

# DAILY PT POINTERS

5th July, 2024



The Hindu : \_GS 2/Health –Page-4

## After Mizoram and Nagaland, Meghalaya declines ‘mandir’ tag for Ayushman health centres

**Rahul Karmakar**  
GUWAHATI

After Mizoram and Nagaland, Meghalaya has refused to rename the health and wellness centres in the State as Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. About 75% of the population in Meghalaya follows Christianity. The percentage of Christians in Mizoram and Nagaland is about 90%.

“We decided not to issue any notification to change the names of the health and wellness centres after receiving the advisory from the Centre [in November 2023]. Since health is a State subject, we have the right not to do as

the Centre says,” Meghalaya’s Health and Family Welfare Minister Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh told presspersons in the State’s capital, Shillong.

Ms. Lyngdoh is a senior leader of the Conrad K. Sangma-led National People’s Party, which heads the coalition government in Meghalaya. The BJP is a minor partner in this government.

Less than a year ago, the Union Health Ministry decided to rename its flagship Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres as Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM) with the tagline ‘Arogyam parmam dhanam’ (Health is the

greatest wealth). There are 1.6 lakh such centres across the country.

### ‘Hidden agenda’

Regional political parties in Meghalaya sniffed a “hidden agenda” of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre behind the renaming of the health and wellness centres.

“Why, then, should a government-run centre bear the name of a Hindu place of worship?” Titosstarwell Chyne, the working president of the United Democratic Party, said. The Voice of the People Party also said the bid reflected a ‘Hindutva’ design.

- In November 2023 the Union Health Ministry decided to rename its flagship Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres as Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM) with the tagline ‘Arogyam parmam dhanam’ (Health is the greatest wealth). There are 1.6 lakh such centres across the country.
- Ayushman Arogya Mandir has two components which are complementary to each other. Under its first component, 1,50,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandir will be created to deliver Comprehensive Primary Health Care, that is universal and free to users, with a focus on wellness and the delivery of an expanded range of services closer to the community.
- The second component is the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) which provides health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per year to over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families for seeking secondary and tertiary care.



## The Hindu :GS1-Society/GS2-Governance(Page -10)

### What went wrong with the Hajj pilgrimage this year?

How do unauthorised pilgrims enter Saudi Arabia at the time of Hajj? Have such tragedies happened before?

Ziya Us Salam

The story so far:

**H**ajj, a gathering of nearly two million Muslim pilgrims, which falls in the last month of the Islamic calendar, has been in news again. More than 1,300 casualties were reported due to extreme heat in Saudi Arabia at this time of the year. Most casualties were reported from Arafat, where the pilgrims pause on their way to Muzdalfa. Arafat is the place where the Prophet Muhammad delivered his farewell sermon to 1,44,000 pilgrims in 632 A.D. This vigil at Arafat is an essential part of the pilgrimage without which the Hajj is considered invalid. Many casualties took place as the pilgrims moved from Arafat to Mina in the scorching heat.

What is Hajj?

Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. This pilgrimage to Mecca is an essential part of the faith and any person who is economically and physically sound has to

undertake the trip once in their lifetime. Prophet Muhammad is said to have undertaken this pilgrimage shortly before breathing his last in 632 AD. The Hajj journey follows the lunar calendar. Accordingly, it falls about 11 days earlier every year. This year's pilgrimage started at the conclusion of the second week of June. For the upcoming couple of years, the pilgrimage will be undertaken in harsh weather with temperature exceeding 50 degrees Celsius.

What happened this year?

The Saudi authorities reserve a fixed quota for all major countries, depending on the Muslim population, for issue of Hajj visas. It helps to plan the stay and movement of pilgrims in the desert state. The authorities issued Hajj visas to a little more than 18 lakh people but the Hajj was undertaken by over two million pilgrims. This means that around 2 lakh people were unauthorised entrants.

The Saudi authorities insisted that most pilgrims with valid Hajj visas were able to

complete the Hajj rituals with the best possible facilities, and there were few deaths beyond natural causes of old age or illness. According to Saudi Health Minister Fahad bin Abdulrahman Al-Jalajel, some 83% of the 1,301 fatalities were unauthorised pilgrims who undertook the journey without requisite precautions at this time of extreme summer temperatures.

Who are 'unauthorised' pilgrims?

The unauthorised, non-documented pilgrims often come over from neighbouring countries of Jordan, Egypt and Iraq on a visit visa a little before the Hajj season begins. Some are also blue collar workers from India and Pakistan who while having a valid work visa, are not entitled to undertake the pilgrimage without proper permission and documentation. The non-documented visitors are usually economically too weak to bear the cost of the pilgrimage through the official route which takes at least 3,000 dollars. Hence, they often take

recourse to agents who offer them the journey for half the cost. The agents take the money in advance and often disappear after these men and women land in Saudi Arabia, leaving them in the lurch. The visit visa holders are not allowed entry into Mecca at the time of Hajj. So, these visitors/pilgrims often undertake arduous routes through the desert to circumvent officials.

While those who take the approved route are provided with all possible facilities by the host country, including transportation on air-conditioned vehicles with constant supply of water and medical facilities, illegal entrants are left under the blazing sun with temperatures often crossing 50 degrees Celsius. Many walk on their own from Arafat to Mina, a distance of around 15 kilometres. Unlike others, they have no healthcare facilities to fall back on. Also, most pilgrims in this category are old, having saved every penny for years for this journey.

Hajj has always been a high-risk journey. Besides the spread of communicable diseases due to the intermingling of millions, there were major tragedies in 1990, 1994, 1998 and 2003. Many of these were avoidable incidents as they resulted from stampede caused by pilgrims taking a non-specified route or going in the opposite direction, in ignorance of Hajj rituals. Since then, Saudi authorities have widened the pathways, adding new floors to the Haram in Mecca to enable the pilgrims to complete the journey peacefully.

THE GIST

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## Brahmaputra's lone female gharial's long wait for a mate could end soon

**Rahul Karmakar**  
GUWAHATI

A lone female gharial has temporarily overshadowed the one-horned rhino in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in eastern Assam.

Wildlife officials and specialists are not sure how this gharial came to inhabit a stretch of the Brahmaputra within the national park. But they are certain that the reptile, presumed to be an adult by its size, is the key to repopulating the river with gharials.

Distinguished from other crocodylians by its elongated snout, the gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) was believed to have been wiped out from the Brahmaputra river system during the 1950s, though there were claims of sightings in



**A comeback:** Gharials were believed to have been wiped out from the Brahmaputra river system during 1950s. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the 1990s. The female gharial was first spotted in 2021 within the Biswanath Wildlife Division of the 1,307.49-sq. km Kaziranga. The gharial, now 2.55 metres in length, was recorded twice, 500 metres apart, in one of the three priority habits chosen during a 10-day survey of aquatic reptiles along the Brahmaputra in January.

Teams of the Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation

India (TSAFI), an NGO specialising in reptiles, and the Assam Forest Department surveyed the Brahmaputra on a 160-km stretch from the Kaliabhomora bridge in the west to the Kamalabari Ghat in Majuli beyond the eastern edge of the Biswanath division.

The female gharial was found to be the only one of its kind moving between a "sandy shoreline" and a

"sandbar with a shoreline water depth of 4.5 metres".

"We do not know much about gharials in the Brahmaputra but we do know that this female has been lonely for more than three years and is close to the size of an adult ready to breed," Sushmita Kar, TSAFI's project director in the northeast, told *The Hindu*.

One of the 10 recommendations in the report was the "high-priority" reintroduction of gharials in the Brahmaputra.

Kaziranga's Director Sonali Ghosh said the tiger reserve had the right conditions for a gharial breeding programme.

If the reintroduction proposal is approved, the reptiles are likely to be brought from the Kukrail gharial breeding centre near Lucknow.

- **The Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) is one of the most endangered freshwater crocodile species**
- Gharial prefers deep fast flowing rivers, however adult gharial have also been observed in still water branches (jheel) of rivers and in comparatively velocity-free aquatic environments of deepholes (kunds) at river bends and confluences.
- Historically, gharial were found in the river system of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and southern part of Bhutan and Nepal. Today they survive only in the waters of India and Nepal
- Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and as Critically Endangered on IUCN Red List

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## PIB-History (GSI)

Prime Minister's Office

### PM pays homage to Swami Vivekananda on his Punya Tithi

Posted On: 04 JUL 2024 9:44AM by PIB Delhi

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi paid homage to Swami Vivekananda on his Punya Tithi.

The Prime Minister posted on X:

"I pay homage to Swami Vivekananda on his Punya Tithi. His teachings give strength to millions. His profound wisdom and relentless pursuit of knowledge are also very motivating. We reiterate our commitment to fulfil his dream of a prosperous and progressive society."



- He was born as **Narendra Nath Datta** on **January 12, 1863**, to Bhuvaneshwari Devi and Vishwanath Datta.
  - He was a monk and the **chief disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa**.
  - His teachings and contributions had a profound impact on **Indian philosophy, spirituality, and nationalism**.
    - a. He envisioned a **strong, united India** and actively promoted the idea of nationalism.
    - b. He advocated for **social reforms, education, and empowerment** of the masses.
  - He introduced **Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga** to the Western world.
  - He played a crucial role in raising **interfaith awareness** and bringing Hinduism to the global stage during the late 19th century.
    - a. In 1893, Swami Vivekananda represented India at the **World Parliament of Religions in Chicago**.

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB –Environment (GSIII)

Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers

Global Conclave on Plastic Recycling and Sustainability (GCPRS) begins today at Bharat Mandapam

- The Global Conclave on Plastics Recycling and Sustainability (GCPRS) – a recycling and sustainability focused trade exhibition under the purview of the All India Plastics Manufacturers’ Association (AIPMA) aims to address the critical issues surrounding plastic use, its impact on the environment, and the innovative solutions that can lead to a more sustainable future.
- The exhibition is also a platform for showcasing business opportunities, focusing on the latest trends and innovations in plastic recycling and sustainable practices, offers numerous prospects for trade in various sectors.

### Do you know ?

India's plastic recycling industry is rapidly growing, and is expected to reach \$6.9 billion by 2033. Government initiatives and a robust existing recycling rate of approximately 60% highlight the country's commitment to managing plastic waste



# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB –Environment (GSIII)

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

Centre issues Scheme Guidelines for funding of testing facilities, infrastructure, and institutional support under the National Green Hydrogen Mission

Guidelines place thrust on the robust quality and testing ecosystem, commensurate with the specified standards/guidelines, in the Green Hydrogen (GH<sub>2</sub>) sector

Posted On: 04 JUL 2024 3:22PM by PIB Delhi

- The Government of India has come out with guidelines for funding of testing facilities, infrastructure, and institutional support for development of Standards and Regulatory framework under the National Green Hydrogen Mission. The Scheme Guidelines have been issued by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE). The scheme will support identification of the gaps in the existing testing facilities for components, technologies, and processes in the value chain of Green Hydrogen & its derivatives. The National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) will be the Scheme Implementation agency (SIA).
- The National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched on 4th January 2023, with an outlay of Rs. 19,744 crores up to FY 2029-30. It will contribute to India's goal to become Aatma Nirbhar (self-reliant) through clean energy and serve as an inspiration for the global Clean Energy Transition. The Mission will lead to significant decarbonization of the economy, reduced dependence on fossil fuel imports, and enable India to assume technology and market leadership in Green Hydrogen

# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB-IR (GSII)

Ministry of Science & Technology

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announces results of Australia-India Strategic Research Fund

Posted On: 04 JUL 2024 11:17AM by PIB Delhi

The Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) is a bilateral program that supports collaborative research projects between Australia and India. It aims to strengthen the scientific relationship between the two countries and address common challenges through joint research efforts.

### **Funding for this year focused on:**

- Creating an AI-driven platform for monitoring soil carbon sequestration.
- Eco-friendly recovery of essential metals from obsolete mobile devices.
- Cost-effective solar thermal desalination by systems design with nanomaterials.
- Harnessing the immune system's power to combat antimicrobial resistance.
- Advanced diagnostics and innovative therapeutics to detect and combat microbial infections.



# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## PIB-IR (GSII)

Meeting Of QUAD Senior Officials From India, Australia, Japan & US Held Via Video Conference

QUAD



Ministry of External Affairs, India

- The Quad is a diplomatic partnership between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States committed to supporting an open, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient.
- The Quad's positive and practical agenda is focused on delivering outcomes for the Indo-Pacific, in response to the region's priorities and most pressing challenges, including health security, climate change, infrastructure, critical and emerging technology, cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, space, maritime security, countering disinformation, and counter-terrorism.
- Quad partners work closely to ensure our efforts complement wider engagement in the Indo-Pacific, both bilaterally and through regional institutions.