TAMIL NADU

➤ **The Tamil Nadu government - has made it mandatory for hotels and lodging houses to provide dormitories for drivers who accompany the guests.**

✓ In this regard, the State Housing and Urban Development Department has issued an order based on a recommendation made by former Chief Secretary V Irai Anbu

✓ As per the order, the accommodation is required to be provided either within the premises or within 250 metres from the hotel

✓ Accordingly, at least one bed should be provided for each car parking space in hotels, along with one separate toilet and bathroom exclusively for every eight beds attached to the dormitory

✓ From now on, this will be one of the prerequisites for grant of planning permission

✓ The move aims to provide sufficient rest to drivers so as to avoid road accidents, since many accidents are caused due to lack of proper sleep to drivers.

➤ **Tamil Nadu's nodal agency for entrepreneurship StartupTN - launched an automotive, electric vehicle (EV) and smart mobility forum for the state's startups**.

✓ The forum was launched by StartupTN along with investment promotion agency Guidance TN and other stakeholders on July 3

✓ The multiagency forum will help startups connect with investors, seek mentorship, help in policy level support, among others.

➤ **IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation - has partnered with 'Vidya Shakti' to take education to rural areas of Uttar Pradesh using online classes and virtual reality (VR).**

✓ The initiative has been implemented in 100 villages of Varanasi district with sessions being conducted in Hindi for students of Classes VI to VIII.

✓ Students will have 'live' online classes in their mother tongue, slow pace of teaching and aptitude questions.

- ✓ Tutors will use simulation software to show experiments to the students.
- ✓ Classes are focused on the fundamentals of languages as well as on maths and science.
- ✓ The project involves a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) tutor carrying three to four VR devices for each session to enable students 'feel' the environment through sensors.
- ✓ This initiative is intended to tackle the 'knowledge gap' created by Covid-19 between students from urban and rural areas

NATIONAL

- ➤ **The government - has scrapped the privatisation of state-run helicopter services provider Pawan Hans**

- ✓ The Centre has disqualified the winning bidder-consortium Star 9 Mobility, citing "integrity issues" due to several legal cases.
- ✓ The decision has been approved by the alternative mechanism or group of ministers, comprising ministers of road transport & highways, finance and civil aviation.
- ✓ The Pawan Hans privatisation was the second-most high profile case in the aviation sector after the sale of Air India to the Tatas.
- ✓ This was the second "strategic disinvestment" process to have been repealed in the last two years after the winning bidder was identified.

- ✓ In September 2022, the government terminated the sale of its 100% stake in Central Electronics (CEL) and disqualified the successful bidder Nandlal Finance and Leasing Private, due to certain allegations against the firm and the bidding process.
- ✓ In April last year, Star9 Mobility, a consortium led by Almas Global Opportunity Fund, had won the bid by quoting Rs.211 crore for the government's 51% stake in loss-making PHL.
- ✓ On April 29, an empowered ministerial panel approved the winning bid by Star9 consortium.
  - ✓ State-run ONGC owns a 49% stake in the firm, which has an ageing fleet of helicopters
- ✓ However, on April 20, the Kolkata bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) passed an order against Almas Global for failing to honour its winning bid of Rs. 568 crore to acquire EMC, a Kolkata-based power system solutions company.
- ✓ Pawan Hans has been incurring losses for several years and the company has a fleet of 42 helicopters, with 41 of them owned by the company

- ➤ **Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud - launched new digital facilities at five courtrooms in the Supreme Court on July 3.**

- ✓ The five courtrooms are equipped with Wi-Fi, which removes the need for the presence of physical law books and papers in these courtrooms.
- ✓ On July 3, the Supreme Court reopened after a six-week summer vacation, marking the implementation of this significant digitization measure.
- ✓ The new green courtroom facilities will have free WiFi available to lawyers, litigants, mediapersons, and other visitors to the court premises.
- ✓ This initiative is part of the court's e-initiatives, and users can access the WiFi by logging in to "SCI WiFi."

- ✓ The enhancements in the courtrooms include installation of "a state-of-the-art Digital Video Conferencing (VC) system" to facilitate efficient communication and collaboration
    - ✓ This system enables seamless remote participation and virtual meetings, enhancing the accessibility and connectivity of courtroom proceedings
- ✓ A futuristic LED video wall has also been installed in the courtrooms, serving as a high-resolution display for camera feeds and multimedia content
- ✓ To ensure optimal audio quality and distribution in these courts, a comprehensive sound reinforcement system has been implemented.
    - ✓ These enhancements deliver clear and balanced audio throughout the courtroom, ensuring that every voice and audio source is heard with exceptional clarity
- ✓ A software has also been developed by the Supreme Court to facilitate the advocates to upload reference material and citations relating to the matter
- ✓ The top court had taken various steps towards digitisation of various judicial processes in the recent past.
    - ✓ This included the launch of e-SCR (online free case records), advocate appearance portal, online RTI portal, implementation of e office module in the Registry

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

> **The Startup20 Shikhar summit under India's G20 presidency - was held in Gurugram, Haryana on July 3 and 4.**

- ✓ The Startup20 Engagement Group hosted the two day Startup20 Shikhar summit.
- ✓ During the summit, startup 20 communique was released, which urged G20 leaders to raise the joint investment in the global startup ecosystem to $1 trillion by 2030.
- ✓ Two hundred international delegates from Sixteen G20 nations and Six invitees nation are participating in the summit

- ➤ **The seventh edition of Mysuru Literature festival – was held on July 1 and 2 in Mysuru.**

- ✓ Jnanpith awardee and eminent Kannada writer Chandrashekar Kambar and Bibek Debroy, chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the prime minister, were the guests of honour at the Festival
- ✓ Chandrashekar Kambar, theatre person B Jayashree, international cricketer V V S Laxman, Manjamma Jogathi, actor Sudharani, writer Jayant Kaikini and several others shared their thoughts in the panel discussions.
- ✓ Mysuru Literary Forum Charitable Trust and Mysuru Book Clubs 2015 hosted the event.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- ➤ **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav – released the details of new discoveries and new records to the country's faunal and floral database in Kolkata on July 1.**
- ✓ Accordingly, India added 664 animal species to its faunal database in the year 2022.
  - ✓ These comprise 467 new species and 197 new records, indicating species found in India for the first time
- ✓ The country also added 339 new plant taxa, including 186 taxa that are new and 153 taxa as new distributional records from the country in 2022.
- ✓ The faunal discoveries have been compiled in a publication by Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) titled 'Animal Discoveries - New Species and New Records 2023', whereas floral discoveries are contained in 'Plant Discoveries 2022' published by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).
- ✓ The maximum number of new faunal discoveries has been of invertebrates with 583 species, while vertebrates constitute 81 species.
  - ✓ The maximum number of new faunal discoveries were recorded from Kerala, followed by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Western Himalayas and Western Ghats are prominent regions for plant discoveries.
  - ✓ The discoveries include seed plants, fungi, lichen, algae, bryophytes, microbes, and pteridophytes.

- ✓ Kerala recorded the highest number of plant discoveries (57), accounting for 16.8% of all discoveries.

BUSINESS/ECONOMY

➢ **Public sector lender Indian Bank - has unveiled new services under its digital transformation initiative — Project WAVE**

- ✓ Accordingly, the Chennai-based bank has introduced an electronic bank guarantee (e-BG) service, in collaboration with the National E-Governance Services Limited (NeSL)
  - ✓ This move will also reduce the turn-around time of the bank guarantee issuance and delivery to the beneficiary from an industry average of 3-4 working days to a few minutes
  - ✓ Additionally, the e-BG service eliminates the need for physical stamp paper and signatures, replacing them with digital stamping and e-signing, thereby ensuring a digital process.
- ✓ Under the newly launched "IND GST Advantage" scheme, customers who regularly file Goods and Services Tax (GST) can access 25% of their annual turnover as an overdraft cash credit facility without additional collateral security.
  - ✓ This move aims to support the financial needs of customers involved in GST filings.
- ✓ Moreover, Indian Bank has introduced a digital journey for eligible individuals and proprietor firms to access pre-approved business loans.
- ✓ Indian Bank has also launched a digital vehicle loan product, allowing customers to obtain loans for their vehicles through a simplified loan application process.
- ✓ Indian Bank has enhanced its chatbot, named "ADYA," allowing customers to request cheque books directly
- ✓ During the launch event, several other digital products were unveiled, including the Jewel loan-MSME and the Loan against Insurance
- ✓ Additionally, the bank introduced a fully digitalised pre-approved credit card (ETB) application facility for its customers.
- ✓ The process of digitisation under Project WAVE was first launched in January 2022

AWARDS

➢ **King Charles III and Queen Camilla of Britain - presented the prestigious Elephant Family environmental award to Indian conservationists at a ceremony**.

✓ Filmmaker Kartiki Gonsalves, known for the Oscar-winning documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers,' received the Tara Award, while the Real Elephant Collective (TREC), consisting of 70 Adivasi artists, was also honoured.

✓ 'The Elephant Whisperers' won the 2023 Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Film.
  ✓ It highlights the connection between humans and elephants, the beauty of India's wilderness, and the wisdom of tribal communities.

✓ TREC was awarded the Mark Shand Award for their meticulous work in creating the CoExistence Herd, a collection of sculptural representations of wild elephants
  ✓ TREC's efforts have developed co-existence between people and wildlife in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiri Hills, benefiting both the environment and the local communities.
  ✓ The sculptures were made from the invasive weed 'lantana camara'
  ✓ They not only provide livelihood opportunities for Adivasi communities but also help remove the harmful weed from protected areas.

✓ Elephant Family, an international NGO dedicated to protecting the Asian elephant, supports projects that promote harmonious living between humans and animals.

✓ The organization was founded by the late Mark Shand, brother of Queen Camilla, who had a deep passion for elephant conservation.

✓ The Animal Ball, hosted by Elephant Family in partnership with the British Asian Trust, celebrated indigenous communities.