



# Daily Current Affairs

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## **Swachh Bharat Mission to celebrate World Toilet Day tomorrow with nationwide activities**

### **Why in news?**

The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) will celebrate the World Toilet Day today with mass awareness and mobilization activities across States and districts.

### **Objective:**

- The focus is on usage of toilets, which is closely linked to the Prime Minister's call for a Swachh Bharat by October 2019.
- The central part of the day's celebrations is the the Swachh Bharat World Toilet Day Contest 2018 among all districts by organizing grassroots activities involving district, block and panchayat level teams, swachhagrahis and swachhata champions.
- To engage with communities and reaffirm the national resolve to a sustain the Sanitation achievement.

### **Achievements:**

- Since the inception of the Swachh Bharat Mission, the rural sanitation coverage of India has increased significantly, from 39% in October 2014 to over 96% today.
- Over 8.8 crore household toilets have been built by rural Indians.
- As a result, 25 States/Union Territories, 530 districts, and over 5.2 lakh villages have declared themselves free from open defecation.
- The number of people practicing open defecation in rural India has gone down from 550 million in 2014, to less than 100 million today through the progress made under the Swachh Bharat Mission.

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## **Qaumi Ekta Week**

### **Why in news?**

With a view to foster and reinforce the spirit of Communal Harmony, National Integration and pride in vibrant, composite culture and nationhood, the “Qaumi Ekta Week” (National Integration Week) will be observed all over the country, from today to 25th November, 2018.

### **Objectives:**

- The observation of the ‘Quami Ekta Week’ will help to highlight the inherent strength and resilience of our nation to withstand actual and potential threats to the eclectic and secular fabric of our country.
- To nurture a spirit of communal harmony in its widest sense.
- To provides an opportunity to reaffirm age old traditions and faith in the values of tolerance, co-existence and brotherhood in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society.

*The National Foundation for Communal Harmony* (NFCH), an autonomous organisation with the Ministry of Home Affairs, organises Communal Harmony Campaign coinciding with the Qaumi Ekta Week and observes the Communal Harmony Flag Day on 25th November.

### **About NFCH**

National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) was set up as an autonomous organisation under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and registered 1992.

### **Objective:**

To provide assistance for the physical and psychological rehabilitation of the child victims of communal, caste, ethnic or terrorist violence, with special reference to their care, education and training besides promoting communal harmony, fraternity and national integration.

### **Governing Council:**

- The Home Minister is ex-officio chairman of the Governing Council of the Foundation.
  - The Governing Council decides broad policies, suggests measures for achieving its objectives and exercises overall supervision over the Foundation.
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### **Pollution in Kolkata worse than Delhi**

#### **Why in news?**

As Indian cities recognised as more polluted cities in the world, Kolkatta has crossed Delhi in terms of air pollution.

#### **Highlights:**

- While pollution in Delhi had hit national headlines immediately after Diwali earlier this month, the air quality in Kolkata has become even worse than the national capital in the past 72 hours.
- The overall PM 2.5 count at Kolkata's Rabindra Bharti University (RBU) on Thursday was 381, compared to 292.25 in Delhi's Ashok Vihar, one of the capital's most polluted localities.
- Kolkatta city has more vehicles which run on diesel than on petrol, which contributes to the deteriorating air quality.

#### **Air Pollution**

- Air pollution may be defined as the presence of any solid, liquid or gaseous substance including noise and radioactive radiation in the atmosphere in such concentration that may be directly and/or indirectly injurious to humans or other living organisms, property or interferes with the normal environmental processes.
- An ever increasing use of fossil fuels in power plants, industries,

transportation, mining, construction of buildings, stone quarries had led to air pollution.

- Fossil fuels contain small amounts of nitrogen and sulphur. Burning of fossil fuels like coal (thermal powerplants) and petroleum (petroleum refineries) release different oxides of nitrogen and sulphur into the atmosphere.
- These gases react with the water vapour present in the atmosphere to form sulphuric acid and nitric acid. The acids drop down with rain, making the rain acidic. This is called acid rain.

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## **World Economic Forum (WEF)**

### **Why in news?**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has launched an initiative called **Shaping the Future of Environment and Natural Resource Security**, an inspiring collaboration that is focused on achieving global economic growth without causing harm to the environment, and preferably improving the state of our global environment.

### **World Economic Forum**

- WEF is Swiss non profit foundation, based in Geneva.
- It is recognized as international institution for public-private cooperation.
- It is committed to improve state of world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.
- WEF is best known for its annual winter meeting for five days in Davos, a mountain resort in Graubünden, in eastern Alps region of Switzerland.

### **Reports published by World Economic Forum**

1. Global Information Technology Report
2. Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report

### 3. Global Competitiveness Report (GCR)

#### **Shaping the Future of Environment and Natural Resource Security:**

The World Economic Forum's System Initiative on Shaping the Future of Environment and Natural Resource Security brings together leading experts and practitioners to provide systems leadership, curate platforms for multi-dimensional cooperation and engage in focused interventions.

The System Initiative aims to:

- Improve the effectiveness of the international community's response to environmental challenges.
- Support public-private action that accelerates the climate action agenda, improves ocean health, realizes deforestation-free supply chains, enables more water-secure economies and helps unlock a trillion-dollar opportunity in the circular economy.
- Explore how Fourth Industrial Revolution innovations can be harnessed to address environmental issues, including redefining what effective global environmental governance looks like.

Responding to these challenges requires breaking down traditional silos and building new forms of cooperation and innovation across the public and private sectors to quickly effect change at scale. The System Initiative offers a platform to support this action.

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#### **Marine Protected Area (MPA)**

##### **Why in news?**

Current marine protected areas (MPAs) leave almost three-quarters of ecologically and functionally important species unprotected, concludes a new performance assessment of the Finnish MPA network. Published in **Frontiers in Marine Science**, the study finds the MPAs were designated with little knowledge of local marine biodiversity -- and that increasing existing networks by just 1% in ecologically most relevant areas could double conservation of the most important species.

## **What is Marine Protected Area (MPA)?**

- Marine Protected Area (MPA) is an umbrella term to describe a wide range of protected areas for marine conservation around the world.
- A global definition specifically for MPAs - as distinct from the general definition of a protected area - was first adopted by the IUCN in 1999.
- The definition was revised in 2012 and the distinction between a marine and terrestrial protected area was removed, aligning the definition of MPAs with the definition of a 'protected area' as "a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values".
- To be included within the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), MPAs must be sites, located in the marine environment, that meet the most recent IUCN protected area definition.

### **Supported by,**

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), along with many regional and national non-governmental organisations, support the idea of MPAs as an effective tool for the conservation of marine biodiversity and important resources.
  - The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 and the 5th World Parks Congress in 2003 called for establishment of a representative global network of marine protected areas by 2012.
  - More recently, the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD in 2008 urged Parties and other Governments to increase the effective protection and management of marine ecosystems.
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