

# Prelims Focus - 9th March 2024

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## 1.Ayya Vaikundar

### Recent news:

The Tamil Nadu Governor's recent statement about Ayya Vaikundar, a social reformer from the 19th century, claiming that he was the reincarnation of Lord Vishnu sent shockwaves throughout the state.

### About:

- Ayya Vaikundar was a spiritual leader in India who made significant contributions to society through his teachings and beliefs.
- Ayya Vaikundar, born in 1809 to a poor Nadar family, was a revered social reformer who founded the Ayyavazhi sect in southern Tamil Nadu.
- He preached equality, fraternity, and the eradication of caste discrimination, challenging established social and religious hierarchies.
- Vaikundar organised community eateries, encouraged wearing turbans and dhotis, and initiated programs promoting vegetarianism and discipline.
- He established community worship spaces without idols, promoted education for lower castes, and introduced simplified marriage customs.
- Additionally, he encouraged priests to apply sacred paste to devotees' foreheads regardless of caste, symbolising the presence of God in every life.

## 2.Assam's Tourist Police

### Recent news:

The tourism department in Assam has come up with a plan to introduce a 'tourist police' program.

### Details:

- The Assam state assembly has recently passed the Assam Tourism (Development and Registration) Bill, 2024, which includes the implementation of a 'tourist police' program.
- This program aims to establish units, police stations, and infrastructure to ensure the safety and welfare of tourists.
- The goal is to ensure the safety of visitors in Assam by establishing a dedicated tourist police unit.
- This initiative was launched in 2022 following a directive from the Union Ministry of Tourism, with collaboration from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Bureau of Police Research and Development.
- Several states have already implemented tourist police units to enhance the security of tourists.

## 3.Sela Tunnel

**In News:** Recently on the eve of the fourth anniversary of the border conflict with China in eastern Ladakh, Prime Minister is all set to inaugurate the long-awaited Sela Tunnel

- **About Sela Tunnel:**

- It is the longest bi-lane street tunnel in the world, at an altitude above 13,000 feet. It is located in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It will join Tezpur, in Assam, with Tawang, in Arunachal Pradesh. It is built via the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under Project Vartak, and the tunnel's construction began on April 1, 2019.

- **Need:**

- Located near the Sela Pass, this all-weather tunnel was needed as Balipara-Chariduar-Tawang Road remains closed for a long term every year, courtesy of snow fall and landslides due to heavy rainfall.
- The tunnel is widespread because it will offer all-weather connectivity to Tawang, bordering China. It will reduce the journey time between Tezpur and Tawang by over an hour.
- It may even provide for quicker deployment of weapons, soldiers, and equipment to forward areas near the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.

- **Sela Pass:**

- It is a high-altitude mountain pass located in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

- Elevation: 4,170 meters above sea level.
- Open during the year, Sela Pass is managed through the BRO.

## 4.Fireflies

**In News:** Researchers identified the key transcription factors that regulate the development of light organs and bioluminescence in the firefly.

- Fireflies, also called lightning insects, are beetles. They get the names “firefly” and “lightning trojan horse” due to the flashes of light they naturally produce. This phenomenon is called bioluminescence.
  - There are approximately 2,000 firefly species. They are determined in temperate and tropical regions on each continent besides Antarctica.
- **Features:**
    - They are tender-bodied beetles that range from 5 to 25 mm (up to one inch) in duration.
    - Fireflies use their light, referred to as bioluminescence, to light up the ends in their stomach to speak with their fellow fireflies. (Animals that produce light are known as luminescent).
    - They have special organs underneath their abdomens that take in oxygen. Inside unique cells, they combine the oxygen with a substance called luciferin to make light with nearly no warmth.
    - Each firefly species has its own sample of light flashing and adult males use this pattern to draw women of the identical species.
    - Bioluminescence in fireflies is almost 100 percent efficient, which means little power is wasted to provide their light.
    - From egg to maturity, fireflies can live up to a year. Most fireflies are nocturnal, despite the fact that a few species are diurnal. They mostly feast on plant pollen and nectar.