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5 April 2024

National & International News


<p>Govt. to record parents' religion to register births</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government is set to update its birth registration process by requiring parents to separately declare their religion. This change, outlined in Model Rules by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, will necessitate State governments to adopt and notify these rules for implementation. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023, passed by Parliament on August 11 last year, mandates the maintenance of a national birth and death database, which may be used to update various records, including the National Population Register (NPR), electoral rolls, Aadhaar numbers, ration cards, passports, and driving licenses. Previously, only the family's religion was noted in birth registers. The new "Form No.1-Birth Report" will expand the religion column to include the "religion of father" and "religion of mother," as well as for parents of an adopted child. All births and deaths must now be digitally registered through the Centre's portal for the Civil Registration System (crsorgi.gov.in), as per the law effective since October 1 last year.
<p>Manufacturing PMI rises to 16-year high</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's manufacturing sector showed strong performance in March 2024, driven by robust production and sales, according to a monthly survey. The HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) reached a 16-year high of 59.1 in March, up from 56.9 in February 2024. This marks the 33rd consecutive month of growth in manufacturing output. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an economic indicator derived from monthly surveys of various companies. It reflects trends in both manufacturing and services sectors and indicates whether market conditions, as perceived by purchasing managers, are expanding, contracting, or stable.



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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMI is closely watched as an indicator of business activity and helps predict a country's economic health. • There are two types of PMI: Manufacturing PMI and Services PMI, with a combined index also being used.
<p>Leap Second</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Earth's slowing rotation may lead to the first-ever negative leap second in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), according to a recent study published in Nature. • This phenomenon is attributed to climate change, which is causing the melting of ice caps and rising sea levels, resulting in a slower Earth rotation. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leap seconds are added to UTC to keep it synchronized with Earth's rotational speed over millions of years. • If Earth continues to rotate slower, a UTC minute might need to be 61 seconds long for the planet to catch up. • Initially scheduled for 2026, the need for a leap second has been postponed to 2029, marking the first negative leap second. • This adjustment poses a challenge, as time meteorologists are uncertain how to cope with a missing second, as stated by Felicitas Arias, former director of the Time Department at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leap seconds have been used since 1972 to align official time with atomic clocks due to Earth's inconsistent rotation speed. • However, a panel of scientists and government representatives decided in 2022 to end leap seconds by 2035 due to complications in computing caused by leap seconds. • The exact timing of a negative leap second is uncertain, contingent upon Earth's current rotation rate. • The International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service will determine when a leap second will be introduced based on the Earth's ongoing rotation speed. • Astrogeophysicist Christian Bizouard noted that the speculation regarding the need for a negative leap second hinges on the Earth's rotation continuing at its current rate.
<p>SCORES 2.0</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has launched an upgraded version of SCORES, its online system for handling investor complaints.



বাংলা



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new version aims to improve the efficiency of the complaint redressal process by introducing automated routing and oversight by designated authorities. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SCORES (SEBI Complaint Redressal System) is an online platform where investors can lodge complaints related to the securities market.• It was initially launched in June 2011.• The enhanced version of SCORES enhances the investor complaint redressal mechanism by introducing features such as auto-routing, auto-escalation, and monitoring by designated bodies, reducing complaint resolution timelines," Sebi stated. <p>Features of Sebi SCORES 2.0</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new version of SCORES includes automated routing of complaints to the relevant regulated entity, reducing delays in complaint processing.• Other features include standardized timelines for complaint resolution (21 calendar days from receipt of complaint) and monitoring of complaint resolution by designated bodies.• The new version also offers two levels of review: first by the designated body and, if needed, a second review by Sebi.• Additionally, complaints will be auto-escalated to the next level if the regulated entity or designated body fails to adhere to prescribed timelines.• Integration with the KYC Registration Agency database has been introduced for easy investor registration on SCORES.
<p>VVPAT</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In recent developments, the Supreme Court has announced its decision to consider a series of petitions aimed at directing the Election Commission of India to implement mandatory cross-verification procedures for Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) prior to the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.• This process entails the thorough counting of all Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips alongside the electronic count. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduced during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system provides an additional layer of transparency and verification to the electoral process.• Linked directly to the EVM, the VVPAT produces a paper slip visible to the voter, displaying the selected party's name and symbol.



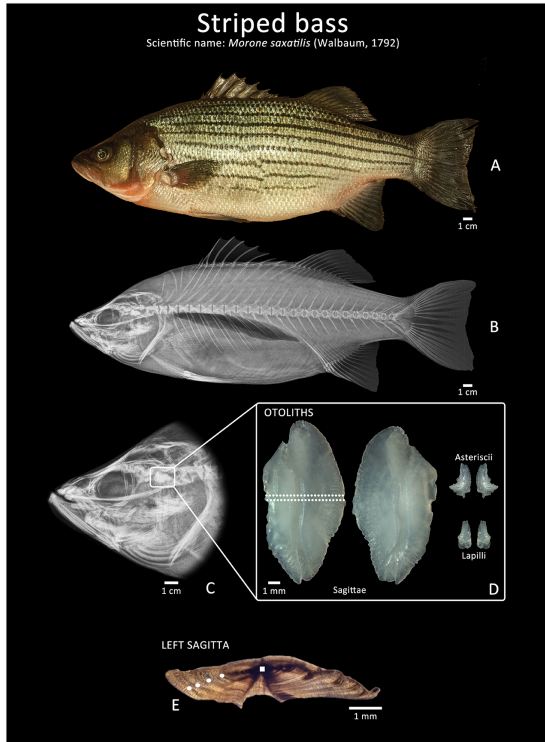
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- This allows voters to **confirm the accuracy of their vote, with a transparent window facilitating visual confirmation of the printed slip.**
- The securely stored paper slips serve as tangible evidence in the event of electoral disputes, ensuring the integrity of the voting process.

Fish otolith ornaments



Context:

- Ornamental jewelry made from **fish otoliths has recently entered the market, created by a group of enthusiastic fisherwomen in Vizhinjam.**
- These women were trained by scientists from the **Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).**

Otoliths:

- Otoliths are **hard, calcium carbonate structures located behind the brain of bony fish.**
- They are **small, feather-like flakes** that can be fashioned into **jewelry.**
- Among fish, halibut otoliths are larger, making them more commonly used for this purpose.
- Otoliths have been historically regarded as **lucky stones by the Romans and Egyptians and are still utilized in countries like Brazil.**
- They have been worn as protective amulets and fashioned into jewelry.
- Otoliths can be stored in test tubes or vials, either dry or in a clarifying liquid.
- Another method is to affix them with transparent nail varnish to a slide or with two-sided sticky tape to a sheet of acetate.

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