

WHAT IS THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (ANSI)?



Human skeletal remains excavated from the archaeological site of Rakhigarhi in Haryana have been formally handed over by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) recently.

- It is a **government-funded organization** that conducts **anthropological research** and studies on the diverse cultures of India.
- It is the **only research organization** to pursue anthropological research in the Central Government under the Ministry of Culture.
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It was established in 1945 under the leadership of **Dr. S.C. Roy**, a renowned anthropologist.
- AnSI was initially set up to study the tribes and castes of India and their way of life.
- AnSI's early research focused on **collecting ethnographic data on the different tribes and castes** of India, including their social structure, kinship system, religious beliefs, and economic activities.
- Over the years, AnSI has **expanded its research ambit** to include the study of the **entire gamut of Indian society**, including the rural and urban population, the marginalized sections, and the diaspora.

Principle Objectives of AnSI:

- To **research the tribes and other groups** that make up India's population from a biological and cultural perspective.
- To **examine and conserve human skeletal remains** from both contemporary and archaic times.
- To **gather examples of Indian tribal arts and crafts**.



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- To serve as a **training ground** for management and advanced anthropology students.
- To **publish the research's findings**.
- AnSI has **several branches** located in different parts of India, including **Delhi, Lucknow, Shillong, and Pune**.
- AnSI has a multidisciplinary team of anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, archaeologists, and other allied professionals who conduct research and studies on various aspects of Indian society.
- AnSI's research **findings are published** in its various publications, including the **Journal of Anthropological Survey of India, Occasional Papers, and Monographs**.

ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA



The Western Ghats one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, may soon receive stronger legal protection in at least three states through the notification of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

- ESAs, also called **Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)** are designated regions identified for special environmental protection because of their **rich biodiversity, fragile ecosystems** or critical ecological functions.
- The **Central Government can notify** certain areas as Ecologically Sensitive Areas **under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- Under this recognition certain activities are **prohibited, some are tightly regulated**, while others are **encouraged to ensure development** does not come at the cost of ecological damage.
- Getting an ESA status also means that any **development project in the area will be subject to stricter environmental scrutiny**.

Significance of ESZ:

- **Eco-Sensitive Zones** are created as “shock absorbers” for the protected areas, to minimize the negative impact on the “fragile ecosystems” by certain human activities taking place nearby.
- These areas are **meant to act as a transition zone** from areas requiring higher protection to those requiring lesser protection.

NIRBHAY CHETNA INITIATIVE



Recently, the central government rolled out ‘Nirbhay Chetna’ to sensitise 17.5 lakh male elected representatives.

- It is a key intervention **under the Nirbhay Raho initiative**.
- It is a first-of-its-kind national initiative implemented under the **Nirbhaya Fund**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- It seeks to **strengthen gender-responsive governance** through Panchayati Raj Institutions by building awareness, accountability and community leadership among elected representatives.
- It is a landmark national initiative on the sensitisation of men towards women-related issues, including women’s safety and security that aims to strengthen gender-responsive **governance at the grassroots level**.
- **Components of Nirbhay Raho:**
 - Nirbhay Chetna seeks to **sensitise elected male representatives** on gender equality and women’s safety;
 - **Nirbhay Netri** focuses on **capacity-building and legal awareness** among elected women representatives;
 - **Nirbhay Drishti** envisages the **installation of CCTV cameras** at strategic rural locations to strengthen technology-enabled safety infrastructure in Panchayats.



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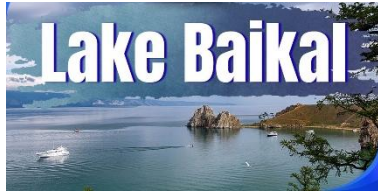
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LAKE BAIKAL



plague bacterium.

Researchers said ancient DNA obtained from bodies interred in four burial sites in the Lake Baikal area revealed the presence of the oldest-known strains of *Yersinia pestis*, the

- **Location:** It is located in the southern part of eastern Siberia, south-central Russia, near the border with
- It is the oldest existing freshwater lake on Earth.
- It is the world's largest freshwater lake.
- It is also the world's deepest lake.
- There are 45 islands and islets in Lake Baikal, of which Olkhon is the largest island.
- **Rivers:** Barguzini, Selenga, Upper Angara, Sarma, and Turka are the major rivers that drain into the lake.
- It has only one outlet, the Angara River.
- It is also home to the Buryat people, who follow the Tibetan Buddhist religion and reside on the eastern side of the lake, rearing goats, camels, cattle, and sheep.
- The lake was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996.

AMBUBACHI MELA



The annual Ambubachi Mela which is one of the largest and most significant religious gatherings in eastern India started at the revered Kamakhya Temple.

- The Ambubachi festival is held during the monsoon, generally in June at the Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam.

- It is a shrine to the Goddess Kamakhya and one of the **most important centres of Tantrik Shaktism**.
- The period of Ambubachi is believed to be the period of the **goddess's annual menstruation, and the shrine is closed for this**.
- The **festival is associated with fertility**, with the onset of monsoon, and the common historical association across cultures of the Earth as a fertile woman. The name 'Ambubachi' itself translates to **water flowing**.

Key Facts about the Kamakhya Temple

- **Location:** It is situated on **Nilachal Hill** and adjoining the southern **bank of the Brahmaputra River**.
- It is one of the most revered **centres of Tantric practices**. It is regarded as one of the **oldest of the 51 Shakti Peethas in India**.
- **Temple Architecture of Kamakhya Temple:**
 - It had been modelled out of a combination of two different styles namely, the **traditional nagara and Saracenic or Mughal style of architecture**.
 - This unusual combination has been named the **Nilachala Style of Architecture**.
 - This is the only temple of Assam having a **fully developed ground plan**.
 - It consists of five chambers, **garbhagriha, antarala, Jagan Mohan, bhogmandir and natmandir** or opera hall for performing traditional dance and music associated with sukta temples.
 - The superstructure of each of the above chambers **exhibits different architectural features**.
 - The main temple contains a modified **Saracenic dome**, the **antarala** carries a two-roofed design, the **bhogmandir** with five domes similar in appearance to the main temple and the **natmandir** having a shell-roof with apsidal end similar to some of the impermanent namghars or prayer halls found in Assam.



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KEIR STARMER RESIGNS AS UK PRIME MINISTER: THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

Keir Starmer has formally resigned as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and as leader of the Labour Party. With this, the UK will have had **seven Prime Ministers in a single decade** — a remarkable sign of **political instability** in one of the world's oldest parliamentary democracies. The 2024 general election was a landslide for Labour. The party won 412 seats, ending 14 years of Conservative rule. Two years later, he is gone.

Why Did Starmer Resign?

- **The 'Freebies Gate' Scandal** - Starmer and his Cabinet Ministers were accused of accepting gifts worth thousands of pounds. Dubbed "Freebies Gate," it caused a sharp drop in his approval ratings.
- **Unpopular Policy Decisions** - Several decisions deepened public resentment. He cut winter fuel subsidies for roughly 10 million pensioners to fund the National Health Service (NHS). He released 1,700 prisoners before their sentences were complete.
- **The Brexit Shadow** - Starmer's resignation came a day before the tenth anniversary of Brexit — Britain's 2016 decision to leave the European Union (EU). A decade on, the economic consequences are deeply felt.
 - An estimated 2–8% contraction in GDP have made 57% of Britons believe Brexit was a mistake.
- **The Final Blow: Local Elections and the Makerfield By-Election** - In the May 2026 local elections, Labour lost 1,100 council seats and control of over 30 councils — a catastrophic performance.

How the UK Chooses Its Prime Minister?

- The UK Parliament has two Houses — the House of Lords and the House of Commons.
- The Commons has 650 seats. Citizens vote in general elections to elect their local Member of Parliament (MP).

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- The leader of the party that **secures a majority** in the House of Commons is invited by the Monarch (currently King Charles III) to form the government.
- That leader becomes the Prime Minister.
- **The PM as "First Among Equals" (Primus Inter Pares)**
 - The British system treats the PM not as a supreme executive, but as **first among equals** within the Cabinet and the parliamentary party.
 - The PM's authority rests entirely on the confidence of their own party's MPs.
 - Once that confidence erodes, the PM can be replaced — a much simpler and faster process than in presidential systems.
- **The Constitutional Handover**
 - The new Labour leader does not become PM automatically. The outgoing PM (Starmer) must travel to Buckingham Palace to formally tender resignation to King Charles III.
 - The newly elected Labour leader is then summoned for an audience with the King, who invites them to form the government. Upon accepting, they officially become Prime Minister.
 - Andy Burnham — the newly elected MP for Makerfield and former Mayor of Greater Manchester — is currently the frontrunner, with Streetering having withdrawn to back him.

Conclusion

Since 2016, the UK has cycled through leaders with striking speed: David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss (45 days — the shortest tenure in UK history), Rishi Sunak, and now Starmer. None has completed a full term.

This pattern reflects a deeper structural crisis — the unresolved consequences of Brexit, economic stagnation, fractured party politics, and a rising far-right that is challenging the two-party order Britain has known for over a century.

THE CHALLENGE OF INDIA'S DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY

- The twenty-first century has made **technology**, **digital infrastructure**, and **data** central to national power. Economic activity, governance, communication, and defence increasingly depend on digital systems.
- Dependence on foreign digital infrastructure creates significant risks for **national security**, economic stability, and governance.
- Critical systems such as **cloud platforms**, **authentication systems**, communication tools, and software services are often controlled by overseas corporations operating under foreign legal frameworks.
- Such dependence can affect government functioning, business operations, manufacturing, and financial systems.
- Even when data is stored domestically, effective control may remain with foreign entities.

Defence and Strategic Vulnerabilities

- Advanced **fighter aircraft**, **missile systems**, radar networks, and surveillance platforms rely on sophisticated code that may remain under the influence of foreign manufacturers.
- In times of conflict, this dependence could limit operational flexibility and weaken strategic capabilities.
- The experience of restricted **GPS** access during the **Kargil conflict** demonstrated how reliance on external technology can create vulnerabilities at critical moments.

The Need to Close the R&D Gap

- India's average R&D spending remains significantly below the global average, limiting its ability to innovate and compete in advanced technologies.
- Sustained investment in scientific research, artificial intelligence, electronics, and defence technologies is essential for long-term competitiveness.
- Without a strong innovation ecosystem, efforts to achieve technological sovereignty will remain incomplete.

Conclusion

- Dependence on foreign-controlled technologies exposes India to economic, political, and security risks that can undermine national interests.
- Strengthening domestic capabilities through innovation, strategic partnerships, private-sector participation, and increased R&D investment offers a sustainable path forward.
- India's success in securing **technological sovereignty** will play a decisive role in shaping its future **economic competitiveness, national security**, and position in the global order.

SARINDA



- It is a **bowed string musical instrument** which is crafted from a **single block of wood** with a hollow resonator.
- It is associated with the indigenous communities of **Tripura** and used during folk performances and other indigenous musical expressions.
- It is also known as **Sarinda Uakhrap**.

Features of Sarinda:

- It is specially **made of bamboo**.
- It also **has an oval shaped void wooden vibrating chamber** which is covered with a thin skin. The middle portion is large and the edges are wide. The cave portion is uncovered.
- In the top portion three pegs are fitted in order to fasten the strings. The strings are either metal or of the **thread of Muga or animals gut**.
- It is **played by a crude "bow"** that is made of **horse hair**.
- **Other GI-tagged products from Tripura:** Tripura Queen Pineapple, Risa and Pachra, also known as Rignai, and Matabari Peda.