1. **Attukal Pongala 2025:** The world's largest women's festival, Attukal Pongala 2025, recently concluded in Trivandrum, Kerala. Women from across the state gathered in large numbers to offer Pongala to Attukal Amma.
   - **About Attukal Pongala:** It is a 10-day long festival celebrated annually at Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Trivandrum, Kerala.
     - Dedicated to Attukal Bhagavathy, also known as Goddess **Kannaki or Bhadrakali**.
     - Celebrated every year in February or March.
     - The term Pongala means 'to boil over'. It is a ritual where women prepare sweet payasam (a pudding made from rice, jaggery, coconut, and plantains) and offer it to the Goddess or 'Bhagavathy' on the 9th day.
     - Recognized as one of the largest congregations of women for a festival in the world.
     - During the 10-day festivities, a sacrificial offering known as Kuruthitharpanam is also included in the religious event.
2. **Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ):** Recently, the Supreme Court directed the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) Authority to appoint the Forest Research Institute (FRI) to conduct a tree census in the zone.
   - **About Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ):** It is a designated area of 10,400 square kilometres around the Taj Mahal to protect it from pollution.
     - Named "Trapezium" due to its trapezoidal shape around the Taj Mahal.
     - Contains several monuments, including three **World Heritage Sites**: Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and Fatehpur Sikri
     - Covers parts of **Uttar Pradesh** and **Rajasthan**, including: **Agra, Firozabad, Mathura, Hathras, and Etah** districts of **Uttar Pradesh**, **Bharatpur** district of **Rajasthan**
     - Divided into four zones based on industry categories: **Red, Green, Orange, and White.**
     - Only **environment-friendly, non-polluting small, tiny, and micro-scale industries** are allowed to operate in this zone.
   - **About Forest Research Institute (FRI):** Located in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
     - Established in 1878 as a Forest School and reestablished in 1906 as the Imperial Forest Research Institute under the British Imperial Forestry Service.
     - Renamed as the Forest Research Institute and College and later became the Forest Research Institute (FRI).

- Conducts research and provides training to forest officers and forest rangers through its various centres across the country.
- Post 1988, after the creation of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), these training and research centres became independent institutions.
- FRI now functions under the ICFRE, which was granted Deemed University status in December 1991.

3. **Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission:** ISRO has successfully demonstrated all capabilities required for rendezvous, docking, and undocking operations in a circular orbit.
   - **About Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) Mission:** PSLV-C60 launched the SpaDeX satellites (SDX01 and SDX02) and 24 other payloads on December 30, 2024, from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota.
   - **Docking:** The satellites were successfully docked on January 16, 2025 — making India the fourth country after the U.S., Russia, and China to achieve this feat.
   - **Feasible Window:** The in-orbit performance of the docked satellites was analysed, identifying a window between March 10 and March 25, 2025, for undocking.
   - **Future Plans:** Further **experiments with satellites** planned in the coming days.
   - **Mission Significance:**
     - **Technology Demonstration:** Developed and demonstrated technology for spacecraft rendezvous, docking, and undocking.
     - **Future Missions:** Critical for sending astronauts to the Moon, sample return missions, and developing the Indian Space Station.
     - **Other Objectives:** Demonstrated the transfer of electric power between docked spacecraft — crucial for applications like in-space robotics, composite spacecraft control, and payload operations post-undocking.
4. **PM-ABHIM:** Recently, Delhi government to sign MoU with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to implement Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM).
   - **About PM-ABHIM:** It's objective to strengthen health systems at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to tackle future pandemics and disasters.

- **Key Components:**
  - **Building-less Sub-Centres:** Construct 17,788 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs).
  - **Urban Health & Wellness Centres:** Set up 11,024 AAMs in urban areas, focusing on slums.
  - **Block Public Health Units (BPHUs):** Establish 3,382 BPHUs at block levels.
  - **District Integrated Public Health Labs (IPHL):** Establish 730 IPHLs, one per district.
  - **Critical Care Hospital Blocks (CCBs):** Create 602 CCBs in districts with population >5 lakhs.
- **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS):** Implemented by states with technical & financial support from MoHFW , use the existing National Health Mission framework, and awareness & IEC activities conducted alongside public health programs.

5. **Saffron Mission:** The Northeast is poised to become India's next saffron hub, transforming agriculture through NECTAR's tech-driven approach.
   - **About: Mission Saffron Initiative** (since 2021) expanded saffron cultivation across **Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya**.
     - Large-scale cultivation underway in Menchukha (Arunachal Pradesh) and Yuksom (Sikkim); plans to extend to Nagaland and Manipur.
     - NECTAR aims to boost agri-tech innovation and enhance agricultural potential without disrupting existing crops.
   - **About Saffron:** It was restricted to Jammu & Kashmir, with Pampore known as the "Saffron Bowl of Kashmir".
     - **Rainfall:** Needs 1000-1500 mm annually.
     - **Plant:** Saffron is extracted from the stigma of Crocus sativus L. flower.
     - **Local Names:** Known as kong (Kashmiri), zaffran (Urdu), and kesar (Hindi).



   - **Season and Cultivation Conditions:**
     - **Sowing:** June-July; in some places, August-September.
     - **Flowering:** Begins in October.
     - **Soil:** Thrives in calcareous, humus-rich, well-drained soil (pH 6-8).
     - **Climate:** Requires distinct summer and winter with temperatures between -20°C to 40°C.

- **Quality and Benefits:**
  - **Crocin Content:** Kashmiri kesar contains **8% crocin**; other varieties contain **5-6%**.
  - **Medicinal Properties:** Lowers **blood pressure**, treats **anemia**, **migraines**, and aids **insomnia**.
  - **Cosmetic Uses:** Enhances **skin quality**, reduces **pigmentation**, and minimizes **spots**.
  - **Culinary Uses:** Integral in **traditional dishes**, beverages, **confectionery**, and **food coloring**.
- **Recognition:**
  - **GI Tag:** In 2020, Kashmiri saffron received a Geographical Indication (GI) certification.
  - **GIAHS Status:** Recognized as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) by FAO.
- **Government Initiatives:**
  - **National Saffron Mission (2010-11):** Supported saffron cultivation in J&K under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).
  - **NECTAR:** Autonomous body under Department of Science & Technology. Piloted saffron cultivation in the Northeast to achieve high quality and quantity production.

6. **Javan Rhino:** A new study has suggested a **taxonomic revision of the Javan Rhino** (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), placing it in a new genus **Eurhinoceros sondaicus** due to its distinct dentition and morphology, indicating a different evolutionary path.



- **About Javan Rhino:**
- **Scientific Name:** Rhinoceros sondaicus (proposed Eurhinoceros sondaicus).
- **Common Name:** Lesser-one-horned rhino.
- **Distribution:** Historically ranged across **northeast India and Southeast Asia**.
- Currently found only in **Ujung Kulon National Park, Java, Indonesia**.
- **Habitat:** Forests, marshy areas, thick bush, and bamboo regions.
- **Population:** Estimated **68–74 individuals** (2020) based on camera trap data.
- **Features:**
  - **Size:** Height up to 1.7 m (5.6 ft); Weight up to 2,300 kg (5,070 lb).
  - **Skin:** Grey or grey-brown, almost black when wet, with pink colouring in folds.

- **Horn:** Single horn, less than 20 cm (7.9 in) — smallest among all rhino species.
- **Diet:** Herbivorous, browsing on leaves, twigs, and woody plants.
- **Behaviour:** Solitary, except for mating pairs and mothers with young.
- **Lifespan:** 30 to 45 years in the wild.
- **Conservation Status:** IUCN Red List (Critically Endangered)

7. **APAAR ID:** Concerns raised by parents and activists about the Ministry of Education's **Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID** for school students, fearing it may become difficult to opt out despite being voluntary.
   - **About APAAR ID:** Specialized identification system for all students in India.
   - Part of the **'One Nation, One Student ID'** program under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
   - Assigns a **unique 12-digit ID** to each student, recording academic achievements, degrees, scholarships, awards, and other credits, ensures **seamless transition** across educational stages.
   - **How APAAR Works:**
     - **Schools:** Record and manage students' academic data, achievements, and activities.
     - **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Skill Institutes:** Access academic history for admission and recruitment.
     - **Students:** Digitally store and retrieve academic records, achievements, and co-curricular accomplishments.
   - **Benefits to Students: Unified Academic Identity,** consolidates academic records on a single platform, simplifies record-keeping for students, parents, and educators, securely stores academic data, facilitates smooth transitions between educational stages. Prioritizes **data security**; shares information only with necessary government agencies.
   - **Academic Progress Tracking:** Allows students to monitor academic progress and personalize study plans, conducted by schools with **parental consent**. Parents can withdraw consent at any time.
   - Student data is stored in the centrally-managed **District Information for Education (DIE) portal** and shared only with concerned government agencies when required.