The 1st Assembly of International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

The **1st assembly of the IBCA** convened in **New Delhi,** endorsed the India's **Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, as the President of IBCA.**

- The Assembly of the IBCA serves as its apex decision-making body and is convened at least once every 2 years.

About IBCA

- It is a **multi-country, multi-agency coalition of** 95 big cat range countries, non-range countries with an interest in **big cat conservation.**
  - ⊙ These Big Cats include **Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar & Puma. (refer to table)**
- **Genesis: Launched in April 2023** (occasion of **50 years of India's Project Tiger**)
- **Main Goal:** To **foster collaboration and synergy by establishing a platform** dedicated to **sharing best practices** in big cat conservation.
- **Founding Members (16):** Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ecuador, **India,** Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Suriname, & Uganda.
- **India** is the **host country** & **Secretariat** for the IBCA.

Significance of protecting big cats & their habitats

- **Protects Biodiversity:** As **Keystone species** big cats balance ecosystems and safeguard biodiversity.
- **Climate Change Mitigation:** Protecting big cat habitats safeguards **forests, water sources,** and **carbon sinks,** aiding in **climate change mitigation.**
- **Supports economy:** Providing **livelihood opportunities** and promoting **ecotourism.**

Big Cat Species	IUCN Status	CITES Status	Wildlife Protection Act
Tiger Panthera tigris	Endangered	Appendix I	Schedule 1
Lion Panthera leo	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule 1
Leopard Panthera pardus	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule 1
Snow Leopard Panthera uncia	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule 1
Cheetah Acinonyx jubatus	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule 1
Jaguar Panthera onca	Near Threatened	Appendix I	Not found in India
Puma Puma concolor	Least Concern	Appendix I	Not found in India

The 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) Concluded in Geneva

The International Labour Conference is the annual meeting of the International Labour Organization.

Key Highlights

- **Adopted Biological Hazards in the Working Environment Convention, 2025 (Convention No. 192):** The **1st international instrument** specifically addressing **biological hazards** in the **working environment.**
  - ⊙ It calls on Member States to formulate **national policies** & adopt measures on occupational safety and health that include the prevention and protection against biological hazards.
- **Approved Amendment to Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC):** The changes call for the right to shore leave and repatriation, and call for recognizing seafarers as key workers.
  - ⊙ MLC is a binding international law for ensuring minimum working and living standards for all seafarers on ships. **India ratified the MLC in 2015.**
- **Decent Work in the Platform Economy:** It held its 1st standard-setting discussion on decent work in the platform economy, an important step toward **improving rights and conditions for digital platform workers.**
- **Resolution on Reducing Informality:** ILC adopted a Resolution to reduce informality and support the **transition to formal work.**
  - ⊙ The resolution calls for urgent action to improve working conditions, extend social protection, and create decent jobs, especially for those most affected by informality.
- **Other:** Formal approval was given to the **ILO's tripartite contribution** to the **Second World Summit for Social Development,** set for November 2025 in Doha.
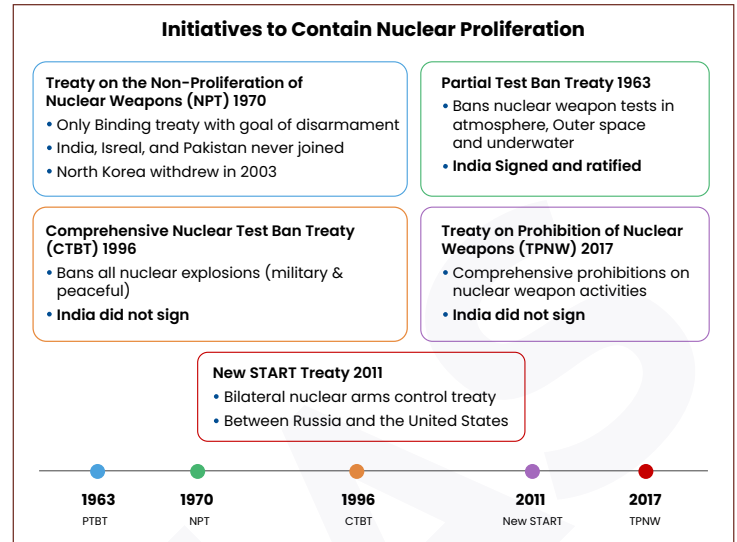
Global Coalition for Social Justice

- The 2nd edition of the Global Coalition for Social Justice annual forum took place on the side lines of the **113th ILC in Geneva.**
- It is an initiative of the **ILO,** launched in **2023.** It aims to bring together global, regional, and national actors to advance social justice through policy and action coherence.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2025 Warns of a New Nuclear Arms Race

Key Findings

- **Global Nuclear Stockpile Decline:** Since the end of the Cold War, the number of **retired warheads has exceeded new deployments.**
- **Countries Expanding Stockpile: China** is expanding fastest, with its stockpile now at least **600 warheads.**
  - **India's arsenal** increased from **172 to 180** warheads, more than Pakistan's (170).
- **Modernisation:** In **2024,** all **9 nuclear-armed countries** continued to **modernise their arsenals.**
- **Status of Fissile Materials:** The explosive material utilized in nuclear weapons is fissile material, either **highly enriched uranium (HEU) or separated plutonium.**
  - **China, and Pakistan** have produced **both HEU and plutonium** for use in their nuclear weapons.
  - **India and Israel** have produced **mainly plutonium.**
- **Emerging Threats:**
  - **Modern Technologies:** The rapid development of **artificial intelligence (AI), cyber capabilities, space assets, missile defence and quantum** are radically creating potential sources of instability.
  - **Arms control in crisis:** While **New START** remains **in force until early 2026,** there are no signs of negotiations to renew or replace it.

Initiatives to Contain Nuclear Proliferation

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) 1970
- Only Binding treaty with goal of disarmament
- India, Isreal, and Pakistan never joined
- North Korea withdrew in 2003

Partial Test Ban Treaty 1963
- Bans nuclear weapon tests in atmosphere, Outer space and underwater
- **India Signed and ratified**

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) 1996
- Bans all nuclear explosions (military & peaceful)
- **India did not sign**

Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) 2017
- Comprehensive prohibitions on nuclear weapon activities
- **India did not sign**

New START Treaty 2011
- Bilateral nuclear arms control treaty
- Between Russia and the United States

1963	1970	1996	2011	2017
PTBT	NPT	CTBT	New START	TPNW

DRDO & IIT Delhi Achieve Quantum Entanglement-Based Free-Space Communication

The free-space quantum secure communication was demonstrated over a **distance of ~1 km via a free-space optical link.**
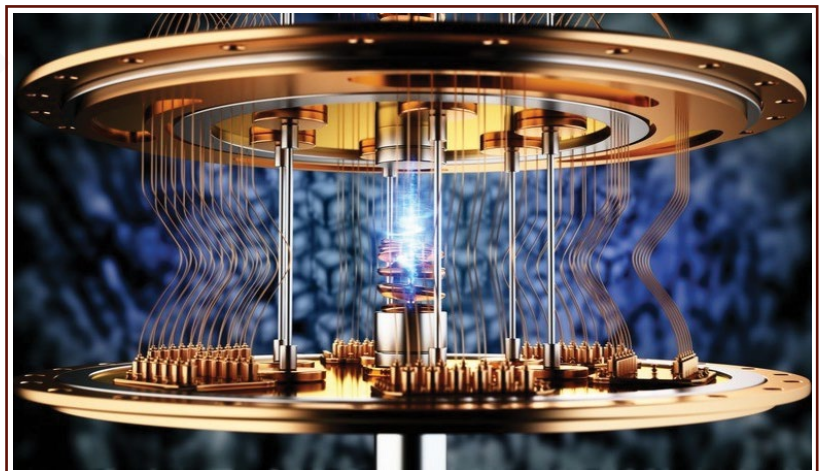
- **ISRO** demonstrated **1st free-space QKD** over 300m in **2021.**

About the experiment

- It was part of the '**Design and development of photonic technologies for free space Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)**' of DRDO.
- The experiment exhibited a very low quantum bit error rate (QBER) of less than 7%.
  - **QBER** is the **error** between the information sent and received and an indicator of **the probability of eavesdropping.**
- It paves the way for **real-time applications** in **quantum cybersecurity, long-distance QKD,** and the **future quantum internet.**

What is QKD?

- **Communication Technology:** It is a **Quantum Communication technology** based on **quantum mechanics,** that is, **quantum entanglement and cryptography.**
  - Quantum mechanics explains how **extremely small objects simultaneously** have the **characteristics of both particles and waves** (a disturbance or variation that transfers energy).
    - Physicists call this the **"wave-particle duality."**
- **Key Principles:**
  - **Quantum entanglement:** Particles of the same origin, which were once connected, **always stay connected,** even when **separated by vast distances.**
  - **Quantum cryptography: encryption** to **secure and transmit data** in a way that **cannot be hacked.**

> **Benefits of Entanglement-Based QKD**
>
> - **Functionality:** Secure key distribution even if devices are compromised or imperfect.
> - **Detection of eavesdropping:** Any attempt to measure or intercept the entangled photons disturbs the quantum state.
> - **Free-space QKD:** No need for expensive fibre-optic cables—ideal for tough terrain and dense cities.

The Prime Minister of India Visits Cyprus after 23 years

During the visit both countries signed a **Joint Declaration on the implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership.**
- The Indian PM was also conferred with Cyprus' highest civilian honour, the **'Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III'.**

Key Highlights of the Joint Declaration
- Both countries reaffirmed their support for a **rules-based international order,** grounded in the UN Charter.
- Both expressed their strong commitment to the resumption of UN-facilitated efforts to achieve a comprehensive & lasting settlement of the **Cyprus Question.**
- Cyprus expressed strong support for India against cross-border terrorism, **condemned the recent Pahalgam terrorist attack.**

Significance of Cyprus for India
- **To counter the growing Turkey-Pakistan axis** & support India's broader strategy to **isolate Pakistan diplomatically.**
  - Turkey supported Pakistan on Kashmir issue, and **backed Pakistan during Operation Sindoor.**
- **Gateway to Europe:** Cyprus forms **part of the energy corridor** & strengthens East-West connectivity through **India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC).**
- **FDI:** Cyprus is among the top 10 investors in India with cumulative investments of USD **14.65 Billion** during 2000 –2025.
- **Enhanced India-EU Relations:** As Cyprus is set to hold the rotating presidency of EU Council in 2026. Cyprus can play a pivotal role in advocating for India's interests within the bloc.
- **Other: Supports India** for permanent seat at UNSC, Nuclear Suppliers Group etc.

Cyprus Question/Problem
- Cyprus is an island in the eastern **Mediterranean Sea,** located close to Turkey and Syria.
  - It is a member of the **European Union** (EU) despite being geographically in Asia.
- It got independence from the British in 1960; however **Since 1974 Cyprus has been divided** between **Turkiye-backed Northern Cyprus** and **Republic of Cyprus.** It is known as Cyprus Question/problem.
- **India** supports a **bi-zonal bicommunal federation** based on UN Resolutions as a solution to the Cyprus problem.

Also In News

Census 2027

The **Registrar General of India,** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs,** has notified that the **Census** will be held in **2027.**
- The notification was published under **the Census Act, 1948.**

Key Highlights of Census 2027
- **To be conducted in 2 phases:**
  - **Phase I – House Listing (HLO)**
  - **Phase II – Population Enumeration (PE)**
- Include **Caste enumeration as well.**
- Conducted through **digital means, using mobile applications.**
- **Provision of self-enumeration** would also be made available to the people.

Cyber Suraksha

Defence Cyber Agency of the **Ministry of Defence** begins Cyber Suraksha exercise.

About Cyber Suraksha Exercise
- It is a **comprehensive Cybersecurity Exercise** to bolster **national cyber resilience.**
- The exercise is designed to **simulate real-world cyber threats,** for providing **targeted training sessions.**

WHA Resolution on Skin Diseases

The World Health Assembly (WHA) of WHO unanimously passed a resolution titled **"Skin Diseases as a Global Public Health Priority."**

About the Resolution
- **Need:**
  - **Widespread Impact:** Skin diseases affect 1.9 billion people globally.
  - **Neglected Area:** Often **underfunded and overlooked,** especially in low- and middle-income countries.
- **Supported by:** International League of Dermatologic Societies (ILDS), the world's largest dermatology alliance.
- **Key provisions**
  - Provides for **Global Action Plan** to establish a framework for **Prevention, Early detection, Effective treatment, Long-term care of** skin diseases.
  - Calls for **dedicated health investment,**
  - Supports **expansion of research, surveillance and data collection.**

PM-WANI Scheme

TRAI releases **Telecommunication Tariff Order 2025** on Tariff for retail broadband connectivity for PDOs under **PM-WANI Scheme.**

About Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) Scheme
- It was launched by the **Department of Telecommunication** in 2020.
- **Aim:** To enhance the proliferation of **public WiFi hotspots** to create robust digital communications infrastructure in the country, especially in rural areas.
- The scheme **encourages local shops** and establishments to provide Wi-Fi for last-mile internet delivery.
  - They do not require a license or charge a registration fee.

Dharti Aaba Janbhagidari Abhiyan

Ministry of Tribal Affairs launches Largest Tribal Empowerment Campaign.

About Dharti Aaba Janbhagidari Abhiyan
- Under it, **nationwide benefit saturation camps** are being conducted at the **village & habitation level** to provide access to critical entitlements and government services.
  - E.g. **Adhaar Card Enrolments and Updates.**
- It is a key initiative under **Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh,** which honors the legacy, culture, & contribution of **India's tribal communities.**
- It embodies the **principles of last-mile delivery, people's participation (Janbhagidari) & dignified tribal empowerment** under the larger umbrellas of PM-JANMAN and Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan.

Switch Auction

In a government switch auction conducted for a notified amount of ₹25,000 crore, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) accepted approximately ₹ 9,000 crore.

About Switch Auction
- **Genesis:** Began in 2019 **by the RBI** on behalf of the Government of India.
- **Objective:** To manage the **maturity profile of public debt by replacing short-term securities with longer-dated** ones.
- **Mechanism:** Market participants **sell source securities** to the Government of India and **simultaneously buy destination securities** at quoted prices.
  - The process is executed through the **e-Kuber portal** via the **Switch Transaction module.**
- **Benefits:** Enhances debt sustainability, Bond Market development, etc.

Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) Achal

Fifth FPV Achal built by Goa Shipyard Ltd Launched for Indian Coast Guard (ICG)
- It is the fifth FPV in a series of eight.

About FPV Achal
- Its primary role includes **protection, monitoring, control, surveillance** and safeguarding **offshore assets** and **island territories.**
- It is designed and constructed under **stringent dual-class certification** from the **American Bureau of Shipping and Indian Register of Shipping.**
- It is aligned with the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** in defence manufacturing with **60% indigenous** contents.

Rinderpest

ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal recognized as a Category A **Rinderpest Holding Facility** by the **World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)** and UN FAO.
- **ICAR-NIHSAD** is a research institute on **exotic & emerging pathogens of animals, & WOAH reference laboratory for avian influenza.**

About Rinderpest (Cattle Plague)
- It is a **contagious viral disease** affecting **clovenhoofed animals** (mainly **cattle & buffalo**).
- **Caused by:** A virus of the **Paramyxoviridae family, genus Morbillivirus.**
- **Severity:** Spread by effective **contact** (does not affect humans) and may also lead to **death.**
  - **Infected** animals on **recovery** acquire **lifetime immunity.**
- This is the second infectious disease to have been eradicated from the world after smallpox.

Samarth Program

The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) provided grants to **18 startups** under its **'Samarth'** Program.
- **C-DOT** is the **Telecom R&D** centre of the **Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications.**

About Samarth Program
- It is a **cutting-edge Startup Incubation** Program of **C-DOT** for development of India's **telecommunications & IT sectors.**
- It aids in access to Startup **grants (up to 5 lakh/ startup),** world-class **infrastructure,** expert **mentorship, networking etc.**
- **Implementation Partner:** Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) & TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs).
  - **STPI** is a premier S&T organization under **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).**

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