78 years of United Nations (UN)

Why in news?

On 24th October 1945, the United Nations was founded amid a period of turmoil in international relations.

Why United Nations was formed?

UN is a global diplomatic and political organization dedicated to international peace and stability

- **League of Nations**- It was created in 1919 after World War I, as part of the Treaty of Versailles. However World War II broke out in 1939.
- **World War II-** League of Nations has been failed but highlighted the need for a new, reformed organization that could promote global peace.
- **Emerging powers**- Countries that had dominated world affairs had suffered a great deal after the two wars, and there were two emerging new powers, in the form of the ***United States*** and the ***USSR***, who looked set to rival each other.
- **Atlantic Charter**- It outlined ideal goals of war; it was not a treaty but only an affirmation that paved the way for creation of UN.
- It declared realisation of certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they based their hopes for a better future for the world.
- The United States joined the war in December 1941, and the title "United Nations" was first adopted to identify the countries that allied against Germany, Italy and Japan.
- **San Francisco Conference**- The main principles and structure of the United Nations Charter were determined by leaders at the United Nations Conference on International Organization.
- **India-** It was under British colonial rule at the time, Independent India viewed its membership at the United Nations as an important guarantee for maintaining international peace and security.
- **Post war**- The United Nations finally came into existence on October 24, 1945, after being ratified by 51 nations, which included 5 permanent members (France, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the UK and the USA) and 46 other signatories.
- At present, 193 countries are members of the UN.

Main Goals of United Nation
• Maintain international peace and security • Develop friendly relations among nations • Achieve international cooperation in solving international problems and • Be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

What are the achievements of the UN?

- **Ban nuclear weapon** - It passed a resolution to commit to the elimination of nuclear weapons in 1946.
- **Health -** In 1948, it created the ***World Health Organisation*** (WHO) to deal with communicable diseases like smallpox, malaria, HIV.
- **Refugee assistance -** In 1950, UN created ***High Commissioner for Refugees*** to take care of millions who had been displaced due to World War II.
- **Environment -** In 1972, UN Environment Program was created to inspire, inform, and enable nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.
- **Law and order**- In 2002, the UN established the *International Criminal Court* to try those who have committed war crimes, genocide, and other atrocities.
- It is distinct from the ***International Court of Justice (ICJ)***, which is one of the principal organs of UN.
- **Restore peace** - The UN peacekeeping missions are authorized by the UN Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.
- At present, there are currently 12 UN peacekeeping missions active in various regions of the world.
- **UN 75 declaration** - The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

What are the failures of the UN?

- **Neo-liberal ideas** - UN and its associated organisations such as World Bank and the IMF has been criticized for furthering neo-liberal ideas.
- This has been linked to *deepening inequalities within countries*.

Neo liberal ideas champions for free market and a reduced role of governments.

- **Lack of representation**- Despite multilateralism, UN has been seen as unrepresentative of its members particularly countries in the ***Global South***.
- **1994 Rwanda Mission -** The UN failed to stop the Rwandan genocide.
- In just 100 days, about 800,000 minority Tutsi community were slaughtered by ethnic Hutu extremists.
- **Cholera in Haiti-** After the 2010 earthquake, U.N led Nepali aid workers were blamed for spreading cholera throughout Haiti. More than 10,000 people died from the outbreak.
- **Oil for Food Program**-This initiative was designed to allow Iraq to sell oil through the U.N. in exchange for food and medicine. But, accusations surfaced that much of the money was funnelled to the Iraqi government and to U.N. officials.
- **Sexual abuse allegations**- In early 2005, U.N. peacekeepers were accused of rape or paying for sex in the Republic of Congo. Similar allegations of sexual misconduct were also reported in Cambodia, Haiti and other countries.

- **Crisis in South Sudan**- A U.N. peacekeeping mission, which was established in 2011, was unsuccessful at protecting civilians from death, torture or rape in South Sudan.

What is the relation between India and UN?

As a founding member of the United Nations, India strongly supports the purposes and principles of the UN

- **San Francisco Conference** - India was one among the select members of the United Nations that signed the Declaration by United Nations in 1942.
- **Decolonization -** India was the co-sponsor of the landmark UN 1960 Declaration on Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and peoples which proclaimed the need to unconditionally end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.
    - India was also elected the first chair of the Decolonization Committee where its ceaseless efforts to put an end to colonialism are well on record.
- **UN Peacekeeping Mission**- India is the first country to contribute to the Trust Fund on sexual exploitation and abuse, which was set up in 2016.
- In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent for Formed Police Unit to the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia.
- **Security Council** - India has served the UNSC 8 times, India has chaired several committees of UN.
- **Mahatma Gandhi**- Commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary at the UN, India hosted a high-level event in 2019 titled, "Leadership Matters: Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi in the Contemporary World".
- During the event, Gandhi solar park was inaugurated at the UN headquarters.
- **Cultural relations** - The UNGA Resolution declaring 21 June every year as the International Day of Yoga was adopted in 2014, this set-in motion global annual observance of the International Day of Yoga.
- **Language usage** - Usage of Hindi in UN public communications began in 2018 following the first MoU signed by the UN with any country.
- **India-UN Development Partnership Fund** - It is the first ever single-country South-South cooperation initiative at the UN in 2017.
- It is a 100-million-dollar fund facility to undertake projects across the developing world.
- **Reform -** As a strong votary of reformed multilateralism, India favours a comprehensive reform of the United Nations and its institutions, to make them reflective of 21st century realities, thereby facilitating stronger collective action.

References

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