

ON TERROR, INDIA, BRAZIL & SOUTH AFRICA SEND MESSAGE TO CHINA

In News:

- The 10th India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum of Trilateral Ministerial Commission took place in New York on the side-lines of UN General Assembly (UNGA).

India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA)

- IBSA is a unique Forum which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.
- The dialogue forum was created in 2003, with the adoption of Brasilia declaration.
- Cooperation in IBSA is on three fronts:
 - As a forum for consultation and coordination on global and regional political issues;
 - E.g., the reform of the global institutions of political and economic governance, WTO/Doha Development Agenda, climate change, terrorism etc.
 - Trilateral collaboration on concrete areas/projects;
 - This is done through fourteen working groups and six People-to-People Forums, for the common benefit of three countries.
 - Assisting other developing countries by taking up projects in the latter through IBSA Fund.
 - The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) is the fund manager of IBSA fund.
 - Through this initiative, development projects are executed in fellow developing countries.
 - It has, since its inception, allocated over US \$44 million, supporting 39 South-South cooperation development projects in 35 partner countries with the majority being Least Developed Countries.
 - IBSA Fund received the 2010 MDG Award for South-South cooperation.

Achievements of IBSA: in Brief

- The three Foreign Ministers have been meeting regularly to provide a coordinated leadership to the grouping.
 - The recent meeting in New York was 10th such meeting.

- While the **IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund)** is small in monetary terms, it has succeeded in implementing many development projects in diverse countries.
 - IBSA projects cover Haiti, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Burundi, Palestine, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Sierra Leone.
 - A sports complex has been completed and inaugurated in 2011 in Ramallah under the IBSA Fund.
- India has been running an innovative IBSA Visiting Fellows Programme through the Delhi-based think tank, Research and Information System for Developing Countries.
- One of the most significant commitments of the IBSA towards enhancing economic ties was the initiative to establish the MERCOSUR-SACU-India Trilateral Free Trade Agreement (T-FTA).

Key Highlights

- The joint declaration expressed serious concern at the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.
- The participating leaders reiterated their call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the need to pursue the path of diplomacy and dialogue.
- These leaders called for urgent reform of the working methods of UN Security Council sanctions committees to ensure their effectiveness, responsiveness and transparency.
- In this context, the leaders urged avoiding politicisation and double standards of any of their proceedings, including listing proposals objectively on evidence-based criteria.
 - This assumes significance in the context of repeated efforts by China to prevent the designation of Pakistan based operatives of terror groups as global terrorist by the UN.

[NIA RAIDS ON PFI IN 15 STATES, SEVERAL ARRESTED](#)

In News:

- In a nationwide crackdown, 109 leaders and activists of the **Popular Front of India (PFI)** were arrested.

- These arrests were made by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the police during searches conducted across 15 States.

Popular Front of India (PFI)

- The PFI was founded in 2007, a year after the merger of three Muslim groups -
 - National Democratic Front in Kerala, the Karnataka Forum for Dignity and the Manitha Neethi Pasarai in Tamil Nadu.
 - A decision to bring the three outfits together was taken in November 2006 at a meeting in Kozhikode in Kerala.
- The organisation emerged in the aftermath of the ban on the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI).
- PFI is most active in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. However, now it has presence in around two dozen states and a well-established organisational structure in a dozen states.

Aim

- PFI calls itself a socio-political movement that strives for the empowerment of the Muslims and other marginalised sections of society
- It describes itself as a cadre-based movement, which is developed through routine training and education regarding management, leadership and mass mobilisation.
- The PFI has itself never contested elections. It has been involved in carrying out social and Islamic religious work among Muslims.
- The Social Democratic Party of India, (SDPI), formed in 2009, is PFI's political front.

Why this group has been on the radar of investigating agencies?

- **Cadres involved in violence**
 - In 2010, some members of the PFI attacked T.J. Joseph, a professor in Ernakulam district of Kerala, chopping off his right palm.
 - He was targeted over a question paper he set for a college examination that had some references to the Prophet, which the attackers said were insulting.

- Back in 2012, the then Kerala government had informed the High Court that PFI was nothing but a resurrection of the banned outfit SIMI in another form.
 - **Followed a multi-pronged operational strategy to communalise the society**
 - As per the dossier(document) on PFI prepared by the NIA, PFI followed a multi-pronged operational strategy that aims to:
 - communalise the nation's polity,
 - encourage and enforce Taliban brand of Islam,
 - Heighten existing social divisions.
 - **Responsible for imposing religious orthodoxy**
 - Investigation agencies allege that PFI is responsible for imposing religious orthodoxy and puritanism (ensorious moral beliefs) amongst Muslims.
 - **Involvement in money laundering**
 - In June 2022, the ED accused the organisation of money laundering, claiming that it had received over ₹60 crore since 2009, including cash deposit of over ₹30 crore.
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34.6L CASES PENDING FOR OVER A DECADE

In News:

- While over 1 lakh cases have been pending in India's lower courts for over 30 years, nearly 5 lakh cases have been pending for 20 to 30 years, and another 28.7 lakhs have been pending for 10 to 20 years.
- According to an analysis of data from the National Judicial Data Grid, this brings the total number of cases pending for more than a decade to 34.6 lakh.

National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG):

- **About:**

- A part of the on-going **e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project**, NJDG is a flagship project launched in **2015** and is implemented under the aegis of the e-Committee Supreme Court of India.
 - The e-Courts Mission Mode Project is a national e-Governance project (of the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice) for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enablement of district and subordinate courts of the country.
 - The objective of the project is to provide designated services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary through ICT enablement of courts, thus improving access to justice using technology.
 - The Project was conceptualized based on ‘**The National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of ICT in the Indian Judiciary - 2005**’ of the e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India.
 - The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the project in **2007**, expanded its coverage in 2010 and extended the project's duration in 2014.
- NJDG is a system for monitoring pendency and disposal of the cases in High Courts and Subordinate Courts.
- NJDG provides a comprehensive database of orders, judgements and case details of District and Subordinate Courts and High Courts.
- The statistics of pendency at National, State, District and at Individual Court level is available to anyone visiting the **National Judicial Data Grid portal**.
- **Features:**
 - NJDG provides the consolidated figures of pendency of cases in Judiciary.
 - Statistical data is automatically updated daily.
 - Pending Civil and Criminal Cases segregated into varied categories.
 - Information pertaining to Institution and Disposal of cases is shown.
 - Serves as National Judicial Data Warehouse.
- **Benefits:**
 - Works as a monitoring tool to identify, manage and reduce pendency of cases.
 - Helps to provide timely inputs for making policy decisions to reduce delays in disposal of cases.

- o Facilitates better monitoring of court performance and thus, serves as an efficient resource

| JUSTICE DELAYED | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| State/UT | 10-20 years | 20-30 years | Above 30 years | Above 10 years |
| Uttar Pradesh | 11,71,384 | 2,26,482 | 41,210 | 14,39,07 |
| Maharashtra | 2,56,595 | 58,404 | 23,483 | 3,38,48 |
| West Bengal | 4,04,399 | 52,108 | 14,345 | 4,70,85 |
| Bihar | 4,79,936 | 76,860 | 11,713 | 5,68,56 |
| Odisha | 1,85,791 | 33,822 | 4,248 | 2,23,86 |
| Gujarat | 99,489 | 26,129 | 2,826 | 1,28,44 |
| Rajasthan | 74,259 | 4,371 | 559 | 79,18 |
| Jharkhand | 21,291 | 1,597 | 337 | 23,22 |
| Tamil Nadu | 46,393 | 2,702 | 334 | 49,42 |
| Karnataka | 41,119 | 1,415 | 143 | 42,67 |
| Kerala | 11,797 | 658 | 109 | 12,56 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 15,103 | 598 | 104 | 15,80 |
| Telangana | 9,091 | 955 | 102 | 10,14 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 7,534 | 371 | 68 | 7,973 |
| Delhi | 11,925 | 517 | 52 | 12,49 |
| Punjab | 1,976 | 95 | 39 | 2,110 |
| Chhattisgarh | 1,016 | 129 | 28 | 1,173 |
| Assam | 4,890 | 290 | 24 | 5,204 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 8,588 | 288 | 22 | 8,898 |
| Haryana | 2,872 | 40 | 14 | 2,926 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 2,978 | 46 | 5 | 3,029 |
| Uttarakhand | 4,885 | 112 | 1 | 4,998 |
| Total | 28,70,776 | 4,89,255 | 1,00,267 | 34,60,27 |

Source: National Judicial Data Centre

management tool.

- o Promotes transparency and accountability in the system by displaying complete pendency and disposal of cases across the country in the public domain.
- o NJDG has been instrumental for judicial planning, monitoring and remote administration by High Court judges, District Judges, and High Court Registry.
- o NJDG is acknowledged as an **innovation under the Ease of Doing Business** initiative of the Government of India.

WHAT IS THE DRAFT TELECOM BILL, AND WHAT CHANGES IT AIMS TO BRING

In News:

- The Union government has released the draft of ‘The Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022’ wherein it has proposed several significant changes.
- These changes include provisions for waiving off dues for financially stressed operators, bringing over-the-top platforms (such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Netflix) within the ambit of telecom services.

Draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022:

- At present, the Indian Telecommunications sector is governed by three separate Acts of Parliament:
 - o **Indian Telegraph Act 1885,**
 - o **Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933,**
 - o **Telegraph Wires, (Unlawful Protection) Act 1950**
- The draft Telecommunications Bill, 2022 aims to consolidate these three separate Acts.

- **Aim** – To amend the existing laws governing the provision, development, expansion and operation of telecommunication services, telecom networks and infrastructure, in addition to assignment of spectrum.

Key Amendments proposed in the Draft Bill:

- **Inclusion of OTTs in the definition of Telecommunications services** –
 - As per the draft law, providers of OTT telecommunication services (such as **WhatsApp, Telegram**) will be covered under the licensing regime, and will be subjected to similar rules as other telecom operators.
 - This issue has been under contention for several years now as the telecom service providers (such as **Airtel, Vi, Jio**) seeking a level-playing field with OTT apps over communication services such as voice calls, messages, etc.
 - The telecommunication services had to incur high costs of licences and spectrum, while OTT communication players used their infrastructure to offer free services.
 - So, OTT communication services have to take a licence now and be subjected to the same conditions governing telecom players in India, like quality of service and security rules, etc.
- **Framework for assigning Spectrum** –
 - Spectrum relates to the radio frequencies allocated to the mobile industry and other sectors for communication over the airwaves.
 - The draft Bill says that spectrum should primarily be given through auction.
 - Meanwhile, for specific functions related to the government and public interest, like defence, transportation and research, the Bill proposes assignment through the administrative process.
 - The government will also have the power to terminate spectrum allocations partly or in full, if it determines that assigned spectrum has remained unutilised for insufficient reasons over a period of time.
- **Push for rapid expansion of Telecom Infrastructure** –
 - The draft Bill tries to achieve through law a ‘**right of way**’ enforceable at the state- and at the municipal-corporation level.
 - This legal framework is key to the rollout of 5G services.

- It lays down a framework in which a public entity that owns the land has to grant 'right of way' permission expeditiously, unless it gives a substantive ground for refusal.
- This is aimed to address the bottlenecks in the rapid expansion of telecom infrastructure.
- **Telecommunication Development Fund –**
- The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) which was created under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, will be referred to as the “Telecommunication Development Fund”.
- USOF is name for the levies collected by the Centre from telecom companies with a view to ensuring funding and development of communication services in rural and underserved areas.
- Currently, USOF has a surplus cash of around **60,000 crore** lying unutilised.
- **Preventing Cyber Frauds –**
- To prevent cyber fraud, the Bill provides that the identity of the person sending a message through telecom services shall be available to a user receiving it.

Criticism of the draft Bill:

- Experts indicate that the Central government cannot take coercive action against states or municipal corporations to impose 'right of way' rules, as **land** is a state subject.
- Also, more clarity is required as to how the Central government plans to regulate OTT communication services under this Bill.
- Analysts also worry that the Bill will adversely impact the consultative role of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), weakening its position.
- The draft Bill excludes the obligation of the government to consult TRAI on licensing issues.

Conclusion:

- Overall, the Bill places emphasis on the development of telecom infrastructure while covering new-age services to keep up with the times.
- The proposed legal framework seeks to be future-ready, provides certainty regarding spectrum management and reserves the penalty of imprisonment or heavy fines only for a small set of critical offences.

National Cadet Corps (NCC) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has signed a MOU in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi.



About:

- MoU was signed to tackle the issue of plastic pollution and achieve the universal goal of clean water bodies through Puneet Sagar Abhiyan and Tide Turners Plastic Challenge programme.
- It is aimed to synergise efforts toward engaging youth for promoting clean water bodies.
- The NCC had launched Puneet Sagar Abhiyan on 1st December last year. The aim of the campaign is to clean sea shores from plastic and other waste material and create awareness about the importance of cleanliness.
- Since the launch of Puneet Sagar Abhiyan, over 100 tonnes of plastic waste have been collected from nearly 1,900 locations by more than 12 lakh NCC cadets, alumni and volunteers.

I2U2 GROUP

India-Israel-UAE-USA, I2U2 Sherpas met on the sidelines of UN General Assembly in New York on 20th of this month. The group agreed to continue to work closely in line with the outcome of the Leaders' Summit in July this year.

- The I2U2 Group is a grouping of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States.
- The group held its inaugural summit on July 14, 2022, in which Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid, and UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan participated.
- As an outcome of the summit, the leaders announced that the UAE will invest \$2 billion "to develop a series of integrated food parks across India."
- The group also agreed to proceed with "a hybrid renewable energy project in India's Gujarat State consisting of 300 megawatts (MW) of wind and solar capacity complemented by a battery energy storage system."

- The group's first joint statement, released on July 14, 2022, states that the countries aim to cooperate on "joint investments and new initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security."
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DART SPACECRAFT

In the first-of-its kind, save-the-world experiment, NASA is about to hit hard a small, harmless asteroid millions of miles away. A spacecraft named Dart will zero in on the asteroid, intent on slamming it head-on at 14,000 mph (22,500 kph).



About:

- The impact should be just enough to nudge the asteroid into a slightly tighter orbit around its companion space rock — demonstrating that if a killer asteroid ever heads our way, we'd stand a fighting chance of diverting it.
 - The asteroid with the bull's-eye on it is Dimorphos, about 7 million miles (9.6 million kilometers) from Earth.
 - It is actually the puny sidekick of a 2,500-foot (780-meter) asteroid named Didymos, Greek for twin.
 - Discovered in 1996, Didymos is spinning so fast that scientists believe it flung off material that eventually formed a moonlet. Dimorphos — roughly 525 feet (160 meters) across — orbits its parent body at a distance of less than a mile (1.2 kilometers).
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