

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

❖ Context

- Russia has called on a meeting of UNSC to discuss the issue of biological weapons labs it claims to have found in Ukraine.

❖ Key Highlights

❖ Biological Weapons:

- Biological weapons disseminate **disease-causing organisms or toxins** to harm or kill humans, animals or plants.
- They can be **deadly** and **highly contagious**.
- Diseases caused by such weapons do not confine themselves to national borders and can **spread rapidly around the world**.
- Can also cause food shortages, environmental catastrophes, devastating economic loss, and widespread illness, fear and mistrust among the public.

❖ About the Convention:

- Formally known as “The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction”,
- Negotiated by the **Conference of the Committee on Disarmament** in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Entered **into force in 1975**.
- The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) effectively **prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons**.
- **First multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category** of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
- Almost universal membership with 183 States Parties and four Signatory States.
- Supplements the **1925 Geneva Protocol**, which had prohibited only the use of biological weapons.
- It also **prohibits** to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain **equipment or means of delivery** designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

❖ Secretary-General’s Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons (UNSGM)

- **UN General Assembly** established and the Security Council reaffirmed, the Secretary-General’s Mechanism (UNSGM) to carry out **prompt investigations** of the **possible use** of chemical and bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons.
- If any Member State provides the Secretary-General with a report of such allegations, the **Secretary-General is authorized to launch** an investigation.
- He can **dispatch a fact-finding team** to the site(s) of the alleged incident(s), and to **report** the results of the investigation **to all Member States**.
- It is **not a standing investigative body**. Instead, Member States nominate expert consultants, qualified experts and analytical laboratories which are then listed in a **roster**.
- For chemical weapons, OPCW, since its establishment in 1997 is responsible for investigation and SG provides cooperation.
- But for **Biological weapons, there is no equivalent implementing agency, and thus UNSGM is the only international mechanism** to investigate the alleged use of biological weapons.
- **UN Office for Disarmament Affairs** (an office of UN Secretariat), is the custodian of UNSGM and provides the operational readiness for such missions.

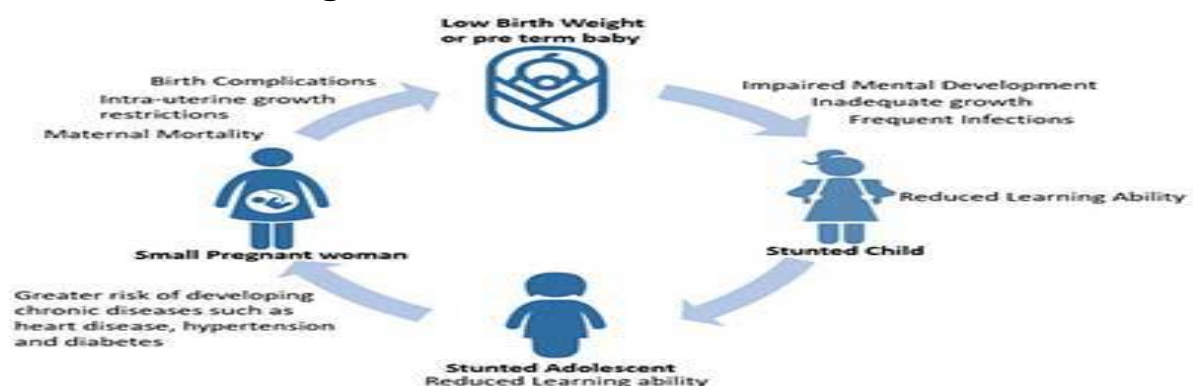
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Innovative Way to Combat Malnutrition in MP

❖ Context

- Recently, The government of MP in partnership with the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** proposed two **inexpensive and ingenious ideas** to encourage women to cook balanced meals.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Forty- two per cent of children** under five are **malnourished** in Madhya Pradesh.
- Having **not received proper nutrition**, they are either stunted or short for their age and deep in tribal areas the numbers only get worse.



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❖ About Two Inexpensive and Ingenious Ideas

- '7 days 7 plots' Programme.
 - Here, **women from the village are taught how to grow different vegetables in their own gardens**, seven to be exact, one for each day of the week.
 - By the end of the week, the first plot is ready to be harvested again.
 - This way, **families get to eat fresh, affordable vegetables** that they can consume for longer and in greater quantities, as against buying from the market, and so reduce sickness.

❖ Tiranga Thali

- To encourage a more balanced meal, the project introduced the concept of the "Tiranga Thali", where each **plate contains ingredients of the three colors from the Indian flag**.
- **Saffron** — all **pulses** like yellow split peas, pigeon peas, and split red lentils representing proteins;
- **White** - **rice, milk and roti** representing carbohydrates;
- **Green** - **leafy vegetables** representing vitamins and minerals.

❖ About IFAD

- It is an international financial institution and a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.
- It was established in **1977**.
- **Role:**
 - It works to address **poverty and hunger** in rural areas of developing countries.
 - It is the only multilateral development organization that **focuses solely on rural economies and food security**.
 - It engages in **providing grants and loans with low interest** for allied projects.
- The organization is an outcome of the **World Food Conference of 1974**.
- **Headquarter**- Rome.
- **Members:**
 - It has 177 member countries.
 - It works in partnership with the OPEC and OECD.
- **Publication:**
 - IFAD brings out the **Rural Development Report** every year.

Newest Crater on the Moon

❖ Context

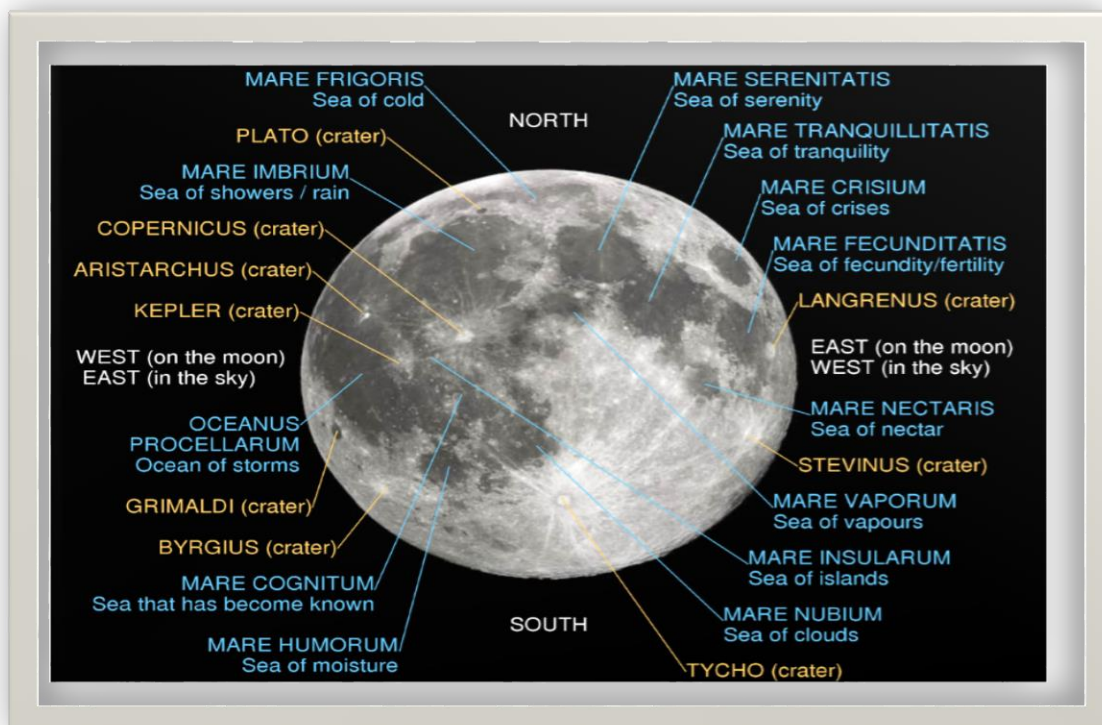
- Recently, a **leftover piece of a spacecraft** flying through space reportedly **hit the surface of the moon**, creating a new crater that may be around 65 feet wide.

❖ Key Highlights

- The piece of space junk was believed to be the **third-stage booster of Chang'e 5-T1** – a lunar mission launched by the China National Space Administration in 2014.
- The object reportedly **weighs around four tonnes** and was racing towards the moon at a speed of 9,300 km an hour.
- The speed, trajectory, and time of impact were calculated using earth-based telescope observations.
- This is the **first recorded unintentional case of space junk hitting the moon**.
- **Moon Craters Names:**

❖ Formation of Lunar Crater

- Moon craters are **bowl-shaped landforms** created by two processes: volcanism and cratering.
- There are **hundreds of thousands of moon craters** ranging from less than a mile across to giant basins called mare, which were once thought to be seas.
- The largest crater on the Moon is called **South Pole-Aitken Basin**.
 - It's about 1,600 miles across (2,500 kilometers).
 - It's also among the **oldest of the Moon's impact basins** and formed just a few hundred million years ago or so after the Moon itself was formed.
- Because of the Moon's lack of water, atmosphere, and tectonic plates, **there is little erosion**, and craters are found that exceed two billion years in age.
- Throughout its existence, the **Moon has been bombarded by comets and asteroid chunks**, and those created the many impact craters.
- The earth has **less than 200 known craters** while the moon has thousands.



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News in Between the Lines

Chilika Lake



❖ Context

- Recently, The Odisha government has proposed to **ban movement of mechanized fishing boats in the Mangalajodi area** of the Chilika lake.
- **Mangalajodi area** is an important haunt of migratory birds, to provide the winged guests an undisturbed ecosystem for six months every year.

❖ About Chilika Lake

- Chilika Lake is a **brackish water lagoon**.
- It is **spreaded over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts** of Odisha state on the east coast of India, at the **mouth of the Daya River**.
- It covers an area of over 1,100 km².
- It is the **biggest lake of India after Vembanad Lake**.
- This lake is the **largest coastal lagoon in India** and the **largest brackish water lagoon in the world** after The New Caledonian barrier reef.
- It has been listed as a **tentative UNESCO World Heritage site**.
- It is the **largest salt water lake** in India. It is the **largest wintering ground for migratory birds** on the Indian sub-continent and is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals.
- Major attraction at Chilika is **Irrawaddy dolphins** which are often spotted off Satpada Island. In **1981**, Chilika Lake was **designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention**.

International Criminal Court (ICC)



❖ Context

- Amid mounting calls to prosecute Russian president Vladimir Putin, the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** earlier this month launched an investigation into the alleged war crimes committed following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

❖ About ICC:

- It is an **intergovernmental organization and international tribunal**.
- Its founding treaty, the **Rome Statute**, entered into force on **July 1, 2002**.
- **Headquarter-** Hague, Netherland.
- It has **2 working languages: English and French**.
- **Role:**
 - It is the **first and only permanent international court** with jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.
- **Limitations:**
 - It **lacks universal territorial jurisdiction** and may **only investigate and prosecute crimes committed within member states**, crimes committed by nationals of member states, or crimes in situations referred to the Court by the United Nations Security Council.
- **Members:**
 - A total of 123 countries are parties to Rome Statute.
 - 33 are from African Nations.
 - 19 are from the Asia-Pacific States.
 - 18 are from Eastern Europe.
 - 28 are from Latin American and the Caribbean States.
 - 25 are from Western Europe and other states.
 - The notable exceptions being the US, China, Russia, and India.
- **Judges:**
 - 18; Elected for 9-year term.
- **Funding:**
 - The Court's expenses are **funded primarily by States Parties**.
 - It also **receives voluntary contributions** from governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

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GenOMICC Project



❖ Context

- Recently, Scientists in the United Kingdom as part of a research project, **GenOMICC (Genetics of Mortality in Critical Care)**, have identified **16 new genetic variants** that make a person more susceptible to a severe COVID-19 infection.

❖ About GenOMICC Project

- It is a research study that **brings together clinicians and scientists** from around the world to find the genetic factors that lead to critical illnesses.
- While **millions suffer from infectious diseases every year**, even though most cases are mild, some people become extremely unwell and need critical care.
- This may be because of their genes and the GenOMICC project is about identifying them.
- The scientists involved **compare the DNA of critically-ill patients with members of the general population.**
- However, ferreting out such differences **requires a large number of people** and comparing their genetic structures at multiple levels of resolution.
- Since 2015, the GenOMICC has been studying emerging infections such as **SARS** (severe acute respiratory syndrome), **MERS** (Middle East respiratory syndrome), flu, sepsis, and other forms of critical illness.

Adi Badri Dam



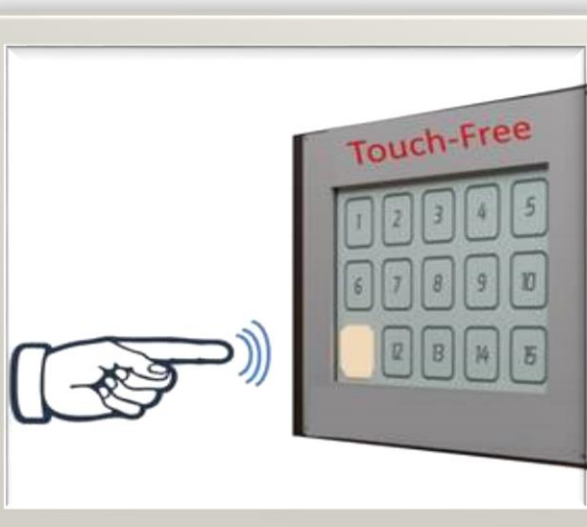
❖ Context

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had been signed recently between the **Governments of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh** for construction of Adi Badri dam on river Somb in Himachal Pradesh.

❖ Key Highlights

- Water stored in the dam is primarily to be used for **revival of river Sarasvati.**
- The dam will border both the states.
- **Adi-Badri** in Yamunanagar district is considered the **origin of the Saraswati river.** However, a defined part of the stored water is earmarked for drinking water and irrigation requirements of the project affected villages in Himachal Pradesh.
- Other key aspects of the MoU are as below:
 - **Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited** shall be the **executing agency** for construction of Adi Badri dam.
 - **Haryana** will bear the **entire funding cost.**
- **River Somb or Som is a tributary of Yamuna river** which originates in Shivalik hills near Adi-Badri in Yamunanagar district on the Haryana-HP border.

Touchless Touch Screen



❖ Context

- Indian Scientists have provided an affordable solution to develop a **low-cost touch-cum-proximity sensor** popularly called touchless touch sensor through a printing technique.

❖ Key Highlights

- Scientists have fabricated a touch sensor which senses a proximal or hover touch **even from a distance of 9 cm** from the device.
- For this, they have set up a semi-automated production plant for the production of printing-aided **patterned (resolution of around 300 μm) transparent electrodes**, which has the potential for being utilized in advanced touchless screen technologies.
- The novel low-cost patterned transparent electrodes have tremendous potential to be used in advanced smart electronic devices like touchless screens and sensors. This touchless touch sensor technology could **assist in preventing the spread of viruses** that spread through contact.

Mumbai Climate Action Plan 2022



❖ Context

- BMC released the first ever Climate Action Plan for Mumbai.

❖ Key Highlights

- Aims to **achieve net-zero carbon emission by 2050**.
- The **first city in South Asia to set such a timeline**. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) prepared the plan with technical support from the World Resources Institute (WRI), India and the C40 Cities network.
- As per a study conducted by WRI India on Mumbai's **vulnerability assessment**, the **city will face two major challenges—temperature rise, and extreme rain events** which will lead to flooding.
- The analysis has revealed a **warming trend over 47 years (1973-2020)** with an increase of **0.25°C per decade for the city**.
- **In 2019**, which is taken as a base year, **Mumbai's GHG emissions were 23.42 million tonnes** of carbon dioxide emission, which is **1.8 tonnes CO2e per person**. In total, unabated climate change could cost the city \$920 billion. Without intervention, the effects of climate change could cost India \$35 trillion over the next 50 years.
- **Energy accounts for 72% of total emissions**, according to the plan documents. Vehicle emissions and waste comprise the rest.
- It lists changes across six domains. This includes.
 - investments in housing,
 - electrifying public transport and more walkable roads;
 - flood-resistant drainage and water conservation.
 - Adding open spaces,
 - investing in clean water and sanitation, and
 - rooftop solar capacities.
- South Asia's other megalopolises including New Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Dhaka and Karachi are also preparing climate action plans. It is estimated that **Indian cities would have to face an influx of some 870 million migrants** seeking refuge from crop failures, water scarcity and storms caused by rising temperatures.

❖ C40 cities network

- The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is a group of 97 cities around the world that represents one twelfth of the world's population and one quarter of the global economy.
- C40 started in **October 2005** when London Mayor Ken Livingstone convened representatives from 18 megacities to forge an agreement on cooperatively reducing climate pollution and created the 'C20'.
- C40 member cities **earn their membership through action not membership fees**. C40's **Leadership Standards** set the minimum requirements for all member cities. **Six Indian cities** of Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Jaipur are part of this network, as of now.

Noor 2



❖ Context

- **Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** has successfully put a second military satellite, the **Noor 2**, into orbit.

➤ Key Highlights

- The announcement came as talks held in Vienna to revive an agreement restraining Iran's nuclear program have reached a critical stage. **Noor 2 is orbiting at an altitude of 500 kilometres (311 miles)**. The **first military satellite, launched by the Islamic Republic** in April 2020, placed the Noor, or "**light**" in Persian, at an orbit of **425km (265 miles)** above the earth's surface. Putting a second satellite in space would be a major advance for Iran's military, raising concerns about the country's nuclear and missile programs. **The same type of rockets**, which use a combination of liquid and solid fuels, carried the first military satellite.