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School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 09 July 2026

TRIBEX PLATFORM



Tribex Platform

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the Tribex platform.

- It is a first-of-its-kind **digital learning platform** dedicated to tribal arts, culture, traditional knowledge and skill development.
- **Launched by:** It was launched by **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.

Features of Tribex Platform:

- **Digital Learning Platform:** It is conceived as a **comprehensive digital learning ecosystem** and offers structured learning opportunities through free certificate courses and **UGC-recognized Post Graduate diploma programmes** in tribal languages, art forms, crafts and traditional knowledge.
- **Digital Repository:** It serves as a digital repository for **documenting, preserving and promoting tribal languages**, oral traditions, performing arts, cultural practices and indigenous knowledge systems for future generations.
- **Courses:** It currently hosts **20 free certificate courses** across a diverse range of tribal art forms, including paintings, handicrafts, handloom, artefacts and traditional musical instruments.
- It integrates a robust **Learning Management System (LMS)**, and a **Repository Management System** providing a secure and seamless digital ecosystem for learning, knowledge management and progress tracking.
- It also has **Heritage Archive** which hosts more than **5000 multimedia resources**, including audio, video and literature documenting tribal festivals, socio-cultural practices and oral traditions from across India.

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YAK



A team of scientists has developed an Internet of Things (IoT)-based smart system to monitor the health of the high-altitude yaks (*Bos grunniens*) and keep tabs on their movement near the international border in the Himalayas.

- Yaks belong to the **Bovini tribe**, which also includes **bison, buffaloes, and cattle**.
- **Habitat:** Wild yaks inhabit alpine tundra at **altitudes of 5000 to 7000 meters**. They thrive in environments such as alpine meadows, alpine steppes, and desert steppes.
- **Distribution:** Found throughout the **Himalayan region, Tibetan plateau, Mongolia,** and parts of South-Central Asia.
 - In India, yaks are reared in **Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh,** and the union territories of **Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh**.
- **Characteristics of Yak:**
 - This bovine animal has long been recognised for its resilience and adaptability to extreme conditions.
 - It features **thick, shaggy coat**. This woolly fur, provides **insulation against the biting cold of high altitudes**.
 - They have large hearts and lungs, compact bodies, thick outer hair covering, and **nonfunctional sweat glands**, which help to **withstand hypoxia and cold stress**.
 - **Diet:** Yaks are **herbivorous**, feeding on grasses and alpine plants.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN:** Vulnerable
 - **CITES:** Appendix I
 - **Wildlife Protection Act of 1972:** Schedule I

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AISHE REPORT - HIGHER EDUCATION ENROLMENT REACHES 4.5 CRORE

- The AISHE is a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, which tracks key indicators in the higher education sector. It covers:
 - Student enrolment
 - Faculty and teaching staff
 - Infrastructure and facilities
 - Programme and course offerings
 - Gender and social category participation
- The survey is a critical policy tool that informs decisions related to higher education planning, financial allocations, and reforms under initiatives like the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

Key Findings of AISHE 2023-24

- **Total Enrolment Reaches 4.5 Crore**
 - Total enrolment in higher education rose to 4.5 crore in 2023-24.
 - This marks a 31.5% increase from 3.42 crore in 2014-15.
 - Reflects growing access and demand for higher education across India.
- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)**
 - GER, the proportion of people aged 18-23 enrolled in higher education, has improved significantly:
 - GER in 2023-24: 30
 - GER in 2022-23: 29.5
 - GER in 2014-15: 23.7
 - The rising GER shows that more young people are pursuing college education.
- **Women's Participation Continues to Rise**
 - Female enrolment in 2023-24: 2.24 crore
 - Female enrolment in 2022-23: 2.18 crore
 - Female enrolment in 2014-15: 1.57 crore

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Significance and Implications

- **For Access and Inclusivity**
 - The rising GER reflects improved access to higher education across the country.
 - Increased women's participation reinforces India's commitment to gender equity in education.
- **For Economic Development**
 - STEM growth aligns with India's ambitions in technology, innovation, and industrial development.
 - A more educated workforce supports the country's economic transformation.
- **For Policy Implementation**
 - The findings align with the **NEP 2020 targets of achieving 50% GER by 2035.**

Challenges Ahead

- **Quality Concerns**
 - Access has grown faster than quality improvements in many institutions.
 - Concerns persist about learning outcomes and the employability of graduates.
 - Faculty shortages and infrastructure gaps in many regions.
 - **Regional Disparities**
 - Uneven distribution of quality institutions across states.
 - Rural-urban divide in access to premier institutions.
 - Concentration of top institutions in metropolitan areas.
 - **NEP 2020 Targets**
 - India needs to raise GER to 50% by 2035, requiring sustained expansion.
 - Institutional capacity, particularly in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, needs strengthening.
 - Balancing expansion with quality assurance remains a challenge.
 - **Employability**
 - Concerns about the skill gap between higher education output and industry needs.
 - Vocational and skill-based education requires greater integration.
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TRANSNATIONAL CRIME - DIPLOMATIC RESET AND GLOBAL CRACKDOWN

- The term "organised crime" refers to illicit operations carried out by networks or groups that collaborate, frequently involving violence, corruption, or related acts in order to get material or financial advantage.
- When organisations or activities operate across several nations, it is known as transnational organised crime.

Canada's Revised Position:

- It clarified that investigations have not found evidence implicating Indian government officials in Nijjar's killing.
- However, the **investigation** remains **ongoing**, and authorities have not closed the case.
- This marks a **significant shift** from former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation of a "potential link" between Indian agents and the assassination.
- India had consistently rejected the allegations as baseless, leading to one of the **sharpest downturns** in India-Canada diplomatic relations.
- Bilateral ties have **gradually improved** since (June) 2025, when both countries agreed to restore diplomatic engagement.

Operation Hard Ball:

- The charges form part of a major US-led investigation targeting Indian-origin transnational criminal syndicates involved in racketeering, extortion, kidnapping, drug trafficking, murder, and organised corruption.
- **Key highlights:** The FBI has announced a reward of up to \$50,000 for information leading to Goldy Brar's arrest.

India-US Security Cooperation:

- **Strengthening intelligence sharing:**
 - Before Operation Hard Ball, US law enforcement agencies held multiple meetings with Indian agencies through the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

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- **India also shared:**
 - Evidence against overseas-based gangsters.
 - Details of criminal networks operating from the US, Canada and Europe.
 - Technical surveillance inputs and interrogation-based intelligence.
- Cooperation intensified after the **deportation** of Anmol Bishnoi from the US in 2025.

Emerging Dimensions of Transnational Organised Crime:

- Investigations reveal increasing **convergence** between organised crime and cross-border security threats.
- **Evading surveillance:** Criminal groups employ Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), encrypted messaging platforms., and advanced digital communication technologies.

Broader Implications:

- **International relations:** India-Canada diplomatic relations. Managing diplomatic disputes through evidence-based investigations. India-US cooperation on law enforcement and intelligence.
- **Internal security:**
 - Cross-border narcotics trafficking, prison-based criminal operations, and cyber-enabled organised crime using encrypted technologies.
 - Expansion into **international organised crime** following the decline of older criminal syndicates led by Dawood Ibrahim, Chhota Rajan and Ravi Pujari.
- **Governance and legal framework:** UAPA, international police cooperation, intelligence sharing for combating organised crime, challenges in extradition and prosecution of overseas fugitives.

International Efforts:

- **The Guwahati Declaration** was adopted by the BRICS nations to strengthen cooperation against illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime.
- Financial Action Task Force (FATF), **Interpol**, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are targeting the massive illicit profits generated by transnational organized crime.

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INDIRA POINT: WHY THE CENTRE WANTS TO PROTECT THE LANDMARK Lighthouse AND DEVELOP A TOURISM HUB

- Indira Point marks **India's southernmost tip**. It is located on the **Great Nicobar Island** (GNI) in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- It is an important maritime landmark, lying to the **south of Galathea Bay** — the site where a transshipment port has been proposed under the larger GNI mega infrastructure project.
- The lighthouse at Indira Point serves as a **key landmark on the Singapore-Colombo international maritime route**, acting as a navigational aid for mariners.
- **A Brief History of the Site**
 - Indira Point was earlier known as **Pygmalion Point**.
 - It was renamed in 1985 in memory of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, following her death.
 - The lighthouse itself was commissioned in April 1972 and stands 35 metres tall. Its tower is made of cast iron, painted in distinctive red and white bands.

What Is the Protection and Development Proposal?

- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, through the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships, wants to **structurally repair** the lighthouse and eventually develop **tourism infrastructure** and facilities around it.
- According to the detailed project report prepared by IIT Madras (IIT-M), the structural work will include:
 - Repair and strengthening of the lighthouse tower's foundation
 - Construction of an all-weather approach road
 - Shore protection works, including breakwaters around the tower
 - Development of a powerhouse, inspection facility, and staff quarters
 - A compound wall and internal pathways

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Coastal Protection and Regulatory Clearances Needed

- Since the proposed works fall within sensitive coastal habitats, they are subject to protection under the **Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) Notification, 2019**.
- This means the project requires prior approval from both the Union Territory's Coastal Zone Management Authority and the Union Environment Ministry.
- The 2019 Notification provides a regulatory framework to protect coastal stretches, marine habitats, and the livelihoods of fishing and other coastal communities across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

THE INDIAN DIASPORA AS AUSTRALIA'S IDENTITY, AND ITS FUTURE

- The Indian diaspora has now officially become Australia's **largest overseas-born community**, overtaking the England-born population for the first time in history.
- This is a significant shift, since Australia's population has been anchored by a British-derived majority for two centuries.
- An Indian-origin community now outnumbering it marks a genuine turning point in how Australia understands its own national identity.
- This development forms the backdrop to PM Modi's third visit to Australia, where the diaspora is expected to be a central focus.

From Three Cs to Four Ds

- The India-Australia relationship has evolved significantly over the years.
- It moved from being defined by the simplistic "**three Cs**" — Cricket, Curry, and Commonwealth — to a more substantive framework of "**four Ds**": Democracy, Defence, Diaspora, and Dosti.
- This shift reflects a decade of serious institution-building between the two countries.
- During PM Modi's visit, all four pillars will be addressed. It is the diaspora-focused event — a large public gathering titled "Melbourne Meets Modi" — that is attracting the most attention, given what this community has come to symbolise for both nations.

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The Need to Move Beyond Numbers

- For India, the diaspora has traditionally been framed with pride — seen as a cultural and emotional bridge connecting India to its strategic partnership with Australia.
- However, pride and sentiment alone do not equal genuine understanding.
- What remains missing on both sides is a serious, evidence-based picture of how this diaspora actually lives, builds trust, and participates in Australian civic life — going beyond routine headline statistics on income, education, and trade that typically dominate government discourse.
- If both nations genuinely wish to treat the diaspora as a real pillar of their partnership — rather than merely a talking point — this requires dedicated efforts to understand their diverse and varied experiences of settlement, which are far from uniform or monolithic.

A Lasting Demographic Shift

- Australia's demographic transformation is not a temporary trend — it will permanently reshape the country's national identity, shifting it from a purely antipodean outlook toward one more deeply intertwined with India and the broader Indo-Pacific region.
- This shift calls for sustained research, stronger engagement with civil society organisations, and policies designed to actively build social cohesion, rather than assuming it will develop on its own.
- If democracy, defence, diaspora, and dosti are to remain the genuine four pillars of this partnership, the diaspora must be treated not merely as a symbolic talking point, but as a real constituency — one whose experiences and trust genuinely deserve to be understood.

Conclusion

- Australia's Indian diaspora represents more than demographic milestone — it embodies a strategic partnership's human core.
 - True partnership demands moving beyond statistics toward genuine understanding, ensuring this community's voice shapes policy, not just political optics.
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