



01 November 2023

National and International News

<p>Access to high-speed Internet</p>	<p>Context The Prime Minister hailed telecom operators' progress in spreading 5G coverage in urban centers, saying that over 80% of India's urban population now had access to high-speed technology.</p> <p>Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a year of the 5G launch, about 4 lakh 5G base stations have been built in India • India is exporting about ₹2 lakh crore in electronics manufacturing • India is not only rapidly expanding 5G in India, but is also moving towards becoming a leader in the field of 6G.
<p>7.5% dip in active workforce under MGNREGS, says study</p>	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of active workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has dipped by 7.5%, according to a data analysis for the period April to September 2023 by LibTech India, a consortium of academics and activists. • The workforce has reduced from 15.49 crore in the previous financial year to 14.33 crore, as per data available till October 6, 2023.
<p>Thallium as a murder weapon</p>	<p>Context In Mahagaon village in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, two women allegedly killed five family members by lacing their food with poison in the form of thallium.</p> <p>About thallium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a chemical element with the atomic number 81 and was discovered by Sir William Crookes in 1861. • It is a soft, heavy, inelastic metal. • Thallium is tasteless and odorless and has been used by murderers as a difficult-to-detect poison. • Appearance: A soft, silvery-white metal that tarnishes easily. <p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is found in trace amounts in the earth's crust. • It is found in several ores. One of these is pyrites, which are used to produce sulfuric acid. Some thallium



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is obtained from pyrites, but it is mainly obtained as a by-product of copper, zinc, and lead refining.

Thallium

atomic number	81	[204.382, 204.385]	atomic weight
symbol	Tl		acid-base properties of higher-valence oxides
electron configuration	[Xe]4f ¹⁴ d ¹⁰ s ² p ¹		crystal structure
name	thallium		physical state at 20 °C (68 °F)

Other metals	Solid
Hexagonal	Weakly basic

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Uses of Thallium

- Thallium's utilization is restricted due to its **toxic nature**.
- **Thallium sulfate**, once a rodent killer, is now banned for household use in many developed nations.
- It finds application in the **electronics industry for photoelectric cells**.
- Thallium oxide is used to create **high-refraction glass and low-melting glass**.
- It is also used in the manufacturing of low-temperature **thermometers, and imitation jewels**.

Health Hazards:

- Thallium can damage the nervous system causing headaches, weakness, and irritability. Repeated exposures can cause tremors, hallucinations, coma, and death.

A new mushroom species named *Candolleomyces albosquamosus*

Context

- A new mushroom species named **Candolleomyces albosquamosus** has been discovered in the **Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI)** at Palode, Thiruvananthapuram.

Key Details about the New Species:

- **Physical Characteristics:** The mushroom has a **delicate, fragile** appearance with a honey-yellow cap.
- **Distinctive Feature:** It is identified by the presence of **white woolly scale-like structures** on its cap, leading to the name '**albosquamosus**.'



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- **Size:** The mushroom is **small**, reaching a **height** of about **58 mm**.

Genus and Taxonomic Information:

- Genus: Belongs to the **genus Candolleomyces**.
- Previous Understanding: **Seven species** previously categorized **under the genus Psathyrella in India** are now **recognized as Candolleomyces**.
- **Global Significance:** The discovery is notable because there are **only 35 known species in the Candolleomyces genus worldwide**.

Significance:

- The discovery adds momentum to the study of **fungal diversity in the Western Ghats region**, emphasizing its ecological importance and uniqueness in the realm of biodiversity.

Electoral bonds

How An Electoral Bond Works

- 01 Notified banks are chosen
- 02 The notified bank issues electoral bonds
- 03 The donor buys an electoral bond using a cheque/digital payment
- 04 The donor gives the party of his/her choice the bond within the specified timeframe
- 05 The party deposits the bond in an account, the details of which are with the Electoral Commission

Context

A **five-judge bench of the Supreme Court** is hearing petitions **challenging the constitutional validity of the electoral bonds scheme**.

Key facts about Electoral Bonds

- **Implemented in 2018 to reduce the influence of black money in politics.**
- Provided a legal and transparent mechanism for contributions to political parties.
- **Donors' identities remain confidential**, reducing the risk of retaliation.

Do you know

There is a **criticism** regarding Electoral bonds because

- **Lack of transparency** regarding the source of funds.
- Concerns about **potential misuse, including laundering illicit money.**
- Reports indicate a **significant** portion of political funding comes from electoral bonds.



Kerala Regional News

Kerala-based startup 'Ikin' included in Forbes-D Globalist list



Forbes-D Globalist list



In News: Kerala-based startup 'Ikin' included in Forbes-D Globalist list

- Kerala-based **startup 'Ikin'** has been included in the Forbes list of 200 companies with a potential to grow globally.

Key Points:

- The **company produces door locks and truck locks** which can be opened using smartphones instead of keys.
- As part of its 'Physical Security As A Service' model, the company is also providing smart security locking facilities to warehouses, and industrial and commercial institutions on a rental basis

About Forbes-D Globalist list:

- The Forbes-D Globalist list is a list of 200 companies with the potential to grow globally.
- The list is **compiled by Forbes India in partnership with D Globalist**, a consulting firm that helps entrepreneurs scale their businesses globally.

Companies are selected for the Forbes-D Globalist list based on several factors, including:

1. Global growth potential
 2. Innovative products or services
 3. Strong leadership team
 4. Financial performance
- The Forbes-D Globalist list is a valuable resource for entrepreneurs who are looking to expand their businesses globally.
 - The list provides a snapshot of the most promising high-growth companies in India, and it can help entrepreneurs identify potential partners and investors.

Research Centre to be set up in Kozhikode for Nipah prevention

In News: Research centre to be set up in Kozhikode for Nipah prevention: Minister Veena George

- Minister Veena George has announced that a research centre will be set up at the Kozhikode Medical College by integrating various departments **under the 'One Health' project** for Nipah prevention.



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Key Points:

- The minister also stated that ICMR has increased the collection and testing of bat samples from various districts
- ICMR points out that several factors such as climate change, and rainfall variability are responsible for the presence of Nipah virus in Kerala.
- The reason for this has not been thoroughly investigated and how the virus spreads to humans has not been discovered.
- The virus can be transmitted by collecting fruit or eating fruit bitten by a bat.

Think:

- Read about the Nipah Virus

The latest edition of NATURE magazine does good by Kerala

Context:

- Since its inception in 1869, **'Nature magazine**, the world's leading multidisciplinary science journal, has featured peer-reviewed research and studies by global luminaries and experts in various academic disciplines.
- The **latest edition** does good by Kerala, **featuring research papers and articles that four experts from the state** -- Dr. Sandeep Das, Dr. S D Biju, Dr. Ranjith P Anand, and Dr. Thekkumkara Surendran Anish -- worked on.
- Sandeep and Biju co-authored a research paper titled, **'Ongoing declines for the world's amphibians in the face of emerging threats'**.
- Ranjith appears as the lead author of the article 'Design and testing of a humanized porcine donor for xenotransplantation'.
- Anish, who played a lead role in the state Nipah surveillance team and is currently a professor of epidemiology at Manjeri Government Medical College Hospital, published an article in the 'World View' section of the journal.

Completion of digital survey in 15 villages in Kerala marks a milestone

In News: Completion of digital survey in 15 villages in Kerala marks a milestone

- Residents of 15 villages in Kerala are set to be the first beneficiaries of the newly implemented digital land survey.

Key Points:



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- The final survey maps of the villages will be uploaded onto an integrated digital system, consolidating the services of three government departments.
- The system will serve as a unified interface for the revenue, registration, and survey departments.
- The primary objective is to enable citizens to access various services provided by these departments without the need for physical visits.
- The **system, known as the Integrated Land Information Management System, will be accessible through the “Ente Bhoomi” portal.**
- This new digital system **aims to streamline land transactions**, making them more authentic and convenient.

Vechoochira is all set to become a village of eye donors.



In News: In the ‘eye’ of a grassroots-level donor campaign, Vechoochira shows the way

- **Vechoochira**, home to the enchanting Perunthenaruvi waterfalls, **is all set to become a village of eye donors.**

Key Points:

- The **grama panchayat, with the support of Kazhcha, a Ranni-based non-governmental organization** working to promote eye donation at the grassroots, has launched an initiative to collect consent letters from villagers interested in donating the organ.
- Execution of the project began on Tuesday and the campaign will run till November 15.
- The grama panchayat has constituted a special committee, with president T K James as chairman and resident Shaji Kaippuzha as convenor, to lead the initiative.

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