

NEWS TODAY

Supreme court issues guidelines against stereotyping of differently abled in Visual media and films

The Supreme Court observed that stereotyping differently abled persons **perpetuates discrimination and inequality.**

- Stereotyping is a **specific belief or assumption (thoughts)** about individuals based solely on their membership in a group, **regardless of their individual characteristics.**

Key Guidelines:

- **The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)** must seek the opinion of **experts on disability before certifying films for screening.**
 - ⊕ **'Nothing about us, without us'** principle shall be followed to ensure inclusivity.
- Visual media should strive to **depict diverse realities of persons** with disabilities, showcasing their challenges and successes, talents, and contribution to society.
- Films and visual media content must search for an **accurate representation of a medical condition as much as possible.**

Status of Person with Disability (PwD) in India according to 2011 census

- **2.21%** of total population
- Among the disabled population **56% are males and 44% are females.**
- Majority (69%) of the disabled population **resided in rural areas.**

Major Challenges Faced by PwDs in India

- **Limited accessibility** to public spaces, transportation, and buildings
- **Stereotypes hinder their opportunities** for social integration, perpetuating a **cycle of exclusion and isolation.**
- **Inaccessible workplaces, lack of accommodations, and shortage of trained educators** limit their employment opportunities.

Initiatives taken to empower PwDs in India:

- **National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006**
- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016** to give effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Accessible India Campaign:** to eliminate obstacles and barriers to indoor and outdoor facilities
- **Draft Guidelines of Accessibility Standards in the Public Exhibition of Feature Films in Cinema theatres** for persons with hearing and visual impairment.

22nd India-Russia Annual Summit concluded

The **Prime Minister of India** co-chaired the Annual Summit with the **President of Russia** in Moscow.

- Joint statement was released after the summit.

Major Outcomes

- **Trade and Economic partnership:**
 - ⊕ Set the bilateral trade target of **USD 100 billion by 2030.**
 - ⊕ Promote bilateral settlement system using **national currencies.**
 - ⊕ Expanding energy cooperation across **nuclear, oil, and petrochemical sectors**, including infrastructure and technology.
- **Transport and Connectivity:** Increase of cargo turnover with India by implementing projects like **North-South International Transport Corridor, the Northern Sea Route and the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor.**
- **Comprehensive reform of the UNSC:** To reflect contemporary global realities and to make it more representative, effective and efficient.
- **Counter Terrorism:** Demanded for expeditious finalization and adoption of the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the UN framework.**
 - ⊕ Also implementation of the UNGA and the UNSC resolutions on countering terrorism and violent extremism, conducive to terrorism.
- **On Ukraine:** Peaceful resolution of the conflict around Ukraine through dialogue and diplomacy including engagement between both parties.
- **Military cooperation:** agreed to encourage joint manufacturing in India of spare parts, components, aggregates and other products for maintenance of **Russian origin arms and defence equipment** under Make-in-India program.

Related News

Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle

- Prime Minister of India awarded Russia's highest civilian honour, **the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle.**
 - ⊕ The award was announced in **2019**, for "exceptional services in promoting special & privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly relations between the Russian and Indian people".
- Established in 1698, It is awarded for the most outstanding **civilian or military merit.**

ICOMOS launches World Heritage Transhumance Initiative to highlight the heritage value of Transhumance Cultural Landscapes

The initiative is led by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and supported by Azerbaijan.

- Initiative aims to highlight complex **environmental, cultural and social dimensions** of transhumance, **promote international cooperation** and building awareness of its **contribution to human heritage**.

About Transhumance

- Transhumance is the **traditional practice of seasonal livestock movement**, which involves the migration of human communities along with their herds.
- It is a **common practice in several mountainous regions** throughout the world.
- In 2023, **two transhumance traditions** – Transhumance in **10 European States** and Alpine Pasture season of **Switzerland** – were **declared Intangible Cultural Heritages of Humanity**.

Significance of Transhumance Landscapes

- Since prehistoric times, it **exemplified the sustainable use and intelligent adaptation** to often inhospitable environments amid changing climatic conditions.
- It ensures **food security** and fosters **social inclusion and strengthens cultural identity**.
- Promote **conservation of ecosystem and biodiversity** as it plays a role in habitat conservation, seed dispersal, fire prevention etc.

Transhumance Landscapes of India

- The transhumance practice is prevalent in the **Himalayas**, where there are several nomadic tribes such as **Gujars, Bakarwals, Gaddis and Changpas**, who rear sheep and goats.
 - ⊖ Animals are moved to **subalpine and alpine pastures during summer**, while during winter they are grazed on adjoining plains.
- This system also exists in the **plains**, such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

Threat to Transhumance Culture

- Economic changes **favouring settlements**, reduced **grazing area, climate change and diversion of land** for industrial purposes and urban development.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued advisory aiming at eliminating the need for begging

The 'Advisory for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Impoverished, Uneducated Children, Women, and Differently-abled Individuals Engaged in Begging' identifies **eight key areas for action** by Centre and State governments and UT administrations.

- As per the 2011 census, there were **more than 413 thousand beggars and vagrants** in India.

Key Action Areas

- **Survey, identification. Mapping and preparing Data Bank** for building a national database.
- **Rehabilitation of individuals engaged in beggary** through Shelter homes, education, and necessary assistance.
- **Healthcare:** Mental health care, de-addiction and healthcare services in shelter homes.
- **Education:** Early childhood care (Article 45) and Free and compulsory education (Article 21A).
- **Drafting a National Policy for the protection and rehabilitation** of individuals involved in beggary and **decriminalising begging**.
- Collaboration with NGOs, civil society organisations, private sector, charitable trusts for skill training programmes.
- Access to financial services through **Self-help Groups (SHGs)**.
- **Awareness generation, sensitization and monitoring**.

Issues associated with Beggary

- Beggary is a **socio-economic issue** caused by poverty, lack of education, and limited employment opportunities.
- As a result of **societal neglect**, physically challenged individuals have to depend on others for survival and daily sustenance.
- **Systemic deficiencies and structural inequalities** perpetuate poverty.
- **Organized groups** often manipulate vulnerable children into begging.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Preamble** postulates 'Justice - social, economic and political', and 'Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual'.
- **Article 23:** State should strive to prohibit **all forms of human trafficking, beggary and forced labour**.

Government Initiatives:

- Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959
- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
- **SMILE is a Central Sector Scheme designed for the comprehensive rehabilitation of individuals engaged in begging.**

Ahom era 'Moidams' recommended for inclusion in UNESCO World Heritage List

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has recommended inclusion of Assam's Ahom Era Moidams in UNESCO World Heritage List.

- ICOMOS is an **advisory body** of UNESCO World Heritage Committee for **implementation of World Heritage Convention of UNESCO**.

Ahom 'Moidam'

- Situated in Assam's Charaideo district, they are the **burial grounds of rulers of Ahom kingdom**, and are often compared to pyramids of Egypt.

- ⊕ In 13th century, **Chau-lung Siu-ka-pha**, the **founder of Ahom kingdom**, established his **first capital at Che-rai-doi or Charaideo** (at the foothill of Patkai hills).

Architectural features:

- ⊕ Exterior of Moidams is **hemispherical** and their sizes vary depending upon the power and status of the person buried.

- ⊕ Moidam consists of **three major features**:

- ◆ A **Vaulted Chamber** with a **centrally raised platform** where the body was laid,
- ◆ A **hemispherical earthen mound** covering the chamber with a brick structure (Chaw-chali), and
- ◆ **Octagonal boundary wall** around mound's base having an **arched gateway** on its west.

- ⊕ Several **objects** used by deceased during his life, like royal insignia, objects made in wood or ivory or iron, gold pendants etc. were **buried with them**.

- ⊕ **The Changrung Phukan** (canonical text developed by the Ahoms) record the materials used to construct Moidams which include **wood, stone and burnt bricks**.



Indian scientists develop Open-source tool for the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT)

It will create a comprehensive star catalogue for the **Adaptive Optics system (AOS)** of the TMT, enabling TMT to generate sharper astronomical images

- Telescopes on Earth's surface **face atmospheric distortion**, affecting the quality of images (more pronounced in telescopes with **high light-collection capacities**, like the TMT).

- To counteract this, an AOS is used.

About Adaptive Optics system

- Involves **sophisticated, deformable mirrors** controlled by computers to **correct the distortion** caused by turbulence of Earth's atmosphere in **real-time**.

- To achieve this, it requires a **fairly bright reference star** (close to the object under study) to measure the blurring that has to be corrected by the deformable mirror.

- ⊕ Above mentioned **AOS system** on TMT, aka **Narrow Field Infrared Adaptive Optics System (NFIRAOS)**, would be enhanced by a Laser Guide Star (LGS) facility.

- ⊕ It would require feedback from **three real stars**, known as **Natural Guide Stars (NGS)**.

Ground Based Astronomy

- It involves **large telescopes** located on Earth's surface employing sophisticated optics to capture and **analyze celestial objects**.

- Unlike space based telescopes, they are **cost effective** and **easier to maintain**.

- It includes the Extremely Large Telescopes currently under development: **The Thirty Meter Telescope**, the **Giant Magellan Telescope**, and the **European Southern Observatory**.

Thirty Meter Telescope

- It is being installed at Maunakea in Hawaii, designed and developed by the **TMT International Observatory LLC (TIO)**.

- ⊕ TIO is a non-profit international partnership involving the USA, Japan, **India (Department of Science and Technology)**, and Canada.

- **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**, Bengaluru, the **Inter-University Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA)**, Pune, and the **Aryabhata Research Institute for Observational Sciences (ARIES)**, Nainital are involved in collaboration with TMT.

Also in News



Jute

Ministry of Rural Development organized Webinar to boost Jute Craft based livelihoods

About Jute:

- **Jute is a Kharif crop**

- Jute, a stem or bast fibre, is also known as **the golden fibre**.

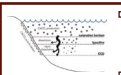
Climatic Conditions:

- ⊕ It grows well on **alluvial soil**
- ⊕ **High temperature, heavy rainfall and humid climate** are required during the time of growth.

- **Producing states:** West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura and Meghalaya.

- India is the **largest producer of raw jute and jute goods** and stands at **second place as an exporter after Bangladesh**.

- **Due to its high cost**, it is losing market to synthetic fibres.



Carbonate Compensation Depth (CCD)

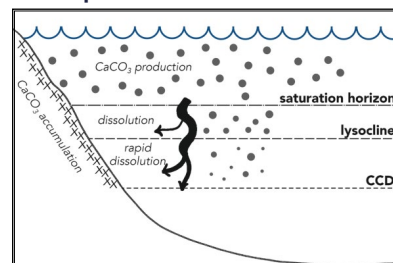
Research indicates that the Carbonate Compensation Depth (CCD) is expanding.

About CCD

- It is defined as the water depth at which the **rate of supply of calcium carbonate** from the surface is equal to the rate of dissolution.

- In the deep ocean, **carbonate particles** in bottom sediments are supplied by the **die-off of surface plankton** that secrete calcium carbonate tests or shells.

- When these shells fall below a certain water depth (around 4,000 meters), they **begin to dissolve** as ocean waters become undersaturated with respect to calcium carbonate because of **increasing pressure**, **decreasing temperature** and **increasing amounts of dissolved CO₂**.





Financial Inclusion Index

RBI released Financial Inclusion Index for March 2024

- The value of the Index for March 2024 stands at 64.2 vis-à-vis 60.1 in March 2023

About Financial Inclusion Index:

- It is a comprehensive index incorporating details of **banking, investments, insurance, postal as well as the pension sector.**
- It captures the extent of **financial inclusion across the country.**
- Single value index (0 to 100), where **0 is complete exclusion and 100 is full inclusion.**
- It includes three broad parameters viz., **Access (35%), Usage (45%), and Quality (20%).**
- It is published annually in July.



Prime Minister's Science, Technology & Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)

The 25th PM-STIAC meeting was held.

About PM-STIAC

- **Constituted in 2018.**
- **Functions:**
 - ⊕ It serves as an overarching council to assess the status of various science and technology-related matters, comprehend challenges, formulate interventions, develop a futuristic roadmap, and **advise the Prime Minister accordingly**
 - ⊕ It also oversees the implementation of interventions by concerned S&T departments, agencies, and other government ministries.
- **Missions approved by the PM-STIAC:** Deep Ocean Exploration Mission, AI (Artificial Intelligence) Mission, National Quantum Mission, Electric Vehicle Mission, and AGNI Mission, etc.



Mitochondrial Disease (Mito)

New IVF procedure called mitochondrial donation (currently under trial in Australia) offers a cure to Mito.

- **Mitochondria is the Powerhouse** of the cells producing **90% of the energy** needed to sustain life.

About Mito

- **Inherited metabolic condition** caused by **genetic mutation** in the DNA.
- It impairs the **ability of mitochondria** to convert food and oxygen into energy.
- **Two Kinds** (as there are two types of DNA):
 - ⊕ **Nuclear DNA**, inherited from both parents.
 - ⊕ **DNA of the mitochondria**, passed down through the mother.



Fly Ash

Ministry of Coal is taking proactive measures for disposal and repurposing of **Fly Ash generated by thermal power plants.**

About Fly Ash

- Fly ash is a **byproduct from burning pulverized coal** in thermal power generating plants.
- As per the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notification of 2009**, the term "fly ash" means and includes, all ash generated such as **Electrostatic Precipitator (ESP) ash, dry fly ash, bottom ash, pond ash and mound ash.**
- Its composition includes silicon dioxide (SiO₂), calcium oxide (CaO), and aluminium oxide (Al₂O₃).
- **Uses:** Manufacture of building materials, replacement of cement, enhancement of soil fertility etc.



Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

CCPA directs an online travel platform to refund booking amounts to consumers affected by COVID-19 lockdown.

CCPA

- **Statutory body:** established in 2020 under **section 10** of the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019.**
- **Objective:** To promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- **Composition:** **Chief Commissioner** and such number of **other Commissioners** as may be prescribed.
- **Powers and functions:** Conduct investigations into violation of consumer rights and institute complaints / prosecution, order recall of unsafe goods and services, etc.



Vachana Literature

Fa.Gu. Halakatti, renowned for his role in revitalizing Vachana Literature was remembered on his birth anniversary.

About Vachana Literature

- **"That which is spoken"** is the literal meaning of the term "vachanas".
- Type of **Kannada rhythmic composition** (also known as Kannada poetry) which originated in the 11th century and thrived throughout the 12th century as element of the **Sharana movement.**
 - ⊕ **Guru Basavanna** spearheaded the Sharana movement in Karnataka.
- **Madara Chennaiah**, an eleventh century **cobbler-saint** who lived in the time of the Western Chalukyas' rule, is considered as the **"father of Vachana poetry"** by certain researchers.



Kartarpur Corridor

Recently, Pakistan completed the long-awaited bridge at Kartarpur Corridor zero line.

About Kartarpur Corridor

- Corridor links **Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, with the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district in India's Punjab state.**
- **Followers of Guru Nanak Dev** built the Dera Baba Nanak town.
- Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak is about **1 km from the Indo- Pakistan border and on the east bank of River Ravi** while Kartarpur Sahib is located on west bank of River Ravi.



Gaur and Sambar

Study by **National Centre for Biological Sciences** revealed disruption in genetic connectivity of **two large herbivores – Gaur and Sambar –** due to change in land use patterns and roads in **Central Indian Landscape.**

Gaur/Indian Bison (Bos gaurus)

- **About:** Grazing animal, lives in groups of about 30 to 40.
- **Habitat:** Mostly found in Western Ghats.
- **Threat:** Poaching, Food scarcity, etc.
- **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
- **WPA, 1972:** Schedule I
- **CITES:** Appendix I

Sambar (Rusa unicorn)

- **About:** Large deer, predated by Indian Leopard, Bengal Tiger and Dhole.
- ⊕ **State animal of Odisha.**
- **Habitat:** Native to Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.
- **Threat:** Habitat Encroachment and hunting.
- **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
- **WPA, 1972:** Schedule I

