

GOVT. INSTITUTIONS

PRE-CONTEXT

ANIIDCO

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 11.

News: "Empower the guardians of the earth, do not rob them."

Context: Union Shipping Ministry is making ambitious plans for high-end tourism along with a shipbuilding and repair yard on Great Nicobar Island.

About Mega Infrastructure Project in Great Nicobar:

- Promoted by **NITI Aayog**.
- Project cost outlay is **Rs. 72,000 crore**.
- **Location:** Great Nicobar (southernmost island of A&N archipelago).
- **Proposed infrastructure:**
 - Construction of a trans-shipment port at proposed at **Galathea Bay**.
 - Greenfield airport.
 - Tourism and township project.
 - Solar and gas-based power plants.
- **Proponent for implementation of project** is **ANIIDCO**.

About: Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO):

- **Incorporated** under Companies Act 1956 in 1988, but not established under the Act, so it is **not a Statutory body**.
- **Objective of ANIIDCO:**
 - To develop and commercially exploit natural resources for the balanced and environment friendly development of the territory.
- **Main activities of ANIIDCO:**
 - Trading of petroleum products, Indian made foreign liquor and milk.
 - Managing tourism resorts.
 - Infrastructure development for tourism and fisheries.

Issues with proposed Mega Infrastructure Project:

- Solar power plant construction will involve **razing nearly a million trees in about 130 square km of rainforest**.
- Criticism from experts over the **denotification of the Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary** for a ₹72,000 crore mega project on Great Nicobar, a **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**.
- **Project will devastate:**
 - About 8 to 10 lakh **evergreen forest trees**.
 - Smother and gouge out scores of coral reefs found along Galathea Bay.
 - Destroy the nesting site for the globally endangered **Leatherback sea turtle species**.
 - Devastate hundreds of nesting mounds of **Nicobar Megapodes**, and kill as many crocodiles.
- **Displacement of the 'Shompen tribe'** (semi-nomadic forest dwelling **PVTG** of Great Nicobar).
 - **Ecologist view:** Tribes may be few in number but **their knowledge of the forests is supreme. They are happy, joyful.** They have their own understanding of the universe. Let them remain the way they are. **If they need us, they will reach out.**
- **Other tribes in area:** **Menchal/Pingaeyak and Meroe/Piruii.**

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LIVESTOCK

PRE-CONTEXT

H5N1 VIRUS

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 1.

News: "Quarantine animals with bird flu symptoms, Centre tells States after tiger, leopard deaths."

About H5N1 Virus:

- Highly **Pathogenic Avian Influenza** but can **occasionally infect humans** and other animals.
- **Caused widespread global outbreak**, carried by migratory birds.
- The outbreak is estimated to have **killed millions of birds** and the virus has infected over 200 mammalian species, including humans.
- **Neurotropism:** refers to the affinity or **tendency of certain pathogens, viruses, or biological agents to specifically target and affect the nervous system**, particularly neurons.
- **Three tigers and one leopard died of the H5N1 virus**, better known as bird flu, at an animal rescue centre in Nagpur in the last week of December.
 - Centre tells States, **quarantine animals with bird flu symptoms** after tiger, leopard deaths.

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HEALTH

PRE-CONTEXT

HUMAN META-PNEUMO-VIRUS (HMPV)

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 8.

News: "Nothing alarming."

About HMPV:

- HMPV virus was first identified in children in **2001 in the Netherlands**.
- The virus causes **upper and/or lower respiratory tract infections**, with lower respiratory tract infections being among the most common.
- While the **virus often causes only mild disease**.
- Union Health Ministry noted that the situation in China is **"not unusual in view of the ongoing flu season"**.
- WHO and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have not raised a red flag so far.

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MAPPING

PRE-CONTEXT

MEDOG DAM

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 10.

News: "Implications of China's mega-dam project."

About Medog Dam on Yarlung Tsang-po:

- **Yarlung Tsang-po (Tibetan name of Brahmaputra)**, it flows through Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
- Announced **mega dam project is in the deep gorges of the eastern Himalayas** that fall under Chinese control.
- The mega dam is designed to be the **largest infrastructure project in the world**. Once constructed, the gigantic dam would dwarf even the **Three Gorges Dam (on River Yangtze)**.
- The site of Medog dam being built by China, **seen one of the greatest earthquakes of modern times**, the **1950 Medog Earthquake, or the Assam-Tibet Earthquake** its disastrous effects still continues with unending cycle of annual catastrophic floods.

About Tibetan River Systems:

- Tibet's river systems are **important to the Earth's cryosphere**, comprising **permafrost and glaciers, and major climate systems directing climate and precipitation pathways** such as the monsoon.
 - **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)** have increased in the Himalayas with climate change events, exemplified by the **Chunghang Dam collapse in Sikkim** (October 2023).

About Brahmaputra:

- Brahmaputra is a **transboundary Himalayan river basin** spanning four riparian countries (China, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh).
- Brahmaputra **originates from the Kailash ranges** of the Himalayas in southern Tibet and **confluence with river Ganga** before it **drains into Bay of Bengal**.
- **A classic example of a braided river**, with many channels that split and rejoin.
- The **Brahmaputra River makes a U-turn** in its course as it crosses India due to the **syntaxial bending of the Himalayas**.
- The Brahmaputra splits into two channels in Assam, which rejoin to form **Majuli Island**, the **world's largest river island**.
 - The **syntaxial bends are deep knee-bend flexures** that occur at the eastern and western extremities of the Himalayas. These **bends are caused by the southward turn of the mountain chain**.
- **Developments countries on Brahmaputra:**
 - **China:** Zangmu dam, Medog dam (recently announced).
 - **India:** announced its largest dam project **at upper Siang**.
 - **Bhutan:** had been planning to building several medium, to small dams.
- **None of the riparian countries of the Brahmaputra river basin have signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses** of 2014, and hence first user-rights on river systems are non-enforceable.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

PRE-CONTEXT

BANIHAL BYPASS

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 14.

News: "Four-lane Banihal bypass opens in J&K's Ramban."

About Banihal bypass:

- A four lane 2.35km stretch, strategically located on NH-44, will boost **'national security logistics' and tourism in J&K**.
- Strategically located on the **Ramban–Banihal section of National Highway 44**.
 - **NH-44 is a major highway in India. The longest in the country**, it stretches from **Srinagar in the north to Kanniyakumari in the south**.
- Centre has embarked on a major mission in J&K to ensure that the **NH-44 remains an all-weather road connecting the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country**.

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Taming the 'rogue' river

The Brahmaputra is a transboundary Himalayan river basin spanning four riparian countries. This map shows its flow from the Tibetan Autonomous Region in China through Bhutan and India into Bangladesh.

