



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

INSTA PT 2021 EXCLUSIVE

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JUNE 2020 – MARCH 2021

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Bilateral Relations

India – US

1. Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy under Siege

The report "Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy under Siege" was released by US think-tank Freedom House.

Key findings:

1. Freedoms in India have reduced resulting in India being classified as 'partly free'.
2. India's score was 67, a drop from 71/100 from last year downgrading it from the free category last year.

About the Report:

Since 1973, Freedom House has assessed the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world. It is used on a regular basis by policymakers, journalists, academics, activists, and many others.

How are the countries ranked?

The report's methodology is derived in large measure from **the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.**

- Freedom in the World assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals, rather than governments or government performance per se.

What topics do the scores cover?

- A. Electoral Process.
- B. Political Pluralism and Participation.
- C. Functioning of Government.
- D. Freedom of Expression and Belief.
- E. Associational and Organizational Rights.
- F. Rule of Law.
- G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights.

2. Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF)

- Established under an agreement between the Governments of India and the United States of America in March 2000.
- It is a bilateral organization funded by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Governments of India, and the U.S. Department of States.
- It promotes Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovation through substantive interaction among government, academia and industry.
- The aim of the Fund is to support and foster joint applied R&D to generate public good through the commercialization of technology developed through sustained partnerships between U.S. and Indian researchers and entrepreneurs.

3. Kerala govt. annuls agreement with U.S. firm

The Kerala government has invalidated a controversial agreement that the Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC) had reached with a U.S.-based firm, EMCC International, **to build and operate a deep-sea trawling fleet to harvest the marine wealth off the State's coast.**

How is the proposed project against fisheries policy?

The Union Government had in 2017 withdrawn permission given for foreign trawlers for deep sea fishing in the exclusive economic zone of the country.

- The EEZ of the country extends up to 370 km from the coastline.

Illegal fishing by foreign vessels in Indian waters is punishable under provisions of **Maritime Zone of India (Regulation of Fishing by Foreign Vessels Act) 1981**.

Besides, **Kerala's fisheries policy**, brought in 2018, opposed allowing foreign and native corporate vessels along the state's coast

- The professed policy of the state is to equip the traditional fishermen for deep sea fishing by making them owners of deep sea fishing vessels.
- Besides, there would be restrictions on the number of vessels. Only traditional fishermen would be given permission to replace their old boats.

What is Deep Sea Trawling?

The Deep Sea Trawling can be defined as the Industrial way or method fishing in which large nets with heavy weight are carted across the seafloor to lift out the catch marine animals such as fishes, shrimp, cod etc. It is considered as the most prominent method of fishing which is a practice across the world at large scale.

Impact of Deep Sea Trawling on Environment:

The gears of Deep Sea Trawling creates huge on the life of marine plants and animals as well as the seafloor by disrupting the sediment column structure, overturning boulders, re-suspending sediments and imprinting deep scars on muddy bottoms.

4. [Biden revokes Trump's immigrant visa ban](#)

The Biden administration has revoked Donald Trump's suspension of **new immigrant visas**, which had been in effect since late April 2020.

What are H-1B, H-2B, L and other work visas?

In order to fill a vacuum of highly-skilled low-cost employees in IT and other related domains, the US administration issues a certain number of visas each year which allows companies from outside the US to send employees to work on client sites.

1. H-1B: Person is Specialty Occupation: To work in a specialty occupation. Requires a higher education degree of its equivalent. H1-B visas are predominantly granted to workers in the IT sector, and most of these visas — over 70% — have gone to Indian citizens in recent years.
2. L1 visas allows companies to transfer highly skilled workers to US for a period of up to seven years.
3. H-2B visas allow food and agricultural workers to seek employment in the US.
4. J-1 Visas: It is for students on work-study summer programmes.

5. [Generalized System of Preference \(GSP\)](#)

- The United States of America (USA) had **terminated India's designation as a beneficiary developing nation under the GSP** (Generalized System of Preference) trade program with effect from 5th June 2019.
- **Implications:**
 - With this, **India could lose a vital U.S. trade concession**, under which it enjoys zero tariffs on \$5.6 billion of exports to the United States.
- **Generalised System of Preferences (GSP):**
 - It is a U.S. trade program designed to **promote economic growth in the developing world** by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from around 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.
- **What is the objective of GSP?**

- The objective of GSP was to give development support to poor countries by promoting exports from them into the developed countries.
- GSP promotes **sustainable development in beneficiary countries** by helping these countries to increase and diversify their trade with the United States.
- **Benefits of GSP:**
 - Indian exporters benefit indirectly – through the benefit that accrues to the importer by way of reduced tariff or duty-free entry of eligible Indian products
 - Reduction or removal of import duty on an Indian product makes it more competitive to the importer – other things (e.g. quality) being equal.
 - This tariff preference helps new exporters to penetrate a market and established exporters to increase their market share and to improve upon the profit margins, in the donor country.
- **What is the difference between GSP and the usual trade arrangement under WTO?**
 - Under the normal trade laws, the WTO members must give equal preferences to trade partners. There should not be any discrimination between countries. This trade rule under the WTO is called the **Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause**.
 - The MFN instructs non-discrimination that any favourable treatment to a particular country. At the same time, the WTO allows members to give special and differential treatment to from developing countries (like zero tariff imports). This is an exemption for MFN. The MSP given by developed countries including the US is an exception to MFN.

6. U.S. puts India on 'currency manipulators' monitoring list

The U.S. Treasury has labeled **Switzerland and Vietnam as currency manipulators**.

- It has also added **three new names- Taiwan, Thailand and India-** to a **watch list of countries it suspects of taking measures to devalue their currencies against the dollar**.

To be labeled a manipulator by the U.S. Treasury:

- Countries must at least have a \$20 billion-plus bilateral trade surplus with the U.S.
- Foreign currency intervention exceeding 2% of gross domestic product.
- A global current account surplus exceeding 2% of GDP.

Reasons:

- In the year through June 2020 Switzerland and Vietnam had intervened heavily in currency markets to prevent effective balance of payments adjustments.
- India and Singapore had intervened in the foreign exchange market in a “sustained, asymmetric manner” but did not meet other requirements to warrant designation as manipulators.

Implications:

While the designation of a country as a currency manipulator does not immediately attract any penalties, it tends to dent the confidence about a country in the global financial markets.

What is currency manipulation and who determines it?

- The US Department of the Treasury publishes a semi-annual report in which the developments in global economic and exchange rate policies are reviewed.
- If a US trade partner meets three assessment criteria, the US labels it a currency manipulator.
- The US Treasury department defines currency manipulation as when countries deliberately influence the exchange rate between their currency and the US dollar to gain “unfair competitive advantage in international trade”.

7. 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**.

8. Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)

The US had warned India that it could face sanctions over it acquiring five Russian Almaz-Antei S-400 Triumf self-propelled surface-to-air (SAM) systems for \$5.5 billion.

- India is unlikely to get a waiver over Washington invoking its **Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)** on the Indian Air Force (IAF) for its S-400 buy.

The United States has imposed sanctions (Under CAATSA) on **Turkey over Ankara's acquisition of Russian S-400 air defence systems**.

What is the S-400 air defence missile system? Why does India need it?

- The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia.
- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern **long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world**, considered much ahead of the US-developed **Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD)**.
- India's acquisition is crucial to counter attacks in a two-front war, including even high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.

What is CAATSA, and how did the S-400 deal fall foul of this Act?

- Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)’s core objective is to counter Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures.
- The Act primarily deals with sanctions on Russian interests such as its oil and gas industry, defence and security sector, and financial institutions, in the backdrop of its military intervention in Ukraine and its alleged meddling in the 2016 US Presidential elections.

What does it mean for India’s defence landscape?

As per the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Transfer Database**, during the period 2010-17, **Russia was the top arms supplier to India.**

- **Most of India’s weapons are of Soviet/Russian origin** – nuclear submarine INS Chakra, the Kilo-class conventional submarine, the supersonic Brahmos cruise missile, the MiG 21/27/29 and Su-30 MKI fighters, IL-76/78 transport planes, T-72 and T-90 tanks, Mi-series of helicopters, and Vikramaditya aircraft carrier
- Therefore, CAATSA impacts Indo-US ties and dents the image of the US as a reliable partner.

US VERSUS RUSSIA IN INDIAN ARMS MARKET

RUSSIA	THE US
India's biggest arms supplier for decades. Sales worth \$65 billion since early-1960s MiG fighters & Sukhoi-30MKI jets to Kilo-class submarines, Talwar/Tabar-class frigates & aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya	Overtook Russia in bagging Indian deals over last 3/4 years. Sales worth \$15 billion since 2007 C-17 Globemaster-III strategic airlifters, C-130J Super Hercules aircraft & P-8I maritime patrol planes to M-777 ultra-light howitzers, Apache attack & Chinook heavy-lift helicopters
FUTURE PROJECTS	FUTURE PROJECTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lease of 2nd nuclear-powered submarine (after first one, INS Chakra) for around \$1.5 billion ➤ Five S-400 Triumf air defence systems for around \$5.5 billion ➤ Four Grigorovich-class stealth frigates (2 to be built in India) for around \$4 billion ➤ Joint production of 200 Kamov-226T light utility helicopters (140 in India) for \$1 billion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ US pushing F/A-18 "Super Hornet" or F-16 fighter production line in India to supply 110 jets for IAF for \$20 billion ➤ In contention for 57 multi-role fighters to operate from aircraft carriers ➤ Also for 111 armed naval light utility helicopters (Rs 21,738 crore) ➤ Also 24 multi-role helicopters with anti-sub warfare capabilities (Rs 12,000 crore). Another 123 such choppers later
 <p>INS Vikramaditya</p>	 <p>IAF C-17 Aircraft</p>
<p>TOI FOR MORE INFOGRAPHICS DOWNLOAD TIMES OF INDIA APP</p> <p>Available on the  App Store  Google play  Windows Phone</p>	

9. Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial cooperation (BECA)

India and the United States signed the **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)**, which, along with the two agreements signed earlier — the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) — completes a troika of “foundational pacts” for deep military cooperation between the two countries.

What is BECA?

This agreement would facilitate exchange of geospatial information between India and United States for both military and civilian use.

Significance and benefits for India from BECA:

BECA will allow India to use US expertise on geospatial intelligence and to enhance military accuracy of automated hardware systems and weapons like cruise, ballistic missiles and drones.

FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENTS		
<p>Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide logistic support, refuelling & berthing facilities for each other's warships & aircraft on barter/equal-value exchange basis ➤ Will not involve stationing of US troops on Indian soil. Nor will India extend support if US goes to war with "a friendly country" ➤ Good for US forces re-balancing to Asia Pacific. Indian forces rarely operate far away from their shores but access to Djibouti & Diego Garcia could be useful 	<p>Communication Interoperability & Security Memorandum Agreement (CISMOA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Technology enabler to help transfer high-tech avionics, encrypted communication & electronic systems to India ➤ US says CISMOA will boost 'interoperability' as well as ensure secrecy of its C4ISR (command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) systems ➤ But fears that US will be able to track & snoop on Indian warships/aircraft equipped with such systems 	<p>Basic Exchange & Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ US says BECA will help India with advanced satellite & topographical data for long-range navigation & missile-targeting ➤ But India, which has its own satellite imaging capabilities, unwilling for American digital sensors to be positioned on its soil

India – Iran

1. Chabahar Port

- Iran's Chabahar port is located on the **Gulf of Oman** and is the only oceanic port of the country.
- The port gives access to the energy-rich Persian Gulf nations' southern coast.
- Significance of the Chabahar port is the fact that **India can bypass Pakistan in transporting goods to Afghanistan.**
- Chabahar port will boost India's access to Iran, the key gateway to the International North-South Transport Corridor that has sea, rail and road routes between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia.
- **Chabahar port will be beneficial to India in countering Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea** which China is trying to ensure by helping Pakistan develop the Gwadar port.
- Gwadar port is less than 400 km from Chabahar by road and 100 km by sea.

India – Australia

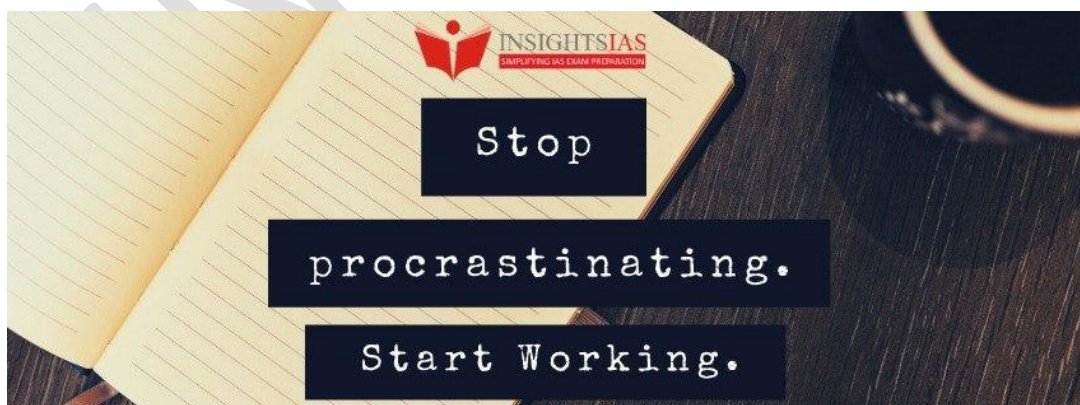
1. Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)

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.



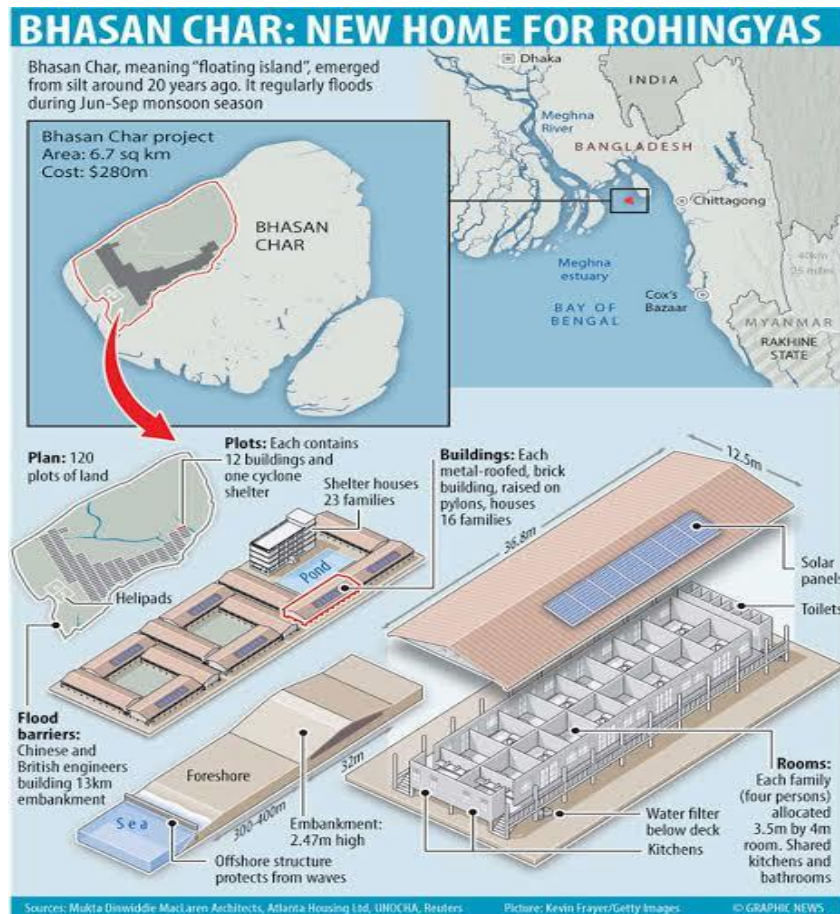
India and its neighbourhood- relations

1. Rohingya Crisis

Bangladesh authorities sent a fourth group of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar to **Bhasan Char** island in the Bay of Bengal despite calls by human rights groups for a halt to the process.

Background:

- Bhasan Char is an island specifically developed to accommodate 1,00,000 of the 1 million Rohingya who have fled from neighbouring Myanmar.
- While human rights groups have criticised the move and some are being forced to go against their will, the government has insisted that refugees moving to the island have done so voluntarily.



Who are Rohingyas?

- They are an Ethnic group, mostly Muslims. They were not granted full citizenship by Myanmar.
- They were classified as "resident foreigners or associate citizens".
- Ethnically they are much closer to Indo-Aryan people of India and Bangladesh than to the Sino-Tibetans of the Country.

Described by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as **"one of, if not the, most discriminated people in the world"**.

2. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

The CPEC is the flagship project of the multi-billion-dollar **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, aimed at enhancing Beijing's influence around the world through China-funded infrastructure projects.

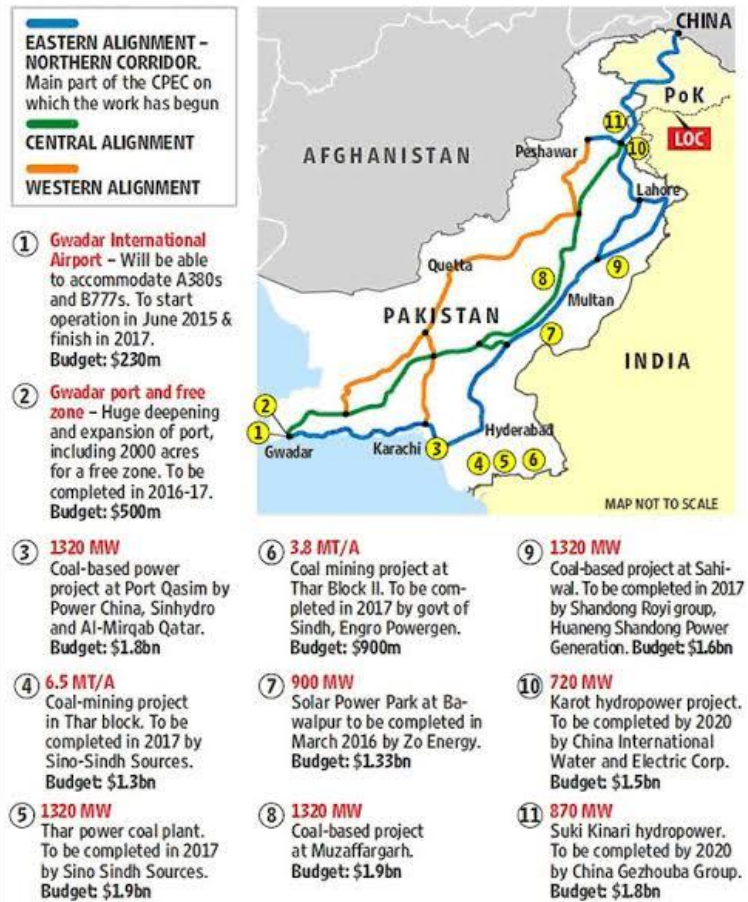
- The 3,000 km-long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) **consists of highways, railways, and pipelines.**

- CPEC eventually aims at **linking the city of Gwadar in South Western Pakistan to China's North Western region Xinjiang** through a vast network of highways and railways.
- The proposed project will be financed by heavily-subsidised loans, that will be disbursed to the Government of Pakistan by Chinese banks.

But, why is India concerned? It passes through Gilgit-Baltistan in PoK.

- CPEC rests on a Chinese plan to secure and shorten its supply lines through Gwadar with an enhanced presence in the Indian Ocean. Hence, it is widely believed that **upon CPEC's fruition, an extensive Chinese presence will undermine India's influence in the Indian Ocean.**
- It is also being contended that if CPEC were to successfully transform the Pakistan economy that could be a **"red rag" for India which will remain at the receiving end of a wealthier and stronger Pakistan.**
- Besides, India shares a great deal of **trust deficit** with China and Pakistan and has a history of conflict with both. As a result, even though suggestions to re-approach the project pragmatically have been made, no advocate has overruled the principle strands of contention that continue to mar India's equations with China and Pakistan.

The routes and main China-sponsored projects along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor



3. India has dismissed as 'fake' a report about China's use of 'microwave weapons'

The Indian Army had dismissed reports that said that China had used **microwave weapons** in eastern Ladakh as "fake" and "baseless".

What are "microwave weapons"?

"Microwave weapons" are supposed to be a **type of direct energy weapons**, which aim highly focused energy in the form of sonic, laser, or microwaves, at a target.

Which countries have these "microwave weapons"?

A number of countries are thought to have developed these weapons to target both humans and electronic systems.

- **China** had first put on display its "microwave weapon", called Poly WB-1, at an air show in 2014.
- **The United States** has also developed a prototype microwave-style weapon, which it calls the "Active Denial System".

Have “microwave weapons” been used in the past?

The US apparently deployed such a weapon in Afghanistan, but withdrew it without ever using it against human targets.

4. India and China agreements on border management

India and China have signed various agreements on border management— signed in September 1993, November 1996, April 2005 and October 2013.

1. 1993 Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the Sino-Indian Border:

As per the agreement, both India and China agree to keep “military forces in the areas along the line of actual control to a minimum level” and “reduce troop levels” compatible with friendly and good relations between them.

2. 1996 Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures:

This agreement allows for “military disclosure when the parties are undertaking border exercises and for the reduction of troop levels in the border areas.

- It also allows the parties to observe and inspect troop movements in each other territory upon invitation.
- In this agreement too, the two sides agreed to reduce or limit their military forces within mutually-agreed geographical zones along the LAC.
- It also specifies the major categories of armaments to be reduced or limited: “combat tanks, infantry combat vehicles, guns etc.
- It also stipulates that “[n]either side shall open fire, cause bio-degradation, use hazardous chemicals, conduct blast operations or hunt with guns or explosives within two kilometers from the line of actual control.

India and China have recently agreed on a **five-point course of action to disengage and reduce tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).**

5. Indo-Sri Lankan Accord

Signed in 1987.

Popularly referred to as **the Rajiv-Jayewardene Accord**, after its architects Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayewardene.

- It sought to collectively address all the three contentious issues between India and Sri Lanka: strategic interests, people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka and Tamil minority rights in Sri Lanka.



INDO-LANKA ACCORD

The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was an accord signed in Colombo on July 29, 1987, between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene.

- The accord was expected to resolve the ongoing Sri Lankan civil war. Under the terms of the agreement, Colombo agreed to a devolution of power to the provinces, the Tamil rebels were to disarm.
- The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord also underlined the commitment of Indian military assistance on which the Indian Peace Keeping Force came to be inducted into Sri Lanka.

- This accord saw the induction of **the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka**.
- According to the terms of the accord, **Sri Lankan forces would withdraw from the north and the Tamil rebels would disarm**.
- The accord was expected to resolve the Sri Lankan Civil War by enabling the thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka and the Provincial Councils Act of 1987.

6. Sri Lankan Parliament passes 20th Amendment

Highlights of the 20th Amendment:

- It envisages **expansive powers and greater immunity for the Executive President**.
- The Amendment **rolls back Sri Lanka's 19th Amendment**, a 2015 legislation that sought to clip presidential powers, while strengthening Parliament. The new legislation in turn **reduces the Prime Minister's role to a ceremonial one**.

Why was the 19th Amendment introduced? (Have a brief overview):

It mainly **sought to weaken the power of the presidency which the 18th amendment had greatly expanded**.

The 18th amendment allowed four basic changes:

1. The President can seek re-election any number of times;
2. The ten-member Constitutional Council has been replaced with a five-member Parliamentary Council;
3. Independent commissions are brought under the authority of the President; and,
4. It enables the President to attend Parliament once in three months and entitles him to all the privileges, immunities, and powers of a Member of Parliament other than the entitlement to vote.

1. 2003 Ceasefire Agreement

India and Pakistan had issued a joint statement to strictly observe the 2003 Ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control (LoC).

About the 2003 ceasefire agreement:

The ceasefire agreement was reached in November 2003, four years after the Kargil War. On November 26, 2003 the ceasefire took effect along the entire stretch of the India-Pakistan frontier.

- It facilitated the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalkot routes, paving the way for bus and truck services linking the two Kashmirs for the first time in six decades and encouraging cross-LoC contacts, exchanges, travel, and trade.
- The ceasefire also enabled India to complete the construction of a fence near the LoC to prevent Pakistan's infiltration of terrorists into Kashmir, a project that it had begun a couple of decades earlier but had to suspend due to Pakistan's artillery fire.

Will this ceasefire last?

This is not the first time that India and Pakistan have agreed to give peace a chance on the LoC to make the lives of civilians living along the line easy.

- The 2003 ceasefire agreement remains a milestone as it brought peace along the LoC until 2006. Between 2003 and 2006, not a single bullet was fired by the jawans of India and Pakistan.
- But since 2006, ceasefire violations became the norm with increasing frequency. Recent years have seen an increasing number of ceasefire violations despite an agreement reached in 2018 to adhere to the 2003 ceasefire agreement.

2. Gilgit-Baltistan

Pakistan had planned to accord **provincial status to the "Gilgit-Baltistan"**.

India's response:

- India has termed this move as an attempt to camouflage the “illegal” occupation of the region by Islamabad.
- India has clarified that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the area of so-called ‘Gilgit-Baltistan’, are an integral part of India by virtue of the legal, complete and irrevocable accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Union of India in 1947.

Where is Gilgit Baltistan located?

It borders China in the North, Afghanistan in the west and Kashmir in the south east.

It shares a geographical boundary with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and India considers it as part of the UT of Ladakh, while Pakistan sees it as a separate from PoK.

Key points:

- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through this region.
- The region 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.

Challenges ahead for Pakistan:

- This would 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”.

3. Indus Water Treaty

September 19, 2020 marks the 60th anniversary of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) between India and Pakistan.

About the Indus Water Treaty:

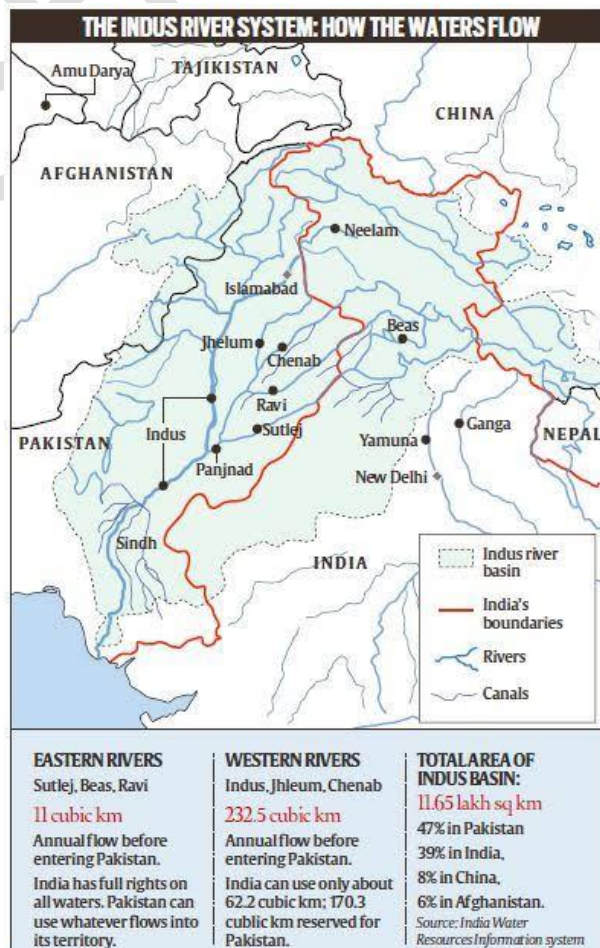
It is a Water-Distribution Treaty, signed in Karachi in 1960, between India (PM Jawaharlal Nehru) and Pakistan (President Ayub Khan), brokered by the World Bank.

Who has control over what?

- Under the treaty, India has control over water flowing in the eastern rivers– Beas, Ravi and Sutlej.
- Pakistan has control over the western rivers– Indus, Chenab and Jhelum.

Water for other purposes:

- India is allowed to use 20% water of the western rivers for irrigation, power generation and transport purposes.
- It also granted 3.6 million acre-feet (MAF) of “permissible storage capacity” to India on the western rivers.



Key features of the treaty:

- As per the treaty, the water commissioners of Pakistan and India are required to meet twice a year and arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works.
- Both the sides share details of the water flow and the quantum of water being used under the treaty.
- The treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers.

4. Shahtoot dam

India and Afghanistan signed an agreement to build the **Shahtoot Dam in Kabul to provide drinking water facility in the Afghan capital.**

- The project is a part of the New Development Partnership between India and Afghanistan.
- The dam would come upon the **Maidan river tributary of Kabul river.**
- This is the second major dam being built by India in Afghanistan, after the India – Afghanistan Friendship Dam [Salma Dam], which was inaugurated in June 2016.

5. India-Bangladesh Border Haat

- India-Bangladesh Border Haat is a border trade market between Bangladesh and India.
- Currently, four border haats are operational along the India-Bangladesh border. Two border haats are located in **Meghalaya** at Kalaichar and Balat and two are located in **Tripura** at Srinagar and Kamalasar.
- There are **no border haats in operation along the Bhutan and Myanmar borders.**
- In addition to the four functional haats, the government of India and the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh have approved **six more border haats**: two in Tripura at Palbasti and Kamalpur and four in Meghalaya at Bholaganj, Nalikata, Shibbari and Ryingku.
- The government of India has also executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of the Republic of Union of Myanmar on the establishment of border haats along their border.

How it functions?

- The trade at border haats is permitted to be carried out **in Indian Rupees/Bangladesh Taka and on a barter basis**, and data of such trade is maintained by the **Haat Management Committee** of the respective border haat.

The Following commodities are traded in the Border Haats:

- Vegetables, food items, fruits, spices.
- Minor Forest produce eg bamboo, bamboo grass and broom sticks, excluding timber.
- Products of Cottage Industries like Gamcha, Lungi etc.
- Small Agriculture household implements eg dao, plough, axe, spade, chisel etc.
- Garments, melamine products, processed food items, fruit juice, toiletries, cosmetics, plastic products, aluminium products, cookeries.

Effects of Policies of Developed and Developing Countries on India's Interests

1. China warns U.S. over its Taiwan stand

China recently warned the Biden administration to roll back former President Donald Trump's "dangerous practice" of showing support for Taiwan.

- China has also warned Taiwan that any attempt to seek independence "means war".

What's the issue?

China sees democratic Taiwan as a breakaway province, but Taiwan sees itself as a sovereign state, with its own constitution, military, and elected leaders.

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.



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.

2. South China sea dispute

A disputed reef in the region - **Reed Bank**.

About the South China sea dispute:

It is a **dispute over territory and sovereignty over ocean areas, and the Paracels and the Spratlys** – two island chains claimed in whole or in part by a number of countries.

- Alongside the fully fledged islands, there are dozens of rocky outcrops, atolls, sandbanks and reefs, such as the Scarborough Shoal.
- Beijing often invokes the so-called **nine-dash line** to justify its apparent historic rights over most of the South China Sea, parts of which are also claimed by **Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei**.
- China has ignored a **2016 international tribunal decision that declared its assertion as without basis**.

Who Claims What?**China:**

claims by far the largest portion of territory – an area defined by the “nine-dash line” which stretches hundreds of miles south and east from its most southerly province of Hainan.

Vietnam:

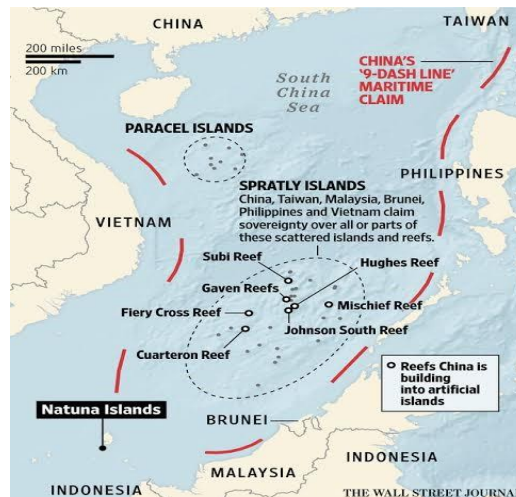
hotly disputes China’s historical account, saying China had never claimed sovereignty over the islands before the 1940s. Vietnam says it has actively ruled over both the Paracels and the Spratlys since the 17th Century – and has the documents to prove it.

Philippines:

both the Philippines and China lay claim to the Scarborough Shoal (known as Huangyan Island in China) – a little more than 100 miles (160km) from the Philippines and 500 miles from China.

Malaysia and Brunei:

They lay claim to territory in the South China Sea that they say falls within their economic exclusion zones, as defined by UNCLOS – the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Brunei does not claim any of the disputed islands, but Malaysia claims a small number of islands in the Spratlys

**3. China’s National Defence Law**

China’s **National Defence Law** has been amended.

Key changes:

- Gives the Central Military Commission (CMC) greater power in mobilising resources to protect a new and broader definition of what constitutes the national interest.
- Experts say the phrase “development interests” included the protection of China’s economic activities and assets overseas, such as those under **the Belt and Road Initiative**, as a reason for defence mobilisation.
- The amendment broadened the scope of key security fields beyond land borders, maritime and air defence, **to include outer space and electromagnetic networks**.
- The amendment also said China “will participate in global security governance, join multilateral security talks and push for and set up a set of international rules that is widely accepted, fair and reasonable”.

4. South Asia multilateral meet

China has held its third multilateral dialogue with countries from South Asia to take forward closer cooperation on fighting COVID-19.

Key points:

- The third dialogue, held virtually, brought together every country in the region **barring India, Bhutan and the Maldives**.
- It was aimed at “anti-epidemic cooperation and poverty reduction cooperation”.

South Asia multilateral meet

All **three dialogues have been attended by Pakistan and Nepal**, which are emerging as two lynchpins in China’s regional strategy.

- **The first such** meeting was convened by China in July, and was attended by **Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan**.

- The second meet was held in November by a five-member grouping attended by **China, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.**
- **The third and recent meeting was attended by all five countries** that have taken part in these dialogues — Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

CPEC extension

At the first quadrilateral dialogue with Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan, China's Foreign Minister proposed extending the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.**

- China discussed about taking forward an economic corridor plan with Nepal, called the **Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network.**
- The four countries were "**connected by mountains and rivers**", and china also offered to share China's expertise and capacities on COVID-19 vaccines.

5. Sino-British Joint Declaration

Britain has accused China of breaking its international treaty obligations, after four pro-democracy lawmakers were ousted from Hong Kong's legislature on security grounds.

- Britain said the new rules to disqualify elected assembly members was "a clear breach of the **legally binding Sino-British Joint Declaration**".

What is it?

- It is an **agreement signed by Britain and China** in 1984 to settle the future of Hong Kong.
- The two governments agreed China would reassume control of Hong Kong, which was occupied by Britain after **the Opium War** in 1840, from July 1, 1997.
- The declaration was later deposited with the United Nations.



What are the main points of the joint declaration?

- It states that China's basic policies regarding Hong Kong which "will **remain unchanged for 50 years**", including the promise that **the city would retain a high degree of autonomy.**
- It also states that Hong Kong's legal and judicial system would also be unchanged for 50 years after 1997.
- It held that Britain would be responsible for the administration of Hong Kong until 1997 and the Chinese government would give its cooperation.

Is the joint declaration still valid now that Beijing governs Hong Kong?

In June 2014 when the State Council released a white paper stating that **Beijing had “comprehensive jurisdiction” over Hong Kong.**

- Now, China says the declaration was “now void and covered only the period from the signing in 1984 until the handover in 1997”.
- But, the Britain argues the agreement remained in effect and was a legally binding agreement that must be honoured.

6. Belt and Road initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative, reminiscent of the **Silk Road**, is a massive infrastructure project that would stretch from **East Asia to Europe.**

It was launched in 2013.

- The plan is **two-pronged**: the **overland Silk Road Economic Belt** and the **Maritime Silk Road**. The two were collectively referred to first as the One Belt, One Road initiative but eventually became the Belt and Road Initiative.
- The project involves creating a vast network of railways, energy pipelines, highways, and streamlined border crossings.

Pakistan and BRI:

To date, more than sixty countries—accounting for two-thirds of the world’s population—have signed on to projects or indicated an interest in doing so.

- Analysts estimate the largest so far to be the estimated \$60 billion **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**, a collection of projects connecting China to Pakistan’s Gwadar Port on the Arabian Sea.

What was the original Silk Road?

The original Silk Road arose during the westward expansion of China’s **Han Dynasty** (206 BCE–220 CE), which forged trade networks throughout the Central Asian countries, as well as modern-day India and Pakistan to the south. Those routes extended more than four thousand miles to Europe.

How have other countries responded to BRI?

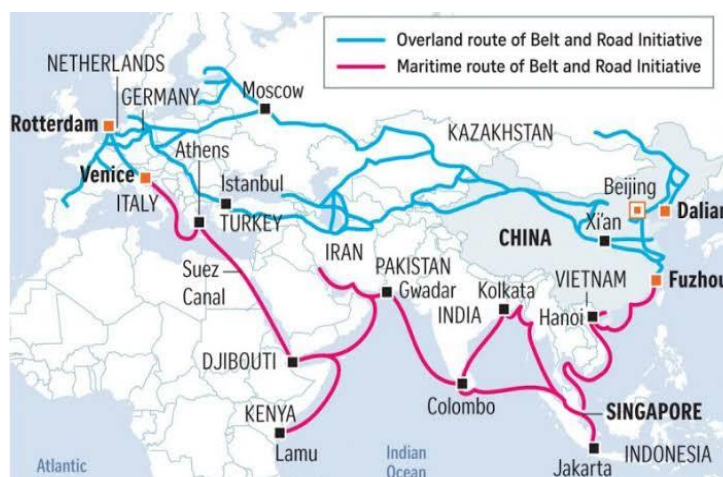
Some countries see the project as a disturbing expansion of Chinese power.

The United States shares the concern of some in Asia that the BRI could be a **Trojan horse for China-led regional development and military expansion.**

What does China hope to achieve?

China has both **geopolitical and economic motivations** behind the initiative.

- Experts see the BRI as one of the main planks of a bolder Chinese statecraft under Xi, alongside the **Made in China 2025** economic development strategy.
- The BRI also serves as pushback against the much-touted **U.S. “pivot to Asia,”** as well as a way for China to develop new investment opportunities, cultivate export markets, and boost Chinese incomes and domestic consumption.



India's views:

India has tried to convince countries that **the BRI is a plan to dominate Asia**, warning of what some analysts have called a

“String of Pearls” geoeconomic strategy whereby China creates **unsustainable debt burdens** for its Indian Ocean neighbors in order to seize control of regional choke points.

7. Biden’s peace plan mean for Afghanistan

The Joe Biden administration has proposed a new peace plan to the Afghan government and the Taliban, seeking to bring violence to a halt.

What's there in the American proposal?

1. It has proposed a **UN-led conference of representatives of Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and the U.S.** “to discuss a unified approach to support peace in Afghanistan”.
2. It seeks to accelerate talks between the Afghan leadership and the Taliban.
3. It urges both sides to reach a consensus on Afghanistan’s future constitutional and governing arrangements; find a road map to a new “inclusive government”; and agree on the terms of a “permanent and comprehensive ceasefire”.

U.S.- Taliban peace deal:

- A peace deal between the U.S. Government and the Taliban was signed on 29 February, 2020.
- The deal calls for U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops to leave Afghanistan.

India’s position on Taliban:

For New Delhi, which has protested being left out of regional formulations in the past both in the original **Moscow process, and in the United Nation’s April 2020 “6+2+1”** that included Afghanistan’s “immediate neighbours” only, the U.S.’s suggestion is a relief.

- Previously, India refused to recognise the Taliban regime of 1996-2001 and rather supported the ‘Northern Alliance’ in fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- India has long held the position of dealing only with the elected government in Kabul, and has always considered the Taliban a terrorist organisation backed by Pakistan.
- India supports an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process.

India has called for an **“immediate comprehensive ceasefire” in Afghanistan.**

- At a recent UNSC meeting, convened under **the Arria Formula** (informally convened at the request of a UNSC member), India reiterated that “For durable peace in Afghanistan, we have to put an end to terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries operating across **the Durand Line.**”

8. Uighurs

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has denounced what he called **the “institutionalised repression” of China’s Uighur minority.** Rights groups believe that at least 1 million Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking Muslim minorities are incarcerated in camps in the western region of Xinjiang.

Who are Uighurs?

- A Muslim minority community concentrated in China's northwestern Xinjiang province.
- They claim closer ethnic ties to Turkey and other central Asian countries than to China.

Why is China targeting the Uighurs?

Xinjiang is technically an autonomous region within China — its largest region, rich in minerals, and sharing borders with eight countries, including India, Pakistan, Russia and Afghanistan.

- Over the past few decades, as economic prosperity has come to Xinjiang, it has brought with it in large numbers the majority Han Chinese, who have cornered the better jobs, and left the Uighurs feeling their livelihoods and identity were under threat.

- This led to sporadic violence, in 2009 culminating in a riot that killed 200 people, mostly Han Chinese, in the region’s capital Urumqi. And many other violent incidents have taken place since then.
- Beijing also says Uighur groups want to establish an independent state and, because of the Uighurs’ cultural ties to their neighbours, leaders fear that elements in places like Pakistan may back a separatist movement in Xinjiang.

Therefore, the Chinese policy seems to have been one of treating the entire community as suspect, and launching a systematic project to chip away at every marker of a distinct Uighur identity.

9. Israel-Palestine Conflict

U.S. President Joe Biden’s administration is restoring relations with the Palestinians and renewing aid to Palestinian refugees.

- This is a reversal of the Donald Trump administration’s cutoff and a key element of its new support for a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict agreed to by Israelis and Palestinians.

Israel-Palestine Conflict:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to the end of the nineteenth century, primarily as a conflict over territory.

- After **the 1948 Arab-Israeli war**, the Holy Land was divided into three parts: The State of Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan River), and the Gaza Strip.
- The **1993 Oslo Accords** mediated the conflict, to set up a framework for two state solution. It recognized the Palestinian Authority tasked with limited self-governance of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.



10. West Bank and issues associated

Where is West Bank?

It is a **landlocked territory near the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia**, bordered by **Jordan to the east and by the Green Line separating it and Israel on the south, west and north**. The West Bank also **contains a significant section of the western Dead Sea shore**.

What are the disputed settlements here? Who lives there?

- The West Bank was **captured by Jordan after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War**.
- Israel snatched it back during **the Six Day War of 1967**, and has occupied it ever since. During this war, the country defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.
- It has built some 130 formal settlements in the West Bank, and a similar number of smaller, informal settlements have mushroomed over the last 20-25 years.
- **Over 4 lakh Israeli settlers** — many of them religious **Zionists** who claim a Biblical birthright over this land — now live here, along with some 26 lakh Palestinians.
- The territory is still a point of contention due to a large number of **Palestinians who live there and hope to see the land become a part of their future state**.

- When Israel took control of the land in 1967 it allowed Jewish people to move in, but **Palestinians consider the West Bank illegally occupied Palestinian land.**

Are these settlements illegal?

The **United Nations General Assembly, the UN Security Council, and the International Court of Justice** have said that the West Bank settlements are violative of **the Fourth Geneva Convention.**

- Under **the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949)**, an occupying power “shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”.

Under **the Rome Statute** that set up **the International Criminal Court in 1998**, such transfers constitute war crimes, as does the “extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly”.



India's views:

India: India traditionally believes in **the 2-state solution and supports the establishment of a sovereign independent and a viable state of Palestine.** However, India’s support for Palestine has not deterred its growing relationship with Israel.

11.Iran says it has started enriching uranium to 60%

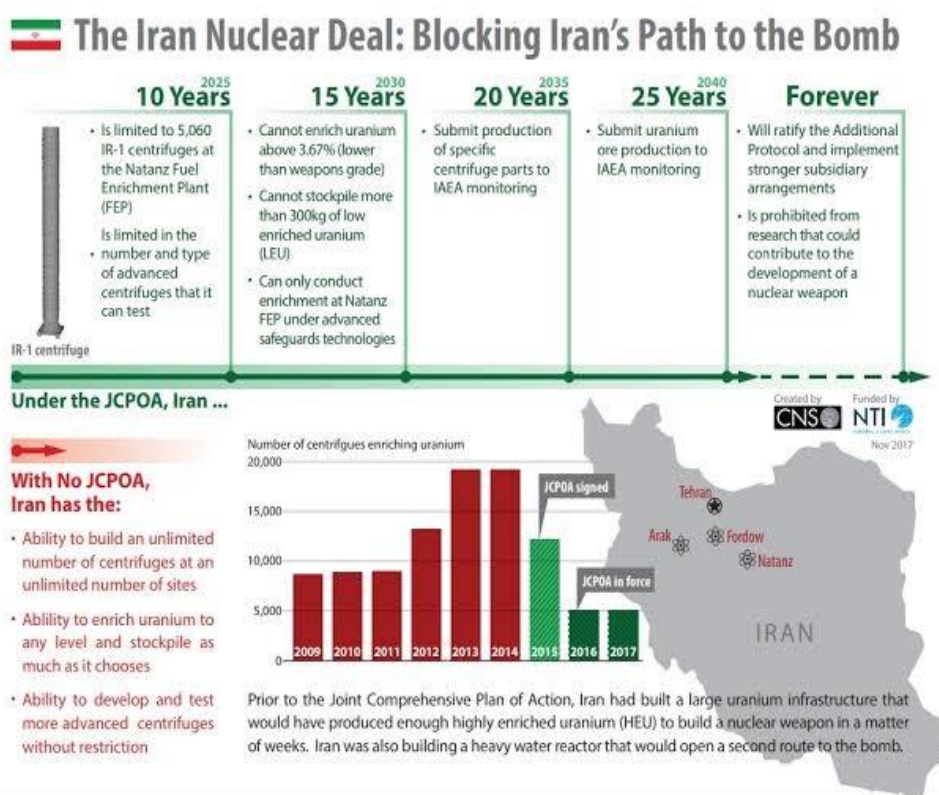
Iran has started **enriching its uranium supply to 60 percent purity — the closest the country has ever come to the level needed for a weapon —** in response to the sabotage of an Iranian nuclear site last

weekend linked to Israel.

What is the goal of uranium enrichment?

Uranium contains a rare radioactive isotope, called **U-235**, that can be used to power nuclear reactors at low enrichment levels and to fuel nuclear bombs at much higher levels.

- **The goal of uranium enrichment is to raise the percentage levels of U-235**, which is often done through the use of centrifuges — machines that spin a form of unrefined uranium at high speeds.



What is enriched uranium?

- Enriched uranium is produced by feeding uranium hexafluoride gas into centrifuges to separate out the most suitable isotope for nuclear fission, called U-235.
- Low-enriched uranium, which typically has a 3-5% purity of U-235, can be used to produce fuel for commercial nuclear power plants.
- Highly enriched uranium has a concentration of 20% or more and is used in research reactors.

How much enriched uranium does Iran now possess?

According to **the International Atomic Energy Agency**, the nuclear-monitoring arm of the United Nations, Iran as of February had amassed 2,967.8 kilograms of uranium — roughly 14 times the limit under the nuclear accord and theoretically enough to power about three atomic bombs if refined to weapons grade. The stockpile includes 17.6 kilograms enriched to 20 percent — also forbidden under the accord until the year 2030.

What's the concern now?

What makes the 60 percent enrichment level particularly threatening is that the tricky process of enrichment becomes far easier and requires fewer centrifuges as it moves into the higher purities. In other words, getting to 90 percent purity is much easier starting from 20 percent, and easier still starting from 60 percent.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA:

Iran agreed to rein in its nuclear programme in a 2015 deal struck with **the US, UK, Russia, China, France and Germany**.

The 2015 nuclear deal gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

Under the deal:

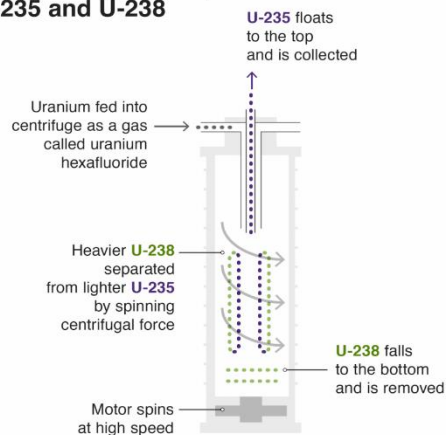
1. Iran agreed to rein in its nuclear programme in a 2015 deal struck with the US, UK, Russia, China, France and Germany.
2. Tehran agreed to significantly cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy-water, all key components for nuclear weapons.
3. The Joint Commission was established, with the negotiating parties all represented, to monitor implementation of the agreement.

12. Tibetan Policy and Support Act

The legislation was passed by the US Congress.

Highlights of the new law:

- It reaffirms **the rights of the Tibetan Buddhists to choose the next incarnation of the Dalai Lama without any interference of China**.
- The legislation will **empower the US Government to impose sanctions** on the Chinese Government officials, who might try to interfere in the process of selecting the next incarnation of the Dalai Lama, just as they had done in case of Panchen Lama.
- It also acknowledged **the legitimacy of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile elected by the exiled community as well as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)**.
- It seeks to introduce key provisions aimed at protecting the environment and water resources on the Tibetan Plateau.

How a centrifuge separates uranium atoms, U-235 and U-238

Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative

BBC

Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018 and had reimposed crippling sanctions on Iran

Response:

It has been hailed by the Tibetans, who were concerned over the possibility of the Chinese Government making an attempt to install someone loyal to it as the 15th Dalai Lama after the death of the incumbent and use him as a puppet to fizzle out the global campaign against its occupation of Tibet.

Background:

The incumbent and the 14th Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India ever since his 1959 escape from Tibet, which had been occupied by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1950-51.

- He has been leading the movement for "genuine autonomy" for Tibet and the Tibetans.

About the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE):

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE) has its **headquarters in Dharamsala**, in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.

The 16th TPIE had 45 members:

- 10 representatives from each of the traditional provinces of Tibetan – U-Tsang, Dhotoe and Dhomey;
- Two from each of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the pre-Buddhist Bon religion;
- Two representing each of the Tibetan Communities in North America and Europe.
- One from Australasia and Asia (excluding India, Nepal and Bhutan).

What does the Tibetan Constitution say?

The Central Tibetan Administration exists and functions on the basis of the Constitution of the Tibetan government called '**The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile**'.

- In 1991, The Constitution Redrafting Committee instituted by the Dalai Lama prepared the Charter for Tibetans in exile.
- The Dalai Lama approved it on June 28, 1991.

What is Kashag?

- The Kashag (Cabinet) is Central Tibetan Administration's highest executive office and comprise seven members.

13. Qatari labour laws reforms

Qatar has brought about a change in its labour laws. **Abolition of the unjustified 'kafala system'** or requirement for a "no objection certificate" that migrant workers needed to get from their employers before changing jobs.

What is kafala?

The 'kafala' system is a system that lays down obligations in the treatment and protection of foreign 'guests'. **Kafala means 'to guarantee' or 'to take care of' in Arabic.**

- Under the system, a migrant worker's immigration status is legally bound to an individual employer or sponsor ('kafeel') during the contract period.
- The migrant worker cannot enter the country, transfer employment nor leave the country for any reason without first obtaining explicit written permission from **the kafeel**.

Protocols / Conventions / Treaties / Agreements / Reports

1. 2020 Human Rights Report

Released by the U.S. State Department.

- The report, which is submitted each year to the U.S. Congress, is retrospective and contains a country-wise discussion of the state of human rights.

Key findings:

1. The harassment and detention of journalists critical of the Indian government in their reporting and on social media, has continued, although the government generally respected the freedom of expression.
2. Government's requests for user data from Internet companies had increased "dramatically."
3. There were several instances in which the government, or actors considered close to the government, allegedly pressured or harassed media outlets critical of the government, including through online trolling.
4. The government made 49,382 user data requests in 2019 from Facebook, a 32% increase from 2018. Over the same period, Google requests increased by 69%, while Twitter requests saw a 68% increase.

2. United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has written to the Chief Secretaries of Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh to "take appropriate action as per law to check illegal influx from Myanmar into India."

What has the Centre said?

The **State governments had no powers to grant "refugee status to any foreigner" and India is not a signatory to the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol.**

- The **Tatmadaw**, or Myanmar military, had taken over the country after a coup on February 1.
- India and Myanmar share 1,643-km border and people on either side have familial ties.

About the Refugee Convention 1951:

- It is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who is a refugee, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum.
- The Convention grants certain rights to people fleeing persecution because of race, religion, nationality, affiliation to a particular social group, or political opinion.
- India not a member
- The Convention also sets out which people do not qualify as refugees, such as war criminals. The Convention also provides for some visa-free travel for holders of travel documents issued under the convention.
- The Convention builds on **Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. A refugee may enjoy rights and benefits in a state in addition to those provided for in the Convention

India has cultivated several infrastructure and development projects with Myanmar, which it sees as the **"gateway to the East" and ASEAN countries** (For example: India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway and the Kaladan multi-modal transit transport network, as well as a plan for a Special Economic Zone at the Sittwe deep-water port).



- The **1967 Protocol** included refugees from all countries as opposed to the 1951 Convention that only included refugees from Europe.

3. United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation

The convention came into force on **12th September 2020**.

What you need to know?

- The **United Nations General Assembly** adopted the Convention on 20th December 2018 and it was **opened for signature on 7th August 2019 in Singapore**.
- It is also known as **the Singapore Convention on Mediation** and also **the first UN treaty to be named after Singapore**.

Key Features of the Convention:

- **Applicability:** The Convention will apply to international commercial settlement agreements resulting from mediation.
- **Non- applicability:** It will not apply to international settlement agreements that are concluded in the course of judicial or arbitral proceedings and which are enforceable as a court judgment or arbitral award. It will also not apply to settlement agreements concluded for personal, family or household purposes by one of the parties (a consumer), as well as settlement agreements relating to family, inheritance or employment law.
- **The courts of a contracting party** will be expected to handle applications either to enforce an international settlement agreement which falls within the scope of the Convention or to allow a party to invoke the settlement agreement in order to prove that the matter has already been resolved, in accordance with its rules of procedure, and under the conditions laid down in the Convention.

Signatories:

The Convention has 53 signatories, including India, China and the U.S.

- India approved the signing of the Convention in July 2019.

Benefits for India:

- Signing of the Convention will **boost the confidence of the investors and shall provide a positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**.
- Businesses in India and around the world will now have **greater certainty in resolving cross-border disputes through mediation**, as the Convention provides a more effective means for mediated outcomes to be enforced.

4. Open Skies Treaty

Russia announced that it is leaving **the Open Skies Treaty (OST)**.

What is the Open Skies Treaty?

It is an accord between over 30 countries that **allows participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states**.

- First **proposed in 1955** by former US President Dwight Eisenhower as a means to deescalate tensions during the Cold War, the landmark treaty was eventually signed in 1992 between NATO members and former **Warsaw Pact countries** following the demise of the Soviet Union.
- It went into **effect in 2002** and had signatories, including key players US and Russia, along with one non-ratifying member (Kyrgyzstan).

Aims of the OST:

Build confidence among members through mutual openness, thus reducing the chances of accidental war.

Features of the treaty:

1. Under the treaty, a member state can “spy” on any part of the host nation, with the latter’s consent.
2. A country can undertake aerial imaging over the host state after giving notice 72 hours before, and sharing its exact flight path 24 hours before.
3. The information gathered, such as on troop movements, military exercises and missile deployments, has to be shared with all member states.
4. Only approved imaging equipment is permitted on the surveillance flights, and officials from the host state can also stay on board throughout the planned journey.

Why did Russia leave after the US?

In May 2020, the Trump administration announced its intention of withdrawing from the OST, accusing Russia of “flagrantly and continuously violating the Treaty in various ways for years”.

- Now, Russia has attributed this move to “the lack of progress in removing obstacles for the continued functioning of the agreement.”
- Moscow is worried that the U.S.’s withdrawal restricts its access to American territory, while Washington’s allies in Europe can continue flyovers over Russian territory to collect intelligence that could be handed to the U.S.

5. New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)

US, Russia agree to extend 'New START' nuclear arms treaty.

- The extension of the landmark arms control treaty will continue to limit the number of nuclear missiles and warheads each country can deploy.

Background:

Negotiations to extend the treaty were stalled by the administration of former US President Donald Trump, which insisted on tougher inspections for Russia and for China to be included, which Beijing refused.

About the New START treaty:

- It is **a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation** with the formal name of

OPEN SKIES TREATY AT A GLANCE

Signed
March 24, 1992

Location
Helsinki, Finland

Effective
January 1, 2002

Duration
Unlimited

Ratifications
34 (Kyrgyzstan has not yet ratified)

Primary value
Building transparency and confidence

Multilateral Treaty body
The Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC)

More than 1,500 observation flights have been conducted under the treaty since 2002.

2020 ESTIMATED GLOBAL NUCLEAR WARHEAD INVENTORIES

The world’s nuclear-armed states possess a combined total of nearly 13,500 nuclear warheads; more than 90% belong to Russia and the United States. Approximately 9,500 warheads are in military service, with the rest awaiting dismantlement.



Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

- **Signed** on 8 April 2010 in Prague, and, after ratification **entered into force** on 5 February 2011.
- Replaced **the Treaty of Moscow (SORT)**, which was to expire in December 2012.
- Its name is a follow-up to the START I treaty, which expired in December 2009, the proposed START II treaty, which never entered into force, and the START III treaty, for which negotiations were never concluded.

Under terms of the treaty:

1. Number of strategic nuclear missile launchers will be reduced by half.
2. A new inspection and verification regime will be established, replacing the SORT mechanism.
3. The number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads is limited to 1,550.
4. Number of deployed and non-deployed inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers, submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments to 800 will be limited.

6. U.S., China dominate arms market

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has released a report on arms market across the world.

Key findings:

1. The U.S. arms industry accounted for 61% of sales by the world’s “Top 25” manufacturers last year, ahead of China’s 15.7%.
2. Total sales by the “Top 25” rose by 8.5% to \$361 billion, or 50 times the annual budget of the UN’s peacekeeping operations.
3. China and the United States are the two biggest states in terms of global arms spending.
4. For the first time, a company from the West Asia made it into the “Top 25”: EDGE, of the United Arab Emirates, was formed by the consolidation of some 25 defence entities in 2019.

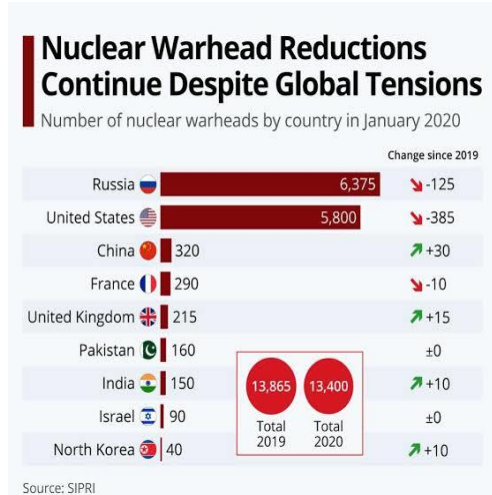
What is SIPRI?

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) established in **1966** is an **independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.**

- Based in Stockholm the Institute provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

7. 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.

8. US State Sponsor of Terrorism list

The **US Secretary of State** has been given powers to designate countries that “have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism” as “State Sponsors of Terrorism”. Inclusion on the list imposes strict unilateral sanctions.

The US can place four categories of sanctions on countries part of the list:

1. Restrictions on U.S. foreign assistance.
2. A ban on defence exports and sales.
3. Certain controls over exports of dual use items.
4. Miscellaneous financial and other restrictions.

As of 2021, the list consists of Cuba, Iran, North Korea and Syria. Countries formerly on the list were Iraq, Libya, South Yemen and Sudan.

9. The Human Cost of Disasters 2000-2019 Report

Released recently by **the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction**.

Key findings:

- **Climate change is largely to blame for a near doubling of natural disasters** in the past 20 years.

About UNISDR:

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), **created in December 1999**, is the successor to the secretariat of **the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction**.

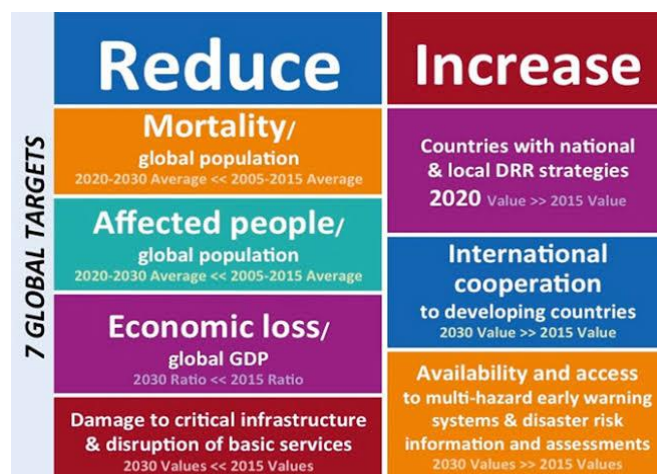
- It was established to ensure the implementation of **the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**.

Functions:

UNISDR supports the implementation, follow-up and review of **the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** adopted by the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan.

UNISDR’s vision is anchored on the four priorities for action set out in the Sendai Framework:

1. Understanding disaster risk.
2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.
3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.
4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.



About Sendai Framework:

The "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" was adopted during **the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction** held in Sendai, Japan in March, 2015.

- It is the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, with seven targets and four priorities for action.
- It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly following **the 2015 Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR)**.

The Framework is the successor instrument to **the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters**.

10. Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**What is Novichok?**

It was **developed in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s**.

- The name **Novichok** means "newcomer". It is **used for a family of highly toxic nerve agents**.
- Novichok agents are believed to be five to 10 times more lethal than other poisonous substances like VX gas.

What's the issue now?

The **weaponisation of any chemical is banned under the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention**, of which Moscow is a signatory.

- However, Moscow is not believed ever to have declared Novichok or its ingredients to the Hague-based **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**, which oversees a treaty banning their use.

Background:

Novichok were added to **the Chemical Weapons Convention's list of controlled substances** in 2019. This was the first time that the list was updated since it was agreed upon in the 1990s.

What is Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)?

It is a multilateral **treaty that bans chemical weapons and requires their destruction within a specified period of time**.

The CWC is **implemented by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**, which is **headquartered in The Hague** (OPCW won the 2013 Nobel peace prize).

The **CWC is open to all nations** and currently has 193 states-parties. Israel has signed but has yet to ratify the convention.

- **Three states have neither signed nor ratified the convention-** Egypt, North Korea and South Sudan.

The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits:

1. Developing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, or retaining chemical weapons.
2. The direct or indirect transfer of chemical weapons.
3. Chemical weapons use or military preparation for use.
4. Assisting, encouraging, or inducing other states to engage in CWC-prohibited activity.

5. The use of riot control agents “as a method of warfare.”

WHAT ARE NOVICHOK NERVE AGENTS?

WHAT ARE NOVICHOK AGENTS?

Novichok agents are organophosphate nerve agents. They were reportedly developed in Russia from the 1970s onwards. Novichok agents are supposedly 5 to 8 times more deadly than VX, another deadly nerve agent.

1970s–1990s

median lethal dose
10
milligrams per person
(skin exposure)

Novichok agents can be delivered as a liquid, fine powder, or gas. It has been claimed that safer precursors can be mixed to make them on demand, though this has been refuted by other sources.

POTENTIAL STRUCTURES OF NOVICHOK AGENTS

Exact structures of Novichok agents are unknown. The structures above are those suggested by Vii Mirzayanov, the Russian chemical weapons scientist who exposed their development. Nerve agent exposure is usually treated with atropine and pralidoxime.

EFFECTS OF NOVICHOK AGENTS

Stop breakdown of acetylcholine	Cause contraction of the pupils	Excessive mucus, tears, saliva & sweat	Nausea, gastrointestinal pain & vomiting	Bronchoconstriction & chest tightness	Spasms, convulsions & loss of bowel control	Coma & eventual death

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11. UN arms trade treaty

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a multilateral treaty that regulates the international trade in conventional weapons.

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.

12. Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

- The NPT is a **multilateral treaty aimed at limiting the spread of nuclear weapons** including three elements: (1) non-proliferation, (2) disarmament, and (3) peaceful use of nuclear energy.
- These elements constitute a “grand bargain” between the five nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear weapon states.
- The treaty was signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. As of August 2016, 191 states have adhered to the treaty.
- Though **North Korea**, acceded in 1985 but never came into compliance, announced its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003. Four states—**India, Israel, Pakistan, and South Sudan**—have never signed the treaty.

Implications:

- States without nuclear weapons will not acquire them.
- States with nuclear weapons will pursue disarmament.
- All states can access nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, under safeguards.

Key provisions:

- **The Treaty defines nuclear weapon states (NWS)** as those that had manufactured and detonated a nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967. All the other states are therefore considered **non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS)**.
- **The five nuclear weapon states are** China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The **Treaty does not affect the right of state parties to develop, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.**

Role of states:

- Nuclear weapon states are not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons and not to assist, encourage, or induce any NNWS to manufacture or otherwise acquire them.
- Non-nuclear weapons states are not to receive nuclear weapons from any transferor, and are not to manufacture or acquire them.
- NNWS must accept the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on all nuclear materials on their territories or under their control.

13. Budapest Convention

Also known as the Convention on Cybercrime, it is **the first international treaty seeking to address Internet and computer crime by harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations.**

- It was **drawn up by** the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, with the active participation of the Council of Europe’s observer states Canada, Japan, South Africa and the United States.
- It is **open for ratification even to states that are not members of the Council of Europe.**

As of September 2019, 64 states have ratified the convention.

What it does?

The Budapest Convention provides for the criminalisation of conduct, ranging from illegal access, data and systems interference to computer-related fraud and child pornography, procedural law tools to make investigation of cybercrime and securing of e-evidence in relation to any crime more effective, and international police and judicial cooperation on cybercrime and e-evidence.

India’s concerns over signing of this agreement:

- India did not participate in the negotiation of the Convention and thus is worried about it.

- The Convention — through its **Article 32b** — allows for transborder access to data and thus infringes on national sovereignty.
- The regime of the Convention is not effective, “the promise of cooperation not firm enough,” or that there are grounds for refusal to cooperate.

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INSIGHTSIAS

International Organisations / Groupings

1. Quad grouping

First-ever leadership summit of the quad grouping was held virtually.

- India, Japan, U.S. and Australia participated.

What is Quad grouping?

The quadrilateral security dialogue **includes Japan, India, United States and Australia.**

- All four nations find a common ground of being the democratic nations and common interests of unhindered maritime trade and security.

Genesis:

The grouping traces its genesis to 2004 when the four countries came together to coordinate relief operations in the aftermath of the tsunami.

- It then met for the first time in 2007 on the sidelines of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit.
- The intention was to enhance maritime cooperation between the four nations.

Significance of the grouping:

- Members share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific. Each is involved in development and economic projects as well as in promoting maritime domain awareness and maritime security.

What are China's views on the Quad?

There is a general understanding that **the Quad would not take on a military dimension against any country.** The strategic community in China, nevertheless, had branded it **an emerging "Asian NATO"**.

Notably, Japanese PM Shinzo Abe's **"Confluence of Two Seas"** address to the Indian Parliament gave a fresh impetus to the Quad concept. This recognised the economic rise of India.

2. OPEC+

- Opec+ refers to the alliance of crude producers, who have been undertaking corrections in supply in the oil markets since 2017.
- OPEC plus countries include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.

India is the world's third-biggest oil importer. India imports about 84% of its oil and relies on West Asian supplies to meet over three-fifths of its demand.

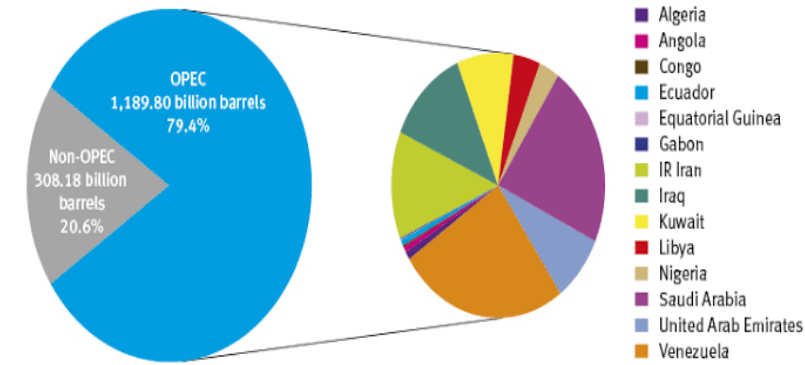
What are their goals?

- The Opec and non-Opec producers first formed the alliance at a historic meeting in Algiers in 2016.
- The aim was to **undertake production restrictions to help resuscitate a flailing market.**

3. OPEC

1. The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** was founded in Baghdad, Iraq, with the signing of an agreement in September 1960 by five countries namely Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. They were to become the Founder Members of the Organization.

OPEC share of world crude oil reserves, 2018



OPEC proven crude oil reserves, at end 2018 (billion barrels, OPEC share)

Venezuela	302.81	25.5%	Kuwait	101.50	8.5%	Algeria	12.20	1.0%	Gabon	2.00	0.2%
Saudi Arabia	267.03	22.4%	UAE	97.80	8.2%	Ecuador	8.27	0.7%	Equatorial Guinea	1.10	0.1%
IR Iran	155.60	13.1%	Libya	48.36	4.1%	Angola	8.16	0.7%			
Iraq	145.02	12.2%	Nigeria	36.97	3.1%	Congo	2.98	0.3%			

Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2019.

- OPEC is a permanent, intergovernmental organization.
- Currently, the Organization has a total of 13 Member Countries.
- The **current OPEC members** are the following: Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia (the de facto leader), the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. Ecuador, Indonesia and Qatar are former members.
- OPEC's objective is to **co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies** among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers; an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations; and a fair return on capital to those investing in the industry.
- It is **headquartered in Vienna, Austria**.
- OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and which shares the ideals of the organization.

4. International Energy Agency (IEA)

International Energy Agency (IEA) has released its India Energy Outlook 2021 report.

About IEA:

- Established in 1974 as per framework of the OECD, IEA is an autonomous intergovernmental organisation.
- Its mission is guided by four main areas of focus: energy security, economic development, environmental awareness and engagement worldwide.
- Headquarters (Secretariat): Paris, France.

Roles and functions:

- Established in the wake of the 1973-1974 oil crisis, to help its members respond to major oil supply disruptions, a role it continues to fulfil today.
- IEA's mandate has expanded over time to include tracking and analyzing global key energy trends, promoting sound energy policy, and fostering multinational energy technology cooperation.

Composition and eligibility:

It has 30 members at present. IEA family also includes eight association countries. A candidate country must be a member country of the OECD. But all OECD members are not IEA members. To become member a candidate country must demonstrate that it has:

1. Crude oil and/or product reserves equivalent to 90 days of the previous year’s net imports, to which the government has immediate access (even if it does not own them directly) and could be used to address disruptions to global oil supply.
2. A demand restraint programme to reduce national oil consumption by up to 10%.
3. Legislation and organisation to operate the Co-ordinated Emergency Response Measures (CERM) on a national basis.
4. Legislation and measures to ensure that all oil companies under its jurisdiction report information upon request.
5. Measures in place to ensure the capability of contributing its share of an IEA collective action.

Reports:

1. Global Energy & CO2 Status Report.
2. World Energy Outlook.
3. World Energy Statistics.
4. World Energy Balances.
5. Energy Technology Perspectives.

5. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

- The World Energy Transitions Outlook report is brought out by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
- The latest report says, the COVID-19 crisis offers an unexpected opportunity for countries to decouple their economies from fossil fuels and accelerate the shift to renewable energy sources.

About IRENA:

1. It is an intergovernmental organisation mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge, and promote the adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy, including bioenergy, geothermal, hydropower, ocean, solar and wind energy in the pursuit of sustainable development, energy access, energy security and low-carbon economic growth and prosperity.
2. It is the first international organisation to focus exclusively on renewable energy, addressing needs in both industrialized and developing countries.
3. It was founded in 2009 & its statute entered into force on 8 July 2010 and is headquartered in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi.
4. IRENA is an official United Nations observer.

6. Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) had decided to retain Pakistan on the “greylist”. Pakistan was placed on the ‘grey’ list in June 2018 and given a timeline to implement 27 action points.

FATF recently held its annual **joint experts’ meet.**

- It was attended by participants from various government agencies all over the world and

Comparison	Money Laundering	Terrorist Financing
Motivation	Profit-seeking	Ideological
Intention	To clean ill-gotten gains or dirty money so that they appear to be proceeds from legal activities.	To intimidate a population or to compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any specific act through the threat of violence.
Source of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlawful sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extortion, kidnapping, narcotics trafficking, smuggling, fraud, theft, robbery, identity theft, improper use of charitable or relief funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlawful sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extortion, kidnapping, narcotics trafficking, smuggling, fraud, theft, robbery, identity theft, improper use of charitable or relief funds and donors many have no knowledge that their donations have been diverted to support terrorist causes. • Legitimate sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charitable donations, foreign government sponsors, business ownership and personal employment.
Methods	Placement – Layering - Integration	The same as or similar to those methods used by other criminals that launder funds.
Life circle	<p>Circular life circle</p> <pre> graph TD Funding --> Placement Placement --> Layering Layering --> Integration Integration --> Funding </pre>	<p>Linear life circle</p> <pre> graph TD Funding --> Placeme Placeme --> Layerin Layerin --> Integration Integration --> Terrorist_activity </pre>

international bodies such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and Interpol.

- The FATF said it attaches great importance to **effective information sharing**, which is one of the cornerstones of a well-functioning **AML/CFT [Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism] framework**.

About FATF:

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body **established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7**.

- It is a **“policy-making body”** which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas.
- The FATF **Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris**.

Roles and functions:

1. Initially it was established to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.
2. In October 2001, the FATF expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing, in addition to money laundering.
3. In April 2012, it added efforts to counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Composition:

The FATF currently **comprises 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations** (European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council), representing most major financial centres in all parts of the globe. It also has observers and associate members.

What is blacklist and grey list?

Black List: Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

Grey List: Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

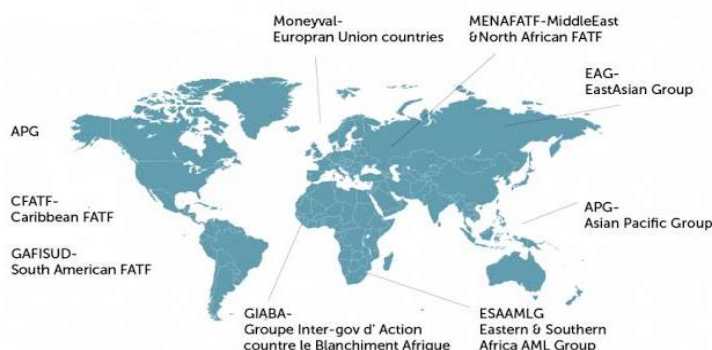
Considered in the grey list may face:

1. Economic sanctions from IMF, World Bank, ADB.
2. Problem in getting loans from IMF, World Bank, ADB and other countries.
3. Reduction in international trade.
4. International boycott.

7. Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG)

The Asia Pacific Group of FATF has retained Pakistan on its **'Enhanced Follow-up' list**. This was the **first Follow-Up Report on Mutual Evaluation** of Pakistan released by the Asia-Pacific Group (APG).

FATF-Style regional bodies



What is a Mutual Evaluation Report?

The APG Mutual Evaluations is a **peer-review system to determine whether countries meet the compliance standards for money laundering and terror financing**.

After a country submits a Mutual Evaluation report, APG members can decide to place a member either through **regular or enhanced follow-up**.

1. A regular follow-up means just biennial reports.
2. A country put under enhanced follow-up has to send four reports of compliance the following year.

About APG:

The **Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG)** is a FATF style regional inter-governmental (international) body, the members of which are committed to implement **international standards against money laundering (AML), the financing of terrorism (CTF) and financing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**.

- APG was **founded in 1997 in Bangkok, Thailand**, and currently consists of 41 member jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region and a number of observer jurisdictions and international/regional observer organisations.
- Jurisdictions that join the APG, either as members or as observers, commit to the **Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**.

8. International Criminal Court (ICC)

- The International Criminal Court (ICC), located in **The Hague**, is **the court of last resort for prosecution of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity**.
- It is **the first permanent, treaty based, international court** established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.
- Its founding treaty, **the Rome Statute**, entered into force on July 1, 2002.
- **Funding:** Although the Court’s expenses are funded primarily by States Parties, it also receives voluntary contributions from governments, international organisations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

Composition and voting power:

- The Court’s management oversight and legislative body, the Assembly of States Parties, consists of one representative from each state party.
- Each state party has one vote and “every effort” has to be made to reach decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions are made by vote.
- The Assembly is presided over by a president and two vice-presidents, who are elected by the members to three-year terms.

Criticisms:

- It does not have the capacity to arrest suspects and depends on member states for their cooperation.
- Critics of the Court argue that there are insufficient checks and balances on the authority of the ICC prosecutor and judges and insufficient protection against politicized prosecutions or other abuses.

ICJ vs. ICC

	International Court of Justice (ICJ) La Cour Internationale de Justice (CIJ)	International Criminal Court (ICC) La Cour pénale internationale (CPI)
Year Court Established	1946	2002
UN-Relationship	Official court of the U.N., commonly referred to as the "World Court."	Independent. May receive case referrals from the UN Security Council.
Location	The Hague, The Netherlands	The Hague, The Netherlands
Types of Cases	Contentious between parties & Advisory opinions	Criminal prosecution of individuals
Subject Matter	Sovereignty, boundary, & maritime disputes, trade, natural resources, human rights, treaty violations, treaty interpretation, and more.	Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes of aggression
Funding	UN-funded.	Assessed contribution from state parties to the Rome Statute; voluntary contributions from the U.N.; voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

- The ICC has been accused of bias and as being a tool of Western imperialism, only punishing leaders from small, weak states while ignoring crimes committed by richer and more powerful states.
- ICC cannot mount successful cases without state cooperation is problematic for several reasons. It means that the ICC acts inconsistently in its selection of cases, is prevented from taking on hard cases and loses legitimacy.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) recently ruled that **it has jurisdiction over war crimes or atrocities committed in the Palestinian territories**, paving the way for a criminal investigation over Israeli actions.

- Judges said their decision was based on jurisdictional rules in its founding documents and does not imply any attempt to determine statehood or legal borders.

What has the ICC said?

- It ruled that Palestine is a state party to the Rome Statute establishing the ICC.
- It ruled that Palestine qualifies as the state on the territory in which the "conduct in question" occurred and that the court's jurisdiction extends to East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

Response by Israel:

Israel is not a member of the ICC. As a non-member, it cannot appeal the recent ruling but its attorney general has argued all along that only a sovereign state can delegate authority to the ICC and that the areas in question were not a Palestinian sovereign state.

9. World Trade Organization (WTO)

Ngazi Okonjo-Iweala has been appointed the new chief of the World Trade Organization, becoming **the first woman to ever lead the institution and the first African citizen to take on the role.**

Roles and functions of Director General of WTO:

The director-general of the World Trade Organization is the officer of the World Trade Organization responsible for supervising and directing the organization's administrative operations.

- The Director-General has little power over matters of policy - the role is primarily advisory and managerial.
- The Director-General supervises the WTO secretariat of about 700 staff and is **appointed by WTO members for a term of four years.**

WTO- facts:

- World Trade Organization, as an institution, was established in 1995. It replaced General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) which was in place since 1946.
- The WTO officially commenced on 1 January 1995 under **the Marrakesh Agreement, signed by 123 nations on 15 April 1994.**
- India has been a member of GATT since 1948; hence it was party to Uruguay Round and a founding member of WTO.
- While WTO came in to existence in 1995, GATT didn't cease to exist. It continues as WTO's umbrella treaty for trade in goods.

Structure of WTO:

The WTO is headed by the Ministerial Conference, while the daily operations are carried out by three administrative bodies:

1. **The General Council** comprises the representatives of all member countries and acts as the representative of the Ministerial Conference when it comes to daily operations. Its job is to carry out the implementation and monitoring function of the WTO.

2. **The Dispute Settlement Body** is a part of the General Council and is responsible for settling trade disputes between member states. There is also an Appellate Body, where member states can appeal any decisions made against them during a dispute settlement.
3. **The Trade Policy Review Body** is also a part of the General Council and is responsible for ensuring the trade policies of member states are in line with the goals of the WTO. Member countries are required to inform the WTO about changes in their laws and trade policies.

10. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- The IAEA is the world's centre for cooperation in the nuclear field.
- **It was set up as the world's "Atoms for Peace" organization in 1957.**
- It was established as an autonomous organization in 1957 through its own international treaty, the **IAEA Statute**.
- **Reports to** both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.
- **Headquarters** in Vienna, Austria.
- The IAEA serves as an **intergovernmental forum** for scientific and technical cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology and nuclear power worldwide.

Functions:

- Works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- Seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.

Board of Governors:

22 member states (must represent a stipulated geographic diversity) — elected by the General Conference (11 members every year) – 2 year term.

- At least 10 member states — nominated by the outgoing Board.
- Board members each receive one vote.

Functions:

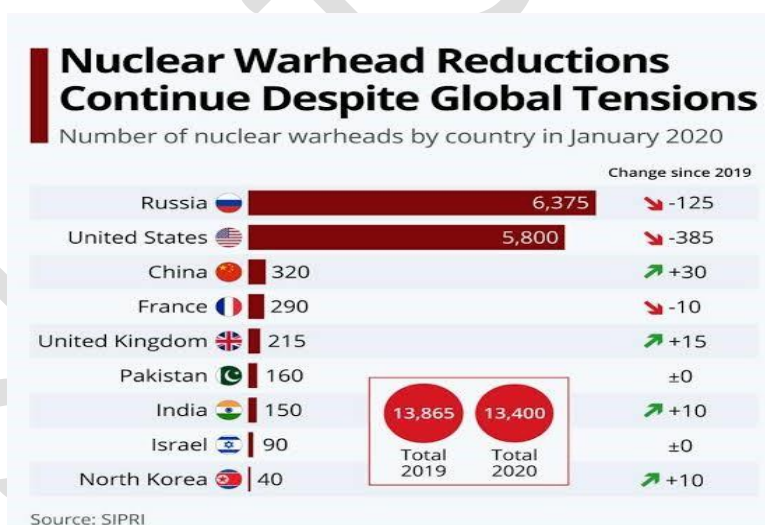
1. Recommendations to the General Conference on IAEA activities and budget.
2. Responsible for publishing IAEA standards.
3. Responsible for making most of the policy of the IAEA.
4. Appoints the Director General subject to General Conference approval.

Programs:

- Program of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT).
- Human Health Program.
- Water Availability Enhancement Project.
- International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles, 2000.

IAEA safeguards:

- **What are they?** Safeguards are a set of technical measures applied by the IAEA on nuclear material and activities, through which the Agency seeks to independently verify that **nuclear**



facilities are not misused and nuclear material not diverted from peaceful uses. States accept these measures through the conclusion of safeguards agreements.

- **The objective of IAEA Safeguards** is to **deter the spread of nuclear weapons** by the early detection of the misuse of nuclear material or technology. This provides credible assurances that States are honouring their legal obligations that nuclear material is being used only for peaceful purposes.

- **Need and implementation:** IAEA safeguards are an essential component of the international security system. The **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** is the centrepiece of global efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. Under the Treaty's Article 3, each Non-Nuclear Weapon State is required to conclude a safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

11. WHO Executive Board

It is one of the WHO's two decision making bodies. The other one is the World Health Assembly. The agency's headquarters are located at Geneva in Switzerland.

Composition:

- The executive Board is composed of 34 members technically qualified in the field of health.
- The Board chairman's post is held by rotation for one year by each of the WHO's six regional groups: African Region, Region of the Americas, South-East Asia Region, European Region, Eastern Mediterranean Region, and Western Pacific Region.

Term:

Members are elected for three-year terms.

Functions:

1. Sets out agenda for the Health Assembly and resolutions for forwarding to the Assembly are adopted.
2. Gives effect to the decisions and policies of the Health Assembly.
3. Advises it and facilitates its work.
4. The Board and the Assembly create a forum for debate on health issues and for addressing concerns raised by Member States.
5. Both the Board and the Assembly produce three kinds of documents — Resolutions and Decisions passed by the two bodies, Official Records as published in WHO Official publications, and Documents that are presented "in session" of the two bodies.

Key facts:

1. India became a party to the WHO Constitution on 12 January 1948.
2. The first Regional Director for South East Asia was an Indian, Dr Chandra Mani, who served between 1948-1968.

12. How is WHO funded

- The U.S. has resumed its funding for WHO as President Joe Biden shifts towards greater international cooperation in the fight against COVID-19.
- This is significant as former U.S. President Donald Trump had begun the process of withdrawing the U.S. from the WHO, a process stopped by his successor, President Joe Biden.

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.

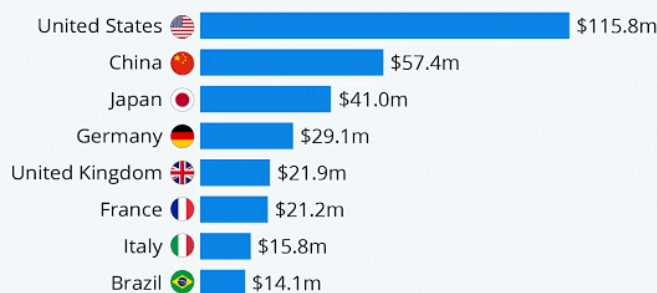
2. **Voluntary contributions** come from Member States (in addition to their assessed contribution) or from other partners. They can range from flexible to highly earmarked.
3. **Core voluntary contributions** allow less well-funded activities to benefit from a better flow of resources and ease implementation 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:

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.

The Biggest Financial Contributors To The WHO

Assessed contributions to the World Health Organization for 2020 (as of March 31, 2020)*



CHF conversion rate at time of billing

* Assessed contributions are paid for membership and are calculated relative to the country's wealth and population. WHO also accepts voluntary supplementary assessed contributions.

Source: World Health Organization

13. International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD)

International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Symposium on Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins inaugurated.

- The International Commission On Large Dams (ICOLD) is a non-governmental International Organization which provides a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience in dam engineering.
- ICOLD was founded in 1928 and has National Committees from more than 100 countries with approximately 10000 individual members.
- The members are mostly practising engineers, geologists and scientists from governmental or private organizations, consulting firms, universities, laboratories and construction companies.
- ICOLD leads the profession in setting standards and guidelines to ensure that dams are built and operated safely, efficiently, economically, and are environmentally sustainable and socially equitable.
- It is headquartered in Paris, France.

14. International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has become an Associate Member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).

IFSC in India:

- The first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in the country has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in Gandhinagar.
- To regulate such institutions, the government established IFSCA on April 27, 2020 with its head office in Gandhinagar.
- In December 2019, Parliament passed a bill to set up a unified authority for regulating all financial activities at IFSCs in the country.

About IOSCO:

- It is the international body that **brings together the world's securities regulators** and is recognized as the global standard setter for the securities sector.
- IOSCO develops, implements and promotes adherence to internationally recognized standards for securities regulation.
- It works intensively with **the G20 and the Financial Stability Board (FSB)** on the global regulatory reform agenda.

15. World Gold Council

As per WGC, Gold demand in India hit a 25-year low at 446.4 tonnes in 2020, compared with 690.4 tonnes in 2019 due to the COVID-19 induced lockdown and on account of record high prices.

Gold & Economy:

As Currency: Gold was used as the world reserve currency up through most of the 20th century. The United States used the gold standard until 1971.

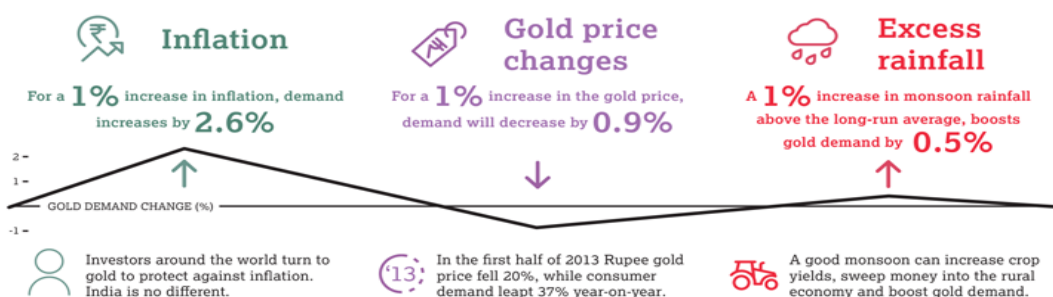
As a hedge against inflation: The demand for gold increases during inflationary times due to its inherent value and limited supply. As it cannot be diluted, gold is able to retain value much better than other forms of currency.

Strength of Currency: When a country imports more than it exports, the value of its currency will decline. On the other hand, the value of its currency will increase when a country is a net exporter. Thus, a country that exports gold or has access to gold reserves will see an increase in the strength of its currency when gold prices increase, since this increases the value of the country's total exports.

Factors affecting Indian gold demand



Short-term factors



About World Gold Council:

- It is the market development organisation for the gold industry.
- It works across all parts of the industry, from gold mining to investment, and their aim is to stimulate and sustain demand for gold.
- It is an association whose members comprise the world’s leading gold mining companies.
- It helps to support its members to mine in a responsible way and developed the Conflict Free Gold Standard.
- Headquartered in the UK, they have offices in India, China, Singapore, Japan and the United States.



16.G7 Countries

The G7, **originally G8**, was set up in 1975 as an informal forum bringing together the leaders of the world’s leading industrial nations. The summit gathers **leaders from the European Union (EU) and the following countries:** Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The major purpose of the G-7 is to discuss and deliberate on international economic issues. It sometimes acts in concert to help resolve other global problems, with a special focus on economic issues.

How did G7 become G8?

- Russia was formally inducted as a member in the group in 1998, which led G7 to become G8.
- However, Russian President Vladimir Putin’s condemnable act of moving Russian troops into eastern Ukraine and conquering Crimea in 2014 drew heavy criticism from the other G8 nations.
- The other nations of the group decided to suspend Russia from the G8 as a consequence of its actions and the group became G7 again in 2014.



17.G20 Countries

- **15th G20 Summit was Convened by Saudi Arabia** in a virtual format.
- The Summit culminated in the adoption of **the Leaders’ Declaration** and with **Saudi Arabia passing on the Presidency to Italy**.
- It was also announced that **India will host the summit in 2023** — a year later than what was decided earlier.

About G20:

- Formed in 1999, the G20 is an **international forum of the governments and central bank governors** from 20 major economies.
- Collectively, the G20 economies account for around 85 percent of the Gross World Product (GWP), 80 percent of world trade.
- To tackle the problems or the address issues that plague the world, the heads of governments of the G20 nations periodically participate in summits.
- In addition to it, the group also hosts separate meetings of the finance ministers and foreign ministers.
- The first G20 Summit was held in Berlin in December 1999 and was hosted by the finance ministers of Germany and Canada.
- The G20 Summit is formally known as the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy”.

Objectives:

- The Group was formed with an aim of studying, reviewing, and promoting high-level discussion of policy issues pertaining to the **promotion of international financial stability**.
- The forum aims to pre-empt balance of payments problems and turmoil on financial markets by **improved coordination of monetary, fiscal, and financial policies**.
- The forum seeks to address issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any one organisation.

Member Countries:

- The members of the G20 consist of **19 individual countries plus the European Union (EU)**.
- The 19 member countries of the forum are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.
- The European Union is represented by the **European Commission and by the European Central Bank**.
- In India, **Suresh Prabhu is the Sherpa to the G-20**. Previous Indian sherpas include Shaktikanta Das, Arvind Panagariya, Montek Singh Ahluwalia.
- A Sherpa is a personal representative of the leader of a member country at an international Summit meeting such as the G8, G20 or the Nuclear Security Summit and are responsible for thrashing out the details before the meeting of the leaders.

Presidency:

The group has no permanent staff of its own, so **every year in December, a G20 country from a rotating region takes on the presidency**.

- That country is then responsible for organising the next summit, as well as smaller meetings for the coming year.
- They can also choose to invite non-member countries along as guests.
- The first G20 meeting took place in Berlin in 1999, after a financial crisis in East Asia affected many countries around the world.

Genesis of G20:

After **the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-1998**, it was acknowledged that the participation of major emerging market countries is needed on discussions on the international financial system, and **G7 finance ministers agreed to establish the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in 1999**.

What is G20+?

The **G20 developing nations**, also called **G21/G23/G20+** is a bloc of developing nations which was **established on August 20, 2003**.

Its origins can be traced to **the Brasilia Declaration** signed by the foreign ministers of India, Brazil and South Africa on 6th June 2003.

- The G20+ is responsible for 60% of the world population, 26% of the world's agricultural exports and 70% of its farmers.

18. G20 Anti-corruption Action Plan

Saudi Arabia hosted the first-ever Ministerial Meeting of the G-20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG).

About ACWG:

Established by **G20 Leaders at the Toronto Summit in 2010.**

- Responsible for updating and implementing the **G20 Anti-corruption Action Plan.**
- Reports to G20 Leaders.
- It cooperates closely with and supports the work of relevant international organizations, including **the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Financial Action Task Force.**

19. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

36th Charter Day anniversary of SAARC observed recently.

- The Charter establishing the Association was signed on December 8, 1985 by the SAARC Heads of States/Governments during **first Summit meeting in Dhaka.**

What is SAARC? When was it established?

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the **SAARC Charter** in Dhaka on 8 December 1985.
- The **Secretariat** of the Association was set up in **Kathmandu** on 17 January 1987.
- **SAARC comprises of eight Member States:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- SAARC maintains **permanent diplomatic relations at the United Nations** as an observer and has developed links with multilateral entities, including the European Union.

Afghanistan became the member of SAARC at the 13th annual summit in 2005.

Important objectives of the Association as outlined in the SAARC Charter are:

- to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
- to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials;
- to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia.

Importance of SAARC:

1. SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 3.8% (US\$2.9 trillion) of the global economy.
2. It is the world's most densely populated region and one of the most fertile areas.
3. SAARC countries have common tradition, dress, food and culture and political aspects thereby synergizing their actions.
4. All the SAARC countries have common problems and issues like poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, natural disasters, internal conflicts, industrial and technological backwardness, low GDP and poor socio-economic condition.

20. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is **a regional organization comprising of seven member states in South Asia and Southeast**

Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.

- This sub-regional organisation came into being on June 6, 1997, through **the Bangkok Declaration**. It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- **It comprises of seven member countries:** five deriving from South Asia — including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka — and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.
- **It is not an FTA. IT is a sector-driven organization** focussing on sharing best practices and help each other in agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture etc. Fourteen priority sectors of cooperation have been identified and several BIMSTEC centres have been established to focus on those sectors.

AMENDMENTS IN THE BIMSTEC ORGANISATION:

- Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- Following the inclusion of Myanmar during a special Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok on December 22, 1997, the group was renamed 'BIMST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan at the 6th Ministerial Meeting in February 2004, the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).

Objectives of BIMSTEC:

- BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization. **Technological and economic cooperation** among South Asian and Southeast Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal is its main objective.
- Starting with six sectors-including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries-for sectoral cooperation in late 1997, it expanded to embrace nine more sectors-including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change-in 2008.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) became a partner in 2005, to undertake the "BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistic Study" (BTILS), which was completed in 2014.

India hosted the 2nd BIMSTEC summit in 2008. Fourth BIMSTEC summit was recently held in Nepal in 2018.

21. Commonwealth

- The Commonwealth of Nations, at one time known as **British Commonwealth**, is an organisation of fifty-four states that were principally below the colonial rule of British Government.
- They came into existence with the proclamation of sovereignty of the state from the colonial rule of British Empire and were later given self-governance.
- It was originally created as the British Commonwealth of Nations through the **Balfour Declaration** at the 1926 Imperial Conference, and formalized by the United Kingdom through the **Statute of Westminster** in 1931.
- It proclaims that the Commonwealth nations are "**free and equal.**" The insignia of this Commonwealth Association is **Queen Elizabeth II who is considered the Supreme of the Commonwealth nations.**
- The member states of the commonwealth are **not legally liable or bound to each other.** They are rather united by language, history, culture, likeness of the democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

- Their values are listed down within the Commonwealth Charter and the hands of harmony towards the member states are extended by the Commonwealth Games held every four years.
- Former British mandates that did not become members of the Commonwealth are Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, British Palestine, Sudan, British Somaliland, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

Key facts:

Former name — British Commonwealth.

Composition: intergovernmental organisation of 54 member states that are mostly former territories of the British Empire.

It operates by intergovernmental consensus of the member states.

Established in 1949 by **the London Declaration**.

Structure: Head of the Commonwealth — Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth. The position is symbolic.

22. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.

During 1950s, the world was emerging out of the long, dark period of colonialism.

- **Newly independent nations** dreamed they could make their way in this new world without hewing to either of the big powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, eschewing the icy hostilities of the Cold War and bask in the warmth of Third World (as it was then known) cooperation.
- **The co-founders were** India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Indonesia's Sukarno, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito, and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah.
- The **Asian-African Conference of 1955 held in Bandung** was the catalyst for the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement.
- The actual formation took place in **Belgrade**, where the Non-Aligned Movement was formally established by the leaders of 25 developing countries in 1961.

23. BASIC countries

The 29th **BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change** was held in **Beijing, China**.

Who are the BASIC?

The BASIC group was **formed as the result of an agreement signed by the four countries on November 28, 2009**.

They are **a bloc of four large newly industrialized countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China**.

Significance of the grouping:

- **Objectives:** The signatory nations have a broadly common position on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and raising the massive funds that are needed to fight climate change.
- The BASIC countries constituted one of the parties in the **Copenhagen Accord** reached with the US-led grouping; the Accord, was, however, not legally binding.
- BASIC is one of several groups of nations working together **to fight climate change and carry out negotiations within the UNFCCC**.

24. Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

1. The Indian Ocean Rim Association was set up with **the objective of strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region**.
2. **Setup in 1997, it Consists** of 22 coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean.

3. The IORA is **a regional forum, tripartite in nature**, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.
4. It is **based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation** particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.
5. The **Coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at Ebene, Mauritius**

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) has identified six priority areas, namely:

1. maritime security,
2. trade and investment facilitation,
3. fisheries management,
4. disaster risk reduction,
5. academic and scientific cooperation and
6. tourism promotion and cultural exchanges.

25. Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI)

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has been nominated by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) as a member on the GAVI Board.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan will be representing **the South East Area Regional Office (SEARO)/ Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) constituency** on the GAVI Board.

GAVI Board:

- The GAVI Board is responsible for strategic direction and policymaking, oversees the operations of the Vaccine Alliance and monitors programme implementation.
- With membership drawn from a range of partner organisations, as well as experts from the private sector, the Board provides a forum for balanced strategic decision making, innovation and partner collaboration.

What is GAVI?

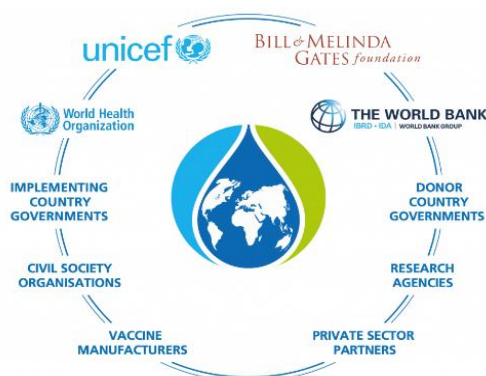
Created in 2000, Gavi is an international organisation – a global Vaccine Alliance, bringing together **public and private sectors** with the shared goal of creating equal access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

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. It contributes to achieving the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals by focusing on performance, outcomes and results.
3. Its partners provide funding for vaccines and intellectual resources for care advancement.
4. They contribute, also, to strengthening the capacity of the health system to deliver immunisation and other health services in a sustainable manner.



26. International Religious Freedom

The US State Department has placed various countries in different lists pursuant to the **International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA)**.

Key Points:

1. Pakistan and China among eight other **countries that are of particular concern (CPC) for violation of religious freedom**. Others include- Myanmar, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.
2. Comoros, Cuba, Nicaragua and Russia on a **Special Watch List (SWL)** for governments that have engaged in or tolerated severe violations of religious freedom.
3. Al-Shabaab, al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the Houthis, ISIS, ISIS-Greater Sahara, ISIS-West Africa, Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin and the Taliban are '**Entities of Particular Concern**'.

Notably, the State Department did not accept the **USCIRF recommendation that India, Russia, Syria and Vietnam be also designated as CPCs**.

WHAT IS THE U. S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (USCIRF)?

- USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan, U.S. federal government commission created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) that monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad.
- USCIRF uses international standards to monitor religious freedom violations globally, and makes policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and Congress.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USCIRF AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan federal government entity, while the **Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF) — also established under IRFA—is part of the U.S. State Department**. Both USCIRF and the State Department release annual reports on international religious freedom, but each has different purposes.

- The State Department's report documents religious freedom violations in every country in the world.
- USCIRF's Annual Report, by statute, **recommends countries to be designated as "countries of particular concern" which the Executive Branch must consider**.

Background:

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest this religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

27. ASEAN

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (more commonly known as ASEAN) is a **political and economic organization** which promotes **intergovernmental cooperation** and facilitates **economic, political, security, military, educational, and sociocultural integration** among its members and other countries in Asia.
- **There are currently 10 member states:** Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.
- ASEAN came into existence on August 8, **1967 after ASEAN declaration** (also known as **Bangkok declaration**).
- It is a regional organisation that aims to promote **intergovernmental cooperation** and facilitates economic integration amongst its members.
- Its Motto is "**One Vision, One Identity, One Community**".
- The **Secretariat of ASEAN is at Jakarta, Indonesia**.

- ASEAN is an **official United Nations observer**, as well as an active global partner.
- A major partner of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, ASEAN maintains a global network of alliances and dialogue partners.

Why was it set up?

- ASEAN was founded half a century ago in 1967 by the five South-East Asian nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- This was during the polarized atmosphere of the Cold War, and the alliance aimed to promote stability in the region. Over time, the group expanded to include its current 10 members.
- Regional cooperation was further extended with the creation of the **ASEAN Plus Three** forum in 1997, which included China, South Korea and Japan. And then the **East Asia Summit**, which began taking place in 2005 and has expanded to include India, Australia, New Zealand, Russia and the United States.

28. ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus)

The **14th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus** was held virtually.

About ADMM- Plus:

Consistent with the ADMM guiding principles of open and outward looking, **the 2nd ADMM in Singapore in 2007 adopted the Concept Paper to establish the ADMM-Plus.**

The **ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners** to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.

- **Eight Dialogue Partners** are Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA (collectively referred to as **the "Plus Countries"**).



Agreed five areas of practical cooperation under this mechanism are:

- Maritime security, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping operations and military medicine.

In 2013, a new priority area of **humanitarian mine action** was agreed.

29. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

The initialising ceremony of **the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** was held among member-countries on the sidelines of **the 37th ASEAN Summit**.

India and ASEAN countries said they would explore ways to increase trade between them despite India's exit from **the 15-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement**.

What is the RCEP?

- The **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is a free trade agreement in the **Asia-Pacific region** between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and five of ASEAN's FTA partners Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea.
- **India, which is also ASEAN's FTA partner, opted out of RCEP in November 2019.**
- RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia.
- The 15 parties account for 30% of the world's population and just under 30% of the world's GDP.

**30. BRICS**

- BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa**.
- Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC" (or "the BRICs"), before the induction of South Africa in 2010.
- **Summits:** Since 2009, the BRICS nations have met annually at formal summits with discussions representing spheres of political and socio-economic coordination, in which member countries have identified several business opportunities, economic complementarities and areas of cooperation. Russia hosted the most recent 12th BRICS summit on 17 November 2020 virtually.
- The 5th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting was held through video conference under the Chairpersonship of Russian Federation.
- **Chairship:** The Chairship of the forum is **rotated annually among the members**. Cooperation among members is predicated on three levels or "tracks" of interaction, namely:
 - Track I: Formal diplomatic engagement between the national governments.
 - Track II: Engagement through government-affiliated institutions, e.g. state-owned enterprises and business councils.
 - Track III: Civil society and "people-to-people" engagement.
- **Facts for Prelims:**
 - The First BRIC Summit was held in June 2009 in Yekaterinburg, Russia.
 - **Brazil hosted the most recent 11th BRICS summit** on 13-14 November 2019.
 - **India hosted the 4th BRICS summit in 2012 and 8th BRICS summit in 2016.**
 - The BRICS members are all leading developing or newly industrialized countries. All five are G-20 members.
- During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB). They also signed the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

31. BRICS Media Forum

The **Fifth BRICS Media Forum** was held virtually.

- At the end of the summit, representatives called for the five nations to work together to jointly combat the **"virus of disinformation"** in the pandemic era.
- A common thread among members is a growing problem of disinformation or 'fake news'.

About BRICS Media Forum:

China's Xinhua news agency came up with the idea of a BRICS Media Forum in 2015 to promote media cooperation.

The forum aims to:

- Establish an efficient coordination mechanism among BRICS media.
- Advance innovation-driven media development.
- Gather stronger momentum for the development of BRICS countries through exchange and pragmatic cooperation under the mechanism.

BRICS has unveiled a counter-terrorism strategy to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the member countries for effectively combating the threat.

32. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

The latest **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum was held online because of the pandemic.**

APEC:

It is a **regional economic forum established in 1989** to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific.

Aim: to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

Functions:

1. APEC works to help all residents of the Asia-Pacific participate in the growing economy. APEC projects provide digital skills training for rural communities and help indigenous women export their products abroad.
2. Recognizing the impacts of climate change, APEC members also implement initiatives to increase energy efficiency and promote sustainable management of forest and marine resources.
3. The forum adapts to allow members to deal with important new challenges to the region's economic well-being. This includes ensuring disaster resilience, planning for pandemics, and addressing terrorism.

Members:

APEC's 21 member economies are Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; Viet Nam.

33. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

7th Justice Ministers' Meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States was hosted by Union Law Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad.

About the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

- SCO is a **Eurasian economic, political and security organisation** headquartered in Beijing, China.
- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.
- It was **founded in 2001**. The full members of the organization are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.
- Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia have **observer status** at present.
- The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter** was signed during the **St. Petersburg SCO Heads of State meeting** in June 2002, and **entered into force on 19 September 2003**.
- The SCO's **official languages are Russian and Chinese**.

- The SCO has established **relations with the United Nations** (where it is an observer in the General Assembly), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
- India and Pakistan were inducted as full members of the SCO at the 17th SCO summit concluded in Astana, capital of Kazakhstan.



The SCO's main goals are:

- Strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states.
- Promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture.
- Making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region.
- Moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

Bodies under SCO:

- **Heads of State Council (HSC)** is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO. It meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation.
- **SCO Heads of Government Council (HGC)** meets once a year to discuss the organisation's multilateral cooperation strategy and priority areas, to resolve current important economic and other cooperation issues, and also to approve the organisation's annual budget.
- The organisation has two permanent bodies — the SCO Secretariat based in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent.
- The SCO Secretary-General and the Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO RATS are appointed by the Council of Heads of State for a term of three years.

34. Partners in Population and Development (PPD)

Inter-Ministerial Conference by Partners in Population and Development (PPD). India took part in it.

About PPD:

- It is an intergovernmental organisation for promoting south-south cooperation in the fields of reproductive health, population, and development.
- Its Secretariat is located in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Currently, PPD has the membership of 26 developing countries, representing more than 59% of the world's population.
- Launched at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), when ten developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America formed an intergovernmental alliance to help implement **the Cairo Program of Action (POA)**.
- This POA, endorsed by 179 nations, stresses the need to establish mechanisms to promote development through the sharing of experiences in reproductive health (RH) and family planning (FP) within and among countries and to promote effective partnerships among the governments, NGOs, research institutions and the private sector.

35. Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- **Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2019 at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in New York, US.**
- A platform where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure.
- It will create a mechanism to assist countries to upgrade their capacities and practices, with regard to infrastructure development in accordance with their risk context and economic needs.
- **Benefits and significance:**
 - This initiative will benefit all sections of society.
 - Economically weaker sections of society, women and children, are the most vulnerable to the impacts of disasters and hence, will be benefitted from the improvement of knowledge and practice in creating disaster resilient infrastructure.
 - It will also benefit all areas with high disaster risk.

At the first meeting between India and Luxembourg in 20 years that was held recently, India invited Luxembourg to join the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**.

36. One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance

Launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Composition:

- This 20-member group comprises heads of states, current and former ministers of different countries, leaders from the private sector and civil society.
- It is co-chaired by the prime ministers of Barbados and Bangladesh, Mia Mottley and Sheikh Hasina Wazed, respectively.
- The heads of FAO, OIE and WHO are ex-officio members of the group.

Why was it created?

It seeks to catalyze global attention and action to preserve antimicrobial medicines and avert the disastrous consequences of antimicrobial resistance.

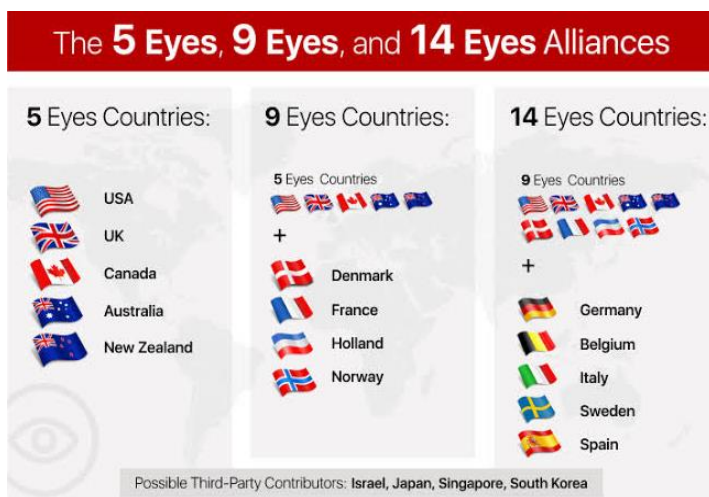
Functions of the group:

The group has to:

1. Monitor the global response to antimicrobial resistance.
2. Maintain public momentum.
3. Provide regular reports on the science and evidence related to AMR to the UN member states.
4. Advocate for the inclusion of AMR 'lens' in investments on agriculture, health, development, food and feed production.
5. Push for multi-stakeholder engagement on the issue.

37. 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.



- **Origin:** 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.

38. Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) Working Group of OECD

India has been designated the 'Vice-Chair' of **Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) Working Group of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**.

What is GLP?

Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) is a quality system, which has been evolved by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and



Development (OECD) to ensure that safety data generated on various chemicals like industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals (Human and Veterinary), agrochemicals, cosmetic products, food/feed additives, and medical devices, etc., can be relied upon by regulatory authorities.

About the National GLP Compliance Monitoring Authority (NGCMA):

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, established the National GLP Compliance Monitoring Authority (NGCMA) with the approval of the Union Cabinet on April 24, 2002.

- NGCMA is the National body which grants GLP certification to test facilities (TFs) conducting safety studies on new chemicals of the above-mentioned categories in accordance with OECD Principles of GLP and OECD Council norms.

39. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 37 member countries, founded in 1961 to **stimulate economic progress and world trade**.
- It is a forum of countries describing themselves as committed to democracy and the market economy, providing a platform to compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practices and coordinate domestic and international policies of its members.
- Generally, OECD members are **high-income economies** with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries.
- As of 2017, the OECD member countries collectively comprised 62.2% of global nominal GDP and 42.8% of global GDP at purchasing power parity.
- The OECD is an **official United Nations observer**.
- Although the OECD does not have the power to enforce its decisions, which further require a unanimous vote from its members, it is recognised as a highly influential publisher of mostly economic data through publications as well as annual evaluations and rankings of member countries.

40. Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC)

How the dispute is taken up at the SIAC? What is the procedure to be followed?

Once a dispute is referred to arbitration, the process of **appointment of the arbitral tribunal** takes place.

Composition: Typically, **in case of a three member tribunal**, both the parties appoint one member each to the tribunal, while the third member is jointly appointed by the two nominees or, if they fail to agree, by SIAC.

Appointment of an Emergency Arbitrator:

Appointment of the arbitral tribunal usually takes time.

- Therefore, under the rules of SIAC, **parties can move SIAC to appoint an emergency arbitrator** to get urgent interim relief, even as the process of appointment of the main arbitral tribunal is underway.

What happens when the parties don't comply with the order voluntarily?

Currently under Indian law, **there is no express mechanism for enforcement of the orders of the Emergency Arbitrator.**

But, **the parties voluntarily comply with the Emergency Award.**

- However, **if the parties don't comply with the order voluntarily**, then the party which has won the emergency award, in this case Amazon, **can move the High Court in India under Section 9 of the Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996**, to get similar reliefs as granted by the Emergency Arbitrator.

Why has Singapore become the hub of international arbitration?

- Foreign investors investing in India typically want **to avoid the rigmarole of the Indian courts.**
- Foreign investors feel that **Singapore is neutral ground for dispute resolution.**
- Singapore itself over time has built a stellar reputation as **jurisdiction driven by rule of law with international standards and high integrity.** This gives comfort to investors that the arbitration process will be **quick, fair and just**".

According to the 2019 annual report of SIAC, **India was the top user of its arbitration seat with 485 cases being referred to SIAC**, followed by Philippines at 122, China at 76 and the United States at 65.

Does India has any international arbitration centre?

Yes. India now has its own international arbitration centre in Mumbai.

About Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC):

It is a **not-for-profit international arbitration organisation** based in Singapore, which administers arbitrations under its own rules of arbitration and the **United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Arbitration Rules.**

41. The European Union

About the European Union:

It is a **group of 27 countries** that operate as a cohesive economic and political block.

- The EU has often been described as a **sui generis political entity** (without precedent or comparison).
- The EU has developed an internal single market through a standardised system of laws that apply in all member states in those matters, and only those matters, where members have agreed to act as one.
- EU policies aim to ensure the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the internal market.
- It maintains permanent diplomatic missions throughout the world and represents itself at the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the G7 and the G20.

Origin of the European Union:

Despite **not being officially formed until 1993**, the European Union's foundations actually reach further back to **1957**, when **the European Economic Community was established**.

The EEC was formed out of a previous group called **the European Coal and Steel Community - which had its own start in 1951**.

- In 1993, the EEC morphed into the European Union following **the new Maastricht Treaty** (also known as the Treaty on European Union).
- Additionally, **the Treaty of Lisbon**, enacted in 2009, gave the European Union more broad powers that included being authorized to sign international treaties, increase border patrol, and other security and enforcement provisions.

42. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

It is **an intergovernmental military alliance**.

Established by Washington treaty.

Treaty that was signed on 4 April 1949.

Headquarters — Brussels, Belgium.

Headquarters of Allied Command Operations — Mons, Belgium.

Significance: It constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its independent member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party.

Objectives:

Political – NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.

Military – NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty – Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.

NATO membership is open to “any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.”

A “NATO decision” is the expression of the collective will of all 30 member countries since all decisions are taken by consensus.

NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under the Washington Treaty - NATO's founding treaty - or under a UN mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organizations.

43. Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)

Election Commission of India has completed one year of Chairmanship of **the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)**.

About The Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB):

- It is **the largest association of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) worldwide**.
- **Established** on October 14, 2013 in Song-do, South Korea.
- **Permanent secretariat** is located at Seoul.
- **Aims** to foster efficiency and effectiveness in conducting free, fair, transparent and participative elections worldwide.

Composition:

115 EMBs as Members & 16 Regional Associations/Organisations as Associate Members.

44. Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

Special Ministerial conference of CICA was held recently. **India** also participated in the event.

What is CICA?

It is an **inter-governmental forum** for enhancing cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in **Asia**.

- The key idea of the Conference is based on **the priority of the indivisibility of security, joint initiative and mutually beneficial interaction of small and large states**.

Secretariat: Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Meeting and summits:

- The **CICA Summit** is convened every four years in order to conduct consultations, review the progress of, and set priorities for CICA activities.
- **Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs** is required to be held every two years.

Genesis:

The idea of convening the CICA was **first proposed by Kazakhstan** in October 1992, at the **47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**.

- However, the **first meeting of the CICA Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held on 14 September 1999** with participation of 15 Member States.
- The **first CICA summit was held on 4 June 2002** with participation of 16 Member States and **Almaty Act**, the charter of the CICA, was adopted.

Membership:

27 member states; 8 observer states; 5 observer organizations.

For becoming a member of CICA, a state must have at least a part of its territory in Asia.

- All decisions within CICA framework are taken by consensus.

45. Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)

Indian Health Minister participated in PMNCH 'Accountability Breakfast' through Video Conference.

The event was co-hosted by **the White Ribbon Alliance (WRA) and Every Woman Every Child (EWEC)**.

- Theme was the effort to protect hard earned gains in the field of Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health from the COVID pandemic.

About the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (The Partnership, PMNCH):

Launched in 2005, PMNCH is an alliance of more than 1000 organizations in 77 countries from the sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health communities, as well as health influencing sectors.

- The vision and goals of the new Partnership were outlined in "**The Delhi Declaration**" – a landmark statement developed by participants of "Lives in the Balance: The Partnership Meeting for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health", held in New Delhi, India, 7-9 April 2005.

Governance:

The Partnership is governed by a Board, and administered by a **Secretariat hosted at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland**.

Roles and functions:

- The Partnership provides a platform for organizations to align objectives, strategies and resources, and agree on interventions to improve maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.

46. Amnesty international

Amnesty International halts India operations following the freezing of its bank accounts by the Enforcement Directorate.

Amnesty International is a non-governmental organisation focused on human rights.

- The stated objective of the organisation is “to conduct research and generate action to prevent and end grave abuses of human rights, and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated.”
- The organisation was awarded **the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize** for its “campaign against torture,” and the United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights in 1978.
- In the field of international human rights organisations, **Amnesty has the second longest history, after the International Federation for Human Rights and broadest name recognition.**

47. 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.**

48. Missile Technology Control Regime

- 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.

49. Indian Ocean Commission

India is 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.
- **It's 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.

50. 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.

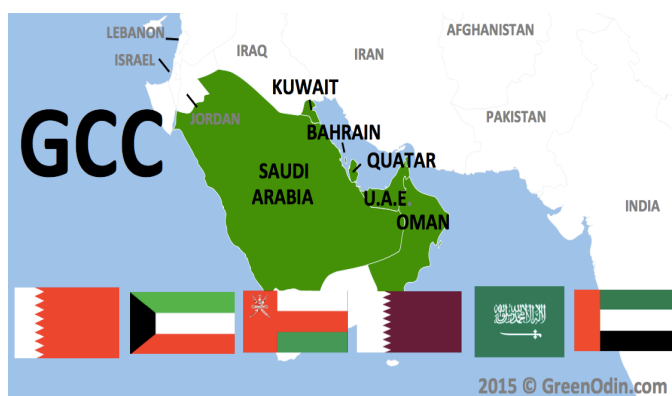
The organization is **not a United Nations agency, but the PCA is an official United Nations Observer.**

51. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

1. It is a **multilateral treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).**
2. Monitored by **the United Nations Human Rights Committee.**
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.**

52. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is **a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries**—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.
- The GCC was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 1981.
- The purpose of the GCC is to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and their similar political and cultural identities, which are rooted in Arab and Islamic cultures.
- Presidency of the council rotates annually.
- All current member states are monarchies, including **three constitutional monarchies** (Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain), **two absolute monarchies** (Saudi Arabia and Oman), and **one federal monarchy** (the United Arab Emirates, which is composed of seven member states, each of which is an absolute monarchy with its own emir).
- In order to reduce their future dependence on oil, the GCC states are pursuing unprecedented economic structural reform.



United Nations Organisations

1. UN Specialised Agencies

- Specialized agencies are **autonomous organizations** working with the United Nations.
- Specialized agencies **may or may not have been originally created by the United Nations**, but they are incorporated into the United Nations System by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- At present the UN has in total **15 specialized agencies** that carry out various functions on behalf of the UN.
- **The specialized agencies are listed below:**
 - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
 - International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
 - International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
 - International Labour Organization (ILO).
 - International Maritime Organization (IMO).
 - International Monetary Fund (IMF).
 - International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
 - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
 - United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).
 - Universal Postal Union (UPU).
 - World Bank Group (WBG).
 - The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD),
 - The International Finance Corporation (IFC),
 - The International Development Association (IDA),
 - World Health Organization (WHO).
 - World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
 - World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
 - World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- **Former Specialized Agencies:**
 - The only UN specialized agency to go out of existence is the **International Refugee Organization**, which existed from 1946 to 1952.
 - In 1952, it was replaced by the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** which is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly.

2. UN Human Rights Council

India has abstained from a crucial vote on Sri Lanka's rights record at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

- The resolution on '**Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka**' was, however, adopted after 22 states of the 47-member Council voted in its favour.

The U.S. has announced plans to reengage with the **UN Human Rights Council** that former President Donald Trump withdrew from almost three years ago.

About the Resolution:

- It gives UN human rights chief the mandate to collect and preserve evidence of crimes related to Sri Lanka's civil war that ended in 2009 with the defeat of Tamil Tiger rebels.
- The resolution also contended the human rights situation has deteriorated under the Rajapaksa administration and that rights defenders and ethnic and religious minorities are facing problems.

About UNHRC:

UNHRC was reconstituted from its predecessor organisation, **the UN Commission on Human Rights** to help overcome the “credibility deficit” of the previous organisation.

- **Headquartered** in Geneva, Switzerland.

Composition:

- The UNHRC has 47 members serving at any time with elections held to fill up seats every year, based on allocations to regions across the world to ensure geographical representation.
- Each elected member serves for a term of three years.
- Countries are disallowed from occupying a seat for more than two consecutive terms.

Functions:

- The UNHRC passes **non-binding resolutions on human rights issues** through a periodic review of all 193 UN member states called **the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**.
- It oversees expert investigation of violations in specific countries (Special Procedures).

Challenges and Need for reforms:

- The human rights record of the member-states such as Saudi Arabia, China and Russia in the council has also not been in line with the aims and mission of the UNHRC, which has led to critics questioning its relevance.
- Despite the continued participation of several western countries in the UNHRC, they continue to harbour misgivings on the understanding of Human rights.
- Non-compliance has been a serious issue with respect to the UNHRC’s functioning.
- Non-participation of powerful nations such as the US.

3. UN Institute for Training & Research (UNITAR)

- It is a dedicated **training arm of the United Nations system**.
- Headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland).
- Created in 1963 to train and equip young diplomats from newly-independent UN Member States with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate through the diplomatic environment.
- The institute also assists ministries of finance through its courses on public debt management, finance and trade, and it provides government officials with training in Peacekeeping and conflict prevention.
- Through its programme on operational satellite applications (UNOSAT), the Institute provides satellite imagery and analysis.
- Since 2003, UNITAR provides courses to support municipal and regional leaders dealing with complex public policies.

4. UN peacekeepers

India gifted 2 lakh vaccine doses to UN peacekeepers.

- The announcement was made by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during his remarks at a UN Security Council open debate on the implementation of **resolution 2532 (2020)**, passed last year.

Elections to the Council happen annually, with **countries serving for three years on a rotational basis**, as some of the seats expire on 31 December every year.

47 seats are equitably distributed according to five regional divisions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and other States).

Countries need a minimum of 97 votes to get elected, and everything happens by secret ballot.

India was elected to the UNHRC for a period of three years beginning January 1, 2019. India has previously served in Human Rights Council from 2011-2014 and 2014-2017.

What is UNSC resolution 2532?

The resolution:

1. Demands a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda" (i.e., those already identified by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)).
2. Calls for all parties engaged in armed conflicts (i.e., including those not specifically on the UNSC agenda) to "engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause for at least 90 consecutive days".
3. Specifically excludes UNSC designated terrorist groups, e.g., the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

What is peacekeeping? It's significance?

- United Nations Peacekeeping is a **joint effort** between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support.
- **Every peacekeeping mission is authorized by the Security Council.**
- The **financial resources of UN Peacekeeping operations** are the collective responsibility of UN Member States.
- According to the UN Charter, **every Member State is legally obligated to pay their respective share for peacekeeping.**

Composition:

- UN peacekeepers (often referred to as **Blue Berets or Blue Helmets** because of their light blue berets or helmets) can include soldiers, police officers, and civilian personnel.
- Peacekeeping forces are **contributed by member states on a voluntary basis.**
- Civilian staff of peace operations are international civil servants, recruited and deployed by the UN Secretariat.

UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles:

1. Consent of the parties.
2. Impartiality.
3. Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

India and the UN Peacekeeping:

- India has consistently been among the top troop contributing nations to the UN and is **the fifth largest with around 5,424 personnel in eight countries.**
- India's contribution to the regular budget is 0.83% and 0.16% of the peacekeeping budget.
- India has so far participated in 51 of the 71 missions and contributed over 2 lakh personnel.
- It has troop deployment in Lebanon, Golan Heights, Congo and South Sudan in addition to staff officers in other missions.
- India has also set up two field hospitals in South Sudan and one in Congo.
- Since 2018, India has co-opted a contingent from Kazakhstan at the mission in Lebanon.

The US and UN Peacekeeping:

- The U.S. on the other hand has never contributed ground troops but contributes 27% of the U.N. peacekeeping budget.
- In 2016, India and the U.S. began a joint annual initiative **"UN Peacekeeping Course for African Partners"** to build and enhance the capacity of African troop and police-contributing countries to participate in the U.N. and regional peacekeeping operations.
- While this is going on, the U.S. is keen on a **similar initiative for South East Asian nations** like Vietnam and others.

China and the UN Peacekeeping:

- It currently has over 2,500 troops in various UN missions and has committed another 8,000 troops as standby. Once implemented, it will make China the largest provider of troops to the UNPK.
- China contributes 12% of the UN regular general budget and 15% of the peacekeeping budget.

5. India's Permanent Mission 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"**.

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.

6. India at UNSC

India has entered the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a **non-permanent member** and it will stay on the council for two years.

India at UNSC:

- India has served in the UN Security Council seven times previously.
- In 1950-51, India presided over the adoption of resolutions calling for cessation of hostilities during the Korean War and for assistance to Republic of Korea.
- In 1972-73, India pushed strongly for admission of Bangladesh into UN. The resolution was not adopted because of a veto by a permanent member.
- In 1977-78, India was a strong voice for Africa in the UNSC and spoke against apartheid. Then External Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee spoke in UNSC for Namibia's independence in 1978.
- In 1984-85, India was a leading voice in UNSC for resolution of conflicts in the Middle East, especially Palestine and Lebanon.
- In 2011-2012, India was a strong vice for developing world, peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and Africa.

- India chaired the UNSC 1373 Committee concerning Counter-Terrorism, the 1566 Working Group concerning threat to international peace and security by terrorist acts, and Security Council 751/1907 Committee concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the organs of the United Nations and is charged with the **maintenance of international peace and security**.
- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions.
- It is the **only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions** to member states.

Members:

- The Security Council consists of fifteen members. Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States—serve as the body's five permanent members and 10 non-permanent members, half of which are elected each year.
- These **permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution**, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General.
- The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms.
- The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.
- India has been a non-permanent member of the Security Council eight time previously: 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73, 1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92 and 2011-12. For the 2011-12 term, India won 187 of 190 votes after Kazakhstan stood down from its candidacy.

How are non- permanent members elected?

- **Each year, the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members out of a total of 10, for a two-year term.**
- **Distribution of seats:** These 10 seats are distributed among the regions thus: five for African and Asian countries; one for Eastern European countries; two for Latin American and Caribbean countries; two for Western European and other countries.
- **Of the five seats for Africa and Asia, three are for Africa and two for Asia;** there is an informal understanding between the two groups to reserve **one for an Arab country**. The Africa and Asia Pacific group takes turns every two years to put up an Arab candidate.
- **Elections for terms** beginning in **even-numbered years** select two African members, and one each within Eastern Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Terms beginning in **odd-numbered years** consist of two Western European and Other members, and one each from Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **Votes:** Irrespective of whether a country is a "clean slate" candidate (that is there is no other contestant from the group) and has been endorsed by its group, **it needs to secure the votes of two-thirds of the members present and voting at the General Assembly session** (a minimum of 129 votes if all 193 member states participate). When contested, **the elections for non-permanent seats can be fraught and can go on for several rounds**, In 1975, there was a contest between India and Pakistan, which went to eight rounds. Pakistan won the seat that year. In 1996, India lost a contest to Japan.

- **The G4 Bloc:** Group of 4 countries, (Germany, Japan, Brazil, India) bidding for permanent seats in the UN Security Council.
- **The Coffee Club or Uniting for Consensus:** Group of countries opposed to the G4. They favoured the expansion of the non-permanent category of seats with members to be elected on a regional basis.
- They include Italy, Spain, Argentina, Canada, Mexico, South Korea and Pakistan.

7. UNSC 1267 committee

Recently, the UNSC threw out a Pakistani attempt to get two Indians designated as terrorists under **Resolution 1267**.

What is UNSC 1267 committee?

It was **first set up in 1999**, and strengthened after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

- It is now known as **the Da'esh and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee**.
- It **comprises all permanent and non-permanent members of the UNSC**.
- The **1267 list of terrorists is a global list, with a UNSC stamp**. It is full of Pakistani nationals and residents.

What is the process by which people are listed under UNSC 1267?

- **Any member state can submit a proposal** for listing an individual, group, or entity.
- The **1267 Committee meets as required with a notice of four working days**.
- **Decisions** on listing and de-listing are adopted by **consensus**.
- The proposal is sent to all the members, and if no member objects within five working days, the proposal is adopted. An **"objection"** means curtains for the proposal.
- **Any member of the Committee may also put a "technical hold"** on the proposal, and ask for more information from the proposing member state. During this time, other members may also place their own holds.
- The matter remains on the "pending" list of the Committee until such time as the member state that has placed the hold decides to turn its decision into an "objection", or until all those who have placed holds remove them within a timeframe laid down by the Committee.
- **Pending issues must be resolved in six months**, but the member state that has placed the hold may ask for an additional three months. At the end of this period, if an objection is not placed, the matter is considered approved.

Any proposal for listing must meet set criteria:

The proposal must include acts or activities indicating the proposed individual/group/entity had participated "in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities" linked to "ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida or any cell, affiliate, splinter group or derivative thereof".

8. Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)

Indian diplomat Vidisha Maitra elected to U.N. ACABQ.

About ACABQ:

Advisory Committee is **an expert Committee of sixteen Members elected by the General Assembly for a period of three years, on the basis of a broad geographical representation**.

- Members serve in a personal capacity and not as representatives of Member States.
- The Committee holds three sessions a year with total meeting time between nine and ten months per year.
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee are elected by the Members of the Advisory Committee.

Functions:

1. To examine and report on the budget submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.
2. To advise the General Assembly concerning any administrative and budgetary matters referred to it.
3. Examines, on behalf of the General Assembly, the administrative budgets of the specialised agencies and proposals for financial arrangements with such agencies.

- To consider and report to the General Assembly on the auditors' reports on the accounts of the United Nations and of the specialised agencies.

9. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

It is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

Headquarters: Rome, Italy

Founded: 16 October 1945

Goal of FAO: Their goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.

Important reports and Programmes (Have a brief overview):

- Global Report on Food Crises.
- Every two years, FAO publishes **the State of the World's Forests**.
- FAO and the World Health Organization created **the Codex Alimentarius Commission** in 1961 to develop food standards, guidelines and texts.
- In 1996, **FAO organized the World Food Summit**. The Summit concluded with the signing of **the Rome Declaration**, which established the goal of halving the number of people who suffer from hunger by the year 2015.
- In 2004 **the Right to Food Guidelines** were adopted, offering guidance to states on how to implement their obligations on the right to food.
- FAO created **the International Plant Protection Convention or IPPC in 1952**.
- FAO is depositary of **the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, also called Plant Treaty, Seed Treaty or ITPGRFA**, entered into force on 29 June 2004.
- The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Partnership Initiative** was conceptualized in 2002 during World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

India has had a historic association with FAO.

- Indian Civil Service Officer Dr. Binay Ranjan Sen was the Director General of FAO during 1956-1967.
- The World Food Programme, which has won the Nobel Peace Prize 2020, was established during his time.
- India's proposals for **the International Year of Pulses in 2016 and the International Year of Millets 2023** have also been endorsed by FAO.

10. World Food Programme

The **United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP)** has won the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to combat hunger around the world and improve conditions for peace in areas affected by conflict.

What is UN WFP?

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food assistance **branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security**.

Born in 1961, the WFP strives to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, with the ultimate **goal in mind of eliminating the need for food aid itself**.

It is a **member of the United Nations Development Group** and part of its Executive Committee.

- WFP food aid is also directed to fight micronutrient deficiencies, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat disease, including HIV and AIDS.

What is "World Hunger Map"?

Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Alibaba is working with WFP to develop digital "World Hunger Map".

- The map will help to monitor global hunger and operations to end scourge by 2030 which is one of UN's key Sustainable Development goals.
- It also aims to boost efficiency of interventions and shorten emergency response times.

11. International Labour Organization

India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization.

About the Governing Body:

It is the apex executive body of the ILO which decides policies, programmes, agenda, budget and elects the Director-General.

It meets in Geneva. It meets three times annually.

About ILO:

- Established as an agency for the League of Nations following World War I.
- Established by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.
- It became the first specialised agency of the United Nations (UN) in the year 1946.
- It got the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.
- It is the only tripartite U.N. agency. It brings together governments, employers and workers.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.

The ILO's fundamental Conventions

These cover subjects considered to be fundamental principles and rights at work:

- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949
- Forced Labour Convention, 1930
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958

Key reports:

1. World Employment and Social Outlook.
2. Global Wage Report.

12. International Telecommunications 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:

- 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).

13. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** is a United Nations agency with the mandate to **protect refugees**, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people, and assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country.
- UNHCR's mandate does not apply to Palestinian refugees, who are assisted by UNRWA.
- UNHCR was created in 1950, during the **aftermaths of World War II**. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland and it is a **member of the United Nations Development Group**. The UNHCR has won two Nobel Peace Prizes,
- UNHCR has helped millions of people to restart their lives. They include **refugees, returnees, stateless people, the internally displaced and asylum-seekers**.
- **UNHCR** has announced a new global campaign urging people worldwide to cover the total distance travelled by refugees each year - 2 billion kilometers - by running, jogging or walking.
 - **The "2 Billion Kilometers to Safety" campaign** vies to encourage people to support refugees by championing individual acts of solidarity.
 - The goal is **to acknowledge the resilience and strength of refugees**.

14. International Court of Justice (ICJ)

- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the **principal judicial body of the UN**.
- Established in 1946 to **replace the Permanent Court of International Justice**, the ICJ mainly operates under the statute of its predecessor, which is included in the UN Charter.
- The seat of the Court is at the **Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands)**.
- Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York (United States of America).
- **It has two primary functions:** to **settle legal disputes** submitted by States in accordance with established international laws, and to **act as an advisory board** on issues submitted to it by authorized international organizations.
- **The ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is legally binding.**
- The ICJ is not a supreme court to which national courts can turn; it does not act as a court of last resort for individuals. **Nor is it an appeal court for any international tribunal**. It can, however, rule on the validity of arbitral awards.

- The Court can only hear a dispute when requested to do so by one or more States. It cannot deal with a dispute on its own initiative. Neither is it permitted, under its Statute, to investigate and rule on acts of sovereign States as it chooses.
- **Judgments are final and without appeal.** If there is a dispute about the meaning or scope of a judgment, the only possibility is for one of the parties to make a request to the Court for an interpretation. In the event of the discovery of a fact hitherto unknown to the Court which might be a decisive factor, either party may apply for revision of the judgment.
- **United Nations Charter authorizes the UN Security Council to enforce Court rulings.** However, such enforcement is subject to the veto power of the five permanent members of the council.
- **Members of the Court:**
 - The International Court of Justice is composed of **15 judges** elected to nine-year terms of office by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.
 - These organs vote simultaneously but separately.
 - In order to be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes in both bodies.
 - In order to ensure a measure of continuity, one third of the Court is elected every three years. **Judges are eligible for re-election.**
- **What are the qualifications of ICJ judges?**
 - A judge should have a high moral character.
 - A judge should fit to the qualifications of appointment of highest judicial officers as prescribed by their respective states.
 - A judge should be a juriconsult of recognized competence in international law.
- **The 15 judges of the Court are distributed as per the regions:**
 - Three from Africa.
 - Two from Latin America and Caribbean.
 - Three from Asia.
 - Five from Western Europe and other states.
 - Two from Eastern Europe.
- **Independence of the Judges:**
 - Once elected, a Member of the Court is a delegate neither of the government of his own country nor of that of any other State.
 - Unlike most other organs of international organizations, the Court is not composed of representatives of governments.
 - Members of the Court are independent judges whose first task, before taking up their duties, is to make a solemn declaration in open court that they will exercise their powers impartially and conscientiously.
 - In order to guarantee his or her independence, no Member of the Court can be dismissed unless, in the unanimous opinion of the other Members, he/she no longer fulfils the required conditions. This has in fact never happened.

International Banks / International Financial Institutions

1. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Centre signs \$304 million pact with AIIB for power transmission network in Assam.

- The fund will be utilised for the 'Assam Intra-State Transmission System Enhancement Project', aiming to improve reliability, capacity and security of the power transmission network in the state.

What is AIIB?

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia and beyond.

The Parties (57 founding members) to agreement comprise the Membership of the Bank.

- It is **headquartered in Beijing**.
- It commenced operations in January 2016.

Aim:

By investing in sustainable infrastructure and other productive sectors today, it aims to connect people, services and markets that over time will impact the lives of billions and build a better future.

Membership:

- There are more than 100 members now.
- Fourteen of the G-20 nations are AIIB members including France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Voting Rights:

- China is the largest shareholder with 26.61 % voting shares in the bank followed by India (7.6%), Russia (6.01%) and Germany (4.2 %).
- The regional members hold 75% of the total voting power in the Bank.

Various organs of AIIB:

Board of Governors: The Board of Governors consists of one Governor and one Alternate Governor appointed by each member country. Governors and Alternate Governors serve at the pleasure of the appointing member.

Board of Directors: Non-resident Board of Directors is responsible for the direction of the Bank's general operations, exercising all powers delegated to it by the Board of Governors.

International Advisory Panel: The Bank has established an International Advisory Panel (IAP) to support the President and Senior Management on the Bank's strategies and policies as well as on general operational issues.

2. New Development Bank (NDB)

NDB has so far approved 18 projects in India, including emergency loans of \$2 billion to support health spending and economic recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About NDB:

It is a multilateral development bank **operated by the BRICS states** (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

- It was agreed to by BRICS leaders at **the 5th BRICS summit held in Durban, South Africa in 2013**.
- It was **established in 2014**, at the 6th BRICS Summit at **Fortaleza, Brazil**.
- The bank is set up to foster greater financial and development cooperation among the five emerging markets.

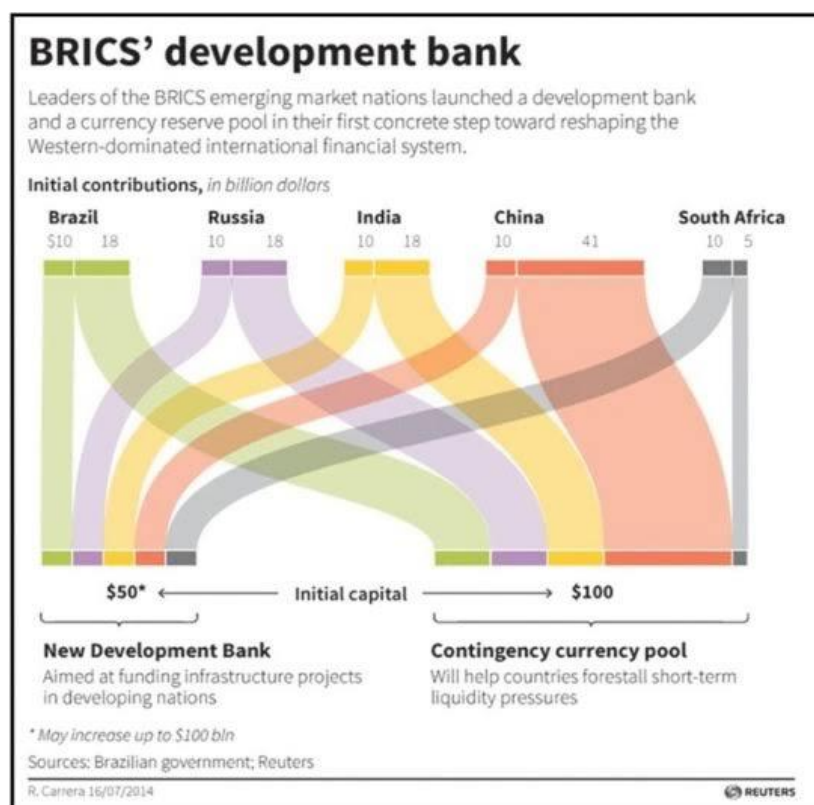
- **Headquartered** in Shanghai, China.
- In 2018, the NDB received **observer status in the United Nations General Assembly**, establishing a firm basis for active and fruitful cooperation with the UN.

Voting:

Unlike the World Bank, which assigns votes based on capital share, in the New Development Bank each participant country will be assigned one vote, and none of the countries will have veto power.

Roles and functions:

The Bank will mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, to supplement existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.



3. Asian Development Bank (ADB)

It is a regional development bank.

- **established on 19 December 1966.**
- **headquartered** — Manila, Philippines.
- official **United Nations Observer.**

Who can be its members?

The bank admits the **members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, formerly the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East or ECAFE)** and **non-regional developed countries.**

- ADB now has 68 members, 49 from within Asia.

Voting rights:

It is modeled closely on the World Bank, and has a **similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members' capital subscriptions.**

- As of 31 December 2019, ADB's five largest shareholders are Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares), the People's Republic of China (6.4%), India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%).

Roles and functions:

Dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

- This is carried out through investments – in the form of loans, grants and information sharing – in infrastructure, health care services, financial and public administration systems, helping nations prepare for the impact of climate change or better manage their natural resources, as well as other areas.

4. International Monetary and Finance Committee

The International Monetary and Finance Committee is a body **under the IMF (International Monetary Fund)**. It had met via video-conferencing to discuss on '**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.

5. 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.

6. Universal eligibility" condition

The \$1 billion World Bank loan to curb covid pandemic for India comes with a condition of "**universal eligibility**" in procurements.

What is "universality eligibility" condition?

This would mean that all preferential market access policies, including Public Procurement Order, Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) Policy, certain benefits to start-ups, shall not be applicable on purchases made while implementing the national project.

Other conditions set by the World Bank:

The World Bank would have the right to review the procurement documents, inspect/audit all accounts, records and other files relating to the project. Compliance to these conditions has been made mandatory for the funding.

Background:

World Bank had 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.

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**.



International Events

1. NCAVES India Forum 2021

Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) India Forum-2021 was organised by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.

India was one of the five countries that took part in this project - the other countries being **Brazil, China, South Africa and Mexico**.

The NCAVES Project

The **Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) project** seeks to advance the theory and practice of environmental and ecosystem accounting in **Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa**.

The project has been jointly implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).

- It aims to assist the five participating partner countries, to advance the knowledge agenda on environmental-economic accounting, in particular ecosystem accounting.
- The project will have a **duration until the end of 2021**.

Funding: The project is funded by the **European Union** through its Partnership Instrument (PI).

Objectives:

The objectives of the National Forum would be:

- To present India's achievements in the domain of Natural Capital Accounting (NCA);
- To prioritize the emerging opportunities for NCA in India;
- To familiarize stakeholders with the work undertaken by the different international agencies in the area of NCA; and
- To provide a platform to selected Research Institutions to present their research conducted in the valuation of ecosystem services.

About NCAVES India Forum 2021

In India, the NCAVES project is being implemented by the MoSPI with collaboration of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC).

NCAVES India Forum 2021 is being organised in a virtual format.

Key Focus area:

The Forum aims to build a stronger awareness about the different perspective to Environment and to show a way forward towards realizing the contribution of the natural capital to achieve a "better environment, better tomorrow".

Significance:

The participation in the project has helped MOSPI commence the compilation of the Environment Accounts as per the UN-SEEA System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) framework.

- The MOSPI has also released environmental accounts in its publication "EnviStats India" on an annual basis since 2018.
- Several of these accounts are closely related to the social and economic attributes, making them a useful tool for the Policy.

2. International Women's Day

- Celebrated on March 8 every year.
- On March 9, 1911, International Women's Day was honoured for the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.
- In the United Nations, it was celebrated for the first time in 1975.

- In December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by the Member States in accordance with their historical and national traditions.
- The theme for International Women's Day 2021 is 'Choose To Challenge'

3. World Summit on Information Society Forum 2021

- It represents one of the world's largest annual gatherings of the 'ICT for development' community.
- It is co-organized by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD.
- The Forum has proven to be an efficient mechanism for coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation activities, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices.

4. SCO Online International Exhibition

SCO Online Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage was launched at **the 19th Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Heads of Government (SCO CHG)**, held in New Delhi.

- It is the **first ever of its kind**. It was developed and curated by the National Museum, New Delhi, in active collaboration with SCO member countries.
- **Participants:** Museums from India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

5. "Culture of Peace" session

- Organised by the UN General Assembly.
- The UN has organised such sessions each year since 1997.
- **The Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace** was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 1999.
- This occurred after ten months of negotiations in the context of preparations for **the International Year for the Culture of Peace**.

At the latest session, India asked the United Nations to **expand its criticism of hatred and violence against religions beyond the three Abrahamic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam**.

Military Exercises / Relief Operations / Defence Related Issues

1. EX Desert FLAG VI

- Ex Desert Flag is an annual multi-national large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.
- The Indian Air Force participated for the first time in Exercise Desert Flag-VI along with the air forces of the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.

2. Desert Knight-21

- It is a bilateral Air exercise held between Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force (Armée de l'Air et de l'Espace).

3. Exercise Kavach

- It is a Joint Military exercise involving assets of Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard.
- It was conducted under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), the only Joint Forces Command of the country.
- The tri-services exercise aims to fine tune joint war-fighting capabilities and SOPs towards enhancing operational synergy.

4. IND-INDO CORPAT

- 35th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) held recently.
- Conducted between the navies of India and Indonesia.
- The aim is to ensure the safety and security of shipping and international trade in the region.

5. Shaheen-IX

It is a bilateral exercise held between **the Pakistan Air Force and the People's Liberation Army Air Force since 2011.**

6. SLINEX 20

- It is a series of naval exercises between the Indian Navy and the Sri Lanka Navy.
- The latest edition was held off Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.
- The first SLINEX took place in 2005.

7. Malabar naval exercise

Australia joined the Malabar 2020 naval exercise, consisting of **India, Japan and the U.S.**

The exercise involves complex maritime operations in surface, sub-surface and air domains.

8. INDRA NAVY

The 11th edition of exercise INDRA NAVY was held.

- It is a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between **Indian Navy and Russian Navy.**
- Initiated in 2003, Ex INDRA NAVY epitomises the long-term strategic relationship between the two Navies.

9. JIMEX 20

- It is a bilateral Maritime Exercise Between Japan and India.
- The 4th edition of the exercise was held in the North Arabian Sea.
- JIMEX is conducted biennially between the Indian Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF).

- JIMEX series of exercises commenced in January 2012 with a special focus on maritime security cooperation.

10.2+2 talks

- It is a format of dialogue where the **defense and foreign ministers meet** with their counterparts from another country. 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.
- India holds such talks with **Australia, Japan and the US at the ministerial level.**

INSIGHTSIAS

Miscellaneous

1. Line of Credit (LOC)

India and the Maldives have signed a defence Line of Credit agreement worth \$50 million.

The Line of Credit is not a grant but a **'soft loan'** provided on concessional interest rates to developing countries, which has to be repaid by the borrowing government.

- The borrower can access funds from the line of credit at any time as long as they do not exceed the maximum amount (or credit limit) set in the agreement and meet any other requirements such as making timely minimum payments.

2. Houthi

- The Houthis were formed by Zaidite scholars, a Shia sect who have lived in Yemen for over a thousand years and also ruled the country for several centuries.
- Their rebellion against the Saudi-backed government began about a decade ago.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. UN removes cannabis from 'most dangerous drug' category

The **United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)** voted to remove **cannabis and cannabis resin** from **Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs**, decades after they were first placed on the list.

With this, CND has chosen to affirm a **World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation from 2019 to remove cannabis from its 'most dangerous' category.**

Who are for and against?

- India was part of the voting majority, along with the US and most European nations.
- China, Pakistan and Russia were among those who voted against, and Ukraine abstained.

The cannabis plant:

According to the WHO, **cannabis is a generic term used to denote the several psychoactive preparations of the plant Cannabis sativa.**

- The major psychoactive constituent in cannabis is Delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).
- The Mexican name marijuana is frequently used in referring to cannabis leaves or other crude plant material in many countries.

How is it regulated?

- The Vienna-based **CND**, founded in 1946, is the UN agency mandated to decide on the scope of control of substances by placing them in the schedules of global drug control conventions.
- Cannabis has been on **Schedule IV the most dangerous category of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs for as long as the international treaty has existed.**
- The law around cannabis in India can be found in **the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.**

What this could mean for the cannabis industry?

The reclassification of cannabis by the UN agency, although significant, would not immediately change its status worldwide as long as individual countries continue with existing regulations.

6. India to bring more nations into coastal radar network

India is planning to further expand:

1. The coastal radar chain network meant to enable real-time monitoring of the high seas for threats.
2. Assistance for capacity building to Indian Ocean littoral states.

India's past and future efforts in this regard:

- Mauritius, Seychelles and Sri Lanka have already been integrated into the country's coastal radar chain network.
- Plans to set up coastal radar stations in the Maldives, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Maritime data fusion in India- institutional and structural efforts:

1. Indian Navy's **Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC)** is the nodal agency for **maritime data fusion**. Located in Gurugram, it was set up after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.
2. As part of information exchange regarding traffic on the high seas, **the Navy has been authorised by the government to conclude white shipping agreements with 36 countries and three multilateral constructs**. So far agreements have been concluded with 22 countries and one multilateral construct.
3. At the Navy's **Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** which is meant to promote Maritime Domain Awareness, three more **International Liaison Officers (ILO)** are expected to join soon. The ILOs from France, Japan and the U.S. have joined the centre.
4. Under Phase-I of **the coastal radar chain network**, 46 coastal radar stations have been set up across the country's coastline. Under Phase-II of the project, which is currently under way, 38 static radar stations and four mobile radar stations are being set up by the Coast Guard and is in advanced stage of completion.

**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.

7. WHO Pre-qualification

A single-dose injectable Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine of Biological E has been pre-qualified by the World Health Organisation, making the vaccine maker one of two pre-qualified suppliers of TCV to UN agencies.

The Prequalification project, set up in 2001, is a service provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) to facilitate access to medicines that meet unified standards of quality, safety and efficacy for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

- The prequalification process consists of a transparent, scientifically sound assessment, which includes dossier review, consistency testing or performance evaluation and site visits to manufacturers

8. 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.

- In cases under investigation, abundant precautions have to be exercised by the law enforcement agency to ensure that it is in possession of prima facie evidence to sustain the allegation before the Courts of Law in the Foreign State.

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?

The Consular, Passport & Visa (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.

An alleged offender may not be extradited to the requesting state in the following cases:

1. **No treaty** – In absence of a treaty, States are not obligated to extradite aliens/nationals.
2. **No treaty crime** – Extradition is generally limited to crimes identified in the treaty which may vary in relation to one State from another, as provided by the treaty.
3. **Military and Political Offences** – Extradition may be denied for purely military and political offences. Terrorist offences and violent crimes are excluded from the definition of political offences for the purposes of extradition treaties.
4. **Want of Dual Criminality** – Dual criminality exists when conduct constituting the offence amounts to a criminal offence in both India and the foreign country.
5. **Procedural considerations** – Extradition may be denied when due procedure as required by the Extradition Act of 1962 is not followed.

9. India launches flash flood guidance services for South Asia

India has launched **first of its kind Flash Flood Guidance services for India and other South Asian countries -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.**

- Under this, IMD will issue impact-based forecasting at the watershed and also city level, of floods which are very sudden and of short duration.

About the Flash Flood Guidance:

It is a robust system **designed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD)** to provide the necessary products in real-time to support the development of warnings for flash floods about **6-12 hours in advance at the watershed level with a resolution of 4kmx4km for the Flash Flood prone South Asian countries** -- India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Why IMD?

Recognizing that flash floods have a particularly disastrous impact on lives and properties of the affected populations, **the Fifteenth WMO Congress** had approved the implementation of a **Flash Flood Guidance System (FFGS) project** with global coverage.

This was **developed by the WMO Commission for Hydrology jointly with some others.**

- Further, WMO has **entrusted India with the responsibility of Regional Centre of South Asia Flash Flood Guidance System** for coordination, development, and its implementation.

What are Flash floods?

They are highly localized events of short duration with a very high peak and usually have less than six hours between the occurrence of the rainfall and peak flood.

10. Declared foreigner

The Gauhati High Court had said that people declared as foreigners **cannot be kept in jails that serve as detention centres, depriving them of basic human rights and human dignity.**

Who is a declared foreigner?

A declared foreigner, or DF, is a person marked by Foreigners' Tribunal (FT) for allegedly failing to prove their citizenship after the State police's Border wing marks him or her as an illegal immigrant.

What is a Foreigners tribunal?

In 1964, the govt brought in **the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order.**

Composition: Advocates not below the age of 35 years of age with at least 7 years of practice (or) Retired Judicial Officers from the Assam Judicial Service (or) Retired IAS of ACS Officers (not below the rank of Secretary/Addl. Secretary) having experience in quasi-judicial works.

Who can setup these tribunals?

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has amended the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964, and has empowered **district magistrates in all States and Union Territories to set up tribunals (quasi-judicial bodies)** to decide whether a person staying illegally in India is a foreigner or not.

- Earlier, the powers to constitute tribunals were vested only with the Centre.

Who can approach?

The amended order (Foreigners (Tribunal) Order, 2019) also empowers **individuals to approach the Tribunals.**

- Earlier, only the State administration could move the Tribunal against a suspect.



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