

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****The Changing Landscape of Multilateralism**

**In Context-** In recent times, the global and regional multilateral order has faced unprecedented challenges, with the East Asia Summit in Jakarta and the G20 summit in Delhi underscoring the deep-seated crises in the existing multilateral framework.

**About Multilateralism:**

- ✓ The concept of multilateralism, as described by the United Nations, is challenging to encapsulate with a single definition. In essence, multilateralism entails a collaborative framework involving a minimum of three participating States, setting it apart from bilateral and unilateral approaches.
- ✓ However, it's important to note that the essence of multilateralism extends beyond the mere number of involved actors. It hinges on the shared pursuit of a common objective grounded in the adherence to a collective set of norms and values.

**The Decline of Post-Cold War Multilateralism**

- ✓ Post-Cold War multilateralism, once at its zenith, is now in decline both globally and regionally. This decline is not only marked by the notable absence of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping at these summits but also by the intensifying conflicts these nations have with the rest of the world.
- ✓ Russia's conflict with the West over Ukraine and China's disputes with numerous Asian neighbours, including India, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam, as well as the United States, exemplify the eroding state of multilateralism.

**The Evolution of Multilateralism**

- ✓ The post-Cold War era in the 1990s saw the flourishing of multilateralism, facilitated by Europe's regional integration under the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Asia.
- ✓ Great power rivalry dwindled, as Russia engaged with Western countries, and China became a close partner with the United States, leading to enhanced cooperation on global issues such as non-proliferation, climate change, and pandemics.
- ✓ China's integration into the World Trade Organization in 2001 boosted its economy, establishing it as the world's second-largest after the United States.

**Challenges to Multilateralism**

- ✓ Challenges within the current multilateral global order include the rise of unilateralism and protectionism, exemplified by the "America First" policy, Brexit, and the USA's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.
- ✓ Additionally, exclusive and unresponsive multilateral institutions like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) pose concerns as they often prioritise the interests of powerful nations. Moreover, influential countries sometimes interfere in the functioning of global bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), potentially compromising their impartiality and effectiveness.
- ✓ Further, the 2008 global financial crisis exposed the fragility of the international economic order, necessitating the expansion of the G7 to include middle powers.
- ✓ Just as multilateralism gained momentum, internal contradictions emerged. Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 marked a significant crisis, while China's unilateral territorial expansionism and manipulation of global economic dependence posed further challenges.
- ✓ In response to China's actions, new security institutions have emerged, including the Quadrilateral Forum (Quad), AUKUS, and trilateral compacts in Northeast Asia. These developments have raised questions about the continued relevance of ASEAN in shaping the regional order in Asia.

**India's Shift in Perspective**

- ✓ Adapting to Emerging Realities: India's initial post-Cold War stance involved aligning with China to promote a multipolar world, countering American unilateralism. However, as economic and security threats from China mounted, India shifted its focus from a "unipolar world" led by the United States to a "unipolar Asia" dominated by Beijing.
- ✓ Positive US Engagement: Crucially, expansive and positive engagement between India and the United States played a pivotal role in India's shift. This engagement led India to embrace the Indo-Pacific concept and revitalize the Quadrilateral Forum (Quad).

**India's New Multilateralism**

- ✓ The Quad's Role: India emphasizes that the Quad complements ASEAN's efforts to enhance regional stability through heightened security cooperation.
- ✓ Re-globalization: India advocates for a more diversified and democratic form of globalization that reduces dependence on China's manufacturing dominance.
- ✓ Addressing Global Issues: India actively pursues agreements on various significant issues within the G20, extending beyond the Ukraine crisis to encompass global tax reform and reforms in multilateral development banks.

- ✓ Concerns of the Global South: India seeks to bridge the gap between developing and developed countries within the G20, addressing the interests of the Global South. India's Emerging Role: Shaping the New Multilateral Paradigm
- ✓ Crucial Role in the Indo-Pacific Quadrilateral Forum: India's significance in the Quadrilateral Forum (Quad) is undeniable, as it actively contributes to regional stability through bilateral and multilateral security cooperation.
- ✓ Expanding the G20's Scope: India's efforts to broaden the G20's agenda to address the concerns of the Global South make it a central player in shaping the global order.
- ✓ Promotion of Balanced Globalization: India's advocacy for balanced globalization underscores its commitment to inclusive and equitable growth that benefits all nations.

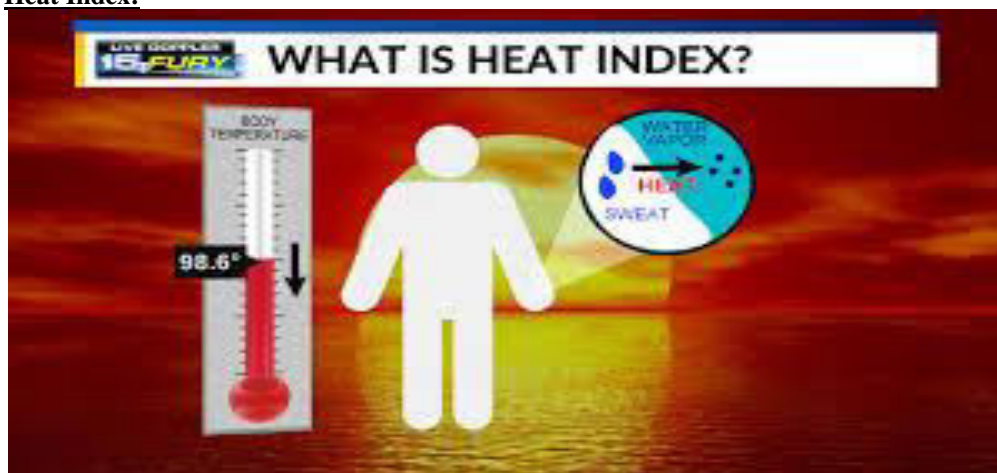
**What Can G-20 and India Contribute?**

- ✓ Addressing the challenges within multilateralism requires a multifaceted approach from the G-20 and India. Currently, the discourse on multilateral reform remains confined to elite circles and select national capitals, primarily among emerging powers.
- ✓ Therefore, the G-20 should prioritise the establishment of a robust narrative surrounding multilateral reform. To achieve this, the G-20 could establish a dedicated engagement group aimed at elevating the discussion on multilateral reform to a global platform.
- ✓ Additionally, India can play a pivotal role by urging Brazil and South Africa, the upcoming chairs of the G-20, to make multilateral reforms a central focus during their presidencies. Given their aspirations for global prominence, this should align with their objectives more easily.
- ✓ While many global challenges necessitate collective solutions and international cooperation, it is crucial to acknowledge the inherent limitations of multilateral collaboration. Competing interests and the dominance of powerful states will persist within multilateral forums. Therefore, alongside supporting traditional multilateral efforts, the G-20 should actively promote minilateral groupings as an alternative form of multilateralism.
- ✓ These minilateral groupings can be transformed into multi-stakeholder partnerships, particularly in areas concerning the governance of global resources and common spaces.
- ✓ This approach can help prevent the emergence of competitive coalitions where other actors seek to exploit the situation to their advantage, potentially leading to a fragmented global order. It's worth noting that most attempts at multilateral reform have yet to address this issue comprehensively.
- ✓ To address the trust deficit, legitimacy concerns, and questions about the effectiveness of multilateralism, the world needs a model, and the G-20 has the potential to serve as one. However, to fulfill this role effectively, the group must become more inclusive while maintaining efficiency.
- ✓ For instance, making the African Union a permanent member and granting permanent invitee status to the UN Secretary-General and General Assembly President could enhance the G-20's legitimacy and its ability to serve as a global model for multilateral cooperation.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, India's burgeoning role in shaping new regional and global frameworks reflects the evolving landscape of multilateralism. While the old order grapples with deepening crises, India stands poised to make significant contributions to the development of multilateral cooperation, prioritizing inclusivity and the balance of global interests.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Heat Index:**



**In Context:** Earlier in August, Iran recorded a scorching heat index of 70 degrees Celsius (°C) in the coastal part of the country, a metric at which survival of life is unfathomable, if not impossible. The country had also declared public holidays on August 2 and 3 on account of "unprecedented heat".

### Heat Index

- ✓ Heat index, also known as **apparent temperature**, is a measure of how the temperature feels to humans.
- ✓ Relative humidity is an important factor that determines heat index, along with air temperature.

### How is the heat index calculated?

- ✓ **Dew point**, which is the temperature at which gas is transformed into a liquid state, is an important factor in the calculation of heat index.
- ✓ In terms of atmospheric moisture, it's the temperature at which air cannot hold any more water vapour, and droplets of water begin to form.
- ✓ Some countries have developed their own corresponding indices to measure heat index.

### Measurement of Heat Index

- ✓ It will aid people in comprehending the effect of humidity on high temperatures.
- ✓ This index's data could be used to detect the heat implications for humans and to comprehend temperature ranges that cause discomfort.
- ✓ It will also aid in directing folks to take extra precautions to alleviate discomfort.
- ✓ It will display the minimum and maximum temperatures for the day, as well as how the current temperature feels.
- ✓ It will make use of data on air temperature and relative humidity.
- ✓ However, it is experimental, and there is a need to modify and validate it for Indian conditions.

### Impact of Humidity

- ✓ High humidity can lead to heat stress; meaning the body is unable to get rid of excess heat. Humans usually maintain a core temperature in the range of 36.1 to 37.2 °C.
- ✓ When the body is unable to get rid of excess heat, the heart rate increases due to a rise in core temperature, leading to heat-related exhaustion and rashes, among other symptoms. It can also be fatal if not addressed promptly.
- ✓ At high temperatures, the human body can lose excess heat through perspiration and cool itself. But when humidity is high as well, it is difficult to sweat and then for that sweat to evaporate because the air around is already saturated with moisture. This makes it difficult for the body to lose heat.
- ✓ On the other hand, if the humidity is low, evaporation of sweat is easier, thus making the apparent temperature feel close to the actual air temperature.
- ✓ This is why a measure of heat index is more useful than just the temperature to gauge the impact of heat on humans.

### IMD's Initiatives and Tools to Combat Heat Waves

- ✓ Heat wave forecasts must be issued on time to keep the people informed.
- ✓ Warnings were issued to disaster management authorities in order for them to be prepared.
- ✓ IMD provides Seasonal outlook and long-term prediction provide more insight into temperature trends.
- ✓ Forecasts for the next five days, updated in real time.
- ✓ Color-coded extreme weather alerts, including heat waves.
- ✓ Heat action plans will be developed in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and local health agencies.
- ✓ Plan implementation in susceptible areas to reduce heat-related dangers.

### Effects of Heat Stress

- ✓ Thermal discomfort affects a variety of activities and jobs.
- ✓ Workers have to deal with extreme heat stress, which can hurt their work and productivity and even put their lives at risk.
- ✓ Occupational health risks ultimately affect the nation's income and economy.
- ✓ In India, about 75 per cent of workers, which is around 380 million people, experience heat-related stress. The increasing heat intensity poses a substantial risk to human health and life.
- ✓ This extreme heat is a health hazard and has continued to grow as a disease burden over the past few years.
- ✓ Human health can be severely affected. It can cause dehydration, acute cerebrovascular accidents and blood clots, which result in cramps, exhaustion, stress, heat stroke and even death in extreme cases.
- ✓ The elderly, children, people with psychiatric disorders and other diseases are particularly impacted.
- ✓ A significant number of deaths have been reported in different parts of the world due to heat

## PRELIM FACTS

### 1. Plastic Pollution Treaty, Zero Draft:

**In Context:** The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee's (INC) second meeting concluded with member nations directing the INC secretariat to prepare a zero draft to eradicate plastic pollution, notably in the marine environment.

### Concerning the Zero Draft Plastic Pollution Treaty:

- ✓ It is a legally binding international agreement to end plastic pollution, notably in the marine environment.

- ✓ The zero draft has ten placeholders for matters such as the prologue, definitions, principles, and scope, as well as institutional arrangements and final clauses.
- ✓ At INC-2, member governments including Saudi Arabia, Iran, and China emphasized the significance of clarifying the extent of the legally binding instrument.
- ✓ This idea had been accepted by India.

**India's Plastic Pollution:**

- ✓ According to the Central Pollution Control Board, plastic trash accounts for 8% of total solid waste, with Delhi contributing the most, followed by Kolkata and Ahmedabad.
- ✓ India produces more than 3 million tons of plastic waste, but the recycling rate for the total plastic waste stands at just 30%.

**2. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Scheme:**

**IN CONTEXT:** The Scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for the development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) was recently authorized by the Union Cabinet, which is chaired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

**Concerning Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS):**

- ✓ The approved scheme calls for the construction of 4,000 MWh of BESS projects by 2030-31.
- ✓ The union government provides financial support of up to 40% of the capital expenditure as budgetary support in the form of Viability Gap Funding (VGF).
- ✓ The VGF will be distributed in five tranches in accordance with the various stages of BESS project implementation.
- ✓ The project aims to achieve a Levelized Cost of Storage (LCoS) of Rs. 5.50-6.60 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) by granting VGF support, making stored renewable energy a viable option for controlling peak electricity demand across the country.
- ✓ To ensure that the scheme's advantages reach consumers, Distribution Companies (Discoms) will be given access to at least 85% of the BESS project capacity.
- ✓ A transparent, competitive bidding process will be used to choose BESS developers for VGF grants, fostering a level playing field for both public and private sector companies.
- ✓ Importance: This will not only improve the integration of renewable energy into the power grid, but it will also reduce waste while optimizing transmission network utilization.
- ✓ This reduces the need for expensive infrastructure changes.
- ✓ The competitive bidding process method will stimulate healthy competition and the development of a robust ecosystem for BESS, drawing large investments and creating possibilities for related sectors.
- ✓ This project intends to offer clean, reliable, and inexpensive electricity to citizens by harnessing the potential of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power.

About battery storage: Battery storage, also known as battery energy storage systems (BESS), are technologies that allow renewable energy sources such as solar and wind to be stored and then released as needed.

**3. Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF):**

**IN CONTEXT:** Disbursal of funds to strengthen agricultural infrastructure through setting up of warehouses and other projects under the ₹1-lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) has been slow as primary agri co-operative societies (PACS) have been laggards in setting up the much-required infrastructure.

**Issues concerning agriculture-infrastructure**

- ✓ About 40% of primary produce like grains, fruits and vegetables is lost before it reaches the market, due to lack of proper handling, cleaning, sorting, grading and packaging facilities at the village level.
- ✓ The unreasonably long supply chain results in a steep increase in the total cost owing to procurement, transit and other taxes and service charges levied at various layers.
- ✓ Due to such inefficiencies in the supply chain, it has been estimated that the price received by the farmers is only in the range of 25-60% of what the consumer pays.
- ✓ Strengthening the supply chain can benefit the consumers and producers by 20-25% in cost reduction.
- ✓ According to one report, the food processing industry is expected to reach Rs 4,000 billion by 2015 contributing around 6.5% to the GDP.

**About Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)**

- ✓ The fund has been launched as part of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) to make farmers self-reliant.
- ✓ It is a pan India Central Sector Scheme, under the scheme, Rs. One Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans.
- ✓ The AIF scheme shall provide a medium – long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management Infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support.
- ✓ Duration of the Scheme: FY2020 to FY2029 (10 years).

- ✓ Eligibility: Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), Marketing Cooperative Societies, Farmer producer organisations (FPOs), SHGs, Farmers, Joint Liability Groups (JLG), Multipurpose Cooperative Societies etc.
- ✓ Interest Subvention: All loans under this financing facility will have interest subvention of 3% per annum up to a limit of Rs. 2 crore. This subvention will be available for a maximum period of seven years.
- ✓ Credit guarantee: under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme for a loan up to Rs. 2 crore.
- ✓ Management of Fund : Monitored through an advance online Management Information System (MIS) platform.

#### 4. Africa Climate Summit 2023:

**In context:** Recently, Africa Climate Summit 2023 (ACW23) held in Nairobi, Kenya, on September 4, 2023.

- ✓ **Global Climate Action:** President Ruto stressed the urgency of addressing climate change despite Africa's small carbon footprint. Urged actions over debates about Global North vs. Global South or developed vs. developing countries.
- ✓ **Youth and Workforce Potential:** By 2050, Africa to have over 25% of the global workforce and nearly 40% by 2100.
- ✓ **Renewable Energy Potential:** Africa's vast renewable energy resources, including wind, solar, and hydro, can make the continent energy self-sufficient. Opportunity to support other nations in achieving net-zero goals by 2050.
- ✓ **Kenya's Renewable Progress:** Kenya's achievements with renewables, aiming for 100% renewable energy by 2030 and 100 gigawatts entirely renewable by 2040.
- ✓ **Summit Theme and Significance:**
  - Theme: "Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World."
  - Outcomes crucial for African consensus and action leading up to COP28 under UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

#### 5. International Literacy Day:

- ✓ UNESCO will celebrate International Literacy Day (ILD) on 8 September 2023 under the theme 'Promoting literacy for a world in transition: Building the foundation for sustainable and peaceful societies'.
- ✓ Sustainable Development Goal 4 is about quality education and is among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in September 2015.

### ANSWER WRITING

**Q. Values based education is the foundation for the character building of society. Comment.**

**Introduction:**

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” – **Nelson Mandela**  
Education is a process of gaining the knowledge and developing a critical & rational thinking. It helps people to self-growth as well create a faculty of reason to distinguish between right and wrong. School is the first formal unit of bringing change in the behaviour of the child. It teaches moral values of sharing, caring, respect for elders, honesty, dutifulness etc. Values are enduring quality/standards of behaviour which guide people's behaviour. Such values are acquired on the basis of socialization, knowledge, awareness, experiences etc. Education is important part of formalisation process. Value inculcation is inherent aspect of education. Value based education seeks to inculcate the ethical and moral values among the children so that they become the responsible citizens of tomorrow.

**These values are inculcated through:**

- ✓ Knowledge and information about the great personalities like Buddha, Gandhiji in books.
- ✓ Teacher - student interaction/relation leads to inculcation of values such as respect, discipline.
- ✓ Various extra-curricular activities in schools and colleges and peer-to-peer interaction leads to development of values like sharing, caring, compassion, cooperation.

**Why values based education is the foundation for the character building of society?**

- ✓ Value based education inculcates good values such as honesty, compassion, responsibility etc. Over the period, good values help in building good character. It reflects through good conduct and behaviour. Person with good character is trusted and appreciated by others. This promotes good inter-personal and trustworthy relations.
- ✓ It creates a feeling of sense of satisfaction. When person has good values system, he/she will feel content even though there may not be successful life in career. E.g. selflessness is about acting without any motive & personal interest. It is act of 'Nishkaam Karma' i.e. do your duty, do not seek fruits. It brings happiness in life through satisfaction.
- ✓ Human values learned/promoted through education set the minimum and maximum standards of behaviour in public life. E.g. if person witnesses an accident on the road. The values of empathy and compassion will

