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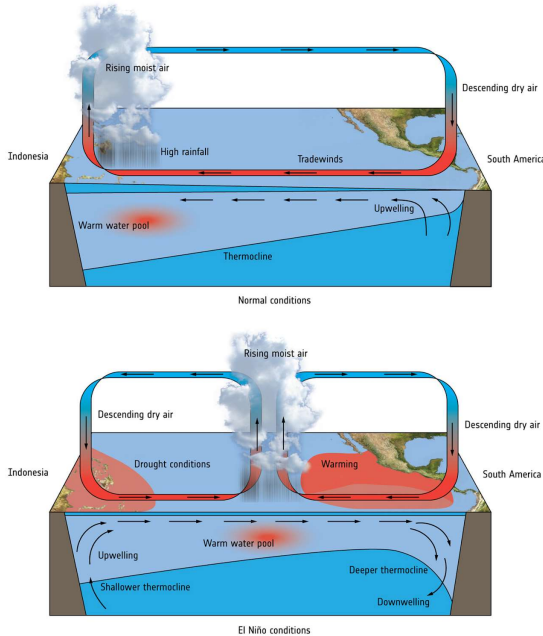
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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

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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.
- 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.



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Navy commissions INS Jatayu, MH-60R helicopter squadron



INS Jatayu:

- 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.**

MH-60R Squadron Commissioned as INAS 334 'Seahawks'

- 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.

PM Inaugurates India's First Underwater Metro Line in Kolkata



Context:

- In Kolkata, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Esplanade-Howrah Maidan section of the Kolkata Metro, marking India's 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.



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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.

2024 Theme:

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



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Project Seabird



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 Station with a 2700 m runway and civil-enclave.**

Economic Benefits

- Directly generated employment for 7,000 personnel and indirectly for 20,000 jobs.
- More than 90% materials sourced from India, involving



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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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