

QUAD SUMMIT 2023

Why in news?

- Recently, Prime Minister of Australia, Prime Minister of India, Prime Minister of Japan, and President of the United States met for the **third in-person Quad Leaders' Summit**.
- This summit was hosted by Prime Minister Albanese on the side-lines of the ongoing G-7 Summit in Hiroshima.
 - This summit was scheduled to be held in Sydney on May 24 in Sydney, Australia.
 - However, it was cancelled after US President announced his postponement of the visit due to debt ceiling negotiations in Washington.

Quad

- The grouping of four democracies –India, Australia, US and Japan– is known as the quadrilateral security dialogue or quad.
- The aim of this grouping is to ensure a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo- Pacific.

Evolution

- Following the Indian Ocean tsunami, India, Japan, Australia, and the US created an informal alliance to collaborate on disaster relief efforts.
- Quad as a formal group was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, due to Chinese resistance and reluctance shown by India, it could not move ahead.
- Later, during the 2017 ASEAN Summits, all four former members re-joined negotiations to revive the quadrilateral alliance.
- The Quad was upgraded to the ministerial level in September 2019.

Naval Exercise

- In November 2020, the navies of Australia, India, Japan and the United States held their biggest naval drills, known as Malabar exercise.
- It was the first time since 2007 that all members of Quad participated in a joint military drill.

First-ever summit of QUAD leaders

- In March 2021, the first-ever summit of QUAD leaders took place virtually.
- 1st in-person Quad Summit took place in September 2021 in US.
- It was participated by the PMs/Presidents of all the member countries. The summit was hosted by US.

ANTIQUES REPATRIATED TO INDIA

Minister of State for Science and Technology, recently announced that 231 stolen antiques have been repatriated to India in the last nine years.



What is an antiquity?

- **The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**, implemented on April 1, 1976, defined “antiquity” as “any coin, sculpture, painting, epigraph or other work of art or craftsmanship; any article, object or thing detached from a building or cave; any article, object or thing illustrative of science, art, crafts, literature, religion, customs, morals or politics in bygone ages; any article, object or thing of historical interest” that “**has been in existence for not less than one hundred years.**”
- For “manuscript, record or other document which is of scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value”, this duration is “**not less than seventy-five years.**”

What do Indian laws say?

- In India, **Item-67 of the Union List, Item-12 of the State List, and Item-40 of the Concurrent List** of the Constitution deal with the country’s heritage.
- Before Independence, an Antiquities (Export Control) Act had been passed in April 1947 to ensure that “no antiquity could be exported without license.” In 1958, The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act was enacted.
- Then in 1971, Parliament saw an uproar over the theft of a bronze idol from Chamba and some important sandstone idols from other places.

- This, along with the UNESCO convention, prompted the government to enact The **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 (AATA)**, implemented from April 1, 1976.
- The AATA states-
 - It shall not be lawful for any person, other than the Central Government or any authority or agency authorised by the Central Government in this behalf, to export any antiquity or art treasure.
 - No person shall, himself or by any other person on his behalf, carry on the business of selling or offering to sell any antiquity except under and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a licence.”
- **This licence is granted by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).** After the AATA was implemented, the Centre asked traders in antiquities and art objects to declare their possessions of antiquities by June 5, 1976, and individual owners by July 5, 1976.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE ON SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT (COE- SLM)

Recently, the Union Minister inaugurated Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management at Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) in Dehradun.



About

- **Background:** The establishment of the CoE-SLM was announced by the Prime Minister of India during the **14th Conference of the Parties (COP-14)** of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in September, 2019.
- **Aims:**
 - To set **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)** targets,
 - Develop **drought risk and early warning systems**,
 - Mainstream gender considerations,
 - Promote **good governance of land tenure and rights**,
 - Assess the impacts of **land degradation on greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss**.

- To facilitate the restoration of degraded land through technical support, capacity building, and knowledge sharing at the national and sub-national levels.
- To promote South-South Cooperation and address land degradation issues through sustainable land management practices.
- **Objectives:** The CoE-SLM has set forth specific objectives to guide its actions:
 - Assessing land degradation,
 - **Capacity building** on sustainable land management frameworks **aligned with SDGs,**
 - Strengthening the assessment, monitoring, and reporting of **land-based indicators outlined by the UNCCD.**

[G7 HIROSHIMA SUMMIT 2023](#)

Why in news?

- The Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) met in Hiroshima for **49th annual Summit**. This year's summit is hosted by Japan in its capacity as the President of the grouping.
- The choice of Hiroshima as host city of the G7 Summit underlines Prime Minister Kishida's commitment to put nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation prominently on the agenda of the meeting.
- **PM Modi** also attended the Summit at the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister
- On the second day of summit, the participating leaders issued a leaders' communiqué which will be adopted at the end of the summit on 21st

In Focus: G7

Origin

- The origin of G7 lies in the **oil shocks of 1973 and the corresponding financial crisis**.
- In order to address the situation after oil shock, the heads of the **world's six leading industrial nations decided to hold a meeting in 1975**.
- These six nations were - the US, UK, France, Germany (West), Japan and Italy.
- These countries were **joined by Canada in 1976** and G7 came into existence.

Current Members

- US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan
- It can be said that the members of this group are the **most developed and the advanced economies of the world.**
- The **European Union is also represented** within the G7.

Purpose of G7

- To determine the course of multilateral discourse
- To shape political responses to global challenges.
- Basically, G7 provides a platform to discuss and coordinate solutions to major global issues, especially in the areas of trade, security, economics, and climate change.

Significance:

- **Economic Significance**
 - The G7 nations account for
 - close to **60 percent of global net wealth,**
 - **46 percent of global gross domestic product,** and
 - about 770 million people or 10 percent of the world's population.
- **Political Significance**
 - Political heavy weights are capable of **shaping the response of Multilateral challenges.**
 - In 1999, it created the Financial Stability Forum in order to manage the international monetary system
 - 47th summit in June 2021 had focused on the recovery from ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It promised to **distribute 1 billion vaccines** to poorer countries.
 - Its theme was **Global Action to Build Back Better.**
- **Developmental Significance**
 - G-7 provided \$300 million in 1997 to help build the containment of the reactor meltdown at Chernobyl.
 - G7 played crucial role in setting up a global fund to fight malaria and Aids in 2002.
 - In October 2020, G7 finance ministers backed an extension of a **G20 bilateral debt relief initiative for the world's poorest countries**

G7 & G8

- In 1998, Russia was formally inducted in the group, which transformed **G7 into G8**.
 - However, Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. As a result, it was suspended from the grouping.
 - Hence, the **group became G7 again in 2014**.
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WHO ARE THE WAGNER GROUP OF MERCENARIES?

Russian President Vladimir recently congratulated the Wagner mercenary group and the national army on their claimed capture of the east Ukrainian city of Bakhmut.



About Wagner Group:

- **What is it?** The Wagner Group also known as **PMC Wagner** is a **Russian paramilitary organization**.
- **Origin:** The group is believed to have been **founded in 2014** by a **Russian veteran of the Chechen war** who so admired Hitler he named the group after Richard Wagner, the führer's favorite composer.
- The **skull is the symbol of the Wagner Group**.
- The organization first came to the world's attention in 2014, fighting alongside Russian-backed separatists in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.
- The organization has also been active across Africa in recent years — Libya, Sudan, Mozambique, Mali and the Central African Republic.
- Today there are **thought to be some 10,000 Wagner Group members**.
- The S. government has called Wagner a "proxy force" of Russia's defense ministry.

What does the term 'führer' mean?

- Führer, also spelled Fuehrer means leader.
 - It is a **title used by Adolf Hitler to define his role of absolute authority**.
 - As early as July 1921 he had declared the Führerprinzip ("leader principle") to be the law of the Nazi Party.
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BARALACHA LA PASS

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) recently rescued 76 tourists including seven children stranded at Baralacha La Pass.



About Baralacha La Pass:

- **Location:**
 - It is a **high mountain pass** located along the **Leh-Manali highway** that **connects Leh district in Ladakh and Lahaul district in Himachal Pradesh.**
 - It is situated in the **Zaskar range.**
 - It lies **close to River Bhaga**, which **originates from the Surya Taal Lake** & is a **tributary of the River Chenab.**
- **Elevation:** It is located at the height of **16,040 feet** above the sea level and is one of the **highest motorable passes in India.**
- It also finds **mention in Rudyard Kipling's celebrated novel 'Kim'**, wherein the source of the **Suraj Tal** is used by the novel's character **Lama** to enter into India from Tibet.

What is the Border Roads Organisation (BRO)?

- It is a **road construction executive force** in India that provides **support to Indian Armed Forces.**
- It was **formed on 7 May 1960** to **secure India's borders and develop infrastructure** in remote areas of the north and north-east states of the country.
- **Motto:** The organisation motto is **Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam (everything is achievable through hardwork).**
- **BRO develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas** and friendly neighboring countries.
- This includes **infrastructure operations** in 19 states and three union territories (including **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**) and **neighboring countries** such as **Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka.**

- Officers and personnel from the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) form the parent cadre of the BRO.
 - It is also **staffed by Officers and Troops drawn from the Indian Army's Corps of Engineers** on extra regimental employment (on deputation).
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WHO LAUNCHES GLOBAL NETWORK TO DETECT INFECTIOUS DISEASE THREAT

Why in News?

- The World Health Organization has launched a global network to help swiftly detect the threat from infectious diseases, like COVID-19, and share the information to prevent their spread.

About International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN):

- The International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN) is a global network of pathogen genomic actors.
- It is hosted by the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence.
- Its aim is to **accelerate progress on the deployment of pathogen genomics and improve public health decision-making.**
- By strengthening the pathogen genomic surveillance ecosystem, the **IPSN enables faster detection of new pathogens and the enhanced tracking of the spread and evolution of diseases.**
 - This in turn can drive better public health responses.
- The **IPSN supports ongoing disease surveillance and will help detect and fully characterize new disease threats before they become epidemics or pandemics.**

What is the Vision/Mission Behind IPSN?

- A world where every country has equitable access to sustained capacity for genomic sequencing and analytics as part of its public health surveillance system.

What is the Need for an International Surveillance Network for Pathogens?

- COVID-19 highlighted the critical role pathogen genomics plays when responding to pandemic threats.

- As pointed out by the WHO that without the rapid sequencing of the SARS CoV-2 virus, vaccines would not have been as effective and would not have become available as quickly.
 - New and more transmissible variants of the virus would also not have been identified as quickly.
- WHO said that **genomics lies at the heart of effective epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response.**
- While the pandemic spurred countries to scale up their genomics capacity, the agency warned that many still lack effective systems for collecting and analysing samples.
- The IPSN would help address such challenges.

Outcomes of IPSN:

- To build towards a strong disease surveillance system, IPSN members and their work will result in:
 - **Stronger national and international surveillance systems** better able to detect and characterize new threats and reduce endemic burdens;
 - Increased harmonization and innovation in pathogen genomics;
 - Increased scale and efficiency of country capacity building efforts; and
 - Increased political attention and financing efficiency.
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