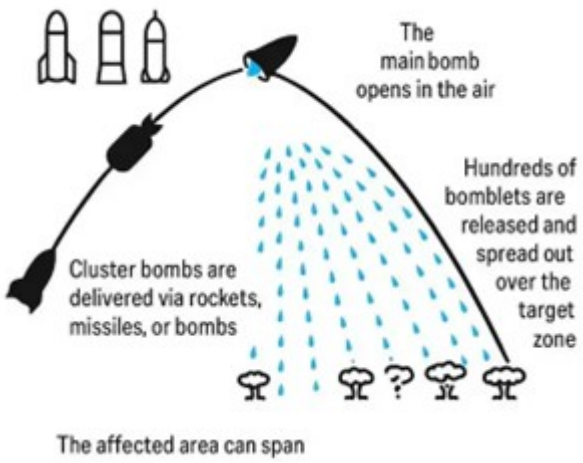
Clustered Bombs

Prelims: Current events of National and International Importance | Science and technology -Defense

Why in News?

Iran's use of cluster munitions in a missile strikes recently injured dozens and marked the first confirmed deployment of the controversial weapon in the ongoing conflict with Israel.

- ***Cluster munitions*** are weapons that are designed to release a container mid-air, scattering explosive submunitions or 'bomblets' over a wide area.
- Depending on the model, they can disperse anywhere from a few to over 600 bomblets over a large area and are typically delivered via aircraft or missiles.
- **Working** - Cluster bombs are delivered via rockets, missiles, or bombs. Upon deployment, the main bomb opens in the air.
- Hundreds of bomblets are released and spread out over the target zone. The affected area can span several football fields.



- **Impacts** - Not all submunitions explode on impact, leaving behind unexploded ordinance (UXO), for years.
- The majority of this - are *free falling*, meaning that they are not individually guided towards a target.
- Unexploded ordnance poses a serious threat to civilians. Clearance operations are costly, slow, and often hazardous.

- **Usage -** According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), they were first deployed during ***World War II.***
- Their development accelerated during the Cold War era, when they were stockpiled in large numbers.
- These weapons were primarily designed to neutralize spread-out military targets such as tanks or troops over wide battlefields.
- **Regulation** - The ***2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions*** prohibits the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of these weapons.
- To date, key nations like Iran, Israel, the United States, and Russia — have refused to join the agreement.
    - In 2023, USA sent clustered munitions to Ukraine to use against Russia. Kyiv has accused Russia of deploying the same weapons in return. Like Iran and Israel right now.
    - **India** did not sign the treaty.

Reference

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