

NEWS TODAY

INDIA GETS ELECTED AS NON-PERMANENT MEMBER OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC) FOR 8TH TERM

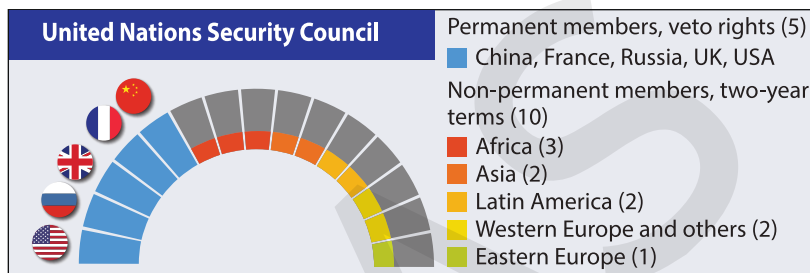
- India begins its **two year term in January 2021** as a non-permanent member (India's last term: 2011-2012).
 - India secured 184 out of 192 votes (requirement: two-thirds majority).
 - India was the sole candidate from Asia-Pacific category** and will join **Vietnam**, second member from Asia-Pacific.
 - ➔ **Mexico, Norway and Ireland were also elected** as non-permanent members.
 - Election is held by secret ballot** and there are no nominations.

India's priorities for this tenure:

- Overall objective of Achievement of **NORMS- New Orientation for a Reformed Multilateral System**
 - Promote multilateral solutions for COVID-19 crisis,
 - Enhance global action against terrorism,
 - Transparency in mandates for UN peacekeeping missions etc.

UNSC is one of 6 main organs of UN with primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

- UNSC consists of **five permanent members** (China, France, Russia, UK and USA) and 10 non-permanent members elected by General Assembly for a term of two years.
 - ➔ Each year five non-permanent members are elected.
- While other organs of UN make recommendations to member states, only **UNSC has the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under UN Charter.**



INDIA CONSIDERS WAYS TO BOOST TRANS-SHIPMENT

- Under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', Ministry of Shipping is planning to develop a port as a trans-shipment hub **to cut India's dependence on overseas hubs** to send and receive container cargo.
 - Of the total container volumes handled at Indian ports in FY19, **25% were transhipped in foreign hubs such as Colombo, Singapore etc.**
 - India has two trans-shipment ports, **Vallarpadam port in Cochin and Vizhinjam port in Trivandrum**. Proposed Enayam port is third major trans-shipment port.
- A trans-shipment terminal act like a hub, **into which smaller feeder vessels bring cargo that then gets loaded onto larger ships** for transportation to final destinations.
 - It is a port that has **connections to origin and destination.**
 - Larger vessels bring about **economies of scale and lower the cost of operations** like lower freight rates for exporters and importers.
- Challenges for India in becoming a trans-shipment hub:**
 - Indian port **tariffs are too high**. Shipping lines are additionally charged for extensive dredging.
 - India has a few deep-draught ports** which is necessary for large container ships to berth and move containers.
 - Lack of necessary infrastructure capabilities** to handle the latest generation ships.

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI PROPOSES NEW MECHANISM FOR FINANCE COMMISSION (FC) GRANTS TO LOCAL BODIES

- Currently, FC grants for urban local bodies (ULBs) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) **come under Finance Ministry**.
 - These are **released to state governments** which is credited by to their respective rural and urban local bodies.
- However, Ministry of Jal Shakti now has proposed a new mechanism to be placed with three different ministries as follows:
 - 50% of the FC Grants to PRIs for **water supply & sanitation** to be placed with **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
 - Remaining 50% of Grants to PRIs should be placed with **Ministry of Panchayati Raj based on Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)**.
 - ➔ GPDP are prepared by the Gram Panchayats to achieve economic development and social justice.
 - FC Grants to ULBs be placed with **Ministry of Housing & Urban Development**.
- FC-15 had **recommended a Rs 90,000-crore grant for local bodies in 2020-21**.
 - Of this, Rs 29,250 crore is for ULBs and Rs 60,750 crore is for PRIs.
 - Grant for PRIs is further bifurcated as** 50% basic or untied grant, and 50% tied grant (for sanitation and maintenance of ODF status; and supply of drinking water, rain water harvesting and water recycling)

PM LAUNCHES AUCTION PROCESS OF 41 COAL BLOCKS FOR COMMERCIAL MINING

- Coal mines being auctioned are located in **Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha**.
- Commercialisation of coal** was announced as part of the announcements in the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan.
 - Commercial mining allows the private sector to mine coal commercially **without placing any end-use restrictions** i.e. private companies can use it in their own end-use plants or sell them in the markets.
 - In 2019, decision was taken to **offer coal mines to private companies 'only for commercial mining and sale purpose'**, moving away from the **earlier regime of offering mines for captive use**.
 - ➔ Under captive use model, private sector firms were only allowed to mine coal for use in their cement, steel, power and aluminium plants i.e. for their own use.
 - ➔ **Only state-owned Coal India limited** was allowed to sell coal.
- Expected benefits of commercial coal mining**
 - End reliance on imports and improve local production.
 - ➔ Presently, **India is second largest coal importer** despite having world's fourth largest coal reserve and being second largest producer.
 - Attract many private sector firms hence enhancing competition, capital, technology etc.
 - Create employment opportunities especially in eastern and central India.

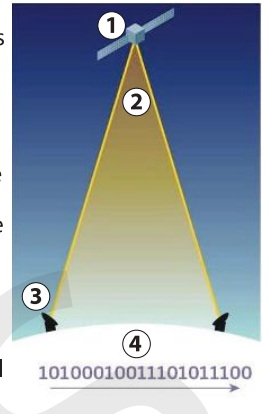
CHINA'S QUANTUM SATELLITE, MICIUS ENABLES FIRST TOTALLY SECURE LONG-RANGE MESSAGES

- Micius is **world's first quantum-enabled satellite**, launched by China in 2016.
 - It is also known as the **Quantum Experiments at Space Scale (QUESS)** which is Chinese research project in the field of quantum physics.
- This breakthrough was achieved by Micius using **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)**.
 - QKD is a technique that allows for secure distribution of keys to be **used for encrypting and decrypting messages**.
 - **In traditional cryptography**, where the security is usually based on the fact that an adversary is unable to solve a certain mathematical problem
 - Whereas in QKD achieves security through the **laws of quantum physics i.e. superposition and entanglement**.
 - **Superposition** means that each qubit can represent both a 1 and a 0 at the same time.
 - **In quantum entanglement**, subatomic particles become inextricably linked or "entangled" in such a way that any change in one disturbs the other even if both are at opposite ends of the universe.
 - Quantum Satellite serves as **source of pairs of entangled photons, twinned light particles** whose properties remain intertwined no matter how far apart they are.
 - This means any attempt at hacking entangled particles would be impossible.

Eavesdroppers thwarted

Quantum key distribution allows users to agree on a way of transmitting their data without the worry that someone is listening in

- 1 Sender instructs satellite to generate 2 entangled photons of particular quantum states
- 2 Photons are beamed to both ground stations
- 3 Sender and receiver compare the quantum states of the photons to check if they have been intercepted. If not they use the photons to create a code to encrypt the data
- 4 Encrypted data can then be sent securely via conventional means



ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be launched on 20th June to boost livelihood opportunities in Rural India. • It is rural public works scheme to empower and provide livelihood opportunities to returnee migrant workers and rural citizens. • This campaign of 125 days, will involve implementation of 25 different types of works to provide employment to migrant workers and create infrastructure in rural regions, with resource envelope of Rs. 50,000 crores. • It will be a coordinated effort between 12 different Ministries/Departments.
<p>Imported tyres now in restricted list</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has restricted imports of tyres used for cars, buses, lorries and motorcycles, in a move aimed at curbing imports and boosting domestic companies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Out of the total tyre imports, 75% in value terms will now come under the categories included in the restricted list. • This is aimed at curbing imports and boosting domestic companies. • Any goods under restricted category means an importer would now require a licence or permission from Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for imports.
<p>Asian Development Outlook (ADO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian Development Bank released its supplement to ADO. • Key highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ India's economy is forecast to contract by 4% in Fy 2020-21, while grow 5% in 2021-22. ➤ Developing Asia's forecasted growth is 0.1% in 2020, slowest since 1961. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 'Developing Asia' refers to a group of over 40 countries that are members of ADB. • ADB is a regional development bank established in 1966 headquartered in Manila, Philippines. • Top 5 shareholders: Japan (15.6%), USA (15.6%), China (6.4%), India (6.3%) and Australia (5.8%).
<p>I-Lab (Infectious disease diagnostic lab)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is India's first mobile testing laboratory which is a part of Aatmnirbhar Bharat. • It will be deployed in remote, interior and inaccessible parts of the country. It can perform 25 Covid-19 RT-PCR tests per day, 300 ELISA tests per day and additional tests for TB and HIV. • I-LAB is supported by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology.
<p>Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, Supreme Court has stayed annual Rath Yatra at Puri's Jagannath Temple in Odisha in the wake of the coronavirus pademic. The yatra was scheduled to be held on June 23. • Rath Yatra marks the annual ceremonial procession of Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Balabhadra and younger sister Subhadra, from their home temple to another temple, located in what is believed to be their aunt's home. • Jagannath temple was sculpted by Anantavarman Chodaganga, a ruler of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, in 11th Century.
<p>Megalithic culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent Kodumanal Excavation in Tamil Nadu throws light on burial rituals and the concept of afterlife in megalithic culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is revealed that this site served as a trade-cum-industrial centre from 5th century BCE to 1st century BCE. • Megalith is a great structure built on large-size stone. They served the funerary or cult purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This type of structures are found mainly in Neolithic age. ➤ This practice was prevalent throughout the Deccan, south India, in the north-east and Kashmir.

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