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National and International News

<p>PM-Vidyalaxmi Scheme</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The PM Vidyalaxmi scheme, approved by the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to financially support meritorious students in pursuing higher education by eliminating financial barriers. <p>Key Features</p> <p>Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students admitted to top 860 NIRF-ranked institutions (22 lakh students annually).Covers both government and private HEIs. <p>Loan Accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Collateral-free, guarantor-free loans available for tuition and course-related expenses.Digital, transparent, student-friendly application system. <p>Financial Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Credit Guarantee: 75% credit guarantee by the government on loans up to ₹7.5 lakhs.Interest Subvention:<ul style="list-style-type: none">3% interest subvention on loans up to ₹10 lakhs for students with family income up to ₹8 lakhs (moratorium period).Annual support for 1 lakh students, with preference for those in government institutions and technical/professional courses. <p>Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Unified Digital Portal: "PM-Vidyalaxmi" portal for easy loan and interest subvention applications.Payment System: Interest subvention via e-vouchers and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallets. <p>Budget and Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Funding: ₹3,600 Crore allocated for 2024-25 to 2030-31.Beneficiaries: 7 lakh new students expected to benefit within the period. <p>Integration with Existing Schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Additional Support:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complements Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Education Loans (CGFSEL).
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- Holistic support for students with PM Vidyalaxmi and PM-USP combined, focusing on higher education access for all deserving students.

Discovery of Al-Natah: A 4,000-Year-Old Ancient Town in Saudi Arabia



Context:

- Archaeologists have uncovered a fortified town dating back **4,000 years in northwest Saudi Arabia**, revealing critical insights into the transition from nomadic to urban lifestyles in ancient societies.

Key Highlights of the Discovery

Location and Importance:

- The ancient town, called Al-Natah, is located within **Khaybar's walled oasis**, a fertile region in Saudi Arabia surrounded by desert.
- This discovery provides a unique perspective on the development of social complexity and organized urban life in the Arabian Peninsula.

Discovery Details:

- Led by **French archaeologist Guillaume Charloux**, the excavation revealed a 14.5-kilometer wall surrounding the settlement.
- Findings, published in the journal PLOS One, suggest Al-Natah was a residential and organizational hub, showcasing early architectural planning.

Archaeological Findings

Age and Structure

- Dated to approximately **2400 BCE** during the early **Bronze Age**, Al-Natah appears to have supported a population of about 500 people.
- The town featured a standard layout with nucleated dwellings connected by small streets, highlighting organized urban planning.
- The settlement covered **2.6 hectares** and likely included distinct zones for **residential living, decision-making, and burial (necropolis)**.

Architectural Significance:

- The **fortified walls** around the oasis settlement emphasize the need for protection and showcase an early form of urban fortification.
- The town's organization reflects a **structured lifestyle**, differentiating it from the nomadic cultures that dominated nearby regions.

Social and Economic Context

Slow Urbanization and Social Complexity

- Unlike rapid urbanization in Mesopotamia and Egypt, Al-Natah exemplifies "slow urbanism" — a gradual shift from nomadic to settled lifestyles in Northwest Arabia.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers believe this process facilitated interactions between pastoral nomads and urban settlers, fostering economic and social exchanges. <p>Integration with Trade Networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al-Natah and other walled oases in Northwestern Arabia likely served as nodes in long-distance trade networks, integrating the region economically with the broader Middle Eastern world. • The town's modest urbanization reflects an indigenous pattern of growth and social organization, unique to the Arabian Peninsula.
KarmayogiSaptah	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KarmayogiSaptah, a week-long initiative under the Mission Karmayogi, aims to ignite a culture of lifelong learning among Indian public servants. • It focuses on capacity building and skill development, empowering civil servants to become future-ready and aligned with national objectives. <p>Key aspects of KarmayogiSaptah include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Learning Week (NLW): A dedicated week for continuous learning and skill development. • Karmayogi Bharat Portal: An online platform for accessing a wide range of learning resources and courses. • Focus on attitude, skills, and knowledge: A holistic approach to capacity building, emphasizing the importance of not just technical skills but also the right mindset and values <p>Refer to Addapedia notes for detailed info on Mission Karmayogi.</p>
NTPC celebrates 50th Raising Day	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NTPC, India's largest integrated power utility, recently celebrated its 50th Raising Day. • This milestone marks five decades of remarkable growth, innovation, and significant contributions to India's power sector. • During the celebrations, NTPC launched Hydrogen-fuel buses, a significant step towards cleaner and greener technologies. • Additionally, the company announced the successful synthesis of CO2 captured from flue gas with hydrogen, which was then converted into methanol at NTPC's Vindhyachal plant. • NTPC also aims to install 60 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2032, solidifying its position as a leader in India's power sector. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NTPC, or National Thermal Power Corporation, is a major Indian public sector undertaking that plays a pivotal role in India's power sector. • It is primarily engaged in thermal power generation, but has also diversified into hydro, nuclear, and renewable energy sources



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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

Aligarh University

Muslim

Context:

- The Supreme Court of India issued a **landmark ruling on the minority status of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)**.
- The court **overruled a 1967 verdict** that denied AMU its minority status due to its status as a central university.

About:

- **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)** is a prestigious central university located in **Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh**.
- Founded in **1875 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan** as the Muhammadan **Anglo-Oriental College**, it was later **transformed into a university in 1920**.
- AMU is a renowned institution for its diverse academic programs, rich history, and significant contributions to Indian education.
- It offers a wide range of courses in fields like engineering, medicine, law, arts, science, and humanities.

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