

# A salute to Nature

On International Day for Biological Diversity, we focus on the need to protect our environment and preserve the biodiversity of the planet.

### What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity refers to the various life forms - flora and fauna - on Earth. It is very vital because each life form has a role to play in keeping the planet going.

### Why is May 22 special?

The United Nations' (U.N.) Convention of Biological Diversity came into force on December 29, 1993, and the U.N. initially designated that day The International Day for Biological Diversity. However, in 2000, the day was changed to May 22 to coincide with the date of the adoption of the text of the Convention. This was also because in many countries December 29 is part of the holiday season, making it difficult for them to hold activities. Though the dates changed, the aim of the day remained the same - "to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues".

### Be nature smart!

Just a few simple steps can bring us close to Nature, understand it better and help us find ways to preserve it. Here are a few suggestions

- Visit a national park in your city to see wildlife in their natural habitat and learn more about them.
- Watch birds from your window; keep a record of their habits. Build a bird house.
- Walk around your neighbourhood and make a list of the variety of trees and their inhabitants.
- Raise flowering plants and / or fruit-bearing trees in and around your house and just see how many insects, birds and animals visit them!
- Do not keep wild animals / birds as pets.

### This year's theme

The theme for 2020 is "Our solutions are in nature". No matter how developed we're scientifically, the reality is that we're dependent on nature for survival. The loss of ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity has a direct impact on us too. If each of us builds a harmonious relationship with nature, there's hope for a better future. And it's this thought the day focusses on. Due to the COVID-19 situation globally, this year the day is being commemorated through its first-ever online-only campaign.

### India's report card



• India is one of the mega-biodiverse countries in the world. Though it constitutes less than 2.5% of the world's total land area, it holds nearly 8% of all species ever recorded - more than 1,00,000 species of fauna and 47,000 flora. It has nearly half the world's aquatic plants too.



• This biodiversity is hosted by many types of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, grasslands, deserts, coastal, and marine regions.



• Many species of animals, birds, reptiles, marine creatures and plants are endemic (found

only in one region) to India. It is also the only country to have both lions (Asiatic lion) and tigers (Bengal tigers) in the wild.



• Of the 34 biodiversity hotspots (places rich in wildlife but threatened) in the world, India is home to four - The Himalayas, the Western Ghats, the North-East, and the Nicobar Islands.

• The Sumatran rhinoceros, Indian cheetah, pink-headed duck and the Himalayan quail, and 18 species of plants have gone extinct in India in the last few centuries alone. Several species, including the great Indian bustard, Bengal florican, the Ganges river dolphin, and pygmy hog, are in peril.

• Several factors such as deforestation, development activities, poaching, hunting and pollution across the country are resulting in the loss of habitat and biodiversity.

### ACTIVITY

A sub-species, the hard ground barasingha is found only in India. Can you list five such flora or fauna species found only in India (not mentioned in this story)?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



PHOTO: S. B. ARAVIND THARUNSI & K.R. DEEPAK

### LEISURE CORNER

## Charlie and the Tramp

Fridays are for films. Explore Charlie Chaplin's classic "The Kid"

"A day without laughter is a day wasted." - Charlie Chaplin

"The Kid" is a 1921 silent film that was Chaplin's first full-length feature as a director. It achieved huge success at the box office.

**What it's about:** The film chronicles another episode in the life of Chaplin's iconic character, the Tramp, who this time finds an abandoned baby and decides to raise it as his own. The two form an inseparable bond, but, when the news gets out that the Tramp is not the kid's real father, their life together is in danger.

**Why you will love it:** A story without dialogue, it offers a refreshing break from today's loud, action-packed films. Tramp's oddball attempts to fit into society will make you laugh and cry.



### ARTIVITY

Artwork by B A Ritul, Class LKG, Dalmia Vidya Mandir, Dalmiapuram, Trichy



Read the newspaper and create an original artwork based on a news item that interests you and send your entry to school@thehindu.co.in with the subject - Artivity. Select entries will be published. Please mention your name, class, school and city.

### Guess that!

This game is simple and fun. It requires just three people, but the more the merrier.

The rules are simple - A pair is given a picture and one person from the pair faces the wall with a blank sheet of paper and pen in hand, while another person draws on the back of the person. The person facing the wall needs to replicate what is drawn on his back. If it matches the picture given, the pair wins. This is decided by the third person or the opposite team (if there are two or more teams).

To make it interesting, you can give each pair a minute to draw.

### GAME ON

### QUEST

## Striking with deadly accuracy

Some insights into how modern-day missiles work to identify and destroy their target

#### Designed to destroy

In modern times, missiles have acquired tremendous importance as an invaluable part of a country's military arsenal. A missile is an unmanned explosive-carrying weapon that moves along a flight path, determined by an external or internal source. In its simplest form, it is a pilotless airplane that uses a guidance system to identify the target and destroy it.

#### How it works

The simplest of missiles is the lightweight and portable missile used by ground troops to target low-flying enemy aircraft. It consists of a rocket engine, a launch engine and an explosive. The missile has an infrared sensor on its nose that detects the heat emitted by the target's aircraft engine. When the sensor locks on to the target, the signal detected is converted into an electrical signal that activates a trigger. The missile shoots out of the launch tube, the launch engine falls away and the main rocket engine propels the missile forward. The explosive



then flies to the target and explodes.

Missiles vary according to the launch platform - surface-to-surface, surface-to-air, etc., their target - anti-ship, anti-tank, etc., and their range - short, medium, intermediate or intercontinental.

Strategic missiles are designed to attack targets located thousands of miles away, while tactical missiles are used over shorter distances.

#### Deadly power

Ballistic and cruise missiles are among the most advanced weapon systems ever developed. They are powered by jet engines and can travel distances of 800-5000km depending on their configuration. They can fly at supersonic speed (approx. 1 km in a second) and even hypersonic speed (five times the speed of sound ie. 1.8 km per second) and deliver tonnes of high-explosive bombs to the target. They are also designed to carry nuclear warheads and are usually launched from submarines, destroyers or aircraft. (Content provided by Amrita Bharati)



## This week in sports history...

Here, we take a look at interesting, iconic and unforgettable sporting moments that took place in the week of May 17-23 through the years.



MAY 17 2014

### ATLETICO TITLE WIN ON FINAL MATCH-DAY

For just the third time in La Liga history, the title came down to a head-to-head match on the final weekend of play. Atletico Madrid took on Barcelona at the Nou Camp in Barcelona, with both sides having a chance to win the title. Atletico led Barca by three points at the start of the game and a 1-1 draw meant that they maintained that difference and won the title. Diego Simeone's Atletico won their first league title in 18 years and also became the first club other than Barca or Real Madrid to win the Spanish top division since Valencia in 2003-04.



MAY 18 2019

### RUNNING IN THE GREAT WALL

Running a marathon is always a challenge. Running the Great Wall Marathon is a greater challenge. Since its start in 1999, the Great Wall Marathon is considered among the toughest marathons in the world owing to the nature of the course. The full marathon race includes over 5,000 steps with many steep ascents and descents. While the world record for a full marathon is fast approaching the 2-hour mark, the best time for the Great Wall Marathon is over three hours for both men and women.



MAY 19 1999

### WHEN KALLIS PAVED THE WAY

South African all-rounder Jacques Kallis, seen here roaring in delight after dismissing opener Romesh Kaluwitharana, picked up the wickets of the top three batsmen of Sri Lanka. Defending just 199, Kallis' burst reduced the defending world champions to 14 for three and they were eventually bowled out for just 110. South Africa moved from strength to strength in the 1999 ODI World Cup before eventually being knocked out after the semi-final against Australia. That match ended in a tie and Australia progressed owing to a better run rate in the Super Six stage.



MAY 19 2012

### DROGBA SPECIAL FOR CHELSEA

The 2011-12 Champions League final was played between Bayern Munich and Chelsea. As it took place at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Bayern were the first finalists since 1984 to have home advantage in the final of this competition. And the trophy seemed to be heading their way when Thomas Muller scored the first goal of the game in the 83rd minute. Chelsea's Didier Drogba, however, had other ideas as he scored the equaliser in the 88th minute and it stayed 1-1 after extra time as well. Drogba then scored the winning penalty as Chelsea won 4-3 in the penalties.