

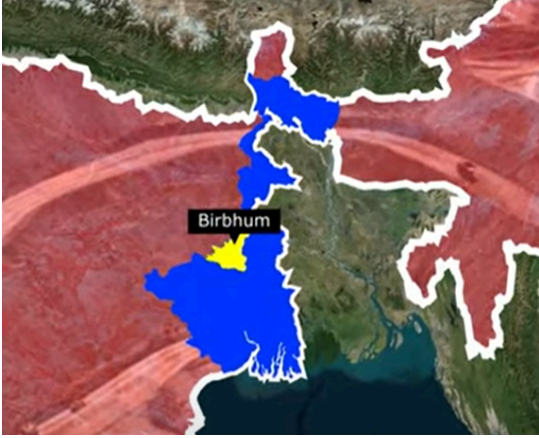


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24 February 2024

West Bengal News

<p>Deocha-Pachami Coal Mine</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bengal government is exploring potential technical collaborations with Poland for the development of the Deocha-Pachami coal. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administration plans to float tenders for mining basalt, a type of rock, from a significant portion of the proposed Deocha-Pachami coal mine in Birbhum district. Mining basalt is the first major step before extracting coal from Deocha-Pachami. The basalt in Deocha-Pachami is renowned for its excellent quality and is used in the construction of buildings, roads, and bridges. The state government has identified an area from which 142 million tonnes of basalt could be extracted, attracting interest from numerous agencies for the tender process. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the second-largest coal block in the world and the largest in India due to the amount of coal reserves. The block has an indicative reserve of 1,198 million tonnes and is spread over 12.31 sqkm
<p>National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kolkata Municipal Corporation's (KMC) Health department, as part of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), has provided diagnosis and treatment to over 100,000 TB patients and screened more than 200,000 slum dwellers in the city for the disease in 2023. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Global TB Report 2023, published by the World Health Organization, indicates that the estimated number of drug-resistant TB cases in India decreased by 21% from 140,000 in 2015 to 110,000 in 2022. In West Bengal, the number of DR-TB cases decreased to 2,367 by October 31, 2023, from 3,088 cases in 2022.
<p>Mid-day meal scheme in Bengal</p>	<p>Context:</p>



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The implementation of the mid-day meal scheme in Bengal has been praised by the Central government, which described it as a "model".

Senior bureaucrats from the Centre expressed satisfaction with Bengal's implementation of the scheme and the proper utilization of funds.

About:

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme in West Bengal, known as PM-POSHAN, is a government initiative that ensures a single meal is provided to students in government and government-aided schools and madrasas¹. The cost of mid-day meals for the 11.6 million students in Bengal is shared by the Centre and state on a 60:40 basis

State initiates construction of Rs 120 cr bridge over Raidak

Context:

- The state government has begun constructing a **Rs 120 crore bridge over the Raidak River in Tufanganj Sub-Division**, Cooch Behar district, aiming to resolve a long-standing issue.

Issue:

- Rampur-I, Rampur-II, and Folimari Gram Panchayat in Tufanganj-II Block face transportation challenges, with residents **travelling 50 kilometres to Cooch Behar**.
- The Raidak River isolates them, requiring boat crossings for eight months and a makeshift bamboo bridge for the dry months.
- The local community eagerly awaits the construction of the proposed bridge, as it would significantly reduce travel distance to **only 5 to 6 kilometres**, providing easier access.
- Additionally, it is expected to boost the area's development, allowing residents to conveniently reach Tufanganj city.

Raidak River

- The Raidāk River, also known as **Wang Chhu or Wong Chhu in Bhutan**, is a tributary of the **Brahmaputra River**.
- It is a trans-boundary river that flows through Bhutan, India, and Bangladesh.
- The river is one of the main rivers in the **Alipurduar District of West Bengal, India**.
- The river originates in the Himalayas and in its upper reaches, it is also known as the **Thimphu Chhu**.
- The river flows southeast through a comparatively open valley, its course strewn with large boulders against which the water foams violently.



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- It is joined by several small tributaries flowing from nearby mountains.
- The river debouches into the plains in the **Alipurduar District and then flows through the Cooch Behar district** in West Bengal, India.
- The Raidak joins with the Brahmaputra in the Kurigram District in Bangladesh.
- The total length of the main river is 370 kilometers, but along with its tributaries, it covers a length of nearly 610 kilometers in Bhutan alone.
- The 336MW Chukha hydel project, which harnesses the waters of the Wang Chhu or Raidak River, was historically one of the largest single investments undertaken in Bhutan.
- It was built by India on a turnkey basis, with India providing 60% of the capital in a grant and 40% in a loan at highly concessional terms and conditions.

The Central Excise Day



Context:

- The **Central Excise Day** commemorates the establishment of the **Central Excise and Salt Act of 1944**, which laid the foundation for India's indirect tax system.
- It celebrates the contributions of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** in mobilizing revenue for the nation's development.
- This act was a combination of 11 acts regarding excise duties, and it was passed to make changes in the law related to salt and central duties.

About:

- On 24 February **1944**, the **Central Excise and Salt Act** was passed, and **Central Excise Day** is celebrated to commemorate this legislation.
- In **1966**, the act was renamed **The Central Excise Act 1944**, and **Schedules 1 and 2** of the act were related to the values and rates of the duties

Do you Know?

- The **Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBIC)** is responsible for administering indirect taxes in India.

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