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## Centre scraps auction to three critical mineral blocks

The centre has stopped the auction of three critical mineral blocks as there were fewer bidders than expected .

The blocks were Lithium , titanium and bauxite blocks in Jammu and Kashmir , Jharkhand and Tamilnadu respectively .

## Ultratech to acquire India cements ; buy 32.72 % stake

Aditya Birla Group flagship company Ultratech cements will acquire a 32.72% stake in India cements , from promoters and their associates for ₹3954 crore .

UltraTech Cements has also announced a ₹3142 crore open offer to acquire 26 % shares of India Cements .

This will increase the stake of Ultratech Cement in India cements to 55% .

Ultratech is the largest cement producer in India followed by Adani cement .

The purchase will help Ultratech cement business in South India , especially in Tamilnadu .

## Army Contingent in Mongolia for 21st Khaan Quest Exercise

Khan Quest exercise is a multinational peacekeeping exercise . The exercise will be held from July 27 and August 9.

In its 21st edition in Mongolia , India has sent 40 soldiers from Madras regiment to participate .

The exercise has around 430 participants , from 23 countries , including Australia , Canada , China , Japan , Turkiye , United States and United Kingdom.

## In the midnight , President appoints six new governors

President Draupadi Murmu appointed six new governors , and three others, a Rashtrapati Bhawan communique said .

A BJP veteran has been appointed as Governor of Sikkim . Manipur governor Anusduiya Uikey has been replaced by Lakshaman Prasad Acharya , who has been moved from Sikkim to Assam . Former IAS officer K Kailash Nathan , a former aide of PM Narendra Modi , has been named LG of Puducherry .

Gulab Chand Kataria will be the new governor of Punjab .

Jharkhand governor CP Radhakrishnan has been appointed as Governor of Maharashtra . Santosh Kumar Gangwar will be the new Jharkhand governor , Deputy CM of Jishnu Dev Verma will be the new Telangana Governor .

A former Lok Sabha member Raman Deka has been appointed as the governor of Chhattisgarh , while C H Vijayshankar will be Meghalaya governor .

## Modi advises states CMs to ensure full coverage of central and state level welfare measures

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the chief ministers of BJP ruled states to ensure saturation level coverage of welfare programmes announced by them and the centre without tinkering . The meeting was attended by 13 Chief Ministers and 15 Deputy CMs held over the weekend . The ‘ Mukhyamantri Parishad ‘ is organised by BJP at regular intervals aimed at reviewing key schemes in the state following best practices .

Certain schemes from the states were singled out for best practices this includes UP’s Gram Sachivalaya Yojana , Assam government’s campaign to quickly fill vacancies , Gujarat Government programme to encourage solar power generation , Bihar government’s drive to stop illegal mining , And Tripura’s Amar Sarkar outreach .



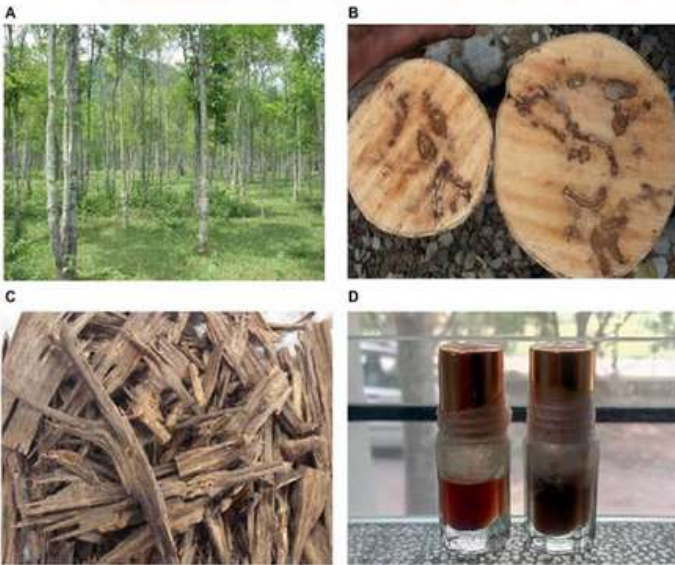
## CITES eases norms to agarwood export ; move to benefit lakhs of farmers from the Northeast

India has successfully prevented the inclusion of agarwood in the Review of Significant Trade. ( RST ) of Conventions of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna ( CITES ).

Since Agarwood is cultivated in different parts of India , especially in North eastern states , this development is going to benefit lakhs of farmers of Assam , Manipur , Nagaland and Tripura . Agarwood was included in CITES in Appendix 2 ( species that are not necessarily threatened but whose trade must be controlled ) in 1995 .

CITES is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered animals and plants from threat of International Trade .

Agarwood has multiple used in medicines , in perfumes etc .



**World :** \_\_\_\_\_

## Israel vows to avenge strike that killed 12 in Golan heights

Tension has increased in the region after a rocket in Majdal Shams in Golan heights killed 12 people .

Israel has blamed Hezbollah . Hezbollah said that it had “ no connection “ in the incident . It vowed that it had fired one such rocket on Saturday towards an Israeli military target in Golan .

The Israeli army called it “ the deadliest attack on Israeli civilians “ since the October 7 attack . Israel defence minister Yoav Gallant on Sunday vowed to “ hit the enemy hard “ ..

Iran warned Israel any new military “adventure “ in Lebanon could lead to “ unforeseen consequences” . Western powers , France and Germany condemned the attack but appealed for calm .

## Wary of China , US revamps military command in Japan

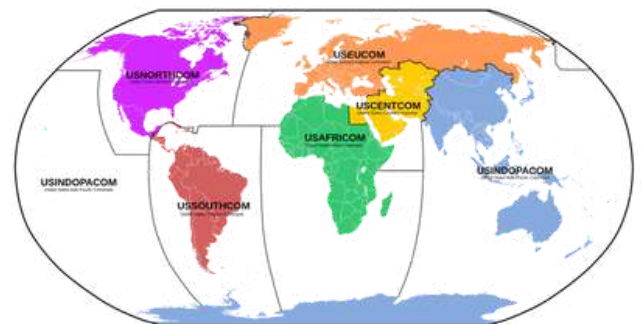
The United States said on Sunday , that it would revive its military command in Japan to deepen coordination with its ally’s forces .

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin after a “ 2+2 “ meeting with their counterparts released a statement regarding this .

The two countries labelled China “ the biggest strategic challenge “ facing the region .

The new “ joint forces headquarters “ will facilitate deeper interoperability with Japan’s armed forces and aims to be implemented with Tokyo’s own plan to establish joint command .

The US currently has about 54,000 military personnels in Japan , they report to Indo Pacific command in Hawaii about 6500 km away . Making a new command will give US forces in Japan greater capability .



**Current US military commands**



## Italy and China warns of a three month action plan on China's visit

Italy's Prime Minister Georgia Meloni is on a five day visit to China .

Italy and China on Monday signed a three year action plan to implement past agreements and experiment with new forms of government .

Ms Meloni is trying to reset relations with China as fears of trade war between EU and China have increased .

Earlier Italy had dropped out of China's Belt and Road Initiative ( BRI ) plan in 2023 .

## Iran's Khomeini formally grants Pezeskian presidential powers

Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamemi formally handed over Presidential power to Masoud Pezeskian .

He is the ninth president of Iran .

## 36 killed and 162 injured in armed clashes between two tribes in Pakistan

At least 36 people were killed and 162 injured in clashes between two ethnic groups between two tribes fighting in Bishera village in Upper Kurram village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of the Balance of Pakistan .

Armed clashes broke down between Shia and Sunni tribes over land disputes .

Officials have brokered peace between the two communities in the region .

## Sports :

## Manu's historic bronze opens India's medal hunt

Manu Bhankar has won a Bronze medal in the Paris Olympics 2024 , in the 10 m air pistol event .

## Science

## Surprising 'dark oxygen ' discovery could ensnarl deep sea mining

Deep sea mining is expected to be a major resource extraction activity within the decades .

In a recent deep sea research it was found that oxygen was being produced from deep sea , where it is too dark for photosynthesis.

Scientists reported in July 22 , in the magazine nature Geoscience .

The team of researchers called it ' dark oxygen '

The oxygen discovery raises questions on how deep sea mining to extract polymetallic nodules will affect marine population.

Polymetallic nodules are lump of iron , manganese hydroxide , and rock partially submerged in many parts of the ocean floor . If their concentration exceeds 10 kg per sq km ,.mining them is considered feasible . Many countries plan to do so .

The current research is going on in the Clarion Clipperton Zone , a part of the ocean floor off Mexico's west coast . The area is considered to be the world's highest concentration of polymetallic nodules .

India is planning to " apply for licences to explore for deep sea mining in the Pacific Ocean ."

India has built its own submersible for this . International Seabed Authority ( ISA ) is the agency that permits seabed mining .





## Planning better

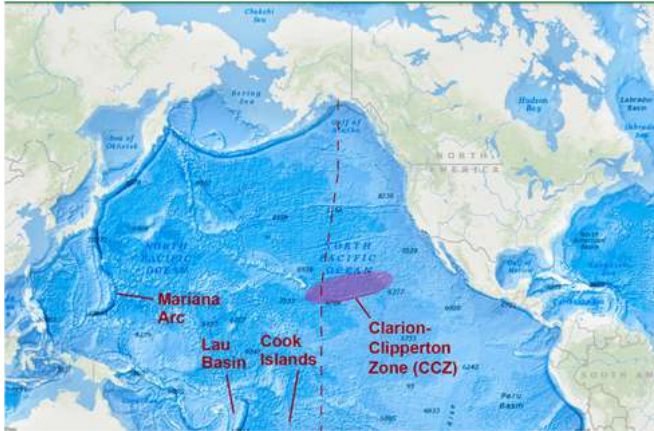
### The NITI Aayog suffers from both functional and structural issues

The editorial is about functioning of NITI Aayog . Recently the ninth governing council meeting of NITI Aayog was held . But 10 opposition states did not participate in the meeting .

They alleged that the center did not provide them enough funds in the Budget . Mamta Banerjee later came out of the meeting alleging that she was not given enough time to speak .

NITI Aayog has been turned into a mere advisory body , with no power to resource allocation of its own .It creates indices and ranks states on different parameters .The editorial says that with this NITI Aayog is promoting “ competitive federalism “ rather than “ cooperative federalism. “ .

The editorial says that NITI Aayog needs to be re-envisioned to bring back some of the responsibilities that NITI Aayog had .



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