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18TH BRICS SUMMIT: NEW DELHI DECLARATION

Context

- The **18th BRICS Summit**, hosted by India in New Delhi recently, adopted the **New Delhi Declaration**, reaffirming reformed multilateralism amid wars, protectionism and unilateral actions by major powers.

Key Highlights of New Delhi Declaration

- **Reformed Multilateralism:** Members reiterated support for a more democratic, representative, accountable and effective international order, with the **UN at its centre**.
- **UNSC Reforms:** BRICS backed comprehensive **UN Security Council (UNSC)** reform and greater representation of developing countries.
 - ♦ **China and Russia**, as permanent members, reiterated support for the aspirations of **Brazil and India** for a greater role, including in the UNSC.
- **Global South:** The grouping reaffirmed its role as a voice for **Emerging Markets and Developing Countries (EMDCs)** and Least Developed Countries, particularly from Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- **Trade & Finance:** It opposed unilateral tariffs, non-tariff barriers and coercive sanctions, while **supporting WTO reform**, restoration of its two-tier dispute-settlement mechanism and greater EMDC representation in the **IMF and World Bank**.
- **Intra-BRICS Trade:** Members supported deeper economic cooperation, resilient supply chains and practical solutions for **cross-border payments and trade settlements in local currencies**.
- **Conflicts:** The Declaration condemned unilateral wars and stressed dialogue, preventive diplomacy and peaceful dispute settlement.
 - ♦ It took a particularly strong position on **Palestine and Lebanon**, including humanitarian access, Palestinian self-determination and the two-state solution.
- **West Asia Compromise:** References to the **U.S.-Israel attacks on Iran, assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Iran's retaliatory attacks, including on the UAE**, were omitted reportedly as a last-minute compromise between Iran and the UAE.

- **Terrorism:** BRICS strongly condemned the **22 April 2025 terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir**, in which **26 people were killed**, and called for zero tolerance towards terrorism and its financing.

Significance of the Declaration

- The Summit demonstrated that BRICS can forge consensus despite sharp geopolitical differences.
 - ♦ Its success rested on **high-level participation, emphasis on intra-BRICS trade mechanisms and consensus-building during wartime**.
- India's **fourth BRICS chairship** strengthened its image as a **Global South balancer** with access to competing geopolitical camps.
- It facilitated the highest-level **Iran-UAE bilateral meeting since the war began**.
- India's engagement with **Iran** helped address concerns over its perceived tilt towards the US and Israel, and its meeting with **China** provided space to reaffirm political will to normalise ties, while outreach to **ASEAN and African leaders** reinforced India's wider partnerships.
 - ♦ India hosted **over 400 BRICS meetings and engagements across 30 Indian cities**, broadening institutional and people-to-people cooperation.

Concerns & Issues Ahead

- **Internal Divergences:** India-China tensions, Iran-UAE differences and differing approaches to global conflicts can constrain consensus.
- **Saudi Arabia's Ambiguity:** Saudi Arabia has not formally joined BRICS; Foreign Minister **Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud** arrived after the main session that adopted the joint statement.
- **Implementation Deficit:** Declarations on UNSC, IMF, WTO reform and local-currency trade require concrete institutional outcomes.
- **Geopolitical Polarisation:** BRICS needs to avoid becoming merely an anti-Western bloc while retaining strategic autonomy.

Way Forward: Strengthening Measures

- Convert declarations into **time-bound implementation roadmaps**.

- Deepen **local-currency settlements, interoperable payment systems and intra-BRICS trade.**
- Build consensus through **issue-based coalitions**, rather than forcing uniform positions.
- Strengthen BRICS' role in **UN, IMF, World Bank and WTO reforms.**
- Expand cooperation in health, technology, climate resilience, food security and counter-terrorism.

BRICS

- Originally **BRIC** (2001, coined by Jim O'Neill), and became **BRICS in 2010** with the inclusion of South Africa.
- **Members:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, and membership was expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia.
- **Objectives:**
 - ♦ Promote **multipolar world order;**
 - ♦ Reform **global financial institutions like IMF, World Bank, UNSC;**
 - ♦ Enhance **South-South cooperation;**
 - ♦ Support **sustainable development and inclusive growth**
- **Significance:**
 - ♦ The total GDP of the BRICS nations in nominal dollar terms as of 2026 is over US\$ 32 trillion, accounting for 28–30% of global GDP.
 - ♦ In Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms, the BRICS is US\$ 78 trillion, representing more than 40% of global GDP, **surpassing the G7's 27.8% share** in PPP terms.

Institutional Mechanisms

- **New Development Bank (NDB), 2014:**
 - ♦ **Headquarter:** Shanghai
 - ♦ **Purpose:** Finance infrastructure & sustainable development projects
 - ♦ Seen as an alternative to World Bank/IMF dominance
- **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA):**
 - ♦ Provides liquidity support during financial crises
 - ♦ Helps reduce dependence on Western-led financial systems

BRICS Presidency

- BRICS Presidency refers to the **annual rotating chairmanship**, where one member country leads the forum for a year.
 - ♦ Each country acts as **chair (host) for one year**
 - ♦ It rotates among members in **alphabetical order.**

Source: MEA

UNITED NATIONS CHIEF BACKS DEMAND FOR EXPANSION OF SECURITY COUNCIL

Context

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres backed the demand from the Global South to expand the UN Security Council at the BRICS Summit.

Need for the Reforms in the UNSC

- **Non-representative Council membership:** When the UN was founded in **1945**, the Council consisted of **11 members out of 51 members** of UN; around **22%**.
 - ♦ Today, there are 193 member-states of the UN, and only 15 members of the Council — **fewer than 8%.**
- **Inability to Address Conflicts:** The current composition of the council has an **inability to address critical conflicts** and maintain international peace and security.
- **Changes in World Order:** The world has undergone significant **changes since 1945** and the **new realities need to be reflected** in the permanent membership.
- **Veto Power:** Currently, **only the five permanent members** hold veto powers and through its use have stalled action in the Council to address global challenges and conflicts such as in Ukraine and Gaza.
 - ♦ The remaining 10 nations in the Council are elected to sit as non-permanent members for two-year terms and **do not have veto powers.**
- **Im-balance of Power:** The composition of the Council also gives undue weightage to the balance of power of those days.
 - ♦ Europe, accounting for **5%** of the world's population, controls **33%** of the seats in any given year (and that does not count Russia, another European power).

- **Legitimacy:** The disproportionate power held by the five permanent members, particularly their veto power **lead to a perception of unfairness and lack of legitimacy.**

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- It is one of the **UN's six main organs** and is aimed at maintaining international peace and security.
- It held its first session on **17th January 1946** in Westminster, London.
- **Headquarters:** New York City.
- **Membership:** The Council is composed of 15 Members.
 - ♦ **Five Permanent members with veto power:** China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.
 - ♦ Ten Non Permanent members

Election of Non Permanent members

- Each year the **General Assembly elects five non-permanent members** (out of 10 in total) for a **two-year term**.
- The 10 non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis as follows:
 - ♦ Five for African and Asian States;
 - ♦ One for the Eastern European States;
 - ♦ Two for the Latin American and Caribbean States;
 - ♦ Two for Western European and other States.
- To be elected to the Council, candidate countries need a **two-thirds majority** of ballots of the Member States that are present and voting in the Assembly.
 - ♦ The elections were held with each of the **193 member states casting its vote in a secret ballot.**
- More than 50 United Nations Member States have never been Members of the Security Council.
 - ♦ **India** last sat at the UN high table as a non-permanent member in **2021-22.**

India's Position for a Permanent Seat

- **Demographic Weight:** India, as the world's largest democracy, represents one-sixth of its total population.

- ♦ India also supports greater representation for **Africa, Latin America and other developing regions**, linking UNSC reform with a stronger voice for the Global South.
- **Economic Powerhouse:** India ranks among the **top three** in purchasing power parity, with estimates placing its 2026 GDP PPP around **\$20 trillion**.
 - ♦ It influences global trade flows, technology supply chains, energy markets, and developmental finance.
- **Military advancement:** India's armed forces are among the world's largest, and it is among the top defence spenders, with its 2026 defence budget reaching a record **\$86 billion**.
 - ♦ India is currently among the few countries with a credible **nuclear triad**.
- **Contribution to international peace and security:** Its troop contribution has been one of the largest since **1948**, despite suffering one of the highest numbers of fatalities among UN peacekeeping contributors.
 - ♦ This reflects India's commitment to **multilateralism** and its willingness to support UN mandates at all costs.
- **Voice of the Global South:** India demonstrated its leadership in the **International Solar Alliance, Global Biofuels Alliance, G20 presidency**, and the **AI Impact Summit in the Global South** etc.
- **On maritime security,** its role in the Indian Ocean shows a strong commitment to freedom of navigation and adherence to the **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea** and its institutions, such as the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea**.
- **BRICS Support:** The **BRICS New Delhi Declaration** called for comprehensive UN reform, including reform of the Security Council, to make it more democratic, representative, effective and efficient.
 - ♦ **China and Russia**, both permanent members of the UNSC, reiterated support for the aspirations of **India and Brazil** to play a greater role in the UN, including the Security Council.

Challenges to Reform

- **Complex Amendment Process:** Any reform requires approval by two-thirds of the UN General Assembly and ratification by all five permanent members. This makes institutional reform extremely difficult.
- **Coffee Club: Uniting for Consensus (UfC)** or Coffee Club, is a movement that developed in the 1990s in opposition to the possible expansion of permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council.
 - ♦ **Under the leadership of Italy**, it aims to counter the bids for permanent seats proposed by **G4 nations (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan)**.
- **Question of veto for new members:** There is no consensus on whether an expanded permanent membership should also receive veto rights.

Concluding remarks

- India should continue advocating for a more representative and inclusive multilateral system that gives developing countries a meaningful role in global decision-making.
- The existing “**pyramid of privilege**” should be transformed into a “**platform of partnership**”, where every country has a voice and a stake in shaping global rules and institutions.

Source: IE

NEED FOR A SYSTEMIC APPROACH FOR INDIA'S ROAD SAFETY CHALLENGE

Context

- Recently, the Supreme Court asked the Road Transport Ministry to examine measures to reduce road traffic deaths by habituating the use of seat belts, helmets and child restraint systems.

Road Traffic Fatalities in India

- India accounts for nearly **11%** of global road traffic fatalities despite having around **1%** of the world's vehicles, reflecting the severity of its road-safety challenge.
- According to the National **Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, 1.99 lakh people died in **traffic accidents in 2024**, an increase of 0.79% compared to 2023.

- **Road Accidents:** Out of 1.99 lakh traffic-related deaths recorded in 2024, 1.75 lakh (88%) were due to road accidents.
- According to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways data, two-wheeler riders accounted for **46.2%** of road deaths in 2024, while pedestrians accounted for **20.6%**.

Reasons for Increased Numbers of Road Accidents in India

- **Overspeeding and Reckless Driving:** Overspeeding, dangerous overtaking, drunk driving, and mobile phone usage while driving are among major causes.
- **Poor Road Infrastructure:** Badly maintained roads, potholes, inadequate signage, poor lighting, and unsafe road design increase accident risks.
- **Weak Enforcement of Traffic Rules:** Inadequate monitoring and inconsistent enforcement of traffic laws lead to low compliance with safety regulations.
- **Lack of Proper Driver Training:** Weak licensing systems and insufficient driver education result in unskilled and irresponsible driving behaviour.
- **Rapid Growth of Vehicles and Traffic Congestion:** Increasing vehicle ownership without proportional expansion of road infrastructure creates chaotic and unsafe traffic conditions.
- **Weak Emergency and Trauma Care:** Delays in medical assistance and inadequate trauma care facilities, especially in rural areas, increase fatalities after accidents.

Need for the Safe System Approach

- **Safer Road Infrastructure:** Governments should identify and repair black spots and accident prone places by technical interventions, better junction design, illumination and adequate segregation of traffic.
- **Speed Management:** Roads should be constructed and regulated for the safe operating speed appropriate to the environment surrounding the roadways and especially in school zones and areas with high pedestrian activity.

- **Safer Vehicles:** Vehicle manufacturers should be encouraged or mandated to include effective seat-belt reminders and other safety systems that are difficult to disable or tamper with.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Users:** Road planning should give priority to pedestrians, cyclists, children and users of two-wheelers, who are less physically protected in the event of crashes.
- **Better Post-Crash Response:** Timely trauma care, emergency medical services and rapid delivery of victims to hospitals can greatly enhance survival following catastrophic crashes.

Measures Taken for Road Safety

- **Global measures:**
 - ♦ Road safety, a public health and development priority, is crucial to achieving the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
 - ♦ In 2020, the UN General Assembly launched the **Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030**, which aims to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by at least **50% by 2030**.
 - ♦ **Brasilia Declaration:** India was one amongst the initial 100+ countries to have signed the Brasilia Declaration in 2015 committing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3.6 i.e. to half the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030.
- **Steps taken by India:**
 - ♦ Implementation of the **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019**. The Act hike in penalties for traffic violations, electronic monitoring of the same, enhanced penalties for juvenile driving.
 - ♦ **Computerization/automation** of vehicle fitness tests, recall of defective vehicles, streamlining the third party insurance and payment of increased compensation for hit and run cases etc.
 - ♦ **Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR)/ Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD):** Centralized system for reporting, managing, and analyzing road accident data to improve safety.
 - ♦ **The Good Samaritan framework** seeks to encourage members of the public to assist road-crash victims without fear of unnecessary legal or procedural harassment.

Key Committees & Policy Frameworks

- **The Supreme Court's Committee on Road Safety (SCCoRS)** mandates the constitution of **District Road Safety Committees** in every district to improve road safety, as per The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.
- **Sundar Committee on Road Safety and Traffic Management (2005);**
 - ♦ It recommended the creation of a **National Road Safety Policy**, approved by the Union Cabinet in **2010**.
 - ♦ It also proposed the establishment of a **National Road Safety Board** to oversee safety regulations and enforcement.

Concluding remarks

- Reducing road fatalities requires India to treat road safety as a core public-policy priority rather than merely a matter of traffic-rule compliance.
- Strengthening enforcement must go hand in hand with safer infrastructure, responsible vehicle design, effective speed management and timely trauma care.

Source: TH

INDIA-AFRICA FORUM SUMMIT

Context

- India restarted discussion on the next **India-Africa Forum Summit on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit**.

India-Africa Forum

- The India-Africa Forum Summit is the **highest institutional platform** for cooperation between **India and African countries** under the leadership of the **African Union**.
- It was established in **2008**, and aims to strengthen **political dialogue, economic cooperation, trade, investment, technology transfer, capacity building and people-to-people relations** between India and Africa.
- It reflects a shared commitment to **South-South cooperation, inclusive development, multilateralism and sustainable partnerships**.
- After the inaugural 2008 summit, additional summits were held in **2011 and 2015**, the next summit is expected in 2026.

African Union

- **The African Union (AU)** is a continental body consisting of the **55 member states** that make up the countries of the African Continent.
- It was officially launched in **2002** as a **successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999)**.
- **Aim:** To realise Africa's potential and to focus towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa's growth and economic development.

India and Africa Relations

- **Increased Cooperation:** In the past decade, there have been nearly 50 high level visits from India to African countries and close to 100 visits from African leaders to India.
 - ♦ India has also opened 17 new diplomatic missions in Africa since 2018, taking its presence to 46 countries.
- **Bilateral Trade:** India is currently Africa's **fourth-largest** trading partner and among its top five investors.
 - ♦ For FY 2024-25, trade between India and Africa amounted to USD 81.99 billion (with India's export amounting to USD 42.6 billion and India's import amounting to USD 39.2 billion).
 - ♦ Africa accounts for **nearly 10 percent of India's energy imports**.
- **Investments:** India's cumulative investment in Africa has reached approximately USD 80 billion between 1996 and 2025, India is among Africa's **top five investors**.
 - ♦ India has provided more than 190 lines of credit worth more than 10 billion dollars to 41 African states so far.
 - ♦ A total of 220 projects worth 4.5 billion dollars have been completed.
- **Health:** India supplies nearly 50% of Africa's generic medicines and has been a reliable partner during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ♦ India is also expanding cooperation in pharmaceutical manufacturing in countries such as Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal, South Africa.
 - ♦ India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra has been set up in Mauritius in Africa.

- **Defence and Maritime Cooperation:** India contributes around five thousand peacekeepers to UN missions in Africa and has increased engagement in maritime security, anti-piracy operations and defence exports.
 - ♦ India conducts joint exercises such as the Africa-India Field Training Exercise (AFFINDEX) and organizes India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclaves.
- **Energy and Sustainability:** About 13% of India's total energy requirement comes from Africa.
 - ♦ 39 African countries have joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) so far, 9 African countries are members of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), and 11 African countries are members of the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA).
- **People to People Ties:** The Indian diaspora in Africa is estimated at around 3.5 million and plays a vital role in strengthening economic, cultural, and social linkages.
 - ♦ India has extended e-visa facilities to 33 African countries to promote tourism, trade, and cultural exchanges.
- **At the multilateral level,** India actively supports Africa's enhanced representation in global governance.
 - ♦ During its G20 Presidency, India played a key role in securing permanent membership of the African Union in the G20.

Significance of Africa for India

- **Economic and Trade Opportunities:** Growing African economies offer opportunities for Indian companies in pharmaceuticals, automobiles, agriculture, IT, telecommunications and infrastructure.
- **Energy and Critical Minerals:** African countries are important sources of crude oil, natural gas and critical minerals such as cobalt, lithium, manganese and graphite, which are essential for India's energy security and green transition.
- **Strategic and Maritime Importance:** Africa's eastern coast overlooks the Indian Ocean and vital sea lanes connecting Asia, Europe and the Middle East.
 - ♦ Cooperation with African littoral states is therefore important for India's maritime security and countering piracy, terrorism and trafficking.

- **Global South Partnership:** Africa is a crucial partner for India in strengthening the voice of the Global South in forums such as the UN, G20 and WTO.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** Greater engagement with Africa can help India build a multipolar international order, diversify its diplomatic partnerships and enhance its influence across the developing world.

Conclusion

- India–Africa relations are rooted in historical ties, shared developmental aspirations and common Global South interests.
- Going forward, a partnership based on mutual respect, co-development and local priorities can transform these ties into a strong pillar of India's engagement with the developing world.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

In News

- The Prime Minister paid tributes to Acharya Vinoba Bhave on his Jayanti.

Vinayak Narahar Bhave

- He was born on September 11, 1895, and was a staunch proponent of non-violence and a champion of human rights.
- He is often regarded as the National Teacher of India and the spiritual successor of Mahatma Gandhi, and was also an eminent philosopher.
- He translated the **Bhagavad Gita** into **Marathi**, titling it 'Geetai'.
- He is remembered for his work on land reform and rural upliftment, particularly through the **Bhoodan (land-gift) Movement**.
- His philosophy emphasised non-violence, social equality and voluntary service.

Association with Mahatma Gandhi

- Acharya Vinoba Bhave's affiliation with Mahatma Gandhi began in 1916 when Bhave was so **inspired by Gandhi's lecture at the Banaras Hindu University** that he chose to give up his academic education.
- He then wrote to Gandhi, and after a series of letters, Gandhi invited him to meet personally at the **Kochrab Ashram in Ahmedabad**.

- The meeting proved to be a turning point in Bhave's life, and he took up Gandhi's beliefs and constructive programs like **Khadi, village industries, Nai Talim, sanitation, and cleanliness**.
- In 1925, Gandhi entrusted him with the task of overseeing the entry of Harijans into the temple at Vaikom, Kerala.
- He became one of Gandhi's closest associates and a prominent figure in India's social reform campaigns. Gandhi saw Vinoba Bhave as his **spiritual heir**.

Legacy

- He is remembered as one of India's most revered spiritual leaders, freedom fighters, and social reformers.
- His life of simplicity, compassion, and non-violence stands as a timeless inspiration for social justice, land reforms, and collective harmony in India.
- His thoughts inspire us greatly in the pursuit of building a Viksit Bharat.

Source: PIB

PERIM ISLAND (MAYUN)

Syllabus: GS1/Places In News

In News

- Iran-aligned Houthi forces took control of Perim Island, also known as Mayun, in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, in a major territorial advance that could put further pressure on one of the world's most important shipping routes.

Perim Island (Mayun)

- It is a **small and barren volcanic island** which lies about 3.5 kilometres off Yemen's western coast.
- It is small, but its strategic location offers its possessor significant sway over shipping across the Red Sea and Suez Canal.
- Its location gives the Houthis a potentially significant position overlooking the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**, which connects the Red Sea with **the Gulf of Aden**.
 - ♦ The waterway has become particularly important as the conflict around the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted another major route for global energy shipments.

Houthi advance toward Bab el-Mandeb

Iran-aligned Houthi forces have taken control of Perim Island (Mayun) and reached the town of Dhubab, after capturing the Red Sea port of Mocha, according to Reuters and AP reports.



Location and advance based on Reuters/AP reporting, Sept. 11, 2026.

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

Source: IE

NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK (NDB)

In News

- Recently, BRICS nations affirmed the New Development Bank's vital role in promoting sustainable development, reducing inequality, and supporting emerging economies globally.

New Development Bank (NDB) (Hq: Shanghai, China)

- The New Development Bank (NDB) is a multilateral development bank.
- It was established in **2015 by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS)**.
- The New Development Bank (NDB) has 11 official

member countries, consisting of five founding members and six subsequently admitted members.

- New admitted members are Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Algeria, Colombia & Uzbekistan.
- The membership is open to members of the United Nations, including both borrowing and non-borrowing members (Article 2 of the NDB).
- It aims to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs).
- Out of the initial **authorized capital of \$100 Billion**, all 5 founding members have an equal share totaling **\$50 Billion**.

Focus Areas



Clean energy and energy efficiency



Transport infrastructure



Water and sanitation



Digital infrastructure



Environmental protection



Social infrastructure

Mandate

- NDB supports infrastructure and sustainable development projects in alignment with the development objectives of members and their commitments under the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.
- It prioritises high-impact operations that are climate-smart, disaster-resilient, technology-integrated and socially inclusive.

Source: TH

INDIA BECOMES THE WORLD'S 4TH LARGEST FOREX HOLDER

Context

- India's foreign exchange reserves surged to a record **\$785.7 billion**, moving the country to the world's fourth-largest holder.
 - ♦ India has dislodged Russia from the fourth spot and is now ranked only behind **China, Japan, and Switzerland**.

What are Foreign Exchange Reserves?

- Foreign Exchange Reserves are assets held by a country's central bank in foreign currencies. These reserves include;
 - ♦ **Foreign Currencies:** A reserve of foreign currencies, including US dollars, euros, yen, etc.
 - ♦ **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs):** These are international reserve assets allocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
 - ♦ **Reserve Position in the IMF:** This is the amount a country can access in the IMF without conditions.
 - ♦ **Gold Reserves**
- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is the custodian of the Foreign exchange reserves in India.
- **Significance:** Foreign exchange reserves help India finance imports, stabilise the rupee, maintain investor confidence, and meet external payment obligations during periods of economic stress.

Source: ET

S-400 TRIUMF

Context

- The Defence Ministry's Annual Report 2025–26 has highlighted the operational role of India's S-400 air-defence system during Operation Sindoor.

About S-400 Triumf

- The S-400 Triumf is a **long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system** developed by Russia.
- **Target Engagement:** It is designed to provide layered air defence against a range of aerial threats, including aircraft, cruise missiles, UAVs and certain ballistic-missile threats.
- **Multi-Layered Defense:** It can use different interceptor missiles, with commonly cited maximum ranges of approximately **40 km, 120 km, 250 km and up to 400 km**.
- **Mobility:** The system is fully mobile and includes a command and control center, automatic tracking and targeting systems, launchers, and support vehicles.
- **Variant: The S-400F** is the ship based version of the S-400 Triumf air defense system.

Source: TH

HYENAS

Context

- A new study has found that in **spotted hyenas, females dominate males not because they are bigger or stronger but because they have larger networks** of social alliances.

Hyenas

- Hyena (family Hyaenidae) are **doglike carnivores found in Asia and Africa and noted for their scavenging habits**.
 - ♦ **There are four distinct species of hyena.** These include the striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) which is also found in the Middle East and Asia as well as the brown hyena (*Parahyaena brunnea*), the aardwolf (*Proteles cristatus*) and the spotted hyena (*Crocutta crocutta*).
- They have excellent **night-time vision and hearing**.
- India is home mainly to the **striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*)**.

- ♦ It is distributed across parts of **arid and semi-arid landscapes**, including grasslands, scrublands, deserts and open forests.
- ♦ It plays an important ecological role by consuming carcasses and helping in nutrient recycling and disease regulation.
- **Conservation Status:** The Spotted Hyena is listed as Least Concern, the Striped Hyena and Brown Hyena are Near Threatened, and the Aardwolf is Least Concern.



Source: TH

