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

Prelims and Mains focus: About UNMISS; India’s contribution in UN peacekeeping operations

News: Fifty Indian peacekeepers stationed in South Sudan have been awarded the UN Medal for their professionalism and service in protecting civilians and building durable peace in the conflict-ridden country.

Contribution of Indian peacekeepers in South Sudan

- The Indian peacekeepers are part of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- They are deployed with the Indian battalion stationed at Bor in the Jonglei region of South Sudan.
- Presenting the award, General Kamanzi acknowledged their contribution in carrying out patrols across the region as well as providing a safe and secure environment for the 2,500 civilians who have sought sanctuary at the UN Protection of Civilians site at Bor.
- The local government in Jonglei also paid tribute to the Indian troops.
- The Indian battalion had played an important role in keeping the community safe as well as encouraging local peace efforts.
- They had also provided much-needed services to the community outside of their core mandate, such as medical care for local residents and support for local farmers with veterinary treatment for their animals.
- The battalion has been intimately associated with peacekeeping efforts and the battalion has supported the mandate of the United Nations and the overall peace process.

About UNMISS

- On 9 July 2011 South Sudan became the newest country in the world. The birth of the Republic of South Sudan is the culmination of a six-year peace process which began with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005.
- However, the Security Council determined that the situation faced by South Sudan continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region and established the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) to consolidate peace and security and to help establish conditions for development.
Following the crisis which broke out in South Sudan in December 2013, the Security Council reinforced UNMISS and reprioritized its mandate towards the protection of civilians, human rights monitoring, and support for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and for the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

What is peacekeeping?

- United Nations Peacekeeping helps countries torn by conflict create conditions for lasting peace. Peacekeeping has proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.
- Peacekeeping has unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy and sustain troops and police from around the globe, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to advance multidimensional mandates.
- UN peacekeepers provide security and the political and peace building support to help countries make the difficult, early transition from conflict to peace.
- There are currently 14 UN peacekeeping operations deployed on four continents.

UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles:

- Consent of the parties.
- Impartiality
- Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

Global partnership:

- UN peacekeeping is a unique global partnership. It brings together the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop and police contributors and the host governments in a combined effort to maintain international peace and security.
- Its strength lies in the legitimacy of the UN Charter and in the wide range of contributing countries that participate and provide precious resources.