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FINDER
FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER

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THE HINDU

A middle power moment in a fragmenting world

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Why in Focus?

- The concept of **middle powers** has gained attention, highlighted by speeches from leaders like Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.
- The article argues that a **weakening global order has created** a **"Middle Power moment"**, allowing countries like India, Brazil and Germany to shape global rules

Key Highlights:

- **Middle powers** are countries with **significant regional influence, economic capabilities, and diplomatic networks**, acting beyond their immediate neighborhoods.
- Middle powers include countries like **India, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, South Africa, Japan, Indonesia, Türkiye, Mexico, and Germany**.
- These nations seek a **more equitable distribution of voice in global institutions** and **advocate for reforms in multilateral governance**.
- Middle powers champion issues such as **development, climate justice, equitable trade, and technology access**.
- They share a view that the **United Nations Security Council** still reflecting **1945 power structures**, does not match their aspirations.
- **Weak institutions, an unpredictable US and great-power rivalry** give them room to build coalitions and mediate conflicts.
- They are already doing so: **India led the G-20 in 2023**, **Brazil led climate diplomacy** by hosting COP30 UNFCCC, **South Africa pushed vaccine equity** through the TRIPS waiver, and **Germany's efforts to stabilize Europe** by backing Ukraine during Russian invasion.

Implications:

- **Middle powers have different interests**, so collective action is limited.
- **Brazil and Indonesia see China as an economic partner**, while India is cautious due to border tensions.
- They face **more risk from economic shocks** than superpowers.
- **Paralysed multilateral bodies** limit joint action.

Way Forward:

- Push for a **more representative UNSC** and fairer voice for developing countries.
- Work together on **climate finance, digital governance and health security**.
- **Strengthen the Quad and BRICS**, and **leverage the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and International North-South Transport Corridor**.
- Follow **multi-alignment** and avoid rigid blocs.
- **Moderate, mediate and innovate**, instead of replacing great powers.

Mains Question:

What is meant by a 'Middle Power'? Discuss India's role and the challenges for middle powers in a changing world order. (15 marks, 250 words)

How do tokamaks work to make nuclear fusion possible?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Why in Focus?

- **Tokamaks** are central to **ongoing research in achieving nuclear fusion as a potential clean energy source**.
- The **tokamak** is in focus as **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor** faces delays and rising costs

Key Highlights:

- The concept of the tokamak was developed in the **Soviet Union** in the 1950s by physicists **Igor Tamm** and **Andrei Sakharov**.
- A **tokamak** uses **magnetic fields** to confine superhot **plasma** in a ring-shaped vacuum chamber, enabling nuclear fusion.

Nuclear Fusion: A process in which two light atomic nuclei combine to form a heavier nucleus, releasing a large amount of energy.

Plasma: It is a fourth state of matter, a gas whose atoms have been stripped of their electrons, leaving free electrons and charged nuclei.

- The **ITER** project aims to **demonstrate the feasibility of fusion as a large-scale energy source**.

ITER Project: It is an international nuclear fusion megaproject using an experimental tokamak reactor in southern France, funded by seven members: the EU, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the USA.

- **How a Tokamak Works:**
  - **Plasma Formation:** Hydrogen gas is heated to extremely high temperatures, converting it into an electrically charged state called plasma.
  - **Magnetic Confinement:** The plasma is confined within a doughnut-shaped chamber using powerful magnetic fields, preventing it from touching the reactor walls.
  - **Nuclear Fusion:** Once the plasma reaches extreme temperatures, hydrogen nuclei fuse to form helium, releasing enormous amounts of energy.
- **Deuterium** and **tritium**, isotopes of hydrogen, are **used in fusion to form helium and a fast neutron**, releasing significant energy.

Fast Neutron: A high-energy neutron released during nuclear fusion, which carries energy and transfers it to the reactor blanket as heat.

- **India** conducts its own research with tokamaks like **ADITYA** and **Steady State Superconducting Tokamak (SST-1)** at the Institute for Plasma Research.
- **China's EAST tokamak** achieved a **record plasma confinement duration (1,066 seconds or nearly 18 minutes)**, highlighting advancements in fusion research.

Implications:

- **No tokamak has yet produced net energy**, as the engineering challenges are huge.
- **ITER's delays and rising costs** test the model of shared international funding.
- **Tritium is rare and radioactive**, so **producing enough fuel** is a **major challenge**
- Even **ITER will not generate electricity**, so a commercial fusion plant is far off.

Way Forward:

- Sustain **international cooperation and funding for ITER**, with realistic timelines.
- Encourage start-ups like **Pranos Fusion** through supportive policy and **public-private partnership**.
- Develop **breeding blankets, heat-resistant materials and tritium handling** alongside plasma research.

Mains Question:

What is a tokamak? Discuss the promise and challenges of nuclear fusion as a clean energy source and India's role in fusion research.(15 marks, 250 words)

Removing the odds between safety and freedom

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why in Focus?

- The **Supreme Court** in **Just Rights for Children Alliance v. S. Harish (2026)** recognized internet access as a **fundamental right** under **Article 19(1)(a)**.
- This **recognition emphasizes** the need to **balance children's internet freedom with their online safety**.

Key Highlights:

- **Internet access** is essential for a **bright digital future for children and an inclusive society**.
- The Supreme Court linked internet access to the **right to freedom of speech and expression** under **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Constitution.
- The court emphasized that **protecting children online should not mean restricting their freedom**.
- **This builds on earlier rulings like:**
  - **Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020)** protected speech and trade over the internet under **Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g)**
  - **Cricket Association of Bengal (1995)** held that **Article 19(1)(a)** includes the **right to receive information about events of public interest through television broadcasting**.
  - **Pragya Prasun v. Union of India (2025)** the **SC held that excluding persons with disabilities from digital KYC** (as they could not perform facial actions like blinking or face movement) denied them access to essential services, **violating Article 21**.
- Several countries, including **Australia, Brazil and China**, restrict children's social media use while giving internet access.
- However, **adequate regulations are needed to govern online content** for children.

Implications:

- Children face **cyberbullying, harassment, privacy violations and fraud**, so **access without safeguards** can **cause harm**.
- **Blanket curbs** may **block useful information** and reduce children's digital skills.
- **Harmful and obscene content** is hard to restrict effectively.
- **Age limits and parental controls** raise privacy and data protection concerns.

Way Forward:

- Set **age-appropriate boundaries** and design content filters, instead of blanket bans.
- Raise **digital literacy and awareness of online risks**, so that children can make informed decisions.
- Make platforms accountable for harmful content through **effective regulation and prompt takedown**.
- Prefer **preventive measures over restrictions on children's right to internet access**

Mains Question:

Discuss the challenges and measures required to balance children's internet access as a fundamental right with ensuring their online safety in India.

(250 Words, 15 marks)

The ecological fallout of Israel's war in Gaza

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Why in Focus?

- The **International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict** is observed on **November 6**.
- The article uses the **day to highlight environmental damage in Gaza and argues that Israel violates international environmental law**.

Key Highlights:

- In 2022, the **International Law Commission** adopted **27 draft principles titled Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts** (PERAC).
- These **principles cover environmental protection before, during and after armed conflicts**, including situations of military occupation.
- A **UNEP report released in 2025**, highlighted severe environmental damage caused by the conflict since 2023:
  - **97% of tree crops, 95% of shrubland and 82% of annual crops** have been lost.
  - **Freshwater resources** have become **critically scarce and contaminated**.
  - **Destruction of sewage treatment plants and water pipelines** has increased water pollution.
  - **Around 78% of buildings** have been damaged or destroyed, **generating 61 million tonnes of debris**.
  - **Vegetation and soil damage has reduced rainwater absorption**, increasing floods and lowering groundwater recharge.
- **Under PERAC principles**, an **occupying power** must **use natural resources for the occupied population's benefit**, **protect the environment and prevent environmental degradation**.
- The article argues that **Israel's extraction of Palestinian natural resources** and **environmental destruction violate these obligations**.
- The **International Court of Justice, in its July 19, 2024 advisory opinion**, addressed the **legal consequences of Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**.

Implications:

- **PERAC principles are non-binding**, so enforcement depends on states' will.
- **Fixing responsibility for environmental harm is hard** during active conflict.
- Damage to **water, soil and food systems** deepens the humanitarian crisis and famine risk.
- Effects like **contaminated aquifers** cross borders and last for generations.
- **Reparation is hard to enforce**, as no strong mechanism exists.

Way Forward:

- Convert the **PERAC principles into a binding international convention**.
- Strengthen **independent monitoring of damage by UNEP** using satellite and field data.
- Include **environmental damage and reparation** in peace agreements and reconstruction.
- Protect **water, sewage and farmland** as civilian infrastructure under international humanitarian law.

Mains Question:

Examine the environmental consequences of Israel's military actions in Gaza and discuss the international legal obligations for environmental protection in conflict zones. (250 Words, 15 marks)

KEYWORDS

Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS)

- **Why in News?:** The **Registrar-General and Census Commissioner of India (RG&CCI)** has directed States to monitor **Census 2027 data collection in real time** during the Population Enumeration (PE) phase using CMMS.
- CMMS is a **centralised, web-based digital portal** developed by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** in **2026**
- This integrated **dashboard** enables real-time monitoring of census activities at the **sub-district, district, state and national levels**.
- The portal facilitates the **appointment, deployment and work allocation** of enumerators and supervisors.
- It tracks **fieldwork progress and data collection**, helping identify delays and improve administrative coordination and efficiency.

INS Sahyadri

- **Why in News?:** INS Sahyadri arrived at **Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on 4 November 2026** to participate in the multilateral **Exercise Malabar 2026**.
- It is an indigenously designed and built **multi-role guided-missile stealth frigate** of the Indian Navy, commissioned on in **2012**
- It is the **third and final ship of the Shivalik-class (Project 17)** stealth frigates, built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai**; the other two are **INS Shivalik and INS Satpura**.
- It is equipped with **BrahMos anti-ship missiles and anti-submarine rocket launchers**, along with advanced electronic warfare systems.
- **Exercise Malabar 2026** involves the navies of **India, Japan, the USA and Australia (the Quad nations)** and **aims to enhance maritime cooperation interoperability** in the **Indo-Pacific region**.



Pralay Missile

- **Why in News?:** The **Defence Research and Development Organisation** successfully test-fired the indigenous **Pralay missile** from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, off the Odisha coast
- Pralay is an indigenously developed **short-range, surface-to-surface quasi-ballistic missile**, developed by DRDO for tactical battlefield use.
- It was developed by **Research Centre Imarat , Hyderabad**, in collaboration with **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)** and **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**.
- It has a range of **150–500 km**, carries a payload of **500–1,000 kg** and is powered by a **solid-propellant rocket motor**
- It can be **launched from mobile platforms** and can reach terminal speeds of **Mach 6.1**.
- Unlike conventional ballistic missiles, a **quasi-ballistic missile** can **manoeuvre during flight and alter its trajectory**, making interception more difficult



NAMASTE Scheme

- **Why in News?:** A **Parliamentary Standing Committee flagged implementation gaps in the NAMASTE Scheme**, including delays in worker identification and validation.
- **National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem** launched in **2023** is jointly implemented by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** and the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.
- It aims to eliminate **hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks** by promoting mechanised cleaning, skill development and welfare measures.
- The scheme is implemented by the **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)** under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Its key objectives include **zero fatalities in sanitation work**, preventing direct contact with human waste, providing safety equipment and strengthening **Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs)**.

Places in News

Yanbu

- **Why in News?:** Saudi Arabia issued a **potential danger alert in Yanbu on 5 November 2026** amid escalating Houthi attacks in the region
- **Yanbu** is a major port city in **western Saudi Arabia**, located along the coast of the **Red Sea**.
- It is an important **oil export and refining hub**, hosting major petroleum and petrochemical industries.
- Yanbu is the western terminus of Saudi Arabia's **East–West Pipeline (Petroline)**, which **transports crude oil from the eastern oil fields to the Red Sea**
- Its strategic importance lies in providing an **alternative route for Saudi oil exports to global markets**, reducing dependence on shipping through the **Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz**.



Lipulekh-Kalapani-Limpiyadhura

- **Why in News?:** The area was mentioned in **discussions between Indian and Nepali officials regarding border disputes** during the visit of India's Foreign Secretary to Nepal.
- **Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura** are strategically important areas located in the **Kumaon region of Uttarakhand**, near the India–Nepal–China (Tibet) tri-junction.
- The **Treaty of Sugauli (1816)** established the **Kali (Mahakali) River** as the western boundary of Nepal, but the exact origin of the river remains disputed.
- **Nepal claims** that the Kali River originates at **Limpiyadhura**, placing Kalapani and Lipulekh within its territory; **India maintains** that the river originates further east and considers these areas part of Uttarakhand.
- **Lipulekh Pass** is an important route for **India–China border trade**, the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra** and India's strategic access to the Tibetan region.

