29.08.2026 NEWS

DEVASTATING FLOOD RAMPAGE

- A major flood originating in Tibet's Lende river system entered central districts of Nepal through the Bhote Koshi and caused severe destruction.
- Floodwater carrying mud and boulders surged several feet high along both banks and into the Trishuli and Narayani systems, badly affecting districts including Nuwakot and Dhading.
- The event is described as one of Nepal's worst natural disasters.

A NEW CHAPTER IN ELECTRICITY GENERATION

» Puga hot springs

- July 17, 2026 is described as a milestone in India's geothermal-energy programme.
- ONGC Energy Centre, the research arm of ONGC, successfully completed drilling of a second well to a depth of about 1,000 metres in the Puga Valley of Ladakh, around 14,000 feet above sea level.
- The two wells were formally inaugurated on July 17 in the presence of Ladakh Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena, according to the source.
- They form the first step in India's pilot geothermal-energy project and are intended to support a 1 MW pilot power plant.
- A geothermal well is a specially drilled well used to extract the Earth's natural heat in the form of hot water or steam.
- The interior of the Earth is extremely hot, and in some locations high temperatures occur at accessible depths of a few thousand metres.
- This heat can be used to generate electricity and, in cold countries, to heat buildings.

» Two wells are generally required

- The first is a production well, often drilled 1,000-3,000 metres deep, through which hot water or steam from underground rock formations is brought to the surface.
- The hot fluid drives turbines in a power plant to produce clean electricity.
- Because the Earth's internal heat is continuously available, geothermal energy is treated as renewable.
- The second is a reinjection well. After steam or hot water has been used for power generation and cooled, the water is pumped back underground.
- Reinjection helps maintain underground water levels and pressure.

» 365 days

- Unlike wind power, which depends on suitable wind conditions, and solar power, which depends on daylight, geothermal power stations can operate continuously throughout the year.
- India ranks among the world's leading electricity-producing countries, but demand is rising rapidly as the economy grows.
- India remains heavily dependent on coal for electricity. The source places annual electricity generation at around 1,800 TWh.
- Based on long-term demand projections of the Central Electricity Authority, annual electricity demand is expected to reach about 2,170 TWh by 2030.
- An International Energy Agency estimate cited in the source puts the global renewable share of electricity generation at about 34% in 2025, while India is stated to be around 25%.
- The article argues that geothermal power should therefore be developed as an additional clean-energy option.
- More than 35 countries produce electricity from geothermal resources. The United States, Indonesia, the Philippines and Turkey are among the leaders.
- Kenya is cited as obtaining about 45% of its electricity requirement from geothermal sources.
- Potential geothermal sites in India include Puga and Chumathang in Ladakh; Tattapani in Balrampur district of Chhattisgarh; Manikaran and Kasol in Himachal Pradesh; and locations in Telangana, Gujarat, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra.
- Geological assessments cited in the source estimate India's geothermal electricity potential at up to 10,000 MW.
- Typical Indian geothermal resources occur at depths of around 1,500-3,000 metres with temperatures of roughly 100-160°C.
- In Puga, useful temperatures of about 140-200°C are reported at shallower depths of 500-1,000 metres, which is why the first pilot project is being developed there.
- The 1 MW project is expected to begin supplying electricity in 2027.
- If successful, larger second-stage projects of 20-50 MW are planned.

SECOND LAKE BREACH CAUSES RENEWED FLOODING; DEATH TOLL IN NEPAL HAS RISEN TO 579; THIRD INDIAN AIRCRAFT CARRYING RELIEF MATERIALS HAS DEPARTED FOR NEPAL

- The source reports renewed flooding after a second glacial lake breached, with the death toll in Nepal stated as 579 and a third Indian relief aircraft carrying supplies to the country.
- Langtang Lirung, the highest peak in the Langtang Himal sub-range, had developed a large glacial lake because of glacier melt.
- On August 26, a glacier section around 1.5 km wide reportedly collapsed into the lake, causing it to breach and producing major flooding in Tibet and Nepal.
- The source reports five deaths in Tibet and a large number of missing persons, many of them described as Indians.
- In Nepal, the Bhote Koshi and Trishuli rivers rose several metres, inundating Rasuwa, Dhading and Nuwakot districts.
- Another large glacial lake near the confluence of the Sochen Khola and Purebu Sangpo systems on the China-Nepal border reportedly breached later, causing renewed flooding in Tibetan and Nepalese rivers.

HIGH COURT BENCH FOR LADAKH - PRESIDENTIAL NOTIFICATION

- Responding to a long-standing demand from residents of the geographically remote Union Territory of Ladakh for easier access to justice, the Union Law Ministry sent a proposal to the President.
- The President issued a notification titled "Regulation for Establishment of a High Court Bench in the Union Territory of Ladakh, 2026", and it was published in the Gazette on the same day.
- The principal High Court will continue to function in Jammu and Kashmir.
- High Court judges/benches may sit and hear cases at authorised locations in Ladakh.
- The Chief Justice retains discretion to direct that a particular Ladakh case be heard at the principal High Court in Jammu and Kashmir when circumstances require.

INDIA TO ACQUIRE JAVELIN ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILES FROM THE UNITED STATES

» Key features

- The Javelin anti-tank guided missile system is jointly produced by Raytheon and Lockheed Martin in the United States.
- It is a man-portable "fire-and-forget" weapon: after launch, the operator does not need to guide the missile continuously to the target.
- Before launch, its infrared seeker locks onto the target's heat signature.
- The source gives the approximate system cost as Rs. 1.70 crore.
- A major feature is top-attack capability: the missile climbs and then strikes a tank from above, where armour is usually weaker.
- Modern tanks are primarily designed to withstand frontal attack; after launch, the Javelin rises to about 492 feet before diving steeply onto the target.
- It can strike targets at distances stated as up to 15,584 feet in the source.
- The source compares the cost of the missile system with a tank costing around Rs. 38 crore and states that a soldier carrying the shoulder-fired system can destroy a tank within seconds.
- These characteristics have made the FGM-148 Javelin one of the most sought-after anti-armour weapons of the 21st century.