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Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

GULF OF KUTCH



- It is an **inlet of the Arabian Sea**.
- It is located along the west coast of India, in the Jamnagar district of **Gujarat**.
- It **divides Kutch and the Kathiawar peninsula regions of Gujarat**.
- It stretches for 99 miles and is famous for the **coral reefs** surrounding the 32 islands.
- A unique feature of this region is the **tidal range, which generates fast currents of about 2.5 m per second**.
- It is a region with the **highest potential of tidal energy generation**.
- It is rimmed with **mudflats**, and **many small islands rise from its waters**.
- The Gulf of Kutch, occupying an area of 7300 sq.km. is **biologically one of the most productive** and diversified habitats along the west coast of India.
- The southern shore has numerous islands and inlets which harbor vast areas of mangroves and coral reefs with living corals.
- The **northern shore with numerous shoals and creeks** also sustains **large stretches of mangroves**.
- The western extremity of the Gulf consists of a **vast complex of marshland criss-crossed by innumerable creeks**.
- **Marine National Park** is situated on the southern shore of the Gulf of Kutch. It is the **1st National Marine Park of India**.

Key Facts about Dugong:

- Dugongs are the **only herbivorous mammals found in India's marine ecosystems**.
- It is known as the **sea cow** but resembles a cross between a seal and a whale, and is distributed through the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- **Distribution:**



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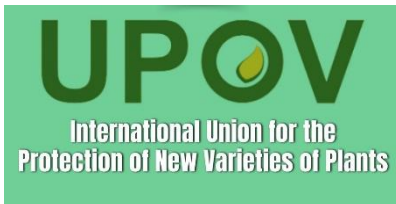


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Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

- Dugongs range across 37 Indo-Pacific countries but have disappeared from many parts of their former range.
- They are found along the Indian coastline, primarily inhabiting warm waters around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, and the Gulf of Kutch.
- **Habitat:** Due to their dependence on seagrass beds for habitat and food, dugongs are restricted to shallow waters, where they spend the day feeding on seagrasses of the genera Cymodocea, Halophila, Thalassia, and Halodule.
- The dugong is a long-lived species, able to live up to 70 years.
- **Conservation status:**
 - IUCN Status: **Vulnerable.**

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS (UPOV)



● UPOV is an intergovernmental organization established in 1961 to provide an effective system of plant variety protection.

- It administers the **UPOV Convention**, which provides a legal framework for plant variety protection implemented by its members.
- **Purpose:** Under this framework, breeders of new plant varieties are granted an intellectual property right known as the breeder's right, which incentivizes innovation in plant breeding.
- The **UPOV Convention** entered into force in 1968 and was revised in 1972, 1978 and 1991, each time strengthening plant breeders' rights.
- **Governance of International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV):**



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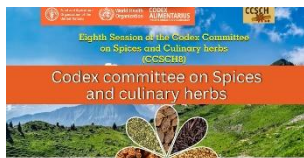


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Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

- The UPOV member countries hold annual meetings of the **UPOV Council**, a permanent body under the UPOV Convention.
- Other UPOV bodies include the **Consultative Committee**, the **Administrative and Legal Committee**, and the **Technical Committee**.
- **Member countries: 80 members** have become member of UPOV. (**India is not a member** of this organization)
- **Headquarter: Geneva** (Switzerland).

CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS



- It is one of the **subsidiary bodies** under **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)**.
- It is an **exclusive committee** for spices and culinary herbs to elaborate standards in harmonization with worldwide standards.
- The committee was **established in July 2013** by the CAC at its **36th meeting held at Rome**.
- India is the host country and the **Spices Board, Kochi** acts as the **secretariat for CCSCH**.
- **Mandates of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs:**
 - To elaborate worldwide **standards for spices and culinary herbs** in their **dried and dehydrated state** in whole, ground, and cracked or crushed form;
 - To consult, as necessary, with other international organizations in the standards development process to avoid duplication.

Key Facts about Codex Alimentarius Commission:

- It is the international **food standards-setting body**.
- It was established jointly by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** in **May 1963**.
- **Objective:** Protecting consumer's health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.



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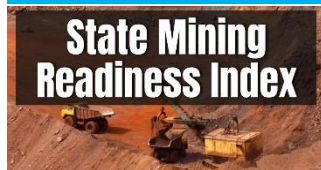


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Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

- **Member Countries:** Currently the CAC has **189** Codex Members made up of 188 Member Countries and 1 Member Organization (The European Union).
- **India** became a member of CAC in
- The Commission meets in regular session **once a year**, alternating between **Geneva and Rome**.
- **Funding:** It is funded through the regular **budgets of WHO and FAO**.
- **Headquarters:** Rome.

STATE MINING READINESS INDEX



State Mining Readiness Index

- It serves as a **tool for benchmarking State performance** and encouraging healthy competition, accelerating the pace of **mining reforms** and sustainable resource management across India.
- **Published by:** Ministry of Mines
- The index **evaluates States on parameters** like: **auction performance, early mine operationalisation, focus on exploration**, and sustainable mining practices related to **non-coal minerals**.
- These indicators aim to capture the **overall readiness and efficiency of States** in facilitating **mining activity** and implementing reforms.
- Under the SMRI framework, States have been divided into three categories based on their **mineral endowment**:
 - **Category A** - States rich in mineral resources
 - **Category B** - States with moderate mineral resources
 - **Category C** - States with limited mineral resources

State rankings of SMRI 2025:

- **Category A:** Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat secured the top three positions.
- **Category B:** Goa, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam ranked in the top three.
- **Category C:** Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Tripura achieved the top three ranks.



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Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

GREEN CRACKERS



- Green crackers are fireworks developed by the government's Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI).
- Green crackers were developed after the Supreme Court banned conventional firecrackers in 2017.
- **Features of Green Crackers:**
 - They are made by reducing the **size of the shells**, eliminating ash, using fewer raw materials, and adding dust-suppressing additives.
 - **There are two main categories of green crackers:** improved crackers that modify existing formulations to cut emissions; and new formulation crackers that **replace polluting ingredients altogether**.
 - Metals, which form part of particulate matter, are either minimized or eliminated to **reduce toxicity**.
- **Chemical composition of Green Crackers:**
 - Green crackers **exclude barium compounds**, and have drastically-reduced aluminium and sulphur content.
 - They **rely on cleaner oxidisers** and formulations that **limit the release of harmful particulates**.
 - Conventional firecrackers use chemicals such as **barium, sulphur, potassium nitrate, and aluminium**, which produce bright colours and loud noises. They also release heavy metals and toxic gases into the air.
 - Three **types of green crackers** have been developed – **SWAS** (Safe Water Releasable), **STAR** (Safe Thermite Cracker), and **SAFAL** (Safe Minimal Aluminium),
- **Advantage of Green Crackers:**

Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

- They **produce brightness and sound comparable** to conventional firecrackers (around 100 to 120 dB) and **reduce particulate matter (PM), SO₂, and NO₂** emissions by at least 30 per cent.
 - **Identification of genuine green crackers:**
 - They can be identified through two mandatory features introduced by CSIR-NEERI which include
 - The official Green Fireworks logo printed on the packaging, and
 - A **unique QR code** that can be scanned using the **‘CSIR-NEERI Green QR Code’ mobile app**.
 - Scanning the code provides details about the manufacturer, formulation, and NEERI certification status of the product.
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FSSAI BAN ON FAKE 'ORS' DRINKS

Following a Hyderabad-based paediatrician’s campaign, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has barred food companies from using the term **‘Oral Rehydration Salts’ (ORS)** on products that do not meet World Health Organisation (WHO) formulation standards.

Oral Rehydration Salts

- Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) is a scientifically formulated mixture of electrolytes and glucose designed to prevent and treat dehydration, especially from diarrhoea, vomiting, or heat-related illness.
- It helps restore the body’s lost fluids and salts effectively.
- **Composition (WHO-Recommended Formula):**
 - According to the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, one litre of ORS solution should contain:
 - **Sodium chloride:** 2.6 g
 - **Potassium chloride:** 1.5 g
 - **Sodium citrate:** 2.9 g



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Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

- **Dextrose (anhydrous glucose):** 13.5 g
- **Total osmolarity:** 245 mOsm/L
 - This precise ratio enables **optimal absorption of water and electrolytes** through the intestines.
- **Mechanism**
 - ORS works by utilizing glucose-mediated sodium absorption in the intestinal wall, which helps draw water back into the bloodstream, quickly reversing dehydration.
- **Uses**
 - Treatment of dehydration caused by diarrhoea, cholera, and vomiting.
 - Used in heat exhaustion or severe fluid loss from illness or exertion.
 - Essential in child healthcare programs and emergency relief operations worldwide.
- **Advantages**
 - Low-cost, easy-to-administer, and life-saving.
 - Can be prepared and used safely at home.
 - Recommended by WHO and UNICEF as the first-line treatment for dehydration.

FSSAI's Clarification on Misleading Labelling

- Recently, FSSAI affirmed that **using 'ORS' in any product name** — including fruit-based or ready-to-drink beverages — **violates the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.**
 - It said such labelling **“misleads consumers”** through false and deceptive claims and breaches multiple provisions under food labelling regulations.
 - **Enforcement and Penalties**
 - Violations can lead to fines, imprisonment, license suspension, or product confiscation.
 - A dedicated adjudication and appeals system, including a Food Safety Appellate Tribunal, handles disputes and appeals efficiently.
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BETTER GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, LED BY CHINA AND INDIA

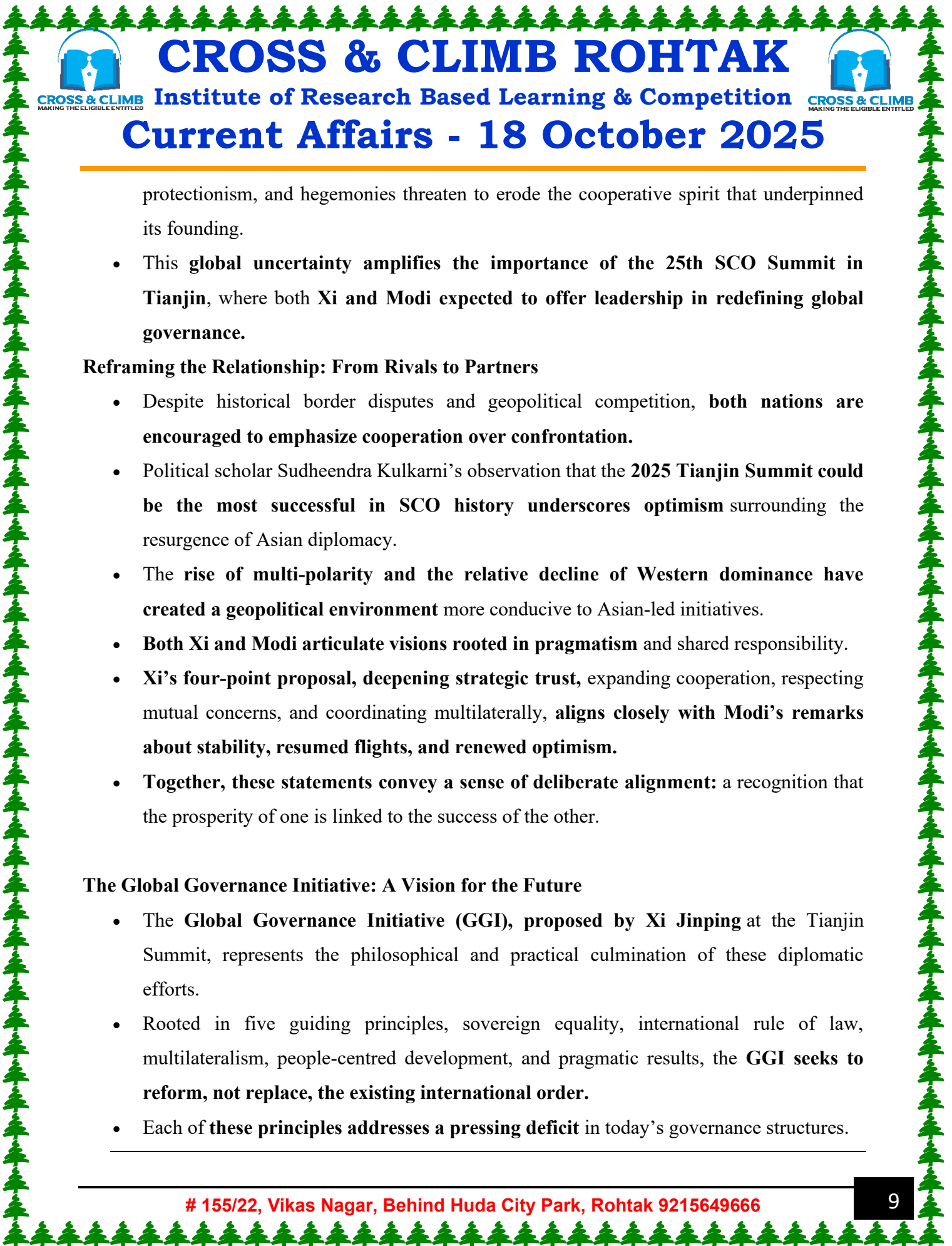
- The year **2025** represents a **significant milestone in international relations: the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and India**, and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.
- Both anniversaries **symbolise continuity and transformation in global diplomacy**, reminding the world of the enduring importance of cooperation over conflict.
- Against the backdrop of rapid geopolitical change, **the relationship between China and India, the world's two most populous nations, takes on renewed meaning.**

Historical Context: Seventy-Five Years of Diplomacy

- Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1950, **China and India have navigated a complex history** marked by periods of tension and cooperation.
- **Symbolic gestures**, such as reciprocal visits to each other's hometowns in 2014 and 2015, **signified a personal and political attempt to foster trust.**
- Subsequent **meetings at major international forums**, including BRICS, the G20, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), **reflect how both nations position themselves as active participants in shaping multilateral frameworks.**
- Even the interruption caused by the **COVID-19 pandemic** could not entirely halt their diplomatic exchanges.
- By the time of their bilateral meetings in 2023 and 2024, **the relationship appeared to have regained momentum**, with both sides reaffirming a shared vision for cooperation.

Global Context: The UN and the Crisis of Governance

- Parallel to the China-India relationship, the **cooperation extends to the larger framework of global governance.**
- The **80th anniversary of the United Nations** serves as a moment of reflection on the successes and shortcomings of the post-World War II international order.
- While the **UN has historically contributed to peace and development**, the early decades of the 21st century have exposed deep systemic challenges, rising unilateralism,



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Current Affairs - 18 October 2025

protectionism, and hegemonies threaten to erode the cooperative spirit that underpinned its founding.

- This **global uncertainty amplifies the importance of the 25th SCO Summit in Tianjin**, where both Xi and Modi expected to offer leadership in redefining global governance.

Reframing the Relationship: From Rivals to Partners

- Despite historical border disputes and geopolitical competition, **both nations are encouraged to emphasize cooperation over confrontation.**
- Political scholar Sudheendra Kulkarni’s observation that the **2025 Tianjin Summit could be the most successful in SCO history underscores optimism** surrounding the resurgence of Asian diplomacy.
- The **rise of multi-polarity and the relative decline of Western dominance have created a geopolitical environment** more conducive to Asian-led initiatives.
- **Both Xi and Modi articulate visions rooted in pragmatism** and shared responsibility.
- **Xi’s four-point proposal, deepening strategic trust, expanding cooperation, respecting mutual concerns, and coordinating multilaterally, aligns closely with Modi’s remarks about stability, resumed flights, and renewed optimism.**
- **Together, these statements convey a sense of deliberate alignment:** a recognition that the prosperity of one is linked to the success of the other.

The Global Governance Initiative: A Vision for the Future

- The **Global Governance Initiative (GGI), proposed by Xi Jinping** at the Tianjin Summit, represents the philosophical and practical culmination of these diplomatic efforts.
 - Rooted in five guiding principles, sovereign equality, international rule of law, multilateralism, people-centred development, and pragmatic results, the **GGI seeks to reform, not replace, the existing international order.**
 - Each of **these principles addresses a pressing deficit** in today’s governance structures.
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