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Indian Army dress regulations

Context: The Indian Army has restated to its personnel the importance of complying with official regulations regarding the wearing of trinkets and religious symbols in uniform.

➤ Army Regulations on Wearing Accessories and Religious Symbols

- The Indian Army's regulations meticulously outline protocols for wearing accessories and religious symbols while in uniform.
- These guidelines are detailed in the Defence Services Regulations and Army Dress Regulations.

➤ Wearing Religious Articles with Uniform

- No unauthorized ornaments or emblems are allowed with the uniform, except for a signet ring.
- Trinkets and visible watch chains are strictly prohibited.

➤ Specific Instructions for Women Personnel

- Married female personnel may discreetly wear the mangalsutra around their neck.
- Makeup rules are stringent: no lipstick, colored nail polish, or bindis are permitted.
- Vermillion (sindoor) can be applied on the hair parting if not visible with a beret/peak cap.

➤ Jewellery Rules

- Apart from small earrings and specified rings (engagement/wedding/signet), wearing jewellery in uniform is prohibited.
- Female personnel are limited to one set of ear piercings, with earrings restricted to a single pair not exceeding 5 mm in diameter.

➤ Additional Restrictions

- Use of fragrances like deodorants and perfumes is strictly prohibited.
- Watches and watch bands are banned due to safety concerns, including brightly-colored variants.
- During ceremonial parades, only the senior soldier controlling the sequence may wear a watch.

Global INDIAai Summit 2024

Context: The two-day Global INDIAai Summit 2024 concluded successfully yesterday at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Key Highlights and Outcomes of Global INDIAai Summit 2024:

➤ Attendance and Participation:

- The summit saw an oversubscribed registration with 2,000 AI experts and practitioners attending physically, while virtual participation exceeded 10,000.
- Additional closed-door sessions were held for delegates of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), enhancing global engagement.

➤ Discussion Focus:

- Each session delved into various aspects including challenges in AI implementation, India's unique requirements in shaping AI discourse, and its global leadership aspirations.

➤ Government's Vision:

- India highlighted its commitment to democratizing AI and ensuring accessibility for all through government initiatives.

➤ INDIAai Mission:

- Sessions on the pillars of the INDIAai Mission showcased India's strategic actions to foster an inclusive and robust AI ecosystem, aimed at global AI innovation leadership.

➤ Global South Representation:

- India's role in amplifying the voices of Global South countries at the global AI forum was acknowledged and appreciated.

➤ Collaborative AI Initiatives:

- The Collaborative AI on Global Partnership (CAIGP) brought together GPAI members, AI experts, and industry representatives to address global AI disparities.

➤ OECD Partnership Announcement:

- OECD and GPAI announced a new integrated partnership on AI during the summit, highlighting collaborative efforts on AI ethics and governance.

➤ Future Vision of GPAI:

- GPAI members outlined a shared vision for the future, emphasizing transformative potential, addressing risks, fostering trustworthy AI, and upholding international recommendations.

➤ Implementation Insights:

- The summit provided deep insights into the implementation aspects of the INDIAai Mission, focusing on multi-model approaches, AI-ready data platformization, and stakeholder collaboration across various sectors.

➤ Background:

- The 'Global INDIAai Summit' was hosted by the Government of India on July 3-4, 2024, in New Delhi.
- The summit centered around advancing AI development across key areas such as compute capacity, foundational models, datasets, application development, future skills, startup financing, and safe AI under the IndiaAi Mission, supported by a USD 1.25 billion outlay.
- India, as the lead chair of GPAI in 2024, spearheaded discussions to bridge the gap between theory and practice in AI, involving 29 member countries in this multi-stakeholder initiative.

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➤ **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)**

- The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on ensuring AI practices are aligned with human rights, diversity, innovation, and sustainable economic growth.
- The GPAI secretariat is located at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- GPAI consists of 29 member countries, including the US, UK, Germany, Israel, Singapore, Australia, Belgium, France, and the EU.
- India became a founding member of GPAI in June 2020.
- India will assume the presidency of GPAI in 2024, having been part of the steering committee since November 2022.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Context: During the SCO Summit's last day in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Thursday, July 4th, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

➤ **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Its Key Objectives**

- Founded in 2001 by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, the SCO is an intergovernmental alliance focusing on political, economic, and security cooperation.
- Aims to promote collaboration in trade, investment, energy, transportation, and security among member states.
- Upholds the "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, equality, consultation, and respect for cultural diversity.
- Official languages of the SCO Secretariat are Russian and Chinese.
- Objectives include strengthening member relations, promoting cooperation across various spheres, safeguarding regional peace and security, and advocating for a democratic international order.

➤ **Composition of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**

- Established as the 'Shanghai Five' in 1996 (Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan), renamed SCO in 2001 with the inclusion of Uzbekistan.
- India and Pakistan joined as full members in 2017; Iran announced its intention to become a full member in 2021.

- **Members:** China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan.
- **Observers:** Afghanistan, Belarus, Mongolia.
- **Dialogue Partners:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Egypt, Nepal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia.

➤ **Organizational Structure of SCO**

- **Council of Heads of State:** Highest decision-making body, meets annually.
- **Council of Heads of Government:** Second-highest council, holds annual summits.
- **Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs:** Coordinates foreign policy.
- **Council of National Coordinators:** Manages SCO activities.
- **Secretariat:** Administrative arm based in Beijing, headed by Secretary-General.
- **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS):** Coordinates efforts against terrorism, based in Tashkent.
- **SCO Business Council:** Promotes economic cooperation.
- **SCO Interbank Consortium:** Facilitates financial cooperation.

➤ **Significance of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**

- Focuses on regional security, counter-terrorism, ethnic separatism, and religious extremism.
- Represents 40% of global population, nearly 20% of global GDP, and covers 22% of world land mass.
- Aims to promote regional integration, stability, connectivity, and combat terrorism and drug trafficking.
- SCO's military initiatives like "Peace Mission" drills are significant in achieving shared security goals.

➤ **Importance and Relevance of SCO for India**

- Addresses counter-terrorism and security concerns, crucial for India amidst regional challenges.
- Offers opportunities to contribute to regional stability and security in Central Asia.
- Emphasizes connectivity and infrastructure development, aligning with India's regional priorities.
- Enhances economic cooperation, providing access to markets, technology, and investment opportunities.
- Acts as a platform for multilateral diplomacy and deepening engagement with member countries.
- Supports India's "Connect Central Asia" policy for boosting relations with Central Asian nations.

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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

National Green Hydrogen Mission



Recently, the Centre has issued guidelines for funding of testing facilities, infrastructure, and institutional support for development of Standards and Regulatory framework under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

About National Green Hydrogen Mission:

- The National Green Hydrogen Mission is a **government initiative launched on January 4, 2023**, to make India a global hub for the production, use and export of green hydrogen.
- The mission **aims to reduce dependence on fossil fuels** and **provide a reliable source of energy** through the use of renewable energy sources like **solar, wind and hydropower**.
- The mission sets a target to develop a green hydrogen production capacity of at least **5 MMT per annum by 2030**.
- The Research and Development scheme seeks to make the production, storage, transportation and utilization of green hydrogen more affordable.
- It also aims to **improve the efficiency, safety and reliability** of the relevant processes and technologies involved in the green hydrogen value chain.
- Green hydrogen is **produced using electrolysis of water with electricity generated by renewable energy**.
- The carbon intensity depends on the carbon neutrality of the source of electricity.
- The more renewable energy there is in the electricity fuel mix, the **"greener" the hydrogen produced**.
- The National Green Hydrogen Mission is administered by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**.

Goods and Services Tax



Recently, former Chief Economic Advisor Subramanian emphasized that GST (Goods and Services Tax) remains complex and challenging to implement effectively.

About the Goods and Services Tax:

- Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a comprehensive **indirect tax** levied on the supply of goods and services across India.
- It is aimed at **replacing multiple indirect taxes** levied by the Centre and States.
- This tax operates on a **dual structure** where **Central GST (CGST)** and **State GST (SGST)** are levied on intra-state supplies, while Integrated GST (IGST) is applied to inter-state transactions.
- The introduction of GST was facilitated by The **Constitution (122nd Amendment) Act, 2016**, which empowers both the Centre and States to levy GST under **Articles 246A and 279A** of the Constitution.
- It was implemented in India on **July 1, 2017**, subsuming various indirect taxes like central excise duty, service tax, VAT, etc.
- The Council is **chaired by the Union Finance Minister** and includes the Union **Minister of State for Finance** and the **Finance Ministers of all the states**.
- It ensures uniformity in GST rates and rules across the country through consensus, requiring a **3/4th majority for decision-making**.

Nagarjunasagar Srisaillam Tiger Reserve



Recently, after several decades, the locally extinct Indian gaur has been spotted in the Nagarjunasagar Srisaillam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) in Andhra Pradesh.

About Nagarjunasagar Srisaillam Tiger Reserve:

- The Nagarjunasagar Srisaillam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) is **India's largest tiger reserve**, located in the **Nallamala Hills of Eastern Ghats** in **Andhra Pradesh** and **Telangana**.
- The reserve is **adjacent to the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam**, which is crucial for water management in the region.
- The **Krishna River flows** through the reserve's basin and it also contains the **Srisaillam and Nagarjuna Sagar reservoirs**.
- It was notified in **1978** and became a Project Tiger reserve in **1983**.
- It is **made up of two wildlife sanctuaries**, the **Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary** and the **Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary (GBM)** and is named after the two major dams in the area.

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	Flora: The habitat includes several endemics such as <i>Andrographis nallamalayana</i>, <i>Eriolaena lushingtonii</i>, <i>Crotalaria madurensis</i> Var, <i>Dicliptera beddomei</i> and <i>Premna hamiltonii</i>. Fauna: The reserve has a diverse range of fauna, including Bengal tigers, Indian leopards, deer, wild boar and elephants.
Gharial 	<i>Recently, a lone female gharial has temporarily overshadowed the one-horned rhino in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in eastern Assam.</i> About Gharial: - The gharial is native to the Indian subcontinent and prefers freshwater river systems with deep, fast-flowing waters. - It has a very long and narrow snout compared to alligators and crocodiles, which typically have broader snouts. - Its major populations is found in three tributaries of the Ganga River: Chambal River Girwa River in India and in the Rapti-Naryani River of Nepal. - Indian Gharial Reserves are located in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. - The gharial is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN, listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and included in Appendix I of CITES. About the Kaziranga National Park: - Kaziranga National Park is located in the State of Assam, covering an area of 42,996 hectares (ha). - It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain. - It was declared as a National Park in 1974. - It has been designated as a tiger reserve since 2007 - It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Who has been recently appointed as the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court?
– **Sheel Nagu (approved by the President of India)**
- Recently, who has been appointed as the Director General of the Press Information Bureau (PIB)?
– **Dhirendra Ojha (He will replace Sheyphali Sharan, who has been appointed as the Director General of the Publications Division)**
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recently released its first-ever clinical treatment guideline for: – **Tobacco cessation in adults**
- Recently, Kerala's Chief Minister emphasized that which initiative will play a pivotal role in achieving the state's ambitious Net Zero Carbon target? – **Pachathuruthu**
- Recently, why did New Zealand deny India's request for a certification trademark equivalent to a geographical indication (GI) tag on basmati rice? – **Basmati rice is grown outside of India as well**

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