 - Neha Nandkumar Chavan (Shooting)
 - **Lifetime Category:**
 - Dharmendra Singh Yadav (Boxing)
 - Virender Kumar (Wrestling)
- **4. Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar**
 - **Entity:** Army Paralympic Node (Pune)
- The 8th edition of the India-US Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Exercise was conducted from August 10 to August 14, 2026, at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi. During this 5-day bilateral engagement, specialized diving and EOD units—including the Indian Navy's Clearance Divers and US Navy Mobile EOD units—conducted hands-on tactical drills, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs), and live field demonstrations.
- Researchers Bhakta Bahadur Raskoti and Rita Ale discovered a new Himalayan plant species, *Impatiens nimsipurjai*, named in honor of the renowned Nepalese mountaineer Nirmal “Nimsdai” Purja.
- **World Humanitarian Day (WHD)** is observed globally on **August 19** to recognize aid personnel and health workers who put their lives at risk to assist communities affected by conflict, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises.
 - **2026 Theme:** *"Honouring fallen humanitarians and calling for greater protection of health care."*
 - **Global Campaign:** Led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) using the hashtag **#ActForHumanity**.
- **World Photography Day** is commemorated globally on **August 19** to celebrate the art, science, history, and craft of photography. In India, the history of photography is inextricably linked to **Lala Deen Dayal** (later known as **Raja Deen Dayal**), widely recognized as India's first professional native photographer.