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19 December 2023

### International & National News

#### International Migrants Day



- International Migrants Day is celebrated on **18 December**.
- On this International Migrants Day, IOM **aims to position migration as one of the solutions to global challenges**, such as adapting to the impacts of climate change or providing better economic opportunities for communities.
- The theme for 2023 is **"Act today for a better tomorrow for all: Improving the health of migrants to unleash the power of migration"**

#### Data on Foreign tourist visits

#### Context

- There has been a significant **increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting India in 2023** with a footfall of **7.24 million** till October compared with **6.44 million** for the corresponding period in 2022.
- This is an **increase of 55.6%**
- The numbers though are still below the pre-pandemic levels.
- In 2018 and 2019, India saw **10.56 million and 10.93 million foreign tourist arrivals**, respectively, which dipped to 2.74 million in 2020 and further to 1.52 million in 2021, majorly due to the COVID-induced lockdown.

#### Schemes for Financial assistance

- **Swadesh Darshan 2** is the flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Tourism** which provides financial assistance to the State governments and Union Territories and Central agencies for the development of tourism infrastructure at various destinations.
- The **Prasad (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive) scheme** focuses on developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across India to promote religious tourism.
- It **aims to integrate pilgrimage destinations** in a prioritized, planned and sustainable manner to provide a complete religious tourism experience.
- The growth of domestic tourism hugely depends on pilgrimage tourism.



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## Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

### First winter Arctic expedition



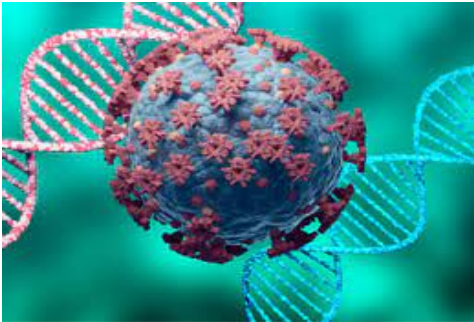
#### Context

- The **Raman Research Institute (RRI)** is participating in the **first winter Indian expedition to the Arctic region**.
- The institute researchers would examine the characterization of the radio frequency environment in the **Svalbard region of the Arctic in Norway**.
- The survey will **help astronomers assess the suitability of this uniquely located region** for carrying out precision astronomy measurements.

#### Key points

- India has been running its own research station, **Himadri, in Svalbard since 2008**.
- The winter expedition is a bid to maintain a year-long presence at the station.
- The month-long scientific expedition is being funded by the **Earth Sciences Ministry**.
- The **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa**, is the nodal agency spearheading the expedition

### JN.1 variant



#### Context

- The Union Health Ministry has asked all States to maintain constant vigilance over the COVID-19 situation in the country given the upcoming festive season and the recent surge in cases in some parts of the country.
- The alert comes following the detection of the country's first case of the new **JN.1 variant of COVID-19 in Kerala**.

### E-bus penetration in India

#### Context

- **CRISIL report** on E-bus penetration in India was released recently
- The share of electric buses in new bus sales across **India is expected to double to 8% next fiscal from 4% in the last fiscal**.
- It is driven by the central government's focus on decarbonizing the public transport sector and favourable **total cost of ownership (TCO)** for an e-bus vis-à-vis bus run on other fuels

#### Key points

- Efforts were underway to deploy e-buses via tenders already awarded under the **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles, or FAME**, scheme and the **National Electric Bus Programme (NEBP)**



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growth in e-buses is also supported by favourable ownership economics</li><li>• TCO for e-bus is estimated to be <b>15-20% lower than the ICE and CNG bus</b>, over an estimated life span of 15 years with breakeven in 6-7 years.</li></ul>
<b>Generative AI</b>	<b>Context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A report prepared by the global accounting/consulting firm, EY highlighted that by fully capitalizing Gen AI technology and its applications across sectors, the country <b>can potentially add \$359-438 billion in FY2029-30</b> alone, reflecting a 5.9% to 7.2% increase over and above baseline GDP.</li><li>• Generative AI (Gen AI) has the potential to add a cumulative <b>\$1.2-1.5 trillion to India's GDP over seven years to 2030</b></li><li>• Approximately <b>69% of the overall impact is expected</b> to be derived from sectors such as business, services, financial services, retail, and healthcare.</li></ul>
<b>Fifth Fazza Dubai Para-Badminton International 2023</b>	<b>Context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mansi Joshi and Thulasimathi Murugesan</b> emerged champions in women's doubles</li><li>• Tokyo Paralympics champion Pramod Bhagat got two silver medals</li></ul>

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