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VOCABULARY

- 1. Insular:** Narrow-minded or isolated, particularly in outlook or experience.
 - Synonyms: Narrow, parochial, provincial, isolated
 - Antonyms: Open-minded, cosmopolitan, broad
 - Sentence: The colonial administration had an insular approach to forest management, focusing solely on timber.

- 2. Murky:** Not clear; obscure or suspiciously unclear.
 - Synonyms: Opaque, obscure, ambiguous, dubious
 - Antonyms: Clear, transparent, explicit
 - Sentence: The administration's murky stance on defining forests has raised concerns among environmentalists.

- 3. Sequestration:** The act of isolating, storing, or removing something, often used for carbon storage in environmental contexts.
 - Synonyms: Isolation, removal, confiscation, storage
 - Antonyms: Release, dispersion, liberation
 - Sentence: The forest report's estimates of carbon sequestration potential are questioned for accuracy.

- 4. Endangerment:** The act of putting something at risk or in danger.
 - Synonyms: Jeopardy, threat, peril, risk
 - Antonyms: Safety, protection, security
 - Sentence: The endangerment of natural ecosystems is a pressing concern in forest management.

- 5. Purview:** The scope or range of something, particularly authority or influence.
 - Synonyms: Scope, extent, range, domain
 - Antonyms: Limitation, restriction, boundary
 - Sentence: The recent amendments have reduced the purview of the Forest Conservation Act.

- 6. Degraded:** Reduced in quality, value, or strength, often referring to environmental or physical conditions.
- Synonyms: Deteriorated, diminished, eroded, ruined
 - Antonyms: Enhanced, improved, pristine, flourishing
 - Sentence: The degraded land in several districts is a major concern for sustainable development.
- 7. Catalyze:** To cause or accelerate a reaction or significant change.
- Synonyms: Facilitate, stimulate, prompt, trigger
 - Antonyms: Hinder, impede, obstruct
 - Sentence: Effective policy changes can catalyze better forest management practices.
- 8. Iteration:** The repetition of a process or utterance.
- Synonyms: Repetition, recurrence, cycle
 - Antonyms: Discontinuation, singularity
 - Sentence: The design went through several iterations before final approval.
- 9. Retrenchment:** The reduction of costs or spending in response to economic difficulty.
- Synonyms: Downsizing, cutback, economizing
 - Antonyms: Expansion, enlargement, growth
 - Sentence: Retrenchment in the coal sector led to widespread job losses during the 1980s.
- 10. Blight:** Something that causes harm or damage, often leading to a decline in prosperity or condition.
- Synonyms: Ruin, decay, devastation
 - Antonyms: Prosperity, boon, benefit
 - Sentence: The closure of coal mines brought economic blight to former mining communities.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

24th December, 2024

1. India was announced as the host of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun 2025.
 - This will be the third top ISSF event to be held in the country after the senior world cup in Bhopal in 2023 and the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final earlier this year, reinforcing India's stature as one of the sport's top destinations in the world.
2. Anahat Singh, the 16-year-old Indian squash player, secured her 9th PSA Challenger title by winning the Western India Slam 2024 Women's Singles in Mumbai.
 - Singh, seeded second, defeated Akanksha Salunkhe 3-0 in the final with scores of 11-8, 11-8, 11-8.
 - The Western India Slam attracted over 700 players from 12 countries.
 - Amneeshenraj Chandaran emerging as the men's champion.
3. Indian-American entrepreneur Sriram Krishnan has been appointed as senior policy advisor for AI in the White House by US President-elect Donald Trump. Krishnan, close to Elon Musk, will focus on ensuring American leadership in AI and coordinate AI policy across government.
4. Union Transport Minister inaugurated India's first bio-bitumen highway on the Nagpur-Mansar Bypass (NH-44), using lignin from crop residues.
 - The road, 40% stronger than traditional asphalt, uses 15% bio-bitumen, offering eco-friendly and cost-effective construction.
 - This road is constructed by joint collaboration of Central Road Research Institute and biotech firm- Praj Industries.
5. Prime Minister Modi invites everyone to experience the Rann Utsav in Gujarat's Kutch, showcasing its unique culture, arts, crafts, and historical sites like Dholavira. The festival, running until February 28, highlights the region's transformation from past disasters into a hub of tourism and cultural preservation, recognized by the UN.

6. The Phewa Dialogue series commenced recently, marking collaboration between Nepal and China, in Pokhara, a city renowned for its picturesque lake. Former President Bidya Devi Bhandari inaugurated the dialogue, denoting its importance for regional cooperation.
7. ISRO is preparing to launch a record 24 scientific experiments on board the POEM satellite under the Spadex Mission.
 - The Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) is a groundbreaking mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) aimed at developing autonomous space docking technology.
 - The mission involves PSLV-C60 as the launch vehicle to demonstrate in-space docking technology using two small spacecraft: Chaser (SDX01) and Target (SDX02).
 - This technology is a critical milestone for future lunar missions, the development of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), and other advanced space endeavours.
8. The Vietnam Coast Guard ship CSB 8005 and the Indian Coast Guard conducted a joint exercise near Kochi. The exercise, Sahayog Hop Tac, focused on maritime security. Crews practiced pollution response, search and rescue, and counter-drug operations. The visit included cross-visits, a beach cleanup, and a volleyball match. The exercise strengthened the partnership between the two coast guards.
9. Kristrunn Frostadottir, Iceland's youngest PM, leads a three-party coalition: Social Democratic Alliance (SDA), Liberal Reform Party (LRP), and People's Party (PP).
 - Cabinet priorities include economic stabilization, interest rate reduction, and public finance control.
 - The SDA, biggest winner in the November 30 election, holds 4 ministerial portfolios; LRP also has 4, and PP has 3.