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FREE SAMPLE

PRELIMS 2027 EDITION

UPSC CIVIL SERVICES · PRELIMS

International Relations

Prelims Summary + Facts

PYQS 1995–2026

India's foreign policy and neighbours, the extended neighbourhood, the major powers, groupings, the UN and other international bodies, and places in the news, as Prelims asks them.

Compiled by Arvind KrS

333	15	191	156	144
PAGES	CHAPTERS	PYQS WITH ANSWERS	FACT TABLES	PRELIMS BOXES

INSIDE EVERY CHAPTER

- A PYQ Radar box: what UPSC asked, and when
- Exam-style facts and fact tables
- Prelims Fact and Prelims Trap boxes
- Update 2026 boxes, checked and dated
- A Prelims Quick Revision panel
- Every PYQ it answers, with answer and reason

UNIT I
India's Foreign Policy and Neighbourhood

UNIT II
The Extended Neighbourhood

UNIT III
Major Powers and Other Regions

UNIT IV
Regional and Global Groupings

UNIT V
International Institutions

UNIT VI
Places in the News

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Updated to November 2026

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International Relations: Prelims Summary + Facts

Fact notes for UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination, built on the Prelims questions of 1995–2026

Prelims 2027 Edition · November 2026 · Compiled by Arvind KrS

Answers for 2011–2025 follow UPSC's official answer keys; 2026 answers follow UPSC's provisional key and are marked so.

Free sample. This sample carries the cover, the full contents and three complete chapters of the book. You may share this sample as it is, without changes.

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Questions or corrections: support@lotusarise.com

How to read this book

This is a Prelims fact book built backwards from the question paper. Chapter 1 shows what UPSC has asked from 1995 to 2026; every other chapter gives the facts in the form Prelims tests them, and ends with the questions it answers.

PYQ RADAR 38 QUESTIONS, 1995–2026

- **Asked:** the years.
- **Learn first:** the table to start with.

PYQ Radar
At the top of each chapter: how many questions UPSC has set from it, in which years, on which themes, and which table to learn first.

- The **New Development Bank** is headquartered in **Shanghai**; its five founders hold equal shares of its initial capital.

Exam-style facts
One fact to a line, written the way a correct statement reads in a Prelims question.

A faint yellow mark runs over the highest-yield facts. Terms are underlined in gold and dates such as 1997 are set in red.

Marks
The few lines in each section most worth reading twice, chosen by the weight of past questions.

PRELIMS FACT A FACT TO ADD

An extra list, pair or detail of the kind Prelims tests.

Prelims Fact
Extra facts beside the main lines.

PRELIMS TRAP LOOK-ALIKES

Two look-alike facts side by side, with the way to tell them apart.

Prelims Trap
Confusions that question-setters use, such as NDB and AIIB, or UNHRC and UNHCR.

UPDATE 2026 WHAT HAS CHANGED

The current position, with its date and the body that announced it.

Update 2026
New members, summits, office-holders and agreements, checked and dated.

Prelims Quick Revision

- **Term**: the point to remember.
- **Term**: one line each.

Quick Revision and PYQs
Each chapter closes with one-line revision points and then every past question it answers, with the answer and a one-line reason.

A THREE-ROUND PLAN

1. **First round:** read Chapter 1, then each chapter with its tables and boxes, and attempt its PYQs.
2. **Second round:** the marked lines, the Trap boxes and the Update 2026 boxes.
3. **Last fortnight:** the Quick Revision panels and the Rapid Revision Tables of Chapter 15.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS SUMMARY

PYQS 1995–2026



PYQ Analysis: International Relations Prelims 1995–2026

This book starts from the question papers. Every UPSC Prelims paper from 1995 to 2026 was read for questions on international relations: India's foreign policy and its neighbours, the extended neighbourhood, the major powers and other regions, regional and global groupings, international organisations, treaties and conventions, connectivity projects, and conflict and separatist regions in the news. That gives **191 questions**, and each one is printed at the end of the chapter that answers it.

The questions are classified the same way throughout. For 2014–2025 the bank holds exactly the questions classified as International Relations in our subject-wise analysis of each Prelims paper, leaving out the domestic schemes, sports items and other non-IR questions listed alongside them. The same rule is applied to 1995–2013 and to 2026. Groupings, international organisations, treaties, India's bilateral relations and conflict regions in the news are in. The working of the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, economic reports and indices, pure geography (capitals, currencies, old names, seas and their littoral states, neighbours) and political general knowledge (heads of state, parliaments) belong to other books and are left out. Four questions of that kind stay in: the Rule of Law Index (2018), the West Texas Intermediate oil benchmark (2020), the countries bordering Ukraine (2023) and the Gulf states whose ships must cross the Strait of Hormuz (2026). No question in the 2012 or 2021 paper falls under this classification.

Every question is quoted with its options, its answer and a one-line reason. The answers for 2011–2025 follow UPSC's official answer keys, which the Commission releases after the final result of each year's examination. For 1995–2010, when no official key was published, the answer is the one the standard keys agree on; where they disagree, the question carries a note and the answer follows the facts wherever the facts can settle it. The 2026 answers follow UPSC's provisional key of 27 May 2026 and are marked "provisional key". One 2026 question, on international conventions India has not ratified, was dropped by UPSC; none of its options is correct, and it is printed with a note.

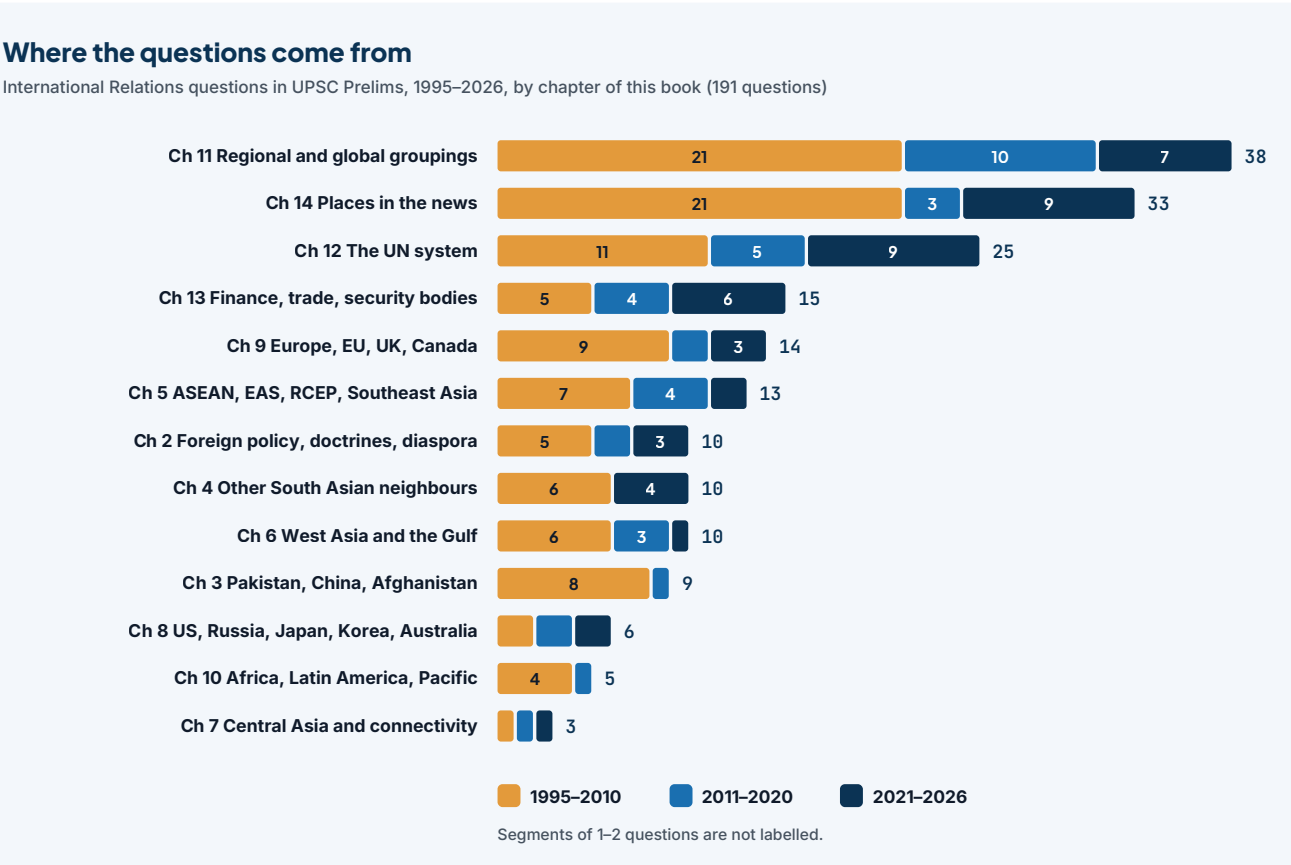
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01 Where the Questions Come From
02 How Many Questions Each Year
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04 Themes UPSC Keeps Returning To
05 Facts Asked Twice or More
06 The Commonest Traps
07 How to Use This Book

01 Where the Questions Come From

Regional and global groupings (Chapter 11) carry the most questions, 38 of 191 (20%), ahead of places in the news (Chapter 14, 33) and the UN system (Chapter 12, 25). With the other international bodies of Chapter 13 (15 questions), these four chapters hold 111 questions, 58% of the total. The nine chapters on India's own relations with countries and regions (Chapters 2–10) share the remaining 80.



International Relations questions in UPSC Prelims, 1995–2026, by chapter of this book, split into three periods.

The weight of the chapters has shifted across the three periods:

- Since 2011, Chapter 11 (groupings) has drawn 17 questions, ahead of Chapter 12 (14), Chapter 14 (12) and Chapter 13 (10). These four account for 53 of the 85 questions asked from 2011 to 2026.

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- Places in the news fell from 21 questions in 1995–2010 to 3 in 2011–2020, then came back with 9 in 2021–2026, now framed as "regions in the news" pairs (Donbas, Tigray, Nagorno-Karabakh, Cabo Delgado), the countries bordering Ukraine and the Strait of Hormuz.
- The UN system (Chapter 12) is steady: 11, 5 and 9 questions in the three periods. Its 2021–2026 questions favour little-known bodies and processes (the Credentials Committee, observer status, International Years, peacekeeping operations, the agencies that won the Nobel Peace Prize).
- Bilateral chapters are small. Central Asia (Chapter 7) has three questions in thirty-two years, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific (Chapter 10) five, and the major powers (Chapter 8) six. Pakistan, China and Afghanistan (Chapter 3) have nine, only one of them since 2011 (the Belt and Road Initiative, 2016).

Table: Questions by chapter and period

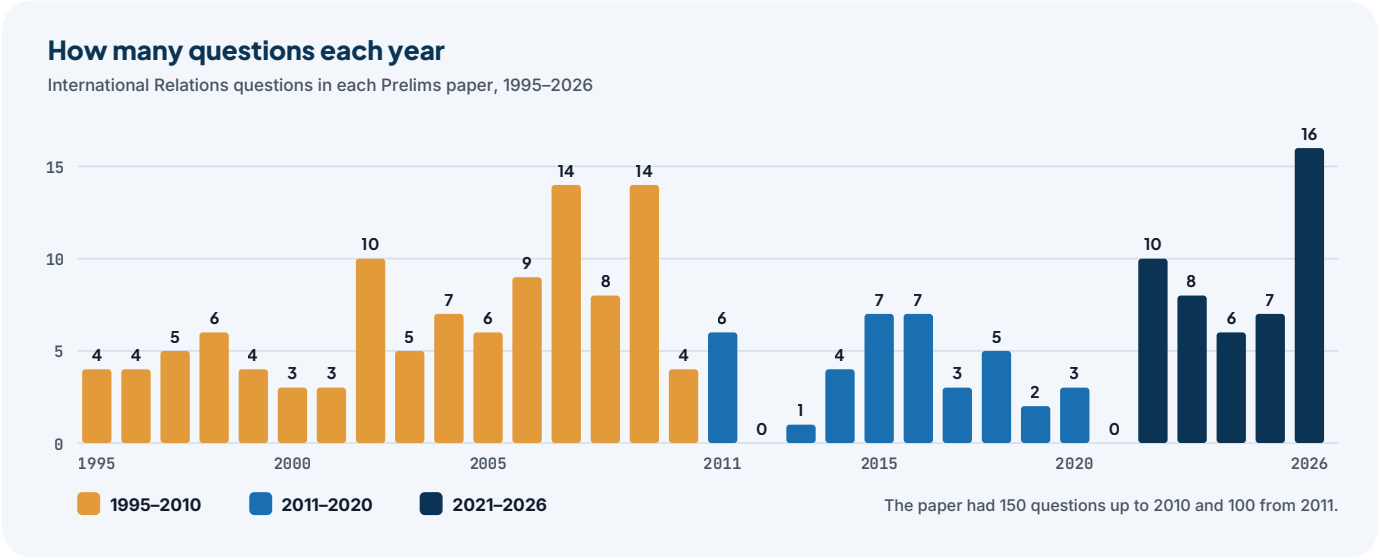
CHAPTER OF THIS BOOK	1995–2010	2011–2020	2021–2026	TOTAL	SHARE
11. Regional and Global Groupings	21	10	7	**38**	20%
14. Places in the News: Conflict Zones, Seas, Borders, Capitals and Countries	21	3	9	**33**	17%
12. The United Nations System	11	5	9	**25**	13%
13. Finance, Trade, Security and Other International Bodies	5	4	6	**15**	8%
9. Europe, the EU, the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Canada	9	2	3	**14**	7%
5. ASEAN, East Asia Summit, MGC, RCEP and Southeast Asia	7	4	2	**13**	7%
2. Foreign Policy: Objectives, Doctrines and the Diaspora	5	2	3	**10**	5%
4. Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Myanmar	6	0	4	**10**	5%
6. West Asia and the Gulf: GCC, OIC, I2U2 and IMEC	6	3	1	**10**	5%
3. Pakistan, China and Afghanistan	8	1	0	**9**	5%
8. United States, Russia, Japan, South Korea and Australia	2	2	2	**6**	3%
10. Africa, Latin America and the Pacific Islands	4	1	0	**5**	3%
7. Central Asia and Connectivity: INSTC, Chabahar, TAPI and Ashgabat	1	1	1	**3**	2%
All chapters	**106**	**38**	**47**	**191**	100%

02 How Many Questions Each Year

The paper had 150 questions up to 2010 and has had 100 since 2011. International relations, as classified here, averaged 6.6 questions a paper before 2011 and 5.3 since, so its share of the paper has risen a little, from 4.4% to 5.3%. The peak is 2026, with 16 questions, ahead of 2007 and 2009 (14 each) and 2002 and 2022 (10 each).

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The 2012 and 2021 papers have none, 2013 has one and 2019 two. The last five papers have 10, 8, 6, 7 and 16 questions from 2022 to 2026.



International Relations questions in each Prelims paper from 1995 to 2026.

PRELIMS FACT THE 2026 PAPER

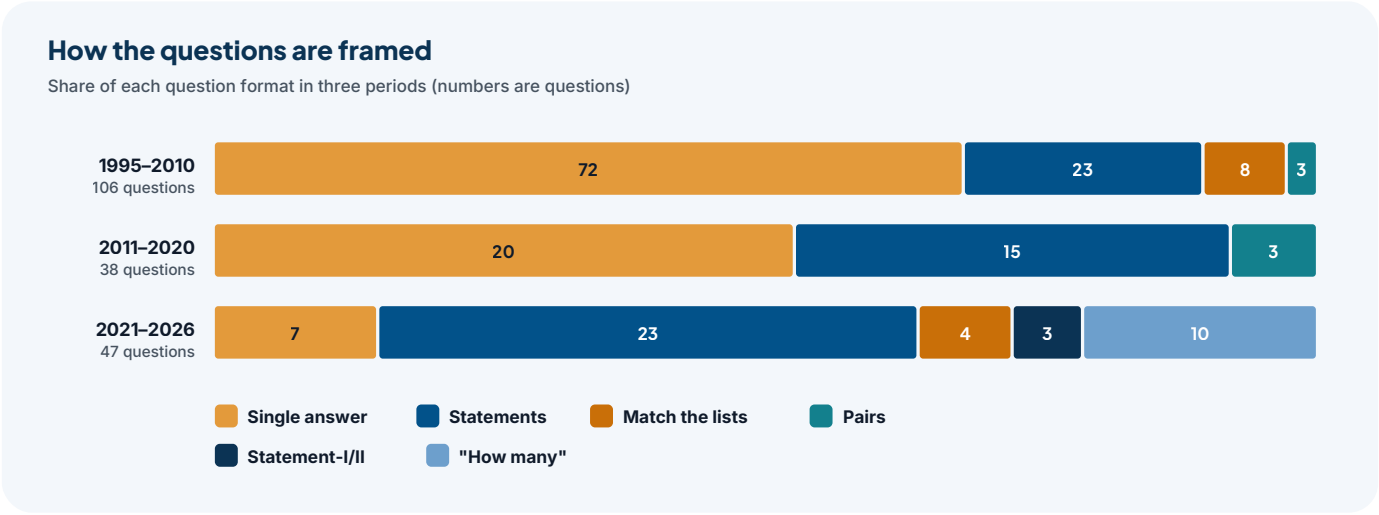
- Sixteen questions: the Strait of Hormuz, river bridges with neighbours, Indian-supported projects in the neighbourhood, India-ASEAN connectivity projects (Kaladan, the Trilateral Highway), BIMSTEC centres, EU members, the German Chancellor's India visit, Russian-origin defence hardware made in India, the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, UN peacekeeping operations, UN agencies that won the Nobel Peace Prize, the UN Ocean Conference, INTERPOL notices, the Montreal Convention, and conventions India has not ratified (dropped by UPSC).
- Seven of the sixteen concern India directly: its projects with neighbours, its summit, a leader's visit, its defence production and its treaty record.

03 How the Questions Have Changed

The single-answer question has nearly gone: two out of three questions before 2011, about one in seven since 2021. Its place has been taken by statement questions, the "how many of the above" format (from 2022) and Statement-I/Statement-II (from 2023). In 2021–2026, 36 of the 47 questions asked you to judge every statement or pair, so one question can test a body's members, headquarters, founding year and India's status together.

- **Match the lists** was a staple of the 1990s and 2000s (eight questions to 2010), vanished in 2011–2025 and returned in 2026 with four questions (peacekeeping operations, BIMSTEC centres, INTERPOL notices, projects in neighbouring countries).
- **News hooks** ("recently", "in the news", "often mentioned") open about one question in six (31 of 191). The fact behind the hook is usually a stable one: a member list, a headquarters, a founding treaty, the country a region lies in.
- **Maps:** six questions from 1995 to 2000 asked you to read a printed map (Chechnya, Jaffna, the Durand Line, Kenya as the new G-15 member, the Siachen, Sir Creek and Wular sites, the route of the hijacked IC-814). UPSC has stopped printing maps, but the same knowledge is now tested through "regions in the news" pairs. Chapter 14 has the maps you need.

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Question formats in the three periods.

Table: Question formats by period (number and share of the period's questions)

FORMAT	1995–2010	2011–2020	2021–2026	TOTAL
Single answer	72 (68%)	20 (53%)	7 (15%)	**99**
Statements (which is/are correct)	23 (22%)	15 (39%)	23 (49%)	**61**
Match the lists	8 (8%)	0 (0%)	4 (9%)	**12**
Pairs (which is/are correctly matched)	3 (3%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	**6**
Statement-I and Statement-II	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	**3**
"How many" of the above	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (21%)	**10**

04 Themes UPSC Keeps Returning To

Grouped by what was asked, three themes dominate: groupings, regions and countries in the news, and international institutions. Between them they hold 129 of the 191 questions. India's own bilateral relations draw 14.

Table: What the questions are about (number and share of the period's questions)

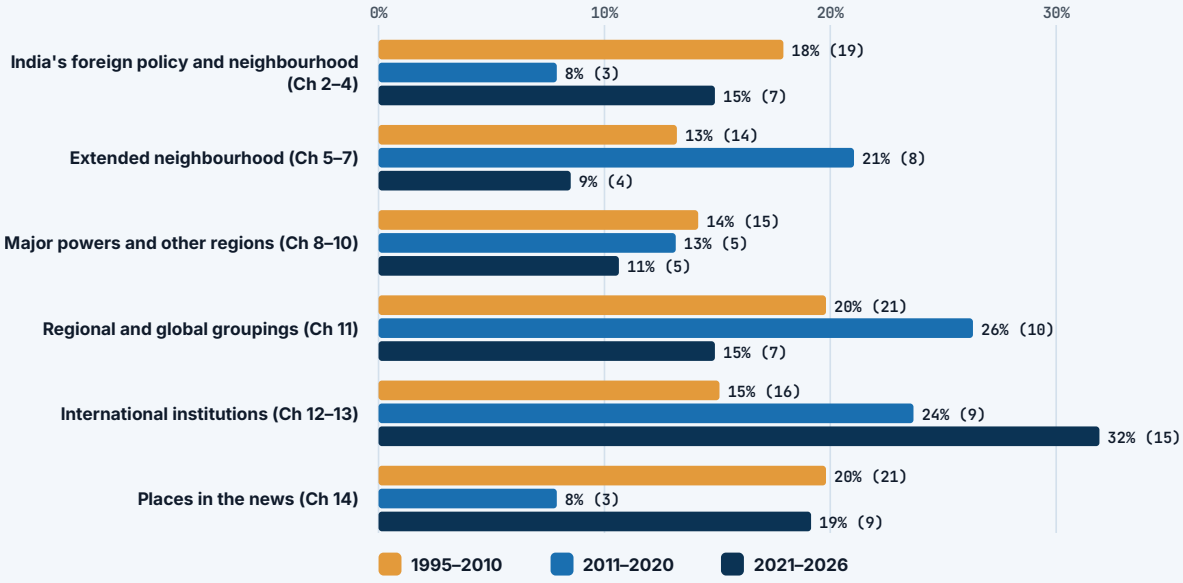
THEME	1995–2010	2011–2020	2021–2026	TOTAL
Groupings: members, headquarters, summits	34 (32%)	13 (34%)	10 (21%)	**57**
Regions, conflicts and countries in the news	26 (25%)	5 (13%)	11 (23%)	**42**
International institutions and agencies	15 (14%)	5 (13%)	10 (21%)	**30**
Treaties and conventions	3 (3%)	7 (18%)	5 (11%)	**15**
Bilateral relations, agreements and projects	10 (9%)	2 (5%)	2 (4%)	**14**

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THEME	1995–2010	2011–2020	2021–2026	TOTAL
South Asian neighbours	9 (8%)	1 (3%)	2 (4%)	**12**
India's foreign-policy concepts and the diaspora	7 (7%)	2 (5%)	3 (6%)	**12**
Corridors, ports and pipelines	1 (1%)	2 (5%)	3 (6%)	**6**
Military exercises	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	**2**
Reports and indices	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	**1**

What the questions are about

Each unit's share of the questions in each period (% of that period's questions)



Each unit's share of the questions in each period.

- **Groupings and their members.** "Which of these is not a member" is the oldest IR question: ASEAN (2005, 2006, 2009), the CIS (2006), the Nordic Council (2006), the SCO (2007), the first G7 (2009), the Arctic Council (2014), the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (2015), the GCC (2016), the G20 (2020), the Organization of Turkic States (2022), NATO (2025) and the EU (2009, 2026).
- **India's status.** UPSC asks directly whether India belongs: observer status in the SCO (2007), APEC and the OECD (2008), APEC, ASEAN and the EAS (2015), the AIIB, MTCR and SCO (2022), the Minerals Security Partnership (2025). The Rapid Revision chapter has a full table of India's status in every body.
- **Headquarters and venues.** The IAEA, ITU, Council of the EU and OECD (2002), UN agencies (2004), the OIC (2007), the ADB, APEC and ASEAN (2009) and the BIMSTEC centres (2026); summit venues from the APEC meeting of 2001 (2002) to the BRICS summit at Kazan (2025).
- **The UN system.** Its official languages (1998), the Charter and the Trusteeship Council (2005), ECOSOC and the Security Council's elected members (2009), the Credentials Committee and observer status (2022), International Years (2025), peacekeeping operations and the Nobel-winning agencies (2026).
- **Treaties and conventions** (15 questions): the Chemical Weapons Convention (1995), the Ottawa landmine treaty (1998), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2010), the UDHR and New START (2011), the NPT and the Beijing Platform for Action (2015), the OPCW (2016), the IAEA Additional Protocol (2018), four

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agreements matched to their subjects (2020), UNCLOS (2022), the Global Compact for Migration and the Arab Peace Initiative (2023), the Montreal Convention and conventions India has not ratified (2026).

- **India's neighbourhood projects** have returned since 2023: connectivity projects (2023), river bridges and Indian-funded projects in neighbouring countries (2026), India-ASEAN projects (2026).

05 Facts Asked Twice or More

Each topic below is covered in full in the chapter named in the last column.

TOPIC	YEARS ASKED	CHAPTER
The European Union: members, enlargement, the euro, laws and bodies	11 questions: 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2016, 2019, 2024, 2026	9
ASEAN: members, partners, headquarters and projects	7 questions: 2005, 2006, 2009 (twice), 2015, 2018, 2026	5, 11
Regions, towns, communities and countries in the news, in matching lists	7 questions: 2002, 2014, 2016, 2022 (twice), 2023 (twice)	14
APEC, and India's non-membership of it	1996, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2015	5, 11
UN organs: the Charter, ECOSOC, the Security Council, the General Assembly's committees and observers	2005, 2009 (twice), 2022 (twice)	12
India's status in groupings and regimes: member, observer or outsider	2007, 2008, 2015, 2022, 2025	5, 11
The former Yugoslavia: successor states, Macedonia and Kosovo	2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2009	14
India's projects with its neighbours: roads, bridges, corridors and aid	2007, 2023, 2026 (3 times)	4, 5
Headquarters of international bodies	2002, 2004, 2007, 2009	6, 11, 12
BRICS: summits, declarations and members	2010, 2014, 2015, 2025	11
India and Russia: declarations, defence and nuclear cooperation	2003, 2004, 2019, 2026	8
Military coups in the news	2007 (twice), 2022, 2023	11, 14
Doctors Without Borders and Amnesty International: what they are, who founded them	2006, 2008, 2015, 2016	13
Export-control regimes: NSG, Australia Group, Wassenaar Arrangement, MTCR	2008, 2011, 2022	11
The G7 and the G20	2009, 2020, 2023	11
The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	2006, 2008, 2009	11, 13
The SCO: members and observers	2007 (twice), 2022	11

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TOPIC	YEARS ASKED	CHAPTER
SAARC and SAFTA	2005, 2006, 2007	11
The Non-Aligned Movement: Bandung, summits, Secretary-General	2005, 2007, 2009	2, 11
India and Israel: diplomatic ties and defence purchases	2004, 2005, 2008	6
Israel and the Arab states: Yom Kippur War, two-state solution, Arab Peace Initiative	2008, 2018, 2023	6
India and Pakistan: summits, the Composite Dialogue, the Indus Waters Treaty	1999, 2003, 2009	3
Sri Lanka's Tamil conflict: Jaffna, the Thimphu talks, Elephant Pass	1996, 1998, 2009	4
East Timor (Timor-Leste)	1997, 2003, 2009	5, 14
Chechnya	1995, 2004, 2014	14
NATO	2007, 2025	13
The Commonwealth	2007, 2010	11
IORA and IONS, the two Indian Ocean bodies	2015, 2017	11
Chemical weapons: the Convention and the OPCW	1995, 2016	11
The IAEA (headquarters, Additional Protocol)	2002, 2018	12
Migration compacts and forums (GCM, Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue)	2023, 2026	2, 12
Article 253: Parliament can make laws to implement treaties for any part of India (the same question)	2000, 2013	2
Books on India's foreign policy by its foreign ministers (Vajpayee, Jaishankar)	2003, 2024	2
The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation	2001, 2015	5
The G-15	1998, 1999	11
BIMSTEC	2025, 2026	11
Ogaden; Dadaab	2008 and 2009; 2009 and 2022	10, 14

06 The Commonest Traps

Most wrong statements in these 191 questions fall into nine patterns. Each chapter has Prelims Trap boxes for its own look-alikes.

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TRAP	HOW UPSC SET IT	HOW TO AVOID IT
India's status	APEC and the OECD offered with the ADB and the Colombo Plan as bodies India belongs to (2008), APEC and ASEAN with the East Asia Summit (2015); India's membership of the AIIB, MTCR and SCO (2022) and the Minerals Security Partnership (2025) tested	Learn India's status in every body: member, observer, dialogue partner or outsider (Rapid Revision table)
The near neighbour in a member list	China among ASEAN members (2005), Estonia in the CIS and the UK in the Nordic Council (2006), Ukraine in the SCO (2007), Japan and the UK in the Arctic Council (2014; both are observers), Iran in the GCC (2016), Armenia in the Organization of Turkic States (2022), Switzerland in the EU (1999, 2009, 2026) with Belarus (2026), Austria and Serbia in NATO (2025)	For every grouping, learn the countries that are close to it but outside it
Wrong headquarters or venue	The ADB placed in Tokyo and ASEAN in Bangkok (2009), the UN Charter said to be adopted at Geneva (2005; San Francisco), the 2006 APEC meeting placed in Bangkok and that year's UN climate conference in Geneva (2007; Hanoi and Nairobi), the first BRIC summit placed in Rio de Janeiro (2014; Yekaterinburg)	Learn headquarters and summit venues in pairs with their look-alikes: ADB Manila, AIIB Beijing, NDB Shanghai, ASEAN Jakarta, APEC Singapore
Wrong number or date	The NSG given 24 members (2008), ECOSOC 24 (2009), the Lahore Summit placed in 1997 (2003; 1999), SAFTA in force from 1 December 2005 (2006; 1 January 2006), the first IONS in 2015 (2017; 2008), BIMSTEC founded by a Dhaka Declaration of 1999 (2025; Bangkok, 1997)	Learn the current member count and founding date of each body
Wrong parent or wrong nature	The UN Credentials Committee said to be set up by the Security Council (2022), NATO said to be replaced by the NACC (2007), the Wassenaar Arrangement placed under the OECD (2011), the OPCW called an EU body (2016), the Nuclear Security Summits put under the UN and the International Panel on Fissile Materials made an IAEA organ (2017), the World Toilet Organization called a UN agency (2024)	For every body, learn who created it, whom it reports to and whether it is inter-governmental or non-governmental
"All", "automatically", "binding"	All former British territories automatically in the Commonwealth (2010), the Global Compact for Migration adopted by all UN members and called binding (2023), the EU said to aim at making all its own clean technology (2024), India called resource-rich in all 30 critical minerals (2025), the Colombo Process and the Charter for Democratic Diffusion of AI called binding (2026)	Test the absolute word first; one exception makes the statement false
Right name, wrong country	Darfur placed in Mali and the Swat Valley in Iraq (2014), the Kurds in Bangladesh (2016), Bidibidi in Kenya, Cabo Delgado in Spain and Catalonia in Italy (2022), Donbas in Syria, Kachin in Ethiopia and Tigray in North Yemen (2023), Mitra Shakti made an India-Bangladesh exercise (2024; Sri Lanka), the Jhulaghat bridge said to link India with Myanmar (2026; Nepal)	For every region, community or exercise in the news, learn the country it belongs to
One word swapped	Historical Macedonia said to be disputed by Belgium and Greece and Slovenia said to have left Czechoslovakia (2004; Bulgaria, Yugoslavia), Kofi Annan said to be from Nigeria (2006; Ghana), the theme of the 16th BRICS summit given as "Multiculturalism" (2025; Multilateralism), the AI Impact Summit's Sutras given as People, Planning and Progress (2026; Planet), the Ayurveda MoU of the German Chancellor's visit tied to the University of Hamburg (2026; Charité)	Read every word of a familiar-looking statement; the change is often a single noun

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TRAP	HOW UPSC SET IT	HOW TO AVOID IT
Facts that have since changed	Georgia in the CIS (2006; it left in 2009), India an SCO observer (2007; a full member since 2017), Timor-Leste outside ASEAN (2009; it joined in October 2025), Ecuador in OPEC (2009; it left in 2020), the Commonwealth without a charter (2010; Charter of 2013), India outside the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group (2011; it joined in 2017 and 2018), South Africa the last to join BRICS (2014; new members from 2024)	Read old questions with today's facts; the reasons in this book say what has changed

PRELIMS TRAP AN OLD ANSWER IS NOT ALWAYS A TRUE FACT TODAY

- The facts behind several older questions have changed since they were asked: India became a full SCO member (2017) and joined the Wassenaar Arrangement (2017) and the Australia Group (2018); the NSG has 48 members; the Commonwealth adopted its Charter in 2013; Timor-Leste became ASEAN's eleventh member in October 2025; BRICS lists eleven members (Saudi Arabia among them, though Riyadh has not confirmed its accession).
- Where this has happened, the reason printed with the question gives the current position.

07 How to Use This Book

- **Start with the tables.** Each chapter opens with a PYQ Radar that names the table to learn first. In a fact book for Prelims, the tables carry most of the marks: members, headquarters, founding years and India's status.
- **Read the Trap boxes twice.** They are built from wrong statements used in past UPSC papers.
- **Check the Update 2026 boxes last,** just before the exam, and read the news against them: membership changes, summits and new heads of bodies are the facts most likely to move.
- **Do the questions at the end of each chapter** before reading the answers. Then revise from the Rapid Revision Tables in the last chapter.

PRELIMS FACT ABOUT THE ANSWER KEYS

- 69 answers (2011–2025) follow UPSC's official keys; 106 (1995–2010) follow the standard keys; 16 (2026) follow UPSC's provisional key and are marked so.
- Six answers from 1995–2010 are disputed between the standard keys. Each carries a note; the answer printed is the one the facts support or, where the facts cannot settle it, the one most keys give.
- Six questions from 1995–2000 needed UPSC's printed map. They are printed with the answer and a note; the maps in Chapter 14 show the places they asked about.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS SUMMARY

PYQS 1995–2026

Regional and Global Groupings

In its own region India belongs to SAARC, BIMSTEC, SASEC and the Colombo Security Conclave; on the Indian Ocean to IORA and IONS; across the Global South to NAM, the G77, IBSA and BRICS; in Eurasia to the SCO; in the Indo-Pacific to the Quad; and among the major economies to the G20. It is an outreach guest of the G7, a member of three of the four export control regimes, and outside OPEC, AUKUS and the NSG. For each grouping, learn its members, headquarters, founding year, latest summit and India's exact status.

SYLLABUS

PRELIMS — **Current events of national and international importance; India's foreign relations, international institutions and groupings**

MAINS · GS PAPER II — **India and its neighbourhood relations; bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India; important international institutions, agencies and fora**

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PYQ RADAR 38 QUESTIONS, 1995–2026

- **Asked:** 1995, 1996, 1998 (twice), 1999, 2005, 2006 (twice), 2007 (four times), 2008 (twice), 2009 (five times), 2010 (twice), 2011, 2014, 2015 (three times), 2016, 2017 (twice), 2020 (twice), 2022 (twice), 2023, 2025 (three times), 2026.
- **Arms control and export regimes** (7 questions): signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Ottawa landmine treaty, the NSG, the Australia Group and Wassenaar Arrangement, NPT nuclear-weapon states, the OPCW, Nuclear Security Summits and the IPFM.
- **India's memberships, other blocs and meetings** (6): regional trading blocs and the WTO; venues of 2006 meetings; ADB, APEC, Colombo Plan and OECD; headquarters of ADB, APEC and ASEAN; AIIB, MTCR and SCO; the Minerals Security Partnership.
- **G7, G20 and G-15** (5): G-15 membership after Kenya joined (twice); the original G7; G20 members; the G20's origin and India's DPI priority.
- **SAARC and BIMSTEC** (5): SAARC trade ministers (2004); SAFTA; China as SAARC observer and India as SCO observer; BIMSTEC's founding and members; BIMSTEC centres (2026).
- **Commonwealth, NAM, OPEC and oil** (5): Fiji's suspension; the Commonwealth without a charter; Zail Singh as NAM Secretary-General; Ecuador in OPEC; West Texas Intermediate as an oil benchmark.
- **BRICS** (4): BRIC economies; the first summit and South Africa's entry; the Fortaleza Declaration; the Kazan summit and Indonesia.
- **SCO and Eurasian groupings** (4): SCO members; CIS members and Georgia's exit (twice); the Organization of Turkic States.
- **Indian Ocean** (2): IOR-ARC's purpose; IONS's inaugural year and nature.
- **Learn first:** the "Master table of groupings" with "Other groupings: members, headquarters and India's status", because most questions test who belongs where, where it is headquartered and whether India is a member.

01 Regionalism, Multilateralism and the Map of Groupings

- **Regionalism** is cooperation among states of one geographic region; its first modern example is often traced to the **Cobden-Chevalier Treaty** (1860) between Britain and France. Forms of economic regionalism include the **free trade area, customs union, common market and economic union**.
- **Multilateralism** is cooperation among three or more states on general principles of conduct; it grew after the Second World War through the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and the GATT (later the WTO).
- **Minilaterals** are small, issue-based groups of three or four states (Quad, I2U2, AUKUS, IBSA, supply-chain and critical-minerals partnerships). India calls its own line **reformed multilateralism**: reform of the UN Security Council, the WTO and the multilateral development banks, with regional and minilateral groups as building blocks.
- The WTO **Appellate Body** has not functioned since **December 2019** because the US blocks appointments. The 13th Ministerial Conference (Abu Dhabi, 2024) admitted Comoros and Timor-Leste (166 members); MC14 (Yaoundé, Cameroon, March 2026) ended without agreement on the e-commerce moratorium.
- India stayed out of **RCEP** (2019) and has since signed the India-EFTA TEPA (March 2024; in force 1 October 2025), the India-UK CETA (signed July 2025, in force 15 July 2026), the India-Oman CEPA (December 2025) and the India-New Zealand FTA (signed April 2026, in force 20 October 2026), and concluded talks on an FTA with the EU (27 January 2026).

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Master Table of Groupings

Table: Members, headquarters, founding year and India's status (export control regimes are in their own table below)

GROUPING	MEMBERS (NUMBER)	HQ OR SECRETARIAT	FOUNDED	INDIA'S STATUS
SAARC	8: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka; 9 observers	Kathmandu	1985 (Dhaka)	Founder member
BIMSTEC	7: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand	Dhaka	1997 (Bangkok Declaration)	Founder member; leads the Security sector
SASEC	7: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka	ADB, Manila, acts as secretariat	2001	Founder member
BBIN	4: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal	None	Motor Vehicles Agreement 2015	Member
IORA	23 members; 12 dialogue partners	Ebene, Mauritius	1997	Founder; Chair 2025–27
IONS	25 member navies; 10 observers	Moves with the chair	2008 (New Delhi)	Founder; Chair 2026–28
Colombo Security Conclave	India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Bangladesh (2024); Seychelles (accession as full member, November 2025)	Colombo	2020	Founder member
BRICS	11 members; 10 partner countries	No secretariat	2006 (ministers); 2009 (summit)	Founder; Chair 2026
New Development Bank	10 members	Shanghai	2014 (agreement); 2015 (in force)	Founder; first president (K. V. Kamath)
SCO	10 members; 2 observers; 15 dialogue partners	Beijing; RATS at Tashkent	2001 (Shanghai)	Member since 2017
G7	7 + EU (non-enumerated)	No secretariat	1975 (G6, Rambouillet)	Outreach invitee
G20	19 countries + EU + African Union	No secretariat	1999; leaders' level 2008	Member; presidency 2023
IBSA	3: India, Brazil, South Africa	No secretariat	2003 (Brasília Declaration)	Founder member
Quad	4: Australia, India, Japan, US	No secretariat	2007; revived 2017	Member
AUKUS	3: Australia, UK, US	None	2021	Not a member

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GROUPING	MEMBERS (NUMBER)	HQ OR SECRETARIAT	FOUNDED	INDIA'S STATUS
NAM	120 members; 17 observer states, 10 organisations	No permanent secretariat	1961 (Belgrade)	Founder member
G77	134 developing countries	UN, New York	1964 (Geneva, UNCTAD I)	Founder member
G4	4: Brazil, Germany, India, Japan	None	2004	Member
Uniting for Consensus	About 12 core states led by Italy (Pakistan among them)	None	1995 (Coffee Club)	Opposes India's permanent seat
Commonwealth	56	Marlborough House, London	1949 (London Declaration)	Member since 1947
OPEC	11	Vienna	1960 (Baghdad)	Not a member
Paris Club	22 creditor countries	Paris (French Treasury)	1956	Ad hoc participant

PRELIMS FACT INDIA IN THE CHAIR, 2026

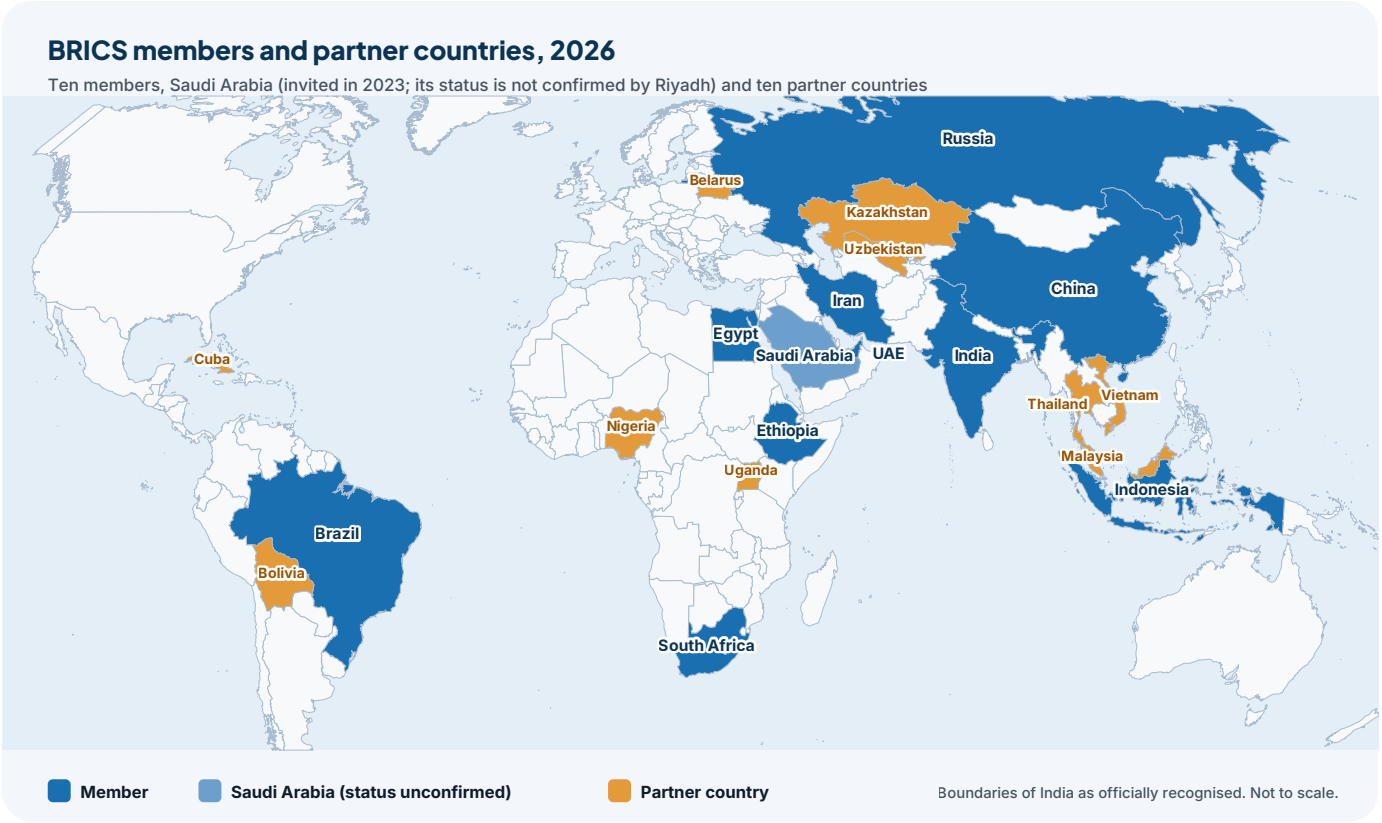
- **BRICS**: India chaired for 2026 and hosted the 18th summit (New Delhi, 12–13 September 2026).
- **IORA**: India has been Chair since 12 November 2025 (term 2025–27); it hosted the 25th Council of Ministers in New Delhi on 27 November 2026.
- **IONS**: India took the chair from Thailand at the 9th Conclave of Chiefs, Visakhapatnam, 20 February 2026, for the first time since 2008.
- **Quad**: India was due to host the leaders' summit after Wilmington (2024), but the leaders met in Manila (17 November 2026).

02 BRICS and the New Development Bank

- The acronym **BRIC** was coined by **Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs in 2001**. BRIC foreign ministers first met in 2006 (New York, on the sidelines of the UNGA), and the first BRIC summit was held at **Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009**.
- **South Africa** was invited in December 2010 and attended the **3rd summit at Sanya, China (2011)**, when BRIC became BRICS.
- BRICS has **no charter and no permanent secretariat**; the chair rotates annually in the order of the acronym B-R-I-C-S: Russia 2024, Brazil 2025, **India 2026**, China 2027.
- Members since **1 January 2024**: **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the UAE** (invited at the 15th summit, Johannesburg, August 2023). **Argentina** declined its invitation (December 2023). **Indonesia** joined on **6 January 2025**, the first Southeast Asian member.
- **Saudi Arabia** was invited in 2023 and appears on official member lists (making 11), but Riyadh has not confirmed accession and attends at the level of foreign minister.
- The **partner country** category was created at the **16th summit, Kazan (October 2024)**, held under Russia's chair with the theme "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security"; partners join summit outreach sessions without full membership.

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- In 2010, **China's GDP** was larger than that of Brazil, Russia and India combined, but its population was smaller than that of India and Brazil together.
- Cooperation runs on three pillars: political and security; economic and financial; cultural and people-to-people. Track I is government, Track II government-linked bodies (business council, think tanks), Track III civil society.
- Other BRICS bodies: **BRICS Business Council** and **Think Tanks Council** (2013); India proposed a BRICS credit rating agency; the BRICS Payment Task Force works on local-currency settlement, and no common BRICS currency has been created.
- Summits held in India: **4th, New Delhi (2012)**, where the idea of a development bank was first taken up; **8th, Goa (2016)**, with a BRICS-BIMSTEC outreach; **13th, virtual (2021)**; and **18th, New Delhi (2026)**.
- All summits: Yekaterinburg 2009, Brasília 2010, Sanya 2011, New Delhi 2012, Durban 2013, Fortaleza 2014, Ufa 2015, Goa 2016, Xiamen 2017, Johannesburg 2018, Brasília 2019, Moscow (virtual) 2020, New Delhi (virtual) 2021, Beijing (virtual) 2022, Johannesburg 2023, Kazan 2024, Rio de Janeiro 2025, New Delhi 2026.



BRICS members and partner countries in 2026.

Table: BRICS members and partner countries with joining years

CATEGORY	COUNTRIES	JOINED
Founders (BRIC)	Brazil, Russia, India, China	2006 (first summit 2009)
Member	South Africa	December 2010 (first summit 2011)
Members	Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE	1 January 2024

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CATEGORY	COUNTRIES	JOINED
Member (status unconfirmed by Riyadh)	Saudi Arabia	Invited 2023
Member	Indonesia	6 January 2025
Partner countries	Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan	1 January 2025
Partner country	Nigeria	January 2025
Partner country	Vietnam	June 2025
Declined	Argentina	December 2023

New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement

- The **Agreement on the New Development Bank** was signed at the **6th summit, Fortaleza** (Brazil), whose **Fortaleza Declaration** also set up the CRA, on 15 July 2014 and entered into force on 3 July 2015.
- The **NDB** is headquartered in **Shanghai**; each of the five founders holds an **equal share** of its capital and has equal voting rights, so no founder can dominate.
- Initial subscribed capital **US$ 50 billion**; authorised capital **US$ 100 billion**. Membership is open to all UN members, but the founders' share cannot fall below 55%.
- The first president was **K. V. Kamath of India** (2015–20), followed by Marcos Troyjo (Brazil) and **Dilma Rousseff (Brazil)**, president since March 2023. The first chair of the Board of Governors was from Russia and the first chair of the Board of Directors from Brazil.
- Regional offices: **Africa Regional Centre, Johannesburg** (2016), and offices in São Paulo, Moscow and **GIFT City, Gujarat** (2022).
- New members: **Bangladesh** and the **UAE** (2021), **Egypt** (2023), **Algeria** (May 2025) and **Uzbekistan** (5 June 2026), making 10. Uruguay, Ethiopia, Angola and Zimbabwe have been admitted and join on depositing their instruments; Colombia dropped its accession on 25 November 2026.
- The NDB lends for clean energy, transport, water and urban infrastructure; Indian projects include the Mumbai Metro, the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS, Chennai Metro Phase II and water supply in Guwahati and Kohima.
- The **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**, also signed at Fortaleza (2014), is a **US$ 100 billion** pool of currency swaps for short-term balance of payments support: China US$ 41 billion, Brazil, Russia and India US$ 18 billion each, South Africa US$ 5 billion. It complements the IMF.

- **PRELIMS TRAP** NDB VS AIIB
  - **NDB**: set up by BRICS; HQ **Shanghai**; agreement Fortaleza 2014; 10 members; equal shares for the five founders; president Dilma Rousseff.
  - **AIIB** (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank): proposed by China; HQ **Beijing**; operational January 2016; over 100 approved members; China is the largest shareholder and **India the second largest**.
  - India is a founding member of both. Neither bank was set up by APEC, and the NDB is not "the BRICS Bank in Beijing".

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UPDATE 2026 BRICS UNDER INDIA'S CHAIR

- The **18th BRICS summit** was held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on **12–13 September 2026** under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", in the 20th anniversary year of BRICS (as of 13 September 2026; source: PMO/MEA).
- Leaders adopted the **New Delhi Declaration** by consensus; it backed UN Security Council reform (China and Russia supported the aspirations of Brazil and India), a WTO-centred trading system and local-currency payments, and did not create a common currency (as of 12 September 2026; source: MEA).
- **Xi Jinping** attended, his first visit to India in seven years, and **Vladimir Putin** attended in person; Brazil was represented by its foreign minister (as of 13 September 2026; source: MEA).
- India's official list shows 11 members (including Saudi Arabia, which has not confirmed) and 10 partner countries; the summit endorsed **China's chairship for 2027** (as of 28 November 2026; source: MEA).
- Uzbekistan became the **10th member of the NDB** on 5 June 2026, the first from Central Asia (as of 18 June 2026; source: NDB).

03 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- The SCO grew out of the **Shanghai Five** (1996) of **China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan**, formed for border demarcation and military confidence-building along the former Soviet-Chinese frontier.
- The **SCO** was founded at **Shanghai on 15 June 2001** by the Shanghai Five and **Uzbekistan**. Its **Charter** was signed at **St Petersburg on 7 June 2002** and entered into force on 19 September 2003.
- It has two permanent bodies: the **Secretariat in Beijing** and the **Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent**. RATS targets the "three evils" of terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- The official languages are **Russian and Chinese** (a 2026 protocol to the Charter adds English once in force). The **Heads of State Council** is the supreme body and meets once a year; the Heads of Government Council approves the budget and economic cooperation; the chair rotates annually.
- **India and Pakistan** became members on **9 June 2017** at the Astana summit (India had been an observer since 2005). **Iran** became the 9th member on 4 July 2023 and **Belarus** the 10th on 4 July 2024.
- India hosted the SCO **Heads of Government Council** for the first time in November 2020 (virtual) and held the SCO chair in 2022–23 under the theme **SECURE** (Security; Economy and trade; Connectivity; Unity; Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; Environment). Its virtual summit of **4 July 2023** admitted Iran.
- India has not joined any SCO paragraph endorsing China's **Belt and Road Initiative** since 2018. At the Qingdao Defence Ministers' Meeting (June 2025) it refused to sign a statement that left out the **Pahalgam attack**.
- The SCO's joint military exercise is **Peace Mission**; India first took part in 2018 (Chebarkul, Russia), alongside Pakistan.
- The Secretary-General is **Nurlan Yermekbayev** of Kazakhstan (from 2025).

Table: SCO members, observers and dialogue partners (November 2026)

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CATEGORY	COUNTRIES
Founder members (2001)	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
Later members	India and Pakistan (2017), Iran (2023), Belarus (2024): total 10
Observers (2)	Afghanistan (inactive since 2021), Mongolia
Dialogue partners (15)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cambodia, Egypt, Kuwait, Laos (2025), Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, UAE



SCO in 2026: ten members, two observers and fifteen dialogue partners.

- **PRELIMS TRAP** SCO VS CSTO
  - **SCO**: 2001, Shanghai; Secretariat Beijing, RATS Tashkent; China and Russia lead; 10 members including **India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus**; it calls itself a non-bloc body with no collective defence clause.
  - **CSTO** (Collective Security Treaty Organisation): treaty signed at Tashkent in 1992, organisation formed in 2002; HQ **Moscow**; Russia-led military alliance with a collective defence clause (Article 4): Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia (Armenia froze its participation in 2024).
  - India, China, Pakistan, Iran and Uzbekistan are in the SCO but not in the CSTO. Armenia is in the CSTO and only a dialogue partner of the SCO.

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UPDATE 2026 SCO: TIANJIN, BISHKEK AND PAKISTAN'S CHAIR

- The 25th summit at **Tianjin (31 August to 1 September 2025)**, the largest in SCO history, was attended by PM Modi, his first visit to China since 2018. It adopted the Tianjin Declaration, which condemned the Pahalgam attack, and the **SCO Development Strategy 2026–2035**, and admitted **Laos** as a dialogue partner. Tianjin also decided to merge the observer and dialogue partner categories into a single **SCO partner** status (as of 1 September 2025; source: SCO Secretariat/MEA).
- **Kyrgyzstan** chaired in 2025–26 and hosted the 26th summit at **Bishkek on 1 September 2026** in the SCO's 25th year; it adopted the Bishkek Declaration and signed a protocol amending the SCO Charter to create the SCO partner status and give English official status; the protocol is not yet in force (as of 28 November 2026; source: SCO Secretariat).
- **Pakistan** holds the SCO chair for **2026–27** and will host the 2027 summit; **Lahore** is the SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital for 2026–27 (as of 1 September 2026; source: SCO Secretariat).

04 G7 and G20

Group of Seven (G7)

- The **G7** is an informal group of seven advanced democracies: **the US, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Canada**. It has no charter or secretariat, and its declarations are not binding.
- Its roots lie in the finance ministers' meetings that followed the **1973 oil crisis**. The French President hosted the first summit at **Rambouillet in 1975** as the G6; **Canada** joined at the 1976 summit at Puerto Rico, making it the G7.
- The **European Union** takes part as a "non-enumerated" member (fully since 1981), represented by the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission.
- **Russia** joined in 1997 (G8) and was suspended in **2014** after its annexation of Crimea.
- The presidency rotates annually; the host sets the agenda and invites outreach countries. Summit preparation is done by personal representatives of the leaders called **sherpas**.
- The G7 set up the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** at its Paris summit of **1989** to fight money laundering; terrorist financing was added in 2001.
- The **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)**, announced at Elmau (Germany, 2022), aims to mobilise **US$ 600 billion by 2027** for infrastructure in developing countries. The 2023 Hiroshima summit launched the **Hiroshima AI Process**.
- India was a "Goodwill Partner" at **Biarritz (2019)** and has been invited to every summit since (none was held in 2020); Évian 2026 was PM Modi's seventh G7 summit in a row.

Table: G7 summits, 2023–2027

SUMMIT	DATES	HOST	NOTES
49th	19–21 May 2023	Hiroshima, Japan	Hiroshima AI Process; India invited as G20 president
50th	13–15 June 2024	Apulia (Borgo Egnazia), Italy	US$ 50 billion loans for Ukraine from immobilised Russian assets; Pope Francis spoke on AI

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SUMMIT	DATES	HOST	NOTES
51st	15–17 June 2025	Kananaskis, Canada	PM Modi attended on PM Mark Carney's invitation
52nd	15–17 June 2026	Évian-les-Bains, France	Nine statements; Critical Minerals Resilience and Production Alliance
53rd	2027	United States	Venue not announced

- **UPDATE 2026** G7 AT ÉVIAN
  - The **52nd G7 summit** was held at **Évian-les-Bains, France, on 15–17 June 2026**. France invited **India, Brazil, Egypt, Kenya and South Korea** as partner countries through the year (as of 17 June 2026; source: Élysée/Council of the EU).
  - Leaders issued nine statements; the critical-minerals declaration set a target to bring dependence on any single outside supplier of rare earths and permanent magnets **below 60% by 2030**. India endorsed the statements on cancer, Ebola and online safety of minors (as of 17 June 2026; source: Élysée).
  - PM Modi addressed three outreach sessions and proposed **IMPACT** (International Mobilisation Partnership for Accelerating Connectivity and Trade) (as of 24 July 2026; source: MEA, Lok Sabha reply).
  - The **United States** holds the G7 presidency in 2027 (as of 17 June 2026; source: Council of the EU).

Group of Twenty (G20)

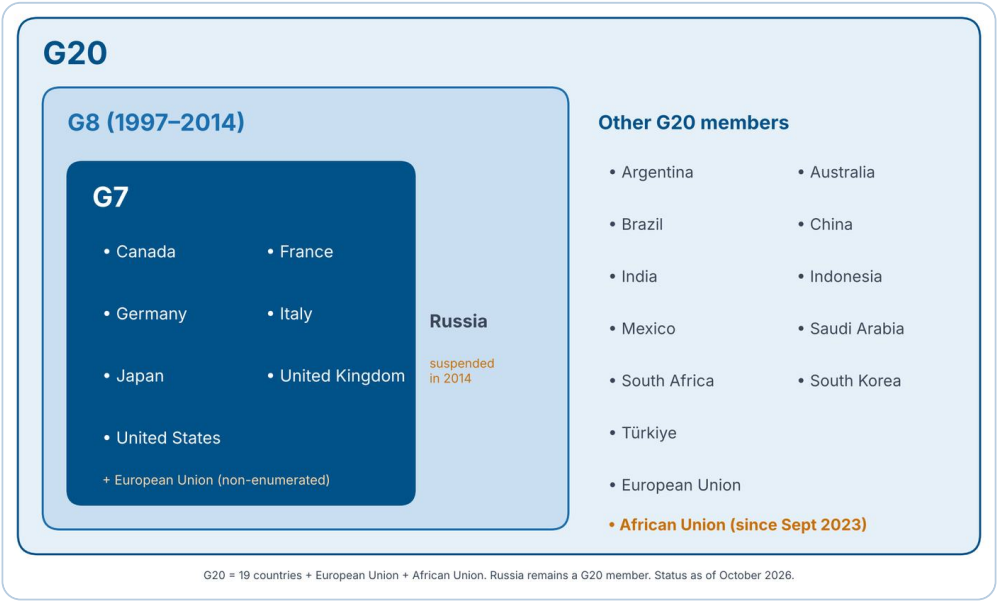
- The **G20** was created after the **Asian financial crisis (1997–98)** as a forum of **finance ministers and central bank governors**; it was agreed at a G7 finance ministers' meeting in September 1999 and first met in **Berlin in December 1999**.
- After the 2008 crisis it was raised to the **leaders' level**: the first summit was held at **Washington, D.C. (November 2008)**, and the Pittsburgh summit (2009) named it the "**premier forum for international economic cooperation**". Summits have been annual since 2011.
- Members: **19 countries, the European Union and the African Union**. The countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Türkiye, the UK and the US. **Spain** is a permanent guest invitee.
- The **African Union** became a permanent member at the **New Delhi summit (9 September 2023)**, the first new member since 1999. The G20 accounts for about 85% of world GDP, over 75% of world trade and about two-thirds of world population.
- The G20 has **no secretariat or headquarters**. The presidency runs for a year (1 December to 30 November) and rotates among five regional groups; **India is in Group 2 with Russia, South Africa and Türkiye**.
- The **troika** is the previous, current and next presidency working together. In 2024 the troika was India, Brazil and South Africa, all IBSA members.
- Work runs on two tracks: the **Finance Track** (finance ministers and central bank governors) and the **Sherpa Track** (development, energy, anti-corruption and other issues). Engagement groups include the B20 (business), C20 (civil society), L20 (labour), T20 (think tanks), Y20 (youth) and W20 (women).
- The G20 created the **Financial Stability Board** (2009) and backed the OECD/G20 **BEPS** project on international taxation.

Table: G20 presidencies and summits, 2022–2028

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YEAR	PRESIDENCY	SUMMIT	NOTES
2022	Indonesia	17th, Bali	Handed over to India
2023	**India**	18th, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, 9–10 September 2023	Theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: One Earth, One Family, One Future"; African Union admitted
2024	Brazil	19th, Rio de Janeiro, 18–19 November 2024	Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty
2025	South Africa	20th, Johannesburg, 22–23 November 2025	First G20 summit in Africa; US boycott
2026	United States	21st, Trump National Doral, Miami, 14–15 December 2026	South Africa not invited
2027	United Kingdom	22nd, Manchester, November 2027	Confirmed November 2025
2028	South Korea	To be announced	

- **Digital public infrastructure (DPI)** was one of India's G20 priorities; leaders adopted a G20 Framework for Systems of DPI.
- Outcomes of India's presidency: the **New Delhi Leaders' Declaration** adopted by consensus; the **Global Biofuels Alliance**; and an MoU on the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** signed by India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the EU, France, Germany and Italy.



G7 inside the old G8 inside the G20; the African Union joined in 2023.

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- **UPDATE 2026** G20: JOHANNESBURG AND THE US PRESIDENCY
  - The **20th summit at Johannesburg (22–23 November 2025)**, the first on African soil, ran under the theme "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability" and completed four Global South presidencies in a row (Indonesia, India, Brazil, South Africa). The US boycotted it; leaders present adopted a 122-point declaration, which Argentina did not join (as of 23 November 2025; source: G20 South Africa/MEA).
  - The **United States** holds the 2026 presidency; the 21st summit is set for **14–15 December 2026 at Doral, Miami**. The US has not invited **South Africa** to any G20 meeting this year and has invited **Poland**, a non-member, to take part in the whole 2026 cycle (as of 28 November 2026; source: US State Department/ Polish MFA).
  - The **UK** will hold the presidency in 2027 and **South Korea** in 2028 (as of 28 November 2026; source: G20).

05 Quad, AUKUS and the Five Eyes

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

- The **Quad** is an informal strategic dialogue of **Australia, India, Japan and the United States** for a "free, open and inclusive" Indo-Pacific. It has no secretariat or treaty and no collective defence clause.
- The four first worked together in the **Tsunami Core Group** after the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004. Japanese PM **Shinzo Abe** proposed the Quad in **2007**; it lapsed when Australia pulled out in 2008. Abe revived the idea in 2012 as the "Democratic Security Diamond".
- The Quad was revived at officials' level in **November 2017** (Manila, on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit). Foreign ministers first met in **New York in September 2019**, and it became a **leaders' summit in 2021**.
- Leaders' summits: 12 March 2021 (virtual); 24 September 2021, Washington (first in person); 3 March 2022 (virtual); 24 May 2022, Tokyo; 20 May 2023, Hiroshima; 21 September 2024, Wilmington, Delaware; 17 November 2026, Manila.
- Work areas: maritime and transnational security, economic security, critical and emerging technologies, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response, with Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Islands as focus regions.
- Initiatives: the **Quad Vaccine Partnership** (2021); the **Quad Fellowship** for STEM students; the **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)** (Tokyo, 2022), which shares "dark vessel" tracking data partly through the **IFC-IOR at Gurugram**; and, at Wilmington (2024), the **Quad Cancer Moonshot** on cervical cancer, **MAITRI** (Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific), the first **Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission** of the four coast guards and the Quad Ports of the Future Partnership.
- The **Quad Critical Minerals Initiative** was launched by foreign ministers in Washington (July 2025). The New Delhi foreign ministers' meeting (26 May 2026) adopted a Quad Critical Minerals Framework and launched a Quad Initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security; ministers met again at Atlanta on 31 October 2026 (Quad AI Accelerator).
- The **Malabar** naval exercise began as an India-US exercise in **1992**; Japan became a permanent participant in 2015 and Australia rejoined in 2020, so all four Quad navies now take part.

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UPDATE 2026 QUAD SUMMIT IN MANILA

- At Wilmington (2024) India was named host of the next leaders' summit, due in 2025; no summit was held in 2025, and none has yet been held in India (as of 28 November 2026; source: MEA).
- The leaders of the four countries met in **Manila on 17 November 2026** on the sidelines of the ASEAN summits, the first Quad summit since 2024 and the **first held in a non-Quad country** (as of 17 November 2026; source: White House/PMO Japan).
- They welcomed the **Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration**, under which Quad P-8 and P-3C aircraft are to fly together in 2027, announced a **Quad Business Leaders' Forum** for early 2027 and condemned cross-border terrorism (as of 17 November 2026; source: White House).

AUKUS and the Five Eyes

- **AUKUS** is a trilateral security pact of **Australia, the UK and the US**, announced on **15 September 2021**. **India is not a member**.
- **Pillar I** gives Australia **nuclear-powered (conventionally armed) submarines**: three in-service US **Virginia-class** boats from 2032, then a new **SSN-AUKUS** class built in the UK and Adelaide. UK and US submarines are to rotate through **HMAS Stirling near Perth** (Submarine Rotational Force-West) from 2027.
- **Pillar II** covers advanced capabilities: AI, quantum, undersea, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic systems, cyber and electronic warfare.
- Australia will be the first country to operate nuclear-powered submarines without a civilian nuclear power industry. The six countries that already operate them are the US, Russia, China, the UK, France and **India**.
- The **Geelong Treaty** (July 2025) is a 50-year Australia-UK treaty on the nuclear-powered submarine partnership.
- The **Five Eyes** is an intelligence-sharing alliance of the **US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand**, rooted in the 1946 UKUSA Agreement. AUKUS is separate from it.

06 South Asia and the Bay of Bengal: SAARC, BIMSTEC, SASEC and BBIN

SAARC

- Regional cooperation in South Asia was first proposed by Bangladesh in **1980**; the foreign secretaries of the seven founders first met in Colombo in April 1981.
- The **SAARC Charter** was signed at the **first summit, Dhaka, on 8 December 1985** by **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka**. **Afghanistan**, admitted at the 13th summit (Dhaka, 2005), joined as the eighth member in April 2007.
- The **Secretariat** was set up at **Kathmandu in January 1987**. The Secretary-General is appointed by the Council of Ministers by alphabetical rotation for a **non-renewable three-year term**.
- **Observers (9)**: Australia, China, the EU, Iran, Japan, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Korea and the US.
- Decisions are taken **unanimously**, and **bilateral and contentious issues are excluded** from its deliberations.
- The **18th summit (Kathmandu, 26–27 November 2014)** is the last. The 19th, due at Islamabad in November 2016, was called off after India and others withdrew following the **Uri attack**.

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- Trade: **SAPTA** (signed 1993, in force 1995); **SAFTA** (signed at Islamabad in January 2004, in force from **1 January 2006**), which covers goods only; its non-LDC members (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) were to cut customs duties to **0–5% by 2013** and the LDC members by 2016; the **SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS)** (2010).
- India launched the **South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9)** on 5 May 2017 on GSLV-F09 at its own cost for its neighbours; **Pakistan opted out**.
- Other features: the **SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme** (suspended for Pakistani nationals by India on 23 April 2025, after the Pahalgam attack); the **SAARC Currency Swap Framework** run by the RBI; the South Asian Annual Disaster Management Exercise (**SAADMEx**), led by India; and a rotating SAARC cultural capital (Mahasthangarh 2016–17, Thimphu 2017–18).

Table: SAARC specialised and regional bodies

BODY	LOCATION	ROLE
SAARC Development Fund	Thimphu	Funds regional projects in social, economic and infrastructure sectors
South Asian University	New Delhi	International university; degrees on par with national universities
South Asian Regional Standards Organisation (SARSO)	Dhaka	Harmonised standards for intra-regional trade
SAARC Arbitration Council	Islamabad	Settles commercial and investment disputes
SAARC Disaster Management Centre	Gandhinagar (interim unit)	Regional disaster preparedness
SAARC Agriculture Centre; Energy Centre; Cultural Centre	Dhaka; Islamabad; Colombo	Sectoral regional centres

BIMSTEC

- **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) was formed by the **Bangkok Declaration of 6 June 1997** as BIST-EC, with **Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand**. **Myanmar** joined in December 1997, and **Nepal and Bhutan** in 2004, when the present name was adopted.
- It links **five South Asian** members (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka) with **two Southeast Asian** members (Myanmar, Thailand), and bridges SAARC and ASEAN. Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Maldives are not members.
- Its permanent **Secretariat** opened at **Dhaka in 2014**. The Secretary-General is **Indra Mani Pandey** of India (since January 2024). The chair rotates in alphabetical order; **Bangladesh** has chaired since April 2025.
- The **BIMSTEC Charter** was adopted at the **5th summit (Colombo, virtual, 30 March 2022)** and entered into force on **20 May 2024**, giving BIMSTEC legal personality. The same summit cut the 14 sectors to seven and endorsed the **Master Plan for Transport Connectivity**.
- Summits: Bangkok 2004, New Delhi 2008, Nay Pyi Taw 2014, Kathmandu 2018, Colombo 2022, **Bangkok 2025**. Bangladesh, the present chair, is to host the 7th; no date has been set. India hosted a **BRICS-BIMSTEC outreach** summit at Goa in October 2016.
- Agreements: a framework agreement for a **BIMSTEC FTA** (2004); a Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking (2009); a Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (2022); and an **Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation** (2025).

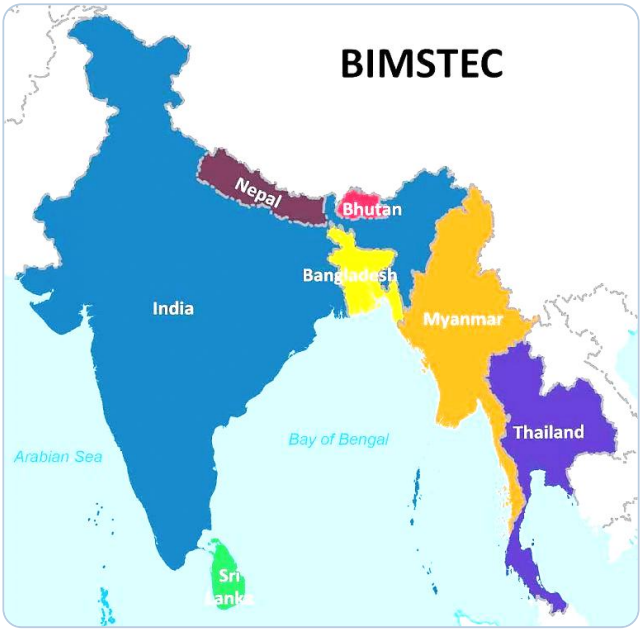
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- India hosted the first BIMSTEC military exercise, **MILEX 2018**, at Pune; Nepal and Thailand attended only as observers.
- Connectivity projects linked to BIMSTEC include the **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project** (India-Myanmar) and the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway**, both slowed by Myanmar's civil conflict since 2021.
- The region holds about **1.7 billion people (22% of the world)** with a combined GDP of about US$ 5 trillion. BIMSTEC marks its **30th anniversary in 2027**, for which India has proposed the first BIMSTEC Games.
- Before 2022 India led four of the 14 sectors (transport and communication, tourism, environment and disaster management, counter-terrorism and transnational crime); since the 2022 restructuring it leads only **Security**.

Table: BIMSTEC centres and facilities

CENTRE	LOCATION
BIMSTEC Energy Centre	Bengaluru
BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate	Noida
BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory	Thimphu
BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility	Colombo

Table: BIMSTEC's seven sectors and their lead countries (2022)



The seven BIMSTEC members around the Bay of Bengal.

SECTOR	LEAD COUNTRY
Trade, Investment and Development	Bangladesh
Environment and Climate Change	Bhutan
Security (counter-terrorism and transnational crime, disaster management, energy security)	**India**

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SECTOR	LEAD COUNTRY
Agriculture and Food Security	Myanmar
People-to-People Contacts	Nepal
Science, Technology and Innovation	Sri Lanka
Connectivity	Thailand

PRELIMS TRAP SAARC OR BIMSTEC?

- In **SAARC only**: Afghanistan, Maldives, Pakistan. In **BIMSTEC only**: Myanmar, Thailand. In **both**: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka.
- SAARC: 1985, Dhaka; Secretariat **Kathmandu**. BIMSTEC: 1997, Bangkok; Secretariat **Dhaka**.
- **Myanmar** is a SAARC observer and a BIMSTEC member. The **Maldives** is in SAARC and SASEC but not in BIMSTEC.

SASEC and BBIN

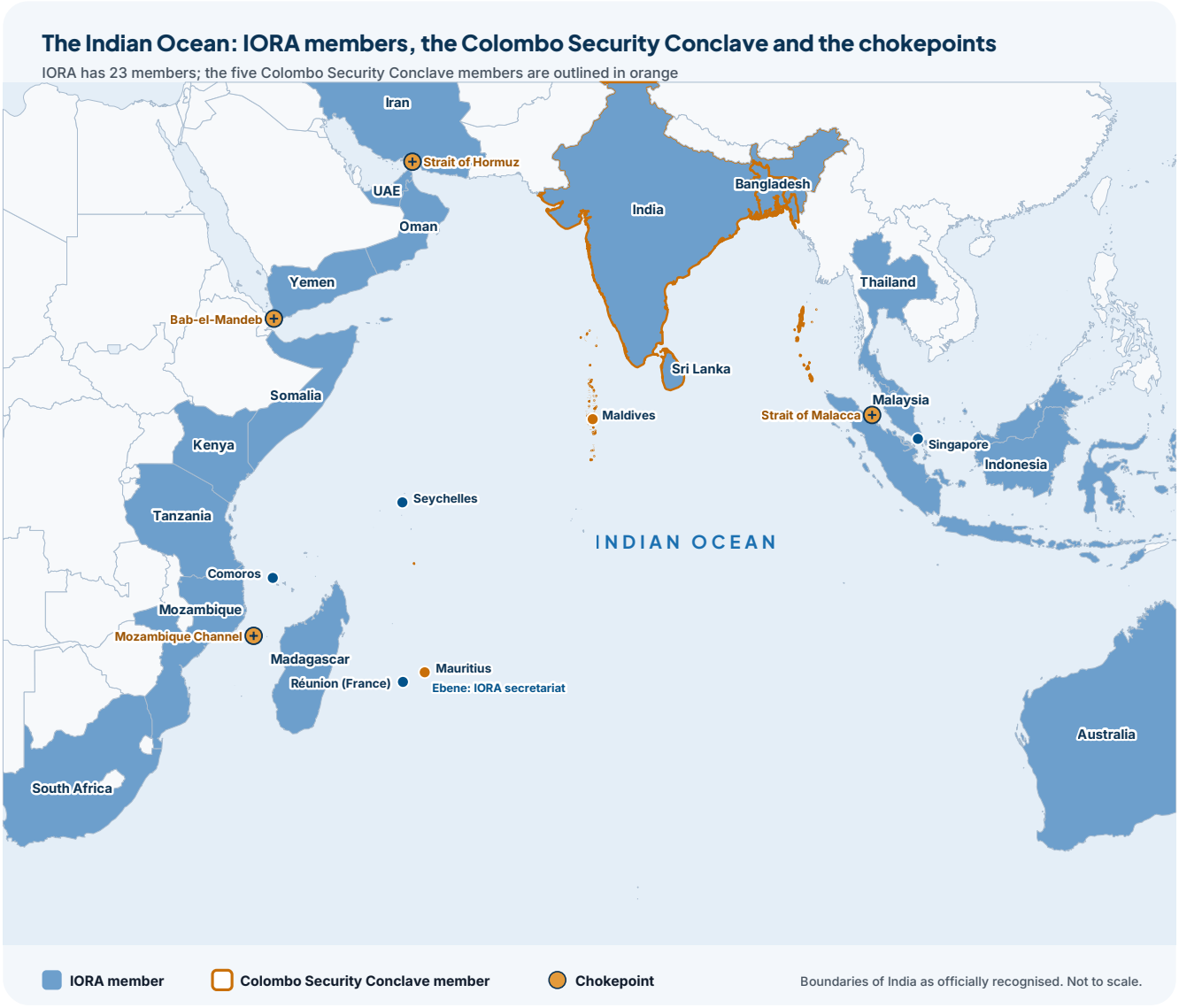
- **SASEC** (South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation) is a project-based programme of the **Asian Development Bank**, begun in **2001**; the ADB in **Manila** acts as its secretariat.
- Its founders were **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal** (who had formed the South Asian Growth Quadrangle in 1996); the **Maldives and Sri Lanka** joined in 2014 and **Myanmar** in 2017, making seven.
- SASEC works on transport, trade facilitation, energy and economic corridors; by December 2025, 99 ADB-financed projects worth about US$ 26.36 billion had been signed, over half of them in transport. It completed 25 years in 2026.
- The **BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement** (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal) was signed at **Thimphu on 15 June 2015**, after Pakistan blocked a SAARC motor vehicles agreement at the 2014 summit. **Bhutan's upper house rejected it in 2016**, so it is not in force; the other three have ratified it.

UPDATE 2026 BIMSTEC AND SAARC

- The **6th BIMSTEC summit (Bangkok, 4 April 2025)** adopted the **Bangkok Vision 2030**, signed the Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation, signed MoUs with IORA and UNODC, and handed the chair to **Bangladesh**; India announced a 21-point plan including the BODHI training programme (as of 4 April 2025; source: MEA).
- No date has been fixed for the 7th summit, which Bangladesh as chair is to host. The first BIMSTEC Health Ministers' Meeting was held in Colombo on 11 November 2026 (as of 16 November 2026; source: BIMSTEC Secretariat/PIB).
- **Dasho Sonam Topgay of Bhutan** took office as the 16th **SAARC Secretary-General** on 17 November 2026, succeeding Md Golam Sarwar of Bangladesh. No SAARC summit has been held since 2014 (as of 27 November 2026; source: SAARC Secretariat).

07 The Indian Ocean: IORA, IONS and the Colombo Security Conclave

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IORA members, the Colombo Security Conclave and the Indian Ocean chokepoints.

- The **Indian Ocean** is the third largest ocean. Its sea lanes carry about two-thirds of the world's oil shipments and a third of its bulk cargo through three chokepoints: the **Strait of Hormuz** (Persian Gulf), **Bab-el-Mandeb** (Red Sea) and the **Strait of Malacca** (to the Pacific).
- India's vision for the region is **SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region), first set out in **Mauritius in March 2015**. At Port Louis on **12 March 2025** it was widened into **MAHASAGAR** (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), India's vision for the Global South.
- India's coastline was about 7,516 km by the old measure; a remeasurement on finer maps (2025) puts it at about **11,098 km**. The Indian Navy's maritime security strategy is titled "**Ensuring Secure Seas**" (2015).
- The **Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** at **Gurugram** (2018) shares maritime domain information with partner navies. India's only tri-service command is at **Andaman and Nicobar** (2001).
- India built an airstrip and the St James jetty on **Agaléga** (Mauritius), inaugurated on 29 February 2024, and runs coastal radar and patrol support for Mauritius, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.
- Under **UNCLOS** (1982), a coastal state's territorial sea extends up to **12 nautical miles** from the baseline, the contiguous zone to 24 nm and the **EEZ** not beyond **200 nm**; ships of all states, coastal or land-locked, enjoy **innocent passage** through the territorial sea.
- The UK and Mauritius signed a treaty on **22 May 2025** recognising Mauritian sovereignty over the **Chagos Archipelago**, with **Diego Garcia** leased back for 99 years; India backed Mauritius, following the ICJ advisory

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opinion of 25 February 2019. The treaty is **not yet in force**: the UK paused ratification in April 2026 for want of US support (as of November 2026).

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

- The **IORA** grew from a Mauritian initiative of 1995 and was launched in **March 1997** as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC); it took its present name in 2013. Its **secretariat is at Ebene, Mauritius**.
- It was set up for **economic and regional cooperation** (trade facilitation, investment, blue economy), not as a maritime security alliance. It works on **open regionalism** and is tripartite, bringing together government, business and academia. Decisions are by consensus; the chair serves two years.
- **Members (23)**: Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE and Yemen. **Pakistan and Myanmar are not members.**
- **Dialogue partners (12)**: China, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Türkiye, the UK, the US, **Saudi Arabia** and the **European Union** (both 2023).
- India chaired IORA in 2011–13 and again from **November 2025**.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

- The **IONS** is a **voluntary initiative** launched by the **Indian Navy** in **February 2008**; its inaugural seminar was held in **New Delhi**, and India was the first chair (2008–10).
- It brings together the navies and maritime agencies of Indian Ocean littoral states. The chair rotates every two years, and each cycle has a Conclave of Chiefs.
- It has **25 members** (among them Australia, Bangladesh, France, India, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UAE and the UK) and **10 observers**: China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, the Netherlands, the **Philippines** (2026), Russia, South Korea and Spain.
- Chairs after India: Saudi Arabia (2028–30) and Kenya (2030–32) have been chosen.

Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)

- The **CSC** began as an **India-Sri Lanka-Maldives** trilateral on maritime security at the level of National Security Advisers (2011) and took its name in **2020**.
- **Mauritius** joined in 2022 and **Bangladesh** became the fifth member in July 2024; **Seychelles**, an observer, decided in November 2025 to accede as a full member. The **Charter** and the MoU on a **Secretariat in Colombo** were signed on 30 August 2024.
- Its five pillars: maritime safety and security; countering terrorism and radicalisation; combating trafficking and transnational organised crime; cyber security and protection of critical infrastructure; and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

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PRELIMS TRAP IORA VS IONS

- **IORA**: intergovernmental (foreign ministers' Council of Ministers); 1997; secretariat **Mauritius**; 23 members; economic cooperation, blue economy, maritime safety. Pakistan is **not** a member.
- **IONS**: a **navies' forum** (Chiefs of Navy); **2008, launched by India**, inaugural meeting in New Delhi; 25 members including **Pakistan**; 10 observers including **China**; no permanent secretariat.
- India chairs both now: IORA for 2025–27 and IONS for 2026–28.

UPDATE 2026 INDIA CHAIRS IORA AND IONS

- India took over the **IORA chair from Sri Lanka on 12 November 2025** for 2025–27, and hosted the **25th IORA Council of Ministers in New Delhi on 27 November 2026** under the theme "Innovation, Openness, Resilience and Adaptability in the Indian Ocean Region"; it adopted the Delhi Communiqué 2026 and endorsed two IORA Centres of Excellence in India (NIO Goa; Rashtriya Raksha University, Gujarat) (as of 27 November 2026; source: MEA).
- India took over the **IONS chair from Thailand** at the 9th Conclave of Chiefs, **Visakhapatnam, 20 February 2026**, held alongside the International Fleet Review and Exercise MILAN; the Philippines was admitted as an observer (as of 20 February 2026; source: IONS/Indian Navy).

08 Export Control Regimes and the Nuclear Order

- **Multilateral export control regimes** are voluntary, non-binding arrangements of supplier countries to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and dual-use goods. They are **independent of the UN**, and all four decide by consensus.
- India is a member of **three of the four: MTCR (2016), Wassenaar Arrangement (2017) and Australia Group (2018)**; it is **not** a member of the **NSG**, where its application of May 2016 is pending. Pakistan has also applied (2016).
- China, along with some others, has blocked India's NSG entry on the ground that India has not signed the **NPT**, asking for a common, criteria-based approach for all non-NPT applicants.
- The NSG granted India a "**clean waiver**" from its rules on **6 September 2008**, after the **India-US civil nuclear (123) Agreement** and India's separation of civil and military facilities under IAEA safeguards.
- India subscribed to the **Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation** (HCOC, 2002) on 1 June 2016, just before joining the MTCR.
- MTCR membership let India buy missile and drone technology (MQ-9B drones from the US, October 2024) and sell **BrahMos** to the **Philippines** (first delivery April 2024).

Table: Export control regimes and India's status

REGIME	CONTROLS	ORIGIN	MEMBERS	INDIA
Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)	Nuclear and nuclear dual-use exports (two sets of guidelines; dual-use list from 1992)	1974, after India's Pokhran-I test; first met London, 1975 ("London Club")	48 (45 in 2008)	**Not a member**; applied 2016; waiver 2008

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REGIME	CONTROLS	ORIGIN	MEMBERS	INDIA
Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)	Missiles and UAVs able to carry **500 kg over 300 km**, and WMD delivery systems	April 1987, by the G7	35 partners	35th partner, **27 June 2016**
Wassenaar Arrangement	Conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies	12 July 1996; successor to Cold War COCOM; secretariat **Vienna**	42	42nd member, **7 December 2017**
Australia Group	Chemical and biological weapons precursors and equipment	1985, after Iraq's use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war	42 countries + EU	43rd participant, **19 January 2018**

- The Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement are both **informal** arrangements outside the OECD and the UN, and both are dominated by European and other Western states.
- NSG membership gives access to the latest nuclear technology and trade; it does **not** make a country a party to the NPT. The **European Commission** and the **Chair of the Zangger Committee** are its permanent observers.
- All Australia Group participants are parties to the **Chemical Weapons Convention** and the **Biological Weapons Convention**. Kazakhstan, Albania and Montenegro adhere to its controls without being participants.
- The MTCR has no secretariat; France acts as its point of contact. **China** is outside the MTCR; it has pledged to follow the original guidelines.
- Membership has been frozen since India's entry: no country has joined the NSG since 2013 (Serbia), the MTCR since 2016, Wassenaar since 2017 or the Australia Group since 2018. Russia, a participant in the NSG, MTCR and Wassenaar, blocked updates to the Wassenaar control lists in 2022 and 2023; the lists were updated again at the December 2025 plenary.

- PRELIMS TRAP NSG, MTCR, WASSENAAR, AUSTRALIA GROUP
  - **India**: MTCR 2016, Wassenaar 2017, Australia Group 2018; **not NSG**.
  - **China**: in the **NSG only** (since 2004); outside MTCR, Wassenaar and the Australia Group. **Pakistan**: in none of the four.
  - Match the subject: NSG = nuclear; MTCR = missiles and drones; Wassenaar = conventional arms and dual-use; Australia Group = chemical and biological.
  - India joined three regimes without signing the NPT; NPT membership is a formal factor only for the NSG.

NPT, CTBT and Other Arms Treaties

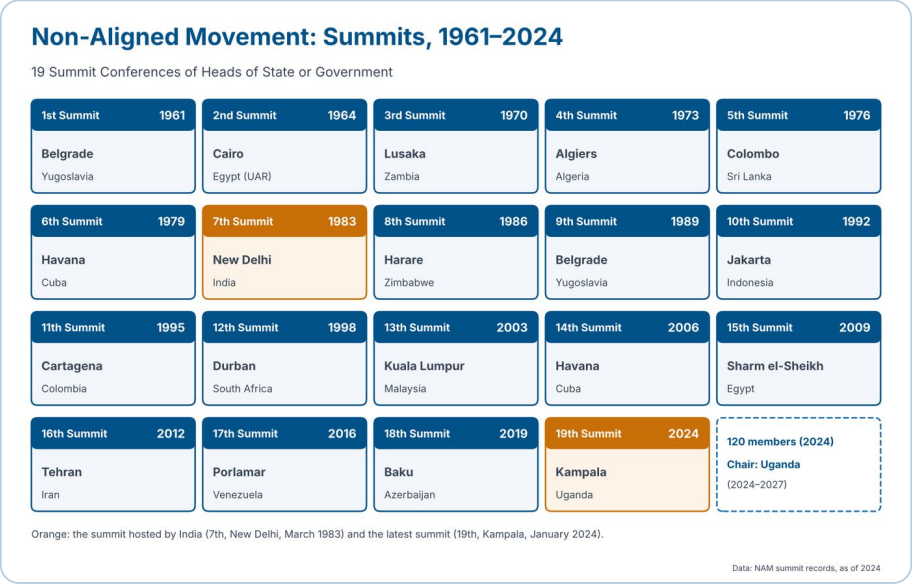
- The **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** was opened for signature in 1968, entered into force in **1970** and was extended indefinitely in 1995. It recognises as nuclear-weapon states only those that tested before **1 January 1967** (US, Russia, UK, France, China).
- **India, Pakistan, Israel and South Sudan** have never joined the NPT; North Korea announced its withdrawal in 2003. India rejects the treaty as discriminatory.
- The **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** was adopted by the UNGA in **1996** and has **not entered into force**, since several of the 44 listed states have not ratified it. **India, Pakistan and North Korea** have not signed it; Russia withdrew its ratification in 2023. The CTBTO Preparatory Commission is in Vienna.
- India keeps a voluntary **moratorium on nuclear testing** after Pokhran-II (1998).

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- Under its 2006 **Separation Plan** and the India-specific Safeguards Agreement, Indian reactors that use **imported uranium** are under **IAEA safeguards** and those using domestic fuel are not. India's **Additional Protocol** (in force 2014) applies only to civilian facilities under safeguards; military facilities stay outside.
- The **Chemical Weapons Convention** was signed in 1993 (India, the US, Russia, Iran and Israel were early signatories; Israel has not ratified; Libya joined in 2004, Iraq in 2009, Syria in 2013 and Angola in 2015, and North Korea never has) and came into force in 1997. It is implemented by the **OPCW** at **The Hague**, an independent body that monitors the chemical industry and assists States Parties against chemical threats; it is not an EU body. The **Biological Weapons Convention** dates from 1972.
- The **Mine Ban (Ottawa) Treaty** on anti-personnel landmines was opened for signature at **Ottawa** in December 1997; India is not a party.
- **New START** (signed 2010, in force 2011) was a **bilateral US-Russia** treaty capping deployed strategic warheads and launchers; Russia suspended it in 2023 and it **expired on 5 February 2026**.
- The **Nuclear Security Summits** (Washington 2010, Seoul 2012, The Hague 2014, Washington 2016) were a US-initiated process outside the UN. The **International Panel on Fissile Materials** is an independent group of experts, not an organ of the IAEA.

09 The Global South: NAM, G77, IBSA and the Commonwealth

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)



NAM summits from Belgrade (1961) to Kampala (2024).

- The idea of non-alignment took shape at the **Asian-African (Bandung) Conference** in Indonesia, **April 1955**, whose ten principles drew on Panchsheel.
- The **first NAM summit** was held at **Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September 1961**, led by **Tito (Yugoslavia), Nasser (Egypt), Nehru (India), Nkrumah (Ghana) and Sukarno (Indonesia)**.
- Non-alignment meant staying out of the US and Soviet military blocs while judging each issue on its merits; it was never neutrality. The **Havana Declaration (1979)** set out NAM's aim as the independence, sovereignty and security of non-aligned states against imperialism, colonialism, racism and foreign domination.

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- NAM has **120 members** (53 from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 2 from Europe: **Azerbaijan and Belarus**) and 17 observer countries and 10 observer organisations. It has no permanent secretariat; the chair country runs it. Its members make up about two-thirds of the UN General Assembly.
- Summits: Belgrade 1961, Cairo 1964, Lusaka 1970, Algiers 1973, Colombo 1976, Havana 1979, **New Delhi 1983 (7th)**, Harare 1986, Belgrade 1989, Jakarta 1992, Cartagena 1995, Durban 1998, Kuala Lumpur 2003, Havana 2006, Sharm el-Sheikh 2009, Tehran 2012, Margarita Island (Venezuela) 2016, Baku 2019, **Kampala 2024 (19th)**.
- The **19th summit (Kampala, January 2024)** had the theme "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence"; **Uganda** chairs NAM for 2024–27. Azerbaijan, the previous chair, hosted an online summit "United against COVID-19" on 4 May 2020.
- The head of the chair country is NAM's chair and Secretary-General until the next summit: after the **New Delhi summit (1983)**, President **Giani Zail Singh** was Secretary-General of NAM (1983–86).
- The Indian PM skipped the 17th (2016) summit; India was represented by the Vice President at Baku (2019) and by the External Affairs Minister at Kampala (2024).

Group of 77 (G77)

- The **G77** was formed on **15 June 1964** by the Joint Declaration of 77 developing countries at the end of the first **UNCTAD** session in **Geneva**. Its first ministerial meeting adopted the **Charter of Algiers (1967)**.
- It is the largest intergovernmental group of developing countries in the UN, now **134 members**, and speaks as the "**G77 and China**". The chair rotates annually by region: **Iraq (2025)** and **Uruguay (2026)**.
- India is a founder member. The **Third South Summit** of the G77 and China was held at Kampala on 21–22 January 2024.

IBSA

- **IBSA** (India, Brazil, South Africa) was formalised by the **Brasília Declaration of 6 June 2003**: three large multi-ethnic democracies from three continents. It has no headquarters or permanent secretariat.
- Leaders' summits: Brasília 2006, Pretoria 2007, New Delhi 2008, Brasília 2010 and Pretoria 2011; the 2013 summit in New Delhi was cancelled. The leaders next met at **Johannesburg on 23 November 2025**, on the sidelines of the G20 summit.
- The **IBSA Fund** (IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, 2004) receives **US$ 1 million a year from each member** and is managed by the **UN Office for South-South Cooperation**.
- **IBSAMAR** is the trilateral naval exercise of the three navies. India runs the IBSA Visiting Fellows Programme through RIS, New Delhi.

Commonwealth of Nations

- The **Commonwealth** is a voluntary association of **56** countries, most of them former British territories. The **London Declaration (1949)** let India stay in as a republic, accepting the British monarch only as "Head of the Commonwealth" (now **King Charles III**).
- Its Secretariat is at **Marlborough House, London**; the Secretary-General is **Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey** of Ghana (since April 2025).
- Not every former British territory joined (Myanmar never did), and the Commonwealth had no charter until the **Commonwealth Charter** was adopted in December 2012 and signed in March 2013. **Fiji** was suspended after its military coup of December 2006 and reinstated in 2014.

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- **Mozambique** (1995), **Rwanda** (2009), and **Gabon and Togo** (2022) joined without any historical link to British rule.
- Heads of government meet every two years at **CHOGM**: Apia, Samoa (2024); **St John's, Antigua and Barbuda, 1–4 November 2026** (28th CHOGM). India hosted CHOGM in 1983 and the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010.

10 G4 and Uniting for Consensus: the Security Council Reform Camps

- The **G4** (**Brazil, Germany, India and Japan**) support one another's bids for **permanent seats** on the UN Security Council. Their foreign ministers usually meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.
- The G4 model would enlarge the Council from 15 to **25 or 26** members: six new permanent seats (two of them for Africa) and four or five non-permanent seats.
- **Uniting for Consensus (UfC)**, nicknamed the **Coffee Club**, was founded in **1995** under the leadership of **Italy** (with Pakistan, Mexico and Egypt). It opposes any new permanent members and wants more elected seats, some of them longer-term.
- UfC core group: Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, Malta, Mexico, **Pakistan**, South Korea, San Marino, Spain and Türkiye. Each opposes a regional rival: Italy and Spain oppose Germany, **Pakistan opposes India**, Argentina opposes Brazil, and South Korea opposes Japan.
- Africa's common position, the **Ezulwini Consensus** (2005), asks for two permanent seats with the veto and five non-permanent seats for Africa.
- Reform is discussed in the UNGA's **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)**, which have not moved to a negotiating text. The **Pact for the Future** (22 September 2024), Action 39, commits members to enlarge the Council and to "redress the historical injustice against Africa".
- India has served **eight terms** as a non-permanent member, most recently 2021–22, and is a candidate for **2028–29**. Pakistan, a UfC member, is on the Council for 2025–26.

- PRELIMS TRAP G4, G7 AND G20
  - **G4** = Brazil, Germany, India, Japan: aspirants for permanent UNSC seats.
  - **G7** = US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada (EU non-enumerated): advanced economies. India, Brazil, China and Russia are not members.
  - **G20** = the G7 plus Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea and Türkiye, plus the **EU** and the **African Union**.
  - **Germany and Japan** are in all three. **India and Brazil** are in the G4 and G20 only. **Spain, Nigeria, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan** are not G20 members (Spain is a permanent guest).

11 OPEC and the Paris Club

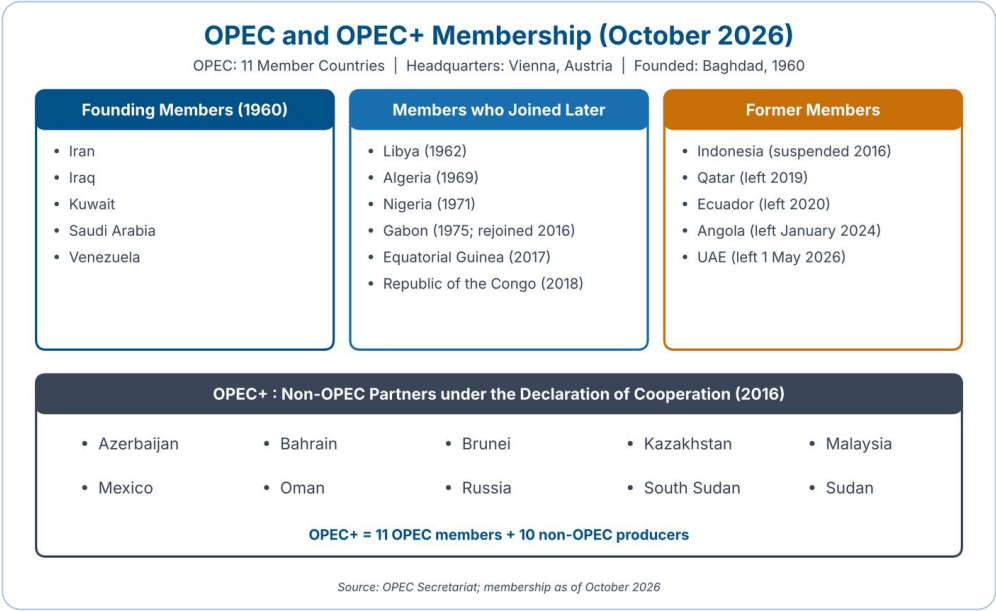
OPEC

- The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** was founded at the **Baghdad Conference in September 1960** by **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela**.

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- Its headquarters moved from **Geneva** to **Vienna** in 1965. The Secretary General is **Haitham Al Ghais** of Kuwait (since 2022). OPEC aims to coordinate the petroleum policies of members and secure fair and stable prices.
- **Members (11)**: Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Former members: Indonesia (suspended 2016), Qatar (left 2019), **Ecuador** (1973–92 and 2007–20, the only South American member besides Venezuela), **Angola (left 1 January 2024)** and the **UAE (left 1 May 2026)**.
- **OPEC+** joins OPEC with 10 non-OPEC producers (Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, **Russia**, Sudan and South Sudan) under the **Declaration of Cooperation** (December 2016). **Brazil** joined the wider Charter of Cooperation (2019) in February 2025 without output quotas. India is in neither.
- World oil is priced against benchmarks: **Brent** (a blend of North Sea crudes, used directly or indirectly to price two-thirds or more of internationally traded oil) and **West Texas Intermediate (WTI)**, a light, sweet crude from the USA whose futures trade on the NYMEX. OPEC publishes its own **OPEC Reference Basket (ORB)**, a weighted average of one export crude from each member; in October 2026 it still included the UAE's Murban.

- UPDATE 2026 UAE LEAVES OPEC
  - On 28 April 2026 the **UAE**, then OPEC's third-largest producer, announced its exit from **OPEC and OPEC+** with effect from **1 May 2026**, during the war involving Iran and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz; OPEC now has 11 members (as of 23 June 2026; source: WAM, US EIA).
  - The UAE had joined OPEC in 1967 through the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (as of 28 April 2026; source: WAM).



OPEC and OPEC+ membership after the UAE's exit (2026).

Paris Club and the G20 Common Framework

- The **Paris Club** is an informal group of official **creditor countries** that grew from a 1956 meeting at which Argentina met its public creditors in Paris. It works on consensus and solidarity, and treats a debtor only after the debtor has an **IMF programme**.
- It has **22 permanent members**, mostly OECD countries, including Russia, Brazil and South Korea (the last two since 2016). **India** takes part as an **ad hoc participant** (since 2019), as do China (2013) and Hungary (2024); India is not a permanent member.

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- The **G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments** (November 2020, Saudi G20 presidency) is endorsed by the **G20 together with the Paris Club** to help **low-income countries** with unsustainable debt; it brings China, India and other non-Paris Club creditors into one creditors' committee per debtor. **Chad, Zambia, Ethiopia and Ghana** have used it. It followed the G20's **Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)** of 2020, under which 48 countries had about US$ 12.9 billion of debt service suspended.
- The **OECD** (Paris, 1961; 38 members) is a separate body; India is one of its five **Key Partners** with Brazil, China, Indonesia and South Africa.

12 Other Groupings, Bodies and Meetings

Table: Other groupings: members, headquarters and India's status

GROUPING	FOUNDED	MEMBERS AND HQ	INDIA AND NOTES
G-15	1989, at the 9th NAM summit, Belgrade	Developing countries; Technical Support Facility in Geneva. **Kenya** joined at the 7th summit, **Kuala Lumpur (1997)**, making 16 members; Iran joined in 2000, making 17; the name stayed G-15	India is a founder member
Colombo Plan	1951 (from a 1950 Commonwealth meeting in Colombo)	Regional development cooperation in Asia-Pacific; secretariat Colombo	**India is a member** (founder)
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	1966	HQ **Manila**	**India is a founder member**; ADB runs SASEC
APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation)	1989, Canberra	21 Pacific Rim economies, industrialised and emerging, spanning about half the earth's surface; secretariat **Singapore**; leaders met at Shanghai (2001) and Hanoi (2006)	**India is not a member**
ASEAN	1967, Bangkok Declaration	Secretariat **Jakarta**; 11 members (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste from October 2025)	India is a dialogue partner; China and Bangladesh are not members
Mekong-Ganga Cooperation	2000, Vientiane	India with Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam	Founder; tourism, culture, education and transport
OECD	1961	38 members; HQ Paris	Not a member; a Key Partner
OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)	1969, Rabat	57 members; secretariat **Jeddah**	Not a member

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GROUPING	FOUNDED	MEMBERS AND HQ	INDIA AND NOTES
CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)	December 1991, Belovezha Accords signed at **Viskuli** (Belarus)	Former Soviet republics, HQ Minsk. The Baltic states (**Estonia**, Latvia, Lithuania) never joined; **Georgia** announced its exit after the August 2008 war (effective 2009); Ukraine stopped taking part in 2018	Not applicable
Organization of Turkic States	2009 (Turkic Council; renamed 2021)	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, Uzbekistan; observers Hungary and Turkmenistan; secretariat Istanbul	Armenia, Croatia and Romania are not members
Nordic Council	1952	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden (with the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland)	The UK is not a member
MERCOSUR	1991, Treaty of Asunción	Southern Common Market of South America: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, with Bolivia (2024); Venezuela suspended	India has a preferential trade agreement with it
TPP / CPTPP	TPP signed 2016 by 12 Pacific Rim economies; CPTPP 2018 after the US left	A trade agreement, not a security alliance; China and Russia are not in it, and not all Pacific Rim states are; the UK joined in December 2024	Not a member
Minerals Security Partnership	2022, US-led	Critical-mineral supply chains	**India joined in June 2023**
APMCHUD (Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development)	First conference, New Delhi, December 2006	Biennial, rotating among members; first theme "A vision for sustainable urbanisation in the Asia-Pacific by 2020"	Not a joint body of ADB, APEC or ASEAN
Danube Commission	Belgrade Convention, 1948	Navigation on the Danube; seat Budapest	Not applicable

- WTO rules (GATT Article XXIV) allow free trade areas and customs unions, so regional trading blocs such as **NAFTA** and **ASEAN** are expected to promote free trade along the lines laid down by the WTO.
- India adopted a list of **30 critical minerals** in 2023 and is not resource-rich in all of them; the **MMDR Amendment Act, 2023** empowered the Central Government to exclusively auction mining leases and composite licences for certain critical minerals.
- **Amnesty International** was founded (1961) by **Peter Benenson**; the **European Space Agency** is headquartered in **Paris**.

Table: International meetings and venues, 1997–2006

YEAR	MEETING	VENUE
1997	Mine Ban (Ottawa) Treaty opened for signature; G-15 7th summit	Ottawa (Canada); Kuala Lumpur
1999	CHOGM; WTO Ministerial Conference	Durban; Seattle
2000	Israel-Syria peace talks (January)	Shepherdstown, USA

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YEAR	MEETING	VENUE
2001	APEC leaders' meeting	Shanghai
2004	4th SAARC Trade Ministers' meeting (November); Second World Buddhist Summit; World Punjabi Conference (December)	Islamabad; Lumbini (Nepal), not Bangkok; Patiala, not Jalandhar
2006	NAM summit; APEC meeting; EU-India summit; UN Climate Change Conference (COP 12)	Havana; Hanoi; Helsinki; Nairobi

PRELIMS FACT IS INDIA A MEMBER?

- **Member**: ADB, AIIB, NDB, Colombo Plan, SCO, BRICS, G20, Quad, IORA, IONS, BIMSTEC, SAARC, NAM, G77, G-15, Commonwealth, MTCR, Wassenaar Arrangement, Australia Group, Minerals Security Partnership.
- **Not a member**: APEC, OECD (Key Partner), ASEAN (dialogue partner), G7 (invitee), NSG, OPEC, OIC, AUKUS, CPTPP, RCEP, Paris Club (ad hoc participant only).

13 Summits and Chairs at a Glance, 2023–2026

Table: Who chairs what (November 2026)

GROUPING	CURRENT CHAIR	NEXT
BRICS	India (2026)	China (2027)
SCO	Pakistan (2026–27)	Summit in Pakistan, 2027
G20	United States (2026)	United Kingdom (2027), South Korea (2028)
G7	France (2026)	United States (2027)
Quad	No formal chair; the 2026 leaders' summit met in Manila (17 November 2026)	Not announced
BIMSTEC	Bangladesh (since April 2025)	7th summit to be hosted by Bangladesh (date not set)
IORA	India (2025–27)	
IONS	India (2026–28)	Saudi Arabia (2028–30)
NAM	Uganda (2024–27)	
G77	Uruguay (2026)	

Table: Summits 2023–2026 with hosts

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GROUPING	2023	2024	2025	2026
G20	New Delhi (India)	Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	Johannesburg (South Africa)	Miami (US), 14–15 December
G7	Hiroshima (Japan)	Apulia (Italy)	Kananaskis (Canada)	Évian (France)
BRICS	Johannesburg (South Africa)	Kazan (Russia)	Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	New Delhi (India)
SCO	Virtual, India chair	Astana (Kazakhstan)	Tianjin (China)	Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)
Quad	Hiroshima (Japan)	Wilmington (US)	Not held	Manila (Philippines)
BIMSTEC	None	None	Bangkok (Thailand), 6th	None; 7th (Bangladesh) not yet scheduled
NAM and G77	None	Kampala (Uganda), January	None	None
CHOGM	None	Apia (Samoa)	None	St John's (Antigua and Barbuda)
IBSA leaders	None	None	Johannesburg (South Africa)	None

Prelims Quick Revision

- **BRICS**: BRIC 2001 (O'Neill); first summit Yekaterinburg 2009; South Africa 2010; Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE 2024; Indonesia 2025; 10 partners; India chair 2026.
- **NDB**: Fortaleza 2014; Shanghai; equal founder shares; first president K. V. Kamath; Dilma Rousseff since 2023; 10 members.
- **SCO**: Shanghai 2001; Secretariat Beijing, RATS Tashkent; India and Pakistan 2017, Iran 2023, Belarus 2024; Pakistan chair 2026–27.
- **G7**: US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada + EU; Rambouillet 1975; Russia suspended 2014; Évian 2026, US 2027.
- **G20**: 19 + EU + African Union (2023); 1999 finance ministers, 2008 leaders; no secretariat; India in Group 2; US 2026, UK 2027.
- **G4**: Brazil, Germany, India, Japan (UNSC permanent seats); opposed by Uniting for Consensus (Coffee Club, Italy-led, 1995).
- **Quad**: Australia, India, Japan, US; Abe 2007; revived 2017; leaders since 2021; Manila summit 17 November 2026.
- **SAARC**: Dhaka 8 December 1985; Secretariat Kathmandu; 8 members, 9 observers; last summit Kathmandu 2014.
- **BIMSTEC**: Bangkok Declaration 1997; Secretariat Dhaka; 7 members; Charter in force 20 May 2024; India leads Security.
- **IORA**: 1997; Ebene, Mauritius; 23 members, 12 dialogue partners; India chair 2025–27.
- **IONS**: Indian Navy, 2008, New Delhi; 25 members, 10 observers (China included); India chair again from February 2026.
- **Export controls**: India in MTCR 2016, Wassenaar 2017, Australia Group 2018; not NSG; NSG waiver 6 September 2008.
- **NAM**: Bandung 1955; Belgrade 1961; 120 members; 19th summit Kampala 2024; Uganda chair.
- **G77**: Geneva 1964 (UNCTAD I); 134 members; chair Uruguay 2026.
- **OPEC**: Baghdad 1960; Vienna; 11 members after the UAE left on 1 May 2026; OPEC+ with Russia.
- **Paris Club**: 1956; 22 creditors; India ad hoc; G20 Common Framework (2020) with the Paris Club for low-income countries.

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Previous Year Questions

2026 Match List I with List II and select the answer using the code given below the Lists :

List I (BIMSTEC Centre / Establishment)

A. BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory

B. BIMSTEC Energy Centre

C. BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate

D. BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility

List II (Location)

1. NOIDA
2. Bengaluru
3. Colombo
4. Thimphu

a A-3, B-2, C-1, D-4 | b A-3, B-1, C-2, D-4

c A-4, B-2, C-1, D-3 | d A-4, B-1, C-2, D-3

Answer: (c). The Cultural Industries Observatory is in Thimphu, the Energy Centre in Bengaluru, the Centre for Weather and Climate at NOIDA and the Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo.
(PROVISIONAL KEY)

2025 Consider the following statements :

I. India has joined the Minerals Security Partnership as a member.

II. India is a resource-rich country in all the 30 critical minerals that it has identified.

III. The Parliament in 2023 has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 empowering the Central Government to exclusively auction mining lease and composite license for certain critical minerals.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

a I and II only | b II and III only | c I and III only | d I, II and III

Answer: (c). India joined the US-led Minerals Security Partnership in June 2023 and the 2023 MMDR amendment let the Centre auction critical minerals, but India is not resource-rich in all 30 critical minerals.

2025 Consider the following statements in respect of BIMSTEC :

I. It is a regional organization consisting of seven member States till January 2025.

II. It came into existence with the signing of the Dhaka Declaration, 1999.

III. Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Nepal are founding member States of BIMSTEC.

IV. In BIMSTEC, the subsector of 'tourism' is being led by India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a I and II | b II and III | c I and IV | d I only

Answer: (d). BIMSTEC has seven members; it was founded by the Bangkok Declaration (1997) by Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand (Nepal joined in 2004), and India does not lead tourism after the 2022 sector restructuring.

2025 Consider the following statements with regard to BRICS :

I. 16th BRICS Summit was held under the Chairship of Russia in Kazan.

II. Indonesia has become a full member of BRICS.

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III. The theme of the 16th BRICS Summit was Strengthening Multiculturalism for Just Global Development and Security.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a I and II | b II and III | c I and III | d I only

Answer: (a). Russia hosted the 16th summit at Kazan (October 2024) and Indonesia became a full member in January 2025; the theme was 'Strengthening Multilateralism', not 'Multiculturalism'.

2023 Consider the following statements about G-20 :
1. The G-20 group was originally established as a platform for the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to discuss the international economic and financial issues.
2. Digital public infrastructure is one of India's G-20 priorities.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c). The G20 began in 1999 as a forum of finance ministers and central bank governors, and digital public infrastructure was a priority of India's 2023 presidency.

2022 Consider the following :
1. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
2. Missile Technology Control Regime
3. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
India is a member of which of the above ?

a 1 and 2 only | b 3 only | c 2 and 3 only | d 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d). India is a founding member of the AIIB, joined the MTCR in 2016 and became a full SCO member in 2017.

2022 Consider the following countries :
1. Armenia
2. Azerbaijan
3. Croatia
4. Romania
5. Uzbekistan
Which of the above are members of the Organization of Turkic States ?

a 1, 2 and 4 | b 1 and 3 | c 2 and 5 | d 3, 4 and 5

Answer: (c). The Organization of Turkic States comprises Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan (Hungary and Turkmenistan are observers).

2020 The term 'West Texas Intermediate', sometimes found in news, refers to a grade of

a Crude oil | b Bullion
c Rare earth elements | d Uranium

Answer: (a). West Texas Intermediate (WTI) is a light, sweet crude oil from the USA and, with Brent, one of the two main global oil price benchmarks.

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2020 In which one of the following groups are all the four countries members of G20 ?

- a Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey
- b Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
- c Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam
- d Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

Answer: (a). Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey are G20 members; Malaysia, New Zealand, Iran, Vietnam and Singapore are not.

2017 Consider the following statements :
1. The Nuclear Security Summits are periodically held under the aegis of the United Nations.
2. The International Panel on Fissile Materials is an organ of International Atomic Energy Agency.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d). The Nuclear Security Summits (2010–2016) were a US-initiated process outside the UN, and the International Panel on Fissile Materials is an independent expert group, not an IAEA organ.

2017 Consider the following in respect of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) :
1. Inaugural IONS was held in India in 2015 under the chairmanship of the Indian Navy.
2. IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.
Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). IONS was inaugurated in New Delhi in February 2008 (not 2015) and is a voluntary forum of the navies of Indian Ocean littoral states.

2016 With reference to 'Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)', consider the following statements :
1. It is an organization of European Union in working relation with NATO and WHO.
2. It monitors chemical industry to prevent new weapons from emerging.
3. It provides assistance and protection to States (Parties) against chemical weapons threats.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | b 2 and 3 only | c 1 and 3 only | d 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b). The OPCW (The Hague) is the independent implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention, not an EU body; it monitors the chemical industry and assists States Parties against chemical threats.

2015 'The Fortaleza Declaration', recently in the news, is related to the affairs of

a ASEAN | b BRICS | c OECD | d WTO

Answer: (b). The Fortaleza Declaration came out of the 6th BRICS Summit in Brazil (July 2014), which agreed to set up the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

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2015 With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements :
1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | **d Neither 1 nor 2**

Answer: (d). IOR-ARC (now IORA) was set up in 1997 for economic and regional cooperation, not as a recent maritime-security alliance.

2015 Consider the following countries :
1. China
2. France
3. India
4. Israel
5. Pakistan
Which among the above are Nuclear Weapons States as recognized by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)?

a 1 and 2 only | b 1, 3, 4 and 5 only
c 2, 4 and 5 only | d 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: (a). The NPT recognises only five nuclear-weapon States (USA, Russia, UK, France, China) that tested before 1 January 1967; India, Pakistan and Israel are outside the treaty.

2014 With reference to a grouping of countries known as BRICS, consider the following statements :
1. The First Summit of BRICS was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009.
2. South Africa was the last to join the BRICS grouping.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | **b 2 only** | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). The first BRIC summit was held at Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009, and South Africa, invited in December 2010, was the last to join at the time of the exam (the group expanded from 2024).

2011 Recently, the USA decided to support India's membership in multi-lateral export control regimes called the "Australia Group" and the "Wassenaar Arrangement". What is the difference between them?
1. The Australia Group is an informal arrangement which aims to allow exporting countries to minimize the risk of assisting chemical and biological weapons proliferation, whereas the Wassenaar Arrangement is a formal group under the OECD holding identical objectives.
2. The Australia Group comprises predominantly of Asian, African and North American countries, whereas the member countries of Wassenaar Arrangement are predominantly from

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the European Union and American continents.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d). Both regimes are informal and outside the OECD, with different mandates (chemical and biological weapons versus conventional arms and dual-use goods), and both are dominated by European and other Western states.

2010 With reference to BRIC countries, consider the following statements:
1. At present, China's GDP is more than the combined GDP of all the three other countries.
2. China's population is more than the combined population of any two other countries.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). China's GDP was then larger than that of Brazil, Russia and India combined, but India and Brazil together outnumbered China's population.

2010 Consider the following statements:
1. The Commonwealth has no charter, treaty or constitution.
2. All the territories/countries once under the British empire (jurisdiction/rule/mandate) automatically joined the Commonwealth as its members.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). In 2010 the Commonwealth had no charter, treaty or constitution (its Charter came only in 2013), and many former British territories never joined it.

2009 Among the following Presidents of India, who was also the Secretary General of Non-Aligned Movement for some period?

a Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan | b Varahagiri Venkata Giri
c Giani Zail Singh | d Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma

Answer: (c). Giani Zail Singh, President of India when New Delhi hosted the 1983 NAM summit, also served as NAM Secretary-General from 1983 to 1986.

2009 Other than Venezuela, which one among the following from South America is a member of OPEC ?

a Argentina | b Brazil | c Ecuador | d Bolivia

Answer: (c). Ecuador, which rejoined OPEC in 2007, was the only South American member besides Venezuela; it left OPEC again in 2020.

2009 Consider the following pairs : Organization : Location of Headquarters
1. Asian Development Bank : Tokyo
2. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation : Singapore

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3. Association of South East Asian Nations : Bangkok
Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched ?

a 1 and 2 only | b 2 only | c 2 and 3 only | d 3 only

Answer: (b). The ADB is headquartered in Manila and ASEAN in Jakarta, so only APEC (Singapore) is correctly matched.

2009 A present group of nations known as 'G-8' started first as G-7. Which one among the following was not one of them ?

a Canada | b Italy | c Japan | d Russia

Answer: (d). Canada, Italy and Japan were G7 members, while Russia joined only in 1997-98 to make it the G8 (and was suspended in 2014).

2009 In the latter half of the year 2008, which one of the following countries pulled out of Commonwealth of Independent States?

a Azerbaijan | b Belarus | c Georgia | d Kazakhstan

Answer: (c). Georgia announced its exit from the CIS after the August 2008 war with Russia; it took effect in 2009.

2008 India is a member of which of the following?
1. Asian Development Bank
2. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
3. Colombo Plan
4. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a 1 and 3 only | b 2 and 4 only | c 1, 2 and 3 only | d 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a). India is a member of the ADB and the Colombo Plan but not of APEC or the OECD.

2008 Consider the following statements:
1. The Nuclear Suppliers Group has 24 countries as its members.
2. India is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d). The NSG then had 45 members (48 now), and India is still not a member.

2007 Which one of the following is NOT a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization?

a Russia | b Kazakhstan | c Ukraine | d Uzbekistan

Answer: (c). Ukraine is not an SCO member; Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are founder members.

2007 With reference to the international meetings held in the year 2006, which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?
1. NAM Summit : Havana

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2. APEC Meeting : Bangkok
3. EU–India Summit : Helsinki
4. UN Climate Change Conference : Geneva

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

a 1 only | b 1 and 3 only | c 1, 2 and 3 | d 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (b). In 2006 the NAM Summit met at Havana and the EU-India Summit at Helsinki, but APEC met in Hanoi and the UN climate conference in Nairobi.

2007 Consider the following statements:

1. China has observer status at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.
2. India has observer status at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c). China became a SAARC observer in 2005-06 and India an SCO observer in 2005.

2007 Near the end of the year 2006, which one of the following countries was suspended from the Commonwealth after a military coup?

a Kenya | b Myanmar | c Fiji | d Tanzania

Answer: (c). Fiji was suspended from the Commonwealth after the military coup of December 2006.

2006 Which one of the following countries is not a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)?

a Armenia | b Belarus | c Estonia | d Georgia

Answer: (c). Estonia, like the other Baltic states, never joined the CIS, while Armenia, Belarus and Georgia were members then (Georgia left in 2009).

2006 Consider the following statements:

1. The agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) came into effect from 1st December 2005.
2. As per SAFTA agreement terms, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have to decrease their custom duties to the level of 0 % to 5 % by the year 2013.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). SAFTA came into force on 1 January 2006, not 1 December 2005, so statement 1 is wrong, while its non-LDC members were to bring tariffs down to 0-5 per cent by about 2013. *Disputed key: Keys split between (b) and (d) because Sri Lanka's SAFTA tariff-cut timetable ran a year longer (to 2014) than India's and Pakistan's (2013).*

2005 Consider the following statements :

1. Second World Buddhist Summit was held in Bangkok in November–December, 2004
2. World Punjabi Conference was held in Jalandhar in December, 2004

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3. 4th Meeting of the SAARC, Trade Ministers was held in Islamabad in November, 2004
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 3 only | b 1 and 2 | c 2 and 3 | d 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). The Second World Buddhist Summit was held at Lumbini, Nepal, and the World Punjabi Conference at Patiala, so only the Islamabad SAARC trade ministers' meeting (November 2004) is correctly stated. *Disputed key: Most keys give (a), but at least two give (c), and one copy prints option (a) as '1 only'.*

1999 Which one of the countries labelled as 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the given map was grantee membership of G-15 in its VII Summit at Kuala Lumpur? (ASKED WITH A PRINTED MAP)

a 1 | b 2 | c 3 | d 4

Answer: (d). Kenya was admitted to the G-15 at the seventh summit at Kuala Lumpur in 1997; it is the country marked 4 on the printed map.

1998 The meeting of G-15 countries held in Malaysia in 1997 was attended by

a 14 member countries
b 15 member countries
c 16 member countries
d 17 member countries

Answer: (c). The G-15 kept its name as it grew; Kenya was admitted at the Kuala Lumpur summit of November 1997, taking the membership to 16.

1998 The recent Land Mines Conference to sign the historic treaty was held in the Capital city of

a Canada | b Japan | c Sweden | d Zimbabwe

Answer: (a). The Mine Ban Treaty was opened for signature at Ottawa, Canada's capital, in December 1997, hence the name Ottawa Treaty.

1996 The emerging trading blocs in the world, such as NAFTA, ASEAN and the like, are expected to

a act as constrictions in free trade across the world
b promote free trade on the lines laid down by the WTO
c permit transfer of technology between member countries
d promote trade in agricultural commodities between countries of the North and South

Answer: (b). Regional trading blocs such as NAFTA and ASEAN were expected to cut trade barriers among members, in line with WTO free-trade principles. *Disputed key: Most standard keys give (b), but one gives (d) and some argue (a) because trading blocs discriminate against non-members.*

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1995 The signatories to the treaty banning chemical weapons include

a USA, Russia, India, Iran and Israel

b Iraq, Libya, India, Russia and China

c Brazil, Angola, North Korea, Pakistan and USA

d Syria, Sri Lanka, Japan, Singapore and France

Answer: (a). The USA, Russia, India, Iran and Israel all signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, whereas Iraq, Libya, Angola, North Korea and Syria had not.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS SUMMARY

PYQS 1995–2026

The United Nations System



The United Nations was set up by the Charter signed at San Francisco on 26 June 1945 and came into being on 24 October 1945. It works through six principal organs, fifteen specialised agencies with their own treaties and members, funds and programmes created by the General Assembly, and related organisations such as the IAEA and the WTO that only have working agreements with it. India is an original member, has sat on the Security Council eight times and has sent more peacekeepers than any other country.

SYLLABUS

PRELIMS Current events of national and international importance; India's foreign relations, international institutions and groupings

MAINS · GS PAPER II India and its neighbourhood relations; bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India; important international institutions, agencies and fora

CONTENTS

01 Origins and the UN Charter

02 The Six Principal Organs

03 International Courts: ICJ, ICC and PCA

04 Human Rights Bodies: UNHRC, OHCHR and UNHCR

05 Specialised Agencies, Funds and Programmes, and Related Organisations

06 IAEA, Safeguards and the Additional Protocol

07 Law of the Sea: UNCLOS, the Seabed Authority and the BBNJ Agreement

08 UN Peacekeeping

09 Conventions, Declarations and World Conferences

10 UN Bodies and the Nobel Peace Prize

11 International Years and Days

12 India and the United Nations

13 UN Reform and the System in 2026

14 Previous Year Questions

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PYQ RADAR 25 QUESTIONS, 1995–2026

- **Asked:** 1998, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 (twice), 2010, 2011, 2015, 2018 (twice), 2020, 2022 (three times), 2023, 2025, 2026 (four times).
- **Principal organs, the Charter and the Secretary-General** (8 questions): the six official languages; where the Charter was adopted, India's admission and the Trusteeship Council; Kofi Annan; Nagendra Singh as ICJ President; ECOSOC's size and election; the term of non-permanent Security Council members; the Credentials Committee; observer status in the General Assembly.
- **Specialised agencies, funds and their heads** (7): which bodies are UN agencies (IBRD, IFC, IFAD, IMF); headquarters of the IAEA and ITU, and of UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and UPU; heads of the WHO and WTO (2007); ILO Conventions 138 and 182; UN agencies that won the Nobel Peace Prize twice; FAO's "Four Betters" at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference.
- **Conventions, declarations and human rights** (8): rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UDHR; the Beijing Declaration; the IAEA Additional Protocol; Alma-Ata, Hague, Talanoa and Under2 pairs; UNCLOS limits; the Global Compact for Migration; conventions India has not ratified.
- **Peacekeeping and International Years** (2): International Years 2025–2029; periods of UNMIL, MINURCAT, MINUSTAH and UNMISET.
- **Learn first:** the "Specialised agencies" and "Funds and programmes" tables, because most questions here are matches of a UN body with its headquarters, head or category.

01 Origins and the UN Charter

- The **Hague Peace Conference of 1899** adopted the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes and set up the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** (working from 1902), the oldest standing body for settling disputes between states.
- The **League of Nations** (1919, Treaty of Versailles; Geneva) was the UN's forerunner. The **ILO** was created in 1919 by the same treaty, and the **Permanent Court of International Justice** (1920) preceded the ICJ. India was an original member of the League as a signatory of the Treaty of Versailles.
- The name **"United Nations"** was coined by US President **Franklin D. Roosevelt**. The **Declaration by United Nations** of **1 January 1942** was signed by 26 nations, India among them, pledging to fight the Axis powers together.
- Steps to the Charter: Atlantic Charter (August 1941), Moscow Declaration (1943), **Dumbarton Oaks** talks (1944) and the Yalta Conference (February 1945), which settled the veto formula.
- The **UN Conference on International Organization** at **San Francisco** (25 April to 26 June 1945) was attended by 50 countries. The **Charter** was signed at San Francisco on **26 June 1945** and entered into force on **24 October 1945**, now observed as UN Day. Poland signed later, so there are **51 original members**.
- **India** signed the Charter on 26 June 1945 and ratified it on 30 October 1945; it is an **original member** although it was not yet independent.
- The UN has **193 member states**; **South Sudan** (14 July 2011) is the latest. Switzerland joined only in 2002. New members are admitted by the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority on the recommendation of the Security Council (Article 4).
- Charter provisions: Article 2(7) bars intervention in matters of domestic jurisdiction; **Chapter VI** covers peaceful settlement and **Chapter VII** enforcement action; Article 23 lists the five permanent members; Article 27 sets Security Council voting; Article 97 covers the Secretary-General; **Articles 108 and 109** require ratification by two-thirds of members including all five permanent members to amend the Charter.

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- The Charter has been amended only for size: the Security Council grew from 11 to 15 members (1965), and ECOSOC from 18 to 27 (1965) and to 54 (1973).

PRELIMS FACT OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE UN

- The UN has **six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish**. Arabic was added by the General Assembly in **1973**; the other five date from 1946.
- The **working languages** of the Secretariat are **English and French**. The ICJ also works in English and French only.
- Hindi, German, Japanese and Portuguese are not official languages. India funds the "Hindi@UN" project (since 2018), which puts out UN news in Hindi.

02 The Six Principal Organs

All six were created by the Charter in 1945: the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC, the Trusteeship Council, the ICJ and the Secretariat. Only the ICJ sits outside New York.

Table: Principal organs with seat, membership and term

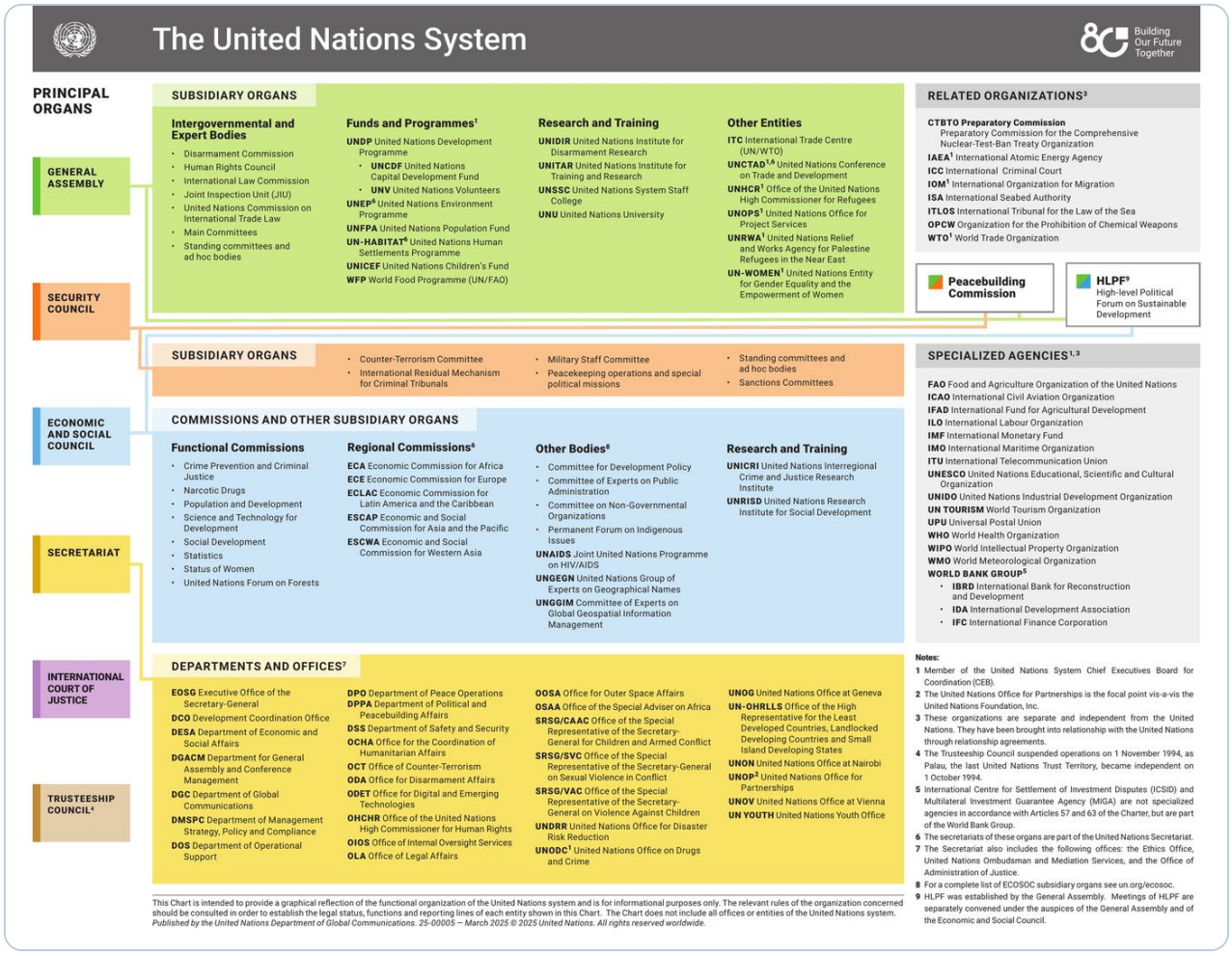
ORGAN	SEAT	MEMBERSHIP	TERM AND VOTING
General Assembly	New York	All 193 members, one vote each	President elected every year; two-thirds majority on important questions, simple majority on others
Security Council	New York	15: 5 permanent (China, France, Russia, UK, US) and 10 elected	Elected members serve 2 years; 9 votes with no permanent member's veto for substantive decisions
ECOSOC	New York	54 members; 18 elected each year	3-year overlapping terms, elected by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly
Trusteeship Council	New York	The five permanent members	Suspended operation on 1 November 1994
International Court of Justice	Peace Palace, The Hague	15 judges; all UN members are parties to its Statute	9-year terms; one-third elected every 3 years by the General Assembly and Security Council
Secretariat	New York	Secretary-General and international staff	Secretary-General appointed for 5 years, renewable

General Assembly

- The **General Assembly** is the only principal organ with universal membership. Decisions on **important questions** (peace and security, admission, suspension and expulsion of members, elections to the Councils, budget) need a **two-thirds majority** of members present and voting (Article 18); other questions need a simple majority. Its resolutions are recommendations, except on the budget and internal matters.
- A **President** is elected for each annual session, which opens in September. **Khalilur Rahman of Bangladesh** presides over the **81st session** (from 8 September 2026); **Annalena Baerbock** of Germany presided over the 80th. **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit** (1953) was the first woman President of the Assembly.

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- **Six Main Committees:** First (Disarmament and International Security), Second (Economic and Financial), Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), Fourth (Special Political and Decolonisation), Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) and Sixth (Legal).
- The **General Committee** (President, 21 Vice-Presidents and the six Main Committee chairs) runs the session; the five permanent members are always among the Vice-Presidents.
- The **Uniting for Peace** resolution 377(V) of **1950**, moved by the US during the Korean War, lets the Assembly take up a threat to peace when a veto blocks the Security Council. The **veto initiative** (resolution 76/262, 26 April 2022) requires the Assembly to meet within 10 working days of any veto.
- Subsidiary bodies of the Assembly include the **Human Rights Council**, the International Law Commission, the Disarmament Commission, UNCITRAL and the funds and programmes.



The UN system: six principal organs, their subsidiary bodies, the specialised agencies and the related organisations.

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PRELIMS FACT CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE AND OBSERVER STATUS

- The **Credentials Committee** has **nine members**, appointed by the **General Assembly** at the start of each regular session on the President's proposal. It examines the credentials of the representatives of all member states and reports to the Assembly, which approves the report. It is not a Security Council body, and it usually meets once a year, late in the session. It has deferred the credentials of Afghanistan's Taliban and Myanmar's military government since 2021.
- The General Assembly grants **observer status** to **non-member states**, **intergovernmental organisations** and a few other entities (ICRC, IFRC, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the International Olympic Committee). Permanent observers may keep **missions at UN Headquarters**, speak and take part in debates, but cannot vote.
- The two non-member observer states are the **Holy See** (observer since 1964) and the **State of Palestine** (non-member observer state since 2012; extra rights and seating among members from 2024, after a US veto blocked its full membership in the Security Council in April 2024).
- The **European Union** has enhanced observer rights (2011). The India-headquartered **International Solar Alliance** received observer status in the General Assembly in 2021.

Security Council

- The **Security Council** has primary responsibility for international peace and security; under Article 25 all members must carry out its decisions, which no other organ can impose on the whole membership.
- It has **15 members**: five permanent and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for **two-year terms**, five each year, by a two-thirds majority even if unopposed. A retiring member cannot be re-elected immediately.
- Regional allocation of the ten elected seats: **five for Africa and Asia-Pacific** (three African, two Asia-Pacific, with one "Arab swing seat"), one for **Eastern Europe**, two for **Latin America and the Caribbean**, and two for **Western Europe and Others**.
- The **presidency** rotates every month in the English alphabetical order of members' names.

Table: Non-permanent members of the Security Council, 2025–2028

TERM	MEMBERS	ELECTED
2025–26	Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama, Somalia	June 2024
2026–27	Bahrain, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Latvia, Liberia	3 June 2025
2027–28	Austria, Kyrgyzstan (first time), Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago, Zimbabwe; Germany and the Philippines lost	3 June 2026

- Procedural matters need any nine votes. **Substantive matters** need nine votes including the concurring votes of the permanent members, so a "no" from any of the five is a **veto**; an abstention is not.
- Recent vetoes: Russia on Ukraine (2022); the US on Gaza ceasefire drafts (2023–2025) and Palestine's membership (April 2024); China and Russia on a Gulf draft on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz (7 April 2026) and on renewing the panel of experts on Iran sanctions (17 September 2026).

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- Subsidiary bodies: Military Staff Committee, Counter-Terrorism Committee, sanctions committees (the 1267 Committee lists ISIL and al-Qaeda terrorists), peacekeeping operations and the **Peacebuilding Commission** (2005, set up jointly with the General Assembly).
- **India** has been elected **eight times**: 1950–51, 1967–68, 1972–73, 1977–78, 1984–85, 1991–92, 2011–12 and 2021–22. In 2021–22 it presided in August 2021 (maritime security debate chaired by the Prime Minister) and December 2022 and chaired the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2022 (Delhi Declaration, October 2022). On **13 July 2026** it launched its candidature for **2028–29**.
- Council reform (the G4, the African Ezulwini Consensus, Uniting for Consensus and the Intergovernmental Negotiations) is covered in Chapter 11; text-based negotiations have still not begun.

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- **ECOSOC** has **54 members**, elected by the General Assembly by a **two-thirds majority** for overlapping **three-year terms**; 18 are elected each year (Africa 14 seats, Asia-Pacific 11, Eastern Europe 6, Latin America and the Caribbean 10, Western Europe and Others 13).
- It coordinates the economic, social and environmental work of the UN: the 15 specialised agencies report to it, along with eight **functional commissions** (Statistical; Population and Development; Social Development; Status of Women; Narcotic Drugs; Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; Science and Technology for Development; UN Forum on Forests) and the funds and programmes.
- Five **regional commissions**: **ECA** (Addis Ababa), **ECE** (Geneva), **ECLAC** (Santiago), **ESCAP** (Bangkok; founded 1947 as ECAFE, subregional office for South and South-West Asia in New Delhi since 2011) and **ESCWA** (Beirut).
- ECOSOC grants **consultative status** to NGOs through its Committee on NGOs. The **High-level Political Forum** reviews the SDGs under ECOSOC and the General Assembly; it replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2013.
- **India** was elected to ECOSOC for **2026–28** on 4 June 2025 with 181 votes.

Trusteeship Council

- The **Trusteeship Council** was set up under **Chapter XIII** of the Charter to supervise **trust territories**: former League of Nations mandates, territories detached from enemy states (such as Japan and Italy) after the Second World War, and territories placed under the system voluntarily (Article 77).
- It supervised **11 trust territories** administered by seven member states. The last, **Palau** (US-administered), became independent on 1 October 1994, and the Council **suspended operation on 1 November 1994**. It now has only the five permanent members and meets only when needed.

Secretariat and the Secretary-General

- The **Secretary-General** is the "chief administrative officer" (Article 97), **appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council**, where the veto applies, for a five-year renewable term. Under Article 99 the Secretary-General may bring any threat to peace to the Council's notice.
- **Kofi Annan** of **Ghana** (1997–2006) was the first Secretary-General chosen from the UN's own staff; he served two terms and shared the **2001 Nobel Peace Prize** with the UN.
- **António Guterres** (Portugal), the ninth Secretary-General, took office on 1 January 2017; his second term ends on **31 December 2026**. No woman has held the post.
- The **Deputy Secretary-General** post was created in 1997; Amina J. Mohammed (Nigeria) has held it since 2017.

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Table: Secretaries-General of the UN

NO.	SECRETARY-GENERAL	COUNTRY	TERM
1	Trygve Lie	Norway	1946–1952
2	Dag Hammarskjöld (died in office; Nobel 1961, posthumous)	Sweden	1953–1961
3	U Thant	Burma (Myanmar)	1961–1971
4	Kurt Waldheim	Austria	1972–1981
5	Javier Pérez de Cuéllar	Peru	1982–1991
6	Boutros Boutros-Ghali (one term)	Egypt	1992–1996
7	Kofi Annan	Ghana	1997–2006
8	Ban Ki-moon	South Korea	2007–2016
9	António Guterres	Portugal	2017–2026

- **UPDATE 2026** CHOOSING THE TENTH SECRETARY-GENERAL
  - The process opened with a joint letter of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council on **25 November 2025**; it follows Article 97 and General Assembly resolution 79/327 (2025). Candidates held public dialogues with member states from 21 April to 20 August 2026 (as of 22 October 2026; source: Office of the President of the General Assembly).
  - The Security Council began secret **straw polls** ("encourage", "discourage", "no opinion") on **30 July 2026** and had held nine by 20 November without any candidate clearing nine votes free of a permanent member's opposition; the tenth was set for 30 November (as of 25 November 2026; source: UN Security Council).
  - Eight candidates remain: **Rebeca Grynspan** (Costa Rica, UNCTAD Secretary-General), **Rafael Grossi** (Argentina, IAEA Director General), Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett (Guyana), Lana Nusseibeh (UAE), Feridun Sinirlioğlu (Türkiye), Olara Otunnu (Uganda), María Fernanda Espinosa and Ivonne A-Baki (both Ecuador). Michelle Bachelet (Chile) and Macky Sall (Senegal) withdrew (as of 25 November 2026; source: UN).
  - The new Secretary-General takes office on **1 January 2027**; no recommendation had been made by the Council (as of 28 November 2026; source: UN).

03 International Courts: ICJ, ICC and PCA

International Court of Justice (ICJ)

- The **ICJ** is the principal judicial organ of the UN, set up by the Charter in June 1945; it began work in **April 1946** at the **Peace Palace, The Hague**, succeeding the Permanent Court of International Justice. It is the only principal organ outside New York.
- It has **15 judges**, no two of the same nationality, elected for **nine years** by the **General Assembly and the Security Council voting separately but at the same time**; a candidate needs an absolute majority in both (97

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in the Assembly, 8 in the Council, where the veto does not apply). One-third of the Court is elected every three years and judges may be re-elected.

- Seats are spread across the regions by an informal convention, which has not held exactly since 2017. Official languages: **English and French**.
- It hears **contentious cases** between states that consent to its jurisdiction and gives **advisory opinions** to UN organs and specialised agencies. Judgments are final, binding and without appeal; advisory opinions are not binding. Only states can be parties; it cannot try individuals.
- If a state ignores a judgment, the other party may go to the **Security Council** (Article 94), where the veto applies.
- President: **Iwasawa Yuji** (Japan), elected 3 March 2025 after Nawaf Salam (Lebanon) resigned to become Prime Minister of Lebanon; Vice-President **Julia Sebutinde** (Uganda).
- Indian judges: **Sir Benegal Narsing Rau** (1952–53), **Nagendra Singh** (1973–88; **President 1985–88**), R. S. Pathak (1989–91) and **Dalveer Bhandari** (since 2012; term ends 5 February 2027).
- Other Indians in high posts, none of them ICJ judges: A. N. Ray was Chief Justice of India, R. K. Trivedi Chief Election Commissioner and Ashok Desai Attorney General.
- India's cases: Right of Passage (Portugal v. India, 1960); ICAO Council appeal (India v. Pakistan, 1972); Pakistani prisoners of war (Pakistan v. India, 1973); Aerial Incident of 10 August 1999 (Pakistan v. India, 2000); nuclear disarmament (Marshall Islands v. India, 2016); **Jadhav** (India v. Pakistan, 2019: Pakistan must allow effective review and reconsideration of Kulbhushan Jadhav's conviction and sentence, and consular access under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations).
- Recent advisory opinions: Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory is unlawful (19 July 2024); **Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change** (23 July 2025, unanimous; requested by the General Assembly at Vanuatu's initiative; 1.5°C is the primary Paris goal and failure to act may be an internationally wrongful act); Israel's obligations towards UN bodies including UNRWA (22 October 2025); the right to strike under ILO Convention 87 (21 May 2026, requested by the ILO).
- Pending cases include South Africa v. Israel (Genocide Convention), The Gambia v. Myanmar (Rohingya), Ukraine v. Russia and Guyana v. Venezuela (Essequibo).

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- The **ICC**, at **The Hague**, is the first permanent international criminal court. Its treaty, the **Rome Statute**, was adopted on **17 July 1998** (World Day for International Justice) and entered into force on **1 July 2002**; it has no jurisdiction over earlier crimes.
- It tries **individuals** for four crimes: **genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression** (aggression jurisdiction active since 17 July 2018). It is **complementary** to national courts, acting only when a state is unwilling or unable to prosecute.
- Jurisdiction arises when a crime is committed on the territory or by a national of a State Party, when a state accepts it, or when the **Security Council refers a situation** (Darfur 2005, Libya 2011). It does not try anyone under 18 at the time of the crime and cannot impose the death penalty; the maximum is 30 years or life.
- It is **not a UN organ**: it is an independent treaty body with a relationship agreement with the UN (2004), and the UN system chart lists it among the related organisations. Organs: Presidency, Judicial Divisions (**18 judges**, nine-year terms), Office of the Prosecutor and Registry; the Assembly of States Parties elects judges and the Prosecutor.
- **125 States Parties** (Armenia 124th in 2024, Ukraine 125th on 1 January 2025). **India, the US, China and Russia are not parties**; Burundi (2017) and the Philippines (2019) left. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have notified withdrawal effective June 2027; Hungary reversed its withdrawal in May 2026.

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- Arrest warrants: Vladimir Putin (March 2023), Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant (November 2024), Taliban leaders Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani (July 2025). Former Philippine President **Rodrigo Duterte** was surrendered in March 2025; three counts of crimes against humanity were confirmed in April 2026 and his trial opens on 30 November 2026.

PRELIMS TRAP ICJ VS ICC VS PCA

- **ICJ**: principal organ of the UN (1945); Peace Palace, The Hague; 15 judges; disputes **between states** and advisory opinions; all 193 UN members are parties to its Statute, India included.
- **ICC**: Rome Statute (1998; in force 2002); The Hague; 18 judges and a Prosecutor; tries **individuals**; independent of the UN (a related organisation by agreement); 125 parties; **India is not a party**.
- **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**: 1899 Hague Convention; also in the **Peace Palace**; not a court with sitting judges; it provides registry services for arbitral tribunals between states, state bodies and private parties. It handled the **South China Sea arbitration** (Philippines v. China, award 2016) and the **Kishanganga** arbitration under the Indus Waters Treaty (India-Pakistan, 2013). The PCA has 129 Contracting Parties; India acceded to the 1899 Convention in 1950.
- Also distinguish the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)** at **Hamburg** (UNCLOS, 21 judges). Three bodies share The Hague: the ICJ, the ICC and the PCA; the OPCW also sits there.

UPDATE 2026 COURTS: NO INDIAN JUDGE ON THE ICJ FROM 2027

- On **3 November 2026** the General Assembly and the Security Council elected **Dapo Akande** (UK), **François Alabrune** (France) and **Rena Lee** (Singapore) and re-elected Mahmoud Hmoud (Jordan) and Phoebe Okowa (Kenya) for terms from 6 February 2027. Their seats replace those of Ronny Abraham (France), **Dalveer Bhandari (India)** and Leonardo Brant (Brazil), so the Court will have no Indian judge from February 2027 (as of 4 November 2026; source: UN/ICJ).
- The ICC Assembly of States Parties removed Prosecutor **Karim Khan** for serious misconduct on **24 July 2026**, the first removal of an ICC Prosecutor; the US has sanctioned ICC judges and prosecutors since 2025 (as of 24 July 2026; source: ICC/Assembly of States Parties).

04 Human Rights Bodies: UNHRC, OHCHR and UNHCR

- The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted by the General Assembly at Paris on **10 December 1948** (Human Rights Day); India took part in drafting it (Hansa Mehta). It is a declaration with no binding force of its own, and its 30 articles are the basis of later binding covenants (ICCPR and ICESCR, 1966).
- The **Human Rights Council (UNHRC)**, created by the General Assembly in **2006** to replace the Commission on Human Rights (an ECOSOC body since 1946), is a **subsidiary body of the General Assembly** based in **Geneva**.
- It has **47 members** elected by an absolute majority of the General Assembly in secret ballot for **three-year terms**; none may serve more than two consecutive terms. Seats: Africa 13, Asia-Pacific 13, Latin America and the Caribbean 8, Western Europe and Others 7, Eastern Europe 6. The Assembly can suspend a member by a two-thirds vote (Libya 2011, **Russia 7 April 2022**).
- Its tools are the **Universal Periodic Review** of every member state, Special Procedures (rapporteurs and working groups), the Advisory Committee and a complaint procedure. Its 2026 President is Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro of Indonesia.

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- **India** is a founding member and was elected on 14 October 2025 for **2026–28**, its seventh term; **Pakistan** was elected at the same time. The **US** left in 2018, returned for 2022–24 and withdrew again by an executive order of 4 February 2025.
- The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**, part of the UN Secretariat, was created by General Assembly resolution 48/141 of **20 December 1993** after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights; it is in Geneva and acts as the Council's secretariat. **Volker Türk** (Austria) was reappointed on **24 July 2026** for a second term to 11 October 2030 (144 in favour, 10 against including the US and Russia).
- The **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** was set up by the General Assembly in **1950** (working from 1 January 1951) with its seat in **Geneva**. It won the **Nobel Peace Prize twice, in 1954 and 1981**. **Barham Salih** (Iraq), the 12th High Commissioner, took office on 1 January 2026, succeeding Filippo Grandi.
- The **1951 Refugee Convention** and its **1967 Protocol** define a refugee; **India is party to neither**. UNHCR works in India from New Delhi and registers mainly Afghan and Myanmar refugees; it helped Tibetan and East Pakistani refugees from 1969 to 1975.
- By mid-2025, 117.3 million people were forcibly displaced, including about 42.5 million refugees and 67.8 million internally displaced people (UNHCR).

- **PRELIMS TRAP** UNHRC VS UNHCR VS OHCHR
  - **UNHRC** (Human Rights **Council**): an intergovernmental body of **47 states**, created in **2006** by the General Assembly; Geneva; runs the Universal Periodic Review. India is a member for 2026–28.
  - **UNHCR** (High **Commissioner for Refugees**): an agency for **refugees** and stateless people, created in **1950**; Geneva; Nobel Peace Prize 1954 and 1981; head Barham Salih. India is not party to the Refugee Convention it serves.
  - **OHCHR** (Office of the High Commissioner for **Human Rights**): part of the **UN Secretariat**, created in **1993**; Geneva; secretariat of the UNHRC; head Volker Türk.
  - The old **Commission on Human Rights** (1946–2006) was an ECOSOC body. India's **NHRC** is a national statutory body (1993), unrelated to any of these.

05 Specialised Agencies, Funds and Programmes, and Related Organisations

Specialised agencies are separate organisations with their own treaties, members, budgets and heads, linked to the UN by agreements under **Articles 57 and 63** and coordinated through ECOSOC and the Chief Executives Board. Funds and programmes are subsidiary organs created by the General Assembly and are funded by voluntary contributions.

Table: Specialised agencies: headquarters, year and head (November 2026)

AGENCY	HQ	FOUNDED	HEAD (COUNTRY)
ITU (oldest)	Geneva	1865	Doreen Bogdan-Martin (US), re-elected 2026
UPU	Bern	1874	Masahiko Metoki (Japan)

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AGENCY	HQ	FOUNDED	HEAD (COUNTRY)
ILO (first specialised agency, 1946)	Geneva	1919	Gilbert F. Houngbo (Togo)
ICAO	Montreal	1944 (Chicago Convention)	Juan Carlos Salazar (Colombia)
IMF	Washington, DC	1944 (Bretton Woods)	Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria)
World Bank Group	Washington, DC	1944 (IBRD)	Ajay Banga (US)
FAO	Rome	1945 (Quebec City)	Qu Dongyu (China), term to July 2027
UNESCO	Paris	1945 (London)	Khaled El-Enany (Egypt), from November 2025
WHO	Geneva	1948 (7 April)	Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Ethiopia), term to August 2027
IMO	London	1948 (convention); 1959 (working)	Arsenio Dominguez (Panama)
WMO	Geneva	1950 (from the 1873 International Meteorological Organization)	Celeste Saulo (Argentina)
WIPO	Geneva	1967 (agency 1974)	Daren Tang (Singapore), reappointed to 2032
UNIDO	Vienna	1966 (agency 1985)	Gerd Müller (Germany)
UN Tourism (formerly UNWTO)	Madrid	1975	Shaikha Al Nowais (UAE), first woman head
IFAD	Rome	1977 (from the 1974 World Food Conference)	Alvaro Lario (Spain)

- PRELIMS TRAP **PRINCIPAL ORGAN, SPECIALISED AGENCY, FUND OR RELATED ORGANISATION?**
  - **Principal organs (6)**: General Assembly, Security Council, ECOSOC, Trusteeship Council, ICJ, Secretariat. UNICEF, the UNHRC and the Peacebuilding Commission are not principal organs.
  - **Specialised agencies (15)**: FAO, ICAO, IFAD, ILO, IMF, IMO, ITU, UNESCO, UNIDO, UN Tourism, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WMO and the **World Bank Group** (IBRD, IDA and IFC; MIGA and ICSID belong to the Group but are not specialised agencies). So the **IBRD, IFC, IFAD and IMF** are all UN specialised agencies.
  - **Funds and programmes**: UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat and WFP; UNHCR, UNRWA, UNCTAD, UNODC, UN Women and UNOPS are other entities of the same kind.
  - **Related organisations**: **IAEA, WTO**, OPCW, CTBTO Preparatory Commission, IOM, the ICC, the International Seabed Authority and ITLOS. The IAEA and WTO are **not specialised agencies**; IOM became a related organisation in 2016.
  - **Outside the UN system**: the ICRC, Amnesty International (NGO, London, 1961), Médecins Sans Frontières (NGO, 1971), the World Toilet Organization (NGO, Singapore, 2001), the International Panel on Fissile Materials and the Nuclear Security Summits.

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Table: Funds, programmes and other UN entities

BODY	HQ	FOUNDED	HEAD (NOVEMBER 2026)
UNICEF	New York	1946	Catherine Russell (US)
UNHCR	Geneva	1950	Barham Salih (Iraq)
UNRWA (Palestine refugees)	Amman and Gaza	1949	Christian Saunders, ad interim
WFP	Rome	1961 (working 1963; UN and FAO)	Luke J. Lindberg (US), from 26 October 2026
UNCTAD	Geneva	1964	Rebeca Grynspan (Costa Rica), on leave while a candidate for Secretary-General; Pedro Manuel Moreno acting
UNDP	New York	1965	Alexander De Croo (Belgium), from 2 December 2025
UNFPA	New York	1969	Diene Keita (Mali)
UNEP	Nairobi	1972 (after the Stockholm Conference)	Inger Andersen (Denmark)
UN-Habitat	Nairobi	1978 (after Habitat I, Vancouver, 1976)	Anacláudia Rossbach (Brazil)
UNODC	Vienna	1997	Monica Juma (Kenya)
UN Women	New York	2010	Sima Bahous (Jordan)
UNAIDS	Geneva	1994 (working 1996)	Winnie Byanyima (Uganda), to 31 December 2026
UNOPS	Copenhagen	1973 (independent 1995)	Jorge Moreira da Silva (Portugal)

- PRELIMS TRAP HEADQUARTERS LOOK-ALIKES
  - **Geneva**: WHO, ILO, ITU, WMO, WIPO, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNHRC, UNCTAD, UNAIDS, IOM (and the WTO). **Vienna**: **IAEA**, **UNIDO**, UNODC, CTBTO, OPEC. **Rome**: FAO, WFP, IFAD.
  - **New York**: UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women. **Nairobi**: **UNEP** and UN-Habitat; the UN Office at Nairobi is the only one of the UN's four main headquarters offices in the Global South. **Paris**: UNESCO (and the OECD, which is not a UN body). **Bern**: **UPU**. **London**: IMO. **Montreal**: ICAO. **Madrid**: UN Tourism. **Washington**: IMF, World Bank.
  - **The Hague**: ICJ, ICC, PCA, OPCW. **Hamburg**: ITLOS. **Kingston, Jamaica**: International Seabed Authority. **Brussels**: the Council of the EU and NATO.
  - Past heads: **Margaret Chan** (Hong Kong, China) led the WHO (2007–17); **Pascal Lamy** (France) led the WTO (2005–13); **Jacques Diouf** (Senegal) led the FAO (1994–2011). Nancy Pelosi (Speaker of the US House) and Steve Ballmer (Microsoft) held no UN post.

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International Labour Organization (ILO)

- The **ILO** was created in **1919** by the Treaty of Versailles and became the **first specialised agency of the UN in 1946**. Its seat is **Geneva** and it has 187 members. It won the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1969**, its 50th year.
- It is the only **tripartite** UN agency: governments, employers and workers each have a voice. Its organs are the **International Labour Conference** (annual, Geneva; adopts Conventions and Recommendations), the **Governing Body** (executive council; **India a permanent member since 1922**) and the International Labour Office (secretariat). Director-General: **Gilbert F. Houngbo** (Togo), the 11th, since October 2022.
- A Convention binds a state only once it ratifies it; Recommendations are guidelines. The ILO has no power to impose sanctions.
- The **1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work** covers freedom of association (C87, C98), forced labour (C29, C105), **child labour (C138, C182)** and discrimination (C100, C111). In June 2022 a fifth category, a **safe and healthy working environment** (C155, C187), was added, making **ten fundamental Conventions**.
- **Convention 138** sets the **minimum age** for employment and **Convention 182** targets the **worst forms of child labour**; India ratified both on **13 June 2017** (minimum age specified: 14 years).
- India has ratified **six of the ten** fundamental Conventions (29, 105, 100, 111, 138, 182). It has not ratified **87 and 98** (freedom of association and collective bargaining, because of limits on government servants) or **155 and 187**. In all India has ratified 47 Conventions and 1 Protocol, including the Employment Policy Convention (C122, 1998) and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (C105, 2000).
- New standards: **Convention 192** on biological hazards (2025) and **Convention 193** on decent work in the **platform economy** (114th Conference, June 2026), the first on gig work. India's four Labour Codes came into force on 21 November 2025.
- The first ILO office in India opened in **1928**; the New Delhi office is also the Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- The **WHO** constitution came into force on **7 April 1948**, now **World Health Day**; HQ **Geneva**. India became a party on 12 January 1948. Six regional offices; the **South-East Asia Regional Office is in New Delhi**.
- The **World Health Assembly** (all members, every May in Geneva) sets policy and appoints the Director-General on the nomination of the 34-member Executive Board. **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, the first African Director-General, is in his second term (to 15 August 2027).
- The **US** treats its withdrawal as complete from **22 January 2026** (ordered 20 January 2025; it had given about 18% of WHO's budget) and Argentina its own from 17 March 2026; WHO still lists 194 member states while its governing bodies consider the US notice.
- Landmarks: **smallpox** declared eradicated in **1980** (India free in 1977); the WHO-UNICEF **Alma-Ata Declaration (1978)** on primary health care ("Health for All"); **Framework Convention on Tobacco Control** (2003), the first treaty under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution; India certified **polio-free on 27 March 2014**; India validated free of **trachoma** as a public health problem (October 2024).
- A **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** is declared under the **International Health Regulations (2005)**, which bind 196 States Parties. Amendments adopted on 1 June 2024 entered into force on **19 September 2025** and add a higher alert, the **"pandemic emergency"**. COVID-19 was declared a PHEIC on 30 January 2020 and called a pandemic on 11 March 2020. The first PHEIC under the amended rules was the **Ebola (Bundibugyo virus)** outbreak in DR Congo and Uganda, declared on 17 May 2026 but judged not a pandemic emergency.

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- The **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre** at **Jamnagar, Gujarat** (2022) is the only WHO global outposted centre for traditional medicine; New Delhi hosted the Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine (December 2025).

- UPDATE 2026 WHO PANDEMIC AGREEMENT AND THE NEXT DIRECTOR-GENERAL
  - The **WHO Pandemic Agreement** was adopted by the **78th World Health Assembly on 20 May 2025** (committee vote 124-0, 11 abstentions), the second treaty under Article 19 after the tobacco convention. It states that WHO cannot impose measures on states (as of 20 May 2025; source: WHO).
  - It opens for signature only after its **Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) annex** is adopted, and enters into force 30 days after **60 ratifications**. The annex missed the May 2026 Assembly; the ninth meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group (2–13 November 2026) aimed to finish it for the **80th World Health Assembly in May 2027** (as of 13 November 2026; source: WHO).
  - Seven candidates are in the race to succeed Tedros, including Hans Kluge (Belgium), María Neira (Spain), Budi Gunadi Sadikin (Indonesia) and Li Song (China); the Executive Board will nominate up to three in January 2027 and the new Director-General takes office on **16 August 2027** (as of 29 October 2026; source: WHO).

UNESCO

- **UNESCO** was founded at a conference in **London** on **16 November 1945**; its seat is **Paris**. It has **194 members and 12 associate members**; the Cook Islands, Niue and Palestine are members outside the UN, while Israel (left 2018) and Liechtenstein are UN members outside UNESCO. India has been a member since 1946.
- **Khaled El-Enany** (Egypt), the first Arab Director-General, took office on 15 November 2025, elected by the 43rd General Conference at **Samarkand**; he succeeded Audrey Azoulay (France).
- The **US** left in 1984 and 2018, rejoined in July 2023 and notified a third withdrawal on 22 July 2025, effective **31 December 2026**; Nicaragua also announced its withdrawal in 2025.
- Main conventions: **World Heritage Convention (1972)**, Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), **Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)**, Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), illicit traffic in cultural property (1970).
- There are **1,273 World Heritage Sites in 173 countries**. India has **45** (37 cultural, 7 natural, 1 mixed: **Khangchendzonga National Park**). Recent: Santiniketan and the Hoysala temples (41st and 42nd, 2023); **Moidams** of the Ahoms, Assam (43rd, 2024, at the 46th Committee session in New Delhi); **Maratha Military Landscapes**, 12 forts (44th, 2025); the **Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath** (45th, Busan, July 2026).
- India has **16 elements** on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, including Durga Puja (2021), Garba (2023) and **Deepavali** (December 2025, at the session India hosted in New Delhi). The Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra manuscripts joined the Memory of the World Register in 2025.
- Programmes: **Man and the Biosphere** (13 of India's 18 biosphere reserves are in the world network, the latest the Cold Desert reserve, Himachal Pradesh, 2025), Global Geoparks, the International Hydrological Programme and the **Kalinga Prize** for popularising science (1951, funded by Biju Patnaik's Kalinga Foundation Trust). The **Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP)** in New Delhi (2012) is a UNESCO category 1 institute.

FAO, WFP and IFAD: the Rome agencies

- The **FAO** was founded at **Quebec City** on 16 October 1945 (World Food Day) and is based in **Rome**; it has 194 members (193 countries and the EU). Director-General **Qu Dongyu** (China) is in his second term (to 31 July 2027); the election of his successor is due in mid-2027.

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- FAO's **Strategic Framework 2022–31** rests on the **"Four Betters": better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life**. Its **Blue Transformation** roadmap (2022–2030) applies them to fisheries and aquaculture; FAO pressed it at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference.
- The **World Food Programme** was set up in 1961 by the FAO and the General Assembly (working from 1963); it is in Rome and won the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020**. India supplied 50,000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan through the WFP (2022).
- **IFAD**, an international financial institution and specialised agency, was set up in 1977 after the **1974 World Food Conference**; it lends to poor rural people.

WIPO

- The **World Intellectual Property Organization** was created by a convention signed at Stockholm in **1967** and became a specialised agency in 1974; HQ **Geneva**; **194 members**; it runs 28 treaties. World Intellectual Property Day is **26 April**.
- India joined in **1975**. It is party to the Paris Convention, Berne Convention, Patent Cooperation Treaty, Madrid Protocol, Budapest Treaty, WIPO Copyright Treaty and Performances and Phonograms Treaty, and was the **first country to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty** (access to books for the visually impaired).
- Two treaties of 2024: the **Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge** (Geneva, 24 May 2024), the first to require patent applicants to disclose the origin of genetic resources and traditional knowledge; and the **Riyadh Design Law Treaty** (22 November 2024). Neither is in force.
- WIPO publishes the **Global Innovation Index**; India ranked **38th of 139** in GII 2026, first among lower-middle-income economies; Switzerland topped it for the 16th year.

Other specialised agencies

- **ITU** (1865, Paris, as the International Telegraph Union; Geneva) is the **oldest specialised agency**; it allocates radio spectrum and satellite orbits. Its Plenipotentiary Conference at Doha (November 2026) re-elected **Doreen Bogdan-Martin** for 2027–2030.
- **UPU** (Bern, 9 October 1874, now World Post Day) is the second oldest. **ICAO** (Montreal) administers the **Chicago Convention (1944)** on civil aviation.
- **IMO** (London; India a member since 1959) runs SOLAS, MARPOL, the Ballast Water Convention and the **Polar Code**. **WMO** (Geneva) set up the IPCC with UNEP in 1988.
- **UNIDO** (Vienna) promotes industrial development. **UN Tourism** (Madrid) has used that name since January 2024 and keeps the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

Funds and programmes

- **UNICEF** was created by the General Assembly on 11 December 1946 as the **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund** for children after the Second World War; it became permanent in **1953** and dropped "International" and "Emergency" from its name but kept the acronym. HQ **New York**; **Nobel Peace Prize 1965**; a 36-member Executive Board elected by ECOSOC; funded wholly by voluntary contributions; Supply Division in Copenhagen. It is guided by the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**. It began work in India in 1949.
- **UNDP** (1965, New York) leads the UN development system and publishes the **Human Development Report** and Index (since 1990). **UNFPA** (1969) is the sexual and reproductive health agency and publishes the **State of World Population** report.

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- **UNEP** (Nairobi) was set up after the **Stockholm Conference of June 1972**; its Governing Council was given universal membership after Rio+20 (2012) and renamed the **UN Environment Assembly** in 2013. UNEP hosts the secretariats of the CBD, CITES, CMS, Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol, Minamata, Basel, Rotterdam (with FAO) and Stockholm conventions, and publishes the **Emissions Gap**, Adaptation Gap and Global Environment Outlook reports.
- **UN-Habitat** (Nairobi) came out of Habitat I (Vancouver, 1976); Habitat III (Quito, 2016) adopted the New Urban Agenda for SDG 11. **UNODC** (Vienna, 1997) serves the drug conventions (1961, 1971, 1988), UNTOC, UNCAC and the Cybercrime Convention. **UN Women** (2010) merged four bodies including UNIFEM.

06 IAEA, Safeguards and the Additional Protocol

- The **International Atomic Energy Agency** grew out of US President Eisenhower's **"Atoms for Peace"** speech (1953); its Statute entered into force on **29 July 1957**. HQ **Vienna**. It is an **autonomous related organisation** that reports to both the General Assembly and the Security Council; it is not a specialised agency.
- It has **182 members** (the Maldives joined in December 2025 and Timor-Leste in September 2026); NPT membership is not a condition for joining. **India is a founding member** and sits on the 35-member **Board of Governors** as a designated member. Director General: **Rafael Mariano Grossi** (Argentina), since December 2019. The IAEA and Mohamed ElBaradei shared the **2005 Nobel Peace Prize**.
- Its three pillars are peaceful uses (technology transfer), **safeguards** (verification) and nuclear safety and security. Non-nuclear-weapon parties to the NPT must accept comprehensive safeguards on all their nuclear material.
- The **Additional Protocol** (model of 1997) gives inspectors wider information and access. The IAEA Board approved an **India-specific safeguards agreement** in August 2008 (with the India-US civil nuclear deal and the NSG waiver; signed in 2009), and its **Additional Protocol entered into force in 2014**. They apply only to the **civilian facilities India places under safeguards**; its strategic (military) facilities stay outside. Ratifying the Protocol gives no NSG membership.
- India joined the IAEA's **Response and Assistance Network (RANET)** in 2020. IAEA initiatives: Rays of Hope (cancer care, 2022), **Atoms4Food** (with FAO, 2023), ZODIAC (zoonotic diseases) and NUTEC Plastics (2020).
- Iran: the Board found Iran in breach of its safeguards obligations on 12 June 2025; after Israeli and US strikes (June 2025) inspectors lost access to the main enrichment sites, the E3 (France, Germany, UK) triggered **snapback** and UN sanctions were re-applied from 27 September 2025 (New York time), which China and Russia reject as invalid. The IAEA has kept a mission at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia plant since 2022.

07 Law of the Sea: UNCLOS, the Seabed Authority and the BBNJ Agreement

- The **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** was adopted at **Montego Bay** in **1982** and entered into force on 16 November 1994; India ratified it in 1995. It has three implementing agreements: Part XI (1994), Fish Stocks (1995) and BBNJ (2023).
- A coastal state may fix its **territorial sea** up to **12 nautical miles** from the baseline (Article 3); ships of all states, coastal or land-locked, enjoy **innocent passage** through it (Article 17); the **EEZ** may not extend beyond **200 nautical miles** (Article 57). The contiguous zone extends to 24 nm; the continental shelf to 200 nm, or up to 350 nm where the margin extends further.

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- UNCLOS created three bodies: the **International Seabed Authority** (Kingston, Jamaica), the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea** (Hamburg) and the **Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf** (New York).
- The **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** regulates mineral activity in the "Area", the seabed beyond national jurisdiction, as the **common heritage of mankind**. It has **172 members** (171 states and the EU); a 36-member Council; Secretary-General **Leticia Carvalho** (Brazil) since January 2025. Its **Mining Code** for exploitation is still under negotiation.
- India holds ISA exploration contracts for **polymetallic nodules in the Central Indian Ocean Basin** (since 2002) and **polymetallic sulphides** on the Indian Ocean ridges (2016). India's Permanent Representative, **Mayank Joshi**, presided over the ISA Council's 31st session (2026).
- The **BBNJ Agreement** ("High Seas Treaty") on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction was adopted on **19 June 2023**. It covers marine genetic resources and benefit-sharing, area-based tools including marine protected areas on the high seas, environmental impact assessments, and capacity-building. India signed it on **25 September 2024**.
- The **third UN Ocean Conference** was held at **Nice, France, 9–13 June 2025**, co-hosted by **France and Costa Rica**; its declaration "Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action" and over 1,000 voluntary commitments form the **Nice Ocean Action Plan**. The fourth conference (2028) will be co-hosted by **Chile and South Korea**. Earlier conferences: New York (2017) and Lisbon (2022). SDG 14 is life below water.
- The IMO's **Polar Code** (International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters) became mandatory on **1 January 2017** through amendments to SOLAS and MARPOL.

- **UPDATE 2026** HIGH SEAS TREATY IN FORCE
  - The BBNJ Agreement entered into force on **17 January 2026**, 120 days after the 60th ratification (19 September 2025); it closed for signature on 20 September 2025 with 145 signatories (as of 17 January 2026; source: UN).
  - It had **110 parties** and 145 signatories in late November 2026, including China, Japan, the UK and the EU. **India, the US, Italy, Argentina and South Africa have signed but not ratified** (as of 28 November 2026; source: UN Treaty Collection).
  - The first Conference of the Parties meets at UN Headquarters, New York, on **11–22 January 2027**; Belgium, Chile and China have offered to host the secretariat (as of 30 October 2026; source: UN).

08 UN Peacekeeping

- Peacekeeping is not named in the Charter; it rests on Chapters VI and VII (sometimes called "Chapter six and a half"). The Security Council authorises missions; the **Department of Peace Operations** runs them; costs are shared through a separate scale set by the General Assembly, on which the US and China pay the largest shares.
- The first mission, the **UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO, 1948)**, sent military observers to the Middle East; the first armed force was **UNEF I** (Suez, 1956–67). Peacekeepers are "Blue Helmets"; **UN Peacekeeping Forces won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988**.
- A mission has a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (head), a Force Commander and a Chief Administrative Officer. Troops stay members of their national armies; the UN has no army of its own.
- **11 operations** are active: MINURSO, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, UNDOF, UNFICYP, UNIFIL, UNISFA, UNMIK, UNMISS, **UNMOGIP** and UNTSO. No wholly new UN-led operation has been authorised since 2014.

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MINUSMA (Mali) closed in 2023, and the Council gave **UNIFIL** a final extension to **31 December 2026** (resolution 2790, August 2025).

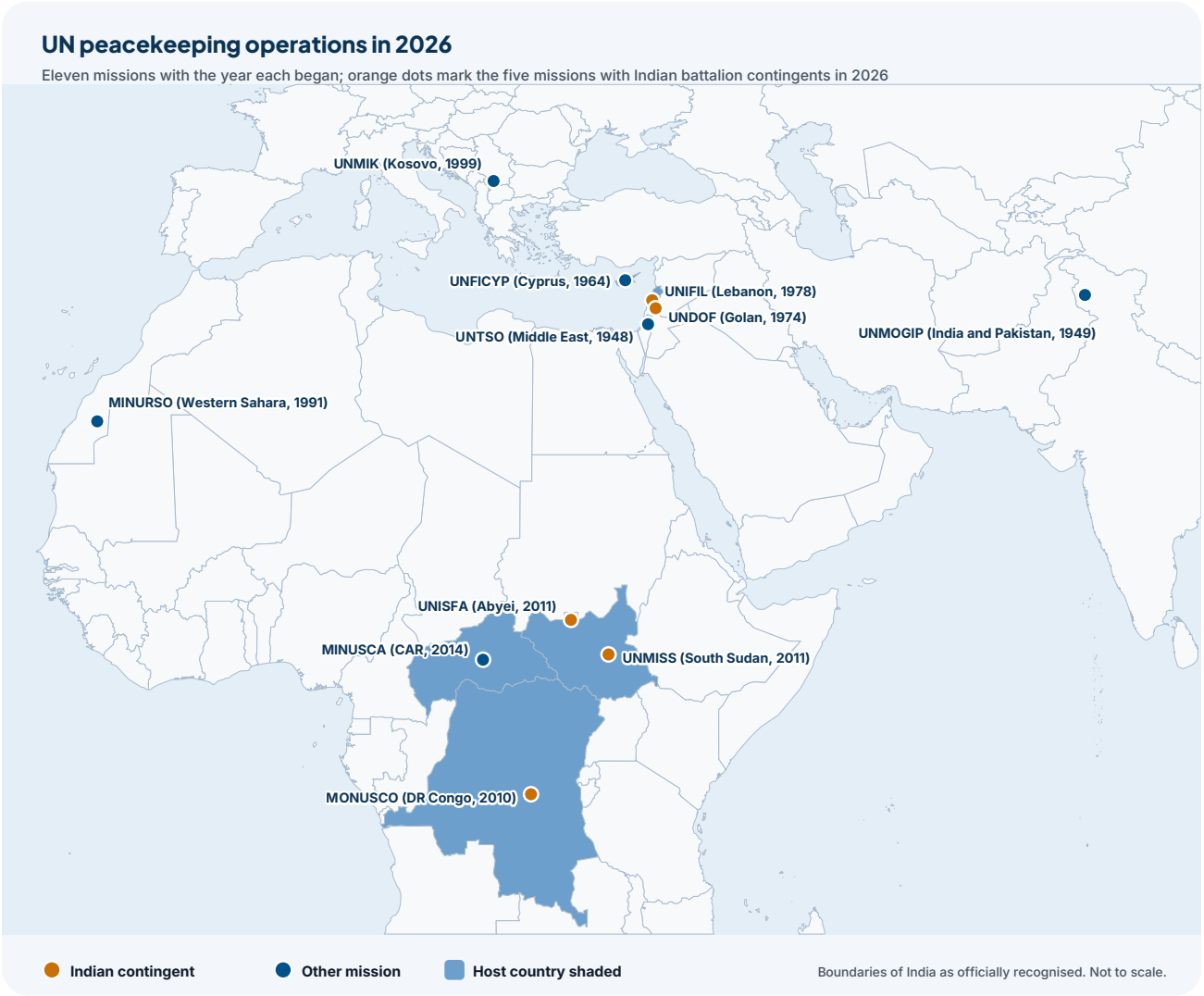
- **UNMOGIP** (from 1949, after resolution 47 of 1948 and the UN Commission for India and Pakistan) observes the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. India has lodged no complaints with it since **January 1972** and holds it irrelevant after the Simla Agreement.
- **India** has sent nearly **3,00,000 troops to more than 50 missions**, the most of any country, and has lost the most peacekeepers (**184** of 4,495 fatalities since 1948, to 31 March 2026; Bangladesh and Pakistan follow). In July 2026 it was the **second-largest** contributor of uniformed personnel (about 4,260) after Nepal.
- India sent the **first all-women Formed Police Unit** to Liberia (UNMIL) in **2007**. It hosted the Conclave of Army Chiefs of troop-contributing countries in New Delhi (14–16 October 2025). The **Centre for UN Peacekeeping** (New Delhi) trains Indian and foreign officers.
- Peacekeeping is shrinking: about 44,800 uniformed personnel in July 2026 against over 1,00,000 in 2016, and a budget of US$ 5.1 billion for 2026–27, about 10% lower.

Table: UN peacekeeping operations and their countries

MISSION	COUNTRY OR AREA	PERIOD
UNTSO	Middle East (first mission)	Since 1948
UNMOGIP	India and Pakistan (Jammu and Kashmir)	Since 1949
UNEF I	Egypt (Suez, Sinai, Gaza; first armed force)	1956–1967
ONUC	Congo (Hammarskjöld died on this mission, 1961)	1960–1964
UNFICYP	Cyprus	Since 1964
UNDOF	Golan Heights (Israel-Syria)	Since 1974
UNIFIL	Lebanon	1978–2026
MINURSO	Western Sahara	Since 1991
UNTAC	Cambodia	1992–1993
UNMIK	Kosovo	Since 1999
UNTAET	East Timor (former Portuguese colony annexed by Indonesia in 1975; UN administration till independence, May 2002)	1999–2002
UNMISET	Timor-Leste	2002–2005
UNMIL	Liberia	2003–2018

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MISSION	COUNTRY OR AREA	PERIOD
MINUSTAH	Haiti	2004–2017
MINURCAT	Central African Republic and Chad	2007–2010
UNAMID	Darfur, Sudan (with the African Union)	2007–2020
MONUSCO	DR Congo (MONUC 1999–2010)	Since 2010
UNMISS	South Sudan	Since 2011
UNISFA	Abyei (Sudan-South Sudan)	Since 2011
MINUSMA	Mali	2013–2023
MINUSCA	Central African Republic	Since 2014



The eleven UN peacekeeping operations of 2026 and the five with Indian battalion contingents.

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09 Conventions, Declarations and World Conferences

- The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989; in force 1990) recognises, among others, the rights to **development** (Article 6), **expression** (Article 13) and **rest, leisure and recreation** (Article 31). It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty; the US is the only UN member outside it. India acceded in 1992.
- The **UDHR** lists the rights to **equal access to public service** (Article 21), an adequate standard of living including **food**, clothing, housing and medical care (Article 25), and **education** (Article 26).
- The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** is the agenda for **women's empowerment** adopted at the UN **Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995**; its 30th review (Beijing+30) fell in 2025. CEDAW (1979) is the binding women's rights treaty (India ratified 1993).
- The **Alma-Ata Declaration (1978)** was on primary **health care**. The **Talanoa Dialogue** (2018, Fiji's COP23 presidency) was a UNFCCC process on **climate** ambition. The **Hague Conventions** (1899, 1907) set the laws of war; the Hague Conference on Private International Law makes treaties such as the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. The **Under2 Coalition** is a network of subnational governments on climate change.
- The **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** was adopted at **Marrakech** in December 2018 and endorsed by the General Assembly on 19 December 2018 by 152 votes to 5 (US, Hungary, Czechia, Poland, Israel), with 12 abstentions. It is **legally non-binding** and covers only **international** migration; India voted for it. The Global Compact on Refugees (2018) is separate.
- The **UN Convention against Cybercrime**, the first global treaty on cybercrime, was adopted on 24 December 2024 and opened for signature at **Hanoi** on 25 October 2025; India signed on **25 September 2026**. It needs 40 ratifications; only three (Qatar, Azerbaijan, Vietnam) had been deposited by October 2026.
- First UN world conferences: human rights (Tehran, 1968), environment (**Stockholm, 1972**), population (Bucharest, 1974), women (**Mexico City, 1975**) and climate (Geneva, 1979). Rio Earth Summit (1992) gave the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD.

Table: Conventions with year and India's status (November 2026)

INSTRUMENT	ADOPTED	IN FORCE	INDIA
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	10 December 1948	Declaration; not a treaty	Voted for; helped draft it
Genocide Convention	1948	1951	Ratified 1959
Geneva Conventions (four)	1949	1950	Ratified 1950
Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol	1951	1954	Not a party
Statelessness Conventions	1954, 1961	1960, 1975	Not a party to either
CEDAW	1979	1981	Ratified 1993
UNCLOS	1982	1994	Ratified 1995
Convention against Torture	1984	1987	Signed 1997; not ratified
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1989	1990	Acceded 1992
Migrant Workers Convention	1990	2003	Not a party

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INSTRUMENT	ADOPTED	IN FORCE	INDIA
UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC, Palermo)	2000	2003	Ratified 2011
UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)	2003	2005	Signed 2005; ratified 2011
Polar Code (IMO, under SOLAS and MARPOL)	2014–15	1 January 2017	Binding through India's SOLAS and MARPOL membership
Global Compact for Migration	2018	Non-binding	Voted for
Convention against Cybercrime	2024	Not in force	Signed 2026
WHO Pandemic Agreement	20 May 2025	Not open for signature (PABS annex pending)	Adopted by consensus with India's support
BBNJ Agreement	19 June 2023	17 January 2026	Signed 2024; not ratified

PRELIMS TRAP BINDING OR NOT, AND HAS INDIA RATIFIED?

- **Not binding**: the UDHR, the Beijing Declaration, the Global Compact for Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, the Pact for the Future (2024), ILO Recommendations, ICJ advisory opinions and General Assembly resolutions.
- **Binding on parties**: the CRC, CEDAW, UNCLOS, UNCAC, UNTOC, ratified ILO Conventions, the International Health Regulations, ICJ judgments and Chapter VII decisions of the Security Council.
- India has ratified the ILO **Employment Policy Convention** (C122, 1998), the **Abolition of Forced Labour Convention** (C105, 2000) and the **Fourth Geneva Convention** (civilians in war, 1950). It has **not** ratified the 1990 **Migrant Workers Convention**, the 1961 **Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness**, the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Rome Statute or the Convention against Torture.

10 UN Bodies and the Nobel Peace Prize

Table: UN agencies and UN figures that won the Nobel Peace Prize

YEAR	LAUREATE	NOTE
1950	Ralph Bunche	UN mediator in Palestine
1954 and 1981	**UNHCR**	The only UN agency to win twice
1961	Dag Hammarskjöld	Secretary-General; posthumous
1965	**UNICEF**	"Promotion of brotherhood among the nations"
1969	**ILO**	50th anniversary
1988	UN Peacekeeping Forces	Blue Helmets
2001	United Nations and Kofi Annan	Shared

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YEAR	LAUREATE	NOTE
2005	IAEA and Mohamed ElBaradei	Shared
2007	IPCC and Al Gore	Shared; IPCC set up by WMO and UNEP
2013	OPCW	Related organisation, The Hague
2020	**World Food Programme**	Hunger as a weapon of war

The ICRC, a non-UN body, has won three times (1917, 1944, 1963). Médecins Sans Frontières won in 1999.

11 International Years and Days

Table: UN International Years

YEAR	INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
2023	**Millets** (proposed by India); Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace
2024	Camelids
2025	**Peace and Trust**; Quantum Science and Technology; Glaciers' Preservation; Cooperatives
2026	**the Woman Farmer**; Rangelands and Pastoralists; Volunteers for Sustainable Development
2027	**Sustainable and Resilient Tourism**; Legal Literacy
2028	Year of International Law
2029	**Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence**

Table: International Days linked to India and the UN

DAY	DATE	ORIGIN
International Day of Yoga	21 June	General Assembly, December 2014, on India's proposal
International Day of Non-Violence	2 October (Gandhi's birthday)	General Assembly, 2007
World Meditation Day	21 December	General Assembly, December 2024 (India in the core group)
UN Day	24 October	Charter in force, 1945
Human Rights Day	10 December	UDHR, 1948
World Health Day	7 April	WHO founded, 1948
World Intellectual Property Day	26 April	WIPO Convention in force, 1970
World Environment Day	5 June	Stockholm Conference, 1972

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DAY	DATE	ORIGIN
World Oceans Day	8 June	General Assembly, 2008
World Day against Child Labour	12 June	ILO, 2002
World Refugee Day	20 June	General Assembly, 2000
World Food Day	16 October	FAO founded, 1945
World Toilet Day	19 November	Started by the World Toilet Organization; UN day since 2013

12 India and the United Nations

- India was the **first country to raise apartheid** (the treatment of Indians in South Africa) at the UN, in **1946**, and took Kashmir to the Security Council on 1 January 1948.
- India is a founder of the **NAM** and the **G77** and a member of the **G4** seeking permanent Council seats; the UK, France, Russia and the US have backed India's claim.
- India pays its assessed dues in full and on time ("Honour Roll"); its share of the regular budget is about **1.1%**.
- Bodies in India: WHO South-East Asia Regional Office (New Delhi), ESCAP's South and South-West Asia office (New Delhi), the **Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology** (New Delhi, 1977), UNESCO's MGIEP (New Delhi) and the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (Jamnagar).
- India hosted the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (46th session, 2024) and the Intangible Heritage Committee (20th session, 2025), both in New Delhi.

13 UN Reform and the System in 2026

- The **Summit of the Future** (New York, 22–23 September 2024) adopted the **Pact for the Future** by consensus with two annexes, the **Global Digital Compact** and the **Declaration on Future Generations**. Its 56 actions include Security Council reform (Action 39: redress the historical injustice against Africa as a priority) and reform of the international financial architecture.
- Its follow-up created an **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI** and a **Global Dialogue on AI Governance** (first session, Geneva, July 2026).
- Falling contributions and US arrears forced cuts: the 2026 regular budget of US$ 3.45 billion, approved on 30 December 2025, is about 15% smaller and abolishes about 19% of posts (2,681).

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UPDATE 2026 UN80 REFORM

- Secretary-General Guterres launched the **UN80 Initiative** in 2025, the UN's 80th year, to make the system "simpler, more effective and more coherent", in three workstreams: efficiencies, a Mandate Implementation Review and structural change (report "Shifting Paradigms: United to Deliver", September 2025) (as of May 2026; source: UN Secretary-General).
- The first structural merger was approved on **3 September 2026** (resolution 80/306): the **UN System Staff College merges into UNITAR**, by 132 votes to 4; the merged body becomes the UN Institute for Capability and Learning Innovation (UNICLI) from 1 January 2027 (as of 3 September 2026; source: UN General Assembly). The UNAIDS board rejected the Secretary-General's proposal to close ("sunset") UNAIDS and chose a smaller secretariat on 26 October 2026 (as of 27 October 2026; source: UNAIDS).
- Proposed mergers of **UNFPA with UN Women** and **UNDP with UNOPS** were not endorsed: the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decided in late August 2026 (decision 2026/26) that it was not yet in a position to recommend them (as of 3 September 2026; source: UN).

UPDATE 2026 US WITHDRAWALS FROM UN BODIES

- The US left the **WHO** on **22 January 2026**, a year after President Trump's order of 20 January 2025; an executive order of 4 February 2025 ended its role in the Human Rights Council and its funding of UNRWA (as of 22 January 2026; source: WHO/White House).
- On **7 January 2026** a presidential memorandum ordered withdrawal from **66 organisations: 31 UN entities and 35 others**. UN entities include the **UNFCCC**, UN Women, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD, DESA, the four regional commissions ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA, the Peacebuilding Commission and the International Law Commission; non-UN bodies include the **IPCC**, IRENA, IUCN and the India-headquartered **International Solar Alliance** (as of 7 January 2026; source: White House).
- The US exit from **UNESCO** takes effect on **31 December 2026**. The US stays in the Security Council, WFP and UNHCR, and a US citizen heads the WFP from October 2026 (as of 26 October 2026; source: UNESCO/WFP).

UPDATE 2026 NEW HEADS ACROSS THE UN SYSTEM

- **UNHCR**: Barham Salih (Iraq) from 1 January 2026. **UNDP**: Alexander De Croo (Belgium, former Belgian Prime Minister) from 2 December 2025. **UNESCO**: Khaled El-Enany (Egypt) from 15 November 2025 (as of 28 November 2026; source: UN Chief Executives Board).
- **WFP**: Luke J. Lindberg (US) from 26 October 2026, after Cindy McCain stepped down. **UN Tourism**: Shaikha Al Nowais (UAE), first woman Secretary-General, from 2026 (as of 26 October 2026; source: WFP/UN Tourism).
- **ITU**: Doreen Bogdan-Martin re-elected at Doha on 12 November 2026 (164 of 173 votes) for 2027–2030. **WIPO**: Daren Tang reappointed on 21 April 2026 for 2026–2032. **OHCHR**: Volker Türk reappointed to October 2030 (as of 17 November 2026; source: ITU/WIPO/UN).
- Contests in 2027: the **WHO** (seven candidates; appointment at the World Health Assembly, May 2027) and the **FAO** (election in mid-2027). The President of the 81st General Assembly is Khalilur Rahman of Bangladesh (as of 23 November 2026; source: WHO/FAO/UN).

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Prelims Quick Revision

- **UN Charter**: signed San Francisco 26 June 1945; in force 24 October 1945; 51 original members including India; 193 members (South Sudan 2011).
- **Official languages**: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish (Arabic added 1973); working languages English and French.
- **Security Council**: 5 permanent + 10 elected for 2 years; 9 votes and no veto; India elected 8 times, last 2021–22, candidate 2028–29.
- **ECOSOC**: 54 members, 3-year terms, elected by a two-thirds majority; 5 regional commissions; India member 2026–28.
- **Trusteeship Council**: Chapter XIII; 11 trust territories; Palau last (1994); suspended 1 November 1994.
- **ICJ**: The Hague, 1946; 15 judges, 9 years, elected by GA and UNSC; Nagendra Singh President 1985–88; no Indian judge from February 2027.
- **ICC**: Rome Statute 1998, in force 2002; tries individuals; 125 parties; not a UN organ (related organisation by agreement); India not a party.
- **UNHRC / UNHCR / OHCHR**: Council of 47 states (2006) / refugee agency (1950; Nobel 1954, 1981) / Secretariat office (1993); all in Geneva.
- **Specialised agencies**: 15, including the IMF and World Bank Group; IAEA and WTO are related organisations; ITU (1865) oldest, ILO (1946) first.
- **ILO**: 1919; tripartite; Nobel 1969; C138 and C182 on child labour ratified by India 13 June 2017; India not party to C87, C98.
- **IAEA**: Vienna 1957; 182 members; India's Additional Protocol in force 2014, covering only safeguarded civilian facilities.
- **UNCLOS**: 1982; territorial sea 12 nm, EEZ 200 nm; ISA at Kingston; BBNJ Agreement in force 17 January 2026, India signed only.
- **Peacekeeping**: UNTSO 1948 first; 11 missions in 2026; India top cumulative contributor (nearly 3 lakh troops, 184 deaths); UNMOGIP since 1949.
- **Nobel Peace Prize**: UNHCR twice (1954, 1981); UNICEF 1965; ILO 1969; Peacekeepers 1988; UN and Annan 2001; IAEA 2005; WFP 2020.
- **International Years**: 2025 Peace and Trust; 2026 Woman Farmer; 2027 Sustainable and Resilient Tourism; 2029 Asteroid Awareness.
- **2026 changes**: SG selection pending (term from 1 January 2027); US out of WHO (22 January 2026) and 66 bodies; WHO pandemic annex due May 2027.

Previous Year Questions

2026 At the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) held in June, 2025 in France, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations demonstrated its leading voice on marine and ocean issues, especially on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for resilient livelihood and "Blue Transformation".
Which of the following combinations about the "Four Betters" proposed by FAO for "Blue Transformation" is correct ?

a. Better production, better nutrition, better environment and better ocean
b. Better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life
c. Better coral reefs, better nutrition, better environment and better life

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d Better estuaries, better nutrition, better environment and better mangrove vegetation

Answer: (b). FAO's Strategic Framework 2022–31, under which Blue Transformation sits, is built on the 'Four Betters': better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life. (PROVISIONAL KEY)

2026 Which of the following international conventions have not been ratified by India ?

1. Employment Policy Convention
2. Abolition of Forced Labour Convention
3. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
4. Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War
5. Convention on Reduction of Statelessness

Select the answer using the code given below :

a 2 and 4 | b 1 and 2 | c 3 and 4 only | d 3, 4 and 5

Dropped by UPSC. India has not ratified the 1990 Migrant Workers Convention or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness but has ratified ILO C122, ILO C105 and the Fourth Geneva Convention, so the correct set (3 and 5) is not among the options.

2026 Consider the following UN organisations/agencies :

1. World Food Programme
2. United Nations Children's Fund
3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
4. International Labour Organisation

How many of the above has/have been awarded the Nobel Prize twice ?

a 1 | b 2 | c 3 | d 4

Answer: (a). Only UNHCR has won the Nobel Peace Prize twice (1954, 1981); WFP (2020), UNICEF (1965) and ILO (1969) have won it once each. (PROVISIONAL KEY)

2026 Match List I with List II and select the answer using the code given below the Lists :

List I (UN Peacekeeping Operation)

A. UNMIL
B. MINURCAT
C. MINUSTAH
D. UNMISET

List II (Period of Operation)

1. 2007 – 2010
2. 2002 – 2005
3. 2003 – 2018
4. 2004 – 2017

a A-3, B-4, C-1, D-2
b A-3, B-1, C-4, D-2
c A-2, B-1, C-4, D-3
d A-2, B-4, C-1, D-3

Answer: (b). UNMIL (Liberia) ran 2003–2018, MINURCAT (Central African Republic and Chad) 2007–2010, MINUSTAH (Haiti) 2004–2017 and UNMISET (Timor-Leste) 2002–2005. (PROVISIONAL KEY)

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2025 Consider the following pairs :

I. International Year of the Woman Farmer : 2026
II. International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism : 2027
III. International Year of Peace and Trust : 2025
IV. International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence : 2029

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

a Only one | b Only two | c Only three | **d All the four**

Answer: (d). The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2025 Peace and Trust, 2026 the Woman Farmer, 2027 Sustainable and Resilient Tourism and 2029 Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence.

2023 Consider the following statements :

1. Recently, all the countries of the United Nations have adopted the first-ever compact for international migration, the 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)'.
2. The objectives and commitments stated in the GCM are binding on the UN member countries.
3. The GCM addresses internal migration or internally displaced people also in its objectives and commitments.

How many of the above statements are correct?

a Only one | b Only two | c All three | **d None**

Answer: (d). The GCM (2018) was endorsed by most but not all UN members, is legally non-binding and covers only international migration, not internal displacement.

2022 With reference to the "United Nations Credentials Committee", consider the following statements :

1. It is a committee set up by the UN Security Council and works under its supervision.
2. It traditionally meets in March, June and September every year.
3. It assesses the credentials of all UN members before submitting a report to the General Assembly for approval.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

a 3 only | b 1 and 3 | c 2 and 3 | d 1 and 2

Answer: (a). The nine-member Credentials Committee is appointed by the General Assembly (not the Security Council) at the start of each regular session and reports to the GA on the credentials of member States' representatives.

2022 With reference to the United Nations General Assembly, consider the following statements :

1. The UN General Assembly can grant observer status to the non-member States.
2. Inter-governmental organisations can seek observer status in the UN General Assembly.
3. Permanent Observers in the UN General Assembly can maintain missions at the UN headquarters.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

a 1 and 2 only | b 2 and 3 only | c 1 and 3 only | **d 1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d). The GA grants observer status to non-member States (e.g. Holy See, Palestine) and to inter-governmental organisations, and permanent observers maintain missions in New York.

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2022 With reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea, consider the following statements :
1. A coastal state has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baseline determined in accordance with the convention.
2. Ships of all states, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea.
3. The Exclusive Economic Zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.
Which of the statements given above are correct ?

a 1 and 2 only | b 2 and 3 only | c 1 and 3 only | **d 1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d). UNCLOS Articles 3, 17 and 57 respectively provide for a territorial sea of up to 12 nm, innocent passage for ships of all States and an EEZ not beyond 200 nm.

2020 Consider the following pairs :
International agreement / set-up : Subject
1. Alma-Ata Declaration : Healthcare of the people
2. Hague Convention : Biological and chemical weapons
3. Talanoa Dialogue : Global climate change
4. Under2 Coalition : Child rights
Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched ?

a 1 and 2 only | b 4 only | **c 1 and 3 only** | d 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: (c). Alma-Ata (1978) was on primary health care and the Talanoa Dialogue on climate ambition under the UNFCCC; the Hague Conventions deal with laws of war/private international law and the Under2 Coalition is a subnational climate network.

2018 International Labour Organization's Conventions 138 and 182 are related to

a Child labour
b Adaptation of agricultural practices to global climate change
c Regulation of food prices and food security
d Gender parity at the workplace

Answer: (a). ILO Convention 138 sets the minimum age for employment and Convention 182 targets the worst forms of child labour; India ratified both in 2017.

2018 In the Indian context, what is the implication of ratifying the 'Additional Protocol' with the 'International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)' ?

a The civilian nuclear reactors come under IAEA safeguards.
b The military nuclear installations come under the inspection of IAEA.
c The country will have the privilege to buy uranium from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

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d The country automatically becomes a member of the NSG.

Answer: (a). India's Additional Protocol (in force 2014) applies to civilian facilities placed under IAEA safeguards; military facilities stay outside.

2015 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action', often seen in the news, is

a a strategy to tackle the regional terrorism, an outcome of a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

b a plan of action for sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific Region, an outcome of the deliberations of the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum

c an agenda for women's empowerment, an outcome of a World Conference convened by the United Nations

d a strategy to combat wildlife trafficking, a declaration of the East Asia Summit

Answer: (c). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) as an agenda for women's empowerment.

2011 Consider the following:
1. Right to education.
2. Right to equal access to public service.
3. Right to food.
Which of the above is/are Human Right/Human Rights under "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"?

a 1 only | b 1 and 2 only | c 3 only | d 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d). The UDHR covers education (Art. 26), equal access to public service (Art. 21) and food as part of an adequate standard of living (Art. 25), so all three are listed.

2010 With reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, consider the following:
1. The Right to Development
2. The Right to Expression
3. The Right to Recreation
Which of the above is/are the Rights of the child?

a 1 only | b 1 and 3 only | c 2 and 3 only | d 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d). The UNCRC recognises the child's rights to development, to expression and to rest, leisure and recreation.

2009 With reference to the United Nations, consider the following statements :
1. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of UN consists of 24 member States.
2. It is elected by a ⅔rd majority of the General Assembly for a 3-year term.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

a 1 only | b 2 only | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). ECOSOC has 54 members, not 24, elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms.

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2009 The Security Council of UN consists of 5 permanent members, and the remaining 10 members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of

a 1 year | b 2 years | c 3 years | d 5 years

Answer: (b). The ten non-permanent members of the UN Security Council are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.

2008 Match List-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the code given below the Lists:
List-I (Person)
A. Nagender Singh
B. A. N. Ray
C. R. K. Trivedi
D. Ashok Desai
List-II (Position)
1. Chief Election Commissioner of India
2. President, International Court of Justice
3. Chief Justice of India
4. Attorney General of India
Code:

a A-1 B-4 C-2 D-3 | b A-2 B-3 C-1 D-4 | c A-1 B-3 C-2 D-4 | d A-2 B-4 C-1 D-3

Answer: (b). Nagendra Singh was President of the International Court of Justice (1985-88), A. N. Ray a Chief Justice of India, R. K. Trivedi a Chief Election Commissioner and Ashok Desai an Attorney General.

2007 Match List-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:
List-I (Person)
A. Nancy Pelosi
B. Margaret Chan
C. Pascal Lamy
D. Steve Ballmer
List-II (Position/Organization)
1. WTO
2. Speaker, US House of Representatives
3. WHO
4. Microsoft
Codes:

a A-2 B-1 C-3 D-4 | b A-3 B-1 C-2 D-4 | c A-2 B-3 C-1 D-4 | d A-4 B-1 C-3 D-2

Answer: (c). Nancy Pelosi became Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Margaret Chan headed the WHO, Pascal Lamy the WTO and Steve Ballmer Microsoft.

2006 Consider the following statements:
1. Kofi Annan – the UN Secretary-General is from Nigeria.
2. Kofi Annan is the first UN Secretary-General to be appointed from the ranks of the United Nations staff.

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3. Kofi Annan was appointed for a second term to the office of the UN Secretary-General.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

a 1, 2 and 3 | b 1 and 2 only | c 2 and 3 only | d 1 and 3 only

Answer: (c). Kofi Annan was from Ghana, not Nigeria; he was the first Secretary-General from the UN's own staff and served two terms.

2005 Consider the following statements:
1. The Charter of the United Nations Organization was adopted at Geneva, Switzerland in June, 1945.
2. India was admitted to the United Nations Organization in the year 1945.
3. The Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization was established to manage the affairs of territories detached from Japan and Italy after the Second World War or such territories not under the control of a country at that time.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1, 2 and 3 | b 2 only | c 2 and 3 | d 3 only

Answer: (c). The Charter was signed at San Francisco, not Geneva, while India was an original member in 1945 and the Trusteeship Council supervised territories including those detached from Japan and Italy, so statements 2 and 3 are correct.

2004 Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below:
List I (Agency)
(A) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
(B) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
(C) United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
(D) Universal Postal Union (UPU)
List II (Headquarters)
1. Nairobi
2. Vienna
3. Berne
4. New York
Codes:

a A-2 B-3 C-4 D-1 | b A-4 B-1 C-2 D-3 | c A-2 B-1 C-4 D-3 | d A-4 B-3 C-2 D-1

Answer: (b). UNDP is headquartered in New York, UNEP in Nairobi, UNIDO in Vienna and the Universal Postal Union in Berne.

2002 Match List I (Organisation) with List II (Headquarters) and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists:
List I (Organisation)
A. International Atomic Energy Agency
B. International Telecommunication Union
C. Council of the European Union
D. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
List II (Headquarters)
1. Brussels
2. Geneva
3. Paris

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4. Vienna

Codes: A B C D

a 1 2 4 3	b 1 3 4 2	c 1 3 4 2	d 4 2 1 3

Answer: (d). The IAEA sits in Vienna, the ITU in Geneva, the Council of the EU in Brussels and the OECD in Paris.

2001

Consider the following organisations:

I. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

II. International Finance Corporation

III. International Fund for Agricultural Development

IV. International Monetary Fund

Which of these are agencies of the United Nations?

a I and II	b II and III	c III and IV	d I, II, III and IV

Answer: (d). The IBRD and IFC (World Bank Group), IFAD and the IMF all have specialized-agency agreements with the UN. *Disputed key: One key gives (b), but the IBRD, IFC, IFAD and IMF are all UN specialized agencies, which supports (d).*

1998

What are the official languages of the U.N.O.?

a English, French and Russian

b English, French, German and Russian

c English, French, Russian, Chinese and Hindi

d English, French, Chinese, Russian, Arabian and Spanish

Answer: (d). The UN has six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

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