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West Bengal News

PM Modi unveils projects worth Rs 15,000 crore in West Bengal	**Context:** ● Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled development projects worth **Rs 15,000 crore in West Bengal.** ● these initiatives aim to advance West Bengal's development. **Key projects inaugurated and launched by PM Modi include:** ● Foundation stone laying of **Damodar Valley Corporation's Raghunathpur Thermal Power Station Phase II (2x660 MW) in Purulia district.** ● Inauguration of the **Flue Gas Desulfurisation (FGD) system at Mejia Thermal Power Station**, developed for Rs 650 crore. ● Inauguration of the four-laning of the 100-km-long Farakka-Raiganj section of NH-12, constructed at Rs 1,986 crore. ● Dedication to the nation of **four rail projects valued at over Rs 940 crore in the state.** ● These include the doubling of the Damodar-Mohishila line, the third line between Rampurhat and Murarai, the doubling of Bazarsau-Azimganj rail line, and a new line connecting Azimganj and Murshidabad.
7th edition of Health Tech held by The Bengal Chamber	**Context:** ● The 7th edition of Health Tech was organized by The Bengal Chamber in collaboration with PwC India. ● It focused on Innovations and Disruptions in Healthcare and Bio Technologies. **Key points:** ● A paper titled **"Understanding the impact of GenAI on the Indian healthcare ecosystem"** was presented during the event. ● Arnab Basu(President Designate and Chairperson of the IT Committee at The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry) emphasized the potential of **Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) to transform healthcare, making it more efficient and scalable**. ● He highlighted its role in creating human-centered healthcare systems and its applications in areas like imaging, radiology, and precision medicine. ● Dr. Satyajit Bose stressed the importance of integrating technology and medicine to improve healthcare accessibility and affordability.

	● He emphasized technology's role in predicting pandemics, combating viral infections, and understanding diseases like cancer, heart attacks, and Alzheimer's.
Eklavya Model Residential School opens in Kalimpong	**Context:** ● Kalimpong district in Bengal welcomed its 8th Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) recently. **Key points:** ● EMRS offers free education to Scheduled Tribal children in a residential setting. ● The school is seen as a significant asset due to the district's sizable tribal population. ● Supervised by the Tribal Development Department of the Bengal government, the school operates free of cost. ● Initially, the school is located at the temporary campus in the Lepcha Youth Hostel in Deorali, Kalimpong, with plans for a permanent campus in Charkhol. ● The school accommodates students from class 6 to class 12, with a capacity of 420 students. ● Currently, the school has begun its academic session with class 6, hosting 70 students, with more in the enrollment process.
Leopard count in North Bengal jumps 3 times in 4 years 	**Context:** ● The leopard count in **North Bengal has surged by almost threefold between 2018 and 2022.** ● This increase is the **second highest in India,** with Arunachal Pradesh showing the highest rise at nearly fourfold. ● In 2016, only 83 leopards were recorded in North Bengal, but by 2022, the number had soared to about 233, marking a staggering **180% increase.** ● The overall leopard population in India also rose from 12,852 in 2018 to 13,874 in 2023, as per a report unveiled in New Delhi. **Regional Distribution of Leopards** ● The **North-eastern Hills region,** which includes North Bengal, is home to approximately 349 leopards. ● Within this cluster, North Bengal houses 233 leopards, while **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have 42 and 74 leopards, respectively.** ● Out of 4,614 photo-captures in this cluster, 228 individual leopards were identified. **Leopard Population in Specific Locations** ● **Buxa, the sole tiger reserve in North Bengal, boasts 61 leopards, with 74 leopards using the reserve.**

	● The study utilized 329 camera traps in North Bengal for the survey, covering protected areas like Gorumara and Jaldapara national parks. ● These camera traps yielded 3,092 photo captures, revealing 129 unique leopard individuals. ● The density of leopards in **Buxa, Jaldapara, and Gorumara was estimated at 9.1, 13.8, and 15.1 per 100 square kilometers, respectively.** **Concerns and Conservation Efforts** ● Despite the growth in leopard numbers in **North Bengal, the escalating human-leopard conflict in the region is a major concern.** ● Leopard signs outside protected areas in other states under NE Hills were sporadic. ● The study suggests cautious approaches for tiger re-introduction in Buxa due to its increasing leopard population and low prey abundance. ● Prey augmentation strategies should consider the presence of other large carnivores in the area.