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CONCISE

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Volume - I

Current Affairs for Prelims 2026
(April 2025- September 2025)



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PREFACE

Concise Prelims Current Affairs 2026

Current Affairs-Sine Qua Non of UPSC Preparation

Proficiency in Current affairs is sine non qua for UPSC preparation. It is the basic foundation of any aspirant 's preparation. Knowledge and skill to relate current news with UPSC syllabus is quintessential part of the preparation.

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Space for Notes:

Chile

Why in News?

India and Chile agreed to start talks on a comprehensive economic partnership, strengthening cooperation in critical minerals, defense, agriculture, digital infrastructure, and Antarctic research.

Description:

1. Geography & Location:

- A long, narrow country along the western coast of South America.
- Shares borders with Argentina (6,691 km), Bolivia (942 km), and Peru (168 km).

2. Diverse Climate:

- Ranges from Atacama Desert (driest place on Earth) to subantarctic climate in the south.
- Central Chile has a Mediterranean climate, while the south has temperate rainforests.

3. Natural Disasters:

- Prone to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, wildfires, and droughts.
- Home to Ojos del Salado (6,893 m), the highest active volcano in the world.

4. Wildfire & Climate Change:

- February 2024 wildfires were the deadliest in 123 years, linked to El Niño and climate change.
- Burnt areas tripled between 1981–2010 and 2014–2023 due to rising temperatures and drought.

5. Economic & Political Significance:

- World's largest copper producer and rich in lithium.
- Exercises sovereignty over Easter Island and multiple Pacific islands.



Heard and McDonald Island

Why in News?

The US President announced reciprocal 10% tariffs for several US trade partners, including Heard and McDonald Island. The President called April 2 "Liberation Day" and declared it "one of the most important days in American history."

Description:

About Islands:

- Heard Island and McDonald Islands are uninhabited subantarctic islands in the Southern Ocean, with no permanent human population.
- They are administered by Australia.
- As the only volcanically active subantarctic islands they 'open a window into the earth', thus providing the opportunity to observe ongoing geomorphic processes and glacial dynamics.
- They are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Space for Notes:



India-Bangladesh relations

Why in News?

India halted the transshipment facility for Bangladeshi cargo citing congestion and Dhaka's earlier actions, including port closures and trade restrictions, which India viewed as unilateral and regressive.

Description:

- Historic Ties & Liberation War:** India played a crucial role in Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971, and was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as an independent nation. The day is celebrated as **Vijay Diwas** in India on 16th December.
- Biggest Trade Partner in South Asia:** Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia, and India is the second-largest trade partner of Bangladesh. In 2021-22, bilateral trade stood at USD 18.2 billion.



3. **Lines of Credit (LoC):** India has extended 3 Lines of Credit worth USD 8 billion to Bangladesh since 2010, for infrastructure development in roads, railways, ports, and more.
4. **Teesta River Dispute:** Water-sharing of 54 transboundary rivers, especially the Teesta River, remains a major unresolved issue. A draft agreement was proposed in 2011, but not finalized.
5. **Connectivity Projects:** Key infrastructure links like the Agartala–Akhaura rail link and revival of pre-1965 railway routes have improved connectivity. The Maitree and Bandhan Express trains enhance people-to-people contact.

Space for Notes:

World Food Programme (WFP)

Why in News?

The World Food Programme ran out of food stocks in Gaza due to blocked crossings, worsening the humanitarian crisis, while Israel denied responsibility for the aid shortage amid ongoing conflict.

Description:

- **Establishment:** The World Food Programme (WFP) was established in 1961 by the United Nations and operates in over 120 countries.
- **Mission and Goals:** It focuses on emergency food assistance, sustainable development, and achieving the Zero Hunger Goal by 2030 (as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals).
- **Recognition:** WFP was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for combating hunger and promoting peace in conflict-affected areas.
- **Funding:** It is entirely funded by voluntary contributions from governments, corporations, and individuals.
- **Key Programs:** WFP implements major programs like school meals, cash assistance, nutritional support for vulnerable groups, and supports smallholder farmers.

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

Why in News?

Steven Ciobo stated that IMEC's success depends on India and Europe cooperating while excluding the agriculture sector from negotiations.

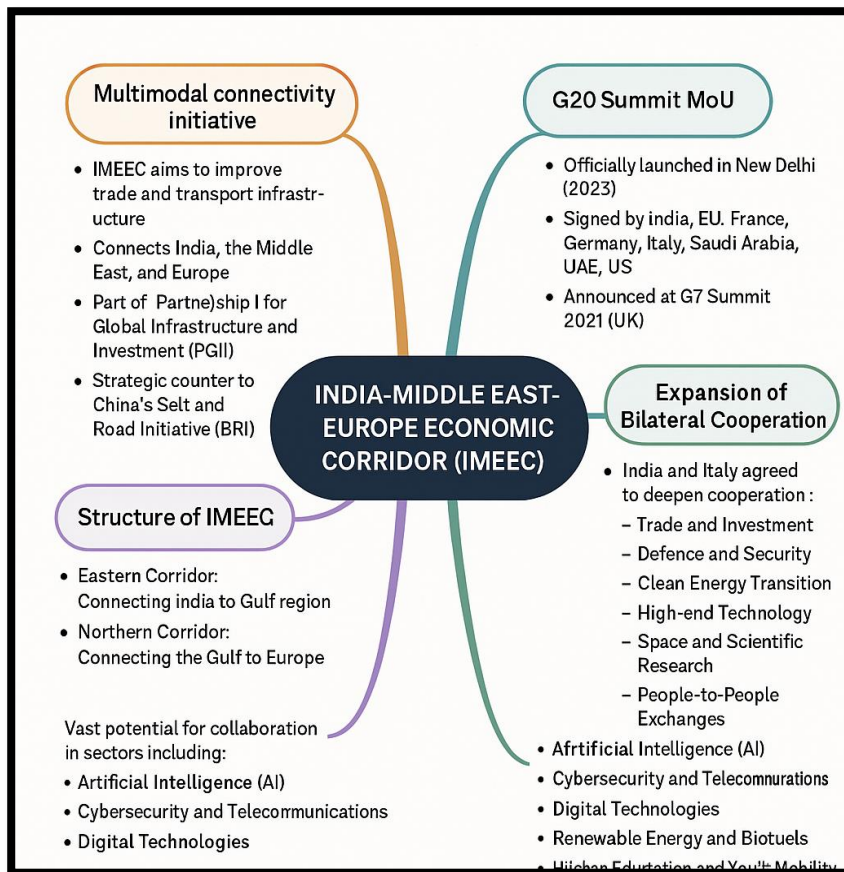
Description:

- IMEEC is a multimodal connectivity initiative to enhance trade and transport infrastructure between India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- Officially launched via a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during the G20 Summit in New Delhi (2023).
- Signatories include India, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the US.
- It is part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), launched at the G7 Summit 2021 (UK).
- Seen as a strategic counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Structure of IMEEC:

- **Eastern Corridor:** Connects India to the Gulf region.
- **Northern Corridor:** Connects the Gulf region to Europe.

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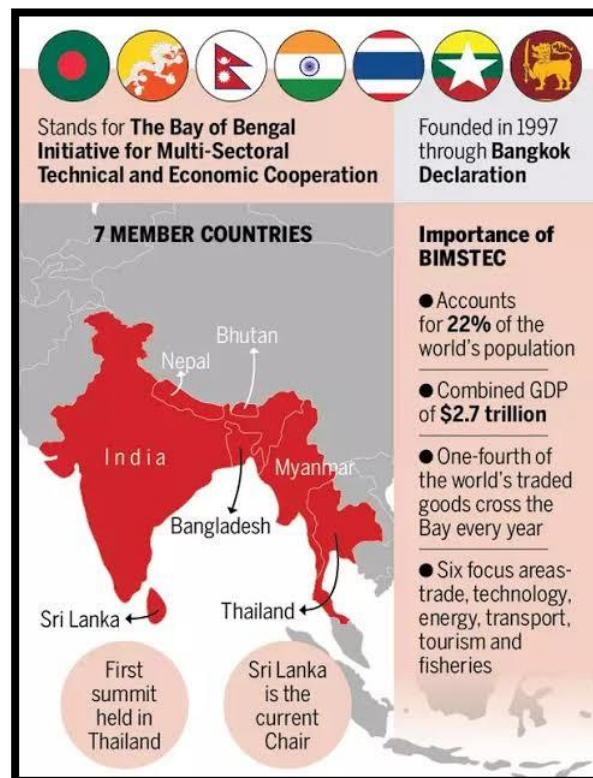
BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)

Why in News?

The 6th BIMSTEC summit in Bangkok on April 4 gains attention amid regional tensions, with speculation over a Modi-Yunus meeting and key maritime agreements.

Description:

- Established in 1997 through the **Bangkok Declaration** to promote regional cooperation among Bay of Bengal countries.
- Has 7 member countries: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Bhutan (originally formed as BISTEC, later expanded).
- BIMSTEC Secretariat** is in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and the organization operates on a sector-driven approach, with 14 priority areas (e.g., trade, transport, energy, counter-terrorism).



- The BIMSTEC Charter was adopted in 2022 and ratified in 2024, giving the organization a legal identity for international cooperation.
- BIMSTEC connects South Asia and Southeast Asia, covering 22% of the world's population with a combined GDP of \$2.7 trillion, enhancing regional economic and strategic ties.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Why in News?

India launched a diplomatic offensive after the Pahalgam terror attack, flagging Pakistan's defence minister's terror link confession and gaining support from UNSC non-permanent members and the UN chief.

Description:

UNSC:

- One of the five principal organs of the United Nations.
- Primary responsibility: Maintaining international peace and security.
- Decisions made by the UNSC are binding on all UN member states.
- Functions include:
 - Determining threats to peace,
 - Recommending peaceful settlement methods,
 - Imposing sanctions,
 - Authorising military action when necessary.

Structure and Membership:

- Total members: 15
 - Each member has one vote.
- **Permanent members (P5) with veto power:**
 - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **Non-permanent members (10):**
 - Elected for two-year terms by the UN General Assembly.
 - Distribution:
 - 5 from Africa/Asia,
 - 1 from Eastern Europe,
 - 2 from Latin America,
 - 2 from Western Europe/others.
- Headquarters: United Nations Headquarters, New York City.



Space for Notes:

Cape Town Convention (CTC)

Why in News?

Rajya Sabha passed the Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, ensuring compliance with the Cape Town Convention for resolving airline-lessor disputes and reducing leasing costs.

Description:

1. **Adoption & Purpose:** The Cape Town Convention (CTC) was adopted in 2001 in Cape Town, South Africa, to facilitate international financing and leasing of high-value mobile assets like aircraft, engines, and helicopters.
2. **International Registry:** It establishes a global electronic registry to record legal interests in mobile equipment, ensuring transparency and protecting creditors' rights in case of borrower default.
3. **Default Remedies:** The convention provides creditors with remedies, such as deregistration and repossession of aircraft, without lengthy legal battles in local jurisdictions.
4. **Cape Town Protocol:** A specific protocol for aircraft financing and leasing was introduced alongside the convention, ensuring uniform regulations for aviation-related transactions.
5. **India's Status:** India signed the CTC in 2008 but has not yet ratified it, meaning its provisions are not legally binding in India's aviation sector. However, the 2025 bill aims to align India's aviation laws with global standards.

India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)

Why in News?

India may become the first to sign a bilateral trade agreement with the U.S., due to its low tariffs and open trade practices, according to U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

Description:

What is a BTA?

- A **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)** is a deal between two countries to promote trade by reducing tariffs, import quotas, and other trade restrictions.
- Unlike FTAs, BTAs do not always eliminate tariffs on 'substantially all trade', which is a requirement under Article XXIV of the GATT for WTO-compliant FTAs.

Key Legal Concerns with India-U.S. BTA:

1. **MFN Violation Risk:**
 - Under **WTO's Most Favored Nation (MFN)** principle, any trade advantage given to one country must be extended to all WTO members.
 - A BTA that gives preferential treatment to the U.S. only could violate MFN.
2. **FTA vs BTA:**
 - If the agreement does not eliminate trade barriers on at least ~90% of trade, it **does not qualify as an FTA**, and thus cannot be exempted from MFN rules.
3. **Possible Workaround – Interim Agreement:**
 - Under **GATT Article XXIV.5**, countries can create an **interim agreement** as a path toward a full FTA, giving them time (usually up to 10 years) to comply with WTO rules.
4. **Enabling Clause Not Applicable:**
 - The **WTO's Enabling Clause** allows special treatment between developing countries. The India-U.S. deal likely wouldn't qualify because it includes a developed country (U.S.).

Why It Matters:

- This BTA could be a turning point in India-U.S. trade relations.
- But it must be **carefully structured to comply with WTO rules**, or else face **legal and political backlash** internationally.

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TYPES OF FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA)S:

Free Trade Agreement (FTA):
Eliminates tariffs on most goods, e.g., India-UAE CEPA



Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA): Trade pact between two countries, e.g., India-Sri Lanka FTA.

Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA): Reduces tariffs on specific goods, e.g., India-Thailand PTA.



Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA): Trade pact between two countries, e.g., India-Sri Lanka FTA.

Regional Trade Agreement (RTA): Agreement between multiple nations in a region, e.g., India-ASEAN FTA.



Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA): Broader than an FTA, includes economic and investment cooperation, e.g., India-Singapore CECA

South Asia Press Freedom Report 2024–25

Why in News?

The South Asia Press Freedom Report 2024–25 flagged India for shrinking press freedom, citing legal harassment, disinformation, journalist attacks, and India's low global rank of 151st in media freedom.

Description:

- Publisher and Coverage:** Published by the Asia Press Freedom group, covering 8 South Asian countries – India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Maldives.
- India's Global Rank:** India ranked **151st globally** in press freedom; Bhutan dropped to **152nd**, its lowest ever.
- Violations and Journalist Safety:** Over **250 media rights violations** recorded; **69 journalists** were jailed/detained and **20 killed** in the line of duty.
- Legal Suppression Tools:** Frequent use of laws like **UAPA, PMLA, Sedition, and Defamation** against critical journalists, along with **Income Tax and ED raids** on dissenting media.
- Disinformation and AI Threats:** Political IT cells, AI-generated content, and manipulated information pose major threats; the **Global Risks Report 2024** flagged fake news as the top short-term global risk.

Boko Haram Resurgence

Why in News?

Boko Haram is back in news due to a surge in attacks in northeast Nigeria, killing civilians and soldiers, as the group's factions expand operations, exploit military weaknesses, and use advanced tactics like drone explosives.

Description:

Background:

- **Boko Haram** is Nigeria's homegrown jihadi group.
- It began an armed insurgency in **2009**.
- Aim: To fight Western education and impose a **radical version of Islamic law**.

Impact So Far:

- Conflict mostly in **northeast Nigeria**.
- **Casualties:** Over **35,000** civilians killed.
- **Displacement:** Over **2 million** people displaced (UN data).
- Recent attack in **Gajibo village, Borno state** killed 9 local militia members.
- **Nyelin Kwari** in Borno's **Hawul** area is now unsafe for returning civilians.

Factions of Boko Haram

1. Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP):

- Backed by Islamic State (IS).
- Notorious for targeting military positions.
- Has overrun the Nigerian military on 15+ occasions, killing soldiers and stealing weapons.

2. Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS):

- Attacks civilians, collaborators, and conducts robberies/kidnappings for ransom.

Expansion & Decentralisation:

- ISWAP's success due to:
 - Tactical **expansion**, decentralised command.
 - **Nighttime raids**, rapid assaults, use of **modified commercial drones** to drop explosives.
- Training from **ex-IS fighters** from **Syria and Iraq** has been reported.

Security Challenges:

- **Outnumbered military:** Troops spread thin across vast territories.
- **Delayed reinforcements** often allow insurgents to loot and retreat.
- Militants pose as defectors to gain logistics and information.

Geopolitical Relevance:

- Nigeria lost control of many border areas since 2014.
- Governor of Borno, **Babagana Zulum**, warns that **confidence in the government is falling** due to repeated attacks.



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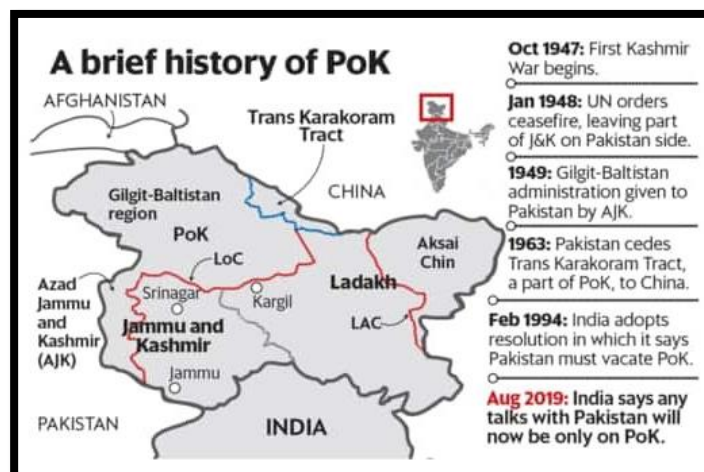
PoK

Why in News?

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said people of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) are part of India and will voluntarily return, stressing India's focus on terrorism and self-reliance in defence.

Description:

- PoK was historically part of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which acceded to India in 1947 after the Partition.
- It consists of two ethnically and linguistically different regions: Mirpur-Muzaffarabad region and Gilgit-Baltistan region.
- However, the region was illegally occupied by Pakistan in 1947 following an invasion by Pashtun tribesmen and the Pakistani Army.



Suez Canal

Why in News?

To revive traffic amid Red Sea security risks, Egypt's Suez Canal Authority announced a 15% transit fee discount for cargo ships, aiming to restore its strategic shipping relevance.

Description:

- Location:**
 - Connects Port Said (Mediterranean Sea) to Suez (Red Sea) in northeastern Egypt.
 - Length: 193 km; separates Africa from the Sinai Peninsula.
- Historical Background:**
 - Constructed by Universal Suez Ship Canal Company; opened in 1869.
 - Nationalized by Egypt in 1956 during the Suez Crisis.
- Global Trade Importance:**
 - Carries 12% of global trade, 7% of world's oil, and 30% of daily container traffic.
 - Saves time and fuel by avoiding circumnavigation of Africa.
- Strategic and Economic Role:**
 - Generates \$8 billion revenues (2022); accounts for ~2% of Egypt's GDP.
 - 23,851 vessels passed through in 2022 (up from 20,649 in 2021).
- Significance for India:**
 - \$200 billion worth of Indian trade with Europe & Americas via this route.
 - Crucial for energy imports (crude, ethane) and naval operations.

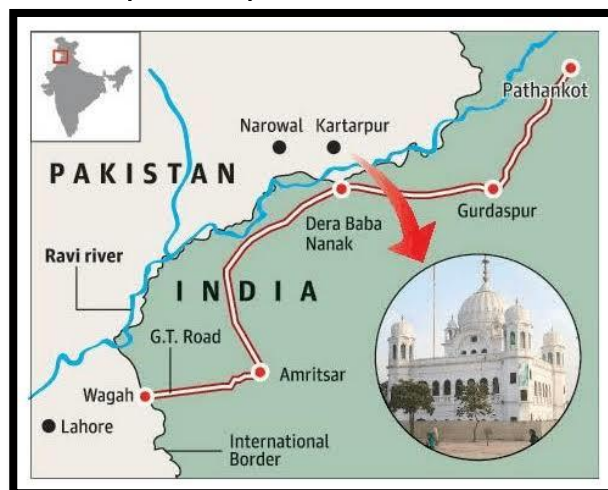
Kartarpur Corridor

Why in News?

India temporarily shut the Kartarpur Corridor and heightened security in Punjab's border districts due to terror threats from Pakistan following Operation Sindoor and recent attacks in Kashmir.

Description:

- Visa-Free Access:** The Kartarpur Corridor allows Indian Sikh pilgrims and OCI cardholders to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan without a visa.
- Location:** It connects Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district, India, to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Narowal district, Pakistan—approximately 4.7 km from the India-Pakistan border.
- Inauguration:** The corridor was inaugurated on November 9, 2019, to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.
- River Association:** The Kartarpur Corridor is situated on the west bank of the Ravi River.
- Daily Pilgrim Limit:** Under the agreement, up to 5,000 pilgrims of any faith are allowed to visit the shrine each day, but they must return on the same day.



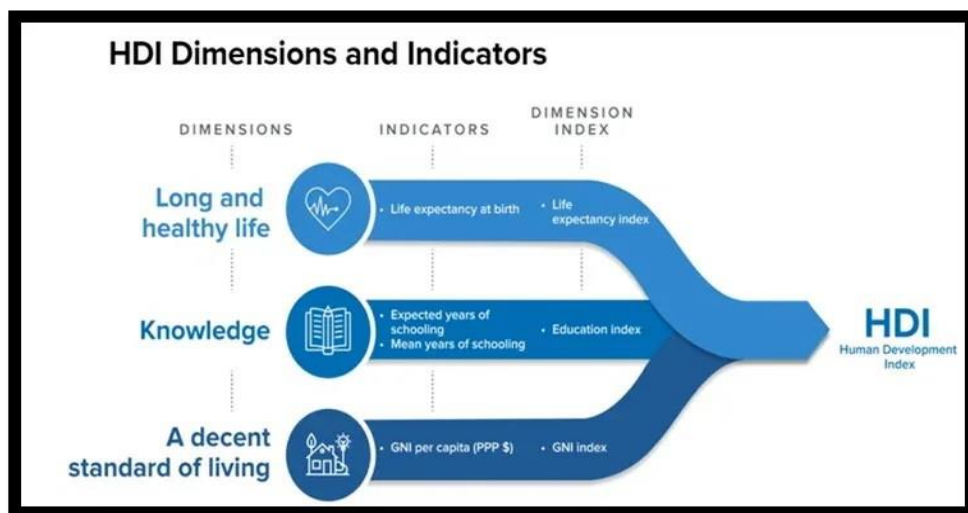
HDI (Human Development Index)

Why in News?

India moved up three spots to rank 130 in the UN Human Development Index 2023, showing progress in life expectancy and GNI, but inequality remains a major concern.

Description:

- **HDI (Human Development Index)** is a statistical composite index published by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) since 1990.
- It measures average achievement of a country in three basic dimensions:
 - **Health** – Life expectancy at birth
 - **Education** – Mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling
 - **Standard of living** – Gross National Income (GNI) per capita
- **Background:**
 - Developed by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq
 - Inspired by Amartya Sen's "capabilities" approach, which emphasizes ends (like well-being and quality of life) over means (like income)
- Other indices presented in Human Development Reports (HDR):
 - **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**
 - **Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)**
 - **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** – since 2010
 - **Gender Development Index (GDI)** – since 2014



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Why in News?

The IAEA confirmed no radiation leak from Pakistan's nuclear facilities after India-Pakistan military tensions, aligning with India's claim of no hits on nuclear sites in Pakistan's Kirana Hills.

Description:

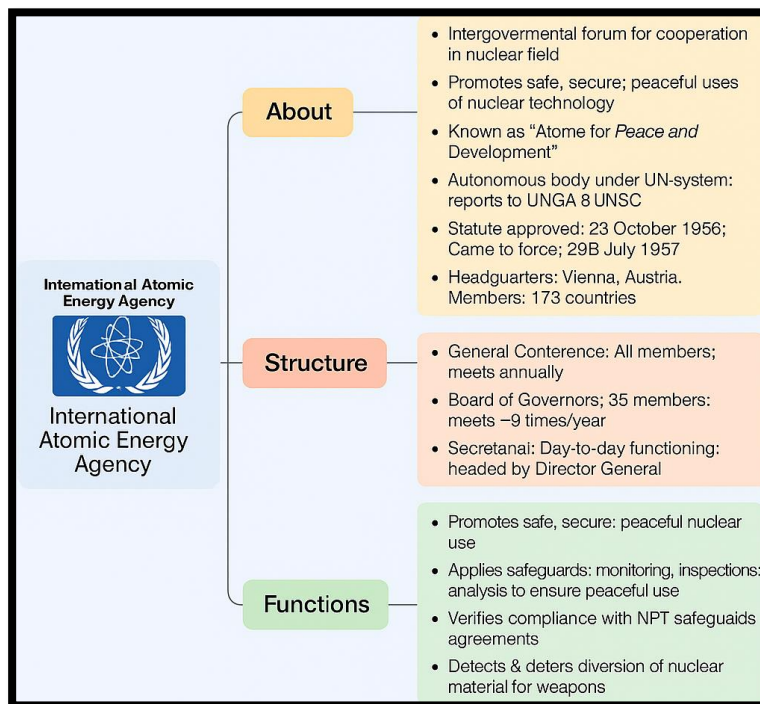
- Intergovernmental forum for scientific & technical cooperation in nuclear field.
- Promotes safe, secure, peaceful uses of nuclear technology.
- Known as "Atoms for Peace and Development".
- Autonomous body under UN system; reports to UNGA & UNSC.
- Statute approved: 23 October 1956; Came into force: 29 July 1957.
- Headquarters: Vienna, Austria.
- Members: 178 countries.

Structure:

1. **General Conference:**
 - All members; **meets annually** to approve budget & programs, discuss policies.
2. **Board of Governors:**
 - **35 members**; meets **~5 times/year**; approves safeguards, appoints DG.
3. **Secretariat:**
 - Day-to-day functioning; headed by **Director General**.

Functions:

- Promotes **safe, secure, peaceful nuclear use**.
- **Applies safeguards:** monitoring, inspections, analysis to ensure peaceful use.
- Verifies compliance with **NPT safeguards agreements**.
- **Detects & deters diversion** of nuclear material for weapons.
- Facilitates **scientific & technical information exchange** among members.
- Strengthens **response to nuclear & radiological incidents** at national, regional, international levels.


Booker Prize
Why in News?

Banu Mushtaq and Deepa Bhashti won the 2025 International Booker Prize for **Heart Lamp**, a Kannada short story collection. It marks the first Kannada win and the first short story collection to receive the prestigious literary award.

Description:

- **Prestige:** It is the world's leading literary award for a single work of fiction.
- **Establishment:** Founded in the UK in 1969.
- **Scope:**
 - Initially limited to Commonwealth writers.
 - Now open globally to any author, regardless of origin.
- **Purpose:** To promote the finest in fiction by awarding the best novel of the year written in English.

Space for Notes:

- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - The novel must be **originally written in English** (not a translation).
 - It must be **published in the UK or Ireland** in the year of the prize.
 - It must be **published by a registered UK or Irish imprint** (self-published novels are **not eligible**).
- **Prize Money:**
 - Winner receives **£50,000**.
 - Each shortlisted author receives **£2,500**.
- **Booker Prize Foundation:**
 - A registered charity established in **2002**.
 - Responsible for awarding the **Man Booker Prize for Fiction** and the **Man Booker International**

U.S. Birthright Citizenship
Why in News?

The U.S. Supreme Court began hearing arguments on President Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship, challenging the 14th Amendment, which grants citizenship to anyone born on U.S. soil.

Description:

- Birthright citizenship means anyone born in the US is considered a citizen at birth.
- It derives from the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution (1868).
- The clause states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States."

Exceptions:

- Children born in the US to foreign diplomatic officers with diplomatic immunity are not subject to US jurisdiction and hence not granted citizenship.

Trump's Executive Order:

- Issued on January 20 (year not specified), it directed federal agencies to refuse recognition of citizenship to children of non-citizens if neither parent is a US citizen or lawful permanent resident.
- The order targeted illegal immigration and "birth tourism."

Previous SC Judgments:

- US citizenship by birth was recognized by the SC in 1898 (case of a Chinese descent man born in San Francisco).
- The SC ruled in 1884 that Native Americans born in sovereign tribal lands are not subject to US jurisdiction.

Current SC Hearing:

- Trump's administration argues that the word "jurisdiction" in the 14th Amendment refers to "complete jurisdiction," excluding children born to non-citizens.
- Challengers argue that the amendment's meaning has been well-settled for over 150 years.

Related Acts:

- Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 codified birthright citizenship with similar language to the 14th Amendment.

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Citizenship

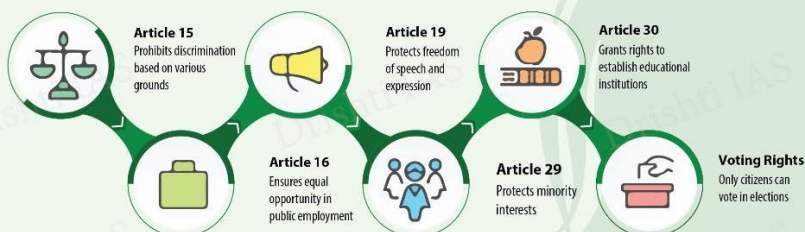
Citizenship is the legal recognition of an individual as a member of a state, granting rights and privileges, and requiring allegiance. In India, it defines who holds these rights and follows citizenship laws.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Citizenship

Articles 5 to 11 of the Indian Constitution deal with citizenship provisions, specifically outlining who became citizens at the commencement of the Constitution (January 26, 1950).



Rights Available Only to Citizens of India



Citizenship Act, 1955

- **Acquisition and Loss:** This Act outlines:
 - Ways to acquire Indian citizenship:
 - Birth
 - Descent
 - Registration
 - Naturalization
 - Incorporation of territory
 - Conditions under which citizenship can be lost:
 - Renunciation
 - Termination
 - Deprivation
- **Amended 6 Times (since 1986):** 1986, 1992, 2003, 2005, 2015, and 2019

Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019:

- ◆ **Eligibility:** Grants citizenship to six communities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians) from **Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh** who entered India on or before **31st December 2014**.
- ◆ **Exemptions from Legal Punishments:** The Act exempts these communities from prosecution under the **Foreigners Act, 1946** and the **Passport Act, 1920** for illegal entry or overstaying in India, thereby providing them with a pathway to **citizenship without facing legal consequences**.

Shangri-La Dialogue

Why in News?

The Shangri-La Dialogue is in the news as Indian and Pakistani defence chiefs address parallel sessions amid post-Operation Sindoor tensions, highlighting regional security, AI warfare, and crisis management.

Description:

- **Asia's premier defence and security summit**, bringing together defence ministers, military chiefs, policymakers, and strategic experts globally.
- **Established in 2002**, it has become the most influential multilateral security platform in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Held annually in June at Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore.**
- **Organized by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, UK.**
- **Co-organized by Singapore's Ministry of Defence.**
- **Agenda focuses on security issues and development trends in the Asia-Pacific region.**
 - Covers **traditional security issues**: territorial disputes, military cooperation.
 - Covers **non-traditional security issues**: terrorism, cybersecurity, climate change.
- **Aims to reflect the full spectrum of security challenges and cooperation needs in the Asia-Pacific region.**
- The dialogue is conducted in **two formats**:
 - **Open general assembly exchanges**:
 - Delegates make speeches and discuss issues of common interest.
 - Promotes **mutual understanding and trust**.
 - **Closed-door breakout sessions**:
 - Allow for **in-depth, specific discussions** on key topics.
 - Aims to **negotiate, cooperate, and seek solutions**.

WHO Pandemic Agreement (2025)
Why in News?

WHO member states adopted the first Pandemic Agreement to improve global preparedness and equitable response to pandemics, after three years of negotiation following COVID-19's global impact.

Description:

- **Adopted at:** 78th World Health Assembly (WHA), Geneva
- **Legally Binding:** Yes, under **Article 19** of the WHO Constitution
- **Timeline:** Final mechanisms to be in place by **May 2026**; needs ratification by **60 countries** to enter into force
- **Historical Significance:** Only the second treaty under Article 19 (after Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, 2003)

Objective:

- Strengthen **pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response**
- Guided by **equity, solidarity, transparency, and scientific evidence**
- **Respects national sovereignty**; WHO cannot impose laws or mandates

Key Provisions:

1. **Prevention & Surveillance:**
 - Develop national pandemic prevention plans
 - Improve early disease detection
 - Focus on immunisation, lab safety, AMR, zoonotic diseases
2. **Sustainable Local Production:**
 - Promote **equitable production & access** to vaccines and health products
 - Rapid scale-up during pandemics
3. **Technology Transfer:**
 - Encourage sharing of tech/knowledge to **developing nations**
 - Support via licensing, financing, and WHO-led regional tech hubs
4. **Pathogen Access & Benefit Sharing (PABS):**
 - Rapid pathogen data sharing system
 - Manufacturers to share **20% of real-time production** with WHO (10% free, 10% affordable)
 - Mechanism to be finalized by **May 2026**

Space for Notes:

5. Supply Chain & Logistics:

- Establish Global Supply Chain and Logistics Network
- Ensures fair and timely distribution of health products in emergencies

Governance & Sovereignty:

- No authority to impose national responses (e.g., lockdowns, mandates)
- Full respect for state sovereignty in implementation

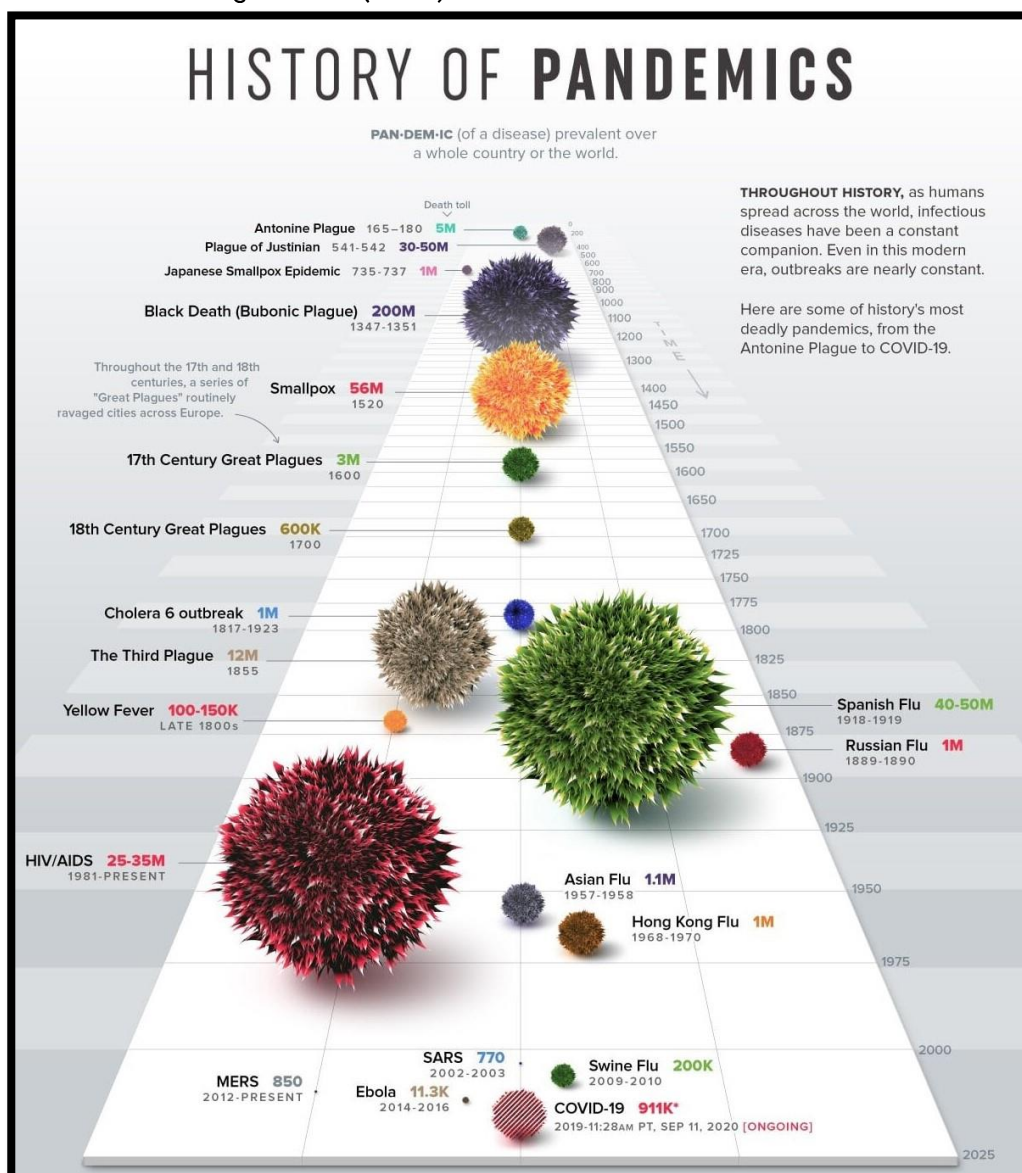
U.S. Non-Participation:

- U.S. not part of the agreement
- Withdrawal process initiated during President Trump's tenure

Notable WHO Milestones:

- Eradication of Smallpox (1980)
- International Health Regulations (IHR)
- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2003)
- Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (2011)
- WHO Pandemic Agreement (2025)

Space for Notes:



Sustainable Development Report 2025

Why in News?

India ranked 99th in the 2025 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index, entering the top 100 for the first time, with a score of 67, reflecting steady improvement.

Description:
About the Report:

- The Sustainable Development Report (SDR) is an annual review of global and national progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by 193 UN Member States in 2015.
- It is published by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).
- Tracks trends, challenges, and rankings for SDG implementation.

India's Performance:

- India ranks 99th out of 193 countries, for the first time entering the top 100.
- India's SDG Index Score: 67 (on a scale of 0–100).

Global Highlights:

- Only 17% of SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030.
- Major obstacles include:
 - Conflicts
 - Structural vulnerabilities
 - Limited fiscal space

Top Performers (SDG Index 2025):

- 1st: Finland
- 2nd: Sweden
- 3rd: Denmark
- Despite high scores, these countries face challenges related to:
 - Climate action (SDG 13)
 - Biodiversity loss (SDG 15)
 - Unsustainable consumption patterns

Regional Trends:

- East and South Asia have made the fastest progress since 2015 due to rapid socioeconomic development.
- Significant improvements globally on:
 - Mobile broadband use (SDG 9)
 - Access to electricity (SDG 7)
 - Internet usage (SDG 9)
 - Under-five mortality rate (SDG 3)
 - Neonatal mortality rate (SDG 3)

Areas of Reversal Since 2015:

- Obesity rate (SDG 2)
- Press freedom (SDG 16)
- Sustainable nitrogen management (SDG 2)
- Red List Index (SDG 15 – species survival)
- Corruption Perceptions Index (SDG 16)

Multilateralism Index:

- Top 3 countries most committed to UN multilateralism:
 - 1st: Barbados
 - 2nd: Jamaica
 - 3rd: Trinidad and Tobago

Other Rankings:

- Among G20 nations, Brazil ranks highest at 25th.
- Among OECD countries, Chile ranks highest at 7th.

Space for Notes:

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QS World University Rankings 2026

Why in News?

IIT Delhi topped the QS World University Rankings 2026 among Indian institutes for the first time in eight years, rising 27 spots to rank 123 globally, surpassing IIT Bombay.

Description:

The QS World University Rankings 2026, released by global education consultancy Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), evaluates the world's top universities based on parameters like academic reputation, research output, and global impact.

- IIT Delhi Ranks Highest in India:** For the first time in 8 years, IIT Delhi topped the list among Indian institutions, ranked 123rd globally, climbing 27 places from last year.
- IIT Bombay Falls Behind:** Previously the top Indian institute, IIT Bombay dropped 11 ranks to 129th position, overtaken by IIT Delhi in 2026 rankings.
- No Indian Institute in Global Top 100:** Despite improvements, no Indian institution has made it into the top 100 globally in QS World Rankings so far.
- MIT Retains Global No. 1 Spot:** The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) continues to hold the #1 global position for the 12th consecutive year.
- India's Research Output Grows, But Citation Lags:** India is now the 4th largest producer of academic papers globally with 1.3 million papers, but only 15% were cited in top journals between 2017–2021, reflecting a gap in global research impact.

SIPRI Report (2020-2024)

Why in News?

SIPRI's 2025 yearbook reports India has 180 nuclear warheads, surpassing Pakistan's 170, while China leads with 600. The report highlights India's expanding arsenal and advancing nuclear delivery systems.

Description:

- India is the 2nd Largest Arms Importer in the world** (8.3% share during 2020-24), after Ukraine, even though India's arms imports declined by about 9.3% compared to 2015-19.
- Main Suppliers to India:** Russia remains India's largest arms supplier but its share dropped from 72% (2010-14) to 36% (2020-24). France has emerged as the second-largest supplier, supplying 28% of its arms imports, including Rafale fighter jets and Scorpene submarines.
- Regional Trends:** Pakistan's arms imports rose sharply by 61% with China providing 81% of Pakistan's arms imports. China itself dropped out of the top 10 arms importers for the first time since 1990-94, due to a stronger domestic defense industry.

4. **Global Arms Exporters:** The US continues to be the largest arms exporter, supplying weapons to Ukraine, NATO countries, and Asia-Pacific nations. Russia's arms exports declined steeply by 64% due to sanctions and production issues but India remains a top buyer of Russian arms.
5. **India's Defence Self-Reliance Initiatives:** India allocated over Rs 6.21 lakh crore for defense in Budget 2024-25 with 75% of capital procurement reserved for domestic manufacturers. Initiatives include the SRIJAN portal, Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 prioritizing domestic products, Defence Industrial Corridors in UP and Tamil Nadu, and increased private sector participation.

Space for Notes:

WEF Global Gender Gap Index 2025

Why in News?

India marks a relative drop in gender parity: India ranked 131 out of 148 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2025, with a 64.1% parity score, reflecting persistent challenges despite gains in health and educational indicators.

Description:

1. Iceland retains the world's most gender-equal economy for the 16th consecutive year, closing 92.6% of the gender gap.
2. Global gender gap narrowed slightly from 68.4% in 2024 to 68.8% in 2025 across 148 economies.
3. Top improvements in 2025 came from:
 - Political Empowerment: ↑ by 0.7% (from 22.5% to 23.2%)
 - Economic Participation & Opportunity: ↑ by 0.4% (from 60.3% to 60.7%)
4. High-income economies have closed 74.3% of the gender gap.
5. Among lower-income groups, top performers outpaced over half of high-income countries in gender parity progress.

Top 10 Countries – Global Gender Gap Index 2025:

Rank	Country	Score (0–1)
1	Iceland	0.926
2	Finland	0.879
3	Norway	0.863
4	United Kingdom	0.838
5	New Zealand	0.827
6	Sweden	0.817
7	Republic of Moldova	0.813
8	Namibia	0.811
9	Germany	0.803
10	Ireland	0.801

Note:

8 out of 10 are European countries; Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden have stayed in the top 10 since 2006.

Bottom 10 Countries – Global Gender Gap Index 2025:

Rank	Country	Score (0–1)
148	Pakistan	0.567
147	Sudan	0.570
146	Chad	0.571
145	Iran	0.583
144	Guinea	0.595
143	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.601
142	Niger	0.613
141	Algeria	0.614
140	Mali	0.617
139	Egypt	0.625

Other Key Insights:

- Countries showing **effective gender parity efforts** in respective income groups:
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Mexico
 - Ecuador
 - Bangladesh
 - Ethiopia
- India's specific rank is **not mentioned** in the data provided, but it is **not in the top or bottom 10**.

Global Economic Prospects (GEP) Report 2025 released by the World Bank
Why in News?

The World Bank retained India's FY26 GDP growth forecast at 6.3%, highlighting it as the fastest-growing major economy, despite global uncertainties and reduced projections for 70% of world economies.

Description:

1. **Global Growth Projection:** The global economy is projected to grow at **2.7% in 2025 and 2026**, maintaining the same pace as in 2024.
2. **Emerging Markets' Rising Share:** Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDEs) now contribute **around 45% of global GDP**, up from 25% in 2000.
3. **Key Growth Drivers:** India, China, and Brazil—the **three largest EMDEs**—have together accounted for approximately **60% of annual global growth** since the beginning of the century.
4. **Trade Restrictions Surge:** In 2024, the number of new **global trade restrictions** was **five times higher** than the average during 2010–2019, impacting global growth rates.
5. **India's Economic Outlook:** India is projected to be the **fastest-growing large economy** for FY26 and FY27 with a **growth rate of 6.7%**, driven by strong service and manufacturing sectors, robust private investments, and government initiatives like **PM GatiShakti and Startup India**.

G7 countries
Why in News?

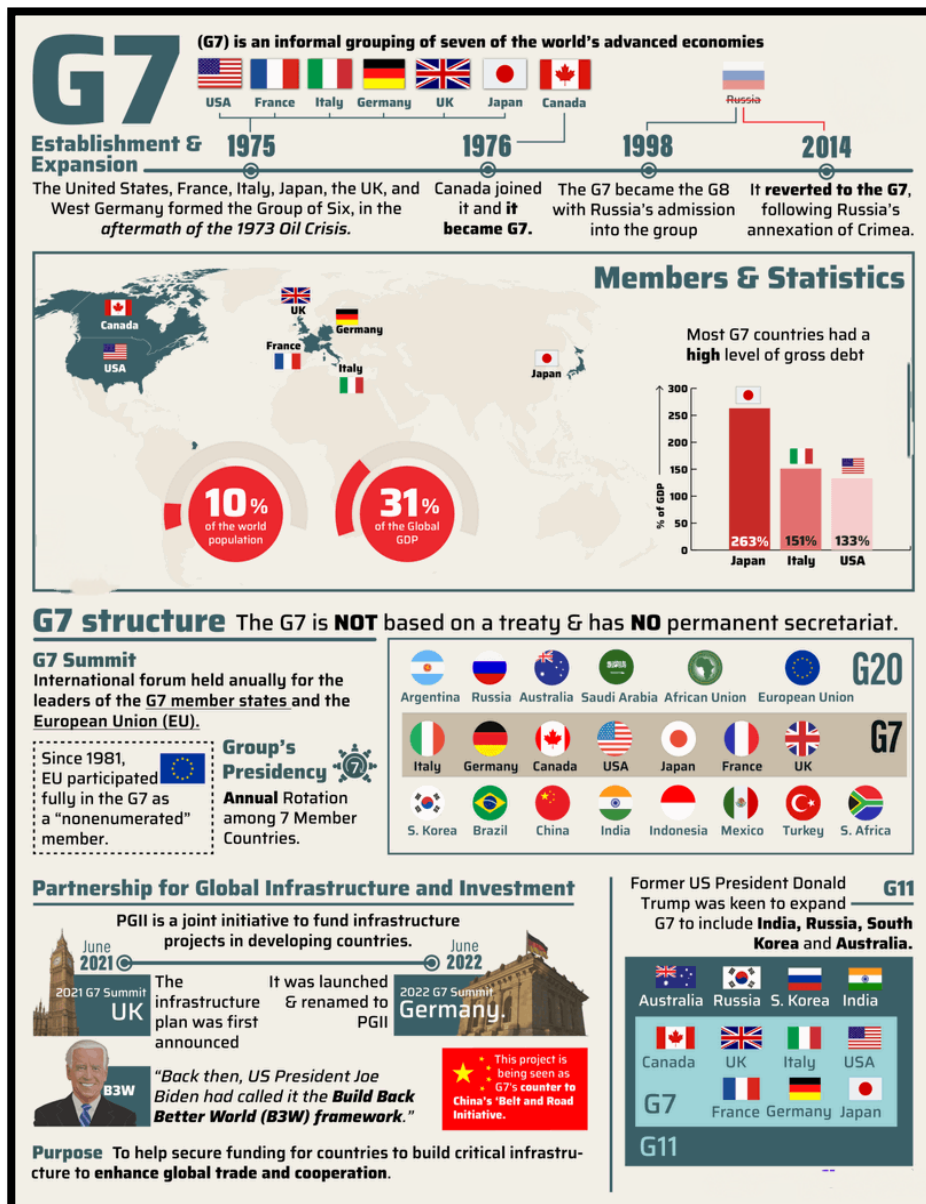
G7 leaders met in Canada amid wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, with President Trump calling Russia's removal from the group a mistake, highlighting divisions on key global issues.

Description:

- **Members:** The G7 consists of **Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States**. The European Union also participates but does not hold the presidency.
- **Formation:** The G7 originated as the **G6 in 1975** to coordinate economic policies during the oil crisis; **Canada joined in 1976**, making it the G7. **Russia** was added in 1997 (G8) but suspended in **2014** after Crimea's annexation.
- **Nature of Grouping:** The G7 is an **informal forum** — it has **no charter, no permanent secretariat**, and no formal membership criteria. The presidency rotates annually among member nations.
- **Economic Influence:** G7 countries represent **less than 30% of global GDP today**, compared to nearly 50% when the group was formed, reflecting the rise of emerging economies.

Space for Notes:

- **Focus Areas of 2024 Summit:** The 2024 G7 Summit in Italy focused on:
 - Defending the rules-based international order
 - Supporting Ukraine (using frozen Russian assets)
 - Managing the Israel-Gaza conflict
 - Engaging with the Global South and Africa
 - Ethical governance of AI
 - Climate action, including phasing out coal by mid-2030s
- **Canada hosted the 2025 G7 Summit** focusing on peace, energy security, digital transition, and building strong international partnerships amid global conflicts and trade tensions.
- The summit included invited leaders like India's PM Modi and Ukraine's President Zelenskyy, aiming to address security, economic stability, and emerging technologies without a joint communique to maintain unity.

Space for Notes:


United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

Why in News?

India abstained from a UN General Assembly resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, marking its fourth abstention in three years. This highlights a shift from India's December 2024 stance, when it supported a ceasefire amid Gaza's worsening humanitarian crisis.

Description:**About UNGA:**

- It is the **main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ** of the United Nations (UN).
- All **193 UN member states** are members of the UNGA, each having **one vote**.

Functions:

- Discusses and makes recommendations on **international peace and security** (except matters under Security Council consideration).
- Approves the **UN budget**.
- Elects **non-permanent members** of the UN Security Council, members of the Economic and Social Council, and other bodies.
- Admits **new members** on the recommendation of the Security Council.
- Appoints the **Secretary-General** (on Security Council's recommendation).

Decisions:

- Resolutions of the UNGA are **non-binding** (they do not have legal force), but carry significant **political and moral weight**.

Sessions:

- Meets in **regular annual sessions** (September to December).
- Can hold **special or emergency sessions** if required.

Voting:

- Important questions (e.g. peace and security, budget) need a **two-thirds majority**.
- Other matters are decided by a **simple majority**.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Why in News?

India strongly opposed ADB's \$800 million funding to Pakistan, citing concerns over misuse, increased military spending, poor tax collection, and inadequate action on terror financing.

Description:

- **Established:** 19 December 1966
- **Headquarters:** Manila, Philippines
- **Purpose:** Promote social and economic development in Asia-Pacific; eradicate extreme poverty
- **Vision:** A prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific

Functions:

- Provides **loans, grants, equity investments, and technical assistance**
- Supports **developing member countries (DMCs)**, private sector, and **public-private partnerships**
- Facilitates **policy dialogue**, advisory services, and **cofinancing** from public/private sources
- Focus areas (aligned with UN SDGs):
 - Education
 - Health
 - Transport
 - Energy
 - Finance
 - Climate change
- Partners with NGOs and private firms to develop **capital markets and business infrastructure**

Membership:

- **Open to:** UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East members, UN members, and agencies
- **Current Members:** 69
 - **Regional (Asia-Pacific):** 49
 - **Non-regional (Europe, North America, etc.):** 20

Space for Notes:

Governance:

- **Board of Governors:** One from each member country
- **Board of Directors:** 12 members
 - 8 from regional members
 - 4 from non-regional members
- **President:** Elected for a 5-year term; traditionally from Japan (largest shareholder)

Voting Power:

- **Weighted voting system** (based on capital subscription)
- **Top shareholders:**
 - Japan & USA: 15.6% each
 - China: 6.4%
 - India: 6.3%
 - Australia: 5.8%

Funding Sources:

- International bond markets
- Member contributions
- Retained earnings & loan repayments

India & ADB:

- India is the largest recipient of ADB assistance (14% of commitments)

Global Financial Institutions Compared			
WORLD BANK	IMF	ADB	AIIB
1944	1944	1966	2015
188 MEMBER COUNTRIES	188 MEMBER COUNTRIES	67 MEMBERS	57 FOUNDING MEMBERS
US LARGEST SHAREHOLDER	US LARGEST SHAREHOLDER	JAPAN LARGEST SHAREHOLDER	CHINA LARGEST SHAREHOLDER
REDUCE POVERTY & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	PROMOTE MONETARY STABILITY GOAL	REDUCE POVERTY GOAL	ADDRESS ASIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE GAP GOAL
12,000 STAFF 130 NATIONS	2,600 STAFF 147 NATIONS	3,000 STAFF 60 NATIONS	IN PLANNING
\$223 BILLION SUBSCRIBED CAPITAL	\$370 BILLION SUBSCRIBED CAPITAL	\$165 BILLION SUBSCRIBED CAPITAL	\$100 BILLION AND RISING SUBSCRIBED CAPITAL
US VETO POWER	US VETO POWER	NO VETO POWER	CHINA TO FORGO VETO
WASHINGTON	WASHINGTON	MANILA	BEIJING

BRICS
Why in News?

India joined BRICS in expressing “grave concern” over military strikes on Iran, calling them violations of international law. BRICS emphasized nuclear safety, environmental protection, and peaceful conflict resolution ahead of the BRICS Summit scheduled in Rio, Brazil, in July 2025.

Description:

- **Members:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
- **Formed:** Term coined in 2001 (Jim O'Neill); first summit in 2009
- **South Africa joined:** 2010
- **Accounts for:** ~40% global population, ~25% global GDP

Major Institutions:

- **New Development Bank (NDB)**
 - HQ: Shanghai
 - Purpose: Finance infrastructure & sustainable development
 - Members beyond BRICS: UAE, Egypt, Bangladesh, Uruguay
 - No veto; BRICS share ≥ 55% of voting power

Space for Notes:

Space for Notes:

- **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**
 - \$100 billion pool for liquidity crises
 - Setup: Fortaleza (2014), operational in 2015
 - Largest contributor: China (\$41B)

Functioning:

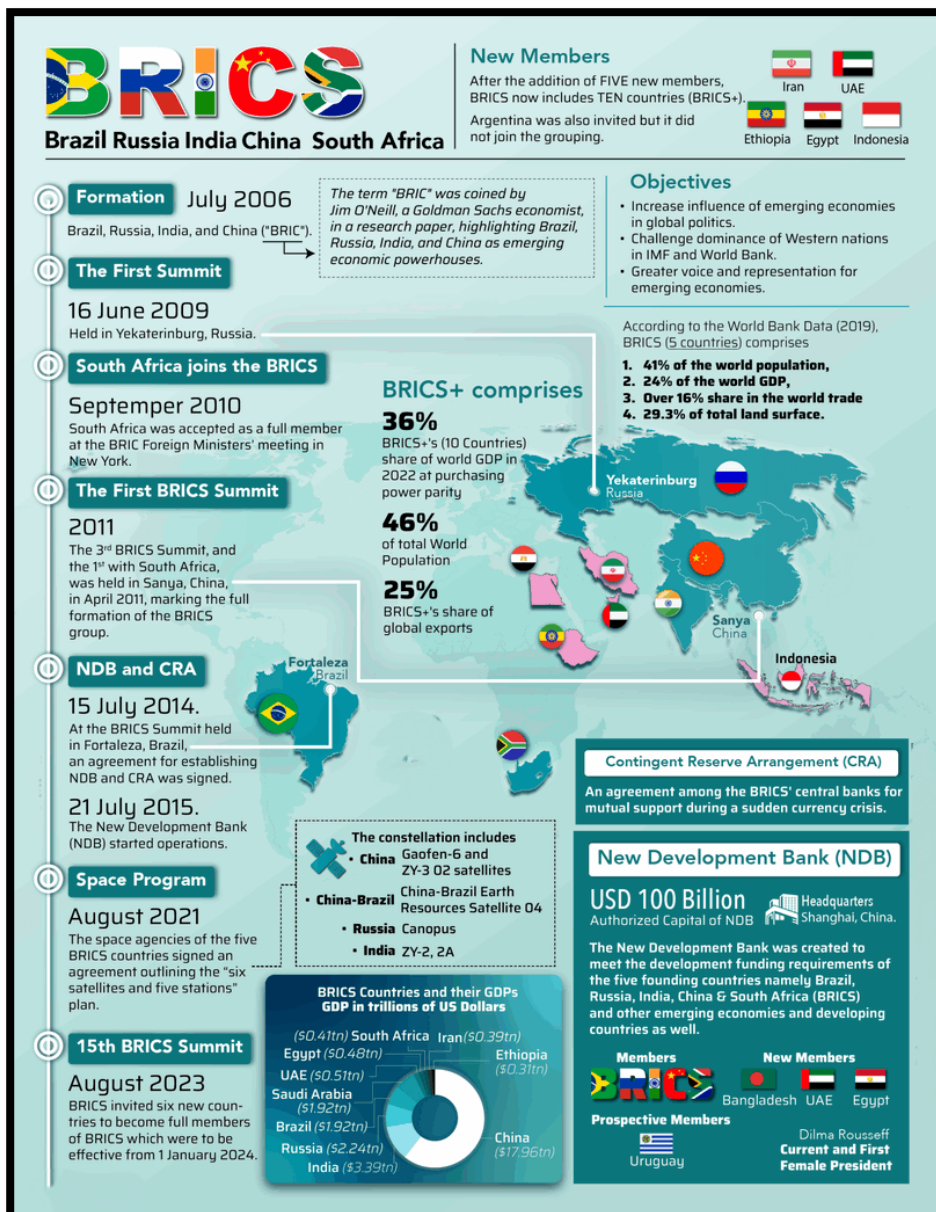
- **Chairmanship:** Rotates annually among members
- **Summit decisions:** Based on consensus
- **Work structure:** Action Plans from annual summits

BRICS Pillars:

1. **Political-Security:** Counterterrorism, UNSC reforms
2. **Economic-Financial:** NDB, CRA, MSMEs, trade
3. **People-to-People:** Youth Summit, Film Festival, Academic Forum

Recent Developments:

- **15th Summit (2023):** Johannesburg, South Africa
 - Theme: "BRICS and Africa..."
 - 6 new members invited (from Jan 2024): Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE
- **16th Summit (2024):** Kazan, Russia
 - Theme: "Strengthening Multilateralism..."
 - New full member: **Indonesia (Jan 2025)**
 - 9 Partner countries inducted



Space for Notes:

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

Why in News?

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) at its inaugural assembly endorsed Bhupender Yadav as president and ratified its headquarters agreement with India for big cat conservation efforts.

Description:

1. Treaty-Based Organization:

- IBCA became a treaty-based intergovernmental organization and international legal entity on 23rd January 2025.
- Its headquarters is located in India.

2. Objective & Coverage:

- Aims to conserve seven big cat species: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.

3. Launch & Implementation:

- Announced by PM Modi in 2023 during 50th Anniversary of Project Tiger.
- Implemented through the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) under MoEFCC.

4. Membership:

- Open to all UN member states (both range & non-range countries).
- Initial members include: India, Nicaragua, Eswatini, Somalia, and Liberia.

5. Funding & Collaboration:

- India committed ₹150 crore (2023–2028).
- IBCA aligns with global treaties like CITES and CMS, and offers financial & technical support for conservation.

Habitat and Gestation Period of Big Cats		
Big Cats	Habitat	Gestation Period (Days)
Tiger	Temperate, tropical and evergreen forests, mangrove and grasslands	95-110
Cheetah	Shrublands, grasslands, savannas and temperate to hot deserts	90-95
Leopard	Forests, subtropical and tropical regions, Savannas, deserts and rocky and mountainous regions	90-105
Lion	Open plains, dry thorn forests and grasslands	100-110
Snow Leopard	Northern and central Asia mountains.	90-105

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

The International Big Cat Alliance is a multi-country, multi-agency coalition aimed at conserving big cat species and their habitats.

Launched by
India (2023)

Headquarters
India

Member states
96 countries

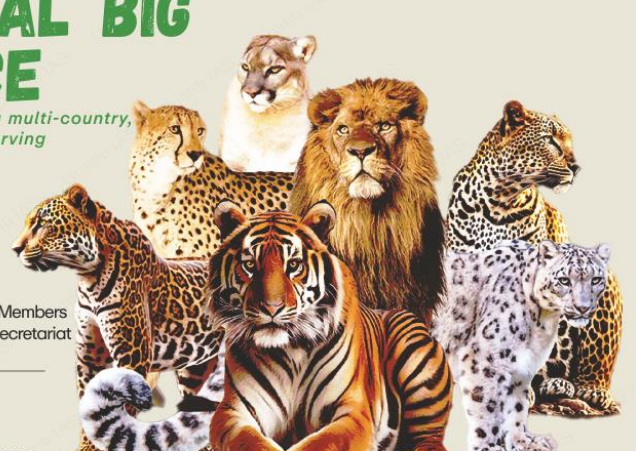
Structure
Consists of Assembly of Members
Standing Committee & Secretariat

FUNCTIONS

- Secure the future of big cats (Tigers, Lions, Leopards, Snow Leopards, Pumas, Jaguars, and Cheetahs)
- Mitigate the adverse effects of climate change
- Advocate for policy initiatives
- Attain the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals

THREATS TO BIG CATS

- Poaching
- Habitat loss & fragmentation
- Human-Leopard conflict
- Climate change & Deforestation



Space for Notes:

Conservation Status of Big Cats				
Species	Scientific Name	IUCN Red List	CITES	Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
Tigers	<i>Panthera tigris</i>	Endangered	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Lions	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Leopards	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Snow Leopards	<i>Panthera uncia</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I
Pumas	<i>Puma concolor</i>	Least Concerned	Appendix II (P. c. Costaricensis and cougar: Appendix-I)	NA
Jaguars	<i>Panthera onca</i>	Near Threatened	Appendix-I	NA
Cheetahs	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix-I	Schedule-I

Other Conservation Efforts in India

- Project Tiger (1973)
- Asiatic Lion Reintroduction Project (2004)
- Project Snow Leopard (2009)
- Project Cheetah (2022)

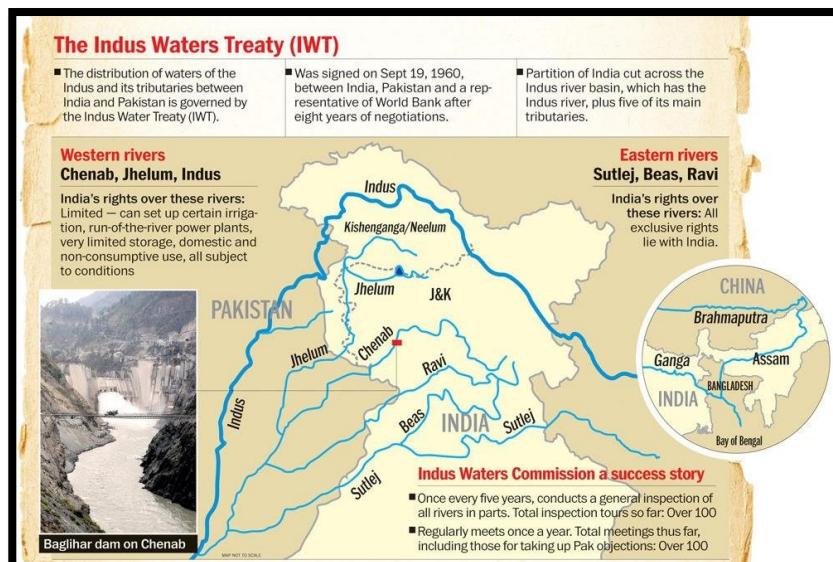
Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

Why in News?

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is expected to attend the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting in the US on July 1. It will be his first meeting with US officials post-Operation Sindoor amid rising tensions in West Asia.

Description:

- Date and Parties Involved:** The Indus Waters Treaty was signed in 1960 between India and Pakistan, with the World Bank as a broker and guarantor.
- River Allocation:** The treaty allocated three eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) to India, and three western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) to Pakistan, with limited usage rights for India on the western rivers for non-consumptive and hydroelectric purposes.
- Permanent Indus Commission (PIC):** A Permanent Indus Commission was established under the treaty, comprising commissioners from both countries, mandated to meet at least once a year.
- Dispute Resolution Mechanism:** Article IX of the treaty provides a three-tier mechanism: (i) bilateral resolution via the PIC, (ii) reference to a Neutral Expert (appointed by the World Bank), and (iii) arbitration by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) if needed.
- Treaty Resilience:** Despite multiple wars and hostilities, the IWT has remained in force for over six decades and is often cited as one of the most successful international water-sharing agreements globally.



United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3)

Why in News?

India is unlikely to ratify the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement) at the UN Ocean Conference 2025 in Nice, France, due to pending legal amendments. Though signed in 2024, formal ratification awaits changes to national laws.

Description:

1. **Host & Venue (2025):** The Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) is being co-hosted by France and Costa Rica from June 9–13, 2025, in Nice, France.
2. **Key Objective:** UNOC3 aims to adopt the "Nice Ocean Agreements", a binding international pact aligned with SDG 14 (Life Below Water) to protect the oceans.
3. **Priority Areas:** The conference focuses on:
 - Completing multilateral ocean-related processes
 - Mobilizing finance for SDG 14 and the blue economy
 - Strengthening marine science for informed policymaking
4. **BBNJ Agreement Significance:** A major agenda is pushing for ratification of the BBNJ Agreement (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) to regulate high seas, which cover 60% of ocean areas and lack effective governance.
5. **India's Interest:** Oceans support India's economy via trade, fisheries, tourism, and hold potential for offshore renewable energy. India is actively engaging in awareness events like the "We Are the Ocean" Festival and "Blue Talks".

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Why in News?

At the SCO Defence Ministers' meet in Qingdao, Rajnath Singh refused to sign the joint communique after Pakistan blocked mention of the Pahalgam terror attack, underscoring India's stance against double standards on cross-border terrorism.

Description:

1. **Formation & Founding Members:**
 - Founded in 2001 in Shanghai by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
 - It evolved from the Shanghai Five (1996).
2. **Membership:**
 - Currently has 9 full members: China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran (joined in 2023).
3. **Headquarters and Languages:**
 - Headquarters: Beijing, China
 - Working languages: Russian and Chinese
4. **Key Organs:**
 - Council of Heads of State – Highest decision-making body
 - RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure) – Based in Tashkent, fights terrorism, separatism, and extremism
 - Secretariat – Executive body based in Beijing
5. **Strategic Significance:**
 - Covers 40% of the world population, 20% of global GDP, and 22% of the world's land area
 - Provides a platform for regional security, economic cooperation, and connectivity, and serves as a bulwark against terrorism and drug trafficking

Space for Notes:

U.N. World Food Programme (WFP)

Why in News?

The UN World Food Programme accused Israeli forces of firing on Palestinians seeking food aid in northern Gaza, killing at least 80 people. The incident highlights worsening humanitarian conditions as Gaza's death toll surpasses 59,000 amid ongoing conflict.

Description:

- **Introduction:**
 - WFP is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations.
 - It focuses on **eradicating hunger** and promoting **global food security**.
- **Establishment:** Founded in 1961.
- **Mandate:**
 - Guided by **Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger)**:
 - End hunger.
 - Achieve food security.
 - Improve nutrition.
 - Promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.
- **Operations:**
 - Operates in **120+ countries and territories**.
 - Provides:
 - **Emergency food aid** during crises (conflict, disaster, etc.).
 - **Nutrition support** for vulnerable populations.
 - **Resilience-building programs** in communities.
- **Funding:**
 - Entirely funded by **voluntary contributions**:
 - National governments.
 - Corporates.
 - Individuals/private donors.
- **Awards:** Awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020** for efforts to combat hunger and promote peace in conflict-affected areas.
- **India Operations:**
 - Present in **India since 1963**.
 - Works with the government to enhance **nutrition, food systems, and disaster preparedness**.
- **Reports:**
 - Publishes the **Global Report on Food Crises**:
 - Describes the **scale and severity** of acute food insecurity globally.
- **Headquarters:** Located in **Rome, Italy**.
- **Affiliation:**
- WFP is a **UN agency**, but **not a member of UNDP** (Note: The original statement is incorrect; WFP and UNDP are separate UN agencies).

International Court of Justice (ICJ)

Why in News?

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that countries are legally obligated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under international law. Failure to act constitutes a wrongful act, making them potentially liable for compensation to vulnerable nations like small island states.

Description:

- **Established:** June 1945 (by UN Charter)
- **Operational Since:** April 1946
- **Location:** Peace Palace, The Hague (Netherlands)
- **Official Languages:** French and English

Space for Notes:

Powers and Functions:

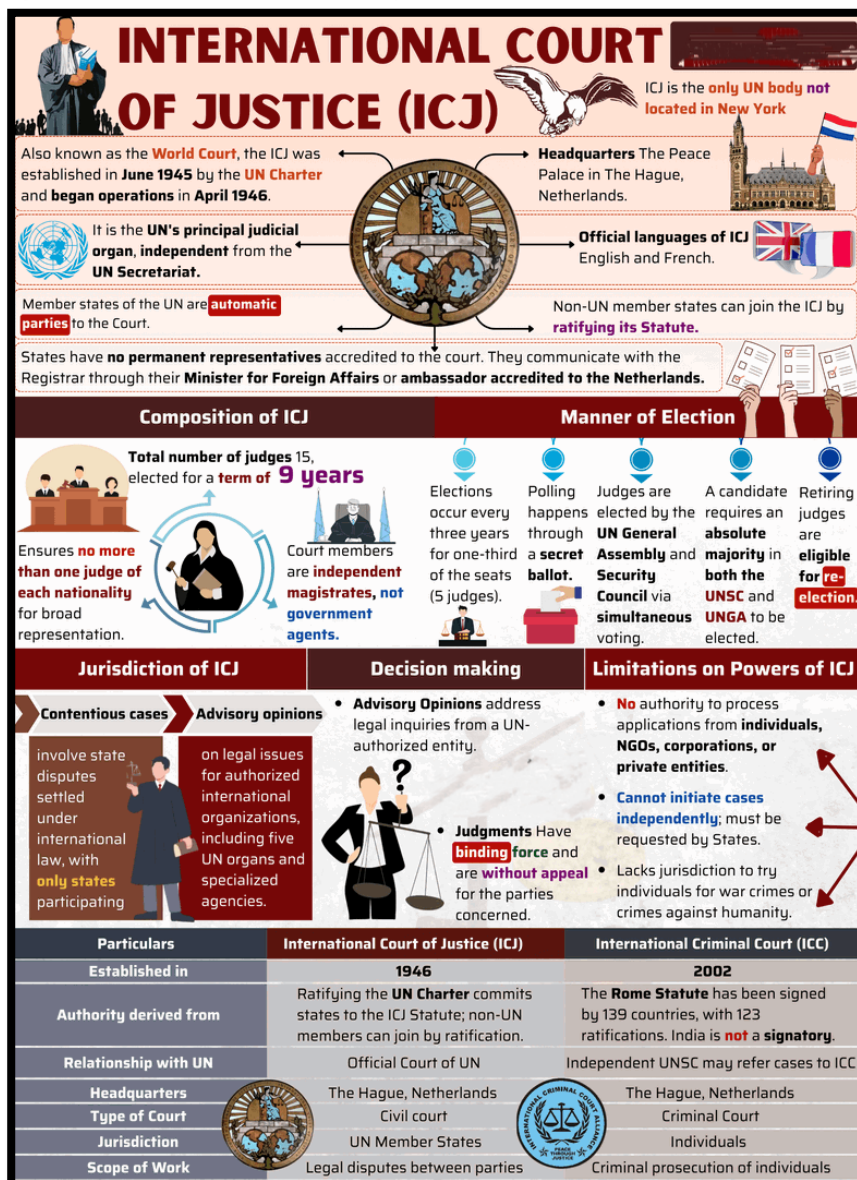
- Contentious Cases:** Resolves disputes between UN member states on:
 - Land/Maritime boundaries
 - Territorial sovereignty
 - Non-use of force & humanitarian law violations
 - Diplomatic relations and non-interference in internal affairs
- Advisory Opinions:** Provides legal clarifications to UN bodies or specialized agencies.
 - Opinions are non-binding, unlike judgments in contentious cases.
- Judgments:**
 - Final and binding in contentious cases, without appeal.
 - Based on international law (conventions, custom, legal principles, judicial decisions, expert writings).

Composition:

- Judges:** 15 members, elected for **9-year terms** by UN General Assembly & Security Council.
- Election Rotation:** One-third of judges are elected every 3 years.
- Independence:** Judges represent international law, not their home countries.
- Ad hoc Judges:** States without a judge of their nationality can appoint a temporary judge for a specific case.

Key Administrative Body:

- Registry:** Permanent secretariat independent of the UN Secretariat.

Space for Notes:


France to Recognise State of Palestine (2025)

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

French President Emmanuel Macron announced that France will formally recognize Palestine as a state during a UN meeting in September, joining over 140 countries, despite opposition from the U.S. and Israel amid ongoing Gaza conflict.

Description:

France's Stand and Objectives:

- End the Gaza conflict.
- Urge demilitarisation of Hamas, release of hostages.
- Push for revival of peace talks and a **viable two-state solution**.
- Signal humanitarian leadership and diplomatic leverage in West Asia.

Global Reactions:

Stakeholder	Position
Palestinian Authority	Welcomed the move as affirmation of self-determination
Hamas	Called it a positive step
Israel	Condemned the decision as encouraging terrorism
USA	Called the move reckless
UK	Supports two-state solution , but hasn't recognised Palestine yet

Significance:

- First recognition by a **G7 Nation** (Group of Seven).
- Over **140 UN member states** already recognise Palestine (Spain, Ireland, Sweden, etc.).
- May influence other countries to follow suit.
- Attempts to **break diplomatic stalemate** over Israel-Palestine issue.

Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza:

- Thousands killed and injured since **Hamas's 2023 attack**.
- **Severe malnutrition and displacement** among children and civilians.
- Gaza infrastructure destroyed; **aid blocked or restricted** by Israel.

Impact on India's Foreign Policy:

India supports a **two-state solution** with:

- Secure borders for Israel
- Sovereign, independent Palestine: India has historically walked a **balanced path**, avoiding early recognition of Palestine's full statehood.



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Why in News?

The UNHCR has suspended the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees from India after recent arrests in Sri Lanka for immigration law violations, raising concerns over their safety and dignity despite assurances of protection during the return process.

Description:

- **UN Refugee Agency** → established 1950 (after WWII displacements).
- **Mandate** → Protect and support refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees.
- **Head** → High Commissioner for Refugees.
- **Parent Body** → United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- **HQ** → Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Presence in India** → since 1981; offices in New Delhi & Chennai.

Legal Framework:

- **1951 Refugee Convention** (Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951):
 - Defines refugees (fear of persecution: race, religion, nationality, social group, political opinion).
 - Principles: **Non-discrimination, Non-penalisation, Non-refoulement.**
 - Refugees not to be punished for illegal entry.
 - Rights: Access to **justice, education, travel documents.**
 - Exclusion: War criminals.
- **1967 Protocol** → Expanded definition beyond Europe.
- India is **NOT** a signatory to both 1951 Convention & 1967 Protocol.

UNHCR Awards:

- **Nansen Refugee Award** → annually for contributions to refugee protection.
- **Nobel Peace Prize** → awarded to UNHCR in **1954 & 1981.**

India & UNHCR:

- India is not a signatory but hosts **large refugee populations.**
- Refugees in India:
 - **Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils** → govt.-protected.
 - Others (Rohingya, Afghans, Myanmar refugees) → handled case by case.
- India generally follows **non-refoulement**, but not legally bound.

Global Plastic Treaty
Why in News?

Global negotiations on the first-ever plastics treaty entered their final week in Geneva. India, aligned with oil-producing nations, opposes mandatory phase-out lists for plastic products, emphasizing focus on pollution reduction and financial support for developing countries.

Description:

- **Initiative under:** United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), 2022.
- **Aim:** Legally binding agreement to eliminate plastic pollution by **2040.**
- **Scope:** Entire lifecycle of plastics – production, use, recycling, disposal.

Key Objectives:

1. **Reduce plastic production** – particularly virgin (primary) polymers.
2. **Encourage recycling & reuse** – promote circular economy.
3. **Regulate hazardous chemicals** in plastics.
4. **Ban harmful practices** – open dumping & burning of plastic waste.

Need for the Treaty:

- **Production Surge:** 234 million tonnes (2000) → 460 million tonnes (2019) → projected 700 million tonnes (2040).
- **Low Recycling:** Only ~10% of plastic waste is recycled.
- **Environmental Damage:** Plastics take 20–500 years to decompose; marine life severely affected.
- **Human Health Risks:** Microplastics in food, water, and air carry toxic chemicals.
- **Economic Impact:** Billions lost annually in tourism, fisheries, and cleanup.
- **Climate Link:** Plastics responsible for 3.6% of global GHG emissions (2020); could rise by 20% by 2050.

India's Domestic Efforts:

- **Ban:** 19 single-use plastic items (since 2022).
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Ensuring producers manage waste.
- **Biodegradable Plastics Certification.**
- **Penalties:** Enforced via updated Plastic Waste Management Rules.
- **Mandatory Jute Packaging Act, 2010:** Reduces synthetic packaging reliance.

Space for Notes:

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Why in News?

NATO began coordinating regular arms deliveries to Ukraine, largely funded by the Netherlands and sourced from the US. The effort aims to streamline battlefield supplies amid Russia's intensified attacks, with \$500 million in equipment expected to arrive this month.

Description:

About NATO:

Feature	Description
Full Form	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Established	1949 (via Washington Treaty)
Headquarters	Brussels, Belgium
Current Members	32 countries (as of 2025)
Latest Member	Finland (joined in 2023)
Nature	Military and political alliance
Primary Objective	Collective Security – safeguarding freedom & security of member states via political & military means

- **Key Principle – Article 5 (Collective Defense):** An attack on one member is considered an attack on all. Invoked only once – after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.
- **Founding Members (12):** BE Belgium, CA Canada, DK Denmark, FR France, IS Iceland, IT Italy, LU Luxembourg, NL Netherlands, NO Norway, PT Portugal, GB UK, US USA
- **Non-NATO EU Countries:** Austria, Ireland, Malta, Cyprus (neutral/non-aligned)
- **India and NATO:** India is NOT a NATO member. However, engages through dialogue platforms on global strategic issues (e.g., Afghanistan, Indo-Pacific).

Geopolitical Significance:

- **Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania):** NATO members bordering Russia & Belarus.
- The region has seen increased NATO deployments post-Ukraine war (2022).
- **Belarus** acts as Russia's strategic partner—making NATO exercises in these zones highly sensitive.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

Why in News?

The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) held its Emerging Leaders Panel Discussion at Southern Naval Command, Kochi (Aug 27–28, 2025), where delegates from 19 countries discussed maritime trade security, AI-enabled systems, interoperability, training cooperation, and India reaffirmed commitment to IOR security.

Description:

- **Conceived by:** Indian Navy in 2008.
- **Nature:** Voluntary initiative, not a treaty-based body.
- **Aim:** Enhance maritime cooperation among navies of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- **Forum Type:** Open and inclusive platform for discussion on regionally relevant maritime issues.

Key Features:

1. **Inaugural Edition:**
 - Held in Feb 2008, New Delhi.
 - India was the first Chair (2008–2010).
2. **Objectives:**
 - Build confidence among littoral navies.
 - Promote information-sharing & maritime security.
 - Work towards cooperative solutions in the IOR.

Space for Notes:

3. **Membership (36 littoral states):** Grouped into 4 sub-regions:
- **South Asian Littorals:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, UK (BIOT).
 - **West Asian Littorals:** Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE.
 - **East African Littorals:** France (Réunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania.
 - **South East Asian & Australian Littorals:** Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste.
4. **Observers (8):** China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Netherlands, Russia, Spain.
- **Latest Observer:** Republic of Korea Navy.
5. **Symbols & Initiatives:**
- **IONS Flag:** First-ever flag designed by India was adopted.
 - India as **Co-Chair of Working Groups on Maritime Security & HADR.**

Distinction from IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association):

- **IONS:** Military/naval cooperation forum (2008).
- **IORA:** Inter-governmental organization for regional cooperation (1997).

Chabahar Port

Why in News?

The US decision to revoke the sanctions waiver on Chabahar port will hinder India's access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, stall its strategic investments in Iran, affect cargo movement through the port, and weaken India's counterbalance to China's Gwadar project.

Description:

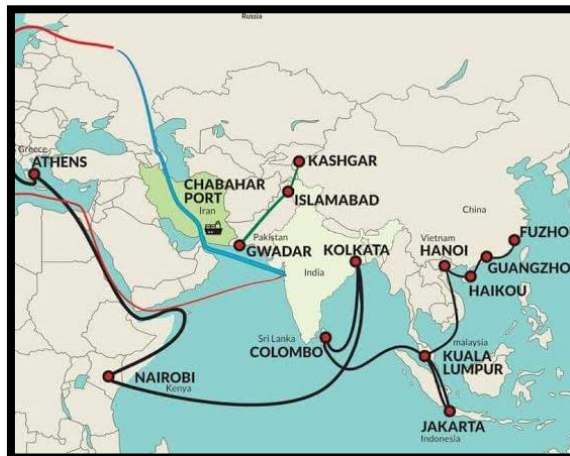
- Deep-water port in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province.
- Situated on the **Gulf of Oman**, at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz.
- Only Iranian port with **direct access to the Indian Ocean**.
- Consists of **two terminals**:
 - Shahid Beheshti
 - Shahid Kalantari
- Proximity:
 - ~550 nautical miles from Kandla (Gujarat).
 - ~786 nautical miles from Mumbai.
- Close to Pakistan's **Gwadar Port** (developed by China).

Strategic Significance for India:

- Provides **sea-land access to Afghanistan & Central Asia**, bypassing Pakistan.
- Complements the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** → links Indian Ocean → Iran → Caspian Sea → Russia → Europe.
- Acts as India's counterweight to China's Gwadar under CPEC.
- Supports India's energy security, trade, and connectivity initiatives.

India-Iran Cooperation:

- **May 2016:** India, Iran & Afghanistan signed a **Trilateral Agreement** (Chabahar Agreement) to develop Shahid Beheshti terminal & a rail link (Chabahar → Zahedan → Delaram).
- **2018:** India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ) took over operations of the Shahid Beheshti terminal.
- India supplied 6 mobile harbour cranes & equipment worth ~USD 25 million.
- **May 2024:** India & Iran signed a **10-year agreement** to operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal (replacing annual renewals).



Space for Notes:

- **Sept 18, 2025:** The US revoked the 2018 sanctions waiver for Chabahar under the Iran Freedom & Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA), effective Sept 29, 2025.
 - May impact India's ability to invest and operate the port.
 - Part of Washington's "maximum pressure" policy on Iran.

Space for Notes:

Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)

Why in News?

Ethiopia inaugurated the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Africa's largest hydroelectric project, generating 5,150 MW. Downstream Egypt protested to the UN, calling it an "existential threat" to its Nile water security and a violation of international law.

Description:

- **Location:** Blue Nile river, Benishangul-Gumuz region, Ethiopia (near Sudan border).
- **Capacity:** 5,150 MW (Africa's largest hydroelectric project).
- **Cost/Funding:** ~\$5 billion; financed mainly through **domestic sources (bonds, contributions)**, not international institutions.
- **Inauguration:** 9th September 2025 (first turbine operational in 2022; now at full capacity).

Significance for Ethiopia:

1. **Economic growth:** Boosts industrialization; millions to gain electricity.
2. **Energy independence:** Surplus power export to **Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan**.
3. **National symbol:** Enhances unity in ethnically diverse and conflict-prone Ethiopia.

Controversy & Tensions:

- **Egypt:**
 - Depends on the Nile for **~97% water supply**.
 - Fears GERD will reduce water flow → "*existential threat*".
- **Sudan:**
 - Concerns: Water flow disruption, regional instability.
 - Benefits: Potential flood control, regulated water supply.
 - Fear: Ethiopia may ignore Sudan's water needs.
- **No Binding Agreement:**
 - The project was announced in 2011 without consultation with Egypt/Sudan.
 - Multiple mediation attempts (AU, US, etc.) failed to produce a legal framework.

Strait of Malacca

Why in News?

During Singapore PM Lawrence Wong's visit, India and Singapore agreed to deepen defence and maritime cooperation. Singapore acknowledged India's interest in patrolling the **strategic Malacca Straits**, alongside new partnerships in **green energy, AI, defence technology, and Indo-Pacific maritime security**.

Description:

Physical Geography:

1. Connects **Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean)** with **South China Sea (Pacific Ocean)**.
2. Lies **between Sumatra (Indonesia)** to the west and **Peninsular Malaysia & southern Thailand** to the east.

Strategic Importance:

1. **Shortest sea route** between **Middle East and East Asia**, reducing time & transportation costs.
2. Carries **~60% of the world's maritime trade**, crucial for global commerce.
3. **Main oil supply route** for **China and Japan**.
4. **Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC)** established in 2001 to:
 - Safeguard India's strategic interests in Southeast Asia.
 - Enable **rapid deployment of military assets** in the islands and the strait.



Space for Notes:

BRICS Grain Exchange

Why in News?

Prime Minister Modi met Russian Deputy PM Dmitry Patrushev at World Food India 2025, discussing a proposed BRICS Grain Exchange to boost agricultural trade, ongoing India-Eurasian FTA talks, and strengthening cooperation in agriculture, fertilizers, and food processing ahead of the annual summit.

Description:

- Announced at the **16th BRICS Summit, Kazan (2025)** as part of the BRICS+ initiatives.
- Designed to strengthen food security, enhance agricultural trade, and reduce dependence on Western-dominated commodity markets.

Key Features:

- **Objective:** Create a platform for **grain trade and pricing** among BRICS and BRICS+ countries.
- **Food Security:** Ensures **predictable supply chains** for essential grains (wheat, rice, maize, etc.).
- **Price Discovery:** Provides a transparent mechanism for pricing, reducing volatility linked to Western markets (e.g., Chicago Board of Trade).
- **Decentralization:** Promotes **alternative to dollar-based grain trade** by encouraging transactions in local currencies.
- **Agricultural Cooperation:** Facilitates sharing of technology, logistics, and storage infrastructure among members.

Significance:

1. **Global Food Security:**
 - BRICS+ includes major food producers (Russia, Brazil, India) and major consumers (China, Egypt, Ethiopia).
 - Helps stabilize global supply in times of crisis (Ukraine war, climate shocks).
2. **De-dollarization:**
 - Grain trade settlement in **domestic currencies** aligns with BRICS' push for de-dollarization.
3. **Alternative to Western Exchanges:**
 - Reduces reliance on **Western-dominated markets** (e.g., CBOT, Euronext).
4. **Support for Global South:**
 - Offers fairer access to grain markets for **developing countries** vulnerable to food inflation.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Why in News?

Qatar met the **ICC President** to explore legal action against Israel following an Israeli strike in Doha that killed five Hamas members and a Qatari official. As an ICC observer state, Qatar cannot directly refer cases to the court.

Description:

The ICC is the **only permanent international criminal tribunal** to prosecute individuals for the gravest crimes.

- **Establishment:** Created by the *Rome Statute* (17 July 1998); came into force on **1 July 2002**.
- **HQ:** The Hague, Netherlands (different from ICJ but same city).
- **Purpose:** To hold individuals accountable for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crime of aggression.
- **Nature:** Court of *last resort* – complements national jurisdictions.

Membership & Funding:

- **States Parties:** 125 (as of 2025).
- **Non-members:** India, China, US, Russia, Israel, etc.
- **Funding:** Contributions from member States + voluntary donations from governments, organisations, individuals, corporations.

Structure of the ICC:

Organ	Key Points
Presidency	3 judges (President + 2 VPs), elected from judges; represents ICC globally
Judicial Divisions	Pre-Trial, Trial, Appeals (18 judges in total, 9-year non-renewable terms)
Office of the Prosecutor (OTP)	Receives referrals/info → investigates → prosecutes
Registry	Administrative & operational support

Jurisdiction:

- Crimes: **Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity, Crime of Aggression.**
- Conditions:
 1. Crime committed on the territory of a State Party or by its national.
 2. National courts unable/unwilling to prosecute.
 3. Only for offences **after 1 July 2002**.
- UNSC can refer cases even if a country is not a member (e.g., Darfur, Libya).

Relation with UN:

- ICC is **not** a UN body but has a **cooperation agreement** (Rome Statute Article 2).
- UNSC can refer or defer investigations (Chapter VII powers).

India & ICC:

- **India is not a member;** concerns:
 - Possible jurisdiction over Indian forces in UN missions / J&K.
 - No immunity for heads of state.
 - Issues with Rome Statute's definition of crimes.

International Seabed Authority (ISA)
Why in News?

India signed an agreement with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to explore polymetallic sulphides in the Carlsberg Ridge, northwest Indian Ocean. This is the world's first licence for that area, enabling India to prospect for deep-sea metals like manganese, cobalt, nickel and copper.

Description:

- **Autonomous intergovernmental body** created under:
 - **1982 UNCLOS** (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)
 - **1994 Agreement** on Part XI (deep seabed).
- Came into force: **16 Nov 1994** (same date as UNCLOS entry into force).
- **HQ:** Kingston, Jamaica.

Space for Notes:

Why ISA Matters:

- Gateway for accessing **strategic minerals** needed for batteries, renewables, electronics.
- Balances resource utilisation with **sustainable ocean governance**.

Mandate:

- Regulate **mining & related activities** in the seabed **beyond national jurisdiction** (called “the Area”).
- Ensure exploitation of minerals (nickel, cobalt, manganese nodules, polymetallic sulphides, etc.) is **for the benefit of humankind as a whole**.
- Protect the **marine environment** from harmful effects of deep-seabed activities.

The Area:

- Seabed, ocean floor & subsoil **beyond EEZ/continental shelf** limits.
- Covers ~ **54%** of the world’s ocean floor.

Membership:

- Open to all **UNCLOS States Parties**.
- Present strength: **169 members** (168 States + EU).

Institutional Structure:

Organ	Role
Assembly	All members; sets policy, elects Council, adopts budget
Council (36)	Executive body; approves exploration/mining contracts
Secretariat	Headed by Secretary-General (4-yr term)

China’s K Visa – Attracting Global STEM Talent
Why in News?

China is introducing the K visa to attract foreign STEM talent amid US H-1B restrictions. Targeting young scientists and researchers, it offers flexibility and independence, aiming to boost innovation, compete globally, and position China as a science and technology superpower.

Description:

- Introduced by **China’s State Council** under revised *Regulations on the Administration of the Entry and Exit of Foreigners*.
- Effective from **1 October 2025**.
- Designed to attract **foreign science and technology talent**, especially youth in STEM fields.
- Seen as a **response/opportunity** arising from US H-1B visa restrictions.

Eligibility:

1. Foreign youth graduates from **renowned domestic or international universities/ research institutions** with **Bachelor’s degree or higher** in STEM.
2. Foreign professionals engaged in **education, research, or innovation** in STEM-related fields.
3. Applicants **do not require sponsorship** from a local Chinese enterprise.

Key Features:

- **Greater flexibility:** entry frequency and validity period extended.
- Expanded scope: includes **education, research, science, technology, culture, entrepreneurship, business collaborations**.
- Seen as an extension of **R visa (high-level talent visa, 2013)**, but specifically targeting **next-generation STEM professionals**.
- Specific details (age range, tech sectors, residency policies) **to be clarified**.

Space for Notes:

Strategic Importance:

- China aims to **compete globally for talent**, particularly in **AI, biotechnology, EVs, and rare-earth sectors**.
- Encourages **international faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and researchers** → accelerates **R&D & innovation**.
- Enhances **China's competitiveness** in high-tech industries.
- Opportunity for China to benefit from **US H-1B restrictions**.

Impact on Global Talent Flow:

- Positions China as a **science & technology hub** in Asia.
- Could **re-shape talent mobility** from India and other countries affected by H-1B curbs.
- Indian policymakers may need to **rethink long-term strategies** to make India a regional research and education hub.

Antifa
Why in News?

US President Donald Trump designated the **antifa movement** as a “domestic terrorist organization” following the murder of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, despite no evidence linking antifa to the incident, sparking debate over its structure, ideology, and legal status.

Description:

- **Full form:** Anti-Fascist
- **Nature:** **Decentralized, loosely organized movement**, not a traditional political party or hierarchical organization.
- **Ideology:** Anti-fascist, anti-white supremacy, pro-First Amendment free speech (in the U.S. context).
- **Origins:**
 - Roots in **early 20th-century European anti-fascist movements**.
 - Gained prominence in the **United States after 2016**, post-Trump election.

Structure & Functioning:

- **Decentralized:** Independent local groups, no clear command structure or central leadership.
- **Affinity groups:** Informal units of 3–8 trusted members during protests.
- **Tactics:**
 - **Direct action:** street protests, counter-protests.
 - Can include **violent conduct** (burning police cars, breaking windows).
- **Online activity:** Tracking right-wing groups, doxxing extremists.
- **Appearance:** Black clothing, covered faces during protests.

Legal & Controversial Incidents:

- **U.S. law enforcement:** No verified terrorist incidents linked to antifa in the U.S.
- **Trump Administration:**
 - Signed an **executive order** designating antifa as a “domestic terrorist organization” after Charlie Kirk’s murder (2025).
 - No evidence linking antifa to Kirk’s assassination.
- **Notable incidents:**
 - **Portland, Oregon (2020):** Michael Reinoehl, a self-identified antifa supporter, killed Aaron Danielson (Patriot Prayer member); Reinoehl was later killed by law enforcement.
 - **San Diego (2021 protests):** Two men convicted of conspiracy to riot; labeled as antifa members.

Space for Notes:

H-1B and L-1 visas

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

Following the US's \$100,000 H-1B visa fee, experts compared it with the L-1 visa, highlighting L-1's advantages for intra-company transfers, automatic spouse work authorization, no lottery or cap, but limited eligibility and strict time restrictions for multinational employees.

Description:

Feature	H-1B Visa	L-1 Visa
Purpose	Allows U.S. companies to hire new foreign professionals for specialty occupations.	Allows multinational companies to transfer employees from foreign offices to the U.S.
Eligibility Employee –	Must have specialized knowledge and at least a bachelor's degree (or equivalent).	Must have worked for the company for ≥1 year in the past 3 years; role can be manager, executive, or specialized knowledge (no degree required).
Eligibility Employer –	Any U.S.-based company can sponsor.	Only multinational companies can sponsor.
Annual Cap	Yes – 65,000 , plus 20,000 for master's or higher ; highly competitive lottery.	No cap – available year-round .
Maximum Duration	6 years (can extend if the green card process is underway).	L-1A: 7 years; L-1B: 5 years; cannot extend beyond max.
Spouse Work Authorization	Limited – H-4 spouse work authorization requires approved I-140 or other eligibility.	Automatic – L-2 spouses can work freely in the U.S.
Labor Certification / LCA	Required – employer must submit LCA and attest to wages, working conditions, etc.	Not required – no LCA needed.
Flexibility	Can work for multiple employers , transfer to another employer, or change jobs.	Must work exclusively for sponsoring multinational employers .
Educational Requirement	Required for specialty occupation; experience can substitute in some cases.	Not required; focus is on company-specific knowledge.
Opening New Office	Not allowed as a primary purpose.	Allowed – L-1A can open a new branch, office, or subsidiary .
Blanket Petition	Not available.	Large companies can use L-1 blanket petitions for easier processing.

International Booker Prize 2025

Why in News?

The Supreme Court dismissed a plea opposing Booker winner Banu Mushtaq inaugurating Mysuru Dasara, citing the Preamble's ideals of secularism, liberty, equality and fraternity. It held the State, being secular, may invite anyone for the event and cannot favour religious exclusivity.

Description:

- **Winner (2025):** *Heart Lamp* by **Banu Mushtaq** (Indian writer, lawyer, activist).
- **Translator:** **Deepa Bhashti** (from Kannada to English).
- First ever Kannada language work to win.
- First collection of short stories to receive the prize.
- Stories (1990–2023) → depict struggles of Muslim women in southern India.

About the International Booker Prize:

- **Awarded annually.**
- Recognises **best long-form fiction or short story collection translated into English** and published in the **UK/Ireland**.
- **Administered by:** Booker Prize Foundation.
- **Prize money:** £50,000 → split equally between author & translator.
- Shortlisted authors & translators: £2,500 each.

History:

- **2005:** Launched as a biennial award → for overall contribution to world literature (no language restriction).
- **2015 rule change:** Became annual; exclusively for works **originally in another language & translated into English**.
- **Eligibility:** Any nationality, provided the work is translated and published in the UK/Ireland.
- Highlights importance of **translators** in global literature.

Booker Prize Vs International Booker Prize:

- **Booker Prize:** Best original novel written in English.
- **International Booker Prize:** Best translated work of fiction.

Fentanyl Crisis in the US
Why in News?

The US Embassy in New Delhi revoked and denied visas to certain Indian business executives over alleged involvement in trafficking fentanyl precursors. Citing immigration law provisions, it warned that such individuals and families may face travel bans, stressing Indo-US cooperation against synthetic narcotics.

Description:
What is Fentanyl?

- **Potent synthetic opioid** used for severe pain management & anesthesia.
- ~100× stronger than morphine, ~50× stronger than heroin.
- Approved for medical use but **highly addictive** and lethal in overdose.
- Trade names: *Duragesic, Sublimaze, Actiq*.

Opioid Epidemic in the US:

- Drug overdose deaths (2021) were **>6× higher** than in 1999.
- ~107,000 overdose deaths in 2021; **>75% involved opioids**.
- Fentanyl & analogues (acetyl fentanyl, carfentanil) have surged since 2013.
- Often mixed with other drugs (heroin, cocaine, counterfeit pills), worsening risk.

International Dimensions:

- **China's role:**
 - Companies in Wuhan, Shanghai supply precursor chemicals for synthetic opioids.
 - Products shipped to Mexico → processed into pills → trafficked to US.
 - Tax rebates & weak regulation enable production.
- **Mexico & Canada** accused of facilitating transit into US.
- Diplomatic friction between US & China hampers cooperation.

Space for Notes:

US Response:

- Sanctions, tariffs, & pressure on China & Mexico to curb supply.
- Domestic steps: tighter prescription norms, law-enforcement action, treatment programs (e.g., naloxone availability).
- Debate on balancing public health & criminal justice.

Key Challenges:

- Synthetic opioids are easy to **alter chemically** → evade bans.
- Local employment in Chinese provinces complicates crackdowns.
- US pharmaceutical over-prescription created a demand base.

Risks & Effects of Fentanyl:

- Rapid respiratory depression → coma, cyanosis, death.
- A very small dose can be fatal; accidental exposure is possible.

Significance for India:

- Examples of **transnational crime** and **public health challenge**.
- Shows how **global supply chains** complicate drug control.
- Links to **GS-3 topics**: internal security, money-laundering, organized crime.

Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees
Why in News?

The Union Home Ministry clarified that undocumented Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India, though exempted from penal provisions, are **not eligible for Long-Term Visas (LTVs)**. Citizenship under the Citizenship Act, 1955, remains unavailable to refugees who arrived after July 1983.

Description:

- **Indian-origin Tamils** were taken to Sri Lanka by the **British (colonial era)** as plantation labourers.
- **Post-Sri Lanka's Independence (1948)** → rise of **Sinhalese nationalism** → Indian-origin Tamils denied citizenship rights → became **stateless**.
- **Ethnic conflict & Civil War (1983–2009)** between LTTE and Sri Lankan govt. forced large-scale Tamil refugee migration to India.

Refugee Situation in India:

- Around **29,500 Indian-origin Tamils** are currently living in India (UNHCR data).
- They have mostly lived in **Tamil Nadu refugee camps** since 1983.
- India lacks a **dedicated refugee law** → refugees treated under **Foreigners Act, 1946** → categorized as **illegal migrants**.
- **Bilateral Pacts:**
 - **Sirimavo-Shastri Pact (1964)** and **Sirimavo-Indira Pact (1974)** aimed to grant Indian citizenship to 6 lakh Indian-origin Tamils → implementation stalled.

Legal & Citizenship Issues:

- **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003**: Tamils arriving after 1983 treated as **illegal migrants**.
- **CAA 2019**: Does **not cover Sri Lankan Tamils** (focus only on Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Christians from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh).
- **Court Rulings:**
 - *P. Ulaganathan vs Gol (2019)* → Exclusion violates **Article 21 (Right to Life & Liberty)**.
 - *Abirami S. vs Gol (2022)* → Urged **humanitarian approach** for citizenship.

Plight of Refugees:

- **Statelessness**: No legal recognition as citizens by any country.
- **Denied rights**: Education, healthcare, property, govt. schemes.
- **Vulnerability**: Prone to exploitation, trafficking, and poverty.
- **Intergenerational impact**: Children inherit statelessness → cycle of deprivation continues.

Space for Notes:

India & Refugee Policy:

- India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or 1967 Protocol.
- Relies on **ad hoc executive decisions**.
- **Security concerns:** Refugee influx via porous borders → demographic & political tensions (esp. in Assam, Tamil Nadu).

Ramon Magsaysay Award
Why in News?

Indian NGO Educate Girls has won the **2025 Ramon Magsaysay Award**, becoming the **first Indian non-profit** to receive it, for its pioneering work in bringing out-of-school girls into classrooms and addressing gender injustice in education across rural India.

Description:

- **Started:** 1957, by Rockefeller Brothers Fund (in memory of Philippines President Ramon Magsaysay).
- **First Awarded:** 1958.
- **Nickname:** "Asia's Nobel Prize".
- **Presented by:** Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF).
- **Award:** Certificate + Medallion (Magsaysay profile).
- **Ceremony:** Aug 31, Manila (Magsaysay's birth anniversary).
- **Purpose:** Honors greatness of spirit & transformative leadership in Asia.

Categories (1958–2008):

1. Government Service
 2. Public Service
 3. Community Leadership
 4. Journalism, Literature & Creative Communication Arts
 5. Peace & International Understanding
 6. Emergent Leadership (≤40 yrs, introduced 2001)
- **Post-2009:** Not category-specific, broader recognitions.

Indian Link:

- Awardees include Vinoba Bhave, Jayaprakash Narayan, Kiran Bedi, Aruna Roy, M.S. Subbulakshmi, Anshu Gupta, Bezwada Wilson etc.
- India → among top recipients.


Tejas Mk-1A Fighter Jet Deal
Why in News?

The Defence Ministry signed a ₹62,370-crore deal with HAL to procure 97 Tejas Mk-1A fighter aircraft for the IAF. Deliveries start in 2027, featuring advanced indigenous systems, boosting Aatmanirbhar Bharat, defence preparedness, and generating significant employment.

Space for Notes:

Description:

- **Tejas:** India's indigenous 4.5-generation Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), developed by Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- **Category:** Supersonic, single-engine, multi-role, light fighter.

Latest Deal:

- **Date:** September 25, 2025.
- **Buyer:** Indian Air Force (IAF).
- **Manufacturer:** HAL.
- **Value:** ₹62,370 crore.
- **Quantity:** 97 Tejas Mk-1A aircraft.
 - 68 single-seat fighters.
 - 29 twin-seat trainers.
- **Delivery:** 2027–28 onwards, to be completed in 6 years.
- **Procurement Category:** Buy (India–IDDM) under Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020.
- Cleared by Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on August 19, 2025.

Significance:

- **Largest-ever deal** for an indigenous fighter jet.
- Coincides with **retirement of last two MiG-21 squadrons** (Sep 26, 2025).
- Will boost IAF's squadron strength.
- **Indigenous content:** Over 64%.
- **Employment impact:** ~11,750 direct & indirect jobs annually.
- **Supply chain:** ~105 Indian companies involved.

Features of Tejas Mk-1A (Compared to earlier variants):

- Equipped with **67 additional indigenous items** compared to 2021 order.
- **UTTAM AESA radar** (indigenously developed).
- **Swayam Raksha Kavach** Electronic Warfare (EW) suite.
- **Indigenous control surface actuators.**
- Powered by **GE F-404 engines** (113 engines finalised separately).

MiG-21 Fighter Jet
Why in News?

The Indian Air Force will retire its legendary MiG-21 fighter jets on 26 September 2025, ending nearly six decades of service. Inducted in 1963 as India's first supersonic fighter, the "warhorse" played key roles from 1965 to Balakot operations.

Description:**General Features:**

- **Type:** Supersonic jet fighter aircraft.
- **Designed by:** Mikoyan-Gurevich Design Bureau (OKB), Soviet Union.
- **First inducted (IAF):** 1963 → India's first supersonic jet fighter.
- **License Production:** 657 built by HAL under Russian license.
- **Global Production:** 2nd most produced jet aircraft in history.
- **NATO reporting name:** *Fishbed*.
- **Nicknames:**
 - *Balalaika* (shape resembles instrument).
 - *Ołówek* ("pencil" in Polish).
 - *Ến Bạc* ("silver swallow" in Vietnamese).

Space for Notes:

Operational History in India:

- Participated in **every major conflict** since 1963:
 - 1965 & 1971 Indo-Pak wars.
 - 1999 Kargil War.
 - **2019 Balakot Airstrikes.**
 - **Operation Sindoor** (recent).
- Known as the “**backbone of IAF**” for decades.

Significance:

- Saw more combat than any other fighter in history.
- Provided India with **air superiority capability** during crucial decades.
- Despite age, still used in limited roles.

Space for Notes:
MiG-21 fighter jets

Context: The Indian Air Force (IAF) has begun **phasing out its MiG-21 fighter jets**, which have been in service since 1963. The IAF plans to replace all MiG-21s by 2025. MiG-21 squadrons will be replaced by advanced aircraft like the LCA Tejas, Sukhoi-30 MKI, and Rafale



Aspect	MiG-21	LCA Tejas	Sukhoi-30 MKI	Rafale
Introduction Year	1963 (India's 1 st Supersonic Aircraft)	2001 (Mk 1)	2004	2020
Role	Multi-role Supersonic Aircraft	Multi-role Supersonic Aircraft	Multi-role Supersonic Aircraft	Multi-role Supersonic Aircraft
Maximum Speed	Approx. 2,175 km/h	Mach 1.6	Mach 2	Mach 1.8
Armament Capabilities	Limited	Advanced weaponry options	Extensive arsenal options	Extensive arsenal options
Variants	Over 800 variants	Mk 1, Mk 1A, Mk 2 (in development)	Mk 2	Rafale F1, F2, F3, F4
Indigenous	No (built under licence by HAL)	Yes	No (built under licence by HAL)	No
Aircraft Manufacturer	Russia	Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)	Sukhoi, Russia (built under licence by HAL in India)	Dassault Aviation, France
In-Service Accidents	Over 400 accidents	Few incidents	Limited incidents	Limited incidents
Squadrons in IAF	2 (being phased out)	2 (more on order)	12 (approx.)	2 (with more on order)

Exercise Yudh Abhyas (2025)
Why in News?

The 21st edition of Exercise Yudh Abhyas (2025) between India and the US has concluded successfully in Alaska, marking a key step in strengthening bilateral military cooperation.

- Despite some recent strains in diplomatic relations, the exercise highlighted the growing trust, interoperability, and operational readiness between the two armed forces.

Key Points Participating Forces:

- The Indian contingent comprises personnel from a battalion of the Madras Regiment, one of the oldest regiments in the Indian Army.
 - The U.S. Army will be represented by soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment “Bobcats” of the Arctic Wolves Brigade Combat Team, part of the 11th Airborne Division.

- **Activities:** The troops will rehearse a range of tactical drills, including heliborne operations, the employment of surveillance resources and unmanned aerial systems, rockcraft, mountain warfare, casualty evacuation, combat medical aid, and the integrated use of Artillery, Aviation, and Electronic Warfare systems.
- **Culmination of Exercise:** The exercise will culminate in jointly planned and executed tactical manoeuvres, ranging from live-fire exercises to high-altitude warfare scenarios.

Objectives:

- A significant aim of Yudh Abhyas 2025 is to improve operational readiness for United Nations peacekeeping operations, focusing on capacity-building for managing peacekeeping missions effectively.
- The exercise will also prepare the forces to handle multi-domain challenges, emphasizing the importance of integrated warfare and joint operational strategies.

All-Women Circumnavigation Expedition by Indian Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force)

Why in News?

An all-women team from the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force has begun a historic circumnavigation aboard the indigenously built yacht **IASV Triveni**, covering 21,600 nautical miles over 8–9 months, showcasing Nari Shakti, tri-service synergy, defence diplomacy and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Description:

- First tri-service **all-women circumnavigation**
- Distance: **21,600 nautical miles**, duration: 8–9 months
- Vessel: *Triveni* – 50-ft **indigenously built yacht**
- Ports: Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, South Africa
- Route: cross Equator twice, round Cape Leeuwin, Cape Horn & Cape of Good Hope, via Drake Passage

Team & Training:

- **10 officers** → 5 Army | 1 Navy | 4 Air Force
- Leader: Lt Col **Anuja Varudkar**
- Others: Sqn Ldr Shraddha Raju, Lt Cdr Priyanka Gusain
- **2.5 yrs training:** navigation, scuba, weather, fatigue mgmt, medical, mechanics
- Practice: Seychelles (10,000 nm)

Significance:

- Boosts **Nari Shakti** & gender inclusion in defence
- Strengthens **Defence Diplomacy** & maritime outreach
- Showcases **Atmanirbhar Bharat** in yacht design
- Demonstrates **Tri-Service synergy** & leadership opportunities for women.

Exercise Yudh Kaushal 3.0 – Indian Army

Why in News?

The Indian Army conducted **Exercise Yudh Kaushal 3.0** in Arunachal Pradesh's Kameng region to validate high-altitude combat readiness. It featured next-generation warfare tactics, drone surveillance, and the operational debut of **ASHNI platoons**, with strong participation from the indigenous defence industry under *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*.

Description:

1. **Objective:**
 - To validate **combat readiness** of the Indian Army in **extreme weather & high-altitude terrain** (Kameng region, Arunachal Pradesh).
2. **Next-Generation Warfare:**
 - Showcased **integration of advanced technology** with conventional combat.
 - Focus on **AI, surveillance, drones, real-time data sharing, and precision targeting**.

Space for Notes:

3. Debut of ASHNI Platoons:

- First operational appearance of ASHNI platoons.
- Designed to integrate **technology + tactics** → decisive edge in **modern, high-tech warfare**.

4. Multi-Domain Operations:

- Combined use of **drone surveillance, target acquisition, precision strikes, cyber & electronic warfare**.
- Demonstrated **synchronized battlefield operations** across multiple domains.

5. Indigenous Defence Industry Involvement:

- Active participation of **Indian defence firms & innovators**.
- Reinforced **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** in defence preparedness.

6. Strategic Location:

- Held in **Eastern Himalayas (Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh)**.
- Region of **high strategic importance** due to proximity with the **India-China border**.

COP30 – Belem, Brazil (2025)

Why in News?

India will submit updated **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** at COP30 on November 10, likely raising energy efficiency targets, reflecting emissions reductions by 2035, and paving the way for the **India Carbon Market** for mandatory sectoral emission trading.

Description:

- **COP** = Conference of the Parties to the **UNFCCC** (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).
- **COP30** = **30th session**, to be held **10–22 Nov 2025**, in **Belém, Brazil (Amazonia)**.
- Nicknamed “**Implementation COP**” → focus on *delivery of existing pledges* rather than fresh treaties.

Themes:

- Review & enhancement of **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** for 2030.
- Strengthening mechanisms for **climate finance, loss & damage, adaptation**.
- Monitoring progress toward **Paris temperature goals** (1.5°C / well below 2°C).
- Highlight Amazon & tropical forests’ role in carbon sinks.

Current Status of Commitments:

- Only **29 of 195 Parties** have submitted updated NDCs (as of Sept 2025).
- **UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2024**: existing pledges → 2.6–2.8°C warming by 2100.
- High-end IPCC scenarios are still dominant.

EU & Other Major Emitters:

- EU debates:
 - **90% emissions cut by 2040** (binding).
 - 2035 milestone to align with Paris goals.
 - Internal split: France & Germany seek more time before voting.
- “**Big Six**” emitters (~74% global emissions): **China, USA, EU (incl. UK), India, Russia, Japan**.

Host & Presidency:

- **Brazil** hosts in the Amazon region; Presidency: diplomat **Andre Lago**.
- Emphasis on indigenous rights, forest conservation, and local participation.

Civil Society & Public Pressure:

- Rallies under banner “**COP30 na Amazônia: A resposta somos nós**” (“We are the answer”).
- Demand stronger ambition & protection for rainforests.

Space for Notes:

Related Agreements:

- **Paris Agreement (2015):** requires updated NDCs every 5 years.
- **Glasgow Pact (COP26):** stressed 1.5°C pathway, coal phase-down.
- **Sharm el-Sheikh/COP27 & Dubai/COP28:** focus on loss & damage fund & energy transition.
- **India's stance:** updated NDC (2022), **Net Zero by 2070**, seeks equity & climate finance.

India–Morocco Defence Industry Cooperation
Why in News?

India and Morocco signed a defence cooperation MoU in Rabat, establishing a framework for defence industry collaboration, joint training, maritime and cyber security, and peacekeeping. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also announced a new Defence Wing at India's Embassy to strengthen strategic partnership.

Description:

- **Zero-bureaucracy offer:** Morocco offered a profitable, investor-friendly, zero-bureaucracy environment for Indian defence companies.
- **Tata Group milestone:** Tata established India's first overseas defence manufacturing facility in Morocco → producing **WhAP 8x8 ground combat vehicle**.
- **Boost to Make in India:** Enhances India's defence self-reliance & exports.
- **Global Market Access:**
 - Morocco has **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with 90 countries** → opens African & European defence markets for India.

Defence Exports – India's Rise:

- FY 2013–14 → ₹686 crore
- FY 2023–24 → ₹21,083 crore
- Morocco partnership expected to increase technology, investment, and production capabilities.

Morocco – Geography:

- **Borders:** Algeria (east), Western Sahara (south), Atlantic Ocean (west), Mediterranean Sea (north).
- **Strategic Location:** Strait of Gibraltar separates Morocco from Spain.

India–Morocco Trade Snapshot

- India's exports to Morocco: USD 83.9 million
- India's imports from Morocco: USD 162 million


New START Treaty
Why in News?

Russian President Vladimir Putin offered a one-year extension of the New START nuclear arms treaty with the U.S., set to expire on February 5, 2026, stressing global non-proliferation, while linking it to Washington's reciprocal adherence and broader security tensions.

Description:

- **Full Name:** New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START).
- **Parties:** USA & Russia.
- **Signed:** 8 April 2010, Prague.
- **Came into force:** 5 February 2011.
- **Extension:** Extended for 5 years in Feb 2021 (till Feb 2026).
- **Replaced:** START I (1991, expired in 2009) and SORT (2002, terminated once New START entered force).

Space for Notes:

Objectives & Provisions:

- Limit deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550 each.
- Limit deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers to 700 each.
- Limit total launchers (deployed + non-deployed) to 800.
- Provides **verification regime** → data exchanges, notifications, inspections.
- Seeks to maintain stability while reducing Cold War-era arsenals.

Timeline:

- 2010 → Signed (Obama & Medvedev).
- 2011 → Entered into force.
- 2018 → Both countries announced they met treaty limits (by Feb 5, 2018).
- 2021 → Extended for 5 years (till Feb 2026).
- **Current status (2025):** Last surviving nuclear arms control treaty between US & Russia.

Importance:

- First **verifiable** U.S.–Russian nuclear arms control treaty since START I (1994).
- Promotes **strategic stability** & predictability.
- Considered a **pillar of global nuclear arms control architecture**.
- Its expiry in 2026 without replacement could mean **no arms control regime** between world's two largest nuclear powers.


Saudi Arabia–Pakistan Defence Pact (2025)
Why in News?

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said Islamabad's nuclear capability would be available to Saudi Arabia under their new defence pact, the first clear acknowledgment of a "nuclear umbrella". The accord, signed this week, vows mutual defence amid regional tensions.

Description:

- Signed in **September 2025** during PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Riyadh.
- Declares: **"Aggression against one will be considered aggression against both."**
- Formalises a **mutual defence commitment** → first such pact between an Arab nation and a nuclear-armed state (Pakistan).

Background & Context:

- **Historic ties:** Since 1960s → Pakistani troop deployments, advisory roles, training of Saudi forces.
- **Institutionalisation:** 1982 Bilateral Security Cooperation Agreement.
- Pakistani forces aided in 1979 *Mecca Grand Mosque crisis*.
- Saudi Arabia → major arms buyer, financier; Pakistan → provider of manpower & training.

Space for Notes:

Space for Notes:

- Recent developments:
 - Israel's strike in Qatar (2025) + waning US security umbrella.
 - Saudi Arabia seeking regional security assurances.

Significance of the Pact:

- For Pakistan:**
 - Secures Saudi investments amid fiscal crisis.
 - Enhances military standing in the Islamic world.
 - Possible indirect access to **US weapons** via Saudi funding.
- For Saudi Arabia:**
 - Strengthens defence against Iran, Houthi militias, regional instability.
 - Signals **strategic autonomy** from the US.
- Geopolitical shift:**
 - First Arab–nuclear power defence pact.
 - Adds a new dimension to West Asian security.

India's Response:

- Cautious & measured.**
- MEA: "Aware of long-standing ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia."
- India will **study implications for national security** & regional stability.
- Reaffirmed commitment to safeguard India's interests.

Saudi Arabia–India Relations (for balance):

- Trade:**
 - Saudi Arabia = India's **5th-largest trading partner**.
 - FY 2023–24 trade = **USD 42.98 bn** (Exports: USD 11.56 bn; Imports: USD 31.42 bn).
- Strategic Milestones:**
 - 2006: Delhi Declaration (King Abdullah's visit).
 - 2010: Riyadh Declaration → Strategic Partnership.
 - 2016: PM Modi received Saudi's highest civilian honour (*King Abdulaziz Sash*).
- Crisis Diplomacy:**
 - Condemned Pulwama (2019) & Pahalgam terror attack (2025).
 - Avoided criticism on **Article 370 abrogation** & **Balakot strikes**.
 - It often plays a mediator role between India & Pakistan.

Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement – High Seas Treaty
Why in News?

India is drafting a new law to safeguard its interests in international waters under the **High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement)**. A 12-member committee will align the legislation with treaty provisions on marine conservation, resource use, impact assessments, and benefit-sharing.

Description:

- Nature:** International legally binding treaty under **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS-1982)**.
- Objective:** Conservation & sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas **beyond national jurisdiction** (High Seas & International Seabed).
- Entry into Force:** 120 days after the **60th ratification**.

Key Features:

- Scope:** Covers ~2/3rd of the global ocean (high seas).
- Core Principles:**
 - Precautionary principle.
 - Ecosystem-based approach.
 - Fair & equitable sharing of benefits.
 - Use of traditional knowledge + best available science.

3. Mechanisms:

- **Area-based management tools (ABMTs)** → Marine protected areas in high seas.
- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)** → For human activities affecting marine ecosystems.
- **Benefit Sharing** → Equitable sharing of marine genetic resources (MGRs).
- **Capacity Building & Marine Technology Transfer** → For developing countries.

4. Relation with UNCLOS:

- Becomes **third implementation agreement** under UNCLOS.
- Earlier ones:
 - 1994 Agreement (deep seabed mining).
 - 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

Significance:

- First-ever treaty to protect **high seas biodiversity**.
- Supports **SDG-14 (Life Below Water)**.
- Balances conservation with sustainable use of marine resources.
- Helps address threats: overfishing, deep-sea mining, climate change impacts.

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