

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that curves through a dense, lush green forest. Several cars are visible on the road, including a white car, a blue car, and a white van. The road has white dashed lines for lane markings. The overall scene is vibrant and scenic.

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DAILY NEWS DECODE

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MIT study finds life can possibly exist in clouds of Venus



- A study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) found that the production of ammonia makes Venusian clouds habitable.
- The researchers listed out chemical pathways of ammonia by which life forms could neutralise the acidic environment on Venus' clouds leading to creation of habitable pockets.
- The researchers stated that life may have originated on Venus as it did on Earth.

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Which places welcome New Year first and last in the world?



- Christmas Island (Kiritimati) welcomed the New Year first as January 1, 2022 started there at 3.30 pm IST on December 31.
- It was followed by New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga at 4.30 pm IST on December 31.
- Baker Island will be the last place to welcome New Year 2022, at 5.30 pm IST on January 1.

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Dara Shikoh



- Union Minister for Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has said that Dara Shikoh was 'deliberately' not given due importance by certain governments due to prejudiced politics.
- Dara Shikoh was the eldest son and heir-apparent of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.
- He was born on 11 March 1615 in Ajmer, the land of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, to whom his father Shah Jahan had prayed for a son.
- He was designated with the title Padshahzada-i-Buzurg Martaba and was favored as a successor by his father and his older sister, Princess Jahanara Begum.

- He had developed a keen interest and proficiency in Sufi mysticism and the Quran at a young age.
- At the age of twenty-five, Dara wrote his first book, *Safinat-ul-Awliya* , a concise document detailing the lives of the Prophet and his family, the Caliphs and of saints belonging to the five major Sufi orders then popular in India.
- He was initiated into the Kadiri order of Sufis by his pir (spiritual guide), Mulla Shah.
- He was a follower of the Armenian Sufi-perennialist mystic Sarmad Kashani, as well as Lahore's famous Qadiri Sufi saint Mian Mir, whom he was introduced to by Mullah Shah Badakhshi (Mian Mir's spiritual disciple and successor).
- He had completed the translation of fifty Upanishads from their original Sanskrit into Persian in 1657 so that they could be studied by Muslim scholars.
- His translation is often called *Sirr-i-Akbar* ("The Greatest Mystery"), where he states boldly, in the introduction, his speculative hypothesis that the work referred to in the Qur'an as the "Kitab al-maknun" or the hidden book, is none other than the Upanishads.

- His most famous work, *Majma-ul-Bahrain* ("The Confluence of the Two Seas"), was also devoted to a revelation of the mystical and pluralistic affinities between Sufic and Vedantic speculation.
- He had also commissioned a translation of *Yoga Vasistha*.
- Other works by him include 'Risala-i-hak Numa' (The Compass of the Truth), the 'Shathiyat or Hasanat-ul-Arifin' and the 'Iksir-i-Azam'.
- He had developed a friendship with the seventh Sikh Guru, Guru Har Rai.
- In the war of succession which ensued after Shah Jahan's illness in 1657, Dara was defeated by his younger brother Prince Muhiuddin (later, the Emperor Aurangzeb) in the Battle Deorai.
- He was executed in 1659 on Aurangzeb's orders in a bitter struggle for the imperial throne.

Indravati Tiger Reserve



- For the first time, a large area (400 square kilometers) of the Indravati Tiger Reserve which is a Maoist-affected area, has been covered in tiger census work.
- The tiger reserve is located in the Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.
- The perennial river 'Indravati' forms the boundary of the reserve on the Northern and Western side, which also happens to be the inter-state boundary between Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra.
- It is one of three Project Tiger sites in Chhattisgarh, along with Udanti-sitanadi, and is home to one of the last remaining populations of the endangered wild water buffalo.

- **Indravati attained the status of a national park in 1981 and a tiger reserve in 1983.**
- **The topography of the park mainly comprises undulating hilly terrain.**
- **The vegetation of the Indravati National Park is mainly of the tropical moist and dry deciduous type with predominance of bamboo, sal and teak.**
- **The most common trees in the park are teak, lendia, salai, mahua, tendu, semal, haldu, ber and jamun.**
- **It is home to gaur (Indian bison), nilgai, blackbuck, chausingha (four-horned antelope), sambar, chital, Indian muntjac, Indian spotted chevrotain, wild boar, tigers, leopards, sloth bears, dholes (wild dog) and striped hyenas.**
- **The reserve had three tigers in 2018-19, when the last census took place.**

India to chair Counter Terrorism Committee of UNSC in January 2022



- India will chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee of UNSC in January 2022 after 10 years.
- The Counter-Terrorism Committee was established by Security Council resolution 1373 adopted unanimously on 28 September 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US.
- The Committee was tasked with monitoring the implementation of resolution 1373 which requested countries to implement a number of measures aimed at enhancing their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home and around the world.

- **This includes taking steps to criminalize the financing of terrorism, freezing any funds related to persons involved in acts of terrorism, denying all forms of financial support for terrorist groups, suppressing the provision of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists and sharing information with other governments on any groups practising or planning terrorist acts.**
- **Besides, the Committee monitors steps taken to cooperate with other governments in the investigation, detection, arrest, extradition and prosecution of those involved in terror acts and criminalizes active and passive assistance for terrorism.**

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Russia's 1st versatile nuclear-powered icebreaker to boost India's Arctic Plans



- Russia has launched its first in the series Project 22220 versatile nuclear-powered icebreaker known as 'Sibir'.
- This icebreaker will support the growing fleet of icebreakers to keep the Northern Sea Route open for year-round shipping through the Arctic and enable a wider presence of India in the arctic region.
- The construction of Sibir was started in 2015 and the icebreaker was floated on 22nd December 2017. Sibir was handed over to the Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation for exploitation; the Delivery-Acceptance Act was signed on 24th December at Baltic Shipyard, St. Petersburg, Russia. The icebreaker is 173.3 meters (568.6 feet) long and 34 meters broad with a 33,500-tonne displacement.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2021

Announced



- Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021 in various languages. According to the board, an engraved copper plate, shawl and an amount of Rs 1 lakh will be given to the main Sahitya Akademi prize winner and an engraved copper plate and an amount of Rs 50,000 each will be given to the Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar.
- The Sahitya Akademi Award 2021 was given in 20 Indian languages, the winner of Gujarati, Maithili, Manipuri, and Urdu languages will be announced at a later date. Seven books of poetry, two novels, five books of short stories, two plays, one book each of biography, autobiography, criticism, and epic poetry have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2021. Author, Namita Gokhale was awarded for her novel Things to Leave Behind