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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



MK Yadav Sir

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LIVEMINT

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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

Modi asks G20 leaders to reform Security Council

'Institutions that do not adapt to change tend to lose their relevance over time'

Gireesh Chandra Prasad
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NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged world leaders assembled at the G20 leaders' summit to make global structures, including the UN Security Council, reflective of current realities.

Speaking at a summit session, Modi made India's claim for permanent membership of the UNSC unambiguous and cautioned that it is a natural law that individuals and institutions that do not adapt to change tend to lose their relevance over time. The five permanent UN members with veto power in the world body are the US, UK, France, Russia and China.

Modi's call to secure a seat for India at the UNSC comes against the backdrop of India presenting itself as the voice of the Global South, championing the cause of developing and least developed countries. It comes a day after G20 nations according permanent membership to the 55-member African Union in G20, based on a proposal by India.

India and Brazil, which holds the next G20 presidency, also issued a joint statement in which Modi and Brazil President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva reaffirmed their commitment to the comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council, including its expansion in the permanent and non-permanent categories, with increased representation of developing countries in both. The leaders reiterated their mutual support for their countries' permanent membership in an expanded UNSC.

Modi also called for reforms at multilateral banks, global regulations on crypto assets, responsible human-centric AI governance and

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UK to back climate action >P2
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PRESIDENCY HAND-OFF



Prime Minister Modi hands over G20 presidency to Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in New Delhi. PTI

Context: Prime Minister of India recently urged world leaders assembled at the G20 leaders' summit to make global structures, including the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**, reflective of current realities.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- **About:** It is one of the **six principal organs** of the United Nations (UN).
- **Formation:** By the UN Charter in 1945.
- **Objective:** Primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.
- **Members:** 15 (5 permanent + 10 non-permanent members).
- **Headquarter:** New York, USA.
- **UNSC Presidency:** Held by each of the 15 members in turn **for one month**, based on English alphabetical order.
  - **Eligibility for presidency:** Both permanent and non-permanent members are eligible for the UNSC presidency.
  - **Presidential Powers:** In the UNSC, the Council President has a broad range of procedural powers: They can call and preside over meetings, approve the UN body agenda for the month, issue presidential statements, decide the content & theme of debates, etc.
  - **India as a non-permanent member:** 8 times. The latest membership was for the year 2021-22.

UNSC REFORMS: MEANING

- **The aim for UNSC reforms encompasses:** Reform in categories of membership (permanent, non-permanent)➔**Question of the veto** held by the five permanent members➔Regional representation➔Size of an enlarged Council and its working methods➔Relationship between UNSC & UNGA etc.

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BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI)

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

Italy Plans to Exit 'Belt and Road', Meloni Tells China

PM's plan to exit China-led BRI has become a test of her nation's relations with the US

New Delhi: Giorgia Meloni privately signalled to Chinese Premier Li Qiang that Italy is planning to exit from an investment pact that has become a test of her nation's relations with the US.

During a meeting on Saturday on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in India, Meloni told Li that Italy plans to withdraw from Chinese President Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road Initiative while still looking to maintain friendly relations with Beijing, according to a person familiar with the matter, who asked not to be named. Italy officially signed up for the pact in 2019.

At a press conference after the G-20, Meloni said she spoke to the Chinese premier about BRI but a decision had yet to be made.

"Belt and Road is not the only element that builds our bilateral relationship with China," she said, adding that other European nations had been able to negotiate better relationships with Beijing without signing up to the initiative.

The Italian prime minister has been taking her time before deciding how to communicate her government's decision to exit from the global infrastructure pact, fearing trade retaliation. She had told allies about her intention to withdraw from the initiative months ago, Bloomberg reported.

Meloni's message to the Chinese premier was first reported by Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera. Neither read-out following the meeting between the two prime ministers made reference to the BRI.

Meloni has said she will visit China in the coming months and the issue is sensitive, particularly since China's ambassador to Italy had warned there would be "negative consequences" for Italy if it withdrew from the agreement. **Bloomberg**



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni with Chinese Premier Li Qiang

OTHER EXAMPLES

Meloni said other European nations had been able to negotiate better relationships with Beijing without signing up for BRI

Sunak Confronts China's Premier After Arrest of Parliament 'Spy'

New Delhi: British PM Rishi Sunak told Chinese premier Li Qiang he had "significant concerns" about "interference" from Beijing, hours after it emerged that two men had been arrested in the UK for allegedly spying for China. Sunak said he'd confronted the Chinese official after news that a parliamentary researcher linked to a number of Tory MPs had been detained earlier this year on suspicion on espionage-related offenses. "I raised... very strong concerns about any interference in our parliamentary democracy, which is obviously unacceptable," Sunak said. **Bloomberg**



Context: Prime Minister of **Italy** Giorgia Meloni recently outlined Italy's plan to **pull out of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** during a meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang at the G20 summit.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- **Proposed:** In 2013 to improve connectivity and cooperation on a transcontinental scale.
- **Purpose:** Of restoring the **ancient Silk Route (**land-based infrastructure connection) that connected Asia and Europe.
  - **21st Century Maritime Silk Road:** Emphasizes maritime routes connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- **Involves:** Building a big network of roadways, railways, maritime ports, power grids, oil and gas pipelines, and associated infrastructure projects.

Criticism and Concerns:

- **Debt Burden:** Some countries have expressed concern about potential debt burdens resulting from BRI projects.
- **Environmental Impact:** Environmental sustainability and social impacts have raised concerns in certain areas.
- **Geopolitical Considerations:** The initiative has been criticized for potential geopolitical implications and concerns about China's influence in participating countries. Ex: BRI's project **CPEC (China-Pakistan economic corridor)** is against India's territorial sovereignty.

PIB

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GLOBAL BIOFUEL ALLIANCE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env & Eco)

Launch of the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)

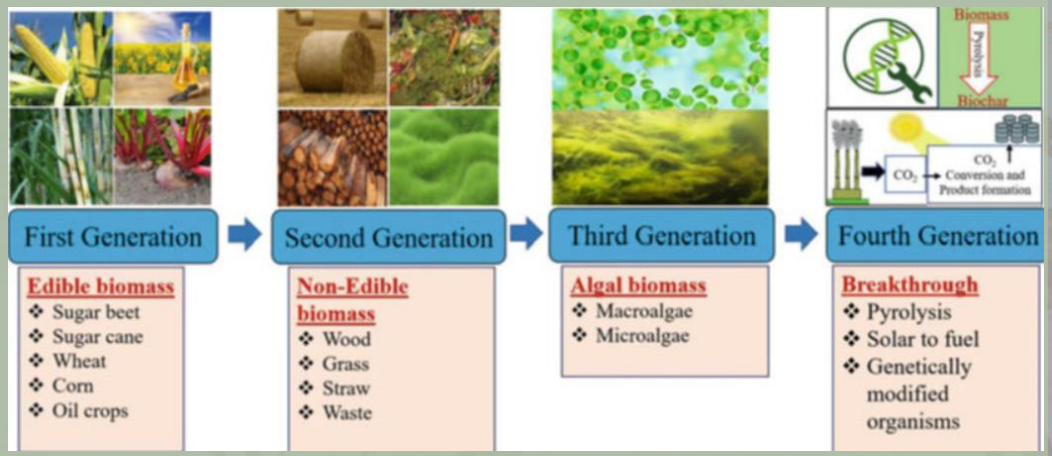
Context: The Prime Minister of India along with the leaders of 9 other countries, launched the **Global Biofuel Alliance** recently, on the sidelines of the **G20 Summit in New Delhi.**

Global Biofuel Alliance

- **About:** It is an initiative by India as the G20 Chair. The Alliance intends to **expedite the global uptake of biofuels** through facilitating technology advancements, intensifying utilization of sustainable biofuels, shaping robust standard setting and certification through the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders.
- **Aim:** To serve as a catalytic platform, fostering global collaboration for the advancement and widespread adoption of biofuels.
- **Function:** The alliance will also act as a central repository of knowledge and an expert hub.
- **Countries involved:** India, Singapore, Bangladesh, Italy, USA, Brazil, Argentina, Mauritius and UAE.

Biofuels and Types

- **About:** Any hydrocarbon **fuel that is produced from an organic matter** (living or once living material) in a short period of time (days, weeks, or even months) is considered a biofuel.
- **Examples:** Ethanol, biodiesel and biogas.
- **Types:** 1st,2nd , 3rd and 4th Generation of biofuel depending upon the their source of origin and production process.
- **Steps taken in India for biofuels:** National Biofuel Policy (2018), Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana (2019), GOBAR-DHAN (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) scheme,(2018) etc.



PARIS AGREEMENT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env & Eco)

How Delhi Declaration feeds into COP28 goals



Context: The Delhi Declaration captures the intent of the G20 countries, responsible for 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions, to meet **Paris Agreement goals**.

- One of the most important aspects of the declaration is that it underlines the principles of **common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR).**

Paris Agreement

- **Successor of:** Kyoto Protocol.
- **Adoption:** 2015, during **COP 21 of UNFCCC** entered into force in 2016, after receiving ratification or acceptance from at least 55 Parties representing at least 55% of GHGs.
- **Objective:** To combat climate change by limiting global warming to well **below 2 degrees Celsius** above pre-industrial levels, with an aspiration to **limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius**.
- **Parties:** 195.

Common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)

- **About:** This principle recognizes that all countries share a common responsibility to address climate change, but their responsibilities should be differentiated based on their historical contributions to emissions and their varying capacities to take action.

Live Mint | Sept 8

PM VISHWAKARMA SCHEME

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2– Government schmes)

Artisans to get ₹15,000 as incentive under Vishwakarma scheme

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NEW DELHI

The Union government is set to launch the PM Vishwakarma scheme to support artisans and workers on 17 September.

Prime minister Narendra Modi will launch the scheme at the India International Convention & Expo Centre, Dwarka in the national capital.

Under the scheme, beneficiaries will get ₹15,000 each as toolkit incentives through e-vouchers or eRUPI, apart from collateral free enterprise development loans at concessional rate of interest. Further, the artisans would also get an incentive of ₹1 per transaction for maximum of 100 transactions per month, showed a presentation prepared by the MSME ministry.

The artisans would have to go through a skill verification phase followed by a five-day training session. They would provide with an advanced training session for 15 or more days and during the training period they would get a stipend of ₹500 per day, the presentation showed.

The scheme also has a corpus of ₹250 crore for quality certification, branding, advertising, publicity and other marketing activities.

The scheme was approved by the cabinet committee on economic affairs (CCEA) on 16 August with an outlay of ₹13,000 crore for a period of five years (FY24-28).

After the Cabinet approval, the ministry in a statement had mentioned of the toolkit incentive and sops for digital transactions.

It said that under the scheme, artisans and craftspeople will be provided recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card along with a credit support of up to ₹1 lakh (in the first tranche) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5%.

The concessional interest rate would be subject to interest subvention cap up to 8% and a credit oversight committee may revise the subvention cap in line with the prevailing interest rates, the presentation showed.

The credit guarantee fess would be borne by the central government.



Prime minister Narendra Modi will launch the scheme at the India International Convention & Expo Centre. PTI

The scheme will provide support to artisans and craftspeople of rural and urban areas across the country and 18 traditional trades have been identified as initial beneficiary sectors. The identified artisans and craftsmen include carpenters, boat makers, blacksmiths, hammers and tool kit makers, locksmiths, goldsmiths, potters, sculptors, stone breakers, cobblers, shoesmiths, masons, coir weavers, traditional toy makers, barber garland makers, washermen and tailors.

The registration and benefits of the Vishwakarma scheme would also be restricted to one member of a family

The eligibility requirements include a minimum age of 18 years and the applicants should not have availed loans under similar credit based self-employment schemes such as Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi, Mudra scheme among other central and state government scheme in the past five years.

The applicants would have to give a self-declaration and the due diligence would be done by banks.

The registration and benefits would also be restricted to one member of a family.

As per the presentation, the implementation would be done with a creation of a national steering committee, state monitoring committees, district implementation committees and at lowest level of the implementing organizational structure would have the field level agencies including banks and skilling centres among others.

Queries sent to the MSME ministry and the prime minister's office remained unanswered till press time.

The Union budget for FY24 has first mentioned that the government would come up with the scheme to support traditional artisans and craftsmen.

Prime Minister Modi in his Independence Day speech last month had said that the government would roll out the scheme within a month.

Context: The Union government is set to launch the **PM Vishwakarma scheme** to support artisans and workers soon which was announced by the PM of India in his independence day speech.

PM Vishwakarma scheme

- **About:** It is a pioneering scheme designed to uplift individuals skilled in traditional craftsmanship, **particularly from the OBC community**.
- **Aim:** To strengthen and nurture the **Guru-Shishya parampara or family-based practice** of traditional skills by artisans and craftspeople working with their hands and tools.
  - Improving the quality, as well as the reach of products and services of artisans and craftspeople and to ensure that the Vishwakarmas are integrated with the domestic and global value chains.
- **Features:** The artisans and craftspeople will be provided recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card, **Credit Support upto Rs.1 lakh (First Tranche) and Rs.2 lakh (Second Tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5%.**
  - **The Scheme will further provide Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentive, Incentive for Digital Transactions and Marketing Support.**
  - The scheme will provide support to artisans and craftspeople of rural and urban areas across India.
  - **18 traditional trades will be covered in the first instance under PM Vishwakarma**.

Highlights of the Programme:

- Financial outlay of **Rs. 13,000 crore**
- **18 Traditional trades** to be covered in 1st instance
- **Artisans and Craftspeople** to be provided recognition with PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID Card
- Credit support upto Rs. **1 lakh** (1st tranche) and **Rs. 2 lakh (2nd tranche)** with concessional interest rate of 5%
- Will provide **Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentive and Incentive for Digital Transactions** and Marketing support

PIB

Sept 8

PGII & IMEC
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) & India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

Context: On the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between countries including India to establish the **India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).**

India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- **About:** The IMEC is being envisioned as a network of **transport corridors**, including railway lines and sea lanes, that is expected to aid economic growth through integration between **Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe**.
- **Part of:** The project is a **part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII).**
- **Countries involved:** India, USA, Saudi Arabia, UAE, European Union, Italy, France and Germany.



Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)

- **About:** It is a West-led initiative for funding infrastructure projects across the world, seen **as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**
- **Announced: June 2021,** during the G7 (or Group of Seven) summit in the UK. In 2022, during the G7 summit in Germany, the PGII was officially launched as a joint initiative to help fund infrastructure projects in developing countries through public and private investments.
- **Aim:** To mobilise nearly $600 billion from the G7 by 2027 to invest in critical infrastructure that improves lives and delivers real gains for all of our people."

DTE

Sept 8

MGNREGS
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – ECONOMY)

Monsoon deficit spikes rural job demand under MGNREGS

Job demands in some states higher than recorded in COVID-19 pandemic

Context: A **deficit in monsoon** in recent times has resulted in skewing the employment pattern and **agricultural distress** and increased employment percentage under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** as per the data available at the Management Information System (MIS).



Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

- **Objective: Guaranteed Right to Work:** MGNREGS is a demand-driven scheme, that seeks to provide guaranteed 100 days of wage employment per year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- **Features:** Legal right to work, a time-bound guarantee of work and unemployment allowance (within 15 days), Decentralised planning – i.e. Gram Sabha recommends work, demand-driven scheme.
- **MGNREGA Act, 2005:** It specifies a list of works that can be undertaken to generate employment such as water conservation, land development, construction, agriculture.
- **Role of MGNREGA in addressing rural distress:** Jobs to unskilled/semi-skilled, Reduction in poverty levels, Women labour force participation, Benefits to agri-sector, Rural Development, Creation of rural assets, Reviving MSME sector.
- **MGNREGA: Challenges:** Employment provided remains below guaranteed minimum, Non-payment of unemployment allowance, Low wage rate, Corruption and leakages, Poor quality of assets and inefficient monitoring and maintenance, Regional disparity, Too much centralisation weakening local governance, Insufficient budgetary allocation.

GREENHOUSE GASES (GHGs)

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env & Eco)

Study: Greenhouse gases may cause 3ft rise in Arabian Sea

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Pune: Rising sea levels in the Indian Ocean are primarily caused by human-induced warming linked to climate change, a recent study by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) in Pune has found. It poses an imminent threat to coastal communities, low-lying islands, and marine ecosystems.

Scientists examined data from two phases of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP) — CMIP5 and CMIP6 — to better grasp the link between human actions and sea-level rise. The study found that a maximum share of sea-level increase in the Indian Ocean, including the North Indian Ocean, has been a result of human-induced factors, with natural influences playing a smaller role.

Swapna Panickal, senior scientist at IITM, said future projections of sea level under high emission scenario of greenhouse gases could cause the Arabian Sea in the Indian Ocean to witness a substantial rise of about 0.76m (nearly 3ft) in the sea level, surpassing the global average increase of 0.75m. "These estimates are based on high emission scenarios. Rising seas directly threaten the lives and homes of countless people in an affected area, as well as marine ecosystems," she added.

Other senior scientists involved in the study included IITM director R Krishnan and J Jyoti, a scientist from the Center for Climate Physics, Institute for Basic Science, Busan in South Korea.

Under various greenhouse gas emission scenarios, the study showed changes in sea surface height (SSH) in the northern and western tropical Indian Ocean. "Sea surface height changes in this region are noteworthy, with an anticipated SSH increase of approximately 0.55m under moderate emissions scenario and up to 0.76m under the high emissions scenario by the end of the 21st century. This means that sea levels in this part of the Indian Ocean are expected to rise substantially," Jyoti said.

Context: Rising **sea levels in the Indian Ocean** are primarily caused by **human-induced warming (GHGs)** linked to climate change, a recent study by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) in Pune** has found. It poses an imminent threat to coastal communities, low-lying islands, and marine ecosystems.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs)

- **About:** A greenhouse gas is a gas that absorbs and emits infrared radiation.
  - They **absorb infrared energy (heat energy) emitted from the earth's surface** and reradiates it back to the earth's surface.
  - They **contribute to the Greenhouse Effect**, which is the resultant heating effect.
- **Most abundant greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere:** Water vapour, Carbon dioxide, Methane, Nitrous oxide, Ozone, Chlorofluorocarbons, Hydrofluorocarbons.
  - Among the greenhouse gases, **only water vapour can absorb both incoming (UV) and outgoing (infrared) radiation.**
  - Oxides of Nitrogen with general formula NOx - NO, NO2 - Nitrogen oxide, Nitrogen dioxide etc. are **global cooling gases**.
- **Other GHGs:** Carbon monoxide, fluorinated gases, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), black carbon (soot), and brown carbon.
  - **Carbon monoxide (CO) is not considered a direct greenhouse gas**, mostly because it does not absorb terrestrial thermal IR energy strongly enough.
  - But CO is able to modulate the production of methane and tropospheric ozone.
- **Global Initiative to fight GHGs:** Kyoto protocol, Paris Agreement, SDG (2030) etc.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	Atmospheric Lifetime (yrs)	Global Warming Potental (GWP)	Primary Current Sources	
Carbon dioxide (CO_2)	50-200	1	Fossil fuel use, land use, cement	
Methane (CH_4)	12±3	21	Fossil fuel use, agriculture	
Nitrous oxide (N_2O)	120	310	Mostly agriculture, ~1/3 are anthropogenic	
Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)	1.5 to 209	150 to 11,700	Alternative to ozone depleting substances	High GWP gases
Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)	2,600 to 50,000	6,500 to 9,200	Primary aluminum production; semiconductor manufacturing	
Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF_6)	3,200	23,900	Used in electric power transmission, magnesium and semiconductor industries	

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 14

AFRICAN UNION
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

WHAT IS THE AFRICAN UNION, THE LATEST MEMBER OF G20

ALIND CHAUHAN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 10

THE AFRICAN Union (AU) was admitted as a new member of the G20 on Saturday, three months after India floated the idea of including the organisation.

What is the AU?

The AU is an intergovernmental organisation of the 55 member states located on the continent of Africa. Launched on July 9, 2002, the grouping is the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was formed in 1963. The AU's secretariat, the African Union Commission, is based in Addis Ababa. Collectively the group has a gross domestic product (GDP) of $3 trillion, with some 1.4 billion people.

Why was the AU formed?

The AU's predecessor, OAU, aimed to bring African nations together and resolve common issues through collective action. Its main focus, however, was to help liberate the colonised countries on the continent. To do so, OAU mustered diplomatic support and provided logistical aid to liberation movements across Africa.

OAU's efforts helped numerous African nations gain independence from their European colonists, but it failed to boost political and economic integration among its member countries. Therefore, it was decided to reform the OAU during the mid-1990s, which ultimately led to the formation of the AU.

What are the objectives of the AU?

The AU concentrates on achieving greater unity and solidarity between African countries and their people. It seeks to accelerate the process of the political and socio-economic integration of the continent. Moreover, the AU addresses the multifaceted social, economic and political problems that the African nations have been facing. Its key objectives include promoting peace, stability, and security across the region. Protecting and promoting human rights are also part of the agenda.



PM Modi with African Union Chairman Azali Assoumani on Saturday. *Reuters*

What are its achievements?

Many of the AU's peacekeeping missions have helped governments tackle terrorism across Africa, from the Sahel to northern Mozambique. The organisation's interventions have prevented violence in countries like Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Darfur, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Mali. AU's diplomatic efforts have also resulted in resolving conflicts in Africa. Last year, it brokered a peace deal between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), almost two years after the entities began fighting.

The African Continental Free Trade Area, which came into force in 2021, is yet another achievement of the organisation.

Context: The African Union (AU) was recently **admitted as a new member of the G20** after India floated the idea of including the organisation. The development took place at the recent 18th G20 Heads of State and Government Summit in New Delhi.

African Union (AU)

- **About:** The AU is an intergovernmental organisation of the 55 member states located on the continent of Africa.
- **Established:** In 2002 as the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was formed in 1963.
  - Main objective of OAU: To help liberate the colonised countries on the continent.
- **Aim:** The AU seeks to build "an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens".
  - Unlike the OAU, the AU **concentrates its energy and resources** on achieving **greater unity and solidarity** between African countries and their people.
  - It seeks to accelerate the process of the **political and socio-economic integration** of the continent.
- **Secretariat:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

G20

- **Origin**: Formed in 1999 in the backdrop of the financial crisis of the late 1990s that hit East Asia and Southeast Asia in particular.
- **Aim and objective**: To secure global financial stability by involving middle-income countries.
- **Members**: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States **and the EU.**
- **Presidency**: Rotates every year among members, and the country holding the presidency, together with the previous and next presidency-holder, **forms the 'Troika' to ensure continuity of the G20 agenda.**
- **No permanent secretariat:** The incumbent chair establishes a temporary secretariat for the duration of its term.

THE HINDU

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NARCOTIC DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES (NDPS) ACT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Health & Governance)

Apple country gets ground ready for cannabis cultivation

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

With the Himachal Pradesh government taking steps to legalise cannabis (hemp) cultivation in the State, growers are upbeat and optimistic about getting an economic boost. A committee comprising lawmakers that explored the possibility of legal cultivation of cannabis recently recommended cultivation of cannabis for "non-narcotic use of cannabis for medicinal, industrial, and scientific use".

However, there are social concerns, especially of adolescents and youth being drawn towards the use and abuse of cannabis, the nexus between illegal producers and suppliers of cannabis getting stronger, the risk of pilferage, and the occurrence of amotivational syndrome.

Hemp is a botanical class of *Cannabis sativa* cultivars grown specifically for industrial or medicinal use. It is produced in parts of Himachal Pradesh, though it is illegal under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

The State Cabinet approval is awaited after which a policy is expected to be framed soon by the State government on cannabis cultivation, keeping in view the provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985, and the NDPS Rules, 1989.

Raising revenue

Even as there has been a growing concern surrounding the drug menace, State Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi, who headed the five-member committee, said the government was committed to curbing the problem and that while steps were being taken in this regard, the cultivation of cannabis would be limited only for industrial, medicinal and scientific use.

The policy on hemp cultivation for medicinal, industrial, and scientific uses would pave the way for utilising the medicinal properties of cannabis to treat patients, besides raising revenue for the State from the products made of hemp, the Minister said.

Allowing cannabis cultivation would also reaffirm the government's commitment to safeguarding the interests of the farmers, who have been long demanding to lift the ban on cultivation.



Cash crop: Hemp is a botanical class of *Cannabis sativa* cultivars grown specifically for industrial or medicinal use. K.R. DEEPAK

The NDPS Act of 1985, imposes a ban on extracting the resin and flowers from the plant, but the law determines the method and extent of its cultivation for medicinal and scientific purposes.

Section 10 (a) (iii) of the Act empowers the States to make rules regarding the cultivation of any cannabis plant, production, possession, transport, consumption, use and purchase and sale, and consumption of cannabis (except charas). The States are empowered to permit, by general or special order, the cultivation of hemp only for obtaining fibre or seeds or for horticultural purposes.

In 2017, Himachal Pradesh's neighbour Uttarakhand became the first State in the country to legalise cannabis cultivation.

Ranjit Singh Ghuman, a Professor of Eminence (economics) at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, recently headed a study titled "Dynamics of drug addiction and abuse in northwest India: social, economic and political implications" that pointed out that approximately 95% drug addicts in Himachal Pradesh are using cannabis and its byproducts.

"Not getting into the government's arguments for legalising the cultivation of cannabis, it is likely to encourage adolescents and youth towards the use and abuse of cannabis. It may, however, help addicts to shift from the use of more harmful drugs to less harmful drugs but there is a very high probability that it may end up in life-long addiction," he said.

Dr. Ghuman added, "Besides, the nexus between illegal producers and suppliers of cannabis, and politicians is promoting the use of cannabis and its by-products. There is a need to curb the supply of drugs and address the socio-cultural, economic and political factors."

'Multiple effects likely'

Sandeep Bhola, a technical expert and master trainer for United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and National AIDS Control Organisation, said, "Cannabis is known to cause psychiatric symptoms in the users which may be temporary and with prolonged use these may become permanent. Amotivational syndrome is known to occur with cannabis use, in which the user loses interest as well as the strength to do any chores. Serious psychotic symptoms are known to occur with cannabis use."

Dharamvira Gandhi, a former MP from Patiala in Punjab who presented a Private Member's Bill in Parliament to amend the NDPS Act in 2016, seeking to decriminalise opium, marijuana and poppy husk, has welcomed the decision.

He said, "The NDPS Act was enacted in order to meet the then United Nations Conventions on Drug Policy in the year 1985. The objective was to prevent rampant drug use in society. But the war on drugs had led to the creation of a dangerous drug mafia, hundreds of scores of human rights violations and innumerable precious lives destroyed. As the common man's recreational substances were made unavailable, the newer, more potent, addictive and dangerous alternative drugs flooded the markets."

Cannabis has been growing in Himachal Pradesh for decades, and those in favour of its cultivation point out that hemp has multiple uses ranging from phytoremediation, fibre-cloth manufacturing, medicinal use, and use in the pulp and paper industry.

Due to the recreational use of its products as 'charas' and 'ganja', the positives of this sturdy plant has been overlooked.

Narcotics: Substances that reduce the effectiveness of the senses and soothe discomfort.

- The Act prohibits **coca leaf, cannabis (hemp), opium, poppy stems, derivatives/concentrates** of any of these substances, and other substances notified by the government in its official gazette.

Psychotropic substances: Any substance which modifies the mind.

- Defined as any substances, whether **natural or synthetic or any natural derivative** or for that matter any preparation of such substance or derivative on the list of psychotropic substances specified in the Schedule of NDPS Act. **For example, Amphetamine, Methaqualone, Diazepam, Alprazolam, Ketamine, etc.**

Context: With the **Himachal Pradesh** government inching closer to legalise cannabis (hemp) cultivation in the State, growers are upbeat and optimist about getting an economic boost. It is produced in parts of Himachal Pradesh though it is **illegal under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.**

Narcotic Drugs and Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:

- **About:** The NDPS Act, 1985 is the **principal legislation** through which the state **regulates the operations of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.**
- **Amendment:** Initially enacted in 1985, the Act was **amended four times** in 1988, 2001, 2014 **and 2021.**
- **Application:** The Act extends to the whole of India and it applies also to all Indian citizens outside India and to all persons on ships and aircraft registered in India.
- **Prohibition:** It prohibits a person the production/manufacturing/cultivation, possession, sale, purchasing, transport, storage, and/or consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
- **Penalties:** Section 27A of the NDPS Act, 1985, prescribes the punishment for financing illicit traffic and harbouring offenders.
  - Section 27 makes drug consumption a punishable offence that can attract a fine of Rs 10,000 and imprisonment of six months or both. Bail provisions are also quite stringent.
- **NDPS Act and Cannabis:** The NDPS Act **defines cannabis (hemp)** as a narcotic drug based on the parts of the plant that come under its purview.

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