

## Prelim Bits 08-12-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

### Article 99 of the UN Charter

Amid Israel's ongoing military attacks on the Gaza Strip, United Nations (UN) has invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter in a bid to establish a ceasefire.

- It has been invoked for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in decades as Israel attacks Gaza.
- **Article 99** - "The **Secretary-General** may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the ***maintenance of international peace and security***."
- It is seen as a ***discretionary power*** of the Secretary-General.

The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** comprises 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members appointed for specific periods. On a rotational basis, each of these 15 countries holds the presidency for a month. The South American country of Ecuador is the President for December 2023.

- **Impact** - The President of the UNSC is under the obligation to call a meeting of the Council.
- **Earlier Invocations**
  - During the upheaval in the ***Republic of the Congo in 1960*** following the end of Belgium's colonial rule.
  - During a complaint by ***Tunisia in 1961 against France's*** naval and air forces launching an attack.

### UN Charter

- It is the *founding document of the United Nations*.
- **Launched in** - June 1945 and came into force on October 1945.
- It has been *amended 3 times* in 1963, 1965, and 1973.
- **Legality** - It is an instrument of international law, and UN *Member States are bound* by it but in practice, there is little that member countries can be forced to do.
- It consists of a *preamble and 111 articles* grouped into *19 chapters*.
- The [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) functions in accordance with the Statute of the International Court of Justice, which is annexed to the UN Charter.

*For a UN resolution to be adopted, it needs at least 9 votes in favour and no vetoes by the 5 permanent members (US, UK, France, China and Russia).*

### References

1. [The Indian Express| UN Secretary General invoked Article 99](#)
2. [UN.ORG| United Nations Charter](#)

## **Essequibo region**

*Recently, the U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency closed meeting at the request of Guyana following Venezuela's weekend referendum claiming Essequibo region.*

- **Geography** - It a 61,600-square-mile area located in the heart of the **Guiana Shield**, a geographical region in the northeast of South America.
- It accounts for two-thirds of Guyana.
- The area is one of the 4 last pristine tropical forests in the world.
- **Economical value** - It has vast oil and mineral resources.
  - With these resources, Guyana is set to surpass the oil production of Venezuela, and by 2025, it would become the world's largest per-capita crude producer.

*Currently, Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves.*



- **History of contention** - It is a disputed territory between ***Guyana and Venezuela.***
- ***1899 arbitration*** demarcated their boundaries which was formally accepted in ***1905 agreement.***
- While Venezuela challenged the 1899 arbitration in 1962, the ***1966 Geneva Agreement*** aimed at maintaining the status quo.
- **Recent contention** - Through referendum, Venezuelans approved the claim of sovereignty over Essequibo and were about to immediately begin exploration in the disputed region.
- **International response** - Guyana approached the *International Court of Justice (ICJ)* which refused to ban the referendum but ***urged Venezuela not to alter the status quo.***

Under ***Article 94 of the U.N. Charter***, if any party to a case fails to perform its required obligations, the other party (in this case Guyana) may take the issue to the Security Council.

## References

1. [The Hindu| Dispute over Essequibo region](#)
2. [Aljazeera | Guyana's territorial dispute with Venezuela](#)

## Global Climate 2011-2020: A Decade of Acceleration

According to a report from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the decade from 2011-2020 was the warmest ever in history.

- The report provides a longer-term perspective and transcends year-to-year variability in our climate.
- It reports how extreme events undermines sustainable development and how improvements in early warnings and disaster management reduced the number of casualties.
- **Released by** - ***World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)*** at the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC), COP28.
- It complements WMO's annual ***State of the Global Climate report***.
- **Data source** - Physical data analyses and impact assessments from National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, Regional Climate Centres, National Statistics Offices and UN partners.
- **Key messages of the report**
  - 2011-2020 was ***warmest decade*** on record
  - It recorded the ***lowest number of deaths*** from extreme events
  - ***Heatwaves*** caused the highest number of human casualties
  - ***Tropical cyclones*** caused the most economic damage
  - Glaciers around the world thinned by approximately ***1 metre per year*** on average between 2011 and 2020
  - Ocean heat and ***acidification damaged marine ecosystems***
  - This was the 1<sup>st</sup> decade that the depleted ***ozone hole visibly showed recovery***
  - Public and private ***climate finance almost doubled***
- **Recommendations** - It emphasizes the need to try to limit global temperature rise to no more than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial era.
- Climate ***finance needs to increase at least 7 times*** by the end of this decade to achieve climate objectives.

## References

1. [The Hindu| Warmest decade in the history](#)
2. [WMO.INT| The Global Climate 2011-2020: A decade of acceleration](#)

## Global Initiative for Academic Networks (GIAN) in Higher Education

After COVID break, Centre approves 4<sup>th</sup> phase roll-out of GIAN scheme as recommended by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA).

- It was launched in ***2015-16 by Ministry of Education (MoE)***.

- **Objectives** -

- To increase the footfalls of ***international faculty in the Indian academic institutes*** and to create avenue for possible collaborative research.
- To develop ***high quality course material*** in niche areas, both through video and print mediums.
- **GIAN Implementation Committee** - It is ***headed by Secretary (HE), MoE*** to finalize and approve courses and also decide on budget allocation.
- **Coverage** - Initially, it will include all IITs, IIMs, Central Universities, IISc Bangalore, IISERs, NITs and IIITs subsequently cover good State Universities.
  - So far ***39% of courses were delivered in IIT*** campuses followed by NITs (24.6%).
- **Activities** - Initially, foreign faculty be involved in delivering Short or Semester-long Courses.
  - In total 1,612 faculties visited, ***41.4% were from U.S.*** and up to 72,000 Indian students directly benefitted.
- **Future prospects** - Experts allowing ***video recording and optional web-casting*** of their course will be given preference.
- There is a plan to make the ***repository of GIAN lectures*** available to universities across India through an online consortium.

## References

1. [The Hindu| Rollout of 4<sup>th</sup> phase of GIAN](#)
2. [GIAN| Global Initiatives for Academic Networks](#)

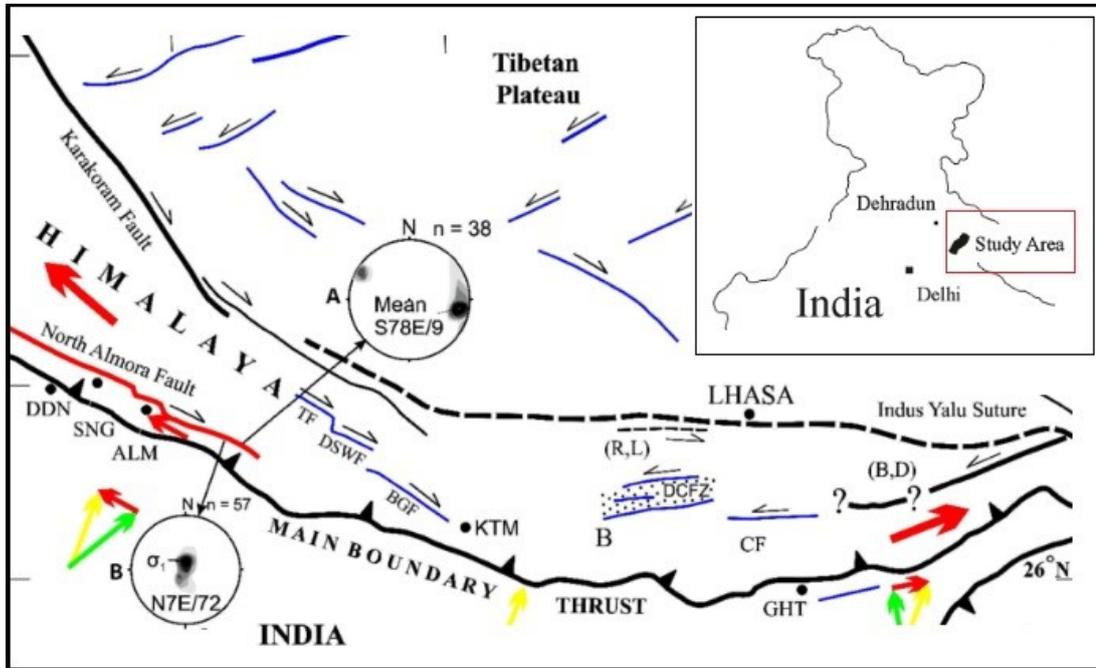
## Almora Fault

*Data indicates an increase in earthquake activity in 2023 was mainly attributed to the activation of the Almora fault.*

- **Almora Fault** - It is located in *Western Nepal*.
- It is a high angle west-northwest-east-southeast to northwest-southeast trending tectonic plane.
- It separates the inner lesser Himalayas in the north from outer lesser Himalayas in the south.

### A fault

- It is a *fracture* or zone of fractures between two blocks of rock.
- **Movement** - It allow the blocks to *move relative to each other* which may occur *rapidly, in the form of an earthquake* or may occur slowly, in the form of creep.
- **Range** - Few *millimetres to thousands of kilometers*.



- **Activation of Almora fault- 3 significant earthquakes above 5.8 magnitude** occurred in 2023 leading to an *increased frequency of earthquakes in 2023*.

*There have been 97 earthquakes in 2023 of magnitude 3.0 to 3,9 compared to 41 in 2022.*

- **Agency responsible** - The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** is responsible for taking precautionary measures and response to earthquake related incidents.

*Nepal and the adjoining northern part of India, located near the active faults of the Himalayan region, are highly seismically active areas prone to frequent earthquakes due to **collision tectonics**, where the Indian plate subducts beneath the Eurasian Plate.*

## References

1. [Down To Earth| Activation of Almora Fault](#)
2. [Live Mint| Almora Fault](#)

## Other Important News

## Railway Protection Force (RPF)'s Operations

<b>Operation Jeevan Raksha</b>	To protect the lives of passengers, who had accidentally fallen while deboarding or boarding.
<b>Operation Yatri Suraksha</b>	To improve the security of passengers traveling by Indian Railways.
<b>Operation NARCOS</b>	It is pan-India drive against smuggling of Narcotics through Rail.
<b>Operation Uplabdh</b>	To curb the illegal sale of railway tickets.
<b>Operation Sanraksha</b>	To enhance the safety of passengers.
<b>Operation Seva</b>	To assist those who (elderly citizens, women, physically disabled and sick/injured persons) in need in their travel.
<b>Operation Satark</b>	To stop the transportation of illegal items through railway networks.
<b>Operation AAHT</b>	To curb Anti-Human Trafficking Efforts.

## Pompe Disease

- It is also known as ***Glycogen Storage Disease Type II***.
- It is a *rare genetic disorder* caused by a deficiency of the enzyme acid ***alpha-glucosidase (GAA)*** (crucial for breaking down glycogen into glucose within the lysosomes of cells).
- Its prevalence estimates range from 1 in 40,000 to 1 in 300,000 births.
- Currently, there is no cure for Pompe disease and to improve quality of life ***Enzyme Replacement Therapy (ERT)*** is a standard treatment.

## Bandipur Tiger Reserve

- The Bandipur Tiger Reserve is situated in Karnataka which holds the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest Tiger population in India.
- It was established in the year 1974 as a forest tiger reserve under the [Project Tiger](#).
- It is part of the ***Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve***.
- 3 rivers flow through the main area of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve - Nugu River, Moyar River and Kabini River.

### **Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in Kerala**

- Kerala breaks the general assumption that educated women have fewer children than uneducated women.
- The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) among educated women is remarkably higher than that among the illiterate women.
- Kerala is the only State in the country with high Total Fertility Rate among educated women.
- The ***Total Fertility Rate (TFR)*** is the average number of children born to a woman during her reproductive years (15-49 years).

### **Asola Bhatti Wild Life Sanctuary**

- Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary is a protected area in ***New Delhi*** and is a part of the Aravalli Mountain Range.
- It was established in the year 1986.
- It is a part of the ***Sariska-Delhi Wildlife Corridor***, which runs from the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan to Delhi Ridge.

### **Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Treaty**

- Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed recently to exchange prisoners of war and work toward signing a peace treaty.
- As part of the deal, Armenia agreed to lift its objections to Azerbaijan hosting next year's international conference on climate change.

### **Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes Virus (EEHV)**

- A new study assessed the circulation of the elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus Subtypes (EEHV) responsible for the recent rise in the disease, as well as its pathogenesis.
- Elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus (EEHV) is a ***double-stranded DNA herpesvirus***.
- It can cause a fatal hemorrhagic disease in ***young Asian elephants***.
- The disease has a mortality rate of up to 85%.

### **Africa's Green Industrialisation Initiative**

- The Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative (AGII) aims to accelerate and scale up green industries and businesses across Africa.
- The initiative builds upon the existing \$4.5 billion Africa green investment from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Africa has 40% of the world's critical minerals necessary for energy transition and has the world's largest natural carbon sink.



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*