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 **SAMYAK IAS, NEAR RIDDHI-SIDDHI, JAIPUR**

Society

1. Sarco Pod Under Legal Scrutiny in Switzerland: A Case of Assisted Dying and Euthanasia: Indian Express

The Sarco pod, a controversial suicide device designed for assisted dying, has come under legal scrutiny in Switzerland following the death of a U.S. woman. The incident has sparked debates around the ethics of assisted suicide and euthanasia, raising questions about whether the device violates Swiss laws on assisted dying.

Sarco pod »

- **About:** a coffin-sized A 3D-printed device designed to facilitate painless, self-administered euthanasia.
- **Mechanism:** It uses liquid nitrogen to rapidly reduce the oxygen levels inside, causing the person inside to lose consciousness and die within a few minutes.
- **Developed by:** Exit International,

Switzerland: Active euthanasia is illegal but assisted dying is permitted. Thus, it has become a hub for death tourism, attracting people seeking an end to their life under legal protection.

India: Passive euthanasia is allowed under specific guidelines. However, active euthanasia remains illegal in India.

Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Spain: Euthanasia is legal

Legal Status

Euthanasia

the practice of intentionally ending a person's life to relieve them of suffering, typically associated with terminal illness or severe, incurable pain.

About:

Active Euthanasia: Involves taking specific steps to cause a person's death, such as administering a lethal injection.

Passive Euthanasia: Involves withholding or withdrawing treatment that would prolong life, allowing the individual to die naturally

Types

Assisted Dying: A form of euthanasia where medical assistance is provided to help a person end their life, typically through the prescription of lethal drugs.

There are issues related to compliance with product safety regulations. Additionally, concerns have been raised about the use of nitrogen gas under the Swiss Chemicals Act.

Critics argue that it may promote commercialized death, while proponents claim it empowers individuals with autonomy over their death.

The Sarco pod raises complex legal questions about what constitutes external assistance in assisted suicide. Swiss law currently does not have provisions covering devices like Sarco, leading to legal confusion.

Product Safety Concerns:

Legal Ambiguities:

Related Challenges:

The use of such a device brings up ethical concerns regarding the right to die and whether technology should play a role in facilitating euthanasia.

Commercialized death:

Ethical Dilemma:

Polity

2. Armed Forces Special Powers Act extended in hill districts of Manipur for another six months – The Hindu

The Manipur government has extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) for another six months, effective October 1, 2024. This decision comes amidst ongoing ethnic violence and unrest in the state, necessitating the use of armed forces to maintain law and order.

Arrest without warrant: The armed forces can arrest individuals without a warrant if they believe that the person has committed an offense.

Use of Force: Soldiers can use force, including lethal force, to prevent actions that may threaten the sovereignty and integrity of India.

Search without warrant: The Act permits searches of premises without a warrant.

Legal Immunity: Armed forces personnel are protected from prosecution for actions taken under the AFSPA, provided they act in good faith and in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Powers Granted: AFSPA gives the military the authority to:

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)

Enactment Year: 1958

Historical Context:

The Act is based on a 1942 British ordinance intended to contain the Indian Independence movement during the Second World War.

Purpose:

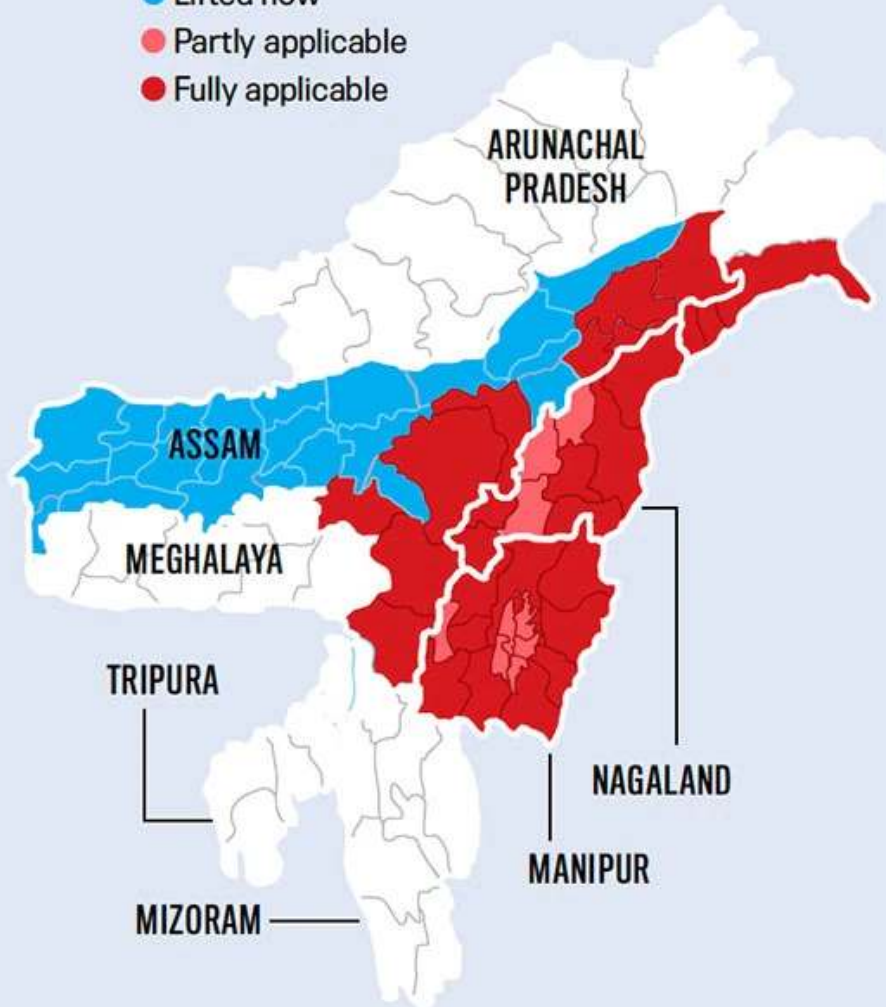
To provide special powers to the Armed Forces in areas deemed "disturbed" to combat insurgency and maintain public order.

Disturbed Area:

Areas declared by notification under Section 3 of AFSPA are subject to the powers of arrest without a warrant, search without a warrant, and protection from prosecution for actions taken in the course of duty.

AFSPA STATUS

- Lifted now
- Partly applicable
- Fully applicable



When was AFSPA introduced in the NE?

Nagaland

1958

Mizoram

1967, removed in 1986

Tripura

1970, removed in 2015

Manipur

1980

Arunachal Pradesh

1987

Assam

1990

Meghalaya

1990, removed in 2018

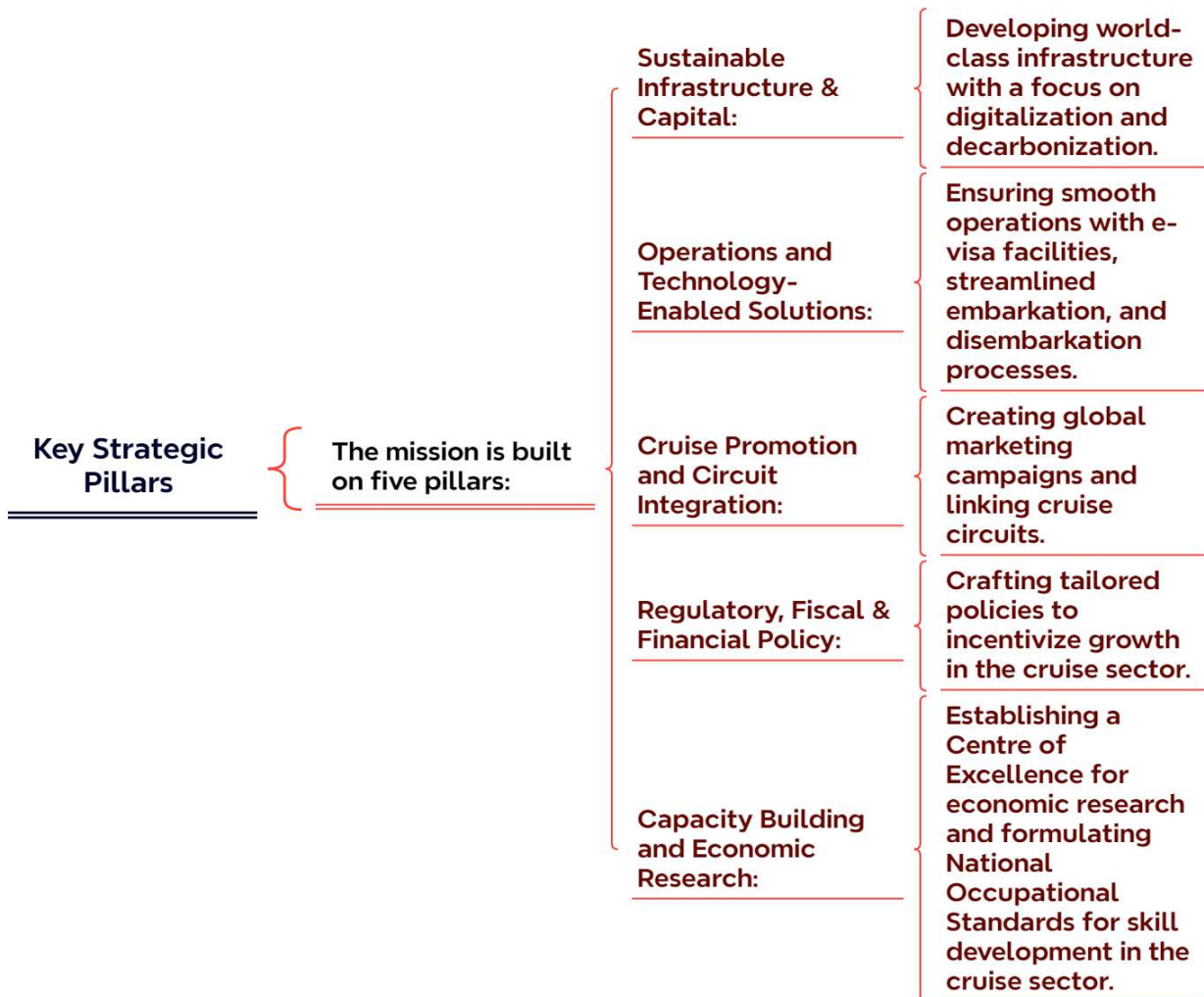
Economy

3. Cruise Bharat Mission Launched by Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways – PIB

The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, launched the Cruise Bharat Mission. The mission aligns with the Blue Economy initiative under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Cruise Bharat Mission »

- **Aim:** To double the number of cruise passengers and calls in India within the next five years, positioning India as a global hub for cruise tourism. The mission also aims to develop 100 river cruise terminals by 2029, facilitating travel along India's extensive inland waterways.
- **Key Performance Targets:** Doubling cruise passengers from 0.5 million to 1 million by 2029 and increasing sea cruise calls from 125 to 500.
- **Employment Generation:** 4 lakh jobs by the completion of the mission.
- **Phases of the Mission:** The mission will be implemented in three phases from 2024 to 2029
 - **Phase 1 (2024-2025):** Conducting studies, forming cruise alliances, and modernizing cruise terminals and marinas.
 - **Phase 2 (2025-2027):** Developing new terminals, marinas, and destinations to activate high-potential cruise locations.
 - **Phase 3 (2027-2029):** Integrating cruise circuits across the subcontinent and enhancing the cruise ecosystem.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW).



4. For the first time in 42 months, core sectors' output tanked in August - The Hindu

The core sectors' output in India has experienced its first contraction in 42 months, marking a significant economic downturn. Six out of eight core infrastructure segments recorded a decline in production, with only fertilizers and steel showing growth, albeit at a slower pace.

Core Sectors »

- **Core Sectors:** The core sectors include coal, crude oil, natural gas, petroleum refinery products, steel, cement, electricity, and fertilizers.
- **The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI):**
 - **About:** It measures the performance of the core sectors of the Indian economy. It captures the production output of eight essential industries, which together represent about 40% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
 - **Frequency:** Prepared every month
 - **Released by:** Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), and Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
 - **Significance:** The ICI is a crucial indicator of industrial activity and economic health in India.
 - **The current weightage of eight core industries:** Petroleum Refinery Products (28.04%) > Electricity > Steel > Coal > Crude Oil > Natural Gas > Cement > Fertiliser (2.63)

Environment

5. Export Ban on Non-Basmati White Rice Lifted: Why and What is the Likely Impact? - Indian Express

The Indian government has lifted the export ban on Non-Basmati White Rice, a significant development that comes after a brief halt imposed last year due to concerns over rice production and monsoon-related uncertainties. With the country's rice production now seeing a marked improvement, this move is aimed at benefiting both domestic traders and international markets. The decision also reflects favorable crop conditions and a stable rice stock position.

Rice globally

Global Rice Competitors:

Thailand and Vietnam are the two major competitors in the global rice market.

They, along with Pakistan, Cambodia, and the United States, represent India's primary competition.

Rice Categories:

India exports both Basmati and Non-Basmati rice.

Basmati accounts for about one-third of India's total rice exports, while Non-Basmati includes six subcategories, including rice in husk of seed quality; other rice in husk; husked (brown) rice; rice parboiled; non-basmati white rice; and broken rice.

Main Export Markets for Non-Basmati White Rice:

Kenya, Mozambique, Cameroon, Vietnam, and Malaysia were among the top importers in 2023-24.

Export ban on Non-Basmati White Rice:

The export ban on Non-Basmati White Rice was initially imposed last year due to concerns over a slight decline in rice production and the threat of erratic monsoon patterns, which raised fears of supply shortages.

Ban lifted:

The 2023-24 kharif season has seen a surge in paddy sowing, largely driven by favorable monsoon conditions. According to data from the Agriculture Ministry, the area under paddy cultivation increased to 413.50 lakh hectares as of September 2024, up from 404.50 lakh hectares last year.

Rice Cultivation in India >>

- **Major Producing States:** West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and Bihar.
 - In West Bengal farmers grow three crops of rice called 'aus', 'aman' and 'boro'.
- **Seasons:** Rice is mainly grown in kharif seasons, with the kharif season being the most significant, contributing to the majority of the crop production.
- **Major producers:** China(1st) and India(2nd) are the largest producers, accounting for over half of the world's rice production.

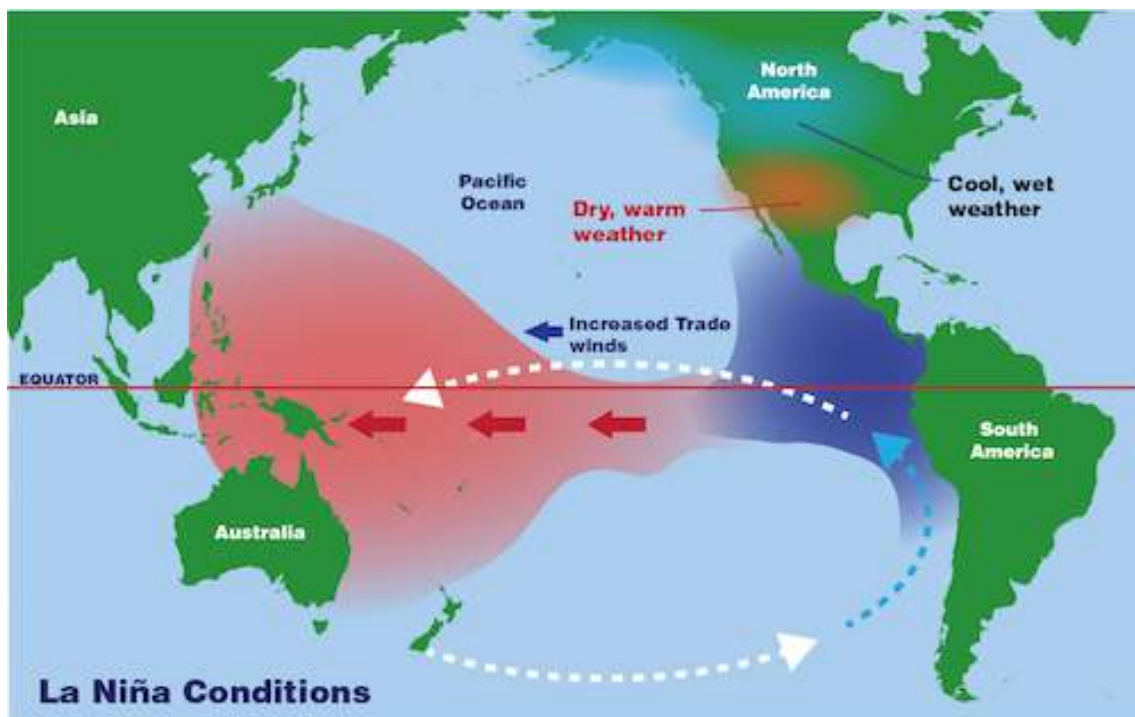
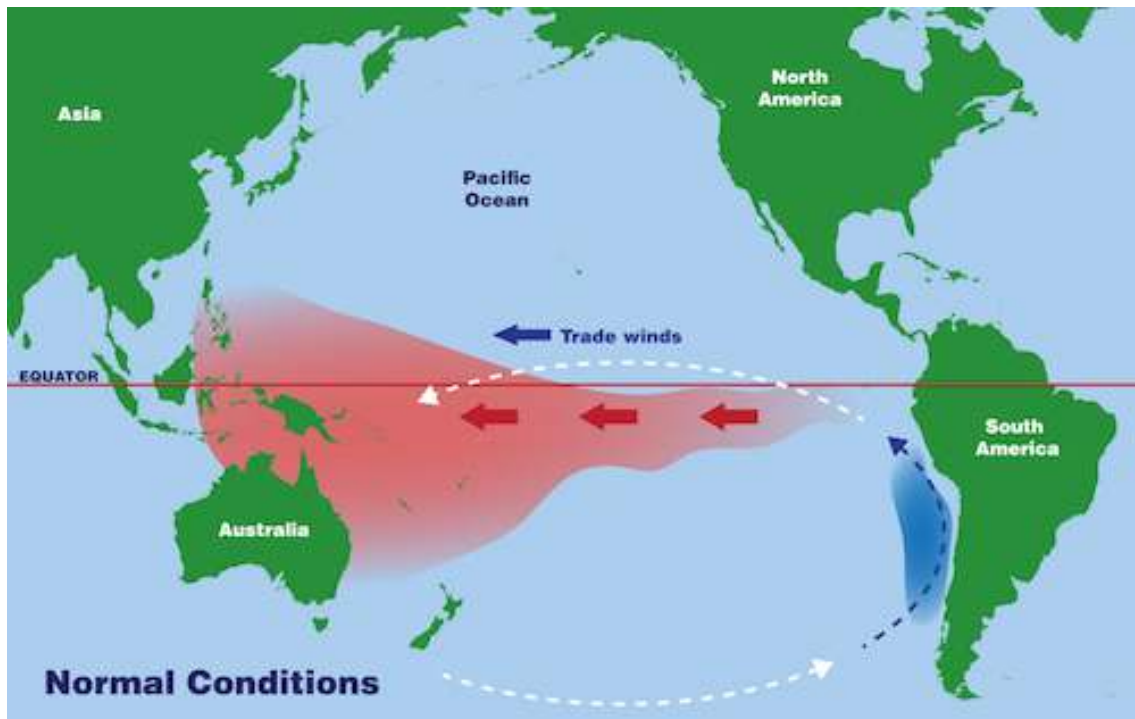
6. The La Niña and North India's Pollution - Indian Express

Recent research by the National Institute of Advanced Science (NIAS) has highlighted the interplay between climate change, La Niña, and air quality in India, particularly during the winter of 2022-23, when Delhi experienced improved air quality. With predictions of a potential La Niña and its implications for weather patterns, there are growing concerns about the air quality in northern India as the winter season approaches.



La Niña »

- **About:** La Niña, meaning "Little Girl" in Spanish, is characterized by stronger-than-usual trade winds that push more warm water toward Asia, leading to increased upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich water along the Americas' west coast.
- **Weather Patterns:** La Niña causes the jet stream to move northward, often leading to drought conditions in the southern U.S. while the Pacific Northwest and Canada may experience heavy rains and flooding. During La Niña years, winter temperatures tend to be warmer in the South and cooler in the North, along with a potentially more severe hurricane season.



7. Karnataka asks Centre to withdraw draft notification for declaring parts of Western Ghats as Eco-Sensitive Areas - The Hindu

The Karnataka government has formally requested the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) to withdraw a draft notification proposing to declare parts of the Western Ghats as Eco-Sensitive Areas (ESAs). This decision follows the state's rejection of the Kasturirangan committee report, which underpins the draft notification.

Background of the News >>

- **Previous Notifications:** The Union government has attempted to classify parts of the Western Ghats as ESAs multiple times over the past decade, but these notifications have faced significant pushback from various stakeholders, including state governments and local communities.
 - ESAs are generally located within 10 kilometers around Protected Areas (PAs), including National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Biosphere Reserves. This buffer zone aims to protect the ecological integrity of these critical habitats.
- **State Government's Response:** Following a cabinet meeting on September 26, the Karnataka government decided to reject the Kasturirangan committee report, asserting that its implementation would lead to hardships for local residents, especially in the 1,499 villages across 10 districts.

Kasturirangan Committee: >>

- **Established:** In 2012
- **Objective:** To assess and recommend the management of the Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- **Key Recommendations**
 - The report proposed that around 37% of the Western Ghats should be designated as ESAs.
 - It provided guidelines for sustainable land use, balancing development with environmental conservation. This included recommendations on regulating activities like mining, construction, and agriculture.
 - The committee emphasized the importance of involving local communities in conservation efforts
 - It advocated for the establishment of a scientific and technical advisory committee to monitor the implementation of its recommendations

8. Indian elephants lost genetic vigour as they moved north to south, 5 distinct populations exist: Study

A recent study reveals significant findings regarding the genetic diversity and population dynamics of Indian elephants. The research highlights the loss of genetic vigor as elephants migrated from north to south, identifying five distinct populations that require tailored conservation strategies. The study used DNA extracted from elephant faeces to monitor populations and identify individual elephants.

About the Study »

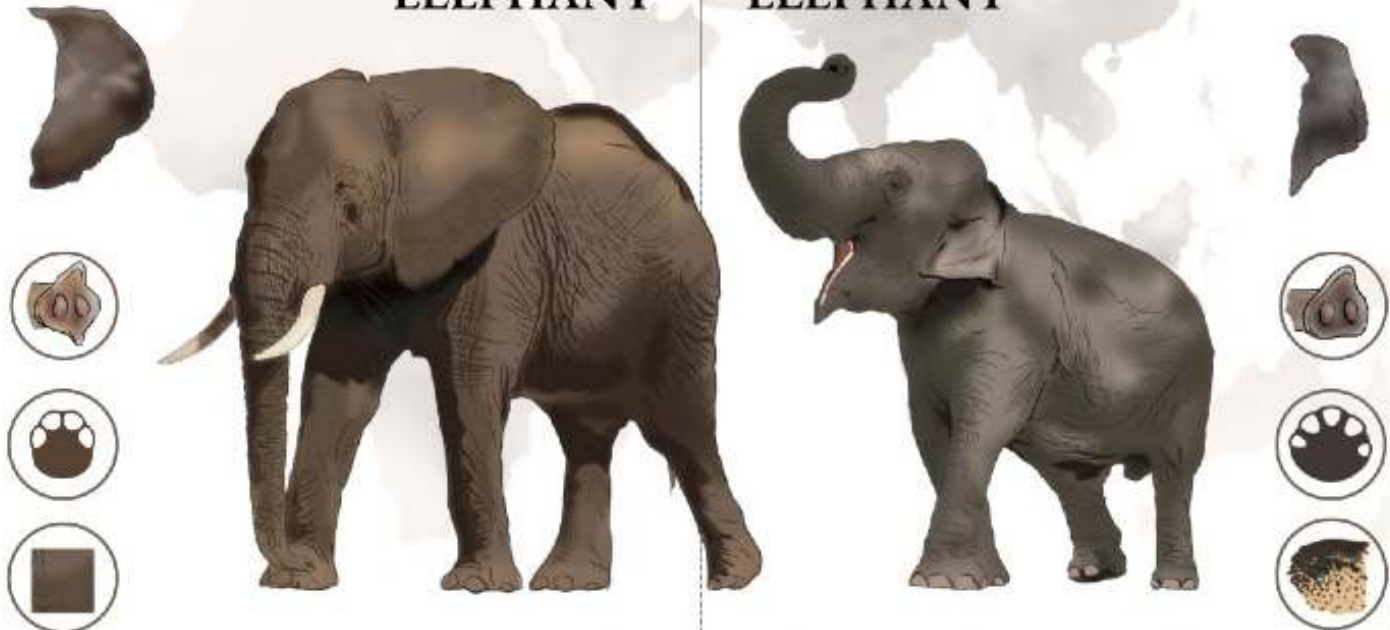
The study provides insights into the historical migration patterns of Indian elephants:

- **Distinct Populations:** Five genetically distinct populations identified:
 - Southernmost population (south of the Shencottah Gap).
 - Central Indian elephants (southwestern West Bengal to eastern Maharashtra).
 - Northwest population (Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh).
 - Northeast population (separated by the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers).
 - North Indian population (extending from Uttarakhand to Arunachal Pradesh).
- **Historical Divergence:**
 - Northern population diverged from other Indian elephants more than 70,000 years ago.
 - Northern population: About 12,000 elephants (2,000 in the northwest and 10,000 in the northeast).
 - Central Indian elephants diverged around 50,000 years ago.
 - Central population: Over 3,000 elephants.
 - Southern populations showed divergence as recently as 20,000 years ago.
 - Southern Population Distribution: Approximately 14,500 elephants
 - The study indicates that the southernmost population, located south of the Shencottah Gap between Tamil Nadu and Kerala, exhibits the lowest genetic diversity. This decline in genetic variation raises concerns about inbreeding depression, making the population vulnerable to extinction.



AFRICAN ELEPHANT

ASIAN ELEPHANT



TUSKS: Both male and female African elephants are capable of growing tusks

WEIGHT: Between 4000kg to 7000kg

TOENAILS: African forest elephants have 5 in front and 4 in hind while African bush elephants have 4 in front and 3 in hind

EARS: Large ears shaped like the continent of Africa

TRUNK: Two "fingers" for grasping

HEIGHT: About 4 metres (tallest at the shoulder)

PIGMENTATION: Consistent dark colouration

TUSKS: Only male elephants are capable of growing tusks, while females sometimes grow tushes (a very small tusk)

WEIGHT: Between 3000kg to 6000kg

TOENAILS: 5 in front and 4 in hind

EARS: Smaller, rounded ears

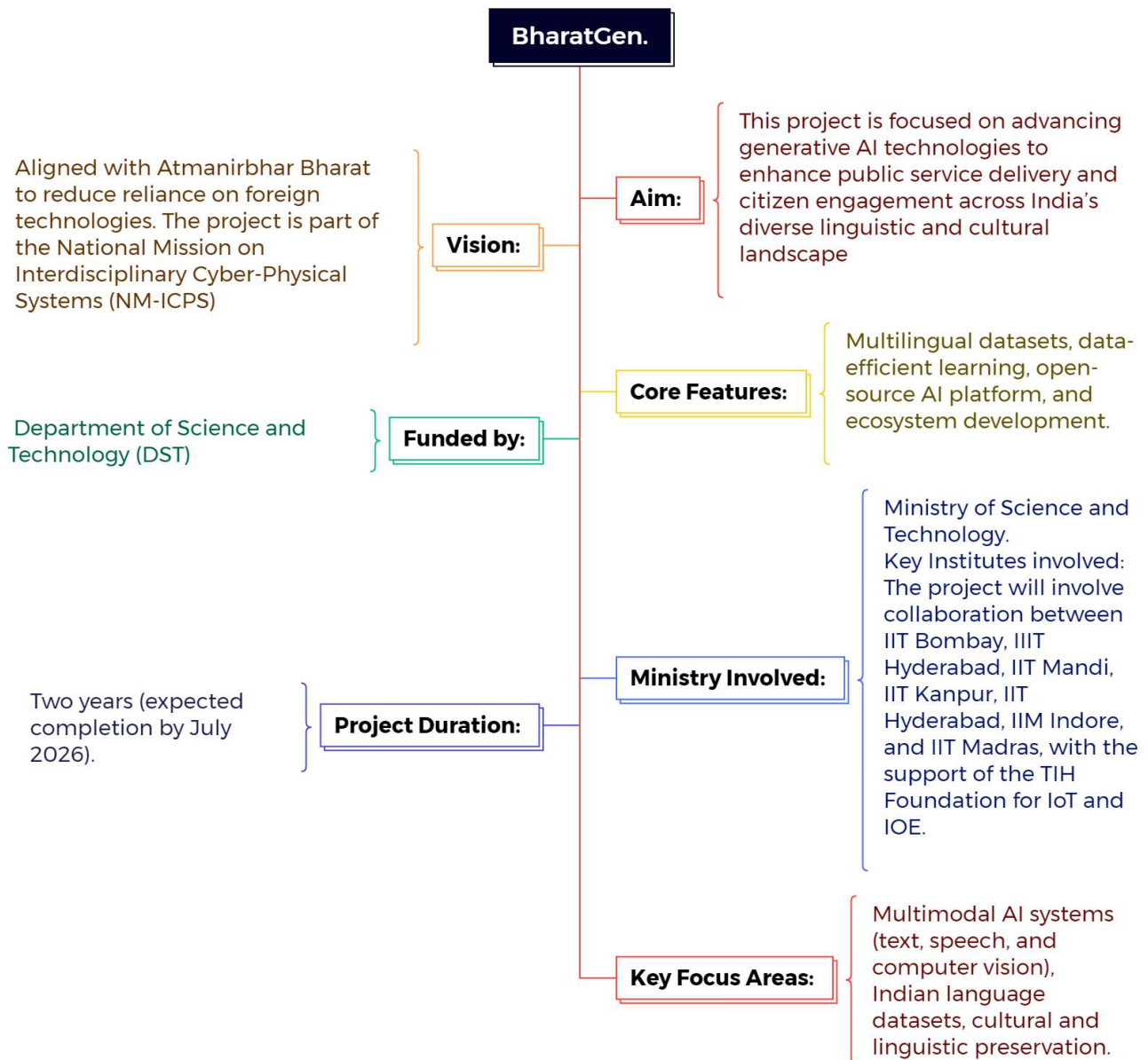
TRUNK: One "finger" for grasping

HEIGHT: About 3.5 metres (tallest at the arch of the back)

PIGMENTATION: Freckled appearance and pigmentation

9. Launch of BharatGen: India's First Government-Funded Multimodal Large Language Model Initiative - PIB

The Indian government launched BharatGen, the country's first government-funded multimodal large language model initiative. It is designed to support multilingual AI systems, ensuring that even languages with limited digital resources can benefit from AI applications.



10. Army Signs 8th Procurement Contract through iDEX - PIB

The Indian Army has recently signed its 8th procurement contract through the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework, marking another step towards indigenization and fostering innovative defence solutions. The contract is part of the Indian government's vision of promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) in the defence sector by encouraging startups and MSMEs to contribute to modernizing military capabilities.

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

- **Launched:** April 2018.
- **Objective:** To attain self-reliance in the defence sector and to foster innovation and technology development in defence and aerospace by engaging MSMEs, startups, individual innovators, and academia.
- **Implementing Agency:** Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), formed by the Defence Production Department.
- **Funds:** Supported by the Defence Innovation Fund.

Defence Innovation Organisation

- **Established as:** 2016 by the Department of Defence Production under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) as a not-for-profit company.
- **Established by:** Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to foster innovation and reduce reliance on foreign defence imports.
- **Purpose:** It was created to drive innovation in the defence sector by promoting research, development, and prototype creation in cutting-edge technologies.