

# Daily Current Affairs

## 13 December 2023

### World's Biggest Opium Producer

- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** released its Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023.
- The report states that Myanmar is the world's biggest opium producer.
- It added, from 2022 to 2023, **Myanmar saw an 18 per cent increase** to one lakh 16 thousand acres in the amount of land used to grow the illicit crop and a 16 per cent rise in production.



- The growth can be attributed to multiple factors such as improved plot density, the use of irrigation and fertilisers.
- **Earlier Afghanistan** held the infamous title but since the ascent of Taliban to power in 2021, cultivation of opium poppies has seen a decrease of 95 per cent.
- The report notes that **opium farming in Southeast Asia** is closely linked to poverty, lack of government services, challenging macroeconomic environments, instability and insecurity.

## ‘Order of Merit’

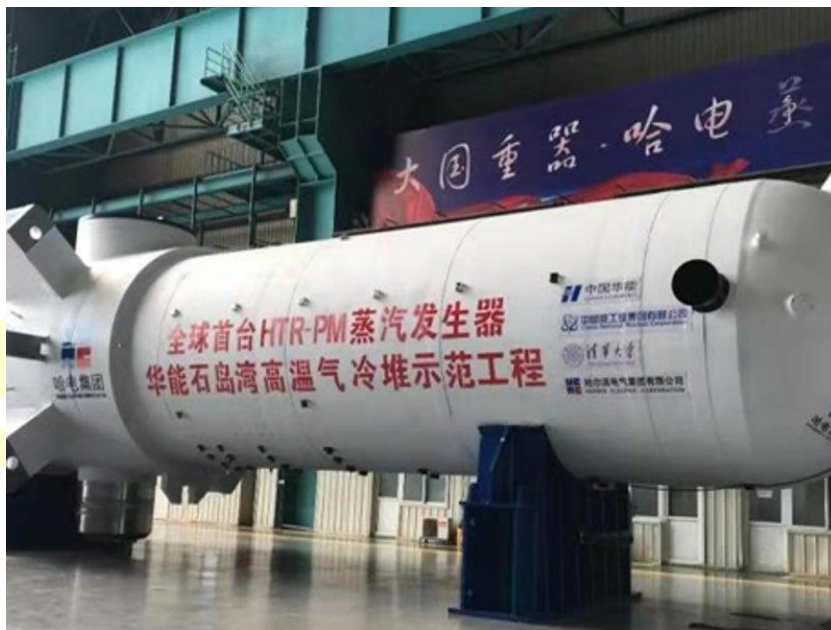
- **Kabir Bedi** was awarded the “**Order of Merit of the Italian Republic**” (Merito della Repubblica Italiana), the country’s **highest honour awarded** to civilians, at a private ceremony **held in Mumbai**.
- This award, the most prestigious Italian honorific one, ultimately recognizes his unconditional feeling and passionate dedication to Italy.
- The “**Order of Merit of the Italian Republic**” stands as a testament to Italy’s appreciation for those who have made outstanding contributions to society, embodying the nation’s values of merit and excellence.



- The “Order of Merit of the Italian Republic,” known as “**Merito della Repubblica Italiana**” in Italian, is one of Italy’s highest honors.
- Established on **March 3, 1951**, the order is bestowed to individuals who have made **significant contributions to various fields**, including arts, literature, economy, public service, and social, philanthropic, and humanitarian activities.
- The order aims to recognize and honor individuals who have distinguished themselves through outstanding achievements and **contributions to Italian society** and beyond.
- The order has **five classes**: Knight Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer, and Knight. Recipients are awarded the corresponding insignia based on the degree of their contributions.

## World's First 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Nuclear Reactor

- China has achieved a significant milestone in its quest to shift away from traditional coal-fired power plants and decrease its reliance on foreign technologies.
- Recently, the **Shidao Bay nuclear power plant** in eastern Shandong province commenced commercial operations, heralding the era of next-generation gas-cooled nuclear reactors.
- This development is crucial for China's commitment to **reducing carbon emissions** and securing a sustainable energy future.



- The Shidao Bay plant **distinguishes itself by utilizing two high-temperature reactors cooled by gas**, a departure from conventional pressurized water cooling systems.
- The Shidao Bay plant's reactors fall under the category of **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**.
- Unlike conventional reactors primarily designed for electricity production, SMRs offer **versatility in applications** beyond power generation.
- These advanced models can be employed for heating, desalination, and steam production for industrial purposes. This adaptability positions SMRs as a pivotal player in China's strategy to diversify its energy applications.

## Karmaveer Chakra Medal 2023

- **Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar** was honored with the **Karmaveer Chakra Medal** and Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship by **ICONGO** in **collaboration with the United Nations**, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to R&D in **Physical & Bio-Science and Microbiological Studies**.
- The Rex Karmaveer Chakra Medal, hailed as one of the most **distinguished civilian honors**, is reserved for individuals who have demonstrated exceptional contributions on a global scale towards the well-being of humanity.



- Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar's exemplary work in advancing scientific knowledge and promoting the understanding of Biological Sciences has rightfully earned him this esteemed accolade.
- A prominent figure in the scientific community, Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar holds the esteemed **position of Ambassador & Elected Member** of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB) in London.
- The Registered Scientist Award 2023 specifically acknowledges Dr. Ravikumar's significant contributions to **"The Study of Memory Activities of the Cells in the Homo sapiens."**
- Additionally, his collaborative work on **"Summarised Facts, Managements, and Treatment Pattern for COVID-19,"** co-authored with Co-scientist Mathunila Vissagan, has further solidified his position as a leading figure in the scientific community.

## Project ARTHA Ganga

- **Arth Ganga** is an initiative added recently to the **Namami Ganga Program** launched by the Government.
- Arth Ganga, which is a **sustainable and viable economic development** model to strengthen the river-people connect through an economic bridge.
- Accordingly, it was decided that the Namami Gange mission should lead the concept of Arth Ganga with the involvement of different ministries/departments and other stakeholders, institution & community organization. So it was added as a **vertical of Namami Ganga Program**, in addition to the 4 verticals – Nirmal Ganga, Aviral Ganga, Jan Ganga and Gyan Ganga, existing till then.



- **Six pillars of Arth-Ganga identified are:** Promotion of Natural Framing on 5 kms band either side of River Ganga; Monetisation and reuse of Treated water and sludge from the STPs; Improvement of Livelihood opportunities, particularly for women; Promotion of Tourism and Cultural heritage; People’s Participation and Building of capacities and institutions. Implementation of these initiatives is aimed to develop sustainable development model with focus on economic activities related to river Ganga.
- While no specific short-term goals have been set, however, the long-term objective of Arth Ganga is to **link people and Ganga through the economic bridge** in line with river rejuvenation, by garnering people’s participation for Ganga conservation and promoting sustainable development.

## India Overtakes Hong Kong

- **India's stock market** value has **overtaken Hong Kong's** to become the **seventh largest in the world** as optimism about the country's economic prospects grows.
- As of the end of November, **the total market capitalization** of the National Stock Exchange of **India was \$3.989 trillion** versus **Hong Kong's \$3.984 trillion**, according to data from the World Federation of Exchanges.
- **India's Nifty 50 index** reached another record high. It has **jumped 16%** so far this year and is headed for its eighth straight year of gains. In contrast, Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng index has plunged 17% year to date.



- India has been a **standout market this year in the Asia-Pacific region**.
- Increased liquidity, more domestic participation and improving dynamics in the global macro environment in the form of **falling U.S. Treasury yields** have all boosted the country's stock markets.
- The world's most populous country also heads into general elections next year, which analysts predict could be another victory for the ruling nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

## UN Climate Talks 2024

- In a surprising turn of events, the **long-standing stand-off between Azerbaijan and Armenia** has found an unexpected resolution, setting the **stage for Baku, Azerbaijan**, to host the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in 2024.
- The resolution emerged as part of a **prisoner swap settlement**, underscoring the intricate relationship between geopolitical dynamics and global efforts to combat climate change.



- **Baku, known for** being home to one of the **world's first oil fields** developed over 1,200 years ago, will become the focal point for climate discussions in 2024.
- The decision to have an **oil powerhouse host climate talks** for two consecutive years raises eyebrows, considering the primary focus of these conferences is often on reducing and eliminating fossil fuels.
- This development prompts reflections on the irony of nations heavily reliant on oil taking center stage in global climate discussions.
- Climate talks historian Jonna Depledge emphasizes that hosting COP29 in Baku is not inherently problematic.
- She argues that nations with significant oil resources stepping up as climate leaders is a positive development, provided they can demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices.

## Vyas Samman

- The literary world is set to celebrate as the **33rd Vyas Samman, 2023**, is announced to honor the accomplished Hindi writer **Pushpa Bharati for her 2016 memoir, "Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein."**
- This prestigious award is bestowed by the **KK Birla Foundation**, recognizing outstanding contributions to Hindi literature.
- Born in 1935 in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, Pushpa Bharati embarked on her literary journey, earning an MA in Hindi literature from Prayag University in 1955.
- **Instituted in 1991**, the Vyas Samman acknowledges exceptional **Hindi literary works** by Indian citizens published in the last 10 years.

- The award includes a **cash prize of ₹4 lakh**, a citation, and a plaque, recognizing the profound impact of the recipient's contribution to the literary landscape.
- The selection committee, led by eminent litterateur Prof Ramji Tiwari, meticulously reviewed works published from 2013 to 2022. Pushpa Bharati's memoir, "**Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein,**" stood out for its captivating anecdotes, providing readers with a glimpse into cherished memories and life lessons.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

### 1. World's Biggest Opium Producer

- A. Afghanistan
- B. Myanmar
- C. Pakistan
- D. Kazakhstan

**ANSWER: B**

### 2. What Factor Contributed To Myanmar's Increased Opium Production

- A. Decreased Use Of Fertilizers
- B. Improved Government Services
- C. Enhanced Plot Density And Use Of Irrigation
- D. Political Stability

**ANSWER: C**



**3. "Order Of Merit Of The Italian Republic" Awarded To**

- A. Aamir Khan
- B. Kabir Bedi
- C. Nikhil Dey
- D. Ayush Khurana

**ANSWER: B**

**4. "Order Of Merit Of The Italian Republic" Award Ceremony Held In**

- A. Mumbai
- B. New Delhi
- C. Hyderabad
- D. Bengaluru

**ANSWER: A**

**5. Shidao Bay Nuclear Power Plant Is Of**

- A. Japan
- B. China
- C. Russia
- D. USA

**ANSWER: B**

**6. What Distinguishes China's Shidao Bay Nuclear Power Plant**

- A. It Uses Traditional Pressurized Water Cooling Systems.
- B. It's A Coal-fired Power Plant.
- C. It Utilizes Gas-cooled Nuclear Reactors.
- D. It Operates Without Any Cooling System.

**ANSWER: C**

**7. Project ARTHA Ganga Is Launched Under**

- A. Jal Sanchay
- B. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana
- C. Namami Gange Programme
- D. Jal Tara

**ANSWER: C**

**8. Who Is Appointed As Prime Minister Of Poland**

- A. Donald Tusk
- B. Mateusz Morawiecki
- C. Mariusz Błaszczka
- D. Grzegorz Puda

**ANSWER: A**

**9. Karmaveer Chakra Medal 2023 Is Awarded To**

- A. Ashis K. Mukherjee
- B. Albert Hofman
- C. Shizuo Akira
- D. Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar

**ANSWER: D**

**10. Karmaveer Chakra Medal 2023 Is Awarded Given By**

- A. ISRO
- B. NASA
- C. iCONGO
- D. Germanwatch

**ANSWER: C**

**11. India's Stock Market Value Surpassed Which Country To Become 7<sup>th</sup> Largest In The World**

- A. China
- B. Japan
- C. Hong Kong
- D. South Korea

**ANSWER: C**

**12. On Which Date Is International Cheetah Day Observed Annually**

- A. December 5\*
- B. December 3\*
- C. December 6\*
- D. December 4\*

**ANSWER: D**

**13. Which Companies Collaborated To Form AI Alliance To Promote An "Open-science" Approach To AI Development**

- A. Google and Microsoft
- B. Meta and IBM
- C. Facebook and Amazon
- D. Apple and NVIDIA

**ANSWER: B**

**14. Who Hosted 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Of ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation Forum**

- A. Malaysia
- B. India
- C. Thailand
- D. Indonesia

**ANSWER: A**

**15. Companies Collaborated For Insurance Accessibility Offering Diverse Range Car & Bike Insurance Directly Via The PhonePe Platform**

- A. ACKO And PhonePe
- B. HDFC and Paytm
- C. Bharti AXA General Insurance and Paytm
- D. SBI and Amazon Pay

**ANSWER: A**

**16. When Is SAARC Charter Day Observed Annually**

- A. November 15\*
- B. December 8\*
- C. January 21\*
- D. December 5\*

**ANSWER: B**

**17. Where Was 5<sup>th</sup> Honey Bee Day Celebrated With Theme 'Bee & Honey Trials'**

- A. Manipur
- B. Mizoram
- C. Arunachal Pradesh
- D. Nagaland

**ANSWER: D**

**18. Which Festival, Often Referred To As "Festival Of Lights," Is Celebrated Globally From December 7\* To December 15\***

- A. Kwanzaa
- B. Eid al-Fitr
- C. Hanukkah
- D. Christmas

**ANSWER: C**

**19. Who Has Been Appointed As New Chairman Of Max Life Insurance**

- A. Analjit Singh
- B. Sunil Bharti Mittal
- C. Naina Lal Kidwai
- D. Rajiv Anand

**ANSWER: D**

**20. Where Is The Headquarters Of Oil And Natural Gas Commission**

- A. Dehradun
- B. Vadodara
- C. Digboi
- D. Mumbai

**ANSWER: A**