



2 November, 2023

## UNESCO's Creative Cities Network

**Context:** Kozhikode as a 'City of Literature' and Gwalior as the 'City of Music' have been included in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.

### ➤ Kozhikode

- Kozhikode, known for its literary culture, **began its journey towards UNESCO recognition in 2022**, initiated by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration.
- The Kozhikode Corporation's **partnership with the University of Prague**, the inaugural 'City of Literature' in 2014, highlighted the city's global literary ambitions.
- A comparative study conducted by Ludmila Kolouchova, a research student from the University of Prague, emphasized Kozhikode's literary prowess, pointing out its 500 libraries and 70 publishers.
- Through events like the annual Kerala Literature Festival and various book fairs, Kozhikode showcased its vibrant literary scene, ultimately securing its place on UNESCO's Creative Cities list.

### ➤ Gwalior

- Gwalior, known as the 'City of Music,' boasts a rich musical heritage with notable figures like **Tansen and Baliti Bawra** associated with it.
- It is the birthplace of the renowned **Gwalior Gharana, one of the oldest Hindustani musical Gharanas**.
- The city's cultural identity, centered in its historic core, is a valuable cultural resource.
- Gwalior has been **officially designated as a 'Smart City' by the Indian Government**, primarily due to its strategic location, connecting it to major commercial hubs and popular tourism circuits in India.

### ➤ UCCN

- **Launch Year:** 2004
- **Eligibility:** Open to UNESCO's member states and associate members.
- **Update Time:** Updated once every 2 years.
- **Total Cities (2023):** 350 cities spanning more than 100 countries.
- **Objective:** Aims to enhance cultural activities, products, services, and international collaboration to promote sustainable development, aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) for Sustainable Cities and Communities.
- **Seven Creative Fields of UCCN:**
  - Crafts and Folk Arts
  - Design
  - Film
  - Gastronomy
  - Literature
  - Media Arts
  - Music
- **Indian Cities in UCCN:**
  - **Crafts and Folk Arts:** Jaipur (2015), Srinagar (2021)
  - **Design:** No Indian city listed
  - **Film:** Mumbai (2019)
  - **Gastronomy:** Hyderabad (2019)
  - **Literature:** Kozhikode (2023) - The first Indian city to receive the 'City of Literature' designation.
  - **Media Arts:** No Indian city listed
  - **Music:** Chennai (2017), Varanasi (2015), Gwalior (2023)
- The **selected cities will participate in the UCCN annual conference in 2024**, held in **Braga, Portugal**, with the theme 'Bringing youth to the table for the next decade.'

## India-Sri Lanka ETCA

**Context:** India and Sri Lanka have re-initiated negotiations for the revival of the Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA).

### ➤ 12th round of ETCA negotiations between India and Sri Lanka held in Colombo.

➤ There were **11 previous rounds** of talks between **2016 and 2018**.

➤ Key discussions covered various aspects, including **trade, technology, and dispute resolution**.

➤ Ongoing discussions included topics like **apparel quotas, pepper, and pharmaceutical procurement**.

➤ Both sides aim to build on prior progress for the ETCA, with flexibility to reflect new developments.

➤ The ETCA's conclusion is expected to boost trade and economic cooperation.

### ➤ Background:

- In **1998**, the **India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement** was established.
- Efforts to create a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) began in the mid-2000s**, aiming to liberalize trade in services and investments.
- CEPA negotiations faced **prolonged delays due to opposition within Sri Lanka**, especially from the business community.

## Face to Face Centres





2 November, 2023

- **India is now advocating for a new trade pact**, the Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement (ETCA), building on the existing FTA.
- **Objectives of ETCA:**
  - Strengthen and advance **economic, trade, investment, and technology cooperation** between India and Sri Lanka.
  - Promote **further liberalization** of trade in goods and services while establishing fair, transparent, and facilitative trading and investment mechanisms.
  - Expand economic cooperation and **establish a cooperation mechanism**.
- **Key Points about ETCA:**
  - **ETCA replaces CEPA**, enhancing the economic partnership with India.
  - Focuses on **trade in services and technological exchange**, an aspect **lacking in CEPA**.
  - Aims to boost cooperation in technical areas, scientific expertise, and research among institutions.
  - Aims to **raise the standard of goods and services** to compete globally and improve opportunities for manpower training and human resource development.
  - **Encourages investments** in areas like **oil farms in Trincomalee, renewable energy, infrastructure**, and new business sectors.
  - India views ETCA as a way to **participate in Sri Lanka's post-war economic development** through Indian investments.
  - The Sri Lankan government intends to integrate into India's supply chain, **leveraging India's "Make in India" initiative** to boost India's manufacturing sector.

## Customized Debt Financing

**Context:** REC Limited hosted a workshop focused on Tailored Debt Financing for Commercial Mining, Mine Developers, and Operators.

- **Debt Financing and Equity Financing**
  - Debt financing involves a company **obtaining funds for its operational needs or capital investments by selling debt securities** to individual and/or institutional investors.
  - In exchange for providing the funds, these **investors become creditors of the company** and receive a commitment that the borrowed amount along with interest will be repaid.
  - An **alternative method to raise capital from financial markets** is through **equity financing**, which involves issuing shares of stock to the public in an offering. This is distinct from debt financing.
- **Customizations in Debt Financing**
  - Customization is possible in debt financing, with adjustable features including **loan amount, interest rate, repayment structure, and collateral**.
  - Customization should always **consider the associated risk profile**.
  - Each company's **unique conditions**, such as **financial health, cash availability, payment consistency, project timelines**, and relationships with financial institutions, influence the customization of debt products.
  - **Borrowing companies can either find a suitable pre-existing product or collaborate with a lender** willing to tailor a product to their specific needs.
  - **Types:**
    - **Amount Customization:** Tailoring the loan amount to align with the business's financial needs and repayment capacity, ensuring an optimal balance.
    - **Repayment Pattern Customization:** Adapting the repayment schedule to suit the company's cash flow and business cycle, with options like bullet payments, quarterly payments, or revenue-linked payments.
    - **Adjustable Interest Rates:** Choosing between fixed or floating interest rates to manage cash flows, with fixed rates providing certainty and floating rates responding to policy changes.
    - **Amortising vs. Revolving Limits:** Selecting between term loans and revolving credit lines based on business requirements, with revolving credit lines allowing drawdowns and repayments.
    - **Prepayment Flexibility:** Offering the ability to prepay a loan but considering lock-in periods and prepayment penalties, aligning with expected cash inflows.

## Retreating Monsoon

**Context:** The northeastern monsoon, vital for southern India's rainfall, is the "sixth lowest" since 1901.

- The Retreating Monsoon, also known as the **Northeast Monsoon or Post-Monsoon Season**, follows the southwest monsoon and begins around October.
- During this period, the **direction of the winds changes**, leading to **clear skies and reduced humidity levels**.
- The Retreating Monsoon is a **crucial source of rainfall for southern India**, including regions like Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and coastal Andhra Pradesh.
- The season can **bring cyclones and depressions in the Bay of Bengal**, causing heavy rainfall, which may result in flooding and landslides.
- It marks the **onset of the winter season** in India, with gradually decreasing temperatures across the country.

## Face to Face Centres





**2 November, 2023**

➤ Agriculture and related activities heavily depend on the Retreating Monsoon, which is the time for crop harvesting and winter preparations.

➤ **Climate during Retreating Monsoon**

- **Temperature:** The retreating monsoon ushers in India's winter season, causing a drop in temperatures with clear skies.
- **Wind:** Winds during the retreating monsoon draw moisture from the Bay of Bengal, influenced by local pressure conditions.
- **Pressure:** The pressure gradient diminishes as the monsoon moves southward.
- **Rainfall:** Southeastern regions, like Tamil Nadu and northeast India, receive substantial rainfall, contributing to nearly half of the annual precipitation.
- **Humidity:** Although rainfall decreases, coastal areas maintain relatively high humidity levels.
- **Cloud Cover:** Typically, clear skies prevail during the retreating monsoon, but sporadic cloud cover may lead to thunderstorms and cyclonic activities.

Parameters	Southwest Monsoon	Retreating Monsoon
Duration	June to September	October to November
Meaning	Arrival of moisture-laden winds	Transition after the withdrawal of the monsoon
Movement of Winds	Sea to land, bringing widespread rain	Land to sea, with limited rainfall effects
Direction of wind	Northeast	Towards South-West
Type of Wind	Moist Winds	Dry Winds
Amount of Rainfall	Brings significant rainfall	May result in cyclones and rainfall in the east
Impacted Regions	Western and northeastern regions	Eastern slopes of Western Ghats, plains, etc.

➤ **Cyclones during the season**

- The Indian Ocean, **specifically the Bay of Bengal**, gives rise to the most intense and destructive tropical cyclones.
- The period from **October to the early part of November experiences the highest frequency of cyclones**.
- Vulnerable coastal regions, including **Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal**, face a higher risk of severe storms.
- Cyclones originating **south of 15 degrees north latitude along India's eastern coast may traverse the southern peninsula** before reaching the Arabian Sea.
- Although they **may weaken during this journey**, they tend to regain strength and transform into cyclonic storms upon re-entering the Arabian Sea.

➤ **October Heat**

- October in the Indian subcontinent is referred to as 'October heat' due to **specific weather conditions**.
- During October and November, as the **sun appears to move southward**, the **monsoon trough over the northern plains weakens**, gradually giving way to a high-pressure system.
- The southwest monsoon winds start to wane and retreat during this period.
- By the start of October, the **monsoon withdraws** from the northern plains, marking a **transition from the wet rainy season to dry winter conditions**.
- The monsoon's retreat results in **clear skies and rising temperatures**. Daytime temperatures are high, while **nights become cool and pleasant**.
- Despite the **moisture in the ground**, the **weather can feel oppressive** during the day, earning the name 'October heat.'
- In India, the retreating monsoon refers to the withdrawal of southwest monsoon winds from North India.

## NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

### La Bae - Mushroom Coffee Brand



**About La Bae:**

- La Bae is the **first mushroom coffee brand from Kerala**, developed with the support of the **Krishi Vigyan Kendra**.
- The success of La Bae prompted the Thalavoor panchayat to initiate the **'Koon Gramam'** project to extend mushroom cultivation in the area.
- The 'Koon Gramam' project intends to attain self-sufficiency in mushroom production and plans to utilize the locally cultivated mushrooms for the production of La Bae.
- La Bae uses five varieties of mushrooms - **button, oyster, milky, lion's mane** and **turkey tail**, along with **organic Arabica coffee beans** from **Wayanad**.
- La Bae's mushroom coffee is an organic product rich in **antioxidants**.
- Each mushroom variety in the blend offers distinctive health benefits, e.g., **lion's mane is a cognitive enhancer, sundried oyster mushrooms are rich in vitamin D** and **turkey tail is good for bone health**.

### Face to Face Centres





**2 November, 2023**

## Bannerghatta Biological Park



In Bengaluru, a leopard was shot during a capture operation after attacking an official, and it died despite being moved to the Bannerghatta Biological Park.

### About Bannerghatta Biological Park:

- Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBBP) is located in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**.
- It was established in **2004** and was carved out of the Bannerghatta National Park (BNP).
- This park is brought under the jurisdiction of the **Zoo Authority of Karnataka (ZAK)**.
- Bannerghatta National Park (BNP), from which BBBP was carved, was declared a national park in **1974**.
- **Flora:** The park features diverse flora, including **scrub-type (dry deciduous forests)**, southern **tropical dry deciduous forests** and southern **tropical moist mixed forests**.
- **Fauna:** Fauna found in this park includes a wide range of species such as **elephants**, chital, barking deer, striped **hyena**, porcupines, peafowls, **grey jungle fowls**, partridges, crocodiles, tortoises, pythons, and various species of butterflies.
- The park offers a list of animals available for adoption, including species like **King cobra**, **Indian rock python**, **Black buck**, **Sambar**, **Emu**, Golden jackal, **Indian leopard**, Sloth bear, Hippopotamus, **Bengal tiger**, **Giraffe**, among others.

## Impact of the Asteroid on Earth



- **66 million years ago**, an **asteroid struck Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula**, causing a global catastrophe.
- This event led to one of the most significant **extinction events in Earth's history**, with about 75% of species including dinosaurs, disappearing.
- Immediate effects included **wildfires**, **earthquakes**, **shockwaves** and **massive waves** in the seas.
- Long-term impacts included a climate catastrophe with **darkened skies** and a significant **temperature drop**.
- Dust from the impact site played a crucial role in driving extinctions by blocking **photosynthesis** and **choking the atmosphere**.
- The total amount of dust generated was about **2,000 billion tonnes**, **over 11 times the weight of Mt. Everest**.
- The **dust, made of silicate particles**, originated from the **pulverized rock** at the impact site.
- Earth experienced a **15-degree Celsius drop in temperature**, leading to a prolonged "impact winter."
- **Sulfur** remained in the atmosphere for about **8-9 years**, while soot and silicate dust persisted for around 15 years, extending the environmental effects.

## Haemoglobin



Recently, scientists have made a noteworthy discovery that reveals haemoglobin, traditionally associated with blood, has functions beyond the circulatory system.

### About Haemoglobin:

- Haemoglobin is a **protein found in red blood cells (RBCs)** responsible for transporting oxygen from the lungs to various tissues and organs in the body.
- Haemoglobin is composed of **four protein molecules (globulin chains)** bound together, each containing an iron atom.
- The primary function of haemoglobin is to bind with oxygen in the lungs and release it in tissues where it's needed for cellular respiration.
- Haemoglobin also helps **transport carbon dioxide** from the body's tissues back to the lungs for exhalation.
- Haemoglobin is responsible for the **red color of RBCs**.
- There are several genetic variants of haemoglobin, with **Hemoglobin A (HbA)** being the most common in adults. **Hemoglobin S (HbS)** is associated with **sickle cell disease**.
- Haemoglobin plays a pivotal role in the **circulatory system**, **facilitating the efficient transport of oxygen and carbon dioxide**.

## Place in News

### Bolivia

Recently, **Bolivia has announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Israel due to Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip.**

**Bolivia (Capital: La Paz and Sucre)**

**Geographical Location:** Bolivia is a **landlocked country** in west-central **South America**.

### Political Boundaries:

- Bolivia is bordered by Brazil to the north and east, Paraguay to the southeast, Argentina to the south, Chile to the southwest and Peru to the west.

### Geographical Features:

- **Altiplano** is a **high plateau in Bolivia**, situated at an elevation of approximately 4,000 meters (13,000 feet) above sea level.
- **Lake Titicaca**, located in the Andean region, is the **highest commercially navigable lake** in the world and one of South America's largest lakes.
- **Salar de Uyuni**, the **world's largest salt flat**, is located within Bolivia's borders.
- **Santa Cruz de la Sierra** is the largest city and Bolivia's principal industrial center.
- Bolivia is known for its **coca leaf cultivation** and the production of refined cocaine.



## Face to Face Centres





**2 November, 2023**

## Personality in News

### Leela Omchery

**Leela Omchery (31 May 1929 – 1 November 2023):**

Leela Omchery, an accomplished Indian classical singer, musicologist and writer, was born on at Thiruvattar in Tamil Nadu.

**Contributions:**

- She authored several significant books related to Indian music, including "Immortals of Indian Music," "Gleanings in Indian Music," "Indian Music and Allied Arts" (comprising 5 volumes), "Abhinayasangeetham," "Keralathile Laasya Rachanakal" and "Leela Omcheriyude Pathangal."

**Honors and Awards:**

- She received the prestigious **Padma Shri award in 2005**, recognizing her significant contributions to the **field of music and culture**.



## POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ Who has been recently named the winner of the 2023 British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding? - **Nandini Das (Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire)**
- ❖ What is the highest point in Thailand? - **Mount Inthanon**
- ❖ Which rivers flow through the Rajaji Tiger Reserve? - **Ganga and Song**
- ❖ What organization was established under the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006, to combat wildlife crime? - **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)**
- ❖ Which organization uses APRAD as a tool to manage road accident data? - **UNESCAP**

## Face to Face Centres

