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## Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

02 November 2023 – Daily Current Affairs

<b>Access to high-speed Internet</b>	<p><b>Context</b> Prime Minister hailed telecom operators' progress in spreading 5G coverage in urban centres, saying that over <b>80% of India's urban population</b> now had access to the high-speed technology.</p> <p><b>Key points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Within a year of 5G launch, about <b>4 lakh 5G base stations</b> have been built in India</li><li>• India is exporting about <b>₹2 lakh crore</b> in electronics manufacturing</li><li>• India is not only rapidly expanding 5G in India, but are also moving towards becoming a leader <b>in the field of 6G</b>.</li></ul>
<b>7.5% dip in active workforce under MGNREGS, says study</b>	<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of active workers under the <b>Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)</b> has dipped by <b>7.5%</b>, according to a data analysis for the period April to September 2023 by <b>LibTech India</b>, a consortium of academics and activists.</li><li>• The workforce has reduced from 15.49 crore in the previous financial year to 14.33 crore, as per data available till October 6, 2023.</li></ul>
<b>Thallium as a murder weapon</b>	<p><b>Context</b> In Mahagaon village in <b>Gadchiroli district</b> of Maharashtra, two women allegedly killed five family members by lacing their food with poison in the form of thallium.</p> <p><b>About thallium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is a chemical element with the atomic number 81, was discovered by <b>Sir William Crookes in 1861</b>.</li><li>• It is a soft, heavy, inelastic metal.</li><li>• Thallium is <b>tasteless and odourless</b> and has been used by murderers as a difficult-to-detect poison.</li><li>• <b>Appearance:</b>A soft, silvery-white metal that tarnishes easily.</li></ul> <p><b>Sources:</b></p>



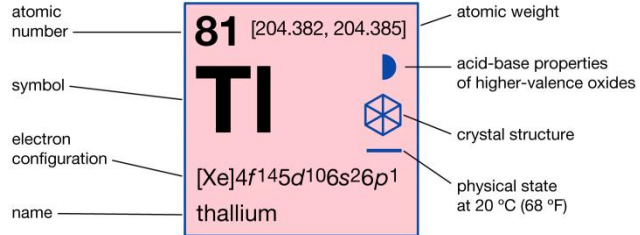
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- It is found in **trace amounts in the earth's crust.**
- It is found in several ores. One of these is pyrites, which is used to produce sulfuric acid. Some thallium is obtained from pyrites, but it is mainly obtained as a by-product of copper, zinc and lead refining.

### Thallium



Other metals	Solid
Hexagonal	Weakly basic

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### Uses of Thallium

- Thallium's utilization is restricted due to its **toxic nature.**
- **Thallium sulfate**, once a rodent killer, is now banned for household use in many developed nations.
- It finds application in the **electronics industry for photoelectric cells.**
- Thallium oxide is used to create **high-refraction glass and low-melting glass.**
- It is also used in the manufacturing of **low temperature thermometers, and imitation jewels.**

### Health Hazards:

- Thallium can damage the nervous system causing headaches, weakness, and irritability. Repeated exposures can cause tremors, hallucinations, coma and death.

### A new mushroom species named *Candolleomyces albosquamosus*

### Context

- A new mushroom species named ***Candolleomyces albosquamosus*** has been discovered in the **Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI)** at Palode, Thiruvananthapuram.



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### Key Details about the New Species:

- **Physical Characteristics:** The mushroom has a **delicate, fragile** appearance with a honey-yellow cap.
- **Distinctive Feature:** It is identified by the presence of **white woolly scale-like structures** on its cap, leading to the name '**albosquamosus**.'
- **Size:** The mushroom is **small**, reaching a height of about **58 mm**.

### Genus and Taxonomic Information:

- Genus: Belongs to the **genus Candolleomyces**.
- Previous Understanding: **Seven species** previously categorized **under the genus Psathyrella in India** are now **recognized as Candolleomyces**.
- **Global Significance:** The discovery is notable because there are **only 35 known species in the Candolleomyces genus worldwide**.

### Significance:

- The discovery adds momentum to the study of **fungal diversity in the Western Ghats region**, emphasizing its ecological importance and uniqueness in the realm of biodiversity.

## Electoral bonds

### How An Electoral Bond Works

- 01 Notified banks are chosen
- 02 The notified bank issues electoral bonds
- 03 The donor buys an electoral bond using a cheque/digital payment
- 04 The donor gives the party of his/her choice the bond within the specified timeframe
- 05 The party deposits the bond in an account, the details of which are with the Electoral Commission

### Context

A **five-judge bench of the Supreme Court** is hearing petitions **challenging the constitutional validity of the electoral bonds scheme**.

### Key facts about Electoral Bonds

- **Implemented in 2018 to reduce the influence of black money in politics.**
- Provided a legal and transparent mechanism for contributions to political parties.
- **Donors' identities remain confidential**, reducing the risk of retaliation.

### Do you know

There is a **criticism** regarding Electoral bonds because

- **Lack of transparency** regarding the source of funds.
- Concerns about **potential misuse, including**



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### Tamil Nadu's blue carbon initiative



#### laundering illicit money.

- Reports indicate a **significant** portion of political **funding comes from electoral bonds**.

**In News:** Tamil Nadu's blue carbon initiative offers key lessons for coastal states at climate summit

- At a climate summit in Mumbai, **Supriya Sahu** emphasized the importance of blue carbon ecosystems, specifically mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and salt marshes, in combating climate change.

#### Key Points:

- She **highlighted the potential** for coastal states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, and West Bengal to **capitalize on the blue carbon economy**.
- Sahu also discussed the MRV initiative, which involves local communities in monitoring the health of mangroves and their carbon content.

#### About Tamil Nadu's Blue Carbon Initiative:

- Tamil Nadu's blue carbon initiative is a state-led effort to protect and restore coastal ecosystems, such as mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and salt marshes, for their role in sequestering and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- These **ecosystems are known as "blue carbon ecosystems" because of their ability to store large amounts of carbon in their biomass and sediments**.
- The Tamil Nadu blue carbon initiative is being **implemented by the Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission** in collaboration with various other government agencies, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

The initiative has a number of key components, including:

1. Mapping and assessment of blue carbon ecosystems
2. Restoration of blue carbon ecosystems
3. Community engagement



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### Edu dept prepares restructuring of SCERT and DIETs

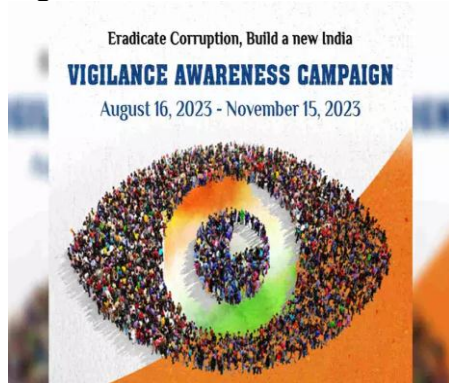
**In News:** Edu dept prepares restructuring of SCERT and DIETs

- The School Education Department is **restructuring the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs)**, as per the approval given by the State government.

**Key Points:**

- This decision follows a series of initiatives undertaken by SCERT in response to recent developments and recommendations, to adapt to the changing educational landscape.
- Under the approved plan, **SCERT has created five divisions** with allocated positions for deputy directors, senior lecturers, and lecturers, marking a pivotal step in enhancing the organization's capabilities.

### Vigilance Awareness Week programmes of Southern Railway begin in Madurai



**In News:** Vigilance Awareness Week programmes of Southern Railway begin in Madurai

- Vigilance Awareness Week programmes commenced in Madurai.

**Key Points:**

- **Sharad Srivastava**, Divisional Railway Manager **administered the integrity pledge** to officers and the staff at the Divisional Office to mark the start of the programme in Southern Railway's Madurai Division.
- The pledge was also administered at stations and other field units.
- This year, the Vigilance Awareness Week is being held on the **theme 'Say no to Corruption; Commit to the Nation'**.
- The **objective of the programme is to bring alertness against corruption amongst the public.**

### Lighting up maritime history

**In News:** Lighting up maritime history

- The **Union ministry of ports, shipping and waterways** in India has **earmarked 75 lighthouses across the country for tourism development**, with 13 in Tamil Nadu.



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	<p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As part of the initiative, the state tourism department has been allocated INR6.5 crore (\$880,000) to revamp and make the lighthouses more accessible.</li><li>• The <b>aim is to preserve and showcase the rich maritime history</b> of the country</li><li>• It also highlights the significance of these structures as symbols of the country's trading practices.</li></ul>
<p><b>Government to restore 520 hectares of grassland in Tamil Nadu</b></p>	<p><b>In News:</b> Food for fauna: Government to restore 520 hectares of grassland in Tamil Nadu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Tamil Nadu Forest Department has decided to restore 520 hectares of grassland to meet food demand for wildlife across the state under the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project for Climate Change Response (TBGPCCR).</li></ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>project is called 'Meipulam,'</b> a name inspired by Madurai Kanchi, a poem in Sangam literature and is expected to reduce the chances of wild elephants roaming out of the forest in search of fodder and thus mitigate the human-elephant conflict in the coming years.</li></ul>



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