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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Birsa Munda Punyatithi 2025: 125th Death Anniversary of Tribal Icon Birsa Munda

In the News: On 9 June 2025, India observed the **125th** Punyatithi (death anniversary) of revolutionary tribal leader **Birsa Munda**, with nationwide tributes led by the Prime Minister and large public ceremonies in Jharkhand, marking a key moment in the run-up to his 150th birth-anniversary celebrations later this year.

Key Points:

- Birsa Munda Punyatithi is commemorated each year on 9 June; the 2025 observance marked exactly 125 years since his death in Ranchi Jail on 9 June 1900.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage via an X post, calling him a “great hero of the freedom struggle” who devoted his life to protecting tribal rights and welfare.
- In Ranchi, Jharkhand Governor Santosh Gangwar and Chief Minister Hemant Soren laid wreaths at the Birsa Samadhi Sthal in Kokar and at Birsa Chowk, extolling his “Jal-Jungle-Zameen” legacy of land, forest and water rights.
- The Ranchi Municipal Corporation conducted a special cleanliness drive around the memorial sites ahead of the ceremonies, highlighting local reverence for the tribal icon.
- Images from SocialNewsXYZ show large gatherings of tribal followers, community leaders and students offering ‘Johar’ salutations and traditional Sarna prayers at the memorial.
- The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and other paramilitary units issued social-media tributes, applauding Munda’s “indomitable spirit” on the 125th anniversary.
- Schools, government offices and tribal councils across Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh organised lectures, essay contests and folk-dance performances to disseminate Munda’s life and ideals.
- The remembrance revived discussion of his Ulgulan (“Great Tumult”) rebellion of 1899-1900, which spurred the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 safeguarding tribal land rights.
- Since 2021, the Government of India has celebrated his 15 November birth anniversary as *Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas*; the 125th Punyatithi serves as a prelude to year-long events culminating in his 150th birth anniversary in November 2025.
- The Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav campaign streamed short documentaries on 9 June, urging citizens to learn about tribal contributions and Birsa Munda’s enduring message of self-rule and social justice.

Ladakh Reservation and Language Regulations Promulgated by President

In the News: On 3 June 2025, President **Droupadi Murmu** used her powers under **Article 240** of the Constitution to promulgate three landmark regulations for the Union Territory of **Ladakh**, introducing an 85 per cent local job quota, declaring five official languages, and reserving one-third of Hill-Council seats for women, thereby meeting several long-standing regional demands.

Key Points:

- The package comprises the Union Territory of Ladakh Reservation (Amendment) Regulation 2025, the Ladakh Official Languages Regulation 2025, and the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Amendment) Regulation 2025, all issued simultaneously through a Presidential notification.
- The Reservation Regulation caps the total quota for locals in public employment and admissions at 85 per cent, excluding the 10 per cent Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota, and applies uniformly to Groups A–D posts and professional institutions.
- Within the 85 per cent ceiling, 80 per cent is earmarked for Scheduled Tribes, 4 per cent for residents along the LoC/LAC, and 1 per cent for Scheduled Castes, reflecting Ladakh’s tribal demographic profile.
- A new domicile framework defines eligibility as 15 years continuous residence (since 31 Oct 2019) or seven years of schooling plus Class 10/12 in Ladakh; children of Central-government employees who have served 10 years, and spouses/children of domiciles also qualify.
- The Hill-Council Amendment reserves 33 per cent of seats for women in both Leh and Kargil Autonomous Hill Development Councils, with rotation based on constituency serial numbers to ensure wider representation.

- The Languages Regulation declares English, Hindi, Urdu, Bhoti and Purgi as Ladakh's official languages, while mandating continued use of English for existing official work.
- It instructs the Administrator to establish an Art, Culture & Language Academy and to make "special efforts" for the promotion of Shina, Brokskat, Balti and Ladakhi, safeguarding endangered dialects.
- All three regulations draw legal authority from Article 240 and Section 58 of the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, marking the first comprehensive statutory framework tailored exclusively to Ladakh since its creation as a separate UT.
- Civil-society groups such as the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) welcomed the steps on jobs and language but reiterated their demand for Sixth-Schedule constitutional safeguards for land and ecology.

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Union Minister Kiren Rijiju Launches UMEED Portal for Waqf Management

In the News: On June 10, 2025, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju officially launched the UMEED Portal, a digital platform aimed at enhancing the management and transparency of Waqf properties across India. The initiative seeks to streamline administration, improve revenue generation, and promote better utilization of Waqf assets.

Key Points:

- **Portal Launch:** Kiren Rijiju inaugurated the UMEED Portal on June 10, 2025, designed to facilitate efficient Waqf property management through digitization and transparency.
- **Purpose of UMEED:** The portal aims to provide a comprehensive database of Waqf properties, enabling better monitoring, revenue collection, and dispute resolution.
- **Technology Integration:** UMEED leverages GIS mapping, online registration, and grievance redressal mechanisms to modernize Waqf administration.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The portal promotes transparency in Waqf Board operations and ensures accountability in the management of Waqf assets.
- **Revenue Enhancement:** By streamlining property records and management, UMEED is expected to boost revenue generation from Waqf properties, benefiting community welfare activities.
- **Support to Waqf Boards:** The initiative provides Waqf Boards with digital tools and training to improve governance and asset utilization.
- **Broader Impact:** UMEED aligns with the government's vision of digitization and good governance, aiming to safeguard the interests of the Muslim community and preserve Waqf heritage.

Reforming Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in India

In the News: The Government of India has initiated comprehensive reforms of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to boost exports, attract investment, and generate employment. The reforms aim to transform SEZs into more flexible and globally competitive economic hubs, in line with the changing dynamics of international trade and the needs of industry.

Key Points:

- **SEZ Reform Initiative:** The government is moving to replace the existing SEZ Act, 2005 with a new framework called the Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs (DESH) Bill, focusing on greater flexibility and integration with the domestic economy.
- **Key Features of Reforms:** The new policy proposes to allow both export-oriented and domestic businesses to operate within SEZs, reducing the export-only restriction. It also seeks to simplify compliance, ease land acquisition, and provide a single-window clearance system.
- **Boosting Exports and Investment:** The reforms are designed to attract more foreign and domestic investment by offering modern infrastructure, tax incentives, and easier regulatory norms, thereby enhancing India's position as a global manufacturing and services hub.
- **Employment Generation:** By making SEZs more business-friendly and expanding their scope, the reforms are expected to create new job opportunities, especially in manufacturing, IT, and services sectors.
- **Integration with Global Value Chains:** The new framework aims to better integrate Indian SEZs with global value chains, encouraging greater participation in international trade and supply networks.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The government has consulted with industry bodies, state governments, and other stakeholders to ensure the reforms address ground realities and industry needs.

Previous Achievements: Since their inception, SEZs in India have contributed significantly to export growth, but challenges like rigid regulations and limited domestic integration have prompted the need for reforms.

Maharashtra Introduces Geo-Tagged Unique ID for Infra Projects

In the News: As of June 11, 2025, the Maharashtra government has launched a digital reform initiative to assign a geo-tagged 13-digit alphanumeric Unique Infrastructure Facility ID (UIFID) to every public infrastructure project statewide. The initiative, piloted in Wardha, will expand statewide from October 1, 2025, and aims to streamline project tracking, prevent duplication, and enhance transparency.

Key Points:

- **UIFID Assignment:** Every public infrastructure asset—such as hospitals, schools, irrigation works, power substations, and public toilets—will receive a UIFID at the time of administrative approval. This ID incorporates a state code, sanction year, scheme abbreviation, district code, asset type, and serial number.
- **Pilot & Rollout Plan:** The system went live in Wardha in June 2025, with a full-scale rollout across Maharashtra starting October 1, 2025.
- **Geo-Tagging & Monitoring:** Managed by the Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC), all projects will be digitally mapped (points, lines, or polygons). No payment will be made on invoices lacking a valid UIID, ensuring compliance.
- **Duplication Prevention:** The portal cross-checks new asset registrations against existing infrastructure nearby. Alerts trigger if similar facilities exist, reducing redundant investment and optimizing resource utilization.
- **Reporting & Coordination:** Real-time dashboards and customised reports will support inter-departmental coordination and evidence-based decision-making. District collectors will oversee monthly reviews via district-level committees.
- **Data Cleanup Timeline:** Authorities must upload records for all projects sanctioned or completed between 2020–2025 by March 31, 2026.
- **Alignment with National Digital Missions:** The initiative complements national efforts such as PM Gati Shakti and Gram Man Chitra, fostering balanced regional development and streamlined governance.

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme: 103 Redeveloped Stations Inaugurated

In the News: On May 22, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated 103 redeveloped railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS). These stations span 86 districts across 18 states and union territories, built at a combined cost of over ₹1,100 crore.

Key Points:

- **Scheme Launch & Goals:** The ABSS was launched in February 2023, aiming to upgrade around 1,300 railway stations into modern, passenger-centric hubs incorporating regional architectural themes.
- **Inauguration Details:** On May 22, 2025, PM Modi flagged off 103 stations via video conference from Bikaner, Rajasthan, including stations such as Deshnok (Rajasthan), Panagarh (West Bengal), and Haibargaon (Assam).
- **Geographic Spread & Investment:** These stations cover 86 districts in 18 States/UTs, with the ₹1,100+ crore investment benefitting regions like Uttar Pradesh (19 stations), Gujarat (18), Maharashtra (15), Tamil Nadu (9), and more.
- **Modern Amenities:** Upgrades include climate-controlled waiting halls, lifts and escalators, digital display boards, improved sanitation, ramp-enabled accessibility, and eco-friendly designs reflecting local culture.
- **Economic & Cultural Impact:** The redevelopments are expected to enhance connectivity, boost regional tourism, foster economic growth, and provide a 'city-centre' experience at railway stations.
- **Phase-Wise Rollout:** Redevelopment work began in 2023–24 across 1,062 stations, with the first phase completing upgrades at 103 stations and plans to renovate 500 more by 2027.
- **Notable Station Upgrades:** Haibargaon (Assam): First in Assam under ABSS, redevelopment cost ₹15.85 crore, blending Assamese cultural motifs. Karchhana (Uttar Pradesh): Upgraded at ₹9.8 crore, featuring a new building, platform, and foot-over bridge. Jharkhand Stations: Govindpur, Shankarpur, and Rajmahal, collectively worth ₹6.65 crore, modernized with improved accessibility and waiting lounges.

Mumbai Ranks 6th Globally in Under-Construction Data Centre Capacity

In the News: According to Cushman & Wakefield's Global Data Center Market Comparison 2025, Mumbai has risen to **6th position globally** in data centre capacity currently under construction, overtaking major global hubs including London and Dublin.

Key Points:

- **Global Ranking (6th):** Mumbai ranks 6th out of 97 global cities, with **335 MW** of data centre capacity under construction as of end-2024.
- **Growth Impact:** Once completed, this pipeline will increase the city's operational capacity by approximately **62%**.
- **National Significance:** Mumbai accounts for **42%** of India's total under-construction data centre capacity.
- **APAC Context:** The city is also the **7th most established data centre market in Asia-Pacific**.
- **Drivers of Growth:** Expansion is fuelled by increasing demand from **cloud computing, AI workloads**, enhanced **power infrastructure, land availability**, and robust **digital infrastructure** including new submarine cables landing in Mumbai.
- **Emerging Regional Trends:** In the broader region, cities like Pune (4th) and Bengaluru (5th) among APAC hubs highlight India's rising status in data-centre development.
- **Sector Outlook in India:** India's total operational data centre capacity, around **950 MW in 2024**, is expected to nearly **double to 1.8 GW by 2026**, with Mumbai playing a central role.

Air India Boeing 787 Crash in Ahmedabad Claims Over 240 Lives

In the News – A Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner operated by Air India, Flight AI 171 en route from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick, crashed shortly after takeoff from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, resulting in a catastrophic loss of life and one miraculous survivor.

- **Incident Details:** The aircraft departed at 1:38 pm local time and reached approximately 625 feet in altitude before it descended rapidly and collided with the hostel block of B.J. Medical College, located in the Meghani Nagar neighbourhood near the airport. The crash happened within roughly 30 seconds of takeoff, generating a massive explosion and thick black smoke visible across the area.
- **Casualties:** Flight records indicate there were 242 people on board, comprised of 230 passengers (including 169 Indian nationals, 53 British citizens, seven Portuguese, and one Canadian) and 12 crew members. Officials have reported 241 onboard fatalities and at least 28 additional deaths on the ground—primarily students in the hostel—bringing the total death toll to at least 269. One British passenger, Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, seated at an emergency exit row (11A), survived with minor injuries after escaping through an exit window.
- **Rescue and Response:** Emergency services, including fire engines, ambulances, and army personnel, were dispatched immediately, and roads were sealed to facilitate rescue efforts. At least 60 injured people were taken to hospitals, while DNA profiling has been used to identify the severely damaged remains.
- **Investigation Underway:** The crash is being investigated by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau with technical assistance from the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, the U.K. Air Accidents Investigation Branch, and Boeing. Investigators have retrieved one of the aircraft's black box flight recorders. Initial tracking data indicates the plane failed to climb and issued a mayday call before descending, but investigators caution that the ultimate cause may take years to determine.
- **Aircraft Background:** This marks the first fatal accident involving a Boeing 787 Dreamliner since the model's commercial debut, surprising aviation experts given its otherwise strong safety record. U.S. authorities have indicated there is no immediate reason to ground the 787 fleet.

India's First Underwater Museum to Be Built Around INS Guldar in Maharashtra

In the News: The Indian Navy has officially handed over one of its decommissioned vessels, **INS Guldar**, to the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) as part of a project to convert the ship into India's very first underwater museum and artificial coral reef. The handover took place at Karwar on **21 February 2025**.

Key Facts:

- **Location & Scope** The underwater museum is slated to be established **off Nivati Rocks**, near Vengurla in Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra. The initiative, funded by the central government, involves an investment of **₹46.91 crore**, approved by the Union Tourism Ministry.
- **Ship Details & Timeline** INS Guldar is a **Polnocny-class Landing Ship Tank (Medium)**, constructed in Poland and commissioned into the Indian Navy on **30 December 1985**. It served for approximately **39 years** before being

decommissioned on **12 January 2024**. Over its service, the vessel completed more than **3,900 days at sea** and undertook **over 490 beaching operations**, aiding in troop landings.

- **Conversion Process** MTDC will undertake the full conversion, starting with rigorous **environmental cleaning** to remove all pollutants and hazardous materials. The procedure will adhere to **marine conservation guidelines**, secure required NOCs, and ensure thorough **scuttling** at a safe location near Sindhudurg.
- **Tourism & Conservation Objectives** The project is designed to enhance **marine biodiversity** by creating an artificial reef and to support eco-tourism, including **scuba diving** and potential **submarine expeditions**. It will also provide advantages for the Indian Navy, offering a platform for underwater **diving training**.

Bairabi-Sairang Project

In the News: On June 11, 2025, the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) completed the safety inspection and granted approval for operations on the final 33.86 km stretch between Hortoki and Sairang, formally connecting Mizoram's capital region to the Indian Railways network via the 51.38 km Bairabi-Sairang broad-gauge line.

Key Points:

- **Project Overview:** The line spans 51.38 km from Bairabi to Sairang, featuring 48 tunnels (total length ~12.85 km), 55 major bridges, 87 minor bridges, 5 road overbridges, and 6 underbridges.
- **Phased Rollout & CRS Inspection:** Bairabi-Hortoki (16.72 km) was completed and certified in July–August 2024. CRS inspected the Hortoki-Sairang section from June 6–10, 2025, including speed trials at up to 110 km/h. Safety clearance was granted for public goods and passenger services at up to 90 km/h.
- **Operational Timeline & Costs:** Formal inauguration is expected in June–July 2025. Originally estimated at ₹2,384 crore, costs were revised to ₹5,021 crore and later to around ₹8,200 crore.
- **Engineering Feat:** Includes 32 tunnels and 35 major bridges in the final section. Notable bridge pier #196 stands at 104 m—42 m taller than the Qutub Minar.
- **Strategic Connectivity:** Sairang, ~20 km from Aizawl, becomes the terminus station, marking Aizawl as the fourth North-East capital connected by rail (after Guwahati, Agartala, and Itanagar).
- **Regional & Economic Impact:** Expected to reduce travel/logistics costs, boost tourism, trade, local market access, and support the Act-East Policy.
- **Local Governance & Employment:** Mizoram's CM has requested enhanced services (Rajdhani Express, Howrah link), reservation and parcel centres, internet facilities, and local youth employment in station operations. Use of Inner-Line Permit (ILP) system and railway police positions are being reviewed in preparation for operations.

India's CCEA Clears Two Major Railway Projects on June 11, 2025

In the News: On **June 11, 2025**, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, granted approval for **two railway multitracking (doubling) projects** aimed at bolstering rail infrastructure across **Jharkhand, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh**, with a combined investment of **₹6,405 crore**.

Key Points:

- The two approved projects involve the **doubling of the Koderma-Barkakana line** (133 km) traversing Jharkhand's coal belt and improving the connectivity between **Patna and Ranchi**, and the **doubling of the Ballari-Chikjajur section** (185 km) crossing Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- Together, these multitracking projects will add approximately **318 kilometres** of additional railway lines covering **seven districts** in the three states, which is expected to **reduce congestion, enhance freight and passenger capacity, and lower logistics costs** under India's PM-Gati Shakti master plan.
- The estimated total cost for implementing both projects is **₹6,405 crore**, with the railway minister stating that the investments are part of a strategic push to reduce logistics costs, estimated to have already fallen by ~4% due to ongoing infrastructure enhancements.
- The project timelines set **completion within the next three years**, with implementation overseen by the Ministry of Railways, and are expected to generate **direct employment of over 108 lakh person-days** during the construction phase.

INTERNATIONAL

Gaza-bound Aid Boat *Madleen* Carrying Greta Thunberg Diverted to Israel

In the News: Israeli forces intercepted the British-flagged yacht *Madleen* in international waters. The vessel, part of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, carried **12 activists including Greta Thunberg** and French MEP Rima Hassan, aiming to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza. Israeli officials diverted the boat to Israel under their 2007 naval blockade policy, preventing it from reaching Gaza. All passengers were reported safe and unharmed.

Key Points:

- **Mission and Symbolism:** *Madleen* embarked from Sicily on June 1, 2025, carrying symbolic aid including rice, baby formula, medical kits, and desalination equipment. Greta Thunberg said the voyage aimed to **“challenge Israel’s illegal siege... and spotlight the humanitarian crisis in Gaza”**.
- **Interception:** Israeli forces boarded the yacht around 2 a.m. in international waters and redirected it to an Israeli port. No injuries were reported. Passengers received food and water and are expected to be **repatriated**.
- **Israeli Position:** Officials labeled the act a **publicity-seeking provocation or “ Hamas propaganda ”**, citing the necessity of the naval blockade to prevent arms smuggling. Israel’s Defence Minister Israel Katz pledged to prevent such attempts, calling for **“all necessary measures”**.
- **Activists’ Allegations:** The Freedom Flotilla Coalition described the boarding as a **forcible interception**—“an illegal act” and part of Israel’s broader blockade enforcement. Thunberg and other activists claimed to have been “kidnapped” and demanded safe passage. UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese urged continued maritime aid effort.
- **Aid Rerouting:** Israeli authorities confirmed the **tiny amount of aid** on board *Madleen* will be redirected to Gaza through official channels. The activists will be deported.
- **Contextual Significance:** The hostage-taking by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and the ongoing Israeli military operations have intensified the naval blockade. Over 54,000 Palestinians have reportedly died, and famine warnings loom.

Jaishankar Leaves for France and Belgium for Key Diplomatic Talks

In the News: On **June 8, 2025**, External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** departed from New Delhi for a week-long official visit to **France, the European Union (EU), and Belgium**, scheduled to continue until **June 14**. This visit follows his recent trip to Germany and aims to enhance **strategic, diplomatic, and economic partnerships**—including pivotal discussions related to counter-terrorism and India-EU cooperation.

Key Points:

- **Strengthening India–France Ties:** Jaishankar will hold bilateral talks with French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot in Paris and Marseille, marking 25 years of a strategic partnership rooted in trust and collaboration on global issues. He is set to participate in the inaugural Mediterranean Raisina Dialogue in Marseille, a joint initiative between the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.
- **EU Strategic Dialogue:** In Brussels, India will conduct its first ministerial-level strategic dialogue with EU High Representative Kaja Kallas, involving senior officials from the European Commission and European Parliament, as part of efforts to finalize a free-trade agreement by year-end.
- **Deepening Relations with Belgium:** Jaishankar will engage in high-level discussions with Belgian Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot, and meet with senior Belgian leaders. The dialogue aims to strengthen cooperation in trade and investment, green energy, pharmaceuticals, technology, and the diamond industry, while also connecting with the Indian diaspora in Belgium.
- **Counter-Terrorism Focus:** China for more than a few years. The visit follows India’s “Operation Sindoor” triggered by the Pahalgam terror attack. Jaishankar will brief European counterparts on India’s zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and recent military response.

National Guard Troops Deploy in Los Angeles on Trump’s Orders Amid Immigration Protests

In the News: From **June 6–8, 2025**, President Donald Trump deployed approximately **2,000 National Guard troops** to Los Angeles under Title 10 authority. This unprecedented federal intervention—ordered without the consent of California’s governor—was aimed at quelling escalating protests against recent ICE immigration raids.

Key Points:

- **Context of Deployment:** The National Guard arrived as thousands demonstrated in reaction to ICE operations, which led to several arrests of undocumented migrants. Protests included blocking highways, setting cars ablaze, and confrontations near the Metropolitan Detention Center. Law enforcement used tear gas, flash-bang devices, rubber bullets, and less-lethal rounds to disperse crowds in areas like downtown LA, Compton, and Paramount.

- **Federal Authorization & Legal Controversy:** Trump invoked Title 10 of the U.S. Code to bypass California's governor in deploying the National Guard—marking a rare federalization of state troops without local approval, last seen in 1965. Governor Gavin Newsom condemned the order as “unlawful” and “dictatorial,” citing violations of the Posse Comitatus Act and state sovereignty. He formally requested Trump to retract the deployment.
- **Political Fallout:** California leaders—including Newsom and LA Mayor Karen Bass—denounced the move as an overreach that would exacerbate tensions. Harris and some congressional Democrats labeled the deployment as authoritarian. On the other side, Trump, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, and Republican officials defended it as a necessary action to control violence and protect federal property during “violent” protests.
- **Ground Operations & Security Measures:** Troops were stationed near federal detention centers, highways, and downtown corridors. Local law enforcement coordinated with the National Guard to declare multiple “unlawful assemblies” and carry out arrests, including crowd-control interventions with gas canisters. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth warned of the potential deployment of active-duty Marines if violence continued

U.S. Ends Temporary Protected Status for Nepal Nationals

In the News: On **June 5, 2025**, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nepalese nationals, originally granted after the **2015 earthquake**. The designation will officially end at **11:59 p.m. on August 5, 2025**, requiring approximately **7,000 non-resident beneficiaries** to either adjust their legal status or leave the U.S.

Key Points:

- **TPS Background & Expiration:** TPS was granted to Nepalese following the devastating April 2015 earthquake. The latest extension expired on June 24, 2025, and DHS has decided not to renew the designation. The last day of coverage is August 5, 2025, with protections ending at midnight.
- **Numbers Affected:** Approximately 12,700 Nepalese nationals held TPS status. Of these, nearly 5,500 have become lawful permanent residents. The rest—around 7,000—must depart or obtain legal status by August 5, 2025.
- **DHS Reasoning:** DHS Secretary Kristi Noem cited “improved disaster preparedness and reconstruction efforts” in Nepal, concluding that the country no longer meets criteria for TPS designation due to restored normalcy.
- **Expiry of Work Permits:** Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) tied to TPS are extended automatically until August 5, 2025. Employers must re-verify employee eligibility if EADs expire earlier.
- **Next Steps for Beneficiaries:** Individuals must either secure alternative legal status (e.g., work visa, green card) or depart the U.S. by the deadline. DHS encourages those leaving to use the CBP Home app to report planned departure

UN Celebrates First International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations

In the News: On **10 June 2025**, the United Nations will be observing the inaugural *International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations*, spotlighting intercultural understanding as a linchpin of global peace. The commemoration—created by General Assembly resolution 78/286 in June 2024—mobilised events from Paris to New York and underscored that open dialogue can counter prejudice, strengthen solidarity, and “build one human family rich in diversity,” in the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

Key Points:

- The Day is fixed for 10 June each year after the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/78/286 by consensus on 7 June 2024, following a proposal tabled by China and co-sponsored by more than 80 Member States.
- The resolution calls on governments, UN entities, civil society and academia to mark the occasion with educational and cultural initiatives that highlight the value of civilizational diversity, mutual respect and global solidarity.
- For the first observance, a UNESCO–China symposium titled “*Youth Dialogue on the Future along the Silk Roads*” convened at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 5 June 2025, engaging young researchers, diplomats and cultural experts in three thematic panels on art, philosophy and science.
- At UN Headquarters in New York on 9 June, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)—celebrating its 20th anniversary—co-hosted a high-level Thematic Dialogue with Egypt, Peru, Spain and Uzbekistan, followed by the multimedia exhibition “Echoes of Dialogue: Interwoven World Heritage” and an intercultural art performance.
- Secretary-General António Guterres stated in his video address that “dialogue is the path to peace,” urging humanity “to listen, to speak and to connect” so every person can live “equal in dignity and human rights.”

- UNGA President Philemon Yang and UNAOC High Representative Miguel Moratinos stressed that dialogue among civilizations helps eliminate discrimination, prevents conflict and advances the universal values enshrined in the UN Charter.
- Media outlets noted that the initiative stems from China's 2023 Global Civilization Initiative, with diplomats from Kenya and other nations praising Beijing's role in shepherding the resolution through the Assembly.
- The observance complements—but does not replace—UNESCO's World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development celebrated annually on 21 May, giving the UN system two distinct platforms focused on intercultural dialogue.
- During the 2024 debate, several delegations framed the new day as a building-block for the September 2025 Summit of the Future, arguing that renewed intercultural trust is essential for reviving multilateral cooperation.

World Energy Investment Report 2025

In the News: The *International Energy Agency (IEA)* released the 10th edition of its flagship *World Energy Investment (WEI) Report*, providing the first full snapshot of 2024 spending and an early read-out for 2025. The study shows global capital flows rising to a record USD 3.3 trillion, with clean-energy technologies attracting twice as much money as fossil-fuel supply and electricity grids emerging as a critical bottleneck.

Key Points:

- **Headline Numbers:** Total energy investment is set to reach USD 3.3 trillion in 2025, up 2 percent in real terms from 2024; around USD 2.2 trillion will go to renewables, nuclear, grids, storage, efficiency and electrification, versus USD 1.1 trillion for oil, gas and coal.
- **Solar Dominates:** Spending on solar PV—both utility-scale and rooftop—will soar to USD 450 billion, making it the single largest line-item in the entire investment ledger; battery-storage spending is set to top USD 66 billion.
- **Electricity-Centric Era:** Investment in the electricity sector (generation, storage and networks) will hit USD 1.5 trillion, roughly 50 percent more than all spending to bring new oil, gas and coal to market.
- **Grid Bottleneck:** Annual outlays on power grids now average about USD 400 billion, barely 40 percent of what is spent on generation assets, creating vulnerabilities that have already triggered blackouts and curbed new renewable connections.
- **Other Low-Carbon Technologies:** Expenditure on nuclear power has risen 50 percent in five years to > USD 70 billion, while approvals for gas-fired plants have rebounded, led by the United States and the Middle East.
- **Coal Resurgence in Asia:** China cleared ≈ 100 GW of new coal-fired capacity in 2024 and India another ≈ 15 GW, pushing global coal plant approvals to their highest level since 2015 and highlighting continued energy-security concerns.
- **Geographical Shifts:** China remains the world's largest single energy investor, while Europe and the United States continue to expand clean-tech spending; however, grids and storage lag behind new renewables everywhere.
- **India Spotlight:** In India, 83 percent of power-sector investment flowed to clean energy in 2024, with solar PV accounting for more than half of all non-fossil spending; India also topped the league table for development-finance inflows, receiving USD 2.4 billion in clean-energy project finance.
- **Financing Imbalances:** Despite the global surge, energy-poor regions—especially in Sub-Saharan Africa—still attract less than 3 percent of clean-energy investment, reflecting high borrowing costs and weak policy frameworks.
- **Critical Minerals & Supply Chains:** The report warns that soaring demand for lithium, copper and rare earths could strain supply by the late 2020s unless upstream investment accelerates and recycling scales up rapidly.
- **Net-Zero Gap:** The IEA reiterates that annual clean-energy investment must triple to about USD 4 trillion by 2030 to align with the Net-Zero 2050 pathway, underscoring the need for faster capital mobilisation and lower cost of capital in emerging markets.

India's Population Reaches 1.46 Billion, Fertility Drops Below Replacement Rate: UN Report

In the News: According to a United Nations report released in June 2025, India's population has reached 1.46 billion, making it the most populous country in the world. The report also highlights a significant demographic milestone: India's total fertility rate (TFR) has dropped below the replacement rate of 2.1, signaling a major shift in the country's population dynamics.

Key Points:

- **UN Report Release:** The United Nations published its latest demographic findings in June 2025, confirming that India's population has hit 1.46 billion.
- **Fertility Rate Milestone:** India's total fertility rate has fallen below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman, indicating that the population growth will gradually slow down in the coming decades.

- **Regional Disparities:** While the national average TFR is below replacement, some states—especially in the north—still have higher fertility rates, whereas southern and western states have seen even sharper declines.
- **Demographic Transition:** The drop in fertility rate marks India's entry into the later stages of demographic transition, with a growing share of elderly citizens and a shrinking youth population projected in the future.
- **Socio-Economic Impact:** A lower fertility rate could reduce pressure on resources, education, and healthcare systems, but it also raises concerns about workforce shortages and the need for robust elderly care policies.
- **Government Response:** Policymakers are focusing on improving healthcare, expanding social security, and encouraging higher female workforce participation to adapt to the changing demographic profile.
- **Historical Context:** India's fertility rate has been on a steady decline for decades, driven by increased literacy, urbanization, and access to family planning.

High Seas Treaty Gains Momentum at UN Ocean Conference

In the News: During the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France (June 9–13, 2025), **18 additional countries ratified the High Seas Treaty**, officially known as the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Treaty), raising the total to **49 ratifications**—just **11 short of the 60-required thresholds** for entry into force.

Key Points:

- **Ratification Surge:** On June 10, 2025, countries including Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Malta, Vietnam, Jamaica, Albania, Bahamas, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Fiji, Mauritania, Vanuatu, Greece, and Jordan deposited their instruments, moving the total to 49.
- **Entry-Into-Force Conditions:** The treaty requires 60 ratifications to trigger a **120-day countdown** to entry into force. At 49 ratifications, just 11 more are need.
- **Scope & Objectives:** It is the first legally binding framework to protect marine biodiversity in international waters—covering nearly two-thirds of the ocean. It mandates creation of marine protected areas (MPAs), environmental impact assessments (EIAs), technology sharing, capacity building, and fair benefit sharing from marine genetic.
- **Global Governance Framework:** The treaty establishes Conference of Parties (COP), a Scientific & Technical Body, and oversight mechanisms. COP1 must occur within one year of entry .
- **Fast-Track Momentum:** UN Secretary-General António Guterres called the speed of ratification “a record,” noting it's much faster than UNCLOS's 12-year journey to entry into .
- **Anticipated Timeline:** French President Macron and environmental actors suggest that reaching 60 ratifications may come by late 2025 or early 2026, setting the effective date in early 2026.

Russia to Build Eight Nuclear Reactors in Iran, Confirms Iranian Atomic Chief

In the News: On June 9–10, 2025, Iran's Atomic Energy Organization President Mohammad Eslami confirmed that **Russia will construct eight nuclear power plants in Iran** under a previously-signed agreement, with **four of them slated for the Bushehr region**.

Key Points:

- **Major Expansion Deal:** Eslami and Iranian parliamentary officials affirmed that **eight new nuclear reactors** will be built in Iran, part of the bilateral nuclear cooperation framework with Russia.
- **Bushehr Focus:** Half of the planned reactors—**four units—will be constructed in Bushehr**, adjacent to the existing first reactor complex.
- **Ongoing Bushehr Development:** Units 2 and 3 at Bushehr are currently under construction by Iranian companies, supported by Russian efforts and financed via Moscow's credit line.
- **Strategic Growth in Nuclear Power:** This expansion is part of Iran's ambition to **triple its civilian nuclear capacity**, complementing its existing reactor at Bushehr and planned indigenous reactors like Derzhavin.
- **Russia's Role:** Russia's state nuclear agency, Rosatom, has been a key collaborator, previously completing Bushehr-1 and now expanding Russia's footprint in Iran's peaceful nuclear energy sector.
- **Geopolitical Dimensions:** Amid U.S. and European scrutiny over Iran's nuclear activities, Russia also offered to remove Iran's excess highly enriched uranium—signalling strategic and diplomatic leverage .

Nuclear Fusion Breakthrough in Germany

In the News: On June 11, 2025, scientists at the Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics in Greifswald, Germany, using the stellarator **Wendelstein 7-X** reactor, sustained a fusion plasma for **43 seconds**, setting a new record and marking a key milestone toward making fusion a viable energy source.

Key Points:

- **Record-Breaking Pulse Duration:** On May 22, 2025, during the OP 2.3 experimental campaign, Wendelstein 7-X held a high-performance plasma with a world-record triple product—a measure combining plasma temperature, density, and confinement—continuously for 43 seconds.
- **Advanced Fuel Delivery:** The record was achieved by injecting approximately **90 frozen hydrogen pellets** over the 43 seconds, coordinated with powerful microwave heating and enabled by a new pellet-injector system from Oak Ridge National Laboratory.
- **High Thermal Conditions:** The plasma reached temperatures above 20 million °C, peaking around 30 million °C—bringing its triple product performance on par with leading tokamaks, but over a much longer duration.
- **Energy Throughput Improvements:** The OP 2.3 campaign also saw Wendelstein 7-X set an energy turnover record of **1.8 GJ over a 360-second run**, surpassing previous marks.
- **Why It Matters:** Sustaining high triple product values over long durations is crucial for achieving net energy gain. Stellarators like W7-X, with their continuous-operation design, may offer a more stable path than pulsed tokamaks.
- **Global Collaboration:** The breakthrough is the result of international cooperation involving EURO fusion, U.S. labs (Oak Ridge, Princeton), Spanish (CIEMAT), German (KIT, Stuttgart), and Hungarian (HUN-REN).

India Slips to 131st in WEF Gender Gap Index 2025

In the News: On **June 12, 2025**, the World Economic Forum published its **Global Gender Gap Report 2025**, which ranks India at **131st out of 148 countries**. India's overall gender parity score increased slightly to **64.4%**, yet its rank dropped from **129th** in 2024—a decline attributed to faster improvements in other countries.

Key Points:

- India's **overall gender parity score improved by 0.3 percentage points**, rising to **64.4%**, while its ranking fell by two places from **129th to 131st** because other nations advanced more rapidly.
- Under the **Economic Participation and Opportunity** sub-index, India's score increased by **0.9 percentage points**, reaching **40.7%**, driven by higher estimated earned income parity (from 28.6% to 29.9%) and sustained labour-force participation parity at **45.9%**, the highest on record.
- In the **Educational Attainment** dimension, India achieved **97.1% parity**, reflecting progress in female literacy and tertiary education enrolment.
- The **Health and Survival** sub-index also showed high parity, bolstered by improved sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy, even though overall life expectancy declined.
- The **Political Empowerment** sub-index declined by **0.6 percentage points**, as the share of female Members of Parliament dropped from **14.7% to 13.8%**, and women in ministerial positions decreased from **6.5% to 5.6%**.
- Regionally, India ranks among the **lowest in South Asia**, trailing Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, with Bangladesh leading at **24th** globally.
- At the global level, the average gender gap closed to **68.8%** in 2025, marking the **largest annual gain since the COVID-19 pandemic**, although full gender parity is still projected to take around **123 years**.

2025 State of World Population Report

In the News: On **10 June 2025**, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) released its **State of World Population 2025**, titled *"The Real Fertility Crisis: The Pursuit of Reproductive Agency in a Changing World"*. The report highlights a global crisis in unmet reproductive desires caused by economic, social, and gendered barriers.

Key Points:

- According to the findings, **one in five people worldwide** expect not to have the number of children they desire, due to financial hardship, job instability, housing costs, and concerns over climate change and future prospects.
- The report makes a clear distinction that the global fertility crisis stems from a **lack of reproductive choice**, rather than a reduced desire for parenthood, with nearly 39% of respondents attributing constrained choices to financial reasons.

- The UNFPA/YouGov survey presented in the report shows that **women are nearly twice as likely as men** to cite unequal domestic workloads as a deterrent to parenthood, and both genders express high levels of anxiety about future uncertainties.
- The report criticizes coercive demographic policies and states that neither **financial incentives**, such as baby bonuses, nor restrictions on reproductive rights have effectively addressed the fertility decline and could be counterproductive.
- Under its demographic analysis, the report indicates that **global fertility rates have fallen below the replacement threshold in over half of countries**, with rapid declines across both high-income countries (such as Japan, the UK, and the US) and emerging economies (like South Korea, Thailand, Colombia, and Sri Lanka).
- From a demographic transition standpoint, the report projects that the **world population is expected to peak within this century before starting to decline**, emphasizing that **one-quarter of people now live in countries where population numbers have already peaked**.
 - Focusing on **India**, the report states that the country's population reached **1.46 billion** by April 2025 and has already surpassed China. It also records a steep decline in its total fertility rate (TFR), which has decreased from nearly 5 children per woman in 1970 to **1.9 in 2025**, placing it below the replacement threshold.

Operation Rising Lion: Israel's Pre-emptive Strike on Iranian Nuclear Sites

In the News: Israel launched Operation Rising Lion, a large-scale series of air and covert strikes against Iran. Over 100 high-value targets—including uranium enrichment facilities, missile sites, military installations, and residences of senior commanders—were hit across Iran. The operation aimed to dismantle Tehran's nuclear weaponization capabilities and eliminate key military figures.

Key Points:

- **Operation Launch:** The operation began in the early hours of June 13, 2025, with approximately 200 Israeli aircraft striking around 100 targets—primarily nuclear and missile facilities—augmented by covert Mossad and drone actions inside Iran.
- **Objective:** To "roll back the Iranian threat to Israel's very survival."
- **Targeted Sites & Methods:** Major targets included the Natanz uranium enrichment complex, missile manufacturing plants, and residences of senior IRGC commanders. The IDF, supported by Mossad, used saboteur drones and commandos for coordinated sabotage deep inside Iran.
- **High-Profile Casualties:** Iranian military leadership was severely impacted, with reported deaths including IRGC Chief Hossein Salami, Armed Forces Chief Mohammad Bagheri, other top commanders, and at least six nuclear scientists (such as Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani and Mohammad Mehdi Tehrani).
- **Israeli Justification:** PM Benjamin Netanyahu affirmed the strikes were essential to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, noting Iran had enough weapons-grade uranium for nine bombs and was advancing weaponization. He pledged operations would persist "as many days as it takes."
- **U.S. Position:** While the U.S. officially disclaimed involvement, President Trump lauded the operation as "excellent" and referenced a deadline given to Iran. U.S. officials emphasized protection of American assets and forces in the region.
- **Iranian Retaliation:** Iran responded with over 100 drones launched at Israel; many were intercepted. Tehran denounced the strikes as a "declaration of war," with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei threatening "severe punishment." Media blackout and restricted internet access followed within Iran.
- **Broader Regional Fallout:** Air travel disruptions occurred as Israel closed diplomatic missions and re-routed flights region-wide. Neighbouring countries like Iraq and Jordan reported drone incursions. International calls for de-escalation intensified.
- **IAEA & Diplomatic Timing:** The IAEA verified damage at Natanz but found no radioactive release. Notably, the strikes coincided with a rescheduled U.S.–Iran nuclear negotiation session in Oman. Iran was already under increased IAEA scrutiny for treaty violations.

India-US Air Force Special Forces Conclude First Joint Exercise 'Tiger Claw'

In the News: From May 26 to June 10, 2025, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the United States Air Force (USAF) conducted Exercise Tiger Claw—their first-ever independent joint Special Forces drill. It culminated at the Garud Regimental Training Centre (GRTC) in Chandinagar, Uttar Pradesh, and involved operations across North India.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Launch & Duration:** Initiated on **May 26, 2025**, and concluded on **June 10, 2025**. Held primarily at the GRTC with additional joint drills across multiple locations in North India.

- **Participating Forces:** India: IAF's elite **Garud Commandos**, established in February 2004. USA: USAF Special Forces units.
- **Objectives:** Strengthen **interoperability** and **tactical coordination** in Special Operations. Share best practices in planning, mission execution, airfield seizure, hostage rescue, and behind-enemy-lines strategies. Expand the **bilateral defence partnership** between the two air forces.
- **Training Activities:** Combat simulations including joint mission planning and field coordination. Exercises focused on airfield seizure and hostage rescue missions. Tactical drills reflecting precision, timing, and high-risk operations.
- **Venue Significance:** GRTC, located at IAF Station Chandinagar, Baghat, serves as the central training hub for Garud commandos. Its terrain and facilities provided an optimal environment for specialized joint drills.
- **Strategic Importance:** First-ever **IAF-USAF Special Forces collaboration**, distinct from past joint air exercises like Cope India, Tarang Shakti, and Red Flag. Reinforces India-US military synergy, particularly within the **Indo-Pacific security** domain.
- **AFSOD Context:** Part of India's move toward **tri-services integration** under the Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD). Tiger Claw supports standardizing procedures and readiness across Army Parachute Regiment, Navy MARCOS, and Air Force Garud units.

IAEA Declares Iran Non-Compliant: What It Means for Global Nuclear Security

In the News: On June 12, 2025, the IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors formally declared Iran non-compliant with its Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) safeguards—the first such finding in two decades—citing unexplained uranium traces at undeclared sites and lack of cooperation since 2019.

Key Points:

- **Official IAEA Declaration:** On June 12, 2025, the IAEA Board passed a resolution (19-in-favor, 11 abstentions, opposed by Russia and China) stating Iran failed to meet its NPT obligations, noting undeclared nuclear materials at multiple locations. The Board regretted Iran's continued non-cooperation since 2019 and concluded the IAEA could not rule out a diversion toward weapons use.
- **Unexplained Uranium Traces & New Facility:** Iran has yet to offer plausible explanations for uranium found at three undeclared sites linked to a covert nuclear program from the early 2000s. In response, Iran announced plans for a third enrichment facility and upgrades to its Fordow site, signalling hardened resolve.
- **Stockpile Growth & Weaponization Concerns:** The IAEA noted Iran increased its stockpile of ~60% enriched uranium by ~50% since February, reaching ~408 kg—enough for potential weapons-grade material. External analysis warns that Iran could produce a crude nuclear device within months if enrichment continues unchecked.
- **Potential UN Security Council Referral:** While the resolution stops short of triggering a referral to the UN Security Council, the IAEA stated the issue falls within its mandate—raising the possibility of renewed sanctions.
- **Regional Tensions & Military Fallout:** The declaration heightened regional tensions, coinciding with Israel's June 13 pre-emptive airstrike—Operation Rising Lion—on Iran's nuclear facilities like Natanz and Fordow. Iran retaliated with missile and drone barrages on Israel, prompting global concern over nuclear site safety.
- **Impact on Diplomacy & Negotiations:** Nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and Iran in Oman have been delayed amid heightened security, complicating diplomatic attempts to revive or renegotiate a deal. Western powers (U.S., U.K., France, Germany) stress that diplomacy remains preferable, while advocating for snapback sanctions if Iran fails to restore compliance.
- **IAEA Safety Monitoring:** Amid military attacks, the IAEA confirmed internal contamination at Iran's Natanz site but found no immediate external radiation threat. The agency continues close monitoring.

Global Displacement Crisis

In the News: As of April 2025, over **122 million** people—nearly 1 in every 67 globally—have been forcibly displaced due to conflict, violence, persecution, and environmental crises, marking a record high in displacement figures.

Key Points:

- **Unprecedented Scale:** The UNHCR's Global Trends Report 2024 revealed **122.1 million** people were forcibly displaced by April 2025, up ~2 million from the previous year, and nearly double the number from a decade ago.
- **Internal vs External Displacement:** **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** 73.5 million, a 9% increase year-on-year, due to more intense and complex conflicts. **Refugees:** 42.7 million under UNHCR's mandate, with an additional 8.4 million asylum-seekers.

- **Country-Specific Crises:** Sudan hosts the largest displacement crisis: 14+ million displaced (IDPs and refugees), overtaking Syria (13.5 million). Other major crises include Afghanistan (~10M displaced), Ukraine (~8.8M), Myanmar, and emerging hotspots like Haiti—with 1.3 million newly displaced in just six months.
- **Human Toll & Protection Risks:** Displaced populations face heightened risks: violence, trafficking, sexual assault, early marriage, exploitation of children. In Haiti, gang violence has internally displaced 1.3 million, leaving many in makeshift shelters without essential services.
- **Funding Shortfalls:** Aid funding has stagnated to **2015 levels** despite skyrocketing displacement; crucial sectors—including protection, shelter, and healthcare—are deeply underfunded. UNHCR has frozen over \$300 million in planned activities due to these “brutal and ongoing” cuts by major donors.
- **Returns & Hope:** Some **rays of optimism**: ~1.6 million refugees and 8.2 million IDPs returned home in 2024, the highest figures in decades. Still, two-thirds of refugees remain in neighboring countries, and 73% are hosted in low/mid-income nations.
- **Future Projections & Appeals:** The Danish Refugee Council warns that by end-2026, an additional ~6.7 million could be displaced globally if conflicts persist and funding wanes. UNHCR’s **2025 Global Appeal** calls for massive funding to protect, assist, and empower the growing displaced population.

SPORTS

Wimbledon 2025 Sets New Prize Money Record at \$73 Million

In the News: On June 12–13, 2025, the All-England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) announced that Wimbledon 2025 will feature a record **£53.5 million** prize pool (roughly **\$72.6–73 million**), marking a **7% increase** over 2024 and **doubling** the total from a decade.

Key Points:

- **Prize Pool Expansion:** Total prize fund increased to **£53.5 million (~\$73 million)**, up 7% year-on-year and 100% compared to 2015.
- **Singles Champions:** Men’s and women’s singles winners each receive **£3 million (~\$4.07 million)**—an 11.1% rise from last year, making it the highest payout in Grand Slam history.
- **Early-Round Boosts:** First-round losers get nearly **\$90,000 (about £66,000)**, a **10% increase**, while prize money climbed across all categories—including doubles, mixed doubles, and wheelchair events.
- **Balanced Rewards:** The AELTC emphasized equitable distribution to support lower-ranked and early-round players, alongside top achievers, and cited consultations with player representatives.
- **Technological & Scheduling Changes:** First-time adoption of **electronic line-call technology**, replacing traditional line judges (who will serve as match assistants). Singles finals rescheduled: women’s final on July 12 and men’s on July 13, both starting at **11 a.m. ET**, two hours later than before.
- **Context & Commentary:** The AELTC noted that while prize hikes address formal demands, broader reforms—such as easing the strenuous calendar and injury pressures—require structural changes. Record highs also extend to doubles and wheelchair tennis, and discussions about facility expansion and fan experience enhancements are underway.

Cristiano Ronaldo Named Global Ambassador for Esports World Cup 2025

In the News: On June 13, 2025, global football icon Cristiano Ronaldo was officially announced as the Global Ambassador for the Esports World Cup 2025 (EWC), set to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from July 8 to August 24. The tournament offers a record-breaking prize pool of around \$70 million and features 25 competitive games, making it one of the most prominent esports events ever.

Key Points:

- **Historic Appointment:** Ronaldo’s selection as Global Ambassador marks a notable crossover between elite traditional sports and competitive gaming, aimed at broadening esports’ mainstream appeal.
- **Campaign Leadership:** As ambassador, Ronaldo will spearhead the EWC’s global campaign before and during the seven-week event. His theme, “Rise Above,” reflects the core values of excellence, ambition, and pushing boundaries.
- **Event Scope & Prize Fund:** The EWC 2025 brings together approximately 2,000 elite players and 200 clubs from over 100 countries, competing in 25 tournaments across 24 games for a prize fund nearing \$70 million (\$70–70.45 m per various sources).

- **Playable Character Debut:** Ronaldo will appear in the game Fatal Fury: City of the Wolves—one of the EWC's featured titles—a unique blend of his football persona and esports platforms
- **Global Reach & Influence:** With over one billion followers across social media platforms, Ronaldo's involvement is expected to significantly amplify EWC's visibility and draw in new audiences to competitive gaming.
- **Strategic Alliance & Legacy:** Ronaldo has supported EWC since 2023—participating in its announcement and the 2024 Closing Ceremony in Riyadh—The collaboration underlines Saudi Arabia's broader Vision 2030 strategy to transform Riyadh into a global entertainment and gaming hub.

ECONOMY

Net FDI Falls 96% in 2024–25 to \$353 Million; Gross FDI Remains Robust

In the News: India's net foreign direct investment (FDI)—the difference between gross inflows and the sum of outflows and repatriation—plummeted by **96.5%**, falling from **US\$10 billion in FY 2023–24 to just \$353 million in FY 2024–25**. Despite this steep decline in net FDI, gross inbound FDI continued to grow, showing the resilience and attractiveness of India's investment climate.

Key Points:

- **Net FDI Collapse:** Net FDI dropped to \$353 million, down 96.5% from \$10.1 billion in the previous year—the lowest on record
- **Drivers Behind the Decline:** Large-scale repatriation by foreign investors—over \$51.5 billion, the highest in nearly a decade—driven by exits via profitable IPOs such as Swiggy and Hyundai.
- **Surge in outward FDI:** Indian companies invested \$29.2 billion abroad, a sharp 75% increase year-on-year.
- **Gross FDI Growth:** In contrast, gross inbound FDI rose by 13.6–13.7%, reaching \$81 billion, the strongest inflow since FY 2019–20. Over 60% of these inflows were concentrated in manufacturing, financial services, energy, and communication sectors, primarily from Singapore, Mauritius, UAE, the Netherlands, and the US.
- **Market Maturity Indication:** RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted the net FDI decline reflects a mature market where investors can freely enter and exit. The trend signifies greater market depth and confidence, not a crisis in investor interest.
- **Implications for Economy:** Sustained growth in gross FDI reaffirms India's position as a preferred destination for foreign capital, supporting job creation, technology transfers, and infrastructure development. Elevated outward FDI and repatriation reflect evolving strategies by Indian corporations and global investors, optimizing capital around global supply chain shifts.

DFCC Bank Becomes First Foreign Entity to List Bond on NSE IX at GIFT City

In the News: Sri Lanka's DFCC Bank PLC became the first foreign corporate issuer to list green bonds on the NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at GIFT IFSC in Gujarat. The LKR 2.5 billion bonds are aimed at funding solar energy projects and signal a major step toward regional sustainable finance collaboration.

Key Points:

- **Landmark Listing:** DFCC Bank PLC, headquartered in Colombo, listed LKR 2.5 billion worth of green bonds on NSE IX at GIFT IFSC on June 9, 2025—the first time a foreign corporate has done so.
- **Bell-Ringing Ceremony:** Held at Grand Mercure, GIFT City, the event was attended by IFSCA Chair K. Rajaraman, NSE IX MD & CEO V. Balasubramaniam, DFCC CEO Thimal Perera, and Prins Perera, Senior VP, Treasury & Investment.
- **Green Bond Purpose:** Proceeds will finance ground- and rooftop-based solar PV projects in Sri Lanka, supporting the nation's goal of generating 70% of its electricity from renewables by 2030, aligned with Sri Lanka's Green Finance Taxonomy and ICMA green-bond principles.
- **Strategic Listings:** The bond was initially issued in Sri Lanka, later listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange, and now dual-listed on NSE IX—expanding global market reach.
- **Regional & ESG Impact:** The listing marks a strengthening of sustainable finance integration across South Asia, contributing to UN SDGs (7: Affordable & Clean Energy; 13: Climate Action) and promoting BIMSTEC regional cooperation.

- **IFSCA & NSE IX Vision:** IFSCA's K. Rajaraman highlighted GIFT IFSC's role as a hub for Global South green finance. NSE IX CEO V. Balasubramaniam expressed hope this would encourage more foreign issuers from Sri Lanka and neighboring countries.
- **DFCC Bank's Profile:** Founded in 1955, DFCC Bank is a leading Sri Lankan institution. Rated A by Fitch, it offers retail, corporate, SME, treasury, and digital banking, and has been a pioneer in sustainable finance.
- **GIFT IFSC & NSE IX Background:** GIFT IFSC, governed by the IFSCA, was inaugurated in 2015. NSE IX, operational since 2017, commands over 99% share of GIFT SEZ trading, offering diverse financial instruments including ESG debt – facilitating this milestone listing.

ENVIRONMENT

Tamil Nadu Declares Dhanushkodi as Greater Flamingo Sanctuary

In the News: On 5 June 2025, coinciding with World Environment Day, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin formally announced that the 524.8-hectare Dhanushkodi lagoon in Ramanathapuram district had been notified as the Greater Flamingo Sanctuary, granting statutory protection to one of India's most vibrant coastal wetlands.

Key Points:

- A Government Order dated 4 June 2025 and the Tamil Nadu Government Gazette Extraordinary No. 256 (5 June 2025) confer sanctuary status under Section 18 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, covering 5.3 km² of revenue and forest land.
- The site lies within the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, featuring sand-dunes, mudflats, marshes and mangroves dominated by *Avicennia* and *Rhizophora*, which stabilise the coastline and buffer storm surges.
- A 2023-24 wetland census recorded 10,761 birds from 128 species, with large flocks of Greater and Lesser Flamingos using the lagoon as a crucial halt on the Central Asian Flyway for migratory water-birds.
- The protected area doubles as a nursery for fish, molluscs and crustaceans that underpin local artisanal fisheries, and its beaches are recognised sea-turtle nesting sites.
- Dhanushkodi becomes Tamil Nadu's first exclusive flamingo sanctuary, expanding the State's growing network of bird sanctuaries and aligning with the Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission target of restoring 100 wetlands in five years.
- Management will rest with the Environment, Climate Change & Forests Department, which will prepare an Integrated Management Plan for habitat restoration, invasive-species control and community-based eco-tourism.
- The 2025-26 State Budget earmarks ₹50 crore for a Marine Conservation Foundation to support research facilities and visitor infrastructure in Dhanushkodi and other coastal sanctuaries.
- Conservationists welcomed the notification but flagged threats such as a recent plastic nurdle spill from the sunken cargo ship *MSC Elsa 3*, which has littered sanctuary beaches and triggered rapid-response clean-ups.
- Ecologically, the lagoon's mangroves provide breeding and feeding grounds while acting as natural barriers against erosion; their protection is expected to boost coastal resilience and improve local livelihoods through sustainable tourism.
- The declaration advances India's commitments under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and complements nearby protected areas such as the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, creating a contiguous coastal-wetland conservation landscape in South India.

Great Indian Bustard

In the News: The Rajasthan Forest Department has named the newly hatched chicks of the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) as Sindoor, Vyom, Mishri, and Sophia, in tribute to Operation Sindoor and the military personnel associated with it.

Key Points:

- **Conservation Status:** The Great Indian Bustard is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and included in Appendix I of CITES, granting it the highest level of legal protection.
- **Population and Distribution:** Fewer than 150 birds remain in the wild, with the largest population found in Rajasthan. Smaller populations exist in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Major Threats:** The species faces severe threats from habitat loss and fragmentation, collisions with power lines, predation of eggs and chicks, and expansion of agriculture and infrastructure. Over 90% of its former range has been lost.

- **Conservation Efforts:** Rajasthan launched Project Great Indian Bustard in 2013, focusing on habitat protection and captive breeding. The National Conservation Breeding Centre in Jaisalmer has successfully bred over 50 chicks, including some through artificial insemination.
- **Habitat and Features:** The bird inhabits open grasslands and arid plains. Males have a distinctive black crown and can weigh up to 15 kg, making them one of the heaviest flying birds.
- **Recent Milestones:** In 2024–25, several chicks have been hatched in captivity, marking progress in recovery efforts. Plans are underway to release captive-raised birds into the wild, although suitable habitat remains a challenge.
- **Public Awareness:** The Great Indian Bustard is the state bird of Rajasthan, and ongoing conservation programs aim to raise awareness and protect remaining habitats.

Why Kerala Wants Wildlife Act Amended to Allow It to Kill Some Wild Animals

In the News: In June 2025, the Kerala government formally requested amendments to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, seeking greater powers to cull certain wild animals that pose threats to human life, property, and agriculture. The move comes amid a surge in human-wildlife conflicts, particularly in rural and forest-adjacent areas, prompting urgent calls for more flexible and responsive legal provisions.

Key Points:

- **Human-Wildlife Conflict Crisis:** Kerala has witnessed a sharp rise in wildlife attacks, with 919 deaths and nearly 9,000 injuries reported between 2016 and early 2025. The state has identified 273 out of 941 village local bodies as conflict hotspots, with animals like wild boars, tigers, leopards, elephants, and bonnet macaques frequently encroaching on human settlements.
- **Impact on Rural Livelihoods:** Crop destruction by wild boars and monkeys has led to significant economic losses for farmers, forcing many to abandon agriculture. In some areas, wild boars have destroyed up to 60% of yields, threatening food security and rural livelihoods.
- **Causes of Increased Conflict:** Key factors include habitat degradation, rapid urbanization, changes in cropping patterns, population explosions of certain species (notably wild boars and monkeys), and ecological imbalances due to the decline of top predators.
- **Legal and Procedural Hurdles:** The current Wildlife Act requires multiple approvals and exhaustive non-lethal measures before culling protected species, causing delays in emergency situations. Local authorities cite impractical guidelines—such as checking pregnancy status before culling wild boars—and bottlenecks due to centralized decision-making.
- **Kerala's Amendment Proposals:** Decentralize authority by allowing regional forest officials, not just the Chief Wildlife Warden, to issue kill permits for dangerous animals in conflict zones. Declare wild boars as vermin under Section 62 of the Act, enabling controlled culling in specified areas and periods.
- Remove bonnet macaques from Schedule I, allowing easier capture and relocation of this problematic monkey species. Provide legal safeguards for farmers and officials acting against wildlife threats. Allow region-specific culling of man-eating animals like tigers and leopards, with clear guidelines to prevent misuse.
- **Central Government's Response:** The Union government has repeatedly rejected Kerala's demands to declare wild boars as vermin and to downgrade bonnet macaques' protection status, arguing that existing measures are adequate and that the state should improve implementation of current provisions.
- **Broader Context:** Kerala's proposal highlights the growing challenge of balancing wildlife conservation with the safety and livelihoods of rural communities, as human populations expand into traditional wildlife habitats.

Bengaluru Becomes India's 'Leopard Capital', Surpassing Mumbai

In the News: A year-long camera-trap survey conducted by the Holématti Nature Foundation revealed that Bengaluru now hosts an estimated 80–85 wild leopards in its forested outskirts—surpassing Mumbai's documented figure of 54 leopards, thereby earning the title of India's 'Leopard Capital'.

Key Points:

- **Survey Findings (2024–25):** Led by conservation biologist Dr Sanjay Gubbi, the study deployed over 250 camera traps across 282 km² of mixed habitat zones—such as Bannerghatta National Park, Turahalli, B.M. Kaval, U.M. Kaval, Roerich Estate, Sulikere, Hesaraghatta, Marasandra, and Manduru—detecting 80–85 leopards.
- **Bangaluru vs Mumbai:** With 80–85 leopards, including 54 inside Bannerghatta National Park and roughly 30 in surrounding forests, Bengaluru surpasses Mumbai's 54-leopard count.

- **Rising Numbers in BNP:** Leopard counts in Bannerghatta NP have grown steadily: 40 in 2019, 47 in 2020, and 54 in 2025.
- **Drivers of Growth:** Improved prey availability and stricter protection efforts are credited; past translocation of conflict leopards may also have boosted numbers.
- **Biodiversity Hotspot:** The survey also recorded 34 mammal species, including tigers, dholes, elephants, gaur, and sambar—highlighting Bengaluru's ecological richness and the need for further habitat conservation.
- **Policy Recommendations:** The HNF suggests declaring key areas like B.M. Kaval, U.M. Kaval, Roerich Estate, and Gollahalli Gudda as *Conservation Reserves*, expanding Bannerghatta NP boundaries, safeguarding wildlife corridors, intensifying community outreach, and halting further leopard translocations.

Brazil and France Initiate the Blue NDC Challenge at UNOC3 in Nice

In the News: On **10 June 2025**, during the opening of the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, France, **Brazil and France jointly launched the "Blue NDC Challenge"**, urging all signatory countries to integrate ocean-focused climate actions into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) ahead of **UNFCCC COP30** scheduled for **November in Belém, Brazil**.

Key Points:

- The **Blue NDC Challenge** is a **multilateral global initiative**, co-founded by Brazil and France, designed to incentivize nations to centre the ocean in their climate strategies by prioritizing its inclusion in NDCs under the Paris Agreement.
- Eight countries—including **Australia, Fiji, Kenya, Mexico, Palau, Seychelles, France, and Brazil**—have already committed to participating in the initiative by incorporating marine actions such as sustainable fisheries, offshore renewable energy, blue carbon ecosystems and coastal restoration into their NDCs.
- Brazil's Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, **Marina Silva**, emphasized that this initiative enables Brazil to enhance ocean-related climate efforts by integrating ecosystems like mangroves and coral reefs and marine spatial planning into its climate commitments—a first under its updated NDC submitted in November 2024.
- The initiative promotes a suite of **ocean-based climate strategies**, including the sustainable management and restoration of marine ecosystems, phasing out offshore fossil fuels, expansion of clean ocean energy (such as tidal, wave, and offshore wind), and strengthening maritime sector resilience—including fisheries, shipping, and tidal power across the participating countries.
- The **urgency** of the initiative is underscored by the fact that out of 195 parties to the Paris Agreement, **only 21–22 countries** had submitted updated NDCs by early June 2025, despite a February 2025 deadline for the third NDC submissions ahead of COP30.
- Support for the Blue NDC Challenge is being provided through partnerships with key organizations including Ocean Conservancy, the Ocean and Climate Platform, the World Resources Institute via the Ocean Resilience and Climate Alliance (ORCA), the Global Mangrove Alliance, the NDC Partnership, and WWF-Brazil.
- Experts highlight that ocean-based solutions could contribute up to **35% of the global emissions reductions** necessary to limit warming to **1.5°C**, reinforcing the critical role oceans play in both climate mitigation and resilience.

Environment Ministry's forest committee clears Arunachal's Etalin hydel project

In the News: On **June 11, 2025**, the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) under India's Environment Ministry granted **in-principle forest clearance** to the **3,097 MW Etalin hydropower project** in Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh. This key decision allows diversion of **1,175 hectares of forest land** and the **felling of approximately 278,000 trees**, despite earlier ecological concerns.

Key Points:

- The Etalin project, one of India's largest proposed hydel ventures, will operate as a **run-of-the-river facility** on the Dri (locally Dibang) and Talo rivers and it does **not involve large-scale storage reservoirs**.
- In its earlier review dated **December 2022**, the FAC had **rejected the proposal**, citing inadequate biodiversity studies and requesting fresh **multi-seasonal and cumulative impact assessments**; however, the new clearance was granted using **existing reports**, including a Wildlife Institute of India study conducted over four months.
- The clearance allows for **diversion of 1,175.03 hectares** of (mostly community) forest and the cutting down of approximately **2.78 lakh trees**, despite the region's designation as a **high conservation value area** rich in biodiversity.
- The Dibang Valley forest, set to be impacted, is home to **endangered species**, including tigers, snow leopards, black bears, alpine musk deer, and around **680 bird species**, of which several are **critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable**.

- Since **2014**, the Etalin proposal has undergone six FAC reviews; its latest approval was issued after the Arunachal Pradesh government addressed earlier concerns to the FAC's satisfaction, leading to the clearance being granted **subject to general, standard, and specific conditions**.

Global Carbon Pricing Trends 2025

In the News: On June 10, 2025, the World Bank released its *State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2025* report, revealing that over 80 carbon pricing instruments—including carbon taxes and Emissions Trading Systems (ETS)—are now active globally. Together they cover nearly 28% of global greenhouse gas emissions and generated more than \$100 billion in public revenue in 2024.

Key Points:

- **Global Expansion:** 80 instruments in operation as of mid-2025 (43 carbon taxes, 37 ETS), up from just 5 in 2005. Jurisdictions with such instruments now represent two-thirds of global GDP.
- **Emission Coverage:** Roughly 28% of global GHG emissions are now subject to pricing—an increase of ~4 percentage points since 2023. However, only ~6% are priced at levels deemed effective (US \$40–100/t CO₂) to drive meaningful emissions.
- **Revenue Mobilization:** Carbon pricing generated US \$103 billion in 2024 (67% from ETS, 33% from taxes), marginally below the record \$106 billion in 2023. EU ETS remains the top contributor (41%), followed by Germany (14%), and Canada (9%).
- **Sectoral Balance:** Power and industrial sector emissions have the highest coverage (>50%), while agriculture, waste, transport, and informal sectors remain largely unpriced.
- **Emerging Economy Leadership:** Middle-income nations like India, Brazil, and Türkiye are actively expanding their carbon pricing frameworks. India's forthcoming ETS, launched in 2024, is an intensity-based benchmark system—expected to begin trading energy-efficiency certificates by 2025 and evolve into a full ETS by 2026.
- **Quality of Carbon Credits:** Nature-based credits, especially afforestation projects, dominated voluntary carbon markets in 2024, raising around \$14 billion. Concerns remain over quality and price volatility.
- **Challenges & Gaps:** Pricing levels mostly remain below effective thresholds. Coverage remains uneven across sectors and regions. Monitoring and verification need strengthening—emerging solutions like blockchain and satellite tracking are being explored. Voluntary markets suffer from trust issues; standardization efforts (e.g. ISO 14068) underway

SCIENCE AND TECH

First Gene-Edited Sheep Marks Milestone in Livestock Biotechnology

In the News: Researchers at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology (SKUAST-Kashmir) publicly unveiled India's—and South Asia's—first gene-edited sheep, a Kashmir Merino lamb whose *myostatin* (MSTN) gene was knocked out with CRISPR-Cas9, yielding about 30 percent more muscle mass than unedited counterparts and signalling a transformative leap for the nation's animal-biotech ambitions.

Key Points:

- The lamb was conceived after July 2024 micro-injection of CRISPR reagents into single-cell embryos; a surrogate ewe carried the pregnancy to term and delivered a healthy 3.15 kg male on 15 December 2024, but the breakthrough was disclosed only after six months of genetic validation.
- Researchers disrupted the MSTN gene, a natural brake on skeletal-muscle growth, thereby mimicking the double-muscling trait of Texel sheep and boosting live-weight gain by roughly 30 percent within three months of birth.
- Whole-genome sequencing confirmed the edit introduced no foreign DNA, distinguishing the lamb from transgenic organisms and aligning it with India's 2022 policy that treats *site-directed nuclease-1* edits as conventional breeding for regulatory purposes.
- The project was led by Prof. Riyaz A. Shah, whose team previously cloned *Noori*, the world's first Pashmina goat (2012), underscoring SKUAST-Kashmir's decade-long expertise in advanced reproductive technologies.
- Funding and biosafety oversight came from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), which views precision breeding as essential for meeting rising meat demand and reducing import dependence.
- Scientists project that editing MSTN could raise carcass yield by up to 8 kg per animal, potentially adding ₹10,000–₹12,000 to farm-gate value while maintaining wool output, a dual-purpose benefit for the Kashmir Merino breed.

- The achievement follows global precedents such as CRISPR-edited hornless dairy cattle and GalSafe™ pigs cleared by the US FDA, positioning India among a small group of countries with proven gene-edited livestock capability.
- Parallel academic work—including a recent BMPR-IB HDR point-mutation that raised fecundity in fine-wool sheep—shows CRISPR's versatility for traits beyond growth, broadening the technology's relevance for Indian flocks.

Axiom-4 Mission: The leak that led to mission delay & how launch windows are decided

In the News: On June 11–12, 2025, the **Axiom-4 mission** — a private astronaut flight organized by Axiom Space and SpaceX, carrying India's Shubhanshu Shukla, Poland's Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski, Hungary's Tibor Kapu, and former NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson — has been **indefinitely delayed**. The launch from Florida's Kennedy Space Center was first scrubbed due to a liquid oxygen (LOX) leak in the Falcon 9 booster and further postponed following the discovery of an air-leak in the ISS's Russian Zvezda service module.

Key Points:

- **LOX Leak in Falcon 9 Booster:** During pre-launch fueling tests after a static-fire, engineers detected a liquid oxygen leak in the Falcon 9 booster (which had flown previous missions, including Starlink). The leak was traced back to incomplete repairs from refurbishment, prompting a stand-down from the June 11 launch to conduct repairs.
- **ISS Air-Leak in Zvezda Module:** Shortly after resolving the rocket issue, a pressure anomaly was identified in the Zvezda service module aboard the ISS. Russian cosmonauts performed inspections, sealed leaks, and the segment was holding pressure, but NASA and Roscosmos decided to delay the launch indefinitely to monitor and evaluate further risks.
- **Crew & Mission Profile:** **Crew:** Commander Peggy Whitson, Pilot Shubhanshu Shukla (India), Mission Specialists Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski (Poland), Tibor Kapu (Hungary).
- **Significance:** Shukla will be the first astronaut from India's ISRO-trained corps to visit the ISS, marking crucial steps toward India's 2027 Gaganyaan program. Poland and Hungary also launch their first government-sponsored ISS missions in over 40 years.
- **Launch Window Planning:** Launch windows for ISS missions are determined by orbital mechanics: the alignment of the launch site (Kennedy Space Center) and the station's flight path. This requires precise timing to ensure rendezvous capability, safe ascent trajectories, weather constraints, and mission readiness. Even small delays can shift windows by minutes to days.

MISCELLANEOUS

Passage Exercise (PASSEX) 2025

In the News: The Indian Navy conducted a high-profile **Passage Exercise (PASSEX 2025)** with the **UK's Carrier Strike Group** in the North Arabian Sea, underscoring deepen maritime cooperation between the two nations.

Key Facts:

- The joint naval exercise was conducted as both the Indian and UK fleets crossed paths during deployment, aiming to strengthen interoperability, enhance communication protocols, and reaffirm their strategic commitment to maritime security.
- Indian assets deployed during PASSEX 2025 included the stealth frigate **INS Tabar**, a conventional submarine, and the **P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft**, while the UK contingent comprised the **HMS Prince of Wales** and **HMS Richmond** from the UK Carrier Strike Group.
- The comprehensive two-day exercise featured complex naval maneuvers including **anti-submarine warfare drills, tactical manoeuvres, and unified helicopter control**, alongside a professional exchange of officers for real-time coordination and experience-sharing.
- PASSEX 2025 was conducted in the **strategic North Arabian Sea**, a vital corridor for global maritime trade and energy transport, highlighting its importance in maintaining freedom of navigation and regional stability.
- The exercise reaffirmed both countries' commitment to a **rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific**, strengthening tactical-level cooperation under the broader frameworks of the **India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** and shared security visions like **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)**.