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1. Vladimir Putin won the Russian elections with 87% of the vote

Why in News?

Russian President Vladimir Putin, 71, won the recent Presidential elections by securing more than 87 per cent of the votes. With a six-year term set to follow, he will become Russia's longest-serving leader in more than 200 years.



Global reactions

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Putin on Monday. "Look forward to working together to further strengthen the time-tested Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia in the years to come," he said in a post on X.

Leaders of China and North Korea also congratulated the Russian President. The United States, meanwhile, denounced the polls. A White House National Security Council spokesperson said, "The elections are obviously not free nor fair given how Mr. Putin has imprisoned political opponents and prevented others from running against him."

About Putin

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin (born 7 October 1952) is a Russian politician and former intelligence officer who is the president of Russia. Putin has held continuous positions as president or prime minister since 1999: as prime minister from 1999 to 2000 and from 2008 to

2012, and as president from 2000 to 2008 and since 2012. He is the longest-serving Russian or Soviet leader since Joseph Stalin.

Putin worked as a KGB foreign intelligence officer for 16 years, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel before resigning in 1991 to begin a political career in Saint Petersburg. In 1996, he moved to Moscow to join the administration of President Boris Yeltsin. He briefly served as the director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and then as secretary of the Security Council of Russia before being appointed prime minister in August 1999.

Following Yeltsin's resignation, Putin became acting president and, in less than four months, was elected to his first term as president. He was subsequently reelected in 2004. Due to constitutional limitations of two consecutive presidential terms, Putin served as prime minister again from 2008 to 2012 under Dmitry Medvedev. He returned to the presidency in 2012, following an election marked by allegations of fraud and protests, and was reelected in 2018.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Issues

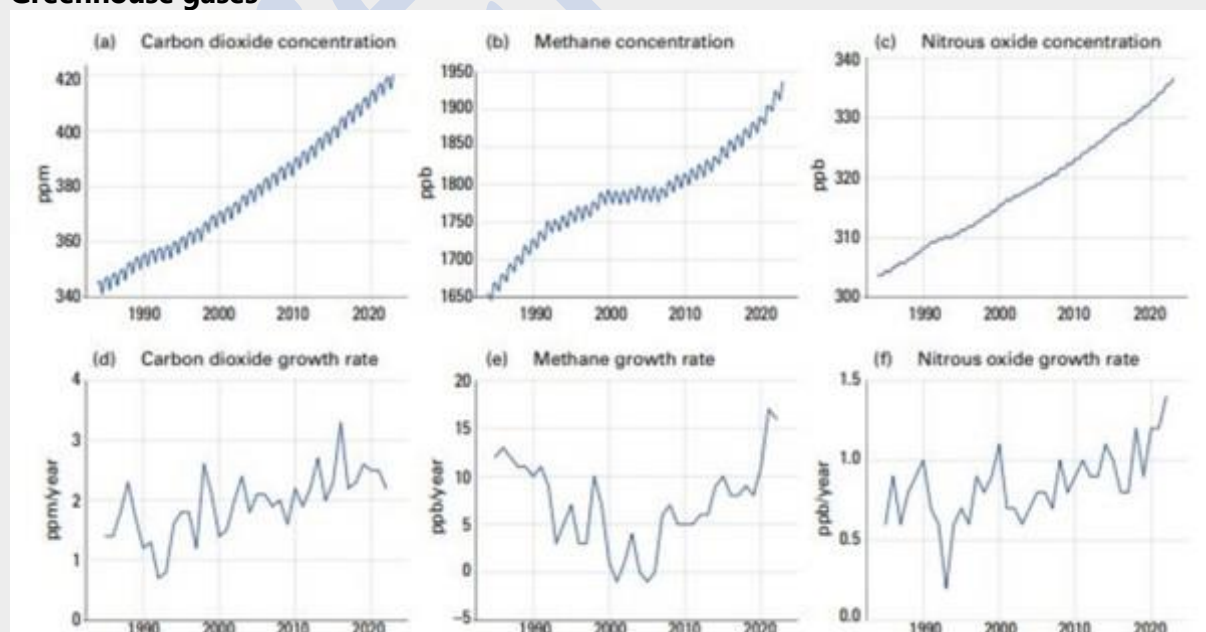
Source: Indian Express

2. Annual State of the Climate report published by the World Meteorological Organisation

Why in news?

The new annual State of the Climate report, published by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) found that 2023 was the hottest year on record. Numerous records for indicators of the climate system, including greenhouse gas levels (GHGs), surface temperatures, ocean heat, sea level rise, Antarctic Sea ice cover, glacier retreat, etc., were broken, the report added.

Greenhouse gases



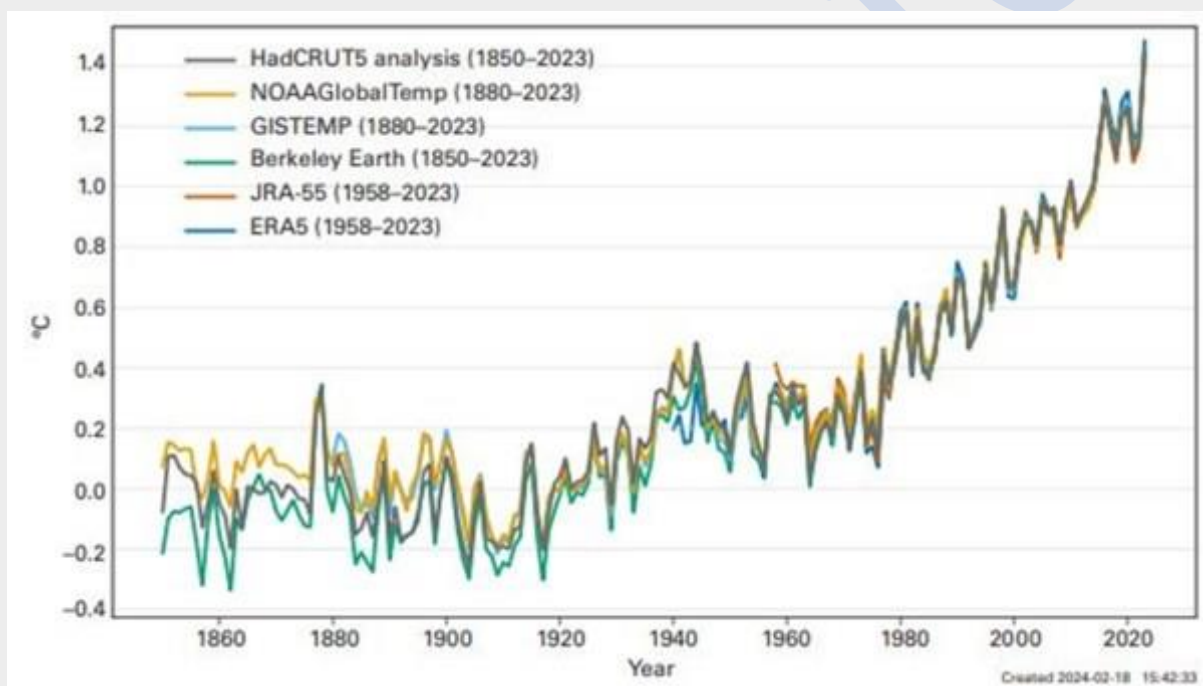
Top row: (a) Carbon dioxide in parts per million, (b) Methane in parts per billion and (c) Nitrous oxide in parts per billion. Bottom row: the growth rates representing increases in successive

annual means of (d) Carbon dioxide in parts per million per year, (e) Methane in parts per billion per year and (f) Nitrous oxide in parts per billion per year.

The unprecedented levels of GHGs in the atmosphere are the main culprit behind the rapid warming of the planet. Gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide trap the incoming solar radiation in the atmosphere and contribute to global warming. The concentration of aforementioned GHGs reached record-high observed levels in 2022 — the latest year for which consolidated global values are available (1984–2022) — according to the WMO report.

Surface Temperature

The global average near surface temperature for 2023 spiked to 1.45 degree Celsius — the highest ever on record — above the pre-industrial levels. Although the rise in GHG concentrations in the atmosphere is the primary reason for soaring global temperatures, the onset of El Niño last year also contributed to the increase in mercury.



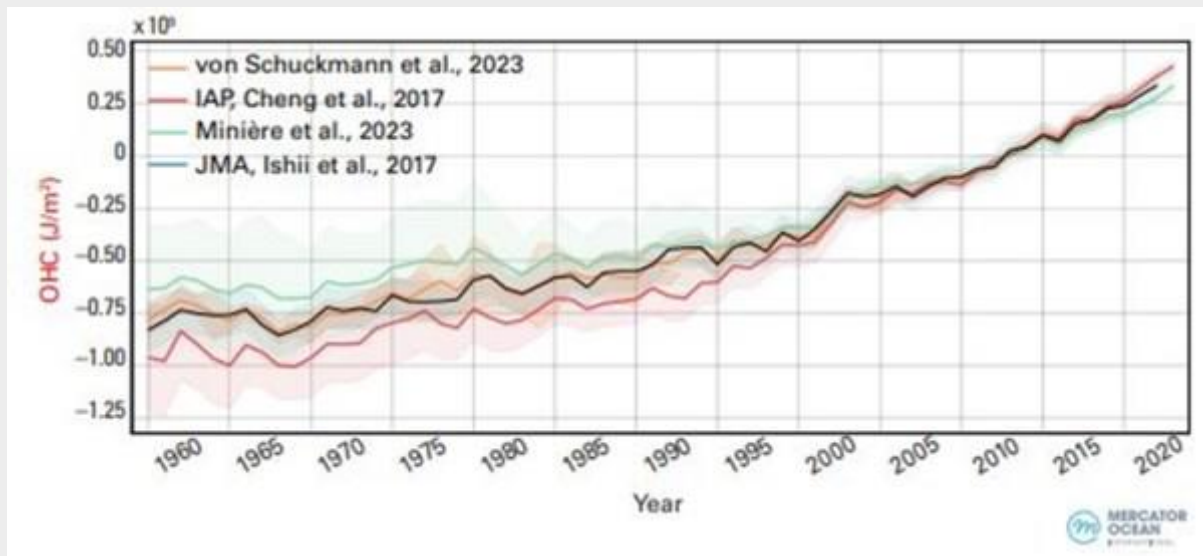
Annual global mean temperature anomalies (relative to 1850–1900) from 1850 to 2023. Data are from six data sets as indicated in the legend. Source: WMO

El Niño refers to an abnormal warming of surface waters in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. It increased the likelihood that temperature records would be broken, and there would be more extreme heat in many parts of the world and the ocean.

Ocean Heat Content

As the oceans have absorbed nearly 90 per cent of the extra heat trapped by GHGs since 1971, they steadily become warmer and their heat content has increased.

In 2023, the ocean heat content (OHC) — the total amount of heat stored by the oceans — reached its highest level in the 65-year observational record, according to the report.



Marine Heat Waves

Due to warmer temperatures, the global ocean experienced an average daily marine heatwave (MHWs) coverage of 32%, well above the previous record of 23% in 2016, the report added. MHWs occur when the surface temperature of a particular region of the sea rises to 3 or 4 degree Celsius above the average temperature for at least five days.

Antarctic Sea-ice extent

Antarctic sea-ice extent plummeted to 1.79 million km^2 in February 2023 — a new record low since the satellite era began in 1979. The extent remained at a record low for the time of year from June till early November, according to the WMO report.

Glacier

In the hydrological year 2022-2023, the global set of reference glaciers suffered the largest loss of ice on record. Glaciers in North America and Europe were particularly impacted.

According to the WMO report, the annual mass balance — the amount of mass gained or lost by the glacier and expressed in metres of water equivalent (m w.e.) — of the reference glaciers dropped to a new low in 2022-2023, which was -1.2 m w.e.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: Indian Express

3. World Bank report says women earn 77 cents for every dollar a man earns: what is the gender pay gap?

Why in News?

Earlier this month, a World Bank Group report found that globally, women earn just 77 cents for every dollar paid to men. This difference has been cited in the past as an example of the "gender pay gap" – women earning less than men on average.

Different figures have also been given over the years across various reports, with some critics even disputing the existence of such a gap. The International Labour Organisation terms the gender pay gap as a “measurable indicator” of inequality between women and men.

What exactly does this “gap” measure, and what does this tell us about women and men and the differences in the work they do?

How is the gender pay gap calculated?

According to the ILO, the gender pay gap is defined as the gap between the average wage level of all women and all men working in the labour market for a monthly salary, hourly or daily wage.

Therefore, it is distinct from the concept of “equal pay for equal work”, which says if women and men have the same qualifications and do the same work, they need to be paid equally.

Further, there is no one agreed-upon method to calculate this gap. Pew Research found in 2012 that women earned 84 per cent of what men earned in the US, while the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that women earned 81 cents to the dollar, just a few months before that.

Why the difference?

Pew used hourly wages to calculate the difference, whereas the Labor Bureau used weekly wages, taking into account only full-time workers (defined as those who usually work at least 35 hours per week). Overall, despite some differences due to the methodology, some kind of gender pay gap does exist in most countries and industries.

What explains the gender pay gap?

First is the simple fact that women are not involved in paying jobs as much as men are, owing to notions about gender roles. The labour force participation rate gives an idea about this. It is the number of people looking for work or working already and above 15 years of age, divided by the total population.

According to ILO, the current global labour force participation rate for women is just under 47%. For men, it is 72%. In India, as per the 2011 Census, the workforce participation rate for women is 25.51% against 53.26% for men.

The second factor is the type of jobs women are employed in, once they join the workforce.

ILO’s Women in Business and Management report found that “Far fewer women than men are in management and leadership positions, especially at higher levels. When women are managers, they tend to be more concentrated in management support functions such as human resources and financial administration than in more strategic roles. This brings down the average salary of female managers compared to that of male managers.”

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper I; Social Issues

Source: The Indian Express