

EDITORIALS - 17TH AUG 2026

1. IN YOUTH-DRIVEN VIKSIT BHARAT, CELEBRATE 'DIMAG' (GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'In youth-driven Viksit Bharat, celebrate 'dimag'' was published in **The Indian Express** on 17th Aug 2026, highlights the need to place **empowered youth, critical thought** and **fearless questioning** at the centre of Viksit Bharat.

Development narrative and youth repositioning

- The Prime Minister contrasted pre- and post-2014 India, presenting **speed and scale** as unprecedented drivers of national development.
- His seven-point reform vision linked **Atmanirbharta** and innovation with local production, start-ups and accelerated reforms amid global crises.
- **Yuva Shakti** became the new Viksit Bharat motif, repositioning youth from protesters into reform drivers and principal beneficiaries.
- Coming after protests over education and employment, this **youth-centred narrative** sought to regain support and soften prevailing discontent.

Youth-focused opportunities

- Proposed **AI training** and free competitive-examination coaching aimed to expand technological skills and educational opportunities.
- The **Innovation Fund** and promised resources for global sporting excellence connected youthful aspirations with institutional support.
- Youth participation in the ongoing **Census exercise** was presented as improving enumeration accuracy while advancing nationwide engagement.

Dissent and democratic thought

- The Prime Minister distinguished defeated armed Naxals from remaining "**dimagi**" **Naxals**, calling for their identification and isolation.
- Equating **armed insurgency** with ideology or dissent is troubling because violence and critical thought are fundamentally different.
- Targeting people for their ideas contradicts an inclusive **Viksit Bharat**, which requires freedom from fear and space for questioning.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Institutionalising youth voice in governance

- **Youth Parliament:** Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2026 connects district rounds, State Assembly sessions and national deliberations, creating a scalable consultation pathway.
- **Grassroots democracy:** The Model Youth Gram Sabha programme exposes students to Panchayat decision-making, consensus-building and participatory local governance.
- **Wider participation:** National Youth Parliament Scheme 2.0 permits institutional, group and individual participation, extending democratic learning beyond formal educational institutions.
- **Digital consultation:** MY Bharat's "Submit Your Idea" facility can support structured youth feedback on employment, education, technology and climate policies.

- **Administrative exposure:** MY Bharat programmes with urban bodies, including Surat, Karur and Erode, provide experiential learning within municipal governance.
- **Youth budgeting:** The Draft National Youth Policy 2025 proposes tracking government expenditure benefiting youth, strengthening resource transparency and outcome-based scrutiny.
- **Policy accountability:** Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026 generated structured governance proposals; publishing official responses could convert consultation into measurable policy influence.

2. BRING BACK E10 FOR OLDER VEHICLES. WORK OUT FOOD VERSUS FUEL TRADE-OFF

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'Bring back E10 for older vehicles. Work out food versus fuel trade-off' was published in **The Indian Express** on 17th Aug 2026, highlights the need to protect older vehicles while assessing **E20's food, water, climate and import consequences**.

Engine performance and older-vehicle concerns

- Ethanol's lower **energy density** makes E20 reduce mileage by only 6–7%, while lowering carbon monoxide and **unburnt hydrocarbons**.
- **Oak Ridge** tested 86 vehicles over nearly 10 million kilometres, while ARAI and **Indian Oil** found no increased E20 wear.
- India's 75–80 million **pre-BS4 two-wheelers** remain vulnerable because carburettors cannot adjust fuel intake and older **rubber seals** degrade.
- Restoring **E10 availability** would protect the legacy fleet while inexpensive retrofitting gradually expands **ethanol compatibility**.

Food, imports and environmental trade-offs

- **E20** reduces India's ₹11–12 lakh crore crude-oil bill by only 3–4%, while the **edible-oil bill** remains ₹1.6–1.75 lakh crore.
- India produces about 40% of its cooking oil and targets **72% by 2030–31**, making edible-oil dependence more reducible than crude imports.
- **Maize** supplies half of ethanol and grains nearly 67%, directly competing with soybean, groundnut and mustard for **agricultural land**.
- Fixed maize procurement and cheaper distillery residue weaken soybean-meal prices, making the **oilseed farmer** lose through both land and **market competition**.
- Water assessment must distinguish rain-fed **green water** from scarce **blue water** drawn by sugarcane in stressed Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- Beyond E20, grain-based expansion faces uncertain **life-cycle emissions**, as Indian studies disagree after including cultivation and **processing impacts**.
- The **ethanol programme** cleared sugarcane dues and raised rural incomes, but E20 also created distillery loans, excess capacity and **sugar-surplus dependence**.

Prudent policy choice

- Procurement prices, protection fuel, water rules and import duties are **reversible instruments**; fuel-linked cropping and distillery investments create difficult **structural lock-ins**.
- Policy should restore **E10** for older vehicles, remove price and water distortions favouring maize, and reconsider **edible-oil duties**.

- India should hold blending at **E20** until a comprehensive **cost-benefit assessment** resolves its food, water and climate implications.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Scaling second-generation biofuels

- **Panipat model:** Indian Oil's plant can process two lakh tonnes of paddy straw annually into nearly three crore litres of ethanol.
- **Climate benefit:** The Panipat project estimates annual avoidance of three lakh tonnes of carbon-dioxide-equivalent emissions by reducing residue burning.
- **Bamboo pathway:** Numaligarh's bamboo-based biorefinery, inaugurated in 2025, demonstrates region-specific ethanol production without diverting food grains.
- **Policy support:** Modified PM JI-VAN extends assistance until 2028–29 and covers agricultural residues, forestry waste, industrial waste, syngas and algae.
- **Commercial viability:** Panipat's investment exceeding ₹900 crore highlights the capital intensity of 2G technology and need for targeted financial assistance.
- **Market certainty:** Fifteen-year purchase agreements, separate 2G ethanol pricing and concessional GST provide investors with predictable demand and revenue.
- **Feedstock safeguards:** FPO-led residue aggregation must retain sufficient biomass for soil health while minimising transport emissions and seasonal supply disruptions.

3. INDIA'S SWEET REVOLUTION DEPENDS ON THIS: SAFEGUARD THE BEE, SUSTAINABILITY IS KEY (GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'India's sweet revolution depends on this: Safeguard the bee, sustainability is key' was published in **The Indian Express** on 17th Aug 2026, highlights the need to combine **honey-sector expansion** with bee conservation, export diversification and sustainable agriculture."

Agricultural and economic importance

- Bees pollinate nearly one-third of global crop output and improve yields for **87 of 115** major **food crops**.
- Pollination also enhances **nutritional quality**, supporting mustard cultivation in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and apple orchards in **Himachal Pradesh**.
- India is the world's second-largest **honey producer** and third-largest **value-based exporter**, after China and New Zealand.
- **Honey production** nearly doubled from 76,000 tonnes in 2013–14 to 1,51,000 tonnes in **2025–26**, expanding farm incomes.

Export vulnerability and value realisation

- India exported nearly **70% of production**, worth \$208 million in 2025–26, accounting for 8.4% of **global honey exports**.
- The US absorbed 76% of exports, worth **\$157.8 million**, exposing India to **market concentration** and tariff shocks.
- Shipments to the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Israel indicate growing **export diversification** towards sustainably sourced, **traceable honey**.

- India's low annual consumption of about **37 grams per capita** leaves substantial **domestic-market potential** for stabilising producer incomes.
- Indian honey's unit value of **\$1,858 per tonne** remains below global averages, requiring better quality, traceability, branding and **retail packaging**.

Reforms and ecological sustainability

- **NMR testing laboratories**, processing clusters and GI branding for Sundarbans and Ramban Sulai varieties can unlock premium markets.
- Organising farmers into **FPOs** can reduce compliance costs and improve access to the EU, Japan and **East Asia**.
- The \$12.7 billion global **bee-products market** offers diversification into beeswax, propolis, royal jelly and pollen beyond **bulk honey**.
- Export expansion must protect **bee health** through scientific beekeeping, pesticide management and institutional support for **pollination services**.
- The **National Beekeeping and Honey Mission** and APEDA support require sharper targeting, laboratories, cluster grants and export promotion.
- Large retailers and **"Honey for Health" campaigns** can expand domestic demand while supporting sustainable **rural prosperity**.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Protecting wild pollinator diversity

- **Hidden diversity:** India hosts over 700 bee species, but only five are social, revealing the ecological importance of overlooked solitary bees.
- **Crop productivity:** Nagaland University found stingless-bee pollination increased king-chilli fruit set from 21% to 29.46%, demonstrating farm-level economic value.
- **Bee Corridors:** NHAI's 2026 initiative promotes nectar-rich roadside vegetation, flowering weeds, hollow trunks and staggered blooming for year-round pollinator habitats.
- **Forest connectivity:** Western Ghats research found surrounding natural forests positively influence fruit formation, supporting habitat retention near cultivated landscapes.
- **Disease prevention:** A global review covering 81 studies recorded pathogen spillover from managed honeybees to wild arthropods, requiring stronger apiary biosecurity.
- **Local documentation:** India's 2.76 lakh Biodiversity Management Committees and 2.72 lakh People's Biodiversity Registers can map pollinators and nesting habitats.
- **Scientific monitoring:** ICAR, ZSI, BSI and universities should develop a national pollinator index covering abundance, distribution, crop visitation and climate-driven changes.