

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 vibrant and scenic.

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DAILY NEWS DECODE

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Donbas Region



- With Russia mobilising thousands of troops on its border with Ukraine, which has sparked fears of war, Donbas is once again at the centre of a looming conflict.
- It is a small region in eastern Ukraine adjoining the Russian border
- The Donbass region (the Donetsk and Luhansk regions) has been facing a pro-Russian separatist movement since 2014.
- Russia is seeking assurances from the US that Ukraine will not be inducted into NATO. However, the US is not prepared to give any such assurance.
- This has left the countries in a stand-off, with tens of thousands of Russian troops ready to invade Ukraine.

- **Russia is keeping the tensions high at the Ukraine border in order to get sanctions relief and other concessions from the West.**

History of the region:

- **After the Russian revolution, Donbas became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.**
- **During the Second World War, the Nazis took the region. In 1943, after defeating the Nazis in Stalingrad, the Red Army took Donbas back.**
- **In 1991, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the region, which comprises the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, became part of the newly born Ukrainian nation.**
- **The region has been facing a pro-Russian separatist movement since 2014.**
- **Now, Donetsk and Luhansk are two self-declared republics run by rebels backed by Russia.**
- **Unable to defeat the Russian-backed rebels, Ukraine agreed to the Minsk Protocol, after holding talks with the rebels and Russia that were mediated by France and Germany, in 2014. The Protocol called for an immediate ceasefire**

PM Modi talks about 'Kaavi' art on Mann Ki Baat, stresses ancient art's preservation



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- **Kaavi is a form of mural painting found in Konkan region, especially in temples of Goa, parts of coastal Maharashtra and Karnataka.**
- **The art was introduced by the Portuguese who ruled Goa until 1961.**
- **The art takes its name from Kaav in Konkani which refers to Indian red pigment which is the only color used in this painting.**
- **The red pigment is obtained from the laterite soil.**
- **The painting is done on wet plaster in a manner similar to frescoes**

- Fresco is a technique of mural painting executed upon freshly laid (wet) lime plaster.
- The painting is done in bright red and white shades. This mural architecture is evident on the walls of the temples, houses, and Roman-Catholic churches.
- Unfortunately, this unique artwork is gradually declining due to a lack of restoration.
- This dying folk art can be revived by applying it to the interior or exterior walls. This would enhance the beauty of the wall and also promote the Kaavi mural painting.

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Dark Genome



- Scientists have discovered important clues to the treatment of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder within a recently-evolved region of the so-called 'dark genome'
- Dark genome refers to 'DNA outside of the regions conventionally defined as genes'
- The human genome is conventionally divided into the "coding" genome, which generates the ~20,000 annotated human protein coding genes, and the "dark" genome, which does not encode proteins.
- Dark genes cannot be adequately assembled or aligned using standard short-read sequencing technologies.

- It prevents researchers from identifying mutations within these gene regions that may be relevant to human disease.
- The dark genome is a vast space, accounting for the ~98.5% of genomic space where repeat elements, enhancers, regulatory sequences, and non-coding RNAs reside.

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CHILIKA LAKE



- **Chilika Lake, the largest brackish water lake and wintering ground of birds in the Indian subcontinent, saw a million birds, including the uncommon Mongolian gull, visiting the waterbody this year.**
- **As per the Water Bird Status Survey-2022 conducted in the Chilika, 10,74,173 water birds (107 species) and 37,953 individuals (76 wetland dependent species) were counted in the entire lagoon.**
- **Last year, the count in the Chilika was over 12 lakh. Members who were part of the census also reported sighting the Mongolian gull.**
- **The census was undertaken jointly by the Odisha State Wildlife Organisation, the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) and the Bombay Natural History Society.**

- **The increase in numbers for the greater flamingo at Nalabana mudflat indicates that the restoration at Nalabana is effective.**
- **This year's greater flamingo count was the highest in the last decade. It is largely due to appropriate management of mudflats.**
- **Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha state on the east coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 km².**
- **It is the biggest lake of India.**
- **It is the largest salt water lake in India.**
- **Chilika Lake hosts birds migrating from thousands of miles away from the Caspian Sea, Lake Baikal, Aral Sea, remote parts of Russia, Mongolia, Central and Southeast Asia, Ladakh and the Himalayas.**

JAGANNATH TEMPLE ACT



- In a historic decision, the Odisha state cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to the Sri Jagannath Temple Act of 1954, simplifying issues pertaining to land owned by the Jagannath Temple.
- After India gained Independence, the state of Odisha formally introduced the Jagannath Temple Act in the year 1952, which came into effect in 1954.
- The Act contains provision on land rights of the temple, duties of the sevayat, administrative powers of the Shri Jagannath Temple Managing Committee, rights and privileges of the Raja of Puri and other persons connected with the management and administration of the temple.

- **The recent amendment approved by the state cabinet now decentralizes the power to settle land related issues of the temple.**
- **The cabinet has delegated power to temple administration and concerned officials for sale and lease of land in name of Jagannath temple.**
- **Unlike earlier, no approval will be required from the state government for the process.**
- **Through the sale of land, used and unused, the temple will also generate additional corpus funds.**

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Who protects the Prime Minister and how security is planned ahead of state visit?



- The planning of the Prime Minister's security during any visit involves central agencies and state police. Broad guidelines are laid down in the Blue Book.
- The SPG is responsible for the PM's security and it holds a mandatory Advance Security Liaison (ASL) with everyone involved including Intelligence Bureau officials, state police and the district magistrate three days before the visit.

China opens its longest underwater highway tunnel fitted with LED lights



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- China has opened its longest underwater highway tunnel to vehicle traffic after nearly four years of construction.
- The 10.79-km-long 'Taihu' tunnel has been built under Lake Taihu in eastern China's Jiangsu Province, about 50 kilometers east of Shanghai.
- The ceiling of the underwater tunnel has been fitted with LED lights to prevent driver fatigue.

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Himachal Pradesh became 1st LPG enabled & smoke free state of the country



- This milestone was achieved due to the Ujjwala Scheme and Grahini Suvidha Yojana by Centre.
- The Ujjwala scheme was introduced by the government to get rid of the smoke.
- The Grahini Suvidha Scheme was introduced to assist the women of rural areas.
- Ujjwala Yojna was started by the Centre government with the view to free the women of the country from indoor pollution.

- Along with this, the Himachal government also started the Grihini Suvidha Yojana to benefit as many women as possible, under the scheme.
- Under the Ujjwala yojana with an expenditure of Rs. 21.81 crore 1.36 lakh free domestic connections were given in Himachal, while under the Grihini Suvidha Yojana of the Himachal government, 3.23 lakh housewives were provided free gas cylinders at a cost of Rs. 120 crore.
- Mukhya Mantri Grihini Suvidha Yojana was launched on 26th May 2018. With the concerted efforts of the Centre and State government, the women of the state have become free from indoor pollution.
- Besides this, in order to conserve the environment, free LPG connection is given to families with no gas connection.

Sindhutai Sapkal popular as 'Mother of Orphans' passes away



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- **Social worker Sindhutai Sapkal, who was called as 'Mother of Orphans' passed away at the age of 73 years. She was also referred to just as 'Sindhutai' or 'Mai'.**
- **She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2021 in the Social Work category.**
- **Apart from this, she had received more than 750 awards and honours in her lifetime. She adopted close to 2,000 orphans and is grandmother to even more.**
- **She was from Maharashtra. A biopic on her life titled "Mee Sindhutai Sapkal" was released in the year 2010.**

Odisha's Ganjam district is now child marriage free 2022



- The district administration has been able to stop as many as 450 child marriages and video-record 48,383 marriages in two years — 2020 and 2021.
- After verification, the Ganjam administration declared it a child marriage free district.
- Sarpanchs and task force committee members had sent recommendations that no child marriage had taken place in their respective areas.
- Ganjam had started a programme Nirbhaya Kadhi (Fearless bud).

- All heads of educational institutes were directed to inform the administration if any girl aged between 12 and 18 remained absent from school for five days.
- As many as one lakh teenagers have undergone counselling in the past two years.
- The administration also made the production of Aadhaar cards mandatory for any marriages to take place.

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Ladakh celebrated traditional new year 'Losar Festival'



- The Losar Festival in Ladakh is celebrated at the onset of the New Year in the traditional schedule of Tibetan Buddhism. It is celebrated by the Buddhist Community in the Ladakh region.
- The Losar is a 15 days festival, from the start of the Tibetan Lunar calendar, marking the 1st day of the 11 months in the Tibetan Calendar. Losar is a Tibetan word that means 'New Year'.
- The festivities began with the celebration of Birth and Nirvana Anniversary Je Tsongkhapa with illuminations of religious places like Monasteries, Stupas, residential and other places. The eve of the Losar festival is also celebrated with memorial food offerings for the departed loved ones.