

NEWS TODAY

Australian Water Partnership (AWP) and ICIMOD release reports on basinwide management of the Ganges

- ▶ A 2019 MoU between AWP and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) calls for **analyzing challenges and opportunities for basin wide management across: Indus, the Brahmaputra, and the Ganges.**
- ▶ **Key findings on Ganges Basin management**

Specification	Description
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Myriad complexities: Sheer size of the basin presents a barrier to cohesive governance, compounded by the complexities of gender, poverty, social inequity, Climate change, etc. ▶ Fragmented governance: Lack of multilateral agreement enabling basinwide collaboration while bilateral agreements are focused on infrastructure projects and short-term goals. ▶ Substantial data gaps: This gap is more prominent for experiences of different genders, indigenous communities, underprivileged, etc.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Climate change represents a unifying catalyst for collaboration across the basin. ▶ Existing bilateral agreements contain references to, or acknowledgement of, basin-scale issues and solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ For example, Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development (of 2011) between India and Bangladesh has references to basin-scale issues such as climate change, and energy.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Delinking of key issues in the basin from the basin-wide political system. ▶ Expand existing bilateral agreements to stimulate multilateral cooperation. ▶ Support the expansion of research and data collection and sharing. ▶ Strengthen the capacity of community groups to enhance local collaboration.

State of the Global Climate 2023 report released by the World Metrological Organization (WMO)

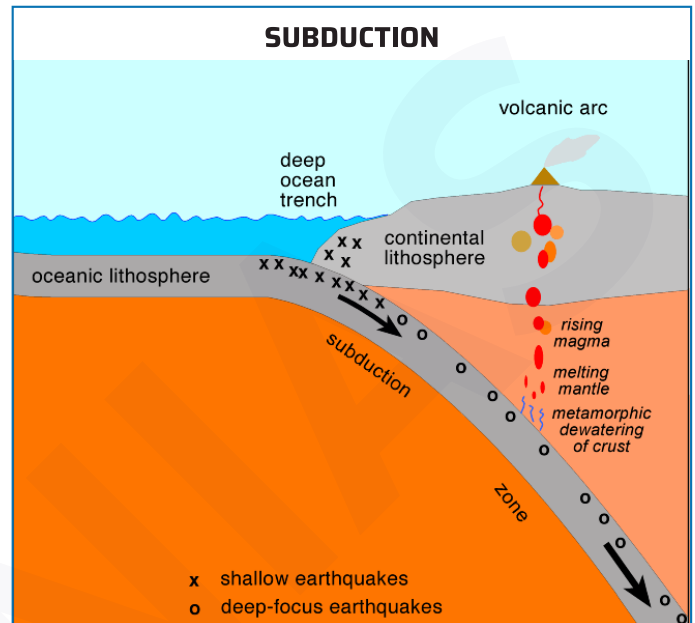
- ▶ WMO is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology, and related geophysical sciences.
- ▶ The report highlighted that 2023 broke every climate indicator like greenhouse gases, temperature, etc., and **also highlighted the State of Climate Finances** across the globe.
- ▶ **Current State of Climate Finance**
 - ⊕ **Climate flows nearly doubled in 2021-22 compared to 2019-20 levels and reached \$1.3 trillion.**
 - ◆ **China, the USA, Europe, Brazil, Japan, and India together received 90% of the increase in funds.**
 - ⊕ **Climate finance investments need to grow more than six times, by 2030 for a 1.5°C pathway.**
- ▶ **Challenges in Climate Finance**
 - ⊕ **The cost of inaction is to rise** with insufficient mitigation and adaptation strategies
 - ⊕ **Climate-vulnerable countries and important sectors** like agriculture and industry – **are receiving little finance despite their mitigation potential.**
 - ⊕ **Adaptation actions of private sectors are yet to be tracked better.**
- ▶ **Recommendations in the report**
 - ⊕ **Transform the financial system** with an emphasis on concessional financing and de-risking; bridging climate and development needs, etc.
 - ⊕ **Mobilize domestic capital,** with an emphasis on enabling policies and regulatory frameworks.
 - ⊕ Improve the **availability and accessibility of quality, granular data** to measure and manage progress.

Initiatives to improve climate finance

- ▶ **Global Climate Finance Framework** adopted in COP28, Dubai.
- ▶ **France's AFD 2050 Facility** supports around 30 developing countries in their implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- ▶ **Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs)** to developing countries in accelerating their transition to a just energy system.

Gibraltar Subduction Zone Extending Further Into the Atlantic Ocean: Study

- **Subduction Zones (SZs) or Benioff Zones** are **locations of convergent plate boundaries** where one **tectonic plate is pushed below the other tectonic plate** and sinks into the mantle (a process called subduction).
 - ⊕ **Subduction initiation** is a **cornerstone of the Wilson cycle** (repetitive opening and closing of ocean basins due to the seafloor spreading and subduction respectively).
 - ⊕ Subduction produces **deep trenches, earthquakes, and volcanoes** that often form **arcs of islands** along the convergent boundary.
- **SZs in Atlantic**
 - ⊕ SZ initiation in **mature Atlantic-type oceans** that have formed from the breakup of a supercontinent is **believed to be difficult**.
 - ◆ This is because the **aged oceanic lithosphere is thick and strong**, making it **resistant to breaking and bending** (both are prerequisites for the start of subduction in an **ocean surrounded by passive margins**).
 - ⊕ Yet, the **Atlantic has two fully developed SZs Lesser Antilles and the Scotia arcs**.
 - ⊕ Its 3rd such zone, **Gibraltar Arc** has **significantly slowed** over years raising a debate **whether it is active or not**.
 - ◆ According to the latest study, the **Gibraltar subduction is still active** and it will propagate further into the Atlantic after a **period of quiescence**.
 - ◆ Study also reveals that a **subduction zone starting in a closing ocean (Ligurian) can migrate into a new opening ocean (Atlantic)** through a narrow oceanic corridor.



Scientists at IARI have red-flagged the illegal cultivation of high-yielding Pusa Basmati varieties in Pakistan

- **IARI scientists** have raised objections and **called for action against Pakistan** as it has **officially registered India's high-yielding Pusa Basmati varieties** and also cultivating the same illegally.
- These varieties, **originally developed by IARI, include:**
 - ⊕ **Pusa Basmati-1121 (PB-1121)** known for the **extra kernel length of its grains**.
 - ⊕ **PB-1509**, which **matures in 115-120 days** as against the 135-145 days of other high-yielding basmati varieties.
 - ⊕ **PB-1847, PB-1885 and PB-1886** (all improved versions of PB-1509) have **resistance to bacterial blight and rice blast fungal disease**.
- **Legal protection**
 - ⊕ All these varieties are **notified under the Seeds Act, of 1966**.
 - ◆ The Act **prohibits the export and import** of seeds of notified kinds or varieties **for sowing or planting**
 - ⊕ They are also registered under the **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001**.
 - ◆ This Act allows **only Indian farmers to sow, save, re-sow, exchange or share the seeds** of any protected/registered varieties.
 - ◆ The Act also enumerate breeder's rights.
- **Basmati rice export from India**
 - ⊕ India is the **leading exporter of Basmati Rice** in the world.
 - ⊕ Major Export destinations are **Saudi Arab, Iran, Iraq, U.A.E and Yemen** where consumers want parboiled rice.
 - ◆ Parboiled rice has **harder grains and is less susceptible to breakage** on cooking for long.

About Basmati Rice

- Also known as '**scented Pearl**', Basmati is a **long-grain aromatic rice variety** grown for many centuries mainly in the Himalayan foothills.
- ⊕ Currently, it is cultivated in the states of **J & K, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand and western Uttar Pradesh**.
- They require **prolonged sunshine, high humidity and assured water supply**.
- So far **34 varieties of Basmati rice** have been notified under the seeds Act, 1966.

Ministry Of Environment, Forest And Climate Change (MoEFCC) notifies Battery Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2024

- The rules have been changed by MoEFCC as per the powers conferred by the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**
- New rules are to amend the **Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022**.
- **Amendments**
 - ⊕ **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** shall fix the highest and lowest price for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) certificates.
 - ◆ It shall be equal to **100% and 30%, respectively** of the environmental compensation leviable on the obligated entities for non-fulfilment of EPR.
 - ◆ EPR strategy holds **producers responsible for the end-of-life consequences** of their goods.
 - ⊕ **The exchange price of the EPR certificate between registered entities** through the portal shall be between the highest and lowest prices.
 - ⊕ **CPCB** shall prepare and recommend guidelines for the imposition and collection of **environmental compensation** in cases of non-compliance with rules.
- **Objectives of Battery Waste Management**
 - ⊕ **Promoting circular economy** by recycling and ensuring environmentally sound management of waste batteries.
 - ⊕ **Promoting new industries and entrepreneurship** in the collection and recycling/refurbishment of waste batteries.
 - ⊕ **Implementing the polluter pays principle** through **EPR**
 - ⊕ Reducing the **dependency on new raw materials** and saving natural resources.

Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: World Inequality Lab (WIL) study

- The WIL is a **global research center** focused on the study of inequality and public policies that promote social, economic, and environmental justice.
- **Key findings of the study:**
 - ⊕ **Inequality declined post-independence** till the early 1980s, after which it began rising and has **skyrocketed since the early 2000s**.
 - ⊕ By the end of 2023, India's richest citizens owned **40.1 percent of the country's wealth**.
 - ⊕ India's top 1 percent income share is **among the very highest in the world**, higher than even South Africa, Brazil, and the US.
- **Issues with extreme inequality**
 - ⊕ It facilitates the **disproportionate influence of wealthy people** on society and government leading to plutocracy.
 - ⊕ Poor people find it **more difficult to escape poverty** as they do not have the same opportunities.
 - ⊕ Leads to lower **overall economic growth**.
- **Recommendations given in the study for removing income inequality**
 - ⊕ To improve the **quality of economic data**.
 - ⊕ **Broad-based public investments** in health, education, and nutrition to enable the average Indian.
 - ⊕ **Restructuring of the tax code** to account for both income and wealth.
 - ◆ A **"super tax" of 2%** on the net wealth of the wealthiest families can be imposed.

Also in News



Nomination process

- **Nomination process for first phase** of Lok Sabha polls 2024 began.
- Nominations is filed under section **33 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951**.
 - ⊕ Date for filing of nomination is fixed by **Election Commission of India**.
 - ⊕ Candidate or any of his / her proposer should deliver the nomination paper to the **Returning Officer (RO) or to the Assistant RO**.
 - ◆ Only an **elector in the constituency** in which the candidate contests the election, **can be proposes**.
 - » **One proposer** is needed for candidate from a **recognised political party**.
 - » **10 proposers** are needed for **independent** or candidates from **registered unrecognised political party**.
 - ⊕ **A candidate** can file maximum 4 nomination **for a constituency**.
- **Nomination paper** cannot be filed **on holiday**.



Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

- SC considers lifting the ban on transmission lines through GIB habitats.
- **Protection status**
 - ⊕ IUCN status: **Critically Endangered**
 - ⊕ Schedule 1 and 4 of wildlife protection act.
 - ⊕ Appendix 1 of CITES.
 - ⊕ Covered under species recovery program.
- **Characteristics**
 - ⊕ An agro-grassland bird **endemic to Indian subcontinent**.
 - ⊕ **Omnivorous bird**.
 - ⊕ **Other bustard species found in India:** lesser florican and Bengal florican.
- **Habitat:** Mainly confined to Rajasthan, Gujarat, and few tracts of Andhra Pradesh.
 - ⊕ **Rajasthan** has the highest population.



Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF)

- Election Commission has **exempted certain emergency works under CMRF** from the ambit of the **Model Code of Conduct**.
- The fund aims to **provide relief for the distressed people** affected by major natural calamities, accidents etc.
- **Similar to the PM Relief fund**, these funds primarily operate with donations from **public and private institutions**, voluntary organisations etc.
- The donations to CMRF are **100% exempted from Income Tax under section 80G of the Income-Tax Act,1961**.



Summit for Democracy

- Prime Minister addressed the third edition of Summit for Democracy.
- **Summit for Democracy**
 - ⊕ **Genesis:** Launched by the US in 2021, the summit has emerged as an important **platform where democracies share experiences** and learn from each other.
 - ⊕ **Aim:** To **strengthen democratic institutions, protect human rights**, and accelerate the **fight against corruption** globally.
 - ⊕ **Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal:** It was launched in the 1st summit and supports initiatives for **advancing technology** for democracy, defending **free and fair elections, independent media**, etc.
 - ◆ **US also provides financial aid** to this initiative.



Sound Laser (Phonon Laser)

- Chinese Scientists have created a powerful Sound Laser.
- Just as light is made up of many particles called photons, sound consists of **particle-like chunks called phonons**.
- They are also known as **Sound Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation (SASER)**
 - ⊕ First developed in 2009.
- New device **uses a micrometer-long silica bead** that is **levitated by two beams of light** within a reflective cavity.
- Levitation leads to the **production of amplified phonons** and makes up the laser beam.



Project Gaia

- Central banks unveiled **Project Gaia to evaluate climate financial risks**.
- **About Project Gaia**
 - ⊕ It is a collaboration between the Bank for **International Settlements Innovation Hub Eurosystem Centre, Bank of Spain, etc.**
 - ⊕ It leverages **generative artificial intelligence (AI)** particularly **Large Language Models(LLMs)** to facilitate the analysis of climate-related risks in the financial system.
- **Benefits**
 - ⊕ Can examine firm **carbon emissions, green bonds, and optional net-zero commitment disclosures**.
 - ⊕ **Enhanced accessibility** to climate-related disclosures, Efficient data extraction, Harmonised climate metrics, Scalability and reliability.



Grid Controller of India Limited (GRID-INDIA)

- GRID-IINDIA was conferred with **Miniratna Category-I status** for Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).
- **About GRID-INDIA**
 - ⊕ Established in 2009.
 - ⊕ Its mandate is to oversee the operation of the Indian Power System.
- **About Miniratna Status**
 - ⊕ **Category I:** CPSEs with **continuous profit in the last three years** with pretax profit >30cr in at least one year and have a positive net worth.
 - ⊕ **Category II:** CPSEs that have **made profit for the last three years and have a positive net worth**.



PIB Fact Check Unit

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notifies **Fact Check Unit under Press Information Bureau (PIB)**.
- ⊕ **PIB is the nodal agency** of the government to disseminate information on government policies, programmes, initiatives, and achievements.
- It has been notified under the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules 2021)**.

Personality in news



Phanindra Nath Ghosh (1918-1992)

- **Birth Anniversary** of Phanindra Nath Ghosh was celebrated,
 - **About**
 - ⊕ Born in **Serampore in the Hooghly district of West Bengal**, Shri Ghosh was the son of Charuchandra Ghosh.
 - **Contributions:**
 - ⊕ His **leadership steered the revolutionary movement** across the **Hooghly district**.
 - ⊕ He Joined the **Yugantar revolutionary party** alongside **J.N. Lahiri**.
 - ⊕ Became an active member of the "**Gupt Samity**" in **Serampore**.
 - ⊕ Played a **pivotal role during the Quit in 1942**.
 - ⊕ Was deeply **committed to Gandhiji's philosophy**.
 - **Awards:** Government of India honoured him with a **Copper Plate in 1972**.
 - **Values:** **Courage of conviction; patriotism; leadership, etc.**
- NOTE:** Please do not confuse this personality with Phanindra Nath Ghosh who was approver of hanging of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru and who was also murdered by revolutionary Baikuntha Shukla.

