

Mains Master

The global nuclear order is under strain

Context

The article explores the rise, successes, and challenges of the Global Nuclear Order (GNO), tracing its origins in the Cold War era, its achievements in curbing nuclear proliferation, and the contemporary challenges it faces due to geopolitical shifts, treaty disputes, and evolving nuclear dynamics. It questions the stability of the GNO amidst changing global power plays and modern nuclear realities.

The **Global Nuclear Order (GNO)** refers to the system established during the Cold War era that aimed to manage the proliferation of nuclear weapons, maintain stability among nuclear powers, and prevent the spread of nuclear technology for military purposes. It encompasses treaties, agreements, and mechanisms put in place by major powers to control the development, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as to promote non-proliferation efforts among nations worldwide. The GNO sought to establish norms, regulations, and cooperation to prevent nuclear conflict and manage the risks associated with nuclear capabilities on a global scale.

Formation of the Global Nuclear Order (GNO):

- **Cold War Realities:** The Cuban Missile Crisis led to the establishment of bilateral mechanisms between the US and USSR, recognizing the need for nuclear tension prevention.
- **Nuclear Non-Proliferation:** The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) emerged from multilateral negotiations initiated by the US and USSR to curb the spread of nuclear weapons.
- **Creation of Controls:** The Nuclear Suppliers Group was formed to regulate the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and prevent its use in explosive endeavors.

Successes and Challenges of the GNO:

- **Taboo against Nuclear Weapons:** A global consensus maintained the taboo against nuclear weapons since 1945, although the role of arms control in preserving this taboo remains debatable.
- **Arms Control Efforts:** Despite limited success in curbing the US-USSR nuclear arms race, arms control agreements contributed to the reduction of nuclear arsenals post-Cold War.
- **Strategic Stability:** The concept of strategic stability, rooted in assured second-strike capability during the Cold War, faces challenges in today's evolving geopolitical landscape.

Changing Geopolitics and Impact:

- **Shift to Multipolar World:** The emergence of a more assertive China challenging US dominance has reshaped the global nuclear scenario.
- **Treaty Disputes:** US withdrawals from pivotal nuclear treaties, such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, have strained relations with Russia.
- **Concerns and New Dynamics:** Escalating tensions due to Russian warnings and saber-rattling have reintroduced nuclear concerns, rendering previous stability definitions ineffective.

Current Challenges to the GNO:

- **Outdated Framework:** The Cold War-era focus on non-proliferation struggles to adapt to evolving nuclear technologies and changing global dynamics.
- **Shaky Treaty Compliance:** The US's pragmatic approach in nuclear deals, turning a blind eye to certain proliferation instances, raises concerns about treaty adherence and consistency.
- **Changing Alliances:** Shifts in global alliances and domestic compulsions of nations, particularly in East Asia, may prompt reconsideration of nuclear armament for security purposes.

Raj Bhavan needs radical reforms

The Central Issue: The recent controversial behaviour of Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan raises a crucial question: how should Governors in Opposition-ruled states conduct themselves and what are the legal consequences of their actions when they deviate from acceptable norms?

Constitutional Morality and Lack of Specific Guidelines:

While the Constitution defines the Governors' functions, powers, and duties, it lacks guidelines concerning their personal behaviour. However, the concept of constitutional morality emphasizes the need for Governors to uphold ethical values in their public conduct. This notion was emphasized by the Supreme Court in *NCT of Delhi v. Union of India* (2018).

Governor's Immunity and Misconduct:

Article 361 provides limited immunity for Governors, but not for actions outside their official capacity. In *Rameshwar Prasad v. Union of India* (2006), the Supreme Court held Governors accountable for "motivated and whimsical conduct," even recommending Presidential rule. Questions remain, however, regarding immunity for extra-constitutional gestures and utterances.

Freedom of Expression and Accountability of Public Functionaries:

In *Kaushal Kishor v. State of Uttar Pradesh* (2023), the Supreme Court acknowledged the freedom of expression of public functionaries while also highlighting potential personal liability for statements not aligned with the government's official stance. This applies to Governors as well, when their actions or words significantly deviate from their constitutional role.

Sarkaria and Punchhi Commission Reports:

Both commissions highlighted the need for Governors to be impartial and avoid close ties to local politics. The Punchhi Commission specifically noted the potential pitfalls of appointing Governors as university chancellors, which has been a major point of contention in Kerala.

Kerala Governor's Case: Breach of Protocol and Unilateral Actions:

The Governor's recent visit to Calicut University without prior announcement and his disparaging remarks against student activists and the Chief Minister raise concerns about his adherence to constitutional morality and democratic legitimacy.

Future Steps and Considerations:

Amending Article 155 of the Constitution to ensure consultation with Chief Ministers during Governor appointments, as suggested by the Rajya Sabha Committee on Public Undertakings, could be a step towards ensuring greater harmony and preventing future conflicts.

Overall:

The Governor's role in India's federal system needs critical reevaluation. While respecting their constitutional authority, we must hold them accountable for their actions outside their official capacity and ensure their conduct upholds the principles of constitutional morality and democratic governance.

In bid to derisk away from China, India looks to seal global alliances

India's Pursuit of Critical Minerals:

Strategic Global Partnerships:

India is actively engaging with nations like Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and Australia to secure critical minerals such as lithium and cobalt through alliances and discussions, seeking to diversify its sources beyond China.

Focused Mineral Strategy:

With a list of 24 crucial minerals, including lithium, cobalt, nickel, and others, India aims to utilize these minerals in various industries vital for its net-zero emission commitment and technological advancements.

Dependency Challenges and Import Costs:

India heavily relies on China for lithium imports, leading to an annual import bill of approximately ₹24,000 crore, expected to escalate due to the growing popularity of electric vehicles.

Strategic Actions Taken:

Mining Collaborations and Exploration:

India is pursuing agreements to acquire lithium blocks in Argentina and conducting advanced talks with an Argentinian state-owned miner, Camyen, for supply agreements and mine development. Additionally, due diligence for lithium and cobalt projects in Australia is underway.

Exploration in Chile and Domestic Efforts:

India has signed a non-disclosure agreement with Chile's ENAMI to explore lithium business opportunities and is intensively exploring critical minerals domestically through Geological Survey of India initiatives.

International Collaborations:

Mineral Security Partnerships:

Joining the Minerals Security Partnership led by the US, India is expressing interest in participating in three projects to secure its mineral supply chains.

CECA with Australia:

The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with Australia encompasses critical mineral mining and processing technologies, offering India opportunities for collaboration.

Domestic Initiatives:

Policy Reforms and Auctions:

India's amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act aim to encourage private sector involvement, while ongoing auctions for critical minerals and policy reforms further support domestic mineral exploration and extraction efforts.

Prelims Booster

Windfall tax on crude hiked

💰 A windfall tax is imposed by governments on industries or businesses that have reaped extraordinary profits due to favorable economic conditions. (Windfall tax definition)

🏗️ This tax primarily targets commodity-based businesses and aims to redistribute excessive profits to benefit social welfare or fund public projects. (Purpose of windfall tax)

🤔 The implementation and perceived fairness of such a tax can be subject to debate and contention. (Debate on windfall tax)

🎰 Individual taxes like inheritance tax or taxes on large lottery or game-show winnings can also be seen as a form of windfall tax as they levy additional charges on sudden or unexpected financial gains. (Individual windfall taxes)

Free Movement Regime at Myanmar border to end soon, entry into India will need vis

🗺️ The free movement regime allows certain ethnic groups to move across the Myanmar-India border without travel documents or visas, rooted in historical and cultural ties.

👥 It primarily benefits ethnic groups like the Naga, Kuki, and other indigenous communities, facilitating social and economic connections across the border.

🏠 It facilitates informal trade and commerce, contributing to the local economies and livelihoods of the border communities.

⚠️ While significant historically, it has raised concerns related to security, illegal migration, and cross-border activities, posing challenges for law enforcement and border management.

Number of minors to cross Darien Gap in a bid to reach the U.S.

🌐 The Darién Gap is a geographic region in the Isthmus of Darién, connecting the American continents within Central America, consisting of a large watershed, forest, and mountains in Panama's Darién Province and the northern portion of Colombia's Chocó Department.

The 'volcano tourists' who vie to catch eruptions on Iceland

- 🌋 Volcanic sites mentioned in the article include:
 - **Grindavik, Iceland:** Witnessed the recent eruption attracting tourists.
 - **Eyjafjallajökull, Iceland:** Caused travel chaos in 2010 due to ash.
 - **Fagradalsfjall volcano, Iceland:** Erupted in 2021, drawing visitors.
 - **Mauna Loa, Hawaii:** Erupted recently, drawing onlookers without posing threats.
 - **Marapi, Indonesia:** Erupted recently, causing fatalities among climbers.
 - **White Island (Whakaari), New Zealand:** Closed since a 2019 eruption that killed tourists.

Starlink

- 🌐 Starlink, the satellite internet network from SpaceX, covers more than 70 countries and aims to extend its services globally, including mobile phone connectivity by 2023.
- 🌐 Launched in 2019, the network comprises over 5,500 small satellites positioned in low Earth orbit (LEO), with plans to deploy nearly 12,000 initially and potential future expansion to 42,000.
- 📡 The network operates by establishing communication links between satellites and designated ground transceivers, ensuring widespread coverage and robust connectivity across various regions, poised to redefine global internet accessibility and communications.

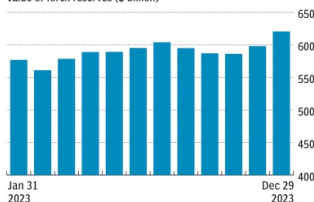
VISUALLY.

Forex reserves keep up momentum

India's forex reserves grew 7.5 per cent in 2023, and are now at a healthy level above \$600 billion, helped by FPI and FDI inflows. Other emerging economies, however, present a mixed bag in accretion to reserves

Forex reserves grow 7.5 per cent in 2023

Value of forex reserves (\$ billion)



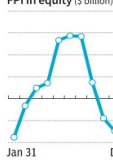
China and a few other EMs have witnessed erosion in their reserves

Total forex reserves (\$ billion)



FDI and FPI flows helped reserves in 2023

FPI in equity (\$ billion)



FDI inflows (\$ billion)

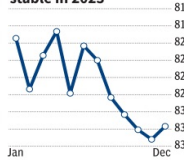


Gold reserves have recorded the highest increase

Value of assets (\$ billion)



Amid this, rupee remained stable in 2023



Source: Bloomberg and RBI

Compiled by Jayant Pankaj | Graphic: KS Gunasekar

111. The Foreign Exchange Reserves (FER) of RBI include which of the following?

1. Foreign Currency Assets (FCA)
2. Gold
3. Special Drawing Rights (SDR)
4. Reserve Tranche Position

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- (A) Only 1 and 2
- (B) Only 2, 3 and 4
- (C) Only 1, 2 and 3
- (D) All of the above

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Prelims