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PRAGATI Platform

- Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) was launched in 2015.
- It is a multi-purpose and multi-modal platform that is aimed at addressing common person's grievances.
- It also simultaneously monitor and review important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- The PRAGATI platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies: Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.
- A three-tier system involves PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States.
- Through this platform PM holds a monthly programme with the Government of India Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries through Video-conferencing enabled by data and geo-informatics visuals.
- The programme will be held once in every month on Fourth Wednesday at 3.30 PM-to be known as PRAGATI Day.

GATI Portal

- Recently Union Road Transport and Highways Ministry launched online web portal 'GATI' on the pattern of 'PRAGATI', the portal.
- GATI Portal has been created by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
- The portal 'GATI' can be accessed from NHAI's website, and contractors and concessionaires can raise any project-related issues on the platform.
- The issues raised on 'GATI' will be daily monitored by a team of NHAI officers and will be constantly reviewed by the senior officers of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Bodoland Territorial Area

- Bodoland, officially the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), is an autonomous region in the state of Assam, India.

- It made up of four districts on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river, by the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The four districts in Assam — Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang — that constitute the Bodo Territorial Area District (BTAD), are home to several ethnic groups.
- It is administered by the Bodoland Territorial Council, which covers over eight thousand square kilometres.
- The territory came into existence under the BTC Accord in February 2003.
- The region is predominantly inhabited by the indigenous Bodo people and other indigenous communities of Assam.
- Bodos are the single largest tribal community in Assam, making up over 5-6 per cent of the state's population.
- The Bodos have had a long history of separatist demands, marked by armed struggle.



Bodo Accord

- Union government has signed a comprehensive Bodo Settlement Agreement to end the over 50 year old Bodo Crisis
- The agreement is signed between Government of India, Government of Assam and Bodo representatives.
- The current agreement proposes to set up a commission under Section 14 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, which will recommend the inclusion or exclusion of tribal population residing in villages adjoining BTAD areas.
- In this commission, besides State government there will be representatives from ABSU and BTC.
- It will submit its recommendation within six months from the date of notification
- The Government of Assam will establish a Bodo-Kachari Welfare Council as per existing procedure.
- The Assam government will also notify Bodo language as an associate official language in the state and will set up a separate directorate for Bodo medium schools.
- The present settlement has proposal to give more legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers to BTC.
- A Special Development Package Rs. 1500 crores over three years will be given by the Union Government to undertake specific projects for the

development of Bodo areas.

Locust Attack

- Locusts are a collection of certain species of short-horned grasshoppers that have a swarming phase.
- These insects are usually solitary, but under certain circumstances, they become more abundant and change their behavior and habits, becoming gregarious.
- Adult locust swarms can fly up to 150 km a day with the wind and adult insects can consume roughly their own weight in fresh food per day.
- These hoppers in small numbers or groups do not cause any economic damage to crops unless they appear in swarms.
- A very small swarm eats as much in one day as about 35,000 people, posing a devastating threat to crops and food security.
- Locusts do not attack people or animals; there is no evidence that suggests that locusts carry diseases that could harm humans.
- India has not witnessed any full-blown locust cycles after 1962, however, during 1978 and 1993, large-scale upsurges were observed.
- Recently few villages of Punjab and Haryana bordering Rajasthan has reported presence of locusts.
- Experts believe that appearance of locusts in winter months is a new phenomenon and may be linked to climate change.

Giant Tusked Elephant

- Recent study has found that about 800,000 years ago, a giant straight-tusked elephant migrated out of Africa and spread across Europe and Asia.
- The elephant is marked by a huge head, which is 4.5 feet from the top of the skull roof to the base of the tusk sheaths.
- The elephant divided into many species, such as

1. Palaeoloxodon antiquus (in Europe),
2. Palaeoloxodon namadicus (India),
3. Palaeoloxodon naumanni (Japan).

- All these species are now extinct.
- For a long time, it was thought that the European species had a rather slenderly built skull roof crest, whereas Indian species was characterized by an extremely robust skull crest that extended near to the base of the trunk from the top of the skull.

- However, some skulls, found in Italy and Germany, with almost the same exaggerated skull crest as the Indian form, raised confusion whether these were the same as the Indian species.
- The new study has concluded that there was a single European species.
- Measurements showed that even in European skulls with pronounced crests, the skull roof never becomes as thickened as in the Indian specimens.
- On the other hand, fossils found in Asia and East Africa represent distinct species that evolved.

G-77 Nations

- G-77, established in 1964 by 77 developing countries in Geneva.
- It aims to provide the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests.
- It enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the UN system and promote South-South cooperation for development.
- The Group of 77 is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations.
- India is among the members of the G77.
- Recently Guyana, a South American nation is selected to head the G-77 grouping.

Source: Indian Express, PIB, the Hindu

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
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