



07 October 2023

National and International News

<p>Delhi AQI turns 'poor'</p>	<p>Context Recently Stage 1 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) was imposed in the National Capital Region (NCR) as its Air Quality Index (AQI) slipped into the poor category.</p> <p>Graded Response Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a set of emergency measures to prevent the deterioration of air quality. The GRAP was first notified in January 2017 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has constituted a sub-committee for the operationalization of the GRAP. GRAP is divided into four stages according to the quality of air The measures taken under the stages are from stage-1 to stage-4. Stage 4 is the most severe.
<p>Air Quality Index (AQI)</p>	<p>About</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was launched by the central government in 2014. It was launched as a part of the Swachh Bharat campaign. The AQI transforms complex air quality data of various pollutants into a single number (index value), nomenclature, and color. The pollutants measured include- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> PM 10 PM 2.5 Nitrogen Dioxide Ozone Carbon Monoxide Sulfur dioxide Ammonia. The color-coded AQI index helps the public and the government understand the condition of the air. 0-50 is a good category represented by Green 401-500 is a severe category represented by dark red, it affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases.



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Person in news: Babloo Loitongbam.



Context

The **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** has recently **intervened** and urged the authorities to protect the family of a **Manipur-based human rights activist**.

Key facts.

- Babloo Loitongbam is a human rights activist in Manipur.
- His house was attacked for criticizing the Meiti group
- He is a lawyer, anthropologist, and **internationally acclaimed human rights activist**.
- He belongs to the Meitei community.
- Bablu Loitongbam has been working to protect human rights in North-East India for more than 20 years.
- Bablu has **prepared a human rights curriculum**.
- Through the curriculum **he prepares traditional village institutions to organize in new ways against growing human rights challenges in the region**.

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

About

- The Council was **established by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 March 2006**.
- It was established to replace the United Nations Commission on Human Rights
- It is a **United Nations body**.
- Its mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world
- the **Council has 47 members elected for three-year terms** on a regional group basis
- The headquarters of the Council is in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

Two out of five amphibians are facing extinction threats due to climate change: study



Context

A new paper has found that **climate change is emerging as one of the biggest threats to reptiles**(frogs, salamanders, and caecilians) around the world.

Key facts

- The study is based on the **second global amphibian assessment coordinated by the Amphibian Red List Authority**.
- **Amphibian Red List Authority** is a branch of the Amphibian Specialist Group of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature's** Species Survival Commission.
- It is managed by **Re: wild, a wildlife conservation group**.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 1,000 experts across the globe, including scientists and researchers from Assam-based biodiversity conservation organization, Aaranyak, and other Indian institutions, contributed their data and expertise. • These data will be published on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <p>Did you know? Climate change and habitat destruction are the biggest threats for amphibians in large part because they are particularly sensitive to changes in their environment.</p>
<p>MPC leaves benchmark interest rates unchanged</p>	<p>Context The Monetary Policy Committee Decides to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50% amid a high inflation rate.</p> <p>Key facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RBI forecast GDP growth for 2023-24 at 6.5% and its forecast for average CPI inflation for the current fiscal year at 5.4%. • The overall inflation outlook was clouded by uncertainties that included the fall in kharif sowing for key crops. <p>Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decides on key interest rates like repo, and reverse repo. • It has six members—three central bank officials and three government nominees—headed by the RBI governor. • It has the responsibility for fixing key policy rates (interest rates) in the country. • The MPC attempts to contain inflation and accordingly formulates monetary policy measures in order to influence interest rates.
<p>RBI allows tokenization of debit or credit.</p>	<p>Context To secure online transactions, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proposed to allow banks to “tokenize” debit or credit cards.</p> <p>Card-on-File tokenization(CoF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tokenization is a process by which card details are replaced by a unique token or code. • It allows online purchases to go through without exposing sensitive details. • Card-on-File Tokenization (CoFT) Services will be started from 1st October, 2022.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the system, the merchants will not be allowed to store your card number, CVV, and expiry date for processing online transactions. • Any existing details that were saved by merchants will be deleted. • The regulation is applicable to all Debit and credit cards. • Once the card is tokenized these token details will be used to initiate online payments instead of the actual card number to process transactions. • A customer will be able to identify his card number with the last 4 digits and bank name. • there is no limit to the number of transactions that can be done from a tokenized card.
<p>Nuclear test treaty</p>	<p>Context Russian lawmakers have informed that they can consider revoking the ratification of a global nuclear test ban.</p> <p>Key facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement comes after the Russian President Vladimir Putin's warning to consider rescinding the ratification of the international pact banning nuclear tests since the United States has never ratified it. <p>Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a global agreement that prohibits all forms of nuclear test explosions across the globe. • The Treaty was deliberated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in 1994. • The treaty was later adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. • The Treaty was opened for signature in 1996 and has since been endorsed by 184 countries. • India is not one of the signatories of this treaty.




Kerala Regional News

<p>Governor to send contentious bills to President</p>	<p>In News: The Governor of Kerala is likely to send contentious bills passed by the legislative assembly of Kerala to the President.</p> <p>Key facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kerala government is gearing up to approach the Supreme Court against the Governor for not signing the bills passed by the assembly, • The Governor may retaliate by leaving the controversial bills for the consideration of the President. • The Governor has yet to sign ten bills, including the amendment to the Lokayukta Act. • The bills that the Governor is likely to send to the President include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the bill regarding the curtailing the powers of the Lokayukta 2. the bill to remove the governor from the post of chancellor 3. the Varsity Tribunal Bill 4. the bill to make the number of search committee members to five. • The government is planning to approach the Supreme Court under Article-32 stating that non-signing of the bills by the Governor is bringing the administration to a standstill.
<p>Internet in all tribal villages, Kerala</p>	<p>In News:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the Internet will be brought to all tribal villages this year to ensure digital learning facilities. <p>Key facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects aimed at the welfare and comprehensive development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes. • The development is being implemented through education, employment, and empowerment. • ABCD is a first-of-its-kind initiative in India to provide access to basic records for all Scheduled Tribe families and securely digitize them.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kerala Empowerment Society was developed to make educated youths of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes into entrepreneurs and employers.
<p>New road to be built parallel to the national highway at Pachakkil, NHAI</p>	<p>In News: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has agreed to build a new road parallel to the national highway at Pachakkil in Kozhikode</p> <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The issue arose when the small lane from Pachakkil Junction was blocked. ● It is the only way to go out for members of 12 houses in the locality, ● Pachaikili junction was blocked when the ground was raised for the approach road to the national highway as part of the ongoing widening process.
<p>Franky’s Narrow-mouthed Frog in ‘critical’ list</p> 	<p>In News: Franky’s Narrow-mouthed Frog (Mysticellus Frank) A rare frog found in Wayanad, Kerala finds a place on the list of critically endangered amphibians’ list.</p> <p>Key facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A new international study has put eight species of amphibians found in the Western Ghats on the list of endangered species. ● Out of the 17 critically endangered amphibians in India, eight species are from the Western Ghats. ● Narrow-mouthed Frog, was discovered by Sonali Garg and S D Biju in Wayanad in 2019. ● This species is endemic to Western Ghats and is known only at a single locality in Wayanad ● Its habitat is under threat due to the expansion of human settlements, agricultural areas, and large-scale tea-coffee and spice plantations
<p>Regulatory panel to revive power-purchase pact</p>	<p>In News: Kerala government to ask regulatory panel to revive power-purchase pact</p>



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Key facts

- The state cabinet has taken a crucial decision to ask the Kerala State Electricity Regulatory Commission (KSERC) to revoke the canceled 450 MW Power Purchase Agreement.
- The step has been initiated by the cabinet in accordance with **Section 108 of the KSERC**, which allows the commission to make policy decisions.
- The regulatory commission had canceled the 465 MW PPA in May **citing procedural and technical lapses**.
- The Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) signed a 450 MW power-purchase agreement (PPA) **with Adani Power Maharashtra Limited in 2015**.
- The PPA is for a period of 25 years, and the power is to be supplied from Adani's Tiroda thermal power plant in Maharashtra.



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