
2. NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Why in News?

- Recently, Finland has officially joined NATO after its application was ratified in record time. This move was supported by the majority of NATO members, who believed that Finland's membership would enhance the alliance's strength in the Baltic area

Highlights

- NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is a political and military alliance consisting of 31 member countries.
- It was formed In 1949 to promote mutual defence and collective security among its members.
- **In 1949, there were 12 founding members of the Alliance:** Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- **Since then, 19 more countries have joined the Alliance:** Greece and Turkey (1952); Germany (1955); Spain (1982); Czechia, Hungary and Poland (1999); Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004); Albania and Croatia (2009); Montenegro (2017); North Macedonia (2020); and Finland (2023)
- Article 5 of the NATO treaty is a key provision that states that an attack on one member is an attack on all members.
- This provision has only been invoked once, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States.
- However, NATO's protection does not extend to members' civil wars or internal coups.