



10 September 2024

National and International News

BepiColombo



Context:

- The spacecraft made its closest approach to **Mercury**, sending back detailed images of the **planet's cratered surface**, particularly its **south pole**.

Overview:

- **BepiColombo**: A joint mission between the **European Space Agency (ESA)** and **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)**, launched in **2018**.
- **Purpose**: To study Mercury, the least explored rocky planet in the solar system, by orbiting and examining its surface, geology, and magnetic field.

Insights:

- **Key Craters Captured**: Craters like **Vivaldi** and **Stoddart** were observed, helping scientists analyze Mercury's geological features and potential ancient volcanic activity.

Curcuma



Context:

- Researchers have identified a **new species within the Curcuma genus**, commonly known as **turmeric**, during a field trip in **Nagaland**.
- This discovery occurred in Ungma village, Mokokchung district. The new species has been named **Curcuma ungmensis**.

Key points:

- Belongs to the **Zingiberaceae family** and the **Curcuma genus**.
- **Physical Description**:The plant grows to a height of 65-90 cm and features prominent yellow flowers.
- **Rhizome Characteristics**:The species is a rhizomatous herb with a branched, deeply buried rhizome.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flowering Season:Flowers during the rainy season, from August to October, with blooms that last a single day. <p>Potential Uses and Conservation:</p> <p>Garden Potential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curcuma ungmensis could be used as an ornamental plant for ground cover and as a cut flower due to its attractive inflorescence.
<p>Valley Fever</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Valley fever, a fungal disease endemic to the western United States, is experiencing a significant rise in cases across California. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Valley fever is caused by inhaling spores from the Coccidioides fungus found in the soil. ● It often presents with flu-like symptoms but can lead to severe complications if untreated. <p>Impact of Drought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drought conditions may affect seasonal patterns, with less severe peaks during droughts. ● Peaks intensify when rains return, possibly due to the persistence of heat-resistant spores.
<p>Sugamya Bharat App</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since its launch in 2021, the Sugamya Bharat app, created to aid people with disabilities and the elderly, has received over 1,400 accessibility complaints. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Sugamya Bharat App is a crowdsourcing mobile application launched by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in India. ● The app aims to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities (PwDs) and the elderly by allowing users to report accessibility-related issues in public infrastructure, transportation, and information and communication technology (ICT) environments. <p>Objectives:</p>



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The primary objectives of the Sugamya Bharat App include:

- **Sensitization and Awareness:** To raise awareness about accessibility issues and promote inclusivity in the built environment and public services.
- **Reporting Mechanism:** To provide a platform for individuals to report accessibility concerns, enabling the government to address these issues effectively.
- **Empowerment:** To empower PwDs and the general public to participate in improving accessibility by reporting problems that require redressal.

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