

## 7. Short News

### 1. Ayush Anudan Portal

The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare officially launched the digital Ayush Anudan Portal in New Delhi.

**The Blueprint** – The portal is developed by the Ministry of Ayush as a crucial part of the Ayush Grid Initiative—the digital IT backbone connecting the entire traditional medicine sector.

**Objective** – It digitizes and streamlines the process of submitting, approving, and tracking financial funding proposals under Central Sector Schemes.

**Governance Reform** – It promotes paperless governance and the "Ease of Doing Business" by moving the entire grant application process from manual files to a 100% online system.

**Strict Verification** – The portal is directly integrated with the government's NGO Darpan Portal, enabling rapid and transparent security verification of applicant organizations.

**Grid Functional Areas** – These fits into the larger Ayush Grid map, which digitizes 6 core sectors – Health Services, Education, Research, Drug Administration, Medicinal Plants, and Ministry Oversight.

### 2. Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA)

Iran has established a new regulatory body called the Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) to police the Strait of Hormuz.

**Strategic Chokepoint** – The authority was created specifically to monitor, manage, and assert structural control over the **Strait of Hormuz**, one of the world's most critical maritime oil transit routes.

**The Permit Regime** – Under this new domestic system, international vessels are ordered to secure transit permits and obey direct operational orders from Iran before entering the strait.

**International Law Clash** – This directly challenges the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which protects uninterrupted shipping via the "transit passage" principle.

**The Ratification Loophole** – While Iran originally signed the UNCLOS maritime treaty, it never officially ratified it, using this gap to justify its sovereign fee and regulatory regime.

**Global Pushback** – The United States, European nations, and neighbouring Gulf states have explicitly rejected the legality of Iran's new maritime authority and transit fees.

### 3. Zwan-Wolf Effect

A study published in *Nature Communications* used data from NASA's MAVEN spacecraft to prove the existence of the Zwan-Wolf effect at Mars.

**The Phenomenon** – Discovered in 1976, it is a space weather event where solar wind (charged particles from the Sun) compresses and squeezes planetary plasma along magnetic field lines.

**The Shielding Effect** – This squeezing action creates a dense plasma "depletion layer" near the boundary of the planet, which helps deflect incoming solar wind flows.

**The Mars Surprise** – Earth has a massive global magnetic field, but Mars is relatively "unmagnetized." This discovery proves that even planets without global magnetic fields experience complex magnetic space weather.

**Atmospheric Clues** – Understanding this effect helps planetary scientists explain how Mars lost its ancient water and thick atmosphere over billions of geological years.

**The Scout (MAVEN)** – The data was captured by NASA's Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN) mission, launched in 2013 specifically to study the Martian upper atmosphere.

### 4. Apache Helicopters Support Deal

The United States has approved a \$198.2 million sale of support services and military equipment to maintain India's fleet of Apache attack helicopters.

**The Platform** – Developed by Boeing, the Apache is universally recognized as one of the world's most lethal and advanced multi-role attack helicopters.

**Onboard Firepower** – It is heavily armed for combat, carrying a 30mm automatic chain gun, 70mm rockets, and precision-guided Hellfire missiles.

**Combat Role** – It is engineered to neutralize heavily armoured ground targets (like enemy tanks), fortifications, and low-flying aerial threats.

**All-Weather Avionics** – Equipped with advanced target-acquisition radars and night-vision suites, it can fight in high-altitude mountain battlefields and zero-visibility weather.

**Global Footprint** – Beyond its deployment in the Indian Armed Forces, the platform is operated globally by nations including the US, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and the UK.

## 5. Chandrayaan-3 – Latest Regolith Research

Scientists from the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) used data from Chandrayaan-3's "hop" experiment to reveal that the Moon's soil structure is layered.

**The Core Discovery** – The Moon's surface soil (regolith) is non-uniform; a loose, highly porous top layer abruptly changes into a much denser, tightly packed soil layer just 2–6 cm beneath the surface.

**The Data Source** – This soil profile was captured by the ChaSTE (Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment) payload on the lander, which recorded data down to a depth of 6–9 cm.

**The "Hop" Factor** – The data was gathered immediately after the Vikram lander performed its unexpected, brief rocket thruster "hop" across the lunar surface in September 2023.

**Strategic Insights** – This structural map provides vital engineering data on how rocket plumes displace lunar dust, helping scientists design future permanent lunar habitats.

**Lander & Rover Toolkits** – The mission deployed specific payloads – ChaSTE (thermal), ILSA (seismic), and Langmuir Probe (plasma) on the lander, alongside APXS and LIBS spectrometers on the Pragyan rover to map chemical composition.

## 6. SHE-MARTs Initiative

The Ministry of Rural Development held a key national consultation in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, to operationalize the new SHE-MARTs infrastructure.

**The Acronym** – SHE-MART stands for Self Help Entrepreneurs – Marketing Avenues for Rural Transformation, a flagship program announced in the Union Budget 2026–27.

**Nodal Setup** – The initiative is rolled out under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) by the Ministry of Rural Development.

**The Objective** – It builds a dedicated, women-led retail ecosystem to boost product branding, eliminate middlemen, and grant rural women entrepreneurs direct market access.

**Community Infrastructure** – It sets up permanent physical retail outlets and storage aggregation hubs owned and run by women through Cluster Level Federations (CLFs).

**Lakhpati Didi Alignment** – This marketing framework acts as an economic ladder to help fulfil the government's target of creating 3 crores additional "Lakhpati Didi's" (rural women earning over ₹1 Lakh annually) by 2029.

## 7. Precious Metal Import Curbs

The Indian government has placed strict limits on gold and silver imports to protect its foreign exchange reserves and stabilize the falling rupee.

**The Regulatory Action** – The government moved silver imports for domestic use into the "restricted" category (requiring an official license) and raised customs duties on gold and silver to 15%.

**The Economic Crisis** – Driven by the West Asia geopolitical crisis, India's forex reserves dropped by approximately \$32 billion within a 10-week window, compounding pressures on the depreciating rupee.

**Surging Import Bill** – The restrictions were triggered because silver imports surged by 150% (\$12.05 billion) and gold rose by 24% (\$71.98 billion) in 2025–26 due to skyrocketing global commodity prices.

**Strategic Exemptions** – To keep India's export sector competitive, silver imported for 100% Export-Oriented Units (EOUs), Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and jewellery re-exports remains unrestricted.

Silver Geography & Industry – Silver boasts the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of all metals, making it vital for green solar panels and electronics. Mexico is the top producer globally; in India, Rajasthan holds 86% of the reserves, where it is extracted primarily as a metallurgical by-product of lead-zinc-copper smelting.

## 8. Afsluitdijk Dam & India-Netherlands Water Ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the historic 32-km Afsluitdijk Dam alongside Dutch PM Rob Jetten to strengthen bilateral water management cooperation.

**The Mega-Structure** – The Afsluitdijk is an iconic 32-kilometer-long sea dam and causeway in the Netherlands that seals off the volatile North Sea to create the freshwater IJsselmeer lake.

**Global Engineering Benchmark** – The structure is recognized worldwide as the gold standard for large-scale maritime flood control, disaster mitigation, and coastal land reclamation.

**The India Pact** – During the visit, India's Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Dutch counterpart signed a formal Letter of Intent (LoI) to cooperate on the Kalpasar Project in Gujarat.

**The Kalpasar Vision** – Gujarat's Kalpasar project aims to duplicate Dutch engineering by constructing a massive freshwater reservoir across the tidal Gulf of Khambhat.

**Integrated Design** – If completed, the Kalpasar project will merge green tidal power generation, large-scale agricultural irrigation channels, and an over-sea transport highway infrastructure.