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National and International News

<p>Biopharmaceutical Alliance</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● South Korea, India, the United States, Japan, and the European Union (EU) have launched an alliance to build a resilient supply chain in the biopharmaceutical sector.● The inaugural meeting of the Biopharmaceutical Alliance was held in San Diego during the Bio International Convention 2024. <p>About Biopharmaceutical Alliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Purpose: The alliance was established in response to drug supply shortages experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.● Coordination: The participating countries will coordinate their bio policies, regulations, and research and development support measures.● Supply Chain Mapping: They plan to create a detailed pharmaceutical supply chain map to enhance reliability and sustainability.● Expansion: Initially formed by South Korea and the U.S., the alliance expanded to include Japan, India, and the EU.
<p>Special category status (SCS)</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The 2024 Lok Sabha elections have renewed interest in the leaders' demands for special category status (SCS) for their States Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. <p>About Special category status (SCS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Special Category Status (SCS) is a classification given to states in India that face geographical and socio-economic disadvantages.● Historical Background:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Introduced in 1969 by the Fifth Finance Commission of India.○ Initially granted to three states: Assam, Nagaland, and Jammu & Kashmir.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Criteria for SCS:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Hilly and difficult terrain.○ Low population density and/or sizeable tribal population.○ Strategic location along borders with neighboring countries.○ Economic and infrastructural backwardness.○ Non-viable nature of state finances.● States with SCS:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ As of now, 11 states have been granted SCS: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir (now split into two Union Territories), Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand.
<p>State of Ocean Report 2024</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The UNESCO 'State of Ocean Report, 2024' highlights the significant challenges faced by global oceans due to climate change and human activities.● The report provides crucial insights into the current state of our oceans. <p>About State of Ocean Report, 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The UNESCO 'State of the Ocean Report' was initiated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO) during the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference.● It provides an accessible overview of the ocean's current status and supports the monitoring of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).● Upper Ocean Warming: The upper 2,000 meters of the oceans have experienced significant warming.● Energy Absorption and Impact:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Oceans absorb about 90% of Earth's excess energy.○ This leads to increased deoxygenation, threatening marine ecosystems and human economies dependent on them.● Ocean Acidification:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ocean acidification is rising globally, especially in the open ocean.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sea Level Rise:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sea levels have risen consistently since 1993.● Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ There is growing interest in mCDR technologies.○ Their ecological impacts and effectiveness remain uncertain.
Zircon mineral	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Study of zircon crystals reveals Earth had conditions to support life earlier than previously thought.● Findings show early interaction of water and land.● This challenges the theories of a water-covered Earth. <p>About Zircon mineral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Basic Information:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Type: Nesosilicate mineral○ Chemical Name: Zirconium silicate○ Chemical Formula: ZrSiO₄● Properties:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ High refractive indices○ Strong lustre○ Occurs in various colours: clear, green, red, yellow, and brown● Significant Findings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Oxygen Isotopes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Reveal fresh water and dry land on early Earth.■ Challenge theories of an entirely water-covered early Earth.■ Indicate a functioning water cycle at least 4 billion years ago, possibly creating conditions conducive to life.



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The Air of the Anthropocene project

Why in the news?

- The "Air of the Anthropocene" project uses **light painting to visualize air pollution in India, Ethiopia, and the UK**, highlighting severe health risks and sparking global discussions on air quality.

About The Air of the Anthropocene project:

- The "Air of the Anthropocene" project is an **international initiative that combines art and science to visualize air pollution**.
- Artists and researchers collaborated, using **digital light painting techniques and low-cost air pollution sensors, to create photographic evidence of air pollution**.

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