



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

>>> 09 JULY 2025

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. NITI Aayog Releases 2nd Edition of NER District SDG Index 2023–24 and Mizoram's Hnahthial District Tops Rankings.



In July 2025, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) released the second edition of the North Eastern Region (NER) District Sustainable Development Index (SDG) Report 2023–24, evaluating the SDG progress of districts in the Northeast. Hnahthial district in Mizoram emerged as the top performer, highlighting regional efforts towards achieving sustainable development goals in alignment with India's 2030 agenda.

- The index report was launched by Suman Bery, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog; B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog; Chanchal Kumar, Secretary of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDoNER); and Dr. Angela Lusigi, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in India. The event was also attended by Rajib Kumar Sen, Programme Director (SDGs), along with senior officials from NITI Aayog and MoDoNER.

- The index was developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDoNER) and with

technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

- It measures district-level performance against India's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and supports evidence-based policymaking across the NER.

Key Points:-

(i) The 2023–24 edition of the index evaluated 121 out of 131 districts (92%) in the Northeast Region, expanding from 103 districts in the previous edition. The assessment uses 84 indicators aligned with the SDGs and classifies districts into four categories: Achiever (100), Front-Runner (65–99), Performer (50–64), and Aspirant (<50).

(ii) According to the report, 103 districts are ranked in the “Front Runner” category, while 18 districts fall under the “Performer” category. No districts scored in the Achiever category. This classification helps states track progress and focus development efforts where most needed.

(iii) Mizoram's Hnahthial district topped the SDG index with a score of 81.43, followed by Champhai district in Mizoram with 79.86, and Gomati district in Tripura with 78.79. In contrast, Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district was the lowest-ranked with a score of 58.71, placing it in the “Performer” category. This highlights the disparity in development among districts and the need for targeted interventions.

2. Punjab Launches 'Mukhya Mantri Sehat Yojana' with ₹10 Lakh Annual Health Cover per Family.



On July 8, 2025, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, along with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal, launched the state-wide 'Mukhya Mantri Sehat Yojana' in Chandigarh.

- The initiative aims to provide a comprehensive ₹10 lakh annual cashless and paperless medical coverage to every permanent resident family in Punjab, regardless of income, age, or occupation.
- This landmark scheme is expected to benefit approximately 65 lakh families (around 3 crore individuals), including government employees, pensioners, farmers, labourers, and business owners.
- The government will issue digital 'Sehat Cards', linked to Aadhaar or Voter ID, enabling access to cashless treatment across both government and empanelled private hospitals from October 2, 2025.

Key Points:-

(i) Beneficiaries already enrolled in the central Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme will receive an additional top-up cover of ₹5 lakh, increasing their total coverage to ₹10 lakh per annum. This ensures parity by bridging state and central healthcare provisions. Beneficiaries already

enrolled in the central Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme will receive an additional top-up cover of ₹5 lakh, increasing their total coverage to ₹10 lakh per annum. This ensures parity by bridging state and central healthcare provisions.

(ii) The policy is projected to allocate ₹778 crore in the 2025–26 state budget to support its rollout and operations. It is positioned as the largest-ever healthcare insurance initiative in Punjab, surpassing previous schemes such as the ₹5 lakh Ayushman Bharat and Mukhya Mantri Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana.

(iii) By eliminating complex documentation and eligibility restrictions, the scheme aims to achieve universal health coverage, significantly reducing out-of-pocket medical expenses and ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare for all residents, especially the underprivileged and rural communities.

3. Startup Policy Forum Launches '#100DesiDeepTechs' to Elevate India's Deep-Tech Landscape.



The Startup Policy Forum (SPF) has launched #100DesiDeepTechs, a first-of-its-kind multi-stakeholder initiative designed to

identify and empower India's top 100 deep-tech startups. Supported by Startup India (DPIIT), MeitY Startup Hub, and IIT-Madras, the initiative aims to accelerate policy dialogue and fast-track India's journey toward global leadership in deep technologies.

- **#100DesiDeepTechs** invites applications from startups across diverse categories such as semiconductors, defence technologies, quantum computing, green hydrogen, space tech, drones, electric vehicles, biotechnology, robotics, advanced manufacturing, and communications infrastructure. The window for applications closes on 17 August 2025.

- Selected startups will participate in exclusive, closed-door Deeptech Dialogues with key stakeholders—policymakers, investors, industry experts, sector regulators, and academic institutions—to diagnose bottlenecks and co-create solutions. Insights from these dialogues will feed directly into a comprehensive policy whitepaper.

- This whitepaper will be unveiled at a high-level event called the "Deeptech Baithak," where selected founders, regulators, investors, and government officials will convene. The initiative will also lay the foundation for SPF's Centre for Deeptech Policy Research (CDPR) to sustain ongoing engagement and deliver a long-term roadmap for the sector.

Key Points:-

(i) To support the selected startups, a Mentor Board composed of experienced founders, investors, policymakers, and deep-tech experts will offer strategic guidance, access to critical networks, and technical assistance.

(ii) The selection process will be conducted by IIT-Madras, with the whitepaper drafted

by SPF's knowledge partner Ikigai Law and the programme managed by policy consultants Kaio.

(iii) This push aligns with national policy priorities like the ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development & Innovation (RDI) Scheme and the dedicated DeepTech Fund of Funds aimed at scaling R&D in critical areas. The SPF initiative comes at a time when the government has also allocated an additional ₹10,000 crore under the Fund of Funds to strengthen India's deep-tech ecosystem.

4. Bihar Cabinet Limits 35% Women's Reservation in Govt Jobs to State Domicile Holders.



On July 8, 2025, the Bihar government, led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, approved a policy change restricting the existing 35% reservation for women in state government jobs solely to those who hold Bihar domicile status, excluding female applicants from other states.

- Previously, women from across India were eligible for the quota introduced in 2016, but the new domicile rule only allows permanent residents—those living for at least three years, owning property, or married to a local—to

benefit. However, non-resident women already serving under the quota will retain their positions unaffected.

Key Points:-

- (i) The Cabinet also announced support measures under the 'Sambal' scheme, offering financial assistance of ₹50,000 to physically challenged candidates preparing for Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) mains exams and ₹1 lakh for those preparing for UPSC mains.
- (ii) Additionally, the state formed a 24-member Bihar Youth Commission, set to include a chairperson, two vice-chairs, and seven members under the age of 45. The commission's mandate is to recommend policies for education, employment, skill development, and youth welfare both within Bihar and among migrant communities.
- (iii) These measures come ahead of the upcoming state assembly elections, marking a strategic effort by Nitish Kumar's government to galvanize women voters in its "caste-neutral" voter base. The domicile-based reservation reflects growing political emphasis on local employment protection.

5. GOI Awards Seven-Star Ratings to Three Mines for Exemplary Green Practices.



In July 2025, the Government of India, through the Ministry of Mines, awarded the prestigious seven-star rating to three mines for the first time, recognising their extraordinary performance in sustainable mining. The awards were presented at a ceremony in Jaipur, attended by Union Coal & Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy and Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma.

- The mines honoured were Naokari limestone mine (Ultratech Cement)—India's first limestone mine to earn this distinction—Noamundi iron ore mine (Tata Steel), and Kammatharu mine (Sandur Manganese & Iron Ore Ltd.), all of which had maintained five-star ratings for five consecutive years, passing a stringent two-stage evaluation.

Key Points:-

- (i) The seven-star ranking is the highest under the Star Rating of Mines programme, assessing performance across four sustainability pillars: impact management, progressive mine closure and restoration, social welfare, and transparent reporting. To qualify, a mine must score at least 90 percent in these modules and then clear a self-assessment followed by field verification by the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM).

(ii) Beyond the elite seven-star winners, the ceremony acknowledged 98 mines in total for FY 2023–24, with 95 receiving five-star ratings, reflecting expanding adoption of sustainable best practices nationwide. These ratings, launched in 2014–15, aim to foster environmental stewardship and community development across India's mining sector.

6. AP Govt Approves Amaravati Quantum Valley Declaration to Position State as Global Quantum Hub.



On July 7, 2025, the Government of Andhra Pradesh formally approved the Amaravati Quantum Valley Declaration, establishing a comprehensive policy framework to advance quantum technology innovation in Amaravati. The declaration aims to transform the state into a leading quantum science and technology hub, targeting USD 1 billion in investment by January 1, 2029.

- The declaration is the outcome of the Quantum Valley Workshop held in Vijayawada on June 30, 2025, where government officials, industry leaders, academic experts, and startups collaborated. It outlines shared commitments such as quantum research, talent development, infrastructure creation, and global partnerships.

- A core initiative includes setting up the QChipIN, India's largest open quantum testbed, within 12 months. This 'Living Lab' infrastructure will integrate quantum computers, key distribution (QKD) fiber links, and sensor platforms to pilot projects in health-tech, finance, defence, logistics, and space sectors.

Key Points:-

(i) Under the declaration, IBM's Quantum System Two is expected to be installed by January 2026, enabling the testing of 100 quantum algorithms. By 2027, three more quantum systems—covering superconducting circuits, trapped ions, photonic qubits—are planned. The roadmap aims to scale up to 1,000 algorithms annually by 2028 and reach 1,000 effective qubits by 2029.

(ii) To build a strong domestic supply chain, Amaravati Quantum Valley will anchor production of qubit platforms, cryo-electronics, quantum chips, single-photon detectors, and photonic packages, aiming for Rs 5,000 crore in annual exports by 2030. Governance will involve a multi-stakeholder mission board, a Global Quantum Collaboration Council, and an annual World Quantum Expo starting in 2026.

7. AP Launches AI-based SMOSS Initiative to Combat Mosquito-borne Diseases Across Six Cities.



In July 2025, the Government of Andhra Pradesh (AP) launched the Smart Mosquito Surveillance System (SMoSS), becoming the first Indian state to adopt an AI-integrated surveillance and control network to tackle mosquito-borne diseases like dengue, malaria, and chikungunya. The project uses a combination of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) tools to provide real-time data for proactive mosquito control.

- The SMoSS initiative is being implemented by the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department of Andhra Pradesh in 66 locations across six municipal corporations.

- These include major urban areas like Greater Visakhapatnam (16 locations), Vijayawada (28), Nellore (7), Kurnool (6), Rajamahendravaram (5), and Kakinada (4), making it one of the largest mosquito surveillance initiatives in the country.

- The project aims to deploy AI-powered smart mosquito sensors, heat maps, automated traps, and drone-based larvicide spraying to monitor and reduce mosquito populations effectively. IoT-connected devices will be used to capture and transmit surveillance data to a central control system.

Key Points:-

(i) The system will track various mosquito attributes, including species, density, and gender, along with local environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity. This information will be continuously analyzed to forecast potential outbreaks and initiate early interventions.

(ii) All collected data will be integrated into a centralized digital dashboard accessible to municipal authorities and health officials. This will enable data-driven decision-making, allowing authorities to act swiftly in case of rising mosquito counts or disease threats in specific locations.

(iii) The SMoSS model aligns with the state's broader smart health infrastructure strategy and supports India's vision for AI-integrated public services. By adopting advanced technologies, Andhra Pradesh aims to set a precedent for other Indian states and contribute to long-term public health protection.

INTERNATIONAL

1. PM Modi Conferred Brazil's Highest Civilian Honour – Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross.



During his state visit to Brazil following the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the prestigious Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross, Brazil's highest civilian honour.

- The accolade was presented by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at a formal ceremony held at Alvorada Palace, Brasília, on July 8, 2025, recognising Modi's contributions to strengthening the strategic India–Brazil partnership.

- The honour marks the 26th international award received by PM Modi since assuming office in 2014, underlining his expanding global diplomatic footprint and leadership stature. This recognition resonates particularly with Brazil's endorsement of India's diplomatic initiatives and its role in Global South cooperation.

- The ceremony was held in a grand atmosphere at the presidential palace, where Modi received a guard of honour and a 114-horse cavalry salute. Cultural gestures—including performances of Samba-Reggae music by the Batala Mundo band and Indian classical harmonium recital—underscored the warmth of India–Brazil cultural exchange.

Key Points:-

(i) In his joint press statement with President Lula, PM Modi expressed deep gratitude and highlighted the award as a testament to the strong affection of the Brazilian people for India. He added that it would encourage continued elevation of India–Brazil ties across trade, defence, energy, health, agriculture, technology, and climate cooperation.

(ii) Brazil's recognition also reinforces shared positions on key global issues:

President Lula reaffirmed Brazil's support for India following the Pahalgam terror attack, and the two leaders underlined a zero-tolerance stance on terrorism while committing to enhanced bilateral defence cooperation.

(iii) This honour aligns with a series of high-level Indian diplomatic recognitions—Modi recently became the first Indian PM to receive the highest national awards from countries like Trinidad & Tobago, Ghana, Mauritius, and Cyprus, reflecting India's strengthened role in Global South partnerships.

2. PM Modi Completes Historic 5-Nation Global South Tour: Strengthens Ties in Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, Brazil & Namibia.



Between July 2–9, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook an extensive 5-nation diplomatic tour, covering Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia — marking his longest overseas trip in a decade and reinforcing India's role as a leader of the Global South.

- He started in Ghana (July 2–3) — his first visit in nearly 30 years — addressing the Parliament of Ghana, receiving a 21-gun salute, and signing four MoUs for culture, health, standardization,

and institutional dialogue. Modi was also honoured with Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana by President John Dramani Mahama.

- From July 3–4, he visited Trinidad & Tobago, his first official trip since 1999, where he addressed a joint session of Parliament and signed six MoUs in sectors such as infrastructure and pharmaceuticals. He was awarded the Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago (ORTT) by President Christine Carla Kangaloo.

- Between July 4–5, Modi visited Argentina, his first bilateral visit by an Indian PM in 57 years, where he met President Javier Milei and discussed opportunities in agriculture, trade, energy, critical minerals, and tech.

Key Points:-

(i) From July 5–7, he attended the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, reinforcing India's position in multilateral forums and later met President Lula da Silva in Brasilia for bilateral engagements, including the awarding of Brazil's Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross.

(ii) Finishing his tour in Namibia (July 8–9), Modi became the first Indian PM to visit in 27 years. He addressed Parliament, signed MoUs on trade, defence, energy, digital technology (including UPI), and received the Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis, Namibia's highest civilian honour.

(iii) This tour saw a blend of diplomacy, diaspora outreach, cultural engagement, and strategic dialogue, as Modi strengthened India's global footprint and fostered cooperation on critical minerals, energy, health, and defence with both African and Latin American nations.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1. AirAsia Berhad Signs USD 12.25 Billion Airbus Deal for 50 A321XLR Jets.



AirAsia Berhad, the full-service subsidiary of Malaysia's Capital A Berhad, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Airbus in Paris on July 7, 2025, for the purchase of 50 A321XLR long-range narrow-body aircraft.

- The agreement, valued at USD 12.25 billion, includes conversion rights for an additional 20 jets, marking a strategic leap in its global expansion plans.

- These next-generation A321XLR aircraft will deliver extended-range connectivity—up to 4,700 nautical miles—while offering up to 20% lower fuel burn per seat compared to current A321neo models. Deliveries are scheduled from 2028 to 2032, aligning with AirAsia's ambitious goal to become the first low-cost narrow-body network carrier, carrying 150 million passengers annually by 2030.

- This agreement comes as AirAsia nears completion of its financial restructuring and emerges from Malaysia's PN17 financially distressed classification.

Key Points:-

(i) Airbus CEO Christian Scherer and AirAsia CEO Tony Fernandes, in the presence of Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim, signed the deal in Paris.

(ii) The move reinforces AirAsia's global multi-hub strategy—centered around Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok—with new long-haul connections into Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

● Khan's technical and managerial foundations include dual bachelor's degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Economics from Tufts University, and a master's in Mechanical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Before joining Apple, he worked as an applications development engineer and key-account technical leader at GE Plastics.

Key Points:-

(i) Apple CEO Tim Cook lauded Khan as a "brilliant strategist" and a central architect of Apple's supply chain resilience, highlighting his leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and in advancing green manufacturing initiatives. The company sees his expertise as vital amid global trade uncertainties and evolving manufacturing shifts—such as Apple's move to increase iPhone production in India by next year.

(ii) As COO, Khan is expected to take charge of Apple's global operations and logistics, reinforcing Apple's supply chain stability during a turbulent trade period. The change comes at a pivotal moment: Jeff Williams, who had managed Apple's operations since 2015 and directly oversaw the Apple Watch design and health initiatives, will continue in an advisory capacity until his retirement.

(iii) This appointment positions Khan as the second-highest executive at Apple and underscores the company's deepening reliance on seasoned internal planning. His rise is also a powerful testament to Indian-origin leadership shaping global tech giants.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1. Apple Appoints Sabih Khan as New Chief Operating Officer to Lead Global Supply Chain.



On July 8, 2025, Apple announced the appointment of Sabih Khan as its new Chief Operating Officer (COO), succeeding Jeff Williams, who is set to retire later this year. The transition reflects a carefully planned leadership succession within the world's most valuable technology company.

● Sabih Khan, an Indian-American born in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh (India) in 1966, has been with Apple since 1995. He has served as Senior Vice President of Operations since 2019, overseeing Apple's global supply chain, supplier responsibility programmes, and product delivery systems—making him the architect of key manufacturing strategies across the US and Asia.

2. BMW Group India Appoints Hardeep Singh Brar as President & CEO.



On July 8, 2025, BMW Group India announced the appointment of Hardeep Singh Brar as its new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective 1 September 2025. Brar succeeds Vikram Pawah, who will transition to lead BMW Australia & New Zealand, marking a strategic leadership change within the luxury automaker's operations in India .

- Brar brings over 30 years of experience in the Indian automotive sector, with senior leadership roles at Kia India, Maruti Suzuki, Volkswagen Passenger Cars, General Motors India, Nissan Motor India, Great Wall Motor, among others.
- Most recently, as Senior Vice President – Sales & Marketing at Kia India, he steered the company past the 1 million units cumulative sales mark and led successful launches including the Carens, EV6, Sorento, and flagship EV9.

Key Points:-

(i) Brar holds a Mechanical Engineering degree from Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Punjab, and is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Senior Executive Leadership Programme—backgrounds that underpin his ability to drive strategy across sales, marketing, supply chain, and customer experience.

(ii) Welcoming the appointment, Jean-Philippe Parain, Senior Vice President for Asia-Pacific and related regions at BMW Group, emphasized that “India is among the fastest-growing markets for BMW Group” and highlighted Brar’s deep insights into the Indian automotive landscape, which will help strengthen operations and drive the next growth phase in India.

(iii) Under Hardeep Singh Brar’s leadership, BMW Group India—already boasting record sales in H1 2025 with 7,774 cars and 2,569 motorcycles—will focus on scaling its luxury portfolio, accelerating electric mobility, enhancing digitalization, and delivering exceptional customer experiences.

SPORTS

1. Asian Para Archery Championships 2025: China Tops Medal Tally, India Clinches Second Place.



Held from July 2–7, 2025 at the China Administration of Sports for Persons with Disabilities Centre in Beijing, the Asian Para Archery Championships 2025 saw China dominate with 17 medals (10 gold, 4 silver, 3 bronze), while India secured a commendable second place by winning 9 medals (3 gold, 3 silver, 3 bronze).

- The Indian contingent comprised 28 athletes and 69 officials, participating across 14 events in Recurve Open, Compound Open, and W1 (wheelchair) categories. This tournament also served as a qualifier for the 2028 Summer Paralympics in Los Angeles, USA.

- Paralympic champion Harvinder Singh, world no. 1 in recurve, captured two golds — setting a competition record of 663 points in qualifiers and dominating the Recurve Men's Open solo and Recurve Mixed Team (paired with Bhawna) finals.

Key Points:-

(i) India's women's compound team, consisting of Sheetal Devi and Jyoti, also secured gold by defeating China 148–143. This win came after China faltered at the final end, demonstrating India's resilience in high-pressure finals.

(ii) In addition to gold, India earned three silvers — Harvinder & Vivek Chikara (Recurve Men's Doubles), Rakesh Kumar & Shyam Sunder Swami (Compound Men's Doubles), and Rakesh Kumar & Jyoti (Compound Mixed Team) — and three bronzes, in Recurve Women's Doubles (Pooja & Bhawna), W1 Men's Doubles (Naveen Dalal & Nurudin), and Compound Women's Open (Jyoti).

(iii) China claimed six of the eight team event golds, showcasing its dominance, though India's two team victories significantly boosted its second-place finish. Notable Chinese archer Zhang Tianxin won three gold medals in W1 and mixed events.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. **World Bioproduct Day 2025** Observed Globally on July 7 to Promote Bio-based Innovations.



On July 7, 2025, World Bioproduct Day was observed globally to raise awareness about the role of bioproducts in environmental sustainability and reducing dependency on fossil fuels. This annual observance highlights innovations in renewable biological resources contributing to climate action and green economic growth.

- The observance was initiated in 2021 by the World BioEconomy Forum (WBEF) and the World Bioeconomy Association (WBA) to spotlight sustainable solutions derived from biomass such as plants, trees, aquatic sources, and waste. These bioproducts aim to offer eco-friendly alternatives to traditional fossil fuel-based materials.

- Bioproducts are classified into two broad categories—conventional and emerging innovations. Conventional bioproducts include wood, paper, and natural fibres, forming the basis of many sustainable industries. In contrast, emerging innovations include bioplastics, bio-based chemicals, and bio-textiles like nylon-based automotive carpets and swimwear.

● These innovations are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), especially SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). They help reduce plastic waste, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and create value-added applications from biomass.

Key Points:-

(i) On the occasion of World Bioproduct Day 2025, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), Government of India, participated in the campaign through a national awareness program titled “The BioE3 Way 2025.” The campaign focused on the three pillars of Environment, Economy, and Employment.

(ii) During the event, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the Government of India’s plan to build a USD 300 billion bioeconomy by 2030. The strategy is supported under the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment) Policy, aimed at boosting innovation, startups, and sustainable product development.

(iii) India’s participation also included the “Voices Across the Cities” campaign and the showcasing of biotech startup success stories, which have grown from 50 startups to 11,000 within a decade. These innovations are now being incorporated into national policies such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

DEFENCE

1. India Successfully Completes ERASR Anti-Submarine Rocket Trials from INS Kavaratti.



India recently achieved a significant defence milestone as the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Navy concluded successful user trials of the Extended Range Anti-Submarine Rocket (ERASR) aboard INS Kavaratti, executed between June 23 and July 7, 2025. The trials, hailed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, affirm India’s growing strategic submarine warfare capabilities.

● ERASR is an indigenous upgrade over the existing RGB-60 rocket, developed collaboratively by DRDO labs—Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), and Naval Science & Technological Laboratory (NSTL)—with manufacturing partnerships involving Bharat Dynamics Limited (Hyderabad) and Solar Defence & Aerospace Limited (Nagpur).

Key Points:-

(i) Seventeen ERASR rockets were test-fired across short- and long-range profiles up to ~8.9 km, featuring a twin-motor configuration, indigenous electronic time-fuze, and precision warhead performance, demonstrating operational readiness and integration with the Indigenous Rocket Launcher (IRL) system onboard.

(ii) The trials affirmed ERASR's capability to accurately engage submerged threats at varied depths and distances, augmenting the Navy's anti-submarine warfare (ASW) toolkit. The system is positioned to replace Russian-origin RGB systems and significantly boost the striking power of Indian naval vessels.

(iii) Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO and the Navy, stating "successful induction of this system will boost India's maritime firepower," underscoring the country's path to self-reliance under Atmanirbhar Bharat and enhanced sovereign defence technology. The rocket is now expected to be commissioned into naval service, marking a major step in India's ASW preparedness.

ensure safe, encrypted communication by leveraging post-quantum cryptography and AI-integrated satellite technologies.

- The satellite will be embedded with post-quantum cryptography (PQC), protecting data transmission from threats posed by future quantum computers. Unlike classical encryption methods like RSA and ECC, PQC ensures long-term confidentiality through quantum-resistant protocols, hardened firmware, and secure crypto-chips—making the satellite resilient against quantum-era cyber threats.

- Space TS will handle the core satellite engineering, including payload integration and orbital mission planning, while Synergy Quantum will contribute post-quantum software architecture and encryption layers. The collaboration's aim is to build end-to-end quantum-safe communications, connecting ground stations, satellite constellations, and drones using AI-assisted control mechanisms and secure key exchanges.

- This indigenous satellite initiative is part of the Indian government's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision, aiming for technological self-reliance in cybersecurity and space infrastructure. It supports national security, defence systems, critical infrastructure resilience, and digital sovereignty, putting India alongside leading nations like the EU and China in quantum space initiatives.

Key Points:-

(i) The satellite will also act as a platform for Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), a highly secure form of encryption key sharing. Its additional functionalities will include encrypted telemetry systems, autonomous control over AI-powered constellations, and secure storage and communication

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. India to Develop First Indigenous Quantum-Secure Satellite in Partnership Between Space TS and Synergy Quantum.



India has taken a major leap in space cybersecurity with Bengaluru-based Space TS signing an MoU with Switzerland's Synergy Quantum in July 2025. The partnership aims to develop the nation's first indigenous quantum-secure satellite to

frameworks suited for national and commercial defence applications.

(ii) Once operational, the satellite will also be used for advanced technologies like secure swarm drone operations, multi-orbit encrypted networks, and space-based cloud computing. This could give India a significant edge in both civilian and defence quantum applications, strengthening its presence in the fast-growing quantum communication ecosystem globally.

2. HCLSoftware Launches Domino 14.5 with Sovereign AI 'Domino IQ' to Safeguard Government & Regulated Data.



HCLSoftware, the enterprise software division of HCLTech, has recently released Domino 14.5, featuring Domino IQ — a powerful sovereign AI extension aimed at governments, financial institutions, and other regulated sectors that require robust control over data privacy and AI usage.

- **Domino IQ enables organisations to use trusted AI models built in-house or by vetted partners—offering granular control over algorithms and data. This ensures compliance with strict frameworks such as the European AI**

Act and removes dependency on foreign cloud providers.

- **HCLSoftware reports that over 200 government agencies are already safeguarding sensitive content—emails, chats, video calls, documents—using the updated platform.**

Key Points:-

(i) Security has been dramatically enhanced: Domino 14.5 is BSI-certified for information security, integrates Security Event and Incident Management (SEIM) tools, and ensures compliance with the European Accessibility Act for inclusive access. It also includes ready-to-use sovereign chat and video-meeting capabilities tailored for highly regulated and classified environments.

(ii) HCLSoftware has partnered with IONOS, a leading European sovereign cloud provider, to host Domino 14.5 within infrastructure that guarantees data residency and eliminates foreign access risks. IONOS CEO Achim Weiss emphasised this model as a benchmark for “digital self-determination” in regulated industries.

(iii) According to Richard Jefts, Executive Vice President & General Manager of HCLSoftware, the update addresses a shifting geopolitical landscape where public and private regulators—especially governments and private banks—are demanding sovereign AI-based collaboration tools to protect national and commercial data integrity.

Static GK

National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) : B.V.R. Subrahmanyam	Headquarters: New Delhi
Punjab	Capital: Chandigarh	Chief minister: Bhagwant Mann
Bihar	Chief minister: Nitish Kumar	Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan
Apple Inc.	CEO : Tim Cook	Headquarters: Cupertino, California, United States
BMW Canada Inc.	President & CEO : Hardeep Singh Brar	Headquarters: Munich, Germany
DRDO	Chairman : Samir V. Kamat	Headquarters: New Delhi
Andhra Pradesh	Chief minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu	Governor: S. Abdul Nazeer
Brazil	Capital: Brasília	President: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
World Archery Asia	President : Chung Euisun	Headquarters : Seoul, South

(WAA)		Korea
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