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National and International News

<p>Naegleria fowleri: The "Brain-Eating Amoeba"</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM) is a rare and fatal brain infection caused by the amoeba Naegleria fowleri. • This single-celled organism thrives in warm freshwater and soil, and can survive in temperatures up to 115°F (46°C). <p>Recent Case in Kerala:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent tragic incident in Kerala saw a five-year-old girl succumb to PAM at the Government Medical College Hospital in Kozhikode. • The suspected source of infection was a local river where the girl, along with four other children, had been swimming. The other children did not develop symptoms. <p>Infection and Spread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naegleria fowleri enters the body through the nose, typically when individuals are swimming in warm freshwater bodies such as lakes, rivers, and poorly maintained swimming pools. • Once inside the body, the amoeba travels to the brain, causing significant tissue destruction and swelling. <p>Symptoms of PAM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial symptoms of PAM include headache, fever, nausea, and vomiting. • As the infection progresses, the patient may experience a stiff neck, confusion, seizures, hallucinations, and eventually fall into a coma. • Most patients with PAM die within 1 to 18 days after the onset of symptoms. <p>Treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no definitive treatment for PAM.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, doctors use a combination of drugs, including amphotericin B, azithromycin, fluconazole, rifampin, miltefosine, and dexamethasone, to manage the infection.
<p>Travel & Tourism Development Index</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India ranks 39th in the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024. This is a significant rise from the 54th position in 2021. <p>Global Rankings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The top countries in the index are the United States, Spain, Japan, France, Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, Italy, and Switzerland. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This new ranking places India as the highest in South Asia and among other lower-middle-income economies. However, direct comparisons with 2021 are challenging due to changes in index parameters. India's improved ranking can be attributed to its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, increased investments in tourism infrastructure, and efforts to enhance travel and tourism sustainability and safety. India ranks 18th in price competitiveness, 26th in air transport, and 25th in ground and port infrastructure. Additionally, India scores in the top 10 across all resource pillars, with its Natural Resources ranked 6th, and both Cultural and Non-Leisure Resources ranked 9th. Despite these achievements, India's overall Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) score is 2.1% lower than in 2019, primarily due to global inflation and supply chain issues affecting price competition, air transport, and tourist services.



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<p>eVTOL</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In India, the ePlane Company, incubated by the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, plans to launch its e-flying taxis in Bengaluru. In India, however, the government has yet to establish clear policies regarding eVTOL flying taxis. Globally, the United Kingdom may witness its first eVTOL flying taxi by 2026. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eVTOLs operate on electric power, allowing them to reach speeds of up to 200 kilometers per hour. They are capable of taking off, hovering, and landing vertically, similar to helicopters. However, unlike helicopters, eVTOLs do not require high fuel and maintenance costs or elaborate infrastructure like helipads. They can function on any open ground or rooftop, offering great flexibility in their operations. <p>Applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily Commute & Cargo Delivery: Potential to reduce road traffic. Military Use: Can be adapted for military applications. Close Proximity Flights: Operates closer to the ground compared to traditional aircraft.
<p>RBI Approves Record Surplus Transfer to Government</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Central Board of Directors has approved a record surplus transfer of Rs 2.11 lakh crore to the government for the financial year 2023-24. This transfer is the highest yearly surplus ever transferred by the Indian central bank. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The surplus transfer is based on the Economic Capital Framework (ECF) adopted by the RBI on August 26, 2019, following recommendations from the Bimal Jalan committee. The increase in surplus is attributed to higher income from the RBI's forex holdings, among other factors.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact: The higher-than-expected surplus will support the central government's liquidity and expenditure. • Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB): The announcement included an increase in the CRB to 6.50% for FY24, as recommended by the committee. The CRB range is maintained between 5.5% and 6.5% of the RBI's balance sheet.
<p>SPECULOOS-3 b</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astronomers have recently made a groundbreaking discovery, detecting a new Earth-sized planet named SPECULOOS-3 b. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated a mere 55 light years away, this planet orbits an ultra-cool red dwarf star, marking only the second of its kind found around such a star. • The star itself is notably colder, less massive, and a hundred times less luminous than our sun, making it an intriguing celestial body to study. • SPECULOOS-3 b exhibits some unique characteristics, taking around 17 hours to complete a single orbit around its star. • One of the most striking features of this planet is its likely state of tidal locking, similar to the relationship between the moon and Earth. • This phenomenon suggests that one side of the planet, the "dayside," always faces the star, leading to endless days and nights on SPECULOOS-3 b.

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