




27 December 2023

International & National News

<p><b>Aerogel fibre</b></p>	<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inspired by the structure of polar bear fur, researchers present a <b>knittable aerogel fibre</b>.</li><li>• The fibers are <b>washable, dyeable, durable, and well-suited</b> to be used in advanced textiles.</li><li>• This allowed the researchers to test them in a sweater with impressive thermal insulation, among other features.</li><li>• Aerogels are an <b>ideal material for thermal insulation</b>.</li><li>• Encapsulated aerogel fiber has <b>excellent thermal insulation</b> while also being mechanically robust.</li></ul>
<p><b>West Antarctic Ice Sheet</b></p> 	<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Genetic analyses of an <b>Antarctic octopus</b> show that the <b>West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS) collapsed</b> during the Last Interglacial about 1,29,000 to 1,16,000 years ago when temperatures were only about 1 degree C warmer than preindustrial levels.</li><li>• The findings suggest that WAIS collapse and resultant sea-level rise could be caused by even the minimal temperature rises.</li><li>• Total WAIS collapse would have devastating global ramifications — it could raise the <b>global sea level by roughly 3 to 5 meters</b>.</li></ul>
<p><b>India-Maldives ties on hydrographic survey</b></p>	<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Maldives Cabinet decided against renewing a <b>Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)</b> with India for cooperation in hydrography.</li><li>• The agreement, signed in 2019, is due to expire in 2024</li></ul> <p><b>About hydrography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is the <b>science of studying oceans, seas, and other water bodies</b>, by compiling and analyzing data, maps, and charts.</li><li>• Branching off from applied sciences, it looks at <b>measuring and describing the physical attributes of water bodies</b> and predicting how they might change over time.</li></ul>



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- While it is said to be undertaken primarily for the safety of navigation, it also supports other activities, such as economic development, security and defence, scientific research, and environmental protection.
- Hydrographical measurements include **tidal, current and wave information.**

### India's expertise

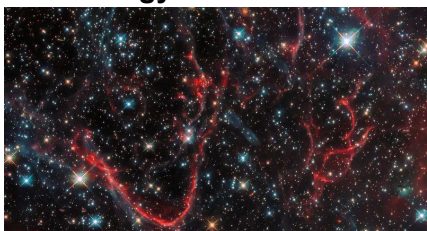
- India has been an active member of the **International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)** since 1955.
- The **Indian Naval Hydrographic Department (INHD)** was established in 1874 in Kolkata.
- It is the **nodal agency for hydrographic surveys** and has a fleet of indigenously built modern survey ships. India partners with many countries in the Indian Ocean Region and African and East Asian countries such as Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania, Maldives, Mozambique, Vietnam, Myanmar, Kenya, and Sri Lanka.
- Personnel from 39 countries have trained at the **National Institute of Hydrography, functioning under the INHD.**

### Chavittu Natakam



- Chavittu Natakam is a **colourful and vigorous theatre form**
- It is considered to be a folk art form **noted for its attractive make-up of characters**, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures, and well-defined body movements.
- It is believed that the art form flourished at **Kodungalloor in Kerala with the spread of Christianity.**
- The Portuguese are supposed to have introduced this art form in Kerala.
- **Chinna Thampi Pilla and Vedanayakan Pilla** are considered to be the originators of this art form.

### Dark Energy



- Dark Energy is a **hypothetical form of energy** that exerts a negative, repulsive pressure, behaving like the opposite of gravity.
- It is **causing the rate of expansion of our universe to accelerate over time**, rather than to slow down.
- That's contrary to what one might expect from a universe that began in the Big Bang.



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### Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant

#### Context

India and Russia signed some “very important” agreements related to the **construction of the future power-generating units** of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant.

#### Key points

- The Kudankulam nuclear power plant, **India’s largest, is being built in Tamil Nadu** with the technical assistance of Russia.
- The **construction began in March 2002**.
- Since February 2016, the first power unit of the Kudankulam NPP has been steadily operating at its design capacity of 1,000 MW.
- The plant is expected to start **operating at full capacity in 2027**.

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