

Bihar Special

Monsoon Impact on Paddy Cultivation in Bihar

Why in the news?

The monsoon needs to be increased in areas of Bihar known for paddy cultivation.

- ❖ **Strategic Shift:** Due to poor rainfall, the agriculture department encourages farmers to diversify crops.

Focus on Nalanda District

- ❖ **New Crop Focus:** The agriculture department aims to develop Nalanda, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's home district, into a hub for the production of sweet corn and baby corn.
- ❖ **Agriculture Roadmap:** This initiative aligns with Bihar's 4th Agriculture Roadmap, which emphasizes crop diversification.
- ❖ **Crop Diversification Support:** The department is providing seeds for sweet corn, baby corn, pearl millet, etc., to mitigate the impact of the monsoon deficiency.

Sweet Corn and Baby Corn Production

- ❖ **High Demand:** Sweet corn and baby corn are in high demand, with Nalanda having the necessary processing and packaging facilities.
- ❖ **Financial Support:** ₹255 lakh has been sanctioned under the National Agriculture Development Scheme for sweet corn cultivation, with plans for a similar scheme for baby corn.

Comparative Maize Productivity

- ❖ **Statewide Production:** Bihar produced 34.71 lakh metric tonnes of maize in the 2023-24 cropping season.
- ❖ **Productivity Highlights:** While Araria leads in maize productivity, Nalanda excels in processing and marketing, making it a focus area for sweet corn and baby corn.

IGIMS to Become Northeast India's Largest Eye Hospital

Why in the news?

The Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS), located in Patna, Bihar, is set to become the largest government-run eye hospital in Northeast India.

- ❖ **Chief Minister's Instructions:** Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has directed for the expedited construction of the eye hospital during his inspection visit on August 26, 2024.

EYE CARE	
Estimated project cost ₹162 crore	
Location Regional Institute of Ophthalmology (RIO), IGIMS	
Number of operation theatres 11, including 2 for emergency	Facilities Emergency, pathological investigations & radiologist equipment like ultrasound, CT scan
Capacity 175 beds	Annual patient handling capacity 3-5 lakh
Completion target December	Departments Retina and Uvea, Glaucoma, Oculoplasty and squint, Pediatric ophthalmology and Neuro ophthalmology

- ❖ **Objective and Benefits:** Once completed, the hospital will provide specialized treatment for eye-related diseases, offering enhanced care and convenience for patients in the region.
- ❖ **Additional Treatment Options:** The new facility will offer state-of-the-art options for treating eye disorders, further improving healthcare services for state residents.

Polity And Governance

Amendments to Pharmacy Act and Drugs & Cosmetics Act

Why in the news?

Amendments to the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, related to the Pharmacy Act 1948, will take effect from December 31, 2024, as per the recent gazette notification.

- ❖ **Related Changes:** The Drugs & Cosmetics Act 1940 will also see amendments from the same date.

- ❖ **Pharmacy Act Amendments:**

- **Imprisonment vs. Penalties:** The amendments eliminate imprisonment for certain violations, replacing it with monetary penalties.

- **New Penalty Rules:** Section 26A of the Pharmacy Act will be updated to impose penalties up to one lakh rupees instead of imprisonment or fines.

- ❖ **Regulatory Changes:**

- **Inquiry and Penalties:** The Pharmacy Council of India has drafted new rules for conducting inquiries, imposing penalties, and filing appeals.

- **State Pharmacy Councils:** Presidents of state pharmacy councils will be authorized to conduct investigations.

- ❖ **Objective:** The amendments aim to decriminalize certain offences to promote ease of living and business by updating 183 provisions in 42 acts across 19 ministries.

- ❖ **Criticism:** Amendments to the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, which allow fines instead of imprisonment for manufacturing substandard medicines, have faced criticism.



International Relations

India and Singapore Elevate Strategic Partnership

Why in the news?

The 2nd India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable was recently held on August 26, 2024, which reviews strategic partnership progress and explores new cooperation avenues.

Overview of the 2nd India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR):

- ❖ Held on August 26, 2024, in Singapore.
- ❖ Both countries reviewed developments since the inaugural ISMR in September 2022 in New Delhi.

- ❖ Key areas assessed included Digitalization, Skills Development, Sustainability, and Healthcare & Medicine.

Expansion of Cooperation:

- ❖ Two new pillars added: Advanced Manufacturing and Connectivity.
 - **Advanced Manufacturing:** Focus on enhancing industrial collaboration, technological innovation, and production efficiency.
 - **Connectivity:** Aims to improve infrastructure links, facilitating trade, investment, and movement between India and Singapore.
- ❖ The expansion underscores the dynamic nature of the partnership and its adaptability to global trends.



Environment And Geography

Solar Installations in India (January-June 2024)

Why in the news?

India registered record solar installations of approximately 15 gigawatts (GW) during the first half of 2024. This surpasses all previous records for solar capacity additions.

❖ Comparison with Previous Periods

- In the first half of 2023, India added 3.89 GW of solar capacity.
- The 15 GW added in January-June 2024 represents a 282% increase compared to the same period in 2023.

❖ Current Solar Capacity

- As of June 2024, India's cumulative installed solar power capacity stands at 87.2 GW.
- To meet the target of 280 GW of solar power by 2030, it is crucial to add approximately 27 GW of solar capacity annually until 2030 to reach this goal.

Science And Technology

New Insights from Chandrayaan-3 Mission

Why in the news?

ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission has provided new data suggesting that the Moon might have once been covered by a 'magma ocean.'

- This information comes from soil measurements taken by the Pragyan rover along a 100-meter track.

- The rover detected elements in the lunar soil near the Chandrayaan-3 landing site, named 'Shiv Shakti Point,' on August 26, 2023.

❖ Lunar Magma Ocean Theory

- The theory proposes that the Moon was formed from a collision between two early planets. The larger planet became Earth, while the smaller one became the Moon.
- The collision caused the Moon to become extremely hot, melting its mantle into a 'magma ocean.'
- As the Moon cooled, lighter minerals floated to the surface, while heavier ones sank to form the mantle beneath the crust. This suggests the Moon's crust is largely made of FAN (Feldspar-Absorbed Neutron) minerals.

❖ Challenges and Support

- On the other hand, recent findings of magnesium in the lunar soil by Pragyan challenge the magma ocean theory.
- Some studies based on Apollo mission samples have also questioned this hypothesis.

- Despite these challenges, the uniformity of the data collected supports the lunar magma ocean theory.



Miscellaneous

Excavation Plans by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

Why in the news?

ASI is set to conduct excavations at 17 sites across Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Karnataka, and West Bengal.

❖ ASI-Managed Excavations

- ASI will conduct excavations at the following sites:
 - ✓ **Rakhigarhi in Haryana:** Known for its significance in the Sindhu-Saraswati civilization, providing evidence that Aryans were indigenous.

- ✓ **Puran Qila in Delhi:** Believed to be the site of the Pandavas' capital, Indraprastha, and will be excavated for the sixth time since independence.
- ✓ **Tilwara in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh:** Linked to the Mahabharat era.
- ✓ **Rath in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh:** Part of the planned excavations.
- ✓ **Tajpur Deur in Bihar:** Another key site for excavation.

❖ Additional Excavations

- **Champaran in Bihar:** Excavations will continue at the Buddha stupas.
- **Chariadeo Moidam in Assam:** Burial grounds of Ahom kings and queens, recently added to the UNESCO World Heritage site list.

❖ Excavations by Other Entities

- **Tamil Nadu:** Eight sites will be excavated.
- **Telangana and Maharashtra:** Two sites each.
- **Assam:** One site.

❖ Other Notable Sites

- **Brahmagiri in Karnataka**
- **Lothal in Gujarat**
- **West Bengal**



Obituary

Sven-Göran Eriksson

Why in the news?

Sven-Göran Eriksson was a Swedish football manager and former player, who died at the age of 76.

❖ Career Highlights:

- Eriksson became notable for being the first foreign manager of the England men's national football team, serving from 2001 to 2006.
- Throughout his career, he has also managed various national teams, including Mexico, the Philippines, and the Ivory Coast, as well as club teams such as Manchester City and Leicester City.

News in Short

- ❖ Apple's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Luca Maestri will leave his job at the end of the year, and his deputy Kevan Parekh will take over.
- ❖ Sindhu Gangadharan, MD of SAP Labs India, has been appointed as the Chairperson of Nasscom, succeeding Rajesh Nambiar when his tenure ends.
- ❖ Germany to donate 100,000 mpox vaccine doses to combat the outbreak in Africa.



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