



drishti

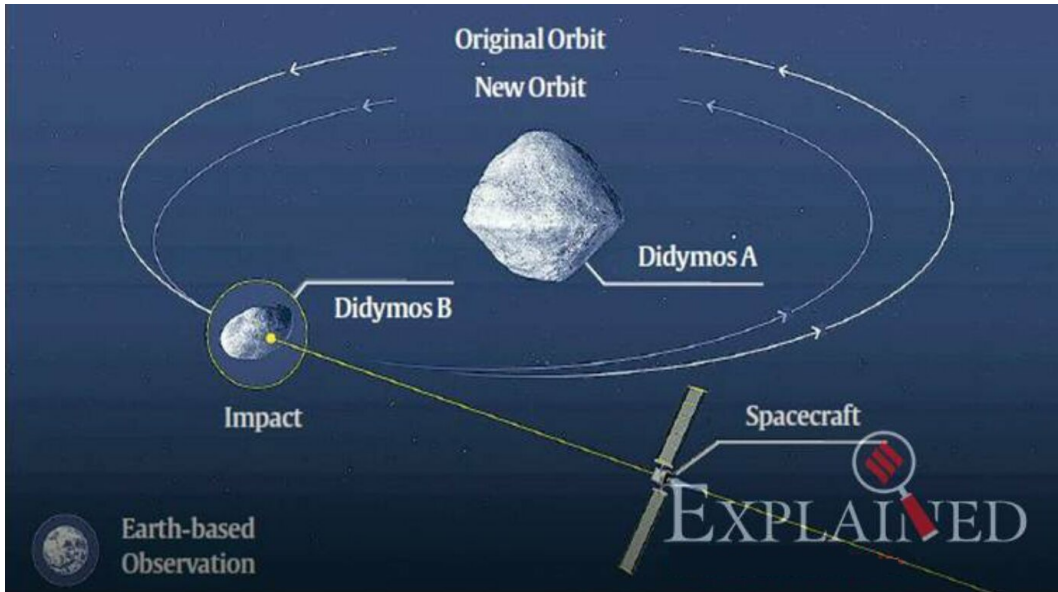
News Analysis (05 Sep, 2019)

 [drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/05-09-2019/print](https://drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/05-09-2019/print)

## Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment (AIDA)

Asteroid researchers with a view to establishing a planetary defence mechanism against huge asteroid will gather in Italy to discuss the progress of **Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment (AIDA)**.

- An asteroid hit is widely acknowledged as one of the most likely, among all the causes that may eventually cause the extinction of life on Earth,
- In general, there are two different ways of planetary defence against an asteroid.
  - **Blowing** up the asteroid before it reaches Earth,
  - **Deflecting** it off its Earth-bound course by hitting it with a spacecraft.
- The **Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment (AIDA)** project seeks to explore the defence mechanism **through deflection**.
  - It is a **joint mission** of the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** and the **European Space Agency (ESA)**.
  - It is an ambitious **double-spacecraft mission** to deflect an asteroid in space.
  - **Target of AIDA**
    - The target is the smaller of two bodies in the **“double Didymos asteroids”**. These are in orbit between Earth and Mars.
    - Didymos is a near-Earth asteroid system.
    - Its main body measures about 780 m across; the smaller body is a “moonlet” about 160 m in diameter.



- The project aims to deflect the orbit of the smaller body through an **impact by one spacecraft**.  
 NASA is building the **Double Asteroid Impact Test (DART)** spacecraft for this.
- Then a second spacecraft will survey the crash site and **gather the maximum possible data** on the effect of this collision.
  - ESA's contribution is a mission called **Hera**, which will perform a close-up survey of the post-impact asteroid.
  - Hera will also deploy a pair of **CubeSats** for close-up asteroid surveys. This would allow researchers to model the efficiency of the collision.
- Flying along with **DART** will be an Italian-made miniature CubeSat, called **LICIACube**, to record the moment of impact.

The Double Asteroid Impact Test (DART) spacecraft will be launch in 2021. It is planned to collide with the target in September 2022.

### CubeSats

- CubeSats are a class of research spacecraft called **nanosatellites**.
- CubeSats are built to standard dimensions (Units or "U") of 10 cm x 10 cm x 10 cm.
- They can be 1U, 2U, 3U, or 6U in size, and typically weigh less than 1.33 kg (3 lbs) per U.

**Source: IE**

---

## Megalithic Sword Unearthed in Kozhikode

---

The State Archaeology Department in Kozhikode recently has unearthed a **Megalithic era iron sword, a chisel** and a few **decorated pottery** from a **rock-cut cave** at Pothuvachery in Kannur district of Kerala.

- The sword is 105 cm long, & is said to be **2,500 years old**.
- The recovery of the implements revealed the **technological advancement** of the Megalithic people.

## **Megalithic Culture**

- Megaliths refer to **large stone structures** that were constructed either as burial sites or as commemorative sites.
- The burial sites are the sites with actual burial remains, such as **dolmenoid cists** (box-shaped stone burial chambers), **cairn circles** (stone circles with defined peripheries), and **capstones** (distinctive mushroom-shaped burial chambers found mainly in Kerala).
- Commemorative megaliths include memorial sites.
- In India, archaeologists trace the majority of the megaliths to the Iron Age (1500 BC to 500 BC), though some sites precede the Iron Age, extending up to 2000 BC.
- Megaliths are **spread across the Indian subcontinent**.
- The **majority** of megalithic sites are found in **Peninsular India**, concentrated in the states of Maharashtra (mainly in Vidarbha), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

## **Rock-cut cave**

- Natural caves were the earliest caves used by local inhabitants.
- Most of the rock-cut structures were closely associated with various **religions and religious activities**.
- As manifested by archaeological evidence, the **Mesolithic period** (c. 6000 BC) marked the first use and modifications of the early caves.
- The overhanging rocks embellished with **petroglyphs or the rock-cut designs** that were created by carving, chiselling and abrading part of rock surfaces forms the early instances of such rock caves.
- The **Bhimbetka rock shelters** inside the tiger reserve '**Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary**' exemplifies the settlement of human life in these rock shelters during the **Stone Age** in India.
- In the beginning, remarkable Buddhist and Jain rock-cut structures were excavated by the Buddhist monks for **prayer and residence** purposes. The best example of this is **Chaityas** (prayer halls) and **Viharas** (monasteries).

**Source: TH**

---

## Global Liveability Index

---

Indian cities have not fared too well in the **Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index for 2019**.

- **New Delhi with 118<sup>th</sup> rank** has registered the biggest decline in Asia whereas Mumbai also fell two places since last year to rank 119<sup>th</sup>.
- **The decline in Mumbai's rank** was mainly due to a **downgrade in its culture score**.
- **New Delhi has fallen in the index because** of downgrades to its **culture and environment score** as well as **fall in the stability score** owing to rising crime rates.
- The list is **topped by Vienna (Austria) for the second consecutive year**.
- **Asian cities** overall have scored **slightly below the global average**.
- Among the ten least liveable cities globally, three are from Asia which are:
  - Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea (135<sup>th</sup>)
  - Pakistan's Karachi (136<sup>th</sup>)
  - Bangladesh's Dhaka (138<sup>th</sup>)
- Among the **BRICS countries, Suzhou from China was** ranked highest at 75, while **India's capital New Delhi was ranked lowest at 118<sup>th</sup>**.

### Global Liveability Index

- The Economic Intelligence Unit considered **140 cities** for rankings.
- The ranking is based on a particular country's scores in five broad categories, namely:
  - **Stability**
  - **Healthcare**
  - **Culture and Environment**
  - **Education**
  - **Infrastructure**
- Each factor in a city is rated as **acceptable, tolerable, uncomfortable, undesirable or intolerable**.

Source:TH

---

## Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index

---

India has moved up six places to **rank 34<sup>th</sup>** on the World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2019, released by the **World Economic Forum**.

- India was ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in 2018.
- Spain, France, Germany, Japan and the United States are the world's most travel-ready nations.
  - Japan remains Asia's most competitive travel and tourism economy, ranking 4th

- globally.
- China is the largest travel and tourism economy in Asia-Pacific and 13th most competitive globally.
  - **Published biennially**, Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report and Index benchmarks the Travel & Tourism (T&T) competitiveness of 140 economies. The 140 economies are ranked in **four sub-indexes**:
    - Enabling environment,
    - Travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions,
    - Infrastructure, and
    - Natural and cultural resources.

**Source: BS**

---

## Ladakh Festival

---

Recently, Minister of State for Culture & Tourism has visited Ladakh Festival which is celebrated **every year in Leh and its nearby villages**.

- The festival is for **one week** which includes events like archery, polo, and **Masked dances from the monasteries**.
- It also includes dances by cultural troupes from the villages.

Masked Dances



**Cham Dance** is a famous **masked dance from Ladakh** which is the major attraction of the festival.

- It is also performed on **Tsechu Festival** which is the yearly **spiritual** festival carried out in many **monasteries** in Ladakh.
- It is said to bring good luck to the people viewing this dance.
- This dance which is accompanied by music played by monks using traditional Tibetan instruments is usually performed by a few selected sects of Buddhism.

**Source: PIB**

---

## India: 10th largest Gold Reserve in the World

---

According to the **World Gold Council**, India has gold reserves **totalling 618 tonnes**, the **10<sup>th</sup> largest gold reserve in the world**.

- **U.S has the highest gold reserves** with 8,133.5 tonnes of total gold reserves, followed by Germany with 3,366.8 tonnes and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** with a holding of 2,451.8 tonnes,
- India's gold reserves have grown substantially in the past couple of decades from 358 tonnes in 2000 to the current 618 tonnes.
- India's entry into the list of top ten countries comes at a time when the quantum of monthly purchases is the lowest in over three years.

### **World Gold Council**

- The World Gold Council(WGC) is the market development organisation for the gold industry.
- **Headquartered in London**, the WGC covers the markets which comprise about three-quarters of the world's annual gold consumption.
- WGC seeks to stimulate and sustain demand for gold, provide industry leadership, and be the global authority on the gold market.
- It intervenes in global markets to make gold more accessible, devising solutions to broaden the understanding and use of gold as an investment asset.

**Source: TH**

---

## North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC)

---

Recently, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has inaugurated a **marketing complex** in Guwahati, for **North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC)**.

- The NERAMAC Limited was incorporated in the year **1982** as a **marketing organization** in the field of **Agri-Horti sector of the North-eastern region**, under the administrative control of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).
- It was set up to support farmers/producers of North East getting **remunerative prices** for their produce and thereby bridge the gap between the farmers and the

market and also to **enhance the agricultural, procurement, processing and marketing infrastructure** of the Northeastern Region of India.

- NERAMAC is continuously making all efforts for the development of the farmers of the region and double their income by the end of 2022.

**Source: PIB**

---