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FISCAL HEALTH INDEX

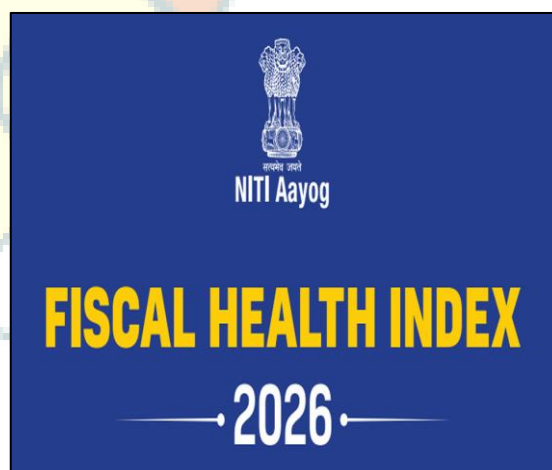
Category: Economy

Context:

- Recently, the NITI Aayog released the second annual edition of the “Fiscal Health Index 2026” in New Delhi.

About Fiscal Health Index:

- Launch:** It was introduced by **NITI Aayog**.
- Coverage:** It provides a systematic framework to evaluate the fiscal performance of **18 major Indian states, 10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states**.
- Framework:** The Index has been designed as a data-driven framework to evaluate **fiscal soundness, guide reforms, and promote evidence-based fiscal policymaking** across states.
- Pillars of Assessment:** The index is built on **five key sub-indices**:
 - Quality of Expenditure:** Ratio of developmental spending (asset creation) vs. non-developmental routine operations.
 - Revenue Mobilisation:** Ability to generate own tax and non-tax revenue independently.
 - Fiscal Prudence:** Adherence to FRBM Act targets and deficit management.
 - Debt Index:** Total debt burden relative to economic size and interest payment liabilities.
 - Debt Sustainability:** Capacity to service current debt based on GSDP growth.
- Classification:** The index classifies states into **four tiers**.
 - Achievers:** These are states with **strong fiscal discipline, high own-tax revenues, low deficits, and manageable debt**;
 - Front Runners:** These states maintain **broadly sound finances** but fall short of the top tier on one or more indicators;
 - Performers:** They occupy the middle ground, with **mixed results** across the five pillars.
 - Aspirational:** These states are those facing the most significant fiscal stress, characterised by **persistent deficits, high debt**, and limited revenue capacity.
- Key Highlights of Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026:**
 - Top Major State: Odisha** retained its number one position, excelling in debt sustainability and non-tax revenue mobilization (e.g., mining premiums).



- **North-Eastern & Himalayan Leader:** Arunachal Pradesh topped this category, followed by Uttarakhand and Tripura.
- **Fiscal Concerns:** Laggard states like **Punjab and West Bengal** were flagged for high committed expenditures (salaries, pensions, interest) and low capital outlay (roughly 10% vs. 27% in top states).

Source:

- [PIB](#)

Asteroid 2024 YR4

Category: Science and Technology

Context:

- Recently, NASA has officially ruled out the possibility of asteroid 2024 YR4 asteroid 2024 YR4 colliding with the moon in 2032.

About Asteroid 2024 YR4:

- **Discovery:** It was **first detected on 27 December 2024** by the Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System (**ATLAS**) telescope in Chile.
- **Nomenclature:** The **Y** in the asteroid's name indicates that it was discovered in the **last half of December**. The **R4** indicates that it was the **117th asteroid** found in that period.
- **Classification:** It is an **Apollo-class asteroid**, meaning its orbit crosses Earth's path but spends most of its time further from the Sun.
- **Size:** Revised observations from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) in 2025 and 2026 estimated its **diameter to be between 53 and 67 metres** (roughly 15–20 storeys high).
- **Torino Scale Rating:** In early 2025, it reached a **Level 3 rating**, the highest for any asteroid since **2004**, indicating a moderate risk of "localized destruction". It was later downgraded to Level 0 (no hazard) as more data became available.
- **Energy Potential:** If it were to impact, it could **release 8 to 10 megatons of energy**—roughly 340 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb.
- **Origin:** The study reveals YR4 is a solid, stony type that likely originated **from an asteroid family in the central Main Belt between Mars and Jupiter**.
- **Orbital period:** It has an orbital period of **4.011 years, or 1,468 days**.
- **Rotation speed:** The asteroid's rotation period is **19.46 minutes**.
- **Type:** It is most likely an **S-type asteroid**, which means that it is probably made up primarily of **silicates and nickel-iron**.



- **Significance:** It reinforces the relevance of missions like NASA's DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test), which proved that kinetic impactors can successfully deflect such threats.

Source:

- [The Hindu](#)

KAMAKHYA TEMPLE

Category: History and Culture

Context:

- The South-Central Railway (SCR) will operate Amrut Bharat Express connecting Assam and two Telugu States facilitating devotees to visit Maa Kamakhya temple in Assam.

About Kamakhya Temple:

- **Location:** It is situated on Nilachal Hill and adjoins the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River in **Guwahati, Assam**.
- **Goddess:** The temple is dedicated to **Goddess Sati, an incarnation of Goddess Durga** and the consort of Lord Shiva.
- **Significance:** It is one of the most **revered centres of Tantric practices**.
- **Uniqueness:** It is regarded as one of the oldest of the **51 Shakti Peethas in India**.
- **History:** The former temple was **destroyed by Kala Pahar, which was later reconstructed in 1565 by Chilarai**, who was the reigning king of the Koch dynasty.
- **Literary Mentions:** The temple is featured in the **Kalika Purana and the Yogini Tantra**, which provide detailed accounts of its spiritual importance.
- **Fair:** **Ambubachi Mela** is one of the major festivals of this temple. The festival is held every year to commemorate the yearly menstruation of Goddess Kamakhya. It is often called the "**Mahakumbh of the East**".
- **Architecture:** It had been modelled out of a combination of two different styles, namely, the traditional Nagara, or North Indian, and Saracenic, or Mughal style of architecture. This unusual combination has been named the **Nilachala Style of Architecture**.
- **Structural style:** It has a unique structural style that is shaped **in the form of a beehive** surrounded by different sculptures of different gods.



- **Temple plan:** This is the only temple of Assam having a **fully developed ground plan**. It **consists of five chambers**, garbhagriha or sanctuary, antarala or vestibule, Jagan Mohan or principal chamber, bhogmandir or ritual chamber and natmandir or opera hall for performing traditional dance and music associated with sukta temples.

Source:

- [Deccan Chronicle](#)

NAURADEHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Category: Environment and Ecology

Context:

- Nauradehi wildlife sanctuary, spanning over three districts of Madhya Pradesh, will receive cheetahs in two months.

About Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary:

- **Location:** It is located in the state of **Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Area:** It is spread over an **area of 1187 sq.km**.
- **Uniqueness:** It is the **largest wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Ecological corridor:** Situated on a plateau in the upper Vindhyan range, it serves as an important ecological corridor **connecting Panna, Satpura, and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserves**.
- **Biogeographic region:** It is classified under the **Deccan peninsula biogeographic region**.
- **Drainage:** Three-fourths of Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary falls in the **Yamuna [Ganges] basin**, and one-fourth of the sanctuary falls in the **Narmada basin**. The north-flowing Kopra River, Bamner River, and Bearma River, which are tributaries of the Ken River, are the major rivers of this sanctuary.
- **Vegetation:** It is rich with lush green vegetation, **small grasslands, and dense tropical dry and mixed deciduous forests**.
- **Flora:** These include **Teak, Saja, Dhaora, Bhirra, Ber, Bel, Mahua**, Tendu, Gunja, Amla, etc. Teak dominates the forested region.
- **Fauna:** It supports diverse wildlife, including **Indian wolves, Bengal tigers, leopards, sloth bears, sambar deer, nilgai**, chinkara, and various bird species.
- **Significance:** It has been selected for the **Cheetah reintroduction Project** in India.



Source:

- [Deccan Chronicle](#)

JHELUM RIVER

Category: Geography

Context:

- The Kashmir Valley is witnessing one of its most unusual early springs in decades, with the river Jhelum, its lifeline, dropping below the zero-gauge level.

About Jhelum River:

- **Origin:** The river originates from the **Verinag Spring at the foot of the Pir Panjal Range** in the **Anantnag district of the Kashmir Valley**.
- **Other names:** The river is also known as **Vitasta in Sanskrit, Hydaspes in Greek, and Bidasp in Persian**.
- **Course:** It **flows northwest through Srinagar** and passes through Wular Lake, which acts as a natural regulator. It then carves deep, narrow gorges through the Pir Panjal mountains **before entering Pakistan-administered territory**.
- **Length:** It is approximately **725 km** in length.
- **Confluence:** It **merges with the Chenab River** at Trimmu in Pakistan.
- **Meandering:** Uniquely, the Jhelum exhibits meandering **even in its youthful stage in the Kashmir Valley**, a classic example of fluvial rejuvenation often asked about in UPSC Geography
- **Significance:** It is the **lifeline of Kashmir**, the region where it flows for most of its course.
- **Hydrology:** The hydrology of the Jhelum River is **largely controlled by snowmelt from the Karakoram and Himalaya ranges** in the spring and the southwest monsoon on the Indian subcontinent that brings heavy rains from June to September.
- **Major Tributaries:** The largest tributary of the Jhelum is the **Kishenganga (Neelum) River**, which joins near Muzaffarabad and enters the Punjab province, Pakistan. Other tributaries include the **Kunhar River, Sandran River, Bringi River, Arapath River, Watlara River, Lidder River, and Veshaw River**.



Source:

- [Down To Earth](#)