



7 November, 2023

Krishi 24/7

Context: The launch of Krishi 24/7 introduces an AI-powered solution for automated monitoring and analysis of agricultural news, a first of its kind.

- **DA&FW** collaborated with **Wadhvani AI** and **Google.org** to develop Krishi 24/7, an **AI-powered agricultural news monitoring and analysis solution**.
- Krishi 24/7 aids in **identifying relevant news, generating alerts**, and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- The tool **scans multilingual agricultural news articles** and translates them to English.
- It **extracts key information**, including headlines, crop details, event type, dates, locations, severity, summaries, and source links.
- The system **provides near real-time monitoring** of online agricultural news.
- Krishi 24/7 **enhances decision-making** for the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- The initiative **focuses on continuous improvement** and adaptability to evolving information landscapes.
- The collaboration aims to **improve data-driven decisions in agriculture** through effective tools.
- **Use of Technology in Agriculture**
 - The **Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM) Initiative**, initiated in **September 2021**, supports **agri-tech startups using cloud computing**, earth observation, remote sensing, data, and AI/ML models.
 - The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is developing '**AgriStack**,' a comprehensive set of technology-driven solutions for agriculture.
 - The **Unified Farmer Service Platform (UFSP) integrates Core Infrastructure, Data, Applications, and Tools** to ensure seamless interoperability among public and private IT systems in the agricultural sector nationwide.
 - The **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) scheme, launched in 2014-15**, aims to extend farm mechanization to small and marginal farmers and regions with low farm power availability.
 - The **National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGP-A)** is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme introduced in 2010-11** in 7 pilot States. Its primary goal is to promote rapid development in India by providing farmers with timely access to agriculture-related information through the use of ICT.
 - Alongside NeGP-A, various other digital initiatives have been implemented, including **Kisan Call Centres, Kisan Suvudha App, Agri Market App, Soil Health Card (SHC) Portal**, among others. These initiatives contribute to improving agricultural services and information accessibility for farmers.

Australia India Education and Skill Council meeting (AIESC)

Context: Shri Dharmendra Pradhan co-chairs the 1st Australia India Education and Skill Council meeting (AIESC) in Gandhinagar.

- **AIESC Meeting and Overview:**
 - Shri Dharmendra Pradhan co-chaired the **1st Australia India Education and Skill Council (AIESC)** meeting.
 - The AIESC focuses on strengthening education and skill development partnerships between India and Australia.
 - It promotes **internationalization, two-way mobility, and collaboration in education and skills**, bringing both sectors under the same institutional forum.
- **Key Initiatives and Agreements:**
 - **MoUs between Australian and Indian HEIs:** Five MoUs were exchanged between Australian and Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to enhance research collaborations in areas like agriculture, water management, critical minerals, healthcare, AI, renewable energy, and climate change.
 - **Innovative Research Universities (IRU) Consortium Campus:** An MoU with seven Australian public universities aims to explore in-country delivery of degrees in India and expand access to Australian higher education for Indian students.
 - **Deakin University and National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC):** Deakin University and NSDC developed the 'Global Job Readiness Program' to address skills shortages in India, upskilling 15 million Indians.
 - **Deakin University and IIT Gandhinagar:** Deakin University, with its campus in GIFT City, collaborates with IIT Gandhinagar on science, innovation, faculty exchange, and joint doctoral programs.
 - **Monash University and IIT Hyderabad:** This MoU focuses on academic and research collaboration in critical minerals and other areas of mutual interest.
 - **Monash University and International Center of Excellence in Mining (ICEM):** This MoU supports research and innovation collaboration to enhance the mining and mineral development sector in India, emphasizing climate change mitigation, efficiency, and critical minerals.

Central Information Commission (CIC)

Context: Heeralal Samariya was sworn in as the Chief of the Central Information Commission (CIC) by President Droupadi Murmu.

- **Establishment:** The Central Information Commission (CIC) was founded in 2005 by the Central Government, as per the **provisions of the Right to Information Act (2005)**. It is **not a constitutional body**.
- **Members:** The CIC comprises a **Chief Information Commissioner** and a **maximum of ten Information Commissioners**.

Face to Face Centres





7 November, 2023

- **Appointment:** The **President appoints** them based on the **recommendation of a committee**. This committee is chaired by the **Prime Minister and includes the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister** nominated by the Prime Minister.
- **Jurisdiction:** The Commission's jurisdiction **covers all Central Public Authorities**.
- **Tenure:** The Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners serve for a term as **specified by the Central Government** or until they reach the age of 65, whichever occurs first. **Reappointment is not allowed**.
- **Role of the Central Information Commission:**
 - **Order inquiry into matters only on** reasonable grounds (suo-moto power).
 - Ensure compliance with its decisions from any public authority.
 - **Receive and investigate complaints from individuals in the following cases:**
 - No response to their request for information within a specified time.
 - Deemed information provided as incomplete, false, or misleading.
 - Any matter related to securing information.
 - Inability to submit a request due to the non-appointment of an officer.
 - Consideration of unreasonable fees charged.
 - Refusal of requested information.
 - The Commission has the authority to examine any record under the control of a public authority. All such records must be provided to the Commission during the examination, and nothing can be withheld.
 - **During inquiries, the CIC possesses powers similar to a civil court, including the ability to:**
 - Summon and compel individuals to give oral or written evidence under oath and produce documents or items.
 - Require the discovery and inspection of documents.
 - Accept evidence on affidavit.
 - Request public records or copies from any office or court.
 - Issue summons for the examination of documents or witnesses.
 - Address any other matter as may be prescribed.
 - The CIC also submits an annual report to the Government of India (GOI) regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Act. This report is subsequently presented to both Houses of Parliament.
- **Recent Amendment**
 - The RTI Act, 2005 **initially specified the tenure, terms of service, and salaries** of the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and Information Commissioners (ICs) at both central and state levels.
 - The **RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019 removed these provisions**, giving **authority to the central government** to determine the term and salary through rules.
 - **Prior to the amendment, the CIC and ICs had a fixed term of 5 years.**
 - The **amendment eliminated the provisions** for deductions in salary due to pension or retirement benefits from previous government service.
 - It **granted the Central Government the power to define the salary, allowances, and service conditions** of the CIC and ICs at both the central and state levels.

The State of Food and Agriculture-2023

Context: An annual hidden cost of over \$7 trillion is attributed to unhealthy diets rich in ultra-processed foods, fats, and sugars, impacting health and the environment, say a new report.

- **Hidden Costs of Unhealthy Diets:**
 - Unhealthy diets, including ultra-processed foods, fats, and sugars, result in global **losses exceeding \$7 trillion** annually.
 - These diets **lead to obesity, non-communicable diseases**, and reduced labor productivity.
 - The **impact is more pronounced in high- and upper-middle-income countries.**
- **Agrifood Systems Costs:**
 - Current **agrifood systems impose hidden costs** equivalent to over **\$10 trillion annually**, roughly **10% of the global GDP**.
 - The study by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) analyzed 154 countries.
 - The expenses are related to the impact of unhealthy diets, among other factors.
- **Rural and Urban Consumption Patterns:**
 - **Consumption of highly processed foods is increasing in peri-urban and rural areas**, influenced by urbanization, lifestyle changes, and employment profiles.
 - Research challenges the belief that urban and rural areas have distinct purchasing patterns; the diffusion of processed foods is extensive in both contexts.

Face to Face Centres





7 November, 2023

- **Approximately 29% of total food consumption consists of processed foods in high-food-budget countries,** while it's 25% in low-food-budget countries.
- **Global Food Insecurity:**
 - Moderate to severe food insecurity remained unchanged globally in 2022 for the second consecutive year.
 - In 2022, **around 29.6% of the global population (2.4 billion people)** experienced moderate or severe food insecurity.
 - **11.3% of the world's population** (approximately 900 million people) faced severe food insecurity.
- **Hunger and Undernourishment:**
 - An **estimated 691-783 million people experienced hunger** in 2022.
 - This is an **increase of 122 million people** compared to 2019, before the global pandemic.
 - The report projects **nearly 600 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030.**
- **South Asian Countries and India:**
 - Among south Asian countries, **India had the third-highest prevalence of undernourishment,** with 233.9 million people experiencing it.
 - The **percentage** of undernourished people in India **declined from 21.4% in 2004-06 to 16.6% in 2020-22.**
- **Hidden Costs by Income Level:**
 - **Low-income countries bear the heaviest burden of hidden costs** from agrifood systems, **accounting for over 25% of their GDP.**
 - **Middle-income countries face less than 12%,** and **high-income countries less than 8%** of their GDP in hidden costs.
- **Recommendations:**
 - The report **suggests more regular and detailed analysis** of the true costs of agrifood systems.
 - It advocates for **true cost accounting and mitigation actions** by governments and the private sector.
 - True cost accounting can help address climate change, poverty, inequality, and food security, and transform agrifood systems accordingly.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Bandipur Tiger Reserve



Recently, a farmer in his mid-30s was fatally mauled by a tiger in the Moliyur range of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka on a Monday.

About Bandipur Tiger Reserve:

- Bandipur Tiger Reserve was established in the **1930s** as a wildlife sanctuary and later became a **tiger reserve in 1973** under Project Tiger.
- It is situated in two contiguous districts, **Mysore** and **Chamarajanagar**, of Karnataka.
- Bandipur Tiger Reserve is surrounded by **Nagarahole** Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the North West, **Mudumalai** Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the South and **Wayanad** Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) in the South West with the River **Kabini** in the north and the River Moyar in the south.

Flora: The reserve comprises diverse vegetation including **rosewood**, **Indian kino tree**, **sandalwood**, **Indian laurel**, clumping bamboo and giant **clumping bamboo**.

Fauna: Bandipur Tiger Reserve is a shelter for the largest population of wild Asian elephants in South Asia, **Bengal tiger**, **Gaur** (Indian bison), Sloth bear, Golden jackal, Dhole (Indian wild dog), **Four-horned antelope** and more.

Tribal Youth Exchange Programme



Recently, a youth delegation from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, participating in the Tribal Youth Exchange Programme (TYEP), met the President of India.

About:

- **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)** has been organizing the Tribal Youth Exchange Programme (TYEP) since 2006.
- It is organized in collaboration with the Department of **Left Wing Extremism (LWE)**, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, which provides financial support.
- Its primary **aim is to sensitize Tribal Youth** in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas to India's rich cultural heritage.
- It intends to foster an appreciation for the concept of "**unity in diversity**" by exposing tribal youth to various cultures and traditions within India.
- During the financial year **2022-23**, NYKS is organizing **26 Tribal Youth Exchange Programmes** across the country.

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National Security Strategy



Recently, India is making significant progress as the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) begins drafting the country's first-ever written National Security Strategy (NSS).

About the National Security Strategy:

- India's National Security Strategy (NSS) is its **first-ever comprehensive document** outlining security objectives and strategies.
- The NSS evolves over time to address **traditional and non-traditional threats**, promoting accountability among implementing agencies.
- It serves as a guiding framework for **military, defense** and security reforms, providing a holistic perspective on national security, threats and strategies.
- It covers a wide range of contemporary challenges, including **financial, economic, food** and energy security, **information warfare, critical infrastructure vulnerabilities**, supply chain issues, and environmental concerns.
- Developed nations like the **United States, the United Kingdom** and **Russia** have their own National Security Strategies.
- Pakistan unveiled a National Security Policy for **2022-2026**, outlining its national security objectives.

Alycaeus Himalayae

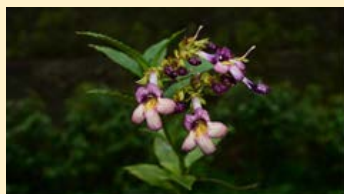


A new snail species named **Alycaeus Himalayae** was recently discovered in a cave in Arunachal Pradesh.

About Alycaeus Himalayae:

- Alycaeus himalayae belongs to the **genus Alycaeus**, which is known for **small land snails**.
- The Alycaeus genus was **previously not reported in India** and is typically **restricted to Southeast Asia**.
- This new species is unique among Himalayan alycaeid species due to its **yellowish, conical shell**.
- The most similar shell found nearby is **Stomacosmethis spratti** from the **Shan States, Myanmar**.
- It **differs from all other Alycaeus species** due to a distinctive **trumpet-like projection** on the outer side of the operculum.
- Alycaeus himalayae is the only Alycaeus species known to **inhabit the Himalayan region**.
- Other known Alycaeus species are primarily reported from countries like **Laos, Vietnam**, southern **Thailand** and **Peninsular Malaysia**.

Lysionotus Namchoomii



Scientists from the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** have recently discovered a new species of epiphytic plant named "**Lysionotus namchoomii**."

About Lysionotus Namchoomii:

- The genus Lysionotus is native to the **Himalayas, Japan** and **Indo-China**.
- This new species is characterized by its **thick leaves** and **attractive purple flowers**.
- It is named in honor of **late Chau Phunkyoo Nomchoon**, a social reformer from Arunachal Pradesh's **Khapti community**.

Botanical Survey of India (BSI):

- Botanical Survey of India was established in **1890**.
- It serves as the apex research organization under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change**.
- It is responsible for conducting **taxonomic studies** on the wild plant resources of India.

Mysterious Blobs



Recently, the seismologists have identified two enigmatic continent-sized blobs in the Earth's mantle beneath Africa and the South Pacific region since the 1970s.

About:

- Mysterious blobs, referred to as **Large Low-Velocity Provinces (LLVPs)**, were discovered deep within the **Earth's mantle**, approximately 1,000 miles beneath the surface.
- Each of these LLVPs is as large as a continent and stands about **100 times taller than Mount Everest**.
- These blobs are located about **2,900 kilometers beneath Earth's surface**, making up approximately 2% of Earth's total mass.
- Each of these blobs is estimated to be **twice the mass of the entire moon**.
- The increased density of the blobs is attributed to their **high iron content**.
- Future lunar missions may help test their **isotopic composition**, which is expected to be similar to lunar mantle rocks.

Deepfake Technology



Recently, a **deepfake video** with actor **Rashmika Mandanna's** face superimposed on an original video of a **British Indian woman** has sparked controversy.

About Deepfake Technology:

- Deepfake technology involves the **manipulation of videos, images** and **audios** using powerful computers and deep learning techniques.
- It is used for generating **fake news, financial fraud** and various deceptive activities, including scams, hoaxes, celebrity **pornography, election manipulation**, social engineering, identity theft and financial fraud.
- The term "**deepfake**" originated in **2017** when an anonymous Reddit user self-identified as "Deepfakes" used Google's open-source deep-learning technology to create and share manipulated videos.
- Deepfake technology has been employed to impersonate notable figures, including former **U.S. Presidents Barack Obama** and **Donald Trump** and **India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- The U.S. introduced the **Deepfake Task Force Act** to assist the **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** in addressing deepfake technology.

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7 November, 2023

Place in News

Seattle

Recently, India has announced to set its sixth consulate in Seattle, after seven years of planning.

Geographical Location:

Seattle is a seaport city on the **West Coast of the United States** and is the largest city in both Washington state and the Pacific Northwest.

Geographical Position:

- Seattle is situated on an isthmus between Puget Sound (an arm of the Pacific Ocean) to the west and Lake Washington to the east.
- The city's location in the **Pacific Ring of Fire** makes it susceptible to earthquakes, with a **major earthquake zone**.

Significance: Seattle is a major **hub for technology companies**, including **Microsoft, Amazon, Boeing**, and more.

Embassy vs. Consulates:

- An embassy is a representation of one country's government in another and is usually located in the host country's capital, with an ambassador as the head.
- Consulates are smaller offices located in major cities of the host country, focusing on **providing consular services to citizens** living or traveling abroad, such as issuing **visas** and **passports** and offering assistance during emergencies and legal aid.



POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ Which city is the host of 'World Food India 2023'? - **New Delhi**
- ❖ Which institution released the '2023 Adaptation Gap Report'? - **UNEP**
- ❖ Which ministry has launched the Jal Diwali Campaign? - **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**
- ❖ Where will the 54th International Film Festival of India be held? - **Goa**
- ❖ 'State of Climate Services' is an annual report released by which institution? - **WMO**

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