



“ We help you reach for the star ”

VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY
&
STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 20/09/2025 (SATURDAY)



9972258970 & 9740702455

**#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004**



Table of Contents

1. Supreme Court on Preamble & Secularism: <i>Banu Mushtaq Dasara Case</i>	2
2. Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA): A Critical Analysis	3
3. A Climate-Health Vision with Lessons from India	5
4. India–Canada Reset of Ties: NSAs Hold Security Talks	7
5. UAPA Tribunals Uphold Ban on AAC and JKIM	8
6. Kerala–EU Blue Economy Partnership in Seafood Sector	9
7. Climate Change and Consumer Preferences Reshaping India’s Tea Ecosystem	11
8. UN Security Council Votes Against Lifting Iran ‘Snapback’ Sanctions	12
9. Pakistan to Share Its Nuclear Programme with Saudi Arabia	13
10. EU Proposes New Russia Sanctions; Indian Entities Likely to Be Affected	15



1. Supreme Court on Preamble & Secularism: *Banu Mushtaq Dasara Case*

Key Highlights

- **Case Context**

- A petition challenged the decision to invite *Booker Prize* winner *Banu Mushtaq* (a Muslim) to inaugurate the *Mysuru Dasara festivities* at Chamundeshwari temple.
- Petitioner argued that inaugural pooja (a Hindu ritual) should be performed only by a Hindu dignitary as part of “essential religious practice.”

- **Supreme Court’s Stand**

- The Court dismissed the plea, citing the **Preamble of the Constitution**, which enshrines:
 - *Secularism*
 - *Liberty of thought and faith*
 - *Equality and fraternity*
- Bench (Justices Vikram Nath & Sandeep Mehta) questioned the petitioner if he had “read the Preamble.”

- **Religious vs. Secular Functions**

- Petitioner’s counsel differentiated between:
 - **Ribbon-cutting ceremony** – a secular activity.
 - **Inaugural pooja** – an essentially religious act involving lighting lamps, offering flowers, etc.

Secularism, a basic feature

Supreme Court, while dismissing the plea, highlighted that liberty of thought and faith, equality and fraternity are ideals cardinal to national unity

■ The petitioner argued that the inaugural pooja was a religious practice reserved for Hindus

■ The court emphasised that the event was conducted by the State of Karnataka, which is secular and ‘maintains no religion of its own’



■ The court reiterated that the State’s neutral attitude to all religions did not prevent it from intervening to ‘eliminate practices which impede the right to equality’

- Counsel argued that pooja by a Hindu dignitary was part of *essential religious practice* under **Article 25**.

- **Supreme Court’s Rejection**

- Court clarified that **state actions must align with secular constitutional values**, and religion cannot dictate official/state events.
- Reiterated that inclusivity and fraternity are fundamental to national unity.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Preamble of the Constitution:** Secularism, equality, liberty, fraternity.
- **Article 25:** Freedom of conscience & free profession, practice, and propagation of religion, subject to public order, morality, health.
- **Article 26:** Right of religious denominations to manage affairs of religion, subject to law.
- **Article 14:** Equality before law and equal protection of laws.



- **Article 51A(e):** Fundamental duty to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood.

Key Definitions

- **Secularism (भारतीय संदर्भ में धर्मनिरपेक्षता):** Equal treatment of all religions by the State, neither favoring nor discriminating against any faith.
- **Essential Religious Practices Doctrine:** Judicial test developed by the Supreme Court to determine which practices are fundamental to a religion and thus protected under Article 25.

Additional Key Points

- This case reinforces **judicial activism in protecting constitutional morality over social/religious majoritarian pressures**.
- Highlights the **State's neutrality in religious matters** and role in ensuring inclusivity in cultural events.
- Emphasizes **Preamble's role as a guiding star** in interpreting constitutional values.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's dismissal of the petition reaffirms that the **Preamble is not just symbolic but a binding guiding principle** ensuring India remains a secular, inclusive, and united nation. Constitutional morality takes precedence over religious exclusivity in public functions.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Secularism, Preamble, Fundamental Rights (Articles 14, 25, 26).
- **Ethics (GS IV):** Constitutional morality, inclusivity, fraternity.
- **Essay Paper:** Role of Preamble in ensuring unity and diversity.
- Important for **Current Affairs-based polity questions** and case-law references in Mains.

2. Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA): A Critical Analysis

Key Highlights

- **Signing of SMDA (2025)**
 - Signed on **17 September 2025 in Riyadh** between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani PM Shahbaz Sharif (with Field Marshal Asim Munir).
 - Aimed at enhancing strategic defence cooperation but seen as a **symbolic and fragile pact** rather than a substantive shift.
- **Historical Defence Relations**
 - Defence ties date back to **1951**, peaking during **1979–89** with ~20,000 Pakistani troops stationed in Saudi Arabia for protecting holy shrines and countering Iran-Yemen threats.
 - Tensions arose over issues like exclusion of Shia troops, Pakistani resentment of subordination, and refusals to join Saudi wars (Kuwait 1990, Yemen 2015).
- **Geopolitical Context**



- The pact has **U.S. involvement**, linked to Trump administration's West Asia strategy and Saudi's conditional demands for U.S. support (defence pact, nuclear access, weapons).
- Israeli attacks (2023–25), Gaza war, and weakening U.S. credibility in GCC defence created urgency for Saudi to seek Pakistan's support.

• Saudi Calculations

- Avoids Arab/Turkish troops to prevent political influence at home.
- Pakistan chosen due to:
 - Nuclear capability (deterrence against Iran).
 - Non-Arab identity.
 - Past precedent of military deployment.
- However, Pakistan's China ties, nuclear technology sensitivities, and Israel's "red lines" limit full-scale cooperation.

• Pakistan's Interests

- Likely to use SMDA as leverage for:
 - Defence hardware and training.
 - Financial aid and oil supplies from Riyadh.
 - Strengthening position vis-à-vis India.
- Less willingness to directly fight Saudi's regional wars (Iran, Yemen, Israel).



• Implications for India

- India is Saudi Arabia's **second-largest trade partner**, major crude oil buyer, and has a large diaspora in the Kingdom.
- India-Saudi relations strengthened since 2014, including defence and intelligence cooperation.
- Riyadh reportedly took New Delhi into confidence during SMDA talks, acknowledging India's **strategic and economic weight**.
- India must stay vigilant, enhance maritime and defence synergies, and balance its West Asia strategy amidst Pakistan-Saudi moves.

Key Definitions

- **Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA):** A formal pact between two states ensuring military cooperation, joint security commitments, and possible deployment of forces.
- **Geostrategic Piquancy:** A situation of heightened strategic sensitivity where alliances and rivalries shift rapidly due to external pressures.
- **Nuclear Umbrella:** Security guarantee by a nuclear-armed state to defend a non-nuclear ally with nuclear deterrence.



Constitutional & Legal Parallels (India's Perspective)

- **Article 51(c) (Directive Principles):** Calls upon the State to foster respect for international law and treaty obligations.
- **Article 51(d):** Promotes settlement of international disputes by arbitration—relevant in India's foreign policy orientation towards peaceful resolution.
- **India's Strategic Autonomy Doctrine:** Though not in the Constitution, it is rooted in maintaining balanced, independent foreign relations without entangling alliances.

Conclusion

The **Saudi-Pakistan SMDA appears more symbolic than substantive**, serving Riyadh's need for an "insurance policy" amidst U.S. uncertainty and regional insecurity. For Pakistan, it is an opportunity to monetize Saudi insecurities for financial and defence gains. For India, the pact necessitates **strategic vigilance** but also reaffirms New Delhi's growing importance in Riyadh's foreign policy calculus due to energy, trade, and diaspora links.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** India's West Asia policy, regional security architecture, role of U.S., GCC dynamics.
- **GS Paper III (Security):** Nuclear proliferation concerns, strategic alliances.
- **Essay Paper:** "Fragility of alliances in multipolar world order" / "India's balancing role in West Asia."
- **Prelims (Current Affairs):** SMDA, Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation, India-Saudi energy ties.

3. A Climate-Health Vision with Lessons from India

Key Highlights

- **Global Conference on Climate & Health (2025):**
 - Held in Brazil (July 29–31, 2025) with delegates from 90 countries.
 - Outcome: *Belém Health Action Plan* (to be launched at COP30 in Nov 2025).
 - India was not officially represented — a **missed opportunity** to showcase its developmental model with climate-health co-benefits.
- **India's Developmental Lessons:**
 - **PM POSHAN:** Combats malnutrition, integrates agriculture, food procurement, health, and education; promotes climate-resilient grains like millets.
 - **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:** Improved sanitation, public health, dignity, and environmental sustainability.
 - **MNREGA:** Generated rural employment while restoring degraded ecosystems.





- **PM Ujjwala Yojana:** Shift to clean cooking fuels reduced air pollution and carbon emissions.
- Insight: *Policies not explicitly designed as climate interventions can deliver major climate and health co-benefits.*

- **Critical Takeaways from India:**

1. **Political Leadership:** High-level involvement (e.g., Prime Ministerial push) ensures inter-ministerial cooperation.
2. **Community Engagement:** Use of cultural symbolism and local institutions for mass participation.
3. **Institutional Embedding:** Leveraging existing structures (ASHA workers, SHGs, Panchayats) rather than creating new bureaucracies.

- **Challenges Identified:**

- Siloed administration restricts intersectoral policy success.
- Rising LPG refill costs under PMUY show how market interests can undermine welfare objectives.
- Persistent **social and cultural barriers** limit equitable access and utilisation.
- Need for **institutionalised mechanisms** that measure *outcomes* (health improvement, climate resilience) rather than just *outputs* (infrastructure built, connections provided).

Key Definitions

- **Climate-Health Nexus:** Interconnection between environmental changes (climate change, pollution) and human health outcomes.
- **Health Co-Benefits:** Secondary health advantages from policies not directly aimed at health (e.g., clean fuel reducing emissions and respiratory illnesses).
- **Intersectoral Policy:** Policy approach that cuts across multiple sectors (health, environment, economy, governance) to achieve integrated outcomes.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions (Indian Context)

- **Article 21:** Right to life includes the right to a healthy environment.
- **Article 47 (DPSP):** Duty of the State to raise nutrition, standard of living, and public health.
- **Article 48A (DPSP):** State shall protect and improve the environment.
- **Article 51A(g) (Fundamental Duty):** Duty of citizens to protect the natural environment.
- **Judicial Support:** Supreme Court has interpreted environmental protection as integral to Article 21 (cases like *MC Mehta v. Union of India*).

Conclusion

India's welfare programmes demonstrate how **non-health interventions can yield climate and health co-benefits**, creating models for Global South nations. Going forward, embedding health considerations into climate policies, ensuring cross-sectoral integration, and empowering communities are essential. India can shape the global discourse by promoting a **health-anchored climate governance model** at international forums like COP30.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & International Relations):** Intersectoral policy, India's role in global climate governance, international cooperation.
- **GS Paper III (Environment & Health):** Climate change adaptation, sustainable development, public health linkages.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics):** Environmental ethics, intergenerational equity.
- **Essay Paper:** Topics like *"Health is the human face of climate change"* or *"Intersectoral policies as drivers of sustainable development."*
- Useful for **Case Studies** in Mains: Swachh Bharat, PMUY, MNREGA, POSHAN as integrated welfare models with climate-health impact.

4. India–Canada Reset of Ties: NSAs Hold Security Talks

Key Highlights

- **Revival of Dialogue**
 - Indian NSA Ajit Doval and Canadian NSA Nathalie Drouin met in Delhi after a two-year freeze in relations following Canada's allegation (2023) of Indian officials' involvement in Khalistani activist Harjeet Singh Nijjar's killing.
 - The meeting followed discussions between PM Narendra Modi and Canadian PM Mark Carney at the G-7 Summit (June 2025).
- **Focus of Talks**
 - Enhanced **counter-terrorism cooperation**, especially against Khalistani extremist groups.
 - India reiterated its demand for **extradition of Khalistani activists** wanted in cases in India.
 - Discussions included sharing of intelligence and coordination between law enforcement agencies.
- **Diplomatic Repair Process**
 - Restoration of **High Commissioners** in Ottawa and Delhi.
 - Decision to **resume suspended trade talks** and dialogue on defence, visa issues, and bilateral mechanisms disrupted since 2023.
- **Challenges in Bilateral Relations**
 - Continued **Khalistani threats**, including siege of the Indian Consulate in Vancouver and online targeting of Indian diplomats.
 - Security of diplomatic missions raised as a concern, with India reminding Canada of its **obligation under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)** to ensure safety of missions.
- **Legal & Constitutional Aspects**





- **Extradition Law:** Governed by India's *Extradition Act, 1962*, which provides legal procedures to bring fugitives from foreign countries.
- **Vienna Convention (1961):** International obligation of host countries to protect embassies/consulates.
- **Counter-Terrorism Cooperation:** Linked to India's *Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967* and global frameworks under the UN.

- **Key Definitions**

- **Extradition:** The process of surrendering an accused or convicted person from one state to another for trial or punishment.
- **Counter-terrorism cooperation:** Collaborative measures between states to prevent, detect, and penalize terrorism-related activities.

Conclusion

The NSA-level talks mark a significant thaw in India–Canada relations, with both nations prioritizing counter-terrorism and security cooperation over past diplomatic tensions. However, Khalistani activism in Canada continues to remain a sensitive irritant.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** India–Canada ties, role of NSAs, Vienna Convention, extradition issues.
- **GS Paper III (Internal Security):** Counter-terrorism strategies, diaspora-linked extremist threats.
- **Current Affairs:** Restoration of diplomatic and trade dialogue after major bilateral strain.

5. UAPA Tribunals Uphold Ban on AAC and JKIM

Key Highlights

- **Ban under UAPA**
 - The Union Home Ministry banned *Awami Action Committee (AAC)*, led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and *Jammu and Kashmir Ittihadul Muslimeen (JKIM)*, led by Masroor Abbas Ansari, on **March 11, 2025** under the *Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967*.
 - The ban was upheld by **two UAPA tribunals** headed by Justice Sachin Datta.
- **Grounds for the Ban**
 - Both groups accused of:
 - Mobilising funds for **secessionist and terrorist activities**.
 - Promoting **hatred against the constitutional authority**.
 - Encouraging people to destabilise law and order and support arms struggle in J&K.
 - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) held them responsible for **anti-national and subversive activities** threatening sovereignty, integrity, and security of India.





- **Tribunal Observations**

- After examining material and evidence, tribunals concluded there was **ample justification** to declare AAC and JKIM as “*unlawful associations*” under **Section 3(1) of UAPA, 1967**.
- Referred to **NIA chargesheets** on terrorist and separatist activities in J&K since the 1980s–1990s.

- **Legal & Constitutional Provisions**

- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967:**
 - Section 3(1): Empowers Central Government to declare an association unlawful if it threatens sovereignty, integrity, or security of India.
 - Provides for constitution of **Tribunals** (judicial bodies) to confirm such bans.
- **Fundamental Rights vs. Restrictions:**
 - Article 19(1)(c): Right to form associations.
 - Subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(4) for sovereignty, integrity, and public order.
- **Article 355:** Duty of Union to protect States against internal disturbance.

- **Key Definitions**

- **Unlawful Association:** Any group that has the objective of encouraging secession, terrorism, or activities against sovereignty and integrity of India.
- **Tribunal under UAPA:** A quasi-judicial body headed by a High Court judge to adjudicate on the validity of a ban.

Conclusion

The upholding of the ban on AAC and JKIM reinforces the government’s zero-tolerance approach towards separatist and extremist activities in J&K. It also highlights the balance between **fundamental freedoms** and **national security imperatives** under constitutional and statutory frameworks.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Role of UAPA, constitutional checks on unlawful associations, rights vs. security.
- **GS Paper III (Internal Security):** Terrorism, separatist movements in J&K, NIA’s role.
- **Current Affairs:** Judicial validation of government’s action against secessionist outfits.

6. Kerala–EU Blue Economy Partnership in Seafood Sector

Key Highlights

- **Blue Economy Conclave**
 - A two-day event “*Blue Tides – Kerala–European Union Blue Economy Conclave*” was held in Kovalam, organised by the Kerala Fisheries Department.



- Focus: Future partnerships between **Kerala and the European Union (EU)** in the marine products and seafood sector.

- **Kerala's Vision**

- CM Pinarayi Vijayan highlighted Kerala's adoption of the **Blue Economy framework** to ensure sustainable fisheries and ocean-based growth.
- Aim: Use EU's expertise in **marine technologies, sustainability frameworks, and ocean governance** to modernise Kerala's fisheries.

- **EU's Role**

- EU Ambassador Herve Delphin proposed creating a **joint platform and nodal point** for smooth collaboration.
- Emphasis on EU's global leadership in **marine innovation, value chains, and sustainable fisheries management**.



- **Economic Context**

- Kerala's marine exports to the U.S. rose from **₹513 crore (2014–17 avg.) to ₹1,093 crore (2022–25 avg.)**, despite current U.S. import tariff barriers.
- EU collaboration seen as a way to **diversify markets** and reduce dependence on the U.S. amid rising trade restrictions.

- **Legal & Policy Frameworks**

- **Blue Economy:** Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and ecosystem health (endorsed by UN SDG 14 – Life Below Water).
- **Indian Context:**
 - *Draft Blue Economy Policy (2021)* by Ministry of Earth Sciences.
 - Governed by Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019 and Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- **International Context:**
 - *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982)*.
 - India–EU strategic partnership frameworks in trade and environment.

- **Key Definitions**

- **Blue Economy:** Economic activities linked to oceans, seas, and coasts that ensure **sustainability, equity, and resilience**.
- **Ocean Governance:** Collective management of ocean resources through laws, institutions, and cooperation to balance development with conservation.

Conclusion

The Kerala–EU collaboration in the seafood sector represents a strategic step in advancing India's **Blue Economy goals**, enhancing marine trade, and adopting sustainable practices. It also provides Kerala an opportunity to diversify seafood export markets and build resilience against tariff shocks from the U.S.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** India–EU cooperation, trade diversification, sustainability partnerships.
- **GS Paper III (Economy & Environment):** Blue Economy, sustainable development, marine resource governance.
- **Current Affairs:** State-level initiative aligning with global frameworks like SDG 14 and India's Blue Economy Policy.

7. Climate Change and Consumer Preferences Reshaping India's Tea Ecosystem

Key Highlights

- **Impact of Climate Change**
 - Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and changing weather patterns are reducing tea yields.
 - Increase in **pests and diseases** is further threatening crop productivity.
 - These issues highlight the need for climate-resilient farming practices in the plantation sector.
- **Market and Consumption Challenges**
 - Tea consumption in India remains stagnant; new global markets need exploration.
 - Suggested strategy: **Government-led promotional campaigns**, similar to *Operation Flood* (milk revolution) or *Operation Silver* (silver jewelry export), to boost tea consumption.
 - Potential export destinations: **Africa (e.g., Ghana)**, and revival of traditional markets like **Russia and Iran**.
- **Consumer Preferences**
 - Changing lifestyles and youth preferences demand innovation in **tea branding and premiumisation**.
 - Focus on **value-added products** (flavoured teas, health blends, ready-to-drink formats) to attract younger demographics.
- **Policy & Trade Aspects**
 - Trade turbulence, fluctuating export orders, and lack of consistent branding impact India's tea exports.
 - **Commerce Ministry** emphasises creating a strong branding ecosystem to make Indian tea globally competitive.
- **Key Definitions**
 - **Climate Resilient Agriculture:** Farming systems designed to adapt to climate variability, reduce vulnerability, and ensure sustainability.

'Climate change, dynamic consumer preferences reshaping tea ecosystem'

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Climate change is adversely affecting tea production, said S. Mathew Abraham, President of United Planters' Association of South-east India (UPASI).

"Climate change is affecting the crop pattern. Yields are decreasing and the production is getting affected. There is also an increase in pests and diseases. The challenge is how can we arrest the drop in yields," said Mr. Abraham, while speaking to The



S. Mathew Abraham

hindu on the sidelines of the eighty-third International Tea Convention 2025 here on Friday.

The main problem is consumption, he said. "India needs new markets. A

governmental campaign on the lines of Operation Flood or Operation Silver can help the tea industry. The generic promotion of tea can be done like this. Then we can increase consumption. We need to explore new markets like Africa, Ghana and old markets such as Russia and Iran where exports have reduced," he said.

Climate change, changing consumer preferences, trade policy turbulence are reshaping the tea ecosystem. It is essential to innovate and adapt with the

changing scenario and think of strategies to increase consumption, experts opined at the three-day tea convention.

Delegates from across the globe, who gathered at the event, stressed on the need to focus on branding as well as premiumisation of the beverage. The need to make the beverage appealing to the youth was also highlighted.

Ms. Koushik Y. Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, stressed the need to focus on branding.



- **Premiumisation:** Strategy of offering high-quality, value-added products to create niche markets and boost revenue.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 48A:** Directive Principle – State shall protect and improve the environment.
- **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental Duty – Citizens must protect natural environment.
- **Tea Act, 1953:** Provides for regulation of tea cultivation, export, and promotion under the **Tea Board of India**.

Conclusion

India's tea industry is at a crossroads due to **climate stress, shifting consumer preferences, and trade challenges**. To sustain growth, it needs **climate-resilient practices, innovative branding, government-backed promotional campaigns, and diversification of markets**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Impact of climate change on agriculture.
- **GS Paper II:** Government schemes, trade policy, global market integration.
- **GS Paper III:** Agriculture, economy, branding, sustainable development.
- **Current Affairs:** Sectoral challenges in traditional Indian exports (tea).

8. UN Security Council Votes Against Lifting Iran 'Snapback' Sanctions

Key Highlights

- **UNSC Decision**
 - A resolution in the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** to halt the reimposition of "snapback" sanctions on Iran's nuclear programme failed.
 - The decision follows weeks of failed diplomatic negotiations ahead of the UN General Assembly session.
- **Iran's Response**
 - Iran's envoy to the UN, **Amir Saeid Iravani**, termed the move as "unlawful" and politically motivated.
 - Iran maintains that the sanctions undermine the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, 2015)**, commonly known as the **Iran Nuclear Deal**.
- **Background: Snapback Sanctions**
 - **Definition:** A mechanism under **UNSC Resolution 2231 (2015)**, which endorsed the JCPOA, allowing reimposition of sanctions if Iran is deemed non-compliant.
 - Triggered mainly by Western concerns that Iran continues uranium enrichment beyond agreed limits.
 - Sanctions affect Iran's arms trade, economy, and oil exports.





- **Global Diplomacy and Power Play**

- The U.S. has often pushed for stricter enforcement of sanctions, while other UNSC members (notably Russia and China) call for engagement.
- Breakdown reflects deep divisions in the UNSC on handling nuclear proliferation and Middle East security.

- **Legal & Constitutional Provisions (International & Indian Context)**

- **UN Charter, Article 25:** Member states are bound to accept and carry out UNSC decisions.
- **Article 51 (UN Charter):** Right to self-defence, often invoked in nuclear security debates.
- **Indian Context:** India, as a non-permanent UNSC member in earlier terms, has historically balanced between **non-proliferation commitments (NPT regime)** and **strategic autonomy in West Asia diplomacy**.

- **Key Definitions**

- **JCPOA (2015):** Agreement between Iran and P5+1 (U.S., U.K., France, Russia, China + Germany) to limit Iran's nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief.
- **Sanctions:** Penalties (economic, military, or diplomatic) imposed by states or international organisations to influence behaviour of a country.
- **Snapback Mechanism:** Automatic reactivation of previous sanctions without new UNSC resolution if Iran violates JCPOA commitments.

Conclusion

The UNSC's failure to stop snapback sanctions highlights **geopolitical fault lines** and the fragile state of global nuclear diplomacy. For Iran, it means continued economic isolation, while for the global community, it raises concerns about regional stability and nuclear proliferation.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** International Relations – Role of UNSC, nuclear non-proliferation, India's foreign policy in West Asia.
- **GS Paper III:** Security issues – Nuclear technology, sanctions, and global peace.
- **Current Affairs:** JCPOA and India's balancing act between Iran (strategic energy partner) and the U.S. (strategic defence partner).

9. Pakistan to Share Its Nuclear Programme with Saudi Arabia

Key Highlights

- **Defence Pact Overview**

- Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a **Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA)**, under which an **attack on one is considered an attack on both**.
- Defence Minister **Khawaja Mohammad Asif** explicitly stated that Pakistan's **nuclear capabilities can be made available to Saudi Arabia** under the pact.

- **Geopolitical Context**



- The announcement comes amid the **Israel-Hamas conflict**, raising security concerns in Gulf Arab nations.
- Seen as a **strategic deterrence signal** to Israel, the only nuclear-armed country in West Asia.
- Reinforces Pakistan–Saudi long-standing **military ties** and regional security collaboration.

- **Nuclear Sharing and Deterrence**

- Pakistan's nuclear programme, tested long ago, forms the backbone of **strategic deterrence**.
- Potential sharing underlines the concept of **nuclear umbrella**, providing extended protection to allied states.
- Analysts warn that actual transfer of weapons is **politically sensitive and unlikely**, but technology or know-how could be shared clandestinely.

- **Legal & Policy Framework**

- **International Law:** Nuclear sharing between non-NPT signatories could raise **non-proliferation concerns** under the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT, 1968)**.
- **UN Security Council Resolutions:** Transfer of nuclear technology without safeguards may violate global non-proliferation norms.
- **Pakistan's Domestic Law:** Pakistan has a **Command and Control system** for nuclear assets under strict state authority.



- **Key Definitions**

- **Nuclear Deterrence:** Strategy of preventing aggression by threatening unacceptable retaliation with nuclear weapons.
- **Nuclear Umbrella:** Protection offered by a nuclear-armed state to an ally against external threats.
- **Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement:** Pact wherein an attack on one party is treated as an attack on the other, enhancing collective security.

Conclusion

The Pakistan–Saudi defence pact and the potential nuclear umbrella signify a **major shift in West Asian security architecture**, highlighting risks of nuclear proliferation and strategic balancing amid regional conflicts. While primarily symbolic, it strengthens deterrence against perceived threats in the Gulf.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** West Asia security dynamics, Pakistan–Saudi ties, impact of Israel-Hamas conflict.
- **GS Paper III (Security Issues):** Nuclear deterrence, nuclear sharing, regional strategic balance, non-proliferation challenges.
- **Current Affairs:** Pakistan–Saudi strategic alignment, nuclear diplomacy, and implications for India and global security.



10. EU Proposes New Russia Sanctions; Indian Entities Likely to Be Affected

Key Highlights

- **Sanctions Package Overview**

- The **European Commission** proposed the **19th sanctions package** against Russia since its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.
- Measures aim to **limit Russia's access to critical technologies** (AI, geospatial data) and resources essential for weapons production.
- **Indian and Chinese entities** may be impacted if they supply restricted technologies or resources to Russia.

- **Trade and Economic Measures**

- Proposal includes a **total ban on Russian LNG imports by January 2027**.
- Sanctions target **Russia's "shadow fleet"** (118 vessels suspected of violating previous sanctions).
- Restrictions also cover **Russian banks, third-party transactions, and select cryptocurrency platforms**.

- **Geopolitical Context**

- EU's actions come shortly after **upgrading ties with India** as a strategic partner.
- Reflects pressure from the U.S. (Trump administration) to curb energy trade with Russia and indirectly impact countries trading with Russia.
- EU prefers **traditional sanctions over trade tariffs** on India or China.



- **Legal & Policy Frameworks**

- **EU Sanctions Law:** Implemented through **Council Regulations**, binding on all member states.
- **UN Charter, Article 41:** Authorises measures not involving armed force, including economic sanctions.
- **India's Trade & Foreign Policy:** Needs careful navigation to balance **EU strategic partnership** and **Russia trade interests**.

- **Key Definitions**

- **Sanctions:** Penalties or restrictions imposed by countries or international organisations to influence behaviour.
- **Shadow Fleet:** Ships that bypass sanctions, engage in illicit trade, or operate secretly to support restricted states.
- **LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas):** Natural gas cooled to liquid form for storage/transport; key energy commodity.

Conclusion



The EU's new sanctions against Russia aim to **exert economic pressure** and compel negotiation with Ukraine. Indian entities face potential inclusion, highlighting the **interplay between global sanctions, trade policies, and diplomatic priorities**. India must **strategically manage trade ties** while engaging with the EU as a strategic partner.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** International Relations – EU–India strategic partnership, Russia–Ukraine conflict, sanctions diplomacy.
- **GS Paper III:** Economy & Security – Trade sanctions, energy security, technology restrictions, supply chain vulnerabilities.
- **Current Affairs:** Global economic sanctions, India's trade diplomacy, and strategic balancing in West Asia and Europe.