



Haryana Forest Census | Haryana | 18 Apr 2024

Why in News?

According to the first state-wide tree census there are around **4.1 crore trees outside designated forests in Haryana**, with **neem, shisham, pipal, bargad and eucalyptus** being the most common species.

Key Points

- Approximately 150 surveyors, taxonomists, and technical staff were engaged in the project for a duration of 13 months to assist authorities in making well-informed decisions regarding **green cover management in the state**.
 - It provides **data on the number of trees in each district outside forest areas**. The **highest tree counts** were found in Yamunanagar, Ambala, Sirsa, Bhiwani, and Hisar.
 - Faridabad had the **lowest count**, with Kurukshetra, Palwal, Gurgaon, and Rohtak following suit.
- Covering only 6.7% of its total area, **Haryana has the smallest forest and tree cover in India**. The [National Forest Policy](#) aims for a 20% coverage for each state.
 - Out of 22 districts in Haryana, 21 have less than 20% forest and tree cover.
 - Karnal ranks the lowest with 1.8%, Panchkula tops the list with 47.4%, and Gurgaon stands sixth at 12.9%.
- The state is witnessing a rapid decline in tree cover too, as reported by the [Forest Survey of India](#), with a 140 sq km reduction in the tree cover (excluding forest area) from 2019 to 2020.
 - Forest department officials are planning to enhance conservation efforts using census data.
 - They are advocating that the government earmark at least 25% of panchayat and common lands for plantations, institutions should have 33% of their area under tree cover, and urban local bodies should focus on developing green spaces in cities, drawing inspiration from Hyderabad's initiatives.
 - Emphasizing the importance of high-quality seedlings, officials stressed that using them is crucial for ensuring the survival and growth of trees.

National Forest Policy

- India's forests are currently governed by the **National Forest Policy, 1988**
- It has environmental balance and livelihood at its centre.
- **Salient Features and Goals:**
 - Maintenance of environmental stability through preservation and restoration of ecological balance.
 - Conservation of Natural Heritage (existing).
 - Checking Soil Erosion and Denudation in catchment areas of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs.
 - Checking extension of sand dunes in desert areas of Rajasthan and along coastal tracts.
 - Substantially increasing Forest/Tree Cover through Afforestation and Social Forestry.
 - Taking steps to meet requirements of fuel, wood, fodder, minor forest produces, soil and timber of Rural and Tribal Population.
 - Increasing the productivity of Forests to meet National Needs.
 - Encouraging efficient utilization of Forest Produce and Optimum Use of Wood (Timber).
 - Generation of Work Opportunities, the involvement of Women.

Forest Survey of India

- The **Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun** has been conducting **biennial (once every two years)** assessments of **forest cover since 1987**, and the findings are published in the **India State of Forest Report (ISFR)**.
 - As per the latest assessment in **ISFR 2021**, India's total forest and tree cover stands at **8,09,537 square kilometers, which accounts for 24.62%** of the country's geographical area.
 - Notably, this represents an **increase of 2261 square kilometers compared to the ISFR 2019 assessment**, indicating positive strides in forest conservation efforts.
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Athletics Federation of India (AFI) | Haryana | 18 Apr 2024

Why in News?

The [Athletics Federation of India](#) has **disaffiliated 16 district associations** across the country for failing to send teams for the **National inter-district junior athletics meet held in Ahmedabad**.

Key Points

- The disaffiliated districts (with name of State/UT association) are **Panchkula** (Haryana), Budgam, Ramban & Shopian (all J&K), Lohardaga (Jhkd), Kalpeni (Lakshadweep), East Jaintia Hills, East Khasi Hills & Ri-Bhoi (all Meghalaya), Harda & Neemuch (both MP), Ferozpur & Fazilka (both Punjab), Jhalawar (Raj), Krishnagiri (TN), Purba Medinipur (WB).
- As per the AFI constitution, the **suspended districts will be removed and fresh associations will be formed**.
 - The State associations have been asked to take appropriate action, in consultation with the AFI, and form the new district units.

Athletics Federation of India (AFI)

- It is the apex body for running and managing athletics in India.
 - It is a non-governmental and non-profitable autonomous body.
 - It is affiliated to the World Athletics, the **Asian Athletics Association (AAA)**, and the [Indian Olympic Association](#).
 - It was formerly called the Amateur Athletic Federation of India (AAFI).
 - The AFI has as many as **32** affiliated state units and institutional units.
 - It came into **existence in 1946**, and the federation organises the National Championships, **trains the Indian Athletics National Campers**, selects the Indian Athletics Teams for various international competitions, including the **Olympics, Asian Games, CWG, World Championships, Asian Championships**, and other international meets, conducts the National Championships for various age categories.
 - The AFI conducts **international and national championships** and various meets to promote the sport, popularise it amongst the masses, and make athletics commercially attractive for the further growth of the athlete and the sport.
 - The federation also **supervises and assists its state units** in their activities, plans and **sets up special coaching camps, coaches training**, and takes initiatives for development programmes and **grass root promotion of athletics in India**.
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Uttar Pradesh Leads India in GI Tags | Uttar Pradesh | 18 Apr 2024

Why in News?

With six new additions, **Uttar Pradesh** retains its position as the state with the most [GI-tagged products in India](#), reaching a total of **75**.

Key Points

- This comprises the renowned '**Tirangi Barfi**' from **Kashi**, a tri coloured sweet that was traded to make a statement by **freedom fighters** in the [Quit India Movement](#).
- The other products that received the certification in Uttar Pradesh include **Banaras Metal Casting Craft, Lakhimpur Kheri Tharu Embroidery, Bareilly Cane and Bamboo Craft, Bareilly Zardozi Craft, and Pilkhuwa Hand Block Print Textile**.
 - With the inclusion of these six new items, Uttar Pradesh remains the leading state in India with the highest number of GI-tagged products.
 - **Tamil Nadu comes next with 58 GI products.**

Geographical Indication (GI) tag

- **About:**
 - A GI tag is a **name or sign used on certain products** that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
 - The GI tag ensures that only the **authorised users or those residing in the geographical territory** are allowed to use the popular product name.
 - It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
 - A registered GI is valid for 10 years.
 - GI registration is overseen by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Legal Framework and Obligations:**
 - The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
 - It is governed and directed by the **WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)**.
 - Furthermore, the significance of protecting industrial property and geographical indications **as integral components of intellectual property** is acknowledged and emphasised in Articles 1(2) and 10 of the Paris Convention.

Surya Tilak Project at Ayodhya | Uttar Pradesh | 18 Apr 2024

Why in News?

[Indian Institute of Astrophysics \(IIA\)](#), an Autonomous body under the Department of science and Technology played a crucial role in the **Surya Tilak Project at Ayodhya**.

Key Points

- Under the Surya Tilak project, **sunlight was brought on the forehead of [Sri Ram Lalla](#) at 12 noon** on the occasion of [Sri Ram Navami](#) in the Chaitra month.
- IIA team carried out the **calculation of the sun position, design and optimisation of the optical system**, and performed the integration & alignment at the site.
 - The IIA team led the calculation for identification of the calendar days of Sri Ram Navami for **one cycle of 19 years** followed by its repetition, estimation of the position in the sky on the calendar dates of the Ram Navami.
 - They also led the design of an **opto-mechanical system** to bring the sunlight from the top of the temple to the forehead of the idol, **estimation of the size, shape and location of mirrors and lenses** in the system for sufficient light to fall on the idol for about 6 minutes.
- The **device has been manufactured by Optica, Bangalore & implementation** of the opto-mechanical system at the site is being done by [CSIR-CBRI \(Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Central Building Research Institute\)](#).

Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)

- The IIA is a premier research institute in India dedicated to the study of astronomy, astrophysics, and related fields. Wholly financed by the **Department of Science and Technology, Government of India**.
- It has several **observational facilities**, including the **Vainu Bappu Observatory** in Kavalur, Tamil Nadu, the **Gauribidanur Radio Observatory** in Karnataka, and the [Hanle Observatory](#) in Ladakh, Jammu, and Kashmir.

Ashwagandha | Madhya Pradesh | 18 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Ashwagandha is growing in popularity, both in India and abroad. It is an **evergreen shrub found in parts of India, Africa, and the Middle East**.

Key Points

- **Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)** is a medicinal herb. It is reputed as an immunity enhancer.
- It is classified as **an adaptogen**, which means that it can **help the body to manage stress**.
- Ashwagandha also boosts brain function and lowers blood sugar and helps fight symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Ashwagandha has shown clinical success in **treating both acute and chronic [rheumatoid arthritis](#)**.
 - **Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)** is an autoimmune disease that can **cause joint pain and damage throughout your body**.
 - An autoimmune disease is a condition in which your immune system mistakenly attacks your body.
- Being **hardy and drought tolerant** species with its enormous **biocompounds**, its usage is forever regarded and continues to enjoy the monopoly in many parts of India, particularly in **Madhya Pradesh**.
 - It grows in **dry parts in sub-tropical regions**. Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar

Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are the **major Ashwagandha producing states** of the country.

- In Madhya Pradesh it is cultivated in more than 5000 hectares.
- The estimated production of Ashwagandha roots in India is more than 1500 tonnes and the annual requirement is about 7000 tonnes necessitating the increase in its cultivation and higher production.



Rebuilding a Hydropower Project in Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand | 18 Apr 2024

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has started the process of granting environmental clearance to **rebuild a hydropower project** in the upper reaches of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand that was almost completely **washed away during the 2013 flash floods** that killed over 6,000 people.

Key Points

- The ministry's expert appraisal committee for river valley and hydroelectric projects approved the grant of terms of reference (ToR) to the [Phata Byung Hydroelectric Project](#) (76 MW).
- The Phata Byung project aggravated the damage caused by the **2013** cloudburst and flash floods by constricting the flow of **the Mandakini river**.

The Mandakini River

- It is a tributary of the **Alaknanda River** in Uttarakhand.
- The river runs for approximately 81 kilometers between the **Rudraprayag and Sonprayag** areas and emerges from the **Chorabari Glacier**.
- The Mandakini merges with river Songanga at Sonprayag and **flows past the Madhyamaheshwar temple at Ukhimath**.
- At the end of its course it drains into the Alaknanda, which flows into the **Ganges**.

