

OPEN NETWORK FOR DIGITAL COMMERCE (ONDC)**SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-III (GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS)**

CONTEXT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced the launch of the pilot phase of open network for digital commerce (ONDC) in five cities in late April.

WHAT IS ONDC?

- It is a not-for-profit organization that will offer a network to enable local digital commerce stores across industries to be discovered and engaged by any network-enabled application.
- It is neither an aggregator application nor a hosting platform, but all existing digital commerce applications and platforms can voluntarily choose to adopt and be a part of the ONDC network.

OBJECTIVES OF ONDC

- ONDC aims to **democratise the country's fast growing digital e-commerce space** that is currently dominated by the two US headquartered firms – Amazon and Walmart.
- It will enable the buying of products from all participating e-commerce platforms by consumers through a single platform.
- ONDC envisages that a buyer registered on one participating e-commerce site (for instance Amazon) may purchase goods from a seller on another participating e-commerce site (for example, Flipkart).
- Implementation of ONDC, which is expected to be on the lines of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) could bring various operational aspects put in place by e-commerce platforms to the same level.

CURRENT STATUS

- Presently, ONDC is in its pilot stage in five cities– **Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Shillong and Coimbatore**- with a target of on-boarding around 150 retailers.
- An advisory council has been constituted with Nandan M. Nilekani as its Non-Executive Chairman to analyse the potential of ONDC and advice the government on measures needed to accelerate its adoption.

SIGNIFICANCE

- ONDC is expected to digitalise the entire value chain, standardise operations, promote inclusion of suppliers, derive efficiency in logistics and enhance value for consumers.
- If the ONDC gets implemented and mandated, it would mean that all e-commerce companies will have to operate using the same processes (like Android Based Mobile Devices) thereby, giving a boost to small retailers as well as new entrants.

I2U2 GROUP**SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (GROUPINGS AND AGREEMENTS INVOLVING/AFFECTING INDIA)**

CONTEXT: President Joe Biden will travel to Saudi Arabia as a part of a larger trip to West Asia in July wherein he will join a virtual summit with leaders of the I2U2 group.

WHAT IS I2U2 GROUP?

- It is a diplomatic group comprising of **India, Israel, UAE and the United States**. The term was used
- for this four member grouping by the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.
- I2U2 was initially formed in October, 2021 following the Abraham Accords between Israel and the

UAE, to deal with issues concerning maritime security, infrastructure and transport in the region.

- At that time, it was called the '**International Forum for Economic Cooperation**' and was referred to as **West Asian Quad**.

The objective of the group is to generate synergies that go beyond government level cooperation.

POSSIBLE AREAS OF COOPERATION

- In the first quadrilateral meeting between India, Israel, UAE and the US, it was decided to—
 1. Ensure closer cooperation on increasing trade.
 2. Enhance cooperation in maritime security and global public health.
 3. Carry out joint infrastructure projects in transportation and technology.

BENEFITS FOR INDIA

- The new Quad will give India the flexibility to engage more freely with Israel and its partners in the Gulf region.
- It will strengthen India's strategic desire to adopt a regional foreign policy strategy towards West Asia transcending its bilateralism.

India, Israel and the UAE are technological hubs and there are many areas where these countries can work together such as technology, trade, climate, COVID-19 and security as well.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-III

CONTEXT: 62nd Global Environment Council (GEF) meeting is being held.

- The 62nd Council Meeting will be the final Council Meeting under the GEF's seventh replenishment.

ABOUT GEF

- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a multilateral financial mechanism that provides grants to developing countries for projects that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities.
- GEF was established during the **Rio Earth Summit of 1992**.
- It is based in **Washington D.C.**, United States.
- The GEF is jointly managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- 183 nations are united under GEF in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs), international institutions, private sector, etc. to address the environmental issues across the globe.
- The GEF has a unique governing structure organized around an Assembly, the Council, the Secretariat, 18 Agencies, a Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), and the Evaluation Office.
- GEF also serves as a financial mechanism for the following conventions:
 1. United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)
 2. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
 3. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
 4. Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)Minamata Convention on Mercury

FOCAL AREAS OF GEF

As an independently operating financial organization, GEF addresses six designated focal areas which are listed below:

1. Biodiversity
2. Climate change
3. International waters
4. Ozone depletion
5. Land degradation

6. Persistent Organic Pollutants

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 62nd GEF MEETING

- **Leader's Pledge for Nature** to reverse species loss by 2030 by protecting land and ocean territory having globally important biodiversity.
- **29 donor countries have pledged \$5.33 billion for GEF-8 replenishment period** (July 2022 to June 2026) to meet nature and climate targets.

Address threats from climate change, land degradation, chemicals and waste, and easing pressure on ocean as well as international waters.

GEF AND INDIA

- It is both a donor and a recipient of funding from the GEF.
- The political focal point for GEF in India is the Finance Ministry while the operational focal point is the Environment Ministry.
- India, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh have together formed a Permanent Constituency in the Executive Council of the GEF.

India receives funding from the GEF for work in three major areas namely, biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation.

PRELIMS FACTS

- **CORPAT EXERCISE:** The 38th edition of India–Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND–INDO CORPAT) is being conducted in the **Andaman Sea**.
 - The two navies had been carrying out CORPATs along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) annually since 2002.
- **SURYA NOOTAN INDOOR SOLAR COOKING SYSTEM:** It is stationary, rechargeable and always kitchen connected indoor solar cooking system that has been developed by the **Indian Oil Corporation Limited and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**.
 - It aims to reduce gas consumption.
 - It works on **hybrid mode**, that is, it is capable of running on solar as well as auxiliary energy sources simultaneously.
- **PATTACHITRA PAINTING:** It is a cloth based scroll painting that is believed to have originated as early as 12th century.
 - This form of art is closely related to the cult of Shri Jagannath and the temple traditions in Puri.
 - It usually depicts a story or a mythological incident.
 - This painting is made on a special canvas where cotton sarees are layered with tamarind paste and then coated with clay powder.
- **RENEWABLE CAPACITY STATISTICS 2022:** It is a comprehensive report that has been released by the **International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**.
 - As per the report, India's total renewable capacity has marked an increase of 9% over the last year.

IRENA is an intergovernmental organisation that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy source and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation.

EX KHAAN QUEST 2022: It is a multinational peacekeeping exercise that features participation from military contingents of 16 countries including India.

- It was conducted in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**.

The Indian Army contingent was represented by the **LADAKH SCOUTS**.