



## News Analysis (18 Jun, 2019)

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### NATO Ally Status to India

Two top American lawmakers have moved a key legislation in the Senate which seeks to advance the US-India strategic relationship.

The legislation will amend the Arms Control Export Act to bring India at par with the US' NATO allies— Israel, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea for purposes of selling military items under the ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations) list.

### Background

- There are two technology control lists in the US system – one is under the Export Administration Regulations, which places controls on the sale of dual-use items that have both civil and military uses and the second is the ITAR list.
- The civil nuclear deal paved the way for India to access items on the first set of lists, i.e. those under the Export Administration Regulations.
- The Arms Control Export (AEC) Act governs the ITAR list. The amendment, therefore, will make it possible for the US to fulfil India's operational requirements in quick time, thus improving its reliability on supplies.

### North Atlantic Treaty Organization

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty (also called the Washington Treaty) of April 4, 1949, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.
- A key provision of the treaty, the so-called Article 5, states that if one member of the alliance is attacked in Europe or North America, it is to be considered an attack on all members. That effectively put Western Europe under the "nuclear umbrella" of the US.
  - NATO has only once invoked Article 5, on September 12, 2001 following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US.
- As of 2019, there are 29 member states, with Montenegro becoming the latest member to join the alliance in 2017.
  - France withdrew from the integrated military command of NATO in 1966 but remained a member of the organization. However, it resumed its position in NATO's military command in 2009.

### Recent Issues

- A big source of the internal strain is American President Donald Trump's recurrent demand that countries devote an amount equal to at least two percent of GDP to defence spending in 2018.

However, only seven of NATO's 29 member states hit the two-percent target.

- Strained relationship over selling of defence equipments.
  - The US has halted delivery of equipment related to its F-35 fighter jets to Turkey over its plans to buy Russia's S-400 missile defence system.
  - U.S. wants Turkey to buy the Patriot defence system of the USA, instead of Russia's S-400s.
- Recently, the Republic of Macedonia changed its name to the "Republic of North Macedonia" to enter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) as its accession to both organizations was vetoed by Greece.

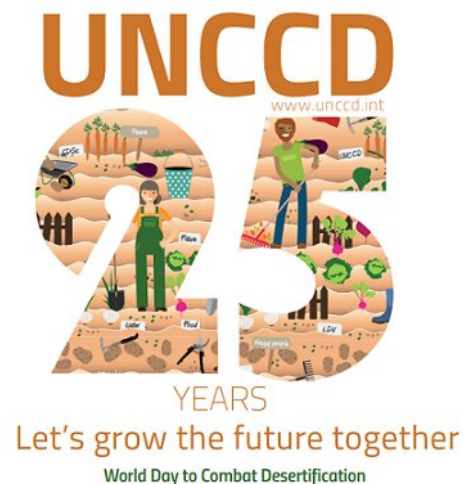
## Importance

- The amendment is moved as part of the National Defense Authorization Act 2020 of the USA, giving a big boost to India-US defence trade.
- This would remove current legislative barriers to export of major high-tech defence equipment to India which is normally shared with only a few countries.
- Although, it is an important signal of US political support for enhancing defense ties but is unlikely to have tangible impact on trade flows in the near term.
- The amendment needs to be passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives before it can be signed by the US President into law.

## World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed every year on **17<sup>th</sup> June**. India for the first time will host the 14th session of the Conference of Parties (COP-14) of the United Nations Convention to

Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in September, 2019.



- The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed every year to promote public awareness of international efforts to combat desertification.
- The day is a unique moment to remind everyone that land degradation neutrality is achievable through problem-solving, strong community involvement and cooperation at all levels.
- **The Theme** of 2019 is "Let's Grow the Future Together"

## United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- It was established in 1994, the **sole legally binding international agreement** linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid

and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

- **UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework:** It is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land, improve the livelihoods of more than 1.3 billion people, and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations to build.
- The Convention's 197 parties work together to improve the living conditions for people in drylands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought.
- The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation. The UNCCD secretariat facilitates cooperation between developed and developing countries, particularly around knowledge and technology transfer for sustainable land management.
- As the dynamics of land, climate and biodiversity are intimately connected, to meet these complex challenges with an integrated approach and the best possible use of natural resources. The UNCCD collaborates closely with the other **two Rio Conventions**:
  - **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).**
  - **The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).**

## The Conference of the Parties (COP)

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- The COP was established by the Convention as the supreme decision-making body. It comprises ratifying governments and regional economic integration organizations, such as the European Union.
- **Functions of COP:** One of the main functions of the COP is to review reports submitted by the Parties detailing how they are carrying out their commitments.
  - The COP makes recommendations on the basis of these reports.
  - It also has the power to make amendments to the Convention or to adopt new annexes, such as additional regional implementation annexes.
  - The COP can guide the Convention as global circumstances and national needs change.

## UNCCD Estimate of Desertification

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- **Land & Drought:** By 2025, 1.8 billion people will experience absolute water scarcity, and 2/3 of the world will be living under water-stressed conditions.

A complex and slowly encroaching natural hazard with significant and pervasive socio-economic and environmental impacts to cause more deaths and displace more people than any other natural disaster.
- **Land & Human Security:** By 2045 some 135 million people may be displaced as a result of desertification.

Achieving land degradation neutrality -by rehabilitating already degraded land, scaling up sustainable land management and accelerating restoration initiatives- is a pathway to greater resilience and security for all.
- **Land & Climate:** Restoring the soils of degraded ecosystems has the potential to store up to 3 billion tons of carbon annually.

The land use sector represents almost 25% of total global emissions. Its rehabilitation and sustainable management are critical to combating climate change.

## UNCCD and Sustainable Development

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**Goal 15 of Sustainable Development Goals(SDG), 2030** declares that “we are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably

managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations”.

## India and UNCCD

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The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in partnership with the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** also launched a flagship project on enhancing capacity on **forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) and Bonn Challenge** in India, through a pilot phase of 3.5 years implemented in the States of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Karnataka.

### Desertification

- It is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts.
- It occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one-third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use.
- Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land

### Bonn challenge

- The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.
- At the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) 2015 in Paris, India also joined the **voluntary Bonn Challenge** pledge to bring into restoration 13 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020, an additional 8 million hectares by 2030.
- India's pledge is one of the largest in Asia.

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## UN Report on Myanmar Rohingya Crisis

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The UN secretary-general has accepted an independent report on how the UN System operated in Myanmar, leading up to the mass exodus of the Rohingyas following serious human rights abuses.

- The report concluded that there were **“systemic and structural failures”** that prevented a unified strategy from being implemented.
- It covers the period 2010-2018, encompassing the UN's response to the systematic and brutal abuse of hundreds-of-thousands of mainly – **Muslim Rohingya in Rakhine state**, by the national army and security forces, which began in August 2017.
- It was described by the UN human rights chief at the time as a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.

### Findings of Report

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- **Fragmented strategy:** The report has expressed displeasure over the functioning of the UN agency in handling the violence against the Rohingya. It observes that serious errors were committed and opportunities were lost in the UN system following a **fragmented strategy** rather than a common plan of action.
- **Improper reporting:** There appear to have been instances of **deliberately de-dramatizing events** in reports prepared by the Resident Coordinator, as well as instances of various UN entities, including the Office **for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, of not sharing their analysis with other

entities of the UN System.

The report also emphasises the impact of competing strategies between some UN agencies and individuals while dealing with the Rohingya crisis.

- **Polarisation:** It appears that the increasing polarisation among officials and staff was fuelled, at least in part, by the emotional reactions to the horrific events taking place on the ground.
- The foundations of **systemic and structural shortcomings** in the UN's presence in Myanmar.
  - Insufficient inter-governmental support.
  - The absence of a clear and unifying strategy.
  - The weakness of a clear nodal point for coordination.
  - Dysfunctional actions at the level of the Country Team.
  - Shortcomings of systematic and unified analysis from the field

## Conclusion and Recommendations

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- **Shared responsibility:** It was the shared responsibility on the part of all parties to protect the Rohingya's.
  - The agencies involved have not been able to accompany the Government's political process with constructive actions.
- The report says that the UN Security Council should bear some responsibility, "for not providing enough support to the Secretariat when such backing was required and continues to be essential.
- **The key lesson** was to foster an environment encouraging different entities of the UN System to work together to reinforce a "**broader, system-wide strategy**".

### Rohingya people

- The **Rohingya people** are stateless, Indo-Aryan ethnic group who reside in Rakhine State, Myanmar.
- There were an estimated 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar before the 2016–17 crisis. An estimated 625,000 refugees from Rakhine, Myanmar, had crossed the border into Bangladesh since August 2017. The majority are Muslim while a minority are Hindu.
- Described by the United Nations as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. The Rohingya population is denied citizenship under the 1982 Myanmar nationality law. They have denied the Rohingya the possibility of acquiring a nationality. Although Rohingya history in the region can be traced back to the 8th century, Myanmar law does not recognize the ethnic minority as one of the eight national indigenous races.

### Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

- OCHA is the part of the United Nations Secretariat responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. OCHA also ensures there is a framework within which each actor can contribute to the overall response effort.
- It works to overcome obstacles that impede humanitarian assistance from reaching people affected by crises, and it provides leadership in mobilizing assistance and resources on behalf of the humanitarian system. OCHA is not an operational agency directly engaged in the delivery of humanitarian programmes, and its added value is as an honest broker, facilitator, thought leader and global advocate, providing support to the humanitarian system.

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## Hypoglycaemia and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome

In the outbreak of acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) in Bihar, witnessing around 350 cases and 103 deaths till now, **most of these deaths have been attributed to hypoglycaemia**, or low blood sugar.

Hypoglycaemia is a commonly seen sign among patients of AES, and the link has been the subject of research over the years.

## About AES

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- **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)** is a broad term involving several infections, and affects young children. The syndrome can be caused by viruses, bacteria or fungi. In India, the most common cause is the virus that causes Japanese Encephalitis (JE).
- The syndrome is also caused by infections such as **scrub typhus, dengue, mumps, measles**, and even **Nipah or Zika virus**.

## How is Hypoglycaemia linked to AES?

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- Hypoglycaemia is not a symptom but a sign of AES. The combination of AES with hypoglycaemia is unique to Muzaffarpur (Bihar), Vietnam and Bangladesh.
- In Bihar, convulsions in children (which is AES) are found in combination with hypoglycaemia. This hypoglycaemia is caused by malnourishment and lack of proper diet.
- **Methylene Cyclopropyl Glycine (MCPG)** which has been known to be a content of litchi fruit has been shown to cause hypoglycaemia in experimental animals.
- When litchi harvesting starts in May, it is common for children to feed on fallen litchis and sleep without food. The toxin in litchi lowers blood sugar level during the night, and these children are found unconscious in the morning.
- The attributing factors to **hypoglycaemic AES** are **malnutrition, heat, lack of rain, and entero-virus**.
- A team from the Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, and Christian Medical College, Vellore, has concluded that heat, humidity, unhygienic conditions and malnutrition, unique to these areas, together contribute to the rise in AES.
- Incidence is higher in litchi fields around which malnourished children live.

## How is the government tackling AES?

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- The Bihar government introduced **free vaccines** at all primary health centres. The current coverage is 70%.
- The central and state governments have conducted **awareness campaign** since February asking people not to expose their children to sun, ensure a proper diet and increase fluid intake.
- **Early hospital referral** and standard treatment for convulsions, high fever and vomiting can save lives.

## The World Population Prospects

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According to '**The World Population Prospects 2019**' published by the Population Division of the **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs**, India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country by 2027.

- Through the end of the century (between **2019** and **2050**) **India** (with an estimated population of 1.37 billion) is expected to remain the world's most populous country, followed by **China, Nigeria, United States of America**, and **Pakistan**.
- The global population is projected to increase by another **2 billion** people by 2050.
- **Ageing** of the world's population will also spike due to increasing **life expectancy** and **falling fertility levels**.
  - By 2050, one in six people in the world will be over **age 65** (16%), up from one in 11 in 2019 (9%).

- Aging will result in a decline in the proportion of the **working age population** that in turn will exert pressure on **social security systems**.
- **Europe and North America** will have a much higher number of aging population.
- Many countries are experiencing a reduction in population size (between 2019 and 2050, many countries will experience **populations shrink** by at least 1%).  
**populations shrink** can be attributed to sustained **low levels of fertility** and, in some cases, high rates of **emigration**.
- In countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines out-migration plays a key in **population change** (outflow of migrant workers).  
In some instances, out-migration could also be caused by violence, lack of **security or wars** as in Myanmar, Syria and Venezuela.
- Many of the **fastest growing populations** are in the **poorest countries**, where population growth brings additional challenges in the effort to eradicate poverty, achieve greater equality, combat hunger and malnutrition and strengthen the coverage and quality of health and education systems to ensure that no one is left behind.

## 'Fewer but Newer' Nuclear Arms: SIPRI

**The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** has reported that the world is witnessing less nuclear arms but with modernising and increasing size.

- **At the start of 2019**, the United States, Russia, Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea had a total of some **13,865 nuclear weapons** with a **decrease of 600** from previous year.
- The drop in recent years can mainly be attributed to the **US and Russia**, whose combined arsenals still make up more than **90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons**.
  - It is partly a result of the **New START treaty** – that was signed between the United States and the Russian Federation in 2010 which puts a cap on the number of deployed warheads as well as getting rid of obsolete warheads from the Cold War era.
  - There is a concern on the future of treaty as it will expire in 2021 and there is no serious discussion on its extension.
- **The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** has also played a vital role in controlling proliferation of nuclear arms.  
Because of the NPT, the number of nuclear arms has been drastically reduced since a peak **in the mid-1980s when there were some 70,000 nuclear warheads** in the world.
- This decrease in number of nuclear arms is observed with **modernisation of nuclear arms coupled with increasing size of arms** especially by China, India, and Pakistan.
- The report has shown worry over the **build-up of nuclear arms** on both sides of the border **between India and Pakistan**, and the danger of a conventional conflict escalating to a nuclear one.
- Global disarmament efforts also suffered a blow when the United States announced in February, 2019 that it would withdraw from the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty**, prompting Russia to say it would also suspend its participation.  
**Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty** was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1987 to eliminate and permanently forgo all of their nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of **500 to 5,500 kilometers**.

### **The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**

- The SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

- Established in 1966 at Stockholm, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

## The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

- The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is:
  - to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology,
  - to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy,
  - and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.
- The Treaty represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.
- Opened for signature in 1968, the Treaty entered into force in 1970.
- A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States.

## Piped Water Connection by 2024

The Prime Minister has recently said that the **government will provide piped water to every household** in the next five years i.e. **by 2024**.

This is the **12<sup>th</sup> time** that India has set a deadline to take water at the household-level.

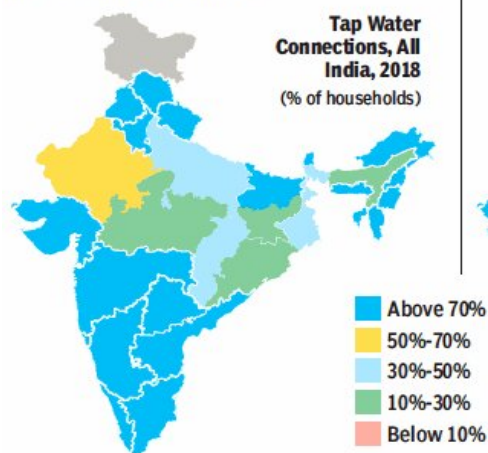
## Challenges

It would be an **enormous exercise**:

- Some 8.43 million households, currently without drinking water facilities, have to be connected to piped water in the next five years.
- Some 4,620 households would have to be added to the network every day for the next five years, at the rate of 40 litres per day.

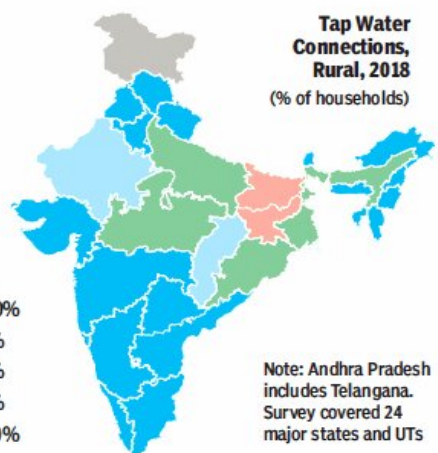
### BIGGEST STATES LAGGING IN TAP WATER SUPPLY

The states of UP, Bengal, Bihar are among those where piped water has reached only half the households at the most

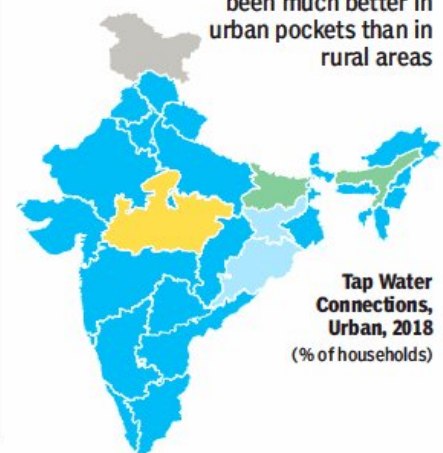


### BUT PROGRESS DOESN'T INSULATE AGAINST CRISIS

States of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are among states where more than 70% households have access to tap water, including for both rural and urban households. But these are also the ones that have borne the brunt of a parched 2019 summer



While even among states lagging overall on piped water access, the performance in ensuring coverage has been much better in urban pockets than in rural areas



- India remains haunted by what is known as the **“slippage” problem**. It means **villages/habitations covered** with safe drinking water facilities **slip back to 'not-covered'** status **due to** various reasons that include **drying up of the source** or collapse of the facilities due to non-maintenances.



- Currently, India is facing a **water stressed situation**, two major reasons being, drying reservoirs and **dipping groundwater levels**.
- It is to be seen from where the piped water supply scheme would draw water as currently the country is going through a water crisis situation.
- **The quality of water sources** — both surface and ground sources — is hardly suited to drinking. According to NITI Aayog, nearly 70 per cent of all of the country's fresh water sources are contaminated.
- **Water, being a state subject**, the scope of the centre's intervention is therefore limited.

## Way Forward

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- There is an urgent need to **create awareness among the people** for the conservation of water.
  - **The Jal Shakti Ministry needs to work with states** to ensure piped water to every household in the country.
  - The **sources as well as the quality of water** in the country needs to be maintained on an urgent basis.
-