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Coverage of

09th July - 15th July, 2025

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9th JULY 2025

India-Brazil Bilateral Talks

- **Context:** Prime Minister Modi and Brazilian President held bilateral talks in Brasilia a day after the BRICS summit.

Major Highlights

- India and Brazil signed six agreements covering cooperation in security, digital infrastructure, renewable energy, agriculture, and intellectual property.
- The agreements include a pact on combating international terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as a memorandum on the exchange of large-scale digital solutions to support digital transformation.
- Both countries also announced the establishment of a ministerial-level mechanism to monitor trade, commerce, and investment.
- The leaders decided a strategic roadmap to further strengthen bilateral ties over the next decade around five priority pillars:
  - Defense and security;
  - Food and nutritional security;
  - Energy transition and climate change;
  - Digital transformation and emerging technologies;
  - Industrial partnerships in strategic areas.
- India and Brazil set a target of almost doubling their bilateral trade to $20 billion over the next five years.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with Brazil's highest civilian award, the Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross.

India - Brazil Relations

- **Diplomatic Relations:** Relations were established in 1948, and the two countries have been Strategic Partners since 2006. Both sides also have several Joint Working Groups to take forward sectoral cooperation.

- **Trade Relations:** Brazil is currently India's largest trade partner in South America.
  - Two-way trade was worth $12.2 billion in 2024-25, with Indian exports amounting to $6.77 billion.
  - Both Nations have established Trade Monitoring Mechanism as an institutional mechanism to monitor and identify bottlenecks in bilateral trade and take appropriate measures to address them.
- **Defence & Security Cooperation:** India and Brazil signed an agreement in 2003 for cooperation in defence. Meetings of the Joint Defence Committee (JDC) are held as an institutionalized mechanism for defence cooperation.
- **Security Cooperation:** Established a Strategic Dialogue mechanism in 2006 to cover regional and global issues of mutual concern.
- **Space Cooperation:** Both signed a framework agreement for peaceful use of outer space in 2004 as well an Agreement for inter-institutional cooperation between the space agencies. Both countries have been collaborating in Data sharing and satellite tracking of Indian satellites.
- India and Brazil share a very close and multifaceted relationship both at bilateral level as well as in plurilateral fora such as BRICS, BASIC, G-20, G-4, India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, International Solar Alliance, as well as in the larger multilateral bodies such as the UN, WTO, UNESCO, and WIPO.

FaceAuth

- **Context:** Himachal Pradesh became the first state in the country to introduce Aadhaar-based face authentication (FaceAuth).

Key Facts

- FaceAuth is introduced for the distribution of ration to eligible beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System (PDS).
- Until now, authentication was carried out using either OTP-based or biometric methods. However, frequent

challenges such as SMS delivery failures and biometric mismatches at the UIDAI end were causing inconvenience to the beneficiaries.

- This new facility uses a mobile camera via an app installed on the fair price shop (FPS) owner's smartphone, enabling direct facial authentication of beneficiaries.

- The new system is expected to improve the authentication success rate and reduce verification time, ensuring a faster and more efficient ration distribution process.

10th JULY 2025

Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis

- **Context:** The President of Namibia conferred on Prime Minister Modi the highest civilian award of Namibia – Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis. He is the first Indian leader to be given this award.

Key Facts

- Namibia is a country located on the southwestern coast of Africa.

- It is bordered by Angola to the north, Zambia to the northeast, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the southeast and south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

- The country's name comes from the Namib Desert, which is considered to be the oldest desert in the world.

- **Major rivers:** Four large rivers flow along Namibia's borders: the Zambezi, Orange, Cunene and Okavango/Cubango.

■ NOTE:

Namibia has become the first African country to sign a licensing agreement to adopt India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system for real-time digital payments.

Bulgaria: 21st Member of Eurozone

- **Context:** Recently the EU finance ministers officially approved Bulgaria's adoption of the euro, set to take effect from January 1, 2026. This makes Bulgaria the 21st member of the eurozone.

About Eurozone

- The Eurozone refers to EU member states that have adopted the euro (€) as their official currency and are subject to the monetary policy of the European Central Bank (ECB).

- The euro was launched on January 1, 1999 (electronic form) and came into physical circulation in 12 countries on January 1, 2002.

- Bulgaria had previously delayed euro adoption due to high inflation, which prevented it from meeting the Maastricht convergence criteria.

11th JULY 2025

Zonal Councils of India

- **Context:** Union Home Minister chaired the 27th meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

About Zonal Councils

- The Zonal Councils are the statutory bodies established under the State Reorganisation Act of 1956.

- The act divided the country into five zones (Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern) and provided a zonal council for each zone.
- **Members:** Each zonal council consists of the following members:
  - Home minister of the Central government, the common chairman of the five zonal councils.
  - Chief ministers of all the States in the zone.
  - Two other ministers from each state in the zone.
  - Administrator of each union territory in the zone.
- Each chief minister acts as a vice-chairman of the council by rotation, holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- North-Eastern Council: In addition to the above Zonal Councils, a North-Eastern Council was created by a separate Act of Parliament the North-Eastern Council Act of 1971.
  - Its members include Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim.
- The zonal councils are only deliberative and advisory bodies. They aim at;
  - Promoting cooperation and coordination between states, union territories and the Centre.
  - Discuss and make recommendations regarding matters like economic and social planning, linguistic minorities, border disputes, interstate transport, and so on.
- Each Zonal Council has also constituted a Standing Committee at the level of Chief Secretaries.

TALASH Initiative

- **Context:** The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in partnership with UNICEF India launched TALASH (Tribal Aptitude, Life Skills and Self-Esteem Hub).

Key Facts

- It is the first program of its kind in India, specifically aimed at supporting the holistic development of tribal students enrolled in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) across 28 States and 8 Union Territories

- TALASH is designed to foster both educational and personal growth among tribal students and offers life skills, and career clarity, empowering students to discover their strengths and plan their futures.

INS Nistar

- **Context:** The Indian Navy has received INS Nistar, its first indigenously designed and built Diving Support Vessel (DSV), from Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL), Visakhapatnam.

Key Facts

- **Name:** Nistar, derived from Sanskrit, means liberation, rescue, or salvation.
- **Built as per:** Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) classification rules.
- **Features:** Equipped with advanced Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) for diver monitoring and salvage operations up to 1000 meters deep.
- **Key Role:** Acts as the 'Mother Ship' for the Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV), which rescues and evacuates personnel in case of submarine emergencies.
- **Significance:** Around 75% indigenous content — a milestone in the Indian Navy's path towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing.

12th JULY 2025

Maratha Military Landscapes: 44th World Heritage Site of India

- **Context:** UNESCO has added the 'Maratha Military Landscapes of India' — 12 iconic forts of the Maratha Empire — into the World Heritage List.

Key Facts

- This historic recognition was granted at the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris.

- This marks India's 44th UNESCO World Heritage Site, ranking the country 6th globally and 2nd in the Asia-Pacific region for the highest number of heritage sites.

About Maratha Forts

- Spread across the states of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, these sites include Salher, Shivneri, Lohgad, Khanderi, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, along with Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu.
- Built between the 17th and 19th centuries, this extraordinary network of forts demonstrates the strategic military vision and architectural ingenuity of the Maratha Empire.

Major Forts of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

- **Raigad Fort:** It was the capital of the Maratha Empire from 1674 to 1818. It is located on a hilltop in the Sahyadri Mountains.
- **Rajgad Fort:** First capital of Shivaji Maharaj before shifting to Raigad.
- **Pratapgad Fort:** It is the site of the famous battle between Shivaji Maharaj and Afzal Khan in 1659.
- **Sindhudurg Fort:** It is located on an island off the Konkan coast.
- **Vijaydurg Fort:** It is known as the 'Gibraltar of the East' due to its strong coastal defense.

134th Session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council

- **Context:** India has reiterated its commitment to maritime safety and gender equality during the 134th session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council, held in London.

Key Highlights

- India highlighted recent accidents, which caused container losses, and release of hazardous cargo such as sinking of MSC ELSA 3, a container ship carrying hazardous cargo, off the coast of Kochi, Kerala and Fire and explosion on WAN HAI 503 (in June 2025) off the Kerala coast.

- India proposed IMO-led standardisation:
  - For incident response protocols.
  - To establish global best practices and enhance the operational safety of container ships.
- **India's "Sagar Mein Samman" Initiative:** India showcased "Sagar Mein Samman" (Honour at Sea), launched in 2024 by the Directorate General of Shipping. It aims to;
  - Promote a safe and inclusive maritime workplace.
  - Encourage women's participation at all levels — from seafaring roles to leadership positions.
- India reported a 650% increase in the number of Indian women seafarers.

Laws and Conventions

- **International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL):** It was rolled out by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 1973 and recognised the need for international coherent efforts for curbing oil spill. India is a signatory to the MARPOL Convention.
- The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, Sets minimum working and living standards for seafarers globally. Covers aspects such as equal opportunity, safety, and gender inclusion on board vessels.
- **Merchant shipping Act, 1958:** The Act, describes the power to give a notice to the owner, when the central government is satisfied the ship is not as per the prescribed rules. After notice, if the person fails to comply, the government can convict the person of an offense.

About International Maritime Organization (IMO)

- The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a specialised UN agency responsible for regulating shipping.
- The IMO was established following agreement at a UN conference held in Geneva in 1948 and the IMO came into existence ten years later, meeting for the first time in 1958.
- **Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom
- IMO currently has 176 Member States and three Associate Members.

Astra Missile

- **Context:** DRDO and the Indian Air Force have successfully conducted a flight-test of the indigenous Astra missile from a Sukhoi-30 MKI, engaging high-speed aerial targets off the coast of Odisha.

About Astra Missile

- **Developed by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Type:** Advanced Beyond-Visual-Range Air-to-Air Missile **(BVRAAM)**.
- **Range:** Capable of engaging aerial targets over **100 km** away.
- **Features:**
  - Advanced guidance and navigation systems for high precision.
  - All-weather, day-and-night operational capability.
  - Maximum speed: **exceeds Mach 4**.
  - Operational ceiling: up to **20 km** altitude.
- **Significance:** Enhances India's indigenous air combat capabilities and aligns with Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence production.

13ᵗʰ JULY 2025

Exercise Talisman Sabre

- **Context:** India has made its debut in Australia's largest bilateral military exercise, Exercise Talisman Sabre.

About The Exercise

- Talisman Sabre began in 2005 as a biennial joint exercise between the United States and Australia.
- This year, more than 35,000 military personnel from 19 nations, including Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom, will take part over three weeks.
- Malaysia and Vietnam are also attending as observers.

Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)

- **Context:** The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has released its 15 page preliminary report on the investigation into the recent Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad that claimed 260 lives.

About AAIB

- The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, responsible for investigating civil aviation accidents and serious incidents in the country.
- Under Rule 3 of the Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017, its sole objective is to prevent future accidents and incidents — not to apportion blame or liability.
- The AAIB has unrestricted access to all relevant evidence, without needing prior permission from judicial or other government authorities.

■ DO YOU KNOW?

- Matters of international civil aviation safety are governed by the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention, 1944).
- The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a UN body with 193 member states (including India), oversees technical standards for global air safety.
- Annex 13 of the Chicago Convention details international protocols for investigating aircraft accidents.
- It mandates that the 'State of Occurrence' (where the accident happens) leads the investigation, while states connected to the aircraft (like the State of Registry or State of Manufacture) have the right to participate.

Nomination to Rajya Sabha

- **Context:** The President of India has appointed four new individuals as nominated members of the Rajya Sabha. The President nominated them on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers (headed by the Prime Minister).

About Nomination to Rajya Sabha

- **Article 80 of the Constitution:** Out of the maximum 250 members in the Rajya Sabha, 12 are nominated by the President of India.
- The nominated members are chosen for their special knowledge or practical experience in areas such as literature, science, art, and social service.
- The nomination system ensures that the Rajya Sabha benefits from the insights of eminent personalities who may not wish to contest elections but can contribute significantly to national discourse.
- Nominated members serve for a six-year term, the same as elected members.
- Nominated members enjoy the same rights as other Rajya Sabha members, except they cannot vote in the election of the President of India.

14th JULY 2025

Appointment of Governors

- **Context:** President of India appointed Governors of Goa, Haryana and Lt Governor of UT of Ladakh.

Key Highlights

- Kavinder Gupta (former Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir) has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, replacing Brig. (retd.) B.D. Mishra
- Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju, a senior TDP leader and former Civil Aviation Minister, has been appointed Governor of Goa, succeeding P.S. Sreedharan Pillai.
- Ashim Kumar Ghosh, a senior BJP leader from West Bengal, has been appointed Governor of Haryana, replacing Bandaru Dattatreya.

About Governor

Appointment and Eligibility

- The Governor is the constitutional head of a State and acts as a link between the Union and the State governments.
- Article 153 provides that each State shall have a Governor, and the same person can be appointed for more than one State.
- The Governor is appointed by the President (Article 155) and holds office during the President's pleasure, though his tenure is generally five years (Article 156).
- **Eligibility:** To be eligible, one must be an Indian citizen aged 35 or above (Article 157), and cannot be a member of Parliament or a State Legislature, nor hold any other office of profit (Article 158).

Power and Functions

- As per Article 154, the executive powers of the State are vested in the Governor and exercised according to the Constitution.
  - He/she appoints the Chief Minister, and on the Chief Minister's advice, appoints the Council of Ministers and allocates their portfolios.
  - The Governor also appoints the Advocate-General, and the Chairman and members of the State Public Service Commission.
  - Additionally, the Governor appoints judges of subordinate courts and is consulted in the appointment of High Court judges by the President.
- **Legislative:** The Governor is an integral part of the State Legislature, holding several legislative powers.

  Governors may summon, prorogue, or dissolve the Legislature (Article 174), address or send messages to the House (Article 175), and must deliver a special address at the start of the first session each year or after general elections (Article 176).

  For any bill to become law, the Governor's assent is essential; he/she can approve, withhold, return it for reconsideration, or reserve it for the President. During the Legislature's recess, the Governor can issue ordinances, which must be approved within six weeks of the Assembly's reconvening.

- **Financial Powers:** The Governor has key financial powers in the State: no money bill can be introduced in the Legislative Assembly without prior permission
  - The annual and supplementary budgets are presented in the Governor's name; and the Governor controls the State Contingency Fund.
- **Judicial:** The Governor has the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites, remission, or to suspend, remit, or commute sentences of persons convicted under laws related to the State's executive powers (Article 161).

2025 Maitri Grants

- **Context:** Australia and India are deepening their partnership through the 2025 Maitri Grants, Fellowships, and Scholarships.

About Maitri Grants

- The Maitri (meaning friendship) Grants is administered by the Centre for Australia-India Relations.
- It aims to support greater exchange and collaboration with India across technology, business, education and culture.
- Key initiatives include the Lowy Institute's India Chair, Asialink Business playbooks for cleantech and agtech partnerships, a major exhibition of Raja Ravi Varma's artworks, and a storytelling incubator led by Bodhini Studios.
- The 2024–2025 round also funds 13 research scholarships and 3 fellowships focused on areas like quantum computing, clean energy, biomanufacturing, maritime cooperation, and digital governance.

15th JULY 2025

Shubhanshu Shukla

- **Context:** Indian Astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who created history by becoming the first Indian ever to set foot on the International Space Station (ISS), returned to Earth after spending 18 days in the space.

Key Highlights

- The Axiom-4 (Ax-4) mission, which undocked from the orbiting laboratory with its four-member crew, splashed down off the coast of San Diego, California, USA
- Led by former Nasa veteran Peggy Whitson and piloted by Group Captain Shukla, Ax-4 had arrived at ISS on 26 June. Its crew included Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland and Tibor Kapu from Hungary.
- Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is only the second Indian to have gone to space. His trip came 41 years after cosmonaut Rakesh Sharma flew aboard a Russian Soyuz in 1984.
- Ax-4, which was originally expected to spend two weeks on the ISS, ended up staying a few days longer. During their stay, Axiom Space said the crew conducted 60 scientific experiments, including seven designed by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- ISRO has announced plans to launch Gaganyaan - the country's first-ever human space flight in 2027 - and has ambitious plans to set up a space station by 2035 and send an astronaut to the Moon by 2040.

Pradhan Mantri Divyasha Kendra

- **Context:** The Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, is set to inaugurate the 75th Pradhan Mantri Divyasha Kendra (PMDK) at Uttar Pradesh.

Key Highlights

- PMDK is a unique initiative aimed at providing integrated services under one roof—including assessment, evaluation, counselling, distribution, and post-distribution care — for eligible Divyangjan and elderly beneficiaries.
- With the launch of this centre, the total number of operational PMDKs across India reaches 75.

About Pradhan Mantri Divyasha Kendra

- It is a government-run initiative established to provide comprehensive rehabilitation and assistive services to:
  - Persons with disabilities (Divyangjan), and
  - Senior citizens in need of mobility or sensory support.
- The centres function under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, and are implemented by ALIMCO (Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India), a central public sector enterprise.
- Target Groups: Persons with disabilities (PwDs), identified under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Senior citizens, particularly those belonging to economically weaker sections (EWS).

Shinkansen Technology

- **Context:** India will be among the first countries in the world to debut the next-generation E10 Shinkansen bullet trains.

About E10 Shinkansen

- Also known as the Alfa-X, the E10 can reach speeds up to 400 km/h, offering significant improvements in speed, safety, energy efficiency, and passenger comfort over the E5, which tops out at 320 km/h.
- The E10 will replace the E2 and E5 fleets in Japan and mark a major leap forward for high-speed rail in India.
- Equipped with automatic train control (ATC), Shinkansen eliminates the need for trackside signals and maintains a perfect safety record.