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## Current Affairs - 18 September 2025

### WHAT IS THE NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NTCA)?



- It is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- It was **established in 2006** under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 (WPA 1972)**.
- **Objectives:**
  - **Providing statutory authority to Project Tiger** so that compliance with its directives becomes legal.
    - The **'Project Tiger'** is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, providing **funding support to tiger range States for in-situ conservation of tigers** in designated tiger reserves.
  - **Fostering accountability of the Center-State in the management of Tiger Reserves** by providing a basis for MoU with States within the federal structure.
  - **Providing for an oversight by Parliament.**
  - **Addressing livelihood interests of local people** in areas surrounding Tiger Reserves.
- **Power and Functions:**
  - **Approve and coordinate research and monitoring** on tigers, co-predators, prey habitat, related ecological and socio-economic parameters, and their evaluation.
  - perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act with regard to conservation of tigers and their habitat.
  - The NTCA may, **in the exercise of its powers** and performance of its functions under this Chapter, **issue directions in writing to any person, officer or authority** for the protection of tiger or tiger reserves and such person, **officer or authority shall be bound to comply with the directions.**



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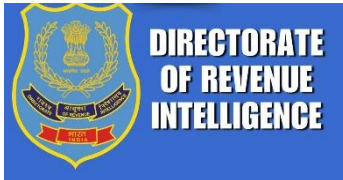
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## Current Affairs - 18 September 2025

### WHAT IS THE DIRECTORATE OF REVENUE INTELLIGENCE (DRI)?



- DRI was constituted in 1957 as the apex anti-smuggling intelligence and investigation agency.
- It works under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- DRI enforces the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, and over fifty other allied acts, including the Arms Act, NDPS Act, COFEPOSA (Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities), Wildlife Act, Antiquities Act,
- It is tasked with detecting and curbing smuggling of contraband, including drug trafficking and illicit international trade in wildlife and environmentally sensitive items, as well as combating commercial frauds related to international trade and evasion of customs duty.
- It has a country-wide network of zonal, regional, and sub-regional units and intelligence cells.
- DRI collects, analyzes, and disseminates intelligence to the field formations, helps in investigations, and keeps statistics of seizures and prices/rates, etc, for watching trends of smuggling and movement of other contraband and suggest remedies for fixing loopholes in existing laws and procedures.
- The DRI has also been designated as the lead agency for S-CORD, the national anti-smuggling coordination centre.

DRI has also been at the forefront in international Customs collaboration through Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements of CBIC with over 60 other countries, where the thrust is on information exchange and learning from the best practices of other Customs administrations.



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### DRAFT CIVIL DRONE (PROMOTION AND REGULATION) BILL, 2025



- Released by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**, the Draft Civil Drone (Promotion and Regulation Bill) 2025 proposed **provisions such as mandatory registration, safety and security features**, as well as **insurance**, amongst other requirements for **unmanned aircraft systems' (UASs) operations in the country**.
- The law covers **individuals and entities engaged in drone ownership, operation, design, manufacture, import, export**, leasing, training or maintenance, but **excludes unmanned aircraft used by the armed forces or those weighing over 500 kilograms**, which will be governed under the **Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam**.
- DGCA Retained as Regulator:
  - It retains the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** as the **primary regulatory authority**.
  - The draft mandates that **no drone will be allowed to operate without registration and issuance of a Unique Identification Number (UIN)** by the **DGCA**.
- Safety, Security Features Compulsory:
  - **No person shall manufacture or assemble, offer for sale, transfer or cause to transfer, operate or cause to operate any UAS that does not incorporate the mandatory safety and security features as prescribed by the central government** or unless the UAS is exempted from such requirement.
- Compulsory Insurance for Operators:
  - Notably, provision for insurance has been made compulsory, with **third-party coverage required for all operators** unless specifically exempted by the government.
- Compensation for Victims Proposed: The owner of the UAS or the authorised insurer shall be liable to pay, in the case of death or grievous hurt due to any accident arising out



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of the use of unmanned aircraft system, a compensation of a sum of 2.5 lakh rupees in case of death or one lakh rupees in case of grievous hurt to the legal heirs or the victim, as the case may be.

- Punishment:
  - Any person who contravenes the provisions of this Act shall be punishable with a fine up to ₹50,000 or an imprisonment which may extend to three months or both, and for any second or subsequent offence with a fine up to ₹1 lakh or an imprisonment which may extend to six months or both.
  - Any offence involving carriage of dangerous goods by a civil UAS, or use of a civil UAS as a weapon, shall be cognizable and non-compoundable.
  - The Director General or any other officer authorised in this behalf may seize and confiscate the UAS, documents, records, devices or things which may be useful for, or relevant to, the investigation of such offence.

### WHAT IS PM MITRA PARK?



- Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) is a mega textile hub that brings every step of textile production, like spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing, and garment-making, into one single place.
- Each park covers a large area (about 1,000 acres or more) and acts as a complete ecosystem for textile manufacture.
- MITRA parks can be either Greenfield or Brownfield.
- The scheme is inspired by the vision “Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign” and aims to make Indian textiles cheaper, faster to market, and of higher quality.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Textiles
- Features:
  - **Integrated Value Chain:** Each park brings spinning, garmenting, dyeing, and processing into a single zone, cutting transport time and costs.



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- **World-Class Infrastructure:**
  - The parks have **modern roads, reliable power and water, worker hostels, logistics, and plug-and-play factory units, with space for research, skill training, and commercial activity.**
  - **PM MITRA will develop 50% area for pure Manufacturing Activity, 20% area for utilities, and 10% of area for commercial development.**
- **Jobs and Investment:** Each park is expected to create 1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect jobs. The project aims to attract over Rs 70,000 crore in investments.
- **Public-Private Partnership:** PM MITRA park will be **developed by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) which will be owned by the State Government and the Government of India in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Mode.**
- **Capital and Incentives:**
  - **The Ministry of Textiles will provide financial assistance up to Rs 800 crores per park for Greenfield projects and up to Rs 500 crores per park for Brownfield projects.**
  - **The State Governments will provide land and augmented utility infrastructure for the proposed mega textile parks.**

**Where are the PM MITRA Parks?** The seven approved PM Mitra Parks are being set up in:

- **Tamil Nadu (Virudhunagar)**
  - **Telangana**
  - **Gujarat**
  - **Karnataka**
  - **Madhya Pradesh**
  - **Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow district)**
  - **Maharashtra.**
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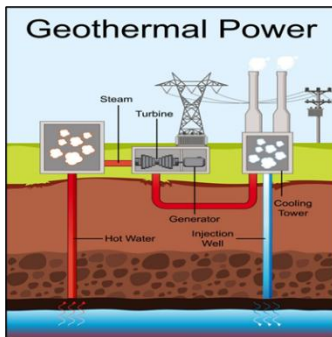


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### NEW POLICY TO BOOST GEOTHERMAL ENERGY IN INDIA

- Geothermal energy harnesses the Earth's heat from hot springs or underground reservoirs, using steam to generate electricity.
- It can also provide heating, cooling, greenhouse support, and aquaculture benefits.
- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has identified 381 hot springs with surface temperatures of 35°C to 89°C.



#### • **How it Works: The Process**

- The process of harnessing geothermal energy typically involves drilling wells to access underground reservoirs of hot water and steam, known as **hydrothermal resources**.
- The most common method for generating electricity from these resources involves a few key steps:
  - **Extraction:** Wells are drilled deep into the Earth to tap into geothermal reservoirs.
  - **Conversion:** The hot water or steam is brought to the surface. In a dry steam plant, the steam is used directly to spin a turbine. In a flash steam plant, high-pressure hot water is converted to steam in a "flash tank" before it turns the turbine.
  - **Electricity Generation:** The spinning turbine is connected to a generator, which converts the mechanical energy into electricity.
  - **Reinjection:** The cooled water or condensed steam is then pumped back into the geothermal reservoir, a crucial step for maintaining the pressure and sustainability of the resource.

#### India's Geothermal Potential

- India's estimated **geothermal potential is 10.6 GW**, with major sites in the Himalayan Geothermal Province (Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir,



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Arunachal Pradesh), the Cambay Graben in Gujarat, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- Abandoned oil wells in Cambay and Gandhar (ONGC, Gujarat) are being considered for geothermal use.
- **Global Geothermal Capacity**
  - Globally, geothermal capacity is less than 17 GW, dominated by **the US, Indonesia, and the Philippines**, while **Iceland and Norway lead in technology innovation**.
  - The US International Trade Administration identified Ladakh's Puga and Chumathang fields as India's most promising.
  - According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), China, the US, and India account for 75% of next-generation geothermal potential, with India's capacity projected to reach 4.2 GW by 2035 and nearly 100 GW by 2045.

### India's Geothermal Energy Push

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) launched its geothermal energy policy, to promote exploration and development.
  - Companies from Norway and Iceland have begun pilot studies in the Gulf of Cambay, Arunachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.
  - Collaborations with the US and Indonesia are also being explored, especially for enhanced geothermal systems suited for large-scale power plants.
  - **Potential Benefits in Remote Areas**
    - According to the policy, geothermal energy can transform energy access in remote regions.
    - In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where electricity costs ₹30–32 per unit, geothermal could reduce costs to ₹10–11 per unit.
    - In Ladakh, it could supply both heating and electricity during extreme winters.
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### UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC)



- It was created by the General Assembly on 15 March 2006 by replacing the Commission on Human Rights.
- It is an **inter-governmental body** within **United Nations system**, responsible for strengthening promotion and protection of human rights around the world.
- **Mandate:** To promote “**universal respect for the protection of all human rights** and fundamental freedoms for all” and “address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations thereon.”
- **Member countries:** The Council is made up of **47 Member States**, which are elected by the UN General Assembly through direct and secret ballot.
- **Functions of United Nations Human Rights Council**
  - It **investigates allegations of breaches** of human rights in UN member states.
  - It addresses **important human rights issues** such as freedom of expression, women’s rights, LGBT rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.
  - The UNHRC works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

**GLOBAL  
INNOVATION  
INDEX**



### GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX

It is a ranking of countries as per their **success and capacity in innovation.**

- It was **first time launched in 2007** and has become the leading global benchmark for measuring and comparing innovation performance.
- It is recognized by the **UN General Assembly** as an authoritative reference for **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies.**
- It is published yearly by the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).**
- It tracks **global innovation trends through investment patterns**, technological progress, adoption rates, and socioeconomic impacts.



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- **Significance:** It provides a **useful resource for government, industry, researchers** and anyone with a stake in developing innovation ecosystems around the world

### Key highlights of the Global Innovation Index 2025

- **Top 5 Innovators:** For the 15th consecutive year, **Switzerland ranks 1<sup>st</sup>**, followed by **Sweden** in 2<sup>nd</sup>, the **US** in 3<sup>rd</sup>, the **Republic of Korea** in 4<sup>th</sup>, and **Singapore** in 5<sup>th</sup>.
- India has risen to **38th place among 139 economies** in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025, a remarkable improvement from its 81st rank in 2015.

### BIMA SUGAM PORTAL



- It is a **unified digital marketplace** for insurance, designed to bring insurers, intermediaries, and customers **onto a single platform**.
- It is backed by the **Life Insurance Council and the General Insurance Council (GIC)**.
- **Features of Bima Sugam Portal**
  - It helps **users to buy, sell, service, renew, manage**, and even claim **insurance policies** with ease and full transparency.
  - This platform will serve as a **centralised database** to answer **insurance-related queries** and help consumers navigate the complex world of insurance.
  - It also aims to accelerate the acceptance of new and sandbox products, opening the door for **innovation in insurance offerings**.
  - It will **cover life insurance in all its forms**, including term plans, savings products (both participating and non-participating), **annuity and pension plans, as well as ULIP products**.
  - It also provides **health insurance options**, addressing the full range of medical and wellness needs.
  - It will remain flexible to **host any new insurance products** that may be introduced in the future, as determined by the regulatory councils.