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## Current Affairs - 13 September 2025

### INS ARAVALI



- It is named after the **Aravali mountain range**.
- It is designed to strengthen the Navy's **information and communication infrastructure**.
- It is located at **Gurugram, Haryana**.

**Motto:** It is guided by the motto '**Maritime Security through Collaboration**'.

It is designed to support **naval information and communication centres** that are critical to India's maritime security, command and control operations, and **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**.

- It embodies a spirit of cooperation with other naval units, MDA centres, and allied stakeholders.
- It marks a strategic step forward in the Navy's efforts to enhance **situational awareness** and **inter-agency coordination** across India's maritime domain.
- The emblem reflects the base's commitment to safeguarding India's maritime interests through constant readiness and innovation.
- It also fulfill the India's collaborative vision of **MAHASAGAR, or Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions**.
- **Symbolism of the crest:** It features a central mountain symbol, representing the steadfast strength of the **Aravali range**, and a **rising sun**, signifying eternal vigilance, resilience, and the **dawn of advanced technological capabilities** in communications and domain awareness.
- **Strategic Role:** It would strengthen India's role as the Preferred Security Partner in the **Indian Ocean Region**.



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### BORDER WING HOME GUARDS



- It acts as **ancillaries to the Army** and other border forces during emergencies.

- Home Guards are raised under the **Home Guards Act** and

#### **Rules of the States/Union Territories.**

- They are raised under the **Home Guards Act, 1962.**
- There are **seven States authorised to have BWHGs**: Meghalaya, Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.
  - **Rajasthan** is the only State which has BWHGs in the present times.
  - They perform the responsibilities of a Constable and are usually enlisted for **three to four years.**
  - 25% cost of training and financial support is borne by the Government of India.

#### **Who are recruited?**

They are recruited from amongst all classes of people and walks of life, who give their spare time to the organisation for betterment of the community.

#### **Role of Home Guards**

- They work in conjunction with the **army in guarding the vital Installations**, the vital points and the vulnerable areas during break out of hostilities on the International Border.
- It works as an auxiliary Force to the Police in **maintenance of internal security situations**, help the community in any kind of emergency such as an air-raid, fire, cyclone, earthquake, epidemic etc.
- They help in maintenance of essential services, promote communal harmony and assist the administration in protecting weaker sections.



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### UNDERSTANDING AMERICA'S GUN OBSESSION

- The United States has more guns than people, with **1.2 guns per person**—far higher than any other nation.
- Though home to less than 5% of the world's population, Americans own 45% of civilian firearms globally.
- This widespread access fuels staggering violence: in 2023, the U.S. recorded 46,728 gun deaths—128 daily, with over half suicides.
- The gun homicide rate stands at 4.38 per 100,000, 26 times higher than other wealthy nations, compared to under 0.05 in the UK and virtually zero in Japan.

### **Guns and the Myth of Freedom in America**

- America's deep-rooted gun culture is tied to historical **myths of firearms as protectors of liberty, from the Revolution to the Wild West.**
- The **Second Amendment (1791)** enshrined this belief, framing arms as safeguards against tyranny.
- Founding Father James Madison even argued that armed citizens could topple oppressive governments, unlike Europe's monarchies.
- Historian Richard Hofstadter observed in 1970 that many Americans stubbornly saw guns as essential to democracy, a notion echoed by Charlie Kirk in 2023, who defended the Second Amendment as protection against government overreach.

### **The Making of America's Gun Culture**

- A 1969 U.S. Justice Department report highlighted the explosive rise of guns — doubling from 45 million in 1945 to nearly 90 million by 1969, even as population grew by less than 50%.
- By 2018, gun numbers were **ten times higher than 1945**, while the population grew only 2.5 times.
- Historians trace this culture to racism: firearms enabled White slave owners to control Black slaves, and post-Civil War fears of retribution spurred groups like Ku Klux Klan.



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- In the 20th century, crime, immigration, and Cold War anxieties intensified gun demand.
- Abundant post-WWII weapon supplies, with Europe's surplus arms flooding the U.S. market, created a mass gun economy, embedding firearms deeply into American society.

### America's Romantic Obsession with Guns

- In the U.S., gun culture has been shaped by powerful advocacy groups like the NRA and gun capitalism, which **transformed firearms into symbols of identity and freedom**.
- Historian Andrew McKeivitt notes that 19th-century gunmakers sold not just weapons but stories, **imbuing guns with cultural meaning** — a case of “commodity fetishism.”
  - Commodity fetishism means giving an object (like a gun, phone, or brand item) a kind of “magical” value, while forgetting how and why it was actually made.
  - For example, instead of seeing a gun as just metal and parts made in a factory, people treat it as a symbol of freedom, power, or identity.
- This fetishization distorts America's gun debate, unlike other countries that embraced strict gun control.
- For example, Australia reduced gun deaths from 2.9 per 100,000 in 1996 to 0.88 in 2018 after reforms.
- The U.S., however, loosened laws, with the 2008 Supreme Court ruling in *Columbia v. Heller* affirming individual gun ownership rights, fueling further resistance to restrictions.

### The Deadly Link Between Guns and Everyday Violence

- NRA advocates claim “a good guy with a gun” stops violence, but historian Dominic Erdozain notes even “good people” can act aggressively, creating risks.
  - Data disproves the simple good-versus-bad binary. Research revealed most U.S. gun homicides stemmed from arguments with friends or spouses, often under alcohol's influence.
  - It showed that keeping a gun at home significantly raised homicide risk.
  - As experts warned in 2008, the real danger is not strangers but those with “a key to the house.”
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## Current Affairs - 13 September 2025

### PM MODI'S MANIPUR VISIT: 5 KEY CHALLENGES IN THE CONFLICT-HIT STATE

- Over 57,000 people remain in 280 relief camps across Manipur, displaced for over two years due to ethnic clashes.
- Displacement occurred mainly in two ways:
  - Kuki-Zo people forced out of Imphal and valley towns, and Meiteis from border and hill towns like Moreh, Kangpokpi, and Churachandpur; and
  - those from “fringe areas” at the valley-hill frontiers fleeing attacks or threats.
- In July, Manipur govt announced a three-phase resettlement plan to close all relief camps by year-end, beginning with phased return of fringe-area residents, followed by prefabricated housing for others once normalcy is restored.
- While around 5,000 people had returned before the plan, progress has since been slow.

#### **Restricted Movement and Buffer Zones in Manipur**

- During the conflict, sharp boundaries between the valley and hill districts have turned into “buffer zones” manned by security forces, blocking safe passage between Meitei and Kuki-Zo areas.
- Meiteis remain confined to the valley without highway access, while Kuki-Zos cannot reach Imphal or use key facilities like the airport.
- After President’s Rule in February, the Centre attempted to enforce “free movement” on highways, but violence erupted, leaving one dead and many injured.
- Currently, Kuki-Zo groups permit only essential goods to reach the valley but refuse Meitei movement across buffer zones.
- Meanwhile, no reciprocal arrangement exists for Kuki-Zo passage in Meitei-dominated areas.

#### **Lack of Dialogue and Ethnic Tensions in Manipur**

- Over 250 people have died in Manipur’s ethnic violence, the last major outbreak in November 2024.



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- While large-scale clashes have ebbed, officials warn the state remains fragile, as both Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities are heavily armed and lack inter-community dialogue.
- The Centre continues separate talks with both sides, recently renewing a **Suspension of Operations pact with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups**.
- These groups agreed to uphold Manipur’s “territorial integrity,” but still demand a Union Territory with legislature, contradicting the pact’s spirit.
- Meitei groups see the agreement as legitimising insurgents, while Kuki-Zos allege past bias by ex-Chief Minister Biren Singh’s government favouring Meitei militias, fuelling mistrust.

### Political Transition and President’s Rule in Manipur

- Former Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned in February after opposition from both Kuki-Zo and many Meitei BJP MLAs.
- Soon after, President’s Rule was imposed, fulfilling a key Kuki-Zo demand and initially welcomed across communities.
- However, nearly two months later, valley-based and Naga MLAs began pressing for restoration of an elected government, citing public pressure.
- Despite this, the Centre has shown no urgency to lift President’s Rule, preferring stability over political transition in the conflict-hit state.

### Border Tensions and Fencing with Myanmar

- **Manipur’s porous border with Myanmar** remains a flashpoint, with Meiteis blaming illegal Chin immigration for fueling unrest.
  - In response, the **Centre scrapped the Free Movement Regime** — which allowed cross-border tribal travel up to 16 km — and announced fencing.
  - This decision has angered both Kuki-Zo and Naga communities, who share deep ethnic, social, and economic ties across the border.
  - Ahead of PM Modi’s visit, the United Naga Council protested by imposing a “trade embargo” on major supply routes but has since suspended it temporarily.
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### THE RTI'S SHIFT TO A 'RIGHT TO DENY INFORMATION'

- The **Right to Information (RTI) Act** in India has long been celebrated as a landmark legislation that deepened democracy by empowering citizens with access to government-held information.
- By establishing **transparency as the default mode of governance**, the RTI transformed the relationship between citizens and the state, enabling ordinary people to scrutinize decisions, demand accountability, and expose corruption.
- Yet, **the recent amendments to Section 8(1)(j)** through the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act **mark a significant departure from this vision**.
- What was once a nuanced balance between privacy and transparency now risks becoming a **legal framework for denying access to vital public information**.

### **Implications for Corruption and Accountability**

- **Corruption thrives in secrecy**, and transparency has long been one of the few effective tools available to citizens in combating it.
  - With broadened definitions of personal information, **even routine and seemingly harmless documents, such as a corrected marksheet**, a signed official order, or lists of pension beneficiaries, **can now be withheld**.
  - **Examples like Rajasthan's public disclosure of pension details**, which once exposed ghost employees and ghost cards, **may no longer be permissible**.
  - This **legal transformation effectively institutionalises opacity**. Information that directly exposes corruption or malpractice could be dismissed as personal.
  - Even the clause allowing disclosure in cases of larger public interest provides little relief, as it is **rarely invoked in practice and demands an onerous justification** from citizens.
  - Thus, **the DPDP amendments not only weaken the RTI but also embolden corruption** by making concealment the default.
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### KEY FACTS ABOUT CONGO RIVER



- The Congo River, or **Zaire River**, is a river in **west-central Africa**.
- With a length of **2,900 miles (4,700 km)**, it is the **continent's second longest river, after the Nile**.
- It is also the **world's second-largest river by discharge volume after the Amazon**
- It is also the **world's deepest river**, with a maximum depth of 720 feet (220m), too deep for light to penetrate.
- It is the **only major river that crosses the Equator twice**.

#### Course:

- **Origin:** It rises in the **highlands of northeastern Zambia between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa (Malawi) as the Chambeshi River** at an elevation of 5,760 feet (1,760 metres) above sea level.
  - Its course then takes the form of a giant counterclockwise arc, flowing to the northwest, west, and southwest before **draining into the Atlantic Ocean at Banana (Banane) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**.
  - It also **empties water and sediment into one of the largest carbon sinks in the world, the Congo Plume in the Atlantic**.
  - The **riverbed continues offshore** with an **800 km-long submarine canyon** that reaches a depth of 1,220 m.
  - The Congo River system **runs through the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, western Zambia, northern Angola, and parts of Cameroon and Tanzania**.
  - Its drainage basin covers an area of 1,335,000 square miles (3,457,000 square km). It's the **world's second-largest river basin, after the Amazon River Basin**.
  - The Congo is **easily navigable for most of its length**, and much of the trade of Central Africa passes along it.
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### SAHYADRI TIGER RESERVE



- It is located in the **Sahyadri Ranges** of the **Western Ghats** in **Maharashtra**.
- It is the first Tiger Reserve of Western Maharashtra and the fourth Tiger Reserve of the State spreading over two Protected Areas of **Koyana Sanctuary (KWLS)** and **Chandoli National Park (CNP)**.
- The central portion of Sahyadri Tiger Reserve is occupied by the “**Shivsagar**” reservoir of the **Koyana River** and the “**Vasant Sagar**” reservoir of the **Warana River**.
- **Terrain:** The total area of STR is undulating, with steep **escarpments** along the western boundary.
- The most distinct feature is the presence of **numerous barren rocky** and **lateritic plateaus**, locally called “**Sadas**”, with less perennial vegetation and overhanging cliffs on the edges, along with numerous fallen boulders with dense thorny bushes.
- **Vegetation:** The forest cover here is that of moist **evergreen**, **semi-evergreen**, **moist**, and dry deciduous vegetation.
- It is the only place where **climax and near-climax vegetation** are plentiful and prospects of adverse anthropogenic influence in the future are minimal.
- **Flora:**
  - There are many **medicinal and fruit-bearing trees** along with the commercial hard wood trees in the reserve.
  - The most common floral species found here are Anjani (*Memecylon umbellatum*), Jambhul (*Syzygium cumini*), and Pisa (*Actinodaphaone Angustifolia*).
- **Fauna:**
  - The main carnivores are the tiger, leopard, and some lesser cats along with the wolf, jackal, and wild dog.
  - The large herbivores are several deer species like Barking Deer, Sambar etc.