

## GS Paper 2-Governance

# What a government study reveals about the state of our panchayats

Karnataka, TN, Kerala, tops 2024 Panchayat Devolution Index

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NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

SET IN the fictional village of Phulera, the story of the popular web series *Panchayat* unfolds as the protagonist, born and brought up in the city, heads there to run the panchayat and faces the hurdles that come with it.

### PANCHAYAT DEVOLUTION INDEX: PARAMETERS

**FRAMEWORK:** Whether the basic provisions mentioned in the Constitution are adhered to by states

**FUNCTION:** Measures how panchayats fulfilled civic responsibilities, from sanitation and waste management to health and education.

**FINANCES:** The efficiency in the devolution of funds

state and Central grants.

**FUNCTIONARIES:** Assessed the strength and performance of panchayat officials and infrastructure available to them

**CAPACITY BUILDING:** How the knowledge and skills of panchayat officials were being expanded to fulfil and take on more responsibilities.

followed by Himachal Pradesh at 57.5%, and Tamil Nadu at 57.32%. Among the states, UP has the lowest proportion of women representatives at 33.33% but the state's rules provide for only one-third reservation for women.

The national average proportion of women representatives is 46.44%, marginally up from 45.9% in 2013-14. While there were 11 states in 2013-14 with 50% or more women representatives, there were 16 such states in 2024.

The IIPA study said that while there is no stipulated reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and

## KEY POINTS

- The 2024 Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI) shows Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu at the top, with improvements in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The national average score rose from 39.92 in 2014 to 43.89.
- Key challenges for panchayats include inconsistent funding, lack of infrastructure, and digital resources.





# The Indian EXPRESS

## GS Paper 3-Environment

### Melting glaciers caused 2 cm sea level rise this century: the likely impact

ALIND CHAUHAN  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

MELTING ICE from glaciers worldwide has led to almost 2 cm of sea level rise in this century alone, a study published in the journal *Nature* on February 19 has found.

While seemingly insignificant, this can have disastrous consequences.

"Every centimetre of sea level rise exposes another 2 million people to annual flooding somewhere on our planet," Andrew Shepherd, head of the department of geography and environmental science at the UK's Northumbria University, told *The Guardian*.

#### Why sea level is rising

Sea level rise is essentially the increase in the average height of the ocean's surface, measured from the centre of Earth.

There are two primary reasons why sea levels are currently rising.

**FIRST** is the global warming-driven melting of glaciers (accumulation of ice and snow that slowly flows over land) and ice sheets (glaciers that cover more than

50,000 square km of land).

According to the latest study, since 2000, glaciers have lost between 2% and 39% of their ice regionally, and about 5% globally. This is equivalent to losing 273 billion tonnes of ice each year — 30 times the annual water consumption of Earth's entire population — for the last 25 years.

Overall, glacier mass loss is about 18% larger than the loss from the Greenland Ice Sheet, and more than twice that from the Antarctic Ice Sheet in the same period, the study said.

While the Greenland ice sheet has been melting at an average rate of about 150 billion tonnes per year, the Antarctic ice sheet has been

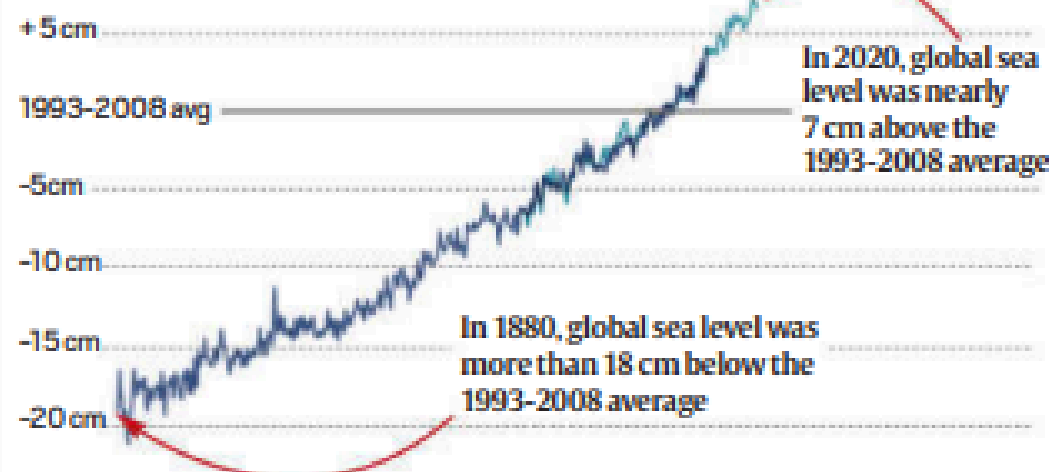
losing about 270 billion tonnes per year since 2002, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

**SECOND** is the thermal expansion of seawater, a process by which water expands as it warms up. With global temperatures rising, oceans are becoming warmer, and as a result, the volume of water is increasing as well. Thermal expansion of seawater is responsible for one-third to half of global sea level rise, NASA said.

EXPLAINED  
CLIMATE

#### GLOBAL SEA LEVEL HAS RISEN BY AROUND 25 CM SINCE 1880

Measured relative to the 1993-2008 average



Source: NOAA and Our World in Data

#### The rise, in numbers

The global sea level has risen by 21-25 cm since 1880, when records were first kept, according to the US agency National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

However, in recent years, this rise has accelerated dramatically. It has more than

doubled from 0.18 cm per year in 1993 to the current rate of 0.42 cm per year. Global sea levels have risen by more than 10 cm between 1993 and 2024, according to NASA, a rate which is unprecedented over the past 2,500-plus years.

The sea level is not rising uniformly the

world over. For instance, the southwestern Indian Ocean region is seeing the sea level rise at a rate of 2.5 mm per year, faster than the global average, according to a 2022 World Meteorological Organization report. In other parts of the Indian Ocean region, the rate is between 0 and 2.5 mm per year.

The uneven rise is because "regional patterns of sea-level change are dominated by local changes in ocean heat content and salinity," the report said.

Among Indian cities, Mumbai is the worst-impacted, having witnessed a sea level rise of 4.44 cm between 1987 and 2021, according to a 2024 report by Bengaluru-based Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy. For context, the island city has an average elevation of around 10 m above sea level. West Bengal's Haldia has witnessed a sea-level rise of 2.73 cm, Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam 2.381 cm, and Kerala's Kochi 2.213 cm, the report said.

#### Matter of concern

An increase in sea level can severely impact both human and natural systems. It leads to more frequent and intense coastal flooding, which exacerbates coastal erosion, and ultimately displaces populations living

close to the coast. For instance, between 1990 and 2016, the West Bengal coast alone lost almost 99 sq km of land, according to a 2018 report by the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR). Sea level rise is a major contributor to this.

A 2024 study in the journal *Scientific Reports* found that 29% of the global population lived within 50 kilometers of the shore in 2018, while 15% lived merely 10 km away from water.

Sea level rise also results in more intense storm surges, allowing more water inland during tropical storms. This in turn can impact coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs and salt marshes, and also contaminate the soil and fresh water supplies.

And the rise is not likely to stop if the world fails to curb the emission of heat-trapping greenhouse gases. As Nadya Vinogradova Shiffer, director of the NASA sea level change team, said in 2024: "Current rates of acceleration mean that we are on track to add another 20 cm of global mean sea level by 2050, doubling the amount of change in the next three decades compared to the previous 100 years and increasing the frequency and impacts of floods across the world."

## KEY POINTS

- Melting glaciers have caused a 2 cm rise in global sea levels this century. The rise is mainly due to glacier melting and seawater expansion from global warming. Sea levels have risen 21 cm since 1880, with accelerated rates. Coastal cities like Mumbai face increased risks of flooding, erosion, and ecosystem damage. If emissions aren't reduced, sea levels could rise another 20 cm by 2050.







**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU**  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



# GS Paper 2-Welfare Scheme

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare



Prime Minister to Release 19th Instalment of PM-KISAN at Bhagalpur, Bihar on 24th February 2025

Over 9.8 Crore Farmers to Benefit from Direct Transfers Exceeding ₹22,000 Crore

Formation of the 10,000th FPO under the Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs scheme

Inauguration of the Regional Center of Excellence (CoE) for Indigenous Breeds at Motihari with an investment of ₹33.80 Cr. under Rashtriya Gokul Mission



## KEY POINTS

- Union Minister for Agriculture, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, announced the release of the 19th instalment of the PM-KISAN scheme on February 24, 2025. This scheme, launched in 2019, provides ₹6,000 annually to eligible farmer families. Over ₹3.46 lakh crore has been disbursed so far, benefiting over 11 crore families. The 19th instalment will support 9.8 crore farmers, including 2.41 crore women, with a total transfer of ₹22,000 crore.







# PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

## GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



## GS Paper 3-Defence

Ministry of Defence



## INDIAN ARMY CONTINGENT DEPARTS FOR INDIA-JAPAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE-DHARMA GUARDIAN

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## KEY POINTS

The 6th edition of the India–Japan Joint Military Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN will be held from 24th February to 9th March 2025 in Japan. The exercise aims to enhance interoperability between the Indian Army and Japan's Ground Self Defence Force, focusing on urban warfare, counter-terrorism, and disaster response







## GS Paper 1-Places in news

**India Sends 26 Tons Of Humanitarian Assistance To Honduras In Aftermath Of Tropical Storm SARA**





## KEY POINTS

- 1. India has dispatched humanitarian assistance of 26 tons to Honduras in the wake of the recent Tropical storm SARA.
- Honduras is a Central American country bordered by Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, with coastlines on the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. Its capital is Tegucigalpa, and San Pedro Sula is also a major industrial and commercial hub.







## GS Paper 2-Governance

**Former RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Appointed Principal Secretary-2 To PM Modi**

