



PIB, THE HINDU Newspaper and Editorial Current Affairs

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United Nations Security Council Resolution 1267

Why in news?

UNSC has taken cognisance about JeM leader Masood Azhar and planning to bring him under UNSC 1267 committee.

About UNSC 1267:

- United Nations Security Council resolution 1267 was adopted unanimously on 15 October 1999. After recalling resolutions 1189 (1998), 1193 (1998) and 1214 (1998) on the situation in Afghanistan, the Council designated Osama bin Laden and associates as terrorists and established a sanctions regime to cover individuals and entities associated with Al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden and/or the Taliban wherever located.
- The regime has since been reaffirmed and modified by a dozen further UN Security Council Resolutions.
- It has been claimed the sanctions regime caused dire hardship to the people of Afghanistan under the Taliban regime at a time when they were heavily reliant on international food aid, while failing to satisfy any of its demands.
- Since the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the sanctions have been applied to individuals and organizations in all parts of the world.
- The regime is composed of a UN Security Council Committee, a "consolidated list" of people and entities it has determined as being associated with Al-Qaeda or the Taliban, and laws which must be passed within each member nation in order to implement the

sanctions.

- The Committee receives reports from each nation as to how the work is proceeding, and is able to vary the conditions imposed on any individual as it sees fit.

The sanctions would result in travel ban, assets freeze and an arms embargo.

- **Assets Freeze:** The Asset Freeze mandates all states to freeze without delay the funds and other financial assets or economic resources of designated individuals and entities.
 - **Travel Ban:** The travel ban implies preventing the entry of designated individuals into or transit by all states through their territories.
 - **Arms Embargo:** Arms embargo requires all states to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale and transfer from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related material of all types, spare parts, and technical advice, assistance, or training related to military activities, to designated individuals and entities.
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cVIGIL

Why in news?

Election commission of India has decided to effectively use of cVIGIL to counter any malpractices in upcoming general election.

Background:

- Presently there is a lack of fast information channel to transmit and track complaints on MCC violations. Delay in reporting of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) violations has often resulted in the culprits escaping detection from the flying squads of election commission

entrusted to ensure enforcement of Model Code of Conduct.

- Further, lack of any documented, untampered, evidence in the form of pictures or videos was a major hurdle in establishing the veracity of a complaint ex-post facto.
- The Commission's experience has also shown a significant percentage of reporting was false or inaccurate, which led to wastage of precious time of Field Units.
- Further, the absence of a robust response system to quickly and accurately identify the scene of occurrence with the help of geographical location details hampered election officers' ability to reach the spot on time to apprehend the violators.
- The new cVIGIL app launched by Election Commission of India is expected to fill in all these gaps and create a fast-track complaint reception and redressal system.

About cVIGIL:

- cVIGIL is an innovative mobile application for citizens to report Model Code of Conduct and Expenditure violations during the elections.
- 'cVIGIL' stands for Vigilant Citizen and emphasizes the proactive and responsible role citizens can play in the conduct of free and fair elections.
- cVIGIL, a user-friendly and easy to operate the android application, which can be used for reporting violations from the date of notifications for bye-election/ assembly/ parliamentary elections.
- The uniqueness of the app is that it only allows Live Photo/ video with auto location capture from within the app to ensure digital evidence for flying squads to act upon in a time-bound manner.
- The app could be installed and used on any Android (Jellybean and above) smartphone equipped with a camera, good internet connection, and GPS access.
- By using this app, citizens can immediately report on incidents of political misconduct within minutes of having witnessed them and without having to rush to the office of the returning officer.
- cVIGIL connects vigilant citizens with District Control Room, Returning Officer, and Field Unit (Flying Squads) / Static Surveillance Teams, thereby, creating a rapid and accurate reporting, action and monitoring system.

- All is required, is to click a picture or a 2-minute video of the activity violating MCC and describe it shortly, before registering the complaint.
 - GIS information captured with the complaint automatically flags it to the concerned District Control Room, permitting flying squads to be routed to the spot within few minutes.
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Pakistan and Terrorism

- Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan often claims he is leading a new Pakistan. He made the same proclamation following the cowardly Pulwama suicide attack that martyred 40 brave men from the CRPF.
- Sadly, there is no evidence to back Khan's claim. Pakistan before Imran Khan was no different. The state sponsorship of terror outfits continues unabated, the army's grip over civilian rule seemingly remains intact and the economy continues to falter.
- He, like his predecessors, keeps repeating that it's not in Pakistan's national interest to sponsor terror strikes in India. And just like prime ministers past, he says Pakistan is also a victim of terrorism. Nothing has changed but he says his is a new Pakistan.

India's Stand:

- For the last five years, the world has acknowledged that India has made huge economic strides. It has made new friends and strengthened relations with traditional partners.
- The Modi government had vowed to isolate Pakistan diplomatically after of the Pulwama attack. At the time, some Indians felt disappointed that India was going to restrict its response to diplomacy.
- This was seen as weakness on India's part. The pounding of Jaish-e-Mohammed's biggest terror camp in Pakistan quickly dispelled that fear. The Balakot attack gave sleepless nights to the Pakistani army and the civilian leadership.

- There should be no scope for debate on India winning the diplomatic war against Pakistan. The return of the IAF officer in two days and a mopping-up operation of dozens of suspects in Pakistan that included the names of the Pulwama suspects supplied by India are proof of our diplomatic victory.
- This operation assumes significance following Imran Khan's first reaction to Pulwama, in which he had denied his country was involved in the attack.
- India is not gloating. PM Modi alluded to the Indian diplomatic triumph merely by saying that he did not wish to repeat how Abhinandan was returned in two days. True to its promise, India has delivered.
- Under the stewardship of PM, the ministry of external affairs, Indian missions have worked tirelessly to isolate Pakistan internationally.

International Response:

- Pakistan's strategic partners, such as Saudi Arabia and UAE, are India's traditional friends. But in new India, they are standing by Modi for you to clean up "new Pakistan".
- This is not the India your country encountered following the terror attack in Mumbai in 2008. New India will doggedly pursue you till you dismantle the last terror camp.
- PM Modi has forged robust relations with the UAE, Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia. The extradition of many fugitives from several countries bears testimony to his foreign policy successes.
- This was on full display when AgustaWestland middleman, Christian James Michel, a UK citizen, was extradited to India by the UAE. As of January this year, more than 10 countries have extradited fugitives wanted by India since Modi came to power in 2014.
- PM Modi's visit to the US in 2017 led to a joint declaration, which listed, for the first time, organisations such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba as terrorist organisations. The US state department classified Kashmiri terrorist leader Syed Salahuddin of the Hizbul Mujahideen as a global terrorist.
- That threat continues to hang over Pakistan. Congressman Ted Poe recently urged the Trump administration to "Quit giving them military aid. Quit giving them money. Designate them as a state sponsor of

terrorism, and remove Pakistan's status as a major non-NATO ally to the US."

- Imran Khan had triumphed in the cricket World Cup in 1992. He can achieve his dream of building a new Pakistan. Let that Pakistan be terror free, free of hatred against India and Hindus.
 - That is only possible when he takes down the last terror camp, hands over the Lakhvis, the Azhars and the Dawoods to India. And if he doesn't, we will act against terror outfits based in Pakistan to protect our people from evil.
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Official Secrets Act

Background:

- Remarks made by the Attorney-General in the Supreme Court on March 6, of looking into "criminal action" against those responsible for making "stolen documents" on the Rafale deal public, have brought the Official Secrets Act into focus.
- The colonial-era law meant for ensuring secrecy and confidentiality in governance, mostly on national security and espionage issues, has often been cited by authorities for refusing to divulge information.
- Governments have also faced criticism for misusing the law against journalists and whistleblowers.

What is the Act about?

- The Official Secrets Act was first enacted in 1923 and was retained after Independence. The law, applicable to government servants and citizens, provides the framework for dealing with espionage, sedition, and other potential threats to the integrity of the nation.
- The law makes spying, sharing 'secret' information, unauthorised use of uniforms, withholding information, interference with the armed forces in prohibited/restricted areas, among others, punishable offences. If guilty, a person may get up to 14 years' imprisonment, a fine, or both.
- The information could be any reference to a place belonging to or

occupied by the government, documents, photographs, sketches, maps, plans, models, official codes or passwords.

Has the law undergone any changes over the years?

- No. However, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (SARC) Report, 2006, suggested that the Act should be substituted by a chapter in the National Security Act that incorporates the necessary provisions. The reason: it had become a contentious issue after the implementation of the Right to Information Act.
- The OSA does not define “secret” or “official secrets”. Public servants could deny any information terming it a “secret” when asked under the RTI Act.
- The SARC report stated that as the OSA’s background is the colonial climate of mistrust of people and the primacy of public officials in dealing with the citizens, it created a culture of secrecy.
- “Confidentiality became the norm and disclosure the exception,” it said. This tendency was challenged when the Right to Information Act came into existence.
- In 2008, during the first term of the UPA, the Group of Ministers that scrutinised the SARC report refused to repeal the Act but suggested amendments to do away with ambiguities.
- In 2015, the NDA government formed a high-level panel to look into the provisions of the OSA in the light of the RTI Act. No action has been taken on the panel’s report, which was submitted in 2017.

Is withholding information the only issue with the Act?

- Another contentious issue with the law is that its Section 5, which deals with potential breaches of national security, is often misinterpreted.
- The Section makes it a punishable offence to share information that may help an enemy state. The Section comes in handy for booking journalists when they publicise information that may cause embarrassment to the government or the armed forces.
- Journalist Tarakant Dwivedi alias Akela was booked for criminal trespass under the Official Secrets Act on May 17, 2011, 11 months

after he wrote an article in Mid-Day about how sophisticated weapons bought after 26/11 were being stored in a room with a leaking roof at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Mumbai.

- An RTI query later revealed that the armoury Akela visited was not a prohibited area and the Bombay High Court subsequently dismissed the case.
 - Kashmir-based journalist Iftikhar Gilani was arrested in 2002 under the OSA for downloading a document from the Internet. After spending seven months in jail, he was honourably discharged by the courts.
 - In a case pertaining to journalist Santanu Saikia, who wrote an article in Financial Express on the basis of a leaked Cabinet note, the Delhi High Court in 2009 ruled that publishing a document merely labelled as “secret” shall not render the journalist liable under the OSA.
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United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Why in news?

Recently An annual assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has opened in Kenya's capital, Nairobi.

About UNEP:

The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

Mission: To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

UN Environment Assembly and Governing Council

- The United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.
- It addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today. Understanding these challenges and preserving and rehabilitating our environment is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The Environment Assembly meets biennially to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law.
- Through its resolutions and calls to action, the Assembly provides leadership and catalyses intergovernmental action on the environment.
- Decision-making requires broad participation, which is why the Assembly provides an opportunity for all peoples to help design solutions for our planet's health.
- UNEP's activities cover a wide range of issues regarding the atmosphere, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, environmental governance and green economy.
- It has played a significant role in developing international environmental conventions, promoting environmental science and information and illustrating the way those can be implemented in conjunction with policy, working on the development and implementation of policy with national governments, regional institutions in conjunction with environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- UNEP has also been active in funding and implementing environment related development projects.
- The World Meteorological Organization and UN Environment established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988.
- UN Environment is also one of several Implementing Agencies for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, and it is also a member of the United Nations Development Group.
- The International Cyanide Management Code, a programme of best practice for the chemical's use at gold mining operations, was

developed under UN Environment's aegis.

