




1 February 2024

National and International News

<p><b>Corruption Perception Index (CPI), 2023</b></p>  <p><b>Corruption Perceptions Index 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India's ranking on the <b>Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2023 is 93 out of 180 countries.</b></li> <li>India's overall score in 2023 was <b>39, a minor decrease from 40 in 2022.</b></li> <li>The country's rank in 2022 was <b>85.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Corruption Perception Index (CPI):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CPI is an annual assessment that evaluates countries based on their perceived levels of public sector corruption.</li> <li>Published by Transparency International, a global non-governmental organization combating corruption.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Scale:</b> Countries are scored on a scale of 0 to 100, where a higher score indicates lower perceived corruption and a cleaner public sector.</li> <li><b>Ranking:</b> Based on their scores, countries are then ranked, with the least corrupt being positioned higher.</li> <li><b>Data Sources:</b> The CPI aggregates data from various sources, including surveys and assessments by organizations and institutions that evaluate corruption levels.</li> <li><b>Expert Opinions:</b> It includes the opinions of experts and business leaders regarding the level of corruption in the public sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Core sector output growth slowed to a 14-month low in December</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Output growth of India's eight core sectors dropped to a <b>14-month low of 3.8% in December.</b></li> <li>This is a significant decline compared to the 8.3% pace observed a year earlier and the revised growth of <b>7.9% in November 2023.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Electricity generation,</b> with a 20% weightage in the Index of Core Industries (ICI), reached an eight-month low of 0.6% in</li> </ul>



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	<p>December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Crude oil</b> output contracted for the second consecutive month, shrinking by 1%, marking the sharpest decline since June 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Coal production</b> grew by 10.6%, the slowest year-on-year uptick in six months, but output was at its highest level since April 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Cement</b> output rebounded from a 4% contraction in November, expanding by 1.3% in December</li> </ul> <p><b>About:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade releases Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI).</b></li> <li>• ICI measures combined and individual performance of production in selected eight core industries viz. Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity.</li> <li>• <b>The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27%</b> of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maldives Seeks Sri Lanka's Medical Evacuation Support</b></p>	<p><b>India-Maldives Strain:</b> The Maldives has turned to Sri Lanka for medical evacuation assistance, seeking alternatives amid <b>strained relations with India.</b></p> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maldivian Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Mohamed Ameen</b> met with Sri Lankan counterpart Nimal Siripala de Silva in Colombo.</li> <li>• Minister Ameen shared on 'X' platform that Sri Lanka has agreed to assist in medical evacuation, emphasizing the creation of a framework for immediate approval on urgent requirements.</li> <li>• President Muizzu's initiative to establish an <b>air ambulance service by March 2024</b> aims to enhance prompt medical evacuation capabilities, allowing patients to travel even to distant locations like Thailand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Way forward:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Maldives' collaboration with Sri Lanka</li> </ul>



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	<p>for medical evacuation signals a <b>strategic move to diversify partnerships, particularly amid strained relations with India.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The initiative aligns with President Muizzu's broader efforts to enhance emergency medical services, addressing recent challenges and aiming for international collaborations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indian Stamp Bill, 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b> The Centre has proposed to replace the existing India <b>Stamp Act, 1899 with the new Indian Stamp Bill, 2023.</b></p> <p><b>Key changes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provisions allow states and the Centre to introduce new instruments for stamp duty.</li> <li>• The bill suggests withdrawing duty exemption for ships and vessels.</li> <li>• Increase in the monetary threshold for revenue receipt issuance from Rs 20 to Rs 1,000.</li> <li>• Inclusion of provisions for digital signatures.</li> <li>• Redefinition of terms like "executed" and "execution" to mean "signed" and "signature," including electronic records and signatures as defined by the <b>Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Eravikulam National Park</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The park undergoes closure from February 1 for the calving season of the <b>Nilgiri Tahr.</b></li> <li>• This annual closure is essential for the protection and conservation of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr during their breeding period.</li> </ul> <p><b>Eravikulam National Park Overview:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established in <b>1978</b>, Eravikulam National Park is the first national park in Kerala.</li> <li>• Originally created to protect the endangered <b>Nilgiri Tahr</b>, it has evolved into a diverse ecosystem supporting various flora and fauna.</li> <li>• The park is named after the <b>Neelakurinji flower</b>, known for its enchanting blue bloom occurring every 12 years.</li> </ul> <p><b>Geography:</b></p>



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- Located in the **Kannan Devan Hills**, part of the Western Ghats mountain range.
- No major rivers flow within the park, but numerous perennial streams intersect, eventually becoming tributaries of the Periyar and Cauvery rivers.
- **Lakkom Waterfalls**, an attractive natural feature, is situated within the park's boundaries.
- **Anamudi, South India's highest peak** at 2,695 meters, is a prominent feature of the park.



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