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National & International News

Tropical Cyclone

Context:

- In a recent research paper published in the Proceedings of the **National Academy of Sciences**, a proposal was made to **modify the Saffir-Simpson (SS) wind scale**.
- The suggested modification involves **linking Category 5 to peak wind speeds ranging between 252 and 309 km/hour**, with the addition of a new **Category 6 for wind speeds exceeding 309 km/hour**.

Key points:

- Tropical cyclones are also called hurricanes or typhoons, depending on the region.
- A tropical cyclone is a rapidly rotating storm that begins over tropical oceans, and they can vary in speed, size, and intensity.
- Tropical cyclones are the second-most dangerous natural hazards, after earthquakes.

Saffir-Simpson (SS) wind scale

- The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a **1 to 5** rating based only on a hurricane's maximum sustained wind speed.
- This scale does not take into account **other potentially deadly hazards such as storm surges, rainfall flooding, and tornadoes**.

RBI Commemorates its 90th year



Context:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was established **under the RBI Act, of 1934, and began operations on April 1, 1935**. This year marks its **90th anniversary**.

Key points:

- The Reserve Bank's evolution as an institution has been closely intertwined with the **development of the Indian economy**.
- From being a **central bank primarily concerned with the allocation of scarce resources** during the planning period, the Reserve Bank has transitioned into being an **enabler for the market economy**.
- The path-breaking structural reforms are the **enactment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and the adoption of Flexible Inflation Targeting**.



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- Moving towards RBI@100, the Reserve Bank remains focused on **ensuring a stable and strong financial system that would act as a bedrock for our country's economic progress.**

About:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was established on **April 1, 1934, following recommendations from the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance.**
- Its primary goal is to maintain the country's monetary stability. Operations began on **April 1, 1935, with Sir Osborne Smith as its first Governor.**
- The RBI has seen **26 Governors to date**, with Shaktikanta Das currently serving as Governor since October 2021.
- Initially located in **Kolkata, the Central Office was moved to Mumbai in 1937.**

Closing Ceremony of International Year of Millets



Context:

- The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** recently hosted the closing ceremony of the **International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023** at its headquarters in Rome.

Key points:

- Throughout the year, the celebration highlighted **millets' nutritional benefits, their adaptability to adverse climates, and their role in creating sustainable market opportunities.**
- Millets are **small-grained, annual, warm-weather cereals** belonging to the grass family.
- **In India, Jowar (Sorghum), Bajra (Pearl Millet), and Ragi (Finger millet) are the important millets cultivated.**
- These crops are particularly important in **semiarid tropics due to low rainfall and poor soil fertility.** Compared to major cereal crops, millets have higher nutrient content and are tolerant to drought and extreme weather conditions.

Hume AI

Context:

- Hume AI is an advanced conversational AI chatbot powered by its **empathic large language model (eLLM).**
- **New York-based startup Hume AI** launched the **first voice AI with emotional intelligence** which can generate conversations for the emotional well-being of its users.

Key points:

- Unlike traditional AI, **Hume emphasizes the tones of voice behind words to understand different emotions.**



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- It can emulate tones across **23 different emotions**, including **admiration, adoration, and frustration**, to **generate human-like conversations**.
- The chatbot is trained on data from millions of human conversations worldwide to understand voice tonality, human reflexes, and feelings.
- **Responses are optimized in real time based on the user's emotional state.**

Benefits and Applications:

- Hume's product is gaining recognition for its potential uses in various fields such as robotics, healthcare, and wellness.
- AI assistants powered by **Hume's eLLM could not only engage in conversations but also assist in daily tasks.**
- This technology opens up possibilities for AI assistants to understand user frustrations, offer genuine emotional support, and empathize with complaints, according to industry experts.

International Year of Camelids



Context:

- **2024 is designated by the UN as the International Year of Camelids.**

Key points:


- These animals, including **camels, llamas, alpacas, vicuñas, and guanacos**, play a crucial role in the lives of millions of families, particularly pastoralists, living in **dryland and mountainous rangeland ecosystems worldwide.**
- The Year aims to **raise awareness among the public and policymakers about the vital role of camelids in ecosystem protection, biodiversity conservation, food security, and climate change adaptation.**
- The resolution for the International Year of Camelids was proposed by **Bolivia and presented by Ecuador**, the Country Chair of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), at the UN General Assembly on 17 October 2017.
- **The resolution was approved upon recommendation by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN).**
- The visual identity of the IYC was unveiled at a side event titled **"Towards the International Year of Camelids: perspectives and challenges"** during the FAO Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation in September



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| | <p>2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO officially launched the IYC 2024 on 4 December 2023, in Rome, Italy. • The first international event of the IYC2024 was the International Workshop on Camelid Pastoralism, held on 5–10 January 2024, in Sadri, Rajasthan, India, hosted by Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS), the League for Pastoral Peoples (LPP), and the Godwar camel pastoralist milk producers. |
| <p>Katchatheevu Island Dispute</p>  | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The controversy surrounding Katchatheevu Island's transfer to Sri Lanka has resurfaced with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent remarks on social media. <p>Background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historical background of Katchatheevu, a small, uninhabited island located in the Palk Strait, between India and Sri Lanka, adds complexity to its political significance, particularly in Tamil Nadu. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katchatheevu, a 285-acre island, has been a point of contention since the early medieval period, transitioning through control by various entities, including the Jaffna kingdom, the Ramnad zamindari, and eventually becoming part of the Madras Presidency during British rule. • Disputes over its ownership persisted into the 20th century, with both India and Sri Lanka laying claim to it. • In 1974, then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, as part of the Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime agreement, relinquished India's claim over Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka. • The decision, perceived by many as unilateral and without consulting Tamil Nadu, sparked protests. • Despite provisions allowing Indian fishermen access to the island, issues regarding fishing rights remained ambiguous, leading to ongoing tensions between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen. |

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