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History, Art and Culture

Odisha Foundation Day or Utkal Divas

The people of Odisha on Utkala Dibasa, celebrating the state's formation.

• **Celebrated on** – April 1st , 2025, marking the 88th anniversary of *Odisha's statehood, achieved in 1936*.

• **From Bengal Presidency to Statehood** – Prior to 1936, *Odisha was part of the Bengal Presidency*, alongside Bihar and Jharkhand.

• The movement for a separate state gained momentum in the early 1920s.

• **Prominent leaders in the Statehood Movement** – Madhusudan Das, Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das, and Fakir Mohan Senapati.

Geography

Chicken's Neck Corridor

Bangladesh has invited China to invest in a river conservation project near the Chicken's Neck Corridor, raising strategic concerns for India.

• **Chicken's Neck or Siliguri Corridor** – It is a *narrow land strip in West Bengal*, crucial for connecting India's mainland to its northeastern states.

• **Link to northeastern states** – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Sikkim, vital for their integration with the rest of the country.

• **Bordered by** – Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh.

• **Strategic importance** – It is essential for military movement and supply, and any disruption could isolate India's northeast, posing a severe security threat.

• **China's role** – Its proximity to the India-China border, especially the Chumbi Valley, where China has military infrastructure.

Social Issues

Bodh Gaya Temple Act Protest

Buddhist monks, under the All-India Buddhist Forum (AIBF), have been protesting since February 2024, demanding the repeal of the Bodh Gaya Temple Act (BTA), 1949.

• **BTA, 1949** – It established an *8-member management committee* to oversee the Bodh Gaya Temple's administration.

• **Management committee composition** – The Act mandated *equal representation for Hindus and Buddhists.*

• **District Magistrate (DM)** – Ex-officio chairperson, historically from the Hindu community, created a perceived *Hindu majority in the committee*.

• **Hindu control** – In 1590, a Hindu monk established the *Bodh Gaya Mutt*, resulting in Hindu control over the temple's administration.

Polity & Governance

NITI NCAER States Economic Forum Portal

NITI NCAER States Economic Forum portal was launched recently.

• **About** – It is a *comprehensive repository of data* on social, economic and fiscal parameters, research reports, papers and expert commentary on State Finances for a period of about *30 years* (1990-2023).

• **Launched on** – April 1, *2025.*

• **Launched by** – NITI Aayog and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).

• **4 main components** – State Reports, Data Repository, State Fiscal and Economic Dashboard, and Research/Commentary.

Silk Samagra-2 Scheme

The government is implementing the Silk Samagra-2 scheme (2021-26).

• **Objective** – To boost *India's sericulture industry*.

• **Financial assistance** – It provides financial aid to states for various interventions including, Nursery development, silkworm rearing, chawki rearing centers, and post-cocoon activities like reeling and weaving.

• **Beneficiary coverage** – Both *pre and post-cocoon activities.*

• **Regional support to** – Specifically, *Andhra Pradesh & Telangana* for beneficiary-oriented projects in the last 3 years.

Sahkar Taxi

The Indian government will launch Sahkar Taxi.

• **About** – It is a *cooperative-based taxi service*, to compete with existing ride-hailing platforms like Ola and Uber.

• **Aim** – To provide a viable, driver-centric alternative, fostering economic empowerment and addressing market gaps.

• **Vehicle types** – 2-wheeler, auto-rickshaw, and 4-wheeler taxis.

• **Direct driver benefits** – It will channel *all profits directly to drivers*.

• **Cooperative insurance for drivers** – It will include a cooperative insurance company, providing drivers with essential insurance coverage.

International Relations and Issues

Exercise Tiger Triumph IV

Exercise Tiger Triumph IV will occur on the Eastern Seaboard from April 2025.

• It is the 4^{th} edition of bilateral India-US humanitarian and disaster relief exercise, will took place in Visakhapatnam.

• **Aim** – To enhance interoperability and develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for joint HADR operations, establishing a Combined Coordination Center (CCC).

Environment

Siberian Tiger/Amur Tigers

A recent study in Oryx highlights the increasing incidents of tigers killed in road, posing a significant threat to Amur Tiger survival.

• **Scientific name** – Panthera tigris altaica.

• They're the *largest tiger subspecies*, adapted to cold climates with thick fur and a light coat.

• **Habitat and Distribution** – They primarily inhabit eastern Russia's birch forests, with limited presence in *China and potentially North Korea.*

• **Population** – Estimates place their population at 265-486 in Russia (2022).

• **Threats** – Poaching and human-wildlife conflict.

• **Conservation status in IUCN** – *Endangered*.

Security

Operation Brahma

India recently launched the Operation Brahma, to provide humanitarian aid to Myanmar.

• **Objective** – To provide *humanitarian aid* after a devastating 7.7-magnitude *earthquake* struck Myanmar.

• **Earthquake impact & response** – It is caused widespread destruction and over 1,600 fatalities in Myanmar and neighboring Thailand, prompting India's swift response.

• **Naval support & aid delivery** – *INS Satpura and INS Savitri* were dispatched, carrying 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Yangon, ensuring the timely delivery of essential supplies.

Miscellaneous

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

IFRC has recently launched a $100 million appeal to aid victims of the recent devastating Myanmar earthquake.

• The IFRC unites 192 Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, mobilizing millions of volunteers for humanitarian aid.

• **Founded in** – 1919 and based in Geneva.

• **Aim** – To assist vulnerable populations by coordinating international emergency response to disasters, including natural, man-made, and health crises, and strengthening community resilience.

• **Funding and Partnerships** – The IFRC *relies on voluntary contributions* from various sources and collaborates with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which focuses on humanitarian law and conflict aid.

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