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15 July 2024

National and International News

Mahabodhi Temple Complex

Temple



Why in the news?

- Satellite images suggest **architectural wealth** beneath **Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya**.

About Mahabodhi Temple Complex:

- **Significance:** One of the four holy sites related to Lord Buddha's life, marking the spot of his **Enlightenment**.
- **Location:** **Bodh Gaya**, central **Bihar**, on the **banks of the Niranjana River**.
- **Historical Importance:**
 - **First temple built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century B.C.**
 - Present temple dates from the **5th or 6th centuries**.
 - Surviving example of early brick structures from the late **Gupta period**.
 - Influential in the development of **brick architecture**.
- **Architecture:**
 - Grand temple's pyramidal **shikhara (tower) with layers of niches, arch motifs, and fine engravings**.
 - Four smaller identical towers at the corners, topped with umbrella-like domes.
 - **Yellow sandstone statue of the Buddha** inside the shrine.
- **Bodhi Tree:**
 - Supposed **direct descendant of the original Bodhi Tree where Buddha attained enlightenment**.
 - Ashoka's stone slab marks the exact spot of Buddha's enlightenment, known as **Buddha's vajrasana ("diamond throne" or "thunder seat")**.
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:** Recognized in **2002**.



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e-office Platform

Why in the news?

- The **Government of India**, as part of its 100-day agenda, has announced a **plan to implement the e-office platform** in 133 attached, subordinate offices, and autonomous bodies.

About e-office Platform:

● **Initiative Overview:**

- Aimed to **streamline operations and enhance efficiency across 133 identified offices.**
- Spearheaded by the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.**
- **Implementation by: National Informatics Centre (NIC)** as the knowledge partner for e-Office implementation.

● **Key Components of e-Office:**

- **File Management System (eFile):** Workflow-based system extending manual file handling to an efficient electronic system.
- **Knowledge Management System (KMS):**
 - Central repository for organizational documents.
 - Allows users to create, manage, and track electronic documents, including version history.
- **Work from Anywhere (WAW) Portal:** A virtual office gateway enabling secure access to office functions from anywhere.
- **Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window (SPARROW):**
 - Web-based application for processing **Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APAR).**
 - Enables employees to fill, report, and review APARs within the official hierarchy.



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<p>Crew Health and Performance Exploration Analog (CHAPEA) project</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A NASA crew has emerged from a year-long simulated Mars mission as part of the CHAPEA project, which took place in a 17,000 sq ft habitat at Johnson Space Center. <p>About CHAPEA project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Simulate year-long stays on Mars to assess NASA’s food system and physical and behavioral health in humans for future space missions. • Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Four private crew quarters ○ Dedicated workstations ○ Dedicated medical station ○ Common lounge areas ○ Galley and food-growing stations • Mission Environment: Simulates realistic Mars conditions with environmental stressors such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource limitations ○ Isolation ○ Equipment failure ○ Significant workloads • Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct simulated spacewalks. ○ Provide data on physical and behavioral health and performance.
<p>World Population Prospects Report 2024</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) recently released the World Population Prospects 2024 report. <p>About World Population Prospects Report 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India's Population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Projected to be 1.45 billion in 2024. ○ Expected to peak at 1.69 billion in 2054.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Global Population Growth:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Expected to peak at around 10.3 billion people in the mid-2080s, up from 2 billion in 2024.○ Projected to decline gradually after peaking, falling to 10.2 billion by the end of the century.● Fertility Rate:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Currently stands at 2.25 live births per woman, down from 3.31 births in 1990.○ More than half of all countries and areas have fertility rates below the replacement level of 2.1 live births per woman.● Life Expectancy:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Reached 73.3 years globally in 2024, an increase of 8.4 years since 1995.○ Projected to rise to an average of 77.4 years globally by 2054.
<p>Agri-SURE initiative</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has recently announced the Agri-SURE (Agri fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises) initiative. <p>About Agri-SURE initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Objective: Supports start-ups and agripreneurs in agriculture and allied sectors.● Funding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Total: ₹750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF).○ Contributions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ NABARD: ₹250 crore.■ Ministry of Agriculture: ₹250 crore.■ Other institutions: ₹250 crore.● Investment Support:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provides investments through sector-specific, sector-agnostic, and debt AIFs.○ Direct equity support to agricultural start-ups.



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- **Target:**
 - Support approximately 85 agri start-ups.
 - Investment sizes of up to ₹25 crore each.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Promote innovative, technology-driven agricultural initiatives.
 - **Enhance farm produce value chain.**
 - **Create new rural ecosystem linkages and infrastructure.**
 - Generate employment.
 - Support **Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs)**.
 - Encourage IT-based solutions and machinery rental services for farmers.
- **Management:** NABVENTURES, a fully owned subsidiary of NABARD, **will act as the fund manager.**

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