



Rapid Fire Current Affairs

2018 - Everyone is a Hero

- **2018- Everyone is a Hero** is a Malayalam survival drama that is **India's official entry for the 96th Academy Awards**. The film is based on the devastating [Kerala floods of 2018](#).
- In August 2018, Kerala experienced its worst floods since 1924 due to [torrential rainfall](#) environmental factors like **encroachment**, [sand mining](#), and [deforestation](#) in the [Western Ghats](#) contributed to the disaster.
- The Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars, are given annually by the **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS)**.
 - The awards recognize and celebrate all aspects of the film industry and the diverse, talented people who make movies.
- India won two Oscars at the **95th Academy Awards in 2023**. "**Naatu Naatu**" from RRR won **Best Original Song**, and "**The Elephant Whisperers**" secured **Best Documentary Short**.

Read more: [Flood Situation in Kerala](#)

Gujarat Bans Conocarpus Plants

- The Gujarat government has banned **the planting of Conocarpus trees, a non-indigenous species**, in both forested and non-forested areas. The government cited the trees' adverse impacts on the environment and human health. Earlier, Telangana too had banned the plant species.
- Conocarpus trees, a **fast-growing mangrove shrub found in tropical and subtropical coastal areas** globally, have been planted to boost green cover in certain regions.
 - However, their small winter flowers produce pollen that can **cause health issues like colds, coughs, asthma, and allergies**. Moreover, their deep root systems can harm infrastructure, particularly drainage systems.

UrbanShift Asia Forum

Recently, the first UrbanShift Forum (Asia) was held in New Delhi.

- The primary objective was to provide training and capacity-building to regional cities for integrated and sustainable urban development.
- UrbanShift is a [Global Environment Facility \(GEF\)](#)-funded program within Urban Development and the WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities. It is led by [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) and implemented in partnership with C40 Cities, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), [UNDP](#), [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#) and the World Bank.

Read more: [National Institute of Urban Affairs](#)

Pangolin's Hidden Diversity

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The **Pangolin**, an **elusive** and highly **endangered creature often touted as the world's most trafficked mammal**, has unveiled a hidden secret.

- Previously thought to consist of **eight species**—four Asian and four African varieties—research has revealed the **existence of a ninth pangolin species, provisionally named *Manis mysteria***.
 - This discovery was made through the analysis of scales confiscated from traffickers in China's Yunnan province in 2015 and 2019.
- Despite **a ban on international trade since 2016**, the newly discovered pangolin species is already under pressure, **showing signs of declining population, low genetic diversity, inbreeding, and genetic load**.

Read more: [Pangolin](#)

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