



10 Sep 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.
- **Flowering Season**:Flowers during the rainy season, from August to October, with blooms that last a single day.

Potential Uses and Conservation:



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	<p><b>Garden Potential:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curcuma ungmensis could be used as an ornamental plant for ground cover and as a cut flower due to its attractive <b>inflorescence</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Valley Fever</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valley fever, a fungal disease endemic to the western United States, is experiencing a significant rise in cases across <b>California</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valley fever is caused by inhaling spores from the <b>Coccidioides fungus</b> found in the soil.</li> <li>• It often presents with flu-like symptoms but can lead to severe complications if untreated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact of Drought:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drought conditions may affect seasonal patterns, with less severe peaks during droughts.</li> <li>• Peaks intensify when rains return, possibly due to the persistence of heat-resistant spores.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sugamya Bharat App</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p><b>About:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sugamya Bharat App is a crowdsourcing mobile application launched by the <b>Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment</b> in India.</li> <li>• The app aims to enhance accessibility for <b>persons with disabilities (PwDs)</b> and the elderly by allowing users to report accessibility-related issues in public infrastructure, transportation, and information and communication technology (ICT) environments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>The primary objectives of the Sugamya Bharat App include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sensitization and Awareness:</b> To raise awareness about accessibility issues and promote inclusivity in the built environment and public services.</li> </ul>



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- **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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