

West Bengal reported the highest number of species of birds, followed by Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2023 across 35 States and Union Territories from February 17 to February 20. While West Bengal reported 489 species, Uttarakhand recorded 426, Arunachal Pradesh 407, Assam 397, and Karnataka 371 species. Tamil Nadu and Kerala took the eighth and ninth spots with 349 and 325 species, respectively. Kerala, on the other hand, recorded the highest number of checklists of birds, the Bird Count India (BCI) said in a statement on Friday. It took the top spot in the checklist category by uploading 9,768 lists of birds. Maharashtra with 7,414 lists and Tamil Nadu with 6,098 were placed second and third, respectively.

In line with the expanding military cooperation with South East Asian nations, an Indian Navy Kilo class conventional submarine, INS Sindhukesari, docked in Jakarta, Indonesia, for the first time from February 22 to 24. "Highly enriching engagements with the Indonesian Navy conducted during port call, strengthening maritime partnership between India and Indonesia towards safer and secure Indo-Pacific," the Navy said on Twitter. The submarine, which was on operational deployment, travelled through the Sunda Strait and undertook the maiden docking in Indonesia for Operational Turnaround (OTR), a defence source said. Naval ships regularly make port calls to countries in the region, the source added.

It has been 55 days since the government made it mandatory to capture the attendance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) workers through a mobile application — National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS). However, the Ministry of Rural Development's own statistics point out that 41.3% of the gram panchayats have reported no NMMS usage. As per the Ministry statistics (MIS report 21.6), as on Friday, the NMMS usage has been reported only in 1,58,390 of the total 2,69,637 gram panchayats. The work of recording the attendance at each worksite is done by the MGNREGS mates or supervisors.

The Supreme Court said on Friday that there are different "dimensions" to menstrual pain leave, which though being a biological process, may also act as a "disincentive" for employers from engaging women in their establishments. A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud asked the petitioner to approach the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development Ministry to frame a policy. The court was hearing a petition filed by Shailendra Mani Tripathi, represented by advocate Vishal Tiwari, seeking a direction to States to frame rules for granting menstrual pain leave for students and working women.

The proposed Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project has taken a political twist with Madhya Pradesh approaching the

CENTRALIZED QUALITY CHECKING SYSTEM FOR DRUGS PROPOSED BY MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (MOHFW)

1. MoHFW is preparing a proposal to create a centralised system of drug registration under Central Drugs Control Standard Organisation (CDSCO) to keep a close watch on drug quality. It involves repurposing CDSCO's online portal Sugam which maintain quality checks on new drugs.
2. This plan comes in backdrop of string of scandals abroad over toxic Indian drugs like cough syrups causing children's deaths in Gambia and Uzbekistan etc.
3. **Drug regulation in India**-CDSCO, central drug authority under MoHFW, regulates quality, safety, and efficacy of drugs including vaccines under New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules 2019, and Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. It also regulates market authorization of new drugs and clinical trials standards; supervises drug imports and approves licenses to manufacture. 4. CDSCO along with state drug regulators are responsible for grant of licenses for certain specialized categories of critical Drugs such as blood, vaccines, etc. CDSCO is headed by Drug controller general of India (DCGI). DCGI acts as an appellate authority if there is any dispute with respect to drugs quality.

GOVERNMENT APPROVED INTEGRATION OF 101 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKETING COMMITTEE (APMC) MANDIS INTO E-NAM

1. This will bring total number of APMC mandis to 1,361 by March end and boost turnover of electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) platform in current fiscal. Presently, 260 mandis have joined e-NAM platform, bringing total to 1,260.
2. e-NAM is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) is implementing agency for e-NAM.
3. Significance of integrating APMCs in e-NAM Creation of unified agricultural market transcending state boundaries. Increase in agricultural trade and market reach. Real time price discovery and stable price realization for producers. Better monitoring and regulation of traders and commission agents.
4. APMC is a statutory market committee constituted by State Government in respect of trade in certain notified agricultural or horticultural or livestock products, under APMC Act 2003 issued by that state government. Other initiatives for digitalization of agriculture: Digital Agriculture Mission 2021-2025, National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture, Platform of Platforms (POP) within e-NAM portal etc.

WATER SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN AND PLANNING (WSUDP) FOR CITIES IN GLOBAL SOUTH

1. WSUDP was primarily developed for western city contexts but rapid urbanisation in Global South necessitates WSUDP for them. WSUD is an emerging urban development paradigm aimed to minimise hydrological impacts of urban development on environment. In practice, this means combining groundwater recharge besides several accompanying measures that reduce run off and increase infiltration.
2. It contributes towards sustainability and liveability, particularly when considered as part of an overall urban strategy. It integrates urban water cycle, water supply, wastewater, storm-water, and groundwater management with spatial and urban design.
3. **Key principles of WSUDP**- Integration of water planning and city planning. Linking of drains with statute protected water bodies; Green places as recharge areas. Reuse of adequately treated wastewater for irrigation purposes. Building roads and drains as per hydrogeography of a place.
4. **Scope of WSUDP intervention in Indian Cities**-City level (planning stage): Open spaces—parks and waterbodies, road infrastructure. Zone level (planning and designing stages): Parking lots, roads, sanitation, storm-water drainage, etc. Individual level (designing stage): Site-specific on-site water-sensitive facilities, water-efficient fittings, etc.

INDIAN ARMY DOCTORS USE 3D PRINTING TECHNOLOGY TO FIX PATIENT'S SKULL DEFECT

1. 3D printing or Additive manufacturing (AM) uses data computer-aided-design (CAD) software or 3D object scanners to direct hardware to deposit material, layer upon layer, in precise geometric shapes. AM adds material to create an object.
2. By contrast, traditional manufacturing involves removing material through milling, machining, carving, shaping or other means. AM was first developed in 1980s. The technique has been applied to (and

Supreme Court seeking a stay on the project.

The sound of crashing waves mixes with excited chatter as the sun begins to set at Puri beach on the Odisha coast. In a makeshift tent, filmmakers of different hues lounge in the breeze, soaking up the atmosphere. No hierarchy exists here — all are equal in their admiration for the films screened and the exchange of ideas that flows freely. For two decades, the Bring Your Own Film Festival (BYOFF), a unique event bereft of corporate sponsorship, has been drawing both filmmakers and film lovers to this coastal town. The 20th edition of the event, which began on Tuesday and will witness the screening of over 70 films from different genres, durations, and parts of the country, concludes on Saturday.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday defended the move to introduce property tax in the Union Territory for the first time, saying “people have money for iPhones, data, games but don’t want to pay for services.” “There is an uproar over the imposition of a nominal property tax in J&K. People need all the services but would not pay for them. If affluent people, who have money for iPhones, data and games can’t pay, then a way needs to be worked out,” he said.

Court complexes across the country cannot be converted into “fortresses” in the name of security, denying ordinary people access to court proceedings, the Supreme Court said on Friday. A Bench of Justices S. Ravindra Bhat and Dipankar Datta said that the judiciary follows the open court principle, insisting that the security solution should be a balanced one.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) said on Friday it has suspended Russia’s membership over Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine. The FATF sets standards for more than 200 countries and jurisdictions and seeks to help authorities tackle serious crime including drug smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism.

The global economic outlook has improved in recent months, but uncertainties still remain, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday as he called upon G20 nations to resolutely address the challenges, including debt distress and threats to financial stability, confronting world economies. Addressing the inaugural session of the meeting of G20 finance ministers and central bank governors (FMCBG), Mr. Das said the outlook for the global economy has improved in recent months.

utilised by) many different industries including medical. Medical 3D printing involves the creation of physical replicas of anatomical structures using 3D printing. It uses 3D imaging techniques such as X-rays, CT scans, MRI scans and 3D ultrasounds to produce an image of the anatomy.

3. **Uses of 3D printing in medical field**-Creating tissues and organoids to replace human organ transplants. Produce cheaper versions of required surgical tools. Patient-specific surgical models to speed up surgical procedures. Custom-made prosthetics to improve lives of those reliant on prosthetic limbs.

NUCLEAR INSPECTORS IN IRAN FIND URANIUM ENRICHED TO 84% PURITY: REPORTS

1. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had detected uranium enriched to 84% (just below the level needed to develop nuclear weapons) at Iran’s nuclear facility. IAEA (Estd. 1957; HQ: Vienna, Austria) is the world’s centre for cooperation in nuclear field, promoting safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear technology. Uranium is a radioactive heavy metal with atomic number 92. Uraninite (UO₂) is its primary ore.
2. It is found with other mineral deposits like autunite, carnotite, torbernite, samarskite etc. and in traces in soil and water. Naturally, Uranium occurs in three major isotopes: U-238 (99.27%), U-235 (0.72%) and U-234 (0.006%). Uranium enrichment is the process of creating an effective nuclear fuel by increasing the percentage of U-235 in natural uranium by removing U-238 to different enrichment levels.
3. Iran’s Nuclear Agreement, 2015, also known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), capped Iran’s Uranium enrichment at 3.67%. JCPOA was signed between Iran and P5+1 nations (USA, UK, China, Russia, France, and Germany). In 2018, USA pulled out of nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions on Iran leading to Iran breaching restrictions under deal.

NATIONAL STOCK EXCHANGE (NSE) GETS FINAL SEBI APPROVAL TO LAUNCH SOCIAL STOCK EXCHANGE (SSE)

1. Idea of SSE was first floated by Finance Minister in Budget speech 2019-20. Following this, government issued a notification declaring a new security 'zero coupon zero principal (ZCZP)' under Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956. ZCZP can be publicly or privately issued by NPO upon registering with SSE of NSE. Earlier, in July 2022, SEBI notified rules for SSE.
2. SSE functions as a regulated funding platform to allow For-Profit Social Enterprises (FPEs) and not-for-profit organisations (NPO) with a social purpose to raise funds.
3. At present, avenues through which social sector (FPEs and NPO) receive funding include Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), impact investing, philanthropic/Government grants, etc. Some of the prominent SSE includes UK (Social Stock Exchange), Canada (Social Venture Connexion), Singapore (Impact Investment Exchange) etc.
4. Benefits of SSE: Enables public participation in social causes through equity route. Provides additional capital to improve lives of underserved. Leverage private sector participation thus complementing government efforts for developmental goals. Brings together social enterprises and impact investors on a common platform.

LAB-GROWN DIAMONDS(LGD)

1. India Centre for LGD is proposed to be established at IIT Madras. LGD are developed from a carbon seed placed in a microwave chamber and superheated into a glowing plasma ball. The process creates particles that crystallize into diamonds in weeks.
2. LGD are produced through 2 technologies, namely High-Pressure High Temperature (HPHT) and Chemical Vapour Deposition (CVD).
3. India is one of the leading producers of LGD using CVD technology. Globally, LGD market is expected to rise to \$ 5 billion by 2025 from \$1 billion in 2020. Applications of LGD: Jewellery, computer chips, satellites, 5G networks etc.



“You all are near-geniuses.
Trust and take the leap of faith.”

Dr. Khan
(KSG)