Current Affairs and Media Issues
BA(JMC)-MDC-111

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UNIT 2

1. International News and Global Perspectives

- Staying informed about international news and developing a global perspective is essential for understanding interconnectedness, global challenges, and opportunities.
- **Key Sources for International News:**
  - **Major International News Agencies:**
    - **Reuters:** Global news agency known for its comprehensive and generally objective reporting, particularly strong in financial and economic news.
    - **Associated Press (AP):** Another major global news agency, providing factual and timely reporting from around the world.
    - **Agence France-Presse (AFP):** French international news agency with a wide global presence.
  - **Reputable International Newspapers & Online Portals:**
    - **The New York Times:** Known for in-depth investigative journalism and extensive international coverage.
    - **The Guardian (UK):** Offers a broad range of international news and opinion.
    - **The Wall Street Journal:** Strong on global business, finance, and political economy.
    - **Financial Times (UK):** Excellent for global economic and financial news.
    - **The Washington Post:** Provides significant coverage of U.S. foreign policy and international events.
    - **BBC News (UK):** A globally respected public broadcaster offering comprehensive news and analysis.
    - **Al Jazeera (Qatar):** Offers a Middle Eastern perspective on global events, with strong investigative reporting.
    - **CNN (US):** Major cable news network providing real-time international coverage.

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2. Security Council: Structure and Role

The Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, established by the UN Charter in 1945.

Structure:

15 Members: The Security Council consists of 15 Member States.
5 Permanent Members (P5): China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States. These members hold veto power, meaning a negative vote from any of them can block a resolution.
10 Non-Permanent Members: Elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms, with five members elected each year. Geographical representation is a key consideration in their election.
Presidency: The presidency of the Security Council rotates monthly among its members in alphabetical order of their English names.

Role and Functions:

Primary Responsibility: The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.
Investigate Disputes: It can investigate any dispute or situation that might lead to international friction.
Recommendations for Peaceful Settlement: It can recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or terms of settlement.
Sanctions: It can impose sanctions (economic, arms embargoes, travel bans, etc.) to address threats to international peace and security.
Authorization of Force: It is the only UN body that can authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. This often takes the form of authorizing peacekeeping operations or military interventions.
Admission of New Members: Recommends the admission of new UN Member States to the General Assembly.
Appointment of Secretary-General: Recommends the appointment of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.
International Criminal Court (ICC): Can refer situations to the ICC for investigation.
Binding Decisions: Decisions of the Security Council are legally binding on all UN Member States, unlike resolutions of the General Assembly.

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3. Role of the United Nations

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1945 to promote international cooperation and to create and maintain international order. Its broad role encompasses:

•Maintaining International Peace and Security: The UN's foundational purpose, achieved primarily through the Security Council, peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention, mediation, and disarmament efforts.

•Protecting Human Rights: Promoting and protecting human rights globally through various conventions, declarations, and bodies like the Human Rights Council.

•Delivering Humanitarian Aid: Providing emergency relief to populations affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and other crises through agencies like UNICEF, WFP, and UNHCR.

•Promoting Sustainable Development: Addressing global challenges related to poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, and environmental degradation through programs and initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

•Upholding International Law: Developing and codifying international law, settling international disputes through the International Court of Justice, and promoting justice.

•Fostering International Cooperation: Providing a forum for member states to discuss and resolve global issues, working together on a wide range of social, economic, environmental, and cultural matters.

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4. General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the United Nations.

•Structure:

- **Universal Representation: Comprises all 193 Member States of the UN, making it the only UN body with universal representation.**
- **One Vote Per Member: Each Member State has one vote.**
- **Annual Sessions: Meets in regular annual sessions from September to December, and can also convene special or emergency special sessions.**
- **President: Elects a President for each annual session.**

•Role and Functions:

- **Deliberation and Policy-making: Serves as a forum for multilateral discussion of a wide range of international issues covered by the UN Charter.**
- **Recommendations: Can make recommendations to Member States or the Security Council on any matters within the scope of the UN, except on peace and security matters that are currently under Security Council consideration. While its resolutions are generally non-binding (except for budgetary matters), they carry significant moral and political weight, reflecting global opinion.**
- **Budgetary Matters: Considers and approves the UN budget and determines the financial contributions of Member States.**
- **Election of Non-Permanent SC Members: Elects the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council.**
- **Election of ECOSOC Members: Elects the members of the Economic and Social Council.**
- **Appointment of Secretary-General: Appoints the Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the Security Council.**
- **Admission/Suspension/Expulsion of Members: Decides on the admission of new members and the suspension or expulsion of existing members upon the recommendation of the Security Council.**
- **Initiates Studies: Initiates studies and makes recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development of international law, human rights, and international collaboration in economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational, and health fields.**
- **"Uniting for Peace" Resolution: If the Security Council fails to act on a threat to peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression due to a permanent member's veto, the General Assembly can take up the matter and recommend collective measures to Member States.**

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5. Other Main Organs of the UNO

Besides the General Assembly and the Security Council, there are four other principal organs of the United Nations:

•Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

- **Role: The principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue, and recommendations on economic, social, and environmental issues. It also oversees the implementation of internationally agreed development goals.**
- **Structure: Has 54 members, elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.**
- **Function: Serves as the central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social, and environmental fields.**

•Trusteeship Council:

- **Role: Established to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories placed under the administration of seven Member States, ensuring steps were taken to prepare them for self-government or independence.**
- **Status: Suspended operation on 1 November 1994, after Palau, the last remaining trust territory, attained independence. It now only meets as occasion requires.**

•International Court of Justice (ICJ):

- **Role: The principal judicial organ of the United Nations.**
- **Seat: Located at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands (the only principal organ not in New York).**
- **Function: Settles legal disputes submitted to it by States in accordance with international law and gives advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies.**

•Secretariat:

- **Role: Comprises the Secretary-General and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the Organization.**
- **Secretary-General: The chief administrative officer of the UN, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year renewable term. The current Secretary-General is António Guterres.**
- **Function: Administers the programs and policies laid down by the other principal organs, provides studies, information, and facilities for UN bodies, and advocates for the world's peoples.**