

PLACE IN THE NEWS: INDIA



Fast Fact: India has the second-largest population in the world. More than 1 billion people live there. That's more than triple the number of people who live in the United States.

On March 13, many people in India will celebrate spring in a very lively way. They'll throw colorful powders on each other! It's part of a holiday in the Hindu religion called Holi (HOH-lee).

Holi is also known as the Festival of Colors. It's a time to say goodbye to the gray days of winter and to welcome the spring season. The goal is to make sure that everyone—and everything—is as colorful as it can be.



Kids take part in Holi.

People decorate their towns and temples with bright flowers. They also have wild water fights in which they spray each other with berry-flavored water. And it's not just kids who celebrate this way. Adults take part too!

Protecting Pangolins

Pangolins are odd-looking creatures. The animals, which live in Asia and Africa, are covered in tough scales. They help protect pangolins from predators. But they can't protect them from their biggest threat: people who catch them illegally.

Over the past 15 years, more than 1 million pangolins have been caught and sold. In nations like China and Vietnam, the animals are killed. Their scales are used in medicine. Also, some people eat pangolin meat. Experts fear pangolins could become **extinct**.



Pangolins' scales are made of the same material as human fingernails.

But now there's hope. Last fall, more than 180 nations agreed to ban the buying and selling of pangolins between countries. Officials say this could help keep pangolins safe.

Elly Pepper works for the Natural Resources Defense

Council, a group that helps wildlife. She hopes people will join the fight to save pangolins. "They're just incredibly special creatures," she says.

Word to Know

extinct: no longer existing



Contractions

To make a contraction, two words are combined, then shortened using an apostrophe. For example, *don't* is a contraction for *do not*. Circle the contractions for *it is* and *they are*.

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