

7. Short News

1. Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project

Commercial operation of Unit-2 (250 MW) of the Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project was inaugurated through virtual mode by the Union Minister of Power, Housing & Urban Affairs.

Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project

Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project is India's largest hydropower project (2000 MW).

Location– Located on the Subansiri River, spanning Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

Installed Capacity– Total capacity– 2000 MW (8 × 250 MW).

Design– Designed as a Run-of-the-River (RoR) scheme with small pondage.

Major Engineering Features– Largest dam in North-East India, it is a 116 m high concrete gravity dam. Features India's heaviest hydro generator rotors, largest stators, and biggest main inlet valves. First-ever use of Rotec's Tower Belt for dam concreting in India.

Flood Moderation & Water Management– It is the first cascaded dam on the Subansiri River. About one-third of the reservoir will be kept empty during floods to protect downstream areas.

Power Distribution– Power will be supplied to 16 beneficiary states across India. Free power allocations to Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. 1,000 MW reserved for North-East India, strengthening regional energy security.

About Subansiri River

Longest tributary of the Brahmaputra; flows through Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. Origin Near the Kangri glacier region in the Himalayas (Tibet–Arunachal border). Course– Flows south through Arunachal Pradesh, enters Assam, and joins the Brahmaputra near Dibrugarh–Lakhimpur region.

2. Thanjavur Painting

The Department of Posts transported a priceless Thanjavur-style painting of Shri Ram from Bengaluru to Ayodhya.

Thanjavur Paintings (Tanjore Paintings)– Thanjavur painting is a classical art form from South India.

Origin and History– Originated in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, around the 17th century during the Maratha rule, with roots tracing back to Chola murals (11th century) in the Brihadeeswarar Temple. Flourished under Nayaka and Maratha patronage.

Distinctive Style– Known for rich, vibrant colors, bold compositions, and a luxurious 3D effect from embossed relief work.

Materials and Embellishments– Extensive use of gold foil, glass beads, pearls, and semi-precious stones for a glittering, opulent appearance.

Themes– Primarily Hindu deities like Krishna, Ram, Balaji (Venkateswara), Ganesha, Lakshmi, Shiva, and Saraswati, depicted in majestic poses with elaborate ornaments.

Cultural Significance– Considered auspicious, often used in pooja rooms for prosperity and blessings.

GI Tag– This painting style received the GI tag in 2007.

3. India's Reconstruction Assistance to Sri Lanka

India has reaffirmed its commitment as a reliable neighbor by announcing a major aid package for Sri Lanka following the devastating Cyclone Ditwah.

Reconstruction Package for Sri Lanka

India has announced a USD 450 million reconstruction package for Sri Lanka. This builds on India's "Neighbourhood First" and "SAGAR" (now MAHASAGAR) policies, emphasizing regional cooperation and disaster response.

Breakdown– USD 350 million in concessional Lines of Credit + USD 100 million in grants. Formalized via a letter from PM Modi to Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake.

Focus areas– Rehabilitation of roads, rails, and bridges; housing reconstruction; restoration of health and education facilities; agriculture support; and enhanced disaster preparedness.

Operation Sagar Bandhu

India launched Operation Sagar Bandhu on the day of landfall of Cyclone Ditrwah as a first responder, delivering swift humanitarian aid. Operation Sagar Bandhu (meaning "Ocean Friend" in Hindi) is a rapid Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) mission to Sri Lanka.

Naval Deployment– Indian Navy ships, including aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and frigate INS Udaygiri were deployed.

Air and Ground Support– IAF aircraft (C-130J, C-17, Mi-17 helicopters) airlifted relief; NDRF teams conducted rescues; Indian Army set up field hospitals treating thousands and built Bailey bridges for connectivity.

4. Duck-Rearing Practice in Kuttanad

Recurring outbreaks of avian influenza (H5N1) have pushed the traditional duck-farming system of Kuttanad to the brink of collapse.

Duck Farming in Kuttanad

Location– Practised in Kuttanad, Kerala, a low-lying wetland region with backwaters and paddy fields. It is a centuries-old traditional livelihood for farming communities.

Farming System & Method– Based on open, free-range rearing in wetlands and harvested paddy fields and is part of the rice–duck integrated farming system.

Breeds of Ducks– Indigenous breeds like Chara and Chembally, which are well-adapted to the wetland ecology, are used.

Production Cycle– Ducks are usually reared twice a year, with production cycles specifically targeting the Christmas and Easter markets.

Benefits– In the integrated system, ducks help in pest control, weed removal, soil aeration, and natural manuring.

Concerns– The duck farming system is highly vulnerable to avian influenza (H5N1) due to the open rearing system and the presence of migratory birds.

Avian Influenza A (H5N1)

Avian influenza A (H5N1), commonly known as H5N1 bird flu, is a highly pathogenic strain of influenza A virus primarily affecting birds. It emerged as a human health concern and has caused global outbreaks in poultry and wild birds.

Origin and Spread– H5N1 viruses circulate in wild birds (especially waterfowl like ducks and geese), which often carry it without symptoms. Migratory birds spread it globally.

In Animals– Highly lethal in domestic poultry (chickens, turkeys, ducks), causing massive outbreaks and culling.

To Humans– Primarily through direct contact with infected birds, their droppings, or contaminated environments. No sustained human-to-human transmission has been documented as of late 2025.

Symptoms in Humans– Range from mild (conjunctivitis/eye redness, mild flu-like illness) to severe (pneumonia, acute respiratory distress, multi-organ failure).