



## News Analysis (17 Feb, 2021)

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### World Trade Organisation

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#### Why in News

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Nigeria's **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** was appointed as **Director-General** of the **World Trade Organisation (WTO)**, the leading international trade body.

**Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** is the **first African official** and the **first woman** to hold the position.

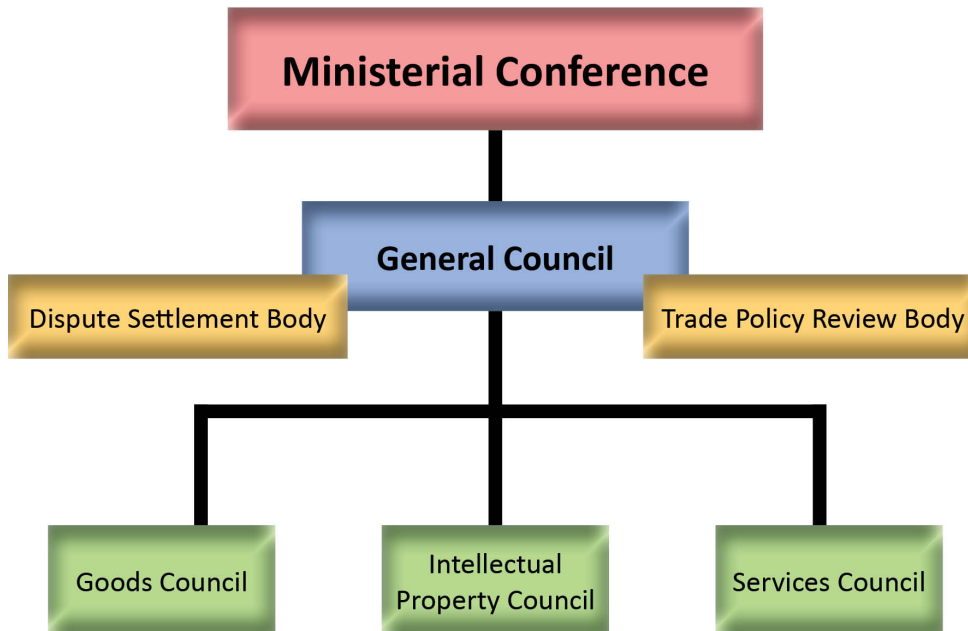
#### Key Points

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- **Origin of WTO:**
  - The WTO is the successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, which was created in 1947.
  - The **Uruguay Round (1986-94)** of the GATT led to the WTO's creation. WTO began operations on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1995.
    - The Agreement Establishing the WTO, commonly known as the “**Marrakesh Agreement**”, was signed in Marrakesh, Morocco in 1994.
- **About:**
  - WTO is an **international organization** dealing with the rules of trade between nations.
  - Main difference between GATT and WTO was that **GATT mostly dealt with trade in goods**, the **WTO and its agreements could not only cover goods but also trade in services and other intellectual properties** like trade creations, designs, and inventions.
  - **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Members:**
  - The WTO has **164 members** (including **European Union**) and **23 observer governments** (like Iran, Iraq, Bhutan, Libya etc).
  - **India is a founder member** of the 1947 GATT and its successor, the WTO.

- **Governing Structure:**

# Structures of WTO



- **Ministerial Conference:**

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Structure of the WTO is dominated by its highest authority, the Ministerial Conference, **composed of representatives of all WTO members**, which is required to **meet at least every two years** and which can take decisions on all matters under any of the multilateral trade agreements.

- **General Council:**

It is **composed of all WTO members** and is **required to report to the Ministerial Conference**.

- **Dispute Settlement Body and Trade Policy Review Body:**

General Council convenes in two particular forms:

- **Dispute Settlement Body:** To oversee the dispute settlement procedures.
- **Trade Policy Review Body:** To conduct regular reviews of the trade policies of individual WTO members.

- **Objectives:**

- To set and **enforce rules for international trade**.
- To provide a **forum for negotiating and monitoring** further trade liberalization.
- To **resolve trade disputes**.
- To **increase the transparency** of decision-making processes.
- To **cooperate with other major international economic institutions** involved in global economic management.
- To **help developing countries** benefit fully from the global trading system.

- **Achievements of WTO:**

- **Global Facilitation of Trade:**

- By **building binding rules for global trade** in goods and services, WTO has facilitated dramatic growth in cross-border business activity.
- The WTO has not only **enhanced the value and quantity of trade but has also helped in eradicating trade and non-trade barriers.**

- **Improved Economic Growth:**

- Since 1995, the value of **world trade has nearly quadrupled**, while the **real volume of world trade has expanded by 2.7 times.**
- Domestic reforms and market-opening commitments have resulted in the lasting boost to national income of nations.

- **Increased Global Value Chains:**

The predictable market conditions fostered by the WTO, have combined with improved communications to **enable the rise of global value chains**, trade within these value chains today accounts for almost 70% of total merchandise trade.

- **Upliftment of Poor Countries:**

The least-developed countries receive extra attention in the WTO. All the WTO agreements recognize that they must benefit from the greatest possible flexibility, and **better-off members must make extra efforts to lower import barriers on least-developed countries' exports.**

- **Recent Challenges:**
  - **China's State Capitalism:**
    - China's state-owned enterprises present a major challenge to the free-market global trading system and the rulebook of the WTO is inadequate for addressing these challenges.
    - It is due to this that **USA-China** are also engaged in **Trade war**.
  - **Institutional Issues:**
    - The **Appellate Body's operations have effectively been suspended** since December 2019, as the USA's blocking of appointments has left the body without a quorum of adjudicators needed to hear appeals.
    - The **crisis with the dispute settlement function of the WTO** is closely linked to the breakdown in its negotiation function.
  - **Lack of Transparency:**
    - There is a problem in WTO negotiations as **there is no agreed definition of what constitutes a developed or developing country** at the WTO.
    - Members can currently self-designate as developing countries to receive 'special and differential treatment' – a practice that is the subject of much contention.
  - **E-commerce & Digital Trade:**
    - While the global trade landscape has changed significantly over the past 25 years, WTO rules have not kept pace.
    - In 1998, realizing that **e-commerce** would play a growing role in the global economy, WTO members established a WTO e-commerce moratorium to examine all trade-related issues relating to global electronic commerce.
    - Recently, however, the moratorium has been called into question by developing countries because of its implications for collecting revenue.
  - **Agriculture and Development:**
    - **Agreement on agriculture** is facing issues due to food security and development requirements for developing countries like India.

## Way Forward

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- Modernizing the WTO will necessitate **the development of a new set of rules** for dealing with digital trade and e-commerce.
- WTO members will also have to **deal more effectively with China's trade policies and practices**, including how to better handle state-owned enterprises and industrial subsidies.
- Given the pressing issues around **climate change**, **increased efforts to align trade and environmental sustainability** could help to both tackle climate change and reinvigorate the WTO.

**Source: TH**

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# Pollution from Coal Burning: IEACCC

## Why in News

A study by the **International Energy Agency's Clean Coal Centre (IEACCC)** has stated that **coal burning** is responsible for heavy **air pollution** in India.

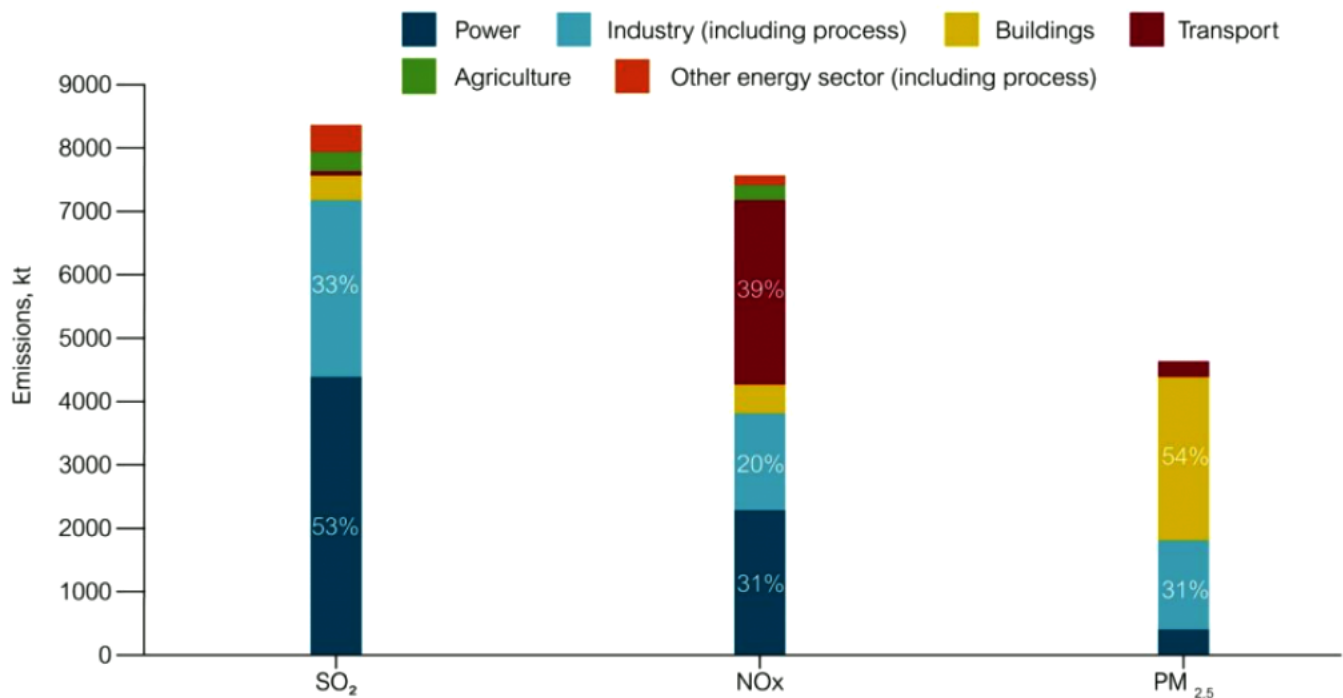
Recently, a Delhi-based think tank **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)** has also discussed the **measures to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)** footprints of India's coal-based power sector and **cautioned the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) against extending the deadline of meeting emission norms** for coal-based thermal power plants in the country.

## Key Points

### Findings:

- **Pollution from Coal-Based Thermal Power Stations:**
  - Coal-based thermal power stations contribute over half **sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)**, 30% **oxides of nitrogen (NOx)**, about 20% **particulate matter (PM)**, etc.
  - Persistent burning of coal in thermal power stations and a **delay in implementation of latest carbon capture storage technology** are among major reasons of air pollution in India.
- **Pollution from Other Sectors:**

**Transport and other industrial sectors stand second** to coal-based thermal power stations as a contributor to air pollution.



## Suggestions:

- **Retirement of Old Fleet of Power Stations:**  
To limit pollution and improve the fleet efficiency by adopting clean coal technology.
- **Investment in Cleaner and Advanced Technology:**  
The most new advanced technology plants in India - such as **Mundra and Sassan in Gujarat** are struggling financially, causing stakeholders to lose confidence in investing in cleaner and advanced technology.
- **Launch More Ambitious Schemes:**  
The current energy efficiency schemes, including **performance and achieve trade scheme**, efficiency standards scheme and carbon pricing schemes, are **not ambitious enough to drive significant improvement.**
- **Adopting Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS):**
  - It is equally important to reduce emissions. It suggested India to include it as a part of its climate commitment.
  - CCUS is the **process of capturing waste CO<sub>2</sub>, transporting it to a storage site** and depositing it where it will not enter the atmosphere.

## Coal Burning and Pollution

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- **Coal Formation:**  
Formed deep underground over thousands of years of heat and pressure, **coal is a carbon-rich black rock** that releases energy when burned.
- **Air Pollution:**
  - When coal is burned, it releases a number of airborne toxins and pollutants.
  - They include **mercury, lead, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, particulates,** and various other **heavy metals.**
  - Health impacts can range from **asthma and breathing difficulties, to brain damage, heart problems, cancer, neurological disorders, and premature death.**
- **Water Pollution:**
  - The coal-fired power plants **produce more than 100 million tons of coal ash** every year.  
More than half of that waste ends up in **ponds, lakes, landfills, and other sites where, over time, it can contaminate waterways and drinking water supplies.**
  - Other water impacts include **acid rock drainage** from coal mines, the destruction of mountain streams and valleys by mountaintop removal mining, and the energy-water collisions that occur when coal plants rely too heavily on local water supplies.
- **Climate Change:**  
Coal is a large contributor to **Global Warming.**

- **Initiatives to Control Emissions from Power Plants:**

- **Exploring CCUS:**

- India is exploring its potential, as a plant at the industrial port of Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin has begun **capturing CO<sub>2</sub> from its own coal-powered boiler and using it to make baking soda.**

- **Emission Standard:**

- India has issued orders for **thermal power plants to comply with emissions standards for installing Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) units** that cut emissions of toxic sulphur dioxide.

- **Graded Action Plan:**

- The Ministry of Power has proposed a "**graded action plan,**" whereby areas where plants are located would be graded according to the severity of pollution, with Region 1 referring to critically polluted areas, and Region 5 being the least polluted.

## **International Energy Agency's Clean Coal Centre**

- **About:**

- It is a **technology collaboration programme**, organised under the **International Energy Agency**.

- **Members:**

- It has **17 members**, made up of **contracting parties and sponsoring organisations**.
  - India's **Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)** is a sponsoring organisation.

- **Location:**

- Based in **London** with a team of engineers, scientists and other experts.

- **Support:**

- It is supported financially by **national governments** (contracting parties) and by **corporate industrial organisations**.

- **Mission:**

- To provide independent information and analysis on how coal can become a cleaner source of energy, compatible with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**.
  - To **address the role of coal in the energy** trilemma and the need to balance security of supply, affordability and environmental issues.
  - To **focus on reducing emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other pollutants** from coal use through **High Efficiency, Low Emissions (HELE) technologies**.

**Source:DTE**

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**Securities Appellate Tribunal**

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## Why in News

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Recently, the **Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT)** stayed the order passed by **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** that had put a one-year ban on a retail company Chairperson and some other promoters from the securities market.

## Key Points

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- **About:**

SAT is a **statutory body** established under the provisions of Section 15K of the **SEBI Act, 1992**.

- **Location:**

Mumbai.

- **Composition:**

SAT consists of a **Presiding Officer** and **Two other members**.

The Presiding officer of SAT shall be **appointed by the Central Government** in consultation with the **Chief Justice of India** or his nominee.

- **Powers:**

It has the **same powers as vested in a civil court**. Further, if any person feels aggrieved by SAT's decision or order can appeal to the **Supreme Court**.

- **Functions:**

- To **hear and dispose of appeals against orders passed by the SEBI** or by an adjudicating officer under the SEBI Act,1992.
- To hear and dispose of appeals against orders passed by the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.
- To hear and dispose of appeals against orders passed by the **Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**.

## Securities and Exchange Board of India

- **About:**

- SEBI is a **statutory body** established in 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the **SEBI Act, 1992**.
- Initially, SEBI was a non-statutory body. In April, **1988 the SEBI was constituted as the regulator of capital markets** in India under a resolution of the Government of India.

The term **capital market** refers to facilities and institutional arrangements through which long-term funds, both debt and equity are raised and invested.

- **Headquarters:**

- The headquarters of SEBI is situated in **Mumbai**.
- The regional offices of SEBI are located in **Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Delhi**.



- **Composition:**
  - All decisions taken by SEBI are collectively taken by its Board that consists of a **Chairman and eight other members.**
  - SEBI also **appoints various committees**, whenever required to look into the pressing issues of that time.
- **Function:**
  - To protect the interests of investors in securities and to **promote and regulate the securities market.**
    - **Securities** are **tradable financial instruments used to raise capital** in public and private markets.
    - There are primarily **three types of securities: equity**—which provides ownership rights to holders; **debt**—essentially loans repaid with periodic payments; and **hybrids**—which combine aspects of debt and equity.
  - **Registering** and regulating the working of **stock brokers, merchant bankers, underwriters, portfolio managers, investment advisers** and such other intermediaries who may be associated with securities markets in any manner.
  - SEBI is a **quasi-legislative, quasi-judicial and quasi-executive body.** It can **draft regulations, conduct inquiries, pass rulings and impose penalties.**

Source:IE

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## Khwaja Monuddin Chishti

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### Why in News

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Recently a 'Chadar' was offered on behalf of Prime Minister at the Ajmer Sharif Dargah of **Sufi Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti** on the occasion of 809<sup>th</sup> Urs.

The Urs festival is an annual festival held at Ajmer in Rajasthan which commemorates the death anniversary of Sufi saint Moinuddin Chishti.

### Key Points

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- **About Sufism:**
  - Sufism is a **mystical form of Islam**, a school of practice that focuses on the spiritual search for God and shuns materialism.
  - It is a form of Islamic mysticism which **stresses on asceticism.** There is a lot of emphasis on devotion towards God.
  - In Sufism, **self discipline** is considered an essential condition to gain knowledge of God by sense of perception.
  - Unlike orthodox Muslims which emphasise on external conduct, the Sufis **lay stress on inner purity.**
  - Sufis believe **service to humanity** is tantamount to service to God.

- **Etymology:**

The term 'Sufi' is probably derived from the Arabic 'suf' word which means 'one who wears wool'. This is because woollen clothes were generally associated with ascetics. Another possible origin of the word is 'safa' which means purity in Arabic.

- **Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti:**

- Moinuddin Hasan Chishti was **born in Sijistan (modern-day Sistan) in Iran** in 1141-42 CE.
- After Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam of Ghor had already defeated Prithviraj Chauhan in the Second Battle of Tarain (1192) and established his rule in Delhi, **Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti started living and preaching in Ajmer.**
- His instructive discourses, full of spiritual insights, soon drew the local populace as well as kings and nobles and peasants and the poor from far and wide.
- **His shrine in Ajmer** has been visited by rulers like Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Sher Shah Suri, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Dara Shukoh and Aurangzeb.

- **Chishti Order (Chishtiya):**

- Chishtiya Order was founded in India by Khwaja Moin-Uddin Chishti.
- It emphasised the doctrine of the unity of being with God (wahdat al-wujūd) and members of the order were also pacifists.
- They **rejected all material goods** as distractions from the contemplation of God.
- They **abstained from connection with the secular state.**
- Recitation of the names of God, both aloud and silently (dhikr jahrī, dhikr khafī), formed the cornerstone of Chishtī practice.
- The Chishty teachings were carried forward and popularized by **disciples of Khwaja Moin-Uddin Chishti** like Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Fareeduddin Ganj-e-Shakar, Nizam uddin Auliya and Naseeruddin Charagh.

- **Other Major Sufi Orders:**

- **Suhrawardi Order:**

- It was **founded by Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul.**
- The Suhrawardis, unlike the Chishtis, accepted maintenance grants from the Sultans.

- **Naqshbandi Order:**

- It was **founded by the Khwaja Baha-ul-din Naqsh band.**
- In **India**, this order was **established by Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi.**
- From the beginning, the mystics of this Order **stressed on the observance of the Shariat.**

- **Qadiriyya Order:**

- It was **popular in Punjab.**
- **Sheikh Abdul Qadir of Badaun** founded it in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- They were **supporters of the Mughals** under Akbar.

**Source:PIB**

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# Maharaja Suheldev

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## Why in News

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The Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone of a **Maharaja Suheldev memorial** and the **development work of Chittaura lake** in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich district.

## Key Points

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- **About Maharaja Suheldev:**

- He was the **erstwhile ruler of Shravasti** in Uttar Pradesh's (UP) Bahraich district, who ruled in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.
- He is known in history for waging **guerrilla warfare against Mahmud Ghazni's large army**.
- Suheldev was deeply moved by the loot and destruction of the magnificent Somnath temple by invader Mahmud Ghazni that he decided to **gather heads of different communities like Tharu and Banjara** as well as small kings to block the invasion.

His army defeated and **killed Ghazi Salar Masud**, the nephew of Mahmud Ghazni, at Bahraich.

- Raja Suheldev finds **mention in 'Mirat-i-Masudi'**, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Persian-language historical account.  
'Mirat-i-Masudi' is the **biography of Salar Masud**, written by Abd-ur-Rahman Chishti during the reign of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (1605–1627).
- In local folklore, Suheldev is **said to be a Rajbhar**.
- He is **popular as a caste icon** among the **Rajbhars (OBC)** and the **Pasis** (second largest Dalit caste in UP), both of whom have been competing for his legacy and are predominantly found in central and eastern UP.

- **Chittaura Lake:**

- The Chittaura Jheel is located in the Bahraich District near the village Chittaur in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Teri Nadi**, a small river originates from this lake which is a home to many migratory birds.
- Being a Hindu pilgrimage site, many fairs are held near this lake during Kartik Purnima and Vasant Panchami.
- There is an ashram where **Muni Ashtwarka** used to live and this site also **witnessed the epic fight between Ghazi Salar Masud and Raja Suheldev** in the year 1033.
- There is a **temple complex with the statue of Raja Suheldev and temple dedicated to Goddess Durga** situated here.

**Source: IE**

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# New York Convention

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## Why in News

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Recently, **Cairn Energy** has filed a case, in accordance with the **New York Convention**, in the USA district court to enforce a USD 1.2 billion arbitration award it **won in a tax dispute against India**.

## Key Points

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- **About:**
  - The **Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards**, also known as the "**New York Arbitration Convention**" or the "**New York Convention**", is one of the key **instruments in international arbitration**.

**Arbitration** is a procedure in which a dispute is submitted, by agreement of the parties, to one or more arbitrators (an independent person/body) who make a binding decision on the dispute.
  - It applies to the **recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards** and the **referral by a court to arbitration**.
  - The Convention was adopted by the **United Nations (UN)** following a diplomatic conference held in May and June 1958 at the UN Headquarters in New York, and entered into force on **7<sup>th</sup> June, 1959**.
- **Parties to Convention:**
  - The Convention has **166 state parties** (Countries).
  - **India** is a party to the Convention.
- **Aim:**
  - The Convention's principal aim is that **foreign and non-domestic arbitral awards should not be discriminated against by courts** asked to enforce them.

It obliges Contracting States to ensure foreign awards are recognised and generally capable of enforcement in their jurisdiction in the same way as domestic awards.
  - To require courts of Contracting States to **uphold valid arbitration agreements and stay court proceedings** in respect of matters which the parties have agreed should be resolved by arbitration.

By signing up to the Convention, a **state agrees that its courts will respect and enforce parties' agreements to arbitrate, and to recognise and enforce any resulting arbitral award in its jurisdiction** subject to only very limited grounds for refusal.

**Source:TH**

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# Coelacanth

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## Why in News

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Recently, a group of palaeontologists have **discovered fossils of coelacanth, a giant fish regarded as an iconic example of a “living fossil.”**

The **discovered fossil** of Coelacanth is **believed to be 66 million years old** belonging to the **Cretaceous era.**

## Key Points

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- **About:**
  - Coelacanths are **elusive, deep-sea creatures**, living in depths up to 2,300 feet below the surface.
  - These were **thought to have gone extinct with the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.** But its **discovery in 1938** started a debate about how this lobe-finned fish fits into the evolution of land animals.
- **Two Species:**

There are only two known species of coelacanths: one that lives near the **Comoros Islands** off the east coast of Africa, and one found in the waters off **Sulawesi**, Indonesia.
- **Living Fossil:**
  - Living Fossil is an organism that has remained unchanged from earlier geologic times and whose close relatives are usually extinct. Other than Coelacanth, **Horseshoe crab** and **ginkgo trees** are examples of living **fossils.**
  - However, in their new study, palaeontologists have found that Coelacanths gained 62 new genes through encounters with other species 10 million years ago. This suggests that they are actually evolving, albeit slowly.

- **Protection Status:**
  - **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered  
**Sulawesi Coelacanth** is listed as ‘**vulnerable**’.
  - **CITES Status:** Appendix I

**Source:DTE**

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## **Sandes: Government Instant Messaging System**

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### **Why in News**

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**The National Informatics Centre (NIC)** has launched an **instant messaging platform called Sandes** on the lines of WhatsApp.

NIC is under the aegis of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**. It provides network backbone and e-Governance support to the Central Government, State Governments and UT Administrations.

### **Key Points**

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- **Sandes App:**
  - **About:**

It is a **Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS)** that can be used for official or casual use by any Government employee or public user having a valid Mobile No./Email ID.
  - **Features:**
    - It offers features such as group making, broadcast message, message forwarding and emojis.
    - Although there is **no option to transfer the chat history between two platforms**, the **chats on GIMS can be backed up** to a users’ email.
    - The **user will have to re-register as a new user** in case they wish to change their registered Email Id or phone number on the App.
    - It **allows a user to mark a message as confidential**, which will allow the recipient to be made aware the message should not be shared with others.
- **Significance:**
  - **Ensures Secure Communication:**

The **Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In)** and the **Ministry of Home Affairs** in April, 2020 had **issued an advisory to all government employees to avoid using platforms like Zoom** for official communication over safety and privacy concerns.
  - **Promoting Indigenous Products:**

The launch of the App is also **a part of the government strategy to push for use of India-made software** so as to build an ecosystem of indigenously developed products.

**Source:IE**

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