

8. Short News

1. India & Greece Hold First Bilateral Naval Exercise

India and Greece recently conducted their first-ever joint naval exercise in the Mediterranean Sea, marking a significant step in strengthening their bilateral defence cooperation.

Exercise Overview

Nature – This was the inaugural bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and the Hellenic Navy.

Location & Time – The exercise took place from September 13–18, 2025, in the Mediterranean Sea.

Indian Participation – The Indian Navy was represented by INS Trikand, a Talwar-class guided-missile stealth frigate.

Phases – The exercise was conducted in two phases – a Harbour Phase at Salamis Naval Base and a subsequent Sea Phase.

Significance – This exercise is a major milestone in India–Greece defence ties. It reflects a shared convergence on key issues like maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation. It provided an opportunity for both navies to share best practices, enhance interoperability, and strengthen professional rapport.

About INS Trikand – It is a state-of-the-art Talwar-class guided-missile frigate, built by the Yantar shipyard in Kaliningrad, Russia. It is the final ship of the second batch ordered by India. It operates under the Western Naval Command (headquartered in Mumbai) and is part of the Indian Navy's Western Fleet.

About Greece –

Location – A country in Southeastern Europe on the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula, possessing the longest Mediterranean coastline. It is bordered by Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

Historical Importance – Known as the cradle of Western civilisation and the birthplace of democracy, it is home to 20 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. During the exercise, the crew of INS Trikand visited the Sacred Rock of Acropolis.

2. Accelerating Melt of Switzerland's Gries Glacier

Switzerland's Gries Glacier has lost six metres in ice depth between September 2024 and September 2025, highlighting the accelerating impact of climate change.

About Gries Glacier

Location – It is a 5.4 km-long glacier located in the Lepontine Alps in the southern canton of Valais, Switzerland.

Definition – A glacier is a large, slow-moving mass of dense ice formed from compressed snow over many years.

Research – It is a key site for research under Glacier Monitoring Switzerland (GLAMOS).

Retreat and Ice Loss Data – The glacier retreated by 800 metres between 2000 and 2023. Its current average ice thickness is now just 57 metres. The severe melting is linked to consecutive dry years (2022–2023) and a very warm summer in 2025.

Global Trends in Glacial Loss – The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reported the largest three-year loss of glaciers on record from 2022–2024. Approximately 100 Swiss glaciers vanished between 2016 and 2022, and Nepal's Yala glacier is expected to disappear by the 2040s.

3. Maitri 2.0 – India-Brazil Agritech Collaboration

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has launched Maitri 2.0, the second edition of the Brazil–India Cross-Incubation Programme in Agritech.

About Maitri 2.0 – It is a bilateral initiative focused on fostering innovation-driven collaboration between the Indian and Brazilian agritech ecosystems. It serves as a two-way learning platform for innovators from both nations to co-create solutions. Its key objectives include promoting resilient food systems, facilitating the exchange of best practices, encouraging the adoption of digital technologies, and empowering farmers.

About Maitri (First Edition) – The original Maitri program was launched in 2019 by ICAR and the Embassy of Brazil to foster innovation and knowledge exchange between Indian and Brazilian agritech startups.

4. Large Ships Granted Infrastructure Status in India

The Ministry of Finance has granted infrastructure status to large ships to improve access to finance and boost domestic shipbuilding, in line with the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047. This move was first recommended by the Rangarajan Commission in 2001.

Definition of Large Ships – Commercial vessels with $\geq 10,000$ gross tonnage under Indian ownership and flag. Commercial vessels with $\geq 1,500$ gross tonnage that are built in India and under Indian ownership and flag.

Benefits of Infrastructure Status – Access to low-cost infrastructure lending with enhanced credit limits. Eligibility for External Commercial Borrowings (ECB). Access to longer-term funding from insurance companies and pension funds. Eligibility to borrow from the India Infrastructure Financing Company Ltd (IIFCL).

Current Challenges & Government Plans – India currently contributes only 0.06% to global shipbuilding and spends USD 75 billion annually on leasing foreign ships. The government plans to invest ₹54 trillion by 2047, launch a Maritime Development Fund (₹25,000 crore), and develop shipbuilding clusters to strengthen the sector.

5. Delhi Explores "Smog-Eating" Technology

The Delhi government has announced a feasibility study on titanium oxide-based photocatalytic coatings, popularly known as "smog-eating" technology, to combat air pollution.

How the Technology Works

Mechanism – It uses photocatalytic materials like titanium dioxide (TiO_2) to chemically break down harmful pollutants like nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter.

Process – When exposed to UV sunlight, TiO_2 produces powerful oxidizing agents (hydroxyl radicals and superoxides) that convert pollutants into less harmful compounds.

Application – The coating can be applied to roads, pavements, building facades, and paints to actively clean the surrounding air.

Types of Smog

Sulfurous Smog (London Smog) – Formed from smoke, fog, and sulfur dioxide in cool, humid climates.

Photochemical Smog (Los Angeles Smog) – Forms when sunlight reacts with NO_x and VOCs to produce harmful ground-level ozone. It is common in sunny, urban areas.

Global Examples

Roads – The Netherlands pioneered photocatalytic pavements in 2013.

Buildings – The Palazzo Italia in Milan used TiO_2 cement for the 2015 Expo.

Smog-Free Tower – A 23-foot tower that uses ionization to clean 30,000 cubic meters of air per hour, deployed in China, the Netherlands, and other countries.

6. Tributes to Maharaja Agrasen

The Prime Minister paid tribute to Maharaja Agrasen on his birth anniversary (Agrasen Jayanti), celebrating him as a symbol of social justice and unity. Agrasen Jayanti is observed on the fourth day of the Hindu month of Ashwin.

About Maharaja Agrasen

Identity – A Vaish King of the Solar (Suryavanshi) Dynasty and the founder of the ancient city of Agroha (near modern Hisar, Haryana).

Legacy – He is revered as the founder of the Aggarwal community, a prominent business and trading community. The term "Agrawal" means "Children of Agrasen."

Lineage – He was a descendant of Kush (Lord Rama's son) and is believed to have been a contemporary of Lord Krishna.

Vision and Social Reforms – He was known as a Karmyogi (man of action) who promoted collective prosperity. He established a unique rule of equality in Agroha – every new family settling in the city was

given one brick and one rupee by each of the existing residents, ensuring they had the means to build a home and start a business. He championed progressive principles like non-violence, social justice, and cooperative living.

7. Redevelopment of Tripura Sundari Temple

The Prime Minister inaugurated the redeveloped Tripura Sundari Temple in Udaipur, Tripura. The 524-year-old temple was redeveloped under the PRASHAD scheme.

About the Temple

Significance – It is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas, a highly revered pilgrimage site also known as Matabari.

History – The temple was built in 1501 by Maharaja Dhanya Manikya.

Architecture – It is built in the Bengali Ek-Ratna style on a hillock shaped like a tortoise's hump, giving it the name Kurma Peetha.

Deities – It enshrines Goddess Tripura Sundari and a smaller idol of Goddess Chandi, called Chhoto-Ma.

Cultural Importance & PRASHAD Scheme – The temple's famous sweet, Matabari Peda, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The PRASHAD scheme, launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2014-15, aims at the holistic development of pilgrimage sites to boost religious tourism.

8. India and Morocco Deepen Defence Cooperation

India and Morocco have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation in Rabat, Morocco's capital.

About the Defence MoU – It establishes a structured framework for long-term and sustainable defence cooperation.

Strategic Areas – The roadmap covers counter-terrorism, maritime security, cyber defence, military medicine, and peacekeeping operations.

Industrial Cooperation – Both sides agreed to intensify collaboration in defence production, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals.

Defence Infrastructure – To support these initiatives, India announced the opening of a new Defence Wing at its Embassy in Rabat.

About Morocco

Location – A North African nation in the Maghreb region, with coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Geography – Its terrain is dominated by the Atlas and Rif Mountains. The Sahara Desert covers its south-eastern part.

Borders – It shares land borders with Algeria and Western Sahara and has enclaves with Spain.