




27 October 2023

National and International News

<p>NCERT panel suggests replacing ‘India’ with ‘Bharat’ in textbooks</p>	<p>Context A high-level committee set up by the National Council of Educational Research and Training to revise the social sciences curriculum has recommended that the name of the country be changed from “India” to “Bharat” in school textbooks</p> <p>About NCERT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is an autonomous organization of the Government of India. • Established in 1961, it is a literary, scientific, and charitable Society under the Societies Registration Act. • Its headquarters are located at Sri Aurbindo Marg in New Delhi. • Dr. Dinesh Prasad Saklani has been the Director of the council since 2022.
<p>Nipah virus antibodies found in Wayanad bats</p> 	<p>Context Nipah virus antibodies have been detected in bats in Wayanad as well in the Indian Council of Medical Research’s bat surveillance studies</p> <p>About Bats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bats are the largest mammalian group after rodents, with over 1,300 species making up a quarter of all mammals. • They occur on all continents except Antarctica and are particularly diverse in South Asia, with 114 species of insect-eating bats and 14 fruit bats, also known as “flying foxes”, occurring in India. • They roost in large colonies on trees, tree hollows, caves, rock crevices, and abandoned manmade structures. • They play a unique role in maintaining ecosystem structure, making a singular contribution to our food production, economy, and well-being. • They are the only mammals capable of true flight and have a unique sonar-based echolocation mechanism to capture prey at night.



Nipah virus (NiV)

- It is a **zoonotic virus** (it is transmitted from animals to humans).
- The organism that causes **Nipah Virus encephalitis is an RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus** of the family Paramyxoviridae, genus Henipavirus, and is closely related to Hendra virus.
- **Hendra virus (HeV) infection** is a rare emerging zoonosis that causes severe and often fatal diseases in both infected horses and humans.
- It first broke out in **Malaysia and Singapore in 1998 and 1999**.
- It **first appeared in domestic pigs** and has been found among several species of domestic animals including dogs, cats, goats, horses, and sheep.

NIPAH: HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS

NIPAH VIRUS (NIV) A ZOOBOTIC VIRUS

- Transmitted from animals to humans and can also be transmitted through contaminated food or directly between people
- Known to cause illness in pigs and people
- Fruit bats, also called flying foxes, are animal reservoirs for NiV in nature
- Infection with NiV linked to encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Can cause mild to severe illness and even death

HOW THE DISEASE SPREADS

Outbreaks occur almost annually in parts of Asia, primarily Bangladesh and India

People can become infected if they have close contact with an infected animal or its body fluids (such as saliva or urine)

Once it spreads to people, person-to-person transmission can also occur

Symptoms typically appear in 4-14 days following exposure to the virus

PREVENTION

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water
- Avoid contact with sick bats or pigs
- Avoid areas where bats are known to roost
- Avoid eating or drinking products that could be contaminated by bats, such as raw date palm sap, raw fruit, or fruit that is found on the ground
- Avoid contact with the blood or body fluids of any person known to be infected with NiV

HOW CASES ARE DETECTED

REAL TIME POLYMERASE CHAIN REACTION OR **RT-PCR** FROM THROAT AND NASAL SWABS, CEREBROSPINAL FLUID, URINE, AND BLOOD SAMPLES CAN CONFIRM

LATER IN THE COURSE OF ILLNESS AND AFTER RECOVERY, TESTING FOR ANTIBODIES CONDUCTED USING AN **ENZYME-LINKED IMMUNO SORBENT ASSAY (ELISA)**



NO TREATMENT OR VACCINE AVAILABLE FOR EITHER PEOPLE OR ANIMALS; PRIMARY TREATMENT FOR HUMANS IS SUPPORTIVE CARE, AS PER WHO



DEATH MAY OCCUR IN **40%-75%** OF CASES, ACCORDING TO CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

SYMPTOMS

- FEVER
- HEADACHE
- COUGH
- SORE THROAT
- DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING
- VOMITING
- DISORIENTATION, DROWSINESS OR CONFUSION
- SEIZURES
- COMA
- BRAIN SWELLING (ENCEPHALITIS)
- LONG-TERM SIDE EFFECTS, INCLUDING PERSISTENT CONVULSIONS AND PERSONALITY CHANGES, IN SURVIVORS

NIPAH KILLS 2 PERSONS IN KERALA; 2 OTHERS, INCLUDING A 9-YEAR-OLD BOY TESTED POSITIVE
On May 19, 2018:
Outbreak reported from Kozhikode district of Kerala; 17 deaths and 18 confirmed cases as of June 1, 2018

TWO AFFECTED DISTRICTS ARE KOZHIKODE AND MALAPPURAM. THE NIPAH OUTBREAK REPORTED IN THE TWO DISTRICTS OF KERALA IN MAY 2018 WAS THE THIRD OF NIPAH VIRUS OUTBREAKS IN INDIA, THE EARLIER BEING IN 2001 AND 2007, BOTH IN WEST BENGAL. It was first discovered in 1999 following an outbreak of disease in pigs and people in Malaysia and Singapore. The outbreak resulted in nearly 300 cases and more than 100 deaths. Over 1 million pigs were killed to help control the outbreak

(Compiled by Kavita Bajaj-Datt)

White phosphorus

Context

Human Rights Watch recently accused Israel of using white phosphorus munitions in Gaza and said that such weapons put civilians at risk of serious and long-term injury

About White phosphorus



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- It is useful in **military operations**. But it also poses environmental dangers.
- White phosphorus can be employed to **create dense smoke screens** in the context of combat, hindering visibility and providing cover for military maneuvers.
- **It can be used in incendiary devices such as grenades and artillery shells**, which can result in persistent and intense fires, effective against people, equipment, and structures.

Legality issue

The **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)** imposes restrictions on the use of incendiary weapons, including white phosphorus, intending to safeguard civilians.

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

- It was **adopted on 10 October 1980** and entered into force in 1983.
- The purpose of the Convention is to **ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons** that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately.

ISA to release a report on global adoption of solar technology



Context

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) will for the first time compile and release a **'global solar stocktake report'**.

Key points


- This is inspired by the first ever **'Global Stocktake'** of the United Nations Conference of Parties
- A key focus area for ISA is expanding solar installations in Africa and to that end the organization has set up the **Global Solar Facility**.
- The aim is to **boost the scale of solar investment** there and following that expand to West Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.
- The **Global Solar Facility will have three funds**: a payment guarantee fund, an insurance fund to mitigate project risks, and an investment fund for technical assistance.

Key findings

- Solar photovoltaic installations globally touched **1,133 gigawatts (GW) as of 2022**, with 191 GW being added in 2022.
- Nearly a fourth, or about 350 MW, is installed in China, which is not a member of the ISA.
- China is followed by the United States, a member country, at 111 GW.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India ranks among the top five countries globally with 62 GW.
<p>International Solar Alliance (ISA)</p>  <p>INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an intergovernmental organization that was launched in 2015, by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Paris. ISA is an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies. The ISA is guided by its 'Towards 1000' strategy, which aims: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To mobilize USD 1000 billion of investments in solar energy solutions by 2030 To deliver energy access to 1000 million people using clean energy solutions To install 1000 GW of solar energy capacity. To mitigate global solar emissions to the tune of 1000 million tonnes of CO2 every year. Vision: Let us together make the sun brighter. Mission: Every home, no matter how far away, will have a light at home. Headquarters: National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gurugram, India.
<p>Hong Kong to have own national security law in 2024</p>	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The semi-autonomous city would create its own national security law in 2024, four years after Beijing imposed sweeping legislation aimed at silencing dissent. <p>About</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hong Kong, officially the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China It is a city and a special administrative region in China. With 7.4 million residents of various nationalities in a 1,104-square-kilometre (426 sq mi) territory, Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated territories in the world.

Kerala Regional News

<p>Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) corridor</p>	<p>In News:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel to look into occupancy regulations in TOD corridor. Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala, has a plan to establish two transit-oriented development (TOD) corridors. The draft master plan 2040 proposes these corridors.
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	<p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TOD is a way to integrate land use and transport planning to create sustainable urban centers with high-quality transit systems TOD is proposed with the objective of capturing early the opportunity offered for mixed development, on implementation of higher-order transport facilities in the future like Metro rail or other mass transit services. The TOD zone is envisaged to cater to the mixed residential and commercial development along identified mobility corridors in the city.
<p>IIMK setting up a new campus in Kochi</p>	<p>In News: IIMK setting up a new campus in Kochi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK) is building a new campus in Kochi, expanding its executive education activities. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foundation stone for the new campus was laid by A Vellayan, Chairman, Board of Governors of IIMK, in the presence of Prof Debashis Chatterjee, director, IIMK, and Lokanath Behera, managing director, Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL). Other board members of IIMK, deans, senior faculty, staff, and alumni of IIMK, and directors of KMRL were also present to witness the event.
<p>International Students Summit</p>	<p>In news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the Keraleeyam program (2023) students from 42 countries studying under Kerala University took part. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state is transitioning into a knowledge economy, aiming to become a sustainable and inclusive "Navakeralam." Kerala embraces diversity, with foreign students contributing to its multicultural identity. The Life Sciences Park, Institute of Advanced Virology, Ayurveda Research Institute, Medical Technology Consortium, and so on, are our initiatives to aid this transformation. Kerala was the first state in India to set up an IT Park, over 3 decades back. Now, it has the country's first Digital University and Digital



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	<p>Science Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kerala Genomic Data Centre, a pioneering high-capacity data center dedicated to harnessing genomic data and Kerala's rich biodiversity, was Inaugurated last year. • Once fully operational, it will be the world's premier center focusing on both humans and non-human organisms. • India's first Graphene Innovation Centre is also coming up in Kerala.
<p>43.5% of amphibians in Kerala at risk of extinction</p>	<p>In News: 43.5% of amphibians in Kerala at risk of extinction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 43.5% of amphibian species in Kerala are at risk of extinction, showed a recent global study published by the British journal Nature. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 200 identified amphibian species in the state, 87 are considered threatened, said Sandeep Das, a SERB-national post-doctoral fellow with the zoology department of Calicut University and co-author of the research. • These include those labeled as critically endangered, endangered, and vulnerable. • In the Western Ghats, 46.08% of amphibian species fall under the threatened category, the study found. "Out of the 230 amphibian species identified in the Western Ghats, 106 are categorized as threatened," Das said.



Galaxy frog

TOP

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THREATENED GENERA IN INDOMALAYA

Genus

Genus	Number of Species in Realm (% threatened)
Micrixalus	24 (92%)
Pseudophilautus	72 (89%)
Cynops	8 (88%)
Nyctibatrachus	36 (84%)
Liuixalus	6 (80%)
Oreophryne	7 (71%)
Hynobius	7 (71%)
Tylototriton	20 (64%)
Nanohyla	8 (57%)
Quasipaa	9 (56%)

Only genera with at least 5 species are included



Total threatened species



Anamudi shrub frog (Raorchestes resplendens)

STRUGGLES OF A SPECIES

According to a recent study published in the journal 'Nature', the decline of the amphibian species was mainly caused by:

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change presents an emerging, serious challenge for survival of the species. With further predicted changes in temperature and humidity, the extent and severity of this threat is expected to magnify in the future.

HABITAT LOSS

A rapidly growing human population and unsustainable consumerism continue to drive deforestation, agricultural expansion, energy production leaving amphibians with fewer places to live, breed, and feed.

DISEASE

Chytridiomycosis, a disease caused by the chytrid fungus Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis (Bd), has been implicated in amphibian declines worldwide. The emergence of Batrachochytrium salamandrinarans (Bsa) in Europe is particularly concerning for salamanders.

FIRES

Fires, both natural and man-made, can result in habitat loss and degradation. The combination of climate change and deforestation has led to drier weather patterns, thus more frequent fires, making it difficult for populations to recover.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Many invasive species can outcompete native amphibians for resources or prey on them directly.



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