



## US to Train Indian Astronauts at NASA

[Source: TH](#)

NASA has stated that it will increase cooperation with India, which will involve a joint project on the [International Space Station \(ISS\)](#) that includes an Indian astronaut.

- The two countries have concluded a **Strategic Framework for Human Spaceflight Cooperation**, which will involve advanced training for [ISRO](#) astronauts at NASA's Johnson Space Center.
- Both countries are also exploring opportunities for India's participation in the **Lunar Gateway Programme**, which is part of the collaborative [Artemis programme](#) led by the US.
- The U.S. and India are also preparing for the launch of the [NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar \(NISAR\)](#), a jointly developed satellite that will **map the entirety of the Earth's surface twice every 12 days** as part of efforts to combat [climate change](#).
- The India-US **initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)** was launched in **May 2022** to forge **greater collaboration** between the two countries in areas of **critical technologies** such as [artificial intelligence](#), semiconductor, critical minerals, advanced telecommunication and defence space.
  - The iCET Dialogue was held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024, in New Delhi in which the US Space Force partnered with Indian startups **114ai** and **3rdiTech**.

[Read more...](#)

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## Striped Caecilian

[Source: TH](#)

Recently, a **limbless amphibian** called the **Striped Caecilian (*Ichthyophis spp*)** has been discovered for the first time in the [Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve](#), during a rapid herpetofauna survey.

- **Reptiles and amphibians are collectively called herpetofauna.** Caecilians belong to the family of Ichthyophiidae.
  - It is characterised by its **worm-like body**. They have a **limited sense of vision** and primarily rely on **touch and smell** to navigate their environment.
  - They spend most of their lives **burrowed under soil** and are **carnivorous**.
  - Their presence provides critical insights into the **evolution and intercontinental speciation** due to their **ancient lineage**.
  - They are **indicator species** for the environment and play a crucial role in **controlling pests**.

**Kaziranga National Park:**

- **Located** between the **Brahmaputra River** and the **Karbi (Mikir) Hills**.

- It was declared as a **National Park** in **1974**, and a [World Heritage Site](#) by [UNESCO](#) in **1985**.
- **“Big 5” Species:** Rhinoceros, Tiger, Elephant, Wild Water Buffalo, and Swamp deer.
- **Major vegetation types:** Alluvial inundated grasslands, Tropical wet evergreen forests and Tropical semi-evergreen forests.

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Read more: [Kaziranga National Park](#), [Amphibians Threatened by Climate Change](#)

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## National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme

[Source: PIB](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Cabinet**, chaired by the [Prime Minister](#), has approved the proposal of the **Ministry of Home Affairs** for the [Central Sector Scheme](#) "**National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES)**".

### What is the National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme?

- **About:**
  - This scheme aims to **enhance forensic infrastructure** across the country by establishing **off-campus laboratories** of the [National Forensic Sciences University](#) in 28 States and all Union Territories.
- **Outlay and Duration:**
  - The scheme has a total financial outlay of **Rs. 2,254.43 crore** during the period from **2024-25 to 2028-29**.
- **Components:**
  - Establishment of Campuses of the **National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU)** across the country.
  - Establishment of **Central Forensic Science Laboratories** in the country.
  - **Enhancement of existing infrastructure** of the Delhi Campus of the NFSU.

### ▪ Key Objectives:

- It aims to **address the shortage of trained forensic manpower**, strengthening the capacity and capabilities of the National Forensic Sciences University.
- The establishment of **new Central Forensic Science Laboratories** across the country is intended to **alleviate the caseload and pendency** in the existing forensic laboratories.
  - With the enactment of the [New Criminal Laws](#), which mandates forensic investigation for offences involving punishment of **7 years** or more, a significant increase in the workload of forensic science laboratories is expected.
- High-quality, trained forensic professionals are expected to **contribute to an efficient criminal justice process**, leveraging advancements in technology and evolving crime patterns.
- The **scheme is intended to support** the government's objective of achieving a **high conviction rate of more than 90%**.

## New Criminal Laws in India

- The new criminal laws in India are set to take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. These laws will replace the existing colonial-era legislation.
  - The [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#) will be replaced by the [Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita \(BNS\)](#).
  - The [Code of Criminal Procedure \(CrPC\)](#) will be replaced by the [Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita \(BNSS\)](#).
  - The [Indian Evidence Act](#) will be replaced by the [Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam \(BSA\)](#).

## National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU)

- It is the **world's first** and only university dedicated to forensic sciences.
- It was established in **2009** as [Gujarat Forensic Sciences University](#) and was later renamed to **NFSU** in **2020**.
- The university was set up to **train professionals in forensic science** and is now an **institution of national importance** under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Its main campus is located in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.

## Forensic Science

- Forensic science is the use of **scientific methods or expertise to investigate crimes** or examine evidence that might be presented in a court of law.
- It comprises a diverse array of disciplines, from [fingerprint](#) and **DNA analysis** to **anthropology** and **wildlife forensics**.
- It is a critical element of the **criminal justice system**.
  - Forensic scientists **examine and analyse evidence from crime scenes** and elsewhere to **develop objective findings** that can assist in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crime or absolve an innocent person from suspicion.

Read more: [Criminal Justice System](#), [National Forensic Science University](#)

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q. In addition to fingerprint scanning, which of the following can be used in the biometric identification of a person? (2014)**

1. Iris scanning
2. Retinal scanning

### 3. Voice recognition

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

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## Odisha Extended Hockey Sponsorship

Source: IE

Recently, the **Odisha government** decided to extend its **hockey sponsorship** until **2036**, which marks the centenary of **Odisha's formation** as a state in **1936**.

- The **Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd (OMC)**, initially committed to sponsoring Hockey India from 2018 to 2023, later extended to 2033.
- Now, the **Odisha government** has added **three more years** to this commitment, stretching it **until 2036**.
  - This new end date aligns with the [2036 Olympic games](#) year.
- OMC is a **wholly owned** government **corporation** in Odisha that was established in 1956.
- Odisha Chief Minister inaugurated [Birsa Munda](#) Hockey Stadium, one of the largest hockey stadiums in Rourkela on **5<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.
- **On 29<sup>th</sup> August**, India observes **National Sports Day** to commemorate the birth anniversary of hockey legend **Major Dhyan Chand**.

## INDIA'S MEN'S HOCKEY MEDAL WINS AT THE OLYMPICS

Olympics Games	Year	Medal Won
Amsterdam	1928	Gold
Los Angeles	1932	Gold
Berlin	1936	Gold
London	1948	Gold
Helsinki	1952	Gold
Melbourne	1956	Gold
Rome	1960	Silver
Tokyo	1964	Gold
Mexico City	1968	Bronze
Munich	1972	Bronze
Moscow	1980	Gold
Tokyo	2020	Bronze



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