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9 May 2024

West Bengal News

Pollution Threat to Sunderbans' Mangrove Ecosystem: Study

Context:

- A recent study highlights the **growing threat of air pollution to the mangrove ecosystem of Sunderbans** in West Bengal, which serves as a natural shield against extreme weather for Kolkata.
- The study, titled "**Acidity and oxidative potential of atmospheric aerosols over a remote mangrove ecosystem during the advection of anthropogenic plumes,**" was conducted by Professor Abhijeet Chatterjee from Bose Institute and lead author Abhinandan Ghosh from IIT Kanpur, along with other researchers.

Key findings:

- The study indicates that pollutants, particularly black carbon or soot particles, originating from Kolkata and the broader Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP) region, are significantly degrading the air quality in Sunderbans.
- Factors contributing to air pollution in Sunderbans include pollutants transported from the IGP, biomass burning, emissions from local boat services, and outdated motors in local boats, which release heavy toxic metals into the air.
- Sunderbans' mangrove ecosystem is crucial for climate change mitigation, acting as a significant absorber of greenhouse gases, surpassing even the Amazon rainforest in this regard.
- **Acidic components of PM 2.5 pollutants in Sunderbans promote the formation of Reactive Oxygenated Species (ROS) in the presence of heavy metals, posing a threat to living organisms by damaging cells.**
- Despite its sparse population, **Sunderbans experiences severe oxidative stress due to PM 2.5 pollutants**, comparable to many urban areas, emphasizing the urgent need for action to protect its ecosystem.
- Professor Abhijeet Chatterjee **underscores the significant impact of transported and regionally emitted air pollutants on Sunderbans' ecology** and calls for immediate solutions to prevent further catastrophe, especially for the marginalized communities residing there.
- **Unique geographical and socio-economic factors, coupled with the transport of air pollutants from nearby cities and local emissions**, exacerbate air quality issues in Sunderbans, particularly during winter.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations from the study include promoting renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power, controlling tourism activities to reduce plastic pollution, transitioning to electric transport options, and offering subsidies for cleaner cooking fuels to rural areas.• Additionally, measures like discontinuing the transportation of toxic waste, regulating carbon-emitting factories, and controlling brick kilns are suggested to mitigate ecosystem degradation in Sunderbans.
<p>Atreyee River</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Atreyee River, flowing through South Dinajpur, was highlighted at the 'International Conference on Trans-boundary Rivers of South Asia: Fostering Regional Cooperation for Environmental Sustainability' in Dhaka, Bangladesh. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organized jointly by Manchester University's Geography Department, North South University's South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance, and Bangladesh's National River Protection Commission.• Tuhin Shubhra Mandal, an environmental activist from Balurghat and secretary of Dishari Sankalpo, presented a research paper focusing on the Atreyee River's significance in South Dinajpur.• Challenges Highlighted: Mandal's paper discussed the Atreyee River's challenges, such as water scarcity, the impact of rubber dams in Bangladesh, and the hardships faced by fishermen and farmers due to fish loss.• Discussions: Emphasized the need for collaborative efforts between Bangladesh and India for Atreyee River conservation and management, along with international initiatives for river conservation.• Advocacy for Conservation: Mandal stressed the importance of preserving the Atreyee River and called for international cooperation in addressing its challenges, including water conservation and sustainable tourism.• Recent Development: During her Lok Sabha election campaign in Balurghat, Mamata Banerjee highlighted the longstanding issue of water scarcity in the Atreyee, mentioning her communication with the Bangladesh government. In response, the state government constructed a rubber dam at Balurghat to retain water during droughts, benefiting agriculture and fishing communities.



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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

163rd Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore

Context:

- The 163rd birth anniversary of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Kolkata.

About:

- Born on 7th May 1861 in Calcutta.
- Also known as 'Gurudev', 'Kabiguru', and 'Biswakabi'.
- A versatile literary figure and polymath, he reshaped Bengali literature and music.
- Close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, conferring him the title of Mahatma.
- Advocated for unity in diversity for India's national integration.
- **Addressed the World Parliament for Religions in 1929 and 1937.**
- Composed over 2000 songs, known as 'Rabindra Sangeet', characterized by unique lyrical and fluid style.
- Modernized Bengali prose and poetry, with notable works including **Gitanjali, Ghare-Baire, and Gora.**
- Authored the song 'Ekla Chalo Re'.
- Established **Vishwa-Bharati University in 1921, challenging conventional education.**
- **Awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913** for Gitanjali, becoming the first non-European laureate.
- Knighted by British King George V in 1915, later renounced knighthood in protest after the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre.

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