

BRITISH ACADEMY BOOK PRIZE

Recently India-born author Nandini Das was named the winner of the 2023 British Academy Book Prize.



About the British Academy Book Prize:

- This was formerly known as the Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize.
- It was established in 2013.
- It was established to reward and celebrate the best works of **non-fiction** that demonstrate rigour and originality and have contributed to public **understanding of other world cultures and their interactions**.
- The British Academy is the UK's national academy for humanities and social sciences.
- The eligible books come from the subjects that fall within those disciplines, from archaeology, history, and psychology to philosophy, languages, and cultural studies.
- **Nandini Das** who is a Professor in the English faculty at the University of Oxford, won the award for her book 'Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire'
- The winner gets the £25,000 prize cash award, and each of the shortlisted works will receive £1,000 each.

STATE FOOD SAFETY INDEX

Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) published the State Food Safety Index.



About the State Food Safety Index:

- The Index is an annual assessment released by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
- It was **started in 2018-19** to create a competitive and positive change in the food safety ecosystem in the country.
- The index will help in providing **safe and nutritious food to our citizens**.

- This index is based on the performance of the State/ UT on **five significant parameters**, namely,
 - Human Resources and Institutional Data, Compliance, Food Testing, Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training and Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment
 - In the 2023 index, a new parameter called **‘Improvement in SFSI Rank’** was added.
- The Index is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all States/UTs.
- The States/UTs are classified into **3 categories, namely large states, small states, and UTs**, for evaluation and assessment.

Key findings of the report

- After adjusting for a new parameter included in the 2023 index, 15 out of 20 states recorded lower 2023 scores compared to 2019.
- The steepest fall in scores over five years was seen in Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat,
- The worst drop has been recorded in the **‘Food Testing Infrastructure’** parameter.
- States including Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh all recorded lower scores for this parameter.
- Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand, meanwhile, recorded lower scores for the **‘Compliance’** parameter.
- The **‘Human Resources and Institutional Data’** parameter, was given the third highest weightage of 18 per cent in 2023 (20 per cent in previous years).
- The only parameter that **recorded significant improvement** was **‘Training and Capacity Building’**, which was given the least weightage of 8 per cent in 2023 (10 per cent in previous years).

FUTURE LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Recently Imperial College London announced its biggest-ever scholarship programme for Indian students.



About the Future Leaders Scholarship Programme:

- The scholarship programme will support **30 of the country's most talented Master's scholars** over the next three years.
- The scholarship will cover the full cost of tuition and living expenses.
- It will be for students studying Master's programmes in **engineering, natural sciences, business, and medical research.**
- In this programme, half of the scholarships are reserved for female scholars.
- It will build a pathway for the most talented students in India to deepen their studies and expand their experiences at one of the world's top universities.
- Alongside the new scholarship programme, the university also signed a new partnership with the UK government's **Chevening Scholarships programme.**
- It will provide funding for an additional three Master's scholars from India over the next three years.

ONE NATION, ONE REGISTRATION PLATFORM

The National Medical Commission (NMC) is all set to launch its “one nation, one registration platform” for doctors across India.



About the One Nation, One Registration Platform:

- The NMC will unveil a patch pilot of the **National Medical Register (NMR)** in the next six months, where doctors will be allotted a **unique identification number.**
- Doctors can also apply for their licence to work in any State depending on where they are.
- The commission had earlier this year issued a gazette notification titled “Registration of Medical Practitioners and Licence to Practice Medicine Regulations, ”
- The idea is to **provide a masked ID to undergraduate students** on the NMR, and depending on when they complete their course, the ID will be unmasked and allotted.
- This ID **can be used to update any further qualifications,** and all State registers for licences to work in any part of the country will be linked here.

- Aim: **To eliminate duplication and red tape** and allow the public to access information on any physician working in India.

Key facts about the National Medical Commission:

- It has been constituted by an act of Parliament known as **the National Medical Commission Act, 2019**.
- It has replaced the Medical Council of India (MCI), which was constituted under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956.
- **Functions:**
 - It **regulates medical education and medical professionals**.
 - It grants recognition of medical qualifications, gives accreditation to medical schools, grants registration to medical practitioners, monitors medical practice, and assesses the medical infrastructure in India.
- **Organisational structure**
 - It consists of **33 members**, including the Chairman (medical professionals only), 10 ex-officio members and 22 part-time members.
 - **Medical Advisory Council:** It provides the platform through which the states or UTs can put forth their views and concerns before the NMC and advises the NMC on measures to determine and maintain minimum standards of medical education.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

[CENTRE TO DEPUTE NATIONAL LEVEL MONITORS TO OVERSEE LIVESTOCK SCHEMES](#)

Why in news?

- The Centre has decided to deploy National Level Monitors (NLM) to oversee the implementation of its livestock schemes including National Livestock Mission and Rashtriya Gokul Mission.

National Livestock Mission

- **About**

- National Livestock Mission (NLM) launched in financial year 2014-15.
- It seeks to ensure quantitative and qualitative improvement in livestock production systems and capacity building of all stakeholders.
- The scheme has been realigned during 2021-22.
- The concept of NLM Scheme is to develop the entrepreneur in order to create the forward and backward linkage for the produce available at the unorganized sector and to link with the organized sector.

- **Aim**

- The revised scheme aims towards:
 - employment generation,
 - entrepreneurship development,
 - increase in per animal productivity and thus targeting increased production of meat, goat milk, egg and wool.

- **Implementing agency**

- The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying is implementing the scheme since the financial year 2014-15.

Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)

- **About**

- RGM is being implemented for development and conservation of indigenous bovine breeds since December 2014.
- It is implemented under the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development (NPBBD).
- It is being implemented by the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

- **Objectives**

- To enhance productivity of bovines and increasing milk production in a sustainable manner using advance technologies.
- To propagate use of high genetic merit bulls for breeding purposes.

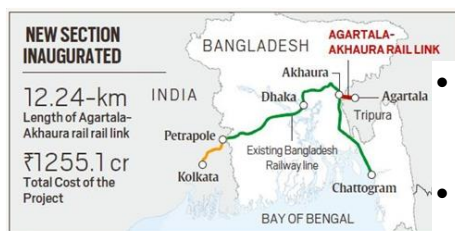
- To enhance Artificial insemination coverage through strengthening breeding network and delivery of Artificial insemination services at farmers doorstep.
- To promote indigenous cattle & buffalo rearing and conservation in a scientific and holistic manner.
- **Significance**
- The scheme is important in enhancing milk production and productivity of bovines to meet growing demand of milk.
- It will also make dairying more remunerative to the rural farmers of the country.
- The mission will result in enhanced productivity and benefit of the programme, percolating to all cattle and buffaloes of India especially with small and marginal farmers.
- This programme will also benefit women in particular since over 70% of the work involved in livestock farming is undertaken by women.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AKHAURA-AGARTALA RAIL LINK

Why in the News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually inaugurated a rail link connecting Northeast India with Bangladesh.

About Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link:



- Akhaura–Agartala line is a railway line between India and Bangladesh.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the two Governments in 2013. The project was launched in 2016.
- It links Bangladesh's Akhaura, through an international immigration station at Nischintapur, to the outskirts of Agartala, capital of Tripura.
- The length of the rail link is 12.24 km with a 6.78 km Dual Gauge rail line in Bangladesh and 5.46 km in Tripura.

- This railway link is part of the 16 transit routes that have been declared allowing cargo transportation from Chattogram or Mongla port, in Bangladesh, to Indian states.
- **Funding Pattern:**
 - The project is wholly funded by the Government of India.
 - The **Ministry for Development of North East Region (DoNER)** funded the work on the Indian side while **Ministry of External Affairs** funded the expense for Bangladesh's side.

Significance of the Project:

- Tripura shares an 856 km-long international border with Bangladesh.
- The state's only road connectivity with the rest of the country is through Assam and a narrow strip of land in West Bengal's Siliguri.
- The 12.24-km rail link project will significantly reduce the travel time between Agartala and Kolkata via Dhaka.
- At present, the **rail route from Agartala to Kolkata is around 1600 kilometers and takes 38 hours**. It passes through Guwahati, Assam.
- With the successful completion of the Akhaura–Agartala line, **the travel time will be reduced to roughly 10 hours**.
 - The distance between Agartala and Kolkata will effectively reduce from 1,600 km to 500 km now.
- The rail link will also **enable goods trains to reach the north eastern region** via Bangladesh at a much lesser transportation cost.
- Further, it will also provide a **direct access between landlocked north eastern India and Chittagong port of Bangladesh**.

WHAT IS WHITE HYDROGEN

Recently, scientists looking for fossil fuels beneath the ground in northeastern France have discovered a large reservoir of white hydrogen.



About White Hydrogen

- White hydrogen is also referred to as “**natural**,” “**gold**” or “**geologic**” hydrogen.
- It is naturally produced **in the Earth’s crust** and is considered a potential source of clean energy.
- It generally exists combined with other molecules.
- White hydrogen has several advantages over other types of hydrogen
 - It **causes no CO2 emissions** when used as a fuel.
 - It is compatible with existing infrastructure and technologies for hydrogen production and utilisation.
 - It is **cheaper and more efficient** than steam reforming or electrolysis.
 - It is **abundant** and renewable.
- Its deposits have been found across the world, including in the **US, Eastern Europe, Russia, Australia, France, and other countries.**
- It is estimated that globally, there could be tens of billions of tonnes of white hydrogen.

Types of Hydrogen:

- **Grey Hydrogen:** It is produced **via coal or lignite gasification**(black or brown), or via a process called steam methane reformation (SMR) of natural gas or methane (grey). These tend to be mostly carbon-intensive processes.
- **Blue Hydrogen:** It is produced via natural gas or coal gasification combined with carbon capture storage (CCS) or carbon capture use (CCU) technologies to reduce carbon emissions.
- **Green Hydrogen:** It is produced **using electrolysis of water** with electricity generated by renewable energy.

WHAT IS THE INFUSE MISSION?

Recently, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched a sounding rocket as part of its INFUSE mission.



About INFUSE Mission:

- The Integral Field Ultraviolet Spectroscope Experiment (INFUSE)



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



was launched from the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

- It was launched to study the **Cygnus Loop**, a supernova remnant.

What will the INFUSE mission do?

- The INFUSE mission is expected to collect information about the remnant for a few minutes from a height of 150 miles (240 km).
- Specifically, the instrument **will gather light streaming from the Cygnus Loop** in far-ultraviolet wavelengths.
- It will observe how the supernova dumps energy into the Milky Way by catching light given off just as the blast wave crashes into pockets of cold gas floating around the galaxy.
- It will study the Cygnus Loop and try to **understand the life cycle of stars**.

What is the Cygnus Loop?

- It is the remnant of a star that was once 20 times the size of our Sun.
- Some 20,000 years ago, that star collapsed under its own gravity and erupted into a supernova.
- Even from 2,600 light-years away, astronomers estimate the flash of light would have been bright enough to see from Earth during the day.