

ONE STOP DESTINATION

CIVIL SERVICE EXAM PREPARATION

An Initiative by
Vetri IAS Study Circle

EXPERT GUIDANCE

ONLINE
TEST
SERIES

RESOURCE
MATERIALS

DAILY
CURRENT AFFAIRS



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CURRENT AFFAIRS 2018 - 2019

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INTERNATIONAL: GROUPS

APEC

HQ: Singapore, Established in 1989:

- ❖ APEC stands for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. It is a regional economic forum of 21 Pacific Rim member economies
- ❖ APEC's 21 members aim to promote free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. APEC account for about half the world's trade and almost 60 per cent of global GDP

Why was it Established?

- ❖ In response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and the advent of regional trade blocs in other parts of the world;
- ❖ To fears that highly industrialized Japan (a member of G8) would come to dominate economic activity in the Asia-Pacific region; and
- ❖ To establish new markets for agricultural products and raw materials beyond Europe
- ❖ India is not a member. India has applied but membership was denied because it does not border Pacific Ocean. India is an observer member in APEC.

What Does APEC Do?

- ❖ APEC ensures that goods, services, investment and people move easily across borders. Members facilitate this trade through faster customs procedures at borders; more favourable business climates behind the border; and aligning regulations and standards across the region.
- ❖ For example, APEC's initiatives to synchronize regulatory systems are a key step to integrating the Asia-Pacific economy. A product can be more easily exported with just one set of common standards across all economies.

ASEAN

In News:

- ❖ The 10th edition of the Delhi Dialogue was recently held in New Delhi. The theme of the two-day DD -10 was "Strengthening India-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation".
- ❖ Singapore hosts 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting and 5th ADMM-Plus
- ❖ The sixth Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Trade Ministers' Meeting was held in Singapore in august 2018

What is Delhi Dialogue?

- ❖ The Delhi Dialogue is a premier annual track 1.5 event to discuss politico-security, economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and ASEAN.
- ❖ This is the first major event to be organized after the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit that was held in New Delhi in January 2018.
- ❖ Political leadership, policy makers, senior officials, diplomats, business leaders, think-tanks and academicians from India and ASEAN Member States are participate in the discussions.

Background:

- ❖ ASEAN stands for Association of South East Asian Nations
- ❖ It is a political and economic organization of 10 South East Asian nations
- ❖ HQ: Jakarta, Indonesia, Formed in 1967
- ❖ Founding members Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand i.e. all 10 current members were not founding members

Current members are:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| A. Indonesia | F. Brunei |
| B. Malaysia | G. Cambodia |
| C. Philippines | H. Laos |
| D. Singapore | I. Myanmar (Burma) |
| E. Thailand | |

Aims:

- ❖ Accelerating economic growth social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members,
- ❖ Protection of regional stability
- ❖ Providing a mechanism for member countries to resolve differences peacefully

How important is the region economically?

- ❖ If ASEAN were a country, it would be the seventh-largest economy in the world, with a combined GDP of \$2.6 trillion in 2014. By 2050 it's projected to rank as the fourth-largest economy.
- ❖ Home to more than 622 million people, the region has a larger population than the European Union or North America. It also has the third-largest labour force in the world, behind China and India.

INDIA-ASEAN:

- ❖ India's focus on a strengthened and multi-faceted relationship with ASEAN is an outcome of the significant changes in the world's political and economic scenario since the early 1990s and India's own march towards economic liberalisation.
- ❖ India's search for economic space resulted in the 'Look East Policy'. The Look East Policy has today matured into a dynamic and action oriented 'Act East Policy. PM at the 12th ASEAN India Summit and the 9th East Asia Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in November, 2014, formally enunciated the Act East Policy. Apart from ASEAN, India has taken other policy initiatives in the region that involve some members of ASEAN like BIMSTEC, MGC etc. India is also an active participant in several regional forums like the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting + (ADMM+) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).
- ❖ **The ASEAN Way'**: Doctrine that the member countries will largely business when it comes to internal matters of member countries
- ❖ **ASEAN plus Three**: Was created to improve existing ties with China, Japan and the South Korea.
- ❖ **ASEAN plus Six**: includes ASEAN + China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and India
- ❖ If the ASEAN nations were a single country, their combined economy would rank the 7 largest in the world

India- ASEAN:

- ✓ Has and FTA with ASEAN (operational since 2010)
- ✓ Shares border both land/marine
- ✓ Large number of Indian origin people living in these countries

IORA

In News:

- ❖ Maldives became a new member of IORA and Myanmar bid to become a member was blocked by some members
- ❖ As many as 21 countries in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) adopted the Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy.

Background:

- ❖ The Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in the Indian Ocean Region calls for collaboration among IORA member states in meeting the growing demand for renewable energy in the Indian Ocean Littoral, development of a common renewable energy agenda for the Indian Ocean region and promote regional capacity building.
- ❖ IORA member countries also resolved to collaborate with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) member nations to exchange knowledge and share views and potential interests in the renewable energy sector.



Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):

- ❖ IORA is international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering Indian Ocean, established in 1997 to promote cooperation in IOR.
- ❖ It is regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Academia and Business for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.
- ❖ It is based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.
- ❖ IORA comprises 22 member states (including India) and 7 dialogue partners. Besides, Indian Ocean Research Group and Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation have observer status.

Focus Areas:

- ❖ Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) has identified six priority areas, namely:
 - ✓ Maritime security,
 - ✓ Trade and investment facilitation,
 - ✓ Fisheries management,
 - ✓ Disaster risk reduction,
 - ✓ Academic and scientific cooperation and
 - ✓ Tourism promotion and cultural exchanges.

Membership:

- ❖ All sovereign States of the Indian Ocean Rim are eligible for membership of the Association.
- ❖ To become members, States must adhere to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the Association.
- ❖ India, Australia, Iran, Indonesia Thailand, Malaysia, South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, Madagascar, UAE, Yemen, Seychelles, Somalia, Comoros and Oman are members of IORA. Maldives is the latest member.

Other important facts:

- ❖ The Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) is a flagship initiative of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- ❖ The first IOD was held in Kerala, India in 2014
- ❖ Fifth Indian Ocean Dialogue was organized in August 2018 in Durban, South Africa
- ❖ The Somalia and Yemen Development Program (SYDP) is a special capacity development initiative by IORA.

ASEM

- ❖ ASEM stands for ASIA-Europe Meeting Summit
- ❖ It is an informal dialogue process including 51 countries (including India) from Asia and Europe and two regional bodies European Union (EU) and the ASEAN
- ❖ It brings together 53 entities
- ❖ Established in 1996 in Bangkok
- ❖ The dialogue addresses political, economic and cultural issues between the two regions
- ❖ It also seeks to strengthen the relationship between the two regions in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership.
- ❖ Meetings are held biennially i.e. every two years

In News:

- ❖ 3rd ASEM Conference on Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons held in Seoul.

IMT HIGHWAY

❖ The 1360 kms long India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway is an initiative pertaining to India, Myanmar and Thailand. India is undertaking construction of two sections of the Trilateral Highway in Myanmar namely,

1. Construction of 120.74 km Kalewa-Yagyi road section, and
2. Construction of 69 bridges along with the approach road on the 149.70 km Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa (TKK) road section.

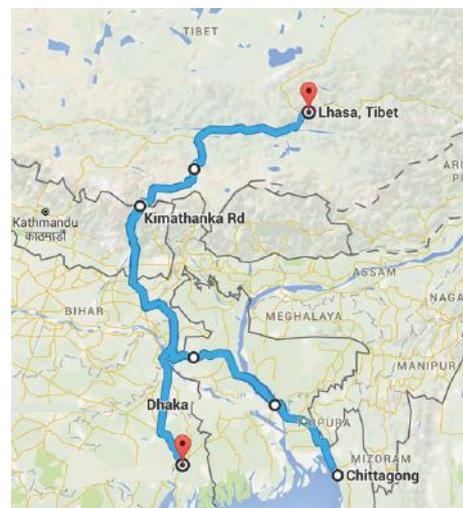
❖ The work on both these sections were awarded on Engineering, Procurement and Construction mode in May 2018 for Kalewa-Yagyi section and November 2017 for the TKK section.

❖ The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway is a highway under construction under India's Look East Policy that will connect Moreh, India with Mae Sot, Thailand via Myanmar.

❖ The road will boost the trade and commerce in the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area, and with the rest of Southeast Asia. India has also proposed extending the highway to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

❖ India's Look East Policy is an effort being made by the Indian government to cultivate and strengthen economic and strategic relations with the nations of Southeast Asia in order to solidify its standing as a regional power.

❖ This policy also serves to position India as a counterweight to the strategic influence of the People's Republic of China in the region.



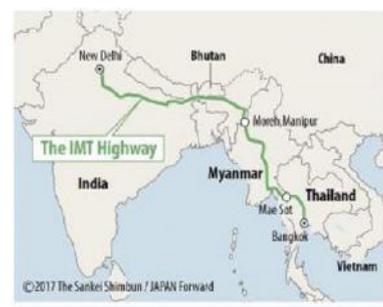
BBIN

❖ BBIN stands for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal

✓ It is a sub-regional architecture of these 4 countries

✓ Aims to formulate, implement and review quadrilateral agreements across areas such as water resources management, connectivity of power, transport, and infrastructure

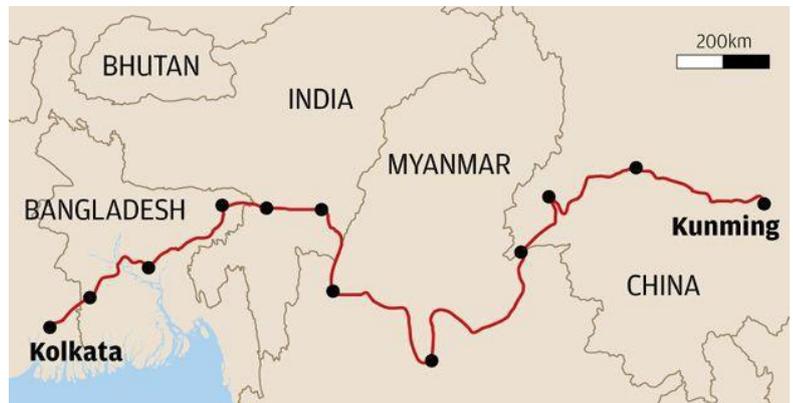
✓ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been providing technical, advisory, and financial support to the BBIN MVA



initiative as part of its assistance to the south Asia sub-regional economic cooperation (SASEC) programme.

In News:

- ❖ Bangladesh, India and Nepal have given nod to operating procedures for movement of passenger vehicles in the sub-region under Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) motor vehicles agreement.
- ❖ But Bhutan refused to participate in this BBIN citing fragile environment in their country.



BCIM

- ❖ BCIM stands for Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar
- ✓ It is a sub-regional organization
- ✓ It aims at greater integration of trade and investment between the four countries
- ✓ BCIM economic corridor is an initiative conceptualized for significant gains through sub regional economic cooperation within the BCIM.
- ✓ The multi-modal corridor will be the first expressway between India and China and will pass through Myanmar and Bangladesh
- ✓ BCIM evolved from 'Kunming Initiative' (A platform in 1990s)
- ✓ The BCIM economic corridor is an ambitious undertaking that hopes to connect Kolkata with Kunming, capital of the Yunnan province.
- ✓ It envisages formation of a thriving economic belt, focusing on cross-border transport, energy and telecommunication networks.
- ✓ Starting from Kunming, the route passes through nodal points, such as Mandalay and Lashio in Myanmar.
- ✓ It heads towards Kolkata after passing through Manipur and Silchar, before crossing Bangladesh via Sylhet and Dhaka, with branches extending to the ports of Cox's Bazar and Chittagong.

BIMSTEC

- ❖ BIMSTEC stands for Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
- ❖ It is an international organisation involving a group of countries in South Asia and South East Asia.

❖ Members:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Bangladesh | 5. Thailand |
| 2. India | 6. Bhutan |
| 3. Myanmar | 7. Nepal |
| 4. Sri Lanka | |

❖ Established in 1997 in Bangkok, HQ: Dhaka, Bangladesh

❖ Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand were founding members

❖ The main objective of BIMSTEC is technological and economic cooperation among south Asian and south east Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, Commerce, investment, technology, tourism, human resource development, agriculture, fisheries, transport and communication, textiles, leather etc. have been included in it



❖ BIMSTEC uses the alphabetical order for the Chairmanship. Bhutan has never been chairman (Skipped itself)

❖ They are collectively home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of global population and has a combined gross domestic product of \$2.8 trillion.

❖ Current chairmanship: Nepal

India and BIMSTEC:

❖ India has been pushing for making BIMSTEC vibrant forum for regional collaboration as cooperation under South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) framework is not moving forward.

❖ India has been maintaining that it was difficult to proceed with SAARC initiative under current circumstances citing continuing support to cross-border terrorism from Pakistan. Pakistan was also blocking connectivity initiatives such as SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA). BIMSTEC excludes Pakistan.

❖ India is now pushing for similar pact motor vehicle agreement in BIMSTEC with an aim to enhance regional trade.

In News:

- ❖ 4th BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu, Nepal, Aug. 2018. The theme of the summit was 'Towards a Peaceful Prosperous, and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region'.

BRICS

In News:

- ❖ 10 BRICS summit held in South Africa in 2018 and produced Johannesburg declaration

Upcoming:

- ❖ The 11th BRICS summit (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) will be held on November 13-14 in the city of Brasilia.
- ❖ Formed in 2011, BRICS is an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa



- ❖ Originally it was BRIC (S. Africa included in 2010). Term coined in 2001
- ❖ First formal summit was held in 2009 in Russia
- ❖ It encourages commercial, political and cultural cooperation between the BRICS nations
- ❖ New Development Bank is an outcome of this platform
- ❖ Except India, all other members GDP is slowing down bringing average GDP growth of the BRICS to near zero.
- ❖ As of 2015, the five BRICS countries represent over 3 billion people, or 42% of the world population.

COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

- ❖ Formerly called the British Commonwealth
- ❖ It is an intergovernmental organization of 52 member states that were mostly territories of the former British Empire

HQ: London

- ❖ This was set up after the Second World War (in 1949) by Britain, to maintain close economic ties with its erstwhile colonies that were now rapidly becoming independent
- ❖ It is not a trade block. It aims to promote democracy, human rights, world peace etc.
- ❖ Commonwealth countries in theory do not consider each other 'foreign', and hence send 'High Commissioners' and not 'Ambassadors'

- ❖ Several countries (such as Britain, Caribbean islands) grant the right to vote to any commonwealth country citizen residing in their territory to vote in their elections
- ❖ In non-commonwealth countries, commonwealth countries can seek assistance at the British embassy, in case their own country does not have consular services in that country
- ❖ On occasion, the commonwealth has suspended members for not maintaining democratic governments (such as Nigeria from 1995-1999). Recently, there have been lots of protests demanding that Sri Lanka be dropped, given the war crimes inflicted on Tamils during the civil war
- ❖ The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states.
- ❖ The Commonwealth is home to 2.4 billion people and includes both advanced economies and developing countries. Thirty-one of our members are small states, many of which are island nations.
- ❖ Mozambique and Rwanda are also its members, who were never colonies of Britain
- ❖ Maldives left the group in Oct 2016 but decided to re-join the commonwealth in 2018 under new leadership.

EAST ASIA SUMMIT

- ❖ It is a forum of East Asian, South East Asian and South Asian
- ✓ 18 members:
 - ✓ 10 ASEAN nations
 - ✓ China, Japan and South Korea (ASEAN + 3)
 - ✓ Australia
 - ✓ New Zealand
 - ✓ India
 - ✓ Russia
 - ✓ USA



Started in 2005 from Kuala Lumpur:

- ❖ EAS meetings are held after annual ASEAN leaders' meetings. It is an ASEAN led initiative. Established in 2005, EAS allows the principal players in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues of common interest and concern, in an open and transparent manner, at the highest level. The membership of EAS consists of ten ASEAN Member States (i.e. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore,

Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam), Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the USA.

- ❖ EAS is an initiative of ASEAN and is based on the premise of the centrality of ASEAN. The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.
- ❖ The final report of the East Asian Study Group in 2002, established by the ASEAN+3 countries (i.e. China, Japan and ROK), recommended EAS as an ASEAN led development limited to the ASEAN +3 countries.

Background:

- ❖ ASEAN is amongst the fastest growing markets in the world and presents substantial trade and investments opportunities for India.
- ❖ It has emerged as second largest trade partner of India in 2017-18 with bilateral trade valued at US \$ 81.33 billion, comprising 10.58% of India's total trade with the world.
- ❖ RCEP is viewed as alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a proposed trade agreement that includes several Asian and American nations but excludes China and India.

EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION (EEU)

- ❖ It is an economic union of states located in Northern Eurasia
- ❖ HQ: Moscow, established in 2015

Five members:

- ✓ Armenia
- ✓ Belarus
- ✓ Kazakhstan
- ✓ Kyrgyzstan
- ✓ Russia



- ❖ The EEU introduces the free movement of goods, capital, services and people and provides for common transport, agriculture and energy policies. In future, it can evolve with provisions for a single currency and greater integration

- ❖ The Eurasian Economic Union is an international organization for regional economic integration. It has international legal personality and is established by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.
- ❖ The EAEU provides for free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, pursues coordinated, harmonized and single policy in the sectors determined by the Treaty and international agreements within the Union.
- ❖ The Union is being created to comprehensively upgrade, raise the competitiveness of and cooperation between the national economies, and to promote stable development in order to raise the living standards of the nations of the Member-States.



G20

In News:

- ❖ The 2018 G20 Buenos Aires summit, was the thirteenth meeting of Group of Twenty (G20), It was the first G20 summit to be hosted in South America.
- ❖ For the first time, India will host the annual G20 summit in 2022, coinciding with the country's 75th anniversary of Independence.
- ❖ The G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting was held in Salta, Argentina from 23 to 24 August, 2018. It took place as part of Sherpa Track for 2018 G20 Leaders' Summit, which is to be hosted by Argentina by end of 2018.

Background:

- ❖ The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier forum for its members' international economic cooperation and decision-making. Its membership comprises 19 countries plus the European Union. Each G20 president invites several guest countries each year.
- ❖ G20 leaders meet annually. In addition, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meet regularly during the year to discuss ways to strengthen the global economy, reform international financial institutions, improve financial regulation and implement the key economic reforms that are needed in each member economy. Underpinning these meetings is a year-long program of meetings among senior officials and of working groups coordinating policy on specific issues.

- ❖ The G20 started in 1999 as a meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis. In 2008, the first G20 Leaders' Summit was held, and the group played a key role in responding to the global financial crisis.
- ❖ Its decisive and coordinated actions boosted consumer and business confidence and supported the first stages of economic recovery. G20 leaders have met nine times since 2008.
- ❖ G20 economies account for around **world 85%** of the **gross world product (GWP)**, **80% of intra-trade, 75%**, and **two-thirds of the** world population.

G20 replaced G8 as the main economic council of wealthy nations

- ❖ G20 members comprise Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, and the US.

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

In News:

- ❖ The 39th session of the GCC summit was held recently in Riyadh. At the end of the summit, the council issued the 'Riyadh Declaration', which included 72 items covering matters related to the Gulf countries, the region and the world.
- ❖ The 40th session of the GCC summit will be held in the UAE, according to a communique issued at the end of the 39th summit in Riyadh.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) became first countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to introduce Value Added Tax (VAT) for the first time to increase their revenue away from oil reserves.
- ❖ The other members of 6 member GCC– Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar – have also committed to introduce VAT, though some have delayed plans until at least 2019.

Background:

- ❖ The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political and economic alliance of six countries in the Arabian Peninsula: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- ❖ Established in 1981, the GCC promotes economic, security, cultural and social cooperation between the six states and holds a summit every year to discuss cooperation and regional affairs.

- ❖ All current member states are monarchies, including three constitutional monarchies (Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain), two absolute monarchies (Saudi Arabia and Oman), and one federal monarchy (the United Arab Emirates).

MEKONG-GANGA COOPERATION

In News:

- ❖ The Ninth Mekong Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting (9th MGC MM) was held on 2nd August 2018 in Singapore
- ❖ The Ministers agreed to hold the 10th MGC Ministerial Meeting on the margins of ASEAN Foreign Minister Meeting in 2019 in Thailand.



Background:

- ❖ The organization takes its name from the Ganga and the Mekong, two large rivers in the region.
- ❖ The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by six countries – India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. It was launched in 2000 at Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- ❖ Both the Ganga and the Mekong are civilizational rivers, and the MGC initiative aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people inhabiting these two major river basins.
- ❖ The MGC is also indicative of the cultural and commercial linkages among the member countries of the MGC down the centuries.
- ❖ India hosted the 6th MGC Ministerial Meeting on 4 September 2012
- ❖ They emphasised four areas of cooperation:
 - ✓ Tourism,
 - ✓ Culture,
 - ✓ Education, and
 - ✓ Transportation

OPEC

In News:

- ❖ Qatar recently announced its decision to quit OPEC

Mission:

- ❖ In accordance with its Statute, the mission of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its Member Countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry.

Membership:

- ❖ The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference on September 10–14, 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- ❖ The five Founding Members were later joined by ten other Members: Qatar (1961) – terminated its membership in January 2019; Indonesia (1962) – suspended its membership in January 2009, reactivated it in January 2016, but decided to suspend it again in November 2016; Libya (1962); United Arab Emirates (1967); Algeria (1969); Nigeria (1971); Ecuador (1973); Angola (2007); Gabon (1975) -; Equatorial Guinea (2017); and Congo (2018). OPEC had its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, in the first five years of its existence. This was moved to Vienna, Austria, on September 1, 1965.

Working:

- ❖ It operates on the principle of unanimity, and one member, one vote
- ❖ OPEC sets production targets for its member nations and generally, when OPEC production targets are reduced, oil prices increase
- ❖ As of 2015, the 13 countries accounted for 43 percent of global oil production and 73 percent of the world's "proven" oil reserves, giving OPEC a major influence on global oil prices. OPEC decisions have come to play a prominent role in the global oil market and international relations

OPEC Reports:

- ❖ Monthly Oil Market Report (MOMR)
- ❖ World Oil Outlook (WOO)

NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP (NSG)

In News:

- ❖ The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) plenary meeting took place on in Jurmala, Latvia after Latvia assumed chairmanship of NSG for 2018-19. With this, Latvia became first Baltic state to chair the NSG. There was no headway in India's application for NSG entry in this plenary meeting. India had applied for NSG membership at 2016 Seoul plenary session, but it was objected by few member countries of NSG including China.

Key Highlights of meeting: / Participation Non-NPT States:

- ❖ NSG member states continued discussions on issue of technical, legal and political aspects of participation Non-NPT States of in NSG initiated at its 2016 Seoul plenary. There was no headway this time for considering India's membership despite thaw in relationship with China. There was no specific reference to Pakistan's application to the NSG.

Waiver to India:

- ❖ NSG continues to consider all aspects of implementation of the 2008 Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India (or NSG waiver for India) and discussed NSG relationship with India.

On North Korea:

- ❖ Participating Governments of NSG reconfirmed their commitment to UN Security Council resolutions 2371 (2017), 2375 (2017), 2397 (2017) and previous relevant UNSC resolutions, which reaffirm that North Korea will immediately abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. They noted that supply of all controlled items to North Korea is prohibited according to above resolutions. They noted with encouragement the recent Inter-Korean summits and North Korea-US summit.

On Iran:

- ❖ They acknowledged continued implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Iran by E3/EU+2 (United Kingdom, France, Germany + Russia, China) and Iran. JCPOA is nuclear deal between P-5 (US, UK, Russia. China, France) + 1 (Germany) and Iran.

Benefits of being an NSG member:

- ✓ Gets timely information on nuclear matters.
- ✓ Contributes by way of information.

- ✓ Has confirmed credentials.
- ✓ Can act as an instrument of harmonization and coordination.
- ✓ Is part of a very transparent process.

Background:

- ❖ NSG is a multinational body concerned with reducing nuclear proliferation by controlling the export and re-transfer of materials that may be used for development of nuclear weapons.
- ❖ It was set up in 1974 as a reaction to India's first successful nuclear tests (code name Smiling Buddha conducted on 18 May 1974) to stop so called misuse of nuclear material meant for peaceful purposes. Currently, NSG has 48 members.

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)

In News:

- ❖ OIC had recently invited India as a special guest to address its session

Initiatives:

- ❖ The new programme OIC-2025 is anchored in the provisions of the OIC Charter and focuses on 18 priority areas with 107 goals. The priority areas include issues of Peace and Security, Palestine and Al-Quds, Poverty Alleviation, Counter-terrorism, Investment and Finance, Food Security, Science and Technology, Climate Change and Sustainability, Moderation, Culture and Interfaith Harmony, Empowerment of Women, Joint Islamic Humanitarian Action, Human Rights and Good Governance, among others.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC):

- ❖ The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states. OIC is an international organization that aims to provide collective voice to the Muslim world and safeguard and protect interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony.
- ❖ It was established in 1969 and has its administrative centre (headquarters) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. OIC consists of 57 member states spread over four continents with a collective population of over 1.3 billion as of 2009 with 47 countries being Muslim Majority countries. It has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union. Its official languages are Arabic, English, and French. It is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the UN.

Issues with India:

- ❖ In this organization, India is a blocked country, though it second largest country (after Indonesia) in terms of Muslim population (It has about 12% of the world's Muslim population). India has been blocked by Pakistan from joining the OIC over Kashmir issue. OIC regard parts of Kashmir as “occupied by India”.

SAARC

In News:

- ❖ The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister has approved the amendments to the framework on currency swap arrangement for SAARC member countries.
- ❖ The amendments incorporate a standby facility of USD 400 million.
- ❖ The first South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Agri Cooperative Business Forum was held in Kathmandu, capital of Nepal

SAARC:

- ❖ SAARC stands for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. It is regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union in South Asia.
- ❖ Founded in Dhaka in 1985. Secretariat: Kathmandu

Members:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ Afghanistan (Joined in 2007) | ✓ Nepal |
| ✓ Bhutan | ✓ Sri Lanka |
| ✓ Bangladesh | ✓ Maldives |
| ✓ India | ✓ Myanmar and China are not its |
| ✓ Pakistan | members |

Nepal is the current chair of SAARC

- ❖ Nine observer states: Australia, China, European Union, Japan, Iran, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Korea, and United States. SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 9.12% of the global economy, as of 2015. The organization promotes development economics and regional integration. It also maintains permanent diplomatic relations at United Nations as an observer.
- ❖ **SAFTA:** South Asia Free Trade Agreement was launched in 2006.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

In News:

- ❖ Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019, the first joint military exercise of SCO
- ❖ Qingdao declaration: SCO summit adopts declaration calling for 3-year plan to combat terrorism

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):

- ❖ SCO is a Eurasian economic, political and security organisation headquartered in Beijing, China. SCO is successor of grouping called Shanghai Five, founded by China in 1996. The Declaration on establishment of SCO was signed in Shanghai (China) in June 2001 by six founding states – Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- ❖ The groupings main objective is military cooperation between members. It also works towards intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism operations in Central Asia.
- ❖ It is primarily centered on its member nations' Central Asian security-related concerns, often describing main threats it confronts as being terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- ❖ The full members of the organization are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.
- ❖ India and Pakistan were granted SCO membership in June 2017. Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia currently enjoy observer status of SCO.
- ❖ Sri Lanka, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal are dialogue partners of SCO.

SCO-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS):

- ❖ Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is permanent organ of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). RATS established in June 2004 is engaged in furthering cooperation and ties between member countries on concerns of terrorism, security, drug trafficking, crime and cyber warfare. It serves to promote cooperation of member states against three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- ❖ It is headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The Head of RATS is elected to three-year term. Each member state also sends permanent representative to RATS.

Qingdao Summit of SCO:

India's Participation:

- ❖ India refused to endorse China's ambitious One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project as part of Qingdao Declaration at the 18th SCO summit.

- ❖ At the restricted session of the SCO Summit, Indian Prime Minister floated concept of SECURE: ‘S’ for security for citizens, ‘E’ for economic development, ‘C’ for connectivity in the region, ‘U’ for unity, ‘R’ for respect of sovereignty and integrity, and ‘E’ for environment protection.

Structure and Function of The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

1. SCO Heads of State Council

- ❖ The Council of Heads of State shall be the supreme SCO body. It shall determine priorities and define major areas of activities of the Organization, decide upon the fundamental issues of its internal arrangement and functioning and its interaction with other States and international organizations, as well as consider the most topical international issues.

2. SCO Heads of Government Council

- ❖ The Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) shall approve the budget of the Organization, consider and decide upon major issues related to particular, especially economic, spheres of interaction within the Organization.

3. SCO Foreign Ministers Council

- ❖ The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs shall consider issues related to day-today activities of the Organization, preparation of meetings of the Council of Heads of State and holding of consultations on international problems within the Organization. The Council may, as appropriate, make statements on behalf of SCO.

THE AUSTRALIA GROUP

In News:

- ❖ On 19 January 2018 India formally became the 43rd member of the Australia Group (AG), the cooperative and voluntary group of countries working to counter the spread of materials, equipment and technologies that could contribute to the development or acquisition of chemical and biological weapons (CBW) by states or terrorist groups.

Background:

- ❖ The Australia Group is an informal arrangement which aims to allow exporting or transshipping countries to minimize the risk of assisting chemical and biological weapon (CBW) proliferation.
- ❖ The Group meets annually to discuss ways of increasing the effectiveness of participating countries’ national export licensing measures to prevent would-be proliferators from obtaining materials for CBW programs.

- ❖ Participants in the Australia Group do not undertake any legally binding obligations: the effectiveness of their cooperation depends solely on a shared commitment to CBW non-proliferation goals and the strength of their respective national measures.

Key considerations in the formulation of participants' export licensing measures are:

1. They should be effective in impeding the production of chemical and biological weapons;
 2. They should be practical, and reasonably easy to implement, and
 3. They should not impede the normal trade of materials and equipment used for legitimate purposes.
- ❖ All states participating in the Australia Group are parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and strongly support efforts under those Conventions to rid the world of CBW.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC):

- ❖ The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a multilateral treaty that bans chemical weapons and requires their destruction within a specified period of time. The treaty is of unlimited duration and is far more comprehensive than the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which outlaws the use but not the possession of chemical weapons.
- ❖ CWC negotiations started in 1980 in the UN Conference on Disarmament. The convention opened for signature on January 13, 1993, and entered into force on April 29, 1997.
- ❖ The CWC is implemented by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which is headquartered in The Hague

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC):

- ❖ The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is a legally binding treaty that outlaws biological arms. After being discussed and negotiated in the United Nations' disarmament forum starting in 1969, the BWC opened for signature on April 10, 1972, and entered into force on March 26, 1975. It currently has 182 states-parties, including Palestine, and five signatories (Egypt, Haiti, Somalia, Syria, and Tanzania). Ten states have neither signed nor ratified the BWC (Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Israel, Kiribati, Micronesia, Namibia, South Sudan and Tuvalu).

The BWC bans:

- ❖ The development, stockpiling, acquisition, retention, and production of:
 1. Biological agents and toxins "of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes;"

2. Weapons, equipment, and delivery vehicles "designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict."
3. The transfer of or assistance with acquiring the agents, toxins, weapons, equipment, and delivery vehicles described above.

OPCW (ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS)

- ❖ The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague, the Netherlands, came into being at the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). States parties to CWC are members of the OPCW. All States Parties make contributions to the OPCW budget, based on a modified UN scale of assessments.

Principal Organs:

1. Conference of the States Parties
 - ❖ The Conference is the OPCW's principal organ, composed of representatives of all States Parties. A regular session of the Conference is to be held annually unless otherwise decided, and special sessions convened when necessary. The Conference can make decisions on any matters brought to its attention by the Executive Council or any of the States Parties
2. Executive Council
 - ❖ The Executive Council is the executive organ of the OPCW. Each member has one vote, and the council decides on matters of substance by a two-thirds majority
 - ❖ There are 41 rotating members, representing 5 regional groupings:
 - ✓ Africa
 - ✓ Asia/Eastern Europe
 - ✓ Latin America and the Caribbean
 - ✓ Western European
 - ✓ Others Group
 - ❖ OPCW Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) got the Nobel Peace Prize 2013

What is a chemical weapon?

- ❖ A Chemical Weapon is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its toxic properties. Munitions, devices and other equipment specifically designed to weaponise toxic chemicals also fall under the definition of chemical weapons.

THE WASSENAAR ARRANGEMENT

- ❖ The Wassenaar Arrangement, or WA, is one of the world's four major export control regimes, the other three being the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group.

What is the Wassenaar Arrangement all about?

- ❖ Multilateral export control regimes are blocs set up with the aim of restricting and/or monitoring the trade of dangerous goods: arms—nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction in particular; the materials and technologies used in the manufacture of weapons; and so-called dual-use goods, which have both civilian and military purposes.

The Arrangement is based on five crucial principles:

1. It contributes to regional and international security and stability.
 2. It promotes transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.
 3. It complements and reinforces the export control regimes for weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
 4. It is not directed against any state or group of states.
 5. It uses export controls as a means to combat terrorism.
- ❖ Every six months member countries of WA exchange information on deliveries of conventional arms to non-WA members that fall under eight broad weapons categories
 - ❖ These categories include battle tanks, military helicopters, armoured fighting vehicles (AFVs), military aircraft, large-calibre artillery, warships, missiles or missile systems, and small arms and light weapons.

India as the 42nd Member:

- ❖ The **23rd plenary session of the WA**, held over 6-7 December 2017, concluded with India being admitted as the latest member of this elite group.
- ❖ Even though **India is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons**, it has managed to make its entry into the **Wassenaar group**, which would enhance its credentials in the field of non-proliferation
- ❖ To be precise, India adopted the control list **for SCOMET** (special chemicals, organisms, materials, equipment, and technologies) items, mandatory under the **Wassenaar Arrangement**. India also seeks to send a message about its larger commitment to non-proliferation.

Origin Wassenaar arrangement:

- ❖ The WA was conceived in a high-level meeting in 1995, in the Dutch town of Wassenaar. This was just after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Wassenaar Arrangement is seen by many as a successor to the erstwhile Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls, or COCOM.
- ❖ COCOM was created in 1949 for the purpose of preventing Western companies and countries from selling strategic goods and services to the Eastern bloc countries behind the “iron curtain”. The founding members of COCOM were the US, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and the UK; several other countries joined later, including Spain, Canada, Australia, Germany, Japan and Turkey.
- ❖ Once the Cold War ended in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the East-West standoff petered out. The members of COCOM then agreed to terminate the group and establish a new multilateral arrangement, temporarily known as the “New Forum”. The participating states, however, agreed to continue the use of the COCOM control lists as a basis for global export controls on a national level until the new arrangement could be established.
- ❖ On 2-3 April 1996, the inaugural plenary meeting of the Wassenaar Arrangement was held in Vienna.

MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime)

1. It is a multilateral, consensus – based grouping of 35 member countries who are voluntarily committed to the non-proliferation of missiles capable of carrying chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).
2. It controls the export of the technologies and materials involved in ballistic missile systems and unmanned aerial vehicles particularly capable of carrying nuclear warheads of above 500kg payload for more than 300 km.
3. This is a non–treaty association of member countries with certain guidelines about the information sharing, national control laws and export policies for missile systems and a rule-based regulation mechanism to limit the transfer of such critical technologies of these missile systems.
4. Each MTCR member is supposed to establish national export control policies for ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, space launch vehicles, drones, remotely piloted vehicles, sounding rockets, and underlying components and technologies

that appear on the regime's Material and Technology Annex. Members can add items to or subtract them from the annex through consensus decisions.

5. The annex is divided into two separate groupings of items, Category I and Category II. Category I includes complete missiles and rockets, major sub-systems, and production facilities. Specialized materials, technologies, propellants, and sub-components for missiles and rockets comprise Category II.

Benefits of being a member of MTCR:

- ❖ India has joined MTCR as a full member and also agreed to join the **Hague Code of conduct** made it **bolster its position as a responsible** nuclear state and strengthen its case for the membership of other multilateral export control regimes like Nuclear Suppliers Group, Australia Group, and Wassenaar arrangement. India can **buy high-end missile technology** and run joint programmes for development of unmanned aerial vehicles with other countries. eg. Procurement of theater missile interceptor **“Arrow II”** from Israel, military drones like **“Avenger”** from the USA etc. India can sell its missiles to other non-member countries with comparative ease.eg. **Supersonic cruise missile, “BrahMos”, to Vietnam. ISRO can access the forbidden cryogenic technology from Russia** which is required for the space exploration operations.
- ❖ MTCR membership can be used **as a bargaining chip against China which** is not a full member of the regime and aspiring to be **one as it has blocked India’s way to NSG.**

Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation

- ❖ MTCR members spearheaded a voluntary November 2002 initiative, the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (formerly known as the International Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation), calling on all countries to show greater restraint in their own development of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction and to reduce their existing missile arsenals if possible. The aim of the initiative is to establish a norm against missiles that could be armed with chemical, biological, or nuclear warheads

BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENTS (BIS)

- ❖ **Established in 1930**, the BIS is owned by 60 central banks, representing countries from around the world that together account for **about 95% of world GDP**. Its head **office is in Basel**, Switzerland

Reports of BIS:

- ❖ Annual Economic Report

Organisation

- ❖ The BIS has three main departments, two of which encompass our two principal activities - policy analysis and banking - and one which provides general internal support.



1. Monetary and Economic Department
2. Banking Department
3. General Secretariat

- ❖ BIS is an international financial organization owned by 60-member central banks, representing countries from around the world including India
- ❖ It fosters international monetary and financial cooperation and serves as a bank for central banks.
- ❖ It carries out its work through its meetings, programmes and through the Basel Process hosting international groups pursuing global financial stability and facilitating their interaction.

COALITION FOR EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS INNOVATIONS (CEPI)

- ❖ CEPI is an innovative global partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil society organisations launched in Davos in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.
- ❖ CEPI's plan includes preparations for possible outbreaks of **Marburg fever, Lassa fever, MERS, SARS, Nipah virus, Rift Valley fever, chikungunya, and others.**
- ❖ It is being funded by **the Wellcome Trust, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Economic Forum (WEF), Governments of Norway, Japan, India (Department of Biotechnology) and Germany.**
- ❖ These three diseases are Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)-coronavirus, Lassa fever, and Nipah virus.

INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL SYMPOSIUM (IONS)

- ❖ The IONS is a **regional forum of Indian Ocean littoral states** launched by India in February 2008.
- ❖ It is a **voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation** among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) by providing an **open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues**.
- ❖ It endeavours to generate a flow of information between naval professionals that would lead to common understanding and possibly cooperative solutions on the way ahead. These states are represented by the heads of their navies.
- ❖ Under the IONS charter of business adopted in 2014, the forum has working groups on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Information Security and Interoperability (IS&I) and maritime security (anti-piracy).
- ❖ Members to IONS: There **are 35 members – navies of the IONS** which have been geographically grouped into the **following four sub-regions**:
 - ❖ **South Asian Littorals**: India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles and Sri Lanka
 - ❖ **West Asian Littorals**: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen
 - ❖ **East African Littorals**: Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Tanzania
 - ❖ **South East Asian and Australian Littorals**: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor Leste.
 - ❖ **Observer Countries**: China, Japan etc.

SUMMIT

GERMANY HOSTED FIRST EDITION OF GLOBAL WIND SUMMIT

- ❖ The first edition of Global Wind Summit will be held in Hamburg, Germany from September 25 to 28, 2018. It will be largest and most important meeting of the wind industry worldwide. The summit will see participation of of speakers from about 100 countries, including India, China, the US, Spain and Denmark.
- ❖ The summit combines will have two main conferences, WindEnergy Hamburg and WindEurope, Holinsky. Both events together will witness participation of about 1,400 exhibitors and 250 speakers from all over the world. The summit will provide platform for experts from across globe to discuss innovative and green technologies for harnessing wind energy making.
- ❖ The focus of the conferences will be on three major subjects viz. dynamic markets, cost efficiency and smart energy. It will discuss ways to develop new markets, make product competitive in auctions and use wind power for all energy applications.

NEPAL HOSTED 2018 BIMSTEC SUMMIT

- ❖ Nepal hosted the 2018 Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit.
- ❖ **Kathmandu Declaration:** “Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region”
- ❖ **Terrorism** - The Declaration focussed on backing of terror by state and non-state actors, and transnational organised crimes. It described terrorism as a “great threat” to international peace and security. It advocated targeting terrorists, terror organisations and networks. Besides, it called for identifying and holding accountable states and non-state entities that - encourage, support or finance terrorism provide sanctuaries to terrorists. **The declaration did not name any specific country.**
- ❖ **Connectivity** - The declaration underscored the importance of multidimensional connectivity. This would be a key enabler to economic integration for shared prosperity.
- ❖ **Energy** - An MoU was signed on establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection.
- ❖ It provides for **optimisation of using energy resources** in the region. It also facilitates promotion of efficient and secure operation of power system.



BIMSTEC:

- ❖ BIMSTEC is the sub-regional group of seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. BIMSTEC countries are India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka from South Asia and Myanmar, Thailand from South East Asia.
- ❖ They are collectively home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of global population. BIMSTEC was established on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. It is headquartered in Dhaka,
- ❖ Bangladesh. Its prime objectives include technological and economic cooperation among south Asian and south East Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ It is sector-driven cooperative organization, starting with six sector including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries. In 2008, it was expanded to embrace eight more sectors including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change.

INDIA HOSTS GLOBAL DIGITAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT

- ❖ India hosted the **4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit** held at **New Delhi** by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- ❖ The summit provides an opportunity to **support governments and health system reformers** in improving the health and well-being of their citizens through digital technologies.
- ❖ The Global Digital Health Partnership Summit is being hosted by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** in collaboration with the **World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP)**.
- ❖ India is committed to securing Universal Health Coverage for the underprivileged and deprived section of our society with the launch of a comprehensive healthcare scheme by the name of **Ayushman Bharat, with the twin pillars of Health & Wellness Centres (HWCs) at primary and secondary levels of healthcare and PM-Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY) at the tertiary level.**

About GDHP:

- ❖ The Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP) is an international collaboration of governments, government agencies and multinational organisations dedicated to

improving the health and well-being of their citizens through the best use of evidence-based digital technologies

- ❖ The GDHP was established in February 2018 to provide an international platform for global collaboration and sharing of evidence to guide the delivery of better digital health services within participant countries.
- ❖ The GDHP also provides an opportunity for transformational engagement between its participants, who are striving to learn and share best practice and policy that can support their digital health systems. The secretariat services for the GDHP are provided by Australian Digital Health Agency for the initial 18 months.
- ❖ Currently, **23 countries** are the member of this group which include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Estonia, Hong Kong SAR, India, Japan Republic of Indonesia, Italy, New Zealand, Netherlands Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the United States, Ukraine, Uruguay and the **World Health Organization**.

ASIA LPG SUMMIT

- ❖ The second edition of the Asia LPG Summit was inaugurated by Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas at New Delhi. The two-day summit with the theme '**LPG – Energy for Life**' will deliberate over series of subjects including how India's successful Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana can become a viable model for other countries to replicate particularly those striving to provide clean cooking fuel to its people. The summit has been organized jointly by the major Indian **oil marketing companies (OMCs)** Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum together with the **World LPG Association (WLPGA)**.

World LPG Association:

- ❖ World LPG Association (WLPGA) is the authoritative voice of the global LPG industry representing the full LPG value chain. WLPGA was established in 1987 and granted Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1989.

Mission of WLPGA:

- ❖ Demonstrate the benefits of LPG and inform, educate and influence all stakeholders.
- ❖ Support the development of LPG markets.
- ❖ Promote compliance with standards, good business and good safety practices.
- ❖ Identify innovation and facilitate knowledge transfer.

- ❖ The WLPGA brings together over 250 private and public companies operating in more than 125 countries involved in one, several or all activities of the industry. The Association aims to add value to the sector by driving premium demand for LPG, while also promoting compliance with good business and safety practices. WLPGA has developed long-standing partnerships with other international bodies such as various departments of the UN, the World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Development Banks and a number of well-respected international NGOs such as the Partnership on Clean Indoor Air (PCIA) and E+Co.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana:

- ❖ Under the PM Ujjwala Yojana, the government aims to provide LPG connections to BPL households in the country. The scheme is aimed at replacing the unclean cooking fuels mostly used in rural India with the clean and more efficient LPG.
- ❖ Ujjwala Yojana is aimed at **providing 5 Crore LPG** connections in the name of women in BPL (Below Poverty Line) households across the country. The government has set a target of **5 Crore** LPG connections to be distributed to the BPL households across the country under the scheme.

Some of the objectives of the scheme are:

- ❖ Empowering women and protecting their health.
- ❖ Reducing the serious health hazards associated with cooking based on fossil fuel.
- ❖ Reducing the number of deaths in India due to unclean cooking fuel.
- ❖ Preventing young children from a significant number of acute respiratory illnesses caused due to indoor air pollution by burning fossil fuel.

PAHAL:

- ❖ The scheme was launched for the consumers of Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG). The modified scheme is referred to as Pratyaksh Hanstantarit Labh or PAHAL DBTL (Direct Benefit Transfer of LPG). This scheme will reduce or prevent the unauthorised sale of LPG cylinders at higher rates. The purchase of multiple gas connections will be prevented. Accordingly, the subsidy burden for the Government will be reduced.

ARAB ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

- ❖ Arab Economic and Social Development summits are summits of the **Arab League**, held at the head of state level to address issues of economic and social development among member-states.

Beirut Declaration:

- ❖ Arab leaders and officials have urged the **international community** to support nations hosting Syrian refugees and take steps to minimize the impact of the refugee crisis. The call was made in the **Beirut Declaration** at the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit that concluded in the Lebanese capital recently.
- ❖ This is the **first time Arab countries** have reached a consensus on encouraging Syrian refugees to return to their country.
- ❖ The declaration said, the refugee crisis in Arab countries is the worst humanitarian problem since World War II. It points out that the crisis leads to an economic slowdown, increases the expenditure and deficit, imposes burdens on public sectors and infrastructure and poses risks to the society.
- ❖ The declaration calls for the establishment of an Arab free trade zone.

Arab league:

- ❖ The Arab League is a regional organization of Arab countries in and around North Africa, the Horn of Africa and Arabia.
- ❖ It was formed in Cairo on 22 March 1945 with six members: Kingdom of Egypt, Kingdom of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Currently, the League has 22 members, but Syria's participation has been suspended since November 2011, as a consequence of government repression during the Syrian Civil War.
- ❖ The League's main goal is to "draw closer the relations between member States and coordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries.

Arab Economic and Social Development Summit:

- ❖ The Arab Economic and Social Development summits are held at the level of head of state to address issues of economic and social development among member-states. Previous summits:
 - ✓ 2009: Kuwait
 - ✓ 2011: Egypt
 - ✓ 2013: Riyadh
 - ✓ 2019: Beirut
- ❖ The fifth Arab Economic and Social Development Summit would be held after four years later in the year 2023 in Mauritania.

13th INDIA-JAPAN ANNUAL SUMMIT

- ❖ Indian Prime Minister visited Japan on October 28-29, 2018 to attend the India-Japan Annual Summit with the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.
- ❖ After the summit, the two sides exchanged 32 MoUs or agreements including USD 75 billion currency swap agreement and agreed to '2+2' dialogue.
- ❖ USD 75 billion currency swap agreement:
- ❖ Japan and India entered into a USD 75 billion currency swap agreement that will boost Indian economy as it encounters a steep drop in the rupee's value. This swap arrangement would be 50 percent higher than the previous swap agreement. Japan had offered a USD 50 billion currency swap in 2013.
- ❖ This facility will enable the agreed amount of foreign capital being available to India for use as and when the need arises. Equally, Japan can also seek dollars from India in exchange for yen.

What is currency swap agreement?

- ❖ A currency swap agreement between two countries is signed between the central banks. In this case, RBI will get a certain amount of yen and the Bank of Japan will get an equivalent amount in Indian rupees. The rate will be decided on the basis of prevailing market rates.
- ❖ "Later, both of the countries will repay the amount at the same exchange rate. In return, there will be a swap rate to be decided by the two countries. Normally, they will be linked to London inter-bank rate, called Libor.
- ❖ Japan has done this with a number of countries, including China, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, among others. Previously, we had this kind of an agreement in the past, but never used it. The decision has not impacted the market, considering the current currency rate at 74 against the dollar.

Benefits of Currency Swaps:

1. Currently swaps enable corporate to exploit their comparative advantage in raising funds in one currency to obtain savings in other currencies.
2. Currency swaps permit corporate to switch their loans from a particular currency to another depending on their expectations of the future movement of the currency and interest rates.
3. It offers flexibility to corporate seeking to hedge the risk associated with a particular currency.

4. A company no longer has to live with a bad decision, if it has selected a wrong currency for its overseas funding operations, a currency swap can undo the damage.
5. Currency swap can be used to lock into exchange rates for a longer period and it do not require monitoring and reviewing.
6. The currency swap mode can be chosen to restructure the currency base of companies liabilities.
7. Currency swaps are used to hedge exposure to currency risk on future receipts (asset swaps) and payments (liability swaps), and to raise funds at a lower cost.
8. A high degree of liquidity in currency swap market ensures a steady supply of principals ready to assume the opposite side of a transaction.
9. In a currency swap, the exchange rates at maturity is known at the outset.
10. Early termination of swap contracts may be possible by agreement of the counter parties.

2+2 dialogue with Japan:

- ❖ After the United States, India will now hold a 2+2 dialogue with Japan. Both the sides agreed for a 2+2 dialogue between Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers. The aim is to work towards world peace and stability.

Japan announced to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA):

- ❖ During the Summit, Japan announced to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) by submitting the instrument of ratification on October 29, 2018. As of now, there are 70 countries that have signed the ISA Framework Agreement and 47 countries that have ratified it.

Japan will **be the 71st country** to sign and **48th country to ratify** the ISA Framework Agreement.

- ❖ Apart from these agreements, Japan agreed to provide loans of about 316.458 billion yen for seven major infrastructure projects in India.

These include:

- ❖ Project for the Construction of Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet or high speed train
- ❖ Project for Renovation and Modernisation of Umiam-Umtru Stage-III Hydroelectric Power Station in Meghalaya
- ❖ Delhi Mass Rapid Transport System Project (Phase 3)
- ❖ North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project (Phase 3)
- ❖ Project for Sustainable Catchment Forest Management in Tripura

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS SUMMIT 2018 HELD IN KATHMANDU

- ❖ The International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2018 was inaugurated by the Vice President of Nepal Nanda Bahadur Pun in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal on September 3, 2018.
- ❖ The three-day event is being organized by the **South Asian Women Development Forum**. It is expected to witness participation from delegates **belonging to 27 countries including China and the SAARC, ASEAN, EU, African and Arab countries**.
- ❖ **Theme:** 'Equality begins with Economic Empowerment'



Objective of conference:

- ❖ The main objective of the summit is to bring together achievers, women business leaders, professionals, international service providers, resource organisations, experts, government representatives and other stakeholders with a focus on innovative economic transformation through discussions and collaborations.

South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF):

- ❖ South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF) with a SAARC Recognized Body status is a member based regional body representing national women entrepreneurs' associations/organizations; institutions working towards the economic issues of women entrepreneurs in the SAARC Region. SAWDF membership is based on organizations with extensive work around women's entrepreneurship.
- ❖ The South Asian Women Development Forum, is incorporated under the **Organization Registration Act 1977**, is an autonomous, nonprofit organization based in Kathmandu, Nepal. SAWDF was granted the **status of SAARC Recognized Body** by the 36th Session of the SAARC Council Ministers at the 18th SAARC Summit which was held in Kathmandu on 24th of November 2014.
- ❖ As the **first SAARC Recognized Body organisation**, working on women entrepreneurs issues, SAWDF facilitates in taking forward the recommendations, drawn

from the deliberations of national programs, as regional instruments for **developing women SMEs friendly policies.**

- ❖ This year the **International Women Entrepreneurs Summit- 2019** is scheduled for September in Kathmandu, Nepal.

G20 DIGITAL ECONOMY MINISTERIAL MEETING HELD IN SALTA, ARGENTINA

- ❖ The G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting was held in Salta, Argentina from 23 to 24 August, 2018. It took place as part of Sherpa Track **for 2018 G20 Leaders' Summit**, which is to be hosted by Argentina by end of 2018. The theme of the meeting was 'Building consensus for fair and sustainable development'.
- ❖ Argentina has selected the theme, '**Building consensus for fair and sustainable development,**' for the **2018 G20 Leaders' Summit**, and has identified three key issues for the agenda: the future of work, infrastructure for development, and a sustainable food future.
- ❖ Its **three key issues for the agenda** were **future of work, infrastructure for development, and sustainable food future.** It concluded with adaptation of declaration that reflects **G20's** commitment towards promoting policies and actions that catalyze digital transformations.
- ❖ The participating delegates deliberated upon efforts to create conditions that help governments, private sector and civil society maximize benefits and confront challenges posed by technological progress.
- ❖ The other focus areas which were also deliberated included digital inclusion in particular **gender divide, digital government, digital infrastructure and measuring digital economy.**
- ❖ Participating G20 member nations agreed to promote policies that will contribute to bridging all forms of digital divide with special attention to **digital gender divide.**
- ❖ They also agreed to promote digital government and digital infrastructure, strengthen digital skills of workforce, deepen analysis towards digital economy measurement and to share experiences and lesson learned.

G20:

- ❖ Group of Twenty (G20) **is premier forum for international economic cooperation and decision-making.** It is a forum for governments and central bank governors from

20 major economies to focus on economic issues and other important development challenges.

- ❖ The **G20 comprises of total 19 countries plus European Union (EU)**, representing **85% of global GDP, 80% of international trade, 65% of world's population.**
- ❖ Its members include Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, India, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, UK, US and EU.
- ❖ It was started **in 1999 as meeting** of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in the aftermath of the **South-east Asian (Tiger economies)** financial crisis.
- ❖ It was established for **studying, reviewing, and promoting** high-level discussion of policy issues pertaining to the **promotion of international financial stability.**
- ❖ In 2008, **the first G20 Leaders' Summit** was held in Washington DC, US. Prior to this, it was merely forum for meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors. The group has played key role in responding to the global financial crisis.

6th EDITION OF BIENNIAL WORLD CITIES SUMMIT HELD IN SINGAPORE

- ❖ The sixth edition of biennial World Cities Summit was held in Singapore from July 8 to 12, 2018. Its theme was **“Liveable & Sustainable Cities: Embracing the Future through Innovation and Collaboration”**.
- ❖ The summit was held together with **Singapore International Water Week and CleanEnviro Summit Singapore.**
- ❖ The summit was jointly organised by **Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities and Urban Redevelopment Authority.**
- ❖ This year theme went beyond themes of urban governance and liveable cities, to embrace future of cities through technology, innovation and collaboration.
- ❖ The summit explored ways for making cities **more liveable and resilient** through better governance and planning, technology and social innovations as well as collaborations with various stakeholders with other cities.
- ❖ It brought together over **20,000 attendees** and record number of mayors from over 100 cities around the world to drive future forward solutions. It provided unique integrated global platform to drive integrated urban solutions, connect **global business experts,**

policy-makers, industry leaders and innovators through strategic collaborative efforts and **cutting-edge technologies**.

World Cities Summit:

- ❖ It is **biennial international conference** series on public governance and sustainable development of cities.
- ❖ It provides platform for **government leaders and industry experts** to address **liveable and sustainable city challenges**, share integrated urban solutions and forge new partnerships. It brings together practitioners and policy makers with leading experts in their field to identify innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges facing cities.
- ❖ The **first summit**, was held in Singapore in **June 2008** and focused on the theme of **“Liveable and Vibrant Cities**

INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE

In News:

- ❖ The third edition of Indian Ocean Conference begin at Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam.

Background:

- ❖ Indian Ocean Conference is an initiative to bring the state leaders, diplomats and bureaucrats from across the region under one roof to strengthen the understanding among each other. It is organized by Indian Foundation along with the partners from Singapore, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The Indian Ocean Conference will emphasise on better cooperation, strategic collaboration and governance architectures.
- ❖ This conference will serve a platform to the countries to come closer and exchange better views on the economic and strategic importance of the region and neighbourhood.
- ❖ Earlier, the conference was held in Singapore and Sri Lanka in 2016 and 2017 respectively.
- ❖ The theme of the two- day conference is ‘Building Regional Architectures’, particularly with regards to trade and commerce, security and governance.

GLOBAL RE-INVEST INVESTMENT SUMMIT

In News:

- ❖ **Global RE-Invest investment** summit on **renewable energy and first Assembly** of the International Solar **Alliance (ISA)** is to be conducted in New Delhi.

What is RE-Invest?

- ❖ RE-INVEST is a **global platform** to **explore strategies** for development and deployment of **renewables**.

- ❖ It **showcases India's clean energy market** and the **Government's efforts** to scale up capacity to **meet the national energy demand in sustainable way**

RE-Invest:

- ❖ The RE-Invest will be **organised by** the country's **new and renewable energy ministry in partnership** with the **ISA** which is headquartered in India.
- ❖ The 2018 **RE-Invest will also host** the meeting of **energy ministers of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) countries.**
- ❖ The **first edition of the RE-Invest was held in 2015.**
- ❖ It provide an **international forum** to established players as well as new segments of investors and entrepreneurs to engage, ideate and innovate on renewable energy sector **involving solar, wind, geothermal and biomass-based clean energy generation.**

WORLD SUMMIT ON ACCREDITATION (WOSA- 2018)

In News:

- ❖ 4th World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA-2018) was inaugurated by Union Minister for HRD in New Delhi.

World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA):

- ❖ World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA) is a biennial Summit organised by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA).
- ❖ It provides a platform to the stakeholders to share their knowledge and information on accreditation.
- ❖ NBA has already organised three Summits in 2012, 2014 and 2016
- ❖ The focus of WOSA 2018 is on "Challenges and Opportunities In Outcome Based Accreditation".

National Board of Accreditation (NBA):

- ❖ The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is an autonomous organisation under Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- ❖ It is engaged in quality assurance of the programs offered by the professional and technical institutions in India through accreditation.
- ❖ NBA has been accorded Permanent Signatory Status of Washington Accord since June, 2014.

- ❖ It has adopted internationally implemented outcome based assessment and accreditation, to ensure that the graduates of the NBA accredited programs are globally competent and relevant.

Washington Accord:

- ❖ It is an International Agreement among bodies responsible for accrediting undergraduate engineering degree programs.
- ❖ The Washington accord was originally signed among six countries in 1989.
- ❖ The membership of Washington Accord is an international recognition of the quality of undergraduate engineering education offered by the member country and is an avenue to bring it into world class category.

MARAKESH TREATY AND ABC

In News:

- ❖ The 28-nation European Union ratified the Marrakesh treaty to ease access to reading material for people who are print-disabled the world over.

The Marrakesh Treaty:

- ❖ The **Marrakesh VIP Treaty** (formally the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities) **is a treaty on copyright.**
- ❖ It is adopted in **Marrakesh, Morocco.**
- ❖ The **WIPO-administered Marrakesh Treaty** makes the **production and international transfer of specially-adapted books for people with blindness or visual impairments easier.**
- ❖ The treaty **allows for copyright exceptions** to facilitate the **creation of accessible versions** of books and other copyrighted works for visually impaired persons.
- ❖ The governments that are **party to the Marrakesh accord** are obliged to **adopt laws authorising** the conversion of books into accessible formats such as **Braille, e-text, audio** and large print by designated organisations.
- ❖ They are also allowed to exchange these alternative **formats across national borders without clearance by copyright owners.**
- ❖ The Treaty was signed in Marrakesh on June 27, 2013, and came into force on September 30, 2016 and
- ❖ **India was the first country to ratify the treaty.**

Accessible Books Consortium (ABC)

- ❖ The Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) is a public-private partnership led by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
- ❖ It is a stakeholder forum established in 2014 at the WIPO headquarters, assists in the implementation of the Marrakesh provisions.
- ❖ It includes organizations that represent people with print disabilities such as the World Blind Union (WBU); libraries for the blind; standards bodies, and organizations representing authors, publishers and collective management organizations.
- ❖ The ABC secretariat is located at WIPO's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

UN-UNITED NATIONS

- ❖ Formed: 24 October **1945** (UN day is celebrated on **24 October** each year)
- ❖ Headquarters: **New York, USA**
- ❖ Regional offices: Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.
- ❖ Official languages: English, French, **Spanish, Arabic**, Russian and Chinese

Current Membership: 193

- ❖ Latest member: South Sudan (2011)
- ❖ **Observers:** In addition to its member states, the United Nations General Assembly may grant observer status to an international organization, entity or non-member state, which entitles the entity to participate in the work of the United Nations General Assembly, though with limitations.
- ❖ Other than organizations and entities, Vatican and **Palestine** are observers in United Nations. '**Palestine 194**' is the campaign by the Palestine to gain UN membership.

Regional Commissions:

1. UNECA - United Nations Economic Commission for **Africa**.
2. ECLAC - Economic Commission for **Latin America and the Caribbean**
3. **ESCAP**-United Nations Economic and Social Commission for **Asia and the Pacific**
4. ECWA - Economic Commission for Western Asia
5. UNECE- United Nations Economic Commission for **Europe**

Objectives:

- ❖ To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.
- ❖ To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights.
- ❖ To establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained.
- ❖ To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.
- ❖ Developing friendly relations among countries based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.
- ❖ Achieving worldwide cooperation to solve international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems.
- ❖ Serving as a centre where countries can coordinate their actions and activities toward these various ends.

Main Organs of UN

General Assembly:

- ❖ The **General Assembly** is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. All **193 Member States** of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only UN body with universal representation. Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and **general debate**, which many heads of state attend and address. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority. The General Assembly, each year, elects a **GA President** to serve a one-year term of office.

Security Council:

- ❖ The **Security Council** has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members (**5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members**). Each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.
- ❖ The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression.
- ❖ It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council has a **Presidency**, which rotates, and changes, every month.

Economic and Social Council:

- ❖ The **Economic and Social Council** is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals. It serves as the central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social and environmental fields, supervising subsidiary and expert bodies.
- ❖ It has **54 Members**, elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms. It is the United Nations' central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on **sustainable development**.

Trusteeship Council:

- ❖ The **Trusteeship Council** was established in 1945 by the UN Charter, under **Chapter XIII**, to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories that had been placed under the administration of seven Member States, and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government and independence. By 1994, all Trust Territories had attained self-government or independence. The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994. By a resolution adopted on 25 May 1994, the Council amended its rules of procedure to drop the obligation to meet annually and agreed to meet as occasion required -- by its decision or the decision of its President, or at the request of a majority of its members or the General Assembly or the Security Council.

International Court of Justice

- ❖ The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Its seat is at the Peace Palace in the Hague (Netherlands). It is the only one of the six principal organs of the United Nations not located in New York (United States of America). The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

Secretariat:

- ❖ **The Secretariat** comprises **the Secretary-General** and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organization's other principal organs. The Secretary-General is chief administrative officer of the Organization, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term. UN staff members are recruited internationally and locally, and work in duty stations and on peacekeeping missions all around the world. But serving the cause of peace in a violent world is a dangerous occupation. Since the founding of the United Nations, hundreds of brave men and women have given their lives in its service.

Funds and Programmes of UN / UNDP

- ❖ The **United Nations Development Programme** works in nearly 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build resilience so countries can sustain progress.
- ❖ As the UN's development agency, UNDP plays a critical role in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNEP (UN Environment)

- ❖ The **United Nations Environment Programme** established in 1972, is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system.
- ❖ UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment.

UNFPA:

- ❖ The **United Nations Population Fund** – UNFPA is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UN-Habitat:

- ❖ The mission of **the United Nations Human Settlements Programme** is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

UNICEF:

- ❖ **UNICEF** works in 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.

WFP:

- ❖ The **World Food Programme** aims to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. It is the world's largest humanitarian agency. Every year, the programme feeds almost 80 million people in around 75 countries.

UN Specialized Agencies:

- ❖ The UN specialized agencies are autonomous organizations working with the United Nations.
- ❖ All were brought into relationship with the UN through negotiated agreements. Some existed before the First World War.
- ❖ Some were associated with the League of Nations. Others were created almost simultaneously with the UN. Others were created by the UN to meet emerging needs.

FAO:

- ❖ The **Food and Agriculture Organization** leads international efforts to fight hunger. It is both a forum for negotiating agreements between developing and developed countries and a source of technical knowledge and information to aid development.

ICAO:

- ❖ The **International Civil Aviation Organization** develops standards for global air transport and assists its 192 Member States in sharing the world's skies to their socio-economic benefit.

IFAD:

- ❖ The **International Fund for Agricultural Development**, since it was created in 1977, has focused exclusively on rural poverty reduction, working with poor rural populations in developing countries to eliminate poverty, hunger and malnutrition; raise their productivity and incomes; and improve the quality of their lives.

ILO:

- ❖ The **International Labor Organization** promotes international labor rights by formulating international standards on the freedom to associate, collective bargaining, the abolition of forced labor, and equality of opportunity and treatment.

IMF:

- ❖ The **International Monetary Fund** fosters economic growth and employment by providing temporary financial assistance to countries to help ease balance of payments adjustment and technical assistance. The IMF currently has \$28 billion in outstanding loans to 74 nations.

IMO:

- ❖ The **International Maritime Organization** has created a comprehensive shipping regulatory framework, addressing safety and environmental concerns, legal matters, technical cooperation, security, and efficiency.

ITU:

- ❖ The **International Telecommunication Union** is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies. It is committed to connecting all the world's people – wherever they live and whatever their means. Through our work, we protect and support everyone's fundamental right to communicate

UNESCO:

- ❖ The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** focuses on everything from teacher training to helping improve education worldwide to protecting important historical and cultural sites around the world. UNESCO added 28 new World Heritage Sites this year to the list of irreplaceable treasures that will be protected for today's travelers and future generations.

UNIDO:

- ❖ The **United Nations Industrial Development Organization** is the specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability.

UNWTO:

- ❖ The **World Tourism Organization** is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

UPU:

- ❖ The **Universal Postal Union** is the primary forum for cooperation between postal sector players. It helps to ensure a truly universal network of up-to-date products and services.

WHO:

- ❖ The **World Health Organization** is the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations system. The objective of WHO is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health, as defined in the WHO Constitution, is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

WIPO:

- ❖ The **World Intellectual Property Organization** protects intellectual property throughout the world through 23 international treaties.

WMO:

- ❖ The **World Meteorological Organization** facilitates the free international exchange of meteorological data and information and the furtherance of its use in aviation, shipping, security, and agriculture, among other things.

World Bank Group:

- ❖ The World Bank focuses on poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards worldwide by providing low-interest loans, interest-free credit, and grants to developing countries for education, health, infrastructure, and communications, among other things. The World Bank works in over 100 countries.
 - ✓ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
 - ✓ International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)*
 - ✓ International Development Association (IDA)
 - ✓ International Finance Corporation (IFC)
 - ✓ Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):

- ✓ Established in 1957
- ✓ HQ: Vienna, Austria
- ✓ It seeks to promote peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to prohibit its use for any military purpose, including manufacturing of nuclear weapons
- ✓ It reports to the UNGA and the UNSC (although it is an independent body)

IAEA:

- ❖ Promotes development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology, provide international safeguards against misuse of nuclear technology and nuclear materials, and promote nuclear safety (including radiation protection) and nuclear security standards and their implementation
- ❖ Three main areas of work that underpin the IAEA's mission are:
 - ✓ Safety and Security;
 - ✓ Science and Technology; and
 - ✓ Safeguards and Verification

The IAEA executes this mission with three main functions:

- ❖ The inspection of existing nuclear facilities to ensure their peaceful use, providing information and developing standards to ensure the safety and security of nuclear facilities, and as a hub for the various fields of science involved in the peaceful applications of nuclear technology

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

In News:

- ❖ Malaysia joins the International Criminal Court

Background:

- ❖ It is an intergovernmental organisation and international tribunal
- ❖ It sits in The Hague, The Netherlands
- ❖ The ICC has the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes
- ❖ It was created by the 'Rome Statute' and has 122 member countries, India is not one of them (neither are China and the USA)

- ❖ The ICC is intended to complement existing national judicial systems and it may therefore only exercise its jurisdiction when certain conditions are met, such as when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute criminals or when the United Nations Security Council or individual states refer investigations to the Court So far, nine investigations have been opened, and 36 individuals have been indicted.
- ❖ All of the official investigations have been in Africa, and hence the ICC has been accused of selective enforcement of western imperialism towards African countries.

Why India is not a member of the ICC?

- ❖ The issue of State sovereignty and national interests versus the powers of the ICC, the difficulty of collecting evidence, the problem of finding impartial prosecutors acceptable to the entire international community and the definition of crimes that would come within the ICC's jurisdiction emerged are some of the challenges that India cites for not accepting ICC's jurisdiction

ICJ-INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

In News:

- ❖ ICJ advises Britain to return Diego Garcia to Mauritius

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

- ❖ Located in Paris
- ❖ Autonomous intergovernmental organization
- ❖ Established in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis
- ❖ The IEA was initially dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors.
- ❖ The IEA acts as a policy adviser to its member states, but also works with non-member countries, especially China, India, and Russia
- ❖ India has become an associate member of IEA
- ❖ The Agency's mandate has broadened to focus on the "3Es" of effectual energy policy:
 1. Energy security,
 2. Economic development, and
 3. Environmental protection
- ❖ The IEA has a broad role in promoting alternate energy sources (including renewable energy), rational energy policies, and multinational energy technology co-operation

PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION (PCA)

- ❖ It is an international organization
- ❖ HQ: The Hague, The Netherlands
- ❖ Established in 1899
- ❖ It is not a court and does not have permanent judges.
- ❖ It is not part of the UN system although it has observer status in UN General Assembly.
- ❖ The PCA is a permanent bureaucracy that assists temporary tribunals to resolve disputes among states (and similar entities), intergovernmental organizations, or even private parties arising out of international agreements.
- ❖ The PCA has experience in administering international arbitrations concerning disputes arising out of treaties, including bilateral investment treaties and multilateral treaties, and other instruments. The PCA also plays an important role under the UNCITRAL Rules
- ❖ The cases span a range of legal issues involving territorial and maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international and regional trade.
- ❖ The decision of the arbitrators **is binding in all cases on** the parties.

WORLD BANK

- ❖ World Bank is one of five institutions created at Breton Woods Conference in 1944.
- ❖ The World Bank (different from world bank group) is an international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital programs.

It comprises of two institutions:

- ❖ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- ❖ International Development Association (IDA).
- ❖ Formation: July 1944.
- ❖ Headquarters: Washington DC, United States.
- ❖ Motto: Working for a World Free of Poverty.
- ❖ Membership: 189 countries (IBRD), 173 countries (IDA)
- ❖ The World Bank is one of the five components of the **World Bank Group**, which is part of the United Nations system.

The World Bank Group consists of five organizations:

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

- ❖ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) lends to governments of middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries.

The International Development Association:

- ❖ The International Development Association (IDA) provides interest-free loans — called credits and grants to governments of the poorest countries.
- ❖ **Together, IBRD and IDA make up the World Bank.**

The International Finance Corporation:

- ❖ The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector.
- ❖ We help developing countries achieve sustainable growth by financing investment, mobilizing capital in international financial markets, and providing advisory services to businesses and governments.

The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency

- ❖ The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) was created in 1988 to promote foreign direct investment into developing countries to support economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve people's lives.
- ❖ MIGA fulfills this mandate by offering political risk insurance (guarantees) to investors and lenders.

The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes

- ❖ The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) provides international facilities for conciliation and arbitration of investment disputes.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

- ❖ It was established in 1945 with the objective of eliminating hunger and improving nutrition and standards of living by increasing agricultural productivity.
- ❖ Its secretariat is in Rome, Italy.
- ❖ Some of the important key programmes of FAO are Food Security Programmes, Codex Alimentarius, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) etc.,
- ❖ The Codex Alimentarius Commission established by FAO and WHO is an international food standard setting body.
- ❖ It has recently adopted three Codex standards for black, white and green pepper, cumin and thyme owing to India's efforts to benchmark global spices trade.
- ❖ With the adoption of codex standards, spices have been included for the first time as commodities that will have universal standards.

- ❖ International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) - It aims to protect cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests.
- ❖ Globefish - It is a unit within the FAO, responsible for information and analysis on international fish trade and markets.
- ❖ Globefish's flagship reports cover over 14 of the most major traded seafood commodities, including shrimp, tuna, salmon, small pelagics and other species with detailed statistics.

India & FAO:

- ❖ FAO council approved India's membership to the Executive Board of the World Food Program (WFP) for 2020 and 2021.
- ❖ It has also decided to observe „International Year of Millets“ in 2023, upon the request from Indian government.
- ❖ India celebrated 2018 as “National Year of Millets“ and notified millets as nutri-cereals & allowed its inclusion in Public Distribution System (PDS).
- ❖ WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency that fights hunger by providing food assistance, school meals, cash based transfers etc.
- ❖ In India, WFP has moved from providing direct food aid to providing technical assistance and capacity building services. Ministry of Agriculture is the nodal agency.

UNESCO

- ❖ UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.
- ❖ UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization is responsible for promoting peace, social justice, human rights and international security through International cooperation on educational, science and cultural programs. It has 195 member states and is based in Paris, France. It accorded recognition in 2011 to Palestine as its 195th member.
- ❖ It is a global development agency with missions that include promoting sex education, literacy, clean water and equality for women.
- ❖ It is responsible for promoting peace, social justice, human rights and international security through International cooperation on educational, science and cultural programs.
- ❖ It is known for its **World Heritage Mission** which encourages world countries to protect Natural and Cultural Heritage sites.
- ❖ It publishes the **Global Education Monitoring report and Gender Parity Index**.

- ❖ It also leads the Man and Biosphere Programme for protecting Biosphere reserves across the world.

India & UNESCO:

- ❖ The Intergovernmental committee has added “Kumbh Mela” as an intangible heritage.
- ❖ UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
- ❖ The 180 cities in 72 countries currently make up this network.
- ❖ Gastronomy, music, crafts and folk art, media arts, design, film and literature are the 7 fields of creativity highlighted by the network.
- ❖ Chennai has been recently included in UCCN for its rich musical tradition. Jaipur (crafts and folk art) and Varanasi (Music) are the other Indian cities that feature on the list.
- ❖ Some of the other cities included are Alba (Italy) for gastronomy (the practice or art of choosing, cooking, and eating good food), Almaty (Kazakhstan) for music and Auckland (New Zealand) for music.
- ❖ UNESCO Asia Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation - Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, has won the award in 2017.
- ❖ It has become the first temple in Tamil Nadu to be given the prestigious award from the UN body.
- ❖ The LAMO Centre, Ladakh won the Award of Distinction in 2018
- ❖ Rajabai Clock Tower & University of Mumbai Library Building, & Ruttonjee Muljee Jetha Fountain, Mumbai were honourable mentions.

UNESCO in News:

- ❖ U.S and Israel have formally quit the UNESCO recently.
- ❖ It was following the criticism by UNESCO against Israel’s occupation of East Jerusalem and the grant of full-time membership to Palestine.
- ❖ The withdrawal from both the countries would not affect the UN organisation financially as both Israel and the US had stopped funding it since Palestine’s membership was granted in 2011.
- ❖ UNESCO has also earlier declared a contested shrine in Hebron city as an endangered Palestinian heritage site.
- ❖ Even in 1984, U.S. withdrew from the UNESCO, accusing it of favouring the Soviet Union; nevertheless, it re-joined the U.N. body in 2002.

UNCTAD

- ❖ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was formed specifically to handle the problems of developing countries dealing with trade, investment and development issues.
- ❖ HQ - **Geneva**, Switzerland
- ❖ It is a **part of UN Secretariat**.
- ❖ Reports published by UNCTAD include Trade and Development Report, World Investment Report, The Least Developed Countries Report, World Economic Situation and Prospects, Information and Economy Report, Technology and Innovation Report, and Commodities and Development Report.

UN-HABITAT

- ❖ It is the UN programme working towards a better urban future.
- ❖ Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.
- ❖ It reports to the United Nations General Assembly.
- ❖ United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat conference) is held once in bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 & 2016).
- ❖ Habitat III took place in Quito, Ecuador in 2016 to ratify the “New Urban Agenda”, building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul in 1996.
- ❖ Habitat III was one of the first UN global summits after the adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Agreement.
- ❖ India has been unanimously elected as the President of the UN-Habitat in the year 2017.
- ❖ Accordingly, India will preside over the governing council meeting for 2 years (2017-2019).
- ❖ Since the UN-Habitat came into being in 1978, it is only the third time that India is elected to lead this important organization, after 1988 and 2007.

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

- ❖ It is the **food-assistance** branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
- ❖ It was formally established in **1963 by the FAO and the United Nations General Assembly**.
- ❖ HQ - Rome

- ❖ The operations are funded by voluntary donations from world governments, corporations and private donors.
- ❖ It strives to **eradicate hunger and malnutrition**, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the need for food aid itself.
- ❖ Its efforts focus on **emergency assistance, relief and rehabilitation, development aid** and special operations.
- ❖ In India, WFP has moved from providing direct food aid to providing technical assistance and capacity building services to the Government, with Ministry of Agriculture being the nodal ministry.
- ❖ Food-for-work programmes help promote environmental and economic stability and agricultural production.
- ❖ WFP has coordinated the five-year Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot project which assists smallholder farmers by offering them opportunities to access agricultural markets and to become competitive players in the market place.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- ❖ UNDP was formed **in 1965** to help countries eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable human development.
- ❖ The status of UNDP is that of an executive board within the **United Nations General Assembly**.
- ❖ UNDP is working to strengthen new frameworks for development, disaster risk reduction and climate change.
- ❖ It also encourages the protection of human rights and the empowerment of women in all of its programmes.
- ❖ The UNDP Human Development Report Office also publishes an annual Human Development Report (since 1990) to measure and analyze developmental progress.
- ❖ In addition to a global Report, it also publishes regional, national, and local Human Development Reports.
- ❖ UNDP Projects in India - In partnership with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), UNDP, through the Governance & Accelerated Livelihoods (GOALS) project, helps promote affordable housing for the rural poor.
- ❖ The Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network, or eVIN, developed by UNDP India with support from the Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, uses technology to help health workers ensure that vaccines reach every child, everywhere.

- ❖ In partnership with Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, funded by **Global Environment Facility**, the project aims to demonstrate and develop the market for **Renewable Energy Technology Packages for Rural Livelihoods (RETPRLs)** in three selected states Assam, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



- ❖ **Disha** is a partnership between the **India Development Foundation and UNDP**, supported by IKEA Foundation, that aims to support one million underprivileged women in India learn marketable skills and connect with income opportunities.
- ❖ Sustainable Development Goals
- ❖ The UNDP is one of the main UN agencies involved in the development of the Post-2015 Development Agenda widely known as the **sustainable development goals**.
- ❖ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the **Global Goals**, are a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION

- ❖ The World Customs Organization (WCO) is an **intergovernmental organization**

HQ: Brussels, Belgium:

- ❖ It has **182 member nations** (including India) that manage more **than 98% of world trade**.
- ❖ The WCO is noted for its work in areas covering the **development of international conventions**, instruments, and tools on topics such as **commodity classification, valuation, rules of origin, collection of customs revenue, supply chain security, international trade facilitation, customs enforcement activities**, combating counterfeiting in support of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), drugs enforcement, illegal weapons trading, integrity promotion, and delivering sustainable capacity building to assist with customs reforms and modernization
- ❖ The WCO maintains the international Harmonized System (HS) goods nomenclature, and administers the technical aspects of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin

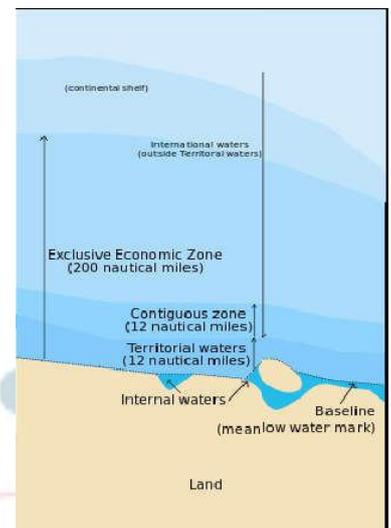
UN CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

- ❖ The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty which was adopted and **signed in 1982**.
- ❖ It replaced the four Geneva Conventions of **April, 1958**, which respectively concerned the **territorial sea and the contiguous zone, the continental shelf, the high seas, fishing and conservation of living resources on the high seas**.

The Convention has created three new institutions on the international scene:

1. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea,
2. The International Seabed Authority,
3. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

- ❖ It is also called the Law of the Sea Convention or the Law of the Sea treaty
- ❖ The Law of the Sea Convention defines the rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of the world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources
- ❖ It came into force in 1994 after it had been ratified by the requisite 60 countries; by the early 21st century the convention had been ratified by more than 150 countries.



UNHRC

- ❖ It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system
- ❖ It is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.
- ❖ It meets at the UN Office at Geneva.
- ❖ The Council is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly.
- ❖ The term of each seat is three years, and no member may occupy a seat for more than two consecutive terms.
- ❖ The council works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and engages the United Nations' special procedures.

- ❖ The General Assembly can suspend the rights and privileges of any Council member that it decides has persistently committed term of membership. The suspension process requires a **two thirds majority vote** by the General assembly

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION (WIPO)

- ❖ WIPO is the global forum for intellectual property services, policy, information and cooperation. It is a **self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 191 member states.**
- ❖ Its mission is to lead the development of a **balanced and effective international intellectual property (IP) system** that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.
- ❖ Our mandate, governing bodies and procedures are set out in the WIPO Convention, which established WIPO in 1967.
- ❖ The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is one of the 17 specialized agencies of the United Nations.
- ❖ Aims to encourage creative activity, to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world
- ❖ HQ: **Geneva**, Switzerland
- ❖ India is a **member of WIPO** and **party to several treaties administered by WIPO.**

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANISATION (WMO)

- ❖ The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an **intergovernmental organization** with a membership of 192 Member States and Territories.
- ❖ It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), the roots of which were planted at the **1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.**
- ❖ Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23 March 1950, WMO became the **specialised agency of the United Nations** for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences a year later.
- ❖ The Secretariat, headquartered **in Geneva**, is headed by the Secretary-General. Its supreme body is the World Meteorological Congress.

Members are divided into six regions:

- ✓ Region I: Africa
- ✓ Region II: Asia
- ✓ Region III: South America

- ✓ Region IV: North America, Central America and the Caribbean
- ✓ Region V: South-West Pacific
- ✓ Region VI: Europe
- ✓ WMO provides world leadership and expertise in international cooperation in the delivery and use of high-quality, authoritative weather, climate, hydrological and related environmental services by its Members, for the improvement of the well-being of societies of all nations.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

- ❖ Asian Development Bank (ADB) was established on Dec.19, 1966. The aim of this bank is to accelerate economic and social development in Asia and Pacific region. The bank **started its functioning on January 1, 1967.**
- ❖ It is modeled on the World Bank
- ❖ It has a **similar weighted voting system** where votes are distributed based on member's capita subscriptions.
- ❖ ADB borrows from **international capital markets** with its capital as guarantee. Japan and USA are its major donors.
- ❖ There has been criticism that ADB's large scale projects cause social and environmental damage due to lack of oversight
- ❖ India has **about 6% voting rights (4th highest; Japan highest, USA 2nd highest)**
- ❖ It is owned **by 67 members** – 48 from the region including India.
- ❖ Its headquarter is located at Manila, Philippines. Its chairmanship is always given to the Japanese and 3 deputy chairmen belong to USA, Europe and Asia.

Functions of Asian Development Bank (ADB)

1. To make loans and equity investments for economic and social development of its developing members countries.
2. To provide for technical assistance for the preparation and implementation of development projects and advisory services.
3. To respond to the request for assistance in coordinating developmental policies and plans in developing member countries.
4. This bank constituted Asian Development Fund in 1974, which provides loans to Asian countries on concessional interest rates.

ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK (AIIB)

- ❖ This is an international financial institution. It aims to support the building of infrastructure in the Asia Pacific region
- ❖ It is an initiative of government of China Started operation in 2016
- ❖ HQ: Beijing, China . it has 56 members (More are expected to join)
- ❖ The capital of the bank is **\$100 billion**, equivalent to **2/3 of the capital of the Asian Development Bank and about half that of the World Bank**
- ❖ China will remain the biggest shareholder in the bank (India second largest), and the shares of non-Asian countries will be restricted to 25% of the total
- ❖ China is the largest shareholder with **26.06% voting shares**. India is the second largest shareholder with 7.5% voting shares followed by Russia (5.93%) and Germany (4.5%)
- ❖ The purpose of the **multilateral development bank is to provide finance to infrastructure projects in the Asia Pacific region.**
- ❖ AIIB is regarded by some as a **rival for the IMF, the World Bank** and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which the AIIB says are dominated by developed countries like the United States and Japan
- ❖ AIIB will concentrate on infrastructure but Critics (such as the US) warn that the China-led bank may fail to live up to the environmental, labour and procurement standards that are essential to the mission of development lenders.
- ❖ China says the AIIB will adopt international best practises.

EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ It is an international financial institution. Founded in 1991
- ❖ As a multilateral developmental investment bank, the EBRD uses investment as a tool to build market economies.
- ❖ Initially **focused on the countries of the former Eastern Bloc** it expanded to support development in more **than 30 countries from central Europe to central Asia.**
- ❖ Besides Europe, member countries of the EBRD are from five continents (North America, Africa, Asia and Australia), with the **biggest shareholder being the United States**, so the name is somewhat of a misnomer.
- ❖ Headquartered in London, the EBRD is owned by 65 countries and two EU institutions.

- ❖ Despite its public sector shareholders, it invests mainly in private enterprises, together with commercial partners.
- ❖ India recently joined EBRD

FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF)

- ❖ It is an inter-governmental policy making body. It aims to establish international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
- ❖ It was established in **1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris** (France) to combat the growing problem of money laundering. It comprises over 36 countries. India is a member. FATF Secretariat is housed at the headquarters of the OECD in Paris.
- ❖ Initially it was only dealing with developing policies to combat money laundering. But in 2001 its purpose was expanded to act against terrorism financing.

Objectives:

- ❖ Set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

Functions:

1. Set international standards to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.
2. Assess and monitor compliance with the FATF standards.
3. Conduct studies of money laundering and terrorist financing methods, trends and techniques. Respond to new and emerging threats, such as proliferation financing (used for promoting proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons)

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

- ❖ The International Atomic Energy Agency is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field. It works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- ✓ It established in 1957
- ✓ HQ: Vienna, Austria
- ✓ It seeks to promote peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to prohibit its use for any military purpose, including manufacturing of nuclear weapons
- ✓ It reports to **the UNGA and the UNSC** (although it is an independent body)

IAEA:

- ❖ Promotes development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology, provide international safeguards against misuse of nuclear technology and nuclear materials, and promote nuclear safety (including radiation protection) and nuclear security standards and their implementation.

Three main areas of work that underpin the IAEA's mission are:

- ✓ Safety and Security;
- ✓ Science and Technology; and
- ✓ Safeguards and Verification

The IAEA executes this mission with three main functions:

- ❖ The inspection of existing nuclear facilities to ensure their peaceful use,
- ❖ Providing information and developing standards to ensure the safety and security of nuclear facilities, and
- ❖ As a hub for the various fields of science involved in the peaceful applications of nuclear technology

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (IDA)

- ❖ HQ in Washington DC
- ❖ The International Development Association (IDA) is the part of the World Bank that helps the world's poorest countries. Overseen by 173 shareholder nations, IDA aims to reduce poverty by providing loans (called "credits") and grants for programs that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities, and improve people's living conditions.
- ❖ IDA is one of the **largest sources of assistance for the world's 75 poorest countries, 39 of which are in Africa, and is the single largest source of donor funds** for basic social services in these countries.
- ❖ **IDA lends money on concessional terms.** This means that IDA credits **have a zero or very low interest charge and repayments are stretched over 30 to 38 years, including a 5- to 10-year grace period.** IDA also provides grants to **countries at risk of debt distress.**
- ❖ In addition to concessional loans and grants, IDA provides significant levels of debt relief through the **Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).**
- ❖ IDA complements the World Bank's original lending arm—**the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).** IBRD was established to function as a

self-sustaining business and provides loans and advice to middle-income and credit-worthy poor countries.

- ❖ The International Development Association (IDA) is an **international financial institution** which offers concessional loans and grants to the world's poorest developing countries.
- ❖ Recent issue: India is no longer eligible for IDA fund because India per capita income is greater than \$1260, so it's a debate whether India will be a beneficiary because India really needs support from it

INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

- ❖ It is an **intergovernmental body** that organizes, regulates and controls all mineral (non-living resources) related activities in the **international seabed** area beyond the **limits of national jurisdiction**.
- ❖ HQ: Jamaica. It is Established in **1994**
- ❖ It is an **organization established by the Law of the Sea Convention**
- ❖ It functions under the aegis of the **United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**. It has an **observer status** to UN
- ❖ The International Seabed Authority (ISA) in its **23rd session** held at Kingston in 2017, Jamaica has extended India's exclusive rights to **explore polymetallic nodules** from seabed in **Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB)**

What are Polymetallic Nodules?

- ❖ Polymetallic nodules Polymetallic nodules (also called as manganese nodules) are small potato-sized (from millimetres to tens of centimetres in diameter) lumps of minerals found in deep sea.
- ❖ They contain nickel, copper, cobalt, lead, cadmium, vanadium, molybdenum, titanium in various proportions of which nickel, cobalt and copper are considered to be of economic and strategic importance. They are found in abundance carpeting the sea floor of world oceans in deep sea.

NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

- ❖ HQ: Shanghai, China. Formed in 2015
- ❖ Also referred as **BRICS Development Bank**. It is a **multilateral development bank** operated by BRICS states.
- ❖ The bank's primary focus of lending will be **infrastructure projects**

- ❖ The bank will have starting **capital of \$50 billion**, with capital increased to **\$100 billion** over time
- ❖ Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa will initially contribute **\$10 billion** each to bring the **total to \$50 billion**
- ❖ Unlike the World Bank, which assigns votes based on **capital shares**, **here each participant country will be assigned one vote, and no country will have veto power**
- ❖ Countries apart from the BRICS countries will also be members- the bank will have some countries from 'the south' on a rotational basis, on the board of the bank, and they will be allowed to vote. The bank will allow new members to join but the share of BRICS countries cannot drop below 55%. The first regional office of the NDB will be opened in Johannesburg, South Africa. **K V Kamath** is its President, from India
- ❖ During the **sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014)**, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB).
- ❖ In the **Fortaleza Declaration**, the leaders stressed that the NDB will strengthen cooperation among BRICS and will supplement the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global development, thus contributing to collective commitments for achieving the goal of strong, sustainable and balanced growth.

What will NDB do?

- ❖ The Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.
- ❖ Shall cooperate with international organizations and other financial entities, and provide technical assistance for projects to be supported by the Bank

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY (UNRWA)

Why in News?

- ❖ India has pledged USD 5 million in assistance to the UN agency working for the welfare of Palestinian refugees to help bolster its "severe funding crisis" following US' cut in its annual aid to UNRWA.

More about UNRWA:

- ❖ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a **relief and human development agency** which supports registered Palestinian refugees, and their descendants.
- ❖ It was established following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

- ❖ It has contributed to the welfare and human development of four generations of Palestine refugees.
- ❖ The Palestinian refugees are defined as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict”.
- ❖ UNRWA benefits from the generous support of UN Member States, the European Union and regional governments.
- ❖ It is the only UN agency dedicated to helping refugees from a specific region or conflict.

GLOBAL SOLAR BANK AND INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE

Why in News?

- ❖ International Solar Alliance is planning to setup a global solar bank to finance solar projects.

Global Solar Bank:

- ❖ Global Solar Bank is a new **proposal by International Solar Alliance** to finance solar projects exclusively.
- ❖ The ISA plans to approach multilateral development banks (MDBs) such as Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to create a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to specifically finance solar projects.
- ❖ This SPV aimed at financing \$150 billion and would later become a **World Solar Bank**.
- ❖ The proposal comes against the backdrop of ISA’s mission to undertake joint efforts required to reduce the cost of finance and the cost of technology.
- ❖ They believe that the initiative will help to mobilize more than \$1,000 billion of investments needed by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy, and pave the way for future technologies.

International Solar Alliance:

- ❖ International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a coalition of solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to specifically address energy needs by harnessing solar energy.
- ❖ The Alliance aims to provide a platform for prospective member countries to collaborate and address the identified gaps through a common agreed approach.
- ❖ It is a treaty-based alliance of 121 prospective solar-rich Member Nations.
- ❖ The initiative was launched on the side lines of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties 21 (CoP21) at Paris, France.

- ❖ Currently 65 countries have already signed the ISA Framework Agreement.
- ❖ Common Risk Mitigation Mechanism (CRMM) project - aimed at de-risking investments into solar energy projects in developing countries, and thereby, encouraging flow of funds into the sector. The headquarter of ISA is at Gurugram

Structure:

- ❖ The ISA will have a two-tier structure – the Assembly and the Secretariat.
- ❖ Each member-country is represented on the Assembly, which meets annually at the Ministerial level at the seat of the ISA.

Programs by ISA:

- ❖ Facilitating affordable finance for solar
- ❖ Scaling up solar applications for agriculture
- ❖ Promoting solar mini-grids in Member Nations
- ❖ Common Risk Mitigation Mechanism (CRMM) project - aimed at de-risking investments into solar energy projects in developing countries, and thereby, encouraging flow of funds into the sector.

INDIAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (ITEC) PROGRAMME

Why in News?

- ❖ India offered additional 10 slots to Cuba under the ITEC programme, taking the total annual scholarships given to Cuba to 70.

More about ITEC Programme:

- ❖ The ITEC programme was launched by Government of India as a programme of bilateral cooperation and technical assistance.
- ❖ It was launched on 15th September 1964.
- ❖ Presently 158 countries are invited to share in the Indian developmental experience in various fields.
- ❖ The Programme is fully-funded by the Government of India.
- ❖ The expenses on training under ITEC Programme, i.e. tuition fees, living allowances, study tours, emergency medical assistance as well as return international air fares are borne by the Government of India.
- ❖ The various training fields covered under the programme include information technology, nonconventional energy, banking and finance etc.

The ITEC assistance is granted under the following four categories:

- ❖ Training in diverse fields in Indian institutions.
- ❖ Projects and project-related assistance from India such as supply of equipment, consultancy services and feasibility studies.
- ❖ Deputation of Indian experts in various fields.
- ❖ Study visits of senior officials/decision makers from the partner countries to India.
- ❖ Gifts/Donations of equipment at the request of ITEC partner countries; and
- ❖ Aid for Disaster Relief.
- ❖ ITEC is one of the vehicles for the sharing of India's experience in the field of economic development, manpower skills and technologies with other countries.
- ❖ There is the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme (SCAAP) which is a sister programme of the ITEC.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

In News:

- ❖ The **United States announced that it was leaving the United Nations' Human Rights Council**. It was the latest withdrawal by the Trump administration from an international institution.
- ❖ India was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for a period of three years beginning January 1, 2019, in the Asia-Pacific category, getting the highest number of votes among all candidates.

Un Human Rights council:

- ❖ The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a United Nations System inter-governmental body responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.
- ❖ It was created by UN General Assembly on March 15, 2006.
- ❖ The UNHRC is the successor to the UN Commission on Human Rights.
- ❖ It is a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly.
- ❖ The council works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
- ❖ The Council is mandated to meet for at least three regular sessions per year.
- ❖ It also can convene in special session when necessary, upon the request of one-third of its members.

- ❖ It is made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe.
- ❖ The UN General Assembly elects the members who occupy the UNHRC's 47 seats.
- ❖ The term of each seat is three years, and no member may occupy a seat for more than two consecutive terms.
- ❖ **On the basis of equitable geographical distribution, Council seats are allocated to the five regional groups as follows:**
 - ✓ African States, 13 seats
 - ✓ Asia Pacific States, 13 seats
 - ✓ Eastern European States, 6 seats
 - ✓ Latin American and Caribbean States, 8 seats
 - ✓ Western European and other States, 7 seats.

Mandate:

- ❖ The UNHRC investigates allegations of breaches of human rights in UN member states.
- ❖ And addresses important thematic human rights issues such as
 - ✓ Freedom of association and assembly,
 - ✓ Freedom of expression,
 - ✓ Freedom of belief and religion,
 - ✓ Women's rights,
 - ✓ LGBT rights, and
 - ✓ The rights of racial and ethnic minorities.
 - ✓ The headquarters of UNHRC is in Geneva, Switzerland.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION (UNESCO)

In News:

- ❖ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will be setting up a '**Design University for Gaming**' in Visakhapatnam.

UNESCO:

- ❖ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is a **specialized agency of the United Nations (UN)**.
- ❖ Its purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture.
- ❖ UNESCO has 195 member countries.

- ❖ It pursues its objectives through five major programs: **Education, Natural sciences, Social and human sciences, Culture, and Communication and Information.**
- ❖ It is also a **member of the United Nations Development Group.**
- ❖ It was formed in the year 1946 with its headquarter at Paris.
- ❖ UNESCO preserves **around 1073 World Heritage** sites in 167 countries and **coordinates Tsunami early warning** systems all over the globe.

Structure:

- ❖ The structure of UNESCO consists of General Conference, Executive Board, and Secretariat. Each member state has **one vote in UNESCO's** General Conference, which meets every two years to set the agency's budget, its program of activities, and the scale of contributions made by member states to the agency.
- ❖ The **58-member Executive Board**, which is elected by the **General Conference**, generally **meets twice each year** to give advice and direction to the agency's work.
- ❖ **The Secretariat** is the **agency's backbone** and is headed by a director general appointed by the **General Conference for a six-year term.**

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)

In News:

- ❖ Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution will attend the UNCTAD meeting of the third inter-governmental group of experts on consumer protection in Geneva.

UNCTAD:

- ❖ UNCTAD is the main U.N. body dealing with trade, investment and development issues.
- ❖ Established in 1964, it functions as a forum for intergovernmental deliberations, supported by discussions with experts and exchanges of experience, aimed at consensus building.
- ❖ Headquarter of UNCTAD is located in Geneva, Switzerland, and it has its offices in New York and Addis Ababa. It reports to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It is also part of the United Nations Development Group.
- ❖ Its membership is 194 countries.

Organisational Structure:

- ❖ The highest policy-making body of UNCTAD is the Conference, which meets **once every four years** to set policy guidelines and to formulate a program of work.

- ❖ The UNCTAD Secretariat performs policy analysis, monitors and implements the decisions of UNCTAD's intergovernmental bodies, and provides for technical cooperation and exchanges of information.
- ❖ It comprises four divisions—on globalization and development strategies; international trade; investment, technology, and enterprise development; and services infrastructure.
- ❖ The Trade and Development Board is the UNCTAD's executive body and it is responsible for the operations of the organization when the Conference is not in session.

Major Reports: / Overall:

- ❖ Trade and Development Report
- ❖ World Investment Report

Specialized:

- ❖ Least Developed Countries Report
- ❖ Trade and Environment Review
- ❖ Information Economy Report
- ❖ Review of Maritime Transport and
- ❖ International Accounting and Reporting Issues Annual Review.

INTERPOL

In News:

- ❖ The Interpol has issued the Red Notice against Nirav Modi and his associates on the request of the Enforcement Directorate and the CBI.

Interpol:

- ❖ The International Criminal Police Organization or Interpol is an international organization that facilitates international police cooperation.
- ❖ It has got 192 member countries.

Structure:

- ❖ General Assembly
- ❖ INTERPOL's supreme governing body is the General Assembly.
- ❖ It is composed of delegates appointed by each member country.
- ❖ It meets annually to take all important decisions.

Executive Committee:

- ❖ It is elected by the General Assembly
- ❖ It is headed by the President of the Organization.

- ❖ It provides guidance and direction to the Organization and oversees the implementation of decisions made at the annual General Assembly.

Secretariat:

- ❖ Day-to-day implementation of the Organization's strategic decisions is carried out by the General Secretariat and National Central Bureaus.

History:

- ❖ The idea of INTERPOL was born in 1914 at the first International Criminal Police Congress, held in Monaco.
- ❖ It was officially created in 1923 as the International Criminal Police Commission and the Organization became known as INTERPOL in 1956.

Priorities:

- ❖ The Strategic Framework 2017-2020 serves as a roadmap for INTERPOL's global activities.



TYPES OF INTERPOL NOTICES

- RED NOTICE:** To seek the location and arrest of wanted persons with a view to extradition or similar lawful action.
- BLUE NOTICE:** To collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.
- GREEN NOTICE:** To provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat these crimes in other countries.
- INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE:** Issued for groups and individuals who are the targets of UN Security Council sanctions committees.
- YELLOW NOTICE:** To help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.
- BLACK NOTICE:** To seek information on unidentified bodies.
- ORANGE NOTICE:** To warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.
- PURPLE NOTICE:** To seek or provide information on modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.

INDIA AND ARCTIC COUNCIL

In News:

- ❖ India is refocusing its priorities to the Arctic pole because of opportunities and challenges posed by climate change.
- ❖ Government of India has renamed the **National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) as the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research.**

Background:

- ❖ NCAOR, since 1998, charged with conducting expeditions to India's base stations to the Antarctic Continent
- ❖ India's earth sciences community also views the Himalayas as a "third pole" because of the large quantities of snow and ice it holds. **India's Polar Research Bases.**

Arctic council:

- ❖ The Arctic Council is an **intergovernmental forum** promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues.
- ❖ The Arctic Council formed with the signing of the Ottawa Declaration on 19 September 1996 in Ottawa, Canada.

- ❖ The **Ottawa Declaration** states that **only those countries** that are **located in the Arctic region are eligible for membership**.

The participants of the Arctic Council:

- ❖ Governments of the eight member states - Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. (Nordic countries + US, Canada, Russia)
- ❖ The Permanent Participants (PPS) (6 organizations to represent Arctic indigenous peoples) and 6 Working Groups. Observers - Observer status in the Arctic Council is open to Non-arctic states, Inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, global and regional Non-governmental organizations. **India received the permanent observer status in Arctic Council at Kiruna Ministerial Meeting in 2013.**

Other Details:

- ❖ The Chairmanship of the Arctic Council rotates every two years among the Arctic States.
- ❖ The Arctic Council has no programming budget. The Arctic Council does not and cannot implement or enforce its guidelines, assessments or recommendations. The Arctic Council's mandate explicitly excludes military security.

For Prelims:

1. Mass balance, dynamics, and climate of the central Dronning Maud Land coast, East Antarctica (MADICE): It is a 4-year project (2016–2020) investigates how the coastal area of the Antarctic ice sheet has changed in the last several millennia. Polar 2018: It is a joint event from the **Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research SCAR** and the International Arctic Science Committee IASC which took place in Davos, Switzerland.

1. Lakes and its location

a) Toolik Lake – Arctic

b) Priyadarshini Lake – Antarctic

India's Research bases:

ANTARCTICA	ARCTIC	HIMALAYAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Dakshin Gangotri ❖ Maitri ❖ Bharti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ HIMADRI ❖ IND-ARC underground observatory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ HIMANSH

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

In News:

- ❖ International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s latest projection about India's gross domestic product (GDP).

Projections:

- ❖ The near-term macroeconomic outlook for India is "broadly favourable."
- ❖ Growth is forecast **to rise to 7.3% in fiscal year 2018-19 and 7.5% in 2019-20** on strengthening investment and robust private consumption.
- ❖ The current account deficit is projected to widen further to 2.6% of the GDP on rising oil prices and strong demand for imports.
- ❖ Headline inflation is projected to rise to 5.2% in fiscal year 2018/19, as demand conditions tighten, along with the recent depreciation of the rupee and higher oil prices, housing rent allowances and agricultural minimum support prices.

IMF:

- ❖ The IMF, also known as **the "Fund,"** was conceived at a United Nations conference convened **in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States, in July 1944.**
- ❖ It sought to build a framework for economic cooperation that would avoid a repetition of the Great Depression of the 1930s.
- ❖ It is a **specialized agency of the United Nations.**
- ❖ Membership is **open to any country that conducts foreign policy and accepts the organization's statutes.**

Functions: / The IMF's responsibilities:

- ❖ The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure **the stability of the international monetary** system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other.
- ❖ The Fund's mandate was updated in 2012 to include all macroeconomic and financial sector issues that bear on global stability.
- ❖ It provides regular assessment of
 - ✓ Global prospects in its World Economic Outlook
 - ✓ Financial markets in its Global Financial Stability Report
 - ✓ Public finance developments in its Fiscal Monitor o Series of regional economic outlooks.

- ❖ The IMF provides technical assistance and training to help member countries strengthen their capacity to design and implement effective policies.
- ❖ The IMF issues an international reserve asset known as Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) that can supplement the official reserves of member countries.
- ❖ The primary source of the IMF's financial resources is its members' quotas, which broadly reflect members' relative position in the world economy.

EXERCISE

CUTLASS EXPRESS – 19

- ❖ **INS Trikand**, a front-line warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multinational training exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS – 19
- ❖ The **aim of the exercise was to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security** and progress **inter-operability between** the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of **interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean.**
- ❖ The Indian Navy played a significant role in '**CUTLASS EXPRESS – 19**', being involved in **planning, coordination and execution.**
- ❖ The annual Exercise Cutlass Express is sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) and conducted by Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF). Exercise Cutlass Express 2019 is **the eighth iteration of the annual multinational maritime exercise** and was held in the vicinity of Djibouti, Mozambique and Seychelles.
- ❖ The participating nations in the exercise Cutlass Express 2019 were **Canada, Comoros, Djibouti, France, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Portugal, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, The Netherlands and the United States.** The Indian Navy was represented in the exercise through **INS Trikand.**
- ❖ During the exercise, Naval, Coast Guard and Marine Police personnel from a number of East African countries were jointly trained by mentors from USA, India, and Netherlands, with the support of international organizations like the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and European Naval Forces (EUNAVFOR).**

NEPAL REFUSES TO PARTICIPATE IN FIRST BIMSTEC JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE

- ❖ The **first BIMSTEC field training exercise** will be conducted at Foreign Training Node **at Aundh** in Pune, Maharashtra from September 10 and 16, 2018. Armies of BIMSTEC members including **India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Nepal** were to participate in it.
- ❖ The theme of exercise includes **counter-terrorism in semi-urban terrain and cordon and search**. The main aim of this military exercise is to promote strategic alignment among the member-states and to share best practices in the area of **counter-terrorism**.
- ❖ The exercise was required **platoon-level participation** of around 30 soldiers from each BIMSTEC member countries for exercises **involving counter-terrorism** in semi-urban terrain and cordon and search.

Reasons for Nepal's backing out:

- ❖ The BIMSTEC military drill saying it is beyond the agenda of BIMSTEC. It also goes against country's history of following policy of keeping equal distance from its neighbours, without ever being part of a regional bloc militarily.
- ❖ Experts believe that non-participation of Nepal in such 'military drill' certainly seems like political call and comes at time when Nepal-China relations are on upward trajectory and BIMSTEC connectivity seen as counter to China's BRI (Belt and Road Initiative).
- ❖ Now, **Nepal** will be only sending **three-member observer team**. Apart from Nepal, Thailand will also not be participating **in military exercise** and will be represented by observer.

About BIMSTEC:

- ❖ The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising of seven member states in South Asia and Southeast Asia **lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity**.
- ❖ This **sub-regional organisation** came into being on June 6, **1997**, through the **Bangkok Declaration**. It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- ❖ It comprises of seven member countries: five deriving from South Asia — including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka — and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.

IOWAVE18: INDIA TO PARTICIPATE IN MULTI-NATION INDIAN OCEAN-WIDE TSUNAMI MOCK EXERCISE

- ❖ Indian Ocean Wave Exercise 2018 (IOWave18) began on September 4, 2018 in the Indian Ocean. India along with **23 other** nations is participating in this major **Indian ocean-wide tsunami mock drill** which involves evacuation of thousands of people from **coastal areas in over half a dozen coastal states**.
- ❖ This tsunami warning exercise is being organized by the **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO**.
- ❖ It was the IOC that coordinated the setting up of the **Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS)** in the aftermath of December 2004 tsunami.
- ❖ Exercise IOWave18 will simulate Indian Ocean countries being put in a tsunami warning situation and require the **respective National Tsunami Warning Centres** and the Disaster Management Offices in each country to implement their Standard Operating Procedures.
- ❖ IOWave18 will also provide an opportunity for Member States to test the indicators of **Indian Ocean Tsunami Ready (IOTR) programme** in pilot communities. IOTR is a community performance-based programme that facilitates a structural and systematic approach in building tsunami preparedness.
- ❖ **Exercise IOWave18** will comprise two scenarios on successive days: **one in the north western Indian Ocean off the coast of Iran**, and **the other in the eastern Indian Ocean off the west coast of northern Sumatra**.
- ❖ The first scenario will simulate a **magnitude 9.0 earthquake** off the coast of Iran and the second scenario will simulate a **magnitude 9.3 earthquake off the west coast** of Northern Sumatra.

Both scenarios will generate simulated tsunami waves travelling across **the Indian Ocean basin**.

Members associated with Exercise IOWave18:

- ❖ Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tanzania and Yemen.

India:

- ❖ In India, IOWave18 is being coordinated by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) under Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) with support from National

Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the Coastal States/UTs.

- ❖ The exercise will involve the evacuation of more than 125000 people from the coastal communities of Odisha, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Gujarat and Goa.
- ❖ NDRF Battalions, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guards, Army, Critical installations (nuclear power plants), Port & harbors are also participating the exercise.

Background:

- ❖ The Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS) at its **11th session in Malaysia in April 2017 decided to organise an Indian Ocean Wave Exercise 2018 (IOWave18)** and established a Task Team to plan and conduct the exercise.
- ❖ The Task Team decided to conduct the IOWave18 exercise during September 4-5, 2018. All IOTWMS Member States **are encouraged to participate** in the exercise to community level.

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC):

- ❖ UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) promotes international cooperation and coordinates programmes in marine research, services, observation systems, hazard mitigation, and capacity development to understand and manage the resources of the ocean and coastal areas.
- ❖ The Commission aims to improve the governance, management, institutional capacity, and decision-making processes of its Member States with respect to marine resources and climate variability.
- ❖ IOC coordinates ocean observation and monitoring through the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) which aims to develop a unified network providing information on the oceans.
- ❖ IOC also coordinates and fosters the establishment of regional intergovernmental tsunami warning and mitigation systems in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, in the North East Atlantic, Mediterranean and Caribbean seas.

AL NAGAH 2019: INDIA AND OMAN EXERCISE FOR THE INTEROPERABILITY OF ARMED FORCES

- ❖ **Al Nagah III** is the third in the series of the bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman. It will be held between March 12 to March 25 at Oman.

Al Nagah III:

- ❖ Al Nagah III will be held at **Jabel Al Akhdar** Mountains in Oman.
- ❖ The 14-day exercise will see both the armies exchanging expertise and experience in tactics, weapon handling and firing.
- ❖ The exercise is aimed to enhance interoperability in counterterrorist operations in semi-urban mountainous terrain.
- ❖ The Indian Army contingent is going to be represented by 10th Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles. Similar strength is also to be fielded by Jabel Regiment of Royal Army of Oman.
- ❖ Al Nagah I was held at Muscat, Oman in January 2015 and Al Nagah II at Himachal Pradesh, India in March 2017. The India-Oman bilateral security ties have continued to evolve and the joint military exercise will go a long way in enchaining understanding of capabilities and strengthening camaraderie between both the Armies.
- ❖ Exercise Al Nagah 2019 will contribute immensely in developing mutual understanding and respect for each other's military as also facilitate in tackling the worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.
- ❖ **Oman is the first Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** to formalize Defence ties with India from joint military exercise and cooperation in anti-piracy and security matters.
- ❖ The Gulf countries which share the Indian Ocean with India is also the **first country** from the region to **start tri-lateral exercises**. The two sides will hone their **tactical and technical skills in joint counter insurgency** and **counter terrorist operations in a semi-urban scenario** in mountainous terrain under UN mandate. The contingents from both countries have been specifically selected for the exercise based on **expertise and professional competence**.
- ❖ Oman being **India's oldest defence partner in West Asia** has given access to the **port of Duqm**, which can be used for military purpose and logistical support as it will also allow India to expand its footprints in the Indian Ocean Region.
- ❖ Oman which is already buying spare parts for some of its **military equipment** from Indian DPSUs, is also looking for ventures for joint production of defence equipment in India under 'Make in India'

- ❖ With a robust security and defence cooperation, both countries are keen to expand cooperation to new areas of mutual interest, including space, cyber security and energy security.

EXERCISE SARY-ARKA ANTI-TERROR 2019

- ❖ India, Pakistan and the other member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will take part in a joint anti-terrorism exercise to be held this year by the grouping.
- ❖ The decision to hold the joint exercise was announced during the **34th meeting of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** council held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Delegations of the competent authorities of India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the RATS Executive Committee attended the meeting. Chaired by **Russia**, the meeting also declared plans to hold **the first stage of the joint border operation "Solidarity 2019-2021"**

What is RATS?

- ❖ RATS, established in 2004, is a **permanent organ of the SCO** which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of **terrorism, separatism and extremism**. It is headquartered in **Tashkent**.
- ❖ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, also known as **the Shanghai Pact**, is a Eurasian political, economic, and military organization which was founded **in 2001** in Shanghai by the leaders of **China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO)

- ❖ The SCO, in which China plays an influential role, is also comprised of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.
- ❖ India and Pakistan were admitted into the bloc in 2017. It is Eurasian economic, political and security organisation headquartered in Beijing, China. Its main objective is **military cooperation** between member states. It is primarily centred on security-related concerns of Central Asian members with main threats **being terrorism, separatism and extremism**. It was established in **June 2001** as a successor of **Shanghai Five mechanism** which was established in 1996 with China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan as members. Iran, Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia enjoy **observer status** of SCO. Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Nepal are **dialogue partners** of SCO.

RED FLAG 2019

- ❖ Red Flag is US Air Force's premier air-to-air combat training exercise. It was launched in 1975. It is scheduled from 3rd to 16th March 2019.
- ❖ The exercise gives aircraft crews an opportunity to experience advanced, relevant, and realistic combat-like situations in a controlled environment to increase their survivability in actual combat operations.
- ❖ Each year the exercise will be held at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. Air forces from US, United Arab Emirates, Belgium, Netherlands, Singapore and Saudi Arabia, participate in this exercise. The origin of the exercise is traced to the unacceptable performance of U.S. Air Force fighter pilots and weapon systems officers (WSO) in air combat manoeuvring (ACM) (airto-air combat) during the Vietnam War. India has participated in it for two times in 2008 and 2016.

CORPAT 2018

- ❖ First Coordinated Patrol between navies of India and Bangladesh in June 2018 in Bangladesh
- ❖ India and Bangladesh have agreed to **institute Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)** as an annual exercise between navies of two neighbouring countries.
- ❖ The first edition of CORPAT between two navies was inaugurated by Indian Navy's Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba during his visit to Bangladesh.
- ❖ The aim Navy Chief's visit was to consolidate bilateral defence relations between India and Bangladesh and to explore new avenues for naval cooperation.

Key Facts:

- ❖ The first edition of joint patrol exercise CORPAT was held under military cooperation of both countries. It saw participation of four maritime patrol aircraft, two from Bangladesh Navy and two from Indian navy, and four frigates, two from Bangladesh Navy (BNS Dhaleswari and BNS Abu Bakar) and two from Indian navy (INS Kadmatt and INS Satpura). During the joint patrol, naval forces of both the countries shared information through naval communication and understanding. The warships and patrol aircraft jointly patrolled from Bangladesh's sea territory and sailed towards the Indian waters in Bay.

Significance:

- ❖ The institution of CORPAT between India and Bangladesh is considered as major step towards enhanced operational interaction between both navies.

- ❖ The joint patrol will help to curb maritime crimes, including militancy in sea, and stop various sea crimes like smuggling and piracy in Bay of Bengal. At present, both naval forces are patrolling their respected water territories round-the-clock on individual purpose.

Background:

- ❖ Indian Navy regularly conducts CORPATs with Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar. It also conducts EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) surveillance of Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles on their request.
- ❖ The CORPAT exercise between navies carries out search and rescue operations, institutes measure for vessels indulged in unlawful activities as well as control pollution.
- ❖ The naval cooperation between India and Bangladesh has been traditionally strong and encompassed wide span which includes operational interactions through port calls, passage exercises along with capacity building, capability enhancement and training initiatives. Over last few years, Indian Navy has expanded its assistance to countries in the region through material support, training, EEZ surveillance, hydrographic assistance, provisioning of platforms, joint exercises and offering slots in professional training courses

EX PITCH BLACK

- ❖ Ex Pitch Black a biennial multi-national large force employment warfare exercise was hosted by Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) from 24 Jul 18 to 18 Aug 18 in Darwin, Australia.
- ❖ Indian Air Force had **earlier participated in the exercise as observers** and **this was for the first time that IAF participated with air assets in the** Exercise Pitch Black (PB-18)
- ❖ The objectives for the exercise were to foster closer relationship between the participating friendly forces and to promote interoperability through exchange of knowledge and experience. The aim for participating crew and specialist observers was to expose them to op environment in international scenarios.

Exercise Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Peace Mission 2018:

- ❖ Military contingents of the all eight SCO member nations (China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, India and Pakistan) participated in this exercise. The exercise was aimed at enhancing cooperation between member states to deal with growing threat of terrorism and extremism. It was for first time since independence, India and Pakistan

simultaneously took part military exercise, though armies of two rival neighbouring countries had earlier worked together in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions

- ❖ The exercise will provide an opportunity to the armed forces of SCO nations to train in counter terrorism operations in urban scenario in a multinational and joint environment. The scope of the exercise includes professional interaction, mutual understanding of drills & procedures, establishment of joint command and control structures and elimination of terrorist threat in urban counter terrorist scenario.
- ❖ The Russian Army has the major participation of 1700 personnel followed by China with 700 & India with 200 personnel. The SCO Peace Mission Exercise is one of the major defense cooperation initiatives amongst SCO nations and will be a landmark event in the history of SCO defence cooperation.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

- ❖ SCO is political and security grouping of eight countries headquartered in Beijing, China. It was founded in 2001. The full members of SCO are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.
- ❖ They represent over 40% of humanity and nearly 20% of the global GDP. Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia have observer status at present. SCO is successor of grouping called Shanghai Five, founded by China in 1996. It comprised Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. In 2001 Uzbekistan was invited to join it and SCO was officially born. After Astana Summit Declaration in 2005, SCO has emerged as regional security organization. SCO's main objective is military cooperation between the members.
- ❖ It also works towards intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism operations in Central Asia. It is primarily centred on its member nations' Central Asian security-related concerns, often describing main threats it confronts as being terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- ❖ The role of China as well as strategic importance of SCO has increased over period of decade and now address problems like terrorism, separatism and militancy in the region.

EXERCISE KAKADU 2018

1. It is premier multilateral regional maritime engagement hosted by Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and supported by Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). It was started in 1993. It is held biennially in Darwin and Northern Australian Exercise Areas (NAXA).
2. Exercise KAKADU derives its name from Kakadu National Park, which is protected area in the northern territory of Australia and located 171 km south-east of Darwin.

KAKADU 2018:

- ❖ KAKADU 2018 is **fourteenth edition** of exercise scheduled to be held between August 29 and September 18, 2018. It is aimed **at enhancing inter-operability** and development of common understanding of procedures for maritime operations.
- ❖ It will see participation of 23 warships, one submarine, 45 aircraft, 250 marines and approximately 52 foreign staff from over 25 different countries including India and China.
- ❖ During the exercise, professional exchanges in harbour and diverse range of activities at sea, including complex surface, sub-surface and air operations will be conducted for sharing of best practices and honing of operational skills.
- ❖ Indian Navy's participation in KAKADU-18 will provide it opportunity to engage with regional partners and undertake multinational maritime activities ranging from constabulary operations to high-end maritime warfare in combined environment

MAITREE 2018

- ❖ Joint platoon level military exercise Maitree 2018 between **India and Thailand** was conducted in Thailand from 6 to 19 August 2018. It was platoon level exercise between Indian Army and Royal Thai Army that comprised of infantry component.

Maitree 2018:

- ❖ The exercise had started with cross training period involving familiarization training between two armies to evolve drills and procedures involved in counter insurgency & counter terrorist operations in urban, rural and jungle terrain under **United Nations (UN) mandate**. It focused on familiarizing with each **other's modus operandi, basic maneuvers and evolving joint drills**. It also included practicing of various drills and tactical scenarios in counter insurgency environment, execution of tactical operations like **search and destroy operation, house intervention and survival techniques**.
- ❖ It culminated **with 72 hour joint exercise** on planning and execution of series of tactical operations like pursuit, raid, establishing military check post and cordon and search operations.

Significance:

- ❖ The Maitree 2018 immensely benefitted both armies from each other's expertise and experience in conduct of **tactical level counter terrorist operations**. It also helped in enhancing cooperation between two armies and bonhomie between troops. It also laid due emphasis on increasing interoperability between forces from both countries which is considered **crucial for success of any joint operation**

COPE INDIA AND MALABAR

In News:

- ❖ India, Japan and the U.S. are set to elevate the bilateral 'Cope India' air exercise to a trilateral format.

Cope India:

- ❖ Cope India are a series of bilateral international Air Force exercises between the Indian Air Force and the United States Air Force conducted on and over Indian soil.
- ❖ The first such exercise was conducted at the air force station in Gwalior in 2004.
- ❖ Cope India has grown in scope with the involvement of fighter aircraft and force multipliers such as Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS).
- ❖ The level of interoperability in the exercises, both bilateral and trilateral, is expected to go up with India recently signing the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) with the U.S.

Malabar exercise:

- ❖ Exercise Malabar is a trilateral naval exercise involving the United States, Japan and India as permanent partners.
- ❖ India, Japan and the U.S already conduct naval war games under the expanded Malabar naval exercise. It was begun in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the United States. Japan became a permanent partner in 2015.

FRANCE TRI-SERVICE MILITARY EXERCISES

In News:

- ❖ India and France are in discussions for a bilateral tri-service military exercise to take forward the strategic cooperation while also exploring ways to operationalize the logistics agreement.

Background:

- ❖ This will be India's third such joint exercise.
- ❖ The first joint tri-service exercise was held with Russia in October last year and has finalised one with the U.S. to be held next year.
- ❖ India and France currently hold bilateral exercises between individual services
 1. Shakti for the Army
 2. Varuna for the Navy

3. Garuda for the Air Force

- ❖ India and France signed a logistics pact earlier in 2018 which gives access to their militaries to each other's bases for logistics support.
- ❖ The agreement gives India access to French military bases all over the world on a "reciprocal basis". New Delhi is of particular interest for the three French bases in the Indian Ocean - Reunion Island, Djibouti and Abu Dhabi.
- ❖ These three bases would give the Indian Navy and the Air Force operational turnaround to the far end of the Indian Ocean, improving its monitoring and surveillance of the region, in the backdrop of increased Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

EXERCISE	PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES	LOCATION
KAZIND	Kazakhstan & India	otar region, kazakhstan
Rapid trident	Ukraine & NATO countries	ukraine
SLINEX	Sri lanka & India	Trincomalee, srilanka
Vostok	Russia, turkey , china & Mongolia	Siberia & the far east
BIMSTEC MILEX	BIMSTEC countries except Nepal	pune
Avia indra	india & Russia	Lipetsk, Russia
Yudh Abhyas	India& US	Chaubatia,Uttarakhand
Nomadic Elephant	India& Mongolia	Ulan baatar, Mongolia
Sahyog - Hop Tac 2018	India & Vietnam	Chennai
IBS Annual Multi-national Maritime Exercise	India, Brazil & South Africa	Simons Town, South Africa
Kamdang	Japan, Philippines, USA	Philippines
Clear sky 2018 War Games	Ukraine, USA & other NATO countries	Ukraine
Ind-Indo CORPAT	India & Indonesia	Belawan Harbour, Indonesia
Jimex 18	India & Japan	Visakhapatnam
Druzhba-III	Pakistan and Russia	Pakistan
Iron Magic 19	United Arab Emirates and the United States	United Arab Emirates
Trident Juncture	NATO countries	Norway

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2018 GLOBAL LIVEABILITY INDEX: VIENNA NAMED WORLD'S MOST LIVEABLE CITY

- ❖ Global Liveability Index released by EIU (Economist Intelligence Unit) compares world cities with each other in terms of security, affordability, education, healthcare, its urban lifestyle and infrastructure. It scores 140 major cities of the world on scale ranging from 0 (least liveable city) to 100 (most liveable city) based on these above parameters.

Gist of the Report:

- ❖ Austrian capital Vienna was ranked as world's most liveable city among 140 major cities in 2018 Global Liveability Index released by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). It is first time that European city has topped rankings of EIU annual survey.
- ❖ No Indian cities were ranked in the top ten or bottom ten of this edition of index. New Delhi had figured at 112th and Mumbai 117th position in list. South Asian cities were also ranked low
- ❖ 10 most liveable cities' list includes Vienna, Austria (rank: 1st, with total score of 99.1), Melbourne, Australia (2nd, 98.4); Osaka, Japan (3rd, 97.7); Calgary, Canada (4th, 97.5); Sydney, Australia (5th, 97.4); Vancouver, Canada (6th, 97.3); Toronto, Canada (7th, 97.2); Tokyo, Japan (8th, 97.2); Copenhagen, Denmark (9th, 96.8); and Adelaide, Australia (96.6).
- ❖ The 10 least liveable cities are Dakar, Senegal (131st); Algiers, Algeria (132nd); Douala, Cameroon (133rd); Tripoli, Libya (134th); Harare, Zimbabwe (135th); Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (136th); Karachi, Pakistan (137th); Lagos, Nigeria (138th); Dhaka, Bangladesh (139th) and Damascus, Syria (140th).

GLOBAL PEACE INDEX 2018

- ❖ India was ranked 136th among 163 countries in Global Peace Index 2018 that was released by Sydney based think tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). In Last year's index, India was ranked 137th.
- ❖ 2018 GPI was twelfth edition of index since it was launched in 2006. Iceland was ranked most peaceful country in the world and it managed to retain its position since 2008.

Findings of the Report:

- ❖ The average level of global peacefulness has deteriorated by 2.38% since 2008. Over that period, 85 countries deteriorated, while 75 improved. 71 countries were more

peaceful in 2018 than 2017. 92 countries were less peaceful in 2018 than in 2017. The global GPI average deteriorated 0.27% from 2017 to 2018.

- ❖ **Top 10 Peaceful Countries in 2018 GPI:** Iceland (1), New Zealand (2), Austria (3), Portugal (4), Denmark (5), Canada (6), Czech Republic (7), Singapore (8), Japan (9) and Ireland (10).
- ❖ **Top 10 Least Peaceful Countries:** Syria (163), Afghanistan (162), South Sudan (161), Iraq (160), Somalia (159), Yemen (158), Libya (157), Democratic Republic of Congo (156), Central African Republic (155) and Russia (154).

Global Peace Index (GPI)

- ❖ GPI ranks 163 independent states and territories every year according to their level of peacefulness. It is considered as one of the most comprehensive analysis that captures trends in peace, its economic value, and how to develop peaceful societies. The multifaceted index uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure state of peace using **three thematic domains:**
 1. Level of societal safety and security;
 2. Extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict; and
 3. Degree of militarisation.
- ❖ It also uses various parameters like the homicide rate, ease of access to weapons, impact of terrorism and number of armed services personnel in population.

WORLD HAPPINESS INDEX 2018

- ❖ India was ranked 133rd among 156 countries in **World Happiness Index 2018**, recently released by the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network**.
- ❖ The index **ranked 156 countries** based on factors (parameters) such as **inequality, life expectancy, GDP per capita, social freedom, generosity, public trust** (i.e. a lack of corruption in government and business) and **social support**.
- ❖ Together these parameters are used to generate a happiness score of **country on a scale from 1 to 10**. This year it is **sixth such** list released since it was **first published in 2012**. The 2018 report, for **the first time** ranked **happiness of foreign-born immigrants** in **117 countries**.

Findings of the Report:

- ❖ The world's largest democracy's rank fell to 133rd position from 122nd last year. India was behind majority of **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** nations apart from **war ravaged Afghanistan**, which was **ranked 145th**.

- ❖ Pakistan (ranked 75th) and China (86th) were well ahead of India in happiness **index despite being not the most democratic or free country.**
- ❖ SAARC nations: Pakistan (75th), Nepal (101st), Bhutan (97th), Bangladesh (115th), Sri Lanka (116th).

INCLUSIVE INTERNET INDEX 2019

- ❖ The Economist Intelligence Unit, commissioned by Facebook, has published the Inclusive Internet Index for a third consecutive year. **India has been ranked 47th.**
- ❖ It covers 100 countries, up from **86 in 2018, representing 94% of the world's population and 96% of global GDP.** The **index benchmarks** Internet inclusion across **four categories**:
 1. Availability
 2. Affordability
 3. Relevance and
 4. Readiness.
- ❖ It is also informed by the Value of the Internet survey, now in its second year, which polled 5,069 respondents from Asia-Pacific, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, revealing what people use **the Internet for, how often, the benefits they receive, and the obstacles faced, from connection quality to mistrust of online information.**

Findings of the Report:

- ❖ Sweden has topped the rankings followed by Singapore and the US.
- ❖ Men have more Internet access than women globally but low and lower middle income countries narrowed the gender gap in 2018.
- ❖ The UK, Namibia, Ireland, Austria, Chile and South Africa are the top performers of the year in terms of gender equality. All these countries had female digital skills training plans.
- ❖ The report notes that Inclusion for women and those with disabilities have improved, with low income and lower-middle-income countries driving the progress.
- ❖ More than half (52.2 per cent) of respondents said they are not confident about their online privacy.
- ❖ Majority of respondents (74.4 per cent) think the Internet has been the most effective tool for finding jobs
- ❖ There are about 3.8 billion people around the world without fast and reliable Internet access. Even though the overall gap between those with access to the Internet and those

without narrowed, the lowest income countries fell behind because they improved at a slower rate than other countries and much slower than last year.

- ❖ Fixed-line Internet access is too expensive or inaccessible in some countries, as a result, mobile services are critical in these regions.
- ❖ The report notes that the affordability is declining relative to monthly income in many countries. This is disproportionately affecting women and people in low-income countries who are more reliant on mobile as their primary means of accessing the Internet.
- ❖ The percentage of households connected to the Internet globally increased, on average from 53.1 per cent to 54.8 per cent, the rate of growth in Internet connections slowed to 2.9 per cent in 2019 from 7.7 per cent in 2018.
- ❖ The lower-middle-income countries made a significant 66 per cent improvement in 4G coverage and low-income countries witnessed a moderate 22 per cent improvement.

INTERNATIONAL IP INDEX 2019: KEY FACTS

- ❖ The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) has released the International IP Index 2019. The Index aims to create a roadmap for countries that aspire to foster economic growth and global competitiveness through stronger IP. The Index benchmarks the IP framework in 50 global economies.
- ❖ The index evaluates the IP infrastructure in each economy based on 45 unique indicators, which are critical to the growth of effective IP systems. The indicators encompass 8 categories of IP protection: patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, commercialization of IP assets, enforcement, systemic efficiency, and membership and ratification of international treaties.

The important features of the International IP Index 2019 are:

- ❖ The U.S., UK, and EU economies remain atop the global IP rankings, though the U.S.'s lead narrowed due to systemic challenges to the U.S patent system. Japan and Singapore also appear among the Index's top ten.
- ❖ India, for the first time, broke free of the bottom ten per cent of economies measured. Majority of the economies benchmarked are building more effective foundations for IP policy.
- ❖ The government introduced reforms in Argentina to streamline the patenting process, increase international cooperation on IP, and bolster transparency and stakeholder engagement has resulted in increasing of its overall score by 15% and its rankings from 46th in 2018 to 40th in 2019.

BLOOMBERG INNOVATION INDEX 2019

- ❖ The Bloomberg Innovation Index analyses each country in a range of areas including education, research and development, and manufacturing before coming up with a list of the 60 most innovative countries. India has been ranked in Bloomberg's 2019 list of most innovative countries in the world -- 2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index - **for the first time ever**. India has **grabbed 54th** spot in the Bloomberg Innovation Index with a score **of 47.93 out of 100** in '2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index' of 60 economies.
- ❖ United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Vietnam, Brazil, Kuwait, Qatar, Chile, Argentina, Slovenia are the countries which have been ranked for the first time.
- ❖ According to Bloomberg, the countries and sovereigns have been ranked on the basis of their overall ability to innovate considering **seven-equal weighted metrics** –
 1. Research & development intensity
 2. Manufacturing value-added
 3. Productivity
 4. High-tech density
 5. Tertiary efficiency
 6. Researcher concentration
 7. Patent activity.
- ❖ India has been ranked at 47th in research & development intensity, 54th manufacturing value-added, 58th productivity, 29th high-tech density, 51st tertiary efficiency, 59th in researcher concentration and 36th in patent activity.

GLOBAL TALENT COMPETITIVE INDEX

- ❖ The Global Talent Competitive Index prepared by the INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group was released on the first day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2019.
- ❖ The Global Talent Competitive Index measures how countries and cities grow, attract and retain talent, ranking 125 countries and 114 cities across all groups of income and levels of development.

Where does India stand?

- ❖ The findings of the 2019 Global Talent Index for India are:
- ❖ Even though India has moved up one position to rank 80th on the global talent competitive index,

- ❖ India remains a laggard among the BRICS nations.
- ❖ India's performance was better than its lower-income peers when it comes to growing talent (48th) and access to growth opportunities (41st).
- ❖ In spite of the scope for improvement across the board, India's biggest challenge is to improve its ability to attract (95th) and retain (96th) talent.
- ❖ India needs to address its poor level of Internal Openness (116th) in particular with respect to weak gender equality and low tolerance towards minorities and immigrants and its disappointing showing in lifestyle (112th) indicators.

The global findings of the Index are:

- ❖ Switzerland is followed by Singapore, the US, Norway and Denmark in the top five on the list. The talent gap between higher and lower-income countries has widened over the last five years. Countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa are seeing a progressive erosion of their talent base. China's ranking fell by two places to 45. Even then China is the best performer among BRICS

2019 EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER REPORT

- ❖ Edelman Trust Barometer report: Global Trust Index
- ❖ The Edelman Trust Barometer report is an **international study based** on the opinions of elites that focuses on the principles of **trust in business, government, media and NGOs**. Based on the findings the report calculates the Global Trust Index.

The key findings from the report are:

- ❖ The Global Trust Index witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52.
- ❖ India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media but the country's brands are among the least-trusted. India stood at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category.
- ❖ The index has been topped by China in both the informed public and the general population segments, with scores of 79 and 88 respectively.
- ❖ Companies headquartered in Switzerland, Germany and Canada were the most trusted ones.
- ❖ Also, the brands from Switzerland, Germany and Canada have a trust score of 70 each while that of Japan is 69 per cent. Companies headquartered in India, Mexico and Brazil are the least trusted, followed by China and South Korea.

- ❖ There is a growing feeling of pessimism about the future, with only one-in-three mass population respondents in the developed world believing his or her family would be better off in the next five years.
- ❖ Just one-in-five believe the system is working for them and 70 per cent desire change.
- ❖ Despite a full-employment economy, fear of job loss remains high among the general population. Search and traditional media have a score of 66 each, while the score of social media is 44 per cent when it comes to reliable sources for news.
- ❖ These findings are based on an online survey in 27 markets covering over 33,000 respondents.

WORLD DYNAMIC CITY 2019

- ❖ The City Momentum Index of JLL which identifies World Dynamic Cities has been released by the property consultant JLL.

About the Index:

- ❖ The City Momentum Index of JLL measures momentum for 131 of the world's most commercially active cities by tracking a range of socio-economic and commercial real estate indicators over a three-year period to identify the urban economies and real estate markets undergoing the most rapid expansion.
- ❖ The Index measures short-term momentum over a three-year horizon and identifies urban economies and real estate markets which are currently undergoing significant rapid growth.

World Dynamic Cities 2019:

- ❖ The standings of the various cities under the 2019 survey are listed below:
- ❖ Silicon Valley of India, Bengaluru has emerged as the world's most dynamic city among 131 major established and emerging business hubs globally.
- ❖ The Second place is occupied by Hyderabad.
- ❖ Other Indian cities which featured in the top 20 list are Delhi (4th), Pune (5th), Chennai (7th) and Kolkata (20th). 19 of the top 20 cities from are from the Asia Pacific. This showcases the region's rapid urbanization and strong economic growth. The Index notes that implementation of reforms such as RERA and GST with a focus on improving infrastructure and improving ease of doing business has brought in more transparency in the real estate sector and has given a strong impetus to the sector.
- ❖ As a result, India is receiving greater interest from foreign real estate investors who are seeking to tap into the countries favourable growth dynamics.

HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX

- ❖ The Henley Passport Index measures the access each country's travel document affords. The Index is based on the data provided by **the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) and covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations.**

Ranking of the countries (Jurisdictions):

- ❖ The Rankings of the jurisdictions based on the rankings in the Henley Passport Index are:
- ❖ Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 jurisdictions.
- ❖ South Korea and Singapore are at joint second position offering access to 189 jurisdictions.
- ❖ China has jumped almost 20 places in just two years, from 85th in 2017 to 69th this year.
- ❖ India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year.
- ❖ European Union member states along with Norway and the US occupy the places behind the top three nations in the rankings. The rankings of the USA and UK have continued to drop. The top 5 positions are held by Japan (190 countries), Singapore, South Korea (189), France, Germany (188), Denmark, Finland, Italy, Sweden (187), and Luxembourg, Spain (186). The bottom 5 positions are held by Eritrea (38), Yemen (37), Pakistan (33), Somalia, Syria (32) and Afghanistan, Iraq (30)

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

- ❖ The EIU Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.
- ❖ The Democracy Index is based **on five categories:**
 - ✓ Electoral process and pluralism;
 - ✓ Civil liberties;
 - ✓ The functioning of government;
 - ✓ Political participation; and
 - ✓ Political culture.
- ❖ Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: **full democracy; flawed democracy; hybrid regime; and authoritarian regime.**
- ❖ India is ranked at 41 – a notch above last year. It is still classified as a 'flawed democracy' according to the index. This is the lowest ever score attributed to India in the index ever since its publication.

- ❖ India ranks below the US (ranked 25th in the index) and other so called ‘flawed democracies’ like Italy, France, Botswana and South Africa.

What is flawed democracy?

- ❖ The report defines a flawed democracy as nations that “have free and fair elections and, even if there are problems (such as infringements on media freedom), basic civil liberties are respected. However, there are significant weaknesses in other aspects of democracy, including problems in governance, an underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation.

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU):

- ❖ The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) is the **research and analysis division** of The Economist Group, which is a British multinational media company headquartered in London. It provides forecasting and advisory services through research and analysis, such as monthly country reports, five-year country economic forecasts, country risk service reports, and industry reports. It publishes a number of reports each year focussing on current issues affecting specific countries, regions and industries.

WEF'S GENDER GAP INDEX

- ❖ India has been ranked **108th** in World Economic Forum (WEF) gender gap index, same as 2017, while recording improvement in **wage equality for similar work** and **fully closing its tertiary education gender gap for the first time**.
- ❖ Gender gap was measured across **four key pillars**
 1. Economic opportunity,
 2. Political empowerment,
 3. Educational attainment, and
 4. Health and survival.
- ❖ The world has closed **68 percent of its gender gap** as per the Gender Gap Index report. At the current speed, it will take about **108 years to close** the overall gender gap in the world. And after **202 years** there will be parity in the workplace in the world at the current rate of change

India's performance in the Gender Gap Index 2018:

- ❖ India has improved in wage equality for similar work subindex of the Gender Gap Index 2018. It has been able to fully close the tertiary education gender gap for the very first time.

- ❖ India has been ranked 142nd in the economic opportunity and participation subindex out of total 149 countries.
- ❖ As per WEF report, India needs **to get more women into senior and professional** roles to make more improvement in the rankings.
- ❖ India widened the **gap in health and survival sub-index**. It continues to **rank third-lowest in this Sub-index in the world**. It has made the least improvement in this parameter in the last 10 years.
- ❖ South Asian region was ranked second-lowest in the index having closed only 65 per cent of its gender gap. India has **closed 66 percent of its Gender Gap** and is slightly ahead of the South-Asian region.
- ❖ Interestingly, India **has the second-largest artificial intelligence (AI) workforce** but one of the largest AI gender gaps, with **only 22** per cent of roles filled by women.

Top 10:

- ❖ Iceland holds **the top spot in the index for the 10th consecutive year**. Norway (2nd, 83.5 per cent), **Sweden** (3rd, 82.2 per cent), and **Finland** (4th, 82.1 per cent) dominated the top slots. Other countries in the top-10 include Nicaragua (5th, 80.9 per cent), Rwanda (6th, 80.4 per cent), New Zealand (7th, 80.1 per cent), the Philippines (8th, 79.9 per cent), Ireland (9th, 79.6 per cent) and Namibia (10th, 78.9 per cent)

The World Economic Forum:

- ❖ The World Economic Forum is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.
- ❖ The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.
- ❖ It was established in **1971 as a not-for-profit foundation** and is **headquartered in Geneva**, Switzerland. It is **independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests**. The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the **global public interest** while upholding the highest standards of governance. Moral and intellectual integrity is at the heart of everything it does

THE GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX

- ❖ According to the fifth edition of Global Terrorism Index (GTI), Maoists operating in the so-called Red Corridor that runs through the eastern, central and parts of the southern regions of the country were responsible for more than half of the 340 deaths in 929 terror attacks in India during in 2016 .The index, which **covered 163 countries**, covering

99.7% of the world's population, ranked **India eighth, same** as in the year before. However, from **2002 to 2015**, India's global ranking had remained higher, varying between the second and sixth positions. **A higher ranking indicates a higher impact of terrorist activities.** The report said India has the lowest rate of deaths per attack among the 10 most affected countries even as the number of attacks was relatively higher, indicating how the nature of terrorism appeared to be different from that in other countries

Global Terrorism Index 2017	10 countries most impacted by terrorist activities					
	Rank (change from 2016)	Country	GTI 2017 score	Deaths 2016 (% change*)	Incidents 2016 (% change*)	Total deaths since 2000
	1 (-)	Iraq	10.0	9,765 (40.3%)	2,965 (22.77%)	60,324
	2 (-)	Afghanistan	9.4	4,574 (-13.89%)	1,342 (-21.75%)	27,299
	3 (-)	Nigeria	9.0	1,832 (-62.91%)	466 (-20.75%)	18,914
	4 (1)	Syria	8.6	2,102 (-23.87%)	366 (-4.69%)	8,486
	5 (-1)	Pakistan	8.4	956 (-11.97%)	736 (-26.98%)	15,908
	6 (-)	Yemen	7.8	641 (-57.8%)	366 (-21.63%)	4,253
	7 (-)	Somalia	7.6	740 (12.29%)	359 (48.96%)	4,466
	8 (-)	India	7.5	340 (17.65%)	929 (16.56%)	8,238
	9 (5)	Turkey^	7.5	658 (105.62%^)	364 (n/a)	1,461
	10 (-)	Libya	7.2	376 (-17.18%)	333 (-22.91%)	1,413

* Over 2015; ^ change based on approx toll for 2015
Source: Institute for Economics & Peace, IANS

IEP:

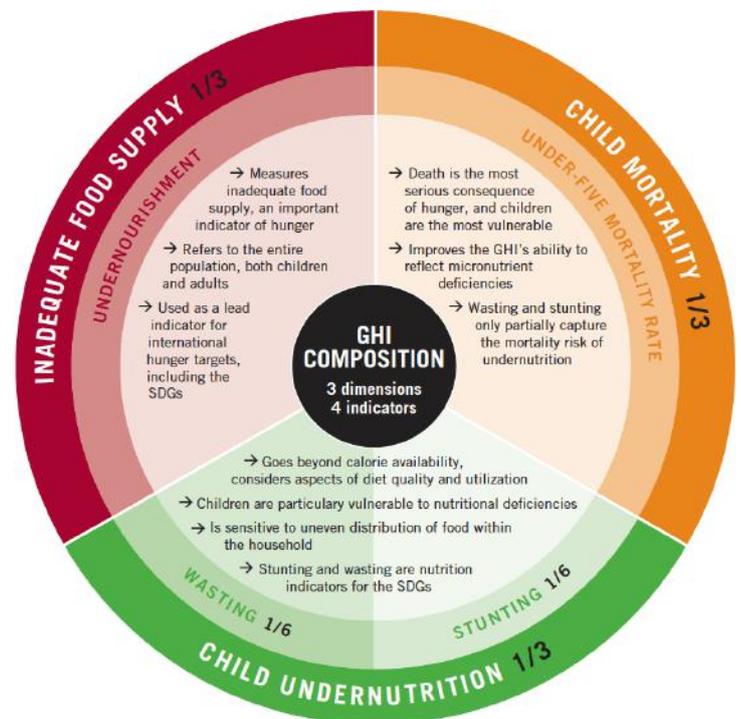
- ❖ The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), is a global think tank headquartered in Sydney, Australia

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2018

- ❖ India has been ranked at the 103rd position among 119 countries on the Global Hunger Index
- According to the report, prepared by Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide, India is among the 45 countries that have "serious levels of hunger."
- ❖ The GHI, now in its 13th year, ranks countries based on four key indicators -- undernourishment, child mortality, child wasting and child stunting.
- ❖ India is ranked below many neighbouring countries, including China (25th spot), Nepal (72), Myanmar (68), Sri Lanka (67) and Bangladesh (86). Pakistan is placed at the 106th position.
- ❖ Zero is the best score and a reading above 100 is the worst. The latter signifies that a country's undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality levels are at the highest level

Global Hunger Index and how it is calculated?

- ❖ The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger.
- ❖ GHI scores are calculated using a **three-step process**.
- ❖ **Firstly**, values are determined for each country **in four indicators**-
 1. The proportion of the undernourished as a percentage of the population
 2. The proportion of children under the age of five suffering from wasting
 3. The proportion of children under the age of five suffering from stunting
 4. The mortality rate of children under the age of five.
- ❖ Secondly, each of the four component indicators is given a **standardised score on a 100-point scale** based on the highest observed level for the indicator.
- ❖ Thirdly, standardised scores are aggregated to calculate the GHI score for each country, with each of the **three dimensions**
 1. Inadequate food supply
 2. Child mortality; and
 3. Child under nutrition.
- ❖ Values from 0 to 9.9 reflects low hunger, values from 10.0 to 19.9 reflects moderate hunger, values from 20.0 to 34.9 reflects serious hunger, values from 35.0 to 49.9 reflects alarming hunger, and values of 50.0 or more reflects extremely alarming hunger levels.



What is Stunting?

- ❖ Stunting, or low height for age, is caused by long-term insufficient nutrient intake and frequent infections. Stunting generally occurs before age two, and effects are largely irreversible. These include delayed motor development, impaired cognitive function and poor school performance.

What is Wasting?

- ❖ Wasting, or low weight for height, is a strong predictor of mortality among children under five. It is usually the result of acute significant food shortage and/or disease. There are 24 developing countries with wasting rates of 10 per cent or more, indicating a serious problem urgently requiring a response.

MISCELLANEOUS

ACT EAST POLICY” OF INDIA

- ❖ Look East Policy" of India was launched by the former Prime Minister P. V Narasimha Rao in 1991. The main focus of this policy was to shift the country's trading focus from the west and neighbours to the booming South East Asian countries. This policy continues till the formation of NDA government in 2014. Since the formation of the new government in the centre, the government upgraded to “Act East Policy”. The “Act East Policy” was launched at the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014.

Differences between “Look East Policy” and “Act East Policy”:

- ❖ The focus of the “Look East Policy” was to increase economic integration with the South East Asian countries and the area was just confined to South East Asia only.
- ❖ On the other hand the focus of the “Act East Policy” is economic and security integration and focussed area increased to South East Asia plus East Asia.

The Objective of "Act East Policy" is to;

1. Promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at regional, bilateral and multilateral levels.
2. To increase the interaction of the North-Eastern Indian states with other neighbouring countries.
3. To find out the alternatives of the traditional business partners like; more focus on the Pacific countries in addition to the South East Asian countries.
4. To curb the increasing impact of China in the ASEAN region. Two-way trade between India and ASEAN moved up to \$71.6 billion in 2016-17 from \$2 billion in the early '90s. In contrast, two-way trade between China and ASEAN stood at \$452.31 billion in 2016.
5. Experts say that under the “Act East Policy” the government is relying on the 3 C's (Culture, Connectivity and Commerce) to develop better relations with ASEAN nations.

- ❖ In order to ensure the success of the policy, the government is putting steady efforts to develop and strengthen connectivity of Northeast Indian states with the ASEAN region **through people-to-people contacts, trade, culture and physical infrastructure (airport, road, power, telecommunication etc.)**. Some of the major projects include **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**, the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project**, **Border Haats** and **Rhi-Tiddim Road Project**,

Border Haats:

- ❖ Currently, four border haats are operational, along the India-Bangladesh border. Two border haats are located in Meghalaya at Kalaichar and Balat and two are located in Tripura at Srinagar and Kamalasagar.
- ❖ The trade at border haats is permitted to be carried out in Indian Rupees/Bangladesh Taka and on barter basis, and data of such trade is maintained by the Haat Management Committee of the respective border haat.
- ❖ Border Haats (or rural market) aims at promoting the well-being of the people dwelling in remote areas across the borders of two countries.
- ❖ It seeks to establish traditional system of marketing local produce thorough local markets in local currency or according to barter basis.
- ❖ Though trade carried in this informal market is not significant in terms of percentage of bilateral trade, but these local measures help to improve economic well-being of marginalised sections of society.
- ❖ Border haats along India-Banlgadesh border are established under Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed for Border Trade and Border Haats between both countries in October 2010.

INTERMEDIATE-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES (INF) TREATY

In News:

- ❖ U.S. President confirmed that the **U.S. would pull out of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty** with Russia.

About the treaty:

- ❖ The Treaty is signed between the **United States of America** and the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on December 1987** and came into force on June 1988.
- ❖ It is on the **elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles**, commonly referred to as the **INF (intermediate-range nuclear forces) treaty**.

- ❖ It requires destruction of the **Parties' ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles** with ranges of **between 500 and 5,500 kilometers**, their launchers and associated support structures and support equipment **within three years after the Treaty enters into force.**
- ❖ The INF Treaty eliminated all nuclear and conventional missiles but it did **not cover sea-launched missiles.**
- ❖ It is a crucial Cold War-era treaty.
- ❖ The treaty, signed in 1987, was central to ending the arms race between the two superpowers, and protected America's NATO allies in Europe from Soviet missile attacks.

What is the Issue?

- ❖ Russia's alleged development and deployment of the Novator 9M729 missile, also known as the SSC-8.
- ❖ This missile could strike Europe at short notice.
- ❖ The Russians denied the allegations and raised counter-allegations of the U.S. installing missile defence systems in Europe.

BYUNGJIN POLICY

In News:

- ❖ A statement issued by the North's foreign ministry said it could revert to its former byungjin policy of simultaneously developing its nuclear capabilities alongside the economy if the US did not change its stance over sanctions.

About the policy:

- ❖ "Byungjin" stands for parallel development, which implied economic and military progress together
- ❖ It is measure to promote economic construction and raise living standards of the people while strengthening national defense capabilities without increasing the defense budget.
- ❖ The "Byungjin" policy of economy and nuclear weapons signified that North Korea will no longer differentiate its nuclear energy for peaceful use from military use.

Other policies:

- ❖ FATHER: kim jong-il -SONGUN (military first policy)
- ❖ GRANDFATHER: Juche -"**self-reliance**" policy

APIX

In News:

- ❖ Prime Minister of India launched the APIX a banking technology platform at the prestigious Fintech Festival, Singapore.

What is APIX?

- ❖ APIX Stands for Application programming Interface Exchange.
- ❖ It is a banking technology platform designed to reach nearly two billion people worldwide are still without bank accounts.
- ❖ Designed by software experts based in Hyderabad, Colombo and London, APIX is a sophisticated technology developed by Boston – Headquartered virtusa, especially for smaller banks, Tier 3 and 4 to reach out to people in the remote regions.
- ❖ APIX will eventually connect companies to financial institution globally.
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About Fintech Festival:

- ❖ It is the World's largest platform for the global Fintech community.
- ❖ Fintech Festival, Which is in its third year, involves a three day conference, and exhibition of Fintech firms and Capabilities.
- ❖ Fintech is an omnibus term for the use of technology to deliver all kinds of financial services.

YOUNG GLOBAL LEADERS 2019

- ❖ The Forum of Young Global Leaders, the World Economic Forum's foundation for remarkable **leaders under 40** has released the list of Individuals with grit, foresight and potential to improve the state of the world for the year 2019.
- ❖ The Forum of Young Global Leaders, the **World Economic Forum's** foundation for remarkable **leaders under 40**, was founded to fuel new models of leadership.

- ❖ Young Global Leaders participate in the Annual Meeting of the New Champions, established in 2007 and known informally as “**Summer Davos**”, alongside Global Growth Companies and other delegations to the World Economic Forum.
- ❖ Young Global Leaders are united by the belief that the urgent problems of today present an opportunity to forge a better future across sectors, generations and borders.

Indians in the list:

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh IT minister Nara Lokesh, BJP MP Poonam Mahajan, Xiaomi India head Manu Kumar Jain, Telangana government’s Chief Innovation Officer Phanindra Sama, SaveLife Foundation’s Piyush Tewari and Kaleidofin’s co-Founder Sucharita Mukherjee are the Indians featuring in the list of Young Global Leaders 2019.

WORLD’S HUNGRY POPULATION ON RISE AGAIN DUE TO CONFLICT, CLIMATE CHANGE: UN REPORT

- ❖ According to United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2018 report, number of hungry people in world has risen for first time in more than decade. There are now approximately 38 million more undernourished people in the world, rising from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016.
- ❖ The report is an overview of progress towards achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG), which consists of 17 goals and 169 targets. It was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit on September 25, 2015. The deadline to meet them is 2030.

Key Highlights of report

- ❖ **Key Factors for rising Hunger:** Conflict, drought and disasters linked to climate change are among the key factors causing this reversal in progress. Violent conflict is now one of the main drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries and it has led to the forced displacement of record high 68.5 million in 2017.
- ❖ **Improvements:** The number of people living on less than \$2 a day declined from 26.9% of the world’s population in 2000 to 9.2% in 2017. The mortality rate for children under five has dropped by almost 50% in the least developed countries.
- ❖ **South Asia:** The region (which also includes India) has seen child marriage rates plunge, with girl’s risk of getting married in childhood dropping by 40% from 2000 to 2017. The water stress levels for many countries in region are above 70%, indicating fast-approaching water scarcity. More than nine out of 10 people living in urban areas around world are

breathing polluted air, with southern Asia scoring worst in this area. While electricity and sanitation deficits in south Asia are still poor, but efforts are being made to close the gap.

- ❖ Need to achieve deadline: Just 12 years left to 2030 deadline, achieving 2030 SDG Agenda requires immediate and accelerated actions by countries along with collaborative partnerships among governments and stakeholders at all levels.

UN APPROVE US \$6.69 BILLION DOLLAR BUDGET FOR 13 PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

- ❖ The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has approved US \$6.69 billion-dollar budget for 13 peacekeeping operations for year 2018-19. This is second year in row in which committee has made significant cuts to overall peacekeeping budget.

Important facts:

- ❖ The budget approved for missions **include MINUJUSTH** (UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti), **MINUSCA** (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic), **MINURSO** (Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara), **MONUSCO** (Stabilisation Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo) and **UNIFIL** (Interim Force in Lebanon).
- ❖ The United States **is biggest contributor to UB, paying 22% of \$5.4 billion** core budget and 28.5% of the US \$7.9 billion peacekeeping budget. China is other top contributor with 10.3% followed by Japan with 9.7 %.

RIO DE JANEIRO RECOGNISED AS WORLD CAPITAL OF ARCHITECTURE 2020

- ❖ **Rio de Janeiro has been recognised as ‘World Capital of Architecture’** for 2020 by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- ❖ Rio de Janeiro will **be hosting the World Congress of the International Union of Architects (UIA)** in July 2020.
- ❖ The theme of the 2020 World Congress of the International Union of Architects is “All the worlds. Just one world,” UNESCO in the release said that “Through the range and quality of its activities, the World Capital of Architecture in Rio de Janeiro will demonstrate the crucial role of architecture and culture in sustainable urban development.”

World Capital of Architecture:

- ❖ The **World Capital of Architecture** initiative underscores the **common commitment of UNESCO** and the UIA to preserve architectural heritage in the urban context. **UNESCO designates the World Capital of Architecture** as per the partnership agreement with the UIA.
- ❖ The **World Capital of Architecture also hosts the UIA's World Congress**, an event that takes **place every three years**. The World Capital of Architecture aims to become an international forum for debates about pressing global challenges from the perspectives of culture, cultural heritage, urban planning and architecture.

FIRST INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA DIALOGUE TO BE HELD IN UZBEKISTAN

- ❖ The first India-Central Asia Dialogue held on Samarkand, Uzbekistan on January 12 and 13.
- ❖ The Foreign Ministers of Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan will participate in the event. The Foreign Minister of Afghanistan will participate in the dialogue as a special invitee for the session dedicated to connectivity issues in the region.

Objective of the Dialogue

- ❖ India and the Central Asian countries are bound together through shared history and cultural linkages.

The objectives of the first India-Central Asia Dialogue are:

- ❖ To enhance their cooperation in wide-ranging spheres including exploring ways to substantially enhance India's economic involvement in business and development sector of Central Asia.
- ❖ Developing viable connectivity options between India and Afghanistan and Central Asia to further facilitate trade and economic activity in the region.
- ❖ Strengthen India's engagement, including political, economic, development partnership and cultural, with all the Central Asian countries and take it to a new level.
- ❖ The first India-Central Asia Dialogue aims at taking forward the bilateral relations which have strengthened following the Prime Minister's visit to all the five Central Asian nations – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – in 2015 and the EAM's tour across the region in August 2018.

ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2018

In News:

- ❖ In the Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR), India advocated for greater investment in disaster resilience and Early Warning Systems.

AMCDRR:

- ❖ Asian ministerial conference for disaster risk reduction (AMCDRR) is being organised in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
- ❖ The first conference was held in China in the year 2005.
- ❖ India hosted the Seventh edition of conference in New Delhi in 2016.
- ❖ It was the first AMCDRR after introduction of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-30 at 3rd UN World Conference in Sendai.

About the 2018 Conference:

- ❖ The eighth edition of AMCDRR is hosted by Mongolia in Ulaan Baatar.
- ❖ The Conference will reflect on three years into the implementation of the Sendai Framework, review progress made against the commitments at the AMCDRR 2016, and reaffirm political commitment on disaster risk reduction and strengthen coherent implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- ❖ Expected outcomes of the conference include the 'Ulaanbaatar Declaration', a 2018-2020 Action Plan for implementation of the Asia Regional Plan, and voluntary commitments.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR):

- ❖ UNISDR was established in 1999 as a dedicated secretariat to facilitate the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).
- ❖ It is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to serve as the focal point for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields.
- ❖ It is an organizational unit of the UN Secretariat and is led by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction (SRSG).
- ❖ The UNISDR Headquarters is located in Geneva.
- ❖ UNISDR has five regional offices – in Asia (Bangkok), Africa (Nairobi), Europe (Brussels), Arab States (Cairo) and Americas and the Caribbean (Panama).

THE '8888' UPRISING

In News:

- ❖ August 8 marks the 30th anniversary of the people's '8888' uprising in Myanmar.

The Anniversary:

- ❖ The '8888' uprising (or the eighth day of August 1988) was a people's movement that challenged the then ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party'.
- ❖ The objective of '8888' was two-fold:
 1. To push for the transfer of power from the military to a civilian leadership.
 2. A change in the political system from an authoritarian regime to a multi-party democracy.
- ❖ It gave rise to the **National League for Democracy (NLD)**, a political party which paved the way for the current Myanmar State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi's entry into politics and **for the pro-democracy movement to continue**

TAPI GAS PIPELINE

In News:

- ❖ India has **sought re-negotiation** of the natural gas price it is to source through a proposed \$10 billion Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline due to slump in global energy markets.

TAPI Gas Pipeline:

- ❖ The TAPI (Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India) Pipeline, also known as **Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline**, is a **natural gas pipeline** being developed by the Galkynysh – TAPI Pipeline Company Limited with **participation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.

Route of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline



- ❖ India's effort is to tap Turkmenistan's **Galkynysh gas fields**, which are the fourth largest in the world.
- ❖ The pipeline will transport natural **gas from Galkynysh gas field in Turkmenistan through Afghanistan into Pakistan and then to India.**

- ❖ Construction on the project started on December 2015. The life of supply is expected to last for period of 30 years and shall be operational from 2019.
- ❖ Member countries of the project have recommended **establishing an inter-government joint security task force (JSTF)** to serve as the nucleus of the safety of the pipeline.

WORLD HINDI CONFERENCE

In News:

- ❖ 11th World Hindi Conference was recently held in Port Louis, Mauritius. The theme for this year's conference is **“Vaishvik Hindi Aur Bharatiya Sanskriti”**.

World Hindi Conference:

- ❖ World Hindi Conference was started in 1975 to make the Hindi language a medium of service and knowledge and enable it to move forward with the time.
- ❖ The first World Hindi Conference was held in 1975 in Nagpur, India.
- ❖ The event, held once in three years, is dedicated to Hindi language.
- ❖ It sees participation from Hindi scholars, writers and laureates from different parts of the world who contribute to the language.

World Hindi Secretariat:

- ❖ Ministry of External Affairs has set up the World Hindi Secretariat in Mauritius.
- ❖ The objectives are the promotion of Hindi as an international language and further the cause for recognition at the United Nations as an Official Language.

Panini Language Laboratory:

- ❖ Panini Language Laboratory' has been set up at Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) in Mauritius.
- ❖ The lab, gifted by the Indian government, will help MGI in teaching Indian languages in Mauritius.
- ❖ It aims to promote reading and writing Hindi amongst young generation and its further development.
- ❖ It will serve as medium to generate more interest in learning Hindi amongst youngsters thereby strengthening language.

ICOMOS

In News:

- ❖ ICOMOS launches initiative to save cultural heritage damaged in flood-hit Kerala.

ICOMOS:

- ❖ The ICOMOS, a global monument conservation body, has launched an initiative to assess the damage to the rich cultural and built heritage in flood-devastated Kerala and set up an emergency response platform.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS):

- ❖ The ICOMOS is a prestigious non-government organization. It is headquartered in Paris.
- ❖ It is dedicated for promoting the application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques for conservation of architectural and archaeological heritage across the world.
- ❖ The initiative also aims at setting up a platform for emergency response to the cultural heritage damaged by the floods in Kerala.
- ❖ **ICOMOS is also an advisory body to the UNESCO for cultural heritage**, in particular for implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
- ❖ The ICOMOS has also approached the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) to partner in the post - disaster work.
- ❖ Rome-based ICCROM is an inter-governmental organisation dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide through training, information, research, cooperation and advocacy programmes

CASPIAN SEA AGREEMENT AND AKTAU

In News:

- ❖ The presidents of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan met in Aktau, Kazakhstan to sign the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

Background:

- ❖ The core dispute over the Caspian is it a lake or a sea.
- ❖ The terminology matters because it dictates how the littoral states use the body of water and how the Caspian's resources are divided up.
- ❖ Until 1991, the Caspian had only two littoral states — the Soviet Union and Iran — which treated the Caspian as a border lake, with their 1921 Treaty of Friendship.

Outcomes:

- ❖ The convention signed confirm that the surface of the Caspian Sea would be legally classified as a sea.
- ❖ It means that each country would control 15 nautical miles of water from its shoreline for mineral exploration and 25 natural miles of shoreline for fishing.
- ❖ All other parts of the Caspian Sea would be considered neutral waters for common use.
- ❖ The convention stipulates that only countries through which a pipeline crosses would have to agree on the construction.
- ❖ Another feature of the agreement that has wider implications is a prohibition on military vessels from non-littoral states in the sea



Caspian Sea:

- ❖ The Caspian Sea is a geopolitically strategic body of water, both in terms of its location and its resources.
- ❖ It is situated in a transcontinental zone between Europe and Asia.
- ❖ It is bounded by Kazakhstan to the northeast, Russia to the northwest, Azerbaijan to the west, Iran to the south, and Turkmenistan to the southeast.

KURASH

What is Kurash?

- ❖ Kurash is one of the sports making its Asian Games debut in Indonesia.
- ❖ It is a traditional wrestling event that is highly popular in Central Asia.
- ❖ The objective of kurash is to throw the opponent on the ground on their back by grabbing hold of the towel around their waist.
- ❖ The World Championships of Kurash have been held since 1999, with the first in Tashkent.
- ❖ A kurash contest starts with both players in a position known as Tazim.
- ❖ There are three ways to score points
 1. **Halal** - Throwing down your rival on his back with full speed and control.

2. **Yambosh** - This means a throw that is not exactly a halal but is close to one. Two yamboshes equal to one halal.
 3. **Chala** - This refers to throws that are close to a yambosh.
- ❖ A maximum of two penalties - Tambik & Dakk - are allowed and in case of a third penalty, known as **Girrom**, the player is disqualified.

E-VIDYABHARATI AND E-AAROgyABHARATI (E-VBAB) NETWORK PROJECT

In News:

- ❖ Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd (TCIL) has signed an Agreement for the implementation of **e-VidyaBharati and e-Aarogyabharati (e-VBAB)** Network Project. The project is being dubbed as a **digital bridge between India and Africa for knowledge and health.**

e- VBAB Network project:

- ❖ The Pan-African e-Network **Project (Phase 1)** was implemented across the 48 partner African countries from 2009 to 2017.
- ❖ The e-VBAB Network project is a **technological upgrade** and extension of this project.
- ❖ The project will provide **free tele-education courses in various academic disciplines to 4000 students every year from African countries over the 5 years project duration.**
- ❖ A **Data Centre and Disaster Recovery Centre** will be established in India along with Learning Centers in various African countries for the project.
- ❖ There will be **two separate platforms for e-VidyaBharati (tele-education) and e-Aarogyabharati (telemedicine).**
- ❖ These two platforms **will link various educational institutions** and hospitals in India and the participating African countries, through the web.
- ❖ The e-VBAB Network Project **will be completely funded** by the **Government of India** for its entire duration and will be open for participation to all our partner countries in Africa.

About Pan African e-Network project

- ❖ It is information and communications technology (ICT) project between India and the African Union.

- ❖ It seeks to **connect the 53 member states** of the **African Union** through a **satellite and fiber-optic network to India**.
- ❖ To enable each other access to and sharing of expertise between India and African states in the areas of
 - ✓ Tele-education,
 - ✓ Telemedicine
 - ✓ Voice over IP
 - ✓ Infotainment
 - ✓ Resource mapping
 - ✓ Meteorological services
 - ✓ E-governance and e-commerce services

INDIA-BANGLADESH FRIENDSHIP PRODUCT PIPELINE PROJECT

- ❖ It is first such pipeline through which refined diesel will be supplied to Bangladesh from India.
- ❖ The project involves construction of 130-kilometre long pipeline that will connect Siliguri in West Bengal and Parbatipur in Bangladesh.

MARIJUANA IN CANADA

- ❖ Canada became the first industrialised nation to legalise recreational cannabis.
- ❖ Adult Canadians will be able to legally smoke recreational marijuana after nearly a century-long ban.

FEIHONG-98 (FH-98)

- ❖ China has successfully tested the world's largest unmanned transport drone – Feihong-98
- ❖ It has a flight height of 4,500 metres, a cruising speed of 180 kilometers per hour, and a maximum range of 1,200 kms.

