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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

1. Sonali Sen Gupta Appointed RBI Executive Director

In the News: On October 13, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the appointment of Sonali Sen Gupta as a new Executive Director (ED), effective from October 9, 2025. She previously served as the Regional Director for Karnataka at the Bengaluru Regional Office. Her appointment was announced alongside Sanjay Kumar Hansda, as part of RBI's ongoing leadership restructuring.

Key Points:

- **Departments Under Her Charge:** Sonali Sen Gupta will oversee the Consumer Education and Protection Department (CEPD), Financial Inclusion and Development Department (FIDD), and the Inspection Department. These departments play a key role in ensuring consumer protection, expanding financial inclusion, and supervising banking operations.
- **Professional Background:** She has over three decades of experience in the Reserve Bank of India, having served in diverse areas such as Banking Regulation, Human Resource Management, Supervision, and Financial Inclusion. She has represented the RBI in several national and international committees related to financial inclusion and consumer protection.
- **Educational Qualifications:** She holds an MBA in Banking and Finance and is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Banking & Finance (IIBF). Her academic and professional qualifications have strengthened her expertise in policy formulation and financial sector governance.
- **Major Roles and Representation:** She served as a Director on the Board of the National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE) and as the RBI's Nominee Director on the Board of Indian Overseas Bank. She has represented India in G20's Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) and the OECD's International Network on Financial Education (INFE), contributing to global discussions on inclusive finance.
- **Strategic Importance:** The appointment highlights RBI's focus on inclusive growth, financial literacy, and consumer protection. With her strong background in regulation and inclusion, Sonali Sen Gupta's leadership is expected to enhance transparency, strengthen financial education initiatives, and improve inspection standards across the banking system.
- **Significance:** This appointment also reflects RBI's commitment to gender diversity in leadership and the promotion of internal talent from regional offices to senior executive positions. Her experience at the state level brings valuable on-ground insights to national policy implementation within the central bank.

2. Drug Safety Under Scrutiny After 14 Children Die from Toxic Diethylene Glycol Cough Syrup

In the News: In October 2025, at least 14 children in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh died after consuming a locally marketed cough syrup that was later found to contain toxic levels of diethylene glycol (DEG). The deaths have triggered nationwide concern over India's drug safety standards and the effectiveness of pharmaceutical regulation and quality control mechanisms.

Key Points:

- **Contaminated Product Identified:** The contaminated cough syrup, marketed under the brand name "Coldrif", was manufactured by Sresan Pharmaceuticals, a company based in Tamil Nadu. Subsequent laboratory analysis confirmed that the syrup contained diethylene glycol in concentrations far exceeding the permissible limit.
- **Extent of Contamination:** Two other cough syrups, Respifresh TR (manufactured by Rednex Pharmaceuticals, Gujarat) and ReLife (produced by Shape Pharma, Gujarat), were also found to be contaminated. However, the fatalities were primarily linked to Coldrif.
- **Mechanism of Toxicity:** Diethylene glycol is a highly toxic solvent used in industrial applications. When ingested, it is metabolized into compounds that cause acute kidney failure, liver damage, neurological impairment, and ultimately death. Early symptoms include vomiting, abdominal pain, and reduced urine output.
- **How Contamination Occurs:** Contamination typically results from the substitution of pharmaceutical-grade glycerin with cheaper industrial-grade solvents containing DEG. Poor quality control, lack of mandatory testing, and negligence in raw material sourcing are major causes behind such toxic contamination.
- **Regulatory and Legal Actions:** Following the incident, the manufacturing license of Sresan Pharmaceuticals was revoked, and its production facility was sealed. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted raids at multiple locations in Chennai



linked to the company. The firm's owner, G. Ranganathan, has been arrested and faces charges including culpable homicide and drug adulteration.

- **Government and Regulatory Response:** The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and state drug authorities have initiated a nationwide inspection drive to test all liquid formulations for traces of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol. Over 30 pharmaceutical companies in Madhya Pradesh and other states have come under investigation for potential violations.
- **Regulatory Gaps and Challenges:** The tragedy has exposed major weaknesses in India's domestic drug quality surveillance. While medicines meant for export undergo multiple levels of testing, drugs sold domestically often face less rigorous oversight. Lack of batch-wise pre-market testing, traceability of raw materials, and inadequate post-market surveillance remain key gaps.
- **International Context:** Similar cases of DEG poisoning have been reported in other countries, including **The Gambia (2022) and Uzbekistan (2022)**, where toxic Indian-manufactured syrups were linked to child deaths. These incidents have raised global concerns over India's pharmaceutical export standards.

Filmfare Awards 2025

In the News: The 70th Hyundai Filmfare Awards 2025, one of India's most prestigious cinematic award ceremonies, were held on October 11, 2025, at the EKA Arena in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. This marked the first time the Filmfare Awards were hosted in Gujarat, in collaboration with the Gujarat Tourism Department. The event celebrated excellence in Hindi cinema for the year 2024.

Key Points:

- **Hosts and Presentation:** The awards ceremony was hosted by Shah Rukh Khan, Karan Johar, and Maniesh Paul. Shah Rukh Khan's return as a Filmfare host after 17 years was one of the evening's major highlights, adding grandeur and nostalgia to the event.
- **Major Award Winners:**
 - Best Film: Laapataa Ladies
 - Best Director: Kiran Rao for Laapataa Ladies
 - Best Actor (Male): Abhishek Bachchan (I Want to Talk) and Kartik Aaryan (Chandu Champion) — shared award
 - Best Actress (Female): Alia Bhatt for Jigra
 - Critics' Choice Best Film: I Want to Talk
 - Best Debut (Female): Nitanshi Goel for Laapataa Ladies
 - Best Supporting Actor: Pankaj Tripathi for Main Atal Hoon
- **Dominating Film:** Laapataa Ladies emerged as the biggest winner of the night with 13 awards out of its 24 nominations. The film's success reaffirmed the growing audience appreciation for content-driven cinema rooted in realism and social themes.
- **Other Notable Winners:** The action film Kill won six awards in technical and performance categories. Chandu Champion and I Want to Talk also received significant recognition for performances and direction.
- **Technical Excellence Awards:** The awards for cinematography, editing, and background score highlighted the shift in Bollywood towards storytelling through strong technical craft. Laapataa Ladies received awards for Best Screenplay, Best Editing, and Best Dialogues.
- **Significance of Venue:** Hosting the ceremony in Ahmedabad marked a significant move away from Mumbai, emphasizing the decentralization of Bollywood events and promoting Gujarat as a growing hub for film tourism and cultural events.

Forest Rangers Honored with 2025 International Ranger Awards

In the News: The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) announced the winners of the 2025 International Ranger Awards, recognizing 15 rangers and ranger teams from nine countries for their outstanding service in wildlife protection, biodiversity conservation, and community engagement under challenging conditions.

Key Points:

- **Award Organizers:** The International Ranger Awards 2025 were co-hosted by the **IUCN, WCPA, and the International Ranger Federation**, in collaboration with **Re:wild and UNEP**.

- **Objective:** The awards celebrate the courage and commitment of rangers who protect natural heritage, often risking their lives to safeguard endangered species and prevent illegal wildlife trade.
- **Global Recognition:** A total of **15 awardees from nine countries** — including India, Kenya, Indonesia, and Brazil — were honored for their exceptional contributions to conservation
- **Indian Representation:** Forest rangers from India were among the winners, recognized for innovative conservation strategies and community-led forest protection initiatives in tiger reserves and biodiversity hotspots.
- **Significance:** The awards highlight the frontline role of rangers in combating poaching, illegal logging, and habitat destruction, while also promoting sustainable coexistence between people and nature.
- **Background:** Established in **2020**, the International Ranger Awards serve as a global platform to recognize and support ranger networks, improve their safety, and raise awareness about their essential role in conservation.

India's First Semiconductor Innovation Museum Opens

In the News: India inaugurated its first Semiconductor Innovation Museum, a landmark institution dedicated to showcasing the nation's growing capabilities in chip design, fabrication, and semiconductor research. Located in Bengaluru, Karnataka, the museum was established to inspire innovation and strengthen public understanding of India's semiconductor journey—from early electronics to cutting-edge nanotechnology and artificial intelligence-driven chip development.

Key Points:

- **Museum Launch:** The Semiconductor Innovation Museum was inaugurated in Bengaluru in October 2025, marking India's entry into the global league of countries with dedicated semiconductor research and innovation museums. It aims to serve as a hub for education, innovation, and awareness about India's evolving semiconductor ecosystem.
- **Objective and Vision:** The museum highlights India's commitment to becoming a global semiconductor manufacturing and design hub under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM). It traces the history of the nation's electronics and chip innovation journey, documenting key milestones, technological collaborations, and indigenous achievements.
- **Features and Exhibits:** The museum features interactive models, semiconductor fabrication process simulations, and exhibits showcasing India's progress in microchip production, AI-integrated circuits, and photolithography technology. It also includes dedicated galleries for pioneers of the Indian semiconductor industry and global innovators.
- **Educational and Research Role:** Designed as both an educational and innovation center, the museum provides students, researchers, and industry professionals with access to curated learning modules, workshops, and demonstrations on chip design, nanoelectronics, and integrated circuit development.
- **Collaboration and Governance:** The museum was developed through collaboration between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the Semiconductor Industry Association of India, and leading academic institutions such as the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

Shah Rukh Khan Becomes 1st Actor To be in Billionaire Club

In the News: Shah Rukh Khan has become the **first Bollywood actor** to enter the billionaire club, as per the **Hurun India Rich List 2025**.

Key Points:

- **Entry into Billionaire Club:** In 2025, the Hurun India Rich List placed Shah Rukh Khan's net worth at **₹12,490 crore**, making him the first actor from Bollywood to cross the "billionaire" threshold.
- **Wealth Sources & Business Ventures:** His wealth is not only from acting, but is bolstered by multiple revenue streams — his film production company **Red Chillies Entertainment**, co-ownership in the **Kolkata Knight Riders** IPL franchise, brand endorsements, real estate holdings, and strategic investments.
- **Historic Rank & Milestone:** This achievement marks a historic shift in the Indian entertainment industry, elevating a Bollywood superstar to a club typically associated with industrialists and global.
- **Comparison with Other Celebrities:** Media reports also highlight that with a valuation around **US \$1.4 billion**, Shah Rukh Khan overtook global entertainers such as Taylor Swift in terms of net worth rankings among celebrities.

Google to Invest \$15 Billion in AI Data Centre in Andhra Pradesh

In the News: Google has announced a **USD 15 billion investment** over five years to establish its first AI hub in India, locating a gigawatt-scale AI data centre campus in **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**.

Key Points:

- **Scale & Scope of Investment:** The commitment of USD 15 billion (2026–2030) makes this Google's **largest investment in India to date**, and will support deployment of **gigawatt-scale compute infrastructure**, high-capacity data centre operations, fiber backbone and energy infrastructure.
- **Strategic Location & Connectivity:** The AI hub will be built in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, and will also include a new **international subsea cable gateway** to improve connectivity and redundancy along India's eastern coast.
- **Partnerships & Local Players:** Google will work with partners such as **AdaniConnex** and **Airtel** to build and operate portions of the infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Economic & Employment Impact:** The data centre is projected to generate about **₹10,000 crore** in revenue for the state, create **5,000–6,000 direct jobs**, and **20,000–30,000 total jobs** including indirect roles.

India Unveils \$77 Billion Hydro Plan Amid China's Dam Push

In the News: India has rolled out a **₹6.4 trillion (≈ USD 77 billion)** hydro-power and transmission master plan targeting the Brahmaputra basin, in a strategic counter to China's upstream dam construction on the Yarlung Zangbo (upper Brahmaputra).

Key Points:

- **Ambitious Capacity Target:** The Central Electricity Authority's plan seeks to harness over **76 GW** of hydropower potential by 2047, comprising 64.9 GW of conventional hydro and 11.1 GW of pumped storage projects.
- **Scope & Geography:** The scheme covers **208 large hydropower and pumped storage projects** spread across **12 sub-basins** in northeastern India. Arunachal Pradesh alone accounts for ~52.2 GW of untapped potential.
- **Phased Investment:** The plan is divided into two phases. Phase I (up to 2035) will require ~₹1.91 trillion; Phase II (to 2047) ~₹4.52 trillion.
- **Implementing Agencies:** Major public sector electricity firms such as NHPC, NEEPCO, and SJVN will champion execution. Some projects are already underway or in advanced planning.
- **Strategic & Geopolitical Motive:** The initiative serves both energy security and diplomatic aims, especially given concerns that China's upstream dams could reduce dry-season downstream flows by as much as 85%.
- **Role in India's Energy Transition:** Hydropower from this plan is expected to support India's target of 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030 and aid grid stability by complementing intermittent renewables.

Kaziranga Director Sonali Ghosh Wins Global Sustainability Award

In the News: Dr. Sonali Ghosh, Field Director of **Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve** in Assam, has become the **first Indian** to receive the **Kenton R. Miller Award**, a prestigious global honour given by the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) for innovation in protected area management at the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi.

Key Points:

- **Award & Significance:** The Kenton R. Miller Award recognises outstanding contributions to innovation in national parks and protected area sustainability. Dr. Ghosh's win marks a milestone for India in global conservation circles.
- **Motivation for Award:** She was recognised for her **community-based conservation model** that integrates traditional ecological knowledge with modern science, and for her inclusive strategies engaging local communities in wildlife protection.
- **Challenges Addressed:** Under her leadership, Kaziranga has confronted threats like floods, poaching, wildlife-human conflict, and habitat degradation, while reinforcing resilience and adaptive strategies.
- **Trailblazer & Representation:** Beyond being the first Indian to win this award, Dr. Ghosh also broke through gender barriers as a woman leader in the male-dominated domain of forest management and conservation.

Iron Age Site Discovered in Tamil Nadu Excavation

In the News: Archaeologists in Tamil Nadu have uncovered a new **Iron Age site** that offers fresh insight into early metallurgy and burial practices in South India.

Key Points:

- **Excavation Findings:** During the first season, the team opened 37 trenches and unearthed a stone slab chamber built of 35 slabs, containing **urn burials** filled with cobblestones to a depth of 1.5 metres.
- **Artefacts & Materials:** A total of **78 antiquities** made of bone, gold, bronze, and iron were recovered. These include tweezers, swords, spearheads, axes, daggers, chisels, arrowheads, and three delicate gold rings.

- **Pottery & Symbolism:** The site yielded ceramics such as white-painted black-and-red ware, red ware, red-slipped ware, black-polished ware and coarse red ware. One red-slipped pot bore motifs depicting a human, a mountain, a deer, and a tortoise — providing clues to the belief systems and environment.
- **Dating & Cultural Context:** Although precise dating is pending laboratory results, comparisons with nearby Iron Age sites like Sivagalai and Adichanallur suggest this site may belong to the early–mid third millennium BCE.

National Household Income Survey (NHIS) 2026

In the News: India is set to launch its first-ever nationwide **National Household Income Survey (NHIS 2026)** in February 2026, an ambitious step toward gathering detailed data on income distribution, expenditure, and sources of household earnings across both rural and urban India.

Key Points:

- **First Pan-India Income Survey:** NHIS 2026 will fill a critical gap in India’s statistical framework by providing direct estimates of household income rather than relying only on consumption or National Accounts-derived numbers.
- **Scope & Coverage:** The survey is designed to collect data on salaries, self-employment income, casual labour, pensions, remittances, income from assets, plus household expenditure on food and non-food items.
- **Pre-testing Exercise:** In August 2025, MoSPI conducted pre-tests of draft questionnaires across 15 regional offices covering diverse urban and rural settings in six zones to test clarity, flow, and respondent acceptability.
- **Technical Oversight & Public Consultation:** A Technical Expert Group (TEG), chaired by Surjit S. Bhalla, is overseeing the survey. Public and expert feedback is being solicited on the draft questionnaire until October 30, 2025.
- **Challenges of Disclosure:** Preliminary tests showed reluctance from respondents to disclose income details; in some areas, up to 95 % were unwilling to share income from various sources or tax information.

Engagement without recognition: Decoding New Delhi’s approach to Taliban government in Kabul

In the News: India is increasingly following a policy of “**engagement without recognition**” toward the Taliban administration in Kabul. Even as India reopens its embassy in Kabul and hosts Taliban leadership visits, it has stopped short of formally recognising the Taliban government.

Key Points:

- **Distinction Between Recognition and Engagement:** India draws a line between formal **de jure** recognition of a government and practical diplomatic engagement. Recognising the Taliban would signal acceptance of how they came to power, which India wishes to avoid, but engaging with them on technical, humanitarian, and strategic fronts is permissible under international law.
- **Reinstatement of Diplomatic Presence:** After operating only a downgraded technical mission since 2022, India has decided to upgrade its presence and **reopen its embassy in Kabul**—a move that signals deeper interaction without crossing into formal recognition.
- **Recent High-Level Visit:** Taliban Foreign Minister **Amir Khan Muttaqi** visited New Delhi in October 2025, meeting External Affairs Minister Jaishankar. India addressed him as Afghanistan’s foreign minister in official statements, and the visit led to renewed discussions on trade, development cooperation, and humanitarian support.
- **Calculated Pragmatism Over Ideological Stance:** India’s approach is informed by strategic realities—concerns over Pakistan’s influence, China’s growing presence in Afghanistan, and the need to maintain leverage in a volatile region—rather than ideological alignment with the Taliban.
- **Risks & Constraints:** India’s cautious engagement strategy must manage several risks: backlash over human rights issues (especially women’s rights under Taliban rule), alienation of Afghanistan’s previous democratic allies, and accusations of implicit legitimization of the Taliban.

India’s Female Workforce Participation Rises to 42% in 2023–24

In the News: India’s female workforce participation rate has reached 42% in 2023–24, marking a sharp increase from 23.3% in 2017–18, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). The growth reflects a significant shift in rural employment dynamics, with more women entering the labour market, particularly in agriculture and informal sectors.

Key Points:

- **Rising Participation:** The female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) in India surged to 42% in 2023–24, nearly doubling in six years. This rise highlights the growing contribution of women to the Indian economy.

- **Rural Workforce Dominance:** The bulk of the increase is driven by rural women, many of whom have joined the agricultural and informal sectors due to household economic pressures and expanded self-employment opportunities.
- **Shift in Employment Patterns:** A significant share of female workers is engaged in low-paying, informal, or unpaid family work, pointing to persistent challenges in accessing quality, secure jobs.
- **Urban Trends:** While urban women's participation has also grown modestly, it remains lower than rural rates, constrained by safety concerns, household responsibilities, and limited flexible work options.
- **Policy Implications:** The rise underscores the need for stronger measures to create formal, better-paying jobs for women through skilling programmes, childcare support, and gender-sensitive workplace policies.
- **Statistical Source:** The findings are based on CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) data, supplemented by the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), reflecting consistent upward momentum in female participation since 2018.

Govt Extends 16th Finance Commission Tenure Till Nov 30

In the News: The Government of India has extended the tenure of the Sixteenth Finance Commission (XVI FC) till **November 30, 2025**, granting it additional time to finalize its report. The Commission, chaired by **Dr. Arvind Panagariya**, was initially required to submit its recommendations by October 31, 2025.

Key Points:

- **Extension of Tenure:** The Union Cabinet approved the extension of the Sixteenth Finance Commission's term till November 30, 2025, providing an extra month for comprehensive analysis and consultations before final submission.
 - **Mandate of the Commission:** Constituted under Article 280 of the Constitution, the 16th Finance Commission is tasked with recommending the **distribution of tax revenues between the Centre and the States**, and among the States themselves, for the **period 2026–31**.
 - **Chairmanship and Composition:** The Commission is chaired by **Dr. Arvind Panagariya**, former Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, and includes experts in public finance, economics, and fiscal policy to ensure a balanced approach to fiscal federalism.
- Scope of Recommendations:** The Commission will assess vertical and horizontal devolution, grants-in-aid, fiscal consolidation of both the Centre and States, and examine mechanisms for enhancing resource efficiency and fiscal responsibility.

Govt, Zomato Partner to Offer 2.5 Lakh Jobs Yearly

In the News: The Government of India announced a partnership with **Zomato** to generate **2.5 lakh employment opportunities annually** under the **Skill India Digital initiative**. The collaboration seeks to provide structured livelihood opportunities to India's youth, particularly from Tier-II and Tier-III cities, by integrating digital skilling and entrepreneurship support within the fast-growing gig economy.

Key Points:

- **Launch and Objective:** The partnership was initiated by the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** in association with **Zomato** to boost employment generation and formalize the gig economy ecosystem. It aims to offer structured training and placement pathways to young people seeking opportunities in logistics, food delivery, and associated service sectors.
- **Scale and Scope:** The program targets the creation of **2.5 lakh direct and indirect jobs each year**, contributing significantly to India's workforce participation rate. It will extend beyond delivery services to include roles in supply-chain management, customer engagement, and operations, strengthening the backbone of India's digital services industry.
- **Skill Training and Certification:** Through the **Skill India Digital Platform**, candidates will receive comprehensive skill training in areas such as digital literacy, logistics handling, safety and hygiene standards, and financial management. Certification under recognized skill councils will ensure employability and upward mobility for participants.
- **Entrepreneurship and Financial Inclusion:** The initiative emphasizes nurturing micro-entrepreneurs by facilitating access to digital finance, insurance schemes, and government-backed microcredit facilities. Delivery partners will be encouraged to become independent service providers and small-scale entrepreneurs within the gig ecosystem.
- **Collaborative Framework:** Zomato will collaborate with the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and regional training partners to design industry-relevant curricula and ensure that training modules align with market demand. Continuous performance assessment and digital tracking mechanisms will maintain transparency and accountability.

- **Vision and Impact:** The initiative complements India's broader goal of building a **future-ready digital workforce** under the '**Viksit Bharat 2047**' vision. It reflects the government's commitment to bridging the gap between skill development and job creation while supporting sustainable livelihoods in the expanding gig economy.

Hindustan Shipyard Granted Mini Ratna Status

In the News: The Government of India conferred **Mini Ratna Category-I status** on **Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)**, recognizing its consistent financial performance and strategic role in strengthening India's defence shipbuilding capabilities. The decision marks a major milestone for the state-owned enterprise under the **Ministry of Defence**, empowering it with greater operational and financial autonomy to pursue new growth avenues in both defence and commercial shipbuilding sectors.

Key Points:

- **Institutional Recognition:** Hindustan Shipyard Limited, headquartered in **Visakhapatnam**, was granted Mini Ratna-I status by the Department of Public Enterprises in acknowledgment of its turnaround success and profitability achieved over the past several years. The designation places HSL among India's leading public sector shipyards contributing to the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision in defence manufacturing.
- **Operational Autonomy:** The Mini Ratna-I status allows HSL's Board of Directors to make independent decisions on key financial matters, including capital expenditure of up to ₹500 crore without seeking prior government approval. This enhanced autonomy is expected to accelerate modernization, production capacity expansion, and innovation in ship design and repair.
- **Strategic Importance:** Established in 1941, HSL is India's oldest shipyard and has evolved into a key player in building and refitting submarines, naval vessels, and support ships for the Indian Navy and Coast Guard. Its growing contribution to strategic maritime projects, such as submarine refits under the Indian Navy's modernization programme, played a decisive role in earning this recognition.
- **Alignment with National Goals:** The move aligns with India's **Maritime India Vision 2030** and the broader **Make in India** initiative, promoting indigenous shipbuilding and reducing dependence on foreign imports in defence and maritime infrastructure.

Why rising gold prices make Indian households richer

In the News: India's massive household gold reserves estimated at over 25,000 tonnes have surged in value due to the sharp rise in global gold prices through 2025. This rise has effectively increased the nominal wealth of Indian households, especially in rural areas where gold remains a key store of value and financial security.

Key Points:

- **Household Gold Holdings:** Indian households collectively own more than 25,000 tonnes of gold, making India one of the largest private holders of the metal globally. As gold prices rise, the rupee value of this stockpile increases significantly, boosting overall household balance sheets.
- **Wealth Effect:** Every 10% rise in global gold prices adds nearly ₹10 trillion to India's household wealth. This appreciation strengthens families' perceived financial stability and contributes to higher consumer confidence, particularly in rural regions.
- **Collateral Value and Borrowing:** The rise in gold prices enhances the collateral value of household gold holdings. This enables individuals to secure larger gold loans or better terms from banks and non-banking financial companies, supporting liquidity and small-scale entrepreneurship.
- **Inflation Hedge:** Gold acts as a hedge against inflation and currency depreciation. During periods of economic uncertainty, its rising value protects real household purchasing power and safeguards long-term savings.

Economic Implications: While the increase in gold prices raises nominal wealth, it does not create new productive assets. Economists caution that the perceived wealth gain may not translate into real growth unless leveraged for investment or income-generating activities.

Uttarakhand Hosts AI Impact Summit Ahead of India-AI 2026

In the News: Uttarakhand hosted the **AI Impact Summit 2025** in Dehradun, marking a major milestone in India's preparations for the upcoming **India-AI 2026 Global Summit**. The event brought together policymakers, researchers, industry leaders, and innovators to explore the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in governance, economy, and society. Organized by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in collaboration with the Government of

Uttarakhand, the summit highlighted India's growing leadership in responsible AI development and its vision of inclusive digital transformation.

Key Points:

- **Summit Overview:** The AI Impact Summit 2025 served as a precursor to the **India-AI 2026 Global Summit**, which will position India as a global hub for ethical, trustworthy, and human-centric AI. The Uttarakhand event aimed to align regional innovation ecosystems with national AI missions and international collaboration frameworks.
- **Themes and Focus Areas:** The summit revolved around the theme **"Harnessing AI for Bharat: Innovation, Ethics, and Inclusion."** Sessions focused on critical domains such as climate resilience, healthcare, agriculture, education, disaster management, and sustainable urban development—highlighting AI's capacity to address real-world socio-economic challenges.
- **Participation and Collaboration:** The event witnessed participation from over 1,500 delegates, including representatives from NITI Aayog, IITs, DRDO, ISRO, and major tech companies like Google, Microsoft, and TCS. Global experts from the OECD and UNESCO's AI Ethics Program also contributed, fostering cross-border dialogue on responsible AI frameworks.
- **Showcase of Indian Innovation:** Startups and research institutions from across India presented cutting-edge solutions such as **AI-driven flood early warning systems**, **precision agriculture tools**, and **energy optimization platforms** designed for Himalayan terrains. These innovations underscored the integration of AI with environmental sustainability and local problem-solving.
- **Policy and Ethical Commitments:** The summit reaffirmed India's commitment to the **National Programme on Artificial Intelligence** and the forthcoming **AI (Accountability and Governance) Bill 2026**, focusing on data privacy, algorithmic transparency, and equitable access to AI benefits. Special emphasis was placed on promoting women and youth participation in AI entrepreneurship.

Akkai Padmashali Becomes First Transgender Member of SC-Appointed Committee

In the News: Transgender rights activist **Akkai Padmashali** created history by becoming the **first transgender member of a Supreme Court-appointed committee** in India. The committee was constituted to recommend comprehensive reforms for the effective implementation of the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**, and to ensure inclusion, dignity, and equality for the transgender community across legal, social, and institutional frameworks. This appointment marks a major milestone in India's journey toward inclusive justice and equal representation.

Key Points:

- **Historic Appointment:** The Supreme Court of India, recognizing the need for representation from the transgender community, nominated Akkai Padmashali as a member of the high-level committee overseeing the enforcement of transgender rights. Her inclusion reflects the Court's commitment to diversity and participatory governance in policymaking related to marginalized communities.
- **Committee Mandate:** The committee has been tasked with reviewing existing legal provisions, welfare schemes, and institutional mechanisms for the protection of transgender persons. It will propose policy recommendations to strengthen access to education, healthcare, employment, and housing while ensuring zero discrimination in both public and private spheres.
- **Akkai Padmashali's Background:** A renowned activist from Karnataka, Padmashali has been a leading voice in advocating for the rights of sexual and gender minorities for over two decades. She is the founder of **Ondede**, a Bengaluru-based organization working on gender, sexuality, and human rights awareness. Her activism has been instrumental in pushing for social acceptance, anti-discrimination laws, and inclusive public policy.
- **Symbol of Inclusion:** Her appointment to a Supreme Court committee marks a powerful recognition of transgender leadership within India's judicial and policy ecosystem. It also symbolizes the evolving understanding of constitutional equality and social justice, echoing the spirit of the **2014 NALSA judgment**, which first recognized transgender persons as a "third gender" entitled to full fundamental rights.
- **Judicial and Social Context:** The formation of this committee comes amid growing emphasis on the implementation of the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act**, which mandates equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination. The Supreme Court's proactive approach seeks to bridge the gap between legal recognition and ground-level empowerment for the community.

- **Government and Civil Society Collaboration:** The committee will work in coordination with the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, state governments, and civil society groups to ensure that policies reflect lived realities. This collaborative model aims to promote gender inclusivity in public administration and social welfare planning.

INTERNATIONAL

Nobel Prize in Literature 2025 Awarded to László Krasznahorkai

In the News: On **October 9, 2025**, the **Swedish Academy** announced that the **2025 Nobel Prize in Literature** has been awarded to **László Krasznahorkai**, a Hungarian novelist, “for his compelling and visionary oeuvre that, in the midst of apocalyptic terror, reaffirms the power of art.”

Key Points:

- **Laureate Profile:** László Krasznahorkai was born in **1954** in **Gyula, Hungary**. He is known for writing dense, philosophically rich novels that explore existential themes, dystopia, decay, and the human condition.
- **Reason for Award:** The Swedish Academy cited his “**compelling and visionary oeuvre**” that, even amid **apocalyptic terror**, reaffirms the **power of art**. They described him as “a great epic writer in the Central European tradition ... characterized by absurdism and grotesque excess.”
- **Literary Style & Themes:** Krasznahorkai’s work is often associated with **absurdism, grotesque excess, long, winding sentences, dark existential vision**, and blending **Eastern contemplative tones** into his European literary tradition.
- **Notable Works & Achievements:**
 - *Satantango* (1985) is one of his breakthrough novels, depicting life in decline on a collective farm.
 - *The Melancholy of Resistance* is another celebrated novel, often cited for its haunting imagery and existential depth.
 - *Herscht 07769* is known for its formal daring—over 400 pages with only one period.
 - He has also received the **Man Booker International Prize** (2015) and gained international admiration for his contribution to translated literature.
- **Reaction & Impact:** Krasznahorkai said the Nobel prize came as a surprise. He described it as “**more than a catastrophe**” (a playful echo of Beckett’s remark) and expressed pride in writing in Hungarian.

Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, and Peter Howitt Win the 2025 Nobel Prize in Economics

In the News: The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences to **Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion**, and **Peter Howitt** for their groundbreaking contributions to understanding the dynamics of technological innovation, economic growth, and long-term productivity. Their work has transformed how economists and policymakers interpret the relationship between innovation, institutions, and economic progress, offering new frameworks for sustainable development in the modern global economy.

Key Points:

- **Award Recognition:** The trio was honored for developing influential theories that link technological progress and institutional evolution to sustained economic growth. Their research integrates history, innovation theory, and macroeconomics, bridging the gap between past industrial revolutions and the digital transformation shaping modern economies.
- **Contributions of Joel Mokyr:** Mokyr, a renowned economic historian at Northwestern University, was recognized for his pioneering studies on the historical roots of technological change and how cultural and institutional factors fostered the Industrial Revolution. His research emphasizes that innovation flourishes in societies where knowledge, experimentation, and openness to ideas are encouraged.
- **Contributions of Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt:** Aghion and Howitt, both leading growth theorists, were acknowledged for their seminal Schumpeterian Growth Model, which highlights how creative destruction—where new innovations replace old technologies—drives economic expansion. Their framework has shaped modern policies on innovation, competition, and education by illustrating how dynamic markets stimulate long-run productivity.
- **Global Relevance:** The Nobel Committee noted that their combined work provides deep insights into the balance between innovation-driven growth and social inclusion, helping nations design policies that promote entrepreneurship while addressing inequality and environmental sustainability.

- **Policy Impact:** Their ideas have influenced global economic strategies, particularly in the European Union and OECD countries, by advocating for research investment, fair competition, and adaptable institutions that respond effectively to technological disruption.

Palau Hosts World's First Live Underwater Interview

In the News: The Pacific Island nation of **Palau** made history by hosting the world's first live underwater interview, marking a groundbreaking step in environmental communication and ocean advocacy. Conducted beneath the turquoise waters of Palau's famed coral lagoons, the event aimed to draw global attention to the urgent need for marine conservation and climate action. The live broadcast connected international journalists, marine scientists, and climate leaders in real time, underscoring Palau's leadership in innovative environmental diplomacy.

Key Points:

- **Historic Event:** The underwater interview was broadcast live from Palau's coral reefs, making it the first such event in the world to be conducted entirely beneath the ocean's surface. It symbolized the island nation's deep connection with marine ecosystems and its pioneering use of technology to amplify climate awareness.
- **Theme and Purpose:** The central theme of the event focused on "Voices Beneath the Waves," highlighting the impact of climate change, ocean acidification, and coral bleaching on island nations and global marine biodiversity. The event emphasized the importance of protecting small island ecosystems that face existential threats from rising sea levels and warming oceans.
- **Participants and Organization:** The initiative was organized by the **Government of Palau** in collaboration with **UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, OceanX**, and leading global broadcasters. It featured live interviews with Palau's President, marine biologists, and environmental activists discussing sustainable ocean governance and blue economy strategies.
- **Technological Innovation:** The event utilized cutting-edge underwater communication systems, high-definition submersible cameras, and live satellite transmission technology to ensure seamless broadcasting. It demonstrated how technology can bridge the gap between scientific research and public engagement on climate issues.

Maldives First to End Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Hep B, Syphilis

In the News: The **World Health Organization** has officially validated the **Maldives** as the first country in the world to achieve "triple elimination" of mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of **HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B**.

Key Points:

- **Historic Milestone:** The Maldives had earlier been validated in 2019 for eliminating MTCT of HIV and syphilis. The new validation for hepatitis B brings the country's status to full triple elimination.
- **Integrated Health Strategy:** The country achieved this through nearly universal **antenatal screening** for HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B; free treatment and diagnostics; and strong immunization systems ensuring that over 95% of newborns receive the hepatitis B birth dose and full vaccination coverage.
- **Sustained Zero Transmission:** In 2022 and 2023, there were **no new cases** of MTCT of HIV or syphilis. A 2023 national school survey also showed **zero hepatitis B infection** among young children, exceeding WHO thresholds.
- **Health System & Equity Focus:** The Maldives backs universal health coverage, ensuring that antenatal care, diagnostic services and vaccines are free and accessible to all residents including migrants.

Israel to Award Trump Top Civilian Honor for Gaza Ceasefire

In the News: Israel has announced plans to confer its **highest civilian honour**, the **Israeli Presidential Medal of Honor**, upon **Donald J. Trump** in recognition of his role in brokering a **Gaza ceasefire** and facilitating the release of Israeli hostages.

Key Points:

- **Award Announcement & Purpose:** Israeli President **Isaac Herzog** declared that Trump would be awarded the medal "in recognition of his role in achieving a historic agreement advancing the release of the hostages and an end to the war," along with praise for his "steadfast and unwavering support for the State of Israel."
- **Context of the Ceasefire Deal:** The award follows a recently brokered truce between Israel and Hamas, under which the final living Israeli hostages were released and Israel initiated the release of over 1,700 Palestinian detainees.
- **Timing & Formalities:** Herzog stated that the medal will be presented to Trump in the coming months at a date and place yet to be determined.

- **Historical Precedent:** Israel has previously bestowed this honour on prominent global figures, including former U.S. President Barack Obama in 2013.
- **Symbolic Messaging:** The move is intended to publicly acknowledge Trump's mediation efforts, reinforce Israel's gratitude, and underscore the diplomatic significance of the ceasefire in Israel's domestic and foreign policy discourse.

IUCN Releases 2025 World Heritage Conservation Outlook

In the News: The IUCN has released its **2025 World Heritage Conservation Outlook (Outlook 4)**, a sweeping global assessment of the state of **natural** and **mixed** UNESCO World Heritage sites, offering insight into their current conservation status, emerging threats, and management challenges.

Key Points:

- **Global Coverage & Frequency:** The Outlook evaluates 271 sites worldwide (231 natural + 40 mixed), covering more than 470 million hectares of terrestrial and marine areas. The assessments are updated every 3–5 years to capture evolving trends.
- **Declining Positive Outlooks:** In 2025, only **57 %** of the assessed sites were judged to have a “positive conservation outlook,” down from 62 % in 2020, indicating increasing pressures.
- **Escalating Climate Threats:** Climate change is now identified as the largest current threat, affecting **43 %** of sites at “high” or “very high” levels — particularly through glacier melt, coral bleaching, wildfire, sea level rise, and extreme weather events.
- **Invasive Species & Pathogens Rising:** Invasive alien species impact 30 % of sites, while threats from pathogens (disease) have sharply increased, now posing high or very high risk in 9 % of sites (compared to just 2 % in 2020).
- **Mixed Regional Trends:** Some sites have improved owing to better management, while others (especially in Asia) have deteriorated. In India's case, the **Sundarbans** shifted from “Good with Some Concerns” to “Significant Concerns” due to salinity, contamination, habitat degradation, storm surges and disease stress.
- **Governance & Financial Gaps:** Only about half of the sites are considered well-managed. Approximately 15 % of sites face serious risk due to under-resourcing.
- **Change Over Time:** From 2014 to 2025, around **70 sites** (~30 % of assessed ones) changed their outlook rating at least once, underscoring that conservation status is dynamic and responsive to interventions (positive or negative).

Henley Passport Index 2025: Singapore Tops the World, India Slips to Rank 85

In the News: According to the **Henley Passport Index 2025**, Singapore has retained its position as the world's most powerful passport, granting visa-free access to **195 destinations**. India, however, has **slipped two places to rank 85**, with its passport holders able to travel to **62 countries without a prior visa**. The index is compiled by London-based global citizenship advisory firm Henley & Partners using data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Key Points:

- **Global Leader:** Singapore continues to top the Henley Passport Index 2025, maintaining visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 195 destinations worldwide, underscoring its strong diplomatic and travel freedom credentials.
- **Top Rankings:** Japan, South Korea, and Germany jointly hold the second position, while countries like Spain, Finland, and Italy follow closely, reflecting Europe and East Asia's dominance in global mobility.
- **India's Position:** India's passport ranks 85th globally, down from 83rd in the previous year, offering visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 62 destinations such as Indonesia, Thailand, Kenya, and Sri Lanka.
- **Comparative Rankings:** India now ranks below countries like Kenya and Mongolia, highlighting the relatively limited travel freedom for Indian citizens compared to other emerging economies.
- **Regional Insights:** Among Asian nations, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea continue to lead, while China stands at 64th position, and Bangladesh and Pakistan remain much lower at 98th and 106th respectively.

India–Mongolia Sign MoUs, Announce Free Visas, Mark 70 Years

In the News: India and Mongolia marked the **70th anniversary of their diplomatic relations** by signing a series of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and announcing a **reciprocal visa-free travel arrangement** for holders of diplomatic and official passports. The agreements reflect a renewed commitment to strengthening strategic, cultural, and economic cooperation between the two nations.

Key Points:

- **Commemoration of 70 Years:** The celebration marks seven decades of India–Mongolia diplomatic ties established in 1955, underscoring their shared values rooted in Buddhism, democracy, and mutual respect in foreign relations.
- **MoUs Signed:** Both countries signed multiple MoUs covering **renewable energy development, cyber security collaboration, information technology cooperation, cultural exchange, and Buddhist heritage preservation**, reflecting a broadening of their strategic engagement.
- **Visa-Free Agreement:** A reciprocal **visa-free travel arrangement** was announced for **diplomatic and official passport holders**, aimed at promoting frequent exchanges and easing official visits to enhance governmental and institutional coordination.
- **Cultural and Spiritual Ties:** The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to preserving and promoting **Buddhist heritage**, including cooperation in restoring monasteries, archaeological research, and cultural documentation projects.
- **Strategic Importance:** India reiterated its support for Mongolia as part of its “**Act East Policy**” and **Indo-Pacific vision**, emphasizing Mongolia’s role as a trusted partner and democratic ally in Central Asia.

US and Middle East Leaders Sign Declaration to End Gaza War

In the News: The **United States**, along with key **Middle Eastern nations** — Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan — signed a historic **Declaration to End the Gaza War** on **October 14, 2025**, marking a major diplomatic breakthrough after two years of conflict. The agreement outlines a permanent ceasefire, the expansion of humanitarian aid, and a roadmap for Palestinian governance reform and regional stability.

Key Points:

- **Peace Declaration:** The declaration, signed in Cairo, aims to bring an end to the prolonged Gaza war by ensuring a **comprehensive and permanent ceasefire**, cessation of hostilities, and withdrawal of all military forces from densely populated civilian areas.
- **Participating Nations:** The accord was endorsed by **U.S. President Joe Biden** and leaders from **Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan**, with broad support from the **United Nations** and the **European Union**, signaling global backing for Middle East peace efforts.
- **Humanitarian Commitments:** The declaration includes provisions for large-scale humanitarian assistance, reopening of Gaza’s border crossings, and the creation of an international reconstruction fund to rebuild war-damaged infrastructure under transparent international supervision.
- **Hostage and Prisoner Provisions:** All parties agreed to the immediate release of hostages held by armed groups in Gaza and the phased release of Palestinian prisoners, overseen by neutral international mediators.
- **Political Roadmap:** The agreement calls for the revival of the two-state solution, placing Gaza and the West Bank under a reformed Palestinian Authority, with elections to be held within 18 months under UN oversight to establish a unified Palestinian government.

Who is Ashley Tellis, Indian-origin US strategist charged with keeping secret defence files?

In the News: The **U.S. Justice Department** has charged **Ashley J. Tellis**, a prominent **Indian-origin American foreign policy strategist**, with unlawfully retaining classified defence documents at his Washington residence. Tellis, who played a key role in shaping the **U.S.–India Civil Nuclear Agreement** and broader Indo-Pacific strategic policy, faces charges under the **U.S. Espionage Act**, though authorities have found no evidence of espionage or foreign collaboration.

Key Points:

- **Background and Career:** Ashley Tellis is a renowned scholar of international relations and a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He previously served as a senior adviser at the U.S. State **Department** and as a key architect of Washington’s strategic engagement with India and the Indo-Pacific.
- **Nature of Charges:** Tellis has been charged with the unlawful retention of classified defence files, reportedly concerning U.S. military alliances, defence frameworks, and security partnerships in Asia. The files were discovered during a federal investigation into handling of sensitive materials.
- **Legal Proceedings:** The Justice Department stated that the case involves mishandling of classified information rather than intentional disclosure or espionage. Tellis has cooperated with authorities and denied any intent to misuse or distribute the materials.
- **Official Response:** U.S. officials emphasized that the documents were not shared with any foreign entity, and the investigation remains focused on procedural breaches of federal classification rules.

Global Repercussions: The case has drawn wide attention in diplomatic and academic communities due to Tellis's stature as one of the foremost voices on U.S.-India relations and Indo-Pacific security cooperation. It also renews debate on information security protocols for senior policy advisers handling classified materials

US Announces \$20 Billion Aid to Stabilize Argentina

In the News: The United States government announced a \$20 billion financial assistance package to stabilize Argentina's struggling economy, marking one of Washington's largest bilateral aid commitments in recent years. The initiative seeks to support Argentina in tackling its ongoing debt crisis, curbing inflation, and restoring investor confidence amid economic turbulence and social unrest. The aid package will be implemented in coordination with international financial institutions, including the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank**.

Key Points:

- **Aid Announcement:** The \$20 billion stabilization package was announced by the U.S. Treasury Department following high-level discussions between American and Argentine officials in Washington, D.C. The assistance reflects the Biden administration's commitment to supporting democratic and economic stability in Latin America, especially in countries facing acute fiscal distress.
- **Economic Context:** Argentina has been battling severe economic challenges, including triple-digit inflation, a depreciating peso, and a mounting external debt exceeding \$40 billion with the IMF. The aid aims to ease short-term liquidity pressures, stabilize the currency, and create fiscal space for structural reforms in agriculture, manufacturing, and energy sectors.
- **Implementation Framework:** The aid package will include direct budgetary support, concessional loans, and technical assistance for monetary policy reforms. A portion of the funds will be directed toward social protection measures to shield vulnerable communities from the impact of inflation and subsidy cuts.
- **U.S. Strategic Objective:** The initiative underscores Washington's renewed focus on Latin America's macroeconomic resilience amid growing Chinese influence in the region. By supporting Argentina's recovery, the United States aims to reinforce regional financial stability and counterbalance Beijing's Belt and Road lending footprint in South America.
- **International Collaboration:** The program will be implemented in collaboration with multilateral agencies such as the IMF, World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). These institutions will work jointly with Argentina's central bank to monitor progress and ensure transparency in the disbursement and utilization of funds.

World Food Day 2025: Theme, History, and Significance

In the News: The world observed **World Food Day**, an annual event commemorating the founding of the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations in 1945. The day serves as a global reminder of the urgent need to eradicate hunger, ensure food security, and promote sustainable agricultural systems. The **theme for World Food Day 2025** is "**Water is Life, Water is Food — Leave No One Behind**," highlighting the indispensable role of water in food production, nutrition, and ecosystem health.

Key Points:

- **Theme and Focus:** The 2025 theme, "Water is Life, Water is Food — Leave No One Behind," emphasizes that water is the foundation of life and food security. It underscores the need for equitable and efficient management of freshwater resources to support agriculture, biodiversity, and human survival amid growing climate challenges and water scarcity.
- **Historical Background:** World Food Day was first celebrated in 1979, following a decision by the FAO's Conference to recognize October 16—the date of the organization's founding—as a day to raise awareness about hunger and global food challenges. Over the decades, it has evolved into one of the most significant international observances promoting food equity and sustainable agriculture.
- **Global Relevance:** The 2025 celebration comes at a time when nearly 735 million people worldwide face chronic hunger, exacerbated by climate change, conflict, and inflationary pressures. The theme calls for a collective commitment to preserving water resources and transforming agri-food systems to ensure that nutritious food reaches all populations equitably.
- **Events and Activities:** The FAO, in collaboration with governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, organized a series of international events, including expert panels, youth campaigns, and local food drives. India also marked the occasion through awareness programs under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, promoting efficient irrigation practices and climate-smart agriculture.

- **Significance for India:** As a water-stressed nation with a growing population, India's participation in World Food Day 2025 reinforces the importance of balancing agricultural productivity with sustainable water use. Initiatives such as the **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY)** and the **National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)** reflect the country's alignment with the FAO's vision of responsible resource management.

India Elected to UN Human Rights Council for 2026–28

In the News: India was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for the 2026–2028 term, reaffirming its global commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The election took place at the UN General Assembly in New York, where India secured an overwhelming majority of votes from member states in the Asia-Pacific group, reflecting international confidence in its human rights record and diplomatic leadership.

Key Points:

- **Election Outcome:** India won the seat for the 2026–2028 term with **184 out of 193 votes**, marking one of the highest tallies in the Asia-Pacific group. This victory reinforces India's status as a trusted voice for the Global South and a key proponent of inclusive multilateralism within the UN system.
- **Historical Context:** This will be **India's sixth term** on the UN Human Rights Council since its establishment in 2006. India previously served in multiple terms, including 2006–2007, 2011–2014, 2014–2017, 2019–2021, and 2022–2024, making it one of the most frequently elected nations from Asia.
- **Commitment to Human Rights:** In its candidature statement, India emphasized its dedication to advancing gender equality, freedom of expression, access to education, and digital inclusion. It also reaffirmed its belief in the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of all human rights, stressing that economic and social rights are as vital as civil and political freedoms.
- **Diplomatic Significance:** India's election comes at a time when the global human rights landscape faces challenges due to conflicts, humanitarian crises, and the misuse of technology. India's presence in the Council is expected to strengthen dialogue-based, cooperative approaches to resolving rights issues rather than adopting a politicized or selective framework.
- **Global Role and Vision:** India will work towards strengthening international cooperation on issues such as sustainable development, climate justice, and the rights of marginalized groups. It has also pledged to advocate for global digital rights frameworks that protect privacy and promote equitable access to technology.
- **Strategic Implications:** The victory enhances India's diplomatic standing as a responsible global actor committed to the UN Charter and the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**. It also aligns with India's broader vision of contributing to a **rules-based international order** and amplifying the voice of developing nations in global governance platforms.

WHO Warns of Toxic Indian Cough Syrups

In the News: The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a global warning regarding the circulation of **toxic Indian-manufactured cough syrups** that were found to contain dangerous levels of **diethylene glycol (DEG)** and **ethylene glycol (EG)**—industrial-grade chemicals known to cause acute kidney injury and death in children. The alert followed multiple incidents reported across **Africa and Southeast Asia**, where contaminated syrups allegedly led to several fatalities, reigniting concerns about pharmaceutical quality control and export safety standards in India's drug manufacturing sector.

Key Points:

- **Global Health Alert:** The WHO's warning identified specific batches of Indian cough syrups exported to several low- and middle-income countries that tested positive for toxic contaminants. The organization urged immediate withdrawal of these products from the global supply chain and called for stronger regulatory oversight of exported medicines.
- **Source and Contamination:** Preliminary investigations revealed that the syrups were contaminated with **diethylene glycol** and **ethylene glycol**, toxic substances commonly used in industrial solvents and antifreeze. Ingestion of these chemicals can lead to acute renal failure, neurological complications, and death, particularly among children.
- **International Impact:** The contaminated cough syrups were traced to shipments distributed in countries such as **Cameroon, Uzbekistan, and the Philippines**, prompting nationwide recalls and heightened scrutiny of pharmaceutical imports from India. The incident follows similar tragedies reported in 2022 and 2023, which resulted in over 300 child deaths globally.
- **Response from Indian Authorities:** The **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)**, India's apex drug regulatory body, initiated an immediate investigation into the manufacturers named in the WHO alert. The Ministry of Health

emphasized that India maintains one of the world's most stringent quality assurance frameworks but acknowledged the need for tighter enforcement on small-scale exporters.

- **Regulatory and Diplomatic Repercussions:** The episode has renewed global debates over the need for harmonized pharmaceutical export standards. India, which supplies over 45% of generic medicines to developing countries, faces mounting pressure to enhance testing mechanisms and ensure traceability in the production and export of medical formulations.

Vivek Menon First Asian Chair of IUCN Species Survival Commission

In the News: Indian wildlife conservationist **Vivek Menon** has been appointed as the **first Asian Chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC)**. His election marks a historic moment for Asian representation in global biodiversity governance and conservation leadership.

Key Points:

- **Historic Appointment:** Vivek Menon, founder and CEO of the **Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)**, became the first Asian to head the IUCN Species Survival Commission—one of the world's most influential conservation bodies.
- **About IUCN SSC:** The SSC coordinates the work of over 10,000 experts globally, spread across 180 specialist groups, focusing on assessing the status of species, updating the IUCN Red List, and developing conservation action plans.
- **Role and Responsibility:** As Chair, Menon will guide global initiatives to protect endangered species, promote sustainable biodiversity policies, and strengthen collaboration among scientists, governments, and conservation organizations.
- **Significance for India and Asia:** His appointment reflects growing recognition of Asia's leadership in wildlife conservation. It highlights India's expertise in species recovery, anti-poaching efforts, and habitat restoration on a global stage.

Tomahawk Missiles

In the News: The United States has approved the sale of **Tomahawk Block V cruise missiles** to India under a major defence agreement in 2025. The acquisition marks a significant milestone in enhancing India's long-range precision strike capabilities, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, strengthening interoperability between the Indian and U.S. navies.

Key Points:

- **Defence Agreement:** The U.S. government approved the sale of Tomahawk Block V missiles to India as part of expanding bilateral defence cooperation. These missiles will be integrated into Indian Navy destroyers, including the Visakhapatnam-class and Kolkata-class warships.
- **Missile Capabilities:** The Tomahawk Block V is a long-range, precision-guided, subsonic cruise missile with a strike range exceeding 1,600 km. It is capable of engaging both land-based and maritime targets with exceptional accuracy.
- **Strategic Importance:** The addition of Tomahawks significantly enhances India's maritime strike capability, enabling it to project power deep into the Indo-Pacific and improve deterrence in strategic sea lanes.
- **Operational Flexibility:** These missiles can be launched from ships or submarines, providing multi-platform operational flexibility and supporting India's "sea-denial" and "sea-control" strategies.
- **Technological Advantage:** The Block V variant features advanced navigation systems, improved target recognition, and network-enabled warfare capabilities, allowing real-time retargeting and high precision even in GPS-denied environments.
- **Geopolitical Context:** The acquisition aligns with India's growing role in the Quad security framework (India, U.S., Japan, Australia) and enhances interoperability with allied naval forces in ensuring a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- **Manufacturer:** The Tomahawk is developed by **Raytheon Technologies**, a U.S.-based defence major, and has been extensively used by the U.S. and allied forces for strategic strike missions since the 1990s.

Uruguay Legalises Euthanasia, a First in Latin America

In the News: Uruguay made history by becoming the **first country in Latin America to legalise euthanasia and assisted dying**, marking a landmark moment in the region's medical and ethical landscape. The legislation, passed after intense national debate, grants terminally ill patients the right to choose a medically assisted death under strict regulatory conditions. The move positions Uruguay among a small group of nations worldwide—such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Canada—that legally recognise euthanasia as an individual right tied to dignity and autonomy.

Key Points:

- **Historic Legislation:** Uruguay's Parliament passed the **Euthanasia and Assisted Dying Law** with strong bipartisan support after nearly five years of public consultation and parliamentary review. The law allows competent adults suffering from irreversible and painful terminal illnesses to voluntarily request medical assistance to end their lives.
- **Eligibility and Safeguards:** The law sets out rigorous ethical and medical conditions. Applicants must be Uruguayan citizens or residents above 18 years of age, with terminal or incurable diseases that cause intolerable suffering. Two independent doctors must confirm the diagnosis and the patient's mental capacity, and a waiting period ensures the decision is fully informed and voluntary.
- **Medical and Ethical Oversight:** A newly established **National Commission on Euthanasia and Assisted Dying**, composed of medical professionals, ethicists, and legal experts, will monitor all cases, ensure adherence to medical protocols, and prevent misuse or coercion. The law emphasizes patient dignity, informed consent, and medical transparency.
- **Cultural and Political Significance:** Uruguay, known for its progressive social policies—such as early legalisation of same-sex marriage and cannabis—continues its tradition of pioneering human rights reforms in Latin America. The euthanasia law reflects a broader societal shift toward compassionate end-of-life care and individual choice.
- **Public and Religious Reactions:** The decision has sparked mixed reactions. While human rights organizations, medical associations, and patient advocacy groups have hailed the law as a humane and necessary reform, the **Catholic Church** and conservative groups have expressed strong moral opposition, arguing that it undermines the sanctity of life.
- **Comparative Global Context:** With this law, Uruguay joins countries like **Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Canada, and New Zealand**, where euthanasia or assisted dying is legally regulated. In Latin America, while countries such as Colombia permit assisted suicide through judicial rulings, Uruguay's act is the first comprehensive legislative framework passed by a national parliament.

FAO, India Mark 80 Years of Partnership on World Food Day

In the News: India and the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations** celebrated **80 years of partnership** on the occasion of **World Food Day**, reaffirming their shared commitment to ending hunger, achieving food security, and promoting sustainable agriculture. The commemoration highlighted India's remarkable progress in transforming its agriculture sector—from food deficit to food surplus—through innovation, policy reforms, and global cooperation.

Key Points:

- **Historic Milestone:** The year 2025 marks eight decades of collaboration between India and the FAO, which began in 1945 when India became one of the founding members of the organization. This long-standing partnership has evolved from addressing post-independence food shortages to advancing modern food systems aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Joint Celebration:** The 80-year milestone was jointly commemorated in **New Delhi** with participation from the **Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**, FAO's **India Representative**, and senior officials from NITI Aayog, ICAR, and state governments. The event celebrated the theme **"Water is Life, Water is Food—Leave No One Behind,"** emphasizing sustainable water use in agriculture.
- **India's Contribution to Global Food Security:** India has played a pivotal role in global food and nutrition security through its leadership in **Millet Mission initiatives**, **South-South cooperation**, and agricultural innovation. The **International Year of Millets 2023**, spearheaded by India and endorsed by the UN, was recognized as a global success model for promoting climate-resilient and nutritious crops.
- **Collaborative Programs:** Over the decades, India and FAO have jointly implemented numerous programs on soil health management, crop diversification, climate-smart agriculture, and digitalization of farm data. The **FAO-India Country Programme Framework (2023–2027)** continues to guide this cooperation, focusing on sustainable agri-food systems, livelihood resilience, and gender-inclusive development.
- **Policy and Institutional Reforms:** India's agricultural transformation has been strengthened through landmark initiatives such as **PM-KISAN**, **National Food Security Mission**, **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana**, and **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana**, which align with FAO's global priorities on sustainable productivity, equity, and environmental stewardship.
- **Technological Advancements:** The collaboration emphasizes digital agriculture and data-driven solutions for smallholder farmers through satellite mapping, precision irrigation, and early-warning systems for drought and pest management, reflecting India's leadership in agri-tech innovation.
- **Shared Vision Ahead:** Both India and FAO reaffirmed their commitment to accelerating efforts toward **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)**, improving nutrition outcomes, empowering women farmers, and promoting sustainable water resource management.

The partnership's 80th anniversary underscores the collective resolve to build resilient agri-food systems for a secure and equitable future.

India Elected Co-Chair of UN-GGIM Asia-Pacific

In the News: India was elected as the Co-Chair of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) Asia-Pacific, marking a major recognition of the country's leadership in advancing geospatial governance, data infrastructure, and regional collaboration. The election took place during the **ninth plenary meeting of the UN-GGIM Asia-Pacific**, where member states unanimously supported India's nomination, reflecting confidence in its growing role in geospatial technology and sustainable development.

Key Points:

- **Global Recognition:** India's election as Co-Chair underscores its leadership in leveraging geospatial data and digital mapping for national and regional development. It highlights the country's growing influence in shaping international geospatial policy frameworks and promoting regional cooperation under the UN mandate.
- **Institutional Representation:** India will be represented by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** through the **National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)** and the **Survey of India**, which serve as the nodal agencies coordinating geospatial initiatives and capacity-building efforts.
- **Strategic Role:** As Co-Chair, India will work closely with other Asia-Pacific nations to strengthen geospatial governance, enhance interoperability of regional data systems, and promote the use of location-based intelligence in disaster management, urban planning, and climate resilience.
- **Contribution to Sustainable Development:** The UN-GGIM framework plays a vital role in achieving the **UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** by integrating geospatial data into policymaking. India's leadership aims to accelerate this process by expanding open-data access, fostering innovation, and supporting regional geospatial capacity-building initiatives.
- **Technological Advancements:** India's advanced platforms such as **Bhuvan (ISRO's Geoportal)**, **National Geospatial Policy 2022**, and the Digital India initiative have demonstrated the nation's capabilities in geospatial innovation, enabling accurate mapping, resource management, and efficient governance through spatial analytics.
- **Regional Cooperation and Capacity Building:** Under India's co-chairmanship, special emphasis will be placed on training programs, knowledge exchange, and developing a common regional framework for geospatial data sharing among Asia-Pacific countries to enhance preparedness for natural disasters and climate-related challenges.

Belgian court approves Mehul Choksi extradition: 5 things to know about PNB scam, cases

In the News: A Belgian court approved the extradition of fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi to India, marking a major breakthrough in the long-running **Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case**. The decision came after years of legal proceedings across multiple jurisdictions, paving the way for Indian authorities to bring one of the key accused in the ₹13,500-crore scam to justice. The verdict signifies growing international cooperation against economic offenders and strengthens India's global efforts to ensure accountability in financial crimes.

Key Points:

- **Landmark Decision:** The Belgian appellate court ruled in favor of India's extradition request after evaluating evidence submitted by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** and the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)**. The court rejected Choksi's defense that he was a victim of political persecution, affirming that the charges were purely criminal in nature.
- **Background of the Scam:** The PNB scam, unearthed in **February 2018**, involved fraudulent **Letters of Undertaking (LoUs)** issued by PNB officials at the Brady House branch in Mumbai to benefit Choksi and his nephew **Nirav Modi**. These LoUs enabled them to obtain unauthorized credit from overseas banks, causing massive losses to the Indian public sector bank.
- **International Flight and Legal Battle:** Mehul Choksi fled India in **January 2018**, weeks before the scam came to light. He later acquired citizenship of **Antigua and Barbuda**, where he sought refuge. Following multiple legal disputes in Antigua and Belgium, the Indian government successfully demonstrated his continued role in laundering proceeds of crime and obstructing investigation.

- **India's Legal Pursuit:** The Indian government presented a detailed case under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)** and **Extradition Treaty provisions**, supported by documentary evidence and witness testimonies. The Belgian court noted that due process was followed and that Choksi would receive a fair trial in India.
- **Significance for India's Anti-Fraud Efforts:** The ruling reinforces India's diplomatic and judicial credibility in pursuing fugitive economic offenders abroad. It follows earlier extradition successes involving **Christian Michel (AgustaWestland case)** and **Rajiv Saxena**, signaling a stronger international stance against white-collar crime.
- **Impact on the PNB Case:** Choksi's return is expected to revive key aspects of the investigation, including the tracing of laundered funds and the recovery of defrauded assets. His extradition will also strengthen the prosecution's case against co-accused
- **Nirav Modi**, who remains in custody in the United Kingdom pending final legal clearance for extradition.
- **Next Steps:** Following the court's order, Indian authorities are coordinating with Belgian and Interpol officials to finalize Choksi's transfer logistics. Upon arrival in India, he will be produced before a special **CBI court in Mumbai**, where he faces multiple charges of fraud, criminal conspiracy, and money laundering under Indian law.

SPORTS

Messi Becomes Top Assist Maker in International Football

In the News: **Lionel Messi**, the captain of the **Argentina national football team**, etched his name into history by becoming the **top assist maker in international football**, surpassing all previous records in men's international play. The milestone was achieved during Argentina's FIFA World Cup qualifier against **Paraguay**, where Messi delivered his 59th career assist for the national side, further cementing his legacy as one of the most complete and influential players in the sport's history.

Key Points:

- **Historic Achievement:** With his record-breaking assist in the 2025 World Cup qualifier, Lionel Messi overtook previous international assist leaders to become the highest assist provider in men's international football. The Argentine forward, renowned for his creative brilliance and vision, has now redefined playmaking excellence at the global level, adding another chapter to his illustrious career.
- **Career Overview:** Since making his international debut in 2005, Messi has been the cornerstone of Argentina's success, amassing over 180 appearances, 106 goals, and now a record number of assists. His playmaking prowess has been pivotal in Argentina's victories at major tournaments, including the **2021 Copa América**, the **2022 FIFA World Cup**, and the **2024 Copa América Finalissima**.
- **Match Context:** The record-setting assist came in Argentina's 3-0 win over Paraguay in Buenos Aires, where Messi orchestrated multiple attacking moves. His assist to Lautaro Martínez for the opening goal exemplified his unmatched passing accuracy, spatial awareness, and game intelligence, hallmarks that have defined his style for two decades.
- **Global Recognition:** Football legends, analysts, and fans across the world lauded Messi's feat, noting that his dual ability to score and create goals has set a benchmark rarely seen in international football. The **FIFA** and **CONMEBOL** (South American Football Confederation) officially recognized his new record, celebrating his sustained excellence and leadership.

Cape Verde Creates History with FIFA World Cup Qualification

In the News: **Cape Verde** created footballing history by qualifying for the **FIFA World Cup** for the first time ever. The Atlantic Island nation secured its spot after a decisive victory in the final round of African qualifiers, marking a milestone moment for both the country and African football. The achievement symbolizes the rise of smaller nations in global football and highlights the growing competitiveness within the African confederation.

Key Points:

- **Historic Qualification:** Cape Verde's national football team, known as the *Blue Sharks*, achieved its maiden FIFA World Cup qualification after defeating **Cameroon 2-1** in Praia. This victory propelled them to the top of their qualifying group, sealing their place among Africa's representatives at the 2026 World Cup.
- **National Celebration:** The qualification sparked nationwide celebrations across the archipelago, with thousands taking to the streets of **Praia, Mindelo, and Santa Maria**. President José Maria Neves and Prime Minister Ulisses Correia e Silva congratulated the players, calling the feat "a triumph of belief, discipline, and unity."

- **Journey of Persistence:** Cape Verde's journey reflects over a decade of steady progress in African football, having earlier impressed in the **Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)** tournaments of 2013 and 2024. The qualification underscores the success of the nation's long-term investment in youth development and European club collaborations.
- **Coaching and Strategy:** Under coach **Pedro Leitão Brito (Bubista)**, the team adopted a high-pressing, tactically balanced system, leveraging the experience of Europe-based players from leagues in Portugal, France, and the Netherlands. This strategic approach helped Cape Verde overcome traditional African heavyweights.
- **Symbol of Hope and Identity:** The qualification is viewed as a defining cultural moment, uniting Cape Verdeans at home and abroad. It represents the power of sport to uplift small island nations and inspire youth towards collective national pride.
- **Recognition and Support:** Following the qualification, the **FIFA President Gianni Infantino** and the **Confederation of African Football (CAF)** lauded Cape Verde's achievement, calling it "a story of determination and inspiration." The government has since announced plans to expand sports infrastructure and youth academies across the islands to sustain this success.

Khelo India University Games 2025 Launches in Rajasthan

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially inaugurated the **Khelo India University Games 2025** in **Rajasthan**, marking the beginning of India's largest multi-disciplinary sporting event for university athletes. The Games aim to promote sports culture at the grassroots academic level and foster India's emerging sporting talent pool ahead of major international competitions.

Key Points:

- **Host State and Venues:** The 2025 edition of the Khelo India University Games is being hosted across multiple cities in Rajasthan, with **Jaipur** serving as the main venue. Supporting events are being organized in **Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Kota**, showcasing the state's growing sports infrastructure.
- **Participation and Scale:** More than **7,000 athletes** representing **over 200 universities** are participating in 20 disciplines, including athletics, boxing, wrestling, kabaddi, swimming, and hockey. This marks the largest student-sports gathering in India since the Games' inception in 2020.
- **Theme and Vision:** The 2025 Games are organized under the theme "**Sports, Spirit, and Sustainability**," aligning with India's broader vision of integrating fitness, education, and environmental awareness within the youth ecosystem.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The Government of India and the Rajasthan Sports Council jointly upgraded key stadiums such as the **Sawai Mansingh Stadium (Jaipur)** and **Dr. S. N. Medical College Ground (Jodhpur)** with new synthetic tracks, aquatic complexes, and athlete villages to meet international standards.
- **Technology Integration:** A real-time digital monitoring and results-tracking system has been introduced for the first time in the Games, ensuring transparent scoring and live updates for viewers nationwide through the **Khelo India app** and **Doordarshan Sports** broadcasts.
- **Empowering University Athletes:** The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced that medal winners will receive direct funding and mentorship under the **Khelo India Talent**
- **Identification Scheme**, providing pathways to national camps and international representation.
- **Sustainability Measures:** The event emphasizes eco-friendly practices, including solar-powered venues, zero-plastic zones, and rainwater harvesting units at all major arenas, promoting the idea of green sports events in India.
- **Background:** The Khelo India University Games were first held in Odisha (2020), followed by Karnataka (2022) and Uttar Pradesh (2023). The Rajasthan edition marks the **fourth edition** of the Games and the first time they are hosted in western India.

SCIENCE & TECH

Maitri II Research Station in Antarctica

In the News: In 2025, India announced the construction of **Maitri II**, a state-of-the-art Antarctic research station designed to strengthen the country's long-term scientific presence in the polar region. Located near the existing Maitri station in Queen Maud Land, Maitri II will serve as India's primary research hub in Antarctica once operational, advancing multidisciplinary

studies in glaciology, climate change, oceanography, and atmospheric sciences. The project underscores India's commitment to polar research under the Antarctic Treaty System and its vision of sustainable exploration in extreme environments.

Key Points:

- **Project Launch:** The Maitri II Research Station project was launched in 2025 under the supervision of the **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**, Goa, functioning under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**. The new station is being built to replace the aging Maitri base, which has been operational since 1989, and to ensure India's continued presence in the region for decades to come.
- **Infrastructure and Design:** Maitri II is designed as a modern, energy-efficient facility capable of withstanding extreme Antarctic conditions. It will include integrated laboratories, living quarters, renewable energy modules, waste management systems, and advanced communication infrastructure. The structure incorporates sustainable architectural practices to minimize environmental impact, featuring prefabricated modular components that can be assembled on-site with minimal disruption to the fragile ecosystem.
- **Scientific Focus:** The new station will support advanced research on ice-climate interactions, the Southern Ocean ecosystem, and the long-term effects of global warming on polar ice sheets. It will also enable atmospheric monitoring, seismic studies, and biodiversity assessments, contributing critical data for global climate models and environmental policymaking.
- **International Collaboration:** Maitri II will enhance India's collaboration with other Antarctic research programs through the **Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)** and foster data-sharing initiatives with countries such as the United States, Russia, and Norway. The project reflects India's growing role in global climate science and sustainable polar governance.

GalaxEye Launches India's First Multi-Sensor Earth Observation Satellite

In the News: Indian spacetechnology startup **GalaxEye** has successfully launched '**Drishti**,' India's first multi-sensor Earth observation satellite, aboard **ISRO's PSLV-C60** from Sriharikota. The satellite represents a major milestone in India's private space sector, combining optical and radar imaging on a single platform to deliver advanced, all-weather Earth observation data.

Key Points:

- **Launch and Collaboration:** The satellite '**Drishti**' was launched in collaboration with the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, marking a significant achievement for India's growing private space ecosystem. GalaxEye, a **startup incubated at IIT Madras**, developed the satellite with support from the IN-SPACe framework promoting private participation in space technology.
- **Technological Innovation:** '**Drishti**' integrates **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** and **optical payloads** into a unified system, enabling simultaneous radar and visual imaging. This hybrid configuration allows the satellite to capture high-resolution, day-and-night, all-weather imagery, overcoming limitations of conventional optical systems.
- **Applications and Utility:** The mission aims to provide Analysis Ready Data (ARD) for a broad range of uses including climate change monitoring, agriculture, urban planning, disaster management, and national security. Its multi-sensor design allows for faster and more precise situational awareness in critical events such as floods, forest fires, and infrastructure damage.
- **Vision and Future Plans:** GalaxEye envisions building a constellation of multi-sensor satellites to provide continuous, global Earth monitoring capabilities. The launch aligns with India's **Space Policy 2023**, which encourages innovation-led private participation and technological self-reliance in space-based services.

India Extends Astra Mark 2 Missile Range Beyond 200 km

In the News: India successfully extended the range of its **Astra Mark 2 Beyond-Visual-Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM)** to **over 200 kilometres**, marking a major breakthrough in indigenous air combat capability. Developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** in collaboration with the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**, the upgraded missile enhances India's deterrence and precision-strike capabilities, allowing its fighter fleet to engage enemy aircraft at significantly greater stand-off distances.

Key Points:

- **Development and Achievement:** The Astra Mark 2 is the next-generation version of the Astra Mark 1 missile, which had a range of approximately 110 km. The Mark 2 variant features a dual-pulse solid rocket motor, an improved seeker system,

and advanced electronic counter-countermeasures (ECCM), enabling high-speed engagements beyond 200 km under all-weather conditions.

- **Testing and Validation:** The extended-range missile underwent a series of flight trials conducted from the **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** platform off the coast of Odisha under the supervision of the DRDO's **Integrated Test Range (ITR)**. The successful validation confirmed its capability to intercept and destroy high-maneuvrability aerial targets at long distances, even under heavy electronic jamming environments.
- **Strategic Importance:** The Astra Mark 2 positions India among a select group of nations—such as the United States, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom—with the ability to produce long-range air-to-air missiles indigenously. It significantly boosts India's air dominance capabilities, particularly in contested airspaces along the western and northern borders.
- **Integration and Deployment:** The missile will be integrated with multiple IAF platforms, including the **Su-30MKI**, **Tejas Mk1A**, and the upcoming **Rafale-M** and **TEDBF** (Twin Engine Deck-Based Fighter). Its compatibility with different radar and avionics systems enhances the versatility and reach of India's aerial strike assets.

ENVIRONMENT

SC Halts Aravalli Jungle Safari Over Ecological Concerns

In the News: The **Supreme Court of India** has temporarily **stayed / halted work** on the proposed **Aravalli Jungle Safari (Zoo Safari) Project in Haryana**, citing serious **ecological and environmental concerns**.

Key Points:

- **Project Overview:** The safari is planned on about 10,000 acres spanning Gurugram and Nuh districts. It envisages zones for big cats, aviary / bird parks, herpetarium, nature trails, underwater world, and other eco-tourism attractions.
- **Legal Petition & Parties:** The stay was granted following a petition by **retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers** and **People for Aravallis**, arguing the project threatens a fragile ecosystem. The petition titled *Dr R P Balwan & Others vs State of Haryana & Others* raised issues under forest / environment law contexts.
- **Key Ecological Concerns Raised:** The Aravalli range is ecologically sensitive, acting as a green buffer for Delhi–NCR, a water recharge zone, pollution sink, and wildlife habitat.
- The proposed constructions — roads, buildings, fencing, captive enclosures — may fragment habitat and disrupt **free wildlife movement**, leading to edge effects, human-wildlife conflict, and stress to fauna. Risk of irreversible damage to biodiversity, hydrology, soil stability, and ecological balance in an already stressed region. Use of compensatory afforestation funds and commercial infrastructure in lieu of genuine ecological restoration was challenged.
- **Court's Orders / Interim Measures:** The Supreme Court directed that **no work** be undertaken on the safari project until the next hearing (October 15, 2025) and asked the Haryana government to file its response. The court also called for clarity on a uniform definition of the Aravalli hills, which has bearing on eco-sensitive zone demarcation.
- **Government's Position & Rationale:** Supporters of the project argue it will promote eco-tourism, wildlife conservation, and economic development, integrating restoration with recreation. The state intends to develop the project in phases, starting with about 2,500 acres in Phase I.

Beyond the numbers: Challenges in elephant conservation

In the News: Conservation experts and environmental agencies across India highlighted the urgent need to look “**beyond the numbers**” in elephant conservation, emphasizing that protecting these keystone species requires more than population statistics. The discussion, held ahead of **National Elephant Day**, brought attention to the complex socio-ecological challenges threatening India's elephant habitats, such as fragmentation, human–elephant conflict, infrastructure development, and climate-induced habitat shifts. The call for a holistic, community-inclusive approach underscored the need to balance conservation goals with the realities of coexistence in an increasingly crowded landscape.

Key Points:

- **Conservation Beyond Census Figures:** While India is home to more than **60% of the global Asian elephant population**, experts stressed that numbers alone do not reflect the health of elephant populations. The focus must shift toward assessing habitat quality, migratory corridor connectivity, and the stress levels caused by increasing human interference in traditional elephant ranges.

- **Habitat Fragmentation and Land Use Change:** Rapid urbanization, mining projects, linear infrastructure such as railways and highways, and agricultural expansion have disrupted traditional elephant migratory paths. This fragmentation forces elephants to move through human settlements, resulting in frequent conflict incidents and rising casualties on both sides. The lack of contiguous forest cover in critical regions like the **Nilgiris–Eastern Ghats corridor** and the **Assam–Arunachal border** remains a pressing concern.
- **Human–Elephant Conflict:** India witnesses over **500 human deaths and 100 elephant fatalities** annually due to conflict arising from crop-raiding, encroachments, and retaliatory actions. Experts emphasized that mitigating these conflicts requires a blend of technology, early-warning systems, and community-based coexistence strategies rather than short-term compensation measures.
- **Policy and Governance Challenges:** Despite strong legal protection under **Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, implementation gaps persist due to limited inter-state coordination and delayed ecological clearances. Conservationists urged for stronger landscape-level governance, improved compensation frameworks, and inclusion of local communities in decision-making to ensure sustainable coexistence.
- **Ecological and Climate Concerns:** Climate change is altering rainfall patterns and vegetation cycles, leading to food and water stress in elephant habitats. Such ecological changes are driving elephants to new territories, exacerbating conflict in areas previously free from elephant movement. Experts called for integrating climate resilience and adaptive land-use planning into wildlife management strategies.
- **Community Engagement and Technological Innovations:** Successful examples of coexistence, such as community-led corridor protection initiatives in **Assam, Odisha, and Karnataka**, highlight the importance of local stewardship. The use of **AI-based surveillance, radio-collaring, and geo-fencing** is increasingly being adopted to track elephant movements and prevent conflict through real-time monitoring and predictive alerts.

UN Reports Record CO₂ Rise in 2024

In the News: The United Nations' World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported that **global carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentrations reached a record 423.7 parts per million (ppm) in 2024**, marking the highest levels ever recorded in human history. The findings were published in the UN's **Greenhouse Gas Bulletin**, raising serious concerns over continued fossil fuel dependence and deforestation despite global climate commitments.

Key Points:

- **Record CO₂ Levels:** Atmospheric CO₂ concentrations rose by **2.8 ppm in 2024**, reaching **423.7 ppm**, surpassing all previous records since systematic monitoring began. This level is about **50% higher than pre-industrial concentrations**.
- **Causes of the Rise:** The WMO attributed the surge to persistent fossil fuel combustion, industrial activity, and large-scale deforestation, which continue to release massive amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.
- **Other Greenhouse Gases:** Alongside CO₂, concentrations of methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) also increased significantly, exacerbating global warming and destabilizing weather patterns across continents.
- **Impact on Climate Goals:** The UN warned that the current emissions trajectory is incompatible with the Paris Agreement target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, heightening risks of severe climate impacts.
- **Regional and Global Effects:** Rising CO₂ levels contribute to record heatwaves, intensified droughts, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations and ecosystems.
- **Call for Action:** The WMO urged nations to accelerate the transition to renewable energy, end fossil fuel subsidies, and enhance carbon sequestration efforts through afforestation and sustainable land-use practices.

Sundarbans' SAIME Model Wins FAO Global Recognition

In the News: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has recognized the SAIME (Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystem) model from the Indian Sundarbans as a global best practice for community-led mangrove restoration and sustainable livelihood development. The model integrates ecological conservation with economic empowerment in one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions.

Key Points:

- **Global Recognition:** The FAO honoured India's **SAIME model** for its success in combining **mangrove restoration** with **sustainable aquaculture**, making it an exemplary nature-based solution for climate resilience and ecosystem restoration.

- **Model Origin:** Developed by **local communities** in partnership with the **West Bengal Forest Department**, the SAIME initiative focuses on restoring degraded mangrove habitats while creating livelihood opportunities through sustainable fish and crab farming.
- **Community Participation:** The project empowers local villagers—particularly **women and small-scale fishers**—to manage aquaculture ponds linked with mangrove plantations, ensuring income generation alongside environmental protection.
- **Ecological Benefits:** The model enhances biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and coastal protection against cyclones and tidal surges, strengthening natural defences in the fragile Sundarbans delta ecosystem.
- **Socio-Economic Impact:** By linking conservation with livelihood development, SAIME reduces economic vulnerability, improves food security, and promotes sustainable resource management in climate-sensitive coastal areas.
- **Global Importance:** FAO identified SAIME as one of the world's most effective nature-based livelihood initiatives, aligning with the UN's Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- **Future Expansion:** Encouraged by international recognition, the initiative is set to be replicated across other coastal regions of India and potentially adapted in Southeast Asian mangrove ecosystems.

ECONOMY

HSBC Pledges \$1 Billion for Indian Startups

In the News: Global banking major **HSBC** announced a \$1 billion funding commitment to support Indian startups and emerging enterprises, marking one of the largest single international financial pledges toward India's innovation ecosystem. The initiative aims to accelerate growth in sectors such as fintech, climate technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, reinforcing India's position as a leading global hub for entrepreneurship and digital transformation.

Key Points:

- **Investment Commitment:** HSBC pledged a dedicated \$1 billion financing pool to nurture India's startup ecosystem through customized debt and equity solutions, venture lending, and expansion support for high-potential enterprises. The fund seeks to empower early-stage and growth-stage companies that are driving technological innovation and sustainable business models.
- **Strategic Objective:** The initiative aligns with HSBC's broader global ambition to strengthen partnerships in high-growth markets and to contribute to India's economic vision of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. The commitment underscores India's strategic importance within HSBC's Asia-Pacific growth framework, particularly in fostering digital entrepreneurship and climate-resilient innovation.
- **Focus Sectors:** The fund will prioritize startups working in financial technology, clean energy transition, digital health, green mobility, and manufacturing automation. By channeling global capital into these sectors, HSBC aims to enhance India's competitiveness in next-generation industries and promote sustainable economic development.
- **Implementation and Collaboration:** HSBC will work closely with venture capital firms, government-backed startup incubators, and innovation hubs such as **Startup India** and **Invest India** to identify scalable ventures. The program will also provide mentorship, global market access, and cross-border business advisory services to help Indian startups expand internationally.
- **Economic Impact:** The funding is expected to catalyze employment generation, technology transfer, and increased capital inflows into India's innovation economy. It also supports the government's Make in India and Digital India missions, bridging financial gaps for enterprises that are transforming India's industrial and digital landscape.
- **Global Significance:** HSBC's commitment represents a strong endorsement of India's startup ecosystem at a time of global economic uncertainty. It reflects growing investor confidence in India's robust entrepreneurial talent, policy stability, and its emergence as a preferred destination for innovation-driven investments.

India's Trade Deficit Hits \$32.15 Billion in September 2025

In the News: India's **trade deficit widened to \$32.15 billion in September 2025**, marking its highest level in 16 months, as exports declined amid robust import demand. The growing gap was primarily driven by a surge in crude oil, gold, and electronics imports, while merchandise exports slowed due to weak global demand.

Key Points:

- **Record Deficit:** India's trade deficit for September 2025 stood at \$32.15 billion, compared to \$28.3 billion in August 2025, reflecting mounting import pressures and weaker outbound shipments.
- **Export Performance:** Merchandise exports fell 5.4% year-on-year to \$34.5 billion, led by declines in engineering goods, chemicals, and textiles, affected by soft global orders and price corrections in key commodities.
- **Rising Imports:** Imports surged 8.2% to **\$66.65 billion**, driven by higher demand for **crude oil, gold, and electronic goods**, with global energy prices remaining elevated and festive-season gold purchases contributing to import growth.
- **Sectoral Trends:** The rise in electronics and energy imports reflects India's continued dependence on high-value imports for manufacturing and mobility sectors, despite ongoing efforts to promote domestic production through the **PLI scheme**.

JOINT EXERCISE

India, Australia Begin Joint Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025

In the News: India and Australia commenced the joint military exercise **AUSTRAHIND 2025**, reflecting the growing depth of defence cooperation and strategic partnership between the two Indo-Pacific democracies. The exercise, held in **Perth, Australia**, aims to enhance interoperability, combat readiness, and mutual understanding between the armies of both nations in multi-domain operational environments. AUSTRAHIND 2025 marks another milestone in the defence engagements under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Australia, reinforcing their shared commitment to regional stability, peace, and security.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Overview:** AUSTRAHIND 2025 brings together troops from the Indian Army and the Australian Army for a comprehensive joint training programme involving tactical drills, counterterrorism operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief simulations. The exercise is being conducted under semi-urban and jungle warfare settings to reflect real-world combat scenarios and hybrid threats.
- **Participating Units and Duration:** The Indian Army contingent comprises soldiers from a battalion of the Gorkha Rifles, while the Australian side is represented by troops from the Royal Australian Regiment. The two-week exercise includes command post training, tactical manoeuvres, live-fire drills, and coordinated mission planning sessions designed to improve operational synergy and joint decision-making.
- **Objectives and Significance:** The primary objective of AUSTRAHIND 2025 is to strengthen bilateral military cooperation and improve tactical interoperability between both armies. It also aims to enhance joint response capabilities for peacekeeping, counter-insurgency, and humanitarian missions under the United Nations framework. The exercise embodies the shared vision of both countries for a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.
- **Strategic Context:** The exercise assumes greater importance amid increasing geopolitical complexities in the Indo-Pacific. It builds upon previous editions of AUSTRAHIND and complements other regional engagements such as the Quad security dialogue and the Malabar naval exercise, thereby deepening defence coordination across maritime and land domains.
- **Broader Defence Collaboration:** Beyond joint exercises, India and Australia are expanding collaboration in defence technology, maritime surveillance, cyber security, and critical infrastructure protection. The partnership also includes institutional mechanisms for military education, logistics cooperation, and strategic dialogues under the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA).
- **Outlook and Legacy:** AUSTRAHIND 2025 exemplifies the growing trust and operational alignment between the Indian and Australian armed forces. It reaffirms their shared commitment to global peacekeeping and regional security while paving the way for more complex tri-service and multinational exercises in the future.

Exercise Konkan 2025 Marks Major Milestone in UK-India Naval Cooperation

In the News: The navies of India and the United Kingdom conducted the latest edition of the bilateral maritime exercise **Konkan 2025**, marking a significant step forward in strengthening defence cooperation and maritime interoperability between the two nations. The exercise, held off the coast of Goa, focused on enhancing joint operational capabilities, maritime domain awareness, and coordinated response to emerging security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. The event symbolized the growing strategic partnership between India and the UK, particularly under the framework of the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Overview:** Exercise Konkan 2025 featured advanced naval drills involving surface, sub-surface, and air operations, along with high-intensity warfighting simulations. The exercise aimed to consolidate maritime cooperation through anti-submarine warfare, fleet manoeuvres, search-and-rescue operations, and live gunnery exercises conducted in realistic maritime conditions.
- **Participating Naval Assets:** The Indian Navy deployed frontline warships including the INS Chennai and maritime patrol aircraft P-8I, while the Royal Navy participated with the HMS Richmond frigate and integral helicopters. The joint fleet executed complex tactical evolutions, communication drills, and coordinated sea-control missions to enhance interoperability in multi-threat environments.
- **Strategic Objectives:** The exercise reinforced the shared vision of both countries for a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. It underscored the importance of maritime partnerships in countering piracy, ensuring the security of sea lanes, and maintaining global supply chain resilience. Both navies also emphasized strengthening collaboration on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations.
- **Broader Defence Context:** Konkan 2025 forms part of the broader India-UK defence dialogue, which includes the UK-India 2030 Roadmap, cooperation in maritime technology, logistics sharing agreements, and joint naval training initiatives. The exercise complements multilateral engagements such as the Carrier Strike Group deployments and Indo-Pacific security initiatives, enhancing interoperability and strategic trust.
- **Technological and Tactical Exchange:** During the exercise, both navies shared expertise in advanced radar operations, integrated maritime surveillance, electronic warfare, and anti-aircraft systems. The joint drills also focused on network-centric warfare and information sharing to enhance real-time operational coordination and situational awareness.

REPORTS

India's Vital Statistics Report 2023

In the News: The **Office of the Registrar General, India (ORGI)** released the **Vital Statistics Report 2023**, based on the **Civil Registration System (CRS)**, highlighting significant improvements in the registration of births and deaths across the country. The report marks a milestone in India's demographic data collection, showing enhanced coverage, better health indicators, and progress in public service delivery.

Key Points:

- **Comprehensive Registration:** The report records 100% birth registration nationwide and 94.4% death registration, indicating substantial improvement in civil documentation and the efficiency of local registration authorities under the CRS framework.
- **Infant Mortality Decline:** India's **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)** has reduced to 25 per 1,000 live births, reflecting progress in maternal and child healthcare outcomes. States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra registered the lowest IMR, while Uttar Pradesh and Bihar continue to lag behind the national average.
- **Public Health Indicators:** The report highlights continued decline in maternal mortality and improvements in life expectancy and health infrastructure coverage, attributing gains to expanding institutional births, vaccination programmes, and access to primary healthcare services.
- **Regional Performance:** Southern and western states lead in registration completeness and health outcomes, while several northeastern and central states have made notable progress in digitizing registration processes and reducing delays in certification.
- **Digital Integration:** The use of online registration platforms and interlinking with Aadhaar and health databases has strengthened transparency, enabling real-time monitoring and improved policy formulation for social welfare and health planning.
- **Future Outlook:** The government aims to achieve universal death registration by 2025 and further integrate CRS data with national health and population registries to enhance accuracy, accessibility, and planning in India's demographic governance system.

Samudra Shakti 2025

In the News: The **Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy** commenced the **fifth edition of the bilateral maritime exercise 'Samudra Shakti 2025'** in the **Java Sea**, marking another milestone in the growing maritime cooperation between the two Indo-

Pacific democracies. The exercise reflects the shared commitment of India and Indonesia to ensure regional stability, enhance interoperability, and strengthen coordination in addressing maritime security challenges across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Key Points:

- **Exercise Overview:** 'Samudra Shakti 2025' is a bilateral naval exercise conducted annually between India and Indonesia. The 2025 edition brought together advanced warships, submarines, and maritime patrol aircraft from both navies for high-tempo operations in surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare domains. The exercise aims to deepen mutual understanding and operational synergy between the two maritime forces.
- **Participating Assets:** The Indian Navy deployed its **indigenously built stealth frigate INS Shivalik** and a **P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft**, while the Indonesian Navy participated with its **KRI Bung Tomo-class frigate**, maritime helicopters, and patrol vessels. Joint drills included tactical manoeuvres, coordinated anti-submarine warfare exercises, helicopter operations, and cross-deck landings.
- **Strategic Context:** The exercise holds special significance as India and Indonesia are maritime neighbours sharing a common maritime boundary near the Andaman Sea. The collaboration underscores the convergence of their Indo-Pacific outlooks, particularly under India's **Act East Policy** and Indonesia's **Global Maritime Fulcrum Vision**, both of which prioritize a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- **Operational Highlights:** The exercise featured advanced naval operations, including live weapon firings, replenishment at sea, and maritime interdiction drills. Special emphasis was placed on **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**, information sharing, and coordinated responses to transnational threats such as piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing.
- **Defence Diplomacy and Cooperation:** Beyond tactical training, 'Samudra Shakti 2025' serves as a platform for defence diplomacy, fostering mutual trust and professional interaction between personnel of both navies. It demonstrates the two nations' shared resolve to strengthen regional maritime architecture and promote peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Broader Significance:** The successful conduct of the exercise reinforces India's growing strategic footprint in Southeast Asia and highlights the increasing relevance of naval cooperation as a tool of diplomacy. It also reflects the deepening partnership between New Delhi and Jakarta in multilateral frameworks such as the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** and the **ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus)**, contributing to a rules-based maritime order in the region.

India-South Korea Hold First Bilateral Naval Exercise IN-RoKN

In the News: India and South Korea conducted their **first-ever bilateral naval exercise, IN-RoKN 2025**, off the coast of **Busan**, marking a major milestone in their maritime defence cooperation. The exercise reflects the growing strategic partnership between the two Indo-Pacific democracies, focused on ensuring regional stability and a rules-based maritime order.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Overview:** The inaugural edition of **IN-RoKN 2025** was held between the **Indian Navy** and the **Republic of Korea Navy (RoKN)** to strengthen operational coordination and maritime interoperability.
- **Participating Ships:** From India, **INS Delhi** (guided missile destroyer) and **INS Shakti** (fleet tanker) participated, while South Korea deployed **RoKS Dae Jo Yeong** and **RoKS Hwacheon**, highlighting both sides' advanced surface combatant capabilities.
- **Exercise Scope:** The drills included anti-submarine warfare, surface maneuvers, communication exercises, replenishment-at-sea, and formation sailing, aimed at refining joint operational tactics and enhancing maritime domain awareness.
- **Strategic Objectives:** IN-RoKN 2025 emphasized both nations' shared vision of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, in alignment with broader regional frameworks such as the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and **ROK's Indo-Pacific Strategy**.
- **Significance for Defence Cooperation:** The exercise builds upon existing defence ties, including **naval ship visits, high-level exchanges**, and cooperation in shipbuilding, cybersecurity, and maritime technology.
- **Regional Importance:** The collaboration contributes to Indo-Pacific security architecture, promoting coordinated responses to challenges such as piracy, illegal fishing, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations.

India and Indonesia Begin 5th Samudra Shakti Naval Exercise

In the News: India and Indonesia have begun the **5th edition of their bilateral naval exercise 'Samudra Shakti 2025'** in the **Java Sea**, reinforcing their shared commitment to maritime security, regional stability, and a free and open Indo-Pacific. The exercise marks another milestone in the growing strategic and defence cooperation between the two nations.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Overview:** The fifth edition of **Samudra Shakti 2025** brings together the **Indian Navy** and the **Indonesian Navy (TNI AL)** for advanced maritime drills aimed at enhancing interoperability and operational synergy.
- **Participating Vessels:** The Indian Navy deployed **INS Kiltan** and **INS Kadmatt**, both anti-submarine warfare corvettes, while Indonesia participated with **KRI Sultan Iskandar Muda** and maritime patrol aircraft, demonstrating combined naval capability.
- **Exercise Components:** The exercise includes surface warfare, air defence operations, joint boarding drills, replenishment-at-sea, and tactical manoeuvres, focusing on strengthening tactical coordination and response to maritime threats.
- **Strategic Significance:** Samudra Shakti 2025 underscores the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Indonesia and aligns with India's Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- **Maritime Security Focus:** The exercise enhances cooperation in maritime domain awareness, anti-piracy operations, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) missions, improving regional disaster response capabilities.
- **Regional Importance:** Conducted in the **Java Sea**, the drill holds strategic significance for maintaining freedom of navigation and ensuring the security of critical sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific region.

