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India's Non-permanent Seat at the UNSC

All the countries in the Asia-Pacific Group at the United Nations have unanimously supported India for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council (UNSC) for a two-year term in 2021-22.

- Both Pakistan and China have supported India's candidature.
- The Asia-Pacific Group consists of 55 members states, they get to nominate one of its members for the June 2020 elections to a non-permanent seat on the UNSC.
- India has been a non-permanent member of the UNSC seven times, the most recent was for the year 2011-12.
- Estonia, Niger, Tunisia, Vietnam and St. Vincent and the Grenadines were elected earlier this month.
- India has been contending for permanent membership at the UNSC from many years and has been a part of G-4 grouping which is continuously lobbying for **UNSC reforms**.

United Nation Security Council

- The United Nations Charter established six main organs of the **United Nations**, including the Security Council.
It gives primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the Security Council, which may meet whenever peace is threatened.
- All members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council.
While other organs of the United Nations make recommendations to member states, only the Security Council has the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.

Permanent and Non-Permanent Members

The Council is composed of 15 Members:

- Five permanent members: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **Ten non-permanent members** elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly (with the end of term year):
 - Belgium (2020), Côte d'Ivoire (2019), Dominican Republic (2020), Equatorial Guinea (2019), Germany (2020), Indonesia (2020), Kuwait (2019), Peru (2019), Poland (2019), South Africa (2020).

Selection of non-permanent members of the Security Council

- 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**:
 - five for African and Asian countries;
 - one for Eastern European countries;
 - two for Latin American and Caribbean countries;
 - two for Western European and other countries.
- Aspiring member needs the vote of two-thirds of the 193 UN General Assembly members to win a non-permanent seat on the UNSC.
- **Article 23** of the UN Charter concerns the composition of the Security Council.

United Nations Regional Groups

- The Regional Groups are the geopolitical regional groups of member states of the United Nations. UN member states were unofficially grouped into **five geopolitical regional groups**.
- Many UN bodies are allocated on the basis of geographical representation. Top leadership positions, including **Secretary-General and President of the General Assembly**, are rotated among the regional groups.
- The groups also coordinate substantive policy and form common fronts for negotiations and bloc voting.

Triclosan and Osteoporosis

A study has found that **women exposed to triclosan**, a chemical widely used as an antibacterial in soaps, toothpastes and other personal care products, **are more likely to develop osteoporosis**.

Triclosan (TCS)

- Triclosan is a broad-spectrum **antimicrobial agent** that is frequently used in pharmaceuticals and personal care products.
- When one uses a product containing triclosan, one can absorb a small amount through one's skin or mouth.
- Triclosan added to toothpaste has been shown to **help prevent gingivitis**.
Gingivitis is a common and mild form of **gum disease** that causes irritation, redness and swelling (inflammation) of gingiva, the part of gum around the base of teeth.
- **Concerns:**
 - Some short-term animal studies have shown that exposure to high doses of triclosan is associated with **a decrease in the levels of some thyroid hormones**, thus making triclosan an **endocrine disruptor**.
Endocrine disruptors are chemicals that may interfere with the body's endocrine system and produce adverse developmental, reproductive, neurological, and immune effects in both humans and wildlife.
 - Some other studies have raised the possibility that exposure to triclosan contributes to **making bacteria resistant to antibiotics**.
 - Laboratory studies have demonstrated that triclosan may have potential to adversely **affect bone mineral density** in cell lines or in animals.
 - Also, there is still no evidence that triclosan in consumer antibacterial soaps and body washes provides any benefit over washing with regular soap and water.

Osteoporosis

- Osteoporosis, which literally means porous bone, **is a disease in which the density and quality of bone are reduced**.
- **Occurrence:** Bone is living tissue that is constantly being broken down and replaced. Osteoporosis occurs when the creation of new bone doesn't keep up with the loss of old bone.
- **Impact:** As bones become more porous and fragile, the risk of fracture is greatly increased.
- **Symptoms:** Often there are no symptoms until the first fracture occurs as the loss of bone occurs silently and progressively.
- **Diagnosis: A bone mineral density (BMD) test** measures how much calcium and other types of minerals are in an area of a bone. This test helps health care provider detect osteoporosis and predict the risk for bone fractures.
- **Prevention:** Good nutrition with adequate calcium, protein, and Vitamin D as well as regular exercise can help in keeping bone healthy throughout the life.

Why women are more likely to get osteoporosis than men?

- Women tend to have **smaller, thinner bones than men**.

- **Estrogen**, a hormone in women that protects bones, **decreases sharply** when women reach **menopause**.
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Married Women Out of Labour Force

The UN report on “**Progress of The World’s Women, 2019-2020**”, has stated that more than half the married women (aged 25-54) didn't participate in the global labour force. The report has cited data from the **International Labour Organization**.

Findings of the Report

- While families assume a central role in care provision, other institutions and actors like paid domestic workers, a care home for older people run by a municipality or a community childcare centre also play a part in financing and delivering care.
When these care services are inaccessible or of poor quality, much of the work falls back on women and girls when needs are not met.
- **Global performance:** The **labour force participation rate** for women who are married or in a union is particularly low in the Central and Southern Asia region (29.1 per cent), compared to the much higher rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (73.8 per cent), Europe and Northern America (78.2 per cent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (60.3 per cent) .
Sub-Saharan Africa stands out as the only region where women who are married or in a union have a higher labour force participation rate than single/never married women.
- **Gender division:** With the women with young children (under age 6), the labour force participation reduces by 5.9 percentage points worldwide, while among men it increased by 3.4 percentage points.
The disparate outcomes are the product of traditional gender norms that classify childcare and domestic work (cooking, cleaning, etc) as maternal responsibilities and breadwinning as a paternal duty.
- **In low-income countries**, motherhood did not shrink women’s labour force participation in low-income countries as compared to middle-and high-income countries.
It could be because in poor countries poverty compels women to join or remain in the labour force to support their families even when young children are present.
- **In developing economies:** Despite witnessing an increase in economic growth, India and China have seen a significant decline in women’s labour force participation.
Women’s labour force fell by 6.9 percentage points in India, during the period 1997–2018, which is one of the largest globally.

In the context of India

- **This story has distinct geographical features: women's labour force participation** has stagnated in urban areas since the late 1980s and has seen a concentrated decline among younger (aged 25–40) married women in rural areas.
- **Quality of work:** The poor quality of the paid work that is available to women, often on top of long hours of arduous unpaid domestic chores, it is not implausible that some improvements in household income levels could have eased the pressure on women to seek outside employment.
- 26% of women according to the **Demographic and Health Survey** and 17% of women according to the **National sample survey organisation** aged between 15–49, receives a wage or income of their own. The majority of women are financially dependent on their spouses, fathers, in-laws and other extended kin.

Recommendations to Bring Equality at Home

- **National care system:** In developing countries, in particular, the existing care infrastructure, including professional care providers, is insufficient to meet existing care needs. In recognition of care as a 'public good' and to more **equitably redistribute care responsibilities** between women and men, and between families and other institutions, national care systems need to be built.
- **The policy components** that aim to provide families with time, money and services to support care work.
 - Time can be provided in the form of **paid maternity** and **parental leave** for parents with young children and **cash benefits** that enable self-employed workers in the informal economy to take time off.
 - Time and money should also be provided to those caring for **older family members** or those living with a disability.
- **Greater public investment:** It is needed in professional care-related services including early childhood education and care, long-term care for people living with disabilities and older persons.
- **Basic infrastructure** to reduce the drudgery of care work. These investments have significant pay-offs:
 - They build children's human capabilities.
 - Safeguard the dignity and human rights of people living with disabilities and older persons.
 - Create decent employment opportunities for women and men in the care sector.

Storage of Payment System Data

The Reserve Bank of India in its directive on 'Storage of Payment System Data' has made it clear that entire payment data shall be stored in systems **located only in India.**

- All system providers need to ensure that within a period of **six months**, the entire data relating to payment systems operated by them is stored in a system only in India.
- Data stored in India should include **end-to-end transaction** details and info about **payment transactions**. The data could be pertaining to:
 - **Customer data** like name, mobile number, Aadhaar number, PAN.
 - **Payment-sensitive data** like customer and beneficiary account details.
 - **Payment credentials** like OTP, PIN.
 - **Transaction data** such as originating and destination system information amount.
- All data related to payments must be stored only in India and data processed (in case the processing is done abroad) will have to be brought back to the country within 24 hours.

There is no bar on the **processing of payment transactions** outside India if so desired by the Payment System Operators (PSO).

- Data stored in India can be accessed or fetched whenever required for handling **customer disputes** as well as for any other related processing activity, such as **chargeback**.

The data may be shared with the **overseas regulator**, if so required, depending upon the nature/**origin of a transaction** with prior approval of the RBI.

- For **cross border transaction data**, (consisting of a foreign component and a domestic component) a copy of the domestic component may also be stored abroad.

Evidence of Supernova Remnants

A team of Indian astronomers has found significant evidence of a supernova explosion in a star-forming region called G351.7-1.2.

- The evidence of explosion is in the form of a high-velocity jet of atomic hydrogen.
- The explosion should have resulted in a compact stellar object such as a neutron star or a pulsar or a black hole. However, there is no trace of either yet.
- **The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT)**, operated by the National Centre of Radio Astrophysics in Pune was used in observation.
- A large number of gas clouds of bubble-shaped, which is usual for a supernova remnant were observed.
 - The high-velocity jets of atomic hydrogen extending to about 20 light years racing at a speed of about 50 km per second in opposite directions in the neighbourhood.
 - It is evidence of a supernova explosion but could not find the leftover of the

massive star.

Notes:

Black Holes- The term 'black hole' was coined in the mid-1960s by American Physicist John Archibald Wheeler. It refers to a point in space where the matter is so compressed as to create a gravity field from which even light cannot escape. Black-holes were theorized by Albert Einstein in 1915.

Supernova- A supernova is the explosion of a star. It is the largest explosion that takes place in space. A supernova happens where there is a change in the core, or centre, of a star. A change can occur in two different ways, with both resulting in a supernova.

Neutron stars-

- Neutron stars comprise one of the possible evolutionary end-points of high mass stars.
- Once the core of the star has completely burned to iron, energy production stops and the core rapidly collapses, squeezing electrons and protons together to form neutrons and neutrinos.
- A star supported by neutron degeneracy pressure is known as a 'neutron star', which may be seen as a pulsar if its magnetic field is favourably aligned with its spin axis.

Big Bang- The Big Bang Theory is the leading explanation about how the universe began. At its simplest, it says the universe as we know, started with a small singularity, then inflated over the next 13.8 billion years to the cosmos that we know today.

Beekeeping Development Committee

Bibek Debroy led beekeeping development committee under the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister has made recommendations to enhance the contribution of the beekeeping sector for achieving the target of **doubling of farmer incomes by 2022.**

The committee was set up to identify **ways of advancing beekeeping** in India that can help in improving:

- **Agricultural productivity.**
- Enhancing **employment** generation.
- Augmenting **nutritional security.**
- Sustaining **biodiversity.**

Key Recommendations

- **Institutionalize** the National Bee Board and rename it as the **Honey and Pollinators**

Board of India under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare as it will help in advancing beekeeping through multiple mechanisms such as:

- Setting up of new **integrated bee development centers** and strengthening the existing ones.
- Creating a honey **price stabilization fund**.
- **Collection of data** on important aspects of apiculture.
- Simplifying procedures and specify clear standards for **ease of exporting honey** and other bee products.
- Beekeeping should not be restricted to honey and wax only instead marketing of bee products such as **pollen, propolis, royal jelly, and bee venom** can contribute to the income of Indian farmers.
- Recognize honeybees as **inputs to agriculture** and consider landless beekeepers as farmers.
- **Training and development** of beekeepers should be provided by state governments.
- **National and regional infrastructure** should be developed for storage, processing, and marketing of honey and other bee products.
- Plantation of **bee-friendly flora** at appropriate places and engaging women **self-help groups** in managing such plantations.
- Recognition of **apiculture as a subject** for advanced research under the aegis of **Indian Council for Agricultural Research**.

Honey Bee Industry in India

- As per the **Food and Agricultural Organization** database, Indian ranked **eighth** in 2017-18 in the world in terms of honey production while China stood first.
- India has a potential of about **200 million bee colonies** as against 3.4 million bee colonies today.
- Increasing the number of **bee colonies** will not only increase the production of bee-related products but will boost overall **agricultural** and **horticultural productivity**.
- As per the National Bee Board and Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare India's **honey exports** have jumped from 29.6 to 51.5 thousand tonnes between 2014-15 and 2017-18.

National Bee Board (NBB)

- Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) registered National Bee Board as a society under the societies registration Act, 1860 in 2000.
- National Bee Board (NBB) was reconstituted (with the secretary as chairman) in June 2006.
- The main objective of the National Bee Board (NBB) is the overall development of beekeeping by promoting scientific beekeeping in India to increase the productivity of crops through pollination and increase the honey production for increasing the

income of the Beekeepers/ Farmers.

- Presently NBB is implementing National horticulture mission (NHM) and Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan State (HMNEM).
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Robots Replacing Manufacturing Jobs

As per a report by analysis firm Oxford Economics, it is predicted that robots are going to replace 10% of jobs in manufacturing sector in next 10 years.

- Manufacturing could lose 20 million positions replaced by robots by 2030.
 - Each new industrial robot is going to wipe out 1.6 manufacturing jobs.
 - The report states that it is expected that automation should boost the economy as a whole, but it is likely to create greater inequality.
 - The pockets of workers most vulnerable to automation can often be found in rural areas with a traditional, labor-intensive industrial base.
 - The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** have also expressed concern over the risk of rising inequality.
 - The report also highlights the importance of taking policy action to reduce the likely impact of robotization in these vulnerable areas.
 - People displaced from jobs are likely to find that the services sector have also been squeezed by automation.
 - It states that more than half of **U.S. factory workers** displaced by robots over the past two decades were absorbed into three employment categories -- transport, construction and maintenance, and office and administration work.

Now these categories are the most vulnerable to automation over the next decade.
 - Loss of jobs because of automation is also confirmed by the **World Economic Forum** (WEF) in its report '**Future of Jobs**'.
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Buddhist Relic Unearthed in Andhra Pradesh

A Buddhist relic has been unearthed in Andhra Pradesh. It is a limestone pillar, which is carved with half lotus medallions at the centre and top portions on all four sides.

- It belongs to the Amaravati school of Art of the Ikshvaku times.
- Buddhist monastery of which this pillar might be part of a Shilamandapa where Buddhist teachers offer regular discourses on the Dhamma of the Buddha.
- The exploration was undertaken under 'Preserve Heritage for Posterity', an awareness campaign launched by the Cultural Centre of Vijayawada and Amaravati (CCVA), to bring to limelight artefact which remained in neglect in different parts of Andhra

Pradesh.

Amaravati School of Art

- Amaravati school of art evolved and flourished for nearly six centuries commencing from 200-100 BC in India itself, i.e. it has no outside influence.
 - It was patronized first by the Satavahanas and later by the Ikshvakus.
 - The material used is a distinctive white marble and Amaravati sculptures have a sense of movement and energy with profound and quiet naturalism in human, animal and floral forms.
 - Both religious (mainly Buddhist) and secular images were present in this style.
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Most Innovative Universities in the Asia-Pacific

The **Reuters' list** of the most innovative universities in Asia Pacific **includes the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) from India**. The universities are **ranked on the basis of innovation**.

- Compared to **last year**, IITs have **slipped four places** to finish last in the list of 75 institutions dominated by China and topped by South Korea.
 - Despite boasting the world's second-largest population and being one of the largest economies, **only one Indian university makes it to the list** i.e. IIT's.
 - **IIT** is a network of **23 universities** which **centralizes its patent administration**, so it's not always possible to identify which constituent university was responsible for what research. As a result, Reuters ranked the entire system as opposed to individual universities.
 - World-class campuses like IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay may have ranked much higher on the list if they weren't grouped in with smaller and newer institutes like IIT Tirupati and IIT Palakkad.
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