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## Australian mining companies 'prefer India over China'



India is a preferred business destination compared with China as the companies here are more transparent, honest, cost-effective and work in a legal framework which is similar for both the countries due to British history, said a representative of a business delegation on mining equipment from Western Australia, a global leader in mining. Clayton Franklin, Founder and Chief Engineer of EPCA, is a part of Australia's first-ever 'First Nations Business Mission to India'.

First nations mean the businesses owned by the aboriginals of the country. This mission includes the owners of eight Australian Mining Equipment, Technology and Services companies (METS) from Western Australia, who are on a week-long visit from October 28 to November 3, to the Indian cities of Mumbai, New Delhi and Kolkata. The aim of the visit is the strengthening of trade and investment opportunities between Australia's First Nations people and India's mining and renewable energy markets. China has been an institutionalised avenue for imports for western Australia for the last 20 years. But the supply chain is for four months. India has the capability to provide an alternative so this can reduce the supply chain investment from four months to one month. Both share the Indian Ocean. Chris Schmid, Managing Director of Woollahra Group which manufactures and distributes cleaning, janitorial and hygiene products, saw India as an opportunity to reduce not just the logistic and inventory costs by 75%, but also the carbon footprint. Western Australia, which is the largest resource in mining sector in the world can bring new opportunities to see what they can source from India .



**At the stroke of midnight hour, India gets its tryst with destiny- Harmanpreet Kaur & Co ends India's wait for their moment of glory. This was a monumental moment not only in Indian cricket, but for women's sport in the country, one so vast that could potentially unlock the untapped talent in women's cricket in the nation.**



Karnataka is planning to establish a permanent water commission comprising technical experts on the lines of the Central Water Commission, to recommend to the State government measures on water security and on matters of water disputes. Among other things, the commission will look into water management in the allocation of the Cauvery water to Bengaluru for the next 50 years. It will also be studying modern irrigation systems and sustainable use of water.



# STATE

## Experts join hands for Ramsar site tag for wetlands in Assam sanctuary

### Conservation Coalition for Ramsar Tag

- Conservationists, wildlife officials, academics, and students have collaboratively initiated an effort to secure Ramsar site status for two interconnected wetlands in Assam's Nagaon district.
- These wetlands are located within the 70.13 sq. km Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, itself part of the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, forming the Rowmari-Donduwa wetland complex.

### Ecological and Conservation Significance

- The wetland complex has recorded more bird species than the only two existing Ramsar sites in Northeast India (Assam's Deepor Beel and Manipur's Loktak Lake).
- Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, adopted in 1971 to protect critical habitats globally.

### Biodiversity and Connectivity Role

- These wetlands serve as connectivity corridors for wildlife, aiding migration between Kaziranga Tiger Reserve and Orang National Park, also known as the Kaziranga-Orang landscape.
- They cover an area of approximately 3 sq. km and host an average of 120 species of resident and migratory birds each year. Notably, globally threatened birds like the knob-billed duck, black-necked stork, and ferruginous pochard have been observed here.

### Field Data and Research Efforts

- Research and monitoring by civil society organizations and students have generated vital information on avian diversity in the wetlands.
- The 6th Kaziranga Waterbird Census, conducted a few months ago, recorded 20,653 birds of 75 species at Rowmari Beel and 26,480 birds of 88 species at Donduwa Beel.

### Administrative Action and Next Steps

- Based on these findings, the Assam Forest Department has submitted a formal proposal to recognize the Rowmari-Donduwa complex as a Ramsar site.
- The Ramsar tag would bolster conservation efforts, promote international importance, and enhance protection measures for this critical wetland ecosystem.
- Assam is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including tropical wet evergreen and deciduous forests, with around 4,400 species of plants and approximately 180 species of mammals.

## IIT-Kanpur tried cloud seeding despite 'no clouds' alert

- Researchers from IIT Kanpur attempted cloud seeding in Delhi on October 28, aiming to induce artificial rain to improve air quality, despite the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warning about insufficient clouds for successful seeding.
- They used a Cessna aircraft to disperse a mixture of 10 kg of silver iodide, common salt, and rock salt into the clouds.
- This was Delhi's first cloud seeding experiment since 1972, carried out specifically to address hazardous air pollution.

### IMD's Reservations and Lack of Support

- The IMD and other experts, especially from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune, expressed skepticism, citing decades of inconclusive results regarding cloud seeding in India.
- Experts emphasized that cloud seeding is only likely to succeed with 'warm clouds' containing at least 15% moisture, which were not present in Delhi at the time.
- The information shared by IMD and IITM with IIT Kanpur was generic, lacking specific recommendations or encouragement to proceed.

### Scientific Rationale and Outcome

- IIT Kanpur's intent was to test their indigenous mixture's potency, not just to induce rain but to study its effects and efficacy in real-world conditions.
- The experiment was carried out despite IMD's pessimistic forecast as the research team wanted to verify if their proprietary mix (20% silver iodide, rock salt, and common salt) would be effective.
- Both attempts failed to yield rainfall, as anticipated by meteorological agencies due to insufficient cloud moisture.

### Broader Context and Implications

- Cloud seeding remains an experimental, largely unproven method in India, though it has seen successful results in China and the UAE.
- The IITM-CAIPEX experiment in Maharashtra demonstrated that successful seeding relies heavily on pre-existing moisture content, with only 40% of seeded clouds yielding rain, and about 27% of unseeded clouds also producing rain in trials.
- Overall gains from seeding averaged around 46% more rain in targeted areas compared to neighboring unseeded areas, but only under ideal moisture-rich conditions.

### Financial and Scientific Considerations

- Each cloud seeding sortie cost approximately ₹15 lakh, making indiscriminate or poorly targeted attempts economically and scientifically questionable.

# As Presidential estates welcome visitors, citizen engagement soars

## Surge in Public Access and Engagement

- The President's Estate, originally a single location in Delhi, expanded by opening its estates in Hyderabad, Shimla, and Dehradun, greatly increasing public access.
- This expansion led to a sharp rise in visitors, with physical visitors growing from around seven lakh before the COVID-19 pandemic to over 20.5 lakh in 2024.
- Overall citizen engagement (combining physical and digital participation) reached over 49 lakh in 2024, marking a 600% increase and fulfilling President Droupadi Murmu's vision of transforming Rashtrapati Bhavan into 'Rashtra ka bhavan' (the nation's building).

## What is "President's Estate" ?

- "President's Estate" typically refers to the official residence and surrounding grounds of a country's head of state, most prominently the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the official residence of the President of India. It includes the main building, administrative offices, gardens, and other facilities that support the functions of the President and their staff.
- It is the site for major national events like the swearing-in of the President, Prime Minister, and Cabinet, and the presentation of national awards.
- Beyond the main building, the term can also encompass other presidential properties like Rashtrapati Nilayam in Hyderabad, Rashtrapati Niketan (Dehradun) and Rashtrapati Niwas in Shimla.

## Thematic Experiences and Engagement

- Each estate features new attractions and thematic experiences, aimed at boosting citizen participation and engagement with the historical and institutional value of the President's office.
- Enhanced accessibility and revamped ceremonies, like the Change of Guard, allow visitors to participate in and appreciate the role of the republic's highest constitutional office.

## Conclusion and Impact

- The initiative validates the success of transforming the President's residences into accessible symbols of national heritage, and demonstrates a strong public interest in civic engagement with the presidential office.

# ISRO launches advanced GSAT-7R, India's heaviest communication satellite

## Launch Overview and Technical Highlights

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the Indian Navy's advanced communication satellite, GSAT-7R (CMS-03), from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- GSAT-7R, indigenously designed and developed, weighs approximately 4,400 kg, making it the heaviest Indian-built communication satellite to be launched from Indian soil.
- The launch was carried out on ISRO's most powerful rocket, the LVM3, during its M5 mission, and successfully placed the satellite into a geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO).

## Strategic Importance and Capabilities

- This satellite marks a major milestone for India's space-based communications, especially aimed at strengthening the Navy's maritime and domain awareness capabilities.
- GSAT-7R can deliver secure voice, data, and video links over multiple communication bands, thereby improving connectivity between the Navy's ships, submarines, aircraft, and Maritime Operations Centres.
- The satellite's technology supports tactical operations and enhances the Navy's autonomy in managing its own communication system.

## Self-reliance and Make in India

- The launch reinforces India's self-reliance in critical space and defense technology sectors, reflecting success in indigenous design and manufacturing.
- The mission is described as a boost to "Atmanirbhar Bharat" by expanding capabilities for armed forces to maintain secure, high-capacity communication—particularly crucial in contested or hostile environments.

## Technical Achievements and Broader Impacts

- LVM3 has now launched its heaviest payload yet; it is capable of launching four-tonne-plus satellites to GTO, reducing India's need to rely on foreign launchers for heavy satellites and supporting future high-profile missions, including Gaganyaan (India's human spaceflight program).
- The successful deployment of GSAT-7R is anticipated to improve the Navy's networked warfare and situational awareness in the Indian Ocean region.
- The achievement is also seen as strengthening India's preparedness for feeding diverse communication and data needs of the country's space and defense programs.

## Institutional Statements and Vision

- ISRO officials described the launch as a testament to Indian engineering and rising stature in global space capabilities.
- The successful mission is explicitly linked to the broader vision of developing robust indigenous space infrastructure to meet strategic needs.

## Tri-services exercise Trishul begins today, to strengthen joint combat preparedness

### Scope and Leadership of Exercise

- The tri-services exercise "Trishul" commences with coordination led by the Indian Navy and includes joint drills with the Indian Army and Air Force in the creek and desert regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat, extending into the northern Arabian Sea.
- The 12-day exercise is steered by the Western Naval Command, involving the Army's Southern Command, Western Air Command, and several maritime security agencies.

### Scale and Forces Involved

- Over 20,000 personnel will participate, including troops, tanks, fighter aircraft (including Rafale jets), helicopters, frigates, and destroyers.
- Additional participants include the Coast Guard, Border Security Force, and other Central agencies, highlighting a high level of inter-agency coordination and integration.

### Objectives: Boosting Interoperability and Combat Preparedness

- The exercise aims to validate joint operational procedures, improve interoperability between services, and strengthen integrated network operations.
- A prominent focus is on aspects of joint intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and comprehensive electronic warfare and cyber defense.

### Operational Dimensions and Scenarios

- Trishul will simulate a broad array of maritime and amphibious operations, including amphibious landings using INS Jalashwa and Landing Craft Utility vessels, along with integrated air-sea coordinated missions.
- The drills are designed to test real-world readiness for multi-domain threats and to sharpen joint operational responses.

### Strategic Significance and Future Outlook

- The exercise reflects the Indian armed forces' continued efforts to align operational practices for modern, multidimensional security challenges.
- The 2025 edition of Trishul places special emphasis on evolving scenarios with robust surveillance, electronic, cyber, and space-based integration, which are pivotal for contemporary defense strategy.
- Large-scale tri-service exercises project India's ability to protect its interests across regions—including sensitive zones such as the western seaboard and northern Arabian Sea—while signaling deterrence to adversaries and reassurance to allies.

## ICMR seeks partners to develop antibody against Nipah virus

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has invited Expressions of Interest (EoI) from eligible organizations, companies, and manufacturers to collaborate on developing and producing monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) against Nipah virus disease.
- The aim is to build indigenous biomedical countermeasures, particularly focusing on monoclonal antibodies for Nipah, a virus with high fatality rates and no licensed vaccines.

### Significance of Nipah Virus Threat

- Nipah virus (NiV) poses a major zoonotic threat in India, with repeated outbreaks since 2001.
- Case fatality rates for NiV have ranged between 40% and 75%, depending on clinical care and outbreak severity, stressing the need for effective medical interventions.

### Rationale for mAbs Development

- Monoclonal antibodies are the only currently feasible biomedical countermeasure, underscoring the urgency to have mAb stocks ready for emergency deployment.
- mAbs could serve as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for high-risk groups—health workers, family of patients, and others exposed without adequate protection.

### Research Status and Collaboration Model

- ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV) Pune is already engaged in advanced research and animal experiments regarding mAbs for Nipah.
- The initiative seeks active collaboration with Indian industry to co-develop an indigenous mAbs platform, and ensure rapid access during outbreaks, thus boosting national preparedness for viral emergencies.

### Guidance and Oversight Mechanisms

- ICMR and its institutes will provide expert technical guidance and support throughout R&D phases, including stringent ethical and technical oversight for development and commercialization of mAb products.

### Expected Outcomes

- The deployment of monoclonal antibody therapies could reduce viral load and disease progression in infected patients, particularly when administered early; this would transform clinical management of Nipah outbreaks in India.
- By encouraging indigenous therapeutic development, the move is poised to reduce India's reliance on international sources and strengthen public health security against high-risk zoonoses.



## **PRELIMS CORNER :**

**1.The Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) was launched by India in which of the below summit?**

- (a) COP21 Paris Climate Conference**
- (b) COP26 Glasgow Conference**
- (c) COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh Conference**
- (d) COP22 Marrakech Conference**

**2.The Quito Adjustment is related to which of the following convention/protocol**

- (a) Montreal Protocol**
- (b) Kyoto Protocol**
- (c) Nagoya Protocol**
- (d) Vienna Convention**

**3.Which of the following is correct regarding Micro forests ?**

- (a) Small-scale forests are grown in urban areas to promote biodiversity.**
- (b) Traditional forests with minimal tree coverage.**
- (c) Artificial forests created through genetic engineering.**
- (d) Miniature trees grown in bonsai gardens.**

**4.Which of the following conventions is related to the elimination or restriction on the production and use of persistent organic pollutants?**

- (a) Basel Convention**
- (b) Stockholm Convention**
- (c) Rotterdam Convention**
- (d) Vienna Convention**

**DETAILED ANSWER KEY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE CHRONICLE PAGE**

## **How is Australia setting standards on training AI?**

### **Government Position on Copyright and AI Training**

- Australia's Attorney General unequivocally rejected proposals that would allow tech companies to freely mine copyrighted content to train AI systems, affirming the need to protect creator rights in the AI age.
- The government's stance signals a decisive moment in the global debate around balancing innovation with intellectual property protection, influencing policies that tech firms must follow when using Australian data.

### **Core Issue: Copyright vs. Tech Innovation**

- The central controversy is whether AI firms should be exempt from copyright law when scraping original material (books, music, journalism) for training algorithms.
- Australia's Productivity Commission had proposed looser access standards, arguing this would foster AI innovation and attract foreign investment, but the idea faced backlash from creative sectors who demand explicit permission and compensation.

### **Response from Creative Industry**

- Artists, authors, unions, and media organizations opposed the proposal. They argue that unchecked content mining undermines creative economies, cultural identity, and the integrity of original works.
- Creators asserted their right to control and benefit from how their works are used and monetized, calling for meaningful copyright protection amid the AI-driven surge in automated content generation.

### **Government Measures and Oversight Mechanisms**

- Attorney General Rowland stressed the importance of balancing technology-driven innovation with robust IP protections. She convened the Copyright and AI Reference Group (CAIRG) to study licensing models and creator compensation strategies for AI.
- The goal is to replace voluntary regimes with paid licensing frameworks, ensuring creators receive value for their intellectual property when utilized by AI systems.

### **Significance and Broader Context**

- Australia's strong position sends a message globally that technological development cannot come at the cost of creator rights and cultural value.
- For the creative industry, the decision is viewed as a victory for economic integrity, collective identity, and practical copyright protection. The move is lauded for its cultural, legal, and economic implications.

### **Implications for Policy and Future Debates**

- As AI advances, the line between inspiration and appropriation in machine learning becomes blurred; Australia's approach may set important legal and ethical precedents for other democracies grappling with similar challenges.
- By championing creator interests and proposing mandatory, paid licensing for AI training, Australia is advocating for a regime that balances private and public gains, innovation and equity, and ensures fair market participation for creators.

# INTERNATIONAL

## With Maduro in his sights, Trump is building up troops in the Caribbean

### U.S. Escalation and Strategic Aims

- The Trump administration has doubled its bounty on Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, whom it accuses of running one of the world's largest narco-trafficking cartels, to \$50 million for information leading to his capture.
- The administration claims Maduro's alleged links to the Cartel de los Soles and other regional drug syndicates justify treating Venezuela as a security threat and focusing military policy on undermining his regime.

### Recent U.S. Military Buildup

- The Pentagon has deployed about 10,000 troops, including the Jim Amphibious Ready Group, over 4,500 Marines and Sailors, three guided missile destroyers, an attack submarine, special operations forces, and reconnaissance aircraft to the Caribbean area.
- Additional U.S. military assets include B-1 and B-52 bombers, F-35 jets, MQ-9 Reaper drones relocated to Puerto Rico, and surveillance targeting the Venezuelan coast and territorial waters.

### Rationale and Methods

- The official rationale is counter-narcotics, with airstrikes targeting alleged drug smuggling and claims of connections between Maduro's network and criminal organizations in Colombia and Mexico.
- However, independent analyses characterize Cartel de los Soles as a more diffuse corruption system rather than a hierarchical narco cartel.

### Political and Geopolitical Consequences

- The buildup increases pressure on Venezuela, particularly as Trump steps up diplomatic, economic, and informational campaigns against left-wing Latin American governments.
- There are concerns the U.S. might target Venezuela's military infrastructure in an expanded "war on drugs" or seek to weaken Maduro's regime through indirect means rather than a direct military strike.
- Speculation persists about an imminent U.S. strike, though Trump has stated he is not considering such action at present, with observers noting U.S. policy inconsistencies.

### Diplomatic and Domestic Fallout

- The international response is complicated by Maduro's alliances with Russia, China, and Iran, as well as ongoing U.S. efforts to squeeze Venezuela via sanctions, support for opposition leaders, and restricting international financial access.
- Despite U.S. hostility, Maduro has been able to consolidate his regime and reportedly has raised sympathetic militias, with the military largely standing by him.

### Wider Regional and Global Implications

- This connects events in Venezuela to broader ideological and geopolitical struggles in Latin America, underlining U.S. concerns about the spread of left-wing governments and corresponding right-wing responses in places like Argentina.
- The situation remains fluid, with the possibility of further escalation, but the article highlights how military posturing can shift regional and global power balances—beyond immediate security objectives.

## Jihadist and 'bandit' groups' violence, haunt Nigeria

### U.S. Policy and Global Attention

- U.S. President Donald Trump listed Nigeria as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) due to what he termed an "existential threat" to the nation's Christian population, driven by intense lobbying from U.S. officials and Christian advocacy groups.
- The U.S. designation could trigger sanctions and travel restrictions.

### Nature of Violence in Nigeria

- Nigeria faces overlapping security issues. The northeast endures attacks from Boko Haram and its offshoots like ISWAP, which have killed over 40,000 and displaced over two million since 2009.
- In central Nigeria, violence is often attributed to land competition between predominantly Muslim herders and majority-Christian farmers, with incidents frequently reported as inter-religious but fundamentally stemming from resource disputes.
- In the northwest, violence comes from "bandit" gangs who attack, loot, and ransom villages, and also engage in rural pillaging.

### Inter-Religious and Ethnic Dimensions

- The conflict between Muslims and Christians is often highlighted internationally, but locally it is more about access to land and resources.
- Biafran separatists in the south also claim persecution, adding layers to Nigeria's complex security dynamics.
- Data and Disputed Death Toll
- Claims that up to 100,000 Christians have been killed are seen by analysts as "overestimations"; the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) project estimates 59,000 civilians (Muslims and Christians) killed since 2009.
- The data shows 389 cases of violence targeting Christians and 318 targeting Muslims between 2020 and 2025, with at least 418 separate deadly incidents.
- Global Christian advocacy organizations, such as Open Doors, continue to flag Nigeria as a major center of Christian suffering globally.

### Implications and Responses

- Nigeria's CPC designation and ongoing violence could have far-reaching diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian implications.
- The Trump administration's stance has emboldened various international actors and intensified religious and ethnic tensions, while NGOs seek to raise awareness and push for international intervention and support.
- Despite global concern and claims of genocide, Nigerian officials deny systematic religious persecution, arguing that violence primarily results from banditry and economic stress rather than organized religious or ethnic cleansing.



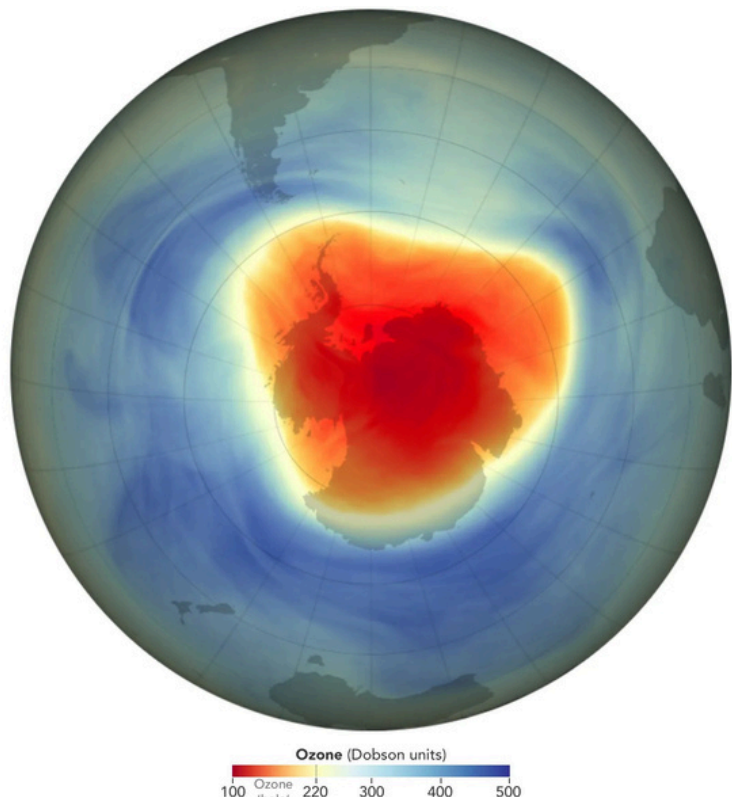
# Prelims Corner: Explanations

**Q1. Ans c**

Under the terms of the Paris Agreement, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) are determined by the countries themselves and communicated to the UNFCCC. In keeping with this, India submitted its updated NDCs on 26 August 2022 and its long-term low-carbon development strategy on 14 November 2022 during COP27 Sharm el Sheikh Conference. These documents lay out India's vision and approaches toward reaching net zero by 2070, which are expected to evolve as necessary over time. As per LT-LEDS, India's vision of low-carbon development is based on the need to ensure India's high energy needs for development, including poverty eradication, achieving Sustainable Development Goals and economic growth. Further, it is necessary that the plan for the country's energy security is based both on the expansion of non-fossil fuel sources for power generation and the rational utilization of fossil fuel resources.

**Q2. Ans a**

In 2018, the Quito Adjustment is the adjustment made to the Montreal Protocol. It aims high to avoid 1°C of future warming. In this, the decision to strengthen enforcement mechanisms of this accord in response to an unexpected rise in global emissions of the banned chemical trichlorofluoromethane or CFC-11 was adopted. Practical arrangements were made to implement the Kigali Amendment by approving technologies for destruction of substances controlled under the Protocol & adopting new data reporting requirements.



**Q3. Ans a**

A micro forest is a dense, tiny forest with high biodiversity. The technique is a form of Afforestation or planting a forest where there wasn't one before. This is different than reforestation, which restores an existing forest. Microforests are planted densely and become hotspots for insects and small animals. Forest patches improve health, cool cities more effectively than ornamental vegetation in urban areas, and remove pollutants. Urban forests also have other benefits, including creating a buffer against disasters like tsunamis or hurricanes.



**Q4. Ans b**

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was adopted at a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Stockholm, Sweden and entered into force on 17 May 2004; Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are organic chemical substances, that is, they are carbon-based. POPs are highly toxic, and exposure can occur through diet, environmental exposure, or accidents. They negatively affect humans, plant and animal species and natural ecosystems both in close proximity and at significant distances away from the original source of the discharge. Among others, the provisions of the Convention require each party to Prohibit and/or eliminate the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex A to the Convention (Article 3).

## Case Study:



**Life in death: funerals become a growing business in ageing, lonely South Korea**

Rows of coffins line a university classroom in the South Korean port city of Busan, ready for use in training the funeral directors of the future in a rapidly ageing country. Growing numbers are finding work in the business of death as South Korea undergoes massive demographic change, with birth rates among the lowest in the world and almost half the population aged 50 or older. Students at the Busan Institute of Science and Technology carefully draped a mannequin in traditional Korean funeral cloth, smoothing the fabric as if over real skin, before gently lowering it into a coffin. More and more South Koreans are also living – and dying – alone. Single-person households now account for around 42% of all homes in Asia's fourth-largest economy. South Korea has the highest suicide rate among developed nations, and these "lonely deaths" include those who died alone by their own hand. A new profession has emerged reflecting that statistic: cleaners who are called in to tidy up homes after their occupants, most of whom lived alone, have died.

## Lucknow declared UNESCO 'Creative City of Gastronomy'



Lucknow has officially been declared a UNESCO 'Creative City of Gastronomy' during the 43rd Session of the UNESCO General Conference, currently under way in Uzbekistan. The global recognition celebrates the city's centuries-old Awadhi cuisine, living food traditions and inclusive cultural heritage. The U.P. government said the moment marks a milestone for the State, positioning it among the world's top gastronomic destinations and showcasing how food heritage can become a symbol of cultural diplomacy and sustainable tourism. Culinary tourism has been attracting visitors to Uttar Pradesh for generations.

