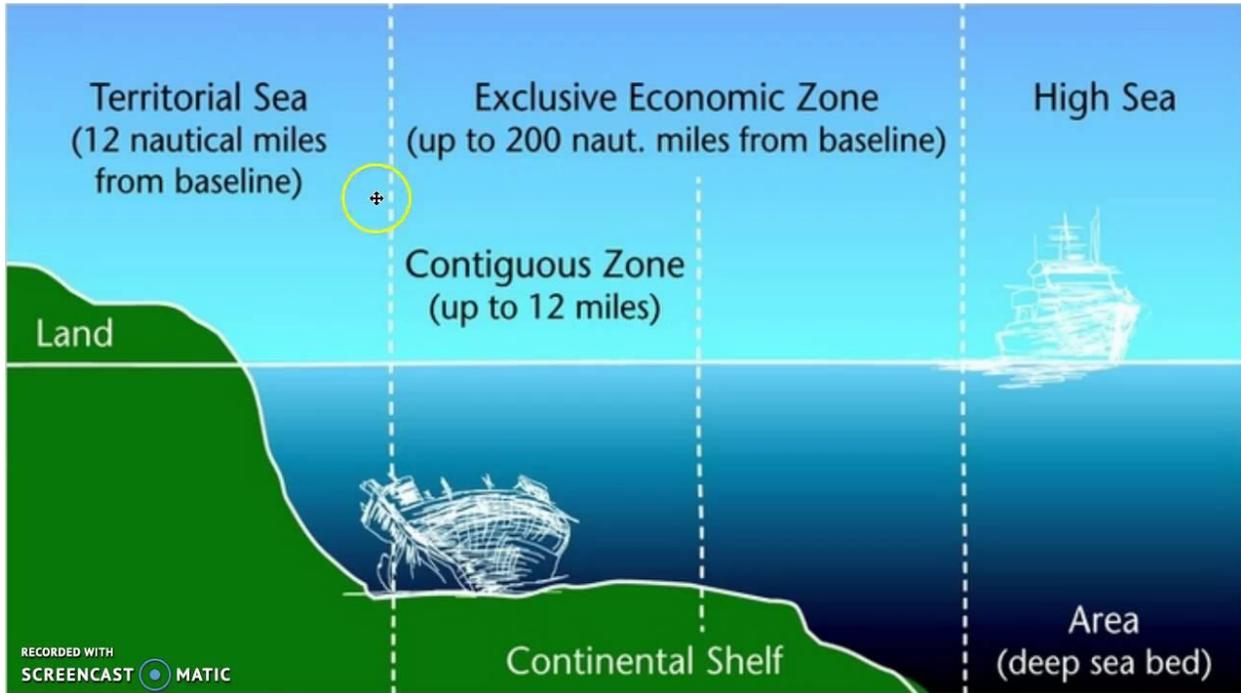


# 1. Convention on High Seas

Topic: International Affairs



**In News:** The U.N. member states failed to finalize a legally binding tool for the conservation and sustainable use of marine Biological diversity in areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). The IGC-4 is convened under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

## More on the Topic:

- The high seas come under the jurisdiction of no one, and there is no comprehensive agreed framework governing resource exploitation or conservation there.
- The intergovernmental conference aimed to unify states globally to take responsibility for international waters in an equitable way that preserves fish stocks and other shared resources for future generations.

## About BBNJ Treaty:

- The "BBNJ Treaty," also known as the "Treaty of the High Seas," is a United Nations-sponsored **international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.**
- BBNJ includes the high seas beyond a country's exclusive economic zone or national waters.
- The negotiations are centred on a set of elements agreed upon in 2015, namely:
- **Conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity** in areas beyond national jurisdiction, particularly **marine genetic resources together and as a whole**, including questions of benefit-sharing
- **tools for area-based management**, such as marine protected areas
- **Capacity building** and marine technology transfer



- Environmental impact assessments

#### **Significance of Legally Binding Treaty on BBNJ:**

- Areas beyond national jurisdiction cover **95 percent of the ocean** and give vital ecological, economic, social, cultural, scientific, and food-security benefits to humanity.
- The high seas are very biodiverse, and they have been **overexploited without knowing the consequences.**
- High seas face **threats such as pollution, overexploitation, and the already visible impacts of climate change.**
- Many marine organisms are facing **threat of extinction.**

#### **About United Nations Convention on the Laws of the seas:**

- UNCLOS is also known as the Law of the Sea Convention or the Law of the Sea Treaty that defines the **rights and responsibilities of nations towards the use of the world's oceans.**
- Also known as Law of the Sea, it divides marine areas into five main zones namely- **Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.**
- UNCLOS is the only international convention which stipulates a framework for state jurisdiction in maritime spaces.
- It provides a different legal status to different maritime zones.

#### **The Convention has created three new institutions on the international scene:**

- **The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea:** It is an independent judicial body that adjudicates disputes arising out of the convention.
- **The International Seabed Authority:** It was formed in 1994 for regulating the exploration and exploitation of marine non-living resources of oceans in international waters.
- **The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf:** CLCS is responsible for facilitating the implementation of UNCLOS with respect to the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

Source: The Hindu

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## **2. Innovations for Defence Excellence**

**Topic: Governance**



**In News:** The Defence Acquisition Council for the first time has cleared the procurement of items worth Rs 380.43 crore from Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) start-ups and MSMEs.

**More on the Topic:**

- The iDEX initiative was launched in 2018.
- iDEX aims to achieve self - reliance and foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace.
- It engages Industries including MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia.
- iDEX has partnered with leading incubators in the country to provide handholding, technical support and guidance to the winners of iDEX challenges.
- iDEX is funded and managed by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, and functions as the executive arm of DIO.
- DIO is a 'not for profit' company registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013.

**About India's Defence Sector:**

- India is the **second largest importer in defence procurement in the world** after Saudi Arabia.
- India is **gradually moving toward indigenisation in the defence sector**, it is only now that India has got its own indigenous aircraft, Tejas.
- Indian Navy has very **serious capability gaps**; as per the Maritime Capability Perspective Plan by 2027, India ought to have about 200 ships but there is still a lot to cover to reach the target.
- However, the navy ensures that it has state of the art SONARs and Radars. Also, many of the ships contain a high amount of indigenous content.

**Source: Business Today**

### 3. Article 355

#### Topic: Polity and Governance

**In News:** Opposition parties at Bengal is demanding to invoke Article 355 owing to violence in the state.

#### More on the Topic:

- Article 355 of the Constitution

deals with an emergency provision by which the Centre can intervene and protect a state **against external aggression or internal disturbance.**

- Over the period, this article has gained a different texture. There are several angles to the second part of this duty – to ensure that **Government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of Constitution.**
- First is **the law & order angle.** We know that the “public order” and “police” are state subject and states have exclusive power to legislate on these matters.
- These subjects were entrusted to states because states would be in better position to handle any law and order problem.
- Management of Police by states was also seen as administratively convenient and efficient.
- However, there might be some circumstances where **states are unable to maintain public order and protect people.**
- In such situation, **center can invoke article 355 and take measures such as taking law and order of state under its own hand, deployment of military etc.** This article thus comes handy when there are communal violence incidents.
- **Second angle is alleged justification of emergency.** Although this article has been seldom used; it is seen as an instrument to justify imposition of emergency under articles 352 and 356.
- Here, we need to pay attention to two words viz. **“internal disturbance” and “armed rebellion”.**
- While article 352 empowers the centre to impose emergency when an armed rebellion occurs, such proclamation cannot be for internal disturbance – thus said SC in SR Bommai Case.
- So, Supreme Court interpretation was that article 355 itself does not give power to centre to impose emergency because mere internal disturbance short of armed rebellion cannot justify a proclamation of emergency under Art. 352 nor can such

Part 18 of Indian constitution talks about emergency, (Article 352 to 360)

- Article 352- National Emergency
- Article 356- State emergency
- Article 360- Financial Emergency

disturbance justify issuance of proclamation under Art. 356, unless it disables or prevents carrying on of the Government of the State in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

- On the basis of this, **the constitutional validity of AFSPA was upheld** which allows the centre to send armed forces in disturbed area.
- Court observed that this law was enacted in order to enable the Union to discharge the obligation imposed on it under Art. 355.
- Further, **Sarkaria Commission also expressed view that article 355 not only imposes duty on the Union but also grants it**, by necessary implication, the power of doing all such acts and employing such means as are reasonably necessary for the effective performance of that duty.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 4. The Export Preparedness Index

**Topic: Economy**

**In News:** NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the Institute of Competitiveness, will release the second edition of the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021.

**More on the Topic:**

- The release of the second edition of the index demonstrates the **Government's continued commitment towards promoting competitive federalism** wherein each state can identify their export opportunities and challenges and subsequently establish context-specific strategies for ensuring a conducive export ecosystem.
- The Export Preparedness Index ranks all States and Union Territories (UTs) on the basis of their export readiness and performance.
- EPI 2021 is based on **four main pillars: policy; business ecosystem; export ecosystem; and export performance.**
- The index can be used by States and UTs to benchmark their performance against their peers and analyze the potential challenges to develop better policy mechanisms to foster export-led growth at the subnational level.

**Source: PIB**

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## 5. Minamata Convention

### Topic: Environment and Ecology

**In News:** The Government of Indonesia as well as the United Nations have sought support and commitment from parties to the Minamata Convention for a Bali Declaration on combatting Global Illegal Trade of Mercury.



### More on the Topic:

- The issue is being discussed at the second round of the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-4.2).
- The meeting is being held in-person in Bali, with online participation.
- The Minamata Convention on Mercury is the most recent global agreement on environment and health. It was adopted in 2013 and entered into force August 16, 2017.
- IUCN reported that Globally, 10-20 million people work in the artisanal and gold mining (ASGM sector) and many of them use mercury on a daily basis.
- As a result, nearly 850 tonnes of mercury was being released into the air in 2015 by ASGM alone, making the sector the largest contributor to anthropogenic mercury emissions.

### About Mercury Pollution:

- Mercury is a **naturally occurring element** that is found in air, water and soil.
- Even small amounts of Exposure to mercury may cause serious health problems, and is a threat to the development of the child in utero and early in life.
- Mercury is considered by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as one of the top ten chemicals or groups of chemicals of major public health concern.
- **Minamata disease** is a methylmercury poisoning with neurological symptoms and caused by the daily consumption of large quantities of fish and shellfish that were heavily contaminated with mercury generated in chemical factories and then discharged into the sea.

**Source: Hindu**

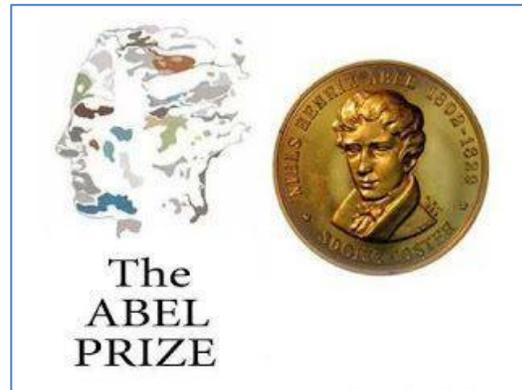
## 6. Abel Prize

### Topic: Awards and Recognitions

**In News:** US mathematician Dennis Sullivan has won Abel Prize in mathematics, for his contributions to topology; the study of qualitative properties of shapes and related fields. **More on the Topic:**

- The Abel Prize is a prize awarded annually by the King of Norway to one or more outstanding mathematicians. It is named after Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel and directly modeled after the Nobel Prizes. It comes with a monetary award of 7.5 million Norwegian kroner.
- Since it was first awarded in 2003, the Abel Prize has come to represent a lifetime achievement award.

**Source:** Hindu



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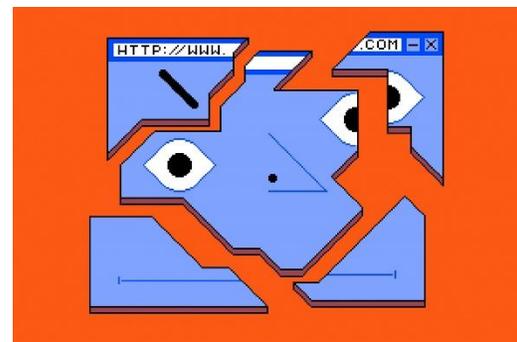
## 7. Splinternet

### Topic: Science and Technology

**In News:** Russia's war on Ukraine is bringing on the arrival of the "splinternet."

#### More on the Topic:

- Splinternet is described as "parallel internets that would be run as distinct, private, and autonomous universes."
- The splinternet (also referred to as cyber-balkanization or internet balkanization) is a characterization of the Internet as





splintering and dividing due to various factors, such as technology, commerce, politics, nationalism, religion, and divergent national interests.

- In this **internet is controlled by autonomous political blocs or any other controlling power** such as tech or e-commerce companies, or countries with diverging national interests tied to nationalism or religion.
- Example: The Chinese government erected the **"Great Firewall"** for political reasons, and Russia has enacted the **Sovereign Internet Law that allows it to partition itself from the rest of the Internet.**

**Concerns:**

- The splinternet's biggest impact is in **limiting access to information.**
- For instance, in partially complying with the government's 2021 blocking order, Twitter stopped some accounts from being visible within India.
- Rules and policies also lead to rise in costs of businesses, and may force some to move out of the country altogether.
- India has also gone after encryption protocols used by apps like WhatsApp in the past, which can potentially impact user's privacy and increase government surveillance.

**Source: Hindu**

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