




22 March 2024

National and International News

<p>Study Finds Spring Season 'Disappearing' in Many Indian States</p> <p>Meteorological Factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meteorologists attribute warming in southern India and reduced rainfall in the north during winter to changes in Western Disturbances and the jet stream pattern. <p>Implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern India may experience abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures to warmer conditions in March. • Rajasthan showed the largest jump in warming rates from January to February (2.6°C higher). • Nine States and territories, including Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, showed a significant January-February temperature difference, contributing to the disappearance of spring-like conditions. 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Trends agency analyzed meteorological records from 1970 to present for 33 Indian States and Union Territories. <p>Key observations:</p> <p>Warming Trends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All regions experienced net warming during winter. • Manipur had the largest change in temperature since 1970 (2.3°C), while Delhi had the smallest (0.2°C). • Winter is the fastest warming season for 12 out of 34 regions analyzed. <p>Regional Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern regions experienced strong warming in December and January. • Northern regions had weaker warming and even cooling during December and January. • All regions warmed in February, with Jammu and Kashmir experiencing the highest warming (3.1°C) and Telangana the lowest (0.4°C). <p>About Jet Streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition: Western disturbances refer to extratropical storm systems that originate in the Mediterranean region and move eastwards across the Middle East and into the Indian subcontinent. • Impact on Weather: These disturbances bring precipitation, primarily in the form of rain or snow, to various parts of the Indian subcontinent, especially the northern and western regions, during the winter months. • Winter Precipitation: In India, western disturbances are crucial for bringing winter rainfall to regions like northwest India, including Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and parts of Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. • Temperature Regulation: They often lead to a decrease in temperature, bringing relief from
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	<p>winter dryness and contributing to agricultural activities by replenishing soil moisture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jet Stream Connection: Western disturbances are closely associated with changes in the polar jet stream, influencing their intensity and trajectory across the Indian subcontinent.
<p>Ramgarh Crater as Geo-Heritage Sites</p> 	<p>Context: Situated in Baran district, Rajasthan, Ramgarh Crater is designated as a geo-heritage site by the Rajasthan government.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed approximately 165 million years ago due to a meteor impact, it is a 3-kilometer diameter crater contributing significantly to the region's ecological balance and biodiversity. • Recognized as the Ramgarh Conservation Reserve, it is safeguarded under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, to preserve its unique ecological and cultural heritage. • The presence of the Pushkar Talab complex within the crater is acknowledged as wetlands under the Wetland (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017. <p>Geo-Heritage Site/National Geological Monuments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoheritage sites have significant scientific, educational, cultural, or aesthetic value due to their geological features. • They often showcase unique rock formations, fossils, or landscapes crucial for education, research, cultural significance, or visual appeal. • The Geological Survey of India (GSI) and State governments safeguard these sites, declaring them as geo-heritage sites/national geological monuments. • Established in 1851, GSI operates under the Ministry of Mines, headquartered in Kolkata, focusing on national geoscientific information creation and mineral resource assessment.
<p>Lianas</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lianas, woody vines that climb trees, restrict tree growth by competing for sunlight in the canopy. • They have lower carbon sequestering capacity compared to trees, which increases the threat to carbon storage.



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- Lianas can accelerate global warming by reducing forests' efficacy as carbon sinks and disrupting carbon cycles.

Challenges:

- Lianas grow in disturbed forests and at higher temperatures, often outcompeting trees for sunshine and resources.
- Their resilience to climatic stress gives them a competitive advantage, especially in areas with more extreme conditions due to global warming.
- Increased lianas can harm tree growth, reduce regeneration, and disrupt nutrient cycles, making forests less resilient to future disturbances.

International Partnership for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy (IPHE)



International Partnership for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy

Context:



India hosts 41st IPHE meeting, focusing on accelerating the hydrogen economy.

Key points:

- Established in 2003, the IPHE is an inter-governmental alliance currently comprising 23 member countries and the European Commission.
- Its primary objective is to facilitate and expedite the transition to clean and efficient energy and mobility systems utilizing hydrogen and fuel cell technologies.
- The IPHE serves as a platform for organizing and executing international research, development, demonstration, and commercial utilization activities related to hydrogen and fuel cells.
- Moreover, the IPHE informs various stakeholders, such as policymakers and the public, about the benefits and challenges associated with establishing widespread commercial hydrogen and fuel cell technologies.
- **Members:** Australia, Canada, European Commission, India, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Chile, France, Italy, Norway, UAE, Belgium, China, Germany, Japan, South Africa, United Kingdom, Brazil, Costa Rica, Iceland, South Korea, Singapore, and the United States.



Kerala Regional News

<p>World Water Day</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Water Day is an annual United Nations observance day held on 22 March It highlights the importance of freshwater and advocates for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first World Water Day was celebrated in 1993 The theme for the first World Water Day in 1993 was 'Water for Life.' <p>Theme 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year's theme is "Water for Peace." It highlights the potential of water as a resource for cooperation and stability. By managing water resources sustainably and ensuring equitable access, we can foster peace and prosperity for all. <p>SDG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean water and sanitation is SDG 6 out of 17 SDGs
<p>House sparrow population plunges in Thiruvananthapuram</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recent survey by the Travancore Nature History Society (TNHS) revealed a worrying decline in the house sparrow population of Thiruvananthapuram city and its suburbs. The prime culprits are believed to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat Loss: Modern buildings offer fewer nesting spots compared to traditional houses. Food Scarcity: Sparrows struggle to find food due to lesser availability of insects and seeds. Extreme Temperatures: The oppressive summer heat might be driving sparrows away from their usual habitats.
<p>Amballur scores big in streamlining collection of non-biodegradable waste</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amballur Panchayat in Ernakulam district, Kerala, has made significant progress in managing waste disposal. They've achieved complete coverage in doorstep collection of non-biodegradable



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	<p>waste through volunteers of the Haritha Karma Sena program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This initiative ensures convenient waste collection from both households and businesses. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haritha Karma Sena (HKS) is a program by the Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala, aiming to create a clean and green state. Launched in 2013, it tackles waste management through a network of Green Technicians and Supervisors, mostly Kudumbashree women.
<p>Aksharasree certificates distributed in Thiruvananthapuram</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a ceremony, Aksharasree certificates were awarded to 299 learners in Thiruvananthapuram. This program targets adult literacy. The oldest learners were Lily (68) and Sahayadas (72) from Government Higher Secondary School for Girls, Cotton Hill. Tributius Antony and Ambili D'Cruz from Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Chala were also felicitated
<p>Kerala Financial Corporation raises Rs 307 crore through NCDs</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kerala Financial Corporation (KFC) successfully raised Rs 307 crore by issuing Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) on March 13, 2024. These 10-year bonds were offered through the BSE Electronic Book Platform at an attractive coupon rate of 8.89%. This strong credit rating (AA by RBI/SEBI) allowed KFC to secure funds at a better rate than many public sector banks in the current scenario. The funds raised will be used to support projects that promote the state's MSME sector. KFC also plans to raise nearly Rs 700 crore more from the bond market in the coming year.

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