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Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

1. CAR-T cell therapy launched

The President of India Shrimati Droupadi Murmu launched India's first Home-Grown Gene Therapy for cancer named CAR-T Cell therapy. The Launch took place at the campus of IIT Bombay. The Therapy is developed through collaboration between IIT Bombay and TATA Memorial Hospital in association with industry partner ImmunoACT.



2. Paira Cropping system losing importance

The Unique conservation Agriculture practice called Paira Cropping, commonly practised in Bihar, Eastern UP, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Odisha is losing importance in recent years due to Climate Change. It is a relay method and this system does not allow agronomic interventions such as Tillage, Weeding, Irrigation and Fertilizer. It is an efficient way of utilising resources for sustainable crop intensification and boosting land productivity.

3. Restoration project for Sannati Buddhist Site

The Sannati Buddhist Site discovered by the Archaeological Survey of India in the 1990s got a restoration project in 2022. The ancient Buddhist site is located on the Bank of River Bhima. The Sannati Ramamandal area was one of the major Buddhist centres flourished with the help of Emperor Ashoka. The site consists of a Mahastupa nearly 22 metres in diameter and rose to a height of 17 metres.

4. Biodegradable Microplastic

Scientists at University of California San Diego have created a plant based polymer that biodegrade at microplastic level. Microplastics are defined as extremely small pieces of plastic debris in the environment that are produced from disposal or breakdown of consumer products and industrial waste. The polymers can completely biodegrade within 7 months.

5. UPI Transactions surge 56%

As per the latest report released by payment service provider Worldline, the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transactions in India surged by 56% between July and December 2023. While card transactions saw a modest growth of 6%. Bharat QR (BQR) and UPI saw significant growth, underscoring the proliferation of digital payment options.

6. Postal ballot Facility for Poll duty personnel

The Election Commission has announced the implementation of postal ballot voting for personnel involved in election duty in the Kallakurichi District of Tamil Nadu. This method, also referred to as Absentee Voting, allows electors to submit their ballots by mail instead of voting in person at a polling station.

7. myCGHS app

Shri Apurva Chandra, the Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), unveiled the myCGHS application. The primary aim of this initiative is to improve access to Electronic Health Records, Information, and Resources for beneficiaries of the Central Government Health Scheme. The application was developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) Himachal Pradesh, in collaboration with the NIC Health Team.

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8. Muslim women have absolute right to extra Judicial divorce through Khula

The Supreme Court of India recently upheld two Kerala High Court verdicts regarding practice of Khula under Islamic law. The law stated that Muslim Women have absolute right to unilateral and extra Judicial divorce through Khula under Islamic law. The Khula practice provides a possibility of the woman returning the “Mehr” or reaching a financial statement with her husband as part of Agreement for ending the marriage.

9. Special agency to combat illegal lending apps “DIGITA”

The Central Bank of India, RBI is contemplating the establishment of a special agency named DIGITA to combat illegal lending apps. The major objective of the agency will be to verify digital lending apps and combat financial crimes. The IT Ministry has been provided with a list of 442 digital lending apps for Google’s Whitelisting by RBI.

10. 100 years of Vaikom Satyagraha

March 30, 2024 marks 100 years of India's first anti Caste movement “Vaikom Satyagraha”. The movement ran for 600 days and was the first among many temple entry movements in India. The movement was aimed at establishing the rights of the Oppressed Classes. The movement was launched on 30th March 1924.



11. IRRI-ISARC to develop low Methane rice varieties

The major focus of the International Rice Research Institute-South Asia Regional Centre (IRRI-ISARC) is to develop rice varieties with low Methane emissions. IRRI is World's premier research organisation aimed at improving the health and welfare of those who depend on rice based agri food systems. ISARC is dedicated to transforming and strengthening the rice based agri food system in the South Asia region.

12. President of India confers Bharat Ratna award

The President of India Shrimati Droupadi Murmu conferred the country's highest civilian award “Bharat Ratna” at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi. The event saw the presence of Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar, and various other notable figures. The award was conferred upon LK Advani, PV Narsimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh, Agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan and Karpoori Thakur posthumously.

13. GNPA to improve further by 2.1 percent by Financial Year 2025

A report by domestic rating agency Care Ratings stated that the Gross Non Performing Assets

(GNPA) of the Indian Banking system is to increase by 2.1 percent by the end of Financial Year 2025. NPA can be defined as a loan or advance where the principal or interest amount remains overdue for 90 days. GNPA surged 11.2 percent in FY18 from 3.8% in FY14 due to the Asset Quality Review process.

14. 39 Sewage treatment plants sanctioned under AMRUT scheme

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has sanctioned 39 Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme. The scheme was launched in 2015 and it focuses on development of basic infrastructure in the sector water supply, sewerage, septage management etc. The Plants will be established along a 55 km stretch between Narsingi and Gowrelly on the river Musi.

15. More than 70000 complaints received on C-Vigil app

The Election Commission of India's C-Vigil application has received over 79000 complaints since the announcement of General Elections 2024. The application enables citizens to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct and it uses GPS to track the location of the violation. The application has a feature to report the case of MCC violation anonymously and capture the live incidents only.



16. Panneer Thiratchai

The Cumbum Valley of Tamil Nadu also known as Grape city of South India contributes upto 85% of GI Tagged "Panneer Thiratchai" production in the country. It is a grape variety extremely popular among farmers because of quick growth and maturity. It was GI Tagged in 2023 and the grape are rich in Vitamins, Tartaric acid and antioxidants.

17. ECO-NIWAS Samhita (ENS) introduced by RETV

A metric measuring heat transfer through a buildings envelope namely "Residential Envelope Transmittance Value (RETV)" was introduced by the Eco-Niwas Samhita. The Eco-Niwas which stands for Energy Conservation-New Indian Way for Affordable and Sustainable Homes is a Residential Energy Conservation Building Code developed by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

18. Decision Support System 2.0

The Decision Support System developed by IITM, Pune will be relaunched with its 2.0 version from September 2024. The system identifies sources of pollution in Delhi's air and enhances air quality forecasting with updated 2023 emission inventory. The system will use VIIRS satellite for PM 2.5 predictions.

International

1. WHO launched S.A.R.A.H.

The World Health Organisation recently announced the launch of Smart AI Resource Assistant for Health (S.A.R.A.H.). It is a digital health promoter prototype powered by Generative artificial intelligence (AI). The prototype aims to provide an additional tool to people to realise their rights to health.

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2. 100 billion euro military fund for Ukraine by NATO

NATO secretary General Jens Stoltenberg proposed a military fund of 100 billion Euro for Ukraine extending for five years. The move will give Western alliance a more direct role in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. Most of the member nations of NATO provide weapons to Ukraine on a bilateral basis.

3. North Korea fires ballistic missiles into East sea

South Korea recently alleged that North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan. The Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea, is located in Western Pacific Ocean and is bounded by Japan and Sakhalin Island to the east and Russia and Korea to the west. The deepest point of the sea is Dohoku Seamount which is an underwater Volcano.

4. Matabari Pera Prasad, Rignai Pachara Textiles of Tripura get GI tag

The Matabari Pera Prasad and Rignai Pachara Textiles of Tripura have recently been included in the GI tag List thereby increasing the number of GI Products of Tripura from 2 to 4. The Coordinated efforts of TRLM team with NABARD and Padmashree awardee Sri Rajanikant from Varasi led to granting of Prestigious tags.



5. Romania and Bulgaria join Schengen Area

The East European Nations Romania and Bulgaria have partially joined Europe's ID check free travel zone known as the "Schengen Area" although checks at land borders remain intact. The Schengen Area was established in 1985 comprising 23 of 27 EU member countries. The area included 4 nations not part of the European Union namely Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

6. 18 sites added to the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network

The Executive Board of UNESCO recently added 18 sites to the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network list bringing the total number of geoparks to 213 in 48 countries. The countries where the new geoparks are situated are Brazil, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Spain. The UNESCO Global geopark designation which recognises Geological heritage of international significance was created in 2015.

7. Countries yet to implement steps to prevent misuse of Virtual Assets

The Intergovernmental body dedicated to combating Money Laundering and Terrorist financing, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recently stated that many countries are yet to fully implement its requirement aimed at preventing misuse of virtual assets and Virtual Asset service providers (VASPs). FATF was established in 1989 during the G7 Summit and is headquartered at Paris, France.

8. Russian Onyx Supersonic cruise Missile

The Russian Supersonic Cruise Missile "Onyx" has received new active homing heads which allows them to hit ground targets of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with high accuracy. The P-800 Onyx

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also known as Russian Brahmos can reach speeds upto 3000 kmph thereby difficult to interpret. The Missile is fired from the Bastion Coastal Missile defence complex or Russian Warships of the Black Sea Fleet (BSF).

9. Closing ceremony of International Year of Millets 2023

The Closing ceremony of International Year of Millets 2023 was organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) at its headquarters in Rome, Italy. The UNGA at its 75th session in March 2021 declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets following a proposal backed by more than 70 countries. The ceremony was organised in a Hybrid mode where dignitaries could participate in person as well as virtually.



10. Indians in Cambodia forcefully committing Cyber Frauds

The Ministry of External Affairs collaborated with the Government of Cambodia to rescue 250 Indians who were carrying out Cyber Frauds forcefully. More than 5000 Indians are reported to be victims of Cyber Slavery in Cambodia. The Fraudsters are reported to dupe People in India of at least 500 crore over the past 6 months.

11. Ownership of Katchatheevu Island

Tamil Nadu BJP Chief K Annamalai obtained a document through RTI application on the decision to cede Katchatheevu Island by the

previous Congress government and the dispute related to the Island. The document showcased India's wavering approach to the island dispute by the previous governments. The island is uninhabited and located in Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka and has been an issue of contention between India and Sri Lanka over its rights.

12. New database launched by India to record crimes against Peacekeepers

India launched a new database designed to record crimes against UN Peacekeepers at the second meeting of the India led Group of Friends (GOF). The Database seeks to promote accountability for crimes against Peacekeepers and monitor progress in holding perpetrators accountable. The GOF comprises 40 member countries with India, Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Morocco and Nepal as co-chairs.

Sports

1. Russian Wrestler Sadulaev barred from Paris Olympic Qualifiers

The two time Olympic Champion from Russia Abdulrashid Sadulaev has been barred from qualifiers of the 2024 Paris games. The major reason behind barring is being given as the Wrestlers support of the war in Ukraine. Sadulaev, also known as the Russian tank won Olympic Gold in 2016 in 86kg and 97kg titles in Tokyo 2021.

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2. Highest Viewership record in first 10 matches of IPL 2024

As per the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) data released by Disney star IPL 2024 records highest viewership in the first 10 matches. The watch time for the tournament skyrocketed to 8028 crore minutes, 20% higher than last year. It is the 17th season of the Indian Premier League.

3. Chennaiyin FC announces Strategic partnership with Norwich City

The Indian Super League (ISL) club signed a strategic partnership with English Club Norwich City. It is a three year Memorandum of Understanding focusing on fostering mutual growth, innovation and Collaboration in Football.

4. Hockey India Awards 2023

To celebrate the outstanding Indian hockey players from the previous calendar year, the Hockey India Awards 2023 were held in New Delhi. The Men's Player of the Year award was given to Hardik Singh and the Women's Player of the Year award was given to Salima Tete.

5. Mirabai Chanu qualifies for Paris Olympics

Indian Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu finished third in the Group B of IWF World Cup, therefore qualifying for the Paris Olympics. She won a Silver Medal in the Tokyo Olympics. Chanu lifted a total of 184 kg in the women's 49 kg Group B event of IWF World Cup.



6. Bonanza-Ebden clinch Miami Open 2024 title

The duo of Rohan Bopanna and Ebden won the finals of the Miami Open 2024 in the doubles category. They beat Ivan Dodig and Austin Krajicek with the final scores of 6-7(3), 6-3, 10-6. The duo retained its worlds number 1 title after the final win.

7. Sikki-Sumeeth pair crashes out of Spain masters 2024

The India Badminton doubles pair of N Sikki Reddy and B Sumeeth Reddy crashed out of the Spain Masters 2024. The duo lost the semifinals against Indonesian rivals Rinov Rivaldy and Pitha Haningtyas Mentari. The scoreline of the match was 21-17, 21-12 and the match lasted for just 29 minutes.

Person In News

1. LKA Chairman barred from taking Administrative actions

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The Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA) Chairman was recently barred from taking any “Administrative Actions” by the Ministry of Culture. The current Chairman of LKA is Nagdad, a Painter and printmaking artist from Kerala. He was appointed on the post on March 13, 2023 for a 3 year term. The Lalit Kala Akademi(LKA) was inaugurated on August 5th, 1954 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.



Science and tech/Space/Defence

1. Agni-Prime successfully test fired

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) along with Strategic Forces Command (SFC) recently flight tested the new generation ballistic missiles Agni-Prime from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha Coast. It is a nuclear capable Missile with a maximum range of 1000 to 2000 km.

2. Tidally locked super-Earth exoplanet confirmed

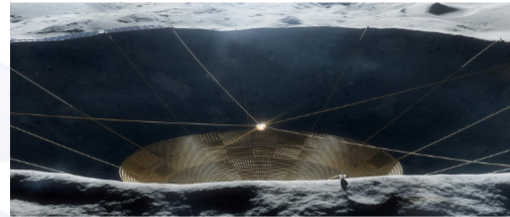
The first known observance of tidally locked super-Earth Exoplanet was confirmed by a team of astronomers and Astrophysicists. The name of the Exoplanet is LHS 3844b. A tidally locked planet in its orbit keeps the same face towards the star while the other side is cloaked to perpetual darkness. The Moon is tidally locked to Earth.

3. Nitrogen Fixing organelles

Scientists from the University of Rhode Island and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have identified symbiotic organisms that fix nitrogen and behave akin to organelles. Nitrogen-fixing bacteria, which are prokaryotic microorganisms, can convert atmospheric nitrogen gas into fixed nitrogen compounds like ammonia.

4. India's PRATUSH to be placed around Moon

Astronomers are set to place high resolution telescopes on the moon and around its orbit as Moon based instruments have a better chance of spotting a weak signal from the Universe's Dark ages. India's PRATUSH has been selected as among one of the Telescopes to be placed. PRATUSH stands for Probing Reionization of the Universe using Signal from Hydrogen.



Health/Agriculture/Environment

1. Carbon Fibre

India plans to manufacture Carbon Fibre for use in Aerospace, civil engineering and defence to get around the European Union Carbon Tax on Steel, alloy and metal products. Carbon Fibre is a critical material in technical Textiles that is known for high strength and lightweight properties. India does not produce Carbon Fibre and rely entirely on countries like the US, France, Japan and Germany for its imports.

2. Massive Earthquake Hits Taiwan

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Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China, experienced a significant earthquake measuring 7.2 magnitude on April 4, 2024. Situated along the Pacific 'Ring of Fire,' where approximately 90% of the world's earthquakes occur, Taiwan is prone to seismic activity. This recent event marks the largest earthquake to hit Taiwan in the past two decades. The epicenter of the earthquake was identified 18 kilometers south-southwest of Hualien county.

3. Negative Leap second

As per the new study published in science journal Nature, Earth's changing rotation may prompt clocks to skip a second, thereby necessitating "Negative Leap Second" around 2029. The melting ocean sheets have delayed adding that Negative Leap second to keep clocks aligned with Earth's rotation. The Leap second is added to Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) in order to synchronise a clock worldwide with the Earth's ever slowing rotation.

4. Clean Energy Transitions Programme annual Report

The Clean Energy Transitions Programme annual Report 2023 was recently published by the International Energy Agency (IEA). The report provides an overview of the programme's achievements over the past year. The Clean Energy Transitions Programme launched in 2017 is a flagship initiative of IEA aimed at accelerating progress toward a global net zero energy system.



5. Conservation of Caracal Species

The Caracal species also called Siya Gosh in India are on the verge of extinction in the country. They are the only other feline species ever used by humanity for hunting besides Cheetah. Caracal are nocturnal species found in several dozen countries across Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia. The species is conserved on Schedule 1 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

6. INDRA application

The Indian Naval Dynamic Resource for Weather Analysis(INDRA) application was launched by the Indian Navy at the METOC Seminar "MEGHAYAN 2024". The application is developed by BISAG (Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo Informatics) in coordination with the Directorate of Naval Oceanology and Meteorology. The allocation will help disseminate weather related information and forecasts.

7. 80% Environmental Funds remain unutilised

As per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) report submitted to National Green Tribunal (NGT), only 20% Funds of the Environment Protection Charge and Environmental Compensation collected for mitigation air pollution in Delhi have been utilised by CPCB. The CPCB is a statutory body established in 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and UT receives compensation broadly under two heads - Environment Protection Charge and Environmental Compensation.

8. Tropical Cyclone Gamane

The Madagascar Disaster Management Office recently said that a Tropical Cyclone named Gamane swept across the island of Madagascar

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killing 18 people and displacing thousands. The Cyclone made a landfall north of Vohemar with average winds of 150 kmph.

9. Indian Laurel Tree

The Indigenous knowledge of the Konda Reddy Tribe about Indian Laurel tree has proven to be resourceful. The Konda Reddy Tribe is a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group found in the Papikonda Hill range in Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh. The Tribe claims that the Indian Laurel Tree stores water in the summer. The Scientific name of Indian Laurel Tree is Terminalia Tomentosa and is found in Papikonda National Park.

