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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Ministry Releases State Mining Readiness Index Rankings

In the News: In January 2025, the **Ministry of Mines** released the first-ever **State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI) Rankings** to evaluate the preparedness of Indian states and Union Territories in developing their non-coal mining sectors through reforms, transparency, and sustainability.

Key Highlights

- The index aims to promote **competitive federalism** by ranking states based on their readiness to implement mining sector reforms and attract investments in the non-coal mineral sector.
- The rankings assess states across parameters such as **auction performance, exploration efforts, early operationalisation of mines, and sustainable mining practices**.
- States are divided into three categories for fair comparison: **Category A – Highly Mineral Endowed States**, **Category B – Mineral Potential States**, and **Category C – States with Limited Mineral Resources**.
- In **Category A**, **Madhya Pradesh secured the top rank**, followed by **Rajasthan** and **Gujarat**, reflecting strong auction processes and proactive mining governance.
- In **Category B**, **Goa ranked first**, followed by **Uttar Pradesh** and **Assam**, showing improved exploration initiatives and investor facilitation measures.
- In **Category C**, **Punjab topped the rankings**, followed by **Uttarakhand** and **Tripura**, highlighting efforts to streamline licensing and adopt sustainable mining practices despite limited reserves.
- The index encourages **early production from auctioned mines** to reduce delays between allocation and mineral extraction.
- The rankings also focus on **environmental responsibility**, emphasising afforestation, land rehabilitation, community welfare, and mine closure planning.
- The Ministry of Mines linked SMRI performance with **financial incentives** under the **PM Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)** and **District Mineral Foundation (DMF)** to reward well-performing states.
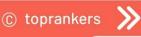
The initiative aims to support mineral self-reliance, reduce import dependency on critical minerals, and boost the mining sector's contribution to India's **economic growth and job creation.**

FSSAI Bans 'ORS' Label on Food Products

In the News: On **October 18, 2025**, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** issued a directive prohibiting food manufacturers from using the term **'ORS' (Oral Rehydration Solution)** on their product labels. The regulator clarified that **"ORS" is a medical formulation regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act** and cannot be used as a **marketing term** for flavored drinks, fruit beverages, or electrolyte-based products sold as refreshments.

Key Highlights

- **Misleading Claims Targeted:** FSSAI found that several beverage brands were **misleading consumers**—especially parents and athletes—by labelling sweetened electrolyte drinks as "ORS," despite not meeting WHO or pharmacopeia standards.
- **ORS is a Medical Formulation:** Genuine ORS is classified as a **therapeutic rehydration formulation** used to treat dehydration caused by diarrhoea and vomiting. It must meet specific composition standards notified under Indian Pharmacopoeia and WHO-UNICEF guidelines.
- **Directive to Food Businesses:** FSSAI has ordered all **Food Business Operators (FBOs)** to **remove "ORS" or similar terms like "Electrolyte ORS," "Hydration ORS," "Instant ORS"** from labels, advertisements, packaging, and promotional materials within **30 days**.
- **Mandatory Ingredient Compliance:** Products that intend to market themselves as rehydration beverages must now comply with **Food Safety and Standards (Food for Special Dietary Use) Regulations, 2022**, and cannot make medical treatment claims.
- **Public Health Concern:** FSSAI flagged that excess sugar and sodium in imitation ORS drinks could worsen dehydration or cause electrolyte imbalance, posing risks to children, elderly persons, and athletes.

- **No Medical Claims Allowed:** Food products cannot claim to treat, cure, or prevent medical conditions unless approved as drugs by the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).**
- **Misbranding and Penalties:** Violations will attract action under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** for **misbranding and misleading advertisements**, including product recall and financial penalties.
- **Difference Highlighted:** FSSAI clarified the difference between ORS and sports drinks—while ORS is designed for clinical dehydration, sports drinks are meant only to replenish fluids after exercise and are not substitutes for ORS.

India Surpasses $20 Billion in AI Investments, Poised for Global Leadership

In the News: India has surpassed **$20 billion in artificial intelligence (AI) investments**, positioning itself among the world's leading AI economies. The milestone reflects India's rapid progress in digital transformation, innovation, and policy-driven growth under the **National AI Mission** and **Digital India framewor**

Key Points:

- **Investment Milestone:** India's AI sector has crossed the **$20 billion mark**, driven by major contributions from global tech firms, domestic startups, and strategic government initiatives.
- **Policy Support:** The growth is anchored in flagship programs such as the **IndiaAI Mission**, **AI Innovation Hubs**, and the **AI Chips Manufacturing Program**, fostering an end-to-end AI ecosystem.
- **Global Ambition:** India aims to reach **$50 billion in AI investments by 2030**, consolidating its position as a trusted global AI powerhouse.
- **Sectoral Impact:** AI adoption has expanded across healthcare, agriculture, education, and manufacturing, boosting productivity and public service delivery.
- **Research and Infrastructure:** The government is promoting semiconductor R&D, establishing AI supercomputing clusters, and expanding AI Centres of Excellence in collaboration with academia and industry.
- **Startup Ecosystem:** Over **12,000 AI-focused startups** are now operational in India, contributing to employment, innovation, and AI-based exports.
- **Ethical and Responsible AI:** Initiatives like the upcoming AI (Accountability and Governance) Bill 2026 and the National Data Management Office (NDMO) aim to ensure responsible, transparent, and secure AI deployment.

India Upgrades Kabul Mission to Full Embassy Status

In the News: India has officially **upgraded its diplomatic mission in Kabul to full embassy status**, marking a major step toward re-establishing comprehensive diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan. The move reflects India's pragmatic policy of "engagement without recognition" toward the Taliban administration while balancing humanitarian aid and regional security interests.

Key Points:

- **Diplomatic Upgrade:** India elevated its Kabul mission from a technical office to a **full-fledged embassy**, signaling renewed engagement and operational normalization after the 2021 Taliban takeover.
- **Policy Context:** The move aligns with India's cautious approach of maintaining diplomatic presence without extending formal recognition to the Taliban government.
- **Focus Areas:** The embassy will oversee developmental assistance, humanitarian projects, and people-to-people ties, while ensuring India's strategic interests in Afghanistan are safeguarded.
- **Humanitarian Outreach:** India continues to supply essential aid, including food grains, medicines, and vaccines, reaffirming its commitment to the Afghan people's welfare.
- **Security Coordination:** The embassy will strengthen cooperation on **counter-terrorism and regional stability**, addressing threats from extremist groups operating in the region .
- **Regional Diplomacy:** The restoration of the full embassy aligns with India's broader strategy of re-engaging with South and Central Asia, in collaboration with Iran, Russia, and Central Asian partners.

9 Years of UDAN Scheme: Connecting India For Affordable Regional Air Travel

In the News: The **UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)** scheme has completed **nine successful years** since its launch in 2016, marking a major milestone in making regional air travel **affordable, accessible, and inclusive** across India. The initiative continues to strengthen regional connectivity by linking tier-2 and tier-3 cities with mainstream air routes under the vision of "Sab Uden, Sab Juden" (Let everyone fly, let everyone connect).

Key Points:

- **Scheme Launch:** The **UDAN scheme** was launched in **October 2016** by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** to make air travel accessible to the common citizen through affordable fares and enhanced regional connectivity.
- **Connectivity Expansion:** Over **550 air routes** have been operationalized, connecting **76 airports, heliports, and water aerodromes** across India, including several remote and hilly regions.
- **Passenger Reach:** The scheme has facilitated over **1.3 crore passenger trips**, significantly improving mobility between tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
- **Employment Generation:** UDAN has created thousands of **direct and indirect jobs** in aviation, logistics, tourism, and allied sectors, contributing to local economic growth.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Under UDAN, previously underserved regions such as **Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, the Northeast, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands** have been integrated into the national aviation network.
- **Environmental Focus:** The government is introducing **green airport initiatives** and encouraging **low-emission aircraft** for sustainable regional aviation under future UDAN phases.
- **Public-Private Partnership:** The scheme operates on a **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** model, enabling collaboration between central and state governments and private airline operators.
- **Future Vision:** Under **UDAN 5.2 and UDAN 6.0**, the government aims to expand connectivity to **1,000 routes by 2030**, emphasizing last-mile air transport and balanced regional development.
- **Achievements Over Nine Years:** Since inception, UDAN has become a **global model for affordable regional aviation**, bridging socio-economic divides and transforming the way India travels.

Appointment of Interlocutor for Gorkhaland Talks

In the News: The **Government of India** has appointed a new **interlocutor for the Gorkhaland talks**, signaling the revival of dialogue on the long-pending demand for a separate Gorkhaland state. The decision aims to restore peace, stability, and inclusive governance in the **Darjeeling hills** through consultations with all relevant stakeholders.

Key Points:

- **Appointment Announcement:** The **Union Home Ministry** appointed a **senior retired bureaucrat** as the interlocutor to mediate and facilitate discussions between the Centre, the **West Bengal government**, and local hill-based political parties.
- **Objective:** The appointment seeks to **revive the tripartite dialogue** mechanism and address socio-political grievances while preserving peace and development in the region.
- **Engagement with Stakeholders:** The interlocutor will hold consultations with representatives of the **Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA)**, **Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM)**, and other community leaders to ensure an inclusive peace process.
- **Focus on Stability and Development:** The renewed talks aim to strengthen **administrative decentralization, economic development, and cultural recognition** for the Gorkha population within the constitutional framework.
- **Background:** The Gorkhaland movement, centered in **Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and adjoining hill regions**, has sought a separate state since the 1980s, citing linguistic and cultural distinctiveness.
- **Past Initiatives:** Previous interlocutors and committees led to the establishment of the **Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA)** in 2011, which provided limited autonomy but did not resolve the statehood demand.

8th Pay Commission: Salary Hike, Fitment Factor, and Pay Matrix Explained

In the News: The Government of India announced preparations for the constitution of the 8th Central Pay Commission **(CPC)**, which will recommend revised pay structures for over **48 lakh central government employees** and **67 lakh pensioners**. The recommendations of the new commission are expected to take effect from **January 1, 2026**, continuing the decade-long cycle of pay revisions initiated under the 7th CPC in 2016.

Key Points:

- **Commission Formation:** The 8th Pay Commission is expected to be formally constituted by early 2026 to review and revise the pay matrix, allowances, and pensions of central government employees. Its terms of reference will include salary rationalization, inflation adjustment, and welfare benefits in line with current economic conditions.
- **Fitment Factor Revision:** The **fitment factor**, a key determinant of salary hikes, is projected to rise from **2.57 to around 3.0**, implying an average 20–25% increase in basic pay. This factor serves as a multiplier applied to the existing basic pay to compute the new pay level under the revised matrix.

- **Pay Matrix Structure:** The upcoming pay matrix will continue the simplified **rationalized framework introduced by the 7th CPC**, which consolidated grade pay and pay bands into a single table. The revised matrix will ensure uniform increments, transparency, and parity across different levels of service.
- **Allowances and Pensions:** Alongside the revision of basic pay, the 8th CPC is also expected to review dearness allowance (DA), house rent allowance (HRA), transport allowance, and pension formula**s** to reflect rising living costs and economic realities. This will particularly benefit retirees by enhancing post-service income stability.

Kerala to Be Declared India's First Extreme Poverty-Free State

In the News: **Kerala was declared India's first extreme poverty-free state**, marking a major milestone in the country's social development landscape. The achievement comes under the **'Nava Keralam' Mission**, which focused on identifying and rehabilitating families living in extreme poverty through targeted welfare programs. Supported by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, the initiative reflects Kerala's continued leadership in human development, inclusivity, and welfare governance.

Key Points:

- **Historic Milestone:** Kerala has become the first state in India to successfully eradicate extreme poverty after uplifting more than **64,000 families** identified as living below the extreme poverty line. The announcement follows a comprehensive review of poverty alleviation outcomes across all 14 districts.
- **Nava Keralam Mission:** The poverty-free declaration forms part of the **Nava Keralam (New Kerala) Mission**, a multi-sectoral poverty eradication program launched by the Kerala government. It integrates interventions across housing, healthcare, education, nutrition, and livelihood creation to ensure sustainable social inclusion.
- **Data-Driven Approach:** Using a data-backed identification process, the state government mapped households facing multiple deprivations — including lack of housing, health coverage, education, and income opportunities — and designed customized rehabilitation plans for each. **Key Interventions:** The initiative provided **pucca housing**, **free healthcare access**, **educational assistance**, and **skill-based employment programs**. It also integrated beneficiaries into ongoing welfare schemes such as Kudumbashree, Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee, and Karunya Health Scheme.
- **Partnership with UNDP:** The **United Nations Development Programme** played a pivotal role in supporting the monitoring and evaluation framework, ensuring that progress was measurable and outcomes were sustainable. The collaboration set a model for global best practices in localized poverty eradication.

Centre Offers Article 371 to Ladakh Amid Statehood Talks

In the News: **The Government of India offered Article 371-type constitutional safeguards to Ladakh** during ongoing talks with regional representatives demanding full statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule. The proposal was made to address concerns over the protection of **land, jobs, and cultural identity** in the Union Territory, which has been seeking greater autonomy since its separation from Jammu and Kashmir in 2019.

Key Points:

- **Government Proposal:** The Centre has proposed extending **Article 371-type provisions** to Ladakh, ensuring constitutional protection for local rights similar to those enjoyed by several northeastern states. The move aims to preserve Ladakh's distinct demography, environment, and traditional livelihoods.
- **Negotiations and Stakeholders:** The offer emerged during formal discussions with the **Leh Apex Body (LAB)** and the **Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)** — two key organizations representing diverse regional and religious communities. Both groups have been at the forefront of the movement demanding statehood, Sixth Schedule protection, and local self-governance.
- **Rationale for Article 371-Type Safeguards:** Unlike the **Sixth Schedule**, which applies to tribal autonomous councils in the Northeast, Article 371 provisions allow for **region-specific constitutional protections** without altering the Union Territory's administrative structure. The Centre believes this framework better balances local aspirations with **national security considerations**, given Ladakh's strategic location.
- **Scope of Protection:** The proposed safeguards include the protection of **land ownership**, **employment opportunities**, and **cultural and linguistic heritage** of the local population. Special provisions are expected to restrict non-residents from acquiring land and ensure priority for locals in government recruitment and development programs.

Jammu and Kashmir Revives 150-Year-Old Darbar Transfer After Four-Year Hiatus

In the News: **The Jammu and Kashmir administration revived the 150-year-old Darbar Move tradition** after a four-year hiatus. The historic practice, originally introduced by **Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1872**, involves the **biannual transfer of the Union Territory's capital** between **Srinagar and Jammu**. The move was reinstated to restore administrative balance, promote regional inclusion, and honor the cultural legacy of the erstwhile princely state.

Key Points:

- **Revival of the Tradition:** The Darbar Move, which had been suspended since 2021 following the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir into a Union Territory, has now been officially reinstated. Government offices will shift to **Jammu during the winter** and return to **Srinagar in the summer**, mirroring the pre-2020 administrative pattern.
- **Historical Background:** The tradition dates back to 1872 when Maharaja Ranbir Singh initiated the practice to maintain accessibility and governance across the two geographically and climatically distinct regions. It symbolized unity, administrative continuity, and the equal importance of both capitals in the governance structure.
- **Reason for Revival:** The decision to restore the Darbar Transfer was driven by the objective of **balancing development and governance** between Jammu and Kashmir regions. It also reflects the government's intent to preserve a historic institution that fosters regional harmony and administrative outreach.
- **Administrative Process:** Under the revived system, key departments and offices will now alternate between Jammu and Srinagar every six months. The arrangement will ensure direct public engagement, effective grievance redressal, and logistical coordination across both regions.

Kerala: First Underwater Tunnel to link Vypin and Fort Kochi

In the News: **The Kerala government announced India's first underwater road tunnel project**, which will connect **Vypin Island and Fort Kochi** beneath the **Vembanad Lake**. The project, developed by the **Kerala Road and Infrastructure Development Corporation (KRIDC)**, is designed to ease traffic congestion, improve inter-island connectivity, and promote sustainable urban mobility in the Kochi region.

Key Points:

- **Project Announcement:** The Kerala government approved the construction of the **country's first underwater twin-tube road tunnel**, linking Vypin and Fort Kochi. The project aims to provide a faster and more efficient alternative to the existing ferry services that currently handle most of the cross-channel movement.
- **Engineering Design:** The tunnel will span approximately **3 kilometers** beneath the Vembanad Lake and feature **four lanes** to accommodate two-way vehicular traffic. It will be constructed using advanced **immersed tunnel technology**, ensuring safety, durability, and minimal disruption to the lake's ecosystem.
- **Project Cost and Model:** Estimated at **₹1,950 crore**, the tunnel will be developed under a **public-private partnership (PPP)** model. The government expects to complete the project within **five years** from the commencement of construction.
- **Infrastructure and Connectivity Benefits:** Once completed, the tunnel will drastically reduce travel time between Vypin and Fort Kochi, relieving traffic congestion on existing roads and ferry routes. It will also enhance connectivity to major commercial and tourism hubs in the Greater Kochi area, boosting economic activity and regional mobility.
- **Environmental and Safety Considerations:** The project includes comprehensive **environmental impact assessments** and safety mechanisms to ensure minimal ecological disturbance to Vembanad Lake, one of India's largest and most biodiverse wetlands. Advanced monitoring systems will be integrated to manage air circulation, emergency evacuation, and water intrusion.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2025

In the News: **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)** jointly released the **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2025**. The report provides a comprehensive measure of global poverty beyond income, assessing deprivations in health, education, and living standards across 100 countries. The 2025 edition reveals that **1.1 billion people worldwide** still live in multidimensional poverty, with significant progress recorded in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Key Points:

- **Global Overview:** The 2025 MPI highlights that while the world has made notable gains in reducing poverty over the past decade, multidimensional poverty remains deeply entrenched in regions with low human development. Approximately 80%

of the global poor live in **Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia**, with deprivation concentrated in nutrition, sanitation, and housing.

- **India's Progress:** India continues to demonstrate major improvements, with around **230 million people lifted out of multidimensional poverty between 2005 and 2022**. The national MPI has declined sharply from **27.5% in 2015–16 to 11.2% in 2022–23**, driven by enhanced access to **clean cooking fuel, sanitation facilities, nutrition, and education**. Rural areas accounted for the majority of this reduction, reflecting the impact of targeted welfare schemes.
- **Key Deprivations:** Globally, the most significant deprivations were observed in **nutrition, child mortality, housing, and access to clean energy**. The report warns that climate change and conflict could reverse hard-won progress unless countries strengthen social protection and resilience systems.
- **Policy Implications:** The 2025 MPI underscores the need for **integrated policy approaches** that go beyond income-based poverty measures. It calls for investments in education, healthcare, housing, and sustainable livelihoods to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and inequality.
- **Measurement Framework:** The MPI assesses poverty through **10 indicators** across three dimensions — health, education, and living standards — providing a multidimensional picture of deprivation. Each dimension carries equal weight, ensuring a balanced evaluation of human well-being.
- **Global Outlook:** The UNDP emphasized that sustained progress toward the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), requires renewed international cooperation and inclusive growth strategies. The report identifies digital inclusion, climate adaptation, and gender equality as critical drivers of future poverty reduction.

Jammu & Kashmir – First Rajya Sabha Elections since abrogation of Article 370

In the News: Jammu & Kashmir is set to hold its first Rajya Sabha elections since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, marking a major step in restoring full parliamentary representation to the Union Territory. The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced that the polls will be conducted in late October 2025 to fill vacant seats in the Upper House, reflecting the ongoing normalization of democratic processes in the region.

Key Points:

- **Historic Election:** This will be the first Rajya Sabha election in Jammu & Kashmir after it was reorganized into a Union Territory following the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation into Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh in 2019.
- **Seats and Representation:** The elections will fill four Rajya Sabha seats that have remained vacant since February 2021, as the Union Territory had no Legislative Assembly functioning since the reorganization.
- **ECI Announcement:** The Election Commission of India released the schedule for the elections following the successful conclusion of the Assembly polls in J&K, paving the way for the reconstitution of the region's legislative and parliamentary representation..
- **Eligible Voters:** The newly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the 90 constituencies of Jammu & Kashmir will form the electoral college for the Rajya Sabha elections.
- **Background Context:** Jammu & Kashmir had been under President's Rule and later Lieutenant Governor's administration since 2018. The reorganization removed its special status under Article 370 and Article 35A, integrating it fully into the Indian Union.

Bajrang Setu: India's First Glass Suspension Bridge Set to Transform Rishikesh by 2025

In the News: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announced the near completion of Bajrang Setu, India's first glass suspension bridge, set to open for the public in Rishikesh by the end of 2025. The architectural marvel, designed to offer breathtaking views of the Ganga River and the surrounding Himalayan foothills, is expected to become a major tourism landmark, blending adventure, spirituality, and sustainability in one destination.

Key Points:

- **Project Overview:** The Bajrang Setu project in Rishikesh is envisioned as India's first full-scale glass suspension bridge, replacing the historic Lakshman Jhula, which was closed for safety reasons in 2019. The bridge has been constructed using high-strength structural glass and advanced steel composites to ensure durability and safety while maintaining aesthetic appeal.
- **Design and Structure:** Spanning 150 meters in length and 2 meters in width, the bridge is inspired by modern global designs like China's Zhangjiajie Glass Bridge. It features layered glass flooring with reinforced tension cables that allow pedestrians to experience an unmatched panoramic view of the Ganga from above.

- **Tourism and Economic Impact:** The bridge is expected to significantly boost eco- and adventure tourism in Uttarakhand, drawing both domestic and international visitors. Officials anticipate that Bajrang Setu will position Rishikesh as a global hotspot for spiritual tourism, river-based recreation, and architectural tourism, thus enhancing local employment and income opportunities
- **Cultural and Symbolic Relevance:** Adventure capital, creating a unique experiential link between tradition and modernity. The name Bajrang Setu pays homage to Lord Hanuman, symbolizing strength and devotion.
- **Implementation and Agencies:** The bridge is being developed under the supervision of the Public Works Department of Uttarakhand with technical support from IIT Roorkee. Construction has been managed with strict adherence to environmental sustainability guidelines to preserve the Ganga's ecology.
- **Strategic Vision:** Once inaugurated, Bajrang Setu will not only serve as a safe pedestrian connection across the Ganga but also stand as a symbol of India's infrastructural innovation, integrating cutting-edge engineering with cultural heritage to promote sustainable development in hill regions.

UIDAI Launches SITAA to Enhance Aadhaar Security and Drive Digital Innovation

In the News: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) launched SITAA - the Secure Identity Technologies and Aadhaar Advancement platform aimed at fortifying Aadhaar's security framework and fostering digital innovation across India's identity ecosystem. The initiative seeks to integrate advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and quantum-resistant encryption to strengthen data protection, enhance authentication reliability, and promote user trust in digital governance.

Key Points:

- **Platform Launch:** The UIDAI introduced SITAA as a state-of-the-art framework to advance the security architecture of the Aadhaar system. The platform is designed to identify emerging cyber threats, improve identity authentication methods, and ensure data integrity across all Aadhaar-linked services.
- **Tech-Driven Security:** SITAA incorporates technologies like blockchain for tamper-proof audit trails, AI-powered threat detection for anomaly tracking, and encryption protocols resistant to quantum computing risks. These innovations aim to make Aadhaar one of the world's most secure and resilient digital identity systems.
- **Data Privacy and Compliance:** The initiative aligns with the upcoming Digital Personal Data Protection Act, ensuring Aadhaar operations adhere to the highest global standards of privacy, consent-based data use, and transparent governance. It will create a strong compliance ecosystem between UIDAI, state agencies, and service providers.
- **Facilitation of Digital Innovation:** Beyond security, SITAA supports startups, fintech companies, and digital service providers to develop identity-based innovations in sectors like banking, healthcare, and e-governance, opening new frontiers for India's digital public infrastructure.
- **Strategic Vision:** UIDAI's CEO highlighted that SITAA represents Aadhaar's evolution from a foundational ID system to a technologically advanced, citizen-centric digital platform safeguarding identity in the AI era. The initiative reaffirms India's leadership in secure digital identity governance and innovation at a global scale.

INTERNATIONAL

India–MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)

In the News: India and MERCOSUR are exploring the expansion of their Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), originally signed in 2004, to cover a wider range of products and deepen economic engagement. Talks gained momentum in 2025 with both sides aiming to include services and investment in the upcoming negotiation rounds.

Key Highlights

- **About the Agreement:** The India–MERCOSUR PTA was signed in 2004 and came into force in 2009. It provides **preferential tariff access** to a limited number of products traded between India and MERCOSUR member countries—**Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay**.
- **Product Coverage:** The agreement currently covers **450 tariff lines from India** and **452 tariff lines from MERCOSUR**, offering **10–100% tariff concessions** on items like pharmaceuticals, textiles, organic chemicals, auto parts, and agricultural products.

- **Trade Value & Growth:** Bilateral trade between India and MERCOSUR crossed **USD 17 billion in 2023–24**, with major Indian exports including **diesel, chemicals, pharma, and engineering goods**, while imports include **soya oil, sugar, leather, and minerals**.
- **Expansion Talks in 2025:** Both sides are considering expanding the PTA to **over 3,000–4,000 products** and include **services, investment, and rules of origin** to boost trade cooperation.
- **Strategic Importance for India:** The PTA enables India to **diversify its energy and food imports**, strengthens **South-South cooperation**, and improves India's economic footprint in **Latin America**, a region rich in **critical minerals and agri-resources**.
- **Importance for MERCOSUR:** MERCOSUR gains access to India's **large consumer market** and opportunities for cooperation in **renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, information technology, and automobile manufacturing**.
- **Trade Challenges:** Current challenges include **logistical barriers, high shipping costs, complex customs procedures, language barriers, and limited awareness among businesses** on both sides.
- **Potential Areas of Cooperation:** Emerging sectors of collaboration include **biofuels (ethanol blending), agri-processing, mining of lithium and rare minerals, pharmaceuticals, defence manufacturing, and digital trade**.
- **Institutional Mechanism:** Trade discussions are governed by the **Joint Administrative Committee (JAC)** established under the PTA framework, which meets periodically to review implementation and resolve trade issues.

Sanae Takaichi: Japan's First Female Prime Minister

In the News: Sanae Takaichi made history by becoming **Japan's first woman Prime Minister**, breaking a political glass ceiling in a country long dominated by male leadership. She was elected as the leader of the ruling **Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)** after Fumio Kishida stepped down, and was subsequently elected as Prime Minister by Japan's National Diet.

Key Highlights

- **Historic Milestone for Japan:** Takaichi became the **first female Prime Minister** in Japan's history, a major development in a nation ranked low globally on gender equality in politics.
- **Political Background:** She is a **veteran LDP politician** and one of the party's most conservative leaders. She has held important portfolios, including **Internal Affairs and Communications Minister** and **Economic Security Minister**.
- **Close Ideological Ally of Shinzo Abe:** Takaichi is known to be a **protégé of former PM Shinzo Abe** and is aligned with his **nationalist and conservative political ideology**, especially on defence and constitutional reforms.
- **Focus on National Security:** In her first address, she emphasized strengthening Japan's **self-defence capabilities** amid regional threats from **China, North Korea and Russia**, and reaffirmed Japan's alliance with the **United States**.
- **Economic Agenda:** Takaichi promised a **pro-growth economic strategy** with a focus on **technological innovation, semiconductor production, supply chain security**, and measures to counter Japan's **shrinking population and labour shortage**.
- **Stance on Constitution:** She supports **amending Japan's pacifist Constitution (Article 9)** to give legal recognition to the Self Defense Forces (SDF), a long-debated issue in Japan's politics.
- **Foreign Policy Outlook:** She advocates a **strong Indo-Pacific strategy**, deeper partnerships with **India, Australia, ASEAN**, and standing firm against **Chinese maritime aggression** in the East China Sea.
- **Domestic Policy Priorities:** Takaichi has announced policies addressing **economic security, energy independence, inflation control**, and support for **traditional family values**, which has drawn both support and criticism.
- **Controversies:** Her political views are considered right-wing conservative. She has faced criticism for visiting the Yasukuni Shrine (seen by China and South Korea as a symbol of Japanese wartime militarism) and for opposing progressive gender reforms like separate surnames for married couples.

Tuvalu Joins IUCN as 90th Member State

In the News: On **October 22, 2025**, **Tuvalu**, a low-lying Pacific island nation threatened by sea-level rise, officially became the **90th Member State of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. Tuvalu's membership signals its commitment to global environmental governance and marine biodiversity protection.

Key Highlights

- **Climate-Vulnerable Nation Joins IUCN:** Tuvalu is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries and could be **partially submerged by 2100**. By joining IUCN, it aims **to strengthen international support for its climate resilience and conservation strategies.**

- **Focus on Ocean Conservation:** Nearly **98% of Tuvalu's territory is ocean**, and it sits within **rich coral reef ecosystems**. Membersip will help Tuvalu protect marine biodiversity, fisheries, and coastal ecosystems that are vital for its food security and economy.
- **Access to Global Conservation Expertise:** As an IUCN Member State, Tuvalu will now participate in **global policy-making forums** and gain access to conservation funding, technical assistance, and nature-based solutions for climate adaptation.
- **Supports 'Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project' (TCAP):** Tuvalu's IUCN membership aligns with its **national adaptation projects**, including artificial island-building, mangrove restoration, and coastal defense mechanisms supported by the **Green Climate Fund**.
- **Strengthening Pacific Environmental Diplomacy:** Tuvalu's entry follows a trend of **Pacific Island nations taking leadership** in climate negotiations. It enhances regional coordination with **Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu** within IUCN platforms.
- **IUCN's Role:** The **International Union for Conservation of Nature** is the world's largest environmental network with 1,400+ members, including governments, NGOs, and scientific institutions. It is the authority behind the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**.
- **Environmental Priorities for Tuvalu:** Key conservation priorities include coral reef protection, climate-induced displacement, ocean governance, fisheries sustainability, and protection of endemic species.
- **Link to Climate Justice Agenda:** Tuvalu has been a global advocate of "climate liability" and "loss and damage" **financing**, and its IUCN membership amplifies its voice in **UNFCCC and COP climate summits**.
- **Digital Nation Initiative:** Tuvalu has launched the **"Future Now Project"** to become the world's **first digital nation** in case rising seas displace its population. Environmental protection is central to this initiative.

India, UK Launch Ramanujan Fellowship for Young Scientists

In the News: India and the **United Kingdom** have jointly launched the **Ramanujan Fellowship for Young Scientists**, aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in science, technology, and innovation. The initiative seeks to empower young researchers and promote joint scientific projects in emerging and high-impact areas

Key Points:

- **Fellowship Launch:** The **India–UK Ramanujan Fellowship** was launched jointly by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India**, and the **UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)** to foster cross-border collaboration in advanced scientific research.
- **Objective:** The fellowship aims to support **early-career scientists** and researchers working in frontier domains such as **artificial intelligence, clean energy, health sciences, and quantum technologies**.
- **Named in Honour:** The program is named after **Srinivasa Ramanujan**, India's legendary mathematician, symbolizing excellence, creativity, and global scientific exchange.
- **Scale and Duration:** Over the next five years, the fellowship will support **75 young scientists** (from both India and the UK) through **joint research projects and exchange programs**.
- **Funding and Support:** Selected fellows will receive **financial assistance, access to advanced research infrastructure**, and **mentorship opportunities** from leading institutions in both countries.
- **Focus on Innovation:** The fellowship promotes research aligned with **sustainable development, digital innovation, renewable technologies, and healthcare solutions**.
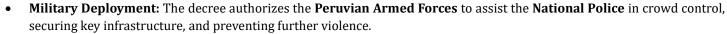
Peru Declares 30-Day State of Emergency in Lima

In the News: The **Government of Peru** has declared a **30-day state of emergency in Lima**, the capital city, following a surge in violent protests over economic hardships and political unrest. The measure aims to restore order and safeguard public infrastructure amid growing tensions

Key Points:

- **Emergency Declaration:** On **October 21, 2025**, the Peruvian government imposed a **30-day state of emergency** in Lima, citing threats to public safety, law, and order.
- **Background of Unrest:** The decision follows **widespread demonstrations** demanding the resignation of President **Dina Boluarte**, driven by discontent over inflation, unemployment, and political reforms.
- **Suspension of Rights:** Under the emergency order, **freedom of assembly, movement, and protest** have been temporarily suspended, allowing authorities greater control to maintain peace.

- **Military Deployment:** The decree authorizes the **Peruvian Armed Forces** to assist the **National Police** in crowd control, securing key infrastructure, and preventing further violence.
- **Casualties and Damage:** Several **injuries and fatalities** were reported in clashes between protesters and security forces, along with damage to public buildings and transportation routes.
- **Government Justification:** Officials stated that the measure was necessary to **prevent escalation and protect civilians**, emphasizing that democratic order and national security remain top priorities.
- **Human Rights Concerns:** Civil society groups and opposition leaders have expressed concern over **potential misuse of emergency powers** and urged the government to pursue dialogue instead of repression.
- **International Response:** The **Organization of American States (OAS)** and **UN Human Rights Office** have called for restraint, transparency, and peaceful resolution through democratic means.

Rodrigo Paz Elected New President of Bolivia
In the News: **Rodrigo Paz** has been elected as the **new President of Bolivia** following a closely contested runoff election held in October 2025. Representing the **Civic Community (Comunidad Ciudadana)** alliance, his victory marks a major political shift from years of dominance by the **Movement for Socialism (MAS)** party.
Key Points:
- **Election Outcome:** Rodrigo Paz, leader of the **Civic Community coalition**, won the **2025 Bolivian presidential election** after a tight runoff against the ruling MAS candidate, securing a narrow yet decisive mandate.
- **Political Background:** He is the **son of former Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora**, and has previously served as a **senator and mayor of Tarija**, known for his moderate and reform-oriented political stance.
- **Policy Priorities:** Paz has pledged to focus on **institutional stability, democratic reforms, and economic diversification**, reducing Bolivia's overdependence on natural gas exports.
- **Governance Vision:** His administration aims to promote **national reconciliation**, combat **corruption**, and strengthen **judicial independence** to rebuild public trust in governance. **Economic Agenda:** Paz plans to invest in **renewable energy, agriculture, and technology sectors** to generate employment and sustainable growth.
- **Foreign Relations:** The new president has emphasized **balanced diplomacy**, aiming to rebuild relations with regional partners and the international community while maintaining Bolivia's sovereignty. **Rodrigo Paz** has been elected as the **new President of Bolivia** following a closely contested runoff election held in October 2025. Representing the **Civic Community (Comunidad Ciudadana)** alliance, his victory marks a major political shift from years of dominance by the **Movement for Socialism (MAS)** party
- **Oath and Transition:** Rodrigo Paz will formally **assume office in January 2026**, succeeding the interim government, and is expected to announce his cabinet in the coming weeks.

New Zealand Plans Social Media Ban for Under-16s
In the News: The New Zealand government announced plans to ban social media access for individuals under the age **of 16**, citing growing mental health concerns and the negative influence of online platforms on young users. The proposal, led by **Prime Minister Christopher Luxon**, aims to safeguard children from cyberbullying, harmful content, and addiction associated with prolonged digital exposure. The legislation is expected to be introduced in Parliament in early 2026 following public consultations.
Key Points:
- **Policy Announcement:** The proposed legislation seeks to prohibit children below 16 years of age from creating or maintaining accounts on major social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and X (formerly Twitter). The move follows increasing global concern about the psychological and social effects of early exposure to social media.
- **Digital Age Verification:** As part of the proposal, technology companies will be mandated to implement **robust age-verification systems** using government-approved digital IDs or secure third-party mechanisms. Non-compliant platforms may face significant fines and regulatory penalties.
- **Mental Health Protection:** The initiative stems from research linking excessive social media use among teenagers to rising cases of anxiety, depression, body-image issues, and sleep disorders. The government emphasized that this step is part of a broader youth well-being strategy to foster healthier lifestyles and offline engagement.

- **Prime Minister's Statement:** PM Christopher Luxon highlighted that the proposal reflects a "moral responsibility" to protect children from harmful digital environments and encourage stronger parental oversight. He noted that the policy prioritizes mental resilience over digital dependence.
- **Public and Expert Reactions:** The proposal has generated mixed reactions. Mental health advocates and educators have praised it as a bold and necessary reform, while critics argue it may infringe on digital rights and place excessive responsibility on tech companies. Parents' groups have called for balanced implementation with strong education and awareness programs.
- **Global Context:** New Zealand joins a growing list of countries, including France and the United States, considering **age-based restrictions on social media**. The move reflects a worldwide policy shift toward regulating online content to protect minors, signaling a new phase in digital governance and child safety legislation.

Saudi Arabia Abolishes Kafala System What It Means?

In the News: Saudi Arabia officially abolished the decades-old Kafala (sponsorship) system, marking one of the most significant labor reforms in the country's history. The announcement was made under the framework of **Vision 2030**, Saudi Arabia's national modernization and diversification initiative. The reform introduces a new labor framework aimed at safeguarding migrant workers' rights, improving labor market transparency, and aligning national laws with international human rights standards.

Key Points:

- **End of Kafala System:** The Kafala system, which had been in place for over seven decades, tied the legal residency of foreign workers to their employers, often leading to exploitation, limited mobility, and restrictions on basic rights. Its abolition represents a transformative shift toward a more equitable labor structure.
- **New Labour Framework:** Under the new reform, migrant workers can now change employers freely after contract completion or with prior notice, without needing employer consent. They can also obtain **exit and re-entry visas** independently, providing them greater autonomy and dignity in their employment conditions
- **Workers' Rights and Protections:** The reform introduces digital grievance mechanisms, transparent wage protection systems, and clear employment contracts. These measures aim to reduce cases of abuse, unpaid wages, and forced labor while ensuring accountability among employers.
- **Alignment with Vision 2030:** The abolition of the Kafala system forms a core part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 agenda, which seeks to modernize the Saudi economy, expand labor participation, and improve global perceptions of Saudi Arabia's human rights record.
- **Impact on Migrant Workforce:** The decision affects millions of migrant workers, primarily from South and Southeast Asia, including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines. The reform enhances their legal rights, mobility, and access to justice, significantly improving living and working conditions.
- **Global and Regional Significance:** International organizations such as the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** and human rights groups have hailed the move as a landmark reform. It sets a precedent for other Gulf countries to undertake similar labor system transformations, promoting fair migration and ethical employment practices across the region.

India Re-Elected Vice-Chair of COP10 Bureau on Anti-Doping

In the News: India has been re-elected as the Vice-Chair of the COP10 Bureau to the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport (ICADS), reaffirming its strong global leadership in promoting clean and fair sports. The decision was made during the 10th session of the Conference of Parties (COP10) held in Paris in October 2025.

Key Points:

- **Re-Election:** India's re-election as Vice-Chair of the COP10 Bureau underscores its continued commitment to global anti-doping governance and reflects the trust of the international sports community in India's anti-doping framework.
- **Representation:** India was represented by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), which functions under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, ensuring compliance with global anti-doping regulations and awareness initiatives.
- **About COP10:** The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision-making body of the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport, which reviews global implementation of anti-doping measures, fosters cooperation, and sets policy directions for clean sport.
- **Global Participation:** The COP10 meeting witnessed participation from over 190 member countries, alongside representatives from UNESCO, World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and international sports organizations.

- **India's Achievements in Anti-Doping:** India has established Asia's largest National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) in New Delhi and introduced athlete education and testing programs across national and state levels to ensure fairness and integrity in sports.
- **Policy Initiatives:** The Government of India has enacted the National Anti-Doping Act, 2022, giving NADA statutory powers for investigation, enforcement, and testing, making India one of the few countries with dedicated anti-doping legislation.

Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2025: "Minds Over AI"

In the News: Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week 2025 was inaugurated under the theme "Minds Over AI," emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, ethical media usage, and responsible application of artificial intelligence. Organized by UNESCO and its global partners, the celebration highlighted the urgent need to strengthen public capacity to evaluate and manage AI-influenced information ecosystems. The event aimed to foster global collaboration in promoting digital literacy, ethical technology use, and informed civic participation in the age of artificial intelligence.

Key Points:

- **Global Launch:** Global MIL Week 2025 was officially inaugurated by UNESCO in cooperation with the Republic of South Korea as the host country. The opening ceremony held in Seoul brought together policymakers, educators, media professionals, and digital innovators from over 100 countries to discuss strategies for enhancing media and AI literacy.
- **Theme Focus:** The 2025 theme, "Minds Over AI," underscores the need for human intelligence, empathy, and ethics to lead technological advancement rather than being overshadowed by artificial systems. It called for strengthening the cognitive and social skills necessary to navigate a rapidly evolving information landscape shaped by AI and digital media.
- **Educational Empowerment:** UNESCO launched a series of global learning resources, school toolkits, and policy frameworks focused on integrating media and information literacy into formal and informal education systems. Special emphasis was placed on equipping youth with analytical and ethical decision-making skills related to AI-generated content.
- **Youth and AI Literacy:** Youth delegates presented projects focused on ethical AI innovation, creative uses of machine learning in education, and campaigns promoting fact-checking and inclusivity in digital spaces. The discussions emphasized empowering the next generation as both responsible creators and critical consumers of information.
- **Global Commitment:** At the conclusion of the week, UNESCO called upon member nations to strengthen national MIL strategies, integrate AI ethics into media education curricula, and expand access to digital learning tools, reaffirming its vision of an informed and ethically aware global society capable of managing the opportunities and challenges posed by AI.

India Becomes First Non-NATO Nation to Participate in Spain's Ocean Sky 2025

In the News: India became the first non-NATO nation to participate in Spain's prestigious multilateral air combat exercise, Ocean Sky 2025. The participation of the Indian Air Force (IAF) marked a major milestone in India's expanding global defense engagements and showcased its growing strategic partnerships with Western nations. The exercise, held at the Gando Air Base in the Canary Islands, focused on advanced aerial combat operations, interoperability, and joint mission planning with NATO air forces.

Key Points:

- **Historic Participation:** India's inclusion in Ocean Sky 2025 made it the first non-NATO country to join this high-end multinational air combat exercise, reflecting the growing trust and recognition of India's aerial capabilities among Western defense allies.
- **Strategic Significance:** The Indian Air Force's involvement symbolizes New Delhi's increasing cooperation with European defense partners and reinforces India's role as a key global security stakeholder committed to maintaining international peace and airspace stability.
- **Exercise Objectives:** Ocean Sky 2025 aims to enhance multilateral coordination in complex air operations, including beyond-visual-range engagements, aerial refueling, and electronic warfare. The drill serves as a testing ground for advanced tactics, integrated command systems, and fighter interoperability.
- **Indian Contingent:** The IAF deployed a fleet of fighter aircraft, mid-air refuelers, and airborne early-warning assets for the exercise. Indian pilots trained alongside NATO counterparts from Spain, the United States, Germany, and Italy, demonstrating high-level combat professionalism and adaptability.
- **Strengthening Defense Partnerships:** Participation deepened bilateral defense cooperation between India and Spain, building upon earlier military exchanges and joint training programs. It also strengthened India's position as a valued defense partner for NATO members.

- **Diplomatic and Geopolitical Implications:** India's invitation to Ocean Sky underscores its balanced foreign policy approach—maintaining strategic autonomy while engaging constructively with both Western and non-Western security blocs. The move signals increasing Western acknowledgment of India's role as a stabilizing force in the Indo-Pacific and global defense frameworks.

SPORTS

Ahmedabad Recommended to Host 2030 Commonwealth Games

In the News: In January 2025, the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** recommended **Ahmedabad** as the official host city for India's bid to organize the **2030 Commonwealth Games**, marking a major step in India's push to host a large-scale international multi-sport event after over a decade.

Key Highlights

- **India's Official Bid Proposal:** The IOA submitted its proposal to the **Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF)**, endorsing Ahmedabad as the host city due to its **world-class infrastructure** and growing global profile. **Sardar Patel Sports Enclave to be the Venue Hub:** The majority of sporting events are planned to take place at the **Sardar Patel Sports Enclave** in **Motera**, which already houses the **Narendra Modi Stadium**, the world's largest cricket stadium.
- **Government Support Ensured:** The **Gujarat Government** and **Central Government** have expressed full backing for the bid, ensuring funding support, security arrangements, and urban development plans connected to the Games.
- **Legacy Infrastructure Development:** The bid focuses on long-term urban transformation, including upgraded transport networks, **Metro expansion**, athlete villages, and development of sports training facilities to boost India's sports ecosystem.
- **Second Time Host Possibility:** If selected, India would host the Commonwealth Games for the **second time** after successfully hosting the **2010 Games in New Delhi**.
- **Economic and Tourism Boost:** The Games are expected to accelerate Gujarat's economic growth and attract **global tourism**, positioning Ahmedabad as a major **international sports destination**.
- **Competitive Bidding Environment:** India's bid gains strength after **Australia withdrew** from hosting due to rising costs, and **Canada paused** its interest, increasing the likelihood of Ahmedabad being selected.
- **Focus on Youth and Sports Promotion:** The bid highlights India's growing sports ambition under initiatives like **Khelo India** and **Fit India**, aiming to inspire youth participation in athletics and international competition.
- **Sustainability Commitments:** The proposed Games will emphasize **sustainability** through green venues, renewable energy use, and minimal carbon emissions in line with global climate standards.
- **Decision Timeline:** The final host city announcement for the **2030 Commonwealth Games** is expected later in **2025** after evaluation by CGF delegates and international inspection committees.

Morocco Stuns Argentina to Win Historic U-20 World Cup

In the News: On 20 October 2025, Morocco defeated Argentina 2-0 in the final of the 2025 FIFA U-20 World Cup in Santiago, Chile — marking their **first-ever FIFA tournament title**.

Key Highlights

- **Historic Victory for Africa:** Morocco became the first African (and Arab) nation to win the FIFA U-20 World Cup, defeating six-time champions Argentina.
- **Final Match Result**: Morocco beat Argentina 2-0 in the final.
- **Goals:** The two goals were scored by Morocco's star player Yassir Zabiri — one from a free-kick in the 12th minute and another close-range finish in the 29th minute.
- **Path to the Final:** Morocco defeated Brazil and France en route; Argentina had been favourites.
- **Significance:** This win highlights Morocco's rising football infrastructure (youth academies, Mohamed VI Football Academy) and signals a shift in global youth-football dynamics.
- It also serves as a landmark achievement for African football.
- **Coach and Strategy:** Under coach Mohamed Ouahbi, Morocco combined disciplined defending with fast counters — effective against Argentina's traditionally possession-based style.
- **Argentina's Missed Opportunity:** Despite being favourites and having a strong tournament run, Argentina could not break down Morocco's defence and stumbled in the final.

- **Global Reaction:** Celebrated by FIFA and African football communities as a major milestone.
- Future Implications: Boosts Morocco's football profile and could motivate further investment in youth development across Africa.

India Unveils FIDE World Cup 2025 Logo and Anthem

In the News: India officially unveiled the **logo and anthem for the FIDE World Cup 2025** at a grand ceremony in Chennai. The event, attended by five-time World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand and Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, marked a significant milestone in India's journey as a global chess powerhouse. The tournament will be hosted in Chennai from **August 10 to 25, 2025**, celebrating India's deep-rooted association with the ancient game of Chaturanga, the origin of modern chess.

Key Points:

- **Launch Event:** The official logo and anthem of the FIDE World Cup 2025 were unveiled in Chennai by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the All India Chess Federation (AICF). The ceremony reflected India's pride in hosting one of the world's most prestigious chess tournaments for the first time.
- **Symbolism of the Logo:** The logo design draws inspiration from India's cultural heritage and the intricate geometry of the chessboard, blending the elegance of Indian art with the precision and strategy that define the game. It represents both tradition and modernity, emphasizing India's role in reviving the global chess legacy.
- **Anthem Theme:** The official anthem celebrates India as the "Home of Chess," tracing the game's origins to ancient *Chaturanga*. It carries a message of unity, intellect, and global harmony, highlighting chess as a symbol of strategic thought and cultural connection across nations.
- **Dignitaries Present:** The event featured prominent figures including Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand, Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, and senior officials of the FIDE and AICF. Their presence underscored the significance of India's growing influence in international chess governance and organization.
- **Tournament Overview:** The FIDE World Cup 2025 will bring together elite players from across the globe, including reigning world champions, top-rated grandmasters, and emerging prodigies. The matches will be held in Chennai, reinforcing the city's identity as the chess capital of India.

Neeraj Chopra Honoured as Lieutenant Colonel in Territorial Army

In the News: Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra was conferred the honorary rank of **Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Territorial Army**. The recognition was bestowed during a special ceremony held at the Army Headquarters in New Delhi, acknowledging his outstanding achievements in athletics and his role in elevating India's global sporting stature.

Key Points:

- **Honorary Rank Recognition:** The Indian Army awarded Neeraj Chopra the honorary title of Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army, joining a select group of distinguished civilians recognized for their contributions to the nation in various fields.
- **Ceremonial Event:** The investiture ceremony took place at the Army Headquarters in New Delhi, where senior Army officials lauded Chopra's discipline, perseverance, and dedication—values that align closely with the ethos of the armed forces.
- **Contribution to National Pride:** The honorary commission acknowledges Neeraj Chopra's monumental role in inspiring India's youth and promoting national unity through sports. His Olympic victory in Tokyo 2020 made him the first Indian to win a gold medal in athletics, significantly uplifting India's sporting prestige
- **Previous Military Honors:** Similar honorary ranks have been conferred upon exceptional personalities such as cricketers Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Kapil Dev, reflecting the Army's tradition of recognizing excellence that brings glory to the nation.

Lionel Messi Clinches 2025 MLS Golden Boot After Stunning Season with Inter Miami

In the News: Lionel Messi clinched the 2025 MLS Golden Boot after an extraordinary season with Inter Miami, reaffirming his status as one of football's greatest icons. The Argentine maestro finished the campaign with 34 goals and 18 assists, leading Inter Miami to the Eastern Conference title and setting new records that elevated both his legacy and the stature of Major League Soccer.

Key Points:

- **Award Achievement:** Lionel Messi secured the 2025 MLS Golden Boot after finishing as the league's top scorer with 34 goals, becoming the oldest player in MLS history to win the award at 38 years of age. His remarkable consistency and precision in front of goal once again demonstrated his unmatched football intellect and technical mastery.
- **Inter Miami's Historic Rise:** Under Messi's leadership, Inter Miami captured the Eastern Conference title for the first time and qualified directly for the MLS Cup Playoffs semifinals. His influence both on and off the field played a decisive role in shaping Inter Miami into one of the strongest and most admired teams in the league.
- **Record-Breaking Performances:** Messi set a new league record with 52 goal contributions, combining 34 goals with 18 assists in a single season. His involvement in nearly every attacking play showcased his adaptability, sharp vision, and enduring dominance even in the later stages of his career.
- **Dynamic Partnerships:** Messi's collaboration with former Barcelona teammates Luis Suárez and Jordi Alba created one of the most effective attacking trios in MLS history. Their chemistry, built over years of playing together in Europe, translated seamlessly into Inter Miami's explosive gameplay, often leaving opposing defenses overwhelmed.
- **Spectator and Global Impact:** Inter Miami's matches turned into global events, selling out DRV PNK Stadium throughout the season. The buzz around Messi's performances sparked record-breaking attendance figures, soaring jersey sales, and heightened international viewership of MLS fixtures, expanding the league's global footprint.
- **Recognition and Accolades:** Tributes poured in from across the footballing world, including congratulations from FIFA and MLS officials. Messi was praised for his unwavering professionalism, leadership qualities, and his ability to raise the competitive level of the league, inspiring a new generation of football fans in the United States and beyond.
- **Career Milestone:** This Golden Boot marked Messi's second since joining Major League Soccer and added to his unparalleled list of honors, including multiple Ballon d'Or titles, UEFA Champions League triumphs, Copa América glory, and a FIFA World Cup victory. His 2025 MLS season stands as yet another defining chapter in a career that continues to shape football's global narrative.

ENVIRONMENT

UN Reports Record CO_2 Rise in 2024
In the News: On November 2024, the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released a report stating that global atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels have reached a **record high**, marking one of the **largest annual increases ever recorded**. The rise continues despite global commitments under the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C.
Key Highlights
- **CO_2 Levels Reach Alarming Peak:** The report found that average global CO_2 concentration crossed **422 ppm (parts per million)** in 2024, compared to the pre-industrial level of 280 ppm, indicating a **50% increase due to human activities.**
- **Major Drivers of Emissions:** Fossil fuel combustion, industrial production, and deforestation continue to drive emissions, with **Asia and North America accounting for over 60%** of global CO_2 output.
- **Carbon Sinks Losing Efficiency:** Natural carbon sinks like **forests and oceans** absorbed **less CO_2 in 2024** due to rising temperatures and environmental degradation, weakening Earth's ability to regulate the climate.
- **Global Temperature Impact:** The record CO_2 levels make **2024 likely to be among the hottest years ever recorded**, intensifying extreme weather events such as **heatwaves, floods, wildfires, and droughts** across continents.
- **Net-Zero Goals at Risk:** The report warns that **current national commitments (NDCs)** under the Paris Agreement are **insufficient**, and the world is **not on track** to meet the 1.5°C or even 2°C warming target unless **emissions peak before 2026**.
- **Call for Urgent Action:** The UN urged countries to **rapidly phase down coal**, **triple renewable energy capacity by 2030**, **end deforestation**, and **invest in carbon capture technologies** to prevent irreversible climate damage.
- **Inequality in Emissions Contribution:** The top **10% of global emitters are responsible for nearly 50% of emissions**, while developing nations face **disproportionate climate impacts** despite contributing the least.
- **Methane and Nitrous Oxide Also Rising:** Alongside CO_2, methane (CH_4) and nitrous oxide (N_2O) reached record levels, increasing the combined **greenhouse gas warming effect by 47%** since 1990.
- **Climate Finance Gap:** Developing countries require over **$2.4 trillion annually** for climate mitigation and adaptation, but current international climate finance falls **far short**, raising concerns ahead of COP30 negotiations.

- **UN's Warning:** The WMO cautioned that every year of delay increases the economic cost and human suffering, stressing the need for collective action, stronger policy enforcement, and climate justice.

Chhattisgarh Successfully Revives Blackbuck Population

In the News: In February 2025, the **Chhattisgarh Forest Department** announced the successful revival of the **blackbuck population** in the State after five decades. The species, once believed to be locally extinct in Chhattisgarh, has now shown a healthy increase due to focused conservation measures.

Key Highlights

- **Return After 50 Years:** Blackbucks had disappeared from Chhattisgarh by the **1960s-70s** due to excessive hunting and habitat loss. Conservation efforts have now led to **stable breeding populations** in the State.
- **Nava Raipur Safari Boosted Conservation:** The species was reintroduced and protected at the **Nandanvan Jungle Safari** in **Nava Raipur**, which began with a small founder population from **Haryana and Telangana** under a scientific breeding program.
- **Successful Breeding Program:** Continuous habitat management, veterinary care, and species monitoring resulted in a **growing blackbuck herd** with a steady rise in births over recent years.
- **Habitat Restoration Efforts:** Grassland ecosystems were **restored and expanded** to suit blackbuck behavior, which depends on open plains for grazing and predator vigilance.
- **Community Involvement:** Local communities were involved in **anti-poaching patrols**, awareness campaigns, and habitat protection, ensuring minimal human-wildlife conflict.
- **Protection Status:** The blackbuck is listed under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, offering it the **highest level of legal protection** in India.
- **Cultural Significance:** Blackbucks hold cultural importance in many parts of India and are historically associated with **Bishnoi conservation traditions**.
- **Wildlife Tourism Potential:** The revival of the blackbuck has opened new opportunities for **eco-tourism in Chhattisgarh**, especially around **Nava Raipur** and **Udanti-Sitanadi wildlife regions**.
- **Model Conservation Effort:** The project is recognized as a successful case study in species revival through captive breeding and rewilding, inspiring similar efforts in central India.

Sundarbans' SAIME Model Wins FAO Global Recognition

In the News: On October 15, 2025, the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations conferred **Global Technical Recognition** on the **SAIME model** (Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems) developed in the **Sundarbans** by the **Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS)**, a Kolkata-based environmental organisation. The award was presented during **FAO's 80th Anniversary Celebrations** and the **World Food Forum** held in **Rome, Italy**.

Key Highlights

- SAIME promotes sustainable aquaculture by integrating **fish farming with mangrove conservation**, reducing ecological damage while supporting local livelihoods.
- The model helps revive **traditional community aquaculture** practices that are environmentally safe and economically viable in the **salinity-prone Sundarbans delta**.
- It encourages the **cultivation of indigenous fish species** and mangrove-friendly pond management, preventing land degradation and protecting coastal biodiversity.
- The initiative has reduced pressure on forest resources by providing **alternative livelihoods** to local communities who earlier depended on risky forest-based activities.
- The project supports **climate resilience**, helping communities adapt to frequent cyclones, tidal surges, and sea-level rise in the Sundarbans.
- SAIME has been implemented through **community-based participation**, involving local farmers, fisherfolk, and women's groups in training and capacity-building programmes.
- The FAO recognised SAIME for its **replicable and scalable model** that balances livelihood security with **ecosystem restoration** in fragile coastal regions.
- The initiative strengthens **mangrove restoration**, which acts as a natural barrier against storms and prevents coastal erosion.

- SAIME aligns with India's commitments to **sustainable development** and contributes to **UN Sustainable Development Goals** such as zero hunger, climate action, and life below water.
- The global recognition is expected to boost **international cooperation** and funding for nature-based livelihood solutions in **climate-vulnerable regions**.

India Rises to 9th Globally in Forest Area, Retains 3rd Rank in Annual Forest Gain

In the News: According to the **Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025** released by the **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, **India has risen to 9th position globally in total forest area** while retaining its **3rd rank in annual forest gain**. This achievement underscores India's strong commitment to sustainable forestry, biodiversity conservation, and community-driven afforestation efforts.

Key Points:

- **Global Ranking:** India now ranks **9th in total forest area** worldwide and continues to hold the **3rd position in annual forest gain**, following **China and Australia**.
- **Data Source:** The rankings are based on the **FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025**, which evaluates countries' forest coverage, conservation measures, and afforestation trends.
- **Forest Coverage:** India's total forest area now accounts for **over 24% of its geographical area**, with a steady rise attributed to extensive plantation drives and improved forest management.
- **Major Initiatives:** The growth is driven by national programs like the **Green India Mission**, **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)** projects, and the **'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign**.
- **Community Participation:** Local communities and self-help groups have played a key role through **Joint Forest Management (JFM)** and **village-level afforestation schemes**, ensuring grassroots-level ecological restoration.
- **Climate Action Impact:** India's forest gain contributes significantly to **carbon sequestration**, aiding the country's progress toward achieving **net-zero emissions by 2070** under the Paris Agreement commitments.
- **Biodiversity and Ecology:** The FAO report also highlights India's leadership in mangrove protection, urban green cover expansion, and wildlife corridor restoration for ecological balance.
- **Technological Integration:** Use of remote sensing, GIS mapping, and digital forest inventories has improved monitoring and accountability in forest management systems.

India's Elephant Population 2025: What the New WII Report Reveals...

In the News: The **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** released the **2025 Elephant Population Report**, revealing that India's wild elephant population has reached **30,150**, marking a steady increase from **27,300 in 2017**. The report highlights India's continued leadership in elephant conservation, while also emphasizing the growing challenges of habitat loss and human-elephant conflict.

Key Points:

- **Population Estimate:** India's wild elephant population stands at **30,150**, reaffirming the country as home to **over 60% of Asia's total elephant population**, according to the **WII 2025 Report.Geographical**
- **Distribution: Karnataka** continues to host the largest number of elephants, followed by **Assam and Kerala**, while significant populations are also found in Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and West Bengal.
- **Growth Trend:** The population has shown a **10% rise** since the last comprehensive census in 2017, reflecting the success of long-term conservation programs like **Project Elephant (1992)**.
- **Conservation Success:** Initiatives such as the Elephant Corridors Restoration Plan, Eco-Bridge Projects, and National Elephant Corridors Authority have improved habitat connectivity and reduced mortality.
- **Human–Elephant Conflict:** The report warns of **rising conflicts** in several states due to expanding agriculture, railway lines, and infrastructure projects intersecting elephant habitats.
- **Technological Integration:** The WII deployed **drones, camera traps, DNA-based population tracking, and GIS mapping** to ensure scientific accuracy in counting and monitoring herds.
- **Habitat Challenges:** Over **25% of traditional elephant corridors** are under pressure from encroachment, posing threats to migration routes and herd safety.
- **Policy Measures:** The government plans to expand the Project Elephant budget and strengthen eco-sensitive zones around reserves such as Wayanad, Nilgiri, and Kaziranga to ensure long-term protection.

Five Maharashtra Beaches Earn Blue Flag Global Recognition

In the News: Five beaches from Maharashtra have earned the prestigious Blue Flag certification in 2025, marking a major milestone in India's coastal conservation efforts. This global recognition is awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), Denmark, to beaches that meet stringent environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility standards.

Key Points:

- **Award Recognition:** The five Maharashtra beaches that received the Blue Flag certification are Kunkeshwar (Sindhudurg), Tarkarli (Malvan), Guhagar (Ratnagiri), Diveagar (Raigad), and Aare Ware (Ratnagiri). This achievement places Maharashtra among India's leading states in sustainable beach management.
- **Blue Flag Certification:** The Blue Flag label is an internationally recognized eco-label for clean, safe, and environmentally sustainable beaches, marinas, and tourism boats. It is granted based on 33 stringent criteria covering water quality, waste management, environmental education, and coastal ecosystem protection.
- **India's Progress:** With these additions, India now has **20 Blue Flag beaches**, up from 15 in 2024, reflecting the country's growing focus on eco-tourism and the Clean Coasts, Safe Seas initiative under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- **Implementation Agency:** The Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM), under MoEFCC, is the national implementing body for achieving Blue Flag standards across Indian beaches under the BEAMS (Beach Environment & Aesthetics Management Services) programme.
- **Environmental and Tourism Benefits:** The recognition boosts local tourism, ensures scientific coastal management, and promotes livelihood opportunities through sustainable eco-tourism. It also enhances global visibility for India's coastal conservation efforts.
- **Previous Recognitions:** Earlier, beaches such as Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghogra (Diu), Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar), and Kovalam (Tamil Nadu) had already received the certification, establishing India's position among top nations with multiple Blue Flag beaches.

Cyclone Montha Set to Intensify Over Bay of Bengal, IMD Issues Orange Alert for Tamil Nadu

In the News: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an Orange Alert for Tamil Nadu as Cyclone Montha intensifies over the Bay of Bengal in October 2025. The system, currently classified as a deep depression, is expected to strengthen into a severe cyclonic storm, bringing heavy rainfall, high winds, and rough sea conditions along the Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh coasts.

Key Points:

- **Cyclone Development:** Cyclone Montha formed over the southeast Bay of Bengal and is gradually moving northwestward. According to the IMD, it is likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm within the next 24–36 hours.
- **Orange Alert:** The IMD has placed Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and parts of coastal Andhra Pradesh under an Orange Alert, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and gusty winds exceeding 80 km/h. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea.
- **Predicted Landfall:** Preliminary forecasts suggest the cyclone may make landfall near the north Tamil Nadu–south Andhra coast around October 27–28, accompanied by intense rainfall and potential flooding in low-lying areas.
- **Preparedness Measures:** The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Teams (SDRF) have been deployed in coastal districts, while authorities are conducting evacuations in vulnerable zones and ensuring readiness of relief shelters.
- **Impact on Coastal Regions:** Coastal areas including Chennai, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, and Nellore are expected to experience storm surges, waterlogging, and power disruptions. The IMD has advised suspension of port operations and fishing activities in affected regions.
- **Climatic Context:** Cyclone Montha is the third major storm to form over the Bay of Bengal in 2025, reflecting an active post-monsoon cyclonic season influenced by elevated sea surface temperatures and the ongoing El Niño conditions.
- **Past Cyclone Comparisons:** The IMD has compared Montha's trajectory to previous cyclones such as Mandous (2022) and Michaung (2023), which caused widespread rainfall and flooding in southern India.

SCIENCE AND TECH

Chandrayaan-2 Observes Lunar Exosphere Changes

In the News: In **October 2025**, scientists from **ISRO** and **Space Physics Laboratory (VSSC)** reported new findings based on data from **Chandrayaan-2's CHACE-2 (Chandra's Atmospheric Composition Explorer-2) instrument**, showing significant seasonal and solar-driven variations in the Moon's exosphere, especially in the presence of argon-40. The study provides rare insights into lunar surface dynamics and interior processes.

Key Highlights

- **Discovery of Temporal Variations:** CHACE-2 detected **daily and latitudinal variations** in **argon-40** levels in the lunar exosphere, showing that the Moon's extremely thin atmosphere is **not static** but **constantly changing**.
- **Role of Solar Activity:** Changes in solar radiation and space weather events such as solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs) were found to directly influence the density of lunar atmospheric particles, revealing Sun–Moon interaction dynamics.
- **Evidence of Moon's Interior Activity:** Argon-40 originates from the **radioactive decay of potassium-40** inside the Moon's interior, escaping through cracks. Its fluctuations hint at **ongoing radiogenic activity** beneath the lunar crust.
- **Exosphere Mapping:** The mission conducted the **first large-scale temporal mapping** of the exosphere over **multiple lunar days**, providing long-term data crucial for future lunar habitation and resource planning.
- **Impact on Future Missions:** Understanding exosphere variations is important for lander and rover mission planning, as dust-charged particles and gas behavior can affect navigation, communication, and instrumentation.
- **Support for Artemis Collaboration:** Findings strengthen India's role in the **Artemis Accords scientific community**, helping global efforts to establish sustained human presence on the Moon.
- **Chandrayaan-2 Orbiter Success:** Despite the lander crash in 2019, the **Chandrayaan-2 orbiter continues to function normally**, contributing **valuable lunar science data** even after **six years in orbit**.
- **Precision Instrumentation:** The **CHACE-2 mass spectrometer** is capable of detecting trace gases at parts-per-billion levels, allowing high precision analysis of lunar atmospheric composition.
- **Helium and Other Gases Detected:** Besides argon-40, the mission also detected **helium-4 and neon**, supporting theories that solar wind implantation is a major source of exospheric gases.

2025 PN7: NASA Confirms Earth's New Quasi-Moon

In the News: **NASA** has confirmed the discovery of **Earth's new quasi-moon**, officially designated **2025 PN7**. The small asteroid, orbiting the Sun in near synchronization with Earth, has been observed to follow a stable gravitational path that keeps it loosely bound to our planet for the next several centuries.

Key Points:

- **Discovery Announcement:** NASA astronomers confirmed **2025 PN7** as Earth's new **quasi-moon**, based on data from the **Pan-STARRS Observatory in Hawaii** and NASA's **Center for Near-Earth Object Studies (CNEOS)**.
- **Nature of the Object:** 2025 PN7 is a small asteroid estimated to be 50–100 meters in diameter. Unlike the true Moon, it does not orbit Earth directly but rather the Sun, in a path that appears to loop around Earth due to gravitational resonance.
- **Orbital Dynamics:** The asteroid follows a horseshoe-shaped orbit relative to Earth, allowing it to remain gravitationally linked to our planet while maintaining its independent solar orbit.Stability Duration: Scientists project that 2025 PN7 will remain Earth's quasi-moon for at least 150 years, possibly extending for several centuries before its orbit gradually shifts.
- **Scientific Significance:** The discovery provides valuable insights into co-orbital dynamics, gravitational interactions, and the stability of near-Earth objects (NEOs) — crucial for planetary defense and space exploration.
- **Previous Quasi-Moons:** Before 2025 PN7, Earth had other known quasi-moons such as **2016 HO3** and **Kamoʻoalewa (2016 FH13)**, both identified as long-term companions in Earth's orbital path.
- **Observation and Tracking:** Continuous monitoring is being conducted by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and International Asteroid Tracking Network to analyse orbital evolution and potential trajectory shifts.
- **Public Engagement:** NASA scientists highlighted the discovery as a reminder of Earth's dynamic space neighborhood, inspiring curiosity and research in **planetary science and celestial mechanics**.

Government Introduces Standards for Navigation with NavIC

In the News: The Government of India has introduced new standards for navigation with NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) in October 2025 to enhance the accuracy, interoperability, and adoption of India's indigenous satellite navigation system. These standards aim to promote the integration of NavIC across sectors including transportation, telecommunications, disaster management, and consumer electronics, aligning with India's vision for technological self-reliance in space-based navigation.

Key Points:

- **Standardization Initiative:** The Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) released the NavIC-Based Navigation Performance Standards (NNPS-2025), defining benchmarks for signal accuracy, integrity, availability, and coverage.
- **About NavIC:** NavIC is India's indigenous satellite-based navigation system developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It provides accurate positioning services over India and up to 1,500 km beyond its borders using a constellation of seven satellites in geostationary and geosynchronous orbits.
- **Objective:** The new standards aim to ensure uniformity in the performance of NavIC receivers and enable seamless integration with international systems like GPS, Galileo, and GLONASS for global compatibility.
- **Applications:** The standards will support critical national sectors such as maritime navigation, aviation, road transport, disaster management, fisheries tracking, and precision agriculture. They also mandate NavIC compatibility in smartphones and vehicle navigation systems to enhance domestic usage.
- **Policy Alignment:** The initiative aligns with the Atmanirbhar Bharat and Digital India missions, promoting indigenous technology adoption and reducing dependence on foreign navigation systems.
- **Technical Specifications:** The NNPS outlines parameters like horizontal accuracy (<10 meters), time to first fix (TTFF), signal integrity metrics, and data authentication standards for public and restricted services.
- **International Recognition:** With these standards, India joins a select group of countries—such as the USA, Russia, China, and the EU—that have independently defined national navigation performance standards.

AWARDS

Indian-Origin Historian Sunil Amrith Wins British Academy Book Prize for "The Burning Earth"

In the News: Indian-origin historian **Sunil Amrith** was awarded the prestigious **British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding 2025** for his acclaimed work "The Burning Earth: A Story of Climate Change in the Global South." The award recognizes exceptional contributions that deepen public understanding of global cultures and societies. The announcement was made in London, marking a moment of pride for India's academic and literary community.

Key Points:

- **About the Winner:** Sunil Amrith, a Professor of History at Yale University, is known for his groundbreaking research on migration, environmental change, and the interconnected histories of South and Southeast Asia. His works bridge environmental studies and human history, offering a global perspective rooted in Asian experiences.
- **About the Book:** "The Burning Earth" explores the human and ecological consequences of climate change in the Global South, focusing on regions such as South Asia and Southeast Asia. Through historical analysis and vivid storytelling, the book examines how environmental transformations, inequality, and colonial legacies have shaped the lives and livelihoods of millions.
- **Themes and Insights:** The book draws connections between climate change, migration, and inequality, arguing that the roots of today's environmental crises lie in historical patterns of exploitation and imbalance between the Global North and South. It presents a compelling call for rethinking development and environmental policy through a more equitable lens.
- **Award Ceremony:** The ceremony was held in London and attended by leading scholars, writers, and cultural figures. The jury praised "The Burning Earth" for its originality, depth of research, and capacity to bridge the gap between academic history and urgent public discourse on climate change.

IMPORTANT DAYS

United Nations Day 2025 – History, Significance, and Objectives

In the News: United Nations Day 2025 was observed on **October 24, 2025**, marking the 80th anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter in 1945. The day celebrates the founding of the UN and its enduring mission to maintain global peace, promote human rights, foster international cooperation, and advance sustainable development across the world.

Key Points:

- **Historical Background:** United Nations Day commemorates the establishment of the United Nations on October 24, 1945, when the UN Charter came into effect after being ratified by the majority of signatory nations, including the five permanent members of the Security Council.
- **2025 Theme:** The theme for UN Day 2025, "Uniting for Peace, People, and Planet," highlights the importance of multilateral cooperation to address global challenges such as climate change, inequality, conflicts, and humanitarian crises.
- **Global Observance:** Member states, UN agencies, schools, and civil society organizations worldwide organize seminars, cultural events, and campaigns to spread awareness about the UN's contributions and its Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.
- **India's Participation:** India, a founding member of the UN, reaffirmed its commitment to global peacekeeping, climate action, and multilateralism. Indian peacekeepers currently serve in several UN missions, and the country plays a leading role in advocating Global South interests.
- **UN Flag and Symbolism:** The UN flag — featuring a world map surrounded by olive branches — symbolizes peace and unity among nations, reflecting the organization's core ideals of harmony and cooperation.

ECONOMY

SBI Named "World's Best Consumer Bank 2025" by Global Finance

In the News: The State Bank of India (SBI) was named the "World's Best Consumer Bank 2025" by Global Finance magazine, recognizing its innovation, customer-centric digital transformation, and leadership in inclusive banking. The award highlights SBI's successful blend of technological modernization and financial accessibility, positioning it as a global benchmark in consumer banking excellence.

Key Points:

- **Award Recognition:** The State Bank of India received the prestigious "World's Best Consumer Bank 2025" award from Global Finance, honoring its outstanding performance in retail banking, digital innovation, and customer experience enhancement on the global stage.
- **Digital Transformation:** SBI's comprehensive digital journey—anchored by platforms such as YONO, SBI Quick, and mobile banking—played a central role in earning the distinction. The bank's continued emphasis on artificial intelligence, data analytics, and customer personalization reshaped its retail services ecosystem.
- **Leadership and Vision:** Chairperson Dinesh Kumar Khara emphasized that the award validates SBI's mission to combine technology with trust, serving over 48 crore customers globally while continuously upgrading service efficiency and innovation capabilities.
- **National and International Impact:** The title adds to SBI's growing list of accolades and further elevates India's position in the global financial sector. It underscores the bank's evolution into a modern, world-class institution while maintaining its deep-rooted public service ethos.