

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that curves through a dense, lush green forest. Several cars are visible on the road, including a white car, a blue car, and a white van. The road has white dashed lines for lane markings. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, looking down on the road and the surrounding trees.

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# DAILY NEWS DECODE

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# Indian-American Sirisha Bandla set to fly into space



- India-origin woman Sirisha Bandla will travel to the edge of the space aboard 'VSS Unity' of Virgin Galactic, which is scheduled to fly off on July 11 from New Mexico.

- She will be the third woman of Indian origin to go to space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams.
- Bandla, the vice-president of government affairs at Virgin Galactic in Washington DC, will travel alongside his boss and the group's founder, billionaire Richard Branson and four others in the company's spaceflight.
- Bandla will take care of the researcher experience of the Unity22 mission. The 34-year-old hails from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh in India.
- She moved to the United States at the age of four along with her family. She graduated from the school of aeronautics and astronautics at Purdue University, Indiana. Bandla also has a masters degree in Business Administration from Georgetown University.

# FLY ASH



- NTPC Ltd, a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power and India's largest integrated power producer, in its endeavour towards 100% utilization of fly ash has invited Expression of Interest (EOI) for sale of fly ash from the designated ports of the Middle East and other regions.

- Fly Ash is a by-product of power generation with coal.
- The Fly Ash generated at NTPC stations is ideal for use in the manufacture of Cement, Concrete, Concrete Products, Cellular Concrete products and for Bricks / Blocks / Tiles.
- To promote the use of Fly Ash bricks in building construction, NTPC has set up Fly Ash brick manufacturing Plants at its Coal based Thermal Power Plants.
- These bricks are being utilized in Plants as well as township construction activities exclusively.
- Over the last five years the fly ash utilisation has grown up by 80% in the country.

# INDO-ITALIAN TIES



- After the late October 2018 India-Italy Summit in New Delhi, the bilateral relations are on the upswing.
- The latest visit of Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Matera in Italy, to attend the meeting of the foreign and development ministers of G-20 group, has further raised the banner of bilateral relations.

- Italy is the eighth largest economy in the world. Italy is also a member of the 27 nation European Union, the influential G-20, and the powerful G-7, besides NATO and OECD.
- Italy has chosen India among the five priority countries, for strengthening all-round relations.
- Besides economy and trade, the two countries have also decided to strengthen defence cooperation by increased defence exchanges through greater two-way collaboration and technology cooperation, co-development, and co-production.
- Both countries have already set up a joint defence committee to promote this.

- **In fact, the November 2020 virtual Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resulted in a Joint Declaration and Plan of Action to prioritize areas of cooperation and strategic goals for the five-year period till 2025.**
- **Being the fifth largest trade partner in the EU, India is home to more than 600 Italian companies. Italy also hosts over 1,80,000 overseas Indians.**



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# NIPUN BHARAT



- The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education launched National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) on 5th July, 2021.

- The vision of NIPUN Bharat Mission is to create an enabling environment to ensure universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy, so that every child achieves the desired learning competencies in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.
- NIPUN Bharat will be implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy.
- A five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at the National- State- District- Block- School level in all States and UTs, under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha.

# Child Soldier recruiter list, 2021



- The US Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA) requires the publication in the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report a list of foreign governments that have recruited or used child soldiers during the previous year.
- The countries which have been added to the annual TIP list of the US State Department this year are: Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen.
- This designation could result in restrictions on certain security assistance and commercial licensing of military equipment.
- The United States Congress adopted the CSPA in 2008, as an amendment to the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2008.

- **The CSPA, which went into effect in 2009, prohibits the US government from providing military assistance to countries identified as having government or government-supported forces that recruit and use child soldiers.**

**The following types of security assistance are prohibited for countries that are in the list-**

- **Licenses for direct commercial sales of military equipment**
- **Foreign military financing for the purchase of defense articles and services, as well as design and construction services**
- **International military education and training**
- **Excess defense articles**
- **Peacekeeping operations**
- **The recruitment or use of children below the age of 15 as soldiers is prohibited by both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions.**
- **The CRC was adopted on November 20, 1989 and entered into force on September 2, 1990.**
- **Currently, 193 countries have ratified the CRC.**
- **The CRC requires state parties to “take all feasible measures” to ensure that children under 18 are not engaged in direct hostilities.**



# Vulture conservation in Valmiki Tiger Reserve



- Following the recent sighting of 150 vultures in Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR), officials have started planning for conservation of vultures.
- According to forest officials, Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), White-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Himalayan griffon (*Gyps himalayensis*) were among the 150 individuals spotted in VTR.
- About 75-80 vultures, the highest number, were spotted at the Ganauli range, followed by Madanpur and others.
- The proposed plan for vulture conservation had been sent to the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH).
- After approval from IDWH, a formal vulture conservation programme will begin in all five ranges of VTR.
- As per the plan, a rescue centre for vultures will be set up in the Ganauli range.

- Besides, the local community, living in nearby villages, will be made aware about the conservation of vultures.
- A campaign will be launched through street meetings, seminars at villages and other means.
- The state government has been planning to create a diclofenac-free zone for conservation of vultures in areas bordering Nepal.
- The current plan is a major step in this direction.
- Vultures from the Himalayan range visit areas in Bihar bordering Nepal during winters.
- However, vultures in Bihar are very difficult to spot today, unlike till early 2000.
- Like elsewhere, vultures used to play a vital role in the state by consuming animal carcasses before they decomposed or raised a stink.
- Conservation status of Vultures In India
- Critically endangered –White-Rumped Vulture, White-Backed Vulture, Ruppell’s Vulture, Indian Vulture, Slender-Billed Vulture
- Endangered –Cape Vulture
- Near Threatened – Himalayan Vulture
- Least Concern – Griffon Vulture

- **India's conservation efforts are focussed on the three species of vultures which are**
- **Critically Endangered – White-backed Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, and Long-billed Vulture**

## **Valmiki Tiger Reserve**

- **Valmiki Tiger Reserve forms the eastern most limit of the Himalayan Terai forests in India, and is the only tiger reserve of Bihar.**
- **Situated in the Gangetic Plains bio-geographic zone of the country, the forest has combination of bhabar and terai tracts.**
- **Valmiki Tiger Reserve lies in the north-westernmost West Champaran district of Bihar**

# J&K ends 149-year-old darbar move tradition



- The LG Manoj Sinha formally put an end to a 149-year-old biannual tradition of shifting offices between summer capital Srinagar and winter capital Jammu.

- The administration served notice to employees to vacate the 'Darbar Move' related accommodations in three weeks in Jammu and Srinagar.
- Administration cancelled the residential accommodation of "darbar move" employees in Jammu and Srinagar, implying the employees will remain stationed in either Jammu or Kashmir.
- Around 8000-9000 employees working in Civil Secretariats, with headquarters in Jammu and Srinagar, would move along with files twice every year.
- While Srinagar served as the summer capital, Jammu was the winter capital.

- Dogra monarch Maharaja Gulab Singh is believed to have started the tradition of shifting the capital in 1872.
- The tradition was continued after 1947 by J&K's political class, as it acted as a major bridge and a space for interaction between two diverse linguistic and cultural groups of Kashmir and Jammu regions.



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# **New beetle species found in 230-million-year-old faeces: Study**



- **Researchers have found a new, but extinct, beetle species that was inside a 230-million-year-old fossilised faeces specimen that was found in Poland several years ago, Uppsala University reported.**
- **Named *Triamyxa coprolithica*, the beetle was found in the poop of *Silesaurus opolensis*. The coprolite, fossilised faeces, was scanned using a special technique called synchrotron microtomography.**

# All-women IIT Delhi-team makes antifungal strategy for cornea infection



- An all-women team of IIT Delhi researchers has developed a novel antifungal strategy for fungal infection of the cornea in the eyes.
- They made the peptide-based antifungal strategy for enhanced Natamycin penetration.
- In tests, 44% of mice showed complete resolution of fungal infection with the novel conjugate as compared with 13% of mice treated with Natamycin suspension only.