

# NEWS TODAY

## India Refuses to Sign Joint Statement At Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting

Because of India's refusal, the meeting concluded without the adoption of a joint declaration, as SCO rules require **full consensus** for joint declaration.

- India's Defence Minister reiterated that India has sought to build consensus on addressing global challenges based on the motto '**One Earth, One Family, One Future**,' which is rooted in India's civilizational ethos of '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**.'
- He also highlighted that the **SCO accounts for 30% of global GDP and 40% of the world's population**.

### Significance of SCO for India

- **Fostering Regional Security:** SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) can help counter terrorism.
  - **Boost to Socioeconomic Ties:** Promotes cooperation through initiatives such as the **SCO Young Scientists Conclave** and the **Special Working Group** on Innovation and Startups (proposed by India).
  - **Enhancing Regional Connectivity:** International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) involves SCO members; thus, their support could be leveraged.
    - ⊕ Such projects are also crucial for **countering China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
  - **Countering the hegemony of Western-dominated institutions** via the SCO's proposal for trade in national currency instead of the dollar.
- China-Pakistan Axis,** China's silence towards Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism and the Perception of the SCO being an anti-Western grouping, etc., are the key issues being faced by India at the SCO.

### Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)



#### Genesis

Founded at the Shanghai Summit in 2001 as an intergovernmental organisation  
Evolved from the "Shanghai Five" grouping



#### 10 Member Countries

- **Original Shanghai Five (2001):**  
China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan
- **Later Additions:**  
Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus



#### "Shanghai Spirit"

- Mutual trust
  - Mutual benefit
  - Equality
  - Consultation
  - Respect for cultural diversity
  - Pursuit of common development
- These principles underpin the working of the SCO



#### Organizational Structure

- **Council of Heads of States** (Apex decision-making body)
- ↓
- **Council of Heads of Governments** (Second-highest council)

## India In Touch with China on Rare Earth Magnet Supply Amid Its Export Restriction: MEA

China, which **controls over 90% of global processing capacity**, enacted restrictions in April requiring **companies to obtain import permits from Beijing**.

- China's export restriction was **seen as a response to the US's policy of reciprocal tariffs**.

### What are Rare Earth Elements (REE)?

- **Definition:** REE include **17 metals** (the lanthanides plus scandium and yttrium).
  - ⊕ **Classified as critical minerals** due to:
    - ◆ Rarely found in **economically exploitable concentrations**, limited suppliers, Strategic importance in defence, etc.
- **Features:**
  - ⊕ REE alloys **prevent corrosion in metals and increase efficiency** in energy storage.
  - ⊕ They also **improve performance in electronics and advanced manufacturing**.
  - ⊕ **REE magnets** are often **utilised in magnets due to their high remanence and coercivity**.
    - ◆ This property is a result of the **relatively large number of unpaired electrons in their atomic structure**.
- **Application:** They are **essential in aerospace, defence, automotive, and energy systems**.
  - ⊕ Examples include **cellular telephones, computer hard drives, guidance systems, lasers, and radar and sonar systems etc.**
- **Global reserves**
  - ⊕ **China:** 44 million metric tons (largest reserve)
  - ⊕ **Brazil:** 21 million metric tons (2nd Largest)
  - ⊕ **India:** Around 7 million metric tons (5th largest in the world)

**Limited processing capacity** has made India **dependent on imports for REEs** (especially from China). The **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**, launched in 2025, aims to promote the exploration of various critical minerals, including REEs.

## Union Minister Of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (Mopsw) Inaugurates Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL)

SMFCL is India's first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) in the maritime sector.

- Formerly known as Sagarmala Development Company Limited, SMFCL is a Mini Ratna, Category-I, Central Public Sector Enterprise.
- It is now formally registered as an NBFC with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- It will offer tailored financial products to a diverse range of stakeholders, such as port authorities and shipping companies.
  - ⊕ It will also support strategic sectors like shipbuilding, renewable energy, cruise tourism, and maritime education.

**Other Key initiatives launched for the Maritime Sector**

- **Digital Centre of Excellence (DCoE):** Foster innovation and modernisation of port operations and shipping logistics through emerging technologies like AI, IoT, and Blockchain.
- **SAGAR SETU platform:** Aligned with PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, SAGAR SETU integrates multiple service providers to offer seamless EXIM (export-import)-related services.
- **DRISHTI (Data driven decision support-Review-Institutional Information-System for-Hastening and-Tracking-Implementation):** Aims to accelerate the implementation of Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.
- **Scale of Rates (SOR) of Major Ports:** Providing a uniform structure for port tariffs.
- **Gateway to Green: India's Ports Transforming into Hydrogen Hubs:** Outlines a roadmap for transforming Indian ports into hubs for green hydrogen production, storage, and export.

### Maritime India Vision 2030

- Provides a comprehensive framework for the holistic development of India's maritime sector, encompassing ports, shipping, and waterways.
- It aims to propel India to global maritime leadership.

### Amrit Kaal Vision 2047

- Builds on the Maritime India Vision 2030.
- Aims to develop world-class ports and promote inland water transport, coastal shipping, and a sustainable maritime sector.

## US pulls funding from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

The US has accused Gavi, along with the World Health Organisation (WHO), of silencing dissenting views and legitimate questions about vaccine safety.

- ⊕ The US has long been one of the biggest supporters of Gavi.

### Rising trend of US withdrawal from Global Alliance

- In recent years, the United States has exhibited a rising trend of withdrawing from key global alliances and institutions such as the WHO, the Paris Climate Agreement, UN Human Rights Council, UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), etc.
- As a global superpower, the U.S.'s withdrawal carries far greater implications for international governance.



### Impact of US Withdrawing from Global Alliances

- **Weakening of Multilateralism/Rule-Based Order:** E.g. Israel withdraws participation from UN Human Rights Council.
- **Undermine Climate Actions:** 2024 was recorded as the hottest year and the USA stands as the world's second-largest greenhouse gas emitter behind China.
- **Shortage of Funds for Health:** US exit could leave institutions with fund crunch. E.g., In 2024, US funded about 15% of WHO's total funding.
- **Other:** It creates a leadership vacuum that can be filled up by China (it may reduce India's influence in global organisations' decision-making), etc.

### About Gavi (2000)

- It is a public-private partnership.
  - ⊕ Its core partners include the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Gates Foundation.
- **Mission:** To save lives and protect people's health by increasing equitable and sustainable use of vaccines.
  - ⊕ It vaccinated over 1 billion children across the poorest countries
- It is a member of the WHO-led Vaccine Safety Net (VSN) project.
- **Secretariat** - Geneva, Switzerland.

## India celebrates 10 years of the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

It was launched on **25 June 2015** and it is the **First Water-focused Mission**.

➤ **AMRUT 2.0 was launched on 1 October 2021** for a period of 05 years i.e. **2021-22 to 2025-26**.

⊖ It covers all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

### About AMRUT

➤ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

➤ **Key Objective:**

⊖ Ensure **every household has access to a tap and a sewerage connection**.

⊖ **Increase the amenity value of cities** (e.g. parks)

⊖ **Reduce pollution** by promoting public transport, etc.

➤ **Scheme Type:** Centrally sponsored scheme, funds shared among States and UTs based on urban population and number of towns.

➤ **Coverage:** Covered **500 selected cities and towns** (now 485 cities including 15 merged cities).

➤ **Other Key Initiatives Under AMRUT**

⊖ **Jal Hi AMRUT:** To treat and reuse water safely

⊖ **AMRUT Mitra:** To foster skills among SHG women related to water management in their communities

### Key Reform-Oriented Outcomes under AMRUT & AMRUT 2.0



**99 lakh** streetlights replaced with energy-efficient LEDs.



**3,599 cities** implemented Online Building Permission System.



**46 lakh tonnes** CO<sub>2</sub> reduction per year.



**₹4,984 crore** raised by BULBs through Municipal Bonds.



GIS-based Master Plans for AMRUT cities formulated for **231 cities covering 1 lakh sq. km area**.



### Also In News



#### AlphaGenome

Google DeepMind has launched a new AI model called **AlphaGenome**.

➤ New AI model will help in **accurately predicting how individual mutations in human DNA affect their functions and impact our health**.

➤ It is built upon Google DeepMind's earlier genomics model, **Enformer**, and complements to **AlphaMissense**, which specializes in categorizing the effects of variants within protein-coding regions.

➤ Model will analyze extremely long DNA sequences – up to 1 million base pairs – and generate highly detailed predictions.



#### Operation Deep Manifest

Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has **seized goods valued at approximately ₹9 crore** under Operation Deep Manifest

#### About Operation Deep Manifest

➤ This operation was launched to **target the illegal import of Pakistani-origin goods** routed through third countries, primarily via Dubai, UAE.

⊖ Following the Pahalgam terror attacks, India imposed a **comprehensive ban on the direct or indirect import or transit of goods originating in or exported from Pakistan**.

◆ Previously, such goods were **subject to a 200% customs duty**.





## Science and Technology (S&T) Clusters Initiatives

S&T Clusters Annual Report 2024-2025" highlighted various initiatives launched under the programme, including **Kalaanubhav.in** which is an AR/VR-enabled artisan marketplace

### About the S&T Clusters initiative

- **Genesis:** Launched in 2020 based on the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- **Aims:** To bring together stakeholders, like academic institutions, R&D organisations, industry, local governments, to deliver demand-driven solutions through innovative ideas.
- **Working Model:**
  - ⊕ Operates through a consortium-based approach.
  - ⊕ Focuses on science and tech-based regional problem-solving.
- **Nodal Implementing Agency:** Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)
  - ⊕ PSA works under the Cabinet Secretary



## Official Language

Golden jubilee of **Department of Official Language** has been celebrated.

- It was established in the year 1975.

### Official Language

- Provisions related to the official language are covered in **Part XVII** of the Constitution.
- **Article 343** states that official language of the Union shall be **Hindi** in Devanagari script.
  - ⊕ **Official Language Act, 1963** provides for use of **English**, in addition to **Hindi**, for all official purposes of Union and business transactions in Parliament.
- **Article 344** provides for constitution of **Commission and Committee on Official Language**
- **Article 345** provides that State Legislature may adopt any one or more languages used in the State or Hindi as the official language of that State.



## Green Data Center

**Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Union Minister for Science & Technology** laid the foundation of state-of-the-art **Green Data Centre at Central Electronics Limited (CEL), Ghaziabad.**

### About Green Data Center

- It will focus on minimizing environmental impact and maximizing energy efficiency.
  - ⊕ It is aligned with aim of making India a self-reliant global digital power.
- It has been set by the of collaboration between **CEL**, a Govt PSU affiliated with **CSIR** under Ministry of Science & Technology and **ESDS** (private company)



## Manasarovar lake

After a six-year gap, Indian pilgrims completed the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra** and visited the sacred lake.

- This marks the first **India-China people-to-people exchange** to resume since the COVID-19 pandemic and the LAC stand-off.
- The yatra takes place via two routes: **Lipulekh Pass (Uttarakhand)** and **Nathu La Pass (Sikkim)**.

### About Manasarovar lake

- **Mount Kailash Parvat** is also known as **Lake Manas Sarovar** in Sanskrit
- **Location:** Located in Tibet, the Southern foot of Mount Kailash.
  - ⊕ It is **world's highest freshwater lake**.
- **Major Monastery:** **Chiu Gompa Monastery** is located near the lake.
- **Cultural and Religious Significance**
  - ⊕ **Hinduism:** Lake is believed to be created by **Lord Brahma**
  - ⊕ **Buddhism:** Buddhists associate it with **Lake Anotatta** and believe **Lord Buddha** was conceived here.



## International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)

**Finance Minister** reviewed progress of **Gujarat International Finance Tech- City (GIFT City)-IFSC.**

- **GIFT City-IFSC** was established as Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in 2015.
- It acts as a **hub for international financial activities**, bridges the gap between **Indian and global financial markets**, etc.

### IFSC Authority

- **IFSC Authority** is a statutory body established under IFSC Act, 2019.
- A unified regulator for development and regulation of financial products, financial services and financial institutions in IFSCs in India.



## UN80 Initiative

**UN80 Initiative** was launched by the United Nations to **commemorate the signing of the UN Charter 80 years ago** in 1945.

- The UN80 Initiative is aimed at **streamlining operations, sharpening impact, and reaffirming the UN's relevance** for a rapidly changing world.

### About United Nations (UN)

- **Genesis:** United Nations is an international organisation **founded in 1945 following the World War II**
- **Six principal organs**
  - ⊕ General Assembly
  - ⊕ Security Council,
  - ⊕ Economic and Social Council,
  - ⊕ Trusteeship Council
  - ⊕ International Court of Justice
  - ⊕ UN Secretariat
- **Total Members:** 193 (India is a founding member)

## Place in News



## Japan (Capital: Tokyo)

Earthquakes strike the Japanese island chain.

- **Political Features:**
  - ⊕ **Location:** An **island nation** off the east coast of Asia.
  - ⊕ **Main Islands:** Honshu (largest), Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku.
  - ⊕ **Maritime Boundaries:**
    - ◆ East: Pacific Ocean
    - ◆ North: Sea of Okhotsk
    - ◆ West: Sea of Japan (also called East Sea)
    - ◆ Southwest: East China Sea
- **Geographical Features:**
  - ⊕ **Highest Peak:** Mount Fuji (3,776 m), a famous volcano.
  - ⊕ **Major Rivers:** Shinano (longest), Tone, and Kiso.
  - ⊕ **Natural Hazards:** Frequent earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI