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WHAT IS IN-SPACE?



• **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACE)** is a **single-window, independent, nodal agency** that functions as an **autonomous agency** in the **Department of Space (DOS)**.

- It is formed following the Space sector reforms to enable and **facilitate the participation of private players**.
 - IN-SPACE is responsible to **promote, enable, authorize and supervise various space activities of non-governmental entities (NGEs)** including building launch vehicles & satellites and providing space-based services; sharing space infrastructure and premises under the control of DOS/ISRO; and establishing of new space infrastructure and facilities.
 - The agency acts as an **interface between ISRO and NGEs** and assesses how to utilize India's space resources better and increase space-based activities.
 - It also **assesses the needs and demands of private players**, including educational and research institutions, and **explores ways to accommodate these requirements in consultation with ISRO**.
 - **Three Directorates viz., Promotion Directorate (PD), Technical Directorate (TD) and Program Management and Authorization Directorate (PMAD)** are carrying out the functions of IN-SPACE.
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WHAT IS THE CHEQUE TRUNCATION SYSTEM (CTS)?



- It is a **cheque clearing system** undertaken by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** for faster clearing of cheques.



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- As the name suggests, **truncation** is the **process of stopping the flow of the physical cheque in its way of clearing.**
- CTS is an **online image-based cheque clearing system** where **cheque images and Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) data are captured at the collecting bank branch and transmitted electronically**, eliminating the actual cheque movement.
- **Security:** CTS is protected by a comprehensive **PKI-based security architecture** which incorporates basic security and **authentication controls** such as **dual access control, user ID, and passwords** with crypto box and smart card interfaces.
 - **Only CTS-2010 standards-compliant instruments** can be presented for clearing through CTS.
 - CTS-2010 standards contain certain **benchmarks** towards achieving standardization of cheques issued by banks across the country.
 - These include provision of **mandatory minimum-security features** on cheque forms like **quality of paper, watermark, bank's logo in invisible ink, void pantograph, etc.**, and standardisation of field placements on cheques.
 - The minimum-security features and standardisation help presenting banks while scrutinising/recognising cheques of drawee banks in an image-based processing scenario.
- **Benefits.**
 - **Realisation of proceeds of cheque possible within the same day.**
 - **Data storage and retrieval becomes easy.**
 - Minimizes risks and introduces a secured cheque clearing system.
 - Will result in **cost savings** due to lower cost in the physical movement of cheques.
 - **Minimizing bottlenecks and delays** between presentation and realization time.
 - Provides **shorter clearing cycles** and a centralized image archival system.
 - **CTS currently processes cheques with a clearing cycle of up to two working days.**



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MOAI STATUES



- They are **massive megalithic** stone-carved **human-shaped** statues found at Easter Island.
- The Easter Island **statues are monolithic human figures** carved from volcanic rock by the first Polynesian settlers on the island, **the Rapa Nui people**.
- They were built in **approximately 1400 – 1650 A.D.** by the natives of this island **known as Rapa Nui**.
- There are around 1000 Moai statues which are made up of volcanic tuff, the tallest of them being 33 feet.
- They carved them in the likeness of their ancestors.
- **What do moais represent?**
 - They were **built to honor chieftains** or other important people who had passed away.
 - They were **placed on rectangular stone platforms called ahu**, which are tombs for the people that the statues represented.
 - The moais were intentionally made with different characteristics since they were intended to keep the appearance of the person they represented.

Key Facts about Easter Island

- It is located in the **eastern Pacific Ocean**. Together with Hawaii and New Zealand, it forms the **so-called 'Polynesian Triangle'**, a spearhead-shaped area in the Pacific that is the traditional homeland of the Polynesian people.



APAAR ID

- APAAR stands for **Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry**. It was envisioned under the New Education Policy, 2020.



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- It is an **identification number which is linked to enrollment**, and a student's journey from **pre-primary to higher education** can be tracked through it.
- APAAR assigns a **unique and permanent 12-digit ID** to every student, offering a comprehensive record of their academic achievements, including degrees, scholarships, awards, and other credits.
- The **APAAR ID will be unique and remain the same** through one's education journey.
- It is **linked to Aadhaar** and stored in DigiLocker for easy access.
- The APAAR ID embodies the **vision of "One Nation, One Student ID"**, ensuring a unified and accessible academic experience for students across India.
- It serves as a lifelong academic passport, consolidating all achievements and credentials of a student in one place.
- APAAR is **generated through Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+)**.
- **Objectives of APAAR**
 - To **accumulate and store students' academic achievements** in a central database
 - To facilitate **seamless transfer between institutions**
 - To provide **standardized digital records** for mark sheets and institutional affiliations.
 - To help in educational policymaking and analysis.

SABHASAAR AI TOOL



- It is an **AI tool** which will automatically **generate minutes of meetings of gram sabhas**.
- Gram Sabha is the **primary body of the Panchayati Raj system**, consisting of all registered voters of a gram panchayat.

Features of SabhaSaar AI Tool



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- It leverages the power of AI to generate structured minutes of meetings from gram sabha videos and audio recordings.
- It will bring uniformity in minutes of the **gram sabha meetings across the country**.
- Panchayat officials can use their e-GramSwaraj login credentials to upload video/audio recordings on 'SabhaSaar'.
- It is **built on Bhashini**, an AI-powered language translation platform launched by the government to bridge literacy, language, and digital divides.
- The **tool generates transcription from a video or audio**, translates it into a chosen output language and prepares a summary.
- It enables transcription in all major Indian languages like Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Gujarati, in addition to English.
- **Significance:** It is ideal for panchayats, administrative bodies, and rural development projects as it streamlines documentation and empowers stakeholders with instant access to meeting insights.

GAUR



- Gaur, also known as **Indian Bison** is the **largest species** among the wild cattle and the Bovidae.
- **Distribution:** Gaurs are indigenous to the **South and Southeast parts of Asia**.
- **Habitat:**
 - Gaurs are primarily found in **evergreen and semi-evergreen forests** along with moist deciduous forests with open grasslands.
 - They prefer **hilly-terrains below an altitude of 1,500-1,800 m** with large and undisturbed forest tracts and abundant water.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable

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- CITES: Appendix I
- Wild Life Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I
- **Ecological Significance:** It plays a vital role in maintaining ecological balance in forests besides serving as **important prey species for tigers**. Being herbivores, they also help shape **vegetation dynamics and contribute to seed dispersal**.
- **Threats:** **Loss of habitat** throughout most of their range. Another serious concern is susceptibility to **domestic cattle diseases** like rinderpest, hoof, or mouth disease.

About Palamau Tiger Reserve (PTR):

- It is located on the western side of the Latehar district on the **Chhotanagpur plateau** in Jharkhand.
 - The reserve forms a **part of the Betla National Park**.
 - It has a total area of 1,014 sq.km. with a core area of 414 sq.km. and a buffer area of 600 sq.km.
 - It is one of the **first 9 tiger reserves created** in the country at the inception of 'Project Tiger'.
 - It is the **first reserve in the world** in which a **tiger census was carried out as a pugmark count**, as early as **1932** under the supervision of J.W. Nicholson.
 - The terrain is undulating with valleys, hills, and plains.
 - Three **rivers, namely North Koyal, Auranga, and Burha flow through the valleys**.
 - The **area is drought-prone** with **Burha being the only perennial river**.
 - The **geological formation** consists of **gneiss** and includes **granite and limestone**.
 - The area is very rich in minerals like **Bauxite and Coal**.
 - **Flora:** The vegetation in Palamau region comprises **moist deciduous and dry deciduous forests** to include **Sal and bamboo as the major components**.
 - **Fauna:** Some keystone and principal species found in the reserve include **Tiger, Asiatic Elephant, Leopard, Grey wolf, Wild dog, Gaur, Sloth bear and four horned antelope**.
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THE CEDING OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN UNIVERSITIES

- **Universities are unique institutions** tasked not only with transmitting knowledge but also with generating new ideas, **challenging orthodoxies, and developing independent thinking.**
- This mission is possible **only when scholars and students have the liberty to question, debate, and explore** without fear of censorship or interference.
- The **health of a university system** is therefore directly tied to the extent of its **intellectual autonomy.**
- When this freedom is curtailed, **the damage is not confined to the campus, it seeps into society, the economy, and the political system at large.**

The Essential Role of Academic Freedom

- **Ability to Question Existing Knowledge**
 - For students, this means more than memorising information; it means **developing the capacity to interrogate established truths**, critique conventional wisdom, and resist undue deference to authority, whether spoken or printed.
 - For faculty, **it entails the liberty to pursue research in any direction their scholarly judgement deems fruitful**, free from political or bureaucratic interference.
 - Institutions themselves must also have **the freedom to address economic, social, and political issues openly**, thereby fulfilling their role as intellectual catalysts in public life.
- **Engagement in Diverse Perspective**
 - This freedom **extends to inviting speakers of diverse perspectives**, determining research priorities, and engaging in unorthodox or dissenting inquiry.
 - Such openness is not merely desirable; it is the **precondition for knowledge to advance.** Fundamental research thrives in an environment rich in **both liberty and resources**, allowing exceptional thinkers to flourish.



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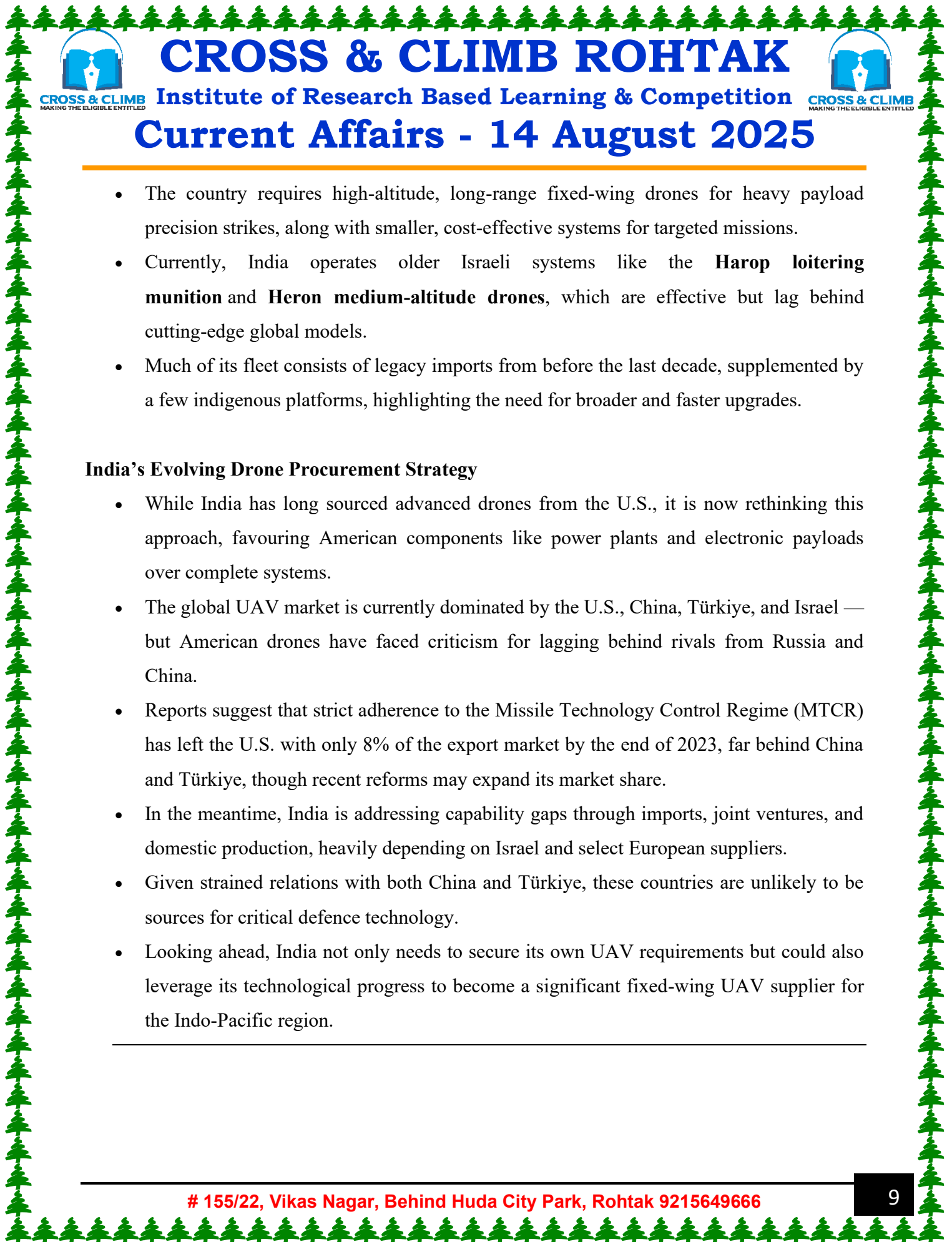
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The Crisis in Indian Higher Education

- In India, the reality diverges sharply from this ideal. Academic autonomy is increasingly **constrained by state control over curricula**, prescribed reading lists, and research funding.
 - Decisions about what may or may not be taught often lie outside the hands of educators themselves, with **certain texts explicitly banned from syllabi**.
 - In the social sciences and humanities especially, **research that deviates from mainstream narratives is frequently suppressed**.
 - This **centralisation of control** extends beyond the classroom.
 - Permissions for faculty to attend international conferences can be contingent upon **undertakings not to engage in any activity critical of the government, even when abroad**.
 - **Private universities are not immune**; many adopt self-censorship to avoid jeopardising their relationship with political authorities.
 - The **net effect is a stifling of critical discourse, a weakening of research culture, and a missed opportunity for India's universities to achieve global excellence**, reflected in the absence of Nobel laureates from their ranks.
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INDIA'S DRONE DIPLOMACY: SEIZING THE INDO-PACIFIC ADVANTAGE

- Following Operation Sindoor, India has intensified efforts to modernise its unmanned aerial capabilities.
- In 2024, it secured **31 MQ-9B Reapers** from the US, including **SkyGuardian** and **SeaGuardian** variants, to boost maritime surveillance and strategic cooperation.
- However, these meet only part of India's diverse defence needs across high-altitude, contested borders with Pakistan and China.



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- The country requires high-altitude, long-range fixed-wing drones for heavy payload precision strikes, along with smaller, cost-effective systems for targeted missions.
- Currently, India operates older Israeli systems like the **Harop loitering munition** and **Heron medium-altitude drones**, which are effective but lag behind cutting-edge global models.
- Much of its fleet consists of legacy imports from before the last decade, supplemented by a few indigenous platforms, highlighting the need for broader and faster upgrades.

India's Evolving Drone Procurement Strategy

- While India has long sourced advanced drones from the U.S., it is now rethinking this approach, favouring American components like power plants and electronic payloads over complete systems.
 - The global UAV market is currently dominated by the U.S., China, Türkiye, and Israel — but American drones have faced criticism for lagging behind rivals from Russia and China.
 - Reports suggest that strict adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) has left the U.S. with only 8% of the export market by the end of 2023, far behind China and Türkiye, though recent reforms may expand its market share.
 - In the meantime, India is addressing capability gaps through imports, joint ventures, and domestic production, heavily depending on Israel and select European suppliers.
 - Given strained relations with both China and Türkiye, these countries are unlikely to be sources for critical defence technology.
 - Looking ahead, India not only needs to secure its own UAV requirements but could also leverage its technological progress to become a significant fixed-wing UAV supplier for the Indo-Pacific region.
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