

24-05-2024

Thiruvananthapuram International Airport Leads Nation with Zero Waste to Landfill Accolade

Why in News?

- Thiruvananthapuram International Airport has made history as the first airport in India to achieve the prestigious recognition of zero waste to landfill (ZWL). This commendation comes from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII-ITC) Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development, confirming the airport's commitment to environmentally responsible practices.

Achieving Zero Waste to Landfill

- Through rigorous assessment, it has been verified that Thiruvananthapuram International Airport has implemented exemplary waste management strategies, resulting in an impressive 99.50 percent diversion of waste from landfills. This achievement underscores the airport's dedication to sustainability and sets a high standard for others to follow.

Best Practices in Waste Management

- The airport's success in waste diversion is attributed to the implementation of cutting-edge waste management practices. By effectively managing plastic waste and other materials, the airport has achieved a remarkable milestone in environmental stewardship.

Commitment to Sustainability

- Thiruvananthapuram International Airport's attainment of the ZWL accolade reflects its unwavering commitment to sustainable development. As a leader in the aviation industry, the airport continues to prioritize eco-friendly initiatives, setting a precedent for responsible waste management across the country.

Leading by Example

- As the first airport in India to receive this recognition, Thiruvananthapuram International Airport sets a precedent for other airports and organizations to follow suit. By demonstrating the feasibility and benefits of zero waste practices, the airport paves the way for a greener, more sustainable future.



Over 4000 Gangetic Dolphins in India: Indian Wildlife Institute

- According to a recent report by the Wildlife Institute of India, there are more than 4000 Gangetic dolphins in the Gangetic River basin. Over 2000 of these dolphins are found in Uttar Pradesh, primarily in the Chambal River. This increase suggests that the river's pollution levels are declining, and the government's conservation efforts are proving effective.

Gangetic River Dolphin

- The Ganges river dolphin, also known as the blind dolphin, Ganges susu, or Hihu, has the scientific name *Platanista gangetica*. Historically found in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems, the dolphin is now present in specific stretches of the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Barak river system in India, as well as in river systems in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Characteristics of Gangetic Dolphins

- Gangetic dolphins are blind and live exclusively in freshwater. They hunt using sonar, emitting ultrasonic sound waves that bounce off prey. These dolphins are usually found alone or in small groups. As mammals, they must surface every 30-120 seconds to breathe, producing a distinctive 'susu' sound when exhaling.

Threats to Gangetic Dolphins

- **The population of Gangetic dolphins has declined due to several factors:**
 - Unintentional killing through entanglement in fishing gear.
 - Poaching for oil used in traditional medicine.
 - Habitat destruction from development projects, pollution, and noise from vessel traffic.
 - Government Efforts to Save Gangetic Dolphins

The government of India has

implemented various measures to protect Gangetic dolphins:

- Listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, providing the highest degree of legal protection.
- Declared the National Aquatic Animal of India on May 18, 2010.
- Included in the list of 22 critically endangered species under the Centrally sponsored scheme 'Development of Wildlife Habitats.'
- Established the Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary in Bhagalpur, Bihar.
- Developed a comprehensive action plan (2022-2047) for river dolphin and aquatic habitat conservation.
- Declared a Dolphin Sanctuary in the Chambal Sanctuary by the Uttar Pradesh government.
- Launched Project Dolphin in 2019 under the Arth Ganga part of the Namami Ganga Project, aiming to double the dolphin population by 2030.

Wildlife Institute of India

- Established in 1982 under the Union Ministry of Forest and Climate Change, the Wildlife Institute of India trains personnel, conducts research, and advises on wildlife conservation and management. Its headquarters is in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.



World Economic Forum Founder Klaus Schwab To Step Back From Executive Role

- Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF), will transition from his current role to become chairman of the board of trustees by January next year, according to an emailed statement from the Geneva-based institution. This move is part of a planned “governance evolution” from

Legacy of the Forum

- Founded by Schwab in 1971, the WEF is renowned for its annual gatherings in Davos, Switzerland, where political and business leaders convene to address major global issues and share leadership practices. Schwab’s vision was to create a platform for policymakers and top executives to collaboratively tackle global challenges.

Criticisms and Evolving Themes

- Despite its influential role, the WEF



a founder-managed organization to one where the president and the managing board assume full executive responsibility.

Governance Evolution

- The WEF’s transition signifies a shift from its founder-led model to a more distributed leadership structure. The president and the managing board will now take on full executive responsibilities, marking a significant change in the institution’s governance.

has faced criticism for being a platform for the elite, contributing to global carbon emissions. In response to these critiques, the forum’s recent themes have focused on addressing immediate global crises and promoting sustainability. Last year’s conference, themed “Cooperation in a Fragmented World,” urged leaders to confront economic, energy, and food crises while fostering sustainable future.

EU Approves World's First Major AI Law

- The European Union has given the final green light to the AI Act, marking a historic step in regulating artificial intelligence. This groundbreaking legislation establishes comprehensive rules to ensure trust, transparency, and accountability in AI technologies while fostering innovation within Europe.

Significant Penalties for Non-Compliance

- The EU Commission will enforce the AI Act with the authority to impose fines of up to €35 million (\$38 million) or 7% of a company's annual global revenue, whichever is higher. This stringent measure underscores the EU's commitment to robust AI regulation.

Risk-Based Approach to AI Applications

- The AI Act categorizes AI applications based on their risk levels. It bans "unacceptable" applications such as social scoring, predictive policing, and emotional recognition in sensitive environments like workplaces and schools. High-risk AI systems, including autonomous vehicles and medical devices, are subject to rigorous evaluation to protect health, safety, and fundamental rights. The Act also addresses AI applications in finance and education to prevent bias.

Impact on U.S. Tech Giants

- U.S. technology firms are closely

monitoring the AI Act, given its unique and detailed regulatory framework. These companies, especially those involved in generative AI, must ensure compliance with the new law, which includes adhering to EU copyright rules, transparency in model training, and maintaining cybersecurity standards.

Timeline for Implementation

- Although the AI Act introduces tough restrictions, these will not be immediate. There is a 12-month delay before the requirements take effect. Existing generative AI systems, like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini, have a 36-month transition period to achieve full compliance.

Focus on Effective Implementation

- The AI Act's agreement signals a new regulatory reality. The next crucial step is its effective implementation and enforcement, ensuring that the legislative framework translates into practical and beneficial outcomes for AI technology and its users.

