

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**India signs 'Christchurch Call to Action'**

To combat online extremism, India has decided to sign an international call initiated by the governments of France and New Zealand along with top social media companies after the Christchurch attacks.

Christchurch Call to Action

- The dissemination of such content online has adverse impacts on the human rights of the victims, on our collective security and on people all over the world was declared by the 17 signatory countries.
- The Call outlines “collective”, “voluntary” commitments from Governments and online service providers intended to address the issue of terrorist and violent extremist content online.
- The document highlights, “All action on this issue must be consistent with principles of a free, open and secure internet, without compromising human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression.
- While the document stresses on the need to ensure that it does not impinge upon the rights of free speech of citizens of any country, the US has decided not to sign the document amid free speech concerns.
- The meeting held in Paris was attended by representatives of online giants like Microsoft, Google, Twitter, Facebook and Amazon.

The document states that the governments/signatories should commit to:

- Counter the drivers of terrorism and violent extremism by strengthening the resilience and inclusiveness of societies to enable them to resist terrorist and violent extremist ideologies, including through education, building media literacy to help counter distorted terrorist and violent extremist narratives, and the fight against inequality.
- Ensure effective enforcement of applicable laws that prohibit the production or dissemination of terrorist and violent extremist content, in a manner consistent with the rule of law and international human rights law, including freedom of expression.
- Encourage media outlets to apply ethical standards when depicting terrorist events online, to avoid amplifying terrorist and violent extremist content.
- Support frameworks, such as industry standards, to ensure that reporting on terrorist attacks does not amplify terrorist and violent extremist content, without prejudice to responsible coverage of terrorism and violent extremism.
- Consider appropriate action to prevent the use of online services to disseminate terrorist and violent extremist content, including through collaborative actions.

The documents draw in the online service providers to commit to:

- Take transparent, specific measures seeking to prevent the upload of terrorist and violent extremist content and to prevent its dissemination on social media and similar content-sharing services.
- Provide greater transparency in the setting of community standards or terms of service, including by:
 - Outlining and publishing the consequences of sharing terrorist and violent extremist content;
 - Describing policies and putting in place procedures for detecting and removing terrorist and violent extremist content.

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

The executive secretary of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has offered India an ‘Observer’ status and access to state-of-art International Monitoring System (IMS) data.

Benefits of becoming an Observer: India can benefit immensely from becoming a CTBTO Observer as the organisation setting has changed a lot over the years. India will have access to the data available which was traditionally not made available.

Background: Although more than 180 countries have signed the CTBT, and mostly ratified it, the treaty can only enter into force after it is ratified by eight countries with nuclear technology capacity, namely China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States.

CTBT

- The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is the Treaty banning all nuclear explosions – everywhere, by everyone. The Treaty was negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It opened for signature on 24 September 1996.

- The CTBT is the last barrier on the way to develop nuclear weapons. It curbs the development of new nuclear weapons and the improvement of existing nuclear weapon designs. When the Treaty enters into force it provides a legally binding norm against nuclear testing. The Treaty also helps prevent human suffering and environmental damages caused by nuclear testing.

India and the CTBT:

- Since its inception, India has had a number of reservations about the CTBT. While it has stood by its demand for a nuclear weapons-free world, various principled, procedural, political, and security concerns have stood in the way of its support for the CTBT.
- India's principled opposition drew from its emphasis on universal and complete nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner. India has traditionally believed this to be the end goal with the test ban just being a path to get there. But it did not insist on a complete disarmament clause in 1994, acknowledging that it was a "complex issue."
- Another major concern was Article XIV, the entry-into-force (EIF) clause, which India considered a violation of its right to voluntarily withhold participation in an international treaty. The treaty initially made ratification by states that were to be a part of the the CTBT's International Monitoring System (IMS) mandatory for the treaty's EIF.

Need of the hour: CTBT has an essential role within the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. More than 20 years since its negotiation, the Treaty has yet to enter into force. Every effort must be made to bring about the immediate entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, CTBT. The failure to bring the treaty into force prevents its full implementation and undermines its permanence in the international security architecture.

World Reconstruction Conference (WRC4)

The Fourth edition of the World Reconstruction Conference (WRC4) was held in Geneva. This conference was organized in conjunction with the 6th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR).

- Theme: "Inclusion for Resilient Recovery".
- Participants: Experts, practitioners and stakeholders from governments, civil society, private sector, academia, international organizations and community-based organizations.

WRC: The World Reconstruction Conference is a global forum that provides a platform to collect, assess, and share disaster reconstruction and recovery experiences and take forward the policy dialogue for an effective international disaster recovery and reconstruction framework.

Significance of the theme- Inclusion for Resilient Recovery:

- Social inclusion is defined throughout Inclusion Matters as both "the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society" and, more specifically, as "the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society."
- Inclusion in disaster recovery and reconstruction is a key condition for the people's resilience.
- Significance: A more inclusive recovery fosters equal rights and opportunities, dignity and diversity, guaranteeing that nobody from a community is left out because of their age, gender, disability or other factors linked to ethnicity, religion, geography, economic status, political affiliation, health issues, or other life circumstances.

Need: The international frameworks set up by the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on climate change all advocate for an increasing focus on resilience and inclusion.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Reserve Bank proposes 24x7 NEFT money transfer**

The RBI has proposed to examine the possibility of extending availability of National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) round-the-clock on all the seven days of the week — 24x7 basis — to facilitate beyond the banking hour fund transfer.

Besides, the central bank will also examine the possibility of extending the timings for Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) transactions.

What are NEFT and RTGS?**I. NEFT**

- NEFT is an electronic funds transfer system maintained by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Started in November 2005, the setup was established and maintained by Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT).
- NEFT enables bank customers in India to transfer funds between any two NEFT-enabled bank accounts on a one-to-one basis. It is done via electronic messages.

- Unlike Real-time gross settlement (RTGS), fund transfers through the NEFT system do not occur in real-time basis.

II. RTGS

- RTGS are specialist funds transfer systems where the transfer of money or securities takes place from one bank to any other bank on a “real time” and on a “gross” basis.
- Settlement in “real time” means a payment transaction is not subjected to any waiting period, with transactions being settled as soon as they are processed.
- “Gross settlement” means the transaction is settled on one-to-one basis without bundling or netting with any other transaction.
- “Settlement” means that once processed, payments are final and irrevocable.

What are the current limits?

- Customers can transfer anywhere between Rs 1 and Rs 25 lakh via NEFT (for HDFC Bank; varies from bank to bank) through net banking in a day.
- Through RTGS, they can transfer between Rs 2 lakh and Rs 25 lakh through net banking in a day.
- However, as of now, these online transactions are not available on Sundays, on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month and on bank holidays.
- On working days, NEFT is available between 8 am and 7 pm (varies from bank to bank) except on working Saturdays (8 am and 1 pm) and hence they restrict customers’ ability to carry out such transactions.
- Online RTGS transactions are available for lesser hours. It can be done till 4 pm (varies from bank to bank).
- Current options available
- Customers can currently transfer money through Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) round the clock but the maximum amount allowed is Rs 2 lakh.
- If RBI makes NEFT 24x7, it will not only ease the fund transfer for customers round the clock but will also take some load-off the bank branches for executing such transactions.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**YUva VIgyani KAryakram**

ISRO recently inaugurated the Young Scientist Programme YUVIKA 2019.

About YUva VIgyani KAryakram:

- Launched by Indian Space Research Organisation.
- It is a special programme for School Children, in tune with the Government’s vision “Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan”.
- Aim: The Program is primarily aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of Space activities.
- Participants: It is proposed to select 3 students each from each State/ Union Territory to participate in this programme covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.
- Eligibility: Those who have just completed 9th standard will be eligible for the online registration. The selection is based on the 8th Standard academic performance and extracurricular activities. Students belonging to the rural area have been given special weightage in the selection criteria. In case there is tie between the selected candidates, the younger candidates will be given priority.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

It doesn't matter how slowly you go as long as you don't stop.

Q.1. What are the benefit to India by signing the Christchurch Call to Action?

Q.2. What is CTBT? Why India is relevant to sign it. Write on the recent CTBT offering observer status to India.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**Why is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty important?**

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is the Treaty banning all nuclear explosions – everywhere, by everyone. The Treaty was negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It opened for signature on 24 September 1996.

The CTBT has been seen as an essential step toward nuclear disarmament for over four decades. It bans all nuclear tests, anytime, anywhere and comprehensively. Without the CTBT, the United States, Russia, China, France the United Kingdom, India and Pakistan are not prohibited from conducting further underground test explosions. The effort to establish an international norm against nuclear testing must not be abandoned after the enormous effort on the part of governments and NGOs, especially when the ratifications of only thirteen states is required for Entry Into Force.

The Treaty is intended to stop the qualitative nuclear arms race. The CTBT does not prohibit research on nuclear weapons, including subcritical tests. But it is very difficult, if not impossible, to develop new nuclear weapons without nuclear test explosions. This explains why all Nuclear Weapons States have resisted such a treaty for over four decades. Now that an agreement on the test ban has been reached and Entry Into Force is within reach, the effort to establish an international norm against nuclear testing must be actively pursued. Should the CTBT not enter into force, all the enormous effort on the part of governments and NGOs would be lost.

The CTBT will prevent further horrendous health and environmental damage caused by nuclear test explosions once and for all.

The CTBTO (the organization of the CTBT and the Secretariat of the Conferences) is already making great strides to establish a wide-ranging monitoring and verification system, including an International Monitoring System and an International Data Centre, which together with national technical means and ten of thousands of civilian monitoring stations, will detect and deter would-be testers, and therefore, will build confidence between all nations that nuclear testing has stopped.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. Consider the following statements with reference to ‘Christchurch Call to Action’
1. It is an international call to combat terrorism taken up by the Govts of New Zealand and the U.S.A.
 2. It is also supported by all major Social Media sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc.
 3. Recently the Govt of India also has decided to join the initiative.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3**
 - (d) All of the above
2. Consider the following statements with reference to Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
1. It is described as the “longest sought and hardest fought for arms control treaty in history”—was opened for signature in the year 1996.
 2. The Non-signatory countries include India, Pakistan and North Korea.
 3. USA was the first country to sign the treaty.
- Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) None of the above**
3. Consider the following statements with reference to India and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
1. The executive secretary of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has offered India an ‘Observer’ status and access to state-of-art International Monitoring System (IMS) data.
 2. With this status India may have access to the data available which was traditionally not made available.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Which of the following statements with reference to World Reconstruction Conference (WRC4) is/are correct?
1. It is a global forum that provides a platform to collect, assess, and share disaster reconstruction and recovery experiences
 2. Recently the Fourth edition of the World Reconstruction Conference (WRC4) was held in Paris.
 3. The theme for the event this year was “Inclusion for Resilient Recovery”.
- Select the correct answer using codes given below.
- (a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All of the above
5. Which of the following statements are incorrect with reference to the NEFT?
1. It is an electronic funds transfer system maintained by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) alone.
 2. It was introduced in the year 2003.
 3. It enables bank customers only in India to transfer funds between any two NEFT-enabled bank accounts.
- Select the correct answer using codes given below.
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 2 and 3**
 - (c) 1 and 3
 - (d) None of the above
6. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect about term Settlement RTGS transactions ?
1. Settlement in “real time” means a payment transaction is not subjected to any waiting period, with transactions being settled as soon as they are processed.
 2. “Gross settlement” means the transaction is settled on one-to-one basis without bundling or netting with any other transaction.
 3. “Settlement” means that once processed, payments are final and irrevocable.
- Select the correct answer using codes given below.
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) None of the above**
7. Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (Yuvika) 2019 is a young scientist programme launched by which of the following organizations.
- (a) Ministry of Science and Technology
 - (b) Defense Research and Development Organization
 - (c) Indian Space Research Organization**
 - (d) Both (a) and (c)
8. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (Yuvika) 2019.
1. It is a special programme for School Children, in tune with the Government’s vision “Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan”
 2. It primarily aims at imparting basic knowledge on Nuclear Technology and its applications.
 3. Those students who have just completed 9th standard will only be eligible for the registration.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3**
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) All of the above