



KERALA STATE CIVIL SERVICE ACADEMY



Established under Centre for Continuing Education Kerala (CCEK)

July 05 to July 11, 2025

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE



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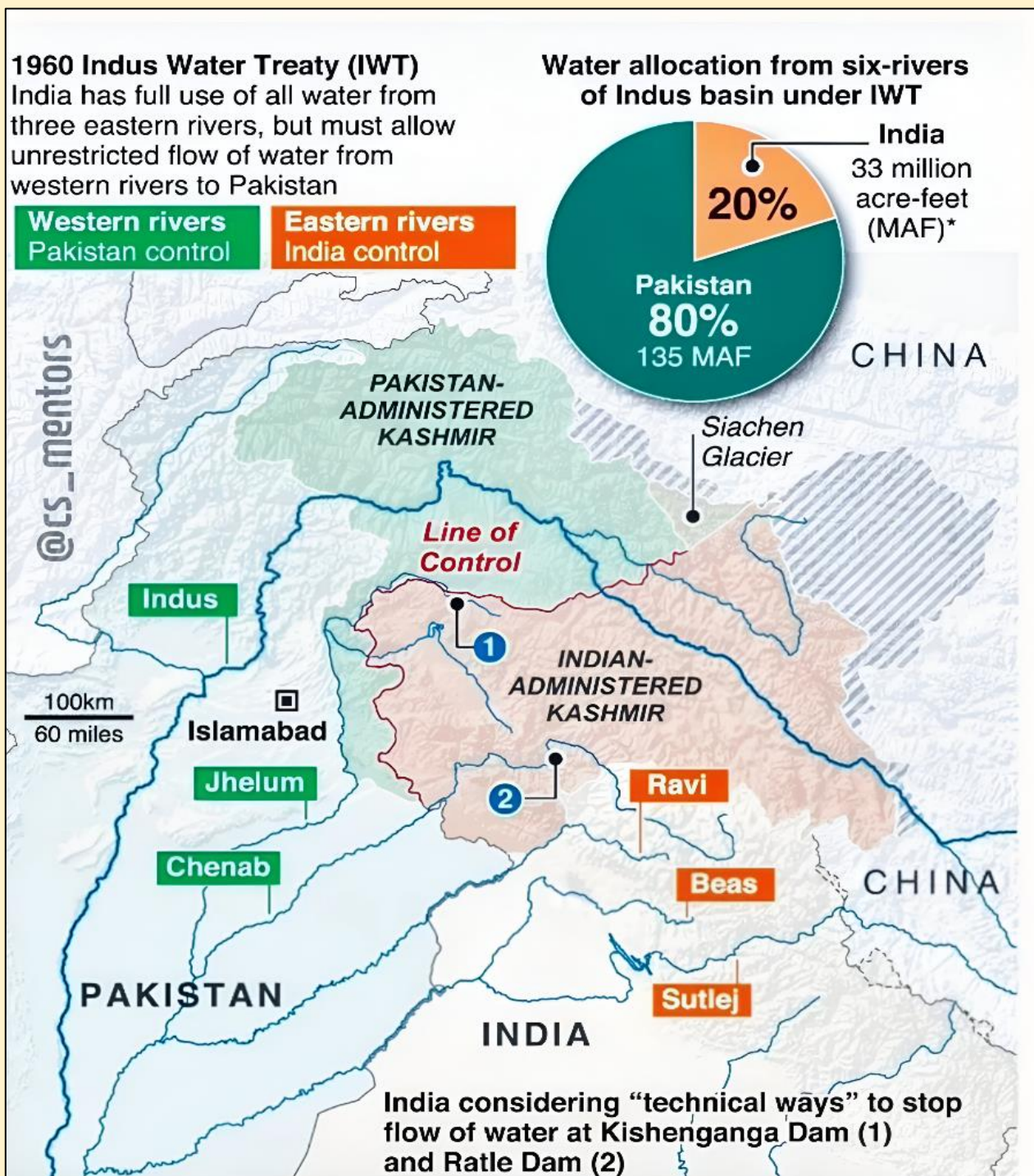
Monthly Current Affairs Magazine

INDUS WATERS TREATY (IWT)

Rethinking the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in the context of geopolitics, climate change, and India's national interest.

Why IWT Needs Rethinking:

- The **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)** was signed during a time of **new geopolitical realities** post-Partition.
- Pakistan's location as a lower riparian state made it vulnerable, prompting a Western-brokered agreement.
- The treaty was **never a simple water-sharing agreement** but a product of Cold War-era geopolitics involving the World Bank and Western powers.



Climate Change & Hydrological Impact:

- Climate change is a **critical factor**: altering glacier melt, river flows, and storage needs.
- The treaty does **not account for changing water availability** or **extreme weather events**.
- India's need for more **storage capacity** and **hydropower** must be factored into a renegotiation.

Asymmetry in the Treaty:

- Pakistan, as the lower riparian, has **veto power** over Indian projects on the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab).
- India receives **only 20%** of the basin's waters despite contributing significantly to the basin's geography and climate.
- The treaty is **not reciprocal**, giving Pakistan more leverage and delaying Indian hydropower projects.

Strategic Need for Renegotiation:

- India must **assert its rights** and **renegotiate** on terms that reflect present realities.
- A revised treaty should consider:
 - India's **climatic and developmental needs**,
 - China and Bangladesh's influence on other river systems,
 - The **scientific understanding** of the Indus Basin (e.g., glaciology, hydrology).

Learning Corner:

Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- **Signed**: 1960
- **Parties**: India and Pakistan, brokered by the **World Bank**
- **Objective**: Water-sharing of the **Indus River System** between India (upper riparian) and Pakistan (lower riparian)

Key Provisions:

- **Western Rivers** (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab): Allocated to **Pakistan**, with limited use permitted to India (non-consumptive uses like hydropower)
- **Eastern Rivers** (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej): Allocated to **India**
- **Permanent Indus Commission**: Established for cooperation and dispute resolution
- **Dispute Mechanism**: Includes negotiation, neutral expert, and international arbitration

GREAT HORNBILL

A recent sighting of the Great Hornbill in Ezhimala, Kannur (Kerala) has drawn attention to the ecological significance of the region.

Significance of the Great Hornbill

- The **Great Hornbill** (*Buceros bicornis*) is a large bird known for its role as a **seed disperser** and indicator of mature, healthy forests.
- It is classified as **Vulnerable**, with declining populations due to **habitat loss and hunting**.



Why the Ezhimala Sighting Matters

- Ezhimala is not part of the species' typical range, suggesting the presence of **remnant forest patches or ecological corridors**.
- The sighting indicates the region's **biodiversity potential** and highlights opportunities for ecological restoration.

Conservation Imperatives

- **Protect forest fragments** and ecological corridors in Ezhimala and nearby areas.
- Promote **community-based conservation**, including habitat monitoring and restoration.
- Strengthen **wildlife protection laws** and consider expanding protected area networks.
- Use the Great Hornbill as a **flagship species** to raise awareness and inspire conservation action.

Broader Implications

- Highlights the need to curb **deforestation and habitat fragmentation**.
- Emphasizes the value of combining **scientific research, traditional knowledge, and local participation** in conservation.
- Shows that **wildlife recovery is possible** with timely and sustained efforts.

Learning Corner:

Great Hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*)

The **Great Hornbill** is one of the largest and most iconic hornbill species found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.

Key Features:

- **Distinctive casque** (helmet-like structure) on top of its beak.
- Large, colorful bird with black, white, and yellow plumage.
- Known for its **loud calls** and **graceful flight** despite its size.

Habitat:

- Prefers **dense evergreen and moist deciduous forests**.
- Commonly found in the **Western Ghats, Northeast India**, and parts of **Southeast Asia**.

Ecological Role:

- Acts as a **key seed disperser**, aiding in forest regeneration.
- Considered an **indicator species** for healthy, mature forests.

Conservation Status:

- Listed as **Vulnerable** on the IUCN Red List.
- Threatened by:
 - **Habitat loss** due to deforestation
 - **Hunting** for casque and feathers
 - **Loss of nesting trees**

Conservation Efforts:

- Protection under **Schedule I** of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Community-led programs like the **Hornbill Nest Adoption Program** promote habitat preservation and awareness.

17TH BRICS SUMMIT

PM Narendra Modi addressed the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Key Takeaways

- Emphasized that **20th-century institutions** like the **UNSC, WTO, and Multilateral Development Banks** no longer reflect the realities of the **21st century**.
- Urged for a **multipolar and inclusive world order**, with reforms in global institutions to ensure **fair representation**.
- Highlighted that **two-thirds of the global population**, largely from developing nations, remain **underrepresented**.
- Criticized **double standards** and **tokenism** in global commitments on development, climate finance, and technology access.
- Called for reforms that bring **tangible outcomes** – restructuring governance, leadership roles, and voting rights.
- Used analogies like “**SIM card without network**” and “**21st-century software on a 20th-century typewriter**” to stress outdated global systems.
- Welcomed **Indonesia** as a new **BRICS** member and praised Brazil’s leadership in expanding the bloc.
- Reiterated **India’s commitment** to the Global South and working with BRICS to promote **inclusive global cooperation**.
- The summit saw participation from new members such as **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, and Indonesia**, focusing on building a **more just and sustainable world order**.

Learning Corner:

17th BRICS Summit (2025)

- The **17th BRICS Summit** was held in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**, from **July 6–7, 2025**.

Theme:

“Reforming Global Governance for a Multipolar World”

Key Highlights:

- Attended by leaders of **Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa**, and **new members: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, and Indonesia**.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** called for:
 - **Greater representation of the Global South** in global institutions
 - **Urgent reforms** in the **UNSC, WTO**, and **international financial institutions**
 - End to **double standards** in global development, climate finance, and technology access
- Modi emphasized that **20th-century institutions are outdated** for 21st-century challenges.
- Welcomed **Indonesia’s inclusion** and praised **Brazil’s leadership** in driving BRICS expansion.

Summit Outcomes:

- Reaffirmed commitment to **inclusive multilateralism**
- Supported **expansion of BRICS membership**
- Called for **equitable and sustainable global development**
- Emphasized **South-South cooperation** and reforms in **global governance architecture**

Significance:

- Marked a shift toward making BRICS a more **inclusive platform** for the **Global South**.
- Strengthened BRICS’ role in shaping a **more balanced international order**.

BRICS

BRICS is a multilateral grouping of five major emerging economies:

Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. It was established to promote **peace, development, and cooperation** among developing countries and to **reform global governance structures**.

Key Features:

- **Formation:**
Originated as “BRIC” in 2006; South Africa joined in 2010, making it **BRICS**.
- **Purpose:**
 - Promote **economic cooperation** among emerging economies
 - Advocate for a **multipolar world order**
 - Push for **reforms in global institutions** like the UN, IMF, and World Bank
 - Strengthen **South-South cooperation**
- **Core Pillars of Cooperation:**
 1. **Political and Security**
 2. **Economic and Financial**
 3. **Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges**
- **Major Initiatives:**
 1. **New Development Bank (NDB):** Provides funding for infrastructure and development projects

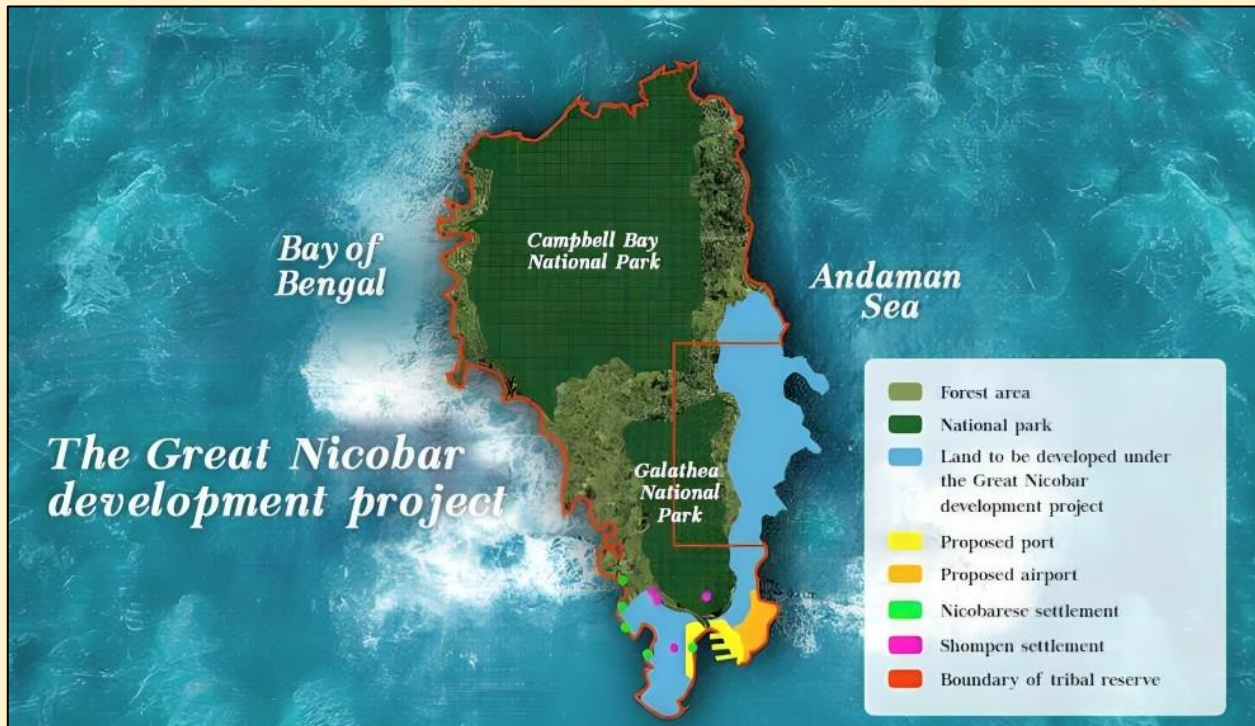
2. **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA):** Supports member countries during financial crises
3. **BRICS Summit:** Annual meeting of leaders to discuss strategic global issues
- **Recent Expansion:**
In 2024–25, BRICS expanded to include **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, and Indonesia**, increasing its global influence.

Significance:

- Represents over **40% of the world population** and nearly **25% of global GDP**.
- Acts as a **voice for the Global South** in shaping a more **balanced and equitable international order**.

GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

The Great Nicobar Island infrastructure project has sparked criticism for inadequately addressing seismic risks in its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), despite the region's vulnerability to major earthquakes.



Key Criticisms:

- **Downplaying Seismic Risk:**
The EIA relies on a limited 2019 study focused mainly on tsunami threats and overlooks broader earthquake hazards, despite the region having a high probability of major quakes.
- **Neglect of Independent Research:**
Independent studies indicate the region is among India's most seismically active, with potential for ground shaking, soil liquefaction, and land subsidence, as witnessed in the 2004 tsunami.
- **Lack of Transparency:**
Critics claim the clearance process was non-transparent and prioritized technical and financial considerations over environmental and safety concerns.

Official Stand:

- The government assures that all construction will follow Indian earthquake-resistant codes and a disaster management plan is in place.
- It downplays the risk of another 2004-scale earthquake in the near future.

Expert Recommendations:

- **Independent Review:**
Experts urge a transparent reassessment by a high-powered committee focused on seismic vulnerability.
- **Regulatory Oversight:**
The National Green Tribunal had imposed a temporary stay, calling for re-evaluation of environmental and coastal regulation clearances.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) :

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process used to evaluate the **potential environmental consequences** of a proposed development project **before it is approved or implemented**. It aims to ensure that decision-makers consider environmental impacts alongside economic and technical factors.

Objectives of EIA:

- Predict environmental impacts at an early stage of project planning
- Propose mitigation measures to reduce adverse impacts
- Promote sustainable development
- Facilitate informed and transparent decision-making

Key Components of an EIA:

1. **Screening** – Determines if a project requires EIA
2. **Scoping** – Identifies the key issues and impacts to be studied
3. **Impact Assessment** – Evaluates potential environmental effects
4. **Public Consultation** – Involves stakeholders in decision-making
5. **Environmental Management Plan (EMP)** – Suggests mitigation strategies
6. **Monitoring and Compliance** – Ensures project follows environmental safeguards

Legal Framework in India:

- Governed by the **Environmental Protection Act, 1986**
- Operationalized through the **EIA Notification, 2006** (amended from time to time)
- Regulated by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** and **State Environmental Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs)**

Great Nicobar Island Project

The **Great Nicobar Island Project** is a mega infrastructure development initiative aimed at strategically transforming the southernmost island of the Andaman & Nicobar archipelago. It has significant **economic, strategic, and environmental implications**.

Key Features:

- **Location:** Great Nicobar Island, located in the Bay of Bengal near the Malacca Strait
- **Project Components:**
 - **International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT)**
 - **Greenfield Airport**
 - **Power Plant**
 - **Township for workers and residents**
- **Implementing Agency:** Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO), with support from the central government.

Strategic Importance:

- Enhances India's maritime presence in the **Indo-Pacific region**
- Aims to **counterbalance Chinese influence** in the Indian Ocean
- Facilitates **secure maritime trade** through proximity to major shipping routes

Environmental Concerns:

- The island is an **ecologically fragile zone**, rich in **biodiversity and tribal heritage**.
- **Criticisms of EIA:** Alleged underestimation of **seismic risks**, lack of transparency, and insufficient consultation.
- Potential impact on **coral reefs, mangroves, tribal communities, and wildlife habitats**.

Current Status:

- Project has received **environmental and coastal regulation clearances**, though challenged by environmentalists and civil society groups
- Subject to **review by the National Green Tribunal (NGT)** for compliance and risk reassessment.

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW)

The **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** held its **23rd Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia** from **1st to 3rd July 2025** in **New Delhi**. The agenda focused on sharing best practices, enhancing cooperation, and addressing challenges in national implementation of the CWC, with the ultimate goal of promoting a world free of chemical weapons.

This platform enabled member states to exchange experiences, coordinate on technical and legislative matters, and reinforce the global commitment to preventing the proliferation and use of chemical weapons.



Learning Corner:

The **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** is an intergovernmental organization established in **1997** to implement the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**. The OPCW's primary mission is to promote and verify the elimination of chemical weapons and prevent their use in warfare.

Key Functions:

- **Verification and Monitoring:** The OPCW conducts inspections of chemical weapons production facilities and ensures compliance with the CWC, promoting global security by preventing the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.
- **Assistance and Cooperation:** It provides technical and legal assistance to member states to help them comply with the CWC's provisions and supports the peaceful use of chemistry.
- **Destruction of Chemical Weapons:** The OPCW oversees the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities.

Significance:

- The OPCW has played a crucial role in the disarmament of chemical weapons, contributing to global peace and security.
- In **2013**, the OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for its efforts in eliminating chemical weapons.

The OPCW currently has over **190 member states**, working towards a world free of chemical weapons.

Major **weapon control regimes** :

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

- **Purpose:** To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and encourage disarmament.
- **Key Provisions:** Non-nuclear states agree not to acquire nuclear weapons, while nuclear-armed states commit to disarmament efforts and share peaceful nuclear technology under safeguards.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

- **Purpose:** To eliminate chemical weapons and prevent their use in warfare.
- **Key Provisions:** Bans the development, production, and use of chemical weapons and mandates the destruction of existing stockpiles. Countries that sign the CWC must declare and dismantle their chemical weapons.

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

- **Purpose:** To prevent the development, production, and stockpiling of biological weapons.
- **Key Provisions:** The BWC prohibits the use and spread of biological weapons and promotes cooperation among states in biodefense and public health.

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

- **Purpose:** To control the export of nuclear materials and technology, ensuring they are used only for peaceful purposes.
- **Key Provisions:** The NSG imposes restrictions on nuclear exports to countries that do not comply with non-proliferation norms or have not signed the NPT, enhancing global nuclear security.

Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

- **Purpose:** To prevent the spread of missile technology that could be used for the delivery of weapons of mass destruction.
- **Key Provisions:** The MTCR limits the export of missile-related technologies and materials, particularly those capable of carrying payloads greater than 500 kg over distances of 300 km.

Australia Group

- **Purpose:** To control the export of materials and technologies used in the development of chemical and biological weapons.
- **Key Provisions:** This multilateral export control regime aims to ensure that sensitive technologies and materials are not diverted to the production of WMDs.

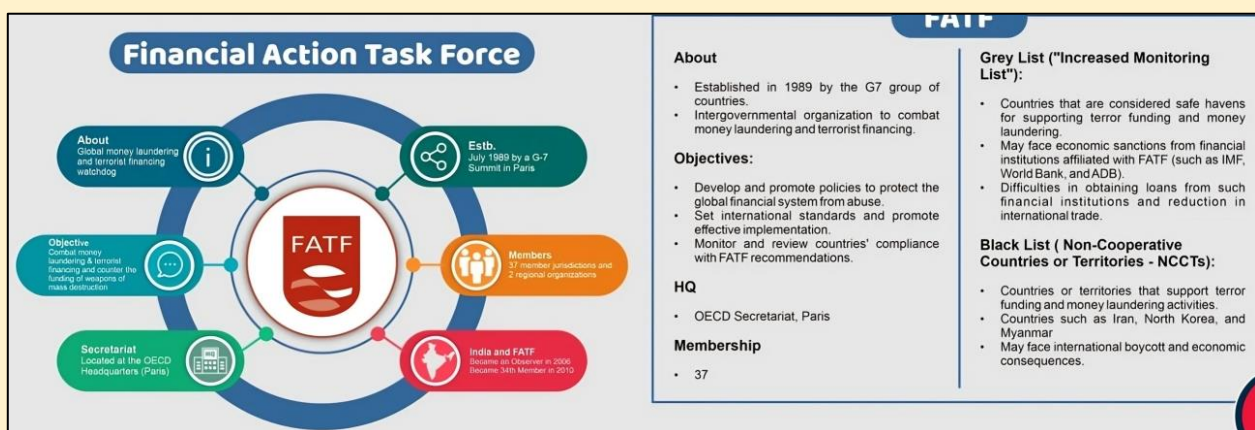
Wassenaar Arrangement

- **Purpose:** To promote transparency and greater responsibility in the transfer of conventional arms and dual-use technologies (those with both civilian and military applications).
- **Key Provisions:** It sets controls on exports of conventional arms, including small arms, and sensitive dual-use goods to prevent their misuse for military aggression or terrorism.

FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF)

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has issued a critical report in 2025 denoting the growing threat posed by the misuse of e-commerce and digital payment platforms for terrorist financing.

This comprehensive update reveals that terror groups are increasingly exploiting online systems to fund operations and evade detection. The report stresses the urgent need for global cooperation and improved detection mechanisms to counter these evolving methods.



Evolution of Terror Financing Methods

Terrorist financing techniques are rapidly changing. Traditional funding like cash smuggling and informal transfers are now supplemented by digital tools.

Online shopping, social media, gaming platforms, and digital wallets are being used to move and launder funds. These methods are tailored to local contexts, making detection harder. Many countries lack the capacity to fully identify and disrupt these activities.

Case Studies – Pulwama and Gorakhnath Attacks

The report cites the 2019 Pulwama attack where explosives were bought via Amazon.

The attackers used e-commerce platforms to procure materials, exposing vulnerabilities in online marketplaces. Another case is the 2022 Gorakhnath Temple attack, where the attacker received ₹6.7 lakh through PayPal.

The attacker used VPNs to conceal transactions. PayPal detected suspicious activity and blocked the account, preventing further misuse.

Misuse of E-Commerce Platforms

E-commerce sites are increasingly exploited for money laundering. Terror groups buy goods online and ship them internationally.

These goods are sold locally to generate clean money. This cycle helps hide the true origin of funds. The FATF warns that without strict oversight, these platforms risk becoming conduits for terror financing.

Challenges in Global Detection and Prevention

The report reveals that 69% of assessed countries fail to effectively investigate or prosecute terror financing. Weak regulatory frameworks and poor data sharing hinder efforts. Terror groups exploit these gaps to sustain operations.

FATF urges enhanced cooperation between governments and private sectors. Sharing data on suspicious payments, travel, and social media activity is critical.

International Support to Terrorist Groups

The report also marks that some terrorist organisations continue to receive direct or indirect backing from certain states. This support includes financial aid, weapons, and training.

FATF calls for global pressure to end such sponsorship, which undermines international peace and security.

Recommendations for Governments and Providers

FATF advises governments to strengthen legal frameworks and enforcement. Digital service providers must implement robust monitoring to detect suspicious transactions.

Developing advanced tools for pattern recognition in payments and online behaviour is essential. Collaboration with international bodies like the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN CTED) is recommended.

NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION

Three out of the four autonomous boards under the National Medical Commission (NMC) – India's apex medical education regulator – have no presidents.

Current Problems:

- **3 out of 4 boards** lack presidents; other members have also resigned or completed their tenure.
- Boards are running in an **ad hoc manner**, stalling inspections, decisions, and curriculum updates.
- **11 of 18 board posts** and 6 part-time posts are vacant.
- Even **virtual inspections** of colleges are being done by **non-technical staff**, leading to concerns over quality assurance.
- Lack of official acceptance of resignations has worsened the leadership vacuum.

Consequences:

- **New medical college inspections** and seat renewals are delayed.
- **Academic changes** (e.g., curriculum updates on LGBTQ+ issues, ethics) are stalled.
- **No full Commission meeting** has happened in nearly a year.
- Students and colleges are affected due to **regulatory inaction**.

National Medical Commission (NMC)

Background:

- **Established:** September 2020
- **By:** National Medical Commission Act, 2019 (replacing the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956).
- **Objective:** To overhaul the medical education system, improve governance, transparency, and eliminate corruption associated with the Medical Council of India (MCI).

Composition of NMC:

- **Chairperson**
- **10 Ex-officio members**
- **22 part-time members**
- **4 autonomous boards (very crucial):**
 1. Undergraduate Medical Education Board (UGMEB)
 2. Postgraduate Medical Education Board (PGMEB)
 3. Medical Assessment and Rating Board (MARB)
 4. Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB).

Each board is headed by a **President** and performs a specialized regulatory function.

Key Functions of NMC:

- Regulate **medical institutions, education, and professionals**.
- Frame **curriculum standards** for undergraduate and postgraduate education.
- Grant permission for establishment of **new medical colleges** and **increase of seats**.
- Maintain **National Register** of licensed medical practitioners.
- Ensure adherence to **ethical codes of conduct**.
- Conduct **National Exit Test (NEXT)** for final-year MBBS students (will serve as a licentiate exam and PG entrance test).
- Promote **evidence-based** medical education and practice.

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Charachira, Kowdiar P.O. Thiruvananthapuram - 695003. Phone: 0471-2313065, 2311654,
Email: directorccek@gmail.com, info.ccek@gmail.com Web : <https://kscca.org>

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For more details contact:

82810 98863

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