



# PIB, THE HINDU Newspaper and Editorial Current Affairs

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## **Innovate4Climate (I4C)**

- Innovate4Climate (I4C) is an integral part of the global dialogue on climate finance, climate investment, and climate markets. It convenes leaders from business, banking, finance, policy, and technology to think innovatively about how to leverage and direct investment toward low-carbon economies.
- I4C attracts leaders focused on transformative action on climate change. I4C delegates represent the diversity of stakeholders engaged in addressing the climate challenge. The event is designed to bring together leading thinkers interested in linking climate innovation with investment opportunities – transforming dialogue into action.
- 2019 will represent the 3rd Edition of I4C and will build on previous events in Barcelona (2017) and Frankfurt (2018), which focused on unlocking the trillions in private sector investment needed to scale up national climate plans and to accelerate the global transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future and the development of innovative financing instruments and approaches to support low-carbon, climate-resilient development pathways.

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## **India slams UN Security Council**

- India has said the UN General Assembly must take lead in finding solutions to the challenges faced by the world, slamming the Security Council for “progressively undermining” the authority of the 193-member global body.

- Growing number of complex challenges facing the world, like those related to peace and security, climate change and sustainable development that cut across boundaries and regions can be addressed only through a genuine multilateral and participative process.
- The General Assembly, which is the closest institution to a world parliament, must take the lead in setting the global agenda and in restoring the centrality of the UN in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues.
- The prerogatives and authority of the General Assembly have been progressively undermined by the Security Council through its frequent attempts to redefine its scope of competence through wider and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security and by engaging in discussions on issues that clearly fall within the purview of the General Assembly.
- A part of the blame for this situation must also be taken by the General Assembly and its member states for focusing on procedures rather than addressing the substantive issues.
- The General Assembly must be in the “vanguard of global agenda-setting” and lead the multilateral process for finding solutions to the challenges faced by the world.
- political will and commitment of member states were required to reinforce the role and authority of the General Assembly as mandated by the UN Charter.
- A revitalised General Assembly must focus on substantive deliberations rather than spending considerable time and resources on procedural issues.
- India has criticised the UN Security Council’s veto-wielding members in the past for obstructing the designation of terrorists without giving any explanation, apparently hitting out at China for repeatedly blocking its bid to list Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.
- New Delhi strongly criticised the UN late last year for its failure to show resolve in sanctioning new Taliban leaders who continue to perpetrate violence and destruction in Afghanistan and aided by those harboured in safe havens in its neighbourhood, a veiled reference to Pakistan.

## **About UNSC:**

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), charged with the maintenance of international peace and security as well as accepting new members to the United Nations and approving any changes to its United Nations Charter.
  - Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions; it is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946.
  - The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.
  - It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.
  - The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression.
  - It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement.
  - In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.
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## **India signals to boycott China's Belt and Road Forum**

- India signalled that it will boycott China's second Belt and Road Forum for a second time, saying no country can participate in an initiative that ignores its core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- India boycotted the first Belt and Road Forum (BRF) in 2017 after protesting to Beijing over the controversial China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is being laid through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) overriding New Delhi's sovereignty concerns.
- India said that "above all, connectivity initiatives must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity

of nations”.

- India shares the global aspiration to strengthen connectivity and it is an integral part of our economic and diplomatic initiatives. We ourselves are working with many countries and international institutions in our region and beyond on a range of connectivity initiatives.
  - However, it is also our belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognised international norms, good governance and rule of law. They must emphasise social stability and environmental protection and preservation, promote skill and technology transfers and follow principles of openness, transparency and financial sustainability.
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## **World Water Day**

- World Water Day is an annual UN observance day (always on 22 March) that highlights the importance of freshwater.
- The day is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.
- World Water Day is celebrated around the world with a variety of events. These can be educational, theatrical, musical or lobbying in nature.
- The day can also include campaigns to raise money for water projects. The first World Water Day, designated by the United Nations, was commemorated in 1993. Each year many countries celebrate World Water Day.
- UN-Water is the convener for World Water Day and selects a theme for each year in consultation with UN organizations that share an interest in that year's focus.
- The theme for 2019 is "Leaving no one behind" and encourages people to consider marginalized groups as these are often overlooked and discriminated against when they try to access safe water.

## **Objectives and structure:**

- World Water Day is an international observance day. The intention is to inspire people around the world to learn more about water-related issues and to take action to make a difference.
- Relevant issues include water scarcity, water pollution, inadequate water supply, lack of sanitation, and the impacts of climate change (which is set to be the theme of World Water Day 2020).
- The day brings to light the inequality of access to WASH services and the need to assure the human right to water and sanitation.
- The World Water Day website announces events, activities and volunteer opportunities. In 2018, stories are about "Nature and water from around the world" in keeping with the theme of "Nature for water".

## **2019 - Leaving no one behind**

- The theme of 2019 is about tackling the water crisis by addressing the reasons why so many people are being left behind. Marginalized groups - women, children, refugees, indigenous peoples, disabled people - are often overlooked, and may face discrimination, as they try to access safe water.
- UN Water asserts that "water services must meet the needs of marginalized groups and their voices must be heard in decision-making processes".

### **Impacts:**

In 2016, the World Water Day campaign and related publications reached millions of people through social media, dedicated websites and other channels: The UN-Water annual report states that social media engagement had a maximum potential reach of 1.6 billion people worldwide in 2016. 21 Over 500 events in 1000 countries were registered on the World Water Day website that year.

### **About SDG 6:**

#### **Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation**

- Water scarcity affects more than 40 percent of people around the



world, an alarming figure that is projected to increase with the rise of global temperatures as a result of climate change. Although 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved water sanitation since 1990, dwindling supplies of safe drinking water is a major problem impacting every continent.

- In 2011, 41 countries experienced water stress - 10 of which are close to depleting their supply of renewable freshwater and must now rely on alternative sources. Increasing drought and desertification is already worsening these trends. By 2050, it is projected that at least one in four people will be affected by recurring water shortages.
- Ensuring universal access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030 requires we invest in adequate infrastructure, provide sanitation facilities, and encourage hygiene at every level.
- Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems such as forests, mountains, wetlands and rivers is essential if we are to mitigate water scarcity. More international cooperation is also needed to encourage water efficiency and support treatment technologies in developing countries.

## **Facts and figures**

**40%** - Water scarcity affects more than 40 percent of the global population, and that figure is projected to rise.

**2.6 billion** - 2.6 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources since 1990, but 663 million people are still without.

**1,000** - Each day, nearly 1,000 children die due to preventable water and sanitation-related diseases.

**40 billion** Women in sub-Saharan Africa collectively spend about 40 billion hours a year collecting water. This significantly impacts their employment opportunities.

**2.4 billion** - 2.4 billion people worldwide do not have access to basic sanitation services like toilets or latrines.

**80%**-80 percent of wastewater from human activities is discharged into waterways without any pollution removal.

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## **U.S. puts Pakistan on notice over terror attack**

### **Why in news?**

The United States has asked Pakistan to take sustained, verifiable and irreversible action against the perpetrators of terrorism and warned the country that another terror attack on India will prove to be extremely problematic.

### **US Warnings:**

- We need to see Pakistan taking concrete and sustained action to rein in the terrorist groups, mainly the Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-e-Taiba, in order to ensure that we don't have re-escalation of tensions in the region," a senior administration official told.
  - And, if there's any additional terrorist attack without Pakistan having made a sustained, sincere effort against these groups, it would be extremely problematic for Pakistan and it would cause re-escalation of tensions, which is dangerous for both countries.
  - Asked about the steps being taken by Pakistan after the Balakot airstrike, the official said the U.S. and the international community needed to see "irreversible and sustained" action against the terror groups.
  - In the recent days Pakistan had taken some "initial" actions. It had frozen the assets of some terror groups and made some arrests.
  - It had taken administrative control of some of the JeM facilities. "But we clearly need to see more. We need to see irreversible action because in the past, what we've seen is they made some arrests and then a few months later, they released these individuals.
  - The terrorist leaders are sometimes still allowed to travel around the country, hold rallies.
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## **SCO offers 'mediation' in India-Pak. Talks**

### **Why in news?**

The eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) offered to smoothen a bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan so that the two countries can resolve their differences, following last month's terror attack in Kashmir.

### **Mediation:**

- At his first press conference after taking over as the SCO Secretary-General, Vladimir Norov offered "mediation," to support direct talks between both countries.
- He said the SCO member-states were ready to offer mediation as there is an intention by India and Pakistan to resolve the differences in a bilateral format.

### **About SCO:**

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai (China) by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. It was preceded by the **Shanghai Five mechanism**.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed during the St. Petersburg SCO Heads of State meeting in June 2002, and entered into force on 19 September 2003. This is the fundamental statutory document which outlines the organisation's goals and principles, as well as its structure and core activities.
- The historical meeting of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was held on 8-9 **June 2017 in Astana. On the meeting the status of a full member of the Organization was granted to the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.**



## Goals and Objectives:

- The SCO's main goals are as follows: strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states; promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, as well as in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas; making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region; and moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.
- Proceeding from the **Shanghai Spirit**, the SCO pursues its internal policy based on the principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultations, respect for cultural diversity, and a desire for common development, while its external policy is conducted in accordance with the principles of non-alignment, non-targeting any third country, and openness.

## Institutional Mechanism:

- The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO.
  - It meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation.
  - The SCO Heads of Government Council (HGC) meets once a year to discuss the organisation's multilateral cooperation strategy and priority areas, to resolve current important economic and other cooperation issues, and also to approve the organisation's annual budget.
  - **The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.**
  - The organisation has two permanent bodies — the **SCO Secretariat based in Beijing** and the Executive Committee of the **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent**. The SCO Secretary-General and the Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO RATS are appointed by the Council of Heads of State for a term of three years.
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## **Political parties yet to comply with RTI Act**

### **Why in news?**

In a time of deep political polarisation, refusing to comply with the RTI Act seems to be one of the few issues that has united national parties across the ideological spectrum.

### **CIC Ruling:**

- Despite a **June 2013 ruling from the Central Information Commission (CIC)** that they fall within the ambit of the transparency law, parties insist that they cannot be considered **public authorities under the Act**.
- Six years on, with another Lok Sabha election in the offing, the Supreme Court is set to adjudicate on the issue, with a petition filed jointly by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and RTI activist Subhash Chandra Agrawal coming up for hearing on March 26.
- Parties are defying the law, and the CIC was unable to do anything about it.
- National political parties are the main players as far as elections are concerned. In a democratic system of governance, it is essential that they are held accountable by informed citizens.
- Most political parties refused to comment publicly on the issue, saying it was sub judice.

### **Background:**

- The issue goes back to October 2010, when ADR filed an RTI request seeking information on donations and contributions received by political parties.
- Of the six parties then recognised by the Election Commission as national parties, only one, the CPI, accepted that it was a public authority under the Act. (It later changed its stance.)
- The Congress, Nationalist Congress Party and the CPI(M) denied they had any obligations under the Act. The BJP and the BSP did not even respond.
- ADR complained to the CIC, the highest appellate body under the RTI

Act.

- In June 2013, a full bench of the CIC ruled that the **national parties are public authorities under Section 2(h) of the Act**, and directed them to make voluntary disclosures, appoint public information officers and respond to RTI applications.
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## **Rupee-dollar swap could boost foreign fund flows under voluntary retention route**

### **Why in news?**

The RBI's decision to infuse rupee liquidity through **long term foreign exchange swap**, a first of its kind in liquidity management policy, is likely to boost investments by foreign portfolio investors under the **voluntary retention route (VRR)**.

### **About the mechanism:**

- The central bank will conduct dollar-rupee buy/sell swap action of **\$5 billion for a three-year tenor**, on March 26. Such a swap route has been explored by various emerging market economies as an **effective tool to manage liquidity**.
- Apart from liquidity infusion, the move will boost the country's foreign exchange reserves and is likely to support the exchange rate.
- Introduced on March 1 by RBI, the VRR for investments by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) is subject to a **minimum retention period of three years from the date of allotment**.
- During this period, FPIs shall maintain a minimum of 75% of the allocated amount in India.
- Since investments made under VRR are subject to a three-year lock-in, this perfectly suits them.

### **Lower premium:**

- There is no liquid market for three-year forward cover. Three-year

forward cover is not easily available in the market and here, RBI is providing that cover and the premium could be lower. And the premium will be market determined. There will be less uncertainties for the FPIs who want to take the VRR route.

- Investments under VRR (by all FPIs taken together) are capped at Rs. 40,000 crore for government securities and Rs. 35,000 crore for corporate debt securities.
  - The new tool could have several implications, including lowering cost of hedging for the importers, with forward premia taking a dip.
  - Also, this move will complement the recently announced VRR route, wherein the stated objective of the regulator is to attract long-term and stable FPI investments in the debt market while providing FPIs with operational flexibility to manage their investments.
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