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Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

1. African Swine Fever outbreak in Kohima

Veterinary experts from the department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services (AH&VS) have successfully contained the outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in Kohima. It is a highly contagious viral disease that affects both domestic and wild pigs and is transmitted through infected pigs, contaminated feed etc. The disease had a Mortality rate of 100%.

2. IREDA unveils GIFT City office

The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) unveiled its strategic move to establish a Gift city office in Gandhinagar. The event took place at World Future Energy Summit 2024. The main aim is to provide Foreign currency denominated debt options to cut financing costs for Green Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Manufacturing projects. The IREDA is set to back India's green energy targets with substantial storage solutions by 2030-32.

3. Unique Iron Age megalithic site discovered in Telangana

Archeologists have recently discovered a unique Iron age megalithic site with more than 200 megalithic monuments. The site has been discovered at Ooragutta near Bandala village in SS Tadvai Mandal of Mulugu district, Telangana. The time period of the Iron age is between 1200 BCE and 600 BCE and it existed in Africa, Europe and Asia. Iron was discovered during this age and Ironwork first began in Turkey before spreading to other parts of Europe.

4. Amitabh Bachchan to be honoured with Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award

The Angry Young Man of Indian Cinema Shri Amitabh Bachchan is to be honoured with Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award for path breaking contribution to the nation. The award was instituted in the memory of Lata Mangeshkar who died on February 6, 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first recipient of the award followed by Asha Bhosla in 2023.



5. FIIs can now invest in Green bonds

The investment in the country's Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIS) was approved by the Reserve Bank of India. Sovereign Green bonds are government debt that specifically funds projects attempting to accelerate India's transition to a low carbon economy. The issuing of Green bonds was announced at the Union budget 2022-23.

6. 100% FDI in Space Sector

The Finance Ministry of India has notified Foreign Direct investment of upto 100% under automatic route for Space sector. The Ministry has changed the rules under the Foreign Exchange management Act (FEMA), 1999. The Cabinet allowed 74% FDI under automatic route for satellite manufacturing, 49% for Launch vehicles and upto 100% under automatic route for manufacturing of components and systems.

7. Khavda Renewable Energy Park

The World's Largest Renewable Energy Park was established by Adani Green Energy Ltd. (AGEL) in Gujarat's Khavda region. The plant has a

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capacity of 45GW and is predominantly fueled by Solar Energy. The Khavda Region has the second best solar radiation in the country after Ladakh. The plant is spread over 538 square kilometres approximately five times the size of Paris.

8. Elections to Special Olympics Bharat to be held on April 22

The National Sports Federation of India, namely Special Olympics Bharat (SOB), is to conduct elections on April 22 to form district units across Tamil Nadu. The Federation is registered under Indian Trust Act 1882 and is accredited by Special Olympics International. The body is recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and it is a designated Nodal agency for all disabilities.



9. IIP grows by 5.7% in February 2024

India's industrial production data (IIP) for February 2024 shows a growth of 147.2% compared to the base year 2011-12. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is a monthly indicator published by the National Statistical Office. It tracks changes in production volume across various industries like mining, manufacturing, and electricity. IIP uses a 2011-2012 baseline. The Eight Core Sectors represent 40.27% of IIP weight.

10. First alumni meet of PRERNA Program

The Ministry of Education held the first alumni meeting for the Prerana Program, a value-based

learning experience for high school students. The Prerna Program, initiated by the Ministry of Education, fosters value-based learning through experiential education, aiming to empower students for personal and academic growth. It fosters leadership, cultural appreciation, and a sense of national pride through interactive activities. Prerna Program was initiated as a pilot from January to February 2024 in Gujarat hosting five batches focusing on nine value-based themes.

11. Operationalisation of gas based Power plants

To address high summer electricity demand, the Indian government is mandating gas-based power plants to run at full capacity from May to June. This aims to optimize power availability alongside other measures like shifting maintenance to monsoon months and maximizing hydropower generation during peak hours. These actions anticipate the hotter-than-usual summer predicted by the Indian Meteorological Department.

12. 8 Principles laid down by SC on Doctrine of Harmonious Construction

The Supreme Court recently declined to excuse a 5659-day delay in an appeal filing, outlining eight principles for interpreting the Limitation Act, 1963, under the doctrine of Harmonious Construction. This doctrine resolves conflicts within laws by ensuring legislative intent while maintaining coherence. The Act sets time limits for legal actions, beyond which remedies are forfeited.



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13. 75% MPLADS Fund allocated unutilised by 39 MPs of Tamil Nadu

The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) grants each MP ₹5 crore annually for constituency development. Launched in 1993, it empowers MPs to recommend projects focusing on national priorities like drinking water, sanitation, and education. It is a Plan Scheme, fully funded by the Government of India and the funds released under the scheme are non-lapsable. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, (MPLADS) was non-operational for two financial years 2020-21 and 2021.

14. Muria Tribe settlement lost in the Woods

Scattered across central India, the Muria tribe struggles with limited access to basic needs. Originally from Chattisgarh, the Muria tribe is classified as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) scattered across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. They speak the Muria language, a Dravidian language of the Gondi-Kui group. They're referred to as 'Gutti Koyas' by the other tribes of Telangana. The Muria tribe is known for its ghotul system, where young people learn about sexuality in communal dormitories.



International

1. UN Women report titled Scarcity and Fear

The United Nations Agency UN Women recently released a new report titled "Scarcity and Fear" highlighting devastating consequences of limited access to Water, Sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services to women in war torn Gaza. The report states that more than 10000 women have lost their lives in the last six months since the war started. UN Women was established in 2010 by UNGA dedicated to gender equity and Empowerment of women.

2. China Reports economic growth of 5.3% in Q1 of 2024

The Chinese economy reported an economic growth of 5.3% in the 1st quarter of 2024, a stronger than projected economic growth amidst continued crisis in the property sector. The data was released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The World Bank projected the slowing of the Chinese economy to 4.5% in 2024 as compared to 5.2% in 2023. An uptick in Chinese growth figures will have its impact on global growth.

3. Fresh Port restrictions on export of Essential Commodities to Maldives

India has imposed new restrictions on the export of essential commodities to the Maldives, allowing exports only through four designated customs stations. Earlier, restrictions were lifted on specified quantities of nine products, including potatoes, onions, eggs, rice, wheat flour, and sugar. The approved quantities mark the highest since the countries established bilateral ties in 1981. Despite the export ban, India continued to export rice, sugar, and onions to the Maldives, affirming its commitment to bilateral development. Maldives is an island country in the Indian Ocean India and Maldives are divided by the Eight Degree Channel.

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4. Hall with Trojan War decorations discovered in Pompeii

Archaeologists in Pompeii uncovered a banquet hall adorned with frescoes depicting Greek mythology scenes, including Apollo's pursuit of Cassandra and Helen of Troy's meeting with Paris, which led to the Trojan War. The hall, with intact mosaic floors, offers insights into Roman social life. Pompeii, destroyed in 79 AD by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, remains Italy's second most visited tourist destination.



5. Crime against Humanity committed in Sudan amidst war between SAF and RSF

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed grave concerns over the situation in Sudan, warning of potential war crimes and crimes against humanity amid escalating unrest. The year-long war between rival generals has displaced millions and left 18 million facing hunger. War crimes are violations of the laws and customs of war, while crimes against humanity are widespread and systematic attacks targeting civilians. They are defined under international law, primarily in treaties such as the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

6. 23rd session of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Experts at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues highlight slow progress in protecting Indigenous territories, crucial for

biodiversity conservation. Despite growing recognition of Indigenous territories (ITs) as crucial for global biodiversity, progress in protecting them is slow. ITs holds 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity, yet receives less than 1% of climate finance. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established in 2000 to provide a platform for indigenous peoples to voice their concerns and participate in UN deliberations affecting them.

7. Israeli Air Defence System stopped 99% of Iranian Missiles

Israeli Defence Forces recently claimed that its air defence system involving Exo-atmospheric interceptors destroyed 99% of incoming missiles of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These are anti ballistic, surface to surface missiles equipped with Infrared sensors and radar systems. It uses a three stage solid rocket booster to propel out of Earth's atmosphere at near hypersonic speed.

8. Restoration of Property rights for Afghan Hindus, Sikhs by Taliban

India supports the Taliban's decision to return land taken from Afghan Hindus and Sikhs. This move is seen as a positive step towards improving the lives of religious minorities in Afghanistan. India considers Afghanistan's stability crucial due to its significant investments in the country's development, including projects like the Afghan Parliament, Zaranj-Delaram Highway, and the Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam. Additionally, Afghanistan serves as a vital gateway to Central Asia, enhancing India's strategic interests in the region.

9. Cases of Whooping Cough rising in several countries

Whooping cough cases are spiking in China, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic. Pertussis or

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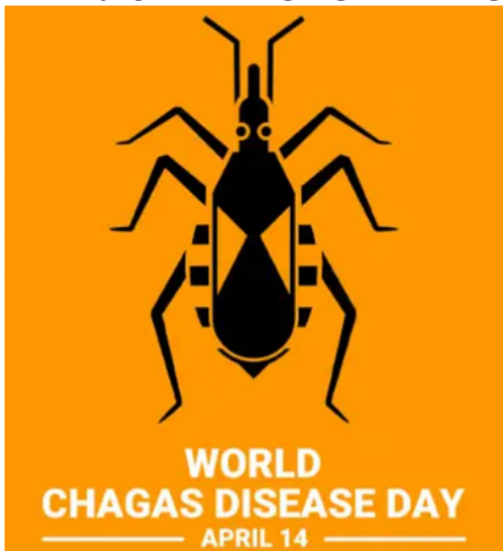
English

Whooping cough, caused by *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria, is a highly contagious respiratory illness. It is named for the characteristic 'whoop' that follows severe coughing fits and is primarily spread through the air via droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. Vaccination for this disease is included under Mission Indradhanush.

Days

1. World Chagas Disease day observed on April 14

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently observed World Chagas Disease Day on April 14th to raise awareness about this often-overlooked illness. Caused by the protozoan parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*, the disease spreads through the bite of triatomine bugs, or 'kissing bugs', but can also be transmitted through blood or organ transplants, or contaminated food and beverages. Despite affecting approximately 6-7 million people globally, many infected individuals exhibit no symptoms or experience only mild flu-like symptoms, making diagnosis challenging.



2. Birth of Kandukuri Veeresalingam celebrated on April 16

The birth anniversary of Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu, considered as the "Father of Telugu Renaissance Movement" was observed on April 16. He was a prominent writer, social reformer from Madras Presidency born on 16th April, 1848. In 1887 he started a Brahma Mandir at Rajahmundry and was conferred with the title of Rao Bahadur by the Government of India in 1893.

3. Siachen Day observed on April 13

Siachen Day, observed on April 13 annually, commemorates 'Operation Meghdoot', launched by the Indian Army in 1984 to secure the strategic Siachen Glacier. Situated in the Karakoram range, the glacier is pivotal yet hostile, with temperatures plunging to -40°C . Originating from the aftermath of partition, the Siachen conflict ensued due to territorial ambiguity. Soldiers face extreme weather and terrain challenges, yet exhibit unparalleled dedication. Siachen Day is celebrated to honor soldiers who bravely serve on the icy Siachen Glacier, defending India's borders, and pay tribute to their courage and sacrifices.

4. World Quantum Day observed on April 14

India celebrates World Quantum Day 2024, aiming to be a leader in Quantum Science and Technology. To promote public awareness, World Quantum Day was established in 2022. National Quantum Mission (NQM), approved in 2023, aims to invest in research and development to make India a leader in Quantum Technology. The mission, under the Department of Science & Technology's (DST) guidance, will establish four hubs focusing on Quantum Computing, Communication, Sensing, and Materials.



5. BR Ambedkar Jayanti observed on April 14

Ambedkar Jayanti, celebrated annually on April 14th in honour of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, commemorates his pivotal role in shaping modern India. Born into the marginalized Mahar caste in 1891, he emerged as a fierce advocate for Dalit rights and the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. As chairman of the Drafting Committee, he championed equality and social reform. Dr. Ambedkar's autobiography, 'Waiting For A Visa', documents his struggles against social injustices.

Sports

1. Former England Cricketer Raman Subba Row dead at 92

England's oldest living Men's Test Cricketer Raman Subba Row dies at 92. He aged his first class cricket for Cambridge University and then joined the Surrey side that won seven successive County championships. He served as Chairman of the test and county cricket board from 1985-90.



2. AFI disaffiliated 16 district associations

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) Recently disaffiliated 16 district associations across the country for failing to send teams for National Inter-district junior athletics meet. The meet was held in Ahmedabad. AFI is a governing body which came into existence in 1946.

3. Para Archer Sheetal claim Silver at Khelo India National Meet

17-year-old Indian archer Sheetal Devi, a Paralympics gold medalist and born without arms, won a silver medal at the Khelo India archery meet. She competed against able-bodied archers, including the eventual winner Ekta Rani, a junior world champion. Sheetal believes this experience will help prepare her for future international competitions, including the Paralympics.

4. Pat Cummins and Nat-Sciver Brunt named Wisden leading cricketer in the World

Australia's World Cup winning captain Pat Cummins and England's women Cricketer Nat Sciver-Brunt named as the Leading Cricketers in the World in 2024 edition of Wisden Cricketers Almanack. Nat Sciver was recognised for her outstanding performance in 2023.



5. Stefano Tsitsipas won Monte Carlo Masters for third time

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The 12th ranked Greek, Stefano Tsitsipas won Monte Carlo Masters for third time beating Casper Ruud with a scoreline of 6-1, 6-4. He won the title in 2021 and 2022. Tsitsipas will return to Top 10 in the ATP world rankings after the title win.

6. Alex Pereira retains Light Heavyweight title at UFC 300

UFC 300 saw Alex Pereira retain his light heavyweight title. Pereira defeated Jamahal Hill with a knockout in the first round. Other notable matches included Zhang Weili retaining her women's strawweight championship and Max Holloway knocking out Justin Gaethje in the BMF title fight.

7. Dipendra Singh Airee becomes third player to hit six sixes in an over in T20

Dipendra Singh Airee of Nepal made history by hitting six sixes in an over in a T20I match against Qatar during the ACC Men's Premier Cup in Oman. Airee became only the third player to achieve this feat after Yuvraj Singh and Kieron Pollard.



Person In News

1. Trump becomes first Former US president to face criminal trials

The former President of the United States of America Donald Trump becomes the first former President in the history of the United States to face criminal trial. The trial is related to payment of USD 130,000 to former adult movie star Stormy Daniels in the final weeks of the Presidential campaign in 2016. The trial is nicknamed the "Hush Money Payment Case".

2. Salman Rushdie released much awaited Memoir KNIFE

The acclaimed British author Salman Rushdie recently released a memoir named "KNIFE" recounting the harrowing experience of being stabbed at a public event in 2022. The incident took place at an art exhibition in New York resulting in severe injuries including blindness in one eye. The memoir consisting of 200 pages provides insights into Rushdie's thoughts and reflection following the attack.



3. FSIB selects SIDBI head and NHB MD

Manoj Mittal and Sanjay Shukhla have been nominated as the Chairman and Managing Director of SIDBI and National Housing Bank. The names have been recommended by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB). FSIB is a government body setup under the Department of Financial Services (DFS) with the role for selection of talent for senior positions at

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Financial institutions owned by the government.

Science and tech/space/defence

1. Indian Navy's SPACE

DRDO Chairman Shri Samir Kamat inaugurated a state of the art Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterization and Evaluation (SPACE) at Underwater Acoustic Research Facility in Idukki, Kerala. It will serve as premier testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems used by the Indian Navy. The platform is developed by the Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory of DRDO.

2. INS Talwar seizes 940 kg drugs in Arabian Sea

The INS Talwar as part of an operation led by the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) seized 940 kg of drugs in the Arabian Sea. CMF is a 42 nation Naval partnership based in Bahrain that focuses on defeating terrorism, preventing Piracy, encouraging regional cooperation and promoting a safe maritime environment. The CMF is commanded by a US Navy Vice Admiral.



3. Successfully trials of MPATGM

The Indian Army and DRDO conducted successful trials of the indigenously developed Man Portable Anti Tank Guided Missile Weapon System (MPATGM). The system consists of MPATGM, Target acquisition System, Fire Control Unit and Launcher. The MPATGM system consists of dual mode seeker functionality, top attack quality for day and night both. The trials were conducted at Pokhran Field Firing Range,

Rajasthan.

4. Joint Military exercise DUSTLIK

The 5th edition of Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK is to take place between India and Uzbekistan from 15th April to 28th April 2024 at Termez, Republic of Uzbekistan. It is an annual exercise conducted alternately between India and Uzbekistan with its last edition taking place at Pithoragarh, India. The aim is to foster Military cooperation and execute Joint operations in mountainous and semi urban terrain.

5. 40 years of Operation Meghdoot

Operation Meghdoot, launched on 13th April 1984, was India's military operation to secure Siachen Glacier from Pakistan. Pakistan's attempts to assert control over Siachen prompted India to take preemptive action. The Indian Air Force played a key role by airlifting troops and supplies to the glacier. Even today, the IAF continues to support the Indian Army in this harsh environment, making it the world's highest battlefield.

6. BepiColombo detects escaping Oxygen and Carbon in Venus's magnetosphere

A recent flyby of Venus by the ESA/JAXA BepiColombo mission detected escaping oxygen and carbon ions from Venus' atmosphere for the first time. The study revealed the acceleration of carbon and oxygen ions to speeds allowing them to escape Venus's gravitational pull. This finding helps us understand how Venus lost its water over time and sets the stage for future missions to comprehensively study the planet. BepiColombo is a joint mission by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to study Mercury.

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7. Queqiao-2 satellite launched by CNSA

China launched a successful lunar communications relay satellite named Queqiao-2, nicknamed 'the main switch'. This satellite bridges communication between Earth and missions on the far side of the moon, which is invisible from Earth. Queqiao-2 will support upcoming missions like Chang'e-6, aiming to retrieve lunar samples for the first time from the moon's hidden side. The satellite is expected to function until at least 2030 and potentially support international lunar exploration efforts.

8. Science Based Target Initiatives (SBTi)

The Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) is a key standards-setting body for corporate climate targets, supported by influential organizations like CDP, the UN Global Compact, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the World Resources Institute. It guides businesses in setting greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, known as Science Based Targets (SBTs).

Health/Agriculture/Environment

1. 3000 year old herb Ashwagandha gaining popularity worldwide

The 3000 year old herb Ashwagandha also known as Indian Ginseng or Indian Winter Cherry is gaining popularity in India as well as globally. It is an Evergreen shrub native to India, Northern Africa and Middle East. Its scientific name is Withania Somnifera and it belongs to the Solanaceae or nightshade family. It has been used as a medicinal plant for thousands of years in Ayurveda.

2. Man suffering from B-virus in Hong Kong

Recently an old man in Hong Kong was suffering from infection with B Virus after he was wounded

by a wild monkey. B Virus is an Alphaherpesvirus enzootic in macaques of the genus Macaca which is also known as Herpes B Virus or Macacine Herpesvirus (McHV-1). The virus is asymptomatic in monkeys but can cause severe neurological complications in humans. The virus has no cure in the form of Vaccine.

3. Leaf Litter frog emits Ultrasounds

The scientists have recently found out that the tiny Leaf litter frog endemic to Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest emits Ultrasounds. The emitted Ultrasounds are inaudible to humans but can scare off predators. Leaf litter Frog is the most abundant species of frog in the forest community which utilises high frequency screams as a survival strategy. Its IUCN status is of least Concern.



4. Veeranam Lake dries up

Chennai's main drinking water source, the Veeranam Lake dries up. As per the data by Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), the water storage in Veeranam lake was recorded at zero million cubic feet. The lake is located in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu and it is considered as one of the longest man made lakes in the world with a length of 14km.

5. IMD predicts above Normal Monsoon in 2024 with 106% of LPA

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) predicts an "above normal" monsoon season

with 106% of the long-period average rainfall. This is a welcome change after below-average rains in 2023. The forecast is based on expected weather patterns, including a shift from El Nino to La Nina during monsoon months. A good monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture and economy, as it provides most of the country's rains.

6. Bumblebees resistant to Pesticide

A new study, at the University of Würzburg, showed that bumblebees may be more resistant to individual pesticides and even mixtures than previously thought. Researchers exposed bumblebees to insecticides, fungicides, and combinations of both, finding no impact on their learning or flight activity. This contrasts with widespread concerns over declining wild bee populations due to pesticide exposure.

7. Lake Kariba suffers drought condition due to El Nino

Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe is at critically low water levels due to the El Nino drought. This has caused a disaster for people and wildlife in the area. The dwindling water impacts survival as fishing declines, leading to conflicts with crocodiles. Human-wildlife conflicts escalate as animals seek water near settlements, exacerbating poaching and disrupting tourism. El Nino is a climate phenomenon characterised by unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, leading to global weather disruptions like droughts and floods.



8. Dholes suffer severe exfoliating mixed skin infections

Asiatic Wild dogs or Dholes have suffered severe exfoliating mixed skin infections in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR). It is an alarming fungal and bacterial infection that can spread to other species including Tiger and leopards. The MTR is located at a trijunction of three states namely Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and it is a part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The Moyar River flows along the Tiger Reserve. The IUCN status of Dholes is Endangered.

9. New species Impatiens neo-uncinata discovered

Researchers have discovered a new species of garden balsam named Impatiens neo-uncinata from Southern Western Ghats of Kerala. The Scientific name of the species is Balsaminaceae and it belongs to section Scorpioidae. The species is classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List. It is a herb that grows upto 20 cm in open areas of Evergreen forests and wetlands.



10. Global Forest Watch monitoring project

As per the latest data from Global Forest Watch monitoring project, India has lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000. The Global Forest Watch tracks forest changes using satellite data and other sources. The data revealed that between 2001 and 2022, forests in

India emitted 51 million tons of Co2 and removed 141 million tons of CO2. Global Forest Watch is a Washington based nonprofit organisation- the World Resources Institute (WRI).

11. Pahariya tribe aims to achieve Seed Independence

The Pahariya Tribe of Jharkhand aims to achieve seed independence by depositing native varieties of seeds in community led banks. The Tribe practises Jhum or Shifting Cultivation and is native to the states of Jharkhand and West Bengal. The Tribe speak their own language Pahariya at home and are influenced by Havli and Chharisgarhi.

12. Shifts in river threatening Food Security in India

The Flow of the Jadhral river is being disrupted by harsh realities of Climate change leading to food security in Assam. The Jadhral river has been a lifeline for generations sustaining communities and nurturing Livelihoods. The Jadhral river is a northern tributary of Brahmaputra river and it originates in the sub-himalayan mountains of Arunachal Pradesh at an altitude of 1247m.

13. Plastic Overshoot Day Report 2024

Similar to Earth Overshoot Day, Plastic Overshoot Day, released by EA Earth Action, highlights our unsustainable plastic use. It marks the date when plastic waste generation surpasses the Earth's capacity to manage it. This creates environmental problems like wildlife harm, ecosystem disruption, and potential human health risks. To combat this crisis, solutions include reducing single-use plastics, improving recycling, stricter policies, and public awareness. India, despite having low per capita plastic use, is among the top twelve polluters due to its high

overall waste generation.

14. Worst Coral bleaching in Great barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is experiencing its worst coral bleaching event in years, likely exceeding the devastation of 2016. Record-breaking marine heatwaves are causing extensive bleaching, even impacting previously resistant coral species in deeper reef areas. Coral bleaching occurs when corals expel symbiotic algae due to stress, turning white. Prolonged stress can lead to coral death. Rising sea temperatures and other environmental factors exacerbate bleaching events, threatening coral reef ecosystems. This is the fifth major coral bleaching event on the Great Barrier Reef in just the past eight years.



15. Volcanic Vortex Rings

Mount Etna, Europe's largest and most active volcano, has been erupting near-perfect smoke rings. These volcanic vortex rings form when gas rapidly escapes a circular vent. Though rare, they've been documented since the 1700s. Located in Sicily, Italy Etna seems particularly prone to this phenomenon, likely due to its vent shapes and gas dynamics. While these rings are fascinating, they don't indicate an imminent major eruption.