



## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### The Black Sea Grain Deal

The [Group of Seven \(G7\)](#) agriculture ministers have issued an official statement calling for the **extension, full implementation, and expansion of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) deal** that allows Ukraine to export over 27 million Tonnes of grain from its Black Sea ports.

The deal was **brokered by the United Nations and Turkey** in July 2022 but Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022, has signaled that it will **not allow the deal to continue beyond 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023** because its demands to facilitate its own grain and fertilizer exports have not been met.

The G7 ministers strongly disapprove of Russia using food as a way to create problems and force Ukraine to do what they want. They promise to stand with Ukraine and help those who are most affected by Russia's use of food as a weapon. The G7 members have also pledged to provide support for the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine, including expertise in demining agricultural land and reconstruction of agricultural infrastructure.

**Read more:** [Black Sea Grain Initiative \(BSGI\)](#)

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### Basava Jayanthi

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The Prime Minister paid tribute to [Jagadguru Basaveshwara](#) on Basava Jayanthi. It is a festival celebrated in **honor of the philosopher, statesman, social reformer, and saint** in the **Shaivism Bhakti movement** during the **12<sup>th</sup> century**. Basaveshwara is well-known for his teachings of gender equality, social reforms, eradication of social discrimination, clarification of superstitions, and unnecessary rituals.

Basava Jayanthi is celebrated on the **third of the bright half or Shukla paksha** during the **month of Vaisakha** by [Lingayats](#) in the **State of Karnataka**, marking the birth anniversary of Basaveshwara.

Basaveshwara introduced the practice of wearing the **Ishtalinga necklace, which symbolizes Lord Shiva** and is worn by all **Lingayats**. The [Anubhava Mantapa](#) established by Basava laid down the foundation of social democracy.

**Read more:** [Basava Jayanthi](#)

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## Earth Day

Earth Day is **an annual event celebrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> April** to raise awareness about the need to protect our planet and its environment. In 2009, the [United Nations](#) designated **22nd April as 'International Mother Earth Day'**. The **theme for Earth Day 2023 is "Invest in our planet,"** which calls on businesses, investors, financial markets, and governments to lead the way in building a healthier and more equitable global system. The private sector can use its power to promote green innovation and practices, while governments can incentivize citizens, businesses, and institutions to work toward environmental conservation. Individual citizens can also contribute by voting for politics that prioritize the environment and by supporting environmentally conscious businesses.

Earth Day was first observed in **1970 as a response to environmental degradation** caused by issues such as [smog](#), **polluted rivers**, and [oil spills](#). Today, Earth Day is globally coordinated by **EARTHDAY.ORG, a non-profit organization** formerly known as **Earth Day Network**. It aims to build the world's largest environmental movement to drive transformative change for people and the planet.

The **landmark [Paris Agreement](#)**, which aims to reduce global greenhouse emissions, **was signed on Earth Day 2016**, demonstrating the significance of this day in driving meaningful change for our planet.

**Read more:** [Earth Day](#)

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## National Panchayati Raj Day

National Panchayati Raj Day is **observed on 24<sup>th</sup> April every year** to commemorate the **73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment** that came into effect on the same day in 1993, which **accorded [panchayats](#) a constitutional status as the third tier of local self-governance in India**.

Although some states such as Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal had already recognized panchayats as local self-governance institutions, the **73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments made this a pan-India phenomenon**.

Panchayati Raj has been far more successful in giving **women a fair share of representation**, with **one-third of total seats reserved for women at the local level**, and some states providing **50% reservations to women** in elections for the local bodies. This increased representation of women at the local level has various policy outcomes, including increased spending on community-based welfare for women and financial independence for women through self-help groups in many places.

There is significant variation in the degree of fiscal autonomy granted to local government bodies across states, with some having greater devolution of financial powers than others. For instance, **Kerala and Maharashtra are ranked as the best in terms of following devolution, while Odisha and Assam are ranked the lowest among major states**.

**Read more:** [National Panchayati Raj Day](#), [Panchayati Raj Institution \(PRI\)](#)