

- **Buyers' credit** refers to loans for repayment of imports into India arranged by the importer from a bank or financial institution outside India.
- Note: Both these credits are for the purpose of import and loan availed by importer.
  - In supplier's credit only two parties namely exporter and importer are involved.
  - In Buyer's credit, a third party namely a bank or financial institution comes into the picture to finance import.

**Securitized instruments** refer to debt securities like bonds, debentures and preference shares which are not fully or compulsorily convertible.

**Bonds and Debentures** are debt instruments i.e. means the owner of debt/debentures are creditors to the company and doesn't have any ownership.

**Bonds** are generally secured by a collateral.

**Debentures** is a debt security issued by a corporation or government entity that is not secured by an asset. Debentures have higher seniority for liquidation repayment than preferred shares.

**Preference Shares** are equity instruments known for giving owners preferential rights in the event of dividend payments or liquidation by the underlying company.

- » ECB also covers **Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds (FCCB)** and **Foreign Currency Exchangeable bonds (FCEB)**.
  - » FCCB and FCEB are both types of bonds issued by companies in foreign currency i.e. principal and interest in respect of these bonds are payable in foreign currency.
  - » **FCCB:** It provides bondholder with the option to convert the bonds into a predetermined number of shares of the issuing company's stocks at a specified conversion price during or end of bond's maturity.
  - » If the equity conversion option is used, the bondholder becomes a shareholder of the company, giving them ownership in the form of equity. Conversion Ratio determines the number of shares to be allotted upon conversion, which is usually determined based on a formulae or fixed ratio. FCCBs typically pay regular interest to bondholders until conversion or maturity, similar to conversion bonds.

- » **FCEB:** They are exchangeable into equity shares of another company called the offered company. The word 'Exchangeable' refers to the facility to convert bonds of one company into equity shares of another company.
- » Its other features are similar to FCCB. The key difference lies in the type of equity ownership that results from the exercise: direct ownership of the issuing company's shares in the case of FCCBs and ownership of shares in a different company for FCEBs.

- » **Short term Debt:** These are trade credits for a maturity less than three years.

## BANKING CAPITAL

- It comprises of three components: Foreign assets of Commercial Banks, Foreign Liabilities and Others.
- **Foreign assets of commercial banks.** It consists of:
  - » Foreign Currency holdings
  - » Rupee overdrafts to non-residents
- **Foreign liabilities** of commercial banks. It consists of:
  - » **Non-Resident Deposits:**
    - The deposits received from non-resident Indians comes under this head. At present there are three types of NRI deposit schemes. They are:
      - i. **Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Banks) FCNR (B):** These deposits are held in the following foreign currencies - US Dollar, Pound Sterling, Euro, Japanese Yen, Australian Dollar and Canadian Dollar; only term deposits of 1-3 years of maturity are allowed. The interest rates are pegged to LIBOR/ SWAP rate.
        - **Note:** LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate) is a benchmark interest rate at which major global banks lend to one another in the international interbank for short-term loans.
      - ii. **Non-Resident External Rupee Account NR (E) A:** These deposits are held in Indian rupees. Term deposits with maturity of one to three years as well as saving deposits are allowed under the scheme. Its interest rate is also pegged to the LIBOR/SWAP rate.
      - iii. **Non-Resident Ordinary Rupee Account:**
        - It is the account held by Indians ordinarily living abroad.
        - An Indian who was an Indian resident but migrated abroad can shift this account to this category. It is held in Indian rupees.
        - It can be opened in current, saving, recurring or fixed deposit accounts.
    - » **Liabilities other than non-resident deposits**, which comprise of rupee and foreign currency liabilities to nonresident banks and official and semiofficial institutions.
  - **Others**
    - » "Others" under banking capital include transactions in balances of foreign central banks and international institutions like the IBRD, IDA, ADB, IFC, IFAD etc. maintained with deposit

account departments (DAD) of RBI as well as transactions in balances held abroad by the embassies of India in London and Tokyo.

## FOREIGN INVESTMENT (FDI AND FPI)

### OTHER CAPITAL FLOWS

These include delayed export receipts, leads and lags in export receipts (the difference between custom data and banking channel data), funds held abroad, and other capital transactions not included elsewhere such as flows arising from cross-border financial derivatives and commodity hedging transactions, and sale of intangible assets such as patents, copyrights, trademarks etc.

### CAPITAL ACCOUNT BALANCE:

- **Loans (External Assistance + External Commercial Borrowing (net) + Short term debt (net)) + Banking Capital (net) + Foreign Investment (net) + Other outflows (net)**
  - **Capital Account Surplus** -> If Capital Account Balance is positive.
  - **Capital Account Deficit** -> If Capital Account Balance is negative.

### C) ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

- It includes the differences between debit and credit entries of all transactions.
- Capital Account balance is calculated with and without errors and omissions.

### D) OVERALL BALANCE/ BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

- **Balance of Payment** = Current Account Balance + Capital Account Balance
- If the BoP is positive -> it would lead to increase in foreign exchange reserve and vice-versa.

## 3. FOREX RESERVES

### 1) COMPOSITION OF INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES

- India's foreign exchange reserves comprise of four components:
  1. **Foreign currency assets (US\$, Euro, Pound, and Yen):** It is expressed in US Dollar or Indian rupee terms.
    - It also includes foreign currency deposits held by RBI with foreign central banks, the BIS and non-resident deposit taking institutions as well as deposit agreements with IMF Trust Accounts that are readily available to meet a BoP financing needs.
    - Securities issued by non-residents and financial derivatives having underlying foreign currency assets also form part of foreign currency assets.

**2. Gold reserves of RBI:** The RBI has gold stocks as a backup to issue currency and to meet unexpected balance of payment problems.

### 3. Reserve Tranche:

- It consists of India's quota (member subscription fee) to IMF and lending to the General Resource of IMF.
  - Note: The General Resource Account is the pool of member countries' quota payment.

### 4. Special Drawing Rights (SDR) holdings of the government

- The IMF member countries are entitled to get a loan from IMF's SDR Account. This loan amount is upto 200% of the member's quota with the IMF. It is also known as **Paper Gold**.
  - In this arrangement IMF doesn't lend directly. It is the member countries, who are in a strong position, lend their SDR holdings to member countries who are in problems for balance of payment.

## 2) WHO MANAGES FOREX RESERVES?

- **RBI Act and Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999** set up the legal provisions for governing the foreign exchange reserves.
- **The RBI** functions as the custodian and manager of forex reserves and operates within the overall policy framework agreed upon with the Centre. It allocates the dollars for specific purposes.
  - For e.g., under the Liberalized Remittances Scheme, individuals are allowed to remit up to \$2,50,000 every year.
- The Central bank uses its forex kitty for orderly movement of the rupee. It sells the dollar when the rupee weakens and buys dollar when the rupee strengthens.

## 3) SIGNIFICANCE OF FOREX RESERVES

- It acts a cushion against domestic currency volatility once the global exchange rate start rising.
- It increases the confidence in the monetary and exchange rate policies of the government.
- During **balance of Payment crisis** foreign exchange reserve come to the rescue of any country so as to absorb the distress related to such crisis.
- Strong forex reserves also helps a country to adopt more aggressive countercyclical measures and emerge from a short-lived recession.
- It also adds to the comfort of market participants that domestic currency is backed by external assets and hence it also helps the equity markets of the country, because due to strong reserves many people from foreign countries are willing to invest in the country.

## 4) OTHER ASPECTS RELATED TO FOREX RESERVES

- However, holding too much foreign exchange reserves is also not advisable -> (Opportunity Cost)
- How much Foreign Reserve do we have?
  - India's forex reserve at \$602 billion as of Aug 2023: RBI
    - Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs): \$534.40 billion
    - Gold Reserves: \$44.34 billion
    - SDR: \$18.32 billion
  - Note: India's foreign reserve had peaked in Sep 2021 at \$642.45 billion.
  - Note: The import coverage of foreign currency reserves has declined since the pre-pandemic levels in most emerging market economies; however, that of India has increased from 95% in Q4 2019 to 96.5% in Q3 2022.

**Figure XI.15 Adequacy of India's Forex Reserves (as a percentage of Annual Imports):  
A Cross-country perspective**



Source: IMF (forex reserves) and WTO (for imports data)

- How did India's foreign exchange reserves increase till Sep 2021?
  - Generally, the current account surpluses result in a building of reserves, as the central bank mops up all the excess foreign currency flowing into the country. But India is an outlier. From 2011 to 2021, there was only one year i.e. 2020 when India had run a surplus. India accumulated forex reserves despite having aggregate deficit of \$400 billion during 11 years.
  - The reserve was built through import of capital.
  - Another source of reserve accretion or depletion: Valuation Effect. Foreign exchange reserves are held in the form of dollars as well as non-dollars currencies and gold, whose value is, in turn, influenced by movements in exchange rates and gold prices. A depreciation of US\$ or higher gold prices cause valuation gains.

## SOURCES OF INCREASE IN INDIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES (IN BILLION US DOLLARS)

	1990-91 TO 1997-98	1998-99 TO 2005-06	2006-07 TO 2013-14	2014-15 TO 2021-22
<b>1 Trade Balance (1a - 1b)</b>	<b>-72.469</b>	<b>-165.135</b>	<b>-1051.316</b>	<b>-1176.895</b>
(a) Exports	207.273	472.412	1857.615	2555.150
(b) Imports	279.742	637.547	2908.931	3732.045
<b>2 Net invisibles</b>	<b>37.527</b>	<b>165.189</b>	<b>713.252</b>	<b>967.989</b>
<b>3 Current Account Balance (1+2)</b>	<b>-34.942</b>	<b>0.054</b>	<b>-338.064</b>	<b>-208.907</b>
<b>4 Capital Flows*</b>	<b>57.887</b>	<b>117.133</b>	<b>479.750</b>	<b>544.290</b>
<b>5 Overall Balance (3+4)</b>	<b>22.945</b>	<b>117.187</b>	<b>141.686</b>	<b>335.383</b>
<b>6 Valuation Effect</b>	<b>2.460</b>	<b>5.068</b>	<b>10.915</b>	<b>-32.297</b>
<b>7 Rise in Reserves (5+6)</b>	<b>25.405</b>	<b>122.255</b>	<b>152.601</b>	<b>303.086</b>

\*Including from International Monetary Fund.

Source: Reserve Bank of India.

- Why the recent drop in the reserves?

- Largely due to steps taken by the Reserve Bank of India to support the rupee.
- Increasing trade deficits (and Current Account Deficits)
- Capital outflow (FIIs have pulled out) [given the rising global interest rates and bond yields on the back of monetary policy tightening by the US Fed and other major central banks.

## 4. EXCHANGE RATE

### 1) BASICS OF EXCHANGE RATE

- 'Exchange rate is the price of a nation's currency in terms of another currency'. Thus, an exchange rate has two components, the domestic currency and a foreign currency and can be quoted either directly or indirectly.

#### 1. Direct Quotation

- The price of a unit of foreign currency is expressed in terms of domestic currency.
  - For e.g., in India's context: 1\$ = 80 Rs.

#### 2. Indirect Quotation

- The price of a unit of domestic currency is expressed in terms of the foreign currency.  
For instance, 1Rs = 0.0125%

- Generally, exchange rate is quoted in value against US dollar. However, exchange rates can also be quoted against another nations currency.

- Floating vs Fixed Exchange Rate

- A floating exchange rate is where a currency rate is determined by market forces. This is generally followed by most major economies.
- **Fixed Exchange Rate:** In this case, the exchange rate is fixed or peg their currencies to a widely accepted currency like the US dollar.
  - This is done to reduce volatility or better manage trade relations. For e.g. Most GCC countries including Saudi Arabia fixes its currency Riyal to US\$ because its main export is oil, which is priced in US\$.
- **Depreciation or Appreciation of Exchange Rate**
  - **Depreciation:** Increase in the direct exchange rate (i.e., fall in the external value of domestic currency because of more demand for foreign currency or less supply of foreign currency or more supply of domestic currency or less Demand of Domestic currency).
    - For e.g., rupee depreciation would mean rupee falling from  $1\$ = 50$  rupee to  $1\$ = 52$  rupee.
  - **Appreciation:** Decrease in the direct exchange rate (due to more demand or less supply of home currency; or less demand or more supply of foreign currency).
    - For e.g. Rupee appreciation would mean Rupee appreciating from  $1\$ = 50$  Rupees to  $1\$ = 48$  rupees.
  - **Devaluation**
    - Reduction in the external value of home currency is called Devaluation.
      - This is done to increase export and is usually resorted to correct the deficit in the balance of payment.
      - How?
  - **Revaluation**
    - Increase in the external value of home currency is called revaluation.
    - It is usually resorted to correct the surplus in the balance of payment. This reduces deficit for other countries. This is very rarely done.
- **Note:**
  - Depreciation and Appreciation takes place automatically due to movement in the demand and supply of currencies in the market (i.e. by market forces). If dollar demand exceeds supply, the rupee depreciates with respect to it and vice versa.
  - Devaluation and revaluation are done voluntarily either by the government or monetary authority.
- **Relation between Inflation and Exchange Rate**
  - Class Discussion

## 2) EFFECTIVE EXCHANGE RATE INDICES OF INDIAN RUPEES

- EER is a summary indicator of movements of home currency against a basket of currencies of trading partners.

- EERs serve as a gauge for assessing the **fair value of currency**, the external competitiveness of an economy and even serve as guideposts for setting monetary and financial conditions.
- The Nominal Effective Exchange Rate (NEER)** is an index of the weighted average of bilateral exchange rates of home currency vis-a-vis currencies of trading partners, with weights derived from their shares in the trade basket of the home currency.
- A Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER)** is the NEER adjusted by relative prices and costs, typically captured in inflation differentials between the home economy and trading partners.
- RBI** is responsible for compilation and dissemination of NEER and REER Indices of the Indian rupee (both trade and export oriented).
- Key Changes made 2021:**
  - Base year was moved from 2004-05 to **2015-16** for NEER/REER indices.
  - Coverage of NEER/REER basket** has been expanded from **36 to 40 currencies** (8 new additions and 4 removals)
    - The selections are based on **two criterias**:
      - Trading partners with extremely high and volatile inflation** are excluded as their currencies tend to experience rapid nominal declines which undermines the stability of NEER/REER indices.
      - Data on inflation and exchange rates of trading partners should be available on a regular basis.
    - The new basket represents **88% of India's total trade** as compared to 84% in the case of older 36 currency basket.
- Note:** To calculate trade weights, geometric means of India's trade (exports plus imports) with trading partners during the preceding three years are computed and then normalized to 100. While the Euro area retains its top position in the trade basket, the US assigned the highest weight in the export basket in 2015-16.

Table 1: New 40-Currency NEER/REER Basket – Normalised Weights

Country/Area	2015-16		2020-21 (P)		(Per cent)
	Trade-based Weight	Export-based Weight	Trade-based Weight	Export-based Weight	
1. Euro Area	11.4	14.0	11.6	14.7	
2. China	10.0	5.0	12.0	5.6	
3. UAE	9.4	12.4	7.8	10.4	
4. US	9.1	14.7	11.6	18.4	
5. Saudi Arabia	6.4	4.1	4.4	2.1	
6. Switzerland	3.7	0.5	2.7	0.4	
7. Hong Kong	2.9	4.8	3.9	4.6	
8. Indonesia	2.9	1.8	2.8	1.6	
9. Singapore	2.8	4.4	3.2	3.7	
10. Iraq	2.7	0.4	3.2	0.6	
11. Korea	2.5	1.6	2.9	1.7	
12. Kuwait	2.5	0.4	1.3	0.5	
13. Japan	2.5	2.3	2.3	1.7	
14. Qatar	2.4	0.3	1.5	0.5	
15. Nigeria	2.3	1.0	1.8	1.0	
16. UK	2.2	3.5	2.2	3.3	
17. Malaysia	2.2	1.8	2.2	2.2	

18. Iran	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.1
19. Australia	2.0	0.9	2.2	1.2
20. South Africa	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.4
21. Brazil	1.5	2.2	1.1	1.3
22. Thailand	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.5
23. Vietnam	1.1	1.9	1.8	2.3
24. Bangladesh	0.9	2.2	1.3	3.1
25. Taiwan	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8
26. Angola	0.9	0.2	0.6	0.1
27. Russia	0.9	0.8	1.3	0.9
28. Turkey	0.9	1.7	1.0	1.9
29. Mexico	0.9	0.8	1.2	1.3
30. Israel	0.9	1.3	0.7	1.3
31. Sri Lanka	0.8	1.9	0.7	1.6
32. Canada	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0
33. Egypt	0.7	1.1	0.6	0.9
34. Oman	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.8
35. Nepal	0.6	1.4	1.1	2.6
36. Kenya	0.6	1.5	0.3	0.7
37. Tanzania	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.6
38. Chile	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.3
39. Ukraine	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1
40. Ghana	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Memo Items:				
AE Currencies	41.7	49.7	45.0	52.6
EMDE Currencies	58.3	50.3	55.0	47.4

AE: Advanced economies. EMDE: Emerging market and developing economies. P: Provisional.  
Source: RBI staff calculations.

- The methodology of computing NEER/REER indices:

- The NEER is calculated as the geometric weighted average of bilateral exchange rates of the home currency in terms of trading partner currencies.

Specifically the NEER can be calculated as follows:	$NEER = \prod_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{e}{e_i} \right)^{w_i} \quad (1)$
REER, which is NEER adjusted by weighted average ratio of the domestic price to foreign prices, is calculated as:	$REER = \prod_{i=1}^n \left[ \left( \frac{e}{e_i} \right) \left( \frac{P}{P_i} \right) \right]^{w_i} \quad (2)$
'e' represents the exchange rate of rupee against the IMF's SDR  'e <sub>i</sub> ' is the exchange rate of the foreign currency 'i' against the IMF's SDR.	A rise in e or (e/e <sub>i</sub> ) represents an appreciation of the rupee relative to currency 'i' and vice versa.  'P' and 'P <sub>i</sub> ' represent price indices of the home economy and the trading partner 'i', respectively. 'w <sub>i</sub> ' denotes trade-/export-based weight assigned to foreign currency/trading partner 'i', while 'n' is the number of currencies (other than home currency) included in NEER/REER basket

### 3) DEPRECIATION AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES

- Why does depreciation take place?
  - » Core Reason - Demand supply gap of foreign currency (US\$)
    - Increasing Current Account Deficit (More imports, less exports).
    - Monetary and Interest rate hikes by the US Fed
      - This makes US treasury investment more attractive and leads to FII's moving funds from emerging economies back to US.
  - » Other traditional factors affecting India's exchange rates
    - Mounting External Debt
    - Tightening global liquidity
  - » Further, since India is an emerging market, **inflation rate** here would be higher when compared to developed countries and there will be a long term depreciation.
- Why the recent depreciation in rupee?
  - » Since March 2022, the US Federal Reserve has been raising its benchmark interest rate causing investors seeking higher returns to pull capital away from emerging markets such as India and back into the USA. This puts pressure on emerging market economies.
  - » Consistently high domestic inflation
- Negative Impacts
  1. Decline in forex reserves
  2. Negatively impacts Current Account Deficit -> Vicious Cycle
  3. Pulling out of Foreign Portfolio Investments
  4. Inflation: Increased prices of imported products
    - Further, increases the cost of crude oil import.
  5. Negatively impacts business' taking loans from abroad.
  6. Difficulty in financing external debt
  7. Increase in RBI's monetary policy rates.
  8. Challenges for students studying or wanting to study abroad
- Positives of declining rupee
  - » Depreciation helps in increasing exports as exports become cheaper for importing foreign country.
    - Therefore, some sectors like IT, Pharma, hospitality can actually benefit from depreciating rupee.
    - This may help in chipping away of trade deficit imbalance.
  - » **Tourism and hospitality** sector may get a boost
  - » **Remittances tend to increase** during the depreciating phase
- Sectoral Impact
  1. Export based industry would benefit.

- Depreciation acts as booster for IT and Pharma sector which are export based. Further hospitality sectors such as tourism, hotel etc can benefit as foreign tourists would now find it cheaper to visit India.

## 2. Problems for Oil Marketing Companies

- Rise in crude oil prices and depreciation of rupee is a double jeopardy for oil marketing companies. The lack of pricing power during major elections further exacerbate the problems for OMCs.

## 3. Auto sector

- Companies having high export shares will benefit from this depreciation.
- On the other hand, operating procedure margins of vehicle manufacturers such as Maruti Suzuki which import most of their components and focus on domestic market are going to face problems.

## 4. Aviation sector will be hit

- Increasing cost of Crude oil (thus Aviation Turbine Fuel)
- The big capacity additions on the anvil will also face problems.

### - Steps taken by Government.

- » Steps to fight trade deficit [see Trade Deficit Topics]
- » Steps to attract investments [See currency depreciation topic]

## 5. INTERNATIONALIZATION OF RUPEE

### - What is Internationalization of Rupee?

- Internationalization is a process that involves increasing the use of the rupee in cross-border transactions. It involves promoting the rupee for import and export trades, and then other current account transactions, followed by its use in capital account transactions.
- It will also require:
  - » **Full capital account convertibility** (currently India allows only full current account convertibility, capital account convertibility is limited).
  - » **Availability in sufficient quantities**
  - » **Opening up of currency settlement and a strong swap and forex market.**

### - Advantages of Internationalization of Rupee:

- Reduces exchange rate risks, while curtailing the demand for US dollar.
  - Reduces risk to economy due to sudden withdrawal of capital from market.
- Reduces the need of forex war chest to meet the external vulnerabilities.
- Lower cost of capital due to better access to international financial markets.
- Promotes ease of doing business but also improves the chances for Indian businesses to grow globally.
  - Bargaining power of Indian businesses will increase, adding weight to Indian economy and enhancing India's global stature and respect.
- Reduced transaction costs: They will not have to incur exchange rate fees.

- **Geopolitical Significance**: US-dollar dominated global currency system can become limitations for the economy if India's relations with US and Europe becomes tense in future. In that scenario, business in domestic currency can be a savior.
  
- **Internationalization of currency is closely linked with a nation's economic progress.**
  - Currently, the US \$, the Euro, the Japanese Yen and the pound sterling are the leading reserve currencies in the world. China's efforts to make its currency renminbi (yuan) a reserve currency has met with only limited successes so far.
  - **Factors behind US\$ being the most common currency of reserve and exchange:**
    - **Size of US Economy** (largest in the world)
    - **Reach of its trade and financial market**
    - **Depth and liquidity** of the US financial market
    - History of macro-economic stability
    - Currency convertibility
    - Lack of viable alternative.
  
- **China's Experience:**
  - Before 2004, RMB couldn't be used outside China.
    - By 2007, the "Dim Sum bond" and offshore RMDB bond market had been created.
  - **Post 2008**, China pursued a phased approach:
    - First, it allowed use of RMB outside China for Current account transactions and for select investment transactions (FDI, outward direct investment) etc.
    - By 2009, it had signed currency swap agreements (i.e., an exchange of an equivalent amount of money, but in different currencies) with countries like Brazil, UK etc.
    - Then, Central banks, offshore clearing banks and offshore participating banks were allowed to invest excess RMB in debt securities.
    - Sanghai Free Trade Zone was launched in 2013, to allow free trading between non-resident onshore and offshore accounts.
  - **In this way**, overtime RMB was internationalized, with reserve currency status increasingly enabled. For e.g. in Q2, 2022, the RMB's share of international reserves had reached around 2.88%.
  
- **Steps Taken towards Internationalization of Rupee:**
  - **Liberalization of Capital Account**: Over the years, government has relaxed FII and FDI norms, facilitating greater cross-border investment and trade.
  - Enabling of ECB in rupee.
  - **Currency Swap Agreements** with several countries, which allow for the exchange of rupee and foreign currency between the central banks of the two countries.

- RBI allowed banks from 18 countries to open **Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs)** for settling payments in Indian Rupees.
- RBI constituted Inter-departmental group (IDG) headed by RBI Executive Director **Radha Shyam Rathi** to frame roadmap for the Internationalization of Indian Rupee has submitted its report.
- During PM Modi's visit to UAE in July 2023, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) signed two MoUs with Central Bank of UAE. One of the MoU focuses on establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies from cross-border transactions, the other was for linking payment systems.

- **Challenges in achieving internationalization:**

- **Little traction for international trade in rupee:**
- **Large Trade Deficit**
- **Lack of Liquidity**
- **Underdeveloped Financial Markets:** India's financial market are still relatively under-developed when compared to major economies, which can limit the range of products and services available to international investors.
- **IDG has also highlighted following limitations that may arise due to internationalization of Rupee:**
  - **Exchange rate volatility in rupee's exchange rate** will increase in initial stages of internationalization.
  - **Triffin Dilemma:** Obligation of a country to supply its currency to meet the global demand may come in conflict with its domestic monetary policies.
  - **Accentuation of external shock** may take place due to open channel of flow of funds into and out of the country and from one currency to another.
- However, the IDG itself said that the advantages of internationalization far outweigh the above limitations. Moreover, the internationalization of rupee will be a long-drawn process and would enable timely redressal of these challenges.

- **Recommendations given by RBI's Inter-Departmental Group:**

- **Short term measures:**
  - » Adoption of Standardized approach for examining the proposals on bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements for invoicing, settlement, and payment in the rupee and local currencies.
  - » Encouraging the opening of the rupee accounts for non-residents both in India, and outside India.
  - » Incentivizing exporters to use Indian currency for trade settlements.
  - » Integrating payment systems to provide seamless cross border transactions.
  - » Strengthening the financial markets by fostering a global 24X5 rupee market
  - » Recalibration of FPI regime.
- **Medium Term Measures (2-5 years targets)**
  - » Synchronizing tax regimes of India and other financial centres.

- A review of taxes on masala bonds
- » Allowing banking services in the rupee outside the country
  - Allowing international use of RTGS for cross border trade
- » Inclusion of Indian government bonds in global bond indices
  
- **Long Term**
  - » Measures to have rupee included in the IMF's SDR.

## 6. EXPORT SECTOR

### - Current Situation:

		<b>2022-23 (USD Billion)</b>	<b>2021-22 (USD Billion)</b>
<b>Merchandise</b>	<b>Exports</b>	447.46	422
	<b>Imports</b>	714.24	613.05
<b>Services</b>	<b>Exports</b>	322.72	254.53
	<b>Imports</b>	177.94	147.01
<b>Overall Trade</b> (Merchandise + Services)	<b>Exports</b>	770.18	676.53
	<b>Imports</b>	892.18	760.06
	<b>Trade Balance</b>	-122.00	-83.53

### - Why does India face such huge trade Deficit:

- **Huge Dependency on Fossil fuel imports**
- **Underperformance in Exports** (India's global export share is only 1.8%, China has 13% share).
  - » Manufacturing sector not well developed.
  - » Less diversification in export basket (10 principal exports account for 78% of total merchandise exports)
- **Less focus on scientific research and development**
  - » This hinders complex and unique exports.
- **High cost of logistics** -> Reduces cost competitiveness of Indian products.
- **Not able to utilize its demographic dividend** due to poor skill levels in the country.

### - Some steps taken to promote exports and reduce import dependency.

- **Various Schemes** to promote exports.
  - A. **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) Scheme.**
  - B. **Export Promotion in Capital Goods Scheme**
- **Steps to improve infrastructure.**
  - National Logistic Policy
- **Focus on Manufacturing sector** - Atmanirbhar Bharat; Various **PLI Schemes**
- **Increased focus on renewable Energy**

## 7. FOREIGN TRADE POLICY, 2023

- India's new FTP i.e. **Foreign Trade Policy, 2023** has come into force from 1st April 2023.
- This policy is based on continuity of time-tested schemes facilitating exports as well as a document which is **nimble and responsive** to the requirements of trade.
- **The Key Approach** to the policy is based on these **4 pillars**:
  1. Incentive to Remission
  2. Export Promotion through collaboration - Exporters, States, Districts, Indian Missions
  3. Ease of Doing Business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives.
  4. Emerging Areas - E-commerce, Developing Districts as export Hubs and **streamlining SCOMET Policy**.
    - Note: SCOMET stands for Special, Chemicals Organisms, Materials, Equipment, and Technologies (SCOMET) policy.
- **Key Aims and Objectives of India's FTP, 2023** are:
  - » Boost India's exports to USD 2 trillion by 2030.
  - » Strengthen India's export competitiveness.
  - » Diversify export basket, expand export markets, and promote sustainable exports.
  - » Focus on promoting exports from small and medium enterprises (SMEs). For this policy envisages support in the form of access to finance and markets.
  - » Provide for several incentives for exporters, including duty drawback, export promotion capital goods (EPCG) scheme, and interest subvention schemes.
  - » Encourage collaboration between exporters, states, and districts to promote exports.
  - » Simplify and streamline the process of exporting goods and services:
  - » Focus on emerging areas of export, such as e-commerce, green technology, and defence and aerospace. These are the areas where India has a competitive advantage, and the policy aims to help businesses take advantage of these opportunities.
- **The Policy aims to boost India's exports through several measures**:
  - » **Process Re-engineering and Automation** (technology enablement) for facilitating exporters.
  - » **Expanding the scope of Town of Export Excellence (TEE)** by including Faridabad, Mirzapur, Moradabad and Varanasi in the existing list of 39 towns listed as Towns of Export Excellence (TEE).
  - » **Promoting Exports from districts** by building partnerships with state government and taking forward the District as Export Hubs initiative to promote exports at the district level.
  - » A robust export control system in India would provide access of dual use High end goods and technologies to Indian exporters while facilitating exports of controlled items/technologies

under **SCOMET** (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment, and Technologies) from India.

- » **Facilitating E-Commerce Exports** through establishment of e-commerce hubs and other related elements.
  - The consignment wise cap on E-commerce exports through courier has been raised from Rs 5 Lakh to Rs 10 lakh.
  - A comprehensive e-commerce policy addressing export/import ecosystem is planned to be brought soon.
- » **Export Promotion of Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme** has been rationalized.
  - Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks (PM MITRA) scheme has been added as an additional scheme eligible to claim benefits under CSP (Common Service Provider) Scheme of Export Promotion capital Goods Scheme (EPCG)
  - Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) of all types, Vertical Farming equipment, Wastewater Treatment and Recycling, Rainwater harvesting system and Rainwater Filters, and Green Hydrogen are added to Green Technology products – will now be eligible for reduced Export Obligation requirement under EPCG Scheme.
- » **Introduction of provisions for merchanting trade.**
  - Note: Merchanting trade involves shipment of goods from one foreign country to another foreign country without touching Indian ports, involving an Indian intermediary.
- » **Amnesty Scheme** to provide relief to exporters who have been unable to meet their obligations under EPCG and Advance Authorization schemes. This will reduce litigations and foster trust based relationship.

## 1) VARIOUS SCHEMES FOR PROMOTING EXPORTS

### A) REMISSION OF DUTIES AND TAXES ON EXPORTED PRODUCTS (RoDTEP)

- **Why in news?**
  - » Government of India notifies extension of Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products support to Advanced Authorization Holders, Export Oriented Units and Special Economic Zone Units (March 2024)
- **About RoDTEP:**
  - » It is an initiative to promote export launched by Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It was announced in 2019 but came into effect on 1st Jan 2021.
  - » Under this reimbursement is made of unrefunded taxes and duties (central, state, or local) incurred in the process of manufacture and distribution of exported products
  - » It is a WTO compliant scheme. This is based on the globally accepted principle that taxes and duties should not be exported. It thus provides a level playing field to Indian industries abroad
  - » **Past WTO challenges?**

- India's past export subsidy was challenged in the WTO by the USA.
  - Therefore, RoDTEP was introduced which is WTO complaint.
  - Two older schemes which has been merged inside this scheme are - Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MIES) and the Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies Scheme (RoSCTL).
- The RoDTEP support which was notified till 30th Sep 2023 is now being extended till 30th June 2024 at the same rates to the existing export items (Sep 2023)
- **RoDTEP Committee**
  - » In line with the framework of the scheme, the RoDTEP committee has again been constituted in the Department of Revenue to review and recommend the ceiling rates under the RoDTEP scheme for different export sectors.
- **Extension of RoDTEP to other sectors (March 2024)**
  - » In March 2024, government announced extension of the RoDTEP Scheme support to additional export sectors i.e. Advanced Authorization Holders, Export Oriented Units (EOU), and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Export Units. These sectors contribute to around 25% of India's exports. Sectors such as Engineering, Textiles, Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, & Food Processing and many others stand to benefit from the measure.
  - » This extension will help export community in handling the international headwind.
  - » Keeping budgetary allocation in view, the extension of RoDTEP to additional sector is presently till 30/09/2024

## B) AUTOMATIC 'STATUS HOLDER' CERTIFICATE UNDER FOREIGN TRADE POLICY, 2023

- In Oct 2023, Ministry of Commerce & Industry has unveiled a significant initiative to issue system based automatic 'Status Holder' certificate under FTP, 2023.
- **What was happening till now?**
  - Till now, the exporter is required to file an online application along with an export certificate from a Chartered Accountant for grant of Status. The DGFT Regional Offices, as per the laid down timelines are supposed to issue the certificate in 3 days.
- **New Regime:**
  - The new arrangement will lead to a simplified regime where no applications are invited from exporters and the certification is granted every year in August based on annual export figures available with the partner government agency i.e. DGCIS.
- **Advantages:**
  - » Exporter will not be required to apply to office of Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for a status certificate and the export recognition will be provided by the IT system based on

available Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) merchandize export electronic data and other risk parameters.

- » It thus reduce compliance burden and promote ease of doing business,

- **What is the significance of Status Holder Certificate?**

- » The Status Holder certification program provides credibility to the Indian exporters in the international markets. Status holders are business leaders who have excelled in international trade and have successfully contributed to India's foreign trade.
- » In addition, it provides certain other privileges including simplified procedures under FTP 2023 and priority custom clearances on self-declaration basis, exemption from compulsory negotiation of documents through banks, exemption from filing Bank Guarantee for FTP schemes etc.

## 8. FOREIGN INVESTMENT (FDI AND FPI)

### 1) FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI)

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is the investment through capital instruments by a person who is a resident outside India:
  - A. In an unlisted Indian company
  - B. In 10% or more of the post issue paid-up equity capital on a fully diluted basis of a listed Indian company
    - » (If the investment comes below 10% subsequently the FDI shall be continued to be classified as FDI. It will not be reclassified as FPI), i.e., once an FDI, always an FDI.
- **Key Facts about India's FDI Policy (Remember for Preliminary Exams)**
  - » **Eligible Investors**
    - A non-resident entity can invest in India, subject to FDI policy, except in those sectors/activities which are prohibited.
    - However, a citizen/entity from Bangladesh can only invest under the Government Route.
    - Further, a citizen/entity from Pakistan can invest, only under government route, in sectors/activities other than defence, space, atomic energy, and prohibited sectors for foreign investment.
  - » **Prohibited Sectors**
    - FDI is prohibited in:
      - i. Lottery business including Government/private lottery, online lotteries, etc.
      - ii. Gambling and betting including Casinos.
      - iii. Chit Funds
      - iv. Nidhi Company
      - v. Trading in Transferable Development Rights
      - vi. Real Estate Businesses and Construction of Farmhouses

- 'Real Estate Businesses' shall not include development of township, construction of residential/commercial premises, roads or bridges and Real Estate Investment Trust (REITs) registered and regulated by SEBI.
- vii. Manufacturing of Cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes, of tobacco or of tobacco substitutes.
- viii. Activities/sectors not open to private investment e.g. Atomic Energy, Railway Operations (other than permitted activities)

#### **A) FDI SITUATION IN INDIA (CURRENTLY)**

- **FY23:** \$70.97 billion
- **Top Source Countries (FY23)**
  - Singapore (\$17.2 billion); Mauritius (\$6.13 billion); the US (\$6 billion), the UAE (\$3.35 billion), the Netherlands (\$2.5 billion).
  - Other important source countries include Japan, UK, Cyprus, Cayman Islands, and Germany.
- **Top Five Sectors to receive FDI**
  - **Computer Software (\$9.4 billion);** (Dip from last year)
  - **Service Sector (\$8.7 billion)** (Rise from last year)
  - **Trading, Telecommunication, pharma and Chemicals** have also recorded growth in FDI inflow.
- **Statewise FDI reception:**
  - **Maharashtra** received the highest inflows of \$14.8 billion during the last fiscal year (though the inflow are down when compared to \$15.44 billion) of last year.
  - **Karnataka, Delhi, TN, Haryana, Telangana** and WB also saw a dip in FDI inflow.
  - **Gujarat** saw an increase in FDI to \$4.71 billion (against \$2.7 billion in FY22).
  - **Rajasthan** also saw a positive growth.
- **Why decline in FY23 and what are FDI threats for future:**
  - » Escalation in geopolitical stress
  - » Enhanced volatility in global financial systems
  - » Sharp Price corrections in global stock market
  - » High magnitude of El-Nino
  - » Frail Global Demand

#### **B) WHY HAS INDIA EMERGED AS AN ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION OF FDI**

- **Liberalization of investment restrictions**
  - In India FDI upto 100% is allowed in non-critical sectors through the automatic route, not requiring clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
  - Even in strategic sectors like Defence, government has allowed FDI of upto 74% through automatic route and 100% through government route.
  - Consultation activities with representation of different sectors
- **Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, PLI Schemes, PM GatiShakti etc.**
- **Reforms in Indirect and Direct taxes:**
  - Corporate tax for most companies have been reduced to 25% and for new companies in manufacturing, it has been reduced to 15%
  - GST system has been streamlined, leading to simple tax regime.
- **Increased public capex expenditure** - It is also crowding in private and foreign investment.

- Strengthening of India's footing in global supply chains
- Elimination of Regulatory barriers
- Improved Ease of Doing Business
- Improved International Relations

### C) NEED OF FDI IN INDIA

- **Lack of Domestic Resources:**
  - » Neither the government, nor the private sector in India has enough resources to fulfill India's infrastructure and industrial needs. For e.g. infrastructure sector alone needs more than 1 trillion dollars over the next few years. COVID-19 crisis has further deteriorated the situation.
- **Diffusion of new Technology:**
  - » FDI, along with it brings in new technology which is very important for the growth and advancement of India.
- **Virtuous Cycle of Investment:**
  - » High FDI in any country gives confidence to other investors and creates a virtuous circle of more investments. So, increasing FDI will also increase private investments which has gone stagnant over the years.
- **Other advantages associated with FDI**
  - » **Economic Growth:** More Investment leads to more growth which in turn leads to higher incomes, more employment etc.
  - » **Improved performance of governments at state level:** Increases competition among states to attract FDI -> promotes good/efficient business practices among the states
  - » **Provides opportunity to government to focus more on social sector**

### D) MAIN PROBLEMS THAT ARE RESTRICTING FDI INFLOWS IN THE COUNTRY

- **Complex and rigid Labour Laws**
- **Significant Delay in Land Acquisition** due to slow environmental clearance and difficult Land Acquisition Act.
- **Bureaucratic Red Tapism and Corruption** still dissuades foreign investors from investing in the country
- **Regulatory framework also needs simplification** as it is still too complex for many investors.
- **Regulatory Certainty** is something the investors crave the most.
  - Frequent rule changes, including retrospective changes worry the investors.

### E) PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED FDI DEPENDENCY

1. **Volatile Investments:** Unreliable in the long term
  - FDI tend to switch to countries where there is more profit, cheap labor and cheap land.
2. **Diffusion of technology is limited :**
  - It is in the interest of foreign firm to withhold profitable technology. Thus generally diffusion of new technology is very less.
  - Moreover, in a developing country like India, where the state of both physical and human capital is not yet on a par with advanced countries, the diffusion also becomes difficult.
3. **Job Creation Not very effective due to FDI** -> FDI is mostly coming in service sector or capital-intensive sector.
  - Despite the central government's push to boost manufacturing sector through 'Make in India' and various PLI initiatives, FDI's continue to chase bets in the services sector.
    - For e.g. in FY23, the highest FDI came in sectors like IT, Services etc.

- Further, the bulk of FDI in manufacturing is not greenfield.

#### 4. Regional inequities are perpetuated -> Most FDI come in already industrialized regions.

- For e.g. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Delhi - collectively accounted for 83% of the FDI between Oct 2019 and March 2022.
- This further leads to metro - non metro divide and inequitable distribution of opportunities throughout the country.

## 2) FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INVESTMENT (FPI)

### - Introduction

- » Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) is any investment made by a person resident outside India in capital instruments where such investment is
  - Less than 10 percent of the post issue paid-up equity capital on a fully diluted basis of a listed Indian company or

<b>Gyan</b>	<p><b>Fully diluted basis</b> means the total number of shares that would be outstanding if all possible sources of conversion are exercised. For e.g. if the company had issued <u>100 shares as on today</u>. However, there are debentures that are yet to be converted into shares. If it happens say the total number of shares may go up to 1500. The 10% calculation is to be made against 1500 which is called total number of shares on fully diluted basis.</p>
-------------	---

- Less than 10 percent of the paid-up value of each series of capital instruments of a listed Indian company

### » Note:

- FPI reflect capital gain but doesn't lead to lasting interest in the company.
- FPI includes investment in stocks, bonds (government or corporate), infrastructure securities etc.

- » Since FPI is easily withdrawable/cashable, it is also called **hot money** and is considered less stable when compared to FDI.

### - Type of FPIs: In India, FPIs include Foreign Institutional Investment (FII) and Qualified Foreign Investment (QFI).

#### 1. Foreign Institutional Investment

- It involves foreign institutional investors going for FPI.
- **Only institutional investors** like investment companies, investment funds etc are allowed to invest in Indian stock market directly. These investors have to get a license from SEBI.

#### 2. Qualified Foreign Investment (QFI)

- The concept of QFI was introduced in 2000, which allowed individual foreign investor to invest in Indian stock market without a sub-account in FII.
- However, they have to open a Demat account and Trade Account with the depository participant in India.
- A QFI can be individual, group or an association.
- QFI should satisfy following conditions.

- i. QFI should be resident in a foreign country that is compliant with the standards of Financial Action Task Force.
- ii. QFI must be a signatory to International Organization of Securities Commission's Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU).

- **Note: According to Regulations by SEBI**

- i. **Investments in unlisted companies** are treated as **FDI**.
  - FPIs are not allowed to invest in unlisted shares and investment in unlisted entities will be treated as FDI.
- ii. Any equity which is less than or equal to 10% of capital in a company is portfolio investment. While investment above 10% of capital in a company will be counted as Foreign Direct Investment.
- iii. **Investment by a FPI** cannot exceed 10% of the paid up capital of the Indian company.
- iv. **All FPI** taken together can't acquire more than 24 percent of the paid-up capital of an Indian Company.
- v. **Investment by NRIs** will not be considered FPI.

- **Advantages of FPI**

- i. **For investor**
  - **Portfolio diversification**
  - **Easy access to international credit**
    - If investor holds FPI they can access credit in the foreign country. Ability to get credit on favorable terms and quickly can determine the business expansion opportunities for the investor.
  - **More Liquid and thus less risky**
- ii. **For Domestic Economy**
  - **More capital to country's capital market** will lead to more development of capital market thereby resulting in more capital flowing into the real economy thereby leading to overall development of the country.
  - **Diverse Investment, large scale investments**
    - FIIs are big and hence they have the capacity to make large scale investment.
  - **Strengthening of domestic currency**

- **Limitations of FPI**

- i. **For Investors**
  - **Lack of control** over business
- ii. **For domestic country**
  - Easy liquidity of investments comes with **vulnerability for economy**.
    - E.g. East Asia crisis of late 1990s.
  - Sudden withdrawal also leads to beating up of the domestic currency.
  - **Chances of round tripping of funds**
    - Sometimes, round tripped capital is re-invested in the Indian Stock markets using the FPI route.

• **Situation in FY23:**

- As per annual report of SEBI released in Aug 2023, **FPIs pulled out Rs 37,632 crore** from Indian equities during FY23. This is a decline in outflow of 73.1% as compared to FY22.
  - **Why the recent outflow:**
    - **Rise in Inflation worldwide** led to tightening of monetary policies among all major economies.
    - **Global uncertainty** due to geopolitics of Europe have also led to withdrawals.
    - **COVID-19 resurgence in China** has also added to negative sentiments
- **But the stock markets haven't fallen much** and are trading near its highest ever.
  - This is because DII flows are compensating the FII outflows. They invested a total of Rs 2.55 lakh crore during the fiscal year.
    - DIIs now own a record 15% of the BSE-500 shares, just 3.3% points below the share of FPIs, which has now declined to nine-year lows.
    - This highlights India's economic resilience and attractiveness to local investors.

## 9. CURRENCY CONVERTIBILITY: CURRENT ACCOUNT AND CAPITAL ACCOUNT CONVERTIBILITY

- **What is Convertibility of a currency?**
  - » Currency convertibility is the ease with which a country's currency can be converted into gold or another currency.
  - » **A convertible currency** (e.g. \$US, Euro, Japanese Yen, and British Pound) can be easily traded on forex markets with little or no restrictions. It is also seen as a reliable store of value, meaning that investor will have no trouble buying or selling the currency. A convertible currency is highly liquid instrument as compared with currencies that are tightly controlled by the country's central bank. A convertible currency is also sometimes referred as a hard currency.
  - » **A partially convertible currency** (for e.g. Indian Rupee, South Korean Won, and the Chinese Yuan) is the legal tender of a country that is traded in low volumes in the global forex market. The government of these countries put capital controls that limit the amount of currency that can exit or enter the country.
- **Currency Convertibility is important in external sector:**
  - » When a country has poor currency convertibility, it means it is difficult to swap it for another currency, it poses a risk and barrier to trade with foreign countries who have no need for the domestic currency.

### 1) CURRENT ACCOUNT CONVERTIBILITY

- » Current account convertibility allows free inflows and outflows for all purposes other than for capital purposes such as investments and loans. In other words, it allows residents to make and receive trade-related payments -- receive dollars (or any other foreign currency) for export of goods and services and pay dollars for import of goods and services, make sundry remittances, access foreign currency for travel, studies abroad, medical treatment and gift.

- » Since 1994 full current account convertibility is allowed in India. That is Indian Rupee is fully convertible in Current Account. This means one can import and export goods and receive or make payments for services rendered without limitations. There is no quantitative restriction on this.
- » Some Minor Restriction on Current Account Convertibility under FEMA
  - Not allowed on betting, gambling, prohibited items
  - Travel to Nepal/Bhutan -> only upto \$10K could be converted and taken. Rupee can be carried in any quantity.
  - Travel to other countries -> only upto \$25K (beyond this permission from RBI needed)
  - Education, Medical treatment, employment -> \$1 Lakh
  - Gift Sending: Rs 5 Lakh worth.
- » Advantages of Current Account Convertibility
  - Facilities to send foreign earnings to India freely.
  - International trade flourishes
  - Imports and exports can be done at fair rates determined by the market.

## 2) CAPITAL ACCOUNT CONVERTIBILITY

- Meaning: It means the freedom to convert local financial assets into foreign financial assets and vice versa at market determined rates of exchange.
- India does not allow full Capital Account Convertibility, i.e. Indian Rupee is not fully convertible on the capital account.
  - » External Commercial Borrowing has sector wise limitations and RBI's approval is required.
  - » FDI restrictions, FII restrictions
    - No restrictions on investment in Bhutan
    - In other countries: Maximum \$75 K per year (individuals) e.g. buying shares, opening foreign bank accounts etc.
  - » Financial Action Task Force: " Non cooperative countries" -> No investment is allowed in such country.
  - » Liberalized Remittance Scheme (2004) (Above FEMA limits both on Current and Capital Convertibility)
    - Applies on Indian Residence
    - Under this \$2.5 Lakh can be taken per year per person abroad.
- Debate over whether Capital Account Convertibility should be liberalized.
  - » Arguments in Support of liberalization
    - SS Tarapore Committee (or Committee on Capital Account Convertibility) was formed by RBI in 1997 to examine the viability of capital account convertibility in India.
      - Bring Capital account convertibility in phases (98,99,00)
      - Preconditions
        - Fiscal deficit (limit it to 3.5% by 2000)

- Inflation average (3-5%) (in 3 years)
    - Interest rates by banks should be decontrolled
    - Enough Forex to sustain 6 months imports
    - NPAs of banks should be brought down to 5% of total asset
    - CRR should be brought down to 3%
  - **Second Tarapore Committee: Committee on Fuller Capital Account Convertibility (2006)**
    - Its approach was same again. It recommended capital account convertibility implementation in a phased manner, in 3 phases from 2006 to 2011.
  - **Need of Easy Capital Account Convertibility:**
    - **Foreign Direct Investment Needs** of India
    - **Easy ECB** can reduce the cost of borrowing for Indian businesses.
    - **More investment** can lead to increased GDP.
    - **Development of more MNCs from India**. Easy capital account convertibility will allow Indian companies to easily acquire foreign companies and thus develop into multinationals.
    - **Portfolio diversification for Indian investors.**
  - **Other Arguments in Support of Capital Account Convertibility**
    - All developed countries are capital account convertible; hence this is an inevitable destiny of the developing countries in their path to development.
    - Better and most efficient flow of global pool of savings to the more productive uses.
    - It will facilitate portfolio diversification by investors in developed as well as developing country.
    - Feasibility of capital account convertibility rests on sound macroeconomic policy, it creates a sort of commitment for the country concerned to ensure better macroeconomic management, lest it is punished by the investors.
- » **Arguments against making rupee full convertible on Capital Account**
- **HR Khan (deputy governor of RBI)**
  - **BoP Crisis** (like the 1990s East Asian Crisis) was exacerbated by the full capital account convertibility.
    - Most of these countries has full capital account convertibility.
    - India and China didn't have the full capital account convertibility, thus these countries were saved from this kind of crisis.
  - Capital flows are sensitive to macroeconomic conditions. Any deterioration in fiscal conditions, inflation management, balance of payments, or any other macroeconomic shock may cause a cessation or reversal of capital flow.
  - **May hamper interest of domestic economy** as funds may easily flow outside the country affecting employment and other opportunities.
  - **Instability in Rupee** may be another outcome of full capital account convertibility.

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# TARGET PRELIMS 2024

## BOOKLET-28; ECONOMY-9

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

#### 1. TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>2. Renewable Energy .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1) Why Renewable Energy is important.....	2
2) <b>Steps taken by Government:</b> .....	2
A) Green Energy Corridor: .....	2
3) India's Situation .....	3
4) Important Institutions .....	3
A) Nodal Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable ENergy (MNRE) .....	3
B) Indian Renewable ENergy Development Agency (IREDA).....	3
5) Problem of Storage of Renewable Energy Sector .....	4
6) Decentralized Renewable Energy/ Distributed Renewable Energy.....	4
<b>3. Solar Energy.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1) Initiatives .....	5
A) Scheme for Development of <b>Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects</b> - Conceived on the lines of "Charanka Solar Park" -> Act as flagship demonstration facility.....	5
B) PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna (Feb 2024).....	6
C) Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahaabhiyan (PM KUSUM).....	6
D) International Cooperation: International Solar Alliance .....	6
E) New Innovation: Floating Solar Plants .....	6
F) National Program on High Efficiency SOlar PV Modules.....	7
G) Promoting COmpetition among States: SARAL INDEX by MNRE .....	7
H) Skill Development: SuryaMitra Scheme.....	7
<b>4. Wind ENergy .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2) National Wind Mission (NWM): Launched in 2015 as part of NAPCC.....	7
3) Offshore Wind Energy .....	7
<b>5. Biofuels.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1) Ethanol Blending .....	11
2) National Policy on Biofuels .....	12
3) <b>Pradhan Mantri Ji-VAN (Jaiv Indhan Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivarana) Yojana</b> .....	12

4)	<b>World Biofuel Day: 10th of Aug .....</b>	13
5)	<b>E-100 Pilot Projects: .....</b>	13
6)	<b>Biogas production of Fat-rich sludge.....</b>	14
7)	<b>National Bioenergy Program .....</b>	14
8)	<b>Biogas .....</b>	14
9)	<b>Bio CNG (Also known as COmpressed Biogas).....</b>	16
<b>6.</b>	<b><i>Hydrogen Fuel.....</i></b>	<b>17</b>
1)	<b>Hydrogen Fuel Cells .....</b>	17
2)	<b>Fuel-Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs).....</b>	18
3)	<b>Types of electric vehicles: EV/BEV, HEV, PHEV, FCEV .....</b>	18
4)	<b>Hydrogen ENergy .....</b>	19
A)	Note: Various types of Hydrogen:.....	20
5)	<b>National Hydrogen Mission .....</b>	20
6)	<b>Government unveils Green Hydrogen Standards (Aug 2023).....</b>	21
7)	<b>Electrolysers.....</b>	21
8)	<b>Hydrogen CNG (H-CNG) .....</b>	22

## 2. RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Non-conventional energy sources refer to renewable energy sources which are replenishable at a rate faster than it is consumed i.e. they don't get depleted when used. These sources are also much less hazardous to environment compared to conventional sources of energy.
- **Popular Sources of Non-Conventional Energy Sources are:**
  - i. Solar Energy
  - ii. Wind Energy
  - iii. Tidal Energy
  - iv. Geothermal Energy
  - v. Hydropower
  - vi. Biomass Energy
  - vii. Fuel Cell (Green Hydrogen)

### 1) WHY RENEWABLE ENERGY IS IMPORTANT

- Energy Security and Reduced Import Dependency
- Economic growth:
- Inclusive Development: Electricity in inaccessible areas
- Environmental sustainability:
- Strengthening India's Soft Power and Global Leadership

### 2) STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT:

- » **Ambitious Targets:** GoI has set a target of achieving 50% of its electricity supply through non-fossil sources by 2030.
- » **Attracting Investment:** FDI upto 100% under automatic route for renewable energy projects including offshore wind energy projects has been allowed.
- » **Promoting Ease of Doing Business:**
  - **Waiving of Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS)** charges for inter-state sale of solar and wind power for projects to be commissioned by 30th June 2025.
  - **Laying of new infrastructure:** New transmission lines and subs station capacity for evacuation of renewable power etc. under Green Energy Corridor scheme for evacuation of renewable energy
- » **Sectoral Initiatives** (Covered separately with each sector)

#### A) GREEN ENERGY CORRIDOR:

- **Why in news?**
  - » Cabinet approves Intra-State Transmission System - Green Energy Corridor Phase-II (Jan 2022)
- The GEC project aims at synchronizing electricity produced from renewable sources, such as solar and wind, with conventional power stations in the grid.
  - » The **first component** of the Scheme, **Inter-State GEC** with target capacity of 3,200 circuit kms (ckm) transmission lines and 17,000 MVA capacity substation, was completed in March 2020.
  - » The **second component** - Intra-state GEC has a target capacity of 9700 ckm transmission lines and 22,600 MVA capacity sub-stations.

- It is estimated to be set up with total estimated cost of Rs 12,031 crores.
- The scheme will help in achieving the target of 450 GW of RE capacity by 2030.

### 3) INDIA'S SITUATION

- **India's Situation:**
  - » As of Feb 2023, India's total power generation capacity was 412.21 GW.
    - **Total Renewable Energy Capacity: 168.96 GW** [122 GW without including large hydro]
      - » **Solar Energy:** 64.38 GW
      - » **Wind Energy:** 42.02 GW
      - » **Hydro** (large + Small): 51.79 GW (Small Hydro - Around 5 GW)
      - » **Bio:** 10.77 GW
    - Another **86.62 GW** of green energy capacity is under implementation and **40.89 GW** of capacity is under various stages of tendering.
  - **Note:** India has already achieved its target of 40% installed electric capacity from non-fossil fuels in Nov 2021 itself.
  - **Future Target:** Government aims to achieve 500 GW of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030.

### 4) IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS

#### A) NODAL MINISTRY: MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (MNRE)

- The ministry was established in 1992 as the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources. It adopted its current name in Oct 2006.
- The broad aim of the ministry is to develop and deploy new and renewable energy for supplementing the energy requirements of the country.
- The **mission** of the ministry is to ensure:
  1. Energy Security
  2. Increase the share of clean energy.
  3. Energy availability and access
  4. Energy Affordability
  5. Energy Equity

#### B) INDIAN RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IREDA)

- **Why in news?**
  - » The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted an 'Infrastructure Finance Company' status to IREDA in 2023.
  - » **IPO** of IREDA got successfully completed (2023)
- **About IREDA**
  - » IREDA is a mini Ratna (category-1) company under the administrative control of MNRE.
  - » It is a public limited government company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987. It is engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for setting up projects relating to new and renewable source of energy and energy efficiency/conservation with a **motto: "Energy Forever"**.

## 5) PROBLEM OF STORAGE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR

- Why is storage needed in renewable energy sector?
  - » Handling Intermittency and variability problem of renewable.
  - » Providing energy in non-solar/wind hours
- Various Storage options and their benefits and Limitations
  - i. Hydrogen based storage:
    - It is found feasible for long-term storage (cross seasons)
  - ii. Lithium-ion batteries: They are the ideal source for day-today storage.
  - iii. Pump Storage Plants:
    - India has a total capacity of about 4.7 GW (out of a worldwide capacity of 149 GW). The CEA estimates that India's storage potential is of 100 GW.
    - Concerns:
      - High investment cost
      - Long Gestation Periods
      - Non-remunerative pricing models
      - Lack of adequate sites having the required topography
      - India's expertise in pump storage plants is somewhat a suspect with the Tehri pump storage project yet to be commissioned though construction began in 2011 and was to be completed in 4.5 hours.
      - There may be environmental concerns associated with this kind of storage.
- In general, we can say that there are two main reasons for lack of storage capacities:
  - » Cost of storage technologies is still relatively high.
  - » Regulatory Framework for storage is not yet fully developed.
- Some initiatives to deal with these challenges:
  - i. Budget 2023:
    - Pumped Storage Projects have received a push with a detailed framework to be formulated.
    - 4 GWh Battery Energy Storage Systems supported through Viability Gap Funding (VGF).
  - ii. National Storage Mission launched in 2020 and wants to develop 100 GW of storage capacity by 2030.
  - iii. The Green Energy Corridor: These are corridors which will be used to transmit electricity from renewable energy projects to load centres. These will also include storage facilities.
  - iv. The National Battery Manufacturing Policy, launched in 2020, aims to promote the manufacturing of batteries in India. This will help to reduce the cost of storage technologies.

## 6) DECENTRALIZED RENEWABLE ENERGY/ DISTRIBUTED RENEWABLE ENERGY

- **Decentralized Renewable energy** refers to generation and distribution of renewable energy at a small and localized level, typically closer to the point of consumption. It can be generated via several renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, hydro and bioenergy.
  - » Currently, India has 12 mature technologies powered by DRE. These include high-capacity irrigation pumps, as well as micro-pumps, silk reeling machines, dryers, charkhas, small horticulture processors, small refrigerators/deep freezers, cold storages, vertical fodder growing institutions units, grain milling machines etc.
  - » The DRE technologies include solar run textile manufacturing units, biomass powered cold solar storages and micro solar pumps etc.
- **Key characteristics** include localized generation, distributed energy resource, Off-Grid or Mini-Grid Solutions;
- **Advantages:**
  - » **Environmentally sustainable**
  - » **Energy Security**
  - » **Inclusive Growth**
  - » **Scalability and Flexibility**
  - » **Job Creations**

### 3. SOLAR ENERGY

- **Introduction:**
  - » Though India missed the ambitious target of 100 GW of solar power generation capacity by 2022, we still need to keep working on expanding Solar Energy Capacity.
  - » As per the National Electricity Plan, India aims to reach a **target of 185.6 gigawatts** of solar capacity by the FY27.
- **Advantages of Solar Energy**
  - » Renewable Energy Advantages
  - » Solar's advantage over other renewable energy
    - Available during office hours
    - Longer life equipment
    - Low running cost
    - India's tropical climate is suitable for solar energy.
    - Less damaging than other renewables
  - » **Solar Energy is becoming more and more competitive.**

### 1) INITIATIVES

#### A) SCHEME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR PARKS AND ULTRA MEGA SOLAR POWER PROJECTS - CONCEIVED ON THE LINES OF "CHARANKA SOLAR PARK" -> ACT AS FLAGSHIP DEMONSTRATION FACILITY.

- **Goals/Program targets**
  - » It envisaged supporting states in setting up atleast **50 solar parks** ( capacity 500 MW and above) and **Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects** targeting over **40,000 MW** of solar power installed capacity within a span of 5 years starting from 2014-15.

- » The scheme envisages supporting the States/UTs in setting up solar parks at various locations in the country.
- **Provisions**
- » The solar parks provide solar power developers with a **plug and play model**, by facilitating suitable developed land with all clearances, transmission system, water access, road connectivity communication network, etc.
  - » All states and UTs are eligible for benefits under the scheme.
  - » **Central Financial Assistance**
    - (CFA) of Rs 25 Lakh per solar park for Detailed Project Report Preparation of the Solar Park, conducting surveys etc.
    - Besides this, CFA of up to Rs 20 Lakh per MW or 30% of the project cost, including Grid-connectivity cost, whichever is lower, is also provided on achieving the prescribed milestone in the scheme.
  - » **Update: June 2023:** The MNRE has extended the timeline for the 'Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects' Program to March 31st 2026 (FY26) from the earlier FY24.

#### **B) PM SURYA GHAR MUFT BIJLI YOJNA (FEB 2024)**

- The finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, announced the launch of the 'Rooftop Solar Scheme' or the 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana' in the 2024-25 budget.
- **Subsequently**, PM Modi launched the 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna'.
- **Solar panels** are installed in the houses under the scheme to supply power to households and additional money for excess electricity output.
  - The government will provide substantive subsidies directly to people's bank accounts and heavily concessional bank loans to ensure that there is no cost burden on the people.
  - The scheme will help poor middle class to save upto Rs 15,000 to Rs 18,000 annually by getting free solar electricity and selling surplus power to electricity distribution companies.
- **Aim:** Under this initiative government aims to install solar power panels in one crore homes throughout the country.

#### **C) PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN URJA SURAKSHA EVAM UTTAN MAHAABHIYAN (PM KUSUM)**

- It aims at providing water and energy security to farmers and enhancing their income by making Annadata also a Urjadata. It focuses on creation of 3 things - (A) Grid Connected Renewable solar power plants; (B) Installation of 20 lakh standalone Solar powered agri pumps; (C) Solarization of 10 lakh grid connected agri pumps.
- **Update:** In 2023, Government approved expansion of PM KUSUM with revised target of 49 lakhs pump to be installed/solarized under component B and C of the scheme.

#### **D) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE**

#### **E) NEW INNOVATION: FLOATING SOLAR PLANTS**

(for e.g. the 100 MW plant at NTPC Ramagundam commissioned in July 2022) is being set up in various parts of the countries. It brings advantages like no land acquisition requirements, water conservation (less evaporation of water), less dust on power panel etc.

## F) NATIONAL PROGRAM ON HIGH EFFICIENCY SOLAR PV MODULES

- It is a PLI scheme which aims to build an ecosystem for manufacturing of high efficiency solar PV modules in India, and thus reduce import dependence in the area of Renewable energy. It will strengthen Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative and generate employment.
- Tranche-II of the PLI scheme was approved by cabinet in Sep 2022

## G) PROMOTING COMPETITION AMONG STATES: SARAL INDEX BY MNRE

## H) SKILL DEVELOPMENT: SURYAMITRA SCHEME

### 4. WIND ENERGY

- **Current Wind Energy Situation in India**
  - » India has made significant progress in the development of wind energy and has emerged as the fourth largest producer in the world with a total capacity of 42 GW as of Feb 2023.
  - » But India did miss the target of achieving 60GW capacity by 2022.
- **Target:**
  - » 140 GW by 2030
- **India's Potential:**
  - » As per National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) in Chennai, India has a much higher wind power potential. At a hub height of 120 meters, the potential is of 602 GW of onshore and 100 GW of fixed and floating offshore. A very remarkable fact is that half of the potential is located in wastelands.

### 2) NATIONAL WIND MISSION (NWM): LAUNCHED IN 2015 AS PART OF NAPCC

#### Aims and Objective

- » To achieve the target of 60 GW by 2022 with an investment of 10 lakh crore (target was missed)
- » Make India a global leader in wind power, by creating conditions conducive for its diffusion across the country in a time bound manner

### 3) OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

#### What is offshore wind energy?

- » It refers to deployment of wind farms inside the water bodies. They utilize the sea wind to generate electricity. These wind farms either use fixed foundation turbines or floating wind turbines.

- A fixed foundation turbine is built on shallow water, whereas a floating wind turbine is built in deeper waters where its foundation is anchored in sea-bed. Floating wind farms are still in infancy.
- **Target:** MNRE has set a target of installing 30GW by 2030.
- **India's offshore wind energy potential:**
  - » MNRE: India can generate 127 GW of offshore wind energy with its 7,600 km of coastline. Other sources mention it to be (World Bank Report - 195 GW (112 fixed and 83 floating);
- **Advantages of offshore wind energy parks:**
  - » Renewable Energy
  - » No land acquisition and land scarcity issues
  - » Offshore wind turbines are more efficient compared to onshore ones (wind speed over water bodies is high and is consistent in direction)
- **Steps Taken**
  1. In June 2022, MNRE has decided to bid out offshore wind energy blocks.
  2. A Revised Strategy for development of offshore wind energy projects has been issued in Sep 2023.
    - It indicates a bidding trajectory for installation of 37 GW capacity of offshore wind energy.
  3. The **offshore wind energy lease rules, 2023**: To regulate the allocation of offshore wind sea blocks to developers have been notified.
  4. **National Offshore Wind Energy Policy, 2015**
    - Nodal Ministry MNRE has been authorized for use of offshore areas within EEZ of the country
    - National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) has been authorized as Nodal agency for development of offshore wind energy in the country and to carry out allocation of offshore wind energy blocks, coordination and allied functions with related ministries and agencies.
    - National Targets for offshore wind energy capacity has been set at 5 GW by 2022 and 30 GW by 2030.

## 5. BIOFUELS

- **Introduction**
  - » Biofuel is a fuel that is produced through contemporary biological processes, such as agriculture and anaerobic digestion, rather than fuel produced by geological processes such as those involved in the formation of fossil fuels.
  - » They are made from recently grown biomass (plant or animal matter). They are **renewable** because the source is continuously replenished.
    - E.g. Biogas, bioethanol, biodiesel etc.
  - » **Biogas** is the biofuel produced through anaerobic digestion of organic waste.

- » **Bioethanol** is an alcohol made by fermentation, mostly from carbohydrates produced in sugar or starch crops such as corn, sugarcane, or sweet sorghum.
  - **Cellulosic biomass**, derived from non-food sources, such as trees and grasses, is also being developed as a feedstock for ethanol production.
  - **Ethanol** can be used as a fuel for vehicles in its pure form, but it is usually used as a gasoline additive to increase octane and improve vehicle emission.
- **Generations of Biofuel (3 important)**
  - i. **1G Biofuel:** They are produced directly from food crops such as wheat, sugar, vegetable oil and even animal fat etc.
    - Advantages includes known simple tech, cost competitiveness with fossil fuels etc.
    - Criticisms include food vs fuel debate etc.
    - They are also known as conventional biofuels. Most common first generation bio fuels include:
      - **Biodiesel:** Extraction of vegetable oils (both edible and non-edible), with or without esterification, from seeds of plants like soybean, rape (canola) and sunflower.
      - **Bio-Ethanol:** Fermentation of simple sugar from sugar crops (sugarcane) or starch crops (corn, wheat etc).
        - It accounts for around 2/3rd of total biofuel production in the country.
      - **Bio-Gas:** Anaerobic fermentation of organic waste and crop residue as energy crops.
  - ii. **2G Biofuels:** Produced from non-food organic crops such as wood, organic waste, food crop waste and specific biomass crops. It includes use of non-food-crops technologies like **jatropha-based fuels**.
    - The advantages include use of wasteland, less impact on food security.
    - There are some limitations including high capital cost, advanced conversion technologies etc.
    - One well known second-generation technology is Lignocellulosic processing which uses forest material.
  - iii. **3G Biofuels:** The source is based on improvements in the production of biomass.
    - They are produced from micro-organisms like algae
    - Algae act as low cost, high-energy and entirely renewable feedstock. It has impressive diversity and higher yield. Advantages include the ease of generating the biomass anywhere where sunlight and carbon is present.
    - Third generation biofuel has the potential to be more sustainable and have a lower environmental impact than first and second generation biofuels.
    - Some limitations include still developing tech, high technology cost, some poisonous algae etc.
  - iv. **4th and 5th Generation Biofuels**
    - A. **Fourth Generation:**
      - It takes the advantage of biotechnology to engineer special crops such as algae (sometimes called oilgae) for biomass production. The aim is to engineer

microorganisms to produce biofuels more efficiently, with higher yields, and with lower environmental impacts.

### B. 5th Generation Biofuels

- They are known as **electrofuels**. They are produced from microbial synthesis using renewable energy sources. In this process, micro-organisms use electricity as an energy source to convert carbondioxide into liquid fuels, such as ethanol or butanol.

**Note:** 4th Generation and 5th Generation Biofuels are in the early stage of development.

- **Current Capabilities:**
  - As of Feb 2023, India has a biofuel power generation capacity of 10.77 GW.
  - According to International Energy Agency (IEA), India is expected to overtake China to become third largest producer of ethanol by 2023.
    - Note: USA is the largest ethanol producer in the world accounting for 46% of global production and 2nd largest in biodiesel production accounting for 19% of the production.
- **Targets:**
  - **National Biofuel Policy, 2018** (as amended in 2021): Country wide blending target of 20% ethanol by 2025 and 5% biodiesel by 2030.
- **Advantages of Biofuels**
  - i. **Renewable and Energy Security**
  - ii. **Fighting Pollution:**
  - iii. **Lesser impact on climate change.**
  - iv. **Can Promote sustainable agriculture:**
  - v. **Increase farmer's income**
  - vi. **Sanitation**
  - vii. **Reduces Import Dependency and saving foreign exchange**
- **Some Criticisms:**
  - **Land Use**
  - **Food Security Issues**
  - **Water Challenges**
- **Steps taken by government to support biofuels.**
  - i. **National Policy on Biofuels, 2018**
  - ii. **Pradhan Mantri Ji-Van Yojana (PMJY)**
  - iii. **Oil CPSEs are setting up 2G ethanol bio-refineries** in the country at Panipat (Haryana), Bathinda (Punjab), Numaligarh (Assam), Bargarh (Odisha) and one demonstration project at Panipat..
  - iv. **EBP and associated steps**
  - v. **National Bio-Energy Program (FY 2021-22 to 2025-26):**
    - It comprises of the following schemes:
      1. **Waste to Energy Programme (Program on Energy from Urban, Industrial, and Agricultural Wastes/ Residues)** to support setting up of large biogas, BioCNG, and Power Plants (excluding MSW to Power projects)

2. **Biomass Programme** (*Scheme to support manufacturing of Briquettes & Pellets and Promotion of Biomass (non-bagasse) based congregation in Industries*) to support setting up of pellets and briquettes for use in power generation and non-bagasse-based power generation projects.
  3. **Biogas Programme** to support setting up family and medium Biogas in rural areas.
- vi. **Biogas Promotion**
- vii. **Advisory to carmakers to introduce flexible fuel engines in Vehicles:**
- viii. **International Collaboration:** For e.g. the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) is one of the top priorities under India's G20 presidency.
- Brazil, India and the USA, as leading biofuel producers and consumers of the world have agreed to work together towards the development of this alliance along with other interested countries.
  - This alliance will work towards facilitating cooperation and intensifying the use of sustainable biofuels, including in the transportation sector.

## 1) ETHANOL BLENDING

- **What is Ethanol Blending?**
  - Process of mixing ethanol with Petrol is called Ethanol blending. The mixture is called as Ethanol Fuel/ Gasohol which is considered as a quasi-renewable energy.
  - In India, the practice of blending ethanol was started in 2001. Ethanol blending was first time mentioned in the Auto Fuel Policy of 2003.
- **Benefits of Ethanol Blending**
  - Reduces vehicular emissions especially CO (Carbon Monoxides) emissions.
  - It is cheaper than petrol as it is easier to manufacture.
  - It reduces our import dependency.
    - Trade balance, foreign exchange etc.
  - Ethanol has higher octane rating than ethanol-free petrol
  - In case of India Ethanol production can generate higher sugarcane prices for farmers.
- **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Program** was launched by the Government in **2003**, and was aimed at promoting 5% blending of molasses-based ethanol with petrol, to promote the use of alternative and environment friendly fuels, to reduce import dependency for energy requirements and to increase value addition to Sugar industry enabling them to clear cane price arrears of farmers.
- **Target for Ethanol blending of Petrol was 10% by 2022 and 20% by 2030.**
- **Allowing conversion of surplus stock of rice with FCI and Maize to Ethanol.**
  - In June 2021, central government allocated 78,000 tonnes of rice from FCI for ethanol production.
- **Cabinet** keeps on reviewing the prices for procurement of ethanol by Public sector Oil Marketing Companies, to ensure better prices for farmers.

## 2) NATIONAL POLICY ON BIOFUELS

- **Why in news?**
  - » Cabinet approves amendments to National Policy on Biofuels to make India energy independent by 2047. (May 2022)
- **Aims**
  - » Reduce India's oil import dependency.
  - » Provide better income opportunities to farmers by helping them dispose of their surplus stock in economic manner.
- **Key Highlights**
  - » Aim (as amended in 2021): Country wide blending target of 20% ethanol by 2025 and 5% biodiesel by 2030
  - » **Categorization of Biofuels to enable extension of appropriate financial and fiscal incentives under each category.**
    1. **Basic Biofuels** viz. First Generation (1G) bioethanol and biodiesel
    2. **Advanced Biofuels** - Second Generation (2G) Ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G biofuels), bio-CNG etc.
  - » **Expands the scope of raw material for ethanol production.**
    - Allowing use of sugarcane juice, sugar containing materials like Sugar Beet, Sweet Sorghum, starch containing materials like Corn, Cassava, Damaged Food grains like wheat, broken rice, Rotten Potatoes unfit for human consumption for ethanol production.
  - » **Allows use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol** for blending with petrol
  - » **A VGF for 2G Ethanol bio-refineries** of Rs 5,000 crore in 6 years in addition to additional tax incentives, higher purchase price as compared to 1G biofuels.
  - » The new policy encourages setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds, used cooking oil, short gestation crops.
  - » **Specifies the role of all the concerned ministries/ Departments** with respect to biofuels
- **2022 Amendment:**
  - » Advance the deadline to reach the blending target of 20% bioethanol in petrol, from 2030 to 2025-26.
    - It will promote the production of biofuels in the country, under the Make in India program, by units located in SEZs/Export Oriented Units (EOUs).
  - » Make additional feedstocks eligible for the production of biofuels.

## 3) PRADHAN MANTRI JI-VAN (JAIV INDHAN VATAVARAN ANUKOOL FASAL AWASHESH NIVARAN) YOJANA

- **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**

- **Key Highlights**
  - » The Yojana provides **financial support (VGF)** to Integrated Bioethanol Plant using Lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock.
  - » Under the yojana, **12 commercial scale** and **10 demonstration scale Second Generation (2G)** ethanol projects will be provided with VGF support in two phases:
    - **Phase-I (2018-19 to 2022-23):** wherein six commercial projects and five demonstration projects will be supported.
    - **Phase-II (2020-21 to 2023-24):** wherein remaining six commercial projects and five demonstration projects will be supported.
  - » **Financial Outlay:** 1969.50 crore for the period from 2018-19 to 2023-24.
  - » The ethanol produced by the scheme will be mandatorily supplied to OMCs to further enhance the blending percentage under EBP program.
  - » **Centre for High Technology (CHT), a technical body under the aegis of MoP&NG,** will be the **implementation Agency** for the scheme. The Project developers interested in availing benefits of the scheme, shall be submitting their proposal for review by Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of MoP&NG. Projects recommended by SAC shall be approved by Steering Committee of MoP&NG under the chairmanship of Secretary, MoP&NG
- **Significance**
  - **Incentivize 2G Ethanol Sector** by setting up commercial and demonstration projects
  - **Increased R&D** in the sector.

#### 4) WORLD BIOFUEL DAY: 10TH OF AUG

- **The day is observed to show the importance of fossil fuels.**
- **History:**
  - It is celebrated in remembrance of Sir Rudolf Diesel, who created diesel engine.
    - On Aug 8, 1893, he successfully used peanut oil to run a mechanical engine for the first time. With this, he was able to foresee the possibility that fossil fuels could be replaced by vegetable oil as a practical source of energy in the coming century.
    - the day is marked by the inventor of the diesel engine, Sri Rudolf Diesel who was the first one to predict the chance of vegetable oil being replaced by fossil fuels.
  - **2022 theme: '*Biofuels for Sustainability and Rural Income*'.**
  - **2023 theme:** No official theme was announced - the day was celebrated with 2022 theme only.

#### 5) E-100 PILOT PROJECTS:

- **Launched at Pune City by Public Sector OMCs on 5th June 2021**
- **To facilitate sale of E-100 fuel.**

- MoP&NG vide its order dated March 22, 2021 has amended the Motor Spirit and High Speed Diesel (Regulation of Supply, Distribution and Prevention of Malpractices) Order, 2005 by permitting the direct sale of Bio-Ethanol (E100) by an oil company for use as standalone fuel or blending with motor spirit, for compatible automobiles to all consumers, in accordance with the standards specified by the Bureau of India Standards (BIS).

## 6) BIOGAS PRODUCTION OF FAT-RICH SLUDGE

- Researchers at **CSIR-CFTRI Mysore** have developed a novel high performance bioreactor system integrated with sustainable pre-treatment process for enabling anaerobic digestion of complex fat-rich sludge from dairy industry. It has further been integrated with membrane bioreactor based-wastewater treatment to enable zero liquid discharge in the dairy industry.
- It can also be applied for anaerobic digestion of complex solid waste containing Fats and oils and can be coupled with wastewater treatment to enable Zero liquid discharge.
- **Dairy and food industry** are likely industries that can take up the technology. The technology will also be applicable for any biodegradable waste sludge and food waste from any food industry as well as food industry wastewaters.

## 7) NATIONAL BIOENERGY PROGRAM

- **Why in news?**
  - MNRE notifies National Bio-Energy Program (Nov 2022)
- **Details**
  - MNRE has continued the National Bio-Energy Program for the period **FY2021-22 to 2025-26**. The program has been recommended for implementation in two phases.
  - **Phase-1** of the program has been approved with a budget outlay of Rs 858 crores.
  - **The NBP** will comprise of following sub schemes:
    - Waste to Energy Program:** (*Programme on Energy from Urban, Industrial and Agricultural Wastes /Residues*) to support setting up of large Biogas, BioCNG and Power plants (excluding MSW to Power projects). IREDA will be implementing agency for the program.
    - Biomass Programme:** (*Scheme to Support Manufacturing of Briquettes & Pellets and Promotion of Biomass (non-bagasse) based cogeneration in Industries*) to support setting up of pellets and briquettes for use in power generation and non-bagasse based power generation project.
    - Biogas Programme:** To support setting up of family and medium size biogas in rural areas.

## 8) BIOGAS

- **Why in news?**

- Budget 2023-24 had announced setting up of 500 biogas plant across the country under the Gobardhan Scheme. Of these 75 plants were to be set up in urban areas.
    - Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 42 plants with a total capacity of 6,213 tonnes per day (TPD) at a cost of Rs 1,082 crore had been approved and the remaining proposal would be cleared soon (April 2023)
- The biogas plants can generate biogas from organic substances like cattle dung, night soil, and biomass from the Kitchen, garden, farms and other such bio-degradable material. This biogas is generated through a process called anaerobic digestion (AD).
- **Advantages of Biogas:**
  - **Renewable and Sustainable** (+ plus other related advantages -> energy security, reduced import dependency etc.)
  - **Reduction in Greenhouse emission:**
  - **Waste Management:** Organic waste gets converted into energy and leads to environmental cleanliness.
  - **Versatility:** Biogas can be used for cooking, heating, transportation etc.
  - **Rural Development and Employment** - Energy source in rural areas leads to these advantages
- **Key challenges:**
  - Level of waste segregation still leaves a lot to desire.
  - Maintenance of biogas plants and other equipment have remained an issue.
- **Steps taken to Promote Bio-gas.**
  1. **Gobar Dhan Yojana** (announced in Budget 2018-19)
    - Galvanizing Organic Bio Agro Resources - Dhan (GOBAR-Dhan) focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to compost, bio gas and bio CNG. The scheme aims to collect waste and solid waste from farmers to sell to entrepreneurs, who thereafter produce manure, biogas, and bio-CNG from the waste. Thus, the scheme connect farmers to buyers.
    - Government has also announced an online trading platform to connect to buyers of agri-waste facilitating the GOBAR-dhan scheme.
    - Ministry: Ministry of Jal Shakti
  2. **Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan (June 2023)**
    - Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched the Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan. It will act a one stop repository to access investment and participation in Biogas/CBG sector at Pan India level and more importantly streamline the process of setting up CBG/Biogas plants in India.
  3. **National Biogas and Manure Management Program (NBMMMP)** aims to set up family type biogas plants.
    - By MNRE.
    - It is a central sector scheme with an aim to setting up family type biogas plants for providing biogas as clean cooking fuel and a source of lighting primarily set up for rural and semi-urban households.

## 9) BIO CNG (ALSO KNOWN AS COMPRESSED BIOGAS)

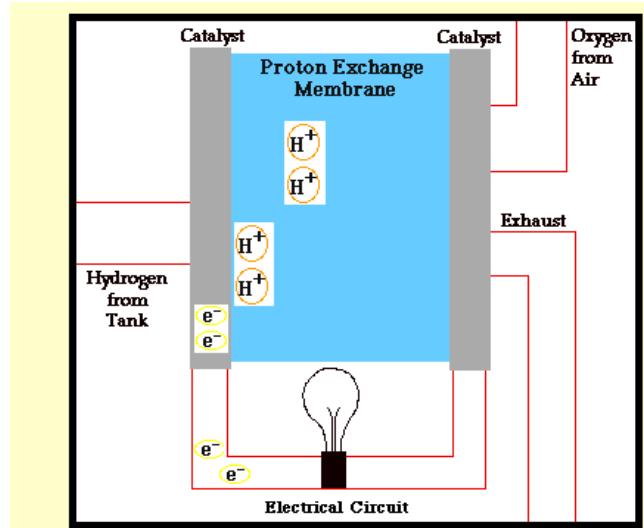
- BioCNG, also known as biomethane, is a renewable and clean-burning transformation fuel produced by upgrading biogas to natural gas quality. It's essentially purified biogas, made from organic materials like: Agriculture waste, food waste, and Sewage Sludge.
- It is an upgraded version of biogas (the dung-based version of which serves as cooking fuel in many villages in India).
- **How Bio-CNG is produced?**
  - » **Pre-Treatment:** The waste is passed through a filter to remove hard material like Coconut shells and pieces of wood.
  - » **Shredding:** the waste is shredded in a hammer mill and made into a slurry with water.
  - » **Hydrolysis:** The slurry is kept in the pre-digestor tank in aerobic conditions for one-two days to attract microbes - the process is called **hydrolysis**.
  - » **Methanogenesis:** After hydrolysis the slurry is transferred to anaerobic digestor where it is retained for 20-25 days. It is during methanogenesis that biogas is generated. This gas contains 65% methane, while the rest is Hydrogen Sulphide, carbondioxide, and water vapour.
  - » **Purification:** The above gas is passed through a wet and dry scrubber to remove hydrogen Sulphide and CO<sub>2</sub>. Methane, purified upto 95% is obtained here which is then compressed at high pressure in cylinders and send to filling stations. This highly purified methane is similar in chemical properties to CNG derived from petroleum sources and can thus be used in vehicles.
- **Advantages:**
  - » **Renewable**
  - » **Swatch Bharat**
  - » **Fighting Air Pollution:**
  - » **Strengthening Rural Economy, organic farming -> More income to farmers and More jobs in rural areas**
  - » **Decentralized energy** as it is produced closest to the point of consumption.
  - » **No Intermittency** like solar and wind as CBG could be produced at all hours.
- **Limitation:**
  - » **Maintenance cost** of Bio-CNG based vehicles is higher.
  - » Further, users have complained that calorific value of Bio-CNG is lower than CNG as it contains moisture.
  - » **Biogas plants** are also sometimes seen as methane bombs as any emission or leak from digestor or pipelines can contribute to climate change significantly.
- **Government Initiatives:**
  - » **SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transport) Initiative:**
    - Launched in 2018, it aims to promote production and use of Bio-CNG (Compressed Bio-GAS) in India. Under it, government sets up compressed Bio Gas (CBG) production plants and make available CBG in the market for use in automotive sector.
  - » **National Bio-Energy Program** (FY 2021-22 to 2025-26)

- » **Compressed Biogas (CBG) Blending Obligation (CBO)** - Government has announced a phased compulsory blending obligation of CBG in CNG and PNG segments of the City Gas Distribution (CGD) sector in Oct 2023.
  - CBO is voluntary till 2025 and mandatory obligation will start from FY26.
  - It shall be 1% (FY26), 3% (FY27) and 4% (FY28) respectively.
  - It shall be 5% for FY29 onwards.
- » Asia's largest compressed bio gas plant was inaugurated in Sangrur by Union Minister Hardeep S. Puri.

## 6. HYDROGEN FUEL

### 1) HYDROGEN FUEL CELLS

- **Introduction**
  - » Hydrogen is the simplest fuel. A fuel cell combines hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity, heat and water.
- **Fuel Cell**
  - » A fuel cell is a device that converts chemical potential energy (energy stored in the molecular bonds) into electrical energy.
    - A Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) cell uses hydrogen ( $H_2$ ), and Oxygen ( $O_2$ ) as fuel.
    - The products of the reaction are water, electricity and heat.
- **Key Elements of a fuel cell**
  - » The anode, the negative electrode of the fuel cell, conducts the electrons that are fed from the hydrogen molecule so that they can be used in the external circuit.
  - » The Cathode, the positive post of the fuel cell, has channels etched into that distribute the oxygen to all surface of the catalyst. It also conducts electrons back from the external circuit to the catalyst, where they can recombine with hydrogen ion and oxygen to form water.
  - » The electrolyte is a proton exchange membrane. This specially treated material, which looks something like ordinary kitchen plastic wrap, only conducts positively charged ions. The membrane blocks electrons.
  - » The catalyst is a special material that facilitates the reaction of oxygen & hydrogen. It is usually made up of platinum nano particles very thinly coated onto carbon paper or clothe.
- **How does a fuel cell work**



- » Hydrogen from a tank onboard the vehicle, enters into anode side of the fuel cell.
- » Oxygen pulled from air enters from cathode side
- As the hydrogen molecule encounters the membrane, a **catalyst** forces it to split into electron and proton
  - » The proton moves through fuel cell stack and the electron follows an external circuit, delivering current to the electric motor and other vehicle components.
  - » At cathode side, the proton and electron join again, and they combine with oxygen to form the vehicle's only tailpipe emission, water.
- **Advantages of Hydrogen Fuel Cell**
  - » Fuel cell **avoids the "thermal bottleneck"** (a consequence of 2nd law of thermodynamics) and are thus inherently **more efficient than combustion engines**, which must first convert chemical potential energy into heat, and then mechanical energy.
  - » Hydrogen is high in energy.
  - » Fuel cells **don't have any moving part** and thus are more reliable than traditional engines.
  - » **No pollution** (Only steam ( $H_2O$ ) emitted as by product)
  - » **No Greenhouse gas and Climate Change** (since no GHG are produced as biproducts)
  - » **Ends dependency of Li-Ion batteries** (Please note for Lithium we are almost completely import dependent)
- **Limitation**
  - » Complex and difficult to build
  - » Still mostly in research phase
  - » Extracting hydrogen is difficult and expensive - **catalyst used is Platinum**- which is very expensive.

## 2) FUEL-CELL ELECTRIC VEHICLES (FCEVs)

- FCEV combine hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity which runs the motor.
  - E.g.s of cars using FCEV: Toyota's Mirai, Honda's Clarity, and Hyundai's Nexo.
- Since they are powered entirely by electricity, FCEVs are considered EVs, but unlike BEVs, their range and refueling processes are comparable to conventional cars and trucks.
  - The **major difference** between a BEV and a refueling time of just five minutes, compared to 30-45 mins charging for a BEV.
  - Also, consumers get five times better energy storage per unit volume and weight, which frees up a lot of space for other things, while allowing the rider to go farther.
- India's first indigenously developed Hydrogen Fuel Cell (HFC) technology bus was unveiled in Aug 2023, with the fuel cell - which uses hydrogen and air to generate electricity onboard to power the bus - being developed jointly by CSIR and Pune based automotive software company KPIT Ltd (Aug 2023)

## 3) TYPES OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES: EV/BEV, HEV, PHEV, FCEV

- **Electric Vehicles:** The standard EV is also known as **Battery powered EV (BEV)**:

- They don't have an internal combustion engine and instead of an petrol/diesel, these vehicles run solely on battery power. These can be charged at home or commercial charging stations.
- **Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs)**: They run on both Internal Combustion Engines and electric motor that uses energy stored in a battery. However, unlike other EVs, HEV cars battery is charged by regenerative braking.
  - **Micro (or mild) Hybrid** uses both battery and electric motor to make the car run. Though they can't run solely on electric power, they maximize fuel economy by shutting off the internal combustion engine during complete stops.
- **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV)**: They expand the concept of HEVs. They have both an internal combustion engine and a battery powered electric motor. This allows the battery to store enough power to feed the electric motor and in turn decrease the gas usage by as much as 60%. They can travel around 60 kms on electric power, rather than 2-3 kms with a standard HEVs.
- **FCEV**: already discussed above.

## 4) HYDROGEN ENERGY

- **Hydrogen Energy** is a clean and efficient form of energy derived from Hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>). It has the potential to replace fossil fuels.
  - » Hydrogen can be produced from variety of sources including water, natural gas, and biomass.
  - » There are two main ways to produce Hydrogen:
    - Steam Reforming**: This process uses heat and steam to break down natural gas into hydrogen and carbon mono-oxide.
    - Electrolysis**: This process uses electricity to split water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen.
  - » **Cost of producing hydrogen** varies depending on the various methods used.
- It can be used in two primary ways:
  - » **Direct Burning** to produce heat and water
  - » **Fuel Cell Route** to directly produce electricity.
- **Advantages of Hydrogen Fuel**:
  - » **Abundance**: It is the most abundant element in the Universe.
  - » **Energy Density** -> High
  - » **Can contribute in achieving Net Zero by 2050**
  - » **No Pollution** (only releases water)
  - » **Leading options for storing energy from renewables**
  - » **Advantages of Hydrogen Vehicles (Fuel cell Stack)** over other **Electric Vehicles (Lithium-ion batteries)**
    - A fuel cell electric vehicle can be refueled in just 5 minutes. EV takes 30-45 minutes for charging.
    - Energy storage per unit volume and weight is higher in fuel cells than other types of electric vehicles.
    - EV battery materials are controlled by a few larger players. Scaled up hydrogen fuel cell will bring countries on equal footing.
    - EV batteries (like Lithium ion batteries) have still not been found viable for heavy vehicles like trucks.

- **Some limitations of Hydrogen fuel**
  - » Hydrogen molecule is not available in abundance on earth and is found in combination with other elements.
  - » Hydrogen technology is "yet to be scaled up". Tesla CEO Elon Musk has called fuel cell technology "mind-bogglingly stupid".
  - » **Lack of fueling station infrastructure**
    - There are fewer than 500 operational hydrogen stations in the world today, mostly in Europe.
  - » **Safety is a concern**
    - Hydrogen is pressurized and stored in a cryogenic engine. Some companies like Toyota and Hyundai have said that safety and reliability of hydrogen fuel tanks is similar to that of standard CNG engines.

#### A) NOTE: VARIOUS TYPES OF HYDROGEN:

- The most common element in nature is not found freely. It exists only combined with other elements, and has to be extracted from naturally occurring compounds like water (which is a combination of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom). This process is energy intensive.
  - **Grey Hydrogen**
    - Hydrogen produced from fossil fuels. This constitutes a bulk of hydrogen produced today.
  - **Blue Hydrogen**
    - Hydrogen generated from fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage options
  - **Green Hydrogen**
    - Hydrogen generated entirely from renewable power sources. Here electricity generated from renewable energy is used to split water into hydrogen and oxygen.
    - For e.g. a IIT-Madras team generated hydrogen from seawater using solar energy. (June 2023)

#### 5) NATIONAL HYDROGEN MISSION

- **Ministry:** MNRE
- With a vision to make India an energy independent nation, and to decarbonize critical sectors, the Government approved National Green Hydrogen Mission on Jan 4, 2023 with an initial outlay of Rs 19744 crores upto 2029-30.
- The mission will facilitate demand creation, production, utilization, and export of Green Hydrogen and mobilization of Rs 8 lakh crores of investment by 2030.
- **Likely Outcomes by 2030:**
  1. **Green Hydrogen Production Capacity** of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne) per annum.
  2. **Reduction in fossil fuel imports** by over Rs 1 lakh crores and creation of over 6 lakh jobs.
  3. **Renewable Energy Capacity Addition** of about 125 GW and abatement of nearly 50 MMT of annual GHG emissions.

- **Interventions:**
  1. Under the **Strategic Interventions of Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Program**, two distinct financial incentive mechanisms - targeting domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers and production of Green Hydrogen - will be provided under the mission.
  2. **Regions capable of supporting large scale production and/or utilization of hydrogen** to be developed as **Green Hydrogen Hubs**.
  
- **Policy Framework:**
  1. **Development of an enabling policy framework** to support establishment of **Green Hydrogen Ecosystem**.
  2. **Robust Standards and Regulations Framework**
  3. **Public Private Partnership framework** for R&D (**Strategic Hydrogen Innovation Partnership - SHIP**) will also be facilitated under the mission.
  4. **Skill Development Program**
  
- **Several Pilot Projects** by PSUs like OIL, NTPC etc. have been initiated for the production of Green Hydrogen.

## 6) GOVERNMENT UNVEILS GREEN HYDROGEN STANDARDS (AUG 2023)

- It outlines the emission threshold for production of hydrogen that can be classified as 'green'.
  - » Well-to-gate emission of not more than 2 kg CO<sub>2</sub> for per Kg H<sub>2</sub>.
    - The well-to-gate emission include water treatment, electrolysis, gas purification, drying and compression of Hydrogen.
    - The scope of the definition encompasses both electrolysis based and biomass-based hydrogen production methods.
  - » A detailed methodology of measurement, reporting, monitoring, on-site verification and certification of green hydrogen and its derivatives will be specified by the Ministry of new and renewable energy.
  - » Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the MoP will be the nodal authority for accreditation of agencies for the monitoring, verification, and certification of green hydrogen production projects.
- **Significance:**
  - » The definition of green hydrogen brings a lot of clarity to the mission of making India a global green hydrogen hub.

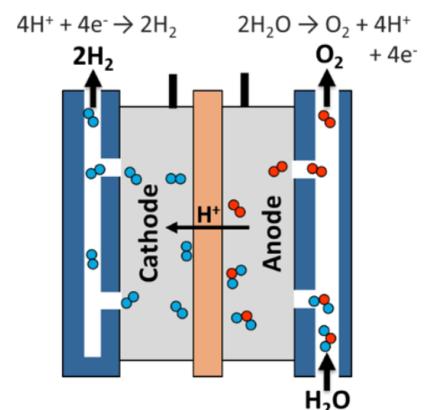
## 7) ELECTROLYSERS

- Electrolysers are a critical technology for the production of low-emission hydrogen from renewable or nuclear electricity.

» **Note:** Electrolysis is the process of using electricity to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. This reaction takes place in a unit called an Electrolysers.

- How does it work?

» Like fuel cells, Electrolysers consist of an anode and a cathode separated by electrolyte. Different electrolyzers function in different ways, mainly due to the different type of electrolyte material involved in the iconic species it conducts.



- The cost of electrolyzers and electricity (fuel) make up the largest share of the production cost, and thus developing more efficient electrolyzers will give a major boost to green hydrogen generation in India.

## 8) HYDROGEN CNG (H-CNG)

- In Sep 2020, MoRT&H has notified hydrogen-enriched compressed natural gas (CNG) as an automobile fuel.
- In Oct 2020, **Delhi became the first city in India to operate buses running on hydrogen spiked compressed natural gas (H-CNG)** in a six month pilot project.
  - The buses are running on a new technology patented by Indian Oil Cooperation for producing H-CNG - **18% hydrogen in CNG - directly from natural gas** without resorting to conventional blending.
- **What is H-CNG?**
  - It is a hydrogen enriched compressed natural gas. The ideal hydrogen concentration is 18%.
    - In **Delhi**, instead of physically blending hydrogen with CNG, hydrogen spiked CNG will be produced using a compact reforming process patented by IOC.
- **Advantages of H-CNG over CNG**
  - **Less Air Pollution**
    - Emits 70% less CO;
    - Reduces total hydrocarbons emissions by around 15% and increases fuel efficiency by 3-4%.
  - **Increases fuel efficiency**
  - **Higher power output**
- **Updates in Sep 2021**
  - **CNG to HCNG model 'Capital intensive'**; Delhi government unlikely to scale up pilot project.

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# TARGET PRELIMS 2024

## BOOKLET-29

### INTERNATIONAL MAPPING AND PLACES IN NEWS-1

### AUSTRALIA, ASIA AND EUROPE

#### Table of Contents

1)	Basics .....	0
A)	Strait.....	0
B)	Isthmus .....	1
2)	Countries through which Equator passes ....	1
3)	Tropic of Cancer Countries.....	2
4)	Tropic of Capricorn Countries .....	3
5)	Berring Strait.....	3
6)	Oceania .....	4
7)	Palau .....	5
8)	Tuvalu .....	5
9)	New Caledonia .....	6
10)	Torres Strait .....	7
11)	Cook Strait .....	7
12)	Mariana Trench .....	7
13)	East Asia – Summary of Water Bodies ....	8
14)	Kamchatka Peninsula .....	8
15)	Klyuchevskaya Sopka Volcano:.....	9
16)	Kuril KamChatka Trench: .....	9
17)	Kuril Islands.....	9
18)	Vladivostok .....	10
19)	Japan .....	10
20)	Fukushima .....	11
21)	Sea of Japan .....	11
22)	East China Sea .....	11
23)	Taiwan and Taiwan Strait.....	12
24)	South China Sea .....	12
25)	Malacca Strait and Singapore Strait.....	13
26)	China .....	13
27)	Gobi Desert.....	14
28)	Imp Rivers of China: Yellow River (Huang He); YangTZE River; Pearl River.....	14
29)	Mekong River.....	15
30)	Kra Canal.....	15
31)	Borneo Island.....	16
32)	Indonesia .....	16
33)	Kalimantan .....	16
34)	Sabang .....	16
35)	Mount Sinabung .....	17
36)	Anak Krakatoa Volcano .....	17
37)	Mt Sameru Volcano.....	18
38)	Merapi Volcano.....	18

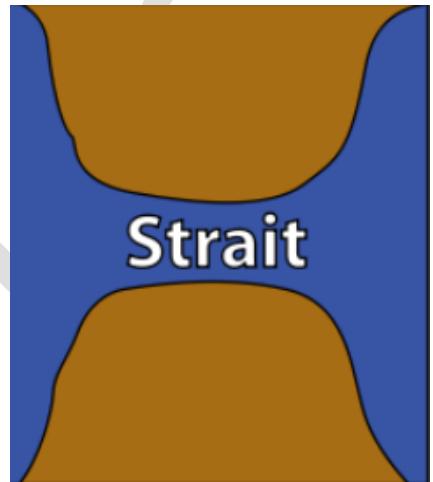
39)	Mount Agung / Gunung Agung .....	19	73)	Sea of Galilee .....	38
40)	Mt. Ille Lewotolok .....	19	74)	Jordon River .....	38
41)	Coral Triangle .....	19	75)	Jordon Rift Valley .....	39
42)	Myanmar .....	19	76)	Dead Sea .....	39
43)	Sittwe Port .....	20	77)	Turkiye (Old Name Turkey) .....	39
44)	Rakhine State .....	20	78)	<b>Turkey Syria 2023 Earthquake .....</b>	<b>41</b>
45)	Bhashan Char Island .....	20	A)	Earthquake Basics: Richter Scale vs Mercalli Scale	42
46)	Afghanistan.....	21	79)	Syria.....	42
47)	Panjshir Valley .....	21	80)	Levant.....	42
48)	Bamyan Valley .....	21	81)	Black Sea.....	45
49)	Shatoot Dam .....	22	82)	Sea of Azov .....	45
50)	Central Asia.....	22	A)	Kerch Strait.....	45
51)	<b>Important Indian Ocean Countries:</b> .....	<b>23</b>	83)	Kerch Bridge (Crimean Bridge) .....	45
52)	Maldives .....	23	84)	Crimean Peninsula .....	46
A)	Addu City.....	24	85)	Ukraine .....	46
53)	Mauritius .....	24	86)	Mediterranean Sea .....	48
54)	Seychelles .....	25	87)	Aegean Sea .....	48
55)	Aldabra Atoll .....	25	88)	Adriatic Sea.....	48
56)	Russia.....	25	89)	Italy .....	49
57)	Caspian Sea .....	26	90)	Venice and Venetian Grand Canal .....	49
58)	South Caucasus Region.....	27	91)	Mount Etna .....	50
59)	West Asia .....	28	92)	River Volga.....	50
60)	Iran (Persia).....	29	93)	Danube River .....	50
61)	INSTC .....	30	94)	Rhine River .....	51
62)	Persian Gulf.....	31	95)	River Dnieper or Dnipro .....	51
63)	Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hormuz .....	31	96)	ALPS Mountain .....	52
64)	Qatar.....	32	97)	Baltic Sea .....	52
65)	Yemen.....	32	98)	<b>Nordic Countries .....</b>	<b>53</b>
66)	Sinai Peninsula .....	33	A)	Nordic Council .....	53
67)	Suez Canal.....	34	B)	SVALBARD (also known as Spitsbergen).....	53
68)	Red Sea .....	34	99)	Nord Stream .....	54
69)	City of Neom .....	34	100)	Scandinavian Countries.....	54
70)	<b>Israel-Palestine Conflict.....</b>	<b>35</b>	101)	ICELAND.....	54
A)	2023-24 Conflict Between Israel and Hamas.	36	102)	Greenland and water bodies around it .	55
71)	Israel - Palestine (West Bank) .....	37	103)	English Channel.....	56
72)	Golan Heights.....	37			

LevelupIAS

## 1) BASICS

### A) STRAIT

- A strait is a naturally formed, narrow, typically navigable waterway that connects two larger bodies of water. Most commonly, it is a channel of water bodies that lies between two large land masses.
- **Important Straits of the world:**
  - » Bering Strait (Bering Sea and Chuksi Sea)
  - » Malacca Strait (joins Andaman Sea and South China Sea)
  - » Sunda Strait (Java Sea and Indian Ocean)
  - » Palk Strait (Joins Palk Bay and Bay of Bengal)
  - » Bosphorus Strait (Black Sea and Marmara Sea)
  - » Bab-el-Mandeb Strait (Red Sea and Gulf of Aden)
  - » Dardenleez Strait (Marmara Sea and Aegean Sea)
  - » Yucatan strait (Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea)
  - » Mesina Strait (Mediterranean sea)
  - » Otranto Strait (Adriatic Sea - Ionian Sea)
  - » Davis Strait (Baffin Bay & Atlantic Ocean)



Diagrammatic map of a strait



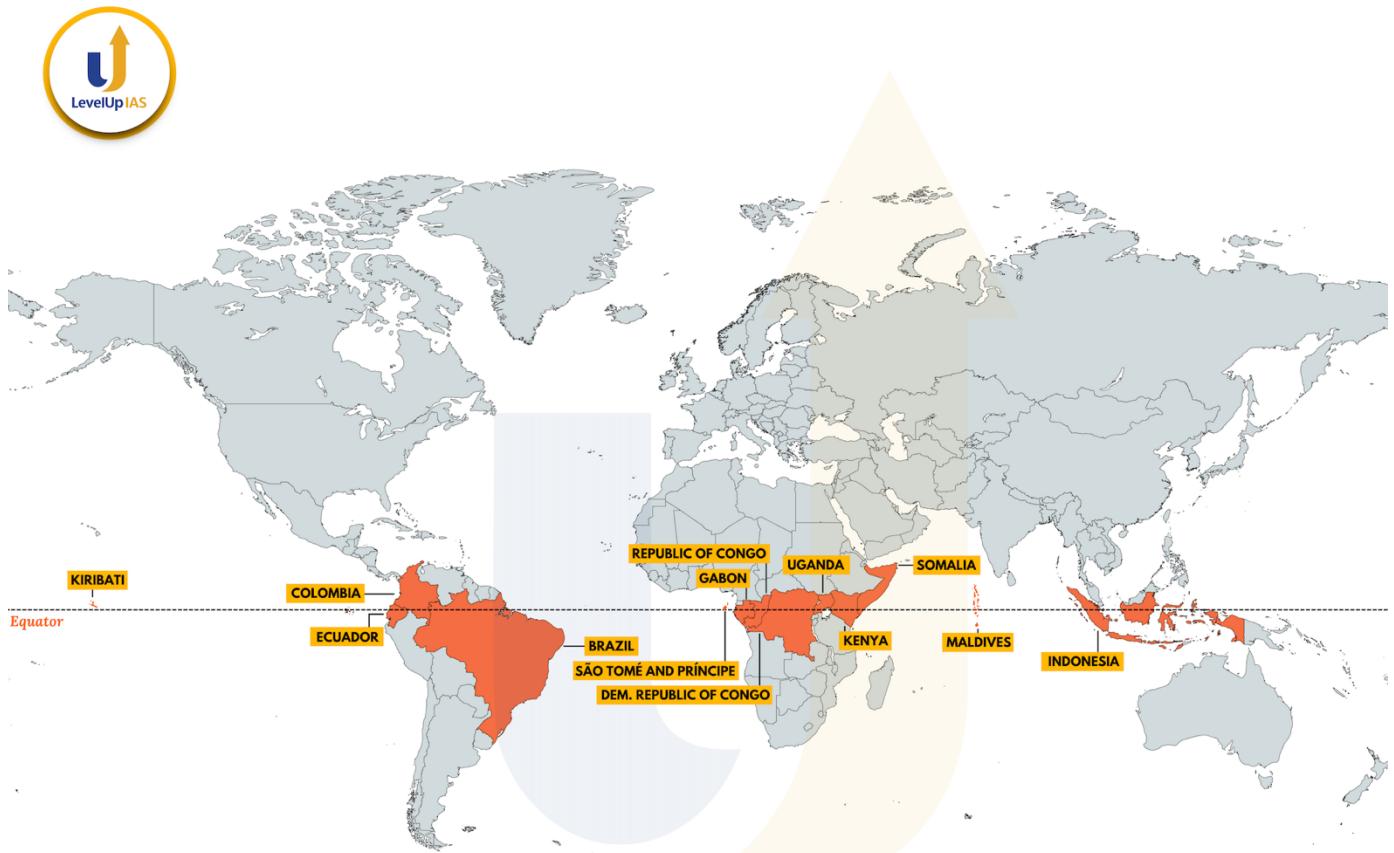
## B) Isthmus

- It is a narrow strip of land that connects two larger landmasses and separates two bodies of water.
  - » **Isthmus of Panama** links continent of North and South America and separates Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean.
  - » **Isthmus of Suez** in eastern Egypt connects the continents of Africa and Asia and separates Mediterranean and Red Sea

## 2) COUNTRIES THROUGH WHICH EQUATOR PASSES

13 countries:

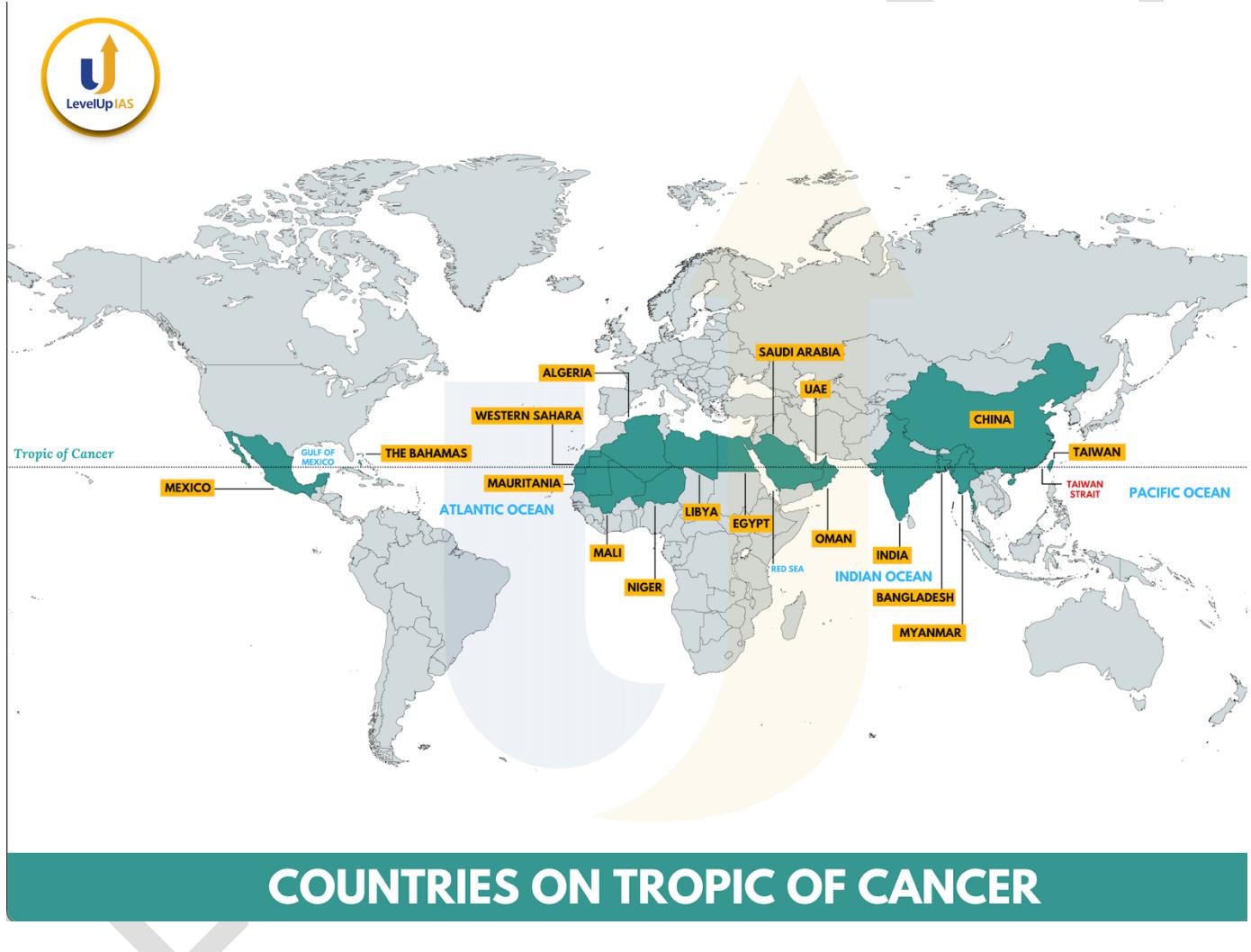
- **South America (3):** Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil.
- **Africa (7):** Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Republic of Congo, DRC, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia.
- **Asia (2):** Maldives, Indonesia
- **Central Pacific Ocean (1):** Kiribati



## COUNTRIES ON EQUATOR

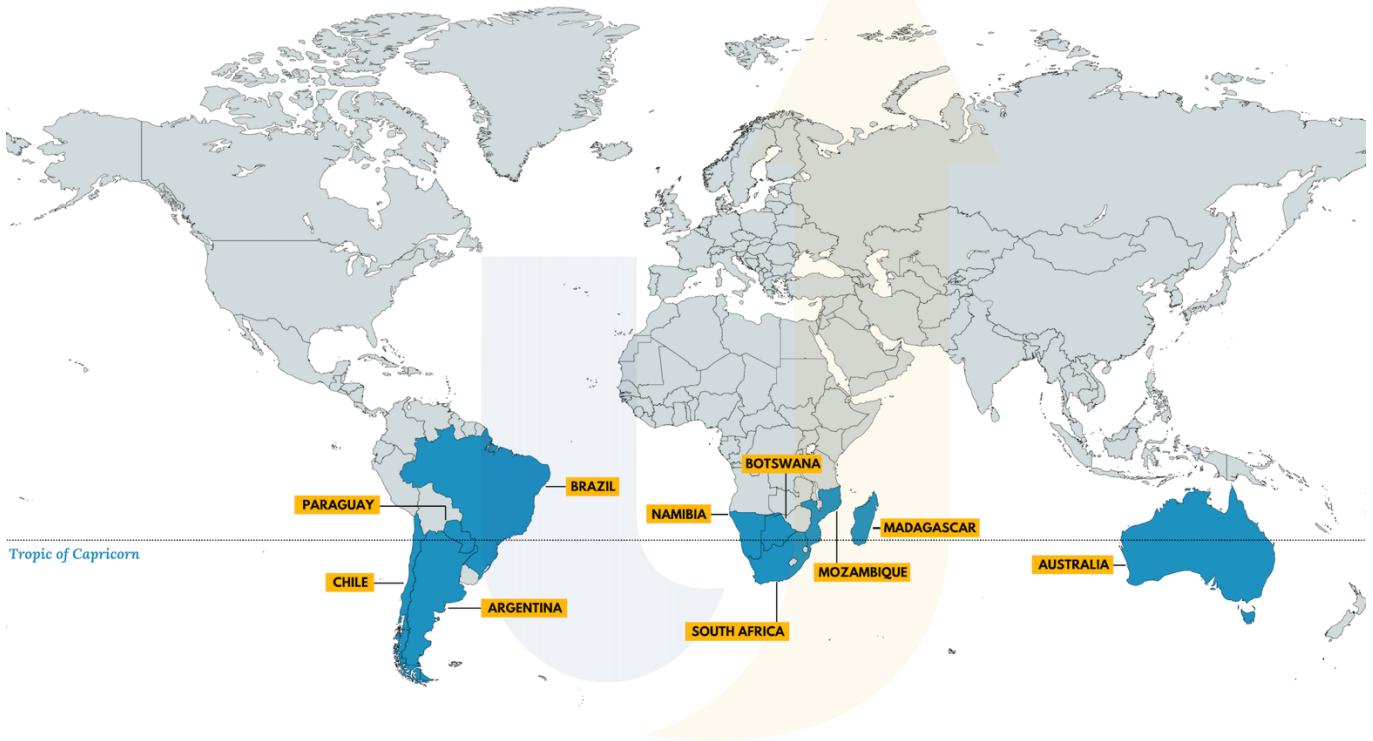
### 3) TROPIC OF CANCER COUNTRIES

- **17 countries:**
  - North America (2): Mexico, Bahamas (Archipelago)
  - Africa (7): Western Sahara, Mauritania, Mali, Algeria, Niger, Libya, Egypt
  - Asia (8): Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Taiwan.
  - **Water Bodies:** Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic Ocean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, Taiwan Strait, Pacific Ocean



#### 4) TROPIC OF CAPRICORN COUNTRIES

South America	Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil
Africa	Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar
Australia	Australia



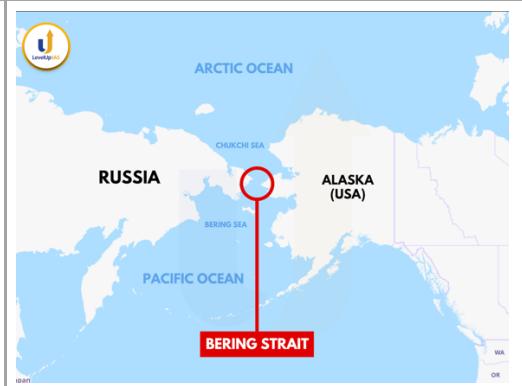
#### COUNTRIES ON TROPIC OF CAPRICORN

#### 5) BERRING STRAIT

**Location:** Between Russia and Alaska (USA); Only marine gateway between icy Arctic and the Pacific Ocean. It joins Arctic ocean and Bering sea.

At its narrowest point the strait is only 55 miles wide.

**Biodiversity:** Though the strait is narrow, it is teeming with wildlife - Beluga whales, bowhead whales, walruses, polar bears, ringed and ribbon seals etc.



**Wildlife Migration:** Each spring, one of the largest wildlife migrations on earth passes through this narrow gateway to reach the Arctic's incredibly nutrient-rich and productive waters.

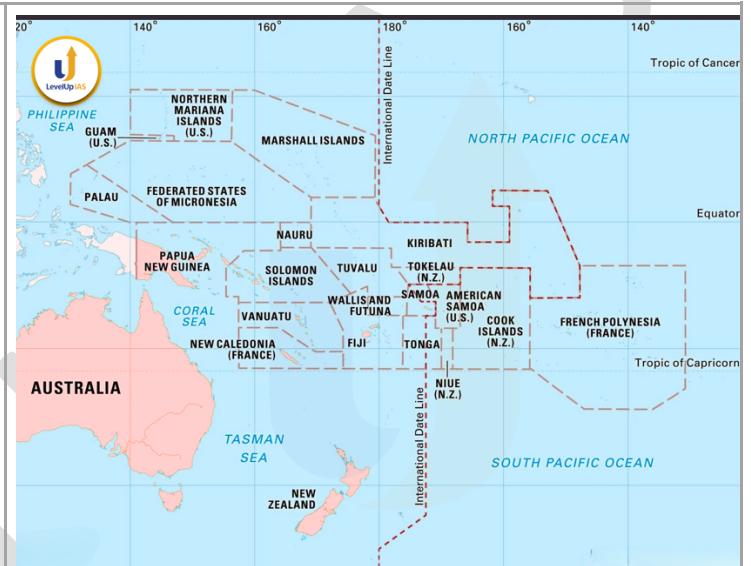
**Humans reaching north America:** Scientists studying land masses and climate know that the Pleistocene Ice Age, created a land bridge which allowed humans to reach Americas for the first time. This happened around 13,000 years ago

## 6) OCEANIA

Oceania collectively refers to the islands scattered throughout most of the Pacific Ocean.

In its widest sense it covers entire region between Asia and Americas.

In its most restricted meaning, it includes more than 10,000 islands, with a total land area (excluding Australia, but including Papua New Guinea and New Zealand) of approx. 822,800 sq km.

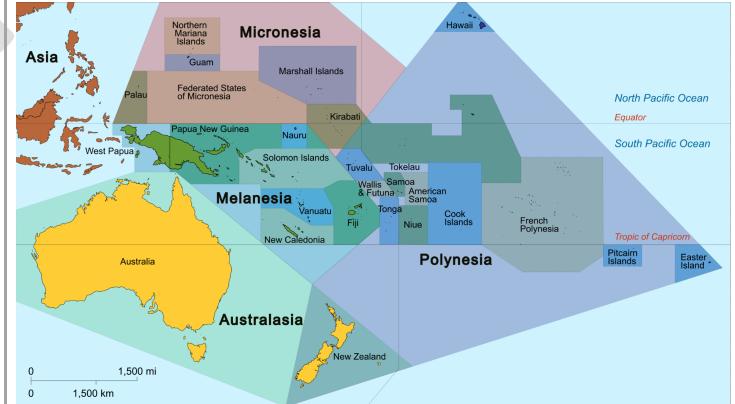


Oceania is traditionally divided into **four parts**: **Australasia** (Australia and New Zealand); **Melanesia**, **Micronesia**, and **Polynesia**.

**Australasia:** The term literally means "south of Asia" referring to all land that lies to the south of mainland Asia in its widest sense. However, its definition has evolved over the years and in its strictest sense include **Australia, New Zealand, and islands neighbouring these two countries** in the Pacific Ocean.

**Melanesia:** It includes Island of New Guinea and Island nation of Fiji, and the area in between the two islands. It thus includes area north and north east of Australia from the Arafura Sea to Fiji.

**Micronesia:** It is located in western Pacific ocean. It features thousands of islands. Five independent



nations (Kiribati, Marshal Islands, Palau, Nauru, and Federated State of Micronesia) and three US territories are part of Micronesia. The regions shares cultural heritage with Polynesia and Melanesia.

**Polynesia:** It consists of over thousand islands in the central and southern part of the Pacific ocean. It is bounded by Hawaii to the north, Easter Island to the southeast and New Zealand to southwest.

**Note:** As recently as 33,000 years ago no human beings lived in the region, except in Australasia.

## 7) PALAU

Officially known as Republic of Palau, it is an island country located in the western Pacific Ocean.

The country has more than 300 islands and connects the western chain of the Caroline islands with parts of the Federated States of Micronesia.

### Neighbours:

International Waters (North); Micronesia (East); Indonesia (South) and Phillipines (West)

Its territory consists an archipelago located in the Pacific Ocean.



## 8) TUVALU

**Tuvalu** is a country in West Central-Pacific Ocean. It is composed of 9 coral islands scattered in chain lying approximately northwest to southeast.

**History:** Together with what is now Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands), Tuvalu formed the British Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony before separately gaining its independence in 1978.

**De facto capital:** Vaiaku. This is where most of the government offices are located.

### Geography:

- The islands are low-lying, most being 13 to 16 feet above sea level.



- **No Rivers:** Rain catchment and wells are sources of fresh water.

### **Recent Developments: Australia Offers Climate Refuge to Tuvalu Citizens (Nov 2023)**

- A new **treaty** - known as the **Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union Treaty** - is the most significant agreement between Australia and Tuvalu.
  - It promises **Australian assistance** to the nation on **climate action** and **security**.
  - Under this **Australia will provide migration pathways** for people from Tuvalu facing the existential threat of climate change. It is the **world's first bilateral agreement on climate mobility**.
  - Under the treaty, **Australia will implement special visa agreement** to allow Tuvaluans to work, study and live in Australia. This is **not a refugee visa**, but rather will allow **up to 280 Tuvaluans** (from a population of around 11,200) to migrate to Australia each year - presumably on a **permanent basis**. This will provide people with **both legal and psychological security**.

## **9) NEW CALEDONIA**

### **Details:**

New Caledonia is a French territory comprising dozens of islands in the South Pacific. It was colonized by Napoleon's nephew in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It's known for its palm-lined beaches and marine-life-rich lagoon, which, at 24,000-sq.-km, is among the world's largest.

It also hosts a French Military base.

A massive barrier reef surrounds the main island, **Grand Terre**, a major scuba-diving destination.

The archipelago is located east of Australia, north of New Zealand, south of the Equator, and just west of Fiji and Vanuatu.

### **Referendum (2021)**

Voters in the French Island territory of New Caledonia chose overwhelmingly to stay part of France, in a referendum boycotted by pro-independence forces and closely watched around the south pacific.



## 10) TORRES STRAIT

The Torres Strait is a strait **between Australia and the Melanesian island of New Guinea**.

To the South is the **Cape York peninsula**, the northernmost extremity of the Australian mainland. To the north is the western province of Papua new Guinea.

It is named after the Spanish navigator Luis Vaz de Torres, who sailed through the strait in 1606.

**The Torres Strait joins Arafura Sea and Gulf of Papua.**



## 11) COOK STRAIT

Cook Strait separates, northern and southern islands of New Zealand, extending northwest to southeast from the **Tasman Sea** to the **South Pacific Ocean**.

In 1642 the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman entered the western end of the strait and believed it to be a bay. Captain James Cook discovered its true nature as a strait in 1770.



## 12) MARIANA TRENCH

The Mariana Trench or Marianas Trench is located in the western Pacific Ocean about 200 kilometres east of the Mariana Islands; it is **the deepest oceanic trench on Earth**.

It is crescent-shaped and measures about 2,550 km in length and 69 km in width.

**What is trench?**

Trenches are long, narrow depressions on the seafloor that form at the boundary of tectonic plates where one plate is pushed, or subducts, beneath another



### 13) EAST ASIA – SUMMARY OF WATER BODIES



### 14) KAMCHATKA PENINSULA

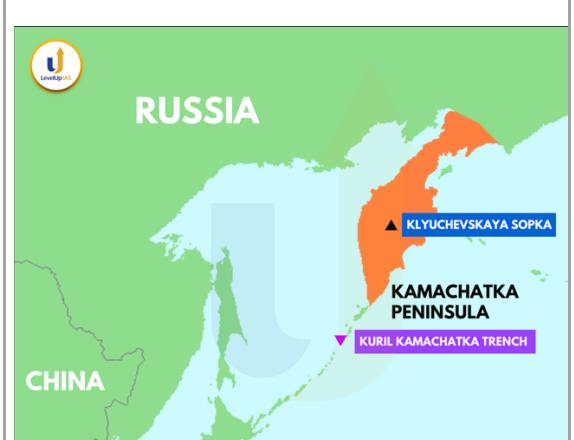
Kamchatka peninsula is a peninsula in the Russian Far East, with an area of about 2.7 lakh km<sup>2</sup>. It is sparsely populated.

The Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Okhotsk make up the peninsula's eastern and western coastlines, respectively.

The peninsula is noted for its array of active and dormant volcano, geysers and geothermal springs.

Immediately offshore along the Pacific coast of the peninsula runs the 10,500 meter deep Kuril-Kamchatka Trench.

**Biodiversity Disaster in 2020:** Many dead sea creatures (Octopus, Seals, and other sea creatures) have washed up on beaches in



**Kamchatka**, in Russia's far east, in what is being treated as a **major marine pollution incident**. Initial analysis detected oil products and phenol in the water.

## 15) KLYUCHEVSKAYA SOPKA VOLCANO:

It is the **tallest volcano of Eurasia** and is located on **Kamchatka Peninsula**. It is a stratovolcano with a height of 4,650 m.

It has been active in recent years and have released lava in June 2023. It also erupted in Nov 2023 and sent ash as high as 13 kms above sea level.

## 16) KURIL KAMCHATKA TRENCH:

It is an oceanic trench that lies off the **southeast coast of Kamchatka** and **parallels Kuril Island chain to meet the Japan Trench east of Hokkaido**.

**Detail:** What is **Oceanic Trench**?

- » Oceanic trenches are long, narrow, depressions on the seafloor. These chasms are the deepest parts of the ocean - and some of the deepest natural spots on Earth.
- » Oceanic trenches are features of the Earth's distinctive plate tectonics. They mark the location of convergent plate boundaries, along which lithospheric plates move towards each other.

## 17) KURIL ISLANDS

**Why in news?**

- Russian President Vladimir Putin says that he plans to visit the Kurils and would consider building up the travel sector there (Jan 2024)
- **Reason:** Ukraine War: Territorial rows have long been a problem between the two countries. Japan's support for Ukraine is just another reason for Russia to challenge Japan which it calls an 'unfriendly state'.

**About Kuril Islands:**

- Kuril Islands (archipelago) extends for 12,00 km from the southern tip of Kamchatka Peninsula to the north eastern corner of Hokkaido island (Japan) and separates Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific Ocean. There are more than 50 islands in this archipelago.
- **Disputed:** Both Russia and Japan claim sovereignty over them, though the island have been under Russian control



### History of The Kuril Dispute:

HISTORY OF THE KURIL DISPUTE
■ 1855: The Treaty of Shimoda gives southern Kurils to Japan and rest of the island chain to Russia. Sakhalin Island to be under joint administration
■ 1875: The Treaty of St. Petersburgh cedes all Kurils to Japan in exchange for Russian jurisdiction over Sakhalin
■ 1905: After Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan gains control of southern Sakhalin
■ 1945: The Soviet Union occupies the entire Kuril chain and southern Sakhalin after declaring war on Japan during the final days of World War II
■ 1951: Japan renounces claim to Kurils in the Treaty of San Francisco, signed between Japan and the Allied powers. The Soviet Union does not sign, and Japan later claims that the four southern islands are not part of the Kuril chain
■ 1956: The Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration restores diplomatic ties between the two countries. The Soviet Union agrees to cede islands of Shikotan and Habomai to Japan after signing of formal peace treaty. Japan claims territorial rights to all four southern islands, so no agreement is signed

since the end of WW-2. Tokyo says that the disputed islands have been part of Japan since the early 19th century.

## 18) VLADIVOSTOK

It is a city and the administrative centre of the **Far Eastern Federal District** and **Primorsky Krai, Russia**, located on the **Golden horn bay**, not far from Russia's borders with China and North Korea.

The city is **home to Russian Pacific Fleet** and is the largest Russian Port on the pacific coast.



## 19) JAPAN

It is an island country in East Asia. It is located in north-west Pacific Ocean and is bordered on the west by Sea of Japan in the north-east by Sea of Okhotsk and in the south and South-west by East China sea.

Nearly the entire land area is taken up by the country's four main islands; from north to south these are **Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu**.

**Honshu** is the largest of the four islands. National Capital **Tokyo** is also located in east-central Honshu.

**Mt Fuji** (12,388 feet, 3,776 metres), is Japans' highest mountain and also located on Honshu island.

**Important Straits:** Korea Strait, Tsushima Strait; Tsugaru Strait

Note: The island of Tsushima defines Korean Strait on the Korea side and the Tsushima Strait on the Japanese side.

**Important Islands:**

**Kuril Islands** (Occupied by Russia since 1945, claimed by Japan)

**Tok Islands** (Take Islands) - Occupied by South Korea; claimed by Japan)

**Senkaku Island** (disputed by China and Japan):

It is called Senkaku by Japan; Diaoyu in China and Tiaoyutai (in Taiwan)

It is a ground of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea, administered by Japan.



## 20) FUKUSHIMA

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is in the town of Okuma, in Fukushima Prefecture. It sits on the country's east coast, about 220 km (137 miles) north-east of the Capital Tokyo.

### What happened at Fukushima?

In March 2011, after an earthquake of magnitude 9, a tsunami flooded the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Okuma and damaged its diesel generator. The loss of power suspended coolant supply to reactors at the facility; the tsunami also disabled the backup system. This led to radioactive material leaking from the reactor pressure vessels, exploded in facility's upper levels, and exposed themselves to the ambient air, water, soil, and local population. Since then, the powerplant and the surrounding land have been uninhabitable.



## 21) SEA OF JAPAN

It is a marginal sea of the West Pacific Ocean. It is partially enclosed by Islands, archipelagos or peninsulas.

### Land Boundaries: Boundaries:

It is bound by Russia north; North Korea in the West, South Korea in South West and by the Japanese Archipelago (Hokkaido island, Honshu Island, and Kyushu Island) in the east and South.

### News (July 2023)

China and Russia have started joint air and sea drill in Sea of Japan. Codenamed "Northern/Interaction - 2023", the drill marks enhanced military cooperation between China and Russia since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and is taking place as Beijing continues to rebuff U.S. calls to resume military communication.



## 22) EAST CHINA SEA

The East China Sea is an arm of the Pacific Ocean.

It is bounded on the east by Kyushu and the Ryukyu Islands of Japan, on the south by the South China Sea, and on the west by the Asian continent.

It connects with the Sea of Japan through the Korea Strait; it opens in the north to the Yellow Sea.



## 23) TAIWAN AND TAIWAN STRAIT

Taiwan, officially the Republic of China, is a country in East Asia.

It shares **maritime borders** with the People's Republic of China to the northwest, Japan to the northeast, and the Philippines to the south.

The **bilateral relations between India and Taiwan** have improved since the 1990s, despite both nations not maintaining official diplomatic relations.

India recognises only the People's Republic of China (in mainland China) and not the Republic of China's claims of being the legitimate government of Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau - a conflict that emerged after the Chinese Civil War (1945–49).

However, India's economic and commercial links as well as people-to-people contacts with Taiwan have expanded in recent years.

China want to bring Taiwan under one country two system (like Hong Kong and Macau).



### Taiwan Strait:

The Taiwan Strait is a 180-kilometer-wide strait separating the island of Taiwan and continental Asia.

The strait is part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north.

The narrowest part is 130 km wide.

Earlier, Taiwan strait was also called **Farmosa Strait** or Strait of Farmosa.

## 24) SOUTH CHINA SEA

The South China Sea is a marginal sea of the Western Pacific Ocean.

It is bounded in the north by the shores of South China (hence the name), in the west by the Indochinese Peninsula, in the east by the islands of Taiwan and Northwestern Philippines (mainly Luzon, Mindoro and Palawan), and in the south by Borneo, eastern Sumatra and the Bangka Belitung Islands, encompassing an area of around 3,500,000 km<sup>2</sup> (1,400,000 sq. mi).

It communicates with the East China Sea via the Taiwan Strait, the Philippine Sea via the Luzon Strait, the Sulu Sea via the straits around Palawan (e.g. the Mindoro and Balabac Strait), the Strait of Malacca via the Strait of Singapore, and the Java Sea via the Karimata and Bangka Strait.

The **Gulf of Thailand** and the **Gulf of Tonkin** are also part of the South China Sea.



### Triton Island:

It is one of the major islands in the Parcel group, which is roughly equidistant from the coast of Vietnam and China's island province of Hainan.

The shallow waters south of the Riau Islands are also known as the **Natuna Sea**.

The **South China Sea disputes** involve both island and maritime claims by several sovereign states within the region, namely Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan (Republic of China/ROC), Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam

It is claimed by China, Vietnam and Taiwan.

News: Aug 2023 - China appears to be constructing an airstrip on the disputed South China Sea.

## 25) MALACCA STRAIT AND SINGAPORE STRAIT

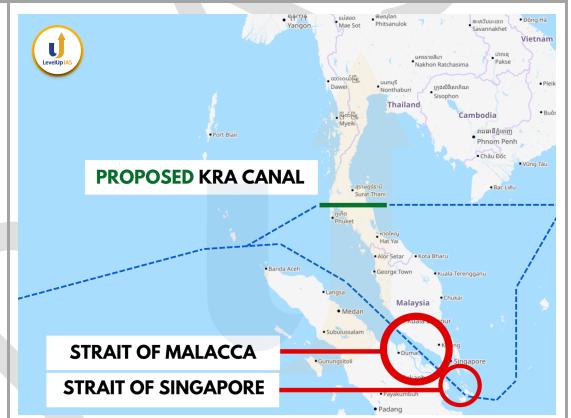
### MALACCA STRAIT:

It is a waterway connecting the **Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean)** and **South China Sea (Pacific Ocean)**. It runs between the Indonesian Island of Sumatra to the west and peninsular (west) Malaysia and extreme southern Thailand to the east.

It is funnel shaped strait with width of only 40 miles in the south and that broadens northward to some 155 miles (250 km).

As the link between the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, the strait of Malacca is the shortest route between India and China and hence is **one of the most heavily travelled shipping channels** in the world.

**Singapore**, of the world's most important ports, is situated at the strait's southern end.



**Singapore Strait:** It lies between strait of Malacca in the west and the South China Sea in east. Singapore is on the north of the channel, and the Indonesian Riau Islands are on the south. The two countries share maritime border along the strait.

## 26) CHINA

**People's republic of China** is a country in East Asia. It is the second most populous country in the world.

**Neighbouring Countries:** China borders 13 countries by land: North Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.

**Note:** China doesn't have borders with Pakistan. Though currently, both Pakistan and China have illegally occupied Aksai Chin and thus have a working border.



It is also the 4th largest country in the world (note - some sources also mention it as the 3rd largest country).

**Rivers:** Yangtze (third longest in the world) and the Yellow Rivers are the most important rivers of China.

**Gobi Desert** runs west to east along the border with Mongolia.

**Important Sea:** China is also bound by Yellow Sea and East China Sea in the east and South China Sea in the southeast.

## 27) GOBI DESERT

The giant Gobi Desert in Asia, stretches across parts of China and Mongolia. It is the sixth largest desert in the world after Antarctic Desert, Arctic Desert, Sahara Desert, Great Australian Desert, and Arabian Desert.

The Gobi desert is expanding through desertification, most rapidly on the southern edge into China. It is mostly attributed to human activities, locally driven by deforestation, overgrazing, and depletion of water resources, as well as to climate change.

China's the Three North Shelter Forest Program (or "Green Great Wall") is an initiative of China that began in 1978 and is set to continue through 2050.

## 28) IMP RIVERS OF CHINA: YELLOW RIVER (HUANG HE); YANGTZE RIVER; PEARL RIVER

### Yellow River (Huang He)

It is the second-longest river in China, after the Yangtze River.

It originates in the Qinghai province of Western China and empties in Bohai Sea (Northwestern and innermost extension of the Yellow Sea, to which connects the Bohai strait)

### Yangtze River:

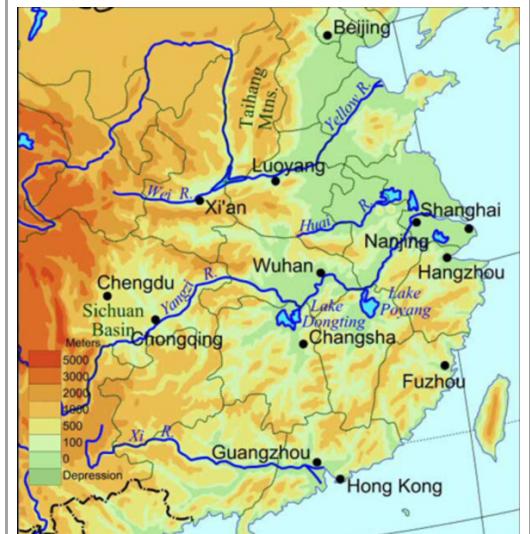
It is the longest river in Asia, (the third longest in the world and the longest in the world to flow entirely within one country).

It originates at Jari Hill in the Tanggula Mountains (Tibetan Plateau) and flows 6,300 km in generally eastern direction to reach east China Sea.

**The three Gorges Dam** on the Yangtze river is the largest hydro-electric power station in the world.

### Pearl River:

The Pearl River is an extensive river system in southern China.



It is the third-longest river of China, after the Yangtze River and the Yellow River

It also drains in the northern parts of Vietnam.

The name "Pearl River" is also often used as a catch-all for the watersheds of the Xi ("West"), Bei ("North"), and Dong ("East") rivers of Guangdong.

The Pearl River Delta is **notoriously polluted with sewage and industrial waste treatment facilities failing to keep pace with the growth in population and industry in the area. A large portion of the pollution is brought about by factories run by Hong Kong manufacturers in the area**

## 29) MEKONG RIVER

The Mekong is a trans-boundary river in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

It is the world's twelfth longest river and the sixth longest in Asia.

Its estimated length is 4,909 km and it drains an area of 795,000 km<sup>2</sup>

From the Tibetan Plateau the river runs through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

The extreme seasonal variations in flow and the presence of rapids and waterfalls in the Mekong make **navigation difficult**. Even so, the river is a major trade route between western China and Southeast Asia.



## 30) KRA CANAL

Kra Canal, also known as Thai Canal or Kra Isthmus Canal, is a proposed canal that would connect the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea across southern Thailand.

The canal would provide an alternative to transit through the straits of Malacca and shorten transit for shipments of oil to Japan and China by 1200 kms.

China refers to Kra canal as part of its 21st century Maritime Silk Road.

In 2015 proposal, the canal was planned to be 102 km long, 400 meter wide and 25 meters deep

## 31) BORNEO ISLAND

Borneo is the third-largest island (after Greenland and New Guinea) in the world and the largest in Asia.

At the **geographic centre of Maritime Southeast Asia**, in relation to major Indonesian islands, it is located north of Java, west of Sulawesi, and east of Sumatra.

The island is politically divided among **three countries**: Malaysia and Brunei in the north, and Indonesia to the south.

Approximately 73% of the island is Indonesian territory.

The **sovereign state of Brunei**, located on the north coast, comprises about 1% of Borneo's land area.



A little more than half of the island is in the Northern Hemisphere, including Brunei and the Malaysian portion, while the Indonesian portion spans the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Borneo is home to one of the oldest rainforests in the world

## 32) INDONESIA

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world. It consists of five major islands and 30 smaller groups.

The **main Indonesian Islands** are: Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), Sulawesi, and the Indonesian part of New Guinea (known as Papua or Irian Jaya).

**Note:** Indonesia has nearly 130 active volcanoes, more than any other country



## 33) KALIMANTAN

- Indonesia's Parliament has approved a bill to relocate the nation's capital from Jakarta to a jungled area of Kalimantan on Borneo island. (Jan 2022)
- The new state capital law, which provides a legal framework for President Joko Widodo's ambitious \$32 billion mega project, stipulates how development of capital will be funded and governed.
- The new centre will be called "Nusantara", a Javanese name for the Indonesian archipelago.
- Nusantara will be led by a chief authority whose position is equivalent to a minister.
- The new capital has been envisioned as a low-carbon "superhub" that will support pharmaceuticals, health and technology sector and promote suitable growth beyond Java Island.
- **Problems with Jakarta:**
  - Chronic congestion (10 million population); Floods and air pollution;

## 34) SABANG

It is a city consisting of main island (Weh Island) and several smaller islands of the northern tip of Sumatra.

The Islands form a city within the Aceh Special Region, Indonesia.

It is also known as the northernmost and westernmost city of Indonesia.

It is considered a strategic location near the strait of Malacca.

It was in news recently as government of Indonesia is planning to develop a port here to promote tourism.



### 35) MOUNT SINABUNG

Mount Sinabung is a **Pleistocene-to-Holocene stratovolcano**.

It is located in a relatively cool area on a fertile plateau with mountains bounding the north on **Sumatra Island** of Indonesia.

The plate tectonic setting at Mount Sinabung is one of ocean-continent subduction between the Indo-Australian plate under the Eurasian plate.

It is one of many volcanoes located along the Sunda Arc, a 5000km long volcanic chain.

Mount Sinabung first erupted in 2010 after being inactive for centuries, and has seen an increase in its activity over the last year.



### 36) ANAK KRAKATOA VOLCANO

#### Anak Krakatoa Volcano

It is an active volcano in **Sunda Strait** roughly halfway between Sumatra and Java.

This volcano had emerged from the sea in 1928 in the Caldera of Krakatoa and has been on the high-level eruption watchlist for the past decade.

With subsequent lava flows it eventually converted into a small **volcanic Island** with an altitude of 300 meters above sea level.

Since its birth, Anak Krakatoa has been in a **state of semi-continuous eruptive activity**, growing bigger as it experiences eruptions every two to three years. It has been on the high-level eruption watchlist for the past decade.



The island is part of Ujung Kulon National Park "demonstrating on-going evolution of geological process".

## 37) MT SAMERU VOLCANO

Erupted in Dec 2022, after a year.

It is an active volcano located in **East Java**. It is a stratovolcano.

It is located in a subduction zone, where Indo-Australian plate subducts under Eurasian plate.

It is the highest mountain on the island of Java. The name "**Semeru**" is derived from Meru, the Central world mountain in **Hinduism**, or Sumeru, the abode of gods.



## 38) MERAPI VOLCANO

**About Mount Merapi:** It is the most active volcano of Indonesia and have erupted regularly since 1548. It is located on Java Island. It is a stratovolcano whose height is 2,930 miles.

It is located at a subduction zone, where the Indo-Australian Plate is subducting under the Sunda Plate.

Mount Merapi's last significant eruption was in 2010 which killed more than 300 people.

### Dec 2023 Eruption:

Mount Merapi erupted again and killed at least 11 hikers. This eruption sent hot ash and other volcanic debris three kms into sky.

It is also one of the 16 Decade Volcanoes

### About Decade Volcanoes

The Decade volcanoes are 16 volcanoes identified by the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior (IAVCEI) as being worthy of particular study in light of their history of large, destructive eruptions and proximity to populated areas.

The Decade Volcanoes project aims of achieving a better understanding of the volcanoes and the dangers they present, and thus being able to reduce the severity of natural disaster.

They are called decade volcanoes because the project was initiated in the 1990s as part of the United Nations - sponsored International Decade for Natural Disasters Reduction.



### **About IAVCEI**

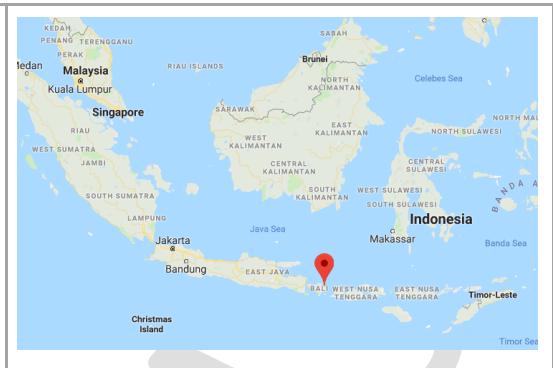
It is an international NGO that focuses on research in volcanology, efforts to mitigate disasters, and research into closely related disciplines, such as igneous geochemistry and petrology, geochronology, volcanogenic mineral deposits, and the physics of the generation and ascent of magmas in the upper mantle and crust.

## 39) MOUNT AGUNG / GUNUNG AGUNG

Mount Agung or Gunung Agung is a volcano in **Bali, Indonesia**, south east of **Mt Batur Volcano**, also in Bali.

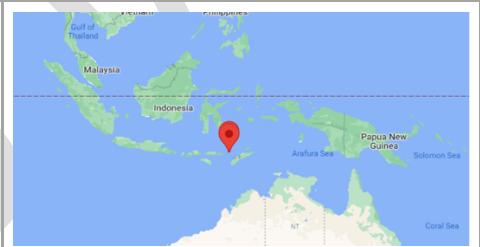
The Agung **Stratovolcano** is the highest point of Bali; it dominates surrounding area, influencing climate, especially rainfall patterns.

An important temple on Bali, **Pura Besakih**, is located high on the slopes of Mount Agung.



## 40) MT. ILLE LEWOTOLOK

Mount Ile Lewotolok or Lewotolo is a **stratovolcano** in the north-central part of the island of Lembata in the Province of East Nusa Tenggara in Indonesia.

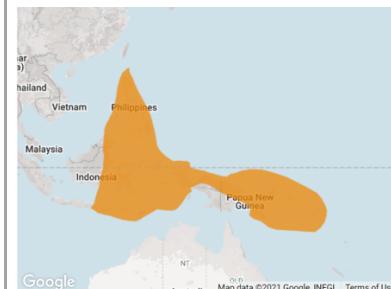


## 41) CORAL TRIANGLE

The Coral Triangle is a marine area located in the western Pacific Ocean.

It includes the waters of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and Solomon Islands.

Named for its staggering number of corals (nearly 600 different species of reef-building corals alone), the region nurtures six of the world's seven marine turtle species and more than 2000 species of reef fish.



The Coral Triangle also supports large populations of commercially important tuna, fuelling a multi-billion dollar global tuna industry.

## 42) MYANMAR

Myanmar is a country in South-East Asia. It is the largest country in the mainland south-east Asia.

**Neighbouring countries include (4):** Bangladesh and India in Northwest; China to its northeast; Laos and Thailand to its east and South east.



**Water Bodies:** Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal to its south and southwest.

#### 43) SITTWE PORT

Sittwe Port is a deep-water port constructed by India in 2016 at Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar, on the Bay of Bengal.

Situated at the mouth of the Kaladan River, the USD 120 Million port is being financed by India as a part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, a collaboration between India and Myanmar.

The project is aimed at developing transport infrastructure in Southwestern Myanmar and North-eastern India



#### 44) RAKHINE STATE

Rakhine State is a state in Myanmar.

Situated on the western coast, it is bordered by Chin State to the north, Magway Region, Bago Region and Ayeyarwady Region to the east, the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh to the northwest.

The Arakan Mountains or Rakhine Yoma separated Rakhine State from central Burma from North to South



#### 45) BHASHAN CHAR ISLAND

Bhasan Char, also known as Char Piya, is an island in Hatiya Upazila, Bangladesh.

Until 2019 it was known as **Thengar Char**.

It is located in the Bay of Bengal, about 6 kilometres from Sandwip island and 37 miles from the mainland.

The island was formed by Himalayan silt in 2006.

It spans 40 square kilometres.

The Government of Bangladesh planned to construct a total of 1,440 buildings, including 120 cyclone shelters, to relocate 100,000

**Rohingya refugees from the mainland camps of Cox's Bazar.**



## 46) AFGHANISTAN

It is a landlocked country between Central Asia and South Asia.

**It is bordered by:** Pakistan, India, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Iran.

**Taliban's return to Power in Aug - Sep 2021:** Taliban now controls most of the country.

**Important Cities:**



## 47) PANJSHIR VALLEY

It is a valley in north-eastern Afghanistan, north east of Kabul and near Hindukush mountain ranges. It is divided by **Panjshir river**. This valley has the Afghan's largest concentration of ethnic Tajiks.



## 48) BAMYAN VALLEY

Bamyan is the capital of Bamyan Province in central Afghanistan.

With an altitude of about 2,550 m and a population of about 100,000 (in 2014), Bamyan is the largest town in the central Afghanistan region of Hazarajat, and lies approximately 240 kilometres north-west of Kabul, the national capital.



Many statues of Buddha are carved into the sides of cliffs facing Bamyan city.

At the end of the 10th century AD, there was a Buddhist culture in which several thousand Buddhist monks lived in caves carved into the mountain.

The 53 and 35 meters high standing Buddha statues were two of the best known monuments left from the Buddhists, which were then destroyed by the Taliban in 2001.

Furthermore, there are several cultural sites left from both the Buddhist and from the later Islamic era of the valley. After the overthrow of

The valley is the Center of the Hazara settlement area, now known as Hazarajat.

#### 49) SHATOOT DAM

Shatoor Dam is a proposed dam in the Char Asiab (11 km south of Kabul) District of Kabul Province.

The establishment of the dam will provide drinking, irrigation and environmental water for the city of Kabul.

The dam will be constructed by engineers from India.

In Feb 2021, India and Afghanistan signed an MoU to build Shahtoot Dam in Kabul. It will be constructed on the Kabul River Basin.



#### 50) CENTRAL ASIA

**Region:** In modern context Central Asia includes the following five republics of former Soviet Union. They all became independent in 1991 after the fall of USSR.

- Kazakhstan (Astana (now called **Nur Sultan**))
- Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek)
- Tajikistan (Dushanbe)
- Turkmenistan (Ashgabat)
- Uzbekistan (Tashkent)



### The Great Game and Central Asia

Traditionally, Central Asia has been an arena of great game. The modern version is being played out even today. Russia, China, US, Turkey, Iran, Europe, EU, Japan, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan all have substantial security and economic stakes in the region.

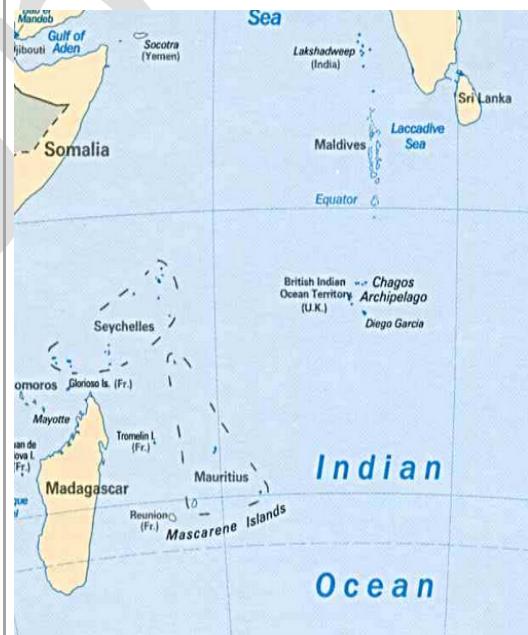
## 51) IMPORTANT INDIAN OCEAN COUNTRIES:

### Note:

The **eight degree line** separates the islands of Minicoy and Maldives.

The **nine degree line** separates the island of Minicoy from the main Lakshadweep archipelago.

The **10 degree Channel** separates the Andaman Islands and the Nicobar Islands from each other in Bay of Bengal.



## 52) MALDIVES

- It is an archipelagic state in the Indian-subcontinent of Asia, situated in Indian ocean. It is located southwest of India and Sri Lanka about 750 km from Asian continent's mainland.
- The chain of **26 atolls** stretches from Ihavandhippolhu Atoll in the north to Addu Atoll in the south (Across the Equator)
- **Capital: Male** (also called King's Island)

- The Maldives archipelago is located on Chagos-Laccadive ridge, a vast submarine mountain range in the Indian Ocean;
- With an average ground level of 1.5 metres, and a highest natural point of only 5.1 meters, it is the world's lowest lying country.

#### A) ADDU CITY

- Cabinet approved opening up of a new consulate General of India in Addu City, Maldives in May 2022 (May 2021)
- **Significance:** Augment India's diplomatic presence and increase engagement
- **About Addu City:** It is a city in Maldives that consists of the inhabited islands of Addu atoll, the southernmost atoll of the archipelago. It is the second largest urban area of Maldives, in terms of population, and is one of the two urban areas to get the status of "city" other than the capital city.
- Maldives occupies an important place in the 'Neighbourhood First Policy' and the 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision of the Government of India.

#### 53) MAURITIUS

With an area of 2,040 sq km, it is one of the smallest countries in the world. It is located in the Indian Ocean, just east of Madagascar.

It is made up of the main island of Mauritius and several outlying islands like Ambre, Est, Cerfs, Benitiers etc. Off the coast of mainland Mauritius, there are nearly a hundred islets and rocks without any human habitation.

**About Mauritius Island:** It is a volcanic island formed due to volcanic activities around 8 million years ago. However, no volcanic activity has been reported in last 1 lakh years. Much of the island is made up of low-lying grasslands surrounded by towering mountains and rolling hills.

**Coral Reef** surround the island protecting the land from storms and waves.

**Lake Vacoas**, is the primary source of water for the islanders. Most of the islands water need is fulfilled by this lake and the three major rivers -> Grand River, South East River and Black River.

**Capital:** Port Louis



##### Pointe d'Ensy Wetland:

Wetland of international importance

Located in the south east Mauritius.

It was in news due to one of the worst oil spill (August 2020)

## 54) SEYCHELLES

**Capital:** Victoria

Seychelles, officially the Republic of Seychelles, is an archipelago and country in the India ocean. The 115-island country, whose capital is Victoria, lies 1500 km east of mainland East Africa.

Other nearby islands include: Comoros, Mayotte, Madagascar, Reunion and Mauritius to the south.

Population: Roughly 93,000, has the smallest population of any independent African state.

## 55) ALDABRA ATOLL

Aldabra atoll comprised of four large coral islands which encloses a shallow lagoon; the group of islands is itself surrounded by a coral reef.

Aldabra atoll is also one of the world's second-largest coral atoll and is situated in the Aldabra group of islands in Seychelles in the Indian Ocean.

It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Due to difficulties of access and the atoll's isolation, Aldabra has been protected from human influence and thus retains some 152,000 giant tortoise, the world's largest population of this reptile



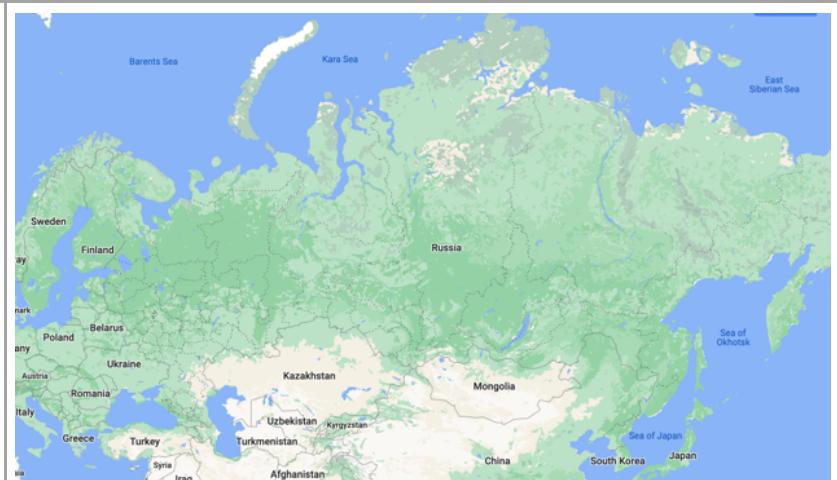
## 56) RUSSIA

Area: 17 million square km (largest country in the world)

Population: 144 million (9th most populous)

Spans 11 time zones and incorporate a wide range of environments and landforms.

Neighbours: From northwest to Southeast, Russia shares **land borders** with Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (both with Kaliningrad Oblast), Belarus,

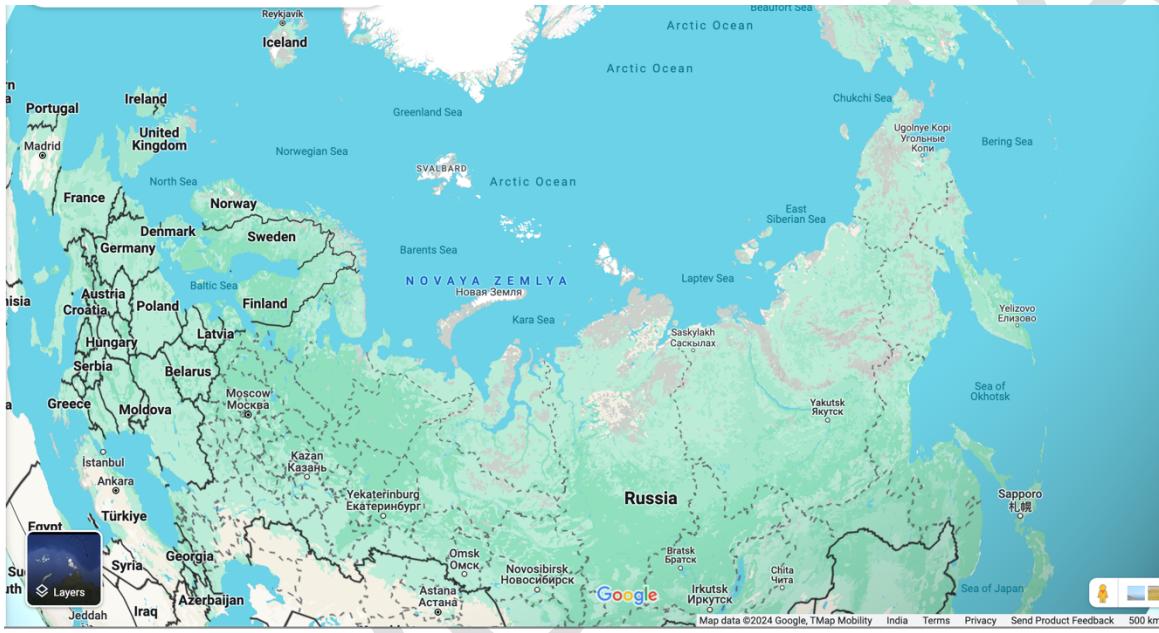


Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia and North Korea.

Maritime borders with Japan (by sea of Okhotsk) and the US state of Alaska across Bering strait.

#### Water bodies around Russia

White Sea, Barents Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, East Siberian Sea, Chukchi Sea, Bering Sea, Sea of Okhotsk, Sea of Japan, Caspian Sea, Black Sea and Baltic Sea



## 57) CASPIAN SEA

It is located to the east of Caucasus mountains and to the west of Central Asian steppes.

It is the **world's largest inland body of water** (largest salt lake in the world).

An **endorheic basin**, it lies between Europe and Asia; east of the Caucasus, west of the broad steppe of Central Asia, south of the fertile plains of Southern Russia in Eastern Europe, and north of the mountainous Iranian Plateau of Western Asia



The sea is bordered by **Kazakhstan (North-East), Turkmenistan (South-East), Iran (South), Azerbaijan (South West) and Russia (North-West)**  
**(Hint: KaTIAR) [Hint2: TARIK]**

Important rivers that drain in Caspian Sea are: **Volga** (longest in Europe), **Ural, Kura and Terek**.

Human made changes, particularly those resulting from construction of dams, reservoirs, and canals on the **Volga** river, have affected the contemporary hydrology.

## 58) SOUTH CAUCASUS REGION

It is a region between Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and mainly occupies **Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Southern Russia**.

It is home to the Caucasus Mountains which has been traditionally considered a natural barrier between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

**Europe's Highest Mountain - Mount Elbrus (5,642 meters)** is in the western part of the Greater Caucasus Mountain range.



### NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

Straddling western Asia and Eastern Europe, Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, but most of the region is controlled by Armenian separatists.

Nagorno-Karabakh has been part of Azerbaijan territory since the Soviet era.

When the Soviet Union began to collapse in the late 1980s, Armenia's regional parliament voted for the region's transfer to Armenia; the Soviet authorities turned down the demand.

**Note: Religious differences:** People of Ngorno Karabakh are primarily Christians whereas Azerbaijan is Muslim dominate.

Years of clashes followed between Azerbaijan forces and Armenian separatists.



**Highly tensed relations between Armenia and its long-time ally Russia.**

- Armenia angered Russia, which maintains a military base in the country, by holding military exercise with the USA in Sep 2023 and by moving towards ratifying Rome Convention that created International

The violence lasted into the 1990s, leaving tens and thousands dead and displacing hundreds of thousands.

In 1994, Russia brokered a ceasefire, by which time ethnic Armenians had taken control of the region.

In November 2020, Russia brokered a new peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan, after the two countries engaged in military conflict for six weeks over the disputed region in South Caucasus. The armistice also placed a Russian Peacekeeper contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh.

**2023:**

In Sep 2023, Azerbaijan's forces opened fire on Armenian positions in the Ngorno-Karabakh region. It claimed that it was an "anti-terrorist operation". There were concerns that the tensions could escalate into full-fledged war.

Later, on 20th Sep 2023, Azerbaijan halted military action after its battlefield successes forced Armenian separatist forces to agree to a ceasefire. Key Highlights:

1. Azerbaijani military had routed separatists and then separatist agreed to cease fire.
2. They are meant to disband and disarm under the deal.
3. Talks on future of the region due to start in 1-2 days.

Criminal Court, which has indicted Russian President Vladimir Putin

## 59) WEST ASIA

The region is surrounded by eight major seas: Aegean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

This region is delimited from Europe by the drainage divide of the Greater Caucasus; delimited from Africa by the Isthmus of Suez; It adjoins Central Asia in North East and South Asia in East. It is located South of Eastern Europe.

**Countries:** Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus.





## 60) IRAN (PERSIA)

Iran (formerly known as Persia) is situated at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia, and Arab states of West Asia. This strategic position - and its access to Persian Gulf in the south - have made Iran an important country throughout its history.

### **Location and neighbouring countries:**

It is country located in West Asia and has land boundaries with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey and Iraq.

In the north, it touches Caspian Sea, and in the south, the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

**Government and Economy:** Iran's government is controlled by a religious figure called the Supreme Leader, who is appointed by a group of Islamic clerics called the assembly of experts. A President, elected by the people, is second in command.

**History:** Iran has seen many great empire - Achaemenid Persian Empire (beginning 559 BCE), Sassanids (beginning 224 CE), Safavids (beginning 1501);

In the North west, Iran also has some areas of Majority Kurdish Population.



**Physical features:** Iran has Gazros mountain (which runs from North west to South East) and Elbruz Mountain (which lies to its north). It also has Kavir Desert and Lut Desert.

Lut Desert often experience highest land and surface temperature: A temperature of 70.7 degree C has been recorded here.

It is also an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Lake Urmia** is located in the North-west of the country.

### International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

#### Important Ports:

1. Bandar Abass (Gulf of Hormuz)

2. Chabahar Port (Gulf of Oman):

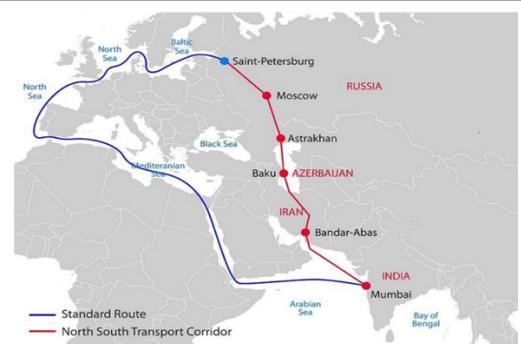
- The Chabahar port is located in the Southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan and is considered a crucial gateway for Iran to gain access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The idea is that the **Port would enable India to bypass Pakistan and access Afghanistan and ultimately Central Asia**.
- In May 2016, India signed a tripartite agreement with Iran and Afghanistan to develop the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar Port. India has pledged to invest \$85 million in the terminal and has already provides cranes and equipment worth a few million dollars.
- Chabahar is India's first foreign port project.



## 61) INSTC

The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a 7,200 km long multi-modal network of ship, rail, and road routes for the transport of freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe. The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Baku, Astrakhan, Tehran, Bandar Abbas, and Bandar Anzali.

**Member States:** India, Iran, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Ukraine, and Syria.



## 62) PERSIAN GULF

The body of water is an extension of the Arabian Sea (Gulf of Oman) through the **Strait of Hormuz** and lies between Iran to the northeast and the Arabian Peninsula to the southwest.

**Countries touching Persian Gulf:** 8 - Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

**Rivers:** The Tigris-Euphrates river system is a large river system in Western Asia which discharges into the Persian Gulf. Both Tigris and Euphrates originate in Turkey.

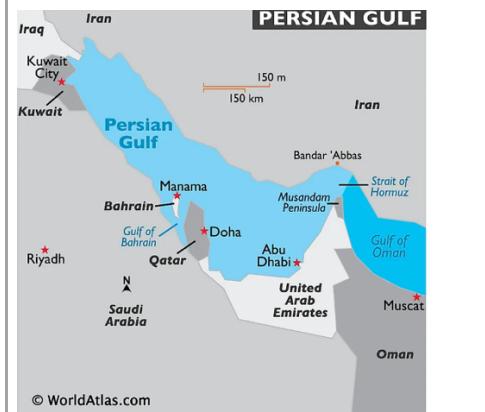
The river flows into a south-easterly direction through the central plains and combine with Al-Qurnah to form **Shatt al-Arab** and discharge into Persian gulf.

**Mesopotamia** is a historical region in Western Asia situated within Tigris Euphrates river system, in the northern part of the Fertile Crescent. Today, Mesopotamia occupy modern Iraq. In broader sense it covered parts of Iran, Syria, Turkey and Kuwait as well.

The Shatt al-Arab river delta forms the northwest shoreline.

**Note:** Shatt al-Arab river is formed at the confluence of Euphrates and Tigris rivers in Iraq.

The Persian Gulf has many fishing grounds, extensive reefs (mostly rocky, but also coral), and abundant pearl oysters, but its ecology has been damaged by industrialization and oil spills



Persian Gulf



## 63) GULF OF OMAN AND STRAIT OF HORMUZ

### GULF OF OMAN:

It connects Arabian sea with the Strait of Hormuz, which then runs into the Persian Gulf.

### Neighbouring Countries

UAE, Oman, Iran and Pakistan

### Important Ports on the Gulf

- Port of Fujairah, UAE
- Port of Khor Fakkan, UAE
- Port of Sultan Qaboos, Oman
- Port of Chabahar, Iran



## STRAIT OF HORMUZ

It is a strait between Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

It provides the only sea passage from Persian Gulf to the open ocean and is **one of the world's most strategically important choke points**.

### Neighbouring Countries

- Iran, UAE and Oman (Musandam, an enclave of Oman)

### Significance

- A third of the world's liquefied natural gas and almost 20% of total global oil consumption passes through the strait, making it a highly important strategic location for international trade.

## 64) QATAR

**About Qatar:** It is an independent emirates on the west Coast of Persian Gulf. It shares land boundary only with Saudi Arabia to its south. It also shares maritime borders with Iran, Bahrain and UAE.

A very interesting aspect about Qatar is that non-Qatari population form around 88% of the total population.

**Oil Resources:** Qatar has one of the world's largest reserves of petroleum and thus employs large number of foreign workers in the production process.

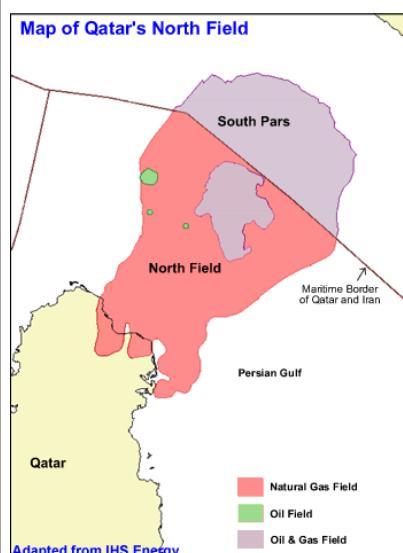
**High Standard of Living:** Because of oil wealth, country's residents enjoy a very high standard of living.

**Capital:** Doha - an eastern coast city

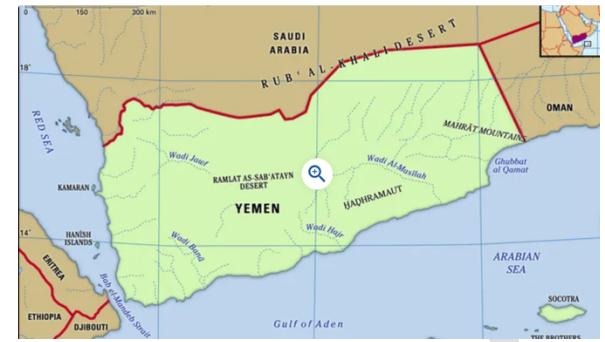
**North Field and South Pars** is a natural-gas condensate field located in the Persian Gulf. It is by far the world's largest natural gas field. With North field being owned by Qatar and South Pars by Iran.

**Non-NATO Aly:** Qatar is also a major non-NATO ally. Major non-NATO ally (MNNA) is a designation given by the US government to close allies that have strategic working relations with the US Armed forces, but are not members of NATO. Important Non-Nato Ally of USA include

**Significance:** The status of MNNA doesn't automatically include a mutual defense pact with the USA, it confers variety of military and financial advantages.



- **Geographical basics**
  - » It is situated on the South-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula.
  - » Most of the Yemen's northern frontier with Saudi Arabia traverses the great desert of the peninsula, the Rub' al-Khali ("Empty Quarter"), and until 2000 remained non demarcated, as did the eastern frontier with Oman until 1992.
  - » It is bound on the south by Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea and the west by Red Sea.
- **The ongoing Civil War:**
  - » The war began in 2014, when Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized Sanaa and the country's northwest, sending the ruling party in exile. Very soon, a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia intervened with a massive air campaign to drive back Houthis and restore the government.
  - » **Yemeni Officials and Sunni States** have repeatedly alleged that Iran and its proxy Hezbollah have provided arms, training and financial support to the Houthis.
  - » Several ceasefire agreements over the years have seen no impact on reducing the military action on the ground. **The UN, USA, and Gulf nations diplomats** have been trying to broker a peace deal for years now.
  - » **Who are Houthis?**
    - » The Houthis are a large clan originating from Yemen's Northwest Saada province. They practice the Zayadi form of Shiism. They make around 35% of Yemen's population.
    - » **They Zayadi imamate ruled Yemen** for 1,000 years, before they were overthrown in 1962. Since then, they have struggled to restore their authority and influence in Yemen.
- **Current Situation:**
  - » Clashes continue, with the Houthis disrupting Red Sea shipping in late 2023.
    - **For e.g.** Yemen's Houthi rebel seized an Israeli linked cargo ship (the Galaxy Leader) in a crucial Red Sea shipping route on Nov 19, 2023, and took its 25-crew member hostage. The rebels said that they hijacked the ship over its connection to Israel and would continue to target ships in international waters that were linked to or owned by Israelis. This shows that regional tensions heightened over the Israel-Hamas war were playing on a new maritime front. The issue remains unresolved as of today.



## 66) SINAI PENINSULA

The Sinai Peninsula is a peninsula in Egypt, and the only part of the country located in Asia.

Sinai has a land area of about 60,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Sinai is triangular in shape, with its northern shore lying on the southern Mediterranean Sea, and its southwest and southeast shores on the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba of the Red Sea.



**Note:** Israel also borders Gulf of Aqaba.

**Note:** Sharm el Sheikh is located at the mouth of Gulf of Aqaba.

It is linked to the African continent by the **Isthmus of Suez**, 125 kilometres (78 mi) wide strip of land, containing the **Suez Canal**.

The eastern isthmus, linking it to the Asian mainland, is around 200 kilometres (120 mi) wide. The peninsula's eastern shore separates the Arabian plate from the African plate

## 67) SUEZ CANAL

The Suez Canal is an artificial sea-level waterway in Egypt, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the **Isthmus of Suez** and dividing Africa and Asia.

The canal is part of the Silk Road that connects Europe with Asia.



## 68) RED SEA

It is a sea-water inlet of the Indian ocean, lying between Africa and Asia.

It connects to Gulf of Aden through the **Bab el Mandeb strait**.

In North it is bound by Sinai Peninsula, Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez.

**Countries neighboring Red Sea:** Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia.

### Why in news?

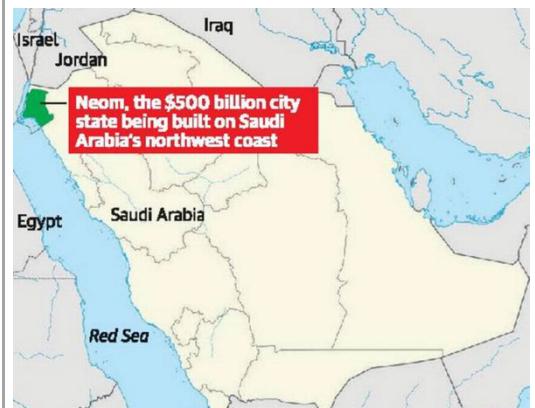
More than 3,000 US military personnel have arrived in the Red Sea aboard two warships, part of beefed-up response from Washington after tanker seizure by Iran (Aug 2023).



## 69) CITY OF NEOM

### Details of Neom:

The planned city along the Red Sea is emerging as the new centre of power in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the Crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) is largely running government from here. Since the COVID-19 outbreak he has been chairing the cabinet meeting in Neom.



The plan for the building of the city was first unveiled in 2017. As part of the **vision 2030 plan**, which seeks to diversify the Kingdom's economy and reduce its dependency on oil, the \$500 billion ambitious project plans to build a carbon-neutral, technologically advanced city state that can house upto 1 million people.

The city is expected to be opened up for the residents by 2025. It will have flying cars, artificial rain generated through cloud seedings, a giant fake moon and a robot dinosaurs once it is complete.

The entire project is coming up on 26,500 sq km of land in the **Tabuk province**.

The autonomous city will have its own tax and labour laws and judicial system, independent of the existing governing system in Saudi Arabia.

## 70) ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

### - Brief Historical Trail of Events

- » **Creation of Israel:** In 1948, the state of Israel was created by an UNGA resolution, on land inhabited by both Jews and Arab Palestinians. The resolution divided Palestine into two countries. But Arabs didn't accept this. This has led to several wars since then and Israel has won all the wars mostly because of military supremacy, US support and Disunity among Arabs.
- » **Hostilities between two communities** in 1948 led to mass displacement of Palestinians. Many of them became refugee in Gaza strip, a narrow swath of land that had come under control of Egyptian forces in 1948-49 Arab-Israel war. The Fate of Gaza strip fell into the hands of Israel when it occupied the territory in the six-day War of 1967.
- » **Israel's continuous increase in Area:** All areas allotted to Palestine



have come under Israel Occupation - Israel has continuously increased settlements in West Bank and Gaza.

- » In 1987, the First Intifada (the first uprising), a popular uprising by the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation began.
  - Hamas, a militant Palestinian group was also founded in 1987.
- » **1993 Oslo Agreement** between Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel came as a glimmer of hope.
  - PLO accepted the 2-state solution and recognized Israel for the first time.
  - Israel agreed to vacate occupied territory.
- » **Opposition from both sides and derailment of Plan:**
  - Hamas opposed to the more conciliatory stance taken by PLO, rejected the plan, and carried out a terror campaign to disrupt it.
  - The Plan was ultimately derailed among suicide bombing by Hamas and assassination of Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish extremist in 1995.
- » **The second Intifada** (2000-2005), was a major uprising by Palestinians against Israeli Occupation, characterized by a period of heightened violence.
  - It ended with the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit and Israel's military withdrawal from Gaza in 2005.
- » **Gaza under Hamas Control:** After collapse of peace process, Israel unilaterally withdrew from the settlements it had constructed in the Gaza strip after 1967. In 2007, there emerged a factional conflict within Palestinian authorities (PA) (between Hamas and Fatah) and Hamas emerged as the defacto ruler in the Gaza strip.
  - This takeover by Hamas promoted blockade of Gaza strip by Israel and Egypt and set the stage for the next 17 years of continued unrest.
  - There were regular hostilities in 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2021.
    - High population density of Gaza strip and the proliferation of subterranean tunnels there have complicated the situation. These tunnels have been used by Gazans to sidestep the blockade and also to hide from Israeli forces.
  - But, before the 2023-24 conflict, the conflicts generally lasted only weeks. Though these conflicts did a lot of damage in Gaza, Israel saw very few causalities and losses.

#### A) 2023-24 CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS

- On 7th Oct 2023, Hamas, officially designated a terrorist organization by many countries including Israel, USA, UK etc. led a stunning coordinated attack which took place on Shemini Atzeret, a Jewish Holiday.
- It launched several thousand rockets into Israel and conducted attacks on border areas, killing 1200 civilians and taking 253 hostages. This was called "Operation Al Aqsa Flood". Families were attacked in

their homes in **Kibbutzim** and an outdoor music festival was also attacked.

- **Overwhelming of Iron Dome System:** During the attack Hamas launched at least 2,200 rockets into Israel in just 20 mins. This overwhelmed the iron dome system.
- It was the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust.
- In response, Israel conducted air strikes and later ground assault against Hamas in Gaza with the aim to "destroy Hamas" governing and military capabilities and to bring hostages home. Hamas continues to fire rocket into Israel.
- **Clashes in other areas:**
  - Hostilities are also going on between Israel and Iran-Aligned Hezbollah in Lebanon and north Israel.
  - Other Iran-aligned groups in Syria and Iraq have conducted attacks against US forces, killing three troops in Jordon in Jan 2024, drawing a US response.
  - From Yemen, the Houthis have launched attacks on shipping lane in Red Sea.
  - Israeli Defense forces (IDF) have also intensified raids in the West bank, blockading several urban areas.
- **Estimated Causalities and Displacements:** As of Feb 2024, more than 29,000 Palestinians were reportedly killed. As per UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), an estimated 1.7 million of Gaza's population (or the total 2.2 million) are now displaced.
  - This has become the deadliest conflict for the Palestinians since the 1948 Arab Israeli war.

#### Important Places in news recently:

- **Rafah Crossing** (between Egypt and Gaza): On 18th Oct, Israel agreed to reopening of Rafah crossings between Egypt and Gaza for humanitarian aid. Around 5,000 foreign nationals and injured Palestinians have been able to leave daily from the crossing.
- **Kerem Shalom Crossing** between Israel and Gaza was opened for aid in Dec 2023.

## 71) ISRAEL - PALESTINE (WEST BANK)

### West Bank:

The West Bank is a **landlocked territory** near the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia, bordered by Jordan and the Dead Sea to the east and by Israel to the south, west and north.

The "West Bank" name was given to the territory after it was captured by Jordan in the 1948 Arab–Israeli War because it sits on the west side of the Jordan River.

Jordan subsequently annexed the territory in 1950 and held it until 1967 when it was occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War.



**Note:** After the six-day war in 1967, Israel gained control of Sinai Peninsula and Gaza strip from Egypt; West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan; and Golan Heights from Syria.

## 72) GOLAN HEIGHTS

- Golan Heights (also called Golan Plateau) are hilly areas overlooking the upper Jordan River valley on the west. It is an area of conflict between Syria and Israel
- The area was part of extreme South West Syria till 1967, when it came under Israeli military occupation, and in Dec 1981 Israel unilaterally annexed the part of the Golan it held.
- Geographically, it is bound by the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee on the West.
- In April 2023, 6 rockets fired from Syria to Golan Heights. Three of them landed in Israeli territory.
- After this, the Israel Defence Forces carried out artillery and drone strikes in southern Syria, targeting the launchers that had been used to fire the rockets.

### 73) SEA OF GALILEE

The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake in Israel.

It is the lowest freshwater lake on Earth and the second-lowest lake in the world, at levels between 215 metres and 209 metres below sea level.

The lake is fed partly by underground springs but its main source is the Jordan River, which flows through it from north to south and exits the lake at the Degania Dam.

The **Sea of Galilee** is situated in northeast Israel, between the Golan Heights and the Galilee region, in the Jordan Rift Valley, the valley caused by the separation of the African and Arabian plates. Consequently, the area is subject to earthquakes, and in the past, volcanic activity. This is evident from the abundant basalt and other igneous rocks that define the geology of Galilee



### 74) JORDON RIVER

Jordon river in west Asia has the lowest elevation of any river in the world. It lies in a structural depression.

**Origin:** The river rises on the slopes of **Mount Hermon**, on the border between Syria and Lebanon, and flow southwards through northern Israel to the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberius). After that it continues south, forming a border between West Bank and Jordon. It eventually empties in Dead Sea.

**Jordon river is shared** by Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Jordon, and the Palestinian Authority.

**Jordon Valley:** The lower course of the Jordon river from the exact point where it exits the sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea is referred to as the Jordon Valley. This 105km long Jordon valley forms a part of the Jordon Rift Valley



and has the lowest elevation in the world **starting from -212m and ending at -400m.**

## 75) JORDON RIFT VALLEY

- It is an elongated depression located in modern day Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank. The geographic region include entire length of Jordon River - from its sources, through the Hula valley, the Sea of Galilee, the Lower Jordon Valley, the Dead sea (lowest land elevation on earth) and then continues through the Arabah depression, the Gulf of Aqaba, whose shorelines it incorporates, until finally reaching Red Sea proper at the Straits of Tiran.
- **Why was it formed?**
  - » It was formed many million years ago when the **Arabian Plate** moved northward and then eastward away from Africa.

## 76) DEAD SEA

- It is a landlocked salt lake between Israel and Jordon. Its eastern shore belongs to Jordon, and the western shore belongs to Israel.
- The sea has the lowest elevation and is the lowest body of water on the surface of earth. The surface of dead sea, at an elevation of about 430 meters below sea level, is the **lowest land point on earth**.
- Dead sea receives almost all its water from Jordon river.
- **Continuous dropping water levels:**
- The water level has dropped from 390 to 550m (below sea level), while the surface area shrank from 950 km<sup>2</sup>, in the beginning of the 20th century, to the current 392 km<sup>2</sup>. It's because of excess utilization by both Israel and Jordon. Most of the water is being diverted upstream.

## 77) TURKIYE (OLD NAME TURKEY)

- **Details**
  - » Following an official letter submitted to the UN by the Republic of Turkiye, the country's name has been changed to Turkiye at the UN.
- **Why the name change:**
  - » President Recep Tayyip Erdogan issued a statement saying the "word Turkiye represents and expresses the culture, civilization, and values of the Turkish nation in the best way".
  - » Domestically, citizens refer to the land as Turkiye, but its anglicised version "Turkey" was adopted internationally.

Turkiye is a transcontinental country bridging South-eastern Europe and Western Asia.

**Asian Turkey**, which includes 97 percent of the country's territory, is separated from European Turkey by the **Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles**. European Turkey comprises only 3 percent of the country's territory.

**Dardanelles Strait** (also known as Gallipoli strait) is a narrow natural strait and internationally significant waterway in the northwest of Turkey. It forms the continental boundary between Asia and Europe and separates Asian Turkey from European Turkey.

**Bosphorus Strait**: it is an internationally significant waterway located in Istanbul in north-western Turkey. It also forms part of continental boundary between Asia and Europe and divides Turkey by separating Anatolia and Thrace. It is world's narrowest strait used for international navigation.

**Dardanelles Strait and Bosphorus Strait** are together called Turkish Straits.

**Sea of Marmara**: In 2021, the Sea of Marmara saw the largest outbreak of 'Sea Snot'. Sea snot refers to marine mucilage that is formed when algae are overloaded with nutrients due to pollution. It looks like vicious brown and foamy substance.

The country is encircled by seas on three sides: the Aegean Sea to the west, the Black Sea to the north and the Mediterranean Sea to the south.

Turkey also contains the Sea of Marmara in the northwest

**Neighbouring Countries**: Syria, Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Bulgaria, and Greece.

Note: Anatolia (also known as Asia Minor) is a large peninsula in Western Asia and is the westernmost extension of continental Asia. The landmass of Anatolia constitute most of the territory of contemporary Turkey. Geographically, Anatolia consist of Turkish Straits in the North-west, Black Sea to the north, the Armenian Highlands to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the South, and the Aegean Sea to the west.



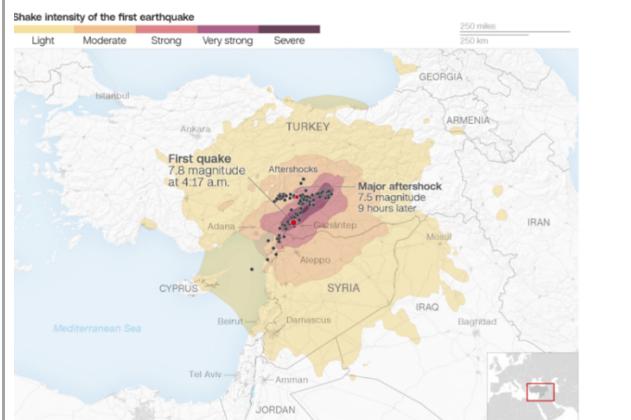
## 78) TURKEY SYRIA 2023 EARTHQUAKE

On 6th Feb 2023, earthquake of 7.8 intensity had struck Southern and Central Turkey and northern and western Syria. It has killed around 60,000 people.

It is the deadliest earthquake in what is now present day Turkey since the 526 Antioch Earthquake.

The epicentre was near the Turkish city of **Gaziantep**.

- **Gaziantep** is a major city in south-central Turkey. It is the capital of the Gaziantep Province in the westernmost part of Turkey's southeastern Anatolia region and partially in the Mediterranean region.
- It was heavily damaged by 2023 Turkey-Syria Earthquake and at the time of earthquake, around half a million Syrian refugees were living here.



**Antakya** (known as **Antioch** to the people of ancient Greece and Rome) is another city that has been badly damaged by the earthquake. It is the capital of southernmost province of Turkey. The city is located in a well-watered and fertile valley on the Orontes river.

Turkey's **two main fault zones**, the **East Anatolian** and the **North Anatolian**, make it one of the most seismically active regions in the world, and more than 70 quakes of magnitude 6.5 or higher have been recorded in the region since 1990.

Central Southern Turkey and Northwestern Syria are affected by the interaction between three tectonic plates - the African Plate, Arabian Plate and Anatolian Plate. The boundary between the African and Arabian plate is represented by the Dead Sea Transform (DST) - a major zone of left-lateral strike slip fault - **it accommodates the relative northward movement of Arabia with respect to Africa**.



The Northern end of DST truncates at East Anatolian Fault (EAF) another major left lateral strike slip fault zone that accommodates the overall westward movement of Anatolian Plate as it is extruded in that direction by the northward movement of the Arabian plate.

## A) EARTHQUAKE BASICS: RICHTER SCALE VS MERCALLI SCALE

The Richter Scale and the Mercalli Scale are two different ways of measuring the magnitude of an earthquake. Here is tabular comparison of the two:

Criteria	Richter Scale	Mercalli Scale
Magnitude	Based on the seismic waves recorded by seismographs.	Based on the intensity of shaking and damage caused by an earthquake.
Units	Measures <u>magnitude on a logarithmic scale from 1 to 10</u> .	Uses Roman numerals from I to XII to describe earthquake intensity. <b>It is not algorithmic but rather a subjective measurement.</b>
Objective/Subjective	Objective, uses <u>quantitative measurement of the energy released</u> by an earthquake.	Subjective, uses <u>qualitative description of earthquake effects on people, structures, and the environment</u> .
Distance	<u>More useful for measuring earthquakes that occur at a distance</u> from the seismograph.	<u>Less useful for measuring earthquakes that occur far away from the seismograph.</u>
Time	<b>Measures the energy released</b> at the moment of the earthquake.	<b>Measures the effect of the earthquake</b> on the ground and on people, buildings, and the environment.
Usefulness	Useful for scientific and engineering purposes.	Useful for communicating the effects of an earthquake to the general public.

It's important to note that both scales are useful in their own ways and are often used together to provide a more complete picture of an earthquake's impact.

## 79) SYRIA

Capital: Damascus

**Neighbours:** Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon

**Maritime boundary** with Mediterranean Sea.

Lake: Al Assad (along Euphrates river)

Rivers: Euphrates and Khabur

**Civil War in Syria:** Northern part is controlled by Kurdish Forces.



## 80) LEVANT

Levant is a term in geography that refers to an area in the middle east. It includes the historic areas of Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Syria. It also includes parts of Iraq, Turkey, Cyprus, and Saudi Arabia.

It is bounded by Taurus mountain to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the West, the Northern Arabian Desert to the South and the Upper Mesopotamia to the east.



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## 81) BLACK SEA

It is a large inland sea situated at the South-eastern extremity of Europe.

It is bordered by **Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, and Turkey.** [BRU-RGT]

The Crimean Peninsula is located on the north of Black Sea and just to its north is located **Kerch Strait** which links the Black sea to **Sea of Azov.**

**Important Ports:** Sevastopol (On Crimean Peninsula)

**Important rivers** that flow into Black sea are: Danube, Dnieper, Don



## 82) SEA OF AZOV

Sea of Azov is a sea in eastern Europe. It is linked to the Black sea in south through Strait of Kerch. It is sometimes also regarded as the northern extension of the black sea.

**Ukraine** in **Northwest** and **Russia** in east are the two countries which surround the sea.

**Don** and **Kuban** are the major rivers that flow into the sea.

**Other features**

It is the shallowest sea in the world with a depth between (0.9 and 14 meters)

There is a constant outflow of water from this sea to Black sea.



### A) KERCH STRAIT

It is the only connection point between black sea and the sea of Azov, and the only way to reach two important Ukrainian ports, Mariupol and Berdiansk. Since Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia had been controlling the strait and thus making movement very difficult for Ukrainian ships.

## 83) KERCH BRIDGE (CRIMEAN BRIDGE)

It is a 19 km bridge which links Russian mainland with Ukrainian Peninsula in the black sea. The bridge has two parallel rail and roadways. It was opened in 2018 by Russian President Vladimir Putin with great fanfare, four years after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine after a contested referendum.



**In July 2023**, According to Russian authorities, one of the sections of the bridge was blown up killing two people and injuring a child. Russians have claimed that this was an attack by Ukraine.

The **bridge is so important for Russians** for symbolic, administrative and operational reasons.

- **Connectivity:** Before Russia had control over Donbas and Kherson, the bridge was the only connection between mainland Russia and Crimea.
- Even now, when it has control over the Donbas and Kherson, it is not far from the frontline and well within the range of Ukrainian fire. So, the **Kerch bridge remains a critical logistical supply link for the Russian troops in the south.**

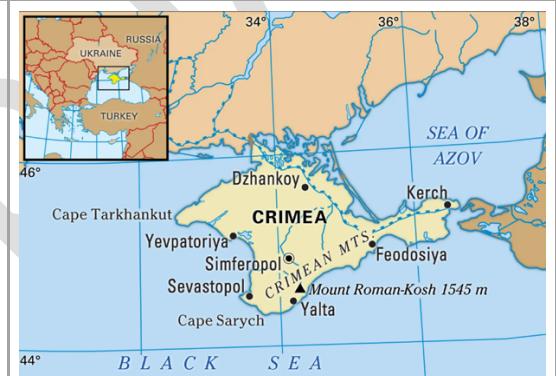
## 84) CRIMEAN PENINSULA

Crimean Peninsula lies between Black Sea and Sea of Azov.

It is connected to the mainland by the narrow Perekop Isthmus.

The region has a population of 2.4 million and has been under Russian occupation since 2014.

The **port city of Sevastopol** serves as the headquarters of Russian Black Sea Fleet.



## 85) UKRAINE

### Geographical Details

Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe. It is the second largest country in Europe after Russia.

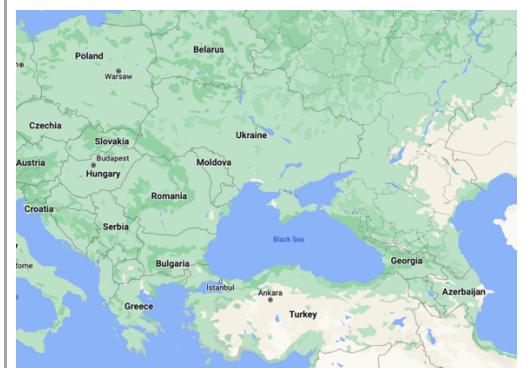
**Neighbours:** It shares its borders with Hungary, Slovakia, Poland to the West, Belarus to North, Russia to North, Northeast and East and Moldova and Romania to the South.

**Trick:** Hungry, Slow, Polar, Bear of Russia are Roaming in Moldova.

**Coastline:** the country has coastline along the sea of Azov and Black Sea.

### Recent Political Events:

Ukraine gained its independence in 1991 after dissolution of Soviet Union. Ukraine declared itself a neutral state, forming limited partnership with both Russia and NATO.



In 2014, Kremlin leaning Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych rejected an association with the European Union (EU) in favor of close ties with Moscow. This resulted in a series of protests across Ukraine, ending with Yanukovych's removal from power the same year. Mass protests and demonstrations known as the Euromaidan erupted, escalating into the Revolution of Dignity that led to the establishment of new government. These events led to Russia annexing Crimea and a war in Donbas against Russian backed separatists, culminating in Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022

### **Donbas Region**

The Donetsk and Luhansk region of Ukraine is collectively called the Donbas.

**Strategic significance of Donbas region:** Donbas can act as a corridor between Russia and Crimea (and by extension, the strategically significant port of Sevastopol).

The population of this region is more Pro-Russia and thus a war has been going on since 2014 against Russia-backed separatists in the region.

On 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2022, Russia officially recognized the DPR (Donetsk People's Republic) and LPR (Luhansk People's Republic) and on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.



### **Kherson**

On Sep 30, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin combatively announced the annexation of four "oblasts" (regions) that are currently de jure Ukraine territory - Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson - and claimed that these regions will be with Russia "forever".

**Kherson** is strategically very significantly located - It is located just north of the Crimean peninsula, which was annexed by Russia in 2014.

### **Mariupol**

It is a city of the north coast of the Sea of Azov at the mouth of Kalmius river. While internationally recognized as in Ukraine, the city is under the de facto administration of the Donetsk People's Republic.

During the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the city was besieged and severely damaged in which it received the title of Hero City of Ukraine.

On 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022, Ukrainian troops in Azovstal Steel Plant surrendered to Russian forces and were evacuated to Russian held territory in the Donetsk People's Republic, as Russia secured complete control of the city



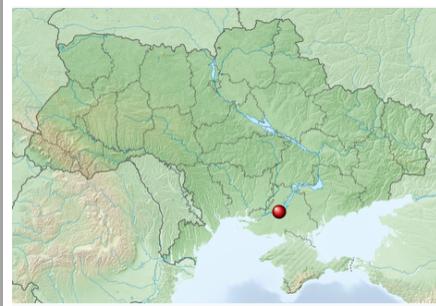
### **Nova Kakhovka Reservoir (DAM)**

The Kakhovka Dam was a dam on the Dnieper River (also known as Dnipro) in Kherson Oblast, Ukraine. It is a soviet era dam and was destroyed in June 2023.

This breach has unleashed flood water in the war zone. Both, Ukraine and Russia have conflicting accounts on who destroyed it.



This Dam is part of Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant. It supplies water to Crimean peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014, and to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is also under Russia control.



Location of Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine

**The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant** is the largest nuclear power plant of Europe. It gets its cooling water from Kakhovka Reservoir. It is located on the southern side, now under Russia control.

## **86) MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

The Mediterranean Sea is a sea connected to the Atlantic Ocean, surrounded by the Mediterranean Basin and almost completely enclosed by land: on the north by Western and Southern Europe and Anatolia, on the south by North Africa, and on the east by the Levant.

Today, **21 countries** form border with Mediterranean Sea

Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Spain (note: No Portugal), France, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, and Greece.



## **87) AEGEAN SEA**

It is an extension of Mediterranean sea between Europe and Asia. It is located between Balkans and Anatolia.

In the north it is connected to Marmara sea, which in turn is connected to black sea.

**In June 2022, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned Greece to demilitarize islands of the Aegean Sea.**



## **88) ADRIATIC SEA**

### Countries bordering Adriatic Sea:

Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania.



## 89) ITALY

Italy is a country consisting of Peninsula, located in the centre of Mediterranean sea.

### Neighbouring Countries:

France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, and the enclaved microstate of Vatican City and San Marino.

It is surrounded by Adriatic Sea in the east, Tyrrhenian Sea in West and Ionian Sea in South.



## 90) VENICE AND VENETIAN GRAND CANAL

**Venice:** It is a city in north-eastern Italy and is the capital of Veneto region. It is built of 118 small islands. That are separated by expanses of open water and by canals.

### Venetian Grand Canal:

It is a channel in Venice, Italy. It forms one of the major water traffic corridors in the city.

One end of the canal leads into lagoon near the Santa Lucia Railway Station and the other end leads into the basin at San Marco; in between, it makes a large reverse-S shape through the central districts of Venice.

### Why in news?

Venetian canal had turned green. Initially known one was able to give a reason. But in June 2023, authorities found that the test samples of the water confirmed the canal's bright new hue was caused by fluorescein, a chemical often used to find leaks during underwater construction. The official are investigating how the chemical got into the canal.



## 91) MOUNT ETNA

Mount Etna is Europe's most active volcano. It is a stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy, in the Metropolitan City of Catania.

Recent eruptions in Feb 2021 have led to spectacular spurts of lava lighting up the sky each night.

Satellites images shows that the volcano has erupted so much in 2021 that it has grown about 30 meters (100 feet)



**Other two active volcanoes of Italy:**

- Mount Vesuvius (Near Naples, last erupted in 1944)
- Stromboli (on Aeolian Islands) (three major explosions in 2019)

## 92) RIVER VOLGA

Longest river of Europe (3700 kms)

It originates in Valdai hills in north western Russia, a heavily forested region and drains into Caspian Sea.

**Source of water:** It is fed mostly by snow (around 60% of the water), underground water (30%) and rain water 10%.

It passes through much of the heart of historic Russia.



## 93) DANUBE RIVER

2nd longest river of Europe (2,850 km) after Volga.

It is located in Central and Eastern Europe.

Originates in Germany and passes through Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Ukraine before draining into Black Sea



**Sulina Channel:**

News: (Aug 2023)

It is a distributary of the river Danube that contributes to forming the **Danube Delta**. The other two main branches of Danube are the **Chilia Branch** to the north and the **Sfantu Gheorghe branch** to the south

The Danube delta has provided Ukraine with an alternative passage for its grain after Russia withdrew from Black Sea grain deal recently.

The deal, was brokered by the UN and Turkey, and is used to provide safe passages for cargo ships carrying grain from Ukrainian Black Sea Ports of Odessa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi.

**Sulina** channel is of particular significance in this 'new' trade route. It connects major Ukrainian ports on the river to the Black Sea, lying completely within the borders of Romania, a NATO member

## 94) RHINE RIVER

### About Rhine River

It is the second longest river in Central and Western Europe (after Danube)

River Rhine originates at Swiss Canton of Graubünden in the south-eastern Swiss Alps and travels 1232 kms to empty into North Sea at Rotterdam.

**Source of water:** A mix of glacial run off and rains feed the river. It acts as important inland waterways and carry ships through some of the important industrial centers.

**It forms many national borders:**

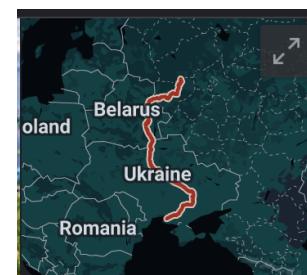
- Swiss Liechtenstein
- Swiss - Austria
- Swiss German
- France German

It then flows through German Rhine Land and Netherlands to eventually empty into the northern sea.



## 95) RIVER DNIPEPER OR DNIPRO

- It is one of the major rivers of Europe.
- It originates in Russia (Valdai Hills), before flowing through Belarus and Ukraine to the **Black Sea**.
- It is the longest river of Ukraine and Belarus and the **fourth longest river of Europe** after Volga, Danube and Ural.



## 96) ALPS MOUNTAIN

The Alps are the highest and most extensive mountain ranges system that lies entirely in Europe. The alps form part of France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania.

Alps are inter-zonal mountain system (or a "transition area") between Central and Mediterranean Europe.

**Mont Blanc** is the highest mountain (4,808 m) in Alps, spanning 3 countries. Its granite ramparts distinguish it from other peaks.

It is the second highest and second most prominent mountain in Europe and the eleventh most prominent mountain summit in the world. It stands between regions of Italy and France.

**Note:** The Highest peak of the Caucasus and the highest point in Europe is **Mount Elbrus** in southwestern Russia.



## 97) BALTIC SEA

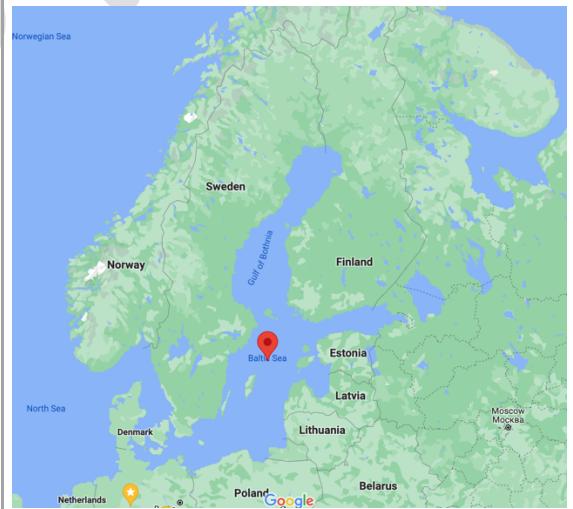
**Baltic Sea** is an arm of Atlantic Ocean. It is enclosed by Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Denmark

**Baltic Proper** is bordered on its northern edge, at latitude 60 degree north, by Aland Islands and the Gulf of Bothnia, on its north eastern edge by Gulf of Finland.

**Gulf of Riga:** (Latvia border – opens into Baltic Sea)

**Baltic Sea is connected to White Sea by White Sea Baltic Canal and to German Bight of the North Sea by Kiel Canal.**

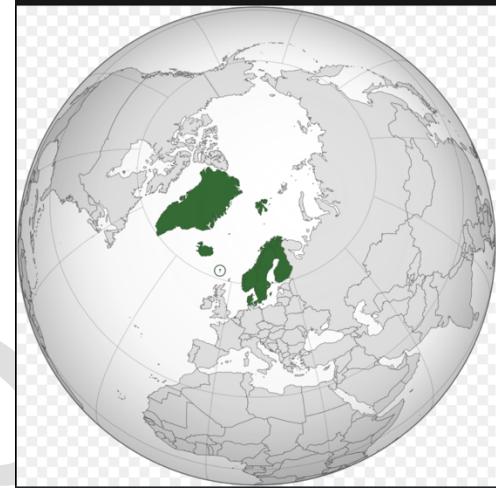
**White-Sea Baltic Canal:**



- In Baltic Sea, citizen divers restore seagrass to fight climate change (July 2023)
  - » This is part of a new project that trains local citizens to restore seagrass meadows in the Baltic Sea. The hope is that this painstaking work can help tackle climate change.
  - » **What is the Project:**
    - Seastore Seagrass Restoration Project , run by the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research in Keil, Germany, is one of the first that aims to enable citizens to restore seagrass autonomously.

## 98) NORDIC COUNTRIES

- Which are Nordic Countries?
  - » The Nordic countries are a geographical and cultural region in Northern Europe and the North Atlantic.
  - » It includes:
    - Norway
    - Sweden
    - Finland (including autonomous region of Aaland)
    - Denmark (including autonomous territories of Faroe Island and Greenland)
    - Iceland
- Note1: Svalbard is a Norwegian archipelago.
- Note2: Only Norway and Finland form border with Russia. (Sweden and Denmark don't)
- Note3: All Nordic countries are part of Arctic Council



### A) NORDIC COUNCIL

- It is an official body for formal inter-parliamentary Nordic Cooperation among the Nordic Countries.
- It was formed in 1952, and has 87 representatives from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland as well as from the autonomous area of Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Aaland. The representatives are Member of Parliaments in their respective countries or areas and are elected by those parliamentarians.
- Headquarter: Copenhagen, Denmark

### B) SVALBARD (ALSO KNOWN AS SPITSBERGEN)

- It is a Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic Ocean. North of mainland Europe, it is about midway between the northern coast of Norway and the North Pole. The islands of the group range from 74 degree to 81-degree N.
- The largest island is Spitsbergen.
- Svalbard Global Seed Vault is a seedbank to store seeds from as many of the world's crop varieties and their botanical wild relatives as possible. It is a cooperation between the government of Norway and the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the vault is cut into rock near Longyearbyen, keeping it at a natural – 6 degree C and refrigerating the seeds to



-18 degree C. It is also referred as Earth's dooms day vault.

- **IndARC:** It is India's first underwater moored observatory in the Arctic region. It was deployed in 2014 at Kongsfjorden fjord, Svalbard, Norway. It is focused on studying arctic climate.

## 99) NORD STREAM

- Nord stream is a set of offshore natural offshore gas pipeline in Europe, running under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany.
- It includes **two Nord Stream-1 pipelines** running from Vyborg in northwestern Russia, near Finland, and two **Nord Stream-2 pipelines** running from Ust-Luga in northwestern Russia, near Estonia.
- **Both set of pipelines** run to **Lumbin** in the northeastern Germany.
- Recently, **NORD STREAM-2** has been denied certification as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



## 100) SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

- Scandinavia is a sub-region in Northern Europe, with a strong historical, cultural, and linguistic tie between its constituent people.
- It includes **Norway, Sweden and Denmark** (please note that it doesn't include Finland)
- A more **narrow definition** only includes Scandinavian Peninsula (i.e. Norway and Sweden)
- Sometime the term is used more broadly to also include Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Åland.
- **Broadest definition** is similar to Nordic countries.



## 101) ICELAND

It is located in North Atlantic Ocean and is one of the least populated countries of Europe.

After Great Britain, it is Europe's largest island.

Its capital **Reykjavik**, is the northernmost national capital in the world.

**Location:** It is located halfway between Europe mainland and North America and is just below the Arctic circle.

The country is famous for its geo-thermal pools, volcanoes, and glaciers.



#### News (July 2023)

Almost 2200 earthquakes have been recorded in the vicinity of Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, within 24 hours.

This surge of seismic activity has prompted the Icelandic Meteorological Office to issue a warning, suggesting the possibility of an imminent volcanic eruption. The earthquakes originated beneath Mount Fagradalsfjall, a mountain situated on the Reykjaness Peninsula, which has witnessed two eruptions in the past 2 years.

**Note:** Iceland's name is misnomer as the country is quite green and fertile.

## 102) GREENLAND AND WATER BODIES AROUND IT

- Greenland is an island nation located between the Arctic and Atlantic oceans, east of Canadian Arctic Archipelago.
- It is world's largest Island and is one of the three constituent countries that form the Kingdom of Denmark, along with Denmark and the Faroe Islands. The citizens of these countries are all Danish nationals.
- With a permanent population of 56,081, it is the least densely populated region in the world.
- **Capital and largest city: Nuuk.**
- **Physiographically**, it is part of North America; But, politically, and culturally it is associated with Europe (specifically Norway and Denmark, the colonial powers)
- **Water Bodies around Greenland** (see adjacent figure)



### 103) ENGLISH CHANNEL

The English Channel is the Atlantic Ocean's 30th largest arm.

It is located between the isle of Great Britain's southern coast and France's northern coast.

It is separated from North Sea by the **Strait of Dover**.



### 104) NEXT BOOKLET – AFRICA, NORTH AMERICA AND SOUTH AMERICA



# TARGET PRELIMS 2024

## BOOKLET-30

### INTERNATIONAL MAPPING AND PLACES IN NEWS-2

### AFRICA, NORTH AMERICA AND SOUTH AMERICA

#### Table of Contents

1) Important Mountain ranges of African Continent .....	1	21) Ethnic Conflict in DRC (NOV 2023, SOurce TH) .....	14
2) Maghreb Region.....	1	22) Lake Tanganyika.....	16
3) LIBYA.....	1	23) Zambia: Kafue National Park .....	16
4) Morocco .....	2	24) Madagascar .....	17
5) Western Sahara Dispute .....	3	25) Mozambique Channel .....	17
6) Horn of Africa.....	3	26) Tristan Da Cunha.....	17
7) Tigray Region of Ethiopia: Tigray War .....	4	27) Rocky Mountains .....	18
8) Danakil Depression.....	4	28) Milne Ice Shelf .....	19
9) SOMALIA.....	5	29) Hawaii.....	19
10) Nile River .....	6	30) Mauna Loa Volcano.....	20
11) Sudan.....	7	31) Maui: .....	21
12) Lake Victoria .....	7	32) Countries in Central America.....	21
13) Sahel Region .....	8	33) Nicaragua.....	21
14) Sierra Leon .....	10	34) Panama Canal .....	22
15) Niger .....	10	35) Countries in South America.....	22
16) Niger River .....	12	36) Pantanal Wetland .....	23
17) Burkina Faso.....	12	37) Galapagos Island .....	24
18) Gulf of Guinea .....	13	38) Sangay Volcano.....	25
19) Congo River and Congo River Basin .....	13	39) World's Fifth Ocean: Southern Ocean...	25
20) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ....	14		

## 1) IMPORTANT MOUNTAIN RANGES OF AFRICAN CONTINENT

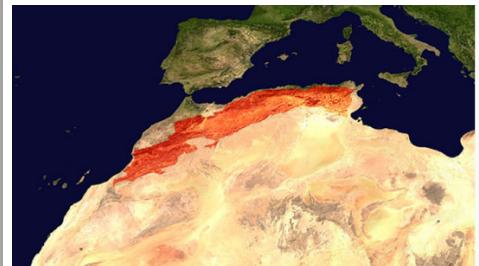
### Atlas Mountains:

The Atlas mountains are a mountain range in the Maghreb in North Africa. It separates Sahara desert from the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Mountains.

The term "Atlantic" is derived from the Atlas mountains.

These stretch around 2,500 kms through Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. They are the longest mountain range of Africa.

**Highest Peak:** Toubkal (located in Morocco). It is the highest peak in North Africa.

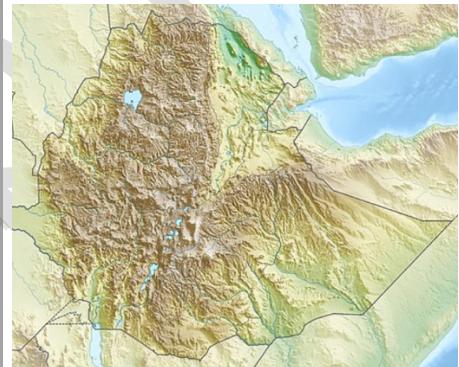


The location of the Atlas Mountains (red) across North Africa

### Ethiopian Highlands:

They are also known as Abyssinian Highlands. This vast and ancient mountain complex covers much of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

It is called the roof of Africa. The rugged mountain mass forms the continent's most extensive continuous elevation area, with the summits reaching upto 14,930 feet.



Ethiopian Highland consist of rugged Western Highlands and the more limited Eastern Highlands. The two sections are separated by the vast Eastern Rift Valley which cuts across Ethiopia from southwest to northeast.

**Mount Ras Dejen** is the highest peak in Ethiopia.

### Special Mention: Mount Kilimanjaro:

- It is not a mountain range though. It is the highest mountain peak in Africa at a height of 5,895 m.
- It is located in Tanzania and is the highest free standing mountain in the world, rising above the surrounding Savanna plains of Tanzania.



**Great Escarpment:** It is a major topographic feature of Africa that consists of steep slopes from the high central South African Plateau downward in the direction of the oceans that surround southern Africa from three sides.

Most of it lies in South Africa, the east of the escarpment extends northward to from the border between Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The Drakensberg is the eastern portion of the Great Escarpment, which encloses the central Southern Africa plateau.

## 2) MAGHREB REGION

The Maghreb, also known as Arab Maghreb and Northwest Africa, is the western part of Arab World. The region contains western and central north Africa, including Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania. It also includes disputed territory of Western Sahara (controlled mostly by Morocco).

**Note:** Maghreb doesn't include Egypt and Sudan.

The term "Maghreb" literally translates to "the west" in Arabic. The traditional definition of the Maghreb encompassed only the Atlas Mountains and the coastal plains of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. This definition was expanded to include Mauritania and the disputed territory of western Sahara.



## 3) LIBYA

It is a country in the Maghreb region in North Africa.

**Neighboring countries:** Algeria to West, Tunisia to Northwest, Egypt to East, Sudan to Southeast, Chad to South and Niger to Southwest.

**Maritime Boundary:** Mediterranean Sea in the north

**Capital and largest city:** Tripoli

**Recent History:** Libya became independent as a kingdom in 1951. A bloodless military coup in 1969, initiated by a coalition led by Colonel Muammer Gaddafi, overthrew King Idris-1 and created a republic. He ruled until being overthrown and killed in the 2011 Libyan Civil War and power was transferred to the General National Congress. By 2014, two rival authorities claimed to govern Libya, leading to another civil war. These two sides signed a permanent ceasefire in Oct 2020 and a unity government took authority.



## Sep 2023 Flood:

On 10th Sep 2023, unprecedented flooding in Libya was caused by Storm Daniel and the collapse of two dams near the city of Derna.

**Derna** is a coastal city. It is situated at the end of a valley and bisected by the Wadi Derna, a seasonal river that flows from Mountains to the south (towards the sea) and is normally protected from flooding by dams.

The north-eastern city of Benghazi, Sousa, and Al-Marj were badly affected by the Disaster.

**Impact:** More than 12,000 people were killed.

The Flooding occurred in LIBYA's eastern region, which witnessed extreme rainfall on 10th Sep and 11th Sep.

**Why so heavy rainfall?**

Storm Daniel or Cyclone Daniel.

Daniel transitioned into a "medicane", or tropical cyclone that occasionally forms over the Mediterranean sea. Focus was intensified due to abnormally warm water of Mediterranean sea.



## 4) MOROCCO

It is a country in the Maghreb region of north Africa.

**Capital:** Rabat

**Countries having land border:** Western Sahara (mostly controlled by Morocco); and Algeria.

**Water Bodies:** The country borders Atlantic Sea to its north and west and Mediterranean sea to its north-east.



**Morocco Earthquake 2023:**

A severe earthquake struck near the town of Oukaimedene in Western Morocco on 8th Sep 2023. It killed around 3,000 people and injured another 5,500 people.

The earthquake heavily damaged parts of ancient section of Marrakech and devastated several remote settlements in the Atlas mountains.

It was also felt as far away as Morocco's largest city, Casablanca, and in Portugal and Algeria.

## 5) WESTERN SAHARA DISPUTE

A former Spanish colony, Western Sahara is a vast, arid region in northwest Africa that is larger than the size of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, but with less than six lakh inhabitants.

It is mineral rich: home to abundant reserves of phosphate, a key ingredient in the manufacturing of synthetic fertilisers.

It has also lucrative fish resources and is believed to have offshore oil.

The region first came under Spanish control in 1884, and was made a province called 'Spanish Sahara' by the European country in 1934. Then in 1957, its northern neighbour Morocco, which had become independent from French rule just a year before, staked its claim over the entire territory, reasserting a centuries-old position.

Meanwhile, Western Sahara's Sahrawi ethnic group began efforts to gain independence from Spain. In 1973, a guerrilla movement sprang up called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (Polisario Front), named after the two regions constituting the Spanish province.

Then in 1975, ten years after the UN called for its decolonisation, Spain withdrew from Western Sahara, partitioning the region between Morocco, which received the region's northern two-thirds, and Mauritania the remaining third in the south. The partition took place despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) calling the claims by both Morocco and Mauritania to the region as tenuous, and which favoured self-determination for the Sahrawis.



The Polisario Front contested the handover and continued its armed struggle with support from neighbouring Algeria, and in 1976 started a government-in-exile called the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Three years later, Morocco again strengthened its hand by annexing Mauritania's share of Western Sahara, after the latter decided to withdraw from the region and the conflict. A UN-brokered ceasefire stopped the war in 1991.

Since then, Morocco has controlled around 80 per cent of Western Sahara, including its phosphate reserves and rich fishing grounds. Combined with its own deposits of the mineral, Morocco currently holds over 72 per cent of the world's phosphate reserves, as per The Atlantic. China, which has the second-most reserves, has less than 6 per cent.

## 6) HORN OF AFRICA

The Horn of Africa is the easternmost peninsula of the African continent, excluding African islands.

It lies along the southern boundary of the Red Sea and extends hundreds of kilometres into the Gulf of Aden, Somali Sea and Guardafui Channel.

The Horn of Africa consists of the internationally recognized countries of Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia as well as the unrecognized country of Somaliland



## 7) TIGRAY REGION OF ETHIOPIA: TIGRAY WAR

**Tigray War** is an armed conflict that lasted from Nov 2020 to Nov 2022. It was primarily fought between the Tigray region of Ethiopia between forces allied to the Ethiopian federal government and Eritrea on one side and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on the other.

The conflict dates back to 2018 when Abiy Ahmed (2019 Nobel Peace Prize Winner) first came to power and took steps to reduce the authority of Tigray officials. The war had erupted in 2020 after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmad sent the army to the Northern Tigray region to remove local authorities from the TPLF who challenged his authority and whom he accused of having attached military bases.



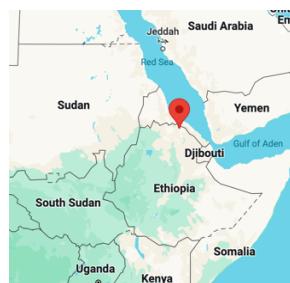
## 8) DANAKIL DEPRESSION

The Danakil depression is located in the north of Ethiopia, close to the border with neighbouring Eritrea (which has gained independence from Ethiopia)

It is the northern part of the Afar Triangle or Afar Depression. The Afar Depression spans Djibouti, Eritrea, and the Afar region of Ethiopia. The northern part of this Danakil depression.

**Afar Triangle** has resulted from the divergence of three tectonic plates in the Horn of Africa. The three plates are African Plate, Arabian Plate and Somali Plate.

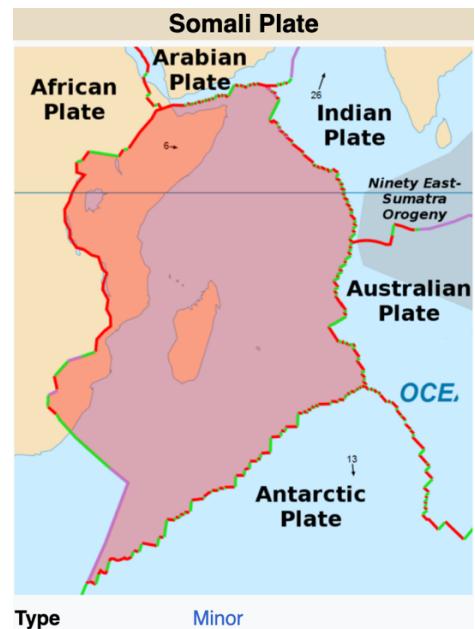
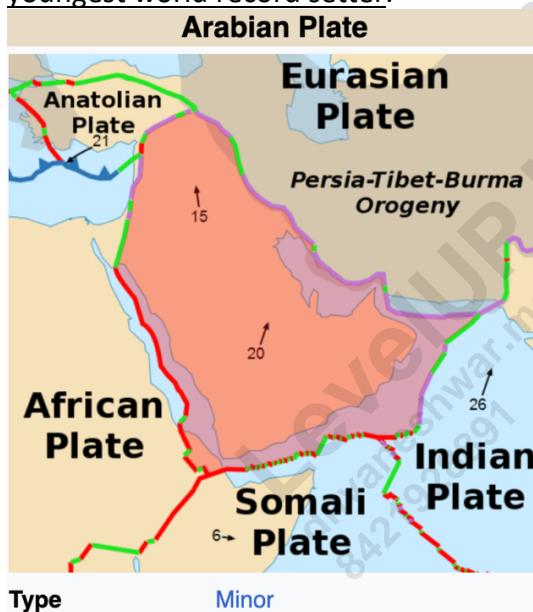
**Other interesting things about Danakil Depression:**



1. In 1974, researchers found the remains of 'Lucy' in the Danakil depression, an early ancestor of modern humans dating back 3.2 million years.
2. It is the hottest place on Earth and one of the world's lowest place at 100 meters below sea level.
3. **No Living Organisms in Danakil Depression:** Scientists have recently concluded that active and naturally occurring life can't be sustained at Danakil.

#### Two Key Reasons

- **Magnesium dominated brines** cause the cells to break down.
- An environment having **simultaneous very low pH and high salt**, a combination that makes adaptation highly difficult
- 4. The acidic springs of the Dallol crater have attracted scientists in the search for extremophile microbes as they seek to understand the origins of life on earth, as well as possibility of early stage life on Mars.
- 5. **Mount Ayalu** and **Ert A Ale** are the two active volcanoes in the Danakil Depression.
- 6. **The Gaet's ale Pond** - located in the depression is the saltiest lake in the world with a salinity of 43%. It was only created in 2005 after an earthquake in the region. Thus, it is one of the youngest world record setter.



## 9) SOMALIA

- Somalia is a country in the horn of Africa and is bordered by Ethiopia to the West, Djibouti to the North west and Kenya to the South West. It also touches Gulf of Aden to its north and Indian Ocean to its east.
- It has the longest Coastline on Africa's Mainland.
- **Capital:** Mogadishu
- It is sometimes described as Africa's most culturally homogenous country.
- **Equator** passes through Somalia.



## 10) NILE RIVER

The Nile is a major north flowing river in the north-eastern Africa. It is also the longest (6650 km) river of the world. The claim of longest river is disputed by the Brazilian government which says that the Amazon river is the longest.

It's **drainage basin** covers 11 countries - Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Republic of Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

**Note:** A drainage basin is an area of land where water from rain or snow melt drains downhill into a body of water such as a river, lake, wetland or ocean.

Nile has two major tributaries - the **White Nile** and the **Blue Nile**. The two rivers meet just north of Sudanese Capital - Khartoum.

- **White Nile** is considered the head water and primary stream of the Nile river itself.
  - It is longer and originates in the Great Lakes region of the Central Africa. It flows north through Tanzania, Lake Victoria, Uganda, South Sudan and meets Blue Nile in Sudan.
- **Blue Nile** is the source of most of the water of River Nile (80%). It begins at Lake Tana in Ethiopia and flows into Sudan from South East.



### Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GRED):

Great Renaissance Dam has been constructed over Blue Nile River in Ethiopia. Once fully constructed it will be the largest hydropower project of Africa. Further, since Ethiopia's 65% of population suffers from lack of access

to electricity, the dam will reduce these shortages and would also benefit industry and economy. The country will also be able to supply electricity to neighbouring countries like Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea and South Sudan.

At full capacity, the huge hydroelectric dam - 1.8 kms (1.1 miles) long and 145 meters high - could generate 5 GW of electricity.

**In Sep 2023**, Ethiopia announced that it has filled its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile.

But, **Egypt and Sudan** fear that the massive \$4.2 billion dam will severely reduce the share of Nile water they receive and have repeatedly asked Addis Ababa to stop filling it until they have all reached an agreement on how it should work.

**In Dec 2023**, Egypt declares dead end in Renaissance Dam negotiation with Ethiopia, Sudan.

## 11) SUDAN

- Why in news?
  - » India launches **operation Kaveri** to evacuate citizens from Sudan (April 2023)
- **Violence in 2023 and need of evacuation:**
  - » A vicious power struggle between the regular army and a powerful paramilitary force (Rapid Support Force) has led to violence across Sudan for more than a week now. The power struggle has seen heavy bombardment of the Khartoum city.
- **Geography:**
  - » Sudan (Republic of Sudan) is a country in north-east Africa.
  - » **Neighbouring Countries:** It is bordered by the Central African Republic to the South West, Chad to the West, Libya to the northwest, Egypt in North, Eritrea in the north-east, Ethiopia in the southwest and South Sudan in South.
  - » It also borders Red Sea on its north east and east.
    - **Port Sudan** is a city and port on the Red Sea in eastern Sudan.
- **Note:**
  - » Jeddah Port is a Saudi Arabian port, located in Jeddah on Red sea, at the middle of the international shipping route between east and west via the suez canal.
    - It is the second largest and second busiest port in the Arab World (after the port of Jabel Ali in Dubai, UAE)
    - The city of Jeddah is the second largest city of Saudi Arabia after the capital Riyadh



## 12) LAKE VICTORIA

It is the 2nd largest fresh water lake in the world in terms of surface area (after Lake Superior) and largest in AF.

It has its boundaries in 3 east African countries (Uganda(45%), Kenya (6%) and Tanzania (49%)). It occupies a shallow depression in Africa.

**Source of water for lake Victoria:** Mostly rainfall (80%) and thousands of small streams. The Kagera river is the largest river flowing into the lake, with a mouth on lake's western shore.

Lake Victoria is drained solely by the Nile River near Jinja, Uganda, on the lake's northern shore

### Mingingo Island

It is a very small island (barely 1/4th of an hectare large) in Lake Victoria.

It is claimed by both Uganda and Kenya and the dispute has continued for a decade now.

The island is a rounded, rocky outcrop which has become densely populated over the last 1 decade.

The surroundings of the island is very rich in fishes and is a fisherman's paradise.

**Note:** Country's forming part of Lake Victoria Basin:

1. Uganda
2. Kenya
3. Tanzania
4. Rwanda
5. Burundi

Each of this country contributes water to the lake through various rivers, streams, and direct rainfall.



### Climate Change threatening Lake Victoria Basin (June 2023)

A new scientific report published in the journal Nature shows significant precipitation changes and increasing extreme climate events in the near future of the already sensitive region, affecting both its large human populations as well as endemic biodiversity.

### Note:

**Lake Superior** is the world's largest fresh water lake by surface area, third largest by volume, and the deepest, largest and coldest of the Great Lakes of North America.

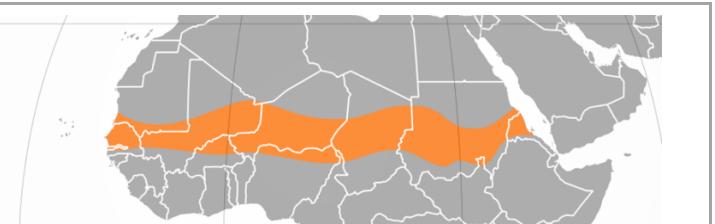
**Lake Baikal** (located in Russia in the southern region of Siberia), is the largest freshwater lake by both volume and depth (1741 m). It contains 20% of the world's fresh water. It hides its vast waters under a relatively small surface area.

## 13) SAHEL REGION

**Sahel** region is a semi-arid region of western and north-central Africa, extending from Senegal eastward to Sudan. It forms a transition zone between the arid Sahara desert to the north and the belt of humid Savanna to the South.

It stretches across the south-central latitude of Northern Africa between the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea.

**Countries:** The Sahel part of Africa includes parts of northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central Mali,



### Some issues faced by the region:

There are frequent shortages of food and water due to dry harsh climate. This is exacerbated by the

Northern Burkina Faso, the extreme south of Algeria, southern Niger, the extreme north of Nigeria, Cameroon, and Central African Republic, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, the extreme north of South Sudan, Eritrea, and the extreme north of Ethiopia.

**population increasing rapidly due to very high birth-rates** across the region.

For e.g. Niger has world's highest fertility rate.

**Jihadist Insurgent groups** including Boko Haram, Islamic State and al-Qaeda frequently carry out major attacks in some parts of Western Sahel.

### Recent examples of Coup Bid in the Wider Sahel Region:

The multifold issues of weak governments, often composed of elites of certain ethnic communities, engaging frequently in corruption, and unable to register economic and social progress, led to military takeovers of elected regimes under the pre-text of restoring stability.

While the number of coup d'etats in the larger African continent and the Sahel were high till the turn of the millennium, a decline was witnessed in the 2000s, followed by an upswing since 2000.

**A renewed chapter of instability began in 2012** when the then fairly dormant rebellion of the Tuareg people, which had taken place in the 1960s, 1990 and 2006 in northern Mali, resurfaced and spilled beyond country's borders. The situation was compounded by collapse of Muammar Gadaffi regime bordering Libya which caused an influx of extremists and arms into the Sahel.

The rebel groups, who demand a separate state for the Tuaregs - a mere 10% of the Malian population - organized and aligned themselves with multiple Islamist groups, including Al Qaea in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This led to violent Islamist group gaining ground in the tri-border region between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, controlling territory and conducting attacks.

### Have Military Takeovers lessened the violence in Sahel?

- No Concrete evidence
- A crisis monitoring group, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), points

### Recent African coups d'état

World leaders condemned an attempted coup in Niger, calling for President Mohamed Bazoum – a key Western ally – to be released. Seven coups since 2020 threaten sub-Saharan stability



**1** **Niger, Jul 26, 2023:** Presidential guard members detain President **Mohamed Bazoum** (right) inside palace in Niamey. Elected in February 2021, President Bazoum has Western support in the fight against violent extremism, corruption and widespread poverty



**2-3** **Mali, Aug 2020:** President **Ibrahim Boubacar Keita** ousted. Second coup by Col. **Assimi Goita** in May 2021. French and UN peacekeepers expelled – Russian Wagner Group deployed. Reports of summary executions



**4** **Chad, Apr 2021:** Military takes control following death of President **Idriss Deby** after 30 years of rule. Deby's son **Mahamat Idriss Deby** declared president. Deadly protests follow amid demands for civilian rule



**5** **Guinea, Sep 2021:** **Mamady Doumbouya** ousts President **Alpha Conde**. After promising democratic reforms, Col. Doumbouya and fellow coup leaders arrest opposition leaders and restrict media freedom



**6** **Sudan, Oct 2021:** Gen. **Abdel Fattah al-Burhan** arrests civilian prime minister **Abdalla Hamdok** and other political leaders just two years after Sudan began transition to full civilian rule



**7** **Burkina Faso, Jan 2022:** Army ousts President **Roch Kabore** (right). Following second putsch in September, junta leader Capt. **Ibrahim Traore** seizes power. In July 2023, U.S. sanctions Malian officials over allegations they have deployed Wagner mercenaries



Sources: Africa News, Bloomberg, Foreign Policy, Reuters Pictures: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS

out that successive military coups in the recent past have caused regional instability and the weakening of state institutions. In recorded that in 2022, the number of reported deaths from political violence increased by 77% in Burkina Faso and 150% in Mali from 2021.

#### 14) SIERRA LEON

**Geography:** It is a country located on the southwest coast of West Africa. It shares the southeastern border with Liberia and the northern half of the country is surrounded by Guinea. It has tropical climate, with diverse environments ranging from Savanna to rainforests.

**Religion:** Muslims constitute 75% of the population. Christian are minority but quite influential.

**Capital:** Freetown.

**What led to Coup attempt in Sierra Leone? (Dec 2023)**

- In Nov 2023, unidentified gunmen targeted the Wilberforce military barracks and several police stations and correctional centres in Freetown, Sierra Leone. It was considered a coup attempt.
- **Key issues in Sierra Leone:**
  - a. **Political Instability:** This instability has been there since June 2023, when President Julius Maada Bio was re-elected. Opposition have claimed that elections were manipulated.
  - b. **Economic instability: Inflation** (upto 50%); **Poverty** (more than 50% of population); **unemployment**
  - c. **Police aggression:** For e.g. the Aug 2022 riots left six police officers and 27 protestors dead.



#### 15) NIGER

**Niger**, officially Republic of Niger, is a western African land locked country.

**Neighbouring countries:** Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Algeria, Libya, and Chad.

It is one of the poorest country in the world with poor HDI performance.

**Resources:** It has gold mining reserves and around 5-7% of the global production of Uranium.

**Capital:** Niamey.

**Niger River:** The country takes its name from the river which flows through the southwestern part of its territory,

**News:** Coup in Niger (July - Aug 2023)

On July 29th, 2023, General Tchiani declared himself the leader of Niger after instigating a military coup against the President, Mohammed Bazoum. The 2021 Presidential Election witnessed Niger's first peaceful democratic transfer of power since its independence from France in 1960. This is the fifth coup in Niger since then.

**Gen Tchiani** has been the head of Presidential guard since 2011, which means he was responsible for protecting the President from military takeover such as this.

**Reactions:**

**African Union** demanded the country's military return to their barracks and restore constitutional authority.

**European Union** has also announced the suspension of security and funding cooperation with Niger, declaring that the EU would not recognize the putschists who have confined the democratically elected President **Mohamed Bazoum** to his official residence.

#### Why is the West extra concerned about Niger's Coup?

Niger, owing to its relative stability, has become a democratic outlier in the Sahel military following military takeover in neighbouring Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad since 2020.



#### Political History of Niger:

- It was a French colony till 1960 like many of its neighbours.
- It faced a long period of instability post-independence and was rocked by four military coup between 1974 and 2010.
- Like many countries in the wider Sahel region, the Niger has also faced the rise of Islamist Extremist groups, and armed local militias supported by stretched state security forces to counter the jihadist threat, and the resulting violence and displacement.
- **Mohammed Issoufou** came to power in 2011, winning legislative elections. Under this two-term President rule, Niger saw a semblance of political stability.
- In 2021, when Mr Issoufou agreed to step down after completing his second term, the maximum number of successive allowed to a leader, his cabinet minister Mr. Bazoum was elected President, in the first democratic transfer of power since the country's independence.
- In July 2023, the President, Mr. Bazoum, and his family were detained by elite troops in Niger, who declared that they now hold power.
- Later, General Tchiani said in a television address that the nation would now be run by newly formed military body, the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP).

#### How does Russia Figure in the Crisis?

Multi pro-coup protestors in Niger this week were seen waving Russian flags in the protests outside the National Assembly, the country's legislature.

After Military coups and anti-French sentiments, France relations with the military rulers grew hostile in Mali and Burkina Faso. After this France shifted more than 1,000 troops to Niger. In such situation, landlocked Niger was viewed by analysts as the West's "only hope" in the region to fight the militants.

**Niger also played an outsized role in America's Africa strategy** and had become a key partner for Washington's fight against Islamist insurgents, who have killed thousands of people and displaced millions more.

The **European Union** also decided last year to set up a three year military training mission in Niger, to which Germany contribute troops. **Italy** also has around 300 soldiers in the country.

**Now**, with Niger also falling into the hands of a military led leadership, it is unclear when the U.S. and European countries would be able to impact security in the region.

**Anti-French sentiments** in the Sahel region has allowed Russia to make inroads in the region.

**Mercenaries from Russia's Private military group Wagner** are already active in Mali, from where the French have withdrawn troops after a decade.

After officially announcing the end of the French operations in Nov 2022, **Burkina Faso** also turned towards Moscow taking steps similar to Mali.

In **Niger** also, Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin expressed his support for the Putschist takeover of Niger. Observers now believe that Niger may open its doors to Russian influence through Wagner.

Notably, the anti-French sentiment in the Sahel has been as a reason for Russia making inroads into the region.

## 16) NIGER RIVER

It is the principal river of Western Africa. With a length of 4,200 km, it is the third longest river in Africa, after the Nile and the Congo.

It originates in the **Guinea Highlands** in south-eastern **Guinea** near the Sierra Leone border.

**Path:** It runs in a crescent shape through **Guinea**, **Mali**, **Niger**, **Benin** and **Nigeria**, discharging through a massive delta called the **Niger Delta**, into the Gulf of Guinea in Atlantic Ocean.



## 17) BURKINA FASO

### Details about Burkina Faso

It is a landlocked country in West Africa. It is bordered by Mali to the Northwest, Niger to Northeast, Benin in Southeast, Togo and Ghana to South, and the Ivory Coast to the Southwest.

**Capital: Ouagadougou**



## 18) GULF OF GUINEA

It is the north easternmost part of the tropical Atlantic Ocean from Cape Lopez in Gabon, north and west to Cape Palmas in Liberia.

The intersection of Equator and Prime Meridian (Zero degree longitude and Zero degree latitude) is in the gulf.

It borders eight African countries - Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome & Principe.

**Note:** Some definitions of Gulf of Guinea also include Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia as the border countries of Gulf of Guinea.

**River:** the main river dispersing its water in the Gulf are the Niger River and the Volta river.

**Note:** Volta is the main river system in the country of Ghana.



In Oct 2023, India conducted joint drills with warships from the EU in Gulf of Guinea, including flying exercises and tactical manoeuvres off the coast of Ghana. This is the **first time** Indian ships have taken part in such a drill in the Gulf of Guinea with EU. **Indian Navy's INS Sumedha**, an offshore patrol vessel, was joined by naval ships of three EU member states - Italian ship ITS Foscari, French Ship FS Ventose and Spanish Ship Tornado

## 19) CONGO RIVER AND CONGO RIVER BASIN

Congo River was formerly also known as the Zaire River.

It is the second longest (4,700 km) river of Africa (9th longest of the world) (the longest is Nile).

It is also the world's third largest river in terms of discharge volume after Amazon and Ganges.

It is also the world's deepest recorded river, with measured depth of around 220 m.

**Important Tributary:** The Chambeshi is a tributary of the Lualaba River (which is the name of the Congo river upstream of Boyoma Falls).

**Crosses equator twice:** It is the only major river of the world to cross equator twice.



**Congo River Basin:** It is the world's second largest river basin (after Amazon river), comprising an area of 3.4 million square kms.

The river and its tributaries flow through the **Congo Rainforest**, the second largest rainforest area in the world, after the Amazon Rain Forest.

**Basin countries include:** DRC, Republic of Congo, parts of Gabon, Part of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi, parts of Tanzania, Western Zambia, northern Angola.

## 20) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

It is a country located in Central Africa and equator passes through northern part of the country giving it a tropical climate.

It has a small 40 km coastline, otherwise it is landlocked.

DRC is the second largest country in the Africa (after Algeria).

**Capital:** Kinshasa (located on Congo river), is the largest city of the DRC and also its administrative, economic and cultural centre.

**DRC** gained independence from Belgium in 1960 and from 1971 to 1997 the country was officially called the **Republic of Zaire**, a change made by then ruler Gen. Mobutu Sese Seko to give the country what he thought was a more authentic African name. "Zaire" is a variation of a term meaning "great river" in local African languages; Following the overthrow of Mobutu in 1997, the country's name prior to 1971, the DRC, was reinstated.

**Lake Tanganyika:** It is the longest freshwater lake in the world and the second deepest (after Lake Baikal of Russia). It forms boundary between DRC-Burundi and part of boundary between DRC-Tanzania.



**Neighbouring Countries:** Republic of Congo (Brazzaville); Central African Republic; South Sudan; Uganda; Rwanda; Burundi; Tanzania (Separated by Lake Tanganyika), Zambia and Angola.

Most of the country is composed of the Central Congo Basin.

**Congo Basin Rain Forest:** The country consist of significant portion of the Congo Basin rain forest often known as the "second lung of the Earth".

## 21) ETHNIC CONFLICT IN DRC (NOV 2023, SOURCE TH)

## Background of Conflict in DRC?

**Rwandan Genocide in 1994:** Ethnic Hutu extremists killed nearly 1 million minority ethnic Tutsis and non-extremist Hutus.

Since then, the eastern part of DRC, bordering Rwanda, has been facing insurgency perpetrated by several rebel militant groups. According to the UN, more than 120 insurgent groups are active in eastern provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika.

**Tutsi led M23 Rebel Group:** The Tutsi led M-23 rebel group resurfaced in Nov 2021 and has worsened the security situation in the eastern provinces of DRC. After failure of various peace attempts, the groups has kept on advancing since Jan 2023. DRC accused Rwanda of supporting Tutsi group.

### Prominent Rebel Groups:

- The prominent groups besides M23 include the Allied Democratic Force (ADF), the Cooperative for Development of the Congo (CODECO).
- **ADF** is an Uganda based insurgent groups and is operating since 1999. It has also pledged its allegiance to ISIS.
- **CODECO** claims that they aim to protect the ethnic Lendu against the Hemas and the Congo army.

### Impacts of Insurgency:

- Thousands are dead
- **Huge Internal Displacement:** In Oct 2023 internally displaced in the DRC has risen to **6.9 million**.
- In the eastern province of Kivu, nearly a million people have been displaced due to the ongoing conflict with the rebel group, Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23)



## Provinces of DRC

### Why insurgency?

- **Ethnic Intolerance:** Following the Rwandan genocide, around 2 million Hutu refugees crossed Rwanda into North Kivu and South Kivu provinces of DRC. The organized ethnic militias in DRC fearing persecution.
  - Tensions intensified as Rwandan Tutsis organized militias against the Hutus who fled to DRC.
  - Subsequently several, ethnic and inter-ethnic groups who felt threatened started organizing their militias against each other.
- **Political Instability:** President Felix Tshikedi came to power in 2019 through democratic elections. The country is to hold elections on 20th Dec. However, election commission has raised concerns about how continuing insecurity in parts of the country would pose a challenge to a "free democratic and transparent" vote.
- **Control over territory and natural resources**
- **Extrajudicial killings by security forces**
- **Rising tensions with neighbouring countries** ( Armed groups have been supported by the governments of **Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi**, at

various points, acting as proxies for each country's interest in the region)

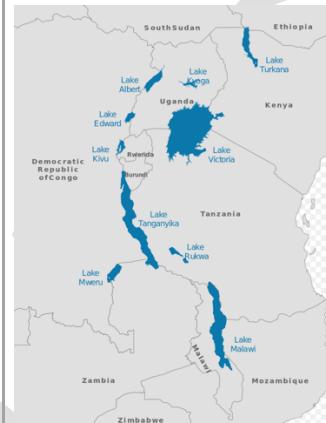
## 22) LAKE TANGANYIKA

Lake Tanganyika is one of the African Great Lake. It is the world's longest lake.

It is second-oldest freshwater lake in the world, the second largest by volume, and the second deepest in the world, in all cases after Lake Baikal in Siberia.

The lake is shared between four countries - DRC(40%), Burundi, Tanzania (46%) and Zambia.

The lake drains into the Congo River system and ultimately into the Atlantic Ocean.



## 23) ZAMBIA: KAFUE NATIONAL PARK

**Kafue National Park:** Lion and Leopard populations have begun rebounding in Africa's **third** largest national park - **Zambia's Kafue National Park (KNP)** -after fifty years of poaching, according to a new report from Panthera, the global wild cat conservation organizations, and partners.

### Factors:

1. **Counter Poaching Operations:** Game changing conservation technologies like SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) and EarthRanger were employed in these operations.
2. **Effective Prosecution**
3. Distribution of synthetic 'heritage Furs' replacing garments made of authentic leopard and lions skin



**Other details about KNP:** KNP sits within the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA), the largest terrestrial conservation landscape in the world spanning five countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe)

## 24) MADAGASCAR

It is an island country off the coast of East Africa in Indian Ocean. The country consists of island of Madagascar (the fourth largest island in the world after Greenland, New Guinea, and Borneo), and numerous smaller peripheral islands.

It is a biodiversity hotspot; and over 90% of its wildlife is found nowhere else on earth.

Malagsay and French are the official language as France controlled the island till 1960.

**Economy:** Madagascar belong to the group of **least developed countries** according to UN. Eco-tourism and agriculture, paired with greater investment in education, health and private enterprise, are key elements of Madagascar's development strategy.

The country lies mostly between 12 degree S and 26 degree S, and longitudes 43 degree E and 51 degree E.

### Neighbouring Islands

- French territory of Reunion and country of Mauritius to the east.
- State of Comoros and the French territory of Mayotte to the north west.

**Mozambique** is the nearest mainland state, located to the west.



## 25) MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL

### Mozambique Channel

Mozambique Channel is a channel in western Indian ocean and threads between the island nation of Madagascar on the east and Mozambique on the Africa mainland (west).

Comoro Archipealgo mark the northern boundary of the channel.

The channel forms EEZ of various countries including Tanzania, Madagascar, Mozambique, France, Seychelles, and Comoros.



## 26) TRISTAN DA CUNHA

Tristan da Cunha is a remote group of volcanic islands in the south Atlantic Ocean.

It is the most remote inhabited archipelago in the world.

Tristan da Cunha is a British Overseas Territory with its own constitution



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## 27) ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Also, referred as **Rockies**, they dominate the western part of North American Continent.

They extend for a distance of 4,800 kms and is the largest mountain range system of North America.

They extend from the northern most portion of the Western Canada to the State of New Mexico in the South west USA.

The mountain system is a complex mix of fold mountains, fault block mountains, and volcanic activities.

### Why in news recently?

Rocky mountain forests burning more now than any time in the past 2,000 years. (Feb 2023)

#### Key reason:

- Exceptional Droughts
- Climate Change

**How are scientists able to compare the current situation with the past?**

- Evidence of past fires are preserved in lake sediments.
- Scientists used records of past fires preserved in the sediments of 20 lakes in the Central Rocky mountains.
- **The Result:** Extensive burning over the 21st century is unprecedented in this region in the past 2,000 years.



## 28) MILNE ICE SHELF

The Milne Ice Shelf, a fragment of the former Ellesmere Ice Shelf, is located in the Qikiqtaaluk Region, Nunavut, **Canada**.

It is the second largest ice shelf in the Arctic Ocean.

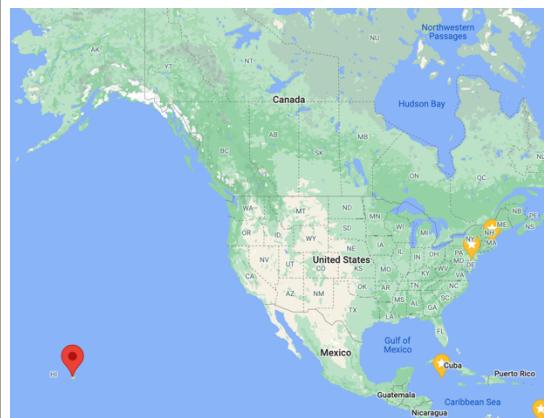
The Milne ice shelf lost more than 40 per cent of its ice over two days at the end of July 2020. This has increased concerns over the rapid melting of ice and the breaking of old ice shelves — large floating pieces of ice that form when a glacier or ice sheet flows into the sea surface.



## 29) HAWAII

Hawaii is a state in the western USA located in the pacific ocean about 2,000 miles from the US mainland. It is the only US state outside north America and only state that is an archipelago. It is also the only US state in the Tropics.

It consists of more than 130 volcanic islands



**Note:** Honolulu is the capital and most populous city of the US State of Hawaii. It is situated along the southeast coast of island of O'ahu, and is the westernmost and southernmost major US city.

#### Kilauea:

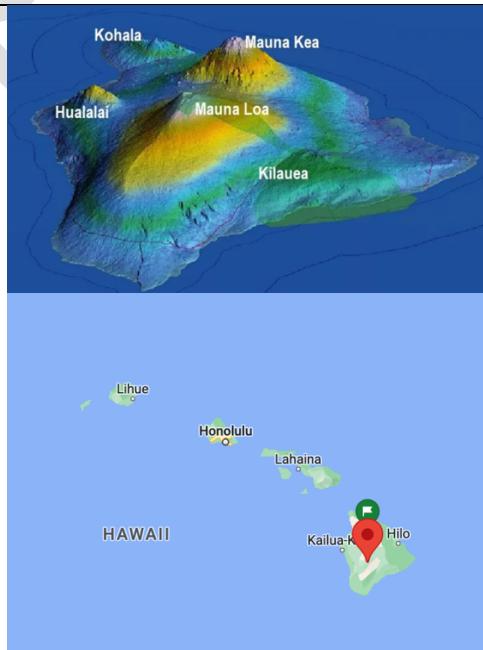
Kilauea is an active shield volcano in the Hawaiian Islands.

Historically, it is the most active of the five volcanoes that together form the Big Island of Hawai'i.

## 30) MAUNA LOA VOLCANO

**Mauna Loa:** Mauna Loa erupts after 40 years (Dec 2022)

- Mauna Loa is one of the five volcanoes that together make up the Big Island of Hawaii. The other four volcanoes are Hualalai, Kilauea, Kohala and Mauna Kea.
  - o **Note:** Big Island of Hawaii is the southernmost island in the Hawaiian archipelago.
- Mauna Loa is not the tallest (that title goes to Mauna Kea), but it's the largest and makes up about half of the Island's land mass. It is the largest volcano situated in the US state of Hawaii.
- It sits immediately north of Kilauea Volcano, which is also erupting currently from its summit crater. It is well known for a 2018 eruption that destroyed 700 homes and sent rivers of lava spreading across farms and into the ocean.
- It is an **active volcano** and in written history, dating to 1843, it has erupted 33 times. Before, 2022, It had erupted in 1984.
- The **Big Island** is mostly rural and is home to cattle ranches, coffee farms and beach resorts. It's about 200 miles (320 kms) South of Hawaii's most populated island, Oahu, where the state capital Honolulu and beach resort Waikiki are both located.



### 31) MAUI:

#### Maui:

The island of Maui is the second largest (1,883 km<sup>2</sup>) of the islands of the state of Hawaii. It is also the largest of Maui county's four islands which include Moloka'I, Lanai, and unpopulated Kahoolawe.

**Aug 2023:** the devastating Wildfires on the island of Maui, Hawaii has already caused 55 deaths and around 1,000 people are still unaccounted for.



### 32) COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

**Countries in Central America: 7 countries are considered to be part of Central America:**

Belize

Guatemala:

- A volcano named Fuego (Spanish for fire) erupted in Dec 2022.

Honduras

El Salvador

Nicaragua

Costa Rica

Panama



### 33) NICARAGUA

- » Nicaragua has severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan and will now officially recognize only China. (
- » **why does China want this?**
  - Loss of formal allies further constrains the Taiwanese leadership's ability to make state visits abroad and feed into Beijing's narrative that Taiwan is losing the diplomatic battle and will eventually be forced to accept the inevitable outcome of the political union with the People's Republic.
- » Nicaragua's authoritarian President Daniel Ortega has increasingly found himself an international pariah, with the USA denouncing Nov 2021 polls as a "pantomime elections".
- » **China had been steadily luring Taiwan's remaining allies by promising trade and development assistance while ignoring political controversies.**
- » **What incentives did China give?**
  - No reason has been given by Nicaragua
  - But, the decision follows a trend among its Central American Neighbours such as Panama and Costa Rica which have

switched to Beijing in recent years, prompting concerns in Taipei and Washington of a potential Domino effect.

## 34) PANAMA CANAL

It is an **artificial waterway** in Panama that connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. The canal cuts across Isthmus of Panama and is a very important for international trade.

**Development of Canal** was initiated by France in 1881, but stopped due to engineering problems and high worker mortality rate.

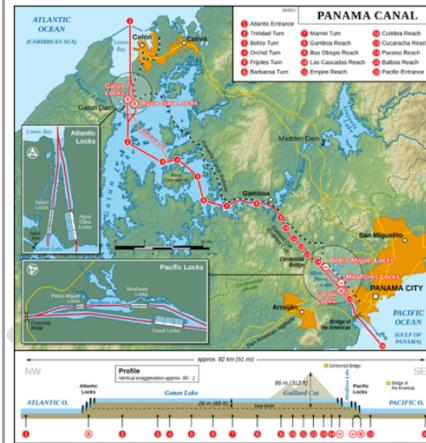
- The **US** took over the work in 1904 and the Canal was opened for operations in 1914.

### Who manages the Canal

- Currently, the Canal is owned, managed and operated by Panama government. **Panama Canal Authority** is responsible for its operation and management.
- Note:
  - **1914 - 1979:** Controlled Solely by US
  - **1979 - 1999:** Panama Canal Commission (joint agency of US and Republic of Panama)
  - **1999 onwards:** Complete control to Panama (Panama Canal Authority)

### Important Components

- **Canal Locks** are at each end to lift/lower the ships upto/down from **Gatun Lake**, an artificial lake created to reduce the amount of excavation work required for the canal, 26 m above sea level.
- **Gatun Lake** was created by damming of Chagres river. It provides millions of litres of water necessary to operate the Panama Canal locks each time a ship passes through.



### Advantages of the Canal

Greatly reduces time and fuel needed for ship to travel from Atlantic to Pacific oceans, enabling them to avoid lengthy hazardous Cape Horn route around the southernmost tip of South America via the **Drake Passage** or **Strait of Magellan**.

### Drought, Climate Change and its impact

An intense drought related to this year's El-Nino phenomenon has precipitously lowered the level of Panama's Gatun lake. This has forced the Panama Canal authority to impose draft limits on ships moving through the waterway's recently expanded locks.

## 35) COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AMERICA

**Brazil**  
**French Guyana**  
**Suriname**  
**Guyana**  
**Venezuela**  
**Colombia**  
**Ecuador**  
**Peru**  
**Chile**  
**Bolivia**  
**Paraguay**  
**Argentina**  
**Uruguay**  
**Falkland Islands**



### 36) AMAZON RIVER

#### Amazon River:

- Amazon river is the river with largest drainage system in the world in terms of volume of its flow and the area of its basin.
  - It is estimated that about 1/5th of all water that runs off Earth's surface is carried by Amazon. The immense amount of freshwater flowing into Atlantic dilutes the ocean's saltiness for more than 160 kms from shore.
- **Length:** The total length of the river - as measured from the headwaters of Ucayali-Apurimac river system in the southern Peru is atleast 6400 km which makes it slightly shorter than Nile river.



- Source:** The source of the river is in Andes mountains and the mouth is in Atlantic Ocean.
- Amazon river is not building Delta:** Most of the estimated 1.3 million tons of sediments that the amazon pours daily into the sea is transported north by coastal currents to be deposited along the coasts of Brazil and French Guiana.
- Affects sea level in Caribbean Sea:** The Amazon river releases so much fresh water into the Atlantic sea, it alters the sea level in the Caribbean. The amazon water get picked up by Caribbean current, which carries the water to Caribbean island.

**Controversy:** Both length and source of the river have been debated and some claim that the river is longer than Nile.

**Drainage Basin countries:** The entire area that Amazon river drains is the largest river basin in the world. It drains part of Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, Bolivia and a small part of Venezuela, Guyana and Suriname.

## 37) PANTANAL WETLAND

The Pantanal is a natural region encompassing the world's largest tropical wetland area, and the world's largest flooded grasslands.

It is located mostly within the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul, but it extends into Mato Grosso and portions of Bolivia and Paraguay.

It is gently-sloped basin that receives runoff from the upland areas (the Planalto highlands) and slowly releases the water through the Paraguay River and tributaries



## 38) GALAPAGOS ISLAND

### Why in news?

Famed Darwin's Arch in Galapagos Islands Collapse

### Details about Galapagos Islands:

These islands are part of the Republic of Ecuador. They are archipelago of volcanic islands distributed on either side of the equator in Pacific Ocean. It is located 903 km west of the continental Ecuador.

**Wolf Volcano** is a famous one in Galapagos Island.

**Darwin's Arch:** It was a famed natural rock formation in the Galapagos island which is popular with divers, photographers, and cruise ship tourists. It has collapsed from erosion.



The arch stood at northernmost tip of the Galapagos Islands. Once a part of Darwin's island, the arch is famous for the variety of underwater life teeming nearby, including schools of hammerhead sharks.



### 39) SANGAY VOLCANO

Sangay is an active stratovolcano in central Ecuador.

It is the most active volcano in Ecuador, despite erupting only four times in recorded history, because the eruption that started in 1934 is still ongoing.

It exhibits mostly strombolian activity



### 40) WORLD'S FIFTH OCEAN: SOUTHERN OCEAN

The National Geographic magazine has recognised the 'Southern Ocean' as the world's fifth ocean June 8, 2021 hoping others will soon follow suit.

Usually, the magazine has followed the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) on marine names, it said in an article notifying the change.

Southern Ocean is the only ocean 'to touch three other oceans and to completely embrace a continent rather than being embraced by them'.

Its northern limit is a latitude of 60 degrees south.

It is also defined by its Antarctic Circumpolar Current that was formed 34 million years ago. The current flows from west to east around Antarctica





# TARGET PRELIMS 2024

## BOOKLET-31

### INTERNATIONAL BODIES-1

#### Table of Contents

<b>1. United Nations (UN): Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Six Main/Principal Organs of UN.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1) The UN General Assembly (UNGA) .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A) Elections of the President and Vice-Presidents .....	2
A) Credentials Committee .....	3
B) Various Important Resolutions of UNGA .....	3
C) UNGA votes to suspend Russia from Human Rights COuncil (April 2022).....	5
<b>2) The UN Security Council (UNSC).....</b>	<b>5</b>
A) Demands for Reforms and Expansion at UNSC.....	6
B) G-4 countries.....	6
C) Coffee Club /Uniting for Consensus.....	6
D) Africa Group.....	7
E) L69.....	7
F) Reforms are difficult because of stringent provisions .....	7
G) UN Secretary General (Appointment Process).....	7
H) India's Non Permanent Membership (2021-2022) – 8 <sup>th</sup> Occasion.....	7
I) While Participating in the Inter-Governmental Negotiation on Security Council Reform (IGN) in March 2024, India has presented a detailed model on behalf of the G4 nations (G4 model) for Security Council reform .....	8
J) UNSC Sanctions.....	8
K) UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNSC-CTC).....	9
<b>3) The Trusteeship Council .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5) The International Court of Justice (ICJ) .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6) THe Secretariat.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1. UNITED NATIONS (UN): BACKGROUND

- The UN has its origin in 1920 **League of Nations** (founded as a result of Paris peace conference that ended the first world war to keep the world away from war and also promote disarmament).
- Franklin D Roosevelt **used UN to describe the allied powers of WW2.**
- **Atlantic Charter** was a policy statement during WW-II, issued on 14th Aug 1941. It defined the allied goals for the post-war world. The leaders of UK and US drafted the work, and all the allies of the WW-II later signed it.
  - » The Adherents of the Atlantic Charter signed the Declaration by United Nations between 1942-45, which became the basis for the Modern United Nations.
- The UN is based on the principle of collective security - one for all and all for one - joint action to prevent attack against the international order.

## 2. SIX MAIN/PRINCIPAL ORGANS OF UN

### 1) THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA)

- The general assembly is the main deliberative organ of UN and is composed of representatives of all member States. The work of the UN year around is largely derived from the mandates given by the General Assembly.
- It was established by the UN Charter in 1945.
- **Functions and Powers**
  - » **Forum for Multilateral Negotiation**
    - It occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the UN.
    - It consists of all 193 members of UN and provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion.
    - It plays an important role in the process of the standard setting and the codification of International Law.
    - It is the only UN Organ in which all members have equal representation.
  - **Other Functions and Powers:**
    - » According to charter of the UN, the general assembly may
      - **Approve the budget of UN.**
      - **Elect the non-permanent members of the security council and members of other united nation councils and organs** and, on the recommendation of security council **appoint the Secretary General**.
      - Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament.
      - Discuss any question related to international peace and security and except, where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed in the Security Council, make recommendations on it.

- Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational, and health fields.
- **Consider reports from security council and other UN Organs**

» The assembly may also act in cases of a threat to the peace, breach of peace or act of aggression, when the security council has failed to act owing to negative vote of permanent member. In such instances, the assembly may consider the matter immediately and recommend to its members collective measures to maintain or restore international peace and security.

- **Meetings**
  - » Assembly meets in regular session intensively from September to December each year, and thereafter as required.
- **Types of Majorities to reach a decision.**
  - » Each of the 193 Member states in the assembly has one vote.
    - **Requirement of 2/3rd majority vs Simple Majority:** Votes taken on designated important issues such as recommendations on peace and security, the election of security council and Economic and Social council members, and budgetary questions - require a 2/3rd majority of member states, but other questions are decided by simple majority.
  - » **Search for consensus:** In recent years, an effort has been made to achieve consensus on issues, rather than deciding by a formal vote, thus strengthening support for the Assembly's decisions.
- **Observers**
  - » Non-member states which are members of one or more specialized organizations of UN, regional and international organizations have received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of general assembly.
    - **Non-member States and Entities**
      - Holy See
      - State of Palestine
    - **International Organizations**
      - Many organizations like African Union, European Union, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), International Criminal Court, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), League of Arab etc.
- **Some Criticisms of UNGA**
  - » One state - one vote ->merely 8% of the people can pass a resolution.

#### - **Other Facts for Prelims**

### **A) ELECTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS**

- As per Rules of Procedure of UN, the UNGA shall elect **a President** and **21 vice Presidents** atleast 3 months before the opening of the session.

---

#### A) CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

- A Credential Committee is appointed at the beginning of each regular session of the General Assembly. It consists of 9 members, who are appointed by the General Assembly on the proposal of the President.
- The committee reports to the assembly on the credentials of representatives.
- **Structure and Functions:**
  - » The credentials of representatives and the names of members of the delegation of each member state are submitted to secretary general and are issued either by the Head of the State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. (Rule 27 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly)
  - » The Committee is mandated to examine the credentials of representatives of Member States and to report to the General Assembly thereon (Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly)
  - » Special and emergency special sessions of the General Assembly as well as conferences convened under its auspices also appoint a Credential Committee having the same composition as that of the Credential Committee as its most recent regular session.

---

#### B) VARIOUS IMPORTANT RESOLUTIONS OF UNGA

##### INDIA VOTES IN FAVOR OF UNGA RESOLUTION THAT EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN OVER ISRAEL NOT WITHDRAWING FROM SYRIAN GOLAN (NOV 2023)

- The 193 member UNGA voted on the draft resolution "The Syrian Golan" under agenda item 'The situation in the Middle East' on Nov 28.
  - » The resolution said it is deeply concerned that Israel has not withdrawn from the Syrian Golan, which has been under occupation since 1967, contrary to the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.
  - » It also declared that Israel failed to comply with security council resolution 497 (1981), which decided that "the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdictions and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect".
- The resolution was introduced by Egypt, and was adopted by recorded vote with 91 in favor, eight against and 62 abstentions.
- **Note:** Syrian Golan is a region in southwest Syria that was occupied by Israeli forces in June 1967

##### INDIA ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON UNGA RESOLUTION THAT CALLED FOR HUMANITARIAN TRUCE AND CEASEFIRE IN GAZA (OCT 2023)

- The resolution, titled the "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", proposed by Jordon on behalf of the Arab League and co-sponsored by about 40 countries, was passed in the UNGA on 27th October with 120 votes in favor, 14 including the US and UK against, and 45 abstentions, including India.
- **Reasons given by India:** The resolution didn't include "explicit condemnation" of the 7th of Oct terror attacks on Israel.

#### **UNGA HAS ADOPTED A DRAFT RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY INDIA TO ESTABLISH A MEMORIAL WALL IN THE UN HEADQUARTERS TO HONOUR FALLEN PEACEKEEPERS (JUNE 2023)**

- The resolution introduced by India was titled 'Memorial wall for fallen UN peacekeepers'.
- It was co-sponsored by nearly 190 UN members and was adopted by consensus.

#### **GLOBAL TOURISM RESILIENCE DAY: 17TH FEB**

- UNGA Resolution 77/269 (Adopted in Feb 2023)
- The resolution decides to proclaim 17th Feb as Global Tourism Resilience Day, to be observed annually.
- It aims to emphasize the need to foster resilient tourism development to deal with shocks, taking into account the vulnerability of the tourism sector to emergencies.

#### **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AS AND WHEN CONDUCIVE TO TERRORISM: 12TH FEB**

- **UNGA Resolution 77/243**
- The resolution has declared 12th Feb as the International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, in order to raise awareness of the threats linked to violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism and to enhance international cooperation in this regard.
- The resolution reaffirmed that terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism can't and shouldn't be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization and ethnic group.

#### **UNGA DECLares ACCESS TO CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AS UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

- The resolution demonstrates that the member states can come together in a collective fight against the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
- It will help reduce environmental injustices, close protecting gaps and empower people, especially those that are in vulnerable situations, including environmental human right defenders, children, youth, women, and indigenous peoples.
- **Note:** A similar text was adopted by UN Human Rights Council in 2021.

#### **UN DECLares MARCH 15 AS THE INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA (MARCH 2022)**

- In March 2022, a resolution proclaiming 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia was unanimously adopted by the UNGA.
- The resolution was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- The text called for expanded international efforts to create a global dialogue that will encourage tolerance and peace centered on respect for human rights and the diversity of religions and beliefs.
- **India's stand:**
  - India raised concerns over phobia against one religion being raised to the level of an international day, saying that there are growing contemporary forms of religiophobia, especially anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhism and anti-Sikh.

### C) UNGA VOTES TO SUSPEND RUSSIA FROM HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (APRIL 2022)

- The General Assembly has the right to suspend the rights of membership in the council of any member that commits gross and systematic violation of human rights. This process requires 2/3rd Majority vote (of those present and voting) by the General Assembly.
- In April 2022, the resolution, '**Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the HRC**' was proposed by a group of countries that included Ukraine, the US, the EU, several Latin American countries and required 2/3rd majority of those present and voting for adoption.
  - » **Note:** Abstentions don't count in the tally of those 'present and voting'.
- UNGA voted, 93 to 24, with 58 abstentions, including **India**, to adopt the resolution suspending Moscow from the UNHRC.
  - » **India** abstained for reasons of "substance and process". Some countries including India were of the view that adopting the resolution would violate due process and impact the credibility of the organization.

## 2) THE UN SECURITY COUCIL (UNSC)

- **Introduction**
  - » It is one of the six principal organs of UN. It is primarily responsible for maintenance of international peace and security.
    - It achieves this through investigating any dispute which may lead to international friction, regulating armament, peace keeping operations, international sanctions, and authorization of military actions.
  - » The Security Council has a special place among the UN organs as it is the **only organ that has the powers to take binding decisions** that member states have agreed to carry out (Article 25 of UN Charter).
  - » Other crucial functions of UNSC include recommending admission of new members to UN and to recommend to the general assembly the appointment of secretary general and together with the assembly, elect the **judges of the ICJ**.
- **Membership:** The UNSC consists of **15 members**.
  - » Of these **5 members are permanent with veto powers** (USA, UK, France, Russia and China) and **remaining 10 are non-permanent members** who are elected by UNGA (at least 2/3rd votes) on

a regional basis to serve **a term of two years**. Five non-permanent members are elected every year.

- **Regional Groups from which non-permanent members come:**

- » African group - 54 - 3
- » Asia-Pacific group - 53 -2
- » Eastern European - 23 -1
- » Latin America and Caribbean - 33 - 2
- » Western European and other groups - 28 - 2

- **Elections:** NP members chosen by regional groups - confirmed by UNGA.

- A member country needs to secure the votes of **2/3rd of the members present and voting** at the General Assembly session (i.e., minimum 129 votes if all 193 member states participate)
- **India** has so far been a non-permanent member of the UNSC **eight time**: 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73, 1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92, 2011-12 and 2021-22.

- UNSC members are always present at UNHQ to meet at any time.

- **Presidency** held for a month by a member on rotational basis of English alphabet.

---

#### A) DEMANDS FOR REFORMS AND EXPANSION AT UNSC

- **Need of Reform:** Undemocratic; anachronistic; inequitable economic and geographical representation; unfair regional distribution; Weapon exporting countries at the helm; P5 involved in lots of conflict etc.
- **Demands for reforms on 5 key issues.**
  - Categories of membership
  - Veto power.
  - Regional representation
  - Size of the enlarged council and its working methods
  - Security council general assembly relationship

---

#### B) G-4 COUNTRIES

**They are** bidding for permanent membership of UNSC.

- **Germany** - among the largest contributors to UN, most well-functioning economy of Europe
- **Japan**
  - One of the largest contributors
  - Behaved impeccably in international forums since the UN got formed in 1945
- **Brazil** - 5th largest territory, most suitable to represent South American continent
- **India** - 2nd largest population
  - Largest average contributor to UN Peace Keeping force

---

#### C) COFFEE CLUB /UNITING FOR CONSENSUS

- Italy, Spain, Argentina, Canada, Mexico, South Korea and Pakistan
- Opposed to G-4 becoming permanent members with a veto power
- Favors expansion of the non-permanent seats with regional representation.

#### D) AFRICA GROUP

- Demands **two permanent seats**, because of historical injustices.
- Council's agenda largely concentrated on the continent.

#### E) L69

- It is a group of developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Pacific (Small Island Developing States). They form a major bloc that is united by the common cause of achieving the lasting and comprehensive reform of the UNSC by expanding both permanent and non-permanent seats.
  - » It currently has 32 members.
- The group derives its name from the draft document number "L.69" that the group had tabled in 2007-08, which led to the initiation of the Intergovernmental Negotiation (IGN) process.
- **Note:** India is a member of the grouping.

#### F) REFORMS ARE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF STRINGENT PROVISIONS

- Reform requires the **agreement of atleast two-third of UN member states** and that of all the P-5 members of UNSC enjoying the Veto right.

#### G) UN SECRETARY GENERAL (APPOINTMENT PROCESS)

- **How is secretary general chosen?**
  - » Secretary general is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of Security Council.
    - The recommendation of security council should be backed by at least 9/15 votes and no veto by the P-5 countries.
  - » Reappointment of Antonio Guterres:
    - UNSC unanimously recommended his name to UNGA and UNGA appointed Antonio Guterres as the UN Secretary General for a second term beginning Jan 1, 2022, and ending on 31st Dec 2026.
  - » **Note:** There is no term limit applicable to the post, no secretary general has so far been appointed for more than 2 terms.

#### H) INDIA'S NON PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP (2021-2022) – 8<sup>TH</sup> OCCASION

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar declared India's candidature as non-permanent member of the UNSC for the 2028-29 term.
- **Note:**
  - India has been part of UNSC eight times so far: 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985, 1991-1992, 2011-2012 and 2021-22.
  - India's last membership (2021-2022) ended on 31st Dec 2022.

#### NORMS (NEW ORIENTATION FOR REFORMED MULTILATERAL SYSTEM)

- NORMS was India's overarching mission for its eighth term as a non-permanent member of UNSC.
- In this India was guided by five priorities:

- New Opportunities for Progress, Effective Response to International Terrorism, Reforming Multilateral Systems, Comprehensive Approach to International Peace and Security, and Technology with a human touch".
- India has sought reforms in multilateral systems including **UNSC, IMF, WHO**, and others arguing for a more inclusive leadership to make them better as per the changed global realities.

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**I) WHILE PARTICIPATING IN THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATION ON SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM (IGN) IN MARCH 2024, INDIA HAS PRESENTED A DETAILED MODEL ON BEHALF OF THE G4 NATIONS (G4 MODEL) FOR SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM**

- **Security Council Membership increase** from current 15 to 25-26, by adding six permanent members and 4 or 5 non permanent members.
  - Among six permanent members, two each are proposed to be from African States, and Asia Pacific States. One from Latin American and Caribbean States; and one from West European and Other States.
    - » The Model says that the member states who should occupy new permanent seats should be decided by the General Assembly in a democratic and inclusive election.
- It also includes flexibility on the veto issue.
  - While the new permanent members would, as a principle, have the same responsibilities and obligations as current members, they shall not exercise the veto until a decision on the matter has been taken during a review.
  - "Nonetheless, we should not allow the veto issue to have a "veto" over the process of Council reform itself. Our proposal is also a gesture of displaying flexibility on the issue for a constructive negotiation".

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**J) UNSC SANCTIONS**

**Introduction:**

- » The Security Council can take action to maintain or restore international peace and security under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. **Sanctions measures, under Article 41,** encompass a broad range of enforcement options that do not involve the use of armed force.
- » **Presently, there are 14 ongoing sanction regimes** which focus on supporting political settlement of conflicts, nuclear-non-proliferation, and counter-terrorism.
- » **Each regime** is administered by a **sanctions committee** chaired by a **non-permanent member** of the Security Council.
  - The committee consist of all members of the UNSC.

**- ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Regime:**

- » The sanction regime was created through **resolution 1267** (in 1999) and was updated by **resolution 1989 (2011)** and **2253 (2015).** It concerns with Al Qaeda, ISIL and associated individual and groups.
- » The **sanctions committee** is also known as **1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.**

- » This committee allows a UN member state to propose adding of name of terrorist or terror groups to a consolidated list, maintained by the Committee, that has affiliation to Al Qaeda and ISIS.
  - » **Addition of names to the list results into:** An arms ban, A travel embargo and an asset freeze of the individuals and entities.
  - » Asset freeze means that all member states without delay should freeze the funds and other financial assets or economic resources of designated individuals and entities.
- » **Decision of the committee** is reached by consensus -> Thus any member can hold up the decision by raising an objection.
- » **India** has successfully proposed the listing of several terror entities in the past two decades, including Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba.
  - » The LeT chief, **Hafiz Saeed**, and his deputy, **Zaki-ur-Rahman Lakhvi** were both placed on the list after the 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai.
  - » **In May 2019**, In a huge diplomatic win for India, the UN designated Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist" after China lifted its hold on the proposal to blacklist the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief, a decade after new Delhi approached the world body for the first time on the issue.
    - Earlier China had kept blocking (4 times) Jaish-e-Mohammed Chief Masood Azhar's inclusion under the ISIL and Al Qaida Sanctions List.
  - » In Jan 2023, the Committee has placed **Abdul Rehman Makki**, a fundraiser and key planner of the Pakistan-based-terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), on its sanctions list. It was possible after China withdrew its technical hold that it had imposed in June 2022.

IN JUNE 2023, CHINA BLOCKED A PROPOSAL BY INDIA AND THE US TO DESIGNATE LASHKAR-E-TAIBA (LET) TERRORIST SAJID MIR, WANTED FOR HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE 26/11 MUMBAI TERROR ATTACKS AS A GLOBAL TERRORIST UNDER 1267 SANCTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

## K) UNSC COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE (UNSC-CTC)

### ABOUT UNSC-CTC

- The United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNSCCT) was established in 2001 following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States.
- Its mandate is to monitor the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1373, which requires all UN member states to take steps to prevent and combat terrorism.
  - » The UNSCCTC is responsible for assessing the capacity of member states to implement measures to prevent and combat terrorism, and for providing technical assistance to countries in need.
  - » It also works to facilitate international cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism.
- The Committee **comprises all 15 members of the UNSC**, and it is supported by a Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), which provides technical assistance and conducts assessments of member states' compliance with Resolution 1373.

### RESOLUTION 1373:

- Resolution 1373 was adopted by UNSC in 2001
- It prevents and suppresses the financing of terrorist acts.
- It criminalizes the wilful provision or collection, by any means, directly or indirectly, of funds by their nationals or in their territories with the intention that the funds should be used to carry out terrorist acts.

### 3) THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

- Made up of P5.
- To promote the advancement of the inhabitants of Trust Territories and their progressive development towards self-government or independence.
- With the independence of Palau, a resolution was adopted in 1992 through which the Trusteeship Council amended its rules of procedure to drop the obligation to meet annually and agreed to meet as occasion required.
  - » Its future role and existence remain uncertain.
- Presently there are no trust territories.

### 4) ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

- The ECOSOC is one of the six principal organs of the UN System established by the UN Charter in 1945. It consists of 54 members of the UN elected by General Assembly.
- Responsible for coordinating the economic, social, and related work of the UN specialized agencies, their functional commissions and five regional commissions.
- Identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems
- Facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation
- Encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- **Specialized Agencies**
  - » These specialized agencies are autonomous organizations working with the United Nations and each other inter alia through the coordinating machinery of the Economic and Social Council
    - i. International Labour Organization (ILO)
    - ii. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
    - iii. United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
    - iv. World Health Organization (WHO)
    - v. World Bank Group
      1. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
      2. International Development Association
      3. International Finance Cooperation
      4. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
      5. International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes
    - vi. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
    - vii. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
    - viii. International Maritime Organization (IMO)
    - ix. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
    - x. Universal Postal Union (UPU)

- xi. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- xii. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- xiii. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- xiv. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- xv. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- xvi. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- xvii. United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- xviii. United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS)
- xix. International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)
- xx. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

## 5) THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ)

- It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN).
- **History:** ICJ was established in June 1945 by the charter of the UN and began work in April 1946.
- The **Seat** of the court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands).
  - » Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York.
- **Role:** The courts role is to settle, in accordance with the international law, legal disputes submitted to it by the states and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies.
- **Structure:**
  - » The court is composed of **15 judges**, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the UNGA and UNSC by absolute majority, 1/3 elected every three years, not more than one national of the same state.
    - Elections requires **2/3rd majority at UNGA** and **9/15 votes at UNSC**.
    - » Its official languages are English and French.
    - » **Ad-hoc judges** - If a party to a contentious case doesn't have one of that party's nationals sitting on the Court, it can select one additional person to sit as a judge on that case only.
- **Jurisdiction**
  - » **Contentious Issues**
    - In contentious cases (adversarial proceedings seeking to settle a dispute), the ICJ produces a binding ruling between states that agree to submit to the ruling of the court. **Only states may be party** in the contentious cases.
      - Individual, corporations, parts of federal states, NGOs, UN organs and self-determination groups are excluded from direct participation in cases, although the court may receive information from public international organizations.
      - This doesn't preclude non-state interests from being the subject of proceedings if one state brings the case against another.
  - » **Advisory Opinion**

- A function of court **only to specialized UN bodies and agencies**. Advisory Opinion is a means by which UN agencies could seek the court's help in deciding complex legal issues that might fall under their respective mandates.
- Only consultative in character but are influential and widely respected.

- **Source of Law**

- International treaties and conventions in force, international custom, general principles of law and judicial decisions and the teachings of the most highly qualified publicists Jurisdiction on Advisory proceedings - are open solely to the five organs of the UN and to 16 specialized agencies of the UN family.

## 6) THE SECRETARIAT

- Day to day work of the organization is done by the secretariat.
- It services other principal organs of the UN and administers the programs and policies laid down by them.
  - » Administering **peace keeping operations**
  - » Mediating international disputes
  - » **Surveying** economic and social trends and problems
  - » **Preparing studies** of human rights and sustainable development and so on.
- It is **organized along the departmental lines**, with each department or office having a distinct area of action and responsibility.
  - » For e.g., Department of Peace Operations (DPO) provides political and executive directions to UN Peacekeeping operations around the world and maintains contact with the security council.
- The Secretariat is **headed by Secretary General**, who is also the de facto spokesperson and leader of the UN. She is appointed by General Assembly on the recommendation of security council for a five-year renewable term.



# TARGET PRELIMS 2024

## BOOKLET-32

### INTERNATIONAL BODIES-2

#### Table of Contents

<b>1. Other UN Bodies.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).....</b>	<b>2</b>
A) Report: Investment Trend Monitor .....	2
B) Report: Commodities and Development Report .....	2
C) Report: World Investment Report .....	2
D) Report: Trade and Development Report 2023.....	2
E) Other Reports by UNCTAD.....	2
<b>2) United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) .....</b>	<b>2</b>
A) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Report, 2023 .....	3
B) Report: World Populations Prospects.....	3
C) Report: World Economic Situation and Prospect Report, 2024.....	3
D) International Migration Stock: 2020 .....	3
E) Other Reports: .....	4
<b>3) International Labour Organization (ILO) .....</b>	<b>4</b>
A) Report: World Employment and Social Outlook.....	4
B) Other REports by ILO .....	4
C) Advancing SOcial Justice (June 2023).....	4
<b>4) Important ILO Conventions .....</b>	<b>5</b>
A) OtheR Conventions: International Seafarer's Identity Documents Convention, 2003 .....	5
<b>5) Other ILO related Facts Useful for Prelims .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) .....</b>	<b>6</b>
A) Report: State of FOod and Agriculture (SOFA):.....	6
B) Report: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World .....	6
C) Report: Global Forest Resource Assessment .....	6
<b>7) Other Important Initiatives by FAO.....</b>	<b>8</b>
A) International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste: 29 Sep.....	8
B) Food Loss Index (FLI).....	8
C) World Food Day: 16th October .....	8
D) World Soil Day: 5th Dec .....	8
<b>8) World Food Program (WFP).....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9) Global Network Against Food Crisis (GNAFC).....</b>	<b>9</b>
A) Report: Global Report on Food Crisis (GRFC), 2023.....	9
<b>10) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) .....</b>	<b>9</b>

A)	Report: UNICEF's Flagship Publication - "The State of the World's Children .....	10
B)	Climate Changed Child: A Children's Climate Risk Index Supplement (2023) .....	10
C)	Children Displaced in Changed Climate (Oct 2023) .....	10
D)	UNICEF Crypto Fund.....	10
<b>11)</b>	<b>United nations Educational, SCIENTIFIC, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) .....</b>	<b>10</b>
A)	UNESCO Initiatives: UNESCO Creative Cities Network.....	11
B)	UNESCO Initiatives: International Network of Geo-Parks.....	12
C)	UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program –done with Environment .....	13
D)	UNESCO Initiatives: Intangible Cultural Heritage/ Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity....	14

## 1. OTHER UN BODIES

### 1) UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)

- UNCTAD is a permanent inter-governmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964. It is part of the UN Secretariat and reports to UNGA and ECOSOC. It has its own membership, leadership and budget. It is also part of United Nations Development Group.
- It is headquartered in Geneva.
- **Functions**
  - » UNCTAD support developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively. It also equips them to deal with potential drawbacks of greater economic integration.

#### A) REPORT: INVESTMENT TREND MONITOR

#### B) REPORT: COMMODITIES AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

#### C) REPORT: WORLD INVESTMENT REPORT

#### D) REPORT: TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2023

- The report projects world economic growth to slow from 3% in 2022 to 2.4% in 2023 with few signs of rebound next year.
  - It says that most regions will see significant slow down.
- Tighter Monetary Policy has so far contributed little to ease pressure.
- Economic inequality remains a significant challenge.
- Prospects of meeting the SDGs by 2030 is fading as a combination of rising interest rates, weakening currencies and slowing growth prospects is putting a lot of pressure of fiscal situation

#### E) OTHER REPORTS BY UNCTAD

- Least Developed Countries Report
- E-Commerce Development Report
- Review of Maritime Transport
- Technology and Innovation Report

### 2) UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (UNDESA)

- UNDESA is part of the UN Secretariat and holds its developmental pillar.
- Formed in 1948.
- Headquartered in New York City.
- It is also a member of United Nations Development Group.

- It is responsible for taking follow-up to major UN Summits, Services to UN ECOSOC, Services to second and third committee of the UNGA etc

## A) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG) REPORT, 2023

- The report monitors global progress on SDG.
- The SDG Report 2023: Special Edition provides a powerful call to action, presenting a candid assessment of the SDGs based on the latest data and estimates.
- While highlighting the existing gaps and urging the world to redouble its efforts, the report emphasizes the immense potential for success through strong political will and the utilization of available technologies, resources, and knowledge.

## B) REPORT: WORLD POPULATIONS PROSPECTS

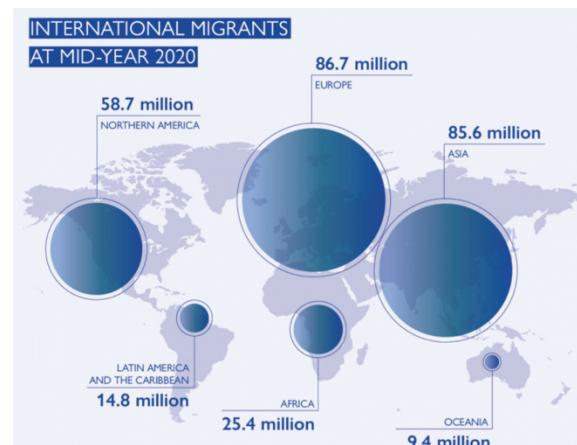
- Biannual Report
- The **2022 Revision of World Population Prospects** is the twenty-seventh edition of official United Nations population estimates and projections that have been prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.
- It presents population estimates from 1950 to the present for 237 countries or areas, underpinned by analyses of historical demographic trends.
- This latest assessment considers the results of 1,758 national population censuses conducted between 1950 and 2022, as well as information from vital registration systems and from 2,890 nationally representative sample surveys
- The 2022 revision also presents population projections to the year 2100 that reflect a range of plausible outcomes at the global, regional, and national levels.
- The report estimated that India will surpass China's population in 2023.
  - **Note:** According to the UN data, India has surpassed China to become world's most populous nation with 142.86 crore people. China has a population of 142.57 crore (April 2023)

## C) REPORT: WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECT REPORT, 2024

- The report presents an outlook for the global economy and underscores the importance of global cooperation and prudent policies to lift global growth.

## D) INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STOCK: 2020

- **Total number of international migrants in the world:** 281 million (2020) [248 million in 2015, 220 million in 2010 etc.]
- **COVID-19** has negatively hampered the international migrations.
  - **European region** hosted highest number of migrants followed by Asia and North America.
  - **USA** has the highest number of migrants (more than 50 million)



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#### E) OTHER REPORTS:

- State of World's indigenous people
- The World's Women Report

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### 3) INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

- **Introduction:**
  - » It is a UN agency dealing with labour issues, particularly international labour standards, social protection, and work opportunities for all. ILO registers complaints against entities that are violating international rules; however, it does not impose sanctions on governments.
  - » It came into existence in 1919 and India is a founder member.
- **Membership:** ILO has 187 member states (186 of the 193 UN members plus the Cook Islands are members of the ILO)
- **Headquarters – Geneva**
- **Functions**
  - » To adapt international conventions for welfare of people
  - » To watch the progress of their implementation
  - » To undertake extensive research work and advisory activities in the field of labour welfare
  - » To extend technical assistance to governments

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### A) REPORT: WORLD EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK

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#### B) OTHER REPORTS BY ILO

- » World Social Protection Report
- » World Wage Report
- » World of Work report
- » Global Employment trend
- » Youth employment

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#### C) ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE (JUNE 2023)

- **Decent jobs:** Not just any jobs. The ILO advocates investment in decent and green job opportunities, skills development, and economies that promote sustainable livelihoods.
- **Social Dialogues:** Strong and independent workers and employers' organization are central to increasing productivity, resolving world of work disputes, and helping build cohesive societies.

#### 4) IMPORTANT ILO CONVENTIONS

- The **8 fundamental Conventions:** The ILO's governing body has identified 8 conventions as "fundamental" covering subjects that are considered as fundamental principles and rights at work:
  1. Freedom of Association and Protection of Right to Organize Convention, 1948
  2. Right to Organize and collective bargaining convention, 1949
  3. Forced Labour Convention, 1930
  4. Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, 1957
  5. Minimum Age Convention, 1973
  6. **Worst Form of Child Labor Convention, 1999** - Convention No - 182
    - It calls for prohibition and elimination of the worst form of child labour, including slavery, forced labour and trafficking. It prohibits the use of children in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, and illicit activities such as drug trafficking, and in hazardous work.
    - In Aug 2020, this convention achieved **universal ratification** i.e. **all 187 member states of ILO have ratified** the convention. This is the **first ILO convention** to get ratification by **all members**. This was achieved by the ratification by the Kingdom of Tonga.
    - Its universal ratification means that **all children now have legal protection against the worst form of child labor**. It reflects a global commitment that the worst form of child labour, such as slavery, sexual exploitation, the use of children in armed conflict or other illicit or hazardous work that compromises children's health, morals or psychological wellbeing, have no place in our society.
  7. Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
  8. Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958
- **India has, in June 2017,** ratified, Minimum Age Convention, 1973 and Worst Form of Child Labor Convention, 1999. With this India has ratified 6 of the 8 conventions. The two conventions which India hasn't ratified yet are:
  1. Freedom of Association and Protection of Rights to Organize Convention (No 87)
  2. Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (no 98)

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#### A) OTHER CONVENTIONS: INTERNATIONAL SEAFARER'S IDENTITY DOCUMENTS CONVENTION, 2003

- Provides a globally recognized seafarers identity card

#### 5) OTHER ILO RELATED FACTS USEFUL FOR PRELIMS

- **Alliance 8.7**
  - » This is a global partnership for which the ILO provides the secretariat. This alliance brings together various partners and countries to coordinate, innovate and accelerate progress to end child labor, forced labor, human trafficking and modern slavery.

- » **Note:** "Ending child labour by 2025 in all its forms" is included under Target 8.7 of the SDG.
- **International Year for Elimination of Child Labor: 2021**
  - » Led by ILO in collaboration with partners.
  - » It aims to raise awareness of the issue and to help accelerate the pace of progress

## 6) FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

- FAO is a specialized agency of the UN that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Its parent organization is UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- **Headquarters** - Rome Italy; Motto: "*Let there be bread*".  
  - » **Goal** of FAO is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.
- **Extent of Work:** It has more than 194 member states and work in over 130 countries worldwide.
- **Functions**
  - » Discussion Forum: Source of Knowledge and information - and helps developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry, and fishery practices ensuring good nutrition, and food security for all.
  - » To continuously review the food and agriculture position of the world
  - » To undertake research with a view to devise new techniques and methods to improve the production of food.
  - » To eradicate animal diseases and to control pests.

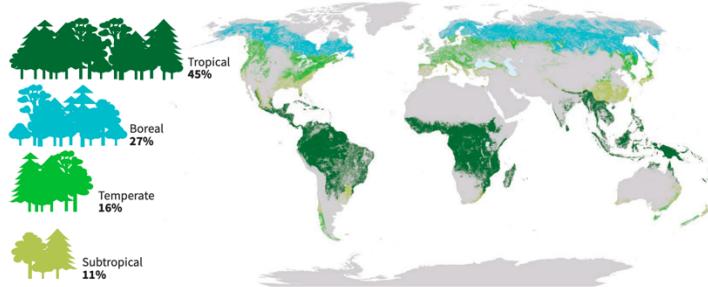
### A) REPORT: STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SOFA):

### B) REPORT: THE STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD

### C) REPORT: GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

- FAO brings out this report every five year (last in 2020)
- **Key Highlights**
  - » **Total Forest Area** in the world is **4.06 billion hectares**, which is 31% of the total area.
  - » **Geographical distribution:**
    - **Tropical domain** has the largest proportion of the world's forests (45%), followed by **boreal (27%)**, **temperate (16%)**, and **subtropical (11%)**.

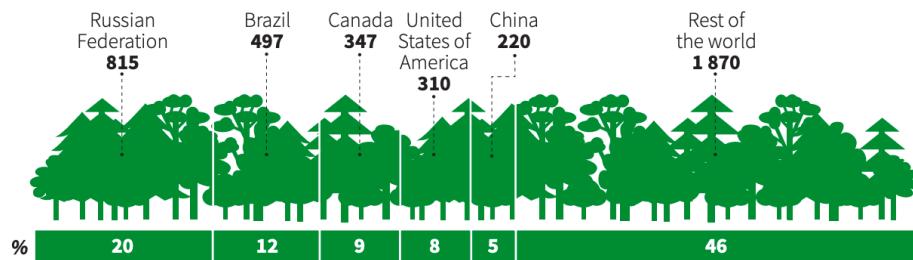
Proportion and distribution of global forest area by climatic domain, 2020



Source: Adapted from United Nations World map, 2020.

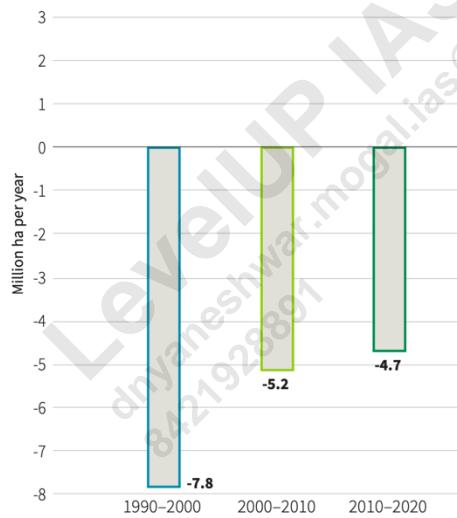
- 5 countries contribute to 54% of the world's forests - Russia, Brazil, Canada, USA, and China.

Top five countries for forest area, 2020 (million ha)



- The world has **lost 178 million hectares** of forest since 1990, which is an area about the size of Libya.
  - The rate of net forest loss decreased substantially over the period 1990-2020 due to a reduction in deforestation in some countries, plus increase in forest area in others through afforestation and natural expansion of forests.

Global annual forest area net change, by decade, 1990–2020



- **More than 700 million ha (18% of total)** of forests is legally established protected areas.
- **Primary Forests** account for **1 billion Ha**.
  - Primary forests are forests composed of native species in which there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes haven't been significantly disturbed.
- **More than 2 billion Ha of forests** has **management plans**.
- **Key Highlights About India**

- India has ranked third among the top 10 countries that have gained in forest areas in the last decade [China > Australia > India]
- Asian continent reported the highest net gain in forest area in 2010-2020.

## 7) OTHER IMPORTANT INITIATIVES BY FAO

### A) INTERNATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE: 29 SEP

#### B) FOOD LOSS INDEX (FLI)

- To monitor SDG Target 12.3, FAO has created the Food Loss Index. The focus on the indicator is on percentages of food removed from the supply chain.
- **About SDG 12 and 12.3**
  - SDG 12 seeks to “**ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**.”
  - *SDG 12.3: “By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”*

### C) WORLD FOOD DAY: 16TH OCTOBER

- In the honor of date of founding of FAO in 1945.
- It is celebrated as a day of action dedicated to tackling global hunger. The day is celebrated by many other organizations concerned with food security, including the World Food Program and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

### D) WORLD SOIL DAY: 5TH DEC

- WSD is held annually on 5th Dec as a mean to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil, and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources. In 2013, UNGA designated 5th Dec 2014 as the first official World Soil Day.
- **Why 5th Dec?**
  - The date of 5th December was chosen because it corresponds to the official birthday of the late H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King of Thailand, who was one of the main proponents of the initiative.

## 8) WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP)

- **Details about World Food Program**
  - » The WFP is the leading humanitarian organization saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies, and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.
  - » It was **founded in 1961** and has his headquarter in Rome with offices in 80 countries.
    - In 1965, after the agency had proved its worth by contributing to alleviating multiple crisis, it was enshrined as a full-fledged UN Program.

- **Funding**
  - WFP operations are funded by voluntary donations principally from governments of the world, and also from **corporations and private sector**.
    - In 2019, it received a fund of \$8 billion of which the largest donors were USA and Germany.
- **Nobel Peace Prize for WFP:** For its efforts to **combat hunger**, for its contribution to **bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas** and for acting as a **driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict**, WFP was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020**
- **WFP and India**
  - WFP has been working in India since 1963.
    - It has focused on reforms in the Targeted PDS. It also provides policy inputs, advocacy and technical assistance for improving access to food.
    - It has also completed a pilot on rice fortification used in government's mid-day-meal in Varanasi.

## 9) GLOBAL NETWORK AGAINST FOOD CRISIS (GNAFC)

- GNAFC is an alliance of humanitarian and development actors united by the commitment to tackle the root cause of food crises and promote sustainable solutions through coordination.
- It was launched by EU, FAO, and WFP during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) to respond to the WHS' s call for new approaches to tackle protracted crisis and recurrent disasters, reduce vulnerability, and manage risk, by bridging the divide between development and humanitarian partners.
- It works towards achieving the zero-hunger goal of the SDG 2030

### A) REPORT: GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISIS (GRFC), 2023

- Published by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) in support of Global Network against food crisis.
- The report for 2023 highlights the number of people experiencing acute food insecurity and requiring urgent food and livelihood assistance is on rise.
- In 2022, around 258 million people across 58 countries and territories faced acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels, (up from 193 people in 53 countries and territories in 2021).

**About Food Security Information Network:** It is a technical platform for the exchange of expertise, knowledge and best practices on food security and nutrition analysis. It is sponsored by FAO, WFP, and IFPRI.

## 10) UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

- **History of UNICEF**
  - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created by UNGA in 1946 to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by World War II.

- In 1950, its mandate was extended to address the long-term need of children and women in developing countries everywhere.
- In 1953, this organization became permanent part of the UN system, and the current name was adopted (though older acronym was continued)

- **Current Details**

- UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories to save Children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescent.
- **Headquarters:** New York City, USA

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#### **A) REPORT: UNICEF'S FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION - "THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN**

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#### **B) CLIMATE CHANGED CHILD: A CHILDREN'S CLIMATE RISK INDEX SUPPLEMENT (2023)**

- Children are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Their bodies and minds are uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as pollution, deadly diseases, and extreme weather.
- Killer children disease are spreading more.
- Children are more likely to suffer from air pollution than adults.
- Infants and young children are less able to regulate their body temperature
- Child malnutrition is worsened by crop failure.
- 40 million children are having their education disrupted
- Extreme heat is associated with an increase in mental health problems.

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#### **C) CHILDREN DISPLACED IN CHANGED CLIMATE (OCT 2023)**

- The report notes that there were 43.1 million international displacements of children linked to weather-related disasters over a six-year period - the equivalent to approximately 20,000 child displacement per day.
- Almost all - 95% - of the recorded child displacements were driven by floods and storms.

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#### **D) UNICEF CRYPTO FUND**

- Launched in 2019, it is the first crypto currency dominated financing vehicle within the UN. In fact, it is the first use of cryptocurrency, without converting to local currency (known as fiat) in the UN system.
- **Advantages:**
  - » UNICEF's ability to hold, receive and invest in cryptocurrency through the Crypto Fund has allowed us to expand services and opportunities for people around the world.
  - » Dramatic increase in the efficiency and transparency of investments by UNICEF

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#### **11) UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

- It is a specialized agency of UN under ECOSOC which is aimed at **promoting world peace and security** through **international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture**. It was founded in 1945 and is headquartered in Paris. It acts as a catalyst for far-reaching and important environmental and sustainable development initiatives.

## A) UNESCO INITIATIVES: UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

- **Why in news?**
  - Kozhikode (Kerala) and Gwalior in MP have been added to the prestigious creative cities list of UNESCO for contributions in the fields of literature and music respectively (Nov 2023)
- **About the Network**
  - The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development.
  - **The cities** which currently make up this network work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.
  - All over the world, these cities, each in its way, make culture the pillar, not an accessory, of their strategy.
  - **As of Nov 2023, UCCN** counts 350 cities in more than 100 countries, representing 7 creative fields.
    - Crafts & Folk Art
    - Design
    - Film
    - Gastronomy
    - Literature
    - Music
    - Media Arts
- **Indian Cities** which are in the list are:
  - Jaipur (**2015**) is designated as a Creative City of **Crafts & Folk Arts**.
  - Varanasi (**2015**) and Chennai (**2017**) are designated as a Creative City of **Music**
  - Hyderabad (**2019**): Creative City of **Gastronomy**
  - Mumbai (**2019**): Creative City of **Films**
  - Srinagar (**2021**): Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art.
  - Kozhikode (**2023**): Literature
    - It is the first city in India to get added in prestigious literature category.
    - The city has long history of hosting various literary events, such as the Kerala Literature Festival, which is one of the largest literary gathering in Asia. The city also is home to 500 libraries.
  - Gwalior (**2023**): Music
    - The city is regarded as the birthplace of Tansen, one of the greatest musician and composer in Indian history.
    - The city is also the origin of the 'Gwalior Gharana' the oldest and the most influential school of the Hindustani Classical Music

- The city also hosts Tansen Sangeet Samaroh, which attracts thousands of music lovers and artists from across the country.

## B) UNESCO INITIATIVES: INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF GEO-PARKS

- UNESCO Global Geo-parks are single, unified geographical sites and landscape of international geological significance. These are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
- There bottom up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular.
- **How many UNESCO Global Geo-parks (UGGp) are there?**
  - At present there are 195 territories from 48 nations.
- **Beginning of the program**
  - UNESCO's work with geoparks started in 2001. In 2004, 17 European and 8 Chinese geoparks came together at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to form the **Global Geopark Network (GGN)**.
  - IN 2015, the 195 member states of UNESCO ratified the creation of a new label, the UNESCO Global Geoparks, during 38th general conference of the organization.
    - This expressed governmental recognition of the importance of managing outstanding geological sites and landscapes in a holistic manner.
- **The Geopark tag is akin to that of a 'World Heritage Site' for historical monuments.**
- **Is a UNESCO's Global Geopark only about geology?**
  - No, while a UNESCO Global Geopark must demonstrate geological heritage of international significance, the purpose is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between that geological heritage and all other aspects of the area's natural, cultural and intangible heritages.
- **Once a UNESCO Global Geopark, always a UNESCO Global Geopark?**
  - No
  - A UNESCO Global Geopark is given this designation for a period of four years after which the functioning and quality of each UNESCO Global Geopark is thoroughly re-examined during a re-validation process.
- **Pre-requisite for getting Geo-Park Status**
  - An aspiring Geopark must have a dedicated website, a corporate identity, comprehensive management plan, protection plans, finance and partnerships for it to be accepted.

- **India:** No Geoparks recognized by UNESCO yet (April 2023)
  - » **Important Sites which have been considered:**

#### **BAGH IN MADHYA PRADESH IS AWAITING UNESCO RECOGNITION AS INDIA'S FIRST GLOBAL GEOPARK (NOV 2022)**

- **About Bagh:** It is a region in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district and is adorned with Buddhist caves. The caves here date back to 4th-6th century CE and the walls are covered with precious Buddhist work.
- **Bagh** also is home to fossils of dinosaurs to giant gymnosperms to prehistoric sharks. Thanks to these resources unearthed, a portion of Bagh has now been declared as Dinosaur Fossil National Park. It is considered among ASIA's oldest dinosaur sites.
- India's leading palaeontologists and geologists have gathered at the Dinosaur Fossil National Park in Bagh, based in the Dhar division of MP, to prepare a dossier for UNESCO's coveted Geopark tag.
- In 2018, Geological Survey of India had chosen heritage locations in Maharashtra and Karnataka for UNESCO site Status

#### **LONAR CRATER LAKE - AN ANCIENT CIRCULAR LAKE CREATED BY METEORITE STRIKE IN MAHARASHTRA**

- It got National geo-heritage tag in 1979.
- It is relatively young geo-logically, just about 50,000 years old.
- A meteorite estimated to weigh two-million-tonnes slammed into the Earth, creating a 1.83-km diameter crater where the lake formed. It is distinguished by a near-perfect, circular ejecta blanket, which refers to earth thrown up during the collision, around it.



#### **ST. MARY'S ISLANDS AND MALPE BEACH IN COASTAL KARNATAKA**

- It is estimated to be an 88-million year old formation that goes back to a time when greater India broke away from Madagascar (continental drift phase). This archipelago consist of a group of four little islands of volcanic origin.
- This archipelago is very high on geological importance and it is also one of the important historical places of Indian civilization.
- Note: St Mary's island was declared a National geo-heritage site in 1975.

### **C) UNESCO'S MAN AND BIOSPHERE PROGRAM –DONE WITH ENVIRONMENT**

## D) UNESCO INITIATIVES: INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE/ MASTERPIECE OF THE ORAL AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

- **Why in news?**
  - Garba dance from Gujarat becomes the 15th cultural item from India to make it to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List (Dec 2023)
- **About Intangible Cultural Heritage**
  - An intangible cultural heritage is a practice, representation, expression, knowledge, or skill as well as instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces that are considered by UNESCO to be part of a place's cultural heritage. It is sometimes called the living cultural heritage.
  - It focuses on intangible aspects of culture.
- **About Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage, 2003**
  - It is an international treaty signed in 2003, acknowledging that cultural heritage is more than tangible places, monuments and objects. It also encompasses traditional and living expressions.
- **Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention**
  - The Intergovernmental Committee of the 2003 Convention consists of 24 members and is elected in the General Assembly of the Convention according to the principle of equitable geographical representation and rotation.
  - **Core Functions** of the Committee:
    - » Promoting the Objective of the Convention
    - » Providing guidance on best practices
    - » Making recommendations on measures for safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
  - The committee also examines the requests submitted by State Parties for the inscription of intangible heritage on the lists as well as proposals or programs and projects.
  - India has been elected as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for the 2022-26 cycle.
    - In the past India has served as a member in two stints - 2006 - 2010 and 2014-18.
  - The elections took place during the 9th general assembly of the 2003 Convention held at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, from 5th to 7th July 2022.
- **India** ratified the convention in Sep 2005.
- **Intangible Cultural Heritages of India:** So far, 15 Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements from India have been inscribed till date on the UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
  - **How is an element included in this list?**
    - Nomination by a state party. (In India, Ministry of culture has appointed the Sangeet Natak Akademi, as nodal office for matters relating to preparation of the nomination dossiers for UNESCO.
- **Elements inscribed from India so far include:**

S.No.	ICH Element	Year _____ of Inscription

1.	<b>Tradition of Vedic chanting</b>	2008
2.	<b>Ramlila</b> , the traditional performance of the Ramayana	2008
3.	<b>Kutiyattam</b> , Sanskrit theatre	2008
4.	<b>Ramman</b> , religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India	2009
5.	<b>Mudiyettu</b> , ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala	2010
6.	<b>Kalbelia</b> folk songs and dances of Rajasthan	2010
7.	<b>Chhau</b> dance	2010
8.	<b>Buddhist chanting of Ladakh</b> : recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India	2012
9.	<b>Sankirtana</b> , ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur	2013
10.	Traditional <b>brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras</b> of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India	2014
11.	<b>Yoga</b>	2016
12.	<b>Nawrouz</b> , Novruz, Nowrouz, Nowrouz, Nawrouz, Nauryz, Nooruz, Nowruz, Navruz, Nevruz, Nowruz, Navruz	2016
13.	<b>Kumbh Mela</b>	2017
14.	<b>Durga Puja</b> in Kolkata	2021
15.	<b>Garba</b> of Gujarat	2023

- **National List for Intangible Cultural Heritage**

- It is an attempt to recognize the diversity of Indian culture embedded in its intangible heritage. It aims to **raise awareness** about the various intangible heritage elements from different states of India at national and international level to ensure their protection.
- **Detailed list is provided in the below link.** Please cover it properly
  - <https://www.indiaculture.nic.in/national-list-intangible-cultural-heritage-ich>



# TARGET PRELIMS 2024

## BOOKLET-33

### INTERNATIONAL BODIES-3

#### Table of Contents

<b>1. UN Bodies – Continue.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1) UNESCO .....</b>	<b>2</b>
A) World Heritage Sites .....	2
B) World Heritage Day/ International Day for Monuments and Sites .....	4
C) Assam's Moidams Meet UNESCO Technical Requirements for Heritage Centre (March 2023) .....	4
D) UNESCO Reports: Gender Parity Index .....	5
E) UNESCO Launches List Documenting 50 Iconic Indian Heritage Textiles.....	5
<b>2) United Nation Human Settlement Program (UN-Habitat) .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3) World Health Organization (WHO) .....</b>	<b>6</b>
A) Report: Global TB report, 2023 .....	6
B) Report: The State of FOod Security and Nutrition in the world, 2023.....	6
C) Report on Global Tobacco Epidemic .....	6
D) WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (WHO-GCTM) .....	7
E) WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products....	7
A) Report: Tracking Universal Health COverage: 2023 Global Monitoring Report.....	8
B) Global Report on Hypertension: The Race Against a Silent Killer (2023).....	8
<b>4) World Bank Group (WBG).....</b>	<b>9</b>
C) Report: Global Economic Prospect (GEP) Report.....	11
D) Report: World Economic Situation and Prospects Report.....	11
A) Report: Logistic Performance Index of World Bank.....	11
C) Report: Ease of Doing Business: World Bank Report .....	12
D) Business Ready (B-Ready) .....	12
E) International Debt Report, 2023.....	13
F) Report: World Development Report, 2023.....	13
G) Women, Business and Law (WBL) Index 2023: World Bank .....	13
<b>5) International Monetary Fund (IMF) .....</b>	<b>14</b>
A) IMF Bailouts .....	15
B) Where the IMF Gets its Money.....	16
C) Governance and Organization .....	16
D) IMF Quotas .....	16
E) IMF Quota and Governance: Need for reforms .....	17
F) Key changes agreed to in 2019 Agreement .....	18
G) Some Key Terms: Special Drawing Rights .....	18
H) Reports: World Economic Outlook .....	19
<b>6) International Maritime Organization (IMO) .....</b>	<b>19</b>

<b>7) World Meteorological Organization (WMO)</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>8) United Nations Convention on Law of the Seas</b> .....	<b>21</b>
A) International Tribunal on Law of Seas .....	22
B) Italian Marine Case .....	23
C) International Seabed Authority (ISA) .....	23
D) Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS) .....	24
<b>9) International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) .....	24
<b>10) United Nations Development Program (UNDP)</b> .....	<b>24</b>
I) Human Development Report 2023-24: Breaking the GridLock (March 2024).....	25
<b>11) United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (also known as the UN Refugee Agency)</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>12) United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>13) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Report: World Drug Report .....	27
<b>14) United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP)</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>15) United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Election of Members to UNHRC .....	28
A) Universal Periodic Review (UPR).....	29

## 1. UN BODIES – CONTINUE

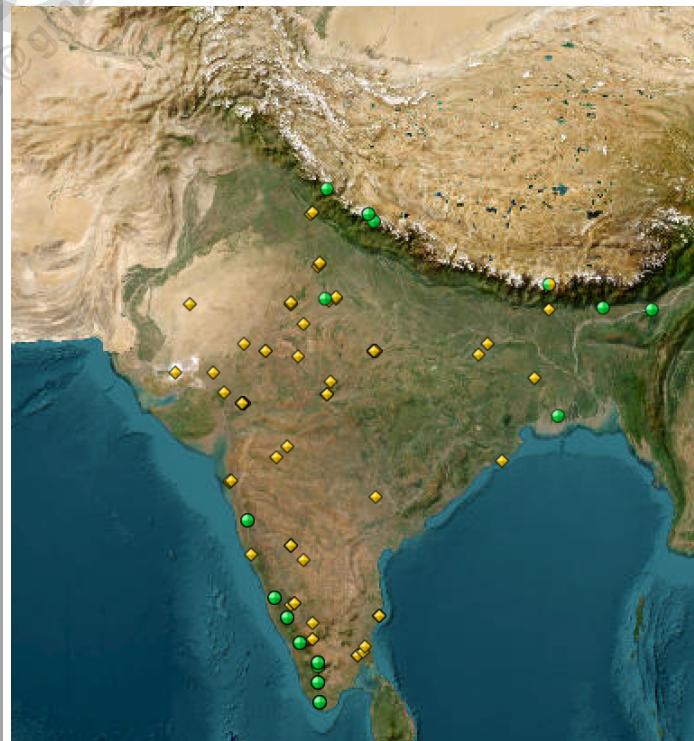
### 1) UNESCO

#### A) WORLD HERITAGE SITES

- The UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the **Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.
  - » The Convention also established the **World Heritage Committee** within UNESCO. It is composed of 21 state parties elected by UNGA.
    - **Note:** India is currently a member of the World Heritage Committee for its fourth term (2021-25).
- **10 Criteria for inclusion in World Heritage list.**
  - » Up to 2004 there were six criteria for cultural heritage site and four criteria for the natural heritage site.
  - » In 2005 this was modified so that, now only one set of ten criteria.
  - » Nominated sites must be of "outstanding universal value" and meet atleast one of the ten criteria.
- **World Heritage sites in India**
  - There are 42 (34 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed) world heritage sites in India as of March 2024.

##### Cultural 34

- Agra Fort (1983)
- Ajanta Caves (1983)
- Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar (2016)
- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989)
- Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (2004)
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004)
- Churches and Convents of Goa (1986)
- Dholavira: a Harappan City (2021)
- Elephanta Caves (1987)
- Ellora Caves (1983)
- Fatehpur Sikri (1986)
- Great Living Chola Temples (1987, 2004)
- Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986)
- Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984)
- Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (1987)
- Hill Forts of Rajasthan (2013)
- Historic City of Ahmadabad (2017)



- Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993)
- Jaipur City, Rajasthan (2019)
- Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Telangana (2021)
- Khajuraho Group of Monuments (1986)
- Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya (2002)
- Mountain Railways of India (1999, 2005, 2008)
- Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi (1993)
- Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) at Patan, Gujarat (2014)
- Red Fort Complex (2007)
- Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003)
- Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (2023)
- Santiniketan (2023)
- Sun Temple, Konârak (1984)
- Taj Mahal (1983)
- The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (2016)
- The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur (2010)

- Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018)

### Natural 7

- Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (2014)
- Kaziranga National Park (1985)
- Keoladeo National Park (1985)
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985)
- Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988, 2005)
- Sundarbans National Park (1987)
- Western Ghats (2012)

### Mixed 1

- Khangchendzonga National Park (2016)

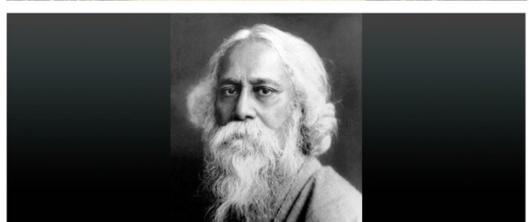
- Santiniketan in WB has been declared India's 41st World Heritage Site (Sep 2023)

Santiniketan is situated in a rural location in WB, and is associated with the work and philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore, a world famous poet, artist, musician, and philosopher and a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913).

The site was established as an Ashram and was given its name in 1863 by Tagore's father Debendranath Tagore. In 1901, Rabindranath Tagore began its transformation to a residential school and centre for art, based on the ancient Indian tradition of gurukul.

His vision was oriented at the unity of humanity, or "Visva Bharati". Distinct from the prevailing British colonial architectural orientations of the early 20th century and of European modernism, Santiniketan represents orientations toward a Pan-Asian modernity, drawing on ancient, medieval and folk traditions from across the region

### SANTINIKETAN



**The Sacred Ensembles of Hoyasalas** has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This is the 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site of India (Sep 2023)

Hoysalesvara Temple, Helebidu, Channakeshava Temple, Belur, and Keshava Temple, Somenathapuram in Karnataka reflect the marvellous architectural and artistic creativity.



- These decision to include the above two sites in the World Heritage List was taken by the 21 nation World Heritage Committee.
- **Sites on the tentative List:**
  - A tentative list is an inventory of those properties which each state party intends to consider for nomination. Currently, there are 57 sites from India on the list.

## B) WORLD HERITAGE DAY/ INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MONUMENTS AND SITES

- 18th April is celebrated as the World Heritage Day. This day is dedicated to promoting the importance of cultural heritage and raising awareness about the need to preserve historical sites and monuments across the globe.
- **History:**
  - » The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) proposed the idea of World Heritage Day in 1982, and it was approved by UNESCO's General Conference that year.
  - » The first World Heritage Day was celebrated in 1983 and since then, it has become an important event for promoting awareness about cultural heritage.
- **2023 Theme:** "Heritage Changes"
  - » The theme is focused on the crucial issue of climate action and its relation to cultural heritage.

## C) ASSAM'S MOIDAMS MEET UNESCO TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HERITAGE CENTRE (MARCH 2023)

Moidams (or Maidams) represent the late medieval (13th - 19th century CE) mound-burial tradition of Tai Ahoms in Assam, which lasted almost 600 years.

Out of 386 Moidams explored so far, 90 royal burials at Charaideo are the best preserved, representative, and most complete examples of this tradition.

Charaideo Moidams enshrine the mortal remains of Ahom royalty among the objects they cherished.

After 18th century, the Ahom rulers adopted the Hindu method of cremation, later entombing the cremated bones and ashes in a Moidam at Charaideo.

The Moidams are highly venerated.



**Note:** Charaideo in Eastern Assam has more than 90 Moidams, the mound-burial system of the Ahoms who ruled large swathes of the present-day state and beyond for some 600 years until the advent of the British in the 1820s.

- Assam's Moidams have met all the technical requirements of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. (March 2023)
  - » The nomination of *Moidams* – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty met all of the technical requirements outlined in the Operational Guidelines concerning completeness check of nominations to the World Heritage List. It is important to recall that the technical completeness of a nomination does not imply that the site concerned is of Outstanding Universal Value and would necessarily be inscribed on the World Heritage List.
  - » Earlier, in Jan 2023, Centre picked Assam's Charaideo Maidams from 52 sites across the country to be nominated for World Heritage site status.

#### D) UNESCO REPORTS: GENDER PARITY INDEX

- It is a socioeconomic index usually designed to measure relative access to education of males and females. It is released by UNESCO.
  - » It compares number of females with number of males enrolled in a given stage of education (primary, secondary etc.)

#### E) UNESCO LAUNCHES LIST DOCUMENTING 50 ICONIC INDIAN HERITAGE TEXTILES

- ***Handmade for 21st Century: Safeguarding Traditional Indian Textiles*** lists the histories and legends behind the textiles, describes the complicated and secret processes behind their making, mentions the causes for their dwindling popularity, and provides strategies for their preservation.
  - » The publication aims to document these intangible cultural heritages.
  - » It acts as a sample of endangered textile crafts.
  - » It also gives recommendations for the protection and revitalization of these textile crafts.
- **Important Textiles**
  - » Toda Embroidery and Sungadi from Tamil Nadu
  - » Sikalnayakanpet Kalamkari from Thanjavur, TN
  - » Ilkal and Lambadi or Banjara embroidery from Karnataka
  - » Kunbi weaves from Goa
  - » Himroo weaves from Hyderabad and Maharashtra
  - » Bandha Tie and dye weaving from Sambalpur in Odisha were some of the textiles that made the cut.
  - » Garad-Koirial from West Bengal
  - » Mashru weaves and Patola from Gujarat
  - » Khes from Panipat
  - » Chamba Rumals from Arunachal
  - » Thigma or wool tie and dye from Ladakh
  - » Awadh Jamdani from Varanasi
- **Note:**
  - » No textile practices from India have been included in the list so far and an inscription in the list would be due recognition of the talent and diversity of the country's extraordinary weaving traditions.

#### 2) UNITED NATION HUMAN SETTLEMENT PROGRAM (UN-HABITAT)

- It is the UN agency for **human settlements and sustainable urban development**. It works towards a **better urban future**.
  - » Its mission is to promote **transformative changes in cities and human settlements, through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action to leave no one and no place behind**.
- It was established in 1978 as an outcome of the **First UN conference on Human Settlement and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat-1), 1976**.
  - » Note: Habitat-3 was held at Quito, Ecuador in 2016.
- It is a member of United Nation Development Group.
- **Headquarter:** Nairobi, Kenya.

### 3) WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

- WHO is an UN Specialized Agency which was created in 1948 to **coordinate and direct the UN's global health efforts**. It is headquartered in **Geneva** and have six regional office (one of them in Delhi)
- It has no authority over its 194 member countries and like most other UN agencies, **depends on member contributions** to carry out its activities.

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#### A) REPORT: GLOBAL TB REPORT, 2023

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#### B) REPORT: THE STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD, 2023

- **About the Report:** The report provides an update on global progress towards the target of ending hunger (SDG Target 2.1) and all forms of malnutrition (SDG Target 2.2) and estimates on the number of people who are unable to afford a healthy diet.
- **Authors:**
  - » FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO

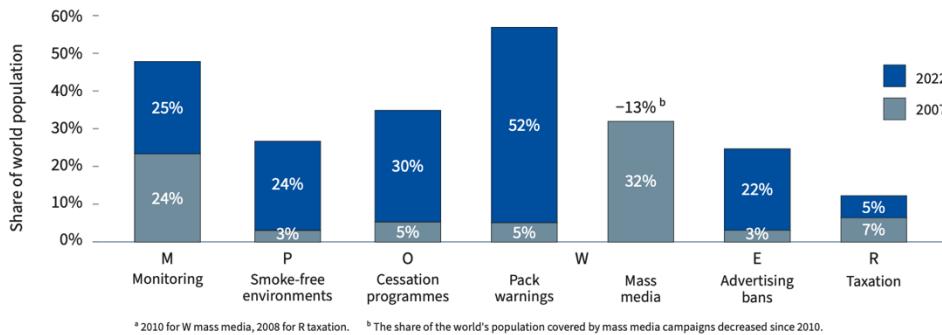
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#### C) REPORT ON GLOBAL TOBACCO EPIDEMIC

- This is the ninth WHO report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic and the fifteenth year since MPOWER was introduced as a technical package designed to help countries implement the demand reduction measures of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
  - » **M: Monitor** tobacco use and prevention policies
  - » **P: Protect** people from tobacco smoke
  - » **O: Offer** help to quit tobacco use
  - » **W: Warn** about the dangers of tobacco
  - » **E: Enforce** bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship
  - » **R: Raise** tax on tobacco
- **Key Highlights:**

- » Over 8 million tobacco related deaths take place a year. This makes tobacco the biggest public health threat and tobacco control remains a global health priority.
- » In 2022, more than 5.6 billion people - 71% of the world's population was covered by atleast one MPOWER measure implemented at the highest level.
- » Number of countries with one or more MPOWER measure in place has tripled since 2007 - from 44 to 151 countries.
- » 2 billion people are still unprotected by any regulatory restrictions on electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS).
  - 74 countries still have no ENDS ban on regulation in place, leaving over 2 billion people particularly vulnerable to the activities of tobacco and related industries.
- » **15 years of MPOWER have made a major impact on global tobacco control.**

**Fig. 4. Increase in the world population covered by selected tobacco control policies, 2007<sup>a</sup> to 2022**



#### D) WHO GLOBAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE (WHO-GCTM)

- **What is Traditional Medicine?**
  - » The term traditional medicine describes the total sum of the knowledge, skills and practices indigenous and different cultures have used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness. Its reach encompasses ancient practices such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine and herbal mixture as well as modern medicines.
- **Details of Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM)**
  - » This Global Centre for Traditional Medicine is supported by an investment of USD 250 million from the Government of India.
  - » Ministry of AYUSH and WHO have signed an agreement to establish WHO GCTM at Jamnagar, Gujarat.
    - In April 2022, PM Modi laid foundation stone of WHO-GCTM at Jamnagar.
  - » It is an outpost centre of WHO-HQ (Geneva) funded by the GoI.
  - » It aims to harness the potential of traditional medicine from across the world through modern science and technology to improve the health of people and the planet.
  - » Around 80% of the world's population is estimated to use traditional medicine.

#### E) WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL AND THE PROTOCOL TO ELIMINATE ILLICIT TRADE IN TOBACCO PRODUCTS

- These are evidence based, legally binding international instruments.
- As of June 2023, there are 182 and 67 parties to this convention and protocol.
- These treaties act as unifying framework for inter-governmental cooperation.
- These are fundamental to combating the global tobacco epidemic and upholding the right of all people to the highest attainable standard of health.

- It came into force in 2005 and includes a core set of mutually reinforcing obligations to reduce the demand for, and supply of, tobacco products.

<b>Demand-reduction measures</b>	<b>Article 6:</b> Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco <b>Article 8:</b> Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke <b>Article 9:</b> Regulation of the contents of tobacco products <b>Article 10:</b> Regulation of tobacco product disclosures <b>Article 11:</b> Packaging and labelling of tobacco products <b>Article 12:</b> Education, communication, training and public awareness <b>Article 13:</b> Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship <b>Article 14:</b> Demand-reduction measures concerning tobacco dependence and cessation
<b>Supply-reduction measures</b>	<b>Article 15:</b> Illicit trade in tobacco products <b>Article 16:</b> Sales to and by minors <b>Article 17:</b> Provision of support for economically viable alternative activities
<b>General obligations</b>	<b>Article 4:</b> Guiding principles <b>Article 5:</b> General obligations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>5.1:</b> Comprehensive multisectoral, national tobacco control strategies, plans and programmes</li> <li>■ <b>5.2:</b> National coordinating mechanism or tobacco control focal point</li> <li>■ <b>5.3:</b> Protecting tobacco control policies from the tobacco industry's commercial and vested interests</li> </ul>
<b>Other measures</b>	<b>Article 18:</b> Protection of the environment and the health of persons <b>Article 19:</b> Liability <b>Article 20:</b> Research, surveillance and exchange of information <b>Article 21:</b> Reporting and exchange of information <b>Article 22:</b> Cooperation in the scientific, technical and legal fields and provisions of related expertise

#### A) REPORT: TRACKING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE: 2023 GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT

- Released jointly by WHO and World Bank.
- The report studies the progress towards Universal Health Coverage using two sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Indicators:
  - » **UHC Service Coverage Index (SCI)** that covers essential health services (SDG 3.8.1)
  - » **Out of Pocket Health Expenditure (OOPE)** measuring catastrophic health spending (SDG 3.8.2)
- **Key Highlights:**
  - » The World is off track to make significant progress towards **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** (SDG target 3.8) by 2030 as improvement to health services coverage have stagnated since 2015.
  - » The Proportion of Population that faced **catastrophic OOPE** has increased.

#### B) GLOBAL REPORT ON HYPERTENSION: THE RACE AGAINST A SILENT KILLER (2023)

- The number of people living with hypertension (blood pressure of  $\geq 140$  mmHg systolic or  $\geq 90$  mmHg diastolic or on medication) doubled between 1990 and 2019, from 650 million to 1.3 billion.

- Hypertension causes - Stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney damage and many other health problems.
- **How to address hypertension?**
  - » **Risk Factor Strategies** include ensuring that people eat a healthy diet low in sodium, maintain a healthy weight, avoid alcohol and tobacco and take regular physical activity.
  - » **Policies and practices to support these strategies** are most effective when implemented across entire populations or within specific settings, such as in schools and at workplaces.

#### 4) WORLD BANK GROUP (WBG)

- **Introduction**
  - WBG is a family of five international organizations that make **leveraged loans to developing countries** and work towards sustainable solutions to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
  - It is the largest developmental bank in the world and is also an observer at the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).
  - **History:**
    - It was founded in 1944 at the **United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference or the Bretton Woods Conference**, which was convened to establish a new, post-World War II international economic system.
    - It officially became operational in 1946.
    - **IMF and WB are called Bretton woods twins** as they were formed as a result of Bretton Woods Agreement.
- HQ: Washington D.C.
- **Goals/ Mission**
  - Ending extreme poverty and building shared prosperity
- The five organizations which form part of WBG are:
  - 1. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**
    - Provides debts financing on the basis of sovereign guarantees.
  - 2. International Development Association (IDA)**
    - Provides concessional financing (interest free loans or grants), usually with sovereign guarantees.
      - » ('Soft loan Window' -> as it gives concessional loans)
      - » It is one of the largest sources of credit for the world's poorest countries.
  - 3. International Finance Cooperation (IFC)**
    - Provides various forms of financing without sovereign guarantees, primarily to the private sector.
  - 4. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)**
    - Provides insurance against certain types of risk, including political risk, primarily to the private sector.
      - » It thus encourages private sector to invest in foreign developing countries.

## 5. International Centre for settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)

- It helps private investors and foreign countries to work out differences when they don't agree.
- Many Bilateral Investment Treaties also provide ICSID mechanism for dispute resolution.
- Note:
  - » India is not a member of ICSID and considers the convention biased in favor of developed countries.
  - » For e.g. the Chairman of ICSID is the Chairman of World Bank. The chairman appoints the arbitrators too.

### - Membership:

- To become a member of the Bank, under the **IBRD Articles of Agreement**, a country must join the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Presently, IBRD has 189 members.
  - Note: Currently, all member of IMF are also members of IBRD.
- Membership of **IDA, IFC and MIGA** are conditional on membership in IBRD.

### - World Bank: The term "world bank" generally refers to just the IBRD and IDA, whereas the term WBG refers to all five institutions collectively.

- **IBRD and IDA focuses on developing countries** in areas such as human development, infrastructure, environment protection, large industrial construction project, and governance.
- They provide **loans at preferential rates to member countries**, as well as grants to the poorest countries.

### - Decisions Making Process:

- » The bank runs like a **giant cooperative**, where its members are shareholders and is operated for the benefit of those using its service. The **number of shares of each country** is based on roughly the **size of its economy**.
  - The US, Japan, Germany, UK and France are the largest shareholders.
- » **A Board of Governors** represents the Bank's government shareholders.
  - Generally, these governors are country ministers. The governors are the ultimate policy makers in the World Bank. They meet once a year in the Bank's Annual Meeting.
- » **24 Executive directors** deal with the daily functions of the bank including approving loans and guarantees, new policies, the administrative budget, country assistance strategy and borrowing and financial decisions.
  - 5 Executive director are from the five largest donors (US, Japan, Germany, UK and France)
  - Remaining 19 executive directors represent the other member countries.

### - President of the World Bank Group (WBG)

- How is President selected?
  - The President is selected through an open, merit-based, and transparent selection process.
    - **Step1: Candidate Nominations** must be made by Executive Directors, or by Governors through their Executive Directors.
      - i. **Candidates** must be nationals of the Bank's member countries.

- **Step2:** Following the close of nomination period, the Executive Directors will decide on a shortlist of upto three candidates and publish the names of shortlisted candidates with their consent. Formal interviews of all shortlisted candidates is conducted by executive directors.
  - **Step3:** Board of Governors of the World Bank Group elects the president of the World Bank.
- Candidates should have the track record of leadership and accomplishment; experience of managing large organization with international exposure, and a familiarity with the public sector; The ability to articulate a clear vision of the WBG's development mission.
- **The President** of the World Bank is ex officio chair of the Board of the Executive Directors of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).
- The President is also ex officio chair of the Board of Directors of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the Administrative Council of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).
- **Current President:**
  - **Ajay Banga** began his five year term as WBG President on 2nd June, 2023.
  - He is the first ever Indian American to be appointed as the WBG President.
- **Need of Reforms:**  
Domination by a few developed countries; Anachronistic i.e., don't represent the current economic picture of the world; Impose "Free Market Economic Policies"; Need of more capital;
- **World Bank Group and India**
  - India is the largest client of the WBG.
  - India is member of 4/5 organs of WBG.

### C) REPORT: GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPECT (GEP) REPORT

- Since its inception in 1991, The Global Economic Prospect report has examined international economic developments and the outlook for growth, with a special focus on emerging markets and developing economies.

### D) REPORT: WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECTS REPORT

- The report paints a sobering picture of the global economic landscape.
- The report forecasts a deceleration in global GDP growth, from an estimated 2.7% in 2023 to 2.4% in 2024.
  - » Developing countries in particular are struggling to recover from pandemic induced losses.
- **India** is projected to grow by 6.2% in 2024, supported by domestic demand and growth in manufacturing and services.

### A) REPORT: LOGISTIC PERFORMANCE INDEX OF WORLD BANK

- Why in news?

- » LPI 2023 released (2023)
- **Intro**
    - » **Logistics** comprise of a network of services that support the physical movement of goods within and across the borders. Logistics are the backbone of trade. Good logistics can lower trade costs and help countries compete globally.
    - » LPI scores countries on how efficiently they move goods across or within borders.
  - LPI analyzes countries across **six parameters**
    - » **Customs** efficiency and border management clearance.
    - » **Infrastructure** Quality for trade and transport
    - » **Tracking and Tracing** of consignments.
    - » **Ease of International shipment** (competitive price)
    - » **Logistic Service Quality**
    - » **Timeliness:** Frequency with which shipments reach consignees within the scheduled expected delivery times.
  - **The 2023 LPI:**
    - » **Transitioning from survey to Big Data:**
      - LPI 2023 with 2 tracks: (1) traditional survey based (2) new indicator based on actual supply chain tracking data
      - **New Features:** New Set of Key performance Indicators
        - Derived from Big Data source on actual trade movements
        - Cover containers, air freight and parcels by trade lanes and gateways
        - Complements the information carried by the survey-based LPI.
      - **Main LPI** is still based on survey: 6 components and one overall score
        - **Perception based:** respondents evaluate 6 indicators of logistics performance in upto 8 parameters.
        - 4090 currently assessments by 652 logistics professionals from 115 countries and from all World Bank regions (survey data Sep to Nov 2022)
    - » **Key Highlights:**
      - Level of Logistic Performance have risen over time.
    - » **India Ranks 38/139 countries** (an improvement from 44 rank of 2018 and 54 rank in 2014)



### C) REPORT: EASE OF DOING BUSINESS: WORLD BANK REPORT

In Sep 2021, WBG cancelled the release of its flagship report - "**Ease of Doing Business**" Report due to allegations of data irregularities. It was alleged that the report was manipulating China's rank.

### D) BUSINESS READY (B-READY)

- It is the World Bank's new flagship report benchmarking the business environment and investment climate in most economies worldwide. The report assesses the regulatory framework and public services

directed at firms, and the efficiency with which regulatory framework and public services are combined in practice.

- With data that are comparable across economy and overtime, **B-READY** provides actionable evidence to promote reforms for a stronger private sector.

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#### E) INTERNATIONAL DEBT REPORT, 2023

- It's an annual report by WB.
- **Key Highlights of the 2023 report:**
  - » Among the biggest surge in global interest rates in four decades, developing countries spent a record \$443.5 billion to service their external and public guaranteed debt in 2022. This leads to shifting of resources from critical areas like health, education, and the environment.
  - » **Debt Service Payments** (which includes principal and interest payments) - increased by 5% over the previous year for all developing countries.

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#### F) REPORT: WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT, 2023

- **About World Development Report**
  - » It is an invaluable guide to economic, social and environmental state of world. It has been published annually since 1978 by IBRD.
- **Key Highlights of the 2023 Report**
  - » **Theme:** Migrants Refugees and Society

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#### G) WOMEN, BUSINESS AND LAW (WBL) INDEX 2023: WORLD BANK

- **Why in news?**
  - » Released in March 2023
  - » It is 9th in the series of annual reports.
- **Key Highlights**
  - » It **analyses laws and regulations affecting Women's economic inclusion** in 190 economies. It **only measures formal laws and regulations** governing women's ability to work or own businesses - it didn't cover a country's norms and practices. It uses **eight parameters**:
    - workplace, pay, mobility, marriage, parenthood, pensions, assets and entrepreneurship
  - » It also analyses the work still to be done to ensure economic empowerment for all.
  - » The study also observed that **giving women equal opportunities** in the workplace leads to more successful economies.
- **India's situation.**
  - » **World Bank Index on Life Cycle of Working Women** (March 2023: Source - TH)
    - Out of the 190 economies covered in the Index, only 14 scored a perfect 100: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.
    - **India** scores 74.4/100.
      - A score of 100 would mean that women are on equal standing with men on all the eight indicators being measured.

- India scored higher than the South Asian average of 63.7 though lower than Nepal which had the region's highest score.
- For India, the index used data the laws and regulations applicable in Mumbai, viewed as the country's main business city.

▪ **Reasons:**

- Laws affecting pay, pension, inheritance and property rights are among the areas where India lags behind in terms of gender equality at workplace.

## 5) INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)

- **Beginning**
  - » The IMF also known as the Fund, was conceived at a UN conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States, in July 1944. It formally came into existence in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to 189 countries that make up its near-global membership.
    - **Note:** IMF and World Bank are two Bretton woods organizations.
  - » **Headquarter:** Washington DC
- The **primary goal** of the IMF was to bring about International Economic Coordination to prevent competing currency devaluation by countries trying to promote their own exports.
  - » Eventually, **IMF evolved to be a lender of last resort** to governments of countries that had to deal with severe currency crisis.
- The **Organization's Objectives stated in the Articles of Agreement are:**
  - » To promote international Economic Cooperation, International Trade, Employment and Exchange rate stability, including by making financial resources available to member countries to meet balance of payment needs.
- **How IMF promotes global Economic Stability**
  - » The IMF helps countries to implement sound and appropriate policies through its key functions of surveillance, technical assistance, and lending.
    - **Surveillance**
      - » IMF's mandate is to oversee the international monetary system and monitor the economic and financial policies of its 189 member countries. This surveillance takes place at the global level and in individual countries and regions.
      - » **Consulting with member countries**
        - IMF monitors members' economies through regular - usually annual - consultation with each member country.
      - » **Closely monitors global and regional trends.**
        - Periodic reports: **The World Economic Outlook**, its regional overviews, **the Fiscal Monitor**, and the **Global Financial Stability Report**, analyze global and regional macroeconomic and financial developments.
    - **Technical Assistance**

- » IMF provides advice and training on a range of issues within its mandate, including fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies, regulation and supervision of financial systems; statistics systems; and legal framework.

- **Lending**

- » Financial assistance to a member country which is experiencing financial difficulty. It can also support crisis prevention.
- » A core responsibility of IMF is to provide loans to member countries experiencing actual or potential balance of payments problems.
  - This financial assistance enables countries to rebuild their international reserves, stabilize their currencies, continue paying for imports, and restore conditions for strong economic growth, while undertaking policies to correct underlying problems. Unlike development banks, **the IMF does not lend for specific projects**.
- » **The Process of IMF lending**
  - Upon request from a member country, IMF resources are usually made available under a lending "arrangement", which may, depending on the lending instrument used, stipulate specific economic policies and measures a country has agreed to implement to resolve its balance of payment problems.

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## A) IMF BAILOUTS

- **Why do nations seek IMF bailout?**
  - » To deal with major macro-economic risks.
    - For e.g., in case of both Sri Lanka and Pakistan, both countries have witnessed domestic price rise rapidly and steep depreciation in their currency.
- **How does the IMF help countries?**
  - » It lends money, often in the form of special drawing rights (SDRs), to troubled economies that seek the lender's assistance.
  - » IMF carries out its lending to troubled economies through a number of lending programs such as Extended Credit Facility; the flexible credit facility; the standby agreement etc.
- **Criticisms of IMF Bailouts**
  - » IMF usually imposes conditions on countries before it lends any money to them. For e.g., a country may have to implement certain structural reforms as a condition to receive IMF loans. The IMF's conditional lending has been controversial as many believe that these reforms are too tough on the public. Sometimes IMF is also accused of influencing international politics.
- **Supporters** argue that without structural reforms bailout will not be successful.

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IMF GRANTED A \$ 3 BILLION SHORT-TERM STAND-BY ARRANGEMENT (SBA) TO PAKISTAN (JULY 2023)

- India abstained from voting when the SBA was approved.
- In March 2024, Pakistani PM Minister Shehbaz Sharif, is pursuing "immediate talks" with the IMF to seek additional funding support, including the \$1.2 billion residual balance under the SBA which expires next month.

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#### IMF CLEARS SECOND TRANCHE OF \$337 MILLION FOR SL (DEC 2023)

- The IMF has cleared the second tranche - of about \$337 million - of the Extended Fund Facility to Sri Lanka, based on the debt treatment plan drawn up by the crisis-battered island nation and its bilateral creditors.
- With the second tranche coming in, SL has received about \$670 million of the \$ 3 billion it hopes to receive from the fund.

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### B) WHERE THE IMF GETS ITS MONEY

- Most resources for IMF loans are provided by member countries, primarily through their payment of quotas.
- Borrowings provides a temporary supplement to quota resources and has played a critical role in enabling the fund to meet member's need for financial support during the global economic crisis.
- Concessional lending and debt relief for low-income countries are financed through separate contribution-based trust funds.

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### C) GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

- » The IMF is accountable to the government of its member countries.
  - At the top of its organization structure is the **Board of Governors**, which consists of one governor and one alternate governor from each member country.
    - The Board of governor meets once each year at the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings. Twenty-four of the governors sit on the **International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC)** and normally meet twice each year.
- » The day-to-day work of IMF is overseen by its 24-member **Executive Board**, which represents the entire membership; this work is guided by the IMFC and supported by the IMF staff. From 2016, all members of the board are elected.
- » The **Managing Director** is the head of the IMF staff and Chairman of the Executive Board and is assisted by four Deputy Managing Directors.

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### D) IMF QUOTAS

- » Quota subscriptions are a central component of the IMF's financial resources. Each member country of IMF is assigned a quota, based broadly on its relative position in the world economy.
  - A member country's quota determines its-
    - Maximum financial commitment to the IMF
    - Its voting powers.
    - Access to Finance: The amount of financing a member can obtain from the IMF (its access limit) is based on its quota.

- » The current Quota formula is a **weighted average of GDP (weight 50%), openness (30 percent), economic variability (15%), and international reserves (5 percent)**.
  - **GDP** is measured as a blend of GDP - based on market exchange rates (weight of 60%) and PPP exchange rates (40 percent).
- » Quotas are denominated in **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)**, the IMF's unit of account.
  - **India's quota is 2.76% and China's is 6.41%, while the U.S.'s quota is 17.46 % (translates to a vote share of 16.52%)** giving it a unique veto power over crucial decisions at the IMF, many of which require a supermajority of 85%.
- » **How Quota Review works**
  - The IMF's ***Board of Governors conducts general quota reviews*** at regular intervals (usually every five years) Any changes in quotas **must be approved by 85 percent majority** of total voting power, and a member's quota cannot be changed without its consent.
    - There are two main issues addressed in a general quota review:
      1. the **size of an overall increase**
      2. the **distribution** of the increase among the members.
- » **Why periodic reviews are done?**
  - **Maintaining adequacy of resource:**
    - In terms of member's balance of payment financing needs
    - IMF's ability to help meet those needs.
  - **Reflect changes in the global economic status.**
- » **Ad hoc increases** outside general reviews **do not occur often**, but the **increases in quotas for 54 member countries approved under the 2008 reforms are a recent example.**
- » **The 2010 Review and it's coming into effect in Jan 2016**
  - The **2010 Quota and Governance reform** were **approved by the IMF's Board of Governors in Dec 2010** and built on an earlier set of reforms that were approved by the Governors in April 2008.
  - This was the **14th General Review of Quotas**
    - **Reform package came into force in Jan 2016**
  - **Key outcomes of the 2010 reform**
    - **Quota Reforms -> Doubling of Quota to SDR 477 billion; Shifting of quota to under-represented member countries and EMDCs.**
      - This has **made China the 3rd largest shareholder in IMF and (India, Brazil and Russia) have also come among the largest shareholders.**
    - **Governance Reform**
      - **All elected IMF's Executive Board** (Board Reform Amendment)

## E) IMF QUOTA AND GOVERNANCE: NEED FOR REFORMS

- **Need for Reform**

- Given the unequal voting power mechanism, IMF doesn't always serve the interests of poor and developing countries, hence require two sets of reforms:
  - **Need for Quota Reforms**
    1. To give more say to developing nations in the activities of the multi-lateral organizations.
    2. To reflect the changes in economic realities, especially with regard to increasing prowess of the developing nations.
    3. To increase the financial capability of IMF.
  - **Need for governance Reform.**
    1. To make it more representative

## F) KEY CHANGES AGREED TO IN 2019 AGREEMENT

- **The 15th Quota Review** is currently underway.
- IMF has agreed to maintain its funding at \$1 trillion but has **postponed changes to its voting structure**.
  - This deal is a compromise with the U.S., the fund's largest shareholder, which has resisted changes to the organization's voting structure as well as increase in its permanent resource base.
  - The IMF quotas will now be reviewed before the end of 2023.

## G) SOME KEY TERMS: SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS

- The SDR is an international reserve asset, created by IMF in 1969. It operates as a **supplement to the existing money reserves of member countries**.
 

- **What is Reserve Asset:** Reserve assets are currencies or other assets, such as gold, that can be readily transferable and are used to balance international transactions and payments.
  - A reserve asset must be readily available, physical, controlled by policymakers, and easily transferable.
- **Why was SDR needed?** Under Bretton Woods, the international supply of two key reserve assets - gold and US dollar - proved inadequate for supporting the expansion of world trade and financial development that was taking place. Therefore, international community decided to create a new international reserve under the auspices of IMF.
- **The IMF uses SDRs for internal accounting purposes.**
- The **value of SDR** is calculated from a weighted basket of major currencies, including the U.S. dollar, the euro, Japanese Yen, Chinese Yuan and British Pound.
  - The makeup of SDR is re-evaluated five years. The current makeup of the SDR is represented by the following table:

Currency	Weights Determined in the 2015 Review	Fixed Number of Units of Currency for a 5-Year Period Starting Oct. 1, 2016
U.S. Dollar	41.73	0.58252
Euro	30.93	0.38671
Chinese Yuan	10.92	1.0174
Japanese Yen	8.33	11.900
Pound Sterling	8.09	0.085946

- Which currencies can be included in SDR baskets?
  - Currencies of "members or monetary unions whose exports had the largest value over a five-year period, and have been determined by the IMF to be freely usable."
- The **SDR interest rate** (SDRi) provides the basis for calculating the interest rate charged to member countries when they borrow from the IMF and paid to members for their remunerated creditors position in the IMF.
- The IMF member countries are entitled to get a loan from IMF's SDR Account. This loan amount is upto 200% of the member's quota with the IMF. It is also known as **Paper Gold**.
  - In this arrangement IMF doesn't lend directly. It is the member countries, who are in a strong position, lend their SDR holdings to member countries who are in problems for balance of payment.

## H) REPORTS: WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- Why in news?
  - » World Economic Outlook (WEO): A *Rocky* report (April 2023: Source: TH)
- Details
  - » IMF comes out with the report twice every year (April and October) and also provides regular updates to it on other occasions.
  - » Key highlights of April 2023 Report
    - The IMF has projected that India's economy will grow by 5.9% for the current fiscal year April 2023-March 2024, a downward revision of 0.2% points since the January forecast.
    - Global output growth is projected by the IMF to slow to 2.8% in 2023 (Calendar year), picking up to 3% in 2024.

## 6) INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)

- Introduction
  - The IMO is a specialized agency of UN responsible for regulating shipping. It plays an important role towards safe, secure, and efficient shipping on clean ocean and plays an important role to create fair, effective and universally accepted regulatory framework.

- Headquarter: **London**
- Membership: 174 Members + 3 Associate Members
  - » Members have to ratify Convention on the International Maritime Organization.
  - » Most UN members that are not members of IMO are landlocked. (AF, Bhutan, Burundi etc.)
  - » India has been a member since 1959.
- Till 1982, it was known as the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) until 1982.
- **Key Function**
  - Develop and maintain comprehensive regulatory function for shipping.
  - It focuses on safety, environment protection, maritime security, efficiency of shipping, legal and technical cooperation.
- **Structure**
  - IMO consists of an Assembly (highest body), a Council and five main committees.
    - » Council consists of 40 Member States elected by the Assembly and act as the governing body.
    - » Technical work of IMO is carried by the five committees.
- **India re-elected at IMO Council**, with the highest tally at elections held for the 2024-25 biennium (2-year term) (Dec 2023)
  - **Members are divided into three categories:**
    - » **Category (a):** States with interest in providing International Shipping Services.
    - » **Category (b):** States with interest in international sea-borne trade
      - **India** was re-elected in this category.
    - » **Category (C):** States with special interest in maritime transport or navigation and whose election will ensure the representation of all major geographical areas.
- **India and IMO**
  - **Important conventions under IMO Framework that India have ratified:**
    - » **International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974**
      - Focuses on safety of Merchant ships.
      - Specify minimum standards for construction, equipment and operation of ships, compatible with their safety.
    - » **International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC)**
      - It establishes measures to deal with marine oil pollution incidents nationally and in cooperation with other countries.
        - It was adopted in 1990 and entered into force in 1995.
  - India also played an important role in anti-piracy operation in cooperation with IMO and Contact Group on Piracy on the Coast of Somalia.

## 7) WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO)

- **Introduction**
  - **WMO** is a specialized body of UN which is an authoritative voice on behavior of earth's atmosphere, its interaction with the oceans, the climate it produces and the resulting distribution of water resources.

- **Headquarter:** Geneva
- It originated from the **International Meteorological Organization**, which was founded in 1873. It was established in 1950 and became the specialized agency of UN in 1951 for Meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences.
  - » It currently operates under the aegis of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- **Reports:** Already covered in Environment

## 8) UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON LAW OF THE SEAS

### - Details of UNCLOS

- UNCLOS lays down a **comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's oceans and seas** establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources. It enshrines the notion that **all problems of the ocean space are closely inter-related and need to be addressed as a whole**.
- It is a convention that was the result of third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) which ended in 1982.
- Came into force in 1994, a year after Guyana became 60th nation to sign it.

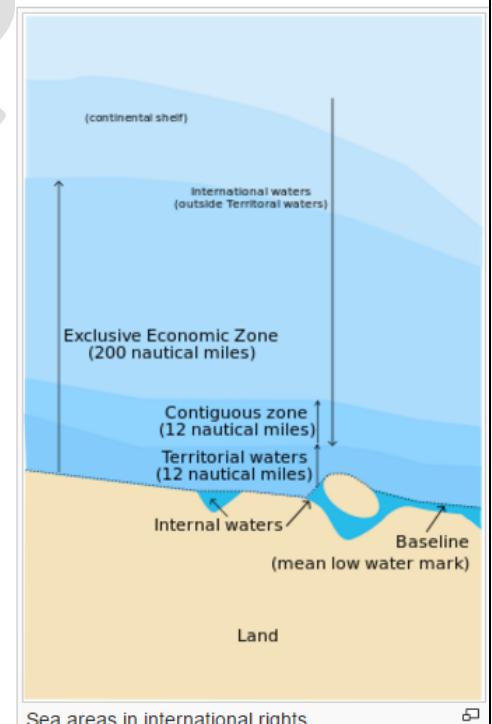
### - Key functions of the convention

1. Defines rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of the World's Ocean.
2. Establishes guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources.
3. It sets the basic rules/principles for:
  - Navigation; Transit Regimes; Archipelagic status
  - EEZ
  - Continental shelf jurisdiction
  - Deep seabed mining; Exploitation regime
  - Marine Environment Protection
  - Scientific research
  - **Dispute settlement.**

### - Sea Areas in International Rights

#### 1. Internal Water

- Covers all water and waterways on the landward side of the baseline.
- The coastal state is free to set laws, regulate use and use any resource.
- Foreign vessels have no right of passage within internal water.
- Air Space is also under full national jurisdiction.



#### 2. Territorial Water

- It extends at most 12 nautical miles from the baseline.
- Territorial sea is regarded as the **sovereign territory** of the coastal state.
- Foreign ships (civilian) are allowed innocent passage through it or transit passage (even for foreign vessels and aircrafts) through straits.
- Air Space is under national jurisdiction (but some restrictions exist)

### 3. Contiguous zone

- To 24 nautical miles from baseline (12 nautical miles from territorial waters)
- State can continue to enforce law in for specific purpose: Customs, Taxation, immigration, and pollution, if the infringement started within the state territory or territorial waters, or if this infringement is about to occur within the state's territory or territorial waters. This makes contiguous zone a **hot pursuit area**.

### 4. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

- 200 nautical miles from the baseline.
- Coastal nation has sole exploitation right over all the natural resources.
- Foreign nations have freedom of navigation and overflight, subject to regulation of the coastal states.
  - Foreign states can also lay submarine pipes and cables.

### 5. Continental Shelf

- Natural prolongation of the land territory to the continental margin's outer edge, or 200 nautical miles (370 km) from the coastal state's baseline, whichever is greater.
- Coastal states have the right to harvest mineral and non-living material in the sub-soil of its continental shelf, to the exclusion of others.
- Coastal states also have exclusive right over the living resources "attached" to the continental shelf, but not to creatures living in the water column beyond EEZ

### 6. Other limits mentioned in UNCLOS.

#### 1. Archipelagic Waters

- A baseline is drawn between the outermost points of the outermost islands, subject to these points being sufficiently close to one another. All waters inside baseline are designated as Archipelagic waters.
- The state has sovereignty over these waters (like internal waters), but subject to existing rights including traditional fishing rights of the immediately adjacent state.
- Foreign vessels have right of innocent passage through archipelagic waters (like territorial waters)

#### 2. Extended Continental Shelf :

- When a continental shelf extends beyond 200 nautical miles a state is required by UNCLOS (article 76) to make a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and is accompanied by technical and scientific data to support the claim.
- The commission assesses the limit and data submitted by coastal state and make recommendations.
- The outer limits of continental shelf established by a coastal state based on these recommendations are final and binding.

### Important bodies established under UNCLOS

#### A) INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL ON LAW OF SEAS

- Introduction
  - It is an intergovernmental organization created by the mandate of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea.

- It was established by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), signed in 1982.
- Based in Hamburg, Germany.
- The tribunal has the power to settle disputes between party states of UNCLOS.
- Composition: The tribunal consist of 21 serving judges, elected from among persons enjoying the highest reputation for fairness and integrity and of recognized competence in the field of the law of the sea.
- India is a signatory to the convention.
- USA is not a signatory of the convention.

## B) ITALIAN MARINE CASE

- Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) have given final ruling in the Italian marines' case (May 2020)
  - **Background:**
    - » In 2012, two Italian Marines had shot dead two Indian fishermen aboard an Indian vessel, St. Antony. This vessel was in **contiguous zone**.
    - » On the arrest of the marines, Italy invoked the compulsory dispute resolution provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in order to initiate proceedings against India through Annex VII arbitration. Italy moved to **International Tribunal on the Law of Sea (ITLOS)**
  - **Final Judgement on 31st May 2020**
    - » **Judgement in favor of Italy**
      - The two Italian Marines accused of killing two unarmed Indian fisherman off the coast of Kerala "are entitled to immunity" **on the acts they committed during the incident** as they were acting as "State Officials" and that India is "precluded from exercising its jurisdiction over the marines".
        - The PAC also decided by three votes to two that "India must take the necessary steps to cease to exercise its criminal jurisdiction over the marine".
    - » **Judgement in favor of India**
      - **Italian Marine officers breached India's Freedom of Navigation** under UNCLOS Article 87(1)(a) and 90.
        - **India is entitled to payment of compensation** in connection with loss of life, physical harm, material damage to property (including to the Indian vessel named St Antony) and moral harm suffered by the captain and other crew members of the St. Antony.
      - **The PCA verdict has been accepted by India.**
    - » **Both India and Italy** would reach an agreement on amount of compensation Italy would pay to India. The Arbitration Tribunal will retain jurisdiction over the case if either India or Italy, or both, approach it to determine the quantum of compensation.

## C) INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA)

- Part IX of the UNCLOS provides for a regime relating to minerals on the seabed outside any state's territorial waters or EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone).

- It establishes an International Seabed Authority (ISA) to authorize seabed exploration and mining and collect and distribute the seabed mining royalty.
- ISA is an intergovernmental organization based in Kingston, Jamaica, that was established to organize, regulate, and control all-mineral related activities in the international seabed area beyond the limit of national jurisdiction, an area underlying most of the world's oceans.

#### D) COMMISSION ON THE LIMITS OF CONTINENTAL SHELF (CLCS)

- The purpose of the CLCS is to facilitate implementation of UNCLOS in respect of the outer limit of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles (M) from the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.
- Under the UNCLOS (the convention), the coastal state shall establish the outer limits of its continental shelf where it extends beyond 200 M on the basis of the recommendation of CLCS.
- The commission shall make recommendations to the coastal states on the matters related to the establishment of those limits; its recommendations and actions shall not prejudice matters relating to the delimitation of boundaries between states with opposite or adjacent coast

#### 9) INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)

- **Introduction**
  - » The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialized agency of UN which deals with administration and governance of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).
  - » It was established in 1944 and is headquartered at Montreal Canada.
  - » It works with 192 Member states of convention and other industry groups to come to a consensus on International Civil Aviation Standards and Recommendation Practices (SARPs) and Policies to ensure safe, efficient, secure, economically sustainable and environmentally responsible civil aviation.
  - » It also assists member states in capacity building towards various aviation development objectives.
- **Conventions, Protocols, Agreements**

#### CARBON OFFSETTING AND REDUCTION SCHEME FOR INTERNATIONAL AVIATION (CORSIA)

#### 10) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP)

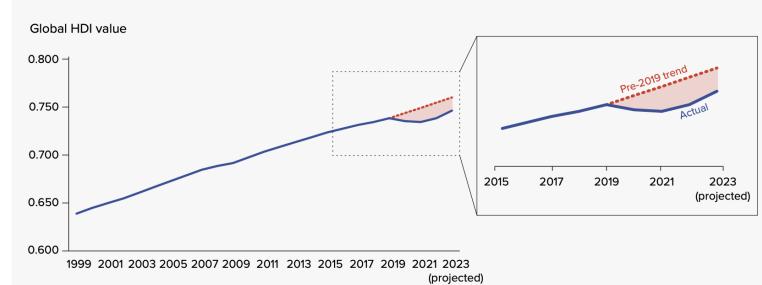
- **About UNDP**

- UNDP is UN's global development network. Headquartered in New York city, it is the largest multilateral source of development assistance in the world. It is funded entirely by voluntary contribution from member states.
- Status within UN:** An executive board within the United Nations General Assembly. The UNDP administrator is the third highest ranking official of the UN after the UN Secretary General and Deputy Secretary general.
- Functions of UNDP**
  - UNDP help governments and local communities to find **solutions to global and national development challenges**. It has offices and staff in around 180 countries of the world.
  - It **coordinates** various global and national efforts to achieve the goals and national developmental priorities.
  - UNDP focuses primarily on **5 Development Challenges**
    - Democratic Governance**
    - Poverty Reduction**
    - Crisis Prevention and Recovery**
    - Environment and Energy**
    - HIV/AIDS**
      - It helps countries to prevent further spreading and reduce its impact.**
- UNDP also encourages protection of human rights, and the empowerment of women in all its programs.
- Towards achieving its aims and objectives, UNDP has been annually publishing **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT** since 1990.

## I) HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2023-24: BREAKING THE GRIDLOCK (MARCH 2024)

- Human Development Index (HDI)** measures countries progress in three basic social dimensions - a long and healthy life (**Health**), access to knowledge (**Education**) and a decent standard of living (**income**).
  - These are measured by four parameters - life expectancy at birth, means years of schooling, expected years of schooling, and the Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita.
- The report also calculates **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** which can be interpreted as the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements.
- Key Highlights of the Report:**
  - The Global HDI are projected to exceed their pre-2019 values.
    - Despite reaching a new high, it will still be below trend.

Figure S.1 A permanent shift in the Human Development Index (HDI) trajectory?



Note: The global HDI value for 2023 is a projection. The pre-2019 trend is based on the evolution of the global HDI value in the previous 20 years.  
Source: Human Development Report Office calculations based on data from Barro and Lee (2018), IMF (2023d), UNDESA (2022, 2023), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2023), United Nations Statistics Division (2023) and World Bank (2023).

- India attained a HDI score of 0.644 in 2022, positioning it at 134 out of 193 countries in the 2023-24 report.
  - Note: In 1990, India's HDI stood at 0.434. the 2022 score reflects a positive change of 48.4%.

## 11) UNITED NATION HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (ALSO KNOWN AS THE UN REFUGEE AGENCY)

- Headquarters: Geneva
- Status in UN: An office in UN Secretariat
- Function:
  - To protect and support the refugees at the request of a government or the UN itself and assists in their voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement to a third country.
  - It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state.
- Definition of Refugees (according to 1951 Refugee Convention of UNHCR)
  - Any person owing to fear of being persecuted because of race, nationality, membership of a social group is outside his country or unable to avail the protection of that country. Involuntary.
  - The above definition was expanded to cover people who have fled due to armed conflicts and turmoil: Humanitarian refugees.
  - Protection offered to refugees.
    - » Non-discrimination
    - » Non-penalization
    - » **Non-refoulement:** mandates that no one can return a refugee against his will to a territory where he or she feels his life is threatened.
    - » **Some other basic rights**
      - Refugees entitled to basic rights = access to courts, primary education, work and travel docs.
  - Signed by 140 countries.
  - Thus, **refugees enjoy a distinct unique protection under international law**.
    - » Safety from deportation in the country where they face prosecution
    - » Protection of basic human rights w/o discrimination on different grounds
    - » Access to fair and efficient asylum procedure
    - » Provision of administrative assistance
  - Note: India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee convention or its 1967 Protocol and doesn't have a national refugee protection framework.

## 12) UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP (UNSDG)

- Previously known as United Nation Development Group (UNDG)
- It is a consortium of UN entities that aims to fulfill the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It serves as a high-level forum for joint policy formulations and decision making. It unites 32 UN funds, programs, agencies, departments, and offices that play a role in development.

- UNSDG entities include FAO, ILO, UNDESA, UN-Habitat, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP, WHO, WMO etc.

### 13) UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

- UNODC is an UN office that was established in 1997 as the Office for Drugs Control and Crime Prevention. It was renamed to UNODC in 2002.
  - It is a member of the **United Nations Development Group**.
- **Function/Role**
  - It assists UN in providing coordinated, comprehensive response to interrelated issues of **illicit drug trafficking, drug abuse, international terrorism, political corruption** etc.

### REPORT: WORLD DRUG REPORT

### 14) UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL FOR ASIA PACIFIC (UNESCAP)

- UNESCAP is a regional developmental arm of the UN for the **Asia Pacific Region**.
- It has a membership of 53 countries and there are 9 associate members, with a geographical scope that stretches from Turkey in the west to the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati in the east. From Russia in the North to New Zealand in the south.
  - » It is the most comprehensive of the UN's five regional commissions.
- Established in 1947, headquartered in Bangkok.
- **Functions**
  - » Deal with regional challenges by providing results-oriented projects, technical assistance and capacity building to member states.
- **About Regional Commissions:** Regional Commissions act as regional outposts of UN in their respective region. The five regional commissions are:
  1. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
  2. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP)
  3. Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC)
  4. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
  5. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)

### 15) UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC)

- The **UN Human Rights Council** is the **main intergovernmental body** for human rights in the UN system. It was established to promote the effective coordination and mainstreaming of human rights in the UN system. It was created by UNGA on 15th March 2006.
- **Where does UNHRC fit in within the UN system?**
  - » The UN Human Rights Council is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, which makes it directly accountable to the full membership of UN.

- » In 2011, the General assembly decided to maintain the status of the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of General Assembly and to consider again the question of whether to maintain this status at an appropriate moment and at a time no sooner than 2021 and no later than 2026.
- About UNHRC members:
  - » The council has 47 members.
  - » The membership is open to all Member states of the UN. Members are elected by General Assembly through individual or direct votes by absolute majority (97 votes). Ballots are secret and elections are held every year.
- Term of Membership:
  - » Members have 3 years term and are not eligible for re-election after serving a two consecutive terms.
- How are seats distributed?
  - » Equitable Geographical Representation: (13 from the Group of African states; 13 from the Group of Asia Pacific states; 6 from the Group of Eastern European States; 8 from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; and 7 from the Group of Western European and Other States)
- What are expectations of Council Members?
  - » When electing members of the Council, Member states are to consider the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitment made in this regard.
  - » Upon election, new members commit themselves to cooperating with the Council and to uphold the highest standards in promotion and protection of human rights.
- Can a member have its rights and privileges suspended in the council?
  - » The General Assembly has the right to suspend the rights of membership in the council of any member that commits gross and systematic violation of human rights. This process requires 2/3rd Majority vote by the General Assembly.
  - » In April 2022, Russia was suspended from UNHRC by UNGA

## ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO UNHRC

- Under the Human Rights Council's rule, seats are allocated to regions to ensure geographical representation.
  - The seats are allocated to UN's regional groups as follows: 13 for Africa, 13 for Asia-Pacific, 6 for Eastern Europe, 8 for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Seven for Western Europe and Others (WEOG).
  - Generally, countries may get elected unopposed. But, if voting is required, it takes place through secret ballot. A country needs minimum 97 votes to get elected in the council.
  - The resolution establishing UNHRC states that "when electing members of the Council, Member States shall take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments made thereto", and that

"members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights."

- **Note:**

- In Oct 2021, India was re-elected to the UNHRC for a 6th term (2022-24)

---

### A) UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)

- The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN member states.
- It is a significant innovation of the UNHRC which is based on equal treatment for all countries. It provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome the challenges to the enjoyment of human rights.



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# TARGET PRELIMS 2024

## BOOKLET-34

### INTERNATIONAL BODIES-4

#### Table of Contents

1.	Un Bodies .....	1
1)	Correction in Previous Booklet .....	1
2)	WMO and Arctic Amplification .....	1
2.	Other UN BOdies .....	1
3)	International Organization for Migration (IOM) ...1	
A)	AMY Pope of USA has become the first women head of IOM (May 2023) .....	2
B)	Project Prayas (Dec 2023) .....	2
C)	World Migration Report.....	2
3.	Important UN Conventions .....	2
4)	Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR), 1961 .....	2
A)	India Canada Rift on Diplomatic Row.....	3
5)	Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) 4	
6)	TIR Convention (The Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under cover of TIR Carnets) .....	5
4.	Non-UN Bodies .....	6
1)	World Trade Organization (WTO) .....	6
A)	WTO AGREEMENTS:.....	7
B)	Some Recent Updates.....	10
C)	Dispute Settlement System at WTO .....	10
D)	Report: World Trade Report .....	11
E)	World Trade Statistical Review.....	12
F)	World Trade Barometer .....	12
7)	Wto: 13 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (Feb March 2024)12	
8)	International Criminal Court.....	13
A)	Armenia Joining ICC (2023) .....	14
B)	In March 2023, the ICC has issued an arrest warrant against Vladimir Putin accusing him of the	

war crime of illegally deporting hundreds of Children from Ukraine.....	15	
C)	South Africa was looking for legal options if Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the 15th BRICS summit in SA.....	15
9)	Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) .....	15
A)	India reiterates its "consistent and principled position" that the Constitution of the "so-called Court of Arbitration" is in contravention of the provisions of the 1960 Indus Water Treaty (July 2023).....	16
B)	Other Important Recent cases .....	16
10)	International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).....	17
A)	91 <sup>st</sup> General Assembly of Interpol .....	18
11)	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ...18	
A)	Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.....	18
12)	World Economic Forum (WEF) .....	19
B)	2024 Annual Meet at DAVOS (Jan 2024): Key Highlights .....	19
C)	Key Reports by WEF .....	19
D)	Global Gender Gap Report, 2023 .....	21
E)	Global Risk Report, 2024 .....	21
13)	International Whaling Commission .....	22
14)	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) .....	23
A)	SIPRI Report (March 2024) .....	23
B)	SIPRI Year Book (June 2023).....	23
5.	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement Trans-Pacific Partnership – CPTPP (earlier named TPP) .....	23
15)	Britain has agreed to join the CPTPP, a trade pact based around the pacific rim, as it seeks to build ties around the world after leaving European Union.....	24
6.	APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) .....	25
7.	USMCA .....	27

8.	Eurasian Economic Union.....	27	27.	OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting COUNTRIES) AND OPEC+ .....	49
9.	G20 .....	28	4)	OPEC+ (i.e. OPEC and its allies) .....	50
16)	2023 G20 Summit: India .....	29	28.	Arctic Region .....	51
17)	India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEE EC).....	31	1)	China and Arctic Region .....	51
18)	Global Biofuel Alliance .....	32	A)	China's official Arctic Policy (announced in Jan 2018).....	52
10.	G7 .....	32	A)	India's presence in Arctic .....	52
19)	49 <sup>th</sup> Summit: May 2023: Hiroshima, Japan ....	33	29.	Arctic Council .....	52
20)	G7's commitment towards Carbon-Free Electricity Production (April 2023) .....	33	30.	BRICS .....	53
11.	G77 .....	33	31.	New Development Bank .....	54
12.	SCO .....	33	32.	OECD (Organization of Economic COoperation and Development).....	55
21)	SCO Summit, 2023 .....	34	33.	Financial Action Task Force (FATF).....	56
13.	QUAD .....	34		FATF suspended the membership of Russia Federation (Feb 2023).....	57
22)	Quad Summit, 2023 (Fifth SUMmit, HiroshimA) 35		34.	Regional Development Banks: Asian Development Bank	57
14.	PARIS Club.....	35	35.	Regional Development Banks: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).....	58
15.	SAARC .....	36	36.	Weapon Control Regimes: Missile Technology Control Regime.....	59
16.	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) .....	37	37.	Weapon Control Regimes: Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) 60	
1)	5 <sup>th</sup> Bimstec Summit.....	38	38.	Weapon Control Regimes: Wassenaar Arrangement 61	
17.	Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) .....	39	39.	Weapon Control Regime: Australia Group.....61	
18.	ASEAN (Association of SOUTHEAST Asian Nations) 40		40.	NON PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) – INDIA NOT A SIGNATORY.....62	
19.	Regional COmprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) 40		41.	COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY (CTBT) 63	
20.	Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) .....	41	42.	OPEN SKIES TREATY.....64	
21.	NATO.....	42	43.	IMPORTANT REPORTS .....	65
22.	European UNION (EU) .....	43	A)	Democracy Index, 2021.....65	
	27 Member Countries: .....	43	B)	Varieties of Democracy Report .....	65
1)	Schengen Area .....	44	C)	Freedom House's Report: Freedom in the World 66	
2)	Eurozone.....	45	2)	Transparency International.....66	
3)	Other Facts About EU .....	45	A)	Corruption Perception Index.....67	
23.	BREXIT.....	45	B)	Global Corruption Barometer.....67	
	On Jan 31, 2020, the United Kingdom left the European Union.....	46	3)	Global Press Freedom Index (PFI) .....	67
24.	ECOWAS (ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WESTERN AFRICAN STATES) .....	47	4)	World Justice Project – Open government Index and Rule of Law Index.....	67
25.	Arab League .....	48	A)	About the Open Government Index.....68	
26.	Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).....	49	B)	About the Rule of Law Index .....	68

44.	Not Very important Indices and Reports .....	68
1)	Academic Freedom Index – Global Public Policy Institute.....	68
2)	OXFAM.....	68
3)	Food Waste Index Report – By UNEP and Partner Organizations .....	68
4)	Henley Passport INdex.....	68
5)	Global Childhood Report and End of CHildhood Ranking 2021 – By Save the Children (a not for profit organization) .....	68
6)	World Competitiveness Index by International Institute for Management and Development (IMD) ....	69
7)	IMD World Talent Ranking.....	69
8)	Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) by INsead Business School .....	69
9)	Global Liveability Index – Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) .....	69
10)	Worldwide Cost of Living Survey, 2020 – By Economic INtelligence Unit (EIU).....	69
11)	Global Peace Index (GPI) by the Institute of Economics and Peace .....	69
12)	Global Terrorism INdex By the Institute of Econmmic and Peace.....	69
13)	Global Economic Freedom Index – By Fraser Institute Canada .....	69
14)	Global Smart City Index by (the Institute of mangement and Development in collaboration with Singapore university) .....	69

## 1. UN BODIES

### 1) CORRECTION IN PREVIOUS BOOKLET

1) **World Economic Situation and Prospect Report, 2024 -> By UN DESA** (Not by World Bank)

2) **IMF Membership:**

Note: Currently IMF has 190 members. Except Andorra, other 189 member are members of IBRD.

**Note:** Andorra became 190th member of IMF in Oct 2020.

### 2) WMO AND ARCTIC AMPLIFICATION

- A recent study has shown that Arctic Warming is disproportionately high
  - » Compared to the 1991-2020 average, the temperature anomaly is predicted to be more than three times as large as the global mean anomaly when averaged over the next five northern hemisphere extended winters.
  - » **Arctic Amplification** is a widely recognized phenomenon in which human-caused global warming is amplified at the poles, causing the Arctic to warm more quickly than the rest of the globe.
  - » **Multiple factors** enhance warming at high latitudes, but the main one is that warming reduces snow and ice, which would otherwise reflect incoming sunlight. Arctic temperatures have risen at least twice as fast as global temperatures, possibly even faster, since the year 2000

## 2. OTHER UN BODIES

### 3) INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

- IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization working in the **field of migration**. It is dedicated towards promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It works closely with governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental partners.
  - It was initially established in 1951 to help resettle people displaced by World War II.
  - But over the years it has expanded its scope and presently has 175 member states and 8 observer states.
    - **Is India a member?** - Yes
- **Headquarter:** Geneva
- **Note:** IOM was not originally a UN Body.
  - In 2016, IOM Director General William Lacy Swing and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon signed a document formally linking IOM to the UN. This document established IOM as a "related organization" on the UN, giving the UN for the first time, an explicit migration mandate.
  - The signing signaled the culmination of a process that began in June 2016 when IOM member states unanimously endorsed the process to join the UN.
  - The signature of the historic agreement brings the leading global migration agency, IOM, into the UN - the culmination of a 65-year relationship.

- **Key Initiatives:**
  - The IOM supported the creation of the Global Compact for Migration in 2018.
    - The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) is an intergovernmental negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the UN, that describe itself as covering "all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner"
    - IOM also coordinates the UN Network on Migration which include UNHCR, WFP, and UNDP, among others.

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#### A) AMY POPE OF USA HAS BECOME THE FIRST WOMEN HEAD OF IOM (MAY 2023)

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#### B) PROJECT PRAYAS (DEC 2023)

- Project PRAYAS (Promoting Regular & Assisted Migration for Youth and Skilled Professionals) was launched by IOM in partnership with India's Ministry of External Affairs.
- It focuses on facilitating safe, orderly, and regular migration for Indian workers and students.
- IOM India says that PRAYAS is one of the first attempts to consolidate all the state-level initiative for safe, orderly, and well-managed international migration.

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#### C) WORLD MIGRATION REPORT

- It is a biennial report.

### 3. IMPORTANT UN CONVENTIONS

#### 4) VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (VCDR), 1961

- **Introduction**
  - VCDR of 1961 is an international treaty that defines the framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries. It specifies the privileges of a diplomatic mission that enable diplomats to perform their functions without fear of coercion or harassment by the host country.
  - This forms the legal basis of diplomatic immunity.
  - Its articles are considered cornerstone of modern international relations.
- **History**
  - The first attempt to codify diplomatic immunity into diplomatic law occurred in Congress of Vienna in 1815.
  - The present treaty was adopted on 18 April 1961, by the United Nations Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities held in Vienna, Australia and first implemented in April 1964.