

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

United Nation Security Council

The United Nation Security Council (UNSC) got five new non permanent members (Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates).Estonia, Niger, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam finished their terms recently.

- Albania is joining for the first time while Brazil is taking an 11th turn. Gabon and Ghana each have been on the council three times before and the UAE once.
- More than 50 of the UN's 193 member countries have never been elected to the council since its formation.

Key Points**UNSC:****About:**

- The Security Council was established by the UN Charter in 1945. It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.The other 5 organs of the United Nations are—the General Assembly (UNGA), the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat.
- Its primary responsibility is to work to maintain international peace and security.
- The council is headquartered at New York.

Members:

- The council has 15 members: the five permanent members and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms.
 1. The five permanent members are the United States, the Russian Federation, France, China and the United Kingdom.
 2. India, for the eighth time, has entered the UNSC as a non-permanent member last year (2021) and will stay on the council for two years i.e 2021-22.
- Each year, the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members (out of ten in total) for a two-year term. The ten non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis.
- The council's presidency is a capacity that rotates every month among its 15 members.

Voting Powers:

- Each member of the Security Council has one vote. Decisions of the Security Council on matters are made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members. A "No" vote from one of the five permanent members blocks the passage of the resolution.
- Any member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that member are specially affected.

India in the UNSC:

- India took active part in the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1947-48 and raised its voice passionately against racial discrimination in South Africa.
- India has played its part in formulating decisions on several issues such as admitting former colonies to the UN, addressing deadly conflicts in the Middle East and maintaining peace in Africa.
- It has contributed extensively to the UN, particularly for the maintenance of international peace and security. India has taken part in 43 Peacekeeping missions with a total contribution exceeding 160,000 troops and a significant number of police personnel.
- India's population, territorial size, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), economic potential, civilisational legacy, cultural diversity, political system and past and ongoing contributions to UN activities make India's demand for a permanent seat in the UNSC completely rational.

Issues with UNSC:

- **Absence of Records and Texts of Meetings:** The usual UN rules don't apply to the UNSC deliberations and no records are kept of its meetings. Additionally, there is no "text" of the meeting to discuss, amend or object.
- **Powerplay in UNSC:** The veto powers that the UNSC's five permanent members enjoy is an anachronism in this age. The UNSC in its current form has become a constraint in understanding the international changes and dynamics in the area of human security and peace.

- **Divisions Among the P5:** There is a deep polarisation within the UN's membership, so decisions are either not taken, or not heeded. Frequent divisions within the UNSC P-5 end up blocking key decisions. Example: With the coronavirus pandemic emergence, the UN, the UNSC, and World Health Organisation failed to play an effective role in helping nations deal with the spread.
- **An Underrepresentation Organisation:** The absence in the UNSC of the globally important countries – India, Germany, Brazil and South Africa - is a matter of concern.

Way Forward

- The imbalances in power relationships among P5 and the rest of the world needs to be corrected urgently.
- Also, it is needed to reform the Security Council through an expansion in permanent and non-permanent seats to enable the UN organ to better deal with the “ever-complex and evolving challenges” to the maintenance of international peace and security.
- India as the current one of the non-permanent members of the UNSC can start by drafting a resolution containing a comprehensive set of proposals for reforming the UNSC. It can further approach other like-minded countries (like the G4: India, Germany, Japan and Brazil) and keep growing its circle of support till sufficient numbers of countries are together to reach out to the whole UNGA to propose the resolution with a realistic chance of winning the vote.

GOVERNANCE**PMFME Scheme**

Recently, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited) today launched six, One District One Product (ODOP) brands under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme.

The Ministry has signed an agreement with NAFED for developing 10 brands of selected ODOPs under the branding and marketing component of the PMFME scheme. Out of these, six brands are Amrit Phal, Cori Gold, Kashmiri Mantra, Madhu Mantra, Somdana, and Whole Wheat Cookies of Dilli Bakes.

Key Points**About:**

- Launched under Atma Nirbhar Abhiyan, it aims to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganised segment of the food processing industry and to promote formalisation of the sector and provide support to Farmer Producer Organisations, Self Help Groups, and Producers Cooperatives along their entire value chain.
- The scheme adopts the One District One Product (ODOP) approach to reap the benefit of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.
- It will be implemented over a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

Features:

- **One District One Product (ODOP) Approach:**
 1. ODOP for the scheme will provide the framework for value chain development and alignment of support infrastructure. There may be more than one cluster of ODOP products in one district. There may be a cluster of ODOP products consisting of more than one adjacent district in a State.
 2. The States would identify food products for districts keeping in view the existing clusters and availability of raw material.
 3. The ODOP could be a perishable produce based or cereal based or a food item widely produced in an area. E.g. mango, potato, pickle, millet based products, fisheries, poultry, etc.
- **Other Focus Areas:**
 1. Waste to wealth products, minor forest products and Aspirational Districts.
 2. Capacity building and research: Academic and research institutions under MoFPI along with State Level Technical Institutions would be provided support for training of units, product development, appropriate packaging and machinery for micro units.
- **Financial Support:**
 1. Existing individual micro food processing units desirous of upgrading their units can avail credit-linked capital subsidy at 35% of the eligible project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs.10 lakh per unit.

2. Support would be provided through credit linked grants at 35% for development of common infrastructure including common processing facility, lab, warehouse, etc. through FPOs/SHGs/cooperatives or state owned agencies or private enterprise.
 3. A seed capital (initial funding) of Rs. 40,000- per Self Help Group (SHG) member would be provided for working capital and purchase of small tools.
- **Marketing and Branding Support:**
 1. Marketing and branding support would be provided to groups of FPOs/SHGs/ Cooperatives or an SPV of micro food processing enterprises under the scheme, which are:
 - ✓ Training relating to marketing.
 - ✓ Developing a common brand and packaging including standardisation.
 - ✓ Marketing tie-up with national and regional retail chains.
 - ✓ Quality control to ensure product quality meets the required standards.

Funding:

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore.
- The expenditure under the scheme would be shared in 60:40 ratio between Central and State Governments, in 90:10 ratio with North Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 ratio with UTs with legislature and 100% by Centre for other UTs.

Need:

- The unorganised food processing sector comprising nearly 25 lakh units contributes to 74% of employment in the food processing sector.
- Nearly 66% of these units are located in rural areas and about 80% of them are family-based enterprises supporting livelihood of rural households and minimising their migration to urban areas. These units largely fall within the category of micro enterprises.
- The unorganised food processing sector faces a number of challenges which limit their performance and their growth. The challenges include lack of access to modern technology & equipment, training, access institutional credit, lack of basic awareness on quality control of products, and lack of branding & marketing skills etc.

Related Initiatives:

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana.
- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).
- Minimum Support Prices (MSP).
- Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- Codex Alimentarius Commission
- Draft Food Safety And Standards (Labelling And Display) Regulation.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Securing Internet of Things**

Recently, in order to secure Consumer Internet of Things (IoT) devices, Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), under Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, has released a report “Code of Practice for Securing Consumer Internet of Things(IoT)”.These guidelines will help in securing consumer IoT devices & ecosystem as well as managing vulnerabilities.

Key Points**Internet of Things:**

- **Definition:** It is a computing concept that describes the idea of everyday physical objects being connected to the internet and being able to identify themselves to other devices.
- **One of Fastest Growing Technology:** It is one of the fastest emerging technologies across the globe, providing enormous beneficial opportunities for society, industry, and consumers.
- **Use of IoT:** It is being used to create smart infrastructure in various verticals such as Power, Automotive, Safety & Surveillance, Remote Health Management, Agriculture, Smart Homes and Smart Cities etc, using connected devices.A smart device is a context-aware electronic device capable of performing autonomous computing and connecting to other devices wire or wirelessly for data exchange.
- **Supplementary Technologies:** IoT is benefitted by recent advances in several technologies such as sensors, communication technologies (Cellular and non-cellular), Artificial intelligence/ Machine Learning, Cloud / Edge computing etc.

Magnitude of IOT: It has been projected that there would be around 11.4 billion consumer IoT devices and 13.3 billion enterprise IoT devices globally by 2025 i.e. consumer IoT devices would account for nearly 45% of all the IoT devices. According to a market research report published by Markets and Markets, the global IoT security market size is expected to grow from USD 8.2 billion in 2018 to USD 35.2 billion by 2023.

Need For Guidelines:

- **Anticipated Growth:** In view of the anticipated growth of IoT devices, it is important to ensure that the IoT endpoints comply with the safety and security standards.
- **Cyber-Security Attack:** The hacking of the devices/networks being used in daily life would harm companies, organisations, nations and more importantly people.
 1. Therefore securing the IoT ecosystem end-to-end i.e. from devices to the applications is very important.
 2. Ensuring end to end security for connected IoT devices is key to success in this market - without security, IoT will cease to exist.
- **Privacy Concerns:** There is in this data-driven future, a growing concern about the potential for increased government surveillance and the resulting encroachment of civil rights, and the suppression of dissent or of marginalised communities
- **Consequences of Cyber Security Attack:** Possible consequences of such attacks could include:
 1. Discontinuity and interruption to critical services/infrastructure.
 2. Infringement of privacy.
 3. Loss of life, money, time, property, health, relationships, etc.
 4. Disruptions of national scale including civil unrest.

Guidelines for securing consumer IoT:

- **No Universal Default Passwords:** All IoT device default passwords shall be unique per device and/or require the user to choose a password that follows best practises, during device provisioning.
- **Implement a means to manage reports of vulnerabilities:** IoT developers should provide a dedicated public point of contact as part of a vulnerability disclosure policy.
- **Keep software updated:** Software components in IoT devices should be securely updateable.
- **Securely store sensitive security parameters:** IoT devices may need to store security parameters such as keys & credentials, certificates, device identity etc. which are critical for the secure operation of the device.
- **Communicate securely:** Security-sensitive data, including any remote management and control, should be encrypted in transit, appropriate to the properties of the technology and usage of the device.
- **Minimise exposed attack surfaces:** Devices and services should operate on the ‘principle of least privilege’. The Principle of Least Privilege states that a subject should be given only those privileges needed for it to complete its task.
- **Ensure that personal data is secure:** In case the device collects or transmits personal data, such data should be securely stored.
- **Make systems resilient to outages:** Resilience should be built into IoT devices and services where required by their usage or by other relying systems.

Way Forward

- **Addressing Data Security Concerns:** While IoT technology is clearly of significant advantage to citizens worldwide, along with greater advantage comes a potential risk to privacy.
 1. This concern over data protection will need to be addressed and IoT manufacturers will have to build and sustain consumer trust in their devices.
 2. In this context, the Data Protection Bill, 2019 is a step in the right direction.
- **Need for Global Deliberation:** Around the world, legislators, device manufacturers, and law enforcement agencies should come together to figure out how to benefit from IoT while mitigating risks.

PRELIMS FACT**Omisure Kit**

Recently, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has approved a made-in-India testing kit, named Omisur, for detecting the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. The kit currently in use to detect Omicron in the country has been developed by the US-based scientific instrumentation company Thermo Fisher.

Further, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has proposed some measures to strengthen laboratory capacities, with the focus on addressing inequalities in access to Covid-19 diagnostics tools.

Key Points

About Omisur:

- This RT-PCR kit is manufactured by Tata Medical and Diagnostics. It uses S-Gene Target Failure (SGTF) strategy.
- Currently, Omicron patients are detected only after genome sequencing. However, the Omisur test kit helps to eliminate this step and detects the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV2 in the nasopharyngeal/ oropharyngeal specimens during the RT-PCR tests.
- The Omicron variant underwent several mutations in the S-gene, the SGTF strategy checks and indicates it in patients who are detected Covid positive.
- 'S' Gene, ORF, 'N' gene, Rdrp, 'E' gene are viral genes that are targeted to detect Covid-19 virus.

WHO Propositions:

- **Genomics Consortium:** The WHO is proposing to set up a SARS-CoV-2 genomics consortium in Southeast Asia. The consortium will help enhance genomic sequencing and surveillance to develop a robust regional system for detecting and monitoring the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 viral threats for epidemics and pandemics.
- **Genome Sequencing:** WHO had called for increased genome sequencing. This will also help improve the timely use of genomic data for public health decision-making and to strengthen preparedness and response to future outbreaks/ pandemics.
- **Addressing Key Barriers:** Need to check key barriers like limited trained workforce and other resources for sustained long-term testing and sequencing capacities.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. In the recent past, growing trends of federalism being challenged by the forces of centralisation were witnessed and it was further highlighted during the pandemic. Critically analyse. (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

Article 1 of the Indian Constitution states, “India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States”. While the Constitution doesn’t mention the term “federal”, it does provide for a governance structure primarily federal in nature. India is a federal state where the Centre and the State are the Cooperating units of the polity. Yet India is an asymmetrical federalism, with the balance of power tilting in the favour of the Centre. Changing dynamics of the party system is increasingly determining the kind of federalism in India.

Body

Background

- Prior to the pandemic, a series of steps by the Union government undermined the principles of federalism, especially fiscal federalism.
- This manifested in the increasing monetary share of the States in Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), the terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission, imposition of demonetisation without adequate consultation with the States among others.
- The institutionalisation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), outsourcing of the statutory functions under the Smart Cities Mission, a delay in transfer of GST compensation, ‘One Nation One Ration’, etc were also major issues.

Federalism during pandemic: Challenges

- **State’s dwindling resources:** The findings suggest that recent changes in India’s fiscal architecture, including the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, and increase in state shares for the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) had placed state finances in a precarious position, even prior to the crisis.
- **Lockdown without prior notice:** There was no prior consultation with states before the lockdown was imposed on 25th March. It caused serious supply chains breakdown and importantly migrant workers chaos.

- **Struggling for fiscal space:** The announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the Rs 20-lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-reliant India Campaign) package left many scrambling with the fiscal maths
- **Increasing dependency on Centre:** The dependency of states on the Centre for revenues has increased, with the share of the revenue from own sources declining from 55% in 2014-15 to 50.5% in 2020-21.
 1. While part of this is inherent in India's fiscal structure, wherein states are the big spenders and the Centre controls the purse strings, the situation has been exacerbated by the introduction of the GST.
 2. Barring a few exceptions, such as petroleum products, property tax, and alcohol excise, indirect taxes have, to a large degree, been subsumed under the GST regime, eroding the ability of states to raise their own revenues.
- **Shortfall in devolution:** Adding to state woes is the significant divergence in past periods between the amount of GST compensation owed and the actual payments made, including for states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand that need greater fiscal support.
 1. Even before Covid-19 hit, 11 states estimated a revenue growth rate below the estimated 14% level, implying higher amounts will be owed as GST compensation.
 2. With the bulk of the states' GST coming from goods such as electronics, fashion, and entertainment — all of which have been impacted by the pandemic — these revenues are likely to decline further.
- **Different Post-lockdown agenda:** For instance, when Kerala took a decision to allow restaurants to open based on its own risk assessment, the state was pressured by the Centre to cancel such permit.

However, it is India's elastic federal structural that has made the pandemic fight stronger, with all the states working as a united force under the guidelines of the Centre at apex.

Way forward and conclusion

- When compared with other large federal countries such as the US, the country has done very well to minimize the frictions and provide a sense of direction to the states.
- However, tackling Covid-19 as seen from the experience of other countries would require a differential and agile response across states and the Centre has at best to play the role of a mentor in providing leadership and resource support.
- The rigid approach as evident in lockdown phase would prove a major hurdle. States must be cleared their dues and be given ample fiscal space to ensure economy is revived.
- States must be allowed to lead in terms of reviving economy, generating income support, jobs while contain the virus at the same time.
- The next big change will come when the current Centre-state relationship gets redefined in a way that enables the 28 states to become federal in the true sense – as self-sustaining economic territories in matters of energy, water, food production and waste recycling.
- Our economic geography of production, transport and communication has to change – it has to become distributive rather than being focused towards the Centre.
- Centrally distributed funds will need to be directed specifically to build the capacities of each state.
 1. The instruments will enable them to embark on a sustainable economic recovery whose base is widely distributed across the various panchayats and districts of each state.
 2. Driving distributive recovery will be energy, transport, supply chains, public administration, rule of law, agriculture and rural development.

In short, the real cooperative federalism which the Centre has been espousing for many years is now put on test and the Centre must ensure states are given full cooperation to battle the challenge in post pandemic phase.

Conclusion

While in certain areas, it might warrant greater powers to the Union(defense, currency etc.), on the development front (education, health etc.) the Centre should respect the autonomy of the other two levels of government and consciously avoid the tendency to centralize powers and functions. Its role should be limited in laying down policies, devolving funds and facilitating co-ordination leaving implementation entirely to States and Local Bodies.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. In the performance of its functions, Election Commission of India (ECI) is insulated from executive interference.
2. The decisions of the ECI can be challenged only in the Supreme Court of India by appropriate petitions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. **1 only**
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Under Article 82 of the Constitution of India, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
2. The representation from each State is changed during the Delimitation exercise.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. **1 only**
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985

1. It prohibits a person from consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
2. It applies to all Indian citizens outside India and to all persons on ships and aircraft registered in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. **Both 1 and 2**
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. What is 'green hydrogen', sometimes mentioned in the news?

- a. Hydrogen generated through electrolysis powered by nuclear energy.
- b. Hydrogen generated through electrolysis with solar power.
- c. Hydrogen created from fossil sources, where the carbon emissions are captured and stored.
- d. Hydrogen produced by electrolysis using renewable energy.**

Q5. With reference to Biological Diversity Act, 2002, consider the following statements:

1. It was enacted to meet the obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
2. It seeks to check biopiracy.
3. It provides for setting up of a National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) in India.

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