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News: Brus become visible, but their fight for identity continues

- A large majority of voters in Tripura were eagerly waiting for the election results to see which party will form the government.
- However, the concern for the people belonging to the Bru tribal community – who exercised their franchise in Tripura for the first time — was related to their identity.
- It was not that they were uninterested in the verdict, but, one gets the sense that the aspiration for a separate identity looms heavily on their minds.

Bru-Reang Refugee Agreement

- Bru–Reang Refugee Agreement is an agreement signed among **Union Government, Governments of Tripura and Mizoram and Bru-Reang Representatives** to end the 23-year old Bru-Reang Refugee crisis.
- Brus, also called Reang in Tripura are the indigenous community which is recognised as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribe in the state of Tripura.**

Provisions

- This agreement gives the **Bru community their choice of living in either the state of Tripura or Mizoram.**
- Centre has announced a package of 600crore under this agreement.
- Bru tribes would be given land to reside in Tripura.
- A family would be given a fixed deposit of 4 lakh as government aid. This amount can be withdrawn after a period of 2 years.
- Each of the displaced families will be given 40×30 feet² residential plots.
- Apart from them, each family will be given Rs. 5,000 cash per month for two years.
- Each displaced family would be given free ration for a period of 2 years and an aid of 1.5 lakhs to build their houses.

News: Assam's moidams fit UNESCO requirements for heritage site

- Assam's pyramid like structures known as moidams or maidams has met all the technical requirements of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said.
- Charaideo in eastern Assam has more than 90 moidams, the mound –burial system of the Ahoms who ruled large swathes of the present day State and beyond for some 600 years until the advent of the British in the 1820s.

Moidams / Maidams, the Ahom burial sites in Assam

- The burial sites named Moidams, also pronounced Maidams in Assam were used by Ahom tribes.
- The Ahom rule lasted for about 600 years until the British annexed Assam in 1826.
- Charaideo, more than 400 km east of Guwahati, was the first capital of the Ahom dynasty founded by Chao Lung Siu–Ka–Pha in 1253.
- Out of 386 Maidams or Moidams explored so far, 90 royal burials at Charaideo are the best preserved, making them showpieces of mound burial tradition of the Ahoms.
- The Charaideo Maidams enshrine the mortal remains of the members of the Ahom royalty, who used to be buried with their paraphernalia.
- After the 18th century, the Ahom rulers adopted the Hindu method of cremation and began entombing the cremated bones and ashes in a Maidam at Charaideo.
- The nomination of the Charaideo Maidams has attained significance at a time when the country is celebrating the 400th birth anniversary of Lachit Barphukan.
- Lachit Barphukan was a legendary Ahom general who fought the Mughals in 1671.

The World Heritage Convention

- The World Heritage Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.
- Defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List under UNESCO.
- World Heritage Centre (1992) ensures the day-to-day management of the Convention.
- To be included, the sites must meet at least one of 10 criteria.
- The World Heritage Convention's operational guidelines say that a tentative list is like an inventory of properties a country thinks should be on the World Heritage Site. After UNESCO includes a property in the Tentative List, the country prepares a nomination document that will be considered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- Italy has the most number of sites (57) followed by China (55).
- India is in the 3rd rank with 52 entries. India has entered super – 40 clubs for World Heritage Site inscriptions along with Italy, China, France, Spain and Germany.
- World Heritage Convention is implemented by UNESCO with the help of International Council on the Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

- Recently, 4 sites from India were included in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. They are: Vadnagar town in Gujarat, iconic Sun temple at Modhera, the rock cut sculptures of Unakoti in Tripura and Ahom burial sites in Assam.

Benefits of world heritage sites status

- **Brings international attention** to the need for the preservation and conservation of the sites.
- **Brings tourism** to the site ensuring economic benefits.
- **UNESCO can provide funds for restoration**, preservation and training if required.
- Promotes **close ties with UN system and prestige and support it provides**.
- Sites **become protected under the Geneva Convention against destruction or misuse during wartime**.