

'Sharing is Caring'

If you have friends preparing for Civil Services, tell them that they can also receive Updates from PrepMate IAS by sending 'Name' and 'State' through WhatsApp on 75979-00000

1. Israeli Strikes on Southern Lebanon: What Happened?

The Israeli military carried out airstrikes on Lebanon and the Gaza Strip after rockets were fired from south Lebanon and Gaza toward Israel.



THE WASHINGTON POST

Deadliest Day in Lebanon Since 2006

Recent Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon have killed 492 people and injured over a thousand. This marks the deadliest day for Lebanon since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concerns that Lebanon might face similar destruction as Gaza.

Intensifying Cross-Border Attacks

Since the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict on October 7, 2023, border clashes between Israel and Hezbollah have increased. Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based militant group, has launched rockets into Israel, claiming it is in support of the Palestinian cause.

Last week, Israel was also accused of using explosive pagers and walkie-talkies in Lebanon, which left more than 30 people dead.

Escalating Military Action

In retaliation for Israel's assassination of Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur, Hezbollah launched hundreds of rockets and drones into Israel in August 2023. Israel responded by sending 100 jets into Lebanon. The situation escalated when Israel warned residents of southern and eastern Lebanon to evacuate as part of a widening air campaign.

Thousands of Lebanese citizens have fled, causing the largest exodus since the 2006 war.

Israel's Justification

Israeli President Isaac Herzog stated that Israel does not seek war but must defend its people. He claimed that Hezbollah stores long-range rockets in civilian homes, putting Israeli citizens at risk. Israeli Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said that Hezbollah's weapons stored in houses were exploding due to Israeli strikes.

Risk of Regional Escalation

Though tensions are high, experts believe neither Israel nor Hezbollah want an all-out war. Hezbollah is using its attacks as leverage to force Israel into a ceasefire with Hamas, while Israel's superior military capabilities limit Hezbollah's response.

Understanding Hezbollah

Origins and Objectives

Hezbollah, meaning "Party of God," was founded during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and is backed by Iran. It opposes Israel and Western influence in the Middle East. The group has become a political force in Lebanon and currently holds 13 of 128 seats in parliament.

Military Strength

Hezbollah is considered the world's most heavily armed non-state actor, with a large arsenal of rockets and missiles. It has an estimated 45,000 fighters, of which 20,000 are full-time soldiers.

Conclusion

The situation remains volatile, with both sides exchanging fire and civilians bearing the brunt of the violence. While a broader regional conflict has not yet erupted, the risks of escalation remain high.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

2. India's First Mission to Venus in 2028: Key Details

India's Upcoming Venus Mission

India's space agency ISRO will launch its first mission to Venus in March 2028. This will be India's second interplanetary mission, following the Mars Orbiter Mission in 2013. The mission will study Venus from orbit, examining its surface, atmosphere, ionosphere, and interaction with the Sun using scientific instruments from both India and international collaborators.

Why Study Venus?

Venus, often called Earth's twin due to similarities in size, mass, and density, offers valuable insights into the evolution of planets. Scientists believe Venus once had water but became dry and hot due to a runaway greenhouse effect. Unlike Earth, Venus has extremely high surface temperatures (462°C), thick atmospheric pressure, and clouds of sulfuric acid. Its slow rotation

and harsh conditions have made past missions challenging, with landers surviving only a few hours.



Mission Timeline and Details

The Venus mission was initially planned for 2023 but was delayed until 2028. With Earth and Venus aligning closely every 19 months, timing is crucial. The mission will take about 140 days to reach Venus after launch. The satellite will carry 100 kg of scientific payloads and will use aero-braking to gradually reduce its orbit for closer study.

What is Aero-Braking?

Aero-braking is a technique to reduce the satellite's orbit using Venus's atmosphere to create drag. The satellite will skim through the outer layers of the atmosphere, reducing its orbit from an initial elliptical path of 500 km x 60,000 km to a closer orbit of around 300 km. This process will take six months and must be carefully controlled to avoid burning up or delaying the mission.

Scientific Payloads

India has selected at least 17 scientific experiments, along with seven international ones. The instruments include radar for surface imaging, thermal cameras, and tools to study dust particles, ionization, and the composition of Venus's atmosphere.

Other Countries' Missions to Venus

The US, Russia, Japan, and the European Space Agency (ESA) have conducted previous missions to Venus. Future missions include the US's DaVinci (2029) and Veritas (2031), and ESA's EnVision (2030).

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

3. Global Collaboration in Tackling Cybercrime

Europol takes down "Ghost" encrypted messaging platform used for crime - @billtoulas
bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/...
Post übersetzen



cash.

Operation Against Encrypted Messaging Platform Ghost

Europol recently led a global operation to dismantle "Ghost," an encrypted messaging platform used by criminal networks. Ghost allowed users anonymity and featured self-destructing messages, making it a preferred tool for activities like drug trafficking, money laundering, and violent crime. The operation, involving nine countries, resulted in 51 arrests, seizure of weapons, drugs, and over €1 million in

Other Major Global Cybercrime Operations

1. Taking Down Encrochat

In July 2020, Europol, alongside French and Dutch law enforcement, dismantled Encrochat, an encrypted communication service used by criminal organizations. Encrochat provided modified smartphones for encrypted communication, often dubbed the "WhatsApp for gangsters." Authorities planted malware on the devices, allowing them to intercept messages. The operation led to 6,500 arrests and seizure of €740 million in cash.

2. ANOM: The FBI's Trojan Horse

Following the shutdown of a Canadian encrypted service in 2018, the FBI launched "Operation Trojan Shield" with a custom-built encrypted messaging platform called ANOM. Criminals unknowingly used ANOM phones, believing they were secure, while law enforcement monitored their communications. The operation led to 800 arrests, drug seizures, and the dismantling of 50 secret drug labs.

3. Sky ECC Takedown

In March 2021, Belgian, French, and Dutch law enforcement targeted Sky ECC, an encrypted communication network. Authorities used phishing software to track 70,000 Sky ECC users' communications. The operation resulted in over 1,000 convictions and seizures of €183 million by 2024.

Conclusion

International cooperation among law enforcement agencies like Europol, FBI, and others has proven critical in combating cybercrime, with operations targeting encrypted platforms used by criminal networks.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express