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### 1. Delhi declaration found middle path between promotion and regulation of AI

#### Why in news?

The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), an alliance of 29 members, has unanimously adopted the New Delhi declaration underscoring the need to mitigate risks arising from the development and deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, and promoting equitable access to critical resources for AI innovation, including computing and high-quality diverse datasets.

The declaration stands out as a contrast from the agreement signed at the United Kingdom AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, a month ago, where countries had committed to first tackle the risks emanating from AI systems.

The New Delhi declaration has attempted to find a balance between innovation and the risks associated with AI systems. While it is largely upbeat about the economic benefits that AI can bring, it also flags issues around fairness, privacy, and intellectual property rights that will have to be taken into consideration.

#### What does the GPAI New Delhi declaration on AI say?

The declaration said that a global framework for use of AI should be rooted in democratic values and human rights; safeguarding dignity and well-being; ensuring personal data protection; the protection of applicable intellectual property rights, privacy, and security; fostering innovation; and promoting trustworthy, responsible, sustainable, and human-centred use of AI.

GPAI members also promoted equitable access to critical resources for AI innovation including computing, high-quality diverse datasets, algorithms, software, testbeds, and other AI-relevant resources.

The declaration also agreed to support AI innovation in the agriculture sector as a new "thematic priority".

#### How does the New Delhi declaration contrast with the Bletchley declaration?

While the GPAI New Delhi declaration addresses the need to tackle AI-related risks, it largely supports innovation in the technology in various sectors, including agriculture and healthcare. The essence of the declaration can be summed up as follows: AI is

inherently good and is a catalyst for economic growth, but some harms need to be mitigated along the way.

By contrast, the declaration that was signed at the UK AI Safety Summit last month put security and safety risks related to AI in the centre of the discussions. At the Bletchley Park meeting, 28 major countries including the United States, China, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, and India, and the European Union agreed to sign on a declaration saying global action is needed to tackle the potential risks of AI.

The declaration noted the “potential for serious, even catastrophic, harm, either deliberate or unintentional, stemming from the most significant capabilities of these AI models”, as well as risks beyond frontier AI, including those of bias and privacy. “Frontier AI” is defined as highly capable foundation generative AI models that could possess dangerous capabilities that can pose severe risks to public safety.

### **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence**

The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI, pronounced “gee-pay”) is an international initiative established to guide the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in a manner that respects human rights and the shared democratic values of its members.

GPAI seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by supporting research and applied activities in areas that are directly relevant to policymakers in the realm of AI. It brings together experts from industry, civil society, governments, and academia to collaborate on the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence.

### **History**

The partnership was first proposed by Canada and France at the 2018 44th G7 summit, and officially launched in June 2020 with fifteen founding members: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) hosts a dedicated secretariat to support GPAI's governing bodies and activities. UNESCO joined the partnership in December 2020 as an observer. On November 11, 2021, Czechia, Israel and few more EU countries also joined the GPAI, bringing the total membership to 25 countries. Since the November 2022 summit, the list of members stands at 29.

Austria, Chile, Finland, Malaysia, Norway, Slovakia and Switzerland were invited. The seven, however, are pending membership approval.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: The Indian Express

## 2. How the hottest summer ever affected the Arctic: 5 things you need to know

### Introduction

The 2023 summer was the warmest on record in the Arctic, which, due to climate change, has warmed nearly four times faster than the globe since 1979. Overall, the past year was the sixth-warmest year the Arctic had experienced since reliable record-keeping began in 1900.

These were some key findings of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) annual Arctic Report Card.

The rising temperatures in the northern polar region contributed to unprecedented wildfires that forced communities to evacuate, a decline in sea ice extent, devastating floods, food insecurity, and a rise in sea level, according to the study.

Here is a look at the most severe consequences of the soaring temperatures in the Arctic.

### 1. THAWING OF SUBSEA PERMAFROST

Subsea permafrost is essentially frozen soil beneath the seabed that contains organic matter. While it has been gradually thawing for thousands of years, (now) warmer ocean temperatures are accelerating this process, making it a cause of concern for scientists.

Just as with permafrost on land, when subsea permafrost thaws, the organic matter it contains decays and releases methane and carbon dioxide – greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming and worsen ocean acidification.

To make matters worse, there isn't enough research to estimate how much greenhouse gases will subsea permafrost release in the following years and what will be its effect on global warming.

### 2. FOOD INSECURITY

Due to the impact of climate change on freshwater bodies and marine ecosystems, Western Alaska recorded another year of extremely low numbers of Chinook and chum salmon — 81% and 92% below the 30-year mean, respectively. The size of adult salmon has also decreased, according to the report.

It led to fishery closures, worsened user conflicts, and had profound cultural and food security impacts in Indigenous communities that have been tied to salmon for millennia.

### **3. RAGING WILDFIRES**

Canada — 40% of its land mass is considered Arctic and Northern — was among the worst affected regions when it comes to wildfires. The country witnessed its worst wildfire season on record with fires burning more than 10 million acres in the Northwest Territories.

This happened as high temperatures dried up vegetation and soil, coupled with below-average rainfall, creating perfect conditions for wildfires to burn more easily.

### **4. SEVERE FLOODING**

Rising temperatures have led to dramatic thinning of the Mendenhall Glacier, located in Alaska, over the past 20 years. As a result, over the years, the meltaway water has annually caused floods in the region.

### **5. GREENLAND ICE SHEET MELTING**

The NOAA report noted that the highest point on Greenland's ice sheet experienced melting for only the fifth time in the 34-year record. Not only this, the ice sheet continued to lose mass despite above-average winter snow accumulation — between August 2022 and September 2023, it lost roughly 350 trillion pounds of mass. Notably, Greenland's ice sheet melting is the second-largest contributor to sea-level rise.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Indian Express

### **3. Maldives to not renew 2019 water survey pact with India**

#### **Introduction**

The Maldives government has decided to not renew an agreement with India that allowed India to conduct hydrographic surveys in Maldivian waters.

The agreement was signed in 2019 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the islands, when President Ibrahim Solih was in power. The new government of President Mohamed Muizzu had earlier this year requested that India should pull out its military personnel deployed in the country.

#### **What was the hydrographic survey pact?**

Hydrographic surveys are carried out by ships, which use methods such as sonar to understand the various features of a water body. These surveys help "map out water depth, the shape of the seafloor and coastline, the location of possible obstructions, and physical features of water bodies", to ensure the efficiency and safety of maritime transportation.

Prime Minister Modi travelled to the Maldives for a State Visit in June 2019, the first overseas visit of his second term. Various MoUs were signed during the visit, including one for Cooperation in the Field of Hydrography between the Indian Navy and the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF).

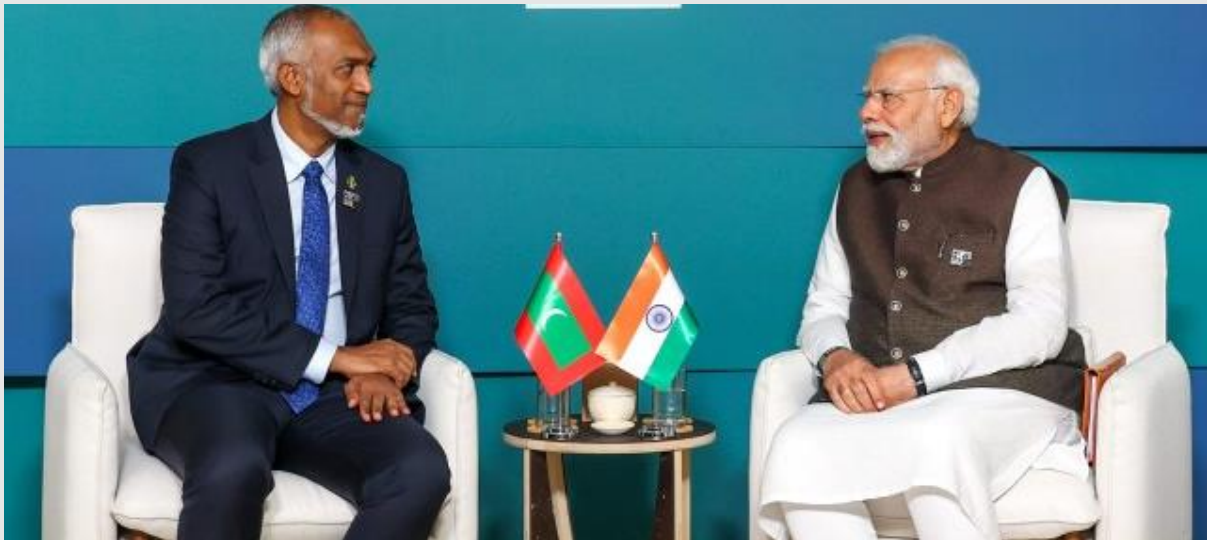


Figure 1 Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a meeting with President of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu during the COP28, in UAE, Friday, Dec. 1, 2023.

### **What was planned as part of this pact?**

The first meeting of the Joint Commission on Hydrography was held in the Maldives in September 2019. So far, three joint hydrographic surveys have been undertaken – in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

The surveys were done to generate updated Navigational Charts/ Electronic Navigational Charts of the areas, which would help sectors such as Tourism, Fisheries, Agriculture, etc.

The ship was to also carry out tidal observations to enable accurate tidal predictions.

### **Does India have such water survey pacts with other countries as well?**

Yes. In 2021, India's oldest Hydrographic Survey ship, INS Sandhayak, was decommissioned. In its 40 years of service, it undertook more than 200 major hydrographic surveys along the Western and Eastern coasts of the Indian peninsula, and the Andaman Sea, as well as surveys in neighbouring countries including Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

The government has previously cited a UN study that says approximately 50 per cent of coastal states have no hydrographic capability and another 25 per cent have only limited capabilities. Only the remaining 25 per cent, including India, have adequate hydrographic capabilities.

There is, therefore, immense scope for international co-operation in hydrography, particularly so, in Asia and Africa, where 36% and 64% of the waters respectively, are yet to be surveyed systematically. Indian survey ships have assisted Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Maldives, Oman, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Tanzania in the past.

### **So why does Maldives want to end the pact?**

It has to do with the change of regime in the country following the elections in October this year. President Solih of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), who was in power from 2018 to 2023, was seen as being more favourable to India, but his successor Mohamed Muizzu of the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) is being seen as more pro-China.

While the Maldives has traditionally been a part of India's sphere of influence, in recent decades China has sought to project its power aggressively in the Indian Ocean, including through massive investments in infrastructure projects under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In 2020, an 'India Out' campaign began in Maldives, alleging that New Delhi had sent a large military contingent to the Maldives – a claim that the Solih government repeatedly denied. During the election campaign, Muizzu said agreements with foreign countries must be terminated unless their presence was beneficial to the Maldives. This was seen as a reference to India – the Indian military is known to operate two helicopters and assist in search and rescue operations for people stranded or facing calamities at sea.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: The Indian Express & The Hindu