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Top Stories of The Day

- *Sanjeev Jain* Appointed as India's Next Ambassador to South Korea to Strengthen Bilateral Ties
- *India Secures 20 Medals* Including 4 Gold at Under-20 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026
- *Dvipa Defence and DRDO* Jointly Develop Indigenous UGRAM 7.62×51 mm Battle Rifle in 100 Days
- *Madhya Pradesh* Becomes First State to Reconstitute Waqf Board Under Waqf (Amendment) Act 2025
- *University of Melbourne* Partners with TIDCO to Establish Emerging Technologies Research Hub in Tamil Nadu
- *Padma Vibhushan Awardee and Pandavani Legend Teejan Bai* Passes Away at 70
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi Receives Indonesia's Highest Civilian Honour *Bintang Adipurna Award*
- *India and Indonesia* Sign Strategic Agreements on BrahMos Missile Supply and Maritime Security Cooperation
- *India and Japan* Sign First Defence Co-Development Agreement for UNICORN Naval Mast Systems
- ISRO Successfully Conducts *First Ground Test of SOLVE* for Gaganyaan Human Spaceflight Mission

Sanjeev Jain Appointed as India's Next Ambassador to South Korea



- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has appointed Sanjeev Jain, a 2008-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea (South Korea).
- He is currently serving as India's Ambassador to Cabo Verde and will succeed Gourangalal Das as India's envoy to South Korea.
- The appointment comes at a time when India and South Korea are deepening cooperation in trade, technology, defence, semiconductors, and the Indo-Pacific region.
- Previously served at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) handling ASEAN countries and was associated with organising major multilateral events, including the BRICS Summit.

India-South Korea Relations:

- Diplomatic Relations Established: 1973.
- Upgraded to Special Strategic Partnership: 2015.

Key Areas of Cooperation:

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| • Trade and Investment |
| • Defence and Maritime Security |
| • Semiconductor and Electronics Manufacturing |
| • Green Hydrogen and Clean Energy |
| • Science & Technology |
| • Artificial Intelligence (AI) |
| • Indo-Pacific Cooperation |

- South Korea is one of India's important partners under the Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

Key Bilateral Agreements:

- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA): Signed in 2009, operational since 2010.
- Cooperation under the Special Strategic Partnership includes defence production, shipbuilding, resilient supply chains, and emerging technologies.

About South Korea:

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| • Official Name: Republic of Korea (ROK). |
| • Capital: Seoul. |
| • Currency: South Korean Won (KRW). |
| • President: Lee Jae-myung. |
| • Neighbouring Countries: North Korea, China (across the Yellow Sea), and Japan (across the Sea of Japan/East Sea). |

- South Korea is one of Asia's leading economies and a global leader in semiconductors, automobiles, consumer electronics, and shipbuilding.

About the Indian Foreign Service (IFS):

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| • Constituted: 1946. |
| • Cadre Controlling Authority: Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). |
| • Recruitment: Through the Civil Services Examination conducted by the UPSC. |

Role:

- Represents India in foreign countries and international organisations.
- Promotes India's diplomatic, strategic, economic, and cultural interests abroad.
- Negotiates international treaties and agreements.

- Protects the interests of Indian citizens overseas.

Exam Focus Points:

• New Ambassador: Sanjeev Jain.
• Country: Republic of Korea (South Korea).
• Service: Indian Foreign Service (IFS), 2008 Batch.
• Current Posting Before Appointment: Ambassador to Cabo Verde.
• Succeeds: Gourangalal Das.

• Diplomatic Relations: India–South Korea established in 1973.
• Special Strategic Partnership: Since 2015.
• Major Trade Agreement: Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), 2009.
• Administrative Ministry: Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
• Key Policy Link: Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Strategy.

India Bags 20 Medals at Under-20 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026



• Muskan – Women's 53 kg
• Kajal – Women's 76 kg
• Sumit Kumar Laxman Bharaskar – Men's Freestyle 70 kg

Championship Highlights:

• Venue: Pattaya, Thailand
• Tournament: Under-20 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026

- India delivered an outstanding performance at the Under-20 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026 held in Pattaya, Thailand, finishing with 20 medals, including 4 gold, 7 silver, and 9 bronze.
- Indian wrestlers secured podium finishes across men's freestyle, women's wrestling, and Greco-Roman events, with the women's team finishing second in the team standings and the men's freestyle team also earning a top-three finish.
- The performance reflects India's growing strength in age-group wrestling and its robust talent pipeline for future international competitions.

Disciplines:

• Men's Freestyle
• Women's Wrestling
• Greco-Roman Wrestling
• India recorded medal-winning performances across all three disciplines.
• The women's team finished second with 184 points, just behind China and ahead of Japan.

Medal Tally of India:

• Gold: 4
• Silver: 7
• Bronze: 9
• Total Medals: 20
• Gold Medal Winners:
• Parveen – Women's 50 kg

About the Under-20 Asian Wrestling Championships:

- Organised under the aegis of United World Wrestling (UWW) and the Asian wrestling governing body.
- Annual continental championship for wrestlers under the age of 20.

- Serves as a major platform for identifying and nurturing future Olympic and World Championship wrestlers.

Features competitions in:

• Men's Freestyle
• Women's Wrestling
• Greco-Roman Wrestling.
• About United World Wrestling (UWW):
• Established: 1912 (originally as FILA; renamed United World Wrestling in 2014).
• Headquarters: Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland.
• President: Nenad Lalović.
• Role: International governing body for the sport of wrestling.
• Recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

About the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI):

• Established: 1958.
• Headquarters: New Delhi.

• Affiliated to: United World Wrestling (UWW), Indian Olympic Association (IOA), and the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
• Role: Governing body for wrestling in India, responsible for athlete selection, coaching, and promotion of the sport.

Exam Focus Points:

• Tournament: Under-20 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026.
• Venue: Pattaya, Thailand.
• India's Medal Tally: 20 (4 Gold, 7 Silver, 9 Bronze).
• Women's Team Ranking: Second.
• Organiser: United World Wrestling (UWW).
• UWW Headquarters: Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland.
• UWW President: Nenad Lalović.
• Indian Governing Body: Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

Defence Startup and DRDO's ARDE Jointly Develop Indigenous UGRAM Rifle in 100 Days



- Hyderabad-based defence startup Dvipa Defence, in collaboration with the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), a laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has developed the UGRAM 7.62×51 mm Battle Rifle in just 100 days.
- The rifle has successfully cleared key Indian Army General Staff Qualitative Requirement

(GSQR) trials, extensive field evaluations, and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) trials.

- It is now moving towards procurement by several Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), including the CRPF, ITBP, SSB, and NSG.

What is the UGRAM Battle Rifle?

- The UGRAM is an indigenous 7.62×51 mm NATO calibre battle rifle designed for military and internal security operations. It has been jointly developed by Dvipa Defence and DRDO's ARDE to provide a modern, lightweight, and highly reliable weapon system capable of operating in diverse climatic conditions.

Key Features:

• Weapon: UGRAM Battle Rifle.
• Developed By: Dvipa Defence and DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE).
• Development Time: 100 days.
• Calibre: 7.62×51 mm NATO.
• Operating System: Gas-operated rotating bolt mechanism.
• Weight: Less than 4 kg.
• Effective Range: Approximately 500 metres.

Successfully completed:

- Indian Army GSQR trials.
- MHA Board trials.
- Reliability and endurance testing in varied climatic conditions.

Proposed users:

• Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
• Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)
• Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)
• National Security Guard (NSG).

About ARDE:

- Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) is a premier laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

• Established: 1958.
• Location: Pune, Maharashtra.
• Parent Organisation: DRDO.

Role:

• Development of small arms.
• Artillery systems.
• Tank guns.

• Ammunition.
• Rocket and missile launcher systems.

- Major indigenous systems developed include INSAS, Pinaka Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher, ASMI Submachine Gun, and various artillery systems.

About DRDO:

• Established: 1958.
• Headquarters: New Delhi.
• Chairman: Rajesh Kumar Singh,

About the General Staff Qualitative Requirement (GSQR):

- GSQR is a set of operational and technical specifications prepared by the Indian Army for defence equipment procurement.
- Any indigenous or imported defence system must satisfy GSQR standards before induction into service.

Exam Focus Points

• Weapon: UGRAM 7.62×51 mm Battle Rifle.
• Developed By: Dvipa Defence and DRDO's ARDE.
• Development Time: 100 days.
• Calibre: 7.62×51 mm NATO.
• Parent Organisation of ARDE: DRDO.
• ARDE Location: Pune, Maharashtra.
• Administrative Ministry of DRDO: Ministry of Defence.
• Procurement Agencies: CRPF, ITBP, SSB, NSG.
• Trial Cleared: Indian Army GSQR and MHA trials.

Madhya Pradesh Becomes First State to Reconstitute Waqf Board Under the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025



- Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in India to reconstitute its Waqf Board under the provisions of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.
- The newly constituted 10-member Madhya Pradesh Waqf Board includes two non-Muslim (Hindu) members for the first time, reflecting the changes introduced by the amended law.
- Sanwar Patel has been appointed as the Chairman of the Board. The reconstitution was notified through the Madhya Pradesh Gazette.

What is the Waqf Board?

- A Waqf Board is a statutory body constituted by the State Government under the Waqf Act, 1995 for the administration, supervision, protection, and management of Waqf properties in the state.
- A Waqf is a permanent endowment of movable or immovable property dedicated by a Muslim for religious, charitable, or pious purposes under Islamic law.

Key Highlights:

- Historic Feature: Inclusion of two non-Muslim (Hindu) members for the first time.

Non-Muslim Members:

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| • Manoj Malpani (Indore) |
| • Animesh Bhargava (Guna) |
| • Notification: Issued through the Madhya Pradesh Gazette. |

About the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

- The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 was enacted to improve the governance, transparency, and accountability of Waqf properties across India.

Major Provisions:

- Permits the inclusion of non-Muslim members in State Waqf Boards.
- Enhances transparency and accountability in Waqf property administration.
- Strengthens digitisation and record management of Waqf assets.
- Seeks to improve the protection and utilisation of Waqf properties.
- Renames the Waqf Act, 1995 as the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development (UWMEED) Act, 1995.

About the Central Waqf Council:

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| • Established: 1964. |
| • Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Minority Affairs. |
| • Nature: Statutory advisory body. |

Role:

- Advises the Central and State Governments on matters relating to Waqf administration.
- Monitors the functioning of State Waqf Boards.
- Promotes better management and development of Waqf properties.

About Waqf Properties:

Waqf properties are dedicated permanently for:

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|-----------------------------|
| • Religious purposes. |
| • Educational institutions. |
| • Charitable activities. |
| • Social welfare. |

- Once declared as Waqf, the property generally cannot be transferred, sold, or inherited except as permitted under law.

Exam Focus Points

- First State: Madhya Pradesh.
- Act: Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.
- Board Chairman: Sanwar Patel.
- Board Size: 10 members.
- Historic Change: Inclusion of two non-Muslim members.

- Administrative Ministry (Central Waqf Council): Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- Parent Legislation: Waqf Act, 1995 (renamed as UWMEED Act, 1995 under the amendment).
- Purpose of Waqf: Administration and protection of Waqf properties dedicated for religious, charitable, and social welfare purposes.

University of Melbourne Signs MoU with TIDCO to Establish Emerging Technologies Hub in Tamil Nadu



- The University of Melbourne (Australia) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) to establish a Centre for Emerging Technologies at Tamil Nadu Knowledge City, Tiruvallur.
- The Centre will operate from a 20,000-square-foot research and teaching facility and focus on quantum computing, agri-tech, and other emerging technologies.
- The initiative aims to strengthen India–Australia collaboration in research, innovation, industry-academia partnerships, and workforce development.

What is the Centre for Emerging Technologies?

- The proposed Centre for Emerging Technologies will serve as a collaborative platform for researchers, students, industries, and policymakers to undertake basic, applied, and translational research in frontier technologies. It will also facilitate industry-oriented education through certification

programmes, joint R&D projects, prototyping, pilot testing, technical workshops, exchange programmes, and dual-certification courses.

Objectives:

- Promote research and innovation in emerging technologies.
- Strengthen industry–academia collaboration.
- Develop a future-ready skilled workforce through specialised training.
- Foster India–Australia cooperation in science, technology, and higher education.
- Support commercialisation of research and innovation.

About TIDCO:

- Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) is a Government of Tamil Nadu enterprise established to promote industrial growth and attract investments.
- Established: 1965.
- Headquarters: Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- Administrative Department: Industries, Investment Promotion & Commerce Department, Government of Tamil Nadu.

About Tamil Nadu Knowledge City:

- Location: Tiruvallur, Tamil Nadu.
- Purpose: Integrated knowledge and innovation ecosystem for education, research, technology, and industrial collaboration.

- Designed to attract global universities, research institutions, startups, and technology companies.

About the University of Melbourne:

- Established: 1853.
- Location: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
- Type: Public Research University.

- One of Australia's leading universities and a member of the Group of Eight (Go8)—a coalition of Australia's leading research-intensive universities.
- Known globally for excellence in research, engineering, medicine, agriculture, and technology.

India–Australia Relations:

- Diplomatic Relations Established: 1941.
- Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP): Elevated in 2020.
- Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA): Signed in 2022.

Major Areas of Cooperation:

- Education and Skill Development

- Critical and Emerging Technologies
- Defence and Maritime Security
- Clean Energy
- Critical Minerals
- Digital Economy
- Research and Innovation

Exam Focus Points:

- MoU Between: University of Melbourne and TIDCO.
- Project: Centre for Emerging Technologies.
- Location: Tamil Nadu Knowledge City, Tiruvallur.
- Facility Size: 20,000 sq. ft.
- Focus Areas: Quantum Computing, Agri-tech, Emerging Technologies.
- State: Tamil Nadu.
- TIDCO Established: 1965.
- University of Melbourne Established: 1853.
- India–Australia Partnership: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2020).
- Key Trade Agreement: India–Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), 2022.

Pandavani Legend Teejan Bai Passes Away



- Renowned Pandavani exponent and Padma Vibhushan awardee Teejan Bai passed away at the age of 70.
- Teejan Bai was instrumental in taking the traditional Pandavani folk art of Chhattisgarh to

national and international audiences through her powerful performances based on the Mahabharata.

Who was Teejan Bai?

- Born: 8 August 1956.
- Birthplace: Ganiyari village, Durg district (present-day Chhattisgarh).
- Art Form: Pandavani (Pandwani) folk storytelling.
- State: Chhattisgarh.
- Recognised as one of the greatest exponents of Pandavani.

- Among the first women to perform the Kapalik style of Pandavani, traditionally dominated by male performers.
- Popularised Chhattisgarh's folk tradition across the world through performances in Asia, Europe, and North America.

What is Pandavani?

- Pandavani is a traditional folk performing art of Chhattisgarh, in which stories from the Mahabharata, particularly those related to the Pandavas, are narrated through singing, dramatic storytelling, and music.

Key Features:

- Origin: Chhattisgarh.
- Theme: Episodes from the Mahabharata.
- Performance Style: Combination of storytelling, singing, acting, and music.
- Main Instrument: Tambura (Ektara), often used symbolically during narration.
- Languages: Primarily Chhattisgarhi and Hindi.

Two Major Styles:

Vedamati Style

- Performer narrates while seated.
- More restrained and traditional presentation.

Kapalik Style

- Performer stands and dramatizes the narrative with expressive gestures.
- Teejan Bai became internationally renowned for this style.

Major Awards and Honours:

- Padma Shri – 1988.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Award – 1995.
- Padma Bhushan – 2003.
- Fukuoka Prize (Japan) – 2018.

- Padma Vibhushan – 2019.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Ratna Sadasya) – One of India's highest honours in the performing arts.

About the Sangeet Natak Akademi:

- Established: 1953.
- Headquarters: New Delhi.
- Ministry: Ministry of Culture.
- Chairperson: Sandhya Purecha
- Type: National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama.

About the Padma Awards:

- The Padma Awards are among India's highest civilian honours.

Categories (in order of precedence):

- Bharat Ratna
- Padma Vibhushan
- Padma Bhushan
- Padma Shri
- Announced: Every year on the eve of Republic Day.
- Conferred By: President of India.
- Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Exam Focus Points:

- Personality: Teejan Bai.
- Art Form: Pandavani.
- State: Chhattisgarh.
- Highest Civilian Honour Received: Padma Vibhushan (2019).
- Other Major Awards: Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Fukuoka Prize.
- Pandavani Theme: Stories from the Mahabharata.
- Two Styles: Vedamati and Kapalik.

- National Academy for Performing Arts: Sangeet Natak Akademi.
- Administrative Ministry of Sangeet Natak Akademi: Ministry of Culture.

PM Narendra Modi Conferred Indonesia's Highest Civilian Honour – Bintang Adipurna



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred Indonesia's highest civilian honour, the Bintang Adipurna (Star of the Republic of Indonesia – Adipurna Class), by President Prabowo Subianto during his official visit to Jakarta. The honour was bestowed in recognition of Prime Minister Modi's contribution to strengthening India-Indonesia bilateral relations, promoting regional cooperation, and enhancing the strategic partnership between the two countries.
- PM Modi became the second Indian Prime Minister, after Jawaharlal Nehru, to receive Indonesia's highest civilian honour.

What is the Bintang Adipurna?

- The Bintang Adipurna is the highest class of the Star of the Republic of Indonesia (Bintang Republik Indonesia), the country's highest national honour. It is conferred by the President of Indonesia upon individuals who have rendered extraordinary service to the unity, integrity, continuity, and prosperity of the Republic of Indonesia. The award may be conferred on both Indonesian citizens and distinguished foreign leaders.

About the Star of the Republic of Indonesia (Bintang Republik Indonesia):

- Established: 1959.

- Awarded By: President of Indonesia.
- Highest Honour: Indonesia's highest order of merit.
- Eligibility: Indonesian citizens and foreign dignitaries.

Classes:

- Adipurna (Highest)
- Adipradana
- Utama
- Pratama
- Nararya

- Objective: To honour exceptional contributions towards the integrity, prosperity, and greatness of Indonesia.

India-Indonesia Relations:

- Diplomatic Relations Established: 1950.
- Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: Since 2018.
- Shared Maritime Boundary: Along the Andaman Sea.

Key Areas of Cooperation:

- Defence and Maritime Security
- Indo-Pacific Cooperation
- Trade and Investment
- Digital Economy
- Renewable Energy
- Space Cooperation
- Counter-Terrorism
- Blue Economy

- Both countries are important partners in India's Act East Policy and MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) Vision.

About Indonesia:

• Official Name: Republic of Indonesia.
• Capital: Jakarta.
• Currency: Indonesian Rupiah (IDR).
• President: Prabowo Subianto.
• Legislature: People's Consultative Assembly (MPR).
• Largest Archipelagic Nation: More than 17,000 islands.

Member of:

• ASEAN
• G20
• East Asia Summit (EAS)
• Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

• United Nations (UN)

Exam Focus Points

• Award: Bintang Adipurna (Star of the Republic of Indonesia – Adipurna Class).
• Recipient: Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
• Conferred By: President Prabowo Subianto.
• Country: Indonesia.
• Established: 1959.
• Nature: Highest civilian/national honour of Indonesia.
• India–Indonesia Diplomatic Relations: 1950.
• Strategic Partnership: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2018).
• Regional Policy Link: Act East Policy and MAHASAGAR Vision.
• Second Indian PM to Receive the Honour: After Jawaharlal Nehru.

India and Indonesia Sign Key Agreements on BrahMos Missile Supply and Maritime Security



- India and Indonesia signed a series of strategic agreements during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official visit to Jakarta, significantly strengthening bilateral cooperation in defence, maritime security, critical minerals, healthcare, and emerging technologies.
- A major highlight was the agreement for the supply of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile system to Indonesia, making it one of India's most significant defence export deals.

- The two countries also signed agreements to enhance maritime safety, coast guard cooperation, and Indo-Pacific security, reinforcing their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Key Agreements Signed

- BrahMos Missile Supply Agreement between India and Indonesia.
- Air-to-Air Missile Cooperation Agreement involving the Astra missile system.
- Maritime Security and Safety Cooperation.
- Cooperation in critical minerals and strategic supply chains.
- Agreements on healthcare, education, digital technology, and capacity building.
- Enhanced collaboration in the Blue Economy and disaster management.

BrahMos Missile System

- The BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by India's DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

Key Features

• Type: Supersonic Cruise Missile.
• Joint Venture: BrahMos Aerospace.
• Developed By: DRDO (India) and NPO Mashinostroyeniya (Russia).
• Speed: Up to Mach 2.8–3.0.
• Range: More than 290 km (extended-range variants have longer ranges).
• Launch Platforms:
• Land-based
• Ship-based
• Submarine-launched

Air-launched (Su-30MKI):

- Capability: Precision strike against land and sea targets.
- Named after the Brahmaputra River (India) and the Moskva River (Russia).

About BrahMos Aerospace:

• Established: 1998.
• Nature: Indo-Russian Joint Venture.
• Indian Partner: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
• Russian Partner: NPO Mashinostroyeniya.
• Headquarters: New Delhi.
• Objective: Design, development, production, and export of BrahMos missile systems.

About Astra Missile:

• Type: Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM).
• Developed By: DRDO.
• Primary User: Indian Air Force.
• Purpose: Air combat and interception of enemy aircraft.
• Designed for integration with fighter aircraft such as the Su-30MKI, LCA Tejas, and other compatible platforms.

Exam Focus Points:

• Countries: India and Indonesia.
• Major Defence Deal: BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile System.
• Additional Defence Cooperation: Astra Air-to-Air Missile.
• Strategic Focus: Maritime Security and Indo-Pacific Cooperation.
• Joint Venture: BrahMos Aerospace (DRDO–NPO Mashinostroyeniya).
• BrahMos Speed: Mach 2.8–3.0.
• India–Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: 2018.
• Shared Strategic Waterway: Strait of Malacca.
• Key Indian Policy: Act East Policy and MAHASAGAR Vision.
• Significance: Boost to India's defence exports and Indo-Pacific strategic partnership.

India and Japan Sign First Defence Co-Development Pact for UNICORN Naval Mast Systems

- India and Japan have signed their first-ever bilateral defence co-development agreement for the joint development and licensed production of UNICORN (Unified Complex Radio

- Antenna) Naval Mast Systems for the Indian Navy.
- The agreement marks a major milestone in the defence partnership between the two countries and aims to enhance the stealth, communication,

and electronic warfare capabilities of future Indian naval warships.

- The project will be implemented through Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) in collaboration with Japanese partners under a Memorandum of Implementation (MoI). The pact reflects the growing strategic convergence between India and Japan in the Indo-Pacific region.



What is the UNICORN Naval Mast?

- The UNICORN (Unified Complex Radio Antenna) is an advanced integrated naval mast system developed by Japan that combines multiple communication, radar, and electronic sensors into a single structure.
- It replaces conventional standalone antennas with a compact integrated mast, thereby reducing the ship's Radar Cross Section (RCS) and significantly improving its stealth capability.

Benefits:

- Reduced radar signature (stealth).
- Integrated communication and radar systems.
- Improved electronic warfare capability.
- Better situational awareness.
- Reduced maintenance and weight compared to conventional mast systems.

About Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL):

- Established: 1954.
- Headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Defence.

- Type: Navratna Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU).

Role:

- Develops defence electronics.
- Manufactures radar systems, communication equipment, electronic warfare systems, and missile electronics.
- Supplies advanced defence equipment to the Indian Armed Forces.

India–Japan Defence Cooperation:

- Special Strategic and Global Partnership: Since 2014.
- 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue: Foreign and Defence Ministers of both countries meet to enhance strategic cooperation.

Major Areas of Cooperation:

- Defence technology.
- Maritime security.
- Indo-Pacific cooperation.
- Cyber security.
- Space cooperation.
- Critical and emerging technologies.
- Supply chain resilience.

About the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI):

- Launched By: Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Year: 2019 (East Asia Summit, Bangkok).
- Objective: Promote a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

Key Pillars:

- Maritime Security.
- Maritime Ecology.
- Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Capacity Building.
- Resource Sharing.
- Science, Technology & Academic Cooperation.

- Trade Connectivity.

About Radar Cross Section (RCS):

- Radar Cross Section (RCS) is a measure of how detectable an object is by radar.
- A lower RCS makes naval ships more difficult to detect and track by enemy radar systems.
- Integrated mast systems like UNICORN contribute significantly to reducing a warship's radar signature.

Exam Focus Points:

- Agreement: First India–Japan Defence Co-Development Pact.
- Project: UNICORN (Unified Complex Radio Antenna) Naval Mast.

- Indian Partner: Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).
- Sector: Naval Defence Technology.
- Purpose: Enhance stealth, communication, and electronic warfare capabilities.
- Administrative Ministry of BEL: Ministry of Defence.
- Strategic Partnership: India–Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership.
- Key Region: Indo-Pacific.
- National Initiative Supported: Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India.
- Major Advantage: Reduced Radar Cross Section (RCS) of naval warships.

ISRO Successfully Conducts First Ground Test of SOLVE for Gaganyaan

Mission



What is SOLVE?

- SOLVE (Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments) is a dedicated solid motor-based sub-orbital test vehicle developed by ISRO to support the Gaganyaan programme. It provides a flexible and cost-effective platform to conduct experiments and validate critical technologies required for India's first human spaceflight mission before actual crewed launches.

Objectives:

- Validate critical systems for the Gaganyaan mission.
- Test crew safety and recovery technologies under simulated flight conditions.
- Verify parachute deployment and crew module recovery systems.
- Reduce mission risks before uncrewed and crewed Gaganyaan flights.
- Improve reliability of India's human spaceflight programme.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully conducted the first ground test of the Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments (SOLVE) solid motor at the Static Test Facility, Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota.
- The test marks a major milestone in the Gaganyaan Human Spaceflight Programme, as the SOLVE vehicle will serve as a dedicated platform to conduct a variety of experiments, including the validation of the crew module recovery and parachute systems under different mission conditions. According to ISRO, the motor performance matched all expected parameters, confirming the readiness of the system for future test missions.

About Gaganyaan Mission

- The Gaganyaan Mission is India's first indigenous human spaceflight programme, aimed at demonstrating the capability to send Indian astronauts (Gaganyatris) into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and safely return them to Earth.

Key Facts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented By: ISRO.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Ministry: Department of Space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved By: Union Cabinet in 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Objective: Send a crew of Indian astronauts into Low Earth Orbit for about 3 days and ensure their safe return.

Mission Components:

- Crew Module.
- Service Module.
- Human-rated LVM3 Launch Vehicle.
- Crew Escape System.
- Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS).
- The mission will be preceded by multiple uncrewed test flights and technology demonstration missions.

About Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC):

- Location: Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- Earlier Name: Sriharikota Range (SHAR).
- Role: India's primary spaceport and launch centre.

Launch site for missions such as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSLV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSLV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LVM3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chandrayaan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aditya-L1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaganyaan missions.

About ISRO:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established: 1969.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Ministry: Department of Space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman: Dr. V. Narayanan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder: Dr. Vikram Sarabhai.

Major Missions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chandrayaan Programme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aditya-L1.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SpaDeX.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaganyaan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISAR (India-NASA Mission).

Exam Focus Points:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission: Gaganyaan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Test Vehicle: SOLVE (Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground Test: First SOLVE solid motor test.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of Test: 3 July 2026.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Location: Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Validation of crew module, parachute, and recovery systems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Ministry: Department of Space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Vehicle for Gaganyaan: Human-rated LVM3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance: Critical technology validation for India's first human spaceflight mission.

Lets Revise

- ❖ Who has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to the Republic of Korea (South Korea)? **Sanjeev Jain.**
- ❖ How many medals did India win at the Under-20 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026 held in Pattaya, Thailand? **20 medals (4 Gold, 7 Silver, and 9 Bronze).**
- ❖ Which indigenous battle rifle, jointly developed by Dviba Defence and DRDO's ARDE in just 100 days, has cleared Army and MHA trials for procurement by CAPFs? **UGRAM 7.62×51 mm Battle Rifle.**
- ❖ Which state became the first in India to reconstitute its Waqf Board under the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025? **Madhya Pradesh.**
- ❖ Which Australian university signed an MoU with TIDCO to establish a Centre for Emerging Technologies in Tamil Nadu? **The University of Melbourne.**
- ❖ Which renowned Padma Vibhushan awardee is credited with popularising the folk art form 'Pandavani' from Chhattisgarh across the world? **Teejan Bai.**
- ❖ Which is the highest civilian honour of Indonesia that was conferred upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his 2026 visit to Jakarta? **Bintang Adipurna (Star of the Republic of Indonesia – Adipurna Class).**
- ❖ Which supersonic cruise missile system was included in the defence agreement signed between India and Indonesia during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2026 visit to Jakarta? **BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile System.**
- ❖ Which advanced naval technology is being jointly developed under the first-ever India–Japan defence co-development agreement? **UNICORN (Unified Complex Radio Antenna) Naval Mast System.**
- ❖ Which ISRO test vehicle successfully completed its first ground test to support technology validation for the Gaganyaan Human Spaceflight Programme? **SOLVE (Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments).**



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IMPORTANCE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS IN UPSC EXAMINATIONS

Current Affairs hold a crucial place in the preparation for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. A comprehensive understanding of recent national and international developments helps aspirants strengthen their General Studies foundation and develop a well-rounded perspective on important issues. Topics such as government policies, schemes, economy, international relations, science and technology, environment, defence, social justice, governance, reports, indices, appointments, awards, and major global events are highly relevant for both the Prelims and Mains examinations. Regular study of current affairs not only enhances factual knowledge but also improves analytical ability, critical thinking, answer-writing skills, and decision-making aptitude. Since UPSC questions often connect contemporary developments with static subjects, consistent preparation of current affairs enables aspirants to understand issues in depth and present balanced, informed, and relevant answers. It also plays an important role in Essay writing, Ethics, and the Personality Test, giving candidates a strong edge throughout the examination process.

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