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# TODAY'S ANALYSIS

## (20 January 2025)

### TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- INDIAN FISHERMEN DETAINED NEAR DIEGO GARCIA
- SUSTAINABLE NANO CATALYST DEVELOPED
- EMPOWER BIZ INITIATIVE
- MCQs



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# INDIAN FISHERMEN DETAINED NEAR DIEGO GARCIA ISLAND

- **Date of Detention:** January 9, 2025
- **Incident Location:** Near Diego Garcia Island, **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)**
- **Origin of Fishermen:** Thengapattanam Fishing Harbour, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu
- On January 9, 2025, **15 Indian fishermen** were detained near **Diego Garcia island**, a part of the **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)**, for allegedly **crossing the maritime boundary**.
- The fishermen had ventured into the sea from **Thengapattanam fishing harbour** in **Kanyakumari district**, Tamil Nadu, on **December 29, 2024**, and were apprehended for **poaching**.

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## LOCATION OF DIEGO GARCIA



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## KEY POINTS

- The fishermen, who usually engage in **deep-sea fishing**, were on a **mechanized boat** owned by **J. Paul Surgen**, a resident of **Thoothoor**, a town in Kanyakumari district.
- Eight of the detained fishermen were from **Thoothoor**, while the rest hailed from **various other parts of the country**.
- The fishermen had planned a long haul, **typically staying out at sea for extended periods before returning to shore**, and were detained for allegedly **crossing into the maritime boundaries** of Diego Garcia.
- As the news spread, the families of the detained fishermen were **shocked** and **worried**, urging the **district administration** to intervene.

## ABOUT DIEGO GARCIA

**Diego Garcia** is an **atoll** in the **central Indian Ocean**, part of the **Chagos Archipelago**. It is the **largest and southernmost** island in the group and has significant **geostrategic importance**.

- **Geography & Area:**
  - Diego Garcia covers an area of approximately **44 square kilometers**.

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- The island is **V-shaped**, with a **sand-fringed cay** about **24 km in length** and a maximum width of **11 km**.
- Its **lagoon** is open at the northern end.
- **Historical Background:**
  - **Discovered by the Portuguese** in the early 16th century, Diego Garcia has a long history of being a **dependency of Mauritius**.
  - In **1965**, it was separated from Mauritius and became part of the newly formed **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)**.
  - In **1966**, the **United Kingdom (UK)** leased Diego Garcia to the **United States** to establish a **military base**. The establishment of the base led to the **forcible removal of the island's inhabitants**.
- **Geostrategic Importance:**
  - Diego Garcia hosts a **major U.S. air and naval base**, making it a critical **logistics and geostrategic support** hub in the **Indian Ocean**.
  - The island is key for **military operations**, especially for the United States, and serves as a strategic outpost for controlling the region.

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- **International Disputes:**

- In **2019**, the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** issued an **advisory opinion** declaring that the UK's separation of Diego Garcia from Mauritius in 1965 was **unlawful**, as the **Chagossian people's** rights were violated.
- The **UN General Assembly** passed a **non-binding resolution** in 2019, calling for the end of **Britain's colonial administration** of the **Chagos Archipelago** and the return of the islands to **Mauritius**.

## CURRENT STATUS

- **No Permanent Population:**

Diego Garcia does not have a permanent civilian population. However, approximately **4,000 U.S. and British military personnel**, along with **civilian contractors**, are stationed on the island due to the presence of the **military base**.

- **Importance for the U.S.:**

The island is considered one of the most important **military installations** for the **United States** in the **Indian Ocean region**, playing a key role in logistics, defense, and surveillance activities.

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## FISHERMEN'S DETENTION & MARITIME BOUNDARIES

The **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)**, which includes **Diego Garcia**, is a **disputed area**, and fishing within its maritime boundary has been a point of contention.

- **Poaching Charges:**

The fishermen from Kanniyakumari are accused of **poaching**, as they were allegedly found fishing within the territorial waters of the **British Indian Ocean Territory**.

- **Maritime Boundary Disputes:**

The **Indian Ocean** is home to several maritime boundaries that are contested, and fishing vessels that unknowingly cross these boundaries can face detention or other legal actions by the authorities governing the waters.

- In this case, the fishermen were apprehended near Diego Garcia, indicating they might have crossed into disputed or restricted waters.

- **Diplomatic Efforts:**

As the families of the detained fishermen have alerted the **district administration**, it is likely that the **Indian government** will pursue diplomatic channels to resolve the issue and secure their release.

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# SUSTAINABLE NANO CATALYST DEVELOPED

## Overview:

- Scientists at the **Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST)** have developed a new **copper-based catalyst** with a star-like shape.
- This new catalyst is designed to make industrial chemical processes more **sustainable** and **cost-effective**, reducing harm to the environment.
- The research was published in *Nanoscale 2024*.

## KEY DETAILS

- **Copper-Based Nano Catalyst:**
  - Scientists have made a **copper oxide** catalyst that has a unique **star-like structure**.
  - This catalyst is aimed at **improving industrial chemical reactions** in a more **environmentally friendly** way.
- **Sporopollenin as Template:**
  - **Sporopollenin** is a natural material found in plant spores.

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- It is used as a **template** for growing the copper oxide in a **nanostar shape**.
- The surface of the sporopollenin is treated with **PEI (polyethyleneimine)**, which **helps copper oxide to grow and form the nanostructures** needed for the catalyst.
- **Environmentally Friendly Features:**
  - The catalyst works well in **water-based reactions** and **does not require harmful chemicals** or high temperatures, which are often needed by regular catalysts.
  - This makes it more **sustainable** as it avoids harsh chemicals and reduces energy consumption.
  - The catalyst can be reused up to **five times**, showing its **durability** and long-term efficiency.
- **Applications:**
  - The catalyst can be used in many different fields, such as:
    - **Organic reactions** in industries like pharmaceuticals and materials.

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- **Cleaning up pollutants** in the environment (environmental remediation).
  - **Electronics** for improving the development of smaller, efficient devices.
  - **Improving chemical analysis** in techniques like **Surface-enhanced Raman Spectroscopy (SERS)**.
- **Use of Biomass Waste:**
    - The development uses **sporopollenin**, a form of **biomass waste**, showing how waste material can be turned into something useful.
    - This approach follows the **circular economy** concept, where waste is reused to create valuable products.
- **Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**
    - This new catalyst directly helps achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, such as:
      - **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production:** By reducing the need for harmful chemicals and materials.
      - **SDG 13 - Climate Action:** By lowering energy use and environmental pollution in industrial processes.

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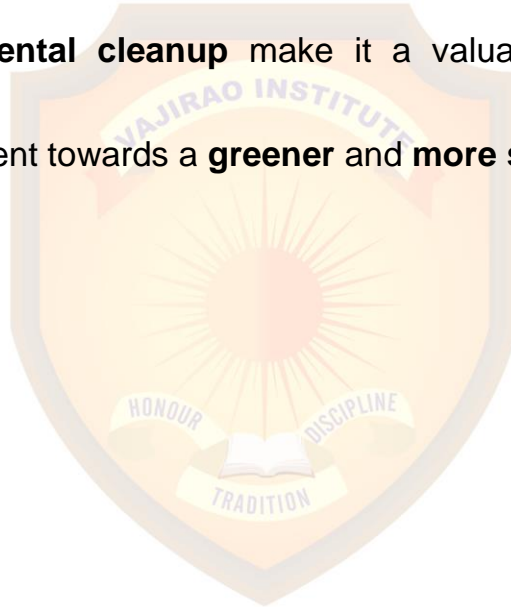
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## CONCLUSION

This new **copper-based nano catalyst** is an important step towards more **sustainable industrial processes**. By using **natural waste materials** and reducing the need for harsh chemicals, it helps to protect the environment. Its applications in **pharmaceuticals, electronics, and environmental cleanup** make it a valuable tool for many industries, supporting the global movement towards a **greener and more sustainable future**.



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## EMPOWHER BIZ INITIATIVE

- In January 2025, The **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)** of **NITI Aayog** launched a new initiative called **EmpowHER Biz – Sapno Ki Udaan** in partnership with **New Shop**, India's largest **24/7 convenience retail chain**.
- This collaboration aims to empower **women entrepreneurs** by providing them with the necessary **skills** and **resources** to succeed in the **organized retail sector**.
- The program is designed to support **aspiring women entrepreneurs** by offering mentorship, training, and access to financial tools to help them build sustainable retail businesses.

### KEY FEATURES OF EMPOWHER INITIATIVE

- **Objective:**
  - The **EmpowHER Biz** initiative aims to empower **women entrepreneurs** by providing a comprehensive support system to help them establish themselves in the **retail business**.
  - The focus is on providing **mentorship**, **training**, and access to **digital tools**, **financial literacy**, and **business development resources**.

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- **Program Structure:**

- The program will offer **mentorship** and **comprehensive training**, covering critical aspects such as:
  - **Retail management**
  - **Digital tools**
  - **Financial literacy**
  - **Business development**
- The initiative will select **fifty women participants** aged **18–35** through an **online application process**, based on specific eligibility criteria.

- **Special Benefits:**

- The **top twenty** participants will receive a **100% waiver on New Shop franchise fees**, allowing them to own and operate their own **retail businesses** with reduced financial barriers.
- The program is specifically targeted at women from **Delhi NCR, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.**

- **Role of New Shop:**

- **New Shop** operates a network of **over 200 convenience retail stores**, which are open **24/7** and are strategically located in **high-density neighborhoods, highways, and gas stations.**

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- The company plans to expand further into **mass transit hubs** such as **airports** and **railway stations**.
- New Shop is committed to **empowering over 10,000 entrepreneurs** by 2030, primarily through its **franchising model**.
- **Role of WEP:**
  - **WEP**, incubated by **NITI Aayog** in **2018**, aims to empower women entrepreneurs through a variety of support mechanisms, including:
    - **Access to finance**
    - **Market linkages**
    - **Training and skilling**
    - **Mentoring and networking**
    - **Compliance and legal assistance**
    - **Business development services**
  - Since **2023**, the '**Award to Reward**' initiative under **WEP** provides a plug-and-play framework for developing impactful programs for women entrepreneurs, with the support of more than **30 public and private sector partners**.

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## MCQs

1. Diego Garcia is under administrative control of which country?

- (A) USA
- (B) UK
- (C) Mauritius
- (D) None of the above

**Ans. (B)**

2. Arrange these islands in the Indian Ocean Region completely lie south of equator?

- 1. Mauritius
- 2. Chagos Archipelago
- 3. Seychelles
- 4. Madagascar

- (A) Only 2 & 3
- (B) Only 3 & 4
- (C) Only 1 & 4
- (D) All of the above

**Ans. (D)**

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3. Which of the following is/are the applications of Nano Catalyst?

1. Pharma industry
2. Cleaning up pollutants in the environment
3. Electronics

(A) Only 2 & 3

(B) Only 3

(C) Only 2

(D) All of the above



**Ans. (D)**

4. Recently EmpowHer Biz initiative was in news. Which organisation launched it?

- (A) Ministry of Social Justice
- (B) Confederation of Indian Industry
- (C) NITI Aayog
- (D) None of the above

**Ans. (C)**

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5. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:
1. The EmpowHER Biz initiative aims to empower women entrepreneurs by providing a comprehensive support system to help them establish themselves in the retail business.
  2. The focus is on providing mentorship, training, and access to digital tools, financial literacy, and business development resources.
- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 & 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2



**Ans. (C)**

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