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25 November 2023

International & National News

Nicaraguan Sheynnis Palacios wins crown at Miss Universe 2023



Context

- **Nicaragua's Sheynnis Palacios** was crowned **Miss Universe 2023** at the **72nd edition** of the pageant, held this year in El Salvador.
- Palacios received the crown and sash from her predecessor, **R'Bonney Gabriel from the United States**.
- Miss India **Shweta Sharda** had made it to the list of the top 20 contestants.

Chimaeras -hosts to multiple genotypes, and maybe human organs

Context

- At present, more than **3 lakh people are waiting for an organ transplant** in India alone; the global number is far higher, with no respite in sight.
- There is an alarming disparity in the number of organ donors and the number of recipients
- The successful application of **animal insulin** and the more recent use of **animal heart valves** in human surgeries have saved human lives.
- Researchers have also made attempts to grow full human organs inside the bodies of animals using advancements in **induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) technology**.
- At the same time, controversy continues to beset this field, most of it centred on the use of human iPSCs in animal embryos and the creation of chimeric animals, the results of which we are yet to fully comprehend.

Key points

- A **genetic chimaera** is a single organism **composed of cells of more than one genetic makeup**.
- **Human-pig chimaeras** have been induced in laboratory settings in a bid to develop model systems that could 'produce' human organs of a suitable size, anatomy, and physiology
- In a **study published in Cell**, scientists reported successful generation of a live chimera in non-human primates – species evolutionarily close to humans.
- This is the first time scientists have succeeded in producing a live infant chimeric monkey.



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<p>Induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) are adult cells that have been genetically reprogrammed to an embryonic stem cell-like state by being forced to express genes and factors important for maintaining the defining properties of embryonic stem cells. Although additional research is needed, iPSCs are already useful tools for drug development and modeling of diseases, and scientists hope to use them in transplantation medicine.
<p>A fact check unit that is unconstitutional</p>	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government of Tamil Nadu issued an order recently to set up a Fact Check Unit to check across all media platforms the authenticity of information related to the Government of Tamil Nadu. This government order (GO) violates several fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India and is unconstitutionally vague and arbitrary. <p>Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The operative part of the GO issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu says that the fact check unit will check the veracity of information related to the announcements, policies, schemes, guidelines, and initiatives of the Government of Tamil Nadu. Annexure III to the GO details the unit's functioning. The fact-check unit has been given powers to take suo motu cognizance of social media posts/articles that require fact-checking There is no doubt that it creates a chilling effect on the freedom of speech and expression, a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.



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Space programme turns 60



Context

- Sixty years ago, the launch of a **715-kg Nike Apache rocket** set India on a journey that saw two more milestones before the country became part of an elite international group
- The first was the launch of India's first truly indigenous rocket, on **February 22, 1969** — a “pencil-sized” vehicle, in the words of Vasant Gowariker, later Director of the **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)**, that weighed around 10 kg.
- The second came on **July 18, 1980**, when its home-grown Satellite Launch **Vehicle-3 (SLV-3) rocket**, weighing 17 tonnes, placed the 35-kg Rohini satellite in orbit — and India in a small group of countries that could launch their satellites into orbit using their own launch vehicles. The only others were the **Soviet Union, the U.S., the U.K., and France.**

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