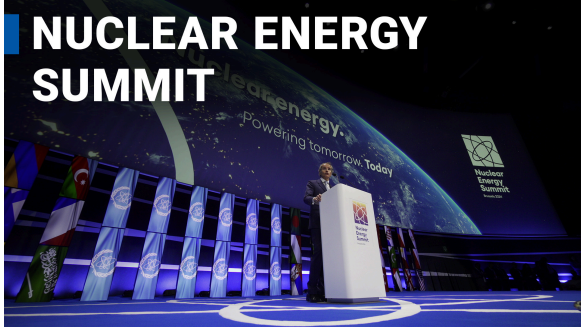




30 March 2024

National and International News

<p>Nuclear Energy Summit</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World leaders convened in Brussels on 21st March for the inaugural Nuclear Energy Summit, emphasizing nuclear energy's role in tackling global challenges like reducing fossil fuel usage, enhancing energy security, and stimulating economic development. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised jointly by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Belgium. Co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Belgium Alexander De Croo and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi, the Summit will be the highest-level meeting to date exclusively focused on the topic of nuclear energy. The Summit follows nuclear energy's landmark inclusion in the Global Stocktake during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai in December 2023. Aligned with the launch of the IAEA's Atoms4NetZero initiative. <p>India's Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India is set to have nuclear energy a significant share in the electricity mix by the year 2047 when India celebrates 100 years of independence. As a medium-term target, it is set to achieve tripling nuclear power generation capacity by 2030 from around 7.5 GW at present.
<p>Samudra Paheredar</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Coast Guard ship Samudra Paheredar, a specialized pollution control vessel, arrived at Manila Bay, Philippines on Sunday for a three-day visit. <p>Purpose of Visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of ICG Marine Pollution Response capabilities. Shared concern and resolve towards marine pollution in the ASEAN region.



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- Bolstering bilateral cooperation with the **Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)**.
- The ICG ship is on an **overseas deployment to ASEAN countries** namely the **Philippines, Vietnam, and Brunei** from 25 March to 12 April 2024.
- The deployment is the **third in a row by the Indian Coast Guard to ASEAN countries**.
- Earlier in the year 2023, ICG **pollution control vessels visited Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia** as part of the initiative.

Samudra Paheredar Overview:

- Stationed on the **East Coast of India in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**.
- Under the Command of Deputy Inspector General **Sudhir Ravindran**.
- Successfully undertaken various **Coast Guard operations including Pollution Response, IMBL/EEZ surveillance, counter-transnational crimes, and Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR)**.

CoViNet



Context:

- WHO has launched **CoViNet, a global network for coronaviruses**, to coordinate **global expertise and capacities for early and accurate detection**, monitoring, and assessment of SARS-CoV-2, MERS-CoV, and other novel coronaviruses.

Key points:

- CoViNet is a network of **36 global laboratories from 21 countries across all 6 WHO regions**, with expertise in **human, animal, and environmental coronavirus surveillance**.
- CoViNet expands on the **initial focus of the WHO COVID-19 reference laboratory network**, established during the early days of the pandemic, to now include a broader range of coronaviruses such as MERS-CoV and potential new coronaviruses.
- Representatives of the laboratories met in **Geneva on 26 – 27 March to finalize an action plan for 2024-2025**, aimed at better equipping WHO Member States for early detection, risk assessment, and response to coronavirus-related health challenges.
- The CoViNet meeting brings together **global**



experts in human, animal, and environmental health, using a comprehensive One Health approach to monitor and assess coronavirus evolution and spread.

- **Impact on WHO's Work:** Data generated through CoViNet will guide the work of WHO's Technical Advisory Groups on Viral Evolution (TAG-VE) and Vaccine Composition (TAG-CO-VAC), ensuring that global health policies and tools are based on the latest scientific information.

Afanasy Nikitin Seamount



Context:

- India has applied to the **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** in Jamaica for rights to explore two vast tracts in the Indian Ocean seabed.
- One of these regions, the **Afanasy Nikitin Seamount (AN Seamount)**, is rich in cobalt and is also claimed by Sri Lanka under different laws.
- India's application is partly motivated by reports of Chinese vessels conducting reconnaissance in the same area.

ISA:

- The **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** is an autonomous international organization established in 1994.
- It regulates mining and related activities in the international seabed beyond national jurisdiction, covering most of the world's oceans.
- The ISA was established upon the entry into force of the **1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, which sets out international law regarding territorial waters, sea lanes, and ocean resources.
- The ISA is responsible for granting licenses for the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the international seabed, regulating activities related to these endeavors, and ensuring compliance with international standards and guidelines.
- It also promotes fair and efficient utilization of mineral resources,


About:

- The AN Seamount is a structural feature in the **Central Indian Basin**, located approximately 3,000 km from India's coast, and contains rich deposits of cobalt, nickel, manganese, and copper.
- Countries have exclusive rights up to 200 nautical miles from their borders, including the underlying seabed.
- Regions beyond this limit are considered 'high sea' and open for exploration with ISA permission.
- The ISA is currently reviewing India's application for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crust, seeking clarification due to the overlap with Sri Lanka's claim.
- India presented scientific evidence in Jamaica to support its exploration claims, with a decision expected later this year.
- India has also applied for permission to explore the **Carlsberg Ridge** for polymetallic sulphides, which are rich in copper, zinc, gold, and silver.
- India has staked a claim for its continental shelf up to 350 nautical miles but awaits approval, having previously secured exploration rights in the Central Indian Ocean.

Seamounts



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<p>ensuring benefits for all stakeholders involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamounts are underwater mountains with pointed summits that rise from the seafloor but do not reach the ocean's surface. They are volcanic in origin and can be 3,000-4,500 meters tall. The Emperor Seamount, an extension of the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean, is a well-known example. <p>Guyots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guyots are flat-topped seamounts that show evidence of gradual subsidence through stages to become flat-topped submerged mountains. It is estimated that more than 10,000 seamounts and guyots exist in the Pacific Ocean alone. <p>Mid-oceanic ridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mid-oceanic ridge is composed of two chains of mountains separated by a large depression. The mountain ranges can have peaks as high as 2,500 meters, and some even reach above the ocean's surface.
<p>Southern Africa's SEAMA Ecoregion</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The South East Africa Montane Archipelago (SEAMA) is a newly recognized ecoregion in southern Africa. Recent studies reveal a rich biodiversity in SEAMA, yet it faces urgent conservation challenges. <p>Life in SEAMA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAMA is a newly recognized ecoregion stretching from northern Mozambique to Mount Mulanje in Malawi. The region is home to numerous previously undocumented species, including 127 plants, 45 vertebrates, and 45 invertebrates. SEAMA boasts of two endemic genera of plants and reptiles and 22 strictly endemic reptile species, mostly threatened by habitat loss. <p>Conservation Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite its ecological significance, SEAMA is experiencing one of the highest deforestation rates in Africa. Since 2000, SEAMA has lost 18% of its primary humid forest cover, with rates reaching up to 43% in some areas. The major causes of deforestation include



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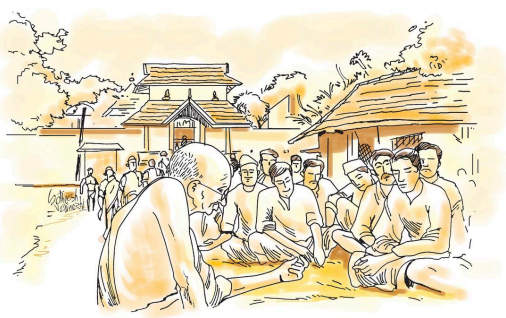
	<p>slash-and-burn agriculture and charcoal production, necessitating conservation agriculture and sustainable livelihood alternatives.</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAMA's diverse ecosystems and species highlight its global biological importance, warranting immediate conservation efforts to mitigate threats and preserve its rich biodiversity.
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Kerala Regional News

<p>Thrissur replaces Palakkad as hottest in Kerala</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thrissur has replaced Palakkad as the hottest district in Kerala this year, recording the highest temperature in the state. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IMD predicts that temperatures in Thrissur will reach 40 degrees Celsius soon. Other districts like Kollam and Palakkad are also expected to experience temperatures of around 39 degrees Celsius. The hot weather is expected to continue in Kerala until March 31, excluding hilly areas.
<p>International Surfing Fest</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The International Surfing Fest in Varkala, Kerala, starting on March 29, aims to promote surfing and adventure tourism. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected to have 100 domestic and foreign participants Organized in association with International Surfing Association, KATPS, DTPC, and Surfing Federation of India <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Kerala a premier surfing destination Promote Varkala as a global water sports hub. <p>Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First surfing festival in India in 2024



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<p>Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) Struggles with Soaring Power Demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected to boost adventure tourism in Kerala. <p>Context: Power consumption in Kerala hit a record high of 104.63 million units (MU) on Wednesday, with a peak demand of 5,197 MW.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The KSEB requires Rs 22 crore daily to purchase power from the central exchange. The state government has agreed to cover 75% of the board's losses, amounting to Rs 767.71 crore, from the previous fiscal year. The board expects a surge in power demand as the Lok Sabha election campaign intensifies. Despite the Kerala Water Authority's decision to settle its Rs 2,068 crore dues over ten installments, the financial situation remains challenging for KSEB. KSEB has requested a Rs 1,500-crore financial package from the state government. To manage the current situation, KSEB advises consumers to avoid using high-power devices like pump sets, washing machines, and air conditioners during peak evening hours.
<p>Vaikom Satyagraha</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 'Vaikom Satyagraha' today, one of its most supported and widely accepted protests. This event not only challenged caste oppression but also shattered the social norms of the Kingdom of Travancore. Start Date: March 30, 1924. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaikom Satyagraha, was a nonviolent agitation for access to the prohibited public environs of the Vaikom Temple in the Kingdom of Travancore. Kingdom of Travancore was known for its rigid and oppressive caste system. Led by prominent Congress leaders like T K Madhavan, K Kelappan, K P Kesava Menon, George Joseph, and the influential E V Ramasamy Periyar. Objective: Aimed to dismantle barriers preventing backward caste Hindus from accessing public roads around Vaikom Temple.



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- Under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance, a compromise was reached with Regent Sethu Lakshmi Bayi.
- **Sri Narayana Guru** criticized the compromise, emphasizing that the real motive was not just to access the forbidden roads but also to enter the temple itself.
- **In 1936, the Temple Entry Proclamation** granted access to the eastern road and entry into the temple for backward castes, marking a monumental shift towards inclusivity and equality.

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