

1. WHO Member States Adopt Global Pandemic Treaty: What It Means

Historic Move After Years of Negotiation

After over three years of complex discussions, member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a legally binding global pandemic treaty on May 20. This is only the second such agreement in WHO's 75-year history—the first being the 2003 tobacco control treaty.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called it "a victory for public health, science and multilateral action."



Why Was a Pandemic Treaty Needed?

Negotiations began in December 2021, during the spread of the Omicron COVID-19 variant. At the time, vaccine-producing countries hoarded supplies, leaving many lower-income nations without access.

- A 2022 Nature study showed over a million lives could have been saved with more equitable vaccine distribution.
- A 2021 report by the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response criticized global pandemic handling as "a toxic cocktail" of poor decisions and inequality.

The treaty aims to avoid such outcomes in future pandemics.

Key Features of the Treaty

1. Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing System

- Pharma companies gain access to data like pathogen samples and genome sequences.
- In return, they must:
 - Allocate 10% of vaccines, drugs, and diagnostics to WHO.
 - Provide another 10% at affordable prices.

2. Technology Transfer and Support

- Countries must promote and incentivize the sharing of technology and expertise.
- This supports drug and vaccine production in developing countries.

3. Funding Conditions for Equitable Access

- Governments must attach conditions to public research funding to ensure global access to resulting treatments.

Limitations and Challenges

1. No Authority Over National Policies

- The treaty explicitly states that WHO cannot impose or direct national laws or policies.

- WHO also cannot mandate lockdowns, vaccine mandates, or travel restrictions.

This limits WHO's ability to enforce the agreement or respond uniformly in a global crisis.

2. Lack of Clarity on Key Mechanisms

- Details on how the benefit-sharing system will function remain unclear.
- Pharmaceutical companies may hesitate to invest without clear rules.

3. Absence of the United States

- The US did not adopt the treaty. After Donald Trump returned to office, he withdrew from WHO negotiations.
- Experts say US non-participation weakens the treaty due to its dominance in global health industries.

Conclusion

While the treaty marks a major step toward better global pandemic preparedness, its impact may be limited by enforcement gaps, lack of clarity, and the absence of major players like the US. Future negotiations and implementation will determine how effective it truly becomes.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: Indian Express

2. Banu Mushtaq's Journey: From Karnataka's Rebel Literature to the Booker Prize

A Historic Win for Indian Literature

Banu Mushtaq's *Heart Lamp* won the 2025 International Booker Prize, becoming the first full-length English translation of her work. Originally written in Kannada, the book has already been translated into Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam. Mushtaq is now among India's most internationally recognized protest writers.



She is the second Kannada author to receive Booker recognition, after UR Ananthamurthy in 2013.

Voice of Resistance: Literature Born of Protest

Mushtaq began writing in the 1970s and 1980s and was a rare woman voice in the Bandaya Sahitya (Rebel Literature) movement, alongside Dalit and Muslim writers reshaping Kannada literature.

She said, "My stories are about women — how religion, society, and politics demand obedience and inflict cruelty on them."

Her writing challenges caste, class, patriarchy, and religious orthodoxy.

A Life Committed to Literature and Activism

- Born in 1948, in Karnataka.
- Profession: Lawyer, activist and author

Heart Lamp brings together stories written since 1990, selected intuitively rather than academically. Mushtaq writes straight from personal emotion: "My heart itself is my field of study."

About International Booker Prize

The International Booker Prize is a prestigious literary award given annually for a book translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. It celebrates both the author and the translator, with the £50,000 prize money split equally between them. The prize recognizes exceptional fiction from around the world, aiming to promote cultural exchange and showcase the best of global literature in English translation.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Indian Express

3. Basava Raju: Top Maoist Leader Killed in Abujhmad Encounter

A Major Blow to Maoist Insurgency

Basava Raju, also known as Nambala Keshav Rao, was a top commander of the CPI (Maoist). He was among 26 Naxals killed by security forces in Abujhmad, Chhattisgarh. The encounter marks a significant success in India's fight against Left-Wing Extremism.

Maoist General Secretary and Mastermind

- Took over as General Secretary of CPI (Maoist) in 2018, succeeding Ganapathy.
- Known for planning deadly attacks, including:
 - Chintalnar attack (2010) where 76 CRPF jawans were killed.
 - Jhiram Ghati attack (2013) on a Congress convoy.



A Techie Turned Guerrilla

- Born in Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh.
- Former kabaddi player in school.
- B.Tech graduate from REC (now NIT) Warangal, known for its past links to leftist student activism.
- Joined the People's War Group in the early 1980s.

Explosives Expert and NIA's Most Wanted

- Known for expertise in making IEDs used to ambush forces.
- Had a reward of over ₹1 crore on his head by the NIA.
- Allegedly planned the killing of two Andhra Pradesh politicians in 2018.

- Maintained ties with other rebel groups like the LTTE.
- Operated mainly in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh.

What Happened in the Abujhmad Encounter?

- Security operation carried out by the District Reserve Guard (DRG) from four districts: Narayanpur, Dantewada, Bijapur, and Kondagaon.
- Targeted a specific area in Abujhmad, based on intelligence.
- Abujhmad is a dense, largely unsurveyed forest region spread across Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, larger than the state of Goa.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

4. Why China Is Speeding Up Work on Pakistan's Mohmand Dam

Dam Construction Amid India-Pakistan Tensions



China has accelerated construction of the Mohmand Dam in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, citing the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attacks. The dam is part of China's broader infrastructure investments under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

What Is the Mohmand Dam?

- Built on the Swat River, a tributary of the Indus.
- Located in Mohmand Tribal District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- Purpose: flood control, irrigation (16,737 acres), hydropower, and drinking water supply
- Start: 2019, target completion: Dec 2025

Why It Matters to Pakistan

- Will generate 2,862 GWh of electricity annually.
- Expected to supply 300 million gallons/day of drinking water to Peshawar.
- Important due to India's control over upstream waters and current treaty suspension.
- Over 75% of Pakistan's renewable water comes from the Indus Basin.
- 90% of crops and 20% of electricity in Pakistan depend on this river system.

China's Role and Strategic Interests

- China funds key projects in Pakistan like Diamer-Bhasha Dam in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, despite India's objections.
- Mohmand Dam highlights China's goal to counter India's regional influence.

- China Power owns 70% of the Diamer-Bhasha project, and Pakistan's military-linked FWO owns 30%.
- Past projects like Diamer-Bhasha faced funding issues, protests, and security threats.

CPEC: High Hopes, Slow Gains

- China remains committed to Pakistan despite delays, attacks on engineers, and economic instability.
- CPEC projects have faced major roadblocks, yet China continues investment due to Pakistan's strategic location.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: Indian Express

'Join PrepMate IAS'

WhatsApp 'Name' and 'State' on 75979-00000 to receive daily current affairs in simple and concise language.