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G-4 Foreign Ministers Meeting on Sidelines of UNGA

Foreign ministers of G-4 countries met on the sidelines of United Nations General Assembly 73rd session.

- The G4 Ministers reaffirmed the need for an early reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) including the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership to enhance its legitimacy, effectiveness, and representativeness.
- Foreign ministers also expressed support for reflecting the African Common Position as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus.

India and UNSC Membership Reforms

- **Why reforms in UNSC membership are necessary?**
 - Current UNSC represents the global order of post-1945. The global order has changed a lot since 1945 and with the rising clout of emerging powers like India and Brazil in the global arena, it is necessary that changes in geopolitics must reflect in the highest council of leaders in the world.
 - Among the permanent members of UNSC
 - Europe is over-represented with the presence of the United Kingdom, Russia and France.
 - Asia is under-represented with only China present.
 - No representation from South America and Africa.
 - Meaningful reform of the UNSC to make it more representative and will strengthen UN to address the challenges of a changing world more effectively.

- **Why India should be given a permanent membership?**

- India is the world's largest liberal democracy and a country representing almost one-sixth of humanity.
- India is the world's fifth largest economy.
- India is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping mission around the world with more than 100,000 Indian troops having served in U.N. missions during the past 50 years.
- India has served seven times to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member, most recently from 2011 to 2012, after receiving 188 of the 190 total votes.
- India is one of the founding members of the United Nations.
- India was the signatory of the Declaration by United Nations on 1 January 1942, the declaration by United Nations became the basis of the United Nations (UN), which was formalized in the United Nations Charter signed by 50 countries on 26 June 1945.
- A seat for India will make the body more representative and democratic. With India as a member, the Council would be a more legitimate and thus a more effective body.

G-4 Nations

- G-4 nations comprise of Brazil, India, Germany, and Japan.
- G-4 nations have a common goal of a more representative UN Security Council and they support each other bid for a permanent seat in UNSC.

L.69 Group

- The L.69 Group is a group of developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific.
- They form a major bloc that is united by the common cause of achieving the lasting and comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council.
- The group currently has 42 countries as its members.

Ezulwini Consensus

- The Ezulwini Consensus is a position on international relations and reform of the United Nations, agreed by the African Union.
- It calls for a more representative and democratic Security Council, in which Africa, like all other world regions, is represented.

- **Initiatives taken by India for UNSC membership reforms**

- India has undertaken a series of initiatives, both at bilateral and multilateral levels, in pursuance of permanent membership in an expanded and reformed UN Security Council.
- **G-4 Nations**
 - India is working with like-minded countries like Brazil, Germany, and Japan who also aspire for a reformed UNSC.
- **L.69 Grouping**
 - India is also working with L.69 Grouping for a reformed UNSC.
- India is also actively engaged in the ongoing **Intergovernmental Negotiations on UNSC** reform at the United Nations.
- Since September 2016, India has been participating in the meetings of the **"Group of Friends on Security Council Reform"** which supports urgent reform of the UN Security Council including an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

- **Supporters to India bid**

- India's bid for the permanent member of UNSC is now backed by four of the five permanent members, namely France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- China has not openly supported India's bid for UNSC membership.
- Other countries that have officially endorsed India's bid for UNSC membership includes all the members of African Union and countries like Norway, Sweden, Australia, Peru etc.

- **Opposition to India's membership**

- Pakistan has been very vocal against India's inclusion in the UNSC as a permanent member.
- The group of Countries called as **"Uniting for Consensus"** grouping (UfC) are strongly against G-4's bid for permanent membership of UNSC.
- UfC includes Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, Egypt, Argentina, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, and Indonesia.

Adultery is Not a Crime: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has struck down as **unconstitutional**, the 158 year old **Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code**, which criminalizes adultery.

The five-Judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra also declared **Section 198 of the Criminal Procedure Code** as unconstitutional, which deals with the procedure for filing a complaint for the offence of adultery. According to this, **the husband alone could complain against adultery while an adulterous man's wife had no such right.**

The Supreme Court's Observations

- It said that the 158-year-old law was unconstitutional and is violative of **Article 21 (Right to life and personal liberty) and Article 14 (Right to equality)**.
- The court observed that two individuals may part if one cheats, but to attach criminality to infidelity is going too far. How married couples deal with adultery is **absolutely a matter of privacy**.
- Besides, there is **no data** to back claims that abolition of adultery as a crime would result in “chaos in sexual morality” or an increase of divorce.
- Any provision of law affecting individual dignity and equality of women invites the wrath of the Constitution. It’s time to say that a **husband is not the master of wife**. Legal sovereignty of one sex over other sex is wrong.
- However, if any aggrieved spouse ended her life because of her partner’s adulterous relation, it could be **treated as an abetment** to suicide if evidence was produced.
- Section 497 is based on the **Doctrine of Coverture**. This doctrine, not recognised by the Constitution, holds that a woman loses her identity and legal right with marriage, is **violative of her fundamental rights**.
- Marriage does not mean ceding autonomy of one to the other. Ability to make sexual choices is essential to human liberty. Even within private zones, an individual should be allowed her choice.
- "Society imposes impossible virtues on a woman, raises her to a pedestal. Confines her to spaces. Objectifies her and says she should be pure. But society has no qualms to commit rape, honour killings, sex-determination and infanticide".

Adultery

The act of adultery is a voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person's current spouse or partner.

Section 497 of the IPC

- It mandates that whoever has sexual intercourse with the wife of another man, **without the consent or connivance of that man**, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape is guilty of the offence of adultery and shall be punished.
- The **law does not punish his wife**, since it presumes that only a man can seduce a woman into a sexual act, and that it is the husband who has suffered due to the sexual relationship of his wife, carried out without his consent. At the same time, **the wife is not protected from similar behaviour committed by her husband**.

Way Forward

- The decriminalisation of adultery comes soon after the Supreme Court judgment that read down Section 377 of the IPC to decriminalise homosexuality, thereby **enabling diverse gender identities to be unafraid of the law**, is a positive and a progressive development.
 - However, it is a matter of concern that refreshing the statute books is being left to the judiciary, **without any proactive role** of Parliament in amending regressive laws.
 - The provisions such as **Section 497 or Section 377** should have been addressed by the Parliament in its legislative responsibility through debates and discussions.
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Important Facts for Prelims (28th September 2018)

India-UN Sustainable Development Framework

- NITI Aayog and United Nations have signed the Government of India-United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) for 2018-2022.
- The government of India-United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (SDF) 2018-2022 outlines the work of UN agencies in India and ensures the support by UN for the achievement of key development outcomes that have been identified in consultation with the government and are aligned to the national priorities.
- These priorities are articulated in the NITI Aayog's Three-year Action Agenda (2017-2020) and other policy announcements (for eg: New India by 2022) and are aligned to agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 2030).
- The NITI Aayog is the national counterpart for the UN in India for the operationalization of the UNSDF.
- The UNSDF 2018-22 comprises of seven priority areas:
 1. Poverty and Urbanization
 2. Health, Water, and Sanitation
 3. Education and Employability
 4. Nutrition and Food Security
 5. Climate Change, Clean Energy, and Disaster Resilience
 6. Skilling, Entrepreneurship, and Job Creation
 7. Gender Equality and Youth Development.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)

- PMKSY is an umbrella scheme incorporating ongoing schemes of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries like Mega Food Parks, Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure, Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure, etc.

- It also incorporates new schemes like Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters, Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages, Creation and Expansion of Food Processing & Preservation Capacities.
- The objective of PMKSY is to supplement agriculture, modernize processing and decrease Agro-Waste.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra Inaugurated

- Recently, a Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra was inaugurated at Dharmagarh, Kalahandi, Odisha.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra**
 - The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) intends to establish state of the art Model Training Centres (MTCs) called Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKK) in every district of the country.
 - National Skill Development Council (NSDC) is the implementation agency for the project.
 - Objectives
 - To create benchmark institutions that demonstrate aspirational value for competency-based skill development training.
 - To focus on elements of quality, sustainability, and connection with stakeholders in skills delivery process.
- Odisha Kaushal Gram
 - It is a scheme under which Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in 6 job roles for 20,000 people will be carried out in Odisha.
 - This project under RPL will certify 20,000 unrecognized skilled workers from villages and create model skill villages called Kaushal Grams in Odisha.

Railways to Roll Out Smart Coaches

- The Indian Railways will launch their 'Make in India' smart coaches with new features like the black box and artificial intelligence (AI)-powered CCTV.
 - In the version 2.0 of these coaches, the Railways are planning to introduce a host of new features, such as video analytics with face detection feature; unusual occurrence feature; fire-and-smoke detection unit; and an energy-metering module to measure the energy consumption of the coach.
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