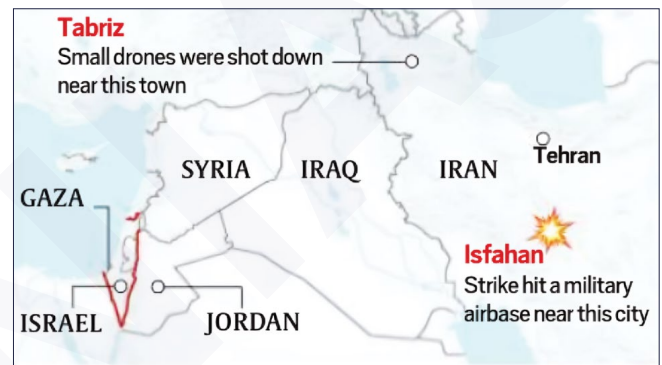


NEWS TODAY

Escalation in Israel-Iran tensions may aggravate instability in the Middle East region

- Iran's attack on Israel and Israel's subsequent retaliation to the attack has sparked **tensions in the Middle East** and beyond.
 - ⊖ Previously, Iranian-backed Palestinian group Hamas launched a coordinated and large attack on Israel in 2023.
- **Concerns related to Instability/ Conflicts in the Middle East Region:**
 - ⊖ **Effect on Global Trade:**
 - ◆ Shipping disruptions in the **Strait of Hormuz** and **Red Sea**.
 - » Recently, Iran seized Israel-linked ship near the **Strait of Hormuz** (world's most important oil chokepoint).
 - » Houthis (supported by Iran) hijacked a commercial ship in the **Red Sea** (approx. 12 % of global trade passes through this route, including Suez Canal).
 - ◆ **Energy Security**, volatility in oil and prices may increase as Iran is a key producer of crude oil within **OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)**.
 - ⊖ **Israel** is believed to be **nuclear-capable** therefore conflict can lead to a **nuclear flashpoint**.
 - ⊖ **Global South** and **global governance** would also be impacted by continuing instability in the Middle East.
- **Impacts on India:** Affects security of large Indian diaspora, supply of crude oil will be disrupted, increased risk of piracy and hostage-taking, etc.



The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) celebrated its 25th Anniversary

- **About IRDAI**
 - ⊖ **Genesis:** Formed based on Malhotra Committee recommendations.
 - ◆ Constituted as an **autonomous body in 1999** and incorporated as a **statutory body in 2000 (Under Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999)**.
 - ⊖ **Objectives:** speedy and orderly growth of insurance industry, speedy settlement of genuine claims, effective grievance redressal mechanism, etc.
 - ⊖ **Ministry:** Ministry of Finance
 - ⊖ **Duties and Responsibilities**
 - ◆ Certify insurance companies.
 - ◆ Protect the interest of the policyholders.
 - ◆ Adjudication of disputes.
- **Significance of IRDAI in transforming the Insurance sector**
 - ⊖ **Growth:**
 - ◆ **Insurance penetration** (percentage of insurance premium to GDP) at **4.2%** in **2021-22** compared to **2.71%** in **2001-02**.
 - ◆ **Insurance Density** (ratio of premium to population) at **\$91** in **2021-22** compared to **\$11.5** in **2001-02**.
 - ⊖ **Increased Employment:** new intermediaries have started operating in the market, like **Corporate agents, Bancassurance** (selling insurance products through banks), **on-line sales, etc.**
 - ⊖ **Modernization:** The digital transformation accelerated by the authority's guidance on e-KYC, paperless policies, digital payments, etc

Initiatives of IRDAI

- **Integrated Grievance Management System**
- **Saral Jeevan Bima:** a standard term life insurance product
- **Saral Pension:** an immediate annuity plan
- **Bima Sugam:** one stop digital platform

India delivers first batch of BrahMos Cruise Missiles to the Philippines

- The supply was made in accordance with the **USD 375 million agreement** that the two nations **agreed in 2022**.
 - ⊕ Also, India recently delivered two Dornier 228 aircraft to Guyana, spreading export linkages to Caribbean nations as well.
 - ⊕ These are seen as major developments in defence exports from India.
- **Defence Export of India**
 - ⊕ India is currently exporting military hardware to around 85 countries.
 - ⊕ **Major export items** include missiles, artillery guns, rockets, armoured vehicles, etc.
 - ⊕ In FY 2023-24, exports reached an all-time high of Rs. 21,083 crore.
- **Key Opportunities:**
 - ⊕ **Strategic Leverage** (bolster relationship with nations)
 - ⊕ Enhances **Self-reliance** in defence by increasing defence manufacturing capabilities, etc.
- **Key Challenges:** Delays in export clearances decreasing competitiveness of Indian defence products, historical perception of inconsistency in the quality etc.
- **Initiatives**
 - ⊕ **The Draft Defence Production & Export Promotion Policy:** It has set the goal of achieving a **turnover of Rs 1,75, 000 crore (\$25 billion)** in the defence sector.
 - ⊕ **Simplification of Export Procedures: India Defence Mart (an online platform)** has been launched for companies to apply for export licenses and track their applications.
 - ⊕ **Other:** Scheme for Promotion of Defence Exports (SPDE), **Innovation** for Defence Excellence (iDEX), Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP 2020) etc.

About BrahMos Missile

- Developed under the joint venture agreement between **India and Russia**.
- It is a **two stage Supersonic Cruise Missile** (travels at a speed of around 2-3 Mach).
 - ⊕ **Cruise Missile** is propelled by jet engines.
- **Key Features:**
 - ⊕ **Fire and Forget** principle of operation.
 - ⊕ **Long flight range (290km)** with varieties of flight trajectories.
 - ⊕ **Low radar signature**.

World Health Organisation (WHO) launched Patient Safety Rights Charter at Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety

- Charter was **developed within framework of World Patient Safety Day 2023** under theme “Engaging patients for patient safety”.
 - ⊕ It will provide healthcare workers, leaders and governments with the **tools to build patient-centred healthcare systems, improving patient safety and reducing risk of harm**.
 - ⊕ It is a key resource intended to support **implementation of Global Patient Safety (GPS) Action Plan 2021–2030**.
 - ◆ **India has signed GPS Action Plan 2021-2030.**
- **Patient safety**
 - ⊕ A **framework of organized activities that creates cultures, processes, procedures** in health systems which promote safety and minimise the risk of harm to patients.
- **Concerns associated with Patient safety**
 - ⊕ Around **1 in every 10 patients** is harmed in healthcare and more than **3 million deaths** occur annually due to unsafe care.
 - ⊕ Above **50% of harm is preventable**; half of this is attributed to **medications**.
 - ⊕ **Other:** Unsafe surgical procedures, healthcare-associated infections, diagnostic errors, patient misidentification, unsafe blood transfusion etc.
- **Initiatives taken to ensure Patient Safety**
 - ⊕ **Global:** World Alliance for Patient Safety; WHO Patient Safety Initiatives (2015–2020); National patient safety implementation framework (2018–2025); Global Patient Safety Challenge etc.
 - ⊕ **India:** National patient safety implementation framework (2018–2025), etc.

Charter covers 10 Patient Safety Rights

- | | |
|--|--|
| ➤ Right to timely, effective and appropriate care. | ➤ Right to dignity, respect, non-discrimination, privacy and confidentiality. |
| ➤ Right to safe health care processes and practices. | ➤ Right to information, education and supported decision making. |
| ➤ Right to qualified and competent health workers. | ➤ Right to access to medical records. |
| ➤ Right to safe medical products and their safe and rational use. | ➤ Right to be heard and fair resolution. |
| ➤ Right to safe and secure healthcare facilities. | ➤ Right to patient and family engagement. |

Supreme Court (SC) has asserted in a judgment that forests in India are a national asset

- SC observed this in the **State Of Telangana vs Mohd. Abdul Qasim** judgment case.
- **Key Highlights of the Judgement:**
 - ⊕ **Need to change from an anthropocentric to ecocentric approach:** Former centers on the needs of man and views nature in the light of these needs. On the other hand, the **latter** centers on the needs of nature and views man in light of these needs.
 - ◆ **Ecocentric approach** is based on the recognition that humans, as but one part of life on earth, must live within their ecological limits rather than see themselves as the purpose of environmental protection.
 - ⊕ **Contribution of forests to the financial wealth:** A country with excess **forest cover** would be in a position to sell its excess **carbon credit** to the one in deficit.
 - ◆ Carbon sink of about 24,000 mt of CO₂ has a worth of \$120 billion.
 - ⊕ **Impact of forests against climate change:** As per the RBI report, rising temperature and changing patterns of monsoon rainfall in India could cost the economy **2.8 % of its GDP**.
- SC also said that the concept of **"Green Accounting"** in evaluating a nation's wealth, including its natural assets, would extend enormous benefits which are both tangible and intangible.

Key Supreme Court Judgements

- **M.C. Mehta v. Kamal Nath, (2000):** Article 48A and 51A to be considered in light of Article 21 of the Constitution. Any disturbance of the basic environment elements, namely air, water and soil, which are necessary for "life", would be **hazardous to "life" within the meaning of Article 21 of the Constitution.**
- **Municipal Corpn. of Greater Mumbai v. Ankita Sinha, (2022):** Highlighted the concept of **Environmental Justice and Environmental Equity.**

India's FY24 pulses imports hit 6-year high as red lentil purchases jump

- This happened due to **lower production** that prompted India to import red lentils and yellow peas.
- **Why does India import pulses?**
 - ⊕ To **ensure stable supplies in domestic market** and keep prices under check.
 - ◆ Pulses inflation was at 17% in March 2024.
 - ⊕ Shortfall in domestic output following **deficit rainfall in growing areas.**
 - ◆ Ministry of Agriculture estimates **pulses production in 2023-24 will be at 234 lakh tonnes**, lower than last year production (261 lakh tonnes).
 - ⊕ Pulses **sowing area has reduced by 16%** from 2021-22 to 2023-24.
- **India's Status with respect to Pulses**
 - ⊕ India is **largest producer, consumer and importer of Pulses** in world.
 - ⊕ India **imported 4.65 million metric tons of pulses** in FY2023-24.
 - ⊕ **Major producing states:** Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, etc.
 - ⊕ **Major import countries:** Canada, Australia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Brazil etc.
- **About Pulses**
 - ⊕ Type of **leguminous crop** that are harvested for dry seed. E.g. Chickpeas, pigeon peas etc.
 - ⊕ Grown in both **Kharif and Rabi seasons**. Rabi pulses contribute more than 60% of total production.
- **Significance of Pulses**
 - ⊕ **Major sources of protein.**
 - ⊕ **Nitrogen-fixing properties of pulses improve soil fertility**, which increases productivity of farmland.

Initiatives taken to promote Pulses

- **National Food Security Mission (NFSM)** to increase the production of rice, wheat and pulses.
- **Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) Scheme** to ensure Minimum Support Price to farmers.
 - ⊕ Under it, procurement of Pulses and Copra shall be done under **Price Support Scheme.**

Also in News



National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)

- NIIF has invested \$200 million in iBUS Network and Infrastructure Pvt Ltd.
- **About NIIF (2015)**
 - ⊕ A Sovereign-linked **Alternative Asset Manager**, established by the Government of India (having a share of 49%).
 - ⊕ It is a collaborative investment platform for international and Indian investors.
 - ◆ It operates in two distinct and attractive asset classes: **Indian Infrastructure and Growth Equity.**
 - ⊕ It was established as an **Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)**, registered with **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).**
 - ⊕ Its **governing council** is headed by Finance Minister.
 - ⊕ **Key Funds under NIIF:** Master Fund, Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF) etc.



DURGA-2 (Directionally Unrestricted Ray Gun Array)

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is developing **DURGA-2** as per reports.
- **About DURGA-2:**
 - ⊕ It is a **directed energy weapon (DEW).**
 - ⊕ It's to be integrated with **land, sea and air-based platforms.**
- **DEW** use concentrated **electromagnetic energy** to combat enemy forces and assets.
 - ⊕ These weapons include **high energy lasers** and **other high power electromagnetics**—such as millimeter wave and high power **microwave weapons.**
 - ⊕ They are going to be the future of anti-missiles, **anti-drones or anti-aircraft warfare.**



Asiatic Wild Dogs (Dhole)

- Mange outbreak reported among Asiatic wild dogs in Mudumalai.
 - ⊖ Mange is a **skin disease** that affects mammals caused by **microscopic mites** that burrow into skin.
- **About Dhole (Cuon alpinus)**
 - ⊖ **Distribution:** India, Cambodia, Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand etc.
 - ◆ In India, it inhabits Eastern and Western Ghats, Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Ladakh etc.
 - ⊖ **Characteristics**
 - ◆ Carnivores that resemble a small wolf or domestic dog in size.
 - ◆ Hunt mainly in early morning or late evening.
 - ⊖ **Threat:** Habitat loss, disease threat etc.
 - ⊖ **Conservation status:**
 - ◆ **IUCN:** Endangered
 - ◆ **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule I and II
 - ◆ **CITES:** Appendix II



Juno mission

- NASA's Juno captures closest views of erupting volcanoes on Jupiter's moon Io.
 - ⊖ **Moon Io** is the most volcanically active world in the solar system.
- **About Juno mission**
 - ⊖ **Launched** in 2011.
 - ⊖ **Aim:** To understand the origin and evolution of Jupiter.
 - ◆ It will investigate the existence of a possible **solid planetary core**, map Jupiter's intense magnetic field, etc.
 - ⊖ In its **extended mission**, it continues its investigation of Jupiter till 2025, or until the spacecraft's end of life.



Shompen Tribe

- Shompen cast their vote for the first time in Lok Sabha Election.
- **About Shompen Tribe**
 - ⊖ One of the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups**.
 - ⊖ Reside in dense **tropical rain forests of Great Nicobar island**.
 - ⊖ Belong to the **Mongoloid group**.
 - ⊖ According to Census (2011), **estimated population of Shompen is 229**.
 - ⊖ They are **hunters and gatherers**. They used to hunt wild pig, python, monitor Lizard, crocodile, etc.
 - ⊖ **Live a semi-nomadic life** and have **not been colonised at one place** in a defined reserve forest.



Euvichol-S

- **World Health Organization (WHO)** has prequalified the **Euvichol-S vaccine** for Cholera.
 - ⊖ It's a **simplified formulation** of the oral cholera vaccine (OCV) **Euvichol-Plus**.
 - ⊖ Uses **fewer ingredients**, is **cheaper**, and can be **made more quickly than old version**.
- **About Cholera:**
 - ⊖ It's an acute diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine with **Vibrio cholerae** bacteria.
 - ⊖ It's transmitted through **ingestion of contaminated food or water**.
 - ⊖ Highest numbers of cases are reported in the **Middle East and Africa**
- India reported **132 cases in 2023** (till July).



Dragonfly mission

- NASA has announced that Dragonfly mission to Saturn's massive moon Titan will be launched in 2028.
 - ⊖ It is fourth mission of **NASA's New Frontiers Program**. The other three are NewHorizons, Juno, and OSIRIS-Rex (also OSIRIS-APEX).
- **About Dragonfly Mission**
 - ⊖ **Goal:** To explore the chemistry and habitability of multiple surface sites covering a large area. It will help in investigating Titan's habitability.
 - ⊖ It will reach **Titan in 2034**.
- Titan is the only satellite in our solar system **known to be blanketed by a dense atmosphere and host liquid seas on its surface**



Vasuki indicus

- Paleontologists have unearthed a giant predator snake in Gujarat's **Panandhro Lignite Mine in Kutch** named **Vasuki indicus**.
- **About Vasuki indicus:**
 - ⊖ Likely lived **47 million years ago** during the **Middle Eocene Period**.
 - ⊖ **Length range:** 36-49 feet.
 - ⊖ It's a member of the **Madtsoiidae snake family** that appeared roughly **90 million years ago** but went **extinct about 12,000 years ago**.
 - ⊖ It spread from **India** through **southern Eurasia** and into **north Africa** after the **Indian subcontinent** collided with **Eurasia** around **50 million years ago**.

Personality in news



Thakur Ranmat Singh

- **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** highlighted the contribution of the freedom fighter Thakur Ranmat Singh.
- **About Ranmat Singh**
 - ⊖ He held the **rank of a Sardar** in the service of the Maharaja of Rewa (Madhya Pradesh).
 - ⊖ **Key Contributions**
 - ◆ Played a key role in **starting Revolt** of 1857 in Satna, Madhya Pradesh.
 - ◆ He set up his entire military organization in the jungle itself.
 - ◆ He attacked the English Residency of **Nagaud** and killed the Resident.
 - ◆ He had a fierce fight with the combined army of the English and Bundelas in the field of **Bhelsai**.
 - ⊖ **Values:** Courage, Leadership, etc.

