

**1. Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir promoted to Field Marshal****Why now?**

The Pakistan government announced that the Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army, General Asim Munir, is being promoted to the rank of Field Marshal.

His promotion was announced by the presidential cabinet for "successfully" leading the armed forces in the recent conflict with India, according to state-run TV.

He will be the second person in history to hold this rank, after Field Marshal Ayub Khan in 1959.

**Who is a Field Marshal?**

The Indian and Pakistani armies are modelled on the British army's system of ranks and privileges. A Field Marshal or FM is a five-star officer rank, and the highest attainable rank, above the general.

The FM rank in the Indian Army is equivalent to the Admiral of the fleet in the Indian Navy and the Marshal of the Indian Air Force.

India has had two FM's: Sam Manekshaw was the first, ascending to the rank in January 1973. KM Cariappa was the second Field Marshal and was promoted in January 1986. India has also had one Marshal of the Air Force, Arjan Singh, who was elevated to the rank in 2002.

**What does the Field Marshal Rank entail?**

The Field Marshal rank is typically bestowed on generals for ceremonial reasons or during wartime. A Field Marshal is considered to be on 'active list' until his death.

While a Field Marshal does not hold any office in official capacity beyond his date of retirement, he is entitled to wear his uniform at any event he deems fit. He wears special badges of rank, has five stars displayed on his vehicle, and as per tradition, salutes with the special Field Marshal's baton raised to the forehead and not the hand as is the norm in a military salute.

**And who is Asim Munir?**

According to Ramanathan Kumar, who headed the Pakistan desk at R&AW from 2015 to 2020, Munir was Pakistan's first "mullah general". While posted as a military attaché in Saudi Arabia, Munir, then a 38-year-old Lieutenant Colonel, had memorised the Holy Quran, a feat that earned him the title of Hafiz-e-Koran.



He hails from a non-military background, with his father having worked as a school principal and imam of the local mosque in Rawalpindi. Munir completed his primary education at an Islamic seminary in Rawalpindi.

Asim Munir was set to retire in 2025, but legislation by the Pakistan National Assembly in November 2024 extended the tenures of the Army, Navy and Air Chiefs to five years from three years. He is now due to retire in 2027 and will remain the Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army until then.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: Indian Express

## 2. Why the UK and EU Are Resetting Ties, Five Years After Brexit

### Background: What Was Brexit?

"Brexit" (Britain + exit) refers to the UK's decision to leave the European Union. Although the vote took place in 2016, the UK officially left the EU on January 31, 2020, entering an 11-month transition period. A trade deal was signed on December 24, 2020, and the UK exited the EU single market and customs union on December 31, 2020.

### Why Are Talks Happening Now?

Global politics have shifted significantly since Brexit:

- **Russia-Ukraine War:** Ongoing since 2022, the UK has taken a leading role in supporting Ukraine, aligning with EU efforts.
- **Trump's Return:** A potential second term for Donald Trump has caused concern due to his America First stance, trade tariffs, and reduced support for Europe.
- **Need for Security Cooperation:** With possible US disengagement, the UK and EU see value in working together on defence and security.



### What Does the UK-EU Reset Deal Include?

#### 1. Fishing Agreement

- EU boats can continue fishing in UK waters until 2038.
- Annual quotas and licenses will still be managed jointly with the EU and Norway.
- The UK will launch a £360 million (\$482 million) fund to boost coastal economies.

#### 2. Agrifood and Veterinary Deal

- Eases border checks on UK food exports to the EU.
- Allows the UK to resume selling items like raw sausages and burgers in EU markets.
- May require regulatory alignment over time (known as "dynamic alignment").

#### 3. Security Pact

- A formal UK-EU defence and security agreement has been signed.
- UK arms firms will gain access to the EU's £150 billion (\$200 billion) SAFE fund, supporting defence projects and jobs.

#### 4. Youth Mobility Scheme

- Young people (18–35 years) may soon work and travel in each other's countries for up to three years.
- The scheme will be limited by quotas and time.

#### 5. Passport Gates and Pet Travel

- UK citizens can use e-gates at EU airports.
- Simplified pet travel rules will reduce the need for repeated vet checks.

#### 6. Carbon Tax Alignment

- The UK will link its carbon pricing system with the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).
- This will avoid double taxation on goods like steel and cement, potentially saving £800 million (\$1.07 billion).

#### What's Not Included in the Deal

The reset does not change the UK's core post-Brexit positions:

- No return to the EU single market.
- No customs union.
- No free movement of people.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: The Hindu

### 3. Astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar passes away: What is the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity?

#### Introduction

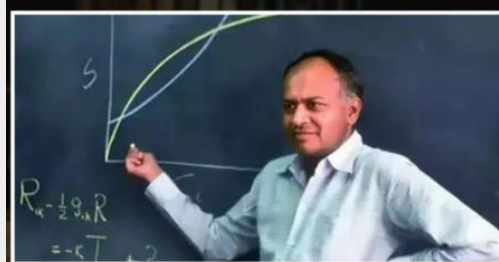
Eminent Indian astrophysicist, science communicator, and Padma Vibhushan awardee Jayant Narlikar passed away in Pune recently at the age of 87.

He was best known for propounding the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity (also known as conformal gravity), which he developed with English astronomer and professor Fred Hoyle in 1964. The theory sought to improve on Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, published in 1915.

#### Link to Mach's principle

At the heart of the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity is the Mach's principle, which says that the mass of every object in the universe is affected by

Dr. Narlikar, in collaboration with Fred Hoyle, developed the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity, a Machian and conformal theory that challenged conventional cosmological models.



its interaction with every other object. Einstein was greatly inspired by the principle, but could not incorporate it into his theory.

Hoyle and Narlikar took Mach's principle more literally and claimed to have successfully included it in their theory. They said that the inertia of an object, that is the tendency to resist change in its state of motion, arises from its interaction with all other matter in the universe.

"As Hoyle and Narlikar see it, a universe with nothing in it is impossible. There must be at least two particles, each to give mass to the other. The masses, and therefore the gravity, of the sun and the earth are partly due to each other, partly to more distant objects such as the stars and galaxies".

### **Concept of C-field**

The Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity also proposed a "creation field" (C-field), a hypothetical negative-energy field responsible for the continuous creation of matter. This helped explain the steady-state cosmology, which said that the universe had no beginning and will endure forever.

The steady-state concept of the universe is essentially an alternative to "Big-Bang" cosmology, which proposed that the universe originated 13 billion years ago with an expansion and has been expanding ever since. Hoyle and Narlikar said that if the universe were this old and always expanding, we would not see anything in the sky.

Hence, Dr Hoyle and other proponents of a steady-state situation have proposed that hydrogen atoms are continually being created in space to fill the void resulting from such expansion. It is to account for this that Dr Hoyle has proposed the existence of an unseen force, or C-field. When this field becomes strong enough, at any point in space, a new hydrogen atom appears."

### **Challenges to the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity**

The Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity was not widely accepted, especially after the discovery of the cosmic microwave background (CMB) radiation in 1965. The Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) is the cooled remnant of the first light that could ever travel freely throughout the Universe. This 'fossil' radiation, the furthest that any telescope can see, was released soon after the Big Bang. Scientists consider it as an echo or 'shockwave' of the Big Bang.

However, the theory continues to draw attention for its attempt to integrate Mach's principle in cosmology.

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

Source: Indian Express

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