

8. Short News

1. Vulture Safe Zones in Tamil Nadu

Initiative- The Tamil Nadu Forest Department will establish Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs) to protect dwindling vulture populations.

Location- The first zone will be in the Moyar River Valley (Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve), a critical nesting site.

Primary Threat

- Cause- Use of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) like diclofenac in cattle.
- Effect- Vultures feeding on contaminated carcasses suffer fatal kidney failure.

Vulture Species Status (IUCN)

Critically Endangered- White-rumped, Indian/Long-billed, Slender-billed, Red-headed Vultures.

Endangered- Egyptian Vulture.

Near Threatened- Bearded, Himalayan Griffon, Cinereous Vultures.

Least Concern- Eurasian Griffon.

2. Henley Passport Index 2026

India has improved its global mobility ranking. An annual ranking of passports based on the number of destinations accessible visa-free (or visa-on-arrival).

Data Source- Based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Rankings

Top Rank- Singapore (1st) with access to 192 destinations.

Runners-up- Japan & South Korea (2nd); European nations like Denmark & Spain (3rd).

India's Performance

- Current Rank (2026)- 80th (improved by 5 spots).
- Access- 55 visa-free destinations.
- Comparison- Ranked 85th in 2025.

3. Ultracold Atoms

Definition- Atoms cooled to temperatures near absolute zero (-273.15°C) where quantum behavior dominates.

Creation- They do not occur naturally; created artificially in labs using-

Laser Cooling- Slows atoms using laser beams.

Evaporative Cooling- Removes hot atoms to cool the rest, forming a Bose-Einstein Condensate (BEC).

Key Features - Atoms behave like waves rather than particles.

Bose-Einstein Condensate (BEC)- A "superatom" state where multiple atoms occupy a single quantum state.

Applications

Precision Clocks- Vital for GPS and internet synchronization.

Quantum Tech- Simulators and computers.

Sensors- Gravity sensors and underground mapping.

India's Role

- Research Hubs- TIFR Mumbai, IISc Bengaluru, IISER Pune, RRI, RRCAT Indore.
- Milestone- TIFR created India's first BEC.

4. Responsible Nations Index (RNI)

Launch- A new index to assess nations based on values and responsibility rather than just economic/military power.

Publishers- World Intellectual Foundation (WIF) with JNU, IIM Mumbai, and Dr. Ambedkar International Centre.

Goal- To evaluate 154 countries on ethical governance, distinct from GDP-based metrics.

Three Core Pillars

- Internal Responsibility- Citizen well-being, justice, dignity.
- Environmental Responsibility- Climate action, resource stewardship.

3. External Responsibility- Global peace, cooperation.

About World Intellectual Foundation (WIF)

Established- 2021.

HQ- New Delhi, India. Function A global, non-partisan think tank for research-driven

