

POTHAMALA HILLS

Context: The sighting of new menhirs, perhaps the largest-ever recorded in Kerala, on the Pothamala hills in **Udumbanchola taluk** on the **Kerala-Tamil Nadu border**, has thrown light on the possible existence of a major prehistoric necropolis there.

About Menhirs:

- ✚ Menhir is a **Tall Upright Stone** of a kind erected in **Prehistoric Times** in western Europe.
- ✚ It can be found solely as **monoliths**, or as part of a group of similar stones.
- ✚ The Pothamala hills housed hundreds of cobbled stone structures, pointing to the existence of a structured graveyard of a prehistoric civilisation.
- ✚ The largest menhir found was 20 ft tall and 6 ft wide with a thickness of 5 ft.
- ✚ They were planted in a **Specific Geometrical Pattern** on a cluster of hills.

KARBI ANGLONG, ASSAM

Context: More than 4.23 lakh people have been displaced by floods that affected 17 of Assam's 33 districts

About Karbi Anglong:

- ✚ It is one of the 33 administrative districts of Assam state in India.
- ✚ **Language:** Karbi, Assamese, Hindi and English.
- ✚ In 1952, Karbi Anglong district became home to the **Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary**, which has an area of 6 km².
- ✚ **Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary** is another wildlife sanctuary of Karbi Anglong covering 37 km²
- ✚ More than 75% of the district is forested.
- ✚ The main vegetation is **Tropical semi-evergreen** with patches of Moist Deciduous and wet Evergreen forests in certain areas.
- ✚ The district boasts the largest population of **hoolock gibbons** in Assam.

H M S MONTROSE

Context: A British warship forced three Iranian boats to back off after they sought to block a British tanker from passing through the Strait of Hormuz

About H M S Montrose:

- ✚ It is one of the Royal Navy's thirteen Type 23 Frigates
- ✚ **Type 23 Frigates** are essential all-rounders, fast, adaptable and ready to take on tasks from antipiracy patrols to providing humanitarian aid.
- ✚ **H M S Montrose** - The 5th of the British frigate fleet and has highly sensitive suite of radars.
- ✚ It allows the ship to track aircraft and missiles up to 120 miles, and a missile system with a 20+ mile range.
- ✚ It was awarded the **Fleet Effectiveness Trophy** for best frigate in the Royal Navy in 2014.



HAYABUSA2

Context: A Japanese spacecraft has successfully landed on a distant **asteroid Ryugu** where it hopes to collect samples that could shed light on the evolution of the solar system.

About Hayabusa2:

- ✚ It is an **Asteroid Sample-Return Mission** operated by the Japanese space agency, **JAXA**.
- ✚ It follows on from the **Hayabusa mission** which returned asteroid samples in **2010**
- ✚ Hayabusa2 was launched on 3 December 2014 and rendezvoused with **near-Earth asteroid Ryugu** on 27 June 2018.
- ✚ It is in the process of **surveying the asteroid for a year and a half**, departing in December 2019, and returning to Earth in December 2020.
- ✚ It carries multiple science payloads for **remote sensing, sampling, and four small rovers** that are investigating the asteroid surface to inform the environmental and geological context of the samples collected.



About Asteroid Ryugu:

- ✚ Asteroid Ryugu is a primitive carbonaceous near-Earth asteroid.
- ✚ Carbonaceous asteroids are expected to preserve the most pristine materials in the Solar System, a mixture of minerals, ice, and organic compounds that interact with each other.

- ✚ It is expected to provide additional knowledge on the origin and evolution of the inner planets
- ✚ In particular, the origin of water and organic compounds on Earth, all relevant to the origin of life on Earth can also be studied.

ASSAM TEMPLE TURTLES SET FREE IN THE WILD

Context: Five species of rare turtles crammed in a small pool within the complex of a Shiva temple in central Assam's Nagaon have been rehabilitated in a wildlife sanctuary.

- ✚ A team from Nagaon Wildlife Division and green group Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), in coordination with the Nagaon Shivasthan Temple Committee, recently released 67 turtles at the Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary in Sonitpur district.
- ✚ The turtles belong to five species – **Indian flapshell, peacock softshell, Indian tent, brown-roofed and black softshell.**

About Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary:

- ✚ It is a protected area located in the state of **Assam in India.**
- ✚ This wildlife sanctuary covers 44.06 km², on the south bank of the **Brahmaputra River** in Sonitpur district.
- ✚ The area was declared a Reserved forest in 1974, it became a sanctuary in 1995
- ✚ **Biodiversity:** It is considered to be an ideal habitat for the **Bengal florican.** It is a paradise for many migratory birds. Reptiles and fish are also found here
- ✚ **Mammals:** Indian rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, wild buffalo, hog deer, wild pigs and occasionally a herd of elephants.
- ✚ **Birds:** Bengal florican, black-necked stork, mallard, openbill stork, teal, whistling duck and many others
- ✚ **Indian flapshell:** It is a freshwater species of turtle found in South Asia; **IUCN status:** Least Concern
- ✚ **Peacock softshell:** It is a species of turtle found in South Asia, and is listed on the **IUCN Red List** as a vulnerable species.
- ✚ **Indian tent turtle:** The species is endemic to India and Bangladesh and listed on the **IUCN Red List** as a least concern species.
- ✚ **Brown-roofed turtle:** The species is endemic to South Asia; **IUCN status:** Near Threatened
- ✚ **Black softshell turtle:** It is a species of freshwater turtle found in India (Assam) and Bangladesh; **IUCN status:** Extinct in the Wild

CHANDRAYAAN-2

About Chandrayaan 2:

- ✚ It is **India's second lunar mission**.
- ✚ It would be launched using India's most powerful rocket **GSLV MK-III** from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in **Sriharikota, AP**.
- ✚ Its payloads will collect scientific information on lunar (moon) topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere etc....
- ✚ It has three modules (a detachable self-contained unit of a spacecraft) namely **Orbiter, Lander named Vikram and Rover named Pragyan**.
- ✚ **Vikram Lander**: It will make soft landing at a predetermined site close to lunar South Pole
- ✚ **Pragyan Rover**: It will roll out for carrying out scientific experiments on lunar surface.

OPERATION THIRST

Context: All India Drive to crack down selling of unauthorized Packaged Drinking Water

- ✚ Aims to curb the menace of **unauthorized PDW (PACKAGED DRINKING WATER)** in Railway premises
- ✚ An all India drive named "**Operation Thirst**" was launched on 08th & 09th July 2019 on the direction of DG/RPF, Railway Board, New Delhi
- ✚ During the drive, 1371 persons were arrested for selling of packaged drinking water of unauthorised brands under different sections

WORLD POPULATION DAY

- ✚ **World Population day** is an annual event, observed on **July 11** every year, which seeks to raise awareness of global population issues.
- ✚ The event was established by the Governing Council of the **United Nations Development Programme** in 1989.
- ✚ **This year's World Population Day calls** for global attention to the unfinished business of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.
- ✚ World Population Day **aims** to increase people's awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human rights.