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National and International News

Bangus Valley, J&K	**Context:** ● The Jammu and Kashmir government has announced plans to **promote Bangus Valley, located near the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district**, as an ecotourism destination. ● This initiative aims to capitalize on the valley's natural beauty and unique ecological features, enhancing its appeal to tourists and supporting local economic development. **Key Features of Bangus Valley:** ● **Location and Geography**: Bangus Valley is situated in the Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, approximately 100 kilometers from Srinagar. ● It lies at an **altitude of about 10,000 feet** and spans around 300 square kilometers. ● The valley is **part of the Trans-Himalayan region**, featuring a mix of grasslands and coniferous forests. ● **Ecological Significance**: The valley is known for its breathtaking landscapes, including lush green meadows, snow-capped mountains, and crystal-clear streams. ● It offers a serene environment ideal for trekking, camping, and nature exploration.
Parvatmala Pariyojana	**Context**: ● The Union Cabinet has **approved two major ropeway projects in Uttarakhand under the Parvatmala Pariyojana**. ● These projects include a **12.4 km ropeway** from **Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Ji and a 12.9 km ropeway from Sonprayag to Kedarnath.** **Key Details:** **Project Overview**: ● **Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Ji**: This ropeway will utilize Monocable Detachable Gondola (MDG) technology from Govindghat to Ghangaria (10.55 km) and Tricable Detachable Gondola (3S) technology from Ghangaria to Hemkund Sahib Ji (1.85 km). ● It will have a capacity of 1,100 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD) and can ferry 11,000 passengers per day. ● **Sonprayag to Kedarnath**: This ropeway will employ Tricable Detachable Gondola (3S) technology with a capacity of 1,800 passengers per hour per direction

	(PPHPD), capable of transporting 18,000 passengers per day. **Development Model**: ● Both projects will be **developed under the Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT**) model, a variant of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. **About:** ● The **Parvatmala Pariyojana** is a **National Ropeways Development Programme** by the Government of India. **Purpose**: ● It aims to improve connectivity in hilly areas by developing ropeway infrastructure. ● It seeks to provide a safe, economical, and convenient alternative transport solution. **Key Aspects**: ● It was **announced in the 2022-23 Union Budget**. ● The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH**) is the implementing ministry. ● The **National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML), a 100% owned SPV** of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), has been mandated by the ministry to implement the project.
Panchganga River	**Context**: ● The **Maharashtra government has appointed a panel to investigate the causes of pollution in the Panchganga River**. ● The panel aims to identify the sources of pollution and propose measures to mitigate them. **Key Points:** ● The main sources of pollution in the Panchganga River include untreated sewage from urban areas, industrial effluents from sugar mills and textile industries, and agricultural runoff. ● The appointed panel will further investigate these issues and suggest corrective actions to improve the river's water quality. **About:** ● The Panchganga River is a significant river in the state of Maharashtra. **Origin and Course**: ● The Panchganga River is **formed by the confluence of five rivers:**

	○ Kumbhi ○ Kasari ○ Tulsi ○ Bhogavati ○ Saraswati (a mythical underground river) ● It flows generally eastward through the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra. ● It **eventually joins the Krishna River near Narsinhpur**.
Antarctic Ocean Current	**Context**: ● According to a study published in Environmental Research Letters, the **Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC**), the **world's strongest ocean current,** which encircles Antarctica is **slowing due to melting ice sheets**, with a **projected 20% reduction in speed by 2050** under high carbon emissions scenarios. ● This slowdown, driven by climate change, could have profound global consequences for ocean ecosystems, climate regulation, and sea-level rise. ● **Key Findings from the Study** ● **Cause of Slowdown**: Melting Antarctic ice sheets are releasing vast amounts of freshwater into the Southern Ocean, reducing salinity and disrupting the ACC's density-driven circulation. ● This **influx of freshwater weakens the sinking of surface water (Antarctic Bottom Water),** a critical process for maintaining the current's strength. ● **Projections**: The ACC, which moves 100 times more water than the Amazon River, is expected to slow by up to 20% by 2050 if current emissions trends continue. ● Even under lower emissions, accelerated ice melt could trigger similar slowdowns. **About:** ● The **Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC**) is a **truly remarkable and vital feature of our planet's oceans.** **Key Characteristics:** **Circumpolar Flow:** ● The **ACC is the only ocean current that completely encircles the globe**, flowing continuously from west to east around Antarctica. **Strength**: ● It is the **strongest ocean current on Earth, transporting a massive volume of water**. **Global Connection:**

	• It plays a **critical role in the global "ocean conveyor belt,"** connecting the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. **Climate Regulation:** • The ACC is essential for regulating Earth's climate by distributing heat, nutrients, and carbon dioxide around the world. • It acts as a barrier, limiting the amount of warmer water that reaches Antarctica, thus helping to maintain the continent's ice sheets.
Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve	**Context**: • A monitoring committee has rejected proposals for constructing commercial buildings near the BRT Tiger Reserve's Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ). • This decision reflects efforts to protect the reserve's ecological integrity and maintain the buffer zone's role in safeguarding wildlife habitats. **Key Points:** • **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ):** • The ESZ is a buffer area around protected zones like tiger reserves, designed to reduce human-wildlife conflict and protect biodiversity. • It acts as a transitional zone between the core area and human settlements. **Importance of Buffer Zones**: • Buffer zones, similar to those in other tiger reserves like Bandhavgarh, play a crucial role in wildlife conservation by providing a protective layer around core habitats. • They help mitigate external impacts on the core zone, ensuring the long-term viability of tiger populations and their prey species. **About:** • The **Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve** is a unique and ecologically significant protected area in India. • It is **located in the Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka state.** **Unique Biogeographical Position:** • It is situated at the **confluence of the Western and Eastern Ghats**, making it a biodiversity hotspot. • This "bridge" between the two Ghats results in a diverse range of flora and fauna. **Origin of Name**: • The **reserve gets its name from the Biligiri (meaning**

	"white rocky cliff") Hills, which are home to the ancient Ranganathaswamy Temple, dedicated to Lord Vishnu. **Protected Status**: ● It was initially established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1974. ● It was declared a **Tiger Reserve in 2011**.
AI Kosha	**Context**: ● **MeitY has launched AIKosha, a secure platform designed to accelerate AI innovation** in India by providing a **comprehensive repository of over 300 datasets and 80 AI models.** ● This initiative is part of the **broader IndiaAI Mission**, which aims to foster a robust AI ecosystem through public-private partnerships. **Key Features of AIKosha:** ● **Dataset Repository**: AIKosha offers a diverse range of datasets, including those from the 2011 Census, satellite imagery, health data, meteorological data, and pollution data. ● These datasets are ethically sourced and focused on reducing reliance on foreign data. ● **AI Models and Use Cases**: The platform includes a variety of AI models and use cases, enabling developers to build and deploy India-specific AI solutions. ● **AI Sandbox Environment**: AIKosha features an AI sandbox with an integrated development environment (IDE), tools, and tutorials. This setup allows developers to test and refine AI models securely. **Security Measures:** ● **Data Encryption**: AIKosha ensures data security through encryption, secure APIs, and real-time filtering to prevent unauthorized access. ● **Permission-Based Access**: The platform uses permission-based access to safeguard sensitive information and maintain data integrity.

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