

Date : 2024-02-25

Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

### 1. 340/quintal approved as Fair and Remunerative Price for Sugarcane

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by PM Narendra Modi increased the Fair and Remunerative Price for Sugarcane by 8%. The price was fixed at Rs 340/quintal at Sugarcane recovery rate of 10.25% for 2024-25 season. The FPR is fixed by the Union Government on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

### 2. Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana

Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Education and Skill Development in Sambalpur, Odisha. The Initiative was launched under the Skill India Mission and will empower PMSvainidhi beneficiaries. The Scheme was launched virtually across 9 cities in India.

### 3. New technique to develop quality varieties of Pigeonpea

Scientists at International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) have developed a new fast breeding technique to develop better quality varieties of Pigeon pea. The technique restricts the vegetative growth and triggers early flowering. Pigeonpea also known as Arhar and Tur in India is a legume crop and protein rich food that is cultivated in tropical areas.

### 4. Flood Management and Border Areas Programme

The Union Cabinet under PM Narendra Modi approved the continuation of the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme for a period of 5 years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The money allocated for the Centrally Sponsored scheme is 4100 crores. Under the scheme Central assistance will be provided to the state governments for taking up critical works related

to flood control, Anti erosion, drainage development etc.

### 5. Indian President visits Nicobar Island

The President of India made a whistle stop tour to an Island in Nicobar which is home to the Shompen Tribe. The Island is earmarked for multi billion dollar development that could wipe out indigenous Shompen Tribe. The Shompen Tribe is one of the most isolated Tribes on earth and Least studied PVTG in India. The estimated population of the Tribe is 229 according to Census 2011.



### 6. 9th edition of Raisina Dialogue

The 9th edition of Raisina Dialogue organised by Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs was held in New Delhi from February 21- 23, 2024. The theme of this year's edition is "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create". It is an annual dialogue held since 2016.

### 7. Tamil Nadu bans sale of Cotton Candy

The Government of Tamil Nadu has banned the sale of Cotton candy due to the presence of carcinogenic chemical "Rhodamine-B". The presence was detected by the Food Safety Department after analysing the samples of Cotton candy. Rhodamine-B is an industrial dye and is a water soluble chemical compound. Puducherry also banned the sale of Cotton candy.

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## 8. 50th edition of Khajuraho Dance Festival

The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Mohan Yadav inaugurated the 50th edition of the Khajuraho Dance Festival. It is an iconic week-long cultural carnival whose first edition took place in 1975. The edition earned a Guinness World Record after 1484 artists performed at the Kathak Dance event. The Khajuraho Dance Festival is organised by the Cultural and Tourism Department.

## 9. Harappan Era fortified settlement “Morodharo” discovered

Researchers from Oxford's School of Archaeology Ajay Yadav and Damian Robinson have discovered a Harappan era fortified settlement named “Morodharo”. The settlement bears striking resemblance to Dholavira. The site has been discovered in Kutch, Gujarat and belongs to the time period between 2600-1900 BCE to late 1900-1300 BCE.



## 10. Phase 3 of BharatNet Project

The state owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) rolls out 65000 crore tender for the implementation of Phase 3 of BharatNet Project. The BharatNet Project is the biggest Telecom project in the world approved by the Government of India in 2011. The project is being executed by Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) which is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

## 11. NCTP meeting chaired by Secretary MoSJE

The pivotal meeting of National Council for Transgenders Persons (NCTP) was convened under the chairmanship of Shri Saurabh Garg, Secretary of

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The meeting was convened at Dr Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC). The major objective of the meeting was to address issues faced by Transgenders concerning education, Life with dignity, health support etc.

## 12. Government increase allocation for Natural Rubber Sector by 23%

The Government of India has increased allocation of budget by 23% for sustainable and inclusive development of the Natural rubber sector for the next two years. The Scheme will be monitored by Rubber Board of India and it will help increase area under Cultivation of the cash crop. The Rubber Board is a statutory body established by the Rubber Act of 1947.

## 13. 3rd meeting of AITIGA Joint Committee

The 3rd meeting of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) Joint Committee was hosted by India at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi. Delegates from ASEAN countries attended the meeting. AITIGA is a trade deal between ten member states of ASEAN and India signed at 7th ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations in Bangkok in 2009.

## 14. Dand Patta declared as Maharashtra State Weapon

The State Government of Maharashtra has officially declared “Dan Patta”, a weapon used by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as State Weapon of Maharashtra. The announcement was made on the Birth anniversary of Shivaji Maharaj that is observed on February 19. Dand Patta or Gauntlet Sword is a double edged sword measuring 4 feet with a gauntlet integrated as a hand guard.

## 15. Mission Basundhara 4.0

The Chief Minister of Assam Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma launched the Mission Basundhara 4.0 to reclaim the Char land from encroachers to safeguard the “Ecological Integrity” of the Brahmaputra Valley. The

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Chars or Chapori are the riverine areas of the river Brahmaputra. The mission will enforce new regulations governing land allocation.

#### 16. Chinook Helicopter makes emergency landing in Punjab

The Chinook Helicopter of the Indian Air Force made an emergency landing following a technical snag in Punjab's Barnala. Chinook Helicopters is a multi mission Helicopter manufactured by American Aerospace and defence firm Boeing for the US army. It has served for the US army in the Vietnam War, 1st and 2nd Gulf wars etc. India has a fleet of 15 CH-47 Chinook Helicopters.



#### 17. NCSC recommends imposition of President's rule in West Bengal

The National Scheduled Castes Commission Chief Arun Halder recommends the imposition of President's rule in West Bengal due to Sandeshkhali violence. Women of SC/ST communities claimed that TMC supporters captured their land and sexually harassed them. The NCSC has recommended imposition of President's rule under Article 338 which aims to safeguard rights of SCs.

#### 18. Awareness program on PMFME

A one day awareness program on Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme was conducted by the Area Marketing Office of the Horticulture Planning and Marketing Department at Srinagar. PMFME is a Centrally Sponsored scheme launched on June 29, 2020 by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

#### 19. Promotion of Indian Languages in Education

The Chairman of Bhartiya Bhasha Samiti Shri Chamu Krishna Shastry stressed on the promotion of Indian Languages in education and promotion of Multilingualism. The Chairman announced that textbooks in Indian Languages will be available on Digital platforms. Bhartiya Bhasha Samiti is a high powered committee for Promotion of Indian Languages constituted in 2021 by the Ministry of Education.

#### 20. 5th National e-Governance webinar organised by DARPG

The 5th National e-Governance webinar (NeWG 2023-24) was organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). The theme of the webinar was "Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering for Digital Transformation at State/UT level". Various initiatives like MINE MITRA, Kutumba etc were presented during the webinar.

#### 21. National Workshop on Urban Livelihoods

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) organised a National Level workshop on Urban Livelihoods in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The workshop was organised under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM). The workshop was attended by 150 delegates from across the country and the primary focus of the workshop was on Empowering women across Urban India.

#### 22. Two day National workshop on "Harnessing Potential of Fisheries in Inland States"

A two day National workshop on "Harnessing Potential of Fisheries in Inland States" was organised by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Government of Andhra Pradesh at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The aim of the workshop is to maximise the potential

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of Fisheries in India's Inland states. 13 states from across the country participated in the workshop.



### 23. Sagar Aankalan guidelines released

Guidelines for Indian Port Performance Index “Sagar Aankalan” released by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal. The guidelines were released at the stakeholders meeting at the Global Maritime India Summit 2023 (GMIS 2023). The guidelines will be applicable to all Indian Ports and the major objectives of the guidelines will be to achieve mapping and benchmarking of Indian Ports-Logistics performance and efficiency, improving Competitiveness etc.

### 24. Law Commission of India submits report on marriages of NRI and OCI

The 22nd Law Commission of India under the chairmanship of Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi released the report titled “Law on Matrimonial Issues Relating to Non-Resident Indians and Overseas Citizens of India”. It is the report number 287 submitted to the Government of India by the law commission.

### 25. Citizen Corner launched on dashboard of JJM

The Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched “Citizen Corner” on the dashboard of Jal Jeevan Mission. It is a one step solution to real time details on water quality of a Village and other water supply information. With the launch of this initiative Citizen can now raise concerns about water quality through an online complaint form. It is a significant step towards transparency and accountability in water management.

### 26. Sangam: Digital Twin initiative

An Unparalleled venture named “Sangam: Digital Twin” was unveiled by the Department of Telecommunications. The venture is aimed to demonstrate practical implementation of innovative infrastructure planning solutions and provide a future blueprint in infrastructure projects. The venture is distributed in two stages and will be conducted in one of the major cities of India.

### 27. 300MW Barsingsar Solar Power Plant

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of 300 MW Barsingar Solar Power Plant as a part of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's CPSE Scheme. The Solar Power plant will be established by NLC India Limited, a leading Navratna CPSE in Bikaner district of Rajasthan. The objective of the solar power plant is to provide affordable power supply to government entities.

### 28. New Scheme to boost Pulses Output

The Government of India unveiled a new scheme to boost production of domestic Cultivation of pulses and attain self sufficiency, thus reducing huge annual imports. The Scheme will facilitate the signing of contract between NAFED and NCCF with farmers willing to grow pulses for 5 years and assuring procurement at pre-fixed MSP.

### 29. Agri-Export: Capacity Building cum buyer seller meet organised by APEDA

The Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) organised a “Agri-Export: Capacity Building cum buyer seller meet” in Mirzapur. The meeting was chaired by Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Shrimati Anupriya Patel. The APEDA was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985.

### 30. Kosi River Floods

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More than 100 protesters marched 250 kms to reach Patna to press their long standing demand for rehabilitation from Kosi River embankments due to destruction caused by floods every year. Kosi is a transboundary River and it is a prominent tributary of Ganga. The river Kosi is formed by a confluence of three tributaries namely Sun Kosi, Arun Kosi and Tamur Kosi. The Kosi River is also known as Sorrow of Bihar.

International

### 1. Guinea Worm Disease Eradication Program

As per WHO's weekly Epidemiological report the race to Global eradication of Guinea Worm disease nears the finish line. The report states that there were more than 3.5 million cases of the disease in the 1980s which dwindled to 14 cases in 2021 and just 6 in 2023. It is a crippling infection caused by long thread Guinea worms. Its scientific name is Dracunculiasis.

### 2. Loan agreement worth 12800 crore signed with Japan

A Loan agreement worth 12,800 crores was signed between India and Japan under which Japan will fund nine infrastructure and innovation promotion projects in India. The move will strengthen Bilateral economic ties between both the nations. Japan becomes the leading development projects financier for India with over 5 lakh crore committed by the Island nation.

### 3. WHO launched Global Initiative in Digital Health (GIDH)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched the Global Initiative in Digital Health (GIDH), one of the three priority areas agreed upon during India's G20 Presidency in 2023. The launch ceremony was addressed by Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and India's representative to the UN Arindam Bagchi. The major aim of the initiative is to share knowledge and Digital products among countries.



### 4. Kapilavastu relics to be showcased in Thailand

The four bone fragments of Lord Buddha also known as Kapilavastu relics will be showcased in Thailand after 30 years. The relics are presently kept in the National Museum, New Delhi. The relics were lastly taken out of the country in May 2023 exhibited at Mongolia. The Kapilavastu relics were discovered by William Claxton Peppe in 1898 at a stupa site in Piprahwa.

### 5. INDUS-X Summit

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and Department of Defence of US are organising US-INDIA Defence Accelerator Ecosystem (INDUS-X) in Delhi. The Summit marks a significant milestone in collaborative efforts between the two countries. The first Summit was held in 2023 in the US. The Ambition of the Summit is to expand strategic technology partnerships and Defence Industrial Cooperation.

### 6. Mission Aspides launched by European Union

The European Union launched Mission Aspides in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and surrounding waters to protect commercial Vessels from attacks by Iran backed Houthi rebels. Under the Mission, Naval Warships and Airborne Early Warning systems would be sent to the affected areas. Countries like France, Germany, Italy and Belgium will participate in the Naval mission by providing ships.

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### 7. Tribal Violence in Papua New Guinea

Dozens of men have been shot dead in the remote highland region of Papua New Guinea over the Tribal Dispute. The deadly clashes are due to the influx of illegal firearms. Papua New Guinea is an island country in Southern-Western Pacific bordered by Indonesia, Australia and Solomon Islands. It is also the world's most linguistically diverse country with more than 800 languages.

### 8. 60th Munich Security Conference

The External Affairs Minister of India Shri S Jaishankar attended the 60th Munich Security Conference in Germany. The major concerns discussed at the conference was continued war in Ukraine and threats of NATO cohesion. The first Munich Security Conference was held in Munich, Germany in 1963 and it is a World's leading forum for debating international security policy.

### 9. India-Colombia sign MoU on in the field of successfully digital solutions

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and Colombia on sharing India's open sourced Digital Public Infrastructures. The major objective of the MoU is to promote digital transformation via India Stack. India Stack is a set of Application Programming Interface (APIs).

### 10. Greece legalised same sex Civil marriage

The European Nation on the north of Mediterranean Sea "Greece" becomes the first Orthodox Christian country to legalise same sex civil marriage. The bill drafted by the Center right Government of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis got support of 176

lawmakers in the 300 seat Parliament. Greece by passing of this historic bill becomes the 16th European Nation to legislate marriage equality.

### Sports

#### 1. Equestrian Anush Agarwalla claims Olympic Quota

The 24 year old Equestrian Anush Agarwalla secured a Paris Olympic quota following his good performances at four FEI events namely Wroclaw (73.485%), Kronenberg (74.4%), Frankfurt (72.9%) and Mechelen (74.2%). He won the Asian Games Bronze in 2023.

#### 2. Brazilian player Fonseca becomes youngest player to win ATP tour match

Brazilian Tennis Ace Joao Fonseca becomes 1st player born in 2006 and youngest player to win an ATP tour match. He defeated seventh seeded Arthur Fils 6-0, 6-4 at the RIP Open. He defeated 36 ranked Frenchmen at the clay court tournament in Rio De Janeiro.



#### 3. 8 year Old Indian born Ashwath becomes youngest to beat Grandmaster

8 year old Indian born Ashwath Kaushik becomes the youngest player to defeat grandmaster Jacek Stopa of Poland in classical chess at Burgdorfer Stadthaus Open in Switzerland. The young prodigy learned the game at the age of four and became World Under Eight Rapid Champion in 2022.

#### 4. Kula Mama Volleyball Tournament 2024

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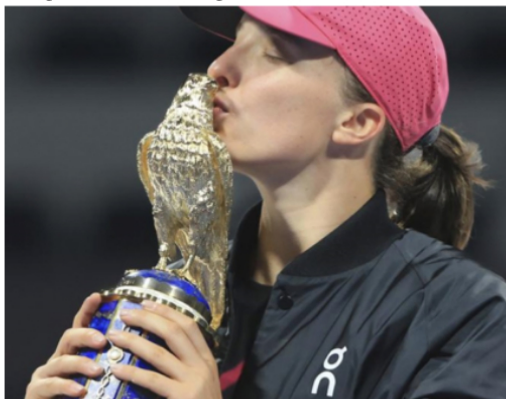
The Forest Department has organised Kula Mama Volleyball Totunament 2024 at Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra. The major objective of the organisation of the tournament is to spread awareness to save Tigers and pristine Forests. The Melghat Tiger Reserve is located at Gawilgarh Hill, Maharashtra.

#### 5. India won first Badminton Asia Team Championships (BATC) title

India defeated Thailand to win the Nation's first Badminton Asia Team Championships (BATC) title. India was levelled 2-2 before the teen prodigy Anmol Kharb defeated World Number 45 Pornpicha Choeikeewong 21-14, 21-9 in the final to help India win its maiden title.

#### 6. Iga Swiatek wins Qatar Open 2024

World Number One Iga Swiatek beats Elena Rybakina in the final of the Qatar Open 2024. The scoreline of the final match was 7-6(10/8), 6-2. With this win Swiatek becomes first player to win three straight titles at the same WTA event since Serena Williams completed a Miami Open Hat trick in 2013-2015.



#### 7. 4th edition Khelo India University Games 2023

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Anurag Thakur inaugurated the Khelo India University Games 2023 in Guwahati. The Games are being organised across seven sister states of North East from 19th February 2024 to 29th February 2024. More than 4500 athletes from 200 Universities will participate at the

event.

#### 8. Ashwin becomes 2nd Indian bowler to take 500 Test wickets

India's star off spinner Ravichandran Ashwin becomes second Indian bowler after Anil Kumble to take 500 test wickets. He became the ninth bowler overall to claim 500 test wickets. Ashwin achieved the feat on Day 2 of the Rajkot test against England after he dismissed English Opener Zak Crawley.

#### Person In News

#### 1. Shashi Tharoor conferred with France's top Civilian Honour

The Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor was recently conferred with France's top Civilian Honour "Chevalier de LA Légion d'Honneur" or "Knight of the Legion of Honour" at a ceremony in New Delhi. The diplomat turned politician was conferred the award at the French Embassy by French Senate President Gerard Larcher.

#### 2. LG Upendra Dwivedi takes over a Vice Chief of Indian Army

Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi, an alumnus of Sainik School, Rewa (Madhya Pradesh) was appointed as the New Vice Chief of Indian Army on February 19, 2024. Previously he was acting as the General Officer Commanding in Chief, Northern Command from 2022-24. He was accorded the Guard of Honour at the South Block Lawns.



Science and tech/Space/Defence

### 1. India's ChatGPT alternative Hanooman to be launched in March

The BharatGPT group in collaboration with Reliance Industries is set to launch its ChatGPT alternative named "Hanooman" in March 2024. It will place India as a global contender in cutting edge Generative language technologies. The AI Model is developed with the help of eight elite Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

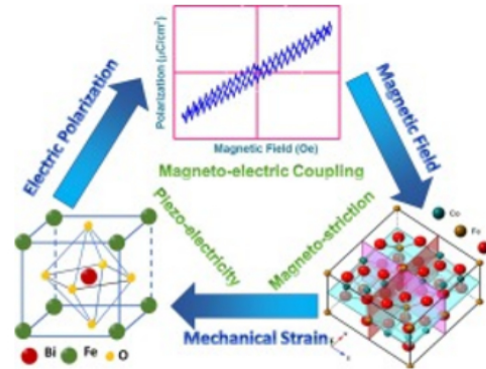
### 2. Solar Maximum

A new visualisation by the Extreme Ultraviolet Imager (EUI) instrument on ESA's Solar Orbiter shows activities on the sun's surface as it approaches Solar maximum in 2024. The solar maximum takes place on the sun's surface every 11 years due to strong and constantly shifting magnetic fields. Greater number of sunspots are observable on the surface during the period.

### 3. Unique properties uncovered in Magnetoelectric Multiferroics

Unique properties have been uncovered by Scientists in a novel mineral named "MnBi<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>". Unique mechanisms of electric polarisation via magnetic ordering have been identified which can be useful for Energy efficient data storage. Magnetoelectric multiferroics are special types of materials with

unique and rare properties. It is a mineral grantianite belonging to the manganese chalcogenide family.



### 4. VAYU SHAKTI-24 conducted in Rajasthan

The Indian Air Force conducted Exercise Vayu Shakti-24 in Pokhran range near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. The Chief Guest at the event was Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan. The Event was aimed at showcasing IAFs offensive lethality and precision targeting capability. Various assets of the Indian Air Force participated in the event like Chetak Helicopters, Rafael jets, C-17 etc.

### Miscellaneous

#### 1. Four Portals launched to revolutionise media sector

The Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shri Anurag Thakur launched four new portals namely Press Sewa Portal, Central Bureau of Communication Portal, Navigate Bharat Portal and National Register for Local Cable Operators to revolutionise the media landscape in India. It will enhance transparency and efficiency in government communication.

#### 2. National Science day observed on 28th February annually

The theme for the National Science Day which is to be observed on 28th February 2024 was released by Union Minister Jitendra Singh. The theme is "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat". The day is observed annually to mark the contributions of



scientists towards development of the country.

**NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY**  
28th Feb



Health/Agriculture/Environment

### 1. World's Largest snake discovered in Amazon

A National Geographic expedition has led to discovery of new species of Giant Anaconda "Northern Green Anaconda" in the Amazonian Rainforest. The World's largest snakes have been reclassified into two genetically distinct species namely Southern Green Anaconda and Northern Green Anaconda. The newly discovered Anaconda species measures 26 feet long and weighs 440 lbs.

### 2. Asia-Pacific 30 years behind to achieve SDG target

As per the report "Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2024" released by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Asia-Pacific region is 30 years behind to achieve the SDG target. At the current pace of growth the region will not attain 17 SDGs until 2062. Currently only 11% of the 116 measurable SDG targets out of 169 are on track.



### 3. Study of Rip Currents for safer beaches

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and India Space Research Organization (ISRO) have launched a project to study and issue operational forecasts alerts of rip currents. The Rip currents can be defined as strong flow of water running from a beach back to Open Ocean, sea or lake. Rip Currents are most well known Coastal hazards in beaches around the world.

### 4. Central Asian Flyway adopted at CMS COP 14

The Central Asian Flyway initiative introduced by India on 17th February 2024 at the 14th Meeting of Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 14) was adopted by member countries. The proposal was supported by Birdlife International and the governments of 30 countries from Russia to Maldives. The major aim of the Initiative is to restore and maintain favourable conservation status of migratory species populations.

### 5. New species Cliffside Bambootail discovered

A team of researchers have discovered New species of Damselfly named "Cliffside Bambootail" at Ponmudi Hills in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. The Ponmudi hills are also translated as Golden Hill or Golden Peak and is a part of Western Ghats mountain range. It is a significant discovery as for 160 years the Genus Phylloneura was considered monotypic.



### 6. Single species Action Plan adopted at CMS COP 14

The 14th Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 14) adopted the International Single Species Action Plan. The plan is being adopted for

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Conservation of Hawksbill Turtles in South East Asia and Western Pacific Ocean Region. The instrument is developed under the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). The IUCN status of Hawksbill Turtle is Critically Endangered.

#### 7. Russia developing Space based Anti Satellite Weapon

The US alleged that Russia is focusing on creating a nuclear anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon, designed to debilitate or destroy satellites in Orbit. The development of these types of weapons opens up possibilities of space being a future battlefield for militaries around the world. These anti-satellite weapons can be launched from air, low Orbit or even ground installations.

#### 8. New Crustacean Specie Parhyale Odian discovered

New species of Marine Amphipod, a shrimp-like Crustacean named "Parhyale Odian" has been discovered by Researchers in Odisha's Chilika Lagoon. Chilika Lake is Asia's biggest brackish water Lagoon on the eastern coast of India. The species is brown in colour and is around 8 millimetres in length with 13 pairs of legs.