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S.NO. TOPIC

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- 2. MUIZZU TO MEET MODI, REQUEST INDIA'S SUPPORT OVER LOOMING ECONOMIC CRISES**
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THE STATUS OF CIVIL WAR IN SUDAN

The status of the civil war in Sudan

What is the extent of the war? Where did the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces begin? How have ethnic tensions and rivalries played a part in the war? From where are conflicting parties sourcing their weapons and arms?

EXPLAINER

Anu Maria Joseph

The story so far:

In September 26, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) launched a major offensive against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Khartoum and Bahri. Thus, the war which was quiet for a few months has gained momentum again. Eighteen months into the civil war, the UN said that more than 20,000 people have been killed. Additionally, the International Organization for Migration has recorded an estimated total of 10,890,722 internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of October 1. All ceasefire efforts and peace talks have failed so far. The latest offensive comes ahead of the U.S.-led ceasefire talks on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Who are the actors in the civil war?

The civil war in Sudan between two military factions, the SAF and the RSF has crossed 18 months. It started as a power rivalry between the military heads of the SAF and the RSF, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Hamdan Dagalo respectively. What began as a conflict in the capital city of Khartoum has spread to Omdurman, Bahri, Port Sudan, El Fasher and the Port Sudan cities, as well as the Darfur and Kordofan states.

The RSF has an upper hand in multiple war zones. However, since August, the SAF has been carrying out frequent airstrikes and has captured pocket regions around Khartoum. The humanitarian crisis is worsening countrywide amidst limited and restricted access to aid and the military heads of the Darfur states. The warring sides are also accused of carrying out war crimes including sexual violence and extrajudicial killings in several regions. In August, the UN declared famine in the Zamzam camp in North Darfur which hosts nearly 5,00,000 IDPs. The UN-Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee says that 14 regions in the Greater Darfur, South and North Kordofan, and Jazera states face conditions similar to Zamzam. According to the latest UN-backed IPC initiative, 25.6 million people, more than half of Sudan's population, face "crisis or worse" levels of food insecurity. Conditions have further worsened amidst heavy rains and floods and the subsequent spread of cholera. The outbreak has killed more than 200 people.

Why is the war continuing?

There is no sign of an end to the war. Firstly, both warring parties are adamant about gaining ground and legitimising their power. The SAF claims to be the legitimate government, with the UN just about recognising their claims, although it came to power through a coup in 2021. However, the RSF has territorial gains around the capital and other war zones. It opposes the SAF's efforts to represent Sudan internationally, claiming legitimacy. The RSF, a former Arab militia known as Janjaweed, seeks alliances from several Arab countries to support its claim to power.

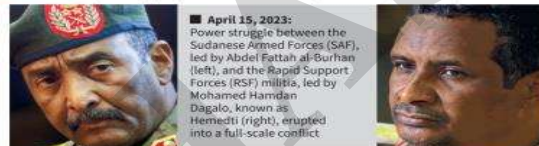
Secondly, Sudan has been under the UN arms embargo, since the 2004 Darfur crisis, which has recently been extended for another year. However, the embargo has not blocked the flow of weapons. A Human Rights Watch report in July claimed that the warring parties have been using armed drones, drone jammers, anti-tank guided missiles,

A multifaceted war

The ongoing civil war in Sudan has killed more than 20,000 people, according to the United Nations. Additionally, the International Organization for Migration has estimated a record 10,890,722 internally displaced people in Sudan



To the brink: Displaced people queue for food aid at a camp in Gedaref, Sudan on September 23. AFP



April 15, 2023:

Power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (left), and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti (right), erupted into a full-scale conflict



According to the latest UN-backed IPC initiative, 25.6 million people, more than half of Sudan's population, face "crisis or worse" levels of food insecurity

Sources: International Crisis Group, UNOCHA Pictures: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS

truck-mounted multi-barrel rocket launchers, and mortar munitions produced by companies registered in China, Iran, Russia, Serbia, and the UAE. Easy weapon procurement and use have aided the continuation of the war.

Thirdly, the war has become complex with the involvement of multiple actors and issues. What began as a military rivalry has now evolved through ethnic lines, involving several regional ethnic militias. Arab and non-Arab militias have taken sides with the RSF and the SAF respectively. The rebel group Sudanese People's Liberation Movement has been fighting alongside the SAF. The RSF and

its allied Arab militias have been targeting the Masalit community and other non-Arabs in Darfur states. Ethnic tensions have intensified the war.

Fourthly, the SAF has accused the UAE and previously Russia's Wagner Group of supporting the RSF. Although the Wagner group and the RSF have rejected any direct military engagement, the group is allegedly supporting the RSF by facilitating the supply of UAE's weapons through the Central African Republic. At the same time, Russia has been supplying weapons to the SAF as well. With abundant external support, both parties have little motive to end the war.

Have there been peace talks?

There were nine rounds of ceasefire efforts led predominantly by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia; all failed in their primary phase. On August 14, the latest round of U.S.-led peace talks were held in Geneva, Switzerland. But, neither of the warring parties attended. SAF boycotted the meeting, blaming the RSF for not adhering to the Jeddah Declaration 2023, including the withdrawal of forces from civilian regions. RSF also pulled out from the talks at the last moment.

The UN, the African Union, the U.S., the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the EU have all urged the parties to end the violence and work together to de-escalate the crisis. Egypt initiated a draft resolution on May 1 at the Arab League meeting in Cairo, calling for an "immediate and comprehensive cessation" of hostilities. Until now, any and all efforts at a long-lasting ceasefire have been ineffective.

The RSF and the SAF claim they are open to negotiations but have shown little commitment to comply. They attempt to gain a military advantage during the ceasefire, owing to mistrust between the parties. Both sides have not reached a possible bargaining stage for an effective mediation.

Another reason is that international media attention to the war on the ground is limited. International organisations' access to war zones is also restricted. With a limited understanding of the conflict on the ground, mediators like the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are challenged to formulate a ceasefire or peace talk which fit the multifaceted war situation.

What are the regional implications?

More than two million people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries including Chad, South Sudan and Ethiopia. The refugee camps are overflowed and have raised concerns in Europe that many will attempt to reach the continent. In February, dozens of Sudanese drowned when a migrant boat capsized along the Tunisia-Italy route. A lack of state apparatus and institutions has triggered ethnic clashes along the South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea borders. Since January, ethnic violence in the Abiey region, a disputed land between Sudan and South Sudan, has increased, with the UN reporting more than 100 casualties. Frequent clashes over agricultural land are reported in the El Fashaga region on the Sudan-Ethiopia border. The war has jeopardised an oil pipeline from South Sudan to the Red Sea.

What next?

The involvement of multiple actors and extended geography has made the war complex, challenging international actors to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table.

Multiple failed ceasefire attempts and peace talks imply the need to revisit international actors' approach to the war in Sudan. Although SAF has been gaining pockets in Khartoum, defeating the RSF is a long road. The RSF lacks international support to claim legitimacy. And, a RSF-SAF compromise is highly unlikely. The war will likely be prolonged until a major breakthrough.

There is an increasing fear that the military rivals will divide the country, leading to a plight similar to that of Libya's. Sudanese people have started to live with the war, and with much attention given to Gaza and Ukraine, the war in Sudan will continue to rage on the sidelines.

The author is a Research Associate at the Africa Studies, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru.

THE GIST

The civil war in Sudan between two military factions, the SAF and the RSF has crossed 18 months. It started as a power rivalry between the military heads of the SAF and the RSF, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Hamdan Dagalo respectively.

The war has become complex with the involvement of multiple actors and issues. What began as a military rivalry has now evolved through ethnic lines, involving several regional ethnic militias.

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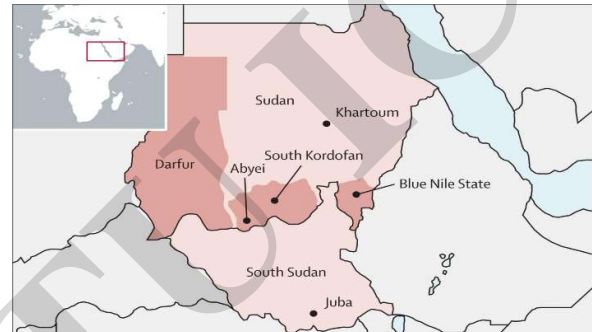


Context :

- ❖ On **September 26, 2024**, the **Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)** launched a significant offensive against the paramilitary **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)** in **Khartoum** and **Bahri**.
- ❖ **18 months into the civil war**, over **20,000 people** have been killed, and **10.8 million** internally displaced persons (IDPs) are recorded as of **October 2024**.
- ❖ Despite multiple ceasefire efforts, no long-lasting peace has been achieved. The latest offensive coincided with the **U.S.-led ceasefire talks** during the UN General Assembly.

About Sudan

- ❖ Sudan is located in **Northeast Africa**.
- ❖ It is the **third-largest country in Africa** and the **16th largest in the world**.
- ❖ **Borders:**
 - North: **Egypt**
 - West: **Chad and Central African Republic**
 - South: **South Sudan**
 - East: **Eritrea, Ethiopia, and the Red Sea**



Major Geographical Features of Sudan

- ❖ **Mountains:**
 - **Jebel Marra:** Located in **Darfur** region (Western Sudan).
 - **Nuba Mountains:** Located in **South Kordofan**.
- ❖ **Rivers:**
 - **Nile River:**
 - The **Nile** is the most important river system, flowing from **South Sudan** through **Khartoum**, where the **White Nile** and **Blue Nile** converge to form the **Main Nile**.
 - The **White Nile** originates in **Lake Victoria**, and the **Blue Nile** originates in **Ethiopia's Lake Tana**.
 - The river plays a critical role in Sudan's agriculture and livelihood, particularly in the **Nile Basin**.
 - **Atbara River:** A tributary of the Nile, originating in the Ethiopian highlands and flowing into the Nile in Northern Sudan
- ❖ **Deserts:**
 - **Nubian Desert:** Located in the **northeastern** part of Sudan, stretching along the Red Sea.
 - **Bayuda Desert:** Located between the **Nile** and **Atbara rivers** in **northern Sudan**, characterized by volcanic features and sand dunes.

Important Areas of Conflict

1. **Darfur:**
 - Western Sudan, known for the **Jebel Marra Mountains**.
 - Ongoing conflict between the **Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)** and the **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)**, with involvement of various ethnic militias.



- The region has been notorious for ethnic violence and human rights violations.

2. Khartoum:

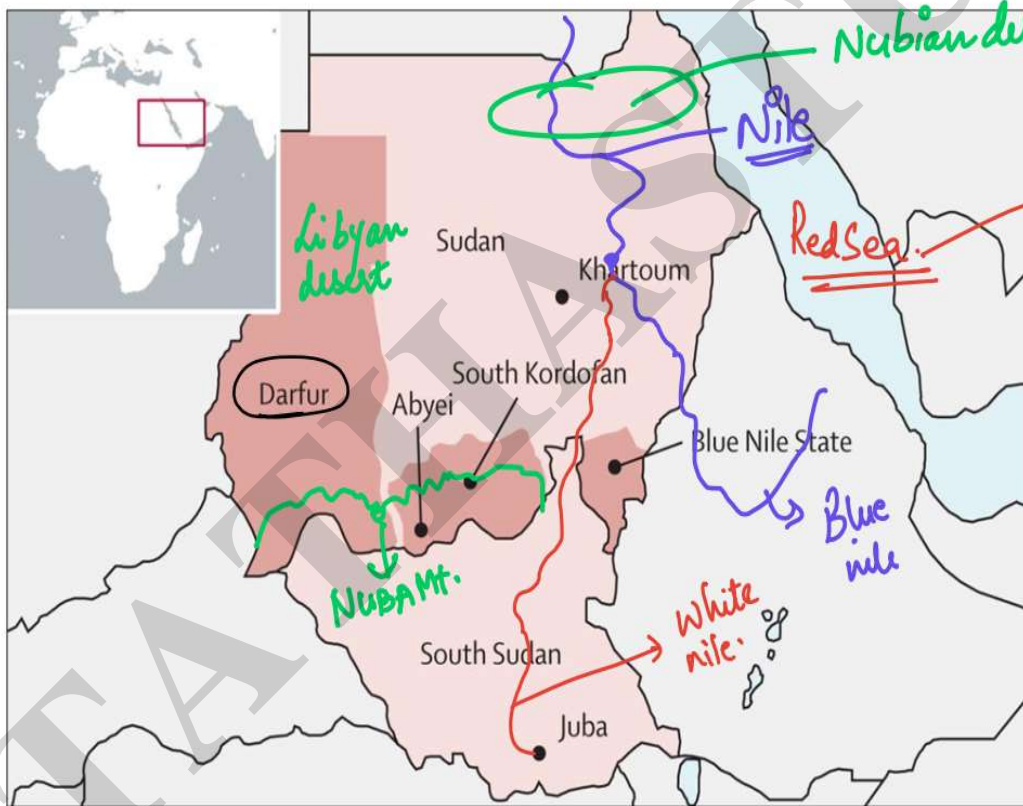
- The capital city and the site of heavy fighting between SAF and RSF.
- It is located at the confluence of the **White** and **Blue Nile** rivers, forming a strategic and contested zone.

3. South Kordofan and Blue Nile:

- These regions are located along Sudan's southern border with **South Sudan**.
- The **Nuba Mountains** in South Kordofan are home to ongoing clashes between the government and rebel groups.

4. Kordofan Region: Both North and South Kordofan have seen **inter-ethnic clashes** and **armed resistance** movements, particularly linked to disputes over land, political representation, and resources.

5. Abyei: A disputed border area between **Sudan** and **South Sudan**, rich in oil resources.



Red Sea
countries

DJ EASY

Jibouti
Jordan
Egypt
Arabia
Sudan
Yemen.

Background of Conflict:

- ❖ The civil war began as a **power struggle** between the **SAF** and the **RSF** military factions, led by **Abdel Fattah al-Burhan** (SAF) and **Hamdan Dagalo** (RSF).
- ❖ Initially confined to Khartoum, the conflict has spread to **Omdurman**, **Bahri**, **Port Sudan**, **El Fasher**, and the **Darfur** and **Kordofan** states.
- ❖ The war has deepened ethnic and regional divides, with the RSF gaining control in several zones, while the SAF has launched airstrikes in **Khartoum**.



Sourcing of Weapons and Arms

- ❖ Despite the **UN arms embargo**, both factions have obtained sophisticated weapons:
 - ❖ The SAF and RSF use weapons from **China, Iran, Russia, Serbia**, and the **UAE**.
 - ❖ The **RSF** allegedly receives support via the **Wagner Group** and **UAE**, while **Russia** has provided arms to the SAF.
 - ❖ Weapons used include **drones, anti-tank missiles**, and **rocket launchers**, highlighting external involvement in prolonging the conflict.

Causes of the Conflict

1. Power Struggle:

- The conflict began over a **rivalry for power** between the two military leaders.
- The **SAF** claims legitimacy as Sudan's government, while the **RSF** controls significant territory, challenging SAF's authority.

2. Ethnic Tensions:

- The conflict has exacerbated ethnic divisions, with **Arab militias** backing the RSF and **nonArab militias** supporting the SAF.
- The **RSF** has been accused of committing war crimes against non-Arab groups, such as the **Masalit** in Darfur.

3. External Support:

- Despite a UN arms embargo, both factions have access to weapons from **China, Russia, UAE**, and **Iran**, prolonging the war

Implications:

- ❖ **Humanitarian Crisis: (GLOBAL)**
 - Over **25.6 million people** in Sudan face severe food insecurity.
 - Cholera outbreaks and famine, particularly in **Darfur**, have worsened the situation.
- ❖ **Refugee Crisis:**
 - More than **2 million refugees** have fled to neighboring countries like **Chad, South Sudan**, and **Ethiopia**.
 - Refugee camps are overwhelmed, raising fears of further migration to Europe.
- ❖ **Regional Instability:**
 - Ethnic violence and clashes along the borders with **South Sudan, Ethiopia**, and **Eritrea** have increased.
 - Tensions in disputed areas like **Abiey** and **El Fashaga** have led to casualties and disrupted local economies.
- ❖ **Humanitarian Concerns (INDIA):** India, a member of the **UN Human Rights Council**, has called for peace in Sudan and has offered **humanitarian assistance**.
- ❖ **Diplomatic Relations:** Prolonged conflict threatens India's diplomatic and **economic ties** with **African Union** members, including Sudan.
- ❖ **Energy Security:** The ongoing conflict jeopardizes the oil pipeline from **South Sudan** to the Red Sea, affecting India's oil imports from the region.





UPSC PYQ 2023

Q.1 In the recent years Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan caught the international attention for which one of the following reason common to all the them?

- (a) Discovery of rich deposits of rare earth elements
- (b) Establishment of Chinese military bases
- (c) Southward expansion of Sahara Desert
- (d) Successful coups

Correct Answer - D

- ❖ In past few years, military leaders have toppled the governments of Mali, Chad, Guinea, Sudan and Burkina Faso. These five nations that have recently experienced military coups form a broken line that stretches across the wide bulge of Africa, from Guinea on the west coast to Sudan in the east. The resurgence of coups has alarmed the region's remaining civilian leaders.
- ❖ **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

UPSC PYQ 2022

Q.2

1. Bidibidi is a large refugee settlement in north-western Kenya.
2. Some people who fled from South Sudan civil war live in Bidibidi.
3. Some people who fled from civil war in Somalia live in Dadaab refugee complex in Kenya.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 3 only

Correct Answer –C

- ❖ Bidibidi became the World's second-largest refugee settlement in the World and the biggest in Africa. **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Bidibidi is a large refugee settlement in **Yumbe district of Uganda**. **Statement 2 is correct:** Bidibidi is home to more than 270,000 refugees mostly from South Sudan.
- ❖ **Statement 3 is correct:** Dadaab refugee (Kenya) complex consists of three camps. The three Dadaab camps are Dagahaley, Ifo and Hagadera. The first two are located in Lagdera (Dadaab) district while Hagadera is located in the neighbouring Fafi district. The first camp was established in 1991, when refugees **fleeing the civil war in Somalia started to cross the border into Kenya**. A second large influx occurred in 2011, when some 130,000 refugees arrived, **fleeing drought and famine in southern Somalia**.

UPSC PYQ 2018

Q.3 Very recently, in which of the following countries having lakhs of people either suffered from severe famine/acute malnutrition or died due to starvation caused by war/ethnic conflicts?

- (a) Angola and Zambia
- (b) Morocco and Tunisia
- (c) Venezuela and Colombia
- (d) Yemen and South Sudan





MUIZZU TO MEET MODI, REQUEST INDIA'S SUPPORT OVER LOOMING ECONOMIC CRISES

Muizzu to meet Modi, request India's support over looming economic crisis

The Maldivian President has said he hoped that India would be ready to ease the Maldives' burden; he is expected to seek a currency swap arrangement and debt support from India; any default in repayment of the rising external debt would spiral the Maldives into a major crisis

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu landed in New Delhi on Sunday for a four-day state visit to India and is expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday morning with a looming economic crisis and an imminent debt repayment on his hands back home.

In an interview to an international broadcaster ahead of his visit, Mr. Muizzu said he hoped that India would be ready to "ease the Maldives' burden", and he is expected to request a currency swap arrangement and debt support during bilateral talks at Hyderabad House, after he receives a guard of honour at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"India is fully cognisant of our fiscal situation, and as one of our biggest development partners, will always be ready to ease our burden, find better alternatives and solutions to the challenges we face," Mr. Muizzu had told the BBC in a written interview.

In September, India announced that the State



Friendly ties: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu during a meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

Bank of India would subscribe Maldivian government bonds of \$50 million, staving off the country's most imminent crisis, and Mr. Muizzu is expected to request Indian support in terms of currency swaps and debt waivers. He had earlier announced that China, a significant creditor, has agreed to defer loan repayments for five years.

On October 8, Maldives is due to make a \$25 million payment towards its

\$500 million *sukuk* (Islamic bonds) debt repayment, out of a total \$114 million still due this year, and about \$1.5 billion in the next two years. In view of the rising external debt, high debt to GDP ratio - at approximately 110% - and falling foreign exchange reserves - at about \$440 million, credit rating agencies Moody's and Fitch have both downgraded the Maldives in recent weeks, and any default on payments is likely to spiral the Maldives

into a major crisis akin to the one faced by Sri Lanka in 2022.

On Sunday, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, and other officials called on Mr. Muizzu to prepare for the talks, which are expected to end with announcements of MoUs on Indian infrastructure projects, security cooperation, and bilateral cooperation in other fields.

In a social media post, Mr. Jaishankar said Mr.

Muizzu's talks with Prime Minister Modi would "give a new impetus" to India-Maldives ties.

"I am confident that this visit will pave the way to further elevating the close neighbourly relations between our two countries and strengthen the enduring friendship and cooperation between our two peoples," Maldives' newly appointed Foreign Minister, Abdulla Khaleel, also said in a post describing the meeting, without offering any specifics on the discussions.

Full turnaround

The visit by Mr. Muizzu to Delhi, his second since he attended Mr. Modi's swearing-in ceremony, marks a full turnaround in ties between the two countries from the tensions between them over the past year.

Mr. Muizzu won elections in the Maldives last year on the back of an 'India Out' campaign and insisted that India withdraw military personnel from the archipelago by May this year. Unlike leaders of other friendly countries in the neighbourhood, Mr. Muizzu did not make India his

first destination abroad, and visited Turkiye, UAE, and China instead over the past year.

Tensions also rose over remarks by Maldivian Ministers that were critical of Mr. Modi and led to an informal 'Boycott Maldives' campaign by certain tour operators, that has halved the number of Indian tourists travelling there. However, after a number of bilateral ministerial meetings, and the Modi government completing the withdrawal of military personnel, ties have warmed up and Mr. Muizzu recently sacked the Ministers involved.

While Mr. Muizzu's visit to India has been expected for some weeks, the economic situation in the Maldives, as well as a Cabinet reshuffle after the resignation of the Finance Minister, had delayed plans. Former Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer, who visited Delhi in May, has now been appointed the Finance Minister.

Mr. Muizzu and his delegation will travel to Agra and Mumbai on Tuesday and then to Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Context :

- ❖ **Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu arrived in New Delhi for a four-day state visit with an agenda focused on economic assistance and bilateral cooperation.**





India – Maldives Relations:

❖ Strategic Significance of the India-Maldives Relationship

1. Geopolitical Significance:

- Maldives is a focal point for India's strategic interests in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- India is seen as a **Net Security Provider** for the Maldives, with a **Comprehensive Action Plan for Defence** signed in 2016.
- India and the Maldives regularly engage in **joint defense exercises** such as “**Ekuverin**” and “**Dosti**.”

2. India as a First Responder:

- India's prompt response to crises like the **1988 coup attempt** (Operation Cactus), the **2004 Tsunami**, and the **COVID-19 pandemic** has strengthened trust and partnership.
- India's assistance includes sending vaccines during health crises and providing disaster relief.

❖ Economic and Trade Relations

1. Tourism:

- Tourism is vital for the Maldives' economy, with **India being the largest source of visitors**. In 2023, over **2,09,198 Indian tourists** visited the Maldives.

2. Trade:

- India is the **2nd largest trade partner** of the Maldives, with bilateral trade crossing **USD 300 million** in 2021.
- A **Bilateral USD Currency Swap Agreement** was signed in 2019, further strengthening trade ties.

❖ Development and Capacity Building Initiatives

1. Infrastructure:

- **Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)** is the largest-ever infrastructure project in the Maldives, supported by India.
- India has also supported the **Hanimaadhoo International Airport** and **National College for Policing and Law Enforcement**.

2. Healthcare and Education:

- India provided funds for the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital** and is setting up a cancer facility.
- India also supports **educational programs** by training Maldivian teachers and providing technical education.

3. Cultural Connectivity:

- India and Maldives share **ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties**, with many Maldivian expatriates in India and vice versa.

-

Key Issues:

1. Lakshadweep Controversy:

- Negative remarks by Maldivian ministers following PM Modi's visit to Lakshadweep resulted in diplomatic friction and a call for **domestic tourism** promotion in India.





2. India Out Campaign:

- The **India Out** campaign seeks to oppose Indian investments and defense presence in the Maldives, stirring tensions around **sovereignty**.
- The newly elected Maldivian government under **President Muizzu** opposes the previous administration's **India First Policy**.

3. Revocation of Hydrographic Agreement:

- The Maldives recently revoked a **Hydrographic Survey Agreement** with India, raising concerns about intelligence collection and security in the region.

4. The China Factor:

- **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** has led to significant Chinese investment in the Maldives.

❖ Concerns about **Chinese military presence** and **oceanographic surveys** in the region pose challenges to India's influence

What can be done to enhance India-Maldives Relationship?

- ❖ **Increase Development Assistance** Focus on projects that benefit the general population (e.g., airport development at Hanimadhoo), boosting India's goodwill.
- ❖ **Engage with Political Opposition** Address concerns through dialogue, emphasizing that projects serve the people's welfare (e.g., tourism-enhancing infrastructure).
- ❖ **Avoid Political Interference** Ensure that India is not perceived as meddling in Maldives' internal politics, especially during elections.
- ❖ **Leverage Neighbourhood First Policy** Use the India-Maldives cooperation as a model for relations with other neighboring countries, enhancing regional ties.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Maldives is vital to India's interests due to its strategic location in the Indian Ocean. India-Maldives Relationship has a strong foundation based on India's historic assistance to Maldives during multiple crises. However, the relationship has seen new challenges in recent times, especially since China's rising influence in the Indian Ocean Region. India must give a rigorous push to ties with Maldives while being mindful of Maldives' sensitivities.





A LEARNING CURVE- PM INTERNSHIP SCHEME

A learning curve

The outcomes of the PM Internship Scheme's pilot project need monitoring

In October 3, without much fanfare, the Centre launched an online portal that will serve as the platform for implementing one of the major announcements in the Budget for India's unemployed, and to a significant extent, unemployable youth. The portal, which operationalises the PM Internship Scheme – part of a five-scheme package designed to spur job creation and impart skills to 4.1 crore youth over five years – will match companies willing to offer year-long on-the-job training stints with young people striving to find a job. In principle, the mainly Centre-funded scheme makes sense for a country with a large, young workforce which is also grappling with distressing levels of youth unemployment. Apart from bridging the gap between the education provided to students and the real-world practical skills desired by employers, well-known firms could offer some form of certification at the end of the internship, providing comfort to prospective employers reviewing candidates for jobs. This could address a key question that employers often grapple with: “They can get the job, but can they get the job done?”

Under a pilot project, the first batch of 1.25 lakh interns will begin stints with voluntarily participating companies on December 2. While the government has consulted industry bodies before and after announcing the scheme, it is rightly cautious before scaling it up to meet the target of creating one crore internships by March 2029. The lessons learned from the pilot project will inform the final scheme design. Some insights will be apparent in the initial process of matching applicants to companies, but the full scope of outcomes can only be assessed after December 2025, when the interns re-enter the job market. Along the way, dropout rates and grievances will need to be monitored closely. A few features pose challenges, such as the plan to place interns within or near their district, and if that is not feasible, within their State. It is unclear how this will play out in less industrialised and less services-oriented States such as Bihar, which are likely to attract higher numbers of applicants. Just five States account for over half of India's manufacturing output, and youth unemployment is higher in States with lower business presence. Apart from shop floor skills, the scheme also needs to incorporate digital and soft skills that are vital for the modern workplace. The pilot project's trajectory requires a diligent and candid evaluation without a self-congratulatory approach, ensuring that intended outcomes are eventually met.

- ❖ To enhance **youth employability** by offering **hands-on exposure** to real-world business environments.
- ❖ Aim to provide **internship opportunities** to **one crore youth** over five years. Focuses on **top 500 companies** for placements.
- ❖ **Pilot Project:** Implemented through an **online portal** managed by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)**.

Stipend and Financial Support:

- ❖ **Monthly stipend** of ₹4,500 will be provided by the **central government** via **DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer)**.
- ❖ Additional **₹500 contribution** by the company through **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** funds.
- ❖ One-time **grant of ₹6,000** upon joining.
- ❖ **Insurance coverage** under **PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana** and **PM Suraksha Bima Yojana**.
- ❖ **Internship Period** : One year.

Eligibility Criteria:

- ❖ **Age Group:**
 - Candidates aged between **21 and 24 years**.





❖ **Educational Qualification:**

- Must have passed **Class 10 or higher**.
- **Not open to post-graduates**.

❖ **Exclusions:**

- Candidates with family members in **government jobs**.
- Graduates from **premier institutes** like IIT, IIM, IISER, or those with **CA or CMA** qualifications are **ineligible**.
- Candidates from households with an annual income of **₹8 lakh or more** in **2023-24** are **excluded**.





STATE SCHEMES IN NEWS

Mukha Mantri Nijut Moina.

Aiming to eradicate child marriage by 2026, says Assam CM

Crackdown has improved infant and maternal mortality rates, says Himanta as he disburses first instalment of the Nijut Moina scheme

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said his government is aiming to eradicate child marriage in the State by 2026.

Mr. Sarma announced the State government's resolve while disbursing the first instalment under the Mukha Mantri Nijut Moina, a scheme for girls to receive a fixed monthly payment to pursue higher education on the condition that they remain unmarried till the completion of their degree course.

The scheme, with a projected outlay of ₹1,500 crore, entails transferring a fixed amount to the accounts of 10 lakh girl students for a set amount of time. The first instalment, for 1.6 lakh students identified for the first year, was



Himanta Biswa Sarma

timed with Navratri. The amount would be credited to the accounts of these students on the 11th of every month from November onwards.

Criteria of the scheme "The rules are simple. Each beneficiary must attend regular classes, maintain good academic performance, and demonstrate discipline," the Chief Minister said.

"The scheme does not apply to the daughters of Ministers, MPs, and MLAs. A beneficiary cannot marry until she completes her graduation," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government's crackdown on child marriage led to significant improvements in the maternal and infant mortality rates in Assam. "Nijut Moina is an endeavour to intensify the battle against child marriage by reducing the economic burden on the parents or guardians of the girls seeking higher education," he said.

The monthly stipend for girls enrolled in Class 12, first year of graduation, and first year of post-graduation (BED included) will be ₹1,000, ₹1,250, and ₹2,500 for 10 months. There is no bar on marriage for girls pursuing postgraduate courses.

Ladki Bahin Scheme.

Payments of Ladki Bahin being made in advance as poll code set to kick in: CM

Oppn. may create obstacles in women beneficiaries getting monthly aid once election schedule is announced: Shinde; vote for ruling alliance to ensure all welfare schemes continue, says Dy. CM

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday said advance payment was being made to beneficiaries of Ladki Bahin Yojana for the months of October and November keeping in mind the impending code of conduct for the Assembly poll.

He said the Opposition parties may create obstacles in women beneficiaries getting monthly aid under the scheme once the model code of conduct kicks in and therefore such a decision has been taken.

The Assembly election is likely to be held in November. The term of the current State Assembly will end on November 26.

"Anticipating the Opposition's possible steps, the Maharashtra government has started disbursing the monthly payment under Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana for October and November," Mr. Shinde said at a rally in Chhatrapati



Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visits the site of a fire in Chembur area of Mumbai on Sunday, which led to the loss of seven lives. PTI

Sambhajnagar.

Under the scheme, women with an annual family income of less than ₹2.5 lakh will be given ₹1,500 per month as aid.

Though ongoing schemes are generally not affected by the model code of conduct, the Shinde government is not taking any chances, a source said.

Citing legendary singer Asha Bhosale's praise for the Ladki Bahin Yojana, Mr. Shinde said it was a slap on

the face of the Opposition, which has been "spreading fake narratives" about the scheme.

Hitting out at former Chief Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray, Mr. Shinde said under the Maha Vikas Aghadi government there used to "instalments of extortion".

"My government does not take from the people, but gives back to them through various schemes.

Ours is a 'dena' bank (donating) and not 'lena' bank (collecting)," he claimed.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar asked the gathering to vote for the ruling alliance to ensure all welfare schemes continue. "We are the ones who follow our words and keep our promises. We do not make decisions with one eye on the election. Do not ever forget us. Consider it ₹1,500 under the Ladki Bahin scheme) as a Bhaai Beej gift to our sisters," Mr. Pawar said.

Patole confident Meanwhile, a day after party leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi visited Kolhapur, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Sunday asserted that the Assembly election will be much better for the party than the upswing predicted for it in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, where election results will be declared on October 8.

Mukha Mantri Nijut Moina Scheme- Assam

❖ Mukha Mantri Nijut Moina Scheme

- **Objective:** To encourage higher education for girls and prevent child marriage.
- **Target Group:** 10 lakh girl students in Assam pursuing higher education (Class 12, Graduation, Post-Graduation).
- **Financial Assistance:** Monthly payments of ₹1,000, ₹1,250, and ₹2,500 depending on the education level.

Conditions:

- ❖ **Remain unmarried** till graduation (except for post-graduate students).
- ❖ **Regular attendance, academic performance, and discipline** are mandatory.
- ❖ **Exclusion:** Daughters of Ministers, MPs, and MLAs are not eligible.

Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana (Maharashtra Government)

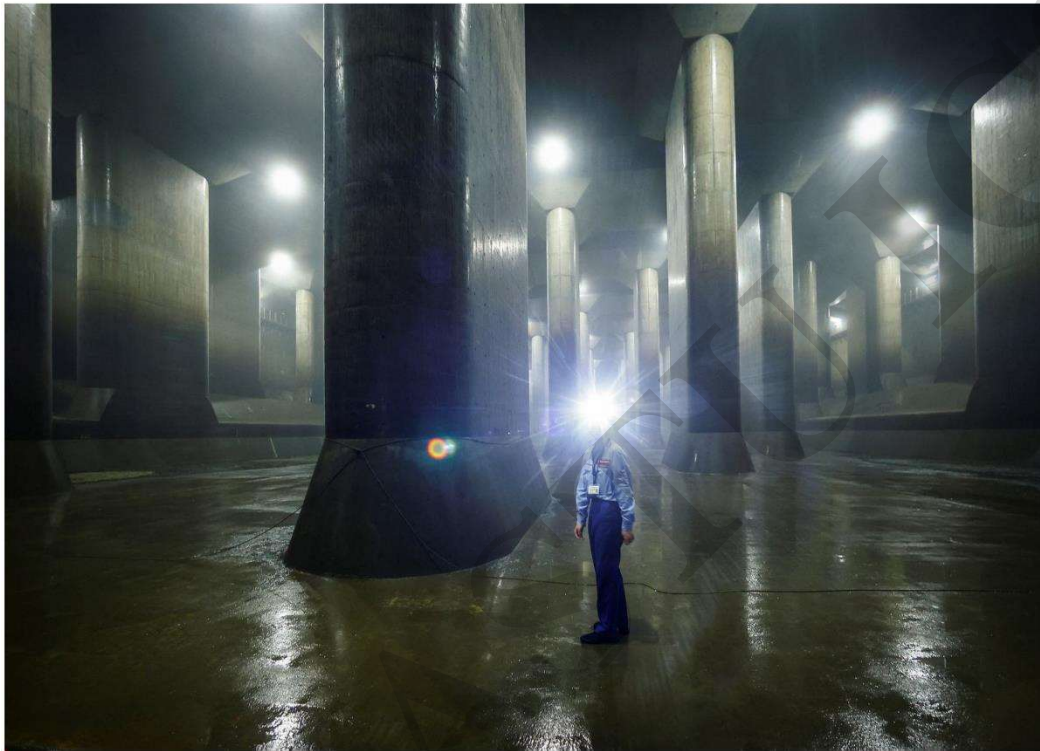
- ❖ Provide financial aid to women with **annual family income less than ₹2.5 lakh** to support their livelihood.
- ❖ Eligible women receive a monthly payment of **₹1,500** under the scheme
- ❖ It also aims to improve the health, nutrition, and role in the family of a woman.



A BENCHMARK IN GLOBAL URBAN FLOOD RESILIENCE

Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel(MAOUDC)

BIG SHOT



MAOUDC:

- ❖ The **Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel (MAOUDC)**, also known as the **G-Cans Project**, is one of the world's largest underground flood management systems, located in **Saitama, Japan**. It was designed to protect **Tokyo and surrounding areas** from flooding caused by heavy rainfall, typhoons, and river overflow.
- ❖ MAOUDC collects floodwaters from **overflowing rivers** and excess stormwater through the network of underground tunnels and discharges it into the **Edogawa River**.

