



03 May 2024

National and International News

Shaksgam valley



Why in news?

- India has registered its protest against China’s “illegal attempts” to “alter facts on the ground” in the Shaksgam valley of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- Recent satellite pictures indicate that China is building a road into the lower Shaksgam valley.

Key points:

- India has never accepted the so-called China Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963, through which Pakistan unlawfully attempted to cede the area to China.
- The Shaksgam Valley is part of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and was ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963, a year after the India-China war.

About Shaksgam valley:

- Shaksgam Valley is located in the disputed region near the northern borders of Kashmir.
- It is part of the broader Trans-Karakoram Tract.
- The valley is characterized by its rugged terrain, high mountains, and is predominantly a high-altitude desert. It is nestled between the Karakoram Range to the south and the Kun Lun Mountains to the north.
- The area is strategically significant due to its location near the Siachen Glacier, another contested area, and its proximity to several important mountain passes.



Ethylene oxide in spice brands

Indian spices and herbs rejected by the U.S. FDA in 2023

A scrutiny of FDA's import refusal report, for the calendar year 2023, cites at least 30 instances wherein entry was refused because the products appeared to contain salmonella

Company	Products rejected	Reasons for rejection
Ramdev Food Products Pvt Ltd	Cumin	Appears to contain salmonella, a poisonous and deleterious substance which may render it injurious to health
	Mixed spices and seasoning	Salmonella
	Coriander	Salmonella
	Nutmeg	Salmonella
	Cumin	Salmonella
	Ginger	Salmonella
Mahashani Di Hatti (MDH)	Fennel	Artificial colouring, misbranding
	Paprika	Filthy, putrid, or decomposed substances otherwise unfit for food; and salmonella
	Mixed spices and seasoning	Salmonella
	Mixed spices and seasoning	Misbranding + salmonella
	Capsicums (cayenne chili, hot peppers) spice	Salmonella
Everest	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Salmonella
	Capsicums (cayenne chili, hot peppers) spice	Salmonella
	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Labelling violation of FPLA because of its placement, form and/or contents statement
MTR Foods Private Limited	Black pepper	Salmonella
	Curry powder, ground, cracked without salt	Salmonella
	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Salmonella
Dharampal Satyapal Ltd. (DS Group Catch)	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Labelling violation
	Mixed spices and seasoning	Appears to be misbranded in that the label or labeling fails to bear the required nutrition information; appears to contain a poisonous or deleterious substance which would ordinarily render the article injurious to health
Patanjali Ayurved Ltd.	Natural extract or flavour	Appears to be a new drug within the meaning of Section 201(p) without an approved New Drug Application (NDA)
Nestle India	Spices and seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Salmonella
Badshah Masala Pvt. Ltd.	Spices and Seasoning, ground, cracked with salt	Labelling violation
Tulsi Foods	Black pepper	Filthy and salmonella
Speciality Indian Food Parks & Exports	Black pepper	Filthy and salmonella

Why in news?

- A crisis of confidence is affecting the Indian spice export industry.
- At least five countries, including Singapore, Hong Kong, and the U.S., have announced an investigation into possible contamination of spice mixes sold by top Indian brands, MDH and Everest.

Key points:

- The complaints cite the presence of ethylene oxide, a toxic chemical used as a food stabiliser, beyond permissible limits.
- The Spices Board of India has initiated mandatory testing of products shipped abroad.
- The international scrutiny has stirred a demand for the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to ensure stringent quality checks on spices and curry powders sold in domestic markets.



International Labour Day



Why in news?

- International Labour Day, also known as **May Day**, is being observed on 1st May to **honour the contribution of workers across the world.**
- The **day aims at paying tribute to workers' sacrifices in achieving economic and social rights** all over the world.

Key points:

- In **1886**, a **large demonstration of labourers, demanding eight hours of daily work**, was held in **America.**
- This demonstration went out of hand in Chicago with lots of people getting hurt in an incident known as **The Haymarket Affair.**
- **The Haymarket Affair marked the start of the International Labour Day.**
- In **1889**, many **socialist parties in Europe came together and decided to celebrate May 1 as International Labour Day.**
- Since then, this special day has been observed every year on the same day.

Antares

Why in news?

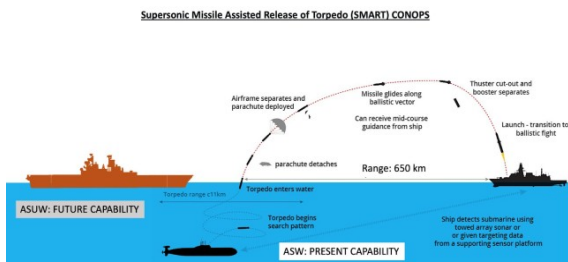
- The **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), based in Bengaluru**, filmed the **passing of the moon in front of Antares, a bright red star.**
- This event was **visible only from southern India** according to IIA.

About Antares:

- Antares, also known as **Alpha Scorpii**, is the **brightest star in the constellation Scorpius** and the **15th-brightest star in the night sky.**
- It is a **massive red supergiant star that is 10,000 times brighter than our sun.**
- Antares is one of the largest known stars, with a diameter 700 times that of the sun.
- **Antares is relatively cool for a star**, with a **surface temperature of about 6,100 degrees F (3,400 degrees C)**, in contrast to our **sun's surface temperature of about 10,000 degrees F (5,500 degrees C).**



Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART)



Why in news?

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) tested a next-generation torpedo release system aimed at enhancing the Navy’s anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- The system, known as the Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART), has been designed and developed by the DRDO.

About SMART system:

- This missile-based mechanism can launch lightweight torpedoes that can target submarines hundreds of kilometres away, far beyond the conventional range of lightweight torpedoes.
- It is a canister-based missile system that comprises several advanced subsystems, including two-stage solid propulsion and precision inertial navigation.

Kerala Regional News

Batillipes Chandrayaani

Why in news?

- Researchers from the Department of Marine Biology, Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat) have discovered a new species of marine tardigrade.
- The new species has been named Batillipes Chandrayaani, in honor of the Chandrayaan-3 mission by ISRO in 2023.

Key points:

- The species was found in the intertidal beach sediments of Mandapam coast, Tamil Nadu.
- The size of the species is similar to other tardigrades, measuring around 0.15 mm in length and 0.04 mm in width.
- This is the third marine tardigrade described from Indian waters and the second from the East Coast.



Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia



- The same research team had **previously discovered marine tardigrades** from the southwest coast (**Stygartus keralensis in 2021**) and southeast coast (**Batillipes kalami in 2023**).
- Tardigrades are among the **toughest animals on earth, surviving all five mass extinctions** and are the **first known animal to survive after exposure to outer space**.
- The new species **belongs to the phylum tardigrada**.

Exotic species or invasive species

Why in news?

- A study by the Kerala State Forest Protective Staff Organisation suggests that **removing exotic plants from forest areas will help ensure food for wild elephants** at Chinnakkanal in Munnar.

About Exotic species or invasive species:

- Exotic species, also known as **invasive species**, are **non-native species** that can **cause harm to the environment, the economy, or human health**.
- Exotic species can **compete with native species for resources and habitat, can change habitats, and can threaten native plants and animals** by consuming them and their food sources.
- **Removing exotic species** such as **Acacia mearnsii (black wattle)** and **eucalyptus** from forests is **important to address ecological problems**.
- The Chinnakkanal landscape is overrun by **West Indian Lantana (kongini)**, which **inhibits the growth of other species and restricts access to animals**.



Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

<p>Glass bridge at Akkulam Tourist Village</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The glass bridge at Akkulam Tourist Village in Kerala, a prestigious project of the Kerala Government, developed cracks ahead of its inauguration. • The bridge, built at a cost of one and a half crores, is 75 feet high and 52 meters long. • The tourism department is constructing the glass bridge considering the huge development potential in the field of tourism. • The bridge can accommodate 20 people at the same time.
<p>Mangad K Natesan</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revered Carnatic musician Mangad K Natesan passed away. <p>About Mangad K Natesan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was a native of Mangad, Kollam. • His music career began at the Swathirunal College of Music, Thiruvananthapuram. • He was tutored by legendary musicians, including Semmangudi Radhakrishna Srinivasa Iyer. • He has performed in national level events conducted by Akashvani. <p>Think:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know about Carnatic music.



Solid Waste Management Systems in Kerala

Why in news?

- The state government is launching a first-of-its-kind digital course on waste management titled ‘Solid Waste Management Systems in Kerala’.
- The course is designed to foster environmental consciousness and promote sustainable and responsible waste management practices.

Key points:

- **Targets:** Students, volunteers, residents’ associations, NGOs, and traders.
- **Designed by:** The Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) and will go live on May 6.
- **Aim:** To spread awareness about the new waste management-related amendments to the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, and the Kerala Municipality Act, 1994.
- The course supports the ‘Malinya Muktham Nava Keralam’ campaign by the local self-government department (LSGD) to make the state garbage-free.

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