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DEFENCE PACT BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND PAKISTAN

Context

- Recently, **Pakistan signed a mutual defence agreement with Saudi Arabia**, India has said that it was aware of the development and reiterated its commitment to “comprehensive national security”.

About

- Background of Meeting:** The agreement was signed in the aftermath of an emergency summit of Arab and Muslim nations hosted by Qatar following Israel's military strikes against Hamas leaders.
 - The meeting brought together almost **60 countries** that are members of the **Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**.
- The Pact:** Called the “**Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement**” states that “**any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both**”.
 - It aims to develop aspects of defence cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression.

Rationale Behind the Pact

- Timing of the agreement:** The pact is seen as a message to Israel, coming after Israel attacked Qatar targeting Hamas leadership.
- Regional alarm:** Israel's expanding operations across Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and now Qatar have worried Arab nations.
- US credibility questioned:** The attack, allegedly backed by the U.S.A, made Gulf states doubt the US as a reliable security guarantor.
- Nuclear Weapon Fear:** Gulf states are aware that Israel is the only nuclear-armed nation in the Middle East, increasing their sense of vulnerability.
- Islamic solidarity:** The Saudi-Pakistan pact projects unity within the broader Islamic bloc.

India's Reaction

- The Ministry of External Affairs said that it was aware that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had been considering such a pact.
- India responded by saying that it will study the implications of this development for national security as well as for regional and global stability.

- The government remains committed to protecting India's national interests and ensuring comprehensive national security in all domains.

Saudi Arabia Ties with India and Pakistan

With Pakistan:

- Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have a long history of military cooperation.
 - Pakistani troops were deployed to **Saudi Arabia in the late 1960s** and helped retake the **Grand Mosque in 1979**.
 - In 1982**, the two countries signed a **Bilateral Security Cooperation Agreement**, institutionalising training, advisory roles, and deployments.
 - Saudi Arabia** became a **key buyer of Pakistan-made arms**, while Pakistani personnel trained the Saudi Air Force.
 - In 2025**, the **Joint Military Cooperation Committee** in Riyadh pledged to expand training, exchanges, and joint exercises.

With India:

- Trade & Economy:** India is Saudi Arabia's **2nd largest trade partner**, while Saudi Arabia is India's 5th largest.
 - Bilateral trade in FY 2023–24** stood at USD 42.98 billion (India's exports: USD 11.56 billion, imports: USD 31.42 billion).
- Strategic Framework:** Delhi Declaration (2006) and Riyadh Declaration (2010) elevated ties to a Strategic Partnership.
- High-Level Recognition:** In 2016, PM Modi received **Saudi Arabia's highest civilian honour**, the King Abdulaziz Sash.
- Security & Diplomacy:** Saudi Arabia condemned the Pahalgam attack during Modi's visit. It has avoided strong criticism of India's Article 370 decision and often positioned itself as a mediator between India and Pakistan.

Major Geopolitical Implication

- Historic move:** It is Pakistan's most consequential defence pact in decades, also offering both strategic and economic benefits to it.
- Impact on India ties:** The pact may affect India-Saudi Arabia's growing strategic and economic relations.

- **Institutional role:** It formalizes Pakistan's position in West Asia's security architecture, giving it more strategic weight.
- **Arms acquisition:** Pakistan can access US weapons using Saudi funding, as Washington seems willing to sell.
- **Conflict entanglement:** Instead of benefiting Pakistan, the pact may drag it into prolonged Middle Eastern wars.

Conclusion

- The defence agreement seems a posturing exercise, and **more about Israel than India**.
- Thus, in reality, the agreement **may bind Pakistan more closely to Saudi Arabia's regional battles** in the Middle East rather than providing it a guaranteed shield against any bilateral escalation.

Source: TH

CLOSING GENDER GAPS HOLDS THE KEY TO ENDING POVERTY

Context

- The **UN Gender Snapshot 2025**, released by **UN Women and UN DESA**, highlights that without urgent action more than **351 million women and girls** could remain in extreme poverty by 2030.

Key Findings

- **Persistent Poverty:** Female poverty has remained stuck at **10% since 2020**. Climate change and conflict are worsening vulnerabilities.
- **Work and Representation:** Women spend **2.5 times more hours** on unpaid domestic and care work than men. They hold **less than one-third** of parliamentary seats worldwide.
 - ♦ 102 countries have never had a woman head of state or government.
- **Digital Divide:** In 2024, **70%** of men used the internet compared to **65%** of women.
 - ♦ Closing this gap could lift **30 million** women from poverty, benefit **343 million** women and girls, and add **\$1.5 trillion** to global GDP by **2030**.
- **Food Insecurity and Violence:** **64 million** more women than men were food insecure in 2024.
 - ♦ 1 in 8 women between **15–49 years** faced intimate partner violence in the past year.
 - ♦ **18.6%** of young women were married before **18** (down from 22% in 2014).
 - ♦ In 2024, **676 million** women and girls lived within 50 km of deadly conflict, the highest since the 1990s.

- **Climate Change:** Worst-case climate change scenarios could push **158 million** more women into poverty by 2050.

India-Specific Dimensions

- **Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR):** Around 37% in 2023 (ILO), among the lowest in South Asia.
- **Political Representation:** Women hold about **15% seats** in Lok Sabha, though the Women's Reservation Act 2023 promises 33%.
- **Education:** Gender parity achieved in school enrolment, but dropout rates for girls rise at secondary levels due to early marriage, safety, and social norms.
- **Digital Divide:** As per NFHS-5, only 33% of women use the internet, compared to 57% of men.
- Violence against women remains widespread; NCRB 2022 data shows over 4 lakh cases of crimes against women.

Global Efforts for Gender Equality

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5:** Aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** is a landmark UN resolution adopted in **1995** at the Fourth World Conference on Women, which provides a comprehensive global blueprint for achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** Encourages policy reforms and legal protection against gender discrimination.

India's Initiative Towards Gender Equality

- **Poshan Abhiyaan:** This mission aims to improve nutrition outcomes for children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.
- **Digital Literacy Programme for Women:** It is part of Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) and **empowers women to access e-governance services and financial platforms**, helping them participate in the digital economy.
- **One Stop Centre Scheme (Sakhi Centres),** aims to facilitate women affected by violence with a range of integrated services under one roof such as Police facilitation, medical aid, legal aid and legal counseling, psycho-social counseling, temporary shelter, etc.

- **The Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE KIRAN) program** has supported nearly 1,962 women scientists from 2018 to 2023.
- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:** Provides for **26 weeks** of paid maternity leave for women working in the private sector and government.
- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023**, seeks to **reserve one-third of the total number of seats** for women in Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and Delhi Assembly.

UN Women

- UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was **established in 2010** to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.
- **Headquarters:** New York.

UN DESA

- UNDESA, or the **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs**, is a United Nations body that supports the UN's development efforts, focusing on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- It serves as a vital link between global development policies and national actions by providing analysis, data, and capacity-building, especially for developing countries.

Source: DTE

WHY DID INDIA CONDEMN THE DOHA STRIKE?

Context

- India's recent condemnation of Israel's bombing in Doha is a **shift from its more muted positions on** previous Israeli operations in other countries.

About

- **Israeli Defence Forces (IDF)** bombed a home in Doha, Qatar, where Hamas leaders were reportedly meeting in the U.S.-proposed ceasefire plan.
- **Israel PM Netanyahu** claimed the strike was "justified," accusing Qatar of "harbouring and funding" Hamas operatives.
- **India condemned the violation of the sovereignty of Qatar.**

- The statements are in **stark contrast to India's reactions to Israel's bombings of several other countries in the region**, including Lebanon, Yemen, Tunisia, Syria, and Iran.

Reasons for India's Stand

- **Energy Security:** Qatar is a crucial LNG supplier for India having long-term contracts.
 - ♦ Any escalation in Doha directly threatens India's energy stability.
- **Large Diaspora:** Over 8 lakh Indians live in Qatar, contributing heavily in remittances.
 - ♦ Security of diaspora communities is always a priority in India's Gulf policy.
- **Strategic Balancing:** India has strong defence and tech ties with Israel, but also deep economic and cultural ties with Arab Gulf states.
 - ♦ The statement avoids direct condemnation of Israel, but signals displeasure at destabilising actions.
- **Geopolitical Calculations:** The U.S. is seen as reducing its security role in the Gulf.
 - ♦ India needs to maintain goodwill with GCC countries that are exploring joint defence mechanisms.
- **Consistency with Multilateral Stance:** India recently supported the two-state solution for Palestine at UNGA and its stance is in line with that.

Implications of India's Stand

- **Strengthens Ties with Qatar & GCC:** Signals to Gulf states that India values their security concerns.
 - ♦ It will protect energy contracts, trade, and diaspora interests.
- **Maintains Israel Ties:** India avoided direct condemnation, but also conveyed that indiscriminate military actions are unacceptable.
- **Boosts India's Image as a Responsible Power:** By calling the strike a threat to "peace and stability," India projects itself as a balanced, peace-oriented actor in West Asia.
 - ♦ This enhances India's credibility in forums like Arab League, OIC, and UNGA.
- **Strategic Autonomy in Action:** Shows India is not blindly siding with Israel or the U.S. narrative.
 - ♦ It reinforces India's approach of multi-alignment in a multipolar West Asia.

Implications for India's West Asia Policy

- **Balancing Israel and the Arab World:** India's close ties with Israel now face tensions with the Arab bloc, silence on Gaza, despite massive civilian casualties, is eroding goodwill.

- ♦ India's eventual vote in favour of the two-state solution at UNGA shows that it must balance ties with Israel while keeping Arab sensitivities in mind.
- **Energy Security and Diaspora Concerns:** Energy diversification and diaspora safety will continue to be drivers of India's West Asia approach.
- **Regional Multilateralism and India's Engagement:** Arab League–OIC condemnation and GCC's defence talks show that Arab solidarity is resurging.
 - ♦ India, which has deep economic stakes across Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait, cannot appear indifferent to regional concerns.
 - ♦ India may need to step up its participation in platforms like the India–GCC FTA negotiations, and expand strategic dialogues beyond bilateral ties.

Way Ahead

- Future escalations may put India in tougher spots, as both Israel and Arab partners will expect support.
- The current situation highlights the limits of transactional diplomacy—India must balance values with interests.

Source: TH

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A CATALYST FOR TRADE GROWTH

Context

- The **World Trade Organization's (WTO) World Trade Report 2025** found that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to boost global trade by up to nearly **40 per cent** over the next 15 years, provided critical policy and infrastructure gaps are plugged.

AI as a Driver of Trade-Led Growth

- **Trade facilitation:** AI in logistics and customs can reduce trade costs by up to 15%, according to WTO simulations.
- **Productivity boost:** AI-driven automation enhances efficiency across manufacturing and services, expanding competitiveness.
- **Digitally deliverable services:** Legal-tech, AI-driven coding, telemedicine, and e-learning are projected to grow by over 40% by 2040.
- **AI-enabling goods:** Trade in chips, servers, and sensors forms the backbone of the AI economy, valued at **USD 2.3 trillion** (2023).

Harnessing AI for India's Trade Transformation

- **Strengthening Services Exports:** India exported USD 250+ billion worth of IT and IT-enabled services in 2023-24, making it a global leader in digitally deliverable services.
 - ♦ AI can enhance India's dominance by boosting exports in software solutions, AI-powered healthcare (telemedicine), fintech, e-learning, and legal-tech services.
- **Enhancing Manufacturing Competitiveness:** AI in predictive maintenance, quality control, and supply chain optimisation can help Indian manufacturers compete globally.
 - ♦ **Integration with Make in India and PLI schemes** can enable India to capture more of the global value chains (GVCs).
- **Boosting Agricultural Trade:** AI-enabled **precision farming, yield forecasting,** and logistics can reduce wastage and increase export competitiveness in agri-products.
- **Empowering SMEs and Startups:** AI tools for translation, compliance, and market intelligence can help Indian SMEs overcome entry barriers in international trade.
 - ♦ With **63 million MSMEs** in India, AI adoption could significantly expand their participation in exports.

Initiatives taken by India

- **NITI Aayog's "#AIforAll" (2018)** laid out India's first comprehensive strategy on AI, focusing on healthcare, agriculture, education, smart cities, and smart mobility.
- **The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**, approved in 2021 with a 76,000 crore outlay, aims to develop a robust domestic semiconductor ecosystem by providing financial incentives for chip fabrication, display manufacturing, and design.
- **The India AI Mission** with an outlay of **Rs.10,371.92 crore**, established a comprehensive ecosystem catalyzing AI innovation through strategic programs and partnerships across the public and private sectors.

What are the Challenges?

- **Digital divide:** Only **41%** of small firms globally use AI, compared to over 60% of large firms. In low- and lower-middle-income countries, AI adoption is below 33%.
- **Inequality in income gains:** Without catch-up, high-income economies could see income growth of **~14%**, while low-income economies would gain only **~8%** by 2040.

- **Regulatory fragmentation:** Divergent AI rules across jurisdictions increase compliance costs and may splinter global trade flows.
- **Risks of Concentration:** A few large firms dominate AI development and infrastructure, raising concerns about monopolistic dependencies and control over trade benefits.

Way Ahead

- **Domestic measures:**
 - ♦ Invest in **broadband, cloud infrastructure**, and affordable AI hardware.
 - ♦ Implement **national skilling programmes** to prepare workers for AI-integrated industries.
 - ♦ Ensure competition policy **prevents monopolistic dominance**.
- **Global cooperation:**
 - ♦ **Harmonise AI standards**, ethical rules, and data governance frameworks.
 - ♦ **Expand WTO's capacity-building** for poorer economies.
 - ♦ **Promote multilateral consensus** to avoid digital fragmentation.

Source: TOI

ANALOG EXPERIMENTS: ATTEMPT TO SIMULATE SPACE ON EARTH

Context

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is conducting a series of **analog experiments (Gyanex)** to test human endurance, refine mission protocols, and validate technologies, as India prepares for **its first human spaceflight mission** under the **Gaganyaan Programme**.

About Analog Experiments

- These are **Earth-based simulations** that **mimic the physical, psychological, and operational conditions** of space.
- These experiments allow astronauts and researchers to:
 - ♦ Live in confined, spacecraft-like environments;
 - ♦ Follow strict routines and conduct scientific tasks;
 - ♦ Test communication protocols, resource management, and emergency procedures;
 - ♦ Act as **laboratories for human spaceflight**, allowing researchers to test psychological resilience, decision-making under stress, and adaptability to unpredictable conditions.
- The **only major difference** from actual space missions is the **presence of gravity**, which remains difficult to replicate on Earth.

ISRO's Gaganyaan Analog Experiments (Gyanex)

- These are being conducted in a **static mock-up simulator in Bengaluru**, led by **ISRO's Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC)** and are critical for future missions to the **Moon, Mars, and beyond**.
- In **Gyanex-1**, **Group Captain Angad Pratap** and **two others** spent 10 days in confinement, performing 11 science experiments and living solely on food developed by DRDO.
- These missions help ISRO gather data on:
 - ♦ Crew behavior under stress;
 - ♦ Impact of isolation on health and performance;
 - ♦ Effectiveness of onboard systems and routines.

Beyond Gaganyaan: Other Analog Missions

- ISRO has conducted **two additional analog missions in Ladakh**, designed to mimic extraterrestrial habitats:
 - ♦ **Ladakh Human Analog Mission:** Focused on building dwellings in cold, barren terrain, simulating interplanetary base stations.
 - ♦ **Tso Kar Valley Mission:** Tested the **Himalayan Outpost for Planetary Exploration (HOPE)** habitat, leveraging the valley's **Mars-like conditions** including high UV, low pressure, and saline permafrost.

Strategic Purposes of These Experiments

- **Human Readiness:** Preparing astronauts for long-duration space travel
- **Technology Validation:** Testing equipment and protocols in realistic conditions
- **Scientific Research:** Understanding human health risks in space-like environments
- **Global Competitiveness:** Matching international standards in space exploration.

Source: IE

ARMY SCALES UP DRONE INDUCTION

In News

- The Indian Army is rapidly expanding its **drone and counter-drone capabilities**, with multiple units operational and training centers.

About Indian Army's Plans

- The Indian Army plans to set up drone training centers at 19 major training institutions, including the Indian Military Academy, Infantry School, and Officers Training Academy, to integrate drone training into the standard curriculum for all ranks.

- Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi announced that every infantry battalion will have a drone platoon, artillery units will get counter-drone systems, and new precision batteries will be raised, highlighting the growing importance of unmanned systems in modern warfare.

Need and Objectives

- Increased drone incursions from adversaries, especially post-Operation Sindoor, necessitate robust detection and neutralization systems.
 - ♦ **Drones have become a standard weapon system**, prompting an emergency procurement of nearly 1,000 drones of various sizes and 600 training simulators.
- **Drones enhance battlefield awareness**, precision targeting, and operational reach.
- **Drones are now essential for surveillance**, combat, logistics, and medical evacuation.

Challenges

- **High costs** and **logistical demands** for training, deployment, and maintenance.
- **Cybersecurity & Interoperability related Issues.**
- Balancing drone use with manned operations for optimal strategy.
- Overreliance on tech can weaken long-term readiness.
- Ensuring safe and ethical use of drones in combat and surveillance.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The Indian Army's focus on equipping soldiers with drones and strengthening counter-drone defenses represents a major shift in readiness, emphasizing drone skills, advanced surveillance, and homegrown innovation to prepare for the future of unmanned warfare.
- The Army aims to have all soldiers trained in drone operation by 2027, marking a major shift in its organizational structure to incorporate UAVs and counter-UAV systems at the battalion level.

Source :IE

NEWS IN SHORT

SEVEN NATURAL HERITAGE SITES ADDED TO UNESCO TENTATIVE LIST

Context

- Seven natural heritage sites from across India have been included in UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites, increasing India's count on the Tentative List from 62 to 69 properties.

Newly Added Sites

- **Deccan Traps at Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra:** The sites form part of the massive Deccan Traps and are located within the **Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary**, already a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Geological Heritage of St. Mary's Island Cluster, Karnataka:** Known for its rare columnar basaltic rock formations, this island cluster dates back to the Late **Cretaceous period**, offering a geological snapshot from around 85 million years ago.
- **Meghalayan Age Caves, Meghalaya:** The stunning cave systems of Meghalaya, particularly the Mawmluh Cave, serve as the global reference point for the Meghalayan Age in the Holocene Epoch, reflecting significant climate and geological transitions.
- **Naga Hill Ophiolite, Nagaland:** A rare exposure of ophiolite rocks, these hills represent oceanic crust uplifted onto continental plates—offering deep insights into tectonic processes and mid-ocean ridge dynamics.
- **Erra Matti Dibbalu (Red Sand Hills), Andhra Pradesh:** These visually striking red sand formations near Visakhapatnam showcase unique paleo-climatic and coastal geomorphological features that reveal Earth's climatic history and dynamic evolution.
- **Natural Heritage of Tirumala Hills, Andhra Pradesh:** Featuring the Eparchaeon Unconformity and the **Silathoranam (Natural Arch)**, this site represents over 1.5 billion years of Earth's history.
- **Varkala Cliffs, Kerala:** The scenic cliffs along Kerala's coastline expose the Warkalli Formation of the Mio-Pliocene age, along with natural springs and striking erosional landforms.

Do You Know?

- **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** is the Nodal agency for UNESCO's World Heritage Convention in India.
- **India** hosted the **46th Session** of the **World Heritage Committee** in July 2024, New Delhi.

Source: AIR

SWASTH NARI SASHAKT PARIVAR ABHIYAN

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan** and the **8th Rashtriya Poshan Maah Campaign** in **Madhya Pradesh**.

About

- It marks the **largest ever health outreach for women and children in India**.
- **Led By:** Jointly by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD).
- **Aim:** To provide women-centric preventive, promotive, and curative health services at the community level.
- **Implementation:** It will involve organising more than 10 lakh health camps at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, Community Health Centres (CHCs), District Hospitals and other government health facilities across the country.
- **Significance:** It will strengthen screening, early detection, and treatment linkages for non-communicable diseases, anaemia, tuberculosis, and sickle cell disease, while also promoting maternal, child, and adolescent health.

Source: PIB

ECI REVISES GUIDELINES TO MAKE EVM BALLOT PAPERS MORE READABLE

Context

- **The Election Commission of India (ECI)** has revised the existing guidelines under **Rule 49B of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961**, for the design and printing of EVM Ballot Papers to enhance their clarity and readability.

About

- **The initiative is in line with the 28 initiatives already taken by the ECI** in the past 6 months to streamline and improve election processes and enhance convenience for voters.
- Candidates' photographs will now be printed in colour, **replacing the earlier black-and-white or no-photo versions**, to facilitate clearer identification.
- The **upgraded EVM Ballot Papers will be used in the upcoming elections**, starting with Bihar.
- **Rule 49B:** It prescribes the Preparation of voting machines by the returning officer.

Source: PIB

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

In News

- Qatar has met with the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** president to seek legal action against Israel following an Israeli strike on its territory targeting Hamas leaders.

Do you know?

- Qatar cannot directly refer cases to the ICC as an observer state, it is exploring all legal and diplomatic options to hold Israel accountable. Arab and Islamic blocs have urged members to take legal measures to stop Israel's actions.

The International Criminal Court (ICC)

- It is the **world's first permanent court** that investigates and tries individuals for serious crimes like **genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression**.
 - ♦ The seat of the Court is in The Hague in the **Netherlands**.
- It has **no police force** and relies on countries worldwide for arrests, transfers, and enforcing sentences.
- It cooperates with the UN, which can refer cases to it.
- It aims to hold perpetrators accountable and help prevent future crimes, working alongside national courts rather than replacing them.
- It is governed by the Rome Statute and it acts as a court of last resort in the global fight against impunity.

Source :TH

BLUE PORTS

Context

- The Department of Fisheries (DoF) has signed a **Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) agreement** with the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations to strengthen Blue Port infrastructure in India.
 - ♦ **The TCP will provide** strategic and operational tools to design investment projects and address environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Blue Ports framework

- **The Department of Fisheries (DoF)** is leading the development of Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbours under the Blue Ports framework, which **balances technological innovation with environmental stewardship**.
- Three pilot harbours namely **Vanakbara (Diu), Karaikal (Puducherry), and Jakhau (Gujarat)**, have been approved with a total investment of **₹369.8 crores**.
- These harbours aim to modernize post-harvest fisheries infrastructure, ensuring:
 - ♦ Safer and more hygienic handling of fish catch.

- Cleaner and more efficient harbour operations.
- Better services and livelihoods for fishing communities.
- Supported under the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**, the initiative integrates smart technologies such as **IoT devices, sensor networks, satellite communication, and data analytics** to streamline harbour operations and enable real-time decision-making.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- FAO is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve food security.
- **It was founded** on 16 October 1945.
- **Members:** The FAO comprises 195 members, including 194 countries and the European Union.
- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy.

Source: PIB

INDIA-AI IMPACT SUMMIT 2026

In News

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) officially unveiled the logo and key initiatives for the **India-AI Impact Summit 2026**.

About

- It is a **global platform** bringing together policymakers, innovators, researchers, and industry leaders to demonstrate AI's transformative potential for humanity and the planet.
- The first summit of its kind hosted by a **Global South nation**, positioning India as a thought leader in responsible and **equitable AI adoption**.
- It will democratize access to AI resources like data, compute, and models—fostering safe, trusted ecosystems.

Guiding Principles (Three Sutras)

- **People:** AI for human dignity, cultural inclusion, and equitable opportunities.
- **Planet:** Resource-efficient AI supporting sustainability and climate action.
- **Progress:** Democratizing AI resources and distributing benefits equitably.

Flagship Initiatives

- **UDAAN Global AI Pitch Fest:** Showcase of startups from India & abroad.
- **YuvaAI Innovation Challenge & AI by HER:** Fostering youth- and women-led innovation.

- **Global Innovation Challenge for All:** Crowd-sourced AI solutions for public-interest problems.
- **Research Symposium:** Collaborations on cutting-edge AI research.

Source: AIR

DEEPSEEK-R1 AI MODEL'S REINFORCEMENT LEARNING

In News

- The DeepSeek-AI team developed a model called R1.

DeepSeek-R1 AI model

- R1 AI model learns to reason through **reinforcement learning**—trial and error with rewards for correct answers—without human-provided reasoning steps.
- Starting from a **base model (R1-Zero)**, it improved significantly in **math and coding tasks**, even surpassing average high school students on a tough math exam.
- The model developed reflective behaviors like self-correction and dynamic reasoning length based on problem difficulty.
- Although some human intervention remained for language consistency and safety, the approach reduces reliance on expensive human-labeled data.

Importance

- Teaching AI to reason has long been a challenge, as reasoning involves step-by-step problem-solving and self-correction beyond memorizing facts.
 - Large language models like GPT-4 have shown some reasoning ability, often guided by human examples, which is costly and limits creativity.
- The recent breakthrough suggests AI reasoning could emerge naturally from properly designed incentives, potentially leading to more creative and independent problem-solving, though challenges remain for open-ended tasks and ensuring safe use.

Source :TH

YELLOW-CRESTED COCKATOOS

In News

- Recently, **yellow-crested cockatoos** have found an unexpected refuge in Hong Kong's urban parks, where they represent about 10% of the global wild population of around 2,000 mature birds.

Yellow-crested cockatoos(*Cacatua sulphurea*)

- It lives in various forest types, scrub, and agricultural areas .
- It prefers open habitats like forest savanna rather than primary forests.
 - ♦ **Native to Indonesia and East Timor.**
- **It nests in tree cavities**, often in dead or decaying trees, using existing holes or cracks.
- **Its diet** includes fruits, flowers, and leaves from multiple plant species
- **IUCN Red Status** : Critically Endangered

Source:TH

EXERCISE PACIFIC REACH**Context**

- Indian Navy's latest indigenously designed *INS Nistar* is participating in the multinational **Exercise Pacific Reach 2025** in Singapore.

About the Exercise

- Exercise Pacific Reach 2025, being hosted by **Singapore** will see participation of more than **40 nations** as active participants or as observers.
- The exercise will mainly be conducted in **two phases** viz. harbour and sea phase.
- Started in **1996**, the **biennial exercise** is hosted in rotation by participating nations.

Source: AIR

