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SIPRI Report

New data on global arms transfers was published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

- **Imports** - India remained the world's largest arms importer from 2018 to 2022 followed by Saudi Arabia and Ukraine.
- Ukraine was the third biggest importer of major arms in 2022 (14th biggest during 2018-22) due to the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war.
- Pakistan is the eighth-largest arms importer during 2018-22, increased its imports by 14%, with China as its main supplier.
- **Exports** - The US was the world's topmost military exporter from 2018 to 2022, accounting for 40% of global exports.
- It is followed by Russia (16%), France, China and Germany.
- US arms exports increased between 2013-17 and 2018-22, while Russia's fell during the same period.
- **India** - India is the largest arms importer in the world since 2013.
- There was an 11% drop in India's arms import between 2013-17 and 2018-22.
- Russia was India's largest arms supplier in 2013-17 and 2018-2022.
- France emerged as the second-largest arms supplier to India in 2018-22, followed by the US.
- India also imported arms during this five-year period from Israel, South Korea, and South Africa.
- India's tensions with Pakistan and China largely drive its demand for arms imports.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is a Sweden-based defence think-tank.

References

1. [IE - India remains world's largest arms importer: SIPRI data](#)
2. [Hindustan Times - India: World's top arms importer in 2018-2022](#)
3. [SIPRI - Global Arms Transfers Data](#)

Channar Revolt

The bicentenary celebration of one of the earliest recorded anti-caste assertions in southern

India was held in Nagercoil with the attendance of Chief Ministers of Kerala and Tamilnadu.

- The anti-caste revolt fought in 1823 in the southern parts of Travancore Kingdom is known as
 1. 'Marumakkal Samaram' and 'Channar Revolt' in Kerala.
 2. 'Thol Seelai Porattam' in Tamil Nadu.
- The revolt is a militant public action fought with women from the Nadar caste, an OBC community in the forefront.
- Their demand was that they be allowed to cloth the upper part of their body, a choice then limited to upper caste women.
- Hence the Channar revolt is also known as '**the Upper Cloth Revolt**'.
- The agitation spread across the southern talukas of the then Travancore kingdom.
- The Hindu upper castes, particularly the Nair community that dominated the administration opposed the demand.
- A royal proclamation acceding to the demand was made in 1859.

Other anti-caste movements in the region

- The Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-1925) was held to allow all castes access to roads that went past the Vaikom Shiva temple.
- Vaikom Satyagraha saw the participation of Hindu upper castes in large numbers.
- A savarna march was organised from Vaikom to Thiruvananthapuram to press the demand of the satyagrahis.
- Sree Narayana Guru (1854-1928), fought against the caste system for social equality.
- His message was: '*Man is of one kind, one faith and one God*'.
- Vaikunta Swami, born in a Nadar family, started a radical spiritual movement that had equality at its core.
- Influenced by the Tamil Siddha tradition, Vaikunta Swami challenged the custodians of caste and the religious sphere it maintained and questioned all sets of authority.
- The Guruvayur temple entry movement in 1931 allowed entry to socially backward Hindus.

References

1. [IE - Two anti-caste revolts, a shared inheritance](#)
2. [The federal - 200 years of Channar revolt](#)

Least Developed Country

Bhutan became the seventh nation to graduate from the United Nations' (UN) list of Least Developed Countries (LDC).

- The Least Developed Countries (LDC) are developing countries listed by the UN that exhibit the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development.
- The concept first originated in the late 1960s and was codified under UN resolution 2768 passed in November 1971.
- **Definition** - According to the UN, Least developed countries (LDCs) are low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development.

- They are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of human assets.
- **LDC at present** - Currently, the UN lists 46 countries that qualify as LDCs.
- Of those, 33 are from Africa, nine from Asia, 3 from the Pacific and 1 from the Caribbean.
- **Criteria** - The UN identifies 3 criteria for a country to be classified as an LDC:
 1. Income - Gross National Income (GNI) per capita below the threshold of USD 1,230 over a three-year average.
 2. Human Assets - Perform poorly on a composite human assets index based on indicators including nutrition, health and education.
 3. Economic Vulnerability - Demonstrate economic vulnerability such as being prone to natural disasters and possessing structural economic constraints.
- The criteria are reviewed on a 3-year basis (triennial) by the UN.
- **Getting off the LDC list** - To graduate from the LDC list, a country must meet certain criteria in the above 3 areas in the triennial review.
 1. A nation must have a GNI per capita of at least USD 1,242 for 2 consecutive triennial reviews in order to meet the income requirement.
 2. By using measures like education, health, and nutrition, a nation must show that it has improved its human capital in order to achieve the human assets requirement.
 3. A nation also must show that it has improved its ability to withstand external economic shocks in order to pass the economic vulnerability test.
- **Advantages of being an LDC** - LDCs also enjoy duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) access to the markets of developed countries.
- LDCs are also eligible for loans with special terms for development, which include 'Official Development Assistance' (ODA) or 'aid'.

Botswana is the first country to achieve graduation in 1994. Its strong economic performance driven by its diamond mining industry and investments in education and infrastructure was a major reason.

Bhutan

- Bhutan is a mountainous, landlocked country in Asia.
- It is consistently ranked one of the happiest in the world.
- Bhutan was included in the first group of LDCs in 1971.
- It has made remarkable progress on a variety of socio-economic metrics and fulfilled the requirements for graduation in 2015 and in 2018.
- Exporting hydropower to India accounts for 20% of Bhutan's economy.

References

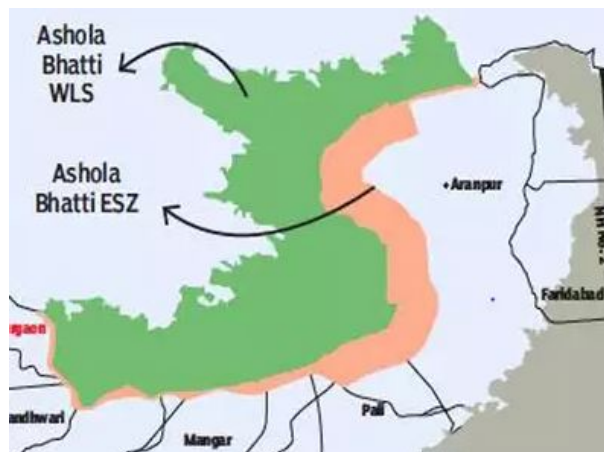
1. [IE - How Bhutan graduated from the 'Least Developed Country'](#)
2. [United Nations - Least Developed Countries](#)

Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary

The Environment Minister opened the Neeli Jheel ecotourism site in the Asola Bhatti

Wildlife Sanctuary to the public.

- The Asola Bhatti sanctuary is situated in the South Delhi Ridge section of the Aravalli range on the Delhi-Haryana border.
- It lies in Southern Delhi as well as northern parts of Faridabad and Gurugram districts of Haryana state.
- It is spread over an area of 6,784 acres and covers 32.71 sq km.
- It is also part of the Sariska-Delhi Wildlife Corridor which runs from the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan to the Delhi Ridge.



- **Protection** - Mining for quartzite and sand in the area was banned in 1991.
- The Eco-Task Force of the Territorial Army has also been part of protection and plantation at the sanctuary since 2001.
- In 2019, the area around the boundary of Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary in Gurgaon and Faridabad was declared as an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ).
- **Flora** - The type of forest in the sanctuary is identified as 'thorny scrub'.
- A forest nursery and a seed bank were also set up at the sanctuary.
- **Fauna** - Leopards, striped hyena, jungle cat, golden jackal, Indian hare, Indian boar, black buck, sambar deer, spotted deer, and hog deer.
- **Neeli Jheel** - It has been developed as an eco-tourism site inside the sanctuary.
- Neeli Jheel is a lake formed in an abandoned mining pit.
- The 100 feet deep Neeli Jheel is an important source of water for wildlife in the sanctuary.
- Four solar-powered artificial waterfalls has been developed there, in which the water cascades down 100 feet to the lake below.
- The site will feature artificial waterfalls, selfie points, trails and facilities such as a cafeteria.

References

1. [IE - How Asola Bhatti WLS is becoming more welcoming](#)
2. [Hindustan Times - Ecotourism spot opens at Asola Bhatti's](#)

Suspension of Operations Pact

The Manipur government decided to withdraw from the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with 2 hill-based tribal militant groups.

- Suspension of Operations (SoO) is a tripartite pact between the Government of India, the Government of Manipur and Kuki insurgent groups in Manipur.
- As many as 17 are under the umbrella group Kuki National Organisation (KNO), and 8 are under the United People's Front (UPF).
- The SoO pact was signed on August 22, 2008 between the tripartite.
- The primary objective of SoO pact is initiating political dialogue.
- **So Far** - The Kuki outfits who were initially demanding a separate Kuki state have come down to a 'Kukiland territorial council'.
- Kuki Territorial Council would have financial and administrative powers independent of the Manipur Assembly and government.
- **Interlocutor** - AB Mathur, former special secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).
- **Monitoring** - The Joint Monitoring Group (JMG) with representatives from all the signatories, has been formed to oversee the effective implementation of the SoO pact.
- **Terms under SoO** - Security forces, including state and central forces, are not to launch any operations, nor can the underground groups.
- The signatories of UPF and KNO shall abide by the Constitution of India, the laws of the land and the territorial integrity of Manipur.
- They are prohibited from committing all kinds of atrocities, extortion, among others.
- The militant cadres are to be confined in designated camps identified by the Government.
- The groups are given arms only to guard their camps and protect their leaders, other arms are deposited in a safe room.
- **Finance** - The UG cadres living in the designated camps are given a monthly stipend of Rs 5000, as a rehabilitation package.
- Financial assistance is also being provided to maintain the designated camps.
- **Related Topic** - [Kuki Insurgency](#)

References

1. [IE - What is the Suspension of Operations \(SoO\) agreement?](#)



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