

NEWS TODAY

India- Brunei Darussalam Elevate Bilateral Ties to 'Enhanced Partnership'

'Enhanced Partnership' symbolizes a new phase in India-Brunei relations, with a focus on mutual cooperation and shared strategic interests.

- It was the **first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Brunei.**
- Both countries **established diplomatic relations in 1984.**

Key Highlights of the visit

- **Acknowledged to expand defence cooperation** through joint exercises, training programs etc.
- Agreed on the importance of pursuing a **policy of development rather than expansionism in Southeast Asia.**
 - ⊖ Experts observe it as a counter to Chinese influence.
- Agreed to work together for **enhanced multilateralism reflective of contemporary realities.**
- **Cooperation in the operation of Telemetry, Tracking, and Telecommand Station** for Satellite and Launch Vehicles.
- **Leveraging respective strengths** including in technology, finance, manufacturing and processing.

Significance of Brunei Darussalam for India

- **Strategic Importance:** Important partner in India's **Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision.**
 - ⊖ Brunei is also an ASEAN member.
- **Indian Diaspora:** Approximately 14,000 Indians are residing in Brunei.
- **Energy Security:** India is one of the **largest importers of crude oil from Brunei** (approximately USD 500-600 million every year).
- **Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS):** Brunei continuously participated in **VOGSS**, an Indian-led initiative.



One Year Completed Since the Launch of India's First Solar Mission Aditya L1

The mission was launched by PLSV-C57 to **observe the Sun from a halo orbit.**

- It was inserted in its targeted halo orbit in January 2024.

About Aditya-L1 Mission

- **Objectives:** To understand:
 - ⊖ **Coronal Heating** and Solar Wind Acceleration;
 - ⊖ **Initiation of Coronal Mass Ejection (CME)**, flares and near-earth space weather;
 - ⊖ **Solar wind distribution** and temperature anisotropy etc.
- **Placed at Lagrangian point L1:** Continuously viewing the Sun without any occultation/eclipses, reduced fuel consumption etc. are the key advantages of L1.
- **7 payloads:** Four payloads **directly view the Sun** and three payloads carry out **in-situ studies of particles and fields at L1**, thus providing insights into the **propagatory effect of solar dynamics** in interplanetary medium.
- **Lifespan:** 5 years
- **Achievements:**
 - ⊖ **Captured images of Sun** through payloads SUIT and VELC.
 - ⊖ **Completion of First Halo Orbit in July.**
 - ◆ Aditya-L1 in the Halo orbit takes **178 days to complete a revolution around the L1 point.**
 - ⊖ **Full validation for state-of-the-art flight dynamics software** developed by U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) of ISRO for the Aditya-L1 missions.

Other Solar Missions

- **Hinotori (ASTRO-A)** launched by Japan in 1980s.
- **Parker Solar Probe** launched by US in 2018 (first spacecraft to "touch" the sun)
- **Solar and Heliospheric Observatory Satellite (SOHO)** mission launched Jointly by NASA-ESA (longest-lived Sun-watching satellite).

About Lagrange points

- At Lagrange points, gravitational pull of two large masses (like Sun and Earth) precisely equals the centripetal force required for a small object to move with them.
- Thus, **objects sent there tend to remain stationary.**
- Of the **five Lagrange points, three (L1, L2, L3) are unstable** and **two (L4, L5) are stable.**

Rajasthan Cabinet approves 33% reservation for women in police force

Earlier states like Bihar, Gujrat, Odisha, and Maharashtra have also provided for women quotas in the police force.

- In 2022, women made up about 12% of the state police. Chandigarh had the highest at 22%, while Jammu and Kashmir had the lowest at 3.3% (India Justice Report, 2022).

Need for more women in Police Force

- **Legal Mandate:** POCSO Act and major criminal laws now require every case of sexual assault to be recorded and investigated by a female police officer.
 - ⊕ The arrest of a woman and searching a woman must be done by a woman only.
- **Better reporting of Crime Against Women:** Presence of women can foster trust among female victims, encouraging them to report crimes.
- **Improved police-community relations:** This is because women's use of excessive force is less common.

Challenges in increasing women representation in Police

- **Stereotype:** Women are seen to be unfit for long and unpredictable hours of the police system.
- **Policy gap:** Absence of reservation policy in many states (Police is a state subject under the 7th Schedule of the Constitution)
- **Implementation gap:** E.g., Bihar provides 35% reservation for women, but actual number in police force is about 17.4%.

Initiatives to increase women representation in Police force



Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued advisories to all the States/UTs to establish **at least one all-women police station in each district.**



MHA issued advisories to all the States/UTs to **increase representation of women police to 33% of the total strength**



Creches and Day Care Centres have been provided by the CAPFs to women employees.



All female candidates are **exempted from payment of application fee in CAPFs exams.**

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launches Vishvasya-Blockchain Technology Stack

Blockchain is a **Distributed Ledger Technology** i.e., a **shared irreversible ledger** that facilitates the process of **recording transactions and tracking assets** across a business network.

- **Google Doc** can be taken as an **analogy to understand the 'distributed nature' of Blockchain technology.** When a Google doc is created and shared, the document is distributed instead of copied or transferred.'

About Vishvasya (BaaS)

- It has been launched to offer **Blockchain-as-a-Service (BaaS)** with a **geographically distributed infrastructure** designed to **support various permissioned Blockchain based applications.**
 - ⊕ BaaS refers to **third-party cloud-based infrastructure** and management for companies building and operating blockchain apps.
- It is a part of the broader **National Blockchain Framework** provided under National Strategy on Blockchain.
 - ⊕ NBF is meant for **effectively utilize the Blockchain technology in different domains** such as health, agriculture, education, finance, etc.
- It seeks to **addresses the challenges of Blockchain adoption** across various stakeholders including Infrastructure Providers, Smart Contract Developers, etc.

Vishvasya BaaS Features



Rapid end-to-end Permissioned Blockchain Security Audited Application Development & Deployment



Ready to use Security Audited Blockchain Containers for Production setup



Blockchain specific Security Audit Guidelines & Best Practices



Geographically Distributed Infrastructure across three Data Centres (Hyderabad, Pune and Bhubaneswar)



Framework Augmented with Documentation for easy onboarding of Stakeholders



NBF Lite - Light weight platform bundled & offered for Rapid prototyping, Research & Learning

MeitY also unveiled:

- **NBFLite-Lightweight Blockchain Platform:** A Blockchain **sandbox platform for startups/academia** for rapid prototyping of applications, carrying out research and capacity building.
- **Praamaanik:** A blockchain-enabled solution for **verifying the origin of mobile apps.**
- **National Blockchain Portal**

Centre and Tripura sign an agreement with insurgent groups

A Memorandum of Settlement was signed between the Union government and the Tripura government and the **National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF)**.

Key highlights of agreement

- **NLFT & ATTF have agreed to abjure path of violence**, lay down all their arms and ammunition and disband their armed organisations.
- **Centre has approved a special package of Rs 250 crore** for the overall development of the tribal population of Tripura.

Reasons for Insurgency in North Eastern Region (NER)

- **Historical neglect** in integrating hill areas of Assam during pre-British and British colonial rule.
- **Continuous lack of economic opportunities** creates incentives for unemployed youths to join armed movements
- Ethnic communities view **'the use of force' as more effective than non-violent dissent in getting attention.**
- **Existence of external help.**

Major Initiatives and Peace Process in NER

- **Peace accords/agreements in NER:** Government has signed 12 important agreements in recent times.
- **Reduction of 'disturbed areas' under AFSPA:** For instance, AFSPA from Tripura lifted in 2015
- **Ceasefire/ Suspension of Operation/ other agreements in NER**
- **Inter-state boundary agreements:** In 2022, Assam and Meghalaya's chief ministers signed an MoU to resolve their decades-long inter-state boundary dispute.

India needs to be cautious against excessive 'financialisation' says Chief Economic Advisor

Financialization is a process whereby financial markets, financial institutions, and financial elites **gain greater influence over economic policy** and economic outcomes.

- Thus, **financial intermediaries** and technologies gain **unprecedented influence over our daily lives.**
- It also describes **moving investments away from traditional, 'physical' asset** (like real estate, gold) **towards 'financial assets'** (like mutual funds).

Factors driving financialisation

- **Rising middle class** with higher disposable income
- **Inflation** due to which households are seeking higher returns beyond fixed deposits
- **Government incentives** on these instruments
- Increasing **digitisation and financial inclusion**

Why is excessive financialisation a concern?

- **Increased Inequality:** Financial income is funneled to top 1% of population through equity ownership.
- **Distorts functioning of economy:** Profits flow increasingly from financial investments, rather than trade in goods and services.
 - ⊖ Thus, **movements of stock market primarily determines functioning of economy** instead of production of employment or rising standards of living.
- **Rising Household debts:** Stagnation of real wages may increase Households' reliance on loans (as seen in U.S economy).
- **Adverse impacts on policies:** Financialisation may push for policies favouring **predatory lending, higher risk-taking and erosion of worker protections.**

Developing countries often face debilitating crises when financial market 'innovations' and growth run ahead of economic growth for e.g the Asian crisis of 1997-98. Therefore, India needs to have an orderly and gradual evolution of the financial market.



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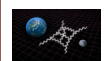


Phrynarachne decipiens

Phrynarachne decipiens has been **recorded for the first time in the country** from Assam's Kamrup district and Kokrajhar district.

About Phrynarachne decipiens

- Popularly known as the **bird dung or bird-dropping crab spider.**
 - ⊕ Spiders of the genus Phrynarachne resemble a **blob of bird dropping**, and even smell like feces or urine.
 - ⊕ This may help it **attract and ambush prey, and avoid the notice of predators**
- Generally found in **Malaysia and Indonesia's Java and Sumatra.**



Quantum gravity (QG)

Indian Researchers have moved a step forward towards the **unification of classical & quantum gravity.**

- They have **obtained an uncertainty relation induced from the noise of gravitons.**
 - ⊖ A graviton is a **hypothetical particle** that is **believed to mediate the gravitational interaction.**

About Quantum gravity (QG)

- QG is a field of **theoretical physics** that seeks to describe **gravity** according to the **principles of quantum mechanics.**
- It deals with environments in which neither **gravitational nor quantum effects can be ignored**, such as in the vicinity of **black holes or neutron stars.**



Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)

The PCIM&H has achieved the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Integrated Management System (IMS) Certifications.

About PCIM&H

- Subordinate office under Ministry of AYUSH.
- Institution for establishing and maintaining standards for Indian medicine and homoeopathy.
- Act as Central Drug Testing cum Appellate Laboratory for IM&H.
- Imparts capacity building training to drug regulatory authorities engaged in quality control pertaining to IM&H.
- Maintains an authentic Reference Raw Materials (RRM) Repository for IM&H.

Note: Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) is a separate Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, responsible to set standards of drugs in the country.



Household Savings Rate

RBI Deputy governor said that Household savings will remain top net lenders to the economy in the coming decades.

- He noted that household savings are increasing from 10.6% during 2011-2017 to 11.5% during 2017-2023.

Household savings

- Household savings rate is expressed as ratio of household savings to GDP.
- household savings are categorized into
 - Financial savings: currency, deposits, life insurance funds, etc.
 - Decline in financial savings poses challenges for banking sector in maintaining liquidity and managing credit risk.
 - Physical savings: physical assets along with savings made in gold and silver.
- In India, household sector typically generates surplus savings relative to its investments, lending the excess to other sectors.



Poshan Tracker initiative

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has been awarded a National Award for e-Governance 2024 for their Poshan Tracker initiative.

Poshan Tracker initiative

- It is a tech tool to monitor Mission Poshan 2.0's progress, including growth measurements, Aadhar verification, and real-time tracking of nutrition services.

Benefits

- Tracks last mile service delivery through 1.3 Million Anganwadi Workers
- Provides nutritional services to 101 Million beneficiaries
- Technology under Poshan Tracker is being leveraged for dynamic identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence among children.



Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

ONDC awarded Gold Award under category "Application of Emerging Technologies for Providing Citizen-Centric Services" in National Awards for e-Governance by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

About ONDC

- Aims at promoting open networks for all aspects of exchange of goods and services over digital or electronic networks.
- Expected to make e-Commerce more inclusive and accessible for consumers.
- It is an initiative of the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.
- ONDC was incorporated as a Section 8 (not for profit) company with the Quality Council of India and Protean eGov Technologies Limited as Founding Members.



Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS)

Ministry of Labor and Employment approved CPPS for Employees' Pension Scheme.

About CPPS

- It establishes a national-level centralized system enabling pensioners to receive their pensions from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country.
 - Existing pension disbursement system is decentralized, with each zonal/regional office of EPFO maintaining separate agreements with only 3-4 banks.
- It will be launched as part of EPFO's Centralized IT Enabled System (CITES 2.01) from 1st January 2025.
- In the next phase, CPPS will enable a smooth transition to Aadhaar-based payment system (ABPS).



India Graphene Engineering and Innovation Centre (IGEIC)

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched IGEIC under the Graphene Aurora program (GAP).

- GAP was launched in 2022 to nurture the deep/emerging Graphene technology & innovation ecosystem.
- It is implemented by Digital University Kerala.

About IGEIC

- Incorporated as not for profit, section 8 company in Trivandrum, Kerala.
- Aims to create a hub of excellence in graphene technology commercialization.
- It shall fill the gap between R&D and commercialization by providing a complete facility to startup and industry.

Earlier MeitY had launched India's first graphene centre-the India Innovation Centre for Graphene (IICG) in Kerala

Personalities in News



Vallinayagam Olaganathan Chidambaram Pillai

Vallinayagam Olaganathan Chidambaram Pillai (5 September 1872- 18 November 1936)

- Popularly 'Kappalottiya Tamilian' (the Tamilian who ran the ship) and Sekkizuththa Semmal [scholarly gentry who suffered at the oil press]
 - He was the first Indian to run a Swadeshi Ship (in 1906)
- Was disciple of Lokamanya Tilak.
- Interested in labour welfare and participated in Tuticorin Coral Mills strike (1908)
- Literary Works: Meyyaram, Meyyarivu, a commentary on the Thirukural and compiled ancient works of Tamil grammar, Tholkappiam.

Values: Leadership, Perseverance, Patriotism, etc.

