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Supreme Court Judges Deliver Split Verdict on GM Mustard Trial Case

TMH-11

- Delhi University Professor Deepak Pental developed the genetically modified mustard.
- It is expected that cultivating this higher-yield crop will significantly reduce the import of cooking oil.
- Based on the recommendation from the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), the Ministry of Environment and Forests granted conditional approval to Delhi University for field trials of this GM mustard variant named TMH-11.
- Gene Campaign, an NGO, and Aruna Rodrigues filed a petition in the Supreme Court against this approval.
- Justice Nagarathna's ruling stated that GEAC's recommendation for field trials of the GM mustard is invalid.
- She mentioned that this approval violates public trust policy and the potential impacts on humans, animals, and plants have not been investigated.
- In contrast, Justice Sanjay Karol's ruling stated that granting approval for the field trials does not breach the precautionary principle.
- He added that the field trials could proceed with adequate safety and precautionary measures.

High Probability of Abundant Diamonds on Mercury

- Research by Chinese and Belgian scientists suggests a high probability of abundant diamonds on the planet Mercury, which is close to Earth.
- Mercury, the first planet in the solar system and third closest to Earth, has a surface composition that includes carbon, silica, and iron.
- Below these layers, there could be diamond layers approximately 9 miles (14 km) thick due to extreme heat and pressure.
- Because of Mercury's proximity to the sun, the carbon and silica, along with diamonds, could be in a molten state.

- Although there may be extensive diamond reserves, extracting them may not be feasible.
- However, studying Mercury's magnetic fields and geological structures may provide valuable insights.
- NASA's Messenger spacecraft was the first to visit and study Mercury, and the data collected is being used by scientists for further research.

First Joint Military Exercise in China under Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), including India, conducted their first joint counter-terrorism military exercise in China.
- Named Interaction-2024, the counter-terrorism exercise took place in Xinjiang, northwestern China.
- Based in Beijing, the SCO is a significant regional international organization focusing on strengthening security cooperation with its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).
- The SCO includes countries like China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Belarus recently became its 10th official member.

World's Most Powerful Passports List Singapore Tops, India at 82nd Position

- According to the latest Henley Passport Index, India ranks 82nd, while Singapore tops the list.
- The Singaporean passport allows visa-free travel to 195 countries.
- Passports from France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Japan hold the second position, allowing visa-free travel to 192 countries.
- The Indian passport ranks 82nd in the Henley Index, enabling Indian citizens to travel to 58 countries without a visa.