

## 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.

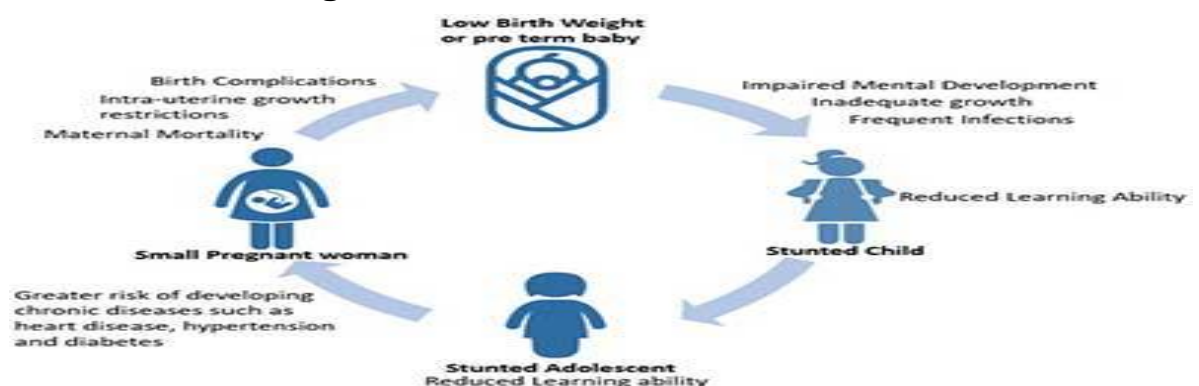
## International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Innovative Way to Combat Malnutrition in MP

### ❖ 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

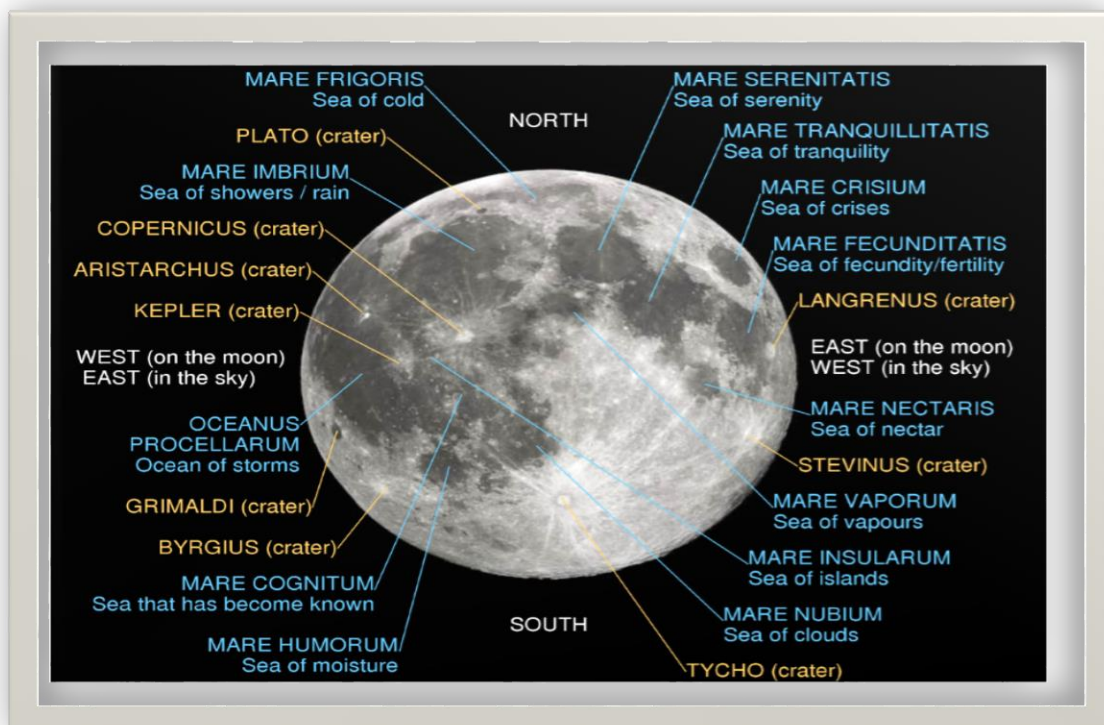
- Recently, a **leftover piece of a spacecraft** flying through space reportedly **hit the surface of the moon**, creating a new crater that may be around 65 feet wide.

### ❖ 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 km<sup>2</sup>.
- 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



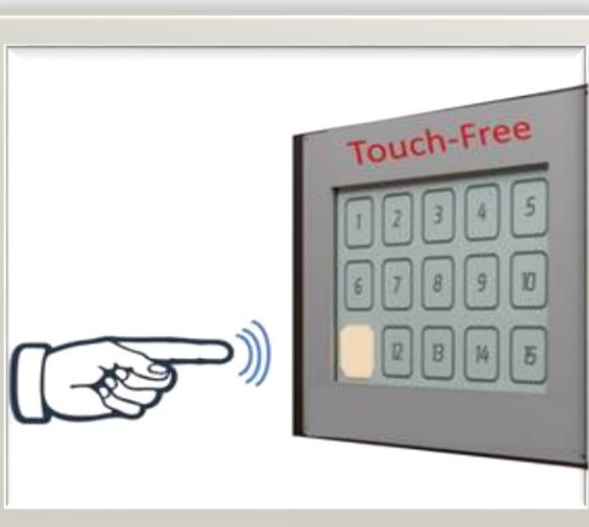
### ❖ Context

- 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.

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