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## IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

## NATIONAL

**DRDO Successfully Tests Home-Grown Air Defence System: IADWS & Its 3 Components**

**In the News:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted the maiden flight tests of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) also known as Sudarshan Chakra on August 23, 2025 at approximately 12:30 hrs off the coast of Odisha. The integrated system effectively intercepted and neutralised multiple aerial threats, marking a milestone in India's indigenous air-defence capabilities.

**Key Points:**

- **What is IADWS?** IADWS is a multi-layered, indigenous air-defence platform designed to intercept a spectrum of aerial threats—including drones, missiles, and aircraft—by integrating kinetic and non-kinetic technologies.
- **Three Core Components:**
  1. **Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAM):** Medium-range interceptors developed by DRDO with Bharat Electronics and Bharat Dynamics, designed to protect mobile armoured units.
  2. **Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS):** Man-portable and vehicle-mounted interceptors developed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat, suitable for close-range, low-altitude threats.
  3. **Directed Energy Weapon (DEW):** A high-energy laser system developed by the Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences, aimed at rapidly neutralising airborne threats like drones.
- **Command & Control Architecture:** A centralised Command & Control Centre, developed by DRDO's Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), orchestrates integrated operations—coordinating missiles, lasers, radars, and communications.
- **Performance During Tests:** The system simultaneously engaged three distinct targets—including two high-speed fixed-wing UAVs and a multicopter drone—at varied ranges and altitudes using the QRSAM, VSHORADS, and High-Energy Laser components. All systems performed flawlessly.

**ISRO Completes First Integrated Air-Drop Test for Gaganyaan**

**In the News:** On August 24, 2025, ISRO successfully conducted its first Integrated Air-Drop Test (IADT-01) for the Gaganyaan mission at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota. The test validated the full parachute-based deceleration system designed to secure the safe return of astronauts during descent and splashdown.

**Key Points**

- **Test Overview & Objective:** The IADT-01 was a full end-to-end demonstration of the Crew Module's deceleration system under realistic mission conditions. A simulated crew module (~4.8 to 5 tonnes) was air-dropped to evaluate the parachute sequence—from apex cover separation to drogue, pilot, and main parachutes deployment—for safe splashdown.
- **Execution Details:**
  - **Launch Platform:** A Chinook helicopter of the Indian Air Force lofted the module to approximately 3 km altitude over the Bay of Bengal.
  - **Deployment Sequence:** The sequence involved four parachute stages—Apex Cover Separation (Ø 2.5 m), Drogue (Ø 5.8 m), Pilot (Ø 3.4 m), and Main parachutes (Ø 25 m)—all deployed according to design.
  - **Recovery:** The module was retrieved successfully post-splashdown, confirming functional deceleration and recovery operations.
- **Collaborative Effort:** The IADT-01 involved a coordinated effort among ISRO, the Indian Air Force, DRDO, Indian Navy, and Indian Coast Guard, reflecting an integrated national approach.
- **Strategic Significance:** The test is a major stepping stone in the overall Gaganyaan mission qualification programme, paving the way for upcoming uncrewed orbital missions (such as Gaganyaan-1) scheduled for Q4 2025. It especially validates the parachute-based deceleration system—and thus astronaut safety—for future human spaceflights.

**40% of Chief Ministers Face Criminal Cases: ADR Report**

**In the News:** The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch released a report revealing that **40 percent of India's current chief ministers**—that is, **12 out of 30**—have **declared criminal cases** against themselves in their pre-election affidavits.

**Key Points:**

- **Extent of Criminal Cases:** 12 out of India's 30 chief ministers, or **40 percent**, have declared criminal cases against themselves.
- **Most Cases Declared:**
  - **Telangana CM Revanth Reddy** leads with **89 criminal cases**. This includes serious IPC charges such as **criminal intimidation, undue influence on elections, and outrage of modesty**.
  - Following him, **Tamil Nadu CM M. K. Stalin** has **47 cases**, **Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu** has **19**, **Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah** has **13**, and **Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren** has **5**.
- **Other Chief Ministers with Declared Cases:**
  - **Devendra Fadnavis (Maharashtra)** – 4 cases
  - **Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh)** – 4 cases
  - **Pinarayi Vijayan (Kerala)** – 2 cases
  - **Bhagwant Mann (Punjab)** – 1 case
  - Additionally included by some sources: **P. S. Tamang (Sikkim)** – 1 case; **Mohan Charan Manjhi (Odisha)** – 1 case; **Bhajan Lal Sharma (Rajasthan)** – 1 case.
- **Serious Criminal Allegations:** Out of the 30 chief ministers, **10 (33 percent)** are facing **serious criminal cases**, including allegations such as **attempt to murder, kidnapping, bribery, and criminal intimidation**.
- **Methodology:** ADR and National Election Watch analyzed **self-sworn affidavits filed by all 30 sitting chief ministers** from state assemblies and Union Territories, filed prior to their last elections.
- **Political Context:** The report's release coincided with the introduction of constitutional amendment bills (the 130th Amendment Bill, 2025) in Parliament, aiming to **automatically remove** the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and other ministers if they are **detained for 30 days or more** on charges punishable with at least five years' imprisonment. These legislative proposals have stirred significant debate: the government brands them as efforts to curb the **criminalisation of politics**, while the opposition has criticized them as potentially **draconian and politically motivated**

**NTCA Limits Tiger Corridors to 32 Least Cost Pathways**

**In the News:** The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) issued a clarification significantly narrowing the definition of officially recognized tiger corridors to just **32 "least cost pathways"** identified in its **2014 report**, along with corridors recorded in Tiger Conservation Plans (TCPs). This marks a policy reversal from earlier positions that included multiple scientific sources like Wildlife Institute of India (WII) studies and All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE) data.

**Key Points:**

- **Policy Narrowing:** The NTCA now recognizes only the **32 least cost pathways** from its 2014 analysis and those designated in state-specific TCPs, excluding other scientific studies and data sources such as the WII reports (2016, 2021) and AITE refinements.
- **Judicial Context:** This shift follows scrutiny by the Bombay High Court, which is reviewing a PIL against the Maharashtra State Board for Wildlife (SBWL)'s practice of granting project clearances only for areas within those least-cost corridors. The NTCA's clarification came during related hearings.
- **Impact on Development Projects:** As a result, certain industrial and mining projects—such as the Durgapur open-cast mines by Western Coalfields Limited and the Surajgarh iron ore mines by Lloyds Metals & Energy in Maharashtra—now fall outside the newly defined corridors and face fewer regulatory hurdles.
- **Scientific and Conservation Concerns:** Conservationists and researchers are alarmed that valid corridors identified via telemetry, landscape modelling, and recent AITE-based studies are being excluded. A July 2025 study by Nagpur's LRC Foundation, using Circuitscape modelling, identified **192 potential tiger corridors** across central India—far more extensive than the limited 32-pathway approach.
- **Note from 2014 Report:** Even the original 2014 NTCA report had cautioned that the listed corridors represented a "minimal requirement" and that "alternative connectivities do exist and need to be conserved"—a caveat now overlooked in the current policy narrowing.

**Bonded Labour**

**In the News:** The Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) took suo motu cognizance of a harrowing case involving a **15-year-old boy from Kishanganj, Bihar**, who was **lured into bonded labour** at a buffalo dairy in Haryana's Jind district,

where he suffered grievous abuse and a catastrophic injury—resulting in the **amputation of his arm**. The Commission condemned this as a violation of **human dignity**, prompting a series of urgent directives to authorities.

**Key Points:**

- **Incident Details:** The minor was separated from his companions at Bahadurgarh Railway Station and was enticed with a ₹10,000/month job at a buffalo dairy in Jind. Instead, he endured two months of forced labour, physical abuse, and deprivation. While cutting fodder, he suffered a severe arm injury that led to amputation. The employer then **abandoned him in an isolated area** instead of providing aid.
- **Survival and Rescue:** Despite his grave injuries, the boy walked approximately **150 km** to Nuh, where two teachers discovered him, brought him to a health centre, and alerted the police. **Legal and Human Rights Violations:** HHRC described the incident as a serious violation of child rights and dignity. It flagged infringement of international obligations under **Article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, along with violations of India's domestic laws, including the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976**, the **Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986**, and constitutional protections under **Articles 21 and 23** (right to life with dignity, against forced labour and trafficking).
- **Commission's Directives:** The HHRC has instructed the district-level authorities in Jind and Nuh to:
  - Identify and arrest the accused employers,
  - Verify bonded labour practices at the dairy,
  - Submit a detailed medical report,
  - Develop a rehabilitation plan (including psychological care),
  - Conduct comprehensive inquiries into labour law violations,
  - Ensure compensation and welfare assistance for the victim.
- **Next Hearing:** The matter has been scheduled for further hearing by the HHRC on **November 4, 2025**.
- **Ongoing Recovery:** The boy is currently recovering at PGIMS (Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences), Rohtak. He has regained consciousness and has begun recounting the events. A second surgery has been planned, conditioned on his recovery stabilizing. Investigations are underway, including attempts to trace his captor, known only as "Anil," though the exact location remains unidentified.

**CISF Launches First All-Women Commando Unit**

**In the News:** The **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)** has launched its **first all-women commando unit**, with training underway at the Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Barwaha, Madhya Pradesh. This initiative marks a breakthrough, as women are being equipped for frontline, counter-terrorism and Quick Reaction Team (QRT) deployment—especially at airports and other sensitive installations. The move underscores CISF's commitment to advancing gender parity in operational roles within India's security forces.

**Key Points:**

- **Training Programme & Scope:** An **eight-week advanced commando course**, beginning in August 2025, involves rigorous training in physical fitness, weapons handling, live-fire under stress, rappelling, obstacle courses, forest survival, and a 48-hour confidence-building exercise designed to test decision-making and teamwork under hostile conditions. The first batch of **30 women** will train from August 11 to October 4, followed by a second batch from October 6 to November 29, with around **100 women expected to complete the programme** in this initial phase.
- **Deployment Strategy:** Post-training, these women commandos will be deployed with **Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs)** and **Special Task Forces (STFs)** at high-risk sites, including civil airports, metro systems, Parliament, and other critical national infrastructure.
- **Gender Representation & Recruitment Goals:** Currently, women make up about **8% of CISF's workforce** (approximately 12,491 personnel). CISF plans to **recruit an additional 2,400 women by 2026** to fulfill the Ministry of Home Affairs' target of achieving at least **10% female representation**.
- **Significance & Institutional Impact:** This milestone makes CISF the **first Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)** to establish a dedicated all-women commando unit focused on combat and frontline operational roles. The initiative signifies a significant shift in policy—moving from symbolic roles to substantive involvement in missions traditionally dominated by male personnel. It also positions all-women commando training as a regular feature in CISF's operational calendar going forward.



### Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Vipul Pancholi Elevated to Supreme Court by the President

**In the News:** Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Vipul Pancholi Elevated to Supreme Court by President In the News: The Centre, through the Law Minister's announcement on social media, confirmed that Chief Justices Alok Aradhe (Bombay High Court) and Vipul Manubhai Pancholi (Patna High Court) have been elevated to the Supreme Court of India, following the Collegium's recommendation on August 25, 2025. The appointments were formalized by the President under Article 124(2) of the Constitution. Once sworn in, the Supreme Court will function at its full strength of 34 judges.

#### Key Points:

- **Collegium Recommendation:** The five-member Collegium led by Chief Justice B. R. Gavai recommended the elevations by a 4–1 majority. Justice B. V. Nagarathna dissented, citing Justice Pancholi's low seniority (57th) and concerns over regional representation imbalance.
- **Presidential Appointment:** Within two days of recommendation, the appointments were approved by the **President of India**, bringing a rapid conclusion to the elevation process.
- **Career Trajectories:**
  - **Justice Alok Aradhe** began as a judge in the **Madhya Pradesh High Court (2009)**, served in **Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka**, and as **Chief Justice of Telangana**, before becoming Chief Justice of Bombay HC in **January 2025**.
    - **Justice Vipul M. Pancholi**, elevated as an Additional Judge in **Gujarat HC (2014)**, later transferred to **Patna HC**, becoming its Chief Justice in **July 2025**.
- **Impact & Controversy:** With the appointments, the SC gets back to full strength of **34 judges**. Justice Pancholi's elevation raised concerns — his transfer to Patna HC and being slated to become **Chief Justice of India (2031–33)** drew criticism from Justice Nagarathna, who feared it would erode Collegium's credibility.

### Centre Forms Committees to Honour Patel, Vajpayee, Birsa Munda

**In the News:** The Government of India has constituted three separate high-level committees, each chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to commemorate the **150th birth anniversaries of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Birsa Munda**, and the **centenary (100th) birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. The Ministry of Culture issued gazette notifications between **August 23–25, 2025**. Each committee comprises over 100 members—including Union ministers, state governors, and chief ministers—tasked with national-level commemorations.

#### Key Points:

**Committee Structure & Leadership:** Each of the three high-level committees will be chaired by **PM Narendra Modi** and supported by over 100 members, including distinguished figures like former Presidents Pratibha Patil & Ram Nath Kovind and ex-PM H.D. Deve Gowda, as well as state governors and chief ministers.

**Serialized Celebrations:** The committees will plan and supervise year-long commemorative activities (seminars, cultural programmes, public outreach) that go beyond their native regions to reflect a pan-India tribute.

**Sardar Patel's Legacy (150th birth anniversary):** Celebrations will celebrate his role in the integration of 565+ princely states and as India's inaugural Deputy PM and Home Minister—reinforcing national unity and administrative foundations.

**Birsa Munda's Legacy (150th birth anniversary):** The Libyan tribal freedom fighter, known for leading the "Ulgulan" uprising in the late 19th century, symbolizes tribal resistance and cultural pride; celebrations aim to spotlight underrepresented tribal history.

**Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Legacy (100th birth anniversary):** The three-time Prime Minister will be honored for his statesmanship—from nuclear policy to infrastructure development (like the Golden Quadrilateral), and inclusive democracy—through year-long commemorations.

### India Sends 700 Troops for Exercise Bright Star 2025

**In the News:** India is deploying **over 700 armed forces personnel** to participate in **Exercise Bright Star 2025**, a major tri-service multilateral military exercise hosted by Egypt from **August 28 to September 10, 2025**. This marks India's commitment to strengthening regional security ties and enhancing cooperation with international partners.

#### Key Points:

- **Exercise Timing and Participation:** Exercise Bright Star 2025 is scheduled from **August 28 to September 10, 2025**. India will send **over 700 personnel** from the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, and Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff for this edition.
- **Multinational Scope:** This marks the **19th edition** of the exercise, with participation from **43 countries**—13 contributing troops directly and 30 as observers. Overall, around **7,900 total troops** are expected at the exercise.
- **Activities Planned:**  
The drill includes a **comprehensive spectrum of tri-service activities**:
  - **Live-firing exercises** showcasing capabilities of the Army, Navy, and Air Force
  - A **Command Post Exercise (CPX)** to enhance joint planning and operational coordination
  - **Short training exercises** focusing on various aspects of modern warfare
  - **Subject Matter Expert (SME) interactions** for sharing knowledge across key domains of contemporary military operations
- **Historical Context:** Exercise Bright Star is a **biennial exercise** initiated in **1980** as a bilateral drill between Egypt and the United States. It has since evolved into one of the **largest tri-service multilateral exercises in the Middle East and North Africa**, highlighting the U.S.-Egypt strategic partnership.
- **India's Strategic Focus:** India's participation underscores its **commitment to regional peace, security, and stability**, as well as its aim to enhance **jointness, interoperability, and cooperation** with friendly foreign nations.

### Union Cabinet Restructures PM SVANidhi Scheme, Extends Till 2030

**In the News:** The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a major restructuring of the **Prime Minister's Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)** scheme, extending its lending period from the earlier deadline of **December 31, 2024 to March 31, 2030**. The revamped initiative comes with a total outlay of **₹7,332 crore** to bolster support for street vendors across the country.

#### Key Points:

- **Extended Lending Period & Financial Outlay:** The scheme, originally slated to end in December 2024, has been extended until **March 31, 2030**, with an enhanced budget of **₹7,332 crore** to broaden its impact.
- **Expanded Beneficiary Coverage:** It now aims to benefit **1.15 crore street vendors**, including **50 lakh new beneficiaries**, reinforcing its inclusive outreach.
- **Higher Loan Amounts:**
  - **First tranche** increased from ₹10,000 to **₹15,000**
  - **Second tranche** increased from ₹20,000 to **₹25,000**
  - **Third tranche** remains capped at **₹50,000**
- **UPI-Linked RuPay Credit Card:** Vendors who repay their second loan on time will now be eligible for a **UPI-linked RuPay credit card**, enabling instant access to credit for business or urgent personal needs.
- **Digital Cashback Incentives:** To promote digital adoption, **cashback of up to ₹1,600** will be offered on retail and wholesale transactions made digitally.
- **Geographical Expansion:** The scheme's coverage is being gradually extended beyond statutory towns to include **census towns and peri-urban areas**, ensuring wider reach.
- **Capacity Building & Skill Development:**  
Vendors will receive training in: Entrepreneurship, Financial literacy, Digital marketing & Hygiene and food safety (in collaboration with FSSAI)
- **SVANidhi se Samridhhi & Lok Kalyan Melas:** The welfare component of the scheme, '**SVANidhi se Samridhhi**', will be strengthened through **monthly Lok Kalyan Melas**, aimed at ensuring saturation outreach and delivering benefits from multiple government schemes to vendors and their families.
- **Impact & Achievements to Date:**  
As of **July 30, 2025**, the PM SVANidhi scheme has:
  - Disbursed **over 96 lakh loans** totalling **₹13,797 crore** to more than **68 lakh street vendors**
  - Facilitated **557 crore digital transactions** worth **₹6.09 lakh crore**, with **47 lakh digitally active beneficiaries** earning **₹241 crore in cashback**
  - Enabled **profiling of 46 lakh beneficiaries** across **3,564 Urban Local Bodies**, resulting in over **1.38 crore scheme sanctions** under '**SVANidhi se Samridhhi**

### Adi Karmayogi Initiative

**In the News:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs officially launched the **Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan**, India's largest tribal grassroots leadership programme. The initiative aims to institutionalize responsive governance and empower local stakeholders—from ASHAs and Anganwadi workers to youth volunteers—by building a strong cadre of tribal “change leaders” across the country.

#### Key Points:

- **Vision & National Movement:** Adi Karmayogi is not just a scheme but a movement to build people-centric governance across tribal India, guided by the principles of **Sewa (Service)**, **Sankalp (Resolve)**, and **Samarpan (Dedication)**.
- **Scale & Outreach:** The initiative targets empowerment across **1 lakh tribal-dominated villages**, mobilizing over **20 lakh change leaders**—referred to as Aadi Karmayogis—spanning **550 districts** across **30 States/UTs**.
- **Training Architecture (Cascade Model):**  
A multi-tiered training structure is in place: **State-level master trainers, District-level trainers & Block-level trainers**, eventually cascading down to village-level Karmayogis  
Training is conducted through structured **Governance Lab Workshops / Process Labs**, emphasizing responsive governance, grievance redressal, citizen engagement, and convergence planning.
- **Participatory Planning—Vision 2030:** Tribal communities and government officials jointly co-create “**Tribal Village Vision 2030**” plans, complete with action strategies and investment outlines. These community-generated visions serve as aspirational blueprints for inclusive development.
- **Service Delivery—Adi Seva Kendras & Seva Hours:** The initiative introduces **Adi Seva Kendras**, envisioned as single-window service hubs in tribal villages. These centres will host regular **Seva Hours** and **Seva Days**, facilitating grievance redressal, youth mentoring, and convergence of welfare services.
- **Cadre Diversity & Roles:**  
The Aadi Karmayogis encompass a diverse group including: Grassroots government workers (e.g., ASHAs, Anganwadi staff), PRI representatives, youth volunteers, SHG leaders & Teachers, doctors, social activists, traditional knowledge holders  
They serve as catalysts for transparent governance, community mobilization, and effective last-mile delivery.
- **Implementation Progress:**
  - **Regional Process Labs** are already underway—for instance, the **4th Regional Process Lab (RPL)** in Bhubaneswar has successfully commenced to train frontline tribal functionaries from Odisha, Jharkhand, and Bihar.
  - **District-level implementations** are active, e.g., in Parvathipuram Manyam district (Andhra Pradesh), where training of district- and block-level trainers has begun to extend to 165 villages benefiting 83,000 tribal residents.
  - In **Gajapati district (Odisha)**, the Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan was launched to cover 485 villages with master trainer sessions scheduled in Jeypore followed by block-level training.
  - Odisha also held a high-level review meeting focusing on improving inter-departmental coordination to ensure delivery of services like housing, roads, health, and livelihoods through village teams of trained individuals

### Kohima, Visakhapatnam, Mumbai among safest cities for women: NARI

**In the News:** The National Annual Report & Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025 was released by the National Commission for Women (NCW). Based on a survey of 12,770 women across 31 cities, it found that Kohima, Visakhapatnam, and Mumbai, among others, emerged as some of the safest urban centres for women in India.

#### Key Points:

- **Top-ranked Cities:** The safest cities identified are: **Kohima, Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, Itanagar, and Mumbai**.
- **Safety Metrics & National Benchmark:** With a **national safety score of 65%**, cities were grouped into performance bands—“much above,” “above,” “below,” or “much below” this benchmark.
- **Bottom-ranked Cities:** On the opposite end, **Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar, and Ranchi** were among the least safe cities for women.
- **Factors Influencing Safety Rankings:** The top-tier cities tend to score higher on metrics like **gender equity, civic participation, policing, and women-friendly infrastructure**. The lower-ranked cities face issues such as **patriarchal norms, weak institutional response, and poor urban planning**.
- **Women's Sense of Safety:** **60%** of women surveyed felt “safe” in their cities. A significant minority—**40%**—felt “not so safe” or “unsafe,” especially during nighttime or in public transport and recreational spaces.

- **Institutions and Harassment Reporting:**
  - **86%** felt safe in educational institutions during the day.
  - **91%** reported feeling safe at their workplace; however, nearly half were unsure if their workplace had a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) policy.
  - Only **25%** of women trusted authorities to take effective action on safety grievances.
- **Harassment Data:**
  - **7%** of women experienced harassment in public spaces in 2024; among those under 24, the figure was **14%**.
  - Harassment most commonly occurred in **neighborhoods (38%)** and **public transport (29%)**.
  - Only **one in three women** reported such incidents—meaning **two-thirds remain unreported**, creating a significant gap in official crime data.

### Rajasthan becomes first State to issue guidelines on stray dogs after Supreme Court directive

**In the News:** Rajasthan became the **first Indian state** to issue detailed, comprehensive guidelines for managing stray dogs, aligning with the **Supreme Court's August 22, 2025 directive**. The state's Department of Local Self-Government formalised roles and protocols for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), championing both public safety and animal welfare.

#### Key Points:

- **Designated Feeding Zones:** Every ward and locality must have **clearly marked feeding spots** for stray dogs, identified in consultation with Resident Welfare Associations and animal welfare organisations. These spots must provide food and water—even for stray dogs in rabies situations.
- **Sterilisation & Medical Facilities:** Municipal bodies are directed to **establish or upgrade sterilisation centres**, offering facilities for deworming, vaccination, and surgery, with full veterinary pre- and post-operative care.
- **Humane Capture Methods:** Only **trained personnel** may handle stray dog capture using **nets or hands**. The use of tongs, wires, snares, or forceful methods is strictly **prohibited**.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Dogs:** **Puppies under six months** and **lactating females with dependent pups** must **not be captured or sterilised**, ensuring animal welfare and healthy developmental continuity.
- **Monitoring & Transparency Measures:**
  - Establishment of **monitoring committees** in each municipal body, including at least one animal welfare worker.
  - Mandatory **CCTV installation** in operating theatres and sterilisation centres.
  - Detailed documentation of sterilisation, vaccination, feeding, deaths, treatments, and staff activity.
- **Release of Treated Dogs:** Healthy, sterilised, vaccinated, and tagged dogs must be **returned to their original locality**. Rabid or dangerously aggressive dogs are to be **quarantined under veterinary supervision**, while sick or injured dogs must be **treated first**.
- **Incentivising NGOs & Para-Veterinary Teams:** NGOs recognised by the Animal Welfare Board of India will receive **₹200 per captured dog** and **₹1,450** for sterilisation, feeding, and post-operative care.
- **Compliance Reporting:** All civic bodies must submit **compliance reports to the state government within 30 days** of implementing the guidelines.
- **Judicial and Safety Context:** These guidelines operationalise the **Supreme Court's August 22, 2025 order**, which reinstated the "vaccinate-sterilise-release" method under the **Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023**—mandating humane and scientifically backed population control over culling or indefinite sheltering.

### Minority Affairs Ministry Launches UMEED Module for Vulnerable Groups

**In the News:** The **Ministry of Minority Affairs** launched an additional module on the **UMEED Portal**, enabling **widows, divorced women, and orphans** to apply for maintenance support from **Waqf-alal-aulad** properties through a digitized platform.

#### Key Points:

- **Module Launch:** The Ministry introduced this new module under the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Rules, 2025, implementing Rule 8(2) in alignment with Section 3(r)(iv) of the Unified Waqf Management Act, 1995.
- **Target Beneficiaries:** The digital system specifically facilitates maintenance support applications for widows, divorced women, and orphans, leveraging income generated from Waqf-alal-aulad—a special endowment category benefiting family members and deserving individuals.



- **Digital Features:**
  - Aadhaar-based authentication for verifying beneficiary identity.
  - Fully online application & approval workflows, administered via State/UT Waqf Boards.
  - Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) ensures maintenance funds are transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts.
- **Governance & Implementation:** The move enhances the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of Waqf administration, reducing administrative delays and promoting good governance in line with inclusive welfare goals. The Ministry has urged State/UT Waqf Boards and Mutawallis (custodians of Waqf property) to ensure the module is widely implemented and to raise awareness among eligible beneficiaries.

### India and Bhutan Sign MoU for Agricultural Cooperation

**In the News:** India and Bhutan formalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Thimphu, aimed at strengthening cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors. The agreement was signed by Devesh Chaturvedi, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (India), and Thinley Namgyel, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Bhutan).

#### Key Points:

- **MoU Signing Event:** The MoU was signed on August 28, 2025, in Thimphu by the respective Agriculture Secretaries of India and Bhutan, marking a renewed commitment to joint agricultural progress.
- **Scope of Collaboration:** The agreement serves as a structured framework for cooperation across multiple domains: Agricultural research and innovation, Livestock health and production, Post-harvest management, Value chain development & Exchange of knowledge, skills, and expertise
- **Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG):** Immediately following the signing, the first meeting of the JTWG was held. During this session, both countries agreed on the group's Terms of Reference and identified priority areas for immediate action.
- **Discussion Areas and Indian Initiatives:** The JTWG covered cooperation domains such as agricultural marketing and cooperatives, food processing, seed sector development, research and technology collaboration, and capacity building. Shri Chaturvedi emphasized India's ongoing efforts in digital agriculture, climate-resilient farming, risk mitigation strategies, and enhanced credit access for farmers.

### India Launches First National Biofoundry Network under BioE3 Policy

**In the News:** Marking the first anniversary of the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) Policy, Union Minister of Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, inaugurated India's first National Biofoundry Network and launched the BioE3 Challenge for Youth at an event held in New Delhi.

#### Key Points:

- **Launch Event:** The launch coincided with the one-year milestone of the BioE3 Policy. Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled both the **National Biofoundry Network** and the **BioE3 Challenge for Youth** on August 27, 2025.
- **National Biofoundry Network:** Comprises **six premier institutions**:
  - International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB)
  - Biotechnology Research Innovation Council – National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (BRIC-NABI)
  - Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI)
  - Institute of Pesticide Formulation Technology (IPFT)
  - National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS)
  - Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC)
  - Designed as an **integrated end-to-end platform** covering design, prototyping, testing, and scaling of biotech solutions—fostering indigenous biomanufacturing and innovation.
- **BioE3 Policy and Bioeconomy Goals:** BioE3 stands for **Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment**. The policy frames biotechnology's role in national growth, eco-sustainability, and job creation. India's **bioeconomy** surged from **USD 10 billion in 2014** to **USD 165.7 billion in 2024**, with an ambitious target of **USD 300 billion by 2030**.
- **Complementary Initiatives and Milestones:** Notable achievements under the BioE3 Policy include:
  - Launch of India's first **Biomanufacturing Institute** in **Mohali, Punjab**
  - Establishment of **Bio-Artificial Intelligence hubs**
  - Creation of **biomanufacturing hubs** and additional **biofoundries**
  - More than a dozen joint research calls in areas like **cell and gene therapy, climate-smart agriculture, carbon capture, and functional foods**, with over **2,000 proposals** received.

- **BioE3 Challenge for Youth:**

- Launched at the same event, the challenge invites innovators (from school students to startups) across India to “**Design Microbes, Molecules & More.**”
- Starting **October 2025**, the challenge will be announced **monthly**:
  - **Top 10 winners** each receive **₹1 lakh**, mentorship, and recognition.
  - **100 selected innovators** are eligible for **funding up to ₹25 lakh** via BIRAC, disbursed in two tranches to support proof-of-concept development.
- The initiative follows the **DESIGN framework**:
  - Define needs → Evidence-first → Sustainability → Integration → Go-to-market → Net-positive impact.

### Index of Industrial Production Growth July 2025

**In the News:** Government data revealed that India’s **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** grew by **3.5% year-on-year** in **July 2025**, marking its strongest performance in four months and exceeding economists’ expectations.

**Key Points:**

- **Overall IIP Growth :** The Index of Industrial Production rose 3.5% in July 2025, up from 1.5% in June, signaling a recovery in industrial activity.
- **Sectoral Performance**
  - **Manufacturing:** Strong growth at **5.4%**, up from June’s 3.7%, making it the main driver of the IIP expansion.
  - **Electricity:** Modest improvement with 0.6% growth, reversing June’s 1.2% decline.
  - **Mining:** Continued contraction but at a slower pace down 7.2% versus June’s 8.7% decline.
- **IIP Index Values**
  - The overall IIP index stood at 155.0 in July 2025, compared to 149.8 in July 2024.
  - Sector-specific indices: Mining: 107.7; Manufacturing: 156.9; Electricity: 221.5.
- **Leading Manufacturing Contributors :** Out of 23 manufacturing industry groups at the NIC 2-digit level, 14 recorded positive growth year-on-year.
- **Top contributors include:**
  - **Basic metals:** up 12.7% (notably MS slabs, HR coils/sheets, alloy steel flat products)
  - **Electrical equipment:** up 15.9% (including electric heaters, switchgear, transformers)
  - **Non-metallic mineral products:** up 9.5% (cement, cement clinkers, marble slabs)
- **Use-Based Classification Trends:** Growth by category in July 2025 over July 2024:
  - **Primary Goods:** -1.7% (decline)
  - **Capital Goods:** +5.0%
  - **Intermediate Goods:** +5.8%
  - **Infrastructure / Construction Goods:** +11.9%
  - **Consumer Durables:** +7.7%
  - **Consumer Non-Durables:** +0.5%

The top performers were infrastructure/construction goods, intermediate goods, and consumer durables.
- **Quarter-to-Date Growth (April–July 2025):** Industrial output for April–July grew **2.3%**, significantly lower than last year’s **5.4%** for the same period.

### Mapping India’s Education Landscape

**In the News:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released results from the Comprehensive Modular Survey: Education (CMS:E), 2025, conducted as part of the 80<sup>th</sup> Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS). The survey gathered data from 52,085 households and 57,742 students, focusing on household expenditure on school education and private coaching across India between April and June 2025.

**Key Points:**

- **School Enrolment Patterns :** Government schools remain foundational to India’s education system: they account for 55.9% of total enrollments nationally—66.0% in rural areas versus just 30.1% in urban areas. Private unaided schools hold 31.9% of enrolments nationwide.

- **Household Spending on Education :** The average per-student expenditure across all schools stands at approximately ₹8,382 in rural areas and ₹23,470 in urban areas, reflecting significant rural-urban disparities. In government schools, households spend much less per student **₹2,863** compared to **₹25,002** in non-government schools.
- **Breakdown of Education Expenses :** Across all school types, **course fees** emerge as the largest expense (average ₹7,111), followed by textbooks and stationery (₹2,002). Urban households spend significantly more: course fees average ₹15,143 in urban areas versus ₹3,979 in rural areas.
- **Rising Prevalence of Private Coaching :** Nearly 27.0% of students took private coaching during the academic year, with higher incidence in urban areas (30.7%) than in rural areas (**25.5%**). Urban households spend significantly more on coaching ₹3,988 per student annually, compared to ₹1,793 in rural areas. Coaching cost increases with education level; for higher secondary, it's ₹9,950 urban vs ₹4,548 rural.
- **Funding Sources for Schooling :** Household members are the primary source of funding for education, cited by 95% of students. Only 1.2% identified government scholarships as their main funding source.
- **Survey Methodology & Caveats :** The survey utilized Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) across a large, nationally representative sample. However, it's important to note that CMS:E's totals are meant for calculating rates and ratios only—not for extrapolating absolute population figures. They should thus be interpreted with caution (e.g., due to sample size and relative standard error). Also, CMS:E differs significantly from the 75th NSS Round (2017–18) in terms of classifications and definitions, such as treating anganwadis as pre-primary and separately reporting private coaching expenses.

### Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana

**In the News:** On **August 29, 2025**, the Bihar Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, approved the **Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana** (Chief Minister Women's Employment Scheme), aiming to empower women by providing financial assistance for self-employment ventures.

#### Key Points:

- **Initial Financial Aid:** One woman from each household in Bihar will receive **₹10,000** as a grant to start an income-generating activity of her choice.
- **Additional Support After 6 Months:** After six months, an assessment will be conducted. Eligible women may receive **additional financial assistance of up to ₹2 lakh** to scale and sustain their ventures.
- **Disbursement Timeline & Process:** The application process is set to begin soon, with funds transferred directly via DBT starting **September 2025**. The Rural Development Department will be the nodal agency, assisted by the Urban Development and Housing Department for urban outreach.
- **Haat Bazaars for Market Access:** To support women entrepreneurs, the government will establish **haat bazaars** (local markets) in both rural and urban areas for marketing and selling women-made products.
- **Objective & Broader Context:** The scheme is positioned to boost women's economic independence, raise household incomes, reduce out-migration, and provide better local employment opportunities.
- **Legacy of Women's Empowerment:** The initiative builds on a longstanding agenda of empowering women since 2005, including: 50% reservation for women in local self-governance (Panchayati Raj and municipal bodies), Liquor prohibition (2016) and Higher pensions benefiting over 1.12 crore women.

### Maharashtra, AP Lead in Energy Efficiency: SEEI 2024

**In the News:** The Ministry of Power released the sixth edition of the State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2024, covering the fiscal year 2023–24. The report, prepared by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in collaboration with the Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE), identified Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh as top performers in energy efficiency in their respective consumption groups, with scores of 80.5 % and 79.3 % respectively.

#### Key Points:

- **Release & Purpose:** The SEEI 2024, launched by BEE Director General Akash Tripathi (also Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power), uses a robust **66-indicator, implementation-focused** framework to evaluate states across various sectors — buildings, industry, transport, agriculture, municipal services, distribution companies, and cross-sector initiatives.
- **Top Performers by Energy Consumption Group:**
  - **Group 1 (>15 MToE)** – Maharashtra led the pack.
  - **Group 2 (5–15 MToE)** – Andhra Pradesh emerged as the leader.

- **Group 3 (1–5 MToE)** – Assam topped this segment.
- **Group 4 (<1 MToE)** – Tripura took the lead.
- **Performance Categories:** States were classified into: **Front Runners** (>60%), **Achievers** (50–60%), **Contenders** (30–50%) and **Aspirants** (<30%).
- **Front Runner States:** The number of front runners dropped from seven in the previous year to five in SEEI 2024—these include **Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu**.
- **Sectoral Highlights:**
  - **Buildings:** 24 states have notified the **Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2017**.
  - **Electric Mobility:** 31 states adopted EV policies.
  - **Solar Pumps:** 13 states promoted solar-powered agricultural pumps, with **Kerala** achieving the highest adoption at **74%**.
  - **State Energy Efficiency Action Plans (SEEAPs):** Prepared by **all 36 States/UTs**, and **31** have established **State-Level Steering Committees on Energy Transition**.
- **Strategic Significance:** The SEEI serves as a key policy tool guiding energy efficiency efforts, facilitating best-practice sharing, and supporting India's climate objectives including a 45% reduction in emissions intensity by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.

### Reliance to Build Solar Project Three Times the Size of Singapore

**In the News:** During Reliance Industries' 48th Annual General Meeting on August 29, 2025, the company unveiled its plan to develop a mega solar project in Kutch, Gujarat spanning **550,000 acres**, which is approximately **three times the size of Singapore**. This initiative forms part of a fully integrated clean energy ecosystem under the **Dhirubhai Ambani Green Energy Giga Complex** in Jamnagar and Kutch.

#### Key Points:

- **Scale of the Project:** The solar project covers a vast **550,000 acres**, making it one of the world's largest single-site solar initiatives—about three times the land area of Singapore.
- **Capacity and Impact:** At peak capacity, the project is expected to deploy **55 MW of solar modules** and **150 MWh of battery containers daily**. Within a decade, it has the potential to **meet nearly 10% of India's electricity demand**.
- **Integrated Clean Energy Ecosystem:** This project is a component of the **Dhirubhai Ambani Green Energy Giga Complex**, envisioned as the world's most integrated clean energy hub. The complex includes: Solar module manufacturing with **20 GW per annum capacity**, Battery giga-factory, Electrolyser facility, Green hydrogen production (aiming for **3 million tonnes equivalent per annum by 2032**).
- **Strategic Significance:** Reliance aims to transform its traditional oil and petrochemicals-led model into a sustainable new-energy portfolio. The Giga Complex, centered at Jamnagar, will link solar, storage, and hydrogen production—setting a template for scale, cost-efficiency, and resilience in clean energy supply chains

## INTERNATIONAL

### Temporary Suspension of Postal Services to the United States of America

**In the News:** The **Department of Posts in India** announced a temporary suspension of most international postal services destined for the United States of America, effective August 25, 2025. This action comes in response to new U.S. regulations that fundamentally change the duty and customs clearance requirements for low-value shipments particularly following the elimination of the longstanding de minimis exemption that allowed goods under **USD 800** to enter the U.S. duty-free.

#### Key Points:

- **Triggering Event:** The suspension was triggered by Executive Order No. 14324 issued by the U.S. on July 30, 2025, which ends the duty-free de minimis exemption for goods valued up to USD 800, effective August 29, 2025. Consequently, all international postal items heading to the U.S. will now be subject to customs duties under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).
- **Undefined Duty-Collection Mechanism:** U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) issued some guidelines by **August 15, 2025**, but critical details—such as identifying “qualified parties” responsible for collecting duties, the process for duty



collection, and mechanisms for remittance—remain undefined. Without clarity, U.S.-bound air carriers declined to accept postal consignments from India effective **August 25**.

- **Scope of Suspension & Exemptions:** Starting August 25, 2025, India Post suspended booking of all types of postal articles to the U.S., except for:
  - Letters and documents
  - Gift items valued up to USD 100 These exempt categories continue to be accepted for shipment, pending further clarification.
- **Refund Policy:** Customers who have already booked items that now cannot be dispatched to the U.S. are eligible for postage refunds. The Department expressed regret over the inconvenience and is actively coordinating with stakeholders to restore full services at the earliest opportunity.
- **Broader Global Context & Impact:** The U.S. removal of the de minimis threshold has triggered similar postal suspensions globally—affecting services in Europe, Asia, and Oceania—due to uncertainty in duty rules. Indian students, families, and small exporters who relied on affordable postal rates face logistical hurdles now, especially with a lack of clarity on how new duties will be levied.

### Trump Appoints Sergio Gor as US Ambassador to India and Special Envoy for South & Central Asia

**In the News:** President **Donald Trump** announced the nomination of **Sergio Gor**—currently serving as Director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office—as the next **U.S. Ambassador to India** and Special Envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs. He will continue in his present role until Senate confirmation.

#### Key Points:

- **Dual Roles & Announcement:** Gor was nominated simultaneously as Ambassador to India and Special Envoy for South & Central Asia, combining bilateral diplomacy with broader regional responsibilities—an unusual move in U.S. foreign policy practice.
- **Current Position & Skills:** At 38, Gor heads the White House Presidential Personnel Office, managing federal staffing decisions. He is known for his loyalty to the Trump administration and his skills in political vetting.
- **Background & Controversies:** His nomination comes after a public clash with Elon Musk, who once labeled him a “snake” during disagreements over NASA nominations. There have also been reports of delays in his security clearance.
- **Diplomatic Context:** The position of U.S. Ambassador to India has been vacant since **January 2025**, when Eric Garcetti stepped down. Gor’s appointment comes at a time of friction in U.S.-India ties, including disputes over tariffs and India’s purchase of Russian oil.
- **Criticisms & Strategic Concerns:** Analysts highlight Gor’s lack of direct diplomatic experience in South Asia, and there is uncertainty over his stance on key bilateral issues. New Delhi has so far responded cautiously, without strong public comment.
- **Personal History:** Born in Tashkent, USSR (1986), Gor spent parts of his early life in Malta before moving to the U.S. He is a graduate of George Washington University, has long-standing ties with the College Republicans, and co-founded Winning Team Publishing with Donald Trump Jr.

### India Partners with France’s Safran to Build Jet Engines for Next-Gen Fighter Aircraft

**In the News:** India and French aerospace giant Safran have entered into a landmark collaboration to co-develop and manufacture advanced jet engines for India’s Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)—the country’s indigenous fifth-generation stealth fighter—under the strategic Make in India initiative. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh confirmed that the proposed engine is expected to deliver approximately 120 kN thrust, and that the partnership includes full technology transfer and intellectual property ownership for India. The project is budgeted at around ₹61,000 crore (≈ US \$7 billion) and forms a critical pillar in deepening Indo-French defence collaboration.

#### Key Points:

- **Strategic Scope:** The engine will serve not just the AMCA, but also **future Indian military aviation platforms**, reinforcing long-term self-reliance in engine manufacturing. **AMCA’s prototype development** is ongoing, with mass production targeted around **2035**.
- **Technical & Financial Outline:** The project aims to build **120 kN-class engines**, powerful enough to drive twin-engine AMCA configuration.

- Estimated project cost: ~₹61,000 crore (~US \$7 billion).
- Safran's proposal includes 100% transfer of technology (ToT) and full IP rights to India—crucial for future indigenisation and export potential.
- **Strategic and Diplomatic Significance:** This agreement represents a **major milestone in Indo-French defence cooperation**, underscoring Paris's trusted role in India's modernisation. It also reflects geopolitical dynamics—France's non-sanction stance post-1998 and smoother processes compared to Western counterparts are seen as strategic advantages. The engine program aligns with New Delhi's aim to emerge as a competitive global defence supplier by **2047**.

### Smart City Index 2025 Rankings: Zurich Tops, Where Do Indian Cities Stand?

**In the News:** The **International Institute for Management Development (IMD)** released its **Smart City Index 2025**, revealing that **Zurich** once again secured the **top rank** globally. Meanwhile, **Indian cities remain outside the top 100**, with **Delhi leading the domestic ranking at 104**, followed by **Bengaluru (110)** and **Hyderabad (109)**—highlighting persistent challenges in urban infrastructure, governance, and sustainability.

#### Key Points:

- **Global Top Performers:** Zurich retained its **number one position for the sixth consecutive year** in the IMD Smart City Index 2025, followed by **Oslo (2nd)** and **Geneva (3rd)**. Other top ten cities include **Dubai, Abu Dhabi, London, Copenhagen, Canberra, Singapore, and Lausanne**.
- **Index Criteria:** The IMD Smart City Index assesses cities on a balance of **technological-economic factors** (e.g., infrastructure, digital integration) and **"humane dimensions"** such as **quality of life, environment, and inclusiveness**.
- **India's Standing:**
  - **Delhi** is the highest-ranked Indian city at **104**.
  - **Hyderabad** follows at **109**, despite its reputation as an IT hub.
  - **Bengaluru** is positioned at **110**. These rankings reflect substantial gaps in urban governance, infrastructure development, and sustainable mobility compared to global peers.

### Famine Crisis in Gaza

**In the News:** The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)—a leading global authority on hunger crises—officially declared **famine in Gaza Governorate**, marking the first famine confirmation in the Middle East. The designation reflects catastrophic food insecurity and a mounting humanitarian disaster in the conflict-ravaged region.

#### Key Points:

- **First Famine Declaration :** The IPC confirmed famine (IPC Phase 5) in Gaza Governorate, including Gaza City. This rare classification highlights extreme food shortages, acute malnutrition, and starvation-related deaths.
- **Scale of Human Suffering :** Over **500,000 Palestinians** are currently experiencing catastrophic conditions, with projections indicating that number could rise to **over 640,000** by late September. Meanwhile, around **1.07 million** more individuals remain at emergency-level food insecurity (IPC Phase 4).
- **Widespread Food Insecurity :** As of mid-August, **100% of Gaza's population** faces acute food insecurity: approximately **20% are in famine (Phase 5)**, **58% in emergency (Phase 4)**, and **20% in crisis (Phase 3)**.
- **Rising Malnutrition and Deaths :** UNICEF reports alarming rates of child malnutrition and malnutrition-related deaths. Doctors describe harrowing signs of hunger, such as protruding ribs among patients entering treatment centers. At least **281 deaths** from hunger have been recorded, including many children, with new fatalities continuing to emerge.
- **Declared as "Man-Made" :** UN Secretary-General António Guterres labeled the famine a "man-made disaster" and a "failure of humanity." The IPC's declaration has heightened global scrutiny over the Israeli blockade, restrictions on aid, and the destruction of food infrastructure that have precipitated this crisis.
- **Political and Humanitarian Fallout :** UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell decried debates over the famine as "obscene," emphasizing the urgency of action over data disputes. Meanwhile, EU leaders, including Ireland's Tánaiste Simon Harris, are calling for concrete measures—including lifting blockades and imposing sanctions—to alleviate the crisis.

### UN High Commissioner for Refugees

**In the News:** The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** announced the **temporary suspension of voluntary repatriation for Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India**. This decision was prompted by the **arrests of returnees in Sri Lanka** on allegations of immigration law violations.

**Key Points:**

- **What Was Suspended?**

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency established in 1950 and operating globally, **temporarily halted its voluntary repatriation program** for Sri Lankan Tamil refugees residing in India.

- **Why the Suspension?**

The policy shift followed credible reports that certain refugees who returned to Sri Lanka were **arrested by authorities** due to alleged **immigration law violations**.

- **UNHCR's Mandate:** Under the **1951 Refugee Convention** and its **1967 Protocol**, UNHCR facilitates durable solutions for refugees, including voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement. Any repatriation process is intended to be **voluntary, informed, and safe**.

- **Historical Context:** Although a **Tamil refugee family** returning from India had been **arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy** as early as **June 2025**, these incidents have now escalated concerns, prompting UNHCR to take a cautious stance.

- **Implications for Refugees:** This suspension affects Tamil refugees in India who had been eager to return but have now been compelled to remain, pending clarity on reception conditions in Sri Lanka.

### India, WFP Join Hands to Combat Global Hunger

**In the News:** On August 25, 2025, the Government of India, through the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD), and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to strengthen collaboration in addressing the global hunger crisis. Under this agreement, India will provide fortified rice for humanitarian distribution in vulnerable, crisis-affected regions across the world. The initiative reflects India's commitment to the principle of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" (the world is one family).

**Key Points:**

- **Commitment Details:** India has committed to supplying fortified rice to WFP, targeting the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations during emergencies. The decision builds upon discussions held during the February 2025 WFP Executive Board meeting in Rome.
- **Strategic Significance:** The collaboration highlights India's role as an agricultural surplus provider and its growing global humanitarian outreach. It aligns with India's philosophy of shared responsibility and leadership in food aid.
- **Expanded Collaboration:** Beyond supplying fortified rice, the LoI also opens avenues for cooperation in supply chain optimisation, smart warehousing, grain ATMs, mobile storage units (Flospans), and "Jan Poshan Kendra" initiatives.
- **WFP's Role in India:** The WFP has worked with India to strengthen the Public Distribution System (PDS), improving efficiency, accountability, and transparency. The system currently serves over 800 million beneficiaries.
- **Financial and Logistical Model:** India has committed USD 100 million in assistance over the first five years, with long-term plans for financial self-reliance of the alliance through membership fees and international contributions.

### Women's Equality Day 2025

**In the News:** On **August 26, 2025**, the United States observed **Women's Equality Day**, marking the **105th anniversary** of the certification of the **19th Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. Governors across several states—including Michigan—issued proclamations honoring the day and reaffirming their commitment to advancing women's rights.

- **Key**

**Points:**

- **Historical Significance:** Women's Equality Day commemorates the August 26, 1920, certification of the 19th Amendment, a pivotal milestone ensuring that voting rights could not be denied on account of sex. The date was first designated as a day of celebration in 1971 and officially recognized by Congress in 1973.
- **Presidential Recognition:** Each year since 1973, the U.S. President has issued a formal proclamation honoring Women's Equality Day. In 2025, the White House reaffirmed the nation's principles of liberty, equal justice under the law, and continuing recognition for the women who made suffrage possible.
- **Modern Reflection:** Beyond celebrating past achievements, Women's Equality Day 2025 was framed as a moment to address ongoing gender inequities, including reproductive rights, economic disparities, and legal protections for women and girls. Advocates tied the commemoration to accountability mechanisms like the U.N.'s Universal Periodic Review.
- **State-Level Celebrations:** States such as Michigan issued official proclamations, recognizing suffragist legacies, current challenges, and the importance of women's leadership in public life.

- **Broader Cultural Impact:** The day also overlaps with annual observances such as “Go Topless Day,” held near August 26 in parts of the U.S., to raise awareness about gender equality and body autonomy—challenging societal norms and legal inconsistencies.

### Smart City Index 2025 Rankings

**In the News:** The **IMD Smart City Index 2025**, published by IMD Business School, assessed **146 global cities** based on how well they integrate technology and infrastructure to improve urban living. The rankings reflect residents' perceptions across key areas such as health, safety, mobility, activities, opportunities, and governance. Swiss cities dominated the top positions, while Indian cities remained outside the top 100.

#### Key Points:

- **Global Top Performers:** The cities that secured the top three positions in the Smart City Index 2025 were **Zurich (1st)**, followed by **Oslo (2nd)**, and **Geneva (3rd)**, showcasing Switzerland's continued leadership in smart urban infrastructure and innovative governance.
- **Leading Asian Representative:** Among Asian cities, **Singapore** emerged as the highest-ranked, securing the **9th** position globally—demonstrating its strong performance in urban technology and citizen-centric services.
- **Indian Cities' Performance:** Indian metropolises featured in the global rankings but trailed behind most top-tier cities. **Delhi** ranked **104th**, followed by **Mumbai** at **106th**, **Hyderabad** at **109th**, and **Bengaluru** at **110th**, indicating room for improvement in governance, mobility, and service delivery.
- **Why Indian Cities Lagged:** Despite significant efforts under the Smart Cities Mission, Indian cities remain just beyond the 100 mark globally—a gap attributed to lingering challenges in infrastructure, public services efficiency, governance reforms, and sustainable urban mobility.
- **New Entrants in 2025:** The index this year welcomed several new contributors, including **Al Ula (Saudi Arabia)**, **Astana (Kazakhstan)**, **Caracas (Venezuela)**, **Kuwait City (Kuwait)**, **Manama (Bahrain)**, and **San Juan (Puerto Rico)**, expanding the diversity of the assessed urban landscape.

### UNGA Launches Two Global Initiatives for AI Governance

**In the News:** The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** formally launched two groundbreaking global initiatives—the **United Nations Independent International Scientific Panel on AI** and the **Global Dialogue on AI Governance**. UN Secretary-General António Guterres hailed these moves as a significant step in advancing the **Global Digital Compact**, aimed at harnessing the benefits of artificial intelligence while mitigating its risks.

#### Key Points:

- **Two New Institutional Mechanisms:**
  - **Scientific Panel on AI:** A 40-member body intended to issue rigorous, independent scientific assessments of AI research, trends, and risks. It will deliver annual, policy-relevant (but non-prescriptive) summary reports to be reviewed at the Global Dialogue. Panel members will be selected via an open nomination process and appointed by the UNGA.
  - **Global Dialogue on AI Governance:** A multistakeholder platform within the UN bringing together states, industry, academia, and civil society to discuss pressing AI governance challenges—from ethical considerations to societal impacts.
- **Timeline & Next Steps:**
  - The **Scientific Panel** will release annual reports, with the first being part of the **Global Dialogue sessions scheduled for July 2026 in Geneva**, followed by another in **July 2027 in New York**.
  - An **open call for expert nominations** to the Scientific Panel will be announced by the UN Secretary-General soon.
- **Broader Context:**
  - These initiatives form a key operational pillar of the **Global Digital Compact**, which itself is part of the wider **Pact for the Future**, aiming for responsible digital cooperation at a global scale.

### NDB Appoints Dr Rajiv Ranjan as Vice President

**In the News:** The **Board of Governors of the New Development Bank (NDB)**—a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS nations—appointed **Dr Rajiv Ranjan**, an esteemed central banker from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as **Vice-President and Chief Risk Officer** for a **five-year term**.

#### Key Points:



- **Appointment Details & Tenure:** Dr Rajiv Ranjan—formerly an Executive Director and Member of the RBI’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)—has been appointed to serve as **Vice-President and Chief Risk Officer** of the NDB for **five years**, starting around September 2025.
- **Extensive Banking & Policy Experience:** Joining the RBI in 1989, Ranjan has over **35 years of experience**, including leadership roles in monetary policy, liquidity management, and economic research. He also served internationally, including as an economic policy expert with the Central Bank of Oman (2012–15).
- **International Engagement & Expertise:** Ranjan brings experience in collaborating with key global financial forums and institutions such as the **G20, IMF, World Bank, BIS, FSB, OECD, SAARC**, and central banks across the Global South.
- **Role in NDB Functions:** Beyond leading **risk management**, Ranjan is expected to shape the NDB’s **strategy, policy frameworks, partnerships, and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** initiatives. He will also represent the bank at global forums on climate change and development finance.

### Google Launches ‘Nano Banana’ AI Photo Editing Tool

**In the News:** Google officially unveiled "Nano Banana", also known as Gemini 2.5 Flash Image, an advanced AI-powered photo editing model integrated into its Gemini app. The announcement was teased via CEO Sundar Pichai’s playful “three bananas” post and quickly captured public attention for its cutting-edge editing capabilities.

#### Key Points:

- **Tool Launch & Accessibility :** “Nano Banana” is the latest AI image editing upgrade in the Gemini app, rolling out globally for both **free and paid** users on mobile and web platforms.
- **Core Capabilities:**
  - **Maintain Visual Consistency:** Keeps faces, pets, and objects recognizable even after dramatic edits in style, background, or context.
  - **Multi-Turn Editing:** Enables iterative, step-by-step modifications like redecorating a room in phases—while preserving coherence across each edit.
  - **Image Blending & Scene Creation:** Users can combine multiple photos into one cohesive scene e.g., placing themselves with their pets in imaginative settings
  - **Style Mixing:** Apply textures or patterns from one image (e.g., butterfly wings or petals) onto another object (like rain boots or dresses).
  - **Prompt-Based Local Edits:** Control fine-grained transformations through simple text commands like “blur background,” “remove stain,” “change pose,” or “colorize black-and-white photos.”
  - **Text-to-Image Generation:** Beyond edits, the model supports image generation from text prompts and benefits from Gemini’s broader world knowledge for more intuitive results.
- **Developer Access & Pricing :** Developers can tap into Gemini 2.5 Flash Image via the Gemini API, Google AI Studio, and Vertex AI. Pricing is set at \$30 per 1 million output tokens, estimating around \$0.039 per image.
- **Watermarking & Safety Measures :** All AI-generated or edited images include both visible watermarks and an invisible SynthID digital watermark for traceability and authenticity. That said, subtle visible watermarks or their visibility may be cropped out, raising concerns about deepfake misuse

### Urjit Patel Appointed IMF Executive Director for 3-Year Term

**In the News:** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet officially appointed Dr. Urjit Patel, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as the Executive Director representing India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for a tenure of three years, succeeding Dr. Krishnamurthy V. Subramanian.

#### Key Points:

- **Appointment Details:** Dr. Urjit Patel has been chosen to represent India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan at the IMF’s Executive Board for a three-year term. He assumes the position following the early termination of Dr. Subramanian’s tenure in April 2025.
- **Professional Profile & Previous Roles:** Served as RBI Governor from September 2016 to December 2018, during which he led the implementation of the inflation-targeting framework and introduced key monetary policy reforms. Earlier, he held roles such as Deputy Governor at RBI and economist at the IMF, marking a return to familiar grounds.

- **Notable Career Trajectory:** His journey spans economic policy, central banking, international institutions, and the private sector including high-profile roles at RBI, IMF (early career), AIIB, and Reliance Industries. His return to the IMF underscores a “full-circle” progression from his early years as an IMF economist to now being one of its Executive Directors.

### 15th India-Japan Annual Summit Joint Statement

**In the News:** Minister Narendra Modi of India visited Japan for the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit. During the summit, he and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba adopted a Joint Statement titled "Partnership for Security and Prosperity of our Next Generation", along with a Joint Vision for the Next Decade, a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, and a Human Resource Exchange Action Plan.

#### Key Points:

- **Historical Context & Summit Overview** The summit reaffirmed the long-standing civilizational ties, shared values, and mutual respect between India and Japan. It marked a new chapter in their Special Strategic and Global Partnership, with a commitment to strengthen cooperation across three priority domains: defense and security, economic partnership, and people-to-people exchanges.
- **Strategic Documents Launched**
  - **Joint Vision for the Next Decade:** Encompasses eight pillars, including economy, economic security, mobility, environment, technology and innovation, health, people-to-people ties, and state-to-prefecture engagement.
  - **Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation:** Upgrades their defense and security collaboration to address contemporary regional geopolitical realities.
  - **Action Plan for Human Resource Exchange:** Aims to facilitate the exchange of 500,000 people over five years, including 50,000 skilled professionals and promising talent from India to Japan.
  - **Economic Security Initiative:** Launches mechanisms to strengthen critical supply chains and economic security cooperation.
- **Economic & Investment Goals:** Japan pledged to mobilize **10 trillion yen (approx. USD 68 billion)** in private-sector investments in India over the coming decade—doubling its previous investment target. The partnership includes major initiatives like Digital Partnership 2.0, AI cooperation, high-speed rail, clean energy (hydrogen and ammonia), Joint Crediting Mechanism for emission reduction, and next-generation mobility covering smart technologies, disaster resilience, and infrastructure.
- **Defense & Security Enhancements:** Strengthened security cooperation, including cybersecurity, counter-terrorism, and defense-industrial collaboration, reflecting a multidimensional and modern security agenda. Expansion of defense collaboration through joint exercises and shared strategic frameworks, aligned with Quad and Indo-Pacific security goals.

### International Day of Enforced Disappearances 2025

**In the News:** On 30 August 2025, the world observes the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances also referred to as International Day of the Disappeared to raise awareness about people abducted or detained in undisclosed locations without acknowledgment by authorities and to highlight their families’ suffering and their pursuit for justice.

#### Key Points:

- **Date & Observation:** This is an annual international observance held on 30 August each year. The next observance falls on 30 August 2025.
- **Purpose:** The day shines light on enforced disappearances—when people are taken by state agents (or with their acquiescence), then withheld from their families and legal systems. It draws attention to the human rights violations these practices entail, including the right to liberty, security, and recognition before the law.
- **Statistics & Worldwide Impact:** Since the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the UN has recorded nearly 61,500 cases across 115 countries; between May 2024 and May 2025, 1,278 new cases were reported in 38 countries.
- **Country Spotlight – Syria:** To mark the day, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) released its 14th annual report:
  - Documents at least 177,057 enforced disappearances in Syria (including 4,536 children and 8,984 women) between March 2011 and August 2025.
  - Attributes approximately 90% of these cases to the regime of Bashar al-Assad, highlighting the systematic nature of this crime.

- **Legal Framework – International Convention:** Adopted in December 2006 and entered into force in December 2010, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) is a UN treaty that:
  - Defines enforced disappearance as a serious violation and possibly a crime against humanity
  - Requires signatories to criminalize the act, investigate it, ensure jurisdiction, facilitate extradition, and provide reparations
  - As of August 2024, 98 states signed and 76 ratified or acceded to the convention.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Nepal Officially Joins India-Led International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

**In the News:** On **August 24, 2025**, Nepal formally joined the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)**—an India-initiated global coalition—by signing its **Framework Agreement**. This development expands global collaboration efforts for big-cat conservation.

#### Key Points:

- **What Is the IBCA?**
  - Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **April 9, 2023** in Mysuru, the **IBCA** is a global alliance focused on conserving seven principal big cat species: **tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar, and puma**.
  - It is hosted under India's National Tiger Conservation Authority with its headquarters in New Delhi.
  - The alliance is structured with a General Assembly, a governing Council of 7–15 nations, and a **Secretary-General** appointed for a defined term.
  - Collaborative goals include sharing conservation strategies, training, coordinated anti-poaching measures, and systematic standard operating procedures. India has committed **USD 100 million** in total grant assistance over the first five years, with plans for financial self-reliance via membership fees and contributions.
- **Why Nepal's Membership Matters:**
  - Nepal, home to key big-cat species including snow leopards, tigers, and leopards significantly enriches the alliance's ecological portfolio.
  - The country's tiger population has impressively risen from 121 in 2009 to 355 in 2022, spotlighting effective conservation models that can benefit other member nations.
  - By joining IBCA, Nepal reinforces global collaboration and data-sharing vital for cross-border conservation, especially in the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.
- **Broader Significance & India's Role:** India through IBCA has been offering diplomatic and operational facilitation: recently granting IBCA and its officials privileges and immunities akin to UN agencies, enabling smoother international cooperation.

## SPORT

### North East United Retain Durand Cup 2025 with 6-1 Win

**In the News:** Defending champions **NorthEast United FC** retained the **134th Durand Cup**, achieving a commanding **6-1 victory** over debutants **Diamond Harbour FC** at the **Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan** in Kolkata. The Highlanders became the **first team in 34 years** to successfully defend the title. It was a landmark performance underscoring their dominance in Indian football.

#### Key Points:

- **Historic Defense:** NorthEast United FC became the **first team since East Bengal in 1991** to defend the Durand Cup, a remarkable three-decade feat.
- **Match Performance:** The final ended in a stunning **6-1 win**, with six different players scoring. Moroccan talisman **Alaaeddine Ajaraie** was instrumental—delivering **three assists** and converting a **late penalty**—securing the **Man of the Match** honors.
- **Tournament Overview:** The Durand Cup, Asia's oldest football tournament, ran from **July 23 to August 23, 2025**, across cities like **Imphal, Kokrajhar, Kolkata, Shillong, and Jamshedpur**. NorthEast United emerged as champions, with **Diamond Harbour FC** as runners-up. **Alaaeddine Ajaraie** finished as the tournament's **top scorer**, contributing 7 goals.

## **Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025 Concludes: Here Are the Winners**

**In the News:** The inaugural **Khelo India Water Sports Festival (KIWSF) 2025** concluded at **Dal Lake, Srinagar** from **August 21–23, 2025**. It was held under the aegis of the **Sports Authority of India** in partnership with the **J&K Sports Council**. As India's first consolidated, open-age national competition in **kayaking, canoeing, and rowing**, the festival not only marked a sporting milestone but also served as a platform for shaping India's Olympic aspirations.

### **Key Points:**

- **Champion State – Madhya Pradesh:** MP emerged as the dominant state with **18 medals** (10 gold, 3 silver, 5 bronze). Particularly notable was its sweeping of all four golds in kayaking and canoeing on the penultimate day, followed by six more in different events on the final day. MP's success was credited to rigorous training at its Water Sports Academy of Excellence.
- **Runner-Up Performers – Odisha & Kerala:** Odisha finished second with a strong showing from athletes trained at the **SAI Jagatpur Centre**, while Kerala placed third with seven medals. Both states benefited from structured, high-quality training infrastructure.
- **Local Milestone – J&K's First Gold:** A **17-year-old shikara rower from Jammu & Kashmir** made history by clinching the region's first-ever gold medal in KIWSF, a landmark moment reflecting the rise of local talent.
- **SAI's National Impact:** A total of **47 athletes trained at SAI Centres** across India won **5 gold, 7 silver, and 3 bronze** medals. The performance by Jagatpur's contingent—spearheading their state's success—was particularly highlighted.
- **Olympic & Policy Significance:** KIWSF 2025 served as a launchpad aligned with **India's Olympic ambitions** for 2028 and beyond. The event was backed by schemes such as **Khelo Bharat Niti, TOPS, and TAGG**, aimed at providing strategic support and nurturing high-performance athletes.

## **FIDE World Cup 2025 to Be Hosted in Goa**

**In the News:** The **International Chess Federation (FIDE)** officially confirmed that the **2025 FIDE World Cup** will be held in **Goa, India**, from **October 30 to November 27, 2025**. This marks the return of India as host after more than two decades, placing one of chess's most prestigious knockout tournaments on Indian soil once again.

### **Key Points:**

**Tournament Scope & Stakes:** The World Cup will feature **206 top players** in an **eight-round knockout format**. Notably, the top three finishers will earn qualification spots for the **2026 Candidates Tournament**, with a **USD 2 million prize pool** (approximately ₹17.5 crore).

**Elite Participation:** The tournament boasts a stellar lineup, including **reigning World Champion D. Gukesh, Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, and R. Praggnanandhaa**. While Gukesh isn't competing for a Candidates spot—being already the World Champion—he will participate for prize money and rating points.

**National Significance:** Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** called this a “proud moment for Indian chess,” emphasizing the growing popularity of the game among youth and India's emergence as a global chess powerhouse. He highlighted the tournament as a celebration of India's rising stature in the game.

**Hosting Context:** Originally, **New Delhi** had been considered as the host city, but **procedural delays** involving approvals from FIDE, AICF, and governmental bodies led to the final decision to host the event in **Goa**, offering a scenic backdrop for the global flagship chess event.

**Format & Broadcasting:** The tournament structure follows an intense knockout format—each match begins with two classical games; tied matches proceed to rapid and blitz tiebreakers. The event format promises high drama with significant implications for the World Championship cycle.

## **Cabinet Greenlights Bid for Hosting Commonwealth Games 2030**

**In the News:** The **Union Cabinet of India**, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, officially approved the submission of a bid to host the **2030 Commonwealth Games** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**. The decision includes authorization to sign the **Host Collaboration Agreement (HCA)** and to provide **grant-in-aid and guarantees** to the Gujarat government if the bid is accepted.

### **Key Points:**

- **Host City Nomination & Infrastructure Strength:** Ahmedabad has been chosen as the proposed host city, praised for its world-class facilities—especially the **Narendra Modi Stadium**, the largest cricket arena globally, which successfully hosted the **2023 ICC Cricket World Cup Final**. Its existing infrastructure and vibrant sports culture reinforce its candidacy.



- **Formal Bid Process Steps Approved:** The Cabinet's approval covers the formal submission of the bid, the signing of the Host Collaboration Agreement, and providing financial backing to Gujarat, ensuring readiness if the Commonwealth Games Federation accepts the bid.
- **Strategic Sports Diplomacy & Olympic Aspirations:** The bid is seen as a strategic move toward eventually hosting the **2036 Olympic Games** in Ahmedabad, using the Commonwealth Games as a stepping-stone. It reflects India's broader ambition to position itself as a global sports powerhouse.
- **Enhanced Bid Proposal & Sustainability Focus:** A recent Commonwealth Sports delegation visit to Ahmedabad helped Indian organizers refine the bid. The proposal emphasizes sustainability, gender balance, cultural diversity, and alignment with the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.
- **Expansion of Sports on Offer:** As part of the proposal, India plans to reintegrate several sports dropped from recent editions—including **field hockey, badminton, table tennis, shooting, wrestling, women's cricket, squash, and archery**—to broaden participation and cultural relevance.
- **Historical Context & Opportunity for Redemption:** India's hosting of the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games was marred by allegations of corruption and mismanagement. The 2030 bid is viewed as a chance to renew its international reputation and deliver a well-managed, impactful event.

### Neeraj Chopra finishes second in Diamond League Finals, Weber wins maiden trophy

**In the News:** At the **Diamond League Final in Zurich**, two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra finished as the **runner-up for the third straight year**. Germany's Julian Weber claimed his **first-ever Diamond League title**, delivering an extraordinary performance with two throws exceeding 90 meters.

#### Key Points:

- **Consistent Podium Finish:** Neeraj Chopra secured **second place for the third consecutive Diamond League Final**, underlining his remarkable consistency at the highest level.
- **Weber's Commanding Victory:** Julian Weber dominated the competition with back-to-back 90m+ throws, including a world-leading effort of **91.51 meters**, claiming his maiden Diamond League crown.
- **Chopra's Best Throw:** Chopra's top mark of the evening was **85.01 meters**, achieved on his final (sixth) attempt—enough to edge past 2012 Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott (84.95m) for second place.
- **Series of Throws & Technical Struggles:** Chopra began with a solid **84.35 m**, but faltered with three consecutive fouls before delivering his best throw in the final round.
- **Head-to-Head Rivalry:** With this win, Weber extended his 2025 head-to-head lead over Chopra to **3-1**, though Chopra maintains a superior **overall advantage of 15-5** in their encounters since 2016.
- **Remarkable Podium Streak:** Chopra's second-place finish continued an extraordinary run—he has **not finished outside the top two since June 2021**, totaling **26 consecutive podium finishes**.
- **Looking Ahead to Tokyo:** Reflecting on his performance, Chopra acknowledged needing improvements ahead of the next major assignment, the **World Championships in Tokyo**, while congratulating Weber on an "excellent" display.

## SCIENCE AND TECH

### Indian Space Research Organisation's Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV)

**In the News:** ISRO is developing its heaviest rocket, the **Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV)**, which is expected to be ready by **2035**. This rocket will be central to India's future deep-space exploration, including the first **crewed lunar mission planned around 2040**. The project reflects India's ambitions to establish itself as a global space power and achieve long-term self-reliance in human spaceflight technology.

#### Key Points:

**Role & Purpose:** The LMLV is designed specifically for **lunar and interplanetary missions**, including transporting astronauts to the Moon and enabling complex deep-space projects.

**Payload Capabilities:** The rocket can carry **~27 tonnes to the Moon** and **~80 tonnes to Low Earth Orbit (200-2,000 km)**, making it the most powerful launch vehicle ever developed by India.

**Timeline:** ISRO has set **2035** as the target for LMLV's readiness, aligning it with India's **2040 goal for a crewed lunar landing**.

**Technical Design:** The rocket will be about the height of a **40-storey building**, with a **three-stage configuration**—two stages powered by liquid propellant and the third using a cryogenic propellant system.

**Strategic Significance:** The LMLV will succeed the current **LVM3 (GSLV Mk-III)**, which launched Chandrayaan-3 and supports Gaganyaan. It will be crucial for missions to the Moon, Mars, and for building a future **Indian space station**.

**Long-Term Vision:** The development of LMLV is part of ISRO's **Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)** roadmap, aiming to enhance payload capacity, ensure technological leadership, and support India's goal of emerging as a major player in human space exploration.

### Indian Navy to Commission Udaygiri and Himgiri

**In the News:** On **August 26, 2025**, Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated two indigenously built **Project 17A stealth frigates**—INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri—at the Eastern Naval Command in **Visakhapatnam**. This marked the **first-ever simultaneous commissioning** of frontline combat ships constructed at two separate Indian shipyards. The vessels were hailed as “floating F-35s,” symbolizing a new era in India's maritime self-reliance and operational capability.

#### Key Points:

- **Project Legacy & Indigenous Content:** These are the **100th and 101st warships** designed by the Navy's in-house Warship Design Bureau, built with **over 75% indigenous content**, involving hundreds of MSMEs and OEMs.
- **Dual Shipyards:** INS Udaygiri was constructed by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (Mumbai)**, while INS Himgiri was built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (Kolkata)**—a pioneering instance of cross-yard coordination.
- **Advanced Capabilities:** Both frigates showcase **stealth design**, reduced radar signatures, enhanced speed and endurance, and are equipped with **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles**, surface-to-air missiles, torpedoes, advanced radar and sensor suites, and aviation facilities.
- **Strategic Impact:** Dubbed “invincible guardians of our seas,” these ships bolster India's **blue-water naval footprint**, enhance deterrence, and significantly enhance maritime operations—ranging from piracy control to disaster relief.
- **Namesake Tradition:** The new ships carry forward the legacy of their predecessors—Udaygiri (1976–2007) and Himgiri (1974–2005)—symbolizing continuity between India's naval heritage and its modern ambitions.

### SpaceX Completes 10th Successful Starship Test Launch

**In the News:** On **August 26, 2025**, SpaceX executed its **10th Starship test flight** from Starbase, Texas—a milestone marked by the first full achievement of all major objectives after a series of prior failures. The flight reached a suborbital altitude of approximately **192 km**, achieved speeds exceeding **26,000 km/h**, deployed eight Starlink simulators, and culminated with controlled splashdowns: the **Super Heavy booster in the Gulf of Mexico** and the **Starship spacecraft in the Indian Ocean**.

#### Key Points:

- **Vehicle and Mission Performance:** The **400-foot-tall Starship-Super Heavy** system performed seamlessly—successful ignition of all 33 Raptor engines, clean stage separation, payload deployment, engine relight test, and controlled splashdowns of both stages. While minor heat shield and aft-flap damage occurred, the flight is considered a remarkable comeback.
- **Milestone Achievements:** This flight marked the **first satellite deployment** from Starship's upper stage (via simulators for Starlink), the **second in-space relight of a Raptor engine**, and the **first full success after several earlier failures**, including a catastrophic explosion during testing in June.
- **Strategic Importance:** The success represents a critical leap toward realizing SpaceX's vision of a **fully reusable launch system** for interplanetary missions, including NASA's upcoming **Artemis III lunar mission (2027)** and eventual **Mars missions**.
- **Public & Environmental Response:** The launch attracted over **1.8 million live viewers**, reflecting high public interest. However, it also sparked **environmental concerns** and **local protests** in Texas, alongside criticism from the Mexican government about debris, emphasizing the complex socio-political landscape surrounding rapid spaceflight development.

## ECONOMY

### India Set to Become Second-Largest Economy in PPP Terms by 2038: EY Report

**In the News:** According to the August 2025 EY Economy Watch report, India is projected to become the world's second-largest economy in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms by 2038, with an estimated GDP of USD 34.2 trillion. This projection is based on IMF's medium-term growth estimates for 2028–2030.

#### Key Points:

- **Projected Growth Trajectory:** India's GDP in PPP terms is expected to grow to **USD 20.7 trillion by 2030**, setting it on track to cross **USD 34 trillion by 2038**—enough to position it just behind China.
- **Growth Drivers:** The country's youthful demographics (median age ~28.8 years), high savings and investment rates, growing domestic demand, and declining government debt-to-GDP ratio (from 81.3% in 2024 to a projected 75.8% by 2030) contribute to a sustainable growth path.
- **Global Economic Comparison:** While China is projected to remain the largest economy by 2030 (~USD 42.2 trillion PPP), India is seen as overtaking the U.S., Germany, and Japan in PPP terms by 2038. These countries face constraints like ageing populations, high debt, or reliance on global trade.
- **Economic Reforms & Resilience:** Structural reforms—including GST, IBC, UPI-led financial inclusion, production-linked incentives—and investments in infrastructure and emerging technologies (AI, semiconductors, renewable energy) are reinforcing India's competitiveness and macroeconomic stability.
- **Policy Outlook:** EY India's Chief Policy Advisor, DK Srivastava, emphasized that India's strengths—its young workforce, solid savings-investment regime, and improving public debt profile—equip it to sustain high growth through global volatility and inch closer to its Viksit Bharat ambitions by 2047.

### India-Africa Trade Crosses USD 100 Billion in 2024-25

**In the News:** Union Minister of State for External Affairs, **Kirti Vardhan Singh**, announced that **India-Africa bilateral trade surpassed USD 100 billion** during the 2024-25 financial year, nearly doubling from USD 56 billion in 2019-20. India has also emerged as one of the top five investors in Africa.

#### Key Points:

- **Trade Surge Over Five Years:** Bilateral trade grew from USD 56 billion in 2019-20 to over USD 100 billion in 2024-25, reflecting a robust expansion of economic ties.
- **Investment Footprint:** Since 1996, India's cumulative investments in Africa have exceeded **USD 75 billion**, positioning India among the **top five largest investors** on the continent.
- **Development Assistance:** India has extended over **USD 12 billion in concessional loans** and **USD 700 million in grants** to support infrastructure and capacity-building projects across African nations.
- **Educational Outreach:** The Government of India offered **50,000 scholarships to African youth**, of which over **42,000 have been utilised**, facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity development.
- **Strategic Alignment and Shared Vision:** Amplifying the economic ties, India endorsed a shift from project-driven cooperation to "**Co-creating a Shared Future**." It invited African partners to join initiatives like the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** and **International Solar Alliance**, signaling deeper collaboration in sustainable development.

### India's Economy Grows Robust 7.8% in Q1 FY26

**In the News:** The **National Statistics Office (NSO)** released data showing that India's **real GDP growth** jumped to **7.8%** in the April-June quarter of **FY 2025-26 (Q1 FY26)**—marking a five-quarter high and exceeding both the Reserve Bank of India's forecast of 6.5% and economists' expectations of around 6.7%–7.0%.

#### Key Points:

- **Surprise Upside:** The 7.8% growth rate represents the strongest quarterly expansion in five quarters, underscoring sustained economic momentum.
- **Main Growth Drivers:** Expansion was fueled by robust performance in key sectors—**services, manufacturing, construction, agriculture**, and substantial **government capital expenditure**.
- **Services Sector Leads:** The services/GVA sector recorded particularly strong growth (~9.3%), reinforcing its role as the principal engine of GDP expansion.
- **Demand-Side Strength:** Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) rose by approximately 7%, matching or exceeding public investment growth—reflecting buoyant domestic consumption.
- **Low Inflation—A Double-Edged Sword:** Deflators were unusually low, leading to technical inflation in real GDP estimation—though boosting headline growth, it raises questions about sustainability.
- **Future Uncertainties:** Economists caution that incoming **50% U.S. tariffs** could dampen exports, slow private investment, and ultimately temper growth in upcoming quarters.