

# UPSC Daily Current Affairs 01 Jul 2021

## Israel improving relation with West Asia

(Topic- GS Paper II –IR, Source- The Hindu)

### Why in the news ?

- Recently, Israel’s new Foreign Minister ‘**Yair Lapid**’ visited to the United Arab Emirates was just the start of a road to wider peace in West Asia.
- He is the first Israeli Cabinet Minister to visit the Gulf state since the countries forged ties last year, also reiterated Israel’s concern about the Iran nuclear deal being negotiated in Vienna.

### Recent development between Israel and West Asia

#### Abraham Accords

- Israel, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates signed the Abraham Accord in 2020.

#### About Abraham Accord



- It is the first Arab-Israeli peace deal in 26 years which is mediated by the United States.
- Egypt was the first Arab State to sign a peace deal with Israel in 1979 and Jordan signed a peace pact in 1994.
- As per the agreements, the UAE and Bahrain will establish embassies, exchange ambassadors, cooperate and work together with Israel across a range of sectors, including tourism, trade, healthcare and security.
- It would open the door for Muslims around the world to visit the historic sites in Israel and to peacefully pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, **the third holiest site in Islam.**

#### Palestine Issue

- The agreements leave the Palestinian question largely unaddressed.

- With Arab countries signing diplomatic agreements with Israel bilaterally, the 2003 Arab collective support for the Palestinian movement for nationhood is crumbling.
- The Arab initiative calls for normalizing relations between the Arab world and Israel, in exchange for a full withdrawal by Israel from the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state.
- But it does not mean that the Palestinian question would fade away.

### **Non-Arab Muslim Powers**

- The vacuum left by the retreat of the Arab powers from the Israel-Palestine conflict is being filled by the non-Arab Muslim powers Iran, Turkey and their allies.
- The geopolitical sands may be shifting but the core issue concerning Israel is unresolved.
- **The UAE-Bahrain** agreements are in fact endorsing the region's emerging order.
- With the U.S. in retreat and Turkey and Iran pursuing more aggressive foreign policies, there is a three-way contest taking shape.
- In this contest Sunni-ruled Arab kingdoms, all American allies, are realigning their geopolitical interests with Israel.
- The Abraham Accords are likely to sharpen this contest

### **U.S. involved in UK Russia standoff in Black sea**

**(Topic- GS Paper II –IR, Source- The Hindu)**

#### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused Washington of involvement in an incident involving a British destroyer off the coast of Moscow-annexed Crimea.

#### **Background**



- Recently, Russia accused Britain of spreading lies over a warship confrontation in the Black Sea and warned London that it would respond resolutely to any further provocative actions by the British Navy off the coast of Russia-annexed Crimea.

#### **Western countries opinion**

- Western countries deem the Crimea to be part of Ukraine and reject Russia's claim to the seas around it.

## Crimea Profile

- Under Greek and Roman influence for centuries, in 1443 Crimea became the centre of a Tatar Khanate, which later fell under Ottoman control.
- Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire during the reign of Catherine the Great in 1783 and remained part of Russia until 1954, when it was transferred to Ukraine under the then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.
- Ethnic Russians make up the majority of the population, but with significant Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar minorities.
- Rival imperial ambitions in the mid 19th century led to the Crimean War when Britain and France, suspicious of Russian ambitions in the Balkans as the Ottoman Empire declined, sent troops.
- Given autonomous republic status within Russia after the Bolshevik revolution, Crimea was occupied by the Nazis in the early 1940s.
- **Russia seized and annexed the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 and considers areas around its coast to be Russian waters.**

## Cinematograph Act, 1952

(Topic- GS Paper II- Governance, Source- The Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- A group of actors and filmmakers have recently written an open letter to the Information & Broadcasting Ministry, against the government's proposed amendments to the 1952 Cinematograph Act.

### Background

- Recently, the Centre released the draft **Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2021** to the general public for comments until July 2.

### Key Provisions of Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2021

#### Revision of certification

- This provision will give the centre with revisionary powers on account of violation of Section 5B (1) (principles for guidance in certifying films) and enable it to “re-examine” films already cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
- The current Act, in Section 6, already equips the Centre to call for records of proceedings in relation of a film's certification. .

#### Age-based certification

- The draft proposes to introduce age-based categorisation and classification.
- Currently, films are certified into the following categories —
  - a. ‘U’ for unrestricted public exhibition;
  - b. ‘U/A’ that requires parental guidance for children under 12;
  - c. ‘A’ for adult films

- d. S: Restricted to a specialized group of people, such as engineers, doctors or scientists
- The new draft proposes to divide the categories into further age-based groups: U/A 7+, U/A 13+ and U/A 16+.
- This proposed age classification for films echoes the new IT rules for streaming platforms.

### **Provision against piracy**

- At present, there are no enabling provisions to check film piracy. Violation shall be punishable with imprisonment and fine.

### **Eternal certificate**

- It proposes to certify films for perpetuity. Currently a certificate issued by the CBFC is valid only for 10 years.

### **Related Information**

- Recently, the ministry of law and justice had also abolished the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT).

### **About Film Certification Appellate Tribunal**

- FCAT was a statutory body constituted set up by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in 1983, under Section 5D of the Cinematograph Act, 1952.
- Its main job was to hear appeals filed under Section 5C of the Cinematograph Act, by applicants for certification aggrieved by the decision of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

### **Members**

- The tribunal was headed by a chairperson and had four other members, including a Secretary appointed by the Government of India to handle.

### **Headquarter**

- The Tribunal was headquartered in New Delhi.

### **About Central Board of Film Certification**

- The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) is a statutory film-certification body in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India.

### **Members**

- It consists of a Chairperson and 23 members, all appointed by the Government of India

### **Functions**

- It is tasked with "regulating the public exhibition of films under the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952."

- Films screened in cinemas and on television may only be publicly exhibited in India after certification by the board.
- In India, all films must have a CBFC certificate if they are to be released theatrically, telecast on television, or displayed publicly in any way.
- The CBFC can also deny certification a film.

## Global Cybersecurity Index 2020

(Topic- GS Paper III- Internal security, Source- Indian Express)

### **Why in the news?**

- Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) has been recently launched by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

### **About the Global Cybersecurity Index**

- GCI assessment is done on the basis of performance on five parameters of cybersecurity including
  - a. Legal measures
  - b. Technical measures
  - c. Organisational measures
  - d. Capacity development,
  - e. Cooperation
- The performance is then aggregated into an overall score.
- For each of the five aspects, all the countries' performance and commitment were assessed through a question-based online survey, which further allowed for the collection of the supporting evidence.
- Through in-depth consultations with a group of experts, the questions were then weighted and assessed, to arrive at the overall scores.

### **Key highlights**

#### **Global Ranking**

- The US topped the chart, followed by the UK and Saudi Arabia tied on the second position, while Estonia was ranked third in the index.

#### **India and Index**

- India ranks among top 10 in Global Cybersecurity Index.
- India has also secured the fourth position in the Asia Pacific region, underlining its commitment to cybersecurity.
- The GCI results for India show substantial overall improvement and strengthening under all parameters of the cybersecurity domain.
- India scored a total of 97.5 points from a possible maximum of 100 points, to make it to the tenth position worldwide in the GCI 2020.

### **Steps taken by the Government to spread awareness about cyber crimes**

#### **International Initiatives**

### **a. International Telecommunication Union**

- It is a specialized agency within the United Nations which plays a leading role in the standardization and development of telecommunications and cyber security issues.
- It was established in 17 May 1865 as the International Telegraph Union, making it among the oldest international organizations still in operation.
- It's headquartered based in Geneva, Switzerland

#### **Memberships**

- The ITU's global membership includes 193 countries and around 900 business, academic institutions, and international and regional organizations.

### **b. Budapest Convention on Cybercrime**

- It is an international treaty that seeks to address Internet and computer crime (cybercrime) by harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations.
- It came into force on 1 July 2004.
- **India is not a signatory to this convention.**

### **c. Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**

- It brings together all stakeholders, i.e. Government, private sector and civil society on the Internet governance debate.
- It was first convened in October–November 2006.

### **Laws and Cyber security Preparedness of India**

#### **a. Information Technology Act, 2000**

- The act regulates the use of computers, computer systems, computer networks and also data and information in electronic format.
- The act lists down among other things, following as offences:
  1. Tampering with computer source documents.
  2. Hacking with a computer system
  3. Act of cyber terrorism, i.e. accessing a protected system with the intention of threatening the unity, integrity, sovereignty or security of the country.
  4. Cheating using computer resources etc.

#### **b. National Cyber security Policy, 2013**

- It aims to protect information and information infrastructure in cyberspace, build capabilities to prevent and respond to cyber threats, reduce vulnerabilities and minimize damage from cyber.

#### **Strategy**

1. The **CERT-IN**-National nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur.
2. **Central Information Security Officer** in all private and public organizations.

#### **c. Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**

- The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) was recently inaugurated by the Government.
- It will be set up under the newly created Cyber and Information Security (CIS) division of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It coordinates all activities related to implementation of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT) with other countries related to cybercrimes in consultation with the concerned nodal authority in the MHA.

**The scheme has the following seven components:**

- National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU)
- National Cyber crime Reporting
- Platform for Joint Cyber crime Investigation Team
- National Cyber crime Forensic Laboratory (NCFL) Ecosystem
- National Cyber crime Training Centre (NCTC)
- Cybercrime Ecosystem Management Unit
- National Cyber Research and Innovation Centre

**d. National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal**

- This portal is an initiative of Government of India to facilitate victims/complainants to report cyber crime complaints online.
- This portal caters to complaints pertaining to cyber crimes only with special focus on cyber crimes against women and children.
- Complaints reported on this portal are dealt by law enforcement agencies/ police based on the information available in the complaints.

**e. Cyber Swachhta Kendra** (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) has been launched for providing detection of malicious programmes and free tools to remove such programmes.

**f. Cyber Crime Volunteer Framework**

- It is an initiative which is a part of cyber hygiene promotion to bring together citizens to contribute in the fight against cybercrime in the country and assist State/UT LEAs (law enforcement agencies) in their endeavour to curb cyber crimes.
- The aim of the programme to enable a culture of surveillance and could create potential social distrust by encouraging civilians to report the online activities of other citizens.
- The volunteers will be enrolled and their services utilized by the respective State/UT Police Authorities, as per their requirement.”
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** has envisaged the Cyber Crime Volunteers Program to bring together citizens with passion to serve the nation on a single platform and contribute in the fight against cybercrime in the country

**[Centre’s digital agri proposals raise concern’](#)**

**(Topic- GS Paper III- Agriculture, Source- The Hindu)**

**Why in the news?**

- The Centre’s digital agriculture proposals also known as **AgriStack** raise concerns of exploitation of farmers, data protection and consent, mismanaged land records, exclusion of landless cultivators and the corporatisation of agriculture.

## Concern


- The 91 organization demanded that the Centre stop implementation of the pilot projects ‘**AgriStack**’ being rolled out in partnership with tech and retail giants including Microsoft, Amazon and Patanjali.

## Background

- Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft to run a pilot programme for 100 villages in 6 states.
- The MoU requires Microsoft to create a ‘Unified Farmer Service Interface’ through its cloud computing services.
- This comprises a major part of the ministry’s plan of creating ‘AgriStack’ (a collection of technologybased interventions in agriculture), on which everything else will be built.

## About AgriStack


# WHAT IS THE AGRISTACK?



*The Report of the Committee on Doubling Farmer's Income, NITI Aayog's Discussion Paper on National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, and the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 all mention the use of electronic database for farmers meant to collect data about agriculture and use this to provide services to farmers.*


**1 WHAT DETAILS DOES IT COLLECT?**

The data to be collected by the AgriStack includes: personal details, profile of the land held, production details, and financial details.




**4 HOW WILL THE LOSS OF PRIVACY IMPACT FARMERS?**

1. Financial lending models relying on technology towards farmers may offer usurious rates for those in dire need.
2. There exist risks of exclusion which has been well documented by studies on Aadhaar linked welfare delivery systems
3. Algorithm based decision making may further reduce the agency of farmers




**2 WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED BENEFITS?**

1. Improved access to formal credit
2. Better quality of input
3. Smooth mechanism for marketing and price discovery




**5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Understanding issues emerging from the leadership of farmer groups to include farmers in the decision making process
2. Necessity of long term study and advocacy to engage farmers effectively
3. Study the impact of a data protection law to ensure digital security and privacy



**3 POTENTIAL ISSUES**

1. Lack of consultations with farmer organisations
2. Algorithm based decision making will impact farmers' rights without transparency or accountability.
3. Incentives to harvest and process farm data for financial gain rather than benefit of farmers



- It is a collection of technologies and digital databases that focuses on farmers and the agricultural sector.
- It will create a unified platform for farmers to provide them end to end services across the agriculture food value chain.
- It is in line with the Centre’s Digital India programme, aimed at providing a broader push to digitise data in India, from land titles to medical records.
- The government is also implementing the National Land Records Modernisation Programme (NRLMP).



- Under the programme, each farmer will have a unique digital identification (farmers' ID) that contains personal details, information about the land they farm, as well as production and financial details.
- Each ID will be linked to the individual's digital national ID Aadhaar.

### **NTPC declares its Energy Compact Goals for sustainability at UN dialogue**

**(Topic- GS Paper III-Environment, Source- Business Standard)**

#### **Why in the news?**

- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Limited has recently become the first energy company in the energy domain in India to declare its Energy Compact Goals as part of the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy (HLDE).
- The United Nations is set to convene a high-level dialogue (HLD) in September, 2021 to promote the implementation of the energy-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- **NTPC is among the few organisations globally to declare its Energy Compact Goals.**

#### **More on the news**

- NTPC has set a target to install 60 Giga Watts (GW) of renewable energy capacity by 2032.
- India's largest power producer is also aiming at 10 per cent reduction in net energy intensity by 2032.
- Further, NTPC has declared that it will form at least 2 international alliances/groups to facilitate clean energy research and promote sustainability in the energy value chain by 2025.
- The company had earlier planned to have a minimum of 32 GW capacity through RE sources constituting nearly 25 per cent of its overall power generation capacity by 2032.
- This development will prove to be a huge boost for the nation's largest energy producer that will catapult its position in the green energy map of the country.

#### **About Energy Compacts**

Energy Compacts will be the most **inclusive** umbrella dedicated to bring together **voluntary commitments** on all SDG7 targets in support of achieving all SDGs by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

### WHAT

**Voluntary commitments** on the following themes to advance SDG7 by 2030 and net zero by 2050.



### WHO

Energy Compacts will be **inclusive** and available for voluntary commitments from all stakeholders in the global movement on SDG7



### HOW

**Aligned** with existing commitments covering ambitious actions, policies, finance and investment, etc. commitments on SDG7.



- It is a platform to unite and connect commitments and actions.
- To accelerate SDG7 action on a trajectory in line with the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, Energy Compacts are being mobilized by **UN-Energy as part of the High-level Dialogue on Energy in September 2021 at New York.**
- They will continue to be mobilized and updated throughout the current Decade of Action.
- Energy Compacts are voluntary commitments from Member States and non-state actors, such as companies, regional/local governments, NGOs, and others.
- These stakeholders commit to an Energy Compact that includes the specific actions they will take to support progress on SDG7.
- Since affordable, clean energy is a prerequisite for achieving all other SDGs and the Paris Agreement, actions defined in an Energy Compact can be directly linked to Nationally Determined Contributions considered as SDG Acceleration Actions.

### Difference between Energy Compacts and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- NDCs address Member States' national climate ambitions and targets that are legally required under the Paris Agreement, focusing on a country's emissions profile from the economy as a whole.
- Since the energy system plays such a major role in a country's overall emissions, changing the energy system to be more efficient and reliant on clean energy will directly support the achievement of NDCs.
- **Whereas, Energy Compacts include a variety of voluntary commitments,** actions, initiatives, and partnerships focused specifically on the energy system and SDG7.
- They will cover the SDG7 targets, including those that are not reflected in a country's NDCs, such as clean cooking access.
- However, because Energy Compact commitments aim to deliver affordable, clean energy for all by 2030, these commitments are complementary to the NDCs.
- Energy Compacts are essentially the energy system "steps" to be taken towards achieving NDCs.
- Countries forming Energy Compacts can align their plans for energy system transformation with their climate ambitions, as expressed under their NDCs.

## **Open for all**

- Energy Compacts are also open to all stakeholders in the global movement on SDG7, including businesses, organizations, and subnational authorities, and will have annual mechanisms to track progress on the commitments.

For Further Reading:

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/i\\_updated\\_flyer\\_v.8\\_april.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/i_updated_flyer_v.8_april.pdf)

## **Fund for Industrial Research Engagement (FIRE)**

**(Topic- GS Paper III- Economics, Source- AIR)**

### **Why in the news?**

- Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) have recently offered the first-of-its-kind research initiative called 'Fund for Industrial Research Engagement (FIRE).

### **About SERB-FIRE**

- The FIRE program is a joint government and industry initiative with a co-funding mechanism to promote innovative technology solutions and strengthen academic research through collaboration with key research and development (R&D) organizations in India

### **Aim**

- FIRE is a one-of-its-kind collaborative initiative that aims to transform the culture of research in India and strengthen the technology ecosystem.

### **Significance**

- It will increase research opportunities in the space of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML), platform systems, circuits & architecture, Internet of Things (IoT), materials & devices, security, and so on from edge to cloud.
- It will bring support for strong ideations, especially in futuristic S&T thematic areas, and aims to bring expertise in academia and industry together with a new model of cooperation.

### **About Science and Engineering Research Board**

- It is a statutory body under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, established by an Act of the Parliament of India in 2009 ( SERB ACT,2008).
- The Board is chaired by the Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Science and Technology.

- The Board was set up for promoting basic research in science and engineering and to provide financial assistance to scientists, academic institutions, R&D laboratories, industrial concerns and other agencies for such research.