



Rapid Fire Current Affairs

Iraq Eliminates Trachoma as a Public Health Problem

Recently, Iraq achieved a Milestone in Global Health by **Eliminating Trachoma**, a [neglected tropical disease](#) and the world's leading infectious cause of blindness.

- **Iraq has joined the league of 17 countries** in eliminating trachoma, according to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).
- The WHO has recognized Iraq as the **50th country to eliminate at least one neglected tropical disease**.
- Despite substantial progress, trachoma is still endemic in six countries in the WHO's **Eastern Mediterranean Region**.
- Trachoma starts as a **bacterial infection** caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis* and can lead to blindness if untreated.
- Disease thrives in **areas with water shortages, poor sanitation, and fly infestations**.
- WHO recommends the **SAFE strategy (Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial cleanliness, and Environmental improvement)** to eliminate trachoma.

Read more: [Global Report on Neglected Tropical Diseases](#)

Postal Life Insurance Introduces Direct Incentive Disbursement Program

- **Postal Life Insurance (PLI)** introduces pilot program "**Direct Incentive Disbursement**" in Delhi and Uttarakhand Circles.
- This initiative recognizes the crucial role of its **sales force**, Agents receive their **earned commissions directly in their Post Office Savings Bank (POSB) Accounts**, ensuring swift and secure transactions.
- This streamlined process boosts convenience for agents, **motivating them to deliver optimal performance and strengthen client relationships**.
 - Around two lakh sales force members, including **Gramin Dak Sevaks and Direct Agents, benefit from secure and instantaneous fund transfers**.
- **PLI was introduced in 1884**. It started as a welfare scheme for the benefit of **postal employees**.

Extinction Alert for Vaquita Porpoise

The [International Whaling Commission \(IWC\)](#) has sounded a dire warning regarding the [vaquita porpoise's survival](#), issuing its **first-ever 'extinction alert' on August 7, 2023**.

- With a mere 10 individuals left in the **Gulf of California, Mexico**, the vaquita faces an alarming decline from its population of approximately 570 in 1997.
- Vaquitas are the most [endangered species of porpoise](#). They are known for their **distinctive appearance**, characterized by dark rings around their eyes and dark patches on their lips.
- One of the primary threats to vaquita populations is **bycatch**, where they become **unintentionally trapped in gillnets meant for catching another species called totoaba fish** (its **swim bladders** are prized in Chinese cuisine).

Read more: [Vaquita porpoise](#)

Norseman Xtreme Triathlon

The 2023 edition of the **Norseman Xtreme Triathlon** took place on **August 5th** at [Norway](#) with 290 athletes from 35 countries taking part in the race.

- The Norseman Xtreme Triathlon is one of the most challenging and prestigious endurance events in the world. It is a long-distance triathlon that consists of a **3.8 km swim, a 180 km bike ride, and a 42.2 km run**, with a total elevation gain of 5,230 meters.
- The race starts with a jump from a ferry into the cold waters of the **Hardangerfjord**, and ends at the summit of **Mount Gaustatoppen**, one of the highest peaks in Norway.

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