Current affairs 19th and 20th January 2025 by Saurabh Pandey Sir

Kaleshwaram Barrage

What is the purpose of the Kaleshwaram Barrage?

The Kaleshwaram Barrage is designed to divert water from the Godavari River for irrigation and power generation in Telangana.

What issues have arisen with the Medigadda barrage?

The Medigadda barrage has sustained damage that has led to concerns over its structural integrity and functionality.

What is the role of the PC Ghose Commission?

The PC Ghose Commission is investigating various aspects of the Kaleshwaram project, focusing on contractor performance and compliance with engineering standards.

How does the Kaleshwaram project impact local agriculture?

The project aims to enhance irrigation capabilities, which can significantly boost agricultural productivity in the region.

What are the future plans for the Kaleshwaram Barrage?

Plans include addressing structural issues, implementing repairs, and ensuring effective water management

Introduction to Cryptography Cryptography, derived from the Greek term meaning "hidden writing," is the art of encoding and decoding messages to protect sensitive information. I The Role of Cryptography in Securing Digital Communications Cryptography is pivotal in safeguarding sensitive information across various digital platforms. Its applications are vast, particularly in: Internet Banking: Protecting transactions from unauthorized access. E-commerce: Ensuring customer data is secure during online purchases. Secure Messaging Systems: Preventing interception of private communications. The consequences of cryptographic failures can be catastrophic, leading to financial loss and reputational damage

The Hindu

Advancements in Cryptography Research in India

India is emerging as a significant player in the field of cryptography research. With institutions like the Indian Institute of Science and Raman Research Institute leading the charge, several key advancements include:

- Development of quantum-resistant algorithms to counter the threats posed by quantum computing.
- Research into homomorphic encryption, allowing computations on encrypted data without decryption.
- Collaborative projects focused on enhancing the security of data transmission across various platforms

Quantum Computing and Its Impact on Cryptography

As quantum computing rapidly advances, it poses a significant threat to traditional

cryptographic methods. The implications of quantum computing on cryptography are profound: Breaking Current Encryption: Quantum computers can solve problems that are currently intractable for classical computers, potentially rendering existing encryption methods obsolete. Need for Quantum-Resistant Algorithms: The development of cryptographic systems that can withstand quantum attacks is imperative for future security

Conclusion: The Future of Cryptography in India The future of cryptography in India is bright, with ongoing research and innovation paving the way for more secure digital communications. As the landscape continues to evolve, the need for robust cryptographic measures will only grow. Researchers and institutions must remain vigilant and proactive in their efforts to safeguard our digital future. Continued investment in research and development Collaboration between academia and industry Emphasis on education and awareness in cryptography

Water Hyacinth Woes: How Invasive Plants Are Stranding Fishermen on Lake Naivasha
Introduction The serene waters of Lake Naivasha, a lifeline for many fishermen in Kenya, have become an arena of despair. Fishermen are grappling with the invasive water hyacinth, a green menace that threatens their livelihoods. Imagine spending over 18 hours on the water, only to return empty-handed. This is a harsh reality for many, as the invasive plant not only disrupts fishing activities but also poses ecological challenges. The Origins of Water Hyacinth in Kenya The water hyacinth, native to South America, was introduced to Kenya in the 1980s, primarily as an ornamental plant. However, it quickly transformed into an ecological adversary.

Historical Background:
Introduced by tourists, the water hyacinth found a perfect breeding ground in the nutrient-rich waters of Lake Naivasha.
First sighted around a decade ago, it has proliferated, forming extensive mats that choke the lake.

Environmental Factors
The plant thrives in polluted waters, exacerbating the already declining water quality and affecting aquatic life.

Impact on Fishing Communities
The repercussions of this invasive species are dire for local fishermen.

Personal Accounts
Fisherman Simon Macharia highlights that losing nets and time on the water has become commonplace.
"Previously, we would catch up to 90 kg of fish per day, but nowadays we get
between 10 kg and 15 kg," he lamented.

Economic Statistics
The East African Journal of Environment and Natural Resources estimates annual losses between $150 million and $350 million across Kenya's fishing, transport, and tourism sectors due to the hyacinth invasion.

Ecological Consequences:
The dense mats block sunlight, affecting photosynthesis in aquatic plants, and result in a drastic drop in fish populations.

Innovative Solutions and Sustainability Efforts
In the face of adversity, innovative solutions are emerging.

HyaPak's Mission:
Founded in 2022, HyaPak’s aims to tackle both the hyacinth problem and

plastic waste by converting the invasive plant into biodegradable packaging.
The partnership with fishermen allows them to harvest and sell hyacinth for processing.

Adapting to the Crisis
Fishermen are learning to adapt, with HyaPak processing up to 150 kg of water hyacinth weekly, creating an eco-friendly alternative to plastics.

Long-Term Solutions
Other methods include the physical removal of the plant and the introduction of natural predators, though chemical solutions may harm other aquatic life.

Conclusion
The plight of fishermen on Lake Naivasha underscores the urgent need for sustainable practices and environmental awareness. The innovative approaches of HyaPak and the resilience of local fishermen offer a glimmer of hope amid the challenges posed by water hyacinth.
The Hindu

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016: A Game Changer for India Introduction to IBC

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) of 2016 is often hailed as one of India's most significant economic reforms.
It was introduced to tackle the challenges of insolvency resolution in a structured and time-bound manner.
But what does that mean for businesses and the economy? Let's dive in!

The Need for IBC
Before the IBC, the insolvency process in India was a convoluted mess. Companies could drag their feet for years, leaving creditors in limbo. The IBC aimed to streamline this process, making it easier for businesses to either recover or wind down efficiently.
The Initial Promise of IBC
When the IBC was first introduced, it was seen as a beacon of hope for improvement. India's standing in the global business arena. It promised to bring bad borrowers and big defaulters to book, ensuring that the economy could thrive without the burden of non-performing assets.

Enhancing India's Business Standing
The IBC was expected to enhance India's business environment by providing a clear framework for insolvency resolution. This clarity was supposed to attract foreign investment and boost economic growth.
Addressing Bad Borrowers
By holding defaulters accountable, the IBC aimed to create a culture of responsibility among borrowers. The idea was simple: if you know there are consequences for defaulting, you're less likely to take reckless financial risks.

Challenges Faced by IBC
However, as the IBC matured, it became clear that certain issues needed urgent attention.
The effectiveness of the IBC is heavily reliant on the performance of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and its appellate body, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).
Institutional Capacity Issues
The Role of NCLT and NCLAT
These tribunals are tasked with handling corporate insolvencies under the IBC, but they also juggle cases under the Companies Act. This dual burden has led to significant bottlenecks in the system.

Temporal Disjunction
The NCLT was conceived in 1999 but only operationalized in 2016. This gap has left it

ill-equipped to handle the contemporary demands of the economy. With only 63 members,
many of whom are stretched thin across multiple benches, the NCLT is struggling to keep up.

Procedural Inefficiencies
Delays in Resolution
The average time for insolvency resolutions has ballooned to 716 days in FY2023-24, up from 654 days the previous year. This is despite the Supreme Court's calls for adherence to specific timelines.
Lack of Domain Expertise
One of the most glaring issues is the lack of domain expertise among tribunal members.
As noted in the Jet Airways case, many members lack the specialized knowledge needed to navigate complex insolvency matters. This creates a paradox where the very institution meant to resolve these issues is hindered by a lack of expertise.
The Supreme Court's Intervention
The Jet Airways Case
The recent Supreme Court judgment in the Jet Airways case has highlighted these structural infirmities. The Court emphasized the need for NCLTs and NCLATs to adhere strictly to timelines, warning that excessive delays could render the IBC ineffective.

The Need for Reform
Given these challenges, it's clear that the IBC needs reform. The current framework is not just about efficiency; it's about integrity.
Proposed Solutions
Mandatory Mediation
One promising reform proposal is the introduction of mandatory mediation before submitting insolvency applications. This could help reduce the burden on the tribunals and expedite resolutions.
Specialized Benches
Creating specialized benches for different categories of cases could enhance both efficiency and expertise. This would ensure that complex cases are handled by those with the right knowledge and experience.

Conclusion
The IBC was a bold step towards modernizing India's insolvency framework, but it's clear that more needs to be done. As India aims to attract greater foreign investment and rejuvenate its economy, the time for a bold reimagining of the IBC is now.
The Hindu

Topic - SPAM REGULATION AND BLOCKCHAIN LEDGER

● **TRAI had also worked with an external agency to develop a DND app,**
which would allow customers to register their DND preferences, and accept complaints.
● Under the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation (TCCCPR), 2018, telemarketers who called or sent messages to DND-registered customers would receive warnings, and if enough warnings accumulated, they would be blacklisted from sending messages to telecom operators.
TRAI mandated in the TCCCPR that telcos use a Blockchain ledger, also known as a distributed ledger, to store a constantly updated list of approved senders of SMS messages.
● Telcos would also be required to approve specific formats of messages.

What is Blockchain Ledger Technology?
Blockchain ledger technology refers to a system of recording information in a way that makes it difficult or impossible to change, hack, or cheat the system. Here's how it operates:

Definition of Blockchain: A Blockchain is a distributed database or ledger that is shared among the nodes of a computer network, securing data in blocks that are linked together in chronological order.

Key Components:

Blocks: Each block contains a list of transactions.

Chain: Blocks are linked together in a sequence.

Nodes: Every participant in the network maintains a copy of the blockchain.

Difference from Traditional Ledgers: Unlike centralized databases where a single entity has control, blockchain is decentralized and distributed, offering greater security and resilience against fraud.

Applications of Blockchain Ledger Technology

The versatility of blockchain ledger technology is evident in its applications across various industries:

Financial Services:

Cryptocurrencies enable peer-to-peer transactions without intermediaries. Smart contracts automate and enforce agreements.

Supply Chain Management:

Enhances traceability of products from origin to consumer.

Increases accountability among stakeholders.

Healthcare:

Secures patient records, ensuring privacy and easy access for authorized personnel.

Identity Verification:

Streamlines processes for verifying identities and managing credentials.

Advantages of Using Blockchain Ledger Technology

Blockchain ledger technology offers numerous benefits that are compelling for businesses:

Enhanced Security: The cryptographic nature of blockchain makes it highly secure against data breaches.

Transparency: All transactions are recorded on a public ledger, allowing for easy verification.

Cost Reduction: Eliminates the need for intermediaries, reducing transaction fees.

Decentralization: Distributes control, reducing the risk of a single point of failure.

Challenges and Limitations of Blockchain Ledger Technology

Despite its advantages, blockchain technology faces several challenges:

Technological Barriers: Adoption is hindered by a lack of understanding and technical expertise.

Scalability Issues: As the network grows, transaction speeds may decrease.

Regulatory Challenges: Varied regulations across regions complicate global adoption.

Environmental Concerns: The energy consumption of blockchain networks is a growing concern.

The Future of Blockchain Ledger Technology

The future of blockchain ledger technology is promising with emerging trends:

Decentralized Finance (DeFi): Transforming traditional financial systems.

Interoperability: Connecting different blockchain networks for seamless transactions.

Regulatory Clarity: Governments are beginning to develop frameworks for blockchain technology

The Hindu

International Migrant Workers and Their Economic Contributions

Overview of International Migrant Workers (IMs)

Definition: IMs address labor market shortages and send remittances to

home countries.
Global Contribution: Contributed significantly to world economic growth.

Key Insights from ILO Report

4.7% of global labor force (167.7 million IMs).
Increase of over 30 million since 2013.
Employed: 155.6 million | Unemployed: 12.1 million.

Demographics of International Migrants

Gender Distribution:

IM Men: 4.7% of total male employment.
IM Women: 4.4% of total female employment.

Age Breakdown:

The majority (74.9%) aged 25-54.
Young IMs (15-24 years): 9.3% (15.5 million).
Older IMs (55-64 years): 12.5%.

Economic Sectors Attracting IMs

Primary Sectors:

Services: 68.4% of IMs, with women holding 80.7%.
Industry: 24.3% of IMs.
Agriculture: 7.4% of IMs.

Host Countries for International Migrants

High-income countries: 68.4% (114 million IMs).
Upper-middle-income countries: 17.4% (29.2 million).

Key regions:

Northern, southern, and western Europe: 23.3%.
Northern America: 22.6% (decrease over the decade).
Arab States: 13.3% (decrease over the decade).

Future Trends and Considerations

Continued demand in the care economy due to aging populations. Greater economic opportunities in host countries.

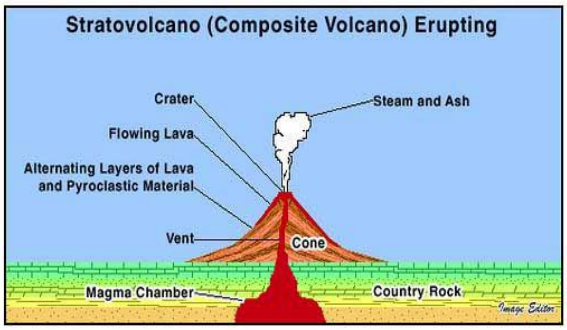
Godda Thermal Power Station is a coal power plant dedicated for electricity export to Bangladesh. It is located in Godda district, Jharkhand, India.

- The power generation capacity is 1,600 MW. The plant was built under an agreement between the Government of India and Bangladesh.

Mount Ibu

Mount Ibu, an active stratovolcano located in North Maluku, Indonesia
In January, it erupted over 1,000 times, leading to the evacuation of thousands of residents.

Eruption Details: The eruptions varied in intensity, creating awe-inspiring yet hazardous displays of nature.



New Findings on Sunburn

Key Insights from the Study

RNA Damage Over DNA: Recent research challenges the traditional view by showing that sunburn primarily damages RNA, not DNA, altering our understanding of UV radiation effects.

Cross-Species Consistency: The study involved both mice and human skin

cells, demonstrating similar responses to UV radiation across these species.

📖 **Published Work**: Findings were published in the journal *Molecular Cell*, enhancing the scientific community's knowledge of skin damage mechanisms.

⚙ **ZAK-alpha's Role:** The protein ZAK-alpha is pivotal in the ribotoxic stress response, activated by RNA damage, leading to inflammation and cell death.

🔍 **Initial Cellular Response:** Cells initially react to RNA damage from UV exposure, which triggers inflammatory signaling and the recruitment of immune cells.

 Gene Functionality: Eliminating the ZAK gene in mice stopped the inflammatory and cell death responses, underscoring its essential role in UV-induced skin damage.

🌐 **Broader Implications:** The study suggests distinct roles for ribotoxic stress response and DNA damage signaling, potentially impacting skin immunity and cancer development.

Dinosaur Extinction and the Role of Sulphur

Key Insights

 Sulphur's Role: Most studies have identified sulphur as a crucial factor in the mass extinction of dinosaurs.

🌋 Sulphates Aerosols: There is significant variation in estimates of sulphate aerosols from impacted rocks in Mexico.

🔬 New Study: Utilized sulphur concentrations and isotopic compositions from drill cores in the crater region.

🌍 Global Analysis: Analyzed chemical profiles of K-Pg boundary sediments worldwide.

📉 Findings: Suggest that the impact of sulphur on dinosaur extinction may have been overestimated.

📊 Research Challenge: Challenges previous assumptions about sulphur's role in mass extinction events.

 Study Emphasis: Highlights the need for more accurate assessments of environmental factors during the K-Pg boundary