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History, Art and Culture

Amarnath Yatra

Over 12,000 devotees offered prayers at the Amarnath shrine on the first day of the yatra, allowed from July 3 to August 28, 2026.

- It is a sacred annual *Hindu pilgrimage* to the Amarnath Cave in the *Himalayas of Jammu and Kashmir*.
- **Key routes** –
  - **Baltal Route** – 14 km trek, begins from the *Baltal base camp (near Sonamarg)*, about 95 km from Srinagar.
  - **Pahalgam Route** – l32 km long, begins from the *Nunwan base camp (near Pahalgam)*, about 90 km from Srinagar.
- **Permit –** Pilgrims must obtain a *Compulsory Health Certificate (CHC)* from authorized doctors/hospitals before applying.

Polity & Governance

National Water Awards (NWA)

Recently launched 7th National Water Awards currently accepting online applications.

- **Instituted in –** 2018.
- **Organized by** – *Ministry of Jal Shakti*.
- **Application Portal** – Rashtriya Puraskar Portal.
- **Eligible beneficiaries** – Any State, District, Urban Local Body, Dam Own Agencies, & Industry.
- **Objectives** –
  - To recognize *classic work in water conservation and management across India*.
  - To advance the government's *vision of a 'Jal Samridh Bharat' (Water Prosperous India).*
  - To encourage the stakeholders to adopt a holistic approach toward water resource management.

MANAS – National Narcotics Helpline portal

- **Nodal ministry –** *Ministry of Home Affairs.*
- **Objectives** –
  - To establish a user-friendly platform to conveniently *report drug-related matters 24x7.*
  - To raise awareness and establish a comprehensive platform for seeking assistance.
- **Significance** – It stands as a beacon for citizens to come forward, contributing collectively to curb drug-related activities.

Agriculture

Matcha tea

Assam tea estate recently sold India's first commercially-produced matcha tea.



- A premium green tea powder traditionally produced in *Japan, China, and Vietnam.*
  - **Distinctive traits –** *Vibrant green colour* and rich flavour.
  - **Nutritional benefits** – It provides *higher levels of antioxidants, amino acids, and natural caffeine*, compared to conventional tea.
- **Production Process**
  - Shade-grown Camellia sinensis leaves (Covered for *3–4 weeks before harvest*).
    - Shading boosts *chlorophyll and amino acid* content.
  - **Method –** Whole tea leaves are finely ground into powder.
- **Significance** – India has expanded its *tea portfolio beyond traditional exports.*
- India is well-positioned to capitalise on the *growing global demand for matcha.*

Totapuri mango

Recently a high level has been formed to address challenges faced by Totapuri mango farmers in Andhra Pradesh.



- **Scientific name** – Mangifera indica.
- It is an *indigenous variety* cultivated in *South India*.
- It extensively cultivated in *Andhra Pradesh*.
- **Native names** –
  - Ginimoothi (parrot face) in Kannada.
  - Kili Mooku in Tamil.
- **Recognized for** – Distinct, *elongated shape with a prominent, pointed tip.*
- **Features** – *Mild sweetness layered with a sharp, tangy flavor.*
- **Importance** – It serves as a vital commercial workhorse for India's fruit processing sector.

Pashujanya Yudh Abhyas (PYA)

Pashujanya Yudh Abhyas (PYA) drill is successfully conducted recently.

- It is the 3rd national-level mock drill *under the National One Health Mission.*
- **Organized by** – Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD)
- **Nodal ministry** – Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
- **Mimicking** – *Influenza A (H1N1) outbreak.*
- **Mechanisms** – It assessed the entire response framework, including
  - Field surveillance.
  - Rapid lab diagnosis.
  - Biosecurity containment.
  - Movement control.
  - Risk communication.
- **Objective** – T*o test and strengthen emergency response capabilities against animal-origin (zoonotic) disease outbreaks.*

Environment

Banyan Tree

Oldest accurately dated Banyan found in Munger, Bihar recently.



- The Banyan Tree is the *national tree of India*.
- It is one of the largest trees in the world by canopy coverage.
- **Scientific name** – “Ficus benghalensis”.
- **Belonging to –** Fig and mulberry family (Moraceae).
- **Features** –
  - Massive canopy
  - **Aerial prop roots** – upper branches that hang down to the ground.
- **Usage** – Its bark, leaves, and milky latex, are utilized in Ayurvedic medicine

Science

Exosomes

Advanced imaging technology unlocks exosome potential for disease diagnosis.

- **Exosomes** – It is nano-sized, membrane-bound extracellular vesicles.
- **Size** – *30 to 150 nanometres* in diameter
- **Type** – *Naturally secreted* by almost all types of eukaryotic cells.
- **New observation –** Once considered cellular waste, they are *now recognized as key cellular messengers.*
- **Functions** –
  - Cell-to-cell communication.
  - Immune response modulation.
  - Transfer of genetic materials.

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Strategic Roadmap for Making Ayurveda Global

A report titled "Strategic Roadmap for Making Ayurveda Global" is recently released.

- **Released by** – *NITI Aayog* in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).
- **3 core pillars –**
  - **Availability** – Globalized workforce, trade, and education.
  - **Acceptability** – Global collaboration, localization.
  - **Propagation** – Global branding, visibility, medical travel.
- **Objective** – To elevate Ayurveda from a "wellness product" into evidence-based global healthcare system.
- **Significance** – The roadmap *outlines a phased strategy extending to 2047, aligned with Viksit Bharat.*

Miscellaneous

Foundation Day of Organiser (Weekly Magazine)

Recently, vice president has addressed "80th Foundation Day of Organiser Weekly".

- It is India's *oldest nationalist English weekly*, acting as a voice for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).
- **Launched on** – 3rd July 1947 by the *Bharat Prakashan Trust*.
- **Focuses on** –
  - Traditional Indian civilization.
  - Coverage of public policy.
  - National security.
- **Historical significance** – *1st magazine banned during the 1975 Emergency.*

