

7th September, 23



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Delhi all set to host G20 Summit



Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Why in news?

- Leaders from the most powerful nations in the world will flock to New Delhi for the G20 Heads of State and Government Summit to be held on September 9-10.
- The culmination of India's year-long presidency of the G20, the summit will be concluded with the adoption of a G20 Leaders' Declaration, which will state the participating leaders' commitment towards the priorities discussed and agreed upon during the respective ministerial and working group meetings.
- Notably, this year's theme is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — One Earth, One Family, One Future".



What is the G20?

- The G20, or the Group of Twenty, comprises 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, U.K, and the U.S) and the European Union.
- These members represent around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. As a forum for international economic cooperation, it plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.
- Some of G20's major objectives are as follows:
 - Policy coordination between its members in order to achieve global economic stability, sustainable growth;
 - To promote financial regulations that reduce risks and prevent future financial crises; and
 - To create a new international financial architecture.

Origin



- The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the emergence of the economies of Brazil, China and India and the Asian financial crisis of 1997 were key factors behind the idea of formation of a new world forum. Existing fora such as the G7, or international organisations such as the World Bank, were incapable of handling crises in the emergent global order.
- It was in late 1999 that the G20, with its current composition, was finally founded as an informal forum for Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of its members to meet annually.
- The first G20 Leaders' Summit was convened in Washington DC in 2008.

How does the G20 work?



- It is important to note that the G20 is an informal grouping. This means that unlike the United Nations (UN), it does not have a permanent secretariat or staff. Rather, the G20 presidency rotates annually among the members and is responsible for bringing together the G20 agenda, organising its workings and hosting summits.
- The presidency is supported by the “troika” – previous, current and incoming presidencies. India holds the presidency from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023 with the troika comprising Indonesia (the previous presidency), India, and Brazil (the incoming presidency).
- The G20 is also informal in another sense – while the decisions of the G20 are important, they do not get implemented automatically. Rather, the G20 is a forum where leaders discuss various issues and make pronouncements, which signals their intentions. Then, they are implemented by relevant nations or international organisations.
- For instance, if the G20 makes a pronouncement on trade, the actual implementation of the pronouncement will be done by an organisation such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

How is the G20 presidency determined?



- The G20 presidency is rotated among its members who (except the EU) are divided into 5 groups.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Australia	India	Argentina	France	China
Canada	Russia	Brazil	Germany	Indonesia
Saudi Arabia	South Africa	Mexico	Italy	Japan
USA	Türkiye		UK	South Korea

- The presidency rotates from group to group. However, each country within a group is eligible for presidency when it is their group's turn. Thus, the countries in the eligible group negotiate among themselves to determine the group's presidency.

The G20 Leaders' Summit

- The presidency is responsible for setting the G20 agenda for the year. This is done in consultation with other members as well as pertinent global developments.
- The president also gets to host various meetings and the G20 Leaders' Summit, which is the culmination of all the work done by the group at lower levels through the year.

Invitees for this year's summit



- In addition to the member countries, each year, the G20 president invites guest countries to participate in the G20 meetings and the Summit. This year, India has invited several countries such as Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, etc.
- Being the president, India has also invited certain international organisations (IOs) such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as guest IOs. These are in addition to the regular G20 IOs (who participate every year) which include the UN, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the World Health Organization (WHO) etc.
- India has also invited the chairs of the following regional organisations (ROs): the African Union (AU), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) etc.
- Since the G20 does not have any direct power to govern or implement any pronouncements made, it depends on its members and IOs to do that. This is why it is crucial to involve IOs in the workings of the G20.

Delhi High Court allows stem cell therapy for two autistic kids

Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Why in news?

- The Delhi High Court recently permitted two children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to undergo stem cell therapy for treatment of their condition.
- The order came in a petition moved by family members of the two children, challenging a 2022 recommendation of the Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB) of the National Medical Commission (NMC) against the use of stem cell treatment for ASD.



What are stem cells?

- Simply put, stem cells are cells from which all other cells, with their respective specialised functions, are generated. The human body, under certain conditions, “divides” stem cells to either create new stem cells or cells with specific functions, such as blood cells, brain cells, bone cells, muscle cells, etc.
- There are two main categories of stem cells: pluripotent stem cells, or cells with the ability to differentiate into all of the cells of the adult body, and adult stem cells, which are tissue or organ-specific and regenerate to form cells only of that particular organ.
- In 2006, researchers identified conditions that would allow some mature human adult cells to be reprogrammed into an embryonic stem cell-like state. Those reprogrammed stem cells are called induced pluripotent stem cells.

How are stem cells used in medicine?

- The regenerative properties of stem cells make them extremely valuable in medicine. This is why stem cell treatments are also termed as regenerative medicine.
- For long, hematopoietic stem cell transplantation has been used to treat people with conditions such as leukaemia and lymphoma. After chemotherapy wrecks the patient’s healthy cells (along with the cancerous ones), a donor’s healthy bone marrow reintroduces functional stem cells to replicate inside of a patient and to produce additional normal blood cells.
- There are typically a very small number of adult stem cells in each tissue, and once removed from the body, their capacity to divide is limited. This is the fundamental limitation of stem cell therapies at the moment. That is why, scientists have been focussed on manipulating adult stem cells to exhibit characteristics of pluripotent stem cells.

What is autism spectrum disorder?

- Autism spectrum disorder is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave.
- People with ASD often have difficulty with communication and interaction with other people, restricted interests and repetitive behaviours, and symptoms that affect their ability to function in school, work, and other areas of life.
- Currently, there is no cure for ASD – treatments and therapies are geared towards managing symptoms and helping someone with ASD lead a happy and functional life.

Can stem cell treatment be used for ASD?

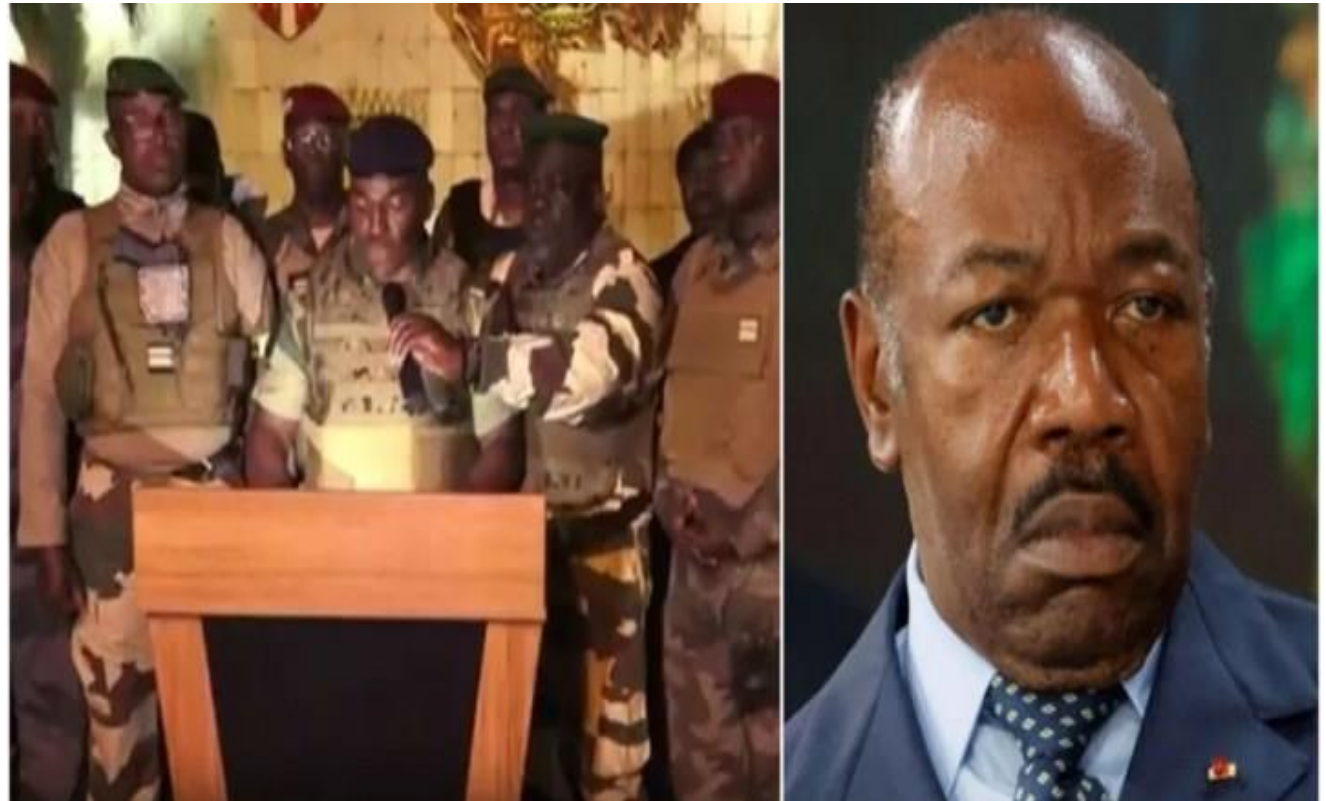
- According to some experts, ASD has potential to be a good candidate for stem cell therapy because evidence exists that some types of stem cells, given intravenously, can improve the overall regulation of the immune system and the neural connectivity in the brain.
- However, stem cell therapy is not typically used for treating ASD yet, and initial clinical trials have shown mixed results. Currently, the treatment is very much in an experimental stage and there is simply not enough data to make definitive claims.
- This is why EMRB made recommendations against its use. It has warned of so-called “predatory marketing” of stem cell therapy “which gave false hope” to parents and caregivers regarding the possibility of “curing” ASD.
- Crucially, the High Court has not spoken out on the general validity of using stem cell therapies for ASD, but in these two cases, has allowed ongoing treatment to continue. The HC bench said that the NMC is permitted to take a final view on the recommendation as per provisions of the NMC Act.

Military officers seize power in Gabon hours after a disputed election win

Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Why in news?

- Military officers in the oil-rich Central African nation of Gabon have claimed that they have seized power. Thus, they have overturned the results of a disputed election that returned the incumbent, President Ali Bongo Ondimba, to a third term in office.
- If it succeeds, the coup in Gabon would be the latest in an extraordinary run of military takeovers across a swath of Africa — at least nine in the past three years.



An end to dynastic rule

- Many Gabonese cheered the apparent demise of a family dynasty that has dominated for a half-century.
- Ali Bongo has ruled Gabon since 2009, when he took over from his father, Omar Bongo, who took power in 1967. Ali Bongo presided over a regime accused of cronyism and corruption in a country where only a minority has shared in its great wealth. Nearly 40% of people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed. Public anger has been simmering for years.
- Ali Bongo has remained a close ally of France whose companies dominate Gabon's oil industry. A member of OPEC, Gabon is Africa's 7th-largest oil producer.
- This coup is a new blow to French interests in Africa, following recent takeovers in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

Widespread Condemnation

- The coup met with instant and near-universal international condemnation. While the French govt has demanded the election results be respected, China, which accounts for about half of Gabon's exports, has expressed concern. So did Russia, which in recent years has benefited from several African coups by deploying Wagner mercenaries to prop up shaky military regimes.

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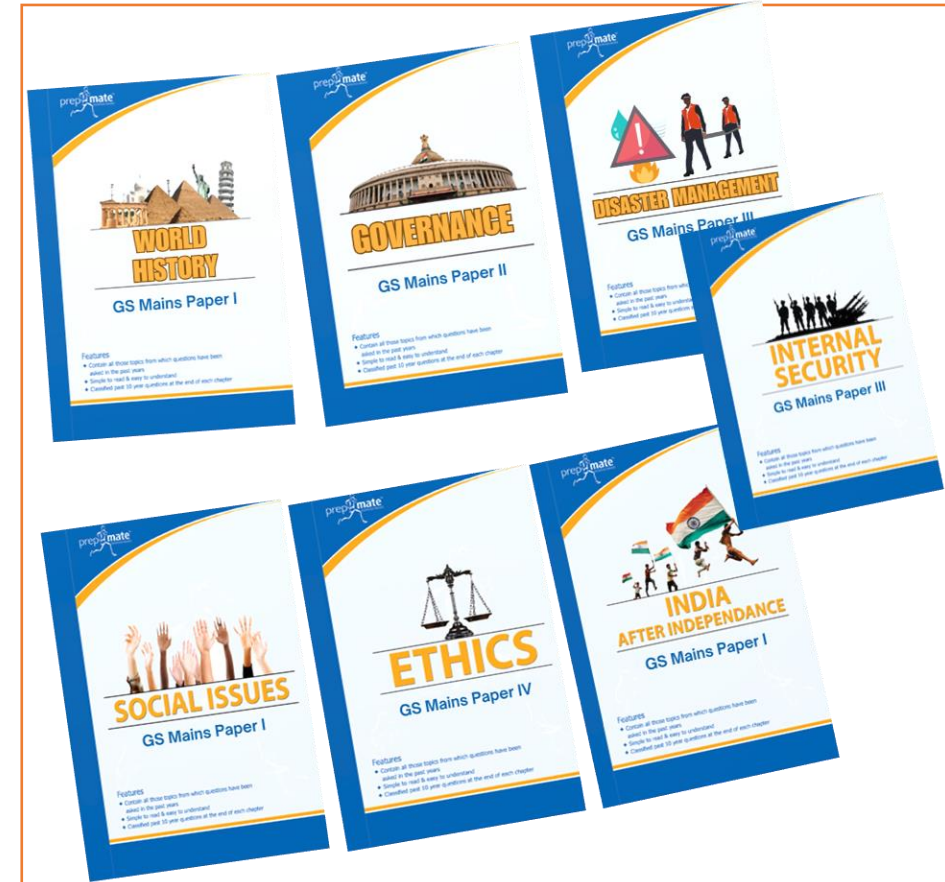
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