

8. Short News

1. MONDIACULT 2025

Recently India was represented by Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat as Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group, emphasizing culture as a global public good at MONDIACULT 2025 .

About MONDIACULT 2025

It is the world's largest cultural policy conference, bringing together ministers, cultural leaders, civil society, and youth to shape the global cultural agenda.

Organizer & Venue - The UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (MONDIACULT 2025) is organized by UNESCO and hosted by Spain in Barcelona.

Objective - To establish culture as a stand-alone goal in the post-2030 UN development agenda, recognizing its role as a unifying force and driver of sustainable development.

Priority Themes

1. **Cultural Rights** - ensuring universal access and protection.
2. **Digital Technologies in Culture** - leveraging innovation for cultural growth.
3. **Culture and Education** - fostering values and creativity.
4. **Economy of Culture** - strengthening creative industries.
5. **Culture and Climate Action** - linking heritage with sustainability.
6. **Culture, Heritage and Crisis** - safeguarding culture in conflict and disasters.

Focus Areas

Culture for Peace - advancing dialogue and harmony.

Artificial Intelligence and Culture - ethical integration of AI in cultural domains.

Significance for India - India chaired the Asia-Pacific Group during the Ministerial Plenary, reflecting its leadership in cultural diplomacy. India reaffirmed culture as a cornerstone of inclusive and sustainable development.

2. Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP)

Recently, NASA launched the Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP) to study the Sun's solar wind and the heliosphere's boundary.

About Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP)

IMAP is a space mission designed to explore the outer boundaries of the heliosphere and investigate how it interacts with the local galactic environment. The heliosphere is the protective bubble created by the solar wind around our solar system.

Launch Vehicle - Falcon 9 with a Spacecraft Mass of 900Kg.

Scientific Components - IMAP carries 10 scientific instruments to study solar wind, energetic particles, interstellar dust, and magnetic fields.

Energetic neutral-atom detectors - Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP) which is equipped to study both charged and neutral particles.

IMAP-Lo - Low Energy Neutral Atom Imager

IMAP-Hi - High Energy Neutral Atom Imager

IMAP-Ultra - Ultra High Energy Neutral Atom Imager

Charged particle detectors - High-energy Ion Telescope (HIT), Solar Wind Electron (SWE), Solar Wind and Pickup Ion Instrument (SWAPI), Compact Dual Ion Composition Experiment (CoDICE) Magnetometer (MAG), Global Solar Wind Structure (GLOWS), Interstellar Dust Experiment (IDEX)

Objective - Map the heliosphere's boundary and chart interstellar particle interactions. Investigate energization of charged particles from the Sun. Monitor real-time solar wind and energetic particles to forecast space weather hazards near Earth. Provide critical data for designing safer spacecraft for future human exploration.

Significance - Enhances understanding of how the heliosphere shields the solar system from cosmic radiation, ensuring planetary habitability. Improves forecasting of space weather, protecting satellites,

power grids, communication networks, and astronauts. Offers insights into fundamental astrophysical processes and the dynamics of other stellar systems' protective bubbles. Contributes to planning safer routes and radiation shielding for future human space missions beyond Earth.

3. India-Bhutan Cross-Border Railway Project

Recently, India announced two cross-border railway projects connecting Bhutan with Assam and West Bengal, costing a total of Rs 4,033 crore.

About the Cross-Border Railway Project

Project Details – The projects include a 69-km Kokrajhar (Assam)–Gelephu (Bhutan) line costing Rs 3,456 crore and a 20-km Banarhat (West Bengal)–Samtse (Bhutan) line costing Rs 577 crore.

Infrastructure –

Kokrajhar–Gelephu line will have six stations, 29 major bridges, 65 minor bridges, two goodsheds, one flyover, and 39 underpasses

Banarhat–Samtse line will include two stations, one major bridge, 24 minor bridges, one overpass, and 37 underpasses.

Technical Features – Both lines will be fully electrified, equipped with modern trains such as Vande Bharat, advanced signalling systems, and trained Bhutanese personnel will assist in operations.

Significance – The projects will enhance passenger and goods movement, support economic development in Gelephu (Mindfulness City) and Samtse (industrial hub), strengthen India-Bhutan trade, and provide employment opportunities for local populations.

4. Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh represented India at the 2nd FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation in Rome, 2025.

About the Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation

Introduction – The FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation provides a multilateral platform for knowledge exchange, cooperation, and sustainable solutions for livestock systems.

Organised by – Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), headquartered in Rome, Italy.

2025 Conference – The second edition was held in September 2025, bringing together ministers, experts, and stakeholders to deliberate on inclusive, climate-resilient livestock policies. India and Ireland jointly co-sponsored the resolution for the International Day of Milk, endorsed by the Conference.

India's Position in Dairy and Livestock

Farmer-Centric and Inclusive Growth – India highlighted farmer-centric initiatives driving livestock and dairy transformation.

Global Leadership in Dairy and Livestock – livestock provides sustainable livelihoods to nearly two-thirds of rural households in India, especially smallholders and women. Largest milk producer globally, contributing 25% of world output (239 million tonnes annually). Second-largest producer of eggs and leading exporter of buffalo meat. The livestock sector contributes 31% to agricultural GVA and 5.5% to the national economy, with a CAGR of 12.77%.

Policy Space and Global Cooperation – India, as First Vice Chair of FAO Sub-Committee on Livestock, reaffirmed its 80-year FAO partnership.

5. Venezuela

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro signalled readiness to declare a state of emergency after recent deadly US strikes on suspected Venezuelan drug boats in the southern Caribbean Sea. The declaration would empower Maduro to temporarily suspend basic rights, citing protection from perceived US aggression and safeguarding national sovereignty.

About Venezuela

Venezuela is located on the northern edge of South America, positioned in the Northern and Western hemispheres with capital at Caracas.

Borders – It shares land borders with Brazil to the south, Guyana to the east, and Colombia to the west

and southwest, and maritime boundaries with several Caribbean nations.

Geography - It has four major regions - The Maracaibo Lowlands (hot and dry), the Andes Mountains and northern highlands (cooler, temperate), the central Orinoco plains (warm, low-elevation), and the Guiana Highlands (humid, jungle-tropical).

Water Bodies - The Orinoco River is the longest with over 2,000 tributaries. Major lakes include Lake Maracaibo and Lake Guri. The Andes Mountains Angel Falls (world's highest waterfall) is located in the Guiana Highlands

Highest Point - Pico Bolívar (4,979 m) in the northern Mountains.

Coastlines - Lies along the Caribbean Sea to the north and the North Atlantic Ocean to the northeast. Important coastal features include the Gulf of Venezuela, the Paraguaná Peninsula, and the Orinoco River Delta on the Atlantic side.