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Electric Vehicle Capital of India

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- Karnataka wants to become the electric vehicle capital of India.
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- Karnataka is the first state to roll out an Electric Vehicle and Energy Storage Policy.
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- The policy looks not only at boosting sales of EVs, but also setting up charging infrastructure.
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- Policy aims to set up EV manufacturing zones along with facilities for testing that can be used even by start-ups.
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- The state estimates that it will be able to create employment for 55,000 individuals over the next few years through the EV industry.

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SHAKTI

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- Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala (Coal) Transparently in India (SHAKTI) is the new scheme of the centre to provide cheaper coal to private power units through bidding.
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- Under this new programme, Coal India offered assured coal supply to units through bidding.
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- The private power units had to quote the discount in their power tariffs that they would offer after getting cheaper coal from the company.
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- Thus the bidding will be for private power units with power purchase agreements (PPAs) but no long-term coal supply.
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New NIRF Exercise

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- National Institution Ranking Framework (NIRF) for the year 2018 has been announced by the centre with a change.
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- The NIRF ranking was started in 2016, ranks higher educational institutions in India on the basis of a variety of parameters.
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- The 2016 and 2017 NIRF lists reflected the ranks of only those institutions that had taken part in the exercise.
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- But for 2018, instead of institutions choosing to take part in the exercise, they are being auto-registered through a large online database.
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- The All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) portal of institutions available with the Ministry of Human Resource Development will be used for auto registration of institutions.
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- With this initiative, the number of institutions for NIRF is expected to raise three fold from previous year rankings.
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- Last year ranking, among universities, Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore was ranked first and Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi was second.
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Citizenship for Chakma and Hajong refugees

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- GoI has announced that it will grant citizenship to all chakma and hajong refugees living in the north east.
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- The government also ensured that the rights of the indigenous people are not diluted.
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- Chakmas and Hajongs were originally residents of Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan).
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- They left their homeland when it was submerged by the Kaptai dam project near Chittagong, Bangladesh, in the 1960s.
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- The Chakmas, who are Buddhists, and Hajongs, who are Hindus, also allegedly faced religious persecution and entered India through the then Lushai Hills district of Assam (now Mizoram).
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- The Centre moved the majority of them to the North East Frontier Agency, which is now Arunachal Pradesh.
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Monitor Lizard

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- India is home to four varieties of monitor lizard - Agra, Yellow, Water, and Large Bengal.
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- Monitor Lizards are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
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- They share their Schedule 1 status with tigers, rhinos, elephants and leopards, and hunting or harming them can attract jail terms of at least 3-7 years;
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- Their trade is restricted under Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
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- The male reproductive organs of monitor lizards are traded in the name of “Hatha Jodi”, which is claimed to possess magical powers that ensure prosperity for its owner.
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Forest Plus Programme

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- Forest Plus, also known as Land Use Science is a joint programme by the

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

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- It aims to strengthen capacity for REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) implementation in India.

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- It brings together experts to develop technologies, tools and methods of forest management to meet the technical challenges of managing forests for the health of ecosystem, carbon stocks, biodiversity and livelihood.

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Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Line, Indian Express

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