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Current Affairs - 01 October 2025

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION



- ICAO is a United Nations (UN) specialized agency, established in 1944, by the Convention on International Civil Aviation (1944) known as **Chicago Convention**.

- It is dedicated to **developing safe and efficient international air transport** for peaceful purposes.
- **Member countries:** It consists of **193 Member States**
- **Headquarters:** Montreal, Canada.
- **Governance of International Civil Aviation Organization:**
 - **ICAO Assembly:** It is convened every three years, is the organization's sovereign body, comprising all **193 signatory States** to the Chicago Convention.
 - **ICAO Council:** It consists of **36-member**, elected by the 193 Member States during the Assembly, and serves as the governing body for a **three-year term**.

Functions of International Civil Aviation Organization:

- It sets **standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety**, security and facilitation, efficiency, and economic development of air transport as well as to improve the environmental performance of aviation.
 - It also serves as a clearinghouse for cooperation and discussion on civil aviation issues among its 193 member states.
 - It also **promotes regional and international agreements** aimed at liberalizing aviation markets.
 - It helps to **establish legal standards to ensure that the growth of aviation** does not compromise safety, and encourages the development of other aspects of international aviation law.
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FARMER SUICIDES IN INDIA - NCRB HIGHLIGHTS ALARMING TRENDS

- India's agricultural sector sustains nearly half of its population, yet farmers often remain economically vulnerable. The recurring phenomenon of farmer suicides is not new and has been deeply linked to issues such as:
 - **Debt Burden:** Dependence on informal credit and high-interest loans often traps farmers in cycles of unmanageable debt.
 - **Crop Failures:** Erratic monsoons, droughts, floods, and pest infestations leave farmers unable to recover investments.
 - **Market Volatility:** Price fluctuations in key crops like cotton, soybean, onion, and pulses reduce profitability.
 - **Policy Gaps:** Inadequate crop insurance, lack of irrigation coverage, and insufficient procurement mechanisms worsen rural distress.
 - **Regional Concentration:** Farmer suicides are often concentrated in cotton and soybean belts like Vidarbha and Marathwada in Maharashtra, highlighting the vulnerability of monocrop-dependent regions.
- Various governments have attempted measures such as loan waivers, crop insurance schemes, and MSP (Minimum Support Price) expansions.
- However, the persistence of suicides suggests structural reforms are required, particularly in rural credit systems, diversification of crops, and ensuring stable incomes.

Key Highlights of the NCRB Report on Farmer Suicides

- According to the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2023 report, 10,786 farmers and agricultural workers died by suicide** across India, accounting for **6.3% of all suicides** in the country.
- **State-wise Distribution**
 - **Maharashtra:** Reported the highest share at **38.5% of farmer suicides**, with Marathwada and Vidarbha remaining epicentres.



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- **Karnataka:** Accounted for **22.5%**, reflecting widespread distress across drought-prone regions.
 - **Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu:** Reported **8.6%, 7.2%, and 5.9%** respectively.
 - **Zero Reports:** States like West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, and several north-eastern states officially reported no farmer suicides, though experts question the accuracy of this data.
 - **Occupation-wise Split**
 - **Cultivators (Farmers):** 4,690 suicides (mostly male).
 - **Agricultural Workers:** 6,096 suicides, indicating that landless labourers also face severe economic stress.
 - **Broader Trends**
 - The NCRB data highlights that more than **10,000 suicides annually** have been consistently reported from the farming sector in 2021, 2022, and 2023.
 - Experts and farmer organisations argue that the figures may be underreported due to discrepancies in state-level data recording.
 - **Key criticisms include:**
 - **Trade Liberalisation:** Removal of the 11% import duty on cotton has sparked fears that cheaper American cotton will further undercut Indian farmers.
 - **Impact of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs):** Concerns that upcoming FTAs could threaten domestic agriculture, dairy, and edible oil sectors.
 - **Policy Indifference:** Critics argue that successive governments have failed to draw lessons from the crisis, remaining focused on corporate-driven models of growth.
 - The data also underscores a **cotton and soybean crisis**, with farmer suicides most pronounced in these crop belts.
 - This makes it evident that agricultural reforms cannot be piecemeal but must focus on holistic rural livelihood security.
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ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT IN NATURAL RESOURCES - A PILLAR FOR VIKSIT BHARAT 2047

- With India aspires to become a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**, a key milestone in this journey is **achieving Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance)**, especially in the **natural resources sector**, which **currently forms 50% of India's imports**.
- Despite having geological resources, **India remains heavily import-dependent** on oil, copper, gold, coal and bauxite.

India's Import Dependence:

- **Oil, gold and copper:**
 - These together constitute **60%** of India's total resource imports.
 - India imports around **90%** of its oil requirement, **95%** of copper requirement and over **99%** of gold requirement.
- **Coal and bauxite:** India also imports coal and bauxite, where imports should be zero as significant domestic reserves exist.
- **Electronics:** 15% of total imports, but domestic production has seen success due to policy push.

Potential of Natural Resources in India:

- Geological history places India in a **resource-rich** category, comparable to **Australia, Africa and South America**.
- However, vast mineral and hydrocarbon deposits remain **underexplored**.
- With **effective policies**, India can **minimize imports** and **leverage natural resources for economic transformation**.

Policy Measures for Self-Reliance:

- **New approach to exploration:**
 - Encourage **small exploration start-ups**, not just large PSUs.
 - **Move away from auction-heavy systems** that discourage small exploration companies. This will free up exploration to unleash entrepreneurial potential.



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- **Expedited processes via self-certification:**
 - The government can create a **rulebook of norms and standards** that must be adhered to.
 - **Entrepreneurs must self-certify**, and the government can hold them accountable (via an audit at a later stage) for any lapse.
 - In fact, the government already uses this system effectively in some domains, like **income tax**.
 - This will **reduce long delays in clearance approvals**, reducing time taken to move from exploration to mining.
- **Rejuvenation of existing assets:**
 - **Dormant mines** (e.g., Kolar Gold Fields) and underperforming assets (e.g., Hindustan Copper, Hutti Gold Mines) **need revival**.
 - This can be achieved by **allowing private sector participation and infusion of technology**.
 - **Immediate results** can be achieved here, **unlike new exploration which is time-intensive**.
- **Level playing field for private sector:**
 - Current dominance and preferential treatment of PSUs creates barriers.
 - Equal opportunities for private players will **attract fresh investment**.
 - Encouragement of **entrepreneurship** in natural resources **can accelerate job creation and production**.

Benefits of the Suggested Measures:

- **Reduced import dependence:** On strategic resources.
 - **Strengthened livelihood opportunities:** In resource-rich regions.
 - **Enhanced government revenue:** Without extra budgetary support.
 - **Integrate natural resources strategy:** Into India's roadmap for energy security, industrial growth, and Viksit Bharat 2047.
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NCRB DATA ON ROAD ACCIDENTS



- A total of **4,64,029** road accidents took place in the country in **2023**, 17,261 more than in 2022.
- **More than 1.73 lakh** people were killed and **47 lakh** injured in road accidents across the country in 2023.
- The highest number of accidents (**20.7% of total**) were reported **between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.**
 - From 3 pm to 6 pm and 12 noon to 3 pm accounted for 17.3 percent and 15 percent , respectively.
- **Two-wheelers** accounted for the **highest number of fatal road accidents**, causing 79,533 deaths, or **8% of total deaths**, followed by **pedestrians** at 27,586 (**15.9%**) and **SUV/car/jeep** at 24,776 (**14.3%**).
- **Most of the deaths in two-wheeler accidents** were reported in **Tamil Nadu (11,490)** and **Uttar Pradesh (8,370)**.
- A large number of **deaths due to SUV/car/jeep accidents** were reported in **Uttar Pradesh (19.2% of total)** and a large number of **deaths due to trucks/lorries/mini truck accidents** were also reported in the State (**29.9% of total**).
- Generally road accidents have caused more injuries than deaths, but in **Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jharkhand, Punjab, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh**, road accidents caused more deaths compared to persons injured.
- The **Cause-Wise Analysis of Fatal Road Accidents**:
 - **6% (1,01,841)** and **23.6% (41,035)** of fatalities were **due to speeding and dangerous/careless driving or overtaking**, respectively.
 - Poor weather conditions, driving under influence of drug/alcohol, and animal crossings caused 4,952 deaths.



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- The **highest number of deaths** were reported on the **National Highways** accounting for **6%**, followed by **State Highways** at **23.4%**.
- State/UT-wise patterns revealed that maximum **fatalities in road accidents** on the **National Highways** took place in **Uttar Pradesh**, followed by **Tamil Nadu**, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh during 2023.
- **Of the 69,910 traffic accidents** that were reported in the **megacities** throughout the year, **5,715 occurred in Delhi**, making up **2% of the total**.
 - **Bengaluru and Chennai** were ranked **second and third** on the list, with 4,980 and 3,653 road crashes each.
 - With 1,457 fatalities, **Delhi** had the **highest number of deaths in the same year**.
 - **Bengaluru** ranked **second** with 915 road accident deaths in the same year, while Jaipur came in third with 848.

INTERSTELLAR MAPPING AND ACCELERATION PROBE



INTERSTELLAR MAPPING AND ACCELERATION PROBE

- Its goal is to **map the heliosphere's boundary**, trace energetic particles, and improve space weather forecasting.
 - The heliosphere is a huge bubble created by the **Sun's wind** that encapsulates our entire solar system.
- IMAP will support **real-time observations of the solar wind** and energetic particles, which can produce hazardous conditions in the space environment near Earth.
- It is situated at the **first Earth-Sun Lagrange point (L1)**, at around one million miles from Earth toward the Sun.
- IMAP will also send data in near real-time to help scientists monitor space weather conditions.
- **Components of Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe**
 - IMAP is equipped with **10 scientific instruments**, each designed to detect different types of **particles or phenomena in space**.



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Current Affairs - 01 October 2025

- Some of them are **energetic neutral-atom detectors** (IMAP-Lo, IMAP-Hi, IMAP-Ultra), which capture neutral atoms that were once charged ions but were changed by acquiring electrons.
 - Other instruments detect charged **particles directly**, magnetic fields, interstellar dust, and solar-wind structures.
 - **The Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe will:**
 - Uncover fundamental physics at scales both tiny and immense.
 - Improve **forecasting of solar wind disturbances** and particle radiation hazards from space.
 - Draw a picture of our **nearby galactic neighborhood**.
 - Help determine some of the basic cosmic building materials of the universe.
 - Increase understanding of how the heliosphere shields life in the solar system from cosmic rays.
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DONALD TRUMP'S 20-POINT GAZA PEACE PLAN

- US President Donald Trump's **20-point "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict"** lays out ambitious measures to end hostilities, ensure security, and rebuild Gaza.
- The war in Gaza has left more than 66,000 people dead, after the October 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas killed 1,200 people and led to about 250 people being taken hostage.
- **Hamas Disarmament and Safe Passage**
 - The plan's most critical element requires **Hamas to surrender and disarm**.
 - Members committing to peaceful coexistence will be granted amnesty, while those unwilling can leave Gaza with safe passage to countries like Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, or Iran.
 - Given Hamas's two-decade rule and history of armed conflict, this is seen as the plan's toughest hurdle.
- **International Stabilization Force (ISF)**



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Current Affairs - 01 October 2025

- A temporary ISF, backed by the US and Arab partners, will be deployed in Gaza.
 - Its role includes training vetted Palestinian police, stopping arms inflow, and facilitating aid and goods movement.
 - **Israel has pledged not to annex Gaza** and will gradually withdraw its forces as the ISF establishes control, though it plans to retain a security buffer zone until stability is ensured.
 - **Governance and Transitional Authority**
 - Gaza will be run by a technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee, with oversight from an **international Board of Peace led by Trump**, alongside other leaders, including former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.
 - This arrangement aims to provide neutral governance and oversee reconstruction, though Blair's inclusion has drawn skepticism given his controversial Iraq War legacy.
 - **Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction**
 - The plan permits the resumption of large-scale humanitarian aid, including rehabilitation of water, electricity, sewage, and healthcare systems.
 - Aid distribution will be overseen by the UN, Red Crescent, and international agencies, ensuring transparent and interference-free relief for Gaza's population.
 - **Hostage-Prisoner Exchange**
 - Within 72 hours of Israel's acceptance, all hostages — alive and deceased — must be returned.
 - In exchange, Israel will release 250 prisoners serving life terms and 1,700 Gazans detained since October 7, 2023, including all women and children.
 - The deal also covers a 15:1 exchange ratio for remains of deceased hostages and Gazans.
 - With 48 hostages still held by Hamas, this remains a sensitive issue fueling public protests in Israel.
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