

News 1 - Snowflake Corals Poses Threat to Marine Ecology.



05-Jan – Snowflake Corals, which, as per the scientists, are an invasive species, could pose a serious threat to the marine ecology of the region. Scuba divers of a local NGO, Friends of Marine Life (FML), reported numerous colonies of the corals off the coast of Thiruvananthapuram and Kanyakumari.

News 2 - India to leapfrog to BS-VI norms from April 1, 2020.



06-Jan – The Union Government has decided to skip Bharat Stage (BS) V altogether and implement stricter emission norms of Bharat Stage (BS) VI from April 1, 2020. At present, BS-IV auto fuels are being supplied in the whole of northern India covering J&K, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, parts of Rajasthan and western UP. The rest of the country has BS-III grade fuel.

News 3 - Ministry of Environment holds first National Stakeholder Consultation on the BIOFIN initiative.



14-Jan – The Environment Ministry started a two-day National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Biodiversity Finance Initiative. This meeting had been organized to understand the BIOFIN project and to seek professional inputs from experts of various fields in strengthening the biodiversity conservation efforts in the country in the context of India's 12 National Biodiversity Targets developed in line with 20 Global Aichi Biodiversity targets.

A global high level panel set up by the Convention on Biological Diversity has estimated that USD 150-440 billion need to

be invested annually in biodiversity for effective implementation of Aichi Global Biodiversity targets. BIOFIN is a global partnership seeking to address the biodiversity finance challenge in a comprehensive manner. It helps in building a sound business case for increased investment in the management of ecosystems and biodiversity.

News 4 - World Bank to extend assistance of 20 Million US dollars for rebuilding Indira Gandhi Zoological Park.



17-Jan – The World Bank will be funding USD 20 million to help reconstruct the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP), which got devastated during cyclone Hudhud. First of its kind, the World Bank has embraced the zoo as a novel initiative for its eco-development. This assistance is a share of the 370 million US dollar Andhra Pradesh Disaster Recovery Project for which the World Bank is extending assistance of 250 million US dollars from 2015-2020.

News 5 - Oxfam published report titled – An Economy for the 1%.



18-Jan – Oxfam published a report titled "An Economy for the 1%". The new Oxfam report explains the vast and growing gap between rich and poor. The report calls for an immediate action to cope with a trend showing that 1% of people own more wealth than the other 99% combined. As per this report, the wealth of the poorest 50% dropped by 41% between 2010 and 2015, whereas, the wealth of the richest 62 people increased by \$500bn (£350bn) to \$1.76tn for the same period. Oxfam, an international confederation of 17 organizations, stands for Oxford Committee for Famine Relief founded in Britain in 1942 with an aim to reduce poverty and injustice.

News 6 - UNWTO published World Tourism Barometer.



18-Jan – The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) published the World Tourism Barometer. As per their report, International tourist arrivals grew by 4.4% in 2015 to reach a total of 1,184 million in 2015. Some 50 million more tourists (overnight visitors) travelled to international destinations around the world last year as compared to 2014. 2015 marks the 6th consecutive year of above-average growth, with international arrivals increasing by 4% or more every

year since the post-crisis year of 2010. Based on the current trend and this outlook, UNWTO projects international tourist arrivals to grow by 4% worldwide in 2016.

News 7 - New Tree Frog Genus discovered in NE India.



20-Jan – The frogman of India, Professor Sathyabhama Das Biju along with his team of researchers discovered a new genus of tree hole-breeding frogs in the forests of India's northeast and China. The tadpoles of these frogs feed on their mother's eggs. The genus has been named Frankixalus after Professor Franky Bossuyt.

News 8 - New bird species named Himalayan Forest Thrush discovered in India.



21-Jan – Scientists have discovered a new bird species called Himalayan Forest Thrush in northeastern India and China. The new species was christened as *Zoothera Salimalii* as its scientific name after famous Indian ornithologist, Salim Ali. New bird species are rarely discovered nowadays. The Himalayan Forest Thrush is only the fourth new bird species described from India since 1949. In the last 15 years, on an average, approximately five new species have been discovered annually, mainly in South America.

News 9 - Snow Leopard marked for the first time in North Sikkim.



27-Jan – Wild Snow leopards have been photographed for the first time in Sikkim. World Wide Fund-India have captured the first evidence of the Snow Leopard inhabiting the high mountains of northern Sikkim. The snow leopard is a Schedule I animal under the Wildlife Protection Act of India and is listed as endangered by the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species.