



24 August, 2024

India US Defense Agreements

Context: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in Washington DC, where India and the US signed the SOSA and a Liaison Officers Agreement.

- **Purpose:** SOSA mandates reciprocal priority support for national defense goods and services between the US and India.
 - **Objective:** To resolve supply chain disruptions and ensure the availability of critical resources for national security.
 - **Impact:** Strengthens the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) and enhances supply chain resilience.
 - **Partnership:** India becomes the 18th SOSA partner of the US, joining countries like Australia, Canada, and Japan.
 - **Implementation:** Includes support for priority delivery requests, assurances under the US Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS), and a Code of Conduct for Indian firms.
 - **Significance:** Aims to boost cooperation and investment strategies for defense supplies, though it is non-binding and not sanction-proof.
 - **Future Steps:** Potential signing of the Reciprocal Defense Procurement Agreement (RDP) for a legally binding arrangement.
- **BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement):**
- **Purpose:** Provides India with real-time access to American geospatial intelligence.
 - **Benefits:** Enhances the accuracy of automated systems, missiles, and armed drones.
 - **Data Sharing:** Includes maps, satellite images, topographical, and aeronautical data.
 - **Usage:** Aids in navigation, targeting, and operational efficiency.
- **LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement):**
- **Signed:** August 2016.
 - **Function:** Allows US and Indian militaries to replenish from each other's bases.
 - **Access:** Includes supplies, spare parts, and services from each other's land facilities, air bases, and ports.
 - **Reimbursement:** Reimbursements are required for these services.
 - **Naval Cooperation:** Enhances Navy-to-Navy cooperation, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement):**
- **Signed:** September 2018.
 - **Function:** Allows the US to provide encrypted communications equipment and systems to India.

- **Secure Communication:** Ensures secure communication networks for military commanders, aircraft, and ships.
 - **Interoperability:** Facilitates interoperability between Indian and US forces.
- **GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement):**
- **Purpose:** Allows the sharing of military intelligence between the US and India.
 - **Signed:** 2002.
 - **Extension:** Industrial Security Annex (ISA), signed in 2019.
 - **ISA Framework:** Provides a structure for the exchange and protection of classified military information between the US and Indian defense industries.

Right to Education

Context: Delhi High Court orders the merger of school IDs to advance the broader objectives of the RTE Act.

- **Constitutional Provisions for Right to Education:**
- **Early Provisions:**
 - Originally part of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) under Article 45 and Article 39(f) of the Indian Constitution, advocating for equitable and accessible state-funded education.
 - **Initial Reports and Judgments:**
 - **1990:** The Ramamurti Committee Report was the first official document on the Right to Education.
 - **1993:** The Supreme Court's judgment in Unnikrishnan JP vs State of Andhra Pradesh declared education as a fundamental right under Article 21.
 - **Constitutional Amendments:**
 - **1999:** The Tapas Majumdar Committee recommended inserting Article 21A.
 - **2002:** The 86th Constitutional Amendment inserted Article 21A, making education a fundamental right for children aged 6-14 years, and led to the Right to Education Act, 2009.
- **Features of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009:**
- **Coverage:**
 - Provides primary education to all children aged 6 to 14 years.
 - **Seat Reservation:**
 - Section 12(1)(c) mandates non-minority private unaided schools to reserve 25% of seats in entry-level grades for economically weaker and disadvantaged children.
 - **Admission Provisions:**
 - Requires admission of non-admitted children to age-appropriate classes.

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- **Responsibilities and Standards:**

- Outlines shared financial and administrative responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.
- Specifies norms for Pupil-Teacher Ratios (PTRs), infrastructure, school working days, and teacher working hours.

- **Teacher Regulations:**

- Prohibits deployment of teachers for non-educational work (excluding census, elections, and disaster relief).
- Mandates required entry and academic qualifications for teachers.

- **Prohibitions:**

- Bans physical punishment, mental harassment, screening procedures for admissions, capitation fees, private tuition by teachers, and unrecognized schools.

- **Child-Centric Approach:**

- Emphasizes a child-friendly and child-centered learning environment, free from fear, trauma, and anxiety.

➤ **Argument for Extension of Free Education under RTE Beyond Class 8 for EWS:**

- **Cost of Education:**

- Parents of children in unaided private schools face high fees for classes 9 and above, which many cannot afford.
- Transitioning from private to government schools after class 8 could impact children's education and mental state.

➤ **Reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in Higher Education:**

- **103rd Constitutional Amendment Act:**

- Introduced a 10% economic reservation in jobs and educational admissions for EWS by amending Articles 15 and 16.
- Added Article 15(6) and Article 16(6) to promote the welfare of the poor not covered by existing reservations for SCs, STs, and SEBCs.

- Allows both the Centre and states to provide reservations for EWS.

State of the Climate in 2023

Context: Climate change has intensified, with 2023 setting new records for drought, severely impacting nearly 8% of the land area.

➤ **Extreme Drought and Temperature Records**

- In July 2023, nearly 8% of global land area experienced extreme drought, a new record, surpassing the previous high of 6.2% in July 2022.
- Globally, 29.7% of land faced moderate or worse drought categories in 2023, another record-setting figure.
- The global surface temperature was 0.55 to 0.60°C above the 1991–2020 average, making 2023 the warmest year since records began in the mid-to-late 1800s.

➤ **Greenhouse Gases and Ocean Metrics**

- Major greenhouse gases—carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide—reached record levels in 2023.
- Global ocean heat content up to 2,000 meters depth and global mean sea level both reached new highs in 2023, continuing trends from previous years.

➤ **Regional Impacts and Extreme Weather Events**

- Mexico had its driest and hottest year since 1950.
- Severe droughts impacted South America, West Asia, and Europe, with the Amazon basin experiencing its most severe drought in decades.
- Canada recorded its worst wildfire season, with 15 million hectares burned, more than double the previous record.
- Greece saw record wildfires, burning more than four times its long-term average area.
- Australia experienced its driest three-month period in 104 years, with extensive bushfires in the Northern Territory.

➤ **Polar Regions and Sea Ice**

- The Arctic had its fourth-warmest year on record, with many sites experiencing the highest permafrost temperatures.
- Arctic sea ice extent was the fifth-smallest in the 45-year record.
- Antarctic sea ice reached record lows in extent and area, with new monthly record lows set in eight months of 2023.

➤ **Cyclone Activity**

- Tropical cyclone activity was below average with 82 named storms, compared to the average of 87 (1991–2020).
- Despite this, global accumulated cyclone energy was above average, with over seven cyclones reaching Category 5.

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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Subhadra Scheme



Recently, Subhadra Scheme was announced by Odisha government.

About the Subhadra Scheme:

- The Subhadra Scheme is a **welfare scheme** that targets one crore women between the **ages of 21 and 60 years**.
- Under this scheme, each **beneficiary will receive a total of ₹50,000 over a period of five years**.
- The financial assistance will be disbursed at **₹10,000 per annum**.
- The annual amount will be paid in **two instalments of ₹5,000 each**, timed to coincide with **Rakhi Purnima and International Women's Day**.
- The total financial outlay for the Subhadra Scheme is ₹55,825 crore.
- The scheme will be implemented from the financial year **2024-25** and will continue **until 2028-29**.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India



Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed Food Business Operators (FBOs) and e-commerce FBOs to remove all claims related to A1 and A2 types of milk and dairy products from their packaging.

About the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India:

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is a **statutory body established under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, Government of India.
- It was established on **5 September 2008 under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**
- It serves as the apex body responsible for **regulating and supervising the food safety and standards in India**.
- Its regulations aim to prevent foodborne illnesses and promote consumer confidence in the food supply chain.
- It is comprised of a **Chairperson and 22 members** representing various stakeholders including food industry, consumer organizations and food scientists.
- FSSAI undertakes various initiatives such as the **Eat Right India movement** to promote healthy eating habits and reduce food wastage.
- Its headquarter is in **New Delhi**.

National Human Rights Commission



Recently, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of Andhra Pradesh over the reported incidents of food poisoning causing serious health problems for 70 students.

About National Human Rights Commission:

- The National Human Rights Commission is a **statutory body**.
- It was established on **October 12, 1993**, in accordance with the **Paris Principles**.
- It is responsible for reviewing and addressing human rights **violations** and making recommendations for their protection and promotion.
- It is mandated to protect human rights as "**rights related to life, liberty and dignity** of an individual guaranteed by the **constitution and courts** of our country".
- It is a multi-member body including a **chairman, four members and four ex-officio members**.
- The **chairman and members serve for a five-year term** or until they reach the **age of 70**, whichever comes first.

Place in News

Botswana

A 2,492-carat diamond, the second-largest ever found was recently unearthed at the Karowe Diamond Mine in northeastern Botswana by a Canada-based mining company.

Botswana (Capital: Gaborone)

Location: Botswana is a **landlocked country** in Southern Africa.

Boundaries: Botswana shares its borders with **Namibia** (West and North), **Zambia** (North), **Zimbabwe** (Northeast) and **South Africa** (South and Southeast).

Physical Features:

- The highest point in Botswana is located at **Tsodilo Hills**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, known for their ancient rock art.
- Botswana's major rivers include the **Okavango, Limpopo, Chobe, Boteti and Molopo Rivers**.
- Botswana is rich in minerals, with key resources including **diamonds, copper, nickel, coal, soda ash and gold**.



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Membership: Botswana is a member of several international and regional organizations, including the **United Nations (UN)**, **African Union (AU)**, **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**, **Commonwealth of Nations** and the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.

POINTS TO PONDER

- What recent innovation has been developed to effectively deliver antifungal medications for targeting infections like pulmonary aspergillosis? - **Polymeric nanoparticles**
- Which telescope's data have IIA astronomers recently used to pioneer a method for probing the Sun's magnetic fields? -**Kodaikanal Tower Tunnel Telescope**
- What has the Green Strategic Partnership between the Governments of India and Denmark led to the establishment of in Varanasi? - **Smart Laboratory for Clean Rivers (SLCR) Project**
- Which river was associated with the Dumbur Dam in Tripura that the Ministry of External Affairs denied as a cause for recent floods in Bangladesh? -**Gumti River**
- In which particle accelerator was the heaviest antimatter nucleus recently spotted by scientists? -**Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC)**

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