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Current Affairs - 25 October 2025

WHAT IS A NOTICE TO AIRMEN (NOTAM)?



- Notice to Airmen, also known as **Notice to Air Mission**, is a notice containing **information** concerning the establishment, **condition, or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure, or hazard**, the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.
 - In short, a NOTAM is a **notification from an official body alerting airspace users to hazards** along their route, **both in the air and on the ground**.
 - NOTAMs **update pilots about changes in airspace, airports, and equipment** that affect aircraft operations.
 - NOTAMs are **issued by national aviation authorities** for a number of **reasons**, such as:
 - **Hazards** such as air-shows, parachute jumps, and glider or micro-light flying;
 - **Flights by important people** such as heads of state;
 - **Closed runways, taxiways, etc;**
 - **Unserviceable radio navigational aids;**
 - **Military exercises** with resulting airspace restrictions;
 - Unserviceable lights on tall obstructions;
 - Temporary erection of obstacles near airfields (e.g. cranes).
 - For reasons of conciseness and precision, NOTAMs are **encoded**, although the code is usually **sufficiently self-evident to allow the user to identify a hazard**.
 - NOTAMs are **communicated** by the issuing agency **using the fastest available means** to all addressees **for whom the information** is assessed as being of **direct operational significance**, and who would not otherwise have at least seven days' prior notification.
 - **Pilots who do not review NOTAMs before flight put themselves (and others) in danger.**
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NATIONAL UNITY DAY



- National Unity Day, or **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas**, is observed on **October 31st** every year.
- This significant day **commemorates the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, a pivotal figure in India's struggle for independence and the first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India.
- It was **introduced** by the Government of India in **2014**.
- Renowned for his exceptional leadership and unyielding commitment to national integration, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is fondly remembered as the "**Iron Man of India**."
- National Unity Day serves as a **reminder of his efforts to unite the diverse princely states into a single nation** and fosters a spirit of solidarity among the people of India.
- **This year marks the 150th birth anniversary of Vallabhbhai Patel.**
- One of the **key highlights** of the day is the **Run for Unity**, a nationwide marathon held to honor Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's vision of a united India.

Key Facts about Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:

- He was **born on 31st October 1875 in Nadiad, Gujarat.**
- A **successful lawyer** by profession, his life encountered a turning point when **Mahatma Gandhi chose him as his deputy commander to lead the Kheda Satyagraha in 1918.**
- Patel **led the Satyagraha movement in Nagpur in 1923** against the British law of banning the hoisting of the Indian flag.
- In **1924**, he was **elected President of the Ahmedabad Municipal Board.**
 - Taking charge, he revamped the drainage, sanitation, cleanliness, and water distribution systems of Ahmedabad.
- He became increasingly involved with the struggle for independence.
- It was **his role in the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928** that elevated him to a new pinnacle of national glory. It was here that he **earned the title of 'Sardar'**.



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- At the time of Independence, India consisted of 17 **British Indian provinces**, and the **Princely States**-comprising about two-fifths of the geographic territory of the country-numbered **more than 560**.
 - Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel stepped in to ensure the accession of the princely states and integrate them into the Union of India.
 - He was appointed as the **first Deputy Prime Minister** and **Home Minister of India** from 1947 to 1950. He also took charge of the **Information and Broadcasting Ministry**.
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PROJECT ARUNANK



- It has been implemented since 2008 by the **Border Roads Organization (BRO)** in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The name of the Project has been conceived from the **name of the State of Arunachal Pradesh**.
- **Objective:** To provide **vital connectivity to remote valleys & forward areas** of Arunachal Pradesh while meeting the operational requirements of the Armed Forces.
- It has adopted innovative and sustainable technologies such as **Steel Slag, Cut-and-Cover Tunnels, Geo Cells, Plastic Sheets, GGBFS Concrete** and **Gabion Walls**, enhancing the durability and environmental sustainability of road infrastructure in the region.
- **Achievements of Project Arunank:**
 - It has completed the 278 km **Hapoli-Sarli-Huri Road**, blacktopped for the first time since Independence, connecting one of the remotest regions of Kurung Kumey district.
 - It played a critical role in **developing communication systems** for socio-economic and strategic growth in the region.



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Key Facts about Border Roads Organization:

- It is a **road construction executive force** in India that provides support to the Indian Armed Forces.
- **Establishment:** It was **formed on 7 May 1960** to secure India's borders and develop infrastructure in remote areas of the north and north-east states of the country.
- It develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas and friendly neighboring countries.
- Nodal Ministry: It works under the **Ministry of Defence**.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST DOPING IN SPORT



in sport.

- It is a **multilateral treaty** by which States agree to adopt national and international measures to prevent and **eliminate doping**
- The Convention was adopted during the **33rd session of UNESCO's General Conference** (19 October 2005) and entered into force on 1 February 2007.
- **Members:** It consists of **192 States Parties**, making it UNESCO's second most ratified treaty.
- **Aim:** The Convention aims to harmonize **anti-doping legislation**, guidelines, regulations, and rules internationally in order to provide a level and safe playing environment for all athletes.
- **Governance:** The **Conference of Parties (COP)** is the sovereign body of the Convention, meeting in ordinary **session biennially**.
- It has overall responsibility for its **implementation and evolution**.

Features of International Convention against Doping in Sport

- The convention allows governments to formally recognize the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the Code**.



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- It works under a positive implementation approach, providing guidance, financial support, skill-training and capacity-building to empower States Parties aiming to enhance their implementation of the Convention.
- It also provides a **global forum for public and private stakeholders** of the sport integrity ecosystem.
- **Funding mechanism: Anti-Doping Fund** was formed to create awareness about doping.

NETWORK SURVEY VEHICLE



NETWORK SURVEY VEHICLE

- It is a **specialized infrastructure management tool** comprising vehicles equipped with advanced sensors and data acquisition systems.
- These vehicles systematically collect data on road inventory and condition of National Highways.
- **Working of Network Survey Vehicle:**
 - It is usually a specialised van or SUV **equipped with multiple sensors and instruments.**
 - It consists of Laser, **Global Positioning System (GPS)**, Video image processing tools, High-resolution cameras, **Inertial Measurement Units (IMU)**, and DMI (Distance Measuring Indicator).
 - The survey will capture **13 types of defects**, including crack measurement, ravelling, patch area, potholes, edge break, roughness, rutting, lane marking, etc.
 - It will also cover details like **carriageway type, road type, pavement** and shoulder width, topography, median details, right of way, utilities, land use, etc.
 - The data will be collected for all projects **involving 2/4/6 and 8 lanes** with NSV before the start of work and thereafter at **regular intervals of six months.**



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- Data collected through NSV survey will be uploaded on NHAI's 'AI' based portal **Data Lake**, where it will be analysed to transform data into knowledge and subsequent actionable insights.
- **Significance:**
 - The collected data is useful to make decisions for **pavement maintenance**, asset management, and infrastructure planning.
 - It will contribute to enhancing **safety and efficiency** of the National Highway Network across the country.

NHAI TO SCAN 20,000 KM OF HIGHWAYS FOR CRACKS AND SAFETY FLAWS

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will deploy **Network Survey Vehicles (NSVs)** across 23 states, covering 20,933 km of National Highways to assess and improve road quality.

These specialised vehicles will gather detailed data on road and pavement conditions, detecting cracks, potholes, ruts, and surface patches to ensure highways meet safety and quality standards.

NHAI's Expanding Highway Network: Progress and Persistent Challenges

- The NHAI has made remarkable progress in expanding and modernising India's road infrastructure, though issues of safety, design, and enforcement continue to persist.
- **Significant Progress in Expansion and Quality**
 - **Rapid network expansion:** India's national highway network has grown by about 60% in a decade, from 91,287 km in 2014 to 146,195 km in early 2025. The length of multi-lane highways has more than doubled in this period.
 - **Faster construction pace:** Construction speed has improved dramatically — 33 km per day in 2023–24, with a record 37 km per day in 2020–21.
 - **Flagship projects:** Under the Bharatmala Pariyojana, NHAI is developing economic corridors and expressways, with thousands of kilometres already completed or under construction.



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- **Stronger maintenance mechanisms:** Both MoRTH and NHAI are prioritising performance-based maintenance contracts for older highway stretches, ensuring accountability and consistent upkeep across the network.
- **Technological innovation:** NHAI is adopting drones, GPS, 3D mapping, and satellite monitoring for project tracking, quality control, and environmental compliance.
- **Persistent Challenges**
 - **Safety and design flaws:** Despite expansion, poor road design and construction defects — such as improper crash barriers, lack of signage, and uneven carriageways — continue to cause accidents. Potholes and unfinished stretches have also contributed to fatalities.
 - **Accidents during construction:** In 2022 alone, ongoing construction activities were linked to over 9,000 road fatalities, highlighting the need for strict safety protocols in active zones.
 - **User dissatisfaction:** Surveys reveal gaps in road quality, safety features, and traffic management, even on newly built expressways, affecting public satisfaction.
 - **Weak enforcement:** Although road safety laws have been strengthened, inconsistent enforcement — particularly against traffic violations — undermines safety gains from improved infrastructure.

How Network Survey Vehicles Detect and Record Highway Defects?

- Network Survey Vehicles (NSVs) are specialised vans or SUVs fitted with advanced tools like lasers, GPS, high-resolution cameras, video processors, Inertial Measurement Units (IMU), and Distance Measuring Indicators (DMI).
 - These vehicles use **3D laser-based imaging** and **360-degree cameras** to automatically capture road surface defects such as cracks, potholes, and unevenness without human intervention.
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GYAN BHARATAM MISSION - INDIA'S PUSH TO PRESERVE HERITAGE

- India is home to one of the richest manuscript traditions in the world, with millions of ancient documents in diverse languages such as Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, Persian, and Arabic.
- These manuscripts embody the intellectual and spiritual heritage of India's civilisational history, spanning literature, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, law, and governance.
- However, many of these invaluable records remain scattered across libraries, monasteries, and private collections, facing the constant threat of decay due to environmental and preservation challenges.
- Recognising the need for a coordinated national effort to conserve and digitise this vast legacy, the **Government of India launched the Gyan Bharatam Mission**, a flagship initiative of the **Ministry of Culture**.

About the Gyan Bharatam Mission

- It aims to **identify, document, conserve, digitise, and promote India's manuscript heritage** through a systematic and technology-driven approach.
- The mission's core mandate is to create a **National Digital Repository (NDR)**, a centralised digital platform to make manuscripts accessible to scholars and the public across the world.
- It also seeks to connect India's rich knowledge traditions with contemporary academic research, encouraging comparative studies and interdisciplinary collaborations.

Funding and Financial Oversight

- The mission's financial structure is designed for transparency and accountability. Funds will be released in **two instalments**:
 - **First Instalment (70%)** - Disbursed after approval of the annual budget and work plan.



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- **Second Instalment (30%)** - Released upon submission of progress reports, utilisation certificates, quality verification, and approval by third-party auditors.
- This phased funding ensures that each participating institution meets its conservation and digitisation milestones with measurable results.

Focus Areas and Key Activities

- The Gyan Bharatam Mission has identified **six thematic verticals** for its partner institutions:
 - **Survey and Cataloguing** - Identifying and recording manuscript holdings across India.
 - **Conservation and Capacity Building** - Training personnel in manuscript restoration and preventive care.
 - **Technology and Digitisation** - Using high-resolution scanners and AI-assisted tools to preserve texts digitally.
 - **Linguistics and Translation** - Promoting the study and translation of rare texts into contemporary languages.
 - **Research and Publication** - Facilitating academic work based on digitised materials.
 - **Outreach and Public Awareness** - Encouraging public participation in preserving India's intellectual legacy.
- By integrating these verticals, the mission aims to balance preservation with access, ensuring that ancient knowledge systems are not lost to time but revived for modern scholarship.

Broader Significance and Global Context

- The Gyan Bharatam Mission aligns with India's broader goal of "**Reclaiming India's Knowledge Legacy**", as highlighted during the first-ever international conference on manuscripts held by the Culture Ministry in 2025.
 - Globally, the initiative reflects India's commitment to protecting intangible cultural heritage in line with **UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme**.
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