

Lachit Barphukan

❖ Context

- Recently, The **3-day long celebrations of 400th birth anniversary** of Ahom commander **Lachit Barphukan** began on 23 November in New Delhi.

Key Highlights

- Union Finance minister inaugurated **exhibition on this occasion** highlighting the life and achievement of Ahom dynasty and Lachit Barphukan among others.
- Today, Lachit Barphukan's victory is honoured with a **gold medal given every year to the best cadet** graduating from the National Defence Academy (NDA).
- A **bust of Lachit** stands at the NDA's entrance.
- In February 2022, The former President laid the foundation stone of a **150-foot bronze statue** of Borphukan at Hollongapar in Jorhat, Assam.



About Lachit Borphukan

- Lachit Borphukan was **born on 24th November 1622**.
- Lachit was **well-trained in humanities, scriptures and military skills** and was appointed as the Commander of the Ahom army by the then-king, Chakradwaj Singha.
- The Ahom Kingdom **resisted the invasion of the Mughal Empire** several times and reigned in present-day Assam for over 600 years.
- The **Ahom Dynasty was founded in 1228** in Assam's Brahmaputra Valley.
- The first King of the Ahom Kingdom was **Chaolung Sukaphaa**, who crossed the Patkai mountainous region to reach the Brahmaputra valley.
- In **1615**, the Ahom Dynasty engaged in its first significant conflict with the Mughal Empire.
- The Mughals conquered the **Ahom capital of Garhgaon in 1662** but were defeated in later battles.
- Finally, during the **battle of Saraighat in 1671**, the Ahoms led by Lachit Borphukan successfully **defeated the Mughals**.
- Borphukan is mainly known for his leadership in this battle.
- By 1682, the Mughal influence in the region was completely eradicated.

Champions of the Earth Award

❖ Context

- Indian wildlife biologist Dr Purnima Devi Barman is among the honourees of this year's Champions of the Earth award.

Key highlights

- The award is the **UN's highest environmental honour**, accorded for their transformative action to prevent, halt and reverse ecosystem degradation.
- The award was established by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** in 2005.
- Dr. Barman is working in Assam to protect the greater adjutant storks, known as '**hargila**' in Assamese (meaning 'bone swallower').
- To change the perceptions of the bird as a bad omen, she assembled a group of village women to help her and named the group as the '**Hargila Army**'.

About the greater adjutant storks

- The greater adjutant stork (*Leptoptilos dubius*) is the **second-rarest stork species** in the world.
 - Their population has dropped to 1,200 today, **less than 1%** of what they numbered a century ago, due to the destruction of their natural habitat.
 - Their current IUCN status is **Endangered**.
- Once commonly found in northern and north-eastern India, it is now confined to certain pockets of **Assam and Bihar**.



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- She also helped the women to become self-sufficient by weaving looms and yarn. They now create and sell textiles decorated with motifs of the 'hargila'.
- There is a small breeding population in **Cambodia**.
- The bird is also a **scavenger**. It, often, carries the garbage and animal carcasses to its nest and drops to the ground below and on rooftops and wells, provoking the villagers.

Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid

❖ Context

- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has proposed to extend its waterways connectivity project to South-east Asia right up to Thailand, aiming to link regional river routes to develop trade.

Key highlights

- The project is called the Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid. It will be an **extension of the India-Bangladesh protocol route**.
- The plan is to link economically weaker eastern and **North-eastern India** and **Bangladesh** with northern India, **Nepal** and **Bhutan**, benefitting about 600 million people.
- This will then be **linked with Myanmar** from Mizoram using the inland waterway terminal coming up near **Sittwe sea port** which has been built by India. Sittwe is connected to Mizoram (through river routes).
- From there the river system will link with **Thailand** and move further South to **Malaysia and Singapore**.
- The network will cover a distance of over **5,000 km** and crosses **eight countries**.
- The trade that can be conducted through the network is estimated at over **\$50 billion**.
- The discussion with countries has already been initiated at the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** forum.



- The objective of India's 'Act East Policy' is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Asia-Pacific region by providing enhanced connectivity to the States of North Eastern Region.

Project Unnati

❖ Context

- The Union Rural Development Ministry has proposed to link performances of the States under the project with its labour budget for the upcoming financial year.

Key highlights

- The project aims to **reduce dependence** on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (**MGNREGS**) by imparting skill training to its beneficiaries.
- Under the project, **one adult member (18-45 years) of a household** that has completed 100 days of work under the MGNREGS, is trained.
- The intention of upgrading the skill base was to **help them transition from partial employment to full employment**.

Progress so far

About the project

- It was **launched in 2020** for a period till March 2022. It has been extended by two years.
- Under the project, the selected candidates are skilled using **three established training programmes** — the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY), the Rural Self Training Institute (RSETI) and the Krishi Vigyan Kendra.
- The **Grameen Kaushal Yojana** is a **placement-linked programme**, in which **70% of the trained candidates have to be compulsorily employed** with a minimum salary of ₹6,000 per month.
- The **RSETI** is for entrepreneurial skills where persons in the age group of 18-45 get short-term residential training with long-term hand-holding support for up to two years.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Ministry, at least 20% of the households that complete 100 days of work under MGNREGS, should be targeted by the States under the scheme to fully utilise its potential. However, since its inception, a little over 25,000 persons have been trained under the project, falling far short of its target of 2 lakh. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Krishi Vigyan Kendra trains candidates in trades related to the agricultural sectors. The candidates undergoing training are paid a stipend for a maximum period of 100 days and for one program per household as per the wage rate prevailing in the concerned State/UT. Full expenditures towards a stipend, against wage loss compensation, are entirely borne by the Central Government. |
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News in Between the Lines

National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)



❖ Context

- Recently, **National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, NIEPA**, celebrated the Diamond Jubilee anniversary of its establishment in New Delhi.

❖ Key Highlights

- The Institute was **set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now known as Ministry of Education), in 1962.**
- In 2006, NIEPA was given the status of a **Deemed to be University.**
- The Institution is one of the **first institutions established in the world** in the area of education and planning.
- It is a premier organization dealing with **capacity building and research in planning and management of education** not only in India but also in **South Asia.**
- Over the past six decades, the institute has acquired a global reputation as one of the most recognized national institutions in the theory and practice of educational policy, planning and administration.

Manipur Sangai Festival



❖ Context

- Recently, **Union Tourism Minister** inaugurated the **'Manipur Sangai Festival 2022'** at the Sangai Ethnic Park, Moirang Khunou in Bishnupur district.

❖ Key Highlights



- The **10-day-long festival** will be held in 13 venues across six districts in the northeastern state till November 30.
- The **theme for the event is "Festival of Oneness"**. It promotes a sense of belonging and creates pride in ownership of land among people.

❖ About Manipur Sangai Festival

- Sangai festival is an **annual cultural festival organised by Manipur Tourism Department** every year from 21 to 30 November.
- It stage the uniqueness of the shy and gentle brow-antlered deer popularly known as the **Sangai**, a regional name given to this rare species of deer.
 - It is the **state animal of Manipur.**
- This festival is being celebrated to promote Manipur as a world class tourism destination.
- It showcases the states contributions to art and culture, handloom, handicrafts, fine arts, indigenous sports, cuisine, music and adventure sports, as well as the natural environment.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Manipur's classical dance form – Ras Leela – is a key performance that is organized during this festival. ➤ Other folk dances performed during this occasion are Kabui Naga dance, Bamboo dance, Maibi dance, Lai Haraoba dance, Khamba Thoibi dance and others. ➤ Another key feature of this festival is indigenous sports like Thang Ta.
<p style="text-align: center;">Gutti Koya tribes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context ➤ A Forest Range Officer (FRO) was killed allegedly by a group of Gutti Koya Adivasis in Telangana's Bhadradi Kothagudem district. ❖ Key highlights ➤ Gutti Koya are a sub-tribe of Koya tribe which lives in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. ➤ They call themselves "Koitor" meaning people. ➤ The Koyas living in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh are called Dorla and Madia. ➤ Their mother tongue is Gondi - a Dravidian language. They can also speak Odia & Telugu languages. ➤ Traditionally, Koyas are pastoralists and shifting cultivators. ➤ Gutti Koyas migrated from Chhattisgarh to adjacent Andhra Pradesh (now Telangana), decades ago in 2005, when violence escalated in the southern part of Dandakaranya forest area due to the government-supported anti-Maoist programme called Salwa Judum. ➤ The migrant tribals claimed themselves as 'podu' cultivators and forest land as 'podu land'. Podu means shifting cultivation. ➤ The State government is conducting a survey of 'podu lands' as per the provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 to find a permanent solution to the issue.
<p style="text-align: center;">Kameng Hydropower Project</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context ➤ Recently, Prime Minister of India dedicated the 600 MW Kameng Hydro Power Station (HPS) to the nation. ❖ Key Highlights ➤ The project developed by the state-owned North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) lies in Arunachal Pradesh. ➤ The 600 MW Kameng HPS stretches over more than 80 km in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh and is 90 km from Tezpur in Assam. ➤ It is a run-of-the-river scheme which will utilise the flows from Bichom and Tenga rivers (both tributaries of the River Kameng). ➤ The project has two dams — Bichom and Tenga and a powerhouse having four units of 150 MW each to generate 3,353 million units of electricity annually. ➤ Other Ongoing Hydroelectric Projects In The State <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Subansiri Lower Project- It is a run-of-river scheme on River Subansiri with capacity of 2,000 MW (8x250 MW) ■ Dibang Hydropower Project- It is a hydropower-cum-flood moderation scheme proposed on Dibang River in Lower Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh with Capacity of 2,880 MW (12x240 MW).
<p style="text-align: center;">Article 222</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context





➤ Lawyers from Gujarat & Telangana are protesting against the Supreme Court's Collegium proposal for transfer of the respective States' High Court Judges.

❖ Key highlights

- According to Article 222 of the Constitution, the **President** may, after **consultation with the Chief Justice of India**, transfer a Judge (including Chief Justice) from one High Court to any other High Court.
- According to the **Memorandum of Procedure**, the **initiation** of the proposal for the transfer of a Judge should be **made by the Chief Justice of India** whose opinion in this regard is determinative.
- In the formation of his opinion for the transfer of a Judge, other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of India is expected to take into account the views of the Chief Justice of the High Court from which the Judge is to be transferred, as also the Chief Justice of the High Court to which the transfer is to be effected.
- The **views should be expressed in writing** and should be considered by the Chief Justice of India and the four senior most Judges of the Supreme Court that forms the Supreme Court Collegium.
- In the case of transfer of a Chief Justice, only the views of one or more knowledgeable Supreme Court Judges need to be taken into account.
- **Consent of a Judge for his first or subsequent transfer would not be required.**

Yakutia



❖ Context

➤ Russia touted its Arctic power at a flag-raising ceremony and dock launch for two nuclear-powered icebreakers that will ensure year-round navigation in the Western Arctic.

❖ Key highlights

- The 173.3-metre **Yakutia**, with a displacement of up to 33,540 tonnes, can smash through ice of up to three metres. It will enter service in 2024.
- Two other icebreakers in the same series, the **Arktika** and the **Sibir**, are already in service, and another, the **Chukotka**, is scheduled for 2026.
- A super-powerful nuclear 209-metre icebreaker known as **Rossiya**, with a displacement of up to 71,380 tonnes, would be completed by 2027.
- Russia has more than **24,000 km of coastline** in the Arctic stretching from the **Barents Sea to the Sea of Okhotsk**.
- The Arctic is taking on greater strategic significance due to **climate change**, as a shrinking ice cap opens up **new sea lanes**.
- **Vast oil and gas resources lie in Russia's Arctic regions**, including a liquefied natural gas plant on the Yamal Peninsula.

❖ About Yamal Peninsula

- Yamal in the Nenets language means "**land's end.**" It holds Russia's **biggest natural gas reserves**.
- It extends roughly 700 km (435 mi) and is bordered principally by the **Kara Sea, Baydaratskaya Bay on the west**, and by the **Gulf of Ob** on the east. At the northern end of this peninsula lie the **Malygina Strait** and, beyond it, Bely Island.

