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National Gopal Ratna Award (NGRA) 2024

Recently, National Gopal Ratna Awards (NGRA) awards given on the occasion of National Milk Day celebrations on 26th November 2024.

- **NGRA -** It is one of the highest National Awards in the ***field of livestock and dairy sector*** for the year 2024.
- **Given by -** *Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD).*
- **Ministry -** Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
- It has been conferred under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) every year.
- **Objective -** To recognize and encourage all individuals like
    - Farmers rearing Indigenous animals,
    - Artificial Insemination (AI) Technicians and
    - Dairy cooperative societies / Milk Producer Company / Dairy farmers Producers Organizations working in the sector of animal husbandry and dairying.
- **3 categories -** It is conferred under these categories:
    - Best Dairy Farmer Rearing Indigenous Cattle/buffalo Breeds.
    - Best Dairy Cooperative Society (DCS)/ Milk producer Company (MPC)/ Dairy Farmer Producer Organization (FPO).
    - Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT).
- The Department has incorporated a ***Special award*** for North Eastern Region (NER) States, in all the 3 categories to encourage and boost the dairy development activities in NER.
- **Certificate**
    - Certificate of merit, a memento, and a monetary prize for first 2 categories.
    - Certificate of merit and a memento only – AIT Category.
- **Cash prize based on Ranking**
    - Rs. 5 lakh - 1st rank
    - Rs. 3 lakh - 2nd rank
    - Rs. 2 lakh for 3rd rank and
    - Rs. 2 lakh - Special Award for NER.

> *National Milk Day honors the 103rd birth anniversary of Dr. Verghese Kurien, remembered as the "Father of the White Revolution in India."*

Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)

• **Aim -** Conservation and development of indigenous bovine breeds in a scientific and holistic manner.
• **Duration** - From 2021-2022 to 2025-2026.
• **Implemented by** - Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying
• **Under -** Rashtriya Pashudhan Vikas Yojna from 2021 to 2026.
• **Important -** Enhancing milk production and productivity of bovines to meet the growing demand of milk and making dairying more remunerative to the rural farmers of the country.
• **Benefits -** Women in particular since over 70% of the work involved in livestock farming is undertaken by women.

References

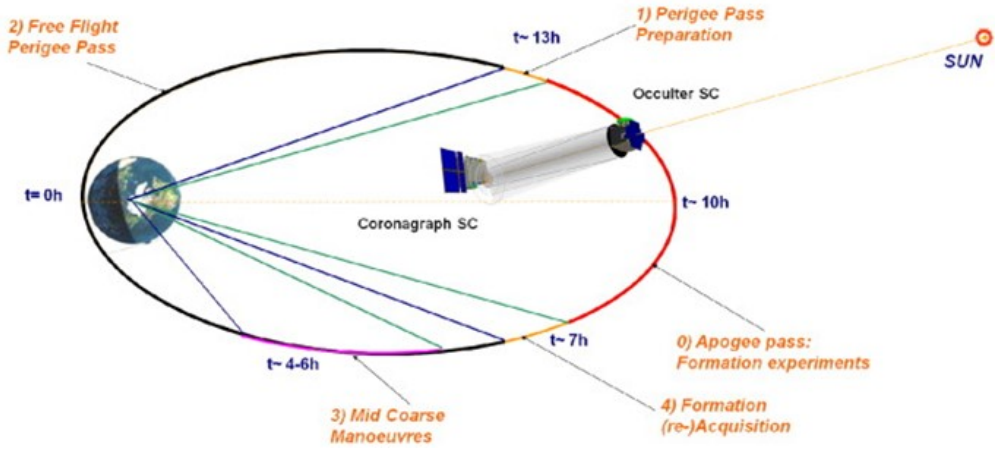
1. PIB| National Gopal Ratna Award (NGRA) 2024
2. PIB| National Gopal Ratna Award (NGRA) 2024
3. DAHD| National Gopal Ratna Award (NGRA) 2024

Proba-3 Mission

The Indian Space Research Organisation ***(ISRO) is all set to launch the European Space Agency's Proba-3 mission*** *from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.*

- **Proba-3 –** It is the ***world's 1st precision formation flying mission***.
- Proba-3 will be the first mission to launch from India.
- **Aim -** To *observe the Sun's corona* through an innovative satellite formation flight.
- **Mission life –** 2 years.
- **Launch vehicle -** Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) XL rocket.
- **Orbit -** It will be launched into a ***highly elliptical orbit*** measuring around 600 x 60,530 km.
- **Orbital period -** 19.7 hours.
- The core objective is to create an ***artificial eclipse*** by precisely coordinating two independent satellites.
- The 2 satellites will be launched together, and maintain a fixed configuration in space.
- **2 satellites**
  - Coronagraph spacecraft (CSC) - 200 kg.
  - Occulter spacecraft (OSC) - 340 kg.
- **Working -** The two spacecraft will fly in formation, maintaining a distance of about 150 meters for 6 hours at a time.
- The OSC will cast its shadow onto the CSC's telescope, blocking the sun's direct light.
- This will allow the CSC to image the sun's corona in visible, ultraviolet, and polarized light.
- The CSC's coronagraph instrument will take images of the sun's corona. The mission will study the sun's corona.

The Sun's corona is the outermost part of the Sun's atmosphere, made up of hot, ionized gas called plasma. The corona is usually hidden by the bright light of the Sun's surface.



- **Instruments**
  - **The Association of Spacecraft for Polarimetric and Imaging Investigation of the Corona of the Sun (ASPIICS) or the Coronagraph** - Its field of view is between the Sun's outer and inner corona, a circular belt normally observable during solar eclipse events.
  - **The Digital Absolute Radiometer (DARA) -** Maintain a continuous measurement of the Sun's total energy output, known as the total solar irradiance.
  - **The 3D Energetic Electron Spectrometer (3DEES) -** Measure electron fluxes as it passes through Earth's radiation belts, providing data for space weather studies.

References

1. The Indian Express| Proba-3 Mission
2. ESA| Proba-3 Mission
3. MEA| Proba-3 Mission

Palpares contrarius

Recently, the Researchers discovered a new antlion species, palpares contrarius for the first time in Tamil Nadu.

- It is a ***large-sized adult antlion species*** that resembles a dragonfly.
- **Order –** Neuroptera, traps ants and other small insects in pits dug into the ground.
- **Taxonomy - Family –** Myrmeleontidae
  - It is the largest group in Neuroptera and is popularly called the Antlions.
  - Over 2,000 species around the world.
- **Appearance –** The antenna is black, the thorax with 3 dark stripes, forewings undulating in the borders, mostly pale in colour, median band crosses the wing, stigma spot projects towards the median.
- No spot at the fork of the cubitus in the hind wing but has dark bands or spots spread across the hind wing.
- The margin of the forewing is sinuate, tips of the hind wings do not falcate. The abdomen is darker towards the apex.
- **Unique Feature -** Curved or clubbed antenna, fluttering flight and fly with their wings flapping vertically.
- **Wingspan –** More than 110 mm in length.
- **Life Cycle -** As a larva inside the soil and debris survives more than a year.

- The adult stage is relatively for a short period with an average lifespan ranging from 20 to 25 days.
- It is very difficult to spot them during the day and can be spotted at night near illuminated spot.
- **Distribution –** Found mostly in Africa, Myanmar, Thailand, and Sri Lanka and
    - Seen in isolated parts of India like Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Diet -** The larvae of the antlion form pits in the sand to trap ants.
- **Conservation Status –** It has not yet been concluded.



References

1. Times of India| Palpares contrarius
2. Threatened Taxa| Palpares contrarius

Kanhirapoil Megalithic Site

Recently, the Archaeologist discovered prehistoric rock-cut footprints and a human figure at Kanhirapoil in Kerala's Kasaragod.

- A megalithic site is a location where large stone structures are found.
- **Megalith -** It means a large/big stone used to construct a monument or a structure.
- It has been constructed either alone or together with other stones.
- Megaliths were used as monuments and burial sites by ancient communities from the Late Neolithic to the Iron Age.
- Megaliths are often oriented to the solstices and equinoxes.
- **Period -** Lasted from 2500 BC to AD 200.

Recent Findings

- **Location** - Kanhirapoil in Madikkai panchayat, Kerala.
- The findings include 24 pairs of prehistoric footprints and a human figure carved into rock on private property.
- These carvings date back to the ***Megalithic period*** and are made with iron tools.
- Footprints vary from 6 to 10 inches.
- At the end of the footprints, a human figure has been intricately etched, accompanied by 4 circular pits around it.
- This represents both children and adults, and souls of dead people have been carved out to honor them.
- All the footprints are pointing towards the west. The local people believe these footmarks to be a goddesses.
- It is similar to prehistoric rock art found in ***Avalakki Pera in Udupi district in Karnataka.***
- These carvings and artefacts indicating a shared cultural heritage in prehistoric north Kerala.

References

1. The Hindu| Kanhirapoil Megalithic Site
2. UNESCO| Kanhirapoil Megalithic Site
3. MAN| Kanhirapoil Megalithic Site

Constitution Day

Recently, the Constitution Day of India, or Samvidhan Divas is celebrated on 26th November to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.

- On November 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India.
- The Constitution finally took effect on January 26, 1950, when India became a republic.
- **Notified by -** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Notified on** – 19th November 2015, the year that marked the 125th ***birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar.***
- President will address the Members of both Houses of Parliament in the Central Hall on the occasion of 'Samvidhan Diwas'.
- **Historical Background -** The Constituent Assembly met for the first time in New Delhi on December 9, 1946 in the Central Hall of the old Parliament House building.
- Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, as its chairman.
- The Assembly had 389 members, including prominent leaders like Dr BR Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Patel.
- Ambedkar presented the draft in the Constituent Assembly in 1948. The draft was adopted, after being deliberated across eleven sessions and for more than two years, on November 26, 1949, with a few amendments.
- The Constitution of India finally came into effect on January 26, 1950, which is observed as Republic Day.
- The Preamble of the Constitution of India declares the country as a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic and aims to secure justice, liberty, and equality for all citizens

The Constitution of India is the largest written constitution in the world, with 1,17,360 words (in the English version) and it had 395 Articles and 8 Schedules.

- Celebrating Constitution Day is primarily to honor Dr BR Ambedkar and promote awareness of constitutional values, rights, and duties.
- **Dr Ambedkar** – He chaired the Drafting Committee of the Constitution.
- He is known as the *Father of the Indian Constitution*.
- The day was previously observed as ***National Law Day*** as he was also the first Law Minister of India.

References

1. Indian Express| Constitution Day
2. Mygov| Constitution Day
3. Livemint| Constitution Day
4. PIB| Constitution Day

