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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Cabinet approves India's 2030 CWG bid, says Ahmedabad ideal host

In the News: The Union Cabinet of India, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, granted approval for submitting India's formal bid to host the **2030 Commonwealth Games**. Ahmedabad was endorsed as the **ideal host city** owing to its world-class sports infrastructure and vibrant sporting ethos. The Cabinet also approved signing the **Host Collaboration Agreement (HCA)** and providing **grant-in-aid** to the Gujarat government contingent on a successful bid.

Key Points:

- **Cabinet Approval :** The Union Cabinet approved the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports' proposal to submit a bid for the **2030 Commonwealth Games**, positioning Ahmedabad as the chosen venue.
- **Host Collaboration Agreement & Financial Support :** The government sanctioned the signing of the Host Collaboration Agreement and pledged necessary guarantees and **grant-in-aid** to the Gujarat government if the bid succeeds.
- **Ahmedabad: Ideal Host City:** Ahmedabad was described as an **ideal host city** with state-of-the-art stadiums, advanced training facilities, and a passionate sporting culture. The Narendra Modi Stadium—the **world's largest cricket stadium**, which successfully hosted the **2023 ICC World Cup Final**—underscores the city's readiness.
- **Benefits to Economy and Youth:** Hosting the Games is expected to generate a **lasting impact**—boosting tourism, creating jobs, and stimulating business across sectors like sports science, event management, logistics, broadcasting, IT, and communications. It's also seen as a catalyst to **inspire a new generation of athletes** and promote enhanced engagement in sports nationwide.
- **Legacy and Olympic Aspirations :** The 2030 bid is part of India's broader vision to demonstrate its sporting capabilities and pave the way towards hosting the **2036 Olympic Games**.
- **International Competition and Context :** India is competing with other nations—such as Canada and Nigeria—for hosting rights. The Commonwealth Games have faced hosting challenges in recent editions, with Victoria (Australia) and Durban (South Africa) having withdrawn from prior commitments.

Exercise Achook Prahar 2025

In the News: Indian Army's Spear Corps (specifically the SpearHead Division) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) carried out a major joint firepower exercise—**Exercise Achook Prahar**—in **central Arunachal Pradesh**. The four-day drill, conducted under simulated battlefield conditions, showcased coordinated use of mortars, machine guns, rockets, and grenades, strengthening operational readiness and interoperability in high-altitude terrain.

Key Points:

- **Participants & Duration:** The exercise, held from **25–28 August 2025**, involved infantry troops from the Indian Army's **SpearHead Division** (Spear Corps) collaborating with the **ITBP**.
- **Firepower Integration:** Joint drills featured **integrated firepower operations**, leveraging mortars, machine guns, rockets, and grenades to validate tactical coordination and battlefield accuracy.
- **Operational Environment:** Conducted in **central Arunachal Pradesh**, the exercise was tailored to the region's **rugged, high-altitude terrain**, testing the forces under challenging environmental and logistical conditions.
- **Interoperability & Readiness:** Achook Prahar reaffirmed the **seamless interoperability** between the Army and ITBP, spotlighting their combined capability to respond swiftly and effectively in simulated frontline combat.
- **Public Safety Action:** During the exercise, the Spearhead Division's unexploded ordnance disposal team safely **demolished 15 unserviceable 81 mm mortar bombs** at Manigong in the Siang District. The swift and professional operation ensured civilian safety with no collateral damage.

Army Conducts Yudh Kaushal 3.0 Multi-Domain Drill in Arunachal

In the News: The Indian Army successfully conducted **Exercise Yudh Kaushal 3.0** in the challenging **Kameng region** of Arunachal Pradesh. The high-altitude, multi-domain drill showcased next-generation warfare capabilities and the integration of indigenous defence technologies, reinforcing the Army's readiness for future combat environments.

Key Points:

- **Location & Conditions:** The exercise took place in the Kameng region of Arunachal Pradesh, characterized by extreme weather and difficult terrain, underscoring the Army's operational capability in high-altitude areas
- **Multi-Domain Demonstrations:** The drill highlighted operations across multiple domains—drone surveillance, real-time target acquisition, precision strikes, air-littoral dominance, and synchronized battlefield manoeuvres.
- **Operational Debut of ASHNI Platoons:** A prominent feature of the exercise was the operational debut of newly raised ASHNI platoons, combining next-gen technology with battle-hardened tactics to deliver decisive advantages in modern warfare.
- **Indigenous Industry Integration:** The exercise actively integrated the **Indian civil defence industry**, highlighting India's "Decade of Transformation" and the push toward **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**—self-reliance in defence innovation.
- **Technology & Future Preparedness:** It validated the Army's readiness in harsh environments and reaffirmed its commitment to emerging technologies: unmanned systems, precision weaponry, and multi-domain operational concepts

Exercise Bright Star 2025

In the News: **Exercise Bright Star 2025** is the 19th edition of the biennial **multilateral tri-service military exercise**, co-hosted by the **United States Central Command (CENTCOM)** and the **Egyptian Armed Forces**, taking place from **August 28 to September 10, 2025**. The exercise underscores a strong commitment to collective defence readiness and international military cooperation.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Timeline & Hosts:** Bright Star 25 began with an opening ceremony at **Mohamed Naguib Military Base** in Egypt and continues through **September 10, 2025**, emphasizing stability and security in the region.
- **Historical Significance:** Initiated in **1980** following the Camp David Accords, Bright Star has evolved into one of CENTCOM's most enduring and large-scale military exercises, strengthening ties between the U.S. and Egypt.
- **Global Participation:** This year's iteration marks one of the largest to date, with participation from more than 40 countries, including over 1,800 U.S. personnel and Indian forces numbering over 700.
- **Indian Involvement:** Over **700 personnel** from the Indian Armed Forces, including members from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Integrated Defence Staff, have been deployed. Indian units will participate in live-firing drills, command post exercises, short training exercises, and subject matter expert interactions to bolster jointness and interoperability.
- **Exercise Components:** The drill comprises a comprehensive suite of military activities:
 - Command Post Exercises to refine joint planning and decision-making;
 - Field Training Exercises including live firing to demonstrate operational readiness;
 - Academic seminars and senior leader symposiums fostering strategic-level dialogue and shared expertise.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

In the News: The Indian Navy hosted an "Emerging Leaders Panel Discussion" under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi. The event brought together young naval officers from 18 IONS member nations with over 300 participants to discuss maritime security challenges, emerging technologies, and collaborative training capabilities. Vice Admiral V. Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, was the Chief Guest. Additionally, earlier in June 2025, the Indian Navy hosted the IONS Working Group Meeting on Maritime Security (IWG-MARSEC) in New Delhi from June 24–25, further reinforcing collective resolve toward a secure Indian Ocean Region.

Key Points:

- **About IONS:** The **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium** is a **voluntary initiative**, established in **2008** by the Indian Navy, aimed at enhancing **maritime cooperation** among the navies of the **littoral states** in the Indian Ocean Region via an **inclusive discussion platform** addressing regional maritime concerns.
- **Membership Composition:** IONS includes **25 member nations** and **9 observer states**, totaling **34** participating countries.
- **Recent Events – June & August 2025:**

- **IWG-MARSEC Meeting (June 24–25, 2025):** Hosted in New Delhi by the Indian Navy, focusing on maritime security cooperation.
- **Emerging Leaders Panel Discussion (August 27–28, 2025):** Held at Kochi's Southern Naval Command, featuring delegates from **18 IONS nations** and covering themes such as:
 - Strategic significance of the Indian Ocean Region from young officers' perspectives
 - Emerging technologies in maritime security
 - The future role of IONS in fostering maritime cooperation
 - Roadmap for collaborative training capabilities among IONS countriesVice Admiral V. Srinivas was the Chief Guest.
- **Consensus Reached:** The panel concluded with strong agreement on:
 - Enhancing **maritime domain awareness**
 - Strengthening **technological collaboration**
 - Expanding **shared training initiatives**Delegates reaffirmed IONS's role as a voluntary and inclusive forum for collective maritime security, dialogue, and cooperation.
- **India's Foundational Role:** Since its inception as the host of the inaugural symposium, India continues to play a pivotal role—having designed the IONS flag and serving as co-chair for working groups on **Maritime Security** and **Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR)** during the 2023–25 cycle.

IEPFA Launches Niveshak Didi Phase II for Women

In the News: The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, launched **Phase II of the Niveshak Didi initiative** in Hyderabad, aimed at advancing financial literacy among rural women through a “for women, by women” model.

Key Points:

- **Programme Launch & Location :** IEPFA officially launched Phase II of its flagship financial literacy initiative Niveshak Didi—at a financial awareness camp in Patelguda Panchayat, Hyderabad, Telangana.
- **Programme Highlights :** Phase II builds on the success of Phase I by extending outreach, introducing interactive training modules, and partnering with grassroots organizations. It emphasizes women-led financial empowerment, savings, investment safety, fraud prevention, and secure usage of digital platforms. The training sessions were delivered in local languages like Telugu for greater accessibility.
- **IPPB's Role in Outreach :** IPPB's extensive postal network plays a crucial role in last-mile delivery of financial education and services across villages and panchayats.
- **Background: MoA & Phase I Outcomes :** Earlier, on April 8, 2025, IEPFA and IPPB signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to jointly launch Phase II. Phase I had impacted over 55,000 beneficiaries roughly 60% of whom were women in rural and economically active age groups, with two-thirds in deep rural areas. Phase II is set to deploy over 4,000 financial literacy camps, conducted by nearly 40,000 trained women postal workers who serve as Niveshak Didis.

T.C.A. Kalyani Appointed as New CGA of India

In the News: The Government of India appointed **T.C.A. Kalyani**, a 1991-batch officer of the Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS), as the **29th Controller General of Accounts (CGA)** in the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

Key Points:

- **Appointment Details :** T.C.A. Kalyani officially took charge as CGA on **September 1, 2025**, succeeding **S.S. Dubey**, who retired on August 31, 2025, after serving since March 2023.
- **Professional Background & Education :** She is a 1991-batch ICAS officer with over 34 years of experience in public financial management, accounting, governance, and administration. Kalyani is a gold medallist in Political Science from the University of Delhi (Lady Shri Ram College) and holds an M.A. in International Politics and an M.Phil. in West European Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- **Career Highlights & Contributions**
 - **Prior Role:** Served as Principal Chief Controller of Accounts (Pr. CCA) at the Ministry of Home Affairs, overseeing budgeting and accounting for one of India's largest ministries.

- **Cross-Ministry Experience:** Held positions in key ministries such as Defence; Telecom; Fertilisers; Finance; Social Justice & Empowerment; Information & Broadcasting; and Home Affairs.
- **Policy & Tech Leadership:** Pivotal in initiating the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** scheme for delivering fertiliser subsidies directly to farmers. At MTNL, spearheaded **digital transformation** efforts including online bill payments and installation of payment kiosks. Contributed to the **revival of the Fertiliser Corporation of India Limited**, enhancing financial structures and transparency.

Supreme Court Revisits RTE Exemption for Minority Institutions

In the News: The Supreme Court of India expressed serious doubts over its **2014 Pramati Educational & Cultural Trust** decision that granted blanket exemption to both aided and unaided minority educational institutions from complying with the provisions of the Right to Education (RTE) Act. The Court has referred the matter to a larger bench for reconsideration.

Key Points:

- **Questioning the 2014 Verdict :** The Supreme Court bench, led by Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan, observed that the earlier ruling might have undermined universal, high-quality elementary education and fragmented the inclusive vision of a common schooling system. Exempting minority institutions may have inadvertently narrowed the reach of educational equity.
- **Balancing Articles 21A and 30(1) :** The bench emphasized that applying the RTE Act to minority schools does **not erode their identity**. Instead, broader inclusion aligns with the true intent of Article 30(1), and there is **no inherent conflict** with Article 21A (the right to education).
- **Impact on School Demographics & Institutional Autonomy :** While Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act mandates a 25% reservation for disadvantaged children, the Court noted it does **not inherently alter the minority character of schools**, provided there is financial neutrality through state reimbursement. The real concern is whether this transforms into a blanket exclusionary policy, which needs fact-based review, not blanket immunity.
- **Reinforcing Divides Instead of Unifying :** The Bench noted that **the exemption may reinforce societal divides** by diluting shared learning spaces and weakening the inclusive spirit envisioned under Article 21A. It cautioned that this exemption might be misused by institutions seeking to avoid compliance.
- **Referral to Larger Bench :** The Court has referred the issue to the Chief Justice of India to decide whether a larger bench is warranted.

Vikram-3201: India's First Made-in-Bharat 32-Bit Microprocessor

In the News: On **September 2, 2025**, at the Semicon India 2025 conference in New Delhi, Union IT and Electronics Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** presented the **Vikram-3201**, India's first fully indigenous 32-bit microprocessor to Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, marking a pivotal milestone in the country's semiconductor self-reliance journey.

Key Points:

- **Fully Indigenous Space-Grade Processor:** Vikram-3201 is the country's first fully home-grown 32-bit microprocessor, explicitly developed for space applications like launch-vehicle avionics and spacecraft systems.
- **Development and Fabrication:** Designed collaboratively by **ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)** and the **Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL)** in Chandigarh, the chip was fabricated using the **180 nm CMOS** process at SCL.
- **Validated in Real Space Scenario:** The initial production lots were tested onboard the **PSLV-C60** mission's **Mission Management Computer** (POEM-4 platform), confirming reliable performance in actual space-flight conditions.
- **Technical Capabilities:** The chip supports:
 - **Floating-point arithmetic**
 - A **custom instruction set architecture (ISA)** developed by ISRO
 - High-level language support for **Ada**, with a **C-compiler under development**.
- **Operational Environment** Engineered to endure **extreme temperatures**—from **-55 °C to +125 °C**—and the intense conditions of rocket launches and space environments.
- **Strategic and National Significance:** This development underscores India's push toward **Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)** in high-reliability microelectronics and critical space technology. It symbolizes growing domestic capabilities and independence from imported semiconductors.

PM Modi Launched Rajya Jeevika Nidhi Saakh Sahkari Sangh Limited

In the News: On **September 2, 2025**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the *Bihar Rajya Jeevika Nidhi Saakh Sahkari Sangh Limited*, a cooperative aimed at empowering rural women entrepreneurs under the Jeevika program. To kickstart the initiative, he transferred **₹105 crore** into the cooperative's bank account.

Key Points:

- **Objective & Purpose:** The cooperative society is established to deliver **easy and affordable financial access** to women involved in Jeevika's self-help groups in Bihar, reducing their reliance on high-interest microfinance alternatives.
- **Funding & Government Support:** Operations are backed by both the **Central and Bihar state governments**, with an initial transfer of **₹105 crore** and a total sanctioned fund of **₹1,000 crore** dedicated to sustaining the initiative.
- **Digital-First Approach:** The system operates **entirely via digital platforms**, enabling direct and transparent transfers into beneficiaries' bank accounts. No physical visits are required. Additionally, **12,000 community cadres** will be equipped with **tablets** to facilitate seamless operations.
- **Scale & Reach:** The initiative is poised to benefit around **20 lakh women** across Bihar, strengthening rural women's entrepreneurship and fostering community-led enterprise growth.
- **Political and Symbolic Significance:** PM Modi emphasized the critical role of women's empowerment in building a "Viksit Bharat," and praised the government's focus on addressing challenges women face—ranging from sanitation to healthcare and housing. He also referenced broader schemes such as Lakhpati Didi, Drone Didi, and Bank Sakhi, underscoring multiple interventions aimed at increasing women's incomes and agency.

NARI 2025 Report by the National Commission for Women (NCW)

In the News: The *National Annual Report and Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025* was released by NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar. The report, based on perceptions of urban women across 31 major cities, casts light on the gap between official safety measures and women's lived realities.

Key Points:

- **National Safety Score & Scope**
 - The NARI 2025 assigned a **national safety score of 65%**, based on surveys of **12,770 women** across **31 Indian cities**. Cities were categorized as "much above," "above," "below," or "much below" the national benchmark.
- **Overall Perception of Safety**
 - While **6 in 10 women (~60%)** reported feeling safe in their cities, alarmingly **40% still feel "not so safe" or "unsafe."**
- **City Rankings**
 - **Safest Cities:** Kohima, Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, Itanagar, and Mumbai.
 - **Least Safe Cities:** Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar, and Ranchi.
- **Harassment Statistics**
 - **7%** of women reported experiencing harassment in public spaces during **2024**. Among **women under 24**, the rate doubled to **14%**.
 - Common forms: Verbal harassment (e.g., catcalling, comments) was most frequent (~58%), followed by physical, psychological, economic, and sexual harassment.
- **Hotspots & Responses** Key areas of harassment: **Neighbourhoods (38%)** and **public transport (29%)**. Actions taken by women when threatened:
 - 28% confronted the harasser
 - 25% left the scene
 - 21% moved into crowds for safety
 - Only 20% reported the incident to authorities
- **Under-reporting & Trust Deficit:** Only **1 in 3 women** reported incidents formally. Just **25%** trusted authorities to act effectively. Workplaces also saw safety concerns: though **91% felt safe** at work, about half were unaware of mandated **POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment)** policies.
- **Time-of-Day Safety Variation:** Safety perceptions dropped sharply at night. While 86% felt safe at schools and colleges during the day, the sense of security at night—especially in streets, public transport, and recreational areas—was far lower.

India's Services Sector PMI Hits 15-Year High

In the News: India's services sector saw its fastest expansion in 15 years, with the HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) soaring to 62.9 in August 2025. This jump, reported by S&P Global, was propelled by strong domestic demand, a surge in export orders, and improved business outlook. The rise underscores sustained momentum in India's key economic sector.

Key Points:

- **PMI Surge:** The HSBC India Services PMI reached **62.9 in A:** India's services sector saw its fastest expansion in 15 years, with the HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) soaring to 62.9 in August 2025, up from **60.5 in July**, marking the steepest growth since mid-2010.
- **New Orders Boom:** The spike was driven by the sharpest increase in **new business since June 2010**, with domestic and international demand both contributing significantly.
- **Exports Rising:** Export orders registered their strongest growth in 14 months, adding momentum to sector recovery.
- **Inflationary Pressures:** Alongside expansion, output price inflation hit its highest level since 2012, while input costs rose at their fastest in nine months, indicating mounting cost pressures.
- **Business Confidence:** Companies remained optimistic, buoyed by planned advertising spends and favorable demand projections, although employment growth stayed modest.
- **Composite PMI Strengthens:** The Composite PMI (combining services and manufacturing) climbed to **63.2 in August**, a **17-year high**, reflecting broad-based economic strength.

Maharashtra Approves Longer Working Hours in Private Sector

In the News: The Maharashtra Cabinet approved amendments to the state's labor laws, extending daily working hours in the private sector shops and establishments from 9 to 10 hours, and in factories from 9 to 12 hours, subject to conditions like written employee consent and enhanced overtime pay.

Key Points:

- **Policy Shift:** The Cabinet has approved extending the maximum daily working hours for private sector employees—10 hours for shops and establishments, and 12 hours for industrial units and factories—with mandatory breaks after 6 hours.
- **Overtime Regulations:** Overtime must be compensated at double the standard wage, and employees must provide written consent to work extra hours. The cap on overtime has been raised—from 115 to 144 hours per quarter.
- **Applicability Threshold:** The amended laws will apply only to establishments with **20 or more workers**, reducing the number of regulated units from around 8.5 million to about 56,000.
- **Protection of Worker Rights:** Despite reducing regulatory coverage for small businesses, basic protections under laws like the Minimum Wages Act and Maternity Benefit Act will continue to apply to all workers.
- **Government's Rationale:** Authorities say these reforms aim to improve ease of doing business, attract investment, boost productivity, and support job creation, while maintaining worker protections.
- **Public Reaction & Concerns:** The move has sparked backlash from trade unions and social media users who argue it could worsen worker exploitation, raise fatigue, and place undue pressure on employees—especially in light of high unemployment. Observers also noted it may conflict with ILO norms.

Exercise MAITREE-XIV

In the News: The 14th edition of India–Thailand joint military exercise MAITREE-XIV began on September 1, 2025, at the Joint Training Node in Umroi, Meghalaya, and is scheduled to run until September 14.

Key Points:

- **Background & Purpose:** Initiated in 2006, Exercise MAITREE fosters military cooperation, interoperability, and mutual trust between the Indian Army and the Royal Thai Army.
- **Participating Forces:** India is represented by 120 personnel from the Madras Regiment, while Thailand has deployed 53 troops from the 1st Infantry Battalion of the 14th Infantry Brigade.
- **Training Focus:** The exercise emphasizes counter-terrorism in semi-urban terrain, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Activities include tactical drills, joint planning, weapons handling, fitness training, and raiding operations. The final phase is a simulated 48-hour validation drill to test operational readiness.
- **Strategic Significance:** MAITREE-XIV enhances bilateral defense collaboration in the Indo-Pacific amid regional geopolitical challenges, reinforcing peace, security, and military diplomacy.

IIT-Madras Tops NIRF Rankings 2025 for Seventh Consecutive Year

In the News: The Ministry of Education released the 10th edition of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). For the seventh consecutive year, IIT-Madras has secured the **top position in the “Overall” category**, reinforcing its leadership in higher education. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, claimed second place, followed by IIT Bombay in third.

Key Points:

- **Overall Category:** IIT-Madras retained the #1 spot for the seventh straight year in 2025.
- **Engineering Excellence:** The institute also topped the **Engineering category for the tenth consecutive year** since the rankings began in 2016.
- **Innovation Leadership:** IIT-Madras achieved **#1 rank in the Innovations category**, moving up from #2 the previous year.
- **Sustainable Development Focus:** A new category—**Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**—was introduced in NIRF 2025. IIT-Madras topped this category as well, highlighting its commitment to environmental and societal goals.
- **Research Institutions Ranking:** In the **Research Institutions category**, IIT-Madras stood at **#2**, behind IISc Bengaluru.
- **Perception and Teaching:** The institute achieved a perfect **100 in the Perception parameter**, a score it has maintained since 2023. It also performed strongly in Teaching, Learning & Resources. However, its score was comparatively lower in Outreach & Inclusivity.

Top 10 Overall Institutions (2025):
1st: IIT Madras
2nd: IISc Bengaluru
3rd: IIT Bombay
4th: IIT Delhi
5th: IIT Kanpur
6th: IIT Kharagpur
7th: IIT Roorkee
8th: AIIMS Delhi
9th: Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)
10th: Banaras Hindu University (BHU)

PM Modi, PM Wong Inaugurate PSA Mumbai Terminal Phase-II

In the News: Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, along with Singapore Prime Minister **Lawrence Wong**, virtually inaugurated Phase II of the **PSA-operated Bharat Mumbai Container Terminal (BMCT)** at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) in Uran, Navi Mumbai. This launch doubles the terminal’s capacity and marks India’s largest container-handling facility.

Key Points:

- **Virtual Inauguration & Bilateral Context :** The inauguration was conducted virtually from Delhi, coinciding with PM Modi’s bilateral talks with PM Lawrence Wong. Several MoUs between India and Singapore were also signed as part of the event.
- **Capacity Expansion :** Phase II upgraded the terminal’s annual handling capacity from **2.4 million TEUs to 4.8 million TEUs**. Combined with other facilities at JNPA, the total port capacity now exceeds **10 million TEUs**, making it the highest in India.
- **Infrastructure Enhancements**
 - The terminal spans **200 hectares** with a **2 km quay length**.
 - Key equipment includes **24 quay cranes, 72 rubber-tyred gantry cranes, multiple rail-mounted gantry cranes, and six dedicated rail sidings**. Deep-draft berths allow handling of container ships up to **18,000 TEUs**.
- **Green Energy & Multimodal Integration :** This terminal is India’s **first 100% renewable energy-powered** container terminal. It features **Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)**–compatible infrastructure with **DFC rail tracks** and connectivity to **63+ inland container depots (ICDs)**, bolstering the multimodal logistics network.
- **Investment & Strategic Significance :** Developed under a PPP with **PSA International** (Singapore) through a **\$1.3 billion FDI** injection, this terminal is one of the largest port-sector foreign investments in India. Maharashtra’s Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis hailed the development as the beginning of Maharashtra’s journey as a **maritime superpower**, noting the upcoming Vadhavan Port will further elevate India’s global trade footprint

India's First Vulture Knowledge Portal Launched in Assam

In the News: India launched its first-ever **Vulture Knowledge Portal**—named *The Vulture Network*—in **Assam**, coinciding with **International Vulture Awareness Day**. The initiative was spearheaded by **We Foundation India** in collaboration with **Gauhati University's Department of Zoology**.

Key Points:

- **Platform Overview :** *The Vulture Network* is a **cloud-based knowledge and awareness portal**—a first in India—designed to build a network of individuals and organizations devoted to vulture conservation.
- **Collaborators and Stakeholders :** The initiative was developed by Assam-based **We Foundation India** along with the **Zoology Department of Gauhati University**, and supported by **Assam Bird Monitoring Network, LASA Foundation, Suraksha Samitee**, and independent conservationists.
- **Purpose & Content :** The portal compiles **scientific information**, raises **public awareness**, and offers **freely downloadable outreach materials**. It targets threats such as **carcass poisoning**, harmful veterinary drugs like **diclofenac**, and **negative social perceptions** that endanger vulture populations.
- **Local Language Accessibility :** Designed with grassroots impact in mind, the portal delivers content in local languages—beginning with **Assamese**—to better connect with local communities.
- **Conservation Focus :** The slender-billed vulture, with only **about 800 mature individuals left**, is a key focus. India is also home to eight other vulture species, all threatened by habitat loss, toxic drugs, and human disturbances.

India Synthesizes Rare Anti-Doping Reference Material for Global Use

In the News: India achieved a significant breakthrough in anti-doping science when the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL), New Delhi, in collaboration with NIPER-Guwahati, successfully developed a rare and high-purity Reference Material (RM) — **Methandienone Long-Term Metabolite (LTM)**. Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya officially launched this at the 22nd Governing Body Meeting of NDTL in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- **Collaborative Development :** The new Reference Material was jointly developed by NIPER-Guwahati (under the Department of Pharmaceuticals) and NDTL, reflecting India's progress towards self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) in sports science.
- **Global Significance & Scarcity :** RMs are highly purified, scientifically characterized substances essential for accurate anti-doping analysis. Only a handful of manufacturers globally (around 4–5) produce them, making them rare and often expensive. India aims to produce **22** such RMs — of which **12 have already been synthesized since 2020**, with Methandienone LTM being the latest.
- **Enhanced Detection of Doping :** Methandienone LTM targets **long-term metabolites (LTMs)**—substances excreted in urine long after usage. This enables detection of Methandienone use even months or years after the fact, boosting the effectiveness of doping controls.
- **Promoting Integrity in Sports :** The RM supports **transparency, fairness, and scientific rigor** in sports by protecting clean athletes and deterring anabolic steroid misuse.
- **Global Sharing for Collective Benefit :** India plans to share Methandienone LTM with all **30 WADA-accredited laboratories worldwide**, reinforcing international collaboration in anti-doping efforts.
- **Strengthening Regional Leadership :** During the launch, Dr. Mandaviya also emphasized expanding extramural grant support for anti-doping science, encouraged growth of the Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU), and introduced a framework to recognize outstanding contributions in doping control research. These moves aim to position India as a regional hub for anti-doping innovation.

What Rajasthan's coaching centre (Amendment) Bill says, why it matters so much

In the News: The **Rajasthan Assembly passed the Rajasthan Coaching Centres (Control and Regulation) Bill, 2025**, aimed at formalizing oversight of coaching institutes to safeguard student welfare and introduce regulatory accountability.

Key Points:

- **Mandatory Registration & Applicability :** All coaching centres enrolling **more than 100 students** must register separately for each branch.

- **Registration & Oversight Infrastructure** : The Bill establishes a two-tier governance structure: a **State Authority** and **District Committees**, comprising senior officials, parents, and coaching representatives, to ensure compliance and handle grievances.
- **Infrastructure & Teaching Norms** : Centres must adhere to standards including minimum space per student, regulated fees, weekly breaks, limited class hours (max 5 hours/day), employ graduate tutors, and offer co-curricular activities.
- **Mental Health & Student Welfare Measures** : Mandatory provisions include psychological counselling, stress management sessions, and parent-student interactions to support students' mental well-being.
- **Fee Transparency & Refunds** : Institutes can't charge excessive fees. They must offer payment in instalments, publicize fee structures, and provide fee refunds on a pro-rata basis if students discontinue.
- **Penalties & Enforcement** : Violation fines have been reduced to **₹50,000 for the first offense, ₹2 lakh for the second**, and **registration cancellation** for repeated non-compliance.
- **Omission of Age Restriction** : The Bill notably omits the Centre's guideline requiring coaching institutes to exclude students younger than 16 years—a key point of dissent.
- **Criticism & Opposition** : Critics argue the legislation falls short on student mental health protection, risks promoting **bureaucracy**, and may economically impact Kota's coaching ecosystem. They also question the lack of stakeholder consultation.
- **High Court Directive Pending Law** : Until the Act comes into force, the Rajasthan High Court has instructed the state government to implement the Central coaching guidelines, with punitive enforcement reliant on enacted legislation.

Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates Green Hydrogen Project at Tuticorin Port

In the News: On September 5, 2025, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated India's first port-based green hydrogen pilot project at V.O. Chidambaranar (VOC) Port in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. The inauguration was held on the 154th birth anniversary of freedom fighter V.O. Chidambaranar. This project marks a significant step in India's clean energy transition by introducing green hydrogen production within a port ecosystem.

Key Points:

- The pilot project at VOC Port has been established with a production capacity of **10 Nm³ per hour** and has been implemented at a cost of **₹3.87 crore**. The hydrogen generated from this project will be used to power the streetlights within the port colony and to operate an electric vehicle charging facility.
- With this development, VOC Port has become the **first port in India** to produce green hydrogen. The initiative aligns with the government's broader objectives of achieving net-zero emissions and promoting clean energy in the maritime sector.
- Alongside the green hydrogen facility, the Union Minister also inaugurated a **pilot project for green methanol bunkering and refuelling** with a storage capacity of **750 cubic metres** at an investment of **₹35.34 crore**. This facility will support the upcoming Coastal Green Shipping Corridor between Kandla and Tuticorin.
- A **rooftop solar power plant of 400 kW capacity** was inaugurated at a cost of **₹1.46 crore**, raising the total rooftop solar capacity at VOC Port to **1.04 MW**, which is the highest among Indian ports.
- A **link conveyor system for coal handling** was launched at a cost of **₹24.5 crore**. This facility is expected to improve berth utilization, increase the port's handling capacity by **0.72 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA)**, and reduce vessel turnaround time.
- The Union Minister also inaugurated a **6 MW wind farm project** with an investment of **₹59.2 crore**. This project forms a part of the port's mission to achieve carbon neutrality and net-zero energy consumption.
- The foundation stone was laid for **Multi-Cargo Berth No. 10**, which is being developed at a cost of **₹90 crore** and will have a capacity of **10 million tonnes** with the ability to handle vessels up to **1,25,000 deadweight tonnage (DWT)**.
- A **four-lane road project from TTPS Roundana to Check Post No. 2**, spanning 3.37 kilometres and costing **₹34.77 crore**, was inaugurated to improve port connectivity and ease the flow of cargo.
- A **Tamil Nadu Maritime Heritage Museum**, developed at a cost of **₹3 crore**, was also inaugurated to showcase the region's maritime history and cultural legacy.
- During the event, VOC Port signed **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)** with the **Indian Port Rail & Ropeway Corporation Limited (IPRCL)** for outer harbour rail connectivity and with **NTPC** for implementing green mobility initiatives at the port.

Justice Shree Chandrashekhar Sworn in as Bombay HC Chief Justice

In the News: On **September 5, 2025**, Justice Shree Chandrashekhar was officially sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court. The oath of office and secrecy was administered by Maharashtra Governor C. P. Radhakrishnan during a ceremonial event at Raj Bhavan, Mumbai, which began with the National Anthem and State Song, and concluded with the police band playing the National Anthem. The ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar, other senior officials, judges from various high courts, and government dignitaries.

Key Points:

- **Appointment Process and Background:** The Supreme Court Collegium, led by Chief Justice B. R. Gavai, recommended Justice Chandrashekhar's elevation to Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court on August 25, 2025. The Central Government issued the official notification on September 4, 2025, confirming the President's approval following consultations with the Chief Justice of India.
- **Judicial and Professional Journey:** Born on May 25, 1965, he completed his LL.B. from the Campus Law Centre, University of Delhi in 1993 and enrolled as an advocate later that year. Over approximately 19 years of legal practice, he argued around 3,500 cases in the Supreme Court, with about 140 reported judgments to his credit. He also served as Standing Counsel for entities like AICTE, Jharkhand State, Bihar State Housing Board, ICAR, among others.
- **Judicial Tenure Across High Courts:** Appointed as Additional Judge of the Jharkhand High Court on January 17, 2013, he became a Permanent Judge on June 27, 2014. Served as Acting Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court from December 29, 2023 to July 4, 2024. Transferred to Rajasthan High Court in July 2024, and subsequently to Bombay High Court on July 20–21, 2025. Assumed the role of Acting Chief Justice of Bombay High Court from August 29 to September 5, 2025, following the elevation of Justice Alok Aradhya to the Supreme Court.

India's Birth Rate Declines, First Dip in Total Fertility Rate in Two Years According to SRS Report

In the News: On **September 5, 2025**, the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2023 was released, revealing that India's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has declined to **1.9 in 2023**, down from **2.0 in 2022**. This marks the **first reduction in TFR in two years**, further moving the country below the replacement level fertility of **2.1 children per woman**.

Key Points:

- The report highlights that for the **first time**, **rural India's TFR has reached the replacement level of 2.1**, suggesting a turning point in demographic stability for non-urban regions.
- India's **Crude Birth Rate (CBR)** also dropped, from **19.1 per 1,000 in 2022 to 18.4 in 2023**, indicating a broader slowdown in birth rates across the country.
- These trends are seen as a **notable demographic shift**, due to the TFR dip being the first in two years, reinforcing concerns about population momentum and long-term demographic sustainability.
- **State-level data** shows stark regional variations: Bihar continues to have the **highest CBR**, while Tamil Nadu reports the **lowest CBR**. Similarly, Bihar has the highest TFR at **2.8**, while Delhi shows the lowest at **1.2**.
- Supporting figures from the SRS data confirm that in **2023**, India's natural growth and fertility indicators are moving further below replacement thresholds.

INTERNATIONAL

PM to address plenary session at SCO summit

In the News: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the **plenary session** of the **25th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, China**, delivering a strong message against terrorism and outlining India's policy vision based on the pillars of **"Security, Connectivity, and Opportunity"**. His remarks highlighted global unity against terror, underscored India's strategic priorities within the SCO framework, and affirmed India's commitment to balanced regional diplomacy.

Key Points:

- **Plenary Address & Diplomatic Context:** PM Modi delivered his plenary speech at the SCO Summit in Tianjin on **September 1, 2025**, followed by a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.
- **Three Pillars—SCO Vision:** He articulated India's agenda for the SCO around three guiding cornerstones: **Security, Connectivity, and Opportunity**.

- **Firm Stance on Terrorism:** Modi denounced terrorism, stating that "**no double standards on terror are acceptable**," calling for a unified global front—a message delivered in the presence of Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.
- **Highlighting Pahalgam Attack & Global Solidarity:** He referenced the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, calling it an affront to humanity and expressing appreciation for nations that stood with India in solidarity.
- **Connectivity with Sovereignty:** PM Modi emphasized that meaningful connectivity must **respect national sovereignty**, warning that initiatives bypassing this principle "lose trust and meaning" — a veiled critique of China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- **India-China Diplomatic Thaw:** On the sidelines, Modi met with President Xi Jinping and affirmed that the two countries are "**development partners, not rivals**." Discussions covered trade, visa, pilgrimage, flight restorations, border peace, and reducing India's trade imbalance.
- **Affirmation of SCO's Role:** Modi portrayed the SCO as a platform for "Security, Connectivity, and Opportunity," reinforcing its potential for regional stability and cooperative development.

Thai court removes PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra for ethics violation over Cambodia

In the News: Thailand's Constitutional Court dismissed Prime Minister **Paetongtarn Shinawatra** from office, concluding she violated ethical standards by prioritizing personal ties—particularly with Cambodia's Senate President Hun Sen—over national interests during a sensitive border dispute. Her removal deepens a persistent pattern of judicial interventions wiping out Shinawatra-affiliated leaders.

Key Points:

- **Ethics Violation Ruled:** The court found that Paetongtarn's conduct in a leaked phone call with Hun Sen was ethically inappropriate—she referred to him as "uncle" and pledged to "take care of" his requests, raising alarms that she subordinated Thailand's interests to personal connections.
- **Call Leaked Amid Border Tensions:** The conversation came during an escalating border conflict with Cambodia, compounding national security concerns. The leak triggered public outrage, protests, and ultimately the withdrawal of key coalition support.
- **Judgment and Suspension Timeline:** Paetongtarn was suspended from her duties on **July 1, 2025**, pending the court's verdict. The final decision was rendered on **August 29, 2025**, with a 6-3 ruling in favor of removal.
- **Caretaker Leadership:** Deputy Prime Minister **Phumtham Wechayachai** stepped in as acting prime minister immediately following her removal. Pheu Thai's remaining prime ministerial nominee, **Chaikasem Nitisiri**, is now the only candidate available to lead.
- **Dynastic Setback:** Paetongtarn becomes the latest in the **Shinawatra dynasty** to be forced out—mirroring the fates of her father Thaksin, aunt Yingluck, and uncle Somchai—all removed through coups or legal rulings.
- **Political Fallout & Uncertainty:** Her removal heightens political volatility in Thailand. Rival factions are scrambling to build a viable government, with early elections now a loomed possibility.

India-Bhutan Punatsangchhu-II Hydropower Project

In the News: Bhutan successfully completed the **1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project**, with the final (sixth) unit synchronized to the national power grid. This milestone marks a **40% boost** in Bhutan's installed power capacity, elevating it to **over 3500 MW**. The project highlights deepening clean energy cooperation between India and Bhutan.

Key Points:

- **Project Completion & Capacity Boost:** The synchronization of the final unit (Unit 6, 170 MW) in August 2025 officially completed the project, lifting Bhutan's power generation capacity by ~40% to over 3500 MW.
- **Commissioning Timeline:**
 - Units 1 & 2 were synchronized in **December 2024**,
 - Unit 3 in **March 2025**,
 - Unit 4 in **May 2025**,
 - Unit 5 in **July 2025**, and
 - Unit 6 in **August 2025**.

- **Project Overview & Funding:** The project is a **run-of-the-river hydroelectric facility** (6 × 170 MW) on the Punatsangchhu River in Wangdue Phodrang District, Bhutan, with a 1,020 MW installed capacity. It is **fully funded by India**, with **30% as grant** and **70% as a loan at around 10% interest**.
- **Technology & Technical Partners:** It utilizes **Vertical Francis turbines**, the project's design and execution involved major Indian agencies—**WAPCOS (engineering/design)** and **NIRM (geotechnical modeling)**.
- **Strategic Bilateral Cooperation:** The project exemplifies longstanding hydropower collaboration between India and Bhutan—including prior projects such as Chukha, Kurichhu, Tala, and Mangdechhu, with Punatsangchhu-II reinforcing this clean-energy partnership.
- **Sustainability & Regional Impact:** As a clean energy source, the project enhances regional energy security and contributes to climate goals. Its run-of-river design minimizes displacement and environmental impact. Under the 2024 Joint Vision Document, further energy cooperation—including hydro and solar—is expected.

India-China Relations Thaw As PM Modi and Xi Jinping Reconnect at SCO Summit

In the News: At the **25th SCO Summit**, held from **August 31 to September 1, 2025** in **Tianjin**, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met on the sidelines, signaling a diplomatic thaw between India and China. Modi reaffirmed commitments to improving bilateral relations, mutual development, and maintaining peace along their shared border. The summit—China's first hosted by Modi in seven years—highlighted mutual cooperation and a shift toward stabilizing ties.

Key Points:

- **Diplomatic Renewal:**
 - Modi and Xi held a bilateral meeting where Modi emphasized India's "commitment to improving ties with China," grounded in "mutual respect, trust and sensitivities."
 - Both leaders reaffirmed that China and India are "development partners, not rivals," agreeing on the importance of stable relations based on mutual respect and sensitivity.
- **Border and Connectivity Milestones:**
 - Modi noted the maintained peace and stability on their disputed Himalayan border and referenced resumed developments like the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra** and **new direct flights** between the two countries. He described these developments as "needed for humanity," benefiting 2.8 billion people across both nations.
- **Geopolitical Context and Strategic Messaging:**
 - Modi's outreach is partly seen as a response to U.S. pressures—especially **heavy tariffs** imposed by then-President Trump—which impacted India's economic ties, thereby prompting a recalibration of regional strategy.
 - Xi, during his address, denounced "bullying behaviour" and "Cold War mentality," advocating for a multipolar world, deeper economic integration, and proposing an **SCO development bank** and **AI cooperation center**. He positioned the meeting as part of a new global order led by the Global South.
- **Regional Display of Unity:**
 - The summit showcased visible camaraderie among the SCO troika—Modi, Xi, and Russian President Putin—against a broader narrative challenging Western influence. The optics of unity were emphasized through shared moments, group photos, and Modi's plenary remarks on terrorism and cooperation.

Singapore Named Asia's Safest Country in 2025 GPI

In the News: According to the **19th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI)** released in 2025 by the Institute for Economics & Peace, **Singapore** has been declared **Asia's safest country**, achieving an impressive **6th rank globally**. This recognition underscores its stellar performance across safety, stability, and low conflict levels.

Key Points:

- **Top Asian Spot & Global Standing:** Singapore is the only Asian nation to break into the GPI top 10, ranking **6th** globally in 2025.
- **Year-on-Year Performance:** Although Singapore slipped one position from 2024, its GPI score improved from **1.339** to **1.357**, reflecting stronger safety and reduced conflict indicators.
- **Assessment Criteria:** The GPI evaluates countries based on measurements like safety and security, ongoing conflict levels, and degree of militarization—areas where Singapore notably excels.

- **Why Singapore Excels:** Its exceptional public safety, political stability, low crime rates, efficient governance, and strong legal framework endow Singapore with a secure and peaceful environment.
- **Regional Context:** Japan, Malaysia, Bhutan, Mongolia, and Vietnam trail Singapore in Asia's peace rankings, with Singapore leading the continent in both safety and overall GPI performance.
- **Appeal for Travelers & Expats:** Singapore's status as Asia's most peaceful nation enhances its appeal to tourists, businesses, and expatriates—drawing them with the promise of a safe, secure, and well-managed destination.

India, Japan Sign Pact on Critical Minerals Cooperation

In the News: During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tokyo for the **15th India-Japan Annual Summit** (August 29–30, 2025), India and Japan signed a pivotal agreement enhancing cooperation in both **defence** and **critical minerals**. The pact targets joint efforts in exploration, processing, refining, and securing resilient supply chains vital for clean energy and advanced technologies. Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy highlighted its strategic importance in reducing reliance on concentrated sources and strengthening bilateral collaboration.

Key Points:

- **Pact Focus Areas:** The agreement formalises collaboration on critical minerals—including rare earths—and defence industrial cooperation. It encompasses joint exploration, processing, refining, and technological synergies.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Through this pact, India and Japan aim to diversify and fortify supply chains for essential resources, decreasing dependency on single-source suppliers and improving economic and strategic resilience.
- **Strategic Economic Security:** This initiative contributes to a broader sense of economic security under the Indo-Pacific framework, aligning with Quad's emphasis on countering Chinese dominance in critical minerals.
- **Comprehensive Partnership:** Beyond critical minerals, the agreement expands cooperation across advanced sectors such as semiconductors, AI, clean energy, and technology—a key pillar of their Special Strategic and Global Partnership.
- **Alignment with National Strategies:** This pact complements initiatives like India's National Critical Minerals Mission and Japan's strategic energy planning, strengthening policy synergies across the region.
- **Diplomatic and Economic Context:** The agreement follows discussions under the Quad framework to bolster shared supply chain resilience, and comes amid heightened U.S. tariffs—prompting India to deepen regional partnerships and economic security.

India-US Joint Military Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2025

In the News: India and the United States began the **21st edition of Exercise Yudh Abhyas in Alaska**, marking another milestone in their enduring defense partnership. The two-week training is being held at **Fort Wainwright, Yukon Training Area, and Donnelly Training Area**, bringing together troops from both nations to enhance interoperability and readiness under challenging Arctic-like conditions.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Details & Purpose:** The exercise spans **September 1 to 14, 2025**, and is hosted on U.S. soil. It emphasizes **joint readiness in subarctic terrain**, with a focus on **high-altitude warfare and counter-drone strategies**, underlining both countries' ability to adapt to modern threats.
- **Participants & Forces Involved :**
 - The Indian contingent, drawn from the Madras Regiment, is supported by personnel across arms and services.
 - The U.S. contingent includes troops from the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment ("Bobcats") of the Arctic Wolves Brigade Combat Team, under the 11th Airborne Division.
- **Training Scope & Focus Areas :**
 - Activities include heliborne operations, surveillance and UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) integration, mountain warfare, casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), and combined employment of artillery, aviation, and electronic warfare systems.
 - Experts from both armies are collaborating in working groups on UAS/counter-UAS, information warfare, communications, and logistics.
- **Strategic Objectives & Broader Context :**
 - The exercise enhances interoperability, brigade-battalion level coordination, and air-to-ground integration doctrine. It supports U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's goals of maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific.

- Despite ongoing trade and tariff tensions, Yudh Abhyas continues to reflect the resilience and depth of the India-U.S. defense relationship.
- **Exercise Evolution & Historical Significance** : Since its inception in 2002, Yudh Abhyas has evolved from counterinsurgency drills to high-level brigade command post and field training, and now sophisticated domain-integrated training. The 2020s editions saw dramatic growth:
 - In 2024 (20th edition), each side deployed 600 soldiers and incorporated systems like HIMARS, Stryker vehicles, artillery, heavy machine guns, and attack helicopters.
 - 2025 continues this expansion, with advanced focus areas and a balanced, large-scale deployment in Arctic conditions.

China Pledges \$2 Billion and AI Support at SCO Summit

In the News: At the 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit held in **Tianjin, China**, Chinese President **Xi Jinping** announced a substantial financial and technological support package, including a **\$2 billion commitment** (roughly 2 billion yuan in grants plus loans) and expanded **artificial intelligence cooperation**, aimed at enhancing regional development and tech collaboration.

Key Points:

- **Financial Commitments**
 - China will provide 2 billion yuan (~\$280 million) in grants to SCO member states this year.
 - An additional 10 billion yuan (~\$1.4 billion) in loans will be extended to banks within the SCO Interbank Consortium over the next three years.
- **Technological & Scholarly Collaboration**
 - China will double SCO-specific scholarships and launch an SCO Innovative PhD programme to nurture high-calibre talent in academics, science, and technology.
 - The plan includes establishing 10 “Luban Workshops” across SCO member states and offering 10,000 human resources training opportunities over five years.
- **AI and Ethical Tech Cooperation**
 - SCO member states, including India, committed to deepening cooperation in Artificial Intelligence (AI), focusing on security, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, and fairness, as reaffirmed in the Tianjin Declaration.
 - The measures aim to ensure equal rights for all countries in the development and use of AI technologies.
- **Long-Term Development Vision**
 - These initiatives are aligned with President Xi’s broader vision of a more inclusive global governance model, one that emphasizes multilateralism and supports a shared future for humanity under the SCO framework.
 - During the summit, China also showcased technological progress, including a humanoid AI robot named “Xiao”, which assisted attendees—a gesture highlighting AI’s growing role in diplomacy and public engagement.

Devastating Earthquake Strikes Afghanistan

In the News: On **August 31, 2025**, a powerful magnitude **6.0 earthquake** struck eastern Afghanistan, centered in Kunar province near the Pakistan border. A substantial **aftershock of magnitude 5.2** followed, exacerbating destruction and complicating response efforts.

Key Points:

- **Scale of Disaster:** At least **1,469 people** were killed and **over 3,700 injured** across multiple provinces including Kunar, Nangarhar, Laghman, Nuristan, and Panjshir. Earlier estimates reported **800–1,400 deaths** and thousands injured, highlighting the evolving toll.
- **Physical Destruction**
 - Over **8,000 homes collapsed**, with entire villages in Kunar—such as Wadir, Shomash, Masud, Areet, and Mazar-e-Dara flattened. In Mazar-e-Dara alone, **95% of homes were destroyed**, resulting in massive casualties.
 - Terrain and vulnerable mud-brick housing led to amplified destruction and landslides, further isolating communities.
- **Rescue Operations & Challenges:** Rescue efforts are critically hampered by rugged terrain, road blockages from landslides, aftershocks, and adverse weather. The government deployed commandos via **airdrop into remote, mountainous zones** to assist in rescue missions.
- **Humanitarian Fallout:** **Food aid may run out within four weeks**, according to the World Food Programme, due to dwindling funding. Donor hesitancy—driven by political concerns over supporting the Taliban—further limits humanitarian capacity.

- **International Aid & Response**
 - The UK, India, Australia, and others have begun providing assistance:
 - **Britain:** £1 million aid via trusted international partners (UNFPA, Red Cross).
 - **India:** Sent 1,000 tents, food supplies, and relief materials.
 - **Australia:** Pledged aid through UN channels, including part of a \$7.6 million emergency release.
- **Worsening Context:** Afghanistan's ongoing humanitarian crisis marked by drought, conflict, donor withdrawal, and displacement amplifies the tragedy.

India-EFTA Trade Pact to Begin October 1

In the News: India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)—comprising Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein—will officially implement their Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) starting **October 1, 2025**. The agreement, signed on **March 10, 2024**, marks a significant milestone in bilateral economic relations.

Key Points:

- **Effective Date & Agreement Name:** The TEPA will come into effect on **October 1, 2025**, after nearly 16 years of negotiations.
- **Legally Binding Sustainability Clause:** For the first time in India's FTAs, this pact includes legally binding provisions on **trade and sustainable development**, enhancing accountability and environmental standards.
- **Investment Commitment:** EFTA countries have pledged **USD 100 billion** in investments over the next 15 years—**USD 50 billion within the first decade** and another **USD 50 billion over the following five years**—expected to generate around **1 million direct jobs** in India.
- **Tariff Reductions & Market Access:** India will lower or eliminate duties on select EFTA imports such as Swiss watches, chocolates, and cut & polished diamonds. Additionally, Switzerland gains enhanced access for approximately **94–94.7%** of its exports to India.
- **Ratification Complete:** All EFTA member countries, along with India, have completed ratification and deposited the treaty instruments, enabling seamless implementation from October 1.

India-Japan Joint Credit Mechanism for Climate Action

In the News: During his visit to Japan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Government of Japan on a Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) under **Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement**. The MoC—signed earlier that month—is part of a broader Indo-Japan cooperation vision, "Green Energy Focus for a Better Future."

Key Points:

- **Mechanism Overview:** The JCM is a bilateral initiative under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement that enables the implementation of low-carbon technology projects in developing countries in exchange for carbon credits. Both India and Japan act as co-implementers, sharing emissions reduction credits and fostering transparency and verifiability.
- **Investment, Technology & Capacity Building:** The mechanism is designed to encourage investment flows, technology transfer, and capacity building for implementing low-carbon technologies at scale. It aims to localize advanced clean technology and build domestic ecosystems for equipment, machinery, systems, and infrastructure.
- **Carbon Trading & NDC Impacts:** Emissions reductions generated through JCM projects will result in tradable carbon credits under Article 6.2. These Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs) can be counted toward both countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), without compromising India's climate commitments.
- **Strategic Timing & Global Context:** The timing is strategic, given climate finance and technology transfer stagnation, US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, and upcoming **COP30 in Belém, Brazil**. The JCM serves as a bilateral model for climate cooperation and may provide momentum for operationalizing Article 6 rules globally.
- **Broader India-Japan Partnership:** The JCM complements larger agreements worth ¥10 trillion (approximately ₹6 trillion) between the two nations, covering AI, defense, semiconductors, and critical minerals. It also provides India with strategic resilience amid US tariffs and China's rare earth restrictions.
- **Institutional Set-Up & Governance:** The mechanism will be governed by a Joint Committee comprising representatives from both nations, responsible for registration, methodology, monitoring, reporting, and verification. India has also authorized its National Designated Authority (NDA) to oversee JCM projects and draft implementation rules, ensuring scalable adoption.

One in 100 Deaths by Suicide: WHO Report on Global Mental Health

In the News: According to recent data released by the World Health Organization (WHO), suicide accounted for approximately **1.1% of all deaths globally in 2021**, meaning that **one in every 100 deaths** was by suicide. In that year, an estimated **727,000 people** lost their lives to suicide.

Key Points:

- **Scale of the Crisis:** In 2021, around **727,000 people** died by suicide globally. Suicide accounted for **1.1% of all deaths** worldwide, underscoring its significance as a public health issue. For every suicide death, there were **over 20 suicide attempts**.
- **Impact Among Youth:** Suicide is especially prevalent among young people: it was the **second leading cause of death** for young women aged 15–29, and the **third leading cause** for young men in the same age group.
- **Global Burden of Mental Health Disorders:** More than **1 billion people** worldwide are living with a mental health condition, with **anxiety and depressive disorders** being the most common. The **World Mental Health Today and Mental Health Atlas 2024** reports underscore the urgent need to scale up mental health services globally.
- **Geographic and Demographic Disparities:** Approximately **73% of suicides occurred in low- and middle-income countries**, highlighting significant regional disparities.
- **Slow Progress in Suicide Prevention:** While global suicide rates have seen modest declines, the rate of improvement remains **far too slow**, prompting WHO to call for urgent action

Singapore Supports India's Malacca Strait Patrol Plan

In the News: On **September 5, 2025**, during a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Singapore formally acknowledged and supported India's interest in joining the **Malacca Strait Patrol (MSP)**. This endorsement came as part of a broader roadmap to deepen cooperation across maritime security, emerging technologies, and regional stability.

Key Points:

- **Strategic Acknowledgment:** Singapore's recognition of India's interest represents a significant shift, as MSP has primarily involved only the four littoral states—Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand—since its inception in 2004.
- **Importance of the Strait:** The **Strait of Malacca** is one of the world's busiest shipping routes, linking the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. Nearly 60% of India's seaborne trade and almost all of its LNG imports pass through this vital waterway. Control and coordination in this area are essential to India's energy security and maritime interests.
- **What MSP Entails:** The MSP comprises three coordinated layers:
 - *Sea Patrols* – regular joint naval patrols by participating countries.
 - *Eyes-in-the-Sky* – combined aerial surveillance for enhanced detection.
 - *Intelligence Exchange Group* – real-time data sharing among the nations involved. MSP is credited with reducing piracy incidents to single digits in recent years.
- **India's Rationale for Joining:** India considers itself a "contiguous state" to the Strait, thanks to the strategic positioning of its Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which provide maritime access to the Malacca region. Inclusion in MSP would allow India to contribute assets, intelligence, and training more effectively—aligning with its evolving **Act East Policy** and strengthening regional integration.
- **Technological and Defence Cooperation:** Alongside support for MSP, India and Singapore agreed to enhance defence-technology collaboration in advanced domains like **quantum computing, artificial intelligence, automation, and unmanned vessel systems**. These technologies could directly augment MSP operations and improve regional maritime surveillance and response capabilities.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** If India formally joins the MSP, it would represent a pivotal move from a purely littoral security framework to one that includes a significant external maritime power. This would strengthen India's role as a "net security provider" in the Indo-Pacific and set a precedent for other regional stakeholders like Japan or Australia to potentially participate.

26 Nations Pledge Postwar Security Guarantees for Ukraine

In the News: On **September 4, 2025**, during a summit held in Paris under the aegis of the "coalition of the willing", French President Emmanuel Macron announced that **26 allied nations** have committed to providing **postwar security guarantees** for

Ukraine once the conflict with Russia concludes. These guarantees encompass land, sea, and air support to form a “**reassurance force**” to deter future aggression and help maintain stability in Ukraine.

Key Points:

- **Scope of Guarantees:** The pledged support includes deployment of troops within Ukraine, and contributions through naval or air presence, aiming to reassure Ukraine’s security—but explicitly **not** to wage war against Russia.
- **Timing and Purpose:** The “reassurance force” is intended to be deployed **the very day a ceasefire or peace agreement is achieved**. Its main objective is to **prevent any future major aggression** against Ukraine.
- **United States’ Role:** U.S. participation has been expressed positively by both President Macron and President Zelenskyy, although details regarding the extent and format of American involvement remain **undecided**. Planning is still ongoing.
- **European Leadership:** France and the United Kingdom are spearheading the initiative, advocating for tangible military and security support. Other European nations, including Germany, Italy, and Spain, have offered conditional backing, focusing initially on **training, equipment, or air and naval support**, rather than troop deployments.
- **Global Coordination and Sanctions:** At the summit, leaders also reinforced the importance of heightened economic pressure on Russia, including new rounds of sanctions if Moscow delays peace, with U.S. discussions involving cutting off funding lines like fuel sales.

SPORTS

ICC, Google Join Hands to Promote Women’s Cricket

In the News: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced a landmark, women’s-only global partnership with **Google**, designed to enhance fan engagement with women’s cricket. The partnership utilizes Google’s suite of technologies to make the sport more dynamic, accessible, and appealing to a broader global audience. It comes ahead of two major tournaments—the ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup 2025 and the Women’s T20 World Cup 2026—marking a strategic move to amplify visibility and interaction with the women’s game.

Key Points:

- **Nature of the Partnership:** This is ICC’s second major **women’s-only global partnership**, following Unilever’s earlier collaboration, signaling a growing trend of dedicated investment in women’s cricket.
- **Google Technologies Involved:** The collaboration taps into multiple Google platforms—**Android, Google Gemini, Google Pay, and Google Pixel**—to craft an integrated fan ecosystem. From discovering highlights to celebrating victories, these tools aim to bring fans closer to the game’s defining moments.
- **Purpose & Motivation:** ICC Chairman Jay Shah framed this as a “landmark moment” to elevate the sport using Google’s innovation, aiming to **accelerate global reach, boost engagement, and inspire future generations**. Google’s VP of Marketing, Shekar Khosla, emphasized the goal of deepening emotional connections with fans by making women’s cricket **more accessible and meaningful**.
- **Timing & Strategic Context:** The partnership arrives at an opportune moment ahead of two high-profile tournaments:
 - 2025 Women’s Cricket World Cup (India & Sri Lanka)
 - 2026 Women’s T20 World Cup (England & Wales)It’s positioned to build on growing momentum following earlier developments like Unilever joining as ICC’s first global women’s partner.

Oscar Piastri Wins Dramatic 2025 Dutch Grand Prix

In the News: At **Circuit Zandvoort** in the Netherlands, **Oscar Piastri** delivered a stunning performance at the **2025 Dutch Grand Prix**, securing victory from pole position while his McLaren teammate **Lando Norris** suffered a late-race retirement—a dramatic twist that reshaped the championship standings.

Key Points:

- **Pole-to-Flag Win & Grand Chelem :** Oscar Piastri converted his pole position into a commanding race win, achieving a rare “Grand Chelem” (pole, fastest lap, and led every lap)—his first in Formula One and a milestone McLaren had not seen since Mika Häkkinen in 1998.
- **Championship Implications :** The victory extended Piastri’s lead in the Drivers’ Championship to **34 points** over Norris, significantly tilting the title fight his way with nine races remaining.
- **Podium Finishers :** **Max Verstappen** finished second, delighting the home crowd, while rookie Isack Hadjar claimed his maiden F1 podium in third—marking the first such achievement for both him and the Racing Bulls team.

- **Notable Incidents & Race Drama** : The race saw multiple safety car periods due to accidents involving Ferrari drivers and Norris' retirement. Piastri navigated the chaos with composure, while Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc also retired after incidents.

ICC Women's ODI World Cup Schedule 2025 Officially Announced

In the News: The International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled the full schedule for the **2025 Women's Cricket World Cup**, to be co-hosted by **India and Sri Lanka** from **September 30 to November 2, 2025**. The tournament begins with the opening match between **India and Sri Lanka**, followed by a round-robin stage, semi-finals, and the final.

Key Points:

- **Tournament Dates & Hosts** : The **13th edition** of the Women's Cricket World Cup will be held from **September 30 to November 2, 2025**, jointly hosted by **India** (for the first time since 2013) and **Sri Lanka**.
- **Opening Match & Ceremony** : The tournament launches on **September 30** with **India vs Sri Lanka**, though sources differ on whether the venue is **Bengaluru** or **Guwahati**.
- **Competition Format & Finals** : Consisting of **8 teams**, the format includes a **round-robin stage**, leading into **semi-finals** (scheduled for **October 29 and 30**) and concluding with the **final on November 2**. The top four teams from the group phase will advance to the semis.
- **Venue Distribution** : Matches will be held at five venues in India—Guwahati, Indore, Visakhapatnam, Navi Mumbai (DY Patil Stadium), and Bengaluru—as well as Colombo, Sri Lanka
- **Local Highlight: Indore's Role** : Holkar Stadium in Indore will host five high-profile matches, including India vs England, Australia vs England, and more. This marks the return of women's international cricket to Madhya Pradesh after 28 years.

ENVIRONMENT

Green Credit Programme (GCP) – Revised Rules for Tree Plantation

In the News: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued a revamped methodology on **August 29, 2025** for awarding Green Credits under the Green Credit Programme. Under these new rules, entities involved in tree plantation—including industries, cooperatives, and other organizations—will earn Green Credits only after a **minimum of five years** of verified restoration activities and upon achieving at least **40% canopy density**. The revised guidelines also restrict the tradability of tree plantation credits, making them **non-tradable and non-transferable**, except in intra-corporate transfers between a holding company and its subsidiaries.

Key Points:

- **New Eligibility Timeline:** Green Credits are now awarded only after completing **at least five years** of restoration work, shifting away from the earlier two-year benchmark.
- **Canopy Density Requirement:** To qualify, plantation areas must achieve a **minimum canopy density of 40%**, meaning the overhead tree crown must shade at least 40% of the ground.
- **Calculation Criteria:** Credits will be calculated based on the **vegetation status**, including **change in canopy density** and the **number of surviving trees**. One Green Credit is awarded for each tree over five years old.
- **Non-tradability & Transfer Restrictions:** Unlike before, tree plantation credits are **non-tradable and non-transferable**, except within corporate holding-subsidiary structures. Previously, credits could be traded freely on a marketplace.
- **Permissible Uses of Credits:**
 - A one-time exchange of credits is allowed for:
 - **Compensatory afforestation obligations**
 - **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) requirements**
 - **Other legal tree-planting obligations**
 - Once exchanged, the credits are considered **extinguished** and cannot be reused. Additionally they may be used for
 - **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** reporting purposes.
- **Shift in Focus: Quality Over Quantity:** The revised rules emphasize **long-term ecological health**, including canopy quality and survival rates—not just counting planted trees. The previous rule required planting **1,100 trees per hectare within two years** as a basic benchmark.
- **Background of GCP:** Launched in **October 2023** under the framework of the **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) initiative**, the GCP incentivizes voluntary environmental actions including tree plantation, water conservation, waste management, and more, by awarding Green Credits. The scheme uses a digital platform for registration, monitoring, and issuance of credits.

MISCELLANEOUS

Total Lunar Eclipse and the 'Blood Moon'

In the News: On the night of **September 7–8, 2025**, a **total lunar eclipse**, commonly known as a “**Blood Moon**”, will occur. During this rare celestial event, the Moon will pass completely through Earth's darkest shadow, the **umbra**, causing it to turn a reddish hue visible to a large part of the world.

Key Points:

- **What is a Total Lunar Eclipse:** A total lunar eclipse happens when Earth comes directly between the Sun and the full Moon. Earth's shadow is cast onto the Moon, resulting in a darkened lunar surface that often appears red due to atmospheric light filtering.
- **Why is it Called a “Blood Moon”:** The Moon appears deep red or coppery because Earth's atmosphere scatters shorter wavelengths of light (like blue), while longer red and orange wavelengths are refracted onto the Moon. This same effect creates red skies at sunrise and sunset.
- **Duration and Rarity:** The eclipse will feature an extended **totality lasting about 82 minutes**, making it one of the most prolonged lunar eclipses of the past decade. This extended duration is due to the Moon's slower movement near its farthest point (apogee) and its central trajectory through the umbra.
- **Global Visibility:** Approximately **85% of the global population** will have the opportunity to witness this spectacle. It will be fully visible across much of **Asia, Australia, Africa, and Europe**, while the **Americas will miss it** as the Moon will have already set.

ECONOMY

GST Council Introduces Two-Tier Regime from September 22

In the News: On **September 3, 2025**, the GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, approved a significant overhaul of India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework, moving from a four-tier structure to a streamlined two-tier regime—**5% and 18%**—along with a special **40% slab** for luxury and “sin” goods. These reforms take effect on **September 22, 2025**, coinciding with the start of Navratri.

Key Points:

- **Simplified Slab Structure:** GST slabs reduced from four (5%, 12%, 18%, 28%) to two primary rates—5% (merit rate) and 18% (standard rate). A premium 40% rate applies to super luxury, sin, and demerit goods.
- **Effective Date:** All rate changes (except for some tobacco-related items) are implemented starting **September 22, 2025**, marking the beginning of Navratri.
- **Rate Cuts for Daily-Use & Essential Items:** 5% slab now covers many essentials previously taxed at higher rates, such as:
 - Packaged foods: packaged coconut water, condensed milk, butter, cheese, pasta, sausages, etc.
 - Personal care: hair oil, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes
 - Household goods: tableware, kitchenware, bicycles
 - Medical items: medical-grade oxygen, gauze, bandages, diagnostic kits
 - Dairy/food items: UHT milk, paneer/chhena, pizza bread, khakra, plain roti, erasers, etc.
 - Several of these items were previously in the 12%–18% brackets.
- **18% slab** applies to:
 - Consumer durables: air conditioners, television sets, dishwashers
 - Automobiles: small cars (≤ 4 m length, petrol $\leq 1,200$ cc; diesel $\leq 1,500$ cc), motorcycles ≤ 350 cc, ambulances, auto parts
 - Cement and various automotive and appliance products
 - Previously taxed at 28%.
- **40% “Demerit” slab** targets: Super-luxury items and sin goods: high-end cars, tobacco, cigarettes, pan masala, gutkha, carbonated beverages, racing cars, yachts, aircraft for personal use, etc..
- **Exemptions:** All **individual life and health insurance policies** (including term, ULIP, endowment, family floater, senior citizen plans) are made **GST-free**.
- **Fiscal Impact & Economic Outlook:** The reform is expected to reduce government revenue by approximately **₹480 billion** (~US \$5.5 billion), a figure lower than initial projections. Analysts estimate these tax cuts could lower inflation by up to **1.1 percentage points**, while also potentially adding **100–120 basis points to GDP** over the next year. The stock market responded positively—auto, consumer goods, and investor sentiment boosted by simplified slabs and spending stimulus.

SCIENCE AND TECH

CEREBO: Indigenous Brain Diagnostic Tool

In the News: India unveiled CEREBO, an indigenous handheld device developed to diagnose traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) quickly and non-invasively. Spearheaded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in collaboration with the Medical Device & Diagnostics Mission Secretariat (MDMS), AIIMS Bhopal, NIMHANS Bengaluru, and Bioscan Research, this innovation tackles diagnostic challenges in resource-limited settings.

Key Points:

- **Technology & Functionality:** Utilizes near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) and machine learning to detect intracranial bleeding and edema in under a minute. Provides color-coded outputs, enabling fast triage without requiring advanced technical expertise. Entirely radiation-free, making it safe for infants, pregnant women, and frequent use.
- **Operational Advantages:** Portable and user-friendly, designed for deployment in ambulances, trauma centers, rural clinics, and disaster response units—especially where CT/MRI access is limited. Offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional imaging tools, priced significantly lower than CT/MRI. Minimal training required; can be operated by paramedical staff or unskilled personnel after a short orientation (~30 minutes).
- **Development & Validation:** The result of a multi-institutional collaboration between ICMR-MDMS, AIIMS Bhopal, NIMHANS Bengaluru, and Bioscan Research. Has undergone clinical validation, received regulatory approvals from DCGI/CDSCO, and completed multi-centre feasibility trials supported by ICMR's mPRiDE initiative.
- **Healthcare Impact**
 - Addresses a critical need in India, where over 1 million serious TBIs occur annually and more than 100,000 lives are lost, with nearly 50% of fatalities within the "golden hour."
 - Early detection via CEREBO can dramatically lower trauma-related deaths and long-term disabilities.
 - Enhances pre-hospital care and triage, particularly in emergency, military, and rural healthcare systems.
- **Global Potential:** Designed to aid not only India but also potentially useful in low-resource countries, including those in Africa and Gulf regions, making it an export-ready innovation.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

NGO 'Educate Girls' wins Ramon Magsaysay Award 2025

In the News: Educate Girls, an Indian non-profit, became the **first Indian organisation** to receive the prestigious **Ramon Magsaysay Award**—Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize—for its transformative work in grassroots girls' education across rural India.

Key Points:

- **Historic First:** Educate Girls made history as the **first Indian non-profit** to win the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2025. The award honors their impactful contributions to girls' education and cultural empowerment.([turn0news19])([turn0news20])
- **Impact Scope:** Established in 2007, Educate Girls has operated in over **30,000 villages**, re-enrolling **more than 2 million girls** into schools and providing **remedial learning support** to over **2.4 million children**.([turn0news19])([turn0news21])
- **Program Footprint:** Originally piloted in Rajasthan's Pali district in 2008 across 500 government schools, the initiative now spans **12 districts** in Rajasthan. It has re-enrolled **over 700,000 girls** in the state and more than **2 million nationally**.([turn0news20])
- **Flagship Initiatives:** The NGO runs two main programs:
 - **Vidya:** Focused on enrolling girls up to age 14 into formal schools.
 - **Pragati:** Offers a second-chance learning opportunity for adolescent girls and women aged 15–29 to improve education and employability.([turn0news20])
- **Volunteer-Driven Model:** A robust grassroots model—**Team Balika**—comprising over **23,000 community volunteers**, identifies out-of-school girls and assists them in rejoining formal education leveraging government infrastructure.([turn0news20])

- **Recognition & Ceremony Details:** Educate Girls was acknowledged by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation for “addressing cultural stereotyping, liberating girls from illiteracy, and infusing them with courage and agency.” The award ceremony is scheduled for **November 7, 2025**, at the Metropolitan Theatre in Manila.

