

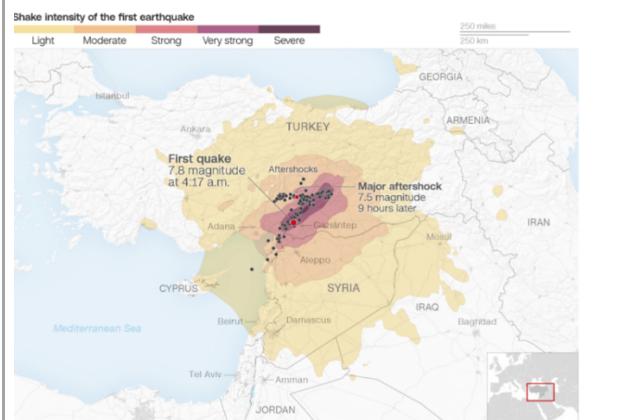
78) TURKEY SYRIA 2023 EARTHQUAKE

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. It is not algorithmic but rather a subjective measurement.
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	Measures the energy released at the moment of the earthquake.	Measures the effect of the earthquake 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.**

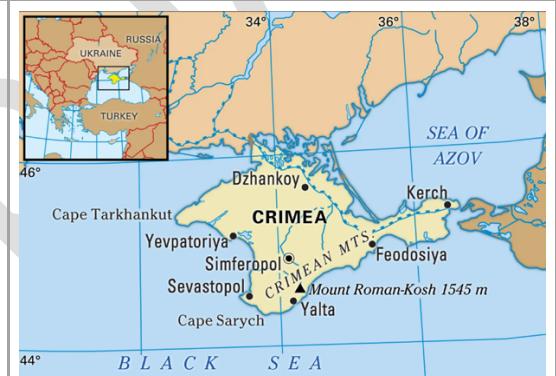
84) CRIMEAN PENINSULA

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.

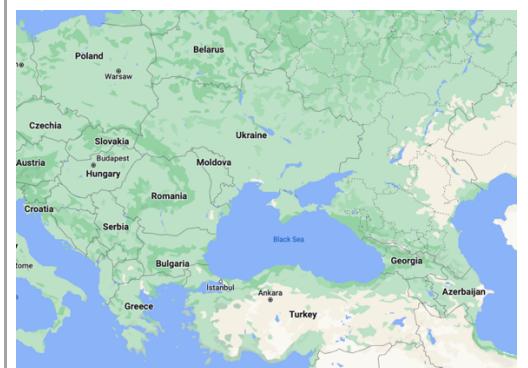
Neighbours: It shares its borders with Hungary, Slovakia, Poland to the West, Belarus to North, Russia to North, Northeast and East and Moldova and Romania to the South.

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 21st Feb 2022, Russia officially recognized the DPR (Donetsk People's Republic) and LPR (Luhansk People's Republic) and on 24th 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 16th 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



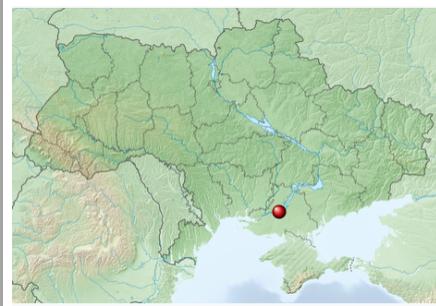
Nova Kakhovka Reservoir (DAM)

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:

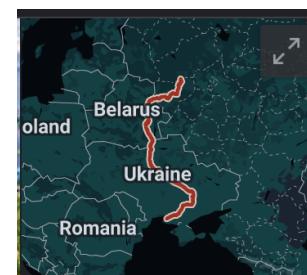
- Swiss Liechtenstein
- Swiss - Austria
- Swiss German
- France German

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



95) RIVER DNIEPER 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

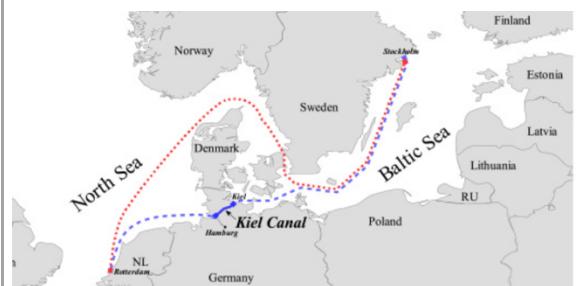
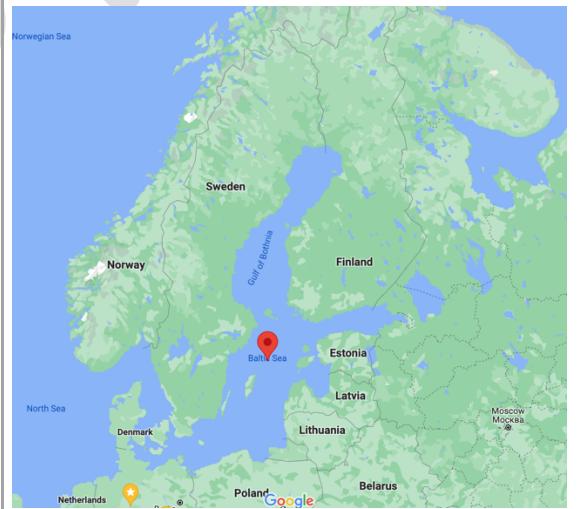
Baltic Sea is an arm of Atlantic Ocean. It is enclosed by Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Denmark

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.

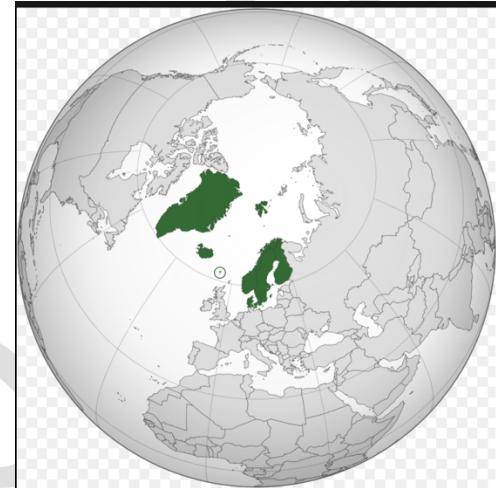
White-Sea Baltic Canal:



- 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



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INTERNATIONAL MAPPING AND PLACES IN NEWS-2

AFRICA, NORTH AMERICA AND SOUTH AMERICA

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1) IMPORTANT MOUNTAIN RANGES OF AFRICAN CONTINENT

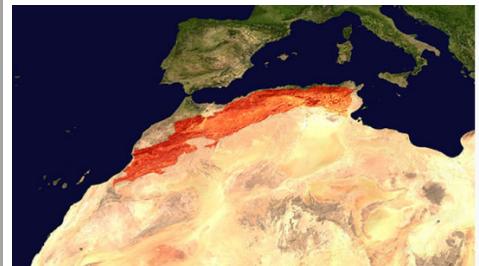
Atlas Mountains:

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.

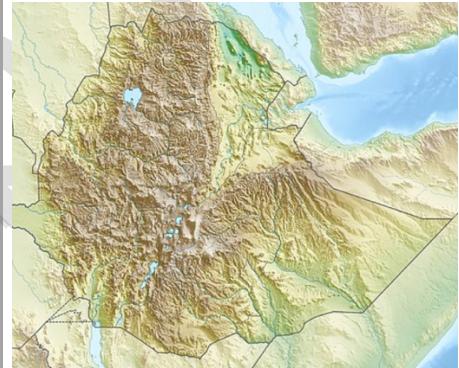


The location of the Atlas Mountains (red) across North Africa

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.



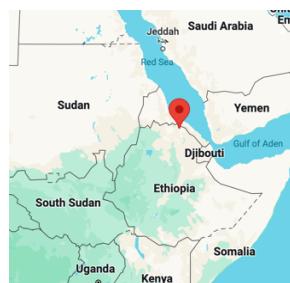
8) DANAKIL DEPRESSION

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.

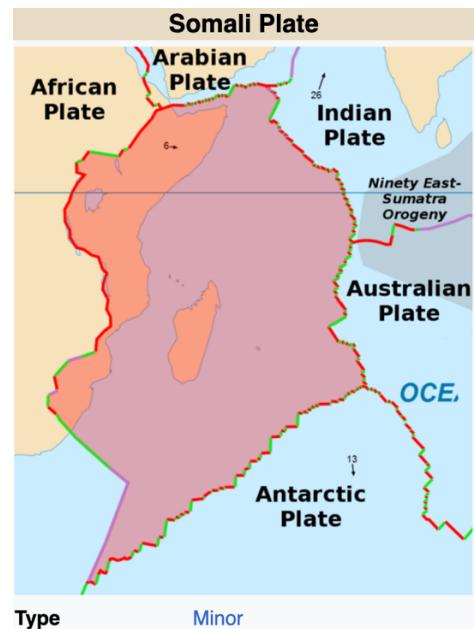
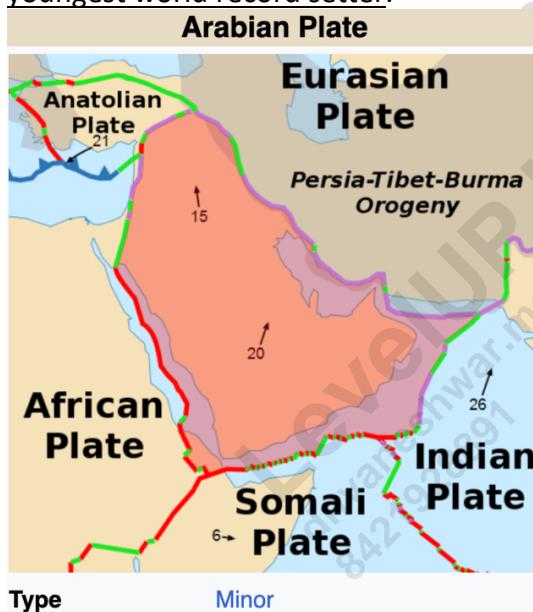
Other interesting things about Danakil Depression:



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.

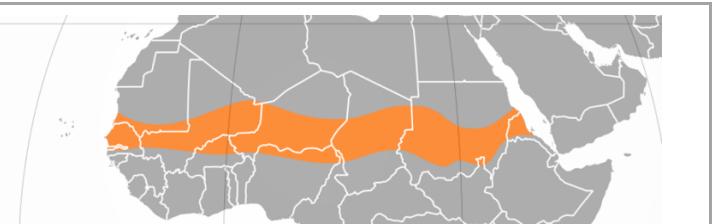
Lake Baikal (located in Russia in the southern region of Siberia), is the largest freshwater lake by both volume and depth (1741 m). It contains 20% of the world's fresh water. It hides its vast waters under a relatively small surface area.

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)

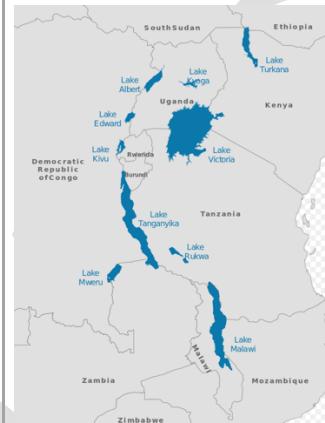
22) LAKE TANGANYIKA

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.

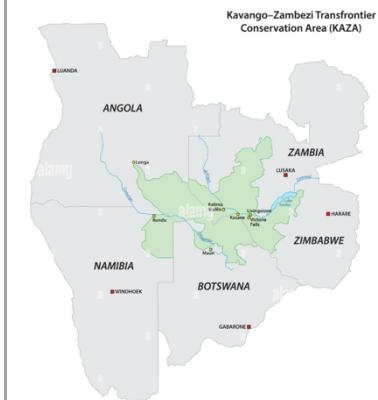


23) ZAMBIA: KAFUE NATIONAL PARK

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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OFFLINE & ONLINE



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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.

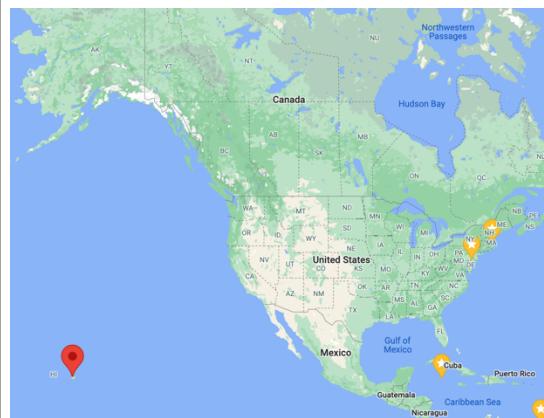
The Milne ice shelf lost more than 40 per cent of its ice over two days at the end of July 2020. This has increased concerns over the rapid melting of ice and the breaking of old ice shelves — large floating pieces of ice that form when a glacier or ice sheet flows into the sea surface.



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:

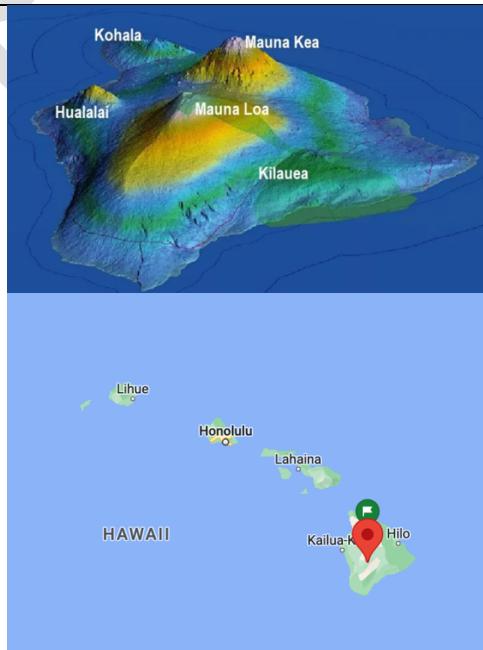
Kilauea is an active shield volcano in the Hawaiian Islands.

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 km²) 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.

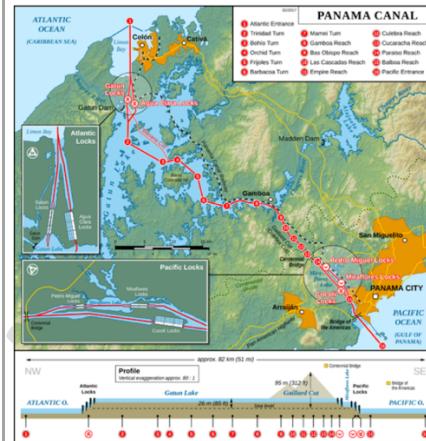
- The **US** took over the work in 1904 and the Canal was opened for operations in 1914.

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

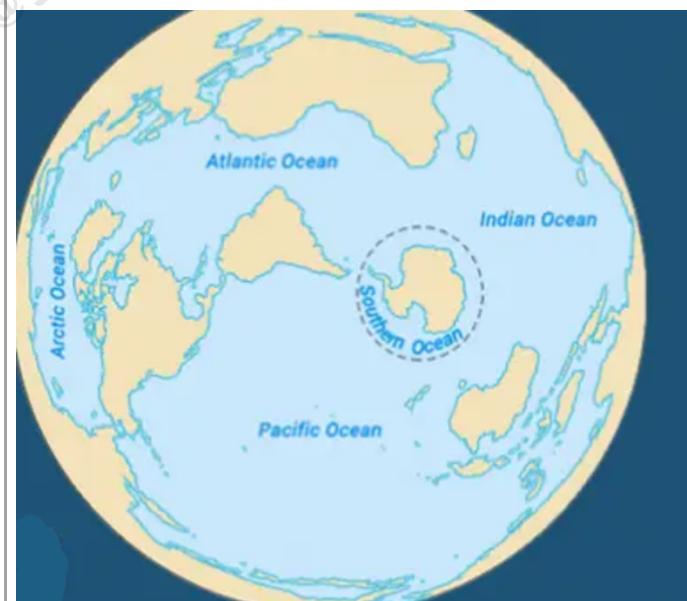
The National Geographic magazine has recognised the 'Southern Ocean' as the world's fifth ocean June 8, 2021 hoping others will soon follow suit.

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

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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) – 8TH 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.

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".

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 Nation 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 Funds (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

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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

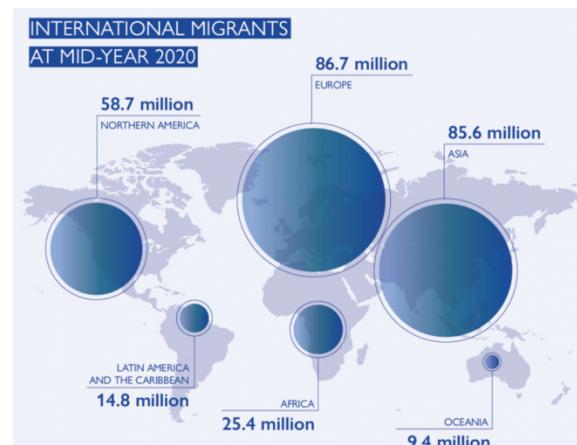
- Biannual Report
- The **2022 Revision of World Population Prospects** is the twenty-seventh edition of official United Nations population estimates and projections that have been prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.
- 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)



E) OTHER REPORTS:

- State of World's indigenous people
- The World's Women Report

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

A) REPORT: WORLD EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK

B) OTHER REPORTS BY ILO

- » World Social Protection Report
- » World Wage Report
- » World of Work report
- » Global Employment trend
- » Youth employment

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)

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.

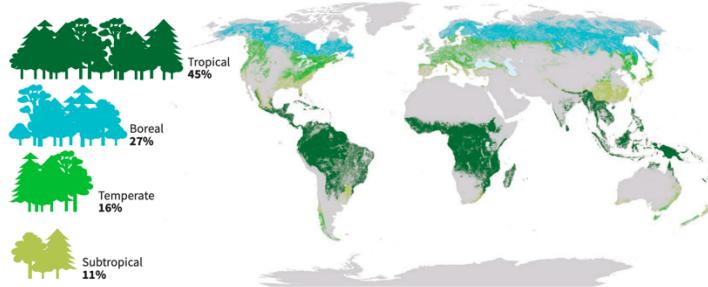
A) REPORT: STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SOFA):

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%)**.

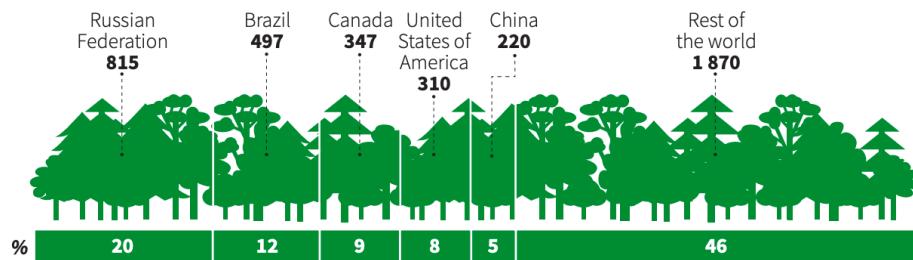
Proportion and distribution of global forest area by climatic domain, 2020



Source: Adapted from United Nations World map, 2020.

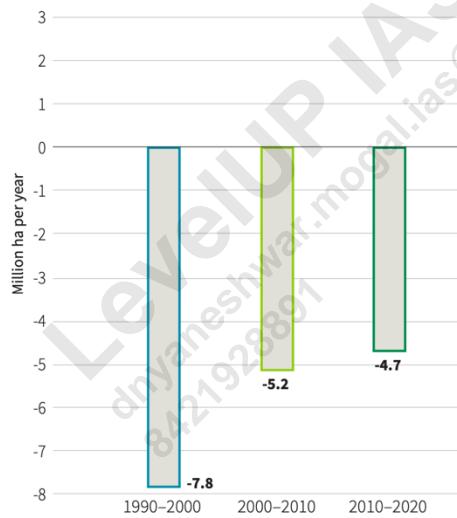
- 5 countries contribute to 54% of the world's forests - Russia, Brazil, Canada, USA, and China.

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

A) REPORT: UNICEF'S FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION - "THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN

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.

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.

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

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.	Tradition of Vedic chanting	2008
2.	Ramlila , the traditional performance of the Ramayana	2008
3.	Kutiyattam , Sanskrit theatre	2008
4.	Ramman , religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India	2009
5.	Mudiyettu , ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala	2010
6.	Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan	2010
7.	Chhau dance	2010
8.	Buddhist chanting of Ladakh : recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India	2012
9.	Sankirtana , ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur	2013
10.	Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India	2014
11.	Yoga	2016
12.	Nawrouz , Novruz, Nowrouz, Nowrouz, Nawrouz, Nauryz, Nooruz, Nowruz, Navruz, Nevruz, Nowruz, Navruz	2016
13.	Kumbh Mela	2017
14.	Durga Puja in Kolkata	2021
15.	Garba 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

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1. UN BODIES – CONTINUE

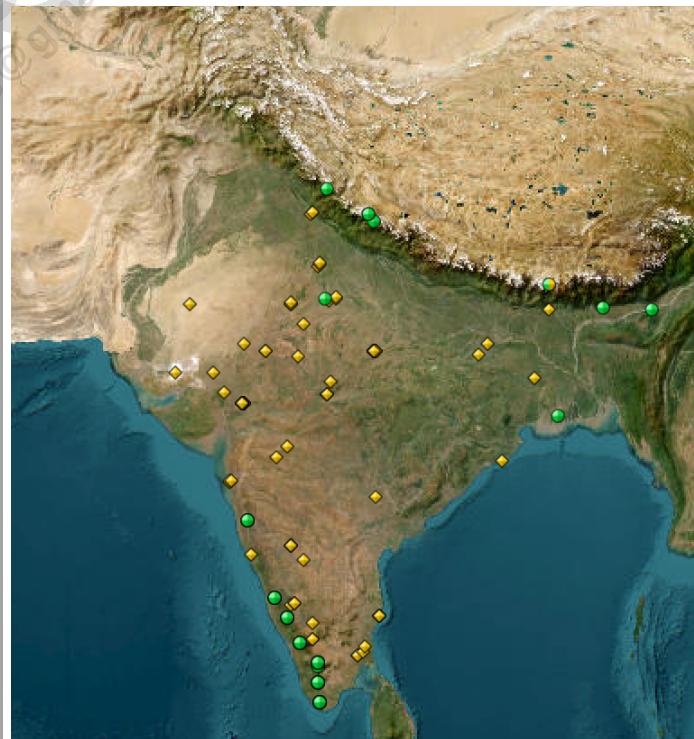
1) UNESCO

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)

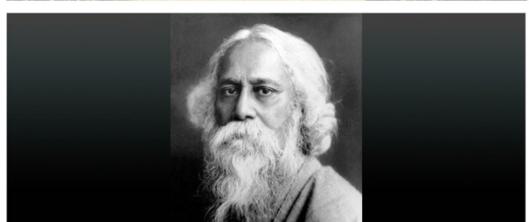
- Santiniketan in WB has been declared India's 41st World Heritage Site (Sep 2023)

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.

A) REPORT: GLOBAL TB REPORT, 2023

B) REPORT: THE STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD, 2023

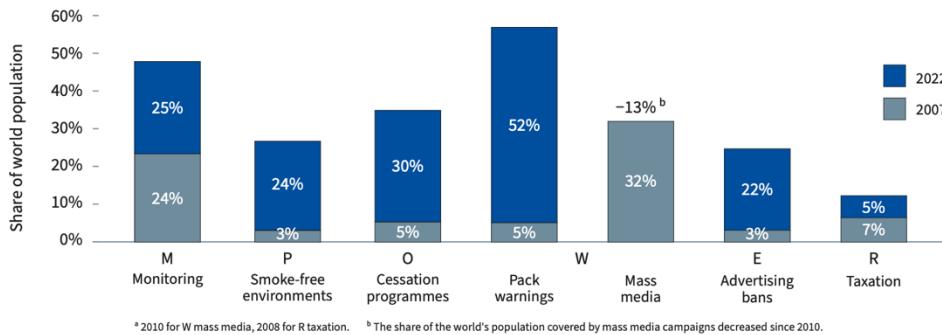
- **About the Report:** The report provides an update on global progress towards the target of ending hunger (SDG Target 2.1) and all forms of malnutrition (SDG Target 2.2) and estimates on the number of people who are unable to afford a healthy diet.
- **Authors:**
 - » FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO

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^a 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.

Demand-reduction measures	Article 6: Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco Article 8: Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke Article 9: Regulation of the contents of tobacco products Article 10: Regulation of tobacco product disclosures Article 11: Packaging and labelling of tobacco products Article 12: Education, communication, training and public awareness Article 13: Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship Article 14: Demand-reduction measures concerning tobacco dependence and cessation
Supply-reduction measures	Article 15: Illicit trade in tobacco products Article 16: Sales to and by minors Article 17: Provision of support for economically viable alternative activities
General obligations	Article 4: Guiding principles Article 5: General obligations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.1: Comprehensive multisectoral, national tobacco control strategies, plans and programmes ■ 5.2: National coordinating mechanism or tobacco control focal point ■ 5.3: Protecting tobacco control policies from the tobacco industry's commercial and vested interests
Other measures	Article 18: Protection of the environment and the health of persons Article 19: Liability Article 20: Research, surveillance and exchange of information Article 21: Reporting and exchange of information Article 22: 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 ≥ 140 mmHg systolic or ≥ 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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

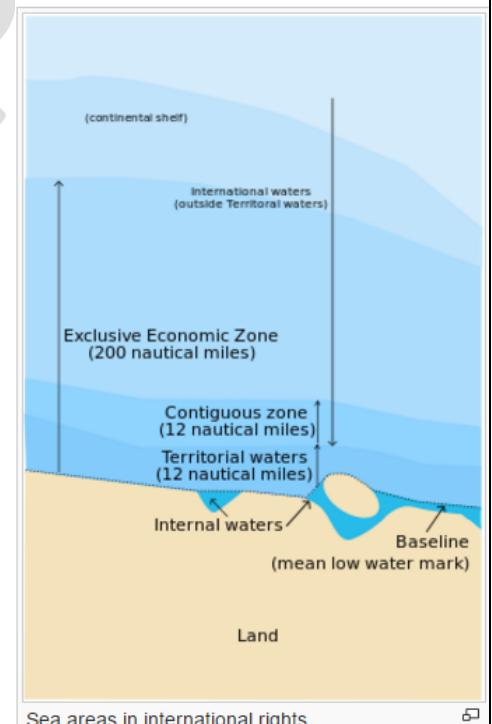
- Key functions of the convention

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)

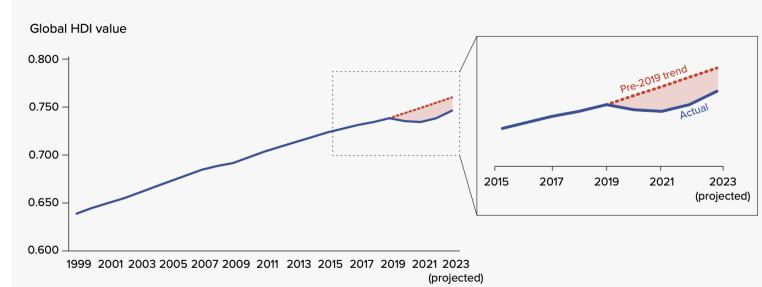
- **About UNDP**

- 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

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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.

A) AMY POPE OF USA HAS BECOME THE FIRST WOMEN HEAD OF IOM (MAY 2023)

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.

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.

- The same conference also adopted the Optional protocol concerning the acquisition of Nationality, the Optional Protocol Concerning the Compulsory settlement of Disputes, the Final Act and four resolutions annexed to the act.

- **Key Provisions of VCDR**

- » **Persona Non Grata**
- » **Inviolable Premise**
- » **Archives and document inviolable.**
- » **Free Communication**
- » **Diplomatic Immunities:** Diplomats must not be liable to any form of arrest or detention. They are immune from civil or criminal prosecution, though the sending country may waive this right under Article 32. (Article 29)
 - Under Article 34, they are exempt from most taxes, and under Article 36 they are exempt from most customs duties.
- » **Actions not covered by diplomatic immunity:** professional activity outside diplomat's official functions. (Article 31.1c)
- » **Extension of (most) protection to family members:**

- **Optional Protocols**

- » In the same year that the protocol was adopted, two amendment protocols were added. Countries may ratify the treaty without necessarily ratifying the optional protocol.
 - Concerning Acquisition of Nationality:** The head of the mission, the staff of the mission, and their families, shall not acquire the nationality of the receiving country.
 - Concerning compulsory settlement of dispute :** Dispute arising from the interpretation of this treaty may be bought before the ICIJ

A) INDIA CANADA RIFT ON DIPLOMATIC ROW

- **India Sought Parity in number of diplomats:**
 - » India asked Canada to downsize its diplomatic staff in India. India has 20 diplomats in Canada and sought a similar number of Canadian diplomats in India.
 - India's move followed the Canadian PM Justin Trudeau's remarks in Canadian Parliament in Sep 2023 who claimed a potential Indian link to the Killing of pro-Khalistan separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada earlier this year. India has rejected this claim and have called it "absurd" and "motivated".
- In Oct 2023, Canada announced recalling of 41 diplomats and their families. It was done as the diplomats were in danger getting their immunity stripped on an arbitrary date.
 - » Canadian foreign minister has said that the "unilateral revocation of the diplomatic privilege and immunity is contrary to international law" and is violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.
 - » US and UK backed Canada, stating that Diplomats are required to be on the ground to resolve differences. Notably, the two countries are also part of the Five Eyes Intelligence-sharing alliance with Canada, which also include Australia and New Zealand.
- **What did India say?**

- » Official statement of MEA has clarified that India hasn't violated any international legal principle. It has adhered to Article 11.1 of the VCDR based on two-pronged reasons.
 - i. Firstly, Canada has massive number of Diplomatic staff in India as compared to its counterpart.
 - ii. Secondly, Canadian personnel have been continuously interfering in India's internal affairs.
 - » Article 11 says that in the absence of specific agreement, as to the size of the mission, the receiving state may require that the size of a mission be kept within limits considered by it to be reasonable and normal, having regard to circumstances and conditions in the receiving state and to the needs of the particular mission.
- **Has this demand for parity occurred in the past?**
- » Around 2017, Russia and USA also asked for each other's diplomats to be recalled over the principle of parity and reduced the presence of their missions.

5) VIENNA CONVENTION ON CONSULAR RELATIONS (VCCR)

- **Consular Access** simply means that a consul (diplomat or other official) will have a meeting with the prisoner who is in the custody of another country. Though this meeting, the diplomat confirms the identity of the individual and ensures good treatment in the custody. Depending on the meeting, the official reports back to her/his country and the next step is initiated (providing legal support etc.)
- **Background to VCCR, 1963: What was the need?**
- **What is Vienna Convention on Consular Relations?**
 - VCCR of 1963 is an international treaty that defines the framework for consular relations between independent states. It was adopted in United Nation Conference on Consular Relations. It came into force in 1967.
 - A consul normally operates out of an embassy in another state, and performs two functions:
 - i. Protecting the interests of countrymen in the host country
 - ii. Furthering the commercial and economic relations between the two states.
 - A consul is not necessarily a diplomat, they work out of the same premise, and under this treaty they are afforded most of the same privileges, including a variation of diplomatic immunity called consular immunity.
 - The treaty has been ratified by 179 countries.
- **Key provisions of the treaty:**
 - **Key functions** of a consul are listed, protecting in the receiving state the interest of the sending states and its nationals, as well as developing commercial, economic, cultural, and scientific relations between the two states. (Article 5)
 - **Declaring persona non-grata**:
 - **Non-intrusion and protection**:
 - **Freedom of communication**
 - **Article 36**:

- It provides that when a national of foreign country is arrested or detained on criminal or immigration charges, the detainees must be advised of the right to have the detainees consulate to be notified and further detainee has the right to regular consultation with consular officials during detention and any trial.

Membership

There are 179 members to the convention including the most UN member states and UN observer states Holy See and State of Palestine.

Optional Protocol

The Conference (UNCCR) also adopted Optional Protocol Concerning Acquisition of Nationality, the Optional Conference concerning the compulsory settlement of disputes, the Final Act and the three-resolution annexed to the act.

6) TIR CONVENTION (THE CUSTOMS CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT OF GOODS UNDER COVER OF TIR CARNETS)

- **Introduction**
 - » It is a **UN Convention** (adopted under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe - UNECE) that allows goods to be sealed in compartments and requires no need for physical checking of the contents, enabling shipments to pass through countries without being opened at the borders.
 - It came into effect in March 1978.
 - » **TIR** stands for "**Transports Internationaux Routiers**" or "International Road Transport".
 - » **Note:** Custom authorities remain entitled to perform inspections whenever they suspect irregularities or randomly.
 - » The convention applies to transport with road vehicles, a combination vehicles and containers provided that some part of the transport includes road transport.
 - This reduces cross border transport time by upto 80% and reduces costs by upto 38 percent.
- **India accessed to the convention in 2017**

4. NON-UN BODIES

1) WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)

- **Introduction**
 - WTO was set up under Marrakesh Treaty (1994) as a result of GATT's Uruguay Round (1986-1994) of negotiation. It came into being in 1995 and is successor of GATT, which in turn was established in the wake of the second world war.
 - It is the only international organization dealing with the global rules of trades between nations.
 - **Headquarter:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Objective**
 - The **main objective** of the WTO is to ensure that **trade flows as smoothly, freely and predictably** as possible. It does this by facilitating the administration, implementation and operation of multilateral trade agreements and negotiations.
 - Further, WTO **handles trade dispute** through its Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).
 - It also helps in reviewing national trade policies. It provides technical assistance to developing countries on trade policy issues and through training programs.
- **Structure**
 - The WTO has 166 members (166 members (Comoros and Timor Leste joined in MC13 (Feb2024)), accounting for 96% of the world trade. Around 25 others are negotiating members.
 - **Ministerial Conference**
 - Top decision-making body
 - Meet atleast once every two years
 - **General Council**
 - Below ministerial council
 - Includes ambassadors and heads of delegation in Geneva, but sometimes officials sent from members' capitals) which meets several times a year in the Geneva headquarter.
 - The general council also meets as **Trade Policy Review Body** and Dispute Settlement Body.
 - **Goods Council, Services Council, TRIPS council** are at the next level and report to General Council.
- **Basic Principles used in WTO Trading System**
 1. **Trade without Discrimination (1. Most Favored Nation 2. National Treatment)**
 - a. **Most Favored Nation (MFN): treating other people equally.**
 - Under this country cannot normally discriminate between their trading partners.
 - Grant someone a special favor (such as lower customs duty rate for one of their products) and you have to do the same for all other WTO members.
 - In general MFN means that every time a country lowers a trade barrier or opens up a market, it has to do so for the same goods or services from all its trading partners.
 - It is the first article of GATT, which governs trade in goods.

- **Exceptions -**
 - FTAs, developing countries, unfairly traded products, national security (Article XXI(b)).

b. National Treatment: Treating foreigners and locals equally.

- Imported and locally produced goods should be treated equally - at least after the foreign goods have entered the market. The same should apply to foreign and domestic services.

2. Free Trade: gradually, through negotiation

- a. **Goal:** Eventually removing custom duties (or tariffs) and measures such as import bans or quotas that restrict quantities selectively. From time-to-time red tape and exchange rate policies have also been discussed.
- b. **Negotiations**
 - Under GATT from 1947-48 to 1994 (8 rounds of negotiation)
 - **Now, Doha Round of Negotiation, the 9th round** is underway.

3. Predictability: Through binding and transparent policies

- Binding and transparent policy provides predictability which gives businesses a clearer view of their future opportunities. With stability and predictability investment is increased.

4. Promoting Fair Competition

- Many of the WTO agreements aim to support fair competition: in agriculture, intellectual property, services, for example.

1. Encouraging Development and Economic Reform

- For developing countries' need of flexibility, WTO agreements allow for special assistance and trade concessions.

A) WTO AGREEMENTS:

Uruguay round resulted into 20 agreements on which WTO was founded.

- Some of the Important Agreements were WTO Agreement, Agreement on Agriculture, Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), Trade Related Aspects of Investment Measures, General Agreement on Trade in Services

WTO AGREEMENT

- WTO was established through this agreement. It is an umbrella agreement and other agreements are annex to this agreement.

AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE (AOA)

- It is aimed at establishing a fair and market-oriented agriculture trading system.
- It is based on **Special and Differentiated Treatment**.
- The agreement also has a **Special Safeguard Mechanism**

- This provides options to countries to impose additional duties on imported products when there is surge in imports or products are imported at lower price.
- The **Main component of AOA** are:

A. Market Access

- It calls for provision of access to imported agriculture goods in the member countries.
- There are two provisions - one is tariffication and Tariff reduction and another one is Minimum market Access.

B. Domestic Support or Domestic Subsidies

▪ **Introduction**

- Under WTO, subsidies are identified as boxes which are given the colors of traffic lights: Green (permitted), Amber (slow down - i.e., be reduced), red (forbidden).
- In Agriculture, things are, as usual, more complicated.
- The Agriculture Agreement has no red box, although domestic support exceeding the reduction commitment levels in the amber box is prohibited; and there is a blue box for subsidies that are tied to programmes that limit production. There are also exemptions for developing countries (sometimes called an "S&D box", including provisions in Article 6.2 of the agreement).

▪ **Amber Box**

- All domestic support measures considered to distort the production and trade (with some exceptions) fall into the amber box.
 - These include measures to support prices, or subsidies directly related to production quantities.
- This support is subjected to limits:
 - 5% of agricultural production for developed countries
 - 10% of agricultural production for developing countries
- Countries that had larger subsidies than the limits at the beginning of post-Uruguay Round reform period are committed to reduce.

▪ **India's Current Situation and Stand:**

- Under WTO law, MSP based subsidy is counted as a trade-distorting subsidy, and if given beyond the permissible limit, breaches WTO law. Currently, India has a temporary relief due to a 'peace clause' which bars countries from bringing legal challenges against price support-based procurement for food security purposes.
- However, a permanent solution to this issue is still not in offing.

▪ **Current Negotiations:** Key points that are being discussed are:

- How much further these subsidies should be reduced, and whether limit should be set for specific products rather than continuing with a single overall "Aggregate" limits.

- **Blue Box**

- This is the '**amber box with conditions**' - conditions designed to reduce distortion.
 - Blue box supports are subsidies that are tied to programmes that limit production by imposing production quotas or requiring farmers to set aside part of their land.
- Any support that would normally be in the amber box, is placed in the blue box if the support also requires farmers to limit production.
- At present, there is **no limit on spending** on the blue box subsidies.

- **Green Box**

- Green box subsidies must not distort trade, or at most cause minimal distortion. They have to be government funded (not by charging consumers higher prices) and must not involve price support.
- These include programs that are not targeted at a particular product, and include direct income support for farmers that are not related to current production level or prices.
- They also include environmental protection and regional development program.
- They are **allowed without limits**, provided they comply with policy specific criteria.
- The green box is defined in Annex 2 of the Agriculture Agreement.
 - E.g. Agriculture research, Training, Pest Control etc.

- **Special and Differentiated Treatment Box (S&D Box) Subsidies**

- Not available to developed countries.
- These include assistance which are essential for rural development and upliftment of poor farmers. These are government assistance to encourage agriculture and rural development which is in nature of rural development program of developing countries, agriculture investment subsidies which are generally available to low-income or resource poor producers in developing countries.

- **Agriculture Subsidies and India:**

- India has continuously come under attack from the US and other western countries for its MSP regime. India along with China have also retaliated regularly by demanding US and EU to give up their farm subsidies first which they have strategically covered under Green Box subsidy.
- India claims that it is unnecessarily targeted to deflect attention from the enormous subsidy package that developed markets such as US and EU offer in form of Green box subsidies. India have complained that green box subsidies also distort global trade by making agricultural production cheaper in developed markets.
- Further, India is demanding exemption for its food security initiatives which is another bone of contention at WTO.

- The above difference has become a **major factor for lack of progress in the WTO negotiation process.**

C. Export Subsidies

- Subsidies that subsidize exports are called export subsidies. These are direct subsidies given by government to producers of agricultural products against exports.
- Targets were set for its reduction with time frame both for developed and developing countries

B) SOME RECENT UPDATES

WTO PANEL RULES AGAINST INDIA IN IT TARIFFS DISPUTE WITH EU, OTHERS (APRIL 2023)

- **Background of the case:** In 2019, the EU challenged India's introduction of import duties of between 7.5% and 20% for a wide range of IT products, such as mobile phones and its components, as well as integrated circuits, saying they exceeded the maximum rate. Japan and Taiwan filed similar complaints the same year.
- **WTO panel verdict:**
 - A world trade panel ruled that India has violated global trading rules in dispute with EU, Japan and Taiwan. It has recommended India to bring such measures into conformity with its obligations.
- **India's Response:**
 - If India decides to appeal, the case will sit in legal purgatory since the WTO's appeal bench is no longer functioning due to US opposition to judge appointments.

C) DISPUTE SETTLEMENT SYSTEM AT WTO

- **Introduction**
 - The eight yearlong Uruguay Round negotiations (1986-1994) also resulted in the creation of the Dispute Settlement System (DSS) and the adoption of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) to govern the trade disputes between member states.
- The DSS process **comprises three stages:**
 1. Consultations between parties
 2. Adjudication by panels, or the Appellate body (if appealed);
 3. Implementation of the ruling, including the possibility of countermeasures if the losing party doesn't implement the ruling.
- WTO's **General Council** (which have representatives (ambassadors or equivalent) from all member states) also convenes as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) to deal with disputes between member countries.

- It is a political body and has been established to administer rules and procedure of the DSU and has been tasked with fulfilling various functions.
- It has the authority to establish dispute settlement panels, refer matter for arbitration, adopt panel, appellate body, and arbitration reports, maintain surveillance over the implementation of recommendations and rulings contained in such reports, and authorize suspension of concession in the event of non-compliance with those recommendations and rulings.
- **Appellate Body:**
 - It is a standing body of seven persons that hear appeals from reports issued by panels in disputes brought by WTO members. It can uphold, modify or reverse the legal findings and conclusion of a panel. The AB has its seat in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - **DSS rulings and recommendations are nearly automatically adopted** as it follows a "negative consensus based procedure" for establishing panels, and adopting panel and AB reports.
 - **Note:** All other decisions such as appointment of panel or appellate body (AB) members, are taken through positive consensus mechanism.

US' WITHHOLDING OF APPELLATE BODY APPOINTMENT AND ITS IMPACT

- **Why new members are not being appointed?**
 - **What concerns have USA raised?**
 - The Appellate body has treated USA in an unfair manner and overstepped vis-a-vis its mandate.
 - USA also want an unconventional set of reforms that aim to increase the control of member states over DSS decisions, thereby allowing them to bilaterally modify, review and delete parts of the rulings.
- **Other concerns related to DSS.**
 - **Inability to effectively deal with complex cases** involving trade obligations and human health, environment, sustainable development and technology on trade and commerce.
 - Other criticisms include the process being costly, too "legalistic" in its interpretation of obligations (without accommodating the interests of developing countries) and it is lengthy.
- **Adverse Impact of dysfunctional Dispute Settlement mechanism of WTO** -> Increase in number of pending disputes; threatens entire rule-based trading regime -> difficult for smaller countries to hold larger countries accountable; Reduces relevance of WTO; Hamper trade including food trade -> exacerbate hunger and erodes food producer's income; Unresolved trade dispute -> political tensions.

D) REPORT: WORLD TRADE REPORT

- An annual publication that aims to deepen understanding about trends in trade, trade policy, and multilateral trading system.

- **Key Highlights of World Trade Report, 2023**
 - The report examines how re-globalization - or increased international cooperation - could address the three major challenges facing today's global economy: national and economic security, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

E) WORLD TRADE STATISTICAL REVIEW

The report provides a detailed analysis of the latest developments in world trade. It is produced annually and has replaced International Trade Statistics, the WTO's former annual statistical publication.

F) WORLD TRADE BAROMETER

- It is a set of indicators to provide "**real-time**" information on trends in world trade.
- The **Goods Trade Barometer**, formerly the **World Trade Outlook indicator**, is a leading indicator that signals changes in world trade growth two to three months ahead of merchandise trade volume statistics.
- The **Services Trade Barometer** is a coincident indicator that illustrates the current state of services trade slightly ahead of official statistics.

7) WTO: 13TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (FEB MARCH 2024)

- WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) took place in Abu Dhabi, UAE from 26th Feb 2024 to 2nd March 2024.
- **Key Decisions:**
 - MC endorsed the accession to the WTO of two LDCs - **Comoros and Timor-Leste** as members of WTO.
 - **Some important outcomes:**
 - **Domestic Regulation of Services:** An important outcome of MC13 was an agreement reached to implement new disciplines for domestic regulation of services, integrating into WTO framework. These disciplines are designed to facilitate trade in services by streamlining and simplifying regulatory procedures.
 - **Least developing countries** continuing to get the benefits of LDC even three years after graduation.
 - Geneva commitment to revive the dispute settlement system by 2024 was reiterated.
 - Decision to improve the use of **special and differential treatment (S&DT) provisions**.
- **No decision on several key issues such as:**
 - **Finding a permanent solution to public stockpile**
 - **Curbing fishing subsidies that leads to over-capacity and overfishing:** India has been asking developed countries engaged in distant water fishing to stop providing any kind of subsidies for 25 years.
- **A number of Developing country demands remained unresolved:**

- **Lifting of moratorium on levying customs duty on e-commerce:** India along with several developing nations has been consistently seeking an end to the moratorium in place since 1998 on their ability to levy custom duties on cross-border e-commerce. India has argued that this undermines its ability to generate revenue from a rapidly burgeoning area of global trade. However, the members agreed to further extend the moratorium on imposing import duties on e-commerce trade for 2 more years.
- **Reconstitution of the WTO's dispute settlement appellate body**

8) INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

- **Introduction**
 - » **ICC** is an Intergovernmental Organization and International tribunal that is designed to investigate and prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression when domestic courts fail to do so. It thus complements existing national judicial systems and therefore only exercises its jurisdiction when certain criteria are met, such as:
 - when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute the criminal or;
 - when the UNSC or individual states refer investigations to court.
 - » It sits in **the Hague, in the Netherlands**.
 - » It began functioning on **1st July 2002**, the date that the **Rome statute** entered into force. The Rome statute is a multilateral treaty which serves as the ICC's foundational and governing document.
 - » **Note:** Not to be confused with International Court Of Justice (ICJ).
 - » **Note:** Judgments are final without appeal and binding upon the parties concerned.
- **Membership:**
 - » As of **March 2024, 124 states** are parties to the Statute of the Court, including all the countries of South America, nearly whole of Europe, most of Oceania and roughly half of Africa.
 - **Armenia joined** ICC in 2023.
 - **Burundi** and **Philippines** were member states but later withdrew (in 2017 and 2019) respectively.
 - » **Another 31 countries** have signed but not ratified the Statute.
 - The law of treaties obliges these states to refrain from "acts which would defeat the objects and purpose" of the treaty until they declare that they don't intend to become a party to the treaty.
 - » **Four Signatories, Israel, Sudan, USA and Russia**, have informed the UN Secretary General that they no longer intend to become state parties and, as such have **no legal obligations** arising from their signature of the statute.
 - » **41 members of UN** have neither signed nor acceded to the Rome statute; some of them including India and China are critical of court.
- **Why has India not joined ICC?**
 - » The issue of State Sovereignty and national interests.
 - The ICC Chief Prosecutor has been given the power to initiate cases on her/his volition.
 - » **Definition of crimes** that come under ICC's jurisdiction.
 - For e.g. India has objected to the definition of **Crime Against Humanity (CAH)** during negotiations of the Rome Statute. India was not in favor of using 'widespread or

- systematic' as one of the conditions, preferring 'widespread and systematic', which would require a higher threshold of proof.
- Further, India wanted a distinction to be made between international and internal armed conflict.
 - India also wanted that use of nuclear weapons and terrorism should be included among the crimes under the purview of ICC but it wasn't.
- **Composition and Voting Power:**
- » **Assembly of State Parties:** It is the court's legislative and oversight body. It consists of one representative from each member state having one vote each.
- **Judicial Division**
- » The judicial division of ICC consist of **18 judges of the court**, organized into three chambers - the Pre-Trial Chamber, Trial Chamber and Appeals Chamber.
 - » **Judges are elected** by the Assembly of States Parties. They serve **9 year term** and are generally not eligible for re-election.
- **Relation with the UN**
- » It is independent from the UN. However, the Rome Statute grants **certain powers to UNSC**, which limits its functional independence.
 - E.g. : Article 13, allows the UNSC to refer to the court situations that would not otherwise fall under the court's jurisdiction (e.g. UNSC referred situation in Darfur and Libya to ICC)
 - » The court **cooperates with UN** in other areas including exchange of information and logistic support.
 - » The court also reports to the UN each year on its activities and some meetings of the assembly of states of parties are held at UN facilities.
- **Limitations of ICC**
- » **Doesn't have capacity to arrest suspects** and thus have to depend on member states for their cooperation.
 - » **3 P-5 UNSC members** are not part of it. China never signed and US, and Russia didn't ratify the Rome Statute
- **Criticisms**
1. **A tool for Western Imperialism** -> Has convicted leaders from small, weak states (mostly African). Therefore, ICC has been accused of bias and is being a tool of western imperialism.
 2. **Insufficient Checks and Balances:** USA claims that there are insufficient checks and balances on the authority of the ICC Prosecutor and judges and insufficient protection against politicized prosecutions or other abuses.
 3. **Imposition of a particular kind of ideology** - ICC has tended to impose ideas of liberal democracy on all states. This 'one size fits all' is not an effective solution.
- **Recent Developments**

A) ARMENIA JOINING ICC (2023)

- Armenia's Parliament votes to join the ICC (60-22 votes). Later, the Armenian President approved the Parliament's decision.
- **Geopolitical Impact:**
 - **Straining of ties with Russia:** The ICC has issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin of Russia over events in Ukraine. Countries that have signed and ratified the Rome Statute that created the ICC are bound to arrest Mr. Putin, who was indicted for war crimes connected to the deportation of children from Ukraine, if he sets foot on their soil.
 - Though Armenia has assured Russia that Mr. Putin wouldn't be arrested if he entered the country.

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.

- Russia has repeatedly denied its forces have engaged in war crimes, or forcibly taken Ukrainian Children.

C) SOUTH AFRICA WAS LOOKING FOR LEGAL OPTIONS IF RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN ATTENDED THE 15TH BRICS SUMMIT IN SA.

- It is because SA is a member of ICC and thus is obliged to arrest Vladimir Putin if he came to South Africa.
- Note: Putin attended the summit virtually.

9) PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION (PCA)

- **Introduction**
 - » Established by the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, concluded in the Hague in 1899 during the first Hague Peace Conference, it is an intergovernmental organization of 122 contracting parties, providing a variety of dispute resolution services to the international community.
 - » It is based in The Hague in The Netherlands.
 - » It is not a court in conventional understanding of the term but facilitates international arbitration to resolve disputes that involve states, state entities, intergovernmental organizations, private parties etc. by assisting in the establishment of arbitration tribunals and facilitating their work.
 - » It is not a UN agency but is an official UN observer.
 - » PCA is different from International Court of Justice which is housed in the same building, the Peace Palace in Hague.
 - People at large are more familiar with the ICJ than with PCA, partly because of the closed nature of the cases handled by PCA and due to small number of cases dealt with between 1946 and 1990. THE PCA's CASELOAD however, has increased since then.
 - » The PCA has a three-part organizational structure consisting of an Administrative Council that oversees its policies and budgets, a panel of independent potential arbitrators known as the Members of the Court, and its Secretariat, known as the International Bureau, headed by Secretary General.
- **Other Key features**

- » **International Offices:** Beyond its headquarters in the Peace Palace in Hague, the PCA has opened offices in various cities in order to make its services more accessible in different regions of the world [Buenos Aires, Mauritius, Singapore]
- » **Financial Assistance Fund:** This fund aims to assist developing countries meet part of costs involved in international arbitration or other means of dispute settlement offered by the PCA.

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)

- Hours after a Court of Arbitration (CoA) ruled that it has "competence" to consider matter concerning the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in J&K, a construction that Pakistan has opposed, India reiterated its position.
 - » **Background:** The World Bank had appointed Murphy as chairman of the CoA on October 17, 2022, after Pakistan sought such a Court to consider its concerns about the designs of Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric power projects.
 - » India has opposed the constitution of the CoA and contends that it is in contravention of the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty. Till date, India has not exercised its right under Treaty to appoint two arbitrators to the CoA. New Delhi has not attended the court's proceedings and has sent its correspondence to World Bank
 - » **In the Award,** the Court carefully considered objections to the competence of the Court raised by India (by way of correspondence to World Bank). In a unanimous decision, which is binding on the Parties and without appeal, the Court rejected each of the objections raised by India and determined that the Court is competent to consider and determine the disputes set forth in Pakistan's Request for Arbitration.
- Ministry of External Affairs said that a Neutral Expert is seized of differences pertaining the two projects. Neutral expert proceedings are the only Treaty Proceeding at his juncture. The treaty doesn't provide for parallel proceeding on the same set of issues.

B) OTHER IMPORTANT RECENT CASES

- Italian Marine Case (2020)
 - » The PCA ruled that both India and Italy had concurrent jurisdiction in the matter but concluded that the Marine's immunity precluded India's Jurisdiction.
 - In India's favor, the Court found that the Italian vessel had violated the right and freedom of navigation of the Indian fishing vessel under UNCLOS and this action merited compensation.
- Bay of Bengal Maritime Boundary (Bangladesh vs. India) (2014)
- Mauritius vs United Kingdom (18th March 2015, ruled that the Chagos Marine Protected Area was illegal)
- Philippines vs China (July 2016 - no evidence that China had historically exercised exclusive control over the waters or resources)

10) INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE ORGANIZATION (INTERPOL)

- **Introduction**
 - INTERPOL is world's largest international police organization, with 196 member countries.
INTERPOL facilitates international police cooperation.
 - **Vision:** "Connecting Police for a safer world"
 - **Mission:** "Preventing and fighting crime through enhanced cooperation and innovation on police and security matters".
 - **Headquarter:** "Lyon, France"
 - Work focuses mainly on
 - Public safety and battling terrorism
 - Crime against humanity
 - Environmental crime
 - Genocide
 - War crimes
 - Organized crimes
 - Piracy, illicit traffic in work of art
 - Illicit drug production
 - Drug trafficking
 - Weapons smuggling
 - Human trafficking
 - **Money laundering**
 - Child Pornography
 - White-collar crime
 - Computer crime
 - Intellectual Property crime
 - Corruption
- **Interpol Notice**
 - An Interpol notice is international alert circulated by Interpol to communicate information about crimes, criminals, and threats from police in a member state (or an authorized international entity) to their counterparts around the world.
 - There are eight types, seven of which are known by their color codes: Red, Blue, Green, Yellow, Black, Orange and Purple.
 - **Red Notice**
 - The most well-known notice is the Red Notice which requests (provisional) arrest of wanted persons, with a view to extradition. An Interpol notice is "*the closest instrument to an international arrest warrant in use today*. (Interpol **does not have the authority to issue arrest warrants** in the formal sense of the word, as this is the domain of the sovereign member states.)
 - **A Blue Corner Notice** is issued by the international police cooperation body to collect additional information from its member countries about a person's identity, location, or activities in relation to a crime.

A) 91ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF INTERPOL

- About General Assembly: It is INTERPOL's supreme governing body and comprise of delegates appointed by the governments of our countries. It meets once a year and takes all the major decisions affecting general policy, the resources needed for international cooperation, working methods, finances and programmes of activities.
- **Key Highlights of 91st assembly in Vienna**
 - » Resolution was passed to strengthen the collaborative response to disrupt financial crime and corruption, combat online sexual exploitation, and promote diversity within interpol itself.
 - » The delegation supported the adoption of Interpol's Vision 2030 and the establishment of the Interpol Future Council.

Other Important initiatives by Interpol

1. Global Focal Point Initiative

- To trace, seize and return stolen public funds to the country of origin.

11) INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

- **Beginning:**
 - It is the world's **center of cooperation in nuclear field**. It was set up as world's "Atoms of Peace" organization in 1957 within the UN family. Though established independently of the United Nations through its international treaty, the IAEA statute, the IAEA reports to both UNGA and Security Council.
- **Objective / Purpose:**
 - It serves as an **intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology and nuclear power worldwide.**
 - It seeks to further inhibit the use of nuclear for military purpose, including nuclear weapons.
- **IAEA SAFEGUARDS**
 - It is a system of inspection and verification of the peaceful use of nuclear materials as part of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, supervised by IAEA.
- **Some Conventions**

A) CONVENTION ON SUPPLEMENTARY COMPENSATION FOR NUCLEAR DAMAGE

- Introduction

1. It recognizes the importance of the measures provided in the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the field of nuclear energy as well as in national legislation on compensation for nuclear damage consistent with the principle of these conventions.
2. It desires to establish a worldwide liability regime to supplement and enhance these measures with a view to increasing the amount of compensation for nuclear damage.

3. This worldwide liability regime would further encourage regional and global cooperation to promote a higher level of nuclear safety in accordance with the principles of international partnership and solidarity.

- Other details
 1. CSC allows for increasing the compensation amount in the event of a nuclear incident through public funds pooled in by contracting parties based on their own installed nuclear capacities.
 2. Entered into force on 15th April 2015.
- India ratified the convention in Feb 2016.

12) WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF)

- **Introduction**
 - WEF is a Swiss nonprofit foundation, based in Cologny, Geneva. Recognized by Swiss authorities as the international institute for public private cooperation, its mission is cited as "committed to **improving the state of the world** by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas".
 - It is best known for its annual meeting at Davos (Switzerland).

B) 2024 ANNUAL MEET AT DAVOS (JAN 2024): KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** took centre stage at this years WEF meet. Both its' positive and negative sides were discussed.
- **War and Uncertainty:** Fragile geopolitical situation in various parts of the world is threatening global supply chain and causing uncertainty around food security.
- **Need for businesses to adapt to climate and united action against climate** was another important area.
- **India's bright prospects** and **China's slowing economy** was another area of discussion
- **Investment in women's health** could boost global GDP by USD 1 trillion annually by 2040.
- **Announcement of the launch of 'Global Good Alliance for Gender Equity and Equality'**: It was launched with the support and endorsement of WEF and Government of India.
 - The objective of the alliance is to bring together global best practices, knowledge sharing and investment in the identified areas of women's health, education and enterprise.

C) KEY REPORTS BY WEF

Report	Period (last published)	India's ranking	Comments
Global Risks Report	Annual (Jan 2024)		See details below
Travel and Tourism Competitive Index	Biannual (2022)	54th/117 (eight lower than 2019)	Japan, the USA, Spain, France and Germany are at <u>top of the list</u> .

Global Competitiveness Index	Annual (2023)	40/134	The report ranks countries on <u>their ability to attract, develop and retain skilled people.</u> Switzerland, Singapore and the US are the top ranked countries
Global Gender Gap	Annual (June 2023)	127/146	Details below
Energy Transition Index	Annual (2023)	67th/140	The Energy Transition Index, <u>which benchmarks 120 countries on their current energy system performance and on the readiness of their enabling environment, finds that while there has been broad progress on clean, sustainable energy, there are emerging challenges to the equity of the transition – just, affordable access to energy and sustained economic development</u> – due to countries shifting their focus to energy security
Future of Growth Report, 2024		Global average score is <u>52.8</u> (100 is best score) India's score is <u>51.2</u> .	The report introduces a <u>multi-dimensional framework</u> to assess the quality of economic growth across <u>107 countries globally</u> . Nation's economic growth is measured across <u>four pillars</u> - Innovativeness; inclusiveness; Sustainability; and Resilience.
Future of Jobs Report, 2023	Annual (2023) 4th edition		The report explores <u>how jobs and skills will evolve over the next five years</u> . Economic, health and geopolitical trends have created divergent outcomes for labour markets globally in 2023 Technology adoption will remain a key driver of business

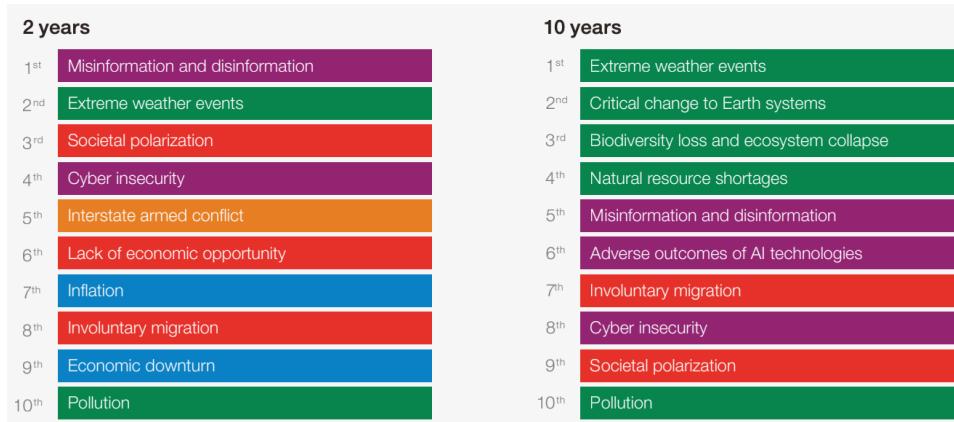
			transformation in the next five years Within technology adoption, big data, cloud computing and AI feature highly on likelihood of adoption
Global Cooperation Barometer 2024	Note: Released by <u>WEF</u> in collaboration with <u>McKinsey & Company</u> .		It is meant to serve as a tool for leaders to better understand the contours of cooperation broadly and along five pillars – trade and capital flows, innovation and technology, climate and natural capital, health and wellness, and peace and security

D) GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT, 2023

- GGG Report benchmarks 146 countries on their progress towards gender parity across four thematic dimensions:
 - i. Economic Opportunities
 - ii. Political Empowerment
 - iii. Educational Attainment
 - iv. Health and Survival
- **Key Highlights: 2023 Report**
 - Iceland (91.2%), Norway (87.9%) and Finland (86.3%) are the best performing countries
 - **India's rank is 127/146 countries (improvement from 135 last year)**
 - India performance badly in Economic Participation and Opportunities (36.7%) and Parity on Political Empowerment (25.3%).

E) GLOBAL RISK REPORT, 2024

- Global Risk Report is an annual study published by WEF ahead of its annual meet at Davos, Switzerland.
- The report describes changes occurring in the global risks landscape from year to year and identifies global catastrophic risks.
- **2024 Report: Key Highlights**
 - **Global Short-term and long term risks:**



- **Most Important Risk for India**

- **Misinformation and disinformation (MI); Infectious disease; Illicit Economic Activity; Inequality (Wealth and Income); and Labour shortage**

13) INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

- International Whaling Commission is an inter-governmental organization whose purpose is the conservation of whale and the management of whaling to allow orderly development of whaling industry.
- The legal framework of the IWC is **the International Convention for the regulation of Whaling**.
 - The convention was established in 1946, making it one of the first pieces of international environmental legislation.
 - All member countries of IWC are signatories of this convention.
- Currently (Aug 2023) IWC has 88 members.
- The **legally finding schedule** of the convention sets out specific measures that the IWC has collectively decided to be necessary in order to regulate whaling and conserve whale livestock.
- These measures include
 1. **catch limits** (which may be **zero in the case of commercial whaling**) by species and area.
 2. **Designating specified areas as whale sanctuaries**,
 3. Protection of calves and females accompanies calves etc.
- The commission also **coordinates and funds conservation work** including research related to conservation.
 - **India joined the IWC in 1981**.
- **Important countries which are not members**
 - Canada (left in 1982), Venezuela (left in 1999), Egypt (left in 1989), **Japan (left in 2019)**.
- **Key Efforts**
 - In 1982, the IWC adopted moratorium on commercial whaling.
 - Countries like Russia and Japan had opposed it.
 - In 1994, the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary was created by the IWC.
- **Other facts**
 - The IWC allows whaling quotas for aboriginal subsistence and also member nations can issue 'Scientific permits' to citizens.

14) STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SIPRI)

- **About SIPRI**
 - » It is an international institute based in Stockholm, Sweden, dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament.
 - » It was established in 1966. It provides data, analysis and recommendations to policy makers, researchers, media, and the interested public.
 - » Its **funds** are mostly drawn from governments and independent philanthropic organizations around the world. It also receives annual support from Swedish government.

A) SIPRI REPORT (MARCH 2024)

- India remained the world's largest arms importer and its imports increased by 4.7% (between 2014-18 to 2019-23)
 - **Russia (36%)** continues to be India's main arms supplier. But this was the first five year period since 1960-64 when deliveries from Russia (or USSR) made up less than half of India's arms import.
- **Saudi Arabia** is the world's 2nd largest arms importer.
- **Pakistan** has significantly increased its arms import (by around 45%).
- **China's arms import shrank by 44%**, mainly as a result of substituting imported arms, with locally produced systems.

B) SIPRI YEAR BOOK (JUNE 2023)

- **9 Nuclear armed states** are continuing to expand and modernize their nuclear arsenal.
- **Total nuclear warheads** in the world is estimated at 12,512 in Jan 2023.
- **Russia and USA** have 90% of all nuclear weapons.
- **Transparency and dialogue** regarding nuclear weapons and forces between Russia and USA have declined.
- **India:**
 - **Nuclear arsenal** has expanded from 164 in 2022 to 164 in 2023.
- **China** has 410 warheads in Jan 2023 (from 350 warheads in Jan 2022)

5. COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP – CPTPP (EARLIER NAMED TPP)

- **Why in news recently?**
 - » The UK has reached an agreement in principle to join the CPTPP. (March 2023)
- **Introduction**

- » CPTPP is a free **trade agreement** between **11 Pacific Rim countries** (US is no longer part of TPP). It was signed in Santiago, Chile.
- » **Aims/Goals:**
 - Create a new single market (something like EU) -> Deepen economic ties, slash trade barriers, and thus increase trade and economic growth in the region.
 - Establish a common framework for **intellectual property**.
 - Enforce standards for labour law and environmental law.
 - Establish an **investor state dispute settlement**.

- **USA's withdrawal from TPP:**
 - » The earlier proposal of TPP which was signed on 4th Feb 2016 in Auckland, New Zealand, couldn't be ratified because of the withdrawal of USA on 23 January 2017.
- **Countries Participating:** Canada, **USA**, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Australia and New Zealand..



- **CPTPP Commission** was established when the CPTPP entered into force on 30th Dec 2018. It has representative from all 11 members and is the decision making body of the CPTPP.
 - The first meet of CPTPP took place Jan 2019, in **Tokyo, Japan**.
- **Significance**
 - Covers 15% of world's GDP (with UK)
 - In addition to tariff cuts, the CPTPP include **high standards on environment and labor laws, IPR regime, e-commerce** etc.
 -
- **Supporters' Argument**
 - The pact would boost growth in Asia Pacific Economies.
 - It would unlock opportunities and address vital 21st century issues within the global economy.

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.

- The UK and the present members formally signed an accession protocol on 16th July 2023 and will join the agreement when it has been ratified by all parties, or after 15 months if the UK and the majority of CPTPP parties ratify.

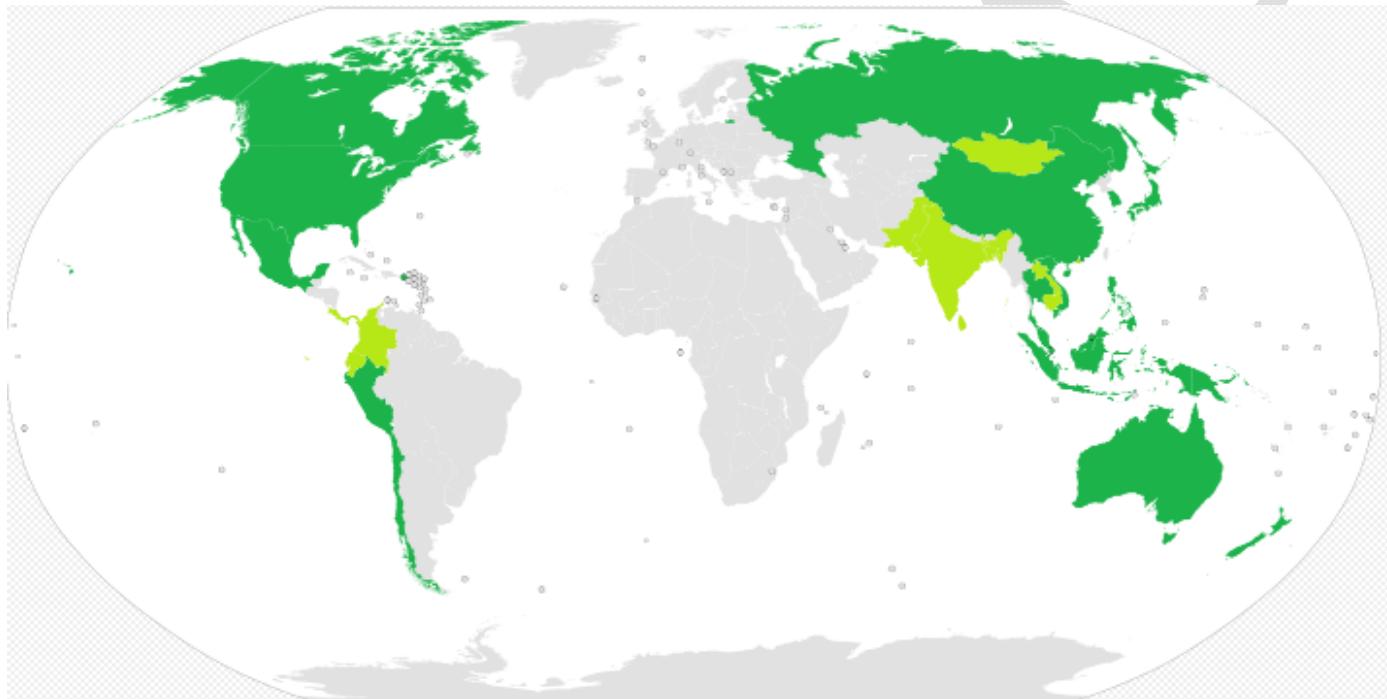
- Britain will become the 12th member and will be the first one to join the partnership since its inception.
- **Economic Benefits for UK**
 - Tariff free trade with a number of countries with which Britain doesn't have FTA.
 - CPTPP doesn't have single market for goods and services, and so regulatory harmonization is not required, unlike the EU, whose trading orbit Britain left at the end of 2020.
- **Other reasons for Britain to Join:**
 - While the economic benefit for Britain may be modest, Britain has geo-political reasons for joining the bloc. Joining CPTPP could enable the UK to enhance ties with like-minded countries to protect a free and open Indo-Pacific Region.
 - » In the context of growing tensions with China, defined as an 'epoch-defining challenge' in the recent refresh of the Integrated Review, strengthening relations with allies in the region has become increasingly important.
- **Note:** China has also applied to join CPTPP

6. APEC (ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION)

- **Introduction**
 - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a forum for 21 Pacific Rim member economies that promotes free trade throughout the Asia Pacific region.
 - **Establishment:** In 1989
 - in response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and the advent of regional trade blocs in other parts of the world (EU and North America FTA)
 - In response to fear that highly industrialized Japan (a member of G7) would come to dominate economic activities in the Asia Pacific region;
 - To establish new markets for agricultural products and raw materials beyond Europe.
- **Member Economies**
 1. Currently has 21 members, including most countries with coastline on the pacific ocean. However, the criterion for membership is that the member is a separate economy, rather than a state. As a result, APEC uses the term member economies rather than member countries to refer to its members.

Member Economies	Observers
1. Russia 2. People's Republic of China 3. Hongkong 4. Republic of China (Taiwan) 5. Japan 6. South Korea 7. Vietnam 8. Thailand 9. Malaysia 10. Singapore 11. Indonesia	22. ASEAN 23. The Pacific Island Forum 24. Pacific Economic Cooperation Council

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>12. Phillipines
 13. Brunei Darussalam
 14. Papua New Guinea
 15. Australia
 16. New Zealand
 17. Canada
 18. USA
 19. Mexico
 20. Peru
 21. Chile</p> | |
|---|--|



2. Possible Enlargement

1. India has requested membership of APEC, and received initial support from USA, Japan and Australia.
 - But, China has remained opposed to India. And since, the APEC works on a consensus model, even one country opposing India's membership becomes an hindrance.
 - Following reasons are given for not admitting India:
 - **Extra-regional status:** India doesn't border pacific ocean, which all current member do
 - Opposition by some members due to India's record on economic reforms and WTO engagement.
 - India was invited to be an observer for the first time in November 2011.
2. Other countries seeking membership
 - Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Macau, Mongolia, Laos, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, and Ecuador.

7. USMCA

- **Background: North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**
 - » NAFTA was a **trilateral agreement between Canada, USA, and Mexico** for creation of a **trade bloc in North America**. The agreement **came into force in 1994**. It was focused on eliminating barriers of trade and investment between US, Canada, and Mexico.
- » **Impact of NAFTA**
 - Most economic analyst believe that NAFTA has been very **beneficial for North American economies and the average citizen** but harmed a small minority of workers in industries exposed to trade competition.
- » **Contentious Issues - Maquiladoras**
- » Former President Trump in his election campaign in 2016 had criticized NAFTA and had called it "single worst trade deal ever approved in the US". Thus, soon after his election, a renegotiation of NAFTA started.
- » In Dec 2019, a trilateral United States Mexico Canada Agreement was finalized to replace the 25 year old NAFTA.
- **USMCA**
 - » It came into force in 2020.
 - » The new deal gives the **US greater access to the dairy markets of Canada and Mexico**, and allows extra imports of Canadian car.
 - » **Minimum wage provisions for auto workers**
 - 40% of the car parts of vehicles produced in the three countries must be made in North America, paying wages of \$16 an hour.
 - US expects that this will reduce the export of Jobs from US to Mexico where labor cost is less compared to US.
 - » **USMCA put the condition** that for a vehicle to qualify for zero tariff, 75% of its content must be from North America. (Under NAFTA this threshold was 60%)
 - » USMCA also contains **stronger protection for workers**, tough new **environmental rules**, and updates the trade relationship to **cover the digital economy and provides "ground breaking" intellectual property protections**.
 - » There are provisions to prevent manipulation of the trade rules, including covering currency values, and controls over outside countries trying to take advantage of the duty-free market.

8. EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION

- **Introduction:**

- EEU is a **political, military and economic union** of states primarily located in northern Eurasia [Eastern Europe, Western Asia and Central Asia]. It consists of **five members**: Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
- In theory, the EEU is an **ambitious project for economic integration** in the former soviet region.
- It has its own institutions, mirroring that of the EU.
 - It includes **Eurasian Economic Commission** in Moscow as its regulatory body, and a **Court of the Eurasian Economic Union** based in Minsk.
- Came into existence on 1st Jan 2015.
- **Aim**
 - **Free movement** of goods, services, capital and people
 - **Common Policy**: Provide common transport and agriculture policy.
 - **Long term aims**: Common currency and common customs like EU.
- **Impact**:
 - Reality of integration between five member states is cumbersome and patchy.



- **India and EEU**

- In Dec 2016, negotiations started for an FTA between India and EEU. However, the talks haven't progressed much.

- **Russia continues to pressure Uzbekistan to Join EEU (2021)**

- In Dec 2020, Uzbekistan got the observer status.
- It plans to commit to half of the EAEU's requirements and technical standards for products exported to the Union market.
 - The government has also directed several agencies to draft national document to align with 26 EAEU technical regulations for common market products.



9. G20

- **Introduction**

- » The Group of Twenty (also known as G-20 or G20) is an international forum for the governments, finance ministers and the central bank governors from 20 major economies.
- » It was **founded in 1999** as an informal forum of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of its members to meet annually, with the aim of studying, reviewing, and

promoting high level discussion of policy issue pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability.

- » It's agenda was **expanded in 2008** with the inclusion of the head of government in the meet. After this first summit it replaced the G8 as the main economic council of the wealthy nations.
- » G-20 in the current form is the child of 2008 global financial crisis.
- » Please note that G20 is an informal grouping and thus it doesn't have permanent secretariat/staff. **Rather, G20 presidency rotates annually** among members and is responsible for bringing together the G20 agenda, organizing its workings and hosting summits.

- **Members**

- » **19 countries, EU and African Union**
 - Canada, US, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Australia.
 - EU is represented by European Commission and European Central Bank.
 - **Note:** In the 2023 summit in Delhi, inclusion of African Union has been agreed upon.
- » **The UN, IMF and WB** also attend G20 meet.
- » **Spain** is a permanent guest invitee at the summit.

- **Objectives:**

- » Policy Coordination between its member countries in order to achieve global economic stability, sustainable growth.
- » To Promote Financial Regulations that reduce risks and prevent future financial crisis.
- » To Create a new international financial architecture.

- **Significance of G20**

- » G20 has emerged as the premier forum of international economic cooperation, a sort of mini-UN, towards building an open world economy. G20 got its reputation because of its ability to restore stability in the global financial system after the 2008-09 crisis.
- » Discussions and agreements at G20 helps in reshaping the governance of global finance. It has enabled work towards reform of IMF, WB and United Nations as all the major world economies are represented here.
- » The member countries (before addition of AU) represent 90% of the Gross World Product, 80% of the trade, 2/3rd of the World Population and approximately half of the world land area.
- » When global governance in general are continuing to reflect the power equations at the end of World War - II, the G20 is a recognition of the changed realities and has given a place at the international high table to emerging powers.

16) 2023 G20 SUMMIT: INDIA

- **India's Presidency Theme** was "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" which means "the world is one family".
- **Key Outcomes:**

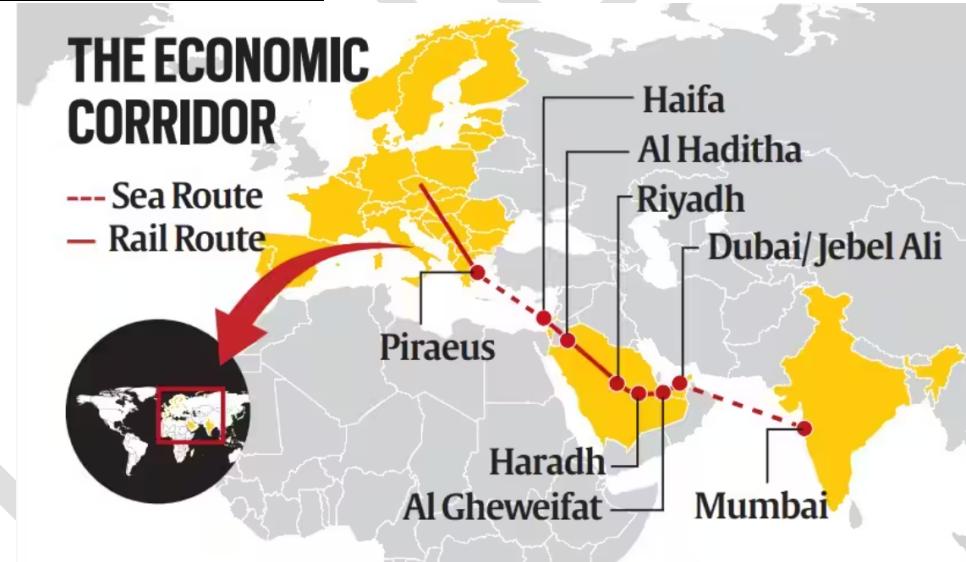
- **New Delhi Declaration:** The G20 has adopted a consensus declaration with following highlights:
 - **On Ukraine War:**
 - All states must act in a manner consistent with purposes and principles of UN charter in its entirety.
 - They must refrain from threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state. States must also refrain from use of or threat of use of nuclear weapons.
 - Peaceful resolution of conflicts and efforts to address crisis as well as diplomacy and dialogue are critical.
 - "Today's ERA must not be of war."
 - **On Grain/Food/Energy Security:**
 - The declaration calls on Russia and Ukraine to ensure unimpeded delivery of food and fertilizer inputs from Russia and Ukraine.
 - **On Economies and Financial Market:**
 - It endorses financial board's high level recommendations for regulation, supervision and oversight of Crypto-assets, activities..
 - Renew our commitment to ensure a level-playing field and fair competition by discouraging protectionism, market distorting practices.
 - **On Climate Change:**
 - Notes that there is a need to accelerate efforts to phase down unabated coal power, in line with national circumstances.
 - The declaration noted that \$5.8-5.9 trillion in pre-2030 period is required by developing countries, in particular for their needs to implement their emission targets.
 - **On Global Debt Vulnerability:**
 - It committed to promoting resilient growth by urgently and effectively addressing debt vulnerabilities in developing countries.
 - **Health:** It remains committed to strengthening global health architecture.
 - **Terrorism:** It condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including those on the basis of xenophobia, racism, and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief, recognizing the commitment of all religions to peace.
- **Announcement of G-20 decision to include the 55-nation African Union**, the second regional bloc to join the G-20 after the EU.
 - With this, the future summits in Brazil and South Africa is expected to take India's Global South Initiative forward.
 - The move help tilt the balance within G-20 away from Power-11 of the geopolitical powers, the G7, Australia, the EU and the Russia and China combined to the Developing 10 (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, African Union, South Africa, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, India, South Korea and Indonesia) who make up rest of the member.
- **Finance Track of India's G20 Presidency** also paved the way for coordinated global approach to regulating cryptocurrencies, strengthening multilateral development banks' lending capacity and

replicating the use of digital public infrastructure like the India Stack to expand financial inclusion around the world.

- Announcement of India-Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor (IMEE EC) to strengthen economic connectivity between India-West Asia and Europe.
- Launch of Global Biofuel Alliance on the sidelines of G20 summit.

17) INDIA MIDDLE EAST EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEE EC)

- It was announced by PM Modi during the G20 Summit in India in 2023
 - India, USA, UAE, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union Commission have signed MoU to establish IMEE EC.
- It entails an ambitious project that could leverage railway tracks and shipping corridors to help physically link up a vast stretch of the Eurasian subcontinent and in the process improve digital connectivity and catalyze trade among countries including energy products including Green Hydrogen.
- It will consist of **two separate corridors:**
 - **East Corridor** connecting India to West Asia/ Middle East
 - **Northern Corridor** connecting West Asia/Middle East to Europe
 - i. It involves laying of a railway link through the Arabian Peninsula that could then link up with shipping passages to India and Europe on both ends.
- The initiative is jointly spearheaded by the US and India, and spans India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and the European Union.



- **Significance:**
 - **Impetus to Economic Development**
 - **Strategic Significance:** ideological alternative to China's BRI.
 - Reduce dependency on Suez Canal
- **Official Timeline and Funds** have not been detailed about.

18) GLOBAL BIOFUEL ALLIANCE

- Launched during the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Delhi in 2023 by PM Modi and a host of global leaders including US President Joe Biden, Brazilian President Lula da Silva, Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.
- **Initiating members** include USA, Brazil, Argentina, Italy, South Africa, Mauritius, UAE, India and Bangladesh.
 - **Observer Countries:** Singapore and Canada.
- Other G-20 countries have been urged to join the initiative.
- **The alliance is aimed at facilitating global cooperation in increasing the sustainable production and use of biofuels across the sector.**
 - Its focus is on strengthening market, facilitating global biofuel trade, developing concrete policy lesson-sharing and providing technical support for national biofuel program worldwide.
 - **Target:** Take ethanol blending with petrol globally to 20%.
- The Alliance mirrors International Solar Alliance (ISA) which aims to bring clean and affordable solar energy within the reach of all.

10.G7

- **Introduction**
 - » The Group of Seven is a group consisting of Canada, USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. It is an informal forum of leading industrialized nation/ seven major advanced economies as reported by IMF.
 - » The European Union is also represented within the G-7.
- **Beginning**
 - » **World Economic** Summit, which later became the G7, was launched in 1975 by former French President Valery Giscard. Initially there were **6 members (G6)** and heads of government/state of USA, UK, Germany, France, Italy and Japan met for a fireside chat at Rambouillet Castle in France. The participants exchanged ideas on the economic problems of the 1970s.
 - » **In 1976**, Canada joined as the 7th member.
 - » In the 1980s, the interest of G7 expanded to include foreign and security policy issues. The Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev was invited to talks on the sidelines of the London Summit in 1991.
 - » **In 1998**, Russia became a member and the **G8** was constituted.
 - » **Russia was thrown out of the group** after its violation of Ukraine's Sovereignty and territorial integrity in 2014.
- Canada became the 7th member in 1976.
- **Purpose**
 - » Discuss the **current world issues** (dominated in 1975 by the oil crisis) in a frank and informal manner -> Economic, foreign and security issues.
- **Criteria**
 - » A very high net national wealth.

- » A very high HDI.
- **Economic Strength**
 - The G7 countries represent more than 64% of the net global wealth; 10% of the world's population; 31T of the global GDP and 21% of the CO2 emissions.

19) 49TH SUMMIT: MAY 2023: HIROSHIMA, JAPAN

- **India, Australia, Brazil** etc. were also invited to the summit.
 - » India gave 10-point action plan to combat challenges associated with food, health, and other development related problems.
- **Major outcomes of the summit:**
 - » **Decision to set up "Coordination Platform on Economic Coercion"** to counter the attempt to "weaponize" trading and economic dependencies in the "critical emerging technologies such as micro-electronics".
 - » **Decision for Development and Adoption of International Technical Standards** for "trustworthy" AI.
 - » **Net Zero by 2050:** Members pledged to achieve net zero by 2050 to fight climate change.
 - » The summit produced Hiroshima Action Statement on Food Security.

20) G7'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS CARBON-FREE ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION (APRIL 2023)

- » **G7 Climate and Energy Ministers and envoys** have committed to ensuring carbon-free electricity production by 2035 and accelerating phase out of coal. The agreement was made at Sapporo, Japan, ahead of the G7 summit in Hiroshima in May 2023.

11.G77

- Group of 77 at the United Nations is a loose coalition of developing countries, designed to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiation capacity in the UN.
- **Membership**
 - There were 77 founding members of the organization, but the membership since expanded to more than 130 member countries.
- **China has never officially joined** but provides consistent political support and financial donation to the G77.

12.SCO

- **Introduction: 9 Members**
 - » The SCO is a Eurasian political, economic and security organization which emerged from Sanghai Five (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) that was founded in 1996 after demarcation of China's border with four newly independent states that appeared after collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Shanghai five was supposed to serve as a platform for political, economic, cultural and security cooperation.

- » This was transformed into today's SCO with the induction of **Uzbekistan** as a new member at the Shanghai summit in 2001; **India & Pakistan** in Astana summit in 2017; and **Iran** in 2023 summit.
- **Members**
 - » **Member States (Important for pre):**
 - China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan and Islamic Republic of Iran.
 - Belarus has also started the process of joining SCO.
 - » **Observers:**
 - Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia
 - » **Headquarter**
 - Beijing, China
 - » **Official Language:** Russian and Chinese
 - » **Objectives**
 - SCO's objectives are centered around **security related concerns**, military cooperation, intelligence sharing, and counterterrorism.
- **Activities**
 - Cooperation on Security
 - Military Activities:
 - Economic Cooperation
 - Connectivity
 - Cultural Cooperation

21) SCO SUMMIT, 2023

- It was hosted by India and was a virtual summit.
- During this summit, Iran officially joined as the 9th member.
- The **theme** of India's chairmanship of SCO is '**Towards a SECURE SCO**', which was an acronym given by PM Modi in 2018 summit in Qingadao.
 - » S: Security, E: Economic development, C: Connectivity, U: Unity, R: Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, E: Environmental protection
- **Key Highlights:**
 - » **New Delhi Declaration** - It calls for international communities to come together to counter the activities of terrorist, separatist, and extremist group.
 - » **Five new pillars of cooperation** has been identified: Startups and Innovation; Traditional Medicine; Youth Empowerment; Digital Inclusion; Shared Buddhist Heritage.

13. QUAD

- QUAD, also known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, is a strategic forum comprising of four nations: United States, Japan, India, and Australia.
 - » The idea of the Quad was first proposed by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007 as a response to China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. However, the initiative did not gain much momentum at that time.

- **The Quad was revived in 2017** and has since gained momentum, with the four countries holding regular meetings at various levels, including at the leaders' level. The Quad is primarily focused on security issues in the Indo-Pacific region, such as **maritime security, counterterrorism, and cybersecurity**, as well as economic and humanitarian issues.

22) QUAD SUMMIT, 2023 (FIFTH SUMMIT, HIROSHIMA)

- **Infrastructure:**
 - » **Quad Infrastructure Fellowship:** The program will provide at least 1,800 scholarships, work exchanges, and other executive programs to government officials on best practices surrounding the design, delivery, and management of high-standard infrastructure projects.
 - » **Quad Partnership for Cable Connectivity and Resilience:** It will bring together public and private sector to address gaps in infrastructure and coordinate on future builds.
- **Investment:**
 - » **Quad Investment Network (QUIN):** a network of investors and executives across Quad countries that seeks to foster co-investment in critical technologies. The QUIN will facilitate access to capital and facilitate technology partnerships through the establishment of an Advisory Board of business leaders and expert working groups to advance the prosperity and security of the Indo-Pacific Region.

14. PARIS CLUB

- **Why in news?**
 - » Sri Lanka reaches agreement with India, Paris Club on debt treatment (Nov 2023)
- **Details**

The Paris Club is a **group of mostly western creditor countries** that grew from a 1956 meeting in which Argentina agreed to meet its public creditors in Paris.

- » It describes itself as a **forum where official creditors meet to solve payment difficulties faced by debtor countries.**
- » When debt countries undertake reforms to stabilize and restore their macroeconomic and financial situation, Paris Club Creditor provide an appropriate debt treatment.

There are 22 members to this grouping and all of them are members of OECD.

Members are: Canada, USA, Brazil, Ireland, UK, Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark Austria, Norway, Sweden,



Finland, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Israel, and Australia.

Their **objective** is to find sustainable debt relief solutions for countries that are unable to repay their bilateral loans.

» **How many agreements have Paris Club been involved in?**

- Since its beginning, Paris Club has reached 470+ agreements with 102 different debtor countries. Since 1956, the debt treated in the framework of Paris Club Agreements amount to more than \$610 billion.
- **How has Paris Club been involved in debt agreements: Key Features of Paris Club Debt Agreements:**
 - **Principle of Consensus and Solidarity:** Any agreement reached with debtor country will apply equally to all its Paris Club creditors.
 - A debtor country that signs an agreement with its Paris Club Creditors, should not then accept from its non-Paris Club commercial and bilateral creditors such terms of treatment of its debt that are less favorable to the debtor than those agreed with the Paris Club.
- **The role and importance of Paris Club Creditors:**
 - The Paris Club countries dominated bilateral lending in the last century, but their importance has receded over the last two decades or so. This is because of rise of China as the world's largest bilateral lender.
- **Sri Lanka agrees debt restructuring with Paris Club Creditors and India (Nov 2023)**
 - Sri Lanka has reached an "agreement in principle" with India and the Paris Club group of creditors including Japan, on a debt treatment plan that will help the crisis hit island nation tap the next tranche of the IMF's nearly \$3 billion recovery package.

15. SAARC

- **Introduction**

- SAARC is a major Pan-South-Asia economic and geopolitical organization of eight countries located in South Asia. It was found in 1985 with **seven South Asian countries** - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. The membership grew to eight when Afghanistan joined in 2007. It also has 8 observer countries including China.
- It's headquartered in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- The SAARC countries together consist of only 3% of the world's land area but, 21% of the world's population. Moreover, 40% of the world's poor live in the region.

- **The SAARC is aimed at achieving two set of goals:**

- i. First, the immediate and non-political aims such as promoting welfare of people; accelerating economic growth, social progress and cultural development; and strengthening collective self-reliance to contribute to mutual trust and understanding among member nations.

ii. **Second**, relates to the long term, political objective of creating a durable, stable and peaceful regional order, strengthening cooperation with other developing countries and cooperating with international and regional organizations.

- **Summits**

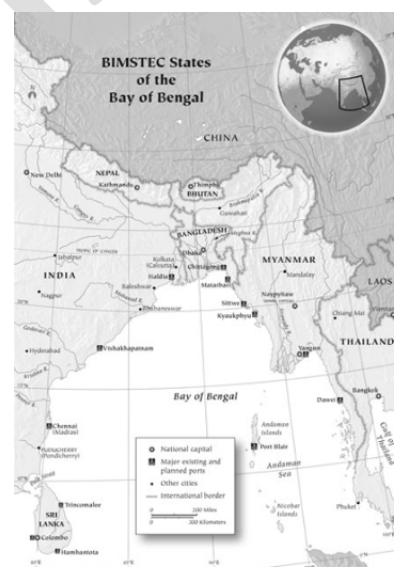
- The first SAARC Summit took place in Dhaka in 1985, and there have been 18 summits since then.
- However, the organization hasn't had a smooth sail, with many summits getting postponed for political reasons, either bilateral or internal.
 - **18th SAARC summit** was held in Kathmandu in November 2014
 - **19th summit** was supposed to be held in 2016 in Pakistan, but the summit was boycotted by India and other SAARC countries on grounds of increasing cross border terrorism from Pak. Since then, the SAARC summit has not been held.

16. BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BIMSTEC)

- **Introduction:**

- BIMSTEC is a regional organization of 7 member states (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar) from South Asia and Southeast Asia that lie in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal.
- **Basic details (Important for Prelims)**
 - It came into being on June 6, 1997 (as BIST-EC - Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka - Thailand Economic Cooperation) through the **Bangkok declaration**. It was later rechristened as BIMSTEC.
 - It is headquartered in Dhaka.

- **The Objective** of the alliance is to harness accelerated growth through mutual cooperation in different areas of common interest by mitigating onslaught of globalization and by utilizing regional resources and geographical advantages.



- It has based on two basic principles.

- To respect the principle of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful-coexistence, and mutual benefits.
- **Constitute an addition to and not be a substitute** for bilateral, regional, or multilateral cooperation involving member states.

- **Key Areas of Cooperation**

- Unlike many other regional groupings, **BIMSTEC is a sector driven cooperative organization.**
 - It has identified **15 priority sectors** such as Transport and Communication, Tourism, Trade, Environment & Disaster Management, Public Health Agriculture etc. and focus on cooperating here.
 - Each sector is led by a member country. (For e.g., India leads transport and communication, tourism, counterterrorism, and trans-national crimes, environment and disaster management.)

- **BIMTEC's growth was hindered in the beginning because of:**

- Lack of political will and collective effort.
- South Asia's focus on SAARC
- But, with the decline of SAARC, BIMSTEC has emerged as a very important grouping for regional connectivity in the region

1) 5TH BIMSTEC SUMMIT

- The 5th BIMSTEC summit was hosted by Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in and from Colombo in hybrid mode on 30th March 2022.
 - » It was preceded by 18th BIMSTEC Ministerial meeting and the 22nd BIMSTEC Senior Officials' meetings.
 - » It was held under the **theme "BIMSTEC - Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy People"**.
- **Key outcomes:**
 - » BIMSTEC Leaders signed the **BIMSTEC Charter** and witnessed the signing of the **BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters**, the MoU on the Establishment of the **BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility**, and the **MoU on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/ Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States**.
 - » The summit saw considerable progress being achieved in the BIMSTEC connectivity agenda with the adoption of the '**Master Plan for Transport Connectivity**'.
 - » The summit also adopted the **BIMSTEC Masterplan on Transport Connectivity**, and the **Rationalized Areas of Cooperation under BIMSTEC**.
 - The **14 areas of cooperation under BIMSTEC have been rationalized to 7 areas of cooperation**.
- **The Chairmanship of BIMSTEC was handed over to Thailand from Sri Lanka at the Summit.**

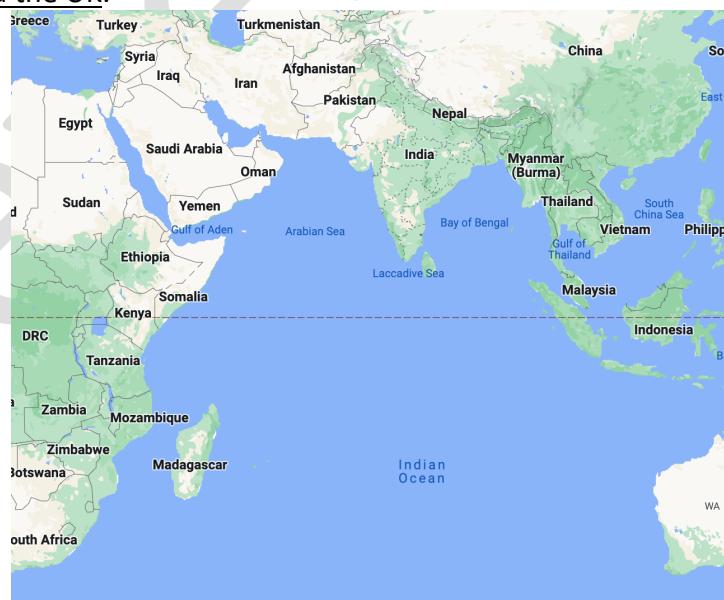
17. INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)

- Introduction

- The IORA, formerly known as Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), is an international organization consisting of coastal states bordering Indian Ocean.
- Formally launched in 1997.
- The coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at **Ebene, Mauritius**.
- The IORA is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia for promoting cooperation and closer interaction among them.
- It is based on the principles of Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as social development of the region.
- IORA became an observer to the UN General Assembly and the African Union in 2015.
- Decisions of IORA are reached by consensus and the commitments are undertaken on voluntary basis.

- Members

- **Member nations (23)**: South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Madagascar, Mauritius (became member in 2014), Seychelles, Comoros, Yemen, Oman, UAE, Iran, India, Maldives (became member in 2018), Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and France (became member in 2021).
- **Dialogue Partners (10)**: The USA, China, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Turkey, Russia, South Korea, and the UK.



- Significance of IORA

- **Economic Growth:**
- **Maritime Security**

18. ASEAN (ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS)

- **Introduction**
 - ASEAN is a political and economic organization of 10 South East Asian countries which promotes Pan-Asianism.
 - Formed in 1967 by - Indonesia, Malaysia, Phillipines, Singapore and Thailand. Since then Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam have joined.
- Headquarter: **Jakarta, Indonesia**
- **Vision:** "One Vision, One Identity, One Community"
- **Various Institutional Mechanisms**
 - **ASEAN Summit:** This is the highest decision and policy making body of ASEAN.
- **Various ASEAN led forums.**
 - **ASEAN plus 3**
 - This was created to improve ties with China, Japan and South Korea.
 - **EAST ASIA Summit**
 - It promotes the security and prosperity in the region. Other than ASEAN leaders it is attended by heads of the states of the important players in the region.
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 - It started with 16 countries in the East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Oceanian regions, based on **ASEAN Plus Six mechanism**. Six countries were China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and NewZealand
 - **Membership expanded to 18 countries** when USA and Russia joined at sixth EAS in 2011.
- **FREE TRADE Agreements**
 - » ASEAN has concluded free trade agreements with China, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and India

19. REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP)

- Introduction

- RCEP is an **FTA between 10 member states of ASEAN and the six five states with which ASEAN has existing FTAs** (Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan and South Korea). **India has decided to stay out of the agreement.**
- RCEP negotiations were **formally launched in Nov 2012** at the ASEAN summit in Cambodia and **concluded in Nov 2020**.
- Its **areas of negotiation** included trade in goods, services, and investment; intellectual property rights; and special and differential treatment to less developed ASEAN members.
- **Key Provisions of the Agreement**
 - It **simplifies the custom provisions** and **rules of origin laws** between countries - implying reduced potential regulatory frictions



- India's decision to stay out of RCEP:

Threat of increasing Trade Deficit: India's trade deficit with RCEP members is still the highest (\$108 billion in 2018-19).

India's Key Concerns were not being taken care of

- Protection against sudden surge in imports was not looked into by member countries.
- India's request of exemption from the Ratchet Obligations was ignored.
- Addressing non-tariff barriers which have hindered India's exports. Issues such as **environmental and labor laws** were used to prevent India's export.
- India's request for country-specific tariff schedule was also rejected at the beginning of the negotiations.
- Dealing with possible circumvention of the rules of origin required stronger provisions, but it couldn't pass the muster.
- Securing better access in service sector couldn't be fructified
- Movement of professionals was also not being liberalized.

Even after hard negotiation by India the other member countries were not ready to budge. **Domestic Slowdown** has also played a role in forcing the government to withdraw from the negotiation.

- **Domestic slowdown intensified the political opposition of India's participation in RCEP.**

Ongoing tensions with China also became an important factor in India staying away from RCEP.

20. MEKONG GANGA COOPERATION (MGC)

- Introduction

- The Mekong-Ganga cooperation (MGC), established in the year **2000**, is a **sub-regional initiative**, focusing on **expanding project-based cooperation** between India and Mekong countries (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam).

- Key areas of cooperation under MGC are tourism, culture, education, public health and traditional medicines, agriculture and allied sectors, transport, and communication, and MSMEs. During the Aug 2019 MM, three new areas of cooperation i.e., Water Resource Management, Science and Technology, and Skill Development & Capacity Building were added. These are aimed at strengthening people to people contact in the region.

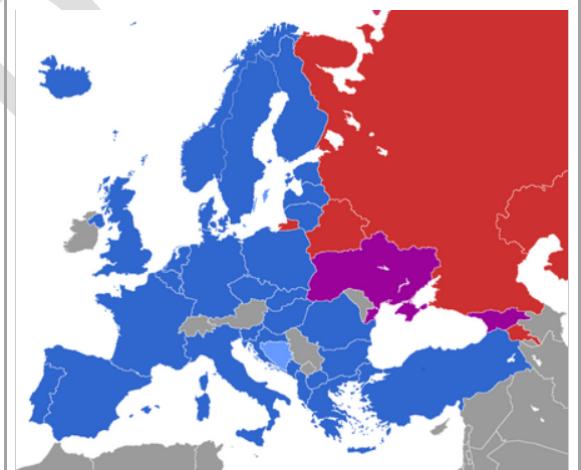


21. NATO

- NATO is a political and Military alliance established in 1949. Its primary purpose is to provide collective defense against potential military aggression from outside alliance. Since the end of cold war, NATO has expanded its membership and taken on new roles, including peacekeeping and counter terrorism operations.
- Headquarter: Brussels

Members: Currently (March 2024) there are 32 members

USA, Canada, UK, Portugal, Spain, France, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Norway, Sweden (joined in March 2024), Finland (joined in 2023), Iceland, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia



Map of NATO in Europe:

- Current members
- Membership Action Plan
- Countries seeking membership
- Countries where membership is not a goal
- Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

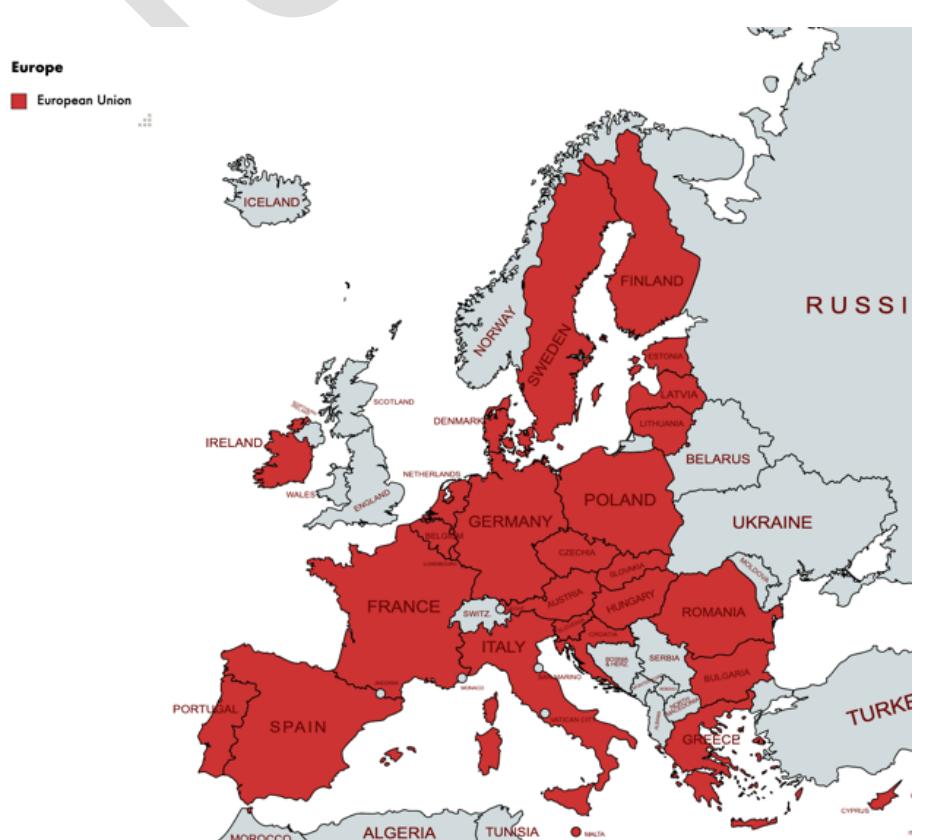
- Note: EU countries not part of NATO: Ireland, Austria, Malta, Cyprus
- Note: Non EU countries part of NATO: USA, Canada, UK, Iceland, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Turkey and Norway

22. EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

- European Union (EU) is a **politico - economic union** of 27 member states (UK withdrew from the group in 31st Jan 2020) that are located primarily in Europe.
 - EU has **developed an internal single market** through a standardized system of law that apply to all member states in those matters, and only those matters, where members have agreed to act as one.
 - The Policies of EU aim to achieve:
 - **free movement of goods, services, people and capital** across the EU market.
 - Enact common legislations in justice and home affairs.
 - Maintain common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries and regional development.
 - The **Maastricht** Treaty (Maastricht is a place in south-east Netherlands) established the **European Union** under its current name in **1993** and introduced the **European citizenship**.
 - The latest major amendment to the constitutional basis of the EU, the **treaty of Lisbon**, came into force in 2009. It amended Maastricht treaty and Treaty of Rome to form European Union on Constitutional Basis.
 - In 2012, the EU was awarded the **Nobel Prize** for having "contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy, and human rights in Europe."

27 MEMBER COUNTRIES:

Ireland,
Portugal,
Spain,
France,
Luxemburg,
Belgium,
Netherlands,
Germany,
Poland,
Czechia,
Slovakia,
Austria,
Hungary,
Slovenia,
Croatia,
Italy,
Malta,
Romania,
Bulgaria,
Greece,
Cyprus,
Denmark,



Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	
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- Its members have a **combined area** of 4.2 million sq km and an **estimated total population** of about 447 million.
- The EU operates through a system of **supernational institutions** and intergovernmental negotiated decisions by the member states.
 - The Institutions of European Union are the **seven-principal decision-making bodies** of the European Union. Their function include:
 - Competencies in **scrutinizing and amending legislation** are divided between **European Parliament** and the **Council of European Union** while **executive tasks** are carried out by the **European commissions** and in a limited capacity by **European Council**. The **Monetary Policy** of the Euro zone is governed by **European Central Bank**. The **interpretation and application of EU law and the treaties** are ensured by the **Court of Justice of European Union**. The **EU budget is scrutinized** by the **European Court of Auditors**. There are also a number of ancillary bodies which advise the EU or operate in a specific area.

1) SCHENGEN AREA

- The Schengen area is the area comprising **27 European countries** that have **abolished passport** and any other type of border control at their common borders, also referred to as internal borders. It mostly functions as single country for international travel purposes, with a common visa policy. Countries in Schengen Area have eliminated border controls with the other Schengen members and strengthened border controls with non-Schengen states.
- **Schengen Agreement (1985)** is the treaty which led to creation of Europe's borderless Schengen Area. It proposed the gradual abolition of border checks at the signatory's common borders.
- Relation with EU
 - Originally, the Schengen treaties and the rules adopted under them operated independently from the EU.
 - However, in 1999 they were incorporated into European Union law by **Amsterdam treaty**, while providing opt-outs for the only two EU member states which had remained outside the area: **United Kingdom and Ireland**. (Note: UK has left EU in Jan 2020)



Map of the Schengen area

- Schengen is now a core part of EU law, and all EU member states without an opt-out which have not already joined the Schengen area are legally obliged to do so when technical requirements have been met.
 - Several non-EU countries are included in the area.
- Within the **Schengen Area** (27 countries), passport controls have been abolished.
 - Out of 27 EU members - 23 participate in the Schengen Area.
 - EU member - Bulgaria, Romania, and Cyprus - are legally obliged to join in future.
 - EU Member - Ireland maintains an opt-out, and instead operates its own visa policy.
 - Non-EU members who are part of Schengen Area include Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.
 - Some countries like Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican City also maintain an open border for passenger traffic with other Schengen member countries and thus are de-facto part of Schengen area.
- Note:
 - Croatia joined the Schengen Zone in 1st Jan 2023.
 - » It also switched to the shared European Currency - the EURO and removed dozens of border check post to join the world's largest passport-free travel area, completing a dream conceived 30 years ago when it fought a war for independence from Yugoslavia.
 - Croatia joined the Schengen Zone on 1st Jan 2023, but didn't lift its air borders to Schengen countries until 26th March 2023

2) EUROZONE

- The Monetary Union (Euro zone) was established in 1999 and came into full force in 2002. It is currently composed of 20 member (Croatia joined in 2023) states that use the Euro as their legal tender.

3) OTHER FACTS ABOUT EU

- Through, the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EU has developed a role in external relations and defence.
- The Union maintains permanent diplomatic missions throughout the world and represents itself at the United Nations, the WTO, the G8, and the G-20.

23.BREXIT

- Brexit Withdrawal Agreement (officially titled "Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community")

- It is a treaty between EU, Euratom and United Kingdom signed on Jan 24, 2020 which set up **terms of withdrawal of the UK from the EU and Euratom**. The text of the treaty was first published in Oct 2019.
- This agreement was approved by the British parliament by enactment of **European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020**.
- The **Council of European Union** ratified the agreement on 30 Jan 2020 following the consent of European Parliament on 29th Jan 2020.

- Key Features of the BREXIT Withdrawal Agreement

- The whole of UK will leave EU, but Northern Ireland will stay in the EU's single market for goods.
- The U.K. can impose tariff on goods entering Northern Ireland from third countries as long as they are not at risk of entering EU single market
- For the goods that are at risk of entering the single market from third countries via Northern Island, EU tariffs will apply.
- Practically, there would be custom border between Great Britain and the island of Ireland, with goods being checked at Northern Irish Ports.
- The agreement replaced the contentious "Irish Backstop" plan in Theresa May's deal with new arrangement which would prevent the return of the 'hard' border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.



ON JAN 31, 2020, THE UNITED KINGDOM LEFT THE EUROPEAN UNION

- UK has become the first country to leave the EU which was set up to forge unity among nations after the horrors of World War - II.
 - Had any nation state ever left the EU before UK?**
 - No, but Greenland one of the Denmark's overseas territories, held a referendum in 1982, after gaining a greater degree of self-government and duly left after a period of negotiation.
- UK had a **11-month transition period** till 31st Dec 2020. During this Britons were able to work in the EU and trade freely - and vice versa, though Britain would not be represented in Bloc's institutions i.e. legally, Britain was out.
- From **1st Jan 2021**, **EU nationals will no longer be able to live and work in Britain without visas** - though it doesn't apply to more than 3 million already doing so - and **Britons can no longer automatically work or retire in EU nations**.

24. ECOWAS (ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WESTERN AFRICAN STATES)

- Why in news?
 - » ECOWAS orders to standby force to deploy in Niger (Aug 2023)
 - This is an attempt to restore democratic forces in ECOWAS.
- About ECOWAS:
 - » It is a regional political and economic union of 15 countries located in Western Africa. It was established in 1975 through the Lagos Treaty.
 - » Its mandate is to promote economic integration among its members. Its **larger aim** is to have a single common currency and create a single trading bloc in areas of industry, transport, telecommunication, energy, financial issues, and social and cultural matters.
 - » According to the website, the Vision of ECOWAS is the creation of a "borderless region" that is well-integrated.
 - » It is meant to be a region governed by principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance.

- Membership:

As of Aug 2023, there are 15 members to this grouping:

Cabo Verde, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.



Following coups in some of the biggest countries in the bloc - namely **Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso** - it suspended the three members and refused to recognize their new governments.

- Organizational Structure:

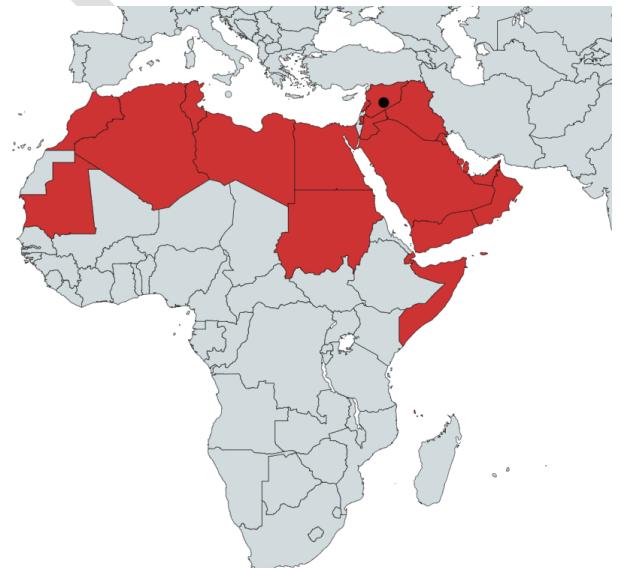
- At the helm of the organizational structure is the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government.
 - The Chairman is the current head of state and government and is appointed by other Heads of State and Government to oversee its affairs for one year.

- What kind of role has ECOWAS played in the region so far?

- Economic Cooperation
- Promoting peace by quelling military conflict.
 - ECOWAS has operated a regional peacekeeping operation known as ECOMOG, led by Nigeria in 1990s and early 200s.
 - For e.g. in Liberia when forces were deployed in 1990 during the deadly civil war and in Sierra Leone in 1997 when a democratically elected government was overthrown.
- **What might ECOWAS do in Niger?**
 - Its response so far has indicated military intervention.
 - But this would face many challenges. For e.g. both Mali and Burkina Faso, both neighbours of Nigeria, run by Military juntas, were sending a delegation of officials to Niger to show support and would consider an attack as an attack on them as well.
 - **Economic Sanctions:**
 - But, there is a question of whether the longstanding measures of economic sanctions - such as those imposed by ECOWAS - can work, as these countries are also leading with low economic growth prospects at the moment.

25. ARAB LEAGUE

- **Basics:**
 - The Arab League, the League of Arab States, is a voluntary regional organization of Arabic speaking countries in and around North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia. It was formed in Cairo on 22nd March 1945 with six members: Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan (Jordan), Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.
 - **Membership: 22 countries**, although Syria's participation has been suspended since 2011, as a result of government's repression during the ongoing uprising and the civil war. (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Comoros, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon)
- **Main Goal** is to "draw closer relation between member states and co-ordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries".
- **How are decisions made?**
 - Decisions are made on the basis of majority, but there is no mechanism to compel members to comply with resolutions.



26. GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

- Member states are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman.
 - » **Note:** Iraq is the only Arab country bordering Persian gulf that is not a member of the GCC.
- Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Persian Gulf, except for Iraq.
 - » **Note:** All current members are **Monarchies**, including three constitutional monarchies (Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain).
- **Formed in 1981**, after signing of Charter of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
- **Objectives**
 - » Formulating similar regulations in various fields such as religion, finance, trade, customs, tourism, legislation, and administration
 - » Fostering scientific and technical progress in industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources
 - » Establishing scientific research centers
 - » Setting up joint ventures
 - » Unified military (Peninsula Shield Force)
 - » Encouraging cooperation of the private sector
 - » Strengthening ties between their people
 - » Establishing a common currency



27. OPEC (ORGANIZATION OF PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES) AND OPEC+

- **Introduction**
 - » It is an intergovernmental organization founded in Baghdad, in **1960** by five countries - **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela**. Since 1965, it is headquartered in Vienna.
- **Membership:**
 - » Currently, the group consists of **13 oil exporting countries** (March 2021).
 - **Five Founding Members:** Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela
 - **Other 8 members:** Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Eq Guinea, Gabon, REPUBLIC OF Congo, Angola and UAE.
- **OPEC differentiates between founding members, full members and Associate Members**
 - **How can someone become full member of OPEC:** The statute stipulates that "any country with a substantial net export of crude petroleum, which has fundamentally similar interests to those



- of Member countries, may become a Full Member of the Organization, if accepted by a majority of three-fourth of Full Members, including the concurring votes of all Founder Members.
- **Associate Members:** The statute further provides for Associate members which are those countries that don't qualify for full membership, but are nevertheless admitted under such special conditions as may be prescribed by the Conference.
- **Members who have left recently:**
 - Qatar (1st Jan 2019)
 - Ecuador (1st Jan 2020)
- **OPEC aims to regulate** the supply of oil in order to set the prices on the world market.
- **Influence on world economy**
 - OPEC decisions have come to play a **prominent role in the global oil market and international relations**.
 - The 13 OPEC countries account for an estimated 44 percent of global oil production and 81.5% of the world's "proven" oil reserves, giving OPEC a major influence on global oil prices.
 - They have started to come to play an important role in global oil market and international relations.
 - The effect can be really strong when wars or civil disorders lead to extended interruptions in supply.
 - E.g.
 - 1970s restriction in oil production led to a dramatic rise in oil prices and OPEC revenue and wealth.
 - Although their influence on international trade is periodically challenged by the expansion of non-OPEC energy sources, and by the recurring temptation for individual OPEC members to exceed production ceiling. Further, **new technologies** like **fracking** in the USA, has had a major effect on worldwide oil prices and has lessened OPEC's influence on the markets.

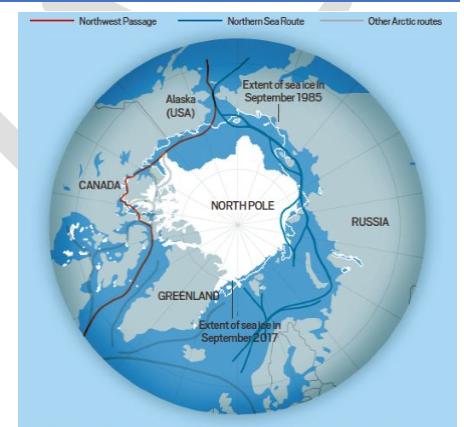
4) OPEC+ (I.E. OPEC AND ITS ALLIES)

- **Background:**
 - After 2014 "glut" diplomacy which brought down prices below \$30-barrel, Saudi Arabia and Russia came together to cut output and steady prices. This is known as **OPEC+** arrangement (Note: Russia is not a member of OPEC) and include Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, South Sudan etc.
 - This alliance kept production lower and pumped up the prices.
- **OPEC+ collapsed in March 2020**, after Russia rejected a Saudi request to affect more cuts in output given the fall in demand due to COVID-19 outbreak.
 - But later, in **April 2020**, OPEC and its allies agreed to historic 10 million barrel per day production cut.
 - **OPEC+ has decided not to increase supply in April** as they await a more substantial recovery in demand amid COVID-19 pandemic. (March 2021)
 - Crude Prices rose after the announcement and are up 33% this year.
 - India have said that the OPEC+ decision to extend the output cuts may hurt some economies.

- In April 2023, OPEC+ announced a surprise cut in oil production.
 - The Group of Oil producing nations say cut of 1.5 million barrels a day is aimed at supporting market stability.
- ~~OPEC+ has decided to increase overall production by 4,00,000 barrels per day every month till the remaining portion of the group's 10 million barrel per day every month production cut announced in April 2020 is completely phased out. (July 2021)~~
 - ~~The decision also ends a standoff between UAE and other OPEC+ countries~~ on trying an extension of the supply agreement to increase production.

28. ARCTIC REGION

- **Introduction**
 - The region around the north pole is known as arctic region. It is usually understood as the area within the arctic circle (parallel of latitude - 66 degree 33 minutes 39 seconds).
 - Climate change and melting of ice in the arctic region has led to opening up of two main sailing routes through Arctic:
 - **The Northwestern Trail** runs along the Canadian coast
 - **The Northeast Passage** through Siberia, which is also the shortest route connecting the far east to the western Europe.
 - It stretches from Murmansk in the west (north west part of Russia) to the Bering Strait in the east and has become the focal point of both Russia and China's Arctic Strategy.
 - This route will be 1/3rd quicker from Asia to Europe than going the long way via Suez Canal and offers a way to rejuvenate the depressed part of Russia.
 - **Some experts believe that Shipping through the Arctic don't make much sense today and likely won't for decades to come:**
 - 1) Even though the routes are shorter, ships have to go slow through the still icy waters.
 - Transit times are still very unpredictable.
 - 2) Most vessels needs to be ice-classed to operate in the route which will lead to extra cost.
 - 3) Shallow waters along Russia rule out the big container ships that dominate cross-ocean traffic.
 - 4) Further, the route bypasses the markets like the Mediterranean sea and Southeast Asia, key hubs in big shipper's global network.
 - 5) This with increased cost due to insurance, and safety consideration are other deterrents.
 - These limitations explain why, despite all the hype, shipping companies are hesitant to dip a toe in the chilly waters.



1) CHINA AND ARCTIC REGION

- China is increasingly active in the polar region despite being a non-Arctic country. It became an observer member of the Arctic Council in 2013.

- Among its increasing interests in the region is its **major stake in Russia's Yamal liquified natural gas project** which is expected to supply China with 4 million tonnes of LNG a year. It has invested **in mining in Greenland** and also seeks to negotiate an FTA with Iceland.
- In fact, the **North Sea route** has become the focal point of both **Russia and China's Arctic Strategy**.

A) CHINA'S OFFICIAL ARCTIC POLICY (ANNOUNCED IN JAN 2018)

- It highlights Beijing's **linking the "Polar Silk Road"** to **Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative**.
- China has **self-identified itself as a "Near Arctic Country"** while keeping its economic and strategic interest in mind.
- China has narrowed down its **interest in two categories**:
 - i. Firstly, Beijing is closely involved in **activities in the areas like scientific research, resource exploration and exploitation, shipping and security**.
 - ii. Secondly, **Climate change** and its potential consequences on the region are expected to affect much of the world, so China is naturally concerned.
- China has outlined its ambitions **to extend President Xi Jingping's BRI to the Arctic** by developing shipping lanes opened up by global warming. China has said that it would **encourage enterprises to build infrastructure and conduct commercial trial voyages**, paving the way **for Arctic Shipping routes that would form a "Polar Silk Road"**.

A) INDIA'S PRESENCE IN ARCTIC

Currently, India has a **single station, Himadri**, in **Ny-Alesund**, Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago, where research personnel are **usually present for 180 days**. India is in the process of procuring ice-breaker research vessel that can navigate the region

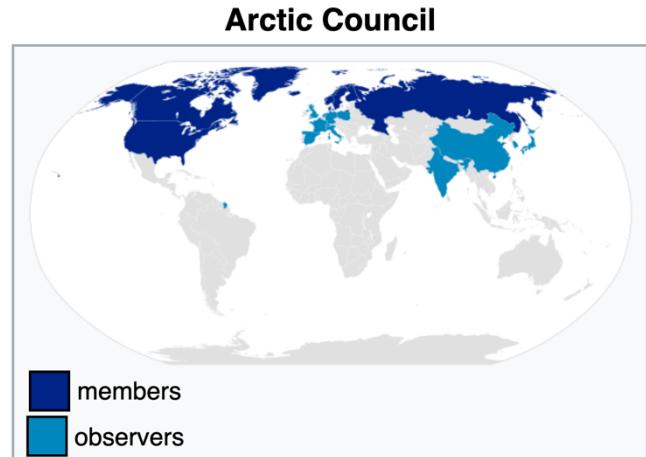
29. ARCTIC COUNCIL

- **Introduction**
 - Arctic Council is a **high-level intergovernmental forum** that addresses **issues faced by Arctic governments and the indigenous people of Arctic**.
 - It acts as **forum for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the arctic states**, with the involvement of the arctic indigenous communities and other arctic inhabitants on issues such as **sustainable development** and **environment protection**.
 - It was **established in 1996 through the 1996 Ottawa declaration**.
- **Membership**
 - **Members:**
 - Only states with territory in the Arctic can be members of the Council. It has **eight member countries** : Canada, USA, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.
 - **Observer states**

- United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, **India**, China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore.

- Importance of the Region

- Vast natural resources
 - Oil, Gas and Minerals
 - Commercial fishing opportunities
- Shortened shipping routes that are now accessible because of global warming.
- Scientific research opportunities
- Climate Change studies
- Strategic significance



- India and Arctic Council

- India was first given observer status in 2013 for five years. This was then renewed in 2018 for another five-year term.
- According to MEA India's interests in the Arctic region are scientific, environmental, commercial as well as strategic.
 - This is also visible from the Draft Arctic Policy released by India recently.

- India Scientific work in Arctic Region

- India now maintains a permanent presence in the region through a **research base Himadri** and **two observatories**, in Kongsfjorden and Ny Alesund.
- **Note:**
 - Himadri is India's first permanent Arctic Research base located at Spitsbergenu, Svalbard, Norway. It is located at the International Arctic Research Base, **Ny-Alesund**. It was set up during India's second Arctic Expedition in June 2008.

30. BRICS

- BASICS

- BRICS is a grouping of five major emerging economies (BRAZIL, RUSSIA, INDIA, CHINA, and SOUTH AFRICA) that are becoming the key driver of globalization. Their cooperation has been driven by not only economic and political factors, but also because of failure of existing global governance framework to satisfy the real needs of these countries.
- Originally the first four were called BRIC before induction of South Africa in 2010.
 - **Note:** Term **BRIC** was coined in 2001 by the then chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management **Jim O'Neil**, in his publication "*Building Better Global Economic BRICs*". On the basis of economic analysis, he claimed that the four economies would individually and collectively occupy far greater economic space and become **among the world's largest economies in the next 50 years**.



- BRICS members are all developing and newly industrialized countries, but they are distinguished by their large and fast-growing economies and significant influence on regional and global affairs.
- All five are G20 members.
- The first summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia in 2009 and since then the BRICS nations have met annually at formal summits.

- **AIMS and Objective**

- Promoting a more legitimate international system including UNSC and IMF/WB reforms
 - Promote South-South Cooperation and regional cooperation.
 - Act as a bridge between developed and developing countries
 - Present a united front of developing countries in climate change negotiations
 - Embrace cultural diversity and promote people to people contact among BRICS countries
- In Recent years BRICS has diversified its objectives and is also working towards fighting protectionism and promoting & protecting multilateralism. Focus on counterterrorism has also increased.

31. NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

- US\$100 billion New Development Bank (formerly known as the "BRICS Development Bank") is a multilateral development bank operated by BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).
- **History**
 - New Development Bank was agreed to by BRICS leaders at the 5th BRICS summit held in Durban, South Africa in 2013.
 - In 2014, at the 6th Summit held at Fortaleza, Brazil, the group of emerging economies signed the long-anticipated document to create the \$100 billion BRICS development bank and a reserve currency pool worth over another \$100 billion.
 - **Headquarter:** The bank is headquartered in Shanghai, China. A regional headquarter will be set up in Johannesburg.
 - The first President will be from India, the inaugural Chairman of the Board of Directors will come from Brazil and the inaugural chairman of the board of Governors will be Russia.
 - On May 11, 2015: K.V. Kamath was appointed as president of the bank. (He completed his five year term in 2020).
 - On March 24, 2023 , the NDB announced Dilma Rousseff as its new President.
- **Voting Powers:** Unlike the World Bank, which assigns votes based on capital share, in the New Development Bank each participant country will be assigned one vote, and none of the countries will have veto power.
- **Why BRICS bank was born -> Lack of Reforms in Bretton Woods Institutions**
- **Objectives and Total Capital**
 - Development Capital

- The bank's primary focus of lending will be infrastructure projects with authorized lending of upto \$34 billion annually. The bank will have starting capital of \$50 billion, with capital increase to \$100 billion overtime.
- **Contribution and voting rights**
 - Each member's contribution will be equal with equal voting rights.
- Each member cannot increase its capital share without all other 4 members agreeing. This was primary requirement of India.
- The bank will allow new members to join but the BRICS capital share cannot fall below 55%.

- **Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**

- The CRA is a framework for the provision of support through liquidity and precautionary instruments in response to actual potential short term balance of payment pressure.
- **Objective** of this capital is to provide protection against the global liquidity pressure. This include currency issues where member's national currencies are being adversely affected by global financial pressures. The bank would also provide assistance to other countries suffering from the economic volatility in the wake of US exit from its expansionary monitoring policy.
- **Contribution By Each Country**
 - Out of the total initial capital of \$100 billion, China will contribute \$41 billion, Brazil, Russia and India would give \$18 billion each, and South Africa would contribute \$5 billion.

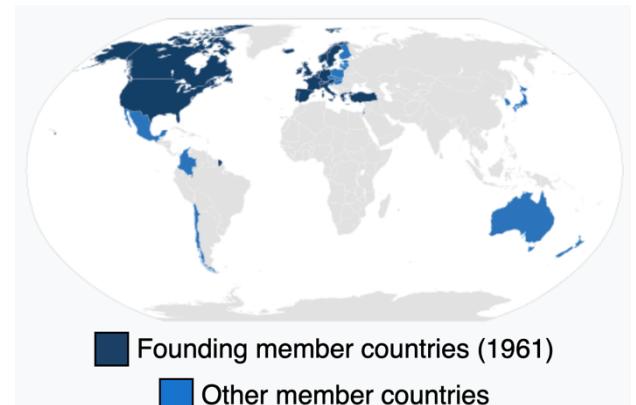
Initial Subscribed Capital	\$50 billion (each member gave 10 billion)
Initial Authorized Capital	\$100 billion
Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA)	\$100 billion

- **Update:** New Development Bank has announced the launch of its Indian Regional Office in GIFT City.

32. OECD (ORGANIZATION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT)

- **About OECD**

- OECD is an international economic organization for 37 countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.
- It is a forum of countries describing themselves as committed to democracy and the market economy, providing a platform to compare policy experiences, seeking answers to common problems, identify good practices and coordinate domestic and international policies of its members.
- **Origin in 1948** OEC which was formed to help administer Marshall plan.
- **Headquarter:** Chateau de la Muette in Paris, France
- **Members:** The OECD's 37 members are: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland,



■ Founding member countries (1961)

■ Other member countries

Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

33. FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF)

- **Intro**
 - Financial Action Task Force (on Money Laundering) is an intergovernmental organization **founded in 1989** on the initiative of the G7 to develop policies to combat money laundering. In 2001, the purpose expanded to act on **terrorism financing**.
 - It **monitors countries' progress** in implementing the FATF Recommendations by the '**peer review**' ('**mutual evaluations**') of member countries.
 - FATF **secretariat** is housed at the headquarters of the OECD in Paris.
- **Members and Observers**
 - **For being a member**, a country must be considered **strategically important** (large population, large GDP, developed banking and insurance sector, etc.), must adhere to **globally accepted financial standards**, and be a **participant in other important organizations**.
 - **Responsibilities of a member:**
 - » The country or organization must endorse and support the most recent FATF recommendations, commit to being evaluated by (and evaluating) other members, and work with the FATF in the development of future recommendations.
- **Every year there are three plenary meeting** of the inter-governmental body.
- What are **Blacklist** and **Grey List**?
 - These two terms **don't exist in FATF's official terminology**. The group identifies "**jurisdictions with weak measures**" through two documents issued at the end of the plenary held thrice a year.
 - The first document (Colloquially known as the **blacklist**) has the **two set of countries ("Call for action")**
 - A. Countries or jurisdictions with such **serious strategic deficiencies** that the FATF calls its members and nonmembers to apply counter measures.
 - **North Korea** falls in this category.
 - B. Countries for which FATF calls on its members to apply enhanced due diligence measures proportionate to the risks arising from the deficiencies associated with the country.
 - **Iran** falls in this category.
 - C. Blacklist is also known as **non-cooperative countries / Territories [NCCTs]**
 - The **second document** is called "**Improving Global AML/CFT Compliance: On Going Process**". It consists of "**Other Monitored Jurisdiction**". This is colloquially known as the **grey list**.

- A. These countries have shown strategic weakness in preventing money laundering and terror financing, but they **will get a second chance** as they "provided a high-level commitment to an action plan developed with the FATF".
- B. **Pakistan** is listed in this list. It has been on the Grey List from **2008-2015**, after which it was taken off the watch list until 2018. In 2018 it was again added on the list and given a 27 point action plan. It was removed from the list in Oct 2022.
- C. A **country in grey list** may face following limitations:
 - Economic Sanctions from IMF, World Bank, ADB
 - Problem in getting loans from IMF, World Bank, ADB and other countries
 - Reduction in international trade
 - International boycott.

FATF SUSPENDED THE MEMBERSHIP OF RUSSIA FEDERATION (FEB 2023)

Reason: Ukraine War: The Russian Federation's actions unacceptably run counter to the FATF core principles aiming to promote security, safety, and the integrity of the global financial system. They also represent a gross violation of the commitment to international cooperation and mutual respect upon which FATF Members have agreed to implement and support the FATF Standards

34. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS: ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** is a regional development bank established 1966. It was conceived as a financial institution that will be Asian in character and foster economic growth and cooperation in one of the poorest regions of the world.
 - **Mission:** Achieve a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable **Asia and the Pacific**, while sustaining our efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- **Headquarter:** Metro Manila, Philippines
- **Objective:** To facilitate social and economic development in Asia.
 - **80% of ADB's lending** have been concentrated in Public sector with focus on **five operational areas**:
 - i. **Education**
 - ii. **Environment, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Reduction**
 - iii. **Financial Sector development**
 - iv. **Infrastructure** including transport, communication, energy, water supply and sanitation, and Urban development.
 - v. **Regional cooperation and integration**
- **Voting** =: Modelled closely on the World Bank, and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with member's capital subscription.
- **Observer at UN:** ADB is an official UN observer.
- **Members:**
 - The bank admits the members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific Region (UNESCAP) and non-regional developed countries.
 - ADB presently (Feb 2020) has **68 members** of which **49** are from within Asia Pacific and 19 outside.

Country	Shares	Voting Power
---------	--------	--------------

Japan	15.571%	12.756%
US	15.571%	12.756%
China	6.429%	5.442%
India	6.317%	5.352
Australia	5.773%	4.917

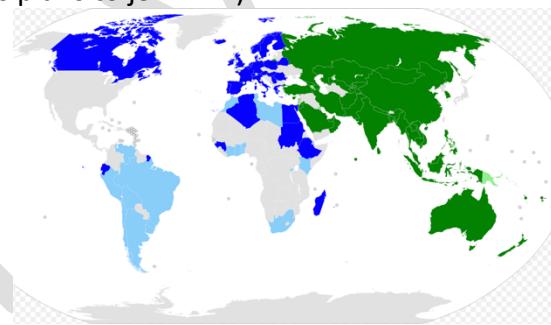
35. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS: ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK (AIIB)

- Introduction

- » The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank with a mission to **improve social and economic outcomes in Asia**. It aims to support the building of infrastructure in the Asia Pacific Region.
- » On **29th June 2015** countries from five continents formally signed in Beijing the **Articles of Association** (also called **60 article agreement**), the legal framework that began the existence of the Bank.
 - The agreement entered into force on 25th Dec 2015 when ratification was received from 10 member states holding a total of 50% of initial subscription of the authorized capital stock.
- » It is regarded by some as rival to IMF, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which are dominated by developed countries like the USA, EU and Japan.

- Members and Founding Members

- » The institution currently has **103 members** (Regional members: 46, Non-regional members: 39, Prospective Members: 18).
 - All of Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand are also members.
- » **Major economies that are not members** of AIIB are **USA, Japan, Mexico and Nigeria** (Nigeria has plans to join AIIB).



- Objectives

- To provide finance to infrastructure projects in Asia region.
- Fostering Long Term Economic Development
- Infrastructure as regional integration and foreign policy tool.

- Reasons for Formation - Slow pace of reforms and governance in **global financial institutions** such as IMF, World Bank, and Asian Development Banks

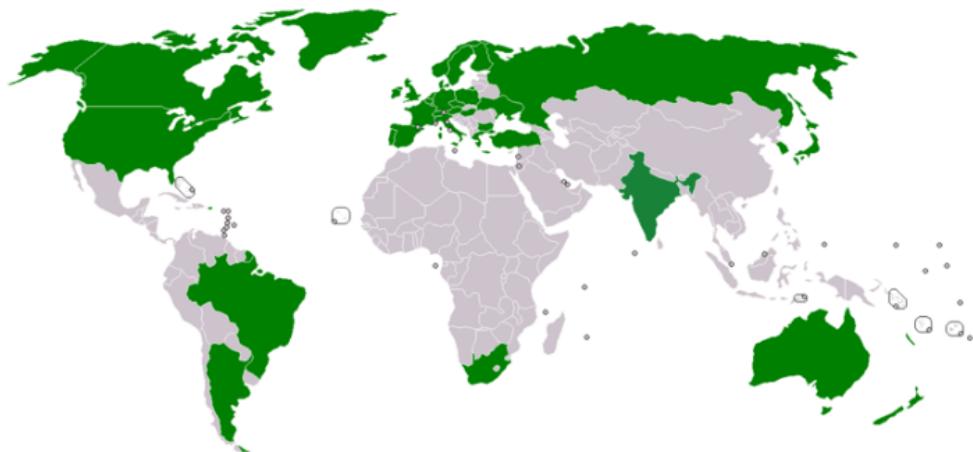
- **Capital**
 - The bank has an authorized capital of \$100 billion (around 2/3rd the capital of ADB, and half that of World Bank)
- **Regional Character of the Bank:** The bank's regional members will be holding around 75% shares i.e.; they will be majority shareholders.
- **Shareholding structure and Voting Right**
 - Voting share: It is based on the size of the economy and not on authorized capital share of the Bank.

Country	Share	Voting Rights
China	30.79%	26.52
India	8.65%	7.604
Russia	6.75%	5.98
Germany	4.63%	4.17

- **India and China** are the only countries to have a permanent seat on AIIB's Board of Directors.
- **China also holds veto power** for certain key decisions.
- **India and AIIB**
 - **Biggest Beneficiary:** India has been the biggest beneficiary of the bank. Out of \$20 billion in loans issued by the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), about \$6 billion has gone to India.
 - **Overlooking China's de-facto veto:**
 - **Projects funded in partnership:**
 - **Easy terms of loans:**

36. WEAPON CONTROL REGIMES: MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CONTROL REGIME

- MTCR is an informal and voluntary partnership between 35 countries (India became a member in June 2016) to prevent the proliferation of missile, complex rocket systems, unmanned aerial vehicles and related technology capable of carrying a 500 Kg payload for atleast 300 kms, as well as systems intended for delivery of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
- **Established**
 - In 1987 by Canada, USA, United Kingdom, France Germany, Italy, and Japan.
 - It was created to curb the spread of unmanned delivery systems for nuclear weapons, specially delivery systems that could carry a minimum payload of 500 Kg a minimum of 300 km.
- **Membership**
 - **Participating states: 35**
 - **Note:** China, Israel and Pakistan are not members of MTCR



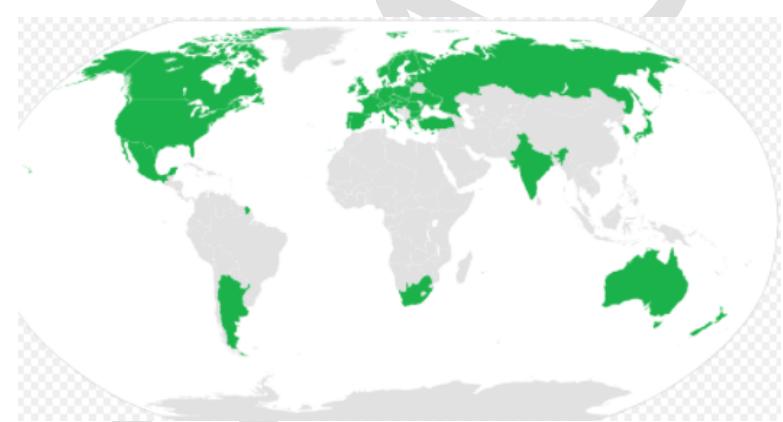
- In 2002, the MTCR was supplemented by the International Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (ICOC), also known as Hague Code of conduct, which calls for restraint and care in the proliferation of ballistic missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, and has 119 members, thus working parallel to MTCR will less specific restrictions but with greater memberships.

37. WEAPON CONTROL REGIMES: NUCLEAR SUPPLIER GROUP (NSG)

- **Introduction**
 - NSG is a multinational body concerned with reducing nuclear proliferation by controlling the export and re-transfer of material that may be applicable to nuclear weapon development and by improving safeguards and protection on existing materials. In short NSG was established **to prevent the civilian nuclear trade from being used for military purpose**.
- **Background**
 - India's Nuclear Test, May 1974.
 - The test demonstrated that certain non-weapons specific nuclear technology could be readily turned to weapons development. Nations already signatories of Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty saw the need to further limit the export of nuclear equipment, materials, or technology.
 - Another advantage of forming NSG was that the Non-NPT nations, then specifically France (France and China acceded to NPT in 1992), could be brought in.
- **First met in 1975**
- **Membership**
 - As of March 2023: NSG has 48 members (**India isn't a member**).
- **Future Indian Participation in NSG**
 - NSG has been opened to admitting new members, but it has been stringent in opening its doors only to those countries that are part of the NPT or CTBP. India is neither signed the NPT nor the CTBT.
 - In 2008, NSG issued an India-specific waiver allowing it to engage in Nuclear trade. India got its exemption on the basis of certain non-proliferation commitments to which it agreed under the India-US Nuclear Agreement.
 - The commitments included

- Separating its civilian and military nuclear facilities in phased manner
- Placing civil nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards
- Signing and adhering to IAEA's additional protocol
- Continuing unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing
- Working with the US for the conclusion of Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)
- Refraining from transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technology to states that do not have them and supporting international efforts to limit their spread.
- US has shown its support in 2010 and 2015, president visit to India. UK, France and Russia are also in favour, only China opposes.

38. WEAPON CONTROL REGIMES: WASSENAAR ARRANGEMENT

- **Introduction:** The Wassenaar arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual Use Good and Technologies is a multilateral export control regime with 42 participating states including many former COMECON(Warsaw) countries.
 - **Establishment**
 - July 1996
 - Wassenaar, Netherlands
 - **Secretariat: Vienna**
 - **Aim:** The Wassenaar Arrangement was established to contribute to regional and international security and stability by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual use goods and technologies, thus preventing established accumulation.
 - Member countries are required to ensure that transfers of these items don't contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities which undermine the goals of security and stability.
 - **Membership**
 - **42 Participating Members**
 - In Dec 2017, India became the 42 members
 - China is not a member of this grouping.
 - Admission requires states to
 - Be a producer or exporter of arms or sensitive industrial equipment
 - Maintain non-proliferation policies and appropriate national policies, including adherence to
 - NSG, MTCR, Australian Group
 - NPT, Biological Weapon Convention, Chemical Weapon Convention
- 

39. WEAPON CONTROL REGIME: AUSTRALIA GROUP

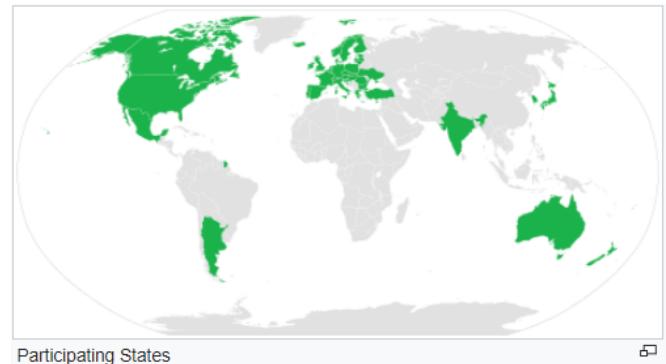
- **Introduction:** It is an informal group of countries (now joined by the European Commission) established in 1985 (after the use of chemical weapons by Iraq in 1984) to help member countries to identify those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons. So, it is one of the multilateral export control regimes (MECR).

- **Naming:** The group has been so named because of Australia's initiative to create the group. Australia also manages the secretariat.

- **Membership**

- **Member countries:**

- The group consists of 43 countries including all 28 members of EU, Ukraine and Argentina.



- **India became the 43rd Member** in January 2018.
- **Note: China, Russia and Pakistan** are not members of the group.
- **Meeting:** Delegations representing the members meet every year in Paris, France.

- **Control**

- Members of the group maintain **export controls on a uniform list of 54 compounds**, including several that are not prohibited for export under the Chemical Weapons Convention, but can be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons.

- **Significance of India's membership**

- India's membership shows that our export controls and safeguards for biological and chemical agents, equipment, technologies meet the benchmark established by the international community.
 - It is understood that India's membership of AG will also boost India's membership bid for the NSG, which is being opposed by China.

40. NON PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) – INDIA NOT A SIGNATORY

- **Introduction:** The Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as NPT, is an international treaty whose **objective** is to
 - Prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology (non-proliferation)
 - Promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy (peaceful uses)
 - Further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament (disarmament)
- **Dates**
 - Open for signature in 1968, the treaty entered into force in 1970.
 - On 11 May 1995, the treaty was extended indefinitely.
- **Membership**
 - A total of 191 states have joined NPT
 - North Korea, acceded in 1985 but never came into compliance, announced its withdrawal in 2003.
 - **Four UN member states who have never joined.**
 - India
 - Pakistan

- Israel
- South Sudan
- **Nuclear Weapon States**
 - The treaty recognizes five states as nuclear weapon states
 - The USA
 - Russia
 - United Kingdom
 - France
 - China
 - Four other states known or believed to possess nuclear weapons
 - India
 - Pakistan
 - North Korea
 - Israel
- **Central Bargain of the treaty**
 - The NPT is often seen to be based on the central bargain: "The NPT non-nuclear weapon states agree never to acquire nuclear weapons and the NPT nuclear weapon states in exchange agree to share the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology and to pursue nuclear disarmament aimed at ultimate elimination of their nuclear arsenals".
- **Achievements**
 - At the time NPT was proposed, there were predictions of 25-30 nuclear weapon states in next 20 years.
 - Today only 5 states are not party and 4 of them are nuclear weapon states.
 - Several additional measures
 - NSG
 - IAEA Additional Protocol
- **Limitations**
 - Failed in disarmament
 - 5 recognized nuclear weapon states have a stockpile of 22,000 warheads. Article VI of the treaty "obligates the nuclear weapon states to liquidate their nuclear stockpiles and pursue complete disarmament". There is no sign of this happening.
- **Why India has not joined**
 - **Haves and Have nots**
 - **NPT Is flawed:** it did not recognize the need for universal, non-discriminatory verification and treatment.
 - **India's own security concerns**
 - **Nuclear weapons as active tools of international diplomacy**
 - **India also remains a strong proponent of universal disarmament.**

41. COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY (CTBT)

- **Introduction**
 - CTBT is a multilateral treaty by which states agree to **ban all nuclear explosions in all environments, for military or civilian purposes**.
 - **Need:** Between 1945 and 1996, over 2,000 nuclear test were conducted – mainly by the US (over 1,000), Soviet Union (700) and France (200) – the treaty was brought to bring this to halt.

- The treaty was negotiated at the **Conference on Disarmament** in Geneva and **adopted by the UNGA in 1996**. But, the treaty **has not entered into force yet, due to the non-ratification of the 8 specific nations**.
- **When would the treaty come in force?**
 - The treaty would enter into force 180 days after the 44 states listed in Annex-2 of the treaty ratify it. These annex-2 states are those states which participated in the CTBT's negotiation between 1994 and 1996 and possessed nuclear power reactors or research reactors at that time.
 - **As of March 2020, 8 annex-2 states have not ratified**
 - USA, China, Egypt, Iran and Israel have signed but not ratified
 - India, North Korea and Pakistan have not signed the treaty.
 - Total 184 countries have signed the treaty (16 without ratification) - As of March 2020.

- **Significance of CTBT**
 - **Prevents Nuclear Proliferation:** CTBT is the last barrier on the way to develop nuclear weapons. It not only curbs the development of new weapons, but also prevents the improvement of existing designs. When in force, it will provide a legally binding prohibition on nuclear testing.
 - **Prevents environmental damage** that occurs due to nuclear testing.
 - It's **non-discriminatory** as under this treaty everyone has the same obligation -> never to conduct nuclear explosion.
- **Why has India not signed the treaty yet?**
 - **CTBT doesn't deal with India's stand of Complete disarmament** in a time bound manner. It is just restricting the new tests.
 - **Discriminatory**
 - For countries who **already have large stockpiles** of nuclear weapons, this is advantageous as it prevents others from getting it. For India, this pact will act as a hindrance in testing new technologies
 - **Technology difference between P-5 countries and India**
 - P-5 countries no longer need to go for testing to enhance their stockpiles as they have developed laboratory stimulated testing mechanism which will not require nuclear explosions.
 - **India's vulnerable neighborhood** makes it mandatory for India to keep the option of future tests open. China already has a huge stockpile and as per CTBT (and NPT) it will be able to retain its arsenal but prevent India from developing more. This will give China an upper hand.

42. OPEN SKIES TREATY

- **Why in news?**
 - IN NOV 2020, **USA formally withdrew from OPEN Skies Treaty**.
 - In Jan 2021, Russia also withdrew from OST.
- **What is Open Skies Treaty?**
 - It is an **accord** that allows participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states.

- The treaty was proposed for the first time in 1955 by the former US President Dwight Eisenhower as a means to deescalate tensions during the Cold War. But it could eventually be signed only in 1992 between the NATO members and the former WARSAW Pact countries following the disintegration of USSR. It came into force in 2002.
 - A country can undertake aerial imaging over the host state after giving notice 72 hours before, and sharing its exact flight path 24 hours before.
 - The **information gathered** such as on troop movement, military exercises, and missile deployment has to be shared with all the member states.
 - **Only approved imaging equipment** is allowed on the surveillance flights, and officials from the host state can also be on board throughout the planned journey.
- **Significance of OST**
 - **Openness and transparency** building confidence among the member countries. It thus reduces the chances of accidental war.
 - It gives **key information** which advanced satellite imagery can't provide till now.
 - **Why has US withdrawn?**
 - Many experts in USA have, for over a decade, accused Russia of non-compliance with the OST protocols and have blamed them for obstructing surveillance flights on its territory, while misusing its own missions for gathering key tactical data.
 - USA has **advanced its satellite imagery capabilities** like no other country. At the same time, it has **not advanced its surveillance aircrafts** while **Russia has gained an unfair technical advantage under the OST** by introduction of a new digital electro-optical sensor to its Tupolev Tu-154 aircraft used for Open Skies Flight. So, remaining in this treaty may not be useful for USA.

43. IMPORTANT REPORTS

A) DEMOCRACY INDEX, 2021

- Released by **the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** which is a UK-based private company which publishes the weekly newspaper ***The Economist***.
- It ranks 167 countries based on 60 indicators divided into **5 parameters**
 1. Electoral Process and Pluralism
 2. Functioning of Government
 3. Political Participation
 4. Political Culture
 5. Civil Liberties.

B) VARIETIES OF DEMOCRACY REPORT

- **About V-Dem**
 - » Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a **new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy**.

- It provides a multidimensional and disaggregated dataset that reflects the complexity of the **concept of democracy as a system of rule that goes beyond the simple presence of elections**.
 - It not only takes into account the electoral dimension (free and fair elections), but also the liberal principle that a democracy must protect "individual minority rights against both the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority".
 - The report **classifies countries into four regime types** based on their score in the **Liberal Democracy Index (LDI)**:
 - **Liberal Democracy**
 - **Electoral Democracy**
 - **Electoral Autocracy**
 - **Closed Autocracy**
 - The **Liberal Democracy Index (LDI)** captures both liberal and electoral aspects of a democracy based on 71 indicators that make up the **Liberal Component Index (LCI)** and **Electoral Democracy Index (EDI)**.
 - The **LCI measures** aspects such as protection of individual liberties and legislative constraints on the executive;
 - The **EDI considers** indicators that guarantee free and fair elections such as freedom of expression and freedom of association.
 - In addition, **LDI also uses Egalitarian Component Index** (to what extent different social groups are equal), **Participatory Component Index** (health of citizen groups, civil society organizations), and **Deliberative Component Index** (whether political decisions are taken through public reasoning focused on common good or through emotional appeals, solidarity attachments, co-ercion).
- » It is a monumental study from the **University of Gothenburg, Sweden**. The report is backed by EU, and funded by a multitude of different institutions and think tanks, ensuring a robust access to data.

C) FREEDOM HOUSE'S REPORT: FREEDOM IN THE WORLD

- **Details**
 - **Freedom House** is a US based human rights watchdog.
 - It publishes an annual report - Freedom in the World - which **assesses the political and civil liberties** around the world.

2) TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

- **About Transparency International**
 - It is an international not for profit NGO which works towards combating global corruption and preventing criminal activities arising from corruption.
 - It was founded in 1993 and is based in Berlin, Germany.

A) CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX

- It ranks **180** countries and territories based on how corruption in their public sector is perceived to be.
It is a composite index i.e., it draws upon corruption related data by a variety of reputable institutions.
It uses a scale of 0 to 100 (0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean)
- **Some limitations of the CPI**
 1. Experts argue that CPI is not a reflection of the corruption environment of a country and it fails to highlight the pressure points.
 2. It is **not truly representative** - It only uses expert assessments and surveys of business people, excluding surveys of public. This generates **sample bias** as business elites are generally less negative about forms of corruption that favor their own group.

B) GLOBAL CORRUPTION BAROMETER

- It is the largest survey in the world tracking public opinion on corruption

3) GLOBAL PRESS FREEDOM INDEX (PFI)

- Published by **Reporters without Borders** (RSF): It is an international NGO whose self-proclaimed aim is to defend and promote media freedom. It is headquartered in Paris and has consultative status with the UN.
- The **objective of the World Press Freedom Index**, which it releases every year, “is to compare the level of press freedom enjoyed by journalists and media in 180 countries and territories” in the previous calendar year
- **RSF defines Press Freedom** as “the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety”
- **Method Used:**
 - Countries are ranked after being assigned a score from 0 to 100, with 100 representing the highest possible level of freedom and 0 the worst.
 - The scoring has **two components**:
 - **A quantitative one**: It tallies abuses against journalists and media outlets
 - **A qualitative analysis** based on the responses of press freedom specialists (journalists, researchers, human right defenders) to an RSF questionnaires.
- **2022 World Press Freedom Index:**
 - India's ranking has fallen to 150/180 countries (from 142 last year)
 - The **top three positions** have been given to **Nordic trio** – Norway (92.65 score), Denmark (90.27) and Sweden (88.84).
 - **Norway** has topped for the fifth year in running.

4) WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT – OPEN GOVERNMENT INDEX AND RULE OF LAW INDEX

- WJP is an international civil society organization with the stated mission of "working to advance the rule of law around the world".
 - It works through **three programs:**
 - Research and Scholarship
 - The WJP Rule of Law Index
 - Engagement
 - It seeks to increase public awareness about the foundational importance of rule of Law, stimulate government reforms and develop practical programs at community level.
 - It was released first in 2015

A) ABOUT THE OPEN GOVERNMENT INDEX

- WJP's **Open Government Index** is the first effort to measure government openness based on general public experience and perception worldwide.
- Open government index is based on the following dimensions:
 - Publicized Laws and government data
 - Right to Information
 - Civil Participation
 - Complaint Mechanism
- The index was first released in 2015.

B) ABOUT THE RULE OF LAW INDEX

- It is the world's leading source for original, dependent data on the rule of law.
- It measures rule of Law based on the experiences and perceptions of the general public and in-country legal practitioners and experts worldwide.

44. NOT VERY IMPORTANT INDICES AND REPORTS

1) ACADEMIC FREEDOM INDEX – GLOBAL PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE

2) OXFAM

- It is an international confederation of 20 NGOs focusing on alleviating global poverty. It was formed in 1995 by a few NGOs to share knowledge and resources and combine their efforts in fighting against poverty and injustice.
 - » The name "Oxfam" comes from the oxford committee of famine relief, founded in Britain in 1942. The group campaigned for food supplies to be sent through an allied naval blockade to starve women and children in enemy occupied Greece during the WW-II.

3) FOOD WASTE INDEX REPORT – BY UNEP AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

4) HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX

5) GLOBAL CHILDHOOD REPORT AND END OF CHILDHOOD RANKING 2021 – BY SAVE THE CHILDREN (A NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATION)

- 6) WORLD COMPETITIVENESS INDEX BY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (IMD)
- 7) IMD WORLD TALENT RANKING
- 8) GLOBAL TALENT COMPETITIVENESS INDEX (GTCI) BY INSEAD BUSINESS SCHOOL
- 9) GLOBAL LIVEABILITY INDEX – ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE UNIT (EIU)
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TARGET PRELIMS 2024

BOOKLET-35

INTERNATIONAL BODIES-5

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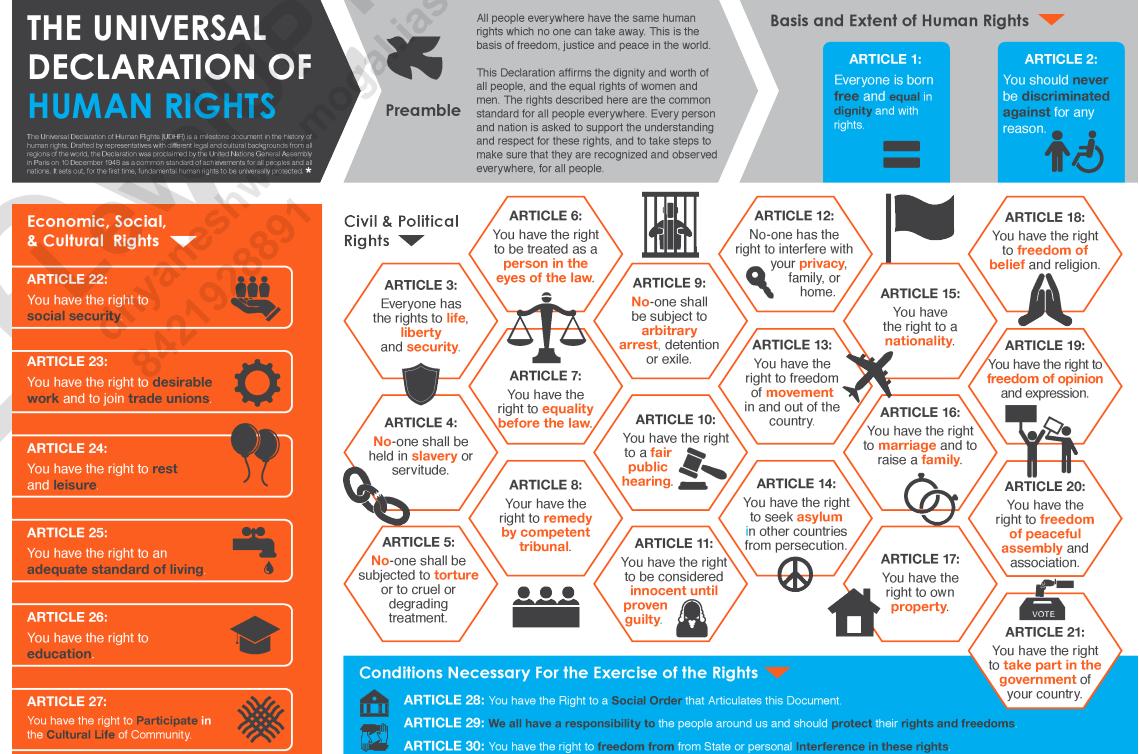
1. UN BODIES, CONVENTION, SUMMITS ETC.

1) ARTICLE 99 OF UN CHARTER

- **Why in news?**
 - » Article 99 of the UN Charter invoked for the first time in decades as Israel invokes Gaza (Dec 2023)
- **Article 99:** "The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten maintenance of international peace and security".
 - » **More details:** It is seen as a discretionary power. According to the UN, the **President of the Security Council is under the obligation to call a meeting of the Council** if the Secretary-General brings to the attention of the Council any matter under Article 99
- **UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres** as invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter in a bid to establish ceasefire amid the Israel's military action on the Gaza Strip.

2) UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

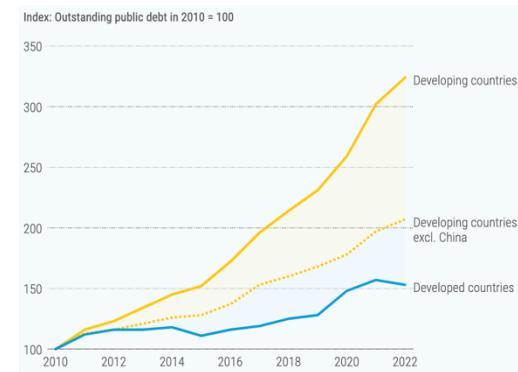
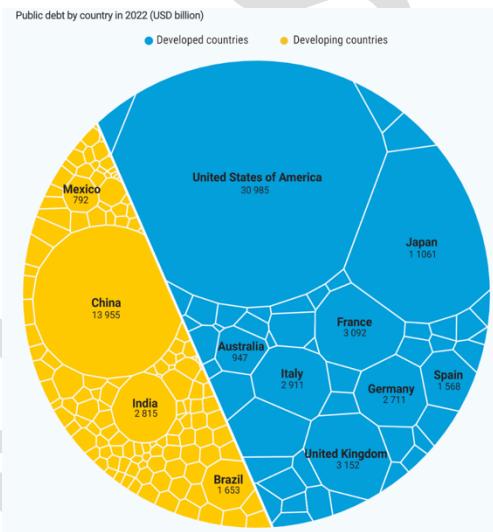
- **75 years ago**, on 10th Dec, 1948, the UNGA approved UDHR at a meeting in Paris - laying one of the foundation stones of the international order that emerged following the horrors of WW-II.
- **Some details about the UDHR:**
 - The document consist of a preamble and 30 articles setting out fundamental rights and freedoms.
 - **Article-1:** "All humans being are born free and equal in dignity and rights".
 - **Article 2:** says that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms the declaration sets out, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."



- **Background: Need of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**
 - » The declaration was born of the "never again" sentiment among political leaders after the two world wars and the holocaust.
- **Is it legally binding?**
 - » The declaration isn't a treaty and isn't legally binding in itself, but the principles it sets out have been incorporated into many countries' laws and it is viewed as the basis for international human rights law.

3) GLOBAL CRISIS RESPONSE GROUP

- **About GCRG:**
 - » The GCRG was set up by the United Nation Secretary General (UNSG) in March 2022 to address the urgent and critical global issues pertaining to interlinked **crisis in food, security, energy, and finance** and to coordinate a global response.
 - » The GCRG is overseen by the Champions Group comprising of HOS/HOGs of Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia, and Senegal.
 - » The UN Deputy Security General leads the steering committee of the GCRG.
- **Update: July 2023: India has joined GCRG, accepting an invitation from UNSG Antonio Guterres to PM Modi.**
 - » The decision to join reflects India's increasing global leadership and commitment addressing contemporary global challenges.
 - » India's participation will boost efforts of UN in finding result-oriented solutions on developmental issues that impact the world, particularly developing countries.
- **Update: July 2023: Report 'A World of Debt: A growing burden to global prosperity'**
 - » **Global Public Debt at Record Highs:** Public debt has increased more than fourfold since 2000 (USD 22 trillion in 2002 to USD 92 trillion in 2022)
 - » **Around 30% of Global public debt is owned by developing countries.**
 - » **Public debt is growing faster in the developing world:**
 - » **A growing number of countries** are facing high levels of debt.
 - » **Public debt can be vital for development.** But at the same time, it can also be a heavy burden. It will be the case when public debt grows too much too fast.



4) 2023 IMO STRATEGY ON REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS

- In support of the UN SDG Goal 13, to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.
- **Background:**
 - » In 2018, IMO adopted an initial strategy, on the reduction of GHG missions from ships.
 - » In Oct 2018, IMO approved a follow-up program, intended to be used as a planning tool in meeting timelines identified in the initial IMO Strategy upto 2023. Further, the initial strategy had envisaged that a revised strategy would be adopted by 2023.
- **In July 2023**, IMO adopted the new strategy: **Key Highlights**
 - » The 2023 IMO GHG Strategy represents a framework for Member States, setting out the future vision for international shipping, the levels of ambition to reduce GHG emissions and guiding principles.
 - » **Levels of Ambition** directing the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy are as follows:
 1. Carbon Intensity of Ships to decline through further improvement of energy efficiency for new ships.
 2. Carbon intensity for international shipping to decline to reduce CO2 emissions per transport work, as an average across international shipping, by at least 40% by 2030, compared to 2018.
 3. Uptake of zero or near zero GHG emission technologies, fuels and/or energy sources to represent at least 5% striving or 10% of the energy used by international shipping by 2030
 4. Peak GHG emissions from international shipping ASAP and to reach net-zero GHG emissions by or around, close to, 2050.
 - » The 2023 IMO GHG strategy also introduces indicative checkpoints to reach net zero GHG emissions from international shipping:
 1. Reducing annual GHG emissions from international shipping by at least 20%, striving for 30%, by 2030 from 2008 levels and by 70% (striving for 80%), by 2040 from 2008 levels.

5) UNITED NATION CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (UNCTOC) AND THE PROTOCOLS THERETO

- **Why in news?**
 - » Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri Nithyanand Rai attends two-day conference to mark the 20th anniversary of UNCTOC at Palermo, Italy (Sep 2023)
- The UNCTOC was adopted by UNGA in 2000. It is the main international instrument against transnational organized crime. It is also known as Palermo Convention.
- It entered into force in 2003.
- The convention is supplemented by three protocols:
 - » The Protocol to Prevent Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children
 - » The Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

- » The Protocol against Illicit Manufacturing or and Trafficking in Firearms, their parts and components and Ammunition.
- Countries must first become party to the convention before becoming parties to any of the protocol.
- India signed the convention and the three protocols in Dec 2002.
 - » CBI is the nodal agency to deal with UNTOC.

6) UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FOREST (UNFF)

- Why in news?
 - » The MoEF&CC organized a Country Led Initiative (CLI) event as part of the UN Forum on Forests from 26-28th Oct 2023 at the Forest Research Institute (FRI), Dehradun, Uttarakhand (Oct 2023: Source-PIB)
- About UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)
 - » It promotes, management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests.
 - » It was established in 2000 by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN.
 - » The forum meets annually at the UN HQ in New York and brings representation from all member states and forest related agencies for high-level dialogue on technical matters in odd years and policy matters on even years.
 - Note: The eighteenth session of UNFF (UNFF18) was held in New York in May 2023 and the UNFF19 will be held in May 2024.
 - » Note: The forum has universal membership and is composed of all member states of UN and Specialized agencies.
 - » India is a founding member of the forum.
- About Country Led Initiative:
 - » The CLI's primary goal is to contribute to the discussions of UNFF regarding the implementation of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UN SPF).
 - » It also aims to facilitate the sharing of best practices among UNFF member states for the implementation of SFM and UN SPF
 - » Note: The UN General Assembly adopted the first-ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests for the period of 2017-2030. This Strategic Plan serves as a global framework for actions at all levels to achieve the sustainable management of all types of forests, including trees outside forests, and to combat deforestation and forest degradation.

7) UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION (UNSC)

- Why in news?
 - » India starts four-year term as UN Statistical Commission member (Jan 2024)
- About UN Statistical Commission:
 - » It was established in 1946 by UN Economic and Social Council.
 - » It is the highest body of the global statistical system. It oversees the work of the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and is a Functional Commission of the UN Economic and Social Council.
 - » It brings together Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world.

- » It is the highest decision making body for international statistical development activities, responsible for setting of statistical standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international level.

A) IN APRIL 2023, INDIA WAS ELECTED TO THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM WITH 46/53 VOTES IN UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL.

- » **India and South Korea** have been elected from Asia Pacific region.

B) IN JAN 2024, INDIA BEGAN ITS FOUR-YEAR TERM AS UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION MEMBER.

- The Commission consist of 24 member countries of the UN elected by UN Economic and Social Council on the basis of equitable geographic distribution.
 - » **Five Members** are from African States; Four from Asia Pacific States; Four from East European States; Four from Latin American and Caribbean States; Seven from Western Europe and other States.
- India has been able to become a member after 2 decades.
- **Significance of the tenure:**
 - » The most crucial business India will participate in is the finalization and implementation of the 2025 System of National Accounts (SNA). The current estimates of national income are based on the 2008 SNA, with 2011-12 as the base year.

C) 55TH SESSION OF THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION (FEB - MARCH 2024)

- At the UN headquarters -> New York.

8) UN COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (UN CSOCD)

- It is one of the eight commissions established by the UN ECOSOC since 1946 to assist it in carrying its work.
- Since the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the CSocD has been the key UN body in charge of the follow up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action.
- **CSocD** consist of 46 members elected by ECOSOC based on equitable geographical distribution.
- **India chairs 62nd session of CSocD** (Feb 2024)
 - » It's a historic moment for India as it was the first time since 1975 that the country had held this esteemed position within the CSocD.
 - » India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ruchira Raj was elected as the chair of the CSocD.

9) UN RELIEF AND WORK AGENCY (UNRWA) FOR PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

- **About UNRWA**
 - » Following the 1948 Arab-Israel Conflict, UNRWA was established by **UNGA Resolution 302 (IV) of Dec 1949** to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestinian Refugees.

- The UNRWA definition of refugee covers Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes during the 1948 war.
- It started functioning on 1st May 1950 and is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states. It receives some funding from UN Budget which is mostly used for International Staffing Cost.
- In the absence of solution to the Palestinian Refugee Problem, the UNGA has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate.
- The agency's human development and humanitarian services encompass primary and vocational education, primary health, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, microfinance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict.
- It is unique in terms of its long-standing commitment to one group of refugees.

- » UNRWA operates in five areas:
 - Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza strip, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- » Outside these areas the aid for Palestinian refugees is provided by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

A) PAUSING OF THE FUNDING FOR THE AGENCY (JAN 2024)

- USA and 8 other western countries, which together provide more than half of the UNRWA's 2022 budget, have decided to pause funding for the agency. The development could have had severe implications for Palestinians in Gaza.
- UN asked the countries to reconsider their decision to suspend the funding as 2 million Palestinian in Gaza are dependent on UNRWA services that could be scaled back if the funding is not restored.
- What has Israel accused UNRWA of?
 - » It has alleged that 12 staff of UNRWA were involved in the 7th Oct 2023 attack. It has also claimed that Hamas siphons off funds given to UNRWA and fights from in and around the agency's facilities.
 - » Israel has also alleged that "Hamas tunnels (are) running next to or under UNRWA facilities and accuses the agency of teaching hatred of Israel in its schools,"
- Updates: Canada lifting ban on UNRWA funding after facing severe criticism for cutting assistance during Israel's war on Hamas (March 2024)
 - » Finland will also resume funding to the UN agency (March 2024)

2. INTERNATIONAL GROUPINGS

1) SASEC

- **Why in news?**

» Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation stone for multiple road upgradation projects worth Rs 34,00 crore, under which 43 roads including 38 bridges will be upgraded as part of SASEC Corridor Connectivity (Feb 2024)

- **Introduction**

» SASEC Program was formed in 2001 in response to the request of the four countries in South Asia - BD, Bhutan, India and Nepal - from ADB to assist in **facilitating economic cooperation among them**. The four countries comprised the **South Asia Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ)**, formed in 1996, as a vehicle of accelerating sustainable

» Now, it brings together Maldives, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar in a **project-based partnership to promote regional prosperity by improving cross-border connectivity, boosting trade among member countries, and strengthening regional economic cooperation.**

▪ **Membership**

- Founding members were BD, India, Nepal and Bhutan.
- Maldives and Sri Lanka joined in May 2014.
- Myanmar became a part of this in Feb 2017.

» **Secretariat**

- Manila, Phillipines-based Asian Development Bank serves as the secretariat of the SASEC countries.

- **Need of such a program**

1. **Poor Economic integration of South Asia**
2. **Poor Cross Border Energy Networks**
3. **Poor Cross border telecommunication connections**
 - Better telecommunications connections would also expand personal and business links, increasing trade at all levels.

- **Key Priority Areas Cooperation for SASEC**

- » In 2005, SASEC countries agreed on priority sectors for investment and coordinated action:
1. **Transport**
 2. **Trade Facilitation**
 3. **Energy**
- » In 2016, SASEC countries approved the SASEC Operational Plan 2016-2025, a 10-year strategic roadmap, which introduced **4. Economic Corridor Development (ECD) as a fourth sectoral area of focus**. SASEC also supports regional initiatives in ICT.

- **Significance**

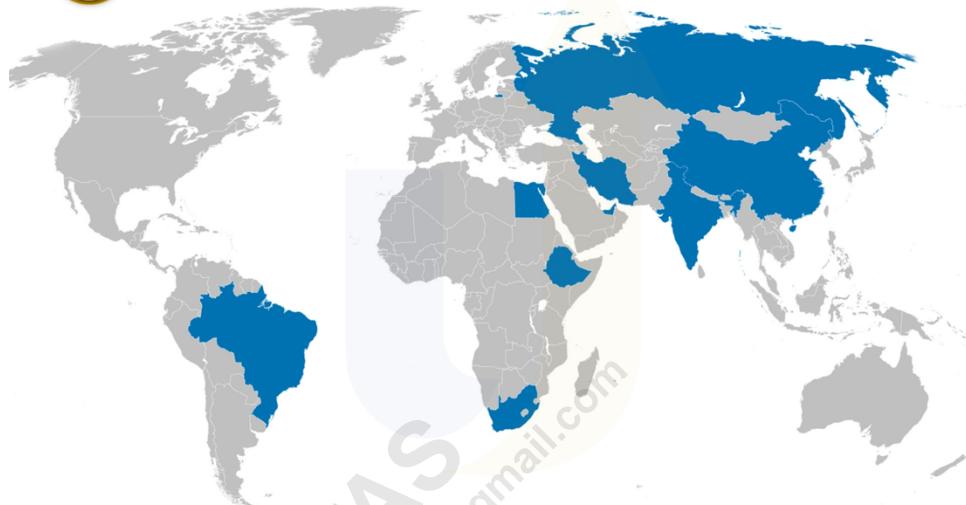
- » Promoting trade, cooperation and economic growth in the region
- » Compensate for the failure of SAARC.

2) BRICS

- **BASICS**

- » BRICS is an intergovernmental organization which comprise of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and UAE.

- » Originally, the grouping was **BRIC** (and only consisted of Brazil, Russia, India and China). It became **BRICS** with the induction of South Africa in 2010.
- » **Note:** The term "BRIC" was coined in 2001 by the then chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management Jim O'Neil, in his publication "Building Better Global Economic BRICS". On the basis of economic analysis he claimed that the four economies would individually and collectively occupy far greater economic space and become among the world's largest economies in the next 50 years.
- » **9 Members:** The founding countries - Brazil, Russia, India and China held the first summit in Yekaterinburg in 2009, with south Africa joining in 2010. Iran, UAE, Ethiopia and Egypt joined the organization on 1st Jan 2024.
- » **Note:** All five initial countries are member of G20.



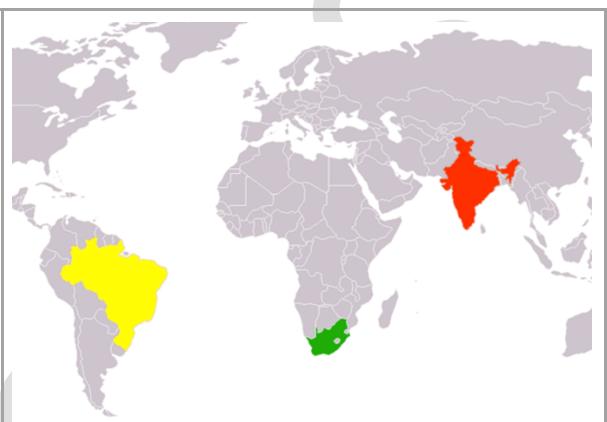
- **AIMS and Objective**
 - » Promoting a **more legitimate international system** including UNSC and IMF/WB reforms
 - » Promote **South-South Cooperation** and regional cooperation.
 - » Act as a bridge between developed and developing countries.
 - » Present a **united front of developing countries** in climate change negotiations.
 - » Embrace cultural diversity and promote people to people contact among BRICS countries
- In Recent years BRICS has **diversified** its objectives and is also working towards **fighting protectionism** and promoting & protecting multilateralism. Focus on counterterrorism has also increased.
- **Significance of BRICS**
 - » BRICS countries are emerging as new centre of gravity in the international economic system.
 - BRICS countries now comprise of more than 40% of the world's population and have surpassed G7 countries in terms of purchasing power parity.
 - » **Shaping of global economic and political architecture:**
 - BRICS have managed to **increase the representation and say of developing countries and global south** in major international organizations such as IMF, WB and WTO in recent years.

- BRICs is also championing an open and multilateral world order against a growing tide of protectionism.
 - Push towards de-dollarization.
- » New Development Bank has made BRICS a serious international actor in financial arena.
- » Expanding the group's footprint in key regions like middle east, Africa etc

3) IBSA FORUM

It's a unique forum that brings together India, Brazil, and South Africa (three large democracies and major economies from three different continents). All three countries are developing, pluralistic, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious nations.

The group was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the foreign ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia on 6th June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.



Cooperation in IBSA is on three fronts:

- first, as a forum for consultation and coordination on global and regional political issues, such as, the reform of the global institutions of political and economic governance, WTO/Doha Development Agenda, climate change, terrorism etc.;
- second, trilateral collaboration on concrete areas/projects, through fourteen working groups and six People-to-People Forums, for the common benefit of three countries; and
- third, assisting other developing countries by taking up projects in the latter through IBSA Fund

A) IBSA FUND

- The IBSA facility for poverty and hunger alleviation (IBSA Fund) was established jointly by India, Brazil, and South Africa in May 2004. It became operational in 2006 to identify replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to developing countries on a demand driven basis as examples of best practices in combating poverty and hunger.
- Since its inception, 42 project in 35 countries have been supported by the fund with disbursement of US\$46.78 million.
- India has been a regular contributor to the IBSA fund since its inception and has contributed more than \$18 million till date.
 - In Feb 2024, India contributed \$US 1 million to IBSA fund.
- The informal understanding so far has been that the partners countries sponsor projects corresponding to the proportion of their contribution to the fund.

- The fund has an appeal for small states who seek funding for small and medium sized project and it has proved to be a useful outreach tool with states which we are not able to assist through bilateral development projects.

4) WEIMAR TRIANGLE

- It is a regional alliance of France, Germany and Poland, created in 1991 in the Germany city of Weimar. The group is intended to promote cooperation between the three countries in cross-border and European Issues.
- It provides the three countries with a unique forum to coordinate approaches to cross-border and European issues. Along with the governments themselves, the parliaments and civil societies of the three countries are also working closely together.
- **Update:**
 - » **In Feb 2024**, the foreign ministers of the three countries met in the Paris Suburb of La Celle-Saint-Cloud to talk about Ukraine, amid other issues. They discussed about reviving the Weimer Triangle, a long dormant regional grouping that was designed to promote cooperation between France, Germany and Poland.

5) MISSION ASPIDES

- **In Feb 2024**, EU launched 'Mission Aspides' to protect Cargo ships in Red Sea from Houthi attack.
 - » **Note:** ASPIDES is the Greek for "the Shield".
- It is a naval mission to help protect cargo ships.
- It will be run out of Larissa in Central Greece - which is home to the Hellenistic Air Force and a NATO headquarters.
- **Note:** Previously, the USA had launched Operation Prosperity Guidance with a similar mission.

3. IMPORTANT SUMMITS

1) SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY

- **Why in news?**
 - » PM Addresses Summit for Democracy virtually. (March 2024)
- The first summit of the Summit for Democracy was a virtual summit hosted by US in 2021.
- The second summit was held in March 2023 and was co-hosted by USA, Costa Rica, Zambia, Netherlands, and Korea.
- The **third Summit for Democracy** kicked off in March 2024 in Seoul, South Korea amid global declines in democracy and the resurgence of authoritarian tendencies.
 - » The ambition is to strengthen democratic institutions, reverse consequential backsliding globally, and tackle thorny problems, including corruption.

- » Implementing the commitments made at the S4D3 and other bilateral events is key to fully deliver concrete and sustainable democratic and anti-corruption reforms at local, national and global levels.

4. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

1) HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX

- **Why in news?**
 - » India has fallen one position from last year in the recently released Henley Passport Index (HPI) 2024 (Feb 2024)
- **DETAILS**
 - » Henley Passport Index ranks all the passports of the world according to the number of countries their holders can travel to without prior visa. The ranking is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and lists the countries that can be accessed visa-free, with an electronic visa (e-TA) or with a Visa-on-Arrival.
- **Key Highlights of the 2024 Index:**
 - » The most powerful passports in the world now allow citizens of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan and Singapore to travel to 194/227 countries.
 - » Indian passport rank 85th in the list. This came as a surprise as now Indian passport can get visa free access to 62 countries in 2024 when compared to 60 countries in 2023.
 - **Ranking of Neighbours:** Pakistan (106), BD (102), Maldives (58)
 - » China (rank - 64) is saw a marginal jump from last year (rank-66).

2) WORLD INEQUALITY LAB – A RESEARCH PAPER

- **India's top 1% income and wealth shares** have reached historical highs and are among the very highest in the world: Paper released by World Inequality Lab (March 2024)
 - » By 2022-23, the top 1% income share in India was 22.6% and top 1% wealth share rose to 40.1%, with India's top 1% income share among the very highest in the world, higher than even South Africa, Brazil and USA



TARGET PRELIMS 2024

BOOKLET-36

PRELIMS MASTERS PROGRAM 2024

INTERNATIONAL MAPPING AND PLACES IN NEWS-3

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1. INDIAN OCEAN

1) AGALEGA ISLANDS

Agalega Islands consist of two outer islands located in the Indian Ocean. It is located 1050 km north of Mauritius Island. Agalega is a dependency of Mauritius.

The two islands have a total area of 26 sq km and a native population of about 300 people.

Agalega is run directly by PM of Mauritius through the Prime Minister's Office to the Outer Island Development Corporation (OIDC).

In Feb 2024, PM of India, Shri Narendra Modi and Mauritian PM Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurated an airstrip and the St. James Jetty on North Agalega Island in the Indian Ocean.

- » The development of the islands is in the socio-economic and national interest of the Mauritius and also aligns with India's vision for Indian Ocean.
- » The new jetty and the air strip will enable a large and more credible government presence on the islands.
- » It will also enable stationing or forward deployment of ships of the Mauritius Coast Guard.

Benefits for India:

- » Increased trust between the two countries.
- » The joint development of the islands underscores India's commitment to the vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), and its willingness to assist smaller maritime nations in building capacity and developing capabilities.



Will Agalega become India's military base?

No. India understands the importance of sovereignty, and the sensitiveness of smaller nations when they interact with larger one. (Vice Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta (Retd) is a former Commander in Chief of the Eastern Naval Command, Indian Navy).

2. ARAL SEA

The Aral sea is situated in Central Asia, between the southern part of Kazakhstan and Northern Uzbekistan.

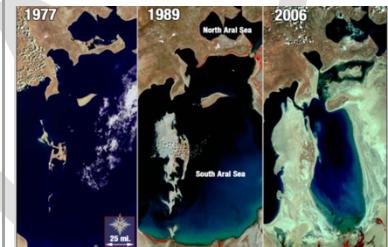
Till 1960s, it was the world's fourth largest saline lake (after Caspian, Balkash (Kazakhstan), Turkana (Kenya, Ethiopia)).

Two important rivers that feed into the lake are Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, reaching the sea through north and south respectively.

- Until the 1960s, the two rivers accounted for around 75-80% of the water supplied to the lake (rest was rainfall).



In 1960s, USSR decided to divert these rivers for irrigation purpose which has led to drastic reduction in the size of the sea.



Impact:

- Reduction in the size of the lake (the size of the lake has declined to less than 10% of its original size).
- Increase in salinity (lakes salinity level is risen from 10 gram/l to over 100 g/l);
- Death of marine species such as barbell, carps etc. (due to reducing water levels and salinity);

Restoration Strategy:

- The five central Asian countries adopted the Aral Sea Basin Program in 1994 as part of the restoration strategy. The program aimed to stabilize the basin's environment, rehabilitate the area around the sea, and improve the lake's water management.

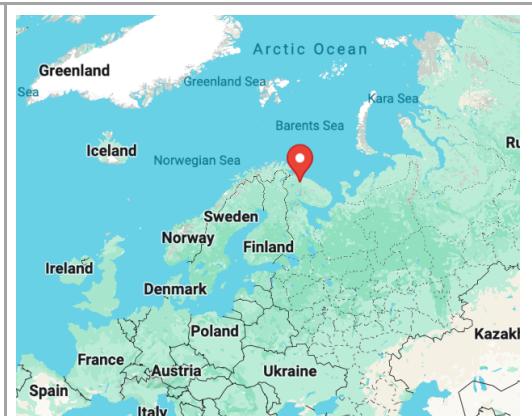
3. RUSSIA

1) MURMANSK PORT

Murmansk is a seaport located in the Northwestern Russia. It lies 200 km north of Arctic circle and is on the eastern shore of Kola Bay, 48 kms from the ice-free Barents sea.

The town was founded in 1915 as a supply port in WW-1. It was a base for the British, French, and American expeditionary forces against the Bolsheviks in 1918.

In WW-2 also the port served as the main port for the Anglo-American convoys carrying war supplies to the USSR through Arctic ocean.



Current scenario: Now, it is an important fish port having one of the largest fish processing facilities of Europe. It's ice-free harbour makes it Russia's only port with unrestricted access to the Atlantic and world sea route. From Dec - May it replaces the icebound St. Petersburg as the major port of the northwest. It is connected by railroad to St Petersburg and Moscow.

News: India's engagement with Russia's Arctic region has been strengthening with India-bound goods constituting the maximum share of cargo handled in 2023 (Jan-July) by Murmansk port.

- Coal was the main item imported in India from this Russian port.

Note: Kola peninsula is a peninsula in the extreme northwest of Russia, and one of the largest peninsula of Europe. It lies almost completely inside arctic circle and is bordered by Barent sea to the north and White sea to the east and north-east.

2) DAGESTAN (REPUBLIC OF DAGESTAN)

Dagestan is a province of Russia within the Russian Federation. Its official name is 'Republic of Dagestan'. It is the southernmost tip of Russia.

Dagestan translates as "land of the mountains". It is a mountainous territory located in the eastern part of the North Caucasus. It has Georgia and Chechnya to its west and Azerbaijan to its south. To its east is Caspian sea.

Diversity: The Republic of Dagestan has mainly Muslim population. It is linguistically and ethnically a varied region. It is Russia's most diverse region. There are at least 40 different ethnicities in the region along with more than 30 spoken languages.

News: Anti-Israel Protestors (numbered in 100s) stormed an airport in Makhachkala (capital of Dagestan) on 30th Oct 2023. This resulted in a chaos and injured more than 20 people. Israel expressed concern and urged Russia to protect Israelis in Dagestan and also inside the airport.



(Image: Wikimedia Commons)

Makhachkala, the capital of Republic of Dagestan is located on the Caspian sea coast.

3) CHECHNYA

Chechnya (officially the Chechen Republic) is a republic of Russia. It is located in North Caucasus region.

The republic forms a part of the North Caucasian Federal District. It is bordered by Russia proper on the north, Dagestan republic on the east and southeast, the country of Georgia on the southwest, and Ingushetia republic on the west.

Insurgency: History

Chechen-Ingush was designated as a republic in 1936.

Secessionist sentiments emerged in 1991 with the disintegration of USSR.

- A coup against local communist government was carried out in 1991, and the coup leader Dzhokhar Dudayev unilaterally declared **Chechnya's independence from Russian Federation** (subsequently Russia).
- In 1992, Chechnya-Ingushetia divided into **two separate republics** with Ingushetiya favoring Russia and Chechnya leader favoring independence.
- **Russian forces took over the capital of Chechnya (Grozny)** in March 1995 and Dudayev was killed in 1996. A peace treaty was signed in 1997.
- But after a bombing killed scores of civilians in Russia, the then PM Vladimir Putin blamed Chechnya and the **Russian forces re-entered Chechnya in 1999**.



Eventually in 2003, Chechan voters approved a new constitution that devolved great powers to the Chechen government, but kept the republic in the federation.

In 2004, Russian backed Ahmad Kadyrov became the President of Chechen. But he was killed in a bomb blast. With Russia's backing in 2006, his son Ramzan Kadyrov, gained the presidency. He had maintained support of Russia and in early 2009 he claimed that insurgency had been crushed.

As of 2023, Ramzan Kadyrov continues to be President of Chechnya.

Nevertheless, sporadic outbreak of violence including guerrilla attacks continue to occur. In addition, Jihadist group associated with IS exist in the region.

4) MOSCOW AND MARCH 2024 TERROR ATTACK

Moscow is the capital and the largest city of Russia. The city is located on Moskva River in central Russia. It is the most populous city of entire Europe and the largest city by land area on the European continent.

Note: In 1712, under the reign of Peter the Great, the Russian capital was moved to the newly founded St. Petersburg which diminished the Moscow's role and influence. But after, Russian revolution the capital was moved back to Moscow in 1918, where it became the political center of USSR and later of Russia.

March 2024 Terror Attack:

- The terror attack took place at Crocus City Hall on the outskirts of Russia on 22nd March and killed around 150 people. This is the deadliest terror attack Russia has seen in a decade.
- **Who has claimed the attack?**
 - Islamic State (IS) has claimed responsibility for the attack.
 - American officials have attributed it to ISIS-K, a branch of the group.
- **Russian authorities** have accused four men from Tajikistan of being behind the attack. Russian President Vladimir Putin have said that "Russian Islamists" carried out the attack, but also claimed without proof that a "window" had been prepared for the attackers to escape to Ukraine. Kyiv has denied the allegations.

Who are ISIS-K?

ISIS-K was formed in 2015 and has been active in AF, PAK, and Iran. It is branch of ISIS, the terror group that emerged in Iraq and Syria and at its peak, controlled a huge stretch of territory.

Why attack Russia?

Russia has been at the top or near the top of the list of ISIS for many years. Moscow's crucial role in the Syrian Civil War, when it intervened in support of the Syrian government and against ISIS is a primary reason.

ISIS propaganda has long targeted Russia for its brutal tactics in Chechen wars.



5) LAKE BAIKAL

It's a large rift lake in Russia. Lake Baikal is basically a rift valley, created by earth's crust slowly moving apart. In geological term is rift is young and active and widens about 4 mm per year. The fault zone is also seismically active.

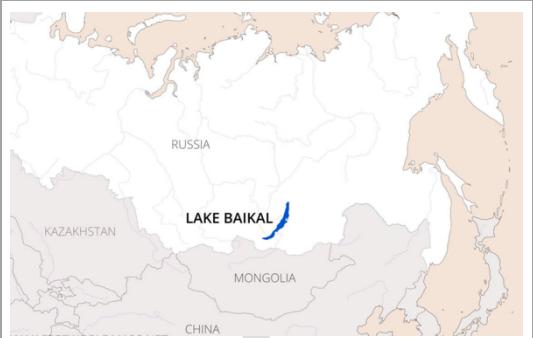
It is located in the southern Siberia.

7th largest lake in the world in terms of surface area and the largest in Asia.

It is also the world's largest freshwater lake in terms of volume of water. It stores more than 20% of world's fresh surface water. This is more than all the North America's great lake combined.

It is also the deepest lake (depth of 1620 km) in the world. (Lake Tanganyika (1436m); Caspian Sea (1,025 m); Vostok (900 m); Lake Martin (836 m));

It is also one of the UNESCO's World Heritage Site.



4. KACHIN PROVINCE

Location: It is the northernmost state of Myanmar bordering China in the north and east and India in the west.

China's claim: Various Chinese government over the years have claims over northern half of the Kachin state as Chinese territory since 18th century.

Reasons for insurgency in Kachin:

Removal of autonomy: When Kachin state was formed after the independence of Myanmar, it was allocated a lot of autonomy. But it changed after the 1962 Burmese coup d'etat. The Ne Win regime which came into power in 1962 unilaterally abrogated the Constitution.

Declaration of Buddhism as state religion: Kachin armed group was established in 1960, after the U Nu government announced the state religion as Buddhism. The Kachin people stopped believing in the government administration system, established after the federal union was agreed upon in 1947 agreement.

Kachin Independence Organization: With the unilateral abrogation of the Union of Burma Constitution by the Ne Win government in 1962, Kachin forces withdrew from Burmese army and formed the **Kachin Independence Army (KIA)** under the **Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)**.

The conflict between KIA and Myanmar forces have extended into 2020s.



5. GWADAR PORT

It is situated on Arabian Sea in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province. It is located around 170 km east of Chabahar Port.

It is under administrative control of the Maritime Secretary of Pakistan.

The port has substantial Chinese investment and features prominently in China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

News: On March 20, 2024, Pakistan security forces thwarted a complex coordinated attack on Gwadar Port Authority Complex in a



two hour long battle and claimed to have neutralized all eight militants. Two soldiers have been killed in action.

The Majeed Brigade of the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA), claimed the responsibility for the attack. They stressed that their fighters have targeted Pakistan's ISI and military intelligence facilities.

Note: Balochistan and Gwadar port are immensely important for Pakistan, especially for the army that has taken on responsibility of making the CPEC and its end port, Gwadar, a success story of China's BRI.

6. BALOCHISTAN PROVINCE

Balochistan is located in the southwest of Pakistan.

It is the country's largest and most sparsely populated province.

It has huge natural resources like oil reserves and abundant natural resources. But the ethnic Baloch are Pakistan's poorest and most under-represented people

Capital: Quetta



7. INSURGENCY IN BALOCHISTAN

1) HISTORY

- At the time of partition, Balochistan comprises of multiple chiefdoms owing allegiance to the British. Ahmed Yar Khan, the chief of Kalat, was the most powerful of these tribal chiefs, and hoped to secure an independent state for his people. However, he was forced to accede in 1948, after Pakistan invaded Kalat. This triggered the insurgency which continues even till today.
- **Other factors** which has fuelled insurgency in the region are:
 - » Economic deprivation
 - » Lack of political freedom
 - » Forced disappearance of thousands of men
 - » Extrajudicial killings of many of those reported missing
 - » Other forms of repression by Pakistani state.
- In many ways, China backed Gwadar port is a symbol of injustice for Balochi people. Despite rampant unemployment in the province, engineers and technical specialists were hired from Punjab, Sindh and even China. In recent years, Baloch militants have repeatedly targeted both Gwadar and Chinese nationals in the country.
- **Baloch armed groups** including, Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), and Baloch Republican Guard (BRG) have created an operational umbrella

alliance under the banner of **Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS)** in 2018 to coordinate their action on ground.

- » The BRAS have claimed more than 600 attacks and more than 600 casualties of armed forces in 2023.
- The Baloch insurgency in Pakistan is gaining momentum for the past two years and insurgents can regularly breach the perimeter security of Pakistan military and paramilitary installation across Balochistan in bold, frontal attacks.

2) MAJID BRIGADE

The Majeed Brigade is the separatist group of Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). It has claimed responsibility of the attack on complex outside Gwadar Port.

The Majed Brigade has been active since 2011 and is the BLA's dedicated suicide squad. The unit is named after two brothers, both of whom were called Majeed Langove (Sr and Jr).

History:

In May 1972, the National Awami Party (NAP) came to power in Balochistan. Nationally, the NAP sat in opposition to Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The NAP had long advocated for greater regional autonomy in Pakistan, and it was emboldened by the secession of BD in 1971.

But, Bhutto was not willing to give an concession and created problems in the functioning of NAP government in Balochistan. The NAP government was finally dismissed in Feb 1973. This led to both the insurgency and the Pakistani state repression becoming worse in Balochistan. Between 1973, thousands of insurgents and military officials were killed.

In this background, Majeed Langove Senior, then a young Baloch man, decided to assassinate Bhutto. In 1974, when Bhutto arrived in Quetta to attend a public gathering, Majeed senior waited atop a tree, a grenade in hand. He had no plans to escape and was most certainly going to die. He eventually died. The grenade burst in Majid Senior's hand as he waited for Bhutto's motorcade.

Junior's Sacrifice and formation of Majid Brigade:

The death of Majeed Senior was mythologized for posterity by the actions of his younger brother, Majeed Langove Junior, who was born two years after senior was killed. In 2010, Junior was killed in a fight against Pakistani forces. His death was mourned by nationalists across Balochistan. After it became widely known that he was the brother of Majid senior who too had given live four Balochi freedom, the Majeed Langrove brothers were raised to near mythical status.

When Aslam Achu, a BLA leader, decided to establish a suicide squad, he named it after 'Majeed' brothers as 'the Majeed Brigade'. The first attack by Majid brigade took place in 2011. After a long hiatus, the group became active again in 2018 and attacked Bus carrying chinese engineers in Dalbandin near the Pakistan-

Afghanistan border. The brigade has also attacked Chinese consulate in Karachi (2018), the Gwadar Pearl Continental Hotel (2019), and the Pakistani Stock Exchange in Karachi (2020).

8. EUROPE

1) CATALONIA

Catalonia is a historic region of Spain including north-eastern provinces of Girona, Barcelona, Tarragona, and Lleida. The autonomous community of Catalonia occupies a triangular area in the north-eastern corner of Spain.

It is bordered by France and Andorra to the north, the Mediterranean sea to the south and East. It also borders autonomous community of Valencia to the south and the autonomous community of Aragon, to the west.

The Pyrenees separate Catalonia from France.

Growing call for Independence: Since 2010s, there has been a growing support for Catalan independence.

- In Oct 2017, the Catalan Parliament unilaterally declared independence following a referendum that was deemed unconstitutional by the Spanish state.
- The Spanish senate voted in favor of direct rule by removing Catalan government and calling a snap regional election. The Spanish Supreme Court also imprisoned seven former ministers of the Catalan government on charges of rebellion and misuse of public funds. But in 2021, all those in Prison were pardoned by Spanish government.

In Dec 2023, Pere Aragones, the President of government of Catalonia wrote in Financial Times that Catalonia is a nation with a rich historical legacy, which is diverse and modern and is bound by its language, Catalan. A nation with persistent desire for self-governance dating back centuries. A nation that wants to be free, that wants to be able to be democratically and peacefully decide how it governs itself, want to create a new state, independent of Spain, but working together with it within the European Framework.



9. AFRICA

1) LAKE FAGUIBINE

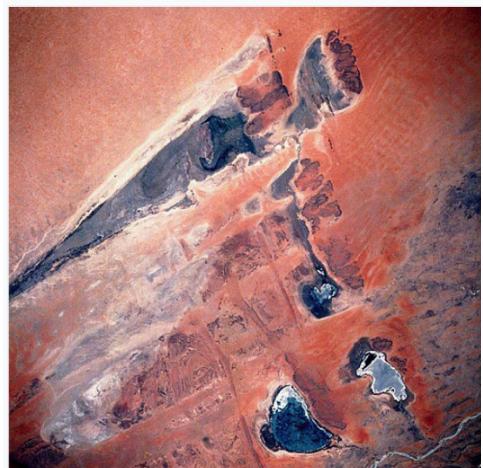
It was a lake in Mali on the southern edge of the Sahara desert. It was situated 75 km north of Niger river to which it is connected by system of smaller lakes and channels.

During heavy flooding the water from Niger river reaches the lake. But since the Sahel drought of 1970s and 80s the lake has mostly remained dry. Water has reached the lake in very few cases. All this has contributed to the partial collapse of the ecosystem of the region.

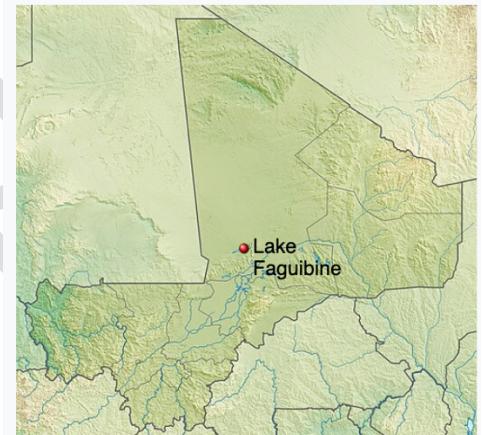
In the **year 2021**, the lake was completely dry.

The Lake Faguibine system: The lake forms a system of five interconnected low lying depressions which fill to different extent every year based on the level of rainfall and flood.

Lake Faguibine



Lake Faguibine (spear-shaped) from space, April 1991. The River Niger is shown at the bottom right hand corner, Lake Oro at the lower left and Lake Fati lower right



2) LAKE VOLTA

Lake Volta is an artificial lake in Ghana. It is formed by the Akosombo Dam over Volta river.

With a storage capacity of 153 Billion cubic meter, it is one of the largest artificial lakes in the world. It covers around 8502 sq km (3.6% of Ghana's area). The lake lies completely within Ghana.

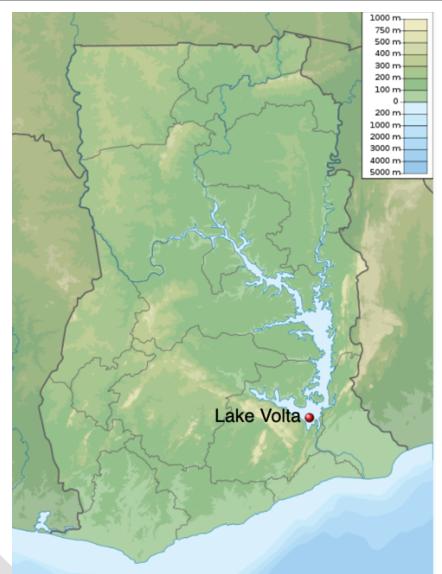
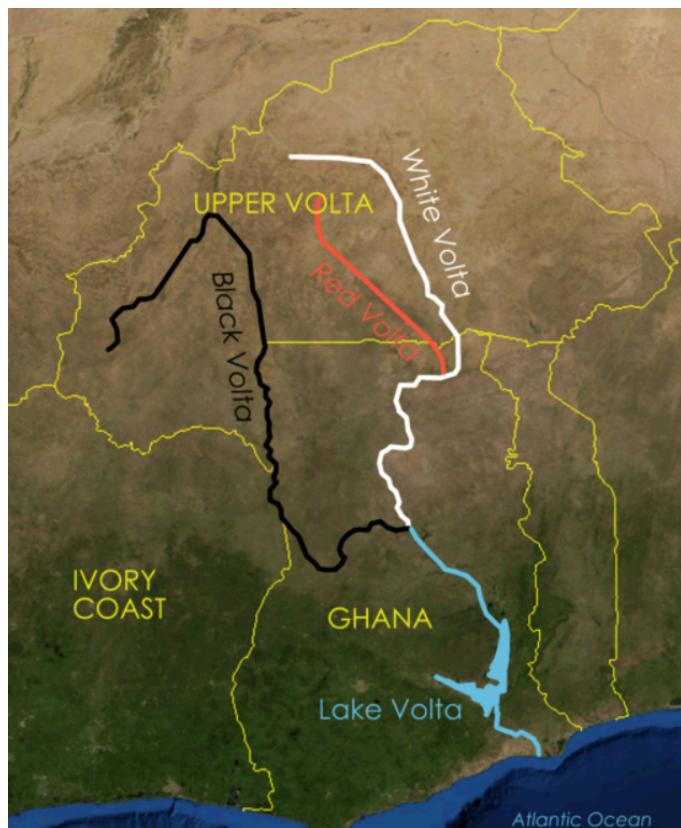
The lake is located on Prime Meridian.

Akosombo Dam holds back both the White Volta River and the Black Volta river which formerly converged where the middle of reservoir lies now, to form a single volta river.

The **present volta river** flows from the outlet of the dam's power house and spillways to the Atlantic Ocean in southern Ghana.



It is navigable and provides a cheap route connecting Ghana's Savanna to coastal region.



3) MOZAMBIQUE

It's a country located in south eastern Africa with capital as **Maputo**. It has a tropical climate. It has extensive coastline, fronting the Mozambique Channel, which separates mainland Africa from the Island of Madagascar.

Bordering countries: South Africa and Swaziland in south and southwest; It is bordered by Zimbabwe to its west; Zambia and Malawi on its north west and Tanzania to its north.

The **great Zambezi river** has provided ample water for irrigation and the basis for a regionally important hydroelectricity power industry.

It gained independence from Portugal in 1975. But it was soon engulfed in civil war.

1977-92: Civil War: Mozambican civil war between Frelimo government, with support from Cuba and USSR, and anti-communist Mozambican National



Resistance (Renamo) rebels, combined with sabotage from the neighbouring states of Rhodesia and South Africa. Over a million people die in the fighting and subsequent famines.

1990: Constitution was amended to allow multi-party system and first multi-party elections were held in 1994.

2017: A jihadist insurgency has begun in the northern side.

4) CABO DELGADO

Cabo Delgado: It is the northernmost province of Mozambique and borders Tanzania to its north and Indian Ocean to its east.

Starting 2017, armed Islamist extremists linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant launched a jihadist insurgency in the Cabo Delgado region. The insurgent group sometimes referred itself as Shabaab. (Please note that they are different from Somali-Al Shabaab).

March 2024: More than 70 children are missing following recent jihadist attack in Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado. They became separated from their family as thousands fled to a neighbouring province in recent weeks. There are fears that some of them may have been kidnapped by fighters linked to ISIS.



Cabo Delgado, Province of Mozambique

10. NORTH AMERICA

1) THE POPOKATEPETL VOLCANO

The Popocatepetl Volcano:

It is Mexico's most dangerous volcano. It is located just outside the Mexico city (72 kms southeast).

Note: Popocatepetl means "smoking mountain" in the Aztec Nahuatl language.

In Feb 2024, it erupted 13 times in a single day. It spewed thick plumes of volcanic ash into the sky causing flights to be grounded. It has also blanketed the capital and the surrounding area with thick plumes of ash.

