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1 Blue Flag Certification (Source: The Indian Express)

- *The Blue Flag Certification is an internationally acclaimed eco-label awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE).*
- *It is granted to beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating operators meeting high environmental and safety standards.*
- **Criteria for Certification:**
  - **Environmental Standards:**
    - Maintenance of high-quality seawater.
    - Implementation of waste management practices.
  - **Educational Awareness**
    - Provision of environmental education activities for visitors.
    - Installation of informative signboards on flora, fauna, and conservation measures.
  - **Safety and Accessibility**
    - Availability of lifeguards and first-aid stations.
    - Unhindered access for differently-abled individuals.
- **Indian Context:**
  - India has 22 Blue Flag-certified beaches, including:
    - Golden Beach, Odisha
    - Radhanagar Beach, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
    - Shivrajpur Beach, Gujarat
  - Certifications were achieved under India's BEAMS (Beach Environment and Aesthetic Management Services) initiative.

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2 BRICS Grouping (Source: The Hindu)

- **Formation**
  - In 2001, the British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
  - The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in 2006.
  - Founded in 2009.
  - South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- **Membership**
  - **BRICS**: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
  - **New Members**: Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Ethiopia, Indonesia.
  - **Partner Countries**: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.
- **Facts**
  - The BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41% of the global population, 24% of the global GDP and 16% of the global trade.
  - The chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- **Objectives**
  - Promote peace, security, and development in member countries and globally.
  - Reform international financial and governance institutions (e.g., IMF, World Bank) to reflect emerging economies' interests.
  - Enhance multilateral trade and investment, cooperation in various sectors (technology, finance, health).
  - Encourage people-to-people exchanges and cultural ties.

- **Key Initiatives**
  - **New Development Bank (NDB)**: Established in 2014 at the BRICS summit in Fortaleza, Brazil. Provides funding for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies.
  - **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**: A framework to support members in case of short-term balance of payments pressures.
  - **BRICS Business Council & Think Tank Council**: Strengthens economic ties and policy coordination.

3 Deep Ocean Mission (Source: The Hindu)

Ministry and Objective

- **Ministry**: Ministry of Earth Sciences
- **Objective**: To explore the deep ocean for resources and develop deep-sea technologies for the sustainable use of ocean resources.

Components of Deep Ocean Mission

- **Deep-Sea Mining & Manned Submersible:** Development of technologies for mining polymetallic nodules and a manned submersible capable of carrying three persons to about 6,000 m depth.
- **Samudrayaan Mission**: India's manned deep-ocean exploration programme. The indigenous submersible MATSYA 6000 is being developed for this purpose.
- **Ocean Climate Advisory Services**: Study long-term changes in the ocean and develop models to understand their influence on climate and weather.
- **Deep-Sea Biodiversity**: Exploration and conservation of deep-sea flora, fauna, and microbial resources, including their potential sustainable uses.
- **Deep-Ocean Survey**: Identification and mapping of hydrothermal minerals and other resources in the Indian Ocean.
- **Ocean Energy & Freshwater**: Development of technologies for energy generation and freshwater production from the ocean.
- **Marine Station for Ocean Biology**: Development of facilities for research and innovation in marine biology and biotechnology.