

## GLOBAL WARMING THREATENS LAKSHADWEEP CORALS

The hard corals of Porites species, found in abundance in the blue-water lagoons of the picturesque Lakshadweep islands, are facing a threat to their existence.

Global warming caused by high CO<sub>2</sub> levels has retarded the growth of these corals, leading to fears that they might eventually disappear.

Around 25 per cent decrease in the growth rate (calcification rate) of two hard corals was observed between 1993 and 2003 in studies conducted along the lagoon of Kavaratti Island, by scientists of the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) Hyderabad.

### NGRI- HYDERABAD

'National Geophysical Research Institute' popularly known as NGRI, is a premier organization established under C.S.I.R in Hyderabad, in 1961 for Geoscientific Research in India. This institution has gained a reputation in recent years for its contributions to the current world with its pioneering research in earth sciences.

S. Masood Ahmad, head of the paleo-climate group at NGRI, who led the study said while the Porites corals grew by two cm every year from 1920 to 1992, the growth rate decreased to 1.25 cm per year between 1993 and 2003.

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## MEGA SOLAR POWER CAPACITY ADDITION PROGRAMME ON ANVIL

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has convened a meeting of Council on Climate Change on August 3 to give a final nod to the plan that aims to add 20,000 MW of generation capacity by 2020 and makes it as cheap as electricity from conventional sources. The mega plan would seek an investment of nearly Rs. 1 lakh crore over a 30-year period.

The objective of the mega solar power plan is to ensure that the country has a capacity addition of one lakh MW by 2030 and two lakh MW of solar power by 2050. It would also seek solar power cost reduction to achieve grid tariff parity by 2020.

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### **GLACIER NATIONAL PARK**

Glacier National Park is located in the U.S. state of Montana, bordering the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia to the North and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation to the East. Glacier National Park contains two mountain ranges, sometimes referred to as the southern extension of the Canadian Rockies mountain ranges, with over 130 named lakes, more than 1,100 different species of vascular plants and hundreds of species of animals. This vast pristine ecosystem, spread across 1,584 mi<sup>2</sup> (4,101 km<sup>2</sup>), is the centerpiece of what has been referred to as the "Crown of the Continent Ecosystem", a region of protected land encompassing 16,000 mi<sup>2</sup> (44,000 km<sup>2</sup>).

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### **ALIPORE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS**

The Alipore Zoological Gardens (also informally called the Alipore Zoo, Calcutta Zoo or Kolkata Zoo) is India's oldest formally stated zoological park (as opposed to royal and British menageries) and a big tourist attraction in Kolkata, West Bengal. It is probably best known as the home of the now expired Aldabra Giant Tortoise Adwaita, which was reputed to have been over 250 years old when it died. It is also home to one of the few captive breeding projects involving the Manipur Brow-antlered Deer.

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### **GROUNDWATER VANISHING IN NORTH INDIA, SAYS NASA**

- Groundwater levels in Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi are falling dramatically — by one foot a year — a trend that could lead to “extensive

socio-economic stresses” for the region’s 114 million residents, says a scientific paper based on the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s satellite imagery.

- A staggering 109 cubic km of groundwater has been lost in just six years (2002-08) — a figure twice the capacity of India’s largest surface reservoir Upper Wainganga and “much more” than the government’s estimation, says the paper published in the latest issue of international journal Nature.
- The depletion is caused entirely by human activity such as irrigation, and not natural climatic variability, concludes the study co-authored by Matthew Rodell, a hydrologist with NASA. Groundwater is being pumped out faster than it is being replenished.
- The finding is based on images from NASA’s Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE), a pair of satellites that sense changes in Earth’s gravity field and associated mass distribution, including water masses stored above or below the Earth’s surface.

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## GREEN POLITICS

Green politics is a political ideology which places a high importance on environmental goals, and on achieving these goals through broad-based, grassroots, participatory democracy. Green politics is advocated by supporters of the Green movement, which has been active through Green parties in many nations since the early 1980s. The political term Green, a translation of the German Grün, was coined by die Grünen, the first successful Green party, formed in the late 1970s. The term political ecology is sometimes used in Europe and in academic circles.

Supporters of Green politics, called Greens, share many ideas with the ecology, conservation, environmental, feminist, and peace movements. In addition to democracy and ecological issues, green politics is concerned with civil liberties, social justice and nonviolence.

## INDIA URGES CHINA TO CONTINUE BAN ON TIGER TRADE

- Much of poaching in India is driven by demand from China. Use of tiger bone common in prescriptions of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Conservationists call for closing down of tiger farms in China.
- In recent months, there has been increasing speculation among conservationists in China that the government will lift a ban on the internal trade in tiger body parts. Much of the poaching in India is driven by demand from China, which has the world's biggest market for tiger parts. In China, the use of tiger bone is common in the prescriptions of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the popularity of which has soared in recent years with increasing healthcare costs.
- There has been a surge in tiger deaths in India in 2009, with at least 68 killings, according to reports. **India has only around 1,300 wild tigers.** There are few wild tigers left in China. While the Chinese government imposed a ban on trade in tiger parts in 1993, it also simultaneously sanctioned the setting up of controversial tiger farms from where parts from the animals are harvested. There are around 4,000 captive tigers in such farms. Conservationists have called for closing down these farms as, they say, it encourages the consumer demand for tiger products.

### CITES

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention) is an international agreement between governments, drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1973 at a meeting of members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival and it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 33,000 species of animals and plants.

### **'GO GREEN' LAUNCHED BY RELIANCE COMMUNICATIONS.**

Go Green project is Plantation drive launched by Reliance Communications in Orissa as part of its corporate social responsibility initiatives.

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### **INDIA, CHINA TO COLLABORATE ON ENVIRONMENT**

- India and China have agreed to set up a joint expert working group on the environment, which will explore how the two countries can combat global warming through reforestation.
  - China adds an estimated four million hectares of forest cover every year, while India adds around one million hectares.
  - The joint working group, which will meet in the first week of November, will also explore the sensitive issue of how the two countries could better work together in clamping down on the illegal trade of animal parts.
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### **CHINA'S BAN ON PLASTIC BAGS YIELDS FRUITFUL RESULTS.**

One year after a nationwide ban on plastic bags came into force, China has saved the equivalent of three million tonnes of crude oil .

Last June, the government introduced a nationwide ban on the use of ultra-thin plastic bags (those thinner than 0.025 mm) and stopped all supermarkets from giving away free bags. The move surprised many given China's poor record with environmental issues and few countries, even in the West, have introduced similar bans.

Since then, the use of bags has fallen by two-thirds in China's stores, according to the **National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the country's top economic planning body.**

The ban has saved the country 40 billion plastic bags in the past 12 months, estimates the China Chain Store and Franchise Association.

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**“White pollution”**, a term used here to describe the huge consumption and wastage of plastic, is becoming a growing problem in China. China consumes more plastic bags than any other country, using 37 million barrels of crude oil on plastic bag production every year. The NDRC said the ban has now saved between 2.4 million and 3 million tonnes of crude oil, and would also cut carbon dioxide emissions by up to 9.6 million tonnes annually.