

### AFRICAN UNION IN G20

#### Why in news?

- During the 18<sup>th</sup> G20 Summit, held in India, the African Union (AU) was admitted as a new member of the G20.
- This was barely three months after India floated the idea of including the organisation.

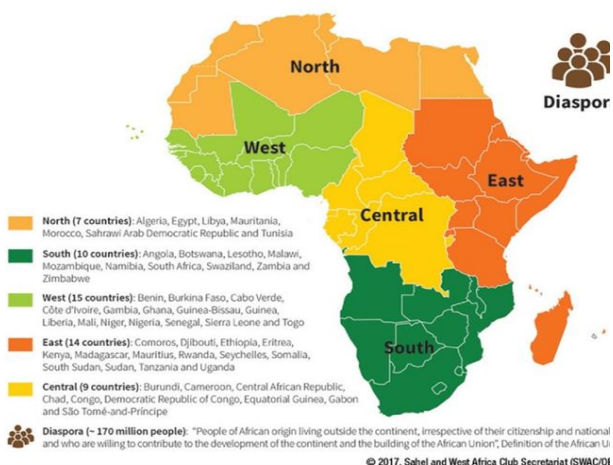
#### Background:

- The idea was floated in June this year, when PM Modi proposed to G20 leaders that the African Union be given full membership at the upcoming Delhi Summit of G20.
- The idea germinated after the ‘Voice of the Global South’ Summit in January 2023, in which most of the African Union’s 55 countries had participated.
  - So far, only one country from the grouping — South Africa – was part of the G20.
  - Many African leaders had argued that Europe is represented by five countries as well as the European Union (EU), and the African Union merits similar representation as well.

#### What is African Union?

- The AU is an intergovernmental organization consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent.

#### THE SIX REGIONS OF THE AFRICAN UNION



- Basically, it is a continental union with a wide range of goals aimed at strengthening its member states both individually and collectively.

- It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999).

- The AU’s headquarters are in Addis

#### Ababa, Ethiopia.

- The AU is guided by its vision of “An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.”

## Objectives of AU

- The AU concentrates its energy and resources on achieving greater unity and solidarity between African countries and their people.
- It seeks to accelerate the process of the political and socio-economic integration of the continent. The AU addresses the multifaceted social, economic and political problems that the African nations have been facing.
- Promoting peace, stability, and security across the region.

## • Shortcomings of the AU

- One failure of the AU has been its inability to thwart coups in Africa.
- Since the 1960s, the continent has witnessed more than 200 coups – the most recent ones took place in Gabon and Niger.
- The organisation has also been unable to get its member countries to pay their annual dues, leaving it starved of funds. As a result, it has to depend on external funding, which impacts its autonomy.

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## [PARTNERSHIP FOR GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT \(PGII\)](#)

### Why in News?

- On the side-lines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, a MoU was signed between the Governments of India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the EU, the UAE, France, Germany and Italy to establish the **India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.
- While its details are yet to come out, the project is a part of the **PGII** - a West-led initiative for funding infrastructure projects across the world, seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

### What is the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)?

- **The infrastructure plan** was first announced in 2021 during the G7 (or Group of Seven, which includes the UK, the US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the EU) summit in the UK.

- Though the US President had called it the **Build Back Better World (B3W) framework**, it did not register much progress.
- In **2022**, the PGII was **officially launched** as a joint initiative of G7 (during the G7 summit in Germany) **to help fund infrastructure projects in developing countries through public and private investments**.
- The PGII collectively **aims to mobilise nearly \$600 billion from the G7 by 2027** to invest in critical infrastructure that improves lives and delivers real gains for the people of the Global South.
- Essentially, the **G7 resolved to showcase their alternative framework** for infrastructure projects undertaken and sponsored by China under the **BRI** on a global scale.
- **The stated purpose of both the PGII and the BRI** is to help secure funding for countries to build critical infrastructure such as roads, ports, bridges, communication setups, etc., **to enhance global trade and cooperation**.
- While welcoming the initiative, **China** said that it is **opposed to pushing forward geopolitical calculations** under the pretext of infrastructure construction or smearing the BRI.

## Why was an Alternative to BRI Needed?

- **China began the BRI in 2013** under its President Xi Jinping to revive the ancient trade routes crossing to and from China—from Rome in Europe to East Asia.
- Under this, **the Chinese government provided loans** for infrastructure projects to various countries, and in many cases, Chinese companies were awarded contracts for carrying out the work.
- This helped China mark its **footprints at a global level**. However, China was criticised (by the West including Italy - only G7 member that was part of the BRI, and others) for **providing unsustainable debts** to countries that will be unable to repay them.
- According to a 2019 WB report, among the 43 corridor economies, 12 could face an unsustainable debt situation.
- **This could lead to public assets being handed over to foreign contractors or China itself.**

- If issues of environmental degradation, high debts and corruption are successfully countered, **BRI could increase trade between 1.7 and 6.2% for the world**, increasing global real income by 0.7 to 2.9%.
- **India** opposed the BRI as it included the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which connected Kashgar in China with the Gwadar port in Pakistan via Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- According to the GoI, any serious connectivity initiative must be transparent and **conform to the most basic principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity**.

## How will PGII be Different from the BRI?

- According to the G7, their initiative (PGII) is meant to be **transparent**, focused on building climate change-resilient infrastructure, and help in achieving objectives of gender equality and health infrastructure development.
- The PGII can contribute towards **reducing the infrastructure gaps in the Global South countries**.

## FAO FOOD PRICE INDEX

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) price index fell to a new two-year low in August.



### About the FAO Food Price Index:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index is a measure of the **monthly change in international prices** of a basket of food commodities.
- It consists of the average of **five commodity group price indices** (cereal, vegetable, dairy, meat, and sugar), weighted with the average export shares.
- **Base year:** 2014-16

### Key facts about FAO

- It is a **specialised agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.
- Its goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.
- **Headquarter:** Rome (Italy).
- **Member countries:** With 195 members - 194 countries and the European Union, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are its sister bodies.
- **Reports published by the FAO:** The State of the World's Forests (SOFO), The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO), The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)

## SALEM SAGO

Recently, the Salem Starch and Sago Manufacturers Service Industrial Cooperative Society Ltd. (popularly called SAGOSERVE) received a Geographical Indication Tag, or GI Tag, for Salem sago.



### About Salem Sago:

- Sago is derived from **raw tapioca**.
- It is in the form of **small hard globules**, or pearls, and is pearl white in colour.
- It is manufactured from the wet starch powder crushed from tapioca roots.
- The wet starch powder is used for producing sago, and the dry powder has been used as a raw material for industrial purposes.

### What is Tapioca?

- It is a major **horticulture crop** cultivated on nearly 3 lakh hectares in Tamil Nadu, producing 60 lakh tonnes of the crop.



- **Climate and Soil**

- Any well-drained soil, preferably **red lateritic loamy soil**.
- It thrives best in a tropical, warm, humid climate
- **Rainfall:** Well-distributed rainfall of **over 100 cm per annum**.
- This crop can be cultivated up to an elevation of 1000 m.

### What is a GI tag?

- It is a sign used on products that have a **specific geographical origin and possess qualities** or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- This is typically used for **agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and industrial products**.
- The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**, seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- This GI tag is valid for **10 years**, following which it can be renewed.

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### WHAT IS THE 'GOA ROADMAP FOR TOURISM'?

In a unanimous decision, G20 leaders recently endorsed the significance of the 'Goa Roadmap for Tourism' as a path towards achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).



#### About 'Goa Roadmap for Tourism':

- The 'Goa Roadmap', an **outcome of India's G20 Tourism Track**, is a blueprint for sustainable global tourism.
- It is **aligned with the theme of India's G20 Presidency** and underscores the role of tourism in society, the economy, and environmental efforts.
- The roadmap **focuses on five interconnected priorities**. They are,
  - green tourism;
  - digitisation;
  - destination management;

- skills development;
- support for tourism micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs);
- These priorities have been **endorsed by all G20 countries, emphasising their commitment to achieving sustainable, resilient, and inclusive tourism.**
- **India's vision of 'Travel for LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) has been incorporated into the Goa roadmap.**

### **G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard:**

- It was **launched by the Union Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).**
- The dashboard will serve as a **global repository, showcasing the best practices and case studies of sustainable tourism practices and policies from G20 nations.**

### **Key Facts about Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment):**

- Mission LiFE, or **Lifestyle for Environment**, is an **India-led global mass movement to nudge individual and community action to protect and preserve the environment.**
- It was **launched by the Indian Prime Minister at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021.**
- The program **hopes to "mobilise one billion Indians as well as people in other countries to become individuals who practice sustainable lifestyles.**
- It makes the fight against climate change democratic, in which everyone can contribute with their respective capacities.
- It emboldens the spirit of the **P3 model, i.e. Pro Planet People.**
- It functions on the basic **principles of 'Lifestyle of the planet, for the planet, and by the planet'.**
- It aims to following a **three-pronged strategy for changing people's collective approach** towards sustainability,
  - **nudging individuals to practice** simple yet effective environment-friendly actions in their daily lives (demand)
  - **enabling industries and markets to respond swiftly** to the changing demand (supply)

- to influence government and industrial policy to support both sustainable consumption and production.
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## WHAT IS THE INTERBANK CALL MONEY MARKET?

The RBI is likely to launch the pilot of central bank digital currency (CBDC) for transactions for interbank borrowing or call money market.



### What is Money Market?

- The money market basically refers to a section of the financial market where financial instruments with high liquidity and short-term maturities are traded.
- It includes buying and selling of securities of short-term maturities of one year or less, such as treasury bills and commercial papers.
- It is used by many participants, including companies, to raise funds.
- The money market is considered a safe place to invest due to the high liquidity of securities.

### What is Call Money?

- Call money is also referred to as the money at call.
- It is a short-term loan that is due to be paid immediately in full as and when demanded by the lender.
- Unlike term loans, call money loan does not have a defined schedule of payment and maturity.
- Furthermore, the lender of the call money need not provide prior notice to the borrower about the repayment.

### About the Interbank Call Money Market:

- It is a short-term money market which allows large financial institutions to borrow and lend money at interbank rates, the rate of interest that banks charge when they borrow funds from each other.
  - The loans in the call money market are very short, usually lasting no longer than a week.
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- These loans are **often used to help banks meet reserve requirements.**
  - It is **not exclusively used by banks.** Interbank call money market customers can include other **financial institutions**, mutual funds, large corporations, and insurance companies.
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## HEADS OF ASIAN COAST GUARD AGENCIES MEETING (HACGAM)

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) recently took part in the 19th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) in Istanbul.



About the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM):

- The HACGAM is an annual event hosted by one of its member nations on a rotational basis.
  - It was **initiated by Japan** to promote cooperation among regional coastguards.
  - The forum has **23 member Coast Guard agencies and two associate members** – the **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)** and the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**.
  - It was **launched after the capture of the pirated vessel MV Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Coast Guard in November 1999.**
  - **Objectives:**
    - The primary focus of the HACGAM is to **foster cooperation between the coast guards of the member Asian states** to ensure and promote **safe, secure and clean seas in the region.**
    - To achieve this, **HACGAM comprises four working groups** that enable a focused and goal-oriented approach towards coordinated response and synergy towards common maritime issues.
  - The **Indian Coast Guard chairs the search and rescue (SAR) working group** and is a proactive member of the **other working groups, which include environmental protection, controlling unlawful acts at sea, and information sharing.**
  - **In 2022, the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the meeting was hosted by the ICG in New Delhi.**
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