



05 Apr 2025

## National and International News

<p><b>Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lok Sabha Speaker, Shri Om Birla, is leading a parliamentary delegation to the 150th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which is being held in Tashkent from April 5 to 9, 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the <b>international organization of Parliaments which was established in 1889 in Paris to promote representative democracy and world peace.</b></li> <li>• It facilitates <b>parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy, and sustainable development around the world.</b></li> <li>• It was the <b>first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations.</b></li> <li>• <b>Members:</b> It comprises 180 member parliaments and 15 associate members.</li> <li>• It promotes democracy and helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender-balanced, and more diverse.</li> <li>• <b>The IPU moved its headquarters to Geneva in 1921.</b></li> <li>• <b>Funding:</b> It is financed primarily by its members out of public funds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vibrant Villages Programme</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Union Cabinet has approved the second phase of Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP), which envisages comprehensive development of select villages located along international borders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a <b>Centrally sponsored scheme, announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 (to 2025-26) for development of villages on the northern border, thus improving the quality of life of people living in identified border villages.</b></li> <li>• It will cover the border areas of <b>Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Ladakh.</b></li> <li>• It will <b>cover 2,963 villages with 663 of them to be covered in the first phase.</b></li> <li>• Vibrant Village Action Plans will be <b>created by the district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats.</b></li> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The scheme aids to identify and develop the economic drivers based on local, natural, human and other resources of the border villages on the northern border;</li> <li>○ Development of growth centres on 'hub and spoke model'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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	through promotion of social entrepreneurship, empowerment of youth and women through skill development and entrepreneurship.
<b>Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)</b>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted BIMSTEC as a model for inclusive development and collective security, announcing over 20 initiatives, including a Home Ministers' security mechanism, UPI payment connections, an energy center, and a chamber of commerce in Bangkok.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is an economic bloc that came into being in <b>June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.</b></li> <li>BIMSTEC was initially formed with <b>four member states- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand on June 6, 1997.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Nepal became an observer state in 1998 and became a full-time member of the bloc along with Bhutan in February 2004.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Members</b> - Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.</li> <li><b>Permanent Secretariat</b> - Dhaka, Bangladesh</li> <li><b>Aim:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Its aim is to counter the onslaught of globalisation by accelerating regional growth through mutual cooperation by utilising regional resources and geographical advantages.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Importance of BIMSTEC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Around 22% of the world's population live in the seven countries around the Bay of Bengal, with a combined GDP close to \$2.7 trillion.</li> <li>All seven countries have sustained average annual rates of growth between 3.4% and 7.5% from 2012 to 2016.</li> <li>A fourth of the world's traded goods cross the bay every year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Defence Exercises: INDRA 2025</b>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bilateral Naval Exercise INDRA 2025 between Indian and Russian navies was held from 28 Mar to 02 Apr 2025.</li> <li>This 14th edition of the exercise included a wide range of activities and structured drills designed to enhance interoperability towards countering common maritime threats.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The exercise is being conducted in two phases: <b>the Harbour Phase in Chennai and the Sea Phase in the Bay of Bengal.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Harbour Phase includes an opening ceremony, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs), reciprocal visits, sports fixtures, and pre-sail briefings between personnel from both navies.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Sea Phase will feature advanced naval drills such as tactical maneuvers, live weapon firings, anti-air operations, underway replenishment, helicopter cross-deck landings, and the exchange of sea riders.</li> <li>● <b>Russian Participation:</b> Russian naval ships, including Pechanga, Rezkiv, and Aldar Tsydenzhapov, are participating in the exercise.</li> <li>● <b>Indian Navy Deployment:</b> The Indian Navy has deployed warships Rana, Kuthar, and maritime patrol aircraft P8I.</li> </ul>
<b>Stand up India Scheme</b>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "Stand-Up India has completed 9 years of empowering women and marginalized communities by providing them with financial support and entrepreneurial opportunities."</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stand up India Scheme was <b>launched on April, 2016 to promote entrepreneurship at grassroot level focusing on economic empowerment and job creation. The scheme has been extended till 2025.</b></li> <li>● The scheme aimed to <b>promote entrepreneurship amongst women and SC/ST to help them in starting a greenfield enterprise in manufacturing, services or the trading sector.</b></li> <li>● <b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promote entrepreneurship amongst women, SC &amp; ST category;</li> <li>○ Provide loans for greenfield enterprises in manufacturing, services or the trading sector and activities allied to agriculture;</li> <li>○ Facilitate bank loans between Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 crore to at least one Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch of Scheduled Commercial Banks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Eligibility:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SC/ST and/or women entrepreneurs, above 18 years of age;</li> <li>○ Loans under the scheme is available for only green field project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In this context, "green field" refers to the beneficiary's first-time venture in sectors such as manufacturing, services, agri-allied activities, or trading.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)</b>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to the 2025 Technology and Innovation Report issued by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), <b>India ranked 36th in 2024 on the Readiness for Frontier Technologies Index, improving its position from 48th in 2022.</b></li> </ul>



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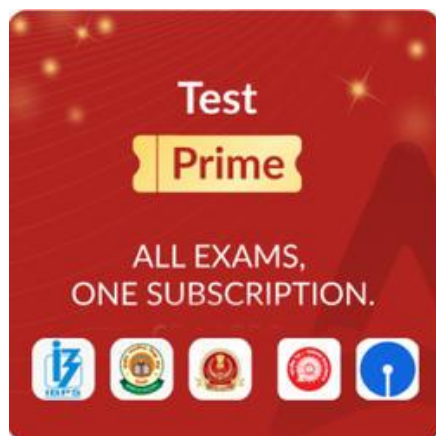
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### Key Points:

- It was established as a permanent intergovernmental body by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.
- Objective: To aid developing countries, particularly the least developed ones, and transitioning economies, in integrating effectively into the global economy.
- **Members:** 195 nations (including India)
- **HQ:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **It helps countries to:**
  - Understand options for addressing macro-level development challenges
  - Diversify their economies to reduce dependence on commodities
  - Limit exposure to financial volatility, among other benefits.
- **Reports published by UNCTAD:**
  - Trade and Development Report
  - World Investment Report
  - The Least Developed Countries Report



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