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ASSAM RIFLES



Union Home Minister has recently announced the relocation of Assam Rifles battalions to Mizoram.

- Assam Rifles is one of the six **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)** that come under the MHA's administrative control.
- It conducts counterinsurgency operations in north-eastern India and other areas where deemed necessary.
- Its **operational control is with the Indian Army**, with an officer of the rank of Lieutenant General commanding the force.
- The headquarters of the Director-General of Assam Rifles (DGAR) is in **Shillong** unlike other Central paramilitary forces, all of which have their headquarters in New Delhi.

Assam Rifles History

- Assam Rifles has its origins in 1835 as a militia called the '**Cachar Levy**' to protect British tea estates and their settlements against tribal raids.
- It later became the '**Frontier Force**' conducting punitive expeditions across the borders of Assam.
- In 1870, the existing elements were merged into three Assam Military Police Battalions, sending over 3,000 men as part of the British Army to Europe and West Asia.
- In 1917, the name was changed to Assam Rifles.
- The force has evolved post-Independence, from combat roles during the Sino-India War 1962 to being a part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka in 1987, besides performing peacekeeping roles in north-eastern India. From 17 battalions in 1960 it has grown to 46 battalions today.

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WHAT IS PM-YUVA 3.0?



The Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education recently launched PM-YUVA 3.0 -Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors.

- The Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors (PM-YUVA 3.0) aims to **train young and budding authors below 30 years** of age to promote reading, writing, and book culture in the country.
- The scheme will help to develop a stream of writers who can write on various facets of India, encompassing the past, present, and future.
- PM-YUVA 3.0 intends to bring to the fore the perspectives of the young generation of writers **on the following themes:**
 - **Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Nation Building;**
 - **Indian Knowledge System;** and
 - **Makers of Modern India (1950-2025).**
- Besides, the scheme will also provide a window for the aspiring youth to articulate themselves and present a comprehensive outlook of the contribution of Indians across fields in ancient and present times.
- The **National Book Trust (NBT), India, under the Ministry of Education** as the **Implementing Agency**, will ensure **phase-wise execution** of the scheme under well-defined stages of mentorship.
- **Features:**
 - The contestants will be asked to submit a **book proposal of 10,000 words**. This includes a synopsis of 2000-3000 words, a chapter plan, two-three sample chapters of 7000-8000 words, a bibliography, and references.
 - **A total of 50 authors will be selected.** The selection will be made by a committee to be constituted by NBT.

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- Applicants who had qualified for the PM-YUVA Scheme 1.0 and PM-YUVA Scheme 2.0 are not eligible for the PM-YUVA 3.0 scheme.
- The **selected young authors will engage with esteemed writers, participate in literary festivals**, and contribute to a diverse body of work that reflects India's rich heritage and contemporary progress.
- The **books prepared under this scheme will be published by National Book Trust, India, and translated into other Indian languages**, fostering cultural and literary exchange while promoting 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.
- A **consolidated scholarship of Rs. 50,000 per month for a period of six months** ($50,000 \times 6 = \text{Rs. 3 Lakh}$) **per author** will be paid under the Mentorship Scheme.
- A **royalty of 10% will be payable** to the authors **on successful publications** of their books at the end of the Mentorship Program.
- They will also be given a **platform to promote their books** and also to propagate the reading and writing culture on a national scale.

WHAT IS FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVE?



In the sharpest jump in over two years, the country's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$15.267 billion to \$653.966 billion recently.

- Foreign Exchange Reserves (also called **Forex Reserves**) are **foreign currency assets held by the central banks** of countries.
- These assets **include foreign marketable securities, gold, special drawing rights (SDRs), and reserve position in the IMF.**
- These are **denominated and expressed in the US dollar**, which is the international numeraire for the purpose.
- **China is the largest foreign exchange reserve holder** in the world.
- **RBI is the custodian** of the foreign exchange reserves in India.

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- India's foreign exchange reserves comprise of;
 - **Foreign currency assets (FCAs):** These are maintained in currencies like the US dollar, euro, pound sterling, Australian dollar, and Japanese yen.
 - **Gold**
 - **SDR (Special Drawing Rights):** This is the reserve currency with the IMF.
 - **RTP (Reserve Tranche Position):** This is the reserve capital with the IMF.
- The **biggest contributor** to India's Forex reserves is **foreign currency assets, followed by gold.**

Purpose:

- They ensure that the **country has sufficient liquidity** to carry out **foreign exchange transactions or cope with a balance of payments deficit.**
- A central bank can use its foreign exchange reserves (foreign currencies) to **intervene in Forex markets and influence its currency's exchange rate.**
- **If the value of the Rupee decreases** due to an increase in the demand for the foreign currency, then **RBI sells the dollar** in the Indian money market so that depreciation of the Indian currency can be checked.
- A country with a good stock of forex has a **good image** at the international level because the trading **countries can be sure about their payments.**

KEY FACTS ABOUT RAISINA DIALOGUE



The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Foreign Ministers of at least 18 countries, top executives of several global firms and foreign policy experts will converge in the national capital for the annual Raisina Dialogue.

- It is India's **flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics**, committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the international community.
- It is modeled on the lines of the Munich Security Conference and Singapore's Shangri-La Dialogue.

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- It is held annually since 2016 in New Delhi.
- It is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of State, Cabinet Ministers, and local government officials, who are joined by thought leaders from the private sector, media, and academia.
- The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.
- This effort is supported by a number of institutions, organisations, and individuals, who are committed to the mission of the conference.
- The theme of Raisina Dialogue 2025 is **Kalachakra: People. Peace. Planet.**

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT AND ITS REACH

Former Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte was flown to the Netherlands on March 12 to face charges of crimes against humanity before the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Understanding the ICC's Jurisdiction:

- The ICC was established under the **Rome Statute of 1998** and serves as a permanent court to prosecute individuals responsible for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- It has **125 signatory states**, all of which are obligated to cooperate with its mandates, including arresting and extraditing individuals facing warrants.
- However, compliance is inconsistent, as seen in the case of **Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu**, whose ICC arrest warrants remain unenforced.
- While the ICC does not have its own enforcement body, it relies on national governments and **Interpol** to execute arrest warrants.
- If a state refuses to comply, the ICC can refer the case to the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, which can impose further obligations on UN member states.

Challenges in Enforcing ICC Warrants:

- **Lack of Enforcement Power:** The ICC relies on member states to execute its arrest warrants, making compliance voluntary.

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- **Political Resistance:** Countries often refuse to cooperate if they view ICC actions as politically motivated.
- **Geopolitical Interference:** Major powers like the **United States, Russia, and China** have criticized the ICC's actions, fearing it could be used for political leverage.
- **Complementarity Principle:** The ICC can only intervene if national courts are **unwilling or unable** to prosecute crimes. The Philippines initially claimed its judicial system was handling the issue, but the ICC found insufficient evidence of domestic prosecution efforts.

Implications for the ICC and International Justice:

- Duterte's arrest is considered a **rare success** for the ICC, which has struggled with enforcing its mandates against powerful leaders.
- However, it also exposes the court's **vulnerabilities**, such as reliance on national governments and political influences.
- The ICC has faced criticism for alleged **Western bias**, as many of its cases have targeted **leaders from developing countries**.
- Additionally, its actions sometimes intersect with global geopolitics, leading to accusations that the court is being used as a **political tool**.
 - For example, China, which has territorial disputes with the Philippines, has condemned the ICC's handling of the case.

Way Ahead:

- Duterte now faces a **pre-trial hearing**, where the ICC will determine if there is enough evidence to proceed to trial. During this phase:
 - The **Prosecutor's Office** will present its case.
 - Duterte's defense team may argue for **dismissal or interim release**.
 - If the court decides to proceed, a **full trial** will be scheduled, though it may take years before a final verdict is reached.
- Regardless of the outcome, Duterte's indictment represents a **major step in international justice**, highlighting both the strengths and limitations of the ICC.

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LINKING AADHAAR WITH VOTER ID - ELECTION COMMISSION'S HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

The Election Commission of India (EC) is set to meet with officials from the Union Home Ministry, Law Ministry, and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to **discuss linking Aadhaar numbers with Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)/ voter ID cards.**

This comes in light of **electoral roll irregularities** flagged by the Opposition.

What is the Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)?

- **About:** Provided to all registered voters as an identification document, however, it does not confer voting rights unless the voter's name is listed in the electoral roll.
- **Issuance of EPIC:** Introduced in **1993** and are distributed by state governments, the issuance of EPIC is governed by the **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.**
- **EPIC number:**
 - Each EPIC number is a **unique 10-digit alphanumeric code** composed of: **3** alphabetic characters, and a **7-digit** numeric sequence.
 - It serves as a unique identifier linking a voter to their photo, constituency, and polling station.
 - It designed to **prevent voter impersonation and electoral fraud** and is generated via **ERONET** (since 2017), which is a web-based platform for automating the electoral roll process in multiple languages and scripts.
- **Issues with EPIC numbers:** ECI admitted that **duplicate** EPIC numbers occurred due to manual data entry and decentralized systems before ERONET, and assured that **ERONET 2.0** would be updated to eliminate duplicate EPIC numbers.

Purpose of Aadhaar-Voter ID Linking:

- **Eliminating duplicate voter registrations:** Aadhaar numbers would help detect multiple registrations and clean electoral rolls.
- **Ensuring electoral roll integrity:** Aimed at preventing electoral fraud and manipulation.

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Opposition's Concerns and Allegations:

- **Allegations of voter list manipulation:**
 - **Trinamool Congress (TMC):** Claims identical EPIC numbers exist in multiple states.
 - **LoP in the Lok Sabha:** Raised concerns about electoral roll discrepancies in Parliament.
- **EC's Response:**
 - Acknowledged errors in EPIC numbering.
 - **Assured correction** of duplicate EPICs within three months.
 - Stated that having **identical EPIC numbers does not necessarily indicate fake voters.**

Government and EC Stand:

- **Voluntary nature of Aadhaar-EPIC linkage:**
 - As per the Law Ministry (2024), Aadhaar submission remains voluntary.
 - Form 6B provides only two options: submitting Aadhaar or declaring non-availability.
- **Existing data collection:**
 - As of January 2025, India has **99 crore registered voters.**
 - 66.23 crore Aadhaar numbers collected as per Supreme Court directives.
- **Upcoming de-duplication process:**
 - EC to update software to identify and replace duplicate EPIC cards.
 - New EPICs will be issued in non-election states.

Conclusion:

- The EC's meeting aims to address concerns regarding **electoral integrity through Aadhaar-EPIC linkage.**
 - While the Opposition sees it as a delayed reaction, the EC maintains that the process will **enhance the credibility of electoral rolls.**
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TUBERCULOSIS



- Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by bacteria that most often affects the **lungs**. It spreads through the air when people with TB cough, sneeze or spit.
- About a quarter of the global population is estimated to have been infected with TB bacteria. About **5–10% of people** infected, eventually get symptoms and develop TB disease.
- **Transmission:** Those who are infected but free of disease cannot transmit it. TB disease is usually **treated with antibiotics** and can be fatal without treatment.
- **Symptoms:** Active TB symptoms include a persistent cough lasting over two weeks, chest pain, coughing up blood or sputum, fatigue, weakness, loss of appetite, weight loss, chills, fever and night sweats.
- **Treatment:** TB is **preventable and curable**. TB is treated with a standard 6-month course of **4 antimicrobial drugs** that are provided with information, supervision and support to the patient by a health worker or trained volunteer.

Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB)

- Drug resistance emerges when TB medicines are used inappropriately, through incorrect prescription by health care providers, poor quality drugs, or patients stopping treatment prematurely.
- MDR-TB is a form of TB caused by bacteria that **do not respond to isoniazid and rifampicin**, the two most effective first-line TB drugs. MDR-TB is treatable and curable by using other drugs, which tend to be more expensive and toxic.