




20 March 2024

National and International News

<p>World Air Quality Report 2023</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the IQ Air's(Swiss air quality monitoring body) 2023 World Air Quality Report, India was declared as the third-most polluted country, following Bangladesh and Pakistan. • With an average annual PM2.5 concentration of 54.4 micrograms per cubic meter, India's air quality is a severe concern. • In 2022, India was ranked the eighth-most polluted country. <p>Top 50 Polluted Cities Feature Indian Metropolitans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of the report's list of the top 50 most polluted cities, a staggering 42 cities were located in India. • Begusarai in Bihar topped the chart as the most polluted metropolitan area in 2023, followed by Guwahati and Delhi. <p>Other Significant Findings of the Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report highlighted the air quality data gathered from 7,812 locations in 134 countries. • The top five most polluted countries in 2023 were Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Tajikistan, and Burkina Faso. • Seven countries achieved the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline of an average of 5 µg/m3 or less, namely Australia, Estonia, Finland, Grenada, Iceland, Mauritius, and New Zealand. • Africa remains deprived of air quality data, with one-third of the population lacking access. • Nine out of the top ten most polluted cities belong to India. • China recorded a 6.3% PM2.5 rise in 2023, amounting to 32.5 micrograms after experiencing declines for five consecutive years. • Canada emerged as the most polluted country in North America for the first time, with the region's 13 most polluted cities.
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Barberton Greenstone Belt



Context:

- A new study has **unearthed evidence of some of the earliest known earthquakes in 3.3-billion-year-old rocks**, revealing insights into the early days of Earth's plate tectonics.
- **The rocks also hint at the conditions present when life first evolved on our planet.**

About:

- The study focused on the **Barberton Greenstone Belt, a complex geological formation in southern Africa, which holds one of the most extensive records of Earth's history between 3.2 billion and 3.6 billion years ago.**
- Researchers discovered **similarities between the Barberton Greenstone Belt and younger rocks in New Zealand** that experienced earthquake-triggered submarine landslides along the Hikurangi subduction zone.
- The findings suggest that **massive earthquakes shaped the Barberton Greenstone Belt over millions of years, indicating that plate tectonics and associated geological events played a significant role in the early history of Earth.**
- While there is no consensus on when plate tectonics began, the researchers believe that earthquakes and the energy they released could have contributed to creating conditions suitable for the emergence and survival of life.

Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS)


Context:

- The **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** has issued a **trade notice highlighting the need for Indian exporters to follow new UK rules under the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) to avail duty concessions on shipments to the UK.**

Key features:

- The DCTS benefits **65 developing and least developed countries, excluding China.** Key features include reduced tariffs on various Indian products and simplified qualification processes with clear origin rules.
- India is in the **"Standard Preferences" category under DCTS**, enjoying benefits though not as extensive as those granted to the poorest countries.
- Products exceeding a specific export limit to the



	<p>UK don't receive lower tariffs and are removed from the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new 6% limit on the UK's total imports affects some Indian products like textiles, with £748 million worth of exports now taxed at the regular rate instead of the preferential rate under DCTS.
<p>Astronomers Detect Seven Potential 'Ghost Particles' Passing Through Earth</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientists, using data from the IceCube Neutrino Observatory in Antarctica, have possibly discovered evidence for astrophysical tau neutrinos, often termed "ghost particles" due to their elusive nature. <p>Key points: Neutrinos: Neutrinos are the most abundant particles that have mass in the universe. Every time atomic nuclei come together (like in the sun) or break apart (like in a nuclear reactor), they produce neutrinos. A neutrino is a fermion that interacts only via weak interaction and gravity.</p> <p>IceCube Neutrino Observatory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IceCube Neutrino Observatory is the first detector of its kind, designed to observe the cosmos from deep within the South Pole ice. • An international group of scientists responsible for the scientific research makes up the IceCube Collaboration. • IceCube searches for nearly massless subatomic particles called neutrinos. • These high-energy astronomical messengers provide information to probe the most violent astrophysical sources: events like exploding stars, gamma-ray bursts, and cataclysmic phenomena involving black holes and neutron stars.
<p>Sangita kalanidhi award</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sangita Kalanidhi award for T.M. Krishna, Nriya Kalanidhi for Neena Prasad. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sangita Kalanidhi, the most prestigious award in Carnatic music, is bestowed by the Madras Music Academy. • Instituted in 1942, it comprises a gold medal and a birdu patra (citation), symbolizing excellence. • This award is a significant milestone in the realm



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of fine arts.

- The title, which means "music, art, treasure, or ocean," was conceptualized by the then President of the Academy, KV Krishnaswami Iyer.

Kerala Regional News

International Day of Happiness



Context:

- Every **March 20th**, the world celebrates the **International Day of Happiness**.
- It was established by the **United Nations in 2012**
- It recognizes **happiness as a fundamental human goal** and the importance of well-being for all.
- It **highlights the link between happiness, sustainable development, and a balanced approach to economic growth**.
- The world **first celebrated** the International Day of Happiness on **March 20th, 2013**.

Theme 2024:

- This year's theme is- **"Reconnecting for Happiness: Building Resilient Communities"**

Prabha Varma bags Saraswati Samman



Context:

- Noted **Malayalam poet Prabha Varma** has been honored with the prestigious **Saraswati Samman for 2023**.
- His work, "**Roudra Sathwikam**," a novel in verse, was recognized for its exploration of the conflict between art and power.
- This win marks a significant moment, as **it's the first time a Malayalam literary work has received the Saraswati Samman in twelve years**.


Green protocol to be followed during polls in Kozhikode

Context:

- To **minimize environmental impact during elections**, Kozhikode follows a **Green Protocol** outlined by the Election Commission.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All political parties have been intimated about the guidelines to be followed, while polling officers and other officials will be trained on it <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-friendly materials: Notices and polling booth materials are made from recycled or biodegradable sources. Ditching plastic: Officials are encouraged to avoid using plastic water bottles and food containers. Cleanliness campaign: Littering around polling booths is strictly prohibited.
<p>Manjummel Boys becomes first Malayalam film to enter ₹200-crore club</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Malayalam film "Manjummel Boys" has achieved a historic feat by becoming the first film from the industry to enter the coveted ₹200-crore club at the global box office. This survival drama, directed by Chidambaram, surpassed the previous record set by "2018: Everyone is a Hero" (2023). "Manjummel Boys" achieved this milestone in just 26 days, showcasing its immense popularity. The film's success is a testament to the growing reach and power of Malayalam cinema.
<p>World Oral Health Day</p>  <p>World Oral Health Day 20 March</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Oral Health Day is observed annually on March 20th This day raises awareness about the critical role oral hygiene plays in overall health. This day aims to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to maintain good oral health through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brushing and flossing regularly Limiting sugary drinks and unhealthy foods Scheduling regular dental checkups <p>Theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2024 theme is "A Happy Mouth is a Happy Body" It emphasizes the connection between oral health and well-being.

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