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3 November 2023

International & National News

Researchers identify a new mushroom species from the Western Ghats



Context

A tiny, fragile-looking mushroom sporting a honey-yellow 'cap' found on the campus of the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) at Palode in Thiruvananthapuram has been identified as a new species.

Key points

- The new species belongs to the genus **Candolleomyces**.
- The new species has been named **Candolleomyces albosquamosus** - 'albosquamosus' for the white woolly scale-like structures on its pileus or cap.
- Delicate in build, the mushroom grows to a height of just about **58 mm**.

Did you know?

The discovery of a new species of the genus Candolleomyces in India is special given that there are only **35 species** in this genus worldwide

Akhaura-Agartala rail link to be inaugurated



Context

The much-awaited **Akhaura-Agartala rail link** will be inaugurated virtually by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and his Bangladesh counterpart **Sheikh Hasina**

Key points

- The rail link is **12.24 km**, with a **6.78 km dual gauge line** in Bangladesh and **5.46 km** in Tripura.
- This rail link is being seen as a first step to connect **Tripura to Kolkata** through **Bangladesh**.
- The link will significantly reduce the time and distance needed to reach **Tripura, southern Assam, and Mizoram from Kolkata**.
- It will also help **boost India-Bangladesh trade** in agriculture products, tea, sugar, construction items, iron and steel, consumer items, besides people-to-people ties.

Modi pays tribute to Patel, launches development projects at Statue of Unity

Context

Prime Minister paid floral tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at the Statue of Unity in Narmada, Gujarat, on the birth anniversary of India's first Home Minister, which is celebrated as **National Unity Day.(31st October)**



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Key points

- He launched several development projects at the Statue of Unity, which has emerged as a **major tourism hub**.
- The Statue of Unity is the world's tallest statue with a height of **182 metres**. Over three million visitors visit the site annually.
- Mr. Modi witnessed the **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) parade**.

About Aarambh

- PM addressed the officer trainees of the **98th Common Foundation Course** at the culmination of the fifth edition of "Aarambh" in which 560 trainees from Indian civil services and three from Bhutan civil services participated.
- The **5th edition of the "Aarambh"** programme was held on the theme of '**Harnessing the Power of Disruption**'.
- The course provides a first-hand introduction to the ideas, challenges and responsibilities of governance in a large and diverse country.

Fiscal deficit touches 39.3% of full-year target in first half

Context

- The central government's fiscal deficit touched 39.3% of the full-year target in the first half of the current financial year, **slightly higher than 37.3%** recorded in the year-earlier period.
- In the Union Budget, the government projected to bring down the fiscal deficit to **5.9% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** in the 2023-24 financial year.
- Tax revenue was at **₹11.60 lakh crore or 49.8% of the annual target**. During April-September 2022, net tax collection was 52.3% of the Budget Estimate.

Keraleeyam Festival

Context

- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the first-ever "**Keraleeyam**" festival on **Kerala's foundation day**.
- It is a **week-long event** showcasing the richness of the region's ethnic traditions and the complexity of its evolution as a modern State.

Key points

- Keraleeyam is the "**mahotsavam**" (great festival) that celebrates the spirit of the southern State.
- The event would be held every year from **November 1** as part of the State Formation Day celebrations.
- The event would be held annually for all the people who are proud of themselves as Keralites, to share their happiness in it with others, and to announce this to the world.



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PM launches new projects in Gujarat



Context

The Prime Minister dedicated a slew of infrastructure projects worth **₹5,950 crore** in Gujarat during his two-day visit to his home State.

Key points

- He **inaugurated railway projects**, such as new sections of the **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor** and the doubling of the Viramgam-Samakhiali rail line,
- He also inaugurated initiatives to recharge lakes, construct a barrage on the Sabarmati river, and set up drinking water and sewage treatment facilities.
- The projects will come up in the districts of Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Mahisagar, Gandhinagar, and Patan.

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