UN Oceans Conference

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Why in News?

The United Nations Oceans Conference (UNOC) concluded in France, with 56 of 60 countries ratifying the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement, also called the 'High Seas Treaty.'

- The 3rd edition of the UNOC aimed to ***accelerate action on protecting oceans.***
- Its main goal was to establish marine-protected areas in international waters and thereby prevent over-fishing as well as deep-ocean mining.
- This deals with parts of the oceans that are *not under the territorial limits of countries* and thus the equivalent of a global commons.

Convention on Biological Diversity has the world's nations committing to conserve 30% of the world's marine and coastal area as 'protected areas' by 2030.

- A key objective of the UNOC is to deal with operational aspects of this aspiration by getting countries to commit to the BBNJ.
- The treaty requires 60 ratifications to trigger a 120-day countdown before becoming legally binding.
- UNOC saw progress with 56 countries ratifying it.
- Once in force, the treaty will
    - Create marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction,
    - Conduct environmental impact assessments,
    - Regulate marine genetic resources, and
    - Support capacity-building for developing nations.
- The UN expects to reach 70 ratifications by September, to host the first BBNJ Conference of Parties (COP), like the annual climate COPs, in late 2026.
- India is ***unlikely to ratify*** the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement.

Reference

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