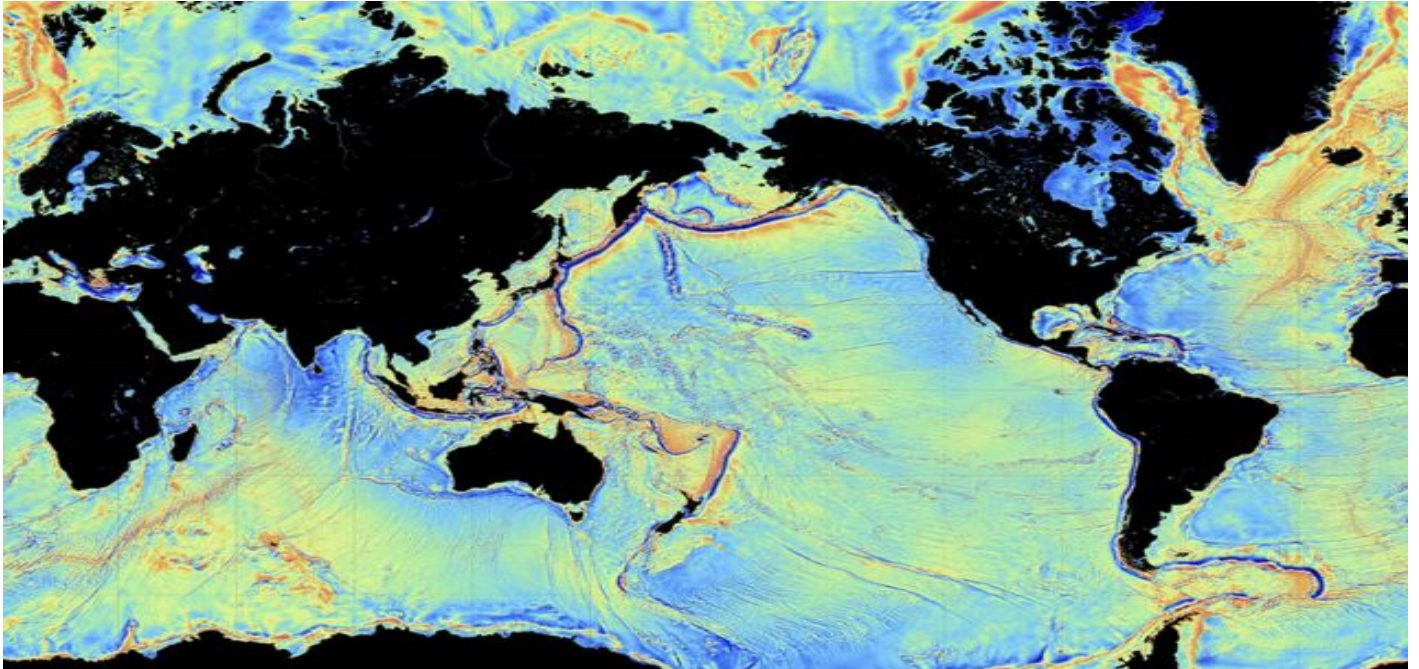


## One-fourth of seafloor equal to Europe mapped for the first time

(GS Paper 3, Science and Tech)

### Why in news?

- Recently, researchers have successfully **mapped nearly one-fourth of the global seabed** amassing information and data in large chunks to create a digital map of the ocean floor.



### Details:

- The development was revealed at the recently concluded UN Ocean Conference 2022, where researchers from the **Seabed 2030 Project** said that the figure now stands at **23.4 per cent**, reflecting an increase of 10.1 million square kilometers of new bathymetric data.
- The amount of sea floor that has been mapped now equates to an area around the size of Europe, and slightly larger than the Sahara Desert.

### What is Seabed 2030?

- A collaborative project between The Nippon Foundation and the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO), Seabed 2030 aims to chart the world's entire ocean floor.
- It was launched at the first-ever UN Ocean Conference in New York.

### Way Forward:

- The topography of the ocean floor could help identify underwater hazards and inform sustainable marine resource management and infrastructure development.
- Researchers are also trying to understand new depths of individual oceans using the same technology guiding the movement of rovers on Mars.
- Researchers are studying even the deepest known place on Earth -- the Challenger Deep, which is 36,200 feet deep.

## Hotels can't force customers to pay service charge: Centre

(GS Paper 2, Governance)

### Why in news?

- Recently, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued guidelines asking hotels and restaurants not to collect service charge from customers.

- These establishments should not add service charge automatically or by default to the food bill.



### Key Guidelines:

- The guidelines adds that **if any consumer finds that a hotel or restaurant is violating the guidelines**, he or she may make a request to remove the service charge from the bill amount or lodge a complaint with the National Consumer Helpline.
- Complaints can be filed with the Consumer Commission too or with the District Collector.
- No hotel or restaurant shall force a consumer to pay service charge and shall **clearly inform the consumer that service charge is voluntary, optional and at consumer's discretion**.

### Inherent in price:

- The Ministry said the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) has received a number of complaints by consumers against levying of service charge.
- The guidelines added that **component of service is inherent in the price of food and beverages offered by the restaurant or hotel**.
- Pricing of the product thus covers both the goods and services component. There is no restriction on hotels or restaurants to set the prices at which they want to offer food or beverages to consumers.
- Thus, placing an order involves consent to pay the prices of food items displayed in the menu along with applicable taxes.
- Charging anything other than the said amount would amount to unfair trade practice under the Act.

## Algeria celebrates 60 years of Independence

(GS Paper 2, International Relation)

### Why in news?

- Algeria celebrates **60 years of its independence from France** with a large military parade, but the tension between the two countries remains due to colonial era brutality.
- The gruelling eight-year war that brought freedom to the country was put to an end with the signing of the **Evian Accords in March 1962**.

### New logo:

- Authorities in Algiers closed a 16-kilometre (10 mile) stretch of a major artery so that the army could conduct final preparations for its parade, the first one in 33 years.

- The government commissioned a logo consisting of a circle with 60 stars, including icons and tools, to commemorate "a glorious history and a new ear."



#### Background:

- Algeria ultimately gained independence from colonial control on July 5, days after 99.72 per cent of its population supported it in a referendum.
- However, the 132-year occupation still has its impact on Algeria's ties with France.
- Thousands of people died during the battle for independence, but 60 years later, despite numerous overturns made by French President Emmanuel Macron, France ruled out any kind of atonement for the colonial era.

### CoVarScan

(GS Paper 3, Science and Tech)

#### Why in news?

- Recently, the United States scientists have developed a new test to identify all current variants of coronavirus (COVID-19) quickly and accurately.
- The test, named CoVarScan, can **detect all current variants of SARS-CoV-2** within hours by finding the signatures of eight hotspots on the deadly virus.



### Significance:

- The test is as accurate as other methods used to diagnose Covid. The test successfully differentiate between all current variants of SARS-CoV-2.
- In most cases, scientists use genome sequencing to determine which variant of COVID-19 a patient has. The process is time-consuming and expensive too.
- To analyse the RNA sequence contained in the viruses, the tests also rely on sophisticated equipment.

### How does CoVarScan work?

- During the research, the CoVarScan had 96 per cent sensitivity and 99 per cent specificity as compared to whole genome sequencing.
- The CoVarScan test detects eight regions of SARS-CoV-2 that commonly differ between viral variants. It detects small mutations to measure the length of repetitive genetic regions that tend to grow and shrink as the virus evolves.
- The method **relies on polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to copy and measure the RNA** at these eight sites of interest.

## Veteran filmmaker Tarun Majumdar passed away (Miscellaneous)

### Why in news?

- Recently, Veteran filmmaker Tarun Majumdar passed away.
- He was among the last of the great film directors from West Bengal who created a niche of their own, beyond the trinity of cinema legends such as Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, and Ritwik Ghatak.



### Honours:

- He was a **four-time National Award winner** and a **Padma Shri conferree**.
- Some of Majumdar's well-known films are Balika Badhu (1967), Kuheli (1971), Shriman Prithviraj (1973), Fuleswari (1974), Dadar Kirti (1980), Bhalobasa Bhalobasa (1985), and Apan Amar Apan (1990).
- He remade two of his hit films in Hindi — Balika Badhu (1976) and Rahgir (1969, adapted from his 1963 film Palatak). Among his critically acclaimed movies are Nimantran (1971), Sansar Simante (1975) and Ganadevata (1978).