

Without reforms, UNSC is ill-equipped to Address Global Challenges: G4 Nations

India on behalf of G4 Nations asserted that the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** needs reforms to tackle global challenges like extremism, cyber security threat, etc.

- **G4 Nations (aka Group of Four resolution)** includes Japan, Brazil, Germany and India as members and all of whom are aspiring to **become permanent members** of the Council.
 - ⊕ Group has proposed that Council's membership shall be increased from 15 to 25, by adding six permanent and four non-permanent members.

Need of UNSC Reform

- **Lack of representation:** Like non representation of **Africa, Latin America** and the **Caribbean**, and the **under-representation of Asia Pacific** in the permanent category.
- **Declining Credibility:** Failed in resolving conflicts. E.g. Russia- Ukraine
- **Interest based Decision Making:** Veto power is used by permanent members to fulfil their interest. E.g. China vetoed Indian resolution for designating certain persons as global terrorist.
- **For India:** Enhancing say in global issues, especially related with global south, policy making on issues like terrorism, etc.

Challenges in Reforms

- **Require amendments in the United Nations Charter**
- Reforms proposed by G4 and **L.69 Group** (cross-regional grouping of developing) are opposed by group like **Uniting for Consensus (the Coffee Club)**.
 - ⊕ Main countries behind the Coffee Club are **Italy, Pakistan** etc.
- Lack of substantive progress of **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on Council reform**.

About UNSC

- **Genesis:** Established by the UN Charter in 1945. It is one of the six principal organs of the UN.
- **Function:** Maintenance of international peace and security.
- **Structure:** Out of 15 members, 5 are permanent member and 10 are non-permanent member (elected for a term of 2 year)
 - ⊕ **Permanent member** includes US, China, United Kingdom, Russia and France.

Government to boost Coal production through Global Mining Operators

Union Ministry of Coal unveiled an initiative to revolutionize coal mining by engaging **Global Mining Developers cum Operators (MDOs)** for major coal mine projects under Coal India Limited.

- In 2019, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade allowed **100% FDI under automatic route** for sale of coal, coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure.
 - ⊕ It is subject to provisions of the **Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015**, the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957**, and other applicable laws.

Roles and responsibilities of MDOs

- To inject **advanced technological capabilities to modernize mining practices** and improve operational efficiency.
- They will also manage crucial aspects such as **Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) issues, land acquisitions, and environmental clearances**.
- Coordinate with State and Central Pollution Control Boards to **guarantee rigorous adherence to environmental standards**.



Other recent reforms in the Coal Sector

- **Composite licensing:** Composite Prospecting Licence-cum-Mining Lease (PL-cum-ML) allowed under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2021.
- **Commercial Coal Mining:** In 2020, commercial coal mining auctions were launched marking the entry of private players into the coal sector.
- **Others:** Integrated Coal Logistic Policy and Plan, Investment in Coal Gasification, etc.

Bail is the Rule, Jail is the Exception: Supreme Court

Recently, a 2-Judge bench of the Supreme Court of India ruled that 'bail is the rule, jail is the exception' even in special statutes like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967.

- Court observed that denying bail in deserving cases is violation of rights under **Article 21** which states that **'No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law'**.

Legal Provisions of Bail

- **Bail in Bailable Offences (Section 479 of Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023)**
 - ⊕ **Maximum period** for which an **undertrial prisoner** can be detained is **one-half of the maximum period of imprisonment**.
 - ⊕ **First-time offenders** will be given bail, if detained for over one-third of the maximum period of imprisonment.
- **Special laws** such as POCSO Act (2012), Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), etc. also contain provisions related to grant of bail.

Concerns with denial of bail (Prison Statistics India, 2022)

- **Large number of undertrials:** Undertrials constitute around 75.8% of all the prisoners.
- **Overcrowding of Jails:** Occupancy rate of Indian prisons is 131.4%.
- **Disproportionate impact on vulnerable sections:** >60% of inmates are either illiterate or educated below Class X.
- **Human Rights violations:** Unhealthy living conditions, unequal treatments, etc.

Measures taken

- **Plea Bargaining:** Enables pre-trial negotiation between defendant and prosecution.
- **E-prisons Software:** Facilitates state authorities to access data of inmates in efficient manner.
- **Model Prison Manual 2016:** Provides guidelines on facilities to be provided to undertrial inmates such as legal defense, legal aid, etc.
- **Model Prisons Act, 2023:** Aims at rehabilitation & transformation of inmates into law-abiding citizens.

NITI Aayog initiated process for revamping of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) of the NITI Aayog initiated the process of conducting evaluations of all the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) of Government of India.

- **DMEO**, constituted in **2015**, is an **attached Office of NITI Aayog** to fulfill the **mandates of monitoring and evaluation assigned to NITI Aayog**.
- For the purpose of evaluation, CSSs have been categorized into **9 sectors** – Agriculture and allied sector, Women and Child Development, Education, etc.

About Centrally Sponsored Schemes

- CSSs are **schemes funded directly by Centre and implemented by States or their agencies, irrespective of funding pattern**, unless they fall under Centre's sphere of responsibility i.e., **Union List. (Bajjal Committee Report, 1987)**
 - ⊕ e.g., Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), etc.
- Under CSS, a **certain percentage of the funding is borne by the States** in the ratio of 50:50, 70:30, 75:25 or 90:10.
- Currently, there are **75 CSSs with ~10.4% of Centre's total budgeted expenditure.** (Union Budget 2024-25)

Need to revamp CSSs

- **Rationalization:** Cut down/ merge schemes through impact assessment and setting **sunset clauses** to stop running them indefinitely.
- **Concerns raised by States:** Lack of flexibility with States in determining funding pattern, overlap with State schemes, delays in fund disbursement from the centre, etc.

Key recommendation by Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on rationalization of CSSs (2015)

- **Prioritization:** Highest priority should be accorded to sectors/ tasks/ objectives like Poverty Elimination and schemes for Social Inclusion.
- **Categorization:** CSSs should be categorized into – Core and Optional Schemes.
- **Flexibility:** 25% allocation in a Scheme should be flexi-fund, to be spent in accordance with Ministry of Finance guidelines.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** NITI Aayog to have concurrent jurisdiction in monitoring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the States and Central Ministries.

6th India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue Concluded

In the Dialogue, maritime domain awareness, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) coordination, etc. issues were discussed.

- Also, 14th meeting of **India-Australia Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism** was also held.



- **These engagements are important element of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP).**

About India-Australia CSP

- Both countries upgraded bilateral relationship from **Strategic Partnership (2009)** to **CSP in 2020**
 - ⊕ **CSP** is based on mutual understanding, trust, and the shared values of democracy and rule of law.
- **Importance of CSP for India:**
 - ⊕ **Maritime cooperation:** **Australia** supports **India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** etc. to ensure an open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
 - ◆ Also, launched initiative like **Australia-India Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Partnership (AIPOIP).**
 - ⊕ **Economic cooperation:** In 2022, **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)** come into force.
 - ◆ It can create at least 10 lakhs jobs in India.
 - ⊕ **Defence Cooperation:** E.g. Arrangement concerning Mutual Logistics Support (MLSA) was signed.
 - ◆ Also conducts military exercise such as **AUSTRALIND, etc.**
 - ⊕ **Regional and Multilateral cooperation:** Includes G-20, WTO, IOR-ARC, ASEAN Regional Forum, QUAD etc.
 - ◆ Early adoption of a **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), 1996** is supported by Australia at the **UN General Assembly.**

25th Edition of Women and Men in India 2023 Report released

The Report has been prepared by on the National Statistical Office, **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**

It provides holistic view of the **situation of women and men** and provides data on a wide range of areas such as Population, Education, etc.

Key Findings

Population:

- ⊕ By 2036, India's population is expected to be **152.2 Crore**, with an improved female percentage of 48.8% (as compared to 48.5% as per census 2011).
- ⊕ Sex Ratio is to increase from 943(2011) to 952 (2036)
- ⊕ **Percentage of India's working-age population** (aged 15-59 years) is projected to rise from 60.7% (2011-12) to 64.9% by 2036.

Health:

- ⊕ **Life expectancy** of 68.6 (males) and 71.4(females){2016-20} is expected to reach 71.2 and 74.7 years, respectively (2031-36)
- ⊕ **Non-Institutional deliveries** have reduced to 8.2% (2019-21).

Employment:

- ⊕ **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** for male has gone from 75.8 (2017-18) to 78.5 (2022-23) while for females, it has gone from 23.3 to 37 during the same period.

Others:

- ⊕ In 2019 national elections, women's voter turnout (67.2%) surpassed men's for the first time.
- ⊕ 47.6% of the total recognized start-up (by **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**) are led by women.

Also in News

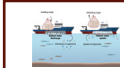


Exercise Tarang Shakti

Indian Air Force (IAF) hosted Phase-I of the **Exercise Tarang Shakti** at Sulur airbase in Tamil Nadu.

About Exercise Tarang Shakti

- India's **first multinational** air exercise.
- Aims to showcase India's defense prowess and provide a platform for participating militaries to **foster interoperability**.
- IAF announced to conduct it biennially.



Ballast water

According to Scientists, ballast water carried by ships is providing a vehicle to bring in exotic and invasive species in coastal areas.

About Ballast Water

- It is **fresh or saltwater held in the ballast tanks and cargo holds** of ships to **provide stability and maneuverability**.
- **Untreated ballast water released at the ship's destination** could potentially **introduce a new invasive marine species**.
- **International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention)**, adopted in 2004, regulates the transfer of potentially invasive species.



DDoS Cyber attack

Recently, a massive Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack resulted in glitches in interview of a former US President over Social Media platform X.

About DDoS Attacks

- It is a **malicious attempt to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target or its surrounding infrastructure** with a flood of Internet traffic.
- ⊕ In **Denial of Service (DoS) attack**, the attacker uses a **single internet connection** to barrage a target with fake requests or to try and exploit a cybersecurity vulnerability.
- It **can utilize multiple compromised computer systems** as sources of attack traffic.



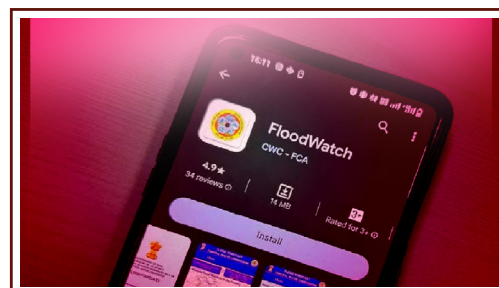
FloodWatch India Application

Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the **version 2.0** of the 'FloodWatch India' mobile application.

- In new version, information from 592 flood monitoring stations (earlier 200) will be covered along with 150 major reservoirs.

About FloodWatch India Application

- Developed by the **Central Water Commission (CWC)**.
 - ⊕ CWC is a **premier Technical Organisation** in the country in the field of water resources.
- **Aim:** Using mobile phones to disseminate information related to flood situation in the country and flood forecasts up to **7 days** on a real-time basis to the public.
- Utilizes advanced technologies such as **satellite data analysis, mathematical modelling** and **real-time monitoring**.





GAURAV

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) carries out successful maiden flight test of **Long Range Glide Bomb 'GAURAV'** from **Su-30 MK-I platform**.

About GAURAV

- An air launched **1,000 kg class glide bomb** capable of hitting targets at long distance.
- ⊕ **Glide bomb** after launch steer towards the target **using highly accurate hybrid navigation scheme** with a combination of **Indian Navigation System (INS)** and **Global Positioning System (GPS)** data.
- Designed and developed indigenously by the **Research Centre Imarat (RCI)**, Hyderabad.



Man Portable Anti-tank Guided Missile

Recently, DRDO successfully test-fired indigenously built Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM).

About MPATGM Weapon System

- It is a **shoulder-launched, portable missile system**, specifically designed to counter enemy tanks and armoured vehicles.
- It consists of **Launcher, Target Acquisition System, and Fire Control Unit**.
- It is equipped with **advanced infrared homing sensors and integrated avionics** which makes it versatile in both day and night operations.



Forever chemicals

Researchers from the US found **methods to trace the origin and destination of the Forever Chemicals**, scientifically known as **Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)**.

About Forever Chemicals

- Forever chemicals refer to **human-made toxic compositions which are not depleted naturally and can stay in the environment for thousands of years**.
- **Applications:** Water-proofing, heat resistance, detergents, food packaging and non-stick technologies, etc.
- **Concerns:** Could lead to adverse health effects such as liver damage, low infant birth weights, hormonal imbalance, fertility issues, immune system effects, and even cancer.



Jiyo Parsi Scheme

Minister of Minority Affairs launched the **Jiyo Parsi scheme Portal**.

- Portal will enable Parsis to apply online, check status of application and receive financial assistance online through Direct Benefit Transfer.

About Jiyo Parsi scheme (2013-14)

- **Scheme Type:** Central Sector Scheme
- **Objective:** **Reverse the declining trend of Parsi population** by adopting a scientific protocol and structured interventions to stabilize their population.
- Encompasses **three components** namely **Medical, Health of Community, and Advocacy** Component.

Personality in News



Madame Bhikaji Cama (1861-1936)

Eminent revolutionary leader and freedom fighter Madame Bhikaji Cama was remembered on her death anniversary. (Aug 13)

About Madame Bhikaji Cama

- She was a revolutionary icon hailing from **Navsari district of the present-day state of Gujarat**.
- Known as the **"Mother of the Indian Revolution"**, she was an **ardent advocate of Indian freedom abroad**.

Key Contributions

- Started **Paris edition of Bande Mataram** to circulate information about the freedom movement and garnered support nationally and internationally.
- In **1905**, she co-founded **Paris Indian Society**, also known as **Bharat Mandal**.
- On **August 22, 1907**, she became the **first person to hoist Indian flag on foreign soil in Stuttgart (Germany)**.
 - ⊕ Flag she unfurled was **co-designed by Cama and Shyamji Krishna Varma**.

Values: Conviction, Courage, Integrity, Nationalism, etc.

