

DAILY PT POINTERS

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HEADLINES OF THE DAY



Indian Express-Environment(GSIII)-Page 8

Pushed by El Nino, 2024 set to become warmest year: WMO

Jan-Sept 2024 global mean surface air temp 1.54°C above pre-industrial avg

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 11

THE YEAR 2024 is set to become the warmest year ever, marked by exceptionally high global mean temperatures, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has said in its latest report. It also said that the 2015-2024 decade was on its way to becoming the warmest decade ever on record.

The WMO report, titled "Statement of Climate 2024", was released at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) that got underway at Baku, Azerbaijan, on Monday.

"The January-September 2024 global mean surface air temperature was 1.54 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial average. This was boosted by a warming El Nino event," said the WMO report.

However, long-term warm-

2015.

The primary cause for the warming, according to global experts, was the strong El Niño event that kept the global temperatures above average for 16 consecutive months between June 2023 and September 2024.

The ocean heat, too, showed a higher-than-average trend this year, with a close similarity with the trends of 2023. "The ocean warming trend will continue," the WMO report said.

The global report further highlighted the fast depleting sea ice extent at both the poles with the Antarctic and Arctic reporting it at below average levels in 2024.

"The Antarctic sea ice extent had fallen to its annual minimum of 2 million sq km, the second lowest since satellite data available since 1979. The annual maximum sea ice extent, too, was the second lowest ever at 17.2 million sq km. The sea ice

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has declared 2024 as the likely warmest year on record, with global temperatures 1.54°C above pre-industrial averages from January to September. This warming is largely driven by a strong El Niño event, which has kept temperatures above average for 16 consecutive months from June 2023 to September 2024. The report, released at the COP29 conference in Baku, also highlights that the 2015-2024 decade is on track to become the warmest on record.
- Despite this short-term warming, global temperatures over the long term remain below the 1.5°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement to limit global warming. Additionally, ocean heat has been consistently higher-than-average, and sea ice extent in both the Arctic and Antarctic has continued to decline, with Antarctica reaching its second-lowest sea ice extent ever recorded.
- These trends signal ongoing challenges in addressing climate change, with rapidly melting sea ice and rising temperatures continuing to shape the global climate.

Indian Express-Governance(GSII)-Page 8

Govt: NGOs to lose FCRA licence over conversions, anti-development acts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 11

THE CENTRE on Monday announced that any NGO involved in anti-developmental activities and forced religious conversions will face cancellation of their registration under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010.

A notice issued on November 8 by Director (FCRA) K Sanjayan said that any NGO whose acceptance of foreign funding may affect social or religious harmony will face cancellation of its FCRA registration. "...If an NGO has diverted foreign contribution for carrying out anti-development activities or inciting malicious protests, field inquiry has revealed the likelihood of personal gain by the organisation or by the office-

bearers, or the foreign contribution is likely to have been utilised for undesirable activities, linkage with terrorist organisations or anti-national organisations, key functionaries have links with terrorist or radical organisations, their FCRA registration would be cancelled," the notice said.

"If any field agency has reported adverse inputs against the NGO and its acceptance of foreign funding is likely to affect social, religious harmony or is involved in induced, forceful religious conversion or proselytisation or its office-bearers have linkage with radical organisations, the organisation will also face action under the FCRA," it added.

According to the notice, not utilising any foreign funding for projects as per the aims and objectives of the NGO would also invite FCRA cancellation.

- the Indian government announced that NGOs involved in anti-development activities or forced religious conversions will face cancellation of their Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) registration. The new directive, issued by the Director of FCRA, K Sanjayan, states that NGOs found to be using foreign funds for activities that harm social or religious harmony, promote malicious protests, or have links with terrorist or radical organizations will have their registration revoked.
- Additionally, NGOs that misuse foreign contributions for personal gain or fail to use funds according to their stated objectives will also face action. The notice further emphasized that any NGO involved in forced religious conversions or proselytization, or whose leaders have connections with radical organizations, would be subject to FCRA cancellation.

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Canada shuts visa fast track: options for Indian students

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
ALANCHAR, NOVEMBER 11

CANADA HAS ANNOUNCED the closure of its Student Direct Stream (SDS) program for students from 14 countries, including India, China, and Pakistan, effective November 9 onward.

Concerns have since been raised about the prospects of Indian students who had hoped to benefit from the program. However, immigration experts said the regular visa route allows ample opportunity to secure approvals. Canada largely remains a favourable destination for Indians seeking education abroad.

What does the closure of the SDS route mean for Indian students?

The SDS programme allowed for faster processing of student visa applications. It was launched in 2018 for admission into post-secondary Designated Learning Institutions (DLI), which are colleges approved by the Canadian territorial or provincial government for hosting international students.

It had strict requirements, such as paying one year's tuition fee in advance and providing a mandatory Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) worth \$20,635 as proof of funds. It was a popular program for many Indian students, who must now fall back on the regular visa route.

How can Indian students apply for Canadian visas?

Immigration experts said students can apply under the regular, non-SDS application

category, which is much more flexible now. For example, students are not required to pay the full one-year tuition fee upfront, but only for six months – and show sufficient funds to cover their living expenses. This makes the process more affordable for students unable to meet the more costly SDS requirements.

While the GIC is still an option, it is not mandatory under the normal route. "Previously, many students with good candidate profiles could not afford to pay the full one-year fee, leading them to choose other destinations like Germany or Europe. But now, studying in Canada has become more accessible," Aman Parmar, a visa consultant at a Punjab-based firm, said.

Parmar added that based on their academic profiles, students should apply to, and aim to secure a Letter of Acceptance (LOA)

from a reputable college in Canada. They should also include an attestation letter from the province where the institute is located when paying the tuition fee to bolster their chances of approval.

What about the IELTS/PTE requirement, which was part of SDS eligibility?

The English language proficiency tests (International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Pearson Test of English (PTE), requiring a minimum of six bands and 60 marks respectively, were part of the SDS process. However, under the non-SDS application route, students have other alternatives even if they do not have these specific scores.

Students with an overall score of 6 bands across modules and 5.5 bands can also apply. Experts said a good score can always

strengthen an aspirant's application. Any other proof of English proficiency acceptable in Canada and a strong academic record can further improve a student's profile.

What likely challenges should students be prepared for?

First, while students no longer need to pay a full year's tuition fee upfront, they will still need to demonstrate that they can financially support their stay in Canada. However, the required funds are much lower now – around Rs 5 to 6 lakh is sufficient in many colleges. The SDS program required around four times that amount.

Additionally, students must work towards a strong visa application. This means having a good academic record, and a plan for higher education. Visa officers prioritise

students who are serious about their educational goals and have a realistic plan for achieving professional success in Canada.

The measure to scrap the SDS is seen as part of larger changes in the country's liberal immigration policy. Earlier this year, Canada introduced a cap on the number of study visas it will issue in the next few years, but the number is quite generous – it aims to grant study visas to 305,000 international students annually until 2027. If a student applies to a reputable educational institution with a study permit and a strong LOA, they are likely to be accepted, even if the number of applicants is high.

Students often faced refusals under the SDS category if their academic profiles were not strong enough – the same principle applies under the non-SDS route as well.

- Canada Ends Student Direct Stream (SDS) Programme:
 - Closure: Effective November 8, ending fast-track visa processing for students from 14 countries, including India.
 - Initial Launch: Introduced in 2018 for post-secondary Designated Learning Institutions (DLI). Implications for Students:
 - SDS Requirements: Previously required paying one year's tuition in advance and a \$20,635 Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC).
 - New Pathways: Students can still apply under the regular, non-SDS category, which is more flexible and affordable, requiring only six months of tuition fees and sufficient funds for living expenses.
 - Accessibility: More affordable, benefiting students who couldn't afford the full one-year fee.

LIGNOSAT: THE WORLD'S FIRST SATELLITE MADE OF WOOD

ANAGHA JAYAKUMAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 11

THE WORLD'S first satellite with wooden components was launched aboard a SpaceX rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, United States, last week. The intention is to establish that wood is a space-grade material.

Built by researchers at Japan's Kyoto University and the Tokyo-based logging company Sumitomo Forestry, LignoSat has been flown to the International Space Station (ISS). In December, it will be released in orbit around 400 km above the Earth.

If successful, the wooden satellite can help make space activity more environment-friendly. It could also lead to the use of timber as a renewable building material in future exploration of destinations such as the Moon and Mars.

What is LignoSat?

LignoSat — named after the Latin word for wood, lignum — is a satellite that weighs just 900 gram, and is the size of a coffee mug.



LignoSat wooden satellite is the size of a coffee mug. Reuters

magnolia. In 2022, the researchers sent samples to the ISS, where they stayed for eight months and were exposed to extreme temperatures, intense cosmic rays, and dangerous solar particles.

Ultimately, magnolia was selected for its lightweight properties and resistance to cracking. After processing the wood, the team took the help of four printers to

- the world's first wood-panelled satellite, LignoSat, was launched into space to test the viability of timber as a renewable building material for space exploration. Developed by Kyoto University and Sumitomo Forestry, the tiny satellite, measuring just 4 inches and weighing 900 grams, arrived at the International Space Station (ISS) aboard a SpaceX Dragon capsule. After a month in the ISS, it will be released into orbit for a six-month mission.
- LignoSat is made from magnolia wood, using traditional Japanese craft techniques without screws or glue. The satellite aims to assess the durability of wood in space's extreme conditions, where temperatures range from -100°C to 100°C every 45 minutes. It will also test wood's potential to reduce the impact of space radiation on electronics.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Defense(GSIII)

Ministry of Defence



First Ever Space Exercise 'Antariksha Abhyas – 2024' hosted by Defence Space Agency begins in New Delhi

India is well positioned to navigate the challenges posed to space based capabilities: CDS Gen Anil Chauhan

Posted On: 11 NOV 2024 7:53PM by PIB Delhi

- Antariksha Abhyas – 2024 is a three-day military exercise, being conducted from November 11-13, 2024, by the Defence Space Agency under the Integrated Defence Staff. It aims to address the growing threats to space-based assets and services and enhance India's military space capabilities.
 - Key Objectives:
 - War-gaming space threats: The exercise focuses on understanding vulnerabilities in space-based assets and services and how disruptions might affect military operations.
- Collaboration and Integration: It will help integrate India's space capabilities into military operations and strengthen national strategic objectives in space.
- Understanding operational dependency: Participants will explore the interdependencies between various military stakeholders and space assets.
 - Participants:
 - Military branches: Personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force will participate.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



PIB-Environment(GSIII)



- A new fire resilient dual blooming species experiences a burst of flowering triggered by the grassland fires and has an inflorescence structure that is rare in Indian species has been discovered in the Western Ghats which is known to harbour many yet-to-be-discovered species.
- *Dicliptera polymorpha* is a distinctive species, notable for its fire-resilient, pyrophytic habit and its unusual dual-blooming pattern. In addition to its typical post-monsoon flowering, the species exhibits a second, vigorous burst of flowering triggered by the grassland fires commonly set by locals in the region. This species is taxonomically unique, with inflorescence units (cymules) that develop into spicate inflorescences. It is the only known Indian species with this spicate inflorescence structure, with its closest allied being found in Africa. The species was named *Dicliptera polymorpha* to reflect its diverse morphological traits. The first specimens were collected during the 2020 monsoon, and the population was monitored by Aditya Dharap for next few years to confirm the consistency of its characteristics.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-Environment(GSIII)

UN Climate Change Conference, COP29 Begins At Baku In Azerbaijan



- The U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP29) has opened in Baku, Azerbaijan, focusing on securing a new climate finance target for countries most vulnerable to climate change. Dubbed the 'Finance COP,' the two-week event will emphasize the need for enhanced finance, technology, and energy resources, especially for India and the Global South, to meet climate targets and protect frontline communities.
- India, a key player in shaping global climate finance frameworks, will advocate for a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance, surpassing the outdated \$100 billion annual target set in 2009. According to India's Economic Survey 2023-24, India will require approximately \$2.5 trillion by 2030 to meet its Paris Agreement commitments.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Air-Places in news(GSI)

Magnitude 6.8 Earthquake Strikes Eastern Cuba



A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 6.8 struck eastern Cuba last night, causing widespread damage in Santiago de Cuba and surrounding areas.

- Cuba is a country in the Caribbean region.
- Capital: Havana
- Location: Cuba is located where the northern Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Ocean meet.
- Cuba's terrain is mostly flat or rolling plains, with rugged hills and mountains in the southeast.
- Highest point is Pico Turquino
- It is a part of the Sierra Maestra Mountain range, located in the southeast of the island.
- The country's longest river is the Cauto;

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Will financial roadblocks continue to hinder conservation efforts?

A big bone of contention at the COP16 was the mobilisation of resources to meet the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework target of \$700 billion a year for biodiversity conservation by 2030, including \$30 billion from developed countries. But pledges at COP16 totalled \$163 million

Aparna Sundaresan
Indu K. Murthy

The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity recently concluded in Cali, Colombia.

Representatives from U.N. countries tried to negotiate measures to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, which threatens both human well-being and the stability of human societies. A key sticking point was who'd pay for implementing these measures and how much.

A highlight of COP16 was the engagement of Indigenous people and local communities – but otherwise it raised a big red flag: it revealed countries are not on track to meet the “30x30” target, which calls for the world to protect 30% of the world’s land and oceans by 2030.

How much of a setback is this?

The highs of COP16

Inclusive decision-making: Negotiators



- The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity concluded in Cali, Colombia, focusing on measures to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

Key Highlights:

Inclusive Decision-Making: Establishment of a permanent body of Indigenous people and local communities for biodiversity decisions.

Biodiversity Funding: Introduction of the ‘Cali Fund’ requiring major corporations to share financial benefits from genetic resources, potentially exceeding \$1 billion annually. Half of the funds allocated to Indigenous communities.

- India unveiled an updated NBSAP, aiming to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and achieve harmony with nature by 2050, emphasizing inter-agency cooperation and community involvement