

— ASSAM SPECIFIC —

CURRENT AFFAIRS COMPILATION 2026

—



JANUARY – MAY 2026

FOR APSC CCE 2025



ASSAM-FOCUSED



EXAM-ORIENTED



AUTHENTIC



ASSAM AT A GLANCE.
STAY AHEAD IN THE RACE.



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Polity

1. Assam Cabinet Approves Uniform Civil Code

The Assam Cabinet approved the introduction of a **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** Bill in the State Assembly, making Assam one of the few Indian States moving towards a common civil law framework.

- The decision of the Assam Cabinet to introduce a UCC has generated nationwide discussion because it touches upon sensitive issues such as marriage, inheritance, tribal customs, women's rights, and religious freedom.
- The Chief Minister stated that the Assam model has been "customised" to protect indigenous and tribal communities while promoting legal uniformity in certain civil matters.

About Uniform Civil Code

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) means the **formulation of one codified law for the whole country**, which would be applicable to all the citizens of that country **in all the civilian matters** such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.

Background

- ❖ Since the **constitutional assembly debates**, there were **reservations** about **codification of Personal laws** and it was opposed by many Muslim as well as Hindu leaders.
- ❖ This uncertainty led to the **inclusion of UCC** in the **DPSP** as **Article 44** rather than FRs.

- **Article 44 in Part IV** (contains the DPSP) of the Constitution states that the state '*shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India*'.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)** are **not enforceable** or **justiciable** in a court of law, are **fundamental** to the **country's governance**.

- ❖ **Personal civil laws in India:** Subjects come under the Concurrent list.
- ❖ The Parsis, Hindu, Muslim, Jews & Christians have their own marriage and divorce act and their own separate law of inheritance.
- ❖ Hindu personal laws (that apply also to the Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists) were codified and passed by the Parliament in 1950's under four parts.
- ❖ **Special Marriage Act:** It was enacted in 1954 which provided for civil marriages outside of any religious personal law.
- ❖ **The Shariat law of 1937** governs the personal matters of all Indian Muslims in India.

Key Features of Assam's Proposed UCC

According to the Assam Cabinet:

- All tribal communities of Assam, both in hill and plain areas, will remain outside the purview of the proposed law.
- Religious rituals, customs, and traditional practices will also remain protected.
- The proposed law will focus on:
 - Minimum legal age of marriage.
 - Compulsory registration of marriages and divorces.
 - Abolition of polygamy.
 - Equal inheritance rights for women.
 - Regulation of live-in relationships.

The government stated that Assam's model differs from the UCC frameworks adopted in Uttarakhand, Goa and Gujrat because of special safeguards for indigenous groups.

2. 24 Years of the Bodoland Accord

The **24th Bodoland Accord Day** was observed across the **Bodoland Territorial Region** in February 2026, marking 24 years since the signing of the historic **2003 Bodoland Territorial Council Accord**.

Remembering the roots of the Accord

- The **Bodoland movement** emerged from long-standing demands of the Bodo people for **political autonomy, cultural protection, and economic development**.
- Years of agitation and armed conflict disrupted life in western Assam.
- The breakthrough came on **10 February 2003**, when the **Government of India**, the **Government of Assam**, and the **Bodo Liberation Tigers** signed the BTC Accord.

What the 2003 Bodoland Accord achieved

- Creation of the **Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)** under the **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution**, specifically within **Article 244(2)**.
- Establishment of a **46-member autonomous council** with legislative, executive, and financial powers.
- Territorial jurisdiction over **Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa, Tampulpur and Chirang** districts with Kokrajhar as the headquarters.
- Formal end to armed insurgency and **mainstreaming of former militants**.
- Institutional space for **self-governance within the Indian Union**.

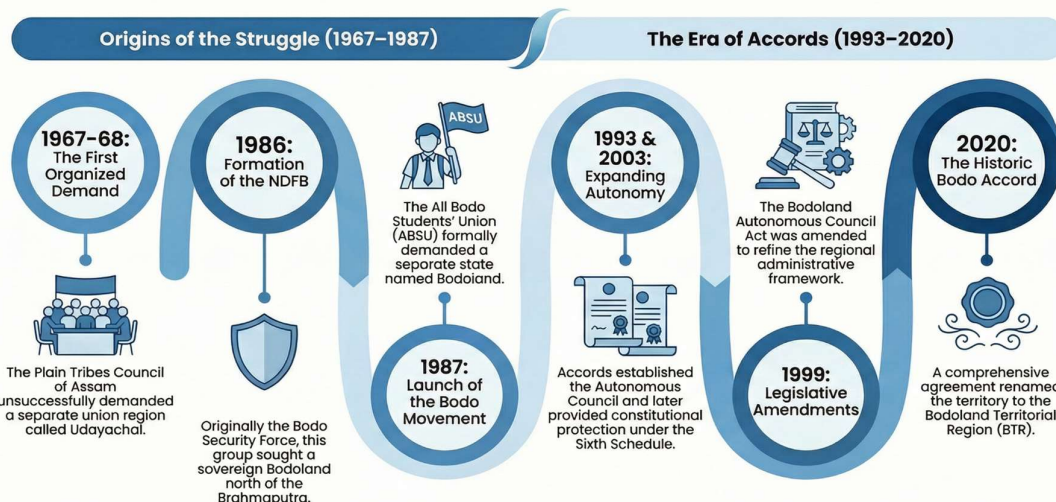
From BTC to BTR: the 2020 turning point

- Despite peace, dissatisfaction persisted over **incomplete implementation** of the 2003 Accord.
- Groups like the **All Bodo Students' Union** revived demands for greater political rights.
- This culminated in the **Third Bodo Accord (2020)**, which:
 - Renamed the area as **Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)**.
 - Expanded administrative and financial powers.
 - Promised accelerated development and cultural safeguards.

Implementation: progress and pending issues

- As per the Union Home Minister's statement in March 2025, **around 82 per cent of the Accord clauses have been implemented**.
- **Key gains include:**
 - Sustained peace and decline in insurgency.
 - Expansion of education, road connectivity, and welfare schemes.
 - Improved political participation and local governance.
- **Unresolved concerns remain:**
 - Full rehabilitation of over **2,600 former militants**.
 - Pending **Scheduled Tribe (Hills) status** for Boro Kacharis in **Karbi Anglong** and **Dima Hasao**.
 - Need for inclusive development benefiting non-Bodo communities within BTR.

The Evolution of Bodoland: A Timeline of Autonomy



One-line wrap

The Bodoland Accord stands as a rare example where constitutional autonomy, dialogue, and sustained political commitment transformed a conflict zone into a region of relative peace and hope.

3. Assam Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) Policy, 2025

The Assam Cabinet approved the **Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) Policy, 2025** with the objective of positioning Assam as the leading aviation MRO hub of Northeast India by 2030.

What is MRO?

Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) refers to the inspection, servicing, repair, modification, and overhaul of aircraft and aviation components to ensure airworthiness and safety.

It includes:

- Aircraft maintenance
- Engine repair and overhaul
- Component repair
- Aircraft testing and certification
- Technical support services

Key Objectives of Assam MRO Policy, 2025

- To establish Assam as the premier aviation MRO hub of Northeast India by 2030.
- To attract investments in aviation infrastructure.
- To create employment opportunities in the aviation sector.
- To reduce dependence on MRO facilities located outside the region.
- To develop a skilled aviation workforce in Assam.
- To support India's goal of becoming a global aviation maintenance destination.

Significance for Assam

Economic Benefits

- Attracts domestic and foreign investment.
- Generates high-skilled employment opportunities.
- Promotes industrial growth around airports.

Strategic Importance

- Strengthens aviation infrastructure in Northeast India.
- Supports regional air connectivity under the UDAN scheme.
- Reduces aircraft downtime and maintenance costs.

Skill Development

- Creates demand for aircraft engineers, technicians, and aviation professionals.
- Encourages aviation-related training institutions.

Other Important Cabinet Decisions

1. High-Powered Investment Committee

The Cabinet approved the formation of a **High-Powered Investment Committee** headed by the Chief Minister.

Features

- Applicable to projects involving investments of **₹10,000 crore and above**.
- Serves as the apex mechanism for:
 - Policy-level facilitation
 - Fast-track approvals
 - Expedited clearances
 - Customized incentives
 - Continuous project support

Objective

- To attract large-scale strategic investments into Assam.

2. Assam Non-Government Educational Institutions (Regulation of Fees) (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Key Provisions

- Strengthens regulation of fees charged by private educational institutions.
- Brings all non-government educational institutions under a transparent regulatory framework.
- Covers minority educational institutions established under **Article 30(1)** of the Constitution.
- Mandates:
 - Registration
 - Fee fixation
 - Periodic renewal

Significance

- Promotes affordability and transparency in education.
- Protects students and parents from arbitrary fee hikes.

3. Provincialization of Services of Non-Teaching Staff Amendment Bill, 2025**Key Provision**

- Introduces **6% annual enhancement** in the fixed monthly salaries of provincialized non-teaching staff working in venture educational institutions.

Significance

- Provides financial relief.
- Addresses long-standing demands for salary revision.
- Improves employee morale and service motivation.

4. Mehta Commission Report

The Cabinet approved placing the **Mehta (Unofficial) Judicial Commission of Enquiry Report** before the Assam Legislative Assembly.

Purpose

- The report relates to incidents connected with the **1983 Assam Election violence**.

Prelims Pointers

- **MRO** = Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul.
- Assam aims to become the **leading aviation MRO hub of Northeast India by 2030**.
- High-Powered Investment Committee will handle projects worth **₹10,000 crore and above**.
- Private educational institutions, including minority institutions under **Article 30(1)**, will be subject to fee regulation.
- Provincialized non-teaching staff of venture educational institutions will receive **6% annual salary enhancement**.
- Mehta Commission Report is related to the **1983 Assam Election violence**.

**Assam Fire and Emergency Services Bill, 2025**

- ▶ Cabinet has approved introduction of the Bill to strengthen fire safety standards, emergency response, and compliance in buildings across Assam

A tradition celebrated with dignity, and safeguarded with responsibility

- ▶ Cabinet has approved placing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Assam Amendment) Bill, 2025, allowing the traditional Buffalo Fight (Moh Jui) during Magh Bihu with regulatory safeguards

Tabling of Mehta Commission Report (1983 Election Violence)

- ▶ Cabinet has approved placing the Mehta (Unofficial) Judicial Commission Report on the 1983 election-related incidents in the upcoming Assembly session

Clearing the Clutter: Simplifying the System- Assam Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025

- ▶ Cabinet has approved amendments to decriminalise and rationalise minor offences across 16 Acts to promote Ease of Doing Business

Historic Relief for Tea Garden Labour Lines

- ▶ Cabinet has approved introduction of the Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings (Amendment) Bill, 2025, excluding labour lines from ancillary land definitions in tea estates. Expected to benefit 3.33 lakh tea worker families across 825 estates

4. How the 16th Finance Commission Will Shape Assam's Economic Future

The **16th Finance Commission** has recommended a revised formula for the distribution of Central taxes among States, increasing Assam's share and introducing new performance-based criteria. This is expected to significantly influence Assam's fiscal stability, development spending, and economic growth.

16th Finance Commission Recommendations (1st April 2026–31st March 2031)

The Finance Commission recommends two types of fiscal transfers to States:

1. Vertical Devolution

- Maintained at **41% of the divisible pool of Central taxes** (same as the 15th Finance Commission).
- This determines the overall share of States in Central tax revenues.

2. Grants-in-Aid

The 16th Finance Commission recommended only **two types of grants**:

- **Local Body Grants**
- **Disaster Management Grants**

In contrast, the 15th Finance Commission had recommended **five types of grants**:

- Local Body Grants
- Disaster Management Grants
- Revenue Deficit Grants
- Sector-Specific Grants
- State-Specific Grants

Horizontal Distribution Criteria (how the 41% of revenue be decided among States)

The criteria and their weights have been revised. A new parameter '**Contribution to GDP**' has been introduced, while '**Tax and Fiscal Effort**' has been removed.

Criteria	XV Finance Commission (2021–26)	XVI Finance Commission (2026–31)
Income Distance	45%	42.5%
Population (2011)	15%	17.5%
Demographic Performance	12.5%	10%
Area	15%	10%
Forest and Ecology	10%	10%
Tax and Fiscal Effort	2.5%	—
Contribution to GDP	—	10%
Total	100%	100%

Key Changes

- Vertical devolution unchanged at **41%**.
- Grants reduced to only **two categories**, simplifying the structure.
- **Contribution to GDP (10%) added** to reward economically productive states.
- **Tax and Fiscal Effort removed**.
- Slight increase in weight to **Population**, while weights of **Income Distance**, **Area**, and **Demographic Performance** reduced.

Understanding the Finance Commission

The **Finance Commission** is a constitutional body established under **Article 280 of the Constitution of India**. It is constituted every five years to recommend how financial resources should be shared between the Centre and the States. Its key functions include:

- Recommending the **distribution of Central taxes between Centre and States (vertical devolution)**.
- Deciding how the States' share is distributed among individual States (**horizontal devolution**).
- Suggesting measures to improve fiscal discipline and financial stability.

The **16th Finance Commission recommendations will apply from 2026 to 2031**, directly affecting Assam's finances.

Increased Tax Share and Fiscal Benefits for Assam

A major positive outcome for Assam is the increase in its share of Central taxes:

- Assam's share increased from **3.128% (15th Finance Commission)** to **3.26% (16th Finance Commission)**.
- States will collectively receive **41% of the divisible pool of Central taxes**, strengthening fiscal federalism.
- This will increase Assam's revenue, helping fund infrastructure, welfare schemes, and economic development.

This increased share reflects Assam's improving economic performance and strategic importance.

New Devolution Formula

The **16th Finance Commission** has introduced a revised formula, with weights assigned to various factors:

- **Income distance – 42.5%:** Helps poorer States like Assam receive higher support.
- **Population (2011 Census) – 17.5%:** Reflects population-based needs.
- **Demographic performance – 10%:** Rewards population control efforts.
- **Area – 10%:** Larger States receive higher support due to administrative costs.
- **Forest and ecology – 10%:** Benefits forest-rich States like Assam.
- **Contribution to Gross Domestic Product – 10%:** Newly added factor rewarding economic growth.

Fiscal Discipline Targets

The Commission has emphasized **fiscal consolidation**, meaning reducing excessive borrowing and maintaining financial discipline.

Key recommendations include:

- The **Central government fiscal deficit should be reduced to 3.5% of Gross Domestic Product by 2030–31**.
- States' fiscal deficit should be limited to **3% of Gross State Domestic Product**.
- Off-budget borrowings must be stopped and included in official fiscal accounts.

Exam Hook

Key points:

- Finance Commission is established under **Article 280**.
- States receive **41% of Central taxes as per current recommendations**.
- Assam's share increased to **3.26% under 16th Finance Commission**.
- Fiscal deficit limits: **3% for States, 3.5% for Centre by 2030–31**.
- New criterion includes **Gross Domestic Product contribution**.

5. Racial Discrimination Against Northeast Indians

The recent racial abuse of two young women from Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur in New Delhi, along with past incidents such as the killing of **Anjel Chakma (2025)** in Dehradun and the earlier death of **Nido Taniam (2014)**, has once again highlighted the continuing problem of **racial discrimination against people from Northeast India**.

Bezbaruah Committee (2014) – Key Recommendations

After the death of Nido Taniam (2014), the Ministry of Home Affairs set up the **Bezbaruah Committee**. Its major recommendations include:

- **Strong Legal Framework**
 - Enact a **specific anti-discrimination law** or amend the Indian Penal Code.
 - Make racial offences **cognizable and non-bailable**.
 - Complete investigation within **60 days** by a senior police officer (Deputy Superintendent of Police/Assistant Commissioner of Police rank).
 - Appoint a **special public prosecutor**.
 - Ensure trial completion within **90 days**.
- **Fast-Track Courts and Special Police Units**
 - Establish **fast-track courts** for racially motivated crimes.
 - Create a **North East Special Police Unit** with trained and sensitised officers.
 - Appoint specially trained public prosecutors for such cases.
- **Educational Reforms**
 - Integrate **Northeast history, culture and society** into school and university curricula.
 - Sensitise teacher training institutes.
 - Conduct socio-economic study on **student migration** from the Northeast to improve higher education planning.
- **Legal Awareness and Social Media Outreach**
 - Organise **legal awareness campaigns** in areas with large Northeast populations.

- Introduce lectures on legal rights in universities.
- Create dedicated **social media platforms** and appoint nodal police officers for community coordination.
- **Promotion of Sports and Cultural Integration**
 - Organise national and international sports events in the Northeast.
 - Improve sports infrastructure.
 - Promote **indigenous games** to strengthen national integration.

Some steps were taken, but implementation remains partial.

Exam Hook:

- Racial discrimination reflects both **societal prejudice and institutional gaps**.
- Constitutional morality must go beyond legal text into social behaviour.
- Education reform and police sensitisation are critical.

6. Assam Constitutes 8th State Pay Commission

The Government of Assam has announced the **constitution of the 8th State Pay Commission**, making Assam the **first State in India** to take this step ahead of the expiry of the 7th Pay Commission on **1 January 2026**.

Key announcement

- The **decision** was **announced** by the **Chief Minister of Assam**.
- The Commission will be headed by **Subash Chandra Das**, former Additional Chief Secretary.

About the 8th Central Pay Commission

- **Pay Commissions** are periodic bodies constituted to revise **salaries, allowances, pensions, and service conditions** of government employees.
- The **Central Government** generally **sets up a Pay Commission once every ten years**.
- Since 1947, seven **Pay Commission** has been **constituted so far**.
- The **8th Central Pay Commission** is a **temporary body** with:
 - One Chairperson (generally a retired judge of Supreme Court)
 - One Part-Time Member
 - One Member-Secretary
 - They are all appointed by the Central Government
- The recommendations of the **8th Central Pay Commission** are expected to be implemented from **January 1, 2026**.
- It has been directed to submit its report within **18 months**, keeping in mind:
 - **Fiscal prudence**, Economic conditions, Pension liabilities, Impact on State finances and Comparison with public sector and private sector pay structures.

What the 7th commission had suggested HT

January 1, 2016
Recommended date of implementation

₹18,000
Minimum monthly pay

₹225,000
Maximum monthly pay for apex scale

3% Annual increment



"The Cabinet's decision on the 8th Pay Commission will improve quality of life and give a boost to consumption."
— **NARENDRA MODI**, Prime Minister

THE HOUSE RENT ALLOWANCE NORMS

- HRA be paid at the rate of 24%, 16% and 8% of the new basic pay for Class X, Y and Z cities respectively
- HRA will be revised to 27%, 18% and 9% respectively when DA crosses 50%
- Revised to 30%, 20% and 10% when DA crosses 100%

HOW THE PANEL ARRIVES AT ITS FINDINGS

- Central Pay Commissions have been periodically constituted since 1947 to go into various issues of emolument structure, retirement benefits and other service conditions of central

- government employees and to make recommendations on the required changes.
- Several states and their agencies often follow recommendations of the commission.

- The panels take inflation, burden to the exchequer and economic conditions into account.
- The panel will give recommendations after extensive consultations with all stakeholders.

7. Article 244(A)

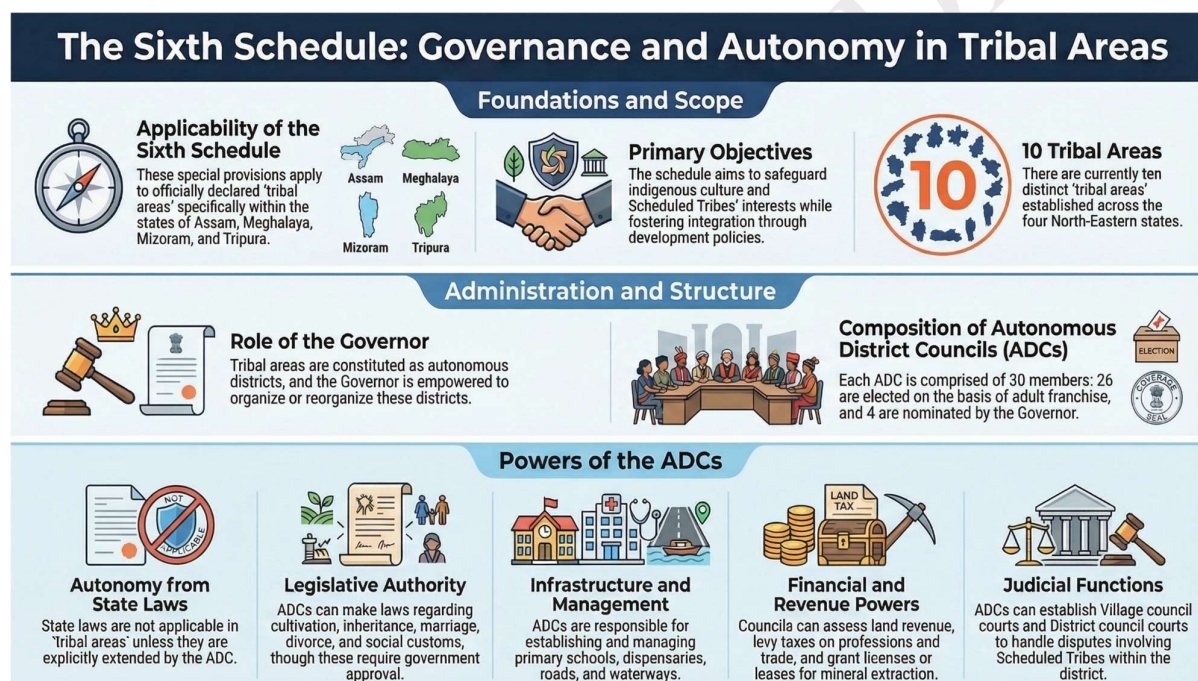
Article 244(A) has become a **major electoral issue in Assam Assembly Elections 2026**, especially in **Dima Hasao and other hill districts**, where demands for autonomy have intensified.

What is Article 244(A)?

- Article 244(A) was inserted by the **Constitution (Twenty-second Amendment) Act, 1969** to address the governance needs of tribal areas in Assam.
- It empowers Parliament to **create an autonomous state within Assam** comprising certain tribal regions.
- This autonomous state can have its own **legislature and council of ministers**, providing a higher level of self-governance.

Difference from Sixth Schedule

- The **Sixth Schedule provides Autonomous District Councils** with limited legislative and financial powers.
 - The six Legislative Assembly segments in Assam's hill districts—**Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, and Dima Hasao**—are part of the Autonomous District (ST) parliamentary constituency.
- Article 244(A) goes beyond this by allowing the creation of a **more powerful autonomous state structure within Assam**.
- The Sixth Schedule does not provide control over **law and order**, whereas Article 244(A) can enable broader governance powers.



8. PVTGs Could Be Counted Separately

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has asked the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGI) that Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) be counted separately in the next Census.

More About the News

- The **exercise** will also **document** their **distinctive cultural, demographic, and socio-economic characteristics**.
- If carried out, this will mark the **first time** that **PVTGs are enumerated separately** since the category was created.
- Earlier (2011 Census), the 40 **PVT groups** were **counted** within the broader category of **Scheduled Tribes (STs)**.
- Here's a polished **news-style addition** to your line:
- This **initiative** to count the most marginalised groups separately to **facilitate targeted policies** of **uplift and redress** is a welcome move.

Who are PVTGs?

- PVTGs are the **most vulnerable among** the STs with some **basic characteristics** like:
 - They are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, social institutions, absence of written language, relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change etc.
- In **1973**, the **Dhebar Commission** introduced the category of **Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)** to **identify tribal communities** that were **less developed** than others.
- In **2006**, the **Government** renamed them as **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**.
- At present, India has **75 PVTGs distributed over 18 states and 1 Union Territory** (Andaman and Nicobar Islands).
 - The **Morram Nagas** of **Manipur** and **Reangs** of **Tripura** are the only **PVTGs** identified in the **North-East region** of India.
- The **Government identifies Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) based on four key criteria:**
 - Pre-agricultural level of technology
 - Low level of literacy
 - Economic backwardness
 - A declining or stagnant population
- For a community to be identified as a PVTG, the **recommendations of the concerned State Government**, along with a **complete proposal**, are mandatory prerequisites.

Population of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- The **PVTGs population** is **estimated** to be around **45.56 lakh**.
- **Madhya Pradesh** (12.28 lakh), **Maharashtra** (6.2 lakh) and **Andhra Pradesh** (4.9 lakh) are the **top three** in terms of PVTG population.

About the Dhebar Commission

- It was **set up under Article 339** of the Constitution in April 1960 and was **assigned various tasks of investigation and reporting problems of STs**.
- The Commission in its report in 1961 observed that amongst tribals, the lowest layer needs the utmost consideration at the hands of the Government.

List of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India

State / UT	PVTGs
Andhra Pradesh & Telangana	Bodo Gadaba, Bondo Poroja, Chenchu, Dongria Khond, Gutob Gadaba, Khond Poroja, Kolam, Kondareddis, Konda Savaras, Kutia Khond, Parengi Poroja, Thoti
Bihar & Jharkhand	Asurs, Birhor, Birjia, Hill Kharia, Konvas, Mal Paharia, Parhaiyas, Sauda Paharia, Savar
Gujarat	Kathodi, Kohvalia, Padhar, Siddi, Kolgha
Karnataka	Jenu Kuruba, Koraga
Kerala	Cholanaikayan (section of Kattunaickans), Kadar, Kattunayakan, Kurumbas, Koraga
Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh	Abujh Marias, Baigas, Bharias, Hill Korbas, Kamars, Saharias, Birhor
Maharashtra	Katkaria (Kathodia), Kolam, Maria Gond
Manipur	Marram Nagas
Odisha	Birhor, Bondo, Didayi, Dongria-Khond, Juangs, Kharias, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Sauras, Lodhas, Mankidias, Paudi Bhuyans, Soura, Chuktia Bhunjia
Rajasthan	Seharias

Tamil Nadu	Kattu Nayakans, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyans, Todas
Tripura	Reangs
Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand	Buxas, Rajis
West Bengal	Birhor, Lodhas, Totos
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Great Andamanese, Jarawas, Onges, Sentinelese, Shom Pens

9. Gauhati High Court Reimposes Ban on Buffalo Fights

The **Gauhati High Court** has issued an **interim order banning buffalo fights (Moh Juj)** in Assam and directed authorities to take **penal action against organisers**, citing violation of animal protection laws.

Background: Cultural Context

- **Buffalo fights and bulbul fights** are traditionally associated with **Magh Bihu (Bhogali Bihu)**.
- Major centres:
 - **Ahatguri (Morigaon district)** for **buffalo fights**, a customary event since **1972**.
 - **Hayagriva Madhab Temple, Hajo (Kamrup district)** for **bulbul fights**.
- These practices have **centuries-old roots**, linked to agrarian celebrations and community gatherings.
- Nearly **200 years ago**, **Rudra Singha**, the 30th Ahom ruler, gave **royal patronage** to Bihu and related traditional games.
- Historical accounts suggest Moh-Juj was once organised at **Ruphi Pathar, Rangpur**, and viewed by Ahom kings from the **Rang Ghar**.

Types of buffalo fights

Two broad categories of buffaloes take part:

1. **Assamese buffalo**
 - Broad forehead, large body, wide-mouthed horns.
 - Engage in **short-duration fights**, usually striking head-to-head.
2. **Adrangi (mixed-origin) buffalo**
 - Rounded horns and greater stamina.
 - Fights last longer; attacks often target the throat.
 - Known as **“Caap-Juj”** in Lower Assam.
 - Once defeated, a buffalo generally avoids fighting again within the herd.

Legal Framework Involved

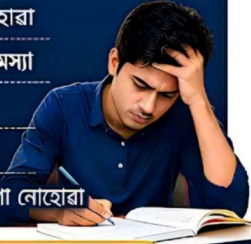
- **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**
 - Prohibits causing unnecessary pain and suffering to animals.
 - Section 22 bans use of certain animals for performance.
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**
 - Protects species like **bulbuls (Schedule II)**.
 - **Bulbul fights are illegal** under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
 - Defines “hunting” broadly, including capturing and baiting.
- **Supreme Court Judgements**
 - **2014 (A. Nagaraja case):** Banned use of bulls in events like jallikattu.
 - **2023 Judgement:** Allowed jallikattu, kambala etc. only after **state amendments with Presidential assent**.

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- × Mock test practice কম হোৱা
- × Time management-ত সমস্যা
- × Revisionৰ চাপ বেছি
- × Negative markingৰ ভয়
- × Actual exam levelৰ ধাৰণা নোহোৱা



IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Economy.

1. Assam Begins First Legal Export of Agarwood Chips to Gulf Countries

Assam exported its first legally approved consignment of **agarwood chips** to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, marking a major milestone for the State's agro-forest economy.

Key Highlights

- The consignment included **100 kg** of agarwood chips to **Saudi Arabia** and **12 kg** to the **United Arab Emirates**.
- The shipment, valued at **₹2.35 crore**, was dispatched from Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport.
- The export received mandatory approvals including **CITES permit** and restricted export licence from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

About Agarwood

- Agarwood or Sanchi (*Aquilaria malaccensis*) is a **highly valuable and aromatic resinous wood**, native to **Assam and South East Asia**.
- It has a mythic reputation with a revered mention in **Mahabharat, Buddhist birth stories and Hadiths in Islam**.
- It **requires warm humid and sub-tropical climate** as well as **soft and sandy soil**.
- It is suitable and preferable for plantation at a **temperature between 22 C to 43C** with **70% sunlight** and **1800-3500 mm rainfall** per annum.
- Agar is **classified as critically endangered** on the **IUCN Red List** and is listed under **Appendix II** of the **CITES**.
- This **listing ensures** that the **trade of agarwood adheres to sustainable limits**, allowing export only if it does not harm the species' survival.



Production of Agarwood

- The cultivation of agarwood has a catch as **healthy Aquilaria trees do not produce these fragrant compounds**.
- **Agarwood is produced** when *Aquilaria trees* are **bruised** by **external factors** such as physical injury, insect attack, bacterial/fungal infection that they form agarwood in defense.
- The **resin is produced** as an **immune response** to **attack** from **fungi** or **injury** by **insects** called **borer** (*Neurozerra confertal*).
 - Borer is naturally found in Assam's districts of Sivasagar, Golaghat and Jorhat.
- In **natural forests**, only up to **10% of trees** become infected and **produce agarwood**.
- Farmers use **artificial inoculation methods** to **produce aromatic resins** in agarwood by drilling holes in trees and injecting fungal inoculants.
 - This triggers an immune response in the tree, leading to resin formation.

Agarwood Production in Assam

- Assam is known as the **"Agarwood Capital" of India**.
- The **climate** and **landscape** of Assam are best **suited** for **agar tree plantations**.
- **Assam is home** to over **82% of India's agarwood trees**, amounting to 11.437 crore trees outside forest areas, showcasing Assam's dominance in this sector.
- Assam's **Golaghat district** holds the **highest concentration** of **Agarwood Trees** (4.5 crore trees).
 - Other key districts include Jorhat, Sivasagar, Karimganj and Cachar.
- In contrast, **Tripura** holds the **second-largest agarwood** population in India with just **1.515 crore trees**.

Significance of Agarwood

- Agar is a **high value tree commodity** and has a great **potential** for **creating a new 'Green Revolution'** in Assam after tea.
- **Preferred Cash Crop:** The **low input** for **management** and **growth** and **intercropping adaptation** makes agar a **preferred cash crop**.
- **Employment Creation:** It can create a large number of **employment opportunities** in **sectors** such as:
 - Agarwood Oil Sector
 - Perfume Industry
 - Cosmetic Industry
 - Medicinal Use
 - Agarwood chips
- **Export Potential:** Agarwood has high international demand, particularly in Gulf countries.
 - *Example:* Top-grade agarwood fetches up to \$33,000/kg.
- **Cultural Significance:** *Sanchipat*, known as 'Sanchi Puthis', manuscripts, historically made from agarwood, are an integral part of Assamese heritage.
- Agarwood plantations **promote reforestation** and **environmental conservation**.

Challenges

- **Long Gestation period:** Agarwood trees take 15-25 years to mature and produce commercially viable quantities of resin. This discourages potential investors seeking quicker returns.
- **Illicit Felling and Smuggling:** The high value of agarwood tempts illegal logging and smuggling posing a threat to sustainable cultivation and fairtrade practices.
- **Lack of Scientific Knowledge:** Limited research and knowledge about optimal cultivation practices and disease management hinder production efficiency.

Initiatives taken by the Government

- **Policy Reforms:**
 - **Assam Wood-Based Industries (Promotion & Development) Rules, 2022:** Regulates sustainable growth of wood-based industries.
 - **Assam Trees Outside Forest (Sustainable Management) Rules, 2022:** Supports the sustainable management of tree resources.
 - **Assam Agarwood Promotion Policy, 2020:** Focuses on developing agarwood as a key economic sector.
- **Trade Promotion:**
 - Establishment of the **International Agarwood Trade Centre** in **Golaghat** to facilitate global trade and promote the agarwood industry in Assam.
 - **Participation in national and international exhibitions** and trade fairs is encouraged to boost marketing and attract potential buyers.

One-Line Wrap

Assam's first legal export of agarwood chips highlights the growing importance of sustainable forest-based industries, regulated trade, and export-oriented rural entrepreneurship in Northeast India.

2. Assam's Untapped Energy Wealth

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently revealed that **over 50 % of Assam's hydrocarbon resources remain unconverted into proven reserves.**

Assam: India's Oldest Oil Frontier

Assam's oil story began in **Digboi in the late nineteenth century**, making it the birthplace of India's petroleum industry. Yet, despite this legacy, production has stagnated over time.

The key issue today is the gap between **"resources" and "reserves."**

- **Hydrocarbon resources** refer to oil and gas deposits that are geologically present but not yet fully verified for commercial extraction.
- **Proven reserves** are those quantities that can be commercially extracted with existing technology and economic conditions.

More than half of Assam's potential remains in the resource category. This means exploration has identified hydrocarbons, but further appraisal, infrastructure, and investment are required to convert them into producible reserves.

Most of the oil and gas discoveries in **Upper Assam until the late 1980s** were found in the **Barail Group (Upper Eocene to Lower Oligocene age)** and the **Tipam Group (Upper Miocene age)** sedimentary formations.

In the **last decade**, new hydrocarbon accumulations have been identified in the **Langpar and Lakadong formations (Paleocene to Lower Eocene age)** across structures such as **Dikom, Kathaloni, Tengakhat, Tamulikhath, Shalmari, Baghjan, and Panidihing.**

A notable geological feature is the **Borholla oil field**, where oil is found in **fractured granitic basement rocks of Precambrian age**, indicating deeper and older reservoirs.

Geographically:

- Most oilfields are located **south and southeast of the Brahmaputra River.**
- Some are situated in **thrust belt zones associated with the Naga-Patkai Hills.**
- The region **north of the Brahmaputra up to the Eastern Himalayan foothills remains poorly explored**, indicating untapped potential.

In the **Naga Schuppen zone**, besides the historic **Digboi oil field**, two major fields have been discovered:

- **Kharsang field** – Oil in **Upper Miocene to Pliocene** reservoirs.
- **Champang field** – Oil in **fractured Precambrian granitic basement rocks.**

In the **Dhansiri Valley**:

- **Khoraghat and Nambar fields** produce oil from the **Bokabil Formation (Middle Miocene)**, which is absent in the northern Brahmaputra Valley.
- Exploratory wells in the southwestern Dhansiri Valley have shown promising oil indications in **Eocene and Oligocene sands.**

Overall, Assam's hydrocarbon system spans multiple geological ages—from **Precambrian basement rocks to Miocene formations**—highlighting both its complexity and vast untapped potential.

Exam Hook

Key Takeaways

- Difference between **hydrocarbon resources and proven reserves.**
- Importance of **gas infrastructure** in energy economics.
- Role of **Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy.**
- Energy security must balance with **environmental sustainability.**

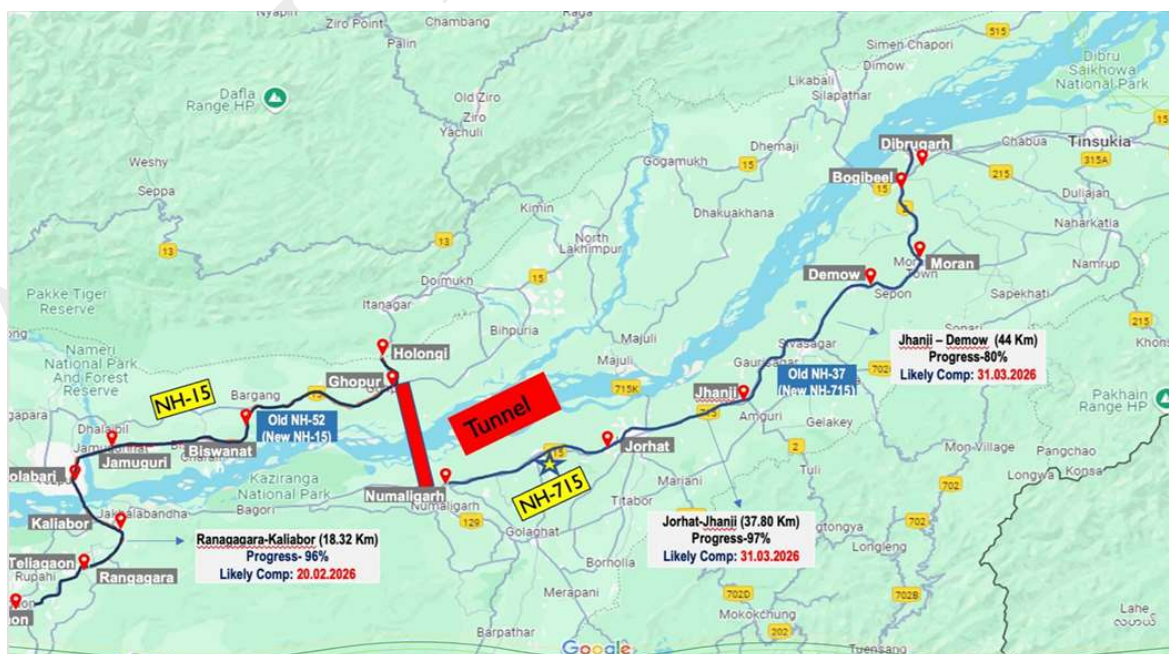
3. India's First Underwater Road-cum-Rail Tunnel Under Brahmaputra

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the construction of India's first underwater twin-tube road-cum-rail tunnel beneath the Brahmaputra River in Assam.

- The project will connect Biswanath's Gohpur on NH-15 (North Bank) and Golaghat's Numaligarh on NH-715 (South Bank) through a 33.7 km access-controlled corridor at a cost of ₹18,662 crore.
- Once completed, it will become the **first underwater road-rail tunnel in India and the second in the world**, after the Fehmarnbelt link between Germany and Denmark.

Key Features of the Project

- The 33.7-km corridor will include a **15.79 km twin-tube tunnel** and **17.91 km of approach roads** (10.15 km on Gohpur side and 7.76 km on Numaligarh side).
- The twin-tube tunnel will be constructed using **Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) technology** beneath the Brahmaputra River.
- The tunnel will be located approximately **57 metres below the riverbed**, ensuring safety and structural stability.
- It will provide **road connectivity**, while one of the tunnel tubes will also accommodate **railway infrastructure**, enabling multimodal transport.
- The twin-tube structure will consist of two separate tubes, each designed for a two-lane highway.
- One of the tubes will also have a rail-cum-road facility, with the railway line embedded within the roadway.
- In normal times, the tunnel will operate as a four-lane road.
- During exigencies, one tube will facilitate railway operations, converting it into a two-lane road with one railway line. Cross passages will be provided at every 500 metres for safety.
- The project will be developed under the **Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode**, where the contractor handles design, construction, and delivery.
- The **construction cost** is estimated at Rs 11,982.36 crore, while the total capital cost stands at Rs **18,662.02 crore**.
 - The cost will be **shared** between the **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways** and the **Ministry of Defence** in an **80:20 ratio**.
 - The **Government of Assam** will bear **50 %** of the **SGST** on the **construction cost**, amounting to around Rs 539 crore.
- Major implementing and stakeholder agencies include:
 - **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited**
 - **Indian Railways**
 - **Government of Assam**
 - **Indian Army** (due to strategic importance)
- The project will **integrate**: **NH-15 & NH-715** and **Rangia–Murkongselek Railway (NFR) & Furkating–Mariani loop line (NFR)**.



4. Scaling Up Assam's Pulse Production

Assam continues to face a **severe demand–supply gap in pulses**, producing only about **20 per cent** of its requirement, even though its **agroclimatic conditions are suitable** for pulse cultivation.

- The launch of the **Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses** by the Union government has renewed focus on achieving **self-sufficiency in pulses** and presents a critical opportunity for Assam.

The paradox of pulses in Assam

- Assam meets barely **one-fifth of its pulse requirement** through local production, while **80 %** is **sourced** from **outside** the region.
- This dependence leads to:
 - **High retail prices** due to transportation and handling costs.
 - **Nutritional insecurity**, especially among low-income households that cannot afford pulses as a regular protein source.
- The problem is therefore not only economic, but also related to **public health and nutrition**.

Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses

- Launched in **October 2025**, the mission aims to make India **self-reliant in pulses** by **December 2027**.
- Its **major objectives** include:
 - Increase domestic pulse production of **tur, urad, and masoor**.
 - Reduce dependence on imports
 - Expanding area under pulse cultivation
 - Promoting **climate-resilient seed varieties**.
- **Time Period:** Six years, from **2025–26 to 2030–31**.
- **Total Financial Outlay:** **₹11,440 crore**.
- **Implementing Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.
- **Priority Crops:**
 - Tur / Arhar (pigeon pea)
 - Urad (black gram)
 - Masoor (red lentil)
- **Implementation Strategy:** Adoption of a **cluster-based approach**, with interventions customised to local agro-climatic conditions and region-specific challenges.
- **Target Beneficiaries:** Around **2 crore farmers**, who will benefit through:
 - Assured and **guaranteed procurement**
 - Access to **quality and climate-resilient seeds**
 - Strengthened **value chain and market support**
- **Additional Intended Outcomes:**
 - Promotion of **climate-resilient and soil health–friendly farming practices**
 - Generation of **substantial rural employment opportunities**
 - Encouragement of **intercropping and crop diversification** to enhance farm income and sustainability
- The national target is:
 - **350 lakh tonnes of pulse production** from **310 lakh hectares**.
 - Average productivity target of **1,130 kilograms per hectare**.

Status of Pulses Production in India

- **Global Position:** India is the **world's largest producer, consumer, and importer of pulses**.
- **Leading Producing States:**
 - **Madhya Pradesh** is the largest producer, contributing **about 22.11%** of India's total pulse production.
 - **Maharashtra and Rajasthan** follow next.
 - Together, these three states account for **nearly 55%** of national pulse output.
- **Cropping Seasons:** Pulses are cultivated across **all three agricultural seasons — Kharif, Rabi, and Summer**.
- **Kharif Pulses:**
 - **Pigeon pea (Tur)**
 - **Green gram (Moong)**

- **Black gram (Urad)**
- Minor pulses such as **moth bean, rajmash, and horse gram**
- **Rabi Pulses:**
 - **Chickpea (Gram)**
 - **Lentil (Masoor)**
 - **Field pea**
 - Green gram and black gram in limited areas
- **Summer Pulses:**
 - **Green gram**
 - **Black gram**
- **Major Pulses by Share in Production:** Chickpea (47.4%), Pigeon pea (15.4%), Green gram (12%), Black gram (10.3%), Lentil (5.4%)
- **Production Trend:**
 - Pulse production increased from **192.55 lakh tonnes in Financial Year 2013–14** to **244.93 lakh tonnes in Financial Year 2023–24**, indicating steady but insufficient growth relative to demand.

Where Assam stands

- Assam's current pulse production is around **1.27 lakh metric tonnes**, while demand by **2030–31** is projected to reach **5.5 lakh metric tonnes**.
 - Assam mainly produces **black gram, lentil, green gram** and **arhar**.
- To align with national productivity targets, Assam must **increase productivity by at least 400 kilograms per hectare**.
- The **Development Agenda and Action Plan for Sustainable Development Goals 2030**, prepared by the State Agriculture Directorate, identifies:
 - **Non-availability of quality local seeds** as a major constraint.
 - Limited irrigation and weak extension services as persistent bottlenecks.

One-line wrap

For Assam, scaling up pulse production is no longer optional—it is central to food security, farmer incomes, and sustainable agricultural transformation.

5. Orange Economy- India's Next Growth Engine

Why in the news?

- In the **Union Budget 2026–27**, the Finance Minister formally recognised the **Orange Economy** as a **strategic pillar of growth and employment**, with an allocation of **₹450 crore**.
- Special focus has been placed on **Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics**, with large-scale skilling initiatives proposed through schools and colleges.

What is the Orange Economy?

- The **Orange Economy**, also called the **Creative Economy**, refers to economic activities where **human creativity, culture, and intellectual capital** are the primary inputs.
- The term draws from the symbolic association of **orange with creativity and culture**.
- According to the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development**, it includes industries involved in **creating, producing, and distributing goods and services based on creativity and intellectual property**.

Key sectors under the Orange Economy

- **Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics**, including extended reality
- **Design, music, media, films, and digital content creation**
- **Handloom, handicrafts, fashion, jewellery, carpets, photography**
- **Cultural and natural heritage-based industries**
- **Software-driven creative services**, which dominate global trade in creative services

6. Union Budget anchors Northeast

Following the **Union Budget 2026–27**, Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** stated that the Budget places the **Northeast, especially Assam**, at the centre of India's growth strategy, marking a clear shift from past neglect to sustained, infrastructure-led development.

The Budget's larger vision

- The Union Budget 2026–27 reflects a **targeted planning approach**, focusing on **cooperative federalism, capital investment, and region-specific development**.
- For the Northeast, the Budget signals a transition from symbolic allocations to **scale, continuity, and outcomes**, integrating the region into **New India's economic and strategic roadmap**.

Key allocations for the Northeast

- The allocation for the **Ministry for Development of the North Eastern Region** has risen to **₹6,812 crore**, more than **three times** the 2014 level.
- Total Budgetary support for the Northeast increased by **22 percent**, from **₹88,741 crore (2025–26 revised estimates)** to **₹1,08,335 crore (2026–27 budget estimates)**.
- Since 2014, **₹7.3 lakh crore** has been spent in the region, averaging over **₹60,000 crore annually**, and crossing **₹1 lakh crore per year** in recent times.

Assam's fiscal and infrastructure gains

- Assam will receive **₹49,725 crore** as its share of **Union tax devolution** in 2026–27, compared to about **₹11,500 crore in 2013–14**, significantly strengthening the State's fiscal autonomy.
- Railways in the Northeast have been allocated **₹11,486 crore**, nearly **five times higher** than annual allocations during the pre-2014 period, improving connectivity and logistics.
- The expanded **₹2 lakh crore Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment** is expected to accelerate **urban renewal, transport corridors, and logistics infrastructure** in Assam.

Urban development and regional balance

- **₹5,000 crore** has been earmarked for **Tier-II and Tier-III cities** such as Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Silchar, Imphal, and Agartala.
- Focus areas include **public transport, sanitation, digital governance, affordable housing, and smart infrastructure**, reducing over-dependence on metros.

Peace, inclusion, and social justice

- A **₹500 crore rehabilitation package** for former **United Liberation Front of Assam** cadres has been described as a landmark step for **peace and reconciliation**.
- Additional allocations for **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Bodoland Territorial Council, Adivasi, and Dimasa communities** aim to address long-standing gaps in **education, health care, infrastructure, and livelihoods**.

7. Kaziranga Elevated Corridor

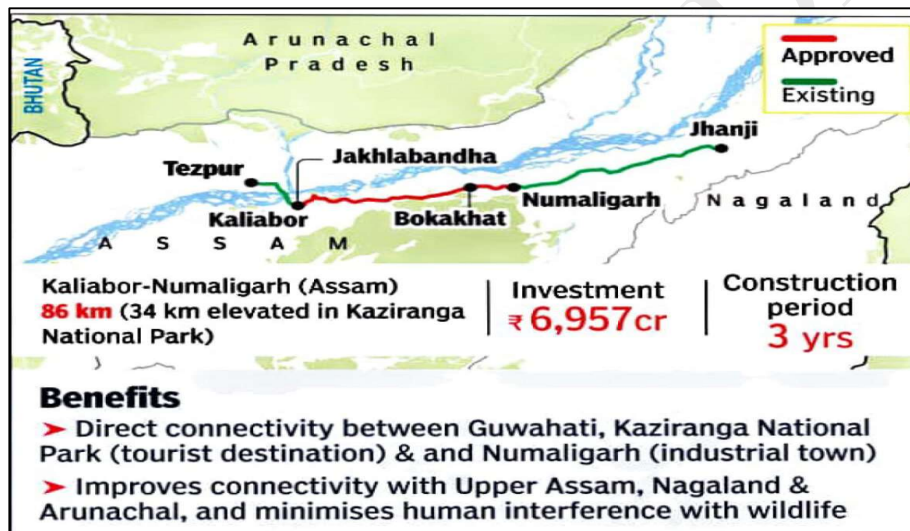
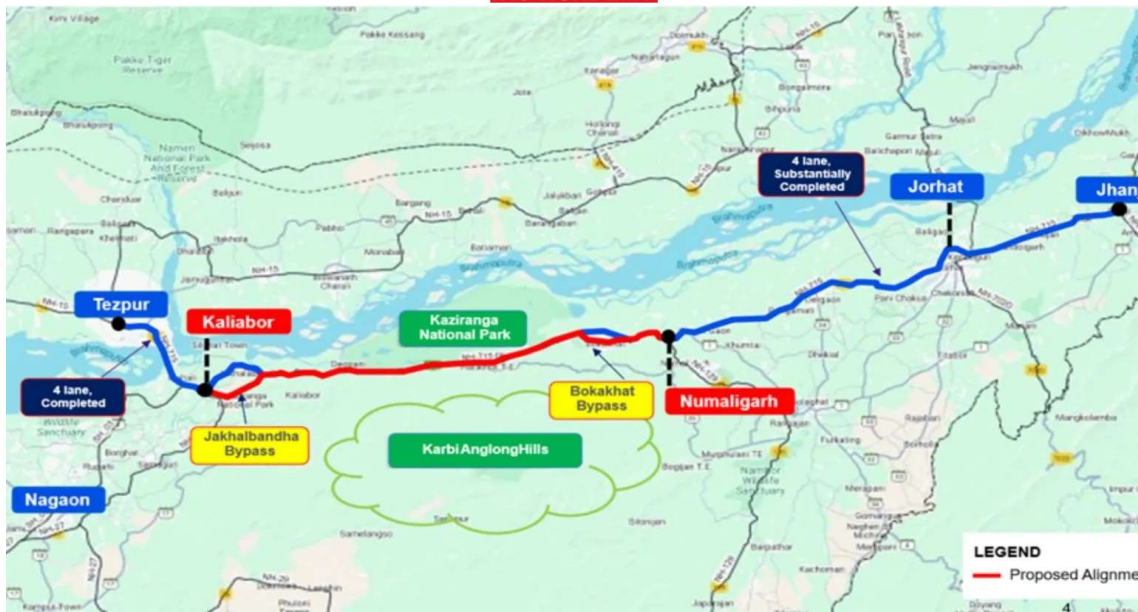
In January 2026, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the **Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project**, a **₹6,950 crore** national highway initiative aimed at improving connectivity in Assam while safeguarding the fragile ecosystem of **Kaziranga National Park**.

What is the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor?

- It is a **four-laning project of the Kaliabor–Numaligarh section of National Highway 715**, earlier known as National Highway 37.
 - **NH 715, connects Tezpur in Sonitpur district to Eastern Assam** forms the southern boundary of Kaziranga, passing through an animal migratory route.
- The project has a **total length of about 86 kilometres** and is being developed in **Engineering, Procurement and Construction mode**.
- It was approved by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** in October 2025.

Key components of the project

- **Elevated wildlife corridor:**
 - Around **34–35 kilometres** of elevated stretches pass through the Kaziranga landscape.
 - Designed to allow **free and uninterrupted movement of wildlife**, especially during floods.
- **Greenfield bypasses:**
 - About **21 kilometres** of bypasses around **Jakhalabandha and Bokakhat** to reduce congestion in towns.
- **Upgradation of existing highway:**
 - Nearly **30 kilometres** of the old highway will be widened and improved.



Why was this corridor needed?

- The exiting road was a **two-lane highway** with poor geometry and heavy traffic.
- During monsoon floods, animals move from Kaziranga towards the **Karbi Anglong hills**, often crossing the highway.
- This led to **frequent human-wildlife conflict and animal fatalities**, particularly of rhinoceroses and deer.

Environmental significance

- The corridor reflects an **environment-sensitive infrastructure approach**, where development is aligned with conservation.
- Reduce **human-wildlife conflict**
- Elevated structures **reduce roadkill**, protect **animal corridors**, and help maintain ecological connectivity between floodplains and highlands (Karbi/mikir hills).
- It supports India's broader commitment to **sustainable development and biodiversity protection**.

Economic and social importance

- **Improved connectivity:**
 - Faster travel between **Guwahati, Kaziranga, Numaligarh, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia**.
- **Boost to tourism:**
 - Better access to Kaziranga strengthens eco-tourism and allied livelihoods.
- **Industrial and trade benefits:**
 - Enhances connectivity to **Numaligarh Refinery** and other industrial areas.
- **Employment generation:**
 - Construction and allied activities create jobs for local youth.

Multi-modal integration

- The corridor links with:
 - **Three railway stations** (Nagaon, Jakhlabandha, Vishwanath Charli).
 - **Three airports** (Tezpur, Jorhat, and nearby regional airfields).
- This improves logistics efficiency and passenger movement in Upper Assam.

One-line wrap

The Kaziranga Elevated Corridor represents a landmark attempt to harmonise economic development, regional connectivity and wildlife conservation in Assam.

8. Assam's WEF Debut

Assam created history when **Himanta Biswa Sarma** became the **first Chief Minister from the State** to attend the **annual meeting of the World Economic Forum** held at **Davos**.

What Assam showcased at Davos

- **Investment potential** in **semiconductors, green energy, advanced manufacturing and digital services**.
- Assam's **strategic location under India's Act East Policy**, positioning it as a gateway to Southeast Asia.
- Emphasis on **policy stability, faster clearances, improving connectivity and law-and-order**, factors crucial for investor confidence.
 - This approach resulted in **initial investment commitments of nearly ₹1 lakh crore**,
- While promoting new sectors, the Chief Minister also highlighted **traditional strengths like tea**.
- Assam positioned itself as an **aspiring participant in the twenty-first century technology ecosystem**.
- Engagements with global firms, including **IBM**, focused on **digital skills, artificial intelligence-aligned training and workforce readiness**.

The **World Economic Forum** is an **international non-profit organisation** that brings together **business, political, academic and social leaders** to deliberate on the world's most pressing challenges. It was **established in 1971** by **Klaus Schwab** with the objective of promoting **stakeholder-based capitalism**, where economic growth aligns with social and environmental well-being.

Mission and Philosophy

- The WEF's mission is simple yet ambitious: **"To improve the state of the world through public-private cooperation."**
- It promotes **stakeholder theory**, encouraging corporations and governments to balance profit-making with broader **societal impact**.

Annual Meeting at Davos

- The Forum is best known for its **Annual Meeting** held in **Davos**.
- This meeting brings together **heads of state, chief executives, policymakers, civil society leaders and experts**.
- Discussions focus on **global priorities** for the coming year, including **economic recovery, climate change, technological transformation and global security**.

Key Areas of Engagement

The WEF addresses major global issues such as:

- **Climate change and energy transition**
- **Economic growth and inequality**
- **Geopolitical risks and global security**
- **Technology, artificial intelligence and future of work**

Funding and Membership

- The organisation is funded by its **diverse global membership**, which includes leading multinational companies and institutions.
- Members contribute financially and intellectually to WEF initiatives and working groups.

Flagship Reports

The WEF regularly publishes influential global reports, including:

- **Global Competitiveness Report**
- **Global Gender Gap Report**
- **Global Risks Report**
- **Energy Transition Index**
- **Global Travel and Tourism Development Report**

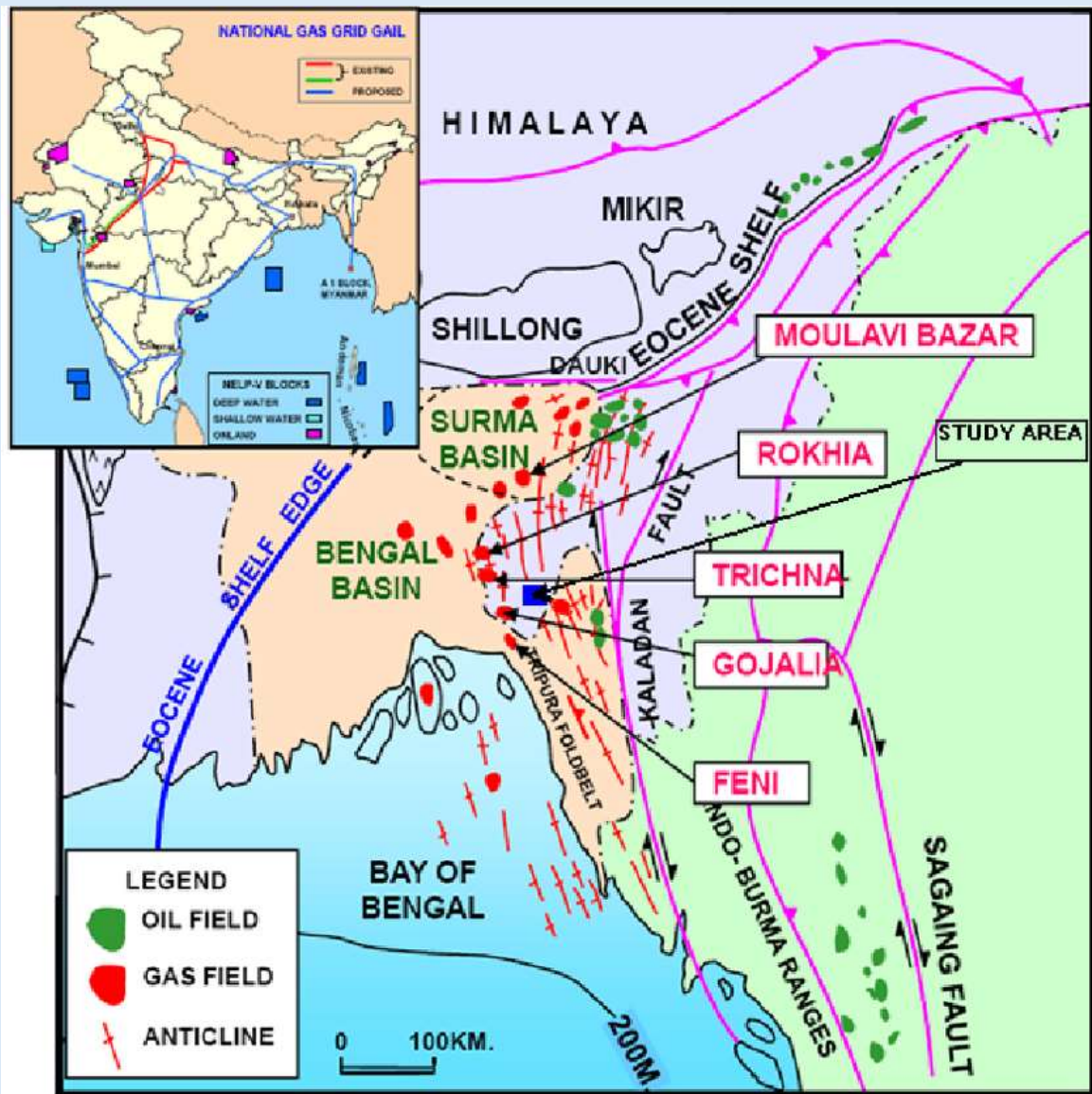
9. Petrochemicals in Assam

Assam is entering a phase where **petrochemicals—not just petroleum fuels**—can drive **industrialisation, jobs, and MSME growth**.

Oil & Petroleum Industry in Assam

- The **earliest recorded discovery of oil in Assam** was made in **April 1825** by **R. Wilcox** of the 46th Regiment, an army officer and geologist, near **Namchik** while surveying the **Burhidihing River**.
 - This was the **earliest recorded reference** to the **existence of oil in India**.
- Subsequent reports by surveyors and travellers highlighted Assam's mineral potential; these were documented in the **Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal**.
- **John H. Wagentreiber** made the **first attempt at oil exploitation in 1854**, but the venture failed.
- In **1866 Hydrocarbon exploration** began in India when **Mr. Goodenough** of the Calcutta-based McKillop Stewart Co. drilled a well near Jaypore in Upper Assam and struck oil.
 - He, however, failed to establish satisfactory production.
- Petroleum gained importance by **1865**. **H. B. Medlicott** of the **Geological Survey of India** drilled trial wells during **1866–68** near **Margherita and Naharpung**, but operations were abandoned due to lack of transport.
- Commercial production began with the **Assam Railways and Trading Company (AR&T)**, which acquired a license in **1888** at **Digboi**.
- **AR&T formed Assam Oil Company (AOC) in 1899** and set up a small refinery at **Margherita** to refine the oil from Digboi.
- In **1901**, **Asia's first oil refinery** was commissioned at **Digboi**, which is still operational.
- Most oil and gas in Upper Assam occur in the **Barail Group (Upper Eocene–Lower Oligocene)** and the **Tipam Group (Upper Miocene)** within the **Assam–Arakan Basin**.

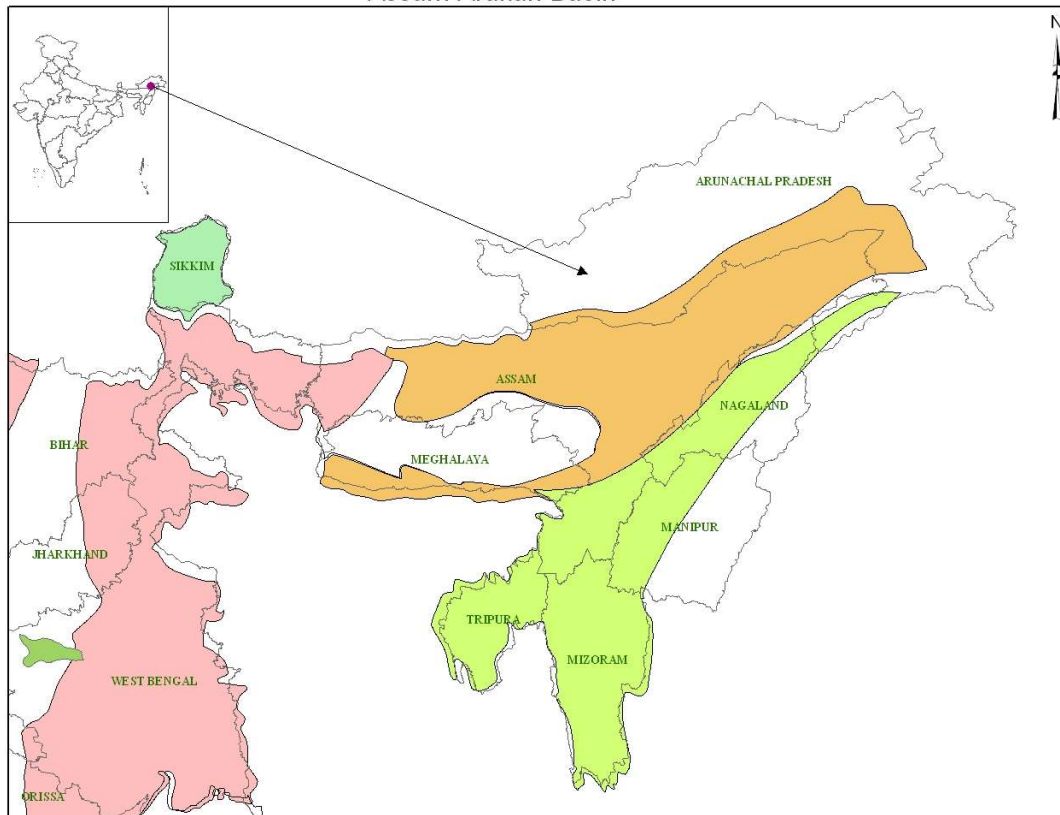
Digboi in Assam is the birthplace of India's oil industry and houses Asia's first oil refinery.



Assam-Arakan Basin

- Assam-Arakan Basin is one of the **principal petroliferous basins of India**.
- It is situated in the northeastern part of India categorized as **category-I basin**.
- The **basin covers** an area of **1,16,000 Sq.Km.**
- Major tectonic elements of the basin are:
 - Assam Shelf
 - Naga Schuppen belt
 - Assam-Arakan Fold belt
- The chief oil fields of Assam are **Digboi, Nahorkathiya, Moran, Rudrasagar and Lakwa**.
- The **Upper Assam Basin** has long been one of the **major onshore petroleum** producing regions of India with reservoir rocks being mainly of Tertiary age.
- The **Upper Assam Shelf** of the **Assam–Arakan Basin** lies mostly below the alluvial cover of the mighty Brahmaputra River and its tributaries.
- Towards south and southwest, the shelf extends to the **Dhansiri valley**, lying between the **Mikir hills** in the west and the **Naga foothills** in the east to southeast, and then continues westward to North Cachar hills and southern slope of Shillong Plateau.

Assam-Arakan Basin



10. Assam Becomes the Fastest-Growing State in India

The Assam Chief Minister stated that **RBI** data recognises Assam as **India's fastest-growing state between 2020 and 2025**, with a growth rate of **45 %**, significantly higher than the national average of **29 %**.

The headline numbers

- **Gross State Domestic Product** at current prices is projected to rise from **₹4.10 lakh crore (2021–22)** to **₹7.41 lakh crore (2025–26)**.
- **Per capita income** increased by **54 per cent**, reaching about **₹1.59 lakh**.
- **State revenue** grew by **53 per cent**, indicating improved fiscal capacity.
- The major drivers of growth are **Agriculture, oil & gas, infrastructure investment, and services**.

Together, these figures suggest not just expansion, but a **structural strengthening of Assam's economy**.

Other Top Growing States in India (2020–2025)

Apart from Assam, these states have consistently outpaced the national average growth rate of **29%**:

State	Growth Rate (Approx.)	Key Drivers
Tamil Nadu	39%	Electronics exports, automobile manufacturing, and textiles.
Karnataka	36%	IT services, biotechnology, and a thriving startup ecosystem.
Uttar Pradesh	35%	Massive infrastructure (Expressways), logistics, and MSMEs.
Rajasthan	34%	Renewable energy (Solar), mining, and tourism.

Andhra Pradesh	33%	Ports, aquaculture, and pharmaceutical manufacturing.
Bihar	33%	Public spending on infrastructure and strong service sector growth.

Top 10 fastest growing major state economies in India over five years



GSDP: GROSS STATE DOMESTIC PRODUCT (Constant Prices); Source: RBI

11. Closure of Jorhat Tea Auction Centre

The Tea Board of India discontinued the Jorhat Tea e-Auction Centre from April 1, 2026, triggering strong opposition from tea growers and industry stakeholders in Assam.

About Tea Auctions

- Tea auctions are **organized platforms for price discovery and sale of tea**, ensuring transparency.
- They operate under the **Tea Board of India (Ministry of Commerce and Industry)**.
- Major centres include **Guwahati, Kolkata, Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Cochin, Coimbatore, and Coonoor**.

About Jorhat Tea Auction Centre

- Established in **2020**, it was **India's first web-based tea auction platform**.
- Operated by **Mjunction Services Limited** (joint venture of Steel Authority of India Limited and Tata Steel).
- It handled about **4 million kilograms of tea annually**, becoming the **second largest auction centre in Assam**.

Tea Board's Justification

- Plans to develop a **Pan-India unified digital tea auction platform** on a **Build-Own-Operate model**.
- Argues that maintaining **multiple parallel auction systems is inefficient**.

- **Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC)** is **one of the busiest tea trading facilities** in the world.
- It is **located in Guwahati** and its primary commodity under the hammer is **Assam tea**.
- It was **established in 1970**.
- It has seen the **largest volume of CTC (Crush/Tear/Curl)** varieties of tea auctions in the world.

12. Joha Rice Export Push

The APEDA's first **25 metric tonne consignment of Joha rice** from Assam was recently exported to the **United Kingdom and Italy**, reviving hopes for global recognition of this indigenous aromatic variety.

About Joha Rice

- **Joha rice** is a traditional aromatic rice variety of Assam known for its **distinct fragrance, fine grain and rich taste**.
- It is a **short-grain winter paddy cultivated** during the **Sali rice season**.
- It **originates from Assam**, where it has been cultivated for centuries as part of traditional agricultural systems and local food culture.
- It received **Geographical Indication status in 2017**.
 - The **registration** was **championed** by **Assam Agricultural University (AAU)** and **Seuj Satirtha**.
- Major cultivation areas include **Nagaon, Baksa, Goalpara, Sivasagar, Majuli, Chirang and Golaghat**.

Key Facts for Exam

- Cultivation area: around **21,000–21,662 hectares**
- **Production**: about **43,000 metric tonnes**
- Compared to Assam's total rice area (**22.86 lakh hectares**), Joha occupies a very small share
- **Facilitated** by **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**.

History

1. 200 Years of the Treaty of Yandaboo

Why in the News?

The year 2026 marks **200 years of the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826)**, signed after the First Anglo-Burmese War.

- The treaty formally ended Burmese control over Assam and brought the region under the **East India Company**, fundamentally reshaping the political, social and economic landscape of Northeast India.

What Was the Treaty of Yandaboo?

The **Treaty of Yandaboo** was signed on 24 February 1826 between the **British East India Company** and the **Burmese Empire**. The Treaty inter alia covered the following important issues:

- **Assam, Manipur, Arakan, Taninthai** were **ceded** to the **British**.
- The **Burmese** had to **cease interference** in the **Chachar Kingdom** and **Jaintia Hills**.
- **Burmese** agreed to **pay an indemnity of One million Pounds sterling** to the **British**.
- **Burmese** agreed to **allow diplomatic representatives** from the **British**.
- **Burmese** also **agreed to sign a commercial treaty** in due course of time.

The Treaty of Yandaboo: Major Actors and Outcomes

THE NEGOTIATING POWERS

British East India Company Expansion



Led by Sir Archibald Campbell to secure control over Assam and Manipur.

Burmese Empire Concessions



Ceded Arakan, paid reparations, and retreated from expansionist ambitions.



LIBERATED TERRITORIES

Ahom Kingdom (Assam) Liberation



Freed from Burmese occupation and placed under British protection.

Manipur Restoration



Raja Gambhir Singh regained rule under British oversight.

Exam Hook:

- Treaty signed in 1826 after the First Anglo-Burmese War.
- Marked beginning of British rule in Assam.
- Introduced revenue settlements and forest laws.
- Influenced identity politics and migration debates.
- Shaped constitutional safeguards in Northeast India.

Art & Culture.**1. Bholaguri Tea Estate Should Be Preserved**

The Assam government is setting up the **Swahid Kanaklata Baruah State University** on the site of **Bholaguri Tea Estate** in Chaiduar, Sonitpur district — the very ground where **Jyoti Prasad Agarwala** created the first Assamese talkie, **Jyomoti**, in 1935, just four years after India's first talkie **Alam Ara** was released in Bombay.

Bholaguri Tea Estate: A Symbol of Assamese Heritage

- **Bholaguri Tea Estate** was established in 1919 by **Gopal Chandra Agarwala**, a member of the prominent Agarwala family of Assam.
- It was the **first tea garden owned by a native Assamese** on the North Bank of Assam, at a time when the tea industry in Assam was largely dominated by the British.
- In 1934, **Jyoti Prasad Agarwala** set up **Chitraban Studio** at Bholaguri Tea Estate on the banks of the **river Balijan**.
- It was the **first open-air studio established in India**, built with bamboo mats and banana stems, with a concrete platform and sound recording facility.
- After that the estate became historically significant when **Jyoti Prasad Agarwala** used it as the base for producing **“Jyomoti” in 1934**, which was released on **March 10, 1935**.

The film **Jyomoti** marked the **beginning of the Assamese film industry** and was almost entirely produced using local resources and support from villagers and tea garden workers.

Current Situation of the Tea Estate

- The estate was taken over by the **Assam Tea Corporation in 1974**.
- At its peak, it had **118 hectares under tea cultivation** with significant annual production.
- Due to **floods, erosion and neglect**, the plantation area has been reduced to about **72 hectares**.

The government has now decided to **close the tea garden and provide a voluntary retirement package to workers**, handing over the land to the Education Department for the proposed university.

Exam Hook**Key Takeaways**

- **Bholaguri Tea Estate** is historically linked with the first Assamese film, **Jyomoti (1935)**.
- It represents **indigenous entrepreneurship and cultural heritage in Assam**.
- Development projects must balance **infrastructure growth with heritage preservation**.

2. Ali-Ai-Ligang

Ali-Ai-Ligang is the most important spring and agricultural festival of the **Mising** community of Assam. It is celebrated every year on the **first Wednesday of the month of Ginmur Polo (February–March)** and marks the ceremonial beginning of paddy sowing.

Meaning of the Name

The term is derived from three words:

- **Ali** – root or seed
- **Aye** – fruit
- **Ligang** – beginning of sowing

Thus, the festival symbolises the start of agricultural activities and prayers for prosperity.

How It Is Celebrated

- The festival begins with **Gumrag Puja**, seeking blessings from deities for a good harvest.
- The head of the family ceremonially sows paddy seeds in the field.
- Traditional songs, dances, and community feasts continue for **five days**.
- Certain **taboos** are observed, such as restrictions on cutting trees, fishing, ploughing, or digging earth, reflecting ecological wisdom.

Food and Feast

- **Purang Apin** (sticky rice wrapped in leaves)
- **Poro Apong** (rice beer)
- Dried fish and pork

Music, Dance and Dress

- The famous **Gumrag Dance** involves rhythmic steps and hand movements.
- Instruments include **dhul, taal, sifung (flute), gong and gagana**.
- Women wear **Ege-Gasor**, and men wear **Gonro Ugon, Mibu Galuk and Dumer**.

About the Mising Community

- The Misings are the **second-largest tribe of Assam**, also found in Arunachal Pradesh.
- They belong to the larger **Tani group of tribes**.
- Many follow **Donyi-Poloism**, worshipping the Sun (Donyi) and Moon (Polo).
- They traditionally live in **Chang Ghar (stilt houses)** suited to flood-prone areas.
- Major festivals: **Ali-Ai-Ligang (pre-harvest)** and **Porag (post-harvest)**.

Ali-Ai-Ligang reflects the deep bond between the Mising people, agriculture, nature, and community harmony.

3. Silpi Divas

Silpi Divas, observed in Assam on January 17 to commemorate the death anniversary of renowned artist Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, affectionately called "Rupkonwar." He passed away on January 17, 1951, at the age of 47.

About Jyoti Prasad Agarwala

- Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, also known as the **"Father of Assamese Cinema,"** was the **first film maker of Assam**, he belonged to Marwar of Rajasthan.
- He was the great writer of Assam, who had written different types Dramas, Poems, Songs, Films.
- Born on **June 17, 1903**, in **Tamulbari Tea Estate** near **Dibrugarh**, his father was Paramanada Agarwala and mother was Kiranmayee.
- During his school time itself he **joined the freedom movement**.
- After matriculation he Joined National College of Calcutta and completed his I.A.
- He went to **Germany to learn Film Making** and **came back to Assam in 1930**.

Pioneer of Assamese Cinema

- Upon his return to Assam, Jyoti Prasad embarked on an ambitious journey to introduce filmmaking to his native land.
- In **1935**, Jyoti Prasad **directed Assam's first feature film, "Joymoti"**, which marked a historic moment for Assamese cinema.
- He established the **Chitran Studio** at the **Bholaguri Tea Estate** in **Gohpur** in 1934 and began his film making career with "Joymoti".
- He also set up a **cinema hall "Junaki"** in **Tezpur** in **1937**.
- He made the **second Assamese movie "Indramalati"** in the year **1939**.

Notable Literary Works

- **Plays:** Jyoti Prasad Agarwala along with 'Kalaguru' Bishnu Prasad Rabha, wrote down the famous plays **"Sonit-Konwari"** and **"Joymoti"**.
 - Some of his other famous plays include **"Karengar Ligiri," Lobhita**, and **"Rupalim", nimati konya, sonpakhilee, kanak Lata, Sundor Konwar**, etc.
 - These works reflect his commitment to preserving Assamese culture and addressing social issues.
- **Poetry and Music:** Jyotiramayan- poetry collection of luitpaaron agnixur.
 - His songs, collectively known as **"Jyoti Sangeet,"** are celebrated for their lyrical beauty and emotional depth.
 - They continue to inspire and resonate with people across Assam.
- In 1944 he also **re-published "Asomiya"** which was a closed down newspaper.

Jyotiprasad Agarwala's transformative role

- Jyotiprasad Agarwala (1903–1951) gave **direction, depth and identity** to modern Assamese theatre.
- He introduced **social realism**, moving drama away from mythological or purely romantic themes toward lived social experience.
- His landmark play **Karengar Ligiri (1937)** was revolutionary for its **original structure and contemporary social content**, capturing the attention of theatre lovers across Assam.
- Another major work, **Lobhita (1948)**, is set against the backdrop of the **Quit India Movement of 1942**, portraying the courage and suffering of ordinary people.

Role in India's Freedom Struggle

- Jyoti Prasad was also a **patriot** deeply involved in **India's freedom movement and took active part in the Quit India movement of 1942.**
- Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, he **used his art and writings to spread the message of resistance, courage, and patriotism.**
- His works often carried themes of cultural preservation and the importance of self-reliance, making him a cultural leader during the struggle for independence.
- He
- He was also made the Chief Commandant of the All Assam Peace Force.
- He was even **jailed for 15 months and fined Rupees 500** for his active involvement in the fighting of Independence.

Challenges and Struggles

- Despite his immense contributions, Jyoti Prasad faced numerous challenges.
- In an era when the concept of cinema was unknown in the region, he decided to make a film in Assamese, overcoming challenges such as lack of infrastructure, financial constraints, and technical expertise.
- His pioneering efforts in filmmaking brought him little financial success, and he often struggled to sustain his creative ventures.
- His films faced commercial failure due to lack of distribution channels and limited infrastructure.
- However, his determination and passion for art and culture remained undeterred.

Impact on Assamese Cinema and Culture

- He laid the foundation for modern Assamese cinema, inspiring future generations of filmmakers and artists.
- His pioneering efforts and passion for storytelling set a benchmark for creativity and cultural preservation.
- His works in literature, music, and theater continue to enrich Assamese heritage.
- His vision of blending art with social change and national pride remains relevant.

Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's life is a testament to the transformative power of passion and perseverance. As the father of Assamese cinema, he introduced a new medium of cultural expression to Assam. His literary and musical works continue to enrich Assamese heritage, while his role in the freedom struggle underscores his commitment to the nation.

Fact-Sheet

- Poet **Anandachandra Barua** gave the **title Rupkonwar** (Prince of beauty) to **Jyotiprasad Agarwala** in 1938.
- **Joymoti**, released by **Chित्रलेखा Movietone**, was the **fourth Indian talkie**. It was based on a play called **Soti Joymoti** by **Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaroa**.
- Jyoti Prasad was the **first Indian filmmaker** to have **introduced dubbing and re-recording technology** in talkies.
 - **Joymoti** was taken to **Lahore for editing**, during which Agarwala discovered there was no sound for one half of the film. So he hired a sound studio and dubbed the voices of all the characters in the film.

4. Jonbeel Mela

The three-day historic Jonbeel Mela, a symbol of cultural unity and tradition, began at Jagiroad, Morigaon, Assam.

About Jonbeel Mela

- Jonbeel Mela is considered one of the most **unique and historic festivals** in **Assam**, where the **barter system comes alive**.
 - It is the **only fair** in India where the **barter system** is **still alive**.
- The **name** of the Mela has come from the word **"Jon," meaning moon**, and **"Beel," which means wetland**, as inspired by the crescent-shaped **Jonbeel water body** near to the fairground.

- The event is organised under the **traditional king** of the **Tiwa Tribe** called **Gobha Deoraja** that once ruled the area.
- It is a three-day festival, attracting people from all communities, particularly the **Tiwa, Karbi, Khasi, and Jaintia tribes** from the hills.

History of Jonbeel Mela

- Historically, the Jonbeel Mela was **begun** in about the **15th century** by the **Ahom King** and **Gobha Raja**, for the **political discussions** and the **bonding** of **Assam and Meghalaya tribes**.
- It was **first organised** during the **reign** of Ahom King, which **later became** an **annual gathering** between the Ahom Kings and tribal chieftains.
- History tells us that both the Ahom Kings and the tribal chieftains brought their subjects to the fair to promote brotherhood and harmony among the people of plains and the hills.
- **While coins existed** at the time, the **barter system** was **preferred** as a way to **strengthen the bond between the communities** of the **plains** and those in the **hills**.
- It has now **become** a **socio-cultural celebration** with the concept of harmony and peaceful coexistence where the hill tribes come with forest products, herbs, and spices.

Key Activities at Jonbeel Mela

- **Community Fishing:** The mela begins with a communal fishing event at Jonbeel Lake, where traditional fishing methods are revived and celebrated.
- **Agni Puja:** A sacred fire ritual, or **Agni Puja**, is performed before the trading activities, invoking blessings for humanity and emphasizing the religious significance of the festival.
- **Barter System:** Tribes from the hills bring forest products, herbs, and spices, exchanging them with goods from the plains in a vibrant demonstration of trust and cultural exchange.
- **Tax Collection:** On the final day, the **Gobha Raja** collects taxes (bhatta) in the form of goods from his subjects, symbolizing the ancient governance system and the enduring relationship between the ruler and the people.
- **Royal Procession:** The Gobha Raja and his courtiers, dressed in traditional royal attire, add a historical grandeur to the festival, connecting ancient customs with modern celebrations.

Jonbeel Mela is a testament to the strength of indigenous cultural practices and a celebration of human and environmental interconnectedness.

5. Assam's Moidams Under Threat

An **Ahom-era moidam** located in the **Maduri area of Sivasagar district** is facing the risk of destruction after **unauthorised earth cutting using heavy machinery**, triggering serious concerns about the protection of Assam's historical heritage.

About Maduri-Mechagarh area

- There are **many historical remains of the Ahom kingdom** in the Maduri-Mechagarh area of Sivasagar district.
- Maduri is also the **birthplace of Mahiyashi Joymoti**.

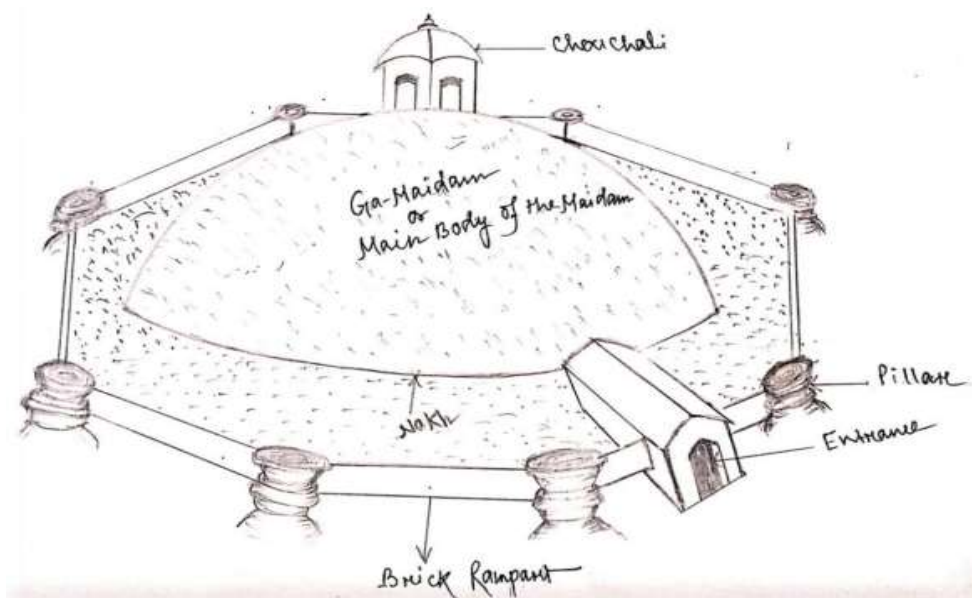
About Moidams

- Moidams are an unique **700-year old mound-burial system** of the **Ahom dynasty's kings, Queens and Nobles**.
- The word Moidam is derived from the Tai word **Phrang-Mai-Dam** or **Mai-Tam**.
 - Phrang-Mai means to put into the grave or to bury and Dam means the spirit of the Dead.
- Though **Moidams** are **found** in all the districts of **upper Assam**, **Charaideo**, **exclusively contains moidams of Ahom royals**.
 - The **maidams of Burhagohains** (Prime Ministers) were constructed on the **south bank** of the river **Dikhou**.
 - The **maidams of Bargohains** (Ministers) were allowed on the **bank** of the river **Dichang**.
- The first king of the Ahoms Chau-lung Siu-ka-pha was buried at Charaideo after his death.
- Since then, it became a norm to bury the Tai-Ahom Kings, Queens and Princes and Princesses at Charaideo.

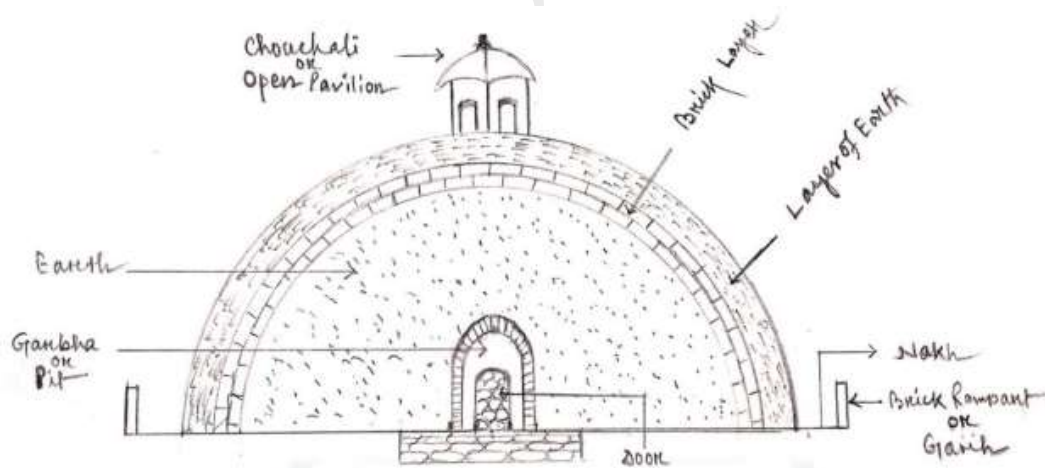
Structure of Moidams

- The **construction** of that **Moidam** could be **assigned** to the **first half** of the **18th century CE**.
- Externally **Moidams** are **hemispherical** in shape and are of **various sizes**, reflecting the power and stature of the individual buried within.
- A typical Maidam consists of **three major features**,
 - A vault of Chamber,
 - A hemispherical earthen mound covering the chamber with a brick structure (Chaw-chali)
 - A low octagonal wall called **garh**, surrounds the mound with one entrance on its west along with small pillars in each corner.

- Between the garh and base of the maidam, a line of bricks was made called **nakh**.
- However the smaller Maidams did not have all the above features.
- Earlier the **vaults** were **made** of solid **wooden poles** and **beams**.
- Probably from the time of king Rudra Singha (CE 1696-1714), **wooden vaults** were **replaced** with **stone** and **brick vaults**.
- Inside the vault, the mortal remains of the dead were kept, after observing the rituals.
- The **Ahom kings** used to be **buried along** with **items** they **needed** for the “**afterlife**”, as well as attendants living or dead, horses, livestock and even their wives.
 - The **practice of burying alive** was **banned** by **King Rudra Singha**.



Outside Elevation of a Maidam or Burial mound of the Ahoms



Customs & Traditions Associated With Moidams

- As per custom, only the people from the **ghraphalia** and **likhurakhan/ Lukhukhans khel** were permitted to bury the bodies of Kings and Queens.
 - Khel were a group of people assigned to do specific jobs and every khel consisted of one to five thousand people.
- The **coffin** (Rung-dang) was **carried** to the burial ground in **Kekora dola** (palanquin) **only** by the **people** from **ghraphalia** and **likhurakhan khel**.
 - **Coffin** was **made** of a specific type of **timber** called **Uriam** (*Bescoffia javanica*).
- The vault under the hemispherical earthen mound known as **kareng-rungdang** (coffin), is where the coffin was placed in **east-west** direction.
- **Only** the **Lukhukhans** were **allowed** to **enter kareng-rung-dang** and after placing the body they sealed the door of the vault with boulders in clay mortar.

- At Charaideo, there was a **specific road** to **carry** the **dead bodies** known as **Sa-nia-ali** and a **specific tank** for the **ritualistic baths** of the death bodies, known as **Sa-Dhua-Pukhuri**
 - Sa means dead body, nia means carry and ali means Path or road.
 - Sa means dead body, dhua means bath and pukhuri means tanks.

Maintenance of the Moidams

- The Ahom kings appointed a special officer, **Changrung Phukan** for the construction and maintenance of all the civil works including Royal Moidams.
 - **Changrung Phukan** was **one** of the **nine Phukans** of the highest rank.
- Special officers, called the **Moidam Phukans** and the guard group, known as the **Moidamiya** were appointed to protect and maintain the Moidams.
- Being famous **treasure troves**, the **Moidams** attracted many **plunderers** from Mughal to the British and even the locals.

About Charaideo

- The word Charaideo has been derived from three Tai Ahom words, **Che-Rai-Doi**.
 - “Che” means city or town, “Rai” means “to shine” and “Doi” means hill. In short, **Charaideo** means, “**a shining town situated on a hilltop.**”
- Charaideo is considered to be the **first capital city** established in 1253 AD by king Sukaphaa.
- Throughout the Ahom rule, it remained a symbolic and ritual centre of power, due to its significance in the dynasty’s founding.

World Heritage site in Northeast India

- The **Moidams** was **inscribed** as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** during the **46th session** of the World Heritage Committee. **held** in **New Delhi**, from July 21st to July 31st, 2024.
- Moidams are the **first World Heritage site** in the category of **cultural heritage** in the **northeast**.
- Other WHS of northeast India includes:
 - Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park of Assam (Natural Sites)
 - Khangchendzonga National Park in Sikkim (Mixed heritage site)

6. Sanchipat Manuscript Painting Gets National Recognition at Lalit Kala Akademi

Sanchipat manuscript painting (Puthi Chitra) from Assam has been **selected for the 65th National Art Exhibition** organised by the **Lalit Kala Akademi**.

- Marks the **first-ever inclusion** of this indigenous art in the exhibition’s history.

About Sanchipat Manuscript Painting

- **Sanchipat**: Traditional manuscript material made from the bark of the **Sanchi tree (Aquilaria agallocha)**.
- The **bark** was **cured, smoked, seasoned**, and **polished** to **create a durable writing surface**.
- The **ink**, known as **Mahi**, was prepared using natural ingredients such as **silikha (Terminalia citrina)**, **bull's urine, amlaka**, and **soot**.
- Paintings are known as **Puthi Chitra**, illustrating religious texts.

Historical Roots of Manuscript Painting:

- References found in **Harsha Charita (7th century CE)**.
- Earliest surviving illustrated manuscript: **Phung Chin manuscript (1473 CE)**.
- Influences from **South-East Asian (Burmese) styles** during the Ahom period.

Key Features of Manuscript Painting

- Use of **organic colours** derived from plants and minerals.
- Strong link with **Neo-Vaishnavite culture** of Assam.
- Manuscripts made on:
 - **Sanchipat** (bark-based sheets)
 - **Tulapat** (cotton-pressed sheets)
- Themes include **Bhagavata Purana, Ramayana, Mahabharata** and **Krishna Leelas**.
- Uses **natural pigments**, fine brushes, and intricate line work.

- Natural pigments included:
 - Hengul (red, mercury sulphide)
 - Haital (yellow, arsenic sulphide)
 - Indigo (blue)
 - Khorimati (white clay)
 - Soot or ash (black)
- **Brushes** were made from **animal fur**, and **artists demonstrated extraordinary control and precision**.
- The **artists responsible** for these **paintings** were called **Khanikars**.
 - They were often clerics associated with Satras and were trained in multiple art forms, including wood carving and theatrical makeup for Bhaonas.
 - Due to religious humility, many Khanikars did not sign their works. Their devotion to spiritual service was considered more important than personal recognition.
- **Major Schools and Styles:**
 - Sattriya School (Vaishnavite)
 - Ahom Royal School (Rajghariya)
 - Darrang School
 - Tai-Ahom School

Recent Development

- Artist **Sujit Das (Nagaon)** created the selected artwork using traditional techniques.
- Recognition highlights **Assam's cultural heritage** at a national level.

About Lalit Kala Akademi

- Operates under the **Ministry of Culture**.
- Spearheads promotion of **visual arts in India**.
- Organises **National Art Exhibition** annually.

Science & Tech.

1. Assam University's Initiative Transforming Farming in Northeast India

Assam University, Silchar has launched an **Artificial Intelligence-driven agricultural initiative** to support farmers in the **Barak River Basin and Northeast India**.

Key Features of the Initiative

- The project is **spearheaded by Assam University's Department of Computer Science and Engineering**.
- It covers **six Northeastern states**: Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland.
- It introduces an **Artificial Intelligence-based early warning system** to predict: Floods, Extreme weather events & River course changes.

Krishi Vikash Mobile Application

- A **multilingual, voice-enabled application** developed as a **complete digital companion for farmers**.
- It supports the **entire agricultural lifecycle**:
 - **Before sowing**: It recommends suitable crops based on **soil and weather conditions**.
 - **During cultivation**: It provides information on **seeds, fertilisers, farm machinery, insurance, and credit**.
 - **After harvest**: It offers details on **market prices, Minimum Support Price, transport, and storage facilities**.
- It also integrates key government schemes such as:
 - **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi**
 - **Agricultural Infrastructure Fund**

One-line wrap:

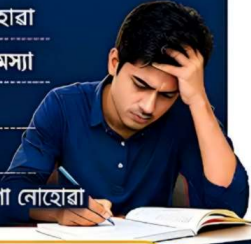
Assam University's Artificial Intelligence initiative is redefining agriculture by empowering farmers with timely, data-driven decisions in Northeast India.

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ARE YOU FACING THESE PROBLEMS?

- × Mock test practice কম হোৱা
- × Time management-ত সমস্যা
- × Revisionৰ চাপ বেছি
- × Negative markingৰ ভয়
- × Actual exam levelৰ ধাৰণা নোহোৱা



IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Environment.

1. Assam Enforces Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 for Cleaner Governance

The Assam government has issued directions for strict implementation of the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026**, in line with the **Supreme Court's directions**.

About the Initiative

- Implemented under: Environment Protection Act 1986
- Focus on **100% compliance within a defined timeline**
- Applies to both:
 - **Urban Local Bodies**
 - **Rural Local Bodies**

Key Provisions

- **District Commissioners** to:
 - Conduct infrastructure audits
 - Carry out quarterly performance reviews
- **Co-District Commissioners** to:
 - Ensure inspections and coordination
- Every local body must:
 - Set a **timeline for full compliance** within 2 months
 - Prepare plans for **remediation of legacy waste sites**

Institutional Mechanism

- Appointment of **Nodal Officers** at:
 - Block level (BDO)
 - Ward level (minimum Junior Engineer rank)
- **Monthly reporting with geo-tagged evidence**
- Creation of:
 - **Online grievance redressal systems**
 - **Real-time digital monitoring platforms**

Objectives

- Achieve **scientific waste management**
- Reduce **pollution and environmental degradation**
- Improve **public health and sanitation**
- Ensure **accountability and transparency**

One-line Wrap

Strict implementation of waste management rules is key to building a cleaner, healthier and sustainable Assam.

2. Illegal Electric Fences Killing Elephants

Why in the news?

Illegal electric fencing has emerged as the **leading cause of elephant deaths in Assam**, with over **200 elephants killed due to electrocution in the last 25 years**, including **55 deaths between 2019–20 and 2023–24 alone**. Conservationists and authorities have raised concerns about increasing human–elephant conflict and weak enforcement of wildlife protection laws.

Assam: A Major Stronghold of Asian Elephants

Assam is one of the most important habitats of the **Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*)**, which is classified as **Endangered under the IUCN Red List**.

- Assam has around 4, 000 **wild elephants**, making it the **second largest elephant habitat** in India after Karnataka.
- The State has 5 elephant reserves
 - Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve (Highest density: 79/100)
 - Dihing-Patkai Elephant Reserve
 - Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve
 - Sonitpur Elephant Reserve
 - Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve
- Districts like **Tamulpur, Udalguri, and Sonitpur** are key elephant movement corridors

Elephants migrate across forests, agricultural land, and human settlements in search of food and water.

Illegal Electric Fencing: The Biggest Killer

Illegal electric fences are now the most serious threat to elephants in Assam.

- More than **200 elephant deaths due to electrocution since 2000**.
- About **55 deaths recorded between 2019 and 2024**.

Farmers often illegally connect fences to **high-voltage electricity lines (220 Volt or 11 kilovolt)** to protect crops from elephants. These fences deliver fatal shocks.

This is illegal and punishable under Indian law.

Legal Protection and Weak Enforcement

Elephants are protected under several laws and conservation frameworks.

Important legal protections:

- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (amended in 2022):** Elephants are listed under **Schedule I**, giving them the highest level of protection.
- **Electricity Act, 2003:** Illegal electricity connections and unsafe power infrastructure are punishable offences.
- **Project Elephant (1992):** A Government of India initiative to conserve elephants and their habitats.
- **Elephant Census:** Conducted once in 5 years under the aegis of Project elephant.
- **MIKE programme:** Established in South Asia in 2003, as mandated by CITES COP resolution.
 - It is a site-based system designed to monitor trends in elephant illegal killing and build capacity in sites across Africa and Asia.
 - Assam has **two sites** under MIKE programme i.e **Chirang-Ripu and Dihing Patkai**.

Exam Hook

Key Takeaways

- Asian elephant is **Endangered (IUCN Red List)**.
- Protected under **Schedule I of WLP Act, 1972**.
- **Project Elephant launched in 1992**.
- **Over 200 elephants killed due to electrocution in Assam in 25 years**.
- Illegal electric fencing is a major conservation threat.

3. Xihu Conservation

India has rolled out the **second nationwide survey of river and estuarine dolphins**, building on the first pan-India assessment conducted during 2021–2023. The exercise goes beyond population counting and focuses on **habitat conservation**, especially for the **Gangetic river dolphin**, locally known as **Xihu** in Assam.

More About the News

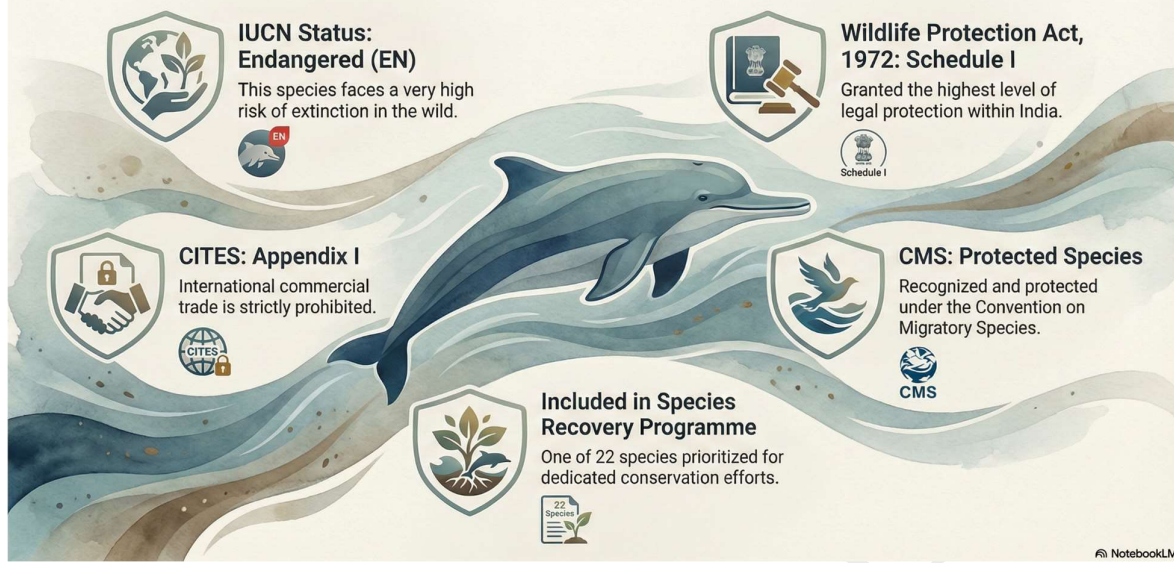
The survey is **conducted** by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC)** under **Project Dolphin (2020)**.

Conducted with support from Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and various **state forest departments**.

About the Survey

- The previous survey estimated **6,327 river dolphins**, including **6,324 Gangetic river dolphins** across Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins and **3 Indus river dolphins** in Beas river basin in Punjab.
- Assam records the **4th highest number** (UP, Bihar, West Bengal) of **riverine dolphins**, with **635 individuals** in its **5 rivers**.
- The **Brahmaputra river system** recorded **635 Xihu**, with **584 in the Brahmaputra mainstream** and **51 in its tributaries** such as **Subansiri (22), Kulsi (20), Kopili (5), and Beki (4)**.
- The previous survey identified **several critical areas** within **Assam** where **dolphin populations** remain **significant**. These include:
 - **Kulsi** (Kamrup district) **Subansiri** (Lakhimpur district) **Brahmaputra** (Majuli and Guwahati) **Dibru-Saikhowa NP** (Tinsukia district) **Kaziranga NP** (Biswanath district) **Goalpara-Bongaigaon** stretch of the Brahmaputra Dhubri region.
- The **Barak river** was identified as a **coldspot** (Areas with Low or No Dolphin Presence) in Assam.
- The ongoing survey also includes the **Irrawaddy dolphin** found in the **Sundarbans and Odisha**, expanding India's dolphin conservation canvas.
- As a **top predator and indicator species**, Xihu reflects the overall health of river ecosystems.

Protection Status of the Ganga River Dolphin



Key Threats to Xihu in Assam

- **Indiscriminate and illegal sand mining**, especially in the **Kulsi River**, is degrading breeding and migration habitats.
- **Large infrastructure projects**, including dams on the **Subansiri** and unplanned bridges, disrupt river flow and create **acoustic barriers** that interfere with dolphin echolocation.
- **Dredging and increased inland water transport** raise risks of vessel collision, underwater noise, and decline in fish populations.

Why Habitat Restoration Matters

- **Restoring Xihu habitats also revives river fisheries**, directly benefiting traditional fishing communities.
- Healthy tributaries help **recharge wetlands**, improve fish diversity, and reduce Assam's dependence on imported fish.
- Conservation projects can discourage fishermen from shifting to **illegal sand mining** by restoring sustainable livelihoods.

Government Frameworks and Initiatives

- **Project Dolphin** was launched on **15 August 2020** under the **Development of Wildlife Habitats** scheme by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
 - The project aims to conserve **riverine and marine dolphins** through **scientific research, habitat protection, and community participation**.
- **Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Wildlife Sanctuary, Bihar** is **India's only dedicated dolphin sanctuary**.
 - It is located along the **Ganga River in Bhagalpur district**.
- The **Gangetic river dolphin** was declared **India's National Aquatic Animal** on **5 October 2009**.
 - The day is observed as **National Ganga River Dolphin Day**.
- **India's first National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC)** was inaugurated in **Patna, Bihar**.

Exam Hook

Key takeaway:

Conserving Xihu is not only about saving an endangered species but about restoring river ecosystems, fisheries, and livelihoods in Assam.

4. Deepor Beel at a Crossroads

The proposed **elevated railway corridor** along **Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary** has triggered environmental concerns. Conservationists have demanded **strict and meaningful compensatory plantation** to offset ecological damage caused by tree felling for the project.

List Of Ramsar Sites in Northeast

Sl. No.	Ramsar Site	State	Designated Year	Notable Feature
1	Loktak Lake	Manipur	1990	Largest freshwater lake in NE India; famous for floating Phumdis ; one of only 2 Indian sites on the Montreux Record ; Keibul Lamjao National Park , world's only floating NP is located here Keibul Lamjao NP, last natural habitat of the endangered Sangai (brow-antlered deer).
2	Deepor Beel	Assam	2002	A permanent freshwater lake; vital storm-water storage for Guwahati.
3	Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura	2005	A natural sedimentation reservoir; site of the Neermahal palace.
4	Pala Wetland	Mizoram	2021	Largest natural wetland in Mizoram; surrounded by tropical forests.
5	Khecheopalri Wetland	Sikkim	2025	Sikkim's first Ramsar site, added in 2025; a sacred lake for both Buddhists and Hindus.

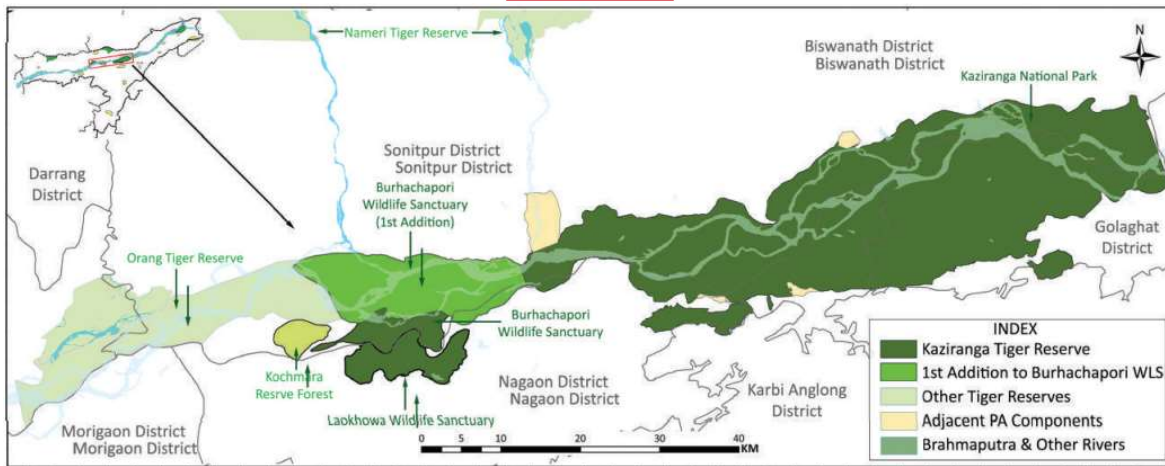
As of April 2026, the states of **Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Nagaland** do not yet have any designated Ramsar sites

5. Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary: Eviction Drive to Protect a Vital Habitat

The Assam government has intensified its campaign against **illegal encroachment on forest and government land** with a major eviction drive in the **Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary**. The operation was jointly carried out by the Sonitpur district administration and the Forest Department in areas earmarked for **compensatory afforestation**. Around **6,200 bighas of land** under the Tezpur, Thelamara, and Dhekiajuli revenue circles—already allocated for compensatory afforestation—were found encroached upon. Illegal occupants had built houses and started agricultural activities, prompting the authorities to act after due notice.

About Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is geographically located on the **south bank** of the **Brahmaputra** under the **Sonitpur district**.
- It is an **important Protected Area (PA)** of the **central Assam** conservancy landscape. .
- It was **declared** as a **Reserve Forest** in **1974** and as a **Wildlife Sanctuary** in **1995**.
- The region falls under the **sub-tropical monsoon climatic regime**.
- **Nestled between the Kaziranga National Park (NP) to the east and the Orang NP to the west and Laokhowa WLS to the south.**
- It is a **part of the Laokhowa-Burachapori eco-system** and comprises **wet alluvial grassland, riparian and semi-evergreen forests** dotted by wetland and river systems.
- This **sanctuary covers an area of 44.06 sq. km.** and is **home to the Great Indian one-horned rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, wild buffalo, hog deer, wild pig, and elephants.**
- Bura Chapori's bird list includes the **highly endangered Bengal Florican, Black-necked Stork, Mallard, Open billed Stork, Teal, and Whistling Duck.**
- The grassland is also rich in various kinds of medicinal herbs and plants.



Ecological importance of Burhachapori

- Burha Chapori, along with the adjacent Laokhowa WLS acts as a **crucial wildlife corridor** connecting **Kaziranga National Park** with **Orang National Park** and **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- Identified as part of the **buffer zone of the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve**.
- Characterised by **grasslands, wetlands, woodlands, and river islands**, supporting endangered mammals, reptiles, and migratory birds.
- Burha Chapori is a **significant habitat** for both **resident and migrant wildlife**.

6. Panidehing bird sanctuary

A **satellite imagery-based study** has revealed that **green cover is rapidly declining even inside protected areas of Assam**, with the **Panidehing Bird Sanctuary** showing alarming levels of grassland loss, forest degradation, and expansion of cropland over the last two decades.

About Panidehing bird sanctuary

- The Panidehing bird sanctuary is **located** in the **northern part of Sivasgar district**.
- It is situated about 22 Kms away from the Sivasagar town **between the Desang and the Demow rivers**.
- The Panidehing Wildlife Sanctuary has a **rich wetland ecosystem** with an area of **33.93 sq. kms**. It was declared as a **Wildlife Sanctuary** in **1996**.
- The sanctuary's prized possession are its variegated species of aquatic birds, so far **165 species** of birds have been **identified and recorded**.
- The common birds seen are:
 - *Bar-headed Goose, Grey leg Goose, Spot billed Duck, Mallard, Gadwall, Wigeon, Gargany, Shoveller, Red crested Pochard, Common Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Adjutant Stork, Lesser Adjutant Stork, Open bill Stork, White necked Stork* etc.



7. Flood Management in the Subansiri Basin

In mid-2025, the **Subansiri Lower Project** successfully managed extreme inflows of **10,000 cumec** during peak monsoon rains.

Subansiri River and its Basin

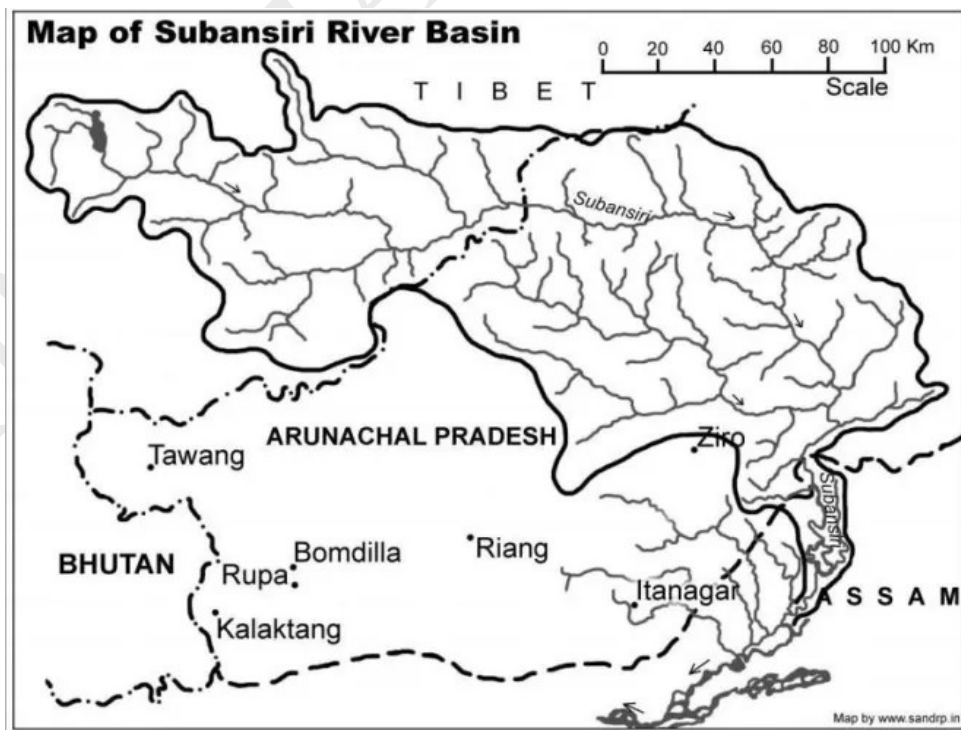
The **Subansiri River** is a major **right-bank tributary of the Brahmaputra River** and holds the distinction of being the **largest tributary of the Brahmaputra by volume of discharge**.

Origin and Course

- The Subansiri originates in **Tibet**, where it is known as **Chayul Chu**.
- Near its source, several streams of the “**Chu**” river system drain into it, with **Sikung Chu** regarded as its principal source.
- The river flows through **Tibet, Arunachal Pradesh, and Assam** before joining the **Brahmaputra River**.
- It enters India near **Taksing** in Arunachal Pradesh, flows through the **Miri Hills**, and finally joins the Brahmaputra at **Jamurighat (Dulangmukh)** in **Lakhimpur district, Assam**.
- The total length of the river is about **442 km**, of which approximately **192 km** lie in **Arunachal Pradesh** and **190 km** in **Assam**.

Subansiri Basin

- The **drainage basin** of the Subansiri covers about **32,640 square kilometres** and is spread over **Assam and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- It contributes nearly **7.9% of the total flow of the Brahmaputra**, making it hydrologically significant.
- Important tributaries of the Subansiri include **Ranganadi, Dikrong, and Kamala**.
- The river lends its name to two districts of Arunachal Pradesh: **Upper Subansiri** and **Lower Subansiri**.



Internal Security.

1. Assam–Arunachal Boundary Survey Advances with Scientific Demarcation

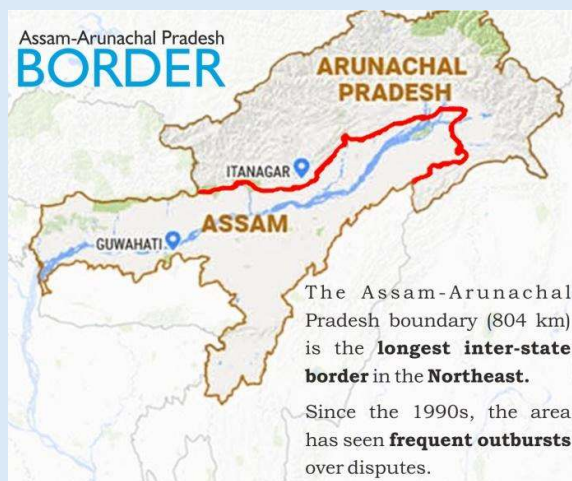
A joint boundary survey between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh has been conducted to resolve the long-pending inter-state border dispute.

About the Survey

- Conducted jointly by: **District administrations of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh**
- Covered: **Stretch-II (Telam to Seren Agma River)**
- Area: Lower Siang (Arunachal Pradesh) and Dhemaji (Assam)
- Method: Use of **geospatial coordinates and scientific mapping**
- Participation: Officials, **Survey of India**, and local stakeholders (Gaon Burahs, Panchayat members)
- Aim: **Accurate and mutually agreed boundary demarcation**

Origin of Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Border Dispute

- The **dispute** has its **roots** in the **colonial times** when the **British** introduced the concept of **Inner Line Regulation (ILR)** in **1873**.
 - The **ILR demarcated** an **imaginary boundary** between **plains** and the **frontier hills**. These **frontier hills** were **designated** as **North East Frontier Tracts (NEFT)** in **1915**.
- NEFT consisted of the **Ballipara Frontier Tract**, the **Lakhimpur Frontier Tract** and the **Sadiya Frontier Tract**.
 - These areas were **kept outside** the purview of the **usual laws** of the land.
- By 1946, the **NEFT** had been **reorganized** and was **administered** by the **Governor of Assam**.
 - They now consist of **Sadiya, Lakhimpur, Tirap, Sela Sub Agency** and **Subansiri area**.
 - **Sela and Subansiri constituted** what was the **erstwhile Ballipara Frontier Tract**.
- After **India** gained **independence**, NEFT came under the **jurisdiction** of the **Government of Assam** till **January 26, 1950**.
- A **sub-committee** headed by **Gopinath Bordoloi** (then CM of Assam), in its report of 1951, **recommended** that the NEFT be **administered** by the **Assam government**.
- As per the recommendations, around **3,648 kilometers** of the **plain area** of **Balipara** and **Sadiya foothills** were **transferred** from NEFT to Assam's then **Darrang and Lakhimpur districts**.
- But the **Government of India** decided to govern it as an **"Excluded Area"**, with the **Governor of Assam** acting as an **agent** of the **President of India**.
- In **1954**, NEFR was **reconstituted** as **North East Frontier Agency (NEFA)** and was **brought under** the **Ministry of External Affairs**.
- In **August 1965**, the **administration** was **transferred** to the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, which supervised and controlled the region till **1972**.
- In **1972** NEFA was **named Arunachal Pradesh** and was **granted** the status of an **Union Territory**.
- After that **Arunachal Pradesh** contended that **several forested tracts** in the plains **traditionally** belonging to the **hill tribal chiefs** and communities were **transferred to Assam**.
- **Arunachal Pradesh** has long **held** that the **transfer** of some parts of **Balipara** and **Sadiya foothills** in 1951 was **done without** the **consultation** of its people.
- It was **unilateral** and **arbitrary** as **no tribal leader** from Arunachal Pradesh was **consulted** before the land was transferred.
- **Arunachal** also **claims** that it had **customary rights** over these lands, considering the tribes living there would pay taxes to Ahom rulers.
- **Assam**, on the other hand, **claims** that this **demarcation** as per **1951 notification** is **constitutional** and **legal**.



- Assam's districts of *Udalguri, Sonitpur, Biswanath, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo* share **boundary** with Arunachal Pradesh.

Efforts to Resolve the Boundary Dispute

- In 1979, a **high-powered tripartite committee** was **constituted** to **delineate** the **boundary** on the basis of Survey of India maps, as well as discussions with both sides.
 - By 1983-84, 489 km out of 800 km boundary, mostly in the north bank of the Brahmaputra, were demarcated.
- However, further demarcation could not commence as Arunachal Pradesh did not accept the recommendations and claimed several kilometers out of the 3,648 sq km that was transferred as per the 1951 notification.
- Assam objected** and **filed a case** in the **Supreme Court** in **1989**, highlighting an **"encroachment"** made by Arunachal Pradesh.
- To resolve the dispute between the states, the apex court appointed a **local boundary commission** in **2006**, which **submitted** its **report** in **September 2014**.
 - Several recommendations were made and it was suggested that both states should arrive at a consensus through discussions. However, nothing happened.
- In **2022**, **Assam** and **Arunachal** commenced **CM-level talks** over the border issue and it led to the historic **Namsai Declaration**.

Namsai Declaration

- Border issues** between both the states would be **confined** to a list of **123 villages**.
- The **boundary line delineated** by the **high powered tripartite committee** in **1980** would be taken as the notified boundary and all realignment would be done in relation to it.
- 12 regional committees covering the 12 districts of Arunachal Pradesh and the 8 districts of Assam for joint verification of the 123 villages.
- The committees were to make recommendations keeping in view **"historical perspective, administrative convenience, contiguity and people's will"**
- No new claim area or village will be added in the future beyond these **123 villages**. It also states MoU is **"full and final"** in respect to the 123 villages.

Current Status

- Disputes** in **37 villages** have been **resolved** with the signing of the **Namsai declaration** itself.
 - Through the MoU, the dispute over another **34 villages** has been **"amicably resolved."**
 - 3 villages** are located partially within the **Indian Air Force's bombing** area in Dullong.
- The MoU states that the matter regarding these three villages will be taken up by **Arunachal Pradesh** with the **Government of India** and the **Indian Air Force**.
- The village boundaries of the 49 remaining villages are unresolved and the MoU states that in these the Regional Committees will finalize the boundaries **"through continuous dialogue"**

One-line Wrap

Scientific and cooperative boundary surveys are key to resolving inter-state disputes and ensuring peace in Northeast India.

2. Reinforcement of India's Eastern Frontier

- The Indian Army has strengthened its eastern frontier by establishing **three new military garrisons** near the India–Bangladesh border in response to changing regional dynamics, including political developments in Bangladesh and China's increasing strategic presence in the neighbourhood.

New Military Garrisons Established

- The Indian Army has established the **Lachit Borphukan Military Station at Dhubri in Assam** to strengthen border management and military preparedness in the eastern sector.
- Two additional forward military bases have been established at:
 - **Kishanganj (Bihar)**
 - **Chopra (West Bengal)**
- These installations are intended to improve surveillance and operational readiness along the India–Bangladesh border and around the Siliguri Corridor.

Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck)

Location

- The **Siliguri Corridor**, popularly known as the "**Chicken's Neck**", is a narrow strip of land in northern West Bengal that connects mainland India with the **eight Northeastern States**.
- It is situated near **Siliguri city** in northern West Bengal.
- The corridor is bounded by:
 - **Nepal** to the west,
 - **Bangladesh** to the south,
 - **Bhutan** to the north,
 - and lies close to the **Chumbi Valley** near the India–Bhutan–China tri-junction.
- At its narrowest point, the corridor is only **20–22 km wide**, making it one of India's most vulnerable strategic bottlenecks.



Historical Background

- The Siliguri Corridor emerged after the **Partition of India in 1947**, when East Bengal became East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh).
- Its strategic significance increased after **Sikkim merged with India in 1975**, strengthening India's position in the eastern Himalayan region.
- Its vulnerability was highlighted during:
 - The **1962 Sino-Indian War**, and
 - The **2017 Doklam Standoff**.

Strategic Significance

- The corridor serves as the **only land link between mainland India and the Northeastern States**.
- Major **railway, road, oil pipeline, power transmission, and communication networks** connecting Northeast India pass through this corridor.
- It acts as a gateway for connectivity with Northeast India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sikkim.
- The corridor is vital for: National security, Military logistics, Economic integration, Border management, Disaster response operations.

Defence Infrastructure

- The corridor contains important military and strategic installations.
- **Bagdogra Airport** serves both as a civilian airport and an important **Indian Air Force base**.
- The region is protected by Indian Army's **Tri-Shakti Corps** along with **BrahMos missile regiments and Rafale fighter squadrons** stationed at Hasimara Air Base

3. Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreement, Manipur

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) recently announced the **renewal of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreement** with Kuki militant groups under the **Kuki National Organisation (KNO)** and **United People's Front (UPF)**.

- The MHA also announced the reopening of **National Highway-02** for the free movement of commuters and essential goods.

What is the Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreement?

- The **Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreement** is a **tripartite ceasefire arrangement** aimed at facilitating political dialogue and maintaining peace in Manipur.
- The agreement was signed in **2008** between:
 - Government of India,
 - Government of Manipur, and
 - Kuki militant groups represented by the **Kuki National Organisation (KNO)** and **United People's Front (UPF)**.
- The KNO and UPF together represent **24 Kuki-Zomi insurgent groups**.
- The agreement was periodically renewed until it lapsed during the ethnic conflict that erupted in Manipur in **May 2023**.

Background

- In March 2023, the then Manipur Government led by **N. Biren Singh** withdrew from the SoO agreement with:
 - **Kuki National Army (KNA)**, and
 - **Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA)**.
- The state government alleged that these groups were involved in activities influencing protests in Kuki-dominated areas.
- Following the outbreak of ethnic violence between the **Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities**, the SoO framework eventually lapsed in 2024.

Key Provisions of the Renewed SoO Agreement (2025)

1. Territorial Integrity of Manipur

- The KNO and UPF have agreed to respect and uphold the **territorial integrity of Manipur**.
- The groups have committed to pursuing a **negotiated political solution** within the constitutional framework.

2. Relocation and Consolidation of Camps

- Kuki militant camps located near the valley areas will be relocated.
- Smaller camps will be consolidated into larger camps to facilitate better monitoring.

3. Deposit of Weapons

- Militants covered under the agreement will deposit their weapons at the nearest:
 - CRPF camps, or
 - BSF camps.
- The measure aims to prevent misuse of arms and build confidence among communities.

4. Physical Verification of Cadres

- Cadres will undergo stringent physical verification.
- Identity cards/certificates will be issued to verified members.
- Any foreign nationals identified during verification will be removed from the list of recognised cadres.

5. Regulation of Movement

- Movement of cadres outside designated camps will be regulated.
- Cadres will be required to report to local police stations while travelling outside camps.

6. Transparent Financial Support

- Government remuneration provided to cadres will now be transferred directly to individual bank accounts.
- This replaces the earlier practice of routing payments through commanders.

7. Joint Monitoring Group (JMG)

- A **Joint Monitoring Group** will oversee implementation of the agreement.
- Violations of ground rules may lead to review or suspension of the SoO arrangement.

National Highway-02 Reopened

- The **Kuki-Zo Council**, a civil society organisation based in Churachandpur, agreed to reopen **National Highway-02**.

Meitei People

The Meiteis are the largest ethnic group in Manipur. They primarily inhabit the **Imphal Valley**, which is a fertile plain located in the center of the state.

- **Language & Script:** They speak Meiteilon (Manipuri), which is a Tibeto-Burman language and one of the official languages of India. They have their own ancient script called *Meitei Mayek*.
- **Religion:** Most Meiteis practice Hinduism (specifically Vaishnavism), though they also maintain their indigenous Sanamahi faith.
- **Status:** Unlike the hill tribes, the Meiteis are generally categorized as General or OBC, though there is an ongoing movement for them to be granted ST status.
 - They are widely considered the **indigenous people of the Manipur valley**.
- **Historical Standing:** They have a recorded history in the valley dating back over 2,000 years, documented in the royal chronicle *Cheitharol Kumbaba*.
- **Current Debate:** While they are the "native" inhabitants of the valley, they are not currently classified as a ST under the Indian Constitution.
 - Many Meiteis are currently campaigning for ST status, arguing that they were historically a tribe and need protection to preserve their land and culture from outside migration.

Kuki-Zo Tribes

The Kuki-Zo people (including groups like the Thadou, Paite, Hmar, and Mizo) are part of a larger ethnic group spread across Manipur, Mizoram, and parts of Myanmar and Bangladesh. In Manipur, they reside mostly in the **southern hill districts**.

- **Kinship:** They share close linguistic and cultural ties with the Mizos of Mizoram and the Chin people of Myanmar.
- **Religion:** Like the Nagas, the Kuki-Zo communities are predominantly Christian.
- **Land Ownership:** They traditionally follow a system where land is owned by the village chief, which differs from the more communal or individual systems seen elsewhere.
- **Status:** The Kuki-Zo people are also recognized as ST, but their "indigenous" status is the most politically sensitive.

Assam-Manipur

Two districts of Assam shared a boundary with Manipur.

1. Dima Hasao-Manipur - 73.50 Km
2. Cachar-Manipur- 130.60 Km

Manipur has a total of **16 districts** of which **3 districts share a border with Assam.**



4. Mizoram Peace Accord with Hmar Group

The **Mizoram government** is set to sign a **peace accord with the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic)**, marking the likely end of one of the State's longest-running insurgencies.

About the Accord

- Operates under: **Ministry of Home Affairs peace process framework**
- Spearheaded by: **Mizoram State Government plus Home Department**
- Supported by: Dialogue-based approach and previous **peace accords in Northeast India**

Background: Hmar Insurgency

The roots of the conflict lie in identity, autonomy, and governance demands of the **Hmar tribal community** in Mizoram. The Hmar people are a tribal community with a distinct identity, language, and culture, concentrated largely in the hill districts straddling Mizoram, Manipur, and Assam..

- The **Hmar People's Convention (HPC)** was formed in 1986 as a political platform demanding **self-governance** for Hmar-inhabited areas in northern and northeastern Mizoram.
- By 1987, it launched an **armed movement** demanding for an **Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule**
- **Violence peaked** around **1991**, when the conflict led to significant civilian suffering and military operations in remote hill areas.

Earlier Peace Efforts

- A major breakthrough came on **July 27, 1994**, when the Mizoram government and the HPC signed a **Memorandum of Settlement**.
- The **1994 Memorandum of Settlement**:
 - Led to creation of **Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC)**
 - Around **308 militants surrendered**
- Many cadres felt the government was slow in implementing its promises, and this **dissatisfaction** led to a **split** and **formation** of **HPC (Democratic)** under **Lalhmingthanga Sanate**.
- The group fractured further when Sanate aligned with **Kuki militant formations**, giving rise to yet another splinter faction under **H. Zosangbera**.
- The Zosangbera faction eventually came around to peace: it signed its own agreement with the state government on **April 2, 2018**.
- **2018 Peace Accord (Zosangbera faction)**:
 - Created **Sinlung Hills Council (SHC)** under **Sinlung Hills Council Act, 2018**

- Provided enhanced autonomy
- Despite this, the Sanate faction stayed out of the peace process entirely, operating from bases in **Hmarkhawlien and Lakhipur** in Assam's **Cachar district**, with its activities gradually reducing to sporadic extortion in parts of Cachar and northern Mizoram.

Current Peace Accord (2026)

The upcoming agreement is significant as it involves the **last active faction** of the Hmar insurgency.

Key Features

- **Surrender of 43 cadres** and laying down of arms
- **Rehabilitation and reintegration** into civilian life
- **Blanket amnesty** for former militants
- **Compensation for surrendered weapons** (as per Ministry of Home Affairs norms)
- Focus on **developmental assurances**, especially:
 - Rural connectivity
 - Infrastructure in **Sinlung Hills region**

International Relations

1. Ganga Water Treaty 1996

Why in the News?

The **Ganga Water Treaty**, signed in 1996 between India and Bangladesh, is set to expire on **31 December 2026**.

- With political changes in Dhaka and renewed debates over water sharing, the treaty has returned to the spotlight.
- Its renewal has major implications for **India–Bangladesh relations**, regional stability, and Northeast India's security.

Background of the Treaty

The treaty was signed on **12 December 1996** between India and Bangladesh to resolve disputes over water diversion at the **Farakka Barrage**, built in 1975 in West Bengal.

- The barrage diverts water into the Hooghly River to maintain the navigability of Kolkata Port.
- Bangladesh had raised concerns about reduced downstream flow affecting agriculture and ecology.

India and Bangladesh share **54 transboundary rivers**, of which the Ganga is the most significant and highly seasonal.



Key Features of the Treaty

- The treaty is valid for **30 years**, with review provisions every five years, earlier if either government desires.
- Water sharing is done during the **lean season (1 January – 31 May)** in 10-day blocks.
- The sharing formula is:
 - If flow is below 70,000 cusecs – water is shared equally.
 - If flow is between 70,000 and 75,000 cusecs – Bangladesh gets 35,000 cusecs.

- If flow exceeds 75,000 cusecs – India gets 40,000 cusecs, and the rest goes to Bangladesh.
- An **emergency clause** mandates consultations if flow falls below 50,000 cusecs.
- A **Joint Committee** monitors water levels at Farakka and Hardinge Bridge.

The treaty is based on 40 years of historical flow data from 1949 to 1988.

Strategic and Diplomatic Significance

- As the upstream nation, India holds natural leverage but must balance it with cooperative diplomacy.
- The treaty supports ecological protection of the **Sundarbans**, a sensitive delta region.
- It impacts irrigation, drinking water supply, navigation, and power generation in both countries.
- Other water agreements include the **Kushiyara River Water Sharing Agreement** and the **Feni River Memorandum of Understanding**, while the **Teesta River Agreement** remains pending.

The upcoming renegotiation will test India's water diplomacy and neighbourhood policy under the **Neighbourhood First Policy**.

Exam Hook

Key Takeaways

- Signed in 1996; expires in 2026.
- Governs dry season sharing at Farakka Barrage.
- India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers.
- Joint monitoring mechanism ensures transparency.
- Example of river water diplomacy in South Asia.

2. Indus Waters Treaty

India has recently alerted Pakistan about “high flood” in Tawi river on “humanitarian grounds”, even as the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) continues to remain in abeyance.

More About the News

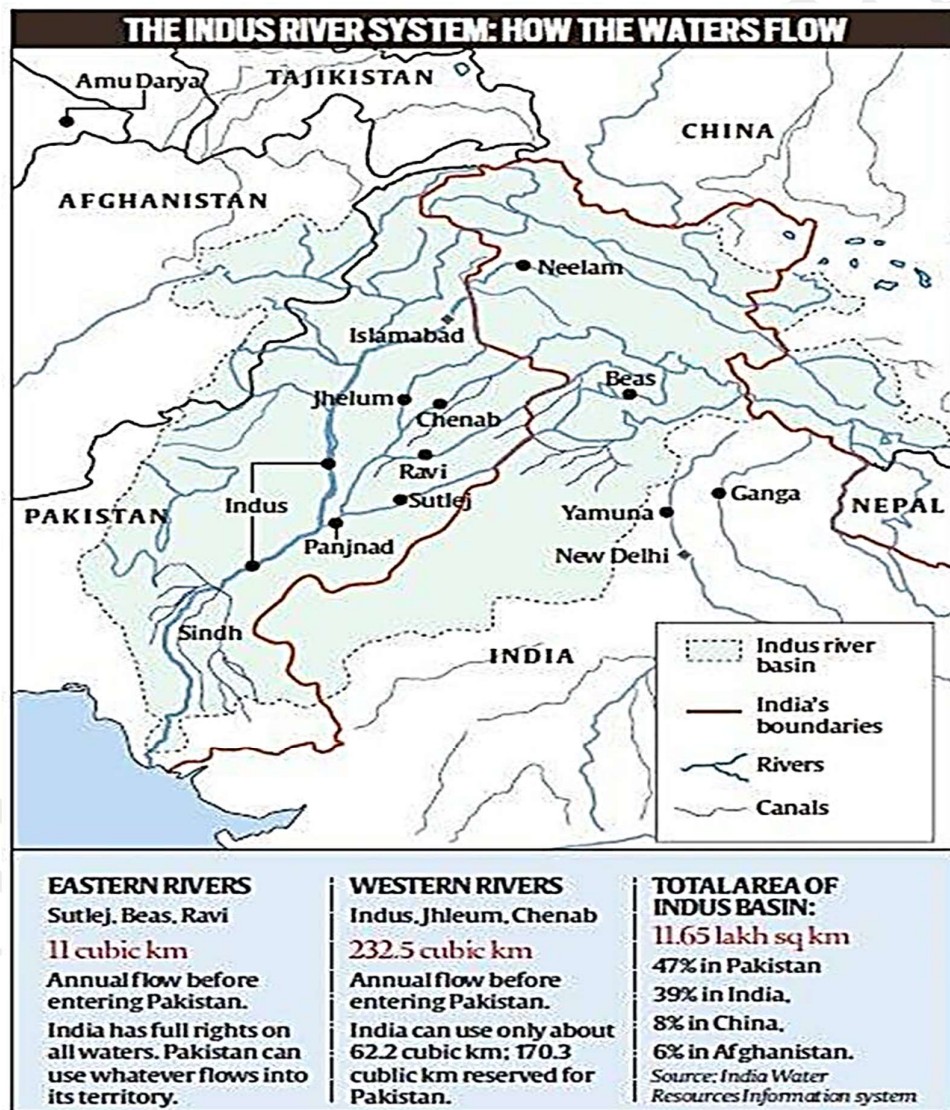
- **Jammu** has been **witnessing heavy rainfall**, with Tawi now flowing close to 12 feet – only five below the danger mark of 17.
- **Heavy rain** has **killed** close to **800 people** in **Jammu** this year, including 65 killed in flash floods during the Machail yatra in Kishtwar.

About the Indus Water Treaty

- The Indus Water Treaty is a **bilateral agreement** between **India** and **Pakistan** that **establishes a partnership** over the **Indus River**.
- This treaty was **signed between India and Pakistan on 19 September 1960 in Karachi**.
- The treaty was signed by the then **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** and the then **President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan**.
- The **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development** (World Bank) acted as a **mediator** between India and Pakistan for the treaty.
- As per the treaty, **waters of the eastern rivers —Sutlej, Beas and Ravi— were allocated to India**, while the **western rivers — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — to Pakistan**.

About the Indus River

- ❖ The Indus River has been integral to the Indus Valley Civilisation, one of the world's earliest urban cultures, which thrived around 2500 BCE.
- ❖ The river **springs** from **Southwestern Tibet**, near **Lake Mansarovar**, **meandering** through **Jammu & Kashmir** before **flowing into Punjab** (Pakistan) and ultimately **falls** into the **Arabian Sea**.
- ❖ Major tributaries, including the **Jhelum**, **Chenab** (largest tributary), **Ravi**, and **Beas** rivers, significantly contribute to the Indus's flow and impact agricultural practices in the region.
- ❖ **Chenab joins Satluj in Pakistan**, **Jhelum joins the Chenab** near Jhang in Pakistan and **Ravi joins the Chenab** near Sarai Sidhu.
- ❖ **Satluj is joined by the Chenab in Pakistan**.
 - Thus, **Satluj** receives the **collective drainage** of the **Ravi**, **Chenab** and **Jhelum** rivers and **joins the Indus** a few kilometers above Mithankot.



Current Status of the Treaty

- India **suspended** the Treaty in April this year following the **Pahalgam terror attack** until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjured its support for cross border terrorism.

Hydro-electricity Projects (HEPs) in Dispute

- ❖ In 2015, **Pakistan objected** to two of **India's hydroelectric projects**, the Kishanganga project, and the Ratle project and moved the World Bank, seeking a settlement through a neutral expert.
- ❖ However, it withdrew its request a year **later** and asked for **adjudication through a Court of Arbitration** instead.
- ❖ **India**, moved an application for a **neutral expert to rule** on the **differences**.
- ❖ The **World Bank appointed Michal Lino** as the **neutral expert**, it also **appointed a Court of Arbitration**.
- ❖ **India opposed** it, saying it could not be “compelled to recognise illegal and parallel proceedings not envisaged by the Treaty” and boycotted the court hearings.
- ❖ It, however, continued participating in the “Treaty-consistent Neutral Expert proceedings”.
- ❖ On August 14, **India rejected** the **award** of the “**Court of Arbitration**” on issues of general interpretation of the IWT.

Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project

- It is a run-of-the-river hydroelectric scheme in Kashmir, India. Its dam diverts water from the Kishanganga River (also called the Neelum River) to a power plant in the Jhelum River basin.
- It has an installed capacity of 330 MW.

Ratle Project

- It is a run-of-the-river hydroelectric power station on the Chenab River, Kishtwar district of the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It includes a 133 m tall gravity dam and two power stations adjacent to one another.
- The installed capacity of both power stations is 850 MW.



Permanent Court of Arbitration

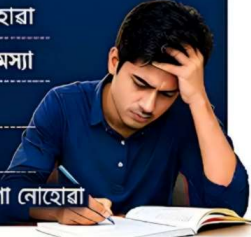
- It is an international organization, **established in 1899**, **headquartered at The Hague**, The Netherlands.
- It is **not part** of the **UN system** although it has **observer status** in the **UN General Assembly**.
- The objective is “to facilitate the arbitration of international disputes” and assists temporary tribunals to resolve disputes among states (and similar entities), intergovernmental organizations, or even private parties arising out of international agreements.
- The cases span a range of legal issues involving territorial and maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international and regional trade.
- The decision of the arbitrators is binding in all cases on the parties.

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EXAM DATE

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(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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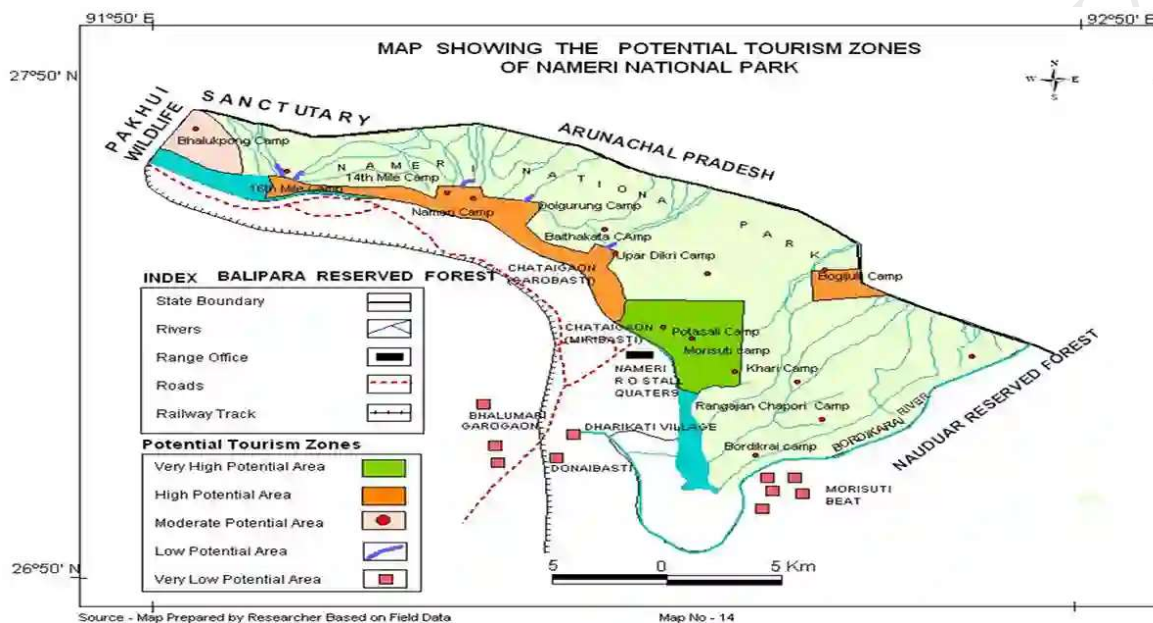
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At A Glance.

Nameri National Park & Tiger Reserve

- Nameri National Park and Tiger Reserve is located in the northern part of Sonitpur district, Assam.
- It lies in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas (Sub-Himalayan region).
- Tezpur is the nearest major town, located about 35 km away.
- The park is contiguous with Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Nameri is a National Park, Tiger Reserve, Elephant Reserve, and Important Bird Area (IBA).
- It is the only national park in Assam where guided wildlife trekking is allowed in the core area.



Historical Evolution

- Declared a Reserve Forest in 1978.
- Upgraded to a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1985.
- Declared a National Park in 1998.
- Notified as a Tiger Reserve in 2000 (second Tiger reserve of Assam after Manas).

Constitution of Nameri Tiger Reserve

Nameri Tiger Reserve has been carved out of:

- Nameri National Park (Core Area – 200 sq km)
- Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary (Satellite Core – about 120 sq km)
- Naduar Reserve Forest (Eastern Buffer – 80 sq km)
- Balipara Reserve Forest (Western Buffer – 64 sq km)

The reserve is formed from two protected areas and two reserve forests, creating an ecologically connected landscape.

Conservation Significance

- Nameri forms an important part of the Sonitpur Elephant Reserve.
- It acts as a critical wildlife corridor between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Along with Pakke Tiger Reserve, it forms one of the largest continuous stretches of semi-evergreen and evergreen forests in Northeast India.
- The reserve is important for tiger conservation, elephant movement, and bird diversity.

Hydrology and River System

- The **Jia-Bhoroli River** (Kameng River) is the lifeline of Nameri National Park.
 - It originates in the Arunachal Himalayas and flows through the park.
- The **Bor Dikorai River** forms the southern boundary of the reserve.
- Other important tributaries include **Diji, Doigurung, Dikorai, Dinai, Nameri, Khari, and Upper Dikirai rivers.**
- River rafting on the Jia-Bhoroli River is a major eco-tourism attraction.
- The river was historically famous for Golden Mahseer angling, which has been officially banned since 2011.

Vegetation

Nameri contains a rich mixture of:

- Riverine grasslands
- Assam Valley floodplain vegetation
- Tropical moist deciduous forests
- Semi-evergreen forests
- Evergreen foothill forests

Important Flora

- Nahor (*Mesua ferrea*), Hollong (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*), Shorea assamica, Terminalia myriocarpa, Chukrasia tabularis, Gmelina arborea, Michelia champaca, Agarwood & Rudraksha.
- The park is known for rich orchid diversity, particularly: Dendrobium, Cymbidium & Lady's Slipper Orchid (Cypripedioideae)

Faunal Diversity

Wild Cats of Nameri

Nameri supports seven species of wild cats: Bengal Tiger, Leopard, Clouded Leopard, Asiatic Golden Cat, Marbled Cat, Leopard Cat, Jungle Cat

Other Carnivores

- Dhole (Wild Dog), Sloth Bear

Major Herbivores

- Asian Elephant, Gaur, Sambar Barking Deer Hog Deer, Wild Boar

Nameri serves as an important tiger corridor connecting the Kaziranga landscape with the forests of Arunachal Pradesh.

Nameri as an Ornithological Hub

- Nameri is recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA).
- More than 384 bird species have been recorded from the park.
- It is one of the most important breeding habitats of the White-winged Wood Duck, the State Bird of Assam.

Ecological Threats

Grassland Loss

- Riverine grasslands have declined significantly due to woodland encroachment and riverbank erosion.
- Hog Deer populations are particularly affected.

Human-Wildlife Conflict

- Elephant incursions into villages are frequent.
- Crop damage and property loss occur in fringe areas.

Anthropogenic Pressure

- Encroachment of forest land.
- Illegal logging activities.
- Large-scale cattle grazing in peripheral regions.

Quick Prelims Facts

- Nameri is located in Sonitpur district of Assam.
- Jia-Bhoreli is also known as the Kameng River.
- Nameri became a Tiger Reserve in 2000.
- Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary forms the Satellite Core of the reserve.
- Nameri is part of the Sonitpur Elephant Reserve.
- It is contiguous with Pakke Tiger Reserve of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The White-winged Wood Duck is the flagship bird species of the park.
- Nameri hosts seven species of wild cats, including the Asiatic Golden Cat and Clouded Leopard.
- It is one of the premier birding destinations of Northeast India.

Padma Dore

The “Padma Doree” textile initiative has been launched to promote cross-cultural collaboration in India's handloom sector, blending traditions from Northeast India and Madhya Pradesh.

About the Initiative

- Launched by North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation
- Operates under:
 - Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region

Key Features

- Fusion of:
 - **Eri Silk (Ahimsa silk)** from Northeast India
 - **Chanderi fabric** from Madhya Pradesh
- Promotes:
 - **Sustainable and ethical textile production**
 - **Innovation in traditional crafts**
- Includes:
 - Fashion showcase
 - Artisan interaction and live demonstrations
 - Exhibition on “fibre to fabric” journey

What is Special about Eri Silk?

- Eri silk comes from two species of silkworms, *Samia ricini* and *Philosamia ricini*.
- It is **durable, cotton-like**, and offers excellent **thermal properties**, making it warm in winter and cool in summer.
- The name “eri” comes from the **Assamese word “era,”** meaning “**castor,**” because these silkworms feed on the leaves of the local, indigenous castor oil plant.
 - **Castor oil plant** is **drought resistant** plant that requires vastly less water than the mulberry tree, grown to feed mulberry silk worms.
- Eri Silk is locally known as **Ryndia** in **Meghalaya**, which in Khasi language refers to the Ryndia (castor) plant.
- The **ancient tradition** and the **existence of Eri Silk date** as early as **2500 BCE**.
- Eri Silk is renowned as the world's only vegan silk, where, unlike other silks, the moth inside the cocoon is not killed.
- Instead, the moth naturally exits the cocoon, leaving it behind for use.
- In **2024, North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC)**, under the Ministry of DoNER, **obtained the Oeko-Tex certification** for its Eri Silk from Germany.
- The production of India's Eri silk takes place almost entirely in village-based setups in the Northeast:
 - **Assam accounts for 38.3%** of India's Eri silk production, **Meghalaya 22.6%, Manipur 29.8 %** and **Nagaland 6.8 %**.

What is Chanderi Fabric?

- Traditional handloom textile originated from the small town of Chanderi in **Madhya Pradesh**
- It is made **primarily using silk, cotton**, or a **blend of both**, often adorned with zari (metallic threads).
- The roots of Chanderi fabric date back to the Vedic period, with its weaving tradition flourishing during the reign of the Scindia rulers in the 18th century.
- Koshti weavers from Jhansi settled in Chanderi village in the 13th century.
- Chanderi fabric evolved when weavers discovered Japanese silk in the 1930s, replacing cotton warps with silk.
- Known for:
 - **Lightweight texture**
 - **Fine motifs and elegance**
- Part of India's rich **handloom heritage**

Objectives of Padma Doree

- Promote **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** vision (cultural unity)
- Create a **sustainable textile ecosystem**
- Provide **market access to artisans**
- Position Indian handlooms in **global luxury markets**

Significance

- Encourages **inter-state cultural integration**
- Strengthens **handloom sector and rural economy**
- Preserves **indigenous knowledge systems**
- Promotes **sustainable fashion globally**

Important Concepts Explained

- **Ahimsa Silk:** Silk produced without killing silkworms
- **Handloom:** Fabric woven manually without power machines
- **Sustainable Fashion:** Eco-friendly textile production
- **Cultural Integration:** Exchange of traditions across regions
- **Value Addition:** Enhancing product appeal and market value

One-line Wrap: Padma Doree beautifully blends tradition and innovation, showcasing India's handloom heritage on a global stage.

Purul Paoki Festival

- The annual **Purul (Hiimai) Paoki Festival** was recently celebrated in **Purul village of Senapati district, Manipur**.
- The three-day festival highlighted traditional paddy cultivation practices, community participation, and indigenous agricultural heritage.
- The event was organised by the **Purul Youth and Students' Organisation (PYSO)** with support from the **Manipur Tourism Department**.

About the Purul Paoki Festival

- **Purul Paoki Festival** is a traditional agricultural festival celebrated in **Purul village**, located in the **Senapati district of Manipur**.
- The festival is closely linked with the **paddy transplantation season** and reflects the deep relationship between local communities and agriculture.
- **"Paobii Payu,"** the traditional transplantation of paddy saplings, remains the central activity of the festival.

Major Highlights of the Festival

- The festival was celebrated from **May 4 to 6** with active participation from villagers, youth volunteers, and visitors.
- The event began with preparations for a **community feast**, symbolising unity and collective participation.
- On the second day, villagers carried out the **uprooting of paddy saplings**, an important stage in rice cultivation.
- The final day focused on the transplantation process, where people worked together in the fields, reflecting the traditional spirit of cooperation.
- A traditional wrestling competition was also organised, showcasing indigenous sporting culture.

Cultural and Agricultural Significance

- The festival preserves traditional farming knowledge passed down through generations.
- It highlights the importance of:
 - Community-based agriculture
 - Sustainable farming traditions
 - Indigenous ecological knowledge
- Such festivals also strengthen:
 - Rural tourism
 - Tribal identity
 - Cultural preservation in Northeast India

Officials stated that the festival reflects the enduring connection between people, land, and livelihood.

Important Terms Explained

- **Paobii Payu:** Traditional transplantation of paddy saplings in local farming practice.
- **Senapati District:** A hill district of Manipur dominated by Naga tribal communities.
- **Community Farming Tradition:** Collective participation in agricultural activities for social bonding and labour sharing.
- **Indigenous Knowledge:** Traditional local knowledge developed over generations regarding farming, ecology, and culture.

One-line Wrap

The Purul Paoki Festival of Manipur beautifully combines agriculture, community participation, and tribal cultural heritage through traditional paddy transplantation practices.

Tokari Geet Documentary Wins Global Recognition

A documentary on Assam's traditional folk music **Tokari Geet** has received international recognition at major film festivals.

About the Documentary

- Title: **"Strings of Tradition: A Tokari Geet Story"**
- Directed by **Dr. Aparna Buzarbaruah**
- Awards:
 - **Honorable Jury Mention** at Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival 2026
 - **Special Jury Mention** at Indian World Film Festival

What is Tokari Geet?

- Tokari is a folk music style from Assam, influenced by Indian mythology and social life.
- A **devotional and philosophical folk music tradition** of Assam
- Performed using the **Tokari**, a traditional single-string instrument played with fingers, **cymbals**, and **flute**, usually **sung by male folk led by a leader**.

- Rooted in:
 - **Spiritual teachings (Deha-Tattwa philosophy)**
 - **Oral traditions passed through generations**

Key Features of the Film

- Explores:
 - Cultural and spiritual essence of Tokari Geet
 - Journey of rediscovering Assamese heritage
- Highlights legacy of:
 - Umakanta Bairagi (Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee)
- Documents:
 - Traditional instrument-making techniques
 - Role of local artists and practitioners

Significance of the Initiative

- Preserves **intangible cultural heritage**
- Promotes **Assamese folk traditions globally**
- Bridges gap between:
 - **Traditional art forms and modern audiences**
- Encourages youth engagement through **digital storytelling**

Important Concepts Explained

- **Intangible Cultural Heritage:** Non-physical traditions like music and rituals
- **Oral Tradition:** Knowledge passed through spoken word
- **Deha-Tattwa:** Philosophical concept linking body and spirituality
- **Folk Music:** Traditional music reflecting community life
- **Cultural Preservation:** Protecting traditions for future generations

One-line Wrap

The Tokari Geet documentary highlights how preserving folk traditions keeps Assam's cultural soul alive for future generations.

Meghalaya Declares Chocolate Mahseer as State Fish

Meghalaya Cabinet has officially declared the **Chocolate Mahseer** (*Neolissochilus hexagonolepis*), as the **State Fish of Meghalaya**.

- The decision aims to strengthen conservation efforts for the species and promote awareness about the protection of freshwater ecosystems.

The declaration comes at a time when river ecosystems across India are facing growing pressure from pollution, habitat loss, overfishing, and climate change.

About Chocolate Mahseer (Khasaw)

- The **Chocolate Mahseer** is a **freshwater fish species** native to the rivers and streams of Northeast India and parts of South Asia.
- It is locally known as **Khasaw** in Khasi and **Na-rang** in Garo language.
- Scientific name: **Neolissochilus hexagonolepis**
- It is mainly found in: **Meghalaya, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh & Himalayan river systems**
- The fish prefers: **Fast-flowing, Clean & Oxygen-rich rivers and streams** of the **northeastern Himalayas**.
- **Ecological Importance:**
 - It plays an important role in maintaining the balance of river ecosystems.
 - It acts as an indicator of **healthy freshwater habitats**.
- Locally known as **Khasaw**, the fish is closely linked with the traditional food habits and culture of Meghalaya communities.
- Mahseer species are valued for: **Inland fisheries, Eco-tourism & Recreational angling**
- **Major Threats:** Overfishing, habitat loss and poor water quality have put the species under increasing pressure in recent decades.

One-line Wrap

By declaring the Chocolate Mahseer as its State Fish, Meghalaya has taken an important step towards protecting fragile freshwater ecosystems and conserving Northeast India's aquatic biodiversity.

Andaman Sets Guinness World Record with Largest Underwater National Flag

The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** have set a **Guinness World Record** by unfurling the **largest underwater national flag**.

- The **massive Tricolour** was **deployed beneath** the sea in a complex, **tightly coordinated operation** involving multiple agencies and trained divers at Swaraj Dweep

About the Achievement

- **Location:** Radhanagar Beach, Swaraj Dweep (earlier Havelock Island)
 - *Havelock Island* was officially **renamed** as Swaraj Dweep in 2018 in **honor of Subhash Chandra Bose**, who had proposed the name during a visit to the islands in 1943.
 - In 2024 **Port Blair**, capital of A&N Islands, was **renamed "Sri Vijaya Puram"** in honor of the region's role in India's freedom struggle, including the naval history of the Chola Empire.
- **Flag size:** Approximately 60 × 40 metres
- **Certified by:** Guinness World Records

Execution of the Event

- Coordinated effort involving: **Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Andaman & Nicobar Police, Forest Department & Professional scuba divers.**
- Operation required:
 - **Precise underwater coordination**
 - Advanced diving techniques
- The achievement highlights the growing stature of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a destination for adventure tourism, marine activities, and globally recognised events.

One-line Wrap

The underwater Tricolour record highlights Andaman's rise as a global hub for marine adventure and tourism.

Exercise CINBAX-II 2026

India and Cambodia are conducting the **second edition of joint military exercise CINBAX-II 2026** to enhance defence cooperation and operational readiness.

About Exercise CINBAX-II 2026

- Conducted between: **India and Cambodia**
- **Location:** At the Royal Cambodian Air Force Training Centre (Camp Basil), Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia
- **Participating Forces:**
 - Indian contingent: **120 personnel**, mainly from **Maratha Light Infantry Regiment**
 - Cambodian contingent: **160 personnel** from Royal Cambodian Army
- **Key Objectives**
 - Strengthen **defence cooperation and bilateral ties**
 - Enhance **interoperability and coordination**
 - Train for **counter-terrorism operations**
 - Prepare for **United Nations peacekeeping missions**

Operational Focus

- Conducted under:
 - **Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter** (peace enforcement operations)
- Focus areas:
 - **Sub-conventional warfare (low-intensity conflict)**
 - Semi-urban combat scenarios
- Training includes:
 - Drone operations
 - Sniper and mortar handling
 - Tactical field exercises

One-line Wrap

CINBAX-II reflects India's growing defence partnerships and commitment to regional security and global peacekeeping.

Mayon Volcano Eruption Triggers Evacuation in Philippines

The **Mayon Volcano** in the Philippines recently caused **mass evacuation of over 300 families** due to ashfall and pyroclastic flows.

About Mayon Volcano

- Located in **Albay Province, Luzon Island**, known for its **perfect cone shape**
- One of the **most active volcanoes** in the **Philippines** and is the part of the **Pacific Ring of Fire**



Recent Event

- No major explosive eruption, but:
 - **Collapse of lava deposits** triggered
 - **Pyroclastic flow** (hot ash, rocks and gases)
- Effects:
 - Ashfall spread across **87 villages**
 - **Over 300 families evacuated**
 - Damage to:
 - Crops (vegetable farms)
 - Livestock
- Reduced visibility caused **transport disruption**

What is a Pyroclastic Flow?

- A **fast-moving mixture of hot gas, ash, and rocks**
- Travels at **high speed** down volcanic slopes
- Extremely dangerous due to:
 - **High temperature**
 - **Rapid movement**

One-line Wrap

The Mayon volcano event highlights how active volcanic regions demand constant monitoring and strong disaster preparedness.

Assam Off to Strong Start in Paddy Procurement Drive

Assam has recorded strong progress in **paddy procurement under Kharif Marketing Season 2025–26**, benefiting thousands of farmers across the state.

Key Highlights

- Total procurement so far: **4.27 lakh metric tonnes**
- Procurement target for first crop: **7.53 lakh metric tonnes**
- Procurement period:
 - **December 2025 to August 2026**
- Registered farmers:
 - Applications received: **61,594**
 - Registered farmers: **60,290**

Agencies Involved

Paddy procurement is being carried out by:

- Food Corporation of India
- National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India
- Assam Food & Civil Supplies Corporation Limited
- Assam State Agricultural Marketing Board
- Procurement is taking place at **183 Paddy Procurement Centres** across Assam.

Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- **Common Paddy:** ₹2,369 per quintal
- **Grade A Paddy:** ₹2,389 per quintal

Minimum Support Price is the assured price at which the government purchases crops from farmers to protect them from distress sales.

Related Government Framework

- Operates under India's **Minimum Support Price system**
- Linked to food security initiatives under:
 - Food Corporation of India
 - National food grain procurement mechanism

One-line Wrap

Efficient paddy procurement strengthens farmer income, food security and agricultural stability in Assam.

Sikkim Becomes India's First Fully Paperless Judiciary

Sikkim has become the **first Indian state to operate a completely paperless judiciary**, marking a major step in judicial digitalisation.

About the Development

- Announcement made during the **Conclave on Technology and Judicial Education** in Gangtok
- **Organised by:** High Court of Sikkim & Supreme Court e-Committee

Key Features of Paperless Judiciary

- Complete shift from **physical files to digital systems**
- Use of:
 - **Virtual court platforms**
 - Real-time case management systems
 - AI-based tools like: **SUPACE** (legal research assistance), **SUVAS** (translation software for courts)

Objectives

- Improve **access to justice**, especially in remote and hilly regions
- Reduce delays and paperwork
- Enhance: **Transparency, Efficiency & Ease of case handling**

Related National Initiatives

- Linked with the **e-Courts Mission Mode Project**, implemented under the:
 - **Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice**
- Supports the broader goals of:
 - **Digital India Mission**
 - Technology-driven governance reforms

Why It is Significant

- Makes justice delivery **faster and more accessible**
- Reduces dependency on physical infrastructure
- Promotes **environment-friendly governance** by reducing paper usage
- Can become a **model for judicial reforms across India**

Challenges Highlighted

- Need for:
 - **Digital literacy among citizens**
 - Expansion of e-Seva Kendras
- Concerns regarding:
 - **Cybersecurity and data privacy**
 - Ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in judiciary

One-line Wrap

Sikkim's paperless judiciary shows how technology can make justice more accessible, efficient and citizen-friendly.

Assam's First IVF-Born Calf

Assam records its **first In Vitro Fertilisation-born calf** in the livestock sector.

What is the development?

- Scientists at the **College of Veterinary Science, Khanapara** (under **Assam Veterinary and Fishery University**) successfully produced a female calf, weighing 23 kg.
 - The calf is named '**Navami**' as per official sources.
- Produced using **Ovum Pick-Up (OPU)**, **In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)** and **Embryo Transfer Technology**.
- Born on **26 March 2026** at **Sonapur (Kamrup district)**.
- Belongs to **Gir breed** (high milk-yielding indigenous cattle).
- Spearheaded by **Dr. Manjyoti Bhuyan** and team (Dr Manna Baruti and Dr Raju Deka).

Objectives

- **Enhance milk productivity** using superior breeds like **Gir**.
- **Rapid multiplication** of superior genetic traits.
- **Strengthen farmers' income** (aligned with **Doubling Farmers' Income** goal).
- Promote **scientific breeding practices** in Assam.
- Reduce dependence on traditional low-yield livestock.

How the technology operates

- **Ovum Pick-Up (OPU)**, more commonly known as egg retrieval or oocyte retrieval, is a minimally invasive medical procedure used to collect mature eggs (ova) from a female's ovaries.
- **In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)**: Fertilisation of egg and sperm outside the animal body in laboratory conditions.
- **Embryo Transfer**: The fertilised embryo is implanted into a surrogate cow.

Key Takeaways

- First IVF-born calf in Assam = **technological milestone**.
- **Gir breed + modern biotechnology** = higher productivity potential.
- Can transform **dairy value chain** in the region.

New Butterfly Species in Arunachal Named After Zubeen Garg

A new butterfly species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh named after cultural icon **Zubeen Garg**.

What is the discovery?

- A new species **Euthalia zubeengargi** (common name: **Basar Duke**) recorded in **Leparada district, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Discovered during **2025 field surveys** in **semi-evergreen forests (600–750 m altitude)**.
- Research spearheaded by **Roshan Upadhaya** (RIMT University) and **Kalesh Sadasivan** (Travancore Natural History Society).
- Published in **Entomon journal** (Association for Advancement of Entomology).



Key Features & Ecology

- Belongs to **genus Euthalia** (widely distributed in **South and Southeast Asia**).
- Distinct **earthy brown wings with pale markings**.
- Habitat: **Cool, shaded forest interiors with dense, moist undergrowth**.
- Behaviour:
 - Feeds on **tree sap** and **minerals** from damp soil and streams.
 - Active during **late morning to early afternoon**.
- Only **two male individuals recorded**, which suggests **rarity or restricted distribution**.

This **discovery brings** the **total number of Euthalia species** recorded in the **NE region** of India to over **80**.

Key Takeaways

- Named species = **scientific recognition + cultural tribute**.
- Northeast India = **high endemism and unexplored diversity**.
- Conservation of **forest microhabitats** is crucial.

One-line wrap: *Euthalia zubeengargi* reflects Northeast India's hidden biodiversity wealth and the urgent need for habitat conservation.

Biodegradable Plastic from Nagaland

Nagaland University develops **biodegradable biopolymer (PHB)** to tackle microplastic pollution.

What is innovation?

- A **biopolymer Polyhydroxybutyrate (PHB)** developed using bacteria **Bacillus subtilis FW1**.
- Isolated from **fish waste disposal sites (Mokokchung, Nagaland)**.
- Spearheaded by **Nagaland University** with collaboration from: **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research–North East Institute of Science and Technology, Tezpur University & Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology**
- Published in **Journal of Polymer Research**.

How it operates

- **Microbial biotechnology:** Bacteria convert organic waste into **biopolyesters (PHB)**.
- Accumulation capacity: **~69.2% PHB** inside bacterial cells.
- Exhibits:
 - **Thermostability**
 - Good **physico-chemical properties**
 - **Biocompatibility** (safe for human cells)

Objectives & Applications

- **Reduce microplastic pollution** (linked to **biomagnification in food chains**).
- Provide **eco-friendly alternative to petroleum-based plastics**.
- Potential uses:
 - **Sustainable packaging**
 - **Biomedical applications**
 - **Agriculture (mulch films, coatings)**

Significance

- Supports **circular bioeconomy** using **waste-to-resource approach**.
- Aligns with:
 - **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 (India)**
 - **Swachh Bharat Mission**
 - Global efforts under **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** to curb plastic pollution
- Demonstrates **Northeast India's role in sustainable innovation**.

Key Findings

- **~59.6% degradation in 28 days** (soil composting).
- Indicates **high biodegradability and environmental safety**.

Key Takeaways

- Converts **fish waste** → **biodegradable plastic**.
- Tackles **microplastics + fossil fuel dependency** simultaneously.
- Example of **local innovation addressing global environmental issues**.

One-line wrap: *Nagaland's PHB innovation showcases how microbial biotechnology can turn waste into a sustainable alternative to plastics, addressing the global microplastic crisis.*

Indian Sailing League at Umiam Lake

Meghalaya hosts the **first Indian Sailing League** edition at **Umiam Lake**, marking a global sporting debut.

What is the development?

- First-ever **Indian Sailing League** held at **Umiam Water Sports Complex** (near Shillong).
- Duration: **March 27–31, 2026**.
- Participation:
 - **14 teams**
 - **58 international sailors** from **8 countries**
- A **Meghalaya home team** also participated.
- Initiative supported by **Government of Meghalaya**, spearheaded by **Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma**.

Objectives

- Position Meghalaya as a **global water sports destination**.
- Unlock potential of **Umiam Lake** for **adventure tourism**.
- Boost **local economy, employment, and infrastructure**.
- Prepare for **National Games 2027**.

About Umiam Lake

- A **man-made reservoir** near Shillong in Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya.
- **Created** in the **1960s** by **damming the Umiam River** for **hydro-power**.
- Known for **scenic beauty and water-based recreation**.

Key Takeaways

- Marks Meghalaya's entry into **international water sports map**.
- Demonstrates **sports-tourism convergence**.
- Strategic step towards **National Games 2027 readiness**.

One-line wrap: *The Indian Sailing League at Umiam Lake signals Meghalaya's strategic push to blend sports, tourism, and global visibility.*

New Flower Species Discovered in Manas

A new flowering plant species, *Osbeckia zubeengargiana*, has been discovered in **Manas National Park, Assam** and formally published in March 2026.

About *Osbeckia zubeengargiana*

- It is a **newly identified plant species** belonging to the **Melastomataceae** family.
- Found in the **grassland ecosystem** of **Manas National Park**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- Named after Assamese singer **Zubeen Garg** for his contributions to culture and environmental awareness.

Key Features

- The plant bears **pink to purple flowers** with:
 - **Tetramerous structure** (four petals)
 - Size of around **2.5–3 cm**
- **Flowering season:** September to January
- Locally called "**Mon Jai**", reflecting cultural linkage
- Identified by researchers from **Gauhati University** and collaborators from Kerala.
- Confirmed through **morphological and taxonomic analysis** (comparison with related species).
- Currently classified as "**Data Deficient**" as per IUCN criteria.
- Found only in a **limited geographic pocket**, raising concerns about:
 - **Habitat vulnerability**
 - Need for **further field surveys and monitoring**

One Line Wrap

Osbeckia zubeengargiana symbolises the fusion of biodiversity richness and cultural identity in Northeast India.

Himalayan Sordid Emperor Recorded in Arunachal Pradesh for the First Time

First **photographic record** of the butterfly *Himalayan Sordid Emperor (Chitoria sordida sordida)* has been reported from **Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh**.

About Himalayan Sordid Emperor

- It is a butterfly species belonging to the **Nymphalidae family**.
- Known for **brownish wing patterns** and typical **basking behaviour** on rocks.
- Usually found in **tropical forest habitats at lower elevations**.

Key Highlights of Discovery

- Recorded in **Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve**, one of India's richest biodiversity areas.
- Observed near a **forest stream (Lunkai Nalla)**.
- Identification based on:
 - **Wing patterns**
 - **Antennae structure**
 - **Colouration**
- No specimen collected; record is based on **photographic evidence**.

Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve

- Located in **Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh**
- Lies along the **India–Myanmar international border**
- Spread over **1985.23 sq. km**
- Situated at the junction of:
 - **Indian subcontinent biogeographic region**
 - **Indo-China biogeographic region**
- Bounded by:
 - **Dapha Bum ridge (Mishmi Hills)**
 - **Patkai ranges**
- Shares boundary with **Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **River system:**
 - **Namdapha River** (tributary of Noa-Dihing) flows north to south
- Namdapha is unique because it contains **multiple forest types across altitudes:**
- **Tropical evergreen, Moist deciduous, Temperate and Alpine scrub.**
- **Flora (Plant Diversity):** Presence of rare species like:
 - **Pinus merkusii**
 - **Abies delavayi**
- Home to **Blue Vanda** (rare orchid)
- Medicinal plants:
 - **Mishimi Teeta (Coptis teeta)** → used by local tribes
- **Fauna (Animal Diversity):** Large mammals:
 - **Elephant**
 - **Himalayan Black Bear**
 - **Himalayan Sun Bear**
- Primates:
 - **Hoolock Gibbon** (India's only ape)
 - **Slow Loris**
- Only park in the world with **four big cat species:**
 - **Tiger**
 - **Leopard**
 - **Snow Leopard**
 - **Clouded Leopard**

Significance of the Finding

- Marks a **range extension** for the species.
- Earlier known from:
 - **Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam, Manipur**
 - **Bhutan and Myanmar**
- Not recorded in earlier checklists of Arunachal despite **~175 species of Nymphalidae documented**.

One Line Wrap

The Himalayan Sordid Emperor's discovery in Arunachal highlights Northeast India's unexplored biodiversity and the need for deeper ecological research.

Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project

Arunachal Pradesh government held consultations with **project-affected families** regarding the **Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project**, emphasizing **participatory development**.

About Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project

- A proposed **1200 megawatt hydroelectric project** in Arunachal Pradesh
- Part of the State's vision to become **India's hydropower capital**
- Spearheaded by the **State Government of Arunachal Pradesh**

Objectives of the Project

- **Clean energy generation** to support India's renewable energy goals
- Harnessing the **hydropower potential of Himalayan rivers**
- Boosting **regional development and infrastructure**
- Providing **employment and economic opportunities**

Recent Developments

- Chief Minister engaged in **direct dialogue with affected families**
- Focus on:
 - **Transparency**
 - **Inclusion of local voices**
 - **Addressing livelihood concerns**
- Government reiterated commitment to:
 - **Fair compensation and rehabilitation**
 - **People-centric development approach**

One Line Wrap

Kalai-II project reflects the challenge of balancing clean energy development with social justice and environmental sustainability.

16th Century 'Trial Tanks' Discovery in Assam

Possible **16th-century brick-lined water tanks (pukhuris)** discovered in **Deoparbat jungle near Numaligarh (Assam)**, potentially linked to an **Ahom-Kachari historical legend**.

About the Discovery

- **Location:** Deoparbat forest, near Numaligarh, Golaghat, Assam.
- **Spearheaded by:** Local exploration team led by **Pranab Jyoti Sharma**.
- **Nature of structures:**
 - **Brick-walled water tanks (pukhuris)**
 - Located in **elevated jungle terrain (Morangi frontier)**
- Area previously **unexplored archaeologically**.

Historical Background: Ahom-Kachari Contest

- The site is linked to a **traditional legend** involving:
 - **The Ahom Kingdom**
 - **The Kachari (Dimasa) Kingdom**

The "Trial Tanks" Legend

- A contest was held to decide control over **Morangi region**.
- Both sides built **water tanks on a hilltop**.
- The side that could **retain water successfully** would win the territory.
- The Ahom representative **Koncheng Borpatra Gohain** used a **special clay sealing technique**, ensuring water retention and winning the region.

Important Concepts Explained

- **Pukhuri:** Traditional Assamese water tank used for storage, irrigation, and rituals.
- **Ahom Kingdom:** Ruled Assam for nearly **600 years (1228–1826)**; known for administrative and hydraulic systems.
- **Kachari Kingdom:** A major tribal kingdom (Dimasa rulers) in Northeast India.
- **Morangi Frontier:** A historically contested border region between Ahoms and Kacharis.
- **Archaeological Verification:** Scientific dating (carbon dating, material analysis) needed to confirm authenticity.

One Line Wrap

The discovery of 'Trial Tanks' in Assam may bridge legend and history, highlighting indigenous engineering and regional political traditions.

AssamSAT

Assam has become the **first Indian State** to float a tender for its own **earth observation satellite system (AssamSAT)** to improve **disaster response, border surveillance, and governance**.

About AssamSAT Initiative

- **Spearheaded by:** Assam Government (Budget 2025–26 announcement).
- **Operates under:** Collaboration with **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe)** and **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- **Implementing agency:** Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (issued Expression of Interest).
- **Execution model:** **Design–Build–Launch–Operate–Transfer** with private sector participation.

Key Features

- At least **5 satellites in Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**.
- Likely **satellite constellation** for **high-frequency imaging (every few hours)**.
- Possible use of **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** for **all-weather imaging (even through clouds and darkness)**.
- Focus on **real-time data access**, reducing dependence on the National Remote Sensing Centre.

Objectives of AssamSAT

- **Disaster Management:**
 - Real-time flood mapping in the **Brahmaputra floodplains**.
 - Early warning for floods and landslides.
- **Border Security:**
 - Monitoring **chars (riverine islands)** and porous borders.
 - Tackling **illegal infiltration** and cross-border activities.
- **Agriculture Support:**
 - Crop monitoring, weather forecasting, and soil assessment.
- **Infrastructure & Governance:**
 - Urban planning, project monitoring, and resource mapping.
- **Law Enforcement:**
 - Tracking **poaching (Kaziranga)** and **drug trafficking routes**.

Important Concepts Explained

- **Low Earth Orbit (LEO):** Satellites orbit close to Earth (160–2000 km) for high-resolution imaging.
- **Satellite Constellation:** Group of satellites working together for frequent data coverage.
- **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR):** Radar technology that captures images **through clouds and at night**.
- **IN-SPACe:** Regulatory body enabling **private sector participation** in India's space sector.
- **Earth Observation Satellites:** Satellites used for **mapping, surveillance, and environmental monitoring**.

One Line Wrap

AssamSAT marks a pioneering step in decentralised space governance, integrating technology with disaster management, security, and development.

Mission Prakriti

The **top five performing schools** under 'Mission Prakriti' were felicitated in Assam for their efforts in promoting **environmental sustainability and ecological awareness among students**.

About Mission Prakriti

- **Mission Prakriti** is a **student-led environmental programme** that **transforms schools into eco-friendly, sustainable spaces** while **building ecological awareness** among young students.
- It is implemented by **WWF India** in collaboration with **Samagra Shiksha** (the Government of India's integrated school education scheme under the National Education Policy framework).
- **Operates under:** WWF-India and Samagra Shiksha Assam (SSA)

Key Themes of the Programme

The initiative focuses on five core areas:

- **Biodiversity conservation**
- **Water management**
- **Waste management**

- Sustainable food practices
- Energy efficiency

Implementation in Assam

- Implemented in **4,723 ICT-enabled schools** across all districts.
- Covers a large student base under the school education system.

National Reach

- Active in **7 States** including Assam, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Telangana, Ladakh, and Delhi.
- Reaches:
 - **23,000+ schools**
 - **56,000 teachers**
 - **5.65 lakh students**

Top Performing Schools (Assam)

- Natun Fatasil Town Higher Secondary School – Kamrup (Metro)
- Sakai Khangia High School – Jorhat
- Bishnu Jyoti MES – Sonitpur
- PM Shri Jamira Higher Secondary School – Hailakandi
- PM Shri Gossaigaon Girls High School – Kokrajhar

Other Recognition

- **Tinsukia district** was awarded as the **Best District** for implementation.

One-line Wrap:

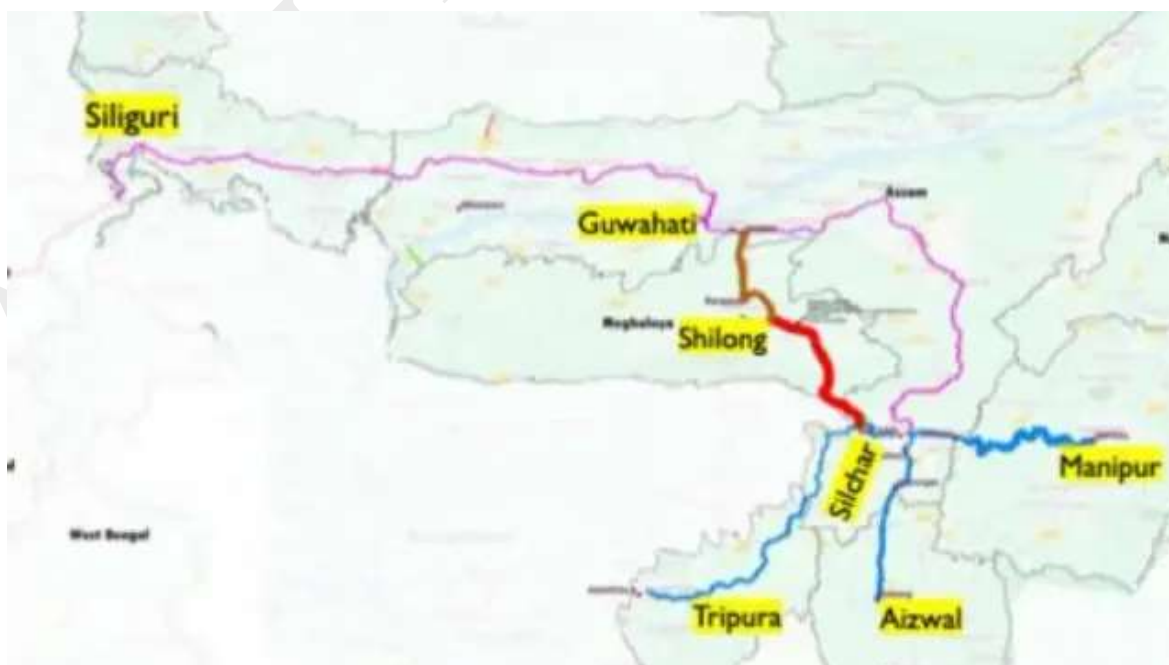
Mission Prakriti empowers students to become **environment-conscious citizens** by transforming schools into **sustainable and eco-friendly spaces**.

Shillong–Silchar Greenfield Corridor

The Prime Minister laid the **foundation stone of the Shillong–Silchar Greenfield High-Speed Corridor**, a major highway project aimed at improving connectivity across **Assam, Meghalaya and the wider Northeast region**.

About the Shillong–Silchar Greenfield Corridor

- The **Shillong–Silchar Greenfield High-Speed Corridor** is a **166.8 kilometre long highway project** connecting **Mawlyngkhung near Shillong in Meghalaya to Panchgram near Silchar in Assam**.
- The project is **implemented by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited**, an agency working under the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**.
- The total estimated **capital cost is about ₹22,864 crore**.
- The corridor will be developed under the **Hybrid Annuity Model**, a public-private partnership framework where the government and private developers share project costs and risks.



Project structure

- The highway has been **divided into four construction packages**.
- Around **144.8 kilometres** falls in Meghalaya, while **22 kilometres** lies in Assam.
- One **31 kilometre** from Mawlyngkhung to Panchgram has an estimated cost of **₹2,206.55 crore**.

Objectives of the Corridor

- To **reduce travel time and transportation costs** between **Shillong, Guwahati and Silchar**.
- To **decongest the existing National Highway 6**, which currently faces heavy traffic and bottlenecks.
- To improve **regional connectivity across Northeast India**, especially linking **Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura**.
- To support the **Atmanirbhar Bharat vision** by promoting **economic growth, logistics efficiency and employment generation**.

Strategic and Economic Significance

- The corridor will integrate with major highways such as **National Highway 27, National Highway 106, National Highway 206 and National Highway 37**.
- It will improve access to towns such as **Diengpasoh, Khlieriat, Ratacherra, Kalain and Umkiang**.
- **Silchar** acts as a **gateway to southern Northeast states**, making this corridor vital for trade, transport and defence logistics.

The project is expected to **boost tourism, trade and mobility across the region**, strengthening the government's focus on **infrastructure-led development in the Northeast**.

One-Line Wrap

The **Shillong–Silchar Greenfield Corridor** is set to become a major infrastructure backbone for the Northeast, improving connectivity, boosting economic growth and integrating the region more closely with the rest of India.

Billion Acts Peace Fellowship

Tanuj Samaddar from Rangia, Assam has been selected as one of **five global recipients of the Billion Acts Peace Fellowship** awarded by the **PeaceJam Foundation**, a United States–based organisation that promotes youth leadership for peace and social development.

About the Billion Acts Peace Fellowship

- The **Billion Acts Peace Fellowship** is a global youth leadership initiative launched under the **PeaceJam Foundation**.
- The programme is guided by **Nobel Peace Prize laureates** and aims to encourage young leaders to undertake **community-based social impact projects**.
- Fellows receive **mentorship, training and small grants** to implement initiatives that promote **peace, education, sustainability and social justice**.

Initiative by the Assam Awardee

- Under the fellowship, **Tanuj Samaddar launched the initiative “Action for a Resilient Tomorrow.”**
- The programme focuses on **improving educational infrastructure in government schools in the Rangia region of Assam**.

Key activities include:

- Conducting **digital literacy programmes and career counselling sessions**.
- Organising **capacity-building workshops for students**.
- Encouraging **student participation in community development activities**.
- Using grant funding to strengthen **learning resources and school infrastructure**.

About PeaceJam Foundation

- **PeaceJam Foundation** is an international non-profit organisation founded in the United States.
- It connects **young people with Nobel Peace Prize laureates** to promote peace education and social change.
- The organisation's flagship campaign, **Billion Acts of Peace**, encourages youth across the world to undertake **actions that contribute to global peace and sustainable development**.

One-Line Wrap

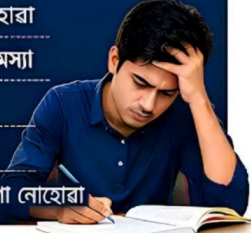
The **Billion Acts Peace Fellowship** empowers young leaders worldwide to design and implement grassroots initiatives promoting **peace, education and sustainable development**.

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- × Negative markingৰ ভয়
- × Actual exam levelৰ ধাৰণা নোহোৱা



IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



পৰীক্ষাত সফলতা বিচাৰে?
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Japan-Focused Agriculture Job Fair in Assam

A Japan-focused agriculture job fair was recently organised in **Guwahati** to connect skilled workers from Assam with employment opportunities in Japan's agriculture sector. The event witnessed participation from **more than 200 candidates both online and offline**.

About the Job Fair

- The job fair was organised by the **National Chamber of Agriculture** in collaboration with the **Embassy of Japan in India**.
- The event aimed to **facilitate overseas employment opportunities for youth from Assam's agricultural sector**.
- Representatives from **three Japanese agricultural management organisations** participated and provided details on employment prospects and working conditions in Japan.

Key Employment Pathways for Indian Workers

Participants were informed about two major programmes through which foreign workers can work in Japan.

Technical Intern Training Programme

- A programme that allows **foreign workers to receive training in Japanese industries**, including agriculture.
- It focuses on **skill development and technology transfer**.

Specified Skilled Worker Status

- Introduced by Japan to address **labour shortages in sectors such as agriculture, construction, and caregiving**.
- Workers with specific skills can **live and work in Japan for longer durations**.

One-Line Wrap

The **Japan-focused agriculture job fair in Assam** reflects growing India–Japan cooperation in **skill development and global employment opportunities for youth in the agriculture sector**.

Developmental Projects in Jorhat

The **Chief Minister of Assam** inaugurated development projects worth about **₹627.79 crore** in **Jorhat district**, including the district's **first flyover** and several **heritage conservation initiatives**.

Major Infrastructure Projects

Maniram Dewan–Piyali Barua Flyover

- Jorhat's **first flyover**, constructed on the busy **Assam Trunk Road**.
- Length: **1.27 kilometres**, connecting **Baruah Chariali to Bhogdoi Bridge**.
- Objective: **reduce traffic congestion and improve urban mobility in Jorhat town**.
- Named after **freedom fighters Maniram Dewan and Piyali Barua**, who played key roles in the **1857 uprising in Assam**.

Heritage Conservation and Cultural Projects

Swaraj Udyan

- A **museum-cum-memorial park** developed over **175 bighas of land** at the former **Central Jail in Jorhat**.
- Dedicated to **freedom fighters who were imprisoned there during India's national movement**.
- Aim: **preserve historical memory and promote heritage tourism**.

Integrated Development of Borbheti Complex

- Development of the **historic Borbheti area at Malow Pathar**.
- The project aims to **preserve cultural heritage while improving tourism infrastructure**.

Lachit Barphukan Maidam Development Project

- Development of the **memorial site associated with Lachit Barphukan**, the **Ahom military commander famous for defeating Mughal forces in the Battle of Saraighat (1671)**.
- The project aims to **promote historical awareness and tourism**.

Community and Youth Development Initiatives

PRAGATI Initiative

- A programme launched by the **Jorhat district administration**.
- Objective: **guide, mentor and empower youth through skill development and career support**.

Infrastructure for Religious and Community Institutions

- A guest house at Moinaporia Namghar was inaugurated to support community and religious gatherings.

One-Line Wrap

The developmental projects in Jorhat combine modern infrastructure with heritage preservation, reflecting a balanced approach to regional development in Assam.

Prime Minister's Two-Day Assam Visit

The Prime Minister of India inaugurated and laid foundation stones for development projects worth more than ₹47,600 crore across Kokrajhar, Guwahati and Silchar.

Major Projects Announced During the Visit

Assam Mala 3.0 Road Infrastructure Programme

- Assam Mala 3.0 is a major state road development initiative.
- The programme aims to construct over 900 kilometres of roads across Assam.
- Objective: improve interstate connectivity and strengthen links between national highways and rural roads.
- Estimated cost: over ₹3,200 crore.

Development Projects in Bodoland Territorial Region

- Six infrastructure projects will be launched in the Bodoland Territorial Council area.
- These include four flyovers and two bridges.
- Total investment: about ₹1,100 crore.
- Objective: improve urban mobility and regional connectivity.

Railway Infrastructure Development

Several railway projects will be initiated or inaugurated:

- Periodic Overhauling Workshop at Bashbari in Kokrajhar to improve railway maintenance.
- Railway electrification projects, including:
 - Rangiya–Murkongselek line
 - Chaparmukh–Dibrugarh line
 - Badarpur–Silchar line
 - Badarpur–Churaibari line
- Furkating–Tinsukia rail line doubling project worth over ₹3,600 crore.

Three new train services will also be flagged off:

- Kamakhya–Charlapalli Amrit Bharat Express
- Guwahati–New Jalpaiguri Express
- Narangi–Agartala Express

Energy and Industrial Projects

- Kopili Hydro Electric Project in Dima Hasao and West Karbi Anglong districts will be dedicated to the nation.
- The project, costing over ₹2,300 crore, will enhance renewable energy generation and grid stability.
- North East Gas Grid Phase One will be inaugurated.
- This pipeline connects Guwahati, Numaligarh, Gohpur and Itanagar, with a branch to Dimapur.
- Expansion of the Numaligarh–Siliguri Product Pipeline will support the Numaligarh Refinery expansion from three million metric tonnes per year to nine million metric tonnes per year.

Tourism and Economic Infrastructure

- Prime Minister Ekta Mall in Guwahati will be inaugurated.
 - The mall will promote One District One Product items, GI products, handicrafts and handloom goods.
- Cruise terminals at Bishwanath Ghat and Nimati Ghat will be developed to boost river tourism on the Brahmaputra.

₹526 crore Investment for Assam's Inland Waterways & Maritime Infrastructure

PROJECT FOR INAUGURATION

Elevated Road – Pandu Port Complex to NH-27

- Faster cargo movement between Pandu Port and NH-27
- Reduces congestion within Guwahati city
- Strengthens logistics and port operations for businesses



PROJECT FOR LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONE

Cruise Terminal at Biswanath Ghat

- Boosts river tourism on Brahmaputra
- Creates opportunities for local hospitality, crafts and small businesses
- Enhances passenger facilities and cruise infrastructure



PROJECTS FOR BHOOMI PUJAN

Regional Centre of Excellence (RCoE) – Bogibeel, Dibrugarh

- First-of-its-kind maritime skill development hub in Northeast India
- Annual intake of over 5000 students
- Research and development facilities for crew and trainees
- Capacity building for inland water transport sector

Cruise Terminal at Neamati

- Promotes river-based tourism along the Brahmaputra
- Creates new avenues for local hospitality services, crafts and small enterprises
- Improves passenger amenities and strengthens cruise infrastructure

Development Projects in Silchar

- Foundation stone for the **Shillong–Silchar Greenfield Corridor**, the **first access-controlled high-speed corridor in Northeast India**.
- Construction of a **new agriculture college at Patharkandi** in Karimganj district.
- Development of an **elevated corridor on National Highway 306 in Silchar**.

India's First Inland River Lighthouses on Brahmaputra

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways recently laid the **foundation stones for four river lighthouses** along the **Brahmaputra River**.

- This marks the **first time lighthouse infrastructure is being developed on an inland waterway in India**.
- The project will be bringing coastal-grade navigational safety infrastructure to the Brahmaputra
- The project is implemented under the **Ministry of Ports Shipping and Waterways**, through collaboration between the **Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships** and the **Inland Waterways Authority of India**.

Key Features of the River Lighthouse Project

- **Total project cost:** Approximately **₹84 crore**.
- **Height of each lighthouse:** About **20 metres**.
- **Navigation range:**
 - **Geographical range:** 14 nautical miles.
 - **Luminous range:** 8–10 nautical miles.
- **Energy source:** Fully **solar-powered** infrastructure.
- **Location of the four lighthouses:**
 - **Bogibeel** (Dibrugarh district)
 - **Pandu** (Kamrup Metro district)
 - **Silghat** (Nagaon district)
 - **Biswanath Ghat** (Biswanath district)

These locations lie along **NW-2**, one of India's most important inland waterways for cargo and passenger transport.



Tourism and Public Infrastructure

Each lighthouse complex will also include:

- Museum and interpretation centre
- Amphitheatre and public spaces
- Cafeteria and souvenir shops
- Children's play areas and landscaped parks

Thus, the sites will function both as **navigation infrastructure and tourism hubs**.

Significance for Northeast India

- Inland waterways transport costs **significantly less than road or rail transport**.
- Water transport produces **lower carbon emissions**, making it environmentally sustainable.
- Developing the **Brahmaputra corridor** will strengthen logistics for **tea, coal, fertilizers and tourism industries** in Assam.

This initiative aligns with the Government's vision of expanding inland waterways as a **green and cost-effective transport network**.

One line wrap:

India's first inland river lighthouses on the Brahmaputra aim to enhance safe navigation, strengthen cargo transport and boost river tourism in Northeast India.

Carbofuran Poisoning Threatens Vultures in Assam

The **accidental poisoning of vultures in Assam due to the pesticide carbofuran** has emerged as a serious conservation concern.

More About the News

- Experts and conservationists have urged the government to **regulate the sale and purchase of carbofuran**, which is widely available in the market but is extremely toxic to wildlife.
- **Several vulture deaths** in recent years have been **linked** to this **chemical**.

How Carbofuran is Killing Vultures

- **Carbofuran**, commonly known as **furadon**, is a highly toxic pesticide used in agriculture to control pests.
- In many cases, **livestock herders lace cattle carcasses with poison to kill feral dogs or wild predators** that attack their animals.
- When **vultures feed on these poisoned carcasses**, they die quickly because even a **small quantity of carbofuran is lethal** to them.
- Experts estimate that **around 700 vultures have died in Assam since 2018 due to such accidental poisoning**.

The lack of **record-keeping of buyers and sellers** of carbofuran also makes it difficult for authorities to identify offenders and enforce strict action.

Declining population

India has nine species of vultures, six of which are found in Assam



Vultures of the genus 'Gyps' ▪ Oriental white-backed (Assam, critically endangered) ▪ Long-billed (critically endangered) ▪ Slender-billed (Assam, critically endangered) ▪ Himalayan griffon (Assam, winter visitor from Himalayas)	▪ Eurasian griffon (Assam, winter visitor from Himalayas) Single representative species ▪ Egyptian ▪ Bearded ▪ Cinereous (Assam) ▪ King (Assam, critically endangered)
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Vultures Found in India

- India hosts a total of **Nine species of vultures**.
- Out of these 9 species, **six species** are **resident**: white-rumped vulture, Indian vulture, slender-billed vulture, red-headed vulture, bearded vulture, and Egyptian vulture.
- **3 species** are **migratory**: cinereous vulture, griffon vulture, and Himalayan vulture.

Why Vultures are Ecologically Important

- Vultures are **natural scavengers** that feed on dead animals.
- They help **clean the environment by quickly removing carcasses**, preventing the spread of diseases such as **anthrax, rabies and other infections**.
- A decline in vultures can lead to an increase in **stray dogs and other scavengers**, which may raise public health risks.

Thus, protecting vultures is not only a wildlife issue but also a **public health and ecosystem stability issue**.

Vulture Population and Conservation Efforts in Assam

Assam is one of the **most important regions for vulture conservation in India**. To protect these endangered birds, several initiatives are underway:

- **Vulture Safe Zone Programme** implemented in parts of Assam to eliminate harmful veterinary drugs.
- The **Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre in Kamrup district**, supported by the Assam Forest Department and conservation organisations, works to breed and release vultures into the wild.
- Community awareness campaigns involving **village heads, Village Defence Party members and local institutions** are helping reduce poisoning incidents.

Encouragingly, awareness drives in parts of **Kamrup district have reported zero vulture deaths between November 2025 and February 2026**.

One-Line Wrap

Protecting vultures from pesticide poisoning is essential not only for biodiversity conservation in Assam but also for maintaining ecological balance and public health.

Historic Pahugarh of Sivasagar

Pahugarh is a historic waterbody located near **Sivasagar**, built during the reign of **Rudra Singha** between **1696 and 1714** as part of the **Rangpur capital complex** of the Ahom Kingdom.

- Historically, it was created as a **natural zoo for wild animals such as rhinoceros, deer, elephants and tigers**, making it one of the earliest known examples of a **natural wildlife enclosure in Asia**
- Today, Pahugarh ponds has evolved into an **important wetland ecosystem** that attracts thousands of **migratory birds during the winter season**, highlighting its ecological significance.

Location and Historical Importance

- Pahugarh is situated **between Joysagar Tank and Rudrasagar Tank**, about **5 kilometres from Sivasagar town**.
- It formed an integral part of the **Ahom capital city of Rangpur**, reflecting the **advanced water management and ecological planning of the Ahom rulers**.
- The site demonstrates the Ahoms' understanding of **nature conservation and landscape design** centuries ago.

Ecological Importance

During **November and December**, large flocks of migratory birds arrive at Pahugarh.

- Important species include: **Siberian pelicans, Glossy ibis, Bar-headed geese, Greylag geese, Pochards, moorhens, egrets and jacanas, Adjutant storks**.
- These birds use the wetlands to **rest and regain energy during their long migratory journeys**.

Threats to the Ecosystem

Despite its importance, the wetland faces several challenges:

- **Broken sluice gates**, causing rapid loss of water from the ponds.
- **Illegal fishing and disturbance**, despite restrictions under **Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973**.
- **Soil erosion and earth cutting** in nearby areas such as **Jerenga Pathar**.
- **Lack of proper conservation and monitoring mechanisms**.

If the water level continues to decline, migratory birds may **shift to other wetlands**, affecting the ecological balance.

Steps Taken to Protect the Pahugarh

- The Sivasagar district administration has prohibited illegal fishing, hunting, littering of garbage, and playing loud music inside Pahugarh, all of these go on clandestinely as there is no security arrangement around.

Proper conservation, improved water management and ecological restoration can transform Pahugarh into a **major biodiversity and tourism site in Assam**.

One line wrap: Pahugarh of Sivasagar, built by Ahom King Rudra Singha, represents a rare blend of historical heritage and wetland biodiversity supporting migratory birds.

Kalmoni River in Guwahati

The **Kalmoni River** flows between **Kahikuchi village and Azara village** on the western fringe of **Guwahati**, near **NH 37**.

- Traditionally, the river has served as a **natural drainage channel**, carrying excess rainwater during the monsoon and protecting nearby localities from flooding.
- However, the river is currently facing severe environmental degradation due to **indiscriminate dumping of garbage and household waste**.

Current Environmental Concerns

Local residents have reported that several stretches of the river have turned into **informal dumping grounds**.

Key issues include:

- **Accumulation of household garbage** along the riverbanks.
- **Waste disposal by nearby markets, hotels and restaurants**.
- **Obstruction of natural water flow**, increasing flood risk during monsoon.
- **Foul odour and unhygienic surroundings**, affecting commuters and residents.
- **Potential spread of pathogens and waterborne diseases**.

The situation has been aggravated by the **absence of a proper waste management system**, especially for tenant households and small business establishments near the river.

Importance of Kalmoni River

Despite being relatively small, the Kalmoni River plays a significant role in Guwahati's urban ecosystem.

- It functions as an **important storm-water drainage channel**.
- It helps **prevent waterlogging in low-lying areas** during heavy rainfall.
- It supports **local biodiversity and ecological balance**.

Urban rivers like Kalmoni are essential for **sustainable urban planning and climate resilience**.

Protecting Kalmoni River is essential for **urban environmental health and flood management in Guwahati**.

One line wrap: The Kalmoni River highlights the growing challenge of urban river pollution and the urgent need for sustainable waste management in Guwahati

Sukhoi-30MKI Fighter Jet Crash in Assam's Karbi Anglong During Training Sortie

A Sukhoi-30MKI fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force reportedly crashed near **Chokihola** in **Karbi Anglong** district of Assam during a routine training sortie.

- A **Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jet** of the **Indian Air Force** reportedly crashed near **Karbi Anglong** after taking off from **Jorhat** during a routine training sortie.
- The aircraft lost radar contact around **Santilangso near Barpung**, and a search and rescue mission was launched immediately. Two pilots were reportedly on board the aircraft.
- The fighter jet was part of a **four-aircraft formation conducting night-flying training exercises**. Squadrons of this aircraft type operate from **Tezpur** and **Chabua** air bases in Northeast India.

About Sukhoi-30MKI Fighter Aircraft

The **Sukhoi-30MKI** is a **multirole combat fighter aircraft** jointly developed by **Russia's Sukhoi Design Bureau** and **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** for the Indian Air Force.

Key Features

- It is a **fourth-generation multirole fighter jet** used for air superiority and strike missions.
- Powered by **two AL-31FP turbofan engines** with **thrust vectoring capability**, allowing high manoeuvrability.
- Equipped with **canards**, which improve aerodynamic control.
- Fitted with the **Tarang Radar Warning Receiver**, indigenously developed by the **DRDO**.
- Capable of carrying the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile**, successfully integrated with the aircraft in 2017.

Range and Performance

- Maximum unrefuelled range: **about 3,000 kilometres**.
- With **in-flight refuelling**, operational range can extend up to **8,000 kilometres**.

Strategic Importance

- The Sukhoi-30MKI forms the **backbone of India's fighter fleet**.
- It plays a critical role in **air defence, maritime strike, and deep penetration missions**.
- Bases in Northeast India strengthen **India's strategic air capability near the eastern border regions**.

One line wrap: The Sukhoi-30MKI remains the backbone of India's air power, highlighting both the strategic importance and operational risks of advanced fighter aircraft.

Scientific Organic Agriculture to Expand Across Northeast India

A major initiative has been launched to promote scientific organic farming across Northeast India under the PM-DevINE scheme.

More About the News

- Scientific **organic agriculture** is set to expand significantly across Northeast India through a project titled **"Promoting Scientific Organic Agriculture in Northeast India."**
- The initiative is spearheaded by the **North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach**, an autonomous body under the **Department of Science and Technology**.
- The project operates under the **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for the North East Region** implemented by the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region**.

Key Objectives of the Initiative

- Promote **scientific organic farming practices** while preserving traditional agricultural knowledge.
- Create **250 organic-certified farming clusters** across Northeast India.
- Train farmers and improve **soil health, crop productivity and rural livelihoods**.

Major Components of the Project

3. Capacity Building

- Development of **250 master trainers** from six Northeastern states:

- Assam – 88, Meghalaya – 57, Arunachal Pradesh – 15, Mizoram – 20, Nagaland – 20, Tripura – 50.
- Each trainer will guide **100 farmers**, covering about **100 acres of farmland** per cluster.

4. Soil Testing Innovation

- Farmers are provided with **VASUNDHARA soil testing kits** developed with support from the **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre**.
- These kits measure **Soil Organic Carbon and soil pH within 10 minutes**, helping farmers maintain soil fertility.

5. Digital Agriculture

- Installation of **Internet of Things devices** to monitor soil, climate and environmental conditions.
- A **Management Information System platform** allows continuous monitoring of farming activities

Impact and Expected Outcomes

- Training of **25,000 farmers** in scientific organic agriculture.
- Conversion of **25,000 acres of land into certified organic farmland**.
- Improved **sustainable agriculture, market connectivity and farmer income**.

The pilot project has already installed IoT devices in **lemon and banana clusters in Chirang district of Assam**, promoting **smart agriculture practices**.

One line wrap: The expansion of scientific organic agriculture could transform Northeast India into a major hub for sustainable farming and organic produce.

Dinesh Goswami

The newly constructed Bharalumukh flyover in Guwahati has been named after veteran Assamese leader Dinesh Goswami.

About Dinesh Goswami

- **Dinesh Goswami** was a prominent political leader from Assam and a former **Union Law Minister of India**.
- He was associated with the **Asom Gana Parishad** and played an important role in shaping India's electoral reform debate in the late twentieth century.
- Dinesh Goswami was **instrumental in advocating** for the **"Special Category Status" for Assam**.
- He was **credited** for playing a **pivotal role** in enhancing Assam's share of central grants from a **70:30 to a 90:10 ratio** — a formula that continues to benefit the state in development financing.
- The Bharalumukh flyover in Guwahati, built to ease traffic congestion in the city, has been named in his honour as recognition of his contribution to Assam and national politics.
- In **1990**, the Government of India constituted the **Dinesh Goswami Committee** to **recommend reforms** in the electoral system.

Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990)

The committee worked with the **Election Commission of India** to strengthen democratic processes.

Key Recommendations

- Introduce **partial state funding of elections** for recognised political parties.
- A candidate should **not contest from more than two constituencies**.
- Amend the **Anti-Defection Law** to limit disqualification only when a member voluntarily resigns from the party.
- Conduct **fresh delimitation of constituencies** based on population data.
- **Reduce minimum age for contesting Assembly elections from 25 to 21 years**.
- **Discourage non-serious candidates** by increasing security deposits:
 - ₹5,000 for Lok Sabha elections
 - ₹2,500 for State Assembly elections
- Questions of disqualification should be decided by the **President or Governor based on the advice of the Election Commission**.

One line wrap: Dinesh Goswami's legacy lies in strengthening India's democratic framework through early electoral reform initiatives.

Takydromus Ultapanensis

Researchers have discovered a new species of Asian grass lizard in the Manas landscape of Assam.

More About the News

- A new species of Asian grass lizard named **Takydromus ultapanensis** has been discovered in the **Ultapani Reserve Forest** within the **Manas Biosphere Reserve** landscape.
- The discovery was made by researchers led by **Basundhara Chettri** from Sikkim University and collaborators, and the findings were published in the scientific journal *Zootaxa*.

Key Features of Takydromus Ultapanensis

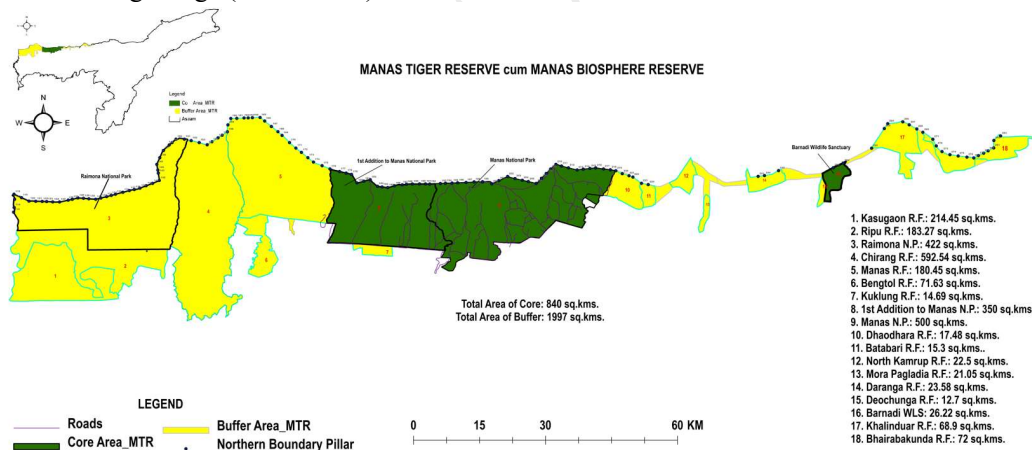
- It is a **new species of Asian grass lizard** belonging to the genus *Takydromus*.
- The species was recorded in **Ultapani Reserve Forest** in **Kokrajhar district** of Assam.
- Unlike many related species that inhabit mountainous areas, it lives in **lowland semi-evergreen forests** with waterlogged grasslands and fern patches.
- Researchers observed the lizard **basking on fern bushes** in small open patches intersected by seasonal water channels.

Scientific Significance

- DNA analysis showed **clear genetic divergence** from related species such as *Takydromus khasiensis* and *Takydromus sikkimensis*.
- Morphological differences include **distinct scale patterns, body proportions and head structures**.
- With this discovery, the number of *Takydromus* species reported from **Northeast India increases to five**.

About Manas National Park

- **Manas National Park** is located in **Baksa and Chirang districts of Assam** along the foothills of the Himalayas.
- It shares an **international boundary** with **Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan**, forming an important **transboundary conservation landscape**.
- **Park Ranges:**
 - Panbari Range (Western)
 - Bansbari Range (Central)
 - Bhuyanpara Range (Eastern)
 - Kuklung Range (1st Addition)



Major River System

- Named after the **Manas River**, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra.
- Important rivers include **Manas, Beki, Aie, Pagladia, Hakua, Bigoni and Mora Manas**.
- Represents the **Bhabar–Terai ecosystem**, consisting of grasslands, riverine forests and moist deciduous forests.

Important Timeline

- **Wildlife Sanctuary: 1928**
- **Project Tiger Reserve: 1973** (among the first tiger reserves in India)
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site: 1985**
- **National Park Status: 1990**
- **Elephant Reserve: 2003**, part of the **Chirang–Ripu Elephant Reserve**
- **Biosphere Reserve: 1989**
 - Manas Biosphere Reserve extends over an area of 2837 km² from Sankosh river in the west to Dhansiri river in the east, with a core area of 500 km² of the National park.
- Recognised as an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)**.

Major Fauna

- Manas is famous for housing several rare and endangered species:
- **Royal Bengal Tiger, Indian Elephant, Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros, Wild Water Buffalo, Swamp Deer, Golden Langur** (endemic), **Pygmy Hog** (world's rarest wild pig), **Hispid Hare & Bengal Florican** (critically endangered bird)

Special Significance

- It is part of the **Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspot**.
- It contains the **world's largest population of Bengal Florican**.
- It is one of the last strongholds of the **Pygmy Hog** and **Golden Langur**.
- The park was placed on UNESCO's "**World Heritage in Danger**" List in 1992 due to insurgency and poaching, but was removed in 2011 after successful conservation efforts.

One line wrap: The discovery of *Takydromus ultapanensis* highlights Northeast India's unexplored biodiversity and the need for stronger conservation efforts.

Kaziranga Orchid Park: Boosting Eco-Tourism and Orchid Conservation in Assam

A new orchid park has been inaugurated near Kaziranga National Park to promote eco-tourism and biodiversity awareness.

- The **Kaziranga Orchid Park**, located at **Kohora near Kaziranga National Park**, has been inaugurated by the **CM**.
- The initiative is spearheaded by the **Assam Department of Agriculture and Horticulture** to promote **eco-tourism, biodiversity conservation and environmental awareness** in the state.
- Spread across **about 20 bighas of land**, the park is considered one of the **largest integrated orchid parks in India**.

Key Features of Kaziranga Orchid Park

- The park currently houses **over 900 species of orchids**, including **endemic and rare varieties** from Northeast India.
- Authorities aim to increase the collection to **more than 1600 orchid species** in the future.
- Infrastructure includes:
 - **Artificial waterfall**
 - **Children's park**
 - **Guest house and cafeteria**
 - **Open amphitheatre with a gramophone-shaped structure**
- The project has been developed at a cost of around **₹16 crore**.

Objectives of the Orchid Park

- **Promote eco-tourism and nature-based tourism** around Kaziranga.
- **Conserve orchid diversity**, especially species native to Northeast India.
- **Create employment opportunities** through tourism and horticulture.
- **Enhance environmental awareness** among visitors and students.

Orchids in Northeast India

- Northeast India is considered a **major orchid biodiversity hotspot**.
- Assam alone hosts **over 300 orchid species**, many of which are endemic.
 - **Rhynchostylis retusa, Foxtail Orchid**, found in **semi-deciduous forests** and woodlands, is the **state flower of Assam & Arunachal Pradesh**.
 - Some other prominent orchid species of Assam include **Arundina graminifolia, Aerides odorata, Dendrobium moschatum, Pholidota imbricata** and **Dendrobium aphyllum** etc.
- Conservation efforts are linked to the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** and biodiversity protection programmes implemented through **Biodiversity Management Committees**.

One line wrap: The Kaziranga Orchid Park highlights Assam's rich orchid diversity while promoting sustainable eco-tourism and biodiversity conservation.

Musa sikkimensis

Researchers from Nagaland University have studied the genetic diversity of the wild banana **Musa sikkimensis**, highlighting its role in climate-resilient agriculture and biodiversity conservation.

- Researchers from **Nagaland University** have conducted an important study on **Musa sikkimensis**, a wild banana species native to the **Eastern Himalayas and Northeast India**.
- The findings were published in the scientific journal **Flora and Fauna**, highlighting the species' importance as a **genetic resource for future banana breeding programmes**.

About Musa sikkimensis

- **Musa sikkimensis**, also known as **Darjeeling banana or Sikkim banana**, is a **seeded wild banana species**.
- It naturally grows in **Himalayan foothills and forest ecosystems** of Northeast India.
- Unlike commercial bananas, it is **not widely cultivated for edible fruit**.
- However, it serves as an **important genetic reservoir** for traits such as:
 - Disease resistance
 - Climate adaptability
 - Stress tolerance

These traits are crucial for developing **improved banana varieties** capable of surviving climate change and pest outbreaks.

Key Findings of the Study

- The study documented **significant genetic diversity** among banana landraces in Nagaland.
- Local banana germplasm shows **strong adaptability to varied environmental conditions**.
- The research highlights how wild species can contribute to **climate-resilient agriculture and food security**.

Conservation Concerns

- Northeast India lies within the **Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot**, one of the world's richest biodiversity regions.
- However, **deforestation, agricultural expansion and hybrid crop adoption** threaten many wild banana genotypes.
- To conserve these resources, Nagaland University has created a **Banana Biodiversity Corridor**, functioning as a **living gene bank**.

One line wrap: The study of *Musa sikkimensis* highlights the importance of wild crop relatives in ensuring climate-resilient agriculture and biodiversity conservation.

Bnei Menashe Community

Migration of members of the Bnei Menashe community from Mizoram and Manipur to Israel has been delayed due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

More About the News

- The **Bnei Menashe community** is a group of people mainly residing in **Mizoram and Manipur** in Northeast India.
- They **claim descent** from the **lost tribe of Manasseh**, one of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel.
- Many members of the community have embraced **Judaism** and aspire to migrate to Israel, which they regard as their ancestral homeland.
- Recently, around **300 members of the community** were preparing for relocation to Israel, but their journey has been delayed due to the **ongoing conflict in West Asia**.

Who are the Bnei Menashe?

- The **Bnei Menashe** literally means **"Children of Manasseh."**
- They believe they are descendants of the **Lost Tribes of Israel**, exiled after the **Assyrian conquest of the Kingdom of Israel in the 8th century BCE**.
- Most members belong to the **Mizo, Kuki and Chin ethnic groups** of Northeast India.

Migration to Israel

- Israel has approved a **phased plan to resettle nearly 6,000 Bnei Menashe members by 2030**.
- Migration takes place under Israel's **Law of Return**, which allows Jews and people of Jewish ancestry to settle in Israel.
- Many community members undergo **religious conversion and Hebrew training** before migration.

Cultural and Historical Significance

- The Bnei Menashe follow **Jewish religious customs**, festivals and dietary practices.
- Festivals such as **Purim and Passover** are celebrated by the community in Northeast India.

- Their migration highlights the **global Jewish diaspora** and unique historical links between South Asia and the Middle East.

One line wrap: The Bnei Menashe represent a unique cultural bridge between Northeast India and ancient Jewish history.

Haripur-Madhabpur Satra Faces Encroachment Threat in Cooch Behar

A historic Vaishnavite Satra linked to Madhabdev is reportedly under encroachment threat.

About Haripur-Madhabpur Satra

- The **Haripur-Madhabpur Satra**, located in Haripur under Tufanganj subdivision of Cooch Behar district (West Bengal), was established in the early 15th century by **Madhabdev** and Harihar Ata.
- It reflects the spread of the **Eka Sarana Nama Dharma** movement beyond present-day Assam.
- At the time of its establishment, Koch King **Nara Narayan** donated 3 bighas of land, notified as **Brahmottar land** (tax-free religious land grant).

Present Challenges

- Nearly one-third of the Satra land is reportedly encroached due to lack of boundary wall.
- Construction of the **Kirtanghar** and **Manikut**, for which Rs 11 lakh was sanctioned by the Government of Assam, remains incomplete.
- The Satra lacks basic facilities such as drinking water, guest house and proper bhakat griha.
- The historic well constructed during Nara Narayan's time is lying unused.

Institutional Context

- Satras operate as Vaishnavite monastic institutions preserving Assamese culture, music and theatre.
- Protection of such heritage sites aligns with the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958** (if declared protected) and state-level heritage conservation policies.
- Encroachment issues also relate to land governance and protection of religious endowments.

One line wrap: Haripur-Madhabpur Satra stands as a living bridge of Assam's Vaishnavite heritage, now seeking protection from encroachment and neglect.

New Projects Inaugurated in Manipur

In a significant development push, **Yumnam Khemchand Singh**, Chief Minister of **Manipur**, inaugurated three key projects in Moirangpured, Imphal East district, aimed at improving rural connectivity and educational infrastructure.

Projects Inaugurated

6. Itham Moirangpured Bridge

- Constructed over the **Thoubal River**.
- Built under **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**.
- Project cost: **Rs 645.84 lakh**.
- Objective: Enhance rural road connectivity and ensure all-weather access to villages.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana operates under the Ministry of Rural Development and aims to provide road connectivity to unconnected rural habitations.

7. Model Residential School

- Constructed under **Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram**.
- Funded by the Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- Project cost: **Rs 25.62 crore**.
- Objective: Improve educational access in minority-concentrated areas and reduce regional disparities.

8. Science and Arts Block, Moirangpured Higher Secondary School

- Built under **Samagra Shiksha** scheme.
- Funded by Samagra Shiksha Manipur.
- Cost: **Rs 3.78 crore**.
- Implemented by the Education Engineering Wing.
- Objective: Strengthen secondary education infrastructure and improve learning outcomes.

Samagra Shiksha is a centrally sponsored scheme integrating school education from pre-primary to Class XII.

Governance Focus

- The Chief Minister assured steps to address **teacher shortages**.
- Directed officials to submit reports regarding **Internally Displaced Persons** in Laikhong village for welfare support.

One-line wrap: The projects reflect integrated rural connectivity and education reforms driving inclusive development in Manipur.

Mamang Dai to Receive Doctor of Literature

Renowned author Mamang Dai is set to receive the Doctor of Literature degree for her literary achievements.

- Celebrated writer **Mamang Dai** will be conferred the **Doctor of Literature (D Litt)** degree in recognition of her immense contribution to **Indian English literature**.
- A native of **Arunachal Pradesh** and a member of the Adi community, she has enriched contemporary literature with narratives rooted in the oral traditions, folklore and landscapes of Northeast India.

Major Achievements

- Recipient of the **Sahitya Akademi Award** (2017) for her novel *The Black Hill* (2014).
- Awarded the **Padma Shri** in 2011 for contributions to literature and education.
- First woman from Arunachal Pradesh to join the **Indian Administrative Service** in 1979 before dedicating herself to writing and journalism.

Notable Works

- *The Legends of Pensam*
- *River Poems*
- *The White Shirts of Summer*

One line wrap: Mamang Dai's honour celebrates the voice of Northeast India in the larger canvas of Indian literature.

'Seujia Kaziranga': New Orchid Hybrid Celebrates Assam's Biodiversity

A new orchid hybrid named "Seujia Kaziranga" has been developed, honouring Assam's ecological heritage.

- Renowned orchid expert **Mohan Pradhan** from Sikkim has developed a new hybrid orchid named "**Seujia Kaziranga**" after eight years of scientific cross-breeding.
- The name reflects Assam's identity — "Seujia" means lush green in Assamese, while "Kaziranga" honours the globally recognised **Kaziranga National Park**.

Scientific Significance

- Orchid hybridisation requires controlled pollination, long observation cycles and stabilisation of flowering traits.
- The eight-year process reflects scientific precision and biodiversity research.
- Assam is home to over **300 orchid species**, many endemic to the Northeast.

Policy & Conservation Link

- The development coincides with the upcoming inauguration of the **Kaziranga Orchid Garden**.
 - It is expected to serve as a conservation hub, research platform and tourist attraction, further positioning Assam as a centre for botanical diversity in India.
- Orchid conservation aligns with the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, which promotes protection and sustainable use of biological resources.
- Supports eco-tourism and biodiversity awareness under India's broader environmental conservation goals.

Objectives

- Promote orchid conservation and research.
- Strengthen eco-tourism in Kaziranga.
- Highlight Northeast India's shared ecological identity.

One line wrap: "Seujia Kaziranga" symbolises the fusion of science, culture and conservation in Northeast India's rich ecological landscape.

Middle East Conflict Raises Concerns for Assam Orthodox Tea Exports

India's tea industry, particularly producers of **Assam orthodox tea**, is closely monitoring the evolving conflict in **Iran** and the broader Middle East. Nearly **50 % of Assam's orthodox tea production** is traditionally consumed by Iran, making the region a critical export destination.

Why the Concern?

- Airspace closures and communication disruptions have affected trade coordination.
- Payment channels with Iran are already fragile due to international sanctions.
- Exporters fear shipment delays, contract cancellations and rising financial risks.

According to industry data, India exported a **record 280 million kilograms of tea in 2025**. Between January and September, Iraq imported about 48.88 million kg, Iran 10.69 million kg, and the United Arab Emirates 45.66 million kg. Much of the trade with Iran is routed through Dubai.

The **Assam Government's subsidy hike to ₹15 per kg for orthodox tea** was expected to boost production and exports. However, prolonged conflict could lead to **excess supply in domestic markets**, potentially depressing tea prices.

One line wrap: Geopolitical tensions in West Asia highlight the fragile link between global conflicts and Assam's tea economy.

Assam Inland Water Transport Reforms

The Assam government has initiated the **unbundling of the 68-year-old Inland Water Transport Directorate**, transferring its assets to the newly formed **Assam Inland Waterways Company Limited**. This move is part of a **World Bank-funded modernisation project worth ₹700 crore**, but it has raised concerns among employees and stakeholders.

What is Unbundling?

Unbundling means separating a single government department into distinct operational and regulatory bodies.

- The existing directorate will be split into:
 - An **operational company** for ferry services.
 - A **regulatory authority** for oversight and safety.
- All vessels and assets have been transferred to the new company.
- The newly built **Guwahati terminal (₹305 crore)** has been put up for lease.

This reform aims to improve efficiency, accountability, and financial sustainability.

Me-Dam-Me-Phi Festival: Ancestor Worship of the Ahoms

Me-Dam-Me-Phi, the traditional **ancestor worship festival of the Ahom community**, is observed every year on **January 31** across Assam and is recognised as a **State holiday**.

What is Me-Dam-Me-Phi?

- **Me-Dam-Me-Phi** literally means:
 - **Me** – offerings
 - **Dam** – ancestors
 - **Phi** – god
- It signifies **offering rituals to ancestors and sacrifices to the divine**, based on the belief that ancestors attain god-like status after death.
- The festival has been celebrated since the **13th century**, making it one of the **oldest living traditions of Assam**.

Historical significance

- Ahom kings traditionally observed Me-Dam-Me-Phi to **honour ancestors, celebrate victories after wars, and seek protection from misfortune**.
- Kings such as **Siu-Huim-Mong, Gadadhar Singha, Pramatta Singha and Rajeswar Singha** performed these rituals.
- The most important public ceremony has historically been held at **Charaideo**, the **first capital of the Ahom kingdom** and royal burial site.
- According to Ahom belief, the **immortal soul of ancestors ultimately merges with the Supreme Being**.

Rituals and celebration

- The festival is widely celebrated in **Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur**, where the Ahom population is concentrated.
- **Three deities are worshipped:**
 - **Grihadam** (household ancestors)
 - **Dam Changphi** (royal ancestors)
 - **Me-Dam-Me-Phi** (supreme heavenly god)
- Rituals are performed at home, usually in the **kitchen**, around a symbolic pillar called **Damkhuta**.
- Offerings include **rice, meat, fish, beans, chickpeas and traditional rice wine**.
- Cultural programmes such as **dance, music and drama** mark the community celebrations.
- Notably, **other communities of Assam also participate**, reflecting the festival's inclusive spirit.

Other Deities of Ahoms

- **Phuratara**- Creator
- **Lengdon**- God of Heaven
- **Jasingfa**- Goddess of Learning
- **Phai**- God of Fire
- **Kao- Kham**- God of Water.

Rafikul Hussain Honoured with Lalilang Bata 2025

Noted playwright, director, poet and writer **Rafikul Hussain** was conferred with the **Lalilang Bata 2025** at a cultural function held at **Nipun Deka Smriti Bhawan, Morigaon**. The award recognises his **long-standing contribution to Assamese drama, literature and social engagement through theatre**.

About the Lalilang Bata

- The **Lalilang Bata** has been instituted in memory of eminent drama artiste **Nipun Deka**.
- It was presented for the first time by **Lalilang The Theatre Rhythm**, a premier theatre group of Morigaon.
- The award comprises:
 - A **memento and citation**
 - A **sarai** (traditional Assamese honour)
 - A **cash award of ₹1,00,000**

The award ceremony

- Several cultural organisations, including **Ramdhenu Natyagusthi, Sanmilita Natyagusthi, Samalai Natyagusthi, Asom Natya Sanmilan**, and **Lekhika Samarooh Samiti**, felicitated Rafikul Hussain with **traditional gamusa**.
- The programme began with a **Borgeet**, the ceremonial lamp was lit by **Nirala Bora**, daughter of late Nipun Deka.

About Rafikul Hussain

- Rafikul Hussain is known for using **theatre as a medium of social reflection**, addressing issues of identity, ethics and collective responsibility.
- His association with Morigaon and grassroots theatre has helped **strengthen local cultural institutions** and inspire younger dramatists.
- Speaking after receiving the award, he observed that **awards motivate creative individuals to continue meaningful work**, reaffirming the social relevance of art.

Dibrugarh's New Legislative Landmark

The Union Home Minister recently laid the foundation stone for a **second Assam Legislative Assembly complex** and an **MLA hostel** in Dibrugarh.

- This development is envisioned as a strategic move to transform Dibrugarh into a **"second capital"** of Assam, decentralizing governance from Dispur to Upper Assam.

Key Highlights of the Project:

- **Infrastructure:** The project, part of a larger **Rs 1,715 crore** investment package, aims to provide a robust administrative base for lawmakers to operate effectively from eastern Assam.
- **Decentralization of Power:** By establishing a legislative footprint in Dibrugarh, the government aims to bring the administration closer to the people of the **Barak Valley and Upper Assam**, reducing the logistical burden of traveling to Guwahati.
- **Strategic Growth:** The move aligns with the **Act East Policy**, positioning Dibrugarh as a focal point for industrial, educational, and political growth in the Northeast.
- **Broader Administrative and Social Focus:** Along with the Assembly complex, foundation stones were laid for several major projects:
 - **Institute of Wildlife Health and Research** at Dinjan, Dibrugarh, strengthening wildlife conservation science.
 - **Phase II expansion of Khanikar Multidisciplinary Sports Complex in Dibrugarh (under NLCPR)**, increasing seating capacity from **5,000 to 35,000**.
 - With a total project cost of ₹447 crore, the complex is being developed as the largest multi-sports facility in Assam.

○ Launch of **Assam's Wetland Restoration Model** under the National Disaster Mitigation Fund
Furthermore, the government highlighted the **granting of land rights to tea garden workers**, a significant shift in land revenue policy aimed at empowering the plantation community under the **Assam Land and Revenue Regulation**.

Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge

The **Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge** over the **Brahmaputra** is one of Assam's most ambitious infrastructure projects and is being **closely monitored** through **PAIMANA**, a web-based platform of the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.

- Launched in **September 2025**, **PAIMANA** tracks **central sector infrastructure projects worth ₹150 crore and above**, ensuring transparency and timely execution.

Key project details

- **Length: 19.28 kilometres** (to be India's **longest river bridge**)
- **Cost: Around ₹4,997 crore**
- **Progress: 67.5 per cent completed** (as of December 2025)
- **Construction start: December 2020**
- **Target completion: September 2028**
- **Implementing agency: National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited**
- **Construction partner: Larsen & Toubro**
- **Funding agency: Japan International Cooperation Agency**

Design and alignment

- A **four-lane bridge** forming a critical part of **National Highway 127B**.
- Connects **Dhubri** (Assam) with **Phulbari** (Meghalaya).
- Comprises:
 - **12.62 kilometres of extradosed cable-stayed navigable spans**,
 - **5.73 kilometres of viaducts**,
 - **0.92 kilometres of approach roads**.
- Acts as the **missing link** between Assam and western-central Meghalaya, close to the **Bangladesh border**.

APL's E-Methanol Project

Assam Petro-Chemicals Limited (APL) has signed a landmark **MoU** with the **Deendayal Port Authority** to establish a **150 Tonnes Per Day e-Methanol plant** at **Kandla Port, Gujarat**.

Key Features of the Project

- **Capital investment: Over ₹1,200 crore**
- **Employment generation: Around 3,500 direct and indirect jobs**
- **Capacity: 150 TPD e-Methanol production facility**
- **Location: Kandla Port**, a major maritime hub on India's western coast

Under the agreement, the Port Authority will provide **pipeline connectivity, storage and fuel-handling infrastructure**, while APL will set up the **green methanol production unit**, creating an **integrated marine fuel value chain**.

What is e-Methanol ?

- **E-Methanol (electro-methanol)** is a **low-carbon energy** produced using **green hydrogen** and **captured carbon dioxide**, powered by **renewable energy**.
- It is considered a **viable alternative fuel** for **shipping, heavy industry and chemicals**, sectors where direct electrification is difficult.
 - Its **derivatives gasoline and kerosene** provide solutions for road and air transport.
- As a marine fuel, it complies with **international emission norms** and enables **cleaner long-distance shipping**.

Benefits of e-Methanol / Green Methanol

- **Infrastructure-ready:** Can be used with **existing fuel storage, transport and bunkering infrastructure**, requiring minimal or no modification.
- **Easy to store and handle:** **Stable at room temperature and ambient pressure**, unlike hydrogen, making storage and logistics safer and cheaper.
- **Versatile fuel:** Can be used **directly as a fuel** or **converted into other fuels and chemicals** such as sustainable aviation fuel, dimethyl ether and olefins.

Strategic and Policy Significance

- The project aligns with India's **Maritime Decarbonisation Roadmap** and the goal of achieving **Net Zero emissions by 2070**.
- Kandla Port is being developed as a **Green Bunkering Hub** and a **Green Hydrogen Hub** under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission**, which targets large-scale green hydrogen production and exports.
- It supports initiatives such as **Harit Sagar – Green Port Guidelines**, **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, **Make in India**, and **Make for the World**.

Jumping Spider Discovery in Barak Valley Marks First Indian Record

Assam has added another feather to its biodiversity cap with the **first Indian record of the jumping spider *Colyttus bilineatus***, discovered in the **Barak Valley**.

The discovery was made by researchers from **Assam University**, in collaboration with a noted arachnologist from Chennai.

Key details of the discovery

- The spider was documented from **Loharbong in Cachar district**, inside an **Inner Line Reserved Forest** of the Barak Valley.
- Until now, *Colyttus bilineatus* was known only from **Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore**.
- Its presence in Assam marks a **significant extension of its known geographical range** into the Indian subcontinent.

Significance of Barak Valley

- The Barak Valley forms part of the **Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot**, one of the world's richest but most threatened ecological regions.
- Its **mixed evergreen and deciduous forests**, dense canopy, and extensive **bamboo growth** provide ideal **microhabitats** for small and elusive species like jumping spiders.
- Compared to regions such as the Western Ghats, **systematic biodiversity surveys in Northeast India remain limited**, making such discoveries especially significant.

Turtle Survey in Kaziranga Highlights Brahmaputra's Aquatic Biodiversity

The **Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve**, in collaboration with the **India Turtle Conservation Programme**, has completed the **fifth consecutive annual survey** of aquatic reptiles along the **Brahmaputra river**, with a special focus on **freshwater turtles and tortoises**.

The findings were released in a report titled "**Assessment of diversity, abundance and habitats for freshwater turtles along the lower Brahmaputra river in Assam**".

Key findings of the survey

- The **rapid boat survey** was conducted from **January 14 to 18**, covering a **174 kilometre stretch** of the Brahmaputra flowing through the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve.
- A total of **945 freshwater turtles** were recorded, belonging to **seven species**.
- These included **876 hardshell turtles** and **69 softshell turtles**.
- The survey documented **55 hardshell turtles of the genus Pangshura**.
- Importantly, **13 softshell turtles** were sighted, including **four critically endangered black softshell turtles**.

About black softshell turtle

- The **black softshell turtle**,
- The **black softshell turtle (*Nilssonina nigricans*)** is **critically endangered** and **endemic to the Brahmaputra basin**.
- According to legend, **Hazrat Bayezid Bostami** brought these **turtles from Iran** to the shrine pond in **Chittagong** in the **1800s**.
- Over time, the **turtles came to be revered as sacred**, ensuring their protection through religious belief rather than law.
- **Native range:**
 - **India:** Assam and Tripura
 - **Bangladesh:** Chittagong and Sylhet regions
- **Conservation Status**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
 - **CITES:** Appendix I (highest level of international trade protection)

- It is **not legally protected in India** which is a major conservation concern.
- It faces serious threats from **habitat loss, predation and overexploitation**.
- In **2002**, the species was declared **Extinct in the Wild** by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature**.
- Surprisingly, **living populations were later discovered** in:
 - **Hayagriva Madhava Temple Pond**, Assam
 - **Kalyan Sagar Lake**, Tripura Sundari Temple, Udaipur (Tripura)
- These temple ponds functioned as **informal community-conserved habitats**.
- Subsequent **habitat protection and conservation efforts** helped ensure the species' continued survival.

Krishak Swahid Divas

Krishak Swahid Divas is observed every year on **January 28** in Assam to honour the **140 peasant martyrs** who lost their lives in the historic **Patharughat Peasant Uprising of 1894**.

The day stands as a powerful reminder of **agrarian resistance** against colonial exploitation and is an important chapter in India's freedom struggle.

Historical Background

- The uprising took place at **Patharughat** (present-day Patharighat).
- Farmers were protesting a **70–80 per cent hike in agricultural land tax** imposed by the British administration.
- On January 28, 1894, **J. R. Berington**, officiating commandant of the military police, ordered firing on the peaceful gathering.
- **140 unarmed peasants were killed**, earning Patharughat the name "**Jallianwala Bagh of Assam**" in popular memory.

Commemoration and Legacy

- A **martyrs' column** was erected at Patharughat in **2001** by the Indian Army and unveiled by former Assam Governor **S. K. Sinha**.
- Last year, to mark the **131st anniversary**, the **Department of Post, Government of India**, released a **commemorative ₹5 postage stamp**, highlighting national recognition of the sacrifice.
- The Assamese historical ballad **Doli-Puran**, composed by **Narrottam Das**, continues to keep alive the memory of the peasant resistance through oral tradition.

Assam CM Lays Foundations

Assam's Chief Minister virtually laid the **foundation stones for multiple infrastructure projects** in **Demow constituency of Sivasagar district**.

Key projects inaugurated

- **Demow Co-District Commissioner Office**, strengthening district-level administration.
- **Upgradation of Sepon–Sunpura road** under **Assam Mala 3.0**, aimed at improving rural connectivity.
- **Approach road from National Highway 37 to Sivasagar Medical College** under **State Owned Priority Development – General**, supporting healthcare infrastructure.
- **Construction and upgradation of Bhekuri Chapori road-cum-embankment** and **embankment from Sesa Tiniali to Laibel**, addressing chronic **flood and erosion issues**.

Addressing a public gathering at **Bakchu Koch Gaon Borbil Playground** under **Khelua Gaon Panchayat**, the Chief Minister highlighted the State government's **development-focused governance**.

Assam's Outstanding Liabilities Rise

Assam's **outstanding liabilities** are projected to touch **₹2,06,608.30 crore** by the end of the current financial year, according to a recent report by the **RBI**.

- The figures underline rising fiscal pressure on the State at a time when welfare demands and climate vulnerabilities are increasing.

Key Debt Trends

- Assam's **internal debt** stands at **₹1,46,758.7 crore**, of which nearly **₹1.28 lakh crore** comprises **State government securities**.

- Outstanding liabilities have risen sharply over recent years:
 - **March 2024:** ₹1,50,901.8 crore
 - **March 2025:** ₹1,78,058.9 crore
 - **March 2026 (projected):** ₹2,06,608.30 crore
- As a **percentage of Gross State Domestic Product**, liabilities increased from **21.2 % in 2020** to **27.9 % in 2026**, indicating growing dependence on borrowings.

Borrowing Pattern

- **Gross market borrowings** rose from **₹17,100 crore (2022–23)** to **₹19,000 crore (2024–25)**.
- In the current financial year alone, borrowings have already crossed **₹9,204 crore**.
- About **82.4%** of outstanding State government securities mature within **ten years**, increasing near-term repayment pressure.

RBI's Fiscal Concerns

The report cautions that **state government finances have deteriorated** compared to the previous year. Key risks include:

- **Persistently high debt levels** and rising contingent liabilities.
- Expanding **cash transfer and welfare schemes**, which, while socially important, may **crowd out spending on infrastructure**.
- **Geopolitical uncertainty** affecting macroeconomic stability.

The RBI recommends **fiscal consolidation**, better **cash management**, and **impact assessment of welfare schemes** to ensure outcomes justify costs.

Climate Risk Dimension

- Assam is among **nine Indian states** listed as globally **most vulnerable to climate change-related damages**.
- Damage intensity in Assam is projected to **increase significantly between 1990 and 2050**.
- The RBI suggests adopting **climate budgeting**, integrating fiscal planning with **climate adaptation and resilience goals**.

Assam Showcases Asharikandi Terracotta Craft at Republic Day 2026 Parade

Assam and the wider **Northeastern region** came into sharp national focus during the **77th Republic Day celebrations** as the State's tableau, themed "**Asharikandi – Terracotta Craft Village of Assam**", rolled down **Kartavya Path** on **January 26, 2026**.

Selected among **30 tableaux** (17 from States and Union Territories and 13 from Ministries and Services) by the **Ministry of Defence**, Assam's tableau aligned with the 2026 themes "**Swatantrata ka Mantra: Vande Mataram**" and "**Samridhhi ka Mantra: Aatmanirbhar Bharat**", linking cultural pride with self-reliance.

What is Asharikandi?

- **Asharikandi** (Madaikhali), located in **Dhubri district**, is **India's largest and most renowned terracotta craft village**.
- For over a **century**, generations of artisan families have preserved this **indigenous clay craft**, sustaining livelihoods through traditional skills.
- The **main raw material** for pottery and terracotta craft is **Hiramati**, a special type of soil.
- **Artistic skill, quality of Hiramati, climatic condition** and **age-old tradition of Kumbhakaras** (potters), has enabled them to retain a separate identity of Asharikandi- style of Terracotta.
- The connection with the river Brahmaputra through the Gadadhar, a tributary of mighty Brahmaputra, gives the place an advantage for marketing network with the major cities.
- Earlier, the needs of the Jamindar (Royal) family for ware and utensils of everyday-use were catered from this area since this potter-community migrated to this place.
- **Asharikandi's terracotta craft** gained national attention when **Sarala Bala Devi**, a local artisan, received the President's Award for her '**Hatima Doll**' in **1982**.
 - Her son **Dhirendra Nath Paul** is also a master Terracotta artist who received the **Assam Gaurav Award** in **2024**.

- Asharikandi is a village located in Dhubri, famous for its distinctive pottery and terracotta craft known for both artistic finesse and cultural significance.
- It is deeply rooted in its cultural heritage, with two distinct communities "Hira and Kumar" preserving the art for generations.
- They have been producing a wide range of products including kitchen utensils, decorative items, idols of god and goddesses etc.
- The unique identity of Asharikandi-style Terracotta is shaped by the exceptional artistic skill of its potters (Kumbhakaras) the quality of Hiramati soil, the region's climatic conditions, and the rich heritage of this age-old craft.



भारत सरकार Government Of India
भौगोलिक उपदर्शन रजिस्ट्री Geographical Indication Registry
मान के भौगोलिक उपदर्शन (रजिस्ट्रीकरण तथा संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 1999
Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999
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प्रमाणित किया जाता है कि भौगोलिक उपदर्शन वह

के नाम से वर्ग में संख्या के अधीन दिनांक को

के संबंध में रजिस्टर में रजिस्ट्रीकृत किया गया है।

Certified that the Geographical Indication has been registered in the register in the name of
Asharikandi Terrakotta Doll Making Samabai Samity Limited at Asharikandi,
Geramari, District: Goalpara, Assam, India. Facilitated By: NABARD, Assam.

in class 21 under no. 980 as of the date 02.09.2022
in respect of **ASSAM ASHARIKANDI TERRACOTTA CRAFT**
Falling in Class - 21 - Terracotta Craft

आज दिनांक को मेरे निदेश पर चेन्नई में मुद्रांकित किया गया।
Sealed at my direction this 30th day of March, 2024 at Chennai.

भौगोलिक उपदर्शन रजिस्ट्री, चेन्नई

Key Features of the Tableau

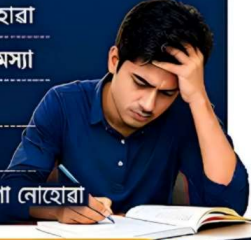
- An imposing **terracotta doll** holding earthen lamps symbolised **light, tradition and continuity**.
- **Bamboo fencing** highlighted Assam's bamboo heritage and its role in **sustainable rural economy**.
- The trailer took the form of a **Moyurponkhi boat**, reflecting Assam's **riverine identity**.
- Artisans were shown shaping **Hiramati (clay)** into divine figures, depicting the **creative and spiritual process**.
- **Women artisans in Mekhela Chador**, singing folk verses, conveyed pride, confidence and the journey towards **self-reliance**.

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(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Bathow Puja

The **Bathow Puja**, one of the **most sacred and ancient religious festivals of the Bodo-Kachari community**, was celebrated with devotion across Assam. The festival is traditionally observed on the **second Tuesday of the Assamese month of Magh** every year.

What is Bathow Puja?

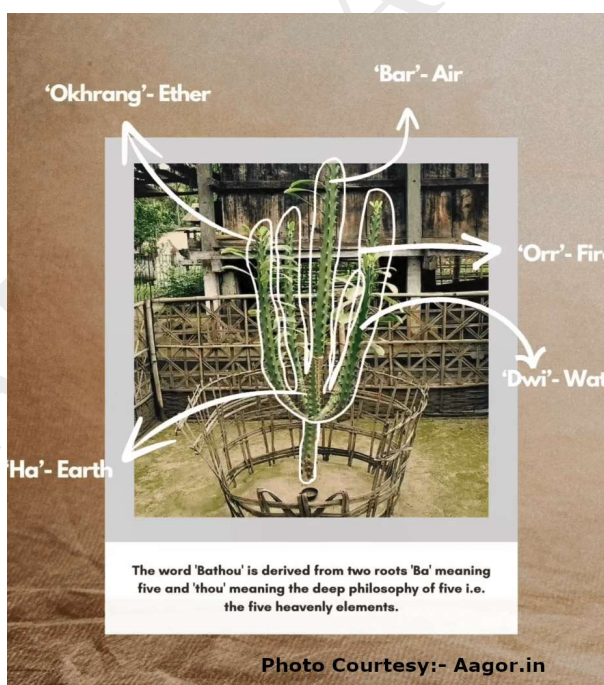
- **Bathow Puja** (also called **Bathou Puja**) is dedicated to **Bathow Bwrai**, the **supreme deity** of the Bodos and is a part of Bathoism.
 - **Bathowism** is the **indigenous religion** of the **Bodo people**.
 - **Assam Government** has officially **recognised Bathoism** as an **official religion option** in various application forms in **BTR region**.
- **Bathow Bwrai** is often associated with **Lord Shiva**, reflecting the syncretic nature of indigenous belief systems.
- The festival reflects **deep reverence for nature, ancestors and cosmic balance**, forming the spiritual core of Bodo society.

Meaning and Philosophy

- The term **Bathow** is derived from two Bodo words:
 - **Ba** – five
 - **Thow** – deep or profound
- It signifies the **five natural elements** — **earth, water, fire, air and sky**, which are central to **Bathowism**, the traditional Bodo faith.
- These elements are believed to sustain life and represent the **divine essence of creation**.

The Sacred Sijou Plant

- The **Sijou plant** (*Euphorbia splendens*) is the **living symbol** of **Bathow Bwrai**.
- It is planted at the centre of worship, fenced with bamboo and offered **flowers, fruits, betel leaves and rice beer**.
- The plant symbolises **life, purity and protection from evil forces**.



Associated Deities and Ritual Structure

Bathow worship honours a **spiritual hierarchy of deities**, representing cosmic forces:

- **Aileng** – guardian deity
- **Agrang** – commander deity
- **Khouila** – messenger spirit
- **Kazi** – minister deity
- **Abla Khungur** – fierce protective form of Bathow

Rituals, symbolic offerings and traditional dances strengthen **community bonding and cultural continuity**.

New Plant Species *Hoya nagaensis* Discovered in Nagaland

Researchers from **Nagaland University** have recorded a **new plant species**, *Hoya nagaensis*, in the **high-altitude forests of Nagaland**, reinforcing the **Northeast as a biodiversity hotspot** and underlining the conservation value of **community-managed forests**.

- *Hoya nagaensis* is a **previously undocumented species**, discovered during botanical surveys in remote forest areas of Nagaland.

About *Hoya nagaensis*

- The species belongs to the **Hoya genus**, well known for its **ornamental and ecological value**.
- Distinctive **leaf morphology and floral structures**, clearly different from known Hoya species.
- Endemic so far to a single site — the **Kavünhou Community Reserved Forest** in Phek district.
- Due to its **restricted distribution** and threats from **shifting cultivation and forest disturbance**, it has been **provisionally classified as Critically Endangered**.

Padma Awardees From Northeast

The **Padma Awards**, among **India's highest civilian honours**, were announced on the **eve of Republic Day 2026**, recognising individuals whose work has created lasting social impact across diverse fields.

Padma Shri Awardees From Assam

Five eminent personalities from **Assam** were conferred the **Padma Shri** for contributions to **art, agriculture and public affairs**:

- **Late Kabindra Purkayastha** (posthumous) – Former Union Minister and three-time MP, honoured for **public affairs** and contributions to **education**.
- **Jogesh Deuri** – Renowned **sericulturist**, recognised for strengthening the **eri silk value chain** through the Integrated Bodoland Silk Parks, benefiting over **1,600 villages** and significantly enhancing **women's participation**.
- **Nuruddin Ahmed** – A pioneer of **modern Assamese stagecraft**, whose innovative set designs reshaped the **mobile theatre movement**.
- **Pokhila Lektheipi** – Karbi folk singer who expanded the cultural reach of **Karbi music** through more than **300 folk compositions**.
- **Haricharan Saikia** – Eminent **Sattriya dancer**, honoured for preserving classical traditions and promoting **women's participation** in the art form.

Nalini Bala Devi was the **first Assamese person** to be **awarded the Padma Shri**, receiving the honor in 1957 for her significant contributions to literature.





Other Padma Shri Awardees from the Northeast

Five others from different states of the Northeast have also been awarded with Padma Shri:

- **Techi Gubin (Arunachal Pradesh)** – Honoured for dedicated work in **social service and community development**.
- **Hally War (Meghalaya)** – Recognised for contributions to **social work** and grassroots welfare.
- **Yumnam Jatra Singh (Manipur) (posthumous)** – Awarded for contributions to **art and cultural preservation**.
- **Sangyusang S Pongener (Nagaland)** – Honoured for achievements in **art and indigenous cultural expression**.
- **Naresh Chandra Dev Varma (Tripura)** – Awarded for contributions to **literature and education**.

About Padma Awards

- **Padma Awards**, one of the **highest civilian Awards** of the country, are **conferred** in **three categories**, namely, **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri**.

- The Awards are given in the **fields of activities**, such as art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- **Padma Vibhushan** is awarded for **exceptional and distinguished service**, **Padma Bhushan** for **distinguished service of high order** and **Padma Shri** for **distinguished service in any field**.
- It was **instituted** in 1954, and is **announced every year** on **Republic Day**, however it was **suspended** thrice during the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997.
- The **total number of awards** to be given in a year (excluding posthumous awards and to NRI/foreigners/OCIs) should **not be more than 120**.
- The Padma award is just an honor, **no cash allowance or any facility/benefit in terms of concession** etc. in rail/air travel is **attached** to these **awards**.
- The award **does not amount** to a **title** and **cannot** be used as a **suffix or prefix** to the **awardees' name**.
- In the **case** of any **misuse**, the **awardee** will **forfeit** the **award**.
- It comprises a **Sanad** (Certificate) **issued under the hand and seal** of the **President** and a **Medallion**.
- The **Padma Awards** are **conferred** on the **recommendations** made by the **Padma Awards Committee**, which is **constituted** by the **Prime Minister** every year.
- The nomination process is open to the public. Even self-nomination can be made
- These Awards are **conferred** by the **President of India** at **ceremonial functions** which are held at **Rashtrapati Bhawan** usually around March/April every year.
- In **2026**, the President has approved conferment of **131 Padma Awards**, including 2 duo cases (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one).
 - The list comprises **5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan** and **113 Padma Shri Awards**.
 - **19** of the awardees are **women**, **6 persons** from the category of **Foreigners / NRI / PIO / OCI** and **16 Posthumous awardees**.

Assam's Welfare Push For Tea Community

Assam's CM recently launched the flagship **Mukhyamantrir Eti Koli Duti Paat** scheme at Doomdooma in **Tinsukia district**, calling it a heartfelt tribute to generations of **tea garden workers** who built Assam's global tea legacy.

Key Features of the Scheme

- Under the scheme, the State government will disburse over Rs 300 crore.
- Under the scheme, **one-time financial assistance** of **Rs 5,000** each will be given to over **six lakh tea workers**.
- Coverage includes **permanent and casual workers** across **836 tea estates**, spread over **27 districts** and **73 Assembly constituencies**.

Social Security and Dignity Measures

- Inauguration of **mobile creches** and **mobile toilet services** to improve **childcare, health and workplace dignity**.
- Special focus on women workers, pregnant labourers and young mothers.

Employment, Land and Inclusion

- **3% reservation** for **tea tribes and indigenous communities** under the **OBC category** in **Grade III and Grade IV government jobs**.
- Announcement of **land rights (pattas)** for tea garden workers and indigenous families living in labour lines, with safeguards against transfer to outsiders.

Education, Health and Livelihood Support

- **120 model schools** established in tea garden areas; **100 more proposed**.
- Reserved **medical and paramedical seats** for students from tea tribes.
- Scholarships for over **1.5 lakh students**, **self-employment support** under the **Shaheed Dayal Das Panika scheme**, mobile medical units, wage compensation for pregnant workers, and promotion of sports through **tea garden football tournaments**.

Cultural Recognition

- **Jhumoir dance** was **highlighted** as a **symbol of resilience**, with renewed national platforms for tea garden youth.
- The initiative coincides with the **bicentenary of Assam tea**, with similar programmes across tea-growing regions.

Who are Tea Tribes?

- **Tea Tribes (Tea Garden Community / Adivasis)** are descendants of **indentured labourers brought by the British during the 19th century** to work in Assam's tea plantations.
- They were mainly recruited from **tribal and rural belts of present-day Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and parts of South India.**
- Over time, their **descendants settled permanently** in Assam and became an important socio-economic community of the state.

Population and Distribution

- Tea tribes constitute **around 17–18% of Assam's population** (Census 2011 estimates).
- They are concentrated mainly in **tea-growing districts**, such as: **Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Sonitpur, Udalgori, Jorhat, Golaghat.**

Cultural Identity

Tea tribes have preserved many of their traditional customs and festivals.

Important cultural elements include:

- **Jhumur Dance**
 - Originates from the **sadan ethnolinguistic group of Chotanagpur region.**
 - Songs sung during Jhumur performance often depicted the struggles of tea plantation workers
 - Performed during festivals and community celebrations.
 - Associated with **harvest festivals such as Karam Puja and Tushu Puja.**
 - **Jhumoir Binandini 2025**, a major cultural event celebrating **200 years of Assam's tea industry**, was organised in **Sarusajai Stadium, Guwahati.**
- The dance and music traditions have **blended with Assamese culture while retaining tribal characteristics.**

Contemporary Issues

Tea tribe communities continue to face several socio-economic challenges:

- **Low wages and poor living conditions**
- **Malnutrition and limited healthcare access**
- **Low literacy and skill development**
- Demand for **ST status** (currently classified as **Other Backward Classes**).

Note: The **Assam government has accorded Other Backward Class status to 37 tea tribe communities** that were earlier classified as **sub-castes** within existing categories.

Assam's First Science City Inaugurated at Sonapur

The **first Science City of Assam** was inaugurated at **Tepesia in Sonapur near Guwahati** by the Chief Minister. The facility aims to **promote scientific awareness, innovation, and curiosity among students in Assam and the Northeast region.**

About Science City Guwahati

- **Science City Guwahati** is the **first large-scale science education and public science communication centre in Assam.**
- The project is located at **Tepesia in Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati.**
- It is spread across **about 82 acres (around 250 bighas)** of land.
- The total project cost is **around ₹300 crore**, with **₹144 crore contributed by the Central Government.**

Implementing Agencies

- Developed under the **Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science** of the **Ministry of Culture.**
- Jointly implemented by:
 - **National Council of Science Museums**
 - **Science and Technology Department of the Government of Assam**

Key Features of the Science City

The facility has been designed to create **interactive learning experiences and inspire curiosity in science.**

Major attractions include:

- **Eureka Pavilion** – interactive exhibits demonstrating scientific concepts.
- **Space Odyssey Gallery** – exhibits on astronomy, space exploration, and planetary science.

- **Science Discovery Centre** – planned for hands-on learning and innovation.
- **Science Park** – an outdoor scientific learning space with interactive installations.

The Science City is expected to become a **regional hub for science education in Northeast India**.

Expansion of Science Education Infrastructure

- Along with the inauguration of the Science City, **five district-level Science Centres were also launched in: Bongaigaon, Dadara (Amingaon), Kaliabor, Majuli and Silchar.**
 - These centres include **science galleries, digital planetariums, and educational auditoriums.**
- Apart from the Regional Science Centre at Khanapara, **Assam has five planetariums/science centers set up,** with 3-D planetariums located in Nalbari (Assam's first 3-D planetariums) and Jorhat.

One-Line Wrap

The **Science City Guwahati** represents a major step toward promoting scientific temper, innovation, and science education in Assam and the wider Northeast region.

Air Quality Monitoring System Installed in Assam School

An **Air Quality Monitoring System** has been installed at **Bajali Higher Secondary School in Pathsala, Assam**, by the **Bajali district administration in collaboration with the Forest Department of North Kamrup Division**. The initiative aims to **promote environmental awareness and climate education among students**.

About the Initiative

- The **Air Quality Monitoring System** has been installed to help students **observe real-time air pollution levels and understand environmental changes**.
- The project is part of efforts by the **Bajali district administration to strengthen climate awareness at the grassroots level**.
- It will allow students and teachers to **track local air quality data and learn about pollution and climate-related challenges**.

How the Air Quality Monitoring System Works

The monitoring device measures several **key air pollution indicators** that help assess environmental health.

It monitors:

- **PM2.5 (Particulate Matter 2.5):** Fine particles that can enter the lungs and bloodstream.
- **PM10 (Particulate Matter 10):** Larger particles that can affect respiratory health.
- **Carbon dioxide levels and other gases** that indicate pollution levels.
- **Real-time air quality data** that helps track changes in environmental conditions.

Such systems play an important role in **air pollution management and climate monitoring**.

Educational and Awareness Activities

During the event, a book titled **“Everyday Climate Action”** was also released. The book aims to **encourage simple lifestyle changes that contribute to climate protection** and environmental sustainability.

One-Line Wrap

The installation of an **Air Quality Monitoring System in Bajali Higher Secondary School** highlights the growing emphasis on climate education and environmental awareness among students in Assam.

King Prithu

The newly constructed **Maharaj Prithu (Noonmati–Dighalipukhuri) flyover in Guwahati** has been named after **King Prithu**, highlighting the historical significance of this early medieval ruler of **Kamarupa (present-day Assam)**.



Who Was King Prithu?

King Prithu was a prominent ruler of the **Kamarupa kingdom**, likely during the **12th century CE**. Historical references to him appear in important texts such as the **Kalika Purana** and **Yogini Tantra**, as well as in local traditions and historical narratives of Assam.

The **Kamarupa kingdom** was one of the earliest political entities in Northeast India and covered large parts of present-day Assam and surrounding regions.

Significance of King Prithu's Reign

Defender Against External Invasions

- King Prithu is remembered for **resisting the eastward expansion of the Delhi Sultanate**.
- He is believed to have **repelled the forces associated with Bakhtiyar Khalji**, who had earlier conquered **Bihar and Bengal** in the early thirteenth century.
- His resistance helped **protect the political independence of Kamarupa** during a period of regional instability.

Military Consolidation

- Prithu strengthened the **defensive structure and boundaries of the Kamarupa kingdom**.
- His leadership created a **strong defensive tradition in Assam**, later continued by powerful dynasties such as the **Ahoms**, who also resisted external invasions.

Administrative Stability

- His reign contributed to **political consolidation and stable governance** in the region.
- The administration strengthened **local institutions and regional identity**, helping preserve the cultural uniqueness of Assam.

Cultural and Religious Patronage

- Historical accounts suggest that **Shaivism and Tantric traditions flourished during his rule**.

- Religious institutions and temples received patronage, reflecting the region's role as an **important cultural and spiritual centre in eastern India**.

Historical Importance

King Prithu is regarded as a **symbol of Assamese resilience and regional sovereignty**. His successful defence against external invasions helped maintain **political autonomy in the Brahmaputra Valley**, shaping the later historical trajectory of Assam.

His legacy continues to inspire modern Assam, where infrastructure projects and institutions are named after him to honour **regional pride and historical memory**.

One-Line Wrap

King Prithu's reign represents an important chapter in Assam's history, marked by military resistance, cultural patronage, and the preservation of regional sovereignty.

Assam Cabinet Decisions

The Assam State Cabinet recently approved several major policy decisions related to **industrial investment, water infrastructure, land rights, community welfare, and cultural recognition**, aimed at accelerating socio-economic development in the state.

Major Decisions Taken by the Assam Cabinet

Industrial Investment Boost

- The Cabinet approved six investment proposals worth **₹24,800 crore**.
- The move is expected to **attract large-scale industries, create employment opportunities and strengthen the state's industrial base**.

Water Infrastructure Development

- A **₹1,367 crore South-East Guwahati Water Supply Project** was approved.
- The project aims to **address water scarcity in rapidly expanding areas such as Noonmati and surrounding localities**.
- It will improve **urban water infrastructure and ensure reliable drinking water supply**.

OBC Status for Tea Communities

- **Thirty-seven tea tribe communities** will be granted **Other Backward Class status**.
- Earlier, many of these communities were considered **sub-castes of existing categories**.
- The move is expected to **improve access to reservation benefits in education and government employment**.

Land Rights for Indigenous Families

- The Cabinet approved **distribution of land pattas to 816 indigenous families living in the hill areas of Guwahati**.
- Eligibility is limited to **three generations of indigenous residents**.
- The initiative is part of broader land reforms under programmes such as **Mission Basundhara**, which aims to resolve land ownership issues.

Cultural Recognition and Heritage Preservation

- The **Mising festival Ali Aye Ligang** has been declared a **state holiday**, recognising its cultural importance.
- **Ten bighas of land of the Zubeen Samadhi Khetra** have been allocated to the **Department of Cultural Affairs** for maintenance and development.

Education and Institutional Development

- The **engineering college at Behali** will be named after **Chabilal Upadhyay**, a noted freedom fighter and social reformer.
- **Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College** will be renamed **Barpeta Medical College**, while another institution will later be named in honour of the former President of India.

Welfare and Financial Inclusion

- The **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi Scheme** will now be extended to **street vendors in rural areas under village panchayats**, in addition to municipal areas.
- The Cabinet also approved the creation of a **Scheduled Caste Development Council** to address welfare and development needs of the community.

One-Line Wrap

The recent Assam Cabinet decisions reflect a comprehensive push toward **industrial growth, infrastructure development, social welfare, and cultural recognition in the state**.

Chapchar Kut Festival of Mizoram

The **State-level celebration of Chapchar Kut 2026** was held at **Lammual in Aizawl**, attended by Chief Minister **Lalduhoma** as the ceremonial **Kut Pa (father of the festival)**, marking the culmination of week-long festivities across the state.

About Chapchar Kut

Chapchar Kut is the **largest and most popular spring festival of the Mizo people**, celebrated annually in **March**.

- It is closely linked with **jhum cultivation**, a traditional **slash-and-burn agricultural practice** in the hills of Northeast India.
- The festival marks the **period after forests are cleared for cultivation and left to dry before burning**, offering villagers a brief respite before the next agricultural phase.

Historical Background

- The festival is believed to have originated between **1450–1700 A.D.** in **Suaipui village**.
- It was revived on a large scale in **1962 in Aizawl** after a decline during colonial and early missionary periods.
- Today, it symbolizes **cultural revival, community bonding, and preservation of indigenous traditions**.

Key Cultural Elements

1. Cheraw Dance

- **Cheraw** is the iconic bamboo dance of Mizoram.
- Male performers rhythmically clap bamboo poles while female dancers step between them with coordinated movements.

2. Community Celebrations

The festival features:

- **Traditional songs and dances**
- **Folk games such as Pawnto**
- **Traditional attire and communal feasting**

3. Agricultural Cycle Festivals

Chapchar Kut is one of the **three major agricultural festivals** of Mizoram:

- **Chapchar Kut** – after forest clearing in jhum cultivation.
- **Mim Kut** – associated with maize harvest.
- **Pawl Kut** – celebration of abundance after harvest.

Cultural and Social Significance

- Promotes **community harmony and social unity**, reflected in the theme **“Zonun ze mawi – Inremna” (Harmony and unity)**.
- Strengthens the **identity of the Mizo diaspora across India and abroad**.
- Preserves **indigenous knowledge systems related to agriculture and environment**.

The festival also aligns with India's broader framework of **cultural preservation under initiatives like the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme**, which promotes awareness of regional traditions.

One-line Wrap:

Chapchar Kut reflects the deep link between agriculture, culture, and community life among the Mizo people, symbolising harmony and preservation of indigenous traditions.

Dr Bhupen Hazarika Lifetime Achievement Award

The **Assam Film Society**, in collaboration with **Jagannath Barooah University**, presented the **first Dr Bhupen Hazarika Lifetime Achievement Award** to Premendra Mazumder at Jorhat. The award was instituted to honour **lifetime contributions to cinema culture, film criticism, and the film society movement**.

About the Award

- The **Dr Bhupen Hazarika Lifetime Achievement Award** is a **biennial recognition** instituted by the **Assam Film Society**.
- It carries:
 - **Cash prize of ₹1 lakh**
 - **Trophy and citation**
- The award ceremony is organised on the anniversary of the commercial release of **Joymoti**, the first Assamese film produced and directed by **Jyoti Prasad Agarwala**.

Objectives

- Promote **film appreciation and critical scholarship**.
- Recognise individuals contributing to **cinema culture and film society movements**.
- Honour the legacy of **Bhupen Hazarika**, a legendary cultural icon of Assam.

About Premendra Mazumder

Premendra Mazumder is a prominent **film critic, curator, author, and organiser** who has significantly contributed to film culture in India.

Key Roles

- **Vice President** of the **Federation of Film Societies of India**.
- **General Secretary** of **FIPRESCI India**.
- Former editor of the **E-Cine India** film journal.

Contributions to Film Festivals

He has played major roles in organising and directing film festivals, including:

- **SiGNS Short and Documentary Film Festival (Kerala)**
- **Third Eye Asian Film Festival (Mumbai)**
- **World Film Festival (Kolkata)**
- **Bengal International Short Film Festival**

He also serves as an advisor to international events such as the **Jaffna International Film Festival (Sri Lanka)** and **Nepal International Film Festival**.

One-line Wrap: The **Dr Bhupen Hazarika Lifetime Achievement Award** celebrates the legacy of Assamese cinema while recognising lifelong contributions to film culture and criticism in India.

Assam Mala 3.0 and BTR Infrastructure Push

Prime Minister virtually launched and laid the foundation stone of **infrastructure and connectivity projects worth over ₹4,500 crore** in Assam, particularly focusing on the **Bodoland Territorial Region**.

Key Highlights of the Announcement

1. Assam Mala 3.0 – Flagship Road Connectivity Programme

- The **Assam Mala** initiative (Phase 3) was launched with an investment of **over ₹3,200 crore**.
- The scheme aims to construct **over 900 kilometres of roads**.

Objectives

- Strengthen **inter-state and intra-state connectivity**.
- Link **national highways with rural road networks**.
- Improve **trade, mobility, and regional integration**.

2. Road Infrastructure in Bodoland Territorial Region

Six major road projects worth **₹1,100 crore** were announced.

Key components include:

- **Four flyovers** at
 - BK Road–Gossaigaon Chariali
 - Balajan Tiniali
 - Debargaon Junction
 - Titaguri
- **Two bridges** to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

These projects aim to transform the **BTR into a well-connected economic corridor**.

3. Railway Infrastructure Development

A **Periodic Overhauling Workshop** for railway coaches will be established at **Bashbari in Kokrajhar**.

- Estimated cost: **₹255 crore**
- Expected outcomes:
 - Improve **railway maintenance capacity**
 - Create **local employment opportunities**
 - Strengthen **rail logistics infrastructure**

4. New Train Services

Three new train services were flagged off:

- **Kamakhya–Charlapalli Amrit Bharat Express** – linking Northeast India with southern India.
- **Guwahati–New Jalpaiguri Express** – strengthening Assam–West Bengal connectivity.

- **Narangi–Agartala Express** – improving connectivity with Tripura. These trains enhance **regional mobility and economic integration**.

Development of Bodoland Territorial Region

The Government highlighted several initiatives for the region:

- **Associate official status to the Bodo language.**
- **₹1,500 crore special development package** for Bodoland.
- Establishment of **medical colleges in Kokrajhar and Tamulpur.**
- Rehabilitation of **nearly 10,000 former militants**, supporting peace and social stability.

These measures follow the **Bodo Peace Accord 2020**, which aims to bring **peace, development, and political stability** to the region.

One-line Wrap:

The launch of **Assam Mala 3.0** and railway projects marks a major step toward transforming connectivity, peace, and economic growth in the Bodoland region and Northeast India.

Major Infrastructure Push in Barak Valley

Prime Minister and Assam Chief Minister launched and inaugurated several **infrastructure and connectivity projects in Barak Valley**, particularly in **Silchar**, aimed at strengthening governance, agriculture education, and regional connectivity.

Key Projects Announced

1. Panchgram–Barapani High-Speed Expressway

- A new **high-speed expressway** connecting **Panchgram and Barapani**.
- Expected to significantly **reduce travel time and improve trade and mobility** in the region.

2. Silchar Flyover

- A major **urban infrastructure project** aimed at reducing **traffic congestion in Silchar city**.
- It will enhance **urban mobility and economic activity**.

3. First Agriculture College in Barak Valley

- The region's **first Agriculture College** will be established at **Patharkandi**.



Railway Connectivity Improvements

The Prime Minister also inaugurated **railway electrification projects**.

- Electrification of **Badarpur–Silchar section**.
- Electrification of **Badarpur–Churaibari section**.

These projects operate under the broader **Indian Railways Electrification Programme**, which aims to improve **energy efficiency, faster train operations, and reduced carbon emissions**.

Projects Inaugurated by the Chief Minister Barak Valley Secretariat

- Located at Srikona.
- A long-standing demand of the region.

Significance

- Strengthens **administrative efficiency**.
- Brings **government services closer to citizens**.

Other Infrastructure Projects

- **Circuit House in Hailakandi** to improve accommodation facilities for officials.
- **District Convention Centre at Silcoorie (Silchar)** equipped with modern facilities for conferences, official programmes, and cultural events.

One-line Wrap:

New infrastructure, education, and railway projects mark a major step toward **accelerating economic growth and governance efficiency in Assam's Barak Valley**.

Mayank Chakraborty Becomes First Chess Grandmaster from Assam and Northeast India

Mayank Chakraborty, a 16-year-old International Master from Assam, became the **first Chess Grandmaster from Assam and the entire Northeast region**, achieving the feat at the **8th Grandmaster Tournament in Stockholm, Sweden**.

Key Highlights

- Mayank secured his **final Grandmaster norm on 13 March 2026** by finishing **first with a score of 7/9**.
- He crossed the **mandatory FIDE rating threshold of 2500**, becoming **India's 94th Grandmaster**.
- The achievement marks a **major milestone for chess in Northeast India**, a region traditionally known for sports like **football and boxing**.

About the Chess Grandmaster Title

- The **Grandmaster title** is the **highest lifetime title in chess**.
- The title is awarded by **FIDE** (Fédération Internationale des Échecs).
 - FIDE operates as the **global governing body of chess**, regulating international competitions and rating systems.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** To become a Grandmaster, a player must:
 - Achieve **three Grandmaster norms** in international tournaments.
 - Cross the **minimum FIDE rating of 2500** at any point in their career.
- **Other Chess Titles:** FIDE also awards other titles:
 - International Master
 - FIDE Master
 - Candidate Master
 - Woman Grandmaster, Woman International Master, Woman FIDE Master, and Woman Candidate Master.
- **Validity and Ethics:** Chess titles are **valid for life**.
 - However, they may be **revoked** if a player violates **FIDE Anti-Cheating Regulations or ethical principles**.

One-line Wrap:

The rise of **Mayank Chakraborty as the first Grandmaster from Assam** marks a historic milestone for chess development in Northeast India.

Assam Government Proposes Kumri Beel as Reserve Forest

The Assam government has issued a **preliminary notification to declare Kumri Beel in Goalpara district as a Reserve Forest**, aiming to protect an ecologically sensitive wetland ecosystem.

About Kumri Beel Proposal

- **Kumri Beel** is a wetland area located in **Goalpara district of Assam**.
- The proposal covers **around 270 hectares of land** under the **Goalpara Forest Division**.
- The initiative has been **spearheaded by the Environment, Forests and Climate Change Department of Assam**.
- A **preliminary notification** has been issued under the **Assam Forest Regulation, 1891** to begin the legal process for declaring the area a **Reserve Forest**.

What Is a Reserve Forest?

- Under India's forest law framework, there are three categories of forests:
 - **Reserved Forests** (most restricted — every activity prohibited unless permitted), **Protected Forests** (every activity permitted unless prohibited), and **Village Forests** (least restricted).
- A **Reserved Forest** is formally notified under **Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927**, or under corresponding State Forest Acts.

Legal Process for Declaring a Reserve Forest

Under the **Assam Forest Regulation, 1891**, the declaration of a Reserve Forest follows a defined process:

- The government first issues a **preliminary notification identifying the proposed forest area**.
- A **Forest Settlement Officer** is appointed to examine the area and record claims.
- In this case, the **Additional District Commissioner of Goalpara** has been appointed as the **Forest Settlement Officer**.
- The officer will conduct a **detailed inquiry to determine the nature and extent of rights claimed by individuals or communities** over the land.
- Citizens can submit **claims regarding traditional rights such as grazing, cultivation, or forest produce**.
- After settlement of claims, the government may issue a **final notification declaring the area as a Reserve Forest**.

Objectives of the Proposal

The initiative aims to:

- **Protect wetland ecosystems and biodiversity** in Goalpara district.
- Prevent **unregulated land use and encroachment** in ecologically sensitive areas.
- Conserve habitats for **wetland birds, aquatic species, and local flora**.
- Strengthen **long-term environmental governance and sustainable land management**.

Wetlands such as Kumri Beel also contribute to **flood control, groundwater recharge, and climate regulation**, making their protection important for ecological balance.

Related Environmental Frameworks

The initiative aligns with broader conservation frameworks such as:

- **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017**
- **National Wetland Conservation Programme**
- **State-level forest and biodiversity conservation policies**

One-Line Wrap

The proposal to declare **Kumri Beel as a Reserve Forest** reflects Assam's efforts to strengthen wetland conservation and protect ecologically sensitive landscapes through legal forest protection mechanisms.

Assam Hikes Wages of Tea Estate Workers

The **Assam government** has approved an interim hike of **₹30** in the minimum wages of tea plantation workers, which will come into effect from **1 April 2026**.

New Wage Structure for Tea Garden Workers

The decision was approved by the **Minimum Wages Advisory Board for Tea Plantation Workers**, operating under the **Labour Welfare Department of Assam**.

- **Brahmaputra Valley:** Daily wage increased to **₹280**.
- **Barak Valley:** Daily wage increased to **₹258**.
- The revised wages will also apply to workers in **small tea gardens** across the state.

The hike is part of the government's effort to **improve the livelihood conditions of tea garden labourers**, a major workforce in Assam's plantation economy.

Background: Wage Determination in Assam's Tea Industry

Traditionally, wages of tea workers were decided through **collective negotiations between tea companies and labour unions**.

- The **last tripartite agreement** between the **Consultative Committee of Planters Association** and **Assam Chah Majdoor Sangha** was signed in **2015**.
- Under that agreement, wages increased from **₹94 to ₹137 per day** over three years.

Later, the Assam government shifted the wage fixation process to the Minimum Wages Advisory Board, which now recommends wage revisions.



Major Wage Revisions in Recent Years

- **2018:** Interim wage hike of ₹30.
- **2021:** Wage increased to ₹205 per day.
- **2022:** Wage raised to ₹232 (Brahmaputra Valley) and ₹210 (Barak Valley).
- **2024:** Increased to ₹250 and ₹228 respectively.
- **2026:** New wage levels ₹280 and ₹258.

STEPS TAKEN FOR ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT OF TEA TRIBE & INDIGENOUS TEA COMMUNITIES

Key initiatives already implemented by the Assam Government

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1.45 lakh+ students admitted to Eklayva Model Residential Schools
- 120 new Adarsh Vidyalayas built; 100 existing ones upgraded
- 250 new Anganwadis established under Seba scheme
- 44 new hostels constructed
- M.Phil & PhD scholarships significantly increased via State Fellowship

ADVANCED HEALTHCARE

- Ayushman Arogya Mandir centres established in 240+ locations
- ₹10 lakh health grants provided to 15,000+ patients
- 10 hospitals set up for tea garden communities
- Telemedicine services introduced
- Mobile Medicare services extended to 1.5 lakh+ people

SKILL DEV. & EMPLOYMENT

- ₹25,000 grants given to 30,000+ youth for skill-linked employment
- Additional youth funded ₹25,000 for self-employment ventures
- 700+ Mahila Samridhi Committees & Market Centres built
- 400+ new shops constructed for income generation

SPORTS & TALENT DEVELOPMENT

- State-level tea tribe football tournament organised
- Dedicated football and sports academies established
- Athletics academy set up under India-Africa Skills Programme
- Online platform for skill certificate courses launched

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Survey in 1,10,813 locations; 3 lakh+ households covered

LAND RIGHTS

Land deeds issued to 8,30,386 tea garden families

WORKER FUND

One-time ₹5,000 financial aid to eligible worker-employers

LEGAL AID

8,000+ youth provided free legal assistance & support

OTHERS

- ₹500 crore Anundoram Borooah Award for community upliftment
- ₹3 lakh financial aid to tea garden workers from 2,05,82,771 fund
- ₹150 crore allocated for tea garden workers' housing construction
- Since 2018 – over 1.1 lakh workers and 12,000+ beneficiaries assisted

REVISED DAILY WAGES			WAGE GROWTH UNDER PRESENT GOVERNMENT					
Region	PREVIOUS (DAILY)	REVISED (DAILY)	Region	2021	2022	2023	2026	Total Rise
Brahmaputra Valley	₹250	₹280	Brahmaputra Valley	₹197	₹205	₹232	₹250	+42.13%
Barak Valley	₹228	₹258	Barak Valley	₹175	₹183	₹210	₹228	+47.42%

Applicable to all tea garden workers across Assam

Legal and Welfare Framework for Plantation Workers

Tea plantation workers are protected under several labour laws and welfare provisions:

- **Plantation Labour Act, 1951:** Mandates welfare facilities such as housing, healthcare, education, and ration for plantation workers.
- **Minimum Wages Act, 1948:** Ensures legally enforceable minimum wages for workers in scheduled employment.
- Assam has also sought technical support from the **International Labour Organization** to determine an **adequate minimum wage and move towards a “living wage” system.**

Key Issues and Comparisons

Despite the recent increase, wages in Assam remain **lower compared to other tea-producing states:**

- **Kerala:** About ₹546 per day.
- **Tamil Nadu:** Around ₹475 per day.
- **West Bengal:** About ₹250 per day.

The difference is often attributed to the “**kind component**” of wages in Assam, which includes benefits such as **housing, food rations, and medical facilities.**

One-Line Wrap

The recent wage hike for **Assam’s tea plantation workers** reflects ongoing efforts to improve labour welfare in one of India’s most important plantation economies.

World’s Largest Grain Storage Plan

The **District Cooperative Development Committee in Darrang, Assam** recently discussed strategies to implement the **World’s Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector**, aimed at expanding local storage capacity and strengthening the rural agricultural economy.

About the World’s Largest Grain Storage Plan

- The **World’s Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector** is a **Government of India initiative launched in 2023.**
- It is **spearheaded by the Ministry of Cooperation**, with monitoring at two sub-national levels —
 - The **State Cooperative Development Committee (SCDC)** at the state level and the **District Cooperative Development Committee (DCDC)** at the district level.
- The scheme is implemented with support from institutions such as the **Food Corporation of India, National Cooperative Development Corporation, and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.**
- The programme operates under the national vision “**Sahakar Se Samriddhi**” (Prosperity through Cooperatives) which is the guiding vision of the Ministry of Cooperation, established in 2021.

How Does It Work?

The plan creates decentralised grain storage infrastructure at the level of **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** — the village-level cooperative societies that form the grassroots tier of India's cooperative credit structure.

An **MoU** has been signed between the **Ministry of Cooperation, Department of Food and Public Distribution, FCI, and NCDC** to ensure that godowns built at PACS level are hired by FCI and integrated into the foodgrain supply chain — giving PACS both forward and backward market linkages.

Each integrated PACS unit includes:

- **Decentralised godowns** (grain storage sheds)
- **Custom Hiring Centres** for farm machinery
- **Primary Processing Units** (cleaning, sorting, grading)
- **Fair Price Shops** for Public Distribution System
- **Procurement Centres** for FCI and state agencies

Objectives of the Scheme

The scheme aims to **strengthen food security and rural infrastructure.**

- To **create decentralized grain storage infrastructure at the village and block levels** through cooperative societies.
- To **reduce post-harvest losses and food wastage.**
- To help farmers **store crops safely and sell them at better prices** rather than being forced to sell immediately after harvest.
- To integrate storage with **processing units, custom hiring centres and fair price shops.**

Implementation of the Scheme

- An **Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)** has been constituted under the chairmanship of the **Minister of Cooperation**, with participation from the Ministers of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and Food Processing Industries.
- A **National Level Coordination Committee (NLCC)** oversees overall progress.
- **Pilot status:** Under the pilot project, godowns have been completed in **11 PACS across 11 states**, creating a total decentralised storage capacity of **9,750 MT**.
 - Foundation stones have also been laid in **500 additional PACS**.
 - Assam is among the 11 pilot states.

Implementation in Assam

- The Food Corporation of India has identified a **storage deficit** of about **2,500 metric tonnes** in **Darrang district**.
- The **Kalyan Gaon Panchayat Samabay Samiti** has been identified for possible implementation of the storage project.
- Assam is also witnessing **rapid expansion of cooperative societies**, including:
 - **54 multipurpose primary agriculture cooperative societies**
 - **42 dairy cooperatives**
 - **Fishery cooperatives**

These cooperatives are expected to **strengthen rural livelihoods by supporting agriculture, dairy and fisheries**.

One-Line Wrap

The **World's Largest Grain Storage Plan** aims to strengthen India's food security and rural economy by building decentralized grain storage infrastructure through cooperative societies.

First Captive-Bred Vultures Released in Assam

In a significant conservation milestone, **five captive-bred White-rumped Vultures** were released into the wild in Assam from the **Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC)**.

Key Highlights of the Initiative

- This marks the **first-ever release of captive-bred vultures in Assam and Northeast India**.
- The release was carried out under the supervision of:
 - Assam Forest Department
 - Bombay Natural History Society
 - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

About Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC)

- The Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), located near Guwahati, Assam, is a premier institution established in 2007 (jointly by Assam Forest Department & BNHS) to save critically endangered vulture species.
- It focuses on breeding Slender-billed and White-rumped vultures, with a 2025 milestone release of 30 birds into Kaziranga National Park.
- India has a total of four VCBCs and Rani VCBC represents the entire northeast India.

About White-Rumped Vulture

- Scientific name: *Gyps bengalensis*
- Status: **Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)**
- Native to the **Indian subcontinent**
- Population declined sharply due to **diclofenac toxicity (veterinary drug)**

Vulture Conservation in India

Operates Under

- **Vulture Conservation Action Plan 2020-2025**
- Spearheaded by:
 - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
 - State Forest Departments
 - Conservation organisations

Objectives

- Prevent **vulture extinction**
- Promote **captive breeding and reintroduction**
- Eliminate harmful drugs like **diclofenac**

Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (Assam)

- Established in **2007**
- Current population:
 - **138 White-rumped vultures**
 - **56 Slender-billed vultures**
- Total: **194 vultures**
- Capacity to release **20–25 vultures annually**

Ecological Importance of Vultures

- Act as **natural scavengers**, cleaning carcasses.
- Prevent spread of **zoonotic diseases**.
- Maintain **ecosystem balance**.

One-line Wrap:

The release of captive-bred white-rumped vultures in Assam marks a major step in restoring ecological balance and reviving critically endangered species in India.

Rare Plant *Agapetes wardii* Discovery in Arunachal Pradesh

A rare plant species, *Agapetes wardii*, has been recorded for the first time in India from Changlang district Arunachal, where it was earlier known only from Myanmar.

Key Highlights of the Discovery

- The species was identified by researchers from the **Society for Education and Environmental Development**.
- It is an **epiphytic shrub**, meaning it grows on other plants without harming them.
- Found in **moist evergreen forests**, often near water sources.

Botanical Features

- **Tubular flowers** ranging from red to pink (sometimes white).
- **Elliptic to lanceolate leaves**.
- Identification confirmed through **morphological and taxonomic analysis**, comparing with related species like:
 - *Agapetes hosseana*, *Agapetes mannii*, *Agapetes buxifolia*

One-line Wrap:

The discovery of *Agapetes wardii* in Arunachal Pradesh highlights the immense and still unexplored biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayan region.

Assam Fast-Tracks Piped Natural Gas Connections Amid LPG Supply Concerns

Amid concerns over liquefied petroleum gas supply disruptions due to the West Asia conflict, the Assam Government has accelerated the rollout of piped natural gas connections across the State to ensure reliable and affordable household energy supply.

Key Developments

1. Barauni–Guwahati Gas Pipeline

- The **Barauni–Guwahati Natural Gas Pipeline**, completed by **GAIL India Limited**, is now nearing full operationalisation.
- Project cost revised from **₹3,308 crore to ₹3,992 crore**.
- Remaining pre-commissioning work is expected to be completed soon.

2. PNG Supply Rollout

- Around **6,000 domestic consumers in Guwahati** are expected to receive piped gas by April 2026.
- Connections have already been provided in areas like:
 - Noonmati, Dispur, Beltola, Khanapara and Hatigaon.

Expansion Plans

- Approximately **12,500 new connections** planned across:
 - Guwahati, Tezpur, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia.
- In Upper Assam alone, **5,000 additional connections** are proposed.

Existing Coverage

- **Assam Gas Company Limited** currently supplies PNG to:
 - **63,000 domestic consumers**
 - **570 industrial units**
 - **1,500 commercial establishments**

Policy Framework

The initiative operates under the **City Gas Distribution network expansion**, promoted by:

- **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board**
- National push towards **cleaner fuels and energy transition**

Objectives

- Ensure **energy security amid LPG supply disruptions**.
- Promote **clean fuel usage** with lower emissions than conventional fuels.
- Reduce dependence on **cylinder-based fuel systems**.
- Improve **ease of living through continuous gas supply**.

One-line Wrap:

The expansion of **pipled natural gas in Assam** marks a key step toward cleaner, reliable, and affordable energy access in the State.

Black Bear Sighting in Rani Reserve Forest

A black bear was recently spotted in the Rani Reserve Forest near Guwahati, highlighting the **healthy biodiversity and thriving ecosystem** of the region.

About Rani Reserve Forest

- **Rani Reserve Forest** is located on the **southwestern outskirts of Guwahati in Kamrup district of Assam**.
- It lies close to the **Garbhanga Reserve Forest and Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary**, forming an important **forest corridor in the region**.
- The forest has **dense vegetation and rich biodiversity**, providing habitat to several species of mammals, birds and reptiles.
- The area plays a key role in **maintaining ecological balance and supporting wildlife movement near the urban landscape of Guwahati**.

About the Black Bear

The bear spotted is most likely the **Asiatic Black Bear**, a species commonly found in the forests of Northeast India.

Key characteristics

- Medium-sized bear with **black fur and a distinctive white crescent-shaped mark on the chest**.
- Known for its **excellent climbing ability** and preference for forested habitats.
- Omnivorous in nature, feeding on **fruits, insects, small animals, honey and plant materials**.

Habitat

- Found in **tropical and subtropical forests, mountain forests and dense woodlands**.
- Distributed across **Northeast India, the Himalayan region and parts of East and Southeast Asia**.

Conservation status

- Listed as **Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature**.
- Protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, which provides the highest level of legal protection in India.

One-Line Wrap

The recent black bear sighting in Rani Reserve Forest highlights the success of Assam's conservation efforts and the importance of protecting forest ecosystems near urban regions.

Over 1 Lakh Trees Felled in Assam in a Decade

Official data obtained through the **Right to Information Act** reveals that **over 1,06,000 mature trees have been felled in Assam since May 2016** for infrastructure and industrial development projects.

Key Findings from the Data

- **1,06,896 mature trees** have reportedly been cut across **15 forest divisions of Assam** since 2016.
- Around **26,000 trees were felled in notified forest areas**, while the rest were removed from non-forest land.
- Nearly **84,000 trees were cut for government projects**, including:
 - National highways and road expansion
 - Bridges and flyovers
 - Medical colleges and public infrastructure

- More than **10,000 trees** were cut for private projects, including oil exploration by **Oil India Limited** and **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation**.

Major infrastructure projects like **National Highway expansion** and **construction of Darrang Medical College** required large-scale clearing of land.

Government Response

The **Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department of Assam** stated that tree felling was done out of “**dire necessity**” for development projects. To compensate for the loss of green cover, the government has taken large plantation drives.

- **3.5 crore saplings** have been planted in the last two years.
- Under the **Amrit Briksha Andolan**, one crore saplings were planted in a single day.
- According to official data, **over 70 percent** of planted saplings have survived.

Environmental Concerns Raised by Experts

Environmental scientists warn that **planting saplings cannot immediately replace mature trees**.

- A **mature tree stores large amounts of carbon** and supports biodiversity, something a sapling takes decades to achieve.
- Cutting large numbers of trees may affect **microclimate, soil health and wildlife habitats**.
- Experts also expressed concern that **no ecological impact assessment studies were conducted** in many divisions before tree felling.

Under the **Forest Conservation Act, 1980** and the **Environment Impact Assessment framework**, ecological impacts are ideally assessed before major land-use changes.

Schemes Related to Afforestation

- **Green India Mission** — part of the **National Action Plan on Climate Change**, targets restoration of 10 million hectares of degraded forest
- **National Afforestation Programme (NAP)** — centrally sponsored scheme for regenerating degraded forests
- **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)**: Manages funds collected from states for diverting forest land for non-forest purposes, used for afforestation and regeneration.
- **Nagar Van Yojana (Urban Forest Scheme)**: Launched in 2020 to create 600 'Nagar Vans' and 400 'Nagar Vatika' in urban/peri-urban areas to create green spaces.
- **MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes)**: Aims to intensify mangrove plantation along India's coastline.
- **National Bamboo Mission (NBM)**: Promotes sustainable bamboo cultivation to boost ecological and economic benefits.
- **Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme (FFPM)**: Focuses on reducing forest fires to protect existing green cover.
- **Amrit Briksha Andolan** — Assam's state-level mass plantation drive

Major Infrastructure Push in Barak Valley

The Prime Minister is set to **lay the foundation stone for three major infrastructure projects in Cachar district of Assam**, along with inaugurating a key railway electrification project. These initiatives together involve an **investment of about ₹24,205 crore** and aim to accelerate development in the **Barak Valley region**.

Key Projects Announced

1. Shillong–Silchar Greenfield Expressway

- A **166.8 kilometre high-speed Greenfield expressway** connecting **Panchgram in Cachar district** with **Barapani near Shillong**.
- Estimated cost: **₹22,864 crore**.
- It will be the **first expressway in Northeast India**.
- The project is expected to **reduce travel time between Barak Valley, Meghalaya, and Guwahati**.
- It will strengthen **trade, tourism, and economic integration** in the region.

2. Elevated Corridor in Silchar

- Construction of a **3.5 kilometre elevated corridor in Silchar city**.

- Estimated cost: **₹564 crore**.
- The project aims to **reduce urban traffic congestion and improve mobility** in the rapidly expanding city.

3. Agriculture College in Patharkandi

- Establishment of the **first Agriculture College in the Barak Valley at Patharkandi in Sribhumi district**.
- Estimated cost: **₹122 crore**.
- The institution will provide **higher education and research opportunities in agriculture**, supporting the **agrarian economy of the region**.

Railway Electrification Project

- The **Silchar–Badarpur–Churaibari railway line** has been electrified at a cost of **₹655 crore**.
- Electrification will:
 - Improve **rail connectivity in southern Assam and neighbouring states**.
 - Reduce **travel time and operational costs**.
 - Promote **clean and energy-efficient railway transport**.

This initiative is part of the **Indian Railways electrification programme** aimed at **improving sustainability and efficiency**.

One-Line Wrap

The launch of three major infrastructure projects in Cachar marks a significant step toward **improving connectivity, education, and economic development in Assam's Barak Valley**.

Nuruddin Ahmed 'Elated' to Receive Padma Shri

Assam's eminent sculptor and art director **Nuruddin Ahmed** expressed deep joy on being named a **Padma Shri awardee**. He is among **five Padma Shri recipients from Assam** announced on the eve of **Republic Day 2026**.

Why Nuruddin Ahmed Matters

- A pioneer of **modern Assamese stagecraft**, Ahmed has designed sets for over **4,000 theatre productions**, especially transforming the **mobile theatre movement** in Assam.
- His recent landmark work includes the **Batadrava Cultural Project** at Borduwa, linked to the birthplace of **Srimanta Sankardeva**, a key figure of the **Bhakti movement in Assam**.
- He has also designed **State tableaux for Republic Day parades**, cultural pavilions, festival structures and iconic **Durga idols**, blending tradition with modern aesthetics.

Training and Artistic Journey

- Born in **Sathikuchi village, Nalbari district**, Ahmed received early training at **Sir J J School of Art, Mumbai**.
- He later studied **modern sculptural techniques** at the **Lalit Kala Akademi** and obtained a diploma in **puppetry** from the **Centre for Cultural Resources and Training**.
- His career began with puppetry, later expanding into **ambience design, sculpture, costume and property design**, and **Ankia Bhaona**, a traditional Assamese theatre form.

Previous Recognition

- Ahmed received the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2017)** for his contribution to Indian theatre stagecraft.

Bamboo Boost for Northeast

The **Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region and Communications**, launched **two major bamboo sector projects** with a combined outlay of **₹82.5 crore** in **Guwahati**, aimed at strengthening **traditional livelihoods** and promoting **industrial development** in the North Eastern Region.

The projects are being implemented by the **North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council**, under the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region**, in coordination with the **North Eastern Council**. They were developed over **18 months** through value-chain assessments, cluster studies, market research and extensive stakeholder consultations.

Project 1: Strengthening Traditional Bamboo Artisan Clusters

- The first initiative is *"Strengthening Traditional Bamboo Artisan Clusters"*
- Focuses on **modernising tools, designs and production processes**.
- Upgradation of **Common Facility Centres** and integration with **digital and organised retail platforms**.
- Expected to benefit over **4,500 bamboo artisans** through skill development, quality improvement and better market access.
- **Memorandums of Understanding** signed with **Amazon India** and **Flipkart** to support onboarding, catalogue development and pan-India market linkage.

Project 2: Promotion of Engineered Bamboo Products

- The second project is “*Promotion of Engineered Bamboo Products.*”
- Aims at **industrial-scale value-added bamboo manufacturing** such as boards, panels, furniture and composite materials in **Assam and Nagaland**.
- Targets sustainable alternatives to **timber, plastics and conventional construction materials**.
- **Two advanced clusters** will be established in **Karbi Anglong and Mokokchung**.
- Support for **1,000 hectares of certified bamboo plantations** and training of **1,000 youth and artisans**.
- Implemented in partnership with **All Time Plastics Ltd**, following **zero-waste, circular economy** principles and **international sustainability standards**.

Northeast Features Prominently with 55 Police & Service Medals

Personnel from **Assam and the Northeastern states** figured prominently in the **Republic Day 2026 honours list**, with **55 officers and staff** receiving national medals for **gallantry, distinguished service and meritorious service** across **police, fire services, home guards and civil defence**.

Assam

Assam recorded honours across **all three police medal categories**.

- The **President's Medal for Distinguished Service** was awarded to **Imdadul Hussain Bora**, Inspector General of Police, for long and exemplary service.
- In the Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM) category, the Assam Police personnel honoured include:
 - Pranab Jyoti Goswami, Dr Sadeque Ali Ahmed, Ripul Das, Nabaneet Mahanta, Saurav Jyoti Saikia, (Superintendent of Police)
 - Anil Moran, (Deputy Superintendent of Police), Jagdish Kalita, Inspector, Parikshit Uzir, Pabin Chandra Das, (Sub-Inspector), Hemadhar Borah, Diganta Kumar Nath, Suresh Boro, Hobibur Rahman, Prasad Talukdar, Lance Naik
- In addition, **Assam Fire Services personnel Bhuban Chandra Mali, Sub Officer and Nandeswar Das, leading fireman**, received **two Medals for Meritorious Service**.
- Home Guard and Civil Defence personnel were awarded one President's Medal for Distinguished Service to Samiran Dey Purkayastha, Platoon Commander and two Medals for Meritorious Service were rewarded to Jaleswar Deka, Deputy Controller and Chakradhar Barman, Platoon Commander from Assam, recognising their role in disaster response, civil emergencies and internal security support .

Manipur: Gallantry and Operational Excellence

Manipur stood out with awards in **gallantry and service categories**.

- Multiple personnel received the **Medal for Gallantry**, reflecting frontline bravery in high-risk operations.
- Others were honoured with the **President's Medal for Distinguished Service** and **Medal for Meritorious Service**, recognising leadership and sustained operational performance.

Other Northeastern States

- **Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura** also saw officers awarded, mainly under **Distinguished Service** and **Meritorious Service** categories.
- The honours covered ranks from **Inspector General level to constables**, reinforcing the inclusive nature of national recognition.

About Police and Service Medals

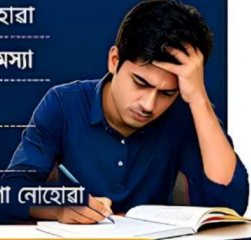
- Announced annually on **Republic Day**.
- Categories include **Gallantry, President's Medal for Distinguished Service**, and **Medal for Meritorious Service**.
- They recognise **bravery, sustained excellence, and commitment to public order and internal security**.
- At the national level, **Republic Day 2026 honours** included **125 Gallantry Medals, 101 President's Medals for Distinguished Service**, and **756 Medals for Meritorious Service**.

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IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Minoti Khaund

Eminent Indian classical violinist **Minoti Khaund** passed away on **January 19, 2026**, at the age of 85, marking the end of an era in Assam's classical music tradition.

Who was Minoti Khaund?

Minoti Khaund was one of **Assam's finest exponents of Hindustani classical violin**, known for her depth, restraint, and devotion to musical purity.

- Born in **1940 in Jorhat**, her musical journey began at the age of ten.
- She received her early training under **Indreswar Sarma** at the Darpanath Sarma Music School.
- A turning point came in **1972**, when legendary violin maestro **Pandit V. G. Jog** accepted her as a disciple after being deeply impressed by her performance at the **All Assam Music Conference**.
- She symbolised **quiet excellence in Indian classical music**.

Her life reminds us that cultural traditions survive not through fame, but through **discipline, humility, and continuity**.

Musical style and contribution

Minoti Khaund belonged to a generation that viewed music as **tapasya (austere discipline)**.

- Her violin playing was deeply influenced by the **Gayaki Ang**, giving it a **vocal, meditative quality**.
- She also trained under **sarod maestro Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta**, enriching her understanding of raga and tala.
- Her performances were marked by **classical purity, patience, and emotional depth**, without theatrical display.

Role as a guru and cultural ambassador

Beyond performance, she was a **dedicated teacher and mentor**.

- She believed strongly in the **guru–shishya parampara**.
- Served as visiting faculty and examiner at music institutions in Assam.
- Trained several students, including her daughter **Sunita Khaund**, herself a noted violinist.
- Represented India internationally through the **Indian Council for Cultural Relations**.

Awards and recognition

Her lifelong dedication was honoured through:

- **Gold Medal (Sangeet Nipune)** – Prayag Sangeet Samiti (1986)
- **Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award (2024)**

Assam Government honours such as **Sangeet Jyoti Award, Silpi Award, and Artist Pension**

Asian Water Bird Census 2026 at Pobitora

The **Asian Water Bird Census 2026** was conducted at **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary** over two days, revealing the presence of several **notable migratory water bird species** and indicating a healthy wetland ecosystem.

About the census

The census was organised by the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary authority in collaboration with **Aaranyak**, the **Assam Bird Monitoring Network**, local bird experts, students, and the Pobitora Jeep Safari Owners' Association, Mayong.

Key migratory species recorded

Several **long-distance migratory birds**, which travel thousands of kilometres to Assam during winter, were spotted, including:

- **Lesser white-fronted goose**
- **Greater white-fronted goose**
- **Bar-headed goose**
- **Greylag goose**
- **Falcated duck**
- **Tufted duck**
- **Northern pintail**
- **Northern shoveler**
- **Pied avocet**
- **Northern lapwing**
- **Black-tailed godwit**

The presence of these species highlights **Pobitora's importance as a wintering ground** in the Central Asian Flyway.

About the Asian Water Bird Census

- It is part of a **continent-wide citizen science programme** coordinated every winter.
- The census helps track:
 - **Population trends of migratory water birds**
 - **Health of wetlands**
 - **Impact of climate change and habitat loss.**

About Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

- ❖ Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is situated on the **southern bank** of the **Brahmaputra** in **Morigaon district** of Assam.
- ❖ Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is known for holding the **highest density of Greater One Horned Rhinoceros** in the country.
- ❖ It was initially declared as a **reserved forest** in **1971**.
- ❖ This wildlife sanctuary was **established** in **1987** with a **total area** of **48.81 square kilometres**.
- ❖ The Sanctuary consists of the **Rajamayong Reserve Forest** and **Pobitora Reserve Forest**.
- ❖ It harbors several species including **Leopard, Capped Langur, Porcupine, Pangolin, Wild Water Buffalo, Monitor Lizard, Wild Boar** etc.
- ❖ The **Brahmaputra River** forms a natural **boundary** to the premises of the sanctuary on the **north**, while the **Garanga Beel** offers a natural **boundary** to its **south**.
- ❖ **Pobitora** also holds the **distinction** of being the **source population** of the **Indian Rhinoceros Vision, 2020 (IRV)**.
 - **Rhinos** were **translocated** from **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary** and **introduced** into **Manas National Park** as part of the **IRV 2020** program.

First-Ever Sylheti Feature Film Released

For the **first time in the history of Indian cinema**, a **full-length Sylheti language feature film**, titled **Mamoner Chithi (Mamon's Letter)**, was released in **Hailakandi**.

The film was formally released at **Hailakandi Rabindra Bhawan**, drawing the presence of artists, academics, journalists and social activists. The event underlined the growing recognition of **regional languages** in mainstream cultural platforms.

About the Film

- **Mamoner Chithi** is a **two-hour feature film** made entirely in the **Sylheti language**.
- It is **directed, produced and acted** by **Siddhartha Sinha**, a resident of **Janakibazar** village in **Hailakandi** district.
- The film has been produced under the banner of **SS Entertainment, Assam**.
- It has received certification from the **Central Board of Film Certification**, making it eligible for public screening across India.
- **English subtitles** have been added to ensure accessibility for non-Sylheti audiences.

Why This Film Matters

- **Sylheti**, spoken across parts of **southern Assam, Bangladesh and the global diaspora**, has long remained **under-represented in cinema**.
- By choosing Sylheti as the primary medium, the film contributes to **cultural preservation and language visibility**.
- The initiative aligns with constitutional values under **Article 29**, which protects the rights of citizens to **conserve distinct languages and cultures**.
- It also reflects the spirit of **cultural federalism**, where India's diversity is expressed through regional creativity.

Broader Significance

- Encourages **regional filmmaking beyond dominant languages**.
- Strengthens **people-to-people cultural connections** across borders, as Sylheti is spoken internationally.
- Demonstrates how cinema can act as a **tool for language revitalisation and social awareness**.

Brajawali Ankiya Naat Compilation Released at Majuli

A significant contribution to Assam's classical and devotional literature was made with the release of "Brajawali Arhir Nator Sankalan", a compilation of Ankiya Naats, during the Asam Bhaona Samaroh 2026 held at Auniati Satra.

The book was formally unveiled by Pitambar Deva Goswami, Satradhikar of Auniati Satra, along with Arup Kumar Misra, in the presence of bhakats and Vaishnav followers.

About the Compilation

- *Brajawali Arhir Nator Sankalan* is a curated collection of 32 Ankiya Naats composed by Srimanta Sankardev.
- These plays are written in **Brajawali**, a literary language developed by Sankardev to communicate **Vaishnav philosophy** through drama and performance.
- The publication has been made possible with **full financial support from the Assam Pollution Control Board**, reflecting institutional involvement in **cultural preservation**.

About Ankiya Naat

- Ankiya Naat is a **traditional Assamese one-act play** that exemplifies the creative genius of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev.
- These **plays blend elements** from Assamese puppet dances, Ojha-Pali and Indian theatrical traditions, and techniques from Sanskrit plays.
- **Twelve** such plays, composed by Sankardev and Madhavdeva, are documented.
- Sankardev's works include *Patni-Prasad (1st Ankiya Naat)*, *Kaliya Domon*, *Rukmini-Haran*, *Parijat Haran*, *Ram Bijoy (written at the request of Chilarai)* and *Keli-Gopal*.
 - **Chihna-Yatra** was Sankardev's first dramatical endeavour, though it had **no written script**.
- **Madhavdeva's plays**, also known as **Jhumur**, include *Chor-Dhara*, *Pimpara Guchuwa*, *Bhojan Bihar*, *Arjun Bhanjan*, *Bhumi Letowa*, and *Nrisinha Yatra*.
- Ankiya Naats are also referred to as **Ankiya Bhaona**. There is **no significant** difference between these two terms.
- Generally, **Naat** refers to the **written document** and **Bhaona** is the **performance** of the **play**.

Characteristics of Ankiya Naat

- (i) The dominant role of the Sutradhara (interlocutor)
- (ii) Abundance of lyrical songs, slokas and prayers
- (iii) Use of Brajavali language (mixer of Assamese & Maithili)
- (iv) Use of versified prose
- (v) Dances with songs

Lighthouse Tourism Comes to the Brahmaputra

The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, announced that **four new lighthouses** will be constructed along the **Brahmaputra River** in Assam to promote **lighthouse tourism** and improve **inland navigation safety**.

Key announcement

- **Four new lighthouses** will be built along **National Waterway-2 (Brahmaputra)** at:
 - **Bogibeel, Silghat, Pandu & Biswanathghat.**
- **Three** of these lighthouses will be on the **southern bank** of the Brahmaputra and **one (Biswanath Ghat)** on the **northern bank**.
- The announcement was made during the **Indian Lighthouse Festival 3.0** held at Visakhapatnam.
- These lighthouses are **located strategically** along the Brahmaputra River, which is **NW-2**.
- The project, estimated at approximately ₹84 crore, is a **joint venture** between the **Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL)** and the **Inland Waterways Authority of India**.
- Each **lighthouse** will be **20 metres tall** and **entirely solar-powered**.
- They have been **designed** with a **geographical range of 14 nautical miles** and a **luminous range of 8-10 nautical miles**.

River Lighthouses on the Brahmaputra to Strengthen Inland Navigation

4 new river lighthouses to enhance safe navigation, strengthen inland waterways and boost cargo, cruise and ferry movement on National Waterway-2

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

Projects & Locations

Bogibeel (Dibrugarh): - Located on the South Bank - Supports IWAI cargo terminal movement - Strengthens the Upper Assam navigation corridor Pandu Kamrup (Metro): - Located on the South Bank - Greenfield navigation aid - Supports cruise and ferry operations Silghat (Nagaon): - Supports multimodal connectivity - Located on the South Bank - Facilitates cargo and passenger vessel movement - Enhances the mid-river logistics ecosystem	Biswanath Ghat (Biswanath): - Only North Bank lighthouse - Greenfield navigation aid - Supports cruise and ferry operations Overall Benefits for People ✓ Safer 24x7 navigation on the Brahmaputra for cargo and passenger vessels ✓ Better connectivity for communities along the riverbanks ✓ Boost to local trade, tourism and river cruise activities ✓ Employment opportunities during construction and operations ✓ Faster and more reliable transport supporting regional economic growth in Assam
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Lighthouse tourism

- India has over 205 lighthouses and a coastline of more than 11,000 kilometres.
- Under **Maritime India Vision 2030** and **Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**, lighthouses are being developed as:
 - Tourist destinations
 - Cultural spaces
 - Local employment generators
- So far, **75 lighthouses** across **10 states and Union Territories** have been upgraded with modern tourist facilities.

LACHIT-1: Northeast's First Satellite Enters Space Era

In a landmark moment for Assam and the Northeast, **Assam Don Bosco University** is set to launch **LACHIT-1**, the **first satellite from the Northeastern region**, aboard **Indian Space Research Organisation's PSLV-C62 mission**.

PSLV-C62 / EOS-N1 Mission Key facts

- Launch Pad:** First Launch Pad, Sriharikota
- Vehicle:** PSLV-DL variant
- Significance:**
 - 105th launch from Sriharikota
 - 64th flight of PSLV
 - 5th mission of PSLV-DL configuration

Primary payload

- EOS-N1**
 - An **Earth Observation satellite** built for **strategic purposes**.
 - To be placed in a **Sun Synchronous Orbit**.

- The mission is a **commercial launch** of **NewSpace India Limited**.

Co-passenger satellites

- **15 co-passenger satellites** developed by **Indian startups, academia, and international partners**.
- Notable contributors include **Dhruva Space (India)**, **AlltoSpace (Brazil)**, **Orbital Paradigm (Spain)**, **RIDE! (France)**, and universities from **India, Nepal, Thailand and the United Kingdom**.
- Includes academic and student satellites such as **LACHIT-1 (Assam Don Bosco University)** and **Thybolt-3**.

Special mission feature

- After deploying **EOS-N1 and 14 satellites**, the **PS4 stage** will be **restarted and de-boosted**.
- The **KID capsule** will be released into a **re-entry trajectory**.
- Both the **PS4 stage and KID capsule** will re-enter Earth's atmosphere and **splash down in the South Pacific Ocean**.

About LACHIT-1

- **LACHIT-1** is part of **Dhruva Space's Polar Access-1 (PA-1) programme**.
- It is named after **Lachit Borphukan**, symbolising courage, resilience and regional pride.
- The satellite has been developed using **Dhruva Space's flight-qualified P-DoT platform** under the **ASTRA programme for academia**.
- It will be deployed using the **DSOD-1U separation system**.

Technical and functional significance

- **Type:** Store-and-forward **amateur radio satellite**.
- **Operation:** Uses **VHF/UHF bands** and will be operated from **ADBU's ground station**.
- **Access:** Once activated in orbit, it will be accessible to the **global amateur radio community**.
- **Utility:** Enables satellite-based messaging, experimentation and learning.

Institutional collaboration

- Developed with **Dhruva Space**, a Hyderabad-based space technology company.
- In collaboration with the **National Institute of Amateur Radio**, structured training programmes will be conducted on **amateur satellites for emergency response**.
- Mission operations will use **Dhruva Space's Integrated Space Operations Command Suite**.

GI Mahotsav

The **GI Mahotsav** (Geographical Indication Festival) was inaugurated in Guwahati, on **January 15, 2026**. Organized by the **PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI)** with support from the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)**.

Comprehensive List of GI Tagged Products from Assam

1. Textiles and Handloom

- Muga Silk of Assam, Muga Silk of Assam (logo), Bodo Eri Silk, Gamosa of Assam, Mishing Handloom Products, Assam Jaapi
- **Bodo Traditional Attire: Dokhona, Jwmgra (shawl/scarf), Gamsa, Aronai**

2. Agricultural and Food Products

- **Assam Tea (Orthodox), Kaji Nemu, Tezpur Litchi, Karbi Anglong Ginger, Singpho Phalap**
- **Specialty Rice Varieties:** Joha Rice, Boka Chaul (*Oryza sativa*), Chokuwa Rice
- **Bodo Agricultural Products: Bodo Keradapini (medicinal plant/shrub), Bodo Gongar Dunjia (aromatic herb)**

3. Handicrafts and Musical Instruments

- Sarthebari Bell Metal Craft, Asharikandi Terracotta Craft, Majuli Mask Making (Mukha Shilpa), Assam Majuli Manuscript Painting, Bihu Dhol, Assam Pani Meteka Craft, Assamese Jewellery.
- **Bodo Musical Instruments: Kham (Drum), Serja (Violin-like instrument), Sifung (Long flute), Thorkha (Percussion instrument), Gongona (Jew's harp), and Jotha (Cymbals).**

4. Manufactured and Fermented Products

- **Judima:** Traditional rice wine made by the **Dimasa** tribe, the first traditional brew from the North East to get a GI tag.

- **Bodo Rice Beers:** Bodo Jou Gwran, Maibra Jou Bidwi, Bodo Jou Gishi
- **Traditional Bodo Food:** Bodo Napham, Bodo Ondla, Bodo Gwkha, Bodo Narzi

Centre Releases ₹20.70 crore for Project Tiger & Elephant Scheme in Assam

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** has released **₹20.70 crore** as the **second instalment** under **Project Tiger & Elephant Scheme** for Assam in the current financial year **2025–26**.

Key details of the release

- The funds will be utilised **exclusively** by all four tiger reserves of Assam:
 - **Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Orang Tiger Reserve, Nameri Tiger Reserve & Manas Tiger Reserve (MONK)**
- The grant is released under the **centrally sponsored Project Tiger & Elephant Scheme**, implemented through the **National Tiger Conservation Authority**.

Project Tiger & Elephant Scheme

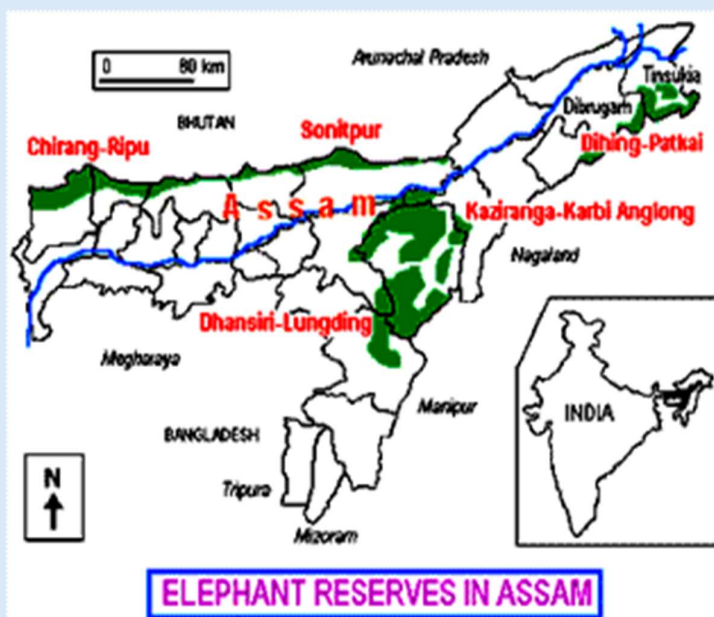
It is a **centrally sponsored wildlife conservation programme** of the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, aimed at protecting India's flagship species—**tigers and elephants**—along with their habitats.

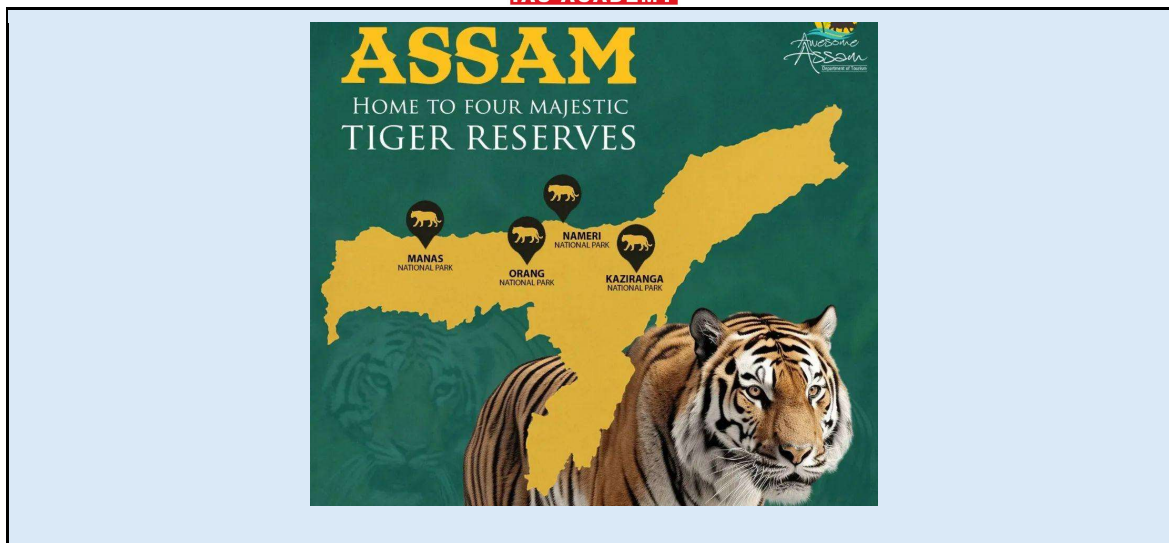
- **Project Tiger** was launched in **1973** to ensure the survival of the **Bengal tiger** by conserving core habitats, strengthening protection, and reducing human–wildlife conflict.
 - It is implemented through the **National Tiger Conservation Authority**.
- **Project Elephant**, started in **1992**, focuses on the conservation of **Asian elephants**, their **migration corridors**, and welfare, while addressing issues like **human–elephant conflict**.

Both the schemes were merged in mid 2023. Under the **merged Project Tiger & Elephant Scheme**, the Centre provides **financial assistance to states** for:

- **Habitat management and restoration, Anti-poaching and surveillance, Eco-development and community participation, Conflict mitigation and compensation, Scientific monitoring using technology**, including satellite imagery

Funds are released in **installments** and must be used strictly as per **approved conservation plans**, with mandatory reporting and monitoring to ensure accountability.





Conditions attached to the grant

- Funds must be spent **strictly as per the approved Tiger Conservation Plan**, focusing on habitat improvement, protection, monitoring and welfare of wildlife.
- Utilisation must follow the **MoU** signed between the Union Ministry and the field directors of the respective reserves.
- The Assam government must:
 - Use the funds **before the end of the financial year**.
 - **Refund any unspent balance** to the Centre.
 - Submit a **performance-cum-achievement report** by **March 31, 2026**.
- Authorities must provide **satellite photographs with date, latitude and longitude**, showing the condition **before and after** completion of works—ensuring transparency and accountability.

Gadya Xahitya Diwas observed to honour Bhattadev

The **387th Tirobhav Tithi** of **Vaikuntha Nath Bhagavat Bhattacharya**, popularly known as **Bhattadev**, was observed at **Haleshwar Devalaya**, Tezpur. The day is commemorated as **Gadya Xahitya Diwas**, celebrating the origins and legacy of Assamese prose literature.

Who was Bhattadev?

- Bhattadev (16th–17th century) is regarded as the **father of Assamese prose literature**.
- He was a devoted disciple of **Mahapurush Srimanta Damodar Dev**, a key figure of the **Ekasarana Vaishnavite** and **Satra** tradition in Assam.
- His prose writings marked a **shift from verse-dominated religious texts to structured, accessible prose**, laying the foundation for modern Assamese literature.
- His works are also noted for **early advocacy of social justice and women's dignity**, making him relevant beyond literature.

Bhattadev University is a public state university located at **Pathsala, Bajali** district established by Bhattadev University Act, 2017.

About Gadya Xahitya Diwas

- Observed annually on Bhattadev's Tirobhav Tithi.
- Aims to **promote Assamese prose (gadya)** and honour scholars who have enriched the language.
- Reinforces the link between **Vaishnavite Bhakti movements and linguistic development** in Assam.

Exam Hook

Gadya Xahitya Diwas is observed in Assam to commemorate Vaikuntha Nath Bhagavat Bhattacharya (Bhattadev), regarded as the father of Assamese prose literature.

Tripura's First Tea Auction Centre

Tripura is set to operationalise its **first tea auction centre** at Gurkhabasti in West Tripura district by April. The foundation stone was laid in March 2024 by Chief Minister. The centre is being developed under the supervision of the **Tripura Tea Development Corporation**.

Why is it Important?

At present, India has **seven tea auction centres**, including major hubs at Guwahati and Kolkata. Tripura's tea growers currently send their produce to these centres, increasing transport costs and reducing profit margins.

The new centre will:

- Reduce transportation expenses for planters.
- Improve **price realisation** for Tripura tea.
- Provide a ₹4 per kilogram transport subsidy to buyers initially.
- Strengthen local value addition and market access.

Economic Significance

- Tripura has **54 operational tea estates**.
- Annual production is around **90 lakh kilograms**.
- Over **30,000 people** directly depend on the tea sector.
- Once operational, Tripura will be treated as a **tea-consuming State**, enabling collection of **Goods and Services Tax on local transactions**.

One-line wrap: Tripura's first tea auction centre promises to empower local planters, enhance revenue, and strengthen the State's tea economy.

Train Operations Approved on Murkongselek–Sille Line

The **Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northeast Frontier Circle**, has authorised train operations on the newly laid **15.7 kilometre broad-gauge line between Murkongselek (Assam) and Sille (Arunachal Pradesh)** after successful inspection and speed trials. Trains can now operate at a maximum permissible speed of **110 kilometres per hour**.

Project Overview

- Part of the **26.15-kilometre Murkongselek–Pasighat new railway line project**.
- Developed by **Northeast Frontier Railway**.
- Includes three new stations: **Sille, Labo and Pasighat**.
- Features **27 major bridges**, reflecting challenging terrain.

Significance

- Enhances connectivity between **Assam and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Extends long-distance rail access to Pasighat via the Rangiya–Murkongselek route and the **Bogibeel Bridge**.
- Reduces travel time and transportation costs.
- Facilitates freight movement and reliable supply of essential commodities.
- Supports tourism and economic development in the region.

Background Context

- Arunachal Pradesh was first connected to **India's broad-gauge railway network** in **2014** through the **Harmuti–Naharlagun line**.
- The current expansion continues the Centre's focus on **strategic connectivity in border States**, aligning with infrastructure development under the Act East Policy and national integration goals.
- The project reflects the importance of railways in strengthening economic growth and strategic mobility in the Northeast.

One-line wrap: The Murkongselek–Sille rail approval marks another milestone in integrating Arunachal Pradesh more closely with the national railway network.

Star Cement's Hilara Plant

The Chief Minister inaugurated a new ₹400-crore cement plant of **Star Cement Limited** at Hilara in Barak Valley. The facility is a **2 million tonnes per annum grinding unit**, marking a major milestone in southern Assam's industrial expansion.

Why is it Important?

- Cement is considered the **backbone of infrastructure development**, supporting roads, bridges, housing and industrial projects.
- The new plant strengthens Assam's ambition to become the **industrial hub of Northeast India**.
- It improves cement supply in Barak Valley and neighbouring States.
- Expected to generate **over 1,000 direct and indirect jobs**.

Broader Infrastructure Context

The inauguration aligns with:

- The upcoming **ammonia-urea plant in Dibrugarh**.
- The proposed **rail-and-road tunnel under the Brahmaputra River**.
- The **high-speed corridor linking Barak Valley with Guwahati**.
- The 36-kilometre elevated corridor near Kaziranga National Park.

These projects reflect the government's focus on **infrastructure-led growth under the Act East Policy and Atmanirbhar Bharat vision**.

Economic Significance

- Encourages private investment in manufacturing.
- Boosts ancillary sectors like transport and logistics.
- Enhances regional supply-chain efficiency.

The plant symbolises rising industrial confidence in Assam's stable policy environment and improved law and order.

One-line wrap: The Hilara cement plant reflects Assam's transition towards infrastructure-driven industrial growth in the Northeast.

Aakhor AI

Aakhor AI, developed by **Borno Labs Private Limited**, is the **world's first speech-to-text application for the Assamese language**.

- It is currently representing Assam at the **India AI Impact Summit 2026** held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, inaugurated by Prime Minister.

Why is it Important?

- Most advanced artificial intelligence tools are limited to English or a few global languages.
- **Aakhor AI promotes digital inclusion** by enabling voice typing and creative writing in Assamese.
- It supports the preservation and promotion of regional languages in line with the **National Education Policy 2020**, which emphasises mother-tongue learning.
- It aligns with the Government of India's broader push under the **India Artificial Intelligence Mission** and Digital India initiatives.

Key Features

- Converts **Assamese speech into text** accurately.
- Enhances productivity of students, researchers, and small entrepreneurs.
- Expands the **digital footprint of Assamese language** in the global artificial intelligence ecosystem.

By showcasing at a global platform with participation from leading artificial intelligence innovators, Aakhor AI positions Assam within India's emerging knowledge economy.

World's First Bamboo-Based Second-Generation Bioethanol Plant in Assam

The **Assam Bio Ethanol Private Limited** plant at Numaligarh, Golaghat district, is the **world's first commercial second-generation bioethanol plant using bamboo as feedstock**. It was inaugurated by the **Prime Minister** in September 2024 and is currently entering full-scale production after the stabilisation phase.

Why is it important?

- It produces **second-generation (2G) ethanol**, unlike first-generation ethanol that uses **food crops such as sugarcane and maize**.
- 2G ethanol aligns with India's **Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme** under the **National Biofuel Policy, 2018 (amended 2022)**.
- Supports India's target of **20% ethanol blending** to reduce crude oil imports and carbon emissions.

Key Features

- **Investment:** ₹4,930 crore
- **Installed ethanol capacity:** 49,000 tonnes per annum
- Requires **5 lakh metric tonnes per annum of green bamboo**
- Additional products:
 - **Furfural** (19,000 tonnes/year)
 - **Acetic acid** (11,000 tonnes/year)
 - **Liquid carbon dioxide** (32,000 tonnes/year)
 - **25 megawatts green power**
- Achieved **99.7% fuel-grade ethanol purity** (above standard 99.5%)

Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) was officially granted **Navratna Status, Category-I Miniratna CPSE** on 1 December 2025, as announced by Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri**. This status enhances the company's financial and operational autonomy.

Historical Background

- Established on **22 April 1993** under the provisions of the **Assam Accord, 1985**.
- Popularly known as the '**Accord Refinery**', reflecting its role in addressing regional aspirations after the Assam Movement.
- The **3 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA)** refinery was dedicated to the nation on 9 July 1999 by former Prime Minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.
- Commercial production began in **October 2000**.
- **Ownership structure:** Oil India Ltd holding a majority stake of 69.63%, followed by the Government of Assam with 26% and Engineers India Ltd with 4.37%.

What is Navratna Status?

Under the **Department of Public Enterprises guidelines**, Navratna status grants select **Central Public Sector Enterprises** greater autonomy to:

- Invest up to ₹1,000 crore (or 15% of net worth) without prior government approval.
- Enter joint ventures and expand globally.
- Strengthen competitiveness in strategic sectors such as energy security.

Socio-Economic Impact

- Targets engagement of **30,000 farmers** across Assam and neighbouring northeastern states.
- Requires **12,500 hectares of bamboo plantation** with 60 lakh saplings.
- Encourages use of **barren and non-crop land**, protecting food security.
- Estimated **₹200 crore annual boost to rural economy**.
- Operates as a **zero-waste facility**, ensuring sustainable utilisation of bamboo.

The plant is promoted by **Numaligarh Refinery Limited** in partnership with **Fortum 3 BV (Finland)** and **Chempolis**, marking a significant example of international clean-energy collaboration.

Dibang Multipurpose Project

The **NHPC Limited** recently achieved a major construction milestone with the **daylighting of Diversion Tunnel-3** of the **Dibang Multipurpose Project** in Arunachal Pradesh.

- **Daylighting** means the **tunnel** has been **excavated completely from both ends** and opened to the surface, marking progress toward river diversion.

About the Project

- It is a **2,880 Megawatt flood control cum hydroelectric power project** being developed on the **Dibang River**, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Once developed fully, it will be India's **tallest concrete gravity dam** (around 278 metres).
- It is **being developed** by India's state-run **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC)**.
- Located near Munli village in **Lower Dibang Valley district**, Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is designed as:
 - An **energy storage project** to stabilise renewable energy supply.
 - A **flood moderation project**, reducing downstream flood risks in Assam.
 - A major contributor to India's **clean energy transition** under the National Electricity Policy and climate commitments.

Key Features

- Construction of a **278 metre high and 375 metre long concrete gravity dam**.
 - A **concrete gravity dam** resists water pressure mainly through its own weight.
- Built using **Roller Compacted Concrete technique**, making it the **highest Roller Compacted Concrete dam in the world**.
 - **Roller Compacted Concrete technique** allows faster construction and greater structural strength.
- Creation of a **43 kilometre long reservoir** with **3.85 billion cubic metres gross storage capacity**.
- Six head race tunnels and six tail race tunnels connected to an **underground powerhouse**.

Key Objectives

- Generation of **clean and renewable energy**.
- **Flood moderation** downstream in Assam.
- Strengthening **energy security** of the Northeast.
- Supporting India's climate commitments under the **Paris Agreement**.

The project is part of India's push for renewable energy expansion and aligns with the **National Action Plan on Climate Change**, especially the mission on sustainable energy.

Zubeen Garg's Rajbanshi Song 'Ore Bondhu'

A previously unreleased **Rajbanshi song** titled '**Ore Bondhu**', recorded nearly a decade ago in the voice of late music legend **Zubeen Garg**, was recently unveiled at Golokganj in Assam.

Why is it Significant?

- The song is recorded in the **Rajbanshi language**, spoken in parts of Assam, West Bengal, and neighbouring regions.
- It reflects Zubeen Garg's deep respect for **regional languages and folk traditions**.
- The lyrics were written by **Kamalesh Singha**, music arranged by **Satyajit Sarkar**, and the video directed by **Arya Koch**.

The release of 'Ore Bondhu' is not merely a musical event but a reminder of how art preserves identity and community memory. Even after his passing, Zubeen Garg's voice continues to connect people across generations.

Baikho Puja

The Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC) region witnessed the vibrant celebration of the traditional Baikho Puja at Bamunigaon in Assam's Kamrup district.

About Baikho Puja

- **Baikho Puja** (also known as **Khoksi Puja**) is a sacred **pre-harvest festival** celebrated annually by the **Rabha community** of Assam and parts of West Bengal.
- The festival is observed on the **full moon day of the Assamese month of Jeth** (May–June).
- It is dedicated to the deity of **wealth, fertility and harvest**, seeking abundant rainfall, protection from diseases and agricultural prosperity.

Key Features

- The festival reflects the close relationship between the Rabha people and nature, agriculture and community life.
- A major attraction is the **Bar Nak-Kai (Fire Dance)**, where priests known as **Baibras** walk barefoot over burning charcoal as an act of devotion and courage.
- Another popular event is **Leuwa Bokai**, a traditional tug-of-war competition played using a thick tree vine instead of a rope.

Traditional Instruments Used

- **Kham** – Traditional Rabha drum.
- **Gugumel** – Bamboo musical instrument.
- **Buburenga** – Indigenous reed instrument.

About the Rabha Tribe

- The **Rabhas** are a **Proto-Bodo indigenous community** belonging to the **Tibeto-Burman ethnolinguistic group**.
- They are recognized as a **Scheduled Tribe** in Assam.

- According to the 2011 Census, the Rabha population in Assam was 277,517, constituting **8.4%** of the **total ST population** of the state.
- The name *Rabha* is believed to have originated from the Sanskrit word **Bhairav**, reflecting their historical association with the worship of **Lord Shiva (Bhairav)** and **Goddess Shakti (Bhairavi)**.

Distribution

- The Rabhas are mainly concentrated in **Assam**, particularly in **Goalpara & Kamrup** districts and **BTR region**.
- Smaller populations are also found in **Meghalaya, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh**.

Social Structure

- Rabha society retains elements of a **matriarchal and matrilineal system**, where lineage is traditionally traced through the mother.
- The community consists of **seven major sub-groups**:
 - **Rongdani, Maitari, Kochcha, Pati, Dahori, Totola, Bitoliya & Hana.**
- Clans are known as **Baray** or **Husug**, while a group of clans forms a **Huri**.

Religion and Beliefs

- Traditionally, Rabhas followed **Animism**, worshipping nature and natural forces.
- Today, many Rabhas practice a blend of **traditional beliefs and Hinduism**.
- They are devoted to **Rishi-Bai** or **Burha Langa** (Lord Shiva) and **Kesaikhati** (Mahamaya) along with **Ghar Gosani** (household deity).
- They also worship **Paora Deo** who is considered to be the **younger sister** of the goddess **Kamakhya**.
- Two broad religious groups within Rabhas are:
 - **Forest Rabha** – primarily follow traditional animistic practices.
 - **Village Rabha** – follow a mix of animism and Hinduism.

Festivals and Culture

- Important festivals include:
 - **Baikho Puja (Khoksi Puja)**
 - **Hasong Puja**
 - **Rontak Puja**
 - **Songbai Tangngi**
 - **Langi Puja**
 - **Marai Puja (Manasa Puja)**
 - **Domashi**, a post-harvest festival resembling Magh Bihu and Bohag Bihu.

Music and Dance

- Traditional folk songs include **Hoi Maru, Dodan Geet, Moso'so Geet, Sathar Love Songs** and **Zora Geet**.
- Important musical instruments are:
 - **Kham** (long drum)
 - **Dhak**
 - **Tarcha**
 - **Mukh Brangsi** (flute)
 - **Sinnga** (buffalo horn instrument)

Traditional Attire

- **Women** wear **Raufan (Patani), Kambung, Khodabang** and **Aanchang** (shawl).
- **Men** wear **Pajal, Foli (Sengkanen), Dotari** and **Khopong** (traditional headgear).

One-Line Wrap:

Baikho Puja is a vibrant pre-harvest festival of the Rabha tribe that symbolizes agricultural prosperity, community unity and the preservation of indigenous cultural traditions.

Pygmy Hog Reintroduction Strengthens Grassland Conservation in Assam

The **Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP)** recently released **15 captive-bred pygmy hogs** (9 females and 6 males) into the **Kuribee grasslands of Manas National Park**.

About the Pygmy Hog

The **Pygmy Hog (Porcula salvania)** is the **world's smallest and rarest wild pig** and is considered a flagship species for the conservation of tall wet grassland ecosystems.

- It is naturally found in the **dense alluvial grasslands of the Himalayan foothills**.
- It is one of the few mammals that **builds their own nest with a roof**.
- It **belongs** to a separate **monotypic genus** (i.e it has no close relative) **Porcula**.
- It lives in **sociable family groups**, led by a **matriarch**.

- Historically, its range extended from **Uttar Pradesh to Assam**, including parts of **Nepal and Bhutan**.
- At present, viable wild populations are largely restricted to **Assam**, particularly **Manas National Park** and **Orang National Park**.

Conservation Status

- **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List:** Endangered.
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES):** Appendix I.
- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I.

Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP)

The programme operates under the leadership of the **Assam Forest Department** and is implemented in collaboration with:

- **Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust.**
- **IUCN Species Survival Commission Wild Pig Specialist Group.**
- **Ecosystems-India.**
- **Aaranyak** (implementation partner).

The programme began in **1996** with the rescue of a small founder population from Manas and initiated reintroductions in **2008**.

Key Achievements

- A total of **194 captive-bred pygmy hogs** have been released in Assam so far.
- **78 pygmy hogs** have been released in Manas National Park since 2020.
- Orang National Park now supports an estimated **250 wild-born pygmy hogs**, demonstrating successful species recovery.

Rare Megalithic Artefacts Unearthed in Dima Hasa

In a major archaeological development, researchers have uncovered rare artefacts at Embrudisa village in Dima Hasao district of Assam.

- The **excavation** was led by **Dr Shringdao Langthasa** in collaboration with the District Museum, Haflong.

Key Discoveries

The excavation at a newly identified **stone jar site** revealed:

- Handmade and wheel-made pottery fragments
- Metal objects such as a **dao (traditional blade)** and arrowhead
- A probable spearhead
- Bangles, beads, and ornaments
- Charcoal remains and bone fragments
- A miniature metallic object shaped like a vessel, possibly of ritual significance

The artefacts have been transferred to the Haflong District Museum for documentation and scientific study.

Why is it Important?

- The site appears to be linked to the **megalithic tradition**, which refers to ancient cultures that built large stone structures for burial or ritual purposes.
- Charcoal and bone samples will undergo laboratory analysis to establish a **scientific chronology**.
- If successfully dated, it could become the **first scientifically dated megalithic site in Assam**, marking a landmark in the State's archaeological history.

Vibrant Villages Programme

The **Vibrant Villages Programme Phase II** was launched by the Union Home Minister from Nathanpur village in Cachar district, Assam. The initiative marks a decisive shift in India's approach towards border development.

About Vibrant Villages Programme

- **VVP Phase I (2023): A Centrally Sponsored Scheme** covering 662 villages along the northern border in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh.
- **VVP Phase II (2025): A Central Sector Scheme** covering 1,954 villages in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, J&K, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal adjoining Pakistan and Bangladesh.
 - 140 of these villages are located in Assam.
- **Total Outlay of VVP-II:** ₹6,839 crore.
- **Time Period of VVP-II:** Financial year 2028-2029

Objectives

- Ensure **zero migration** from border villages.
- Achieve **zero infiltration** into the country.
- Remove developmental gaps between border and mainland regions.

Key Focus Areas (Four Thematic Pillars)

- **All-weather road connectivity**
- **Telecommunication and digital connectivity**
- **Television connectivity**
- **Electrification through convergence of schemes**

The programme integrates infrastructure, healthcare, education, livelihood generation and tourism promotion. It aligns with national security goals and strengthens the role of border residents as partners in internal security.

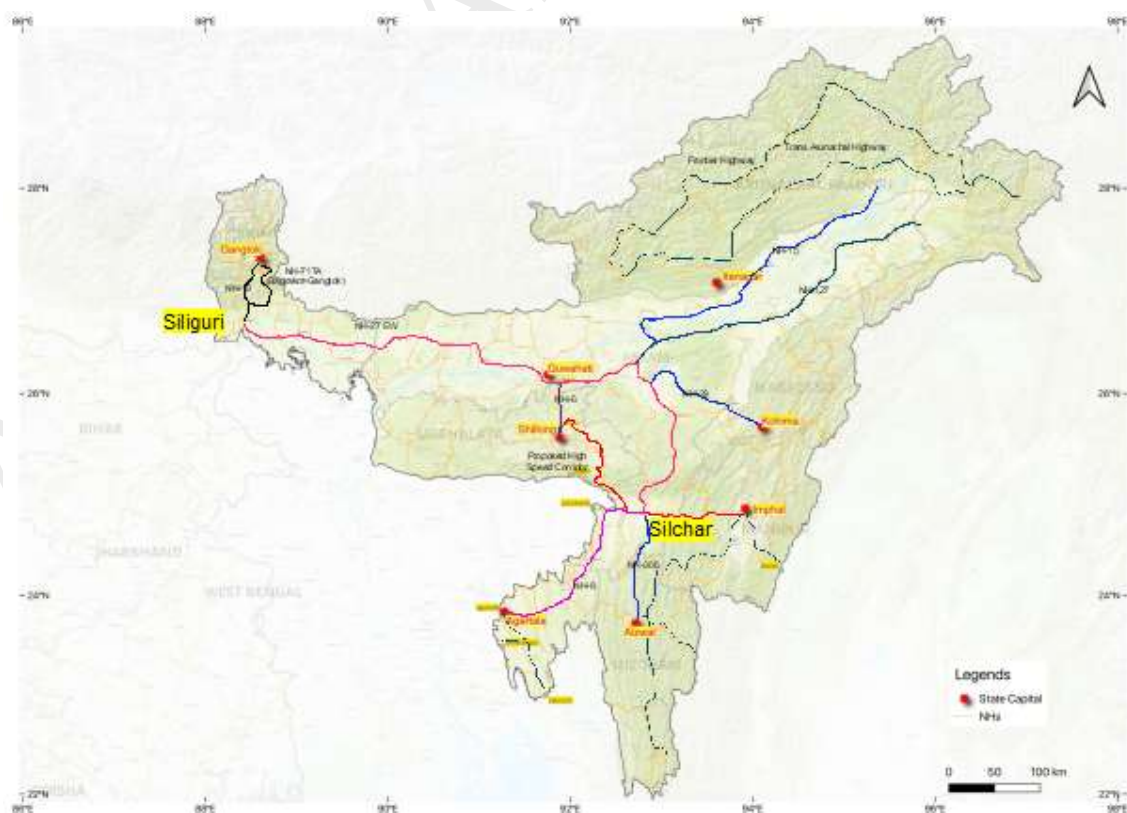
The initiative would benefit 11 villages in Cachar, 21 in Sribhumi, 28 in Dhubri and several others across South Salmara, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Tamulpur and Udalguri.

Silchar–Guwahati Expressway

The Prime Minister is set to lay the foundation stone of the **Silchar–Guwahati Expressway** during his visit to Barak Valley on 14 March 2026. The ambitious project, approved by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs**, is a major infrastructure push in the Northeast.

Project Overview

- **Length:** 166.8 kilometres (144.8 km in Meghalaya, 22 km in Assam).
- **Cost:** Approximately ₹22,864 crore.
- **Type:** Four-lane, access-controlled **greenfield expressway** (part of NH-06).
- **Developer:** **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited.**
- **Completion Target:** 2030.
- **Mode:** **Hybrid Annuity Model**, where government and private players share financial risks.
- **Economic / Social / Transport Nodes Connected:** Airports: Guwahati Airport, Shillong Airport, Silchar Airport
- **Major Cities / Towns Connected:** Guwahati, Shillong, Silchar, Diengpasoh, Ummulong, Phramer, Khlieriat, Ratachera, Umkiang, Kalain.



Connectivity and Alignment

- Connects Mawlyngkhung (near Shillong) to Panchgram (near Silchar).
- It passes through Ri Bhoi, East Khasi Hills, West Jaintia Hills, East Jaintia Hills (Meghalaya) and Cachar (Assam).
- Integrates with major highways such as National Highway-27 and National Highway-37.
- Reduces travel time between Guwahati and Silchar to around **4.5–5 hours**.

One-line wrap: The Silchar–Guwahati Expressway promises to redefine connectivity and economic integration across the Northeast by 2030.

Brahmaputra Literature Festival

The second edition of the revived **Brahmaputra Literature Festival 2026** was held in Sivasagar, bringing together writers, artists and scholars from India and abroad.

- The festival has re-emerged as a major cultural platform for the Northeast.

Origin and Revival

- The festival was first organised in 2017 under the leadership of eminent Assamese author **Rita Chowdhury**, then Director of the **National Book Trust**.
- It placed the Northeast prominently on India's literary map.
- After a pause, it was revived under the literary trust **Adharxila**, and the **2026 edition** was hosted in **Sivasagar**, the historic capital of the Ahom kingdom.

Key Highlights

- Nearly 50 sessions covering literature, history, archaeology, ecology, artificial intelligence and identity.
- International participation from Hungary, Slovakia and Kenya.
- Discussions ranged from **Madhab Kandali's Ramayana** to modern warfare narratives.
- **Theme and Focus:**
 - The 2026 theme is “**A confluence of Rhythm, Word & Spirit – Celebrating the Voice of Humanity.**”
 - The festival will place a special spotlight on **tribal heritage**, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual identities, and **indigenous storytelling traditions** of the region, including the Bodo and Mishing communities.
 - It serves as a vital platform to **bridge local traditions with global perspectives**, fostering dialogue across nations, languages, and cultures.

Exam Hook: Key Takeaways

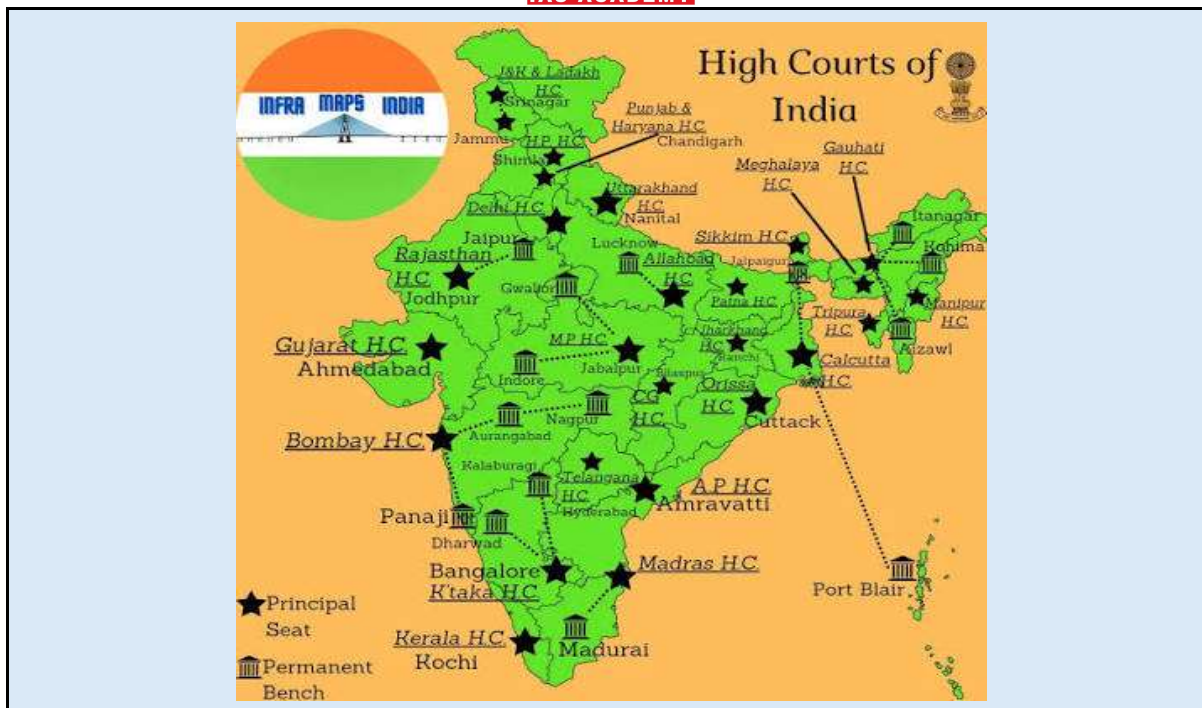
- Launched in 2017; revived in 2025–26.
- Hosted in historic Sivasagar.
- Promotes Northeast's literary and cultural heritage.
- Examples of cultural soft power and decentralised literary movement.

Integrated Judicial City for Northeast India Takes Shape in North Guwahati

The Chief Justice of India **Surya Kant** laid the foundation stone for an **Integrated Judicial Court Complex** at **North Guwahati**.

About Gauhati High Court

- The **Assam High Court** was **inaugurated** in **Shillong** on **April 5, 1948**, and later shifted to **Gauhati** on **August 14, 1948**, before being **renamed** the **Gauhati High Court** in **1971**.
- The **Principal Seat** of the Gauhati High Court is at **Guwahati**, Assam.
- Apart from it, the High Court has **three outlying Benches**, viz, **Kohima Bench** for Nagaland, **Aizawl Bench** for Mizoram and **Itanagar Bench** for Arunachal Pradesh.
- The **Gauhati High Court** occupied a unique position of being a **common High Court** of **seven States of North East India**, till **23.03.2013**, when separate High Courts were established in **Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura**.
- **Sir Ronald Francis Lodge** was the **first Chief Justice** of the Assam High Court (now Gauhati High Court).
- The **first Assamese Chief Justice** of the Gauhati High Court was **Justice Holiram Deka**, who served from January 3, 1961, to June 29, 1961.



What is the Integrated Judicial Court Complex?

- The complex will house the **principal seat** of the Gauhati High Court, which serves Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland.
- It is being developed at Rangmahal over 148 bighas (around 49 acres).
- **Phase-I cost:** approximately ₹479 crore.
- Envisioned as a **modern judicial city**, integrating courts, lawyers, litigants and judicial staff in one campus.

Key features

- **High Court buildings, district courts, bar buildings, and administrative offices.**
- **Parking facilities** for about 900 cars and 400 two-wheelers.
- **Interconnected buildings** through bridges for smooth movement.
- **Advanced security, fire safety, and disaster-resilient design.**
- **Dedicated facilities** such as:
 - Separate bar room for **women lawyers**
 - **Primary health centre**
 - Dedicated approach road for the High Court

Illegal Earth Excavation Threatens Jerenga Pathar Heritage

The All Tai Ahom Students' Union (ATASU) has submitted a memorandum to the district administration of Sivasagar, raising alarm over **alleged illegal earth excavation** at Jerenga Pathar and **wildlife crimes** at Pahu Garh.

About Jerenga Pathar

- **Jerenga Pathar** is not merely a physical landscape; it is a **symbol of Assamese sacrifice, courage, and identity.**
- It is closely associated with **Joymoti Konwari**, revered for her resistance and martyrdom during the Ahom period.
 - In the 17th century, **Joymoti Konwari** (wife of Prince Gadapani) was **tied to a thorny plant** and **tortured to death** at this very spot for 14 days.
 - She refused to reveal her husband's whereabouts to the tyrannical 'Lora Raja' (Sulikphaa)

Pahu Garh: Asia's First Natural Zoo

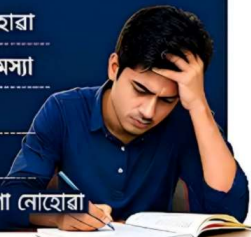
- Located to the west of Jerenga Pathar, **Pahu Garh** is an engineering and ecological marvel built by **Swargadeo Rudra Singha** (1696–1714).
- It was **designed** as an **open-habitat zoo**—centuries before the modern concept of "safari parks" existed.
 - Animals were kept in enclosures created by earthen ramparts (**Garhs**) and water channels.
- Today, it functions as a critical **wetland ecosystem** and a **sanctuary** for **winter migratory birds** like the Bar-headed Goose and Siberian Pelican.

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IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
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EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Manipuri Duck Earns Indigenous Breed Tag

The **Manipuri duck**, locally known as **Meitei Nganu / Eshing Nganu**, has been officially recognised as an **indigenous duck breed of India**.

More About the News

- The **Manipuri duck** has been registered as a distinct indigenous breed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research – National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, following approval by the **Breed Registration Committee**.
The decision was taken during the **13th meeting of the committee held in New Delhi**, chaired by the Deputy Director General (Animal Science), ICAR.
- This recognition formally places the Manipuri duck within India's official livestock genetic repository.

Key facts about Manipuri Duck

- **Local names:** *Meitei Nganu, Eshing Nganu*
- **Region:** Manipur
- **Rearing system:** Mostly **backyard and wetland-based**, low-input system
- **Utility:** Eggs and meat; well adapted to local climatic and wetland conditions
- **Significance:** Part of Manipur's traditional farming and food culture.
- With this registration, **Manipur now has four indigenous breeds** recognised at the national level:
 - **Manipuri Pony, Kaunayen Chicken, Manipuri Black Pig, Manipuri Duck**

National context

- In the same approval cycle, **13 indigenous and 3 synthetic livestock and poultry breeds** from across India were cleared.
- Assam also featured with registrations such as **Nagi duck** and **Rajdigheli goose**.
- So far, **242 indigenous animal breeds** have been registered in India, reflecting the country's vast agrobiodiversity.

One-line wrap

The indigenous tag for the Manipuri duck strengthens conservation of local genetic resources while supporting sustainable rural livelihoods.

Bilasipara Powers Assam's Green Push with First Utility-Scale Solar Plant

The Chief Minister inaugurated a **70 megawatt solar power plant at Khudigaon, Bilasipara, Dhubri**, marking a major milestone in Assam's **renewable energy transition**.

- On the same day, financial assistance was distributed to **18,375 women beneficiaries** under the **Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyaan**, popularly known as **Lakhpatri Baideu**.

Key features of the solar project

- **Capacity:** **70 megawatt**, Assam's **first utility-scale solar plant**
- **Land area:** Around **1,000 bighas** of encumbrance-free government land
- **Cost:** Over **₹350 crore**
- **Infrastructure:**
 - **1,80,605 solar modules**
 - **Dedicated switchyard and control room**
 - **6-kilometre transmission line** to Bilasipara grid sub-station
- **Expected output:** About **141 million units of electricity annually**
- **Environmental impact:** Reduction of nearly **1.15 lakh tonnes of carbon emissions per year**

A **power purchase agreement** has been signed between Assam Power Distribution Company Limited and the implementing agency at a tariff of **₹3.92 per unit**. The developer will operate and maintain the project for **25 years**.

Why is this significant for Assam?

- Assam's solar generation was earlier **negligible**; with this project, total solar capacity has reached **about 680 megawatt**.
- Strengthens **energy self-reliance** and reduces dependence on conventional power sources.
- Supports India's broader climate commitments under **renewable energy expansion and emission reduction**.
- Another **50 megawatt solar project at Barchala (Sonitpur)** is under construction, indicating scale-up.

One-line wrap

The Bilasipara solar plant marks Assam's shift from negligible solar generation to a credible green energy future.

Chandubi Festival

The **16th annual Chandubi Festival** was held from **January 1 to January 5, 2026**, at **Chandubi Lake**, reaffirming its place as one of Assam's most important **community-led cultural and eco-tourism festivals**.

What is the Chandubi Festival?

- The Chandubi Festival is a **five-day indigenous cultural festival** organised jointly by the **Barduar Bholagaon Anchalik Rabha Students' Union** and the **Chandubi Festival Celebration Committee**.
- It is held near Chandubi Lake, located in **Kamrup**, under the Palasbari Legislative Assembly Constituency.
- The festival primarily celebrates the **culture, traditions, music and dance of the Rabha community**, while welcoming participation from other groups across Assam.

Chandubi Lake: Geography and history

- Chandubi Lake was formed after the **Great Assam Earthquake of 1897**, making it a **natural lake created by tectonic activity**.
- It is located at the **foot hills of Garo hills** spread between Assam and Meghalaya.
- Surrounded by hills, forests and indigenous settlements, the lake is both an **ecologically sensitive wetland** and a **cultural landscape**.
- The area is inhabited largely by indigenous communities, especially the **Rabhas**, whose livelihoods are closely linked with the lake.

About the Rabha Tribe

- The Rabha language belongs to **Bodo sub branch of Tibeto-Burman language** and so it is a sister language of the Boro language.
- Rabha does **not have its own scripts** and so the **Assamese script** has been adopted to write this language.
- The Rabhas are primarily found in **Goalpara** district, the **northern Garo Hills**, and **Kamrup district**, which is on the south bank of the Brahmaputra.
- The Rabha people are dispersed over the districts of Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, and Darrang.
- The Rabha population is 296.189 people, or 8.6% of all Tribal people, according to the 2011 Census Report.
- The Rabhas have accepted Assamese as a working language for their overall development and survival.
- They have also accepted various cultural and ritual functions of Assamese society.

Festival

- Their main communal celebrations, known as "Khokchi" or "Baikho," are based on their own religious ideas and ideals.
- This spring celebration is observed from the middle of April through the middle of May.
- Additionally, they celebrate two other holidays: "Domasi" (harvesting on January 14) and "Mambe-Bakai" (the start of planting in March/April).
- The 'Baikho' or 'Khokchi', puja is observed by the Rangdani and Maitori communities with the goal of appeasing the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, Baikho.
- In the majority of the villages, 'Hachang puja' has taken the place of this celebration at a designated location known as 'Hachang than'.
- During this event, young people sing the traditional song 'Sathar geet' or 'Khokchi geet' to express their love and affection for their loved ones.
- Another folk festival of the Pati Rabhas is 'Langa puja'. 'Langa' means Mahadeva, one of the Trinity of the Hindu Mythology.
- There are many other deities, such as: Dhan-kuber, Thakurani, Dudhkumar, etc.

One-line wrap:

The Chandubi Festival shows how indigenous culture, local economy and environmental care can grow together through community leadership.

Floating Toilet Inaugurated in Nalbari

To strengthen **flood-resilient sanitation infrastructure**, a **Floating Toilet** was inaugurated in **Nalbari** under the **Swachh Bharat Mission–Grameen**. The initiative aims to ensure **safe, hygienic, and dignified sanitation access** during Assam's recurring floods, especially in **riverine and low-lying areas**.

Key features of the Floating Toilet

- Built on a **high-density polyethylene floating dock**, ensuring stability during floods.
- Equipped with **four fibre-reinforced plastic cabins**:
 - **Two waterless urinals**
 - **Two Indian water closets**
- Integrated **biodigester-based waste treatment system** that safely breaks down waste and produces **odour-free treated water**.
- Treated effluent meets **prescribed discharge standards**, making it safe for reuse or release into nearby water bodies.
- Designed for **easy access** through a floating walkboard.
- Each unit has its own **water tank, proper ventilation, lighting**, and provision for **solar power**.
- A **manual hand pump** ensures usability even during power outages.

Operational advantages

- The units are **portable**, can be installed or removed within a few hours, and adapt to changing flood conditions.
- They can be deployed near **relief camps** and vulnerable habitations during emergencies.
- Ownership and deployment will be managed by **Public Health Engineering divisions** during flood situations.

Mrdangiya Gayan-Bayan

The second biennial State convention of the **Mrdangiya Gayan-Bayan Sanstha, Assam** was held in Dibrugarh, attended by Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal**, highlighting renewed efforts to preserve Assam's classical devotional traditions.

About Mrdangiya Gayan-Bayan

- **Mrdangiya Gayan-Bayan** is a traditional **devotional music and percussion ensemble** of Assam, closely associated with the **Ekasarana Vaishnavite tradition**.
- It forms an integral part of **Naam-Kirtan** performed in **Namghars** and **Satras**, using instruments like the **khol** and **mridanga** along with vocal recitation.
- The tradition has **no written manual**; it is transmitted orally through **guru-shishya parampara**, sustained by disciplined practice across generations.

Cultural and social significance

- The tradition is deeply rooted in **rural Assam**, acting as a bridge between **spiritual practice, music, and community life**.
- It reflects the **living intangible cultural heritage** of the State, combining rhythm, devotion, and collective participation.
- Institutions such as **Auniati Satra** have historically played a key role in nurturing and standardising gayan-bayan practices.



Sanskaar Shaala

The **Sanskaar Shaala** programme was inaugurated in Guwahati by **Lakshman Prasad Acharya**, highlighting renewed focus on **value-based education for children**.

About Sanskaar Shaala

- **Sanskaar Shaala** is a structured programme aimed at the **holistic development of children aged 4 to 14 years**.
- It is organised by the **Marwari Sammelan**, Kamrup Shakha.
- The initiative seeks to complement formal schooling by **instilling moral values, social responsibility, and cultural awareness** at an early age.

Key ideas highlighted at the launch

- The Governor emphasised that **education without values is incomplete**.
- Quoting the Sanskrit maxim "**Sanskarah hi gunanam moolam**", he underlined that **values are the foundation of all virtues**.
- While education provides **knowledge and skills**, values guide **conduct, character, and citizenship**.
- Children, as future citizens, must grow with a sense of **Indian values, family traditions, and social harmony**.
- The programme draws inspiration from India's **ancient knowledge traditions**, including teachings from the **Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Bhagavad Gita**.

Rongker Fest Begins in Karbi Anglong Amid Land Rights Debate

The **Rongker Karkli Festival 2026**, the most important traditional festival of the Karbi community, has begun across **Karbi Anglong** and West Karbi Anglong, even as a **crucial legal hearing on land rights and eviction** is awaited in the Gauhati High Court.

About Rongker Karkli Festival

- **Rongker** is a **post-harvest thanksgiving festival** of the Karbi people, one of the largest indigenous tribes of Assam's hill districts.
- It is dedicated to **appeasing local deities** for community welfare, protection from natural calamities, good harvest, and prosperity.
- The festival is marked by **ritual prayers, traditional dances, community feasts, and offerings**, reinforcing Karbi cultural identity and social cohesion.
- Celebrated annually in villages across Karbi Anglong and neighbouring areas, Rongker reflects the **living traditions of hill societies** under the Sixth Schedule.

Parallel legal development

- January 5, 2026, is significant due to an ongoing legal dispute over **Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR) and Village Grazing Reserve (VGR)** lands.
- The **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council** and the Government of Assam are set to file a **joint affidavit** in response to writ petitions concerning alleged encroachments in the **Kheroni area of West Karbi Anglong**.
- The High Court has **stayed eviction proceedings**, and the final verdict will decide whether eviction can proceed on lands claimed as grazing reserves.

Hega'ngi Festival

The **Zeme community**, a prominent branch of the **Zeliangrong Naga** group, recently concluded their major annual festival, **Hega'ngi**, in Haflong, Dima Hasao. Celebrated with immense traditional fervor, this three-day event is essentially a post-harvest thanksgiving ritual and a "year-ending" festival that marks the transition into a new agricultural cycle.

About the Festival

The festival centers around the worship of **Tin Wang**, revered as the "Leader of the Sky" or the Supreme Deity.

- The festivities begin at the **Lodiram Kelumki** (temple), where community members offer their best **Jhum** (shifting cultivation) produce to Tin Wang.
- Second day is for **Social Bonding** and is dedicated to **traditional games, sports, and merry-making**.
 - A hallmark of Zeme culture, the winners of these competitions invite the village to their homes for a feast featuring traditional meat dishes and **Ju** (locally brewed rice beer).
- On the final day, the youth visit the elders of the village, singing and dancing to receive their blessings.

About the Zeme People

- **Identity:** The Zeme (also known as Zemi or Nzeme) are spread across **Assam** (Dima Hasao), **Manipur**, and **Nagaland**. Together with the **Liangmei** and **Rongmei** tribes, they form the **Zeliangrong** collective.
- **Religious Reforms:** While many follow Christianity, a significant section adheres to the **Heraka** and **Paupaise** indigenous belief systems, largely influenced by the reforms of **Rani Gaidinliu** and **Haipou Jadonang**.
- **Preservation:** In the modern era, festivals like Hega'ngi are critical for preserving the Zeme's **folklore**, distinctive **Sattriya-like** rhythmic dances, and their unique **linguistic identity**.

Rima Das Wins New York Women in Film and Television Award

Acclaimed Assamese filmmaker **Rima Das** has achieved another milestone in her career by winning the **New York Women in Film and Television (NYWIFT) Award** for Direction. The award recognizes her work on "**Village Rockstars 2**", a sequel to her National Award-winning film. This accolade highlights her unique style of **realism** and "lived-experience" storytelling, which has brought the local narratives of Northeast India to the global stage.

Key Highlights of the Achievement

- **Prestigious Recognition:** The New York Women in Film and Television is a premier non-profit organization dedicated to elevating the voices of women in digital media and entertainment.
- **Village Rockstars 2:** Released in 2025, the film continues the journey of its predecessor, focusing on the dreams and struggles of rural youth in Assam.
- **Global Impact:** Rima Das was among 11 international filmmakers selected this year. Her peers included notable directors like **Sonali Bose** and **Cherien Dabis**, placing Indian independent cinema in elite company.
- **Cinematic Style:** Das is known for being a "one-woman army"—often acting as director, writer, cinematographer, and editor. Her films typically feature non-professional actors from her own village, **Chhaygaon**.

TS-38: Climate-Resilient Rapeseed Variety

Farmers in Assam's **Kamrup** district are witnessing a bumper season for **Toria** (rapeseed), due to a unique synergy between traditional weather patterns and modern agricultural science. While dense fog often disrupts daily life, it has emerged as a "blessing" for the **TS-38** variety, providing essential moisture to parched, rain-fed plots and preventing the crops from withering.

Why TS-38 is a Game Changer

Developed by **Assam Agricultural University** during **2018–19**, the **TS-38** variety is a **certified toria (rapeseed) variety** designed for the agro-climatic conditions of Northeast India.

- **High Yielding & Short Duration:** Its quick maturity makes it perfect for **double or triple cropping**, allowing farmers to plant it immediately after harvesting **Sali rice**.
- **Climate Adaptability:** It thrives in **rain-fed conditions**, yielding approximately **5 quintals per acre** without requiring heavy irrigation.
- **Adopted:** TS-38 is now being adopted in other Northeastern states such as **Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh**, and even in **Odisha, Bihar and Rajasthan**.
- **National Demand:** Due to its superior performance, the variety is now being exported to states like **Odisha, Bihar, and Rajasthan**, proving its adaptability across diverse ecological zones.

Institutional Support and Success

The success of rapeseed in the region is bolstered by a strong support framework:

- **Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK):** KVK Kamrup provides the critical link between laboratory research and the field, offering **technical support** and producing **certified seeds** for local farmers.
- **Farmer Producer Companies:** Groups like the **Bhailabari Fishery Farmers Producers Company** are aggregating small-scale farmers to adopt these certified varieties, ensuring better market reach and collective bargaining power.
- **Economic Impact:** Individual farmers have reported earnings of up to **₹5 lakh** from a single season, highlighting the potential of oilseed mission goals.

Financial Assistance Scheme for Udasin Bhakats Launched in Assam

The Chief Minister of Assam has launched a **monthly financial assistance scheme for Udasin Bhakats** attached to recognised satras in Assam, aimed at strengthening their welfare and sustaining satra institutions.

About the Scheme

- **Beneficiaries:** *Udasin Bhakats* of **recognised Satras** in Assam
- **Financial Assistance:** ₹1,500 per month
- **Mode of Transfer:** Direct Benefit Transfer to bank accounts
- **Disbursement Date:** 10th of every month
- **Current Coverage:** 620 Udasin Bhakats across multiple districts

Administrative Process

- Beneficiary lists are:
 - Prepared by **District Commissioners**
 - Verified by **District / Additional District Commissioners**
 - Uploaded district-wise on the **DIDS portal**
- The scheme allows:
 - Inclusion of **newly inducted Udasin Bhakats**
 - Addition of **eligible beneficiaries left out earlier**

District-wise Distribution

- The highest number of beneficiaries are from **Majuli**, reflecting its status as the cultural heartland of Assam's **Vaishnavite satra tradition**.
- Other districts include Barpeta, Jorhat, Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Golaghat, Nagaon, Nalbari, Sivasagar, Sonitpur, Udalguri, Dhubri, and Goalpara.

Other Reforms

- The State Government has also:
 - Constituted the **Assam Satra Commission** with **financial powers**
 - Empowered it to:
 - Grant financial assistance to satras
 - Permit eviction of **encroachments on satra land**
- As per official data, over **15,288 bighas of satra land** are under encroachment, with **Barpeta district** being the most affected.

Types of Sattras

Satras in Assam can be classified in **two ways**—by **lifestyle of bhakats** and by **ideological affiliation (sanghati)**.

Based on Lifestyle of Bhakats

- **Udasin Sattras:**
 - Bhakats and the **sattradhikar** follow **celibacy**.
 - Examples: **Uttar Kamalabari Sattra**, **Auniati Sattra**, **Bhogpur Sattra**.
- **Grihasti Sattras:**
 - Bhakats lead **householder (non-celibate) lives**.
 - Example: **Garmur Sattra (Majuli)**.

Based on Ideological Affiliation (Sanghati)

- **Purusha Sanghati:**
 - Founded by **Purusottama Thakura**, grandson of **Srimanta Sankardeva**.
 - Sattras led by descendants of Sankardeva.
- **Nika Sanghati:**
 - Founded by **Mathuradas Burha-ata** and **Badaluwa Padma-ata**.
 - Emphasises **purity, cleanliness, and strict discipline**, following **Madhavdeva's tradition**.
- **Kala Sanghati:**
 - Established by **Gopaldeva** and successors.
 - **Egalitarian**, especially regarding caste; strong outreach to **tribal and marginalised communities**.
 - Examples: **Moamaria Sattra**, **Dihing Sattra**.
- **Brahma Sanghati:**
 - Founded by **Damodardeva** and **Harideva**, Brahmin disciples of Sankardeva.
 - More **orthodox**; allows **Vedic rites** along with **nama-kirtana**.

- Prioritises **deva** over **guru, nama, and bhakat**.
- Examples: **Auniati Sattr**, **Dakshinpat Sattr** (**Majuli**).

Tlaizawng Paradise Festival

The **Tlaizawng Paradise Festival** was inaugurated in Mizoram as part of the State government's efforts to promote **nature-based and experiential tourism**.

More About the News

- The two-day festival was held near **Tuivai Bridge over Tuivai river at Phuaibuang village in Saitual district**, a scenic location known for its riverine landscape and seasonal floral beauty.
- The term **Tlaizawng** means *cherry blossom* in the local language, symbolising the natural charm and visual appeal that the festival seeks to showcase.
- The event reflects the State's strategy to diversify tourism beyond conventional destinations and highlight lesser-known natural sites.

Why the festival matters

- Mizoram is rich in **hills, rivers, forests, and floral diversity**, but remains underexplored in mainstream tourism.
- Festivals like Tlaizawng aim to **link ecology with livelihood**, creating income opportunities for local communities.
- Seasonal attractions such as **cherry blossoms** help promote **low-impact, sustainable tourism**, especially during short flowering windows.

Mopin Festival

The **Mega Mopin Festival** was recently celebrated in Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, highlighting **cultural unity and indigenous traditions** of the region.

About Mopin Festival

The **Mopin Festival** is a major **harvest festival of the Galo tribe** in Arunachal Pradesh, celebrated to seek **prosperity, peace, and protection from evil forces**.

- It is dedicated to **Mopin Ane (Mopin-Digo Ane)**, the goddess of wealth and fertility.
- Celebrated annually during **April**, marking the agricultural cycle.
- It symbolises **community bonding, cultural identity, and harmony with nature**.

Key Features of the Festival

- **Rituals & Prayers:**
 - Devotees offer prayers to **Mopin Ane** for good harvest and well-being.
- **Popir Dance:**
 - A traditional group dance performed by women, reflecting **cultural elegance and unity**.
- **Use of Rice Paste (Ette):**
 - Applied on faces as a symbol of **purity, prosperity, and blessing**.
- **Community Feasts & Celebrations:**
 - Strengthens **social cohesion and shared identity**.

One-Line Wrap

Mopin Festival reflects the rich tribal heritage of Arunachal Pradesh, blending agriculture, spirituality, and unity in diversity.

Bharalu River

The **Bharalu River in Guwahati** is facing severe pollution due to **unchecked dumping of plastic and household waste**, raising concerns over **urban flooding and public health**.

About Bharalu River

- The **Bharalu River** is a **tributary of the Brahmaputra River** flowing through Guwahati, Assam.
- It historically functioned as a **natural drainage channel**, helping manage stormwater and prevent flooding.
- It is a non-perennial river.
- Initially Bharalu River received perennial flow from Bahini River which originates from Khasi Hills of Meghalaya at Umtyrnga.
- It travels a distance of 9.29 Km before confluence with Bharalu River at Jonali point.
- The width of the River is on an average 14 meters.



One-Line Wrap

The Bharalu River crisis highlights how urban pollution and poor waste management can turn vital natural drains into environmental hazards.

Mount Semeru Volcano

Mount Semeru, Indonesia's tallest volcano on Java Island, recently erupted multiple times, emitting **ash plumes up to 1,100 metres**, prompting safety alerts and evacuation warnings.

About Mount Semeru

- Located in **East Java, Indonesia**.
- Height: **3,676 metres above sea level**.
- Lies in the **Pacific Ring of Fire**, a highly active tectonic zone.
 - **Ring of Fire:** A zone around the Pacific Ocean with intense volcanic and seismic activity due to plate boundaries.



Key Features of Mount Semeru

- It is a **stratovolcano**, characterised by **steep slopes and explosive eruptions**.
 - **Stratovolcano**: A volcano built from layers of lava, ash, and debris, known for explosive eruptions.
- One of the **most active volcanoes in Indonesia**.
- Regular eruptions include: **Ash plumes, pyroclastic flows (hot ash clouds) and lahars**.
 - **Lahar**: A mixture of volcanic ash, debris, and water flowing down slopes like mud.

Recent Eruption Highlights

- Multiple eruptions recorded in a single day.
- The ash column reached up to **1,100 metres above the summit**.
- Authorities imposed:
 - **5 km exclusion zone around the crater**
 - **Up to 13 km restriction along river channels**
- Risk of **lahars and pyroclastic flows extending up to 17 km**.

One-Line Wrap

Mount Semeru exemplifies active volcanism in the Pacific Ring of Fire, highlighting the link between plate tectonics and natural disasters.

Guwahati Biotech Park

Two startups selected for incubation at **Guwahati Biotech Park** under the **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Innovative Scheme**.

About Guwahati Biotech Park

- Guwahati Biotech Park functions as a **technology and innovation hub in Assam**.
- It hosts a **Technology Incubation Centre**, which supports startups in biotechnology and allied sectors.
- It acts as a **bridge between research, innovation, and entrepreneurship** in Northeast India.
- GBP is where Science and business form a platform to promote entrepreneurship in Northeast India.
- Situated on the **northern bank of the river Brahmaputra**, in proximity to IIT Guwahati, Assam Engineering College, Institute of Advanced studies of Science & Technology and Gauhati University and the Brahmaputra Industrial Park.
- It is **launched** by an **autonomous society** under the **Government of Assam**.

Operates Under (Framework)

- Supported under the **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Innovative Scheme** of the Government of India.
- The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.
- It aligns with broader initiatives like:
 - **Startup India Programme**
 - **Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission**

Objectives of the Scheme

- The scheme aims to **promote innovation and entrepreneurship in early-stage startups**.
- It provides:
 - **Financial assistance**
 - **Mentorship and technical support**

- Access to advanced infrastructure
- It focuses on enhancing **commercialisation of innovative ideas**.

Selected Startups and Focus Areas

- **EazyCycles** is working on **low-carbon footprint technologies**, contributing to sustainable development.
- **Real-Time Diagnostic Feedback Analyzer** focuses on **Industry 4.0 and 5.0 solutions for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.
- Each startup receives **financial assistance of ₹15 lakh** for product development and scaling.

One-line wrap: *Guwahati Biotech Park is playing a crucial role in transforming Assam into a hub of innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable technological growth.*

Siikhe Lake

Siikhe Lake in Arunachal Pradesh is emerging as a **key habitat for migratory birds**, including the rare **Mandarin Duck**.

About Siikhe Lake

- Siikhe Lake is located about **12 kilometres from district headquarters in Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The lake was originally developed as an **artificial waterbody for groundwater recharge**.
- It was earlier a **wetland paddy field**, later transformed under a local development initiative.
- The lake now supports **rich biodiversity**, with more than **15 bird species recorded annually**.
- It has become an important **stopover site for migratory waterbirds** during **November to May**.
- Species observed include:
 - **Mallard, Northern Pintail, Garganey, Eurasian Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe**
- The presence of the **Mandarin Duck**, a rare species in India, highlights its ecological importance.

Conservation Efforts (Spearheaded by)

- Monitoring is being carried out since 2019 by:
 - **Ziro Birds Walk group**
 - **Siikhe Multipurpose Society**
- Activities include:
 - **Waterbird census and seasonal migration tracking**
- Research collaborations involve:
 - **Rajiv Gandhi University and international institutes**

One-line wrap: *Siikhe Lake highlights how sustainable landscape transformation can create thriving biodiversity hubs while supporting local development.*

Revival of Putola Naas

Efforts to revive **Putola Naas (traditional puppetry of Assam)** highlighted at **Charcha Café 2026 in Guwahati**.

What is Putola Naas?

- A **traditional string puppetry theatre art form of Assam**.
- Roots traced to:
 - **Bhakti movement and Srimanta Sankardeva era**
 - References found in **ancient texts like Mahabharata**
- Combines:
 - **Storytelling, music, and theatre**

Present Status

- Only **10–13 active puppetry groups** remain in Assam.
- Practitioners face:
 - **Declining audience base**
 - **Financial instability**
- Many artists continue due to **cultural passion rather than income**

Challenges Identified

- **High cost of production:**
 - Puppet making, logistics, artist payments

- **Lack of training:**
 - Especially in **scriptwriting** and **modern storytelling**
- **Limited institutional support**
- **Difficulty in reaching diverse audiences beyond children**

Revival Efforts (Spearheaded by)

- **Roots to Branches Foundation and NAAT Foundation**
- Initiatives include:
 - **Workshops** and **discussions** (Charcha Café 2026)
 - Proposal for **state-level puppetry association**
 - Promotion of **modern themes with traditional art**



Ministry of Culture
Government of India



STYLES & TYPES

of puppets in India

String Puppets



Kathputli
(Rajasthan)



Kundehi
(Odisha)



Gombeyatta
(Karnataka)



Bommallattam
(Tamil Nadu)

Glove Puppets



Gulabo-Sitabo
(Uttar Pradesh)



Pavakoothu
(Kerala)



Putul Nauch
(West Bengal)



Yampuri
(Bihar)

Rod Puppets



Tholu
Bommallata
(Andhra Pradesh)



Chamadyacha
Bahulya
(Maharashtra)



Ravanchhaya
(Odisha)



SVEEP Programme in Assam

Assam intensifies SVEEP voter awareness campaigns ahead of Legislative Assembly Elections 2026.

What is SVEEP?

- **Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)** is a flagship programme of the Election Commission of India.
- Operates under:
 - **Representation of the People Act, 1950 & 1951**
- Aim:
 - Increase **voter awareness, registration, and turnout**
 - Promote **informed and ethical voting**

Implementation in Assam

- Spearheaded by **Chief Electoral Officer, Assam (Anurag Goel)**.
- Executed through:
 - **District Election Officers**
 - **Booth Level Officers and Civil Defence volunteers**

Key Initiatives

- **Grassroots campaigns:**
 - Street plays, slogan contests, rangoli, wall writing
- **Digital outreach:**
 - Poster-making, media engagement
- **Adopt a Polling Station Campaign:**
 - Focus on **low voter turnout areas** (e.g., Tamulpur district)

- Use of:
 - **Local mascots and icons** (e.g., paracyclist Rakesh Bonik)

One-line wrap:

SVEEP campaigns in Assam highlight the importance of inclusive, grassroots efforts in strengthening democratic participation.

Slow Loris Rescue in Assam

A rare slow loris rescued from Numaligarh (Assam) and shifted to **Kaziranga Rescue Centre**.

About Slow Loris

- **Slow loris** is a small **nocturnal primate** found in **South and Southeast Asia**.
- A total of **nine species** of **slow loris** which includes Philippine slow loris, Bengal slow loris, greater slow loris, Kayan slow loris, Bangka slow loris, Bornean slow loris, Sumatran slow loris, Javan slow loris, pygmy slow loris.
 - **Bengal slow loris** (*Nycticebus bengalensis*) is **found in India** and is **confined** to the **Northeast**.
- All **belong** to the **same genus** ie. **Nycticebus**, with each species sharing many similar characteristics and behaviours.
- Unique feature of Slow Loris: **World's only venomous primate**.
 - **Venomous animal**: Produces toxin injected through bite (slow loris secretes venom from elbow glands).
- **Key Characteristics**
 - **Arboreal species** i.e it lives mainly on trees.
 - Large **forward-facing eyes** adapted for night vision.
- **Movement**:
 - Slow and stealthy to avoid predators
- **Behaviour**:
 - Comes to ground only for **defecation**
 - Feeds on **fruits, insects, tree gum**
- Protected under:
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 – Schedule I**
 - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES Appendix I)**
- **Threats**
 - **Habitat loss** (deforestation, tea plantations)
 - **Illegal wildlife trade** (pet trade)
 - Human-wildlife conflict

One-line wrap:

The rescue of a slow loris in Assam highlights the need to protect one of the world's most unique and endangered primates.

E-Rise Programme

Meghalaya launches **E-Rise programme** to strengthen **eri-silk economy and rural livelihoods**.

What is the E-Rise Programme?

- A **₹4.61 crore** initiative by **Government of Meghalaya**.
- Spearheaded by **Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma**.
- Focus: **Value-chain development in eri-silk sector**.
- Covers **1,200 farming households** across **22 clusters** (**Ri-Bhoi district**).

About Eri Silk

- Also called **“peace silk”** (non-violent, as worms are not killed).
- Produced from **eri silkworms** feeding on:
 - **Castor leaves**
 - **Tapioca plants**
- Majorly found in **Northeast India** (**Assam, Meghalaya**).

Key Components (Operates Under Value Chain Approach)

- Distribution of **high-yield feed plants** (castor, tapioca)

- Financial support:
 - ₹17,000 for climate-resilient rearing houses
 - ₹11,000 electric spinning machines
- Capacity building:
 - Training and skill development
- Enables 4–6 rearing cycles annually

Objectives & Outcomes

- Increase farmer income and productivity
- Promote local value addition:
 - Raw cocoons (~₹700) → Yarn (~₹3000–₹3500)
- Generate ₹9.36 crore annual economic value
- Reduce dependence on external markets

One-line wrap:

E-Rise programme transforms Meghalaya's eri-silk sector by shifting from raw production to value-added rural prosperity.

Assam's Pallavi Payeng Shines at Khelo India Tribal Games

Assam's Pallavi Payeng wins silver medal at the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026.

More About the News

- Pallavi Payeng, a weightlifter from Assam's Mising community, secured silver medal in the women's 69 kilogram category.
- Event: Inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games held in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

About Pallavi Payeng

- Began weightlifting journey in 2018.
- Achieved success in state-level competitions.
- Faced challenges:
 - COVID-19 disruption
 - Motherhood break
- Successfully made a strong comeback, reflecting resilience and determination.

About Khelo India Tribal Games

- A national-level multi-sport event dedicated exclusively to tribal athletes.
- Operates under the Khelo India Programme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Objective: To provide a national platform for talent identification.
 - Talent Identification and Development Committee (TIDC) scouts promising athletes for advanced training under the Khelo India framework.
- Hosted in Chhattisgarh across: Raipur, Jagdalpur & Surguja
- Jointly managed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Olympic Association, National Sports Federations and the Chhattisgarh state organising committee.
- Official mascot: Morveer (In Chhattisgarhi 'Mor' means our own and 'Veer' means bravery).
 - It symbolises pride, spirit and the identity of India's tribal communities.
- The event featured:
 - Seven medal sports athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming and wrestling.
 - Demonstration events such as mallakhamb and kabaddi.

KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES 2026
India's First Tribal Sports Mega Event

Overview

- Launched under the Khelo India Programme
- 25 March – 3 April 2026
- First National Multi-Sport Event for Tribal Athletes

Why It Matters (Significance)

- Inclusion**
Integrates Tribal Youth into Mainstream Sports
- Talent Recognition**
Discovers Hidden Grassroots Talent
- Opportunity**
National-Level Exposure & Competition
- Cultural Boost**
Showcases Tribal Identity, & Traditions

Key Message A major step toward "Sports for All" and inclusive nation-building through sports.

SAI | MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS | KHELO INDIA

KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES

KHELO INDIA
TRIBAL GAMES 2026
CHHATTISGARH

राज्य के अग्रणी खेलकूद खिलाड़ी राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर प्रतिस्पर्धा करेंगे।

Raipur | Jagdalpur | Surguja

25 March – 6 April (2026)

7 Medal Competitions | 2 Demo Games

Mascot: 'Morveer'



One-line wrap:

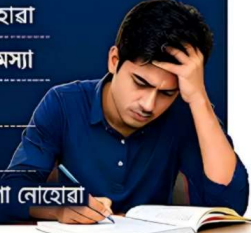
Pallavi Payeng's silver medal highlights the success of inclusive sports initiatives in empowering tribal talent in India.

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IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Athunli Hydro Electric Project

Public hearing completed for **680 megawatt Athunli Hydro Electric Project** in Arunachal Pradesh.

Athunli Hydro Electric project

- Proposed **680 megawatt run-of-the-river hydropower project** in Dibang Valley district (Anini), Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is planned on **Tangon/Talon river/basin** in Arunachal Pradesh
- Aims to enhance **renewable energy capacity** in Northeast India.
- Part of the state's broader strategy to utilise its **hydropower potential**.

Statutory Process (Operates Under)

- Public hearing conducted by **Arunachal Pradesh Pollution Control Board**.
- Based on:
 - **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**
 - **Environmental Management Plan (EMP)**
- Required under:
 - **Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006**
- Final approval to be granted by:
 - **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

One-line wrap: *The Athunli Hydro Project reflects Northeast India's push for clean energy while highlighting the need for inclusive and environmentally responsible development.*

Arunachal Pradesh's Donyi Polo Airport Wins Best UDAN Airport Award and Green Building Recognition

The **Donyi Polo Airport** at Hollongi, Arunachal Pradesh has received two back-to-back honours — the **Best Airport under the Regional Connectivity Scheme–UDAN** award, and a **provisional GRIHA 4-Star Rating** for sustainable and green infrastructure.

About Donyi Polo Airport, Hollongi

- Located near **Itanagar**, the state capital of Arunachal Pradesh
- Named after **Donyi Polo** — the indigenous sun and moon worship faith of the Adi tribe, reflecting the state's cultural identity
- Operationalised to give the state capital its first **greenfield commercial airport**
- Developed by the **Airports Authority of India** under the Ministry of Civil Aviation

UDAN Scheme

The **Regional Connectivity Scheme–UDAN** (*Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik* — "Let the common citizen of the country fly") is a flagship central government initiative:

- **Launched in:** 2016
- **Operated under:** Ministry of Civil Aviation
- **Spearheaded by:** Airports Authority of India
- **Objective:** To make air travel affordable and accessible to common citizens in Tier-2, Tier-3 cities and remote, hilly, and tribal regions of India
- **Mechanism:** Airlines are given **Viability Gap Funding** — a government subsidy that covers the financial gap when operating flights on low-traffic routes is not commercially viable on its own
- Donyi Polo Airport received the **Best Airport under RCS–UDAN** award for its outstanding contribution to regional air connectivity

GRIHA Rating — Flying Green

The airport has also been awarded a **provisional GRIHA 4-Star Rating**, placing it among a select group of environmentally responsible airport facilities in India.

GRIHA (*Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment*) is India's **nationally recognised green building rating system**:

- **Developed by:** The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in collaboration with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

- **Purpose:** Evaluates buildings and infrastructure on parameters like **energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, sustainable materials**, and overall environmental impact
- A **4-star provisional rating** indicates that Donyi Polo Airport has met stringent green construction and operational standards — a significant achievement for infrastructure in a sensitive Himalayan biodiversity zone

Rare Orchid Species Found in Arunachal Pradesh

A rare orchid species – *Liparis mengziensis*, earlier known only from China, has been **recorded for the first time in India** from Arunachal Pradesh.

Key Highlights

- The species was discovered in **Lower Dibang Valley district** near **Mayodia Pass** at an altitude of about **2,309 metres**.
- It was earlier known only from **Yunnan province (China)** since 2021.
- This discovery **extends its geographical range** to the **Eastern Himalayas**.

About *Liparis mengziensis*

- It is a **terrestrial orchid** growing on **moss-covered wet rocks**.
- It is a **small herb (~10 cm tall)** with:
 - A **single leaf**
 - **Yellowish-green flowers with purple tinge**
- **Flowering season:** June–July

Identification Features

- Broad ovate leaf with **crenate (toothed) margins**
- **Purple-tinged flowers**
- Distinct **ovate lip with pointed tip**

Orchid Diversity in India

- India has **42 species (and 1 variety)** under genus *Liparis*
- **32 species are found in Northeast India**
- **24 species are found in Arunachal Pradesh alone**

This confirms Arunachal Pradesh as a **major orchid diversity centre**.

One-Line Wrap

A rare orchid discovery in Arunachal Pradesh showcases the hidden biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayas and the need for deeper ecological exploration.

Breakthrough Prize 2026

Dr. Atanu Nath, a physicist from Assam's Hailakandi district, is part of the team awarded the **Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics 2026**, often called the "Oscars of Science".

- He **shared the award with 376 scientists**, including 11 from India, for their work on the **Muon g-2 experiment** (measuring the "g-2" factor of the muon).

About the Breakthrough Prize

- The Breakthrough Prize is among the **world's most prestigious science awards**.
- The award was **launched in 2012** by the **Breakthrough Award Foundation**.
- Its **founders** include **Sergei Brin, Priscilla Chanand, Mark Zuckerberg, Yuri and Julia Milner, and Annie Wojcicki**
- It is a **\$3 million award funded by Silicon Valley entrepreneurs** like Yuri Milner and Mark Zuckerberg and others.
- It is **awarded for work in Fundamental Physics, Life Sciences, and Mathematics**.
- Objective:
 - To **recognise outstanding contributions in science**
 - To **promote scientific excellence and innovation**

Key Highlights of 2026 Award

- **Awardee:** Dr. Atanu Nath, Assistant Professor at Tihu College, Nalbari, is the **first and only scientist** from **North East India** to receive the **Breakthrough Award in Basic Physics**.
- Part of an **international collaboration of around 376 researchers**
- Research conducted across institutions like CERN, Fermilab and Brookhaven National Laboratory

- He is the **only awardee working in India in regional academia**

About the Muon g-2 Experiment

- Focuses on the **Muon**, a heavier relative of the electron.
 - The muon behaves like a tiny magnet, and its subtle motion in a magnetic field is measured with extraordinary accuracy.
- Measures the **anomalous magnetic moment** (a deviation in magnetic behaviour)
- Tests predictions of the **Standard Model of Particle Physics**

Why is it Important?

- Any **deviation from expected results** may indicate **new physics beyond the Standard Model**.
 - For this reason, the Muon G-2 program is considered the most important reliability test in particle physics.
- Could help discover **unknown particles or forces**
- Strengthens India's presence in **global scientific research**

One-line Wrap

The Breakthrough Prize 2026 highlights how Indian scientists are contributing to discoveries that may redefine the laws of physics.

First Children's Literary Award

The **first-ever Children's Literary Award** has been instituted by the **Bishnu-Nirmala Trust** on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Late Bishnuram Medhi, to promote **children's literature and reading culture** in Assam.

Key Highlights of the Award

- **Winner:** Dr. Anjumoni Saikia for her book *Xuntolir Xubax*
- **Chief Guest:** Arup Kumar Dutta
- **Prize includes:** Citation, traditional Assamese items (**seleng sador, ongo bostro**) and cash award of **₹25,000**
- Aims to **encourage writers to contribute to children's literature**

About the Bishnu-Nirmala Trust

- **Established by:** Bishnuram Medhi
- **Operates from:** Bishnu-Nirmala Auditorium, Guwahati
- Functions as a **social and cultural institution**

Objectives:

- Promote **children's welfare and education**
- Encourage **regional literature for young readers**
- Preserve and spread **Assamese cultural heritage through books**

One-line Wrap

The Children's Literary Award reflects how nurturing young readers today builds a culturally rich and informed society tomorrow.

Digitizing Assam 2.0

The **Digitizing Assam 2.0** initiative has made over **2.76 million** pages of Assamese literature digitally searchable, marking a major step in cultural preservation.

About the Initiative

- **Spearheaded by** Nanda Talukdar Foundation
- Supported financially by Oil India Limited
- Technological collaboration by: **Borno Labs & Bohniman Systems**

Key Features

- Digitised **2.76 million** pages of:
 - Books, journals, manuscripts and rare records
- Enables **keyword-based search across archives**
- Converts static records into a **dynamic digital knowledge repository**
- Open access for **researchers, students and public use**

Technological Innovation

- Uses **Artificial Intelligence** for:
 - Text recognition and indexing
 - Language processing of Assamese script
- One of the **most complex language digitisation efforts in India**

Future Developments

- Launch of a **mobile application** to:
 - Enable citizens to **scan and upload documents**
 - Convert digitisation into a **mass movement**
- Integration with **National Education Policy 2020**:
 - Student internships in **cultural preservation and research**

One-line Wrap

Digitizing Assam 2.0 transforms hidden archives into accessible knowledge, preserving language while empowering future generations.

Translocation of Wild Buffaloes

Four **Asiatic Wild Water Buffaloes** have been **translocated** from **Kaziranga Tiger Reserve** to **Kanha Tiger Reserve** of MP, as part of a major wildlife conservation programme.

- In 2023, **Chhattisgarh** successfully **translocated** the **four wild buffaloes** from **Assam's Manas Tiger Reserve** to **Chhattisgarh's Barnawapara sanctuary**.

About the Translocation Project

- First batch: **1 male and 3 females** transported over **2,000 km by road**
- Multi-phase plan to **translocate around 50 buffaloes**
- Conducted with support of: Forest departments of Assam and Madhya Pradesh & Veterinarians and wildlife experts
- Uses **soft release technique (boma enclosure)** for acclimatisation

About Asiatic Wild Water Buffalo

- Scientific name: **Bubalus arnee**
- **State animal of Chhattisgarh** and is the **second heaviest living bovid species** on earth, **native to the Indian Sub-continent and South East Asia**.
- Status:
 - **Endangered** on IUCN Red List
 - **Schedule I species** under the **Wildlife Protection Act 1972**
- **Global population: Less than 4,000**, with about **99% in Assam**.
 - With more than 1,000 wild buffaloes, **Kaziranga National Park** in Assam, holds the **world's largest population of wild water buffalo**.
- **Features:**
 - **Weigh around 700 to 1,200 kg.**
 - **Both females and males bear horns.**
- **Habitat:**
 - Primarily found in the **alluvial grasslands, marshes, swamps and river valleys**.
- **Behaviour:**
 - Live in groups and adult males form large herds containing 10 to 20 members.
 - However, older males generally prefer to live in solitude.

Objectives of the Initiative

- Reintroduce species in areas where it became **locally extinct (Madhya Pradesh)**
- Create a **genetically viable population** outside Assam
- Enhance **grassland ecosystem management**
- Reduce risk of **disease or disaster wiping out a single population**

Institutional Framework

- Operates under:
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**
 - Guidelines of **National Board for Wildlife**
- Spearheaded by:
 - State forest departments
 - Supported by wildlife conservation authorities

One-line Wrap

The translocation of wild buffaloes marks a major step in securing India's biodiversity through scientific and cooperative conservation.

50 Years of Sikkim's Statehood

India celebrated **50 years of Sikkim's statehood (1975–2025)**, with renewed focus on connectivity, tourism and Northeast development.

Historical Background

- Ruled by the **Namgyal dynasty (Chogyals)** from 1642
- Became a **British protectorate (1861 Treaty of Tumlong)**
- Continued as an **Indian protectorate (1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty)**
- Became India's **22nd state through the 36th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1975**
- A **referendum in 1975** led to abolition of monarchy and integration with India
- **Article 371F** of the Indian Constitution, added by the 36th CAA of 1975, provides special provisions for the state of Sikkim.

Key Features of Sikkim

- **Part of Northeast India**, shares international borders with **Nepal** in the west, **Bhutan** in the east, **China** in the north, and **Indian state West Bengal** in the south.
- **First fully organic state in India**
- Located in the **Eastern Himalayas biodiversity hotspot**
- Rich in species like **red panda** and **Himalayan blue poppy**
- Diverse population: **Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis**
- Holds **strategic importance** near India–China border (Nathula, Doklam region)



Significance of 50 Years

- Transformation from a **monarchical state to a democratic unit**
- Emergence as a **model of sustainable and eco-friendly development**
- Strengthening of **India's strategic presence in the Northeast**
- Boost to **tourism, connectivity and local economy**

One-line Wrap

Sikkim's journey from monarchy to a model state reflects India's blend of democracy, sustainability and strategic growth.

Arunachal Pradesh Deploys Thermal Drones for Wildlife Monitoring

Arunachal Pradesh has introduced **thermal drones** to enhance **wildlife monitoring and forest surveillance**, becoming the **third State in India**, after Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, to adopt this technology.

About the Initiative

- Launched by the **Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Arunachal Pradesh**
- Supported by **RNR Unmanned Aerial Systems (training partner)**
- Includes:
 - Deployment of **5 thermal drones**
 - **Hands-on training programme** for forest personnel
- **Objectives of the Initiative:**

- Enhance surveillance in dense and inaccessible terrains, helping the authorities track animal movement and detect illegal activities like poaching, wildlife trafficking, and encroachment
- In the **first phase, five Thermal Drones** will be **deployed** in the areas of:
 - Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve
 - Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary
 - Deomali and Nampong forest divisions
 - Itanagar Biological Park

What are Thermal Drones?

- Drones equipped with **infrared sensors** to detect heat signatures
- Can track **animals, humans and activities even in darkness or dense forests**
- Useful in **difficult terrains and remote areas**

One-line Wrap

Thermal drones mark a new era where technology strengthens conservation and protects wildlife in India's forests.

Bhupen Hazarika's 'Manuhe Manuhor Baabe' Released in German

The iconic Assamese song "**Manuhe Manuhor Baabe**" by Bhupen Hazarika has been **translated into German** as part of his **birth centenary celebrations**.

About the Initiative

- Initiative led by Bhupen Hazarika International Foundation
- Foundation was established in **2012 by Tej Hazarika (his son)**
- German version titled "**Der Mensch für die Menschen**"
- Translated by **Dr Binod Kumar Gogoi** with assistance from language experts

About the Song

- "**Manuhe Manuhor Baabe**" means "**Humans for Humanity**"
- Carries universal values of: **Compassion, Unity and Humanism**
- Dr. Hazarika wrote this song between 1961-62.
- The song has been translated almost to the Indian language as well as in English.

Broader Cultural Context

- Proposal to designate translated works as "**Bhupendra Sangeet**"
- The Assam government is working to get the song '**Manuhe Manuhor Babe**' recognized as **Anthem of Humanity** and has **submitted a formal request** to the UN for this.

One-line Wrap

The German translation of "**Manuhe Manuhor Baabe**" shows how Assam's cultural voice is reaching the world through universal human values.

Assam-born Scientist Links Environment with Cancer Risk

An Assam-born scientist, Dr. Fazlur Rahman Talukdar, has highlighted the **link between environmental factors and cancer occurrence** through advanced research in genomics.

About the Research

- Born in Badarpur, Sribhumi district, he is currently teaching at University of Cambridge.
- Worked with International Agency for Research on Cancer under World Health Organization
- Research focuses on **how genes interact with environmental pollution to trigger cancer**
- Uses **genomics** (study of genes) and **data-driven scientific analysis**

Key Findings and Insights

- Cancer is not only genetic but also influenced by **environmental exposure and lifestyle**
- Factors such as: **Air and water pollution, Dietary habits Changing lifestyles** play a major role in increasing cancer risk
- Helps explain **regional variations in cancer incidence**, including in Assam

One-line Wrap

Understanding cancer through the lens of environment and genes can transform prevention from treatment to protection.

Rare 'Fanged' Mud-Nesting Frog Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

A new species of fanged frog with underground nesting behaviour has been discovered in Namdapha Tiger Reserve, highlighting Northeast India's rich biodiversity.

About the Discovery

- Discovered by researchers from Wildlife Institute of India
- The species belongs to the **Limnonectes group**, known for **fang-like jaw structures**
- Named after **Motijheel Lake** within the reserve
- Produces a distinct **"wooooak"** call, aiding identification

Unique Features

- **Fanged jaws:** Rare among frogs; possibly used for feeding or territorial behaviour
- **Subterranean nesting:** Builds **cup-shaped nests beneath moist soil and leaf litter**
- **Morphology:** Medium-sized (2.3–3.5 cm), with a **dark line between eyes and inverted V-shaped ridge**
- Reflects **evolutionary adaptation** to dense evergreen forest ecosystems

One-line Wrap

The discovery of the fanged mud-nesting frog reveals how much of India's biodiversity still remains hidden in its forests.

National Strategy to Save White-bellied Heron

A national-level workshop at Cotton University (Assam) brought together experts to develop a **coordinated conservation strategy** for the **White-bellied Heron (Ardea insignis)**.

- The species has an **estimated global population of fewer than 50 individuals**.

About White-bellied Heron

- The **White-bellied heron (*Ardea insignis*)**, also known as **imperial heron** or great white-bellied heron is the **World's second largest heron species** and one of the **most threatened birds**.
- It is a **non-migratory waterbird** that **prefers freshwater terrestrial water**.
- Its presence in the ecosystem indicates the health of the rivers, the environment, the fish population, and water quality.
- It mostly **inhabits the wetlands of tropical and subtropical forests** in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas.
- It is mainly found in the **foothills of the eastern Himalayas in northeast India (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam) Bhutan** (host the largest population) **hills of Bangladesh, to northern Myanmar**.
- It **prefers free-flowing riverine habitats**, and predominantly depends on fish found in the river rapids.
- It is **threatened by habitat loss, increasing disturbance and habitat degradation** due to conversion of wetlands for agriculture and expansion of settlements.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
 - **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule-I

Key Features

- It is a large heron with a **dark grey body and distinctive white belly**.
- It has a slightly longer neck and compact body with shorter legs and extensive toes.
 - The extra elongated, flexible neck with razorsharp serrated bill allows them to catch fish far in deep waters.
- Usually found near **undisturbed rivers, wetlands and forest streams**.
- The bird feeds mainly on **fish, amphibians and small aquatic animals**.

Workshop Highlights

- **Organised by:** Nature Conservation Foundation
- **Supported by:** The Habitat Trust
- **Collaborating institutions:**
 - **Wildlife Institute of India**
 - **Zoological Survey of India**
 - **Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment**
 - **Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History**

Proposed Conservation Measures

- **Protection of critical rivers stretches** through stricter regulation.
- **Monitoring frameworks** using scientific data.
- **Regulation of extractive activities** like mining.
- **Multi-stakeholder coordination** involving government, researchers, and local communities.

Mount Dukono Eruption

Indonesia's **Mount Dukono** volcano in **North Maluku Province** recently erupted, leading to the death of three people and trapping several hikers.

- The eruption sent volcanic ash nearly **10 kilometres into the atmosphere**, prompting evacuation efforts and aviation warnings.

About Mount Dukono

- **Mount Dukono** is an active volcano located on **Halmahera Island** in eastern Indonesia.
- It rises to a height of about **1,087 metres above sea level**.
- It is one of Indonesia's **127 active volcanoes**, making the country one of the most volcanically active regions in the world.

Key Features of the Recent Eruption

- The volcano erupted with a massive ash plume and continuous volcanic activity.
- Authorities warned people not to enter within a **4-kilometre radius** of the crater area.
- Rescue teams were deployed to evacuate trapped hikers and nearby residents.
- Thick volcanic ash affected visibility and posed respiratory risks to local communities.

Why Indonesia Faces Frequent Volcanic Eruptions

- Indonesia lies on the **Pacific Ring of Fire**, a highly active tectonic zone surrounding the Pacific Ocean.
- The region experiences frequent **earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis** due to the movement of tectonic plates.

One Line Wrap

- The eruption of Mount Dukono highlights the growing importance of volcanic disaster preparedness in tectonically active regions located along the Pacific Ring of Fire.

Rare Low-Altitude Cordyceps Mushroom Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

Researchers from the **Central Agricultural University (CAU), Pasighat** have discovered the rare medicinal **Cordyceps mushroom** in **East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh**.

- The finding is significant because Cordyceps is usually found only in **high-altitude Himalayan regions above 3,000–4,500 metres**.

About Cordyceps Mushroom

- **Cordyceps**, scientifically known as **Ophiocordyceps sinensis**, is a **rare parasitic fungus** that **grows on insect larvae**.
- It is famous for its biological lifecycle as when these **fungi attack their host**, they **replace its tissue** and **sprout long, slender stems** that **grow outside the host's body**.
- The fungi are **widely distributed** and are found on **every continent except Antarctica**.
- It is popularly known as **"Himalayan Gold"** because of its extremely high medicinal and commercial value.
- The fungus has been used for centuries in **traditional Tibetan and Chinese medicine**.
- It is among the **world's costliest medicinal fungi** and commands very high prices in international herbal markets due to its **aphrodisiac properties**.
- **Important Medicinal Properties:** It produces compounds such as **cordycepin, adenosine, ergosterol** and **bioactive polysaccharides**.
 - It is **associated with immunomodulatory, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antitumor and antidiabetic properties**.
- Concerns remain regarding: Overharvesting, Habitat degradation, Climate change impacts

Significance of the Discovery

- The discovery in a **low-altitude zone** is **considered highly unusual** and **scientifically important**.
- Earlier records mainly reported Cordyceps in: **Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Nepal, Tibet & Alpine Himalayan meadows**

One-Line Wrap

The discovery of low-altitude Cordyceps in Arunachal Pradesh highlights the immense biodiversity wealth of the Eastern Himalayas and opens new opportunities for scientific research and sustainable bioeconomy development.

‘Moi Eti Nixhasor’ Wins Global Recognition

Assamese feature film ‘Moi Eti Nixhasor’ (Koduwa the Nightbird) won the **Best Dark Comedy** and **Best Editor** awards at the **59th WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival 2026** in the United States.

About the Film

- The film is written and **directed by Bidyut Kotoky**, a National Award-winning filmmaker.
- Editing of the film was done by **Pallavi Kotoky**.
- The movie is based on a true story written by Assamese journalist **Anuradha Sharma Pujari**.
- It has been produced by the **National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)** along with production house **Red River & Blue Hills**.
- The story of the film revolves around **Koduwa** (played by Gunomoni Baruah), a clever village thief navigating Assam’s social and political realities.

Awards and International Recognition

- The film received:
 - **Platinum Remi Award** for Best Dark Comedy.
 - **Gold Remi Award** for Best Editing.
- The **WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival** is one of the oldest independent film festivals in the world, founded in **1961**.
- Earlier editions of the festival recognised internationally renowned filmmakers such as:
 - Steven Spielberg
 - George Lucas
 - Ang Lee
- The film was also earlier recognised at:
 - **Accolade Global Film Competition (USA)**.
 - **Covellite International Film Festival 2026**.

About National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)

- NFDC functions under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- It is a **Central Public Sector Undertaking**, established in **1975**, to encourage high quality Indian cinema.
- It **functions** in areas of **film financing, production and distribution**
- NFDC was further **expanded** when the **Films Division, Directorate of Film. Festivals, National Film Archives of India, and Children's Film Society, India** were **merged** with it in 2020.
- Objectives include:
 - Promoting quality Indian cinema.
 - Supporting regional films.
 - Encouraging independent filmmakers.

One-Line Wrap

The international success of ‘Moi Eti Nixhasor’ reflects the rising global appeal of Assamese cinema and the growing strength of India’s regional storytelling traditions.

Khangri Glacier Expedition Raises Climate Change Concerns in Arunachal Pradesh

The **fifth Khangri Glacier Expedition** conducted in Arunachal Pradesh’s **Mago Chu Basin** has revealed alarming signs of glacier instability, rapid melting, and formation of a potentially dangerous glacial lake in the eastern Himalayas.

- Scientists during the **5th Khangri Glacier Expedition 2026** observed alarming glacier instability and the formation of a potentially dangerous glacial lake in Arunachal Pradesh’s **Mago Chu Basin** in Tawang district.

About the Expedition

- The expedition was conducted by:
 - **Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS)**.
 - **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**.
 - **North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST)**.
- The study focused on: Glacier health assessment, Cryosphere monitoring & Climate-linked disaster risks in the eastern Himalayas.

Where is Khangri Glacier?

- Located in the **Mago Chu Basin** near **Gori Chen mountain range** of **Tawang district**, Arunachal Pradesh.
- It feeds the **Mago Chu river** which forms an important headwater for the **Brahmaputra River system**.
- The glacier lies in the fragile eastern Himalayan ecosystem close to the India-China border region.

Major Findings of the Expedition

- **Formation of Glacier Sinking Zone:** Scientists discovered a major **glacier sinking zone**, where the glacier snout is collapsing rapidly.
 - This creates unstable terrain and increases the risk of: **Landslides, Flash floods & Landscape instability.**
- **Emergence of a Proglacial Lake:** A new **proglacial lake** has formed at nearly **16,500 feet** altitude. Researchers warned that it could trigger a **Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)**.
- **Continued Rapid Melting:** Despite healthy winter snowfall, glaciers continue melting rapidly because of:
 - Rising temperatures.
 - Climate variability.
 - Global warming impacts.

Scientific Monitoring Measures

- Five monitoring stakes were installed at elevations up to **17,000 feet** using **Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS)** technology and **steam ice-core drilling systems**.
- Scientists also collected data from:
 - **Automatic Weather Stations (AWS).**
 - **Automatic Water Level Recorders (AWLR).**

Exam Hook – Key Takeaways

- Khangri Glacier is located in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district.
- Scientists observed glacier collapse and formation of a dangerous glacial lake.
- GLOFs are becoming major climate-linked hazards in the Himalayas.
- Himalayan glaciers are crucial for India's water and ecological security.

One Line Wrap

- The Khangri Glacier findings highlight how climate change is rapidly destabilising the fragile Himalayan ecosystem and increasing disaster risks in Northeast India.

Astronomy Festival 2026

The Astronomical Society of India and Guwahati Planetarium are organizing a six-day **Astronomy Festival** from May 14–19 to popularize astronomy and space science in Northeast India.

Key Highlights of the Festival

- The festival is being organized under the **Science and Technology Department of Assam Government** in collaboration with the **Astronomical Society of India (ASI)**.
- Scientists and researchers from premier institutions such as:
 - Indian Space Research Organisation
 - Tata Institute of Fundamental Research
 - Indian Institute of Astrophysics will participate in the event.
- The festival includes:
 - Hands-on workshops for teachers and students.
 - Popular science lectures and interactive sessions.
 - Telescopic sky observation programmes.
 - Free access to planetarium shows and astronomy galleries.

Objectives of the Astronomy Festival

- To promote **scientific temper**, which is a **Fundamental Duty under Article 51A(h)** of the Indian Constitution.
- To increase awareness about:
 - Astronomy and astrophysics.
 - Space science and emerging technologies.
 - India's achievements in space exploration.
- To encourage students of Northeast India towards:
 - Scientific research.
 - Innovation and critical thinking.
 - Careers in science and technology.

About the Astronomical Society of India (ASI)

- It is India's premier professional body of astronomers and astrophysicists.
- It was established in **1972**.
- It works to:
 - Promote astronomy research and education.
 - Encourage collaboration among scientists.

- Spread public awareness of astronomy.

One-Line Wrap

The Astronomy Festival in Guwahati highlights India's efforts to promote scientific temper, astronomy education, and youth engagement in space science through collaboration between scientific institutions and public outreach programmes.

Asam Sahitya Sabha to Honour Eminent Assamese Litterateurs in 2025

The **Asam Sahitya Sabha** has announced the recipients of its prestigious **President's Special Literary Honour 2025**, recognising distinguished personalities for their contribution to Assamese literature, journalism, research, and cultural life.

About the Honour

- The award is instituted by the **Assam Sahitya Sabha**, the premier literary organisation of Assam founded in **1917**.
- It aims to honour individuals who have significantly enriched:
 - Assamese language.
 - Literature.
 - Research and criticism.
 - Journalism and intellectual discourse.
- The award ceremony will be held at the **Sangeetacharya Lakshmiram Barua Auditorium** in Guwahati.
- **Recipients of the President's Special Literary Honour 2025:** The five distinguished awardees are:
 - **Dr Pushpa Gogoi (Dhemaji)** – noted researcher, artist and writer.
 - **Devi Prasad Bagrodia (Dibrugarh)** – tea planter and litterateur.
 - **Upendra Barkotoki (Nagaon)** – retired professor, writer, critic and journalist.
 - **Jitumoni Bora (Guwahati)** – senior journalist and noted litterateur.
 - **Nomal Mahatta (Bongaigaon)** – senior police officer, poet, writer and researcher.

One Line Wrap

- The Asam Sahitya Sabha's literary honours highlight Assam's rich intellectual tradition and the continuing importance of regional literature in preserving India's cultural diversity.

Barak Valley Poet Kallol Choudhury Gains Global Literary Recognition

Kallol Choudhury, a prominent bilingual poet, translator, researcher and social activist from Assam's **Barak Valley**, has gained international recognition after his English poetry collection "**Buddha on Planchette**" was listed among the top globally discussed books by *The Hindustan Times*.

About the Book – *Buddha on Planchette*

- The collection contains **42 poems** exploring themes such as:
 - Peace and spirituality.
 - Nature and environmental consciousness.
 - Human emotions and introspection.
 - Cultural identity of Northeast India.
- The poetry reflects the philosophical influence of **Buddhist thought**, blending lyrical expression with reflections on society and ecology.

Major Achievements of Kallol Choudhury

- Received the **Literary Wits Award 2025-26** as the Best Male Translator at the national level.
- Honoured with the **Michael Madhusudan Academy Award 2025** in Kolkata.
- His stories were included in collections published by:
 - **Penguin Random House.**
 - **Oxford University Press.**
- In 2023, he received the **Invierno Revista Official Magazine Award** from Argentina.
- He also served as an international jury member for the **Global Literary Award** literary festival held in Goa.

One Line Wrap

- Kallol Choudhury's global literary recognition reflects the rising influence of Northeast India's cultural and intellectual traditions in world literature.

Japan-Assam Collaboration Boosts Technology-Driven Mushroom Cultivation

A Japanese delegation visited the **Livelihood Ashram at Sajanpara in Rani, Assam** to explore collaboration in **mushroom cultivation, artificial intelligence-based farming, and rural entrepreneurship**.

Key Highlights

- The initiative is being coordinated by the **Mushroom Development Foundation (MDF)** in collaboration with Japanese technology and sustainable business firms.
- The discussions focused on integrating: **artificial intelligence, cloud connectivity, software support systems, smart packaging technologies.**
- The collaboration **aims to improve: productivity, disease management, yield prediction, farmer profitability.**

‘KINOKO SENSEI’ Platform

- A major attraction of the programme was the introduction of the Japanese digital platform “**KINOKO SENSEI**”, meaning “**Mushroom Teacher.**”
- The platform is designed to provide:
 - Technology-based guidance to farmers.
 - Real-time production data management.
 - Scientific cultivation support.
- Artificial intelligence tools can help mushroom farmers tackle challenges such as:
 - Seasonal fluctuations.
 - Pest and disease outbreaks.
 - Labour-intensive cultivation.
 - Unpredictable yields.

Importance of Mushroom Cultivation

- Mushroom farming is considered a high-potential agricultural activity because it:
 - Requires less land and water.
 - Generates quick returns.
 - Supports women-led rural enterprises.
 - Cultivation can be done year-round in controlled units.
 - Promotes nutritional security and sustainable farming.
- Assam’s humid climate is suitable for varieties such as: Oyster mushroom, Button mushroom & Paddy straw mushroom.

One Line Wrap

- The Assam-Japan collaboration in mushroom cultivation highlights the growing role of artificial intelligence and smart technologies in sustainable rural agriculture.

Issues Over Northeast’s Oldest Railway Route

The suspension of the **Dibrugarh–Dangari Diesel Electric Multiple Unit passenger train service** by Northeast Frontier Railway has triggered protests across Upper Assam over the future of the historic Dibru–Sadiya railway route.

Historical Importance of the Railway Route

- The **Dibru–Sadiya railway line**, now known as the **Makum–Saikhowa route**, is regarded as the **oldest railway corridor in Northeast India**.
- It **begins** in the industrial and railway hub of **Makum**, runs through Tinsukia, and **ends** at **Saikhowaghat** near the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and the Dhola-Sadiya Bridge.
- The **Assam Railway and Trading Company (AR&T Co)** laid the **95-km-long Assam’s first railway track** from **Dibrugarh to Saikhowaghat** in **1881**.
- In the devastating earthquake in 1950, the track along with Saikhowaghat railway station suffered heavy damages.
 - Consequently, the **rail service** was **confined upto Dangari railway station**, 8 km from Saikhowaghat.
- The railway line was initially developed to:
 - Support tea plantation trade.
 - Transport coal and natural resources.
 - Improve connectivity in Upper Assam.

- There are **ongoing demands** from local action committees to **extend** and **restore** this historic **railway corridor** to **Saikhowa** and further into **Roing** in Arunachal Pradesh.

Northeast Frontier Railway

- Northeast Frontier Railway is one of the **18 railway zones of Indian Railways**.
- It operates under the Ministry of Railways.
- Headquarters: Maligaon.
- It plays a major role in:
 - Border connectivity.
 - Economic integration of the Northeast.
 - Strategic transportation infrastructure.

One-Line Wrap

The suspension of the Dibrugarh–Dangari DEMU train has revived concerns about preserving Northeast India’s oldest railway heritage route and ensuring regional connectivity in Upper Assam.

LEADS 2025 Report

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry released the **LEADS 2025 Report**, ranking States and Union Territories on logistics efficiency, infrastructure, and supply chain performance.

What are LEADS?

- **Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS)** is DPIIT’s flagship assessment of logistics performance across States and UTs.
- It serves as a **key benchmarking** and **reform tool** for **improving logistics efficiency** across the country.
- LEADS 2025 reflects the **Government’s continued focus** on **integrated** and **data-driven logistics** reforms under the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan and National Logistics Policy.
- The framework supports cooperative and competitive federalism by enabling States and UTs to benchmark performance, identify gaps and prioritise targeted logistics interventions.
- The **7th edition of LEADS** marks a **significant evolution** in the **assessment of India’s logistics landscape**, featuring a more rigorous and refined evaluation methodology.
- **LEADS 2025** also places **greater emphasis** on **measurable** and **evidence-based indicators**.
 - Nearly **59% weightage** assigned to **objective indicators** to strengthen assessment robustness and implementation tracking.
- The **LEADS 2025** framework has **transitioned** from its previous **three-tier classification** to a more comprehensive **four-tier performance framework**.

New Classification Framework in LEADS 2025

The 2025 report replaced the earlier “Achievers, Fast Movers and Aspirers” model with a more detailed classification system.

- **Exemplars:** Represent the top-performing States/UTs, demonstrating sustained excellence across policy, infrastructure, service delivery, and regulatory dimensions.
 - **Coastal States:** Tamil Nadu
 - **Landlocked States:** Uttar Pradesh
 - **North- Eastern States:** Mizoram
 - **Union Territories:** Delhi
- **High Performers:** Comprise States/UTs that demonstrate strong and consistent outcomes across the majority of performance indicators.
 - **Coastal States:** Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra
 - **Landlocked States:** Haryana, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Bihar
 - **North- Eastern States:** Tripura, Meghalaya
 - **Union Territories:** Jammu & Kashmir, Puducherry
- **Accelerators:** Comprise States/UTs that have demonstrated notable improvement momentum and a clear reform orientation in recent years.
 - **Coastal States:** Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, Karnataka
 - **Landlocked States:** Punjab, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh
 - **North- Eastern States:** Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam
 - **Union Territories:** Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Chandigarh, Ladakh, Lakshadweep
- **Growth-Seekers:** Represent States/UTs that are at a foundational stage of logistics system development and institutional strengthening.

- **Coastal States:** West Bengal
- **Landlocked States:** Rajasthan
- **North- Eastern States:** Sikkim
- **Union Territories:** Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Overall, LEADS marks an important step toward strengthening evidence-based logistics planning and performance monitoring across States/UTs to support targeted reforms aimed at improving logistics efficiency, reducing logistics costs and strengthening India's competitiveness.

One-Line Wrap

The LEADS 2025 Report highlights India's push towards integrated logistics reforms and shows how better connectivity and infrastructure can accelerate balanced regional economic growth.

National Florence Nightingale Award 2026

Lalenthangi Hnamte, an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife from Mizoram, received the **National Florence Nightingale Award** from the President of India on the occasion of **International Nurses Day** (12th May) for her outstanding service in remote tribal regions.

About the National Florence Nightingale Award

- The President of India, conferred the **National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026** upon **exceptional nursing professionals**.
- The Award, **instituted in 1973** by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, honours the dedication, compassion, and resilience that define the nursing profession.
- The award is **presented to Registered Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, and Lady Health Visitors** employed in Central, State/UTs and Voluntary Organizations.
- Each award includes a **Certificate of Merit**, a **cash prize of ₹1,00,000**, and a **medal** symbolizing the nation's gratitude for the invaluable service rendered by these health warriors.

About Lalenthangi Hnamte

- She has served as an **Auxiliary Nurse Midwife** since 1999 in remote areas of Mizoram, especially in Lunglei district.
- **Many villages** where she worked **lacked proper road connectivity, regular medical facilities and easy transportation access**.
- Despite these challenges, she continued to provide **maternal and child health services, immunisation and vaccination programmes** and **public health awareness support**.
- Since her posting at the **Tuichawng Ayush Health and Wellness Centre** in 2017, health-care delivery in the area reportedly improved significantly.

About Florence Nightingale

- Florence Nightingale is known as the "Lady with the Lamp."
- She pioneered modern nursing practices during the **Crimean War** and emphasized hygiene, sanitation, and patient care.

One-Line Wrap

Florence Nightingale Award celebrates the selfless contribution of frontline nurses who strengthen India's public health system by delivering essential health services in remote and underserved regions.

BRO's Project Vartak

- The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** celebrated the **66th Raising Day of Project Vartak** on May 7, 2026.
- The project continues to play a major role in maintaining strategic road connectivity in **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.

About Project Vartak

- **Project Vartak** operates under the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**, which functions under the **Ministry of Defence**.
- It was originally raised as **Project Tusker** on **May 7, 1960**, becoming the first BRO project in India to commence road construction activities in the country.
- In **1963**, it was renamed **Project Vartak** after the Indianisation of project names.
- Since its inception, the Project has remained at the forefront of providing vital connectivity in some of the most challenging and strategically sensitive regions of the nation.
- The Project successfully completed the task of improving the **Bhalukpong–Tenga–Tawang axis**, cutting works **connecting Bomdila with Sela** and surfacing works from **Bhalukpong to Rupa**.

- At present, **Project VARTAK** operates through its **Task Forces** located at **Tenga, Sapper Camp and Khirmu**.
- The **Project** is entrusted with the **construction, development and maintenance of strategically important roads in:**
 - **Sonitpur District** of **Assam** and **West Kameng and Tawang Districts** of **Arunachal Pradesh**, extending up to the international border.
- It is presently responsible for **approximately 2066.90 km of road network**, including significant stretches in high-altitude and snow-bound regions.
- The **Project maintains** strategically **important passes and locations** including **Womingla, Bumla, Yangtse, Nagula, Y Junction, Klemta, Lungro GG, Monkey Pass, Lungar, Dhaula and Assam Hill**.

Major Strategic Importance

- The project plays a crucial role in:
 - Border connectivity.
 - Military preparedness along the India-China border.
 - Socio-economic development of remote frontier areas.
 - Disaster response during floods and landslides.
- It maintains important strategic locations and mountain passes.
- The project regularly conducts:
 - Snow-clearance operations.
 - Road restoration work.
 - Emergency connectivity support in harsh weather conditions.
- The Project has been engaged in
 - Disaster response, humanitarian assistance and restoration of connectivity to natural calamities in the Northeastern Region.

One-Line Wrap

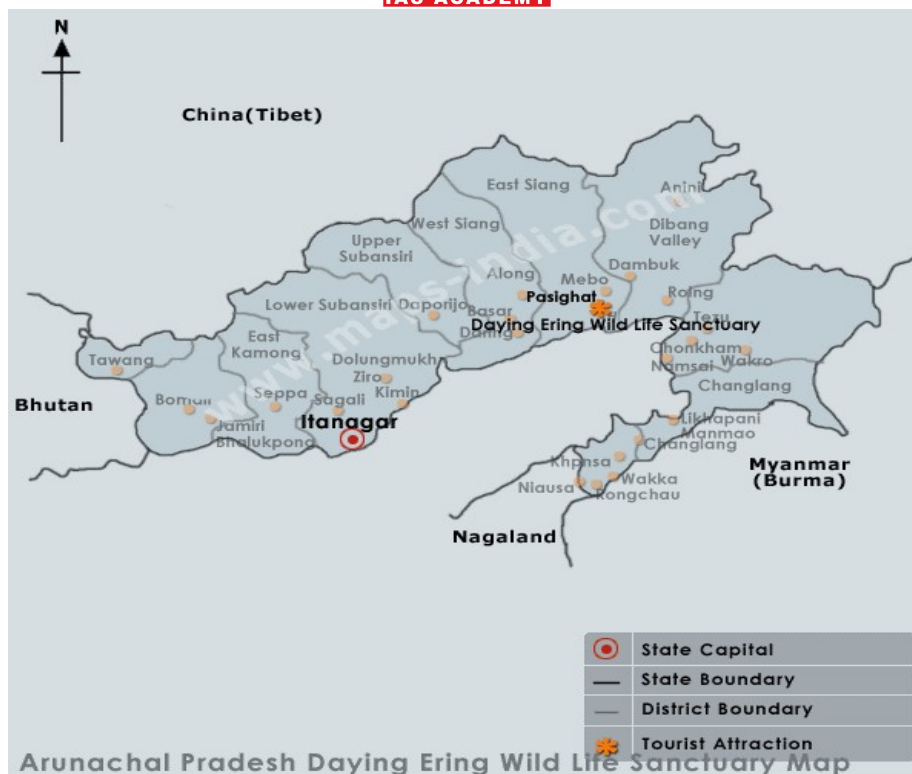
Project Vartak stands as a vital pillar of India's strategic border infrastructure, ensuring connectivity, security, and development in the challenging frontier regions of Northeast India.

Tiger Returns to Arunachal Pradesh's D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary

A **tiger** has been captured on a camera trap for the first time in nearly **20 years** inside **D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary** in Arunachal Pradesh, indicating ecological recovery and successful conservation efforts.

About D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary

- The sanctuary is located in **East Siang district** of Arunachal Pradesh near the **Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border**.
- It spreads across nearly **190 square kilometres** along the floodplains of the **Siang River** and its tributaries.
- It was **established in 1976** and was initially known as **Lali Wildlife Sanctuary** after the declaration of Lali Reserve Forest as a sanctuary and was **renamed as D'Ering in 1986**.
- The sanctuary is named after **Daying Ering**, former Union Minister and chairman of the **Ering Commission**, which contributed to strengthening the Panchayati Raj system in India.
- It is known for its unique **riverine grassland and wetland ecosystem**.
- It enjoys a **tropical climate** and **receives north-east and south-west monsoons**.
- The sanctuary includes scattered patches of trees such as *Termenelia myriocarpa*, *Dillenia indica*, *Albizia* spp., *Bombax ceiba*, and others.
- Mammals in the sanctuary are represented by **Hog Deer, Wild Pig, Tiger and Elephant**.
- More than **150 species of birds** are the inhabitants of the sanctuary, including the endangered ones like **White-Winged Wood Duck**, and **Bengal Florican**.



Key Highlights of the Discovery

- Forest officials and frontline staff had observed indirect signs of tiger presence over the past year.
- Multiple rounds of systematic **camera-trap monitoring** were conducted with technical support from the **Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)**.
- The latest survey finally captured photographic evidence of the tiger, confirming the species' return to the sanctuary.

One Line Wrap

- The return of the tiger to D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary highlights the growing success of community-supported wildlife conservation in Northeast India.

Lum'er Pyngngad Emerges as a New Eco-Tourism Hotspot in Meghalaya

Lum'er Pyngngad in Meghalaya's **Ri Bhoi district** is witnessing a rapid rise in tourist footfall and is emerging as a major example of **community-led eco-tourism** in Northeast India.

About Lum'er Pyngngad

- Lum'er Pyngngad is located in the scenic hills of **Ri Bhoi district** in Meghalaya.
- It lies around **74 kilometres from Jorabat**, making it a popular weekend destination for visitors from **Guwahati and nearby regions**.
- The region is known for:
 - Rolling hills and pine forests.
 - Panoramic valley views.
 - Clean environment and peaceful surroundings.

One Line Wrap

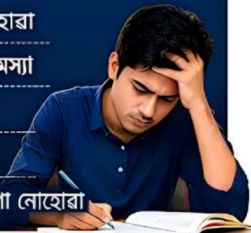
- Lum'er Pyngngad highlights how community-driven eco-tourism can promote both environmental conservation and sustainable rural development in Meghalaya.

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IMPORTANT UPDATE

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EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Assam Bags Three National Panchayat Awards for Grassroots Development

Assam secured **three prestigious honours** at the **National Panchayat Awards 2025** announced by the **Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj**.

Key Highlights

- A total of **42 Panchayats** from 17 States and Union Territories were selected for the awards.
- The awards recognise excellence in:
 - Rural governance.
 - Sustainable development.
 - Cleanliness and sanitation.
 - Infrastructure creation.
 - Community participation.

Major Achievements of Assam

- The **new Nopam Gaon Panchayat** of **Sonitpur district** was declared the **Best Village Panchayat in India** under the **Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar 2025**.
 - It received a cash award of **Rs 1.5 crore**.
 - The Panchayat was recognised for:
 - Effective implementation of welfare schemes.
 - Improved sanitation and rural infrastructure.
 - Public participation and livelihood generation.
- **Jummurmur Gaon Panchayat** of **Nagaon district** secured **second rank** in the **Clean and Green Panchayat** category under the **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar 2025**.
 - It was recognised for cleanliness drives, waste management and environmental conservation initiatives.
- **Hugrijan Gaon Panchayat** of **Dibrugarh district** received recognition in the **Self-Reliant Infrastructure** category for promoting sustainable rural infrastructure and local economic development.

Note: **Sepahijala district** in **Tripura** was **ranked 1st** (Best District Panchayat) in the country under the **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar 2025**.

About the National Panchayat Awards

- The awards are organised by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** under the framework of the **Panchayat Sustainable Development Goals (PSDGs)**.
- They encourage Panchayats to contribute towards achieving the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** at the grassroots level.

One Line Wrap

- Assam's success at the National Panchayat Awards highlights the growing strength of grassroots governance and sustainable rural development in the State.

Critically Endangered Gharial Spotted Again in Kaziranga National Park

The **critically endangered gharial** has been sighted in **Kaziranga National Park** in Assam after being believed to have disappeared from the State's river systems for many years.

More About the News

- The rare reptile was spotted during an early morning safari in the **Burhapahar Range** near **Dipholu Camp** in Kaziranga.
- Wildlife experts described the sighting as an important indicator of improving riverine biodiversity and successful conservation efforts in Assam.

About the Gharial

- The **Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*)** is a freshwater crocodilian species native to the Indian subcontinent.
- It is easily identified by:
 - Its long and narrow snout.
 - Sharp interlocking teeth.
 - Fish-based diet.
- Male gharials develop a bulb-like structure on the snout that resembles an earthen pot which is called a **"ghara"** in Hindi, from which the species gets its name.
- Gharials show strong **sexual dimorphism**, meaning males and females differ in size and appearance.
- Unlike other crocodilians, gharials feed almost entirely on **fish**, even at adulthood.

- Their thin jaws are specially adapted for catching fish in fast-flowing rivers.
- Gharials are **not man-eaters** because:
 - Their jaws are too narrow and weak to attack large mammals.
 - They are physically incapable of devouring humans.
- **Habitat:** They are found only in deep, clear and fast-flowing rivers and rivers with sandy banks
 - Female gharials lay eggs on **steep sandy riverbanks** during the breeding season.
- **Distribution:** They were earlier found across the river systems of: **Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mahanadi-Brahmani-Baitrani** basins.
- They were historically distributed across: India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh & Pakistan.
- However, at present major surviving populations are found in:
 - **Chambal River, Girwa River, Rapti-Naryani River** in Nepal.
- Smaller populations survive in: **Ken River, Yamuna River, Brahmaputra River, Ghaghara River, Bhagirathi-Hooghly River.**
- **Conservation Status**
 - **International Union for Conservation of Nature:** Critically Endangered.
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I species
- **Major Threats:** River pollution, Sand mining, Dam construction, Loss of nesting habitats, Fishing net entanglement, Overfishing, Egg collection and poaching.

Conservation Efforts

- **Project Crocodile** was launched in **1975** with support from:
 - United Nations Development Programme.
 - Food and Agriculture Organization.
- Important gharial reserves are located in:
 - Uttar Pradesh.
 - Madhya Pradesh.
 - Rajasthan.
- A **Gharial Bio-logging Project** has also been launched in collaboration with:
 - **World Wide Fund for Nature-India.**
 - **University of Tokyo, Japan.**
- The project studies underwater behaviour and habitat use of free-ranging gharials.

One Line Wrap

- The rare sighting of the gharial in Kaziranga highlights the success of Assam's riverine wildlife conservation efforts and the ecological richness of the Brahmaputra landscape.

Khongjom Day

Khongjom Day (April 23) was observed at the **Khongjom War Memorial, in Kheba Ching in Thoubal district (Manipur)** to pay tribute to martyrs of the **Anglo-Manipur War, 1891.**

About Khongjom Day

- Commemorates the **Battle of Khongjom (1891)**, the **last major battle** of the Anglo-Manipur War.
- Observed annually in **Manipur** as a symbol of **patriotism, courage, and resistance.**
- **Spearheaded by:** State Government of Manipur with participation of citizens, armed forces, and institutions.

Historical Background: Anglo-Manipur War (1891)

- Conflict between **British colonial forces** and the **Kingdom of Manipur.**
- Triggered by political tensions and British interference in Manipur's internal affairs.
- The battle at **Khongjom**, led by **Paona Brajabashi**, marked the final resistance by Manipuri forces.
- The **Manipuri Army** was **defeated** in the battle which **led to the loss of Manipur's sovereignty** and the beginning of British rule in Manipur.

Key Leaders and Heroes:

- **Paona Brajabashi** – iconic warrior who chose death over surrender
- **Yuvraj Tikendrajit, Maharaj Kulachandra, Chongtha Mia, Chinglensana**

One-line wrap:

Khongjom Day stands as a powerful reminder of Manipur's heroic resistance and enduring legacy of courage in India's freedom struggle.

Nitya Bora

Nitya Bora, noted Assamese writer and former editor of *Asomiya Pratidin*, passed away in Jorhat at the age of 83.

About Nitya Bora

- **Born:** 1943, Jamugurihat, Assam
- Began his career as an officer in the **Life Insurance Corporation**, later transitioned into **journalism and literature**.
- Served as **Editor of *Asomiya Pratidin***, one of Assam's leading newspapers.

Major Contributions

- **Journalism:**
 - Played a key role in shaping **modern Assamese media discourse**.
 - Known for his **analytical writing and editorial leadership**.
- **Literature:**
 - Authored significant works such as: *Atmaghati Asomiya*, *Jagroto Bibek: Udayaditya Bharali*, *Dusamayar Samay*.
 - His writings reflected **social concerns, identity issues, and contemporary challenges** in Assam.
- **Editorial Initiatives:**
 - Founder-editor of *Sampatrik Samayiki* (1976–1985), an influential socio-cultural magazine.
 - Contributed to *Amar Pratinidhi*, edited by Bhupen Hazarika, under a pen name.
 - Edited **Bezbaruah Rachanawali** (Works of Lakshminath Bezbarua) & **Itihas Aru Aitijya** (on historian Dr. Amalendu Guha).

One-line wrap: Nitya Bora's life reflects the enduring role of journalism and literature in shaping Assam's socio-cultural consciousness.

Shekha Jheel Becomes India's 99th Ramsar Site

Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh) has been declared **India's 99th Ramsar Site (2026)**, moving the country closer to the milestone of 100 sites.

About Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

- **Location:** Near Aligarh (15–17 km), Uttar Pradesh
- **Type:** Freshwater perennial wetland, **linked** to the **Upper Ganga Canal system**
- **Biodiversity hotspot:**
 - Supports **249 bird species**, out of which **62** are specifically **dependent** on the **wetland**.
- **Famous habitat** for **winter migratory birds** traversing on the Central Asian Flyway migratory route, such as the bar-headed goose, and the painted stork.
- **Other fauna:** Nilgai, blackbuck, reptiles, small mammals

Key Highlights

- India now has **99 Ramsar Sites**, **highest in Asia** and **third highest globally** after the UK (176) and Mexico (144).
- **Uttar Pradesh leads** with **12 Ramsar sites**, showing strong state-level conservation efforts.
- As of now **Tamil Nadu (20)** has the **highest number of Wetlands**.

Community-Led Water Conservation in Assam

- A **community water conservation project** was inaugurated at **Batabari village (Sonitpur, Assam)** under the **Dabur Jeevandhara Corporate Social Responsibility programme**.

About the Project

- The initiative focuses on **scientific rejuvenation and deepening of an existing pond** to enhance water storage and availability.
- It is **spearheaded by Dabur India Limited** under its **Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives**, in collaboration with local institutions.
- The project follows a **participatory planning approach**, involving village-level committees.

Key Features

- **Increased Storage Capacity:**
 - From **16,316 cubic metres** to **21,903 cubic metres**.
- **Total Water Potential:**

- Estimated **29,569 kilolitres** based on rainfall.
- **Coverage Area:**
 - Around **seven bighas of land**.
- **Beneficiaries:**
 - Approximately **1,364 residents** of Batabari and nearby villages.

Objectives and Outcomes

- Ensure **year-round water availability**.
- Improve **irrigation facilities** for agriculture.
- Support **fisheries and allied livelihoods**.
- Reduce dependence on **distant water sources**.
- Promote **community ownership of water resources**.

One-line wrap: The Batabari water conservation project highlights how community-driven and corporate-supported efforts can strengthen rural water security sustainably.

Sati Sadhani Divas

- Sati Sadhani Divas is **celebrated on April 21st every year** in Assam.
- This day **pays tribute to Sati Sadhani**, the last queen of the Chutia Dynasty, **commemorating the day she passed away in 1524**.
- Sati Sadhani, the **daughter of King Dharmadhwajpal** from the Chutia Dynasty, was **married to Nityapal (Nitai) in 1512** at the young age of 19.
- This union ultimately resulted in **Nityapal ascending to the throne**.
- However, according to history, **Nityapal's lack of efficiency and leadership skills** led to **Sadhani assuming control** and being **crowned Queen in 1522**.
- Nonetheless, significant chaos and anarchy had already ensued by this time.
- In **1524**, the **Ahom kingdom** (Under Suhungmuhung) launched an **attack on Sadiya**, the Chutia capital, and successfully **conquered it**.
- **Queen Sati Sadhani**, accompanied by her husband and a small group of warriors, **retreated to the Chandragiri hills**, where they valiantly battled the invading forces.
- She chose death over dishonour, **refusing the proposal of marrying Sadiyakhwa Gohain** (Ahom Governor of Sadiya) and **sacrificed her life** by leaping from the **Chandragiri hills in 1524**.
- Sati Sadhani Divas is not only a remembrance of a brave historical figure but also a celebration of courage, honour, and the spirit of freedom.
- On this day, the **Sati Sadhani award** is **bestowed** upon deserving individuals in recognition of their remarkable **contributions to the realms of art, culture, and literature**.
- **Cricketer Uma Chetry** is set to be **honoured** with the **prestigious Virangana Sati Sadhani Award, 2026**, on the occasion of the 502nd death anniversary of Sati Sadhani.
 - The award ceremony will be held at Ratnadhvaj Pal Field in Ahu Gaon, Bokakhat, and is being organised by the All Golaghat District Chutia Students' Association.

Suwari Festival of Assam

- The **114th edition of the Suwari Festival** was celebrated in **Boko (Assam)** with large participation, showcasing rich cultural traditions.

About Suwari Festival

- The **Suwari Festival** is a **traditional regional festival of Assam**, celebrated with a blend of **rituals, folk performances, and indigenous sports**.
- It reflects the **living cultural heritage** of rural Assam and promotes **community bonding across different groups**.

Key Features

- **Cultural Performances:**
 - Mass **Bihu dance and music** performances, including participation of large troupes of drummers and dancers.
 - Other dance performance includes **Hana Ghora Dance** (individual dresses like a horse) and **Deity Dance** (one dress as various local deities and performs ritualistic dance)
- **Traditional Sports:**
 - Events such as **elephant races, horse races, and footraces** are central attractions.

- **Community Participation:**
 - Brings together people from **diverse communities**, reinforcing **social harmony and unity**.

One-line wrap: The Suwari Festival showcases Assam's vibrant cultural traditions, blending ritual, sport, and community participation into a living heritage.

Gangetic River Dolphin

A **Gangetic river dolphin** was allegedly **poached in the Brahmaputra river (Kamrup, Assam)**, raising concerns over declining populations.

About Gangetic Dolphin

- **Scientific Name:** *Platanista gangetica*
- It is a **freshwater river dolphin** found in the **Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna and Karnaphuli river systems** (India, Nepal, Bangladesh).
- Recognised as **India's National Aquatic Animal** and **Assam's State Aquatic Animal**.
- Gangetic Dolphin in Assam are found in areas of the Kulsi River (Kamrup district), Subansiri River (Lakhimpur), Brahmaputra River in Majuli, Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (Tinsukia), Kaziranga National Park (Biswanath district), Guwahati (Darang-Kamrup metro), Goalpara-Bongaigaon, and Dhubri.
 - The **Barak River** has been identified as a **cold spot with no dolphin population**
- Acts as an **indicator species**, reflecting the health of river ecosystems.

Key Features

- It has a **long snout, stocky body, and large flippers**.
- Known as the **"blind dolphin"** due to absence of eye lens.
- Uses **bio-sonar (echolocation)** to navigate and hunt in murky waters.
- It is a **mammal**, hence must surface frequently to breathe.
- Feeds mainly on **fish species** and thrives in deep river channels.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN:** Endangered
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I (highest protection)
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species:** Appendix I

Threats

- **Poaching** for oil used in fishing and traditional medicine.
- **Habitat degradation** due to pollution, dams, and sand mining.
- **Accidental entanglement** in fishing nets.
- **Declining prey base** and river fragmentation.

Government Initiatives

- **Project Dolphin** was launched on **15 August 2020** under the **Development of Wildlife Habitats** scheme by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
 - The project aims to conserve **riverine and marine dolphins** through **scientific research, habitat protection, and community participation**.
- **Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Wildlife Sanctuary, Bihar** is **India's only dedicated dolphin sanctuary**.
 - It is located along the **Ganga River in Bhagalpur district**.
- The **Gangetic river dolphin** was declared **India's National Aquatic Animal on 5 October 2009**.
 - The day is observed as **National Ganga River Dolphin Day**.
- **India's first National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC)** was inaugurated in **Patna, Bihar**.

One-line wrap: The Gangetic dolphin, a key indicator of river health, faces serious threats from poaching and habitat loss, demanding urgent conservation action.

Rising Human–Elephant Conflict in Assam

Assam recorded **502 human deaths due to elephant attacks (2019–2025)**, with fatalities rising to **119 in 2024–25**, highlighting worsening **Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC)**.

Key Highlights

- Assam is the **4th most affected state** after **Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal**.
- Deaths increased by nearly **59% in six years**.
- Despite mitigation efforts, **no consistent decline** in fatalities is observed.

Understanding Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC)

- It refers to **negative interactions between humans and elephants**, leading to loss of life, crops, and property.
- Common in regions where **forest habitats overlap with human settlements**.

Major Causes

- **Habitat loss and fragmentation** due to deforestation and infrastructure projects.
- **Encroachment of elephant corridors** and migration routes.
- **Crop raiding** as elephants are attracted to agricultural fields.
- **Climate variability** altering food and water availability.
- Lack of **early warning systems** and poor ground-level coordination.

Institutional Framework

- **Primary responsibility** lies with **State Governments** (Forest Departments).
- Supported by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.

Key Schemes and Measures

- **Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats Scheme**
 - Provides **financial assistance** for conservation and compensation.
- **Ex-gratia compensation**
 - Increased to **Rs 10 lakh** for human deaths (2023 revision).
- **Project Elephant (1992)**
 - Focuses on **elephant conservation, habitat protection, and conflict mitigation**.
- Local initiatives like **Gajamitra Scheme (Assam)** for community participation.

One-line wrap: Rising human–elephant conflict in Assam reflects deeper ecological imbalance, demanding urgent habitat protection and community-driven solutions.

Ramsar Site Status for Meghalaya Wetlands

Civil society groups have demanded **Ramsar site recognition for Meghalaya wetlands**, opposing the proposed **luxury resort at Lumpongdeng Island (Umiam Lake)**.

Context

The Meghalaya Government plans to develop **Taj Umiam Resort and Spa** on Lumpongdeng Island. However, environmental groups argue that such ecologically sensitive zones must be protected under the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**, rather than commercialised.

What is the Ramsar Convention?

- It is an **international treaty adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971** and came into **force in 1975** for the **conservation and wise use of wetlands**.
 - It is **not mandatory** for the **Government to conserve all wetlands under Ramsar convention**.
- It is the only global treaty focusing on a single ecosystem.
- India has been a **signatory since 1982** and currently has **98 Ramsar sites**.
- Wetlands designated as Ramsar sites are recognised as **Wetlands of International Importance**.

About Wetland

- As per **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010**:
 - A "wetland" means an area or of marsh, fen, peatland or water; natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish water.
- It also **includes all inland waters** such as **lakes, reservoirs, tanks, backwaters, lagoon, creeks, estuaries etc.**

Status of Meghalaya

- Meghalaya currently has **no Ramsar site**, like other NE states of **Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Activists highlight lack of **political will and administrative action**.
- Key wetlands suggested for inclusion:
 - **Umiam Lake (Ri-Bhoi district)**
 - **Nongkhylllem Wildlife Sanctuary wetlands**

Ramsar Sites in Northeast India

- **Assam:** Deepor Beel (near Guwahati)
- **Manipur:** Loktak Lake
- **Mizoram:** Pala Wetland
- **Tripura:** Rudrasagar Lake

One-line wrap: Granting Ramsar status to Meghalaya's wetlands is crucial to balance development with long-term ecological sustainability.

New Gecko Species Discovered in Northeast

- Researchers have discovered a **new bent-toed gecko species in Tripura**, highlighting the rich biodiversity of Northeast India.

Key Highlights

- The new species is named *Cyrtodactylus jayadityai*, after noted herpetologist **Jayaditya Purkayastha**.
- The discovery has been published in the **European Journal of Taxonomy**, a peer-reviewed scientific journal.
- The study was conducted using specimens collected from **Tripura and Meghalaya (2024–2025)**.

About the Species

- It belongs to the genus **Cyrtodactylus (bent-toed geckos)**, widely distributed across Asia.
- Identified using an **integrative taxonomic approach**, including:
 - Morphological analysis
 - Statistical comparison
 - Molecular (DNA-based) study
- It shows **genetic divergence of 4.7–5.2%** from its closest relative, *Cyrtodactylus tripuraensis*, confirming it as a distinct species.

One-line wrap: The discovery of *Cyrtodactylus jayadityai* highlights Northeast India's rich but fragile biodiversity and the urgent need for conservation.

First Captive-Bred Vultures Released in Assam

In a significant conservation milestone, **five captive-bred White-rumped Vultures** were released into the wild in Assam from the **Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC)**.

Key Highlights of the Initiative

- This marks the **first-ever release of captive-bred vultures in Assam and Northeast India**.
- The release was carried out under the supervision of:
 - Assam Forest Department
 - Bombay Natural History Society
 - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

About Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC)

- The Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC), located near Guwahati, Assam, is a premier institution established in 2007 (jointly by Assam Forest Department & BNHS) to save critically endangered vulture species.
- It focuses on breeding Slender-billed and White-rumped vultures, with a 2025 milestone release of 30 birds into Kaziranga National Park.
- India has a total of four VCBCs and Rani VCBC represents the entire northeast India.

About White-Rumped Vulture

- Scientific name: *Gyps bengalensis*
- Status: **Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)**
- Native to the **Indian subcontinent**
- Population declined sharply due to **diclofenac toxicity (veterinary drug)**

Vulture Conservation in India

Operates Under

- **Vulture Conservation Action Plan 2020-2025**
- Spearheaded by:
 - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
 - State Forest Departments
 - Conservation organisations

Objectives

- Prevent **vulture extinction**
- Promote **captive breeding and reintroduction**
- Eliminate harmful drugs like **diclofenac**

Rani Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (Assam)

- Established in **2007**
- Current population:
 - **138 White-rumped vultures**
 - **56 Slender-billed vultures**
- Total: **194 vultures**

- Capacity to release **20–25 vultures annually**

Ecological Importance of Vultures

- Act as **natural scavengers**, cleaning carcasses.
- Prevent spread of **zoonotic diseases**.
- Maintain **ecosystem balance**.

One-line Wrap:

The release of captive-bred white-rumped vultures in Assam marks a major step in restoring ecological balance and reviving critically endangered species in India.

Rare Plant *Agapetes wardii* Discovery in Arunachal Pradesh

A rare plant species, *Agapetes wardii*, has been recorded for the first time in India from Changlang district Arunachal, where it was earlier known only from Myanmar.

Key Highlights of the Discovery

- The species was identified by researchers from the **Society for Education and Environmental Development**.
- It is an **epiphytic shrub**, meaning it grows on other plants without harming them.
- Found in **moist evergreen forests**, often near water sources.

Botanical Features

- **Tubular flowers** ranging from red to pink (sometimes white).
- **Elliptic to lanceolate leaves**.
- Identification confirmed through **morphological and taxonomic analysis**, comparing with related species like:
 - *Agapetes hosseana*, *Agapetes mannii*, *Agapetes buxifolia*

Why Arunachal Pradesh is Biodiversity-Rich

- Located in the **Eastern Himalayan region**, known for high species diversity.
- Features **dense forests, varied altitude, and high rainfall**, creating ideal conditions for plant growth.
- Hosts numerous species under the **Agapetes genus**, reflecting ecological richness.

One-line Wrap:

The discovery of *Agapetes wardii* in Arunachal Pradesh highlights the immense and still unexplored biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayan region.

Assam Fast-Tracks Piped Natural Gas Connections Amid LPG Supply Concerns

Amid concerns over liquefied petroleum gas supply disruptions due to the West Asia conflict, the Assam Government has accelerated the rollout of piped natural gas connections across the State to ensure reliable and affordable household energy supply.

Key Developments

1. Barauni–Guwahati Gas Pipeline

- The **Barauni–Guwahati Natural Gas Pipeline**, completed by **GAIL India Limited**, is now nearing full operationalisation.
- Project cost revised from **₹3,308 crore to ₹3,992 crore**.
- Remaining pre-commissioning work is expected to be completed soon.

2. PNG Supply Rollout

- Around **6,000 domestic consumers in Guwahati** are expected to receive piped gas by April 2026.
- Connections have already been provided in areas like:
 - Noonmati, Dispur, Beltola, Khanapara and Hatigaon.

Expansion Plans

- Approximately **12,500 new connections** planned across:
 - Guwahati, Tezpur, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia.
- In Upper Assam alone, **5,000 additional connections** are proposed.

Existing Coverage

- **Assam Gas Company Limited** currently supplies PNG to:
 - **63,000 domestic consumers**
 - **570 industrial units**
 - **1,500 commercial establishments**

Policy Framework

The initiative operates under the **City Gas Distribution network expansion**, promoted by:

- **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board**

- National push towards **cleaner fuels and energy transition**

Objectives

- Ensure **energy security** amid LPG supply disruptions.
- Promote **clean fuel usage** with lower emissions than conventional fuels.
- Reduce dependence on **cylinder-based fuel systems**.
- Improve **ease of living** through continuous gas supply.

Significance

- Strengthens **urban energy infrastructure** in Assam.
- Supports India's goal of **increasing the share of natural gas in the energy mix**.
- Reduces **household fuel costs** and environmental pollution.

One-line Wrap:

The expansion of **pipled natural gas** in Assam marks a key step toward cleaner, reliable, and affordable energy access in the State.

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

The Union Government has approved the **Small Hydro Power Development Scheme** with an outlay of **₹2,585 crore** to promote **clean energy generation** through small hydro projects across India, with special focus on **Northeast and hilly regions**.

Key Features of the Scheme

1. Project Scope

- Implementation period: **2026–27 to 2030–31**
- Target capacity: **1,500 megawatts**
- Applicable to **small hydro projects (1–25 megawatts capacity)**

2. Financial Assistance

The scheme provides **Central financial support** to developers:

- **Northeast and border areas:**
 - Up to **₹3.6 crore per megawatt** or **30% of project cost** (whichever is lower)
 - Maximum limit: **₹30 crore per project**
- **Other States:**
 - Up to **₹2.4 crore per megawatt** or **20% of project cost**
 - Maximum limit: **₹20 crore per project**

Objectives

- Promote **renewable and clean energy generation**.
- Utilise **untapped hydro potential in remote areas**.
- Encourage **private sector investment** (estimated ₹15,000 crore).
- Support **energy access in difficult terrains**, especially in Northeast India.

Importance for Northeast India

The Northeast region has **abundant river systems and hilly terrain**, making it ideal for small hydro projects.

Benefits

- Provides **reliable electricity in remote villages**.
- Reduces dependence on **fossil fuels and diesel generators**.
- Supports **local employment and regional development**.
- Enhances **energy security in border areas**.

What is Small Hydro Power?

- Refers to **hydropower projects with capacity up to 25 megawatts**.
- Usually based on **run-of-the-river systems**, which do not require large dams.
- Considered **environment-friendly with minimal displacement and ecological impact**.

Policy Context

The scheme aligns with India's broader goals:

- Increasing the share of **renewable energy in the energy mix**.
- Achieving **climate commitments under global agreements**.
- Promoting **sustainable infrastructure development**.

One-line Wrap:

The **Small Hydro Power Development Scheme** aims to harness clean energy potential in Northeast India while promoting sustainable and decentralised power generation.

Aizawl City Beautification Project

A prime land parcel in **Aizawl**, earlier occupied by the **Assam Rifles** for more than a century, has been transferred to the **Mizoram Government**. The State has announced plans to redevelop the site under the **Aizawl City Beautification Project** as part of the **Lammual Master Plan**.

Background of the Land Transfer

- The land in the **central Lammual area of Aizawl** had been under the control of Assam Rifles since the **colonial period**.
- It was **officially handed over to the Mizoram Government in March 2025**.
- The transfer fulfilled a **long-standing demand of residents** to utilise the centrally located land for civilian purposes.

About the Aizawl City Beautification Project

The redevelopment initiative is part of the **Lammual Master Plan**, aimed at transforming the urban core of Aizawl into a modern civic hub.

Key Features of the Project

- **Road infrastructure improvements** to reduce congestion in the city centre.
- Development of **public squares and green spaces** for recreation.
- Construction of **parking facilities** to address traffic challenges.
- Creation of **pedestrian-friendly zones** and designated viewpoints.
- Establishment of a **large public hall and community infrastructure**.
- Expansion of **power and water supply systems** to support urban growth.

Objectives

The project aims to:

- Create an **inclusive urban environment** for children, youth, and elderly citizens.
- Improve **urban mobility and civic infrastructure** in Aizawl.
- Convert a historic institutional site into **public space for community use**.
- Promote **planned urban development in hill cities**.

Urban Development Context

Urban redevelopment projects such as this align with broader national initiatives like:

- **Smart Cities Mission**, which focuses on sustainable and citizen-friendly urban planning.
- **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation**, which improves water supply, transport, and public spaces.

One-line Wrap:

The redevelopment of vacated Assam Rifles land under the **Aizawl City Beautification Project** marks a major step toward modern and people-centric urban planning in Mizoram.

IIT Guwahati Develops Radiation-Shielding Cement Mortar

Researchers at **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati** have developed an **improved cement mortar capable of blocking harmful radiation**, which could enhance safety in **nuclear power plants and radiation-sensitive facilities**.

Key Innovation: Radiation-Shielding Cement Mortar

The research aims to create **cement-based materials that are stronger, more durable, and capable of shielding radiation**.

The scientists modified ordinary cement mortar by adding **four specialised microparticles**:

- **Boron oxide, Lead oxide, Bismuth oxide and Tungsten oxide**

These particles were added in small quantities to test their ability to **increase compressive strength and block radiation**.

Key Findings

- The modified mortar showed **higher structural strength after 28 days of curing**.
- It demonstrated improved ability to **block mixed radiation fields**, including:
 - **Gamma radiation**
 - **Neutron radiation**

Importance for Nuclear Infrastructure

Nuclear facilities require extremely strong protective structures.

Containment structures in nuclear power plants act as a **protective barrier** against radiation leaks during:

- Earthquakes
- Explosions
- Temperature fluctuations

Improving cement mortar helps build **radiation-resistant concrete**, making nuclear facilities safer.

This is especially important in light of past nuclear disasters such as:

- **Chernobyl disaster**
- **Fukushima nuclear disaster**

These events highlighted the need for **stronger containment materials and safety systems**.

Applications of the Technology

The newly developed material could be used in several sectors:

- **Nuclear power plants**
- **Small modular reactors**
- **Medical radiation facilities**
- **Radiation research laboratories**

The research findings were published in the international journal **Materials and Structures**.

Future Scope

The research team is exploring collaborations with:

- **Nuclear energy agencies**
- **Construction material manufacturers**
- **Infrastructure companies**

The aim is to conduct **pilot-scale testing under real-world conditions** and develop **next-generation nuclear-grade construction materials**.

Key Takeaways

- The new cement mortar improves **both structural strength and radiation shielding capacity**.
- It could help build **safer nuclear infrastructure**.
- The innovation supports **expanding nuclear energy while ensuring high safety standards**.

One-line Wrap:

The IIT Guwahati research on **radiation-shielding cement mortar** could significantly improve the safety and durability of nuclear power infrastructure in India.

Moghai Ojah Award

Renowned folk artiste and Bihu dance expert **Ranjit Gogoi** was honoured with the **16th Moghai Ojah Award** at a ceremony organised in Jorhat by the **Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad**.

About the Moghai Ojah Award

- The **Moghai Ojah Award** was instituted in **2011** by the Jorhat district unit of the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad.
- It commemorates the legendary Assamese folk musician **Moghai Ojah**.
- The award is presented **annually on 15 March**, marking the **death anniversary of Moghai Ojah**.
- The award includes:
 - A **cash prize**, a **seleng chadar** (traditional shawl), **gamosa** (traditional Assamese towel), **japi** (traditional conical hat), **xorai** (bell-metal offering vessel), a **citation**, and a **memento**.

These items represent the **traditional cultural heritage of Assam**.

About Moghai Ojah

Moghai Ojah is regarded as one of the **greatest dhol** — Assam's iconic traditional drum — **players in Assamese folk music**.

Moghai Ojah (also known as Moghai Baruah), who lived from 1916 to 1978, was a legendary musician from Assam widely credited with bringing the Dhol to a global audience. Born in Naosolia village, Jorhat district, into the Keot community, he overcame financial hardship to become one of Assam's most celebrated folk musicians.

Due to his extraordinary drumming skill, he came to be known as the "Oja of Dhol" — the master of the dhol. He was also **associated** with the **Gananatya Sangha** (IPTA), through which he worked alongside towering figures such as Kalaguru Bishnu Rabha, Nata-Surjya Phani Sharma, and Sudha-Kantha Dr. Bhupen Hazarika. He passed away on **15 March 1978**.

Contributions

- Elevated the **Assamese dhol (traditional drum)** to national and international recognition.
- Played a crucial role in popularising **Bihu music and dance traditions**.
- Also appeared in several films such as:
 - *Pioli Phukan, Ranga Police, Pratidhwani, Mahut Bandhu Re* (Bengali) and *Maram Trishna*

Other Recognitions

During the same programme:

- The **Moghai Ojah Educational Trust Award** was presented to **Puja Dutta**, a student of **Tezpur University**.
 - The award provides **monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500** to support higher education.
- **Moghai Ojah Srijan Award (2015)**: Instituted by Srijanasom Trust, a charitable body promoting Indian art and culture.

One-line Wrap:

The **Moghai Ojah Award** celebrates the legacy of Assam's legendary dhol maestro while promoting the preservation of traditional Bihu music and folk culture.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025

The **Sahitya Akademi Award** for **2025** has been announced, recognising outstanding literary works across **24 Indian languages**.

Key Awardees from Assam

Two prominent writers from Assam have been honoured:

- **Devabrat Das** – Awarded for the **Assamese novel *Karhi Khelar Sadhu***.
- **Sahaisuli Brahma** – Awarded for the **Bodo novel *Dwngnwi Lama Mwnse Gathwn***.

The awards highlight the **rich literary traditions of Northeast India** and the growing recognition of regional languages.



About the Sahitya Akademi Award

- The award is presented by **Sahitya Akademi**, India's national institution for literature.
- It is **conferred annually** for **outstanding literary works in 22 languages** listed in the **8th Schedule** of the Indian Constitution, plus **English and Rajasthani**.
- The Akademi operates under the **Ministry of Culture, Government of India**.
- The **Sahitya Akademi Award** consists of:

- A casket containing an engraved copper plaque
- A shawl
- Cash prize of ₹1 lakh
- **Objectives:**
 - Promote **Indian literature in multiple languages.**
 - Encourage **creative writing, translation, and literary scholarship.**
 - Preserve and celebrate **India's linguistic and cultural diversity.**
- The 2025 awards recognised **various literary genres**, including:
 - *Eight poetry collections, four novels, six short story collections, two essay collections, one literary criticism work, one autobiography and two memoirs.*

One-line Wrap:

The Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 celebrates India's linguistic diversity by honouring outstanding literary contributions in 24 languages, including Assamese and Bodo.

Infrastructure and Education Boost

The Assam Chief Minister virtually inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of **10 development projects worth about ₹73 crore in Hailakandi district**, aimed at improving **education, administrative infrastructure, sports facilities, and rural connectivity.**

Key Development Projects

1. Education Infrastructure

- **Hailakandi Government VMHS School** will be developed as a **Centre of Excellence.**

Objective

- Improve the **quality of secondary education.**
- Provide better **academic infrastructure and learning facilities.**

2. Administrative Infrastructure

- The new **Circuit House in Hailakandi** was inaugurated with an investment of **₹12.64 crore.**

Significance

- Enhances **administrative functioning and accommodation facilities** for visiting officials and dignitaries.
- Supports better **governance and coordination** in the district.

3. Sports Infrastructure

- Construction of a **multi-storey youth hostel** under the **first phase of Hailakandi District Stadium development.**

Investment

- Approximately **₹2.98 crore.**

Objective

- Promote **sports activities and youth engagement** in the district.

4. Rural Connectivity and Bridge Projects

Several bridge construction projects were initiated to improve connectivity in rural areas.

Key projects include:

- **Bridge connecting Bhavanipur and Saidpur villages.**
- **Bridge at Nachghar in Bagargul area.**
- **Bridge over the Dhaleshwari River linking Chandipur Part I and Chiparsangan Part III villages.**
- **Bridge over Katakhal River at Lalacherra** on the Abdullahpur–Barnarpur road (₹14.10 crore).

These projects operate under broader rural connectivity efforts similar to the **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**, which aims to connect remote villages with all-weather roads.

One-line Wrap:

The new infrastructure and education projects in **Hailakandi district** aim to **strengthen connectivity, governance, and youth development in Assam's Barak Valley.**

Assam's Healthcare Transformation

The Union Home Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of **healthcare projects worth ₹2,092 crore in Assam**, highlighting improvements in medical education, cancer care, and public health infrastructure.

Key Healthcare Infrastructure Projects

1. Pragjyotishpur Medical College & Hospital

- **Pragjyotishpur Medical College and Hospital** was inaugurated with an investment of **₹675 crore**.
- It will enhance **medical education, research, and treatment facilities** in the state.

2. Expansion of Cancer Care Facilities

Two new cancer hospitals were inaugurated under the **Assam Cancer Care Foundation**:

- **Golaghat Cancer Centre** – ₹135 crore
- **Tinsukia Cancer Centre** – ₹135 crore

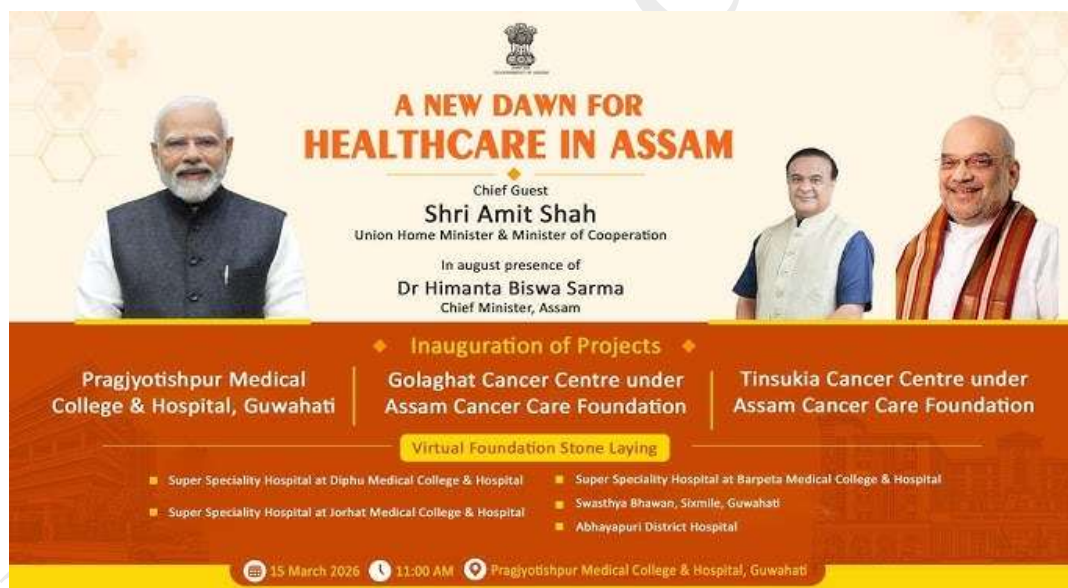
These centres operate under a **public-private partnership model**, spearheaded by the Assam Government with support from philanthropic institutions, to expand **affordable cancer treatment in Northeast India**.

3. Super-Speciality Hospital Projects

Foundation stones were laid for new **super-speciality hospitals**:

- **Diphu Medical College & Hospital** – ₹220 crore
- **Jorhat Medical College and Hospital** – ₹310 crore
- **Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College and Hospital** – ₹284 crore

Other infrastructure projects include **Swasthya Bhawan in Guwahati** (₹218 crore) and **Abhayapuri District Hospital** (₹115 crore).



Progress in Assam's Healthcare Sector

Over the last decade, the state has witnessed significant improvements:

- **Medical colleges increased from 6 to 14, with 10 more under construction.**
- **MBBS seats increased from 726 to 1,850.**
- **Cancer hospitals increased from 2 to 17 across Assam.**
- **Health budget increased from ₹4,000 crore to ₹9,000 crore.**

Public Health Outcomes

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio** reduced from **304 to 105**.
- **Infant Mortality Rate** reduced from **54 to 30**.
- **Institutional deliveries** reached **98 percent**.
- **Around 92 percent of the population** is covered under government health insurance schemes such as **Ayushman Bharat**.

Future Healthcare Innovation

Assam plans to introduce **proton therapy for cancer treatment**, a highly advanced radiation therapy technology.

- Proposed cost: **₹400 crore**.
- Assam could become **the first Indian state to provide proton therapy in a government hospital**.

One-line Wrap:

Assam's expanding medical colleges, cancer care network, and advanced treatment facilities signal a major **transformation in healthcare infrastructure and access in Northeast India**.

Four Inland Waterway Projects to Boost Trade and First Record of Potter Wasp in India

- A **new species record for India**, *Antepipona bhutanensis*, has been discovered in **Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh**, earlier known only from Bhutan.

Key Highlights

- The species belongs to **potter wasps**, a group of solitary insects known for **mud nest building**.
- This marks the **first confirmed presence of the species in India**.
- The discovery highlights **faunal linkages across the Eastern Himalayan region**.
- It was acknowledged by the **Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh** as an important biodiversity milestone.

About *Antepipona bhutanensis*

- It is a **solitary wasp species** belonging to the **family Vespidae**.
- Commonly called a **potter wasp** due to its **pot-shaped mud nests**.
- Plays an important ecological role as a **natural pest controller**, helping maintain ecosystem balance.



Important Terms Explained

- **Potter Wasp**: A type of wasp that builds **mud nests and feeds on insect larvae**, aiding pest control.
- **Faunal Linkages**: It refers to **distribution of animal species across geographical regions**, indicating ecological connectivity.
- **Biodiversity Hotspot**: A region rich in species diversity but under threat.
- **Transboundary Conservation**: Conservation efforts involving **multiple countries sharing ecosystems**.
- **Ecosystem Balance**: Maintenance of **natural interactions between species and environment**.

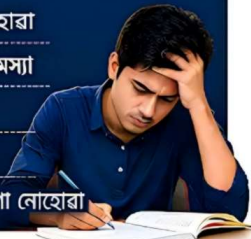
One-line wrap: The discovery of *Antepipona bhutanensis* in Arunachal Pradesh highlights the ecological richness of the Eastern Himalayas and the need for stronger conservation efforts.

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EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



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10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

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RuTAG IIT Guwahati

- **Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG) at Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati** has completed nearly **two decades of grassroots innovation**, with renewed focus on **commercialisation under RuTAG 2.0**.

About RuTAG Initiative

- Established in **2006 under the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India**.
- Operates through premier institutions like **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati**.
- The initiative is **spearheaded by scientific institutions in collaboration with rural communities**.

Objectives of RuTAG

- It aims to **design user-friendly and affordable technologies** for rural and tribal communities.
- It focuses on **livelihood enhancement, productivity improvement, and reducing drudgery**.
- It works on a **bottom-up approach**, where solutions are developed based on **local needs and feedback**.

Key Innovations and Products

- A **heavy-duty bicycle and rural vending cart** has improved mobility and reduced transport costs for farmers.
- An **Eri cocoon opener** has increased silk processing productivity by nearly **ten times**, benefiting handloom clusters.
- A **solar-powered potter's wheel** has doubled production and reduced manual labour.
- A **feed-block machine** helps produce animal feed for **yaks and mithuns**, preventing starvation in harsh winters.
- A **biomass dryer** enables drying of agricultural produce without electricity, ensuring **weather-independent processing**.

National Recognition

- Six technologies from RuTAG Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati have been selected under the **Science and Technology Intervention in North East Region programme**.
- Local enterprises are involved in **scaling up production**, ensuring **employment generation and sustainability**.

RuTAG 2.0: The Next Phase

- Focus on **patenting and large-scale commercialisation** of innovations.
- Strengthening **industry linkages and market access**.
- Expanding impact across sectors like **agriculture, handloom, and rural enterprises**.

One-line wrap: RuTAG IIT Guwahati showcases how locally driven technology can transform rural livelihoods and drive inclusive growth in Northeast India.

Meghalaya Recognises Khasi and Garo as Official Languages

The Meghalaya cabinet recently approves Khasi and Garo as official state languages.

About the Decision

- The government of Meghalaya has approved the **Meghalaya Official Languages Ordinance, 2026**.
- It declares **Khasi and Garo as official languages of the state**, along with English.
- The Cabinet **repealed the Meghalaya State Language Act, 2005** and **amended** the relevant Acts, including the **Meghalaya State Legislature (Continuance of English Language) Act, 1980**.
- The move is aimed at strengthening the use of indigenous languages in governance and promoting the **linguistic identity of indigenous tribal communities**.

What are Official State Languages?

- **Official languages** are those used by a state government for **administration, legislation, and official communication**.
- States can choose their own official languages under **Article 345 of the Constitution of India**.
- They are different from the **Eighth Schedule languages**, which are recognized at the national level.

Key Features of the Move

- **Khasi and Garo** can now be used in:
 - Government communications
 - Administrative work
 - Legislative debates (after legal amendments)
- Amendments will be made to the **Meghalaya State Legislature (Continuance of English Language) Act, 1980**.
- Strengthens the demand for inclusion of Khasi and Garo in the **Eighth Schedule**.

Official Languages of Assam

- In Assam:
 - **Assamese** – Official language of the state

- **Bodo** – Official in Bodoland Territorial Region which includes the districts of Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri, Chirang and Tamulpur.
- **Bengali** – Official language in Barak Valley districts of Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi.
- **Manipuri**– Associate Official Language in four districts of the state namely, Cachar, Karimganj, Hailakandi and Hojai.

One-line wrap: Recognising Khasi and Garo as official languages reinforces **linguistic identity and inclusive governance in Meghalaya**.

Rongjali Bwisagu Festival

Rongjali Bwisagu was recently celebrated with enthusiasm in Kokrajhar district.

About the Festival

- **Rongjali Bwisagu** is the most important festival of the **Bodo community** of Assam.
- Celebrated during **mid-April (Bohag/Baisakh)**, marking the **Bodo New Year and arrival of spring**.
- It is similar in spirit to other spring festivals like **Bihu**.

Key Features

- Traditionally celebrated for **seven days**, though earlier it continued for the entire month of Bohag.
- Divided into two main parts:
 - **Mwsou Thukhwinai (Cattle rites):**
 - Observed on the last day of Chait month.
 - Involves **ritual bathing and worship of cattle** (similar to Goru Bihu), highlighting agrarian roots.
 - **Mansini Bwisagu (Human celebration):**
 - Begins on the **first day of Bohag**.
 - Mansi Bwisagu seven days celebration are divided in different parts, such as:
 - ✓ **First day** is **Mansini Bwisagu** (Similar to Manhu bihu),
 - ✓ **Second day** is called **Swimani Bwisagu** (dog's Bwisagu),
 - ✓ **Third day** is called **Omani Bwisagu** (swine's Bwisagu)
 - ✓ **Fourth day** is called **Daoni Bwisagu** (Fowl's Bwisagu),
 - ✓ **Fifth day** is called **Hangswni Bwisagu** (Duck's Bwisagu),
 - ✓ **Sixth and seventh days** are for **receiving relatives and friends**.

Cultural Elements

- Celebrated with a rich tradition of **music, dance, and rituals**.
- Use of traditional instruments: **Kham (drum), Siphung (flute), Jotha (cymbal) and Thorkha (bamboo instrument)**
- Reflects **harmony with nature and animals**.

One-line wrap: Rongjali Bwisagu celebrates **Bodo identity, agrarian life, and harmony with nature**.

Kalicharan Brahma Award 2026

Recently the **eighth Kalicharan Brahma Award** was announced for 2026.

About the Award

- The **Kalicharan Brahma Award** is an annual honour given to individuals for their **outstanding contribution to Brahma Dharma philosophy and social reform**.
- The **2026 award** has been conferred on:
 - Ramesh Chandra Bharadwaj
 - Karenra Basumatary (posthumously)
- **Prof. Bhardwaj**, a **distinguished scholar of Indian Philosophy** and the **Indian Knowledge System**, has over three decades of academic experience at the University of Delhi.
 - His **contributions to Vedic studies, Mimamsa philosophy, and Indo-European research** have earned him wide recognition.
- **Late Karendra Basumatary**, popularly known as "**Mugani Dawharu**," will be **honoured posthumously** for his **contributions as a socio-political leader**.
 - He **served as President** of the **All Bodo Students Union** from 1983 to 1986 and as a Member of the Legislative Assembly during 1991–1996 and 2001–2011.
- It is presented on the occasion of **Kalicharan Brahma Jayanti**.

About Kalicharan Brahma

- Kalicharan Brahma was a **prominent social reformer and spiritual leader** of the Bodo community.
- He propagated **Brahma Dharma**, a reformist religious movement promoting:
 - **Social equality**
 - **Moral upliftment**
 - **Community development**
- He received **initiation (Diksha)** into Brahma religion in Kolkata and worked for the **upliftment of the Bodo society**.

One-line wrap: Kalicharan Brahma Award recognises contributions to **Bodo social reform and Brahma Dharma philosophy**.

Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project

The fourth unit of the Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project is nearing completion.

About the Project

- The **Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project (SLHEP)** is a major **hydropower project** located on the Subansiri River, the largest tributary of the Brahmaputra River.
- It is being **developed by National Hydroelectric Power Corporation**.
- **Situated in Gerukamukh** along the border of **Assam and Arunachal Pradesh**.

Key Features

- **Total installed capacity:** 2,000 megawatts
- **Current status:**
 - 4th unit under trial
 - **1,000 megawatts generation expected soon**
 - Full capacity targeted by **March 2027**
- Includes a **116-metre-high concrete gravity dam**, the largest dam in North-East India.
 - This will be the first cascaded dam on the Subansiri River.
- Type: **Run-of-the-river project** (minimal water storage, environmentally relatively less disruptive).

Objectives

- To enhance **renewable energy capacity** in India.
- To ensure **energy security in Northeast India**.
- To promote **regional development and infrastructure growth**.

Significance

- One of the **largest hydropower projects in India**.
- Critical for **clean energy transition**, allocate 1,000 MW to the North-East.
- Supports **grid stability and peak power demand**.
- Strategically important for **water management, flood control**, and **energy security** in the North-East.
- Supply power to **16 beneficiary states**, provide **free power** to **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.

Associated Projects in Region

- **Dibang Multipurpose Project** (2,880 megawatts) – under construction.
- **Subansiri Middle Project** (1,720 megawatts) – approved.
- **Lohit Hydropower Project** (1,200 megawatts) – planned near India–China border.

One-line wrap:

Subansiri project is a **flagship hydropower initiative driving clean energy and development in Northeast India**.

Pongtu Kuh Festival

The traditional Pongtu Kuh festival was celebrated by the Tutsa community residing across Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh on 11th April.

About the Festival

- **Pongtu Kuh** is a traditional festival of the **Tutsa tribe** celebrated in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is observed mainly in **Tirap and Changlang districts**, with Tutnu village being an important cultural centre.
- It is an important and oldest agricultural festival **celebrated on the eve of the rainy season**.
- The word “PONGTU” is composed of two words i.e., ‘Pong’ which means ‘WIND’ and ‘Tu’ means ‘RETREATING’.

- The festival is **celebrated before the harvesting of Millet rice** and to **welcome the New Year** and to drive out the old.
- It is aimed at **fostering unity and brotherhood** among the kith and kins belonging to clan and the family.
- The festival reflects the **ancestral traditions, identity, and unity** of the Tutsa community.

Key Features

- The celebration includes **folk songs, traditional long drum performance, rituals, and indigenous attire**.
- Prayers are offered to the supreme God **Rangkhothak** which is believed to be divine Goddess both benevolent and malevolent
- Acts as a platform for **community bonding and inter-generational knowledge transfer**.
- Organized with participation of **community leaders, youth, and local administration**.

One-line wrap: Pongtu Kuh showcases how **tribal festivals act as pillars of cultural preservation and regional development**.

New Burrowing Reed Snake Discovered in Meghalaya

Scientists discover a new species of burrowing reed snake in Meghalaya.

About the Discovery

- A new species named **Calamaria garoensis** (Garo Hills reed snake) has been discovered in Meghalaya, specifically in the **West Garo Hills**.
- The discovery was made through a **collaborative effort of multiple Indian institutions**, including the Zoological Survey of India.

Key Features of the Species

- Belongs to the genus **Calamaria**, known for **small, burrowing (fossorial) snakes**.
- Found in **forested habitats of Oragitok**, indicating **restricted distribution**.
- Distinct traits include:
 - **Smooth dorsal scales (13 rows)**
 - **Short, blunt tail**
 - **Black stripe on underside of tail**
- Genetically distinct (6.3% divergence) from related species like *Calamaria mizoramensis*.

One-line wrap: Discovery of *Calamaria garoensis* highlights the **rich yet underexplored biodiversity of Northeast India**.

Sikkim's First Border Community Radio

Indian Army launches first community radio station in Sikkim's border village.

About the Initiative

- The **Indian Army's Trishakti Corps** has launched '**Radio Sikkim Sundari**', the **first border village community radio station** in Sikkim.
- It is aimed at improving **last-mile connectivity, communication, and information access** in remote high-altitude regions.

Key Features

- Broadcasts **local news, weather updates, and government schemes**.
- Promotes **local culture, traditions, and languages**, strengthening regional identity.
- Provides a platform for **youth participation and skill development** in communication.
- Enhances **community engagement and awareness** in border areas.

Regulatory Framework

- Community radio in India operates under the **Community Radio Guidelines (2006)** issued by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- Licensing and frequency allocation are regulated by the **Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing** under the **Ministry of Communications**.

Objectives

- To **bridge the information gap** in remote border villages.
- To strengthen **civil-military cooperation and trust**.
- To support **inclusive development and governance outreach**.
- To empower local communities through **participatory communication**.

Conclusion

- The initiative reflects a **community-centric development model**, where communication becomes a tool for empowerment and inclusion in strategically important regions.

One-line wrap: Community radio in border areas strengthens **connectivity, governance outreach, and grassroots empowerment**.

Asian Boxing Championships 2026

India's women's boxing team topped the **Asian Boxing Championships 2026 medal tally**, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Key Highlights

- India secured a total of **10 medals**:
 - **4 Gold, 2 Silver, 4 Bronze**
- Remarkably, **every member of the women's team won a medal**, reflecting strong bench strength.
- The team performed under the guidance of head coach Santiago Nieva and the leadership of Ajay Singh.
- Assam's **Lovlina Borgohain** and **Ankushits Boro (65kg)** secured a bronze medal.
- **Gold Medal Winners**
 - **Minakshi (48 kg)** defeated Mongolia's Nomundari Enkh-Amgalan (5–0).
 - **Preeti (54 kg)** defeated Huang Hsiao-wen, a three-time world champion and Olympic medallist.
 - **Priya (60 kg)** secured a 3–0 win over North Korea's Won Un-gyong.
 - **Arundhati (70 kg)** clinched gold with a 4–1 victory over Kazakhstan's Bakyt Seidish.
- **Silver Medals:** Jaismine (57 kg), Alfiyan Pathan (80+ kg)

- **Lovlina Borgohain** previously won a **bronze medal** at the **2020 Tokyo Olympics** in the women's welterweight category.
- Her career achievements include a gold medal at the 2023 IBA Women's World Boxing Championships, bronze medals at the 2018 and 2019 editions of the event.
- She was also **awarded the Arjuna Award in 2021** for her achievements in boxing.

One-Line Wrap

- India's success at the Asian Boxing Championships 2026 reflects **rising excellence in women's sports backed by strong policy support and grassroots development**.

Cabinet Approves Major Hydropower Projects in Arunachal Pradesh

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved two major **hydro-electric projects** in Arunachal Pradesh, marking a significant push towards **clean energy generation and regional development** in Northeast India.

About the Projects

- The approval includes an investment of about **₹40,176 crore** for two projects:
 - **Kamala Hydro-electric Project** (₹26,069.5 crore)
 - **Kalai-II Hydro-electric Project** (₹14,105.83 crore)

Key Features

Kamala Hydro-electric Project

- It will have an **installed capacity of 1,720 megawatts**.
- It is expected to generate about **6,870 million units of electricity annually**.
- It is located across **Kamle, Kra Daadi, and Kurung Kumey districts**.
- It is being implemented as a **joint venture between National Hydroelectric Power Corporation and the Arunachal Pradesh government**.
- The project is expected to be completed in **eight years**.

Kalai-II Hydro-electric Project

- It will have an **installed capacity of 1,200 megawatts**.
- It is expected to generate about **4,852.95 million units annually**.
- It is located in the **Lohit basin in Anjaw district**.
- It is being developed by **THDC India Limited in partnership with the state government**.
- The project is expected to be completed in **six and a half years**.

Objectives and Benefits

- The projects aim to **enhance renewable energy capacity** and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- They will contribute to **regional development, employment generation, and infrastructure growth**.
- Arunachal Pradesh will receive **12 percent free power** and an additional **1 percent for the Local Area Development Fund**, ensuring local benefits.

One-Line Wrap

- The approval of major hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh reflects India's commitment to clean energy, regional development, and sustainable growth.

NABARD Opens Rural Haats in Arunachal Pradesh

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has launched **two rural haats** in Arunachal Pradesh to strengthen rural livelihoods and market access.

Key Highlights

- Two rural markets (haats) have been established at:
 - **Namsai (2nd Mile area)**
 - **Wakro (Lohit district)**
- The initiative aims to provide **dedicated selling platforms** for farmers and **Self Help Groups (SHGs)**.
- The project is implemented under the Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission.
- **Objectives and Features**
 - To improve **market access** for rural producers and reduce dependence on middlemen.
 - To promote **income generation and rural entrepreneurship** through SHGs.
 - To provide **infrastructure for aggregation, storage, and sale of agricultural produce**.
 - To support **financial inclusion** through SHG-Bank linkage programmes pioneered by NABARD.

Key Interventions

- Introduction of **low-cost vegetable coolers** (developed by Indian Institute of Technology Bombay) to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Distribution of seeds under the **JIVA Natural Farming Project**, promoting **eco-friendly and sustainable agriculture**.
- Promotion of **bamboo-based livelihoods** through plantation drives and local enterprise development.

Institutional Framework

- **NABARD:** Setup in 1982 on recommendation of B.Sivaraman committee, as apex development bank for agriculture and rural development, focusing on credit, infrastructure, and livelihood promotion.
- **Self Help Group-Bank Linkage Programme:** A flagship initiative to connect SHGs with formal banking systems for credit and enterprise growth.
- **National Rural Livelihoods Mission:** Works towards **poverty alleviation and women empowerment** through SHGs.

One-Line Wrap

- NABARD's rural haats in Arunachal Pradesh highlight how **local markets, SHGs, and sustainable practices** can drive inclusive rural development.

Hargila Initiative

The **Hargila conservation initiative** in Assam has recently gained attention during polling in Kamrup district, where themed polling booths highlighted the success of community-driven biodiversity protection.

About the Hargila Initiative

- The initiative is **spearheaded by wildlife biologist Dr. Purnima Devi Barman** and supported by the women-led group called the **"Hargila Army."**
- It focuses on the conservation of the **Greater Adjutant Stork (Hargila)**, a rare scavenger bird once facing social neglect and habitat loss.
- The programme operates through **community participation, awareness generation, and habitat protection**, especially in villages like Dadara in Kamrup district.

About Hargila

- It is a **member** of the **stork family, Ciconiidae**, which has about 20 species in the family.

- There are only 3 known breeding grounds of **Greater Adjutant Stork**, one in **Cambodia** and two in **India** (Assam and Bihar).
- **Assam holds over 75–80% of its global population**, with key nesting sites in Kamrup district (Dadara, Pacharia) and near Deepor Beel.
- They are **primarily carnivorous**, feeding on fish, frogs, snakes, other reptiles, eels, birds, offal and carrion.

Objectives and Approach

- The initiative aims to **protect nesting sites** and reduce threats to the species through local involvement.
- It works towards **changing social perception**, transforming the bird from a symbol of stigma to one of community pride.
- It promotes **women empowerment**, as rural women actively participate in conservation efforts.

Key Achievements

- The conservation efforts have led to the **improvement in the conservation status** of the bird from *Endangered* to **Near Threatened** on the **IUCN Red List**.
- There has been a **significant increase in nesting and population numbers** in Assam.
- **Conservation efforts** in Assam, have led to a significant increase in the **population of the Greater Adjutant Stork**, from **450 to over 1800 birds**.
- The model has gained **global recognition**, with international delegates visiting under the **International Election Visitor's Programme 2026**.

Pongtu Kuh Festival

The traditional Pongtu Kuh festival was celebrated by the Tutsa community residing across Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh on 11th April.

About the Festival

- **Pongtu Kuh** is a traditional festival of the **Tutsa tribe** celebrated in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is observed mainly in **Tirap and Changlang districts**, with Tutnu village being an important cultural centre.
- It is an important and oldest agricultural festival **celebrated on the eve of the rainy season**.
- The word “ PONGTU” is composed of two words i.e., ‘Pong’ which **means ‘WIND’** and ‘Tu’ means **‘RETREATING’**.
- The festival is **celebrated before the harvesting of Millet rice** and to **welcome the New Year** and to drive out the old.
- It is aimed at **fostering unity and brotherhood** among the kith and kins belonging to clan and the family.
- The festival reflects the **ancestral traditions, identity, and unity** of the Tutsa community.

Key Features

- The celebration includes **folk songs, traditional long drum performance, rituals, and indigenous attire**.
- Prayers are offered to the supreme God **Rangkhothak** which is believed to be divine Goddess both benevolent and malevolent
- Acts as a platform for **community bonding and inter-generational knowledge transfer**.
- Organized with participation of **community leaders, youth, and local administration**.

One-line wrap:

Pongtu Kuh showcases how **tribal festivals act as pillars of cultural preservation and regional development**.

Operation Urja Suraksha

The **Indian Navy** launched Operation Urja Suraksha in March 2026.

- **Objective:** Secure safe passage of India-bound energy shipments through the **Strait of Hormuz** amid rising West Asia tensions.
- The operation provides **escort, navigational guidance, and maritime security support** to **LNG, LPG, and crude oil vessels**.
- It **extends maritime security beyond the Strait into safer waters**.
- Nearly a major share of India's energy imports pass through the Persian Gulf region.

Other Important Operations by India

Operation	Purpose / Objective	Region / Context	Key Features
Operation Sindoor	Counter-terror strike operation, launched in 2025	PoK & LAC	High-tech border security and anti-terror mission
Operation Sankalp	Maritime security & anti-piracy escort mission, launched in 2019	Arabian Sea & Red Sea	Ensures safety of merchant vessels amid Red Sea crisis
Operation Sagar Bandhu	HADR mission, launched in 2025-26 during Cyclone Ditwah	Sri Lanka	Naval operation delivering relief and medical support
Operation Black Forest	Anti-insurgency operation, launched in 2025	Chhattisgarh	Conducted against Naxal/insurgent groups in forest areas by CRPF & state police
Operation Kaveri	Launched in 2023 for evacuation of Indian citizens	Sudan	Used C-17 aircraft to rescue Indians during Sudan conflict
Operation Sindhu	Evacuation of Indians (students/workers), launched in 2026	Iran	Humanitarian evacuation via land routes during West Asia tensions
Operation Ajay	Launched in 2023 for repatriation of Indian nationals	Israel	Evacuation framework activated during Israel conflict
Operation Rahat	Launched in 2015 to evacuate Indian citizens and foreign nationals	Yemen	Carried out by the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, and Air India
Operation Brahma	Disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, launched in 2025	Myanmar earthquake relief mission	India supplied rescue teams, medicines, relief material and humanitarian aid under "Neighbourhood First" policy

About Strait of Hormuz

- Connects the **Persian Gulf** with the **Gulf of Oman** and **Arabian Sea**.
- One of the world's most critical oil chokepoints.
- Bordered by:
 - **Iran** (north)
 - **Oman & UAE** (south)

National Panchayat Day

The nation commemorates the **National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD)** on **24th April** to celebrate the **decentralisation of power** to the **grassroots level** in India.

About National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD)

- On this **date**, in **1993**, the **73rd CAA, 1992** which gave **constitutional status** to **Panchayats** as **institutions of rural local self-government**, came into effect.
 - The **73rd CAA, 1992** was **passed on 17th June 1992**.
- This year marks the **32nd year** of the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**.
- The day was **first celebrated in 2010**, when 24th April was officially declared as National Panchayati Raj Day.
- The **first National Development Council recommended** establishing a **grassroots of democratic governance system** in the early 1950s.
 - However, the **formation remained unofficial** until 1993.

Panchayati Raj System in Assam

- At present Assam has a total of **21,912 Gram Panchayats**, **2,188 Anchalik members**, **397 Zilla Parishad members**.

- At present there are **21 Zilla Parishads, 185 Anchalik Panchayats** and **2202 Gaon Panchayats** in Assam.
- Assam has ensured **50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions**.

Evolution of Panchayati Raj System in Assam

- **The Rural Panchayat Act 1948:** Under this system there were two tiers of Panchayats – Primary Panchayats at village level and Rural Panchayats at Mouza level.
- **Assam Panchayati Raj Act 1959:** Under this act a three-tier system was introduced; they are Gaon Panchayat, Anchalik Panchayat and Mohokuma Parishad.
- **Assam Panchayati Raj Act 1972:** Under this system again a two-tier system was introduced they are Gaon Panchayat and Mohokuma Parishad
- **Assam Panchayati Raj Act 1986:** Under this act again a three-tier system is introduced – Gaon Panchayat, Anchalik Panchayat & Mohokuma Parishad.
- **Assam Panchayat Act 1994:** A three-tier system with Zilla Parishad has been introduced – Gaon Panchayat, Anchalik Panchayat and Zilla Parishad, introduced through 73rd CAA, 1992.

Earth Day

Earth Day takes place every year on **22 April** and is one of the biggest environmental protest movements on the planet.

- The day focuses on **raising awareness** about **environmental issues** such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss.
- **Governments, organisations, and individuals** mark the occasion through **tree-planting drives, clean-up campaigns, and sustainability initiatives**.
- The **theme** is once again **'Our Power, Our Planet'**.
- This theme emphasises leveraging community action, accelerating the transition to renewable energy, and boosting accountability for environmental damage to tackle the climate crisis.
- Earth Day was **first celebrated** on **April 22, 1970**, marking the beginning of the modern environmental movement.
- It was **initiated by Gaylord Nelson**, a U.S. senator who wanted to raise awareness about pollution and environmental damage after witnessing the impact of the Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969.

Assamese Film 'Aakuti' Shines at New York Indian Film Festival 2026

Assamese feature film **'Aakuti (Longing)'** has been selected for the **competition section at the New York Indian Film Festival 2026**.

- Nominated for **Best Debut Film** and **Best Child Actor (Kavisha Mahanta)**.

About the Film

- **Directed and written by Snigdha P Roy** (debut feature film).
 - Her **directorial credits** include short films such as **Hands of A, Let Love Be, Wounds** and **The Gift**.
- **Shot in Mangaldoi, Assam** over 45 days.
- Explores the **emotional journey of an 8-year-old girl (Lakhi)** coping with the loss of her mother.
- Known for its **minimalistic storytelling**, focusing on silence, emotions, and human relationships.

One-line wrap: 'Aakuti' reflects the rising global presence of Assamese cinema and the growing importance of regional storytelling in India's cultural landscape.

Sahitya Akademi Bal & Yuva Puraskar 2025

Four writers from Assam were selected for the **Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar and Yuva Puraskar 2025**.

- The awards recognise outstanding contributions to **children's literature and young literary writing** in different Indian languages.

Key Highlights

- The Sahitya Akademi announced:
 - **24 recipients** for the **Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2025**
 - **23 recipients** for the **Yuva Puraskar 2025**
- Each awardee will receive:
 - An **engraved copper plaque (casket)**
 - A **cash prize of ₹50,000**

Awardees from Assam

Award Category	Awardee	Language	Work	Genre
Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2025	Surendra Mohan Das	Assamese	<i>Mainaahatar Padya</i>	Children's Poetry
Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2025	Binay Kumar Brahma	Bodo	<i>Khanthi Bwswn Arw Akhu Danai</i>	Story Collection
Yuva Puraskar 2025	Suprakash Bhuyan	Assamese	<i>Kuchiyanama</i>	Short Story Collection
Yuva Puraskar 2025	Amar Khungur Boro	Bodo	<i>Ang Asur</i>	Poetry Collection



About Sahitya Akademi

- The **Sahitya Akademi** is India's **National Academy of Letters**.
- It was established in **1954** to promote **Indian literature and literary culture**.
- The Akademi recognises literary works in **24 Indian languages**, including **22 scheduled languages** and **English and Rajasthani**.
- **Bal Sahitya Puraskar**: Established in 2010, the award is given for **outstanding contribution to children's literature**.
- **Yuva Puraskar**: Established in 2011, the award recognises **young writers (below 35 years)** for exceptional literary works.

Asian Golden Cat

The Asian golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*) that was once abundant across Asia, ranging from India to China. Today its population is undergoing a significant decline.

About Asian Golden Cat

- The **Asian golden cat** is a medium-sized wild cat found in the dense forests of Asia.
- It is also known as the **Asiatic golden cat** or **Temminck's cat**.
- The species is rarely seen in the wild due to its secretive nature.
- **Distribution:** It is **endemic to Indo-Malayan eco-realm**. It is found across parts of:
 - **India, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, China, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Sumatra.**
 - In India it is found in the Northeast States of **Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh & West Bengal.**
- **Habitat:** The species mainly inhabits: **Dense tropical and subtropical forests, Evergreen forests, Mountain forests, and Rocky landscapes.**
- In some parts of China, it is also called the **“rock cat”** because it is seen in open rocky terrain.
- The range of the Asian golden cat is estimated to be around **20% larger than that of the clouded leopard.**
- **Physical Features:** The Asian golden cat weighs up to around **16 kg (35 pounds).**
- It is often described as a **“feline of many costumes”** because of its remarkable variation in coat colour.
- Coat colours may include: Golden, Reddish-brown, Grey, Black, or Spotted morphs.
- **Behaviour:** It is a **solitary, territorial and elusive** predator.
- **Diet:** Despite its **medium size**, it is capable of hunting relatively large prey such as:
 - Buffalo calves, Muntjacs, Young deer, and Birds.
- It is known for plucking feathers from birds before eating them.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - IUCN Status: **Near Threatened**
 - WPA, 1972: **Schedule I**
- **Major threats include:** Habitat destruction, Deforestation, Hunting, and Illegal wildlife trade.

Major Small Cats in India:

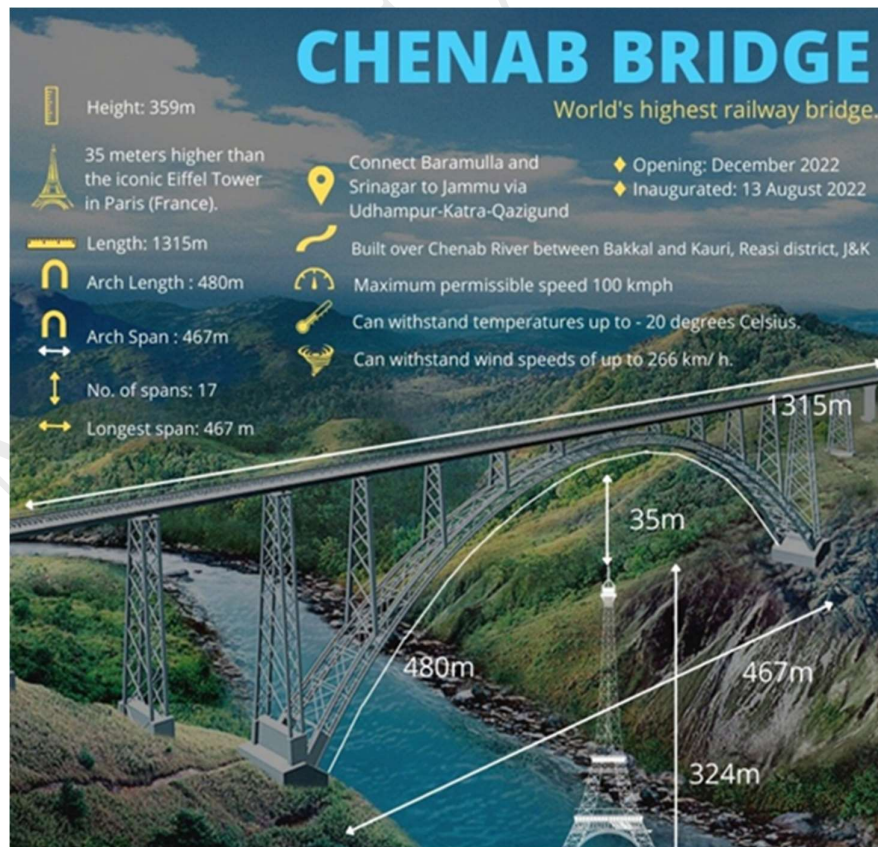
 Species	 Habitat	 Characteristics	 Conservation Status
Caracal	▶ Arid and semi-arid regions ▶ Reported in only three states in India (Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh)	▶ Also called Siya Gosh (black-tufted ears) ▶ Solitary and territorial animal, nocturnal.	▶ IUCN: Least Concern, ▶ Wild Life Act: Schedule I
Fishing cat	▶ Wetland environments ▶ Sundarbans, Himalayan foothills, and parts of Northeast India	▶ Nocturnal ▶ Webbed hind feet: To propel itself in shallow water	▶ IUCN: Vulnerable ▶ Wild Life Act: Schedule I
Eurasian lynx	▶ Barren, relatively open, rocky mountainous plateau of Central Asia. ▶ India: some parts of Ladakh	▶ Primarily solitary, territorial, and nocturnal animals	▶ IUCN: Least Concern ▶ Wildlife Act: Scheduled-I

Operation Shield

- In order to enhance national security preparedness, **civil defence mock drills** were conducted under 'Operation Shield' across several states and UTs sharing borders with Pakistan.
- The exercises were held in **Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, and Chandigarh**.
- The operation focused on regions closest to the border and most **susceptible to cross-border threats**.
- It is designed to simulate hostile situations, including air raid sirens, blackout protocols, and various emergency response actions, to evaluate the preparedness of civil authorities, emergency services, and local populations.
- The drills aim to **replicate real-time scenarios** that may arise from potential external threats, particularly in **sensitive districts near the LoC** and the **International Border (IB)**.
- This initiative underscores the **government's ongoing efforts** to **strengthen civil defence mechanisms** amid heightened regional security concerns.
- The drills are expected to significantly **improve inter-agency coordination, public awareness, and the ability of local systems**.

Chenab & Anji Bridge

- The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the Chenab Bridge, the World's highest railway arch bridge over Chenab River and the Anji Bridge, India's first cable-stayed rail bridge over Anji River.
 - **Anji River** is a **tributary of Chenab** which itself is the **largest tributary of Indus**, formed by two streams, the Chandra and the Bhaga.
- Both the projects are **part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)** Project.
- The **Chenab bridge** stands at **359 metres** above the riverbed, spanning **1,315 metre-long** metre-long in length.
- Its key Features include Steel Arch Bridge engineered to withstand seismic and wind conditions.
- The Anji Bridge is towering **331 m above** the riverbed and stretching **725 m across**, it is anchored by **96 high-tensile cables**.
- Both the projects will enhance connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar.



Gaja Mitra

- In a move to curb the **escalating human-elephant conflict** in Assam, authorities have launched ‘Gaja Mitra.’
- It is a dedicated initiative aimed at protecting both local communities and the state’s majestic elephants.
- It is **implemented** in **5 high-conflict districts: Goalpara, Baksa, Udalguri, Sonitpur, and Nagaon**, areas that frequently experience crop destruction, property damage, and fatalities due to elephant incursions.
- The initiative takes a **multi-pronged approach** and a **key component** of the initiative is **ecological restoration**.
- Efforts are being made to **regenerate forest areas** that provide adequate food and allow elephants to move within their natural migratory corridors, reducing their dependence on human settlements.
- The initiative **leverages advanced technology** such as AI-powered camera traps.
- These devices are strategically placed in forested areas to detect elephant movement and send real-time alerts to nearby villages, enabling early warnings and timely response.
- This **smart surveillance system** aims to **provide communities** with enough **time to prepare, react, or evacuate** if necessary, reducing the risk of surprise encounters. (IANS).
- Gaja Mitra thus **combines habitat conservation, community awareness, and technological interventions** to foster peaceful human-elephant coexistence.

Swagat Satirtha 2.0

About the Initiative

- **Swagat Satirtha 2.0** is an online mutual transfer portal launched by the Government of Assam.
- The portal is applicable to **Grade III and Grade IV State government employees**.
- It was launched by Chief Minister **Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma** at **Lok Sewa Bhawan, Guwahati**.
- The initiative aims to ensure a **transparent, efficient, and paperless transfer process** for government employees.

Key Features of Swagat Satirtha 2.0

- The portal provides a **fully online and single-click transfer mechanism**.
- It eliminates physical movement of files and reduces the need for employees to visit Dispur.
- The portal ensures:
 - Same grade pay,
 - Same service rules, and
 - Similar nature of posts for mutual transfers.
- It covers:
 - **38 departments**, and
 - More than **75 directorates and Head of Department (HOD) offices**.

Performance of Swagat Satirtha 1.0

- Around **4,502 applications** were approved under Swagat Satirtha 1.0.
- Approximately **9,004 employees** benefited across **32 departments**.
- Nearly **31,000 employees** registered on the portal during January–February 2025.
- About **21,000 employees** selected their preferred districts for transfer.
- The system significantly reduced administrative workload and operational costs.

Governance and Administrative Significance

- Swagat Satirtha is considered the **first transparent online mutual transfer system of its kind in India**.
- The initiative reduced:
 - File processing delays,
 - Administrative burden, and
 - Travel expenses, saving nearly **₹10,000 per employee**.
- It promotes:
 - Digital governance,
 - Transparency,
 - Ease of service delivery, and
 - Administrative efficiency.
- The system builds upon Assam’s earlier experience with teacher transfer reforms under the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**.

Assam-2nd-Highest Pineapple Producer

- Assam has emerged as the **second-highest pineapple-producing state** in India, achieving a production volume of **2,96,000.52 metric tonnes** during the **2022-23 period**.
- **Assam contributes 19%** of the country's total output, **West Bengal tops** the list with 356,320 tonnes.
- The impressive yield is attributed to **Assam's tropical climate** and **favourable agricultural conditions**.
- Pineapple cultivation thrives in several districts including **Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, and Cachar**.
- The rise in production not only meets growing market demands within the state but also caters to consumers in neighbouring regions, thereby contributing to farmers' economic upliftment.

Swahid Kanaklata Barua University

- In a significant stride toward enhancing higher education infrastructure in Assam, the state Cabinet has approved the establishment of Swahid Kanaklata Barua University at the Bholaguri Tea Estate in Gohpur.
- The project, which comes with a proposed investment of Rs 400 crore, was formally announced by Assam's Chief Minister following a Cabinet meeting.
- Kanaklata Barua University will be **Assam's first institution** with a **strong industry-oriented academic approach**.
- The university will offer specialised programs in **emerging fields** such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing and robotics.

Royal Bengal Tiger Returns to Dibru-Saikhowa After Three Decades

In a **major boost to wildlife conservation in Assam**, the **Royal Bengal Tiger** has been **camera-trapped inside Dibru-Saikhowa National Park**, confirming its return to the park after **nearly 30 years**. This is the **first photographic evidence** of the species in the park in recent times.

About Dibru-Saikhowa

- It is a **National Park** as well as a **Biosphere Reserve** situated on the **south bank** of the **river Brahmaputra** in the district of **Dibrugarh & Tinsukia**.
- The park is **bounded by the Brahmapura and Lohit Rivers** in the **north** and **Dibru River** in the **south**.
- It mainly consists of **moist mixed semi-evergreen forests, moist mixed deciduous forests, canebrakes and grasslands**.
- It is the **largest salix swamp forest** in north-eastern India, with a **tropical monsoon climate** with a hot and wet summer and cool and usually dry winter.
- Dibru-Saikhowa, with an area of 340 sq km, is among the most vibrant wildernesses on earth and is also distinct for its pristine scenic beauty.
- Situated in the **flood plain of Brahmaputra**, Dibru-saikhowa is a **safe haven** for many **extremely rare and endangered species of Wildlife**.
- The forest type of Dibru-Saikhowa comprises semi-evergreen forests, deciduous forests, littoral and swamp forests and patches of wet evergreen forests.
- Famed for **Feral horses**, a total 36 species of mammals and above 400 species of birds have so far been recorded from the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.
- **Fauna** : Originally created to help conserve the habitat of the rare white-winged wood duck, the park is also home to other rare creatures. 36 species of mammals have so far been recorded:
 - Tiger, Elephant, Leopard, Jungle Cat, Bears, Small Indian Civet, Squirrels, Gangetic Dolphin, Slow Loris, Assamese Macaque, Rhesus Macaque, Capped Langur, Hoolock Gibbon, Wild Pigs, Sambar, Barking Deer, Water Buffalo, Feral Horses etc.
- **Avifauna** : It is an **identified Important Bird Area (IBA)** having more than 382 species of Birds, some of which are:
 - Greater Adjutant Stork, Lesser Adjutant Stork, Greater Crested Grebe. Large Cormorant, Open bill Stork, Black necked Stork, Large Whistling Teal. Grey leg Goose, Grey-headed Fishing Eagle, Griffon Vulture, Osprey, Crested Serpent Eagle, Spot Billed Pelican, White Winged Wood Duck, Baer's Pochard, Greater Spotted Eagle, Pale Capped Pigeon, Great Pied Hornbill, Marsh Babbler, Jerdon's Babbler, Black Breasted Parrot bill, etc.
 - The Park is renowned for natural regeneration of Salix trees.
- The area was **declared as Dibru Reserved Forest in 1890**.

- In 1986, an area of 650 km² was preliminarily declared as a wildlife sanctuary out of which finally 340 km² was declared as **wildlife sanctuary in 1995**.
- In **1997, Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve** was declared with an area of 765 km² that included the 340 km² of sanctuary area as the core.
- In **1999**, the 340 km² sanctuary area was **declared as a national park**.

Centre Releases ₹213 Crore for Strengthening Grassroots Governance in Assam

The **Union Government** has released **₹213.9 crore** to Assam as the **first instalment of the Fifteenth Finance Commission Untied Grants for Rural Local Bodies** for the financial year **2025–26**.

What has been released and to whom?

The funds have been released to strengthen **grassroots self-governance** across Assam.

- The amount covers:
 - **2,192 Gram Panchayats**
 - **182 Block Panchayats**
 - **27 Zila Parishads**
- These are **eligible Panchayati Raj Institutions**, fulfilling prescribed financial and governance conditions.

The grants are part of recommendations of the **Fifteenth Finance Commission**, routed through the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Jal Shakti**, and finally released by the **Ministry of Finance**.

Untied vs Tied Grants

- **United Grants:**
 - Can be used by panchayats for **local priority needs**
 - Must relate to the **29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule** of the Constitution
 - **Cannot** be used for salaries or establishment costs
- **Tied Grants** (released separately):
 - Reserved for **basic civic services**, especially:
 - **Sanitation**, waste management, and maintaining **open defecation free status**
 - **Drinking water**, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling

This flexible design empowers local bodies to address **area-specific problems** rather than following a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach.

Centre Reviews Central Sector Infrastructure Projects in Northeast

The Union Government recently **reviewed Central sector infrastructure projects** under implementation in the **Northeastern region**, underlining the strategic importance of timely project completion for **connectivity, inclusive growth and regional development**.

The review meeting was **chaired by the Union Minister of State for Statistics and Programme Implementation**. He urged all ministries and implementing agencies to adopt a **solution-oriented and proactive approach** to resolve bottlenecks.

Key highlights of the review

- A total of **221 Central sector infrastructure projects** are currently under implementation across the Northeast.
- These projects span **11 Central ministries and departments**, with a combined original cost of about **₹2.33 lakh crore**.
- The projects aim to strengthen **road, rail, power, telecom and energy infrastructure** in the region.

Sector-wise issues discussed

- **Road Transport (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways)**
 - **177 projects covering 3,634 km** were reviewed.
 - Land acquisition delays and forest clearances remain key challenges.
- **Railways**
 - **Nine ongoing projects** are being implemented by **Northeast Frontier Railway**.
 - Constraints include difficult terrain, landslides, monsoon-dominated climate and short working seasons.
 - Achievements include the **Bhairabi–Sairang rail line in Mizoram** and **1,072 route km of electrification**.
- **Power sector**

- **Nine projects** were reviewed, facing issues such as contractor non-availability and compensation disputes in reserve forest areas.
- The **Tato-I Hydroelectric Project (186 MW)** of North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited faced transmission and road connectivity constraints.
- **Telecommunications**
 - Two projects worth **₹2,227.45 crore** were examined.
 - Emphasis was placed on integrating **optical ground wire along power lines** with last-mile connectivity.
- **Petroleum and Natural Gas**
 - Issues related to land acquisition and administrative approvals were flagged, including for the **North East Gas Grid Project**.

Students Flag Brahmaputra Erosion Threat in Dibrugarh

Local students in Dibrugarh staged a hunger strike demanding urgent anti-erosion measures on the **Maijan–Bogibeel stretch** of the Brahmaputra river.

The stretch is among the most **erosion-prone zones** threatening Dibrugarh town, a major urban and economic centre of Upper Assam.

What is the issue?

- The **Brahmaputra**, a highly dynamic braided river, causes **intense lateral erosion**, especially during the monsoon.
- ADSU alleged that **anti-erosion works by the Water Resources Department** have slowed down or stalled, despite the **dry season being the most suitable period** for long-term interventions.
- Temporary measures like **geobags** have repeatedly failed, offering only **short-term relief**.

Why Dibrugarh is vulnerable

- Located close to the **southern bank of the Brahmaputra**, with loose alluvial soil.
- Faces combined threats of **bank erosion, flooding, and channel migration**.
- Urban expansion has increased exposure of **infrastructure and population** to river hazards.

Students' demands

- **Immediate intervention** by the Chief Minister and senior officials.
- Shift from temporary fixes to **permanent, scientifically designed anti-erosion solutions**.
- Time-bound execution of works during the **lean (non-monsoon) season**.

Assam Takes a Digital Step to Save Vanishing Languages

The **All Assam Students' Union (AASU)**, in collaboration with the **Nanda Talukdar Foundation**, has successfully completed a landmark initiative to **digitally preserve three endangered indigenous languages of Assam – Khamyang, Tai Phake and Singpho**. This effort marks a crucial step towards safeguarding Assam's fragile **linguistic and cultural heritage**.

What was done?

- The initiative was carried out under a **Memorandum of Understanding signed in April 2025** as part of the broader **'Digitizing Assam' initiative**.
- The project involved **systematic digitisation of manuscripts, printed texts, audio recordings, and visual documentation**.
- All materials have now been made **publicly accessible online** for students, researchers and citizens.

Why is it significant?

- **Khamyang language** is on the **verge of extinction**, with **only one known fluent speaker** left globally.
 - **Bhogeswar Thomung**, an 84-year-old Buddhist priest from Powaimukh, is the **only person left in the world** capable of fluently speaking, reading, and writing the language.
 - Khamyang is a **critically endangered Tai language** spoken by the Khamyang people, mainly residing in Powaimukh village located near Margherita in the Tinsukia district, Assam.
 - It is closely related to the other Tai languages in the Assam region: Aiton, Khamti, Phake, and Turung.
 - The Khamyang, as a distinct tribe, are found in Jorhat, Sibsagar and Golaghat District of Assam. There are also a few Khamyang villages in Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Tai Phake** manuscripts included classical texts such as the **Mahabharata and Ramayana**, highlighting deep civilisational links.

- Tai Phake is a Southwestern Tai language spoken in Assam, mainly in the Buri Dihing Valley in the Dibrugarh district, and also in Arunachal Pradesh state.
- Tai Phake is written with a version of the Myanmar / Burmese alphabet known as Lik Tai.
- **Singpho language documentation** followed **UNESCO-endorsed endangered language documentation protocols**, including structured audio recordings.
 - Singpho is a dialect of the **Jingpho language**, spoken by the Singpho people of **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.
 - The Jingpho/Singpho or Kachin language is a Tibeto-Burman language mainly spoken in Kachin State of Myanmar and Yunnan Province of China.

Key outputs of the project

- **Tai Phake:** 262 manuscripts, nearly **20,000 digitised pages**.
- **Singpho:** Old printed texts plus **350+ recorded speech units**.
- **Khamyang:** 12 manuscripts, **650 pages**, and a basic **audio vocabulary archive**.
- Hundreds of photographs capturing **rituals, traditions and daily life**, ensuring cultural context alongside language.

Constitutional and Global Frameworks

This initiative aligns with several protective frameworks:

- **UNESCO Protocols:** Documentation followed the **UNESCO** guidelines for endangered languages.
- **Article 29:** Protects the right of any section of citizens to conserve their distinct **language, script, or culture**.
- **Assam Accord (Clause 6):** Mandates the constitutional, legislative, and administrative safeguards to protect the cultural, social, and linguistic identity of the **Assamese people**.

The digital repository is now available as **open-source** material, providing a vital resource for scholars and the indigenous communities to revitalize their mother tongues.

Assam's Only Ape Habitat at Hollongapar

A group of school students recently participated in an **immersive nature trail** at the **Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary** in Jorhat district, a **critical habitat for the threatened hoolock gibbon**, the **only ape species found in India**. The exposure visit aimed to build ecological awareness and conservation ethics among young learners through first-hand experience.

About the programme

- The nature trail was organised under “**Nature’s Wonderland – A Journey of Curiosity**”, a flagship environmental education initiative of Aaranyak.
- It was jointly conducted by Aaranyak’s **Environment Education and Capacity Building Division** and **Primate Research and Conservation Division**, in collaboration with the Assam Forest Department.
- Students and teachers from **Rongdoi High School, Jorhat**, actively participated.

Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary

- The only sanctuary in India **named** after a **primate** and a **critical stronghold** for the **nation’s only ape** for its **high density of Gibbon population**.
 - The Western Hoolock Gibbon is listed as **Endangered** on the **IUCN Red List** and protected under **Schedule I** of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Located in the **Jorhat district of Assam**, the Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary (formerly Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary) is a unique, isolated patch of evergreen forest.
- Despite its small size of approximately **21 square kilometers**, it holds immense ecological significance and its status as a remnant of the once-vast lowland rainforests of the Brahmaputra valley.
- The **Bhogdoi river** creates a **waterlogged region** in the **sanctuary covered by semi-hydrophytic plants** along the border of the sanctuary.
- It is the only place in India where you can find **seven species of primates** sharing a single habitat:
 - **Western Hoolock Gibbon** (India's only ape species), **Bengal Slow Loris** (Northeast India’s only nocturnal primate), **Stump-tailed Macaque**, **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque**, **Eastern Assamese Macaque**, **Rhesus Macaque**, **Capped Langur**.
- The sanctuary is named after the **Hollong tree** (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*), the State Tree of Assam, which dominates the upper canopy (reaching heights of 30-40 meters).
 - The middle canopy is dominated by the **Nahar** (*Mesua ferrea*).
- Historically, it was part of a larger forest range extending to the **Patkai mountain range**, but it is now an "island" forest surrounded by tea gardens like Dissoi and Hoollong.

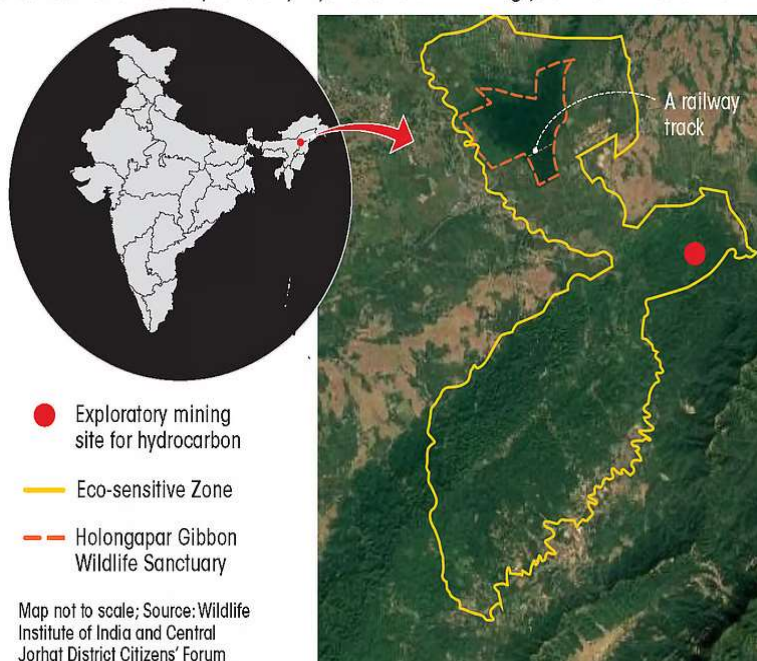
Conservation Challenges

The sanctuary has been in the news recently due to critical infrastructure and environmental concerns:

- **Railway Fragmentation:** A **1.65-km-long railway track** (the Mariani-Dibrugarh line) bisects the sanctuary, preventing gibbons—which are strictly arboreal (tree-dwelling)—from crossing.
 - In 2024 and 2025, plans for **artificial canopy bridges** and railway rerouting were discussed to prevent genetic isolation.
- **Oil Exploration:** In **January 2025**, the **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** considered and initially deferred exploratory drilling for oil and gas by the Vedanta Group within the sanctuary's **ESZ**.

Double whammy

In 2024, the National Board for Wildlife approved the Railways' plan to electrify the 1.26-km railway stretch cutting through the sanctuary, and also sanctioned exploratory hydrocarbon mining just 13 km south of it



Exam Hook –

Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary is significant as it protects the habitat of the hoolock gibbon, the only ape species found in India.

Tezpur Airbase Strengthens India's Eastern Defence

The decision to expand the **Tezpur Air Force Station** in Assam marks a **strategic boost to India's eastern defence preparedness**, especially along the **India–China border**.

As per a recent gazette notification, around **382.82 acres of private land** in **Bokajan village** of **Sonitpur district** will be acquired to support this expansion.

Strategic significance

- The Tezpur airbase is one of the **most critical frontline airbases** of the **Indian Air Force**, located close to the **Line of Actual Control** in the eastern sector.
- It plays a vital role in **surveillance, rapid troop mobilisation, air defence and deterrence** in a sensitive and mountainous region.
- The expansion aligns with India's response to **infrastructure build-up across the border** and reflects the need for **higher operational readiness**.

Exam Hook –

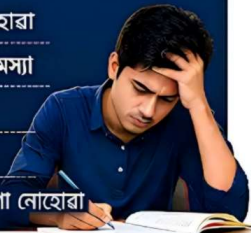
The expansion of the Tezpur Air Force Station enhances India's air power and deterrence capability along the eastern sector of the Line of Actual Control.

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EXAM DATE

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(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

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Importance of the Mithun in North-eastern India

Traditional **gayal (mithun) rearing** in Mizoram's Serchhip district is facing severe losses due to repeated **wolf attacks**, threatening both rural livelihoods and indigenous culture.

What is happening on the ground?

- In **Sailulak and Leng villages**, close to the Myanmar border, families practising semi-domesticated gayal rearing are losing calves to **nocturnal wolf predation**.
- Since **2019**, villagers estimate that **nearly 300 juvenile gayals** have been killed, mostly soon after birth.
- Sailulak alone has around **40 families rearing nearly 250 gayals**, while Leng has seen numbers fall sharply from earlier levels.

Why are gayals vulnerable?

- **Gayal (Bos frontalis)** are not stall-fed animals; they **roam freely in forests**, grazing on natural vegetation.
- They **instinctively recognise** their **owners** and return to familiar grounds, but this **free-ranging system** exposes calves to predators.
 - **"Mithun-Salt" Bond:** Owners provide common salt periodically. This "salt-licking" creates a bond that ensures the animal recognizes its owner and stays within a specific forest territory.
- Complete fencing is **impractical**, as animals range across large forest tracts and sometimes even cross the **Tiau river into Myanmar**.

Government support and gaps

- Since **2019**, the **Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department** has **promoted gayal domestication** by providing:
 - Barbed wire and fencing material
 - Shelters and water ponds
- However, farmers point out that:
 - **Predator-proof protection** for **newborn calves** is **inadequate**
 - **Delayed compensation** from the Environment, Forests and Climate Change Department reduces confidence and recovery after losses.

About Gayals/Mithun

- The **Gayal**, popularly known as the **Mithun**, is a **large, semi-domesticated bovine endemic species** found in the north-eastern hills of India, and countries of Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and China.
- Often referred to as the **"Cattle of the Mountains,"** it is the most significant animal in the socio-economic and cultural life of several tribal communities in Northeast India.
- It is believed to have **originated** around **8000 years ago** and is considered to be the **domesticated form** of the **Gaur (Bos gaurus)**.
 - Unlike the Gaur, the **Mithun** is generally more **docile**.
- It is a massive animal with a sturdy build, has a distinct high ridge on its back (dorsal ridge), a prominent dewlap, and thick, upward-curving horns.
- Usually blackish-brown with white "stockings" (white fur on the lower parts of all four legs).
- They thrive at altitudes between **300 to 3000 meters** above sea level.
- They are unique because they are **"free-ranging"**; they **live** in the **forest** but **return** to the **village occasionally** or when salt is offered by owners.

Geographical Distribution

They are predominantly found in the tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests, particularly in the hilly regions of Northeast India and parts of Southeast Asia. In India, the Mithun population is concentrated in four North-eastern states:

- **Arunachal Pradesh:** State Animal (Highest population).
- **Nagaland:** State Animal.
 - **Nagami Mithun** from Nagaland, is the **world's first officially recognized breed of Mithun**, registered by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- **Manipur & Mizoram:** Significant populations are also found here.

Cultural Significance

- Mithun is a **symbol** of **"peace and communal harmony"** and its sacrifice is said to usher in the prosperity and well-being of those for whom the act is intended cattle.
- For tribes like the **Nyishi, Apatani, Galo, Naga, and Chin**, the Mithun is more than just livestock; it is a measure of wealth and social status.
- The **Adi tribe** of Arunachal Pradesh observes the **'Solung festival'** annually to **commemorate the birth and arrival of Mithun** on this earth.
- Traditionally, the **mithun figures** prominently in the **pantheon of powerful deities** the Nyishis worship.

Economic Significance

- Mithun plays an important role in the socio-economic and cultural life of the local tribal population.
- Presently, this **animal** is **mainly reared for meat**, which is considered to be more tender and superior over the meat of any other species.
- **Mithun milk**, though produced less in quantity, is of **high quality** and can be used for preparation of various milk products.
- **Leather obtained** from this species has been found to be superior to cattle.
- There is a **great scope** to **promote this animal** as an **organic meat and milk producer**.
- This animal is also used as **bridal gift** as well as in **barter trade**.

Conservation of Mithun

- Keeping in view the dwindling population of Mithun, it is of great priority for the Mithun inhabited states to conserve and propagate quality Mithun germplasm at a faster rate to stabilize its population.
- There are **three ways** for the **conservation of Mithun genetic resources**:
 - Through cryopreservation of genetic material like living ova, embryos or semen;
 - Preservation of genetic information as DNA;
 - Conservation of live population.

India Launches Its First Open-Sea Marine Fish Farming Project

India has launched its **first-ever open-sea marine fish farming project** in the **Andaman Sea**, marking a major step towards harnessing ocean resources for sustainable growth.

What is the project about?

- The project was launched at **North Bay, Sri Vijaya Puram** in the Andaman Sea.
- It focuses on **open-sea cultivation of marine finfish and seaweed** in natural ocean conditions, unlike traditional near-shore or inland aquaculture.
- The initiative is implemented through collaboration between the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, its technical arm **National Institute of Ocean Technology**, and the Union Territory administration of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Key features of the initiative

- **Marine fauna component**:
 - Cage-based cultivation of finfish using **NIOT-developed open-sea cages**, designed to withstand strong currents and waves.
- **Marine flora component**:
 - Distribution of **seaweed seeds** to local fishing communities to promote deep-water seaweed farming.
- **Livelihood focus**:
 - Direct involvement of local fishers to create **new income opportunities** and reduce pressure on capture fisheries.

Significance

- **Advances the Blue Economy vision**:
 - The project aligns with India's **Blue Economy** approach, which aims at sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, livelihoods and ecosystem health.
- **Untapped ocean potential**:
 - India has a long coastline and vast Exclusive Economic Zone, yet open-sea aquaculture remains underdeveloped.
- **Scalable model**:
 - The pilot will generate technical and economic insights that can later support **public-private participation** and expansion to other coastal regions.

Policy and governance linkages

- Supports national priorities related to **Blue Economy, livelihood diversification for fishers, and technology-led marine resource management**.
- Complements efforts under fisheries and coastal development frameworks by shifting focus from overexploited near-shore areas to **open-sea systems**.

One-line wrap

India's first open-sea marine fish farming project signals a shift towards technology-driven, sustainable use of ocean resources under the Blue Economy vision.

Upendranath Sarma Memorial Lecture & Award

The **first Sahityacharya Upendranath Sarma Memorial Lecture and Award Ceremony** will be held on **January 22** at Cotton University, Guwahati, to honour the legacy of a distinguished Assamese scholar and critic.

Key highlights of the programme

- The programme is organised by the **Sahityacharya Upendranath Sarma Memorial Committee**, in association with the **Natasurya Memorial Celebration Committee**.
- It commemorates **Upendranath Sarma**, former HOD of the English Department of **Cotton College**, remembered for his contribution to **literary criticism, pedagogy, and Assamese intellectual life**.
- The **first Sahityacharya Upendranath Sarma Memorial Award** will be conferred on **Tilottoma Misra** for her outstanding contribution to **literature and criticism**.
- Autobiography ***Reels of Memory*** by late Upendranath Sarma, edited by **Gautam Sarma**, will be formally released.

About Upendranath Sarma

- Upendranath Sarma who passed away at the age of 96 at his residence in Sarania, Guwahati, **left behind** a rich **legacy of academic scholarship and literary criticism**.
- He **authored ten books, translated three, and edited ten works**, making a substantial contribution to the study of literature in Assam.
- Among his most notable works is ***Assamese Literature of the 20th Century***, which remains an important reference for students and scholars.
- Since 2014, he has served as the **Editor of Ramanjali**, the **journal of the South East Asia Ramayana Research Centre**.
- In 2017, he was honoured with the title **“Sahityacharya”** by the Axom Xahitya Xabha, in recognition of his outstanding and lifelong contribution to Assamese literature and criticism.

One-line wrap

The Upendranath Sarma Memorial event reinforces Assam’s tradition of honouring scholarship, critical thinking, and literary excellence.

Assam Ranked 24th in Export Readiness

Assam has been ranked **24th among 36 States and Union Territories** in the **Export Preparedness Index 2024**, released by **NITI Aayog**, highlighting both the strengths and structural gaps in the State’s export ecosystem.

What is the Export Preparedness Index?

- The **Export Preparedness Index**, first launched in **2020**, assesses how ready Indian States and Union Territories are to **promote and sustain exports**.
- The assessment is based on **four broad pillars**:
 - **Export infrastructure**
 - **Business ecosystem**
 - **Export performance**
 - **Policy and governance**
- These pillars are broken into **13 sub-pillar** and **70 detailed parameters**, offering a comprehensive picture of export capacity.

Pillar	Weightage	Key Focus Areas
Business Ecosystem	40%	Macroeconomy, MSME ecosystem, human capital, financial access, and cost competitiveness.
Policy & Governance	20%	State export policy, institutional mechanisms, and trade promotion initiatives.

Export Infrastructure	20%	Trade & logistics infrastructure, connectivity, and industrial utilities.
Export Performance	20%	Export outcomes, diversification of products, and global market integration.

Highlights of EPI 2024

The 2024 rankings showed a significant shift, with **Maharashtra** overtaking Tamil Nadu to secure the top spot among large states.

Top Performers by Category:

- **Large States:**
 1. **Maharashtra** (Rank 1)
 2. Tamil Nadu
 3. Gujarat
 4. Uttar Pradesh
 5. Andhra Pradesh
- **Smaller States, NE States & UTs:**
 1. **Uttarakhand** (Rank 1 in this category)
 2. Jammu and Kashmir
 3. Nagaland
 4. Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu
 5. Goa

Assam's current export profile

- Assam's exports stood at **₹3,700 crore in the financial year 2024**.
- **Tea** remains the dominant export, contributing **more than half of total merchandise exports**, reflecting Assam's long-standing global reputation.
- Other key export items include:
 - **Coke and semi-coke**, supported by coal availability
 - **Medicaments**, aided by pharmaceutical hubs near Guwahati
 - **Coal and bituminous coal**, linked to resource-based industries

Untapped export potential

The report identifies several **underutilised sectors** with export promise:

- **Wood charcoal and shell or nut wood**, with scope for value addition and sustainable forestry
- **Fragrances and cosmetics**, including odoriferous substances and skincare products, which need branding and quality certification
- **Sesame seeds and other oilseeds**, suited to Assam's agri-climatic conditions and potential markets in East and Southeast Asia

Key challenges highlighted

- **Over-dependence on tea**, making exports vulnerable to global price fluctuations and climate risks
- **Weak logistics ecosystem**, including inadequate cold storage and cargo services
- **Shortage of accredited testing laboratories**, forcing exporters to rely on facilities outside the State
- **Export concentration risk**, with Bhutan accounting for nearly **23 per cent** of exports
- **Informal export practices**, such as under-invoicing and bypassing formal channels, affecting credibility and revenue

One-line wrap

Assam's low export readiness ranking reflects strong commodity strengths but also urgent structural gaps in logistics, diversification and formal trade practices.

Assam at Davos

The Assam Chief Minister is attending the **World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2026** at Davos, marking the **first-ever participation of an Assamese leader** at this global platform.

About the World Economic Forum

- The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** is an international non-governmental organization headquartered in **Cologne, Geneva, Switzerland**.
- Founded in 1971 by German engineer and economist **Klaus Schwab**, it is best known for its annual meeting in **Davos**, where global leaders discuss the world's most pressing economic and social issues.
- Key global institutions such as the **World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization** actively participate.
- The forum focuses on **global economic growth, geopolitics, technology, education, investment and governance reforms**.
- The WEF publishes the **Global Risks Report, Global Gender Gap Report, Energy Transition Index**.

Why Assam's participation matters

- Traditionally, **only developed Indian states** represented India at Davos.
- **For the first time, the Union Government has chosen Assam** to represent India alongside leading states.
- This reflects Assam's **rising economic profile**, especially after the **Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit**.

Assam's agenda at WEF 2026

- The Chief Minister will participate in **over 17 high-level meetings** with global investors and industry leaders.
- Key focus areas include:
 - **Governance reforms and ease of doing business**
 - **Industrial growth and manufacturing**
 - **Technology-driven development**
 - **Future-ready workforce**
 - **Travel and tourism**
 - **Health and healthcare**
- Several **memoranda of understanding** are expected to be signed to attract foreign and domestic investment.

One-line wrap

Assam's debut at the World Economic Forum signals the State's transition from a peripheral economy to a globally visible investment destination.

India's Startup Ecosystem Rankings 2024

The **Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** has released its **State and Union Territory Startup Ecosystem Rankings 2024**, assessing how effectively Indian states are nurturing startups and entrepreneurship.

What is this ranking about?

- It is a **yearly evaluation exercise** conducted by the DPIIT under the broader **Startup India** framework.
- The exercise is **aimed at supporting states and UTs** in developing their startup ecosystem and learning from each other's best practices.
- **34 States and UTs** participated in the latest edition and are **ranked under five categories- best performers, top performers, leaders, aspiring leaders and emerging startup ecosystems**.
- States are grouped based on **population size** (above and below one crore) to ensure fair comparison.
- States and UTs are assessed across **six reform areas and nineteen action points**, covering:
 - **Policy and institutional support**
 - **Physical and digital infrastructure**
 - **Access to funding**
 - **Market access and linkages**
 - **Capacity building for entrepreneurs**
 - **Innovation-led growth**

Top highlights from the rankings

- **Best Performers:**
 - **Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, and Goa** emerged as the **best performers** in building a robust startup ecosystem.
 - Gujarat achieved this distinction **for the fifth consecutive year**, reflecting policy consistency and strong institutional support.
- **Top Performers:**
 - **Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh**.
- **Leaders:**

- Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Nagaland.
- **Aspiring Leaders:**
 - Assam, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Emerging Startup Ecosystems:**
 - Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Chandigarh, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu.

One-line wrap

The DPIIT startup rankings underline that strong policy support, infrastructure, and funding access are key to transforming states into vibrant centres of entrepreneurship.

Bagurumba Dwhou 2026

The PM is visiting Assam for two days, during which he will attend **Bagurumba Dwhou 2026** in Guwahati and launch major infrastructure projects linked to culture, connectivity and conservation.

Bagurumba Dwhou 2026: Celebrating Bodo Heritage

- **Bagurumba**, a classical folk dance of the **Bodo community**, will be performed by **nearly 10,000 artistes** in a single, synchronised presentation at **Sarusajai Stadium, Guwahati**.
- Artistes from **81 Legislative Assembly Constituencies across 23 districts** are participating, making it one of the largest cultural showcases of indigenous dance in India.
- Often called the “**Butterfly Dance**”, it symbolises **blooming flowers, harmony with nature, and the rhythm of life**.
- Traditionally performed by **young Bodo women**, with men accompanying them on instruments such as **kham (drum)** and **sifung (bamboo flute)**.
- The dance is marked by **gentle, flowing movements**, arranged in **circles and lines**, reflecting butterflies, birds, leaves, and flowers.
- Each performer will receive **financial honorarium and skill certification**, reflecting institutional recognition of indigenous art forms.
 - **Dancers** to get Rs. **25000** each and **trainers** to get Rs. **50,000**

Infrastructure Push with Ecological Sensitivity

- On January 18, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of the **Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project** worth over **₹6,950 crore**.
- The **86-kilometre project** includes:
 - **35 kilometres of elevated wildlife corridor** through **Kaziranga National Park**
 - **21 kilometres of bypasses**
 - **30 kilometres of highway widening**
- The project aims to balance **regional connectivity** with **biodiversity protection**, ensuring safe animal movement, reduced human-wildlife conflict, and lower accident rates.

Rail Connectivity Boost

- Two new **Amrit Bharat Express trains** will be flagged off, strengthening rail links between the **Northeast and Northern India**, improving mobility for passengers and freight.

One-line wrap

Bagurumba Dwhou 2026 blends indigenous cultural pride with modern infrastructure and ecological consciousness in Assam.

Magh Bihu Bird Census at Chandubi Beel

The **first Magh Bihu Bird Census 2026** was recently conducted at **Chandubi Beel** and its adjoining areas, documenting a remarkable **111 species of birds**, reflecting the ecological richness of this important wetland ecosystem.

Key findings of the census

- A total of **111 bird species** were recorded.
- The species included: **Aquatic birds** (wetland-dependent species), **Grassland birds**, **Woodland birds** and **Raptors (birds of prey)**
- The diversity indicates that Chandubi Beel functions as a **multi-habitat ecosystem**, supporting varied feeding and nesting requirements.

Who conducted the census?

- The census was organised by the **Loharghat Range** under the **Kamrup West Forest Division**.
- Around **40 participants**, divided into five groups, took part, including:
 - Experts from the **Assam Bird Monitoring Group**
 - Researchers from the Department of Zoology, **Gauhati University**
 - Members of non-governmental organisations such as **Bonyobondhu** and **Assam Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Organization**
 - Officials of the **Assam Forest Department**
- Local support came from the **Chandubi Boat Safari Association** and nearby communities.

Chandubi Lake: Geography and history

- Chandubi Lake was formed after the **Great Assam Earthquake of 1897**, making it a **natural lake created by tectonic activity**.
- It is located at the **foot hills of Garo hills** spread **between Assam and Meghalaya**.
- Surrounded by hills, forests and indigenous settlements, the lake is both an **ecologically sensitive wetland** and a **cultural landscape**.
- The area is inhabited largely by indigenous communities, especially the **Rabhas**, whose livelihoods are closely linked with the lake.

One-line wrap

The first Magh Bihu Bird Census establishes Chandubi Beel as a key avian hotspot and strengthens the case for community-led wetland conservation in Assam.

Silpi Bota 2026

The **Government of Assam** has announced the recipients of its **prestigious cultural and literary awards for 2025–26**, including the **Silpi Bota Award 2026**, honouring eminent contributors to Assam's art, music, literature, theatre and cinema.

Key award announcements

- **Silpi Bota Award 2026**
 - **Dhanada Pathak**
 - **Samar Hazarika (posthumous)**
 - The award will be **formally conferred in February 2026**.
- **Krishna Kanta Handiqui Memorial Award 2025**
 - **Maneswar Deuri** – for contribution to Assamese literature.
- **Gopinath Bardoloi National Integration Award 2025**
 - **Amalendu Guha (posthumous)** – for contributions to education and national integration.
- **Natasurya Phoni Sarma Award 2025**
 - **Karuna Deka** – for excellence in theatre.
- **Dr Bhabendranath Saikia Award 2025**
 - **Arup Manna** – for contribution to cinema.
- **Biju Phukan Award 2025**
 - **Abani Ranjan Pathak** – for service to Assamese films.

Artist welfare measures

Along with awards, the State has strengthened its **cultural welfare framework**:

- **83 artistes** selected for **regular Silpi Pension (2025–26)**.
- **3 differently-abled artists** selected for **Silpi Pension (Special category)**.
- **170 artists** chosen for **annual Silpi Sanman**.
- **3 differently-abled artists** for **annual Silpi Sanman (Special category)**.
- **26 families** granted **regular Family Pension**.
- **5 families** of deceased artistes receive **one-time special financial assistance**.

One-line wrap

Assam's 2025–26 cultural awards and pensions reaffirm the State's commitment to honouring creativity while ensuring dignity and welfare for its artistes.

Assam to Set Up Tinkerers' Labs in Engineering Colleges

The **Assam Innovation and Startup Foundation** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Maker Bhavan Foundation** to establish **Tinkerers' Labs** in select engineering colleges across Assam. The initiative aims to strengthen **experiential learning** and foster a **culture of innovation** among engineering students.

What are Tinkerers' Labs?

- **Student-managed maker spaces** designed to promote creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration and problem-solving.
- Equipped with **advanced fabrication and prototyping tools** such as **3D printers, laser cutters, milling machines and electronics workstations**.
- Operate on a **24×7 access model**, managed by trained student teams under faculty and technical mentorship.

Key features of the MoU

- **Hands-on learning:** Supports **curriculum-integrated projects**, structured skilling workshops and solution-oriented prototyping.
- **Idea to product:** Enables students to convert concepts into **tangible prototypes**, strengthening innovation outcomes.
- **Industry linkage:** Improves collaboration between academia and industry, reinforcing the **innovation ecosystem**.
- **Scale and experience:** Maker Bhavan Foundation brings experience of impacting **over 1,00,000 students** through **18 Tinkerers' Labs** nationwide.

Where will the labs be set up?

- **Jorhat Institute of Science and Technology,**
- **Jorhat Engineering College**
- **Golaghat Engineering College**

Overall coordination will be handled by the **Directorate of Technical Education, Assam**.

One-line wrap

Assam's Tinkerers' Labs initiative brings round-the-clock, hands-on innovation spaces to engineering campuses, bridging classroom learning with real-world problem-solving.

Lifetime achievement honour for Bishnu Kharghoria

The **Guwahati Asian Film Festival 2026** will confer its **Lifetime Achievement Honour** on veteran actor **Bishnu Kharghoria**, recognising his outstanding and long-standing contribution to Assamese and Indian cinema.

About the award and the festival

- The **Lifetime Achievement Honour** is an annual recognition given to artistes whose work has **shaped cinematic culture** and inspired generations.
- The **second edition of GAFF** will be held from **January 22 to 25, 2026**, at **Jyoti Chitraban, Guwahati**.
- The festival is organised by **Trending Now Media**, with support from the **National Film Development Corporation** and the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India**.

About Bishnu Kharghoria

- Bishnu Kharghoria is regarded as one of the **finest actors of Assamese cinema**, known for performances marked by **emotional depth, realism and integrity**.
- He began his film career with *Bristi* (1974) and went on to act in several landmark films that shaped regional cinema, including *Kollol* (1978), *Firingoti* (1992), *Xagoroloi Bohudoor* (1995) and *Pokhi* (1998).
- His contribution has received **national and international recognition**, including **National Film Award (Special Mention)** for *Xagoroloi Bohudoor* and *Baandhon*.
- He also won the **Best Actor Award** at the **Singapore International Film Festival** for *Xagoroloi Bohudoor*, highlighting the global reach of Assamese cinema.

One-line wrap

GAFF 2026's Lifetime Achievement Honour to Bishnu Kharghoria celebrates a career that shaped Assamese cinema and carried its stories to national and global audiences.

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

The Union Government has approved the **Small Hydro Power Development Scheme** with an outlay of **₹2,585 crore** to promote **clean energy generation through small hydro projects** across India, with special focus on **Northeast and hilly regions**.

Key Features of the Scheme

1. Project Scope

- Implementation period: **2026–27 to 2030–31**
- Target capacity: **1,500 megawatts**
- Applicable to **small hydro projects (1–25 megawatts capacity)**

2. Financial Assistance

The scheme provides **Central financial support** to developers:

- **Northeast and border areas:**
 - Up to **₹3.6 crore per megawatt** or **30% of project cost** (whichever is lower)
 - Maximum limit: **₹30 crore per project**
- **Other States:**
 - Up to **₹2.4 crore per megawatt** or **20% of project cost**
 - Maximum limit: **₹20 crore per project**

Objectives

- Promote **renewable and clean energy generation**.
- Utilise **untapped hydro potential in remote areas**.
- Encourage **private sector investment** (estimated ₹15,000 crore).
- Support **energy access in difficult terrains**, especially in Northeast India.

Importance for Northeast India

The Northeast region has **abundant river systems and hilly terrain**, making it ideal for small hydro projects.

Benefits

- Provides **reliable electricity in remote villages**.
- Reduces dependence on **fossil fuels and diesel generators**.
- Supports **local employment and regional development**.
- Enhances **energy security in border areas**.

What is Small Hydro Power?

- Refers to **hydropower projects with capacity up to 25 megawatts**.
- Usually based on **run-of-the-river systems**, which do not require large dams.
- Considered **environment-friendly with minimal displacement and ecological impact**.

One-line Wrap:

The **Small Hydro Power Development Scheme** aims to harness clean energy potential in Northeast India while promoting sustainable and decentralised power generation.

Aizawl City Beautification Project

A prime land parcel in **Aizawl**, earlier occupied by the **Assam Rifles** for more than a century, has been transferred to the **Mizoram Government**. The State has announced plans to redevelop the site under the **Aizawl City Beautification Project** as part of the **Lammual Master Plan**.

Background of the Land Transfer

- The land in the **central Lammual area of Aizawl** had been under the control of Assam Rifles since the **colonial period**.
- It was **officially handed over to the Mizoram Government in March 2025**.
- The transfer fulfilled a **long-standing demand of residents** to utilise the centrally located land for civilian purposes.

About the Aizawl City Beautification Project

The redevelopment initiative is part of the **Lammual Master Plan**, aimed at transforming the urban core of Aizawl into a modern civic hub.

Key Features of the Project

- **Road infrastructure improvements** to reduce congestion in the city centre.
- Development of **public squares and green spaces** for recreation.
- Construction of **parking facilities** to address traffic challenges.
- Creation of **pedestrian-friendly zones** and designated viewpoints.
- Establishment of a **large public hall and community infrastructure**.
- Expansion of **power and water supply systems** to support urban growth.

Objectives

The project aims to:

- Create an **inclusive urban environment** for children, youth, and elderly citizens.
- Improve **urban mobility and civic infrastructure** in Aizawl.
- Convert a historic institutional site into **public space for community use**.
- Promote **planned urban development in hill cities**.

Urban Development Context

Urban redevelopment projects such as this align with broader national initiatives like:

- **Smart Cities Mission**, which focuses on sustainable and citizen-friendly urban planning.
- **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation**, which improves water supply, transport, and public spaces.

One-line Wrap:

The redevelopment of vacated Assam Rifles land under the **Aizawl City Beautification Project** marks a major step toward **modern and people-centric urban planning in Mizoram**.

IIT Guwahati Develops Radiation-Shielding Cement Mortar

Researchers at **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati** have developed an **improved cement mortar capable of blocking harmful radiation**, which could enhance safety in **nuclear power plants and radiation-sensitive facilities**.

Key Innovation: Radiation-Shielding Cement Mortar

The research aims to create **cement-based materials that are stronger, more durable, and capable of shielding radiation**.

The scientists modified ordinary cement mortar by adding **four specialised microparticles**:

- **Boron oxide, Lead oxide, Bismuth oxide and Tungsten oxide**

These particles were added in small quantities to test their ability to **increase compressive strength and block radiation**.

Key Findings

- The modified mortar showed **higher structural strength after 28 days of curing**.
- It demonstrated improved ability to **block mixed radiation fields**, including:
 - **Gamma radiation**
 - **Neutron radiation**

Importance for Nuclear Infrastructure

Nuclear facilities require extremely strong protective structures.

Containment structures in nuclear power plants act as a **protective barrier** against radiation leaks during:

- Earthquakes
- Explosions
- Temperature fluctuations

Improving cement mortar helps build **radiation-resistant concrete**, making nuclear facilities safer.

This is especially important in light of past nuclear disasters such as:

- **Chernobyl disaster**
- **Fukushima nuclear disaster**

These events highlighted the need for **stronger containment materials and safety systems**.

Applications of the Technology

The newly developed material could be used in several sectors:

- **Nuclear power plants**
- **Small modular reactors**

- **Medical radiation facilities**
- **Radiation research laboratories**

The research findings were published in the international journal **Materials and Structures**.

Future Scope

The research team is exploring collaborations with:

- **Nuclear energy agencies**
- **Construction material manufacturers**
- **Infrastructure companies**

The aim is to conduct **pilot-scale testing under real-world conditions** and develop **next-generation nuclear-grade construction materials**.

Key Takeaways

- The new cement mortar improves **both structural strength and radiation shielding capacity**.
- It could help build **safer nuclear infrastructure**.
- The innovation supports **expanding nuclear energy while ensuring high safety standards**.

One-line Wrap:

The IIT Guwahati research on **radiation-shielding cement mortar** could significantly improve the safety and durability of nuclear power infrastructure in India.

Moghai Ojah Award

Renowned folk artiste and Bihu dance expert **Ranjit Gogoi** was honoured with the **16th Moghai Ojah Award** at a ceremony organised in Jorhat by the **Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad**.

About the Moghai Ojah Award

- The **Moghai Ojah Award** was instituted in **2011** by the Jorhat district unit of the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad.
- It commemorates the legendary Assamese folk musician **Moghai Ojah**.
- The award is presented **annually on 15 March**, marking the death anniversary of **Moghai Ojah**.
- The award includes:
 - A **cash prize**, a **seleng chadar** (traditional shawl), **gamosa** (traditional Assamese towel), **japi** (traditional conical hat), **xorai** (bell-metal offering vessel), a **citation**, and a **memento**.

These items represent the **traditional cultural heritage of Assam**.

About Moghai Ojah

Moghai Ojah is regarded as one of the **greatest dhol** — Assam's iconic traditional drum — **players in Assamese folk music**.

Moghai Ojah (also known as Moghai Baruah), who lived from 1916 to 1978, was a legendary musician from Assam widely credited with bringing the Dhol to a global audience. Born in Naosolia village, Jorhat district, into the Keot community, he overcame financial hardship to become one of Assam's most celebrated folk musicians.

Due to his extraordinary drumming skill, he came to be known as the "Oja of Dhol" — the master of the dhol. He was also **associated** with the **Gananatya Sangha** (IPTA), through which he worked alongside towering figures such as Kalaguru Bishnu Rabha, Nata-Surjya Phani Sharma, and Sudha-Kantha Dr. Bhupen Hazarika. He passed away on **15 March 1978**.

Contributions

- Elevated the **Assamese dhol (traditional drum)** to national and international recognition.
- Played a crucial role in popularising **Bihu music and dance traditions**.
- Also appeared in several films such as:
 - *Pioli Phukan*, *Ranga Police*, *Pratidhwani*, *Mahut Bandhu Re* (Bengali) and *Maram Trishna*

Other Recognitions

During the same programme:

- The **Moghai Ojah Educational Trust Award** was presented to **Puja Dutta**, a student of **Tezpur University**.
 - The award provides **monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500** to support higher education.
- **Moghai Ojah Srijan Award (2015)**: Instituted by Srijanasom Trust, a charitable body promoting Indian art and culture.

One-line Wrap:

The Moghai Ojah Award celebrates the legacy of Assam's legendary dhol maestro while promoting the preservation of traditional Bihu music and folk culture.

Oil Pipeline Beneath the Brahmaputra: A Major Engineering Milestone

Numaligarh Refinery Limited has successfully completed one of the **world's longest horizontal directional drilling crossings** beneath the Brahmaputra River in Jorhat district, as part of the **Paradip–Numaligarh crude oil pipeline project**.

What has been achieved?

- A **4,058-metre-long underground pipeline** has been laid beneath the Brahmaputra using **horizontal directional drilling**, a trenchless technology that avoids disturbing the river ecosystem.
- This crossing connects **Afalamukh (Majuli)** on the north bank to **Nimatighat (Jorhat)** on the south bank.
- The work is part of the **1,635-kilometre crude oil pipeline** connecting **Paradip in Odisha** to Numaligarh in Assam, passing through **Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal** and the **Northeast**.

About Paradip Numaligarh Crude Pipeline

- It originates from **Paradip Port (Odisha)** and **traverses through West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar**, before **terminating** at its **refinery in Numaligarh (Assam)**.
- IGGL is executing the laying of a natural gas pipeline from Guwahati to Numaligarh as part of its marquee project for connecting India's North-east Region (NER) with the National Gas Grid.
- IGGL's natural gas pipelines will connect Guwahati to major cities of NER like Itanagar, Dimapur, Kohima, Imphal, Aizwal, Agartala, Shillong, Silchar, Gangtok and Numaligarh.

About Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL)

- It is a **public sector oil refinery** situated in **Numaligarh, Golaghat district**, operating as a **subsidiary of Oil India Limited**.
- The refinery's origins trace back to the **Assam Accord of 1985**, which envisioned a facility to utilize local crude resources and promote industrial growth in Assam
- Incorporated in 1999 as a **joint venture between Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and the Government of Assam**.
- Ownership evolved when **Oil India Limited acquired a 69.63% stake**, making NRL its subsidiary, while the Government of Assam retained 26% and Engineers India Limited held 4.37%.
- NRL was **accorded 'Navratna' status**, in December 2025, elevating it from Miniratna. It becomes the **27th Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** to be accorded the status.

Why is this project important?

- **Energy security:** The pipeline will supply crude oil to NRL after its refinery capacity expansion from **3 million to 9 million metric tonnes per annum**.
- **Engineering significance:** At over 4 kilometres, the Brahmaputra crossing ranks among the **longest river crossings in the world** using this technology.
- **Environmental protection:** Horizontal directional drilling ensures **minimal impact on river flow, aquatic life, and flood dynamics**, which is crucial for a sensitive river like the Brahmaputra.
- **Regional integration:** The project strengthens energy infrastructure in the **Northeast**, reducing dependence on long road or rail transport of crude oil.

Key technical facts

- Total pipeline length: **1,635 kilometres**
- Length already laid: **about 1,460 kilometres**
- River crossings: **38 rivers**
- Tunnels: **10 planned, 8 completed**
- Water bodies crossed: **around 90**
- Executing agency for the Brahmaputra crossing: **Trenchless Engineering Services Private Limited**.

PM's Visit Boosts Infrastructure and Digital Push in Assam

The Prime Minister will undertake a day-long visit to Assam, inaugurating key projects related to **defence preparedness, connectivity, digital infrastructure and urban mobility**.

Emergency Landing Facility at Moran

- The Prime Minister will land at the **Emergency Landing Facility (ELF)** on the Moran Bypass in Dibrugarh.
- It is the **first such facility in Northeast India**, developed in coordination with the **Indian Air Force**.
- Designed as **dual-use infrastructure**, it can handle:
 - Fighter aircraft up to **40 tonnes**.
 - Transport aircraft up to **74 tonnes maximum take-off weight**.
- It strengthens **disaster response capability** and strategic mobility in the Northeast.
- Similar emergency landing stretches are part of India's broader effort to enhance **national security infrastructure**.

Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu

- The Prime Minister will inaugurate the **Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu**, a **6-lane extradosed Prestressed Concrete bridge** built at a cost of about ₹3,030 crore.
- It connects **Guwahati and North Guwahati**, reducing travel time to just **7 minutes**.
- Key features:
 - **Base isolation technology** using friction pendulum bearings for seismic safety.
 - **High-performance stay cables** for durability.
 - **Bridge Health Monitoring System** for real-time structural safety.
- It is the **first extradosed bridge in Northeast India**.

Digital and Education Infrastructure

- Inauguration of the **National Data Centre for the Northeastern region** at Amingaon.
 - Sanctioned load: **8.5 megawatt**.
 - Acts as a **Disaster Recovery Centre**.
 - Supports the vision of **Digital India** by strengthening regional digital infrastructure.
- Launch of the **temporary campus of Indian Institute of Management Guwahati**, boosting higher education in the region.

Urban Mobility under PM-eBus Sewa Scheme

- Flag-off of **225 electric buses** under the **PM-eBus Sewa Scheme**:
 - 100 for Guwahati.
 - 50 each for Nagpur and Bhavnagar.
 - 25 for Chandigarh.
- Promotes **clean urban transport** and reduces carbon emissions.

Assam State Film Awards 2020–21

The Government of Assam has announced the winners of the **Assam State Film Awards** for the years 2020 and 2021, recognising excellence in Assamese and regional cinema across **40 categories**.

Top Film Awards

- **Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala Award (Best Film)**
 - 2020: *Balconit Bhogowan (God on the Balcony)*
 - 2021: *Xobdo Nixobda Kolahal*
- **Short Film Category (Nip Barua Award)**
 - 2020: *Kumu* by Akansha Bhagawati
 - 2021: *Xogun* by Utpal Barpujari
- **Documentary Category (Naren Barua Award)**
 - 2020: *Screaming Butterflies* by Aimee Baruah
 - 2021: *Breaking the Silence* by Parthajit Baruah

The awards were announced by Cultural Affairs Minister **Bimal Borah**, along with the Chairman of the **Assam State Film (Finance and Development) Corporation Limited**. The initiative aims to promote **regional cinema**, preserve Assamese cultural narratives, and strengthen the state's creative industry.

Financial Assistance for Mini Cinema Halls

- The government announced **₹50 lakh financial assistance** each to 10 beneficiaries for setting up **mini cinema halls** across Assam.
- This move aims to revive theatre culture and improve access to cinema in semi-urban and rural areas.
- Beneficiaries include projects in **Bokakhat, Hojai, Dergaon, Duliajan, Nalbari, Biswanath, North Lakhimpur, Majuli, Chirang and Sivasagar**.

Other Recognitions

- **Pabitra Kumar Deka Award (Best Article Writing on Cinema)**
 - 2020: Aparajita Pujari
 - 2021: Dr. Dipshika Bhagawati

One-line wrap:

The Assam State Film Awards 2020–21 celebrate regional cinematic excellence while boosting grassroots film infrastructure across the state.

Gauhati High Court Clears Maa Kamakhya Access Corridor Project

The **Gauhati High Court** has permitted the Assam government to proceed with the **Maa Kamakhya Access Corridor Project**, dismissing concerns about possible structural and hydrological damage to the historic temple complex.

Why the Case Was Filed

- Petitioners had raised concerns that the corridor project might:
 - Damage the ancient temple structure.
 - Affect the **underground holy water springs**, which hold deep religious significance.
- The matter involved heritage protection and environmental sensitivity.

Expert Review and Findings

- The **National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee** conducted a hydrological and geophysical study of the project.
- The findings were vetted by the **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati**.
- The reports concluded that the project is **“viable and non-damaging”**.
- Structural designs were modified incorporating scientific recommendations.

High Court’s Observations

- A Division Bench led by Chief Justice Ashutosh Kumar observed that:
 - With scientific reports integrated into the design, there is **no embargo** on execution.
 - The project must strictly follow drawings and designs approved by IIT Guwahati.
 - Execution should not affect the temple structures or the underground springs.
- The Court granted liberty to petitioners to revive the case if any breach is observed during execution.

About Maa Kamakhya Access Corridor

- Foundation stone laid by the Prime Minister in February 2024.
- The project seeks to **boost tourism and pilgrimage facilities** by improving accessibility and visitor comfort.
- It is designed on the lines of the **Kashi Vishwanath Corridor (Uttar Pradesh)** and **Mahakal Lok Corridor (Madhya Pradesh)**.
- Implemented by the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region**.
- The project has been sanctioned under the **Prime Minister’s Development Initiative for North Eastern Region (PM-DevINE)**.
 - It is a **Central Sector Scheme**, launched in the Union Budget 2022–23.
 - **Objectives:**
 - Fund critical infrastructure projects.
 - Promote social development in the North Eastern Region.
 - Support livelihood activities for youth and women.
 - Fill development gaps in the region.

One-line wrap:

The High Court’s nod to the Maa Kamakhya Corridor underscores a development-with-conservation approach backed by scientific validation.

Choto Pokalagi Electrified After 75 Years

Residents of Choto Pokalagi village on the Assam–West Bengal border have received electricity for the first time since Independence.

- Choto Pokalagi under Agomoni Tehsil in Dhubri has finally emerged from decades of darkness, powered through a rare and strategic cross-border electricity arrangement with neighbouring West Bengal.
 - The village, though administratively part of Assam, is geographically surrounded by West Bengal from 3-sides.
- The breakthrough was achieved through coordinated efforts of the **Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL)** and the West Bengal electricity department.
- The electrification project was executed by the Agomoni Electrical Sub-Division under the **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS)**.

Why Was Electrification Delayed?

- The village's **geographical isolation** posed connectivity challenges.
- Inter-state coordination issues slowed progress.
- Infrastructure expansion in remote border areas often faces administrative and technical hurdles.

Jorhat–Majuli Bridge

The Chief Minister recently inaugurated the construction of the Majuli-Jorhat bridge along with the connecting highway at a function held at Manika Pathar, Garmur, in Majuli.

About the Jorhat–Majuli Bridge

- **Project:** Two-lane major bridge with approaches over the Brahmaputra
- **Location:** Between **Nimati Ghat (Jorhat)** and **Kamalabari (Majuli)**
- **National Highway:** NH-715K (declared on 17 November 2020)
- **Total Length:** 6.8 kilometres
- **Estimated Cost:** ₹925.47 crore (with revised cost for remaining work at ₹657.66 crore)
- **Implementing Ministry:** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- **Implementing Agency:** National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited

Key technical features

- **Design:** Two-lane bridge with approach roads and protective embankments
- **Spans:**
 - 40 spans of 125 metres each (about 5 kilometres)
- **Vertical clearance:**
 - 10 metres above high flood level, as per Inland Waterways Authority of India norms
- **Purpose:**
 - Ensures uninterrupted river navigation and water transport on the Brahmaputra

Strategic and developmental significance

- This will be the **first permanent land connectivity** between **Majuli Island and mainland Assam**.
- It will ensure **all-weather access**, reducing complete dependence on ferry services.
- The bridge will significantly improve access to:
 - **Health services**
 - **Education facilities**
 - **Markets and employment opportunities**
- It is expected to boost **tourism, cultural exchange, and economic integration** of Majuli.

Policy framework

- The project is part of the **National Highway Infrastructure Development Programme**.
- It aligns with the **Bharatmala Pariyojana**, which focuses on improving connectivity to **remote, border, and strategic regions**, especially in the Northeast.

About Majuli

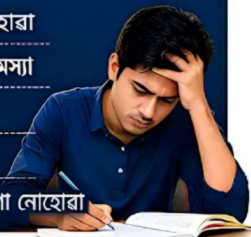
- Majuli is often described as the **heart of Assam's river civilisation**.
- It is a major centre of **Neo-Vaishnavite culture**, home to historic satras and unique ecological traditions.
- Permanent connectivity is crucial for protecting its **cultural heritage and sustainable development**.

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EXAM DATE

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GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Sariyahatali Sports Project Inaugurated in Nalbari

The **Chief Minister** recently inaugurated the **Sariyahatali Sports Project** in **Nalbari**, strengthening Assam's push towards modern sports infrastructure and talent development.

About the Sariyahatali Sports Project

- The project has been completed in its **first phase at a cost of ₹58.22 crore**.
- It is designed as a **multi-sport, international-standard facility** to host large tournaments and train young athletes.

Key facilities developed

- International-level 9-lane athletics **track** to support competitive track and field events.
- A **full-size football ground** suitable for district and state-level matches.
- An **international-standard swimming pool** to promote aquatic sports.
- A modern **indoor sports hall** for multiple disciplines.
- A dedicated **volleyball court**.
- The complex can accommodate **around 10,000 spectators**, enabling the hosting of major sporting events.

Athletics academy

- Along with the sports complex, an **Athletics Academy** was inaugurated.
- The academy will provide **scientific and modern coaching** to **20 selected athletes**.
- It includes **residential accommodation** and training under **qualified professional coaches**.
- The State Government has earmarked an **additional ₹100 crore** for further **modernisation and expansion** of facilities.

Significance

- The project aims to **identify and nurture grassroots talent** from rural and semi-urban Assam.
- It strengthens Assam's **sports ecosystem**, aligning with the broader goal of creating **world-class athletes**.
- The facility will help decentralise sports infrastructure beyond major cities, ensuring **regional balance in sports development**.

Assam's Electoral Roll Sees Net Decline Ahead of Assembly Polls

The **final electoral roll** published after the **Special Revision 2026** shows that **Assam's total voters have declined by 2.43 lakh**, following an intensive verification exercise ahead of the State Assembly elections.

Key Facts at a Glance

- **Draft voter list:** 2,52,01,624
- **Final voter list:** 2,49,58,139
- **Net decline:** 2,43,485 voters (0.97%)
- **Draft roll published:** 27 December 2025
- **House-to-house verification:** 22 November – 20 December 2025
- **Claims and objections period:** 27 December 2025 – 22 January 2026

Why did voter numbers decline?

According to officials of the **Election Commission of India**, the reduction is mainly due to:

- **Deletion of deceased voters**
- **Removal of voters who permanently shifted residence**
- **Elimination of duplicate entries** found during verification
- **Correction-driven revisions**, not mass disenfranchisement

District-wise Highlights

- **Kamrup Metropolitan district**
 - Voters declined by **about 26,000 (2.41%)**
 - **Final voters:** 10,49,644
 - **Gender composition:**
 - **Male:** 5,05,249
 - **Female:** 5,44,183
 - **Third gender:** 32
 - **Polling stations:** 1,218
- **Hojai district**
 - **37,993 names deleted** across Binnakandi, Hojai and Lumding constituencies
 - **Final voters:** 7,62,422

- Triggered **political protests** and demands for review by opposition parties

Safeguards for Voters

- Any voter deleted as “**Permanently Shifted**” can apply again using **Form 6**.
- **Appeal mechanism available under Section 24 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950:**
 - **First appeal:** District Magistrate within **15 days**
 - **Second appeal:** Chief Electoral Officer within **30 days**
- District Election Officers have been instructed to conduct **rigorous checks** to prevent inclusion of ineligible voters.

One-line Wrap

The Special Revision 2026 reflects Assam’s push for electoral accuracy, but its success depends on ensuring that no genuine voter is excluded.

Maijan Wetland

The Assam government has initiated steps to **rejuvenate Maijan Wetland (Maijan Beel)** in Dibrugarh as part of a broader plan to restore wetlands for **flood mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and eco-tourism**.

About Maijan Wetland

- **Maijan Beel** is located in **Dibrugarh district, eastern Assam**, just a few kilometres from Dibrugarh town.
- It is **directly connected to the Brahmaputra River**, enhancing its role in floodwater regulation.
- **Area: 44.5 hectares**
- **Water depth:**
 - Maximum: ~ **9 metres**
 - Minimum: ~ **3 metres**
- The wetland is **entirely surrounded by tea gardens**, which has led to **water quality degradation** due to untreated wastewater inflow.

Ecological Significance

- **Important biodiversity hotspot** and winter habitat for **migratory birds**.
- Rich aquatic life:
 - **54 fish species**
 - **42 macrophyte species**
 - High plankton diversity:
 - **Phytoplankton:** Dominated by **Chlorophyceae**
 - **Zooplankton:** Dominated by **Rotifera**
- Often described as the “**kidneys of the ecosystem**”, wetlands naturally filter pollutants and regulate water flow.

Concerns Identified

- Ecological degradation due to:
 - Untreated effluents from tea estates
 - Excessive human activities
- Gradual loss of natural beauty and fish diversity
- Reduced tourism potential despite high ecological value

Government Initiatives

- Assam has identified **16 wetlands in flood-prone districts** for restoration.
- The State plans to seek support from the **National Mitigation Fund** for wetland rejuvenation.
- Restoration aims:
 - **Flood and erosion control** by diverting excess Brahmaputra waters
 - **Biodiversity conservation**
 - Development of **eco-tourism and birdwatching**

Community and Expert Views

- Local residents and environmentalist’s stress:
 - Strong **community participation**
 - Involvement of schools, colleges and civil society
- Officials highlight Maijan Beel’s role in **urban flood management for Dibrugarh**.

Dibrugarh District

- Situated in the **Upper Assam region** on the **south bank** of the **Brahmaputra River**.
- Boundaries:
 - **North:** Dhemaji district and Lakhimpur district.
 - **South:** Arunachal Pradesh and Charaideo district.
 - **East:** Tinsukia district.
 - **West:** Sivasagar district.
- The **Bogibeel Bridge** is **located** here. It is **India's longest rail-cum-road bridge**, measuring approximately 4.94 km.
- **Constructed** over **Brahmaputra** river, it **connects** the **Dibrugarh** district on the south bank with the **Dhemaji** district on the north bank.
- Dibrugarh is known as the **Tea City of India**, it serves as a major hub for the tea trade and is surrounded by some of the world's most productive tea estates.
- It is a **key industrial zone** with major installations like **Oil India Limited (OIL)** and the **Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL)** at Lepatkata.
- Proximate to the coal-rich belts of Upper Assam, supporting regional industrial energy needs.
- **Jokai Botanical Garden** and **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park** (shared with Tinsukia), famous for its feral horses and white-winged wood ducks, is located here.

One-line Wrap

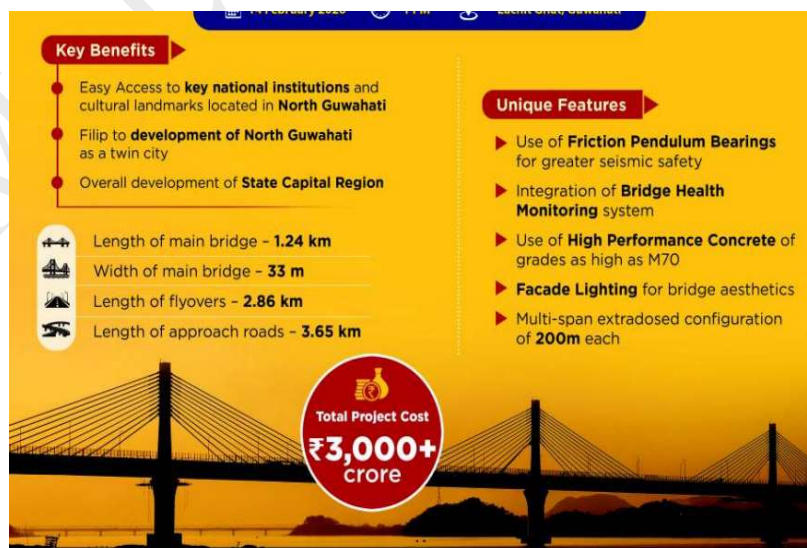
Maijan Wetland's rejuvenation reflects Assam's effort to use nature-based solutions for flood control, biodiversity protection, and sustainable tourism.

Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu set to transform Guwahati–North Guwahati connectivity

The Prime Minister is set to **inaugurate the Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu** during his visit to Assam, marking a major infrastructure milestone in the Northeast.

Key facts at a glance

- **Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu** is a **six-lane extradosed bridge** over the **Brahmaputra River**.
- It connects **Guwahati with North Guwahati**, forming part of an **8.4-kilometre-long connectivity corridor**.
- **Length of main bridge:** 1.24 kilometres.
- **Estimated cost:** Between **₹2,600 crore and ₹3,300 crore**.
- It is the largest ever project undertaken by Assam Public Work Department, it is primarily financed by the BRICS New Development Banks.
- **Travel time reduced:** From long ferry- and bridge-dependent commutes to **around 7 minutes**.



Key developments

- **Assam Chief Minister** conducted the **final inspection** ahead of inauguration.
- The bridge will be **open for public access till March 1**, after which it will allow **all categories of vehicles**.

- The State plans to impose **higher tolls on commercial vehicles** such as buses and trucks to regulate heavy traffic.
- The government is exploring the possibility of a **dedicated bicycle track**, promoting **sustainable and non-motorised transport**.

Why it matters

- **Urban mobility:** Eases congestion and reduces pressure on existing bridges and ferry services.
- **Economic growth:** Encourages **commercial, residential, and logistics development** in North Guwahati.
- **Regional integration:** Strengthens Assam's role as a **connectivity hub in the Northeast**.
- **Sustainability angle:** Proposed cycling infrastructure aligns with **green mobility goals**.

Vande Mataram Gets Legal Protection Under National Honour Law

The **Union Cabinet** has approved an amendment to the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** to make obstruction to the singing of **Vande Mataram** a punishable offence.

- The move aims to provide the **National Song** the same statutory protection currently available to the **National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana**.

What is the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971?

- The Act was enacted to protect:
 - The **National Flag**
 - The **Constitution of India**
 - The **National Anthem**
- It punishes acts such as:
 - Burning or damaging the National Flag
 - Insulting the Constitution
 - Intentionally disturbing the singing of the National Anthem
- Punishment can include:
 - Imprisonment up to **three years, fine or both**.

About Vande Mataram

- **Vande Mataram** was written by **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** and was **published** in his novel **Anandamath** in **1882**.
 - The central plot of the novel 'Ananda Math' revolves around a group of Sanyasins known as Santanas (children), who dedicate their lives to the cause of their motherland.
- It was **first published on 7 November** in Bengali magazine **Bangadarshan** edited by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**.
- In **1907**, **Madam Bhikaji Cama** raised the **tricolour flag** for the **first-time outside India** in **Stuttgart, Berlin**. The words **Vande Mataram** were written on the flag.
- Vande Mataram, as a political slogan, was first used on **7 August 1905**.
- It was **first sung** by **Rabindranath Tagore** at the 1896 Congress Session in Calcutta (presided by Rahimtullah M Sayani).
- On **24 January 1950**, the Constituent Assembly adopted:
 - **Jana Gana Mana** as the National Anthem
 - **Vande Mataram** as the National Song
- Its **english translation** is done by **Sir Shri Aurobindo**.
- It was **set to music** by **Rabindranath Tagore**.
- The song praises the motherland and symbolizes: Patriotism, National unity & Cultural pride
- Only the **first two stanzas** are officially recognized as the National Song.
- This year (Nov 07, 2025) **marks the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram**.
- **150 years of Vande Mataram** was the **theme of the parade**.
- A series of paintings created by Shri Tejendra Kumar Mitra in 1923, illustrating the verses of 'Vande Mataram' and published in the 'Bande Mataram Album' (1923), was displayed as view-cutters along Kartavya Path during RDP 2026.

One-line Wrap

The proposed amendment seeks to strengthen legal respect for Vande Mataram, a song deeply linked with India's freedom struggle and national identity.

Assam Nakshatra Award 2026 honours Jadav Payeng

Padma Shri awardee and environmentalist Jadav Payeng was conferred the Assam Nakshatra Award 2026 in Tezpur.

Key highlights

- The award was presented at **Sahitya Sabha Bhawan, Tezpur** during the **10th foundation anniversary of Axomiya Suraksha Manch**.
- **Jadav Payeng**, popularly known as the “**Forest Man of India**”, was honoured for his **lifelong contribution to afforestation and environmental conservation**.
- Payeng is globally known for creating a **large man-made forest ecosystem** known as Molai forest located in Majuli, on a sandbar of the Brahmaputra through decades of individual effort.

Payeng's key messages

- He expressed concern over **rapid environmental degradation in Assam**, a state traditionally known for its greenery.
- He urged the government to ensure **development without deforestation**, stressing that progress should not come at the cost of forests.
- He informed that he has written to the **Prime Minister of India** regarding **forest conservation in Amchang and other regions**.
- He appealed to citizens to **plant more trees and protect existing forests** as a collective responsibility.
- Highlighting cultural dimensions of development, he emphasised the importance of **mother-tongue education**, stating that teaching children in **Assamese** supports mental growth and strengthens cultural roots.
- He noted that **language, art, and culture are essential pillars of nation-building**, alongside economic growth.

Moran Golf Course Under Threat

The **historic Moran Golf Course** in Upper Assam is facing the risk of **large-scale land conversion** after allegations that parts of the course have been ploughed for tea plantation purposes, threatening its survival as a **heritage and sports institution**.

About Moran Golf Course

- Located in **Moran, Dibrugarh district**, adjacent to the Moran airstrip.
- Spread over **20.30 hectares**, within the Thowra Tea Estate.
- Officially listed by the **Department of Tourism, Assam** as a **State tourism and heritage asset**.
- Archival records show it once served as a **landing and take-off ground for light aircraft**, linking it to **Assam's early civil aviation history**.

Nature of the Threat

- Around **8 hectares** of the golf course were allegedly converted into plantation land in **2023**.
- Fresh attempts are reportedly underway to plough the **remaining portions**.
- Earlier destruction in **2021** damaged **seven of the original nine holes** and led to the demolition of a historic aircraft hangar.
- The course was later reduced to a **six-hole layout** due to land loss.

Social and Sporting Significance

- The course has played a vital role in **nurturing golfing talent from the tea community** of Upper Assam.
- The **Upper Assam Golf Association** conducts **caddie tournaments** here.
- Selected caddies receive **training, mentoring, and exposure** to national-level golf circuits.
- Several former caddies have progressed to become **coaches and course managers** across India.

One-line Wrap

The threat to Moran Golf Course reflects the larger challenge of protecting heritage and community-based sports spaces amid land-use pressures.

Emergency Landing Facility on Moran Highway

The Prime Minister is set to **inaugurate the Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) on the Moran highway in Assam** during his day-long visit on **February 14**, with the **Indian Air Force conducting an air show** to demonstrate its operational readiness.

What is the Moran Emergency Landing Facility?

- The **Moran Emergency Landing Facility** is a **4.2-kilometre stretch of National Highway** in Dibrugarh, designed to function as an **airstrip during emergencies**.
- It allows **military and rescue aircraft** to land and take off when regular airbases are unavailable.
- These facilities are part of **dual-use infrastructure**, serving both **civilian and military purposes**.
- Aircraft such as **C-130 transport planes and Sukhoi fighter jets** have already successfully conducted rehearsals.
- Developed in coordination with the **Indian Air Force and the Ministry of Defence**.

Key Features

- **Highway-based airstrip** with reinforced concrete surface.
- **No central divider**, enabling use as a runway.
- **Capable of handling fighter jets and transport aircraft**.
- Designed for **defence operations, disaster response and rescue missions**.
- The Prime Minister's aircraft will **land and take off directly from the highway**, marking a first for the Northeast.

Strategic and Security Significance

- Assam lies close to **international borders and sensitive regions**, making rapid military deployment crucial.
- Enhances **Indian Air Force operational flexibility** in the Northeast.
- Strengthens **disaster response capacity** in flood- and earthquake-prone areas.
- Fits into India's broader plan of **dual-use infrastructure**, combining civilian and defence needs.

National Context

- The Indian Air Force has cleared **at least 12 National Highways across India** as emergency landing airstrips.
- The **first highway-based emergency landing facility** was inaugurated in **2021 on NH-925A in Rajasthan's Barmer district**, located between Gandhav & Bhakasar (3.5km).
- Moran becomes the **first such facility in the Northeast region**.

One-line wrap

The Moran highway emergency landing facility marks a major leap in Assam's defence readiness and disaster-response infrastructure.

IIT Guwahati Develops Low-Cost System to Remove Arsenic from Groundwater

Researchers at the **IIT Guwahati** have developed a **low-cost electrocoagulation-based system** that can **remove up to 99% arsenic from contaminated groundwater**, offering a practical solution for arsenic-affected regions.

What is the new technology?

- The system is based on **electrocoagulation**, a water-treatment process that uses **electric current instead of added chemicals**.
- It uses a **rotating iron anode** and a **stationary cathode**, which improves mixing and speeds up contaminant removal.
- Arsenic binds with iron particles released from the electrode and is then removed through **settling or flotation**.

Why arsenic in groundwater is a concern

- Arsenic enters groundwater from **natural rock formations** and **human activities** such as mining and agriculture.
- **Long-term exposure** can cause:
 - Organ damage
 - Skin disorders
 - Cancer
 - Heart disease risk
- Around **140 million people globally** are exposed to unsafe arsenic levels, with **India and Bangladesh among the worst affected**.

Arsenic-affected Regions

- According to the **Integrated Management Information System (IMIS)**, there are about 1,800 arsenic-affected rural habitations in India where 23.98 lakh people are at risk.
- IMIS data indicates that there are **6 arsenic-affected States** with regard to ground water sources.
 - **West Bengal** (1,218) has the **maximum number** of habitations having **arsenic contaminated water** followed by **Assam** (290), Bihar (66), Uttar Pradesh (39), Karnataka (9) and Punjab (178).
- According to **Central Ground Water Board** data, **19 districts in Assam** have **arsenic above 0.01 mg/l**:
 - Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Hailakandi, Karimganj, Cachar, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Dhubri, Nalbari, Nagaon, Morigaon, Kamrup, Darrang, and Baksa.

Key advantages of the IIT Guwahati system

- **High efficiency:** Removes 99 % arsenic within minutes.
- **Low cost:**
 - Small community plants (10–50 kilolitres per day): ₹8–15 lakh
 - Conventional systems: ₹12–20 lakh
- **Lower operating cost:**
 - No expensive membranes
 - Minimal chemical use
 - Maintenance mainly involves **electrode replacement**
- **Rural-friendly:** Simple design, robust operation, and suitable for **rural and semi-urban areas**.

How it improves existing methods

- Traditional methods:
 - Require chemical dosing
 - Take longer
 - Generate excess sludge
- Rotating electrode system:
 - Prevents deposit build-up
 - Enhances mass transfer
 - Improves overall efficiency

Future roadmap

- Field testing in **real groundwater conditions** with multiple contaminants such as **fluoride and iron**.
- Discussions underway with an Assam-based engineering firm for **fabrication and installation**.
- **Commercialisation planned** after securing funding.

One-line wrap

The new electrocoagulation system from IIT Guwahati offers an affordable and scalable solution to India's arsenic-contaminated groundwater crisis.

Atmanirbhar Assam 2.0

The Assam government has begun **disbursing the first instalment of financial assistance under Atmanirbhar Assam Abhiyan 2.0**, with over ₹55 crore released to 7,373 beneficiaries across Bongaigaon, Dhubri, Goalpara and South Salmara–Mankachar districts.

What is Atmanirbhar Assam Abhiyan 2.0?

- **Atmanirbhar Assam Abhiyan 2.0** is a flagship scheme of the **Government of Assam**.
- It aims to transform **educated youth from job seekers into job creators**.
- The scheme supports **new enterprises as well as expansion of existing businesses**.
- It focuses on **rural and semi-urban economic empowerment** through entrepreneurship.

Key Objectives

- To provide **self-employment opportunities** to educated youth.
- To build an **entrepreneur-friendly ecosystem** in Assam.
- To generate **local employment** through micro and small enterprises.
- To promote **sustainable livelihoods** in diverse sectors.
- To strengthen **rural and semi-urban economic growth**.

Financial Assistance Pattern

- **Up to ₹2 lakh** for graduates, diploma holders and matric-qualified candidates.
- **Up to ₹5 lakh** for professional degree holders in engineering, agriculture, veterinary science, fisheries, medicine and allied fields.
- **Around 50% as direct financial support**.
- **Remaining amount as an interest-free government loan**.
- Support is available for **both new ventures and business expansion**.

Target Sectors Covered

- **Agriculture and horticulture**
- **Poultry, dairy, pig and goat farming**
- **Fisheries**
- **Retail and stationery**

- Small manufacturing and packaging
- Garments and fabrication
- Bamboo, rubber and plantation activities
- Wood-based industries
- Service-sector enterprises and vocational self-employment

Eligibility Conditions

- Should be a permanent resident of **Assam** and should be of age between **28 and 45 years**.
- Minimum **Class X qualification** (for General categories) and upto **Class X** (for SC/ST/OBC categories).
- Must have **relevant skills, knowledge or experience** to undertake income generating activities.
- Should have a **scheduled commercial bank account**, which has been opened **before 1st April 2024**.
- Should be **registered** with the **Employment Exchange**.
- Only **one member per family** is eligible for the loan.
- **Applicants should not have defaulted any loan** taken from any scheduled commercial Bank in the past.
- Must not be a beneficiary of **Atmanirbhar Assam Abhiyan 1.0**.

One-line wrap

Atmanirbhar Assam 2.0 seeks to turn Assam's educated youth into local entrepreneurs and drivers of inclusive growth.

India Jumps Five Places on Corruption Perceptions Index 2025

India climbed five places to **91st position** out of **182 countries and territories** in the **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025**, released by the Berlin-based anti-corruption watchdog **Transparency International**.

- The improvement reflects a **one-point increase** in India's score compared to the previous year.

What is the Corruption Perceptions Index?

- The **CPI** is an annual global ranking that assesses **perceived levels of corruption in the public sector** across countries.
- It uses a **scale from 0 to 100**, where **0 indicates highly corrupt** and **100 indicates very clean**.
- The index is widely used to gauge **governance, transparency, and institutional integrity**, drawing on expert assessments and business surveys.

India's Performance in 2025

- **Rank:** 91st out of 182 countries.
- **Score:** 39 on a 0–100 scale.
- This represents an **improvement of one point** from the previous year and a **rise from 96th place to 91st**.

Global Context

- The **global average CPI score** fell to a **decade-low to 42 out of 100**, indicating widespread public sector corruption globally and limited progress overall.
- It further pointed out that 122 countries, which are more than **two-thirds** of the total, **scored under 50**.
- Fewer than **one-third** of countries have **improved significantly** over the last decade.
- **Denmark retained the top position**, followed by Finland and Singapore as among the cleanest nations.
- **South Sudan and Somalia**, both scoring 9, tied at **rank 181**, **Venezuela** ranks slightly higher at 180 with a score of 10, placing these **three nations** at the **bottom** of the index.

Key Takeaways from the Report

- The report warns that **corruption remains a serious threat worldwide**, highlighting the **need for stronger democratic checks and independent civil society** to hold power to account.
- **High CPI scores don't necessarily translate to corruption-free status.**
 - The report noted that the world's best democracies, like New Zealand, Sweden, Canada, the UK, France, the US, etc, have seen worrying declines as compared to autocracies or flawed democracies.
- It also notes that **attacks on journalists and activists** weaken transparency and allow corruption to persist.

One-line wrap

India's rise to 91st place in the CPI 2025 reflects modest gains in perceived public integrity but underscores the continuing challenge of curbing corruption and strengthening accountability.

Sati Sadhani Statue Unveiled in Sivasagar

A statue of **Birangana Sati Sadhani** was unveiled at **Bogidoul Haluwa Bhakat Gaon, Sivasagar**, using the **Chief Minister's One Time Relief Fund (2023–24)**.

- The event was inaugurated by **Education and Sivasagar district guardian minister Dr Ranoj Pegu**, along with the inauguration of a commemorative arch.

Who was Sati Sadhani?

- **Sati Sadhani** was the **last queen of the Chutia Dynasty**, remembered for her courage and sacrifice.
- She was the daughter of **King Dharmadhvajpal** of the Chutia kingdom.
- Married to **Nityapal (Nitai)** in **1512**, she later assumed power due to his weak leadership.
- She was crowned **Queen in 1522**, during a period of political instability.

Historical significance

- In **1524**, the **Ahom kingdom under Suhungmung** attacked and conquered **Sadiya**, the Chutia capital.
- Queen Sati Sadhani retreated to the **Chandragiri hills** with her husband and a small force and resisted the Ahom invasion.
- She chose **death over dishonour**, refusing to marry **Sadiyakhwa Gohain**, the Ahom governor of Sadiya.
- She **sacrificed her life by jumping from the Chandragiri hills** in 1524.

In Honour of Sati Sadhani

- The **Government of Assam** built a **Kalakhetra** dedicated to **Birangana Sadhani** in the year of **2009**.
 - It is situated in **Selengi Gaon, Golaghat** district.
- **Sati Sadhani Diva** is observed every year on **April 21** in Assam to commemorate her **martyrdom, courage, and spirit of freedom**.
- The **Sati Sadhani Award** is conferred on individuals for outstanding contributions to **art, culture, and literature**.

Nagara Naam: The Rhythmic Soul of Lower Assam's Devotion

Over **5,000** artistes performed **Nagara Naam** at **Hari Mandir, Nalbari**, in a massive collective effort to popularise and preserve this traditional folk art.

- The event was inaugurated by **Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah**, who announced plans to set up a **trust for the welfare and promotion of Nagara Naam artistes**.

What is Nagara Naam?

- **Nagara Naam** is a **folk devotional musical tradition of Lower Assam**, deeply rooted in the **Neo-Vaishnavite movement** propagated by **Srimanta Sankardev** and **Madhabdev**.
- The term "**Nagara**" refers to a **large traditional drum**, while "**Naam**" means **chanting the name of the Lord**.
- It blends **powerful drum beats, cymbals, and collective chanting** of Vaishnavite verses.

Key features

- Performed **collectively** by men and women, often involving hundreds of participants.
- Usually held in **Naamghars (community prayer halls)**, temple premises, and village courtyards.
- Performed during **religious festivals, community prayers, and social gatherings**.
- Unlike classical forms such as **Borgeet** or **Sattriya**, Nagara Naam belongs to the **folk bhakti tradition**—more **spontaneous, rhythmic, and emotionally charged**.
- Often described as the "**heartbeat of village devotion**" in Lower Assam.

Cultural significance

- Represents **collective spirituality**, where **rhythm becomes prayer** and **music becomes meditation**.
- Symbolises **social harmony, equality, and shared devotion**, core ideals of Neo-Vaishnavism.
- Acts as a **living cultural heritage**, passed orally and performatively across generations.

Centre Clears Middle Subansiri Hydropower Project Construction

The **NHPC Limited** has received **investment and environmental clearance** from the Government of India to start construction of the **Middle Subansiri Hydropower Project**, following progress in the Lower Subansiri project.

Key developments

- **Middle Subansiri Project**
 - Approved by the **Central Government** with full investment clearance.
 - **Installed capacity:** more than **1,600 megawatt**.

- **Environmental clearance** granted.
- **Tendering process** for construction has begun.
- **Lower Subansiri Project**
 - Two units are already in **commercial operation**, generating **500 megawatt**.
 - The **third unit** is expected to begin commercial production shortly.
 - All **eight units** are projected to be operational by **March 2027**, if timelines are met.

Operational features and concerns

- The Lower Subansiri project is affected by **seasonal variation in water flow**:
 - During the **dry season**, only one or two units operate at a time.
 - Water is conserved to run all units during **peak demand hours**.
 - At least one unit is kept running continuously to ensure **minimum river flow** in the **Subansiri River**.
- During the **monsoon season**, water availability is sufficient to operate all units.

Flood management measures

- Unlike several hydropower projects in the Himalayan region, the **Lower Subansiri project includes flood moderation features**:
 - **Flood cushioning and storage capacity up to 15 metres**.
 - Designed after assessing **historical high flood levels** of the Subansiri river.
 - Officials state that the project **should not significantly increase downstream flood risk**.

One-line wrap

The clearance of the Middle Subansiri project marks a major step in expanding hydropower capacity in Northeast India while highlighting the need for careful river and flood management.

Assam Begins Grant of Land Ownership Rights to Tea Garden Workers

The Assam government has formally launched the **process of granting land ownership rights** to tea garden workers and their families, ending decades of land insecurity in plantation areas.

What is the new initiative?

- At a public meeting in **Dinjoye Tea Estate**, the CM launched the **distribution of application forms** for land pattas.
- Eligible tea garden workers living in **labour housing lines** can now apply for **legal ownership of both land and houses** they have occupied for generations.

Legal and policy basis

- The initiative follows an **amendment to the Assam Land Ceiling Act**, passed in the last session of the Assam Legislative Assembly.
- The amendment enables the **transfer of ownership** from tea estate managements to resident workers.
- Earlier, despite living there for over **200 years**, workers had **no legal ownership**, as land and houses belonged to tea estate owners.

Key features of the process

- **Application-based system**:
 - Workers will declare the **name of the patta holder**, **area occupied**, and related details.
- **Survey-driven implementation**:
 - Surveys completed in **103 tea estates**.
 - Surveys in **another 250 tea estates** have begun.
 - Around **800 tea gardens** will be covered in total.
- **Timeline**:
 - The exercise is expected to take **6–7 months**.
- **Beneficiaries**:
 - Assam has nearly **10 lakh tea garden workers**, or about **5 lakh families**, eligible for pattas.
- Once pattas are issued, workers can **upgrade or modify their homes without permission** from tea estate management.

Social justice dimension

- The move is described by the government as a correction of a **“historical injustice”** faced by plantation labourers.
- It strengthens:
 - **Right to housing**
 - **Tenurial security**

- **Dignity of labour**
- It aligns with constitutional goals of **social and economic justice** for historically marginalised communities.

Linked employment announcement

- The Chief Minister announced that the **State Cabinet will soon consider extending the existing 3 per cent reservation** for tea tribe candidates:
 - Currently applicable to **Grade III and IV posts**.
 - Proposed to be extended to **Gazetted posts**, including senior administrative and police services.

One-line wrap

By granting land pattas to tea garden workers, Assam has taken a landmark step toward land security, dignity, and long-term empowerment of plantation communities.

New Cricket Facilities

The **Assam Cricket Association** has taken a major step towards strengthening sports infrastructure by inaugurating a **state-of-the-art cricket ground and pavilion** at **Satra Baradi, Barpeta**, establishing the **ACA Cricket Academy – Lower Assam Zone**.

- The initiative aims to support **both grassroots and high-performance cricket**, with a clear focus on talent identification and long-term player development.

What has been inaugurated?

- A **modern cricket ground and pavilion** equipped with:
 - **Five centre pitches**
 - **Ten net practice pitches**
 - **Dining and support facilities**
 - **Match officials' areas**
- The facility is designed to host **domestic-level matches** and structured coaching programmes.
- A **players' hostel** has been proposed, with its foundation stone laid, to provide **residential support** to emerging cricketers from the region.

Significance

- The academy will function as a **satellite venue for the Lower Assam Zone**, while **Umrangso** will serve as the satellite academy for the Southern Assam Zone.
- Expanding quality sports infrastructure beyond major urban centres ensures **inclusive access** for rural and district-level talent.
- Structured coaching, residential facilities, and regular exposure are critical for building a **strong domestic cricket pipeline**.

One-line wrap

The new cricket academy at Barpeta marks a decisive push towards decentralised sports infrastructure and grassroots talent development in Assam.

Buddhist Circuit Initiative to Boost Spiritual Tourism in Northeast India

The **All-Assam Buddhists' Association** has welcomed the **Central Government's announcement in the Union Budget 2026–27** to develop a **Buddhist Circuit Initiative** in the **Northeastern Region**. The move is being seen as a significant step towards **spiritual tourism, heritage preservation, and inclusive regional development**.

Speaking on behalf of the association, its foreign secretary said the initiative reflects a **forward-looking vision** that recognises the deep historical and cultural roots of Buddhism in the Northeast. The association, led by its president, appreciated the Prime Minister and the Union Finance Minister for acknowledging the region's **ancient Buddhist legacy**.

What is the Buddhist Circuit Initiative?

- The initiative aims to develop a **network of Buddhist heritage sites** across the Northeast in states of **Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, and Manipur**.
- It focuses on:
 - **Preservation of temples and monasteries**

- Pilgrimage interpretation centres
- Improved connectivity and pilgrim amenities
- Infrastructure supporting spiritual tourism

Why is it important for the Northeast?

- The Northeast is home to **Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhist traditions**, making it spiritually diverse and culturally rich.
- Despite this, many Buddhist communities have remained **economically and politically marginalised**, with limited access to development opportunities.
- The initiative is expected to:
 - Generate **local employment**
 - Encourage **community participation in tourism**
 - Integrate Buddhist communities into the **national development framework**

Institutional background

- The **All-Assam Buddhists' Association**, established in **1939**, has long worked for the social, cultural, and spiritual welfare of Buddhists in Assam.
- Its central office is located at the **Desangpani Buddhist Temple** in **Charaideo district**, an important centre of Buddhist heritage.

One-line wrap

The Buddhist Circuit Initiative marks a strategic blend of heritage conservation, spiritual tourism, and socio-economic upliftment in Northeast India.

Buannel tourism hit by conflict in Myanmar's Chin State

Buannel, a scenic highland destination in **Chin State**, near **Champhai** in Mizoram, is witnessing a sharp decline in tourist arrivals during what is usually its peak season of February–March.

- Ongoing clashes between **Myanmar's military junta and armed Chin groups** have raised security concerns, prompting advisories against travel.

What is Buannel and why is it popular?

- Buannel is known for its **picturesque highland landscape** and pleasant dry-season climate.
- February–March is the most attractive period due to the blooming of rare flowers such as:
 - **Chawkhlei** (rhododendron)
 - **Bingbi** (drumstick primrose or primula species)
- It has traditionally attracted tourists from **Mizoram, other parts of India, and some foreign visitors**.

Security situation and advisory

- Clashes in nearby areas of Chin State have directly affected the tourist zone.
- The **Buannel Management Committee**, under the **Hualngoram People's Organisation**, has issued an **advisory urging people from Mizoram to avoid visiting Buannel** during the peak months.
- Heightened insecurity has made travel risky despite favourable weather and road conditions.

Cultural significance

- Buannel holds deep emotional and spiritual value for the **Mizo people**.
- It is believed to be the abode of **Chawngtinlerhi**, a mythical nymph in Mizo folklore regarded as the creator and guardian of wild animals.
- The area is also considered the **mythical birthplace of animals**, giving it cultural importance beyond tourism.

Impact of border restrictions

- The **Assam Rifles** have imposed tighter controls at **Zokhawthar**, the border trade village on the **India–Myanmar boundary**.
- Casual cross-border movement across the **Tiau river** has been restricted.
- These measures have also reduced visits to **Rih Dil (Rih Lake)**, another major attraction in Myanmar, where visitors are now allowed to stay for **only one hour**.

Five Northeast Frontier Railway Stations Receive 'Eat Right Station' Certification

Five railway stations under the **Northeast Frontier Railway** have been awarded the prestigious **'Eat Right Station'** certification by the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India**.

- The certified stations are **Dimapur, Alipurduar, Kokrajhar, Golakganj and New Mal Junction**.

What is 'Eat Right Station'?

The certification is a flagship initiative under the **Eat Right India movement**, launched by FSSAI in 2018. It aims to promote:

- **Safe and hygienic food practices** at railway stations.
- Compliance with food safety regulations.
- Availability of **nutritious and sustainable food options**.
- Consumer awareness about healthy eating habits.

Stations undergo a **comprehensive audit** covering food stalls, catering units, storage systems, waste management and hygiene practices.

Dimapur Railway Station has received certification valid from October 2025 to October 2027 after meeting stringent standards.

Why is it Important?

- Addresses rising concerns of **diet-related diseases** such as diabetes and heart ailments.
- Ensures food safety against microbial contamination and chemical residues.
- Strengthens implementation of the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**.
- Enhances passenger confidence in railway food services.

As of February 2024, around **150 railway stations across India** have been certified under this initiative.

The recognition reflects the commitment to improving public health infrastructure through safer food ecosystems.



One-line wrap: The 'Eat Right Station' certification strengthens food safety standards while promoting healthier travel experiences across India's rail network.

Assamese Film Not a Hero Special Mention Award at Berlin International Film Festival 2026

Assamese filmmaker **Rima Das** has brought global recognition to regional cinema as her coming-of-age film '**Not a Hero**' received the **Special Mention Award** at the **Berlin International Film Festival 2026**. The film premiered in the **Generation Kplus section**, which focuses on children and youth narratives.

About the Film

- Written and directed by **Rima Das**.

- Produced by Rima Das and Fran Borgia under Flying River Films.
- Starring Bhuman Bhargav Das, Sukanya Boruah and Mrinmoy Das.
- Music composed by Pallab Talukdar.
- Story revolves around an 11-year-old boy navigating displacement between urban and rural worlds.

The Berlin International Film Festival, established in 1951, is one of the “**Big Three**” global film festivals, along with Cannes and Venice.

About Rima Das

- Two-time National Film Award winner.
- Directed **Village Rockstars (2017)** – India’s official entry to the Academy Awards.
- Other acclaimed works include *Bulbul Can Sing* and *Tora’s Husband*.
- Member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences since 2024.

One-line wrap: ‘Not a Hero’ reflects how Assamese stories, rooted in local soil, can resonate powerfully on the world stage.

Dark Sky Park in Assam

Assam is preparing to join the global dark sky movement by proposing certified **Dark Sky Parks/Reserves** to curb **light pollution**, promote **astro-tourism**, and **safeguard nocturnal biodiversity**.

- The initiative has received in-principle Cabinet approval, with **Kaziranga National Park**, **Manas National Park**, and **Dima Hasao** emerging as leading candidates.
- The **initiative** is led by the **Science, Technology & Climate Change Department, Assam**.
- It will also **involve coordination** among **forest, tourism, rural development** and **power departments**, along with collaboration with the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics**.

What is a Dark Sky Park?

A **Dark Sky Park** is a **protected area** where **artificial lighting** is **strictly regulated** to preserve natural night conditions. They are often **located** in **national parks** or **rural areas**, protecting night skies to promote astronomy, scientific research, ecology, and tourism.

- **Certification:** Granted by **DarkSky International**.
- Key features include:
 - Use of shielded, downward-focused lighting.
 - Low radiance and minimal artificial illumination.
 - Protection of wildlife sensitive to night-time light.
 - Promotion of astronomy and eco-tourism.

- Globally, there are over **240 such sites**.

Other Such Facilities in India

- **India’s first Dark Sky Park:** **Pench Tiger Reserve** (Maharashtra), which is also Asia’s fifth official Dark Sky Park.
- **India’s first dark-sky Reserve:** **Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO)**, a high-altitude astronomy station situated in Hanle and operated by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics.
 - Positioned in the Western Himalayas at an elevation of 4,500 meters (14,764 ft), the IAO ranks among the world’s highest sites for optical, infrared, and gamma-ray telescopes.

One-line wrap: Assam’s Dark Sky Mission blends conservation, science and sustainable tourism under a shared night sky.

Vrindavani Vastra Museum

The Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for a world-class museum complex in Khanapara, Guwahati to display the historic **Vrindavani Vastra**. The textile will be loaned by the **British Museum** for 18 months starting in 2027.

About the Museum

- The museum would be **constructed at Khanapara** under the **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative** of the **JSW Group**.
 - The **Assam government provided the land** and the **company will be bearing the construction costs**.
- Earlier in November 2025, the Assam government and the JSW Group had signed an agreement to set up this world-class heritage museum.

About Vrindavani Vastra

The **Vrindavani Vastra** is a 16th-century silk textile depicting the life of **Lord Krishna in Vrindavan**. It was created under the **guidance of Srimanta Sankardeva**, at the request of **Koch King Naranarayan's brother, Chilarai**.

Key Features of the Vrindavani Vastra

- **Woven by weavers of Tantikuchi (Barpeta)** along with master weaver **Gopal**, later honoured as **Mathuradas Budha Ata**.
- **Weaved under the supervision of Sankardeva and Madhavadeva.**
 - Under **Madhavadev's supervision**, about 4 inches of extra cloth could be made in one day. Pleased with this progress, **Srimanta Sankardeva** praised him and **gave him the title *Badhār Po***.
- Created using the rare **lampas weaving technique**, which requires **two weavers working simultaneously**.
- Originally **120 cubits long and 60 cubits broad**, crafted as **15 separate silk panels** later stitched together and it took about **six months to finish** the weaving.
- Designs were woven with a large variety of colored threads like red, white, black, yellow, green, etc.
- **Some colors** were evidently **mixed colors** or 'misravarna' like **Kāch-nilā**, **Gaura-syāma**, etc.
- **Presented to Chilarai**, with due ceremony only a little before the passing away of Sankardeva, **Chilarai kept it at the Madhupur Sattrā**.
- Contains woven **visuals of Krishna's leelas and fragments of Sankardeva's poems**.
- A symbol of **Assamese Vaishnavite spirituality**, artistic excellence and cultural fusion.
- **Significance:** Symbol of Assam's rich spiritual and cultural heritage, reflecting the devotion and vision of Sankardev.



Journey of the Textile

- Believed to have travelled from Assam to **Tibet (17th–18th century)**.
- Collected by **British explorers** (Perceval Landon) in the **19th–20th century**.
- Acquired by the **India Museum in 1904** and later transferred to the **British Museum**.
- At present it is on **display in 4 museums** in the world – one each in **London, Paris, Boston and Los Angeles**.
 - The **biggest fragments** of the **Vaishnavite textiles** are on display in the museums of **London and Paris**.

The British Museum has agreed to lend the Vastra for **18 months**, contingent on Assam building a **state-of-the-art museum** meeting global conservation standard—an area where the state has historically lagged.

Assam's Anti-Encroachment Drive in National Parks and Spring Rejuvenation Efforts

Assam has intensified its **anti-encroachment drive** across protected areas, with official data indicating that nearly **1.44 lakh bighas of land** in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries are under encroachment.

The State has **8 National Parks and 17 Wildlife Sanctuaries**, forming a critical part of India's biodiversity network under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

In the past four years, around **44,000 bighas** have been cleared through phase-wise eviction. Sanctuaries such as **Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary** and **Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary** have faced significant pressure from cultivation and commercial activities.

Ecological Impact

- Encroachment disrupts **wildlife corridors** and breeding grounds.
- Post-eviction reports show improved habitat quality for **rhinos, tigers, hoolock gibbons and spectacled monkeys**.
- Elephant movement has resumed in Laokhowa after clearance.
- Natural springs in hill districts had dried due to land-use changes.

Springshed and Watershed Management

To restore ecological balance, the State has launched **springshed management** in hill districts such as Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao.

- **36 springs** have been **rejuvenated** so far.
- The Government of India sanctioned schemes for **16 additional springs**.
- Focus on **watershed development**, climate resilience and community water security.

These efforts align with national commitments under the **National Wildlife Action Plan (2017–2031)** and India's climate adaptation goals.

One-line wrap:

Assam's eviction and spring rejuvenation drive reflects the growing integration of biodiversity conservation with climate resilience and sustainable development.

Assam Tops Northeast in Pothole Deaths on National Highways

Assam has recorded the **highest number of deaths due to pothole-related accidents on National Highways** in the Northeast between 2020 and 2024.

- Out of **476 deaths** reported across six Northeastern States, **Assam alone accounted for 395 fatalities**, raising serious concerns about road maintenance and public safety.

Key Data (2020–2024)

- **1,168 accidents** in Assam caused by potholes.
- **395 deaths** and **1,152 injuries** (grievous and minor).
- Highest fatalities recorded in **2022 (117 deaths)**.
- Other States:
 - Arunachal Pradesh – 65 deaths
 - Nagaland – 7
 - Manipur – 5
 - Mizoram – 3
 - Tripura – 1
 - Meghalaya and Sikkim – **No deaths reported**

National Highways are managed under the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**, with projects executed by agencies like the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** under the **National Highways Act, 1956**. Road safety also forms a core component of the **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019**, which strengthens accountability and penalties.

One-line wrap:

Assam's rising pothole-linked fatalities underline the urgent need for stronger highway maintenance, accountability and road safety governance.

CII Launches New Project to Promote MSMEs in Assam

The **Confederation of Indian Industry Centre of Excellence on Employment and Livelihood** has launched its flagship **MSME Project** in Guwahati to strengthen Assam's **MSME sector**.

- The initiative operates under the **Confederation of Indian Industry Centre of Excellence on Employment and Livelihood**.
- It is spearheaded in Assam in collaboration with the **Assam Industrial Development Corporation** and the **CII Guwahati Entrepreneurs Development Forum**.

- The project was formally launched by the Managing Director of Assam Industrial Development Corporation, M N Dahal.

Objectives of the Project

- To provide **structured business transformation support** to micro and small enterprises.
- To improve **productivity, competitiveness and market access**.
- To build entrepreneurial capacity through mentoring and technical guidance.
- To strengthen Assam's MSME ecosystem in line with national initiatives such as the **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** and the **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006**.

Why MSMEs Matter for Assam

- MSMEs contribute significantly to **employment generation**, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.
- Government-supported schemes in Assam have already benefited over **25,000 individuals**, many of whom have established viable enterprises.
- MSMEs are key drivers of **inclusive economic growth** and local value addition.

The project aims to help enterprises move from survival-based operations to structured and sustainable businesses.

One line wrap: The new CII initiative seeks to transform Assam's MSMEs into competitive engines of employment and inclusive economic growth.

Kamrupa Coconut Variety Faces Wildlife Threat in Assam

Assam's nationally acclaimed **Kamrupa coconut variety** is facing a serious productivity crisis due to increasing damage by **monkeys and squirrels** in Kamrup district.

According to official data (2021–22):

- Assam has **20,723 hectares** under coconut cultivation.
- Annual production stands at **1,67,409 metric tonnes**.
- Kamrup alone contributes **1,421 hectares** and **15,821 metric tonnes**.

What is happening?

- Farmers allege that the rising population of monkeys and squirrels since 2019 has led to near-total crop losses in some areas.
- The **Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel**, a protected species classified as "**Least Concern**", is reportedly damaging tender nuts.
- Decline in natural predators like hawks and eagles is cited as a reason for the surge.
- Wildlife experts link the issue to **habitat changes and food availability in plains**, indicating a growing **human–wildlife conflict**.

Economic Impact

- Farmers earlier earned up to **Rs 2 lakh annually from 25 trees**, but losses have forced many to shift to other crops like floriculture.
- Coconut traders supplying to temples and neighbouring States have reported severe disruptions.

Scientific & Policy Response

Experts from **Krishi Vigyan Kendra** and the **Coconut Development Board** recommend:

- **Non-lethal preventive measures** such as tree banding and protective netting.
- Proper irrigation (around **20 litres per plant daily**).
- Replacing trees older than 50 years.
- Maintaining spacing of more than seven metres to limit squirrel movement.

The issue highlights the need for integrated solutions under schemes like the **National Horticulture Mission**, focusing on scientific management and ecological balance.

One line wrap: The Kamrupa coconut crisis reflects how ecological imbalance and human–wildlife conflict can directly threaten rural livelihoods and horticultural sustainability in Assam.

Assam Launches Major Student Cash Support Schemes

The Chief Minister has launched three new **direct cash transfer schemes** aimed at supporting nearly one lakh students and researchers across the State.

Key Schemes Launched

1. Jibon Prerana Scheme

- **Monthly financial assistance** to **fresh graduates** to support their job search and preparation for competitive exams.
- **Benefit:** ₹2,500 per month for 12 months (totaling to ₹30,000)
- **Department:** Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship Department, Government of Assam

- **Implementing Agency:** Directorate of Employment and Craftsmen Training
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - **Residency:** Must be a permanent resident of Assam.
 - **Graduation Status:** Must be a fresh graduate (2025 pass-out only) from a Government/ Public institution of the state or central government, situated in Assam.
 - Students from open universities and private institutions are not eligible.
 - **Employment Status:** Should not be already employed.
 - **Further Studies:** Should not have taken admission in any Professional/Vocational courses.
- **Exclusions:** Applicant should not be a beneficiary of the Mukhya Mantri Nijut Moina Scheme.
- **Parental Status Exclusions:**
 - Applicant's parents should **not be employed** in **Public Offices** (MLA, MPs or Ministers).
 - Applicant's parents should **not be registered as a contractor**.
 - Applicant **should not belong to a family of professionals** with an income > ₹10 lakh per year.
 - Applicant's parents **should not be employed** as a **government employee**, or **pensioner** (except for Grade IV employees).
- **Beneficiaries:** 48,319 fresh graduates
- **Objective:**
 - To support fresh graduates during their job search.
 - To encourage fresh graduates to prepare for competitive examinations.
 - To empower fresh graduates to pursue self-employment opportunities.

Government of Assam
Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department

Launch of
Chief Minister's Jibon Prerana Scheme

Handholding Fresh Graduates of Assam

Assistance of
₹2,500
per month
for 1 year

Chief Guest
Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
Chief Minister, Assam

In august presence of
Shri Prasanta Phukan
Minister, Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship, etc., Assam

3 November 2025 | 4:00 PM
Ground Floor, Lok Sewa Bhawan, Dispur

Objectives

- Support Fresh Graduates in their Job Search
- Encourage Fresh Graduates to prepare for Competitive Exams
- Empower Fresh Graduates to pursue Self-Employment

Eligibility

Fresh Graduates (2025 pass-outs only) from Govt./Public Institutions of state or central, situated in Assam (excluding open universities and private institutions)

Permanent Resident of Assam

2. Jibon Anuprerana Scheme

- One-time financial assistance to **research scholars**
- **Benefit:** ₹25,000 to **general** research scholars, and ₹40,000 to **Divyang** (differently-abled) research scholars.
- **Beneficiaries:** 2,112 research scholars, including Divyang scholars.

- **Department:** Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship Department, Government of Assam
- **Implementing Agency:** Directorate of Employment and Craftsmen Training
- **Aim:** Promote research, innovation, and higher academic pursuits.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - **Residency:** Applicant must be a permanent resident of Assam.
 - **Academic Status:** Applicant must be a Full-time Research Scholar.
 - **Institution:** Scholar must be from a Government or Public institution (State or Central) situated in Assam.
 - **Admission Year:** Applicant must be admitted to a PhD program on or after 1st April 2021.
- **Mode of Disbursement:** Transferred directly to the bank accounts of the eligible scholars through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

Government of Assam

Launching of
Chief Minister's Jibon Anuprerana Scheme Portal

Aiding Luminous Scholars

7 June 2025 | 4:00 PM
Ground Floor, Lok Sewa Bhawan, Dispur

- Financial assistance to research scholars during their scholastic journey
- Promotion of academic excellence and innovation in Assam
- Inclusive assistance for Divyang (differently-abled) scholars

Scheme Benefits

Research Scholars	Divyang Research Scholars
One-time Financial Assistance	One-time Financial Assistance
₹ 25,000/-	₹ 40,000/-

Eligibility:

- Full-time Research Scholars from Govt./Public Institutions of state or central, situated in Assam (excluding open universities and private institutions)
- Permanent Resident of Assam
- Admitted to PhD program in 2025 (at Central / State Universities in Assam)

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3. Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Babu Asoni

- **Monthly financial assistance** for Graduate and Post Graduate **male students**.
- **First-year undergraduate Students-** ₹ 1,000 per month for 10 months (₹ 10,000/- assistance per academic year).
- **First-year postgraduate Students-** ₹2,000 per month for 10 months. (₹20,000/- assistance per academic year).
- Transfer of assistance amount directly to the student's bank account.
- **Eligibility Requirements:**
 - Permanent residents of Assam.
 - Applicants must currently be in the 1st year of an UG or PG regular course within Assam.
 - Enrollment of students should be in a Government or Provincialised Education Institute.
 - Student's annual family income must not exceed Rs. 4 lakh.
 - UG students who enjoy benefits from the Chief Minister Jibon Prerana Scheme cannot submit an application.
 - PG students who receive the Banikanta Kakati Merit Award Scheme are not eligible.
 - Married male students do not qualify.
- **Focus:** Prevent dropouts among economically weaker sections.

These schemes complement the existing **Nijut Moina Scheme (2024)**, which provides up to **₹2,500 per month** to girl students from Class 11 to postgraduation to prevent child marriage and improve female enrolment in higher education. Together, **Nijut Moina** and **Nijut Babu** aim to cover nearly **10 lakh students**, strengthening human capital development in Assam.



Skill Development Push

- The Chief Minister also launched **31 advanced technology laboratories** across Industrial Training Institutes and polytechnic institutions in collaboration with Tata Technologies.
- These labs aim to equip youth with skills in **manufacturing, automation, and advanced technologies**, aligning with the goals of **Skill India Mission** and the **National Education Policy 2020**.

One-line wrap:

Assam's new education-focused cash transfer schemes combine welfare, skill development, and social reform to strengthen youth empowerment.

Muga Silk Stole and Joha Rice Among Prime Minister's Gifts to Global Leaders

During his five-nation tour, the Prime Minister presented a range of **GI-tagged products, traditional handicrafts, handlooms, and agricultural products** to world leaders, showcasing India's rich cultural heritage and regional diversity.

Key Highlights

- The gifts reflected the spirit of **"Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat"**, **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, and the **5F Vision** (*Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Fabric, Fabric to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign*).
- Several products from the **Northeast Region** received international attention.

Important Gifts

- **Muga Silk Stole (Assam)** was gifted to Italian Prime Minister **Giorgia Meloni**.
 - It is known as Assam's **"Golden Silk"** due to its natural golden sheen.
 - It is produced by the **Antheraea assamensis** silkworm and holds a **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag.
- **Shirui Lily Silk Stole (Manipur)** highlighted the rare **Shirui Lily**, found only in Manipur's Shirui Hills.
- **Joha Rice (Assam)** was gifted to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization.
 - It is an indigenous aromatic rice variety grown in the **Brahmaputra Valley**.
 - It is renowned for its fragrance, soft texture, and premium quality.

- **Meghalaya Pineapple**, was gifted to the President of the United Arab Emirates.
- **Loktak Tea and Chak Hao (Black Rice)** from Manipur were also presented.
- **Italy PM Giorgia Meloni**: Muga Silk Stole & Shirui Lily Silk Stole
 - **Muga (GI tagged)**: It is known as Assam's "Golden Silk" due to its natural golden sheen.
 - It is produced by the *Antheraea assamensis* silkworm which feeds on Som and Soalu trees.
 - **Shirui Lily**: Highlighted the rare bell-shaped **Shirui Lily** (state flower of Manipur), blooms only on Shirui Kashong peak, Manipur.
- **Italy President Sergio Mattarella**: Pietra Dura (Pacchikari) marble inlay box
 - **Pietra Dura**: Originated in Florence, Italy; brought to India during Shah Jahan's reign. The Taj Mahal is the supreme example.
- **Netherlands King Willem-Alexander**: Blue Pottery (Jaipur)
 - GI-tagged; iconic cobalt blue, white and yellow designs. Does not use clay as base — uses quartz stone, glass and fuller's earth — hence "blue pottery."
- **Netherlands PM Rob Jetten**: Madhubani Painting (fish motif)
 - GI-tagged folk art from Mithila region, Bihar-Nepal border area; intricate geometric patterns; traditionally painted by women on mud walls and floors.
- **Norway King Harald V**: Tarakasi silver sailboat (Cuttack, Odisha)
 - **Tarakasi**: Ancient silver filigree art; GI-tagged; Cuttack is called the "Silver City of India" for this craft tradition dating back 500+ years.
- **Norway Queen Sonja**: Pattachitra (Tala Pattachitra)
 - One of Odisha's most ancient art forms; painted on dried palm leaf (Tala = palmyra palm); GI-tagged; depicts scenes from Jagannath mythology.
- **Sweden PM Ulf Kristersson**: Ladakhi pure wool stole & Loktak tea
 - **Loktak tea**: Artisanal tea from hills around Loktak Lake, Manipur — the largest freshwater lake in Northeast India and a Ramsar Wetland site.
- **Iceland PM Kristrun Frostadottir**: Replica of Tenzing Norgay's ice axe
 - Tribute to the tool used by Sherpa Tenzing Norgay during the first ascent of Mount Everest with Sir Edmund Hillary on 29 May 1953.
- **UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed**: Rogan painting, Kesar mangoes & Meghalaya pineapples
 - **Rogan**: Rare textile art from Kutch, Gujarat;
 - **Kesar mango**: GI-tagged, "Queen of Mangoes" from Gujarat;
 - **Meghalaya pineapple**: Thrives in hilly terrain, known for its sweetness and quality.
- **Queen Mother of the UAE, Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Al Ketbi**: Chak Hao Rice
 - Popularly known as "Black Rice". Once reserved for royalty, the aromatic rice is rich in antioxidants, dietary fibre and iron.
- **FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu**: Five premium rice varieties
 - **Joha rice** (Assam), **Gobindobhog rice** (West Bengal), **Kalanamak/"Buddha Rice"** (UP), **red rice** (Palakkad, Kerala), and **Basmati rice**.

INSIDE PM MODI'S GIFT HAMPER FOR LEADERS

PM GIORGIA MELONI

Muga Silk Stole and Shirui Lily Silk Stole

ITALY PRESIDENT SERGIO MATTARELLA

Marble Inlay Work Box with Bhimsen Joshi and M S Subbulakshmi music compilations

FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL DR QU DONGYU

Red Rice, Gobindobhog Rice, Basmati Rice, Joha Rice, Kalanamak Rice and Millet Bars
Dutch King Willem-Alexander: Jaipur Blue Pottery

DUTCH QUEEN MAXIMA

Meenakari and Kundan Earrings

DUTCH PM ROB JETTEN

Madhubani Painting with Fish Motif

NORWAY PM JONAS GAHR STORE

Pressed Orchid Painting and Orchid Paperweights



NORWAY QUEEN SONJA

Palm Leaf Pattachitra

NORWAY CROWN PRINCE HAAKON

Palm Leaf Pattachitra

SWEDEN PM ULF KRISTERSSON

Shantiniketan Messenger Bag, Tagore Books, Loktak Tea and Ladakh Wool Stole

SWEDEN CROWN PRINCESS VICTORIA

Gond Painting and PM Modi's book Convenient Action: Continuity for Change



ICELAND PM KRISTRUN FROSTADOTTIR

Replica of Tenzing Norgay's Ice Axe

DENMARK PM METTE FREDERIKSEN

Bidri Silver Work Vase

FINLAND PM PETTERI ORPO

Kamal Talai Pichwai Painting

UAE PRESIDENT MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

Rogan Painting, Kesar Mangoes and Meghalaya Pineapples

UAE CROWN PRINCE

Koftgari Work Dagger and Mithila Makhana

UAE QUEEN MOTHER SHEIKHA FATIMA BINT MUBARAK

Karimnagar Filigree Chest, Maheshwari Silk and Chak Hao Black Rice



Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

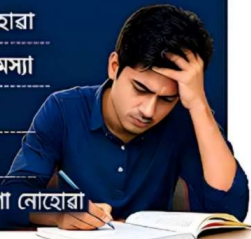
- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation due to that origin; governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999;
- India's GI tags are issued by the Geographical Indications Registry under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce.
- GIs are recognized as an aspect of IPRs under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement.

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IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Mission Arunachal Kiwi

The Union Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has launched “**Mission Arunachal Kiwi: The USP of Arunachal Pradesh**”, a cluster-based initiative to strengthen kiwi cultivation, processing, branding and exports in Arunachal Pradesh.

About Mission Arunachal Kiwi

- The mission was **spearheaded by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** in collaboration with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It has an estimated outlay of **₹167 crore**.
- It follows a **convergence-based approach**, involving the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, NABARD, ICAR–Central Institute for Horticulture, APEDA, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation**, and private investors.
- **Approach:** Cluster-based, convergence-driven model meaning different government schemes and departments are merged into one coordinated effort rather than working in silos.
 - This is called a whole-of-government approach.
- **Six integrated Post-Harvest Management Hubs:** Ziro Valley (Lower Subansiri), Dirang and Kalaktang (West Kameng), Shi Yomi, and Dibang Valley.

Why is it Important?

- **Arunachal Pradesh contributes more than 50% of India’s kiwi production**, producing over **7,000 metric tonnes annually**.
- Despite high production, farmers often face **low price realization, distress sales, inadequate storage facilities, and limited market access**.

Key Objectives

- The mission aims to develop a **globally competitive organic kiwi value chain**.
- It seeks to strengthen **scientific cultivation, post-harvest management, cold storage, processing, branding, traceability and exports**.
- It aims to restore the State’s **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) certification** and position “**Arunachal Organic Kiwi**” as an international brand.
- It also promotes **agri-tourism, farmer producer organizations, and private sector participation**.
- The mission targets the creation of **2,000 metric tonnes of cold-chain capacity**.
- More than **30 strategic interventions** will address gaps from production to marketing.

MDoNER's unique products from all 8 states

North Eastern State	Unique Selling Product (USP)	Key Significance
Arunachal Pradesh	Organic Kiwi (Mission Arunachal Kiwi)	Largest kiwi-producing state in India; focus on organic cultivation, value addition, branding and exports.
Assam	Muga Silk (Golden Silk)	World's only naturally golden silk; Geographical Indication-tagged product and symbol of Assamese heritage.
Manipur	Polo Heritage / Chak Hao (Black Rice)	Birthplace of modern polo; Chak Hao is a Geographical Indication-tagged aromatic black rice with high nutritional value.
Meghalaya	Lakadong Turmeric	Famous for exceptionally high curcumin content (7–12%); major export-oriented spice crop.
Mizoram	Ginger	Known for high-quality ginger cultivation; important cash crop supporting rural livelihoods.
Nagaland	Coffee	Emerging specialty coffee hub with organic and shade-grown coffee gaining international recognition.
Sikkim	Organic Farming	India's first and only 100% organic state ; global model for sustainable agriculture.

Tripura	Queen Pineapple / Bamboo Crafts	Renowned for sweet, fibreless Geographical Indication-tagged pineapple and rich bamboo-based handicraft tradition.
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Tani Lipi

Tony Koyu, inventor of **Tani Lipi**, has been selected for the **Luminous Lummer Dai Literary Award 2026** for his outstanding contribution to literature and language preservation in Arunachal Pradesh.

What is Tani Lipi?

- **Tani Lipi** is the **first and only indigenous script developed** for the **Tani tribes** of **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- It was **spearheaded and developed by Tony Koyu**, a noted writer, linguist and cultural activist.
- The script was created to provide a common writing system for several **Tani language groups**, including **Galo, Adi, Nyishi, Apatani, Tagin and Mishing** communities.
- The term “**Tani**” refers to a group of ethnically and culturally related tribes tracing their ancestry to the legendary ancestor **Abo Tani**.
- Tani Lipi is a **left-to-right alphabetic script** — written in the same direction as English
- It consists of **26 specially designed letters** which have sounds that standard scripts like Devanagari or Latin cannot accurately represent.
- The script is **not derived from or related** to any existing writing system, though some letters visually resemble Bengali or Latin letters.

Steps Taken to Promote Tani Lipi

- It is **digitally enabled** — Tani Lipi works on computers and smartphones; a dedicated Tani Lipi typing app is available on the Google Play Store (launched December 2023).
- The script was **first presented publicly at a seminar at the North Eastern Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST)**, Naharlagun in November 2001
- It was subsequently **introduced in the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 2007**.
- **Echo of Arunachal**, the **state's first newspaper**, promoted and published content in Tani Lipi for four years — giving the script early mainstream visibility and legitimacy.
- The tele-film “**The Last Hope**”, which explains Tani Lipi and its significance, has been telecasting on Doordarshan Kendra (DDK) and North East TV since 2005.

Objectives of Tani Lipi

- The script aims to **preserve indigenous languages, oral traditions, folklore and cultural identity**.
- It seeks to reduce dependence on external scripts and strengthen linguistic self-reliance.
- It promotes the documentation of tribal literature, history and traditional knowledge for future generations.

About Tony Koyu

- He is an **indigenous social scientist** from Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh who **created Tani Lipi** in 2000 after years of deep research into the phonetic structure of Tani languages.
- He has **authored more than five books**, including novels and philosophical texts in the Galo language and the Adi language using Tani Lipi, as well as a novel in Hindi.
- He is the **Founding Vice-President of the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS)**, the body that has now honoured him with the Luminous Lummer Dai Literary Award 2026.
- **Awards received:** Bharat Jyoti Award, Sanskar Bharati Award, Penguin Publication Award, and felicitation by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister for contributions to Tani language and culture.
- He has also **founded the Tony Koyu Foundation Pvt. Ltd**, a not-for-profit entity dedicated to systematically digitising and promoting Tani Lipi across schools, universities, and government institutions.

Luminous Lummer Dai Literary Award

- It is regarded as the **only state-level literary award in Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The award is named after **Lummer Dai**, one of Arunachal Pradesh’s most celebrated literary figures and pioneers of modern literature in the state.

One-Line Wrap

Tani Lipi is a landmark indigenous script initiative that strengthens linguistic preservation, cultural identity and literary development among the Tani tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

Ranjeet Kumar Dass Re-Elected Speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly

Ranjeet Kumar Dass, a four-time legislator from Bhowanipur-Sorbhog, has been unanimously elected as the **22nd Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly**, becoming the **first person in Assam's history to serve a second term as Speaker**.

Key Highlights

- The election took place during the first session of the **16th Assam Legislative Assembly**.
- Dass had earlier served as Speaker from **June 2016 to January 2017**.
- A former journalist, teacher and Indian Information Service officer, he entered politics in 2005.

A Landmark for Linguistic Diversity

- The newly constituted **126-member Assembly** created history by allowing Members of the Legislative Assembly to take oath in their **mother tongues**.
- Oaths were administered in Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, English, Sanskrit and several indigenous languages such as **Karbi, Rabha and Rajbongshi**.
- This was the first time legislators were permitted to take oath in languages beyond the **22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution.

Constitutional Position of the Speaker

- **Article 178** mandates every State Legislative Assembly to elect a **Speaker and Deputy Speaker** from among its members.
- The Speaker is the **presiding officer of the Assembly** and ensures smooth functioning of House proceedings.
- The Speaker:
 - Maintains order and discipline in the House.
 - Decides whether a Bill is a **Money Bill**.
 - Acts as the final authority on Assembly rules and procedures.
 - Decides disqualification cases under the **Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law)**.
 - Exercises a **casting vote** in case of a tie.

SPEAKERS OF ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY - SINCE 1937

Assam Province				
Sl.	Name	Took office	Left office	
1	Babu Basanta Kumar Das	7 April 1937	11 March 1946	
2	Debeswar Sarmah	12 March 1946	10 October 1947	
3	Laksheswar Borooh (INC)	5 November 1947	3 March 1952	

Assam State				
Sl.	Name	Took office	Left office	Political Party
1	Kuladhar Chaliha	5 March 1952	7 June 1957	Indian National Congress
2	Devakanta Barua	8 June 1957	15 September 1959	Indian National Congress
3	Mahendra Mohan Choudhury	9 December 1959	19 March 1967	Indian National Congress
4	Hareswar Goswami	20 March 1967	10 May 1968	Indian National Congress
5	Mahi Kanta Das	27 August 1968	21 March 1972	Indian National Congress
6	Ramesh Chandra Barooah	22 March 1972	20 March 1978	Indian National Congress
7	Jogendra Nath Hazarika	21 March 1978	4 September 1979	Janata Party
8	Sheikh Chand Mohammad	7 November 1979	7 January 1986	Indian National Congress
9	Pulakesh Barua	9 January 1986	27 July 1991	Asom Gana Parishad
10	Jiba Kanta Gogoi	29 July 1991	9 December 1992	Indian National Congress
11	Debesh Chandra Chakravorty	21 December 1992	11 June 1996	Indian National Congress
12	Ganesh Kutum	12 June 1996	24 May 2001	Asom Gana Parishad
13	Prithibi Majhi	30 May 2001	19 May 2006	Indian National Congress
14	Tanka Bahadur Rai	29 May 2006	19 May 2011	Indian National Congress
15	Pranab Kumar Gogoi	6 June 2011	19 May 2016	Indian National Congress
16	Ranjit Kumar Das	1 June 2016	30 January 2017	Bharatiya Janata Party
17	Hitendra Nath Goswami	30 January 2017	20 May 2021	Bharatiya Janata Party
18	Biswajit Daimary	21 May 2021	May 2026	Bharatiya Janata Party

Chandrayaan-3 Receives Prestigious Goddard Astronautics Award 2026

India's **Chandrayaan-3 mission** has been awarded the prestigious **2026 Goddard Astronautics Award** by the **American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)** for its groundbreaking achievements in lunar exploration.

Key Highlights

- The award was presented at the **AIAA ASCEND 2026 Conference** in Washington, D.C.
- India's Ambassador to the United States, **Vinay Kwatra**, received the award on behalf of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- Chandrayaan-3 created history on **23 August 2023** by becoming the **first mission to achieve a soft landing near the Moon's South Pole**.

About the Goddard Astronautics Award

- It is the **highest honour in astronautics** conferred by the **American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)**.
- The award commemorates **Robert H. Goddard**, regarded as the father of modern rocketry.
- It recognizes exceptional achievements in space science, technology, and exploration.

Other Major Honours Received by Chandrayaan-3

- **IAF World Space Award (2024)**: Conferred by the **International Astronautical Federation** for the mission's remarkable success and cost-effective engineering.
- **Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (2024)**: India's highest science award, presented to the Chandrayaan-3 team on **National Space Day**.

Rupamoni Gorh Becomes First Woman from Assam to Scale Mount Everest

Why in News?

Rupamoni Gorh, a young mountaineer from Assam, has created history by becoming the **first woman from Assam to successfully scale Mount Everest**, the world's highest mountain peak.

Key Highlights

- Rupamoni Gorh reached the summit of **Mount Everest (8,848.86 metres)** on **21 May 2026**.
- She achieved the feat as part of an **11-member all-women expedition team** of the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force**.
- The expedition was organised under the **"Nari Shakti Vandan"** initiative of the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- The team was led by **Deputy Commandant Bhanita Timungpi**, a native of Assam and an experienced mountaineer.

About Rupamoni Gorh

- She hails from **Lilabari in Lakhimpur district, Assam**.
- Born into a farmer's family, she overcame limited resources through determination and hard work.
- Her father, **Joysing Gorh**, is a farmer, while her mother, **Kamalawati**, serves as an Anganwadi assistant.
- A graduate in Arts, she joined the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force** in 2020 and continued pursuing her passion for mountaineering.

About Mount Everest

- **Mount Everest** is the highest mountain in the world, located in the **Himalayas** on the border between **Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China**.
- Its officially recognised height is **8,848.86 metres**.
- It is known as **Sagarmatha** in Nepal and **Chomolungma** in Tibet.



Exam Facts

- **Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force** was established in **1962** and functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- It is responsible for guarding India's border with Tibet and promoting high-altitude mountaineering activities.

Kaziranga Records First Yellow-Throated Marten

A **Yellow-Throated Marten (*Martes flavigula*)** has been recorded for the first time in **Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve**, Assam, during routine camera-trapping conducted by the Kaziranga Tiger Cell.

About the Discovery

- The sighting confirms the presence of this **mesopredator** in the semi-evergreen forest patches of Kaziranga.
- The discovery highlights the rich biodiversity and ecological health of the protected area.
- The species was photographed during wildlife monitoring under the park's conservation programme.

About Yellow-Throated Marten (*Martes flavigula*)

- It belongs to the **Mustelidae family**, which is a diverse family of carnivorous mammals, including weasels, stoats, badgers, otters, martens, grisons, and wolverines.
- It is the **largest marten species in Asia**.
- It is a **diurnal (day-active)** and **arboreal (tree-climbing)** carnivore.
- It is an **omnivorous species**, feeding on small mammals, birds, fruits, and carrion.
- Unlike other mustelids, martens are **highly social** and often **hunt in pairs or groups**.
- It is known for its **bold, aggressive and fearless behaviour**, often compared with the honey badger.
- It weighs around **1–2 kilograms** and has a **distinctive yellow-orange throat and chest**.
- **Distribution:** Found across the **Himalayan region**, Northeast India, Southeast Asia, China, Korea and parts of Russia.
 - In India, it occurs in forested habitats of the **Eastern Himalayas and Northeastern States**.
- **Ecological Importance:** It plays an important role in maintaining ecosystem balance.
 - It acts as a **seed disperser**, helping forest regeneration.
 - It controls populations of small mammals, birds, insects and reptiles.
 - As a **mesopredator**, it occupies an intermediate position in the food chain below apex predators such as tigers and leopards.
- **Conservation Status**
 - **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972:** Protected under **Schedule II**.
 - **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern.

About Kaziranga National Park

- Located in **Assam** along the floodplains of the **Brahmaputra River** across the districts of **Nagaon, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong, Sonitpur and Biswanath districts**.
- Located in **Assam** Bounded by the **Brahmaputra River** in the north/east and **Karbi Anglong Hills** in the south.
- Lies within the **Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspot**.

- **National Highway 715** (earlier NH-37) passes along the park landscape.

Major Rivers & Wetlands

- Important rivers: **Brahmaputra, Diphlu (Difalu), Mora Diphlu and Mora Dhansiri.**
- Contains numerous **beels (wetlands)** and oxbow lakes.

Administrative Ranges

- **Central Range** (Kohora), **Western Range** (Bagori), **Eastern Range** (Agaratoli), **Burapahar Range** (Ghorakati), **Northern Range** (Biswanath).

Major Fauna (Big Five of Kaziranga)

- **Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros:** Hosts the world's largest population of the **One-Horned Rhinoceros.**
- **Royal Bengal Tiger:** Recorded the **third-highest tiger density** in India after Bandipur Tiger Reserve and Corbett National Park,
- **Wild Water Buffalo:** Home to the largest population of wild water buffalo in the world.
- **Asian Elephant**
- **Eastern Swamp Deer (Barasingha)**

Other Important Species

- **Ganges River Dolphin, Hoolock Gibbon, Capped Langur**
- Recently recorded sighting of **Smew bird & Gharial.**
- A new orchid hybrid named “**Seujia Kaziranga**” has been developed.

Conservation Significance

- Holds around **two-thirds of the world's Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros population.**
- Also designated as an **Important Bird Area** and biodiversity hotspot.
 - Kaziranga is located at the **geographical intersection** of the **Australasia** and **Indo-Asian migratory bird flyways.**
- One of India's most important **Tiger Reserves.**
- Habitat for **9 of India's 14 primate species.**

Important Timeline

- **1905:** Proposed Reserve Forest.
- **1916:** Kaziranga Game Sanctuary.
- **1950:** Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **1974:** Declared a **National Park.**
- **1985:** Designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- **2007:** Declared a **Tiger Reserve.**

Project Sampoorna Strengthens Women's Health and Well-being in Assam

The **Deepjyoti India Foundation**, under **Project Sampoorna**, recently conducted its third **health and wellness session** for women at **Bonda, Assam**, focusing on preventive healthcare, mental well-being and community support.

About Project Sampoorna

- **Project Sampoorna** is a community-based initiative aimed at improving the **physical, mental and social well-being of women** through regular health interventions and awareness programmes.
- The project seeks to promote **preventive healthcare**, early diagnosis of diseases, mental health support and community empowerment.
- It is being implemented by **Deepjyoti India Foundation** in collaboration with the **Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM).**

Key Highlights of the Initiative

- Nearly **90 per cent of returning beneficiaries** reported noticeable improvements in their health and overall well-being within three months of participation.
- The programme focused on **six-month preventive healthcare plans**, mental health awareness and community support mechanisms.
- Medicines for **anaemia**, a major public health concern among women, were distributed.
- Women requiring **Electrocardiogram (ECG)** and **ultrasound investigations** were identified for further medical assistance and follow-up care.
- Special counselling sessions were conducted to address issues related to **family stress, emotional well-being and personal challenges.**

One-Line Wrap

Project Sampoorna demonstrates how community-led healthcare initiatives can improve women's physical health, mental well-being and social empowerment in rural Assam.

IIT Guwahati Develops ‘4D Anti-Counterfeiting’ Technology to Combat Fake Currency and Forged Documents

Researchers at **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati** have developed an advanced **light-emitting perovskite nanomaterial** that can create highly secure authentication patterns for protecting banknotes, official documents, medicines, and branded products from counterfeiting.

What is the Innovation?

- The research team has developed **perovskite nanocrystals**, ultra-small crystalline materials with exceptional optical and electronic properties.
- These nanocrystals produce **highly pure and intense colours** with unique optical signatures that are difficult to replicate.
- The findings have been published in the **Advanced Optical Materials** journal.

How Does the Technology Work?

- Researchers created a **double-layer protective coating** around the nanocrystals to make them resistant to moisture, heat, and chemicals.
- Using a **direct laser writing technique**, they generated microscopic patterns capable of storing and revealing encoded information.
- Unlike conventional security labels, the developed material changes its behaviour when exposed to specific heat or chemical treatments.

What is ‘4D Anti-Counterfeiting’?

- The research team has termed this approach “**4D Anti-Counterfeiting**.”
- It combines:
 - **Three-dimensional physical patterns**, and
 - **A fourth dimension of dynamic response**, where the material behaves differently under controlled environmental conditions.
- A counterfeiter would need to copy both the visible pattern and its unique response to heat and chemicals, making duplication extremely difficult.

Significance

- The technology can strengthen security against:
 - **Fake currency notes**
 - **Forged identity documents**
 - **Counterfeit pharmaceuticals**
 - **Fake electronic products and luxury goods**
- It also has potential applications in **secure data storage**, **micro-LED displays**, **wearable devices**, and **Augmented Reality (AR) systems**.

Key Scientific Terms

- **Perovskite Nanocrystals**: Advanced crystalline materials known for excellent light-emitting properties.
- **Nanometre**: One-billionth of a metre; about 100,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair.
- **Direct Laser Writing**: A high-precision technique used to create microscopic patterns without conventional masks.
- **Micro-LED Display**: A next-generation display technology offering higher brightness and energy efficiency.
- **Augmented Reality (AR)**: Technology that overlays digital information onto the real world.

One-Line Wrap

IIT Guwahati’s ‘4D Anti-Counterfeiting’ technology represents a major step towards secure authentication systems by combining advanced nanomaterials, laser engineering, and smart optical responses.

Second Phase of Brahmaputra Riverfront Development Project

The **second phase of the Brahmaputra Riverfront Development Project** is expected to begin soon, with **Guwahati Smart City Limited (GSCL)** initiating preparations related to budget allocation, environmental clearances and necessary approvals.

About the Brahmaputra Riverfront Development Project

- The project is being implemented by **Guwahati Smart City Limited (GSCL)** under the broader framework of the **Smart Cities Mission**, launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It aims to transform the banks of the **Brahmaputra River** into a modern public space while promoting tourism, recreation and sustainable urban development.

- The project seeks to improve the city's relationship with the river through enhanced public access, beautification and ecological conservation.

Key Features of the Project

- The proposed riverfront development covers a **6.3-kilometre stretch** from **Raj Bhawan to Chakreshwar Temple**.
- The **first phase**, covering about **1.2 kilometres**, has already been completed at an estimated cost of **₹327 crore**.
- The upcoming phase will pass through culturally and religiously significant sites, including the **Sukreswar Temple**, requiring careful planning and environmental assessment.

Expected Benefits

- The project is expected to create a major **recreational and tourism hub** in Guwahati.
- It will provide facilities for walking, jogging, cultural activities and public gatherings along the riverbank.
- Improved urban infrastructure can boost local businesses and strengthen Guwahati's position as the gateway to Northeast India.

One-Line Wrap

The **Brahmaputra Riverfront Development Project** represents a major step towards sustainable urban transformation in Guwahati, balancing tourism, heritage conservation and environmental protection.

Assam Assembly Passes Resolution Supporting 33% Reservation for Women in Legislatures

The **Assam Legislative Assembly** has passed a resolution supporting the implementation of **33 per cent reservation for women** in the **Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies**, in line with the provisions of the **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023**.

Key Highlights

- The resolution was introduced by **Women and Child Development Minister Ajanta Neog**.
- It seeks the **early implementation** of women's reservation after the completion of the next **Census** and subsequent **delimitation exercise**, as mandated under the law.
- Assam has joined several other states in formally supporting the operationalisation of women's reservation in legislatures.

About Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023

- It is the **106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023**.
- It provides **33% reservation for women** in:
 - The **Lok Sabha**.
 - **State Legislative Assemblies**.
 - The **Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi**.
- Reservation will also apply within seats reserved for **Scheduled Castes** and **Scheduled Tribes**.
- The reservation will come into effect only after:
 - The first **Census conducted after the commencement of the Act**, and
 - A subsequent **delimitation exercise**.

One-Line Wrap

The Assam Assembly's resolution reinforces support for the **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**, aiming to enhance women's political representation and strengthen inclusive democracy in India.

Major Abhilasha Barak Receives United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award 2025

Major Abhilasha Barak of the Indian Army has been selected for the prestigious **United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award 2025** for her outstanding contribution to gender inclusion and community engagement during a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Lebanon.

Key Highlights

- Major Abhilasha Barak is currently serving with the **Indian Battalion** in the **United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)**.
- She serves as the **Commander of the Female Engagement Team (FET)**, which works closely with local women and communities in conflict-affected areas.
- She has been recognised for:
 - Promoting meaningful engagement with **women and adolescent girls**.
 - Conducting **gender-sensitisation training** for peacekeepers.

- Strengthening trust between local communities and United Nations peacekeeping forces.
- She will receive the award at the **United Nations Headquarters, New York**, during the observance of the **International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers (29 May)**.

About the Award

- The **United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award** was instituted in **2016** by the **Office of Military Affairs** under the **Department of Peace Operations**.
- The award recognises military peacekeepers who effectively advance the principles of **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security**.
- It highlights the importance of integrating a **gender perspective** into peacekeeping operations.

Why is this Achievement Significant?

- Major Abhilasha Barak is the **third Indian peacekeeper** to receive this honour after **Major Suman Gawani (2019)** and **Major Radhika Sen (2023)**.
- She is also known as the **first woman combat helicopter pilot of the Indian Army**.
- The award reflects India's growing contribution to **United Nations peacekeeping missions** and women's leadership in security and defence.

About UNIFIL

- The **United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)** was established in **1978**.
- It operates under the authority of the **United Nations Security Council**.
- Its objectives include maintaining peace along the Lebanon-Israel border and supporting humanitarian and security efforts.

IIT Guwahati's Breakthrough Coating for Affordable Green Hydrogen Production

Researchers at **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati** have developed an innovative electrode coating technology that significantly improves the efficiency and durability of **green hydrogen** production through solar-powered water splitting.

What is Innovation?

- The research has been published in the journal **Small**.
- It focuses on **Photo-Assisted Electrochemical Water Splitting**, a process that uses sunlight to split water into **hydrogen** and **oxygen**.
- Green hydrogen produced through this method can help decarbonise sectors such as **steel, fertilisers, refining and heavy transport**.

Key Challenge Addressed

Conventional solar water-splitting systems face two major problems:

- **Catalyst Delamination:** Catalyst coatings gradually peel off from electrodes, reducing efficiency and lifespan.
- **Gas Bubble Accumulation:** Hydrogen and oxygen bubbles stick to electrode surfaces, blocking active sites and lowering output.

How Does New Technology Work?

- Researchers developed a **composite coating** using:
 - **Graphitic Carbon Nitride** (a two-dimensional photocatalyst).
 - **Bubble-repellent Hydrogel**.
 - **Porous Nickel Foam** substrate.
- Unlike conventional methods, the photocatalyst is **embedded within the coating structure**, improving adhesion and stability.
- The design enables faster bubble release, keeping catalytic surfaces active.

Major Outcomes

- The technology achieved:
 - **51% higher hydrogen production**.
 - **44% higher oxygen production** compared to conventional systems.
- It enhances system durability and can reduce the cost of green hydrogen generation.

One-Line Wrap

IIT Guwahati's new composite coating technology marks a significant step towards making green hydrogen production more efficient, durable and affordable, supporting India's clean energy transition.

Amur Falcons Complete Record Migration from Manipur to Africa

Three satellite-tagged Amur falcons from Manipur have successfully reached Africa under Phase II of a scientific tracking project.

More About the News

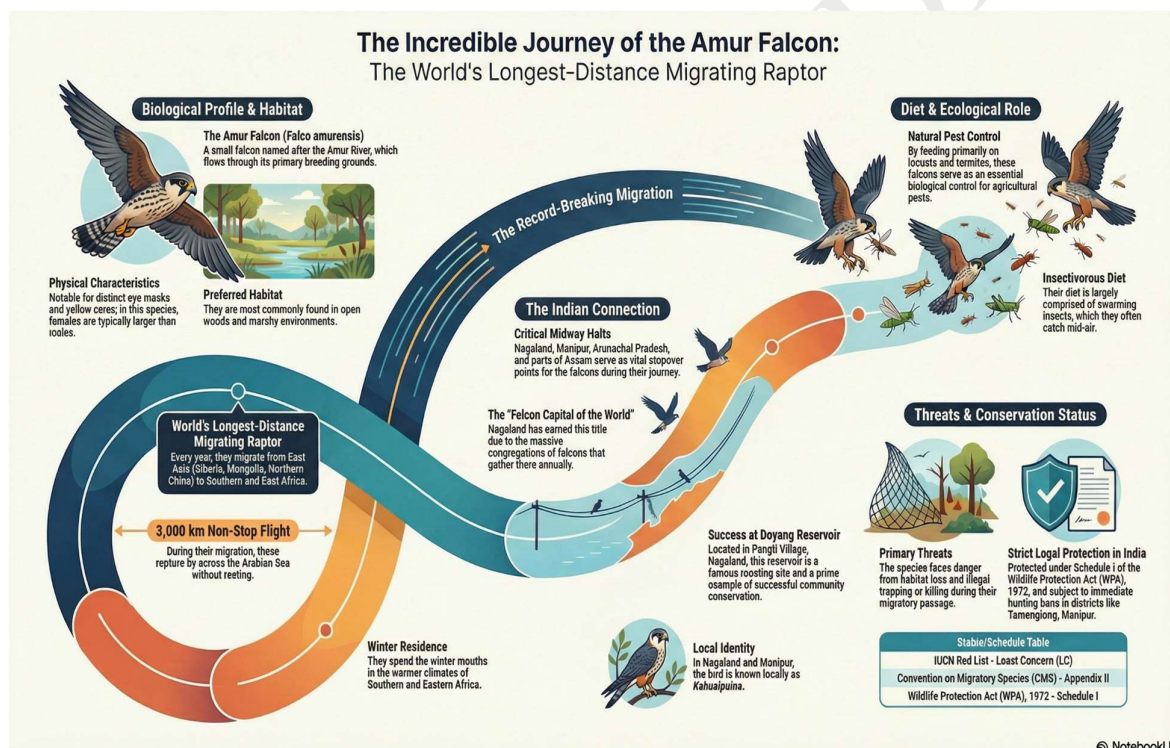
- Under **Phase II of the Manipur Amur Falcon Tracking Project**, three Amur falcons — Ahu, Alang and Apapang — tagged in November 2025 have completed their migration to Africa within nine to ten days.
- The tagging exercise was carried out by the **Forest Department, Manipur**, in collaboration with the **Wildlife Institute of India**, Dehradun, at Chiuluan village in Tamenglong district.

As per the latest satellite data:

- **Ahu** is in Somalia
- **Apapang** is in Zimbabwe
- **Alang** is in Botswana

About Amur Falcons

- Scientific name: **Falco amurensis**
- Breed in eastern Russia and northern China
- Migrate annually to southern Africa, covering nearly **20,000 km**
- Known for crossing the Arabian Sea in a non-stop flight



Project Details

- **Operates under:** State Forest Department with scientific support from the **Wildlife Institute of India**
- **Spearheaded by:** Forest Department, Manipur
- **Objective:**
 - Track migratory routes
 - Study behaviour and stopover sites
 - Strengthen conservation strategy
- Protected under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**

The project highlights how scientific monitoring can aid international bird conservation, especially after past incidents of mass hunting in Northeast India.

One line wrap:

The Amur Falcon tracking project reflects how science, conservation and community efforts can protect one of the world's longest migratory birds.

Rare Eurasian Diving Duck Spotted in Kaziranga

The seventh waterbird count (January 4–11, 2026) at Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve recorded a rare winter migrant — the Smew (*Mergellus albellus*), a striking diving duck from the Eurasian taiga breeding grounds.

- This is the first recorded sighting of the species in the Kaziranga landscape.

About the Smew

- A rare winter visitor to India, usually seen in northern wetlands.
- Males have a **black-masked white body**, while females are mottled brown.
- Prefers **fish-rich, sheltered wetlands**.
- Global population: ~1,30,000 (declining due to habitat loss and pollution).

Its presence in Kaziranga's Rowmari and Donduwa beels (Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary) signals healthy wetland ecosystems but also raises concerns about **climate-driven range shifts**.

Census Highlights

- **1,05,540 waterbirds** recorded.
- **107 species** documented across **166 wetlands**.
- **Highest concentration** (about 50,000 birds) was recorded in the **Beelmari** and **Dandua wetlands** of Kaziranga.
- Top abundant species: **Bar-headed Goose, Northern Pintail, Lesser Whistling Duck**.
- Top five wetlands by count were **Laokhowa's Rowmari Beel** (15,661 birds), **Donduwa Beel** (14,469), **Katakhal** (4,979), **Sohola** (3,612), and **Khalihamari** (3,463).
- Top five wetlands by diversity were **Rowmari** (77 species), **Donduwa** (71), **Sohola** (69), **Kawoimari-Bhoisamari-Diffulo** (57), and **Ververy** (53).
- **IUCN status in count:** 1 Critically Endangered, 1 Endangered, 2 Vulnerable and 14 Near Threatened.
 - Endangered species such as *Leptoptilos dubius* (66) and *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (61) were also recorded.
 - Vulnerable species such as Lesser Adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) (257)
 - Near threatened species, including Ferruginous Pochard (*Aythya nyroca*) (5,594) and Oriental Darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*) (1,102) were also recorded.

Kaziranga landscape (1,302 sq. km.) includes **Important Bird Areas (IBAs)** such as Kaziranga, Laokhowa and Burhachapori.

Conservation Significance

- Highlights importance of **wetland conservation under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- Supports India's commitment under the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**.
- Reinforces the role of floodplain ecosystems for migratory birds along the **Central Asian Flyway**.

The slight decline in bird numbers compared to 2025 underlines vulnerability to **climate change, habitat degradation, and encroachment**.

One-line Wrap:

The rare Smew's arrival in Kaziranga reflects both wetland resilience and emerging climate signals in Northeast India.

MILAN 2026

The **13th edition of Exercise MILAN 2026** concluded aboard **INS Vikrant** in **Visakhapatnam**, marking a significant milestone in India's growing maritime diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region.

About Exercise MILAN

- A **biennial multilateral naval exercise** hosted by the **Indian Navy**.
- First conducted in **1995**; now a major Indo-Pacific naval engagement.
- **Objective:** Deepen professional relationships, enhance operational compatibility, and promote a shared understanding of contemporary maritime challenges.
- Theme (2026): **"Camaraderie, Cohesion and Collaboration."**
- **Participation** (2026): **74 countries**, making it the **largest and most inclusive edition**.
- Conducted under India's **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)** vision.
- 2026 edition **conducted under** the aegis of the **Eastern Naval Command**, headquartered in Visakhapatnam.

- Conducted in two phases of MILAN: **Harbour Phase & Sea Phase.**

The exercise ran concurrently with the **International Fleet Review (IFR)** and the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs**, enhancing strategic dialogue.

MILAN reflects India's increasing diplomatic outreach through **naval diplomacy and defence cooperation.**

One-line Wrap:

Exercise MILAN 2026 showcased India's maritime leadership and strengthened naval cooperation across the Indo-Pacific.

Assam Faces Severe Winter Rainfall Deficit Amid Climate Change Signals

Assam has witnessed an alarming **rainfall deficit of over 70 per cent since November** and nearly **99 per cent since January 1**, marking one of the driest winters in recent years.

- In at least **25 districts**, no rainfall has been recorded since the beginning of the year, while several others reported deficits above 90 per cent.

Key Climate Observations

- **Unusually warm winter** conditions across the State.
- In Upper Assam, **maximum temperatures were up to 7°C above normal** on certain days.
- Slight improvement in the last few days due to isolated showers.
- Rainfall activity is expected to increase in early March.

Why It Matters

Assam's agriculture is highly dependent on **pre-monsoon and monsoon rainfall**, with nearly 90 per cent of annual rainfall concentrated in these seasons. Reduced winter rainfall directly affects:

- **Rabi crops** such as mustard and pulses.
- Soil moisture and groundwater recharge.
- Wetlands and biodiversity.

Repeated winter dry spells indicate a possible **climate change pattern**, consistent with rising temperature trends observed by the **India Meteorological Department** and global climate assessments under the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**.

Experts warn that erratic rainfall combined with warming trends may intensify both droughts and floods in the Brahmaputra basin.

One-line Wrap:

Assam's severe winter rainfall deficit highlights growing climate vulnerability and the urgent need for adaptive water management.

Zubeen Garg Posthumously Honoured at Filmfare Awards Assamese

- Renowned Assamese singer, composer and filmmaker **Zubeen Garg** was posthumously conferred three prestigious honours at the **Filmfare Awards Assamese**. The awards included:
 - **Best Playback Singer (Male)**
 - **Lifetime Achievement Award**
 - **Special Honour** for his contribution to the film *Roi Roi Binale*
- The ceremony was organised in association with the Jeevan Ram Mungi Devi Goenka Public Charitable Trust.
- His wife, Garima Saikia Garg, received the awards on behalf of the family.
- The **Lifetime Achievement Award** recognised his decades-long dedication to music and cinema, while the playback award highlighted his artistic excellence in his final works.

One line wrap:

Zubeen Garg's posthumous honours celebrate a legacy that strengthened Assamese identity while enriching India's cultural landscape.

Strengthening Inland Water Transport in Northeast India

The Union minister of ports, shipping and waterways has inaugurated three major infrastructure projects along the **Brahmaputra River**.

About the Projects

- The projects include:
 - **Customs and Immigration Complex at Bogibeel**
 - **Customs and Immigration Complex at Dhubri**
 - **Renovated Inland Waterways Authority of India Heritage Building at Dibrugarh**
- These facilities operate under the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**, which functions under the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.
- They are developed along **National Waterway-2 (NW-2)**, declared under the **National Waterways Act, 2016**.
- These projects are **expected to reduce logistics costs, strengthen cross-border trade, and reinforce the Brahmaputra's role as a sustainable economic corridor** for the entire Northeast.

Strategic Importance

- **Bogibeel terminal**: Developed as a **modern tourist-cum-cargo facility** integrating customs, immigration and Inland Waterways Authority of India administrative functions in one complex.
 - It is aimed at improving efficiency and facilitating trade under the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route.
- **Dhubri complex**: Enhances export-import activities, positioning Dhubri as a strategic gateway for cross-border trade with **Bangladesh and Bhutan**.
- **Dibrugarh heritage building**: Combines administrative functions with cultural tourism promotion.

Key Objectives

- **Strengthen trade and logistics** along the Brahmaputra.
- Facilitate **cross-border trade** under the **Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade**.
- Reduce logistics costs and improve **multimodal connectivity**.
- Promote **river tourism and cruise operations**.
- Ensure streamlined customs and immigration processes for cargo and passengers.

India has declared **111 National Waterways**, including **20 in the Northeast**, with NW-2 being one of the most active. This initiative aligns with the government's broader vision of transforming waterways into engines of growth under sustainable development principles.

One-line wrap: The Brahmaputra is steadily emerging as a strategic economic corridor driving trade, connectivity and regional growth in the Northeast.

Assam Signs MoU with AAI for Five New Greenfield Airports

Assam has signed a MoU with the Airports Authority of India to explore setting up **five new greenfield airports**.

- In a major push to strengthen its **aviation infrastructure**, the Government of Assam has signed a **MoU** with the **Airports Authority of India** to conduct **pre-feasibility studies** for five proposed **greenfield airports**.
- The five identified locations are: **Manas, Umrangso, Charaideo, Diphu and Majuli**.
- The agreement was signed between the State Transport Department and the Airports Authority of India.
- The **Chief Minister** stated that these locations hold strategic importance in terms of **tourism, economic development, and national security**.

What is a Greenfield Airport?

A **greenfield airport** is a new airport built from scratch on undeveloped land, unlike brownfield airports which involve expansion of existing facilities.

Why is this important?

- **Regional Connectivity**: The move aligns with the Government of India's **Regional Connectivity Scheme (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik)**, which aims to improve air connectivity to underserved regions.
- **Tourism Boost**: Locations like Manas (near Manas National Park) and Majuli (river island) have high tourism potential.
- **Strategic Importance**: Border and hill areas such as Diphu and Umrangso enhance connectivity in sensitive regions.
- **Economic Growth**: Better air connectivity attracts investment, trade, and employment opportunities.

Current Aviation Growth in Assam

- Guwahati is being developed as a **regional aviation hub**.
- Passenger traffic at **Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport** has crossed **17 lakh annually**.
- Increased air traffic is also reported at Dibrugarh.
- Approval has been received for setting up a **Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul facility** at Guwahati airport, which will support aircraft servicing and generate skilled jobs.

One-line wrap: Assam's plan for five greenfield airports signals a major step toward turning the Northeast into a connected aviation growth hub.

India–Philippines Parliamentary Friendship Group

In a significant move to deepen legislative diplomacy, **Gaurav Gogoi**, Member of Parliament from Jorhat and Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, has been nominated as President of the **India–Philippines Parliamentary Friendship Group** by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

- The group is part of a broader initiative led by **Om Birla**, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, to constitute **Parliamentary Friendship Groups (PFGs)**.

Parliamentary Friendship Groups (PFGs)

- They are formal platforms constituted by the Lok Sabha to enhance **Parliament-to-Parliament engagement** between India and other countries.
- These **groups bring together MPs** from across political parties, reflecting India's plural democratic ethos.
- **Key Features**
 - Constituted under the guidance of the **Lok Sabha Speaker**.
 - Headed by senior Members of Parliament from different parties.
 - Established with over **60 countries**, including **Sri Lanka, Germany, United States, Russia, Japan, France, United Kingdom, Australia, South Korea, Vietnam** and others.
 - Complement traditional executive diplomacy conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs.

Objectives

- Facilitate **direct dialogue between lawmakers** of different countries.
- Share **legislative experiences and best practices**.
- Promote cooperation in **trade, technology, social policy, education, culture and global governance issues**.
- Strengthen **mutual trust and people-to-people ties**.

The 11-member group includes Members of Parliament from different political parties, reflecting India's multi-party democratic character.

One-line wrap: The India–Philippines Parliamentary Friendship Group highlights India's growing use of democratic diplomacy to strengthen global partnerships.

Major Boost to Assam's Agriculture & Rural Development

The Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister launched several key initiatives to strengthen Assam's agriculture and rural sectors.

Key Announcements

- Approval of **₹1,819 crore** under **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-IV)** to build **1,522 km of rural roads and 62 bridges**.
- Launch of mobile applications '**Krishi Sarathi**' (Agriculture Department) and '**Rural One**' (Panchayat Department).
- Introduction of social audit module of the AWAS Plus app under **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Gramin (PMAY-G)**.
- Signing of a tripartite **MoU with PepsiCo and State Bank of India** to support potato farmers under the Chief Minister's Utkarsh Yojana.
- Release of **₹120 crore**, including grants and community investment funds to Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

Significance

- **PMGSY** enhances rural connectivity, improving market access for farmers.
- Strengthening **Farmer Producer Organisations** boosts collective bargaining power.

- Promotion of horticulture, drones and digital monitoring supports modern agriculture.
- Tea industry revival, with additional 40 million kilograms exported, strengthens Assam's global presence.
- Land rights to tea garden workers promote social justice and rural stability.

These measures align with the goal of **doubling farmers' income and promoting self-reliant rural growth**.

One-line wrap: The new initiatives mark a decisive step towards digitally empowered, well-connected and farmer-centric rural development in Assam.

Manipuri Film Boong Wins BAFTA for Best Children's & Family Film

The Manipuri coming-of-age film **Boong** won the prestigious **Best Children's & Family Film** award at the **British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards 2026** in London.

About the Film

- The film is **directed by debutant Lakshmipriya Devi** and **produced by Farhan Akhtar's Excel Entertainment** along with **Ritesh Sidhwani** and **Alan McAlex**.
- At the ceremony held at the Royal Festival Hall, Devi made an emotional appeal for peace in Manipur, highlighting the plight of internally displaced children.
- The film **stars Gugun Kipgen** and **Bala Hijam** and competed against major international films like *Lilo and Stitch* and *Zootropolis 2*.

Why is this Important?

- BAFTA is one of the **most respected global film institutions**, often considered alongside the Oscars.
 - Officially known as the **EE British Academy Film Awards** since 2013, it is an annual film award show **hosted by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA)** to honour the best British and international film contributions.
- This was the **first Indian film to win a BAFTA award in the Children's and Family Film category**.
- Recognition of a **regional language film from Manipur** enhances India's cultural soft power.
- Highlights themes of childhood, conflict, resilience and forgiveness.
- Demonstrates growing global acceptance of **independent and Northeast Indian cinema**.

The award is not just a cinematic achievement but also a symbolic moment for the Northeast region.

One-line wrap: The BAFTA win of *Boong* marks a proud moment for Manipuri cinema and India's diverse storytelling tradition.

1st North Eastern Region Fish Festival–Assam 2026

The **1st North Eastern Region Fish Festival–Assam 2026** was inaugurated in Guwahati by **North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited**, a Public Sector Undertaking under the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region**.

- The two-day festival aims to promote fisheries development and strengthen market linkages across the Northeast.

Key Highlights

- Technical sessions on **sustainable aquaculture and fish value chains**.
- Exhibition of **value-added fish products** and innovative practices.
- Participation of policymakers, experts, entrepreneurs and fish farmers.
- Cultural programmes showcasing the region's aquatic heritage.

The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development** highlighted its support in promoting **12 Fish Farmer Producer Organizations in Assam**, strengthening organized fisheries.

Significance of Fisheries Development

- Fisheries are a major livelihood source in the Northeast.
- Enhances **market access and income generation** for fish farmers.
- Supports implementation of national initiatives like the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana**, which focuses on sustainable fisheries development.
- Encourages community-based and climate-resilient aquaculture.

The festival marks a first-of-its-kind initiative in the region, creating opportunities for collaboration and inclusive growth in the fisheries sector.

One-line wrap: The Fish Festival reflects the Northeast's growing focus on sustainable aquaculture and farmer-centric market development.

Dulal Roy Honoured with Minoti Chowdhury Memorial Award

Renowned theatre personality and playwright **Dulal Roy** was conferred the **Minoti Chowdhury Memorial Award** at the 18th Singhapurush Radha Govinda Baruah Memorial Theatre Festival held at the **Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium, Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra, Panjabari, Guwahati**.

- The award, instituted by socio-cultural organisation **Jyotirupa** in memory of its patron late Minoti Chowdhury, recognises Roy's **outstanding and lifelong contributions to Assamese theatre and cultural development**.

About the Festival

- The annual full-length drama festival began on **February 24**.
- On the second day, *Sonali Beli*, written and directed by **Jyoti Narayan Nath**, was staged by **Anubhav – The Artist Guild, Guwahati**.
- The concluding play, *Bukur Soru Sorai*, based on a story by **Ujjala Barman** and dramatized by **Amlan Deep Saikia**, will be presented by **Angana, Guwahati**.

Recognition of theatre stalwarts like Dulal Roy reflects the importance of sustaining **regional art forms** in the era of digital entertainment and globalisation.

One-line Wrap:

The honour to Dulal Roy underscores Assam's continuing commitment to nurturing and celebrating its rich theatrical and cultural legacy.

Assam Proposal to Upgrade Four Reserve Forests into Wildlife Sanctuaries

A proposal has been submitted to grant wildlife sanctuary status to four reserve forests in Upper Assam amid concerns over illegal coal mining.

- An environmental activist has urged the Government of Assam to notify **Tirap, Tipong, Saleki and Makumpani Reserve Forests** under the Digboi Forest Division as **Wildlife Sanctuaries**.
- The move aims to protect the ecologically sensitive **Tirap–Tipong forest corridor**, which lies near **Dehing Patkai National Park** (231.65 square kilometres).
- The concern arises due to alleged **rat-hole coal mining** activities in the Jagun, Lekhapani and Margherita forest ranges along the Assam–Arunachal Pradesh border.

Wildlife Sanctuaries in India

- They are established under **Section 18** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, primarily by **State Governments**.
- **Authority: State Governments** (primarily) can declare, alter, or revoke sanctuary boundaries, though the Central Government can also declare them under specific conditions.
- **Classification:** Classified under IUCN Category IV.
- **Protection Level:** Less restrictive than National Parks, with focus on specific species/ecosystems.
- **Management:** Managed by the State Forest Department under the Chief Wildlife Warden.
- **Numbers:** As of 2026, there are 573 wildlife sanctuaries in India, covering approximately 3.76% of the country's total land area.
- **Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary** (Largest), **Kutch Bustard Sanctuary** (Smallest).

Why Sanctuary Status?

- Under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, wildlife sanctuaries receive stronger legal safeguards than reserve forests. Once notified:
 - Mining and extractive activities are strictly regulated or prohibited.
 - Habitat protection for species such as elephants and other wildlife is strengthened.
 - Critical river systems and forest corridors receive statutory backing.
 - Administrative clarity improves in disputed or shifting boundary areas.
- Provided constitutional backing is provided through Article 48A and Article 51A(g).

Ecological Significance

- The forests form part of the **Dehing Patkai landscape**, known for rich biodiversity and elephant corridors.
- The area connects to sensitive border zones, making conservation important for both ecology and governance.
- The Supreme Court in November 2025 directed prohibition of mining within one kilometre of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, reinforcing legal deterrence.

Operates Under:

- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**
- Supreme Court directives on mining near protected areas
- State Forest Department under Assam Government

Objective:

- Prevent illegal mining.
- Strengthen biodiversity conservation.
- Secure forest corridors and river systems.
- Reduce jurisdictional ambiguity in border areas.

One-line wrap: Granting sanctuary status to Upper Assam forests could legally shield fragile ecosystems from illegal mining and strengthen biodiversity conservation.

CBSE Defends On-Screen Marking System for Transparent and Fair Evaluation

The Central Board of Secondary Education clarified concerns regarding the use of the **On-Screen Marking (OSM)** system in Class 12 board examinations after students and parents raised doubts over evaluation and pass percentages.

What is the On-Screen Marking System?

- **On-Screen Marking (OSM)** is a digital evaluation system in which scanned answer sheets are assessed electronically by examiners.
- The system operates under the Ministry of Education and the Central Board of Secondary Education.

Key Features of OSM

- Answer sheets are:
 - Digitally scanned.
 - Uploaded to a secure evaluation platform.
 - Checked electronically by authorised examiners.
- The system aims to ensure:
 - Transparency in evaluation.
 - Uniform marking standards.
 - Faster result processing.
 - Reduced manual errors.

Important Highlights

- The Central Board of Secondary Education stated that:
 - OSM was first introduced in **2014**.
 - It is widely used internationally by boards such as:
 - International Baccalaureate.
 - Cambridge Assessment.
- Nearly **98 lakh answer sheets** were evaluated through OSM this year.
- More than **13,000 answer sheets** with scanning or legibility issues were manually checked.

Advantages of the System

- Examiners can evaluate answer sheets from different locations, improving flexibility.
- Digital monitoring strengthens Security, accountability, and fairness in assessment.
- Students can:
 - Access copies of evaluated answer sheets.
 - Apply for verification and re-evaluation.

Challenges and Concerns

Some concerns raised include:

- Difficulty in reading lightly written answers after scanning.
- Fear of technical errors affecting marks.
- Need for stronger digital infrastructure and examiner training.

The Ministry clarified that additional security and manual verification mechanisms were used to maintain fairness.

One-Line Wrap

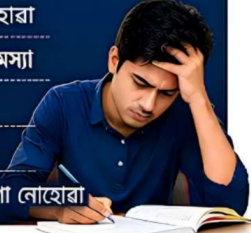
The On-Screen Marking system reflects India's growing shift towards technology-based educational governance aimed at ensuring transparent, efficient, and standardised evaluation processes.

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IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Meghalaya to Host North East India Infrastructure Summit 2026

Meghalaya will host the **North East India Infrastructure Summit and Exhibition (NEINFRA) 2026** on June 11–12 to promote investment, connectivity, and infrastructure-led growth in Northeast India.

Key Highlights of the Summit

- The summit will bring together policymakers, investors, financial institutions and industry leaders.
- Discussions will focus on:
 - Infrastructure development.
 - Regional connectivity.
 - Industrial investment.
 - Economic growth of Northeast India.

Meghalaya Industrial Promotion Policy

- The State government has introduced the **Meghalaya Industrial Promotion Policy** to encourage:
 - Industrial investment.
 - Entrepreneurship.
 - Employment generation.
 - Private sector participation.
- The policy offers:
 - Incentives for investors.
 - Support for infrastructure development.
 - Promotion of business-friendly governance.

Expanding Information Technology Ecosystem

- Meghalaya's first Information Technology Park is reportedly functioning at full capacity.
- A second Information Technology Park is being developed following strong interest from:
 - National companies.
 - Global industry leaders.

One-Line Wrap

The North East India Infrastructure Summit reflects the growing focus on infrastructure, investment, and regional integration as key drivers of economic transformation in Northeast India.

Neglect of Zero Point Park Revives Focus on Stilwell Road Heritage in Assam

Concerns have been raised over the deteriorating condition of **Zero Point Park** at Singri village in Lekhapani under the Margherita Co-District of Assam, a historic site linked to the famous **Stilwell Road** of World War II.

What is Zero Point Park?

- Zero Point Park marks the starting point of the historic **Stilwell Road** project in Northeast India.
- The park was earlier renovated to preserve the memory of this important wartime route and its international historical significance.

About the Stilwell Road

- The Stilwell Road, originally known as the Ledo Road, was constructed during the Second World War by **Allied forces led by the United States**.
- The road was built under the supervision of Joseph Warren Stilwell, after whom it was renamed in 1945.
- It starts from **Ledo** in **Tinsukia** district and extends up to **Kunming** through present-day **Myanmar**.
- The **total length** of the road is approximately **1,736 kilometres**.
- The road passes through **Lekhapani, Jairampur, Nampong, Pangsau Pass, Myitkyina** and **Bhamo** in Myanmar before joining the historic Burma Road towards China.
- Japan captured Burma during World War II, cutting off Allied supply routes to China.
- The road was built to:
 - Supply military equipment and aid to Chinese forces.
 - Maintain Allied operations in the China-Burma-India theatre.
 - Counter Japanese expansion in Southeast Asia.

Historical Importance

- The road played a strategic role during World War II by improving military supply connectivity between India and China.
- It symbolises:
 - International cooperation during wartime.

- Sacrifice of workers and soldiers.
- Shared historical ties between India, the United States, and China.

Present Concerns

- Reports indicate:
 - Damage to boundary walls.
 - Theft of infrastructure materials.
 - Removal of signboards.
 - Vandalism of public facilities.
- Local organisations, including the All Assam Tangsa Student Union, have demanded:
 - Restoration of the park.
 - Better security arrangements.
 - Preservation of the heritage site.

One-Line Wrap

Zero Point Park represents the historic legacy of the Stilwell Road and highlights the importance of preserving Northeast India's wartime heritage and cultural memory.

India's First Satellite-Tagged Ganges Soft-Shell Turtle Released in Kaziranga

India's first satellite-tagged **Ganges soft-shell turtle** was released in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve on the occasion of **Endangered Species Day**, marking a major step in freshwater turtle conservation.

National Endangered Species Day

- **National Endangered Species Day** is celebrated annually on the **third Friday of May**.
- National Endangered Species Day 2026 is **observed on 15 May 2026**.
- The **2026 observance** marks the **21st annual celebration** of a global conservation day focused on threatened and endangered wildlife.
- It **began** as an **annual observance** in the **United States** and is now used for conservation education in several countries.
- The **2026 theme** is "*Celebrating America's Wildlife Comeback Stories. Championing the Endangered Species Act.*"

Key Highlights

- The turtle was fitted with a satellite transmitter and released along the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River.
- The project was carried out by:
 - Wildlife Institute of India
 - Kaziranga National Park authorities.
 - Assam Forest Department.
- The initiative received support from the National Geographic Society.

About the Ganges Soft-Shell Turtle

- Also known as the **Gangetic Softshell Turtle** (*Nilssonina gangetica*), is a **large freshwater reptile**.
- As it is a **freshwater turtle** species, it is **found in large rivers, lakes and reservoirs** mostly in areas with **sandy or muddy bottoms** where they can easily bury themselves.
- Unlike most turtles that have a hard, bony scute, these **belong** to the **family Trionychidae**, characterized by a **leathery shell that lacks a traditional keratinized cover**.
- The species can be identified by the **distinct arrowhead-shaped markings** on the head.
- They are **distributed across Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan**.
- In India they are mainly found in **Indus, Ganges, Meghna, Brahmaputra, Yamuna, Narmada and Mahanandi river basins**.
- They are **omnivorous**, feeding on fish, amphibians, mollusks, insects, carrion and aquatic plants.
- **Threat:** Habitat alteration and destruction, Poaching and illegal trading for traditional medicines, expansion of agriculture, commercial exploitation.

Conservation Status

- Listed as **Endangered** on the **IUCN Red List**.
- Protected under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, which provides the highest level of legal protection in India.

- Listed under **Appendix I** of CITES.

Ecological Importance

- The turtle **acts** as an **important river scavenger** by feeding on dead and decaying animal matter.
- It **helps maintain river ecosystem health, water quality and ecological balance**.

Why Satellite Tagging Matters

- Satellite tracking helps scientists study:
 - Seasonal movement patterns.
 - Nesting and breeding habitats.
 - Migration behaviour.
 - Habitat use in the Brahmaputra basin.
- The information can support:
 - Better conservation planning.
 - Habitat protection strategies.
 - Scientific management of endangered freshwater species.

One-Line Wrap

The satellite-tagging of the endangered Ganges soft-shell turtle in Kaziranga highlights India's growing use of scientific technology for wildlife conservation and river ecosystem protection.

Revival of Manipur's Subika Art

An exhibition titled "*The Revival of the Forgotten Art of Manipur*" in Washington, D.C. has brought global attention to the endangered **Subika Art** tradition of Manipur.

What is Subika Art?

- **Subika Art** is a rare manuscript painting tradition of the Meitei civilization of Manipur.
- It is considered one of the oldest indigenous visual knowledge traditions of Northeast India.
- Traditionally, the paintings were created on:
 - Handmade paper.
 - Agarwood bark manuscripts known as **Puya** or **Korbek**.

Key Features of Subika Art

- The manuscripts are written in the **Old Meitei script**, an indigenous script of the Meitei language belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family.
- Subika paintings mainly depict themes related to Astronomy, Cosmology, Divination, Mythological stories, Indigenous rituals and spiritual beliefs.
- Only six major Subika manuscripts are known to have survived, including:
 - Subika.
 - Subika Achouba.
 - Subika Laishaba.
 - Subika Choudit.
 - Subika Cheithil.
 - Thengrakhel Subika.

Cultural Importance

- Subika Art represents:
 - The intellectual heritage of the Meitei civilization.
 - Indigenous manuscript traditions of Northeast India.
 - The fusion of art, spirituality, and knowledge transmission.
- Its revival supports:
 - Preservation of endangered cultural traditions.
 - Promotion of Northeast India's heritage globally.
 - Protection of India's cultural diversity.

One-Line Wrap

Subika Art reflects the rich intellectual and cultural heritage of Manipur and highlights the importance of preserving endangered indigenous traditions of Northeast India.

Assam Appoints Pro Tem Speaker Ahead of New Assembly Session

The **Governor** Lakshman Prasad Acharya appointed senior legislator Chandra Mohan Patowary as the **Pro Tem Speaker** of the 16th Assam Legislative Assembly.

What is a Pro Tem Speaker?

- A **Pro Tem Speaker** is a temporary Speaker appointed to conduct the initial proceedings of a newly elected legislature.
 - The term “**Pro Tem**” means “**for the time being**.”
- The office of the pro tem speaker ceases to exist after the new Speaker of the House is chosen.
- The appointment is made by the **Governor** before the election of the regular Speaker.
- **Functions of the Pro Tem Speaker:** The Pro Tem Speaker mainly performs the following duties:
 - Administers oath or affirmation to newly elected Members of Legislative Assembly.
 - Presides over the first sitting of the Assembly.
 - Conducts the election process for the permanent Speaker of the House.

Constitutional and Legal Basis

- The Constitution does not specifically mention the term “Pro Tem Speaker.”
- The practice is based on:
 - **Parliamentary conventions.**
 - Powers of the Governor under:
 - **Article 188** – Oath by Members of State Legislature.
 - **Article 180** – Duties of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.
- Usually, the senior-most legislator is appointed as Pro Tem Speaker.

About Chandra Mohan Patowary

- Chandra Mohan Patowary, a seven-time legislator, will administer oaths to newly elected Members of Legislative Assembly.
- Election of the new Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly will also take place during the first session.

One-Line Wrap

The appointment of a Pro Tem Speaker is an important parliamentary convention that ensures the smooth functioning and constitutional continuity of a newly elected legislative assembly.

Assam Government Introduces Austerity Measures

The Assam government announced a series of **austerity measures** for six months in response to the Prime Minister’s appeal for cost-cutting and conservation of foreign exchange.

Key Austerity Measures Announced

- The State government has decided:
 - Not to purchase new government vehicles for six months.
 - To restrict foreign tours of government officials, including private visits.
 - To reduce the size of official convoys of the Governor, Chief Minister, MLA & Senior officials.
- The government also plans to:
 - Reduce fuel expenditure on official vehicles by **20 %** compared to the previous year.
 - Conduct only **virtual seminars and workshops** during the period.
 - Scrap old fuel-consuming government vehicles aged between 15 and 20 years.

Objectives of the Measures

The initiative aims to:

- Reduce unnecessary public expenditure.
- Conserve fuel and foreign exchange reserves.
- Promote efficient governance and responsible spending.
- Encourage sustainable and environment-friendly administrative practices.

Economic and Governance Significance

- Austerity measures are often adopted during periods of:
 - Global economic uncertainty.
 - Rising fuel prices.
 - External financial pressure.

- The move reflects broader national priorities such as:
 - Fiscal discipline.
 - Energy conservation.
 - Sustainable governance.

One-Line Wrap

Assam's austerity measures reflect the growing importance of fiscal discipline, sustainable governance, and efficient public expenditure management in times of economic uncertainty.

Geum macrosepalum Rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh

Researchers from the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** have rediscovered the rare Himalayan flowering plant **Geum macrosepalum** in Arunachal Pradesh nearly **120 years** after its last confirmed record in India (1905).

Discovery Highlights

- The species was rediscovered near **Se La Pass** between **Tawang and West Kameng districts** of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It was found during a study on the **impact of climate change on alpine and sub-alpine plant diversity** in the Eastern Himalayas.
- The plant was recorded at an altitude of around **4,200 metres** in **alpine meadows and marshy habitats**.
- The findings have been published in the international journal **Phytotaxa**.
- The species was last reliably collected from **Sikkim in 1905**.

About Geum macrosepalum

Botanical Profile

- It belongs to the **Rose Family (Rosaceae)**.
- It is **endemic to the Eastern Himalayas**, meaning it is naturally found only in this region.
- It bears **pale yellow to ivory-yellow flowers** with reddish tinges and drooping blossoms.
- The species is specially adapted to survive the harsh conditions of **high-altitude Himalayan ecosystems**.

Conservation Significance

- The species has been classified as '**Vulnerable**' using IUCN assessment parameters.
- It faces threats from:
 - **Restricted geographical distribution**.
 - **Habitat degradation** caused by infrastructure development.
 - **Climate change impacts** on fragile mountain ecosystems.
- The rediscovery highlights the importance of the **Eastern Himalaya Biodiversity Hotspot**, one of the world's richest centres of endemic flora and fauna.

One-Line Wrap

The rediscovery of **Geum macrosepalum** after 120 years highlights the extraordinary biodiversity of Arunachal Pradesh and the urgent need to conserve fragile Himalayan ecosystems.

Jan Bhagidari Abhiyan

The **Jan Bhagidari Abhiyan** was launched in **Kamrup district, Assam**, to improve the delivery of government welfare schemes and strengthen citizen participation, particularly in **tribal and remote areas**.

About Jan Bhagidari Abhiyan

- **Jan Bhagidari** means **people's participation in governance**.
- The campaign focuses on ensuring that welfare benefits reach eligible beneficiaries and that local grievances are addressed promptly.
- It seeks to bridge the gap between government institutions and tribal communities through direct outreach and engagement.

Key Objectives

- To improve awareness and access to **government welfare schemes** among tribal populations.
- To identify and resolve public grievances through direct interaction with officials.
- To collect feedback from beneficiaries and improve service delivery mechanisms.

- To strengthen last-mile governance and inclusive development.

Major Components of the Campaign

- **Entitlement Drives:** To help eligible citizens access government benefits and welfare schemes.
- **Village Immersion Activities:** Officials visit villages to understand local issues firsthand.
- **Jan Sunwai (Public Hearing) Camps:** To hear and resolve public grievances.
- **Health Screening Camps:** To provide basic healthcare services and awareness.
- **Documentation and Feedback Collection:** To identify implementation gaps and improve governance outcomes.

Role of Adi Sewa Kendras

- **Adi Sewa Kendras** function as outreach and facilitation centres for tribal communities.
- They help in awareness generation, beneficiary registration, grievance redressal and coordination with government departments.
- In Kamrup district, **62 Adi Sewa Kendras** are operational, covering villages across **Boko, Bongaon, Bezera and Sualkuchi**.

Significance

- The initiative promotes **inclusive governance, tribal welfare, and participatory development**.
- It aligns with the constitutional vision of empowering marginalized communities through effective public service delivery.
- It supports the broader goals of **good governance, social justice, and grassroots democracy**.

One-Line Wrap

Jan Bhagidari Abhiyan reflects the principle that effective governance becomes meaningful when citizens actively participate in development and decision-making processes.

National Science Centre Guwahati Inaugurates Orchid and Cactus Garden

National Science Centre Guwahati inaugurated a new **Orchid and Cactus Garden** during the celebration of **International Museum Day 2026**.

Key Highlights

- The programme was organized under the theme **“Museums Uniting a Divided World”**.
- The initiative **highlighted the role of museums** in Scientific awareness, Cultural exchange, Environmental education & Community engagement.

About the Orchid and Cactus Garden

- The garden showcases:
 - Indigenous orchid species of Northeast India.
 - Exotic orchid varieties.
 - Drought-resistant cactus species.
- The facility was described as a **“living museum”** by Ashiho A Mao.

Orchids of Assam

- Assam is one of India's richest orchid diversity regions.
- Around **182 orchid species** are reported from Assam.
- These represent:
 - Nearly **44.39%** of orchid species are found in Northeast India.
 - About **24.42%** of orchid species are found in India.
- **Important Orchid Species of Assam**
 - **Rhynchosytilis retusa** (Foxtail Orchid/Kopou Phul).
 - **Dendrobium** species.
 - **Paphiopedilum bellatulum**.
 - **Arundina graminifolia**.
 - **Aerides odorata**.
 - **Dendrobium moschatum**.
 - **Pholidota imbricata**.

Kopou Phul (Rhynchosytilis retusa)

- It is the **State Flower** of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is popularly known as **Kopou Phul** in Assam.
- It **natively grows and thrives in moist and dry deciduous forests**.
- It is **native to Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India**.

- It is culturally associated with the **Rongali Bihu** festival and **Traditional Assamese weddings**.

One-Line Wrap

The Orchid and Cactus Garden at National Science Centre Guwahati reflects how science museums can combine biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage, and public engagement to strengthen environmental awareness among citizens.

Rising Man-Elephant Conflict in Assam Due to Deforestation

Increasing incidents of **man-elephant conflict** in Assam, especially in Nagaon, Hojai, West Karbi Anglong and Karbi Anglong districts, have raised serious concerns over deforestation, habitat destruction and ecological imbalance.

What is Human-Elephant Conflict?

- Human-elephant conflict refers to:
 - Negative interactions between humans and wild elephants.
 - Crop damage, property destruction, and loss of human and animal lives.

Major Causes of the Conflict

Man-Made Triggers

- **Deforestation and Habitat Fragmentation**
 - Illegal logging.
 - Encroachment of forest land.
 - Expansion of agriculture and settlements.
- **Infrastructure Development**
 - Railways, roads and other linear infrastructure disrupt elephant corridors.
 - For instance, the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong landscape has fragmented elephant corridors, due to highways and tea plantations leading to frequent crop raids and human deaths.

Natural Triggers

- Climate variability and drought reduce food and water availability.
- Seasonal migration forces elephants into human settlements.

Situation in Central Assam

- **Several hill ranges** that earlier supported dense forests and bamboo vegetation have reportedly **become barren**.
- **Loss of Sal forests, Bamboo plantations, Fruit-bearing trees** has **reduced food availability** for elephants.
- As a result, **elephants** increasingly enter **Paddy fields, Tea gardens & Villages**.
- Areas such as **Kandoli Reserve Forest, Chapanala forest, Doboka hills** and **Haengthol hills** were traditionally **important elephant habitats**.

Government Schemes and Conservation Initiatives

- **Project Elephant (1992):** Launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 - Objectives include:
 - Conservation of elephants.
 - Protection of habitats and corridors.
 - Reduction of human-elephant conflict.
- **RE-HAB Project:** Under this, *Bee-fences* are created by setting up bee boxes in the passageways of elephants to block their entrance to human territories.
 - Cost-effective way of reducing human-wild conflicts without causing any harm to the animals.
 - Initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) under the submission of the National Honey Mission.
- **Gajah Mitra Scheme:** Focus on high-risk areas across the state where elephants and people frequently come into contact.
 - The government will grow bamboo and Napier grass, two favorite elephant foods, to keep elephants from entering villages.

One-Line Wrap

The growing man-elephant conflict in Assam reflects the urgent need for habitat restoration, scientific conservation, and sustainable coexistence between humans and wildlife.

Northeast Eri Silk and Rajasthan's Kota Doria to Create Premium Indian Textile

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has initiated a collaboration to blend Northeast India's **Eri silk** with Rajasthan's famous **Kota Doria** fabric to create a premium handloom product for domestic and global markets.

Key Highlights of the Initiative

- The project aims to combine the soft and eco-friendly texture of **Eri silk** with the lightweight transparent weave of **Kota Doria**.
- The collaboration aligns with Prime Minister's **5F Vision of Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Fabric, Fabric to Fashion & Fashion to Foreign**.
- The **objective** is to **create a distinctive premium textile** for both **domestic and international markets**.
- **Institutions Involved:** Preparations are underway for signing a Memorandum of Understanding between:
 - North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation.
 - District Industries Centre, Government of Rajasthan.
- The proposed MoU will facilitate cooperation in areas such as:
 - Joint product and design development, skill enhancement and artisan training, technology support, branding, and market linkage initiatives.

Significances

The initiative is expected to:

- **Create new livelihood opportunities** for Weavers, Artisans, Rural women.
- **Strengthen textile innovation**, handloom exports, sustainable fashion industry.
- **Enhance India's global identity** in ethical and heritage-based textiles.

About Eri Silk

- Eri silk comes from two species of silkworms, *Samia ricini* and *Philosamia ricini*.
- It is **durable, cotton-like**, and offers excellent **thermal properties**, making it warm in winter and cool in summer.
- The name "eri" comes from the **Assamese word "era," meaning "castor,"** because these silkworms feed on the leaves of the local, indigenous castor oil plant.
 - **Castor oil plant** is **drought resistant** plant that requires vastly less water than the mulberry tree, grown to feed mulberry silk worms.
- The **ancient tradition** and the **existence of Eri Silk** date as early as **2500 BCE**.
- Eri Silk is renowned as the **world's only vegan silk**, where, unlike other silks, the moth inside the cocoon is not killed.
- Instead, the moth naturally exits the cocoon, leaving it behind for use.
- In **2024, North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC)**, under the Ministry of DoNER, **obtained the Oeko-Tex certification** for its Eri Silk from Germany.
- The production of India's Eri silk takes place almost entirely in village-based setups in the Northeast:
 - **Assam accounts for 38.3%** of India's Eri silk production, **Meghalaya 22.6%, Manipur 29.8 %** and **Nagaland 6.8 %**.

About Kota Doria

- Kota Doria is a **traditional handwoven fabric** from **Kota, Rajasthan**.
- **Kaithoon**, in the Kota district, is the **major hub**, but some other clusters of Kota Doria production can also be found in the villages of Baran, Bundi and Kota.
- The **Ansari community** of the **Hadaoti region** are the traditional weavers **associated** with the **fabric**.
- It is a **light woven fabric** and can be distinguished by its **eminent tiny squares** (known as Khats) handwoven on pit looms.
- Historically, it is said to be **associated** with **Rao Kishore Singh**.
- Kota Doria was originally called Kota Masuriya as they had originated in Mysore and the weavers were called Masuria.
- In the late **17th century**, the **weavers** were brought to **Kota by Rao Kishore Singh**.
- **Cotton and Mulberry silk yarns** are used in the production for the **base** of the Kota Doria saree whereas gold and silver zari yarns are used for the extra warp and weft designing.
 - **Cotton:Silk ratio** is approximately **80:20** in traditional Kota Doria.
- Kota Doria has a **GI tag**, registered in **2005**, one of the earliest GI tags given to a textile in India
- This fabric was **considered auspicious** and was adored on many religious occasions.
- It is known for its **fine check patterns, lightweight texture & transparent weave**.

One-Line Wrap

The blending of Eri silk and Kota Doria represents a unique fusion of Northeast and Rajasthan handloom traditions aimed at promoting sustainable textiles, artisan livelihoods, and India's global handloom identity.

Western Hoolock Gibbon Uses Artificial Canopy Bridge in Assam for the First Time

A **Western Hoolock Gibbon** was recently recorded using an artificial canopy bridge over a railway line in Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary, marking the **first documented instance in the world** of a hoolock gibbon using such a structure.

Key Highlights

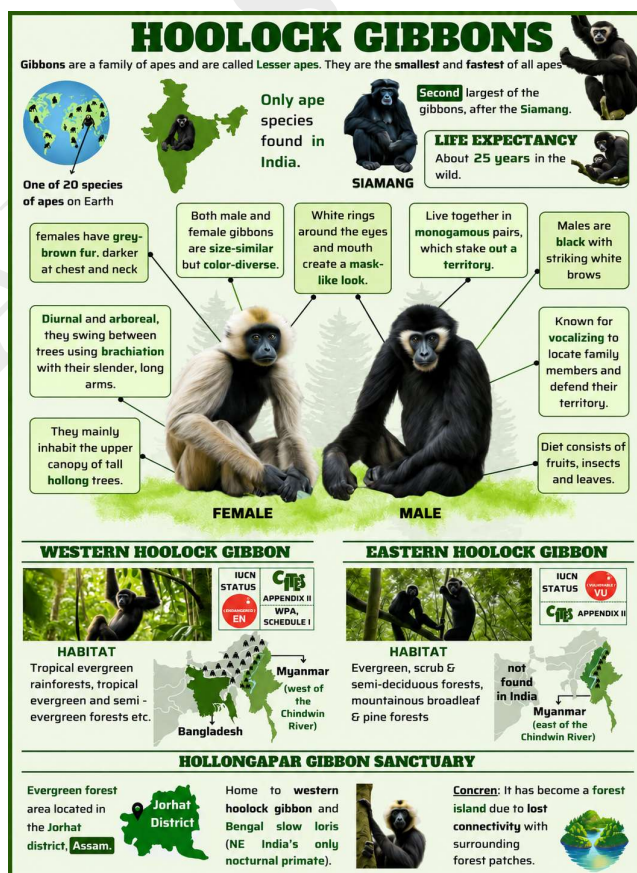
- The crossing was recorded in the **Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary** in Assam.
- The sanctuary supports only about **120–130 Western Hoolock Gibbons**, making conservation efforts crucial.
- The canopy bridge was installed across the electrified **Lumding–Dibrugarh railway line**, which fragments the forest habitat.

About the Artificial Canopy Bridge

- The current bridge consists of:
 - Double-rope nylon structures.
 - Safety nets for protection.
 - Design suited to the gibbon's natural movement.
- It was developed following consultations with the Wildlife Institute of India.

About the Western Hoolock Gibbon

- Scientific Name: **Hoolock hoolock**.
- It is:
 - **India's only ape**.
 - A completely **arboreal (tree-dwelling)** primate.
 - Known for **brachiation**, a movement in which it swings from branch to branch using its arms.
- Conservation Status:
 - **Endangered** under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.
 - Protected under **Schedule I** of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.



Significance

- Railways, roads, and power lines often cause **habitat fragmentation**.
- **Electrocution** on electrified railway track passing through the Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary
- **Genetic isolation** of **gibbon** groups has **reduced genetic diversity**, threatening long-term survival.
- In such case, **Artificial canopy bridges help**:
 - Restore connectivity between isolated forest patches.
 - Reduce wildlife mortality.
 - Improve movement for breeding and feeding.

Global Significance

Similar canopy bridges are used worldwide for:

- Lemurs in Madagascar.
- Sloths in Costa Rica.
- Possums in Australia.
- Monkeys in South Africa.

However, experts emphasize that canopy bridges are a **mitigation measure**, not a substitute for conserving natural forests and wildlife corridors.

One-Line Wrap

The successful use of an artificial canopy bridge by the Western Hoolock Gibbon in Assam demonstrates how innovative wildlife-friendly infrastructure can help reduce habitat fragmentation and support the conservation of endangered species.

Hollong Tree (*Dipterocarpus retusus*)

About **95% of hollong saplings** 'were destroyed' in Tinsukia's Nalani Forest.

About Hollong

- **Scientific Name:** *Dipterocarpus retusus* Blume
- **Family:** Dipterocarpaceae
- Commonly known as **Hollong**.
- It is one of the most important tree species of tropical rainforests in Northeast India.
- Declared as the **State Tree of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh**.

Distribution

Global Distribution

Found in:

- Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam & India.

Distribution in India

- Primarily found in: Assam (especially Upper Assam), Arunachal Pradesh & Nagaland.
- Hollong occurs in abundance in **Dehing Patkai National Park & Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary**.

Habitat and Ecology

- Occurs in tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests.
- Found at elevations ranging from **100–1300 metres**.
- Prefers:
 - Temperature: **22°C–30°C**
 - Annual rainfall: Around **3000 mm**
- Commonly grows in the alluvial deposits of the Brahmaputra Valley.

Physical Characteristics

- A large rainforest tree reaching up to **45 metres** in height.
- Trunk diameter may reach **3.5–6 metres DBH**.
- Bark is brown in colour.
- Straight cylindrical bole remains branch-free for 15–20 metres.
- Crown is small and spherical when mature.
- Leaves are ovate to elliptic in shape.
- Flowers are usually solitary.
- Fruits are ovoid with enlarged wing-like calyx lobes.

Ecological Importance

- Dipterocarp forests are important carbon sinks.
- Tropical forests store nearly **40% of terrestrial organic carbon**.
- Hollong-dominated forests have high carbon sequestration potential.
- Plays a significant role in maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance.

Economic Importance

Timber Uses

- Valuable medium hardwood species.
- Used for: House construction, Interior construction works & Plywood industry

Traditional Uses

- Fuelwood
- Insect repellent
- Extraction of oleoresin
- Oleoresin used as lubricant

Cultural Importance

- Considered a sacred tree by several indigenous communities of Northeast India.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered (EN)
- Population has declined by approximately **50–70% over the last 300 years**.
- Overexploitation and habitat degradation have severely reduced natural populations.

Major Threats

Anthropogenic Threats

- Illegal felling
- Habitat degradation
- Expansion of monoculture agriculture
- Open-cast coal mining, particularly in the Dehing Patkai region

Biological Threats

- Nine insect pest species have been reported to damage Hollong seedlings in Assam.

Climate Change Threats

- Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns may disrupt flowering, fruiting, and regeneration cycles.
- Altered phenology can affect long-term survival of the species.



Prelims Facts

- State Tree of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Scientific Name: *Dipterocarpus retusus*.
- Family: Dipterocarpaceae.
- IUCN Status: Endangered.
- Important rainforest timber species of Northeast India.
- Found in Dehing Patkai and Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Important carbon-sequestering species of tropical evergreen forests.

Rare Black Panther

A rare black panther was recently spotted inside the **Manas National Park** has turned the **UNESCO World Heritage Site** into a major attraction for wildlife enthusiasts and tourists from across the country and abroad.

About black panther

- The **black panther** is a **melanistic variant** of the **Indian leopard** (*Panthera pardus fusca*). It is **not a separate species**.
 - Melanism is a genetic condition causing excess black pigmentation and is extremely **rare in the wild**, making such sightings scientifically valuable.
- The presence of top predators indicates a **healthy prey base**, balanced ecosystem, and effective protection measures.

Habitat

- Black panthers share the same habitat as Indian leopards:
 - Tropical evergreen forests
 - Moist deciduous forests
 - Montane forests
 - Grasslands and scrublands
- Prefer dense canopy and low-light environments, which help their dark coat blend with surroundings.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, they thrive in thick, undisturbed forest landscapes with healthy prey availability.

Where Are They Generally Found?

- Black panthers are extremely rare, but have been recorded in:
 - Western Ghats
 - Kabini (Nagarhole Tiger Reserve)
 - Biligiri Ranga Hills
 - Dandeli–Anshi landscape
 - Eastern Ghats
 - Northeast India
 - Pakke Tiger Reserve (Arunachal Pradesh)
 - Manas & Nameri (Assam)
 - Central India
 - Satpura, Pench & Tadoba
 - Southern India
 - Wayanad, Bandipur
 - Kerala–Karnataka forest complexes
- **Global distribution** includes **Africa** and **Southeast Asia** wherever melanistic leopards occur, but **India** has one of the **highest numbers of confirmed sightings**.

Threats

- Black panthers face the same threats as leopards—often amplified due to their rarity:
 - **Habitat loss** due to deforestation and development projects.
 - **Fragmentation of forests** reduces prey availability.
 - Poaching for skin and body parts.
 - **Human–wildlife conflict**, especially in fringe villages.
 - Decline in prey population, leading to competition.
 - **Genetic bottlenecks** due to low numbers in isolated habitats.

Conservation Status

- Leopard (*Panthera pardus*): **Vulnerable (IUCN Red List)**
- Listed under the **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** (maximum protection)
- Included in **CITES Appendix I** (strictest trade regulation)
- **Protected** under **Project Tiger** landscapes and **centrally sponsored Project Leopard** initiatives

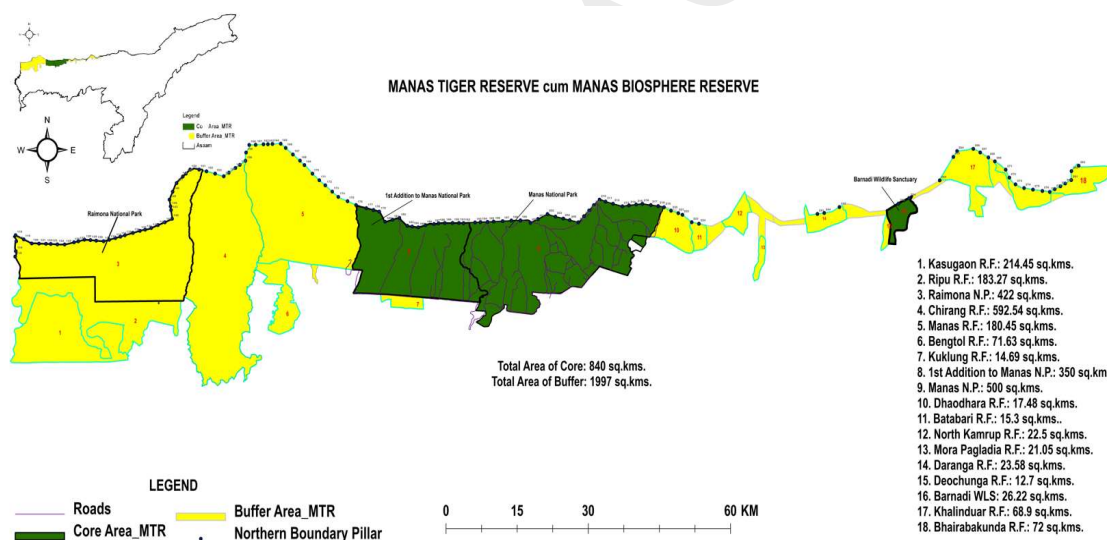
Manas National Park

- The Manas National Park is **located at Himalayan foothills** and is **spread over two districts** (Chirang, Baksa).
- It is one of the **first reserves** included in the **tiger reserve network** under **project tiger in 1973**.
- It **shares an international boundary** with **Royal Manas National Park** in **Bhutan**.
- The largest number of protected species of India including tiger, leopard, civet, elephants, buffalo, pygmy hog, golden langoor, Assam roof turtle, and the Bengal florican.
- This park is included as a site of international importance under **UNESCO's world heritage convention in 1988** as well as **Biosphere Reserve in 1989**.

- In 1990 the Manas National Park was declared a world heritage site in danger due to heavy poaching and terrorist activities but in 2011 it was removed from this list.
- The **Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve** within Mana was declared in the year **2003**.
- The **last population of pygmy hogs** survives in the wild of Manas and nowhere else in the world.
- It also **hosts the world's largest population of Bengal florican**.
- The **Manas-Beki system** is the major river system flowing through the protected area.
- The park is also crossed by several seasonal and perennial streams, such as the **Pagladia** (drainage basin impact), **Hakua**, **Bigoni**, and **Mora Manah**.
- It has the **combinations of two biomes** i.e. Grassland and Forest.
- It forms a part of the **Sub-Himalayan Bhabar Terai** formation leading up to the Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests (semi-evergreen).
- The park ranges consist of
 - Panbari Range (Western)
 - Bansbari Range (Central)
 - Bhuyanpara Range (Eastern)
 - Kuklung Range (1st Addition)

Important Timeline

- **Wildlife Sanctuary:** 1928
- **Project Tiger Reserve:** 1973 (among the first tiger reserves in India)
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:** 1985
- **National Park Status:** 1990
- **Elephant Reserve:** 2003, part of the **Chirang–Ripu Elephant Reserve**
- **Biosphere Reserve:** 1989
 - Manas Biosphere Reserve extends over an area of 2837 km² from Sankosh river in the west to Dhansiri river in the east, with a core area of 500 km² of the National park.
- Recognised as an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)**.



One-Line Wrap

The rare sighting of a Black Panther in Manas National Park underscores the ecological richness of Assam's protected areas and highlights the importance of conserving large, connected forest ecosystems for apex predators.

Parthenium Weed

The rapid growth of suspected **Parthenium** plants along stretches of **National Highway-27 in Assam's Bajali district** has raised concerns over public health, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation.

About Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

- They are **non-native species** that **establish, spread rapidly** and **cause ecological, economic or health damage**.

- The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** defines **invasive alien species (IAS)** as those whose **introduction and spread outside their natural distribution threaten biodiversity**.
- IAS can include **animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms**, affecting various ecosystems.
- India's efforts to manage IAS are guided by the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002, National Biodiversity Action Plan**, and the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 6)**, which aims to reduce invasive species globally.

What is Parthenium?

- **Parthenium hysterophorus**, commonly known as **Congress Grass, Carrot Weed, or White Top**, is one of the world's most harmful **invasive alien plant species**.
- Parthenium hysterophorus is an **herbaceous, erect, annual plant**.
- It is a **poisonous, pernicious, problematic, allergic, and aggressive weed** posing a serious threat to human beings and livestock.
- It is native to **Central and South America** and belongs to the family **Asteraceae (compositae)**.
- It was **accidentally introduced into India** during the **1950s** through **contaminated grain imports**.
- A single plant can produce **thousands of seeds**.
- Seeds are **dispersed through: wind, water, vehicles, road networks, contaminated soil and agricultural products**.
- **Highways and railway corridors** often become **major pathways** for its spread.

Parthenium as Concern

- **Public Health Impacts**
 - It can cause **allergic dermatitis, skin rashes, and itching**.
 - It may trigger **asthma, bronchitis, and respiratory disorders**.
 - Continuous exposure can lead to chronic allergic reactions.
- **Ecological Impacts**
 - It is an **invasive alien species** that spreads aggressively.
 - It suppresses the growth of native grasses and plants through **allelopathy** (release of harmful chemicals).
 - It reduces biodiversity and alters ecosystem balance.
 - It affects grazing lands and lowers fodder availability for livestock.
- **Agricultural Impacts**
 - It reduces crop productivity.
 - It contaminates agricultural fields and pasture lands.
 - It increases management costs for farmers.

Other Invasive Alien Species in India

Species	Primary Habitat	Key Impacts	Why in News / Extra Facts
Lantana camara	Tropical and Subtropical forests (Mudumalai, Bandipur, Corbett, Kaziranga)	Forms dense thickets and suppresses native vegetation through allelopathy ; reduces grazing areas for herbivores such as deer and sambar.	Has invaded nearly 40% of India's forests and is linked to increased human-wildlife conflict.
Prosopis juliflora	Arid and Semi-arid regions (Delhi Ridge, Kutch, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu)	Deep roots deplete groundwater; thorny plants injure livestock; reduces biodiversity and creates "biological deserts".	Subject of removal drives and court interventions for habitat restoration.
Senna spectabilis	Western Ghats (Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Wayanad, Bandipur)	Replaces native species such as bamboo and amla; forms monocultures; degrades elephant habitats and forest ecosystems.	Popularly known as the "Yellow Menace" ; large-scale eradication programmes are underway.

Water Hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes)	Freshwater ecosystems, wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers and floodplains (Deepor Beel, Urapad Beel, Kaziranga wetlands)	Forms dense floating mats that block sunlight; causes eutrophication , oxygen depletion, siltation and destruction of fish breeding grounds; disrupts aquatic biodiversity and navigation.	Native to South America and introduced during British rule as an ornamental plant. Known as the " Terror of Bengal ".
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One-Line Wrap

Parthenium is a highly invasive alien weed that threatens biodiversity, agriculture, and human health, making its early detection and control crucial for ecological security.

PRAGATI 2026

A 13-nation multinational military exercise, **PRAGATI 2026**, commenced at **Umroi Military Station, Meghalaya**, with participation from India and 12 friendly countries of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian region.

About PRAGATI 2026

PRAGATI stands for **Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region**.

- It is a **multinational military exercise** hosted by **India**.
- It is spearheaded by the **Indian Army** under the aegis of the **Ministry of Defence**.
- The exercise aims to enhance **military cooperation, interoperability, and mutual understanding** among participating countries.
- **Participating Countries:** India, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka & Vietnam.

Objectives of the Exercise

- To provide a common platform for **professional military exchanges**.
- To strengthen **military-to-military ties** among participating nations.
- To improve coordination in addressing **regional security challenges**.
- To enhance operational capabilities in **counter-terrorism and jungle warfare**.
- To promote cooperation in ensuring **peace, stability, and security in the Indian Ocean Region**.

Key Features of PRAGATI 2026

- The exercise is being conducted in **semi-mountainous and jungle terrain**, reflecting the operational environment of many participating countries.
- Training includes:
 - Joint planning exercises.
 - Tactical-level military drills.
 - Coordinated counter-terrorism operations.
 - Physical endurance and field-craft training.
- Special emphasis is placed on **discipline, adaptability, fitness, and interoperability**.

One-Line Wrap

PRAGATI 2026 reflects India's growing role in regional defence cooperation by bringing together 13 nations to strengthen military interoperability, counter-terrorism capabilities, and security in the Indian Ocean Region.

Language Martyrs' Day (Bhasha Shahid Divas)

Silchar observed the **65th anniversary of the 1961 Language Movement**, paying tribute to the **11 language martyrs** who lost their lives in police firing at **Silchar Railway Station** on **19 May 1961** while demanding linguistic rights for the Bengali-speaking people of the Barak Valley.

Historical Background

- In **1960**, the Assam Government passed the **Assam Official Language Act**, making **Assamese** the official language of the state.

- This led to widespread protests in the Bengali-majority **Barak Valley** districts of **Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi**.
- On **19 May 1961**, peaceful demonstrators staged a picket at Silchar Railway Station demanding recognition of the Bengali language.
- Police opened fire on the protesters, resulting in the death of **11 activists**, who came to be known as the **Language Martyrs**.

Significance of the Movement

- The sacrifice of the martyrs compelled the government to reconsider its language policy.
- Bengali was subsequently granted official status in the Barak Valley region.
- The movement became an important milestone in the protection of **linguistic and cultural rights** in independent India.

Key Facts

- **Observed:** Every year on **19 May** as *Bhasha Shahid Divas*.
- **Location:** Silchar, Cachar district, Assam.
- **Notable Martyr:** **Kamala Bhattacharya**, regarded as the world's first female language martyr.
- **Memorial Sites:** Silchar Railway Station and Gandhibag remain important symbols of the movement.

One-Line Wrap

The 1961 Barak Valley Language Movement stands as a powerful reminder that India's unity is strengthened by respecting and protecting its linguistic diversity.

National Science Centre Guwahati Inaugurates Orchid and Cactus Garden

National Science Centre Guwahati inaugurated a new **Orchid and Cactus Garden** during the celebration of **International Museum Day 2026**.

Key Highlights

- The programme was organized under the theme “**Museums Uniting a Divided World**”.
- The initiative **highlighted** the **role of museums** in **Scientific awareness, Cultural exchange, Environmental education & Community engagement**.

About the Orchid and Cactus Garden

- The garden showcases:
 - Indigenous orchid species of Northeast India.
 - Exotic orchid varieties.
 - Drought-resistant cactus species.
- The facility was described as a “**living museum**” by Ashiho A Mao.

Orchids of Assam

- Assam is one of India's richest orchid diversity regions.
- Around **182 orchid species** are reported from Assam.
- These represent:
 - Nearly **44.39%** of orchid species are found in Northeast India.
 - About **24.42%** of orchid species are found in India.
- **Important Orchid Species of Assam**
 - **Rhynchostylis retusa** (Foxtail Orchid/Kopou Phul).
 - **Dendrobium** species.
 - **Paphiopedilum bellatulum**.
 - **Arundina graminifolia**.
 - **Aerides odorata**.
 - **Dendrobium moschatum**.
 - **Pholidota imbricata**.

Kopou Phul (*Rhynchostylis retusa*)

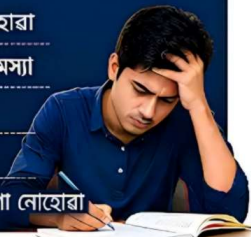
- It is the **State Flower** of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is popularly known as **Kopou Phul** in Assam.
- It is an **epiphytic orchid**, **natively grows and thrives in moist and dry deciduous forests**.
- It is **native to Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India**.
- It is culturally associated with the **Rongali Bihu** festival and **Traditional Assamese weddings**.

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IMPORTANT UPDATE

**APSC COMBINED COMPETITIVE
(PRELIMINARY) EXAMINATION, 2025**



EXAM DATE

5th JULY, 2026
(SUNDAY)



GS-I

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GS-II

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM



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Personality in News

1. Anundoram Borooah

Assam observes the birth anniversary of **Anundoram Borooah (21 May)**, the first Assamese to enter the prestigious **Indian Civil Service (ICS)** during British rule. His life continues to inspire discussions on education, scholarship, cultural identity, and intellectual excellence.

Who was Anundoram Borooah?

Anundoram Borooah (1850–1889) was one of the most distinguished scholars produced by Assam. While he is popularly remembered as the **first Assamese ICS officer**, his contribution extended far beyond administration. Born during colonial rule when educational opportunities were extremely limited, Borooah achieved extraordinary academic success through hard work, discipline, and dedication to learning.

Key Facts

- He was the **first Assamese and among the earliest Indians** to qualify for the Indian Civil Service.
- He possessed remarkable command over **Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, English, and Assamese**.
- He earned recognition from leading European scholars for his work on **Sanskrit literature and Indian classical knowledge traditions**.
- He served in the British administration while remaining deeply rooted in Indian culture and scholarship.
- **Born in North Guwahati, Assam**, into a **distinguished Kayastha family**, Borooah demonstrated exceptional aptitude for Sanskrit from a young age.
- He **pursued higher education** at **Cotton Collegiate School** in Guwahati and **Presidency College** in Calcutta, where he excelled in literature and **became Assam's first graduate**.
- In May 1869, supported by scholarships, he traveled to England to prepare for the ICS and Bar examinations.
- He **successfully joined** the ICS in September 1872 as the **sixth Indian officer** overall and the **first to take charge of a district**.
- Throughout his career, Borooah **served primarily in Assam**, including as Assistant Magistrate in Sibsagar.
- He became the **first Indian to hold the position of District Magistrate**, marking a significant milestone in breaking racial barriers within the British administration.
- As a scholar, he **authored** influential works such as the **English-Sanskrit Dictionary** and **Ancient Geography of India**.
 - In 1877, he **published** an **edition of Bhavabhuti's Mahāvīracarita**, a Sanskrit play dramatizing episodes from the Ramayana, **accompanied** by his own detailed commentary titled **Jānakīrāmaḥāṣya** and a **Sanskrit-English glossary**.
 - He also **produced** an **edition of Amarasimha's Nāmaṅgānuśāsana**, a foundational Sanskrit lexicon.
- He also **established the Arunoday Yantra printing press** to promote Assamese literature and Sanskrit education in the region.
- He died unmarried on January 19, 1889, in Calcutta at the age of 39, while residing at the home of fellow scholar Taraknath Palit.

His Legacy

- Borooah's dedication left a lasting legacy, honored today through institutions like the Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture in Assam.
- **Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture (ABILAC)**
 - Established by the Government of Assam.
 - Works for the promotion of language, literature, culture, manuscripts, and research.
- **Anundoram Borooah Cash Award Scheme (ARBAS)**
 - Launched by the Government of Assam in 2005 to reward meritorious students scoring 75% or above in the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination.

Exam Hook: Key Takeaways

- First Assamese to join the **Indian Civil Service**.
- Renowned scholar of **Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek**.
- Symbol of the synthesis between **modern education and Indian traditions**.
- Inspiration for educational excellence and cultural confidence in Assam.
- Legacy preserved through **Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture (ABILAC)**.

2. Krishna Kanta Handiqui (1898 – 1982)

Early Life and Background

- Krishna Kanta Handiqui was born on **20 July 1898** in **Jorhat**, Upper Assam.
- He was the eldest son of **Raibahadur Radha Kanta Handiqui**, a tea planter and philanthropist and **Narayani Aideo**.
- His family descended from an **aristocratic Ahom lineage**, historically connected with the Ahom kings of medieval Assam.
 - The family surname “Handiqui” comes from the Tai Ahom language, meaning “**to lay a bridge**,” symbolizing service and connection.

Education and Linguistic Mastery

- Handiqui received his early education at **Jorhat Government High School** and then at **Cotton College, Guwahati**.
- He earned a **First-Class B.A. Honours in Sanskrit** and completed his **M.A. in Sanskrit from Calcutta University in 1919**.
- From **1920 to 1927**, he spent seven years in **Europe** (mainly France and Germany), where he learned **Latin, Greek, French, German, Russian, Italian, and Spanish**.
- Handiqui became proficient in **13 languages**, including his mother tongue, and used his linguistic skills to explore world literature.
- Even while studying abroad, he contributed scholarly articles to Assamese journals like **Banhi** and **Cetana**, introducing global literary trends to Assamese readers.

Career in Education

- In **1930**, Handiqui became the **founding Principal of Jorhat Jagannath Barooah College**, the **first non-government degree college** in the *North-East*.
- From **1948 to 1957**, he was the **first Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University**, the **first University of the North-East**.
- In **1952**, he was elected as **President of the Inter-University Board of India** and presided over key educational conferences at Madras University and Waltair.

Contributions to Literature and Indology

- Handiqui was a profound scholar in **Sanskrit and Prakrit literature** and gained international acclaim for his translations and commentaries.
- His first monumental work, “**Naisadhacarita of Sriharsha**” (1934), was the first complete English translation of the 12th-century Sanskrit epic.
- His second major work, “**Yasastilaka and Indian Culture**” (1949), was a pioneering interdisciplinary study of Jain literature and culture.
- His third great work, “**Setubandha of Pravarasena**” (1976), a translation and study of a Prakrit mahakavya, was praised for its depth and philological richness.
- These three works placed him among the world’s most respected Sanskritists and Indologists.

Philosophy and Public Life

- Handiqui believed in the **moral and ethical dimensions of education**, emphasizing character over credentials.
- In the **first Convocation of Gauhati University (1951)**, he reminded students that “**character and purity of heart**” matter more than degrees.
- Despite his scholarly fame, he lived a **simple and humble life**, uninterested in publicity, wealth, or power.
- He was known for his **discipline, honesty, and devotion** to the cause of education and learning.
- He **established Hemolata Handiqui Memorial Institution in Jorhat** in memory of his wife.

Honours and Recognitions

- Handiqui **presided** over the **1937 Guwahati Session of the Assam Sahitya Sabha**.
- He served as **President of the Classical Sanskrit Section** at the **All India Oriental Conference in 1951** and later became its **General President** at the **1961 Srinagar session**.
- He was awarded the **Padma Shri in 1955** and the **Padma Bhushan in 1967** by the Government of India.
- He received **honorary D.Litt. degrees** from **Gauhati University (1968)** and **Dibrugarh University (1972)**.
- In **1968**, he was made an **Honorary Fellow of Deccan College, Pune**, a rare honour given only to a few scholars globally.
- The **Sahitya Akademi** posthumously honoured him in **1985** for his collected works *Krishna Kanta Handiqui Rachana Sambhar*, edited by **Jatindranath Goswami**.
- In **1983**, the **Government of India** issued a **postage stamp** in his honour, celebrating his contribution to literature and education.
- In his honour, the Assam Government instituted the **Krishna Kanta Handiqui Memorial Award** in 2006 to recognise one’s contribution in the field of promoting Sanskrit language and literature.

His Legacy

- Handiqui passed away on **5 June 1982**, but his legacy lives on through his writings, institutions, and influence on Assamese intellectual life.
- His personal library of **over 7,000 books** was donated for public use, enriching future scholars.
- Several **books and biographies** have been written about him, and **Dibrugarh University published a dedicated bibliography** on his works.
- He remains a **symbol of scholarship, integrity, and selfless public service** in Assam and beyond.
- Handiqui's life exemplifies the **power of knowledge, humility, and dedication** to uplift education and cultural heritage in India.

3. Bishnuram Medhi

Renewed discussions around **migration, land rights, and identity in Assam** have brought attention back to the legacy of **Bishnuram Medhi**, the **second Chief Minister of Assam (1950–1957)**, whose policies addressed similar foundational challenges.

Who was Bishnuram Medhi?

- Bishnuram Medhi was a **prominent freedom fighter, politician, and administrator from Assam**.
- He was **born on 24 April 1888 at Hajo** in the present-day **Kamrup district** of Assam.
- He received his early education at Cotton Collegiate School in Guwahati, where he passed his matriculation examination in 1905.
- **Role in National Indian freedom**
 - He became actively involved in the **Indian freedom struggle** by **joining the Indian National Congress** during the **1920s**.
 - He **participated** in the **Non-Cooperation Movement** and played an important organizational role in the Congress.
 - In 1926, he **served** as the **Joint Secretary** of the **Reception Committee of the Pandu Session of the Congress**, and in 1930, he became the **President of the Assam Provincial Congress**.
- **Role in Politics**
 - Following the introduction of provincial autonomy after the Government of India Act, 1935, he served as the Finance Minister in the cabinet of Gopinath Bordoloi.
 - After independence, he rose to become the **Chief Minister of Assam** and served in this position from **1950 to 1957**.
 - After his tenure as **Chief Minister**, he was appointed as the **Governor of Madras State** (1958 to 1964), becoming the **first Assamese** to hold such a gubernatorial position.
- Known for his **disciplined, legalistic, and institution-focused approach** to governance.

Context of His Leadership

- Took office in the **early years after Independence and Partition**.
- Faced challenges such as:
 - **Refugee influx and migration pressures**
 - **Land settlement issues**
 - **Weak administrative infrastructure**

Governance Approach

- Medhi prioritised **stability, order, and institution-building** over short-term political gains.

Key Measures:

- Focused on **refugee rehabilitation and land distribution**.
- Strengthened **administrative machinery and governance structures**.
- Emphasised **rule of law and constitutional values**.

Key Terms Explained

- **Refugee Rehabilitation:** Process of resettling displaced populations after Partition.
- **Land Settlement:** Allocation and regulation of land ownership and use.
- **Institutional Governance:** Governance based on strong systems rather than individuals.
- **Constitutional Morality:** Adherence to constitutional principles in decision-making.
- **Administrative Capacity:** Ability of the state to implement policies effectively.

Debates and Criticism

- His policies on **migration and land** remain debated:
 - Some view them as **necessary for stability**.
 - Others argue they contributed to **long-term identity concerns**.

Relevance in Contemporary Assam

- Issues like **citizenship, migration, and land rights** continue today.
- Medhi's approach offers lessons:
 - Importance of **long-term planning over reactive decisions**.
 - Need for **balanced governance amid social diversity**.

Legacy Beyond Assam

- As **Governor of Madras**, he continued his emphasis on **administrative discipline and neutrality**.
- After his death, his **residence at Hajo** was **converted into a Shishu Kalyan Kendra**, while his **house in Guwahati** was turned into a **children's library** under the Bishnu Nirmala Trust.
- Remembered as a leader who valued **institutional integrity over political visibility**.

Exam Hook**Key Takeaways**

- Governance requires **balance between responsiveness and responsibility**.
- Strong institutions ensure **long-term stability**.
- Historical leaders provide insights for **modern policy challenges**.

One-line wrap: Bishnuram Medhi's legacy reminds us that durable governance is built on institutions, patience, and constitutional values rather than short-term political gains.

4. Maniram Dewan

The **220th birth anniversary of Maniram Dewan** is being observed, remembering his role as a **freedom fighter and pioneer of the tea industry in Assam**.

Early Life and Background

- Born in **1806** in Assam as **Maniram Dutta Baruah**
- Served as **Tehsildar (revenue officer)** and later became **Barbhandar (Prime Minister)** of Ahom king **Purandar Singha**. Also known as **Kalita Raja**

Contribution to Tea Cultivation

- Played a key role in introducing **tea cultivation in Assam**
- Assisted British officials in discovering and identifying tea potential in 1823.
 - He introduced Robert Bruce and his brother Charles Bruce to Bisa Gam, the chief of the Singpho.
- Became the **first Assamese tea planter**
- Established tea gardens at: **Cinnamara (Jorhat)**, later at **Seleng (Sivasagar)**
- Worked with the **Assam Tea Company** but later resigned due to differences

Role in Freedom Struggle (1857 Revolt in Assam)

- One of the earliest leaders of the **Indian Rebellion of 1857 in Assam**
- Planned to **restore Ahom rule** under **Kandarpeswar Singha**
- Mobilised:
 - Disbanded Ahom soldiers
 - Local aristocracy and tribal support
- Saw opportunity due to:
 - Weak British presence in Assam
 - Discontent among local population

Reasons for Revolt

- Faced **economic hardship and discrimination** from British authorities
- His tea properties were seized by British officer **Charles Holroyd**
- Growing resentment against **colonial exploitation**

Suppression and Martyrdom

- British discovered the conspiracy before execution
- Arrested and tried under colonial administration
- **Executed by hanging on 26 February 1858 at Jorhat** along with **Piyali Barua**
- Remembered as one of Assam's earliest **martyrs of freedom struggle**

Legacy and Significance

- Known as:
 - **Father of Assamese tea industry**
 - Pioneer of **regional resistance against British rule**
- His life reflects:

- Link between **economic exploitation and political resistance**
- Cultural remembrance:
 - Folk songs like “**Maniram Dewanar Geet**”
 - Literary work “**Buranji Vivek Ratna**”

Exam Hook**Key Takeaways:**

- Maniram Dewan was both a **tea pioneer and freedom fighter**
- Played a crucial role in **1857 uprising in Assam**
- His revolt was driven by **economic injustice and political resistance**

One-line Wrap

Maniram Dewan’s life shows how economic leadership and patriotic resistance together shaped Assam’s early fight against colonial rule.

5. Badal Thakur

The life and contributions of **Badal Thakur**, one of Assam’s early cricketing stalwarts, are being remembered as part of the region’s sporting legacy.

Early Life and Career

- Initially played **both cricket and football** during childhood
- Shifted fully to cricket after facing **early setbacks in selection trials**
- Selected for **Assam Ranji Trophy team in 1952**.
 - The **1951–52 Ranji Trophy** later became the **first Ranji Trophy victory for Assam**, when they beat Orissa by 103 runs.
 - **Assam played their first Ranji Trophy match** in the **1948–49** season in **Gymkhana field Jorhat**, captained by Rupert Kettle, against United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh).
- **Badal Thakur** later became **captain of Assam team in 1961**

Cricketing Achievements

- A talented **all-rounder: Middle-order batsman & Skilled inswing bowler**
- Notable performances:
 - Scored **69 and 96 runs against Odisha (1964)**
 - Took **eight wickets against Bengal**
- Known for deceiving top players with his **swing bowling skills**

Professional Career

- Played for **NF Railway cricket team** and served as its **captain**
- Continued playing domestic cricket till **1970**
- Represented the **institutional sports system**, which was crucial in early Indian cricket development
- Served as an expert **cricket pitch curator**
- Prepared pitch at **Nehru Stadium, Guwahati** for an international match involving the Australian team led by Bill Lawry
- Demonstrated technical expertise beyond playing, contributing to **infrastructure development in sports**

Legacy and Significance

- One of the **earliest cricketing icons of Assam**
- Represents a generation where **passion and dedication shaped regional sports**
- Known for **sportsmanship and humility**, admired even by opponents
- His life highlights:
 - Importance of **institutional support in sports**
 - Role of **unsung heroes in building sporting culture**

One-line Wrap

Badal Thakur’s life reflects the dedication and spirit that laid the foundation of cricket in Assam.

6. Chandraprabha Saikiani: Pioneer of Women's Movement and Social Reform in 20th-Century Assam

Why in the News?

The year marks the **125th birth anniversary of Chandraprabha Saikiani**, widely regarded as the **pioneer of the feminist movement in Assam** and an important leader who mobilised women in the freedom struggle and social reform movements of the twentieth century.

Early Life and Struggle for Education

Chandraprabha Saikiani was **born on 16 March 1901 in Doisingari village of Kamrup district in Assam**. She was the **seventh among eleven children** and grew up in a society where girls' education was rare.

- As her village had **no school for girls**, she and her sister attended a **boys' school**, where she experienced discrimination firsthand.
- Determined to change this, she **established a school for girls in Akaya village at the age of 13**, marking the beginning of her reformist journey.
- Encouraged by educationist **Neelakanta Barua**, she received a scholarship to study at **Nagaon Mission School** along with her sister **Rajaniprabha Saikiani**, who later became **Assam's first woman doctor**.
- While studying there, Chandraprabha **protested discriminatory hostel policies that favoured Christian students**, ensuring equal access for all girls.

Her early activism reflected a strong belief that **education was the foundation of women's empowerment**.

Role in the Freedom Movement

Inspired by **Mahatma Gandhi**, Chandraprabha Saikiani became actively involved in India's national movement.

- In **1921**, she addressed the **Tezpur Women's Convention**, encouraging women to participate in the **Non-Cooperation Movement**.
- She mobilised women across Assam to **boycott foreign goods and join the freedom struggle**.
- She later participated in the **Civil Disobedience Movement (1930)** and the **Quit India Movement (1942)** and was **imprisoned for her activism**.

Through her leadership, women in Assam began participating actively in political and national movements.

Challenging Social Norms in Assam

Chandraprabha Saikiani played a significant role in **breaking gender barriers in public life**.

- In **1925**, during the **Assam Sahitya Sabha session at Nagaon**, she urged women sitting behind a bamboo screen (purdah) to come forward and join the public gathering.
- This symbolic act challenged the **purdah system and gender segregation**, becoming a landmark moment in Assam's social reform history.
- Her **iconic image of cycling to work** became a symbol of women's independence.

Her personal life also reflected courage and defiance against social conventions, as she **raised her son as a single mother despite social stigma**, continuing her activism without compromise.

Institutionalising the Women's Movement

One of her most lasting contributions was the establishment of an organised women's movement.

- In **1926**, she founded the **Asom Pradeshik Mahila Samiti**, the first major women's organisation in the region.
- The organisation worked for:
 - **Women's education and employment**
 - Campaigns against **child marriage and polygamy**
 - **Gender equality and temple entry reforms**

Through her efforts, the **Hayagriva Madhava Temple at Hajo** was opened to people of all castes and genders.

Literary Contributions

Chandraprabha Saikiani was also an accomplished writer who highlighted women's issues.

- At **17 years of age**, she published her first story in the Assamese journal **Bahi**.
- Her notable novels include:
 - **Pitribhitha**
 - **Sipahi Bidroh**
 - **Dillir Sinhasan**

She also served as the editor of **Abhijatri**, the magazine of the Mahila Samiti, for several years.

Recognition and Legacy

Chandraprabha Saikiani's contributions have been widely recognised.

- She was awarded the **Padma Shri** in 1972.
- The Government of India issued a **commemorative postage stamp** in 2002 in her honour.
- Her life inspired the Sahitya Akademi award-winning novel **Abhiyatri** by Nirupama Borgohain.

Today she is remembered as **Assam's earliest feminist icon and a pioneer of women's empowerment in Northeast India**.

Key Takeaways

- Chandrababha Saikiani was **one of the earliest feminist leaders in Northeast India**.
- She connected **women's education, social reform, and the Indian freedom struggle**.
- Her leadership laid the foundation for **organised women's movements in Assam**.

One-line Wrap:

Chandrababha Saikiani transformed Assam's social landscape by **linking women's education, gender equality, and the freedom struggle into a powerful reform movement**.

7. Pradip Baruah

The passing of **Pradip Baruah** has revived public reflection on his seminal role in shaping **modern Assamese journalism, publishing and cultural life**, especially through *Prantik* and *The Assam Tribune* ecosystem.

Early life: Values shaped at home

- Pradip Baruah was born on **3 September 1938 in Dibrugarh**, into the family of **Radha Govinda Baruah**, one of the foremost builders of modern Assam.
- A childhood lesson from his father—watching a **kite soaring higher and higher**—became a lifelong metaphor for **ambition, self-belief and determination**.
- He lost his mother early and grew up under the care of his elder sister, an experience that quietly instilled **discipline and resilience**.

Education and professional training

- Schooled initially in Dibrugarh, he later studied at **Don Bosco School, Guwahati**, after the Tribune Press shifted there in 1948.
- He completed his **Intermediate (Science) and BA from Cotton College**, reflecting a strong grounding in liberal education.
- Trained in **Manchester**, he mastered **monotype, linotype and offset printing**, becoming a **self-taught master printer**—a rare blend of intellect and technical skill.

Building modern Assamese print culture

- Working alongside his father and brothers, Pradip Baruah helped transform **Assam Tribune Press** into one of the **most modern printing establishments in Northeast India**.
- He played a decisive role in ambitious publishing ventures under *Sahitya Prakash*, notably the **Bezbaroa Rachanavali**, the complete works of Lakshminath Bezbaroa.

Prantik: A turning point in Assamese journalism

- In **December 1981**, from a modest room in the Tribune campus, Pradip Baruah launched **Prantik**, with Bhabendra Nath Saikia as chief editor.
- *Prantik*:
 - Set **new standards in language journalism** in India.
 - Encouraged **modern, rational and introspective writing**, moving beyond slogan-driven literature.
 - Nurtured an **entire generation of writers and readers**, shaping critical thinking in Assamese society.
- The magazine became a **cultural institution**, not merely a periodical.

Contribution beyond journalism

- A gifted organiser, he worked quietly behind RG Baruah in:
 - Establishing **Nehru Stadium, Guwahati**.
 - Organising **national-level sports and cultural events**.
- He helped found **Madhuchayanika**, a cultural group that pioneered **film festivals in Assam** and mobilised public support for **Bhupen Hazarika's film Pratidhwani**.
- As a sportsman and cultural activist, he also led **Lions Club** initiatives focused on rural development and community service.

Personality and legacy

- Soft-spoken yet firm, Pradip Baruah believed in two core principles taught by his father:
 - **Never work under fear**, and
 - **Progress demands risk-taking**.
- He combined **ethical journalism, cultural sensitivity and modern outlook**, making him a bridge between tradition and change.

One-line wrap

Pradip Baruah was not just an editor or printer; he was a silent institution-builder who reshaped Assamese journalism, literature and cultural confidence.

Exam Hook

- Important for questions on **regional journalism, print culture and cultural modernity in Assam**.
- *Prantik* as a case study of **language journalism and social transformation**.
- Illustrates how **media institutions influence society beyond news**.

8. Swahid Piyali Baruah

February 26 marks the death anniversary of **Swahid Piyali Baruah**, who was publicly hanged in 1858 along with **Maniram Dewan** in Jorhat for plotting against British rule. Civil society groups have renewed demands to properly honour his sacrifice.

The Historical Context

The execution of Piyali Baruah and Maniram Dewan must be understood against the backdrop of the **Treaty of Yandaboo (1826)**, which formally transferred Assam from Burmese to British control after the First Anglo-Burmese War.

British rule disrupted the traditional Ahom political order, revenue systems and land rights. This led to several early resistances in Assam, including:

- **Gomadhar Konwar's rebellion (1828)** to restore Ahom sovereignty.
- Execution of **Piyoli Phukan (1830)** at Sivasagar Jail.

By 1857, when the **First War of Independence (Sepoy Mutiny)** erupted across India, Assam too witnessed a parallel uprising.

Who Was Swahid Piyali Baruah?

- Real name: **Mahesh Chandra Sarma Gabhorumelia Baruah**.
- His **grandfather** was **Jurai Gabhoru Melai Baruah**, an official in the court of Ahom King Kamaleswar Singha.
- Belong to the **Bezbaruah lineage** of Jorhat.
- Acted as the **key mobiliser and strategist** in the planned revolt.

**#AmritMahotsav***Piyali Barua***Died: 26th February, 1858**

Remembering the **revolutionary freedom fighter** who led the 1857 uprising in Assam, **Piyali Barua**, on his death anniversary.

He along with Maniram Dewan were the **masterminds** behind the execution of the Anti-British plot during the First War of Independence (1857).

His Role in the 1857 Uprising

- Travelled across Sibsagar district mobilising support.
- Inspired soldiers of the Light Infantry at Nogra (Golaghat).
- Coordinated with local patriots across communities, including Hindu and Muslim supporters.
- Planned an attack during the Durga Puja festivities.

However, British authorities intercepted secret letters. After a trial by Special Commissioner **Charles John Holroyd**, both Piyali Baruah and Maniram Dewan were publicly hanged on **February 26, 1858** near Na-Ali in Jorhat.

Exam Hook**Key Takeaways**

- Assam actively participated in the 1857 uprising.
- Treaty of Yandaboo marked the beginning of British rule in Assam.
- Piyali Baruah and Maniram Dewan were executed in 1858.
- Regional freedom fighters are crucial for balanced historiography.

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