International Relations

75th Session of UNGA on Prevention of HIV/AIDS

Syllabus: GS 2/United Nations, its Bodies & Agencies/Health

In News: Recently, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally addressed the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Resolution 75/260.

- The Resolution 75/260 of UNGA deals with the Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declarations on HIV/AIDS.

Key Points of Address

- India has ably demonstrated that strong political leadership which is most critical to address inequalities and gaps in epidemic response.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, India took swift and timely action by involving communities, civil society, and development partners to mitigate the impact of COVID on HIV services.
- India aspires to scale up HIV care to reach 100% of people living with this dreaded disease.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDS

- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is an infection that attacks the body’s immune system, specifically the white blood cells called CD4 cells.
  - HIV destroys these CD4 cells, weakening a person’s immunity against infections such as tuberculosis and some cancers.
- If the person’s CD4 cell count falls below 200, their immunity is severely compromised, leaving them more susceptible to infections. Someone with a CD4 count below 200 is described as having AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).
- HIV can be diagnosed using simple and affordable rapid diagnostic tests, as well as self-tests.
• It is important that HIV testing services follow the 5Cs: consent, confidentiality, counselling, correct results and connection with treatment and other services.
  ○ This early identification greatly improves treatment options and reduces the risk of transmission to other people including sexual or drug-sharing partners.

• Symptoms
  ○ Many people do not feel symptoms of HIV in the first few months after infection and may not know that they are infected.
  ○ Others may experience influenza-like symptoms, including fever, headache, rash and sore throat. However, these first few months are when the virus is most infectious.
  ○ As the disease progresses, symptoms will be expanded and more pronounced.
    ■ These can include swollen lymph nodes, weight loss, fever, diarrhoea and cough.

• Treatment/Prevention
  ○ HIV is fully preventable. Effective antiretroviral treatment (ART) prevents HIV transmission from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery and breastfeeding.
    ■ HIV is treated with antiretroviral therapy consisting of one or more medicines.
    ■ ART does not cure HIV but reduces its replication in the blood, thereby reducing the viral load to an undetectable level.
    ■ ART enables people living with HIV to lead healthy, productive lives. It also works as an effective prevention, reducing the risk of onward transmission by 96%.
    ■ ART should be taken every day throughout the person’s life. People can continue with safe and effective ART if they adhere to their treatment.
    ■ In cases when ART becomes ineffective due to reasons such as lost contact with health care providers and drug stock outs, people will need to switch to other medicines to protect their health.
  ○ Someone who is on antiretroviral therapy and virally suppressed will not pass HIV to their sexual partners.
  ○ Condoms prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and prophylaxis use antiretroviral medicines to prevent HIV.
  ○ Male circumcision is recommended in high-burden countries in eastern and southern Africa.
  ○ Harm reduction (needle syringe programmes and opioid substitution therapy) prevents HIV and other blood-borne infections for people who inject drugs.
Global Efforts

- **UNAIDS**
  - The [Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)](https://www.unaids.org/en) is an international organization that is working towards **stopping new HIV infections**, ensuring that everyone living with HIV has access to HIV treatment, promoting human rights, and producing data for decision-making.
  - The organization leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.
- **WHO recommends** that every person who may be at risk of HIV should access testing.
  - People diagnosed with [HIV should be offered and linked to antiretroviral treatment as soon as possible following diagnosis](https://www.who.int). If taken consistently, this treatment also prevents HIV transmission to others.

Steps Taken by India

- **HIV/AIDS Act 2017**
  - It aims to **prevent and control the spread of HIV and AIDS** in the country and provides for **penalties for discrimination against those affected by the virus**.
  - It provides a **legal and enabling framework** to safeguard the human rights of infected and affected populations.
- **90-90-90 Strategy**
  - 90% of those who are HIV positive in India know their status, 90% of those who know their status are on treatment and 90% of those who are on treatment experience effective viral load suppression.
- **HIV Prevention Model**
  - India’s unique [HIV prevention model](https://www.nacp.gov.in) is centered around the concept of ‘Social Contracting through which the ‘Targeted Interventions Program’ is implemented with support from civil society. The program is aimed at behaviour change, communication, outreach, service delivery, counselling & testing and ensuring linkages to HIV care.
- **Free Anti-Retro-Viral Treatment**
  - India is providing [free anti-retro-viral treatment](https://www.mohfw.gov.in) to close to 1.4 million people. Indian drugs are also reaching millions of People living with HIV in Africa.
- **National AIDS Control Programme (NACP)**
  - It was launched in 1992, is being implemented as a [comprehensive programme for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in India](https://www.nacp.gov.in). Over time, the focus has shifted from raising awareness to behavior change, from a national response to a more decentralized response.
It has been Revised, Revived and Revamped to focus on hard-to-reach and at-risk populations.

In line with the motto of the Government of India, ‘Together, for everyone’s growth, with everyone’s trust’, the National AIDS Control Program has signed MoUs with public and private sector industries to mobilise their support for HIV prevention and treatment.

- Viral Load Testing Facilities
  - They have been scaled up, and HIV counselling, testing and community-based screening for early diagnosis have been ramped up to achieve the target of Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV.

- Project Sunrise
  - It was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (2016) to tackle the rising HIV prevalence in north-eastern states.

United Nations General Assembly.

- It 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.
- 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.

Source: PIB

Biodiversity & Environment

India to Restore 2.6 Crore Hectares of Degraded Land by 2030

Syllabus: GS3/ Environmental Pollution and Degradation

In News: Recently, a High-Level Segment Meeting of the 14th Conference of Parties (COP14) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), was held.

Key Points of Meeting
- India reaffirmed its commitment to addressing all the three main concerns of the Rio Conventions:

Source: PIB
○ Climate change
○ Biodiversity
○ Land degradation

• India intends to raise its ambition of the total area that would be restored from its land degradation status, from twenty-one million hectares to **twenty-six million hectares** between now and 2030.

• Major emphasis on:
  ○ restoring land productivity and ecosystem services of 26 million hectares of most degraded and vulnerable land,
  ○ degraded agricultural, forest and other wastelands by adopting a landscape restoration approach.

• India proposed to setup a **global technical support institute** for the member countries of the UNCCD for their capacity building and support regarding the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Program

• Degraded lands and water scarcity go hand in hand. Leadership of UNCCD, was applauded, to conceive a **global water action agenda** which is central to the **Land Degradation Neutrality strategy**.

• Eradicate the menace of **single use plastic**.

• **The Delhi Declaration** will be released.
  ○ The Delhi Declaration of 2019 called for better access and stewardship over land, and emphasised gender-sensitive transformative projects.
  ○ Due to this, around 3 million hectares of forest cover have been added in the last decade, enhancing the combined forest cover to almost one-fourth of the country’s total area.

• **A Centre of Excellence** is being set up in India to **promote a scientific approach towards land degradation issues**.

**Reasons for Land Degradation**

• **Loss of Fertility by Mismanagement**: Due to the use of various scientific inputs like irrigation, fertilisers, pesticides etc. Unscientific cropping practices are also causing harm. This results in problems like soil erosion, loss of natural nutrients, water-logging and salinity and contamination of ground and surface water.

• **Soil Erosion**: This is the process by which the top soil is detached from land and either washed away by water, ice or sea waves or blown away by wind. An area of around 8C mHa is exposed to the threat of soil erosion, while 43 mHa is actually affected.
- **Salinity/Alkalinity**: This problem occurs in areas of temporary water surplus and high temperatures due to over-irrigation or high rainfall. The salt layer plays havoc with the fertility of topsoil and renders vast stretches of useful land infertile. This problem is particularly serious in areas with assured irrigation in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, western Maharashtra, Bihar and northern Rajasthan (the Indira Gandhi Canal command area). Such lands are known by local names, such as reh, kallar, usar, chopan etc.

- **Waterlogging**: This happens when the water table gets saturated for various reasons — over-irrigation, seepage from canals, inadequate drainage or presence of a hard pan below. The land under waterlogged conditions can be used neither for agriculture nor for human settlements. This menace can be tackled by adopting scientific norms for the amount of irrigation, checking seepage from canals by proper lining and providing adequate drainage through field channels.

- **Floods and Droughts**: Both these hazards have the harmful effect of limiting the use of good soil.

- **Desertification**: It is also the end result of Land Degradation but it could also be the reason. Advancement of sand from the desert to the adjoining regions is called desertification. The sand covers fertile soil and affects its fertility. This problem is particularly serious in areas adjoining the Thar desert in Rajasthan.

**Measures to Check Land Degradation**

- **Improved agricultural practices**: Better practices need to be adopted in different regions. Tillage on higher slopes should be avoided, while contour ploughing on the slopes prone to erosion may help in maintaining the soil depth.

- **Shelterbelts**: Planting of shelterbelts and stubble mulching help in conserving the soils in desert regions.

- **Avoid overgrazing**: The pressure of livestock on pastures in hilly, desert and plateau regions has to be reduced in order to avoid overgrazing, such as in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

- **Prevent Ravines**: The ravines and gullies should be plugged to prevent head-ward erosion.

- **Land Degradation Neutrality**: A state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- Established in 1994, came into force in 1996.
- India ratified in 1996
- UNCCD is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the **drylands**, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

The new **UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework** is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)** in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land, improve the livelihoods of more than 1.3 billion people, and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations to build.

Focus on:
- to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and
- to mitigate the effects of drought.

The UNCCD is particularly committed to a **bottom-up approach**, encouraging the participation of **local people** in combating desertification and land degradation.

The UNCCD secretariat facilitates cooperation between developed and developing **countries**, particularly around knowledge and technology transfer for sustainable land management.

As the dynamics of land, climate and biodiversity are intimately connected, the UNCCD collaborates closely with the other two Rio Conventions; the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, to meet these complex challenges with an integrated approach and the best possible use of natural resources.

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**UNCCD CoP 14 - New Delhi**

14th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP14) will take place on 2-13 September 2019 at New Delhi, India.

UNCCD is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.

COP14 is aiming to help countries achieve Land Degradation Neutrality by delivering tools and resources that are fit for purpose.

Reversing land degradation and its outcomes while accelerating positive achievements for people and for ecosystems with a view to deliver on Sustainable Development Goals is the core agenda of CoP 14.

The theme of the conference is "Investing in Land, Unlocking Opportunities"

The conference assumes special significance for New Delhi as the problem is acute in India with around 29% of its area being affected by desertification and land degradation.

India to restore 50 lakh hectare of degraded land by 2030: says Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Environment, India.

Conclusion

- Restoration of land will not only ensure good soil health, increased land productivity, food security but also improved livelihoods.
- About one-third of the net sown area in India is irrigated. The increasing pressure of population on the arable land will necessitate a higher level of intensification of agriculture with the help of adequate inputs of irrigation, high yielding varieties of seeds and intensive use of fertilisers.
- The agreements reached about how to restore, protect and manage the land on a massive scale and how to include private sector partnerships can immediately strengthen action plans for all the stakeholders.

Best Practices

- **Banni region** in Rann of Kutch in Gujarat
  - suffers from highly degraded land and receives very little rainfall.
  - In that region, land restoration is done by developing grasslands, which helps in achieving land degradation neutrality.
  - It also supports pastoral activities and livelihood by promoting animal husbandry.
- In the same spirit, we need to devise effective strategies for land restoration while promoting indigenous techniques.

Bonn Challenge

- The Bonn Challenge is a global goal to bring **150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration** by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030.
- Their work is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) goal, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement – all together providing a roadmap for a sustainable planet.
- To achieve this, reliance is on **Forest landscape restoration (FLR)**:
  - FLR is the ongoing process of restoring the ecological functionality of degraded and deforested landscapes while enhancing the well-being of people who coexist with these places.
  - IUCN and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) coined the term forest landscape restoration in 2000 as a framework for managing landscapes, complementing both forest conservation and sustainable management.
  - Since then, FLR has evolved into a powerful nature-based solution, transforming landscapes and the lives of people worldwide.
At the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) 2015 in Paris, India joined the voluntary Bonn Challenge and pledged to bring into restoration 13 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2020, and an additional 8 million hectares by 2030.

- India’s pledge is one of the largest in Asia.
- The government sees schemes are formulated as tools to tackle the problem of land degradation namely
  - Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana
  - Soil Health Card Scheme
  - Pradhan Mantri Krishi Synchayee Yojana etc

Sources: IE

Polity and Governance

Tulu: Demand For Official Language Status

Syllabus: GS2/important aspects of governance

In News: Recently, Various organisations initiated a Twitter campaign demanding official language status to Tulu in Karnataka and Kerala and received an overwhelming response.

About Tulu

- Tulu is a Dravidian language spoken mainly in two coastal districts Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala.
- As per the 2011 Census report, there are 18,46,427 Tulu-speaking people in India.
- Some scholars suggest Tulu is among the earliest Dravidian languages with a history of 2000 years.
- Robert Caldwell (1814-1891), in his book, A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages, called Tulu “one of the most highly developed languages of the Dravidian family”.

Present Status of Tulu

- According to Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy president, people who speak Tulu are confined to the above-mentioned regions of Karnataka and Kerala, informally known as Tulu Nadu.
- At present, Tulu is not an official language in the country.
  - Efforts are being made to include Tulu in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. If included in the eighth schedule,
- Tulu would get recognition from the Sahitya Akademi.
- Tulu books would be translated into other recognised Indian languages.
- Members of Parliament and MLAs could speak in Tulu in Parliament and State Assemblies, respectively.
- Candidates could write all-India competitive examinations like the Civil Services exam in Tulu.

- **Tulu in Education**
  - The Karnataka government introduced **Tulu as a language in schools a few years ago**.
  - In 2014-15, 18 students chose the language as the third optional when it was introduced.
  - Last year, ‘Jai Tulunad’ conducted an online campaign demanding to include Tulu in the new National Education Policy (NEP).

- **Tulu Art, Culture and Cinema**
  - Tulu has a **rich oral literature tradition** with **folk-song forms like paddana**, and **traditional folk theatre yakshagana**.
  - Tulu also has an active tradition of cinema with around 5 to 7 Tulu language movies produced a year. Tulu films are being screened every day in Mangalore and Udupi in at least one theatre.

**Demand of Tulu Speakers**
- The Tulu speakers, mainly in **Karnataka and Kerala**, have been requesting the governments to give it **official language status and include it in the eighth schedule to the Constitution**.
- The political party ‘Tuluvere Paksha’, which got recognition from the Election Commission of India in February 2021 under section 29A of Representation of the People Act 1951, has given **wings to the political aspirations of the Tulu-speaking people**.
- When the country was reorganised based on languages, Tulu Nadu was partly shared among Kerala and Karnataka. When there was a separate state for Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada-speaking people, then there should be a separate state for Tulu Nadu.
  - **Article 29 of the Constitution** provides that a section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture have the right to conserve the same.

**Eighth Schedule**
- The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India lists the official languages of the Republic of India. **Part XVII of the Indian Constitution** deals with the official languages in **Articles 343 to 351**.
- The Constitutional provisions relating to the Eighth Schedule occur in article 344(1) and 351 of the Constitution.
**Article 344(1):** It provides for the constitution of an official language Commission by the President, which shall consist of a Chairman and such other members representing the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule to make recommendations to the President for the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes of the Union.

**Article 351:** It provides for enriching Hindi language by assimilating in it the forms, style and expressions used in the languages specified in the Eighth Schedule so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.

**Article 345:** Official language or languages of a State subject to the provisions of Article 346 and 347.

It would thus appear that the Eighth Schedule was intended to promote the progressive use of Hindi and for the enrichment and promotion of that language.

- **Languages under the Eighth schedule:** As Per Articles 344(1) and 351 of the Indian Constitution, the eighth schedule includes the recognition of the following 22 languages:
  - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri are the 22 languages presently in the eighth schedule to the Constitution.
  - Of these languages, 14 were initially included in the Constitution. Subsequently, Sindhi was added in 1967; Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were added in 1992; and Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santali were added in 2003.

Source: IE

**International Relations**

**Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2021**

**Syllabus:** GS2/ Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India’s interests

**In News:** The number of nuclear warheads which are ready and deployed to fire have increased globally.
About

- Swedish think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released its “Yearbook 2021”, which assesses the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security.
- Russia and the US together possess over 90 per cent of global nuclear weapons.
- Both have extensive programmes under way to modernise their nuclear warheads, missile and aircraft delivery systems and production facilities.
- China is in the middle of a significant modernisation and expansion of its nuclear weapon inventory.
- India and Pakistan also appear to be expanding their nuclear arsenals.

Key Findings of the Report

- The world has nine declared nuclear-armed states —
  - the US,
  - Russia,
  - the UK,
  - France,
  - China,
  - India,
  - Pakistan,
  - Israel and
  - North Korea
- These countries together possess an estimated 13,080 nuclear weapons at the start of 2021.
- This marked a decrease from the 13,400 that SIPRI estimated these states possessed at the beginning of 2020.
- Despite this overall decrease, the estimated number of nuclear weapons currently deployed with operational forces increased to 3,825 from 3,720 last year.
  - Around 2,000 of these — nearly all of which belonged to Russia or the USA — were kept in a state of high operational alert.
  - The UK and France are the other two who have deployed warheads.
  - China, India and Pakistan are not listed in the report as having “deployed” such weapons with operational forces.
- India possessed an estimated 156 nuclear warheads at the start of 2021 compared to 150 at the start of last year.
- Pakistan had 165 warheads, up from 160 in 2020.
- China’s nuclear arsenal consisted of 350 warheads up from 320 at the start of 2020.
- The raw material for nuclear weapons is fissile material, either highly enriched uranium (HEU) or separated plutonium.
  - India and Israel have produced mainly plutonium,
Pakistan has produced mainly HEU but is increasing its ability to produce plutonium.

China, France, Russia, the UK and the US have produced both HEU and plutonium for use in their nuclear weapons.

- Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China were the **five largest importers** of major arms in the world between 2016 and 2020.
- Saudi Arabia had 11 percent share and **India 9.5 percent in the global imports** of the major arms in this time period.

### World nuclear forces, January 2021

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* Image Courtesy: SIPRI Yearbook 2021

**Global Efforts to Promote Nuclear Disarmament**

- **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**
  - The NPT is a landmark international treaty which was opened for signature in 1968.
  - The Treaty **entered into force in 1970**.
  - On 11 May 1995, the Treaty was extended indefinitely.
  - A **total of 191 States have joined the Treaty**, including the five nuclear-weapon States.
  - **Objective** is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.
  - The Treaty represents the **only binding commitment** in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.
  - More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, a testament to the Treaty’s significance.
○ The Treaty is regarded as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.
○ To further the goal of non-proliferation and as a confidence-building measure between States parties, the Treaty establishes a safeguards system under the responsibility of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
○ Safeguards are used to verify compliance with the Treaty through inspections conducted by the IAEA.
○ India hasn’t signed the NPT.

- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**
  ○ It is a multilateral treaty that bans all nuclear tests, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments.
  ○ It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 September 1996, but has not entered into force, as eight specific nations including the United States and China have not ratified the treaty.
  ○ Widely considered to be a milestone towards nuclear disarmament, the CTBT would prohibit all nuclear testing.

- **New START**
  ○ It is a treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on measures for the further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.
  ○ The term ‘strategic offensive arms’ applies to nuclear warheads deployed by Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicles (‘SNDVs’).
  ○ SNDVs are Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) with a range exceeding 5,500 kilometres, strategic bombers, warships (including strategic submarines) and cruise missiles, including air and sea-launched cruise missiles.
  ○ Enforced in 2011
  ○ It was scheduled to end in Feb 2021 if not renewed.
  ○ The United States and the Russian Federation agreed to extend the treaty for 5 more years through February 4, 2026.
  ○ It enhances U.S. national security by placing verifiable limits on all Russian deployed intercontinental-range nuclear weapons.

**Way Forward**
- As a complement to controlling arms, international security can be improved by states acting to build mutual confidence.
- This can be through relatively simple multilateral mechanisms for sharing information on arms procurement or military expenditure.
- The existing arrangements are in urgent need of revitalization as participation is low and there is a gap in communication among leading countries.
IISS report

- A report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, in May titled 'Nuclear Deterrence and Stability in South Asia: Perceptions and Realities' said that chance played an important ameliorative role in the India-Pakistan crisis of February 2019 and the two countries “risk stumbling into using their nuclear weapons through miscalculation or misinterpretation in a future crisis.”

- **India and Pakistan:** India and Pakistan are seeking new technologies and capabilities that dangerously undermine each other’s defence under the nuclear threshold. Whatever they learn from past crises, the uncharted territory they are now exploring requires enlightened judgement about their doctrines, their nuclear and conventional capabilities, and their unpredictable implications in future crises.

- **China Angle:** It stated that China’s evolving profile as a nuclear-weapons state was compounding India’s security challenges. “Yet control over the drivers of the India-Pakistan nuclear-deterrence and stability equation remains almost entirely in the hands of leaders in New Delhi and Islamabad,” it noted.

- **Confidence Building Measures:** such measures and other practical steps in this direction are needed. Robust, trusted, reliable, deniable back channel between the leaderships is the most promising means by which India and Pakistan could achieve greater strategic and nuclear deterrence stability.

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Image Courtesy: TOI
Nuclear Doctrine of India

- Building and maintaining a **credible minimum deterrence**;
- A posture of "No First Use" nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere;
- **Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive** and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.
- Nuclear retaliatory attacks can only be authorised by the civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority.
- **Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states**;
- However, in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons, India will **retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons**;
- A **continuance of strict controls on export of nuclear and missile related materials** and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty negotiations, and continued observance of the moratorium on nuclear tests.
- **Continued commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapon free world**, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

SIPRI

- SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- Established in 1966,
- SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.
- Based in Stockholm, SIPRI is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide.

**Vision and mission**

- SIPRI's vision is a world in which sources of insecurity are identified and understood, conflicts are prevented or resolved, and peace is sustained.
- SIPRI's mission is to:
  - undertake research and activities on security, conflict and peace;
  - provide policy analysis and recommendations;
  - facilitate dialogue and build capacities;
  - promote transparency and accountability; and
  - deliver authoritative information to global audiences.

Sources: TH
Modern History

Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil

Syllabus: GS 1, Modern Indian History, Significant Events, Personalities, Freedom Struggle

In News: Recently, the Ministry of Culture has held a special ceremony at Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, the birthplace of Ram Prasad Bismil, to mark his 124th birth anniversary.

- This event was held as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

About Ram Prasad Bismil

- Birth: Born to a Brahmin family on 11th June, 1897 in Shahjahanpur (Uttar Pradesh).
- Early Life
  - He was associated with the Arya Samaj from an early age and joined it despite his father's disapproval.
  - The ideals of freedom and revolution got first ingrained in his mind after he read the death sentence passed on Bhai Parmanand, an Indian nationalist and Arya Samaj missionary.
  - He started writing powerful patriotic poems in Urdu and Hindi under the pen names of ‘Bismil’, ‘Ram’ and ‘Agyat’ from the age of 19.
  - He used to sell his books to buy weapons needed for the revolution.
- Contributions
  - He was among the most notable Indian revolutionaries who fought British colonialism.
  - He was a revolutionary personality and an inspiration to the youngsters of the country.
  - His ideals of freedom struggle stood in stark contrast to that of Mahatma Gandhi’s non violence.
  - He attended the 1921 session of the Indian National Congress at Ahmedabad.
After conflicting views and growing resentment with the Congress party, he formed the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) with leaders like Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad, in 1924.

- The association was based on equal rights and an end to discrimination.
- He participated in the Mainpuri conspiracy of 1918 and the Kakori conspiracy of 1925 with Ashfaq Ullah Khan and Roshan Singh to protest against the British Rule.

- **Literary Works**
  - He expressed his anger on the death sentence of Bhai Parmanand in the form of his poem ‘Mera Janm’.
  - He had a good command of Urdu and Hindi and was also a multilingual translator.
  - His poem Manipuri’s Pratigya became very famous.
  - While in jail, he wrote ‘Mera Rang De Basanti Chola’, ‘Sarfaroshi Ki Tamanna’ and his autobiography which is considered as one of the finest works in Hindi literature.
    - It was later published under the cover title of ‘Kakori ke Shaheed’.

- **Death**
  - For his role in the Kakori conspiracy, the British government executed him at the age of 30, on 19th December 1927 in Gorakhpur Jail, Uttar Pradesh.
  - He was cremated on the banks of Rapti river and the site later came to be known as Raj Ghat.
    - Rapti joins Ghagha river, which is a major left bank tributary of the Ganga.

### Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

- It is an initiative of the Government of India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.
- The celebration commenced on 12th March 2021 which started a 75 week countdown to the 75th anniversary and will end post a year on 15th August 2023.
- The plan is to look back at achievements of the previous 75 years and draw a framework for the next 25 years i.e. 2047 when India will be celebrating its centenary since independence.

### Mainpuri Conspira
- Bismil along with Genda Lal Dixit, a school teacher from Auraiya, organised youth from Etahwah, Mainpuri, Agra and Shahjahanpur districts to strengthen their organisations, ‘Matrivedi’ and ‘Shivaji Samiti’.
- He published a pamphlet titled ‘Deshwasiyon ke Naam’ and distributed it along with his poem ‘Mainpuri ki Pratigya’ in January 1918.
To collect funds for the parties, they *looted government coffers.*

**Kakori Conspiracy**

- **On 9th August 1925**, Bismil along with companions *Ashfaqulla Khan* and others executed the plan of looting the train at Kakori near **Lucknow**.
- After the revolutionaries stopped the **8-Down Saharanpur Lucknow passenger train** at Kakori, Ashfaqullah Khan, Sachindra Bakshi, Rajendra Lahiri, Thakur Roshan Singh and Ram Prasad Bismil subdued the guard and *looted cash meant for the treasury.*
- Within a month of the attack, the angered colonial authorities arrested more than a dozen HRA members. Bismil, Lahiri, Khan and Singh were awarded death sentences.

Source: AIR

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### Facts in News

| Jiyo Parsi Scheme | • The scheme resulted in a rise in the number of births in the Parsi community.  
| | • It was formulated by the **Ministry of Minority Affairs** in September 2013.  
| | • **Objective:** To reverse the declining trend of Parsi population by adopting a **scientific protocol** and structured interventions to **stabilize their population** and increase the population of Parsis in India.  
| | o The scheme is meant for the notified minority community i.e. Parsi/Zoroastrian only.  
| | o Under the scheme, medical assistant for Assisted Reproductive Treatments are provided,  
| | • India’s Parsi-Zoroastrian population has been falling every decade since 1941. Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, their numbers fell from 69,000 to 57,000.  

| Anchor Investors | • The Government plans to bring in anchor investors to invest up to ₹25,000 crore in the shares of **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** in its planned mega initial public offering (IPO).  
| | • Anchor investor is a concept launched by **Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** in 2009.  
| | • They are institutional investors who are invited to subscribe the shares before the Initial Public Offers (IPOs).  
| | • They are required to take up the share at a **fixed price** to make other investors confident and improve the demand of the share.  

○ This process also helps to improve the investment opportunity for retail investors with the company.

● Each anchor investor needs to invest a minimum of **Rs 10 crore in the issue.**

● The anchor investor who applies for the anchor quota surely gets a guaranteed allotment.

● They are able to make an offer of shares anywhere.
  ○ It is to be noted that it should be within the price band which is declared by the company

● There is a lock-in of 30 days on shares for **every anchor investor**
  ○ The anchor investor is not allowed to sell his/her share for at least 30 days after the allotment.
  ○ Investors who want to flip shares on the listing are advised not to use this anchor route.

● Allocation to anchor investors is done on a discretionary basis for IPOs above **₹250 crore.**

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**UN Security Council (UNSC)**

● Recently, the **75th session of the General Assembly** was held in New York to elect five new non-permanent members to the Security Council.

● UNSC is one of the UN’s six main organs and is aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

● It held its first session on 17th January 1946 in Westminster, London.

● **Headquarter:** New York City.

● **Membership:**
  ○ Permanent Members:
    ■ The USA, the UK, Russia, China and France, are permanent members (P-5).
    ■ They have veto rights.

  ● **Non-permanent Members:**
    ○ Each year the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members (out of 10 in total) for a two-year term.
    ○ **Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)** were elected by the 75th session of the General Assembly to serve as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for the 2022-2023 term. The newly elected five will join India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway, the other non-permanent members
    ○ Non-permanent members do not have veto rights.
### Functions:
- To maintain international **peace and security** in accordance with the principles and purposes of the UN.
- To help parties reach an **agreement through mediation** by appointing special envoys, dispatching a mission or requesting the UN to settle the dispute.
- **Responds to crises** and takes action based on options that do not involve armed force.
- To call on Members to apply **economic sanctions** and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression.
- However, Chapter VII of the UN charter allows the council to **authorise the use of force** “to maintain or restore international peace and security”.
- To **recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General** and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bharitalasuchus Tapani</th>
<th>Recently, researchers from the <strong>Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata</strong> have thrown light on a <strong>carnivorous reptile</strong> that lived <strong>240 million years ago</strong>.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Name</strong>: <em>Bharitalasuchus tapani</em></td>
<td><strong>The specimens have been found in the rocks of the Yerrapalli Formation</strong> in what is now <strong>Telangana</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>In Telugu</strong>, Bhari means huge, Tala means head, and Suchus is the name of the Egyptian crocodile-headed deity.</td>
<td><strong>Scientific Name</strong>: <em>Bharitalasuchus tapani</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The species is named after paleontologist Tapan Roy Chowdhury</strong> in honour of his contribution to <strong>Indian vertebrate paleontology</strong> and especially his extensive work on the Yerrapalli Formation tetrapod fauna.</td>
<td><strong>It belongs to a genus and species previously unknown</strong> to science and to a <strong>family of extinct reptiles named Erythrosuchidae</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>This was</strong> a <strong>robust animals with big heads and large teeth</strong> probably predated other smaller reptiles.</td>
<td><strong>This was</strong> a <strong>robust animals with big heads and large teeth</strong> probably predated other smaller reptiles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- They were approximately the **size of an adult male lion** and might have been the largest predators in their ecosystems.
- **Tooth marks have been found in its first trunk vertebra**, which indicates that a smaller animal took a bite probably after the death of the specimen.
  - This gives a nice example of **evidence of biological interaction** that occurred 240 million years ago.

![Image of a dinosaur with tooth marks]  
*Image Courtesy: TH*

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<tr>
<th>Rosewood</th>
<th>Recently, steep demand in the international market for musical instruments and furniture fashioned out of <strong>rosewood</strong> has <strong>increased its widespread illegal felling</strong>.</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Scientific Name:</strong> <em>Dalbergia latifolia</em></td>
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<td><strong>Habitat and Distribution</strong></td>
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<td>- It occurs in evergreen or deciduous tropical or subtropical forests with deep, well-drained and moist soils, within an elevational range of 300 to 1,000 m above sea level.</td>
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<td>- It is native to India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Java and Indonesia.</td>
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<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
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<td>- It is a <strong>large hardwood tree</strong> that can grow up to 40 meter tall.</td>
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<td>- It is highly utilised as a <strong>timber</strong> species and is renowned for the <strong>colour and fragrance</strong> of its wood.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- It is <strong>particularly prized</strong> for making musical instruments (e.g. guitars), furniture, veneer, flooring, plywood, carvings, and moulding.</td>
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<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
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<td>- Timber is of high commercial value and wild subpopulations are widely overexploited.</td>
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<td>- Continued deforestation across its range due to human settlement and agriculture.</td>
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<td>- Although it is grown in commercial plantations, its slow growth rate and long rotation period make it difficult for plantations to meet demand for the timber.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Conservation Efforts
  ○ It is protected under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 with the export of logs or sawn timber being banned.
  ○ The Kerala Restriction on Cutting and Destruction of Valuable Trees Rules, 1974, does not allow cutting of rosewood that has not attained a girth at breast height (GBH) of 2.5 metres.

• Protection Status
  ○ IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
  ○ CITES: Appendix II

| Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) Challenge | Recently, the Defence Minister of India has approved the budgetary support of Rs. 498.8 crore to iDEX challenge for the next five years.

• It is funded and managed by a Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) formed as a not for profit company as per Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013.
• It was established by the Department of Defence Production (DDP).
• Aims
  ○ To promote innovation and indigenisation in the aerospace and defence sector at the start-up level.
  ○ To provide financial support to start-ups, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), individual innovators and partner incubators.
• India is the world’s largest defence equipment importer and is expected to spend around USD 220 billion in the coming decade to modernize its armed forces.
• In recent years, the government of India has initiated various schemes like Make In India, Startup India, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), etc. to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the Indian commercial ecosystem. |