

06th August 2024

IndOBIS

On 3rd September 2024, the Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE), an attached office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, conducted a first national-level workshop on the Indian Ocean Biodiversity Information System (IndOBIS) at its Kochi campus.

About the workshop

- ❖ The workshop brought together scientists and researchers from various institutions across the country.
- ❖ The workshop helped raise awareness about marine biodiversity data documentation and publishing among the participants.

About IndOBIS

- ❖ IndOBIS is the Indian regional node of the global Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS).
- ❖ OBIS is one of the largest global repositories of information on marine species, containing millions of records from thousands of datasets contributed by researchers, governments, and organisations worldwide.
- ❖ It provides detailed information on species distribution across the world's oceans, including data on their occurrence, habitats, and environmental parameters.
- ❖ It offers tools and services that allow users to search, visualise, and download biodiversity data.
- ❖ It has been set up by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO for promoting marine science, conservation, and sustainable development. It is now an integral component of the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) of IOC.

The IndOBIS is the only Indian regional node of OBIS, which has been developed, facilitated, and is being run by CMLRE. It accepts several categories of marine biodiversity data types, including literature and occurrence, abundance records, DNA-derived or genomic profiles, etc.

CMLRE is a premier research institution under the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Established in 1998.

It is dedicated to studying and sustainably managing marine living resources in India. CMLRE maintains voucher (preserved) specimens of deep-sea biodiversity as part of the IndOBIS objectives.

President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

India celebrates Teachers' Day annually on September 5, the birth anniversary of former President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975).



S Radhakrishnan: A Philosopher of Hinduism

- ❖ *One of India's most recognised and influential thinkers of the 20th century, Radhakrishnan's life and work was dedicated to defining, defending, and disseminating the Hindu religion. He is seen in philosophy circles as a bridge-builder between India and the West, and credited for his role in shaping the West's understanding of Hinduism.*
- ❖ *Radhakrishnan was among the foremost proponents of the **non-dualist Advaita Vedanta** tradition in the 20th century, and re-interpreted Adi Shankara's philosophy for modern times. In doing so, he defended Hinduism against what he said was "uninformed Western criticism".*

Respected teacher

- ❖ By the 1920s, Radhakrishnan had established himself as one of India's most respected academics. He held the prestigious King George V Chair at the Calcutta University from 1921 to 1932, was the second vice-chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936, and the fourth vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University from 1939 to 1948.
- ❖ He also held the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religion and Ethics at University of Oxford from 1936 to 1952. Radhakrishnan was knighted in 1931.

Why is 5th September celebrated as Teachers Day?

- ❖ He became the first Vice President (1952-62), and the second President of India (1962-67). In 1962, after he became president, some old students expressed their wish to celebrate his birthday.
- ❖ Radhakrishnan refused a personal celebration, and instead requested his students to honour teachers across the country on his birth anniversary. Thus began the tradition of celebrating Teachers' Day on September 5

Genome Mapping of Chandipura virus

The Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) in Gandhinagar has published the only fully mapped genome of the Chandipura Vesiculovirus (CHPV).

What is the Chandipura virus?

- ❖ Chandipura is a viral infection that can lead to outbreaks of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) or brain swelling.
- ❖ **Symptoms:** It is known to cause fever, headache, and encephalitis leading to convulsions, coma, and death, usually within a few days of the symptoms showing up. The disease's rapid progression is one of its defining features.
- ❖ **Transmission:** It was first isolated in Maharashtra in 1965, the Chandipura virus most severely affects children below the age of 15. It can be transmitted by sandflies, ticks, as well as the Aedes aegypti mosquito which also transmits infections such as dengue and chikungunya. Sandflies were responsible for spreading the virus during the current outbreak, researchers found.

- ❖ **Mortality rate:** With no specific treatment, mortality due to the virus can be as high as 56 to 75 per cent, as seen in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat in 2003 during India's worst ever Chandipura outbreak that killed 322 children.

What is Genome Mapping?

- ❖ Genome mapping refers to the process of determining the location of genes on an organism's chromosomes.
- ❖ Genome mapping provides important clues on where a virus comes from, how it is changing, and whether it has any mutations that are likely to make it more transmissible or deadly. Sequencing viral genomes helps researchers keep an eye on viruses that may lead to outbreaks in the future.

Project Strawberry

OpenAI the world's premier artificial intelligence research organisation is to release its project codenamed Project Strawberry.

Key Points

- ❖ It is likely to release its most powerful AI model this fall (September–November).
- ❖ Initially it was known as Project Q (Q-star).
- ❖ It is expected to feature autonomous Internet research and dramatically improve AI reasoning capabilities, and has been billed as OpenAI's push to create Artificial General Intelligence with capabilities similar to that of the human brain.

International Solar Festival

The first International Solar Festival was held in New Delhi.

Key Points

- ❖ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) hosted the first International Solar Festival in New Delhi on September 5–6, 2024.

- ❖ Four core themes of the festival were: the role of youth, communities, women, and the private sector.
- ❖ Businesses, academia, youth and community leaders, among others shared knowledge, fostered innovation, and built international cooperation towards building a solar-powered future.

International Solar Alliance

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a global intergovernmental organization dedicated to advancing solar power adoption for a carbon-neutral future.

ISA's mission is to unlock investments in solar while reducing the cost of technology and its financing.

ISA is one of the first multilateral intergovernmental organization to be headquartered in India and is collaborating with multilateral organizations, public and private sectors, and civil society to deploy cost-effective and transformational solar solutions, particularly in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Species In News

Phrynarachne decipiens



- ❖ Assam has added a species of spider whose web mimics a bird's excrement to India's list of arachnids.
- ❖ The *Phrynarachne decipiens*, better known as the bird dung or bird-dropping crab spider, was known to be distributed in Malaysia and Indonesia's Java and Sumatra.
- ❖ It has been recorded for the first time in the country from Assam's Sonapur in the Kamrup (Metropolitan) district and the Chirang Reserve Forest in the Kokrajhar district.

Military Exercises in News

Exercise Varuna	Indian & French Navy bilateral naval exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ P81 aircraft of the Indian Navy participated in 'Exercise Varuna' with the French Navy. ❖ The 2024 edition of Indo-French bilateral naval 'Exercise Varuna' was scheduled from September 2 to 4 in the Mediterranean Sea. ❖ Background: Indian & French Navy bilateral naval exercise was initiated in 1993. The exercise was later christened as 'Varuna' in 2001 and has since become a hallmark of robust India-France strategic bilateral relationship.
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Important News- Other States

Gujarat	<p>The Ministry of Jal Shakti, in collaboration with the Gujarat state Government, is launching the "Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari" initiative in Gujarat. Under this programme approximately 24,800 rainwater harvesting structures across the State are being constructed with community partnership. These recharge structures will be instrumental in enhancing rainwater harvesting and ensuring long-term water sustainability.</p>
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