

The Centre has decided to nominate Assam's Charaideo Maidams — the Ahom equivalent of the ancient Egyptian pyramids — for the UNESCO World Heritage Site status this year. "There is currently no World Heritage Site in the category of cultural heritage in the northeast. The dossier [to push for the case of the Charaideo Maidams] was prepared in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India," Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose the Maidams, representing the late medieval (13th-19th century CE) mound burial tradition of the Tai Ahom community in Assam, from among 52 sites across the country seeking the World Heritage Site tag. The Ahom rule lasted for about 600 years until the British annexed Assam in 1826. Charaideo, more than 400 km east of Guwahati, was the first capital of the Ahom dynasty founded by Chao Lung SiukaPha in 1253.

It has been nearly three years since the School Health and Wellness Programme was launched under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, and so far only 15 States have started the weekly 40minute classroom sessions with students, official sources from the Union Health Ministry told. As of December 2022, only 71 of 766 districts have achieved 100% HWA training targets, according to Ministry data. Only four States and Union Territories — Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Chandigarh and Dadra and Nagar Haveli — have achieved 100% coverage. Some States are on the road to achieving targets, such as Rajasthan (99%), Uttarakhand (97%), and Haryana (92%). "In 2022-23, over 300 districts are targeted to be covered across 36 States and Union Territories," a senior Health Ministry official said.

The third wave in India that began in the first week of January 2022, driven primarily by the BA.1 Omicron sub lineage, peaked at around 3,38,000 new infections on January 21, and came to an end by the first week of March 2022. Except for a short period — mid-June to mid-August — after the third wave, India has not witnessed even an uptick in new infections in 2022. The relative calm in India comes even when new Omicron subvariants and recombinants with ever increasing ability to evade immune responses and greater transmissibility have emerged at regular intervals last year.

"The hybrid immunity — natural infection and vaccination induced immunity — is the reason that there has not been an uptick in COVID-19 cases in India. An estimated 95% of India's population above 12 years of age has developed hybrid immunity. India's situation of hybrid immunity is arguably the best possible protection against SARSCoV2," says Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya, consultant physician and an epidemiologist.

The ground in other parts of Udhagamandalam had reached subzero temperatures. The lowest ambient

CENTRE ISSUES GUIDELINES TO SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS TO REGULATE PROMOTIONS

1. The guidelines are aligned with those guidelines issued under Consumer Protection Act (CPA), 2019. Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022 was issued under CPA, 2019 It provides a framework for protecting consumers against unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements.
2. **Need for the guidelines:** There has been increased use of social media for promotional activities and influencer violations comprising almost 30% of ads taken up by the Advertising Standards Council of India. India's social media influencer market expected to reach 2,800 crores by 2025 (from ₹ 1,275 crore in 2022).
3. **Key highlights-**Any celebrity, influencer or virtual influencer must disclose any material connection (trips or hotel, etc.) with the advertiser. Disclosures must be prominently and clearly displayed (hard to miss.) Endorsements must be made in simple, clear language and terms such as "advertisement," "sponsored," or "paid promotion" can be used. The product and service must have been used or experienced by the endorser. Non-compliance can lead to a jail term of up to 2 years and penalty of Rs 50 lakh.

SUPREME COURT (SC) DECLINES TO ENTERTAIN PETITIONS AGAINST CASTE-BASED CENSUS IN BIHAR

1. The Bihar government had recently launched the caste survey which aims to compile data on each family digitally through a mobile application from the panchayat to the district level. However, pleas were submitted to quash the notification on the ground that the caste-based census "violated the basic structure of the Constitution" SC refused to entertain the petitions and asked the petitioners to approach the high court.
2. **About Caste Census-** Caste Census is the caste-wise tabulation of population in the census exercise. Caste was included as a parameter in Census data only during the 1931 Census. Ever since independence, the Census had only the data related to SC and ST populations. Caste Census is under the administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs. Earlier in 2011 attempt was made towards Caste Census by conducting the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC). Rohini Commission was another attempt by categorization within OBCs for better targeted service delivery.
3. **Need for Caste Census-** Obsolete data as the data is nearly 8 decades old. Hindrance to sub categorisation of OBCs as denoted by Rohini Commission. To have sufficient data for Govt policy making. To provide equitable representation to all castes.

INSURANCE SECTOR NEEDS ₹50,000 CR. CAPITAL PER YEAR TO LIFT PENETRATION: IRDAI

1. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) chief said the target is to double penetration in the next five years, and added that it is possible to insure all by 2047. 2. Insurance Penetration is the ratio of premium underwritten in a particular year to the GDP. It indicates the level of development of insurance sector in the In India the overall penetration for insurance is 4.2% as of FY21-end with life insurance at 3.2%, and non-life at 1%. Insurance density (ratio of insurance premium to population) has increased from \$78 in 2020-21 to \$91 in 2021-22.
3. **Key reasons for low penetration:** Lack of awareness, Lack of customised and standardised products, Fewer product innovations, etc.
4. **Ways to enhance insurance penetration:** Make property insurance compulsory. Insurers should have bancassurance arrangements with non-bank lenders, co-operative banks, and payment aggregators. Financial sector participants should work together synergistically for deepening the penetration.
5. Business conglomerates should channelise funds into the sector. IRDAI is a statutory body responsible for regulating, promoting and ensuring orderly growth of the insurance and re-insurance business in India.

NEPAL MAKING EFFORTS TO ACTIVATE SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION(SAARC)

1. Nepal said it was making efforts to activate regional grouping the SAARC which has not been effective since 2016. The last biennial summit took place in Kathmandu in 2014. The 2016 SAARC Summit was to be held in Pakistan. But after the terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in 2016, India did not participate. The summit was called off after Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also declined to participate.

temperature in the day was a more tolerable 1.7 degree celsius. What had caused the mercury to dip so low in Fingerpost? The answer, as is often the case with the weather in the 21st century, begins somewhere else on the planet: the equatorial Pacific Ocean. “We are in a La Niña winter,” Raghu Murtugudde, a visiting professor at IIT Bombay and an emeritus professor at the University of Maryland, said. This means heady winds blow warm water on the sea surface away from the South American mainland, roughly off the coast of Ecuador. This heat movement across the Pacific has global consequences. Over India, the La Niña can intensify summer monsoons, bring excess rainfall, and cause colder winters.

New research reveals the genes that likely allowed whales to grow to giant sizes compared to their ancestors (Scientific Reports). The findings highlight the role of four genes — GHSR, IGFBP7, NCAPG, and PLAG1 — and suggest that they promote large body sizes. The researchers performed molecular evolutionary analysis on nine candidate genes: five genes from the growth hormone, and four genes associated with increased body size in hoofed animals. They assessed these genes in 19 species of whale.

A powerful laser aimed at the sky can create a virtual lightning rod and divert the path of lightning strikes, a new study (Nature Photonics) demonstrates. The findings may pave the way for better lightning protection methods for critical infrastructure. The most common lightning protection device is the Franklin rod, an electrically conducting metal mast that intercepts lightning discharges and guides them to the ground. Acting as a virtual, movable rod, a laser beam directed at sky could offer an alternative.

Madagascar’s biodiversity could take millions of years to recover to levels before the arrival of humans if threatened animal species become extinct (Nature Communications). The findings suggest that immediate conservation efforts are needed to avoid long-lasting biodiversity losses. Madagascar is home to a unique set of animal species, including the ring-tailed lemur, and the world’s smallest chameleon. Many species may face extinction, owing to human influences.

2. **Importance of revival of SAARC:** Reviving SAARC is crucial to countering the common socio-economic challenges prevalent in South Asia. A unified South Asian platform remains India’s most potent countermeasure in dealing with the challenge from China. There is no real alternative as BIMSTEC cannot replace SAARC for reasons such as lack of a common identity and history among all BIMSTEC members. Critical for Regional cooperation in South Asia as it is one of the least integrated regions in the world in terms of trade and people-to-people contact. SAARC can help in the creation of mutual trust and peace within the region.
3. **About SAARC-**It is an economic and political organization which was established in 1985. Members include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Headquarters: Kathmandu, Nepal.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST, AND CLIMATE CHANGE (MOEFCC) NOTIFIES NORMS FOR FLY ASH UTILISATION BY POWER PLANTS

1. MoEFCC has notified the latest amendments exercising the power under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986. Amendments are aimed at better utilisation of fly ash by coal-based thermal power plants (TPPs) in the country.
2. **Key changes-**Areas where fly ash is stored can also be reclaimed by setting up solar and wind power plants, along with plantations. Done away with the price cap on fly ash bricks. Utilisation targets as per the applicable compliance cycle shall commence from April 1, 2022”
3. **About Fly ash-** Ash is the mineral matter left after burning coal. In a power plant, a major portion of the ash is carried off with flue gases (hence, the term fly ash), and can be filtered using electrostatic precipitators. Due to improper handling, it ends up in neglected ash ponds in dangerous quantities, polluting surface, and groundwater.
4. **Composition:** substantial amounts of oxides of silica, aluminium, and calcium. Arsenic, Boron, Chromium, lead etc. in trace concentrations. Usage: manufacturing of Portland cement, bricks, tiles, manufacturing of Absorbents (for purification of waste gases, drinking water) etc.

IN RELIEF FOR INVESTORS, BOMBAY HIGH COURT QUASHES WRITE-OFF OF YES BANK ADDITIONAL TIER-ONE (AT-1) BONDS

1. The Court set aside the 2020 order of an RBI appointed administrator at Yes Bank to write down more than ₹8,300 crore of AT-1 bonds bought by investors. The writing off AT 1 bonds were allowed as part of a restructuring plan to rescue YES Bank in March 2020.
2. About AT1 Bonds AT1 bonds are a type of perpetual bonds having maturity of 100 years and offer relatively higher rates. They are considered quasi-equity instruments with a larger risk of investment. They were introduced under Basel accord and banks issue them to shore up their core capital base to meet the Basel-III norms. In India, banks must maintain capital at a minimum ratio of 11.5% of their risk-weighted asset. Of this, 9.5% needs to be in Tier-1 capital and 2% in Tier-2.
3. If the capital ratios of the issuer fall below a certain percentage or in the event of an institutional failure, the rules allow the issuer to stop paying interest or even write down these bonds, as happened in the Yes Bank case. These bonds are subordinate to all other debt and senior only to equity.
4. It refers to a set of banking supervision regulations set by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS). The Basel III regulations were created after the financial crisis and strengthened the minimum capital requirements outlined in Basel 1 and II.



“Two things.
Others are not as bad as you think.
Second, you are not as good as
you expect others to think about you.”

DR. KHAN
(KSG)