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INDIA GERMANY SIGN PACT TO SHORE UP DEFENCE INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

Context

- **India and Germany signed agreements spanning sectors** such as defence, technology, health, energy and human resources.
  - The German Chancellor Friedrich Merz is on a two-day visit to India.

Major Outcomes

- The two sides concluded **19 agreements** and made several policy announcements.
- **Defence and Security Cooperation:** Joint Declaration of Intent on strengthening bilateral defence industrial cooperation.
  - It is aimed at promoting long-term collaboration through co-development, co-production and technology partnerships.
- **Trade, Economy and Technology:** Highlighting strong economic ties, the leaders noted that bilateral trade in goods and services surpassed USD 50 billion in 2024, accounting for over a quarter of India's trade with the European Union.
  - Several agreements and declarations were signed to boost cooperation in semiconductors, critical minerals, telecommunications, digitalisation, artificial intelligence and innovation.
- **Green and sustainable development:** Both leaders reviewed progress under the Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (GSDP), noting that nearly 5 billion of Germany's 10 billion commitment up to 2030 has already been utilised.
  - They welcomed new funding commitments and the launch of joint working groups on battery storage, solar manufacturing and wind energy.
- **Global and regional issues:** India and Germany reaffirmed backing for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and called for comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council.
- **Education, mobility and culture:** Germany allowed visa-free transit for Indian passport holders, describing it as a boost to travel and exchanges.
  - The leaders also welcomed new agreements on higher education, skilling, renewable energy training, sports cooperation, maritime heritage and youth exchanges, further strengthening cultural and social links.
- **Other agreements include:**
  - Joint Declaration of Intent for Joint Cooperation in Research and Development on Bioeconomy.
  - Joint Declaration of Intent on the extension of tenure of the Indo-German Science and Technology Centre (IGSTC).
- Both leaders agreed that the next India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations will be held in **Germany later in 2026,** reaffirming their shared commitment to elevating the Strategic Partnership to new heights.

India and Germany Bilateral Ties

- **Establishment of Ties:** India was among the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with Germany after the Second World War in 1951.
  - **2026 marks the 75 years** of the establishment of diplomatic relations.
- **Strategic Partnership:** Since 2000, India and Germany have had a 'Strategic Partnership' and 2025 marks the **25 years of Strategic Partnership.**
- **Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC) in 2011**: The IGC framework allows for a comprehensive review of cooperation and identification of new areas of engagement at the Cabinet level.
  - India is among a select group of countries with which Germany has such a dialogue mechanism.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement was signed in 2006 and provides the framework for bilateral defence ties.
  - Germany Participated in many multilateral exercises with India, such as: MILAN, PASSEX, EX TARANG SHAKTI-1.
- **Trade Cooperation:** Indo-German bilateral trade touched an all-time high of **US$ 33.40 billion** with exports from India at **US$ 15.09 billion** and imports to India from Germany at **US$ 18.31 billion in 2024.**
  - India was Germany's **23rd largest trading partner in 2024** and Germany was the **8th largest trading partner for India in and is India's largest trading partner in the EU.**
- **Development Partnership:** Germany is one of India's biggest development partners (≈€24 billion committed).
  - **Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (2022):** Germany pledged €10 billion by 2030.
  - Collaboration in renewable energy, metro projects, green corridors, and smart cities directly aids India's climate goals and SDG commitments.

- **Multilateral Cooperation:**
  - Support for India's permanent seat at UNSC.
  - Coordination at G20, UN, WTO, COP climate talks.
  - Both emphasize rules-based international order and Indo-Pacific security.
- **Indian Diaspora:** There are around 2.46 lakh (2023) Indian passport holders and Indian-origin people in Germany.
  - The Indian diaspora mainly consists of professionals, researchers and scientists, businessmen, nurses and students.

Conclusion

- Germany is significant for India as a **gateway to Europe,** a leader in green technology and innovation, and a partner in shaping a multipolar, sustainable world order.
- The relationship complements India's priorities in economic modernization, climate action, skill mobility, and strategic security.

Source: BS

ARTICLE 6 OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND INDIA

In Context

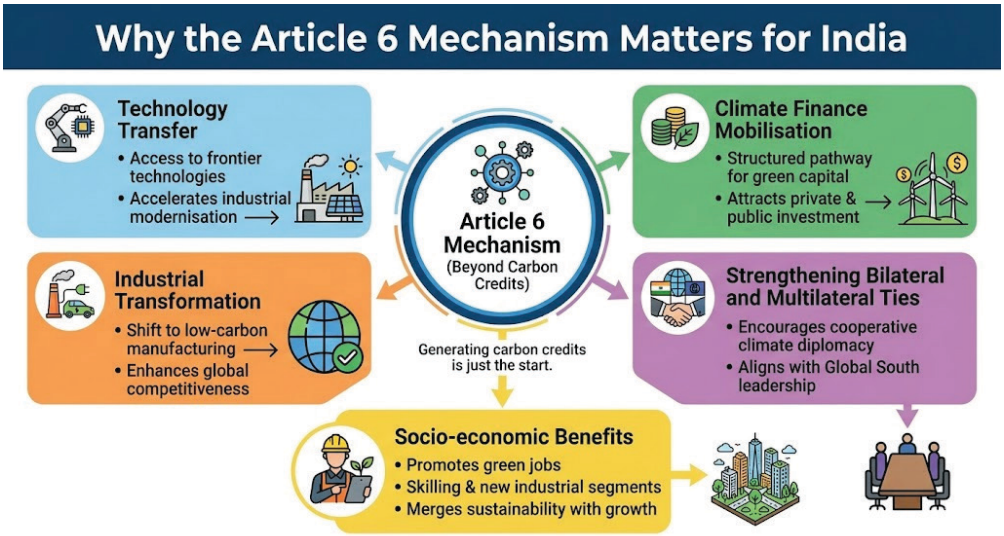
- At COP29, carbon markets under **Article 6 (A6) of the Paris Agreement** were made fully operational to improve the delivery and efficiency of climate finance.
- Earlier, India took a major step by signing the **Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)**, effectively operationalising Article 6.2 and marking India's formal entry into international carbon market cooperation.

What is Article 6 of the Paris Agreement?

- Article 6 creates a framework that allows countries to cooperate voluntarily to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through two main routes:
  - **Article 6.2:** Enables bilateral or plurilateral cooperation through the trading of emission reductions, called Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs).
  - **Article 6.4:** Establishes a centralized Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism (PACM), evolved from the earlier Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), to validate and verify projects generating carbon credits.
- Both mechanisms are backed by strong accounting rules to avoid double counting and ensure transparency and environmental integrity.

India and the Joint Crediting Mechanism

- India's entry into Article 6 through its JCM partnership with Japan represents the operationalisation of Article 6.2. The JCM framework will facilitate the adoption of low-carbon and advanced industrial technologies, offering mutual benefits—emissions reduction for Japan and technology transfer and finance for India.
- The Indian government has identified 13 eligible activities under A6, focusing on high-impact, emerging technologies such as:
  - Renewable energy with storage and offshore wind
  - Green hydrogen and compressed bio-gas
  - Sustainable aviation fuel and fuel-cell mobility
  - High-end energy efficiency applications
  - Carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS)
- These reflect a strategic alignment between India's growth priorities and long-term decarbonisation goals, particularly for industries like steel, cement, and power generation.



Key Policy Priorities

- **Strengthen the Domestic Carbon Governance Framework:** India's Designated National Authority (DNA) must define clear procedures for:
  - Issuing Letters of Authorisation (LoAs) for A6 projects.
  - Managing corresponding adjustments to prevent double counting.
  - Establishing a robust legal and regulatory architecture for carbon trading.
- **Streamline Project Approvals:** A Cabinet-level steering committee and single-window clearance system can drastically cut approval timelines. Current voluntary carbon projects take over 1,600 days to register—four times slower than regional peers.
- **Develop a Domestic Carbon Removals Market:** With rising global demand, India can position itself as a key supplier of high-quality removal credits through biochar, enhanced rock weathering, and afforestation-based projects.
- **Promote South–South Collaboration:** India's leadership in institutions like ISA, CEM, and BASIC can catalyze shared platforms for knowledge exchange and co-investment among developing economies.

Source: TH

WARMING OF EARTH'S OCEANS

Context

- According to a study titled 'Ocean Heat Content Sets Another Record in 2025', found that the oceans absorbed more heat in 2025 than in any year since modern measurements began in the 1960s.
  - It focused on the **top 2,000 meters of the ocean**, where **most heat is stored**.

Key Findings of Study

- **Record-Breaking Ocean Heat Content (OHC):** The **Earth's oceans absorbed 23 Zettajoules (ZJ)** of additional heat in **2025**, surpassing all previous records since the 1960s.
  - It marks a **44% increase** compared to **2024**, when oceans absorbed **16 ZJ**.
- **Rising Global Sea-Surface Temperatures (SSTs):** Global average SSTs in 2025 were the **third highest on record**, roughly **0.5°C above the 1981–2010 baseline**.
  - The South Atlantic, North Pacific, and Southern Ocean were identified as the fastest-warming regions.
- **Oceans Absorb 90% of Anthropogenic Heat:** Nearly **90% of the excess heat** trapped by **greenhouse gases (GHGs)** since the industrial era has been absorbed by the oceans.
  - This has led to **steady, long-term warming** even during years when atmospheric temperature rise slows temporarily.
- **Increased Ocean Stratification:** Rising heat content has intensified **ocean stratification** like separating warm, light, nutrient-poor surface waters from cooler, denser, nutrient-rich deep waters.
  - It **reduces vertical mixing**, meaning:
    - Less CO_2 absorbed by oceans.
    - **Oxygen depletion** in deeper waters.
    - **Nutrient scarcity** for marine life near the surface.
- **Threats to Marine Ecosystems:** Stratification and warming together threaten **phytoplankton populations**, which form the **base of marine food webs**.
  - Decline in phytoplankton affects **zooplankton**, **fish**, **crustaceans**, and **corals**, increasing the risk of **ecosystem collapse**.
- **Marine Heat Waves (MHWs) Intensifying:** Marine heat waves (defined as **ocean regions 3–4°C above average for ≥5 days)** are becoming **more frequent, longer, and more intense**.
  - According to the **IPCC (2021)**, MHW frequency has **doubled between 1982 and 2016**.
  - MHWs drive **coral bleaching**, reduce coral reproduction, and alter fish migration patterns.
- **Stronger and More Destructive Storms:** Warmer oceans are fueling **more powerful tropical storms**, **cyclones**, and **hurricanes**.
  - Increased evaporation and heat transfer intensify storms, leading to **stronger winds**, **heavier rainfall**, and **worse flooding** upon landfall.

Oceans Warming

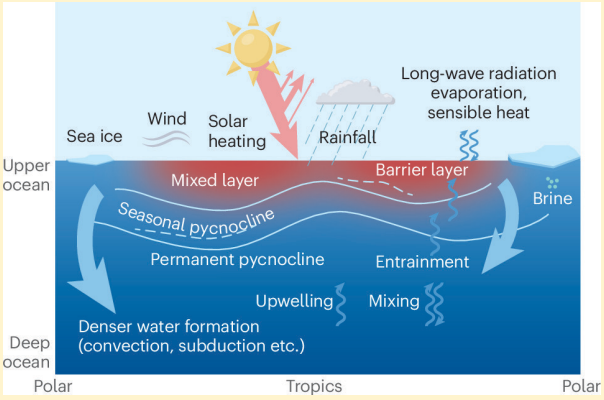
- Ocean warming is **primarily driven by human-induced climate change**, with greenhouse gas emissions, thermal expansion, and **altered ocean-atmosphere interactions**.
- According to the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** and the **IPCC**, over **90% of excess heat trapped by greenhouse gases** since the 1970s has been absorbed by the oceans.
  - It affects global weather patterns, marine ecosystems, and coastal communities.

Causes of Ocean Warming

- **Increased GHGs concentrations**, especially **carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O)**, trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere.
- **Deforestation and industrial emissions** reduce natural carbon sinks.
- **Changes in ocean circulation**, influenced by atmospheric warming.

Impact on Marine Life and Ecosystems

- **Coral bleaching** is increasing, with up to **70–90% of coral reefs** expected to be lost if global warming exceeds 1.5°C.
- **Fish migration patterns** are shifting toward cooler waters, impacting global fisheries.
- **Deoxygenation** and acidification further stress marine ecosystems.



Ocean Warming and Climate Feedback Loops

- As water warms, it expands **(thermal expansion)**, contributing to sea level rise, **alters the density** and **circulation of ocean currents.**
- Warming oceans amplify climate change through **feedback mechanisms**:
  - **Reduced CO_2 absorption capacity** of warmer waters.
  - **Melting polar ice** leads to further heat absorption (albedo effect).
  - **Altered weather systems** such as stronger El Niño events.
- The **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** notes that these feedbacks could accelerate warming beyond current projections.

Regional Focus: Indian Ocean

- Data from the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** and **INCOIS** show that:
  - The **Indian Ocean has warmed by 1.2°C since 1950**, faster than the global average.
  - It contributes to **intense monsoons**, **cyclone variability**, and **coastal flooding**.
  - The **Arabian Sea** is particularly affected, witnessing a rise in severe cyclonic storms.
- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** warns that increasing ocean heat content is linked to **sea-level rise** along India's coastline, affecting coastal ecosystems and communities.

Mitigation and Global Action

- The **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)** emphasizes:
  - Enhanced **marine observation networks**.
  - **Reducing emissions** through renewable energy transition.
  - **Blue carbon initiatives** like mangrove and seagrass restoration.
- India's **National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR)** and MoES have initiated **long-term ocean observation programs** under the **Deep Ocean Mission**, aimed at understanding and mitigating ocean warming effects.

Source: IE

FIRST FULLY ORGANIC VILLAGE OF RAJASTHAN

In News

- Bamanwas Kankar Panchayat, Rajasthan, has become the **first fully organic village body in the state, covering seven hamlets.**

Organic farming

- Organic farming is a sustainable agricultural system that avoids synthetic inputs and relies on natural, on-farm resources for nutrient management and eco-friendly methods for pest and disease control.
- It promotes safe food production, lowers production costs, improves soil health, and helps mitigate climate change by reducing dependence on chemical fertilizers.

Advantages of organic farming

- It helps to maintain environmental health by reducing the level of pollution.
- It reduces human and animal health hazards by reducing the level of residues in the product.
- It helps in keeping agricultural production at a sustainable level.
- It reduces the cost of agricultural production and also improves soil health.
- It ensures optimum utilization of natural resources for short-term benefit and helps in conserving them for future generation.
- It not only saves energy for both animal and machine, but also reduces risk of crop failure.
- It improves the soil physical properties such as granulation, good tilth, good aeration, easy root penetration and improves water-holding capacity and reduces erosion.
- It improves the soil's chemical properties such as supply and retention of soil nutrients, reduces nutrient loss into water bodies and environment and promotes favourable chemical reactions.

Governments steps

- The Government of India has been promoting Organic farming in the country through dedicated schemes namely **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana(PKVY)** and **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region(MOVCDNER)** since 2015-16 to cater to the needs of domestic and export markets respectively.
- **National Centre of Organic Farming** is a nodal organization for promotion of organic farming under Integrated Nutrient Management(INM) Division, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

Source :TH

CHINA'S EAST FUSION REACTOR BEATS DENSITY LIMIT

Context

- China's **Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) nuclear fusion reactor** has breached a **major fusion limit** by firing plasma beyond its usual operational range.

About

- They pushed **plasma density 65%** beyond a special threshold, entering **a stable state** that overcomes a **long-standing barrier to achieving burning plasma,** the stage where a **fusion reaction becomes self-sustaining.**
- This matters for the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER),** the fusion experiment in which India has invested.

Artificial Sun

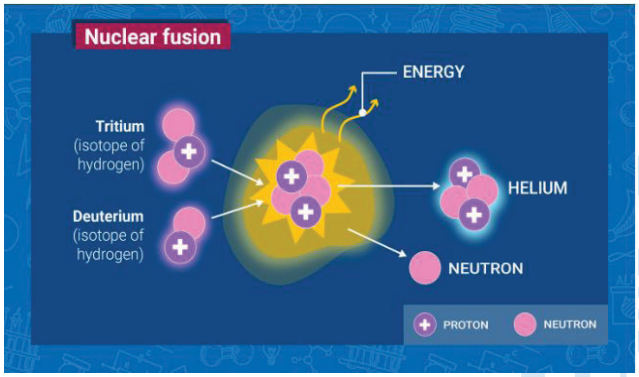
- It is a **nuclear fusion reactor facility,** and it is called an "artificial sun" because it **mimics the nuclear fusion reaction that powers the real sun** – which uses hydrogen and deuterium gases as fuel.
- Scientists generally use a **donut-shaped reactor called a tokamak** in which hydrogen variants are heated to extraordinarily high temperatures **to create a plasma.**
- EAST is a testbed reactor for **(International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) ITER,** an international megaproject.
- **Members of the Project:** The European Union, China, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United States.
- They are working together to **build a tokamak** that will **sustain nuclear fusion** that releases more energy than that required to sustain the plasma.
  - A tokamak is a machine that uses magnetic fields to confine plasma for nuclear fusion research.

Background

- **1939:** Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch explained fission as a process of energy release.
- **1942:** The first sustainable nuclear fission reactor was built by Enrico Fermi and team.
  - Nuclear fission **produces harmful radioactive waste** whereas nuclear fusion doesn't.
  - Nuclear fusion reactors have become an important technological goal for a world keenly interested in **new sources of clean energy.**
- **Current Progress:** Projects like ITER are working on creating viable fusion reactors, but net-positive energy from fusion is still a work in progress.

What is Nuclear Fusion?

- Nuclear fusion is the process by which **two light atomic nuclei** combine to form **a single heavier one** while releasing **massive amounts of energy.**
- Fusion reactions take place in a **state of matter called plasma** — a hot, charged gas made of positive ions and free-moving electrons with **unique properties distinct from solids, liquids or gases.**
- The sun, along with all other stars, is powered by this reaction.
- **Process:** The **Deuterium (H-2) and Tritium (H-3)** atoms are combined to form **Helium (He-4)**. A free and fast neutron is also released as a result.
  - The neutron is powered by the kinetic energy converted from the 'extra' mass left over after the combination of lighter nuclei of deuterium and tritium occurs.



Significance of Fusion Energy

- **Clean Energy:** Nuclear fusion — just like fission — does not emit carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, so it could be a long-term source of low-carbon electricity from the second half of this century onwards.
- **More Efficient:** Fusion could generate four times more energy per kilogram of fuel than fission (used in nuclear power plants) and nearly four million times more energy than burning oil or coal.
- **Fusion fuel is plentiful and easily accessible:** Deuterium can be extracted inexpensively from seawater, and tritium can potentially be produced from the reaction of fusion-generated neutrons with naturally abundant lithium.
  - These fuel supplies would last for millions of years.
- **Safer to Use:** Future fusion reactors are also intrinsically safe and are not expected to produce high activity or long-lived nuclear waste.
  - Furthermore, as the fusion process is difficult to start and maintain, there is no risk of a runaway reaction and meltdown.

Way Ahead

- **EAST's** successes are crucial for ITER's future, which faces criticism for delays and cost overruns.
  - High costs have deterred some governments from pursuing such projects.
- The findings suggest a **practical and scalable pathway** for extending density limits in tokamaks and **next-generation burning plasma fusion devices.**

Source: TH

ISRO'S PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 MISSION EXPERIENCED AN ANOMALY DURING THE THIRD STAGE

In News

- ISRO's first launch of the year, the PSLV-C62 mission failed to place its 16 satellites into the intended orbit, marking the second consecutive failure of the long-reliable PSLV rocket.

The PSLV-C62 / EOS-N1 Mission

- PSLV-C62, the 64th flight of India's PSLV and ninth **commercial mission by NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**, aimed to launch the EOS-N1 Earth observation satellite along with 15 co-passenger satellites.
- EOS-N1 is an Earth observation satellite intended for environmental monitoring, resource mapping, and disaster management.
  - The mission also carried a technology demonstration, the Kestrel Initial Technology Demonstrator (KID) from a Spanish startup, a small re-entry vehicle prototype designed to return to Earth and provide data for future re-entry system development.

PSLV

- Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is the third generation launch vehicle of India.
- It has also been called "the workhorse of ISRO" for consistently delivering various satellites into low earth orbits with a high success rate.
- It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages.
- It is a four-stage rocket in which each stage has its own engine and fuel.
  - These stages operate one after another during flight, propelling the mission forward and then separating once their role is completed.

Stages

- The **first stage** provides lift-off, overcoming gravity and air resistance using a powerful solid-fuel engine, and is jettisoned after about two minutes.
- The **second stage**, powered by the liquid-fuel Vikas engine, continues the climb and accelerates the rocket to high speeds at around 220–250 km altitude.
- In the **third stage,** solid fuel is used to rapidly increase horizontal speed, placing the vehicle on a sub-orbital path.
- The **fourth and final stage**, using liquid propulsion, precisely manoeuvres and places the satellite into its designated low-Earth orbit.

Major launches

- After its first successful launch in October 1994, PSLV emerged as the reliable and versatile workhorse launch vehicle of India.
- In addition to launching satellites into LEO, PSLV has also launched satellites for communication, meteorology, navigation, scientific experiments and space exploration missions.
- The PSLV successfully launched two spacecrafts-Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and Mars Orbiter Spacecraft in 2013 that later travelled to Moon and Mars respectively.
- It also launched India's first space observatory, Astrosat.

Do you know?

- The **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)** is India's largest fourth-generation launch vehicle, designed to overcome the limitations of the PSLV by carrying heavier payloads to higher orbits.
- GSLV is a **three-stage vehicle** with four liquid strap-ons, a solid rocket motor, and a cryogenic upper stage, capable of delivering up to 1,750 kg to low Earth orbit (up to 600 km) and smaller payloads to Geostationary Transfer Orbit.
- GSLVs use **cryogenic engines** with liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen, providing greater thrust than earlier launch vehicles.
- Its advanced variant, **LVM-3 (formerly GSLV Mk III)**, employs solid, liquid, and cryogenic engines, carrying up to 8,000 kg to low Earth orbit (up to 2,000 km) and 4,000 kg to geosynchronous orbit (36,000 km), earning the nickname 'Bahubali' for its payload capacity.
    - LVM-3's first successful mission was in 2017 with GSAT-19, followed by Chandrayaan-2 in 2019 and Chandrayaan-3 in 2023.
    - ISRO is developing its heaviest rocket, the Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV), expected by 2035, to support future lunar missions, including India's first human Moon mission planned for 2040.

Source :TH

NEWS IN SHORT

BHADRAKALI INSCRIPTION

In News

- Recently, it has been highlighted that Prabhas Patan has a rich historical and spiritual heritage, with inscriptions like Bhadrakali, copper plates, and memorial stones showcasing its prosperity, valor, and devotion.

Bhadrakali Inscription

- It was carved in 1169 CE (Valabhi Samvat 850 and Vikram Samvat 1255) and currently protected by the State Department of Archaeology.
- It is located near the museum in Prabhas Patan, beside the old Ram Temple in Bhadrakali lane.
    - Prabhas Patan, home to the historic Somnath Temple, and it is housed in the ancient Sun Temple.
- It is a **eulogistic inscription** of Param Pashupata Acharya Shriman Bhavabrihaspati, the spiritual preceptor of Maharajadhiraj Kumarapala of Anhilwad Patan.

Features

- It records the ancient and medieval history of the Somnath Temple.
- It mentions the construction of Somnath Mahadev in all four yugas.
    - Accordingly, in the Satya Yuga, **Chandra (Soma) built it of gold**; in the **Treta Yuga, Ravana built it of silver**; in the **Dvapara Yuga, Shri Krishna built it of wood**; and in the **Kali Yuga, King Bhimdev Solanki** constructed a beautifully artistic stone temple.
        - History confirms that Bhimdev Solanki built the fourth temple on the earlier remains, followed by the fifth temple constructed by Kumarapala in 1169 CE at the same site

Importance

- Prabhas Patan embodies the spiritual pride of Sanatan Dharma.

- The Bhadrakali inscription highlights the devotion of Solanki rulers and scholars like Bhavabrihaspati, and its rich artistic, architectural, and literary legacy continues to inspire, affirming that devotion and self-respect remain timeless.

Source :PIB

PAX SILICA

Context

- The US Ambassador announced that India would be invited next month **to join Pax Silica.**

Pax Silica

- **Pax Silica** is a **US-led strategic initiative** to build a secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain from critical minerals.
- **The inaugural Pax Silica Summit** was held in December 2025 and **the signatories include** Australia, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the UK, the Netherlands, and the UAE.
  - Together, these countries are home to the most important companies and investors powering the global AI supply chain.
  - **Qatar** became the latest signatory to Pax Silica.
- **Its objective** is to reduce coercive dependencies, protect the materials and capabilities foundational to artificial intelligence, and ensure aligned nations can develop and deploy transformative technologies at scale.
- **Countries will partner** on securing strategic stacks of the global technology supply chain, including, but not limited to, software applications and platforms.

Significance for India

- Joining Pax Silica might help **India diversify away from China** to more secure suppliers like Australia for critical minerals.
- It is likely to facilitate **investments and technology transfer** via partnerships with Japan and the Netherlands.
- It might **boost India's capabilities** for advanced extraction and processing of rare earth minerals from its vast monazite and thorium resources.

Source: DD

CENTRE NOTIFIES NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE RULES, 2026

In News

- The Union Government has notified the **National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026**, under the **National Sports Governance Act, 2025.**

Objectives of the Rules

- To professionalise and standardise the functioning of National Sports Bodies (NSBs).
- To ensure meaningful participation of athletes in sports administration.

About the Rules

- **Inclusion of Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOMs):** Minimum 4 SOMs must be included in the General Body of every National Sports Body.
  - Gender representation mandate is 50% of the SOMs must be women sportspersons.
- **SOM Eligibility Tiers:** In the Tiered criteria, 10 Tiers have been prescribed, starting from sportspersons who have won a gold, silver or bronze medal in the Summer Olympic Games, Paralympic Games or Winter Olympic Games, to sportspersons who have won a gold, silver or bronze medal in the National Games or a National Championship.
- **Disqualification Criteria:** Convicted individuals facing imprisonment are barred from General Body membership, Executive Committee elections, or Athletes Committees.
- **Governance Framework:** The National Sports Board oversees recognition, affiliate registration, and inquiries into governance or fund misuse.
- **Election Framework:** The National Sports Election Panel shall maintain a minimum strength of 20 members at all times to oversee the conduct of elections for National Sports Bodies.

Source: TH

EU COUNTRIES APPROVED THE MERCOSUR AGREEMENT

In News

- The European Union has approved a long-delayed trade deal with the South American Mercosur bloc, despite strong opposition led by France and concerns from farmers across Europe.

What is Mercosur?

- Mercosur is a South American trade bloc formed in 1991, with Brazil as its largest member, alongside Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, with Bolivia as the newest full member, aiming for free trade and economic integration.
  - Venezuela, once a member, has been suspended indefinitely.

EU–Mercosur Free Trade Agreement

- It is the EU's largest ever in terms of tariff reductions, eliminating over 4 billion in duties on EU exports.

- Trade between the two blocs stands at 111 billion, with the EU exporting machinery, chemicals and transport equipment, and importing mainly agricultural products and minerals.
- Under the deal, Mercosur will remove duties on 91% of EU exports over 15 years, while the EU will eliminate duties on 92% of Mercosur exports within 10 years.
- Both sides retain quotas on sensitive agricultural goods, though the EU will increase beef import quotas and Mercosur will allow duty-free cheese imports.
- The agreement also protects about 350 EU food and drink products through geographic indications.
    - To address concerns over agriculture, the EU has introduced safeguards, a crisis fund, farmer support measures, reduced fertiliser duties and stricter import controls.

Criticisms

- Opposition to the EU–Mercosur trade deal comes mainly from concerns over agriculture and the environment.
- Countries such as France, Poland, Austria, Hungary and Ireland fear that cheaper South American farm products—especially beef—will undercut European farmers and reduce their market share.
- They also argue that imports may not meet the EU's strict environmental standards and warn that the deal lacks enforceable safeguards against deforestation and biodiversity loss, particularly in regions like the Amazon.
- It could harm European farmers by allowing cheaper agricultural imports from South America.

Source :TH

DRDO SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT-TESTS THIRD-GENERATION MPATGM

Context

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully **flight-tested** the **third-generation Fire & Forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile,** or MPATGM, with top attack capability against a moving target.

About

- The **fire-and-forget missile** was developed indigenously by **DRDO.**
    - **The 'Fire and forget' type of missile refers** to a weapon system that locks onto a target before launch and does not require further guidance from the operator after firing.
- It is equipped with **state-of-the-art indigenous technologies,** including an Imaging Infrared homing seeker, tandem warhead, all-electric control actuation system, fire control system, propulsion system and a high-performance sighting system.
- The missile is capable of **day and night combat operations** and can effectively defeat modern main battle tanks.
- It can be **launched from a tripod** as well as a **military vehicle launcher.**

Source: AIR

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