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## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

### NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (NGT)



- It was established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

- It is a specialized body equipped with the necessary expertise to handle environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues.
- The Tribunal shall not be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
- The Tribunal is mandated to make and endeavour for disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing of the case.

Locations: New Delhi is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai shall be the other four place of sitting of the Tribunal.

- Composition of NGT: The Tribunal comprises:
- Chairperson: A retired Supreme Court judge.
- Judicial members: Retired High Court judges.
- Expert members: Professionals with at least 15 years of experience in fields related to environment or forest conservation.

### PM INTERNSHIP SCHEME



- It is a remarkable initiative launched by the Indian government, designed to provide valuable internship opportunities for the youth of India.
- It aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world experience by offering internships across the top 500 companies.

## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

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- The pilot phase targets 1.25 lakh youth, with a five-year goal to facilitate internships for one crore young individuals.
- Through this Scheme, youth will gain exposure to real-life business environment, across varied professions and employment opportunities.
- Under this scheme, interns will be provided monthly financial assistance of Rs 5,000 for 12 months and a one-time grant of Rs 6,000.

Who is eligible for the scheme?

- Candidates aged between 21 and 24 years and who are not engaged in full-time employment.
  - Internships are available to those who have passed class 10 or higher.
  - Individuals from families with government jobs are excluded.
  - It is not open to post-graduates.
  - A candidate who graduated from premier institutes such as IIT, IIM, or IISER, and those who have CA, or CMA qualification would not be eligible to apply for this internship.
  - Anyone from a household that includes a person who earned an income of Rs.8 lakh or more in 2023-24, will not be eligible.
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### SPACE DOCKING EXPERIMENT (SPADEX)



The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch its year-end mission, "Space Docking Experiment" (SpaDeX), today from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota.

- The primary objective of the SpaDeX mission is to develop and demonstrate the technology needed for rendezvous, docking and undocking of two small spacecraft. Other objectives include:
- Demonstration of the transfer of electric power between the docked spacecraft, which is essential for future applications such as in-space robotics,



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## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

---

- Composite spacecraft control, and
- Payload operations after undocking.
- Two small spacecraft- SDX01 (the Chaser) and SDX02 (the Target) will be docked in a 476-km low-Earth circular orbit.
- Weight of two satellites: Approximately 220 kg each.
- Launch Vehicle: PSLV- C60
- The indigenous technology used for this mission is called the "Bharatiya Docking System".

Significance:

- It will make India the fourth country after USA, Russia and China in the world to achieve the feat.
  - SpaDEX mission is expected to be a stepping stone for India's future endeavours in space exploration which include getting rocks and soil from the moon on Earth, the proposed Bharatiya Antariksha Station and landing an astronaut on the lunar surface.
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### WORLD AUDIO VISUAL ENTERTAINMENT SUMMIT (WAVES)



Recently, Prime Minister has said that India will host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) for the first time in February, 2025.

- WAVES would be the first-ever global summit covering the entire gamut of Media and Entertainment industry.
- The event will bring together industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators to discuss prospects, challenges, promote trade to India, and influence the sector's future.
- The Summit will also highlight India's advancements in animation, gaming, entertainment technology and regional and mainstream cinema.



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## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

---

About WAVES-India:

- Vision: To position India as an unparalleled global powerhouse in the dynamic Media & Entertainment landscape while setting new standards of creativity, innovation, and influence worldwide.
- Mission: Empowering global Media & Entertainment leaders with exclusive investment opportunities through the premiere platform of WAVES.

Objectives:

- Position WAVES as a platform to provoke ideas, fuel conversations, facilitate knowledge exchange and engage in meaningful collaborations with M&E industry leaders from across the globe.
  - To drive the country's Creative Economy through IP Creation for India & for the World.
  - To position India as a business-friendly investment destination.
  - To develop India's M&E infrastructure and build capacity of the industry to ensure skilled workforce for global needs.
  - To embrace and adapt to new trends, technology and transformations in the M&E landscape.
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### INS SARVEKSHAK



**India and Mauritius recently held a joint coordination meeting onboard INS Sarvekshak to commence the Joint Hydrographic Survey aimed at enhancing navigational safety in Mauritian waters.**

- It is an Indian Navy hydrographic survey ship, based at Southern Naval Command in Kochi.
- It is fitted with state-of-the-art survey equipment like Deep Sea Multi-Beam Echo Sounder, Side Scan Sonars & a fully automated digital surveying and processing system.

## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

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- In addition, the ship carries an integral Chetak helicopter, which would be extensively deployed during the survey.
- The ship is the second ship of the Darshak class of ships and has a complement of 15 officers and 175 sailors.
- In the past, INS Sarvekshak has also undertaken foreign cooperation surveys in Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Kenya.

What is Hydrography?

- It is the branch of applied sciences which deals with the measurement and description of the physical features of oceans, seas, coastal areas, lakes, and rivers, as well as with the prediction of their change over time.
  - This is done mainly with specialised ships and boats operating echo sounders and sonars, but also using survey aircraft fitted with lasers.
  - Useful information can also be derived sometimes from satellite observations.
  - It also involves measuring the tide and the currents.
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### POOR ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION OF OVERSEAS INDIAN VOTERS IN LOK SABHA POLLS 2024

**Voting by overseas Indian voters**

- **What is the current process of voting by NRIs/overseas Indian voters?**
  - Currently, Election Commission of India (ECI) allows NRIs to register as overseas electors as long as they have not acquired the citizenship of another country.
  - An NRI can vote in the constituency in which his/her place of residence, as mentioned in the passport, is located.
  - He/she can only vote in person and will have to produce her passport in original at the polling station for establishing identity.



## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

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- Voting rights for NRIs were introduced only in 2011, through an amendment to the Representation of the People Act 1950.
- As per the government, **total number of overseas voters** on January 1, 2023 stood at over 1.15 lakh.
  - In Lok Sabha elections of 2019, roughly 25,000 of them flew to India to vote.
- **Proxy voting proposal**
  - In 2018, a bill to allow proxy voting for NRIs was passed in the Lok Sabha but stalled in the Rajya Sabha.
- **Postal Ballot Proposal**
  - The EC, in 2020, had written to the Law Ministry proposing NRIs be allowed to vote through postal ballots.
  - According to the EC proposal, any NRI interested in voting through postal ballot in an election will have to inform the Returning Officer (RO).
  - RO should be informed in a time period not later than five days after the notification of the election.
  - On receiving such information, the RO will dispatch the ballot paper electronically.
  - The NRI voters will download the ballot paper, mark their preference on the printout and send it back.
  - This ballot is to be sent back along with a declaration attested by an officer appointed by the consular representative of India in the country where the NRI is resident.

### Participation of overseas Indian voters in Lok Sabha polls 2024

- **Enthusiasm in Registration but Poor Turnout**
  - Overseas Indians showed significant enthusiasm in registering as electors, with 1,19,374 enrolling in the 2024 voter list, an increase from 99,844 in 2019.

## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

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- However, only 2,958 flew to India to cast their votes, with Kerala contributing the majority (2,670).
  - **State-Wise Voting Trends**
    - **Kerala:** Highest participation with 2,670 voters out of 89,839 registered electors.
    - **Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Bihar, Goa:** Zero turnout despite registrations.
    - **Gujarat:** Only 2 out of 885 overseas electors voted.
    - **Maharashtra:** Only 17 of the 5,097 electors participated.
    - **Andhra Pradesh:** 195 out of 7,927 electors cast their votes.
  - **Legal and Logistical Challenges**
    - Registered NRI voters must travel to their constituencies in India to vote and show their original passports for identity verification.
    - High travel costs, employment obligations, and education are cited as barriers to participation.
  - **Future Prospects**
    - The Election Commission continues to receive appeals from the Indian diaspora for postal voting, highlighting the need for electoral reforms to address the low turnout among overseas electors.
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### TECH TRENDS 2024 AND BEYOND (AI, INNOVATIONS, AND EMERGING CHALLENGES)

#### Tech Developments in 2024 (Key Highlights):

- **AI's growing influence:**
  - AI became all-pervasive, impacting various sectors and introducing existential questions.
  - Companies have recognised AI's potential but are recalibrating use cases due to difficulties in realising immediate returns.



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## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

---

- For individuals, AI acts as a "copilot," supporting but not replacing human creativity and specialised skills.
- **Responsible AI and ethical concerns:**
  - The focus on responsible AI highlighted the importance of ethical considerations in deployment.
  - AI agents raised questions about autonomy and human intervention, particularly in sensitive areas like **healthcare and finance**.
- **Greener tech and sustainability:** Efforts to integrate sustainable practices into technology gained momentum, reinforcing the importance of eco-conscious innovations.
- **Missed predictions:** Though these trends gained popularity worldwide, predictions regarding the prevalence of a "cookieless world" and extended reality in India were not met.

### Tech Predictions for 2025:

- **AI agents revolutionise automation:**
  - **Adoption and capabilities:**
    - AI agents capable of autonomous learning and decision-making will become prevalent.
- **Unmatched computing power:**
  - **Quantum leap:** Innovations like Google's Willow chips and NVIDIA's GPUs are pushing computing boundaries.
  - **Data challenges:** Computational advancements highlight the need for robust, complex data models to leverage full potential.

### Conclusion:

- 2024 underscored AI's transformative potential while revealing its limitations and ethical implications.
  - Predictions for 2025 suggest continued innovation, particularly in AI agents, analytics, and computing power.
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## Current Affairs - 30 December 2024

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### SRISAILAM TEMPLE



The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recently made a significant discovery at the Srisailam Temple, uncovering several copper plates and other ancient inscriptions in the temple's Ghantamandapam.

- Srisailam Temple, or Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple, is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, worshipped here in the form of Mallikarjuna Swamy.
  - It is located at Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh.
  - It is surrounded by the forests of the Nallamala Hills, overlooking the pristine waters of the Krishna River.
  - According to Hindu mythology, the temple is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, divine manifestations of Lord Shiva spread across India.
  - The Goddess Shakti is worshipped as Bramarambha in the temple and has a shrine dedicated to her.
  - This ancient temple built in the Dravidian style with lofty towers and sprawling courtyards is one of the finest specimens of Vijayanagara architecture.
  - Though the exact origins of the temple are not available, the Satavahanas of the 2nd century AD have referred to it.
  - The Kakatiyas and the Vijayanagara kings have made several endowments here.
  - The unique feature of this temple is the combination of Jyothirlingam and Mahasakthi (in the form of Bhramarambika) in one campus, which is very rare and only one of its kind.
  - The great religious leader Aadi Sankara is said to have visited this shrine and composed his immortal Sivananda Lahiri here.
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