

Daily News Decode

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Six Indian places added to tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites



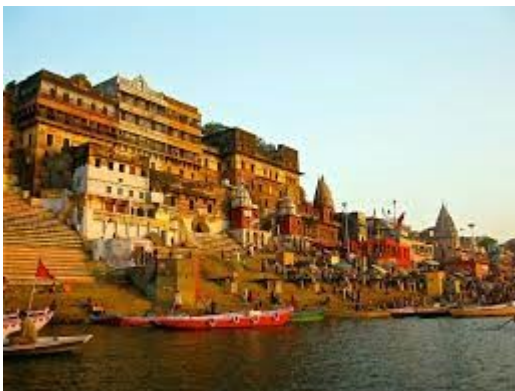
- Satpura Tiger Reserve, Iconic riverfront of the historic city of Varanasi, Megalithic site of Hire Benkal, Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra, Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley- Jabalpur, and temples of Kanchipuram

Satpura Tiger Reserve



- Located in Madhya Pradesh, the Satpura National Park is home to 26 species of the Himalayan region including reptiles, and 42 species of Nilgiri areas, as per whcunesco.org.
- It is the largest tiger-occupied forest and also has the largest tiger population.
- The website also states the place has more than 50 rock shelters with paintings that are 1500 to 10,000 years old.
- One of the criteria on which the national park made it to the tentative list includes “its beautiful silence where one can even hear the snoring of the bears and roaring of the tigers clearly with such stunning exceptional visual delights”.

Ghats of Varanasi



- The Ganges riverfront of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, has been vying for the UNESCO tag for several years now.
- According to a paper ‘Varanasi as Heritage City (India) on the scale of the UNESCO World Heritage List: From Contestation to Conservation’, Varanasi’s riverfront mainly falls “into the second category of cultural properties, i.e: groups of buildings, groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.”

- The Ganga river with its riverfront ghats also fulfill the criteria of Cultural Landscapes as designated in Article 1 of the Convention and specifically that of a cultural landscape “that retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress” and an associative cultural landscape “by virtue of powerful religious, artistic, cultural associations of the natural element”, mentioned author Prof Rana P B Singh, Department of Geography, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Megalithic site of Hire Benkal



- The 2,800-years-old megalithic site of Hire Benkal in Karnataka has made it to the tentative list owing to the fact that it is one of the largest prehistoric megalithic settlements where some funerary monuments are still intact.
- According to scholars, the granite structures are burial monuments that may also have served many ritual purposes.
- Due to the extremely valuable collection of Neolithic monuments, the site was proposed for recognition.

Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra



- There are 12 forts in Maharashtra dating back to the era of the 17th-century Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji.
- They are namely Shivneri (the birthplace of Shivaji); Raigad (the capital fort rebuilt for the coronation of the Maratha king), Torna (the first fort of the Maratha empire), Rajgad, Salher-Mulher, Panhala, Pratapgad, Lohagad, Sindhudurg, Padmadurga (Kasa), Vijaydurg and Kolaba.
- “The theme for the serial nomination of these forts is ‘Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra and Guerrilla Warfare’,” said Tejas Garge, director of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums

Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley- Jabalpur



- Often referred to as the Grand Canyon of India, is a town in the Jabalpur district, around 25 kms from Jabalpur.
- It is known for its marble rocks and their various morphological forms on either side of the Narmada river which flows through the gorge, states whcunesco.org.
- 'It has also been observed that the magical marble mountains assume different colours and even shapes of animals and other living forms as one moves through them.'
- Several dinosaur fossils have been found in the Narmada valley, particularly in Bhedaghat-Lametghat area of Jabalpur.
- In 1828, the first Dinosaur fossil was collected from Lameta Bed by William Sleeman.
- River Narmada narrows down on its way through marble rocks and plunges in a waterfall giving out the appearance of a smoke cascade.

Temples of Kanchipuram



- Synonymous with spirituality, serenity, and silk, the temple town of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, is dotted with ancient temples that are architectural marvels and a visual treat, states incredibleindia.org.
- Situated on the banks of River Vegavathi, this historical city once had 1,000 temples, of which only 126 (108 Shaiva and 18 Vaishnava) now remain.
- Its rich legacy has been the endowment of the Pallava dynasty, which made the region its capital between the 6th and 7th centuries and lavished upon its architectural gems that are a fine example of Dravidian styles.

'INFRASTRUCTURE' STATUS



- The Finance Ministry has granted 'Infrastructure' status for exhibition and convention centres, a move that is expected to ease bank financing for such projects.
- 'Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre is included in the Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure sub-sectors by insertion of a new item in the category of Social and Commercial Infrastructure,' the Department of Economic Affairs said.

- However, the benefits would only be available for projects with a minimum built-up floor area of 1,00,000 sq. m. of exclusive exhibition space or convention space or both combined.
- As of now, the major projects under way in the sector are backed by the government – the International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centres at Dwarka and Pragati Maidan in the capital.
- The infrastructure tag does not involve significant tax breaks but would help such projects get easier financing from banks, said experts. However, restrictions on size may be a dampener.
- India doesn't have large convention centres or single halls with capacities to hold 7,000 to 10,000 people, unlike countries like Thailand that is a major global MICE destination.
- Becoming a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) destination can generate significant revenue with several global firms active in India but it will take time to become a preferred destination.

GHOLVAD SAPOTA



- In a major boost to exports of Geographical Indication (GI) certified products, a consignment of Dahanu Gholvad Sapota (chikoo) from Palghar district of Maharashtra was today shipped to the United Kingdom.
- GI certification of Ghovad Sapota is held by Maharashtra Rajya Chikoo Utpadak Sangh and the fruit is known for its sweet and unique taste.
- It is believed that the unique taste is derived from calcium rich soil of Gholvad village.
- Currently in the Palgahr district, around 5000 hectares of land is under sapota or plantation.
- Out of 5000 farmers who grow Sapota, 147 farmers are authorized GI users.
- Sapota is grown in many states- Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.
- Karnataka is known to be the highest grower of the fruit, followed by Maharashtra.

Fake buster



- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar in Punjab and Monash University, Australia have developed a unique detector named 'FakeBuster'.
- It is claimed that 'FakeBuster' is one of the first tools to detect imposters during live video conferencing using DeepFake detection technology.
- The real time mimicked visuals (videos) known as 'Deepfakes' can even be used during online examinations and job interviews.

- The detector helps to identify imposters attending a virtual conference without anybody's knowledge.
- It can find out faces manipulated on social media to defame or make a joke of someone.
- This standalone solution enables a user (organizer) to detect if another person's video is manipulated or spoofed during a video conferencing.
- This tool will also help in identifying fake news.
- It is claimed that the tool has achieved over 90 per cent accuracy.
- FakeBuster works in both online and offline modes.
- The device can presently be attached with laptops and desktops only.
- The team is working on using the device to detect fake audios.

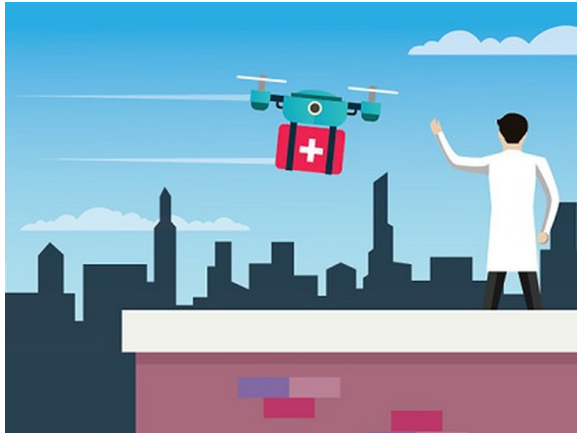
US Global entry scheme



- Indian security agencies in the past two years have checked the antecedents of more than 9,000 Indians who wanted to enrol for the paid Global Entry Program.
- The Global Entry is a facility run by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), an agency that works under the Department of Homeland Security.
- The department fast tracks movement of pre-approved, low-risk travellers upon arrival after a rigorous background check through designated kiosks.
- At airports, program members proceed to Global Entry kiosks, present their machine-readable passport or U.S. permanent resident card, undergo fingerprint verification and complete a customs declaration.
- The kiosk issues the traveler a transaction receipt and directs the traveler to baggage claim and the exit.
- Though the pilot project started in 2008, India became a member of Global Entry in 2017.
- All applicants undergo a rigorous background check and in-person interview before enrollment.
- After receiving a request, the U.S. authorities send them to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- The MEA forwards it to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which taps other ministries, State police and other databases to run a background check.
- The CBP does not process the application if a person has been “convicted of any criminal offence or have pending criminal charges, have been found in violation of any customs, immigration or agriculture regulations or laws in any country.”
- The other countries that are part of this programme are Argentina, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

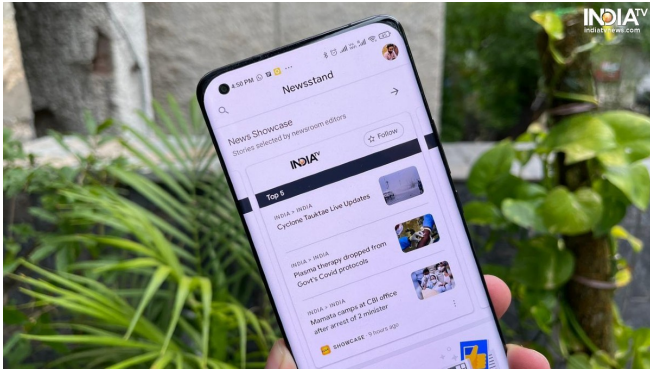
- The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) is being used in India for antecedent verification for Global Entry.
- This is not a public service open to all the Indian citizens.

‘Medicines from Sky’ project



- The Telangana State government has selected 16 primary healthcare centres (PHCs) spread around Vikarabad area hospital for pilot testing the ambitious ‘Medicine from the sky’ project.
- It is the first-of- its-kind project involving delivery of medicines through multiple drones.
- A consortium of seven operators headed by Blue Dart Med-Express had been selected.
- The permission has been granted for conducting experimental delivery of Covid-19 vaccines within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) Range, normally about 500 meters and will be scaled up gradually to 9 km range.
- The permission exemption is valid for one year.
- The project would be launched in three waves starting with a pilot followed by mapping the route network for operation of drones for delivering vaccine/medicine in the desired community health centres and PHCs.
- The Civil Aviation Ministry granted approval to the state on its request under the Unmanned Aircraft System Rules 2021 for conducting experimental BVLOS drone flights for delivery of vaccines.
- The project is aimed at assessing alternative logistics routes in providing safe, accurate and reliable pick up and delivery of health care items like medicines, COVID-19 vaccines, units of blood and other lifesaving equipment from the distribution centre to specific locations and back.
- The consortium of companies selected for the implementation of the project has been asked to submit standard operation protocol along with the risk mitigation plans to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation for its approval.
- It has been decided to constitute teams comprising health experts and representatives from the regulator as also the Air Traffic Control (ATC) at Shamshabad airport for monitoring the implementation of the project in phases.
- Blue Dart, one of the major logistics service providers in the country, recently formed ‘Blue Dart Med-Express Consortium’ to streamline delivery of vaccines and emergency medical supplies to the remote parts of the country with drones.
- The consortium is part of the ‘Medicine from the Sky’ project, in collaboration with the Government of Telangana, World Economic Forum, NITI Aayog and Healthnet Global.

News Showcase by Google



- Google recently announced the launch of its global product called News Showcase in India
- News Showcase is a global vehicle to pay news publishers for their content online.
- It also allows partnering publishers to curate content and provide limited access to paywalled stories for users.
- It was originally launched in October 2020.
- Google has sealed agreements with 30 Indian publishers to offer access to some of their content on News Showcase.
- The content from these publishers will begin to appear in dedicated News Showcase panels in Google News and on Discover pages in English and Hindi.
- Support for more local languages will be added in the future.
- Google has signed licensing agreements with publishers for editorial curation and it will also pay participating news organizations to give readers access to a limited amount of paywalled content.
- News Showcase is currently live across many countries like the UK, Germany and Australia with over 700 news publications.
- Under the Google News Initiative (GNI) programme, 50,000 journalists and journalism students will be trained in strengthening their digital skills to aid reporting and combat misinformation online.
- The GNI Transformation Lab, a programme for 20 local small- and mid-sized Indian news organizations to help them transform every aspect of their business to succeed online will be launched.

Ivermectin



- The union health ministry has recommended Ivermectin in Covid-19 treatment.
- Ivermectin is an antiparasitic, but there is no discernible evidence of how effective it is in combating the COVID pandemic.
- The drug was not mentioned in the Union health ministry's medical guidelines in 2020.
- In 2021 beginning as the second wave hit, the guidelines underwent modifications and drugs like hydroxychloroquine and antibiotics like azithromycin were no longer recommended and Ivermectin was introduced.
- The April 2021 directives from the Centre recognised the low evidence of Ivermectin therapy and mentioned that it "may be" used for those with mild cases and in home isolation.

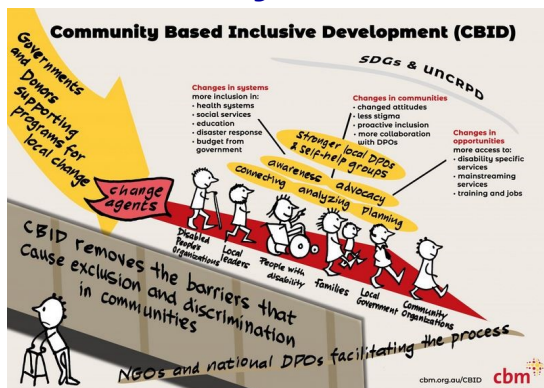
- Some state governments have advocated the use of Ivermectin for COVID-19 treatment and as a prophylaxis (preventive medication).
- However, agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Medicines Agency have warned against its use due to insufficient data.
- Currently, around 12 intervention trials focusing on the use of Ivermectin in treatment and prevention of COVID-19 are registered with The Clinical Trials Registry, India and are at various stages of completion.
- Ivermectin is FDA-approved antiparasitic used to treat many types of parasite infestations like head lice, scabies, river blindness (onchocerciasis), strongyloidiasis, trichuriasis, ascariasis, and lymphatic filariasis.
- It was discovered in 1975 and came into medical use in 1981 and is on the World Health Organization's List of Essential Medicines.
- In veterinary medicine, it is used to prevent and treat heartworm and acariasis, among other indications.
- It can be taken by mouth or applied to the skin for external infestations.
- Common side effects include fever, itching, and skin rash when taken by mouth, and red eyes, dry skin, and burning skin when used topically for head lice

World Metrology Day observed globally on 20th May



- World Metrology Day is observed globally on 20th May every year. Many nations on this day, internationally collaborate to create awareness about metrology and its advancement in the respective field.
- The theme for World Metrology Day 2021 is Measurement for Health.
- This theme was chosen to create awareness of the important role measurement plays in health, and thus in the wellbeing of every one of us.
- World Metrology Day is an annual celebration of the signature of the Metre Convention on 20 May 1875 in Paris, France by representatives of seventeen nations.
- The World Metrology Day project is realized jointly by the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) and Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (BIPM).

Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Program:

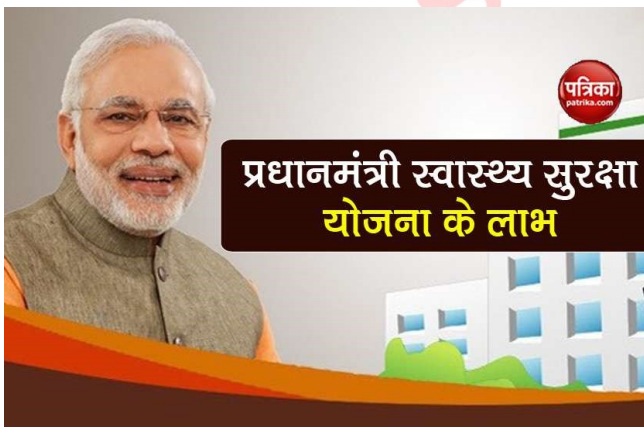


- Launched recently by the Union Ministry of Social Justice.

Features:

- The program aims to create a pool of grass-root rehabilitation workers at community level who can work alongside ASHA and Anganwadi workers to handle cross disability issues and facilitate inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society.
- The program has been designed to provide competency based knowledge and skills among these workers to enhance their ability for successfully discharging their duties.
- These workers will be called 'Divyang Mitra' i.e. friends of persons with disabilities.
- The National Board of Examination in Rehabilitation under the Rehabilitation Council of India will conduct examinations and award certificates to pass-out candidates.

PM Swasthya Suraksha Yojana



- The Central government has approved setting up 22 new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) so far under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) out of which six are already fully functional.

About PMSSY:

- PMSSY was announced in 2003 with objectives of correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/ reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.
- The PMSSY is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

It has two components:

- Setting up new AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences).
- Upgradation of government medical colleges in various states.
- The project cost for upgradation of each medical college institution is shared by the Centre and the state.

Taiwan Strait



- The Taiwan Strait is a 180-kilometer-wide strait separating the island of Taiwan and continental Asia.
- The strait is currently part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north.
- The narrowest part is 130 km wide.
- The Taiwan Strait, also known as the Formosa Strait.

Microsoft to shut down Internet Explorer after 25 years in 2022



- Microsoft has announced that it will be shutting down Internet Explorer after more than 25 years on June 15, 2022.
- "We are announcing that the future of Internet Explorer on Windows 10 is in Microsoft Edge," Microsoft said in a blog post.
- Internet Explorer was first released as part of the add-on package Plus! for Windows 95 in 1995.

INS Rajput



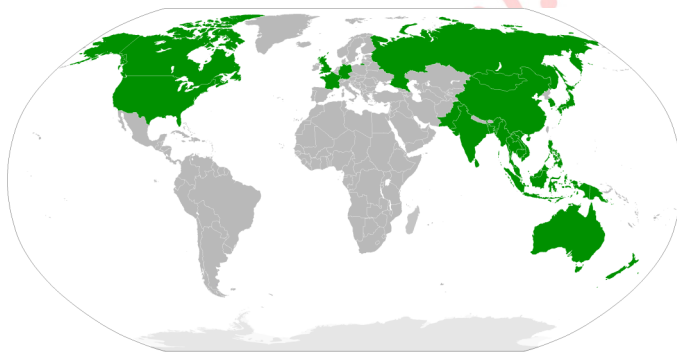
- The Indian Navy's first destroyer, INS Rajput, will be decommissioned on Friday after 41 years of service
- INS Rajput was a guided-missile destroyer and the lead ship of the Rajput class of the Indian Navy.
- She was commissioned on 4 May 1980.
- Commodore Gulab Mohanlal Hiranandani was her first commanding officer.
- Rajput served as a trial platform for the BrahMos cruise missile.
- INS Rajput was constructed in the 61 Communards shipyard in Nikolaev (now Ukraine) under her original Russian name "Nadezhny", meaning "hope".
- The keel of the ship was laid on September 11, 1976 and she was launched on September 17, 1977.
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Super Blood Moon on May 26



- The month of May brings the “most super” of the year’s supermoons and also a total lunar eclipse.
- On May 26, a lunar eclipse will coincide with the moon's closest approach to Earth — making it a "supermoon" eclipse that will turn the moon reddish — also known as a "blood moon."
- When the moon travels around earth in an elliptical orbit, or an elongated circle, every month, the Moon passes through perigee (the point closest to Earth) and apogee (the point farthest from Earth).
- When the Moon is at or near its closest point to Earth at the same time as it is full, it is called a “supermoon.”
- During this event, because the full moon is a little bit closer to us than usual, it appears especially large and bright in the sky.
- The bloodmoon eclipse will be visible from India but only the penumbral phase.
- In Colombo, Sri Lanka for example, the moon rises at 6:23 p.m. local time on May 26, and the penumbral eclipse ends at 7:19 p.m. local time.

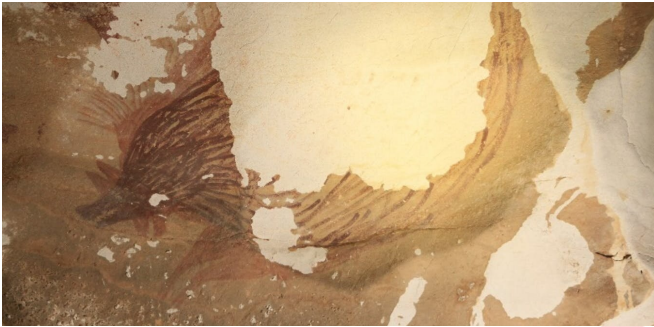
The Shangri-La Dialogue Asian security summit



- The summit has been cancelled because of the deteriorating global COVID-19 situation, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
- The IISS Asia Security Summit: The Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) is a "Track One" inter-governmental security forum held annually by an independent think tank, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) which is attended by defense ministers, permanent heads of ministries and military chiefs of 28 Asia-Pacific states.
- The forum gets its name from the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore where it has been held since 2002.
- The summit serves to cultivate a sense of community among the most important policymakers in the defence and security community in the region.
- Government delegations have made the best out of the meeting by holding bilateral meetings with other delegations on the sidelines of the conference.
- While primarily an inter-governmental meeting, the summit is also attended by legislators, academic experts, distinguished journalists and business delegates.

- The participants have included Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, East Timor, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

Climate change erasing oldest animal cave painting drawn 45,500 years ago



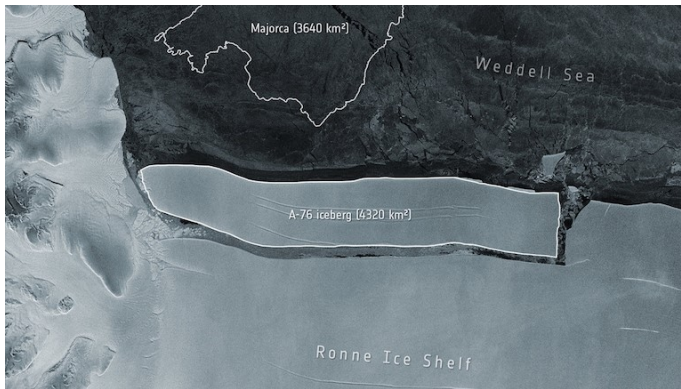
- Indonesian rock art that includes the picture of a wild pig drawn 45,500 years ago is getting destroyed due to climate change, researchers warned. Researchers said the picture of a wild pig, believed to be the oldest cave painting of an animal, is decaying daily.
- They found that increased temperatures and extreme weather patterns have accelerated the build-up of salts

Corpse Flower



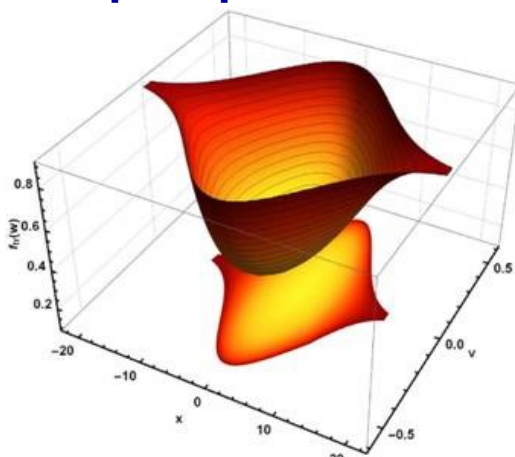
- Hundreds of people lined up outside an abandoned gas station in the San Francisco Bay Area for a whiff of a 'corpse plant' that is named after the rotting flesh smell it emits.
- The Corpse Flower, *Amorphophallus titanum*, is a single inflorescence that reaches an astounding height of 6-9' tall.
- It only flowers once every 7-8 years and only 3-5 blooming events, from plants grown in cultivation, happen worldwide each year.
- This rare plant is for plant geeks who want a challenge and will be committed to nearly a decade of nurturing and pampering this rare and attractive giant.
- Corpse Flower was first found in the tropical forests of Sumatra where even there, it is rare in its native habitat. It is a member of the Aroid family and also known as the Titan Arum.
- The bloom is magnificent with its frilly-edged maroon petal completely circling the center spadix.
- It's known as the Corpse Flower because of the raunchy smelling odor, similar to rotten meat, when in full bloom.
- Like most tropical plants, it needs warm growing conditions above 75 degrees F.
- Some people have success growing the plant on a heat mat when grown indoors to keep the temperature in the right range.

World's largest iceberg, nearly 3 times the size of Delhi, forms in Antarctica



- An iceberg has calved from western side of the Ronne Ice Shelf, lying in the Weddell Sea, in Antarctica.
- The iceberg, dubbed A-76, measures around 4,320 sq km in size, making it the largest iceberg in the world.
- It is nearly three times the size of Delhi.
- Further, the iceberg is around 170 km in length and 25 km wide.

Theory by Indian Scientists to shed light on mystery behind complex phenomena in Plasma-- the fourth state of matter



- Indian Scientists have recently developed a theory that helps understand the complicated nature of Sun-Earth interaction's happening in the magnetosphere-- an area of space around Earth that is controlled by the Earth's magnetic field.
- This new theory has opened up a plethora of opportunities to unlock the mysteries of the ion-hole structures (a localized plasma region where the ion density is lower than the surrounding plasma).
- They are now working towards a detailed study of the ion hole structures observed in various space and astrophysical environments using the developed theory.
- A group consisting of Mr. Harikrishnan, Prof. Amar Kakad, and Prof. Bharati Kakad from the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India developed a theory that solves every bit of uncertainty regarding the conflict between the observations from Magnetospheric Multiscale (MMS) Mission ---a NASA robotic space mission to study the Earth's magnetosphere and theoretical predictions.
- They were also supported by Prof. Peter Yoon from the University of Maryland, USA.
- They have completely ruled out the necessity of the upper limit in the temperature ratio between ions and electrons for the generation of a special kind of wave called Bernstein Green Kruskal (BGK) waves, named after the scientists who predicted this wave.
- They revealed that the electrons that are not part of ion hole dynamics also play a vital role.