

Of healing and social distancing: Impact on environment

28 March 2020

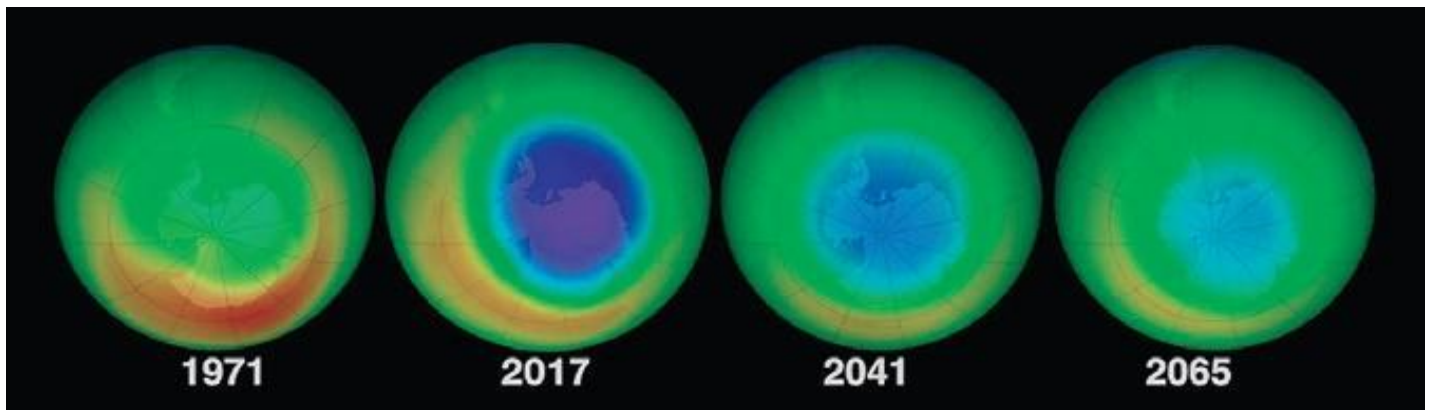
The New Indian Express looks at strange news stories around the world, as people, places, animals, things come to grips with Covid-19.



Heal the World

While this isn't directly related to Covid-19 itself, the lockdown caused by the pandemic and the subsequent positive impact it's had on the environment must definitely be helping. We've all been taught that the ozone layer, which ensconces the earth protecting it from all manner of harmful radiation as well as maintaining the climate, has been badly damaged over the last few decades thanks to human activity. Ozone depleting substances emitted by refrigerators and air conditioners, industrial solvents and other pollutants had created huge holes in the planet's protective sheath of ozone, increasing the amount of radiation that hit the earth's surface, as well as causing erratic weather patterns due to shifting climactic conditions.

While the Montreal Protocol was signed by various nations in 1987 in order to minimise the use of ozone-depleting substances, any improvements were a long time coming. Now, a new study by the UN shows that the Montreal Protocol has indeed had its desired effect as the depletion of the ozone layer has reduced substantially and has helped repair itself. And with most planes grounded and most cars parked thanks to the lockdown in large parts of the world, the regeneration is sure to accelerate. And we sure could use some good news.



Hope Springs Eternal

2020, the first year of a whole new decade, hasn't been off to the best start, in case you've noticed. With the fag end of December setting up an appropriately disturbing prologue for what to come, the world has been reeling under Covid-19 ever since, the disease having first appeared in the Chinese city of Wuhan. One-third of the global population is under lockdown, the global economy is tanking, and the global sporting events like the Olympics, have been postponed.

What corona virus cannot affect though is the passing of seasons. For many cities around the world, especially in East Asia, spring arrives with cherry blossom season. Among the cities that get to enjoy this seasonal display is Wuhan, and dear reader, the blossoms are a-blooming. While the city's parks are usually full of admirers of the flowers, this season has been anything but usual, with only a few enjoying a panorama they've never seen before.

Show and Tell

From West Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee drawing circles in chalk spaced out at meters' distance to demonstrate how to line up to various government advertisements preaching its virtues, social distancing is all the rage. Or at least, that's what governments around the world are hoping it to be, given that it's proven to be one of the most effective methods of curbing the infection rate of Covid-19. And while some covidiot continue to endanger themselves and the rest of us by ignoring the people's mandate, everyone else is playing along, and happy to show off the fact.

McDonald's Brazil pried apart its iconic golden arches in an image posted on its Facebook page, to promote social distancing, and other companies around the world are doing much of the same. The car conglomerate of Audi and Volkswagen has tweaked their logos on the brands' social media accounts and recent posts. While, Audi's logo has separated its four rings, Volkswagen separated the V and W. Both the companies' social media accounts also posted videos encouraging the practice and asking people to exercise restraint so as to stay safe.

Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2020/mar/28/of--healing-and-social-distancing-impact-on-environment-2122541.html>