

## Daily News Decode

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### Andaman and Nicobar Command conducts Tri-Services Para Jumping and Freefall Skydiving Training Course



- Andaman and Nicobar Command has accomplished yet another milestone by conducting the first ever Tri-Services Para Jumping and Freefall skydiving training course at Air Force Station Car Nicobar
- The course was conducted by the Indian Air Force which trains personnel of Indian Armed Forces.
- During the Joint para jumping and skydiving course with participants from the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, a total of 267 jumps were undertaken within a short span of 04 days and a total of 31 persons qualified the basic and advanced course
- The participants of basic course earned Para Wing. The training course was a great success and of historic significance for the Command to wars enhancing the jointmanship and operational capability.

### India proposes to expand research, tourism in the Arctic



- India has unveiled a new draft 'Arctic' policy that, among other things, commits to expanding scientific research, "sustainable tourism" and mineral oil and gas exploration in the Arctic region.
- India expects the Goa-based National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research to lead scientific research and act as a nodal body to coordinate among various scientific bodies to promote domestic scientific research capacities by expanding "earth sciences, biological sciences, geosciences, climate change and space related programmes, dove-tailed with Arctic imperatives in Indian universities.
- India launched its first scientific expedition to the Arctic in 2007.

## Brazil Prez shares Lord Hanuman's 'sanjeevani booti' pic, thanks India for vaccines



- In his tweet, Bolsonaro included an image showing Lord Hanuman bringing the 'sanjeevani booti' from India to Brazil. "Brazil feels honoured to have a great partner to overcome a global obstacle by joining efforts. Thank you for assisting us with the vaccines exports from India to Brazil," he wrote.

## 2 female ray fish give birth without males in their tank, scientists suspect 'virgin birth'



- Two female ray fish gave birth to pups without a male ray fish being present in their tank for over two years at an aquarium in New Zealand. Andrew Christie, curator of the aquarium, believed the most likely explanation is that they had stored sperm from their last encounter. Another scientist suspected it could be a case of "virgin birth".

## Mumbai Metro to get its first made-in-India 'driverless' train on January 27



- Maharashtra Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde has said that Mumbai Metro will get its first indigenously-manufactured driverless train on January 27
- "This will be a driverless metro train, running automatically. But, in order not to panic or make passengers feel unsafe, for around six months initially, [it] will be operated by a motorman,"

## All industries in Delhi likely to switch to PNG by Jan 31: DPCC



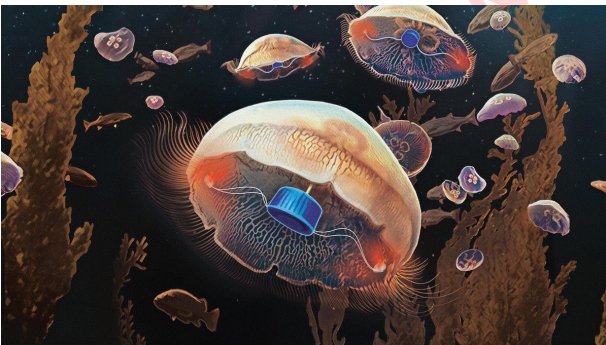
- All industries in Delhi are likely to switch to petroleum natural gas (PNG) by January 31, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) said on Thursday. "At least 1,624 industrial units in Delhi have converted to PNG...out of 1,644 units using polluting fuels,"

## United Nations to launch mobile game about protecting ozone layer



- The United Nations Earth Programme (UNEP) will release a mobile game aimed at Gen Z called 'Reset Earth', that tasks players with saving the ozone layer. A user plays as three teenagers from 2084 who have to travel back in time to ensure the signing of the 1987 Montreal Protocol, preserve the ozone and prevent the rise of a virus.

## Jellyfish-inspired robot for underwater exploration made: Researchers



- Researchers from the universities of Edinburgh and Southampton have developed a jellyfish and squid-inspired robot for probing sensitive ocean environments,
- including coral reefs. They claim it's also suitable for work on underwater archaeological sites. Tests showed it's 10-50 times more efficient than typical small underwater vehicles powered by propellers and used for underwater exploration.

## Trash collected from Mt Everest to be turned into art in Nepal



- Trash collected from Mount Everest will be transformed into art and displayed in a gallery in Nepal to highlight the issue of littering near the mountain. Sagarmatha Next Centre Co-founder Tommy Gustafsson said foreign and local artists will be engaged in creating artwork from waste. "We hope to change the people's perceptions about the garbage and manage it," he said.

## India's recession will end in the current quarter: ICRA



- Domestic ratings agency ICRA's Principal Economist Aditi Nayar has said that good news is on the way and India's recession will end in the current quarter.
- Most indicators have shown a year-on-year expansion in the third quarter, she added.
- In November, the RBI said that India had entered into a technical recession after the GDP contracted for two successive quarters.

## Fire warning



- The initial assessment indicates that Thursday's blaze may have been triggered by flammable materials set afire by sparks generated during construction work, trapping and asphyxiating workers.

- The storage and transport of vaccines, which are time and temperature-sensitive pharmaceutical products, require special care, and COVID-19 has come as a wake-up call to governments to overcome supply bottlenecks and capacity constraints.
- Even the creation of new vaccine plants to meet future needs would be entirely justified.
- With a scramble for approved vaccines and inability to produce enough for all countries, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that bilateral deals were threatening the smooth rollout of the COVAX initiative.

- At close to 3 billion doses, it is the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine that forms the bulk of over 10 billion doses of different vaccines ordered so far. Clearly, Indian production is vital to meeting this demand.

## **A new framework around caste and the census**

**(Written by : Divya Vaid)**

- The synchronous decennial Census going back to the colonial exercise of 1881 has evolved over time and has been used by the government, policy makers, academics, and others to capture the Indian population, its access to resources, and to map social change.
- Since Independence, aggregated Census data on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on certain parameters such as education have been collected
- With demands to conduct a full-scale caste census gaining traction over time, some have seen the inclusion of broader caste information as a necessity to capture contemporary Indian society and to understand and remedy inequalities, while others believe that this large administrative exercise of capturing caste and its complexities is not only difficult, but also socially untenable.
- There have been concerns that counting caste may help solidify or harden identities, or that caste may be context-specific
- The other concern is whether an institution such as caste can even be captured completely by the Census.
- The Census and the SECC have different purposes. Since the Census falls under the Census Act of 1948, all data are considered confidential
- whereas according to the SECC website, “all the personal information given in the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households”.
- The Census thus provides a portrait of the Indian population, while the SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support.
- Apart from themes specific to enumerating caste, there are other issues that the Census and the SECC in particular face.
- The first relates to the time lag between each Census, and the second to the delay in the release of data.
- The second, however, also has important repercussions to understanding social change since data may remain un-released