# Table of Contents

## Bilateral Relations

1. EXTRADITION TREATY BETWEEN INDIA AND BELGIUM ................................................. 4  
2. INDIA-U.S. MILITARY COOPERATION GROUP (MCG) ............................................. 4  
3. ADDITIONAL TRADE BARRIERS VIOLATE WTO’S PRINCIPLE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION: CHINA .................................................................................................................. 5  
4. MISSION SAGAR ............................................................................................................... 5  
5. WORKING MECHANISM FOR CONSULTATION & COORDINATION ON INDIA–CHINA BORDER AFFAIRS (WMCC) ...................................................................................... 5  
6. BAY OF BENGAL BOUNDARY LAYER EXPERIMENT OR BOBBLE ................................. 6  
7. CHINA- TAIWAN RELATIONS .......................................................................................... 6  
8. MUTUAL LOGISTICS SUPPORT AGREEMENT (MLSA) .............................................. 7  
9. VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT (VFA) ........................................................................ 7  
10. INDIAN TRAWLERS IN SRI LANKA AND ISSUES ASSOCIATED ................................. 7  
11. AFGHAN EXPORTS TO INDIA THROUGH WAGAH BORDER ...................................... 8  
12. INDIA ENERGY MODELING FORUM ............................................................................ 8  
13. U.S. RELAXES RULES ON SALES OF ARMED DRONES ........................................... 9  
14. INDIA IDEAS SUMMIT ................................................................................................... 9  
15. RAFALE FIGHTER JETS ................................................................................................ 9  
16. AMERICAN VISAS .......................................................................................................... 10

## Effects of Policies of Developed and Developing Countries on India’s Interests

1. AGREEMENT FOR BRINGING PEACE TO AFGHANISTAN ........................................ 11  
2. FOREIGNERS BEING SERVED ‘LEAVE INDIA’ NOTICES: HOW DOES INDIAN LAW DEFINE ‘ANTI-GOVT’ ACTIVITIES FOR THEM? ................................................................. 11  
3. OVERSEAS CITIZENSHIP OF INDIA (OCI) ................................................................ 11

## Protocols / Conventions / Treaties / Agreements / Reports

1. COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY (CBC) REPORT ........................................................................ 13  
2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: 36 CHANGES IN GLOBAL INDICATOR FRAMEWORK ......................................................................................................................... 13  
3. COVID-19 SOLIDARITY RESPONSE FUND .................................................................. 13  
4. EMERGENCY COVID-19 FUND FOR SAARC NATIONS ........................................... 13  
5. SAFE HANDS CHALLENGE ............................................................................................ 15  
6. GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES ........................................................................ 15  
7. GLOBAL REPORT ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT (GRID 2020) .............................. 15  
8. ADB’S COVID-19 ACTIVE RESPONSE AND EXPENDITURE SUPPORT (CARES) PROGRAM ................................................................................................................................. 15  
9. USCIRF 2020 ANNUAL REPORT .................................................................................... 16  
10. GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX (GTI) .............................................................................. 16  
11. ANNUAL SPECIAL 301 REPORT .................................................................................. 17  
12. COMMODITY MARKETS OUTLOOK .......................................................................... 18  
13. TRENDS IN WORLD MILITARY EXPENDITURE ......................................................... 18  
14. EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE ......................................................................................... 18  
15. OPEN SKIES TREATY .................................................................................................... 18  
16. UAE KEEN ON OPEN-SKY POLICY WITH INDIA ..................................................... 18  
17. SIPRI REPORT ON INDIA CHINA NUCLEAR WEAPONS ......................................... 19

www.insightsonindia.com
18. GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS ................................................................. 19

International Organisations / Groupings ......................................................... 21
1. INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION .................................................................. 21
2. NAVAL LIAISONS AT RMIFC AND EMASOH ........................................... 21
3. UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE (UPEACE) ......................................................... 22
4. HOW IS WHO FUNDED? ........................................................................... 22
5. GLOBAL VACCINE SUMMIT .................................................................... 23
6. MILK TEA ALLIANCE ............................................................................... 23
7. COMMISSION ON THE LIMITS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF (THE COMMISSION OR CLCS) .................................................................................. 24
8. EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE (ECJ) ....................................................... 24
9. COMMONWEALTH HEALTH MINISTERS’ MEETING ................................... 25
10. COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE (CHRI) .......................... 25
11. WHO FOUNDATION .................................................................................. 25
12. RUSSIA-INDIA-CHINA GROUPING ........................................................ 25
13. PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION (PCA) ......................................... 26
14. GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA (GFTAM) ................................................................. 26
15. INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR) ............................................................. 27
16. BRICS INNOVATION BASE ....................................................................... 27

United Nations Organisations ........................................................................... 29
1. UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST ........................................................... 29
2. UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ........... 29
3. UN WOMEN .............................................................................................. 30
4. INDIA’S PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ................. 30
5. INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION (ITU) ...................... 31
6. U.N.-75 DECLARATION DELAYED ............................................................ 32
7. UN ARMS TRADE TREATY .......................................................................... 33

International Banks / International Financial Institutions ............................... 34
1. INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE .................. 34
2. WORLD BANK PLEDGES $1 BN TO BOOST INDIA’S SOCIAL SAFETY NET .................................................................................. 34
3. INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION (IFC) .................................... 35

International Events ......................................................................................... 36
1. WORLD CONSUMERS DAY ...................................................................... 36
2. WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2020 ....................................................... 36
3. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES 2020 ............................................... 36
4. CHINA’S MAY FOURTH MOVEMENT ......................................................... 36
5. INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING 2020 ............................................................. 36
6. CORAL TRIANGLE DAY .............................................................................. 37

Military Exercises .......................................................................................... 37
1. EXERCISE RED FLAG .................................................................................. 37

Places in News ............................................................................................... 38
1. INDIA AND BANGLADESH BORDER ....................................................... 38
2. GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD).................................... 38
3. REUNION ISLAND ......................................................... 38
4. KASOWAL BRIDGE .................................................. 38
5. GILGIT-BALTISTAN .................................................... 38
6. PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR (POK) ....................... 39
7. DOKLAM AND NAKU LA .......................................... 40
8. JUBALAND ............................................................... 40
9. MONTENEGRO .......................................................... 40
10. DEPSANG ............................................................... 40
11. PERSIAN GULF ........................................................ 41
12. TRIPOLI ................................................................. 41
13. PETRAPOLE ............................................................ 41
14. LOCATIONS OF NORTH KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA .. 42
15. DAULAT BEG OLDIE ............................................... 42
16. NIMU/NIMOO .......................................................... 42
17. BOTSWANA ............................................................. 43
18. NATANZ ................................................................. 43
19. CHUSHUL ............................................................... 43
20. NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION .................................. 44
21. AZAD PATTAN HYDEL POWER PROJECT .................... 44
22. MONT BLANC MOUNTAIN RANGE ............................. 44
23. CHATTOGRAM PORT ................................................ 44
24. PORT LOUIS ............................................................ 44
25. GALAPAGOS ARCHIPELAGO ..................................... 45
26. BEIRUT ................................................................. 45
27. MEDITERRANEAN SEA ............................................. 45

Miscellaneous ............................................................. 46
1. STAFFORD ACT .......................................................... 46
2. COVID-19 RURAL POOR STIMULUS FACILITY ............... 46
3. NEIGHBOURING RIGHTS LAW ..................................... 46
4. SAUDI ARABIA ABOLISHES FLOGGING ......................... 46
5. TRAVEL BUBBLE ..................................................... 47
6. SOCIAL BUBBLES .................................................... 47
7. HEZBOLLAH .............................................................. 47
8. THE RESISTANCE FRONT ........................................... 47
9. BOKO HARAM .......................................................... 48
10. INTERAHAMWE MILITIA ........................................... 48
11. ANTIFA ................................................................. 48
12. ORDER OF THE NINE ANGLES .................................. 48
13. MANIPUR'S KHUDOL ................................................ 48
14. OPERATION WARP SPEED ........................................ 48
15. VACCINE NATIONALISM ............................................ 48
16. THAAD DEFENCE SYSTEMS ...................................... 49
17. GAFA TAX .............................................................. 49
18. CHIANG MAI INITIATIVE (CMI) ................................. 50
19. LOYA JIRGA ........................................................... 50
1. **Extradition Treaty between India and Belgium**
Cabinet approves signing and ratifying of the Extradition Treaty between India and Belgium.

**Salient features:**
1. **Obligation to Extradite:** Each Party agrees to extradite to the other any person found in its territory, who is accused or convicted of an extraditable offence in the territory of the other Party.
2. **Extraditable Offences:** An extraditable offence means an offence punishable under the laws of both the Parties with imprisonment for a period of one year or more severe punishment.
3. **Duration of sentence:** Where extradition is sought in respect of a convicted person, the duration of the sentence remaining to be served must be at least six months at the time of making the request.
4. **Offences relating to taxation, or revenue or is one of a fiscal character** also fall within the scope of this Treaty.
5. **Extradition of Nationals** is discretionary. The nationality will be determined at the time the offence was committed.

**Under the Treaty, extradition shall be refused if:**
1. The offence involved is a political offence. However, the Treaty specifies certain offences, which will not be considered as political offences.
2. The offence for which extradition is requested is a military offence
3. The request for prosecution has been made for the purpose of prosecuting or punishing the person on account of his race, sex, religion, nationality or political opinion.
4. The prosecution of enforcement of sentence has become time barred.

**What is Extradition?**
As defined by Hon’ble Supreme Court of India, ‘Extradition is the delivery on the part of one State to another of those whom it is desired to deal with for crimes of which they have been accused or convicted and are justifiable in the Courts of the other State’.

**When can it be initiated?**
An Extradition request for an accused can be initiated in the case of under-investigation, under-trial and convicted criminals.

**What is the Legislative Basis for Extradition in India?**
The Extradition Act 1962 provides India’s legislative basis for extradition. It consolidated the law relating to the extradition of criminal fugitive from India to foreign states. The Indian Extradition Act, 1962 was substantially modified in 1993 by Act 66 of 1993.

**Who is the nodal authority for Extradition in India?**
CPV Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India is the Central/Nodal Authority that administers the Extradition Act and it processes incoming and outgoing Extradition Requests.

2. **India-U.S. Military Cooperation Group (MCG)**
The MCG is a forum to review the progress of defence cooperation between India’s Integrated Defence Staff and the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) at the strategic and operational levels.
The Integrated Defence Staff was responsible for coordination among the armed forces before the appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff.
3. **Additional trade barriers violate WTO’s principle of non-discrimination: China**

China has said that the additional barriers set by India for investors from specific countries violate World Trade Organisation’s principle of non-discrimination, and go against the general trend of liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment.

**What are China’s concerns?**
- The amended policy makes every type of investment by Chinese investors subject to government approval.
- It neither distinguishes between greenfield and brownfield investments nor listed and unlisted companies.
- It also does not distinguish between the different types of investors, such as industry players, financial institutions, or venture capital funds.
- Besides, making government approval necessary for acquisitions in private companies by Chinese investors will only reduce the number of potential investors available for a prospective seller, and drive down the valuation.

**The Principle of Non-Discrimination in International Trade Law (GATT perspective):**
- Non-discrimination is a key concept in WTO law, not to say is both central and essential to assuring the success of the multilateral trading system.
- The principle of non-discrimination rests on two pillars: the most-favored nation (MFN) treatment obligation and the national treatment obligation.
- The principle of non-discrimination is so fundamental for the balance of rights and obligations within the WTO that it continues to induce legal effects even when subject to certain exceptions.

**About Most Favoured Nation status is already covered**

4. **Mission Sagar**

- Mission Sagar has been launched as part of the government’s outreach initiative towards five Island nations in the Indian Ocean amidst the ongoing COVID-19.
- Under the mission, Indian Naval Ship Kesari had departed for Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros, to provide food items, COVID-related medicines including HCQ tablets and special Ayurvedic medicines with medical assistance teams.
- Also, as part of the mission, INS Kesari entered the Port of Male in the Republic of Maldives, to provide them 600 tons of food provisions.

**Significance of the mission:**

The deployment is in consonance with the Prime Ministers’ vision of **Security and Growth for All in the Region ‘SAGAR’** promulgated in March 2015.
- SAGAR highlights the importance accorded by India to relations with her neighbouring countries and further strengthens the existing bond.

5. **Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC)**

India and China had recently activated the “working mechanism” at the diplomatic level.

The WMCC was established in 2012 as an institutional mechanism for consultation and coordination for management of India - China border areas, as well as to exchange views on strengthening communication and cooperation, including between the border security personnel of the two sides.

www.insightsonindia.com
Composition: It is headed by joint secretary-level officials from both sides. They are entrusted to help the special representative for boundary talks, a position currently held by NSA Ajit Doval.

6. Bay of Bengal Boundary Layer Experiment or BoBBLE
A team from Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru and UK based University of East Anglia have created a blueprint for accurate prediction of monsoon, tropical cyclones and other weather-related forecast under the Bay of Bengal Boundary Layer Experiment or BoBBLE.

About BOBBLE:
BoBBLE is a joint India-UK project. It seeks to examine the impact of ocean processes in the Bay of Bengal (BoB) on the monsoon system. It is a project funded by Union Ministry of Earth Sciences and the Natural Environment Research Council of UK. The Bay of Bengal (BoB) plays a fundamental role in controlling the weather systems that make up the South Asian summer monsoon system.

7. China- Taiwan relations
US lawmakers have written to over 60 nations to garner their support towards the inclusion of Taiwan in the World Health Organisation (WHO). These include Germany, Thailand, Canada, Britain, Saudi Arabia and Australia.

What’s the issue? To this date, Taiwan is not a part of the WHO owing to objections from China which calls the nation a part of its own. However, that has not deterred Taiwan from seeking to join a ministerial meeting of WHO’s decision-making body, the World Health Assembly (WHA).

China- Taiwan relations- Background:
China has claimed Taiwan through its “one China” policy since the Chinese civil war forced the defeated Kuomintang, or Nationalist, to flee to the island in 1949 and has vowed to bring it under Beijing’s rule, by force if necessary.

- China is Taiwan’s top trading partner, with trade totaling $226 billion in 2018. Taiwan runs a large trade surplus with China.
- While Taiwan is self-governed and de facto independent, it has never formally declared independence from the mainland.
- Under the “one country, two systems” formula, Taiwan would have the right to run its own affairs; a similar arrangement is used in Hong Kong.
- Taiwan is a member of the World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and Asian Development Bank under various names.

One-China policy:
The One China policy is the recognition in the US of the long-held position in Beijing that there is only one China, and Taiwan is part of that.

- Any country wishing to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing must acknowledge there is only “One China” and sever all formal ties with Taiwan.
- As a part of the policy, Washington maintains a robust, non-official relationship with Taiwan, including continued arms sales to the island.
The One China policy is also different from the “One China principle”, which is the principle that insists both Taiwan and mainland China are inalienable parts of a single “China”.

Indo-Taiwan relations:
Although they do not have formal diplomatic ties, Taiwan and India have been cooperating in various fields.
India has refused to endorse the “one-China” policy since 2010.

8. **Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)**
India and Australia have signed a historic agreement, called ‘**Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)**’, to allow access to military bases for logistics support.
This was agreed upon at the **first-ever virtual bilateral summit** between India Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison.

What is MLSA?
- The agreement will facilitate reciprocal access to military logistics facilities, allow more complex joint military exercise and improve interoperability between the security forces of the two nations.
- It allows reciprocal access to military facilities in terms of logistics support which generally include food, water, petroleum (fuel), spare parts and other components.
- The agreement will be useful during joint military exercises, peacekeeping operations, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations, scheduled deployments of military platforms, and any other exigent situations that may arise.
- It will help in improving interoperability between the involved parties.

9. **Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA)**
The government of Philippines has suspended plans to cancel the **Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA)**, a deal that is important to Washington’s moves to counter Beijing’s rising regional power.

What is it?
- A **visiting forces agreement (VFA)** is an agreement between a country and a foreign nation having military forces visiting in that country.
- VFA spells out the rules, guidelines and legal status of the U.S. military when operating in the Philippines.
- The VFA also affirms the **1951 Mutual Defense Treaty** as well as the **2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement** — agreements that enable the U.S. military to conduct joint exercises and operations in the Philippines.
- The **Philippine Senate ratified the VFA in 1999.**

10. **Indian trawlers in Sri Lanka and issues associated**
Sri Lanka’s Fishermen along the northern coast of Jaffna Peninsula, especially **Point Pedro**, have complained to northern Fisheries authorities about their nets being found damaged in the sea, after being caught under the large Indian trawlers that were reportedly in Sri Lanka’s territorial waters.

What is bottom trawling?
Bottom trawling is a destructive fishing practice which affects the marine ecosystem. The practice, which involves trawlers dragging weighted nets along the sea floor, is known to cause great depletion of fishery resources, and curbing it is in the interest of sustainable fishing.

India-Sri Lanka maritime boundary agreements:
Both countries signed four maritime boundary agreements between 1974 and 1976 to define the international maritime boundary between them.

1. The first agreement was regarding the maritime boundary between Adam’s Bridge and the Palk Strait. It came into force on July 8, 1974.
2. The second agreement came into force on May 10, 1976, and it defined the maritime boundaries in the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal.
3. India, Sri Lanka and Maldives signed an agreement for determination of the tri-junction point in the Gulf of Mannar in July 1976.
4. In November 1976, India and Sri Lanka signed another agreement to extend the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mannar.

11. **Afghan exports to India through Wagah border**

Pakistan allowed Afghanistan to send goods to India using the Wagah border from July 15, 2020. The decision is part of Islamabad’s commitment under **Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement**.

**About APTTA:**

Afghanistan–Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (also known as APTTA) is a bilateral trade agreement signed in 2010 by Pakistan and Afghanistan that calls for greater facilitation in the movement of goods amongst the two countries.

12. **India Energy Modeling Forum**

In the recent joint working group meeting of the **Sustainable Growth Pillar**, an **India Energy Modeling Forum** was launched.

**Composition:** The forum would include knowledge partners, data agencies and concerned government ministries.

- **NITI Aayog** will initially coordinate the activities of the forum and finalizing its governing structure.

**Background:**

**Sustainable Growth Pillar** is an important pillar of **India-US Strategic Energy Partnership** co-chaired by NITI Aayog and United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

- The SG pillar entails energy data management, energy modelling and collaboration on low carbon technologies as three key activities.

**The Forum aims to:**

1. Provide a platform to examine important energy and environmental related issues;
2. Inform decision-making process to the Indian government;
3. Improve cooperation between modelling teams, government, and knowledge partners, funders;
4. Facilitate exchange of ideas, ensure production of high-quality studies;
5. Identify knowledge gaps at different levels and across different areas;
6. Build capacity of Indian institutions.

What is Energy Modelling?
Energy modeling or energy system modeling is the process of building computer models of energy systems in order to analyze them.

What are Energy Modelling Forums (EMF)?
The Energy Modelling Forum (EMF) in USA was established in 1976 at Stanford University to connect leading modelling experts and decision makers from government, industry, universities, and other research organizations.

- The forum provides an unbiased platform to discuss the contemporary issues revolving around energy and environment.

13. U.S. Relaxes Rules on Sales of Armed Drones
The US administration has relaxed export restrictions on specific types of unmanned aerial systems, commonly known as drones, enabling U.S. defense contractors to sell more of their wares abroad.

About Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR):
- It is an informal and voluntary partnership among 35 countries.
- Objective: to prevent the proliferation of missile and unmanned aerial vehicle technology capable of carrying greater than 500 kg payload for more than 300 km.
  The regime was formed in 1987 by the G-7 industrialized countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the United States).
- It is not a legally binding treaty on the members.

What is the purpose of the MTCR?
- The MTCR was initiated by like-minded countries to address the increasing proliferation of nuclear weapons by addressing the most destabilizing delivery system for such weapons.
- In 1992, the MTCR’s original focus on missiles for nuclear weapons delivery was extended to a focus on the proliferation of missiles for the delivery of all types of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), i.e., nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Such proliferation has been identified as a threat to international peace and security.

India and the MTCR:
India was inducted into the Missile Technology Control Regime in 2016 as the 35th member. China is not a member of this regime but it had verbally pledged to adhere to its original guidelines but not to the subsequent additions.

14. India Ideas Summit
Recently India Ideas Summit has been concluded with the theme ‘Building a Better Future’.
- Organized by the US India Business Council (USIBC).
- It is a platform to convene scholars, practitioners, diplomats and think tanks for high-level dialogue on key issues related to India.
- 2020 marks the 45th anniversary of USIBC.
  USIBC was formed in 1975 as a business advocacy organization to enlighten and encourage the private sectors of both India and the United States to enhance investment flows.

15. Rafale fighter jets
Five Rafale jets arrived in India. These are part of the 36 twin-engine aircraft purchased from Dassault Rafale at approximately Rs 59,000 crore in 2016.

What is the Rafale Jet?
It is a twin-engine fighter jet manufactured by Dassault Aviation of France.
16. American Visas

American Visas - 6 Common Non-Immigrant U.S. Visas

Our Boston immigration lawyers have experience assisting foreigners to obtain all types of non-immigrant U.S. visas, for those who want to live and work in the U.S. on a temporary basis, for a specific period or purpose. These visas include:

1. H-1B Visa - Work Visa for Professional Employees
   - For professionals with at least a bachelor’s degree, who have an employer ready to sponsor them for a job that requires the preparation and experience of the professional. There are limited numbers of H-1B visas available and you must apply on April 1st each year.

2. E-1 Visa (Treaty Trader) & E-2 Visa (Treaty Investor)
   - For those who wish to invest and create a business in the U.S. or those who have a significant commercial relationship with the U.S., as long as there is a commercial treaty between the U.S. and the applicant’s country of nationality.

3. L-1 Visa for Intra-Company Transfers
   - L-1A visa for employees in an executive or managerial position, and L-1B visa for employees in a specialized knowledge capacity, that are transferred from a foreign enterprise to a U.S. affiliate or subsidiary.

4. K-1 Visa for Alien Fiancé(e)
   - This visa is designed to allow entry into the United States to fiancé(e) of U.S. citizens for the purpose of marrying their fiancé(e), within the first 90 days after entering the U.S.

5. The U Visa - For Victims of Crime, Including Domestic Violence
   - Program designed to provide relief in the form of immigration benefits for victims of crimes in the U.S. and their immediate family.

6. O Visas - for Foreigners of Outstanding Ability
   - For individuals with an extraordinary ability in the areas of sciences, arts, education, business, athletics, or the film/television industry, who have received national or international recognition.
Effects of Policies of Developed and Developing Countries on India’s Interests

1. **Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan**
   - US and Taliban have signed a historic agreement—“Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan”—in Doha, Qatar.
   - It outlines a series of commitments from the US and the Taliban related to troop levels, counterterrorism, and the intra-Afghan dialogue aimed at bringing about "a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire."
   - The agreement could pave the way to ending America’s longest-fought war.

2. **Foreigners being served ‘Leave India’ notices: How does Indian law define ‘anti-govt’ activities for them?**
   Five foreigners were asked to leave India for violating visa norms by participating in anti-CAA protests.

   **How does Indian law define ‘anti-govt’ activities for them?**
   - According to visa guidelines laid out by the MHA, foreign nationals shall be required to strictly adhere to the purpose of visit declared while submitting the visa application.
   - However, a foreign national (other than a Pakistani national) coming to India on any type of visa will be allowed to avail activities permitted under tourist visa.
   - However, there are no provisions specified under “anti-government” activities subhead.

   **What do ‘anti-government’ activities mean for an Indian national?**
   - According to the lawyers, “anti-government” activities are those which are listed as punishable under **Section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code.**
   - **Section 124A IPC states:** "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which a fine may be added; or, with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which a fine may be added; or, with fine."

3. **Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)**
   Government of India launched the ‘Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme’ by making amendments to **Citizenship Act, 1955 in 2005.**
On 09 January 2015, the Government of India discontinued the PIO card and merged it with OCI card.

Eligibility:
Government of India allows the following categories of foreign nationals to apply for OCI Card.

Exceptions:

Anyone who is applying for OCI card should hold a valid Passport of another country.
- Individuals who do not have citizenship of any other country are not eligible to gain an OCI status.
- Individuals whose parents or grandparents hold citizenship of Pakistan and Bangladesh are not eligible to apply.

Benefits for OCI cardholders:
1. Lifelong Visa to visit India multiple times. (special permission needed for research work in India).
2. No need to register with Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) for any length of stay.
3. Except for acquisition of agricultural and plantation properties, OCI card holders have similar facilities that are extended to NRIs in economic, financial and educational fields.
4. Same treatment as of NRIs in respect to Inter-country adoption of Indian children.
5. Also treated at par with NRIs regarding – entry fees for national monuments, practice of professions like doctors, dentists, nurses, advocates, architects, Chartered Accountants & Pharmacists.
6. At par with NRIs to participate in All India Pre-medical tests and such.
7. Treated at par with Indian citizens in matters of traffic in airfares in Indian domestic sectors.
8. Same entry fee as for Indians for entry into India’s national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.
9. OCI booklet can be used as identification to avail services. An affidavit can be attached with local address as residential proof.

There are certain restrictions placed on OCI card holders:
1. Do not have right to vote.
2. Do not have right to any public service/government jobs
3. Cannot hold offices of – Prime Minister, President, Vice -President, Judge of Supreme Court and High Court, member of Parliament or Member of state legislative assembly or council.
4. Cannot own agricultural property.
1. **Country-by-Country (CbC) Report**

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notified rules for furnishing "Country-by-Country Report" (CbC) specifying information pertaining to all large multinational enterprises (MNEs).

**Background:**

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has developed an Action Plan called "Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Action Plan 13" to ensure that a multinational enterprise would report its profit correctly where it is earned.

**What is a Country-by-Country (CbC) Report?**

The Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Action 13 report (Transfer Pricing Documentation and Country-by-Country Reporting) provides a template for multinational enterprises (MNEs) to report annually and for each tax jurisdiction in which they do business the information set out therein. This report is called the Country-by-Country (CbC) Report. This information enables an enhanced level of assessment of tax risk by both tax administrations.

**What is BEPS?**

Base erosion and profit shifting refers to the phenomenon where companies shift their profits to other tax jurisdictions, which usually have lower rates, thereby eroding the tax base in India. India in July 2019 ratified the international agreement to curb base erosion and profits shifting (BEPS)—Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures.

**About the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting:**

The Convention is an outcome of the OECD / G20 BEPS Project to tackle base erosion and profit shifting through tax planning strategies that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to artificially shift profits to low or no-tax locations where there is little or no economic activity, resulting in little or no overall corporate tax being paid.

**Overview and significance of the convention:**

1. The Convention implements two minimum standards relating to prevention of treaty abuse and dispute resolution through Mutual Agreement Procedure.
2. It will be applied alongside existing tax treaties, modifying their application in order to implement the BEPS measures.
3. The Convention ensures consistency and certainty in the implementation of the BEPS Project in a multilateral context. The Convention also provides flexibility to exclude a specific tax treaty and to opt out of provisions or parts of provisions through making of reservations.

2. **Sustainable Development Goals: 36 changes in global indicator framework**

Thirty-six major changes to the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were approved and adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), at its 51st session that concluded on March 6, 2020, in New York.

The revised global framework will have 231 indicators, approximately the same number as in the original framework.

These changes are based on the ‘2020 comprehensive review’ conducted by the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).

**Key changes:**
Eight additional indicators were added across six SDG goals — 2, 3, 4, 10, 13 and 16. These include:

1. Indicator 13.2.2 on the total greenhouse gas emissions per year for the SDG target 13.2 to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.
2. Prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15-49 years, by pregnancy status (percentage) under the target 2.2 to end forms of malnutrition by 2030.
3. A new indicator on reducing the percentage of bloodstream infections due to selected antimicrobial-resistant organisms has been added under the Global health goal (SDG 3).
4. Indicator 10.7.3 on the number of migrants killed while attempting to cross maritime, land and air borders.
5. Indicator 10.7.4 on the proportion of the population who are refugees, by country of origin.

Six indicators across six SDG goals — 1, 4, 8, 11, 13 and 17 — have been deleted. These include:

1. Indicator 1.a.1 on the proportion of domestically-generated resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes.
2. Indicator 4.2.1 on the proportion of children under five years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex.
3. The portion of the indicator that measures progress for children between 0 and 23 months of age, which is currently in tier III was proposed for deletion by the IAEG.
4. Under the SDG goal on combating climate change, the indicator 13.3.2, quantifying the number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of capacity-building for implementing adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions has been deleted.

3. **COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund**
   The United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation have created the solidarity fund to support WHO and partners in a massive effort to help countries prevent, detect, and manage the novel coronavirus – particularly those where the needs are the greatest.

4. **Emergency covid-19 fund for Saarc nations**
   PM Modi proposed emergency covid-19 fund for Saarc nations.
   - It will be an emergency fund based on voluntary contributions from all SAARC members.
• India has already pledged $10 million towards this fund.

5. **Safe Hands Challenge**
   It is a campaign launched by the **World Health Organization** in the wake of 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic. The campaign urges everyone to wash their hands regularly for 40 seconds to keep themselves safe and prevent the transmission of disease.

6. **Global Report on Food Crises**
   A new edition of the annual **Global Report on Food Crises** has been released by the **Global Network Against Food Crises**. The report reveals scope of food crises as COVID-19 poses new risks to vulnerable countries.

   1. **Worst hit areas**: More than half (73 million) of the 135 million people covered by the report live in Africa; 43 million live in the Middle East and Asia; 18.5 million live in Latin America and the Caribbean.
   2. **The key drivers behind the trends analysed in the report were**: conflict, (the key factor that pushed 77 million people into acute food insecurity), weather extremes (34 million people) and economic turbulence (24 million).

   **What is Acute food insecurity?**
   - Acute food insecurity is when a person’s inability to consume adequate food puts their lives or livelihoods in immediate danger.
   - It is more severe than / not the same as chronic hunger, as reported on each year by the UN’s annual **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World** report.

   **Chronic hunger** is when a person is unable to consume enough food over an extended period to maintain a normal, active lifestyle.

   **About the Global Network against Food Crises:**
   It was launched by the European Union, **FAO and WFP** during the **2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)** to respond to the WHS’s call for new approaches to tackle protracted crises and recurrent disasters, reduce vulnerability, and manage risk, by bridging the divide between development and humanitarian partners.

   The Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2020) has been released by the **Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)**. The centre is a part of the **Norwegian Refugee Council**.

   **Key findings:**
   - Nearly five million people were displaced in India in 2019 — the highest in the world so far.
   - The displacements in India were prompted by increased hazard intensity, high population and social and economic vulnerability.
   - Globally, around **33.4 million people faced new internal displacements** because of conflicts and disasters in about 145 countries in 2019.

8. **ADB’s COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Program**
   The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a $1.5 billion loan agreement for the ADB’s **COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Programme** (CARES Programme).

   **About ADB’s COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Program:**

   www.insightsonindia.com
• Started to provide immediate requirements to governments in the face of this global crisis.
• The CARES Programme is provided as the first support to meet the immediate requirements of the government.
• The Program will contribute directly to the improvement of access to health facilities and care, as well as social protection for more than 800 million people.
• The Program is funded through the COVID-19 pandemic response option (CPRO) under ADB’s Countercyclical Support Facility.
• The CARES Program will be provided with a USD 2 million technical assistance grant to support the government to strengthen its operational framework and efficient targeting, delivery, and monitoring and evaluation of its pro-poor economic package, as well as its health sector and social protection interventions.

9. USCIRF 2020 annual report
The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has released its 2020 report.

About USCIRF:
USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan federal government entity established by the U.S. Congress to monitor, analyze and report on threats to religious freedom abroad. It makes foreign policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress intended to deter religious persecution and promote freedom of religion and belief.

Highlights of the report:
India-specific:
• India is at the lowest ranking, “countries of particular concern” (CPC).
• This is the first time since 2004 that India has been placed in this category.
• India is placed alongside countries, including China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.
• India was categorised as a “Tier 2 country” in last year’s listing.

Recommendations made by USCIRF to US government:
Take stringent action against India under the “International Religious Freedom Act” (IRFA). Impose targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals’ assets and/or barring their entry into the United States under human rights-related financial and visa authorities, citing specific religious freedom violations.

Important Terms and definitions:
Tier 2 countries are those in which violations engaged in or tolerated by government are serious and characterized by at least one of the elements of systematic, ongoing, and egregious (horrible).
CPC is designated to a nation guilty of particularly severe violations of religious freedom under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998. The term ‘particularly severe violations of religious freedom’ means systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.

10. Global Terrorism Index (GTI)
Niti Aayog has questioned Australian institute’s terror ranking of India in its Global Terrorism Index of 2019.
It has questioned the methodology adopted to rank India as the seventh worst terrorism affected country.

About Global Terrorism Index:
• The GTI report issued by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) is based primarily on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, besides other sources.
• The index provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism since 2000.

What GTI rankings matter?
GTI scores are directly used in the Global Peace Index, the Global Slavery Report published by the Walk Free Foundation, and indirectly used in computing country scores in the World Economic Forum’s Travel and Tourism Competitiveness and Global Competitiveness Indices and compilation of Safe Cities Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

11. Annual Special 301 report
The United States Trade Representative (USTR) has released its Annual Special 301 Report.

What is Special 301 Report?
• It is prepared annually by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) that identifies trade barriers to United States companies and products due to the intellectual property laws, such as copyright, patents and trademarks, in other countries.
• It is published pursuant to Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.
• The Report includes a list of "Priority Foreign Countries", that are judged to have inadequate intellectual property laws; these countries may be subject to sanctions.
• In addition, the report contains a "Priority Watch List" and a "Watch List", containing countries whose intellectual property regimes are deemed of concern.

Observations made about India in the latest report:
• India continues to be on the ‘Priority Watch List’ for lack of adequate intellectual property (IP) rights protection and enforcement.
• While India made “meaningful progress” to enhance IP protection and enforcement in some areas over the past year, it did not resolve recent and long-standing challenges, and created new ones. The same assessment was made in the 2019 report.

Demands by the USTR:
It has urged India to join the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks, a treaty that harmonises trademark registration.
• The treaty was adopted in Singapore on 28 March 2006. It entered into force on 16 March 2009.
• As of July 2016, there are 50 contracting parties to the treaty, which includes 48 states plus the African Intellectual Property Organization and the Benelux Organization for Intellectual Property.
• It includes provisions on the recording of trademark licenses, and establishes maximum requirements for requests for recordal, amendment or cancellation of the recordal of a license etc.
• The Treaty is open to States members of WIPO and to certain intergovernmental organizations.

What about other countries?
Algeria, Argentina, Chile, China, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and Venezuela are also on the Priority Watch List.
12. Commodity Markets Outlook
World Bank’s April 2020 Commodity Markets Outlook has been released. Commodity Markets Outlook provides market analysis for major commodity groups -- energy, metals, agriculture, precious metals, and fertilizers. The report forecasts prices for 46 key commodities, including oil. It is published in April and October.

13. Trends in World Military Expenditure
The report on Trends in World Military Expenditure was recently released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri).

Key findings:
1. Top three biggest military spenders in the world last year: The United States, China and India.
2. This is the first time that India and China have featured among the top three military spenders.
3. New Delhi’s defence spending grew 6.8% to reach $71.1 billion in 2019.

14. Education for Justice
• The Education for Justice (E4J) initiative was launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes to teach next generation about crime prevention and address problems under law.
• The initiative seeks to prevent crime and promote a culture of lawfulness through education activities designed for primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
• The E4J initiative is under the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration.

15. Open Skies treaty
The Trump administration is expected to pull out of the "Open Skies" treaty.

What is the "Open Skies" treaty?
The treaty allows 34 countries to conduct unarmed surveillance flights over one another’s territories -- including the US and Russia. It was signed in 1992 and went into effect in 2002. Kyrgyzstan has signed, but not ratified the treaty.

Significance:
It was agreed just after the Cold War to allow signatories to avoid nasty surprises by monitoring rival militaries. The treaty "was designed to enhance mutual understanding and confidence by giving all participants, regardless of size, a direct role in gathering information through aerial imaging on military forces and activities of concern to them."

16. UAE keen on open-sky policy with India
The United Arab Emirates has said that it is keen to have an open-sky agreement with India. It asked India to look at Open-sky policy separately from fifth and sixth freedoms (of air).
• The issue of fifth and sixth freedoms of air has been a sore point between airlines in India and the UAE.

What is Open Sky policy?
The agreement will not only encourage connectivity and passenger travel between the two countries, but will also result in reduction in airfares on these routes.
• The National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016, allows the government to enter into an 'open sky' air services agreement on a reciprocal basis with SAARC nations as well as countries beyond a 5,000 kilometre radius from New Delhi.

• It implies that nations within this distance need to enter into a bilateral agreement and mutually determine the number of flights that their airlines can operate between the two countries.

India has already signed open sky agreements with Greece, Jamaica, Guyana, Czech Republic, Finland, Spain and Sri Lanka.

Freidoms of air:
International air travel is governed by various freedoms of air. The degree of “sky openness” depends on the freedoms of the air in the country granted to foreign airlines. There are 9 such freedoms according to the 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation. Importantly,

1. First freedom of air allows a carrier to take off from its home state.
2. Second freedom of air allows it to land in a second country.
3. Third and fourth freedoms of air allow the airline to take off from the country it has landed in and come back to land at its home base.
4. The fifth and sixth freedoms allow airlines to carry passengers picked from one country and fly them to a third country rather than the country from which the airline originated.

17. SIPRI report on India China Nuclear weapons
1. All nations that have nuclear weapons continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals, while India and China increased their nuclear warheads in the last one year.
2. China is in the middle of a significant modernisation of its nuclear arsenal. China’s nuclear arsenal had gone up from 290 warheads in 2019 to 320 in 2020.
3. China is developing a so-called nuclear triad for the first time, made up of new land and sea-based missiles and nuclear-capable aircraft.
4. India’s nuclear arsenal went up from 130-140 in 2019 to 150 in 2020.
5. Pakistan, too, is slowly increasing the size and diversity of the nuclear forces. It has reached 160 in 2020.
6. Both China and Pakistan continue to have larger nuclear arsenals than India.

Global scenario:
1. Together the nine nuclear-armed states — the U.S., Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea — possessed an estimated 13,400 nuclear weapons at the start of 2020, which marked a decrease from an estimated 13,865 nuclear weapons at the beginning of 2019.
2. The decrease in the overall numbers was largely due to the dismantlement of old nuclear weapons by Russia and the U.S., which together possess over 90% of the global nuclear weapons.

About Stockholm International Peace Research Institute is already covered in previous IR Module.

18. Global Economic Prospects
• It is the World Bank’s semi-annual flagship publication on the state of the world economy.
• It examines global economic developments and prospects, with a special focus on emerging market and developing economies.

• It is issued twice a year, in January and June. The January edition includes in-depth analyses of topical policy challenges while the June edition contains shorter analytical pieces.
International Organisations / Groupings

1. **Indian Ocean Commission**
   India was recently accepted as an observer in the Indian Ocean Commission, an organization that handles maritime governance in the western Indian Ocean. India’s entry is a consequence of its deepening strategic partnership with France as well as its expanding ties with the Vanilla Islands.

   **About IOC:**
   - It is an intergovernmental organization created in 1982.
   - It was institutionalized in 1984 by the Victoria Agreement in Seychelles.
   - It is composed of five African Indian Ocean nations: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion (an overseas region of France), and Seychelles.
   - Its principal mission is to strengthen the ties of friendship between the countries and to be a platform of solidarity for the entire population of the African Indian Ocean region.
   - The Commission has a Secretariat which is located in Mauritius and headed by a Secretary General.
   - The Commission has five observers — China, India, EU, Malta and International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

   **Objectives:**
   - Political and diplomatic cooperation,
   - Economic and commercial cooperation
   - Sustainable development in a globalisation context, cooperation in the field of agriculture, maritime fishing, and the conservation of resources and ecosystems
   - Strengthening of the regional cultural identity, cooperation in cultural, scientific, technical, educational and judicial fields.

   **ReCoMAP:**
   The Indian Ocean Commission has funded a number of regional and national conservation and alternative livelihoods projects through ReCoMAP, Regional Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Coastal Zones of the Countries of the Indian Ocean (PROGECO in French). This project ended in 2011.

2. **Naval liaisons at RMIFC and EMASOH**
   India is looking to post Navy Liaison Officers at the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and also at the European maritime surveillance initiative in the Strait of Hormuz for improved Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

   **About Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC):**
   - The RMFIC functions under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).
   - It is based in Madagascar.
   - It is designed to deepen maritime domain awareness by monitoring maritime activities and promoting information sharing and exchange.

   **About the European maritime surveillance initiative in the Strait of Hormuz:**
   - The EMASOH headquarters is composed of Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and French officers and based at the French naval base in Abu Dhabi.
   - The aim is “to monitor maritime activity and guarantee freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.”
   - It was started by France in February 2020.
How this will help India?
This will be in the overall realm of improving linkages of the Navy’s Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) with other IFCs and become the repository for all maritime data in the IOR.

About the Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR):
- The Navy set up the IFC-IOR in December 2018 within the premises of the Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) in Gurugram to track maritime movements in the region.
- France became the first country to deploy a Liaison Officer at the IFC-IOR followed by the U.S. and several other countries including Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom have announced their intention to post LOs.

3. University for Peace (UPEACE)
- It is an intergovernmental organization with university status.
- Established by treaty at the United Nations General Assembly in 1980 and having its main campus in Costa Rica.
- The University has the unique status of not only being a dedicated institution for higher education in Peace and Conflict studies, but also an international treaty body organization mandated by the United Nations General Assembly.

4. How is WHO funded?
U.S. officially notified the United Nations of its intention to withdraw membership from the World Health Organization.

WHO came into existence on 7 April, 1948 – a date which is now celebrated every year as World Health Day. The organisation is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

How WHO is governed?
1. The World Health Assembly (delegations from all members countries) determines the policies of the organisation.
2. The executive board is composed of members technically qualified in health, and gives effect to the decisions and policies of the health assembly.
3. Its core function is to direct and coordinate international health work through collaboration.

How is the WHO funded?
There are four kinds of contributions that make up funding for the WHO.
These are:
1. Assessed contributions are the dues countries pay in order to be a member of the Organization. The amount each Member State must pay is calculated relative to the country’s wealth and population.
2. Voluntary contributions come from Member States (in addition to their assessed contribution) or from other partners. They can range from flexible to highly earmarked.
3. Core voluntary contributions allow less well-funded activities to benefit from a better flow of resources and ease implementation bottlenecks that arise when immediate financing is lacking.
4. Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Contributions were started in 2011 to improve and strengthen the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential, and to increase the access of developing countries to vaccines and other pandemic related supplies.

WHO’s current funding pattern:

www.insightsonindia.com
As of fourth quarter of 2019, total contributions were around $5.62 billion, with assessed contributions accounting for $956 million, specified voluntary contributions $4.38 billion, core voluntary contributions $160 million, and PIP contributions $178 million.

Largest contributions:
1. The United States is currently the WHO’s biggest contributor, making up 14.67 per cent of total funding by providing $553.1 million.
2. The US is followed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation forming 9.76 per cent or $367.7 million.
3. The third biggest contributor is the GAVI Vaccine Alliance at 8.39 per cent, with the UK (7.79 per cent) and Germany (5.68 per cent) coming fourth and fifth respectively.
4. The four next biggest donors are international bodies: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (5.09 per cent), World Bank (3.42 per cent), Rotary International (3.3 per cent), and the European Commission (3.3 per cent). India makes up 0.48 per cent of total contributions, and China 0.21 per cent.

Allocation of funds:
- Out of the total funds, $1.2 billion is allotted for the Africa region, $1.02 billion for Eastern Mediterranean region, $963.9 million for the WHO headquarters, followed by South East Asia ($198.7 million), Europe ($200.4 million), Western Pacific ($152.1 million), and Americas (39.2 million) regions respectively. India is part of the South East Asia region.
- The biggest programme area where the money is allocated is polio eradication (26.51 per cent), followed by increasing access to essential health and nutrition services (12.04 per cent), and preventable diseases vaccines (8.89 per cent).

5. Global Vaccine Summit
Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi recently addressed the virtual Global Vaccine Summit.

What is GAVI?
Created in 2000, Gavi is an international organisation – a global Vaccine Alliance, bringing together public and private sectors with the shared goal of creating equal access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world’s poorest countries.

Members: Gavi brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry in both industrialised and developing countries, research and technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private philanthropists.

Main activities:
1. GAVI’s strategy supports its mission to save children’s lives and protect people’s health by increasing access to immunisation in poor countries.
2. Its partners provide funding for vaccines and intellectual resources for care advancement.
3. They contribute, also, to strengthening the capacity of the health system to deliver immunisation and other health services in a sustainable manner.

6. Milk tea alliance
- It is a pro-democratic front formed by thousands of internet users from Thailand, Taiwan and Hong Kong in social networks against the authoritarianism of the Chinese Government and its supporters.
The informal movement began by defending itself against the insults of pro-Chinese Twitter users against Thailand. It has now ended up forming a social network group to combat Chinese “propaganda”.

7. **Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (the Commission or CLCS)**

- The purpose of the **Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (the Commission or CLCS)** is to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the Convention) in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles (M) from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.
- Under the Convention, the coastal State shall establish the outer limits of its continental shelf where it extends beyond 200 M on the basis of the recommendation of the Commission.

**Functions:**
The Commission shall make recommendations to coastal States on matters related to the establishment of those limits; its recommendations and actions shall not prejudice matters relating to the delimitation of boundaries between States with opposite or adjacent coasts.

**Members of the Commission:**
The Commission shall consist of twenty-one members who shall be experts in the field of geology, geophysics or hydrography, elected by States Parties to the Convention from among their nationals, having due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical representation, who shall serve in their personal capacities.

8. **European Court of Justice (ECJ)**

**European Court of Justice (ECJ)** is a part of **Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)**, and is the **European Union’s supreme court in matters of EU law**.

Founded in 1952 after the **Treaty of Paris**.
- It is based in Luxembourg.
- It ensures that EU law is interpreted and applied the same in every EU country, and ensures that countries and EU institutions abide by EU law.
- It settles legal disputes between national governments and EU institutions.
- In terms of hierarchy, the national courts of member countries are understood to be below the ECJ in matters of EU law.

Following the entrance into force of the **Treaty of Lisbon** on 1 December 2009, the ECJ’s official name was changed from the "**Court of Justice of the European Communities**" to the "**Court of Justice**".

**Composition:**
- It is composed of one judge per member state – currently 27 – although it normally hears cases in panels of three, five or 15 judges.
- The President of the Court of Justice is elected from and by the judges for a renewable term of three years.
9. **Commonwealth Health Ministers’ Meeting**
Union Health Minister attended the 32nd Commonwealth Health Ministers’ Meeting through videoconferencing.

**About the Commonwealth Health Ministers’ Meeting:**
- The Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting (CHMM) is the annual meeting of health ministers from across the Commonwealth countries.
- The meeting reviews activity and events from the previous year and provides a platform for countries to bring issues of health to the attention of their Commonwealth partners and peers.
- Each CHMM provides a ministerial statement summarising the discussion and priorities for the coming year including setting the theme for the next meeting.
- CHMM is held every year in Geneva in mid-May. But in 2020, the meeting was via videoconferencing because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**About Commonwealth of Nations is already covered in previous IR Module**

10. **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)**
A report on slavery was recently released by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) and an international anti-slavery organisation Walk Free on the occasion of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

**About the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI):**
It is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, international non-governmental organisation working in the area of human rights.
In 1987, several Commonwealth professional associations founded CHRI.
- **Roles and functions:** CHRI promotes adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Commonwealth Harare Principles and other internationally recognised human rights instruments, including domestic legislation supporting human rights in Commonwealth countries.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi, India.

11. **WHO Foundation**
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the creation of the WHO Foundation.
- It is an independent grant-making entity that will support the organization’s efforts to address the most pressing global health challenges.
- The Foundation will support global public health needs by providing funds to the WHO and trusted implementing partners, but is legally separate from WHO.
- It’ll be Headquartered in Geneva.
- The Foundation will work with individual donors, the general public and corporate partners to strengthen health systems globally.

12. **Russia–India–China grouping**
Conceived by the then Russian foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov in 1998.
The group was founded on the basis of “ending its subservient foreign policy guided by the U.S.,” and “renewing old ties with India and fostering the newly discovered friendship with China.”

**Significance and potential of the grouping:**
1. Together, the RIC countries occupy over 19 percent of the global landmass and contribute to over 33 percent of global GDP.
2. All three are nuclear powers and two, Russia and China, are permanent members of the UN Security Council, while India aspires to be one.
13. Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)
- Established in 1899.
- Headquartered at the Hague in Netherlands.
- It has Financial Assistance Fund which aims at helping developing countries meet part of the costs involved in international arbitration or other means of dispute settlement offered by the PCA.
- All decisions, called “awards” are binding on all the parties in the dispute and have to be carried out without delay.

Functions and jurisdiction:
It provides services of arbitral tribunal to resolve disputes that arise out of international agreements between member states, international organizations or private parties.
- The cases span a range of legal issues involving territorial and maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international and regional trade.

The organization is not a United Nations agency, but the PCA is an official United Nations Observer.

14. Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFTAM)
popularly known as the Global Fund, it aims to “attract, leverage and invest additional resources to end the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria to support attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations.”
- Founded in 2002, the Global Fund is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases.
- Secretariat is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The G8 formally endorsed the call for the creation of the Global Fund at its summit in July 2001 in Genoa, Italy

How is it administered?
The Global Fund was formed as an independent, non-profit foundation under Swiss law and hosted by the World Health Organization in January 2002.
- In January 2009, the organization became an administratively autonomous organization, terminating its administrative services agreement with the World Health Organization.

Role of GFTAM:
The Global Fund is a financing mechanism rather than an implementing agency.
Programs are implemented by in-country partners such as ministries of health, while the Global Fund secretariat monitor the programs.
- Implementation is overseen by Country Coordinating Mechanisms, country-level committees consisting of in-country stakeholders that need to include, according to Global Fund
requirements, a broad spectrum of representatives from government, NGOs, faith-based organizations, the private sector, and people living with the diseases.

**Fundraising:**
Since the Global Fund was created in 2002, **public sector contributions have constituted 95 percent of all financing raised**; the remaining 5 percent comes from the private sector or other financing initiatives such as Product Red.

### 15. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

The independent experts on the Human Rights Committee have published a fresh interpretation of the right of peaceful assembly.

**Background:**
The committee is tasked with monitoring how countries implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which under Article 21 guarantees the right to peaceful assembly.

**Important observations made by the Human Rights Committee:**
1. It is a “fundamental human right” for people to gather to celebrate or to air grievances, “in public and in private spaces, outdoors, indoors and online.”
2. Everyone, including children, foreign nationals, women, migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, can exercise the right of peaceful assembly.
3. **Governments could not prohibit protests by making “generalised references to public order or public safety, or an unspecified risk of potential violence”**.
4. **Governments “cannot block internet networks or close down any website” because of their roles in organising or soliciting a peaceful assembly**.
5. It also stressed **the right of journalists and human rights observers to monitor and document any assembly**, including violent and unlawful ones.

**Implications:**
The Committee’s interpretation will be important guidance for judges in national and regional courts around the world, as it now forms part of what is known as ‘soft law’.

**About ICCPR:**
1. It is a multilateral treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
3. The covenant **commits its parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, electoral rights and rights to due process and a fair trial**.
4. The ICCPR is **part of the International Bill of Human Rights**, along with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
5. It became effective in 1976.

### 16. BRICS innovation base

China is “actively considering the establishment of a **BRICS innovation base in China**, in order to strengthen practical cooperation with the BRICS”.

- **Aim:** To take forward **5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) cooperation** among the five countries.

**How BRICS countries have responded?**
- Russia said it would work with China on 5G.
• In South Africa, Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei is providing services to three of its telecom operators in the roll-out of their 5G networks.
• Brazil has allowed participation in trials but is yet to take a final call.
However, India is the only country in the grouping that is leaning towards excluding Chinese participation in the roll-out of its national 5G network.
United Nations Organisations

1. UNESCO World Heritage List

What is a World Heritage Site?
It is a location having an “Outstanding Universal Value”.

According to the World Heritage Convention’s Operational Guidelines, an Outstanding Universal Value signifies “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."

Categorisation:
The Sites fall into three categories: cultural heritage, natural heritage, and mixed heritage (cultural as well as natural).

Who selects the Sites?
The UNESCO World Heritage Committee meets at least once every year, generally in June/July, to deliberate the addition, removal, or modification of items on the list of World Heritage Sites.

How do countries get their preferred spots included?
According to the Guidelines, the State Parties prepare a Tentative List, or the “inventory of those properties situated on its territory which each State Party considers suitable for nomination to the World Heritage List.”. A nomination document is then prepared in this regard based on which the application is considered by the Committee.

- In India, the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO (INCCU), and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are the bodies which play a key role in this regard.

After receiving nominations from the State Parties, the Committee then puts them through a rigorous examination before any new location can qualify as a World Heritage Site.

What happens after a World Heritage Site is declared?
1. Getting featured on the list of World Heritage Sites affords the location a coveted status, driving up demand for travel and tourism from around the world geared towards it.
2. A heavy onus is placed on the government of the country in which the Site is located for its conservation and upkeep.
3. The Committee conducts regular audits at declared Sites, and can place a spot that is seriously threatened on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
4. If the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is destroyed, the Committee can consider deleting the property from the World Heritage List.

Facts for Prelims:
Dholavira is located in the Khadir Island in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. It is a mature harappan site.

2. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
In March 2020, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights filed an intervention application as amicus curiae (third party) in the Supreme Court, urging it to take into account international
human rights law, norms, and standards in the proceedings related to the Citizenship Amendment Act.

How can a UN body seek intervention in a case involving a domestic Indian law?
• The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) is the leading UN entity on human rights.
• It is mandated to, Inter alia protect and promote all human rights and to conduct necessary advocacy in that regard, established pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/141.
• It also has to promote adherence to international human rights law and, with this purpose in mind, to support domestic courts, with their constitutional or judicial function, in ensuring the implementation of international legal obligations. This is the basis for seeking intervention.

3. UN Women
The UN Women had urged member-states to include prevention of violence against women in their action plans on COVID-19.
It also called the rise in gender-based violence a “shadow pandemic”.

UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.
In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women’s empowerment:
• Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW).
• International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).
• Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI).
• United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The main roles of UN Women are:
• To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
• To help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
• To hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

4. India’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations
India has appointed diplomat T S Tirumurti, who was serving as Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, as its Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

What are Permanent Missions to the United Nations?
• According to Article 1 (7) of the Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character, a “Permanent Mission” is a: “ mission of permanent character, representing the State, sent by a State member of an international organization to the Organization”.
• The Permanent Mission is the diplomatic mission that every member state deputes to the United Nations.
• It is headed by a Permanent Representative, who is also referred to as the “UN ambassador”.

www.insightsonindia.com

InsightsIAS
Roles and functions:
- The presence of such permanent missions serves to assist in the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.
- They seek to keep the necessary liaison between the Member States and the Secretariat in periods between sessions of the different organs of the United Nations.
- The Representatives are assigned to the UN headquarters in New York City, and can also be appointed to other UN offices in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi.

The Indian Permanent Mission at the UN:
The first Indian delegates at the United Nations included statesman Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, and freedom fighters Hansa Mehta, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, and Lakshmi Menon. Mehta and Pandit were among the 15 women members of the Indian Constituent Assembly.

India and the UN:
- India was among the select members of the United Nations that signed the United Nations Declaration at Washington on January 1, 1942.
- India also participated in the historic UN Conference of International Organization at San Francisco from April 25 to June 26, 1945.

5. International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2020 was observed on 17 May with the theme “Connect 2030: ICTs for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

Background:
It has been celebrated annually on 17 May since 1969, marking the founding of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865.

About International Telecommunication Union (ITU):
- It is an agency of the United Nations (UN) whose purpose is to coordinate telecommunication operations and services throughout the world.
- Originally founded in 1865, as the International Telegraph Union, the ITU is the oldest existing international organization.
- Headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

The ITU consists of three sectors:
- Radiocommunication (ITU-R) — ensures optimal, fair and rational use of the radio frequency (RF) spectrum.
- Telecommunication Standardization (ITU-T) — formulates recommendations for standardizing telecommunication operations worldwide.
- Telecommunication Development (ITU-D) — assists countries in developing and maintaining internal communication operations.

Membership:
- There are 193 Member States of the ITU, including all UN member states except the Republic of Palau, plus the Vatican City.
- Membership of ITU is open to only UN members, which may join the Union as Member States, as well as to private organizations like carriers, equipment manufacturers, funding bodies, research and development organizations and international and regional telecommunication organizations, which may join ITU as non-voting Sector Members.

Functions:

www.insightsonindia.com
• The ITU sets and publishes regulations and standards relevant to electronic communication and broadcasting technologies of all kinds including radio, television, satellite, telephone and the Internet.
• The organization conducts working parties, study groups and meetings to address current and future issues and to resolve disputes. The ITU organizes and holds an exhibition and forum known as the Global TELECOM every four years.
• Another important aspect of the ITU’s mandate is helping emerging countries to establish and develop telecommunication systems of their own.
• Although the recommendations of the ITU are non-binding, most countries adhere to them in the interest of maintaining an effective international electronic communication environment.

India and the ITU:
India has been an active member of the ITU since 1869 and has been a regular member of the ITU Council since 1952. In November 2018, India was elected as a Member of the ITU Council for another 4-year term (2019-2022).

6. U.N.-75 declaration delayed
Commemorative declaration marking the 75th anniversary of the signing of the U.N. Charter has been delayed.

Why?
Member states could not reach an agreement on phraseology. They have objected to the use of a phrase “shared vision of a common future”.
Because, the phrase, “community with a shared future for mankind” is closely associated with the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) and especially Chinese President Xi Jinping as an articulation of the country’s vision for the world.

Who is opposing?
The Five Eyes — the U.S., the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and Canada — along with India, have objected.

Silence process:
With this objection, the ‘silence’ process (a procedure by which a resolution passes if no formal objections are raised within a stipulated time) has been broken.

What the countries demand?
The objecting countries wanted the resolution to read, “We will work together with partners to strengthen coordination and global governance for the common good of present and future generations and to realize our shared vision for a better future as envisaged in the preamble of the UN Charter.”

75th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter:
• The Charter was signed in San Francisco on June 26, 1945 and came into force on October 24, 1945.
• It is the foundational treaty of the United Nations.
• Objectives: Conceived above all as a means to save future generations from the scourge of war, the Charter calls for the organization to maintain international peace and security; promote social progress and better standards of life; strengthen international law; and promote human rights.
• As a charter, it is a constituent treaty, and all members are bound by its articles. Article 103 of the Charter states that obligations to the United Nations prevail over all other treaty obligations.
What is Five Eyes?
It is an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. These countries are parties to the multilateral UKUSA Agreement, a treaty for joint cooperation in signals intelligence.

Origins: It began in 1946 when the United States and the United Kingdom agreed to an open exchange of intelligence on the communications of foreign nations. It was expanded when Canada joined the alliance in 1948, followed by Australia and New Zealand in 1956.

7. **UN arms trade treaty**
National People’s Congress, China’s top legislative body, has voted to join the global treaty to regulate conventional arms sales.

What does the Arms Trade Treaty seek to do?
It has the ambitious aim of responding to international concern that the $70 billion a year trade in conventional weapons leaves a trail of atrocities in its wake.
The treaty calls for the international sale of weapons to be linked to the human rights records of buyers.
It requires countries to establish regulations for selling conventional weapons.
- It calls for potential arms deals to be evaluated in order to determine whether they might enable buyers to carry out genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes.
- The treaty also seeks to prevent conventional military weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists or organized criminal groups, and to stop deals that would violate UN arms embargos.

What types of conventional weapons deals does the Arms Trade Treaty seek to regulate?
- Conventional weapons covered by the UN Arms Trade Treaty include tanks and other armored combat vehicles, artillery, attack helicopters, naval warships, missiles and missile launchers, and small arms.
- It also establishes common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in ammunition, weapons parts, and arms components.
- The treaty does not regulate the domestic sale or use of weapons in any country. It also recognizes the legitimacy of the arms trade to enable states to provide for their own security.
International Banks / International Financial Institutions

1. **International Monetary and Finance Committee**
   The International Monetary and Finance Committee is a body under the IMF (International Monetary Fund). It recently met via video-conferencing to discuss the ‘Exceptional Times-Exceptional Action’ global policy agenda.

   **Composition**: The IMFC has 24 members, drawn from the pool of 187 governors. Its structure mirrors that of the Executive Board and its 24 constituencies. As such, the IMFC represents all the member countries of the Fund.

   **Functions**: The IMFC meets twice a year, during the Spring and Annual Meetings. The Committee discusses matters of common concern affecting the global economy and also advises the IMF on the direction its work.

   **At the end of the Meetings, the Committee issues a joint communiqué** summarizing its views. These communiqués provide guidance for the IMF’s work program during the six months leading up to the next Spring or Annual Meetings. There is no formal voting at the IMFC, which operates by consensus.

   **Significance**:
   1. The IMFC advises and reports to the IMF Board of Governors on the supervision and management of the international monetary and financial system, including on responses to unfolding events that may disrupt the system.
   2. It also considers proposals by the Executive Board to amend the Articles of Agreement and advises on any other matters that may be referred to it by the Board of Governors.
   3. Although the IMFC has no formal decision-making powers, in practice, it has become a key instrument for providing strategic direction to the work and policies of the Fund.

2. **World Bank pledges $1 bn to boost India’s social safety net**
   - World Bank has approved 1 billion USD aid to India to accelerate “India’s COVID-19 Special Protection Response Programme”.
   - Of the 1 billion USD aid, around 550 million USD is to be credited by the IDA (International Development Association) and 220 million USD by the IBRD (International Bank of Reconstruction and Development). The final maturity amount of the loan is 18.5 years. It also includes a grace period of five years.

   **About IDA**:
   - **Established in 1960**, IDA aims to reduce poverty by providing loans (called “credits”) and grants for programs that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities, and improve people’s living conditions.
   - **IDA complements the World Bank’s original lending arm—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**.
   - **IBRD and IDA share the same staff and headquarters and evaluate projects with the same rigorous standards**.
   - **IDA lends money on concessional terms**. This means that IDA charges little or no interest and repayments are stretched over 25 to 40 years, including a 5- to 10-year grace period. IDA also provides grants to countries at risk of debt distress.

www.insightsonindia.com
How IDA funds are allocated?
To be eligible for funds, countries must first meet the following criteria:

1. Relative poverty defined as GNI per capita must be below an established threshold (updated annually). In fiscal year 2020, this was $1,175.
2. Lack of creditworthiness to borrow on market terms and therefore have a need for concessional resources to finance the country’s development program.

Countries are then assessed to determine how well they implement policies that promote economic growth and poverty reduction. This is done through the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment. This assessment and portfolio performance together constitute the IDA Country Performance Rating.

3. International Finance Corporation (IFC)

- It is an international financial institution that offers investment, advisory, and asset management services to encourage private sector development in developing countries.
- It is a member of the World Bank Group and is headquartered in Washington, D.C., United States.
- It was established in 1956 as the private sector arm of the World Bank Group to advance economic development by investing in strictly for-profit and commercial projects that purport to reduce poverty and promote development.
- The IFC is owned and governed by its member countries, but has its own executive leadership and staff that conduct its normal business operations.
- It is a corporation whose shareholders are member governments that provide paid-in capital and which have the right to vote on its matters.
- Since 2009, the IFC has focused on a set of development goals that its projects are expected to target. Its goals are to increase sustainable agriculture opportunities, improve healthcare and education, increase access to financing for microfinance and business clients, advance infrastructure, help small businesses grow revenues, and invest in climate health.
- It offers an array of debt and equity financing services and helps companies face their risk exposures while refraining from participating in a management capacity.
- It advises governments on building infrastructure and partnerships to further support private sector development.
International Events

1. **World Consumers Day**
15 March is World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD), an annual occasion for celebration and solidarity within the international consumer movement. It marks the date in 1962 President John F Kennedy first outlined the definition of Consumer Rights. The theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2020 is ‘The Sustainable Consumer’.

Key facts:
- Consumers International (CI), which was founded in 1960 organises WCRD. It is the only independent and authoritative global voice for consumers and has over 220 member organisations in 115 countries around the world.
- Consumer Rights Day — India December 24th. On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 had received the assent of the President.

2. **World Press Freedom Day 2020**
World Press Freedom Day popularly known as World Press Day is one of the calendar events planned, organised and promoted by the United Nations, is observed annually on May 3. The day is celebrated to raise awareness regarding the importance of freedom of the press. The theme of World Press Freedom Day 2020, "Journalism without Fear or Favour"

The day May 3 also marks the anniversary of Windhoek Declaration. The Declaration is a statement of press freedom principles put together by African newspaper journalists in 1991. It was a landmark document which set the stage for the development of the African media.

3. **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES 2020**
Observed on 15th of May with the theme “Families in Development: Copenhagen & Beijing+25.”
**Objective:** To promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them.
This year is the 25th anniversary of Copenhagen Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action.

- At the World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen in 1995, Governments reached a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development and adopted the Copenhagen Declaration.
- The Beijing Declaration was a resolution adopted by the UN at the end of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing. The resolution adopted to promulgate a set of principles concerning the equality of men and women.

4. **China’s May Fourth Movement**
It is an intellectual revolution and sociopolitical reform movement that occurred in China on May 4th in 1919.
The Movement unfolded sparked by the refusal of delegates at the Paris Peace Conference to return former German colonies in China to Chinese sovereignty at the conclusion of World War I. The students protested not only Western imperialism but their own government’s weakness.

5. **International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2020**
Observed on 26 June.
Theme: “Better Knowledge for Better Care”.
**Why June 26th?**
The date June 26 is to commemorate Lin Zexu’s dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong, ending in June 25 1839, just before the First Opium War in China.
On this occasion, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report 2020 was also released.

Indian Government has taken several policy and other initiatives to deal with drug trafficking problem:

- It constituted Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) in November, 2016 and revived the scheme of “Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control”.
- In 2017, the government approved new Reward Guidelines with increased quantum of reward for interdiction or seizure of different illicit drugs.
- Narcotics Control Bureau has been provided funds for developing a new software i.e. Seizure Information Management System (SIMS) which will create a complete online database of drug offences and offenders.
- The government has constituted a fund called “National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse” to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with combating illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs; rehabilitating addicts, and educating public against drug abuse, etc.
- The government is also conducting National Drug Abuse Survey to measure trends of drug abuse in India through Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with the help of National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of AIIMS.

6. **Coral Triangle Day**

- Held every year on **June 9**.
- It is a massive celebration of **the Coral Triangle**, the world's epicentre of marine biodiversity, which encompasses **the seas of 6 countries in the Asia-Pacific region**: Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste.
- **Objective**: The event brings together individuals, organizations, and establishments on one special day of the year to shed light on ocean conservation and the numerous ways to protect and conserve the Coral Triangle.
- **Coral Triangle** is considered as one of **the 3 mega ecological complexes on Earth**, together with Congo Basin and the Amazon Rainforest. The region contains 76% of all known coral species, 37% of all known coral reef fish species and 53% of the world's coral reefs.
- The **first Coral Triangle Day was celebrated on June 9, 2012** in conjunction with World Oceans Day which is celebrated every year on June 8.

### Military Exercises

1. **Exercise Red Flag**

- The U.S. Air Force had cancelled Phase-I of its flagship multilateral air exercise, Red Flag, scheduled in Alaska from April 30.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) was to take part in the exercise with its Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jets.

**Key facts:**

- Exercise Red Flag is a two-week advanced aerial combat training exercise held several times a year by the United States Air Force. It aims to offer realistic air-combat training for military pilots and other flight crew members from the United States and allied countries.
- Only countries considered friendly towards the United States take part in Red Flag exercises.
Places in News

1. India and Bangladesh border
Bangladesh and India share a 4,156-kilometre-long international border, the fifth-longest land border in the world.
This includes 262 km in Assam, 856 km in Tripura, 180 km in Mizoram, 443 km in Meghalaya, and 2,217 km in West Bengal.

Why in News?
According to the recent government data, there has been no unusual increase in apprehension of illegal infiltrators along the Bangladesh border in 2019 compared to the trend observed in the past six years.

2. Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)
LOCATION: Benishangul-Gumuz region, Ethiopia.
Formerly known as the Millennium Dam, it is under construction in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of Ethiopia, on the Blue Nile River, which is located about 40 km east of Sudan.

3. Reunion Island
India and France, For the first time, have conducted joint patrols from the Reunion Island.
India has so far carried out Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) only with maritime neighbours and had rejected a similar offer by the US.
Reunion is an overseas department and region of the French Republic and an island in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar and 175 km southwest of Mauritius.

4. Kasowal Bridge
• It is a 484-metre long permanent bridge on the river Ravi to connect the Kasowal enclave of Punjab along the Pakistan border to the rest of the country.
• Built by the Borders Roads Organization.
• Kasowal enclave is around 35 square km. It was till now connected through a pontoon bridge of limited load capacity.
• The enclave was formed because it has the Ravi behind it and the International Border ahead of it.
• There are similar enclaves of Pakistani territory too, which lie ahead of Ravi and face Indian territory. These Pakistani enclaves — Dera Baba Nanak enclave and Jassar enclave — were occupied by the Indian Army in the 1965 and 1971 wars.

5. Gilgit-Baltistan
• Located in the northern Pakistan. It borders China in the North, Afghanistan in the west, Tajikistan in the north west and Kashmir in the south east.
• It shares a geographical boundary with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and India considers it as part of the undivided Jammu and Kashmir, while Pakistan sees it as a separate from PoK.
• It has a regional Assembly and an elected Chief Minister.
• China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) also passes through this region.
• Gilgit-Baltistan is home to five of the “eight-thousanders” and to more than fifty peaks above 7,000 metres (23,000 ft).
• Three of the world’s longest glaciers outside the polar regions are found in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Gilgit-Baltistan has functioned as a “provincial autonomous region” since 2009. Besides, India has conveyed that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of India by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.

How Pakistan took over it?
• The British sold it, along with the rest of Jammu and Kashmir, to the Dogra ruler of Jammu, Gulab Singh, after defeating the Sikh army in 1846, but retained controlled over the area through a lease extracted from the Maharaja.
• This lease was last renewed in 1935. In 1947, a British army officer of the rank of Colonel imprisoned Maharaja Hari Singh’s governor in the region, and handed over the area for accession to Pakistan.

Recent developments:
Pakistan, in 2017, proposed to declare the strategic Gilgit-Baltistan region as its fifth Province.

Impediments ahead:
• Two UN resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949 clearly established a link between GB and the Kashmir issue.
• Making the region its fifth province would thus violate the Karachi Agreement — perhaps the only instrument that provides doubtful legal authority to Pakistan’s administration of GB — as well as the UN resolutions that would damage its position on the Kashmir issue.
• Any such move would also be violative of the 1963 Pak-China Boundary Agreement that calls for the sovereign authority to reopen negotiations with China “after the settlement of the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India” and of the 1972 Simla Agreement that mentions that “neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation.”

6. Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK)
Indian government has decided to begin weather forecasts for regions under Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) — Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad and Mirpur. After DD and AIR started airing weather forecasts from PoK regions, In return Radio Pakistan also featured updates from Srinagar, Pulwama and Ladakh.

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) is that part of the Jammu and Kashmir (India) which was invaded by Pakistan in 1947. The region is referred by the United Nations and other international organizations, as ‘Pakistan-administered Kashmir’ (or Pakistan Administered Kashmir) and it was re-named as ‘Pakistan occupied Jammu-Kashmir’ by the Modi government.

PoK divided into two parts:
1. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)
2. Gilgit-Baltistan (referred to as the ‘Northern Areas’ till August 2009).

Why is PoK important?
PoK is of immense strategic importance. It shares borders with several countries — the Punjab and
North-West Frontier Province provinces (now called Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) in Pakistan to the west, the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan in the north-west, Xinjiang province of the People’s Republic of China to the north and India’s Jammu and Kashmir to the east.

7. **Doklam and Naku La**

Naku La sector is a pass at a height of more than 5,000 metres above Mean Sea Level (MSL) in the state of Sikkim.

It is located ahead of Muguthang or Cho Lhamu (source of River Teesta). The other passes located in the state of Sikkim are Nathu La Pass and Jelep La Pass.

Doklam (or Zhonglan or Donglong): It is an area with a plateau and a valley which lies on the Bhutan-China border, near India. It is located between Tibet’s Chumbi valley to the North, Bhutan’s Ha valley to the East and India's Sikkim state to the West.

The line, which delineates the boundary between India and China, is popularly called the *McMahon line*, after its author Sir Henry McMahon.

8. **Jubaland**

It is an autonomous region in southern Somalia.

- Its eastern border lies 40–60 km east of the Jubba River, stretching from Gedo to the Indian Ocean, while its western side flanks the **North Eastern Province in Kenya**, which was carved out of Jubaland during the colonial period.

- Its largest city is *Kismayo*, which is situated on the coast near the mouth of the Jubba River.

9. **Montenegro**

Montenegro is the first country in Europe to declare itself *coronavirus-free*.

Montenegro is a country of **South and Southeast Europe on the coast of the Balkans**.

It borders Bosnia-Herzegovina to the northwest, Serbia to the northeast, Kosovo to the east, Albania to the southeast, the Adriatic Sea to the southwest, and Croatia to the west.

10. **Depsang**

It is an area at a crucial dip (called the Bulge) on the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.

- The Chinese Army occupied most of the plains in 1962.

- India controls the western portion of the plains as part of Ladakh, whereas the eastern portion is part of the Aksai Chin region, which is controlled by China and claimed by India.
11. Persian Gulf
The lands around the Persian Gulf are shared by eight countries—Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

- These countries are major producers of crude oil and natural gas, and thereby contribute critically to the global economy and to their own prosperity.
- The area has approximately two-thirds of the world’s estimated proven oil reserves and one-third of the world’s estimated proven natural gas reserves.
- A considerable amount of sea trade passes through the gulf, leading to heavy traffic in the region.

12. Tripoli
- Tripoli is the capital city and the largest city of Libya.
- It is located in the northwest of Libya on the edge of the desert, on a point of rocky land projecting into the Mediterranean Sea and forming a bay.
- Libya’s UN-backed gov’t announces taking over Tripoli from the militias of Haftar.

13. Petrapole
It is the Indian side of Petrapole-Benapole border checkpoint between India and Benapole of Bangladesh, on the Bangladesh-India border, near Bongaon in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

- Petrapole border is the only land port in south Bengal. It is also the largest land customs station in Asia.
- The landport alone accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh.
14. **Locations of North Korea and South Korea**

North Korea has cut off all inter-Korean communication lines with the South, including a hotline between the two nations’ leaders. The North said this was the first in a series of actions, describing South Korea as “the enemy”.

**Key facts:**
- It is a country in East Asia constituting the northern part of the Korean Peninsula.
- The country is bordered to the north by China and by Russia along the Amnok and Tumen rivers, and to the south by South Korea, with the heavily fortified Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two.

15. **Daulat Beg Oldie**

- **DBO** is the northernmost corner of Indian territory in Ladakh, in the area better known in Army parlance as Sub-Sector North.
- It has the world’s highest airstrip, originally built during the 1962 war but abandoned until 2008, when the Indian Air Force (IAF) revived it as one of its many Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs) along the LAC.
- DBO is less than 10 km west of the LAC at Aksai Chin.
- To the west of DBO is the region where China abuts Pakistan in the Gilgit-Baltistan area, once a part of the erstwhile Kashmir principality.

**Why in News?**

The construction of the 255-km long Darbuk-Shyokh-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) all-weather road was said to be the immediate reason behind the standoff between Indian Army and a Chinese Army along LAC. Built by BRO, the road runs almost parallel to the LAC and connects Leh to DBO.

16. **Nimu/Nimoo**

Recently Prime Minister travelled to Nimu in Ladakh to interact with Indian troops.
- **Nimu** is the reserve brigade headquarters of the Indian Army.
- Its significance can also be ascertained from the fact that the Border Road Organisation (BRO) is constructing a road from Padum in the Zanskar Valley to Nimu.

**Key facts:**
- Nimu is a village located in the south-eastern part of Ladakh region.
- It is surrounded by the Zanskar range.
- It is famous for offering view of the confluence of the Indus and Zanskar rivers.
- **Magnet Hill** is a gravity defying road 7.5 km southeast of Nimoo.
- Due to the surrounding geographical features, it has an optical illusion where vehicles seem to roll uphill in defiance of gravity when they are, in fact, rolling downhill.
17. **Botswana**

Hundreds of elephants have died mysteriously in Botswana’s Okavango Delta. The cause is yet to be established.

Key facts:
- Botswana is a landlocked country in Southern Africa.
- Botswana is topographically flat, with up to 70 percent of its territory being the Kalahari Desert.
- **Neighbours**: It is bordered by South Africa to the south and southeast, Namibia to the west and north, Zimbabwe to the northeast, and Zambia to the north.
- Botswana is currently home to more elephants than any other African country, and southern Africa remains a stronghold for 293,000, or 70%, of the estimated remaining African elephants.
- The Okavango Delta is a vast inland river delta in northern Botswana. It was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2014.

18. **Natanz**

Recently, a fire broke out at Natanz, an Underground Nuclear Facility of Iran used for enriching uranium.
- Located in Iran’s central Isfahan province in Tehran, Natanz hosts the country’s main uranium enrichment facility. It is known as the first Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant of Iran.
- It is among the sites monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal.

19. **Chushul**

- It is a village in the Leh district of Ladakh, India.
- It is located in the Durbuk tehsil, in the area known as “Chushul valley”.
- It is close to Rezang La and Pangong Lake at a height of 4,360 metres.
- Chushul is one of the five officially agreed Border Personnel Meeting points between the Indian Army and the People’s Liberation Army of China for regular consultations and interactions between the two armies to improve relations. This place is famous for the Indian Army who fought to the 'last man, last round' at Rezang La (Chushul) on November 18, 1962. Without this crucial victory, the territory might have been captured by China.
20. Nagorno-Karabakh region
Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh, is a landlocked region in the South Caucasus, within the mountainous range of Karabakh. It is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan.

21. Azad Pattan hydel power project
The 700MW power project is on the Jhelum river in Sudhoti district of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).
Why in News? Pakistan and China have signed an agreement on this under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

22. Mont Blanc mountain range
A melting glacier at Europe’s Mont Blanc mountain range recently disentombed Indian newspapers buried there for 54 years — some of them carrying headlines such as “India’s First Woman Prime Minister”, referring to Indira Gandhi’s election win in 1966.

Location:
1. Mont Blanc is the second-highest mountain in Europe after Mount Elbrus.
2. It is the highest mountain in the Alps and Western Europe.
3. The mountain stands in a range called the Graian Alps, between the regions of Aosta Valley, Italy, and Savoie and Haute-Savoie, France.
4. Its epithet the “Roof of Europe”.
5. It is also known as White Mountain in French.
6. The border between Italy and France passes through the summit of Mont Blanc, making it both French and Italian.

23. Chattogram Port
First trial container ship flagged off from Kolkata to Agartala through Chattogram Port of Bangladesh. The ship has been launched under the Agreement on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for the movement of India’s transit cargo through Bangladesh.

24. Port Louis
It is the capital city of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. It's known for its French colonial architecture.

Why in News?
Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritius counterpart Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurated the new Supreme Court built in Port Louis with Indian grant assistance.
25. **Galapagos archipelago**

- The Galapagos Islands, spread over almost 60,000 sq km, are a part of Ecuador, and are located in the Pacific Ocean around 1,000 km away from the South American continent.
- The giant tortoises found here – ‘Galápagos’ in old Spanish – give the islands its name.
- Ecuador made a part of the Galapagos a wildlife sanctuary in 1935, and the sanctuary became the Galapagos National Park in 1959. In 1978, the islands became UNESCO’s first World Heritage Site.
- Charles Darwin described the islands as a “world in itself”.

26. **Beirut**

It is the capital and largest city of Lebanon. Located on a peninsula at the midpoint of Lebanon's Mediterranean coast, Beirut is an important regional seaport.

**Why in News?**
A huge explosion recently devastated the port area of the capital Beirut
The blast was caused by 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored unsafely in a warehouse.

27. **Mediterranean Sea**

The Mediterranean is a vast sea positioned between Europe to the north, Africa to the south, and Asia to the east.

The Mediterranean Sea connects:
1. to the Atlantic Ocean by the Strait of Gibraltar (known in Homer’s writings as the "Pillars of Hercules") in the west
2. to the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, by the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus respectively, in the east
3. The 163 km long artificial Suez Canal in the southeast connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea.
Miscellaneous

1. **Stafford Act**
US President Donald Trump had declared a national emergency in the country invoking the Stafford Act.
Key features:
- As per this act, the federal government contributes about 75% to the cost of relief for states.
- The Act authorises the President to provide financial and other assistance to local and state governments, certain private nonprofit organisations, and individuals following declaration as a Stafford Act Emergency (limited) or Major Disaster (more severe).

2. **COVID-19 Rural Poor Stimulus Facility**
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has launched a multi-donor COVID-19 Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF).
Key facts:
1. The RPSF is a short-term strategy that feeds into IFAD’s longer-term development objectives.
2. The Facility will leverage the UN Secretary-General’s Response and Recovery Fund and the work of other multilateral partners to achieve food security for the millions of poor rural people in the most remote and vulnerable communities.

Objectives:
- It aims to improve the food security and resilience of poor rural people by supporting production, market access and employment.
- The ultimate goal of the RPSF is to accelerate the recovery of poor and vulnerable rural people from the COVID-19 crisis.

The interventions fall into four main categories:
1. Providing inputs and basic assets for production of crops, livestock and fisheries.
2. Facilitating access to markets to support small-scale farmers in selling their products in conditions where market functions are restricted.
3. Targeting funds for rural financial services to ensure sufficient liquidity and to ease repayment requirements so as to maintain services, markets and jobs.
4. Promoting the use of digital services to deliver key information on production, weather, finance and markets.

Eligibility:
- All IFAD-supported country programmes that are at risk of not achieving their development outcomes due to COVID-19 are eligible to receive funding from the RPSF.
- Preference will be given to countries with low institutional and financial capacity to respond to the crisis.

3. **Neighbouring rights law**
- It is mentioned in Europe’s new digital copyright law.
- It is designed to ensure news publishers are compensated when their work is shown on websites, search engines and social media platforms.

4. **Saudi Arabia abolishes flogging**
Saudi Arabia has abolished flogging as a punishment for crime.
Flogging, also called whipping or caning, a beating administered with a whip or rod, with blows commonly directed to the person's back. It was imposed as a form of judicial punishment and as a means of maintaining discipline in schools, prisons, military forces, and private homes.

- Now, with flogging abolished, judges will have to choose between fines, jail sentences and non-custodial alternatives such as jail sentences.
- This reform was made in order to “bring the kingdom into line with international human rights norms against corporal punishment”.
- In 2018, Saudi had lifted the ban on women drivers. And, women not requiring permission from their male guardians to apply for a passport anymore.

5. Travel bubble
The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have started what is being referred to as a ‘travel bubble’ to help put their economies back.

What is a travel bubble?
Creating a travel bubble involves reconnecting countries or states that have shown a good level of success in containing the novel coronavirus pandemic domestically. Such a bubble would allow the members of the group to rekindle trade ties with each other, and kickstart sectors such as travel and tourism.

6. Social Bubbles
One of the ways of effective social distancing strategies to keep the Covid-19 curve flat suggested by experts include the idea of social bubbles.

What are social bubbles?
- The idea is based on New Zealand’s model of household “bubbles”, an exclusive social group that is allowed to meet with each other amid the pandemic.
- A bubble is referred to as an individual’s household or the people that one lives with. People may be allowed to extend their bubbles slightly to include caregivers or children who might be in shared care.
- These people don’t need to live in the same household but must be local.
- New Zealand followed this approach during the lockdown and allowed the expansion of the bubbles as transmission slowed and restrictions eased.

In case a member of the bubble develops symptoms, the entire bubble quarantines itself, preventing further spread of the infection.

7. Hezbollah
- Germany has classified the organization Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in its soil.
- The Hezbollah is a Shia Islamist political party that is based in Lebanon. The organization was founded by the Iranian effort in 1980s to aggregate Lebanese Shia groups. In the on-going Iran-Israel conflicts, Hezbollah acts as a proxy for Iran.

8. The Resistance Front
It is an offshoot of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Toiba and is also associated with other terror outfits such as Hizbul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed.
9. **Boko Haram**
Boko Haram is a violent Islamist insurgent group that has spread from northeast Nigeria to neighbouring West African nations of Niger, Chad and Cameroon in the Lake Chad Basin.

10. **Interahamwe militia**
It is a far-right Hutu paramilitary organization active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

11. **Antifa**
- Short for “anti-fascists,” antifa is not a single organization but rather an umbrella term for far-left-leaning movements that confront or resist neo-Nazis and white supremacists at demonstrations.
- Anti-fascists of the movement tend to be grouped on the leftward fringes of the US political spectrum, many describing themselves as socialists, anarchists, communists or anti-capitalists.
- The origin is traced as far back as Nazi Germany.
- While the movement has had a presence in several European countries and has come into focus in the United States in recent years, Antifa does not have a formal organisational structure.
- Antifa members typically dress in black and often wear a mask at their demonstrations, and follow far-left ideologies such as anti-capitalism. They take up causes such as LGBTQ and indigenous rights. What makes them stand out is the violence.

12. **Order of the Nine Angles**
- O9A is considered to be a satanic, anarchist group founded in the UK in the 1970s that now operates around the world, including in the US.
- The group describes itself as “a diverse, and world-wide, collective of diverse groups, tribes, and individuals, who share and who pursue similar sinister, subversive, interests, aims and life-styles, and who cooperate when necessary for their mutual benefit and in pursuit of their shared aims and objectives…”

13. **Manipur’s Khudol**
The United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth has listed Manipur’s Khudol (gift) among the top 10 global initiatives for an inclusive fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

14. **Operation Warp Speed**
- It is a public–private partnership, initiated by the Federal Government of the United States, to facilitate and accelerate the development of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.
- It is an interagency program that includes components of the Department of Health, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institutes of Health and private firms.

15. **Vaccine Nationalism**
The United States had indicated that it would like to secure priority access to doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Other countries, including India and Russia, have taken similar stances. This prioritisation of domestic markets has become known as vaccine nationalism.
How it works?
Vaccine nationalism occurs when a country manages to secure doses of vaccine for its own citizens or residents before they are made available in other countries. This is done through pre-purchase agreements between a government and a vaccine manufacturer.

How was it used in the past?
Vaccine nationalism is not new. During the early stages of the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic, some of the wealthiest countries entered into pre-purchase agreements with several pharmaceutical companies working on H1N1 vaccines.

16. THAAD defence systems
THAAD is an acronym for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense. It is a transportable, ground-based missile defense system. This anti-ballistic missile defense system has been designed and manufactured by the US company Lockheed Martin.

How it operates?
THAAD is coupled with space-based and ground-based surveillance stations, which transfer data about the incoming missile and informs the THAAD interceptor missile of the threat type classification. THAAD is alarmed about incoming missiles by space-based satellites with infrared sensors.

Where all it has been deployed?
South Korea, the UAE, Guam, Israel and Romania.

17. GAFA tax
GAFA tax—named after Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon—is a proposed digital tax to be levied on large technology and internet companies. France has decided to introduce the tax (3% tax on revenues from digital activities).

Digital tax in India:
India has the second-largest online users in the world, with over 560 million internet users.

Recent Amendments:
1. The “Equalization Levy” —
A tax aimed at foreign digital companies has been in place since 2016 and levied a 6% tax payable on gross revenues from online advertising services, which raked over Rs. 550 crores in fiscal year 2017-2018.
The new amendment, effective from April 1, 2020, essentially expands the equalization levy from online advertising to nearly all online commerce activities done in India by businesses that do not have taxable presence in India through applicability of 2% on its revenues.

Specifically, it is levied on consideration receivable by the e-commerce operator for supply or services or facilitation of supply or service to – Person resident in India, Non-resident under specified circumstances such as through sale of data collected from a person resident in India, and Person who buys goods or services through an IP address located in India.

2. The concept of “Significant Economic Presence” (SEP):
Introduced for the purposes of corporate income tax, which expanded to include the following:
- Advertisement which targets a customer residing in India or who accesses advertisement through internet protocol (IP) address located in India.
- Sale of data collected from a person residing in India or who uses an IP address located in India.
- Sale of goods/services using data collected from a person residing in India or who uses IP address located in India.

18. Chiang Mai initiative (CMI)
- It is a multilateral currency swap arrangement among the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the People’s Republic of China (including Hong Kong), Japan and South Korea.
- Launched in 2010 to manage regional short-term liquidity problems and to avoid relying on the IMF.

19. Loya Jirga
- It is a mass national gathering that brings together representatives from the various ethnic, religious, and tribal communities in Afghanistan.
- It is a highly respected centuries-old consultative body that has been convened at times of national crisis or to settle national issues.
- According to the Afghan Constitution, a Loya Jirga is considered the highest expression of the Afghan people. It is not an official decision-making body and its decisions are not legally binding.

Why in News?
A three-day Loya Jirga-grand assembly was called in Afghanistan to decide on freeing about 400 Taliban fighters convicted for serious crimes including murder and abductions.