

UN Declares Famine in Gaza



Source: TH

The **United Nations** has officially **declared a famine in Gaza**, marking the **first famine in West Asia**, with over half a million people facing extreme hunger due to conflict and restricted access to food.

- **Famine:** The **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** defines Famine as a situation in which **at least one in five households has an extreme lack of food and face starvation and destitution**, resulting in extremely critical levels of acute malnutrition and death.
 - IPC Phase 5 is the highest phase of the **IPC Acute Food Insecurity scale**, and is attributed when an area has at least **20% of households, acute malnutrition in at least 30% of children under five**, and mortality of at least two per 10,000 people daily.
- **Cause:** Sharp escalation of Israel-Hamas conflict, massive displacement, and severe restriction of humanitarian and commercial food supplies.

Gaza Strip

- The Gaza Strip is a coastal territory in **West Asia**, approximately 41 km long and 10 km-wide territory, situated **northeast of the Sinai Peninsula**.
- It borders **Israel to the north and east, Egypt to the southwest**, and the **Mediterranean Sea to the west**.
- The Gaza Strip remains a strategically important and densely populated enclave, central to the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**, with ongoing humanitarian, political, and security challenges.



[Read more: UNSC Resolution: Ceasefire in Gaza](#)

Vaquita Porpoise

Source: DTE

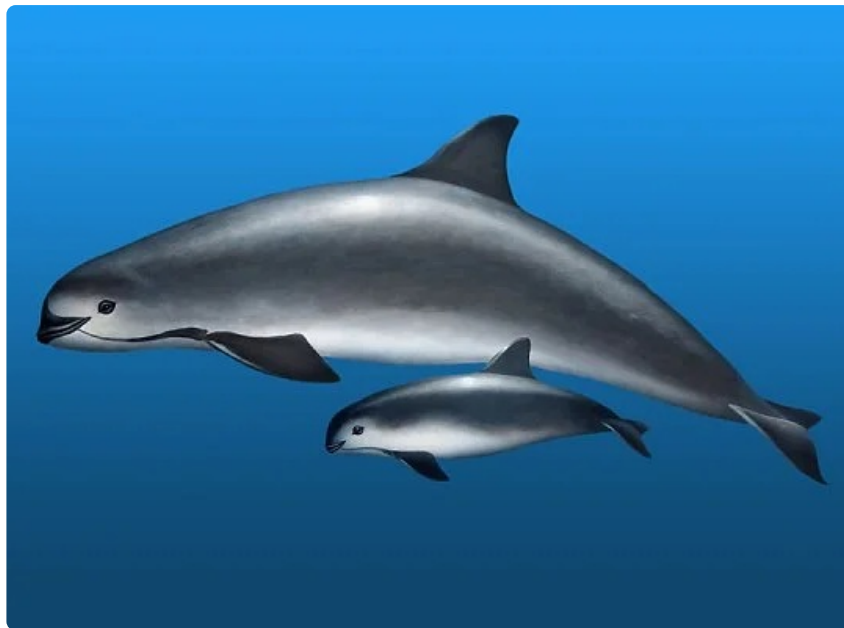
A new report has highlighted that only about 10 **vaquita porpoise**, the world's **rarest marine mammal**, remain in the **Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez), Mexico**.

- Their numbers have plummeted due to **entanglement in illegal gillnets** used for catching **totoaba** (an endangered fish prized for its swim bladder).

Vaquita Porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*)

- **About:** The **vaquita porpoise** (little cow in Spanish), is the **world's most endangered marine mammal** discovered in 1958.

- **Porpoises** are the **smallest members** of the **cetacean family** (whales, dolphins, porpoises) and are **distant relatives of dolphins**, diverging around 15 million years ago.
- **Habitat: Marine** , restricted to the **northern Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez), Mexico** , mostly in shallow waters up to **50 m deep**.
- **Physical Characteristics:** Vaquitas have **dark rings around the eyes** , dark patches on lips stretching to the fins. Newborns are darker with a gray fringe.
 - Their large dorsal fin helps release body heat in warm waters.
- **Behavior: Shy** and usually stay **near the shore** . They **avoid boats** and are mostly **solitary or in very small groups** , unlike other **cetaceans** that travel in large pods.
- **Threats: Bycatch in illegal gillnets** set for the vulnerable **totoaba fish** .
- **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered.
 - **CITES:** Appendix I



Read More: Vaquita Porpoise

PM SVANidhi 2.0

Source: PIB

The Union Cabinet has approved the **restructuring and extension** of the **Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme** , until **31 st March 2030** with an aim to benefit 1.15 crore street vendors, including 50 lakh new beneficiaries.

- **PM SVANidhi Scheme: Launched by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2020. It aims to support street vendors affected by the Covid-19 pandemic by providing working capital loans to restart their businesses and promoting financial inclusion and digital transactions.**
 - PM SVANidhi offers **interest subsidy on timely loan repayment, cashback for digital transactions** , and eligibility for enhanced next tranche of loans.
 - ' **SVANidhi se Samridhhi** ' component under PM SVANidhi provides social security benefits to street vendors.
 - As of July 2025, over 96 lakh loans worth Rs 13,797 crore were disbursed to **68 lakh street vendors**.
 - The scheme won the **Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration (2023)** for innovation and the **Silver Award for Government Process Re-engineering (2022)** for digital transformation.
- **PM SVANidhi 2.0: Implementation of the scheme would be the joint responsibility of MoHUA and Department of Financial Services (DFS) .**
 - Enhanced loan amounts **across first and second tranches, providing greater working capital.**
 - Provides **UPI-linked RuPay Credit Card** for vendors who have repaid the second loan, ensuring quick access to credit for business or personal needs.
 - **Expanded coverage** beyond statutory towns to census towns and peri-urban areas in a graded manner.
 - '**SVANidhi se Samridhhi**' initiative will be strengthened further through monthly Lok Kalyan Melas to ensure beneficiaries access multiple government schemes.
 - The scheme focuses on building **vendors' capacity in entrepreneurship, digital skills, and food safety** in partnership with **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.**

Read more: PM SVANidhi Scheme

UN Charts New Path for Global AI Governance

Source: DTE

The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has launched the **Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and the **Global Dialogue on AI Governance** , marking a key step to harness AI benefits while managing its risks.

- **Global Dialogue on AI Governance:** It will provide an **inclusive platform within the United Nations** for states and stakeholders to discuss the critical issues concerning AI facing humanity today.
- **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI:** It acts as a bridge between AI research and policymaking. Provides rigorous, independent scientific assessments to anticipate challenges and guide global AI regulation.
 - It will present its annual reports at the **Global Dialogue on AI Governance in 2026 (Geneva)** and **2027 (New York)** .

AI Governance in India

- India currently lacks a dedicated AI law. It is regulated through existing frameworks like the **Information Technology Act of 2000** (cybercrimes, intermediary liability), **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** (data privacy), and **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) laws** (AI-generated works).
- NITI Aayog's **National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence, 2018** guides AI Research and Development in healthcare, agriculture, education, smart cities, and mobility, while its **Principles for Responsible AI (2021)** address **ethical AI deployment**.
- India is active in global AI forums. It hosted the **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit** in 2023, co-chaired the **AI Action Summit** with France in 2025, and will host the **AI Impact Summit in 2026**.

Read more: AI in Public Service Delivery , AI and India's Legal Landscape