



## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### Estonia Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage

Estonia's parliament **approved a law to legalize [same-sex marriage](#), becoming the first central European country to do so.** This move sets Estonia apart from its neighbors in the region, **where same-sex marriage remains illegal.**

Marriage between same-sex couples is legally performed and recognised in 34 other countries. Of these 34, **23 legalised same sex couples to marry through legislation, while 10 through court decisions.** Netherlands was the **first ever nation to legalise same-sex marriage in the year 2001.**

The **Indian legal system currently does not recognize same-sex marriages**, and the country's laws define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. However, in November 2018, the **Supreme Court decriminalised homosexuality by striking off parts of [Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#).**

Read more: [Same-sex marriage](#)

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### Integrated Simulator Complex 'Dhruv'

Recently, India's Defense Minister, inaugurated the **Integrated Simulator Complex (ISC) 'Dhruv' at the [Southern Naval Command in Kochi](#).** This cutting-edge facility is equipped with **state-of-the-art simulators developed indigenously** and is set to revolutionise practical training in the Indian Navy.

The simulators housed within the ISC 'Dhruv' will provide **real-time experiences in navigation, fleet operations, and naval tactics, greatly enhancing the training process.** Notably, these simulators will **also be utilised to train personnel from friendly countries, strengthening defence cooperation.**

Among the simulators showcased, the **Multi-Station Handling Simulator (MSSHS), Air Direction and Helicopter Control Simulator (ADHCS), and Astronavigation Dome** garnered attention. The **[ship handling](#) simulators, exported to 18 countries, highlight India's prowess in simulator manufacturing, while the Astronavigation Dome, a first-of-its-kind in the Indian Navy, showcases the nation's innovative capabilities.**

Read more: [Indian Navy](#)

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### US Senate Proposes 'NATO Plus Five' Defence Status for India

Recently, in a significant move coinciding with Prime Minister of India's visit to Washington, the **co-chairs of the U.S. Senate** announced their plan to introduce legislation granting India **'NATO plus five'** defence status. This arrangement currently includes the US, its NATO partners, and **five countries: Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, and Israel.** Aims to enhance defence ties and **facilitate the transfer of defence equipment.** However, India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, had already rejected this framework, stating that it did not apply to India. US defended the proposal, emphasizing the importance of increasing defence trade between the US and India to **bolster India's defence capabilities**, particularly in the face of the **China threat.** The goal is to establish a

comprehensive partnership between the two nations.

**Read more:** [North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\)](#)

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## St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF)

The **26<sup>th</sup> edition of the [St. Petersburg International Economic Forum \(SPIEF\)](#)** showcased Russia's determination to maintain its **economy despite Western sanctions**. The **[war in Ukraine](#)** has **prompted Russia to seek alternative economic and geopolitical alliances**. This year's SPIEF was less international due to the absence of high-ranking delegates and CEOs from the West.

SPIEF is an **annual Russian business event** for the economic sector, which has been held in **St. Petersburg since 1997**, and under the Russian President since 2006. The Forum brings together the **leaders of major Russian and international companies**, heads of state, political leaders, experts, and civil society representatives to **discuss key issues on the global economic agenda** and to **exchange best practices** and expertise for **[sustainable development](#)**. The Forum also hosts an exhibition of investment and business projects and initiatives from various regions and sectors of Russia and other countries.

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