Syllabus subtopic: Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the first global refugee forum and its significance; the refugee crisis around the world and its consequences, about UNHCR

News: Stressing that India has welcomed refugees from all over the world, the government on Wednesday defended the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Geneva and said it is dealing with the problem through ``democracy and due process``.

Remarks made by the Permanent Representative of India to UN

- In a statement at the First Global Refugee Forum by Permanent Representative of India to the UN, Geneva, Rajiv K Chander said Pakistan is a self-proclaimed champion of human rights that has shrunk the size of its own minority community from 23 per cent in 1947 to 3 per cent by subjecting them to draconian blasphemy laws, systemic persecution, blatant abuse and forced conversions.

- Throughout history, India has welcomed refugees from all over the world. The Zoroastrians who had sought refuge in India from 7th century onwards, now known as the Parsis, are a vibrant and important community in our democratic polity. The Jews who were persecuted in the 16th century had sought refuge in Cochin in South India where the synagogue they built exists to date.

- Closer to our times, thousands and thousands have sought refuge in India from some of our neighbouring countries, including more than 10 million in 1971 from erstwhile East Pakistan, after which Bangladesh was born.

About the First Global Refugee Forum

- The forum is organized by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Govt. of Switzerland in Geneva with the aim of generating new approaches and commitments from a variety of actors to assist and
respond to refugee needs more effectively.

- Being conducted for the first time with the participation of representatives from the states, U.N. Agencies, nongovernmental organizations and many other international actors, the forum, in its words, "comes at the end of a tumultuous decade," which has been marked by various refugee crises.

- While host countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon contributed large amounts of their resources for the refugee communities, the West had a disappointing record of refusing to tackle the problem. Still, the Global Refugee Forum kicked off with the hope of coming up with substantial, concrete solutions to the issue.

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

- It is a UN Refugee Agency and a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting the rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

- It was created in 1950 to help millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes.

- It is headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland.