

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

FATF Retains Pakistan on Grey List

Recently, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) retained Pakistan in the ‘greylist’ or ‘increased monitoring list’. The FATF also announced the ‘greylisting’ of Jordan, Mali and Turkey. Botswana and Mauritius had been taken out of the grey list.

Key Points**About:**

- Pakistan is retained for failing to effectively implement the global FATF standards and over its lack of progress on investigation and prosecution of senior leaders and commanders of UN-designated terror groups.
- Pakistan will remain on the grey list till it addresses all items on the original action plan agreed to in June 2018 as well as all items on a parallel action plan handed out by the FATF’s regional partner - the Asia Pacific Group (APG) - in 2019.
- 1. The Pakistan government has two concurrent action plans, with a total of 34 action plan items. It has largely addressed 30 of the items.
- 2. Pakistan has made significant progress and it has largely addressed 26 out of 27 items on the action plan it first committed to in June 2018. The item on financial terrorism still needed to be addressed.
- 3. The 2019 action plan largely focussed on money laundering deficiencies.
- The FATF had advised that Pakistan should continue to work to address its six strategically important deficiencies, which included enhancing international cooperation by amending the money-laundering law and demonstrating that assistance was being sought from foreign countries in implementing the UNSCR 1373 designations.
- 1. The UNSC Resolution 1373 was adopted on 28th September 2001. It declares international terrorism a threat to international peace and security and imposes binding obligations on all UN member states.

Background:

- The FATF had issued the 27-point action plan after placing Pakistan on the ‘Grey List’ in June 2018. The action plan pertains to curbing money laundering and terror financing.
- Pakistan was first put on the list in 2008, removed in 2009 and then again remained under increased monitoring from 2012 to 2015.
- Pakistan’s inclusion in the grey list has adversely impacted that country’s prospects of obtaining financial assistance from world bodies such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Asia Development Bank.

Financial Action Task Force**About:**

- An inter-governmental body established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris.
- Assesses the strength of a country’s anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing frameworks, however it does not go by individual cases.

Objectives:

- To set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

Headquarters:

- Its Secretariat is located at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris.

Member Countries:

- The FATF currently has 39 members including two regional organisations - the European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council. India is a member of the FATF.

Lists under FATF:**Grey List:**

- Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list.

- This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

Black List:

- Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities.
- The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.
- Currently, Iran and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) are under High-risk Jurisdiction or black list.

Sessions:

The FATF Plenary is the decision making body of the FATF. It meets three times per year.

2.New Quad

Recently, the Foreign Ministers of India, the US, Israel and the UAE concluded a virtual meeting. The meeting is a strong manifestation of the changes in West Asian geopolitics and formation of another Quad like grouping in the Middle East. India's involvement in this new grouping reflects a shift in its foreign policy.

Key Points
Factors Responsible for New Grouping:

- Abraham Accord: The new grouping is possible after the resumption of formal diplomatic relations between Israel and the UAE, through the Abraham Accord.
- Tackling Turkey's Regional Dominance: The new Quad can be termed as a result of converging interests between India, the UAE, and Israel amidst Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's assertive claims for the leadership of the Islamic world.
- US Pivot to Asia: The US is clearly seeking to lessen its footprint in the Middle East as part of its pivot to East Asia to tackle China's rise, which is redrawing West Asia's traditional equations. In order to contain rising China's assertiveness, the US under its 'pivot to Asia policy' has launched Quad initiative, Indo pacific narrative.

Significance for India:

- Shift Towards a Regional Approach:** The four-nation meeting suggests India is now ready to move from bilateral relations conducted in separate silos towards an integrated regional policy.
- India's Westward Shift:** Much in the manner that the "Indo-Pacific" has transformed the way India thinks about the east, the notion of a "Greater Middle East" can provide a huge fillip to India's engagement with the extended neighbourhood to the west.
- Tackling Pakistan:** Further, the new grouping is also driven by Pakistan's growing alignment with Turkey and its alienation from its traditionally strong supporters in the Arab Gulf - the UAE and Saudi Arabia.
- Deepening Relations:** Over the years, India has built vibrant bilateral ties with all the countries in the new grouping.
 - It is a member of the Quad with the US, Australia and Japan, which have common concerns and shared interests in East Asia.
 - Israel is one of India's top defence suppliers.
 - The UAE is vital for India's energy security and hosts millions of Indian workers.



Way Forward

- **Too Early to Call:** While it is too early to speak of the strategic significance of such a grouping, there are areas where it can deepen its engagement - trade, energy ties, fighting climate change and enhancing maritime security.
- **Keeping Distance from Regional Rivalries:** India should be careful not to get sucked into the many conflicts of West Asia that could intensify amid growing regional rivalries.
- **Engaging With Iran:** India is facing deepening insecurities in continental Asia after the American withdrawal from Afghanistan. So the challenge before India is to retain a healthy relationship with Iran even as it seeks to build a stronger regional partnership with the US-Israel-UAE bloc.

GOVERNANCE**Child Sexual Abuse**

Recently, a report titled the Global Threat Assessment Report 2021, released by WeProtect Global Alliance has revealed that Covid-19 had contributed to a significant spike in child sexual exploitation and abuse online. The report outlines the scale and scope of child sexual exploitation and abuse online, as well as an overview of the global response to the issue.

WeProtect Global Alliance is a global movement of more than 200 governments, private sector companies and civil society organisations working together to transform the global response to child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

Key Points**Highlights of the Report:**

- In the past two years, the reporting of child sexual exploitation and online abuse has reached its highest level. Covid-19 created a 'perfect storm' of conditions that fuelled a rise in child sexual exploitation and abuse across the globe.
- According to the Internet Watch Foundation, the rise in child 'self-generated' sexual material is another worrying trend.
- Transgender/non-binary, LGBQ+ and/or disabled were more likely to experience online sexual harms during childhood.
- **Indian Scenario:**
 1. During the pandemic, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) indicated 106% increase in reports of suspected child sexual exploitation to its global CyberTipline. NCMEC is a non-profit organization (NGO) established by the United States Congress.
 2. Further, during the Covid-19 lockdown in India, there was a 95% rise in searches for child sexual abuse material.

Problems Related to Child Sexual Abuse:

- **Multi-layered Problem:** Child sexual abuse is a multi-layered problem which negatively impacts children's physical safety, mental health, well-being and behavioural aspects.
- **Amplification Due to Digital Technologies:** Mobile and digital technologies has further amplifies child abuse and exploitation. New forms of child abuse like online bullying, harassment and Child Pornography have also emerged.
- **Ineffective Legislation:** Although Government of India has enacted the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act 2012 (POCSO Act), it has failed to protect child from sexual abuse. The reasons for this can be following:
 1. **Low Conviction Rate:** The rate of conviction under the POCSO act is only about 32% if one takes the average of the past 5 years and the percentage of cases pending is 90%.
 2. **Judicial Delay:** The Kathua Rape case took 16 months for the main accused to be convicted whereas the POCSO Act clearly mentions that the entire trial and conviction process has to be done in one year.
 3. **Unfriendly to Child:** Challenges related to age-determination of the child. Especially laws that focus on biological age and not mental age.

Indian Initiatives for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

1. Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit
2. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

3. Juvenile Justice Act/Care and Protection Act, 2000
4. Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006)
5. Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2016
6. Operation Smile

Way Forward

Comprehensive Framework: The report calls for prioritising prevention activities against abuse, creating safe online environments for children, besides calling on all with a role to protect children to work together to dramatically improve the response.

Multi Stakeholder Approach: Developing a comprehensive outreach system to engage parents, schools, communities, NGO partners and local governments as well as police and lawyers to ensure better implementation of the legal framework, policies, national strategies and standards.

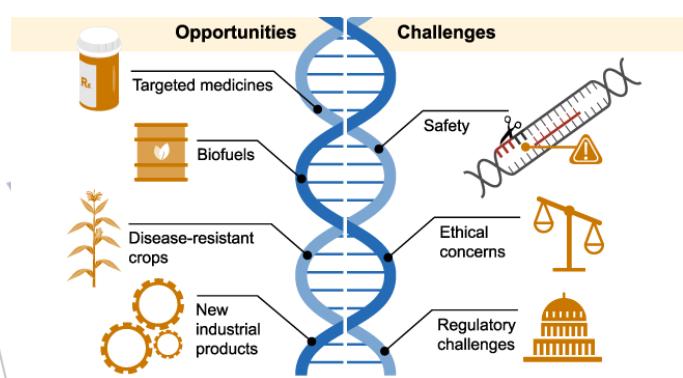
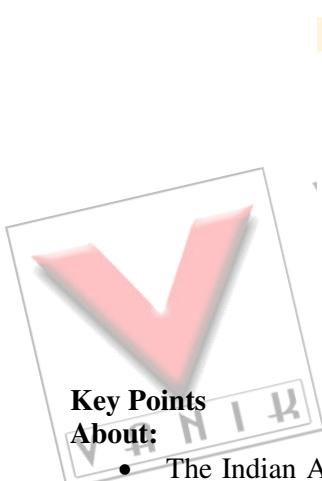
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

New Gene Editing Technique

The proposal for Indian regulators to consider a new gene editing technique has been pending with the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee for almost two years.

Gene Editing

- Genome editing (also called gene editing) is a group of technologies that give scientists the ability to change an organism's Deoxy-Ribonucleic Acid (DNA).
- These technologies allow genetic material to be added, removed, or altered at particular locations in the genome.



Key Points

About:

- The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) has now moved to newer technologies such as Site Directed Nuclease (SDN) 1 and 2.
- New technique aims to bring precision and efficiency into the breeding process using gene editing tools such as CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats), whose developers won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 2020.
- SDN genome editing involves the use of different DNA-cutting enzymes (nucleases) that are directed to cut the DNA at a predetermined location by a range of different DNA binding systems.
- After the cut is made, the cell's own DNA repair mechanism recognizes the break and repairs the damage, using one of two pathways that are naturally present in cells.
- It involves the use of gene editing tools to directly tweak (improve\change) the plant's own genes instead.
- It would allow plants to be genetically modified without the need for conventional transgenic technology.

Current Application:

- A research coalition under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), which includes the IARI, is using these techniques to develop rice varieties which are drought-tolerant, salinity-tolerant and high-yielding. They could potentially be ready for commercial cultivation within three years. The IARI has previously worked on golden rice,

a traditional GM variety which inserted genes from other organisms into the rice plant, but ended trials over five years ago due to agronomic issues.

Significance of New Techniques:**• Safe:**

1. In this case, you are just tweaking a gene that is already there in the plant, without bringing in any gene from outside.
2. When a protein comes from an outside organism, then you need to test for safety. But in this case, this protein is right there in the plant, and is being changed a little bit, just as nature does through mutation.

• Fast:

1. It is much faster and far more precise than natural mutation or conventional breeding methods which involve trial and error and multiple breeding cycles. It is potentially a new Green Revolution.

Status of New Techniques Globally:

- The U.S., Canada, Australia and Japan are among the countries which have already approved the SDN 1 and 2 technologies as not akin to GM, so such varieties of rice can be exported without any problem.
- The European Food Safety Authority has also submitted its opinion that these technologies do not need the same level of safety assessment as conventional gene mutation, though the European Union is yet to accept the recommendation.

Related Laws in India:

- In India, several rules, guidelines, and policies backed by the “Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989” notified under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, regulate genetically modified organisms.
- Apart from it, the National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research involving human participants, 2017, by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and the Biomedical and Health Research Regulation Bill implies regulation of the gene-editing process.
 1. This is especially so in the usage of its language “modification, deletion or removal of parts of heritable material”.
 2. However, there is no explicit mention of the term gene editing.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary: Odisha**

Recently, the Odisha Government has decided to relocate around 420 families from four zero-connectivity villages in Debrigarh wildlife sanctuary. The relocation is aimed at reducing man-animal conflict and providing better living conditions to the displaced families.

Key Points**Location:**

- It is situated in the Bargarh district of Odisha near Hirakud dam (Mahanadi River) and covers an area of 346.91 square kilometers.
- It is bounded on the east and north by the huge Hirakud reservoir.
- It was declared as a wildlife sanctuary on 8th February 1985.
- It is an important site for in situ conservation of wildlife and its habitat in the state of Odisha

Biodiversity:

- **Flora:**Dry deciduous forests
- **Fauna:**Four-horned antelope, Indian leopard, Indian elephant, sambar, chital, gaur, etc.

Major Protected Areas in Odisha:**• National Parks:**

1. Bhitarkanika National Park
2. Simlipal National Park

• Wildlife Sanctuaries:

1. Badrama WLS
2. Chilika (Nalaban island) WLS
3. Hadgarh WLS
4. Baisipalli WLS
5. Kotagarh WLS
6. Nandankanan WLS
7. Lakhari Valley WLS
8. Gahirmatha (Marine) WLS

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. We need to slow the flow of plastic at its source, but we also need to improve the way we manage our plastic waste. Examine. (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

In 2019, the Union government in a bid to free India of single-use plastics by 2022, had laid out a multi-ministerial plan to discourage the use of single-use plastics across the country. In this direction, the Environment Ministry recently issued draft rules that mandate producers of plastic packaging material to collect all of their produce by 2024 and ensure that a minimum percentage of it be recycled as well as used in subsequent supply.

Body**Plastic waste scenario in India**

- As of 2019, about 660,787.85 tonnes of plastic waste is produced in India annually, of which around 60% is reportedly recycled. Nearly 43% is packaging material and most are single use plastic.
- Per capita consumption of plastic is projected to go up from 11 kg in 2014-15 to 20 kg by 2022 (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry data); about 43% is single use packaging with poor rates of recovery.
- In spite of the notification of the Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules, 2016, and amendments made two years later, most cities and towns are not prepared to implement its provisions.
- Even the biggest Municipal Corporations shouldering a staggering waste burden have failed to implement segregation of waste: collecting recyclable plastic, non-recyclable plastic and other waste separately for processing by material recovery facilities.

Steps taken so far to tackle plastic pollution

- In 2019, the Union government in a bid to free India of single-use plastics by 2022, had laid out a multi-ministerial plan to discourage the use of single-use plastics across the country.
- Currently, the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, prohibits manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags and plastic sheets less than 50 microns in thickness in the country.
- The Environment Ministry has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021.
- These rules prohibit specific single-use plastic items which have “low utility and high littering potential” by 2022.
- The permitted thickness of the plastic bags, currently 50 microns, will be increased to 75 microns from 30th September, 2021, and to 120 microns from the 31st December, 2022.
- At the policy level, the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), already mentioned under the 2016 Rules, has to be promoted.
- The Central Pollution Control Board, along with state pollution bodies, will monitor the ban, identify violations, and impose penalties already prescribed under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986.
- The Central Pollution Control Board has reported that 22 States have, in the past, announced a ban on single-use plastic, but this has had little impact on the crisis of waste

choking wetlands and waterways and being transported to the oceans to turn into microplastic.

- So far, 22 States and Union Territories have joined the fight to beat the plastic pollution, announcing a ban on single-use plastics such as carry bags, cups, plates, cutlery, straws and thermocol products.
- India has also won global acclaim for its “Beat Plastic Pollution” resolve declared on World Environment Day last year, under which it pledged to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022.

Way forward

- As consumers, we should ensure that all plastic waste leaving our homes is segregated and is not contaminated with food waste.
- Managing plastic waste requires effective knowledge, not only among those who produce the plastic but also among those who handle it.
- The brand owner and manufacturer should try and understand the fates a plastic packaging material would meet after its purpose of packaging has been served.
- Citizens have to bring behavioural change and contribute by not littering and helping in waste segregation and waste management.
- To encourage innovation in development of alternatives to identified single use plastic items and digital solutions to plastic waste management, the India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021, has been organized for students of Higher Educational Institutions and start-ups recognized under Start-up India Initiative.

Conclusion

Packaging is projected to grow into a \$72.6 billion industry in India by 2020 from about \$31 billion in 2015, with a proportionate rise in waste volumes. The pressure on producers to streamline the collection, recycling and processing of all forms of plastic is bound to grow. Individuals and organizations should now actively remove plastic waste from their surroundings and municipal bodies must arrange to collect these articles. Startups and industries should think of newer ways of recycling.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. With reference to the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), consider the following statements :

1. IMFC discusses matters of concern affecting the global economy, and advises the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the direction of its work.
2. The World Bank participates as observer in IMFC's meetings.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2**
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. Gold tranche (Reserve tranche) refers to

- A loan system of World bank
- One of the operations of a central bank
- A credit system of WTO granted to its members
- A credit system granted by IMF to its members**

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. World Food Day was established in November 1979.
2. World Food Day is being celebrated every year on October 16 to commemorate the date of the founding of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).
3. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. **1 and 3 only**
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Q4. In India, ‘extended producer responsibility’ was introduced as an important feature in which of the following?

- a. The Bio-medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998
- b. The Recycled plastic (Manufacturing and Usage) Rules, 1999
- c. **The e-Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011**
- d. The Food Safety and Standard Regulations, 2011

Q5. The “Kunming Declaration” was in news recently, is related to which of the following?

- a. **Biodiversity conservation**
- b. Solid waste management
- c. Population control and family planning
- d. Eradication of hunger and poverty