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93rd ACADEMY AWARDS



- U.S. road movie Nomadland emerged as the big winner at the Oscars on Sunday with three major prizes, including a history-making award for director Chloe Zhao.
- Chloe Zhao makes history as first woman of colour to get best director award. She is also only the second woman to win best director after Kathryn Bigelow, who broke the glass ceiling in 2010 when she won the prize for The Hurt Locker.
- Zhao's drama about marginalised Americans roaming the West in vans was honoured for best picture, director and actress for Frances McDormand, who now is in elite company with her third Academy Award.
- Hopkins' win at 83 for his shattering portrayal of a dementia sufferer in The Father makes him the oldest actor to win a competitive Oscar in history.

List of winners of the 93rd Academy Awards:

- ⇒ Best picture: Nomadland
- ⇒ Best actress: Frances McDormand
- ⇒ Best actor: Anthony Hopkins
- ⇒ Best supporting actress: Yuh-Jung Youn
- ⇒ Best supporting actor: Daniel Kaluuya
- ⇒ Best director: Chloe Zhao

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) fixed the tenure of MD, CEO and whole-time director (WTD) in a private sector banks



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) fixed the tenure of MD, CEO and whole-time director (WTD) in a private sector bank at 15 years and prescribed the maximum age of 70 years for such functionaries.
- These directives form part of the instructions issued by the RBI with regard to the chair and meetings of the board, composition of certain committees of the board, age, tenure and remuneration of directors, and appointment of the WTDs.

- The RBI said it would come out with a Master Direction on Corporate Governance in banks in due course.
- The post of the MD & CEO or WTD cannot be held by the same incumbent for more than 15 years.
- Thereafter, the individual will be eligible for re-appointment as MD & CEO or WTD in the same bank, if considered necessary and desirable by the board, after a minimum gap of three years, subject to meeting other conditions.
- It added that during this three-year cooling period, the individual shall not be appointed or associated with the bank or its group entities in any capacity, either directly or indirectly.
- With regard to upper age limit for MD & CEO and WTDs in the private sector banks, the RBI said that no person can continue in such positions beyond the age of 70.
- The maximum age limit for chairman and non-executive directors has been fixed at 75 years.

LADAKH IGNITED MINDS PROJECT



- To provide better educational opportunities for Ladakhi students, the Indian Army has initiated the project Ladakh Ignited Minds: A Centre of Excellence and Wellness.
- On behalf of Indian Army, Fire and Fury Corps has signed a couple of MoUs with partner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and executing agency, a Kanpur based NGO, National Integrity and Educational Development Organization (NIEDO), in Leh.
- The project is aimed at providing better training facilities to disadvantaged Ladakhi students to give them opportunity to study in niche educational institutes.
- Fire and Fury Corps of Indian Army with the support of HPCL and execution agency NIEDO will provide a holistic training for Ladakhi youth.
- In the first batch, comprising 20 girls, 45 students from Leh and Kargil districts, would get training for JEE and NEET entrance examinations.

The CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur has indigenously developed Oxygen enrichment technology



- The Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (also known as CSIR-CMERI Durgapur or CMERI Durgapur) is a public engineering research and development institution in Durgapur, West Bengal.
- It is a constituent laboratory of the Indian Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- This institute is the only national level research institute in the field of mechanical engineering in India.
- The CMERI was founded in 1958.

Leatherback Turtle



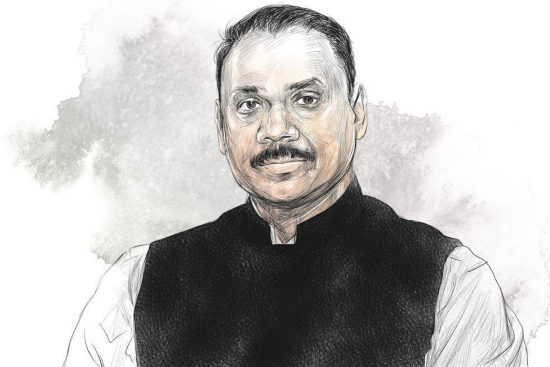
- Leatherback turtles under threat as government considers 'development' in Little Andamans
- Five species of marine turtles are found in Indian waters. The leatherback is the largest of all living turtles and India and Sri Lanka are the only places in South Asia with large nesting populations.
- Olive Ridley turtles, Green turtles, Hawksbill turtles, Loggerhead turtles, and Leatherback turtles are among the other species that nest along the Indian coast.
- Except for the Arctic and Antarctic, it can be found in all oceans.
- Just Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are home to them in the Indian Ocean.
- In the genus Dermochelys and the family Dermochelyidae, it is the only living animal.
- Its lack of a bony shell easily distinguishes it from other modern sea turtles.
- They are mentioned in India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, in Schedule I.
- Vulnerable – IUCN
- CITES Appendix I species
- The Ministry of the Environment has published the National Marine Turtle Action Plan, which emphasises the importance of the A&N Islands.
- The Little Andaman's South Bay and West Bay, as well as the Great Nicobar's Galathea, are classified as "Important Marine Turtle Habitats in India."

India's Organic food products exports rises by more than 50% in terms of value in 2020-21



- India's Organic food products exports rose by more than 50 per cent in terms of value in 2020-21 despite COVID-19 challenges.
- Commerce and Industry Ministry said, in terms of quantity, the exports of organic food products grew by 39 per cent to eight lakh 88 thousand metric tonne during last financial year compared to 2019-20.
- The growth in organic products has been achieved despite logistical and operational challenges posed by the COVID19 pandemic.
- The Ministry said, oil cake meal has been a major commodity of the organic product exports from the country followed by oil seeds, cereals and millets, tea, medicinal plant products and dry fruits.
- India's organic products have been exported to 58 countries including USA, European Union, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Switzerland, Israel, South Korea.

Indian CAG as external auditor of OPCW



- India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) GC Murmu has been chosen as the external auditor by a prestigious intergovernmental organisation working for the elimination of chemical weapons for a three-year term starting 2021.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

- The Chemical Weapons Convention of 1997 created an international body to adopt and uphold the provisions of the non-proliferation treaty, which forbids signatory states from using, stockpiling, or transferring chemical weapons.
- The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is allowed to conduct inspections to ensure that signatory states are abiding by the convention.
- The OPCW reports on its inspections and other operations to the UN through the Secretary General's office, as per the 2001 Relationship Agreement between the OPCW and the UN.
- The Nobel Peace Prize was given to the organisation in 2013 "for its systematic efforts to eradicate chemical weapons."

The Chemical Weapons Convention makes it illegal to:

- Chemical weapons development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, or retention. The movement of chemical weapons, either directly or indirectly.

- Usage of chemical weapons or combat readiness for use.
- assisting, enabling, or causing other countries to participate in CWC-prohibited activities.
- “As a form of warfare,” the use of riot control officers.
- The Executive Council
- India was also selected as the member of the executive council of the OPCW representing Asia group for another two-year term during the OPCW conference.
- It is the OPCW’s governing body.
- The Council is made up of 41 OPCW Member States who are elected every two years by the Conference of States Parties.
- The Council is in charge of overseeing the Technical Secretariat’s operations and supporting the Convention’s successful implementation and enforcement.
- Each Member State has the right to serve on the Executive Council on a revolving basis.

Parambikulam Tiger Reserve



- A survey held at the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve in Kerala in recent weeks identified 35 tigers, indicating an increase in the apex predator population
- The sanctuary is located between Longitude:76° 35'- 76° 50' E, and Latitude:10° 20' – 10° 26' N. It is 135 kilometres (84 mi) from Palakkad town and adjacent to the Anamalai Wildlife Sanctuary to the east in Tamil Nadu.
- The Parambikulam Tiger Reserve is a protected area in Kerala’s Palakkad district. In 1973, the wildlife sanctuary was created.
- It is located between the Anaimalai Hills and Nelliampathy in the Sungam range of hills.
- On February 19, 2010, the Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary was designated as part of the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve.
- The Kadar, Malasar, Muduvar, and Mala Malasar are among the four indigenous tribes who call the sanctuary home.
- The reserve is known for having the world’s first scientifically operated teak plantation, which was later combined with forest land.
- It is home to the largest and oldest teak tree in the world. The tree, known as “Kannimara” (a corrupt version of the Irish name Connemara), is estimated to be 350 years old, with a height of 40 metres and a girth of 6.4 metres.
- It won the Mahavriksha Puraskar given by the Indian Government.

- The Participatory Forest Management Scheme is implemented at Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (PFMS).
- Tigers, Grey-headed Fishing Eagles, Peninsular Bay Owls, Nilgiri Wood Pigeons, Black-capped Kingfishers, Great Black Woodpeckers, and Lesser Grey-headed Fish Eagles are among the fauna.
- The oldest ever teak tree, Kannimara Teak exists here.
- *Haplothismia exannulata* is a rare species of mycotrophic plant found in this area.

Wolf Rayet Stars



- Indian astronomers have tracked a rare supernova explosion and traced it to one of the hottest kinds of stars called Wolf–Rayet stars or WR stars.
- They are highly luminous objects a thousand times that of the Sun and have intrigued astronomers for long.
- They are massive stars and strip their outer hydrogen envelope which is associated with the fusion of Helium and other elements in the massive core
- WR stars are a rare heterogeneous set of stars with unusual spectra showing prominent broad emission lines of ionised helium and highly ionised nitrogen or carbon.
- The spectra indicate very high surface enhancement of heavy elements, depletion of hydrogen, and strong stellar winds.
- The surface temperatures of known Wolf-Rayet stars range from 30,000 K to around 210,000 K, hotter than almost all other kind of star

Amarkantak Plateau



- Amarkantak Plateau, mountain range in Madhya Pradesh state, central India.
- It runs in a north-south direction and forms the eastern base of the triangular Satpura Range.
- The Maikala Range consists of laterite-capped, flat-topped plateaus (pats) with elevations ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 feet (600 to 900 metres).
- The Satpura-Maikala watershed is the second largest in India.

- The Narmada, Son, Pandu, Kanhar, Rihand, Bijul, Gopad, and Banas rivers run almost parallel from south to north and have carved extensive basins in the relatively soft rock formations of the Maikala Range.
- Vegetation varies from grass and thorny trees to deciduous trees such as teak and sal (*Shorea robusta*).
- The Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve is a biosphere reserve in India that extends across the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, covering a total area of 383,551 hectares

River Narmada

- The Narmada originates on the western flank of the Amarkantak plateau. It is the largest west flowing river of Peninsular India.
- Flowing in a rift valley between the Satpura in the south and the Vindhya range in the north, it forms a picturesque gorge in marble rocks and Dhuandhar waterfall near Jabalpur.
- Its valley is a depressed block of the Earth's crust bordered by parallel faults.
- Meets the Arabian sea south of Bharuch, forming a broad 27 km long estuary. Its catchment area is about 98,796 sq. km.
- The Sardar Sarovar Project has been constructed on this river

River Son

- The Son is a large south bank tributary of the Ganga, originating in the Amarkantak plateau.
- After forming a series of waterfalls at the edge of the plateau, it reaches Arrah, west of Patna, to join the Ganga.

Johilla River

- It is a tributary of River Son.
- Its source is near Amarkantak.

Tapi River

- The Tapi is the other important westward flowing river.
- It originates from Multai in the Betul district of Madhya Pradesh.
- Nearly 79 per cent of its basin lies in Maharashtra, 15 per cent in Madhya Pradesh and the remaining 6 per cent in Gujarat.

Statehood to Washington DC



- The House of Representatives voted to pass a bill that would give statehood to Washington, DC.
- The District of Columbia statehood movement is a political movement that advocates making the District of Columbia a U.S. state.
- To provide the taxpayers of the District of Columbia with voting representation in the Congress and full control over local affairs. The District of Columbia is currently a federal district under the direct jurisdiction of the United States Congress.
- Statehood for the District may be achieved by an act of Congress, under the power granted to Congress by the United States Constitution to admit new states to the Union (Article IV, Section 3, Clause 1).
- Alternative proposals to statehood include the retrocession of the District of Columbia and voting rights reforms.
- If the District of Columbia were to become a state based on 2018 figures – it would rank 49th by population, 51st by area, 1st by GDP per capita, 1st by median household income, 34th by total GDP, and the first state admitted to the union in almost 62 years.
- Based on 2019 figures, it would be ranked 1st in educational attainment with 59.7% of residents having a bachelor's degree and 34.0% having an advanced degree.
- In 2015, the District of Columbia was 1st in population density and was 9 times more dense than New Jersey 2nd most dense and 11,000 times more dense than Alaska.
- For most of the modern (1980–present) statehood movement, the new state's name would have been “New Columbia”, although Washington, D.C.
- The Admission Act passed by the United States House of Representatives in 2020 and 2021 refers to the proposed state as the “State of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth” to honor Frederick Douglass.
- On January 26, 2021, Tom Carper of Delaware introduced a similar bill, S.51, “A bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, DC into the Union” into the United States Senate with a record 38 co-sponsors.
- Additional co-sponsors have since signed on, and as of April 14, 2021, there are 44 co-sponsors. On January 26, 2021, Tom Carper of Delaware introduced a similar bill, S.51, “A bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, DC into the Union” into the United States Senate with a record 38 co-sponsors.
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Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI)



CHANDLER GOOD GOVERNMENT INDEX

- The Chandler Good Government Index is an annual Index, built by government practitioners, for government practitioners, measuring the capabilities and effectiveness of 104 governments around the world.
- The Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG) is an international non-profit organisation, headquartered in Singapore.

The index focuses on seven pillars:

- leadership and foresight; robust laws and policies; strong institutions; financial stewardship; attractive marketplace; global influence and reputation; and helping people rise.
- Good government is a deciding factor in whether nations succeed.
- The Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) shows why investing in strong government capabilities is vital to securing positive outcomes for citizens and businesses.
- Seven of the top ten countries are in Europe, but there are four continents represented in the top ten, with Singapore first in Asia, New Zealand leading Oceania, and Canada foremost in the Americas.
- All of the top ten countries are high-income, as defined by the World Bank.
- India has been ranked 49th.

Zhurong



- China's first Mars rover will be named Zhurong after a traditional fire god.
- The rover is aboard the Tianwen-1 probe that arrived in Mars orbit on February 24 and is due to land in May to look for evidence of life.
- China in 2019 became the first country to land a space probe on the little-explored far side of the moon and in December returned lunar rocks to Earth for the first time since the 1970s.
- China would become the third country after the former Soviet Union and the United States to put a robot rover on Mars
- China's first Mars probe is called Tianwen-1 (formerly Huoxing 1).
- The spacecraft consists of an orbiter, a lander and a rover.
- Launched in 2020 on a Long March 5 rocket from Xichang, China.

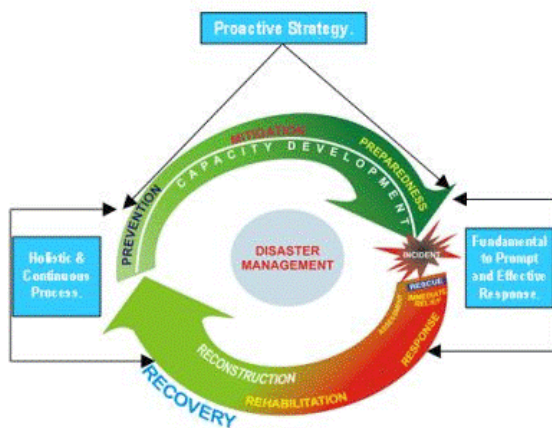
- Landing site: Somewhere in Utopia Planitia, a vast plain in Mars' northern latitudes and the same place NASA's Viking 2 mission landed in the 1970s.

There are five core science objectives:

- Create a geological map of Mars.
- Explore the characteristics of the Martian soil and potentially locate water-ice deposits.
- Analyze the surface material composition.
- Investigate the Martian atmosphere and climate at the surface.
- Understand the electromagnetic and gravitational fields of the planet.

Disaster Management Act

DISASTER MANAGEMENT CONTINUUM



- Invoking the Disaster Management Act, the Centre has ordered States that all liquid oxygen, including the existing stock with private plants, should be made available to the government and will be used for medical purposes only.
- The order was issued by the Union Home Secretary, who is the Chairman of the National Executive Committee under the DM Act, 2005.
- Supply of oxygen will now be prohibited for industrial purposes, except for nine industries that include the pharmaceutical, petroleum, nuclear energy and steel sectors.
- The stated object and purpose of the DM Act is to manage disasters, including preparation of mitigation strategies, capacity-building and more.
- It came into force in India in January 2006.
- The Act provides for “the effective management of disasters and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”
- The Act calls for the establishment of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), with the Prime Minister of India as chairperson.
- The Act enjoins the Central Government to Constitute a National Executive Committee (NEC) to assist the National Authority.
- All State Governments are mandated to establish a State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).
- Power bestowed by DM Act on Central Government and NDMA are extensive.
- The Central Government, irrespective of any law in force (including over-riding powers) can issue any directions to any authority anywhere in India to facilitate or assist in the disaster management.

- Importantly, any such directions issued by Central Government and NDMA must necessarily be followed the Union Ministries, State Governments and State Disaster Management Authorities.
- In order to achieve all these, the prime minister can exercise all powers of NDMA (S 6(3)). This ensures that there is adequate political and constitutional heft behind the decisions made.

Production of combined HIV, Hepatitis, Syphilis test launched in Russia



- Russian biotechnological company BioPalette launched the mass production of MultiSCREEN", the world's first test system designed to simultaneously screen for the presence of such diseases as HIV, hepatitis B and C, and syphilis. According to the company, there are currently no similar test systems in the world that can diagnose four infections at the molecular level in a single analysis.

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