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Current Affairs - 03 October 2025

SIR CREEK



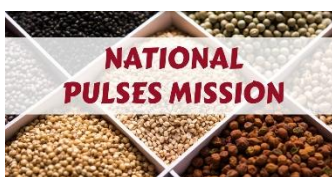
• Sir Creek is a 96 km long tidal estuary located in the marshy Rann of Kutch region, separating Gujarat (India) from Sindh (Pakistan).

- It flows into the Arabian Sea and is a strategically sensitive zone due to its proximity to the international boundary.
- The area is significant for security, fishing rights, oil and gas exploration, and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) determination.

Nature of the Dispute:

- The dispute arises from differing interpretations of the 1914 Bombay Government Resolution signed between Sindh (then under British India) and the Ruler of Kutch.
- **Pakistan's claim:** The boundary lies on the eastern bank of the creek (giving the creek to Sindh).
- **India's claim:** The boundary should follow the **thalweg principle** (mid-channel line of navigable waters).
- **Pakistan's counter-argument:** Sir Creek is not navigable, hence the **thalweg principle** doesn't apply.
- **India's stand:** The creek is navigable during high tide, so international maritime norms apply.

NATIONAL PULSES MISSION



• The "Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses" is a six-year central scheme aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in pulses production, with a financial outlay of ₹11,440 crore.

- It will be for the period from 2025-26 to 2030-31.



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Features:

- Under the mission, the Government has set a **target to increase pulses production to 350 lakh tonnes by 2030-32** from 242 lakh tonnes achieved in 2023-24.
- The **area under pulses cultivation will be expanded to 310 lakh hectares** from 242 lakh hectares, while **yield is targeted to improve to 1,130 kg per hectare** from 881 kg per hectare.
- The mission will be implemented through a **cluster-based approach across 416 focused districts**.
- About **1,000 new packaging and processing units** will be set up, with a **maximum subsidy of Rs 25 lakh** available for establishing processing and packaging facilities.
- To improve productivity, the emphasis will be on **developing and disseminating the latest varieties of pulses** that are high in productivity, pest-resistant and climate-resilient.
- **Multi-location trials** will be conducted in major pulse-growing states to ensure regional suitability.
- The Government will **distribute 126 lakh quintals of certified seeds** to pulse-growing farmers, covering 370 lakh hectares by 2030-31.
- **States will prepare five-year rolling seed production plans**, with breeder seed production supervised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- Foundation and certified seed production will be undertaken by state and central-level agencies and tracked through the Seed Authentication, Traceability & Holistic Inventory (SATHI) portal.
- Additionally, **88 lakh seed kits** will be distributed free of cost to farmers to support area expansion by an additional 35 lakh hectares, targeting rice fallow areas and promoting intercropping and crop diversification.



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EXERCISE DRONE KAVACH



- It was conducted by the Indian Army's Spear Corps, operating under the Eastern Command.

- The four-day exercise was conducted in the forward areas of Eastern Arunachal Pradesh.
 - The exercise showcased the Army's combat readiness for the next generation of drone warfare, besides validating state-of-the-art drone technologies.
 - It was also attended by personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) deployed in forward areas.
 - As part of it, a series of tactical manoeuvres and combat situations were exercised to validate the Army's preparedness for operating in a multi-domain, technology-infused battlefield scenario.
 - Tactics, techniques, and procedures pertaining to target acquisition, active/passive counter-drone measures, and target neutralisation with assured success were rehearsed under simulated conditions.
 - Newly raised structures at the unit level were also exercised for developing tactics, techniques, and procedures in consonance with the overall employment philosophy and mandated operational tasks.
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ANUSANDHAN NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION (ANRF)



Anusandhan
National
Research
Foundation
(ANRF)

- Established under: ANRF Act, 2023, functioning under the Department of Science & Technology (DST).
- Subsumed body: The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has been merged into ANRF.



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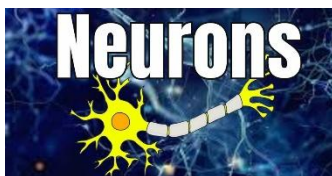


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- **Core objective:** To seed, grow, and promote R&D, and foster a research and innovation culture across universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D labs in India.
- **Strategic role:** Acts as an apex body providing high-level strategic direction to research, in line with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
- **Funding target:** ₹50,000 crore for the period 2023–2028, with ~70% expected from private sector contributions.
- **Broader vision:** Develop an AI Science & Engineering Open India Stack to revolutionize sectors like drug and chemical discovery, aerospace design, advanced materials, climate and weather studies.
- **Single-window system:** Envisaged as a single-window clearance mechanism for R&D funding in academic and research institutions.
- SARAL uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate simplified summaries of complex research papers in the form of videos, podcasts, posters, and presentations for wider outreach.

NEURONS



• Neurons (nerve cells) are the fundamental units of the brain and nervous system.

- They are responsible for:
 - Receiving **sensory input** from the environment.
 - Sending **motor commands** to muscles.
 - **Processing and transmitting** electrical and chemical signals.
- **Structure of Neuron:**
 - **Dendrites** → receive incoming signals.
 - **Cell Body (Soma)** → integrates signals.
 - **Axon** → carries impulses away from the cell body.



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- **Axon Terminals** → release neurotransmitters at synapses.

Neuronal Communication

- Traditionally, neurons communicate via **synapses** where neurotransmitters cross gaps.
- **New Discovery:** Neurons may also connect via **nanotubes (DNTs)**, enabling:
 - **Direct electrical signal transfer.**
 - **Protein transport** (including amyloid-beta, linked to Alzheimer's).

SNOW LEOPARD



Snow Leopard

- Declared **State Animal** of **Ladakh** and **Himachal Pradesh**.
- Found across **12 range countries** – Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.
- India is home to an estimated **500–700 snow leopards** spread across the Himalayas and Trans-Himalayan region.
- **Mascot of Khelo India Winter Games 2024:** named **Sheen-e She (Shan)** in Ladakh.

Key Characteristics

- Medium-sized cat
- **Vocalisation:** Cannot roar, unlike most big cats.
- **Evolutionary relation:** Closer to tigers than leopards.

Key details of the Survey

- The exercise, covering **26,000 sq km** across Spiti Valley, Kinnaur, Pangi, Lahaul, and **Great Himalayan National Park**, involved **271 camera traps**.
- First official sighting of **Pallas's Cat** in Kinnaur and rediscovery of **Woolly Flying Squirrel** in Lahaul also reported.
- For the first time globally, **indigenous women from Kibber** contributed to data analysis, highlighting **inclusive community participation** in conservation.
- Himachal Pradesh is the **first state in India** to complete a population estimation of snow leopards, setting a **cost-effective, scalable model** for monitoring.



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DRAFT RULES FOR REGULATION OF ONLINE GAMING IN INDIA

- The Ministry of Electronics and IT has released **draft rules** under the **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025**.
- The Act, which received Presidential assent in August 2025, aims to **regulate online gaming in India, ensure user safety, and curb societal and security concerns** linked to money-based online games.

Key Provisions of the Draft Rules:

- **Establishment of the Online Gaming Authority of India:**
 - **Composition:** A chairperson and five members from various government ministries.
 - **Powers:**
 - Decide whether a game qualifies as an “online money game.”
 - **Register online games.**
 - Issue directions and impose penalties.
 - **Cancel registration** in case of material changes (e.g., revenue model shift to betting).
- **Scope of regulation:**
 - **Prohibited:** All forms of online money games (poker, fantasy sports, wagering).
 - **Permitted:** “Online social games” and e-sports, for purposes like **recreation, education, and skill development.**
- **Registration process:**
 - **Mandatory** for all online game operators.
 - Companies must provide:
 - Revenue model.
 - **User safety measures.**
 - Proof that revenue comes from ads, subscriptions, or one-time fees (not wagers).



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- **Penalties and liabilities:**
 - Violations classified as **non-bailable offences**.
 - **Entire company staff can be held liable**.
 - **Penalty quantum** to be decided based on:
 - Profits earned through non-compliance.
 - Losses caused to users.
 - Repeated nature of violation.
- **Grievance redressal mechanism (3-tiered system):**
 - **Internal** redressal by the gaming service provider.
 - **Appeal** to Grievance Appellate Committee (under IT Intermediary Rules, 2021).
 - **Appeal** to the Online Gaming Authority.
- **Role of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:**
 - **Issue codes of practice** for classification of online social games.
 - **Provide guidelines for games** related to recreation, education, and skill development.

Significance of the Draft Rules and Way Forward:

- **Significance:**
 - **Addresses security and societal concerns** over online gaming.
 - **Introduces comprehensive regulation** for a growing digital sector.
 - **Balances innovation** in e-sports and gaming **with public safety and consumer protection**.
 - **Way forward:**
 - **Ensure clarity** in defining “online money games” vs. “social games.”
 - **Build stakeholder consensus** through public consultation (Example, draft rules open for public consultation till October 31).
 - **Develop technological tools** to monitor compliance.
 - **Encourage responsible gaming** while supporting India’s gaming and e-sports industry growth.
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THE BATTLEFIELD, CHANGE AND THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES

- **Artificial intelligence, automation, swarms of drones,** and inexpensive precision weapons have radically lowered the cost of force while accelerating decision cycles and amplifying operational risk.
- **For India, facing potential confrontations along two fronts and in multiple domains,** the consequence is stark: technological purchases alone will not suffice.
- **India must remake the architecture of power:** doctrine, command, force design, professional military education (PME), and the defence industrial base must be integrated into a single, adaptive system.

The problem: fissures between technology and organisation

- The **Indian Armed Forces have taken essential steps,** new doctrines (Joint Doctrine, 2017; Army Land Warfare Doctrine, 2018), tri-service agencies for cyber and space, and capability buys such as MQ-9B drones and Rafale-M fighters.
- **Despite political emphasis on jointness for over a decade,** joint PME and **true operational integration are only now being implemented;** the pace of organisational change has lagged operational needs.
- The **underlying problem is not a single deficiency but a mismatch:** a technological tempo that demands rapid, multi-domain responses and an institutional tempo that favours slow, service-centred decision cycles.

Proposed Solutions

- **From coordination to command: Theatre Commands and Legal Reforms**
 - Moving from mere coordination to unified command is the **central organisational prescription.**
 - **Empowering theatre commanders** with administrative and disciplinary authority (as reflected in recent rules) **aligns authority with responsibility,** a prerequisite for fast, coherent action.



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- But **authority must be paired with accountability**, legal clarity, and safeguards. Phased activation of theatre commands, with clear metrics and sunset reviews, will help manage inter-service resistance while proving operational utility.
- **Doctrine and multi-domain evolution**
 - Future conflicts will be multi-domain from the opening salvo: **choices made in cyberspace, space, and the information environment will shape kinetic outcomes.**
 - Doctrine must therefore be anticipatory. **India's Ran Samvad emphasis on hybrid warriors**, officers versed in scholarship, technology and narrative shaping, is a necessary conceptual shift.
- **Force design: modularity, speed, and logistics**
 - The **emergence of Integrated Battle Groups (Rudra)** and modular units (Bhairav) is a practical response to the need for speed and tailored lethality.
 - These **mission-specific brigades promise 12–48-hour deployments** with integrated armour, artillery, engineers, drones and loitering munitions.
 - **But rapid entry forces demand rapid logistics**, resilient C2, and joint sustainment: absence of logistic parity will render fast brigades brittle.
 - **Equally, maritime reforms, carrier-centred posture bolstered by Rafale-M, strengthen blue-water options**, yet need an unmanned and subsurface roadmap to deter across the spectrum of conflict.
- **PME and the technologist-commander**
 - Reforming PME to produce technologist-commanders is vital.
 - **Officers must be fluent in code**, data-centred decision-making, and information operations; they must also be comfortable failing fast in controlled settings and iterating.
 - **Embedding rapid prototyping into exercises, creating joint courses** with industry and universities, and rotating technologists through command postings will break the knowledge-silo barrier.