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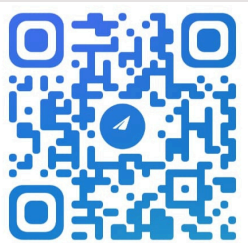
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INDIAN POLITY

1.DCS EMPOWERED TO APPOINT SPECIAL COUNSELS FOR COMPLICATED LEGAL CASES



- The state government has empowered District Commissioners (DCs) to appoint special counsels, outside the existing team of government pleaders/public prosecutors, to represent the government in critical and complicated legal cases.
- This move has been necessitated by the increasing number of cases where DCs are made parties in civil and criminal litigations, and where improper conduct of cases has led to adverse orders against the government.
- In some instances, the engagement of special counsels has been deemed essential for safeguarding greater government interest.
- Through a notification issued by the Judicial Department, the government has bestowed powers on DCs to appoint special counsels in critical and complicated legal cases.
- After examining all pros and cons, and superseding the earlier notification, new guidelines have been laid down for the engagement/appointment of Special Counsels/Special Government Pleaders/Special Public Prosecutors (SPP) by the DCs.
- These guidelines apply only to sensitive, complex cases or cases of significant public interest (civil or criminal) requiring specialised legal expertise, as deemed necessary by the DC within their jurisdiction.
- The DC will be responsible for initiating the process, appointing the special counsel, and forwarding the justification to the government for information.
- The District Prosecution Officer (DPO)/Government Pleader will assess legal complexity and prepare case summaries.
- The Home & Political Department will keep the appointment notification issued by the DC for official records.
- The Judicial Department will also maintain the appointment notification issued by the DC for official records.
- The Legal Cell (Office of the District Commissioner) will maintain all relevant case records and correspondence related to such appointments.
- All Special Public Prosecutors/Special Government Pleaders/Special Counsels must handle the entrusted cases in consultation with the concerned DC.

- All case records handled by special appointees are to be treated as confidential and may only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

2.PM NARENDRA MODI ON SACRED RELICS OF LORD BUDDHA SENT TO VIETNAM



- PM Modi addressed various themes including **women's empowerment**, **environmental consciousness**, **International Yoga Day**, and **India-Vietnam spiritual ties**.
- He expressed deep appreciation for the **heartfelt messages from Vietnam** thanking India for enabling the *darshan* of the **sacred relics of Lord Buddha**, taken from **Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh** to Vietnam on May 2.
- He described the **spiritual connection** between India and Vietnam as "heartwarming," noting the emotional gratitude expressed by the Vietnamese people.
- PM Modi highlighted increasing **environmental awareness** in the country, lauding both individual and collective efforts to protect nature.
- He shared the inspiring example of **Ramesh Kharmale from Pune**, who created small ponds, planted hundreds of trees, and is building an **Oxygen Park**, leading to the return of birds and wildlife.
- In **Ahmedabad**, he praised the '**Mission for Million Trees**' campaign by the municipal corporation, with a special initiative called '**Sindoor Van**', where **Sindoor trees are planted in memory of the martyrs of Operation Sindoor**.
- He encouraged public participation in the '**Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam**' campaign, which promotes tree planting across India, urging citizens to "plant trees, save water, serve the earth".
- The Prime Minister applauded **Patoda village in Maharashtra** for becoming a **carbon-neutral village panchayat**, with practices like:
 - No garbage thrown outside homes
 - Door-to-door waste collection
 - Wastewater treatment before it enters rivers
- PM Modi celebrated the recognition of **Meghalaya's traditional Eri silk**, which recently received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- He highlighted **women-led economic empowerment**:

- In **Telangana** and **Karnataka**, grassroots women's initiatives are transforming local economies.
- In **Kalaburgi, Karnataka**, women entrepreneurs have branded traditional **jowar rotis**. These rotis are now sold in **Bengaluru** and online, increasing incomes and enhancing women's empowerment.

3.AMBITIOUS PLAN TO CONNECT SHILLONG WITH REST OF INDIA BY NEW HIGHWAY



- The **Government of India** has launched an ambitious plan to **connect Shillong more directly with the Indian mainland** by constructing a **new four-lane highway through Dhubri in Assam**.
- The **National Highway Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL)** is currently constructing a **four-lane bridge over the River Brahmaputra** connecting **Dhubri (Assam)** and **Phulbari (Meghalaya)**.
- A new **four-lane highway** is proposed to be constructed from the **Phulbari point to Shillong**, the capital of Meghalaya.
- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** has entrusted **NHIDCL** with preparing a **feasibility study and Detailed Project Report (DPR)** for this highway project, covering the **Phulbari–Shillong stretch of NH 127B/NH 106**.
- NHIDCL has issued **tenders** for hiring **consultancy services** to carry out the feasibility study and DPR preparation.
- The **tentative length of the proposed highway** from Phulbari to Shillong is **303 km**.
- NHIDCL has set a **target of 6 months** for completing the **feasibility study and DPR** from the date the consultant is appointed.
- The **Dhubri–Phulbari bridge**, currently under construction, is part of the project and will **connect travellers from the Indian mainland directly to Shillong** without passing through Guwahati.
- Once completed, **travellers from outside the Northeast** can take a diversion at **Dhubri**, cross the **Dhubri–Phulbari bridge**, and proceed via **NH 127B/NH 106** directly to Shillong.
- The **Dhubri–Phulbari bridge** spans **19.28 km**, including approach roads, and is being constructed as a **four-lane bridge**.

4.INDIA'S DIGITAL GROWTH AMONG FASTEST IN WORLD: PM



- India's digital growth is among the fastest in the world, with the aim to make India a leader in the digital domain, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- In 2014, India had around 25 crore internet connections; today, that number has grown to over 97 crore.
- Over 42 lakh km of optical fibre cable (OFC), equivalent to 11 times the distance between Earth and the Moon, connects even the most remote villages.
- India's 5G rollout is among the fastest in the world, with 4.81 lakh base stations installed in just two years.
- High-speed internet now reaches urban hubs and forward military posts alike, including Galwan, Siachen, and Ladakh.
- India Stack, the country's digital backbone, has enabled platforms like UPI, which handles over 100 billion transactions annually.
- Around half of all real-time digital transactions in the world now happen in India.
- ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) is a revolutionary platform connecting a vast market of buyers and sellers seamlessly.
- GeM (Government E-Marketplace) enables the common man to sell goods and services to all arms of the government, empowering citizens and saving government expenditure.
- India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)—from Aadhaar, CoWIN, DigiLocker, and FASTag to PM-WANI and One Nation One Subscription—is now being studied and adopted globally.
- CoWIN enabled the world's largest vaccination drive, issuing 220 crore QR-verifiable certificates.
- DigiLocker, with 54 crore users, hosts 775 crore documents securely and seamlessly.
- India ranks among the top three startup ecosystems in the world, with over 1.8 lakh startups.
- The startup boom signifies more than a movement—it marks a tech renaissance.
- India is excelling in AI skill penetration and talent concentration among youth.

- Through the \$1.2 billion India AI Mission, India has enabled access to 34,000 GPUs at less than \$1 per GPU hour, offering globally unmatched affordability.
- India is now not just the most affordable internet economy, but also the most affordable compute destination.

5. CABINET APPROVES RS 1.07 LAKH CR ELI SCHEME TO CREATE 3.5 CR JOBS IN 2 YEARS



- The Central government approved an Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme with an outlay of ₹1.07 lakh crore to create 3.5 crore jobs over the next two years through social security schemes run by EPFO.
- The scheme aims to support job generation, enhance employability, and expand social security across all sectors, with a special focus on the manufacturing sector.
- Approved by the Union Cabinet in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the scheme was announced as part of the Union Budget 2024-25.
- It is one of five schemes launched to facilitate employment, skilling, and related opportunities for 4.1 crore youth, with a total outlay of ₹2 lakh crore.
- The ELI scheme will provide incentives to both employees and employers to promote job creation.
- It targets the creation of over 3.5 crore jobs between August 1, 2025, and July 31, 2027.
- Of these, 1.92 crore beneficiaries are expected to be first-time entrants into the workforce.
- **Part A – For Employees:**
 - Focuses on first-time employees registered with EPFO.
 - Offers a one-month wage (up to ₹15,000) in two instalments.
 - Employees with salaries up to ₹1 lakh are eligible.
 - First instalment is payable after 6 months of service, and the second after 12 months plus completion of a financial literacy programme.
- **Part B – For Employers:**
 - Aims to incentivise employers for generating additional employment, especially in the manufacturing sector.
 - Employers with less than 50 employees must hire at least 2 additional workers, and those with 50 or more must hire at least 5, on a sustained basis for at least 6 months.

- Incentives will be provided for employees with salaries up to ₹1 lakh/month.
- Incentive amount per additional employee per month:
 - ₹1,000 for wages up to ₹10,000
 - ₹2,000 for wages between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000
 - ₹3,000 for wages above ₹20,000 (up to ₹1 lakh)
- Employers will be incentivised for two years, with extended benefits for the 3rd and 4th years in the manufacturing sector.
- Part B is expected to incentivise additional employment creation for nearly 2.60 crore persons.

6. GOVT ISSUES DRAFT RULES FOR DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT:



- **The Digital Personal Data Protection Rules** drafted by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation while protecting citizens' rights, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.
- The government has issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act for public consultation till February 18.
- The minister said earlier there was only one template available to the world – the European data protection rule with high level of regulation, but Indian rules have attempted to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in innovation ecosystem developing among startups in the country.
- He said extensive consultation has been held with the industry and a digital office is being put in place for registration of complaints, their handling and adjudication.
- The minister said the final rules will be placed before Parliament in the monsoon session and all entities handling data digitally will get two years to adapt their system and comply with the law.
- **The Digital Personal Data Protection draft rules specify that a parent's verifiable consent will have to be obtained by social media or online platforms before children can create an account.** Parents' identity and age will have to be checked through voluntarily provided identity proof or virtual tokens.
- He said the penal provision will be implemented as per the Act and the rules prescribe the way to implement them. The Act has the provision to impose a penalty of up to Rs 250 crore on data fiduciaries.

7.PM NARENDRA MODI PAYS TRIBUTE TO REVERED AFRICAN LEADER KWAME NKRUMAH



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Nkrumah Memorial Park in Accra, Ghana, to pay tribute to Kwame Nkrumah, the founding President of Ghana and a prominent leader of the African independence movement.
- PM Modi was accompanied by Ghana's Vice President, Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, during the visit.
- He laid a floral wreath and observed a moment of silence in honour of Nkrumah's contributions to freedom, unity, and social justice.
- The gesture reflects India's deep respect for Ghana's historical legacy and underscores the strong and enduring India-Ghana friendship.
- Kwame Nkrumah led Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) to independence from Britain in 1957 and served as its President until 1966.
- Nkrumah also played a key role in establishing early diplomatic ties with India.
- India opened a representative office in Accra in 1953, before Ghana's independence, and established full diplomatic relations with Ghana in 1957.
- In his address to the Parliament of Ghana, PM Modi quoted Nkrumah: "I am not African because I was born in Africa. But because Africa was born in me," affirming India's deep emotional connection with Africa.
- During his historic visit, PM Modi was conferred with Ghana's highest civilian honour, the *Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana*, in recognition of his global leadership and contribution to strengthening bilateral ties.

8.KALADAN PROJECT TO BE READY BY 2027:

- Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal announced a series of initiatives to boost the waterways and maritime sector in the Northeast.
- The **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**, a strategic initiative under the India-Myanmar Friendship Treaty, is expected to be fully operational by **2027**.

- The **Sittwe Port in Myanmar**, part of the Kaladan project, has been swiftly executed, demonstrating India's commitment to regional connectivity.
- The government aims to **train 50,000 youth** in maritime skills over the next decade through the **Maritime Skill Development Centre (MSDC)** in Guwahati and a new **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** in Dibrugarh, to be built with an investment of **Rs 200 crore**.
- Over the past two years, the Ministry has undertaken **projects worth Rs 1,000 crore** in the inland waterways sector of the Northeast; **Rs 300 crore** worth of work is already completed, and the remaining **Rs 700 crore** is to be completed by **2025**.
- Major infrastructure projects include:
 - Permanent cargo terminals at **Pandu, Jogighopa, Dhubri, Bogibeel, Karimganj, and Badarpur**
 - Round-the-year dedicated **dredging operations**
 - A new **approach road to Pandu Port**
 - **Heritage restoration in Dibrugarh**
 - Tourist jetties worth **Rs 299 crore**
 - Skill development centres in Guwahati and Dibrugarh
- A **Germany-based company** will deploy **100 barges** on National Waterways 2 and 16 by **2025**.
- To maintain year-round navigability, **10 amphibian and cutter section dredgers** will be deployed at a cost of **Rs 610 crore**.
- **85 community jetties** will be developed across the Northeast to improve local connectivity.
- For tourism and regional trade, **Rs 300 crore** will be invested in new tourism and cargo jetties at **Silghat, Neamati, Biswanath Ghat, and Guijan**.
- **Water Metro projects** are planned for **Guwahati, Tezpur, and Dibrugarh**, with feasibility studies completed.
- **Lighthouses with IMD weather centres** will be established at **Pandu, Tezpur, Biswanath, and Bogibeel**, with support from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

9.SC TAKES SUO MOTO NOTE OF ED SUMMONING LAWYERS FOR OFFERING LEGAL ADVICE



- The Supreme Court has taken suo moto cognisance of investigation agencies summoning lawyers who provide legal

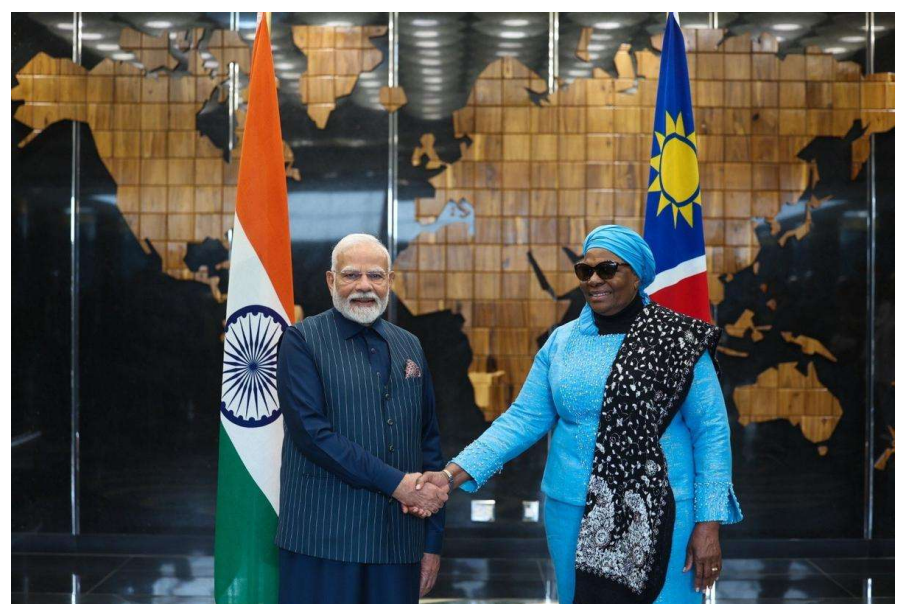
advice or represent clients, aiming to assess the legality of such actions.

- A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and NV Anjaria will hear the matter on July 14, after the summer break.
- The move follows the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoning senior lawyers Arvind Datar and Pratap Venugopal.
- In response, the ED issued a circular on June 20 instructing its officers not to summon advocates in money laundering cases involving their clients, except with prior approval from the agency's Director.
- The ED's directive cites Section 132 of the Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023, which provides protections against compelling advocates to disclose client-related information.
- If an exception is made under the proviso to Section 132 of BSA, prior approval from the ED Director is mandatory before issuing summons to a lawyer.
- The lawyers had offered legal advice to Care Health Insurance Ltd regarding an employee stock ownership plan involving Rashmi Saluja, former Chairperson of Religare Enterprises.
- The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA) condemned the ED's actions, calling them a "disturbing trend" that threatened the independence of the legal profession.
- They urged the Chief Justice of India to intervene, citing serious implications for the profession and the justice system.
- On June 25, a separate bench of Justices KV Viswanathan and N Kotiswar Singh observed that the legal profession is an integral part of justice delivery and summoning lawyers undermines their autonomy.
- The bench highlighted that such practices pose a "direct threat" to the independence of the justice system.
- The Court framed two key legal questions:
 - Can a lawyer who is only advising a client be summoned directly by police or investigating agencies?
 - If the agency believes the lawyer has a role beyond legal advice, should there be judicial oversight before summoning?
- The Court noted that the issue affects the broader administration of justice and lawyers' ability to carry out their professional duties without fear.
- It stressed the need for a comprehensive resolution to protect both the legal profession and judicial independence.

10.PM MODI HOLDS TALKS WITH NAMIBIA PRESIDENT NANDI-NDAITWAH

- Namibia will roll out India's **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** system later this year, following talks between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**.
- The rollout is based on a **technology licensing agreement** signed in **April 2023** between **NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India)** and the **Bank of Namibia**.

- The Modi-Ndaitwah meeting focused on enhancing cooperation in **digital technology, defence, security, agriculture, healthcare, education, and critical minerals**.
- Following the meeting, India and Namibia signed four agreements, including:
 - Cooperation in **health and medicine**
 - Establishment of an **Entrepreneurship Development Centre**
 - Namibia's joining of the **CDRI (Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure)**
 - Namibia's joining of the **Global Biofuels Alliance**
- **CDRI** is a global initiative to enhance infrastructure resilience against climate and disaster risks, involving governments, international organizations, and the private sector.
- **Modi expressed gratitude** for Namibia's assistance in **Project Cheetah**, which helped India reintroduce cheetahs into its ecosystem.
- Both sides discussed increasing cooperation in **trade, energy, and petrochemicals**.
- This marks **Modi's first visit to Namibia**, and the **third-ever** by an Indian Prime Minister.
- Modi paid tribute to **Namibia's founding father Sam Nujoma** at the **Heroes' Acre memorial**, praising him as a visionary who led the country to independence in 1990.
- Prime Minister Modi described Namibia as a "**valued and trusted partner**" in Africa.
- He was received with a **ceremonial welcome, guard of honour, and a 21-gun salute** at the State House.



11.PM MODI'S GLOBAL HONOURS TALLY CLIMBS TO 27 AFTER NAMIBIA'S HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** was conferred with **Namibia's highest civilian honour, the Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis**, during his one-day state visit.
- The award, established in **1995**, is named after the **Welwitschia Mirabilis**, an ancient desert plant native to Namibia that symbolizes **resilience, longevity, and the enduring spirit** of the Namibian people.

- It recognizes **distinguished service and leadership** and reflects the deepening ties between India and Namibia.
- This is **PM Modi's 27th global honour**, the **fourth during his current five-nation tour**, and the **second in less than 24 hours**.
- Just a day earlier, Brazil had awarded PM Modi its **highest civilian honour**, the **Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross**.
- In **Trinidad & Tobago**, PM Modi became the **first foreign leader** to receive the **Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago**, the Caribbean nation's highest honour.
- Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister **Kamala Persad Bissessar** praised Modi's **global leadership, strong diaspora connections, and humanitarian contributions** during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On **July 2**, the first stop of his five-nation tour, PM Modi was awarded '**Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana**', Ghana's national honour, by President **John Dramani Mahama**, in recognition of his **distinguished statesmanship and global influence**.



12.ED UNEARTHS NAMES OF AGENTS, IMMIGRATION AGENCIES:



- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has recovered 30 original passports and identified the names of several agents and immigration agencies involved in the illegal "donkey route" racket for sending Indians abroad.
- This operation is part of an investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), initiated after the deportation of several Indians from the United States in February.
- The term "donkey route" refers to the arduous and illegal journey migrants undertake—often involving multiple countries—to enter a foreign nation, especially the US.

- ED conducted searches in several cities of Punjab (Amritsar, Sangrur, Patiala, Moga) and Haryana (Ambala, Kurukshetra, Karnal).
- The case is based on FIRs registered by the police in Haryana and Punjab regarding human trafficking incidents.
- It was found that many individuals were misled by travel agents with false promises of legal immigration to the US.
- Instead, they were trafficked through illegal routes involving multiple borders, aided by human trafficking conduits known as "donkers" and mafia networks.
- The trafficked individuals were often put in distressing and threatening situations to extort additional money from their families.
- The ED discovered 30 original passports in possession of one of the agents involved in these illegal activities.
- Substantial evidence was also uncovered showing large-scale cash and hawala transactions involving crores of rupees made by duping clients.
- Several names of agents and immigration firms operating this illegal racket on a large scale have been identified by the ED.

13.SMALL TEA GROWERS MOVE CENTRE FOR PRICE PROTECTION SCHEME



- Underlining the persistent challenges, including poor price realization, unregulated market intermediaries, and limited policy safeguards faced by small tea growers, the Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Associations (CISTA) has moved the Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal seeking introduction of a price protection scheme.
- The flawed price sharing formula (PSF) has failed to ensure fair and transparent price realization for small tea gardens (STG), the apex body of small growers associations of 12 states said, advocating a comprehensive study to determine an equitable price-sharing ratio between factories and STGs.
- The confederation sought replacement of the concept of minimum benchmark price (MBP) with a pricing mechanism linked to the total sales value (auction and private sales), ensuring that growers receive a fair and remunerative price.
- It also demanded adoption of the Sri Lanka model wherein surplus earnings over auction averages are shared equally between factories and growers, incentivizing quality leaf production.
- It said that following the initiative directing cent per cent auction of dust teas, the proportion of dust-grade teas offered

through auctions increased from 41 per cent to 45 per cent of total production post-notification.

- The average price payable by factories to small tea growers (as per the PSF) rose from Rs 17.59 per kg to Rs 23.67 per kg, reflecting a significant increase of Rs 6.
- These early outcomes signal a positive shift in market dynamics—improved transparency, fairer pricing mechanisms, and a stronger institutional framework for PSF implementation—it said.
- President of the confederation Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty said while the present PSF is modelled on the Sri Lankan system, there is limited monitoring or enforcement in India, allowing persistent non-compliance by many bought leaf factories (BLF).
- Several factors continue to erode STG confidence in the PSF mechanism like rising input costs which are not reflected in the green leaf price, seasonal price fluctuations that are not aligned with consistent production costs, lack of factory-wise realisation data which prevents accurate price calculation, non-compliance by BLFs with mandated auction sale percentages and non-transparent private sales, making it difficult to verify actual sale realisations—it said.
- A well-designed price protection scheme will not only ensure fair and stable prices but also catalyze a shift towards direct market access, higher quality compliance, and sustainable income generation, it said.

14.DELHI GOVT TO RELEASE ALL DOCUMENTS RELATED TO MISA USED DURING EMERGENCY



- In a first, the Delhi government will make public all documents related to the controversial Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), which was extensively used against Opposition leaders and activists during the Emergency.
- According to government sources, all available MISA-related files have been sent to the Home department for final approval. Once the process is completed, the documents will be digitised and made accessible to the public.
- The idea is to preserve and share this important chapter of India's political history. Efforts are being made to ensure the process is completed in a time-bound manner.
- They said the documents related to MISA were retrieved during the digitisation process of the other four crore documents, adding that these include details and reports of

activists and people who were arrested during the Emergency period.

- The move comes amid growing interest in historical records related to the Emergency, following the completion of its 50 years, especially those concerning arrests made under MISA.
- During the Emergency between 1975 and 1977, many Opposition leaders, including Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, Atal Behari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani, were detained under MISA.
- According to the Shah Commission of Inquiry, more than 35,000 people were held under preventive detention without trial during this time.
- MISA was enacted by the then Indira Gandhi government in 1971 to address issues of national security and internal disturbances.
- However, the law drew widespread criticism for its provisions allowing preventive detention without charge or trial.
- During the 21-month Emergency from June 25, 1975, to March 21, 1977, MISA became a key tool for suppressing dissent, with thousands detained, including journalists, activists, students and political opponents.
- The Act was finally repealed in 1978 when the Janata Party formed its government.

15.JAISHANKAR 'DELIGHTED' AS MARATHA MILITARY LANDSCAPES GET UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE TAG



- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** expressed happiness after the “**Maratha Military Landscapes of India**” were officially **inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List**.
- These landscapes were developed between the **17th and 19th centuries** and feature **extraordinary fortification systems** that reflect the **strategic brilliance** of the **Maratha defence architecture**.
- The inscription was approved at the **47th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris**, marking it as **India's 44th World Heritage Site**.
- The nomination was India's **official entry for the 2024–25 cycle** and was submitted for consideration in **January 2024**.

- The decision followed an **eighteen-month evaluation process** involving **technical meetings**, site assessments, and a **review by ICOMOS** (International Council on Monuments and Sites).
- The recognition highlights **India's enduring cultural legacy**, architectural diversity, regional identity, and historical continuity.

16.CITIZENS MUST KNOW VALUE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH: SC

- The Supreme Court emphasized that citizens must understand the value of the right to freedom of speech and expression and exercise self-restraint.
- It was hearing the plea of Wazahat Khan, who faced FIRs in multiple states, including West Bengal, for posting content against a Hindu deity on platform X.
- A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and KV Viswanathan remarked that one of the fundamental duties is to uphold the unity and integrity of India, which is being violated.
- The court observed that divisive tendencies, especially on social media, must be curbed.
- While acknowledging freedom of speech and expression as a fundamental right, the bench said there is a lack of self-restraint and self-regulation among citizens.
- The court stated that if citizens wish to enjoy this fundamental right, they must regulate themselves and exercise self-restraint.
- The court reiterated that reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) of the Constitution on freedom of speech and expression are valid and rightly placed.
- It expressed concern that cases arising from the misuse of free speech are clogging the legal system.
- The bench questioned why citizens do not show self-restraint, particularly on social media platforms.
- Justice Nagarathna noted that having an opinion is acceptable, but expressing it in an abusive manner crosses a line.
- She further emphasized that such speech may not always fall under hate speech legally, but it damages fraternity among citizens.
- She concluded that promoting fraternity among citizens would help reduce hate-driven expression.

17.CABINET RESOLUTION TO HAIL SHUBHANSHU SHUKLA'S SPACE ODYSSEY



- Union Cabinet passed a resolution congratulating Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla for successfully completing his 18-day mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS).
- The Cabinet meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The resolution described the mission as a moment of pride, glory, and joy for the entire nation.
- Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is an Indian Air Force officer and served as the mission pilot of the private Axiom-4 mission.
- The Axiom-4 mission was launched on June 25; the astronauts spent 20 days in space, including 18 days aboard the ISS.
- Shukla became the first Indian to travel to the ISS.
- The resolution stated that the mission marks a new chapter in India's space programme and represents the aspirations of a rising India.
- The Cabinet affirmed that the mission would inspire youth, ignite scientific temper, and promote innovation.
- It also said the achievement would energise the national resolve to build a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047.
- The mission enhances India's global standing in space exploration.
- The Cabinet praised the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the scientific community for enabling the achievement.
- Shukla collaborated with the Axiom-4 crew and Expedition 73 members, showcasing India's growing role in international space cooperation.
- He conducted experiments in microgravity on muscle regeneration, algal and microbial growth, crop viability, microbial survivability, cognitive performance, and cyanobacteria behaviour.

18.INDIA-EFTA TRADE PACT TO COME INTO EFFECT FROM OCT 1: GOYAL

- Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal announced that the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) will officially take effect on October 1.

- The agreement is expected to help generate 1 million direct jobs in India.
- EFTA consists of four countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.
- The TEPA, signed on March 10, 2024, is anticipated to boost foreign direct investment (FDI) and enhance trade and economic cooperation across multiple sectors.
- EFTA countries have pledged an investment of \$100 billion, which will support job creation and economic development in India.
- A dedicated India-EFTA Desk has been launched to facilitate trade, investments, and partnerships. It will serve as a 'single-window platform' for both governments and private entities.
- The pact includes an initial \$50 billion in FDI over the first 10 years, followed by another \$50 billion over the next 5 years.
- TEPA is considered one of India's most comprehensive trade agreements and is expected to open high-value European markets for Indian exporters, while also attracting capital, technology, and employment opportunities.
- EFTA has offered 92.2% of its tariff lines, which covers 99.6% of India's exports to the region.
- Their market access offer includes 100% coverage of non-agricultural goods and tariff concessions on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP).
- India is offering 82.7% of its tariff lines, which covers 95.3% of EFTA's exports—over 80% of which consist of gold imports.
- The effective import duty on gold will remain unchanged under the pact.
- Sensitivities around sectors covered by the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme—such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and processed food—have been considered.
- Items like dairy, soya, coal, and sensitive agricultural products have been excluded from the agreement.
- Indian consumers will benefit from access to high-quality Swiss products—such as watches, chocolates, biscuits, and clocks—at reduced prices, as India gradually eliminates customs duties on these goods over a 10-year period.

19.MANDAVIYA INTRODUCES SPORTS GOVERNANCE BILL



- Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya introduced the National Sports Governance Bill in the Lok Sabha.
- The Bill proposes the creation of a National Sports Board (NSB) to establish accountability and governance

mechanisms across all National Sports Federations (NSFs), including the BCCI.

- NSFs will be required to obtain recognition from the NSB to be eligible for central government funding.
- A key feature of the Bill is the establishment of a National Sports Tribunal with powers of a civil court to resolve disputes involving athletes and sports federations, including issues related to selection and elections.
- Decisions of the Tribunal can only be challenged in the Supreme Court.
- The Bill proposes a relaxation in the age cap for sports administrators, allowing individuals aged 70 to 75 to contest elections if permitted under the statutes of the relevant international body—unlike the current National Sports Code which caps the age at 70.
- All recognised national sports bodies will be brought under the purview of the Right to Information (RTI) Act.
- The BCCI, despite its opposition and lack of dependence on government funding, will be required to comply with the Bill once it becomes law, especially as cricket is now part of the Olympic movement (included in the 2028 Los Angeles Games).
- The NSB will include a Chairperson and members appointed by the central government from individuals with proven ability, integrity, and experience.
- Board members are expected to have expertise in areas such as public administration, sports governance, and sports law.
- Appointments to the NSB will be made based on recommendations from a search-cum-selection committee.
- The selection committee will consist of the Cabinet Secretary or Secretary (Sports) as Chairperson, the Director General of the Sports Authority of India, two sports administrators who have served in key positions in NSFs, and one eminent sportsperson who is a recipient of the Dronacharya, Khel Ratna, or Arjuna Award.



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ECONOMICS

20.GST @8: PWC FOR PETRO-PRODUCTS' INCLUSION, LOWERING TAX SLABS



- A **PwC India report** has recommended key reforms for the **GST Council**, which includes Finance Ministers from the Centre and States.
- The suggestions include:
 - **Simplifying compliance**
 - **Reducing tax slabs** from four to three
 - **Bringing petroleum products under GST** to broaden the tax base
- **GST (Goods and Services Tax)** was launched on **July 1, 2017**, replacing **17 local taxes and 13 cesses** with a simplified five-tier tax system.
- In the **8 years since its rollout**, average monthly GST collections have:
 - Risen from **Rs 90,000 crore in 2017–18**
 - To **Rs 1.84 lakh crore in 2024–25**
 - Reached a **record high of Rs 2.37 lakh crore in April 2025**
- The **current GST structure** includes **four slabs: 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%**
 - **Luxury and demerit goods** are taxed at **28%**
 - **Essential items and packaged foods** fall under the **5% slab**
- PwC has suggested shifting to a **3-tier GST structure** to:
 - **Reduce interpretational disputes**
 - **Improve tax certainty**
 - **Simplify compliance**
- A **comprehensive review of GST rates** is needed to address the **inverted tax structure**, particularly in sectors like:
 - **Electric vehicles**
 - **Aviation**
 - **E-commerce**
- The report emphasized the need to **include petroleum products under GST**, starting with **Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF)**, to avoid the **cascading effect** and **cash flow issues** in the industry.

- **Petrol, diesel, natural gas**, and other petroleum products are **currently outside the GST regime**, subject instead to **central excise duty** and **state VAT**.
- These products can only be brought under GST through a **specific recommendation by the GST Council**.

21.PM GATI SHAKTI MASTER PLAN CUTS INDIA'S LOGISTICS COSTS BY 5 PC OF GDP:



- India's logistics costs have reduced to between **7.8–8.9% of GDP**, significantly lower than earlier estimates of **13–14%**, as per studies by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).
- This reduction reflects the impact and success of the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan** for infrastructure development.
- Despite the improvement, India's logistics costs still remain above global benchmarks of **6–8%** observed in developed economies.
- India's position is now more favourable for attaining world-class logistics efficiency through continued infrastructure coordination.
- The country has improved its rank in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index, moving from **44th to 38th** in 2023, indicating forward momentum.
- The **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan** is India's most ambitious initiative for coordinated infrastructure development, reshaping the connectivity and economic development model.
- The report, titled '*Gati Se Pragati*', notes that while the programme has built strong institutional frameworks and achieved early coordination successes, there is still much potential for further transformation.
- The initiative operates through the "seven engines" framework, which includes roads, railways, airports, ports, waterways, mass transit, and logistics infrastructure.
- Each of these seven sectors plays a vital role in enhancing India's overall connectivity ecosystem.
- The plan's ambitious targets include expanding national highways to **200,000 km**, increasing railway freight capacity

to 1,600 million tonnes, establishing 200–220 new airports, and ensuring full multimodal integration.

- These goals are aligned with India's broader economic strategy and are aimed at overcoming historic infrastructure bottlenecks.
- However, the report also highlights significant implementation challenges such as funding gaps, regulatory complexities, delays in land acquisition, and coordination issues between Central and State governments.

22. WORLD BANK LOAN TO BOOST STATE'S EDUCATION SECTOR



- The Assam Cabinet has approved availing a ₹2,750 crore loan from the World Bank to improve the State's education infrastructure.
- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stated that 90% of the loan will be repaid by the Central Government, and Assam will repay the remaining 10% (₹275 crore).
- The loan will be utilized to develop infrastructure in 400 schools and 1,733 Anganwadi Kendras across the State.
- These decisions were taken during a Cabinet meeting held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat complex at Paltan Bazar.
- The Cabinet also decided to start a training programme for unemployed youth in the State, where nurses, drivers, and IT professionals (computer operators) will be taught the Japanese language.

- The training will be conducted by three Japanese institutes approved by the Government of Japan.
- The cost of training per person is ₹3 lakh, with the Assam Government covering 50% and the rest to be borne by the trainees.
- According to the Chief Minister, a driver in Japan earns around ₹1.5 lakh per month, while nurses and IT professionals earn ₹2.5–₹3 lakh per month.
- Japan reportedly has an immediate requirement for 25,000 such skilled professionals.
- This initiative is part of the CMFLIGHT scheme, and the training is expected to begin in October.
- The Cabinet approved 508 land allocation cases, mostly meant for community purposes.
- MLAs will now be allowed to use funds for the development of personnel for housing society facilitation, such as electricians, plumbers, and painters.
- Under a new government scheme called Mission Maitri, ₹150 crore will be allocated for strengthening police infrastructure in Assam.
- On August 12, ten new co-districts will be formally inaugurated: Boko Chaygaon, Palasbari, Rangapara, Borsola, Dudhnoi, Dholai, Mariani, Teok, Makum, and Digboi.
- Each new co-district will have a District Commissioner and a Superintendent of Police.
- The Chief Minister reiterated his firm stance on employing retired teachers in schools and colleges, stating, "I am 101 per cent committed to this, and this will be implemented."
- He emphasized the importance of experienced educators in reforming the education system.
- Responding to financial allegations against Lakhimpur MP Pradan Baruah, Sarma defended him by saying, "I have known Pradan Baruah to be clean on finances."
- Sarma is scheduled to attend several official functions over the next two days.
- On the previous evening, he inaugurated a fuel station with a CNG filling facility near Doomdooma



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INTERNATIONAL

23.FTAS WITH UK, US, EU TO OPEN NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEXTILES SECTOR: MARGHERITA



- Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the US, UK, and European Union (EU) will create new opportunities for India's textiles sector, said Minister of State for Textiles Pabitra Margherita.
- He stated that India's textile exports have crossed USD 34 billion and the target is to reach USD 100 billion by 2030.
- The India-UK FTA and ongoing negotiations with the EU and US will help Indian exporters tap into high-value, quality-conscious markets.
- The government is committed to equipping exporters with the right strategy, standards, and compliance tools.
- Speaking at the inauguration of the 73rd Edition of India International Garment Fair (IIGF) at Yashobhoomi, Margherita noted that the textile and apparel industry contributes 2.3% to India's GDP, 13% to industrial production, and 12% to exports.
- In 2023-24, India exported textile products worth USD 34.4 billion, with apparel making up 42% of the total.
- The minister emphasized the critical role of MSMEs, entrepreneurs, and exporters in achieving the USD 100 billion export goal by 2030.
- The IIGF is Asia's largest garment fair, featuring more than 360 exhibitors and buyers from 80 countries.
- The fair showcases fabrics, fashion, creativity, and craftsmanship.
- Buyers are attending from regions including North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Oceania, Africa, and Eurasia.
- With over 80% of India's textile sector being MSME-driven, focus is needed on boosting productivity, ensuring steady raw material supply, and reducing import dependence to stay competitive, the minister said.

24.IRAN PRESIDENT ORDERS SUSPENSION OF COOPERATION WITH UN WATCHDOG IAEA



- Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has ordered the suspension of the country's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following American and Israeli airstrikes on its key nuclear facilities.
- The move is likely to further restrict IAEA inspectors' ability to monitor Iran's nuclear programme, which has reportedly enriched uranium to near weapons-grade levels.
- The order did not provide specific timetables or details on the scope of the suspension.
- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi indicated in a CBS News interview that Tehran remains open to negotiations with the United States despite the recent developments.
- Iran has previously used limits on IAEA inspections as a pressure tactic in diplomatic negotiations with Western countries.
- However, Iran currently denies having immediate plans to resume talks with the United States, which were derailed by the recent 12-day Iran-Israel conflict.
- Pezeshkian's directive follows a law passed by Iran's parliament mandating the suspension of cooperation with the IAEA.
- The legislation has received approval from Iran's Guardian Council and likely has the backing of the Supreme National Security Council, chaired by Pezeshkian himself.
- The IAEA, headquartered in Vienna, is awaiting official communication from Iran to clarify the implications of the suspension.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the world's leading intergovernmental organisation for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field.
- It promotes the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology in line with global non-proliferation norms.
- The IAEA Statute was approved on 23 October 1956 and came into force on 29 July 1957.
- It headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

25.PRIME MINISTER MODI ARRIVES IN GHANA



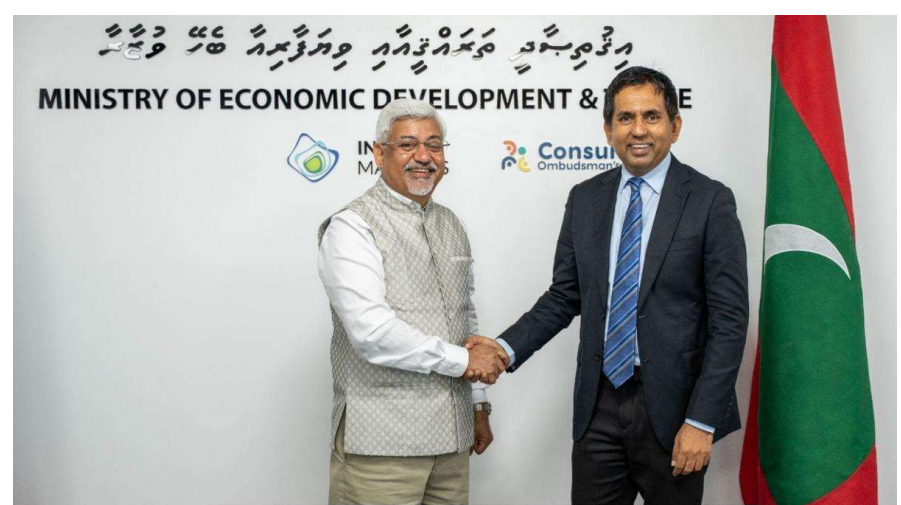
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** arrived in **Ghana** on a **two-day visit**, marking his **first-ever bilateral visit** to the country.
- This is also the **first prime ministerial visit from India to Ghana in three decades**.
- Modi will hold talks with **Ghana's top leadership** to review and strengthen the **bilateral partnership**.
- Calling Ghana a **valued partner in the Global South**, Modi noted its important role in the **African Union** and the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**.
- The talks will aim at deepening historical ties and exploring new areas of cooperation, especially in **investment, energy, health, security, capacity building, and development partnership**.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** stated that Modi's discussions with the Ghanaian President will focus on enhancing ties through **economic, energy, and defence collaboration**.
- The visit reaffirms India's commitment to strengthen its engagement with **ECOWAS** and the **African Union**.
- After Ghana, Modi will travel to **Trinidad and Tobago** from **July 3 to 4**.
- The **third leg** of his visit will take him to **Argentina** from **July 4 to 5**.
- In the **fourth leg**, Modi will visit **Brazil** to attend the **17th BRICS Summit**, followed by a state visit.
- In the **final leg**, he will travel to **Namibia**.

26.RUSSIA IS FIRST NATION TO RECOGNISE TALIBAN'S LATEST RULE IN AFGHANISTAN

- Russia became the first country to formally recognise the Taliban's government in Afghanistan since it seized power in 2021.

- This recognition followed Moscow's decision to remove the Taliban from its list of outlawed organisations.
- The Russian Foreign Ministry announced it had received credentials from Afghanistan's newly-appointed Ambassador, Gul Hassan Hassan.
- Russia stated that official recognition would foster "productive bilateral cooperation."
- Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry called the move a historic step, and Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi welcomed it as "a good example for other countries."
- The Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021 after the withdrawal of US and NATO forces.
- Since then, the Taliban have sought international recognition while enforcing a strict interpretation of Islamic law.
- Until now, no country had formally recognised the Taliban administration, though the group held high-level talks with several nations and established diplomatic ties with countries like China and the United Arab Emirates.
- The Taliban government has remained largely isolated on the global stage due to its restrictions on women.
- Despite early promises of moderate governance, the Taliban imposed bans on most jobs and public spaces for women, and prohibited girls from studying beyond sixth grade.
- Russian officials recently stressed the importance of engaging with the Taliban to stabilise Afghanistan and lifted the ban on the group in April.

27.INDIA, MALDIVES HOLD TALKS TO DEEPEN TRADE, INVESTMENT TIES



- India and the Maldives discussed new opportunities for economic cooperation and trade enhancement.
- The meeting took place at the Maldivian Economic Ministry during the visit of Indian Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal.
- Discussions focused on strengthening existing trade ties and exploring new areas of economic collaboration.
- Barthwal had a "constructive" meeting with Maldivian Minister Saeed, focusing on enhancing trade and investment.
- Business forums were recently held in three Indian cities to attract Indian investment in the Maldives.
- India remains a key development partner for the Maldives, supporting infrastructure and capacity-building projects.
- India has extended a USD 25.94 million currency swap facility to support the Maldivian economy.

- On May 26, India and the Maldives explored trade and strategic cooperation during Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel's visit to New Delhi.
- The visit was part of efforts to implement the economic and maritime security partnership agreed upon during Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's October 2024 trip to India.
- Bilateral ties had strained after Muizzu, seen as pro-China, demanded withdrawal of Indian military personnel post his swearing-in in November 2023.
- Indian military personnel were later replaced by civilians on a mutually agreed date.
- Relations improved after Muizzu's October 2024 visit, where he pledged to boost ties with India.
- Maldives is India's key maritime neighbour and plays a crucial role in the 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).

28. TRINIDAD & TOBAGO EXTENDS SUPPORT TO INDIA FOR UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP



- India and Trinidad and Tobago signed six agreements to boost cooperation in sectors such as infrastructure and pharmaceuticals.
- The agreements followed talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar.
- PM Modi announced that Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) cards will now be issued up to the sixth generation of the Indian diaspora in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Over 40% of Trinidad and Tobago's population is of Indian origin.
- Modi's visit to Port of Spain marks the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Caribbean nation since 1999.
- The leaders explored cooperation in defence, agriculture, healthcare, digital transformation, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and capacity building.
- Trinidad and Tobago reaffirmed full support for India's bid for permanent membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council.
- The six MoUs cover collaboration in pharmacopoeia, quick-impact projects, culture, sports, and diplomatic training.
- The sports pact includes training, talent exchange, infrastructure development, and joint capacity building.

- PM Modi offered to train aspiring young women cricketers from Trinidad and Tobago in India.
- Both leaders called for comprehensive reforms in the United Nations, including expansion of the Security Council to reflect current global realities.
- India will support Trinidad and Tobago's candidature for a non-permanent UN Security Council seat for 2027–28.
- In return, Trinidad and Tobago will support India's candidature for the 2028–29 term.
- Modi and Bissessar agreed to enhance cooperation among Global South countries and strengthen the India-CARICOM partnership.
- CARICOM (Caribbean Community) is an intergovernmental organisation of 15 Caribbean nations aimed at promoting economic integration and cooperation.

29. TRUMP SIGNS 'ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL' INTO LAW



- US President Donald Trump hailed the passage of the "One Big Beautiful Bill" as the start of America's "new Golden Age."
- The bill, approved by the House of Representatives, is being called the biggest legislative win of Trump's two terms.
- A signing celebration is scheduled at the White House.
- **Key reforms and provisions:**
- **Permanent 2017 tax cuts:** Locks in Trump's 2017 tax reforms, including lower rates and higher standard deductions. SALT deduction caps are raised until 2028.
- **New worker tax breaks:** Introduces time-limited deductions (until 2028) for tip income, overtime pay, auto loan interest (on US-assembled cars), and a \$6,000 deduction for eligible seniors.
- **Immigration enforcement boost:** Allocates \$170 billion for border security and ICE, expanding staffing, detention, and wall construction—making ICE one of the best-funded US agencies.
- **Cuts to safety net programs:** Enforces stricter Medicaid and SNAP rules, including work mandates and tighter eligibility, potentially affecting millions.
- **Climate support rollback:** Cancels clean energy tax credits from the Inflation Reduction Act, as part of a broader deficit-cutting agenda.
- **Debt ceiling increase:** Raises the federal borrowing limit by \$4–5 trillion; CBO projects the bill will add \$2.4–3.3 trillion to the national debt by 2034.

- **New fees and savings accounts:** Imposes a 1% tax on remittances; introduces “Trump Accounts”—tax-advantaged savings plans for child support and development.
- **Defence spending surge:** Allocates an additional \$150 billion for defence modernization, including drones, AI systems, missile defence, and Indo-Pacific expansion.
- **Student loan and agency reforms:** Caps graduate/professional student loans, pauses student debt relief, and defunds or repeals agencies like the CFPB.

30.MOS MARGHERITA IN CAMBODIA:



- Union Minister of State (MoS) Pabitra Margherita visited the Royal Palace of Cambodia and admired the mural painting depicting the Ramayan, calling it a symbol of the long-standing cultural ties between India and Cambodia.
- He welcomed the Archaeological Survey of India’s (ASI) initiative to undertake restoration and conservation work of the murals.
- India has a historical association with temple restoration in Cambodia, with ASI conducting restoration at Angkor Wat Temple from 1986 to 1993.
- Angkor Wat is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a major tourist destination visited by millions annually.
- Currently, ASI is engaged in restoration work at the Ta Prohm Temple in the Angkor Archaeological Park.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has emphasized that India-Cambodia ties are rooted in shared civilisational heritage and a strong, people-centric development partnership.
- Ahead of Margherita’s visit, the MEA stated that the visit aimed to further strengthen bilateral ties and allow both nations to explore initiatives and issues of mutual interest.
- MoS Margherita was scheduled to call on Cambodian senior leadership, interact with ITEC/ICCR alumni, and engage with the Indian community in Cambodia.
- He also reviewed the extensive restoration and conservation work carried out by India at Cambodian World Heritage Sites as symbols of shared cultural heritage.
- Margherita called on Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and held a productive discussion on enhancing bilateral partnership.
- The two leaders discussed various matters of mutual interest to deepen cooperation between the two countries.

- Margherita met Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni and reaffirmed the deep historical and cultural ties between India and Cambodia.

31.CAMBODIAN SITES OF KHMER ROUGE BRUTALITY IN UNESCO HERITAGE LIST



- UNESCO has added **three former Khmer Rouge torture and execution sites** in Cambodia to its **World Heritage List** during the 47th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris.
- The listing coincides with the **50th anniversary** of the rise of the **Khmer Rouge regime**, which ruled from 1975 to 1979 and led to the deaths of an estimated **1.7 million Cambodians** through starvation, torture, and executions.
- The **three sites** added to the list include:
 - **Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (S-21)** in Phnom Penh, a former high school used as a notorious prison where around **15,000 people were imprisoned and tortured**.
 - **M-13 prison** in Kampong Chhnang province, one of the main prisons during the early Khmer Rouge period.
 - **Choeung Ek**, located 15 km south of Phnom Penh, used as an **execution site and mass grave**, depicted in the 1984 film *The Killing Fields*.
- These are the **first modern and non-classical archaeological sites** in Cambodia to be nominated for UNESCO listing, and among the first globally associated with **recent conflict**.
- The Khmer Rouge seized Phnom Penh on **April 17, 1975**, and forcibly relocated city residents to the countryside, subjecting them to inhumane conditions until the regime was overthrown by Vietnam in 1979.
- In **September 2022**, the **UN-backed Khmer Rouge Tribunal** concluded after 16 years and \$337 million, having convicted only **three individuals**.
- Cambodian Prime Minister **Hun Manet** directed citizens to **beat drums simultaneously** across the country to mark the UNESCO recognition.
- **Youk Chhang**, Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, emphasized that the listing will help **educate younger generations** about the atrocities and help the country process its **painful historical legacy**.
- Cambodia’s previous UNESCO World Heritage sites include **Angkor, Preah Vihear, Sambo Prei Kuk, and Koh Ker**.

32.INDIA HIGHLIGHTS GROWING INDO-PACIFIC ROLE UNDER SAGAR VISION IN 2024 MEA REPORT



- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** has reaffirmed India's growing engagement in the **Indo-Pacific**, guided by its **SAGAR vision** (*Security And Growth for All in the Region*).
- India remains committed to a **free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific**, which respects **sovereignty**, resolves disputes **peacefully**, and upholds **international law**.
- The MEA's **2024 Annual Report** highlights India's objective of **multi-dimensional engagement** in the Indo-Pacific, including **political, security, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation**.
- The report noted significant progress under the **Act East Policy**, which marked its **10-year milestone**, with **ASEAN** remaining central to this approach.
- India has deepened ties with regional bodies like:
 - **ASEAN**
 - **East Asia Summit (EAS)**
 - **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**
 - **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)**
 - **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)**
 - **Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)**
 - **Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)**
 - **Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)**
- The **India-ASEAN relationship** was elevated to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022**.
- At the **21st India-ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Laos** (October 10, 2024), PM **Narendra Modi** and ASEAN leaders reviewed cooperation and issued joint statements on **digital transformation** and **future collaboration**.
- The report highlighted **cultural and people-to-people ties**, including initiatives like the **India-ASEAN Women Scientists Conclave**.

- **ASEAN** has emerged as one of India's key partners in **trade and technology**.
- The **East Asia Summit (EAS)** is described as a vital platform for **strategic dialogue**. PM Modi attended its **19th edition on October 11, 2024**, where he reiterated support for **ASEAN centrality** and adherence to **international norms**, while addressing **terrorism, cyber threats**, and the **revival of Nalanda University**.
- In the **Western Indian Ocean**, India's engagement includes being an **observer in the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)** since 2020 and serving as **Vice-Chair of IORA (2023–2025)**.
- India has taken up projects in **maritime safety, security**, and the **Blue Economy**, which, according to the **World Bank**, involves the sustainable use of ocean resources for **economic growth, employment, and ecosystem preservation**.

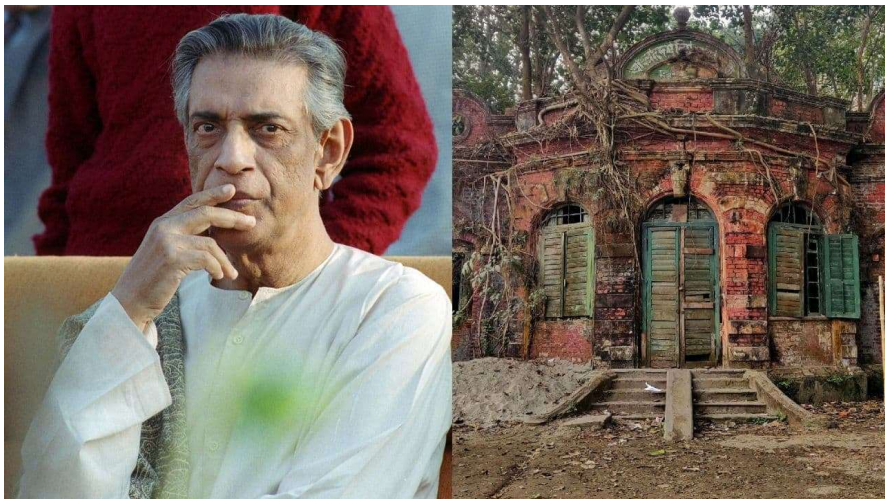
33.N KOREA'S MOUNT KUMGANG LISTED AS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE



- North Korea's Mount Kumgang, a scenic mountain known for its seasonal beauty, has been named a **UNESCO World Heritage site**.
- UNESCO added Mount Kumgang to its World Heritage list during the 47th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Paris.
- The official name of the listed site is "Mt Kumgang Diamond Mountain from the Sea."
- In May, the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature recommended Mount Kumgang for World Heritage status.
- UNESCO's website describes Mount Kumgang as "a strikingly beautiful mountain" with over 12,000 peaks, curious rock formations, crystal-clear waterfalls, pools, and scenic coastal views.
- North Korea submitted its application for inscription in 2021, but the review was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed this year.
- Mount Kumgang is now North Korea's third World Cultural Heritage site, following the Complex of Koguryo Tombs (2004) and the Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong (2013).
- In 2014, North Korea also had "Arirang," a lyrical folk song, inscribed as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

- On July 12, UNESCO also added a set of prehistoric rock carvings in southeastern South Korea — the “Petroglyphs along the Bangucheon Stream” — to the World Heritage list.

34.INDIA OFFERS HELP TO RESTORE SATYAJIT RAY’S ANCESTRAL HOME AMID DEMOLITION ROW IN B'DESH:



- The Government of India has expressed deep regret over the ongoing demolition of Satyajit Ray’s ancestral property in Mymensingh, Bangladesh.
- The property holds historical and cultural significance as it belonged to the legendary filmmaker and author.
- India has offered its cooperation to repair and restore the heritage structure.
- Satyajit Ray was born on May 2, 1921, in Calcutta (now Kolkata), India, and passed away on April 23, 1992.
- He was a Bengali filmmaker, writer, and illustrator who gained international acclaim for his contributions to Indian cinema.
- Ray brought Indian cinema to global attention with his debut film *Pather Panchali* (1955), followed by two sequels, forming the renowned *Apu Trilogy*.
- In 1978, the Berlin Film Festival organizing committee ranked him among the three greatest film directors of all time.
- In 1992, Ray received the Honorary Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement, recognizing his mastery in filmmaking and his profound humanitarian vision.
- He was also honored with France’s highest civilian award, the “Légion d’Honneur,” and India’s highest civilian award, the “Bharat Ratna.”
- Throughout his career, Satyajit Ray received numerous national and international awards for both his individual excellence and his films.

35.BEIJING BACKS MOSCOW INITIATIVE TO REVIVE RUSSIA-INDIA-CHINA TROIKA

- China has expressed support for Russia’s initiative to revive the dormant Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral cooperation.
- China stated that such cooperation serves the interests of the three nations and contributes to regional and global security and stability.

- Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko mentioned that Moscow is actively negotiating with Beijing and New Delhi to resume the RIC format.
- Rudenko emphasized that the absence of the RIC format is inappropriate, especially as the three countries are BRICS founders and key global partners.
- The revival of the RIC format is expected once bilateral relations, particularly between India and China, improve sufficiently.
- Interest in RIC resurfaced following External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar’s visit to China to attend the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting.
- During the visit, Jaishankar held discussions with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Russian counterpart.
- India-China relations had been frozen for over four years due to the Ladakh standoff.
- Bilateral ties began to improve after the Modi-Xi meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan last year.
- A steady dialogue process is underway to normalise India-China relations.
- India, China, and Russia were key drivers behind the formation of BRICS and the New Development Bank (NDB), now comprising 10 member countries.
- The growing India-China rivalry and China’s support for Pakistan weakened the relevance of RIC in recent years.
- Russia and China have shown renewed interest in RIC amid India’s participation in the Quad, which includes the US, Japan, and Australia.
- Beijing perceives the Quad as a strategic alliance aimed at containing China’s rise.

36.INDIAN ENVOY INAUGURATES ASHOKA PILLAR REPLICA, BUDDHA RELICS IN LANKA



- A replica of King Ashoka’s Vaishali Pillar of Dhamma and a special exposition of the sacred Kapilavastu Relics were inaugurated in Sri Lanka.
- The inauguration took place at the Raja Guru Sri Subuthi Maha Viharaya Temple in Waskaduwa, a significant coastal Buddhist temple in Sri Lanka.

- The temple is known for housing sacred relics of Lord Buddha and his chief disciples, Sariputra and Maudgalyayana.
- The event was led by Indian High Commissioner Santosh Jha and Most Ven. Waskaduwa Mahindawansa Mahanayake Thero, head of the Amarapura Sambuddha Sasanodaya Maha Nikaya.
- The exposition highlights the deep spiritual and civilisational bonds between India and Sri Lanka, rooted in Buddhism.
- Historical ties date back to Emperor Ashoka sending his children, Arhat Mahinda and Theri Sanghamitta, to spread Buddha's teachings in Sri Lanka at the request of King Devanampiya Tissa.
- In April, PM Narendra Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake visited the Jaya Shri Mahabodhi Temple in Anuradhapura, which houses a Bodhi tree grown from a sapling brought by Theri Sanghamitta from India.
- PM Modi announced that the Holy Relics of Lord Buddha discovered in 1960 in Gujarat's Aravalli region are being sent to Sri Lanka for exposition.
- The Kapilavastu Relics, discovered in 1970, have previously been exhibited in Sri Lanka in 1978 (witnessed by around 10 million people) and in 2012 (to commemorate the 2600th anniversary of Buddha's Enlightenment).
- The relics from Waskaduwa Vihara were also displayed in India in October 2015 to mark the 60th anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism, attracting over 8 million visitors.
- These events underline the enduring people-to-people connection and the shared Buddhist heritage between the two nations.

37.INDIA, UK INK HISTORIC TRADE DEAL



- India and the UK signed a trade agreement aimed at boosting both economies and slashing tariff lines across 99% of Indian exports.
- The agreement is officially called the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).
- It was signed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and British Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds in the presence of Indian and British Prime Ministers.
- The pact was formalised after British PM Keir Starmer hosted Indian PM Narendra Modi at Chequers, the British PM's countryside residence.

- CETA was concluded after three years of negotiations.
- It aims to ensure comprehensive market access for Indian goods across all sectors.
- India will benefit from tariff elimination on about 99% of tariff lines covering nearly 100% of trade values.
- The agreement is expected to especially benefit India's youth, farmers, fishermen, and MSME sector.
- Indian consumers and industries will gain access to UK-made products like medical devices and aerospace parts at more affordable prices.
- It is expected to promote ease of doing business, reduce business costs, and enhance business confidence.
- British PM Starmer stated the pact will create thousands of UK jobs, unlock new business opportunities, and drive economic growth.
- According to the UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT), India's average tariff on British products will fall from 15% to 3%.
- British companies will find it easier to export products to India, including soft drinks, cosmetics, cars, and medical devices.
- UK whisky producers will benefit from immediate tariff cuts from 150% to 75%, and further to 40% over the next 10 years.
- India will see the elimination of tariffs on around half of its exports to the UK, including textiles, footwear, and agricultural goods like mangoes and grapes.
- Although UK tariffs were already low, further reductions will make India a more competitive market in the region.
- Details:
- Sure! Here's the same content organized with clear **headings**:

AGRICULTURE

- India to get duty-free access in fruits, vegetables, cereals, turmeric, pepper, cardamom, ready-to-eat food, mango pulp, pickles, and pulses.
- Over 95% of agricultural and processed food tariff lines will attract zero duty.
- Expected to boost agri exports by over 20% in three years, contributing to USD 100 billion agri-export target by 2030.
- Technical Barriers to Trade provisions will reduce time and cost for exporters.
- New market access for jackfruit, millets, organic herbs to help diversify farm income.

MARINE PRODUCTS

- UK tariffs on Indian marine items like shrimp, tuna, fishmeal, and feeds eliminated (previously 4.2–8.5%).
- India's current share in the UK's USD 5.4 billion marine import market is only 2.25%.
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures will simplify compliance with UK standards.

PLANTATION SECTOR (COFFEE)

- Duty-free access for instant coffee boosts India's competitiveness against European suppliers.
- Expected rise in value-added coffee exports, especially instant coffee.

OILSEEDS

- Reduced tariffs and simplified export procedures to make Indian oilseeds more competitive.

TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

- Zero-duty access for 1,143 tariff lines.
- Eliminates India's disadvantage compared to Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Cambodia.
- High-growth segments: ready-made garments, home textiles, carpets, handicrafts.
- India expected to gain at least 5% UK market share in 1–2 years.

ENGINEERING GOODS

- India's exports currently USD 4.28 billion vs UK's imports of USD 193.52 billion.
- Tariffs (up to 18%) eliminated, projected to double Indian exports to USD 7.5 billion by 2029–30.
- Key products: electric machinery, auto parts, industrial/construction equipment.

PHARMACEUTICALS & MEDICAL DEVICES

- Indian pharma exports to UK under USD 1 billion despite UK's USD 30 billion market.
- Zero-duty for generics and medical devices (surgical tools, ECG, X-ray, diagnostic equipment).
- UK remains India's largest pharma export destination in Europe.

CHEMICALS

- Projected 30–40% growth in chemical exports, targeting USD 650–750 million in 2025–26.
- India's current export to UK is only USD 843 million out of UK's USD 35.11 billion market.

PLASTICS

- Duty-free access to UK market in films, sheets, pipes, packaging, tableware, kitchenware.
- Projected 15% growth; export target of USD 186.97 million in 5 years.

SPORTS GOODS & TOYS

- Export gains expected in soccer balls, cricket gear, rugby balls, and non-electronic toys.
- Indian products to gain cost advantage over Chinese and Vietnamese goods.

GEMS & JEWELLERY

- India's exports to UK at USD 941 million; UK imports ~USD 3 billion in jewellery.
- FTA expected to double Indian exports in 2–3 years.

LEATHER & FOOTWEAR

- Tariffs up to 16% reduced to zero.
- Expected to push exports past USD 900 million.
- MSMEs in Agra, Kanpur, Kolhapur, Chennai to benefit.
- GI protection and simpler standards included.

OTHER SECTORS & GENERAL BENEFITS

- Zero tariffs on 99% of tariff lines, covering nearly all trade value.
- Major duty reductions:
 - Marine (from 20% to 0%)
 - Textiles (from 12% to 0%)
 - Chemicals (from 8% to 0%)
 - Base metals (from 10% to 0%)
 - Processed food (from up to 70% to 0%)
- Duty-free access extended to labour-intensive sectors and high-tariff products.
- Other sectors gaining access: base metals, instruments, clocks, minerals, plastic, rubber, transport/auto, tea, coffee, spices.

UK MANUFACTURING BENEFITS (INDIA'S TARIFF CUTS)

- Aerospace: tariffs up to 11% reduced to 0%.
- Automotives: tariffs up to 110% reduced to 10% (quota-based).
- Electrical machinery: tariffs up to 22% reduced to 0% or 50%.

SERVICES SECTOR

- Easier mobility for Indian professionals including contractual service providers.
- Yoga instructors, classical musicians, chefs to benefit from eased entry into UK market.

INNOVATION CHAPTER

- Focuses on supporting trade in innovation-driven products and services.
- Joint collaboration in emerging and transformative technologies.
- Promotes a knowledge-sharing and R&D-friendly trade environment.

38.INDIA TO PROVIDE RS 4,850 CR LINE OF CREDIT TO MALDIVES



- India is proud to be the most trusted friend of the Maldives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.
- He announced a Rs 4,850 crore (\$565 million) line of credit to the island nation.
- The Maldives holds an important place in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and the MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision.

- Modi emphasised that mutual cooperation in the field of defence and security reflects the trust between the two countries.
- India will continue to support the Maldives in strengthening its defence capabilities.
- This development marks a turnaround in bilateral relations, especially after President Mohamed Muizzu, known for his proximity to China, came to power in November 2023 following the “India Out” campaign.
- In the early months of his presidency, Muizzu's policies caused severe strain in India-Maldives ties.
- Shortly after taking oath, he demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from the Maldives.
- India later replaced its military personnel with civilian staff.
- The Indian military personnel were originally deployed to operate and maintain two helicopters and an aircraft used for humanitarian and rescue operations.
- It is widely believed that India’s sustained diplomatic efforts and economic assistance helped restore the relationship.
- The Maldives is a key maritime neighbour for India in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Under previous Maldivian governments, bilateral ties, particularly in defence and security, had steadily improved.

39.INDIA, MALDIVES SIGN FISHERIES DEAL TO BOOST SUSTAINABLE TUNA INDUSTRY, AQUACULTURE



- India and the Maldives have signed a fisheries cooperation agreement aimed at enhancing the Maldives’ fish processing capabilities and promoting sustainable tuna fishing.
- The agreement will also provide India with improved access to deep-sea fisheries resources in the strategically vital Indian Ocean region.
- The MoU was signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s state visit to the Maldives and is one of six bilateral agreements exchanged between the two countries.
- The agreement is between India’s Department of Fisheries and the Maldives’ Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources.

- It focuses on promoting sustainable tuna and deep-sea fisheries, enhancing aquaculture and resource management, and supporting fisheries-based ecotourism.
- Key areas of cooperation include value chain development, advancement of mariculture, trade facilitation, and capacity building in the fisheries sector.
- The Maldives will boost its fish processing capabilities by investing in cold storage infrastructure and strengthening aquaculture through hatchery development, improved production efficiency, and species diversification.
- The MoU also includes training and knowledge exchange programmes related to aquatic animal health, biosecurity screening, aquaculture farm management, and technical skills such as refrigeration and marine engineering.
- The cooperation underscores both countries’ shared commitment to developing a more resilient and sustainable fisheries industry.

40.INDO-US SPACE COLLABORATION TAKES FLIGHT WITH NISAR SATELLITE SUCCESS





- India and the United States marked their first space collaboration with the successful launch of a GSLV rocket that placed a jointly developed Earth observation satellite into orbit.
- The satellite, named NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar), was developed through a decade-long cooperation between ISRO and NASA.
- ISRO’s GSLV F-16 injected NISAR into a precise Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO) after a flight of about 19 minutes, reaching an altitude of approximately 745 km.
- This marked the first time a GSLV rocket was used for an SSPO mission, as all previous GSLV missions targeted the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).
- The mission is considered one of the most expensive Earth observation satellite projects in the world, with an estimated cost of \$1.5 billion.
- NISAR is an all-weather, day-and-night imaging satellite capable of scanning the entire Earth every 12 days.
- It combines ISRO’s S-band synthetic aperture radar with NASA’s L-band payload and a 12-metre unfurlable antenna, making it the world’s first dual-frequency radar imaging satellite of its kind.

- The mission is seen not only as a technical achievement but also as a significant milestone in US-India space relations and broader bilateral cooperation.
- At the end of a 27.30-hour countdown, the 51.7-metre-tall launch vehicle lifted off from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, at 5:40 pm.

- Following the successful separation of the satellite from the rocket, scientists began the process of commissioning the satellite, which will take several days to complete and align with mission goals.


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SCIENCE & TECH

41.'STARLINK FREE TO ROLL OUT INDIA SERVICES AFTER IN-SPACE NOD



- Union Communications Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** announced that all due diligence processes from the Ministry's end have been completed for **SpaceX's Starlink** to enter the Indian market.
- The **final approval now rests with IN-SPACe** (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre), the country's space regulator.
- Once Starlink receives the required **regulatory and licensing approvals**, it can roll out its satellite-based internet service in India at any time.
- **IN-SPACe**, formed in **June 2020**, is an autonomous nodal agency under the **Department of Space** that promotes private sector participation in India's space activities.
- IN-SPACe has already issued a **draft Letter of Intent (LOI)** to Starlink. Once signed by both parties, the company will be officially cleared to begin operations in India.
- **Starlink** provides internet access via a **network of over 6,750 satellites** in low Earth orbit, making it ideal for **remote and underserved regions**.
- In Asia, Starlink services are already available in **Mongolia, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Jordan, Yemen, Azerbaijan, and Sri Lanka**.
- **Globally**, Starlink serves users in **over 100 countries**, offering **residential and roaming internet plans**.
- Residential plans are typically offered in two categories:
 - **Residential Lite** – for smaller households with lower data needs.
 - **Residential** – for larger families or users with higher data requirements.

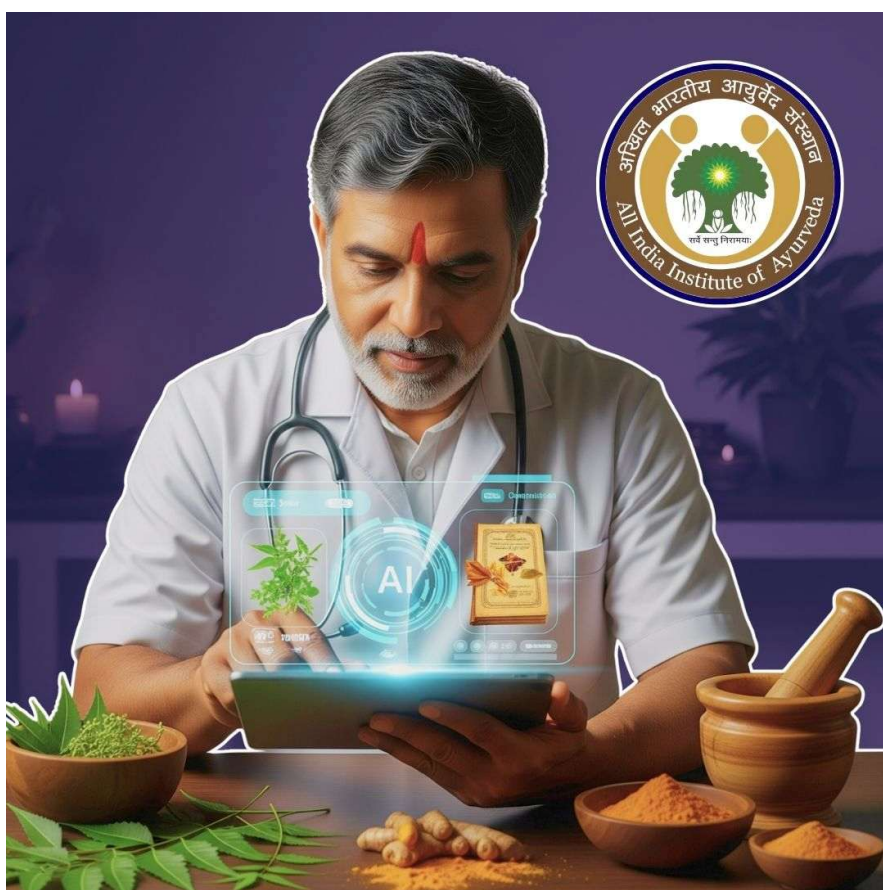
42.INDIA'S FIRST WATER TECH PARK INAUGURATED



- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated India's first water technology park named 'Aqua Tech Park' at Bagibari, Sonapur.
- The park has been set up by Kolong-Kapili in collaboration with NABARD, ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), the Fishery Department, and Selco Foundation.
- It is the first of its kind in Assam and showcases advanced technologies in aquaponics, biofloc system, modern fish production, ornamental fish breeding, and other innovative areas.
- Aqua Tech Park aims to empower fish farmers with knowledge of cutting-edge technologies to enhance fish production and increase their income.
- The park is envisioned as a step towards a resurgent and Atmanirbhar Assam.
- In 2021, Kolong-Kopili, with assistance from ICAR and CIFA, started its Aqua Culture School, contributing significantly to fish farming, natural farming, and integrated agriculture, thereby empowering thousands of youth.
- The Chief Minister expressed hope that the Aqua Tech Park would be a boon for farmers and stakeholders, greatly boosting fish production and providing ample earning opportunities.
- The park will serve as a model for fisheries development in the State.
- Assam doubled its fish production to 4.99 lakh metric tonnes between 2019 and 2024 and became the fourth-largest fish-producing state in India.
- A Rs 800 crore ADB-assisted project has been initiated to support the Sustainable Wetland and Integrated Fisheries Transformation Project.
- Additionally, a JICA-aided Rs 250 crore project has helped in implementing various development schemes in the fishery sector.
- The government created 10 fishery cluster development projects in the current financial year with a financial outlay of Rs 8 crore.
- The government is developing the fisheries sector through schemes like PM Matsya Sampada Yojana and SWIFT.

- These initiatives aim to rejuvenate and make Assam's fisheries sector nationally competitive.
- The Chief Minister cited successful youth entrepreneurs in the fishery sector: Debojit Barman (Nalbari), Hemanta Deka and Fatik Ahmed (Barpeta), Biswajit Bora (Sonitpur), Sudipa Dey (Cachar), Harendranath Rabha (Tamulpur), Krishna Gogoi (Jorhat), and Lalit Dutta (Golaghat).
- Under Mukhyamantri Atmanirbhar Asom Abhiyan, the government is giving Rs 5 lakh each to graduates of Raha Fishery College and Rs 2 lakh to fishery farmers.
- Starting from September, one lakh youth in the State will receive financial benefits under this scheme.

43. AYUSH 'INNOVATIONS' FEATURED IN WHO'S BRIEF ON AI IN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE



- The World Health Organization (WHO) has acknowledged India's efforts in integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) with traditional medicine systems, particularly Ayush.
- This recognition came through a technical brief titled *Mapping the Application of Artificial Intelligence in Traditional Medicine*.
- The WHO document is a result of India's proposal on the subject, which led to the development of WHO's first-ever roadmap for using AI in traditional medicine.
- India's initiative reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "AI for All."
- AI is being integrated with Ayush systems through digital platforms like the SAHI portal, NAMASTE portal, and the Ayush Research Portal.
- These efforts aim to preserve India's ancient medical wisdom while promoting personalized, evidence-based, and globally accessible healthcare.
- The WHO brief highlights India's AI-driven innovations such as "Prakriti-based machine learning models" and the "Ayurgenomics" project, which merges Ayurveda with modern genomics.

- The Ayush Grid, launched in 2018, is the foundation for the SAHI, NAMASTE, and Ayush Research portals, driving digital transformation in the sector.
- AI-driven applications in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy are showcased, including diagnosis support systems integrating traditional methods like pulse reading, tongue examination, and Prakriti assessment with machine learning and deep neural networks.
- Ayurgenomics is recognized as a scientific breakthrough combining genomics and Ayurvedic principles to identify disease markers and personalize health recommendations.
- The brief also notes India's progress in decoding the genomic and molecular basis of herbal formulations for their use in treating modern diseases.

44. ISRO COMPLETES DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE MODULE PROPULSION SYSTEM FOR GAGANYAAN



- ISRO has successfully completed the **development and qualification testing** of the **Service Module Propulsion System (SMPS)** for the **Gaganyaan Mission**, India's first human spaceflight program.
- A **350-second full-duration hot test** of the SMPS was conducted to validate its integrated performance under a **flight off-nominal mission abort profile**.
- The **Service Module (SM)** uses a **regulated bi-propellant propulsion system** to support orbit circularisation, on-orbit control, de-boost manoeuvring, and ascent phase abort operations.
- **Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) engines** provide the main thrust during orbit circularisation and de-boost phases.
- **Reaction Control System (RCS) thrusters** ensure precise attitude control of the spacecraft.
- A **System Demonstration Model (SDM)** test bed was created, replicating the fluid circuit of the SMPS, including propellant tank feed system, helium pressurisation system, flight-qualified thrusters, and control components.
- The SDM underwent **25 tests** under various nominal and off-nominal conditions, totaling **14,331 seconds** to simulate different Gaganyaan mission scenarios and meet **human rating requirements**.

- The SMPS was **designed, developed, and realised** by the **Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC)**.
- All tests were conducted at the **ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu**.

45.SHUBHANSHU SHUKLA RETURNS TO EARTH AFTER SPACE SOJOURN



- With waves and smiles, Shubhanshu Shukla returned to Earth after an 18-day stay on the International Space Station (ISS), a feat that holds the promise to herald India's own human spaceflight ambitions.
- Lucknow-born Shukla and three other astronauts of the private Axiom-4 mission splashed down in the Pacific Ocean off the San Diego coast in California in the predawn darkness at 2:31 am Pacific Time (3:01 pm IST) amid cheers from the citizens of India, literally on the other side of the world.
- Shukla, a Group Captain in the Indian Air Force, became the second Indian to travel to space after Rakesh Sharma's 1984 sojourn as part of a Soviet Russian mission.
- He also scripted history by becoming the first Indian to travel to the ISS with the longest stint – 20 days – in orbit around the Earth.
- For India, Hungary and Poland, this mission has realised the return to human spaceflight, with astronauts from these countries travelling to space for the first time in more than 40 years.
- The Dragon Grace spacecraft lifted off from Florida on June 25 and docked at the ISS on June 26 after a 28-hour journey.
- Onboard the orbital laboratory, the Axiom-4 mission crew comprising Shukla, commander Peggy Whitson, and mission specialists Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland and Tibor Kapu of Hungary spent the next 18 days conducting 60 experiments and 20 outreach sessions.
- Travelling at a speed of over 28,000 km per hour, the Dragon spacecraft, carrying the Axiom-4 crew members, executed a series of manoeuvres to gradually slow down and enter the Earth's atmosphere, braving intense heat before a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean.
- Minutes later, the Dragon spacecraft was hauled up over SpaceX's recovery ship Shannon, where Shukla and the other astronauts emerged from the spacecraft, smiling and waving at the cameras.
- The astronauts were helped by the ground staff to get on their feet as they adapted to gravity on the Earth after experiencing weightless conditions during their 20-day trip.

46.NASA-ISRO SATELLITE NISAR LAUNCH ON JULY 30



- The NASA-ISRO joint satellite NISAR will be launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, on July 30 at 5.40 pm.
- According to ISRO, the GSLV-F16 rocket will place the Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite into a 743-km Sun-synchronous orbit with an inclination of 98.4 degrees.
- NISAR will observe the Earth with a swath of 242 km and high spatial resolution, employing SweepSAR technology for the first time.
- The satellite will scan the entire globe and provide all-weather, day-and-night data at 12-day intervals, enabling a wide range of applications.
- NISAR is capable of detecting even minor changes on the Earth's surface, such as ground deformation, movement of ice sheets, and vegetation dynamics.
- Additional applications include sea ice classification, ship detection, shoreline monitoring, storm characterisation, soil moisture changes, surface water resource mapping and monitoring, and disaster response.
- NISAR weighs 2,392 kg and is a unique Earth observation satellite, being the first to use a dual-frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar — NASA's L-band and ISRO's S-band — both deployed via NASA's 12-meter unfurlable mesh reflector antenna, integrated into ISRO's modified I3K satellite bus.
- The NISAR launch reflects over a decade of strong technical collaboration between ISRO and NASA/JPL technical teams.

47.3RD BATCH OF STUDENTS FROM STATE EMBARK ON A JOURNEY TO ISRO

- The third batch of students under the North East Student Programme for Awareness, Reach and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS) has been officially flagged off.
- A total of 12 meritorious students from the districts of Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar, Nalbari, and Udalguri are set to visit the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) headquarters in Bengaluru.
- NE-SPARKS is a joint initiative of the Department of School Education and the Department of Transformation and Development, Government of Assam.

- The broader programme is supported by the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC).
- It aims to take 800 talented science students — 100 each from the eight north-eastern States — to ISRO in a phased manner for exposure and learning.
- The selected students are from classes IX to XII of government and provincialized schools and are chosen based on academic merit and keen interest in science and space.
- During their visit to Bengaluru, students will engage with ISRO scientists, including the Secretary of ISRO.
- They will also explore key ISRO facilities such as the MOX Control Centre, ISSDC (Indian Space Science Data Centre), URSC (U R Rao Satellite Centre), ISITE (ISRO Satellite Integration and Testing Establishment), and the Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium.



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DEFENCE

48.2ND SHIP OF PROJECT 17A STEALTH FRIGATE DELIVERED TO NAVY



- The second ship of Project 17A stealth frigate, *Udaygiri*, equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, was delivered to the Indian Navy.
- These multi-mission frigates are capable of operating in a “Blue Water” environment, tackling both conventional and non-conventional threats across India’s maritime interests.
- The hull of a Project 17A ship is 4.54% larger than that of a Project 17 frigate, offering enhanced design and capability.
- Project 17A ships are an upgrade over the Shivalik-class (Project 17) frigates, featuring advanced weapons, sensors, and improved stealth.
- *Udaygiri* is being constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai, and is the second of seven such frigates.
- It was delivered in a record time of 37 months from the date of its launch.
- The remaining five frigates under Project 17A are under various stages of construction at MDL, Mumbai, and GRSE, Kolkata, and will be delivered progressively by the end of 2026.
- The frigate’s weapon suite includes a supersonic surface-to-surface missile system, a medium-range surface-to-air missile system, a 76 mm gun, and close-in weapon systems of 30 mm and 12.7 mm rapid-fire guns.
- Project 17A represents a “quantum leap” in the Indian Navy’s in-house warship design capabilities, developed at the Warship Design Bureau.

49.NEW DELHI: INDIA SPEEDS UP WORK ON AGNI’S BUNKER-BUSTER WARHEAD

- India is accelerating the development of advanced **bunker-buster warheads** as part of a new **variant of the Agni missile system**, aimed at destroying deeply buried and fortified enemy targets.
- The push follows the successful use of similar weapons by the US against Iran’s underground nuclear facilities, prompting India to expedite its own plans.

- Unlike the US system that uses **B2 stealth bombers** to deliver bunker-busters, India’s warhead will be **missile-delivered**, enhancing **cost-effectiveness** and **operational flexibility**.
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is reportedly working on a **modified Agni-5 missile**, which currently has a range of over 5,000 km and typically carries nuclear payloads.
- The new version will carry a **conventional bunker-buster warhead weighing approximately 7,500 kg** and will be capable of penetrating **80–100 metres underground** before detonation.
- These warheads are intended to target **hardened military infrastructure**, including **missile silos**, **command-and-control centres**, and **underground bunkers**.
- Two new variants of the Agni-5 are reportedly in development:
 - One with an **airburst warhead** to target above-ground infrastructure like **runways** and **armoured formations**.
 - Another with a **deep-penetration warhead**, comparable to the US **GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator**.
- Due to the heavier payloads, the range of these variants is expected to be around **2,500 km**, lower than the original Agni-5’s 5,000 km, but sufficient for the intended tactical purposes.
- The missiles are expected to achieve speeds between **Mach 8 and Mach 20**, placing them in the category of **hypersonic weapons** with significantly increased payload delivery capabilities.



50.DEFENCE MINISTRY CLEARS PROCUREMENT PROJECTS WORTH OVER RS 1-LAKH CR

- The Defence Ministry has approved capital acquisition of military hardware and platforms worth approximately ₹1.05 lakh crore.
- The procurement projects were cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- Key approvals include procurement of armoured recovery vehicles, electronic warfare systems, integrated common inventory management systems for the tri-services, and surface-to-air missiles.

- These acquisitions aim to enhance mobility, improve air defence, streamline supply chain management, and strengthen overall operational preparedness of the armed forces.
- Additional approvals were given for procurement of mine counter-measure vessels, super rapid gun mounts, and submersible autonomous vessels.
- Emphasising the role of emerging technologies in modern warfare, 33 niche technologies will be adopted by the armed forces by 2030.
- ₹390 crore has been allocated for research and development, infrastructure development, and training over the next five years.
- These initiatives are aimed at transforming the Indian Army into a future-ready force.
- Niche technologies refer to specialised technological innovations designed for specific, often narrow, applications within the broader defence industry.

51. INDIGENOUSLY BUILT DIVING SUPPORT VESSEL DELIVERED TO NAVY



- **Nistar** is the first indigenously designed and constructed **Diving Support Vessel (DSV)** delivered to the **Indian Navy**.
- It was built by **Hindustan Shipyard Ltd** and handed over on **July 8** at **Visakhapatnam**.
- The ship will serve as the ‘**mother ship**’ for a **Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV)**, capable of rescuing submarine crew in underwater emergencies.
- It is highly specialised and can undertake **deep-sea diving and rescue operations**, a capability possessed by only a few navies worldwide.
- Nistar is designed and built in accordance with the classification rules of the **Indian Register of Shipping (IRS)**.
- The name ‘**Nistar**’ is derived from **Sanskrit**, meaning *liberation, rescue, or salvation*.
- The vessel is **118 metres** long and weighs approximately **10,000 tonnes**.
- It is equipped with **state-of-the-art diving systems**, including saturation diving capability up to a **depth of 300 metres**.
- Additionally, it features a **side diving stage** to support diving operations up to a **depth of 75 metres**.

52. LARGEST-EVER MILITARY DRILL KICKS OFF IN AUSTRALIA



- **Talisman Sabre 2025**, the largest-ever iteration of the military exercise, began in Sydney with participation from over 35,000 troops.
- Originally launched in 2005 as a bilateral exercise between Australia and the US, it has now expanded to include 19 nations.
- This year's opening ceremony was held on board **HMAS Adelaide**, an Australian naval ship, at Garden Island in Sydney.
- Over the next three weeks, military personnel will operate across multiple Australian regions including Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales, and Christmas Island.
- For the first time, activities will extend beyond Australia, with operations in Papua New Guinea; Malaysia and Vietnam will attend as observers.
- Participating nations include Australia, the US, Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom.
- **Talisman Sabre 2025** will involve live-fire drills, field training exercises, amphibious landings, ground force manoeuvres, and coordinated air and maritime operations.
- Vice Admiral Justin Jones, Australian Chief of Joint Operations, described the exercise as an “unrivalled opportunity to train together” across all military domains — land, sea, air, space, and cyber.
- US Army Pacific Deputy Commanding General Lieutenant General Joel B Vowell called it a “powerful demonstration” of collective strength, trust, interoperability, and readiness across the Indo-Pacific.

53. INDIA CARRIES OUT SUCCESSFUL TRIAL OF AKASH PRIME MISSILE IN LADAKH

- India has successfully test-fired the indigenously developed Akash Prime missile in Ladakh, customised to operate at altitudes above 4,500 metres.
- The achievement is significant as it follows the “exceptional performance” of India’s indigenous air defence systems during Operation Sindoor.
- Akash Prime is an upgraded variant of the Akash weapon system built for the Indian Army.
- The test-firing in Ladakh is notable due to its proximity to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The weapon system includes the latest upgrades such as an indigenously developed radio frequency seeker.
- Based on operational feedback from users, various upgrades have been implemented to enhance operational effectiveness.
- The successful test demonstrates the advantage of the indigenous defence ecosystem.
- India also successfully test-fired the short-range ballistic missiles Prithvi-II and Agni-I from the Integrated Test Range off the Odisha Coast.
- These launches validated all operational and technical parameters.
- The tests were conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command.
- Agni-I was test-fired from Abdul Kalam Island.
- Prithvi-II was test-fired from Launch Pad No-III of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, shortly after Agni-I.

54.DRONE SQUADRON OF BSF ALONG INDO-PAK BORDER:



- The Border Security Force (BSF) is establishing its first-ever “drone squadron” for deployment along the India-Pakistan border.
- This move follows lessons learned from Operation Sindoor and the need to counter lethal UAV attacks.
- The squadron will be stationed at select Border Outposts (BOPs) along the western frontier.
- It will consist of reconnaissance, surveillance, and attack drones, operated by specially-trained personnel.
- The control room for the squadron will be located at the BSF’s western command headquarters in Chandigarh.
- The BSF is primarily responsible for securing the India-Pakistan International Border (IB).
- The decision to raise the drone unit was taken after a review of the BSF’s vulnerabilities and operational gaps following Operation Sindoor.

- Operation Sindoor was a retaliatory mission launched on May 7 against terrorist and defence bases in Pakistan and PoK after the April 22 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 people.
- The BSF played an active role in Operation Sindoor, working alongside the Indian Army.
- In response to the operation, Pakistan deployed thousands of drones, including swarm drones, to target Indian military and civilian sites along the western border.
- The new BSF drone squadron will be deployed across key BOPs along the 2,000+ km-long India-Pakistan border, covering Jammu, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.
- The squadron will use a mix of small and large drones for surveillance, reconnaissance, and attack purposes, particularly during operations or “hot war” scenarios like Operation Sindoor.
- Small teams of 2-3 trained personnel will be posted at designated vulnerable BOPs to operate the drones.
- Procurement of necessary drones and equipment is underway, and personnel are being trained in batches.
- Following the May 10 drone attack, the BSF has also begun reinforcing its defences and bunkers along the Pakistan border to protect against drone-delivered bombs and explosives.

55.DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRES DRONE-LAUNCHED MISSILE



- A drone-launched precision-guided missile was successfully test-fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at a test range in Andhra Pradesh.
- The missile is an upgraded version of the earlier ULPGM-V2 and is now named ULPGM-V3.
- The ULPGM-V3 features a high-definition dual-channel seeker capable of engaging a wide range of targets.
- It is designed for use in both plain and high-altitude areas.
- The missile offers day-and-night operational capability and is equipped with a two-way data link to enable post-launch target updates.
- It comes with three modular warhead configurations:
 - Anti-armour warhead for destroying modern armoured vehicles with rolled homogeneous armour.
 - “Penetration-cum-blast” warhead designed for anti-bunker applications.
- The missile was launched from an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) developed indigenously by Newspace Research Technologies, a Bengaluru-based Indian start-up.

- DRDO is working on integrating the UPLGM system with long-range, high-endurance UAVs from other Indian companies as well.
- Adani Defence, Bharat Dynamics Ltd, and over 30 MSMEs and start-ups have contributed to the success of this indigenous missile project.

56. APACHE CHOPPERS: A GAME-CHANGER FOR INDIAN ARMY'S FIREPOWER



- In a significant boost to India's combat readiness along its western frontier, the Indian Army has officially inducted the first three of six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters this month.
- These helicopters are positioned for frontline operations near the Pakistan border.
- Painted in desert camouflage and built partly by a Tata-Boeing joint venture in Hyderabad, the Apaches will be based in Jodhpur.

- They enhance the Army's rotorcraft fleet, which already includes indigenous Dhruv Rudra and Prachand helicopters.
- The Apache stands out due to its lethal firepower, advanced technology, and battlefield survivability.
- It is armed with a 30 mm M230 chain gun, Hydra 70 rockets, AGM-114 Hellfire anti-tank missiles, and Stinger air-to-air missiles.
- The Apache is capable of neutralising enemy tanks, helicopters, UAVs, and other threats under intense combat conditions.
- Equipped with the AN/APG-78 Longbow radar, mounted above the rotor, it can track 128 ground targets and prioritise 16 at once.
- This radar enables the Apache to remain hidden behind terrain while engaging targets with precision.
- Integration with live drone feeds and networked combat systems provides real-time battlefield awareness to commanders.
- The induction follows Operation Sindoor, amid ongoing tensions along the western border.
- The Apache introduces a powerful deterrent against enemy armour, terror camps, and logistics infrastructure.
- With armoured cockpits, crash-resistant systems, and hardened rotor blades, it is built to survive and retaliate.
- For India's military planners, the Apache not only adds firepower but also transforms the dynamics of the battlefield.



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SPORTS

57.SHUBMAN GILL'S HISTORIC 269* – A RECORD-BREAKING KNOCK FOR THE AGES:



• Firsts and Milestones:

- ✓ Gill scored 269 not out off 387 balls, marking his maiden Test double century.
- ✓ He became the first Indian to score 250 or more in a Test outside the Indian subcontinent.
- ✓ He is the first Indian and Asian captain to score a double century in a Test in England, surpassing Tillakaratne Dilshan's 193 at Lord's in 2011.
- ✓ This is now the highest score by an Indian captain in Tests played away from home, breaking Virat Kohli's 200 against the West Indies in 2016.
- ✓ Gill also set the record for the highest-ever score by an Indian in England, overtaking Sunil Gavaskar's 221 (1979) and Rahul Dravid's 217 (2002), both at The Oval.

• Elite Captaincy Feats:

- ✓ Gill became only the sixth Indian captain to score a Test double century, after MAK Pataudi, Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni, and Virat Kohli.
- ✓ He is just the second Indian captain to score a double century in an away Test, following Kohli's 200 in 2016.
- ✓ He reached the double century in just his third innings as captain, tying with Sunil Gavaskar as the fastest Indian skipper to do so.

• Age-Based Records:

- ✓ At 25 years and 298 days, Gill is the second-youngest Indian captain to score a Test double century, only behind MAK Pataudi who did so at 23 years and 39 days.
- ✓ He is the third Indian captain to score 150 or more in a Test before the age of 26, joining Pataudi and Tendulkar.

- ✓ Only Graeme Smith of South Africa scored a Test double century in England at a younger age than Gill.

• Elite Company and Comparisons:

- ✓ Gill is the sixth Indian player to score 250 or more in a Test innings, joining Virender Sehwag, VVS Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Karun Nair, and Virat Kohli.

- ✓ He is the fourth Indian to score centuries in both Tests and ODIs as captain, after Sehwag, Tendulkar, and Rohit Sharma.

- ✓ His 269* surpassed Kohli's 254 not out against South Africa in 2019, becoming the highest score by an Indian captain in Tests.

- ✓ He also broke Mohammad Azharuddin's record of 179 in Manchester in 1990, which was the previous best by an Indian captain in England.

• Historical Context in England:

- ✓ There have been only 12 double centuries by Test captains in England. Of those, seven were by visiting captains. Gill now joins that elite list.

List of Test records broken by Gill:

- 7th highest score by Indian batter
- Highest score by an Indian captain
- Highest score by an Indian batter in England
- Highest score by an Indian captain in away Test
- 2nd Indian captain to score double century in away Test
- 6th Indian captain to score double century
- 2nd-youngest Indian captain to score double century

Highest scores by India batters in Tests:

- ◆ Virender Sehwag - 319 vs South Africa (Chennai, 2008)
- ◆ Virender Sehwag - 309 vs Pakistan (Multan, 2004)
- ◆ Karun Nair - 303* vs England (Chennai, 2016)
- ◆ Virender Sehwag - 293 vs Sri Lanka (Mumbai, 2009)
- ◆ VVS Laxman - 281 vs Australia (Kolkata, 2001)
- ◆ Rahul Dravid - 270 vs Pakistan (Rawalpindi, 2004)
- ◆ Shubman Gill - 269 vs England (Birmingham, 2025)
- ◆ Virat Kohli - 254* vs South Africa (Pune, 2019)
- ◆ Virender Sehwag - 254 vs Pakistan (Lahore, 2006)
- ◆ Sachin Tendulkar - 248* vs Bangladesh (Dhaka, 2004)

58.PRESIDENT MURMU UNVEILS DURAND CUP TROPHY:



- President Droupadi Murmu unveiled and flagged off the trophies of the **Durand Cup 2025** at a grand ceremony held at the **Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre**.

- In her remarks, she highlighted that sports promote **discipline, determination, and team spirit**, and serve as a powerful tool for **national integration**.

- The **2025 edition of the Durand Cup**, Asia's oldest football tournament, will be held between **July 15 and August 23**.

- Matches will be hosted across **six venues in five states**: West Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Jharkhand.

- **Kokrajhar in Assam** will host matches for the **third consecutive year**, while **Jamshedpur (Jharkhand)** and **Shillong (Meghalaya)** continue as hosts after debuting last year.
- Since shifting its base from New Delhi to **Kolkata in 2019**, the tournament has grown in stature and is now in its **sixth consecutive edition in the city**.
- The tournament has expanded from **16 to 24 teams**, with participation from **all Indian Super League (ISL) clubs**.
- Organised by the **Eastern Command of the Indian Army** on behalf of the three Services, the Durand Cup uniquely pits **Services teams against top Indian clubs**, and has seen **foreign military teams** participate in recent years.
- Matches will be held at:
 - **Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan** and **Kishore Bharati Krirangan** (Kolkata)
 - **JRD Tata Sports Complex** or **Morabadi Stadium** (Jharkhand)
 - **Khuman Lampak Stadium** (Imphal)
 - **Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium** (Shillong)
 - **SAI Stadium** (Kokrajhar)
- **NorthEast United FC** enters the 2025 edition as **defending champions**, having won their **maiden title** last year by defeating **Mohun Bagan Super Giant**.
- The **full list of participating teams and groupings** is expected to be announced later this week.

59.NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS ANNOUNCED IN HONOUR OF BHOGESWAR BARUAH



- The Assam Olympic Association (AOA) has announced the institution of the National Sports Awards in honour of legendary athlete Bhogeswar Baruah, the first Arjuna Award winner from the Northeast.
- The announcement was made by AOA president and Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal during a press conference in Guwahati.
- The awards aim to celebrate Bhogeswar Baruah's legacy, who overcame immense challenges and limited resources to win gold for India.
- The awards will include:
 - Rs 5 lakh for the Best Sportsperson of the Year
 - Rs 3 lakh for the Lifetime Achievement Award

- Rs 2 lakh for the Emerging Player of the Year
- The first award ceremony will be held on September 3 in Sivasagar, the home district of Bhogeswar Baruah.
- A selection committee has been formed, which includes:
 - The sports secretary of the Assam Government
 - Former India volleyball captain Abhijit Bhattacharya
 - Arjuna awardee and former international table tennis player Monalisa Baruah Mehta

60.TENDULKAR'S PORTRAIT UNVEILED IN MCC MUSEUM AT LORD'S



- A portrait of cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar was unveiled at the MCC Museum at Lord's in London before the start of the third Test between India and England.
- The portrait was painted by Stuart Pearson Wright, based on a photograph he took of Tendulkar at his home 18 years ago.
- The portrait will be on display in the MCC Museum until later this year, after which it will be moved to the iconic Pavilion.
- Stuart Pearson Wright has previously painted portraits of other Indian cricket legends including Kapil Dev, Bishan Singh Bedi, and Dilip Vengsarkar.
- The Lord's Portrait Programme has been running in its current form for over 30 years.
- MCC has been collecting art and artefacts since the Victorian era and established a dedicated museum in the 1950s, making it the oldest sporting museum in Europe.
- The Long Room Gallery at Lord's is considered the most iconic gallery in the world of sport.
- The MCC's collection currently holds about 3,000 pictures, including nearly 300 portraits.

61.ICC FORMS WORKING COMMITTEE TO EXPLORE TWO-TIER TEST SYSTEM

- An eight-member working group has been formed by the ICC to explore the restructuring of Test cricket into a two-tier system.
- The group is headed by ICC's new CEO Sanjog Gupta, with the panel being set up during the ICC's annual general meeting in Singapore, chaired by Jay Shah.
- Other key members include ECB chief executive Richard Gould and Cricket Australia CEO Todd Greenberg.

- The proposed changes, if approved, would take effect in the next World Test Championship cycle (2027–2029), expanding the format from nine teams to two divisions of six teams each, incorporating a promotion and relegation mechanism.
- The presence of representatives from ECB and CA, both strong advocates of the two-tier model, indicates a high likelihood of its implementation.
- Cricket Australia has been pushing for a model where Australia, England, and India face each other twice every three years, up from the current two series every four years.
- The working group has been tasked to submit its recommendations to the ICC board by the end of the year.
- Meanwhile, the revival of the Champions League T20 (CLT20), a club-based international T20 tournament, is being actively considered by the ICC.
- Discussions for the tournament's comeback are being led by the cricket boards of India, Australia, and England.
- The proposal reportedly received backing from key member nations at the ICC's AGM, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*.
- The last edition of CLT20 was held in India in 2014, where Chennai Super Kings defeated Kolkata Knight Riders in the final at Bengaluru.
- That edition featured three Indian teams, two each from Australia and South Africa, and one team each from Pakistan, West Indies, and New Zealand.
- A total of six editions of the CLT20 were held between 2009–10 and 2014–15, with four tournaments hosted in India and two in South Africa.
- The tournament was won twice each by Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians, and once each by Australia's New South Wales and Sydney Sixers.

62. BCCI WILL BE COVERED IN NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE BILL

- The BCCI will fall under the ambit of the proposed **National Sports Governance Bill**, which is set to be introduced in Parliament.
- Even though BCCI doesn't rely on government funding, it will have to seek recognition from the **proposed National Sports Board (NSB)**.
- Like other National Sports Federations (NSFs), BCCI will remain autonomous, but any disputes—including those

related to elections and selections—will be addressed by the **National Sports Tribunal**.

- The Bill emphasizes that the **government will act as a facilitator**, not as an enforcer of control over NSFs.
- The BCCI comes under this framework following cricket's inclusion in the **2028 Los Angeles Olympics** in the T20 format.
- The **Sports Governance Bill** aims to establish a robust governance structure to ensure **timely elections, accountability, athlete welfare, and reduced litigation** in Indian sports.
- The **NSB**, appointed entirely by the central government, will have wide powers, including the ability to **grant or suspend recognition** of NSFs for reasons like electoral malpractice or financial irregularities.
- On the controversial **age cap**, administrators aged **70 to 75 years** can contest elections if not objected to by their respective international bodies.
- The Bill respects the **Olympic Charter and International Federation statutes** in electoral matters.
- The **NSB** will consist of a chairperson and members selected by the government from persons of integrity and ability, based on recommendations from a **search-cum-selection committee**.
- This selection panel will include:
 - The **Cabinet Secretary or Secretary Sports** (Chairperson),
 - The **Director General of Sports Authority of India**,
 - Two experienced sports administrators, and
 - One eminent sportsperson who is a **Dronacharya, Khel Ratna, or Arjuna awardee**.
- The **National Sports Tribunal** will ensure quick resolution of disputes to prevent **career damage to athletes**; currently, around 350 sports-related court cases involve the Ministry.
- The NSB can also **constitute ad-hoc panels** to manage sports federations if an NSF is suspended.
- It will collaborate with **international sports bodies** for athlete welfare and issue guidelines to NSFs to meet global standards—responsibilities so far handled by the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)**.
- The NSB has the power to **de-recognise national bodies** that fail to conduct elections or engage in gross electoral irregularities.

NORTH-EAST & ASSAM

63.GOV'T FORMS PANEL TO SUGGEST REMEDY TO CHECK DROPOUTS



- The Assam government has acknowledged that **high dropout rates at the secondary level** remain a serious concern.
- A **committee** has been formed under the leadership of **Additional Secretary Krishna Baruah** to investigate the issue and recommend **remedial measures**.
- The **Education Department** is exploring a **targeted, incentive-based scheme**, modeled on the lines of 'Nijut Moina', to **address economic, social, and geographic barriers** to school retention, especially among **vulnerable and marginalized groups**.
- The committee will:
 - Conduct a **detailed study** of secondary school dropouts.
 - **Identify stages** where dropouts are most likely to occur.
 - Analyze **disaggregated data** based on **class, gender, geography, and socioeconomic status**.
 - Assess **key contributing factors** such as **early marriage, poverty, domestic responsibilities, and lack of access to schools**.
- The committee includes members from:
 - **UNICEF**
 - **Central Square Foundation**
 - Four officials from the **State Education Department**
- The committee has been instructed to **submit its report by August 15**, with clear recommendations on the **design, structure, and quantum of incentives** for the proposed scheme.
- The final report will help the **Chief Minister** and the state government to make **informed decisions** to tackle the dropout issue effectively.
- According to data:
 - Out of every 100 boys in Assam, **only 57.4%** completed secondary education in 2023, down from **62.6% in 2019**.

- Among girls, **63.7%** completed secondary education in 2023, compared to **64.6% in 2019**.
- Assam ranks **third from the bottom** in secondary level dropout rates nationally, after **Bihar and Meghalaya**.
- As per the **UDISE 2023–24 report**:
 - Assam's **secondary dropout rate** is **19.46%** (second highest after Bihar at 20.86%).
 - At the **middle level**, Assam ranks fourth with a **dropout rate of 8.16%**, behind Bihar (25.95%), Meghalaya (12.41%), and Jharkhand (9%).
- In the **Performance Grading Index (PGI)** released by the **Union Ministry**, Assam's score in the 'Access' domain dropped from **50.2 in 2022–23** to **46.0 in 2023–24**, ranking **third from the bottom**, just above Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

64.INDIA PAVILION AT US FOOD SHOW CELEBRATES 200 YEARS OF ASSAM TEA:



- The **India Pavilion** at the **Summer Fancy Food Show 2025** was inaugurated on **Sunday** at the **Jacob K. Javits Center** in **New York** by **Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota** and **Consul General Binaya S. Pradhan**.
- The event marked the celebration of **200 years of Assam Tea**, a milestone recognizing its global significance in **flavour, strength, heritage, livelihoods, and economy**, since its discovery in **1823 along the banks of the Brahmaputra River**.
- Four **Assam-based startups** were part of the India Pavilion, showcasing innovation in the tea sector.
- **Chief Secretary Ravi Kota** emphasized the crucial role of **small tea growers** in Assam and the **transformative impact of bought-leaf factories** in supporting the tea ecosystem.
- He highlighted the **Guwahati Tea Auction Centre** as a key enabler in the industry. It is:
 - The **largest in India by volume**
 - Trading **over 250 million kg annually**
 - Operating as a **digital, transparent, and regulated platform** providing global buyers access to Assam Tea.
- In **2024–25**, Assam exported **over 100 million kg of tea** to **more than 90 countries**, earning approximately **USD 285 million** in export revenue.

- Major export destinations include the:
 - United Kingdom
 - Russia
 - United Arab Emirates
 - Germany
 - Iraq
 - China
- The export figures affirm Assam’s position as a **trusted supplier** to both **traditional and emerging global tea markets**.
- The **Assam government** announced plans to host the **‘Heritage to Wellness’ Tea Showcase** across various U.S. locations.
- The government also plans to **sign MoUs** with:
 - American universities
 - Retailers
 - Innovation platforms
- These partnerships aim to promote **traceability**, enhance **sustainability**, and establish **long-term collaborations** in the global tea industry.

65.HAHILA BEEL: WETLAND OF LEGENDS, SWANS, AND FORGOTTEN STORIES



- Hahila Beel**, a prominent wetland in Goalpara district, has long been **misrecorded** as **‘Hasila Beel’** due to **local pronunciation variations** and **errors in English transliteration**.
- According to **Madhuri Bharali**, an 80-year-old respected **former teacher** and **renowned cultural figure** from Goalpara, the **correct name is ‘Hahila Beel’**, (called Hasila beel) as preserved in **oral traditions and local memory**.
- She attributes the **misnaming** to **administrative oversight** and the **gradual erosion of oral heritage** from formal documentation.
- The name **‘Hahila’** originates from the Assamese word **‘haah’**, meaning **swan**, symbolizing the large flocks that once graced the **pristine, untouched wetland**.
- Once a **serene and sacred landscape**, Hahila Beel has suffered **degradation and encroachment** over the years.
- Recently, the **Assam government** claimed to have **lawfully reclaimed 495 acres of government-notified wetland** from **long-standing encroachment** in the area.
- The state government has also announced plans to **transform Hahila Beel into an eco-tourism destination**, aiming to restore its **ecological and cultural significance**.

66.ASSAM TO CELEBRATE WORLD VOLLEYBALL DAY WITH WEEK-LONG ACTIVITIES

- The **Brahmaputra Volleyball League (BVL)** will partner with the **Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB)** and the **global volleyball community** to celebrate **World Volleyball Day** on **July 7**.
- World Volleyball Day** commemorates the **invention of volleyball** by **William G. Morgan** on **July 7, 1895**, with the first public demonstration held at the **YMCA in Holyoke, Massachusetts**.
- The **FIVB** has officially declared **July 7 as World Volleyball Day**, with **over 220 countries** expected to participate in the global celebration.
- BVL**, recognized as the **only grassroots volleyball initiative in the world** to receive the **Silver Certification of Excellence** by the **FIVB Volleyball Foundation**, will hold a **week-long celebration from July 1 to 7**.
- The celebration will span **over 150 centres across 32 districts of Assam**, engaging more than **12,000 children, volunteers, officials, parents, and supporters**.
- Activities during the week include:
 - Essay writing and painting competitions
 - Tree plantation drives
 - Cycle rallies
 - 3 vs 3 volleyball matches in all BVL-affiliated villages
- On **July 7**, BVL coaches and centre heads will attempt to **introduce volleyball to over 3,000 first-time players**, including both **children and adults**.
- The initiative seeks to **deepen community engagement** and promote **volleyball as a tool for unity, fitness, and empowerment** in rural Assam.
- The **BVL** continues to be a **model for grassroots sports development**, emphasizing **teamwork, resilience, and community spirit** through volleyball.

67.ALL-TIME HIGH PADDY PROCUREMENT IN STATE

- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stated that Assam has recorded its highest-ever paddy procurement, purchasing nearly 7 lakh metric tonnes of the foodgrain.
- This marks more than a two-fold increase compared to the previous season.
- The Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2024-25 concluded with a record paddy procurement of 6.97 lakh metric tonnes – the highest ever.
- In comparison, during KMS 2023-24, the State had procured only 3.14 lakh metric tonnes.
- In KMS 2022-23, paddy procurement stood at 5.92 lakh metric tonnes.
- This achievement reflects the State’s commitment to connecting farmers to markets and ensuring they receive the Minimum Support Price (MSP) they deserve.

- The State had earlier set a procurement target of 5,85,500 metric tonnes for the 2024-25 KMS.
- Sarma highlighted that Assam's agricultural products are now catering to the global market due to their high quality and nutrient-rich content.
- Recently, farmers from Majuli expanded their market reach to the Middle East and EU by exporting 267 metric tonnes of Red Rice.
- This initiative enabled them to earn higher profits and helped in establishing Brand Assam globally.

68. ASSAM BOXERS SHINE AT ELITE WOMEN'S BOXING TOURNAMENT



- Assam pugilists Lovlina Borgohain, Ankushita Boro, and Gitimoni Gogoi delivered outstanding performances at the Elite Women's Boxing Tournament held at Saroor Nagar Indoor Stadium, Hyderabad.
- Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain, representing the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), was crowned champion in the 75kg weight category, winning the final by walkover after her opponent Lashu Yadav (RSPB) withdrew due to injury.
- Former Youth World Champion Ankushita Boro, part of the TOPS development squad, clinched the gold in the 65kg category after defeating Railways' Shashi in a closely contested 3:2 split decision final.
- Gitimoni Gogoi, representing SAI National Centre of Excellence (NCOE), earned a silver medal in the 70kg category after a strong performance, narrowly losing to Delhi's Shivani in the final.
- The tournament featured top-level national and international boxers and served as a crucial platform for selection to upcoming events.
- All gold and silver medallists from the tournament, including the Assam trio, will be invited to the national training camp in Patiala as per the Boxing Federation of India's selection criteria.
- The event was a key trial for international competitions, including the World Boxing Championships in Liverpool and the World Boxing Cup Finals in New Delhi.
- Railways Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) emerged as the top-performing team at the tournament, securing nine medals – three gold, three silver, and three bronze.

- The performances of Lovlina, Ankushita, and Gitimoni showcased Assam's growing prominence in Indian women's boxing.

69. CM INAUGURATES PROJECTS IN GOLAGHAT, LAYS FOUNDATION FOR RS 130-CRORE WATER SUPPLY SCHEME



- Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma visited Golaghat to inaugurate several key development projects in the district.
- He began his visit with a stop at **Sri Sri Athkhelia Namghar**, where he lit a lamp and offered prayers for the well-being of the people of Assam.
- The CM assured full support from the Assam Government for the future development of the Namghar, bringing encouragement to devotees and the local community.
- Dr. Sarma inaugurated the **newly-constructed sports complex** of Golaghat Government Bezbaruah Higher Secondary School and the **modern Golaghat Indoor Stadium**, ushering in a new era for sports in the region.
- The sports complex is expected to boost local sports development, while the indoor stadium will offer **state-of-the-art facilities** to athletes and enthusiasts.
- The Chief Minister also **laid the foundation stone for a ₹130 crore water supply project**, aimed at delivering **24x7 clean drinking water to 55,000 residents**, sourcing water from the Dhansiri river.
- This water project is anticipated to be a **major advancement in public health infrastructure** for Golaghat.
- Additionally, the CM visited the **Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL)** as part of his itinerary.

70. ASSAM, MEGHALAYA BEGIN BORDER PILLAR WORKS

- Survey teams and administrative officers of Assam and Meghalaya today started the installation of border pillars along the inter-state boundary at the Hahim area of Boko in Kamrup district.
- The pillars are being installed along the banks of the Gijang and Tirchang rivers, covering Rangthali, Umshek (Mathapota), Maspara, Malapara, Ranighar, Salpara, Thutia Bazaar and Rangsapara areas, as part of the efforts initiated by

the Assam and Meghalaya governments to resolve their decades-long boundary dispute.

- Teams from both the states will also survey the Gijang area adjoining Hahim shortly for the installation of border pillars, an official said.
- These areas have witnessed untoward incidents arising out of the border dispute since Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as a separate state in 1972.
- After several rounds of discussions between the two states under the leadership of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma, 12 stretches along the border were identified as “areas of difference” and six of them were settled in the first phase on March 29, 2022, which included Hahim, Gijang, Tarabari, Bakalapara, Khanapara-Pilinkata and Ratachera under Kamrup, Kamrup (Metro) and Cachar districts of Assam and West Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi and East Jaintia Hills districts of Meghalaya.
- In June 2021, the two states had adopted a “give-and-take” policy to start the process of resolving the boundary dispute by constituting three regional committees each, which led to the signing of an agreement on March 29, 2022 in New Delhi in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, resolving the border dispute in the six sectors.
- The today’s development follows a decision reached by the two chief ministers on June 2 last to erect border pillars before Independence Day this year in the areas where the border dispute has been settled.
- The local residents of the area have lauded the government action and described the erection of border pillars as a historic moment.

71.FIRST GLOBAL ASSAMESE CONFERENCE 2026 TO UNITE DIASPORA TO BE HELD:



- The **First Global Assamese Conference** will be held from **January 16 to 18, 2026**, at **IIT Guwahati**.
- This inaugural three-day event aims to foster **knowledge exchange, collaboration, and global diaspora engagement** focused on Assam’s development.
- The conference is part of the **Global Assamese Engagement Initiative**, which seeks to mobilize the Assamese diaspora to contribute to the state's progress.
- Supported by individuals and organizations globally and locally, the initiative emphasizes **grassroots, time-bound, and measurable development actions**.

- The annual conference will serve as both a **networking hub** and a **platform for setting and reviewing development agendas**.
- **Day 1: The Historical Tapestry of Assam**
 - Focus on Assam’s **rich historical heritage**: ancient civilizations, medieval conflicts, colonial transitions.
 - Sessions include a **welcome address by a historian**, a **keynote on the Kamarupa kingdom**, and a **panel on archaeological findings**.
 - Workshops will cover the **Ahom Dynasty, medieval cultural developments**, and **colonial to modern Assam**.
 - The day ends with a **roadmap for preserving historical heritage** and **stakeholder pledge commitments**.
- **Day 2: Sustainable Development Strategy in Assam**
 - Brings together **policymakers, experts, and stakeholders** to strategize on **SDGs** tailored to Assam.
 - Sessions include a **keynote on global and national SDG frameworks**, and panels on **climate change, sustainable agriculture**, and **economic growth**.
 - Workshops focus on:
 - **Climate action and disaster resilience**
 - **Sustainable agriculture and food security**
 - **Inclusive growth and employment**
 - The evening session will draft a **comprehensive SDG roadmap** with **partnership pledges**.
- **Day 3: Engaging the Global Assamese Diaspora**
 - Focus on mobilizing the **diaspora’s talent and resources** for Assam’s development.
 - Keynote address by a **prominent diaspora leader**, and panel discussions on **education, healthcare, and technology**.
 - Workshops will explore:
 - **Education & skill development** (scholarships, mentorship)
 - **Healthcare & medical outreach** (telemedicine, medical camps)
 - **Technology & innovation** (startups, knowledge transfer)
 - Presentations on successful diaspora-led projects and a **diaspora engagement roadmap** will conclude the day.
- **Additional Highlights**
 - **Networking opportunities** with leaders in trade, education, health, investment, and tourism.
 - Launch of the **First Ever Global NRA Expert Database**, inviting global Assamese to register and contribute.
 - The **Community Recognition Award** will honour outstanding Assamese diaspora contributors (nominations are open).
 - Early bird registration available for interested participants.
- **Distinguished Speakers and Hosts Include:**
 - **Dr. Amarjyoti Choudhury, Dr. Pitambar Dev Goswami, Pabitra Margherita, Firoz Hussain, and Dr. Randhir Thakur** (CEO & MD, Tata Electronics).

- Host committee includes **global conveners** and **subcommittees** focused on programme planning, diaspora outreach, and local coordination.
- This conference promises to be a **historic, collaborative effort** to strengthen Assam's global connections and drive sustainable, inclusive growth.

72.GAUHATI UNIVERSITY LEADS AI WORKSHOP TO DIGITALLY PRESERVE NE INDIA'S LANGUAGES:



- Assam's Education Minister Dr. Ranaj Pegu highlighted the transition from traditional practices to a digital era, emphasizing AI and technology's role in shaping a transformative future.
- He made these remarks during the inauguration of a three-day national workshop on 'Parts of Speech (PoS) Tagging for North East Indian Languages' at GUIST Seminar Hall on Monday.
- The event was organised by the Department of Information Technology in collaboration with the Centre for Research and Development in Digital and Endangered Local Languages (CRD-DELL).
- The workshop aims to integrate regional languages such as Assamese, Bodo, and other scheduled and non-scheduled languages into digital ecosystems.
- PoS tagging, the core focus of the event, involves assigning grammatical labels like nouns or verbs to words, enabling AI systems to understand and process language.
- This foundation is essential for building AI-based tools like translation apps, voice recognition systems, and educational platforms that support Northeast Indian languages.
- Distinguished guests included Prof. Utpal Sarma (Registrar), Prof. Shikhar Kumar Sarma (Dean, Faculty of IT), and Prof. Dipti Mishra Sharma from IIIT Hyderabad, who shared expertise in computational linguistics.
- Over the next three days, participants will explore practical applications of PoS tagging to enhance communication tools, educational resources, and preservation of endangered dialects.
- The workshop also envisions innovations like multilingual chatbots, digital archives, and localized content that can keep languages like Assamese and Bodo vibrant in the digital era.
- Gauhati University's initiative showcases a commitment to bridging ancient linguistic heritage with modern technological advancements, ensuring cultural preservation through digital means.

73.SDG INDEX IN NE: NONE OF ASSAM DISTRICTS IN TOP TEN:

- None from Assam feature in the top ten districts of Northeast in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index, as per the latest district-level assessment.
- Dibrugarh is the top-ranked district in Assam, but it stands at 17th position among 121 districts in the Northeastern region.
- Hnahthial (Mizoram) is the highest-scoring district in the Northeast with 81.43 points, as per the 'North Eastern Region SDG Index 2023-24' published by NITI Aayog, DoNER, and UNDP.
- The top ten performing districts are Hnahthial (Mizoram), Champhai (Mizoram), Gomati (Tripura), Mokokchung (Nagaland), West Tripura (Tripura), Kohima (Nagaland), South Tripura (Tripura), Gangtok (Sikkim), Kolasib (Mizoram), and Dimapur (Nagaland).
- South Salmara-Mankachar in Assam ranks 118 out of 121 NE districts, followed by West Karbi Anglong at 108, Udalguri at 102, Baksa at 97, and Barpeta at 94.
- All districts in Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura fall under the 'Front Runner' category (65–99 points), with no district in the 'Aspirant' (0–49 points) or 'Achiever' (50–64 points) categories.
- In Assam, Dibrugarh scored 74.29 points, followed by Sivasagar (74 points, rank 20), Jorhat (73.79 points, rank 21), and Kamrup Metro (rank 38).
- Geographical characteristics like mountainous terrain, dense forests, and border proximity act as natural barriers to industrial development and infrastructure expansion, especially in eastern Arunachal Pradesh.
- These constraints hinder progress on SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and limit employment opportunities in modern sectors.
- The interlinked nature of SDGs means these infrastructure challenges also impede progress on SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and 4 (Quality Education).
- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, and Nagaland show substantial room for improvement in these areas.
- The region performs below the national average in the indicator of grade 8 students achieving minimum proficiency levels, as per NAS 2021.
- In the Northeast Region, 66% of districts reported values lower than the national average (77%) in student learning outcomes.
- The annual average dropout rate at the secondary level (Class 9–10) is higher than the national average of 14.1% in 100 districts.
- School infrastructure needs significant improvement across the region.
- Forest area has seen a continuous decline over the years, posing environmental concerns.
- As per ISFR 2023, 72 districts reported a reduction in forest cover compared to 2021.
- While access to clean cooking fuel has improved, about 75% of the districts remain below the national average.

- The index assessed 121 out of 131 (92%) districts in the region.
- The second edition of the index used 84 indicators, with data for 41 from Union Government sources and 43 from State sources.

74. GOVERNOR PAYS HOMAGE TO RASESHWAR SAIKIA BARBAYAN



- Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya attended the 17th Raseshwar Saikia Barbayan Sattriya Award 2025 and Indian Classical Dance and Music Festival held at the Sri Sri Madhavdev International Auditorium in Panjabari.
- The event was organized by Sangeet Sattri in collaboration with the Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam.
- Governor Acharya conferred the Raseshwar Saikia Barbayan Sattriya Award 2025 on two eminent artistes — Pt. Rajendra Gangani and Karunadhar Sarma — for their outstanding contributions to Indian classical dance and music.
- In his address, the Governor paid homage to Raseshwar Saikia Barbayan on his birth anniversary, remembering his dedication to Sattriya culture and his lasting impact on Assam's spiritual and artistic heritage.
- He expressed gratitude to the organizers and appreciated Sangeet Sattri's commitment to preserving and promoting Sattriya art since 2009.
- The Governor highlighted the pan-Indian significance of the award, which has been conferred on artistes from across the country, promoting unity beyond regional boundaries.
- He congratulated the 2025 awardees for their lifelong dedication to classical traditions and cultural heritage.
- Reflecting on the philosophical and spiritual depth of Indian music and dance, he noted that from Vedic hymns to Borgeets and bhajans, music has always been a medium of emotional and spiritual expression.
- He mentioned that ancient texts like the Sama Veda and Natya Shastra emphasize the central role of music in Indian civilization, and that Sattriya draws deeply from these Vedic roots.
- He expressed pride in the global recognition of Sattriya as one of India's eight classical dance forms and acknowledged the institution's role in bringing the monastic art to national and international stages.
- The Governor urged the youth to reconnect with their roots and carry forward these cultural traditions in contemporary times.

75. INDIGENOUS CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMME INAUGURATED



- In a vibrant celebration of Assam's indigenous heritage, the state government inaugurated the "Assam's Indigenous Cultural Integration and Exchange Programme" at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra.
- This state-level initiative aims to promote, preserve, and foster cultural exchange among the diverse tribal and indigenous communities of Assam and the Northeast.
- Over 360 youth artistes from 36 indigenous communities across Assam and neighbouring states — including Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh — participated in the inaugural event.
- The two-day cultural workshop provides a common platform for indigenous artistes, artisans, and cultural practitioners, especially those involved in traditional agriculture, environmental conservation, and folk heritage.
- The second phase of the workshop will be held on July 9 at the Kalakshetra auditorium and will feature cultural performances and interactive discussions.
- Sessions will cover topics such as folk dance, music, theatre, fine arts, oral traditions, and culinary culture.
- Artistes will perform in traditional attire, and a showcase of tribal cuisines will highlight the richness of Assam's food culture.
- The event also emphasizes the role of traditional practices in contributing to the socio-economic development of indigenous communities.
- Cultural scholars, musicians, filmmakers, and eminent artistes will participate in discussions to offer academic and creative perspectives on the evolving role of indigenous art forms in contemporary society.
- The final day of the programme will feature a grand cultural showcase by selected artistes.

76. PVT HOSPITALS BARRED FROM WITHHOLDING BODIES OVER BILLS

- The State Cabinet approved that no private hospitals will be allowed to keep a deceased patient's body for more than four hours, even if hospital dues are unpaid by the family.

- Any violation by hospital authorities will attract fines and may lead to suspension of license.
- To address man-elephant conflict, a rapid response team will be formed under the Gaja Mitra scheme in 80 identified conflict hotspots in the State.
- Each rapid response team will consist of eight local residents.
- Provision will be made for alternate food stock for elephants in their natural habitats.
- The Chief Minister stated that additional measures are being explored to promote peaceful coexistence between humans and elephants.
- The bell metal industry of Sarthebari will be reimbursed the State GST share to support local artisans.
- Students appearing for the upcoming HSLC examination will receive a monthly allowance of Rs 300 from November 1 to help them purchase study materials.
- In municipal areas with a population exceeding 1 lakh, new posts will be created for engineers—including environmental, mechanical, and civil engineers—to strengthen urban governance.
- Under Mission Basundhara, more than 3,000 religious institutions and schools have been allotted land, with the process to be completed by August 14.
- The monthly allowance of village heads will be increased from Rs 9,000 to Rs 14,000, effective October 1.
- A monthly allowance of Rs 1,500 will be provided to 'Udashin Bhakats' of Sattras from October 1.
- The allowance for Anganwadi workers and helpers will be raised by Rs 1,500 and Rs 750 respectively.
- The Rabindranath Tagore University at Hojai will be renamed as Rabindranath Thakur Viswavidyalaya.

77. RHINO HORN SAMPLE VERIFICATION PROCESS CONCLUDES IN KAZIRANGA:



- Assam undertook a historic initiative by verifying and reconciling rhino horns stored across treasuries and Forest Department offices, leading to the mass destruction of 2,479 horns on September 22, 2021.
- Out of 2,623 horns reconciled, only those with unique features or those involved in court cases were retained; the rest were burned to dispel myths surrounding rhino horns.
- During the reconciliation process, a small quantity of each horn sample was preserved for future genetic and chemical analysis to support better rhino population management.

- From July 3 to 8, a specialized team began work at Kaziranga under the supervision of the Chief Wildlife Warden of Assam, with the presence of four independent observers: journalist Nilapadma Sharma, activist Uttam Saikia, The Assam Tribune correspondent Debasish Baruah, and WWF-India's Amit Sharma.
- The team operated under the chairmanship of senior forest official Rohini Saikia, and included the DFO of Eastern Assam Wildlife Division Arun Vignesh, forest staff, and NGO representatives.
- The entire operation followed a strict protocol approved by the Chief Wildlife Warden of Assam.
- A total of 2,573 rhino horn samples were verified, segregated, and repackaged into vials for DNA analysis at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
- The entire technical process was recorded and monitored by the independent experts and media representatives.
- Select samples were also retained for chemical analysis to be conducted at a later stage.
- The DNA profiling of rhino horn samples will be done by the WII genetics laboratory under Dr. Samrat Mondol as part of the RhoDIS India programme.
- The aim is to create individual DNA profiles and store them in the RhoDIS India DNA database.
- Further analysis will examine any changes in Short Tandem Repeat (STR) allele frequencies over the years across horn samples from various regions of Assam.
- The standardized protocol for RhoDIS India has been approved by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

78. MEMBA BUDDHISTS OBSERVE 'SMOKE OFFERING' CEREMONY IN ARUNACHAL VILLAGE



- The Gelling village of Arunachal Pradesh hosted the annual 'smoke offering' ceremony (Riwo Sangcho) at the sacred Kepangla Pass, bringing together the Memba Buddhist community in a vibrant expression of spiritual devotion, cultural pride, and harmony with nature.
- Observed on the 15th day of the fifth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar, this age-old ritual is part of a global Buddhist tradition deeply embedded in the Memba community's spiritual heritage.

- The ceremony is conducted each year with reverence, reflecting the Memba people's enduring connection to their ancestral roots.
- Monks and lay practitioners gathered at the Kepangla Stupa, where the aromatic smoke of herbal offerings blended with the pristine mountain air.
- Buddhist chants resonated across the valley as participants dedicated the 'sacred smoke' to guardian deities, enlightened beings, and all sentient life.
- The ritual symbolised prayers for environmental purification, protection of the border lands, and universal peace and well-being.
- The rising smoke represents the removal of obstacles, negative energies, and karmic imprints, offering benefits to both the physical and spiritual realms.
- The annual ceremony stands as a powerful testament to the cultural resilience of the Memba people, who have preserved their sacred Himalayan Buddhist traditions for generations.
- Increasingly recognised beyond the region, the Kepangla ceremony has the potential to serve as a model for spiritual ecology and cultural resilience among remote Himalayan communities.

79. ASSAM LSA HOSTS MEET TO PROMOTE SANCHAR MITRA SCHEME IN ENGINEERING HUBS

- The **Assam License Service Area (LSA)**, under the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**, organized an **interactive session** at **BSNL Bhawan, Guwahati** to promote the **expanded Sanchar Mitra Scheme**.
- The session included heads and representatives from **IIT, IIIT, NIT**, and various **engineering colleges across Assam**.
- The **Sanchar Mitra Scheme**, launched by Union Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia**, aims to engage **student volunteers**—called **Sanchar Mitras**—as **digital ambassadors** to spread awareness about **telecom safety, cybersecurity, and digital empowerment**.
- The session was chaired by **Sunita Chandra**, Advisor at the Office of DG Telecom, New Delhi, who emphasized the role of youth in bridging the gap between telecom initiatives and public awareness.
- **Suresh Puri**, ADG and Head of Assam LSA, described the scheme's three core pillars: **Connect, Educate, and Innovate**, stressing the importance of **public awareness** for secure and responsible telecom usage.
- **Hemendra Kumar Sharma**, DDG (Media), highlighted the urgency of educating citizens about **digital frauds** and **EMF-related concerns**.
- Initially piloted in select institutions, the scheme has now been **scaled for nationwide implementation**.
- **Student volunteers** from telecom, electronics, and computer science backgrounds will receive **expert training** from institutions like the **National Communications Academy–Technology (NCA-T)**.
- Sanchar Mitras will conduct **awareness drives, engage communities, and promote digital literacy**.

- **Outstanding participants** may earn **internships**, roles in **national projects**, and the chance to represent at major forums like the **India Mobile Congress**.
- The event concluded with **strong participation** and enthusiasm from institutional representatives, reinforcing the scheme's alignment with **India's vision of becoming a global telecom innovation hub**.

80. GENETIC ANALYSIS OF 2,573 RHINO HORNS COMPLETED IN KAZIRANGA



- At the **centenary celebration centre** of the forest department in **Kohora, Kaziranga**, a **six-day genetic analysis** process of **rhinoceros horn samples** has been completed.
- This follows Assam's bold initiative (begun on **September 22, 2021**) to **verify the authenticity** of rhino horns stored in **treasuries and forest department stockrooms** across the state.
- A total of **2,623 rhino horns** were collected. Except for those with **unique identifiers** or involved in **ongoing legal cases**, the rest were **publicly burned** at **Rajabari playground, Bokakhat** under **tight security** led by the **Chief Minister of Assam**.
- Prior to destruction, **small samples** of the horns were **preserved for genetic and chemical analysis** to aid in the **scientific management** of the current rhino population.
- Between **July 3 and 8**, a **special team**, authorized by the **Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)**, conducted testing and cataloguing of **2,573 samples** at Kaziranga.
- The samples were repackaged and sent to the **Genetic Research Laboratory** of the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** in **Dehradun** for further analysis.
- The entire procedure was **recorded and monitored** by **independent experts and media representatives** as part of an overseeing committee.
- Some samples were **reserved for future chemical analysis**, as confirmed by the **Divisional Forest Officer (DFO)**.
- **DNA analysis** will be conducted under the supervision of **Dr. Samrat Mondal** at the **WII Genetics Laboratory**, which manages the **RhoDIS India genetic database**.
- The objective is to document the **DNA profile of each rhino horn** and include them in the **RhoDIS India DNA library**.
- Experts believe the analysis will help in detecting **changes in STR allele frequency** across time and regions in Assam.

- The analysis follows the methodology of **RhoDIS India**, a programme launched in **2016** by **WII** and **WWF-India**, aimed at:
 - Enhancing **scientific tools for wildlife crime investigations**.
 - Providing **technical support** for the **scientific management** of India's rhino population.

81.KAZIRANGA'S TREASURES: 1ST GRASSLAND BIRD SURVEY REVEALS THRIVING DIVERSITY



- Kaziranga National Park has conducted its **first-ever Grassland Bird Survey**, identifying **43 species**, including **1 Critically Endangered**, **2 Endangered**, and **6 Vulnerable** species, according to the IUCN Red List.
- The survey also documented **several regional endemic birds**, highlighting Kaziranga's importance as a refuge for avian biodiversity within the **Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot**.
- The report marks a **significant milestone** in the documentation and protection of **grassland-dependent bird species** in the Brahmaputra floodplains.
- It employed a combination of **point count surveys** and **passive acoustic monitoring**, making it the **first dedicated assessment** of grassland avifauna in the region.
- **Ten focal species** were emphasised due to their global threat status or endemism:
 - Bengal Florican
 - Swamp Francolin
 - Finn's Weaver
 - Swamp Grass Babbler
 - Jerdon's Babbler
 - Slender-billed Babbler
 - Black-breasted Parrotbill
 - Marsh Babbler
 - Bristled Grassbird
 - Indian Grassbird
- These species are considered **ecological indicators** of grassland health and integrity.
- The use of **passive acoustic recorders** allowed for **non-invasive, continuous monitoring**, improving detection of **shy and cryptic birds**, especially in inaccessible areas.

- The survey identified **critical grassland habitats** within Kaziranga that support significant populations of **threatened and endemic birds**.
- A key highlight was the discovery of a **breeding colony of the Endangered Finn's Weaver** in the **Kohora Range**, underlining the importance of focused habitat protection.
- The **survey report was released on 11th July** at Kaziranga by the **Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, who praised the park authorities for highlighting lesser-known aspects of biodiversity.
- The report represents a **foundational step** toward **long-term conservation** of grassland birds and calls for **continued ecological monitoring** and **adaptive management**.
- This pioneering initiative reaffirms Kaziranga's status not only as a stronghold for megafauna but also as a **critical hub for avian conservation** in Northeast India.

82.ASSAMESE FILM KIYO GAINS GLOBAL ACCLAIM BEFORE OFFICIAL RELEASE

- In a proud moment for Assam and Tezpur, the film *Kiyo*, based on a drama by 'Natasurya' Phani Sarma and directed by Aparup Agarwala, has won the 'Best First-Time Director Award' at the Berlin Kiez Film Festival before its official release.
- The film connects Assam's cinematic legacy with modern aspirations, reviving a classic work for global audiences.
- The trailer and theme song of the film were launched at Shree Haribilash Movies auditorium in Kumar Gaon, Tezpur.
- The event saw the presence of prominent figures from Assam's cultural and literary communities.
- Director Aparup Agarwala also launched a historical novel titled *Cheng*, written by late playwright Hiren Choudhury.
- The novel, unveiled by Tezpur Sahitya Sabha secretary Dr. Pallab Bhattacharya, highlights an untold character from Assamese history and explores the Tai people's lives before their migration under Chaolung Siu-Ka-Pha.
- Dr. Bhattacharya called *Cheng* a major contribution to Assamese historical fiction for its blend of imagination and historical depth.
- Additionally, a newly updated travel guidebook titled *Tezpur: The City of Eternal Romance* by Dilip Kumar Baruah was released.
- The reformatted edition, now titled *Spring Valley Travellers' Guide to Tezpur*, has been published by Hemanta Lahkar.
- The guidebook includes details on Tezpur's geography, climate, administration, demography, historical background, parks, gardens, inscriptions, lakes, beels, and pilgrimage sites known as 'Sapta Tirtha'.

83. ASSAM'S FIRST DE-ADDICTION CENTRE FOR BOYS AGED 10–18 OPENS IN TINSUKIA UNDER PROJECT AAROCHAN

- In a major step towards addressing youth substance abuse in Assam, IndianOil's Digboi Refinery, in partnership with the Tinsukia District Administration and the Forum for Integrated Sustainable Solutions (FISS), has inaugurated the state's first de-addiction centre exclusively for boys aged 10 to 18 years.
- The centre has been launched under IndianOil's CSR initiative *Project #IndianOilAarohan*.
- It aims to provide comprehensive treatment, rehabilitation, and counselling for adolescents struggling with drug and substance addiction.
- Located in Tinsukia, the centre marks a significant milestone in combating youth drug abuse in the state.
- As the first such facility in Assam, it is expected to serve as a model for similar initiatives in the region, highlighting the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in addressing social issues.
- In a related development, Arunachal Pradesh Governor KT Parnaik inaugurated the counselling hall and isolation room at the Charju De-Addiction Centre in February.
- The initiative was led by the Care Me Home Welfare Society (CMHWS).
- The governor was accompanied by CMHWS chairperson Sontung Lowang Bangsia and social activist Tai Tagak during the visit.
- Governor Parnaik commended CMHWS's efforts and emphasized the importance of helping individuals recover from addiction, calling it a noble cause.
- He expressed concern over the increasing prevalence of drug addiction among the youth and attributed it to the influence of drug peddlers.

84. GUWAHATI SHINES IN SWACHH SURVEKSHAN 2024-25:



- Guwahati, the largest city in Northeast India, secured the **44th national rank** in the 3–10 lakh population category in the *Swachh Survekshan 2024–25* rankings.

- This marks a **major improvement** from its previous rank of **402nd**, showcasing significant progress in urban sanitation.
- Despite Guwahati's achievement, other northeastern cities largely **lagged behind** in the national assessment.
- However, six cities were recognised as “**Promising Swachh Shehar**” in their respective states:
 - **North Lakhimpur** (Assam)
 - **Jiribam** (Manipur)
 - **Shillong** (Meghalaya)
 - **Lunglei** (Mizoram)
 - **Jalukie** (Nagaland)
 - **Khowai** (Tripura)
- These cities, along with Guwahati, were awarded the title “**Promising Swachh Shehar of the State**”.
- **Six Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** from Assam — North Lakhimpur, Kokrajhar, Tinsukia, Bilasipara, Makum, and Mariani — were awarded the ‘**ODF++**’ **certification**.
- **Agartala** (Tripura) and **Jiribam** (Manipur) also received the **ODF++ status**.
- No ULB from **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, or Meghalaya** received this certification.
- The **ODF++ certification** signifies a step beyond ODF and ODF+ statuses, indicating:
 - No open defecation (ODF)
 - Functional, clean, and well-maintained public toilets (ODF+)
 - Safe treatment and disposal of faecal sludge and sewage (ODF++)
- These achievements indicate steady progress in sanitation infrastructure and hygiene awareness in select urban areas of Northeast India.
- In the *Garbage Free City* category of the **Swachh Survekshan** rankings:
 - **Guwahati, Nagaon, Silchar, and Dibrugarh** in Assam received a **one-star rating**.
 - **Imphal** (Manipur) also received a **one-star rating**.
 - **Jiribam** (Manipur) achieved a **three-star rating**, the highest among northeastern cities.
 - **Panisagar** in Tripura received a **one-star rating**.
- **No cities** from **Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, or Meghalaya** received any rating in this category.
- **Assam topped the Northeast** in **door-to-door garbage collection**, with **57% coverage** across its **96 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)**.
- **Tripura followed** with **55% door-to-door collection** across **20 ULBs**.
- The situation is **less promising** in **Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland**, where door-to-door collection is significantly lower.
- The report also highlighted that **except for Assam and Manipur**, the **treatment of collected garbage is extremely poor** across the northeastern states.

- In some states, **no treatment of garbage is done at all**, raising concerns about waste management and environmental health in the region.

85.AHOM DYNASTY ENTERS NCERT CURRICULUM, MARKING HISTORIC RECOGNITION

- In a landmark decision, NCERT has introduced the Ahom dynasty into the Class 8 history curriculum under the chapter "Tribes, Nomads and Settled Communities."
- This revision aims to expand historical narratives beyond the traditional focus on empires like the Mughals, Mauryas, and Guptas, giving long-overdue national recognition to the Ahom legacy of Assam.
- The Ahom kingdom ruled the Brahmaputra valley for nearly 600 years (1228–1826) and is celebrated for its military strength and administrative sophistication.
- The Ahoms famously resisted Mughal invasions at least 17 times, safeguarding Assam's independence.
- Historical figures like Lachit Borphukan and Srimanta Shankardev are remembered for their valor and contributions to cultural renaissance.
- Founded by Shan prince Sukaphaa, who entered Assam via the Patkai Hills, the Ahom dynasty contributed to governance, architecture, agriculture, and cultural development.
- Architectural marvels like Rang Ghar and Talatal Ghar continue to reflect the dynasty's rich legacy.
- The inclusion is widely seen as a long-pending move to reflect India's complete historical diversity and promote awareness of Northeast India's heritage.
- Though brief in coverage, the move is seen as a significant milestone in ensuring that students across India gain a fuller understanding of the nation's plural past.

86.ASSAM GOVT LAUNCHES 50% SUBSIDY SCHEME ON FARM EQUIPMENT TO BOOST CROP YIELD, CUT LOSSES



- In a key initiative to boost agricultural productivity and minimize post-harvest losses, Assam's Agriculture Department has launched a new scheme under the **National Food Security Mission** and the **National Mission on Edible Oils–Oil Palm**.

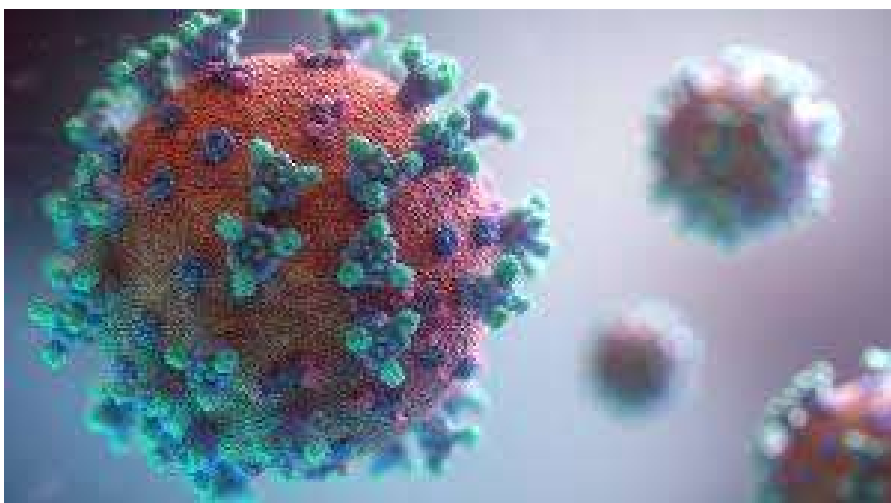
- The scheme offers **advanced agricultural machinery** for crops like **paddy and pulses** at a **50% subsidy**, aiming to empower farmers through modern technology and reduce manual labour dependency.
- The initiative is expected to enhance efficiency and increase yields across the state.
- **Farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs)** are encouraged to visit the Agriculture Department office to **submit applications** for subsidised equipment.
- Applications will be **processed in the order they are received**, giving priority to early submissions.
- The department has urged all eligible stakeholders to apply promptly and make the most of this opportunity to modernise farming practices.
- In a related development, **Dhubri district launched the "Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan"** ahead of the Kharif season in May. This awareness campaign was initiated by the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** in partnership with the **Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**, Government of India.
- Additionally, **Assam Education Minister Ranoj Pegu** distributed **15 tractors, 18 power tillers, power weeders, and paddy threshers** to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) during an **ITDP programme in Dhemaji** held in February this year.

87.STATE DAIRY SECTOR SET FOR BIG BOOST

- The Purabi Dairy plant of West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd (WAMUL) at Panjabari is set for a major expansion aimed at strengthening the State's dairy sector.
- The facility's milk processing capacity will be doubled from 1.5 lakh litres per day (LLPD) to 3 LLPD.
- A groundbreaking ceremony was organised by WAMUL to mark the beginning of the expansion.
- The Rs 104-crore expansion project is based on an MoU signed between WAMUL and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) during the Advantage Assam 2.0 Summit held in February this year.
- The expansion is part of a broader initiative to strengthen the dairy value chain and ensure sustainable livelihoods for rural milk producers.
- Around 20,000 dairy farmers linked to 601 dairy cooperative societies across Assam will receive assistance of Rs 5 per litre of milk, up to 30 litres per day.
- This assistance will be given only to farmers supplying milk to organised dairy processing projects, with a provision of Rs 10 crore allocated for the scheme in FY 2025-2026.
- Operated under the Purabi Dairy brand, the Panjabari plant is the largest dairy processing unit in Northeast India.
- The upgraded unit will increase pasteurised pouch milk production from 1.15 LLPD to 2.0 LLPD.
- The expansion also includes a new ice cream production unit of 20 TLPD (thousand litres per day), expandable to 30 TLPD.
- Additional dairy products totaling 70 TLPD will be incorporated as part of the expansion.
- The plant will feature advanced facilities to boost operational efficiency and cater to growing consumer demand.

- The expansion aligns with the Assam Dairy Development Plan (ADDP), which aims to process 10 LLPD statewide in the formal dairy sector.
- Previously, the Panjabari plant was upgraded from 60,000 litres per day to 1.5 LLPD under the World Bank-funded APART project.
- This earlier upgrade enabled significant growth in Purabi product distribution, leading to nearly 100 per cent capacity utilisation within 18 months of its inauguration.

88.MULTIPLE DEATHS IN STATE LINKED TO UNDERDIAGNOSED ZOONOTIC DISEASE



- Multiple deaths in Assam since last year have been linked to an underdiagnosed bacterial disease — Leptospirosis — with recent investigations indicating its growing presence in the Northeast and eastern Himalayas.
- A team from the ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Dibrugarh, confirmed the presence of ‘Leptospira wolffii’ during an outbreak of fever and jaundice in Goalpara district, marking the first such human infection reported from Northeast India.
- Leptospirosis can present as a mild flu-like illness or escalate into a severe, potentially fatal condition involving systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS) or cytokine storm.
- Common initial symptoms include fever, muscle pain, headache, and vomiting. In severe cases, it can progress to Weil’s disease, involving jaundice, kidney failure, liver dysfunction, and internal bleeding.
- A critical complication is pulmonary haemorrhage, leading to respiratory failure and possible death within days. Other complications include meningitis, septic shock, and multi-organ failure.
- Without early intervention, the fatality rate in severe leptospirosis can exceed 10–20%.
- The disease is caused by spiral-shaped bacteria of the genus Leptospira and is typically transmitted to humans from animals through water, soil, or food contaminated with infected animal urine.
- A recent fatal case in Sikkim involved a young adult with no pre-existing conditions, who succumbed quickly due to severe lung and organ complications.
- Diagnostic collaboration between STNM Hospital, Gangtok and ICMR-RMRC, Dibrugarh confirmed Leptospira wolffii as the causative agent, making it the first lab-confirmed fatal human case in the Eastern Himalayas.

- Genetic similarities with strains circulating in Bangladesh point to possible cross-border spread of this emerging pathogen.
- Last month, Bhutan reported a leptospirosis outbreak resulting in three deaths.
- Fortunately, leptospirosis is treatable if diagnosed early. Mild cases respond to oral antibiotics like doxycycline or amoxicillin, while severe cases may require intravenous penicillin or ceftriaxone.
- Critically ill patients often need supportive care, including dialysis and mechanical ventilation.
- For high-risk adults like farmers and flood rescue workers, weekly 200 mg doxycycline during high-risk periods is effective for prevention.
- Azithromycin is recommended for children and pregnant women as a safer prophylactic alternative, administered weekly at age-appropriate doses during exposure periods.
- First formally described by Adolph Weil in 1886 in Germany, leptospirosis has been endemic to tropical and subtropical regions.
- Recent findings have highlighted its expanding reach in Northeast India.
- It is estimated that over one million people are infected globally each year, with around 60,000 deaths, making it a major zoonotic disease of public health concern.

89.PALE-CAPPED PIGEON SPOTTED IN DEHING PATKAI



- The rarely seen pale-capped pigeon (Columba punicea), listed as ‘vulnerable’ by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), has been sighted in Dehing Patkai National Park, Assam.
- Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary shared the remarkable sighting on social media, generating excitement among birdwatchers and conservationists.
- The pale-capped pigeon is characterized by ash-grey feathers and a distinctive pale crown. It is a shy forest bird that has become increasingly elusive due to habitat loss and fragmentation.
- Its appearance in Dehing Patkai is seen as an important sign of the park’s rich biodiversity and ecological vitality.
- The sighting reinforces Dehing Patkai’s status as a sanctuary for endangered and forest-dependent bird species.
- This pigeon typically resides in the dense, undisturbed canopies of tropical and subtropical forests in Northeast India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand, though sightings have become rare in recent years.

- Ornithologists note the scientific significance of such sightings, as they help monitor the distribution and population of vulnerable species like the pale-capped pigeon.
- Dehing Patkai, despite its ecological value, continues to face threats from illegal coal mining, deforestation, and unregulated development.
- Environmentalists have warned that without strong conservation measures, the fragile ecosystem may face irreversible damage.
- The reappearance of the pigeon has renewed momentum for scientific research, eco-tourism, and community-driven conservation in the region.
- In his viral social media post, Forest Minister Patowary praised the alertness of local photographers and forest personnel, calling the moment a reminder of the urgent need to preserve Assam's green heritage for future generations.

90. HUGE IRON ORE DEPOSIT DISCOVERED IN DHUBRI

- A significant iron ore deposit has been discovered in the Chandardinga area of Dhubri district, Assam, marking a major development for the state's economy.
- According to the June 2025 edition of the *Handbook on Geological Potential of North East India: A Hidden Trove of Mineral Prospect Beneath Majestic Landscape*, the deposit is estimated to contain around 18.29 million tonnes of iron ore with an average grade of 37.45% Fe.
- This discovery highlights the largely untapped mineral potential of Chandardinga, a region traditionally known for its scenic beauty and biodiversity.
- The report identifies the area as a promising zone for responsible mineral exploration and future extraction.
- Experts suggest that the find could attract new investments in Assam's mining and industrial sectors, while also boosting employment and regional development.
- However, they emphasise the need for environmentally sustainable practices and protection of local community rights in any future mining operations.
- The state government and geological authorities are expected to conduct further surveys and feasibility assessments to evaluate the commercial viability of the deposit.

91. GOALPARA ADMINISTRATION GEARS UP FOR 'ADI KARMAYOGI ABHIYAN'



- A preparatory meeting was held at the District Commissioner's office in Goalpara to discuss the rollout of the 'Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan'.
- The initiative is a flagship campaign launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.
- The campaign aims to enhance service delivery and promote inclusive development in tribal-dominated regions across the country.
- Designed as a nationwide movement, the programme seeks to improve grassroots governance by drawing from tribal values and ensuring respectful and effective policy implementation.
- The campaign will be implemented across 550 districts in 30 states.
- Goalpara district will adopt special measures to ensure that the tribal population has access to essential government services.
- These services include streamlined registration for ration cards, Aadhaar cards, job cards, and inclusion in welfare schemes from departments like Public Health Engineering, Agriculture, Industries and Commerce, and Panchayat and Rural Development.
- Each department has been instructed to nominate a district-level master trainer to ensure effective implementation.
- Similar master trainer appointments will also be made at the block level.
- Every tribal village will have a designated village-level master trainer responsible for raising awareness, assisting with scheme applications, and encouraging community participation in public benefit and grievance redressal systems.

92. MEGHALAYA MULLS MANDATORY HIV TEST BEFORE MARRIAGES



- The Meghalaya Government is considering making HIV testing mandatory before marriage as a measure to combat the rising number of HIV/AIDS cases in the state.
- Currently, no Indian state has legally mandated such a requirement, though similar proposals have been discussed in Goa, Kerala, and Maharashtra.
- According to the HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017, informed consent is mandatory for HIV testing, except in specific circumstances such as blood transfusion.
- Section 5 of the Act clearly states that no HIV test or medical intervention can be performed without the informed consent of the individual or their representative.
- Therefore, making HIV tests compulsory before marriage may violate this legal provision.

- The Health Department is preparing a Cabinet memorandum to establish protocols for testing, data collection, and treatment to manage the HIV/AIDS situation more effectively.
- Meghalaya ranks sixth nationally in HIV prevalence.
- Over the past 20 years, the state has recorded a 221.1% increase in HIV/AIDS cases.

- In East Khasi Hills district alone, confirmed cases have doubled to 3,432, though only 1,581 individuals are currently undergoing treatment.
- A major concern is the dropout of patients from follow-up care, which has led to 159 deaths in the district due to the discontinuation of antiretroviral therapy.
- The highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Meghalaya is reported in East and West Jaintia Hills districts.



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PERSON IN NEWS

93.MIZO JOURNALISTS FETED FOR AWARD-WINNING BBC DOCU



- Mizoram Information and Public Relations Minister felicitated two journalists – HC Vanlalruata and Isaac Zoramsanga – for being part of the BBC team honoured at the 46th Annual News and Documentary Emmy Awards 2025.
- The two journalists contributed as producers to the BBC news documentary *Myanmar's Civil War*, which won in the category of Outstanding Continuing News Coverage – Short Form.
- As part of the felicitation, each journalist received a citation and a cash award of ₹10,000.
- The awardees shared their experiences covering the Myanmar conflict and spoke briefly about their approach to news reporting.

94.NOTED ASSAMESE LITTERATEUR PARAN KR BARUAH PASSES AWAY

- Noted Assamese poet, critic, and former president of Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha, **Paran Kumar Baruah**, passed away.
- Born in 1959, Baruah completed his master's degree from Guwahati University.
- He actively participated in the Assam Movement and worked for the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad in Nagaon.
- He later joined the Industry and Commerce Department, Government of Assam, as an official and retired a few years ago.
- Baruah served as president of Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha and was also an executive member of Asam Sahitya Sabha.
- A prolific writer, he authored over a dozen books on literature, culture, and history.
- His works include writings on Srimanta Sankaradeva, Rabindranath Tagore, and other prominent personalities.

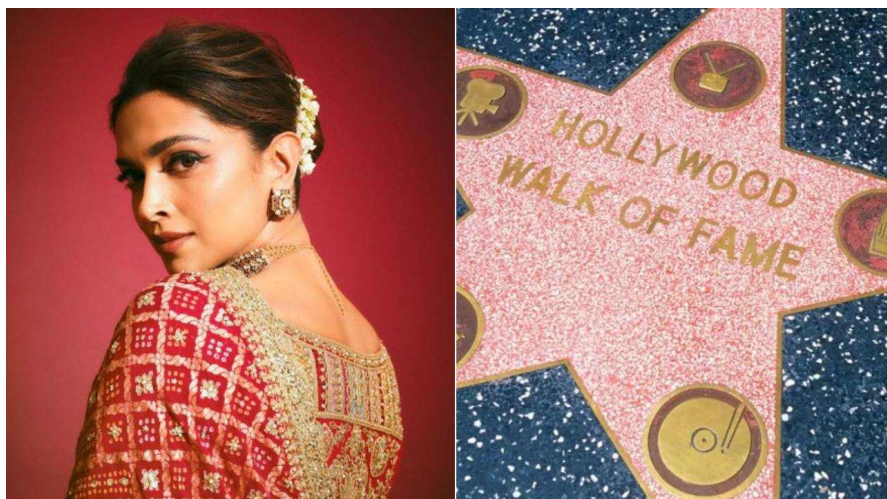
- He was a recipient of several prestigious honours, including the Bhim Rao Ambedkar Award and the Michael Madhusudan Award.

95.RENOWNED ASSAMESE POET ANUBHAV TULASI PASSES AWAY AT 67



- Renowned Assamese poet, storyteller, and literary critic **Anubhav Tulasi** passed away.
- Tulasi was a towering figure in modern Assamese literature, celebrated for his profound poetry and diverse contributions as an editor, storyteller, and film critic.
- His creative journey, which began in the late 20th century, significantly shaped contemporary Assamese writing.
- A postgraduate in English Literature from Gauhati University (1984), he served as a professor at Swawal Kuchi Budharam Madhab Satradhikar College until his retirement in 2018.
- His debut poetry collection, "Najma", launched a prolific literary career that included 20 poetry volumes and over 30 published books across various genres.
- His literary works are included in the curricula of institutions like Gauhati University and Cotton University.
- His poems featured in esteemed national and international publications, including Oxford University Press, Penguin, Sahitya Akademi, and the National Book Trust.
- Tulasi's writings have been translated into German, French, Hungarian, and Uzbek, earning him a global readership.
- He represented Assam at major literary festivals in Istanbul, Austin, Athens, and Dhaka, establishing himself as a global literary voice.
- He received several prestigious honours, including the Munin Barkotoki Award, a senior fellowship from the Ministry of Culture, and literary awards from the Axaam Xahitya Xabha.
- The news of his demise has deeply impacted the Assamese literary community, with condolences pouring in from writers, scholars, students, and admirers of his work.
- Tulasi's enduring legacy will continue to inspire generations of readers and writers in Assam and across the world.

96.HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME STAR FOR DEEPIKA PADUKONE



- Deepika Padukone will receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, becoming the first Indian actor to be felicitated with this honour.
- The announcement was made by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce on its official Instagram page.
- She will be honoured alongside Hollywood stars such as Emily Blunt, Timothee Chalamet, Marion Cotillard, Stanley Tucci, Rami Malek, Rachel McAdams, and Demi Moore.
- Filmmakers Chris Columbus and Tony Scott are also among the honourees.
- From television, honourees include Greg Daniels (creator of *The Office*), Sarah Michelle Gellar, Gordon Ramsay, Bradley Whitford, and Noah Wyle.
- The Hollywood Walk of Fame features over 2,700 brass stars embedded in sidewalks along Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street in Los Angeles.
- The stars honour achievements in film, television, music, radio, and live performance, recognising global contributions to popular culture.
- In 2011, Indian conductor Zubin Mehta received the 2,434th star on the Walk of Fame; actor Kirk Douglas spoke at his ceremony.
- Earlier, Indian-origin American actor Sabu Dastagir also received a star for his contributions to Hollywood in the 1940s.
- Deepika Padukone made her Bollywood debut in 2007 with *Om Shanti Om* and has starred in acclaimed films like *Love Aaj Kal*, *Piku*, *Bajirao Mastani*, *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, *Padmaavat*, *Chhapaak*, and *Gehraiyaan*.
- She made her Hollywood debut in 2017 with *XXX: Return of Xander Cage*, co-starring Vin Diesel.
- Padukone was named one of TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in 2018 and received the TIME100 Impact Award.
- In 2022, she served on the main competition jury at the Cannes Film Festival.

97.IIT-G STUDENT SELECTED AS C'WEALTH YOUTH PEACE AMBASSADOR

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati student Sukanya Sonowal has been selected as a Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador.
- She now holds a leadership position in the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (CYPAN) Executive Committee.
- CYPAN is a youth-led initiative that operates across 56 member nations to promote peace, respect, and understanding while countering violent extremism.
- Sonowal is the co-founder of STEMvibe – STEM for Viksit Bharat Empowerment, an initiative focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) outreach.
- STEMvibe aims to empower students all over India.
- Through this platform, she has successfully engaged more than 3,000 participants from across the nation.
- She is also spearheading The Integral Cup, a national-level mathematics competition for undergraduates.
- The Integral Cup attracted over 2,500 participants from top institutions during its very first edition.

98.25TH GLOBAL HONOUR FOR PM



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the **Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**, the highest civilian honour of the country.
- He became the **first foreign leader** to receive this prestigious award.
- This marked the **25th international honour** conferred upon Modi by a foreign country.
- It was also Modi's **first visit to Trinidad and Tobago** as Prime Minister.
- He became the **first Indian PM to visit the Caribbean nation since 1999**.
- Modi arrived in Trinidad and Tobago from **Ghana**, where he was honoured with 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana', the country's national award.
- According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the honour recognises Modi's "**distinguished statesmanship and influential global leadership.**"

99.DRONA BHAGAWATI SOWARANI SHILPI AWARD PRESENTED:



- The Drona Bhagawati Sowarani Shilpi Award-2025 was formally presented to artiste Nrityacharya Jatin Goswami.
- The award ceremony was held at Guwahati Press Club on Friday.
- The award was instituted by Drona Bhagawati Parul Bhagawati Memorial Trust.
- It commemorates the late Drona Bhagawati, an eminent cultural figure and Vaishnavite scholar.

100.SOCIAL THINKER UDAYADITYA BHARALI PASSES AWAY:

- Social thinker, historian, political commentator, and former principal of erstwhile Cotton College (now Cotton University) Prof Udayaditya Bharali passed away.
- He contributed a series of columns in daily and weekly newspapers of Assam.
- Some of his popular columns were 'Somoyor Jolongare' (Sadin), 'Pristhabhumir Sinaki' (Asomiya Pratidin), 'Bibidh Toka' (Asam Bani), and 'Pransangik Pandulipi' (Asomiya Pratidin).
- He edited and authored several books, including *The Political History of Assam Vol-I* (Associate Editor), *Hundred Years' History of Cotton College, 1901–2001*, *Jati Samasyar Prasnat*, *Baimanor Thikona Sondhan*, *Jatiya Prasna Aru Anyanya*, and *Dholphat*.
- For his short story collection *Baimanor Thikona Sondhan*, he was awarded the 'Bishnuprasad Rabha Bota' by the Asam Sahitya Sabha in 1996.
- In 2025, he was honoured with the Parag Kumar Das Journalism Award for his thought-provoking and impactful journalistic writings.
- Beyond academia, he played a key role in various social movements and organized cultural events across Assam.
- He served as the executive president of Jyoti Prasad Janma Satabarsha Udjapan Samiti, Jananeta Bhimbora Deuri Janma Satabarsha Udjapan Samiti, and Bishnuprasad Rabha Janma Satabarsha Udjapan Samiti.
- In 2004, he chaired the *Buranji Adhibesan* organized by the Asam Sahitya Sabha.

- He was also actively associated with several sports organizations in the state.

101.NILIM KUMAR TO RECEIVE 'VISWAMBHARA' NATIONAL AWARD



- The prestigious 'Viswambhara' National Award, instituted by the Smt Suseela Narayana Reddy Trust in honour of legendary poet and Jnanpith Awardee Dr C Narayana Reddy, will be conferred this year on eminent Assamese poet Nilim Kumar.
- The award ceremony will take place on July 29 at Ravindra Bharathi, Hyderabad, during the 94th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr Reddy.
- Nilim Kumar, a prominent figure in contemporary Assamese literature, will receive a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, a memento, and a citation.
- He has authored 24 volumes of poetry and received numerous accolades, including the Kusumagraj National Award and the Udayabharati National Award.
- His poetic works have been translated into several Indian and foreign languages, such as Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Bengali, English, Spanish, German, and French.
- His poems are included in the curricula of various universities across India.
- The Governor of Telangana, Jishnu Dev Varma, has been invited to attend the event as the chief guest.

102.ARNAV KUMAR BHUYAN LIFTS AITA U-16 SINGLES TITLE

- Assam's Arnav Kumar Bhuyan has won the boys' under-16 singles title at the AITA Championship Series National Ranking Tennis Tournament.
- The tournament was held recently in Sonapat, Haryana.

103.ASSAM SHREYASI BAGS THREE GOLDSD:



- Rifle shooter Shreyasi Mazumdar from Assam won three gold medals at the 0135 India Open Competition 2025, held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, from July 1 to 10.
- Representing the Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCoE) under the Directorate of Sports & Youth Welfare, Assam, Shreyasi secured gold in the 50m rifle 3 positions event in the women's senior, junior, and youth categories.
- The 0135 India Open is a prestigious all-India level pre-national competition organized by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).
- The event serves as a selection platform for qualified shooters to participate in the upcoming National Shooting Championship.

104.DEMBI RAM PANGING CONFERRED AMBEDKAR EDUCATIONAL AWARD FOR SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION



- An award presentation and felicitation ceremony for meritorious students was recently held at the Dr. Madhav Chandra Das Auditorium of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat.
- The event was organized by Ambedkar Foundation Assam, an organization committed to promoting the ideals of social justice, equality, and fraternity, inspired by the vision of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.
- At this significant event, the Ambedkar Educational Award was conferred upon Dembi Ram Panging, the Working President of the All India SC/ST Employees Welfare Association (AISCSTEW), ONGC.

105.INDIA MUST FAST-TRACK ITS ACTION TO ELIMINATE RABIES BY 2030: ICMR STUDY:

- The Central Government is aiming to eliminate rabies in India by 2030.
- According to a study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) on human rabies deaths and animal bite burden estimates in India (2022–2023), over 5,000 people die each year due to dog bites.
- As per data reported on the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (Integrated Health Information Platform) portal under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, States and Union Territories reported 21,95,122 dog bite cases in India between January and December 2024.
- The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying cited these figures based on a release issued by the Ministry.

106.ARMY LAUNCHES 'OPERATION SHIVA' FOR SAFE AND SECURE AMARNATH YATRA IN KASHMIR

- The Indian Army has launched **Operation Shiva** as part of a



multi-tier security setup to secure the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

- A total of **8,500 troops** and a **counter-unmanned aerial system (C-UAS) grid** have been deployed along the twin routes to the cave shrine.
- The **38-day pilgrimage** to the 3,880-metre-high shrine commenced on **July 3**, using two tracks — the **48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route** in Anantnag district and the **14-km Baltal route** in Ganderbal district.
- The yatra will conclude on **August 9**.
- Operation Shiva reflects the Indian Army's **unwavering commitment to ensuring a safe, seamless, and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage** for all devotees.

107.UAE DEEPENS INNOVATION TIES WITH INDIA THROUGH HIGH-IMPACT MOU AT MUMBAI START-UP EVENT



- The UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC), in collaboration with the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in India, hosted an exclusive **Start-up Sundowner** event at the St. Regis, Mumbai.
- The event highlighted opportunities for Indian founders and start-ups to engage with the newly launched **UAE-India CEPA Start-up Series**, a high-impact platform aimed at accelerating cross-border growth, collaboration, and market access.
- A key moment of the evening was the **signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the UAE-India CEPA Council and the **Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE)**, the technology business incubator of IIT Bombay.
- The MoU formalises a partnership to **identify and support high-potential start-ups** from the SINE ecosystem and alumni network for participation in the Start-up Series.

108.SONALI MISHRA TO BE FIRST WOMAN OFFICER TO HEAD RPF



- Senior IPS officer **Sonali Mishra** has been appointed as the **first woman Director General of the Railways Protection Force (RPF)**.

- She is the **first woman** to head the RPF, which is responsible for the **security of railway property and passengers**, among other duties.

109.MAIDEN WIMBLEDON TITLE FOR IGA SWIATEK



- **Iga Swiatek** won her **first Wimbledon championship** with a **6-0, 6-0** victory over **Amanda Anisimova**.
- This was the **first women's final at Wimbledon in 114 years** where one player failed to win a single game.
- Swiatek already had **four French Open titles** (on clay) and **one U.S. Open title** (on hard court), but this was her **first career title on grass**.
- The Wimbledon win also ended a **trophy drought of over a year**, with her last title being at **Roland-Garros in June 2024**.

110.BIJOYA SAWIAN AMONG 20 WOMEN ACHIEVERS TO BE HONOURED IN DELHI ON JULY 19:

- Writer **Bijoya Sawian** will be honoured at the 3rd edition of the **Aalekh Foundation Women Achievers' Awards** ceremony to be held at **The Leela Palace, New Delhi** on **July 19**.
- She is among 20 women selected from across the country for their impactful work in diverse fields.
- The award recognises her contribution to Indian literature and indigenous cultural preservation, especially through her storytelling rooted in the heritage of the Khasi people.
- Her translations such as *The Teachings of Elders* and *The Main Ceremonies of the Khasis* have played a vital role in preserving oral traditions.
- Her fiction works like *Shadow Men* and *Hill Songs of Love and Longing* are noted for their lyrical and sensitive portrayals of life in the Khasi Hills.
- **Bijoya Sawian's** writings are praised for bridging geographies and generations, bringing the rich culture and socio-political history of the Northeast into India's literary mainstream.
- The **Aalekh Foundation Women Achievers' Awards** is a flagship initiative celebrating women who have broken barriers and contributed to society, culture, and nation-building.

111.SINNER BEATS ALCARAZ TO EARN MAIDEN WIMBLEDON TITLE



- Jannik Sinner claimed his first Grand Slam title by winning Wimbledon in a commanding performance.
- He defeated defending champion Carlos Alcaraz in a gripping final on Centre Court with a scoreline of 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

112.KUDERMETOVA, MERTENS CAPTURE WOMEN'S DOUBLES TITLE



- Eighth seeds Veronika Kudermetova and Elise Mertens won their first Grand Slam title as a pair at Wimbledon.
- They came from a set down to defeat Hsieh Su-Wei and Jelena Ostapenko with a score of 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 in the women's doubles final.

113.JULIAN CASH AND LLOYD GLASSPOOL MAKE HISTORY AS FIRST ALL-BRITISH PAIR SINCE 1936 TO WIN WIMBLEDON MEN'S DOUBLES

- Julian Cash and Lloyd Glasspool made history by winning the 2025 Wimbledon Men's Doubles Championship on July 12.
- The British duo defeated Rinky Hijikata and David Pel with a commanding 6-2, 7-6(3) victory in the final.
- This triumph secured their first-ever Grand Slam title.

- With this win, Cash and Glasspool became the first all-British team to win a Grand Slam men's doubles title since 1936.

114.UTPAL BORPUJARI IN BOARD OF ADVISORS OF IICS

- National award-winning filmmaker Utpal Borpujari has been nominated as a member of the Board of Advisors of the Indian Institute of Creative Skills (IICS).
- IICS is India's first industry-led creative incubator, established under the chairmanship of Oscar-winning sound designer Resul Pookuty.
- The institute is operated by the Media and Entertainment Skills Council (MESC), chaired by Grammy Award-winning composer Shankar Mahadevan.
- IICS functions under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and is affiliated with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) Academy.
- Utpal Borpujari will serve on the IICS Board of Advisors alongside prominent film personalities including directors Girish Kasaravalli, Rahul Rawail, and Shonali Bose.
- Other members of the advisory board include producer Shibashish Sarkar, editors A. Sreekar Prasad and Bina Paul, and action director Sham Kaushal.

115.CENTRE LAUNCHES 'RAH-VEER' SCHEME TO HONOUR ROADSIDE HEROES SAVING ACCIDENT VICTIMS



- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched the upgraded 'Rah-Veer' scheme to honour Good Samaritans who help road accident victims receive medical aid within the crucial Golden Hour.
- The scheme came into effect on **April 21, 2025**, as per a press release from the Regional Office of Information & Public Relations, Barak Valley Zone, Silchar.
- Individuals who ensure that accident victims are hospitalised within the Golden Hour will be recognised as "Rah-Veers."
- Each Rah-Veer will receive a **cash reward of ₹5,000 per case**, with a **maximum of ₹25,000** for helping multiple victims in a single incident.
- Recipients will also receive a **Certificate of Appreciation**.

- Every year, the **10 most outstanding Rah-Veers** will be selected for a **national-level award of ₹1 lakh** each for their bravery and service.
- To encourage participation, the scheme ensures **legal protection under the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, and related 2020 rules**, shielding Good Samaritans from harassment or legal complications without their consent.
- District-level committees will handle grievances and oversee verification and approval of reward claims.
- The **District Magistrate** will head the district committee responsible for validation.
- **Approved rewards will be transferred directly** to the recipients' bank accounts within one week.
- A **state-level committee** will review the scheme's implementation through **quarterly assessments**.
- The scheme aims to foster a **culture of empathy, responsibility, and timely action**, thereby reducing road accident fatalities in India.

116.ASHUTOSH KUMAR TAKES OATH AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF GAUHATI HC

- Justice Ashutosh Kumar was sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court.
- Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office at a solemn function held at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra International Auditorium.
- He was elevated as a Judge of the Patna High Court in 2014.
- In 2015, he was transferred to the Delhi High Court.
- He was repatriated to the Patna High Court in 2017.

117.VICE PRESIDENT JAGDEEP DHANKHAR RESIGNS CITING MEDICAL REASONS

- Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned from his post citing medical reasons.
- He submitted his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu and stated that he was stepping down with immediate effect.
- To prioritise his health and follow medical advice, he resigned as Vice President of India in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution.
- Dhankhar, aged 74, had assumed office in August 2022.

118.THEATRE LEGEND RATAN THIYAM PASSES AWAY



- Internationally renowned theatre personality Ratan Thiyam passed away at the age of 77. He is survived by his wife, one son, and two daughters.
- Thiyam was widely regarded as one of India's most influential theatre directors and playwrights.
- He received six international awards, 27 national awards, and six state-level awards in recognition of his work.
- Known for fusing traditional Manipuri art forms with modern theatre techniques, his productions were acclaimed both in India and abroad.
- Thiyam served as the chairman and director of the National School of Drama (NSD), Delhi, where he directed groundbreaking plays that challenged conventional norms and earned global recognition.
- He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1989, which he later relinquished in 2001 in protest against the Centre's decision to extend a ceasefire with the NSCN militant group.
- In 1976, he founded the Imphal-based Chorus Repertory Theatre, through which he showcased his works in over 50 countries and at more than 40 international theatre festivals.
- Some of his most celebrated plays include *Chakravyuha (The Wheel of War)*, *Uttar Priyadarshi (The Final Beatitude)*, *Urubhangam (The Broken Thigh)*, and *Andha Yug (Blind Age)*.
- His play *Chinglon Mapan Tampak Ama (Nine Hills One Valley)* is an allegorical representation of the insurgency in Manipur.
- Thiyam was a key figure in the 'Theatre of Roots' movement, which aimed to evolve an indigenous Indian theatre form distinct from colonial Western models by drawing on native traditions.
- He creatively incorporated elements like Manipuri song, dance, and martial arts into his productions to convey modern messages.
- Among his many accolades are the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1987), France's La Grande Medaille (1997), and the John D Rockefeller Award (2008).
- Born on January 20, 1948, Ratan Thiyam had also studied Manipuri dance and painting.

119.VENUS MAKES HISTORY AT 45 WITH WTA VICTORY



- Venus Williams, at 45, became the oldest player to win a WTA singles match since 2004 with her 6-3, 6-4 victory over Peyton Stearns at the Washington Open.

- The seven-time Grand Slam singles champion stated that she still has the "fire in her belly" for competition.
- She is now the oldest WTA singles match-winner since Martina Navratilova, who won at Wimbledon in 2004 at the age of 47.

120.UMA KANJILAL BECOMES FIRST WOMAN VC OF IGNOU

- Uma Kanjilal has been appointed as the first woman Vice-Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), four decades after its establishment.
- She has been a professor of Library and Information Science since 2003.
- Kanjilal is nationally recognised for her expertise in e-learning, ICT in libraries, digital libraries, and multimedia courseware development.
- She currently serves as the National Coordinator for SWAYAM and SWAYAM PRABHA, the Ministry of Education's flagship digital education initiatives.

121.NARENDRA MODI BECOMES INDIA'S SECOND-LONGEST SERVING PRIME MINISTER

- On July 25, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed 4,078 consecutive days in office.
- This surpasses Indira Gandhi's unbroken tenure of 4,077 days from January 24, 1966, to March 24, 1977.
- Modi now stands as the second-longest serving Indian Prime Minister in an unbroken term, after Jawaharlal Nehru, who served for 16 years and 286 days.
- He is the first Indian Prime Minister born after Independence.
- Modi is the longest-serving Prime Minister from outside the Congress party.
- He is also the longest-serving Prime Minister from a non-Hindi-speaking state.
- He is the only non-Congress leader to complete two full terms and secure a third term with a clear Lok Sabha majority.
- Modi is also the first sitting Prime Minister since Indira Gandhi in 1971 to return to power with a full majority.

122.GILL EQUALS BRADMAN'S RECORD AS TEST CAPTAIN

- India skipper Shubman Gill continues to rewrite history with a fantastic and gritty 103 against England at Old Trafford.
- With his fourth ton in as many games, Gill has now tied with the legendary Don Bradman for most centuries as captain in a Test series.
- He also became the first player to hit four centuries in his debut Test series as captain.
- Continuing from 87, an uneven bounce on a Ben Stokes delivery struck Gill on his injured right thumb and ricocheted onto his helmet.

- The 25-year-old stood tall and went on to notch the first century by an Indian at Old Trafford in 35 years, after Sachin Tendulkar in 1990.
- He tied Virat Kohli and Sunil Gavaskar for the most hundreds by an Indian in a single Test series.
- It is also the first time he has taken more than 200 balls to score a century, reaching three figures off his 228th delivery today.
- His previous slowest hundred came off 199 balls, in the first innings of the Edgbaston Test.
- The 25-year-old made history at Edgbaston with twin centuries – 269 and 161 – amassing 430 runs in the Test.
- This tally is the second-highest match aggregate in Test history.

123.DIVYA DESHMUKH RULES CHESS WORLD



- Divya Deshmukh stunned the chess world by winning the FIDE Women's World Cup 2025, becoming the first Indian woman to claim the prestigious title.
- In the all-Indian final, the 19-year-old defeated legendary compatriot Koneru Humpy 1.5-0.5 in the rapid tie-breaks on Monday to script a fairytale ending in Georgia's Batumi.
- With nerves of steel, Divya closed out the win to become the 2025 Women's World Cup champion.
- She also became the fourth Indian woman to earn the Grandmaster title and the country's 88th GM overall.
- Divya's victory is even more remarkable considering the odds stacked against her.
- She entered the tie-breaks as the underdog against Humpy, a two-time World Rapid Champion and currently world No. 5 in classical chess.
- Humpy was widely expected to dominate in the faster format.
- In contrast, Divya was ranked No. 18 in classical, No. 22 in rapid, and No. 18 in blitz on the FIDE women's list.
- This win crowns a sensational rise for the Nagpur teenager, who had clinched the World Junior Championship title just last year.
- She also played a pivotal role in India's gold medal run at the 2024 Chess Olympiad in Budapest, securing individual gold on her board.



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 **3RD FLOOR, ROYAL CIRCLE BUILDING, ZOO ROAD, GUWAHATI**

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NEWS IN SHORT

124.USE THE TERM ‘TCR’ INSTEAD OF ‘LCR’: GAUHATI HIGH COURT



- The Gauhati High Court has directed that the term ‘lower court record (LCR)’ should no longer be used in cause lists or official references.
- Instead, such records must be referred to as ‘trial court record (TCR)’.
- This directive was issued by the Registrar of the Gauhati High Court, in accordance with a high court order dated June 25, 2025, in an Interlocutory Application (Criminal).
- The directive also aligns with orders issued by the Supreme Court of India on February 8, 2024, and May 23, 2025.
- The notification mandates that in all communications, documents, and correspondence, the term TCR must be used in place of LCR.
- This applies to the registries, officers, and staff of the principal seat, outlying benches, and all subordinate courts under the Gauhati High Court.
- The directive also extends to all judicial officers of Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh.

125.NDFF LAUNCHES ‘TALK CINEMA ON THE FLOOR’ TO STRENGTHEN FILMMAKING ECOSYSTEM

- A new initiative titled ‘Talk Cinema On The Floor’ was launched by the New Delhi Film Foundation (NDFF) at the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts and Creativity (SACAC) in New Delhi.
- The initiative serves as an interactive platform to bring together artists, filmmakers, technicians, writers, and producers to foster conversation, collaboration, and creation.
- The inaugural session featured two key segments:
 - ‘Craft & Crew’
 - ‘Spotlight’

- The event was held in collaboration with the Media & Entertainment Skills Council (MESC) and SACAC.
- The programme aims to produce six impactful short films over the next six months.
- NDFF Founder Ashish K. Singh explained the vision behind the campaign, highlighting its goal of creating new opportunities for writers and filmmakers.
- One of the highlights of the event was ‘Take The Floor: The 5-Minute Window’, where selected participants had the opportunity to showcase their talent and pitch their projects, promoting real-time collaboration.
- The event also allowed young filmmakers to present their short film proposals, opening doors for emerging talent in the Indian film industry.

126.ASSAMESE LANGUAGE LEARNING CENTRE INAUGURATED IN ITANAGAR:

- Arunachal Pradesh Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona inaugurated the Assamese Language Learning Centre at the Don Bosco Youth Centre in Itanagar.
- The centre is a significant cultural initiative aimed at fostering linguistic diversity and promoting cultural understanding between Arunachal Pradesh and neighbouring Assam.

127.DTO’S ‘COMPLETE SERVICE MONTH’ BEGINS

- The Kamrup (Metro) District Transport Office officially launched the ‘Complete Service Month’ campaign.
- The initiative aims to provide vehicle driving education and training to students from higher secondary to postgraduate levels.
- It also offers instant solutions to vehicle documentation issues for teachers, doctors, advocates, journalists, senior citizens, and families of ex-servicemen.
- On the first day of the campaign, over 50 students received training and became aware of the application process for obtaining a driving license.

128.WORK FOR INDIA-FUNDED THILAMALE BRIDGE REACHES 60 PERCENT

- Work on the Thilamale Bridge, financed by India, is 60 percent complete with the conclusion of piling works, revealed Maldives’ Infrastructure Minister Abdulla Muthalib.
- The 6.7 km bridge links the capital Male with Vilimale, Thilafushi, and Gulhifalhu on its west.
- The project is financed through an Indian grant of USD 100 million and a USD 400 million concessional credit line from India’s Exim Bank.

- The Thilamale Bridge project is one of the largest infrastructure initiatives launched by former President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's administration.
- The bridge will include the tallest precast segments in the world, standing at 8.2 meters.

129.INDIA, RAS AL KHAIMAH EXPLORE COOPERATION



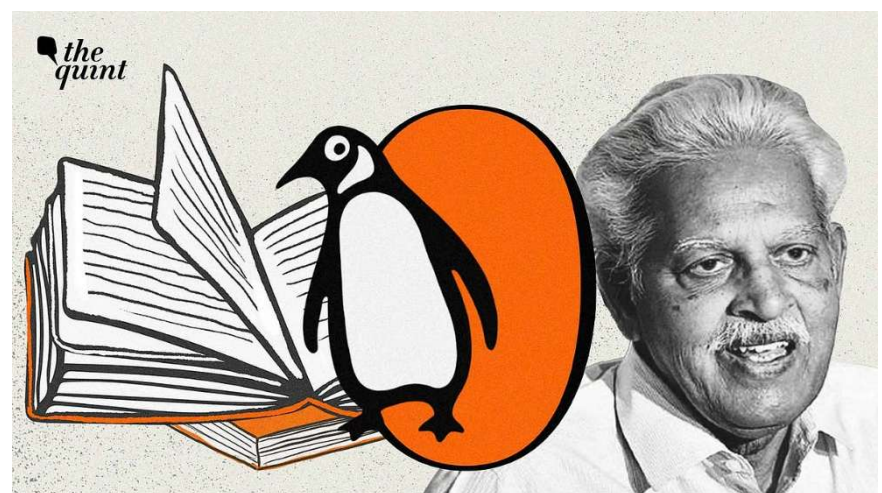
- Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and the Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, held discussions on strategic opportunities, including securing long-term access to low-silica limestone from the UAE.
- They explored collaboration in the field of green steel and discussed prospects in green hydrogen.
- Both sides considered trade partnerships through value-added steel exports from India.
- Discussions included the establishment of calcined lime production units using RAK's local limestone and natural gas.
- They also explored enhanced engagement through Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) like SAIL, NMDC, and MECON.
- Minister Kumaraswamy invited RAK to explore collaborations in infrastructure development, energy components, and raw material value chains.
- Speaking about NMDC's new office, he said it positions the company to pursue mineral asset acquisitions, forge strategic joint ventures, and diversify sourcing of key inputs.
- The focus will be on acquiring and sourcing critical minerals such as steel-grade limestone, dolomite, and other resources essential for India's clean energy and industrial manufacturing sectors.

130.WOOLAH'S BAGLESS TEA DIP TECH GETS PATENT:

- Woolah Tea, a homegrown startup, has successfully patented its unique bagless tea technology.
- The invention involves compressed true whole leaf tea dips that can be used as natural tea dips without the need for a bag.
- These compressed tea leaves are tied by a string and can be brewed in water or milk, offering convenience without compromising quality.

- When dipped in hot water, the leaves unfurl without significant breakage, ensuring a more flavourful and sustainable tea experience.
- The patent application was filed in 2020 by TiLT India Pvt Ltd, based in Sivasagar, and founded by entrepreneurs Upamanyu Borkakoty and Anshuman Bharali.
- The team has launched a 6000 sq ft tea crafting studio to maintain complete quality control.
- They have also leased organic tea gardens and scaled up production to meet growing demand.
- Co-founder Upamanyu Borkakoty was recently conferred the Assam Gaurav Award for his contributions.

131.'PENGUIN EIGHT' LAUNCHED



- Penguin Random House India has launched a new publishing imprint named 'Penguin Eight'.
- This imprint is dedicated to books that delve into the **cultural and literary richness of Northeast India**.
- **Penguin Eight** will feature works by both **emerging and established writers**.
- The focus will be on narratives that **reflect the complexities, histories, and diverse voices** of the Northeast region.

132.CENTURY-OLD 'KHARCHI PUJA', WORSHIP OF 14 DEITIES, TO BEGIN IN TRIPURA

- The **century-old traditional 'Kharchi Puja'** will begin in **Puran Habeli** (now Khayerpur), located **8 km north of Agartala**, the former capital of the princely state of Tripura.
- Although the **seven-day festival** and fair officially begin on **8th July**, the traditional '**Snan Yatra**' (ritual bath) of the **14 Hindu deities** will take place on **7th July**.
- Held annually in **June-July**, Kharchi Puja sees participation from **lakhs of devotees** across India and neighbouring **Bangladesh**, celebrating with **traditional rituals and vibrant fairs**.
- The festival is primarily aimed at **cleansing the sins of mortal souls** and is steeped in religious fervour and spiritual symbolism.
- According to **Ratan Chakraborty**, chairman of the Kharchi Puja and Mela Committee and BJP MLA, nearly **30 lakh devotees and tourists** join the celebration each year.
- Though originally a **Hindu tribal** festival, it is now embraced by **people from all communities and faiths**.

- The **14 deities** worshipped during the festival are: **Shiva, Durga, Vishnu, Laxmi, Saraswati, Kartik, Ganesha, Brahma, Abadhi (God of Water), Chandra, Ganga, Agni, Kamdev, and Himadri (Himalaya).**
- Celebrations include **colourful processions, illuminated marquees, mantra chanting, and drum beats**, led by the **Tripura Police music band.**
- As per tradition, the **deities are first dipped** in the **Howrah river**, marking the beginning of the rituals.
- **Tripura Police** also **escort the priests and idols**, and present a **guard of honour** to the **Chief Royal Priest (Raj Chantaia).**
- Notably, among all **eight northeastern states**, only **Tripura's tableau** was featured in the **2024 Republic Day parade** on Kartavya Path, New Delhi.
- **Historian Salil Debbarma** emphasized the historical significance of the ritual dip in the river.
- On **October 15, 1949**, Tripura merged with India via an agreement signed by **Regent Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi** and the **Governor General of India.**
- The merger agreement mandates the **Tripura government** to continue sponsorship of **14 temples**, including the **Mata Tripura Sundari Temple**, one of India's **51 Shakti Peethas.**
- The **state government** continues to bear the **full expense** of Kharchi Puja in accordance with the merger terms, **preserving tribal faith and traditions.**
- **Kharchi Puja** is considered the **biggest tribal Hindu festival in Northeast India.**
- From **1760 to 1838**, **Puran Habeli** was the capital of undivided Tripura, which then included parts of present-day **Bangladesh** (Sylhet, Brahmanbaria, Comilla).
- The capital was shifted from **Udaipur to Puran Habeli** by **King Krishna Manikya Bahadur** in 1760, and later to **Agartala** in 1838 by **King Krishna Kishore Manikya Bahadur.**
- The **temple of the 14 deities**, built during this era, still **stands today as a symbol of enduring faith and tradition.**

133.NEW SYSTEM INTRODUCED IN POST OFFICES:

- The Department of Posts has announced the rollout of the 'APT application'.
- It will be implemented across all post offices in Nalbari and Tinsukia from July 8.
- The APT application is designed to offer an enhanced user experience.
- It aims to ensure faster service delivery and a customer-friendly interface.

134.CENTRE HAILS ASSAM FOR HIGH USAGE OF NATGRID:

- The Centre has appreciated the Assam Police for their high usage of NATGRID (National Intelligence Grid) solutions.

- This recognition highlights the Assam government's consistent use of modern tools to enhance safety in the State.
- NATGRID is an integrated intelligence master database designed for counter-terrorism purposes.
- It connects databases of various core security agencies under the Government of India.
- Along with Assam, a few other states, including Tamil Nadu, were also praised for their efforts.
- Tamil Nadu significantly increased the number of active NATGRID users in June 2025, with four times more users firing at least one query.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has urged other states to increase usage by conducting training, collecting feedback, and appointing nodal officers.

135.STATE'S TALLEST STATUE OF SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJEE UNVEILED IN KOKRAJHAR

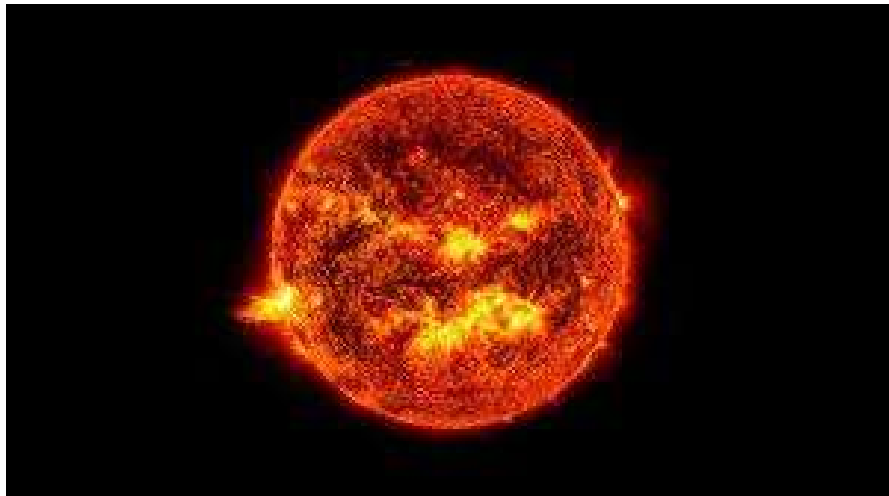


- Assam Legislative Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary inaugurated the state's tallest statue of Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder and freedom fighter Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in Kokrajhar town.
- The inauguration marked the 125th birth anniversary of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.
- The statue has become a defining landmark in Kokrajhar, unveiled in the presence of dignitaries, local leaders, and residents.
- It was funded through a Rs 10 lakh grant from the Assam government, along with contributions from local leaders and community organisations.
- The statue stands as both a visual marvel and a tribute to Mukherjee's lasting impact on India's democratic ethos.

136.EDSON ALVAREZ'S TIEBREAKING GOAL PROPELS MEXICO TO 10TH GOLD CUP TITLE

- **Edson Álvarez** scored the tiebreaking goal in the **77th minute** after a video review overturned an offside call.
- **Mexico** defeated the **United States 2-1** to win its **record 10th CONCACAF Gold Cup title.**

137.INDIAN ASTRONOMERS FIND TINY LOOPS IN SOLAR CORONA, TO DECODE SUN'S HIDDEN EXPLOSIVE SECRETS



- Astronomers at the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**, under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have discovered **hidden miniature plasma loops** in a major breakthrough.
- These **small and short-lived plasma loops** may help explain how the **Sun stores and releases magnetic energy**, a long-standing mystery in solar physics.
- Located in the **Sun's outer layer**, **coronal loops** are glowing, arc-like structures of hot plasma, typically exceeding a **million degrees** in temperature.
- The **miniature plasma loops** discovered are about **3,000–4,000 kilometres long** (similar to the distance from Kashmir to Kanyakumari), but are extremely narrow—less than **100 kilometres wide**, making them difficult to observe.
- These loops are hidden in the **lower layers of the Sun's atmosphere** and were **unresolved by earlier telescopes**.
- Astronomers at IIA used **high-resolution imaging and spectroscopy** techniques to detect and study these elusive structures.

137.SUMI TRIBE OF NAGALAND CELEBRATES TULUNI FESTIVAL:

- The Sumi community of New Ministers' Hill, Kohima, celebrated the 35th Tuluni Festival, reaffirming their cultural values and collective identity.
- Tuluni Festival is primarily associated with agricultural activities and holds deep significance in Naga tradition.
- Concern was expressed over the declining engagement in agricultural practices in rural areas, with a call to revive these traditions.
- The celebration featured a vibrant mix of cultural performances, including traditional songs, dances, and special musical numbers.

138.INDIAN NAVY SIGNS CONTRACT WITH BEL:

- The Indian Navy has signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), a major defence PSU, for the implementation of the National Maritime Domain Awareness (NMDA) Project.
- The agreement aims to enhance maritime and coastal security through advanced technological integration.
- The signing took place in the presence of Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, and BEL Chairman and Managing Director Manoj Jain in Bengaluru.
- The NMDA Project will enable an integrated approach to data collation, analysis, and information-sharing among various maritime stakeholders.
- The project includes upgrading the existing National Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence (NC3I) Network to the NMDA Network.
- It also incorporates AI-enabled software to improve situational awareness and decision-making capabilities.

139.BIHAR CABINET APPROVES 35% RESERVATION IN GOVERNMENT JOBS FOR NATIVE WOMEN

- In a major step toward **women's empowerment**, the **Bihar government** has approved **35% reservation** for **native women candidates** in all categories of **direct recruitment** across all levels of **government services**.
- The decision was made during a **cabinet meeting** chaired by **Chief Minister Nitish Kumar**, which lasted about an hour and approved **43 key proposals**.
- The reservation will apply **only to women who are natives of Bihar**.
- **Women from other states will not be eligible** for this reservation in Bihar's government jobs.
- This move aims to promote **greater participation of women** from Bihar in the state's administrative and public service sectors.

140.RS 1 CRORE FILM SUBSIDY TO TRANSFORM M'LAYA INTO GLOBAL CINEMA DESTINATION

- In a major initiative to promote cinematic tourism, the **Meghalaya government** will offer **financial subsidies of up to Rs 1 crore** for films shot in the state.
- The subsidy applies to **films in national and international languages**, provided that **at least 75% of the shooting** takes place in Meghalaya and highlights its **tourism destinations**.
- To streamline the process, the government will set up a **Film Facilitation Cell**, comprising representatives from the **Departments of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and Information & Public Relations (DIPR)**.
- The Film Facilitation Cell will oversee all aspects of the scheme, including **financial subsidy disbursement, infrastructure development, and project approvals**.

- The government also plans to establish a **dedicated film studio** to further support film production and attract filmmakers to Meghalaya.
- All these measures will be evaluated and monitored by the Film Facilitation Cell to ensure smooth execution and effective promotion of the state's cinematic potential.

141. OPERATION NANHE FARISTEY: THREE CHILDREN RESCUED BY RPF AT GUWAHATI RAILWAY STATION

- In a commendable act of alertness and compassion, the **Railway Protection Force (RPF)** at **Guwahati Railway Station** rescued **three minor children**—two girls and a boy—under the nationwide initiative "**Operation Nanhe Faristey**".
- **Operation Nanhe Faristey** is a dedicated drive launched by **Indian Railways** to identify and rescue **children in need of care and protection** who come into contact with the railway network.
- Under this initiative, rescued children are **handed over to the concerned authorities** and later **reunited with their families** after proper verification and care.
- The successful rescue at Guwahati highlights the **commitment of the RPF** to safeguarding vulnerable children and ensuring their well-being.
- This operation reflects Indian Railways' broader mission to make railway stations a **safe environment for all**, especially for children at risk.

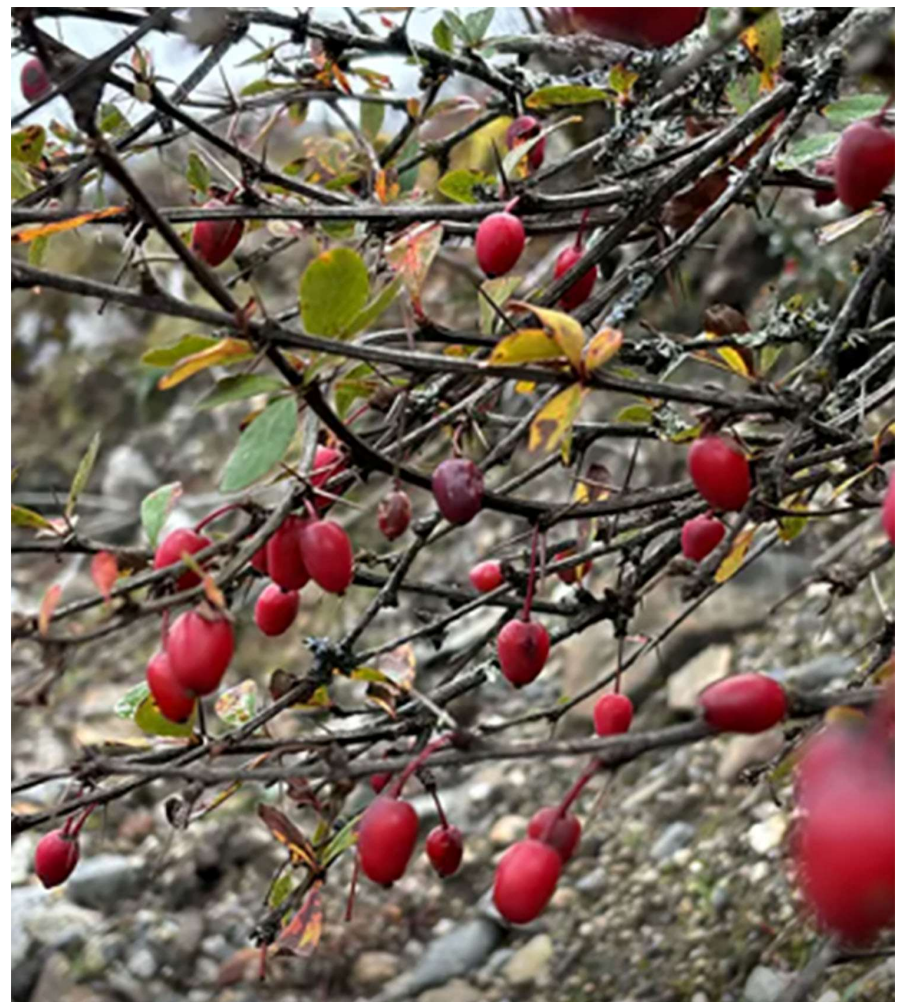
142. INDIA TEST-FIRES ASTRA BEYOND-VISUAL-RANGE AIR-TO-AIR MISSILE



- India successfully test-fired the Astra beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile from a Su-30 Mk-I aircraft off the coast of Odisha, demonstrating its indigenous defence capabilities.
- The missile has a range exceeding 100 km and is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance and navigation systems.
- During the tests, two launches were carried out against high-speed unmanned aerial targets at different ranges, target aspects, and launch platform conditions.
- In both cases, the missiles destroyed the targets with pin-point accuracy.

- All subsystems performed as per expectations, including the radio frequency seeker, which has been indigenously designed and developed by the DRDO.
- These successful flight tests have re-established the accuracy and reliable performance of the Astra weapon system with the indigenous seeker, the Ministry of Defence said.
- In addition to various laboratories of DRDO, more than 50 public and private industries, including Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), have contributed towards the development of the weapon system.

143. NEW BERBERIS SPECIES DISCOVERED IN TAWANG



- A new species of *Berberis* has been discovered in the high-altitude forests of Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh.
- The species has been named *Berberis myriovula*, notable for having up to **17 ovules in a single ovary** — the highest ever recorded among the 400–500 known species of the genus globally.
- The discovery was made during floristic surveys by Bipankar Hajong (research scholar at CSIR-NEIST, currently assistant professor at BN College, Dhubri), Dr. Pankaj Bharali (scientist at CSIR-NEIST), and Dr. Julian Harber (UK-based botanist).
- *Berberis myriovula* surpasses the ovule count of all previously known Asian *Berberis* species, where the count rarely exceeds 15.
- Closely related species like *B. calliantha* and *B. tsangpoensis*, found in Tibet and Nepal, typically bear fewer ovules.
- The species is unique for its solitary flower and unusually high ovule count.
- The team had previously reclassified *Berberis setifolia*, another species from the same region, which has up to 13 ovules.
- Outside Asia, only two South American species — *B. comberi* and *B. microphylla* — have shown more than 10 ovules.

- The discovery of *B. myriovula* is considered significant in the global botanical community due to its unprecedented reproductive trait.

144.FINMIN BACKS UNESCO TAG FOR LIVING ROOT BRIDGES

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has extended strong support to Meghalaya's bid for UNESCO World Heritage status for the living root bridges in East Khasi Hills.
- During her visit to Siej village on Saturday, Sitharaman praised community-led efforts to revive the nomination and highlighted the global relevance of these sustainable, indigenous engineering marvels.
- Handcrafted over generations by Khasi and Jaintia communities, the living root bridges are bioengineered structures unique to Meghalaya's southern slopes.
- First proposed for UNESCO listing in 2018 under the "cultural landscapes" category, the nomination faced delays due to procedural hurdles and documentation gaps.
- Sitharaman said global recognition would honour traditional knowledge and promote sustainable practices rooted in local wisdom.

145.MEDA ALI SAIKIA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION AWARDS TO BE PRESENTED IN GUWAHATI

- The Meda Ali Saikia Educational Foundation, a leading social and educational institution in Assam, will present the Pragma Ratna Awards 2025 to several distinguished personalities of Assam.
- Prominent educationist Dr. Dayanand Pathak and renowned singer Dwipen Barua will be honoured for their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.
- The 'Distinguished Administrative Award' will be presented to IPS officer Manbendra Dev Ray.
- Achyut Kumar Patwari, Executive Editor of the Assamese Pratidin newspaper, will receive the 'Distinguished Journalist Award' (Print Media) for his excellence in journalism.
- Dr. Kumud Das will be honoured with the 'Distinguished Journalist Award' (Electronic Media).
- Hemen Kalita, a well-known social and green activist, will also be recognised for his work.
- The 'Krishak Baibhav Award' will be presented to Bipul Haloi.
- Several others will also be felicitated during the award ceremony.

146.ARUNACHAL PROPOSES INDIA'S FIRST GERMPLASM BANK, BIOINCUBATOR

- Arunachal Pradesh Science and Technology Minister Dasanglu Pul held a meeting with Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jitendra Singh.
- She proposed the establishment of India's first ex-situ Germplasm bank in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The proposed bank aims to preserve rare and economically significant plant species found in the region.
- Germplasm banks are facilities that conserve genetic resources—such as seeds, tissues, or DNA—of plants and animals.
- These banks support long-term conservation and are vital for future breeding programmes, research, and biodiversity conservation efforts.

147.TSECL TO INTRODUCE DRONE-BASED SURVEILLANCE OF POWER TRANSMISSION LINES

- Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL) is set to implement a drone surveillance mechanism to enhance power supply reliability in the state.
- The drone system will play a key role in predictive maintenance and rapid response, helping minimize downtime and improve service quality.
- It will eliminate the need for technicians to climb towers or work near live wires, thereby reducing accident risks and improving adherence to electrical safety norms.
- AI-based image analysis will be used to detect physical degradation, misalignment, or damage in poles and wires across the power distribution network.
- The system will also help detect illegal power tapping through visible hooking by using visual and thermal inspection techniques.
- Drones will be used to monitor vegetation growth near electric poles and power lines, which can pose safety hazards and threaten uninterrupted supply.
- This expanded functionality will enable TSECL to better maintain both transmission and distribution systems, prevent power theft, ensure vegetation control, and enhance the safety and reliability of power supply in Tripura.

148.INDIA, NEW ZEALAND BEGIN TRADE TALKS

- India and New Zealand began the second round of negotiations for a proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Monday, with talks scheduled to conclude on July 25.
- The FTA, officially termed the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), aims to enhance bilateral trade and investment flows.
- Negotiations initially began in April 2010 but were stalled in February 2015 after ten rounds of discussions.
- Talks resumed on March 16, 2025, after a gap of nearly ten years.
- Bilateral trade between India and New Zealand reached USD 1.3 billion in 2024–25, up from USD 873.4 million in 2023–24.

- India's exports to New Zealand include clothing, fabrics, home textiles, medicines, refined petroleum, agricultural equipment, machinery (tractors and irrigation tools), automobiles, iron and steel, paper products, electronics, shrimps, diamonds, and basmati rice.
- New Zealand's key exports to India consist of agricultural goods, minerals, apples, kiwi fruit, lamb and mutton, milk albumin, lactose syrup, coking coal, timber (logs and sawn wood), wool, and scrap metals.

149.NAGALAND BID TO ENROL CHILD BEGGARS INTO GOVT SCHOOLS

- In a significant move to safeguard the rights of underprivileged children, the Directorate of School Education, Government of Nagaland, has issued an official advisory to identify and enrol children involved in begging into government schools.
- The directive, dated June 17, follows an advisory by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) aimed at protecting and rehabilitating impoverished, uneducated children, women, and differently-abled individuals engaged in begging.
- The advisory, signed by Principal Director Shashank Pratap Singh, calls on NGOs, municipal bodies, town and village councils, churches, student unions, and the public to report such children to the child helpline number 1098 for enrolment in nearby government schools.
- The Department of School Education aims to identify out-of-school children aged 6–14 years who are not enrolled or have dropped out before completing elementary education, including those engaged in begging.
- The initiative also focuses on identifying children aged 3–6 years whose parents are involved in begging and are not enrolled in any preschool, Anganwadi, or Balvatika centres.

150.INDIA AND FRANCE PLEDGE DEEPENING OF STRATEGIC TIES ON BASTILLE DAY

- France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, **Jean-Noel Barrot**, highlighted the **growing strategic partnership** between India and France, while thanking External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** for his Bastille Day greetings to the French government and citizens.
- Both nations reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the **Horizon 2047 Roadmap** and the **Defence Industrial Roadmap**, reflecting deep trust and shared ambition in bilateral ties.
- The developments followed **EAM Jaishankar's June 11–14 visit to France**, which occurred within four months of PM Modi's visit for the **Artificial Intelligence Action Summit**.
- The ministers held **comprehensive bilateral talks**, reviewing progress in **strategic sectors** such as **defence, security, space, counter-terrorism, and global issues**.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction over cooperation in **emerging areas** like **technology, innovation, trade,**

investment, health, life sciences, education, talent mobility, and museum partnerships.

- They also discussed **expanding new areas of cooperation** to deepen bilateral relations further.
- In this context, the ministers **looked forward to celebrating the "India-France Year of Innovation"** next year, which aims to add a new dimension to the multifaceted partnership.

151.600-YEAR-OLD GHILA TREE RECOGNISED AS ASSAM'S OLDEST TREE:



- A **600-year-old Ghila tree** (African dream herb) located in **Golaghat's Hazrat Langar-shah Aulia Dargah Sharif Mazar premises** has been officially recognised as **Assam's oldest tree**.
- The tree has **witnessed centuries of history**, including the British colonial era, making it a living symbol of Assam's cultural and ecological heritage.
- Spanning **seven bighas of land**, the Ghila tree is noted for its vast spread and historical presence within the Dargah premises.
- It has been featured in the **'Heritage Trees of Assam'** book, published by the **Assam Environment and Forest Department**, and recognised as the **oldest recorded tree in the state**.
- The tree also ranks among the **top 100 historic trees** listed from various districts of Assam, highlighting its ecological and spiritual importance.

152.CACHAR LAUNCHES FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND DIGI CFRC TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

- In a significant move toward community-centric governance and disaster resilience, the Cachar district administration launched the Digital Community Facilitation and Resource Centre (Digi CFRC).
- The initiative is claimed to be the first of its kind.
- Digi CFRC is a platform aimed at bridging gaps in disaster response.
- It also seeks to enhance public access to government schemes and services.
- The project reflects a shift toward digital and inclusive governance at the grassroots level.

153.INDIA, ARGENTINA TO BOOST TIES IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

- India and Argentina agreed to strengthen cooperation in agricultural mechanisation, pest control, climate-resilient agriculture, and joint research.
- The agreement was reached during the 2nd Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting on Agriculture between the two countries.
- Indian Co-chair Devesh Chaturvedi, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, joined the meeting virtually.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Sergio Iraeta, Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, Argentina.
- Both sides highlighted the meeting as a milestone in enhancing bilateral cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors.
- Chaturvedi stated that Argentina is a crucial partner for India and stressed opportunities in knowledge and technology sharing.
- He identified key areas for collaboration: agricultural mechanisation, pest control, climate resilience, and joint research.
- Iraeta reaffirmed Argentina's commitment to the partnership and showed strong interest in genome editing and plant breeding technologies.
- He emphasized the potential of both countries to complement each other in increasing productivity and promoting mechanisation.
- Muktanand Agrawal, Joint Secretary (Plant Protection), showcased India's achievements in agriculture and highlighted digital solutions, climate-resilient practices, and risk mitigation initiatives.
- Discussions covered cooperation in horticulture, oilseed and pulses value chains, precision agriculture, biopesticides, carbon credits for farmers, locust control, breeding technologies, and market access.
- Senior officials from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and Ministry of External Affairs participated in the meeting.

154.NEW DAY GECKO SPECIES DISCOVERED ON BRAHMAPUTRA BANKS, NAMED CNEMASPIS BRAHMAPUTRA

- A new species of day gecko, *Cnemaspis brahmaputra*, has been discovered along the banks of the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- The species is named in tribute to the Brahmaputra River, highlighting its ecological importance.
- This is only the second known species of its kind recorded in Northeast India, emphasizing the region's rich biodiversity.

- In a separate discovery, herpetologists found a new frog species, *Leptobrachium aryatium*, in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest near Guwahati, Assam.
- The frog is named in honour of Arya Vidyapeeth College, reflecting the affiliation of the researchers involved.
- The frog species is identified by orange-and-black eyes, distinct throat markings, and a melodious call at dusk.
- The discovery was published in the April 14 edition of *Zootaxa*, a New Zealand-based journal specializing in animal taxonomy.

155.ONGC, BP INDIA SIGN PACT TO EXPLORE HYDROCARBON SECTOR

- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with BP India.
- The MoU aims to unlock new frontiers in India's hydrocarbon exploration and drive deeper exploration in the upstream sector.
- The collaboration will focus on drilling stratigraphic wells in India's Category II and III offshore sedimentary basins — Andaman, Mahanadi, Saurashtra, and Bengal.
- The MoU was signed on the sidelines of 'Urja Varta 2025'.
- 'Urja Varta 2025' reinforces the government's commitment to deepen global collaboration in India's energy journey.
- The event serves as a critical platform for shaping the future of India's energy landscape.
- It highlights the country's focus on sustainability and innovation in the energy sector.

156.CENTRE BEGINS FORMULATION OF AUTOMOTIVE MISSION PLAN 2047

- The Ministry of Heavy Industries has initiated the formulation of the Automotive Mission Plan 2047 (AMP 2047).
- AMP 2047 aims to enhance innovation, global competitiveness, and sustainable development in the automotive sector.
- The goal is to establish India as a global automotive leader by the year 2047.
- The initiative aligns with the 'Viksit Bharat @2047' vision and builds upon the achievements of previous Automotive Mission Plans.
- Past mission plans contributed to significant growth in India's automotive sector through collaborative efforts.
- The inaugural meeting of the AMP 2047 Sub-Committees was held to outline objectives and the strategic framework.
- The initiative emphasizes stakeholder integration, including Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), auto component makers, policymakers, academia, and end users.
- It aims to address sectoral challenges such as technological advancements and the development of charging infrastructure.

157. NEW DAY GECKO SPECIES DISCOVERED ON BRAHMAPUTRA BANKS, NAMED CNEMASPIS BRAHMAPUTRA



- A new species of day gecko, *Cnemaspis brahmaputra*, has been discovered along the banks of the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- The species is named in honour of the Brahmaputra River, acknowledging its role in sustaining the region's rich biodiversity.
- This is only the second known species of its kind found in Northeast India, highlighting the ecological importance of the Brahmaputra basin.
- Experts consider the discovery a significant advancement in regional wildlife research and a reminder of the need to protect Assam's unique natural habitats.
- In a parallel development, herpetologists have discovered a new frog species, *Leptobrachium aryatium*, in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest near Guwahati.
- The frog is named after Arya Vidyapeeth College, recognising the affiliation of the researchers involved in the discovery.
- The frog is distinguished by its orange-and-black eyes, clear throat markings, and a melodious call heard at dusk.
- The discovery was published in the April 14 edition of *Zootaxa*, a well-regarded New Zealand-based journal focusing on animal taxonomy.

158. US DESIGNATES LET PROXY TRF AS FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANISATION

- The United States has designated The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), as a 'Foreign Terrorist Organisation' (FTO) in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.
- The move was welcomed by India as a "timely and important" step, reflecting strong counter-terrorism cooperation between the two nations.
- The U.S. State Department has also classified TRF as a 'Specially Designated Global Terrorist' (SDGT).
- TRF, which functions as a front and proxy of Lashkar-e-Taiba, had claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack that resulted in the death of 26 civilians.

- India reiterated that the designation of TRF aligns with its long-standing call for enhanced global collaboration in combating terrorism.

159. NEPAL BANS TELEGRAM APP:

- The Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) has directed all telecom service providers in the country to block access to the Telegram messaging app.
- This move follows repeated warnings and requests from the Cyber Bureau of Nepal Police, which flagged Telegram as a platform used for financial fraud and money laundering.
- The NTA confirmed that the decision was made in response to serious concerns raised by security agencies.
- Fraudulent activities on Telegram have recently increased, including fake job offers, cryptocurrency scams, and other deceptive schemes.
- A key reason for the ban is Telegram's refusal to cooperate with Nepal's law enforcement agencies.

160. CHINA BEGINS CONSTRUCTION OF DAM OVER BRAHMAPUTRA

- China has officially commenced the construction of a USD 167.8 billion dam over the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, near the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Chinese Premier Li Qiang inaugurated the construction at a ground-breaking ceremony held on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra, locally known as Yarlung Zangbo, in Nyingchi City, according to state media.
- The event was conducted at the dam site of Nyingchi's Mainling hydropower station in the Tibet Autonomous Region.
- The hydropower project is considered the largest infrastructure project in the world and has triggered concerns in downstream countries, particularly India and Bangladesh.
- The plan includes five cascade hydropower stations, with a total estimated investment of around 1.2 trillion yuan (approximately USD 167.8 billion).
- As per a 2023 report, the hydropower station is projected to generate over 300 billion kWh of electricity annually, sufficient to meet the yearly power requirements of more than 300 million people.
- The electricity produced will be primarily intended for external supply, although it will also help meet local energy needs in Tibet, which China officially refers to as Xizang.

161. DR SANTANOO TAMULY'S STORY TO FEATURE IN TEXTBOOK FOR 26 COUNTRIES

- A children's story titled '*Joy in the Jungle*', written by internationally-acclaimed children's and science fiction author Dr. Santanoo Tamuly from Jorhat, has been selected for inclusion in a school textbook to be used in 26 countries across Southeast and West Asia.

- The textbook, '*Magnolia English Readers*', is being developed by the well-known Hyderabad-based publishing house Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd., formerly known as Orient Longman India.
- Dr. Tamuly shared this news during a programme where he was honoured with the title '*Jibanjura Sadhana Vigyan Sahitya Sanman*' by Jorhat Vigyan Chora – an organisation promoting scientific thinking – held at the Jorhat Science Centre and Planetarium auditorium.
- Explaining the origin of the story, Dr. Tamuly said he wrote '*Joy in the Jungle*' and '*Bubu Bulbuli's Garden*' (originally in Assamese) after attending a children's writers' workshop in Agartala organised by the National Book Trust (NBT) in 2008.
- Both stories, illustrated by Durlabh Bhattacharjee and published by NBT in 2009, have been used as rapid readers by ICSE and CBSE boards for over a decade.
- At the event, Dr. Tamuly was felicitated with a citation, a phulam gamosa, a jaapi, and a memento by Jorhat Vigyan Chora during its 50th session.
- Several other organisations also honoured Dr. Tamuly, who is also the founder of the widely-read children's science magazine '*Mouchak*', started over four decades ago.

162.RAILWAY BOARD SEEKS REPORT ON REOPENING OF HISTORIC DOOMDOOMA STATION

- The Railway Board has sought a detailed report from the Chief Commercial Manager of the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) on the reopening of the historic Doomdooma railway station, situated on the Dibrugarh-Sadiya route.
- This action follows a letter from Jorhat MP Gaurav Gogoi, who raised critical concerns about railway connectivity and infrastructure in Assam and the Northeast region.
- Nishith Lucas Tigga, Joint Director (G-3) of the Traffic Commercial Branch of the Railway Board, issued an official directive (Letter No. 2025/TG-IV/1/NFR/04/MR) on July 15, instructing the NFR to submit the report by July 21.
- The proposal includes the reopening of Doomdooma station along with the establishment of a Passenger Reservation System (PRS) and a public ticket counter for improved passenger services.
- The recommendations also call for restoring pre-COVID train stoppages and introducing new ones in response to growing passenger demand.
- Additional proposals include the construction of level crossings and the extension of key train routes such as the Guwahati–New Bongaigaon (55810) service up to Fakiragram.
- The plan also suggests re-extending the Brahmaputra Mail service to Dibrugarh to enhance regional rail connectivity.

163.BTC ROLLS OUT 'DAHAL' SCHEME WITH DMIT TEST; RS 5 LAKH INSURANCE FOR STUDENTS

- The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has launched a major student welfare initiative under the "DAHAL" scheme in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).
- The scheme uniquely combines DMIT (Dermatoglyphics Multiple Intelligence Test) with an insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh for each student.
- On July 18, around 1,000 students took the DMIT test at Kabirali Higher Secondary School in Harisinga Council constituency, Udalguri district.
- The test was conducted for students from Class 5 to Class 12 to assess their unique talents, cognitive strengths, and learning styles.
- The purpose of the DMIT is to help students choose appropriate academic and career paths based on their individual potential.
- The initiative also includes college and university students, each receiving Rs 5 lakh insurance coverage.
- Dr. R.N. Sinha, Chief Advisor of the Advisory Committee overseeing the programme, announced the insurance benefit.
- The programme reflects BTC's commitment to both the holistic development and future security of students across the region.

164.SCHEME TO PROVIDE SUBSIDY TO MILK PRODUCERS LAUNCHED IN CITY

- Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a new scheme aimed at promoting self-reliance among dairy farmers and initiating a White Revolution in Assam.
- The launch event took place at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra in Guwahati.
- The scheme targets around 20,000 dairy farmers affiliated with 601 dairy cooperative societies across the State.
- Eligible farmers will receive financial assistance of Rs. 5 per litre of milk, for up to 30 litres per day.
- The support is applicable only to farmers supplying milk to organised dairy processing units.
- A budgetary provision of Rs. 10 crore has been allocated for the scheme in the financial year 2025–26.
- The assistance will be directly credited to the bank accounts of the eligible farmers on a fixed date each month.

165.INDIAN NAVY BOLSTERS BILATERAL TIES IN INDONESIA

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Saryu, an indigenously built Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NOPV), and Landing Craft Utility (LCU) 55, the fifth ship of the LCU Mk-IV class, along with Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) Dornier, arrived at Indonesia's Belawan for the post-deployment debriefing and closing ceremony of the 44th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT).
- The 44th edition of IND-INDO CORPAT is being conducted between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy from July 13–21.
- India and Indonesia share a close and friendly relationship, encompassing a wide range of cooperative activities and strategic interactions.
- The current edition of CORPAT aims to strengthen maritime cooperation between the two navies and reinforce the bonds of friendship between India and Indonesia.
- The engagement is aligned with the Government of India's vision *MAHASAGAR – Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions*.
- As part of this vision, the Indian Navy has been actively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to enhance regional maritime security.
- These efforts include bilateral and multilateral exercises, coordinated patrols, joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.

166.A WOMAN MARRIES TWO BROTHERS, PUTTING POLYANDRY IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

- In Shillai village, Himachal Pradesh, Sunita Chauhan married Pradeep and Kapil Negi in a three-day ceremony following the *Jodidara* ritual, a traditional practice of the Hatti tribal community.
- The *Jodidara* ritual reflects the custom of polyandry, where brothers share one wife to avoid division of family land and ensure household unity.
- Although polyandry is rare and not recognized under Indian law, it continues to be practiced in some tribal regions of Himachal Pradesh under customary tribal rules.
- The Hatti community, recently granted Scheduled Tribe status, follows this tradition as part of their cultural framework.
- State revenue rules and court decisions permit the Hatti community to maintain their customary practices, including polyandrous unions like *Jodidara*.
- This tradition is rooted in socio-economic needs such as preserving land holdings and family structure within the tribal context.

167.ASU, ASSAM START-UP HOLD FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE

- Assam Skill University (ASU), in partnership with Assam Start-up, organized the 'ASU Start-up Connect' event at Assam Start-up—The Nest, Ambari.

- The event is a flagship initiative aimed at bridging the gap between academia and industry.
- It seeks to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and skill-based opportunities within Assam's expanding start-up ecosystem.
- The Vice Chancellor, in his keynote address, appreciated the participating start-ups.
- He highlighted the importance of such initiatives in blending industry exposure and innovation with academic learning.

168.WORLD WAR II RELICS DISCOVERED AT CONSTRUCTION SITE IN IMPHAL WEST DIST



- A cache of relics believed to be from World War II was unearthed during construction work in Imphal West district.
- The military artefacts were found during soil excavation for pillar erection at a government project site in Langthabal Phumlou Konjin Leikai, around 10 km south of Imphal.
- The relics were discovered at a depth of about four to five feet below the surface.
- Items found include rusted empty shell cases, water bottles, a hand grenade, spades, tin cans, and other military equipment.
- The relics are suspected to have belonged to Allied soldiers who participated in the historic Battle of Imphal in 1944.
- The discovery site is located close to areas associated with significant WWII military activity.

169.BOEING DELIVERS 3 APACHE CHOPPERS TO INDIAN ARMY



- American aerospace giant Boeing delivered three Apache attack helicopters to the Indian Army.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called it a significant move to enhance India's defence capabilities.
- The helicopters are part of a ₹4,168 crore contract for six AH-64E Apache choppers.
- The AH-64 Apache is considered one of the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopters and is operated by the US Army.
- The delivery marks the first batch of Apaches for the Indian Army.
- In 2020, Boeing had completed the delivery of 22 AH-64E Apaches to the Indian Air Force.
- A separate contract was signed in 2020 for supplying six Apaches specifically for the Indian Army.

170. ASSAMESE TRANSLATION OF UNDRIP PRESENTED AT UN GENEVA SESSION

- In a historic moment for the Assamese language and indigenous identity, Hiram Jyoti Bora unveiled the world's first indigenous-language Assamese translation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- The unveiling took place at the 18th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at Palais des Nations, Room XIX, Geneva.
- The translated document was officially handed over to the Director of UNESCO, marking significant global recognition of Assam's rich linguistic and cultural heritage.
- This initiative was a collaborative effort between Touch of Humanity NGO and the World Barua Organization, which holds special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- The Assamese version of UNDRIP is scheduled for a formal launch at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France.
- The launch will further establish Assam's presence in international discussions on indigenous rights and cultural preservation.

171. TWO INDIANS IN FIDE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL

- For the first time in Indian chess history, the FIDE Women's World Cup will have an Indian winner, with Koneru Humpy and Divya Deshmukh set to compete in the final.
- The grand finale will take place in Batumi, Georgia.
- This is the first instance in the tournament's history where two Indian players are facing each other in the final.
- Both Koneru Humpy and Divya Deshmukh have secured qualification for the Women's Candidates Tournament next year by reaching the final.

172. GUWAHATI RAILWAY STATION TO BECOME FULLY PLASTIC-RECYCLABLE HUB BY INDEPENDENCE DAY

- The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is set to convert Guwahati railway station into a fully plastic-recyclable hub by Independence Day.
- This initiative is aimed at tackling plastic pollution across the NFR network.
- NFR is working in collaboration with IIT-Guwahati and the Assam Pollution Control Board to develop a comprehensive action plan.
- M/s Kusum Udyog, a PCBA-approved recycling agency, has been assigned the task of submitting a detailed proposal for the project.
- The agenda includes reviewing current waste disposal methods, identifying high-impact zones, and creating a joint strategy to reduce single-use plastics and promote sustainability.
- The project involves collecting, shredding, washing, and segregating plastic waste at the station for effective recycling.
- To raise awareness, NFR's Scouts and Guides are actively engaging passengers and staff through placard displays, street plays, and drama performances.

173. IIT GUWAHATI DEVELOPS ECO-FRIENDLY BAMBOO COMPOSITE FOR CAR INTERIORS

- Researchers at IIT Guwahati have developed an eco-friendly composite material made from bamboo that could potentially replace conventional plastics used in automotive interiors.
- The team used Bambusa tulda, a fast-growing bamboo species native to Northeast India, and combined it with biodegradable polymers to create the composite.
- The material is characterized by high strength, thermal stability, low moisture absorption, and cost-effectiveness.
- These properties make it a viable alternative to the plastics currently used in vehicle interiors.
- The research was led by Dr. Poonam Kumari, Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering.
- The innovation addresses the issue of plastic waste while offering a sustainable solution aligned with the global demand for greener materials in the automotive industry.
- The findings have been published in the reputed journal *Environment, Development and Sustainability* (Springer Nature).
- The paper was co-authored by Dr. Kumari and her research scholars, Abir Saha and Nikhil Dilip Kulkarni.

