



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

30th July - 05th Aug., 2025

★★ Useful for ★★

**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**

NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR)

India launched the World's
most expensive **Earth Imaging Satellite**



 www.madeeasy.in

30th JULY 2025

NISAR Earth Observation Satellite

- **Context:** The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

About NISAR Satellite

- NISAR is an Earth-observation satellite that stands for NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar.
- It is Jointly developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Indian Space Research Organisation under a partnership agreement signed in 2014.
- It will be launched into a polar Sun-synchronous dawn-dusk orbit at 747 km altitude and an inclination of 98.4°.
- NISAR is the first satellite mission to collect radar data in two microwave bandwidth regions, called the L-band and the S-band. The S-band payload has been made by the ISRO and the L-band payload by the U.S.
- The NISAR system comprises a dual frequency, fully polarimetric radar, with an imaging swath greater than 150 miles (240 km).
- This design permits complete global coverage every 12-days, allowing researchers to create time-series interferometric imagery and systematically map the changing surface of Earth. It can monitor various aspects in very high resolution.
- After a 90-day commissioning period, the mission will conduct a minimum of three full years of science operations with the L-band radar to satisfy NASA's requirements. ISRO requires five years of operations with the S-band radar.



Extension of President's Rule in Manipur

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha has given its approval to the statutory resolution regarding the extension of President's rule in Manipur for a further period of six months with effect from 13th of August 2025.

Key Facts

- Manipur was placed under President's Rule in February 2025 after erstwhile Chief Minister N. Biren Singh stepped down, nearly two years after the ethnic conflict began in the State between the valley-based Meitei community and the hills-based Scheduled Tribe Kuki-Zo group of communities.
- The conflict originated from the Meitei demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status, which the Kukis opposed, fearing loss of job opportunities and other affirmative actions meant for STs.

About President's Rule

- It is a state emergency which is commonly called President's Rule. The term 'President's Rule' is not mentioned in the Constitution.
- It has been declared under Article 356, fulfilling the Union's duty under Article 355 to protect states from external aggression or internal disturbances to ensure that State governments operate as per the Constitution.
- Article 356(1) allows the President to declare President's Rule if a State's constitutional machinery fails due to non-performance or malperformance, based on the Governor's report or otherwise.
- This shifts the State's executive powers to the Centre and legislative powers to Parliament, while the High Court remains unaffected.
- Under Article 365, if a State disobeys Union directions, the President may also declare a Constitutional Emergency.
- The proclamation must be approved by both Houses of Parliament within two months and can last six months per approval.

- It may be extended beyond a year only if a national emergency is in force and the Election Commission certifies election difficulties. However, President's Rule cannot exceed three years in total and can be revoked anytime.
- Unlike a national emergency, President's Rule does not suspend citizens' fundamental rights.
- During a national emergency, Article 19 freedoms can be suspended under Article 358, and other rights (except Articles 20 and 21) may also be restricted.
- Under President's Rule, the President assumes special powers, with the Governor administering the State on her behalf, aided by the Chief Secretary or appointed advisers.
- Article 357 allows Parliament to transfer legislative powers to the President or another authority and enables the President to approve spending from the State's Consolidated Fund.
- First applied in Punjab in 1951, it has served as both a crisis-management tool and a politically sensitive measure.
- Manipur and Uttar Pradesh share the highest number of impositions at 10 each, with Manipur's latest making it 11 times.
- Jammu & Kashmir holds the record for the longest cumulative period under President's Rule (over 12 years), followed by Punjab (over 10 years) and Puducherry (over 7 years).

Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill

- **Context:** The Maharashtra Legislature passed the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill to provide for effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of Left-Wing Extremist organisations or similar organisations'.

Key Provisions of the Bill

- The State Government can ban organisations it deems unlawful without public notification or due process safeguards.
- Section 2(f) criminalises speech, gestures, or signs that "tend to interfere with public order or cause concern."

- Once banned, an organisation can be permanently banned as there is no time limit for review.
- Lower courts cannot hear cases under this Act, making legal challenges more difficult.
- Government officials acting in 'good faith' are provided full legal protection.

About Naxalite Movement

- The Naxalite movement began in 1967 in Naxalbari, West Bengal, as a radical leftist uprising championing the rights of tribal and landless communities.
The insurgency spread across the so-called Red Corridor, covering parts of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala.
- Naxalites employ guerrilla warfare, target state institutions, extort local populations, and often recruit children.
- They claim to fight for marginalized communities but resort to violent methods.

31st JULY 2025

USA's Tariff on India's Exports

- **Context:** Recently, the USA President has announced an additional 25% tariff on all imports from India for India's continued purchases of Russian oil, totaling 50% of tariff.

Key Facts

- India's high tariffs on U.S. goods, which the US President called 'among the highest in the world'. The US has about a \$40.8 billion trade deficit with India.
- The US accuses India of maintaining high tariffs and other non-tariff barriers, particularly citing India's agricultural subsidies and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures related to food safety.
- India's status as Russia's largest energy buyer (accounts for 35–40% of India's total oil imports), and its long-standing defense ties with Moscow.

- The penalty component of the tariff is reportedly linked to these purchases, though its exact nature remains unspecified.
- The US views BRICS, the emerging markets bloc which India is part of, as an anti-dollar coalition that challenges US economic leadership.
- A mini-deal to avoid retaliatory tariffs was not finalized before the August 2025 deadline, despite ongoing talks since February 2025.

Key Implications

- **Economic Impact on Indian Exports:** The tariff affects \$129 billion in annual bilateral trade, with India's exports to the U.S. valued at \$86.5 billion in FY25.
- **Most Vulnerable Sectors:**
 - **Pharmaceuticals:** India is a major supplier of generic drugs to the U.S.
 - **Auto Parts & Engineering Goods:** \$2.2 billion worth of auto components exported in 2024 now face full tariffs.
 - **Textiles, Gems & Jewellery, Electronics, and Seafood:** These export-heavy sectors may lose price competitiveness.
- **Pressure on MSMEs and Labour-Intensive Industries:** The tariff could disproportionately affect small manufacturers and exporters, especially in labour-intensive sectors like garments, leather, and handicrafts.
 - Industry bodies like FICCI warn of immediate disruption to India's export-intensive sectors.
- The penalty component is linked to India's energy and defense ties with Russia, making this tariff not just economic but geopolitical.
- India's strategic autonomy in foreign policy — especially its stance on Russia — may face renewed scrutiny.

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI 2025) Report

- **Context:** The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI 2025) report has been released.

Major Findings

- **Level of Hunger:** An estimated 8.2% of the global population, or about 673 million people, experienced hunger in 2024, down from 8.5% in 2023 and 8.7% in 2022. Hunger continued to rise in most subregions of Africa and western Asia.
- Notable improvements are seen in southern Asia and Latin America. The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) in Asia fell from 7.9% in 2022 to 6.7% or 323 million people, in 2024.
- **Projection:** 512 million people could be chronically undernourished by 2030, almost 60% of those will be in Africa.
 - The prevalence of stunting in children under five declined from 26.4% in 2012 to 23.2% in 2024.
 - There is an increase in the global prevalence of anaemia among women aged 15 to 49, from 27.6% in 2012 to 30.7% in 2023.
- Global policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic — characterized by extensive fiscal and monetary interventions — combined with the impacts of the war in Ukraine and extreme weather events, contributed to recent inflationary pressures.
 - Since 2020, global food price inflation has consistently outpaced headline inflation.
 - Low-income countries have been particularly hit hard by rising food prices.

About SOFI Report

- This report is the annual global monitoring report for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (targets 2.1 and 2.2) — to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms.
- This year's report examines the impact of food price inflation on food security and nutrition.
- Jointly Released by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations agency for children (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

About Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- The United Nations General Assembly, during its 70th Session in 2015, adopted the document titled “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”
- This document outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets.
- The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, came into force with effect from 1st January 2016.
- The SDGs serve as a comprehensive blueprint aimed at achieving a better and more sustainable future for all.
- The goals call for action on addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.
- The SDGs are universal, applying to all nations — developed, developing and least developed countries. Countries are primarily responsible for following up and reviewing the progress made in implementing the goals and targets at the national level until 2030.
- The SDGs are not legally binding, but they have effectively become international obligations and have the potential to reorient domestic spending priorities in countries.

UN Women

- **Context:** UN Women marks its 15th anniversary this year.

About UN Women

- UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls globally.
- Established by the UN General Assembly in July 2010 and operational from January 2011.
- UN Women serves as the secretariat to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).
- **UN Women Executive Board:**
 - Comprises representatives from 41 Member States.

- Members are elected by ECOSOC for three-year terms on a rotational basis, ensuring geographical balance and global representation.

1st AUGUST 2025

Swachhata Pakhwada 2025

- **Context:** Recently, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) observed Swachhata Pakhwada 2025.

Key Facts

- Swachhata Pakhwada is an initiative under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen).
- The programme was launched in 2016 with the objective of bringing about an intense focus on sanitation issues and practices by involving all Ministries and Departments of Government of India.
- It's an annual observance aimed at spreading awareness and encouraging activities related to cleanliness and hygiene across various sectors of society.
- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) acts as the nodal department, laying down suggestive activities for observing the Pakhwada each year.

Kavach 4.0

- **Context:** Indian Railways has commissioned indigenous railway safety system Kavach 4.0 on the Mathura-Kota section of high-density Delhi-Mumbai route.

About Kavach

- It is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) in collaboration with Indian industry.
- Kavach aids the Loco Pilot in running of trains within specified speed limits by automatic application of brakes in case Loco Pilot fails to do so and also helps the trains to run safely during inclement weather.

- It is designed to the highest safety standard — Safety Integrity Level 4 (SIL-4) — where the probability of failure is just 1 in 10,000 years.
- The advanced version 'Kavach 4.0' approved in May 2025 for speeds up to 160 kmph.

India's First 1 MW Green Hydrogen Plant

- **Context:** India's first indigenously developed 1 MW Green Hydrogen Power Plant is inaugurated at the Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) in Kandla, Gujarat.

Key Facts

- The plant is capable of producing approximately 140 metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually.
- The Deendayal Port Authority has previously introduced India's first Made-in-India all-electric green tug, further reinforcing its leadership in eco-friendly port operations.

About Green Hydrogen

- The hydrogen produced via electrolysis, the splitting of water into hydrogen and oxygen with electricity generated from renewable energy sources such as solar or wind, is known as Green hydrogen.
- MNRE defines Green Hydrogen as having a well-to-gate emission (i.e., including water treatment, electrolysis, gas purification, drying and compression of hydrogen) of not more than 2 kg CO₂ equivalent / kg H₂.

Himgiri

- **Context:** The Indian Navy received the advanced guided-missile frigate Himgiri built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata.

Key Highlights

- It is the third Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) frigate and the first built by GRSE.
- The Project 17A frigates are versatile multi-mission platforms, designed to address current and future challenges in the maritime domain.

- It is a reincarnation of the erstwhile INS Himgiri, a Leander-class frigate, that was decommissioned on May 6, 2025
- It is a modern, multi-mission warship designed by the Warship Design Bureau and launched in December 2020.
- It features BrahMos and Barak 8 missiles, advanced AESA radar, and state-of-the-art combat systems.
- It is capable of anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare.
- The ship symbolizes India's defence self-reliance with high indigenous content.
- It offers modular design, enhanced survivability, and full aviation facilities for helicopters, accommodating up to 225 personnel.

2nd AUGUST 2025

15th Meeting of the Ramsar Convention (COP15)

- **Context:** The 15th Meeting of the Ramsar Convention (COP15), held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, concluded with new resolutions on wetland restoration, protection of migratory birds and wetland species, and equitable governance.

About COP15

- The Ramsar COP15 conference in Zimbabwe attended by some 3,000 delegates, was the second time that Africa has played host to a Ramsar Convention conference after Uganda hosted COP9 in 2005.
- The conference, themed "Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future", gathered global stakeholders to address freshwater ecosystem threats.
- COP16 will be hosted by Panama in 2028.
- Zimbabwe took over the three-year Ramsar Convention on Wetlands presidency from China.

Major Outcomes

- At COP15 of the Ramsar Convention, all 13 proposed resolutions were adopted, marking significant progress in global wetland protection and restoration.

- The resolutions focused on national action, monitoring, capacity building, integrating wetlands into climate adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.
 - A key outcome was the Victoria Falls Declaration, emphasizing political will, resource mobilisation, and investment in sustainable wetland management.
 - Its Highlights include commitments to restore degraded freshwater ecosystems, protect migratory birds, and adopt clearer criteria for designating Wetlands of International Importance.
 - A new strategic plan with four goals and 18 targets was approved, though a major breakthrough in long-term financing was not achieved.
 - The core budget was increased by 4.1% to CHF 15.5 million for 2025–2027.
 - Additional resolutions addressed equitable governance, urban wetlands, traditional knowledge, and youth engagement.
 - At the Ramsar COP15 in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, India successfully introduced and passed a resolution titled 'Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles for the Wise Use of Wetlands'.
 - The resolution, widely supported by 172 Ramsar Contracting Parties and international organizations, emphasizes the critical role of individual and societal choices in wetland conservation and promotes a 'whole-of-society' approach.
- It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.
 - Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world's geographic regions, have acceded to become "Contracting Parties"
 - India is one of the Contracting Parties to Ramsar Convention, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. India became a signatory to the convention on 1st February 1982.
- **Wetlands in India**
 - In June 2025, two more wetlands from India were added to the list of Ramsar sites, taking the number of such sites in the country to 91.
 - The latest to join the list of Ramsar sites in India are Khichan in Phalodi and Menar in Udaipur, both in Rajasthan.
 - India is home to a rich diversity of wetlands, many of which hold cultural and religious significance.
 - These wetlands are protected under various national laws, including the Indian Forest Act (1927), the Forest (Conservation) Act (1980), and the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972).

13th India-UAE Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) Meeting

- **Context:** India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral defence cooperation during the 13th India-UAE Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting, held in New Delhi.

Key Outcomes of The 13th JDCC Meeting

- **Joint Manufacturing:** India and UAE agreed to pursue joint manufacturing initiatives, replicating the model of collaboration between ICOMM (India) and CARACAL (UAE) for small arms production.
- **Technology Co-Development:** Discussions were held on co-developing next-generation technologies in emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence, autonomy, and cybersecurity.

About Wetlands

- Wetlands are areas where water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life. They occur where the water table is at or near the surface of the land, or where the land is covered by water.
- Wetlands take many forms including rivers, marshes, bogs, mangroves, mudflats, ponds, swamps, billabongs, lagoons, lakes, and floodplains. Most large wetland areas often include a combination of different types of freshwater systems.

Convention on Wetlands

- It is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indian Coast Guard and the UAE National Guard to deepen collaboration in Search and rescue operations, Anti-piracy missions, Pollution control response and Maritime situational awareness.

Significance of The Defence Cooperation

- **Counterbalance to Regional Conflicts:** India's balanced approach in West Asia enhances its role as a stabilising, non-hegemonic partner, fostering regional trust amid ongoing tensions.
- **Maritime Security:** The UAE's strategic location near the Strait of Hormuz complements India's naval presence in the Arabian Sea and enhances collaborative maritime security.
- Joint maritime efforts strengthen sea lane security, trade route protection, and anti-piracy measures.
- India's defence export and production capabilities receive a major boost through such partnerships, helping meet its target of 35,000 crore in defence exports by 2025.

3rd AUGUST 2025

National Film Awards

- **Context:** The 71st National Film Awards were announced.

Key Highlights

- The best male actor award was shared by Shah Rukh Khan for Jawan and Vikrant Massey for 12th Fail.
- 12th Fail won the best feature film award.
- Rani Mukerji was awarded the best female actor for her role in Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway.

About National Film Awards

- The National Film Awards (NFA) were established in 1954 to promote cinematic excellence in India.
- They are presented every year by the Government to celebrate excellence in filmmaking.
- These awards recognise the best films, performances, and technical achievements across various languages and genres.

- **Eligibility:** Films certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) between January 1 and December 31 of the previous year are eligible.
- The awards are announced by a jury appointed by the Directorate of Film Festivals and are presented by the President of India.
- The first Best Actor and Best Actress awards were given to Uttam Kumar and Nargis, respectively, in 1968.
- The Best Actress award was initially called 'Urvashi' and the Best Actor award was called 'Bharat'.

Sikkim's Sabbatical Leave Scheme

- **Context:** Sikkim has become the first state in India to implement a Sabbatical Leave Scheme for government employees.

Key Highlights

- Introduced in August 2023, the scheme aimed at empowering the workforce by providing time for personal and professional development without sacrificing job security.
- The policy allows regular state government employees who have completed at least five years of continuous service to avail of leave from 365 days up to a maximum of 1,080 days while receiving 50% of their basic pay during their absence.
- The scheme preserves their seniority, ensuring continuity in service, and the government retains the right to recall the employee with one month's notice.
- Temporary employees become eligible after six months of continuous service, with the same structural provisions in place.
- **Delegation of Approval Authority:**
 - **Group A & B:** Require approval from the Secretary, Personnel Department.
 - **Group C & D (including temporary staff):** Leave can now be granted by Heads of Departments.
- This decentralisation streamlines processes and accelerates decision-making.

BlueBird Communications Satellite

- **Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch Block 2 BlueBird communication satellite in next three to four months

About BlueBird Communications Satellite

- The BlueBird communications satellite is developed by the U.S.-based AST SpaceMobile.
- It weighs 6,500 kg and is expected to arrive in India by September.
- It will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota using ISRO's most powerful launcher, the LVM3, previously known as the GSLV-Mk III.

About INSAT

- The Indian National Satellite System (INSAT) is a series of multipurpose Geo-stationary satellites launched by ISRO to satisfy the telecommunications, broadcasting, meteorology, and search and rescue needs of India.
- Commissioned in 1983, INSAT is the largest domestic communication system in the Asia Pacific Region.
- The satellites also incorporate transponder(s) for receiving distress alert signals for search and rescue missions in the South Asian and Indian Ocean Region, as ISRO is a member of the COSPAR-Sarsat programme.

4th AUGUST 2025

Operation Muskaan-XI

- **Context:** Telangana Police rescued over 7,600 children during the last month as part of the nationwide Operation Muskaan-XI initiative.

About The Initiative

- **Objective:** To rescue children involved in child labour, begging, or living in unsafe conditions.
- High-risk areas targeted: Railway and bus stations, brick kilns, mechanic shops, construction sites, tea stalls, and religious places.
- Conducted in coordination with Women Development and Child Welfare Department, Labour and Health Departments, Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), District Child Protection Units (DCPUs), and NGOs.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Operation Muskaan, also known as Operation Smile, is a Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) initiative.
- It is a month-long campaign led by State Police forces that aims to trace, rescue, rehabilitate, and reunite missing or trafficked children with their families.

India-UN Global South Capacity Building Initiative

- **Context:** India launched the first tranche of four projects under the India-UN Global Capacity Building Initiative.

About India-UN Global Capacity Building Initiative

- It is aimed at supporting the Global South in achieving SDG goals through specialized training.
- The initiative, announced in September 2023, is a collaboration between India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and UN agencies.
- It builds on India's longstanding ITEC programme, which offers over 12,000 training slots annually to nearly 160 countries.
- Under this initiative, UN agencies help identify projects, while training is conducted via ITEC.
- In the first phase of the India-UN Global Capacity Building Initiative, four projects have been launched:
 - Rice Fortification in Nepal (with WFP),
 - Digital Health Platforms for Zambia and Lao PDR (with UNDP),
 - Census Preparedness in Caribbean nations (with UNFPA),
 - Vocational Training in South Sudan (with UNESCO).

BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival

- **Context:** The first-ever Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Traditional Music Festival, titled 'SaptaSur: Seven Nations, One Melody' was held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

About BIMSTEC

- It is a grouping of seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal.
- It is a unique link connecting South Asia with South-East Asia – five Members from South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka) and two from South-East Asia (Myanmar and Thailand).
- The BIMSTEC region brings together 1.7 billion people – 22% of world population with a combined GDP of US\$ 5 trillion.
- BIMSTEC had initially focused on six sectors in 1997 (trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism, and fisheries) and expanded in 2008 to incorporate agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people-to-people contact, and climate change.
- The organization came into existence on 6 June 1997 through the 'Bangkok Declaration'.
- It was originally formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- Following the inclusion of Myanmar in December 1997, it was renamed 'BIMST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- With the inclusion of Nepal and Bhutan in 2004, the name of the grouping was changed to BIMSTEC.

5th AUGUST 2025

Pariksha Pe Charcha, 2025

- **Context:** The Prime Minister's flagship initiative Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) has set a Guinness World Record for the "Most people registered on a Citizen Engagement Platform in one month", with over 3.53 crore registrations on the MyGov platform during its 8th edition in 2025.

About Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC)

- Launched in 2018, PPC is an annual event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with students, teachers, and parents ahead of the board examinations.
- It is organised by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with MyGov, the citizen engagement platform of the Government of India.
- The program is part of the broader movement under the 'Exam Warriors' initiative, aiming to reduce exam stress and promote holistic education.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

- **Context:** Russia has officially withdrawn from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

About Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)

- The INF Treaty was signed in December 1987 by the United States and the former Soviet Union, and entered into force on 1 June 1988.
- It required both countries to eliminate their ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles that could travel between 500 and 5,500 kilometres by an implementation deadline of 1 June 1991.
- It was crucial to Euro-Atlantic security for decades and it eliminated a whole category of nuclear weapons that threatened Europe in the 1980s.

■ DO YOU KNOW? _____

- Russia specifically pointed to the US deployment of a Typhon missile system in the Philippines and missile drills in Australia as destabilizing moves.
- The US had already left the treaty in 2019, accusing Russia of violations, which Russia denied, claiming the US was instead developing prohibited missile systems.
- This latest step reflects rising tensions between Russia and the US, especially following President Trump's announcement of deploying two nuclear submarines.

Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath

- **Context:** India has submitted a dossier titled "Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath" to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for the 2025–26 nomination cycle.

About Sarnath



- It is situated near Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- In Sarnath Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon, known as the Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta (Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma), after attaining enlightenment. This event marks the beginning of the Buddhist Sangha (monastic community).

- Sarnath is one of the four most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites, alongside Bodh Gaya, Lumbini, and Kushinagar, and served as a major centre for Buddhist learning and dissemination, closely linked to ancient transnational pilgrimage routes and cultural exchanges. It reflects the interplay of Mauryan, Kushan, and Gupta architectural styles.

Key Monuments and Structures at Sarnath

- **Dhamek Stupa:** Built in 500 CE to commemorate Buddha's first sermon.
- **Ashokan Pillar:** Erected by Emperor Ashoka with an edict; originally topped with the Lion Capital, now India's national emblem.
- **Chaukhandi Stupa:** Commemorates the spot where Buddha met his first disciples.
- **Mulagandha Kuti Vihar:** Modern temple built by the Mahabodhi Society, housing frescoes depicting Buddha's life.
- **Sarnath Archaeological Museum:** Houses important artefacts, including the original Lion Capital of Ashoka.