



## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### Official Mascot of Asian Athletics Championships 2023

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The **2023 Asian Athletics Championships** which began in Thailand recently **have chosen revered Hindu god Hanuman as the official mascot for the 2023 year's event**. The event was **held on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Asian Athletics Association (established in 1973)**.

The **25<sup>th</sup> Asian Athletics Championships 2023 logo** indicates the athletes participating in the games, skills, teamwork of athletes, showcase of **athleticism, dedication, and sportsmanship**.

A **total of nine countries** (Japan; Hong Kong; Singapore; China; Indonesia; the Republic of Korea; Malaysia; and Philippines) **participate in the Asian event including India**.

**Read More:** [Winter Olympics](#)

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### Floating Gold



Recently, a massive chunk of floating gold has been found in the belly of a dead whale beached on the Spanish island of [La Palma](#). The highly valuable substance is called ambergris.

Ambergris (grey amber), is **generally referred to as whale vomit**. It is a **solid waxy substance originating in the intestine of the sperm whale**. It is **produced only by an estimated 1% of sperm whales**. Chemically, ambergris contains alkaloids, acids, and a specific compound called ambrein, which is **similar to cholesterol**. It floats **around the surface of the water body and at times settles on the coast**. Because of its **high value, it is referred to as floating gold**. It is highly used in the **perfume market**.

The sperm whale, (*Physeter macrocephalus*), is **dark blue-gray or brownish, with white patches on the belly**. **They are found in temperate and tropical waters throughout the world**. They are listed as **vulnerable in the IUCN Red List**, mentioned in **Appendix I of CITES and included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.



**Read More:** [Ambergris & Sperm Whale](#)

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## Railway Financial Code Modified to Prioritize Safety Projects

Following a tragic [train accident in Balasore, Odisha](#), the Railway Board has taken swift action by modifying the **Indian Railway Financial Code** to prioritize safety-related projects, particularly those pertaining to signalling systems. The Indian Railway Financial Code sets the rules to financially evaluate the viability of projects.

The revised rules now **exempt signalling works from the requirement of being financially remunerative**, categorizing them under the '**Safety**' category instead. This significant change ensures that projects aimed at improving the signalling infrastructure, such as the anti-collision system [Kavach](#) and [Electronic Interlocking](#), **do not need to pass the financial viability test**.

Additionally, projects involving mobile train communications systems, **Remote Diagnostic and Predictive Maintenance Systems**, technology upgrades, and automatic Train Management Systems will also be exempt from the financial viability norms.

**Read more:** [Kavach](#), [Electronic Interlocking](#), [Derailment](#)

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## INS Sunayna Participates in Op Southern Readiness 2023



The recent participation of [INS Sunayna](#) in **Op Southern Readiness 2023**, conducted by the [Combined Maritime Forces \(CMF\) in Seychelles](#) from 10-12 Jul 23, marked a significant step towards strengthening multilateral ties and enhancing cooperation in the maritime domain.

The **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)** is a multinational maritime partnership, which exists to uphold the **Rules-Based International Order (RBIO)** by countering illicit non-state actors on the high seas and promoting security, stability, and prosperity across approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters, which encompass some of the **world's most important shipping lanes**. It has **38 member nations (including India)**.

**INS Sunayna**, the second of the **NOPV (Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel)** class of ship designed to undertake fleet support operations, coastal and offshore patrolling, ocean surveillance and monitoring of **Sea Lines of Communications and offshore assets**, and escort duties.

**Read more:** [Combined Maritime Forces](#), [Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel](#)

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