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SAVDA
December 2023
Current Affairs



शौर्य और विवेक

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Indian Navy Receives Third ACTCM Barge

- **The Indian Navy** celebrated a significant achievement on November 30, 2023, with the delivery of the 3rd **Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile (ACTCM) Barge, LSAM 17 (Yard 127)**
- The ceremony was graced by the presence of Shri Shankar Mukharjee, INAS, AGM NAD



Indian Navy Receives Third ACTCM Barge

- The ACTCM barges will be inducted in Indian Navy to undertake the mission needs for embarking or disembarking ammunition, torpedo, missile, etc.



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Raksha Mantri Inaugurates 40th Coast Guard Commanders' Conference

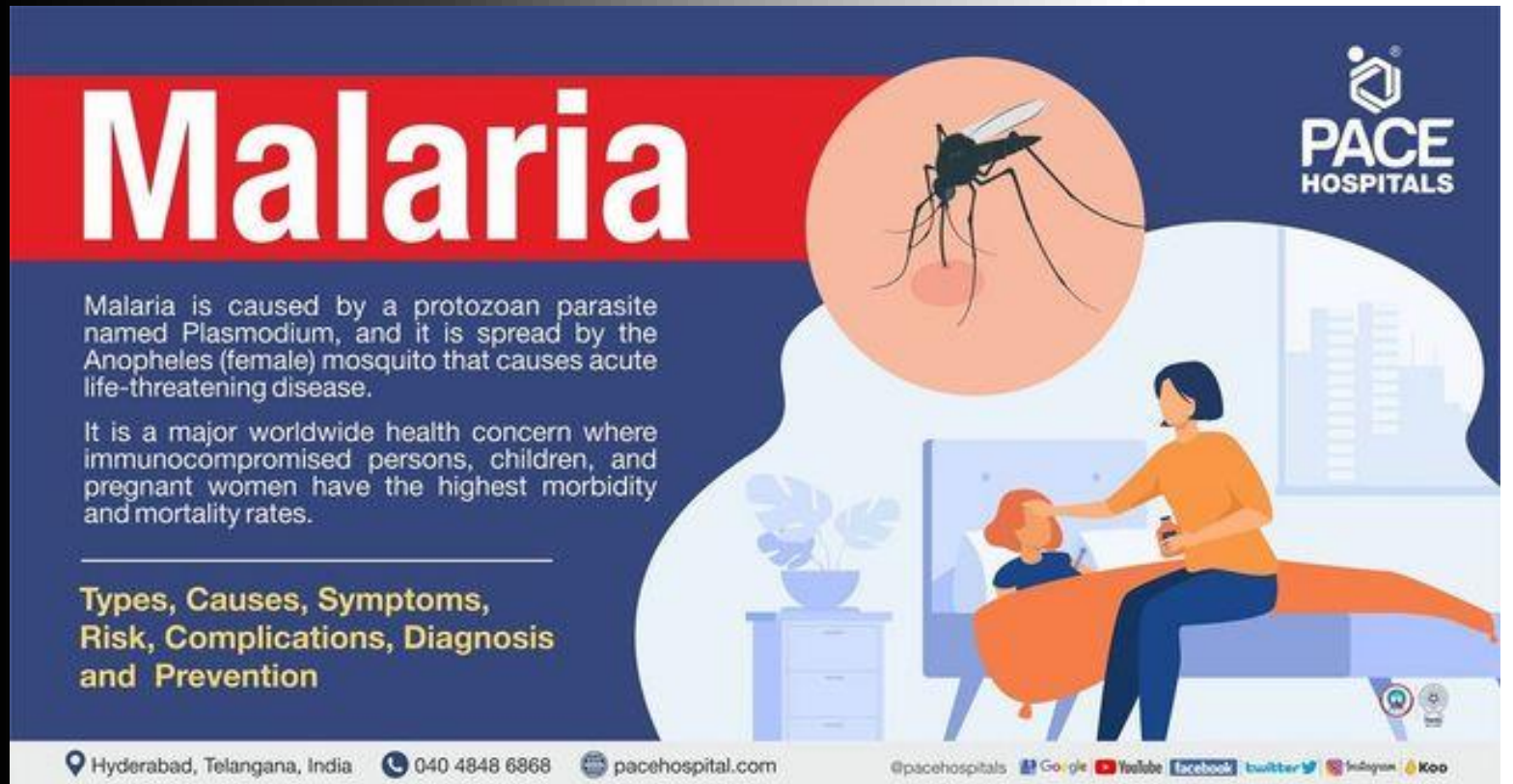
- On November 30, 2023, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the **40th Coast Guard Commanders' Conference in New Delhi**, emphasizing the crucial role of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in enhancing coastal defenses and maritime capabilities
- The three-day conference aims to address **contemporary maritime challenges and fortify the country's coastal surveillance mechanisms**



Malaria Landscape in 2022: India Tops South & Southeast Asia in Recorded Cases

- **India led South and Southeast Asia** in recorded malaria cases in 2022, comprising **66% of the 5.2 million cases reported in the region, according to the World Health Organization (WHO)**
- The World Malaria Report 2023, released on November 30, 2023, noted that **India saw a 55% reduction in cases, even though it accounted for the highest number of cases**

Malaria



Malaria

Malaria is caused by a protozoan parasite named Plasmodium, and it is spread by the Anopheles (female) mosquito that causes acute life-threatening disease.

It is a major worldwide health concern where immunocompromised persons, children, and pregnant women have the highest morbidity and mortality rates.

Types, Causes, Symptoms, Risk, Complications, Diagnosis and Prevention

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- Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by a parasite
- People with malaria often experience fever, chills, and flu-like illness
- Left untreated, they may develop severe complications and die

Historic Peace Agreement with UNLF

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Wednesday that the Union and Manipur governments have successfully signed a peace agreement with **the United National Liberation Front (UNLF)**, marking a significant development in Manipur's history
- **Note (30th December, 2023): ULFA faction signs peace agreement, Amit Shah hails it as a golden day for Assam**
- **It has also agreed to vacate all camps occupied by its armed cadres, engage in the peaceful democratic process established by law and maintain the integrity of the country**

What is the UNLF?

- Formed on **November 24, 1964**, the **UNLF is the oldest valley-based insurgent group in Manipur**
- Unlike groups in Naga-dominated and Kuki-Zomi dominated hills, the UNLF sought secession from India
- Led by **Arembam Samarendra Singh**, the group's central committee included leaders from Naga and Kuki communities. Trained by the **NSCN (IM)**, the UNLF's armed wing, **Manipur People's Army**, was established in **1990**



WHO's Agenda at COP28: Putting Health at the Center Stage

- In a historic move, health takes center stage at the 27-year-old **United Nations Conference of Parties (COP)** with a dedicated day on **Health/Relief, Recovery, and Peace on December 3 in Dubai, the venue of COP28**
- The day, hosted by the COP28 Presidency and the World Health Organization (WHO), features the **first-ever climate-health ministerial, bringing together over 50 ministers from health, environment, and other sectors**



NASA's Vision for Lunar Colonies by 2040

- NASA's ambitious plan to establish human settlements on **the moon by 2040** has captivated the imagination of scientists, engineers, and dreamers worldwide
- The **Artemis program, a comprehensive initiative by the US space agency, charts a course for humanity's significant leap beyond Earth, envisioning sustainable habitats on the lunar surface**



Recovery and Reconstruction Plan Approved for Joshimath

- The Centre, led by a high-level committee headed by **Union Home Minister Amit Shah**, has approved a recovery and reconstruction plan for **Joshimath in Uttarakhand**
- This decision comes in response to the landslide and ground subsidence that affected the region earlier this year
- The approved plan allocates Rs 1658.17 crore for the recovery and reconstruction efforts

A portrait of Kanchan Devi, a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue jacket, sitting in an office with bookshelves in the background.

First Woman Director General of ICFRE

- In a significant milestone, **Kanchan Devi**, a 1991-batch Indian Forest Service Officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the **Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education**
- This marks a historic moment as **Kanchan becomes the first woman officer to hold this prestigious position in the premier council under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change**



First Woman Director General of ICFRE

- **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)**, an apex body in the national forestry research system, has been undertaking the **holistic development of forestry research through need based planning, promoting, conducting and coordinating research, education and extension covering all aspects of forestry**

India Re-elected to International Maritime Organisation Council

- In a recent assembly, **India** achieved a significant milestone by being re-elected to the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council** for the 2024–25 biennium
- This re-election places India in the esteemed Category of 10 states with the **“largest interest in international seaborne trade,”** standing alongside influential nations such as **Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**



Indian Navy's New Survey Vessel Sandhayak

- **Sandhayak, Yard 3025**, the inaugural vessel among the four Survey Vessel (Large) ships, has been successfully delivered to the Indian Navy on December 4, 2023
- The SVL ships are designed by **M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata**
- The primary role of the ship would be **full scale coastal and deep-water Hydrographic Survey of Port/ Harbour approaches and determination of navigational channels/ routes**
- Zone of operation includes **maritime limits upto EEZ/ extended continental shelf**



Unprecedented Monkeypox Outbreak in the DRC

- The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** is grappling with a severe **monkeypox** outbreak, with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting a **staggering 12,569 suspected cases and 581 deaths from January 1 to November 12, 2023**
- This marks the **highest annual case count ever recorded and poses significant challenges for the affected regions**



Monkeypox?

- ✓ Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) is a rare disease caused by infection with the mpox virus
- ✓ Monkeypox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Mpox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and mpox is rarely fatal.

COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health

- Recently, the **28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates**
- COP28, member countries reached an agreement to operationalize the **Loss and Damage (L&D) fund aimed at compensating countries grappling with climate change impacts**

COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health

- The 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) witnessed a significant development as **123 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, and the European Union, signed the Declaration on Climate and Health on December 2**
- Notably, **India has not yet signed, but commitments from additional countries are expected before COP28 concludes**



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Honored on Navy Day

- On Navy Day, December 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and unveiled a grand statue of the **17th-century Maratha king at Sindhugarh, Maharashtra's coastal fort**
- The Prime Minister acknowledged **Shivaji's understanding of naval power and announced that naval officers' epaulettes would soon carry his emblem**




India and Kenya Sign 5 Pacts

- The discussions between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto** resulted in the signing of five pacts, fostering cooperation in diverse fields such as sports, education, and digital solutions
- Both leaders unveiled a **joint vision document to enhance maritime engagement in the Indian Ocean region**



India and Kenya Sign 5 Pacts

- Plus USD 250 million line of credit to Kenya for modernisation of its agricultural sector
- The Kenyan side offered, in line with Kenyan laws, to provide land to Indian companies and institutions for cultivation of crops, including millets.



JT-60SA Commences Operations

- On December 1, the world witnessed the official commencement of operations for **JT-60SA, the largest and most advanced nuclear fusion reactor, located in Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture**
- This groundbreaking project is a **collaborative effort between the European Union and Japan**



Panchayati Raj Ministry Launches “Gram Manchitra” App

- In a strategic move to enhance spatial planning at the Gram Panchayat level, the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj introduced the Geographic Information System (GIS) application known as “Gram Manchitra”**
- This innovative application **leverages geo-spatial technology to empower Gram Panchayats in their planning endeavors**

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work



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Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023

- **Dehradun** is preparing to host the **Global Investors Summit** on December 8-9, anticipating the participation of 5,000 delegates from India and abroad
- The summit is geared towards **showcasing investor-friendly policies, good governance, and sustainable practices**
- PM Modi is set to officially open the **summit at the Forest Research Institute on December 8**

An aerial photograph of a port area with several large cargo ships docked at a pier. In the foreground, there is a city with buildings and green spaces. The sky is clear and blue.

India's Strategic Focus on Duqm Port

- PM Modi is set to host **Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tarik** later this month, with a primary focus on strengthening India's presence at the strategically located **Duqm Port in Oman**
- This visit marks **Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's first trip to India** since assuming the role following the demise of his predecessor, Qaboos bin Said Al Said

India's
Strategic
Focus on
Duqm Port

India Eyes Strategic Heft Through Duqm



An aerial photograph of a port facility, likely Duqm Port, showing several large cargo ships docked at long piers extending into the blue sea. The port infrastructure includes roads, buildings, and cranes. The sky is clear and blue.

Strategic Focus on Duqm Port?

- The Port of Duqm is strategically **located situated on south eastern seaboard of Oman, overlooking Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean**
- It is straddled along **critical sea lanes in Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden**

An aerial photograph of a port area. In the foreground, there are several large, rectangular structures, possibly storage tanks or industrial buildings, with some greenery. In the middle ground, a large ship is docked at a pier. In the background, the sea is blue, and another ship is visible. The overall scene depicts a busy port facility.

Strategic Focus on Duqm Port?

- It is located in close proximity to **Chabahar port in Iran (being developed by India to open a trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan)** and **Gwadar Port in Pakistan which is developed by China as part of CPEC (China–Pakistan Economic Corridor)**
- The port also has **special economic zone, where about \$1.8 billion investments are being made by some Indian companies**



Miyawaki Method Adopted for Forest Plantation in Chhattisgarh's Coal Belt

- In a move to enhance forest cover in Chhattisgarh's coal belt region, **South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL), a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd, is set to implement the Miyawaki method for the first time in its operational areas**
- The Gevra Area of SECL will witness a **two-hectare Miyawaki forest pilot project in collaboration with Chhattisgarh Rajya Van Vikas Nigam (CGRVVN) at an estimated cost of Rs 4 crores**



Miyawaki Method

- **Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki** endowed the **Miyawaki technique** to create dense forests with native plants
- This unique method is **used worldwide for urban afforestation by growing a forest in someone's backyard.**



Miyawaki Method

- The Miyawaki Method is one of the **most effective tree planting methods for creating forest cover quickly on degraded land that has been used for other purposes such as agriculture or construction**
- It is effective because it is based on **natural reforestation principles, i.e. using trees native to the area and replicating natural forest regeneration processes**
- It has some significant benefits over **more traditional forestry methods when used in smaller afforestation projects and is particularly effective in the urban environment**



Google Unveils Gemini

- After much anticipation and a bit of delay, Google has officially launched its latest AI system, named **Gemini**
- Google CEO Sundar Pichai described it as the ***“biggest science and engineering effort” the company has undertaken, marking eight years of dedicated AI work***



'Garba of Gujarat' Recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The vibrant and culturally rich dance form, '**Garba of Gujarat,**' has earned a prestigious place in the Representative List of **Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by UNESCO**
- The recognition was formalized during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage held from 5th to 9th December, 2023, in **Kasane, Botswana**



Italy Withdraws from BRI

- **Italy** has officially withdrawn from **China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative**, marking the end of its participation more than four years after becoming the only G7 nation to sign up
- The decision, communicated to Beijing three days prior, reflects **PM Giorgia Meloni's long-standing opposition to Italy's involvement in an initiative seen by many as an attempt by Beijing to exert political influence**

1st Delta Ranking of ABP

- **Tiriyani Block in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, Telangana**, clinched the top spot in the inaugural delta rankings of the **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)** as **announced by NITI Aayog**
- This achievement was unveiled during a **virtual event at NITI Aayog**, featuring the participation of **329 districts and 500 aspirational blocks nationwide**



Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale 2023

- PM Modi is set to inaugurate the first-ever **Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB)** 2023 at the historic **Red Fort** on December 8, 2023
- The IAADB is a result of the Prime Minister's vision to establish a **flagship Global Cultural Initiative in India, akin to international biennales in Venice**, Sao Paulo, Singapore, Sydney, and Sharjah, this initiative is aligned with a nationwide campaign to **revitalize museums and develop cultural spaces in five major cities: Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Varanasi**

A photograph of UN Secretary-General António Guterres speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a blue tie. The background is a blue wall with the United Nations logo and the text 'United Nations' and '联合国' (United Nations in Chinese).

Article 99 of the UN Charter

- Recently, **UN Secretary-General Guterres addressed the UN Security Council**, highlighting the **severe risk of a collapse of the humanitarian system in Gaza**
- He urged the Council to help **avert a humanitarian catastrophe and appealed for a humanitarian ceasefire**



6th NSA-Level Meeting of Colombo Security Conclave

- National Security Advisers from India, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka, along with delegates from Seychelles and Bangladesh, participated in the **6th NSA-level meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) in Mauritius**
- **The National Security Advisers of Member Countries participated in the meeting along with senior delegates from Bangladesh and Seychelles**



World's Deepest Underground Physics Laboratory

- **China** has launched the world's deepest and largest underground **physics laboratory**, the **Deep Underground and Ultra-low Radiation Background Facility for Frontier Physics Experiments (DURF)**, located beneath Jinping Mountain in Sichuan Province
- The laboratory, operational after **three years of extensive upgrades**, aims to **revolutionize the global search for dark matter, a hypothetical form of matter that does not interact with light or the electromagnetic field**

Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2024

Very High
High
Medium
Low

- India has secured the **seventh position** in climate performance during 2022, making significant progress over the previous year when it held the eighth spot.
- The rankings are part of the annual report, **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2024**, published on the sidelines of COP28 in Dubai on December 8



India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System

- Mr. Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), inaugurated the India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) on December 6, 2023, in **New Delhi**
- This significant event took place in the presence of **Mr. KO Kwang Hyo, Commissioner of Korea Customs Service (KCS)**, and his delegation

Khelo India Para Games 2023

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, is set to inaugurate the **Khelo India Para Games 2023 in New Delhi tomorrow**
- The games, scheduled between December 10 and 17, will witness the **participation of more than 1400 players from 32 states, Union Territories, and the Services Sports Board at three venues in New Delhi**

SC Verdict on Article 370

- The Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, declared **Article 370**, which **granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, a temporary provision of the Indian Constitution**
- The ruling was a response to the **2019 move by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi**

Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023

- A contingent of 45 Indian Armed Forces personnel has arrived in **Hanoi, Vietnam**, to participate in the fourth edition of the Joint Military Exercise **VINBAX-2023**
- Running from December 11th to 21st, the **exercise aims to strengthen collaborative partnerships, promote interoperability, and share best practices between India and Vietnam**



Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) in Nagpur

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has entered into a significant agreement with M/s. DC Multi Modal Park (Nagpur) Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of M/S. DeltaBulk Shipping India Pvt. Ltd., for the development of a **Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) in Nagpur**
- This project, estimated at Rs.673 crore, will be developed over 150 acres under the **Public Private Partnership model, marking a pivotal milestone in the country's development and aligning with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan**



Barracuda: India's Fastest Solar-Electric Boat

- In a significant stride towards eco-friendly maritime transportation, the **Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat**, was ceremoniously launched at the
- The **Barracuda, aptly named after the swift long fish, is designed by Navalt for workboat purposes**
- Boasting a top speed of 12 knots and a remarkable range of 7 hours on a single charge, the 14-meter long and 4.4-meter wide vessel is equipped with twin 50 kW electric motors, a marine-grade LFP battery, and 6 kW solar power



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A blue and white solar-electric boat named Barracuda is shown on the water. The boat has a white cabin with a blue roof and a blue hull. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds and palm trees in the distance.

Barracuda: India's Fastest Solar-Electric Boat

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IUCN Red List Report on Extinction Threat to Freshwater Fish

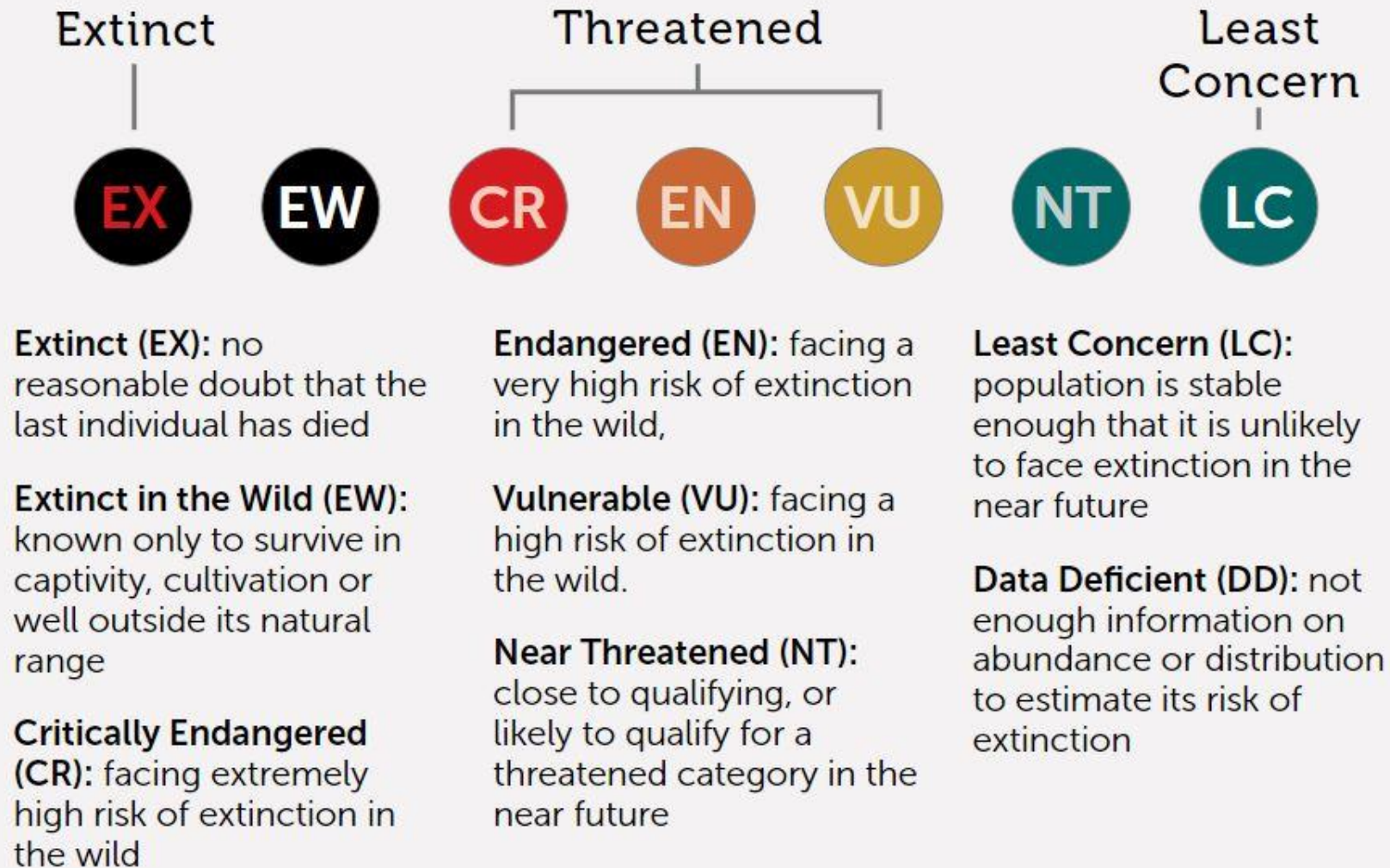
- A new **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List** assessment has unveiled a dire situation for **freshwater fish species**, with approximately a quarter facing the risk of extinction due to climate change
- Out of 14,898 species assessed, 3,086 are identified as at risk, showcasing the urgent need for conservation efforts

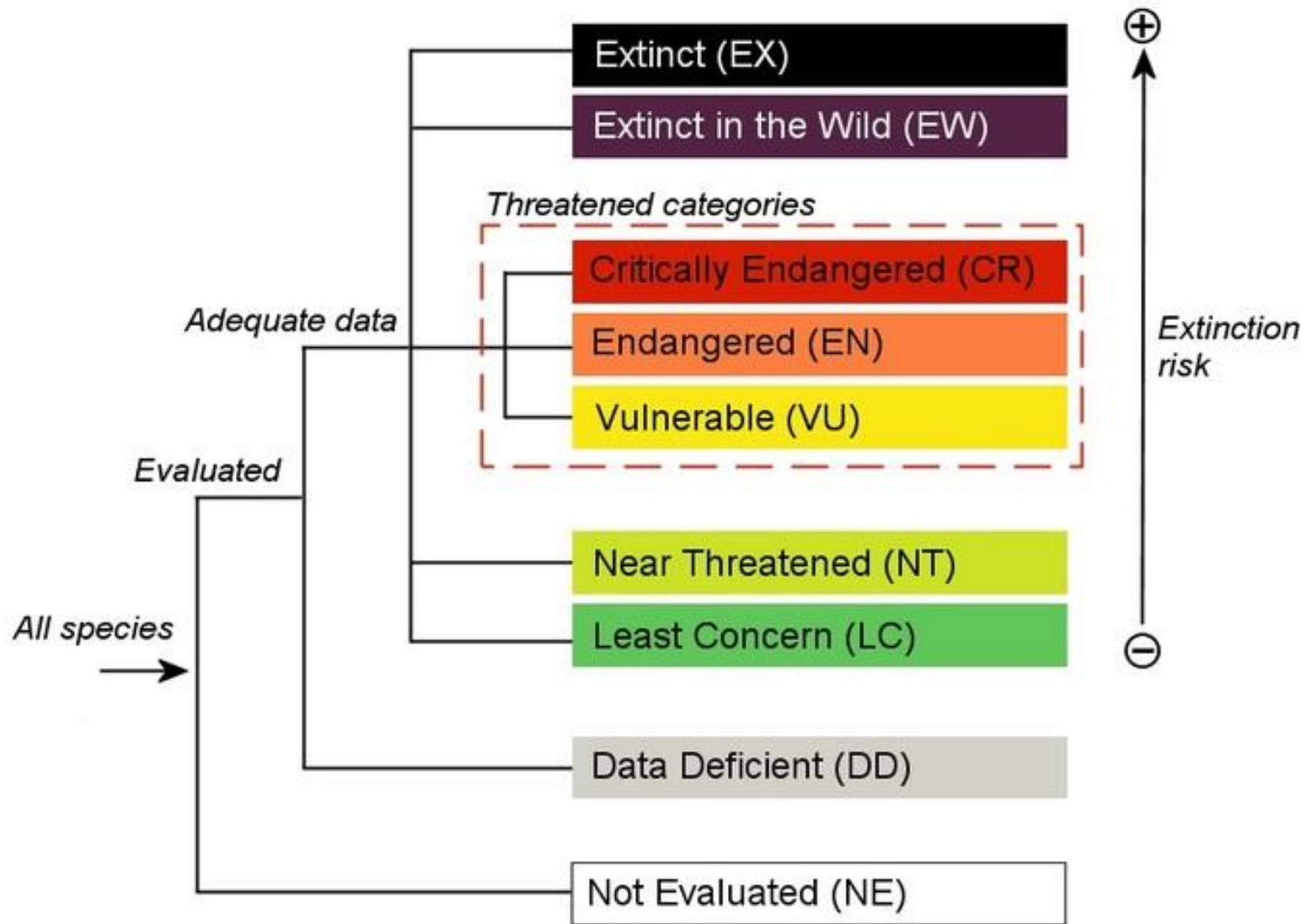
An underwater scene showing several fish swimming in clear water. The fish are silvery with some darker spots, and the water is filled with small bubbles and light reflections. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

IUCN Red List Report on Extinction Threat to Freshwater Fish

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, also known as the **IUCN Red List or Red Data Book, founded in 1964, is an inventory of the global conservation status and extinction risk of biological species.**

THE RED LIST CATEGORIES





Patriarch Kirill in Wanted List

- On December 15, Ukraine's Interior Ministry placed **Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church** and a staunch supporter of the **Kremlin's invasion of Kyiv**, on a wanted list, accusing him of abetting the conflict
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Advancing Stealth Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) Technology

- In a significant stride toward developing **stealth unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs)**, India conducted a successful flight trial of an **“autonomous flying wing technology demonstrator”** at the **aeronautical test range in Chitradurga, Karnataka**
- This achievement represents a remarkable maturity in technology readiness levels, positioning India among the elite nations mastering flying-wing technology

Surat Diamond Bourse Inaugurated by PM Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate **the Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB)**, touted as the world's largest office space in a single project, on Sunday (December 17), located **in Gujarat, the complex surpasses the US Pentagon in capacity**, boasting 4,200 diamond trading offices
- SDB aims to shift and expand the diamond trading business from Mumbai to Surat, known for diamond cutting and polishing. The bourse, built at **DREAM (Diamond Research and Mercantile) city**, covers an area of 66 lakh square feet, costing Rs 3,200 crore



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A close-up photograph of an Akash missile, showing its white body with blue lettering and a green conical nose. The word 'AKASH' is visible on the side of the missile. The background is slightly blurred, showing other parts of the missile or its launch system.

India's Akash Missile System Achieves Historic Milestone

- In a groundbreaking development, **India has become the first country globally to showcase the capability of engaging four targets simultaneously with its indigenous Akash surface-to-air (SAM) weapon system**
- The successful demonstration occurred during **Exercise Astrashakti 2023 at Suryalanka Air Force Station** on December 12, according to defense officials



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The background of the slide features two Akash missiles. They are white with green conical nose cones and the word "AKASH" written in blue on their sides. The missiles are positioned diagonally across the frame, with one in the foreground and another slightly behind it. The lighting is somewhat dim, highlighting the metallic and painted surfaces of the missiles.

Akash Missile System?

- Akash is India's first indigenously produced medium range SAM that can engage multiple targets from multiple directions and it can be launched from mobile platforms like battle tanks or wheeled trucks
- It has nearly 90% kill probability.
- The development of the Akash SAM was started by the DRDO in the late 1980s as part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.

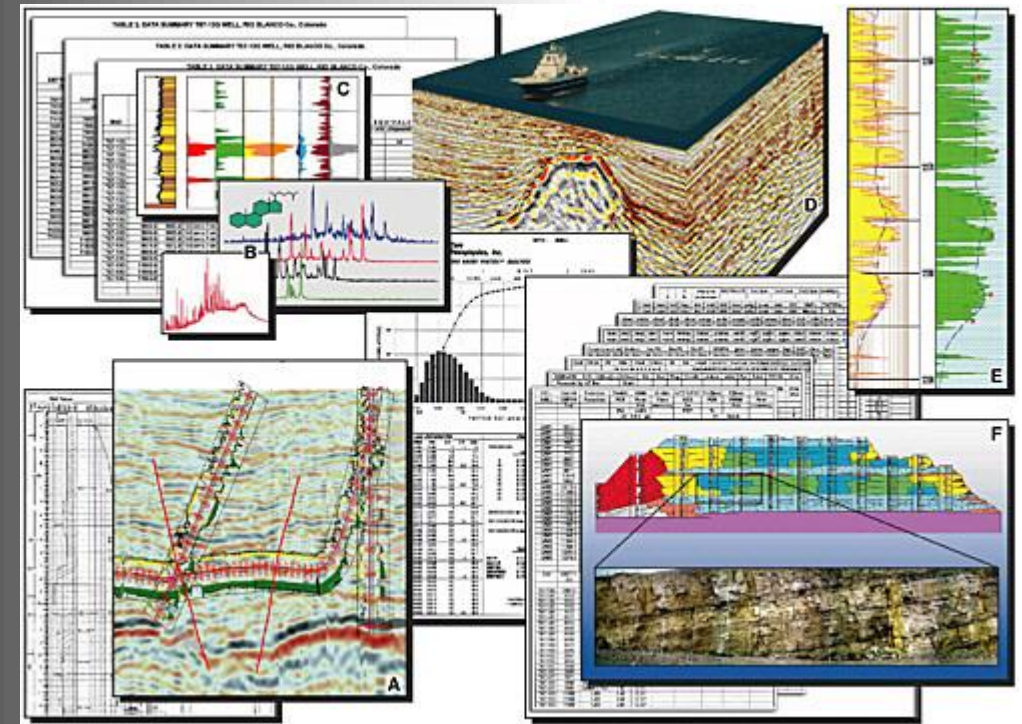


National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR) Portal Launch

- The Ministry of Mines is set to unveil the **National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR) Portal** on December 19, 2023, in a grand ceremony in **New Delhi**
- This initiative aims to provide a **comprehensive online platform for accessing, sharing, and analyzing geospatial information across the nation, marking a significant step in democratizing critical geoscience data**

What is Geoscience Data?

- Geoscience data and collections **record the history of processes that operate on the Earth today and in the past and provide insights that lead to improved prediction of potential hazards, both immediate and long term.**





India and ADB Sign \$250 Million Agreement for Delhi-Meerut RRTS Corridor

- On December 15, 2023, **the Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) joined hands, signing a significant agreement for a 37 billion Japanese Yen (\$250 million) loan**



India and ADB Sign \$250 Million Agreement for Delhi-Meerut RRTS Corridor

- This funding will continue to support the construction of the **82-kilometer Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor**
- The loan, amounting to **37 billion Japanese Yen, is part of a broader \$1,049 million Multi-tranche Financing Facility (MFF) approved by ADB in 2020 for the RRTS project**



What is ADB?

- ✓ ADB, established in 1966 is owned by 68 members-49 from the region.
- ✓ It is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- ✓ Further, it assists members and partners by providing loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.



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What is ADB?

- ✓ It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.
- ✓ As of 31st December 2019, ADB's five largest shareholders are Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares), the People's Republic of China (6.4%), India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%).
- ✓ It is headquartered in Manila, Philippines.



Kakrapar Atomic Power Project Unit 4 Attains Criticality

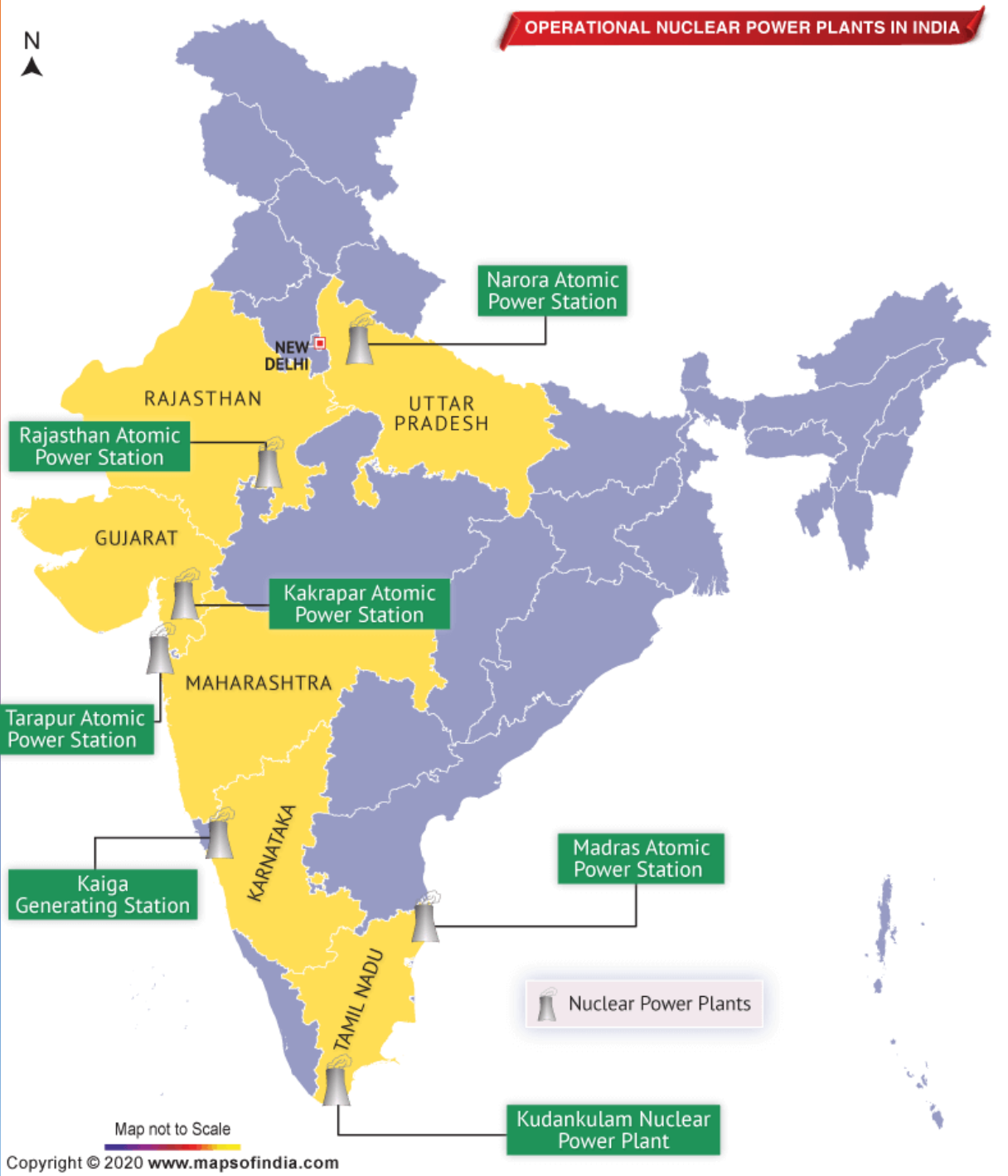
- In a significant achievement, **Unit 4 of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP 4 – 700 MW), Gujarat** achieved the criticality milestone on December 17, 2023
- This marks the **commencement of a controlled fission chain reaction**, a crucial step in the reactor's operational journey



Kakrapar Atomic Power Project Unit 4 Attains Criticality

- The rate of fission and power of a controlled chain reaction is constant, and can be controlled with the use of moderators and control rods
- As a result, controlled chain reactions are used in nuclear power plants (nuclear generators).

OPERATIONAL NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS IN INDIA



India's Nuclear Plants

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World's Largest Meditation Center at Varanasi



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World's Largest Meditation Center

- PM Modi inaugurated the **Swarved Mahamandir, a majestic seven-floor temple situated in Varanasi's Umaraha area**
- This grand spiritual edifice is a testament to architectural splendor and serves as a center for **meditation with a seating capacity for 20,000 individuals**



Lithium Reservoir in Salton Sea

- In a groundbreaking study, scientists exploring **Southern California's Salton Sea**, the state's largest lake, have uncovered a remarkable **lithium reservoir estimated to be worth \$540 billion**
- This '**white gold**' discovery positions the **United States as a potential leader in lithium production, marking a significant development for the country**



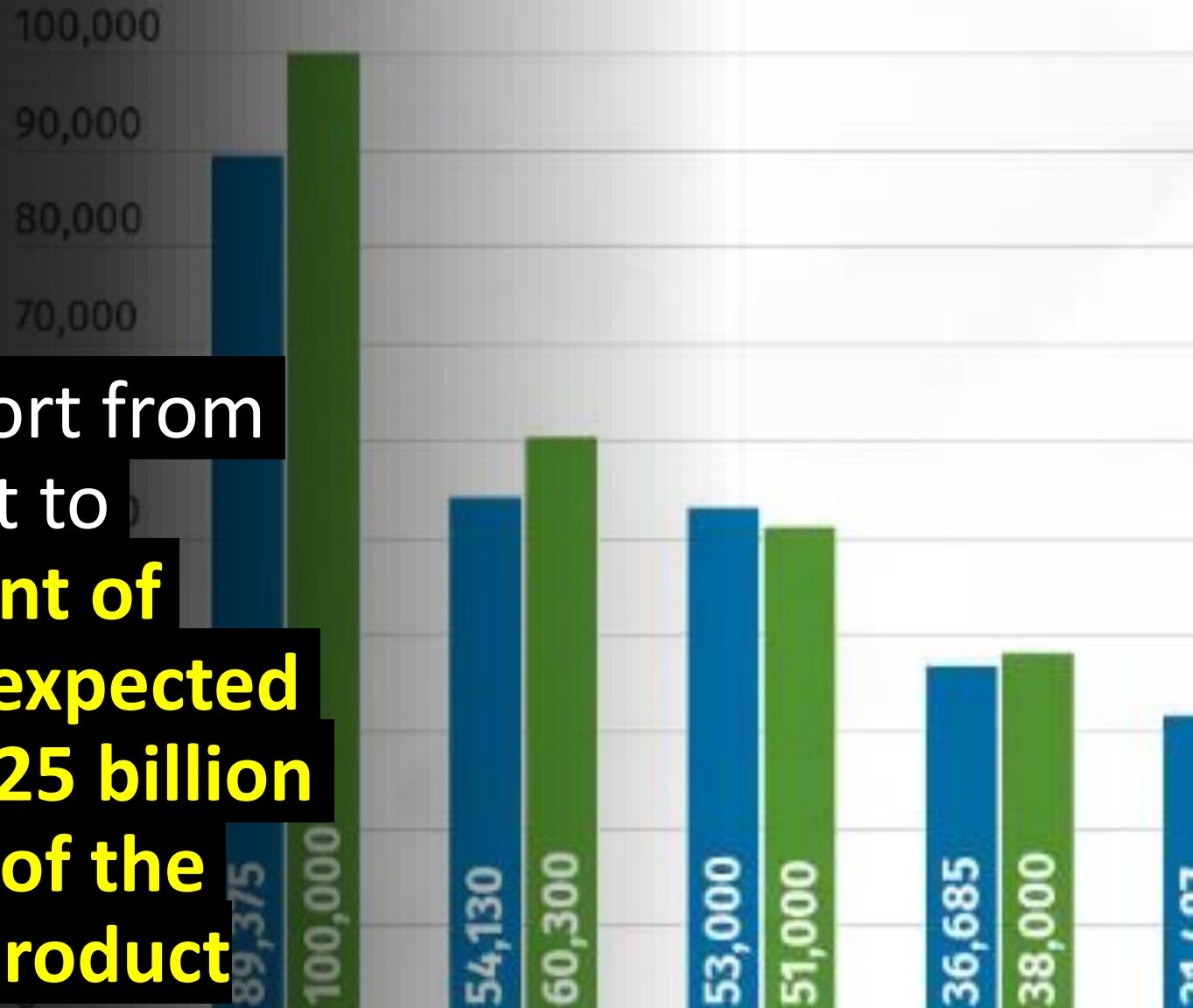
Lithium Reservoir in Salton Sea

- Dubbed 'white gold' because of its soft, silvery-white look, lithium has been the **key metal used in manufacturing rechargeable batteries not just for EVs but for many other devices like laptops and mobile phones**

OF REMITTANCES

India Leads Global Remittances

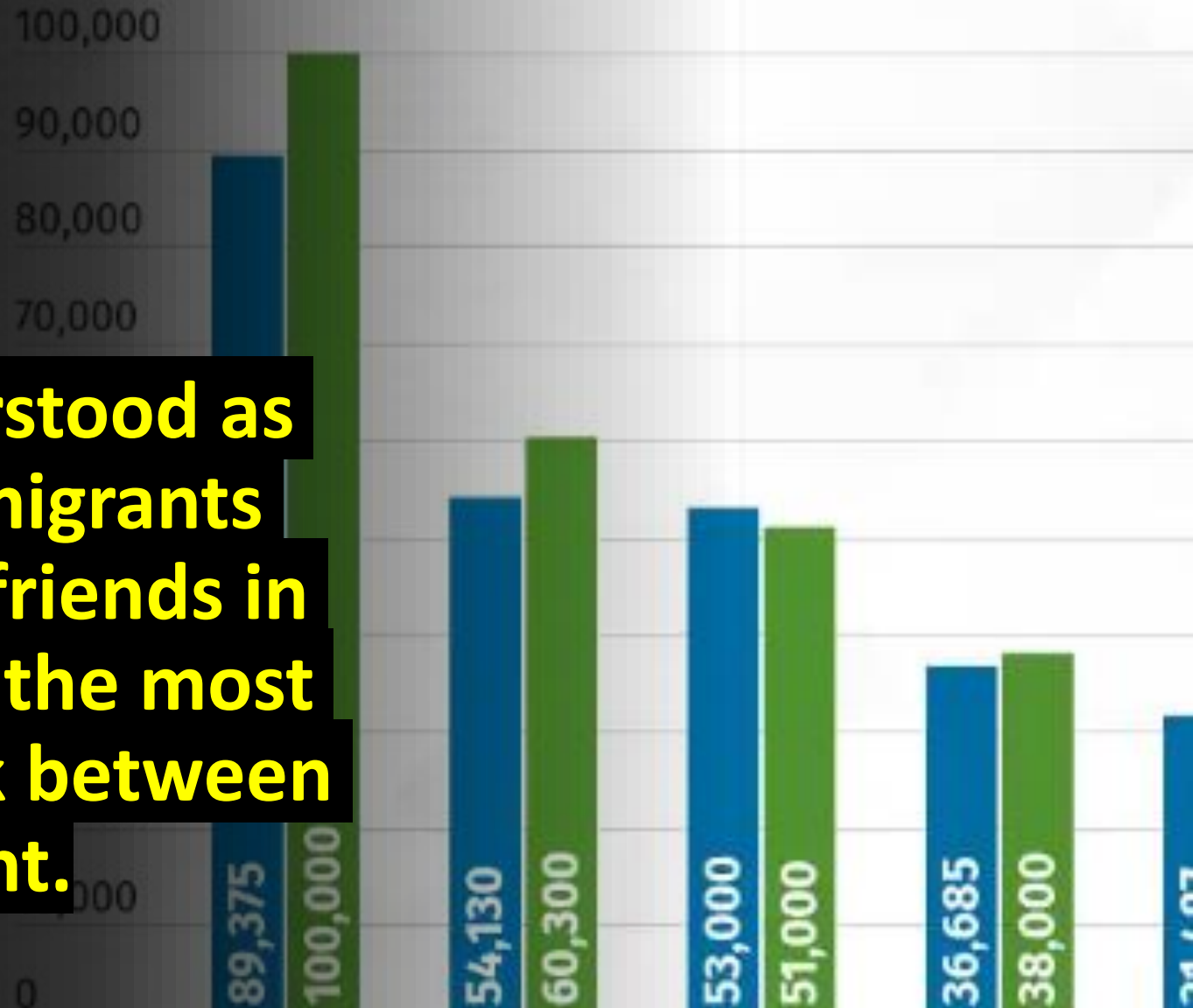
- According to the latest report from the **World Bank**, India is set to become **the largest recipient of remittances**, with inflows expected to increase by 12.4% to **\$125 billion** in 2023, constituting 3.4% of the country's gross domestic product



OF REMITTANCES

India Leads Global Remittances

- Remittances, usually **understood as the money or goods that migrants send back to families and friends in origin countries, are often the most direct and well-known link between migration and development.**





Gelephu Special Administrative Region

- **Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck** recently announced the **Gelephu Smartcity Project**, a mega “**international city**” near the Indian border
- This project, officially named the **Gelephu Special Administrative Region (SAR)**, spans 1,000 square kilometers and aims to be an economic corridor connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia via India's northeastern states



A photograph showing a man in a white shirt standing next to a dark-colored cow. The cow has a large, bloody wound on its head, near the ear. The background is a rough, grey wall.

Parliamentary Committee Raises Concerns Over Lumpy Skin Disease Data

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing has expressed doubts regarding the accuracy of data on cattle deaths due to **Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)**
- The committee noted a gap or mismatch between the figures provided by the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)** and the ground reality

The background image shows a close-up of a cow's skin, which is covered with numerous small, dark, raised nodules characteristic of Lumpy Skin Disease. The cow is standing in a field with trees in the background.

Lumpy Skin Disease

- Lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV) belongs to the family Poxviridae, subfamily Chordopoxviridae, and genus *Capripoxvirus*
- **LSD is a disease of cattle** characterised by **fever, nodules on the skin, mucous membranes and internal organs, emaciation, enlarged lymph nodes, oedema of the skin, and sometimes death**
- The disease is of economic importance as it can cause a temporary reduction in milk production, temporary or permanent sterility in bulls, damage to hides and, occasionally, death



WHO Recognizes Noma as Neglected Tropical Disease

- On December 15, 2023, the **World Health Organization (WHO) officially included noma**, a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face, in its **list of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)**
- Also known as cancrum oris, **noma has a high mortality rate of approximately 90%**, and it is associated with extreme poverty, malnutrition, and poor sanitation

A woman wearing a green hijab is seated on a train, looking out the window. Next to her, a child wearing a colorful, patterned headscarf is also seated. The background shows the interior of a train with windows and a camera mounted on the wall.

What is gangrene?

- **Gangrene is a dangerous and potentially fatal condition that happens when the blood flow to a large area of tissue is cut off**
- **This causes the tissue to break down and die. Gangrene often turns the affected skin a greenish-black color.**

What is Noma (Cancrum oris)?

- Noma, also known as cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis, is a severe and aggressive gangrenous process (a condition wherein body tissues die due to infection or lack of blood supply) that affects the mouth, nose, and lips
- This fatal disease is particularly prevalent among children in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated frequency of 1 to 7 cases per 1,000 individuals
- Noma usually begins as an ulcer on the mucus membrane at the alveolar margin of the mouth and rapidly spreads into other parts of the mouth, including teeth, jawbone, cheek, tongue, lips, and nose




Century's Largest Flood Hits Far North Queensland

- A massive flood, triggered by the remnants of **Tropical Cyclone Jasper**, has struck **Australia's Far North Queensland (FNQ)**, marking the largest flood in over a century. Jasper, making landfall on December 13, 2023, left a trail of devastation with unprecedented rainfall

Abdel Fattah El-Sisi Wins Third Term as Egypt's President

- **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi** secures a resounding **third term as Egypt's president**, winning a staggering 89.6% of the votes in an election where serious challengers were notably absent
- The National Election Authority made the **announcement on December 18, marking a continuation of El-Sisi's presidency amid economic challenges and regional tensions**



Colorado Supreme Court Disqualifies Trump from 2024 Ballot

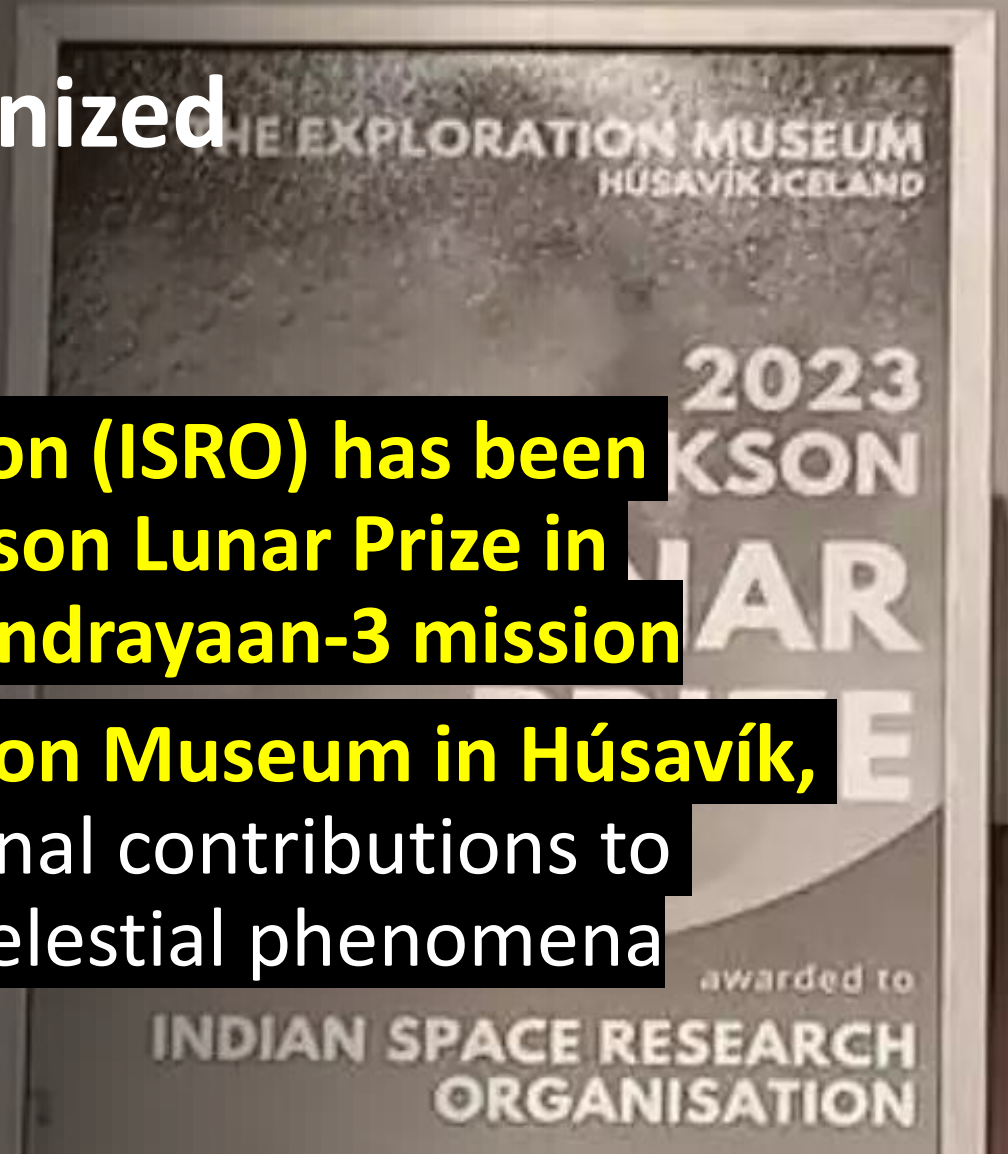
- The Supreme Court in Colorado has ruled that former **US President Donald Trump should be removed from the state's presidential election ballot in 2024**
- The court cited Trump's alleged involvement in the January 6, 2021 attacks on the US Capitol as grounds for disqualification
- The move comes as Trump supporters protested the election victory of Democratic candidate Joe Biden, claiming electoral fraud

Inaugural World Odia Language Conference

- The **Odisha government** has announced plans to organize the **first-ever 'Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani' (World Odia Language Conference) in February 2024**
- The Heritage Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, approved the proposal to strengthen and popularize the Odia language
- National and international language experts, along with researchers, will be invited to the three-day event

Chandrayaan-3 Mission Recognized with Leif Erikson Lunar Prize

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been honored with the prestigious Leif Erikson Lunar Prize in recognition of its groundbreaking Chandrayaan-3 mission
- The award, presented by the Exploration Museum in Húsavík, Iceland, acknowledges ISRO's exceptional contributions to lunar exploration and understanding celestial phenomena



Rs 1,614 Crore Contract for Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels

- The Ministry of Defence has signed a Rs 1,614 crore contract with **Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders Ltd** for the procurement **of six next-generation offshore patrol vessels (NGOPVs) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**
- The acquisition aims to enhance the Coast Guard's maritime security capabilities



World's Oldest Known Fort

- An international team of archaeologists has uncovered what is believed to be the **world's oldest-known fort in a remote region of Siberia**
- The groundbreaking discovery challenges conventional beliefs about early human societies, suggesting that complex defense structures existed among hunter-gatherers much earlier than previously thought



Thank you! Let's keep the energy high and continue to dive into these fascinating topics

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Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 Winners

- The **Sahitya Akademi Awards for the year 2023 have been announced, recognizing outstanding literary** works in various Indian languages
- ✓ **Among the notable winners are Tamil author Rajasekaran (Devibharathi) for his novel “Neervazhi Padooum,”**
- ✓ **Telugu writer T. Patanjali Sastry for the short story collection “Rameshwaram Kaakulu Marikonni Kathalu,”**
- ✓ **Malayalam litterateur E.V. Ramakrishnan for his literary study “Malayala Novelinte Deshakalangaal”**

What are Sahitya Akademi Awards?

- ✓ The Sahitya Akademi Award is a literary honour given annually by India's National Academy of Letters
- ✓ The award recognizes and promotes excellence in writing and acknowledges new trends
- ✓ The awards include 9 for poetry, 6 for novels, 5 for short stories, 3 for essays, and 1 for literary study.
- ✓ The awards, which include a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl, and a cash prize of Rs. 1,00,000/- each.



CISF Roped In for Parliament's Security

- The government has taken a decisive step to enhance the security measures at the **Parliament building complex**
- **In light of a recent breach of the safety ring, official sources revealed that the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will now be responsible for the “comprehensive” security of the complex**



CISF

- ✓ Under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ✓ It was initially established in 1969 under CISF Act, 1968 to protect major PSUs.
- ✓ However, it was converted to armed force with a larger ambit under an amendment to the Act in 1983.
- ✓ CISF is tasked with providing security to various government installations including country's airports, metros etc.
- ✓ It also has Fire Wing to response to fire emergencies/accidents.

First CISF Women DG

- The new director general of the CISF is **Nina Singh**
- She was promoted to the position of DG, CISF, is an IPS officer from the 1989 batch from the Rajasthan cadre who is currently serving as Special DG.



A close-up portrait of Dr. V Mohini Giri, an elderly woman with short white hair, wearing glasses and a red bindi on her forehead. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera.

Dr. V Mohini Giri Passes Away

- **Dr. V Mohini Giri**, a prominent women's rights activist, breathed her last recently following a brief illness
- At 86, she left behind a legacy of significant contributions to the **empowerment of women in India**

A close-up portrait of Dr. V Mohini Giri, an elderly woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing glasses and a red bindi on her forehead. The background is a plain, light color.


Dr. V Mohini Giri Passes Away

- **Dr. Giri served as the Chair of the National Commission for Women (NCW) from 1995 to 1998**, leaving an indelible mark on the organization's mission
- Additionally, she chaired the Central Social Welfare Board and led the Guild of Service, a New Delhi-based social service organization advocating for women's and children's rights in education, employment, and financial security

A photograph of Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the new Emir of Kuwait. He is wearing a white ghutra and a black agal, with a black and gold sash over his white thobe. He has a mustache and is wearing glasses. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah: Kuwait's New Emir

- **Kuwait's new emir, Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah,** formally assumed leadership in a swearing-in ceremony before parliament following **the passing of his half-brother, Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah**
- The ceremony, held during a **special session of the National Assembly,** marked the beginning of **Sheikh Mishal's rule over the Gulf monarchy**

A man in a white tank top is working with large bales of jute in a processing facility. The bales are stacked high, and the man is leaning over one of them, possibly inspecting or handling the fibers. The background is filled with more bales, creating a sense of a busy industrial or agricultural setting.

Jute Corporation of India Launches 'Paat- Mitro' App for Jute Farmers

- **The Jute Corporation of India** took a significant step toward supporting jute farmers by launching **the 'Paat- Mitro' app**
- Rachna Shah, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, inaugurated the app, which aims to provide essential knowledge to farmers for optimal jute cultivation and increased income


NASA's 3D-Printed Rotating Detonation Rocket Engine

- NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, has achieved a significant milestone by successfully testing a novel 3D-printed Rotating Detonation Rocket Engine (RDRE)
- The test, lasting **251 seconds** and producing more than **5,800 pounds of thrust**, emulates typical requirements for a lander touchdown or a deep-space burn that could set a spacecraft on course from the Moon to Mars

A satellite component wrapped in gold thermal insulation, likely part of the XPoSat mission, is shown in a laboratory setting. The component is rectangular and covered in crinkled gold foil. It is positioned in front of a black perforated metal structure. In the background, there are various equipment and displays, including a wall with posters or charts.

What is XPoSat Mission?

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is gearing up to commence **the New Year with the anticipated launch of its pioneering polarimetry mission, XPoSat**, slated for January 1
- This mission marks a significant milestone as the country's third space-based observatory, joining the ranks of the recently launched solar mission, **Aditya-L1, and the 2015-launched AstroSat**



Serum Institute's R21/Matrix-M Malaria Vaccine Granted WHO Prequalification

- In a significant milestone in the fight against malaria, **the World Health Organization (WHO) granted prequalification to the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and manufactured by the biotechnology company Serum Institute of India**
- The announcement, made on December 21, 2023, signifies that the vaccine meets WHO standards for quality, safety, and efficacy

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) 2023

- The **8th edition of the IONS Conclave** of Chiefs took place in **Bangkok, Thailand**, from December 19 to 22, 2023
- Chiefs of Navies and senior delegates from 27 member and observer countries participated in this significant event

Commissioning of INS Imphal

- On December 26, 2023, **INS Imphal (Pennant D68)**, the **third vessel** of the Visakhapatnam class stealth-guided missile destroyers, is scheduled to be commissioned into the Indian Navy
- **As part of Project 15B**, this class represents the latest in indigenous destroyer technology



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Hu Zhongming : China Appoints New Navy Chief Amid Rising Regional Tensions

- On December 25th, **China announced Rear Admiral Hu Zhongming as the new commander of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)**, replacing Admiral Dong Jun
- The change in leadership comes at a time of escalating tensions between China and its neighbours over disputed territories in the East and South China Seas

eSvarna: The First Corporate RuPay Credit Card with UPI

- **IndusInd Bank** has launched a pathbreaking new corporate credit card – eSvarna – on the RuPay network
- It is **India's first corporate credit card that allows linking with UPI apps for payments**
- The card offers comprehensive features tailored to frequent business travellers



ULFA Peace Deal: Background and Recent Developments

- After years of negotiations, the central government is on the cusp of finalizing a historic peace deal with **the pro-talk faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) on December 29th, 2023**
- This is seen as a major step by the Modi government towards resolving long-standing insurgency issues in Assam and the Northeast

A portrait of Dr. P. Indira Devi, an elderly woman with dark hair, wearing glasses and a yellow and white sari. She has a bindi on her forehead. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

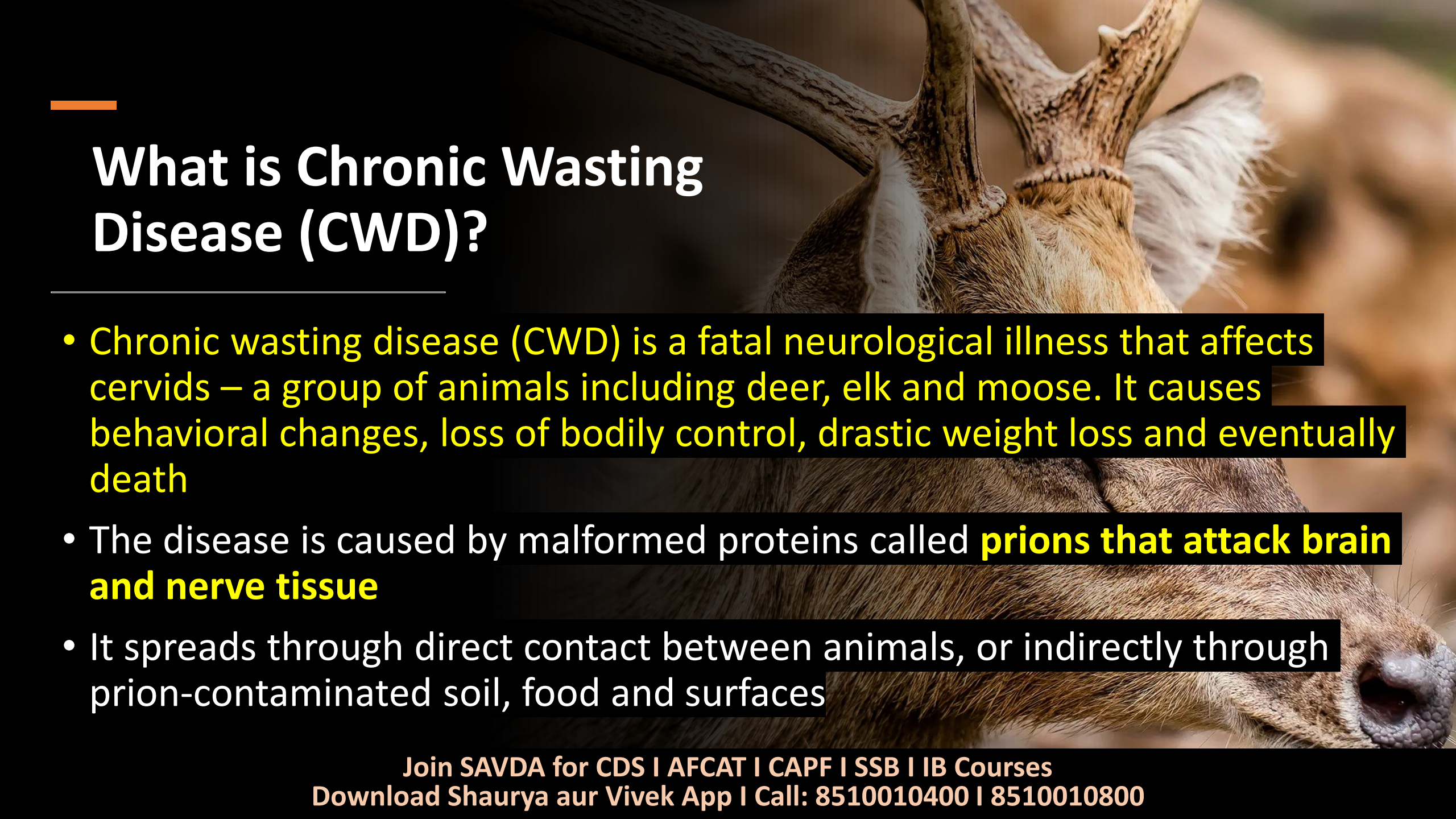
Dr P. Indira Devi Conferred Prestigious ISAE Fellow 2023 Title

- **Dr P. Indira Devi, an eminent agricultural economist from Kerala, has been conferred the distinguished title of ISAE Fellow 2023 by the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics (ISAE)**
- This recognition highlights her trailblazing contributions spanning over three decades in the domains of agricultural research, policymaking and teaching




The Spread of the 'Zombie Deer Disease'

- A concerning brain illness nicknamed **“zombie deer disease”** is spreading rapidly among wildlife in parts of **the United States**, prompting warnings from researchers about potential transmission to humans



What is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)?

- Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurological illness that affects cervids – a group of animals including deer, elk and moose. It causes behavioral changes, loss of bodily control, drastic weight loss and eventually death
- The disease is caused by malformed proteins called **prions that attack brain and nerve tissue**
- It spreads through direct contact between animals, or indirectly through prion-contaminated soil, food and surfaces

The background image shows the Ayodhya Railway Station, a modern architectural structure with a prominent dome and classical columns. The station is set against a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

PM Modi to Inaugurate State-of-the-Art Ayodhya Railway Station

- **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the new Ayodhya Dham railway station on December 30th**
- The transport hub sets a new benchmark for convenience with airport-style amenities across its cutting-edge three-story complex



Former European Commission President Jacques Delors Dies at 98

- Former **European Commission President Jacques Delors** passed away recently at age 98
- The French statesman was instrumental in major EU integration milestones but drew the ire of euroskeptics in Britain



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energy high and
complete the task**

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Guyana and Venezuela Defuse Long-Standing Land Dispute

- On December 15th, **Guyana** and **Venezuela** agreed to resolve their centuries-old border conflict over the **Essequibo region** peacefully, easing fears of potential military escalation



The Origins of the Dispute

- **Essequibo is a sparsely populated, forested area constituting over half of Guyana's land**
- But Venezuela has claimed it since the 1800s when both were European colonies
- Tensions reignited in 2013 when Guyana permitted ExxonMobil to explore offshore oil and gas reserves near Essequibo, the subsequent discovery of over 17 trillion cubic feet of gas and 11 billion oil-barrel equivalents sparked Venezuela's aspirations

Disputed Essequibo region

Venezuela will hold a referendum on Sunday on whether to establish a new state in the disputed Essequibo region, an oil-rich territory long ruled by Guyana.





Indian Scientists Develop Eco-Friendly Solar Cell Material

- Indian researchers have created a novel solar harvesting material that substitutes **toxic lead with greener magnesium**
- This marks an important breakthrough for affordable and sustainable photovoltaics



China Launches Massive Ship to Drill Into Earth's Mantle

- **China has built an enormous ocean drilling vessel called the Mengxiang** to achieve humanity's first-ever excavation into the Earth's upper mantle
- The ambitious mission could uncover clues about our planet's inner workings and evolution

Indian Navy Adopts New Rank Insignia Inspired by Shivaji

- Aligning with the PM's call to shed vestiges of colonialism, the **Indian Navy has unveiled redesigned shoulder insignia for top Admirals incorporating elements**



Connection to Shivaji

- The octagonal shape specifically references the seal of 17th century Indian ruler Shivaji, famed for pioneering naval warfare against colonial forces
- Using his royal stamp's iconography highlights the Navy's native lineage while ditching British-era legacy

A close-up photograph of Nina Singh, a woman in a khaki Indian Police Service uniform. She is wearing a peaked cap with a crest and a red chin strap. Her uniform features white braided epaulettes and a red and white striped scarf. She is wearing glasses and has a serious expression.

Nina Singh Becomes First Woman Chief of Industrial Security Force

- Senior Indian Police Service officer Nina Singh took charge as Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) recently
- She became the first woman to head the specialized security organization and the 30th CISF Director General



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