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EXPRESS  
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SCI-TECH

Environment and Science & Technology

## Study Reveals Moths Rely on Plant Sounds for Reproduction Decisions

A study by Israeli researchers shows moths use sounds emitted by plants to decide where to lay eggs. Female Egyptian cotton leafworms preferred silent, healthy plants over those emitting stress sounds, such as ultrasonic clicks. The findings indicate that moths interpret these sounds to optimize food availability for larvae. Further research will explore how acoustic cues integrate with other plant signals like scent.

Source: The Indian Express



Polity & Governance

## Delhi Police Decentralizes Traffic Personnel Deployment

Delhi Traffic Police has empowered Additional CPs and DCPs to allocate traffic personnel within their ranges. This move follows challenges from recent large-scale transfers, leaving vital circles understaffed. A Police Establishment Board will oversee fair distribution based on factors like manpower needs and personnel residence. The initiative aims to improve resource utilization, address grievances efficiently, and enhance fieldwork administration.

Source: The Indian Express

## India-Norway Strengthen Trade Ties with Proposed Startup Bridge

The India-Norway Business Forum in Mumbai emphasized bilateral trade and investment opportunities across priority sectors like renewable energy, maritime, and sustainability. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal proposed a startup bridge and pledged to resolve regulatory challenges to enhance partnerships. Norway hailed the TEPA agreement and outlined plans to ratify it by 2025. The event highlighted India's robust investment potential, Norway's commitment to green initiatives, and opportunities for mutual growth under the

Source: PIB - The Press Information Bureau

## Balancing India's Growth with Emission Control

Environment & Economy

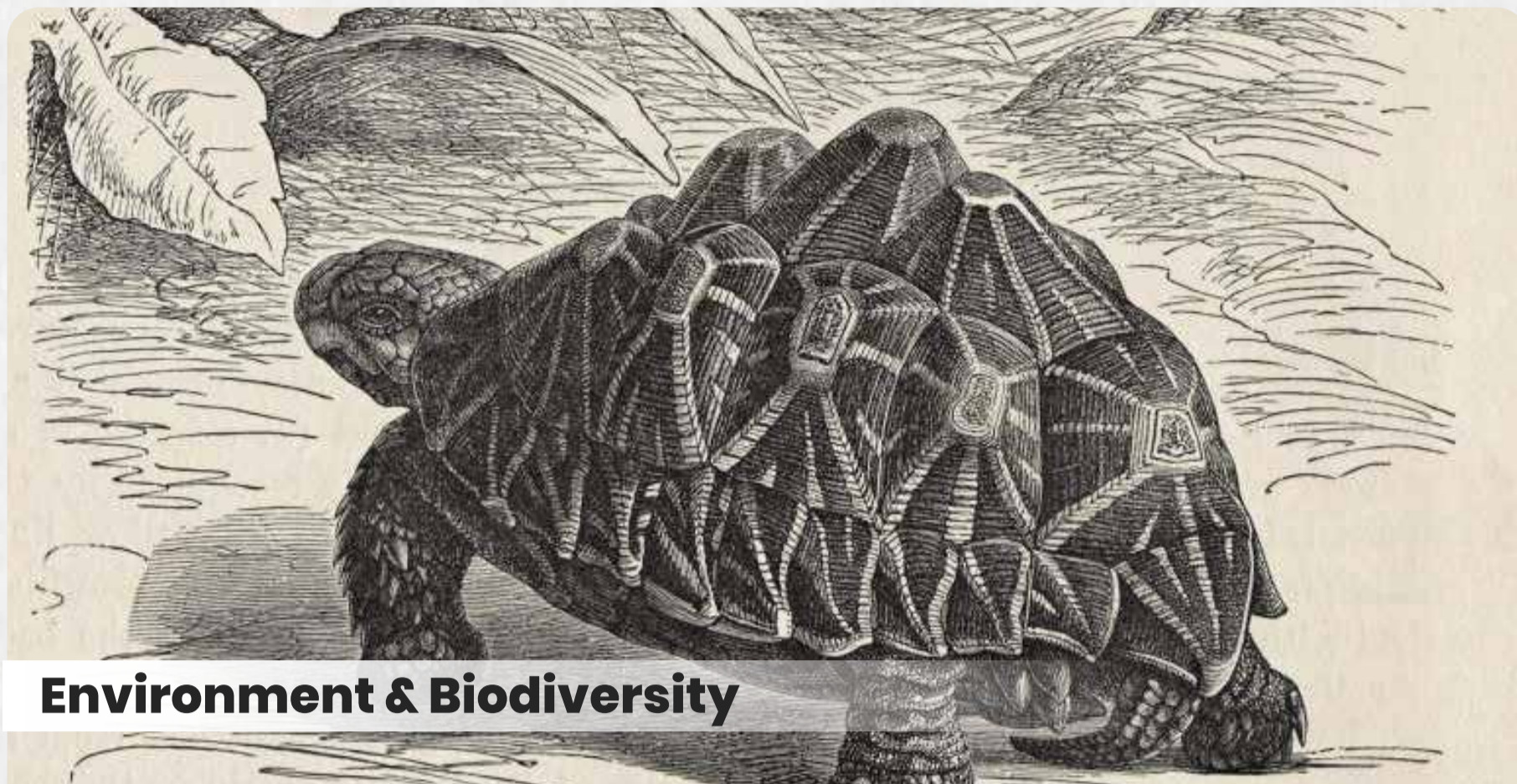
India's Economic Survey (2023-24) highlighted a relative decoupling of GDP growth and greenhouse gas emissions between 2005 and 2019. While GDP grew at a CAGR of 7%, emissions rose by only 4%, suggesting progress. However, India has not achieved absolute decoupling, where emissions decrease despite economic growth. Achieving sustainable growth requires renewable energy adoption, emission mitigation, and balancing climate goals with developmental needs.

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

## Government Boosts Millet-Based Products with PLI Scheme

The Government of India launched the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Millet-Based Products (PLISMBP) for FY 2022-2023 to FY 2026-2027, with a ₹800 crore outlay. This scheme removes investment thresholds, aiding 29 beneficiaries. It mandates locally sourced agricultural produce and requires a 10% annual sales growth for incentives. Measures like a user-friendly portal, technical support, and weekly meetings enhance implementation. So far, ₹3.917 crore has been disbursed to eligible applicants.

Source: PIB - The Press Information Bureau



Environment & Biodiversity

## IISc Study Advocates Targeted Conservation for Indian Star Tortoise

A new study led by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has emphasized the critical need for evidence-based conservation efforts to protect the Indian star tortoise. Native to arid and semi-arid regions of southern and western India, the species is under threat from poaching for the exotic pet trade and habitat destruction. The research identifies key habitat zones in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka requiring immediate intervention. The findings offer actionable insights for policymakers to prioritize habitat restoration and anti-poaching measures, ensuring the species' long-term survival.

Source: The Hindu Newspaper



International Relations

## US Student Visas for Indians Fall by 38% Amid Stabilized Demand

US F-1 student visa issuances to Indians dropped 38% in the first nine months of 2024 compared to 2023, with 64,008 visas issued versus 1,03,495. Reasons include stabilizing post-Covid demand, stricter visa norms, and delays in processing. Analysts highlight unused visa slots and students opting for alternatives like Canada and Germany. The US aims to improve wait times and optimize appointment availability for peak application periods.

Source: The Indian Express

## Continued Dialogue Vital in India-China Border Issues

International Relations, Security

The article evaluates India's efforts to manage its border negotiations with China. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar emphasized disengagement and de-escalation, acknowledging persistent structural challenges. The absence of clarity on patrolling arrangements in disputed regions like Demchok and Depsang raises concerns. The author stresses that restoring the April 2020 status quo remains vital while urging bipartisan consensus and transparent policymaking for sustained progress in border talks.

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

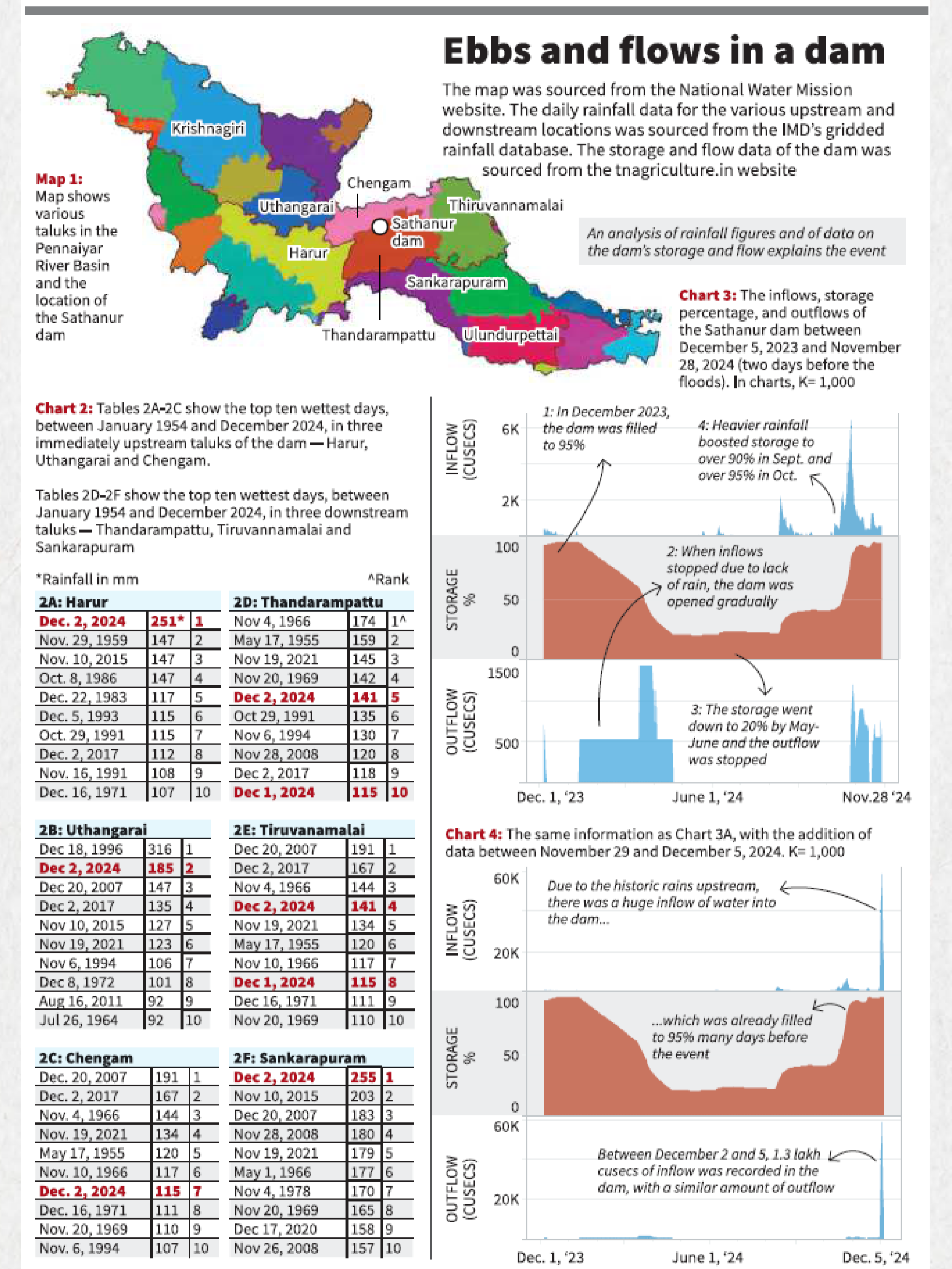
## ASI Survey Reveals 250 Protected Monuments as Waqf Properties

An ASI survey identified 250 protected monuments registered as Waqf properties, including Hauz Khas Masjid and Ferozeshah Kotla's Jama Masjid. The ASI plans to present this to the JPC examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, highlighting conflicts in conservation efforts. The Waqf Board's unilateral declarations, enabled by the Waqf Act 1995, clash with the ASI's rights under the AMASR Act 1958, complicating management.

Source: The Indian Express

## Sathanur Dam's Mismanagement Amid Cyclone Fengal Sparks Debate

Disaster Management



During Cyclone Fengal, the Sathanur Dam in Tamil Nadu faced critical challenges. The dam was already 95% full before the cyclone's unprecedented rainfall. Emergency water releases to prevent dam overflow, combined with torrential downstream rains, caused severe flooding in villages along the Thenpennai river. Critics pointed to insufficient preemptive measures, claiming that gradual water releases before the cyclone could have minimized damage to fields and homes. Farmers voiced frustration over submerged paddy and cash crops, blaming delayed communication and improper dam management. However, the Tamil Nadu government defended its actions, stating that water releases adhered to standard protocols and that warnings were issued in time. The incident has reignited discussions on enhancing dam management strategies and improving disaster preparedness in flood-prone regions. The floods also highlighted the broader need for efficient infrastructure to cope with extreme weather events, which are becoming more frequent due to climate change.

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

## Exploring AI's Role in Big Tech Layoffs

Big Tech companies, including Google, Meta, and Microsoft, have laid off thousands in 2024 amidst cost-cutting pressures. While some attribute layoffs to AI, experts argue it's more a correction from overhiring during a decade of tech boom. AI's real impact lies in shifting priorities, favoring specialists over generalists. Rising AI expenditures and delayed profitability compel firms to balance innovation with efficiency, often at employees' expense.

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

## Ensuring Safe Piped Water in Urban India

Public Health, Urban Governance

The recent deaths of three individuals in Chennai due to suspected contaminated piped water highlight gaps in urban water safety despite extensive coverage. With 34 others hospitalized, concerns over E.coli outbreaks in cities like Bengaluru, Kochi, and Noida underscore strained water infrastructure. The Tamil Nadu government plans to increase potable water supply and cut wastage. Global data reveal a dire need for clean water, as unsafe drinking water causes millions of deaths annually.

Source: The Hindu Newspaper