

**29 October 2024**

## Mangroves: the human and climate savior



### Key Points:

- ❖ Cyclone Dana, which made landfall close to Bhitarkanika National Park and Dhamra Port in Odisha at 3.30 am on Friday, did not cause significant damage as many had feared.
- ❖ Although efforts by state authorities helped limit the devastation — for instance, Odisha evacuated one million people to cyclone shelters — there was one non-human factor that also played a crucial role. It was the rich mangrove forest cover of Bhitarkanika.
- ❖ Mangroves are a unique type of coastal ecosystem found in tropical and subtropical regions.
- ❖ They are dense forests of salt-tolerant trees and shrubs that thrive in intertidal zones, where land meets the sea.
- ❖ These ecosystems are characterized by their ability to withstand harsh conditions, such as saline water, tidal fluctuations, and muddy, oxygen-poor soils.
- ❖ Mangrove forests serve an important role in stabilizing and reinforcing coastlands. In this way, they protect these coastlands from erosion that results from action of waves and tides that occur regularly.
- ❖ They act as a shield against storms. This capability of the mangrove forests has saved valuable property and countless lives around the world from imminent destruction.

## How do mangroves protect against cyclones?



- ❖ When cyclones strike, mangrove forests act as a barrier against storm surges — a change in sea level caused by a storm, usually leading to large waves — by obstructing the water flow with their roots, husks, and leaves, according to a report published by the World Bank Group.
- ❖ A different report by the group revealed that some of the mangrove species such as *Sonneratia apetala* “reduced the surge height from 4 cm to 16.5 cm with 50 m to 2 km wide mangrove strips, and reduced the water flow velocity from 29% to 92% with 50 m or 100 m wide mangrove forests”.

## How vast is Bhitarkanika’s mangrove forest cover?



- ❖ Currently, Odisha has a reserve of a mangrove forest area of 231 square kilometres with a major chunk lying in Bhitarkanika.

- ❖ It stands second only to Sundarbans in West Bengal. Besides Bhitarkanika in Kendrapara, the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur and Puri are also home to mangroves, otherwise known as coastal woodland.
- ❖ While 82 sq km area in Bhitarkanika is densely mangroveinfested, 95 sq km area has moderate mangrove forest. The coastal patches spread across 672 sq km were declared the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary in 1975.
- ❖ The core area of the sanctuary, with an area of 145 km, got the National Park tag in September 1998.

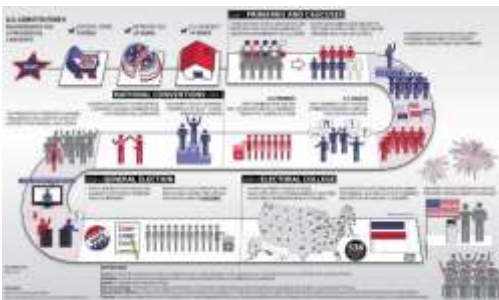
### US Presidential Elections 2024

#### Eligibility Requirements:

To run for President, a candidate must be at least 35 years old, a natural-born citizen of the United States, and have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years.

#### Procedure of Election of US President

- ❖ **Primaries:** State-run elections where voters cast secret ballots for their preferred presidential candidates.
- ❖ **Caucuses:** Party-run meetings where members discuss and vote openly to choose their preferred candidate and delegates.
- ❖ **Purpose:** To select delegates who will support particular candidates at the national party conventions.



#### National Conventions

- ❖ Each major political party holds a national convention typically in the summer before the election. Here, delegates from primaries and caucuses endorse a candidate.
- ❖ The candidate with a majority of delegates receives the party's nomination.
- ❖ If no candidate has a majority, additional rounds of voting occur until a nominee is selected.

#### Timing: Summer 2024 Purpose:

- ❖ To officially nominate the party's candidate for President and Vice President.



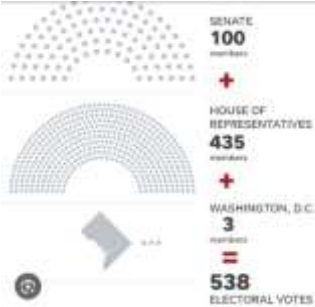
#### General Election Campaigning

- ❖ Following the conventions, the nominated presidential candidates campaign across the country, participating in debates and rallies to garner support from the general electorate.
- ❖ **Timing:** Post-convention to early November 2024 Purpose: To campaign for the general election.
- ❖ **Process:** Candidates from the major parties (Democratic and Republican) and any third-party or independent candidates campaign across the country. Debates, rallies, advertisements, and other campaign activities are conducted to persuade voters.

#### General Election

- ❖ The general election takes place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Voters cast their ballots for presidential candidates.

- ❖ In the general election, voters are actually voting for electors in the Electoral College, not directly for a president and vice president.
- ❖ **Timing:** November 5, 2024 (Election Day)  
**Purpose:** To select the President and Vice President



### Electoral College

- ❖ The Electoral College is the body that officially elects the President and Vice President. It consists of 538 electors, with each state allocated electors based on its congressional representation.

### Winner-Takes-All System:

- ❖ In all but two states (Alaska and Arizona), the candidate who wins the majority of votes in a state wins all of that state's electoral votes.

### Proportional System:

- ❖ Alaska and Arizona allocate their electoral votes based on the proportion of the vote each candidate gets.
- ❖ **Timing:** December 2024
- ❖ **Purpose:** To officially elect the President and Vice President.

### Electors Meeting

- ❖ In mid-December, electors meet in their respective states to cast their votes for President and Vice President.
- ❖ Congressional Count In January, Congress counts these votes in a joint session, and the candidates with a majority of at least 270 electoral votes are declared winners.
- ❖ **Timing:** Early January 2025

- ❖ **Purpose:** To formally count the electoral votes. Inauguration The President-elect and Vice President-elect take the oath of office and are inaugurated on January 20th following the election.
- ❖ **Purpose:** To officially install the new President and Vice President

### SBI Named Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine



### Key Points:

- ❖ State Bank of India (SBI) has been recognized as the Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine during its 31st Annual Best Bank Awards in Washington.
- ❖ SBI Chairman CS Setty accepted the award, reflecting the bank's commitment to exceptional service and financial inclusion.
- ❖ State Bank of India (SBI) has been awarded the title of Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine during its 31st Annual Best Bank Awards, held in Washington, coinciding with the Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank.
- ❖ SBI Chairman CS Setty accepted the award, highlighting the bank's dedication to exceptional services and its role in promoting financial inclusion across the nation.
- ❖ This recognition underscores SBI's long-standing commitment to winning customer trust and its pivotal role in the evolving Indian banking landscape.

### Bhubaneswar's Public Transport System Shines at UMI 2024



#### Key Points:

- ❖ The 17th Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference & Exhibition 2024 concluded with a valedictory session led by Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs and Power, Shri Manohar Lal, at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ❖ The 17th Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference & Exhibition 2024 concluded with a valedictory session led by Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs and Power, Shri Manohar Lal, at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ❖ This three-day event brought together key stakeholders and experts to discuss advancements in sustainable urban mobility solutions.

### Bhubaneswar Recognized for Excellence in Public Transport

- ❖ Bhubaneswar was awarded the title of 'City with the Best Public Transport System' at the Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference & Exhibition 2024.
- ❖ The award was presented to Odisha's Housing & Urban Development Minister, Dr. Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Manohar Lal.

#### Minister's Statement

- ❖ Dr. Mahapatra emphasized that the award symbolizes a collective commitment to creating a sustainable future aligned with the "Viksit Odisha" vision.

- ❖ He highlighted the significant improvements in public transport that have altered the travel experience for citizens of Odisha.
- ❖ The state has adopted innovative technologies and expanded its transport network, prioritizing passenger safety and accessibility.

### Shaktikanta Das Earns A+ in Central Bank Report Card 2024



#### Key Points:

- ❖ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been awarded an A+ grade in the Central Bank Report Cards 2024, marking his second consecutive year of recognition.
- ❖ This accolade was presented by Global Finance during an event in Washington, D.C. The grades, ranging from "A+" to "F,"
- ❖ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been awarded an A+ grade in the Central Bank Report Cards 2024, marking his second consecutive year of recognition.
- ❖ This accolade was presented by Global Finance during an event in Washington, D.C. The grades, ranging from "A+" to "F," assess central banks on their effectiveness in critical areas such as inflation control, economic growth targets, currency stability, and interest rate management.

#### Award Recognition

- ❖ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das received an A+ grade in the Central Bank Report Cards 2024 for the second consecutive year.

- ❖ The award was presented by Global Finance in Washington, D.C.

### Grading Scale

- ❖ Grades are assigned on an “A+” to “F” scale.

### Global Finance’s Report

- ❖ Since 1994, Global Finance has published the Central Bank Report Cards annually.
- ❖ The report grades central bank governors from nearly 100 key countries, territories, and regions, including the European Union and various central banks in the Caribbean and Africa.

### About Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India, abbreviated as RBI, is India’s central bank and regulatory body responsible for regulation of the Indian banking system.
- ❖ It is responsible for the control, issue and maintaining supply of the Indian rupee.
- ❖ The RBI was established in 1934, under the Reserve Bank of India Act.
- ❖ The bank was set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton Young Commission.
- ❖ Though privately owned initially, it was nationalized in 1949 and since then fully owned by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

### Sohrai Paintings: A Gift to Russian President Vladimir Putin



### Key Points:

- ❖ Prime Minister Modi presented Russian President Vladimir Putin with a Sohrai painting from Hazaribagh district in Jharkhand.
- ❖ This painting style, recognized under India’s One District One Product (ODOP) initiative, symbolizes the unique cultural identity of Jharkhand’s indigenous communities.
- ❖ Traditionally created during the Sohrai harvest festival, these paintings are a vibrant representation of agrarian life, symbolizing the harmony between humans and nature.
- ❖ The women of tribal communities have passed down this art form across generations, using it as a means of storytelling and expression.

### India Ranks 79th in World Justice Project’s Rule of Law Index 2023



### Key Points:

- ❖ India ranks 79th out of 142 countries in the World Justice Project’s Rule of Law Index 2023, reflecting a continuing decline in the rule of law globally.
- ❖ This year, 59% of surveyed countries saw a decrease in rule of law, with India’s score dropping from 0.50 in 2022 to 0.49.
- ❖ The World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index 2023 reveals that India ranks 79th out of 142 countries, reflecting a continuing decline in the rule of law globally.
- ❖ This year’s Index shows a decline in the rule of law in 59% of the countries surveyed, marking the sixth consecutive year of global declines since 2016.

- ❖ Notably, India has experienced a drop in several key areas, particularly in the Fundamental Rights factor, where its score fell from 0.50 in 2022 to 0.49 in 2023.
- ❖ This decline is attributed to ongoing issues such as corruption, judicial inefficiency, and government overreach.

**Global and Regional**

- ❖ Context Globally,
- ❖ Denmark holds the top position in the WJP Index, while Venezuela ranks lowest. In South Asia, India is third behind Nepal (71st) and Sri Lanka (77th).
- ❖ The overall trend shows that the judicial and civil systems in India continue to struggle, with rising corruption impacting their effectiveness.

**Bibhab Talukdar Wins IUCN's Top Conservation Leadership Award**



**Key Points:**

- ❖ Assam-based conservation scientist Bibhab Kumar Talukdar received the Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership from the IUCN's Species Survival Commission for his notable efforts in species conservation, particularly for Asian rhinos.
- ❖ Assam-based conservation scientist Bibhab Kumar Talukdar has been awarded the prestigious Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Abu Dhabi.

- ❖ This honor, awarded during the 5th IUCN SSC Leaders' Meeting, acknowledges his groundbreaking contributions to species conservation, particularly for Asian rhinos, through both leadership and on-ground initiatives.
- ❖ Talukdar has been an influential conservationist associated with IUCN SSC since 1991 and became Chair of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group in 2008.

**India finishes U23 World Wrestling Championships 2024 with 9 Medals**



**Key Points:**

- ❖ The Indian wrestling contingent finished its U23 World Wrestling Championships 2024 campaign with nine medals—one gold, one silver, and seven bronze.
- ❖ Last year also, the Indian contingent had won 9 medals -one gold,2 silver and 6 bronze medals at the U23 World Wrestling Championships 2023 held in Tirana.
- ❖ The U23 World Wrestling Championships 2024 was organised by the world wrestling governing body United World Wrestling (UWW) and hosted by Albania in Tirana from 21 to 27 October 2024.
- ❖ At the Tirana event, competitions were held in 10 weight categories of freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling. Both men and women wrestlers under the age of 23 years participated in the Championships. India sent a 30-member wrestling team for the Tirana Championship.

### Chirag Chikkara wins solitary gold for India

- ❖ Chirag Chikkara won the solitary gold medal for India in the U23 World Wrestling Championships 2024.
- ❖ He won the gold medal in the men's freestyle 57kg event.
- ❖ Chirag Chikkara is the third Indian wrestler to win a gold medal in the U23 World Wrestling Championships after Paris Olympic bronze medalists Aman Sehrawat and Reetika Hooda.
- ❖ Aman Sehrawat won the gold medal in the 2022 Championships in the 57kg freestyle, while Reetika won the gold medal in the 76kg category at the 2023 edition of the Championship.
- ❖ In 2023 edition of the U23 World Wrestling Championships, Indian wrestlers were competing under the United World Wrestling flag as the Wrestling Federation of India was suspended by the United World Wrestling.

### US, Japan and S.Korea to support digital infrastructure in India



#### Key Points:

- ❖ The United States, Japan, and South Korea announced on 26 October 2024 that they will launch a new framework to collaborate with the Indian private sector to support digital infrastructure in India.
- ❖ The new framework is called the Digital Infrastructure Growth Initiative for India Framework (DiGi Framework).

#### Who will support the DiGi Framework?

- ❖ The DiGi Framework will be supported by the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, the Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank) and the

Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

- ❖ In August 2023 the DFC, JBIC and Korea Eximbank signed an agreement to strengthen coordination and cooperation among like-minded countries in order to drive sustainable economic growth in the Indo-Pacific region by supporting private sector investment in infrastructure.
- ❖ The recently announced DiGi Framework is part of the agreement reached by the three in August 2023.

#### Aim of the DiGi Framework

- ❖ The DiGi Framework, in partnership with the Indian private sector, will promote investments in digital infrastructure in India.
- ❖ It will provide support to meet the needs of strategic digital infrastructure deals in India.
- ❖ It will support projects in the information and communications technologies (ICT) sectors like Open RAN (radio access network), 5G in the telecom sector, submarine cables, optical fibre networks, telecom towers, data centres, smart cities, e-commerce, artificial intelligence (AI), and quantum technology.
- ❖ The framework will also encourage and support dialogues with the Indian government and private sector so as to promote private sector funding for digital infrastructure projects in India.

#### About the Institutions

- ❖ The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) was set up by the United States government in 2019. Its headquarters is in Washington, D.C.
- ❖ It is an American government development financial institution that partners with the private sector to finance solutions to the most critical challenges facing the developing world, such as energy, healthcare, critical infrastructure, and technology.

### Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)

- ❖ The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) was established by the Japanese government in 2012.
- ❖ Its headquarters is in Tokyo.
- ❖ It is owned by the government of Japan, and it provides loans to foreign countries or foreign private companies so that they can get goods and services from Japanese companies.

### The Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank)

- ❖ The Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank) is owned by the South Korean government. It was established in 1976 and has its headquarters in Seoul.
- ❖ It provides loans to foreign governments/companies so that they can buy South Korean goods and services.

### India wins 24 medals at the Japan Para-Badminton International 2024



#### Key Points:

- ❖ Indian para-badminton players delivered an impressive performance at the Japan ParaBadminton Internationals 2024 by winning 24 medals-six gold, nine silver and nine bronze.
- ❖ The Japan Para-Badminton Internationals 2024 was held in Tokyo, Japan, from 22-27 October 2024. It was a level 2 category Para-Badminton tournament.

### Navy launches 7th GRSE's Anti-Submarine Warfare Vessel 'Abhay'



#### Key Points:

- ❖ The Indian Navy's Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) Abhay, constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd, was ceremoniously launched at L&T's Kattupalli shipyard near Chennai.
- ❖ The Arnala-class ships will eventually replace the existing Abhay-class ASW corvettes, currently serving the Indian Navy. This vessel is the seventh in an eight-ship ASW SWC series, an initiative from a 2019 contract between the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and GRSE.
- ❖ Designed for anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, these advanced craft are also capable of Low-Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO) and mine-laying activities, enhancing the Navy's operational reach and defensive capabilities along India's coastlines.
- ❖ The ASW SWCs are compact, waterjetpropelled vessels capable of reaching speeds up to 25 knots, providing agility and swift response in tactical situations.
- ❖ These 77-meter-long, 10-meter-wide warships are engineered for powerful subsurface surveillance in coastal waters.
- ❖ They can track various surface and underwater targets, and conduct coordinated anti-submarine operations with aircraft.

