

06th August, 2024

Economy

Cabinet Approves Eight High-Speed Road Corridor Projects

Context: The Union Cabinet approved eight high-speed road corridor projects, totaling 936 kilometers, with a combined investment of ₹50,000 crore.

These projects aim to enhance connectivity for pilgrims and freight transport across different regions.



Key Projects

❖ Ayodhya Ring Road:

- Length: 68 km
- Cost: ₹3,935 crore
- Purpose: Facilitates pilgrim access to the Ram Mandir and improves connectivity from Lucknow airport and major railway stations.

❖ Guwahati Bypass:

- Length: 121 km
- Cost: ₹5,729 crore

➤ Features: Includes a major Brahmaputra River bridge.

➤ Connectivity: Improves travel on National Highway 27, connecting cities like Siliguri, Silchar, Shillong, and Tezpur.

❖ Tharad to Ahmedabad Corridor:

- Length: 214 km
- Lane configuration: Six-lane
- Connectivity: Links Amritsar-Jamnagar and Delhi-Mumbai Expressways.

➤ Freight Benefits: Enhances transport for industrial regions in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and major Maharashtra ports.

❖ Agra to Gwalior Corridor:

- Length: 88 km
- Cost: ₹4,613 crore
- Significance: Improves connectivity between Agra and Gwalior, boosting economic interaction and regional development.

Defence

14th India-Vietnam Defence Policy Dialogue

Context: The 14th India-Vietnam Defence Policy Dialogue, held in New Delhi, underscored the growing commitment between the two nations to enhance defence cooperation amid regional security challenges.

- ❖ Co-chaired by India's Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and Vietnam's Deputy Minister of National Defence, Senior Lieutenant General Hoang Xuan Chien, the dialogue aimed to further strengthen the bilateral defence partnership outlined in the 'Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030', signed in June 2022.



Proposed Areas of Cooperation

- ❖ Delegation Exchanges and Dialogue: Regular interactions between defence officials.

- ❖ Staff Talks: Enhanced coordination through military staff discussions.
- ❖ Service-to-Service Cooperation: Collaboration among different branches of the armed forces.
- ❖ Education and Training: Knowledge sharing and joint training programs.
- ❖ Defence Industry Cooperation: Collaboration in defence technology and production.

Science & Technology

Legionnaires' Disease Outbreak in Victoria, Australia

Context: A surge in Legionnaires' disease cases has been reported in Victoria, Australia. The number of confirmed cases has risen from 22 to 33, with an additional 10 suspected cases. The outbreak is primarily concentrated in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs, prompting concern from Chief Health Officer Clare Looker.



Understanding Legionnaires' Disease

- ❖ Legionnaires' disease is a severe form of pneumonia caused by Legionella bacteria.
- ❖ Inhalation of water droplets containing these bacteria is the primary mode of transmission.
- ❖ Common sources of contamination include air-conditioning systems, spas, and misting devices.

Transmission and Spread

- ❖ The disease is not contagious and does not spread from person to person.
- ❖ Infection occurs through exposure to contaminated environmental sources, especially aerosols generated by cooling towers or similar equipment.

Governance

AI in Education: Challenges and Opportunities

Context: The advent of AI tools like ChatGPT in late 2022 sparked significant debate within the educational landscape. While initially met with concerns about academic integrity, AI rapidly integrated into the educational ecosystem.



Challenges Posed by AI

- ❖ Educators faced the challenge of distinguishing between AI-generated and student-authored content.
- ❖ Attempts to ban AI tools proved futile as students found workarounds. This necessitated a shift in pedagogical approaches.

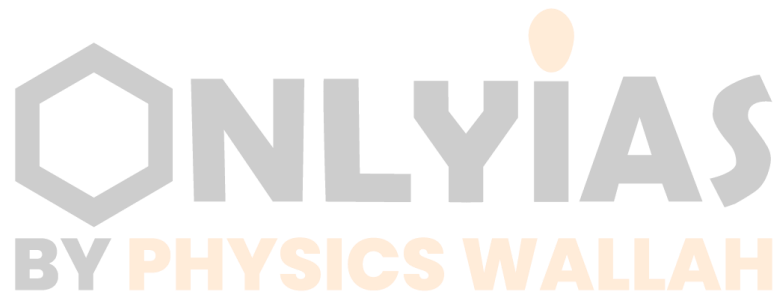
AI as a Double-Edged Sword

- ❖ The widespread adoption of AI highlighted both its potential benefits and limitations.
- ❖ While AI offers numerous advantages, it also demonstrated vulnerabilities to inaccuracies and hallucinations, emphasizing the need for critical thinking and evaluation.

Student Engagement with AI

- ❖ Research indicates that approximately 60% of high school students have utilized ChatGPT for various academic tasks, despite acknowledging the potential for academic dishonesty.

- ❖ However, the data also suggests that some students have leveraged AI as a learning tool.



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