

8. Shortnews

1. World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Day

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities observed World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Day on 7th September 2025.

About World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Day

It is observed annually on 7th September to raise awareness about the rare genetic disorder affecting muscle function.

Participation - The day is observed globally with participation from governments, institutions, researchers, patients, and civil society to foster awareness, inclusion, and support for affected families.

2025 Theme - "Family - The Heart of Care"

About Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD)

It is a rare and progressive genetic disorder that causes gradual weakening of muscles, impacting mobility, breathing, and heart function.

Caused By - DMD is caused by mutations in the dystrophin gene, leading to the absence or deficiency of dystrophin protein, which is essential for maintaining muscle integrity.

Who It Affects - The condition primarily affects children, especially boys, due to its X-linked inheritance pattern.

Symptoms usually appear in early childhood between 2–5 years of age.

Progression - The disease progressively weakens skeletal, cardiac, and respiratory muscles, often leading to loss of independent walking in adolescence and complications in adulthood.

Management - While there is no permanent cure, timely interventions such as physiotherapy, respiratory and cardiac care, and social inclusion strategies can significantly improve quality of life and survival rates.

2. Pallas's Cat

A wildlife survey conducted in Arunachal Pradesh has captured the first-ever photographic evidence of the elusive Pallas's cat in the state.

About Pallas's cat

Evolution - Believed to be the oldest living cat species, with origins dating back around ten million years.

Scientific Name - *Otocolobus manul*

Lifespan - Up to 11.5 years

Appearance - Squat, short-legged felid with a thick, bushy tail about half the length of its body and head combined. Despite its thick fur, it resembles roughly the size of a domestic cat.

Behavior - Primarily nocturnal, spending days in caves, rock crevices, or marmot burrows; may be active during the day when prey is available. Hunts by stalking or creeping due to short legs; relies mostly on sight.

Prey - Diet includes pikas, gerbils, voles, mouse-like rodents, and chukar partridge.

Habitat & Distribution - Found across Asia and the Middle East, especially central Asia, Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia. Prefers uplands, hilly areas, steppes with rocky outcrops, and semidesert regions. Lives from low elevations up to 3,000–4,000 meters. Inhabits areas with extreme continental climates - low rainfall, low humidity, and wide temperature ranges.

Threats - The main threat is hunting for its fur.

Conservation Status - Classified as Least Concern by IUCN and listed under Appendix II of CITES for protection.

3. ZAPAD 2025

Recently, an Indian Armed Forces contingent departed for Russia to participate in the multilateral

joint military exercise ZAPAD 2025.

About Exercise ZAPAD 2025

Exercise ZAPAD is a multilateral military exercise designed to enhance collaboration among participating nations and prepare forces for complex operational environments.

Venue – Mulino Training Ground in Nizhniy, Russia, which is a major hub for Russian military training.

India's Participation – India has sent a 65-member contingent, comprising 57 personnel from the Indian Army, seven from the Indian Air Force, and one from the Indian Navy. The Indian Army component is led by a battalion of the KUMAON Regiment, supported by troops from other arms and services.

Aim of the Exercise – The primary objectives of ZAPAD 2025 are to –

1. Enhance military cooperation among participating nations.
2. Improve interoperability of forces in conventional and counter-terrorism operations.
3. Serve as a platform for exchanging tactics, techniques, and procedures.

Focus Area – The exercise emphasizes company-level joint operations in open and plain terrain, covering –

1. Joint mission planning to harmonize multinational operations.
2. Tactical drills and manoeuvres to refine battlefield coordination.
3. Special arms skills training to address diverse combat challenges.
4. Integration of emerging technologies for modern warfare scenarios.
5. Operations in multinational combat environments to foster coordination among diverse armed forces.

Significance – Participation in ZAPAD 2025 is expected to –

1. Strengthen defence cooperation and camaraderie between India and Russia.
2. Reinforce the spirit of collaboration and mutual trust among all participating nations.

4. IDEX-DIO and EdCIL Partnership

Recently, the Ministry of Defence announced a partnership between IDEX-DIO and EdCIL (India) Limited under the ASPIRE programme to drive dual-use technology innovations.

About the Partnership

A MoU was signed to connect defence innovation expertise with emerging educational technology solutions.

Focus on Dual-Use Technologies – The collaboration aims to promote cutting-edge dual-use technologies that serve both defence and civilian applications.

Utilising Start-up Ecosystem – The partnership will leverage India's start-up ecosystem to develop scalable innovations, aligning with the national emphasis on indigenous capabilities.

About IDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence)

iDEX is the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Defence aimed at promoting innovation and technology development in the defence and aerospace sectors.

Launch Year – The initiative was launched in 2018 as a transformative initiative in the defence innovation ecosystem.

Objective – Its main objective is to support start-ups, MSMEs, and innovators to co-create technologies for India's defence needs, while reducing import dependence.

Engagement with Start-ups – It has built a strong community of over 650 start-ups and MSMEs contributing to defence and aerospace solutions.

Procurement Achievements – Clearances for procurements worth ₹3,250 crore have been approved, and orders worth ₹1,652 crore have been placed for 36 products developed under the IDEX framework.

About EdCIL (India) Limited

EdCIL is a Mini Ratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) providing consultancy, project management, and ed-tech services in India and abroad.

Mini-Ratna Category-I is a status for profitable Indian CPSEs.

Eligibility -

1. Profitable for 3 consecutive years.
2. Net worth \geq ₹500 crore or average annual profit \geq ₹30 crore.

Growth Performance - Between 2014–15 and 2023–24, EdCIL achieved a 24% CAGR, with revenues rising from ₹74 crore to ₹655 crore.

About ASPIRE Programme

Launch - Jointly by iDEX-DIO (Defence) and EdCIL (Education) in September 2025.

Objective - To accelerate dual-use innovations in defence and education, linking start-ups, MSMEs, and Ed-Tech.

iDEX Role - Backed 650+ start-ups, enabling defence procurements worth ₹3,250 crore.

EdCIL Role - Expertise in education consultancy, Ed-Tech solutions, and project implementation.

Focus Areas - AI-based Ed-Tech, VR simulations, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure.

Significance - Advances Atmanirbhar Bharat, promotes self-reliance, and bridges defence innovation with education reforms.

1. Mauritius

Recently, Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam arrived in Mumbai on a State visit to India for his first overseas bilateral visit in this term.

Cultural and Regional Visits - Apart from Mumbai, he will travel to Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Tirupati.

Key Areas of Discussion

Enhanced Strategic Partnership - Strengthening India-Mauritius ties across economic, cultural, and strategic domains, including trade, investment, and defence cooperation.

Maritime Security - Mauritius, a pivotal maritime neighbour, plays a central role in India's Vision MAHASAGAR and the Neighbourhood First Policy, contributing to Indian Ocean Region (IOR) security.

Global South Cooperation - Reinforces Mauritius as a trusted partner in India's outreach to the Global South, enhancing collaboration in multilateral forums and long-term political engagement.

Mauritius – Location Overview

Geographical Position - Mauritius is an island nation located in the southwestern Indian Ocean, approximately 2,000 km (1,200 miles) off the southeast coast of the African continent.

Capital - Port Louis

Proximity to Other Countries -

1. East of Madagascar (~900 km).
2. Northeast of Réunion Island (~200 km).

Archipelago - The country comprises the main island of Mauritius and several smaller islands, including Rodrigues, Agalega, and Cargados Carajos Shoals.

Maritime Significance - Located strategically along major Indian Ocean sea lanes, giving it importance in trade, shipping, and regional security.

Climate and Terrain - Tropical maritime climate; volcanic origin with mountainous interiors and coastal plains.

