

### MANGROVE ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE (MAC)

Spearheaded by the UAE in partnership with Indonesia, MAC was launched at the COP27 Summit in Egypt to scale up and accelerate the conservation and restoration of the mangrove forests.



#### About:

- The alliance will raise awareness about the **role of mangroves as a "nature-based solution to climate change"**.
- The alliance will be amplified at the G20 Summit that will be held between November 15 and 16, 2022 in Bali under the presidency of Indonesia.
- The MAC seeks to scale up, accelerate conservation, restoration and growing plantation efforts of mangrove ecosystems for the benefit of communities globally, and recognize the importance of these ecosystems for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

#### Mangroves:

- A mangrove is a shrub or a small tree that grows along the coastlines and has roots in salty sediments, often underwater. They also grow in swamps.
- Mangrove forests can survive extreme weather conditions and require low oxygen levels to survive.
- The mangroves **cannot survive freezing temperatures and thus are found mainly in tropical and subtropical latitudes.**
- UNESCO celebrates July 26 as the **International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem** to raise awareness about mangrove ecosystems and to promote their conservation.
- According to MAC, **Mangrove forests can store ten times more carbon per hectare than terrestrial forests.** Also, they can store carbon up to 400 per cent faster than land-based tropical rainforests.

- According to **Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA)**, when the mangroves are cut, the carbon stored in these plants gets released into the air. So, preserving them to keep the carbon emissions levels low is necessary.
- Once the plants die, they take the stored carbon into the soil. This is called "**Blue Carbon**".
- Moreover, Mangrove forests act as natural barriers against rising tides and storms. Each year, they prevent property damages of over \$65 billion.

### **Mangroves in India:**

- India contributes to nearly half of the total mangrove cover in South Asia.
- According to the Forest Survey report 2021 released in January, mangroves cover in the country is 4,992 square km, which is 0.15 per cent of the country's total geographical area. Since 2019, the cover has risen by only 17 sq km.
- **West Bengal has the highest percentage of mangrove cover in India, mainly because it has Sundarbans**, the largest mangrove forest in the world. It is followed by Gujarat and Andaman, and Nicobar islands.
- **Other states that have mangrove cover are Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Kerala.**

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### SHARM EL-SHEIKH ADAPTATION AGENDA

Seeking to minimise devastating impacts of climate change on vulnerable people across the globe, the COP27 Presidency has launched the Sharm-el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda outlining 30 goals to enhance resilience for 4 billion people living in the most climate vulnerable communities by 2030.



#### **About:**

**The 30 Adaptation Outcomes include urgent global 2030 targets related to:**

- **Transitioning to climate resilient, sustainable agriculture** that can increase yields by 17% and reduce farm level greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 21%, without

expanding agricultural frontiers, and while improving livelihoods including of smallholder farmers

- Protecting and restoring an estimated 400 million hectares in critical areas (land and freshwater ecosystems) supporting **indigenous and local communities** with use of nature-based solutions to improve water security and livelihoods and to transform 2 billion hectares of land into sustainable management.
- Protecting 3 billion people by installing **smart and early warning systems**
- Investing USD 4 billion to secure the future of 15 million hectares of **mangroves** through collective action to halt loss, restore, double protection and ensure sustainable finance for all existing mangroves.
- Expanding **access to clean cooking** for 2.4 billion people through at least USD 10 billion/year in innovative finance.
- **Mobilising USD 140 to USD 300 billion needed across both public and private sources** for adaptation and resilience and spur 2,000 of the world's largest companies to integrate physical climate risk and develop actionable adaptation plans

<b>CLIMATE TARGETS</b>	
Other key goals of the Sharm-el-Sheikh adaptation agenda	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Protecting and restoring an estimated <b>400 million hectares</b> in critical areas (land and freshwater ecosystems) supporting local communities</li> <li>&gt; Use of nature-based solutions to improve water security and livelihoods</li> <li>&gt; Tap into nature-based solutions investment opportunities of \$354 billion per year needed by 2030</li> <li>&gt; Transform 2 billion hectares of land into sustainable management</li> <li>&gt; Protecting 3 billion people by installing smart and early</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>warning systems</li> <li>&gt; Expanding access to clean cooking for 2.4 billion people through at least \$10 billion annually in innovative finance</li> <li>&gt; Provide evidence-based actionable adaptation plans for 10,000 cities and 100 regional governments across the globe</li> <li>&gt; Increase global consumption of fruits, vegetables, seeds, nuts and legumes by 1.5 times</li> <li>&gt; Promote healthy alternative proteins, capturing 15% of the global meat and seafood market</li> </ul>

The Agenda emphasises the urgency for counting with evidence-based, actionable adaptation plans for all actors, making climate risks visible and accessible, and to deploy the locally-led adaptation principles.



# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



## REPUBLICANS MAKE GAINS IN U.S. MIDTERM POLLS BUT NO 'RED WAVE'

### In News:

- In the mid-term elections, held in the United States on 8 November, Republicans appeared confident to eke out (supplement) a slim majority in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- However, their hopes of a red wave in midterm elections were dashed as President Joe Biden's Democrats outperformed expectations.
  - Red wave - A situation in which Republicans would comprehensively win the House and probably also wrest control of the Senate.

### US midterm elections

- The US Congress is made up of two parts - **the House of Representatives and the Senate**.
- Control of these two houses is decided by the midterm election, which was held recently on November 8, 2022.
- These votes are held every two years and when they fall in the middle of the president's four-year term of office, they are called the midterms.
- Each state has two senators, who sit for six-year terms. Representatives serve for two years, and represent smaller districts.
  - In the recently held election, all the seats in the House of Representatives were up for election, alongside **one-third of the Senate**.

### Situation before the November 8 midterm election

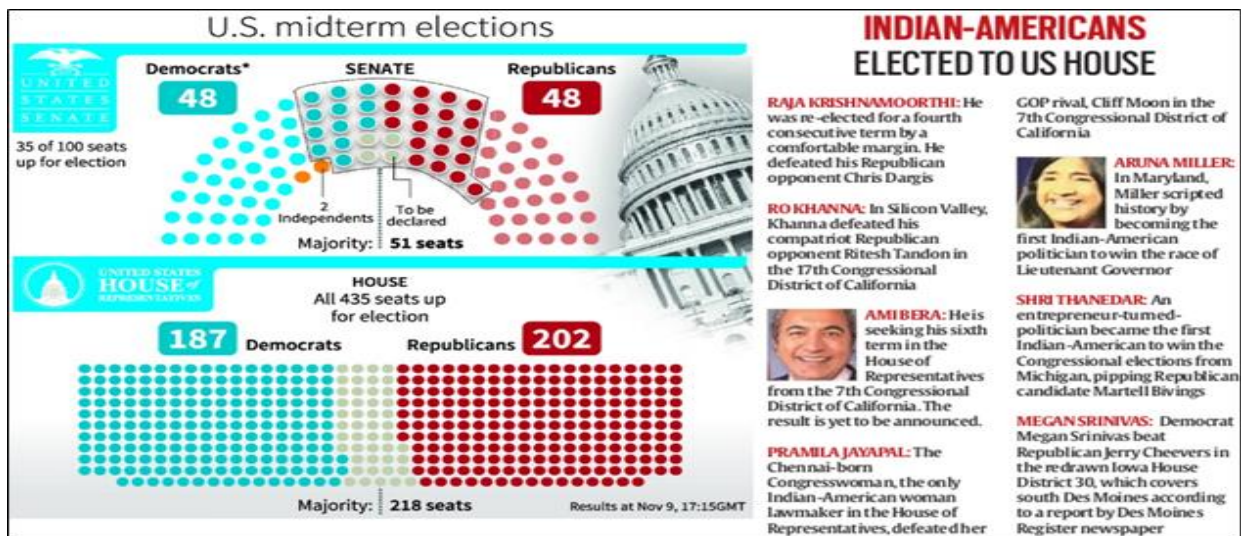
- The Senate has 100 members, with two from each of the 50 states. Elections were held for 34 seats, and winners serve six-year terms.
- Before the recent election, Senate was at a 50-50 deadlock. However, it was controlled by Democrats because Vice President Kamala Harris had the tiebreaking vote.
- The House, with 435 voting members, was controlled by the Democrats (222: 213).
  - Elections were held for all the 435 seats, with winners serving two-year terms.



- Historically, the party that controls the presidency — currently the Democrats — has fared poorly in the midterms.
- Frustration with the president often leads to success for the other party, and Biden has low approval ratings.

## Why midterm elections matter?

- It is exceedingly difficult to pass legislation unless one party controls the presidency, the House and the Senate.
- The US Congress makes nationwide laws.
  - The House decides which laws are voted on while the Senate can block or approve them, confirm appointments made by the president and, more rarely, conduct any investigations against him.
- If Republicans win either the House or the Senate, they can prevent any major Democratic legislation before 2024, the next presidential election.
- On the other hand, if Democrats hold onto the House and increase their lead in the Senate, it could give them more ability to pass new laws.
- Since senators serve six-year terms, running up a lead now would give them some breathing room in 2024.
- Control of the Senate includes the power to approve federal court justices, up to and including



the Supreme Court.

- If Republicans claim control, they could use their power to block Biden’s nominations.

## News Summary

- Following the US midterm elections, the Republican party remained close to winning enough seats to gain a majority in the House.
- However, the control of the Senate remained up for grabs.
- Either party could secure a Senate majority with wins in both Nevada and Arizona — where the races were too early to call.

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## PASHMINA SHAWLS

Traders of Pashmina shawls are complaining that “obsolete testing methods” have resulted in many of their export consignments being flagged by Customs authorities for presence of Shahtoosh guard hair, which is obtained from endangered Tibetan antelopes. The traders claim the use of obsolete techniques such as “light microscopy” by the authorities has resulted in several cases of “false positives”, leading to their wrongful prosecution.



### About:

#### Pashmina and Shahtoosh:

- Pashmina refers to a fine variant of spun cashmere (the animal-hair fibre), that is derived from the downy undercoat of the Changthangi.
- Pashmina is obtained from a breed of mountain goats (*Capra hircus*) found on the Changthang Plateau in Tibet and parts of Ladakh.
- Shahtoosh, on the other hand, is the fine undercoat fibre obtained from the Tibetan antelope, known locally as chiru, a species living mainly in the northern parts of the Changthang Plateau in Tibet.
- As they offer high levels of smoothness and warmth, Shahtoosh shawls is a highly expensive commodity.

- However, when their population declined dramatically from commercial poaching, CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora) **listed the Tibetan antelope in 1979, leading to a ban on sale and trade of Shahtoosh shawls and scarves.**
- In today's terminology, pashmina can refer to either the material or a particular type of Kashmir shawl made from it.

### **Production of Pashmina shawls:**

- In the spring, the goats naturally shed their undercoat, which regrows in winter. This undercoat is collected by combing the goat (not by shearing, as in other fine wools).
- A traditional producer of pashmina wool in the Ladakh region are a people known as the **Changpa (nomadic people inhabit the Changthang plateau of Tibet).**
- **China accounts for 70% of the world's cashmere production** (followed by Mongolia (20%) and the remaining by others like Afghanistan, Australia, India, Iran, etc).
- India contributes only about **1% of the world's Pashmina**, but the Pashmina produced in India is considered the best of the lot.

### **Geographical Indication (GI) label on Kashmir Pashmina:**

- The original 'Kashmir Pashmina' fabric and its products **were given GI tag (by the Government of India, under the 1999 Act)**, in order to preserve the centuries old art of spinning and weaving fabric.

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## GROUNDWATER EXTRACTION

According to the Dynamic Ground Water Resource Assessment Report for the entire country for the year 2022, groundwater extraction in India saw an 18-year decline.



### **About:**

- The assessment was carried out jointly by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), States and Union Territories.

- Such joint exercises between the CGWB and States/Union Territories were carried out earlier in 1980, 1995, 2004, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2017 and 2020.

## Highlights:

- The total annual groundwater recharge for the entire country is 437.6 billion cubic metres (bcm) and annual groundwater extraction for the entire country is 239.16 bcm.
- Out of the total 7,089 assessment units in the country, 1,006 units have been categorised as “over-exploited” in the report.
- By comparison, an assessment in 2020 found that the annual groundwater recharge was 436 bcm and extraction 245 bcm.
- In 2017, recharge was 432 bcm and extraction 249 bcm. The 2022 assessment suggests that groundwater extraction is the lowest since 2004, when it was 231 bcm.
- The analysis indicates increase in ground water recharge which may mainly be attributed to increase in recharge from canal seepage, return flow of irrigation water and recharges from water bodies/tanks & water conservation structures.
- The improvement in ground water conditions in 909 assessment units in the country when compared with 2017 assessment data.
- In addition, overall decrease in number of over-exploited units and decrease in stage of groundwater extraction level have also been observed.

## ATAL NEW INDIA CHALLENGE (ANIC)

Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog recently launched the Women centric challenges under the 2nd edition of Atal New India Challenge (ANIC).



### About:

- ANIC's Woman centric challenges address the major issues faced by women from all spheres of life.
- These include driving women hygiene through innovation,



innovations to improve women's safety, professional networking opportunities for women, innovations that make working mothers' life better, and easing the life of Rural Women.

- ANIC is an initiative by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog targeted to seek, select, support and nurture technology-based innovations that solve sectoral challenges of national importance and societal relevance through a grant-based mechanism of up to INR 1 crore.

### Other initiatives:

- **Indo-German development cooperation project 'Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Start-ups by Women (Her&Now)'**
  - The project was commissioned by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and jointly implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to train AIM business incubators with the knowledge, tools, and methods to boost women entrepreneurs.
- **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP):**
  - NITI Aayog currently runs the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), which was launched in 2018, to help women become entrepreneurs, scale up their innovations and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses.