

Highlights of 21 August 2026 Current Affairs

- The **31st Southern Zonal Council (SZC) meeting** was chaired by Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** on **August 20, 2026**, in **Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu**. Organized by the Inter-State Council Secretariat under the Ministry of Home Affairs with Tamil Nadu as the host state, the forum brought together key leaders from across southern India to discuss inter-state coordination and regional priorities.
- The **2026 Hunger Hotspots Report**, jointly issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP), warns that acute food insecurity is projected to deepen across **13 countries and territories**. The report highlights that armed violence, economic shocks, severe funding shortfalls, and severe climate variability remain the primary drivers placing millions at risk of starvation and catastrophe.
- The **65th Subroto Cup International Football Tournament** kicked off on **August 18, 2026**, in **New Delhi**, continuing its long-standing legacy as India's premier inter-school grassroots football competition.
- The **Muzaffarpur–Sitamarhi–Sonbarsa section of National Highway-22 (NH-22)** in Bihar is being upgraded to a four-lane highway under the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The project aims to improve cross-border trade with Nepal, reduce travel times, and boost local connectivity under the **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan**.
- **World Senior Citizens Day** is observed every year on **August 21** to honor older adults, acknowledge their lifetime of contributions, and raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by the aging population globally.
- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of a dedicated bench of the **High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh** in the Union Territory of Ladakh. This decision marks a major administrative milestone for Ladakh since its formation as a separate Union Territory without a legislature on October 31, 2019 under the *Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019*.
- **Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir**, a veteran politician and long-serving leader of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was elected as the **23rd President of Bangladesh** in a parliamentary vote. He officially took his oath of office at the Bangabhaban in Dhaka, administered by Acting Speaker Kayser Kamal.
- The **Master Plan for Delhi-2047 (MPD-2047)** was officially unveiled and notified by Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar, alongside Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. The 20-year urban development framework serves as the spatial and economic roadmap to transform National Capital Territory of Delhi into an inclusive, globally competitive, and environmentally sustainable metropolis capable of accommodating a projected population of **3.2 crore by 2047**.
- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry issued Notification No. 31/2026-2027 to allow duty-free imports of **10 lakh metric tonnes (1 million MT)** of raw sugar under a Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ). The decision is aimed at controlling a sharp domestic price surge and guaranteeing sufficient local stock ahead of the peak festive season.

- The Central Government has appointed **S. Somanath** (former Chairman of ISRO) and reappointed **Anand Mahindra** (Chairman of the Mahindra Group) as part-time, non-official directors to the **Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**. Both appointments took effect on **August 20, 2026**, for a tenure of **four years** (or until further orders, whichever is earlier).
- Renowned Odia poet, essayist, and former CSIR-IMMT scientist **Dr. Ashutosh Parida** has been selected for the **47th Sarala Puraskar (2026)** for his poetry collection '*Bishwas De Pruthwi*' (*Grant Faith, O Earth*). The Sarala Puraskar is recognized as one of the highest literary honors in Odisha. It was instituted in 1979 by industrialist Dr. Bansidhar Panda and Ila Panda, and is awarded annually by the **Indian Metals Public Charitable Trust (IMPACT)**—the social wing of Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys Ltd (IMFA).