

NEWS TODAY

SOFTWARE WITH INTELLIGENCE MARKING BASED IDENTIFICATION OF ASIATIC LIONS (SIMBA) TO IDENTIFY ASIATIC LIONS

- Gujarat forest department will use SIMBA an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based photo-identification software- **specifically designed to distinguish patterns or marks.**
 - It has been developed by Hyderabad-based “teliolabs”.
- **How it works** - Asiatic lions have **unique whisker spots on either side of their muzzle.** According to scientific studies, these **precise patterns are highly variable and do not change over time.**
 - SIMBA, with machine learning technique **automates the individual identification, based on the variability in the individual's whisker spot pattern, presence of scars on face, notches on ears** and other metadata of the photograph.
- **Significance**
 - Allows user to **identify and search whether individual** already exists in the database or is a new inventory.
 - Additional information like **gender, name, microchip number, life-status**, lactating (in case of female) can also be used to filter individuals from database.
 - Aid the efforts towards **conservation and management of the species in the Asiatic lion landscape.**

About Asiatic Lion

- It is one of five big cats inhabiting India, along with the Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, snow leopard, and clouded leopard.
- Found **only in India**, in five protected areas in Gujarat – Gir National Park, Gir Sanctuary, Pania Sanctuary, Mitiyala Sanctuary, and Girnar Sanctuary.
- Lions are the only cats that live in groups, called pride.
- **Female lions** are the **pride's primary hunters.**
- The gestation period lasts between **100 – 119 days.**
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **Schedule 1** of Wildlife Protect Act, 1972.
 - **Appendix-I** of CITES
 - **Endangered** on IUCN Red List.
- Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
 - IUCN status of African Lion is **Vulnerable.**

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) PANDEMIC TREATY TO PREVENT GLOBAL HEALTH DISASTERS

- WHO is discussing Pandemic Treaty in the backdrop of **COVID 19 pandemic exposing the cracks in the global health system.**
 - Objective is to provide for **a convention, agreement or other international instrument” to prevent further pandemics and to improve the preparedness and response** in case of its occurrence.
- **Background of the treaty**
 - In December 2021, World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted a decision titled **“The World Together” at its second special session since it was founded in 1948.**
 - Under the decision, it established **an intergovernmental negotiating body (INB)** to draft and negotiate the contents of the treaty in compliance with **Article 19 of the WHO Constitution.**
 - It is expected to cover aspects like **data sharing and genome sequencing of emerging viruses and equitable distribution of vaccines and drugs** and related research throughout the world.
 - EU also wants a ban on wildlife markets to be included in the treaty.
 - While the **EU wants the treaty to be legally binding, the U.S., Brazil and India have expressed reservations** about the same.

Article 19 of WHO

- It gives the World Health Assembly the **authority to adopt conventions or agreements on matters of health.** A two-third majority is needed to adopt such conventions or agreements.
- Sole instrument established under Article 19 to date is the **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.**

RUSSIA THREATENS TO LET INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS) FALL

- Fears were ignited after Russian space agency threatened to let **ISS fall over US or Europe, or over India and China** in the backdrop of US imposing sanctions on Russia amid Ukraine war.
 - ISS's **orbital flight path usually does not take it over most of the Russian territory.**
- Threat emanates as **ISS has two broad segments**, one relating to **power and systems which is managed by US** and the other **responsible for keeping the ISS in orbit, which is managed by Russia.**
 - Russia periodically sends **thrusters that attach themselves to the ISS and impart the required momentum to keep it going.** Left to itself, the **ISS would fall down.**
- **About ISS**
 - It is **the only operational space laboratory, orbiting the earth in a trajectory that is about 400 km above the land surface since 1998.**
 - It is operated as a **"co-operative programme" between Europe, the United States, Russia, Canada and Japan.**
 - It completes **one journey around the earth in about one and a half hours.**
 - It is used for carrying out a **variety of zero-gravity experiments, space exploratory studies, and technology development.**

INDIA'S SMART METERING PROGRAMME HITS A SNAG, BIDS SUSPENDED TILL 15 MARCH

- As per reports, government has suspended smart meter bids under its Rs. 3.03 trillion **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS)** till March 15 due to multiple issues.

- RDSS aims to **bring down India's average aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) loss from the present level of 20% to 12-15% and gradually narrow the deficit between the cost of electricity and the price at which it is supplied to zero by 2024-25.**



- Smart Meter is an advanced energy meter that provides the **tracking of utility energy consumption** that occurs on the system or outlet it is attached to.

- A smart meter is **one component of a smart grid.**

• Benefits of smart metering

- **To customers:** Greater control over their electricity use; enhanced consumer satisfaction through better complaint management, system stability, reliability and transparency.
- **To discoms:** Reduce AT&C losses, improve financial health, incentivise energy conservation, enhance ease of bill payments and ensure billing accuracy.

• Issues with smart metering

- **Delay in operationalizing prepaid functionality** in these meters.
- **Connections and disconnections are done manually**, defeating the objective of avoiding human intervention.
- **Cybersecurity risks** include data privacy issue.

Government steps

- **National smart metering programme (NSMP)** aims to replace 250 million conventional meters with smart ones that will **reduce power theft and ensure reliable electricity supply.**
- **National Smart Grid Mission (NSGM)** plans and monitors the implementation of policies and programmes related to Smart Grid activities in India.

SC ENFORCES A LANDMARK RULING ON DEATH PENALTY

- Supreme Court, in **Chhannu Lal Verma vs. State of Chhattisgarh**, held that, before awarding death sentence, a **proper psychological/psychiatric evaluation is to be done by courts** to assess probability and possibility of reform of the criminal.

- In this case, **SC referred to various judgments:**

- In **Bacchan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980)**, SC established the **doctrine of "rarest of rare" crime in handing down capital punishment** while mandating a comparative **analysis of aggravating and mitigating circumstances** in connection to the accused.

- In **Machi Singh vs State of Punjab (1983)**, SC **elucidated doctrine of "rarest of rare"** and set down some guiding principles in the death sentences cases.

- **Aggravating circumstances included** the manner in which crime was committed, motive for committing the crime, severity of crime, and the victim of crime.

- **Mitigating circumstances comprised of the possibility of reformation and rehabilitation of an accused**, his mental health and his antecedents.

- In 2014, **SC ruled that unexplained delay in execution was a ground for commutation of death penalty**, and an inmate, his or her kin, or even a public-spirited citizen, could file a writ petition seeking such commutation.

ALSO IN NEWS



Furlough

- Jailed Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim was sent back to jail after competition of his furlough.
- **About Furlough**
 - In legal terms, it refers to **granting leave of absence** for a specified time period to a convict from the prison.
 - While **Parole** is granted for the prisoner to meet a specific exigency; furlough may be granted after a stipulated number of years have been served, without any reason.
 - Condition for granting of it vary from state to state because **prisons is State subject** under the **State List** of the 7th Schedule of Constitution.
 - It is **not a legal right of the prisoner**.
- Its main objective is to **break the monotony of imprisonment** and to enable the convict to integrated integration with society.



National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

- On 17th Foundation Day of NCPCR, **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** launched the new motto of NCPCR- **protect the future (children)**.
- It is a **statutory body** under the **Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005**.
 - It ensures that all **laws, policies, programmes are in consonance with the Child Rights** as per Constitution and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
 - **Child is defined** as a person in the **0 to 18 years age group**.
 - It monitors the implementation of **POCSO Act**.
 - It is under **administrative control of MWCD**.



Montreux Convention

- Turkey pledged to implement **1936 Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits** to limit the movement of Russian warships between Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea.
- According to the convention, **Turkey has control over both the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits**.
- It is an **essential element in the context of Black Sea security and stability**.
- **Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits**, also known as the **Turkish Straits or the Black Sea Straits**, connect the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea via the Sea of Marmara.
- It is the **only passage** through which the Black Sea ports can access the Mediterranean and beyond.



National Logistics Portal (NLP) is to be integrated with Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)

- NLP was to ensure **ease of trading in international and domestic markets** linking all the stakeholders of EXIM, domestic trade and movement etc. on a single platform.
- ULIP brings **all mode of transportation under a single window by connecting all logistics stakeholders** spread across multiple ministries, associations.
 - Objective is to **bring down the logistics cost which is currently at 13-14% of GDP**.
 - It has **3 key components** - Integration with existing data, Data exchange with private players and Unified document reference in the supply chain.



Facility for Low Carbon Technology Deployment (FLCTD)

- FLCTD is a **project financed by the Global Environment Facility**, implemented by United Nations Industrial Development Organisation in collaboration with Bureau of Energy Efficiency.
- FLCTD was launched in 2016 with an **objective to identify innovative energy efficiency and low carbon technology solutions** that address the existing technology gaps in Indian industrial and commercial sectors.
 - FLCTD **has identified six priority technology verticals** for '**Innovation Challenge**' in the areas like Waste Heat Recovery, Space Conditioning, Industrial Resource Efficiency and Electrical Energy Storage etc.



Konark Temple

- Odisha is planning to make Konark Temple and Konark town a 100 per cent solar town.
- **About Konark Temple**
 - Dedicated to **Sun God**, the temple is located on the shores of the Bay of Bengal.
 - It was **built by King Narasimha Deva I** of the Eastern Ganga dynasty from 1238-1250 CE.
 - It is a **Kalinga architectural style temple**, a sub-style of Nagara Temple Architecture, with a:
 - **Rekha Deula** or Vimana (principal sanctuary) with a Shikhara (Crowning cap).
 - **Jagamohana** or assembly hall.
 - **Natamandir** or Dance Hall; and a number of other sub- structures.

• Declared as a **World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1984**, it is also known as **Black Pagoda**.



Bishni Devi Shah (1902-1974)

- Born in Bageshwar, Uttarakhand.
- She is known as the **first woman activist of Uttarakhand**.
- She used to sing the **songs of Kumaoni poet Girda in Ratri Jagran**.
- She was **inspired by mass awakening of Mahatma Gandhi** and participated in **Individual Satyagraha in 1940-41**.
- In the Quit India Movement in 1942, she made the British government realize the **role of the agitating woman**.

- She promoted the idea of **Swadeshi and khadi**.

- **Personal values:** Patriotism, bravery, swadeshi.

Subhadra Kumari Chauhan (16 August 1904- 15 February 1948)

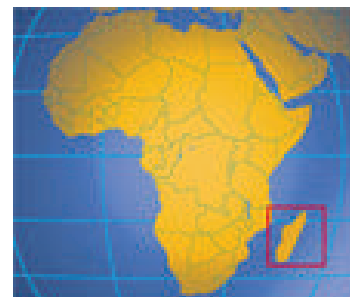
- She **joined Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement** against the British.
- A trailblazing writer whose work rose to national prominence during a male-dominated era of literature.
- Her poem, **Jhansi ki Rani**, is regarded as one of the most recited poems in Hindi literature.
- She wrote in the **Khariboli dialect** of Hindi.
- Her poems also **depicted the hardships and challenges faced by Indian women** during the freedom movement of India.
- **Personal values:** Patriotism, bravery.



Personalities in News

Madagascar

- Madagascar braces for 4th tropical cyclone(EMNATI) in a month.
- **Features & boundaries**
 - > It is an **island country** located in Indian ocean off the coast of southern Africa. It is also the **world's fifth largest island**.
 - > Shares maritime borders with **Comoros, France (Mayotte and Réunion), Mauritius, Mozambique and Seychelles**.
 - > Separated from the African continent by **Mozambique Channel**.
- **Geographical features**
 - > Climate is **tropical along the coast, temperate inland, and arid in the south**.
 - > With over 250 islands it is **home to world's largest coral reef systems** and most **extensive mangrove** areas in the Western Indian Ocean.



Places in news



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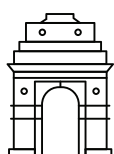
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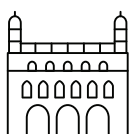
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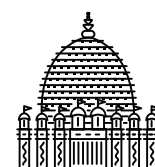
PUNE



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CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI