

8. Short News

1. Pacific Angel 25 – Indo-Pacific Humanitarian Exercise

India has joined the United States and Sri Lanka in Pacific Angel 25, the largest disaster response and humanitarian cooperation exercise in the Indo-Pacific region.

Launch – The exercise was launched on September 9, 2025, at Katunayake Air Base in Sri Lanka.

Objective – The primary goal is to strengthen regional preparedness for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, enhancing the ability of participating nations to respond collectively to crises.

Participants – The exercise involves nearly 90 US personnel and 120 Sri Lanka Air Force members, who are joined by troops and observers from India, Australia, Bangladesh, Japan, and the Maldives.

Significance – Pacific Angel 25 is crucial for enhancing interoperability in key areas such as search and rescue, medical readiness, aviation safety, and engineering support. It fosters regional cooperation and improves the speed and effectiveness of crisis response.

2. Operation Weed Out – DRI's Crackdown on Hydroponic Weed

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized 108.67 kg of hydroponic weed across India under a special operation named "Operation Weed Out."

About the Operation – It is a pan-India crackdown targeting drug trafficking syndicates that are smuggling hydroponic cannabis into the country.

Hydroponic Weed – This is a method of growing cannabis in a soil-free system, using nutrient-rich water solutions to cultivate the plants, often resulting in a more potent product.

Legal Framework – All enforcement actions under this operation are being taken under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

Significance – The operation supports the Government of India's vision of a "Nasha Mukt Bharat" (Drug-Free India) by actively dismantling drug syndicates and curbing the rising trend of narcotics smuggling, particularly from Thailand.

About DRI – Established in 1957, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence is India's premier intelligence agency under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). It is the lead agency for combating smuggling, narcotics trade, and other economic offenses.

3. Cheetah Relocation – Expansion of Project Cheetah

On the third anniversary of Project Cheetah, a female cheetah has been relocated from Kuno National Park to Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary, both in Madhya Pradesh. This is the first such move to a second habitat within India.

Objective of Relocation – The move aims to reduce population stress on Kuno National Park and diversify the habitats for India's growing cheetah population, which now stands at 27.

About Project Cheetah

Launch – The project was formally launched in 2022 with the translocation of eight cheetahs from Namibia to Kuno National Park. This was followed by the arrival of 12 more cheetahs from South Africa in February 2023.

Goal – To reintroduce cheetahs in India following their extinction in 1952, with the broader aim of restoring ecological balance and strengthening grassland conservation.

Authority – The project is overseen by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

About Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary

Location – Located in the Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh, around the backwaters of the Gandhisagar Dam on the Chambal River.

New Cheetah Habitat – It has been officially designated as the second cheetah habitat in India after Kuno. It currently houses 3 cheetahs.

Ecosystem – It is part of the Khathiar-Gir dry deciduous forest and is home to diverse wildlife, including leopards, dholes (wild dogs), and mugger crocodiles.

4. SPIN90 Protein – Key to Cell Movement Discovered

Scientists at the CSIR–Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad have discovered the crucial role of the SPIN90 protein in regulating how cells move and change their shape.

About SPIN90 Protein – It is a cellular protein that controls the internal structural reorganization of cells, playing a central role in cytoskeletal dynamics.

Role in Cell Movement – SPIN90 influences the rearrangement of actin filaments, which form a dense network near a cell's membrane and determine its shape. It helps cells generate a fresh meshwork of actin, which pushes the cell membrane in a desired direction, forming rapid protrusions (extensions). This process is essential for cells like white blood cells to chase, capture, and destroy pathogens.

Health Implications – Defects in the SPIN90 protein may disrupt immune responses and are believed to contribute to diseases like cancer metastasis (the spread of cancer cells).

5. Moran Community's Demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) Status

The Moran community in Assam, led by the All-Moran Students' Union (AMSU), has initiated an economic blockade to press their long-standing demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

About the Moran Community – They are an indigenous Assamese community, primarily agrarian, concentrated in Upper Assam (Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts). They are one of six communities in Assam, including the Adivasi (tea tribes), Motok, Tai Ahom, Chutia, and Koch-Rajbongshi, that are demanding ST recognition.

6. Constitutional Process for ST Inclusion

Constitutional Basis – Article 342 empowers the President to notify any community as an ST after consulting with the concerned state government.

Step-by-Step Process –

1. The proposal must be initiated by the State Government/UT.
2. It is then examined by the Registrar General of India (RGI).
3. Next, it is reviewed by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).
4. The final decision is taken by the Union Cabinet, followed by a notification from the President.
5. Any final inclusion or removal from the ST list requires a Parliamentary amendment.

7. Gussadi Dance – A Raj Gond Tradition

Members of the Raj Gond Tribe from Telangana's Adilabad district are set to perform the traditional Gussadi dance for the 78th Hyderabad Liberation Day.

About the Dance – Gussadi is a traditional dance of the Raj Gond tribe, performed by men in groups. Performers wear vibrant attire, including turbans studded with peacock feathers, deer horns, and goat skins. They use traditional instruments like the Dappu, Tudumu, and Pipri.

Famous Exponent – Kanaka Raju, a master of the Gussadi dance, was awarded the Padma Shri in 2021 for his lifelong contribution to preserving and teaching this art form.

8. India-Venezuela Economic Cooperation

India and Venezuela have agreed to collaborate on pilot projects in priority sectors, including agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and digital public infrastructure.

Bilateral Trade – The total trade between the two nations stands at \$1.8 billion, with Indian imports (\$1.6 billion) significantly outweighing exports (\$216 million).

Pharmaceutical Cooperation – Pharmaceuticals are the backbone of India's exports to Venezuela, meeting about 40% of the country's annual requirement. In 2024–25, India supplied \$110 million worth of pharma products to Venezuela.

9. East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) Controversy

The East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) is facing strong opposition from environmental activists due to its significant ecological risks.

About the Project – It is a 1,443-km pipeline designed to transport oil from Uganda’s Lake Albert oilfields to the port of Tanga in Tanzania for export. The project is backed by Total Energies, China’s CNOOC, and the governments of Uganda and Tanzania.

Criticisms –

Biodiversity Threat – The pipeline cuts through 44 protected areas and seven key biodiversity zones, endangering wildlife and fragmenting critical habitats.

Climate Impact – The project is projected to emit over 34 million tons of CO₂ annually, threatening global climate goals.

10. IEA Report on Declining Oil and Gas Fields

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released a report warning that global oil and gas fields are declining at a faster rate than before.

Major Highlights – The decline is steeper in shale and deep offshore fields, which now account for more production. Nearly 90% of current upstream investment is being used just to offset these natural declines, not to increase overall production.

Implications for India – As a heavily import-dependent nation (over 85% of crude oil and 45% of gas), India faces increased supply and price risks. The IEA recommends that India diversify its energy sources, expand domestic exploration, and invest in cleaner alternatives like green hydrogen and biofuels.

11. US Imposes 50% Tariff on Indian Diamonds and Gems

The United States has imposed a 50% tariff on Indian diamonds and gems, which took effect on August 27, 2025.

Impact on the Industry – The US is a critical market, accounting for nearly a third of India’s annual gem and jewellery shipments. The tariff has exacerbated an existing slowdown, with Indian diamond exports already at a two-decade low due to weak Chinese demand. In Surat, where over 80% of the world’s rough diamonds are cut and polished, orders have started to dry up. Some larger players are considering shifting operations to countries with lower tariffs, like Botswana (15% US tariff).

About India’s Gems and Jewellery Sector – The sector is a major economic contributor, accounting for 7% of India’s GDP and employing about 5 million workers.