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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Tamil Nadu Becomes First State to Issue ID Cards for Women SHG Members

In the News: On September 2025, Tamil Nadu became the first state in India to issue identity cards to women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The initiative was launched when the Deputy Chief Minister Thiru Udhayanidhi Stalin, distributed the first set of ID cards to SHG women in Karuppur, Salem district. The decision follows a demand raised by SHG members in Tiruvarur about five months earlier and aims to formally recognise SHG members while extending them direct benefits.

Key Points:

- Tamil Nadu has more than five lakh women Self-Help Groups functioning across the state, making it one of the strongest SHG networks in India.
- The new ID cards entitle SHG members to free government bus travel for carrying their products up to 100 kilometres.
- Cardholders will also receive discounts at state-run outlets such as Aavin, Co-optex, and Mudhalvar Marunthagam, thereby reducing costs and supporting their livelihood.
- The move enhances formal recognition of SHG women, enabling easier access to credit, institutional support, and welfare schemes.
- By providing official identity and logistical benefits, the initiative is expected to improve mobility, boost market access, and empower SHG women in economic and social terms.
- Tamil Nadu's initiative sets a precedent for other states to adopt similar measures for women-led Self-Help Groups across India.

IRDAI Unveils "Bima Sugam" Insurance Marketplace

In the News: In September 2025, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) launched **Bima Sugam**, a unified digital platform operated through the **Bima Sugam India Federation (BSIF)**, with the aim of serving as a single marketplace for all types of insurance in India. The official website was launched at IRDAI headquarters in Hyderabad, and the platform is expected to become fully operational in phases by **December 2025**.

Key Points:

- Bima Sugam will offer life, health, and general insurance (including motor, travel, property, and agricultural policies) on a single platform.
- Consumers will be able to compare, purchase, renew, manage their policies, and initiate claims, all through the portal.
- The platform was legally incorporated and capitalised, and its governing body includes insurers and intermediaries; many insurers also hold equity stakes in BSIF.
- The initial phase of Bima Sugam will function as an informational and guidance portal; full transaction capabilities (purchase, renewals, claims) will be enabled as insurers and service providers complete backend integrations.
- Policy documents will be stored securely in digital format, and users will have a centralised dashboard to manage multiple policies from different insurers.
- Bima Sugam is being positioned as part of the national vision "Insurance for All by 2047" and is linked with the larger goal of establishing a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for insurance.
- The regulations governing the marketplace are specified in the **IRDAI (Bima Sugam – Insurance Electronic Marketplace) Regulations, 2024**.
- Security, transparency, and scalability have been built into the design so that the platform can handle large volumes of users and offer trustworthy service.

India Adds 7 Natural Sites to UNESCO Tentative List

In the News: In September 2025, India added seven natural heritage sites to the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage Sites. With this inclusion, the total number of properties under consideration from India increased from 62 to 69. These 69 sites include 49 cultural, 17 natural, and 3 mixed-heritage properties.

Key Points (with Detailed Facts):

- **Deccan Traps (Panchgani & Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra):** These sites are part of the vast Deccan Traps, which are among the best preserved and studied flood basalt lava flows in the world. They lie within the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary, which is already a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The lava flows are estimated to be around 66 million years old, covering extensive area, and they include features like red-bole layers and fossil beds.
- **Geological Heritage of St. Mary's Island Cluster, Karnataka:** This is an island cluster off the coast of Udupi known for rare columnar basaltic formations. These formations date to the Late Cretaceous period (about 85–88 million years ago). The basalt columns are unique in India and provide insight into ancient volcanic processes.
- **Meghalayan Age Caves, Meghalaya:** Especially the Mawmluh Cave is the type locality for the Meghalayan Age in the Holocene epoch. These caves preserve signatures of climatic events, geological transitions, stalagmite records, and significant paleoclimate data.
- **Naga Hill Ophiolite, Nagaland:** The site reveals a rare exposure of ophiolite rocks, meaning oceanic crust and upper mantle rocks thrust onto continental crust. It offers key evidence about tectonic activity, plate boundary processes, and sea-floor spreading, which are important for geological study.
- **Erra Matti Dibbalu (Red Sand Hills), Andhra Pradesh:** These red sand formations near Visakhapatnam are striking both visually and scientifically. They reflect ancient coastal processes, paleo-climatic changes, sea level oscillations, and coastal geomorphology. The formations are relatively young in geological time (Quaternary), and they also help in understanding environmental change.
- **Natural Heritage of Tirumala Hills, Andhra Pradesh:** This includes the Eparchaeon Unconformity, one of the oldest visible geological discontinuities in India, and the Silathoranam, a natural arch. The rocks here span over 1.5 billion years of Earth's history, making the site highly significant for geology.
- **Varkala Cliffs, Kerala:** The coastline in Varkala exposes sedimentary rock formations of the Warkalli Formation from the Mio-Pliocene age. The cliffs are also known for natural springs, erosional landforms, and their scenic value, which combine scientific importance with potential for sustainable tourism.

Prior restraint: How gag order in Adani case flies in face of what SC has ruled

In the News: On **6 September 2025**, a Delhi court issued an ex-parte gag order restraining several journalists and media entities from publishing “unverified, unsubstantiated and ex facie defamatory” content about Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL). The order also directed takedown of entire articles/posts/URLs within 36 hours and allowed AEL to identify further material to be removed. On **18 September 2025**, a Delhi court quashed this gag order for four journalists (Ravi Nair, Abir Dasgupta, Ayaskant Das, and Ayush Joshi) on appeal, citing lack of opportunity for hearing and other legal shortcomings.

Key Points:

- The September 6 order was an **ex-parte interim injunction**: it was granted without the defendants (journalists) being heard.
- The order imposed **prior restraint** by directing that content not be published before a court trial to decide defamation, including sweeping bans on “unverified or defamatory” materials.
- The order also delegated to the plaintiff (AEL) a power to specify URLs/posts for removal, and required intermediaries/agencies to take down content within 36 hours.
- Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression; restrictions must be under Article 19(2), and prior restraint is treated as a heavy restriction that must meet high thresholds.
- The Supreme Court follows the **Bonnard standard** (from *Bonnard vs Perryman*, 1891) in defamation cases while granting pre-trial injunctions: injunctions should be granted only when it appears that the defendant may *not* be able to justify the allegedly defamatory material—not merely when there is suspicion of defamation.
- In 2024, in *Bloomberg v. Zee Entertainment*, the Supreme Court applied this principle and struck down an ex-parte ad-interim injunction, reaffirming that ex-parte orders and pre-trial publications bans must be rare and justified by exceptional circumstances.
- The quashing order of 18 September held that the September 6 gag order was unsustainable because journalists had not been heard; many of the posts were in the public domain already; and the removal of content might cause irreversible consequences (if later found non-defamatory).

India Sets Up First Defence Manufacturing Plant in Morocco

In the News: India inaugurated its first defence manufacturing facility in Morocco. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh opened the facility, marking the first-ever Indian defence plant in Africa, under the Tata Advanced Systems banner.

Key Points:

- **Facility Inauguration:** The plant is a new manufacturing facility by Tata Advanced Systems Maroc, located at Berrechid near Casablanca, Morocco.
- **What Will Be Produced:** It will manufacture the *Wheeled Armoured Platform (WhAP) 8×8* armoured combat vehicles (an amphibious infantry combat vehicle), which were co-developed with DRDO in India.
- **Significance:** This is the **first-ever Indian defence manufacturing plant in Africa**, expanding India's defence production footprint overseas and aligning with "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiative.
- **Capacity & Employment:** The plant is expected to produce around 100 combat vehicles annually. It will employ ~350 people locally. A large portion of systems integration work remains in India.
- **Industrial & Strategic Cooperation:** Along with this, India and Morocco are expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation, covering exchanges, training, industrial linkages etc.
- **Geostrategic Implications:**
 - The plant positions India as a credible defence partner in Africa.
 - Morocco's strategic location as a gateway between Africa and Europe adds value.
 - Strengthens bilateral ties between India and Morocco in defence, trade, and security.

India Secures Exclusive Rights for Polymetallic Sulphides Exploration in Carlsberg Ridge

In the News: India signed a 15-year contract with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) giving it **exclusive rights** to explore polymetallic sulphides (PMS) over a 10,000 sq km area of the **Carlsberg Ridge** in the Indian Ocean. The agreement was made through the Ministry of Earth Sciences under Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Key Points:

- **Exclusive Exploration Rights:** India has been granted exclusive rights by the ISA to explore for polymetallic sulphides in a 10,000 sq km area at Carlsberg Ridge. The contract duration is **15 years**.
- **What Are Polymetallic Sulphides (PMS):** These are mineral deposits formed by hydrothermal vents on the seabed. They contain valuable metals such as **copper, zinc, iron, silver, gold, platinum** etc.
- **India's Position & Milestone:** India now holds **two** active ISA contracts for PMS exploration — one earlier in the Central Indian Ridge & Southwest Indian Ridge, and now this one in Carlsberg Ridge. Among all countries, India holds the **largest exploration area globally** for polymetallic sulphides under ISA contracts.
- **Relation with Deep Ocean Mission & Blue Economy:** This development is part of India's Deep Ocean Mission which aims to build capacity in seabed mineral exploration, develop technology for deep-sea mining, and boost its Blue Economy.
- **Strategic / Scientific Importance:** The move enhances India's maritime presence and strengthens its role in deep sea research and resource utilization. It is also significant for clean energy technologies, electronics, and other industries that require the metals found in PMS.
- **Historical Context & ISA Engagement:** India has had a long engagement with the ISA. It was earlier designated as a "Pioneer Investor" for polymetallic nodule exploration in international waters. The earlier PMS contract (prior to Carlsberg) dates from around 2016 for other Indian Ocean ridges, still in effect.

Indian Army's 'Amogh Fury' Integrated Firepower Exercise

In the News: The Indian Army's Sapta Shakti Command conducted Amogh Fury, a major integrated firepower exercise, at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan's Thar Desert.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Location & Command:** Amogh Fury was held at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges (MFFR) in the Thar Desert, Rajasthan, under the Sapta Shakti Command.
- **Purpose / Objectives:**
 - To test the Army's combat power, coordination and operational readiness in real-time battle scenarios.
 - To train for multi-domain operations involving integration of different arms and modern tech.
- **Platforms & Units Involved:** Battle tanks, infantry combat vehicles, attack helicopters. Long-range artillery. Drones for surveillance/targeting.
- **Technologies / Systems Emphasized:**

- Network-centric communication. Command and control architecture. Real-time surveillance and targeting systems.
- Creation of a common operating picture shared across different units.
- **Training Aspects:** Troop insertion (air/ground) and offensive ground actions. Realistic combat conditions, to sharpen decision-making in high-stress environments.
- **Significance:**
 - Demonstrates jointmanship among combat arms, support arms and services.
 - Emphasises readiness for emerging threats in modern multi-domain warfare.
 - Reflects Indian Army's increasing reliance on technology integration for battlefield superiority.

SC Ruling on Anand Marriage Act: Sikh Marriage Rights and Legal Debate

In the News: The Supreme Court of India directed 17 States and several Union Territories to frame rules within four months under Section 6 of the Anand Marriage Act, 1909 (amended in 2012), to enable registration of Sikh marriages (Anand Karaj). Until the rules are notified, the Court ordered that these marriages be accepted under existing marriage registration frameworks.

Key Points:

- **Legal Background:** The Anand Marriage Act, 1909 was enacted to give legal validity to marriages solemnised through the Sikh rite of Anand Karaj. The Anand Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2012 introduced **Section 6**, mandating that State Governments frame rules to register these marriages, maintain a public marriage register, provide certified extracts, etc. The original law and its amendment had not been uniformly implemented: many States/UTs had not notified rules under Section 6 even years after 2012.
- **Supreme Court's Ruling / Directions:** States & UTs that have not yet framed rules under Section 6 are to do so **within four months** from the date of the order. Until rules are notified, registering authorities must accept marriages solemnised by *Anand Karaj* under the existing marriage registration frameworks (civil registration laws) without discrimination. Couples may request that the certificate explicitly state that the marriage was by the Anand Karaj rite. For States/UTs that have already notified rules: issue clarificatory circulars within three months, publishing required forms, fees, documents, timelines; ensure certified extracts are available. Also, no duplicative registration under other marriage laws once registered under the Act. Appointment of nodal officers: Each State/UT must designate a Secretary-level Nodal Officer to oversee implementation, grievance redressal etc. Union of India to act as coordinating authority: circulate model rules, compile compliance status reports etc.
- **Why the Ruling Matters:** It ensures that Sikh marriages have uniform legal recognition across India, which was lacking due to differential implementation of Section 6. A registered marriage certificate enables legal rights: proof of marriage is relevant for inheritance, succession, maintenance, insurance, residence etc., especially for women and children. It affirms secularism principle: the State cannot treat a citizen's faith "as either a privilege or a handicap."
- **Remaining / Ongoing Debates & Shortcomings: Lack of divorce provisions:** The Anand Marriage Act does *not* currently cover divorce or matrimonial issues; so Sikh couples often rely on the Hindu Marriage Act or general laws for those matters. This raises issues over religious identity / autonomy.
 - **Identity concerns:** Many in the Sikh community see registration under the Anand Marriage Act as important for maintaining distinct religious identity. The Act and its past non-implementation have diluted that.

Ahmednagar Railway Station Renamed 'Ahilyanagar' in Honour of Ahilyabai Holkar

In the News : The Ahmednagar railway station in Maharashtra has officially been renamed **Ahilyanagar**, as a tribute to **Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar**, following a notification from the Maharashtra government and approval from the Union Home Ministry. The renaming aligns with the earlier decision to rename the **Ahmednagar district** to **Ahilyanagar district**.

Key Points

- **Official Change & Authority:** The State government issued a notification renaming the station after obtaining the **Union Home Ministry's approval**. Central Railway's Pune Division announced the name change. The station code "**ANG**" remains unchanged despite the name change.
- **Reason & Symbolism:** Renaming is intended as a **tribute to Ahilyabai Holkar**, an 18th-century queen known for her visionary administration, public works, temples, justice and philanthropy. It reflects efforts to align place identities with local heritage and historical figures.

- **Relation to District Renaming:** Ahmednagar district had already been renamed **Ahilyanagar district** earlier. The station renaming ensures consistency between city/district and railway nomenclature.
- **Practical & Logistical Aspects:** While the name is changed, the station code remains the same to maintain continuity in railway operations, ticketing, and databases. Signage, announcements, tickets, maps and official records will be updated to reflect **Ahilyanagar**. The physical shift is mostly in name; the infrastructure, platforms, functionality remain unaffected.
- **Broader Context:** Place renaming to honor historical/cultural figures is a recurring practice in India, used to reinforce identity and heritage. This change is part of a broader set of efforts in Maharashtra to rename certain places to reflect local and historical significance. The renaming decision had both supporters and critics; some viewed it as symbolic, while others argued for prioritizing development over changing names.
- **Impacts & Reactions:** Among locals, heritage groups, and historians, the move is seen as recognition of a respected figure in Indian history. In administrative and travel circles, care will be needed during the transition period to avoid confusion among passengers accustomed to "Ahmednagar." Over time, "Ahilyanagar" will become the accepted usage in schedules, mapping, travel portals, and public discourse.

PM Modi Inaugurates Redeveloped 524-Year-Old Tripura Sundari Temple in Tripura

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the redeveloped **524-year-old Tripura Sundari Temple** at Udaipur in Gomati district, Tripura.

Key Points

- **Historical & Cultural Background:** The temple was originally built in **1501** by Maharaja Dhanya Manikya of the Manikya dynasty, when Udaipur (then called Rangamati) was the capital. It is one of the **51 Shakti Peethas** revered in Hindu tradition. The temple is built atop a hillock that resembles the hump of a tortoise (Kurma), which gives rise to certain local legends.
- **Redevelopment Project:** The redevelopment cost is over **₹52 crore**, funded through the **PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive)** scheme of the Union Ministry of Tourism and contributions from the Tripura state government (₹7 crore). The central government's share is about **₹34.43 crore**, while the state government contributed **₹17.61 crore** in one report. Redevelopment work began earlier (foundation laid in 2018) under a temple trust set up by the state government.
- **Features of the Redeveloped Structure:** The complex now has a **three-storied structure**:
 - Ground floor area: ~6,784 sqm – includes lobbies, **86 stalls**, multipurpose halls, Prasad house, etc.
 - First floor (~2,317 sqm): dormitories, residential quarters for monks/volunteers.
 - Top floor (~7,355 sqm): contains the main **naatmandir** (assembly area) for devotees.
 - Accessibility features: ramps, lifts for differently-abled devotees.
 - Surrounding amenities:
 - Landscaping, lighting, parking, walkways, public conveniences.
 - **A Shaktipeetha Park** nearby, with **replicas of all 51 Shakti Peethas**, stalls for local artisans, and cultural exhibits.
 - An exhibition detailing temple history, the royal lineage, and local traditions was also part of the redevelopment.
- **Inauguration & Ceremonial Details:** PM Modi traveled from Agartala to Udaipur by helicopter and arrived at the temple complex in the afternoon. He offered **puja** at the redeveloped temple, visited various parts of the site, and participated in inauguration ceremonies along with state leaders. A **12-km roadshow** from Palatana helipad to the temple was staged, with crowds greeting the PM.

CAG Report on the Fiscal Health of States

In the News : The Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India published, in September 2025, a decadal analysis of the fiscal condition of 28 states. The report reveals that in the span of a decade, state public debt has nearly tripled, sounding alarms on long-term fiscal sustainability and raising concerns over states' ability to manage revenue, expenditure, and liabilities effectively.

Key Points

- **Debt Explosion Over 10 Years:** Combined public debt (internal debt + loans from Centre) of 28 states rose from **₹17.57 lakh crore** in 2013-14 to **₹59.60 lakh crore** in 2022-23 — i.e. a 3.39× increase. Debt as a share of **Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** has climbed from **16.66 %** to **22.96 %** over the same period. As of 2022-23, state debt is **~22.17 % of India's GDP** (i.e. the share of states' debt relative to national output)
- **State-wise Disparities in Debt Burden**

- States with **highest debt-to-GSDP ratios**:
 - Punjab ~ 40.35 %
 - Nagaland ~ 37.15 %
 - West Bengal ~ 33.70 %
- States with **relatively lower debt ratios**:
 - Odisha ~ 8.45 %
 - Maharashtra ~ 14.64 %
 - Gujarat ~ 16.37
- **Revenue Surplus / Deficit Trends**: The report identifies **16 states** in FY 2022-23 that registered a **revenue surplus** (i.e. their revenue receipts > revenue expenditure). Uttar Pradesh, previously considered a “Bimaru state,” led the surplus list with ~ **₹37,000 crore**. Other states with surplus include Gujarat (~₹19,865 crore), Odisha (~₹19,456 crore), Jharkhand, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Goa. Meanwhile, 12 states remained in **revenue deficit**, e.g. Andhra Pradesh (~₹43,488 cr), Tamil Nadu (~₹36,215 cr), Rajasthan, West Bengal, Punjab, etc.
- **Debt vs Revenue Capacity & Borrowing Patterns**: On average, states’ debt levels amount to ~**128–191 %** of their revenue receipts; in some years, debt was nearly double the revenue. Many states have violated the “**Golden Rule**” of fiscal policy (i.e. borrowing should be for capital expenditure, not recurring expenditures). The report notes at least **11 states** were using borrowings to fund day-to-day (revenue) expenses. The sources of borrowings include open market borrowings (bonds, securities), treasury bills, ways and means advances, and loans from the Union government (especially to cover gaps such as GST compensation shortfalls).
- **Contingent Liabilities & Fiscal Risks**: Many states carry **contingent liabilities** (guarantees on projects, infrastructure firms, etc.), which are not part of regular debt but can turn into actual liabilities. Interest rates on state borrowings tend to be higher (risk premium over central government borrowing), which increases debt servicing burden. Rising committed expenditures (salaries, pensions, subsidies, interest payments) reduce fiscal flexibility for states to invest in infrastructure or welfare.
- **Implications for Fiscal Federalism & Sustainability**: As state debts balloon, their **fiscal autonomy** is curtailed; dependence on central transfers, conditional grants, and borrowing could strengthen central influence. States might fall into a **debt trap**: borrowing more to service previous debt, leaving fewer resources for development. High debt limits states’ ability to respond to economic shocks, natural disasters, or emergencies, as less “fiscal space” remains. Development and welfare goals may suffer—states may be forced to cut public spending or delay capital projects. The report also underscores regional disparities: heavily indebted states may lag further behind fiscally stable states, exacerbating inequality.

Visakhapatnam Declaration 2025: Charting India’s Digital Transformation

In the News: The 28th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) concluded in Visakhapatnam and the Visakhapatnam Declaration was formally adopted. This Declaration sets out India’s roadmap for digital governance and transformation in the years ahead, placing civil service reform, technology adoption, and inclusive reach at its core.

Key Points:

- **Theme & Philosophy**: The conference was held under the theme “Viksit Bharat: Civil Service and Digital Transformation,” and the Declaration reaffirmed the vision of “Viksit Bharat 2047” along with the principle of “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance.”
- **Civil Service Transformation**: The Declaration mandates a whole-of-government approach to equip civil servants with digital skills, data-driven decision frameworks, and better inter-departmental coordination.
- **Technology as Enabler**: It calls for harnessing AI, machine learning, blockchain, GIS, IoT, and data analytics to drive transparent, sustainable and citizen-centric governance.
- **Scaling Digital Platforms**: The Declaration proposes expanding use of AI-driven platforms such as Digital India BHASHINI, Digi Yatra, and NADRES V2 to deliver multilingual, real-time and sector-specific services, ensuring ethical and transparent adoption of AI.
- **Replication of Best Practices**: It emphasizes replicating and scaling successful state or local digital governance models like SAMPADA 2.0 (Madhya Pradesh), eKhata (Bengaluru), Rohini Gram Panchayat (Maharashtra), and NHAI’s Drone Analytics Monitoring System (DAMS).

- **Geographic & Social Inclusion:** The Declaration stresses extending digital governance to underserved regions (e.g. North-East and Ladakh) by bolstering infrastructure and ensuring mandatory e-services under NeSDA. It also highlights increasing digital literacy among women, youth and marginalized communities.
- **Cybersecurity, Trust & Resilience:** It underscores adoption of robust measures such as Zero-Trust architecture, post-quantum security, and AI-based monitoring across sectors like transport, defence and citizen services to build cyber resilience.
- **Agriculture & Rural Empowerment:** The Declaration commits to accelerating deployment of the National Agri Stack so farmers can better access credit, advisory services and markets, and promotes climate-smart, sustainable farming methods.

World Food India 2025 Set to Begin in New Delhi

In the News: **World Food India 2025** will take place in New Delhi at Bharat Mandapam. The event, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is being billed as the largest edition yet, and aims to position India as a global hub in food processing, innovation and investment.

Key Points:

- **Scale & Participation:** The 2025 edition is expected to host over **90 countries** and **2,000 exhibitors**, with thousands of stakeholders spanning the entire food value chain—from producers to technology providers.
- **Objectives & Vision:** The event is designed not merely as a trade fair but as a transformative platform to showcase India's strengths in food processing, sustainability and innovation, and to attract global partnerships.
- **Flagship Initiatives & Government Support:** Under the PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme, credit-linked support of over ₹770 crore is being offered to nearly 26,000 micro enterprises in food processing. The government has also permitted 100 % FDI in food processing and launched incentive schemes such as PLISFPI (Production Linked Incentive for Food Processing Industry).
- **Event Features & Structure:** The fair will include high-level knowledge sessions, thematic panel discussions, B2B and B2G networking, sectoral exhibitions (machinery, cold chain, processing, packaging), culinary shows, and start-up innovation showcases. Parallel events include the **3rd Global Food Regulators Summit (FSSAI)** and the **24th India International Seafood Show (IISS)**.
- **Partner & Focus Countries:** This edition features New Zealand and Saudi Arabia as Partner Countries, while Japan, UAE, Vietnam, and Russia are designated as Focus Countries.
- **Strategic Importance & Sectoral Growth:** India is currently the largest producer of milk, pulses and onions, and ranks second globally in production of rice, wheat, tea, fruits, vegetables and eggs. The food processing sector has attracted USD 7.33 billion in FDI equity inflows over the past decade. In 2024-25, agricultural and processed food exports reached USD 49.4 billion, with processed foods contributing over 20 % of that share.

MDL Signs MoU with Tamil Nadu to Develop World-Class Shipyard on East Coast

In the News: **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Guidance Tamil Nadu**, the state's investment promotion agency, to explore development of a **world-class greenfield shipyard** on India's eastern coast. This deal was executed under the aegis of the **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** and in collaboration with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

Key Points:

- **Strategic Alignment & Vision:** The MoU is part of India's broader Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, which seeks to build the country into a global maritime power by investing in port infrastructure, shipping, inland waterways, and maritime logistics.
- **Parties & Signing:** The agreement was signed by Biju George (Director, Shipbuilding, MDL) and Dr. Darez Ahamed (MD & CEO, Guidance Tamil Nadu) during a ceremony in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, witnessed by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.
- **Purpose & Scope:** The MoU contemplates feasibility studies, planning, and implementation frameworks for a greenfield shipyard facility on India's east coast. It signals intent rather than committing to fixed timelines or investment figures at this stage.
- **Strategic Importance:** This shipyard would strengthen India's shipbuilding capacity in the eastern region, reduce dependence on foreign facilities, support naval and commercial maritime infrastructure, and contribute to the Make in India / Atmanirbhar Bharat agenda.

- **Economic & Regional Impact:** Tamil Nadu's coastal geography and existing maritime infrastructure make it a favorable location for such a facility. The project is expected to generate employment, boost local industry, and catalyze ancillary activities in shipbuilding, maintenance, and logistics.

Indian Navy to Commission 'Androth': Second Anti-Submarine Warfare

In the News: The Indian Navy will commission **INS Androth**, the second Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), at the Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam. This induction is part of a larger plan to bolster India's coastal and underwater defence capabilities.

Key Points:

- **Second in Class & Fleet Expansion:** INS Androth is the second vessel in a planned series of 16 ASW-SWCs aimed at enhancing India's anti-submarine warfare strength in shallow coastal waters.
- **Indigenous Construction & Self-Reliance:** The ship is built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, using over 80 % indigenous components, in line with India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat defence manufacturing goals.
- **Delivery and Hand-Over:** Androth was handed over to the Indian Navy on September 13, 2025, following its construction and trials under the supervision of the Directorate of Ship Production and the Warship Overseeing Team.
- **Capabilities & Role:** The vessel is equipped with advanced sensors, weapons, and water-jet propulsion, designed for underwater threat detection, tracking and neutralisation, maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and coastal defence operations.
- **Namesake & Symbolism:** INS Androth is named after Androth Island in Lakshadweep, reflecting India's commitment to securing its maritime periphery. The name also pays homage to a previously decommissioned ship, INS Androth (P69), which served the Navy for decades.
- **Strategic Significance:** The commissioning of Androth strengthens India's ability to combat submarine threats in shallow waters around the Indian coastline and in the Indian Ocean region. It also underscores India's progress in developing modern warships indigenously.

Centre Extends General Anil Chauhan's Tenure as Chief of Defence Staff Till 2026

In the News: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the extension of **General Anil Chauhan's** tenure as Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), allowing him to continue in the role until **May 30, 2026**, or until further orders.

Key Points:

- **Tenure Extension:** The government extended General Chauhan's service as CDS and as Secretary of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) up to May 30, 2026.
- **Original Appointment & Term:** He was appointed CDS on September 28, 2022. His original three-year term was due to expire around September 2025.
- **Age Limit Norms:** According to CDS norms, the upper age limit is 65. Chauhan will turn 65 in May 2026, aligning with the extension till then.
- **Leadership Continuity:** The extension reflects the government's confidence in his leadership amid ongoing efforts to push defence reforms and inter-service synergy.
- **Role in Reform Agenda:** Alongside his CDS functions, he will oversee the proposed theatre commands and further integration in logistics, procurement, infrastructure, and appointments across the three services (Army, Navy, Air Force).
- **Distinguished Career:** Commissioned in 1981 into the 11 Gorkha Rifles, Chauhan has held key command and staff appointments including command of Eastern Command.

He has been awarded several military honours: Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal, and Vishisht Seva Medal.

GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) Launched by Finance Minister

In the News: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman formally launched the **Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)** in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- **Purpose & Rationale:** GSTAT is a statutory appellate body created to consolidate and streamline dispute resolution in GST. It aims to reduce litigation, bring uniformity in interpretation, and build predictability in the GST regime.

- **Operationalisation Timeline:** Hearings will begin from **December 2025**. The filing of appeals will happen in a staggered manner, with older cases getting priority initially.
- **Extension of Limitation Period:** For legacy appeals, the limitation period has been extended up to **June 30, 2026**. Structure and Reach: GSTAT will operate via a **Principal Bench in New Delhi** and **31 State Benches across 45 locations** to ensure national coverage. Each bench will include two Judicial Members, one Technical Member from the Centre, and one Technical Member from the State.
- **Digital Platform & Access:** At the launch, an **e-Courts Portal** was unveiled. Taxpayers and practitioners can file appeals online, track case status, and participate in hearings virtually.
- **Principles Emphasized by FM:** Minister Sitharaman stressed that GSTAT's decisions should be in **plain language**, use simplified formats and checklists, be digital-by-default, and adhere to time standards for listing, Hearing and pronouncement.

PM Narendra Modi Chairs 49th PRAGATI Meeting

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the **49th PRAGATI** meeting the ICT-enabled multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation to review major infrastructure projects across India.

Key Points:

- **Scope of Review:** The PM reviewed **eight critical infrastructure projects** spanning sectors such as Mines, Railways, Water Resources, Industrial Corridors, and Power.
- **Geographic & Financial Spread:** These projects cover **15 States and Union Territories**, with a **cumulative investment of over ₹65,000 crore**.
- **Emphasis During Review:** The PM stressed the need for **clear timelines, effective inter-agency coordination, and prompt resolution of bottlenecks** so projects are completed on schedule.
- **Cost of Delay:** Modi reiterated that delays carry a **double cost**: rising project expenditure and depriving citizens of timely access to essential services.
- **Result-Orientation:** Officials at both Central and State levels were urged to adopt a **result-oriented approach**, and to institutionalize mechanisms at the State/UT level to **regularly monitor and review** flagship projects.
- **Reform & Preparedness:** The PM called upon States/UTs to place stronger emphasis on reforms that enhance competitiveness, efficiency, and innovation, so that emerging opportunities can be seized swiftly.

India Restricts Silver Imports Till March 31, 2026

In the News: The Indian government announced that it would **restrict imports of silver and plain (unstuded) silver jewellery** until **March 31, 2026** to curb a surge in such imports and protect domestic manufacturers.

Key Points:

- **Policy Change:** The import policy for silver and certain silver jewellery items was amended from **"free" to "restricted"**, with effect from the date of the notification, lasting until March 31, 2026.
- **Licensing Requirement:** Importers must now obtain a **government licence** under the restricted category to bring in these items.
- **Triggering Factor:** The decision was driven by a sharp rise in imports—especially from Thailand and other ASEAN nations—often under Free Trade Agreement (FTA) exemptions, which was seen as unfair competition to domestic producers.
- **Scope of Items Affected:** The restrictions apply to **plain silver jewellery / articles of silver / unstudded silver jewellery** which earlier entered without restrictions.
- **Objective:** The measure aims to **level the playing field** for Indian manufacturers, especially small and medium enterprises, and to curb the misuse of trade agreements to flood the market with imported silver items.
- **Wider Trade Context:** This move is viewed as part of broader efforts to ensure that India's trade policies do not disadvantage domestic value addition while still honouring international trade commitments.

Youth-led Ladakh Protests: Demands for Statehood, Sixth Schedule and Autonomy

In the News: Youth-led protests erupted in Leh and Kargil, Ladakh, demanding **statehood**, inclusion under the **Sixth Schedule** of the Constitution, and greater **autonomy**. Clashes with security forces turned deadly.

Key Points:

- **Origins & Context:** After the abolition of Article 370 in 2019, Ladakh was carved out as a Union Territory without a legislature, leaving it under direct central control. Many locals view this as disenfranchisement.
- **Demands of Protesters:** The principal demands include full **statehood** (i.e. legislative assembly for Ladakh), **Sixth Schedule** protections for tribal majority areas, a **separate public service commission**, **two Lok Sabha seats**, and **job reservations** for locals.
- **Youth Involvement & Escalation:** The protests were led by Gen-Z youth disillusioned by delays and unfulfilled promises. What began as a peaceful hunger strike turned violent when thousands, especially youth, broke ranks and attacked offices and infrastructure.
- **Violent Clashes & Casualties:** Protesters set fire to a BJP office, police and CRPF vehicles, and administrative buildings. Security forces responded with tear gas, batons, and live rounds. Four protesters died and numerous others were injured.
- **State Response & Restrictions:** Curfew was imposed in Leh and security forces were deployed. Restrictions on assembly, movement, and operations under Section 163 BNSS (public safety statute) were enforced.
- **Government's Stance & Criticism:** The Home Ministry blamed activist **Sonam Wangchuk** for inciting the unrest, citing his speeches and fast. The government also revoked the FCRA licence for his NGO, SECMOL. Protest leaders argue the state response is heavy-handed and that no tangible steps have been taken to meaningfully address the demands.

Children in India 2025 Report Released Here You Need To Know

In the News: The Government of India released the **Children in India 2025** report during the 29th CoCSSO conference in Chandigarh.

Key Points

- **Infant & Under-five Mortality:** IMR fell from 44 in 2011 to 25 in 2023. Under-five mortality (U5MR) is 29 in 2023, down from 30 in 2022.
- **Sex / Rural-Urban IMR:** In 2023, male IMR = 26, female = 25. U5MR is 33 in rural areas, 20 in urban areas.
- **Birth Rate:** In 2023, overall birth rate = 18.4 per 1,000. In rural areas it is 20.3; urban areas 14.9.
- **Dropout Rates / Enrollment:** Between 2022–23 and 2024–25, dropouts fell: preparatory level from 8.7% to 2.3%; middle level from 8.1% to 3.5%; secondary from 13.8% to 8.2%.
- **Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER):** In 2024-25, GER in secondary level = 68.5% (up from 66.5%); in middle level = 90.3% (from 89.5%).
- **Child Marriage:** Women aged 20–24 married before 18 declined from 26.8% (2015–16) to 23.3% (2019–21).
- **Adoption:** Total children adopted rose from 3,927 (2017–18) to 4,515 (2024–25).
- **Health — Lipid Levels:** Over one-third of children aged 5–9 have **high triglyceride** levels. In West Bengal, 67% affected; Sikkim 64.6%; Assam 57%; Nagaland 55.5%.
- **High Cholesterol in Adolescents:** In Goa, 15% of children aged 10–19 have high cholesterol—the highest among states.
- **Nutrition – Stunting & Underweight:** As per NFHS (2019–21), 35.5% of children are stunted; rural: 37.3%, urban: 30.1%. Underweight children share = 32.1% (down from 35.7%).
- **Crimes Against Children:** Crime rate against children = 36.6 per lakh population (2022). Delhi highest at 134.9 per lakh. Kidnapping & abduction = 45.7% of all cases.
- **Publication Structure / New Inclusions:** The 2025 edition has 7 chapters: overview, population & vital stats, health & nutrition, education & development, crimes & child protection, policy & legal framework, SDG indicators. It also adds new data on causes of death, adoption trends, device usage, and state comparisons.

Make in India Marks 11 Years of Economic Transformation

In the News: India celebrated **11 years of the Make in India** campaign. PM Narendra Modi said it has played a pivotal role in India's economic transformation.

Key Points:

- **Launch & Objective:** Make in India began on September 25, 2014, to boost manufacturing, attract investment, and foster self-reliance.
- **FDI Inflows:** From 2014 to 2024, India attracted USD 667 billion in foreign direct investment, making up a large share of post-liberalisation FDI.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** India's global ranking improved from 142 in 2014 to 63 in the World Bank's report by 2020.

- **Policy Tools & Reforms:** The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, logistics data bank, and reduction in compliances have driven investment and efficiency.
- **Manufacturing Growth:** In July 2025, manufacturing grew by 5.4% year-on-year; IIP rose 3.5%. Exports of goods in April–August 2025 rose 2.52% to USD 184.13 billion.
- **Sectoral Gains:** India became the world's **second-largest mobile maker**. Defence production surged ~225%, with exports to 100+ countries.
- **Emerging Focus – Make in India 2.0:** The upcoming push will emphasize future sectors like green growth, defence, semiconductors, and global competitiveness.

L&T, BEL Join Race to Build India's Stealth Fighter Jet

In the News: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) announced a strategic partnership to compete in India's indigenous stealth fighter jet programme, particularly the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project.

Key Points:

- **Strategic Tie-up:** L&T and BEL will jointly respond to the Expression of Interest (EoI) by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) for prototype development and testing.
- **Domain Strengths:** L&T brings aerospace and platform development expertise; BEL contributes defence electronics and systems experience.
- **Competing Model:** The partnership challenges the traditional dominance of HAL by opening the development model to private and public firms.
- **Project Scope:** The winning consortium must design, build, test, certify prototypes and then scale up to serial production.
- **Investment Scale:** The AMCA programme is estimated at around ₹15,000 crore.
- **Policy Shift:** The Indian MoD has reformed the execution model to allow non-HAL entities to participate in developing advanced fighter aircraft.
- **Strategic Implication:** The move signals India's push toward defence indigenisation and reduced dependency on foreign suppliers.

Nuclear Liability Fund

In the News: The Indian government announced plans to create a **Nuclear Liability Fund** to handle compensation claims beyond the existing operator cap in case of a nuclear accident.

Key Points:

- **Purpose:** The fund will cover accident compensation exceeding ₹1,500 crore (\approx ₹15 billion) that currently lies beyond the operator's liability.
- **Current Liability Law:** Under the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, the plant operator is liable up to ₹1,500 crore; beyond that, the government steps in.
- **Need for the Fund:** Uncertainty about risks beyond the cap has deterred global suppliers and private firms from participating in India's nuclear expansion.
- **Expected Design:** The fund would be a structured pool backed by government allocations, and possibly contributions from the industry.
- **Legal Backing:** It is likely to be incorporated via a new atomic energy bill, supplementing the operator's liability cap.
- **Strategic Outcome:** The move is aimed at boosting foreign investment, encouraging advanced reactor technology, and accelerating India's nuclear capacity growth.
- **Energy Goals:** This reform aligns with India's plans to scale nuclear power up to support clean energy targets and reduce fossil fuel dependence.

India Bids Farewell to the Iconic MiG-21 Fighter Jet

In the News: India officially retired its last MiG-21 fighter jets, bringing an end to a storied 62-year service history in the Indian Air Force.

Key Points:

- **Ceremony & Final Sortie:** The decommissioning was held at Chandigarh Air Force Station, the same base where MiG-21 was first inducted. A flypast and water cannon salute accompanied the final flight. Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh flew the last sortie under the call sign Badal 3.

- **Historical Role & Legacy:** The MiG-21 entered IAF service in the early 1960s as a supersonic interceptor. It served in many key conflicts: 1965 & 1971 wars, Kargil (1999), and the 2019 Balakot air strike. India acquired over 700 aircraft of various MiG-21 variants over decades.
- **Safety Concerns:** Over the years, it earned the “flying coffin” moniker due to frequent crashes. Between 1971 and 2012, 482 crashes involving MiG-21s were recorded.
- **Fleet Impact & Squadron Strength:** After retirement of MiG-21s, IAF strength fell to 29 fighter squadrons, below the earlier target of 42. The retiring squadrons included No. 23 (Panthers) and No. 3 (Cobras).
- **Replacement & Modernisation:** The government signed a deal to procure **97 Tejas** jets to fill the gap. India plans global bids for **114 multi-role fighter aircraft** to modernize the fleet. Focus is on indigenization and next-generation capabilities.
- **Tributes & Symbolism:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh referred to MiG-21 as a national pride. The aircraft is acknowledged for shaping multiple generations of IAF pilots.

India's Smartphone Exports to US Surge 148% in August 2025

In the News: India's smartphone exports to the United States grew sharply — with the U.S. shipments alone rising by **148%** compared to August 2024, according to the India Cellular Electronics Association (ICEA).

Key Points:

- **Overall Export Growth:** India's smartphone exports in August 2025 reached about USD 1.53 billion, up 39% year-on-year.
- **U.S. Shipment Surge:** Shipments to the U.S. jumped from USD 388 million in August 2024 to USD 965 million in August 2025 — a 148% increase.
- **Export Trends over FY26:** From April to August 2025, U.S. smartphone exports from India hit USD 8.43 billion, nearly three times the USD 2.88 billion in the same period last year.
- **Global Positioning:** India has overtaken China as a key supplier of smartphones to the U.S., capturing a 44% share of U.S. smartphone imports in Q2 2025 (vs 13% a year ago). Electronics production in India is now estimated at ₹12 lakh crore, and exports of electronic goods have grown eightfold over the past decade.
- **Contrasting Data / Caution Signals:** According to think tank GTRI, India's smartphone exports to the U.S. plunged 58% between May and August 2025 (from USD 2.29 billion in May to USD 964.8 million in August), despite the absence of U.S. tariffs on smartphones. This suggests possible challenges like supply chain disruptions, shifting production, or seasonal fluctuations.
- **Tariff & Policy Context:** In August 2025, the U.S. imposed 50% tariffs on many Indian goods; however, smartphone exports remained exempt from these new tariffs. Still, declines in “tariff-exempt” exports like smartphones have raised concerns about sustainability.
- **Key Contributing Factors:** Apple's supply chain shift is core — Foxconn shipped 97% of India-made iPhones to the U.S. between March and May 2025. India's scaling of manufacturing capacity, favorable policies (PLI, “Make in India”), and reliance by global firms on diversification away from China are major drivers.

India Govt. Appoints First Mushroom Scientist to Lead BSI

In the News: The Government of India has appointed **Dr. Kanad Das**, a distinguished mycologist (mushroom scientist), as the new Director of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI). He is the first mycologist ever to lead the BSI.

Key Points:

- **Historic First:** Dr. Kanad Das becomes the **first mycologist** (mushroom scientist) to head BSI.
- **Appointment Details:** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved his appointment on September 6, 2025. He took charge as the 13th Director of BSI on September 25, 2025.
- **Institutional Context:** BSI functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). BSI's mandate includes surveying India's flora, taxonomic research, and conservation of plant diversity.
- **Focus & Vision:** His appointment signals a shift toward integrating **fungal research** (mycology) into broader botanical studies. Emphasis is expected on **digitizing India's botanical heritage** and enhancing research outputs.
- **Scientific Credentials:** Dr. Das was previously Scientist-F at BSI and has led teams in discovering new fungal taxa.

National Initiative on Water Security

In the News: The Government of India launched the **National Initiative on Water Security** to strengthen water conservation efforts across rural India, especially in water-stressed blocks.

Key Points:

- **Mandatory Fund Allocation under MGNREGA:** In over-exploited or “dark zone” blocks, **65%** of MGNREGA funds must be used for water-related works. In semi-critical blocks, **40%** of funds are mandated for such works. Even in non-stressed blocks, at least **30%** of funds must go toward water conservation and harvesting.
- **Legal & Institutional Backing:** The MGNREGA Act’s schedule has been amended to institutionalize the priority for water works in rural blocks. The scheme was launched jointly by Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil from New Delhi.
- **Types of Eligible Works:** Works such as check dams, farm ponds, percolation tanks, desilting, groundwater recharge pits, renovation of traditional water bodies, watershed structures, irrigation channels, and afforestation qualify.
- **Rationale & Urgency:** India is one of the largest extractors of groundwater globally, facing severe depletion in many regions. Rural drinking water and agriculture heavily depend on groundwater, making its conservation crucial. Erratic monsoons and climate variability worsen water stress, making proactive conservation necessary.
- **Integration with Existing Schemes & Projects:** This effort builds upon earlier water conservation initiatives like **Atal Bhujal Yojana (groundwater management scheme)**. It also complements watershed management programmes and project schemes under rural development.
- **Expected Benefits & Impact:** Improved groundwater levels, rejuvenation of rivers, and water security for agriculture, livestock, and communities. Long-term ecological balance, enhanced resilience to droughts, and sustainable rural livelihoods.

Sonam Wangchuk detained under NSA: What to know about National Security Act

In the News: Activist Sonam Wangchuk was detained under the **National Security Act (NSA)** by Ladakh Police following violent protests in Leh. He has since been moved to Jodhpur Central Jail.

Key Points:

- **Reason for Detention:** Authorities allege Wangchuk’s speeches and activities incited the protests in Leh that led to arson, attacks on police, and four deaths. He was accused of making “provocative statements” and failing to call off his hunger strike even after dialogue was resumed.
- **About the NSA (National Security Act):** The NSA is a preventive detention law enacted in 1980 that allows detention without formal charges to prevent actions prejudicial to national security or public order. A detention order must provide grounds within 5 to 15 days, and an Advisory Board (usually high court judges) must review it within 3 weeks. The detainee has limited rights: no guaranteed legal representation before the Advisory Board, and the government can withhold facts citing “public interest.” Maximum detention under NSA is 12 months unless revoked earlier or extended by further recommendation.
- **Procedural Aspects & Legal Remedies:** Wangchuk is entitled to make a representation to the government against the detention. He may also approach the High Court or Supreme Court under writ jurisdiction (Articles 226 / 32) to challenge the legality of his detention.
- **Aftermath & Reactions:** His detention has triggered protests across Uttarakhand and strong condemnation from environmentalist and civil-society groups. Authorities also **cancelled the FCRA licence** of his NGO (SECMOL), preventing it from receiving foreign funds. He was shifted over **1,000 km away** from Ladakh to Jodhpur jail.
- **Context: Ladakh Protests & Demands:** Protests in Ladakh have been ongoing since 2021, centering around demands for statehood, constitutional protection (Sixth Schedule), and local governance measures. Wangchuk had been on a hunger strike as part of protests led by the Leh Apex Body. Violence in Leh escalated in September 2025, including arson and clashes with police, reportedly in response to frustration over perceived inaction and broken promises.

INTERNATIONAL**2025 World Trade Report: “Making Trade and AI Work Together to the Benefit of All”**

In the News: In September 2025, the World Trade Organization (WTO) published its **World Trade Report 2025**, which examines how **artificial intelligence (AI)** is reshaping global trade, what opportunities it creates, and what challenges need to be addressed so that all countries can benefit.

Key Points:

- The report projects that by **2040**, AI could increase the value of trade in goods and services globally by **34-37%**, depending on how much countries invest in catching up technologically and implementing supportive policies.
- Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could grow by **12-13%** by 2040 under scenarios in which AI is more widely and effectively adopted.
- The greatest growth (over 40%) is expected in **digitally deliverable services** (for example, online services, digital media, software, etc.), with smaller growth in sectors like manufacturing, primary inputs, or sectors with less digital integration.
- One of the main ways AI helps trade is by **reducing trade costs**: improving logistics, easing regulatory and customs compliance, reducing language barriers, helping with contract enforcement, and improving matching of buyers and sellers.
 - Countries that lag behind in digital infrastructure, regulation, skills or data access are likely to miss out, causing **unequal gains**. The report warns that without effort, AI may widen global inequality between high-income and low/middle-income economies.
- The report emphasizes that policy frameworks, digital public goods, regulatory clarity, investment in skills, data governance, and cross-border cooperation will be essential to ensure fairness in who benefits from trade enabled by AI.

Hurun India Wealth Report 2025

In the News: The **Mercedes-Benz Hurun India Wealth Report 2025**, released in September 2025, provides updated estimates of millionaire households in India (households with net worth ≥ ₹8.5 crore, approx. US\$1 million), state-wise and city-wise distribution, and trends over the past few years.

Key Points / India Ranks & Trends

- India now has **871,700 millionaire households** with net worth ≥ ₹8.5 crore (US\$1 million), which is a **≈90% increase** over the 2021 figure of ~458,000 households.
- These millionaire households represent about **0.31%** of all Indian households.
- The top state is **Maharashtra**, with **178,600** millionaire households, showing ~194% growth since 2021. Mumbai alone accounts for **142,000** of these.
- Other leading states include Delhi (~79,800 households), Tamil Nadu (~72,600), Karnataka (~68,800), Gujarat (~68,300), Uttar Pradesh (~57,700), Telangana (~51,700), West Bengal (~50,400), Rajasthan (~33,100), and Haryana (~30,500). These 10 states together hold over **79% of millionaire households** in India.
- Top cities are: Mumbai (142,000 households), New Delhi (68,200), Bengaluru (31,600), Ahmedabad (26,800), Kolkata (26,600), Chennai (22,800), Pune (22,500), Hyderabad (19,800), Gurugram (10,100), and Surat (5,700).

Comparative / Global Perspective

- While India's growth in millionaire households is rapid (~90% growth in 4 years), India's count of millionaire households is still much less than countries like the United States and China. A comparison in the report notes China has nearly **5.1 million** such households.
- The report introduces the inaugural **Mercedes-Benz India Hurun India Index (MBHX)**, which has also grown by nearly **200%**, signalling rapidly rising wealth creation among high-net-worth individuals in India.

US Senators Introduce India Shrimp Tariff Act To Protect Seafood Industry

In the News: U.S. Senators Bill Cassidy (Louisiana) and Cindy Hyde-Smith (Mississippi) introduced the India Shrimp Tariff Act, legislation aimed at imposing tariffs on shrimp imports from India. The act is designed to protect the domestic shrimp and catfish industries, particularly in Louisiana, from what is claimed to be unfairly low-priced shrimp entering the U.S. market.

Key Points:

- **Purpose of the Act:** To protect U.S. seafood producers—especially shrimpers and catfish farmers in states like Louisiana and Mississippi—from the economic harm caused by cheap imported shrimp from India. The Senators argue that Indian shrimp imports are being “dumped”—i.e. sold in the U.S. at prices below fair market value—undermining local producers.
- **Proposed Measures:** Imposition of tariffs on Indian shrimp imports to level the playing field for U.S. producers. The legislation seems to target both shrimp and catfish imports.
- **Impact on Stakeholders:**
- **For the U.S. Seafood Industry:** If passed, the legislation could offer relief to domestic seafood producers facing competition from low-cost imports.

- Potentially preserves jobs in shrimping, processing, associated supply chains in states like Louisiana and Mississippi.
- **For Indian Exporters:** The Indian shrimp export industry, valued at about **US\$4.88 billion**, has expressed that such legislation is problematic and could further damage already affected exporters.
- There are warnings that tariffs will raise costs for U.S. importers and possibly pass onto consumers.
- **Economic & Trade Context:** Shrimp is a major export commodity for India; any tariff will affect the revenues, livelihoods of farmers, processors, exporters. U.S. producers claim that cheap imports distort market fairness. The legislation reflects broader concern about trade deficits and protection of domestic sectors.
- **Criticism / Industry Response:** Indian shrimp exporters have largely downplayed the impact: some say the damage is already substantial, suggesting there's little more that such a tariff could do to harm what's already suffered. The U.S. legislation may provoke retaliatory trade measures or reduce market access for Indian seafood in the U.S.

India, Greece Hold First Bilateral Naval Exercise

In the News: The Indian Navy and the Hellenic (Greek) Navy concluded their maiden bilateral maritime exercise in the Mediterranean Sea. The exercise was held in two phases: a harbour phase (Sep 13-17) at Salamis Naval Base in Greece, and a sea phase (Sep 17-18) in the Mediterranean. India was represented by the guided-missile stealth frigate INS Triakand.

Key Points:

- **Participating Units & Assets: India:** INS *Triakand* (stealth guided-missile frigate) represented India.
- **Greece:** Participated with HS *Themistokles* (Elli-class frigate), submarine *Pipinos*, and a naval helicopter among other units.
- **Phases of the Exercise: Harbour Phase (Sep 13-17):** At Salamis Naval Base. Included pre-sail conference, cross-deck visits, professional & crew exchanges, cultural interaction, and diplomatic engagements.
- **Sea Phase (Sep 17-18):** Carried out at sea in the Mediterranean. Featured tactical and operational drills such as night VBSS (Visit, Board, Search, Seizure), anti-submarine warfare (ASW), coordinated gun firing, replenishment-at-sea, and helicopter cross-deck operations.
- **Cultural / Symbolic Aspects:** Cultural exchange aboard INS *Triakand* and visits to iconic Greek landmarks (e.g. the Acropolis) for Indian crew. Interactions with senior naval officers and diplomatic leaders of both countries to strengthen people-to-people ties and defence diplomacy.
- **Objectives and Purpose:**
 - Enhance interoperability between Indian and Greek navies in complex maritime operations. Demonstrate capacity to operate jointly in diverse maritime scenarios, including non-routine operations (VBSS etc.).
 - Strengthen defence cooperation and shared commitment to maritime security, freedom of navigation, stability in shared sea lanes.
- **Significance:**
 - First bilateral naval exercise between India and Greece — marks a new chapter in defence ties.
 - Part of India's expanding naval presence and diplomacy in the Mediterranean/Indo-Pacific linked theatres.
 - Helps both navies to share best practices, build trust, improve mutual handling of operational challenges.

India Elected to Interpol Asian Committee: A Strategic Win

In the News : India was elected as a member of the **INTERPOL Asian Committee** during the 25th Asian Regional Conference held in Singapore. The election was conducted through a multi-stage voting process, reflecting India's diplomatic efforts and institutional standing in international policing cooperation.

Key Points :

- **What is the Interpol Asian Committee?:** It is an **advisory body** to the **Asian Regional Conference** of INTERPOL. The Committee helps **identify regional strategic priorities**, deliberate operational threats (like organized crime, cybercrime, human trafficking, terrorism, drug trafficking), and guide coordinated actions among member countries. It convenes annually to discuss regional security and policing cooperation.
- **India's Election & Process:** India was represented by a delegation from the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** at the conference. The election went through **multiple voting rounds** among Asian INTERPOL member states. India's diplomatic missions, embassies, and the National Central Bureau played a coordinated role in campaigning for support. The term for India's membership is **2025–2029**.
- **Strategic Significance & Benefits for India:**

- **Greater influence in regional law enforcement:** Being on the committee gives India a voice in shaping priorities and responses within Asia.
- **Better coordination in transnational crime:** Helps in strengthening cooperation on cross-border issues such as terrorism, trafficking, cybercrime, and drug smuggling.
- **Enhancement of India's global policing profile:** Demonstrates its commitment to international security frameworks and collective policing goals.
- **Access to intelligence and best practices:** Through committee work, India can tap into regional intelligence-sharing, operational frameworks, and capacity building.
- **Soft power and diplomatic leverage:** This election underscores India's standing among Asian nations in matters of security cooperation.
- **Challenges & Considerations:** India must **deliver on its responsibilities** in the committee—active engagement, resource commitment, and follow-through on resolutions. Balancing national sovereignty and regional cooperation: India will need to align its domestic priorities with regional directives without compromising core interests. Ensuring that decisions and recommendations from the committee translate into **on-the-ground action and results** across borders. Maintaining diplomatic goodwill among other Asian nations, avoiding perceptions of dominance or overreach.

What is the contentious 2 per cent 'Zucman Tax', which targets France's billionaires?

In the News : The idea of a "2 % Zucman tax" has resurfaced in French politics as the Socialist Party demands that Prime Minister **Sébastien Lecornu** include a new wealth tax in the 2026 budget. Bernard Arnault (head of LVMH and France's richest person) has strongly condemned the proposal, calling it harmful to France's economy.

Key Points

- **What Is the Zucman Tax?:** Proposed by economist **Gabriel Zucman**. It is a **minimum 2 % annual wealth tax** on net assets (i.e., total wealth, not just income) for the ultra-wealthy. In France, it would apply to households with net worth exceeding **€100 million** (~\$118 million). The idea is that if a billionaire is paying less than 2 % of their wealth in taxes under the current system, they would need to pay a "top-up" to bring their tax burden to at least 2 %.
- **Rationale & Justification:** Zucman argues ultra-rich individuals often pay proportionally less tax (through tax optimization, wealth structuring, deferral, etc.) than lower income groups. A 2 % floor is chosen to maintain progressive taxation — the aim is to ensure the ultra-rich do not enjoy a lower effective tax rate than professionals just below them. It is pitched as a tool for social justice, fiscal equity, and fiscal sustainability (helping narrow deficits).
- **Differences from Previous Wealth Taxes in France:** Past wealth taxes (e.g. **ISF**) and current ones (real-estate wealth tax, **IFI**) are more limited in base or scope. The Zucman tax would include **all assets**, including business shares and financial holdings, not just property. The threshold of €100 million is much higher, so the tax would affect **far fewer households** than previous wealth taxes. It proposes a **minimum tax floor**, unlike prior taxes which were levied directly on wealth above certain levels.
- **Projected Revenue & Scope:** Zucman's more optimistic projection: **~€20 billion** per year. But critics and alternate economists estimate a more modest figure: **~€5 billion**, accounting for tax flight and avoidance. Only ~1,800 households are expected to be affected (given the high threshold).

China to Launch K Visa to Attract Global Talent Amid H1-B Crackdown

In the News : In response to stricter U.S. H-1B visa policies (including a proposed \$100,000 fee for new applications), China has announced the introduction of a new K visa program to attract young professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The K visa is scheduled to come into effect on 1 October 2025 under revised Chinese entry-exit regulations.

Key Points

- **Background & Rationale:** The announcement follows U.S. visa policy changes, notably a \$100,000 fee for new H-1B visa petitions, that have disrupted the appeal of U.S. work visas for global talent. China sees an opportunity to capture skilled global professionals, especially those who might reconsider U.S. migration under tighter constraints. The move aligns with China's broader "talent-driven development" and innovation strategies.
- **Legal & Regulatory Changes:** On **August 7, 2025**, China's State Council issued **Order No. 814**, amending the **Regulations on the Administration of the Entry and Exit of Foreigners** to insert the new K visa category. The amendments add two new provisions (Articles 6 and 7) specifying:

1. Inclusion of “K visa: issued to foreign young science and technology talent” among visa categories.
 2. That applicants must meet “conditions and requirements for foreign young science and technology talent ... and submit supporting documents.”
- **Who Is Eligible / Target Group: Young STEM professionals** (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) from around the world. Holders of at least a **bachelor's degree** from recognized universities or research institutions. Individuals already engaged in research, education, or scientific work may also qualify. Detailed criteria like age limits, experience thresholds, or accepted institutions will be clarified by Chinese authorities and embassies/consulates.
 - **Key Features & Benefits: No requirement** for a domestic employer or invitation to apply, removing a major barrier common in work visas. **Greater flexibility** in terms of entry frequency, validity period, and length of stay compared to existing Chinese visa types. K visa holders may engage in **scientific, educational, cultural exchanges, entrepreneurship, business activities, and innovation work**. Multiple entries allowed and more favorable terms for stay durations (compared with existing visa categories).

Russia to Complete S-400 Missile System Deliveries to India by 2026

In the News: Russia has confirmed that it will complete the delivery of the **S-400 Triumf air defence missile systems** to India by 2026. The commitment follows the 2018 defence deal between the two countries, signed during President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi, and marks one of the largest arms contracts India has ever concluded with Russia.

Key Points:

- **Major Defence Deal:** India signed a USD 5.43 billion agreement with Russia in October 2018 for the procurement of five S-400 regiments. The system is among the most advanced in the world, capable of neutralising aircraft, drones, and ballistic and cruise missiles at ranges up to 400 kilometres and altitudes of up to 30 kilometres.
- **Delivery Timeline:** Four units have already been delivered despite delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. The final regiment is expected to arrive in India by 2026, thereby completing the full contract.
- **Strategic Importance:** The deployment of S-400 systems strengthens India's multi-layered air defence architecture, providing a credible deterrence against aerial threats along the borders with both China and Pakistan. It also integrates with India's indigenous air defence systems to provide seamless coverage.
- **Sanctions Concerns:** The deal has attracted scrutiny under the United States' Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). While Washington has repeatedly expressed concern, India has defended its decision on grounds of national security, and sanctions have not been imposed so far.
- **Operational Use:** The S-400 has already been inducted into the Indian Air Force and deployed at strategic locations to cover sensitive sectors. Reports indicate its systems were successfully tested in operational exercises, underscoring their role as a force multiplier.
- **Future Outlook:** India is also in discussions with Russia for potential procurement of additional regiments beyond the existing contract, reflecting its continued reliance on advanced Russian defence platforms while simultaneously seeking to strengthen its domestic defence industry under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

UK PM Keir Starmer Honoured with 'Living Bridge' Award for India-UK FTA

In the News: British Prime Minister **Keir Starmer** was honoured with the “**Living Bridge**” award by the India Business Group (IBG) in recognition of his role in advancing the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The award ceremony was held in London's House of Lords, and the honour was accepted on his behalf by Seema Malhotra, Britain's Indian-origin Minister for the Indo-Pacific.

Key Points:

- **Purpose of the Award:** The “Living Bridge” awards celebrate individuals and organizations that act as bridges between India and the UK, strengthening bilateral relations in trade, investment, education, culture, and diplomacy.
- **Recognition of FTA Role:** Starmer was specifically recognised for championing and helping conclude the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). The award highlights his efforts in facilitating stronger commercial and strategic ties between the two nations.
- **Acceptance & Ceremony:** Seema Malhotra received the award on his behalf at a ceremony in the House of Lords.
- **Other Honourees:** Alongside Starmer, the 2025 awards honoured the GMR Group, businessman G.P. Hinduja, Bina Mehta (Chair, KPMG UK), and the University of Southampton for their roles in deepening India-UK collaboration.

- **FTA Ambitions & Trade Target:** The India-UK FTA (CETA) aims to double bilateral trade to USD 120 billion by 2030 once ratified by the UK Parliament.

Super Typhoon Ragasa

In the News: Super Typhoon Ragasa, also known as Typhoon Nando in the Philippines, has ravaged parts of East and Southeast Asia in September 2025. It struck Taiwan, the Philippines, and southern China—including Hong Kong and Guangdong—causing widespread flooding, infrastructure damage, evacuations, and loss of life.

Key Points:

- **Origin & Intensification:** Typhoon Ragasa formed in mid-September 2025 north of Yap and entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility on September 17, when it was named “Nando.” It rapidly intensified over warm seas, achieving **super typhoon status** by September 21 with sustained winds nearing 270 km/h (1-minute average as per JTWC).
- **Peak Strength & Path:** At its height, Ragasa’s central pressure dropped to around 905 hPa, making it the **most intense tropical cyclone recorded in 2025**. It made landfall over **Panuitan Island, Cagayan, in the Philippines** then tracked northwestwards across the Luzon Strait toward Taiwan, Hong Kong, and finally Guangdong in southern China.
- **Impact in Taiwan & Barrier Lake Overflow:** In Taiwan, heavy rains led to the overflow of a **barrier lake** in Hualien County, triggering a flash flood that destroyed infrastructure and claimed dozens of lives. As many as 17 people died, and dozens were missing. The lake had been formed earlier by landslides blocking a tributary of the Matai’an Creek.
- **Devastation in Hong Kong & Southern China:** Ragasa battered Hong Kong with hurricane-force winds, flooding roads and damaging buildings, including hotels where waves broke through glass lobbies. Hundreds of flights were canceled, transport systems ground to a halt, and emergency shelters were activated. In Guangdong, more than **400,000 people were evacuated**, schools and businesses shut down, and transport was disrupted.
- **Regional Toll & Aftermath:** At least 27 people died across Taiwan and the Philippines, and millions were impacted by flooding, displacement and storm damage. The destruction of infrastructure, power outages, landslides and coastal inundation added to the scale of the disaster.
- **Lessons & Climate Context:** Meteorologists warn that climate change is raising the intensity and frequency of extreme storms in East Asia. Ragasa’s rapid intensification and destructive trajectory underscore the growing risks to coastal populations and infrastructure.

7th Future Food Forum 2025 Begins in Dubai

In the News: The **7th Future Food Forum 2025** was inaugurated in Dubai from September 23 to 25, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, innovators, and academics to deliberate on strengthening food systems, trade, sustainability, and technological innovation in the food and beverage sector.

Key Points:

- **Host & Platform:** The Forum is convened under the aegis of the **UAE Ministry of Economy and Tourism**, with the **UAE Food Cluster** playing a pivotal role in shaping the agenda.
- **Venue & Duration:** It is being held at **Le Méridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre** over two days (23–24 September) with associated events extending until the 25th.
- **Theme & Focus:** The Forum is centered on “**Shaping Tomorrow’s Food Ecosystems**”, emphasizing resilience, sustainability, trade, and alignment of national strategies with global trends.
- **Trade & Policy Emphasis:** A significant focus is placed on **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs)** as levers to expand food manufacturing, exports, and integration of SMEs in global supply chains.
- **National Targets & Growth:** The UAE aims to boost the food sector’s contribution from **AED 30 billion to AED 40 billion** under its economic clustering strategy.
- **New Initiatives Launched:** The Forum saw the launch of a **Knowledge Hub** to connect academia and industry, and a **Global Buyers Programme** to facilitate market access for UAE producers.
- **Partnerships & MoUs:** A key MoU was signed between **GS1 Emirates Ltd** and **UAE Food Cluster** to co-develop a universal product catalogue for the UAE’s food & beverage sector, strengthening traceability and regulatory compliance. Technological & Innovation Tracks: Sessions cover AI, smart manufacturing, vertical farming, digital supply chains, personalized nutrition, sustainable packaging, and other frontier technologies.
- **Significance for Global South:** Observers noted that the Forum fosters **South-South cooperation**, positioning UAE–India non-oil trade and agri-industrial linkages as models for the Global South.

India Nominates IIT-Madras as UN AI Centre of Excellence

In the News: India has nominated **IIT-Madras** to be a **UN Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence**, to strengthen AI research, skills development, and global collaboration.

Key Points:

- **Global South Focus:** The centre will especially support AI capacity building in developing countries.
- **Core Activities:** Research, training, model development, and collaborative projects are expected to be led from IIT-Madras.
- **Institutional Strengths:** IIT-Madras already has strong AI and data science infrastructure, making it a logical candidate.
- **Policy Alignment:** This nomination fits with India's broader AI goals under the IndiaAI mission and national tech strategy.
- **Strategic Recognition:** The move signals international acknowledgment of India's growing role in AI and highlights IIT-Madras's leadership.
- **Next Steps:** Formal UN approval, setting of mandate, and resource allocation will define the centre's shape and reach.

India's Role in Palestine Statehood Recognition

In the News: India's longstanding supportive stance toward Palestine has drawn renewed attention amid recent diplomatic shifts and heightened global momentum for Palestinian statehood recognition.

Key Points:

- **Recognition Since 1988:** India formally recognised the State of Palestine in November 1988, following its declaration of independence.
- **Early Backing of PLO:** In 1974, India became the first non-Arab nation to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
- **Diplomatic Presence:** India opened a Representative Office in Gaza in 1996, later relocated to Ramallah, strengthening bilateral presence.
- **UN & Resolutions:** India has consistently backed UN resolutions favouring Palestinian rights, and in 2025 voted with 142 nations for a UN General Assembly declaration supporting a sovereign Palestinian state.
- **Balanced Approach:** Despite its Palestine support, India also maintains diplomatic and strategic ties with Israel, advocating a two-state solution and peaceful coexistence.
- **Recent Diplomatic Activity:** India is participating in a UN conference aimed at resolving the Palestine question via a two-state path.
- **Voice in Global Debate:** With over 150 UN members now recognising Palestine, India's position remains influential in shaping consensus and regional diplomacy.

India's SDG 3 Progress

In the News: India's progress on **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)** has come under scrutiny in 2025 as strong gains in some health indicators contrast with persistent gaps in maternal, workforce, and non-communicable disease arenas.

Key Points:

- **Health Index Gains:** India's SDG 3 score saw improvement of ~22 points between 2018 and 2021.
- **Maternal Health Lag:** With current trajectories, India is unlikely to meet target MMR reductions by 2030.
- **Child & Neonatal Deaths:** Declines are observed, but the rate of improvement must accelerate.
- **Health Worker Density Decline:** Between 1991 and 2019, density of health personnel fell (from ~1.22 to ~0.73 per 1,000), hurting service delivery.
- **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):** Rising share of disease burden from NCDs and injuries poses a major risk to target achievement.
- **Inequalities & State Variations:** Some states show much better outcomes (for maternal mortality, child health) than others.
- **Policy & Planning Gaps:** Weak implementation, limited resources, and fragmentation in health systems hamper acceleration.

Qatar Becomes 8th Country to Adopt UPI

In the News: Qatar has become the **8th country** to adopt India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI), allowing Indian travellers to make seamless digital payments while in Qatar.

Key Points:

- **Partnership Deal:** NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL) has teamed up with Qatar National Bank (QNB) to enable QR-based UPI payments across QNB merchant outlets.
- **First Merchant Live:** Qatar Duty Free became the first merchant in Qatar to accept UPI payments.
- **Convenience for Tourists:** Indian visitors in Qatar can now avoid carrying cash or dealing with currency exchange for many purchases.
- **Global Reach of UPI:** With Qatar on board, UPI is accepted in countries like Bhutan, France, Mauritius, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, UAE, and now Qatar.
- **Technical Enablement:** The payments are enabled via point-of-sale terminals with QR codes powered by a solution from NETSTARS. S
- **Soft Power & Digital Diplomacy:** This expansion reflects India's growing digital influence and supports bilateral ties via technological integration.

Google Turns 27: Celebrating a Legacy of Innovation with a Nostalgic Doodle

In the News: Google celebrated its 27th birthday by featuring a **nostalgic Doodle** that revived the company's original 1998 logo on its homepage.

Key Points:

- **Retro Logo Doodle:** The Doodle displayed is Google's first-ever wordmark from 1998, transporting users back to the company's early days.
- **Founding & Anniversary Date:** Google was founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while at Stanford University. Though incorporated on September 4, Google chooses September 27 as its official "birthday" for celebratory purposes.
- **Evolution of Doodles:** Google uses Doodles to celebrate occasions like anniversaries, holidays, and notable figures. Over time, Doodles have become creative and interactive, going beyond simple logo changes.
- **Journey & Growth:** From a garage startup, Google expanded into products such as Gmail, Maps, Android, Chrome, YouTube, and cloud services. The company now emphasizes AI, search, and organizing information at global scale.
- **Brand & Design Legacy:** The original logo's designer, Ruth Kedar, played a key role in shaping Google's visual identity. The nostalgic Doodle also reminds users of how the Google brand has evolved while retaining its core elements.

India Shines with Five Medals at ISSF Junior World Cup 2025

In the News: At the 2025 ISSF Junior World Cup held in New Delhi, India delivered a strong performance by winning **five medals**, including a **clean sweep** in the women's 50m rifle prone event.

Key Points:

- **Medal Tally:** India secured 5 medals in the New Delhi leg of the ISSF Junior World Cup 2025. In the earlier Suhl leg, India had already won 11 medals (3 gold, 4 silver, 4 bronze).
- **Women's 50m Rifle Prone Sweep:** Indian shooters **Anushka Thokur, Anshika Agrawal, and Aadhya Agrawal** clinched gold, silver, and bronze respectively in women's 50m rifle prone.
- **Other Notable Wins:** In men's 10m air pistol, **Jonathan Antony** clinched gold with a dominant final score of 244.8. India also won gold in the **10m air pistol mixed team** event, with the duo **Rashmika Sahgal & Kapil** defeating fellow Indians in the final. In women's skeet, **Raiza Dhillon** and **Mansi Raghuvanshi** took silver and bronze respectively.
- **Scale & Participation:** The New Delhi leg featured **208 shooters** from **19 federations**. India fielded one of the largest contingents, emphasizing both depth and home advantage.
- **Overall Standings & Momentum:** Combining Suhl and New Delhi performances, India leads in the overall medal standings in the 2025 Junior World Cup circuit. This success is a strong signal of future potential in India's junior shooting ranks.

SPORTS

Indian Skater Anish Raj Secures Historic Bronze at World Championships 2025

In the News: Indian skater **Anish Raj** won a **bronze medal** in the Junior Men's One-Lap Road Sprint at the 2025 Inline Speed Skating World Championships held in China. This marked India's first ever medal in that category at this championship.

Key Points:

- **Event & Category:**

- The medal came in the Junior Men's One-Lap Road Sprint event.
- The competition was part of the 2025 Inline Speed Skating World Championships.
- **Historic Significance:**
- Anish Raj is the **first Indian** to secure a medal in this junior one-lap sprint event at the World Championships.
- The achievement is gaining recognition in the Indian roller sports community, considered a milestone for junior inline speed skating.
- **Reactions & Support:**
- Roller Skating Federation of India (RSFI) congratulated him, noting pride in his performance.
- The news has prompted increased media attention and encouragement for the sport at the grassroots level.
- **Further Context:**
- Alongside other Indian achievements in speed/inline skating, this adds to a growing list of international successes for Indian skaters.
- It underscores that junior skaters are achieving on world stages, which may help with infrastructure, coaching, funding in future.

Smriti Mandhana Breaks Virat Kohli's Record for Fastest Indian Century in ODIs

In the News: During the final Women's ODI between India and Australia at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Smriti Mandhana scored a blistering century in just **50 balls**, becoming the fastest Indian (male or female) to reach 100 in an ODI — surpassing Virat Kohli's previous record of 52 balls.

Key Points:

- **The Record:**
- Smriti Mandhana scored her century in *50 balls*.
- This breaks the longstanding Indian record held by Virat Kohli, who had made an ODI hundred in 52 balls against Australia in 2013 at Jaipur.
- **Match Context:**
- The match was the series-decider against Australia (Women's ODI) played at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.
- Despite Mandhana's century, India lost the match and therefore the series 2-1.
- **Statistical Significance:** This is the fastest ODI century by an Indian cricketer (any gender).
- **Batting Details:**
- Mandhana's final score in that innings was **125 off 63 balls** including a high number of boundaries (fours and sixes), showcasing powerful scoring.
- She hit 17 fours and 5 sixes in that knock.
- **Previous Record:** Virat Kohli's 52-ball century against Australia (Jaipur, 2013) stood for over a decade.

ICC Unveils Official Song 'Bring it Home' for Women's Cricket World Cup 2025

In the News: The International Cricket Council (ICC) released the official anthem for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025, titled '**Bring It Home**', sung by Shreya Ghoshal. The tournament is set to take place from 30 September to 2 November 2025 in India and Sri Lanka.

Key Points:

- **Song & Performer:**
- The official song is titled "*Bring It Home*".
- Sung by Indian playback singer **Shreya Ghoshal**.
- **Musical Style & Highlights:**
- The song is described as a "high-energy blend of rhythm, melody and emotion" aiming to unite fans globally.
- Contains catchy hooks like "Tarikita Tarikita Tarikita Dhom" and "Dhak Dhak, we bring it home".
- Lyrics include motivational lines like "*Patthar pighlana hai, Ek naya itihas banana hai*" (We have to melt stones and forge a new history), emphasizing perseverance and determination.
- **Purpose & Theme:**
- The anthem celebrates unity, strength, and the dreams of women cricketers stepping onto the world stage.
- The song is meant to reflect the legacy of women's cricket and also inspire both players and fans.

- **Release & Platforms:**

- The track has been made available on multiple digital streaming platforms including Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, JioSaavn,
- YouTube Music and social media (Instagram, Facebook, etc.).
- An official music video was released along with it, featuring dynamic visuals, archival moments of women's cricket, and choreography.

- **Tournament Details & Other Context:**

- The Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 is scheduled from 30 September to 2 November, hosted by India & Sri Lanka.
- The ICC has also announced record-low ticket prices for fans (from ₹100) for this event, to encourage greater attendance and inclusion.

Ballon d'Or 2025

In the News: The Ballon d'Or 2025 awards were held at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. **Ousmane Dembélé** won the men's Ballon d'Or, while **Aitana Bonmatí** claimed the women's Ballon d'Or for a third consecutive year.

Key Points

- **Edition & Format:** 2025 marked the **69th edition** of the Ballon d'Or. For this edition, the award was based on performance in the **2024–25 season**, not the calendar year. The period of consideration for men was 1 August 2024 to 13 July 2025 (end of FIFA Club World Cup. For women, the window extended to 2 August 2025 (end of Copa América Femenina)
 - **Winners & Major Honors**
 - **Men's Ballon d'Or:** Ousmane Dembélé (PSG/France) — his first Ballon d'Or title.
 - **Women's Ballon d'Or (Ballon d'Or Féminin):** Aitana Bonmatí (Barcelona/Spain) — third in a row.
 - **Men's Kopa Trophy (best young player):** Lamine Yamal (Barcelona)
 - **Women's Kopa Trophy:** Vicky López
 - **Men's Yashin Trophy (best goalkeeper):** Gianluigi Donnarumma
 - **Women's Yashin Trophy:** Hannah Hampton
 - **Men's Gerd Müller Trophy (top scorer):** Viktor Gyökeres
 - **Women's Gerd Müller Trophy:** Ewa Pajor
 - **Club of the Year (Men's):** Paris Saint-Germain (PSG)
 - **Club of the Year (Women's):** Arsenal
 - Additional awards:
 - **Men's Coach (Johan Cruyff Trophy):** Luis Enrique
 - **Women's Coach (Johan Cruyff Trophy):** Sarina Wiegman
 - **Socrates Award:** Given to recognize humanitarian/social work by a footballer during the year (presented at the Ballon d'Or ceremony)
 - **Ranking & Notables**
 - In the men's top 10, second place went to Lamine Yamal.
 - Vitorinha had a strong showing (third) and Mohamed Salah was fourth.
 - Raphinha's placement (5th) drew criticism from Neymar, who called it "too much of a joke."
 - Some surprises in rankings included players being placed lower than many expected (e.g. Michael Olise finishing 30th)
- Debates and controversies erupted around fairness and criteria of voting, especially for certain lower-ranked nominees.

ICC Suspends USA Cricket's Membership Over Governance Issues

In the News: The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced the **suspension** of **USA Cricket's** membership, citing multiple governance failures and constitutional breaches.

Key Points:

- **Reason for Suspension:** USA Cricket was found to have engaged in **repeated and continued breaches** of its obligations under the ICC Constitution.

- **Specific Failures:** The ICC cited the **absence of a functional governance structure**, **insufficient progress** toward recognition by the **US Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC)**, and **actions causing reputational damage** to cricket domestically and globally.
- **Continuity for Teams:** Despite the suspension, **USA's national cricket teams will retain the right to participate** in ICC events, including preparations for the **2028 Los Angeles Olympics**.
- **ICC Oversight:** The ICC (or designated representatives) will temporarily **manage and oversee administration** of USA's cricket operations to safeguard athletes and performance programmes.
- **Roadmap for Reinstatement:** The ICC's **Normalisation Committee** will chart the path for restoration of membership, requiring **demonstrable governance reforms** and ongoing monitoring.
- **Precursor Warnings:** USA Cricket had been **placed "on notice" at the 2024 ICC AGM** for non-compliance and given a window to resolve deficits.
- **Timing & Decision:** The suspension was effected immediately after an ICC Board meeting after assessing that prior remedial commitments by USA Cricket remained unfulfilled.

Ravichandran Ashwin Becomes First Indian to Join BBL

In the News : Ravichandran Ashwin became the first male Indian cricketer to join Australia's **Big Bash League (BBL)** by signing with the **Sydney Thunder**.

Key Points:

- **Historic Move:** Ashwin's signing breaks the barrier that previously barred Indian male players from overseas T20 leagues.
- **Team & Timing:** He will join **Sydney Thunder** in early January 2026 after his stint in **ILT20** ends.
- **Recent Retirements:** His retirement from international cricket in December 2024 and from the **IPL** opened the door to this opportunity.
- **Role in Thunder:** He joins a spin-rich squad, expected to bolster the team's all-round balance.
- **BCCI Policy Context:** Former policy prevented active Indian men cricketers from participating in foreign leagues; Ashwin's prior retirements enabled this move.
- **Fan & Team Reaction:** Thunder call it their biggest overseas signing. Ashwin praised the leadership and cultural fit.
- **Cricketing Legacy:** Ashwin leaves behind a storied record — over 500 Test wickets, significant contributions in all formats.

Ahmedabad to Host 11th Asian Aquatics Championship 2025

In the News: Ahmedabad will host the **11th Asian Aquatics Championship 2025** from September 28 to October 11, marking the first time India hosts the continental aquatic event.

Key Points:

- **Dates & Venue:** September 28 to October 11, 2025, at the **Veer Savarkar Sports Complex**, Ahmedabad.
- **Disciplines:** Will include swimming, diving, artistic swimming, and water polo.
- **First in India:** This is the first edition of the Asian Aquatics Championship held in India.
- **Mascot & Logo:** The mascot **Jalveer** and the event logo were launched by Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in early September.
- **Participation:** Over **30 nations** expected to send athletes. More than **1,000 participants** anticipated.
- **Qualifying Event:** Performances here will help qualify Indian athletes for the **2026 Asian Games**
- **Strategic Importance:** Hosting this event strengthens Ahmedabad's credentials in India's bid for the **2036 Olympics** and showcases its capacity to host major international sport events.
- **Infrastructure Upgrade:** The sports complex is built to Olympic standards.

SCIENCE AND TECH

Arjuna 2025 PN7: Newest Quasi-satellite of Earth

In the News Astronomers recently announced the discovery of a small near-Earth asteroid **2025 PN7**, also dubbed a **quasi-moon** of Earth. It is a new addition to the family of objects that share Earth's orbital neighborhood without being true moons.

Key Points

- **Discovery & Designation:** Discovered on **2 August 2025** by the **Pan-STARRS1** telescope at Haleakalā, Hawaii.

- Designated **2025 PN7**.
- Archival images suggest it may have been in a quasi-orbital relation with Earth for decades (back to ~2014 or earlier)
- **Orbital Characteristics & Classification:** Belongs to the **Arjuna class** of asteroids — objects whose orbits are very Earth-like in terms of semi-major axis, low eccentricity and inclination. It is an **Apollo asteroid** (a broader group), but among them, Arjuna's are distinguished by non-Earth-crossing orbits (in many cases) or by their resonance behavior.
- Its orbital parameters:
 - Semi-major axis ≈ 1.003 AU
 - Eccentricity ~ 0.108
 - Inclination $\sim 1.98^\circ$
 - Aphelion ≈ 1.108 AU, Perihelion ≈ 0.898 AU
 - Absolute magnitude $H = 26.4$ (implies a small size)
- **Physical Properties:** Estimated diameter: **~ 19 meters** (≈ 62 feet) Very faint and small, making detection challenging. Composition, albedo, surface properties currently unknown due to limited observations.
- **Quasi-satellite Behavior & Stability:** A **quasi-satellite** is an object orbiting the Sun in a 1:1 mean motion resonance with Earth — it appears to stay near Earth over long intervals, though it's not gravitationally bound to Earth. Unlike **mini-moons** (which are temporarily captured by Earth's gravity), quasi-satellites are in a resonant orbit, not bound gravitationally, though Earth's influence perturbs them. 2025 PN7 is expected to stay in its quasi-satellite configuration for about **128 years**, though it is considered relatively short-lived in cosmic terms. Over time, orbital perturbations may drive it into a different co-orbital regime (e.g. horseshoe orbit or Trojan configuration).
- **Relation to Earth & Distance:** It can come relatively close to Earth at some times, though not approaching dangerously near. Its distance from Earth will fluctuate as it leads or trails in its orbit, due to the resonant motion.

Agni-P missile test, from a train: All you need to know

In the News: India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test-fired the **Agni-Prime (Agni-P)** missile from a **rail-based mobile launcher**, marking the first time such a launch has been executed in the country.

Key Points:

- **Missile & Range:** Agni-P is a **two-stage, solid-fuel, intermediate-range ballistic missile**, with an operational range between **1,000 km and 2,000 km**.
- **Rail-based Launcher:** The test used a **specially designed rail mobile launcher** that can move on the railway network without pre-conditions, enabling launch from anywhere along the tracks.
- **Strategic Rationale:** Rail launchers offer **greater mobility, concealment, and survivability**. Tunnels and the expansive rail network can help hide missile assets from surveillance until launch.
- **First-of-its-kind Achievement:** Before India, only a few countries (e.g. Russia, the US, China, possibly North Korea) had the capability to launch long-range missiles from rail platforms. India now joins that select group.
- **Operational Features:** The rail launcher is **self-sustained**, equipped with independent launch capability, communications systems, and protection mechanisms, and can initiate launch with short reaction time.
- **Implications for Deterrence:** Because India follows a "no first use" nuclear doctrine, mobile launch platforms are crucial to ensure a credible **second-strike** capability launching after absorbing an initial strike.

ENVIRONMENT

Brazil Will Be First to Invest in Global Forest Fund

In the News: On 19 September 2025, it was reported that Brazil will become the first country to make an investment in the **Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)**, a multilateral fund proposed by Brazil to support the conservation of endangered tropical forests. The announcement is expected to be made by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in New York, aiming to galvanize further contributions from both wealthy and developing nations.

Key Points:

- The **Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)** is envisioned as a **US\$125 billion** endowment, combining contributions from sovereign (governments) and private sector sources.

- Under the proposed model, countries would receive annual payments from the fund based on the area of tropical forest they preserve.
- Brazil has indicated its initial investment will be **considerable**, though the exact amount has not been disclosed. The aim is for Brazil's move to set a benchmark for other countries.
- Other countries reported to have committed (or are planning to) initial contributions to TFFF include **China, UK, France, Germany, Norway, Singapore**, and the **United Arab Emirates**.
- The plan is that the first **US\$25 billion** in public and philanthropic pledges would help unlock an additional **US\$100 billion** in private investment.
- Brazil hosts the largest tropical forest in the world, giving it the potential to be among the biggest beneficiaries of the fund.
- Brazil intends for this fund to be a major deliverable at the **COP30 climate summit**, which it is set to host in Belem in November 2025.

BBNJ Treaty to Enter into Force in January 2026

In the News : The **60th ratification** required for the **BBNJ Treaty** (also called the High Seas Treaty) was achieved, triggering its entry into force on **17 January 2026**. This marks a historic milestone: for the first time, there will be a legally binding international framework to protect **marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions** (i.e. the “high seas”).

Key Points

- **BBNJ Treaty: Full Name & Purpose:** Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). Commonly known as the **High Seas Treaty** or “Global Ocean Treaty.”
- **Aims:**
 - Establish legal rules for conserving biodiversity in international waters (areas beyond national jurisdiction)
 - Enable designation of **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** in the high seas.
 - Mandate **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)** for human activities in high seas zones.
 - Ensure fair and equitable access to *marine genetic resources* (and benefit-sharing).
 - Promote capacity building, technology transfer, and scientific cooperation especially for developing states.
- **Ratification & Trigger for Entry into Force:** The treaty was adopted in **June 2023**, after nearly two decades of negotiations. It opened for signatures on **20 September 2023**. Before it becomes legally binding, **60 ratifications** are required. On 19 September 2025, Morocco deposited its ratification as the **60th country**, meeting that threshold. Once the 60th ratification was deposited, the treaty enters into force **120 days later**—i.e. **17 January 2026**.
- **Key Dates**
 - Adopted: June 2023
 - Signature opens: 20 September 2023
 - 60th ratification: 19 September 2025
 - Entry into force: 17 January 2026
- **Institutional & Implementation Structure:** The treaty provides for institutional mechanisms including:
 - **Conference of the Parties (COP)** — first COP must occur within one year of entry into force.
 - **Scientific & Technical Body** to advise on scientific matters.
 - **Secretariat and Clearing-house Mechanism** to coordinate information exchange and implementation.
 - Parties must integrate treaty provisions into **national legal frameworks**.
 - The treaty mandates **consensus decision-making**, with fallback to two-thirds vote if consensus is not possible.
- **Significance & Challenges:** This treaty fills a major governance gap — until now, the **high seas (beyond national jurisdiction)** lacked a comprehensive binding legal framework. It is a critical tool toward achieving **global biodiversity goals**, including the **30×30 target** (protection of 30% of the planet's surface by 2030). Challenges remain in integrating the treaty with existing regimes—e.g. **regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs)**, deep-sea mining governance (International Seabed Authority), and overlapping jurisdictional rules. Effectiveness depends on **universal or near-universal participation**—non-ratifying major powers could undermine the treaty's reach. Capacity gaps in developing states, funding, and enforcement in remote high seas areas are practical hurdles.
- **Status of Participation:** As of the 60th ratification, there are **142+ signatories** (states that have signed but not yet ratified). India is among the signatories. More ratifications are expected, especially at the UN General Assembly sessions, to broaden the treaty's reach.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Former CJI DY Chandrachud Pens Debut Book “Why the Constitution Matters”

In the News: Former Chief Justice of India **Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud** is set to release his **debut book**, *Why the Constitution Matters*, by the end of August 2025. The announcement emphasises that the book will seek to connect constitutional values with lived experience, drawing on his judicial career to make complex ideas accessible to ordinary citizens.

Key Points

- **Book Title & Publication**
 - Title: *Why the Constitution Matters*
 - Publisher: Penguin Random House India
 - Scheduled release: end of August 2025
- **Author Background:** D.Y. Chandrachud served as the **50th Chief Justice of India** (November 2022 to November 2024). He has had an extensive judicial career of about 25 years at various levels, and delivered landmark judgments on constitutional issues.
- **Purpose & Approach:** The book is not intended as a technical legal treatise, but as a civic and accessible text that encourages citizens to connect with constitutional ideals. Chandrachud uses personal judicial experience and landmark judgments to illustrate how constitutional reasoning shapes real-life outcomes.

WORLD REPORT

Child Nutrition Report 2025

In the News: UNICEF released its **Child Nutrition Report 2025**, titled **Feeding Profit: How Food Environments Are Failing Children**. The report highlights alarming global trends in child nutrition, especially the growing prevalence of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents, and examines how poor food environments are accelerating these trends.

Key Points:

- **A Turning Point: Overweight Surpasses Underweight:** For the first time in history, the prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents aged 5–19 (9.4 %) has overtaken underweight prevalence (9.2 %). This marks a substantial shift in the global malnutrition burden.
- **Rapid Growth of Obesity & Overweight:** Since 2000, the number of school-age children and adolescents living with overweight has more than doubled—from 194 million to 391 million globally. Low- and middle-income countries now account for over 80 % of such cases.
- **Unhealthy Food Environments as a Driver:** Children are increasingly exposed to ultra-processed foods, sugary drinks, and aggressive marketing tactics. Many are consuming them as staples, beginning in early childhood, rather than more nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, eggs or flesh foods.
- **Marketing & Policy Gaps :** A UNICEF U-Report survey found that three in four young people saw junk food advertisements in the prior week, often via digital channels. Only a small minority of countries have binding nutrition standards for schools or levy taxes on sugar-sweetened products.
- **India's Nutrition Landscape:** In India, obesity among children under five has grown from 1.5 % (in NFHS-3) to 3.4 % (in NFHS-5). Among adolescents, overweight/obesity has risen sharply—125 % in girls and 288 % in boys over time. Projections suggest India could have 27 million children aged 5–19 with obesity by 2030, representing 11 % of the global burden.
- **Health, Economic & Social Costs:** Childhood obesity increases risks of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and certain cancers. In India, obesity already costs an estimated USD 29 billion (about 1 % of GDP), with a projected rise to 2.5 % of GDP by 2060 if unchecked.
- **Global Nutrition Targets & Challenges:** WHO/UNICEF have set six global nutrition targets for 2025: 40 % reduction in stunting, 50 % reduction in anaemia in women, 30 % reduction in low birth weight, no increase in childhood overweight, exclusive breastfeeding rate of at least 50 % in first six months, and reduce wasting below 5 %. Many countries are off track, especially for overweight, wasting, anaemia targets.
- **Call to Action:** The report urges governments to adopt bold policies: regulate marketing to children, establish mandatory school nutrition standards, impose taxes on unhealthy products, and transform food systems to prioritize healthy diets over

profit. Delay in action locks in higher future health costs, perpetuates inequality, and places a heavy burden on public health systems.

REPORT

The Production Gap Report 2025

In the News: The **Production Gap Report 2025** was published by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Climate Analytics, and IISD. The report assesses the mismatch between national fossil fuel production plans and levels consistent with climate goals.

Key Points:

- **Worsening Production Gap:** Governments now plan to produce **about 120% more fossil fuels by 2030** than would be aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5 °C, and **77% more** than consistent with a 2 °C pathway.
- **Trend Since 2023:** The gap has widened relative to the 2023 report. Nations plan **higher coal production to 2035, higher gas production to 2050**, and continued increases in oil output.
- **Country Profiles:** The report analyses 20 major fossil-fuel producing countries, which together account for ~80% of global production.
- **Lack of Alignment:** While a few countries have begun adjusting plans to align with net zero goals, most still forecast expansions in fossil fuel production inconsistent with climate commitments.
- **Implication for Paris Goals:** Unless governments reverse course, the growing production gap will render the Paris Agreement goals more difficult, potentially locking in stranded fossil infrastructure and undermining emissions targets.
- **Call for Policy Action:** The report urges governments to adopt deliberate, coordinated policy reforms—such as phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, integrating production cuts into energy transition planning, and ensuring just transition measures.

AWARDS

Journalist Amshi Prasannakumar Wins Krishi Media Award 2025

In the News: Senior journalist **Amshi Prasannakumar**, from Mysuru, has been awarded the **Hombale Samhita Harinikumar Alumni Krishi Media Award – 2025** for his distinguished contributions to agricultural journalism.

Key Points:

- **Award & Recognition:** He was selected for the **Krishi Media Award 2025** recognizing his efforts in raising awareness among farmers via print and electronic media.
- **Awarding Body & Title:** The award is named after Hombale Samhita and Harinikumar Alumni.
- **Professional Background:** Amshi Prasannakumar is a veteran journalist based in Mysuru.
- **Contribution & Impact:** He is known for coverage that educates farmers and strengthens reportage on agriculture.
- **Award Ceremony Details:** The ceremony is scheduled for October 11, 2025, at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

National Geoscience Awards 2024: Honours for India's Top Earth Scientists

In the News: President Droupadi Murmu presented the **National Geoscience Awards 2024** at Rashtrapati Bhavan, recognising India's top earth scientists for their contributions to exploration, mineral technology, basic and applied geosciences.

Key Points:

- **About the Awards:** The awards were instituted in 1966 by the Ministry of Mines. They reward outstanding achievements in mineral discovery & exploration, mining technology, geosciences research, and allied fields.
- **Categories & Numbers:** In 2024, **20 geoscientists** were honoured across **12 awards** (9 individual, 3 team).
- **Awards include:** Lifetime Achievement (1 award) .National Geoscience Awards (10 awards across various sub-fields) . National Young Geoscientist Award (1 award)
- **Major Awardees & Highlights :** Prof. **Shyam Sundar Rai** received the Lifetime Achievement award for his work in solid Earth and exploration geophysics. Shri **Susobhan Neogi** received the Young Geoscientist Award for research on tectonic evolution and mineral genesis. Dr. **V.V.S. Sarma** (chief scientist, CSIR-NIO, Visakhapatnam) was awarded in the basic geosciences category for his contributions to marine/chemical oceanography. Dr. **Ranjeet Kumar Singh** was honoured in

mineral beneficiation & sustainable development. Other awardees span fields like mining technology, applied geophysics, natural hazard investigations, and geoinformatics.

- **Ceremony & Messages:** Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy and Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Piyush Goyal, attended the ceremony. President Murmu emphasized the importance of **rare earth elements (REEs)** for India's technological sovereignty and called for sustainable mining and innovation. She noted the dual role of geoscientists: resource discovery and ensuring geo-environmental sustainability.

