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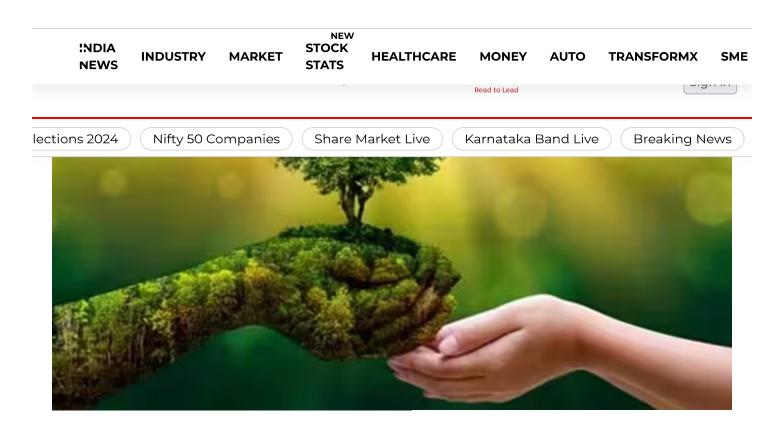
Earth Overshoot Day: India's Battle for Ecological Balance

It is calculated by the Global Footprint Network (GFN) by comparing humanity's ecological footprints, such as waste output, carbon emissions, and resource consumption, to the Earth's ability to replenish those resources in that year.

Written by **Guest**

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India, a nation grappling with a burgeoning population and rapid urbanization, is the third-largest emitter globally. (Representational image: IE)

By Ananth Aravamudan

Earth Overshoot Day is an annual milestone that marks the point in each year when humanity consumes more natural resources than the Earth can regenerate. It is calculated by comparing the amount of resources we use, such as energy, water, and food, with the Earth's ability to replenish those resources within that year. When we reach Earth Overshoot Day, it means that we are using up resources faster than the Earth can renew them, leading to a depletion of our planet's natural capital.

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It is calculated by the Global Footprint Network (GFN) by comparing humanity's ecological footprints, such as waste output, carbon emissions, and resource consumption, to the Earth's ability to replenish those resources in that year. In 2023, Earth Overshoot Day will be reached on August 2, when the ecological footprint surpasses Earth's bio-capacity.

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Each country faces its own unique set of challenges in achieving ecological balance. India, a nation grappling with a burgeoning population and rapid urbanization, is the third-largest emitter globally. According to a report in 2019 by UNEP, despite low per-capita emissions, India emits a net 2.9 GtCO2e every year. The country faces mounting water scarcity issues, escalating impacts of

The agriculture sector, already vulnerable to water scarcity, heatwaves, and unpredictable rainfall caused by climate change, experiences reduced crop yields, impacting farmers' livelihoods and potentially leading to higher unemployment. Climate change-induced events like floods and droughts disrupt infrastructure and construction projects, causing delays and negatively impacting the economy. McKinsey estimates that by 2030, India could experience a 15% increase in lost outdoor working hours due to extreme heat and humidity, posing a risk of 2.5-4.5% to GDP. The country is also projected to face a significant portion of global job losses due to heat stress.

Recognizing the gravity of these challenges, the Indian government, along with various stakeholders, has taken significant steps to protect natural resources and promote sustainable livelihoods. The government launched the National Clean Energy Fund to promote clean energy and reduce carbon emissions. Simultaneously, the National Water Mission aims to conserve and manage water resources, improving efficiency across sectors. The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana focuses on enhancing water availability for agriculture through efficient irrigation practices. Moreover, the government introduced the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act to provide employment opportunities to rural citizens. At the same time, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana offers insurance coverage to farmers, safeguarding them from crop losses. Additionally, private-sector programs like the Powering Livelihoods initiative (run jointly by Villgro Innovations Foundation and the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), boost the usage of clean energy for rural livelihoods.

Steps need to be taken to ensure that sustainable methods are utilized at the local level as well. Nearly 40% of India's annual carbon emissions might be

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lections 2024 Nifty 50 Companies Share Market Live Karnataka Band Live Breaking News Raheja Solar collaborate with farmers, offering not only cost-effective solar								
dryers to reduce post-harvest losses but also marketing their dried products to								
top FMCG companies. Another such enterprise, Resham Sutra, empowers								
underp	rivileged rui	ral artisan	s by dev	veloping affo	rdable, s	olar-po	wered	
machines for silk yarn and fabric production. Additionally, Devidayal Solar,								
focuses	on value ch	nains like	dairy an	d fisheries, p	roviding	efficier	nt solar-	
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In addition to the innovations mentioned above, there are numerous advancements by various enterprises, harnessing the potential of clean energy to build a sustainable livelihood ecosystem in India. Social entrepreneurs are scaling up the penetration of solar appliances in rural India, preserving fossil fuels, and stimulating sustainable livelihoods. Eco-friendly transportation modes like cycling, walking, and electric vehicles are being promoted, along with the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit systems in many cities. These initiatives not only reduce traffic congestion but also contribute to air pollution reduction. Circular economy models are being introduced in waste management, along with the creation of green spaces in multiple cities that improve air quality and provide recreational areas for citizens.

To curb resource depletion, we must pursue creative and economically viable solutions to meet India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, aiming for net-zero emissions by 2070. Our updated plans include increasing renewable energy, green hydrogen production, and eco-friendly manufacturing. Reducing food waste, promoting local food systems, and adopting tree intercropping techniques can also push back Earth Overshoot

The author is Sector Lead, Climate Action, Villgro.

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