



Rapid Fire Current Affairs

Warm Temperatures Led to Massive Pest Attack in Assam

Continuous warm temperatures for prolonged periods may have led to the serious pest (**Namely *Mythimna separata***) infestation in Assam that damaged **around 28,000 hectares of paddy crop in at least 15 districts**.

- The pest (*Mythimna separata*) is known as the ear head cutting caterpillar, rice ear-cutting caterpillar, or armyworm. It feeds on leaves and can cut off panicles from the base of a crop plant, frequently leaving the field looking like it has been grazed by cattle.
- In a warming world, **changes in both temperature and rainfall are the two big drivers of shifts** in how and where pests and diseases spread.
- Every small rise in global temperatures will **reduce the lifecycle of insects, resulting in a higher population of pests, increasing generations, an extension of geographical range and development season**, high risks of invasion by migrant pests and overwintering.

Read More: [Armyworm Attack](#), [White Fly](#)

Humanitarian Pause in Gaza

Qatar successfully mediated between [Israel and Hamas](#), leading to a four-day humanitarian pause, facilitated by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States. Although not a [ceasefire](#), the agreement aims to bring relief to [Gaza](#), subject to possible extension.

- The [United Nations \(UN\)](#) defines a “humanitarian pause” as a **“temporary cessation of hostilities purely for humanitarian purposes”**. Such pauses are usually limited to a defined period, and to a specific area where the humanitarian activities are to be carried out.
- A ceasefire, on the other hand, goes much further. The UN defines it as a **“suspension of fighting agreed upon by the parties to a conflict, typically as part of a political process”**, with the goal being to **“allow parties to engage in dialogue, including the possibility of reaching a permanent political settlement”**.

Read More: [Israel-Palestine Conflict](#), [UNSC Resolution on Gaza Strip](#)

Girish Chandra Murmu Elected Vice-Chair of UN Panel of External Auditors

Girish Chandra Murmu, the current [Comptroller and Auditor General \(CAG\) of India](#), has been appointed as the **Vice-Chair of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors** for the year 2024, marking a significant milestone in India's involvement in global audit governance.

- This position was conferred during the **sixty-third session of the Panel of External Auditors held at the United Nations headquarters in New York**.
- The **Panel of External Auditors**, composed of Heads of **12 Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs)** globally, oversees the external audit of the **UN Secretariat, Funds and Programmes, and Specialized Agencies**.
 - Their responsibilities encompass a wide spectrum, ranging from financial and performance audits to ensuring compliance within UN entities.

- It includes representatives from Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Philippines, Russia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Read more: [Comptroller and Auditor-General of India \(CAG\)](#)

Zero Draft Text to Mitigate Plastic Pollution

Recently, the **3rd session of the [Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee \(INC-3\)](#)** concluded at the **[United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#)** Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

- This session focused on the development of an **international legally binding instrument on [plastic pollution](#)**, encompassing concerns related to the **[marine environment](#)**.
- However, amidst the progress, challenges emerged as INC-3 encountered difficulties in reaching a consensus on the **zero draft text** of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.
- The zero draft of INC 3 outlines proposed elements for the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, emphasizing the marine environment.
 - It aims to address prevention, regulation, and mitigation, encompassing technical, regulatory, institutional, and procedural elements crucial for effective implementation.
 - India actively supports this development and actively participates in the INC process.
- **INC-4 and INC-5 are scheduled to be hosted by Ottawa, Canada** a few months from now and by **Busan, South Korea** in November 2024, respectively.

Read more: [Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee](#)

Guru Nanak Jayanti

Recently, the President of India greeted the citizens on the occasion of **[Guru Nanak Jayanti](#)**.

- Guru Nanak Jayanti, also known as **Gurpurab**, is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of **[Guru Nanak Dev](#)**, the **first guru and the founder of the Sikh religion**.
 - The festival is celebrated on the **fifteenth lunar day** of the Hindu month of Kartik, typically falling in November.
- Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) was born in a village, Talwandi Rai Bhoi, near Lahore (it was renamed later as Nankana Sahib).
- Guru Nanak Dev initiated **inter-faith dialogue** way back in the 16th century and had conversations with most of the religious denominations of his times.
- Compositions penned by Guru Nanak Dev were integrated into the **Adi Granth by Guru Arjan (1563-1606), the fifth Sikh guru**.
 - Later enhanced by the **10th Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh** (1666-1708), it evolved into **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- Guru Nanak Dev's commitment to equality is evident in the social institutions he advocated: **Langar** (collective cooking and sharing of food), **Pangat** (partaking in food without distinctions of high and low caste), and **Sangat** (collective decision-making).
 - Advocated equality without distinctions of caste, creed, and gender.



Read more: [Guru Nanak Dev Jayanti](#), [Guru Nanak Dev](#)

Lachit Diwas

Recently, the Prime Minister of India has paid tributes to [Lachit Borphukan](#) on **Lachit Diwas (24th November annually)**.

- Lachit Borphukan was a commander and Borphukan (viceroys) in the **Ahom kingdom**, located in present-day Assam, India
- He is known for his leadership in the **1671 Battle of Saraighat**, where he defeated the Mughal army sent by **Emperor Aurangzeb** to conquer Assam.
- He was born on 24th November 1622 to Momai Tamuli Borbarua, a high-ranking official in the Ahom administration.
- He is celebrated as a symbol of Assam's historical autonomy and cultural identity.
- His birth anniversary is observed as Lachit Diwas on 24th November every year across the state.
- The **Lachit Borphukan Gold Medal** instituted in 1999, is awarded to the best cadet from the **National Defence Academy**.



Read more: [General Lachit Borphukan of Ahom Kingdom](#)

