

7. Short news

1. Net-Zero Banking Alliance

The Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA) — the primary global coalition of banks committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 — has ceased operations following a member vote to wind up the organisation.

About the Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA)

Establishment – Founded in 2021 under the *UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI)* as part of the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ).

Purpose – To mobilise global banks to align their lending and investment portfolios with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

Commitments – Members pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, set 2030 interim targets, and disclose progress transparently.

Membership – At its peak, the alliance represented over 40% of global banking assets, including major U.S. and European financial institutions. No Indian bank is a member of the NZBA.

Governance – Governed by a 12-member Steering Group and a Chair, representing diverse geographies and business models. Steering Group is selected by member banks to oversee strategy and decision-making. The UNEP FI Secretariat supports the Alliance, and the United Nations holds a permanent seat on the Steering Group.

2. Exercise Konkan – 2025

Recently the bilateral naval exercise “KONKAN-2025” between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom commenced off the western coast of India.

About Exercise Konkan

Inception – The *Exercise Konkan* series is an annual exercise began in 2004 as a modest bilateral engagement and has since evolved into a complex, multi-dimensional maritime exercise.

Purpose – It aims to enhance mutual understanding, interoperability, and joint operational capability between the two navies in diverse maritime domains.

Strategic Significance – It forms part of India’s broader vision of fostering defence partnerships with like-minded democracies to promote a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific. The exercise will be held in two distinct phases — Harbour Phase and Sea Phase.

Harbour Phase – It involves professional interactions, cross-deck visits, sports fixtures, and cultural engagements. Sea Phase encompasses complex maritime operational drills covering –

1. Anti-Air, Anti-Surface, and Anti-Submarine warfare operations.
2. Flying operations involving shipborne and shore-based aircraft.
3. Seamanship evolutions and tactical manoeuvres.

Participating Forces – India – The Carrier Battle Group (CBG) led by the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier INS Vikrant, accompanied by surface, sub-surface, and air assets.

U.K. – The UK Carrier Strike Group 25 (CSG-25) led by HMS Prince of Wales, along with assets from Norway and Japan, marking the multilateral dimension of the exercise.

Significance – Exercise KONKAN 2025 reflects the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership outlined in the “India-UK Vision 2035”, focusing on defence, technology, and maritime cooperation.

3. Compressive Asphyxia

Recently, the Karur stampede during actor-politician Vijay’s rally tragically killed 41 people, highlighting the dangers of compressive asphyxia in overcrowded situations.

About Asphyxia – Asphyxia occurs when the body does not receive enough oxygen, preventing normal respiration, which can lead to hypoxia causing unconsciousness or death. At rest, a healthy adult typically consumes approximately 200–250 milliliters of oxygen per minute.

Types of Asphyxia – Mechanical Asphyxia, Traumatic Asphyxia, Perinatal Asphyxia, Compressive Asphyxia, and Other Types such as Suffocation, chemical asphyxia, strangulation, and drowning.

About Compressive Asphyxia

Definition – Compressive asphyxia occurs when external pressure on the chest or abdomen prevents the diaphragm from functioning, restricting air intake and carbon dioxide removal.

Causes –

Crowd Pressure – Large, dense crowds crush individuals, preventing chest expansion.

Direct Compression – Objects or people sitting, kneeling, or pressing on the chest or abdomen.

Preventive Measures – Crowd Awareness – Stay aware of exits, avoid high-density areas, and move diagonally or sideways to safer zones. Preparation – Plan in advance, check venue layout, go with a companion, and leave early if the crowd feels unsafe.

Safe level of Crowd – The U.K.'s Green Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds states 47 persons per 10 square metres (4.7 per square metre) should be the maximum number to calculate the capacity of standing areas at sports grounds. A massive congested crowd can lead to oxygen deprivation (hypoxia) and carbon-di-oxide level increases (hypercapnia), triggering respiratory distress.

Significance – Understanding compressive asphyxia and taking preventive steps is crucial to reduce fatalities in stampedes and crowded events.

4. Xenobiology

Xenobiology is an emerging scientific field studying life forms based on biological systems fundamentally different from those found on Earth.

Xenobiology – Xenobiology, derived from the Greek word *xenos* meaning “alien”, literally means “the study of alien life.” It examines whether life must always depend on DNA, RNA, and proteins made from Earth's 20 amino acids or if other biochemical systems are possible. Scientists have engineered bacteria with extra genetic letters beyond A, T, C, and G, creating proteins with new structures and functions. The discipline bridges chemistry, genetics, and astrobiology, probing how many distinct forms of life might exist across the universe. Xenobiology offers potential to develop microbes that can produce medicines or degrade toxic waste safely, as they cannot survive outside controlled lab conditions.

5. Cyclone Shakhti

Recently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) confirmed the formation of Cyclone Shakhti over the northeast Arabian Sea, moving away from the Indian coast.

About Cyclone Shakhti – Cyclone Shakhti is a severe cyclonic storm named by Sri Lanka, forming over the northeast Arabian Sea.

Origin and Location – As of October 3, 2025, it was centered about 340 km west of Dwarka, Gujarat near latitude 22.0°N. Initial movement is west-northwestwards, shifting to west-southwestwards, expected to reach central parts of the north and adjoining central Arabian Sea.

Condition for Cyclone Formation – Cyclone's form in warm tropical waters, typically above 26–27°C, with low vertical wind shear and sufficient Coriolis force for rotation.

Rising Frequency in the Arabian Sea

Warming Sea Temperatures – The Arabian Sea is becoming increasingly cyclonically active due to rising sea surface temperatures, which enable rapid intensification. Earlier, it was less cyclonically active than the Bay of Bengal.

Recent Cyclones – Severe cyclones such as Tauktae (2021) and Biparjoy (2023) off India's west coast indicate a rising trend in cyclone formation over the last five years.