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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

SC Upholds Legislative Authority of State

In the News: The Supreme Court of India, in **Nandini Sundar & Ors. vs. State of Chhattisgarh (2012)**, held that the state legislature has full authority to enact new laws—even if they are passed in response to a court judgment—so long as those laws are constitutional and within legislative competence. The contempt petition filed against Chhattisgarh for authorizing auxiliary armed forces was dismissed.

Key Points:

- **Case Background:** After the 2011 order banning Special Police Officers (SPOs) in anti-Maoist operations, Chhattisgarh passed the Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Armed Police Forces Act (akin to Salwa Judum). Petitioners alleged it amounted to contempt.
- **Court's Decision:** The SC rejected the contempt plea, confirming the State legislature had complied with prior directions and was entitled to enact laws—even to validate or modify affected practices—provided they are not unconstitutional or beyond its powers.
- **Doctrine of Separation of Powers:** The ruling reinforced that legislative bodies may override judicial interpretations by passing fresh laws; such laws are open to constitutional challenge, not contempt charges.
- **Precedents Referenced:** The Court cited **Indian Aluminium Co. vs. Kerala (1996)**, which upheld legislative power to enact retrospective laws to nullify judicial decisions, thereby clarifying the permissible scope of legislative authority.
- **Legal Implications:** Legislatures can **legislate on matters previously judicially addressed**, even modifying judgments' effects, subject to constitutional review.
- **Judicial restraint is reaffirmed:** courts cannot penalize legislatures for passing valid laws. The decision strengthens **federal legislative autonomy**, underscoring that state parliaments have independent authority bounded only by constitutionality.

Setback for Saif Ali Khan as MP High Court Sets Aside Order on Inheritance

In the News: On June 30, 2025, the Madhya Pradesh High Court, led by Justice Sanjay Dwivedi, overturned a February 2000 district court decree that had affirmed actor Saif Ali Khan, his mother Sharmila Tagore, and sisters Soha and Saba as sole heirs to the Bhopal Nawab's private estate (worth approx. ₹15,000 crore). The MP High Court has ordered a fresh trial in the dispute over these royal properties.

Key Points:

- **What the High Court Ruled:** The trial court's judgment was set aside because it relied on a 1997 Allahabad High Court ruling—later overruled by the Supreme Court—that private properties of a Nawab automatically form part of the royal "Gaddi" (throne). Now, the trial court must reassess the matter with updated legal interpretations, allowing new evidence if needed, and decide ideally within one year.
- **Background of the Dispute:** The original trial (initiated in 1999) rejected petitions by other heirs—descendants of Nawab Hamidullah Khan's brother and daughter Rabia—seeking partition of his private estate under Muslim Personal Law. The trial court had favored the Pataudi line, holding that the merger agreement (1949) and succession laws vested the property with Nawab's successor, Sajida Sultan (Saif's grandmother).
Legal Foundation Cited: The High Court referred to Supreme Court decisions overturning the precedent used by the trial court—specifically regarding Talat Fatima Hasan v. Nawab of Rampur—and invoked CPC Order 23A to remand for retrial.
- **Scope of Fresh Trial:** The trial court will now reconsider whether properties should be partitioned among all legal heirs under Muslim Personal Law or remain with Sajida Sultan's lineage per merger and throne succession agreements. If partition is allowed, shares will be determined and formalized in a preliminary decree.
Assets at Stake: Properties include historic Bhopal estates such as Flag Staff House, Noor-Us-Sabah Palace, Dar-Us-Salam, and Ahmedabad Palace—collectively valued at around ₹15,000 crore.
Parallel Enemy Property Issue: Separately, some of these properties were previously declared "enemy property" under the Enemy Property Act after Nawab's elder daughter migrated to Pakistan. That case remains distinct and requires separate legal redress.

Himachal Becomes First State to Use Face ID for Ration Distribution

In the News: Himachal Pradesh became the first state in India to introduce Aadhaar-based facial authentication (FaceAuth) for ration distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS), using real-time face recognition tied to beneficiaries' Aadhaar database.

Key Points:

- **Innovative Phase-out of OTP/Biometric Methods:** Previously, authentication relied on OTPs and fingerprint scans. Frequent SMS delivery failures and biometric mismatches—especially in remote, hilly areas—often created access issues.
- **FaceAuth Roll-out:** The new system uses a mobile app on FPS-owners' smartphones for live Aadhaar-based facial recognition. Beneficiaries simply look at the camera for immediate authentication.
- **Efficiency Gains:** Officials noted improved authentication success rates and faster verification, making ration distribution more efficient and reliable.
- **Tech-Governance Initiative:** Led by the Department of Digital Technologies & Governance (DDTG) and supported by Gokul Butail (Principal Advisor to the CM), this deployment represents a major step in using AI-driven governance to enhance public service delivery.
- **Inclusive Access:** By eliminating the need for fingerprint scanning and OTPs, the system particularly aids elderly beneficiaries and those in connectivity-poor terrain, minimizing exclusion.
- **Pilot for Other States:** Being the first such implementation in India, Himachal's success is expected to guide future adoption by other PDS-focused states and central agencies, reinforcing its position as a model for state-led digital innovation.

Medical Faculty Regulations 2025

In the News: The National Medical Commission (NMC) formally notified the Medical Institutions (Qualifications of Faculty) Regulations, 2025, in its Gazette. Introduced by the Post Graduate Medical Education Board, the rules aim to expand India's medical education infrastructure—aligned with the Central Government's plan to add 75,000 new MBBS and PG seats over the next five years.

Key Points:

- **Widening Teaching Bed Eligibility:** Non-teaching government hospitals with ≥ 220 beds can now be designated as teaching institutions—down from the earlier 330-bed requirement—enabling more colleges to start UG and PG courses simultaneously.
- **New Faculty Entry Paths:** Specialists who have worked ≥ 2 years post-PG in these hospitals can be appointed Assistant Professors without requiring prior Senior Residency, provided they complete the Basic Course in Biomedical Research (BCBR) within two years. Specialists with ≥ 10 years of such experience are now eligible for Associate Professor roles.
- **Senior Consultants & Diploma Holders:** Senior consultants with at least three years of prior PG teaching experience (in NBEMS-recognized institutions) may now be appointed as Professors Diploma holders with six years' experience in government institutions (including NBEMS-recognized teaching hospitals) are now eligible for Assistant Professor roles.
- **Expanded Non-Medical Faculty Pool:** M.Sc./Ph.D.-qualified experts can be faculty in five non-clinical subjects—Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Pharmacology—with a 30% cap on such appointments, restoring previous norms.
- **Age & Experience Norms:** The upper age limit for faculty is set at 70 years. For Senior Residents in pre-clinical/para-clinical subjects, the upper age cutoff is now 50 years. Up to five years spent in roles within the NMC, university/state medical councils, or related government agencies now count as teaching experience.
- **Streamlining PG Course Norms:** PG courses can now begin with just two faculty members and two seats—the earlier minimum being three faculty and a senior resident. Bed-to-unit requirements for certain specialties have been reduced.
- **Internal Cadre Mobility:** Faculty with super-specialty qualifications currently positioned in broad specialty departments can be formally re-designated to their super-specialty fields.

India Launches National Biobank for Personalised Healthcare

In the News: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the Phenome India "National Biobank" at CSIR-IGIB in New Delhi, laying the foundation for India's first longitudinal population-health cohort study. The project aims to collect genomic, lifestyle, and clinical data from 10,000 individuals to propel personalised medicine initiatives across the country.

Key Points:

- **Launch & Institutional Lead:** The facility was inaugurated by Dr. Singh—Union Minister for S&T and CSIR Vice-President—at the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), marking India's entry into large-scale biobanking.

- **Cohort Composition:** Data will be collected from at least 10,000 participants, purposely representing India's diverse geography, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds to ensure population-level relevance.
- **Modelled After UK Biobank:** Inspired by the UK Biobank's structure, the Indian biobank is tailored to the nation's unique demographic mix and is built to study long-term health trajectories.
- **Driving Personalised Medicine:** By integrating genomic, lifestyle, and clinical profiles, India expects to transition towards personalised treatments suited to individual genetic and environmental contexts.
- **Target Diseases & Research Value:** The initiative prioritises complex conditions like diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, rare genetic disorders, and central obesity—especially visceral fat in seemingly lean individuals.
- **Tech Synergy:** The Biobank will support AI-powered diagnostics, CRISPR genome-editing, drug development, and antimicrobial-resistance research through high-resolution data.
- **Collaborative Integration:** Dr. Singh emphasised cross-sector collaboration—between research institutes, biotech, and government bodies (e.g., DBT)—to translate data into actionable healthcare innovations.
- **CSIR-IGIB's Track Record:** IGIB, which first decoded the human genome in India, has developed over 300 genetic diagnostics and spearheaded COVID-19 sequencing and indigenous CRISPR trials (e.g., for sickle-cell anaemia).

Adani Power Buys 600 MW Vidarbha Unit for ₹4,000 Crore

In the News: On July 7, 2025, Adani Power Ltd (APL) acquired Vidarbha Industries Power Ltd (VIPL) through the insolvency resolution process for ₹4,000 crore. This acquisition adds a 600 MW coal-fired plant in Butibori, Nagpur district, to Adani Power's portfolio, increasing its total generation capacity to 18,150 MW and supporting its growth strategy toward 30,670 MW by 2029–30.

Key Points:

- **Acquisition Completion:** Adani Power completed the full takeover of VIPL (2 × 300 MW) on July 7, 2025, after the Mumbai NCLT approved its resolution plan on June 18, 2025, under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- **Buyout Value:** Total consideration for the transaction was ₹4,000 crore.
- **Capacity Upgrade:** With VIPL added, Adani Power's operational capacity now stands at 18,150 MW, maintaining its position as India's largest private thermal power generator.
- **Strategic Growth Plans:** The company aims to expand further to 30,670 MW by FY 2029–30 via a mix of brownfield and greenfield ultra-supercritical thermal (USCTPP) projects across several states.
- **Shift in Plant Role:** The VIPL plant at Butibori, Nagpur, which initially aimed to supply local industries as a captive project, later operated as an independent power producer (IPP) supplying to Mumbai before falling into insolvency.

Haryana to Build Asia's Biggest Jungle Safari

In the News: On July 6, 2025, the Haryana government announced plans to develop Asia's largest jungle safari park in the Aravalli Hills, across Gurugram and Nuh districts, covering approximately 10,000 acres. The project, supported by both state and central ministries, aims to boost eco-tourism, wildlife conservation, and regional employment.

Key Points:

- **Project Launch:** Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, alongside Union and state forest ministers, revealed the initiative on July 6, 2025, describing it as Asia's biggest jungle safari.
- **Scale & Location:** The safari will span about 10,000 acres across the Aravalli range in Gurugram and Nuh, making it five times larger than Sharjah's current largest curated safari (≈2,000 acres).
- **Features & Zones:** Planned attractions include four big-cat zones, herbivore areas, exotic animal sections, aviaries, a herpetarium, an underwater world/oceanarium, diverse botanical gardens, nature trails, and themed biomes (equatorial, tropical, desert, etc.).
- **Eco-Friendly Focus:** The project emphasizes sustainable tourism, modern infrastructure, biodiversity preservation, and eco-friendly development practices.
- **Economic & Social Benefits:** It's expected to generate local employment in hospitality, guiding, home-stay sectors, and aid in ecological restoration of the Aravalli region.
- **Expert Consultation:** Officials visited Vantara wildlife facility in Jamnagar, Gujarat to study best practices before initiating construction.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Some conservationists have raised issues about altering the fragile Aravalli ecosystems; legal objections are reportedly under review.

2nd Edition of the NER District SDG Index

In the News: On July 7, 2025, NITI Aayog—alongside the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDoNER) and with UNDP support—launched the 2nd edition of the North Eastern Region (NER) District SDG Index for 2023–24. This builds upon the first edition released in August 2021 and evaluates district-level progress toward the SDGs across social, economic, and environmental dimensions for 121 districts in the Northeast.

Key Points:

- **Launch & Partnership:** The report was officially released by NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Suman Bery, CEO B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, MoDoNER Secretary Chanchal Kumar, and UNDP Representative Dr. Angela Lusigi on July 7, 2025. It's a collaborative effort by NITI Aayog, MoDoNER, and UNDP.
- **Coverage & Methodology:** Covers 121 districts across eight states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim—using NITI Aayog's SDG India Index methodology across multiple indicators.
- **Performance Improvement:** The proportion of districts categorized as 'Front Runners' (scores 65–99) rose from 62% in the first edition (2021) to 85% in 2023–24.
- **Top & Bottom Districts:** Hnathial (Mizoram) topped the index with a composite score of 81.43. Longding (Arunachal Pradesh) recorded the lowest score at 58.71.
- **State Highlights:** All districts in Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura achieved 'Front Runner' status, with none in the 'Aspirant' or 'Achiever' categories. Nagaland had three districts featured in the top 10. Sikkim showed the most consistent district-level performance (narrowest score range of 5.5 points); Tripura followed closely.
- **Sectoral Gains:** Notable improvements in Good Health & Well-Being across 93 districts. Assam showed marked progress in Zero Hunger, Quality Education, Clean Water & Sanitation, and Decent Work & Economic Growth indicators.

Policy Utility: The index acts as a steering tool for evidence-based planning, identifying gaps, and allocating resources effectively. It supports SDG localisation and aligns with national goals such as Viksit Bharat @2047.

Bihar Reserves 35% Government Jobs for Domicile Women

In the News: On July 8–9, 2025, the Bihar Cabinet under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar approved a major revision in its women's reservation policy—restricting the 35% quota in government jobs to women who are permanent residents (domicile) of Bihar. This decision, announced ahead of state assembly elections, further includes the formation of a Bihar Youth Commission and support measures for differently-abled candidates.

Key Points:

- **Quota Revision:** The existing 35% horizontal reservation for women in state government jobs—originally available to all women regardless of origin—is now confined strictly to those with Bihar domicile status.
- **Domicile Criteria Clarified:** Eligible women must be permanent residents—having lived in Bihar for at least three years, owning property, or being married to a Bihari resident. Voter ID can serve as supporting evidence.
- **Exclusion of Non-residents:** Women from other states will henceforth compete under the general category, although current non-resident women already employed retain their reserved positions.
- **Associated Announcements:** The Cabinet also approved forming the Bihar Youth Commission to promote local youth welfare, and expanded financial support to differently-abled candidates under schemes like 'Sambal.'
- **Pensions Boost:** Monthly pensions for widowed and differently-abled women increased from ₹400 to ₹1,000.
- **Political Timing:** The policy comes just before the October–November assembly elections, reflecting mounting calls for domicile-based reservations and seen as a strategy to strengthen support among local women voters.

Banakacherla Project

In the News: In June 2025, a renewed interstate dispute emerged between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana regarding the Polavaram–Banakacherla (Godavari–Krishna–Penna) river-linking initiative. The Andhra Pradesh government, led by CM Chandrababu Naidu, is fast-tracking tenders and DPR preparation for the ₹80,000–82,000 crore project—aimed at diverting surplus Godavari floodwaters to drought-prone Rayalaseema. Telangana, under CM Revanth Reddy, opposes the move, citing violations of the 2014 Reorganisation Act, tribunal awards, and procedural clearances.

Key Points:

- **Project Scope & Cost:** Aimed at linking Godavari floodwaters to Krishna and Penna basins via Polavaram right canal, tunnels under Nallamala forests, and lift schemes to Banakacherla reservoir. Estimated cost: ₹80,000–82,000 crore, covering

~40,000 acres including forest areas. The Centre may fund 50% under river-linking schemes, with 20% grant, 10% state, and 20% private under HAM .

- **Water Volume & Sources:** Seeks to divert approx. 200 TMC of 'surplus' flood water from Godavari annually (~3,000 TMC unused currently). AP maintains it uses only unallocated floodwaters, not infringing secured shares .
- **Telangana's Opposition:** Telangana govt argues the project breaches the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014 and Godavari & Krishna tribunal awards. They demand project be put in abeyance until Apex Council approvals (KRMB, GRMB), CWC clearance, and environmental assessments are complete .
- **Political & Legal Maneuvers:** CM Revanth Reddy offered AP a reciprocal 1,580 TMC share from Godavari/Krishna if they granted NOC for Telangana projects, cautioning legal action otherwise. Senior Telangana leaders, including BRS and Congress, urged Central intervention, an Apex Council meeting, and even public mobilization .
- **Support & Critique within AP:** AP's Irrigation Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu assured the project won't affect upstream states or violate agreements, reaffirming it's based solely on surplus waters. Conversely, retired officials & experts criticized it, highlighting potential high maintenance costs (~₹50,000 per acre), erosion of AP's legal claim on Krishna waters, flood risks around Vijayawada, and contractor-driven concerns—urging alternatives like gravity-based links .
- **Centre & Technical Processes:** AP government has begun issuing tenders, set to prepare DPR vetted by oversight bodies. Central govt raised queries about energy requirements for lift schemes and feasibility of handling simultaneous floodwaters. Pending approvals from KRMB, GRMB, CWC, and potentially Apex Council remain roadblocks cited by Telangana .

FATF Flags E-Commerce in Terror Financing Risks

In the News: On July 8, 2025, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) released its "Comprehensive Update on Terrorist Financing Risks," warning that e-commerce, digital payment platforms, and VPNs are increasingly being exploited to facilitate terrorist financing. Highlighting cases like India's 2019 Pulwama attack and the 2022 Gorakhnath Temple incident, the report signals urgent gaps in surveillance and cross-border regulation .

Key Points:

- **Exploitation of E-Commerce Platforms:** Terrorists are using online marketplaces (EPOMs) like Amazon to procure chemicals and bomb components, as seen in the Pulwama IED case. Aluminum powder and other materials were bought online and used in explosives .
- **Use of Online Payment Systems & VPNs:** Digital payment services such as PayPal, plus VPNs, have been used to transfer funds anonymously across borders—for instance, the Gorakhnath attacker transferred around ₹669,841 via PayPal to ISIL-linked accounts while concealing his IP .
- **Complex Trade-Based Money-Laundering:** E-commerce transactions are being misused to disguise illicit value transfers—buying goods in one place and selling in another to access clean profits for funding.
- **Structural Weaknesses in Regulation:** FATF reports that 69% of jurisdictions lack sufficient capabilities to investigate and prosecute such terrorist financing cases effectively .
- **State Sponsorship Concern:** The report also highlights that some terrorist groups receive direct financial/logistical support from state actors, complicating detection efforts .
- **Emerging Digital Trends:** Increasing integration of diverse TF methods includes using virtual assets, crowdfunding, and gaming platforms to raise terror funds .

PARAKH RS Survey – India's Learning Gaps in School Education

In the News: On July 9, 2025, the 2025 PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (RS) survey—India's largest-ever assessment involving 21.15 lakh students from Grades 3, 6, and 9 across 781 districts—revealed troubling learning deficits in literacy, numeracy, science, and social science, prompting urgent calls for foundational education reforms and improved subject-specific outcomes .

Key Points:

- **Survey Scope & Reach:** 21,15,022 students assessed from 74,229 schools across 781 districts. Also included inputs from 2.7 lakh teachers/school leaders .
- **Grade-3 Findings (Foundational Stage):** Only 55% could correctly order numbers up to 99; 54–58% could perform basic two-digit addition/subtraction . Language proficiency: ~67% vocabulary use, ~60% comprehension of short stories .

- **Grade-6 Highlights (Preparatory Stage):** Math weaknesses: only 54% understood place value; only 29–38% dealt with fractions and real-life arithmetic problems. “The World Around Us”: 44% could identify surroundings; 38% made predictions; 56% understood community systems.
- **Grade-9 Performance (Middle Stage):** Math/Science/social science deficits: only 31% understood number sets; 28% applied percentages; 37% explained natural phenomena; ~34% distinguished living vs non-living; ~45% grasped constitutional values; 54% had news comprehension
- **Disparities & Trends:** Steep drop in competency from Grades 3→9, particularly in applied learning. Rural/urban divide: rural better in Grade 3, urban outperformed later grades; gender gaps less pronounced but present. Institutional differences: Kendriya Vidyalayas poor in Grade 3 maths but excelled in Grade 9 language.
- **State/District Variations:** Top performers: Punjab, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh across grades; Chandigarh & Dadra & Nagar Haveli in middle/upper grades. Lagging regions: Sahebganj (Jharkhand), Reasi & Rajouri (J&K) in Grade 3; various parts of Meghalaya & Arunachal in Grades 6 & 9. Telangana showed marked improvement, moving from 36th to 26th in Grade 3, and similar gains in Grades 6 and 9

Maharashtra Government Declares Ganeshotsav as State Festival

In the News: The Maharashtra Government officially declared **Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav (10-day public Ganesh festival)** as a **State Festival**, elevating its status and committing state support for its celebrations. The announcement was made in the Legislative Assembly by Cultural Affairs Minister **Ashish Shelar** following a proposal by BJP MLA **Hemant Rasane**.

Key Points

- **Official State Recognition & Funding:** The government pledged to allocate **over ₹100 crore** toward festival infrastructure, security, and promotional efforts statewide, aiming to promote Ganeshotsav nationally and internationally.
- **Promotion of Cultural Unity and Heritage:** Minister Shelar highlighted Ganeshotsav’s origins—initiated by Lokmanya Tilak in **1893**—as an instrument of **social unity, nationalism, language pride, and freedom**.
- **Eco-Friendly Idol Policy & POP Lifting:** After a state-commissioned study by the **Kakodkar Committee** under the Rajiv Gandhi Science Commission, the government revoked restrictions on **Plaster of Paris (POP) idols**, now allowing their manufacture, sale, and immersion.
- **Logistical and Thematic Planning for Mandals:** Government support will enhance mandals’ logistical capabilities and inclusion of socially relevant themes—honoring the armed forces, “Operation Sindoor”, development achievements, and social initiatives.
- **Legal Clearance and Administrative Support:** The government took swift action to remove legal obstacles that had hindered mandals during the COVID period, enabling smoother organization and permitting large POP idols.

PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (RS) 2024–25 Report

In the News: The **2024 PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (National Survey)** report, released by NCERT under PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), assessed over **21 lakh students** from **74,229 schools** across **781 districts** in Grades 3, 6, and 9. The findings reveal significant foundational learning deficits in subjects such as mathematics, language, science, and social science.

Key Points

- **Large-Scale Assessment:** The survey covered **Grades 3, 6, and 9** in core subjects—language and mathematics for all; environmental studies for Grades 3 & 6; science and social science for Grade 9. Additionally, **2.7 lakh teachers and school leaders** participated via contextual questionnaires.
- **Widespread Learning Gaps:**
 - **Grade 3:** Only ~55–67 % of students demonstrated basic competency in reading comprehension, vocabulary, number ordering, and multiplication/division.
 - **Grade 6:** Just 38–44 % could solve real-life arithmetic, identify environmental patterns, or understand fractions.
 - **Grade 9:** Only 28–31 % applied percentages or fractions; 34–37 % demonstrated understanding of science concepts like circuits, pressure, and living vs non-living things.
- **Regional Disparities:**
 - **High-performing states:** Punjab, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli–Daman & Diu topped across grades.

- **Low-performing districts:** Many hotspots in Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir—e.g. Sahebganj, Reasi, Rajouri, Garo Hills, Shi Yomi.
- **Urban-rural divide:** Rural students in Rajasthan outperformed urban peers by 7 % in language and math.
- **State-Level Trends:**
 - **Maharashtra** outperformed national averages in Grades 3, 6, 9 but showed performance decline in higher grades—Math scores dropped from 64 % in Grade 3 to 38 % in Grade 9.
- **Himachal Pradesh** rose impressively from 21st to 5th overall in NAS/PARAKH 2025 through targeted reforms in staffing, school consolidation, and teacher training.

Indian Army Launches Operation SHIVA 2025 for Amarnath Yatra Security

In the News: On **July 11, 2025**, the Indian Army launched **Operation SHIVA 2025**, a high-altitude, multi-agency security initiative to ensure the smooth and secure conduct of the Amarnath Yatra in Jammu & Kashmir. This operation is being executed in close coordination with the civil administration and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) amid heightened threats following the April Pahalgam terror attack.

Key Points

- **Troop Deployment & Joint Coordination:** Over **8,500 Indian Army troops** have been deployed along the **Nunwan–Pahalgam** and **Baltal** pilgrimage routes. The operation is integrated with CAPFs and local civil administration teams.
- **Multi-Layered Surveillance & Security Grid:** A comprehensive security architecture includes:
 - Deployment of a **counter-unmanned aerial system (C-UAS)** grid with more than **50 drone-jamming and electronic warfare systems**
 - **UAV patrols**, PTZ cameras, and real-time convoy monitoring.
- **Infrastructure & Logistics Support:** Army engineers are engaged in **bridge repairs**, **track widening**, and **landslide prevention**, supported by **medical personnel**, **quick-reaction teams**, and **helicopter readiness** for emergency evacuations.
- **Pilgrims & Duration:** The 38-day pilgrimage (July 3–August 9) has already seen over **140,000 pilgrims**, each assigned traceable ID tags and monitored for safety.

Arthunkal Police Station Becomes India's First ISO-Certified Station

In the News: The Arthunkal Police Station in Alappuzha district, Kerala, became the **first police station in India to receive the IS/ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS) certification** from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The certificate was formally presented at the station in a ceremony attended by senior police and BIS officials.

Key Points

- **Certification Details:** The ISO 9001:2015 certificate was granted by the **Southern Regional Office of BIS** on **June 24, 2025**, recognizing the station's commitment to improving service delivery, transparency, and operational efficiency.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Arthunkal PS underwent a **two-stage audit**, which assessed its performance in areas such as **crime prevention**, **investigation**, **law & order**, **traffic management**, **emergency response**, **judicial coordination**, **public grievance redressal**, **record-keeping**, **infrastructure**, and **officer conduct**.
- **Ceremonial Presentation:** The certificate was handed over by BIS officials including **Praveen Khanna (Deputy Director General, Southern Region)**, in the presence of **Kerala DGP Ravada Azad Chandrashekhar**, ADGP H. Venkatesh, and other senior officers.
- **Modernisation Drive:** The certification is part of the **Modernised Cherthala Police Programme**, initiated by ASP Harish Jain, aimed at introducing structured reforms, community policing, and alignment with national and international quality standards.

Maharashtra's Urban Maoism Bill 2024

In the News: The Maharashtra Assembly passed the **Maharashtra Special Public Security (MSPS) Bill, 2024**, also known as the "Urban Maoism Bill." Championed by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and his cabinet, the legislation targets **left-wing extremist (Maoist) organisations operating in urban areas**. It now awaits clearance from the Legislative Council and the Governor's assent.

Key Points

- **Objective & Background:** The Bill addresses the perceived rise of "urban Maoism," where Maoist cadres allegedly use **NGOs**, **student groups**, **intellectuals**, and **media fronts** in cities to support rural insurgencies. Existing central laws like UAPA were deemed insufficient for such urban networks.

- **Scope & Definitions:** It criminalises a wide array of activities—including disrupting public order, encouraging disobedience, intimidating public servants, supporting banned organisations, and fundraising—whether through speech, writing, symbols, or conduct.
- **Penalties & Enforcement Powers:** Offences are **cognisable and non-bailable**, carrying **2–7 years of imprisonment and ₹2–5 lakh fines**. The government can also declare organisations as “unlawful” and **forfeit property (even before conviction)** with only a 15-day notice period, though affected parties can appeal in High Court within 30 days.
- **Checks, Dilutions & Safeguards:** Revisions following **1,200+ public inputs** replaced earlier sweeping provisions (like targeting individuals and using derogatory “urban Naxal” terminology). Now the law focuses on **organisations**, elevates **investigative authority** to ACP/DSP ranks, and establishes an **Advisory Board** (headed by a retired High Court judge, plus a district judge and government pleader) to vet bans and investigations.
- **Key Concerns:** Critics argue that the Bill’s **broad/vague definitions** risk suppressing dissent, curtailing free speech and protest. They highlight dangers of **pre-conviction property seizure**, erosion of the presumption of innocence, and potential misuse by police due to expansive powers.

INTERNATIONAL

PM Modi at the 17th BRICS Summit in Brazil

In the News: On July 6–7, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the 17th BRICS Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His visit included attending the inaugural plenary, joining bilateral meetings, and reinforcing India's stance on global reform, multilateral cooperation, and Global South empowerment.

Key Points:

- **Summit Participation & Family Photo:** PM Modi joined fellow leaders, including Brazil’s Lula da Silva and South Africa’s Ramaphosa, in the traditional group photo at Rio’s Museum of Modern Art, underscoring unity and cooperation among BRICS nations.
- **Bilateral Engagements:** Modi met the Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel on the sidelines and was warmly received by the Indian diaspora in Rio, featuring cultural performances such as the “Operation Sindoor” dance.
- **Global Governance & Global South:** In his inaugural address on “Reform of Global Governance and Peace and Security,” he called for greater representation for developing countries in institutions like the UN Security Council, IMF, and World Bank, warning that 21st-century challenges demand updated global frameworks—not “20th-century type-writers.”
- **Double Standards Highlighted:** Modi emphasized that the Global South is often sidelined by double standards in development, resource allocation, and security, reinforcing the need for equitable treatment and real reform.
- **Tech, Finance & AI Advocacy:** He addressed sessions on economic-financial affairs and artificial intelligence, stressing sustainable development, technology access, and climate finance for Global South nations.
- **Support for COP33 Bid:** BRICS leaders endorsed India’s bid to host UNFCCC’s COP33 in 2028, as mentioned in the summit’s joint declaration.
- **BRICS Expansion Context:** The summit saw the debut of Indonesia as a full member, expanding the bloc’s diversity and reinforcing calls for reform of major global institutions. Modi welcomed the expansion while highlighting the need to maintain core BRICS cohesion.

23rd Regional Meeting of National Authorities (Asia) under CWC

In the News: From July 1–3, 2025, India—the host nation—organized the 23rd Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia under the Chemical Weapons Convention at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi. The event was co-hosted by the OPCW and India’s National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC), with 38 delegates from 24 Asian countries, plus OPCW and UNRCPD representatives in attendance.

Key Points:

- **Purpose & Participation:** The three-day meeting aimed to bolster regional cooperation and capacity development for CWC implementation. Topics included legislative measures, chemical safety/security, industry collaboration, and AI integration.
- Attended by 38 delegates representing National Authorities from 24 Asian States Parties, including Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, South Korea, and more, alongside OPCW and UNRCPD officials.

- **Core Themes Discussed:** Strengthening **legislative frameworks** to ensure national laws align with CWC obligations. Enhancing **chemical safety and security**, featuring best practice exchange and industry protocols.
- Engaging **chemical industry stakeholders**; India's Indian Chemical Council (ICC) was showcased for its outreach and awarded the **OPCW-The Hague Award 2024**. Exploring the use of **Artificial Intelligence** for monitoring and compliance, notably in threat detection and reporting. Discussing synergies between CWC and **UNSC Resolution 1540** to prevent proliferation to non-state actors. Planning **Mentorship/Partnership initiatives**, following India's mentorship of Kenya's National Authority in 2024.
- **Institutional Impact & Significance:** These annual regional meetings—one of four global gatherings—serve as key platforms for experience-sharing, networking, capacity building, and bilateral cooperation.
- India's hosting reflects its proactive leadership in CWC implementation, reinforced by NACWC's role and ICC's recognition as the first industry body to receive the OPCW Hague Award.

PM Modi Honored With 'Key to the City of Buenos Aires'

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was presented with the prestigious "Key to the City of Buenos Aires" by Jorge Macri, the Chief of the City Government of Buenos Aires, during his official two-day state visit to Argentina. This accolade recognized his pivotal role in strengthening India–Argentina relations and marked the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 57 years.

Key Points:

- **Ceremonial Recognition:** The "Key to the City" was ceremonially conferred by Jorge Macri, symbolizing trust and friendship between Buenos Aires and New Delhi.
- **Historic Visit:** PM Modi's visit was the first dedicated bilateral trip by an Indian PM since 1968, highlighting a renewed commitment to deepening ties.
- **High-Level Talks:** During his stay, Modi held productive discussions with Argentine President Javier Milei, focusing on expanding cooperation in trade, defence, energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, critical minerals (like lithium and shale gas), and sports.
- **Cultural Tributes :** Modi paid homage to icons including Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore at their statues in Buenos Aires, and also laid a wreath at the memorial of Argentine liberator General José de San Martín—underscoring shared historical values
- **Diaspora Engagement:** The Indian community in Buenos Aires warmly welcomed him, waving flags, performing cultural tributes, and chanting slogans, adding vibrancy to the visit.
- **Part of Regional Tour:** This visit formed the third leg of Modi's five-nation diplomatic tour, succeeding his stop in Trinidad & Tobago (where he received that country's highest civilian honour) and preceding his attendance at the BRICS Summit in Brazil.

Elon Musk Launches New Political Party in the US

In the News: On July 5, 2025, Elon Musk announced the formation of a new third political party in the United States, named the **America Party**, via his platform X (formerly Twitter). He declared the party's mission to "give you back your freedom," directly positioning it as an alternative to the traditional two-party system.

Key Points:

- **Party Announcement & Motivation:** Musk revealed the America Party after clashing with former President Trump over a sweeping tax-and-spending bill, which Musk called fiscally irresponsible. A poll on X showed ~65% user support for a new party, inspiring Musk's statement: "Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom."
- **Platform Ideology:** According to statements and platform details, key tenets include fiscal conservatism (reducing national debt), embracing Bitcoin over fiat currency, defense modernization via AI, pro-gun rights ("Second Amendment is sacred"), deregulation, pro-natalist policies, tech-forward governance, and freedom of expression.
- **Strategic Focus:** Rather than vying for sweeping national power, Musk envisions targeting a small number of pivotal congressional races—"two to three Senate seats" and "eight to ten House districts"—to hold the balance in legislation.
- **Organizational Hurdles:** Experts note significant barriers: state-level ballot access laws, FEC registration, funding systems, and establishing grassroots infrastructure. Creating a durable third-party structure historically has been difficult.

- **Political Fallout & Reactions:** Former ally Trump dismissed the effort as “ridiculous,” warning that third-party bids tend to fracture support. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent criticized Musk’s lack of popularity and urged focus on business. Financial markets reacted: Tesla’s stock dropped ~7–8% over investor concerns of distraction.
- **Support from Public Figures:** Notable individuals such as Mark Cuban, Andrew Yang, Anthony Scaramucci, and Justin Amash have voiced support, offering help with ballot access and shared principles.

UAE Introduces Nomination-Based Golden Visa For Indians

In the News: On July 7, 2025, the United Arab Emirates announced a new nomination-based Golden Visa specifically for Indian nationals. This pilot initiative allows eligible Indians to obtain lifetime UAE residency for a one-time fee of AED 100,000 (about ₹23.3 lakh), without needing property or business investments.

Key Points:

- **New Pilot Scheme:** India (along with Bangladesh) is part of the first phase of this nomination-based Golden Visa, reflecting deepening India–UAE ties, including under CEPA.
- **Lifetime Residency Fee:** Applicants must pay a one-time AED 100,000 (≈₹23.3 lakh) fee to receive lifetime residency.
- **Nomination & Eligibility:** Applicants require nomination from approved UAE agencies—like Rayad Group with VFS and One Vasco—and must clear extensive background checks, including criminal, anti-money laundering, and even social media review.
- **Who Qualifies:** Eligible candidates include professionals (teachers, nurses, tech specialists), researchers, creators (e.g., YouTubers), and outstanding students—all showcasing contributions to key UAE sectors.
- **Shift from Investment-Based Model:** This marks a departure from the conventional investor model (AED 2 million property stakes), signaling a shift toward talent acquisition over capital investment.
- **Process & Access:** Applications can be processed remotely from India via authorised channels—no need to visit the UAE in person.

Projected Demand: More than 5,000 Indian applicants are expected within the first three months, underscoring strong interest.

Bulgaria to Join Eurozone as 21st Member from January 1, 2026

In the News: On July 8, 2025, EU finance ministers approved the final legal measures enabling Bulgaria to adopt the euro starting January 1, 2026. Once adopted, Bulgaria will become the 21st country in the eurozone—a milestone in its EU integration since joining in 2007.

Key Points:

- **Final Approval:** The EU Council adopted three essential legal acts, including fixing the conversion rate at €1 = 1.95583 leva, officially recognizing Bulgaria as the 21st eurozone member effective January 1, 2026.
- **Rigorous Convergence Criteria Met:** Bulgaria met all Maastricht accession benchmarks—price stability, public finances, interest rates, and a stable ERM II exit rate of 1.95583 lev/€, with inflation at ~2.7% (below the 2.8% threshold).
- **Strong Institutional Backing:** The European Parliament approved the move by a large margin (561–69–79), and the European Commission and ECB had issued favorable convergence assessments in early June.
- **Economic Rationale:** Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov projected that euro adoption would boost growth, purchasing power, investment inflows, and convergence toward EU living standards. Safeguards are planned to protect consumers—such as transparent pricing, no conversion fees, and monitoring framework.
- **Public Reaction & Challenges:** Surveys show public opinion is split (approx. 45% support vs. 53% opposition), with concerns over inflation and erosion of monetary sovereignty. Protests occurred; some political parties even proposed a referendum which was blocked as unconstitutional.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Honoured with Brazil’s Highest Civilian Award

In the News: On July 8, 2025, during his state visit to Brazil following the BRICS Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the **Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross**, Brazil’s highest civilian honour. The accolade—bestowed by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva—marks Modi’s 26th global award and reflects deepening diplomatic ties between India and Brazil.

Key Points:

- **Prestigious Award:** Modi received the Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross—the country’s most distinguished civilian honour—during a ceremony at Alvorada Palace in Brasilia on July 8, 2025 .
- **Diplomatic Significance:** The award recognises his “notable contributions to strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation across global platforms such as BRICS, G20, and UN,” as stated by the Brazilian government and MEA .
- **Celebratory Welcome:** Modi was received with a grand ceremonial welcome—114-horse salute at Alvorada Palace and vibrant cultural performances by the Bataala Mundo Afro-Brazilian band at the airport—further symbolising the strong cultural and diplomatic ties.
- **Expressing Gratitude:** In public remarks, PM Modi expressed deep pride, stating the honour was “a moment of immense pride and emotion, not only for me, but also for 140 crore Indians.” He also thanked President Lula and the people of Brazil.
- **International Recognition:** This marks Modi’s 26th international civilian honour, following awards from countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Cyprus, and more, showcasing his rising stature on the global stage.

What is the European Union’s CBAM, and why has BRICS condemned and rejected it

In the News: On July 8–9, 2025, the BRICS bloc formally “condemned and rejected” the EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), characterizing it as a “unilateral, punitive and discriminatory protectionist measure” that undermines developing economies’ ability to invest in their climate transitions and floods exports with disadvantageous costs .

Key Points:

- **What is CBAM?** A mechanism under the EU’s “Fit for 55” package, CBAM imposes a carbon price on imports of goods like steel, cement, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity, and hydrogen—equivalent to EU ETS prices—aiming to prevent ‘carbon leakage’ by internalising carbon costs.
- **Purpose & Phase-in:** Designed to level the playing field between EU and non-EU producers by applying the same emissions costs to imports. Transitional reporting effective from October 2023–2025; full implementation begins January 1, 2026 .
- **BRICS Standpoint:** BRICS countries argue CBAM acts as a carbon tariff—“a carbon border tax ... penaliz[ing] exporters lacking robust carbon pricing”. They view it as discriminatory: “not in line with international law... undermining their capacities to invest in their transitions and development priorities” .
- **Trade & Development Implications:** CBAM could increase export costs for developing nations, reduce export competitiveness, and disrupt global value chains. BRICS expressed concerns that CBAM diverts critical financial resources away from domestic climate action in emerging economies .

Nvidia Becomes First Company to Reach \$4 Trillion Value

In the News: On **July 9 and 10, 2025**, Nvidia became the first publicly traded company in history to reach a **\$4 trillion market capitalization**. The company’s shares peaked at around **\$164.42** before settling at **\$164.10**, resulting in a record-breaking market value that briefly surpassed the combined valuations of other major tech firms and even some national stock markets.

Key Points

- Nvidia achieved this milestone due to a **surging demand for its AI-focused chips**, which are used by major technology firms such as Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Meta, and OpenAI to power advanced data-center infrastructure.
- Over the past two years, Nvidia’s stock has surged approximately **287 percent**, with around **18 percent growth** in 2025 alone.
- Despite its historic valuation, Nvidia’s **forward price-to-earnings ratio of around 33–34×** is still below its five-year average (approx. 41×) and is lower than some high-growth peers like Tesla .
- The company reported **Q1 revenue of \$44.1 billion**, marking a **69 percent year-over-year increase**, and projected **Q2 revenue around \$45 billion**.
- Analysts caution that while Nvidia’s rise is often compared to late-1990s tech bubbles, it remains central to the AI boom—though if valuation multiples spiked to Cisco-like levels, Nvidia could conceivably reach **\$15 trillion**, raising concerns of overheating.
- Nvidia’s stock now constitutes approximately **7–7.5 percent of the S&P 500**, making it the largest individual weight in that index.
- Nvidia faced **export restrictions to China**—especially for its top-tier chips—but still posted strong growth and investor confidence.

- On **July 10, 2025**, Nvidia's co-founder and CEO, **Jensen Huang**, saw his personal net worth increase by about **\$1 billion**, bringing his total wealth to over **\$140 billion** thanks to his 3.5 percent ownership stake.

India and Namibia Sign Key Deals During PM Modi's Visit

In the News: During his **July 9, 2025** state visit to Namibia—the first by an Indian Prime Minister in **27 years**—PM Narendra Modi and Namibian President Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah jointly signed several key memoranda of understanding (MoUs). These agreements span sectors such as entrepreneurship, health, digital payments, disaster resilience, cybersecurity, and more. PM Modi was also honoured with the country's top civilian award – **The Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis**.

Key Points

- Entrepreneurship & Healthcare:** A new **Entrepreneurship Development Centre** will be established in Namibia under an MoU, alongside a collaboration in the field of **health and medicine** to enhance pharmaceutical and medical cooperation.
- Disaster Resilience & Cybersecurity:** India and Namibia joined hands on **disaster resilience**, particularly through the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**, and formalized **cybersecurity** cooperation under another MoU.
- Digital Payments via UPI:** Namibia became the **first country** to adopt India's **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**, with a licensing agreement between NPCI and the Bank of Namibia. This will launch later in 2025.
- Global Coalition Memberships:** The country formally joined two India-led multilateral initiatives: the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** and the **Global Biofuels Alliance**.
- Other Strategic Areas:** Talks highlighted cooperation in **energy, defence, critical minerals** (including cobalt, lithium, uranium, and diamond trade), **education**, and **agriculture**, building on Namibia's natural resource strengths.
- Trade & Investment:** In 2023, bilateral trade stood at **USD 654 million**, with growing investments from India in sectors like mining, energy, and manufacturing.

Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2025

In the News: The Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) released its **Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2025** report on **June 23, 2025**, revealing that **global climate finance reached a record USD 1.9 trillion in 2023**, with early data suggesting it surpassed **USD 2 trillion in 2024**.

Key Points

- Strong Growth After 2021:** From **2021 to 2023**, climate finance investments grew on average by **26 percent per year**, compared to about **8 percent annual growth** between 2018 and 2020.
- Mitigation Dominates but Adaptation Lags:** In 2023, **USD 1.78 trillion** was directed toward **mitigation efforts**, while **adaptation received only USD 65 billion**, with an additional **USD 58 billion** classified as dual-benefit finance.
- Private Finance Leadership:** For the first time, **private climate finance surpassed USD 1 trillion** in 2023, with households, corporations, and financial institutions becoming the largest source of climate capital.
- Geographic Funding Imbalance:** Developing and emerging markets received **USD 196 billion** in international climate finance during 2023, primarily from public sources (78 percent), highlighting a gap in private-sector investment.
- Sectoral Focus:** Around **91 percent** of climate finance goes to **mitigation**, with **energy and transport** being the primary beneficiaries.
- Future Projections vs Needs:** If the current investment trend continues, global climate finance could reach **USD 6 trillion annually by 2028**, closing in on the conservative estimate of global needs—estimated at **USD 6 trillion per year**.
- Risks and Gaps:** Despite reaching record funding, the report warns of ongoing **systemic risks**, significant **adaptation shortfalls**, and challenges for emerging economies in securing **affordable capital**.

UNESCO Removes 3 African Sites from Danger List

In the News: During the 47th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Paris, three African heritage sites—**Rainforests of the Atsinanana (Madagascar)**, **Abu Mena (Egypt)**, and the **Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya)**—were officially removed from the **List of World Heritage in Danger** due to successful conservation efforts and restored site integrity.

Key Points

- Rainforests of the Atsinanana (Madagascar):** Designated as endangered in 2010 due to **illegal logging, precious wood trafficking**, and **deforestation** threatening biodiversity and lemur populations. Through UNESCO-supported measures such as robust management plans, satellite monitoring, local patrols, and replanting, **63% of deforested areas have been restored**, illegal logging halted, and lemur poaching reduced to a 10-year low.

- **Abu Mena (Egypt):** Inscribed in 1979 and placed on the danger list in 2001 after surging **groundwater levels** from nearby irrigation threatened structural stability. Since 2021, a comprehensive **drainage and groundwater pumping system**, along with an integrated conservation plan, have successfully stabilized the site.
- **Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya):** Recognized in 1986, it faced threats from **conflict, wildfires, and flooding**, leading to its endangered status in 2016. Restoration efforts—including rebuilding pipelines, repairing historic structures, and training local authorities in risk management—have effectively reduced these threats.
- **UNESCO's Continental Focus:** UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay emphasized the organisation's ongoing commitment to Africa, noting that since 2021, three other sites in the **Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Senegal** have been removed from the endangered list thanks to sustained support

The ICC issues arrest warrants against Taliban leaders

In the News: During its Pre-Trial Chamber II session, the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** issued **arrest warrants** under seal for two senior leaders of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan: **Haibatullah Akhundzada**, the Taliban's Supreme Leader, and **Abdul Hakim Haqqani**, the Taliban's Chief Justice. The warrants, later unsealed, accuse both figures of committing **crimes against humanity**—specifically the **systematic persecution of women, girls**, individuals whose gender identity did not conform to Taliban decrees, and political opponents.

Key Points

- **Charges & Context:** The ICC found "reasonable grounds" to believe these two men orchestrated persecution—including murder, torture, rape, enforced disappearances, and denial of basic freedoms—based on **gender and political affiliation**, violating Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute ("persecution") since the Taliban seized control in **August 2021** through January 2025.
- **Historic Gender-Persecution Warrant:** This marks the **first time** the ICC has issued arrest warrants specifically citing **gender persecution**, extending protection to women, girls, and LGBTQI+ individuals under international law for such crimes.
- **Taliban's Rejection:** Taliban spokesman **Zabihullah Mujahid** dismissed the ICC's authority, denouncing the warrants as "baseless rhetoric" and asserting that their policies align with **Islamic Sharia law**, declaring non-recognition of the court.
- **ICC Enforceability:** As of July 2025, **125 ICC member states** are legally mandated to arrest the named individuals if they enter their territory. However, enforcement remains rare—high-ranking individuals with ICC warrants have evaded capture in the past.
- **Human Rights Community Response:** Human Rights Watch and feminist groups have praised this action as a vital step towards justice, urging ICC members to enforce the warrants and support broader investigation into **war crimes and crimes against humanity in Afghanistan**, including those committed by ISIS-K and former Afghan or foreign forces.

UNESCO Names New World Heritage Sites

In the News: During the **47th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee** (July 6–16, 2025), held in **Paris**, UNESCO officially inscribed several new **World Heritage Sites**, including culturally and historically significant places in **Germany, Australia, Mexico, India, Cambodia, and the United Arab Emirates**.

Maratha Military Landscapes of India

Key Notes

- **Designation & Scope:** Inscribed as India's **44th UNESCO World Heritage Site** during the 47th Session in Paris, the **Maratha Military Landscapes** comprise **12 forts** (11 in Maharashtra, 1 in Tamil Nadu) built between the **17th and 19th centuries**, exemplifying the Maratha Empire's strategic military architecture.
- **Forts Included:** The sites include **Salher, Shivneri, Lohgad, Khanderi, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, and Gingee Fort** in Tamil Nadu.
- **Criteria & Extent:** Recognised under UNESCO Criteria (*iv*) for architectural significance and (*vi*) for historical value; the site covers approx. **1,577 ha** with a **96,500 ha buffer zone**.
- **Evaluation Process:** Following an 18-month review—entailing ICOMOS evaluation and on-site assessments—the site was approved in July 2025.
- **Cultural Importance:** These forts exemplify defensive prowess and administrative planning, significantly tied to figures like **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, with forts such as **Shivneri** being his birthplace.

- **Conservation Steps:** Maharashtra has initiated 10-year conservation programs—for example, around **Salher Fort**, including infrastructure, tourism regulation, and heritage interpretation.

ECONOMY

Gini Index – India

In the News: According to the World Bank's latest data released in July 2025, India's Gini Index based on consumption is 25.5 for 2022–23. This places India in the “moderately low” inequality category, ranking 4th most equal globally—just behind the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Belarus.

Key Points:

- **Definition & Interpretation:** The Gini Index measures income/consumption inequality on a scale from 0 (complete equality) to 100 (complete inequality). A value of 25.5 indicates that India's income distribution is comparatively equitable.
- **Global Comparison:** India's Gini (~25.5) is significantly lower than China's (~35.7) and the USA's (~41.8), and is more equal than all G7 and G20 nations.
- **Trend Over Time:** India's consumption-based Gini has improved from 28.8 in 2011 to 25.5 in 2022–23, reflecting a steady reduction in inequality.
- **Poverty Reduction Link:** The decline in inequality coincides with the reduction of extreme poverty—around 171 million people have been lifted above the poverty line between 2011 and 2023.
- **Data Limitations & Debate:** Critics point out that the reported Gini refers to consumption, not income, and comparisons to other countries' income-based Ginis may be misleading. World Inequality Database suggests India's actual income Gini is much higher—possibly over 0.60, placing it among the most unequal countries worldwide.
- **Wealth Concentration:** Wealth inequality is even more extreme—with the richest 1% holding about 22.6% of total national income and over 40% of wealth. The top 0.1% have accrued as much income growth as the poorest half since 1980.
- **Policy Responses:** Dispatches from think tanks and economists, including Thomas Piketty, call for wealth taxes on the ultra-rich (e.g., 2% wealth tax, 33% inheritance tax) to fund social investment and curb inequality.

RBI Financial Stability Report, June 2025

In the News: On June 30, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India released its semi-annual **Financial Stability Report (FSR)**, presenting the collective evaluation of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) Sub-Committee. The report assesses the resilience and risks facing India's financial system amid both global and domestic headwinds.

Key Points:

- **Global and Domestic Risks:** Elevated global economic and trade policy uncertainties, volatile bond markets, and geopolitical tensions pose potential risks, with high public debt and elevated asset valuations acting as amplifiers.
- **Bank Asset Quality:** Gross NPAs for scheduled commercial banks stood at a multi-decade low of around 2.3% as of March 2025. Under baseline stress scenarios, they could marginally rise to 2.5% by March 2027; in extreme conditions, they may climb to 5.3–5.6%.
- **Capital Buffers & Stress Tests:** SCBs maintain strong capital adequacy (~17–18%), above regulatory thresholds. Macro-stress tests confirm banks, mutual funds, and clearing corporations could withstand severe scenarios.
- **NBFC & Insurance Stability:** NBFCs show healthy capital buffers (>22%), strong earnings, and improving asset quality. The insurance sector also remains solvent with solvency margins above regulatory levels.
- **Liquidity Conditions:** Thanks to accommodative policy and prior rate cuts, banking liquidity remains comfortable; liquidity coverage ratios are well above 100%, even under stress.
- **Growth & Inflation Outlook:** India's GDP is projected to grow at ~6.5% in FY 2025–26, driven by robust domestic demand. Retail inflation has softened, with CPI at ~2.8–2.9% in May, and the RBI revised FY 2025–26 inflation forecast down to ~3.7%.
- **Market Valuation Risks:** The FSR warns of overvaluation in mid- and small-cap equities, where earnings growth lags market pricing; a correction may follow absent stronger earnings.

VRRR Auction to Absorb Excess Liquidity

In the News: On **July 4, 2025**, the Reserve Bank of India conducted a **7-day Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR)** auction of ₹1 lakh crore to absorb surplus liquidity from the banking system, which had surged to ₹3.75 lakh crore. The operation is part of RBI's liquidity management under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) framework.

Key Points:

- **Auction Details:** The RBI opened the VRRR auction on **July 4**, accepting ₹1 lakh crore at a **weighted average rate of ~5.44%**, with funds being returned on **July 11**.
- **High Surplus Liquidity:** Prior to the auction, system liquidity hit ₹3.75 lakh crore—its highest level since July 2022.
- **Strong Participation:** Bids totaled ₹1.70 lakh crore, well above the notified amount, indicating robust demand to park surplus funds securely.
- **Monetary Impact:** The operation raises the cost of overnight liquidity, pushing the Treasury Repo (TREPS) and call rates closer to the LAF floor (5.25%) and ceiling (5.75%).
- **Strategic Rationale:** RBI aims to manage elevated liquidity—notably from government spending and past policy measures—and ensure effective transmission of its policy rate following a 50 bps repo rate cut.

ENVIRONMENT

India Becomes 4th Largest Biofuel User in 2024, Ahead of China

In the News: In 2024, India overtook China to become the world's **fourth-largest consumer of biofuels**, recording a 40% surge in usage to around **77,000 barrels per day (b/d)**, while China saw an 18% increase.

Key Points:

- **Massive Usage Growth:** India's biofuel consumption climbed sharply by 40% in 2024 to about 77,000 b/d, overtaking China's growth in this segment.
- **Production Increase:** Domestic biofuel production rose approximately 27%, reaching nearly 70,000 b/d, up from lower levels in earlier years.
- **China Comparison:** While China still produces more in absolute terms (~106,000 b/d), much of its output is exported, resulting in lower domestic consumption growth (18%).
- **Global Context:** Worldwide demand for biofuels hit record highs in 2024, exceeding 2 million b/d, with India and China leading growth within Asia.

Mauna Loa Climate Station Faces Shutdown After 65 Years

In the News: Reports surfaced that the United States plans to shut down the Mauna Loa Observatory near Hilo, Hawai'i. This atmospheric research station, continuously tracking CO₂ since 1958, is set to be closed—ending a crucial chapter in global climate science.

Key Points:

- **Historic CO₂ Monitoring Site:** Established in 1956, Mauna Loa Observatory began systematic carbon dioxide measurements in March 1958 under Charles David Keeling—producing the iconic Keeling Curve demonstrating relentless rise from ~320 ppm to over 420 ppm today.
- **Global Climate Barometer:** Located at 11,134 ft on Mauna Loa's northern flank, the site's altitude and isolation provide pristine.
- **Federal Budget Cuts Threaten Operations:** As part of a broader effort to save ~\$500 million through lease terminations and staff downsizing in NOAA, the observatory's lease may not be renewed by August, potentially ending its CO₂ data collection after 65+ years.
- **Science Community Alarm:** Scientists warn that losing Mauna Loa would cripple the ability to monitor atmospheric CO₂ trends globally—akin to discarding a thermometer mid-fever—hindering climate policy assessments and forecasting of extreme weather events.

Bonn Climate Change Conference 2025

In the News: From June 16–26, 2025, the UNFCCC held its mid-year climate negotiations (SB62) in Bonn, Germany, marking critical groundwork ahead of COP 30 in Belém, Brazil. The session tackled core issues like climate finance, adaptation, just transition, global stocktake, and future reform of process frameworks.

Key Points:

- **Funding Stalemate & Agenda Dispute:** Delegates delayed agenda adoption by two days over disagreements on including Agenda item on developed-country obligations under Paris Agreement Article 9.1. Though resolved via compromise, finance emerged as a recurrent flashpoint across workstreams.
- **Adaptation Advances:** Bonn made progress on the Adaptation Fund's transition to exclusively serve the Paris Agreement and agreed on refined indicators measuring access, quality, and financing for adaptation—crucial steps toward the Global Goal on Adaptation.
- **Just Transition Win:** Civil society advocacy secured the formal introduction of the Just Transition Work Programme, ensuring labor, community, and equity priorities are integrated in the UNFCCC process.
- **Climate Finance Focus:** India, alongside G77+China, LMDCs, AOSIS, LDCs, and African Group, spearheaded calls for clear accountability, transparency, and climate funding commitments ahead of COP 30.
- **Science & Stocktake:** Parties agreed to “take note” of the WMO's latest climate science, acknowledging current global warming of 1.34–1.41 °C, but failed to secure stronger language on the 1.5 °C threshold. The Global Stocktake negotiations remained unresolved.
- **Process Reforms:** The Brazilian COP 30 presidency introduced discussions on streamlining UNFCCC processes—limiting delegation sizes, sunseting agendas, and adopting majority voting—though consensus on reforms will continue in Belém.

India Opposes Amendments to Plant Treaty over Sovereignty Concerns

In the News: During an **Ad Hoc Working Group** meeting in Lima (preparing for the November 2025 Governing Body session), India strongly opposed proposed amendments to the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Plant Treaty)**. The amendments could expand the **Multilateral System (MLS)** from Annex I's 64 crops to cover **all plant genetic resources**, raising serious concerns about seed sovereignty and national authority.

Key Points:

- **Proposed Amendment:** Expand Annex I to include **all Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA)**, making India legally bound to share germplasm under a global Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA), overriding national rules.
- **Sovereignty Threat:** The move threatens India's sovereign rights over seeds and may sideline **State Biodiversity Boards**, despite agriculture being a **state subject**—Kerala and other state heads have objected.
- **Farmers' Rights at Risk:** Civil society groups like Bharath Beej Swaraj Manch and Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh warn the amendments could erode farmers' rights to **save, use, exchange, and sell traditional seeds**.
- **Digital Biopiracy Alarm:** Experts caution that expanding MLS without benefit-sharing for **Digital Sequence Information (DSI)** could open the door to “digital biopiracy,” allowing companies to exploit India's genetic data without compensating farmers or biodiversity frameworks.
- **Strong Indian Representation:** India's delegation in Peru is co-chaired by **Dr. Sunil Archak** (ICAR-NBPGR), signaling Delhi's commitment to defending national and farmers' interests.
- **Call for Domestic Consultations:** Stakeholders urge that any amendment move must involve nationwide consultation with **farmers and state governments**—without it, decisions are considered unilateral and undemocratic.

Great Nicobar Project EIA Downplays Earthquake Risk

In the News: In early July 2025, scrutiny intensified around the ₹72,000-crore Great Nicobar Infrastructure Project (GNIP), after an IIT-Kanpur report warned of significant seismic and tsunami hazards. Critics argue the project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) minimizes these threats despite the region's history as a high-risk seismic zone, notably hit by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Key Points:

- **Project Overview:** GNIP includes an international container transshipment port, greenfield airport, township, cruise terminal, ship-repair facilities, and a 450 MVA gas-solar power plant, located around Galathea Bay on Great Nicobar Island.
- **Seismic Risk Assessment:** EIA prepared by Vimta Labs leans on a 2019 IIT-Kanpur study, estimating a 420–750-year return period for magnitude-9+ quakes and 80–120 years for >7.5 magnitude events. It asserts that the likelihood of a repeat of the 2004 tsunami-triggering quake is low.

- **Criticism of EIA Methods:** Experts highlight major gaps: EIA relies on secondary data, lacks site-specific seismic and tsunami studies, and omits indications of strain accumulation and a 2,000-year sediment record gap—all critical for accurate risk forecasting.
- **Geological Sensitivity:** The island lies on the Andaman–Sumatra subduction zone, historically active, with sediment records showing seven tsunamis over the past 8,000 years. Local fault lines and soil types also heighten seismic vulnerability and liquefaction risk.
- **Expert & Regulatory Warnings:** Scientists like Prof. C.P. Rajendran (NIAS) and Prof. Javed Malik (IIT-Kanpur) stress the need for field-based seismic analysis. The National Green Tribunal has mandated EIA reappraisal over ecological, geological, and tribal safety concerns.

Eco-Sensitive Zone Guidelines

In the News: In **July 2025**, the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL), chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, announced the government's decision to **review and revise the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) guidelines**. This initiative aims to transition from uniform, blanket ESZ norms—typically a fixed 10 km buffer around protected areas—to a **more flexible, site-specific, and development-sensitive approach**, balancing conservation with local socio-economic needs.

Key Points

- **Purpose of ESZs:** Eco-Sensitive Zones act as **buffer areas** around national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and protected forests to **shield biodiversity** from the adverse effects of activities such as mining, large-scale construction, and polluting industries.
- **Permissible, Regulated, and Prohibited Activities**
 - **Prohibited:** No new permanent structures (e.g., hotels/resorts) are allowed within ESZs, as per a 2022 Supreme Court ruling.
 - **Regulated:** Activities like eco-tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, and small-scale infrastructure development may be permitted under strict environmental norms.
- **Concerns Over Rigid ESZ Boundaries:** Stakeholders from states such as Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Odisha highlighted that the **uniform 10 km buffer** often encroaches on heavily forested or populated areas without ecological justification, resulting in **unnecessary development constraints**.
- **Move to Site-Specific Norms:** The SC-NBWL proposes adopting **custom ESZ widths** based on ecological, geographical, and socio-economic conditions—allowing tighter conservation near tributed rivers while easing restrictions in areas with minimal ecological risk.

Sariska Tiger Reserve

In the News: On **June 26, 2025**, the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL), chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, approved the **boundary rationalisation** of the **Critical Tiger Habitat (CTH)** and buffer zones of **Sariska Tiger Reserve** in Rajasthan, pending final notification and Supreme Court review.

Key Points

- **CTH Expansion & Buffer Reduction:** The approved plan increases the CTH from **881.11 km² to 924.49 km²** and reduces the buffer zone from **245.72 km² to 203.20 km²**.
- **Rationale & Compensation:** It removes **48.39 km²** of degraded, peripheral highlands from the CTH and compensates by adding **90.91 km²** of higher-quality tiger habitat previously in the buffer.
- **Implications for Mining Projects:** The modification removes the 1 km “no-mining” buffer zone around the CTH boundary, potentially allowing the reopening of **over 50 marble, dolomite, and limestone mines** that were shuttered by the Supreme Court.
- **Supreme Court Oversight & CEC Directions:** The boundary rationalisation follows recommendations from the Supreme Court's **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** and must ensure no net loss of tiger habitat, maintain ecological connectivity even in low-density areas, and safeguard against harmful development.
- **Environmental Concerns & Expert Pushback:** Ecologists and wildlife experts warn that excluding key peripheral hills—described as “finger-shaped”—may fragment essential **tiger corridors**, disrupt movement between the reserve's southern segments, and compromise long-term viability.

SPORTS

Sukanya Sonowal Becomes Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador

In the News: Sukanya Sonowal, a final-year B.Tech student in Biosciences & Bioengineering at IIT Guwahati, was appointed as the Lead – Communications & Public Relations on the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (CYPAN) for the 2025–2027 term. She will play a major role in promoting peace, respect, and understanding across the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth.

Key Points:

- **Appointment & Role:** Sukanya was selected as a Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador and will serve as the CYPAN Executive Committee's Lead for Communications & Public Relations from 2025 to 2027.
- **Rigorous Selection:** She emerged through a competitive three-stage process—application plus two interview rounds—evaluated on her leadership, community service, peacebuilding work, and alignment with Commonwealth values.
- **IIT Guwahati & Assam Roots:** A native of Lakhimpur district, Assam, she is currently in her fourth year at IIT Guwahati, where faculty and the director applauded her for representing the institute and nation on a global platform.
- **Communication Expertise:** Sukanya has honed her communication and outreach skills through roles in media and branding at Techniche—her college's techno-management fest—which strengthened her candidacy.
- **STEM Leadership:** She co-founded STEMvibe, a national STEM outreach initiative reaching over 3,000 students across India, and leads The Integral Cup, a national undergraduate math competition that attracted more than 2,500 participants.
- **Global Collaboration Experience:** Her work includes strategic communication projects with global organizations like Optiver, Qube Research & Technologies, and Jane Street—showcasing her international engagement and leadership capacity.

India to Host Shooting World Cup in 2027 and Junior Worlds in 2028

In the News: During its executive committee meeting on **July 10, 2025**, the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) awarded **New Delhi** the hosting rights for two major global shooting competitions: the **ISSF World Cup (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun)** in 2027 and the **ISSF Junior World Championship (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun)** in 2028.

Key Points

- **2027 ISSF World Cup:** New Delhi will host one of the premier international shooting competitions (covering rifle, pistol, and shotgun), elevating India's profile in senior-level shooting sports.
- **2028 Junior World Championship:** The city will also stage the ISSF Junior World Championship for rifle, pistol, and shotgun events—marking the first time India hosts the Junior Worlds.
- **Continuity of International Events:** This builds on India's busy shooting calendar, which includes hosting the ISSF Junior World Cup in **September 2025** and the **Asian Rifle/Pistol Cup in February 2026**.
- **Launch of National Shooting League:** Along with these international events, India is introducing the inaugural **Shooting League of India (SLI)** in **November 2025**, adding a domestic professional league to its shooting ecosystem.
- **NRAI Leadership Response:** NRAI President **Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo** and Secretary General **K. Sultan Singh** welcomed the ISSF's decision, emphasising the benefits for athlete preparation, international exposure, and India's emergence as a trusted global shooting destination.

SCIENCE AND TECH.

Operational License for Indigenous 700 MWe PHWRs

In the News: On **July 3, 2025**, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) granted a **five-year operational license** to the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) for **KAPS-3 and KAPS-4**, the country's first **indigenously developed 700 MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)**, located at the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station in Gujarat.

Key Points:

- **Licensing Completion:** AERB concluded extensive design and commissioning safety reviews and formally handed over the license on July 3, 2025.
- **Commissioning Background:** KAPS-3 reached full-power operation in **August 2023**, followed by KAPS-4 in **August 2024**.

- **Rigorous Safety Process:** The license followed **15 years of multi-tiered safety reviews**, covering lifecycle stages from siting and design to commissioning .
- **Strategic Fleet Expansion:** This milestone supports NPCIL's plan to build **10 more 700 MWe PHWRs** in a fleet mode .
- **India's Nuclear Landscape:** Prior to these units, India operated **15 PHWRs of 220 MWe** and **2 of 540 MWe**, plus a 700 MWe unit at Rawatbhata, Rajasthan .
- **Technical Advancement:** The 700 MWe PHWR design was an **upgrade from the earlier 540 MWe variant**, reflecting enhanced domestic capability .

Gene-Edited Japonica Rice

In the News: In July 2025, scientists at Delhi's National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR) announced the development of a CRISPR-Cas9-edited japonica rice variety that significantly enhances phosphate uptake and yields—achieving up to 20% yield gain with full fertilizer, and a remarkable 40% boost when phosphate use is cut to just 10% of usual recommendations .

Key Points:

- **Target Crop & Context:** The improvement was engineered in the japonica rice cultivar "Nipponbare," a model variety used for genetic studies . Japonica is high-starch, short-grain rice mainly grown in East Asia and ideal for controlled breeding .
- **Genetic Editing Focus:** Researchers targeted the phosphate transporter gene *OsPHO1;2*, essential for moving phosphorus from roots to shoots .A key repressor (*OsWRKY6*) regulating this gene was modified: instead of full removal, only a 30-base-pair repressor-binding sequence was precisely deleted using CRISPR .This allowed increased *OsPHO1;2* expression without disrupting other regulatory functions .
- **Yield & Fertiliser Impact:** Under full fertiliser use, edited lines yielded ~20% more. Impressively, even with just 10% of recommended phosphate, yields were 40% higher than controls . Enhanced phosphate absorption led to more panicles and seeds, while seed size and quality remained unchanged .
- **Genome Integrity & Biosafety Measures:** No foreign DNA (like Cas9 vector) remained in the final plant lines—they were removed by Mendelian segregation . Comprehensive checks (e.g., in silico predictions, genome scans) identified no off-target mutations

India Launches First Indigenous Diving Support Ship INS Nistar

In the News: Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) officially delivered **INS Nistar**, the first **indigenously designed and constructed** Diving Support Vessel, to the Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam. The acceptance was formalized by HSL's CMD, Cmde Hemant Khatri, and the ship's commanding officer, Cdr Amit Subhro Banerji, in the presence of senior naval officials, marking India's entry into a select group of nations with such deep-sea rescue capabilities.

Key Points

- **Design & Construction:** INS Nistar is a **Nistar-class DSV**, measuring approximately **118 m in length**, displacing nearly **9,350–10,000 tonnes**, and features advanced diving systems including both air and saturation diving, side-scan sonar, underwater ROVs, and deep-submergence rescue integration.
- **Operational Role:** As part of the Eastern Naval Command, INS Nistar will act as the **'Mother Ship' to the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV)**, enhancing maritime safety through deep-sea diving, submarine rescue, search and rescue operations, sustained patrolling, and helicopter support.
- **Key Features:** The vessel is equipped with **dynamic positioning (DP-II)** to maintain precise positioning in deep waters, an eight-bed hospital, intensive care and hyperbaric medical facilities, a 15-tonne subsea crane, a helipad, and has an endurance of over **60 days at sea**.
- **Indigenous Content & "Aatmanirbhar Bharat":** Over **80 percent** of the vessel's content is sourced domestically. The project mobilised **120 MSMEs**, aligning with the government's **'Make in India'** and self-reliance initiatives.
- **Legacy & Strategic Importance:** The vessel continues the heritage of the Soviet-era INS Nistar (commissioned in 1971 and decommissioned in 1989), carrying forward the motto **"Surakshita Yatharthta Shauryam"** ("Deliverance with Precision and Bravery"), reflecting its rescue mission ethos.
- **Upcoming Commissioning:** INS Nistar is scheduled for formal induction into the Indian Navy on **July 18, 2025**, at Visakhapatnam's Naval Dockyard in the presence of Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh**.

ISRO Successfully Conducts Hot Tests of Gaganyaan Propulsion System

In the News: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully performed two live hot-fire tests of the Gaganyaan Service Module Propulsion System (SMPS) at its Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri. These tests—lasting 30 seconds and 100

seconds—validated the complete integration of the propulsion configuration under realistic conditions, marking a critical step toward India's planned crewed space mission.

Key Points

- **Purpose & Duration of Tests:** The tests included a **30-second run** and a prolonged **100-second burn** to validate the propulsion system's flight-like performance.
- **Thruster & Engine Operations:** During the longer test, ISRO successfully operated **all 16 reaction control thrusters (RCS)** in steady and pulsed modes concurrently with the **five Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM)** engines, demonstrating coordinated system functionality.
- **System Specifications:** The SMPS consists of **five LAM engines**, each generating **440 N of thrust**, and **16 RCS thrusters**, each rated at **100 N**. It supports both **orbital manoeuvres** and **emergency aborts**.
- **Managing Agency:** ISRO's **Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC)** led the hot-test campaign, incorporating design refinements from earlier test runs to improve operational performance.

Next Steps: Having achieved expected performance, ISRO announced plans for a **full-duration hot test** to further validate the SMPS in preparation for the Gaganyaan crewed mission.

DRDO, IAF Successfully Test Astra Missile from Su-30 MKI

In the News: DRDO and the Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully carried out **two flight-tests of the Astra Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM)**, equipped with an **indigenous Radio Frequency (RF) seeker**, launched from a **Su-30 MKI** fighter jet over the coast of Odisha ([turn0news10], [turn0search2]).

Key Points

- **Dual Successful Test Launches:** Two Astra missiles were fired at **high-speed unmanned aerial targets** from varying ranges and flight conditions. In both cases, the missiles achieved **pin-point accuracy**, validating the missile's tracking and engagement capabilities.
- **Homegrown RF Seeker Technology:** The indigenous **RF seeker**, designed and developed by DRDO, functioned flawlessly in-flight and is a significant breakthrough in Indian missile autonomy.
- **All-Systems Validation:** Flight performance and data from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur confirmed the operation of all subsystems, including guidance, navigation, and tracking equipment—attesting to the Astra system's maturity.
- **Range & Design:** Equipped with advanced guidance and navigation systems, Astra BVRAAM has a **strike range exceeding 100 km** and is compatible with the Su-30 MKI platform.
- **Indigenous Collaboration Ecosystem:** Over **50 public and private industry partners**, including HAL and major DRDO labs, contributed in design, development, and integration, reflecting built-in domestic capacity under the **Make-in-India** defence initiative.
- **National Endorsement:** Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** praised the successful test and the indigenous RF seeker progress as a "major milestone in critical defence technology," a sentiment echoed by DRDO Chairman **Dr Samir V. Kamat**.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Varsha Deshpande Wins 2025 UN Population Award

In the News: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) announced that **Varsha Deshpande**, founder of the Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal in Maharashtra, received the **2025 UN Population Award** in the individual category. This annual honour, established in 1981, recognizes exceptional contributions to population and reproductive health including gender equality and women's empowerment.

Key Points

- **Grassroots Impact:** Over **35 years**, Varsha Deshpande has spearheaded initiatives to combat **gender-based violence, child marriage, and sex-selective abortion**. Through vocational training, advocacy for joint property ownership, and protections for informal-sector women workers, her work has empowered thousands of grassroots women.
- **Pioneering Anti-Sex-Selection Campaign:** Deshpande conducted **sting operations** and mobilized communities around preventing gender-biased sex selection. She served on government bodies including under the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act**, playing a central role in policy implementation to curb this social evil.

- **Historic Recognition for India:** She joins **Indira Gandhi (1983)** and **JRD Tata (1992)** as the **third Indian** to receive the prestigious individual award.
- **UN Tribute:** In her UN acceptance speech on **World Population Day**, Deshpande emphasized that the award reflects **collective grassroots efforts** and renewed focus on the vital issue of gender equality and reproductive health

