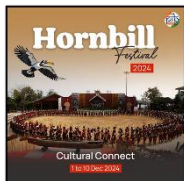


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HORNBILL FESTIVAL



The Hornbill Festival, Nagaland's iconic cultural and tourism fair that is annually held from December 1 to 10.

- It is an annual festival celebrated from 1 to 10 of December in Nagaland.
- It was first time organized in **the year 2000**.
- It aims to promote **inter-tribal interaction** and **preserve Nagaland's heritage**, blending the traditional with the contemporary in a harmonious display of unity.
- It is also called the **festivals of festivals and held every year**.
- It is organized by the **State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments of the Government of Nagaland**.
- **It is celebrated at** Naga Heritage Village, **Kisama** which is about 12 km from Kohima in Nagaland.
- It has evolved into a celebration showcasing the diverse and vibrant cultural and traditional heritage of the tribes of Nagaland.
- The festival **was named after the Hornbill bird** given its association with the socio-cultural life of the Nagas.

Theme of 2024 festival: The Hornbill Festival 2024, themed “**Cultural Connect**,” is a grand celebration of Nagaland's rich heritage and cultural diversity.

- The festival's appeal extends beyond culture, weaving together modernity and tradition with activities like **Naga wrestling, traditional archery, food and herbal medicine stalls**, fashion shows, beauty contests, and musical concerts.
- This year, the Archives Branch is also hosting a special exhibition titled “**Naga-Land & People in Archival Mirror**”, in collaboration with the National Archives of India, offering an in-depth exploration of the region's history and cultural practices.

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INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BODY FOR SUBMARINE CABLE RESILIENCE



- It was jointly launched by the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** and the **International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC)**.
- This initiative aims to **strengthen the resilience of submarine cables**, which are essential to the functioning of the global digital economy.
- It **comprises 40 members** from around the world—including ministers, heads of regulatory authorities, and senior experts in telecommunications—the body reflects a diverse global perspective.
- The **Advisory Body will meet bi-annually** to consult on international policies, infrastructure, and best practices for improving submarine cable resilience

Functions:

- It will work towards **promoting best practices across governments** and industries to improve cable resilience, reduce risks of damage, and ensure the swift repair and deployment of these vital systems.
- The collective experience of the body will help address the needs of those whose livelihoods depend on submarine cables, as well as those responsible for deploying, maintaining, and protecting this critical infrastructure.
- The Advisory Body will **also provide strategic guidance to** address challenges related to increasing traffic, aging infrastructure, and growing environmental threats to submarine cables.

What is International Cable Protection Committee?

- It was founded in 1958, is a **global forum for governments** and commercial entities involved in the submarine cable industry.
- Its primary mission is to enhance the security of undersea cables by providing a platform for exchanging technical, legal, and environmental information.

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ANNA CHAKRA



- It is a **Public Distribution System (PDS) Supply chain optimisation tool**.

- It is spearheaded by **Department of Food Public Distribution**, which enhance the efficiency of the PDS logistics network across the country.
- It is developed in collaboration with the **World Food Programme (WFP)** and **Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT)**, IIT-Delhi.

Working:

- The project leverages **advanced algorithms** to identify optimal routes and ensure **seamless movement of food grains across** supply chain nodes.
- An operation of this magnitude involves a complex supply chain, relying on multiple stakeholders starting from farmers to Fair Price Shops.
- The **inter-state route optimization tool** has been developed for optimization of the PDS movement between the states and **it is integrated with the FOIS** (Freight Operations Information System) portal of the Railways through Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP).
- A significant milestone in this effort is the integration of the optimization tool with the **PM Gati Shakti platform** which now houses geo-locations of FPSs and warehouses across the states.

About SCAN (Subsidy Claim Application for NFSA) portal:

- It will provide for a **single window submission of subsidy claims by states**, claim scrutiny and approval by DFPD facilitating expeditious settlement process.
- The portal will ensure **end-to-end workflow automation** of all the processes for release and settlement of food subsidy using rule-based processing.

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INDIAN NATIONAL TRUST FOR ART AND CULTURAL HERITAGE (INTACH)

The Supreme Court recently impleaded the Archaeological Survey of India and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) in a plea filed for the restoration of two heritage buildings in Mysore city.



- It is an **autonomous non-profit organisation** set up in 1984 with a mandate to protect and **conserve India's vast natural, built and cultural heritage**.
- It is recognized as **one of the world's largest heritage organizations**, with over **228 Chapters across the Country**.
- It is essentially a **volunteer-based organization** and its enthusiastic volunteers in a network of chapters in cities, towns and villages across the country are largely responsible for the spread of awareness about the vast cultural heritage of the country.

Headquarter: New Delhi,

It **operates through various divisions** such as:

- Architectural Heritage
- Natural Heritage
- Art & Material Heritage
- Intangible Cultural Heritage, Heritage Education, and Communication Services (HECS)
- Heritage Crafts and Community
- Chapters
- INTACH Heritage Academy
- Heritage Tourism
- Listing Cell
- INTACH Knowledge Centre.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (NCVET)



In a landmark development, the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) has officially recognized the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACE) as an Awarding Body (Dual).

National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) was established by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India in 2018, as a **regulatory body**, aimed at ensuring quality in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector.

- It has taken over the roles previously held by the **National Skill Development Agency (NSDA)** and the former **National Council of Vocational Training (NCVT)**.
- It has been entrusted with the development, qualitative **improvement**, and **regulation of vocational education entities** involved in both long- and short-term vocational education and training while also **establishing minimum standards** for their operations.
- **The principal functions of NCVET encompass:**
 - Recognize, monitor, discipline, and de-recognize Awarding Bodies.
 - Recognize, monitor, discipline, and de-recognize Assessment Agencies.
 - Recognize, monitor, discipline, and de-recognize Skill Information Providers.
 - Frame guidelines for the approval of qualifications and approve qualifications in the manner set out in such guidelines.
 - Create and monitor a system of redressing grievances against recognized bodies.

BHARATIYA VAYUYAN VIDHEYAK 2024

The **Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak (BBV) 2024**, replacing the **Aircraft Act, 1934**, marks a significant overhaul of India's aviation laws. Passed by the **Rajya Sabha** after clearance by

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the **Lok Sabha** in August 2024, the new legislation is designed to enhance the **ease of doing business in the aviation sector**.

The outdated 1934 law, which had been amended **21 times**, is now replaced with contemporary provisions to address modern challenges and opportunities in aviation.

Key Features of the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak

- **Authorities**
 - **Establishment of Three Authorities:**
 - **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA):** Regulatory functions and safety oversight.
 - **Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS):** Security oversight.
 - **Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB):** Aircraft accident investigations.
- **Government Supervision:**
 - Central government retains overall superintendence over these bodies.
 - Directions may be issued, and their orders reviewed by the government.
- **Appeals:**
 - Appeals against DGCA or BCAS orders lie with the central government.
 - No further appeals permitted.
- **Regulation of Aircraft Design**
 - **Existing Provisions Retained:** Regulation of manufacturing, use, operation, and trade of aircraft.
 - **New Powers Added:** Regulation of the design of aircraft.
- **Rule-Making Powers**
 - **Existing Rule-Making Powers Retained:**
 - Regulation of activities related to aircraft, licensing, certification, and inspection.
 - Regulation of air transport services.

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- **Offences and Penalties**

- **Specified Offences Punishable by Up to Two Years' Imprisonment, ₹1 Crore Fine, or Both:**
 - Violating rules on prohibited goods in aircraft (e.g., arms, explosives).
 - Flying in a manner endangering people or property.
 - Non-compliance with DGCA and BCAS directions.

Criticism of the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak

- **Concerns of the autonomy of the regulator**
 - Unlike regulators in other sector (insurance, electricity, telecom, etc.), DGCA is not independent of government control.
 - Qualifications, selection process, and tenure of the Director General are not defined.
 - DGCA operates as a government department, unlike independent regulators in sectors such as telecom, electricity, and insurance.
- **Appeals being limited to the Union Government**
 - Experts have highlighted the fact that the appeals against decisions by bodies like DGCA or BCAS is restricted to the Union Government.
 - This may affect their ability to function professionally and independently.
- **Role of arbitrator for determining compensation in certain cases**
 - The Vidheyak empowers the government to appoint an arbitrator for determining compensation in certain cases.
 - The Supreme Court has held that power to unilaterally appoint an arbitrator for one party is violative of right to equality under Article 14 of the constitution.
- **Discretion to the central government**
 - It gives discretion to the central government to specify criminal penalties for violation of certain Rules.
 - This may go against the principle of separation of powers.

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CHALLENGES FACED BY PROGRESSIVE STATES

- **Declining Revenue from Consumption-Based Taxes**
 - Older populations typically consume less, reducing the revenue generated from consumption-based taxes like Goods and Services Tax (GST).
 - For States that rely heavily on such taxes, this decline can create a fiscal deficit that hampers their ability to fund developmental initiatives.
- **Rising Social Expenditure**
 - As the population ages, the demand for healthcare, pensions, and social welfare programs increases.
- **Infrastructure Development**
 - Rapid urbanisation necessitates massive investments in infrastructure, including transportation networks, housing, water supply, waste management, and energy systems.
- **Environmental Concerns**
 - Urbanisation often exacerbates environmental challenges, such as air and water pollution, loss of green spaces, and climate-related vulnerabilities like flooding.
 - For a coastal State like Tamil Nadu, these risks are particularly acute and demand proactive resource allocation to build climate-resilient cities.
- **Social Equity Issues**
 - Urban areas tend to attract a diverse population, including migrant workers seeking better opportunities.
 - This influx can create social equity issues, such as access to affordable housing, healthcare, and education, which require targeted interventions.
- **Rising Costs of Developmental Programs**
 - High-performing States are expected to maintain their momentum by investing in infrastructure, innovation, and welfare programs.

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PUNATSANGCHHU-II HYDROPOWER PROJECT



India and Bhutan recently discussed hydropower projects including the 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project, and expressed satisfaction as it was “nearing completion”.

- It is a **1 GW run-of-the-river** hydroelectric power-generating facility under construction in the Wangdue Phodrang district of **Bhutan**.
 - It is located on the **right bank of the Punatsangchhu River** in the Wangdue Phodrang district in Western Bhutan.
 - The project is being developed by the **Punatsangchhu II Hydroelectric Project Authority**, under an **Inter-Government Agreement** between the Royal Government of **Bhutan** and the Government of **India**.
 - It is **funded by the Government of India** with **30% grant and 70% loan**.
 - The **project Authority** shall be dissolved within two years after the commissioning, and the project shall be **handed over to the Royal Government of Bhutan**.
 - The project **involves the construction of** a 91m-high and 223.8m-long **concrete gravity dam**, along with an 877.46m-long and 12m-diameter diversion tunnel with a discharge capacity of 1118 cubic metres per second.
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