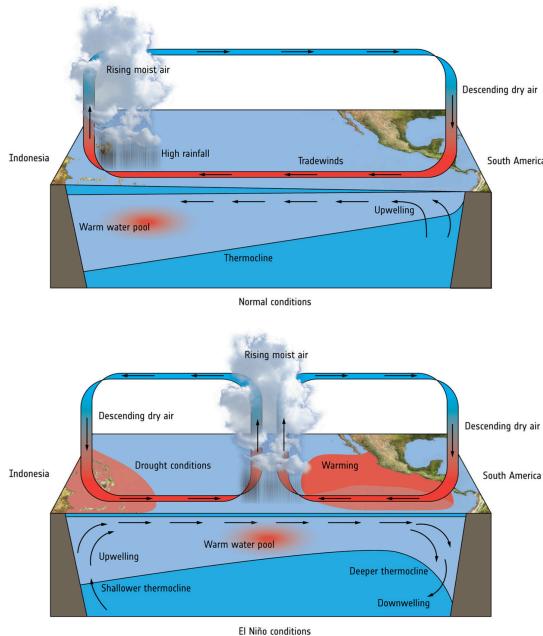




07 March 2024

National and International News

El Niño 2023: Among the Strongest on Record



Context:

- The **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)** announced on March 5 that the **2023-2024 El Niño is among the five strongest on record.**
- **Despite a weakening trend, the El Niño is expected to continue affecting the climate in the upcoming months.**

Key points:

- **Above-normal temperatures** are predicted over almost all land areas from **March to May.**
- The prevailing El Niño conditions have already caused record temperatures and extreme events worldwide, **with 2023 being the warmest on record.**
- The WMO forecasts a **60% chance of El Niño persisting during March-May** and an **80% chance of neutral conditions during April-June.**
- Scientists suggest that if La Niña conditions set in by June-August, it could lead to improved monsoon rains in India compared to 2023.

About:

- **El Niño refers to the periodic warming of the ocean surface** in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, occurring every two to seven years and lasting nine to twelve months.
- It is associated with **increased rainfall in the Horn of Africa and southern U.S., and dry, warm conditions in Southeast Asia, Australia, and southern Africa.**
- According to WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo, **unusual high sea-surface temperatures persist globally for the past ten months, not solely explained by El Niño.**
- El Niño typically has the greatest impact on climate in its second year of development, notably in 2024.
- The current El Niño event, which began in **June 2023**, peaked in November-January, with temperatures about 2 degrees C above the 1991-2020 average.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This El Niño event has significantly impacted societies and economies, with accurate seasonal forecasts helping countries prepare in climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture, water resources, and health. • Early warnings of weather and climate extremes associated with El Niño have saved numerous lives.
<p>Navy commissions INS Jatayu, MH-60R helicopter squadron</p> 	<p>INS Jatayu:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Indian Navy commissioned the INS Jatayu at Minicoy island, marking its second base in Lakshadweep after INS Dweeprakshak in Kavaratti. • The commissioning of INS Jatayu is part of a phased expansion plan to bolster India's surveillance and security in the strategically located islands near the Nine Degree channel and critical sea lanes of communication. • The presence of INS Jatayu will strengthen the Indian Navy's presence in the Lakshadweep islands, enhancing capacity building, operational reach, and sustenance in the region. • Plans are underway to improve the jetty infrastructure in Minicoy island to accommodate larger vessels, improve connectivity, and enhance response and ability. <p>MH-60R Squadron Commissioned as INAS 334 'Seahawks'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Navy also commissioned its first MH-60R multi-role helicopter squadron, INAS 334 'Seahawks', at Kochi. • The squadron consists of 48 officers and 170 men and is commanded by Captain M. Abhishek Ram, an experimental test pilot with extensive flying experience. • A scintillating fly-past by a formation of Seahawks and a traditional water cannon salute with four helicopters marked the historic moment. • The MH-60R squadron represents a major capability boost for the Indian Navy's rotary fleet and its anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
<p>PM Inaugurates India's First Underwater Metro Line in Kolkata</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Kolkata, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Esplanade-Howrah Maidan section of the Kolkata Metro, marking India's



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first underwater transportation tunnel passing beneath the Hooghly river.

Key points:

- The Esplanade-Howrah Maidan stretch, part of the East-West Corridor, **spans 4.8 kilometers and was constructed at a cost of ₹4,965 crore.**
- Additionally, the **Kavi Subhash-Hemanta Mukhopadhyay section of the New Garia-Airport line, 5.4 kilometers long and costing ₹1,430 crore, was inaugurated.**
- These new sections aim to alleviate road traffic congestion and enhance connectivity in Kolkata.

National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF)

Context:

- On 6th March 2024, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports hosted the finals of the National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF).
- The festival, inspired by the Prime Minister's Mann Ki Baat Address on 31 December 2017, aims to fortify democratic principles, foster discipline and tolerance, and acquaint young people with parliamentary practices.

About:

- The NYPF held at various levels, is organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in **collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and National Service Scheme (NSS).**
- It includes **District Youth Parliament, State Youth Parliament, and National Youth Parliament**, all geared towards raising awareness about active citizenship, encouraging youth engagement, and nurturing leadership qualities among the participants.

Objectives:

- One of the **festival's key objectives is to amplify the voices of youth aged 18-25** through deliberations at District, State, and National levels.
- It aims to **stimulate young people to engage with public issues, form articulate opinions, and develop their decision-making abilities.**
- Moreover, it seeks to cultivate respect for differing views, underscore the importance of rules in discussions, and document youth opinions on the Vision of New India, making them accessible to policymakers.



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Project Seabird



2024 Theme:

- **Young Voices: Engage and Empower for Nation's Transformation**

Context:

- The Defence Minister is set to inaugurate key infrastructure/facilities of **Project Seabird at Naval Base Karwar in Karnataka.**

About:

- The largest naval infrastructure project for India, it involves creation of a naval base at Karwar on the west coast of India.
- **Approved in 1999 after Pokhran-II by the then Defence Minister George Fernandes.**
- Upon completion, this \$3 billion program and effort will provide the **Indian Navy with its largest naval base on the west coast** and also the largest naval base east of the Suez Canal.
- It will be able to accommodate **around 32 warships, 23 submarines, and hangers for several aircraft.**

Purpose

- Providing fleet support and maintaining warships.

Phases

Phase I

- Designed for **10 ships, completed in 2011.**
- Infrastructure included a **breakwater, a pier for 10 ships, a 10,000-ton ship lift, Naval Ship Repair Yard, logistics and armament storage, accommodation for 1000 personnel, Headquarters/Depot Organisation, and a 141-bed Naval Hospital.**

Phase IIA

- CCS(Cabinet Committee on Security) approval for **berthing 32 ships, submarines, and 23 Yardcraft.**
- Includes constructing buildings adhering to MOEF and IGBC guidelines, piers for ships/submarines, technical facilities, electrical substations, and a Covered Dry Berth for four capital ships.
- **Four townships with 10,000 dwelling units for Officers, Senior and Junior Sailors, and Defence Civilian staff.**
- **Setting up a green field dual-use Naval Air**



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	<p>Station with a 2700 m runway and civil-enclave.</p> <p>Economic Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly generated employment for 7,000 personnel and indirectly for 20,000 jobs. • More than 90% materials sourced from India, involving companies like AECOM India Ltd., Larsen & Toubro, ITD Cementation India Ltd, Nagarjuna Construction Company, Navayuga Engineering Company Ltd., and Shapoorji Pallonji Group. • Once operational, estimated 50,000 individuals to reside in Naval Facilities, contributing to the local economy. • Expected industrial growth and investments in Uttara Kannada region, creating employment opportunities. • Naval Air Station to improve air connectivity and boost tourism in Uttar Karnataka and South Goa, providing government employment to around 8,000 personnel.
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Kerala Regional News

<p>Kerala to introduce 'K-Rice' in apparent counter to Centre's 'Bharat Rice'</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state of Kerala is set to launch its own rice brand, "K-Rice," in what is seen as a response to the central government's "Bharat Rice" initiative. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerala's K-Rice: This initiative aims to offer an alternative to consumers, particularly those who hold white and blue ration cards and face limited rice allocation through the public distribution system. • Pricing Strategy: K-Rice is expected to be priced competitively, potentially slightly lower than Bharat Rice.
<p>PM Modi inaugurates Thripunithura line of Kochi Metro in Kerala</p>	<p>Context:</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM Modi dedicated the final phase of the first phase of Kochi Metro (Phase 1B) linking the metro line to Thripunithura in Ernakulam district of Kerala to the nation in virtual mode from Kolkata. • The Prime Minister also inaugurated India's first underwater metro corridor. • The inauguration of the last phase of Kochi Metro completes the more than 28-km metro line between Aluva and Thripunithura which has 25 stations. • The Thripunithura station, where the first phase ends, has been designed with the cultural heritage of the town just outside Kochi and is meant to attract tourists. • The 1.35 lakh sq ft metro station will soon house a dance museum to draw visitors to the site.
<p>Kerala Tourism inks pact with Morex Group for Bekal Tourism Village project</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State government signed an agreement with Morex Group for the development of Bekal Tourism Village project with an estimated investment of ₹250 crore • It stands out as the first investment proposal to become a reality among a raft of schemes showcased at the Tourism Investors Meet 2023 (TIM). <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bekal Tourism Village project aims to transform the coastal town of Bekal in Kerala, into a world-class tourist destination. • Investment: ₹250 crore by the Morex Group, marking the first materialized project from Kerala Tourism's investment proposals. • Focus: Eco-friendly development with strict regulations to maintain pristine surroundings. • Project Stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phase 1: Completed, involving land development and infrastructure preparation. ○ Phase 2: Offering six unique sites for tourism-related infrastructure development adhering to high standards.
<p>App to nominate Ayush doctors for govt. award</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A software for nominating Ayush doctors for the State government's best doctor award and



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	<p>for rating the doctors was released by Health Minister Veena George</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the mobile application for Ayush awards, patients as well as other members of the Ayush medical fraternity can rate Ayush doctors for their performance. Students will also have an opportunity to rate their teachers. The final awards will be decided by the government on the basis of the nominations and ratings and an interview. The mobile application will ensure transparency in the nomination process and help avoid delays in the submission of applications
<p>2022 State television awards announced</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhoomi directed by Midhun Chandran was chosen as the best telefilm in the “Below 20” minutes duration category in the Kerala State Television Awards for 2022 Kanam directed by T.S. Mridul was chosen as the best telefilm in the “Above 20” minutes duration category. Minister for Culture Saji Cherian announced the awards Other notable awards included Best Comedian (Bhasi Vaikam), Best Child Artist (Davanchi Santhosh), and Best Screenplay (Sudhevan PP).

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