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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Classroom Study Material

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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NOTE:

Dear Students,

PT 365 document comprehensively covers the important current affairs of last 1 year (365 days) in a consolidated manner to aid Prelims preparation.

In our endeavour to further enhance the document in the interest of the aspirants, following additions have been incorporated:

Summarised Infographics: Topics such as
- India's Bilateral Relations
- International Institutions and Organisations
- Multilateral Groupings

have been summarised and added in the form of interactive infographics to improve ease of understanding, provide for smoother learning experience and ensure enhanced retention of the content

Thumbnails: Pictorial and interactive thumbnails of important information such as:
- Headquarters and year of establishment of the organisation
- Whether India is a member/party to an initiative/organisation etc.

Consolidated Maps: They have been used to provide geographical and contextual information about places in news.

Know the Term: They have been added to clarify important concepts and terms.

Do You Know: They have been used to provide prelims related additional factual information.

Quiz: QR based Smart quiz has been added to test the aspirant's learnings and understanding.

SMART QUIZ

You can scan this QR code to practice the smart quiz at our open test online platform for testing your understanding and recalling of the concepts.

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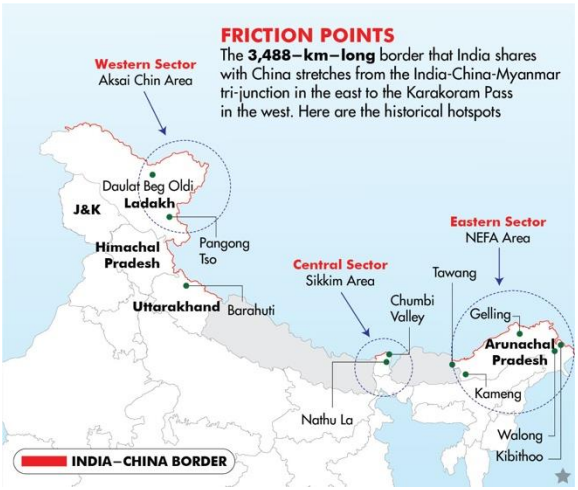
1. INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

1.1. INDIA-CHINA

Why in news?

Recently, border clashes have been reported along the Line of actual control (LAC) in Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

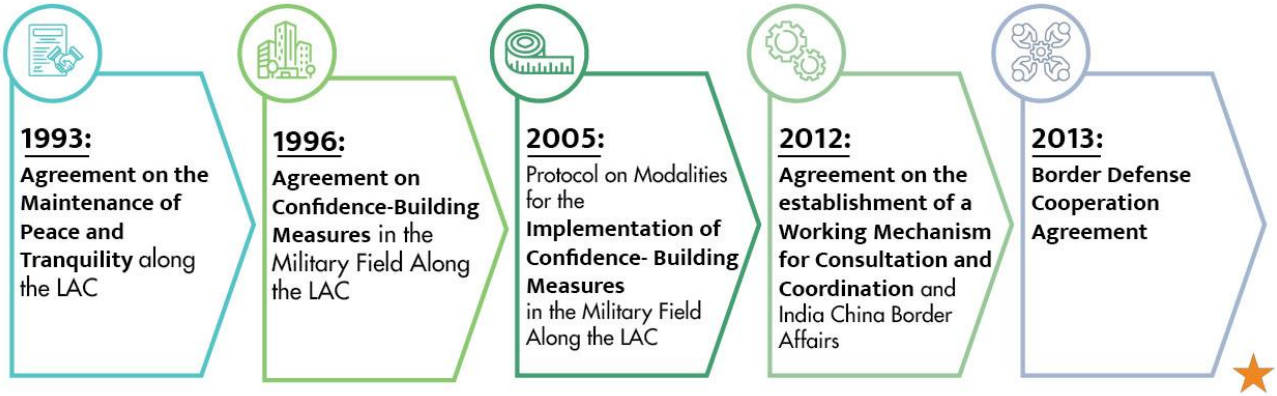


India China border dispute

- The border between India and China is **not clearly demarcated** throughout and there is **no mutually agreed Line of Actual Control (LAC)** along certain stretches.
  - LAC came into existence after the 1962 Indo China war.
- India-China border is divided into **three sectors, viz. Western, Middle and Eastern (Refer map):**

Region	Dispute	India's stand	China's stand
Western sector (Ladakh)	Boundary dispute in this sector pertains to the **Johnson Line** proposed by the British in the 1860s that extended up to the Kunlun Mountains and put Aksai Chin in the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.	India uses the **Johnson Line** and claims Aksai Chin as its own.	China doesn't recognize **Johnson Line** and instead accepts **McDonald Line** which puts Aksai Chin under its control.
Middle Sector (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand)	In this sector dispute is a **minor one.** Here LAC is the least controversial except for the precise alignment to be followed in the **Barahoti plains.**	India and China have exchanged maps on which they broadly agree.	
Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim)	Disputed boundary in this sector is **over the McMahon Line (in Arunachal Pradesh**) decided in 1914 in a meeting of Representatives of China, India, and Tibet in Shimla.	India asserts that according to the line, Tawang Tract is a part of India (according to 1951 position).	China asserts that Tawang Tract is part of its territory.

Border dispute settlement mechanism between India and China



India China Relations- Key Facts

Historically, **Silk Road served as a major trade route** between India and China, and for **facilitating the spread of Buddhism** from India to East Asia.

India shares **3488 km** of border with China that runs along the Union Territory of **Ladakh and States of Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh.**

Bilateral trade between China and India is more than **$100 billion.**

India's **trade deficit** with China is more than **$56 billion** (biggest single trade deficit India has with any country).

Sister-cities relationship is there between Delhi-Beijing, Ahmedabad-Guangzhou, Bengaluru-Chengdu,Kolkata-Kunming and Chennai- Quanzhou and **sister-province relationship** between Gujarat and Guangdong Province and Tamil Nadu and Fujian province.

Both countries are members of multilateral groupings such as **BRICS, SCO, RIC, WTO, UN and G20.**

1.1.1. ONE-CHINA POLICY

Why in news?

US house speaker recent visit to Taiwan was seen by China as being in contravention to One China Policy.

More on news

- The US has maintained a **'One China'** policy since the **1970's**, recognising Taiwan as part of China. But it has unofficial ties with Taiwan as well, a strategy known as **strategic or deliberate ambiguity**.
  - The island of Taiwan is part of the so-called **"first island chain"**, which includes a list of US-friendly territories that are crucial to US foreign policy.

India's Policy on Taiwan

- India follows the "**One China**" policy since **1949** and has **no formal ties with Taiwan** yet.
- Also, in 1995 India and Taiwan established offices in each other country for diplomatic functions with focus on- **Commerce, Culture and Education.**
- However, from **2010 India stopped the use of "One China"** in the backdrop of increased Chinese aggressions at the Line of Actual Control.
- Since then, India has signed **a Double-Taxation Avoidance Agreement and a Bilateral Investment Treaty** with Taiwan.

What is One-China Policy?

- It is **a policy of acknowledging** that there is only one Chinese government as opposed to separate Chinese states.
- Further under this principle, countries also consider disputed territories of Taiwan, **Tibet, Hong Kong and Xinjiang** to be an inseparable part of mainland China.

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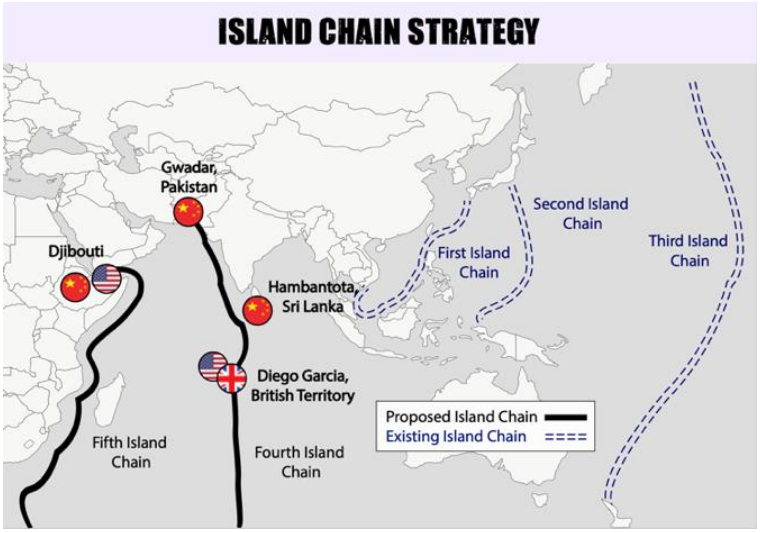
About First Island Chain



- **First Island Chain** comprises the **Kuril Islands, the Japanese Archipelago, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, northwest Philippines** and **ending at Borneo.**
- This chain is the first line of defence and serves as the maritime boundaries between the **East China Sea, Philippine Sea, South China Sea** and the **Sulu Sea.**
- In this chain are located the **Bashi Channel** and the **Miyako Strait** which are critical chokepoints for China.
- It is a part of **Island Chain Strategy** *(refer image)* **formulated by the US in 1951** to contain the erstwhile USSR and China with a string of naval bases in the western Pacific region to restrict sea access to these two countries.

1.1.2. ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS

Why in News?

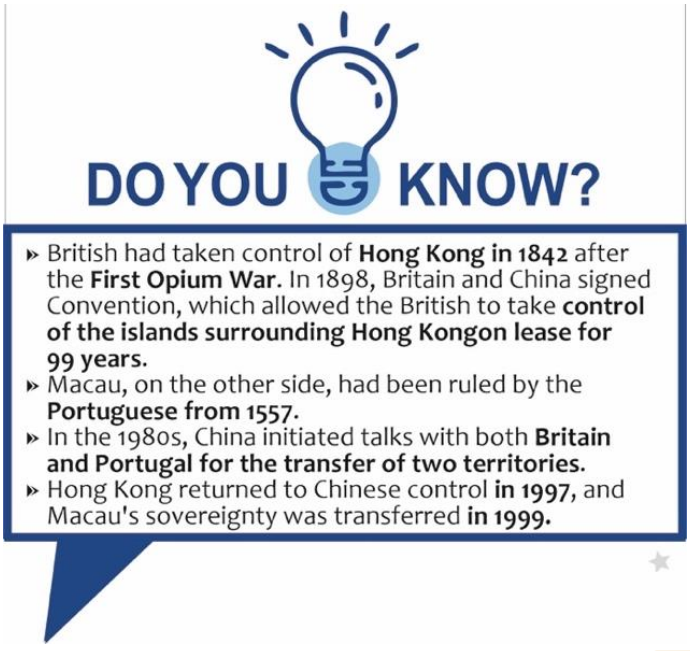
China marked the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return and emphasized Beijing's control over Hong Kong under **One country, two systems (OCTS).**

Background of OCTS

- It was originally proposed to unify China and Taiwan but rejected by Taiwan.
- The idea resurfaced when **China started talks with Britain and Portugal,** who were governing Hong Kong and Macau, respectively, as colonies.

About OCTS

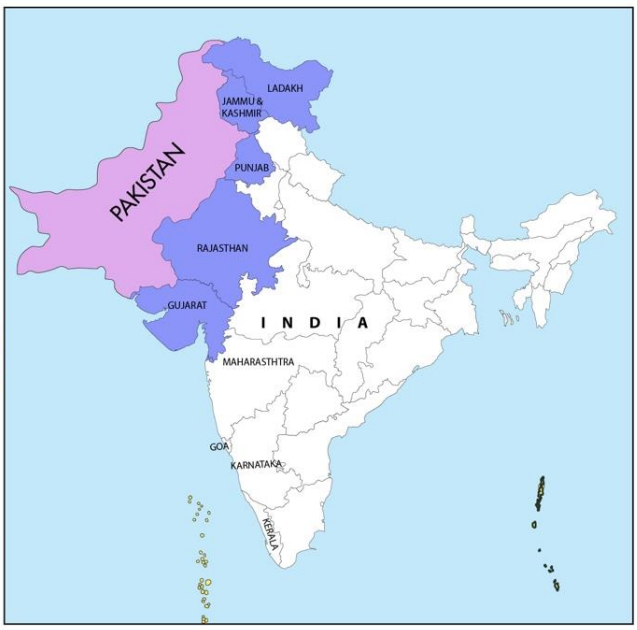
- Under this, **China proposed that, Hong Kong, and Macau**, can **have different economic and political systems** from that of **mainland China, while being part of China.**
- Both regions **became Special Administrative Regions** of China with their **own currencies, economic** and **legal systems,**
  - However, **defence and foreign affairs** would be **decided by China.**
- Also, Hong Kong has freedom of assembly and speech, and some democratic rights, which **are not available in mainland China.**
  - These freedoms are protected by the Basic Law, a mini constitution that guides relationship between Hong Kong and China.
  - Ba**sic law is valid for 50 years, till 2047 for Hong Kong** and **2049 for Macau.** But it is **unclear** what **will happen after this term.**



1.2. INDIA-PAKISTAN

India-Pakistan Relations- Key Facts

- India-Pakistan **border runs along Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat** for alength of about **2,300 km**(excluding the Kashmir border portionwhich is under partial occupation of Pakistan).



- **India Pakistan boundary is the result of partition in 1947 under the Radcliffe award.**
- Bilateral trade is around USD 500 million and **India has a trade surplus.**
- **Cross LoC travel** was started in 2005 and trade across J&K was initiated in 2009.
- **Kartarpur Corridor** provides for visa-free travel of Indian pilgrims as well as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, **to Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.**
- India and Pakistan signed a **visa agreement** in 2012 leading to liberalization of bilateral visa regimes between the two countries.
- India and Pakistan are members of multilateral groups such as **SAARC, G33, WTO and UN.**

1.2.1. INDUS WATER TREATY

Why in news?

India issued notice to Pakistan to modify Indus Waters Treaty.

More on news

- The notice opens up the process for making changes to the treaty for the **first time since it was signed.**
- India is seeking modifications in the treaty **to make it easier for Pakistan to enter into intergovernmental negotiations,** within 90 days, and **rectify the 'material breach' of IWT.**
- The notice was issued in line with **Article XII (3)** of the treaty, which states: "The provisions of this Treaty may from time to time be modified by a duly ratified treaty between the two Governments."

Indus River Basin

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Important international principles for water-sharing

The Harmon doctrine

It postulates that **every state is sovereign** in its water resources and has **right to do whatever it likes** within its territorial jurisdiction.

Campione Rules

It outline the need to include the water of an aquifer (that is, underground water or fossil water) while determining reasonable equitable share.

Helsinki rules, 1996

It established the principle of **"reasonable and equitable utilization"** of the waters of an international drainage basin among the riparian states as the basic principle of international water law.

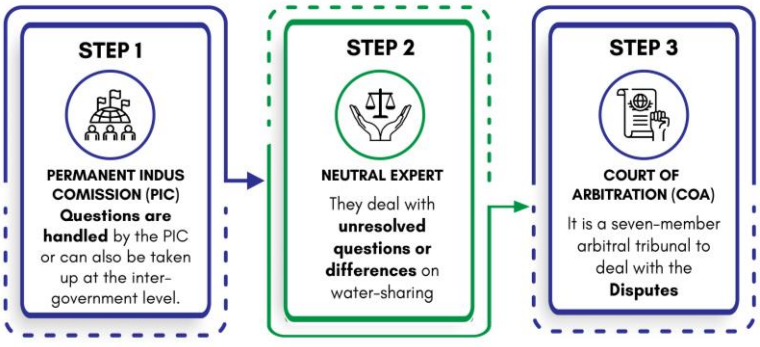
Berlin Rules 2004

It provides that basin states should manage the water of an international drainage basin having due regard for the obligation not to cause significant harm to other basin states.

About the Indus Water Treaty (IWT)

- IWT was **signed in 1960, between India and Pakistan** and **brokered by the World Bank.**
- **Objective:** The treaty fixed and **delimited the rights and obligations of both countries** concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.
  - It consists of **six main rivers** with numerous tributaries.
- **Provisions for sharing of river water:**
  - All the water of the **eastern rivers – Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi** which amounts to around 33 million acre-feet (MAF) annually — is **allocated to India** and is for unrestricted use.
  - And the water of **western rivers – Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab** which is around 135 MAF annually has been **assigned mostly to Pakistan.**
    - ✓ **India has the right under the Treaty to generate hydroelectricity through run-of-the-river projects on the western rivers.** These are subject to specific criteria for design and operation.
    - ✓ Indian hydro-electric power (HEP) projects on tributaries of Chenab River: **Pakal Dul, Kiru, Lower Kalnai** and **Ratle.**
    - ✓ **Run-of-the-river hydroelectricity project** is a type of hydroelectric generation plant whereby little, or no water storage is provided.

Three Step Dispute Resolution Mechanism under IWT



Neutral Expert and CoA is **appointed by the World Bank.** However, **it doesn't have the power** to decide **whether one procedure should take precedence** over the other.

- **Other Provisions:**
  - It provided for the **funding and building of dams, link canals, barrages, and tube wells**—notably the Tarbela Dam on the Indus River and the Mangla Dam on the Jhelum River.
  - The **treaty required the creation of a Permanent Indus Commission,** with a commissioner from each country, to maintain a channel for communication and to try to resolve questions about implementation of the treaty. In addition, a **mechanism for resolving disputes** was provided.

India's current mechanism of cooperation in river water sharing with other countries

Countries	Mechanism for cooperation
India-Nepal	• **The Kosi Treaty of 1954,** under which the embankments in Nepal were established and maintained. • **The Mahakali Treaty** pertains to sharing water of Mahakali river.
India-China	• **Memorandum of Understanding** upon provision of Hydrological Information of the **River Brahmaputra.** • **Memorandum of Understanding** on Hydrological Data Sharing on **River Sutlej.** • **Expert-Level Mechanism** to discuss interaction and cooperation on provision of flood season hydrological data and emergency management.
India-Bangladesh	• The **Ganges Treaty** is an agreement to share surface waters at the Farakka Barrage near their mutual border. • System of **Transmission of flood forecasting data** on major rivers like **Ganga, Teesta, Brahmaputra, and Barak during** the monsoon season.
India-Bhutan	• **Comprehensive Scheme for Establishment of Hydro-meteorological and Flood Forecasting Network** on rivers Common to India and Bhutan. • A **Joint Group of Expert (JGE) on Flood Management.**

1.2.2. THE SHIMLA AGREEMENT

Why in news?

The Shimla Agreement completed 50 years.

About Shimla Agreement

- It was signed on **2nd July 1972** between **India and Pakistan.**
- It laid a **comprehensive blueprint** for **good neighborly relations** between the countries.
- It was signed to **reverse the consequences of the 1971 war**.
- **Key Principles of Shimla Agreement**
  - **Charter of the United Nations shall govern the relations** between the two countries.
  - **Mutual commitment to the peaceful resolution** of all issues through **direct bilateral approaches**.
  - To **build the foundations of a cooperative relationship** with special focus on **people-to-people contacts.**

 © Vision IAS

- To **uphold the inviolability of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir**, which is a most important Confidence Building Measures between India and Pakistan, and a key to durable peace.
- Respect for each other's **national unity, territorial integrity, political independence** and **sovereign equality**.

- While India has **faithfully observed** the **Shimla Agreement principles**, Pakistan did not live up to its initial promises as:
  - It keeps raising the **Kashmir issue** at **international forums** and involves third parties to find a solution.
  - Frequent Line of Control Violations.
- Apart from Shimla agreement, **Lahore Declaration (1999)** reiterated, **among other things,** that the Kashmir issue needed to be **resolved bilaterally**.

1.2.3. CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (CPEC)

Why in news?

China and Pakistan have decided to invite interested third country to join the CPEC project and are also planning to expand CPEC projects to Afghanistan.

About CPEC Project

- CPEC is a **3,000-km long route of infrastructure projects** connecting Pakistan's Gwadar port in Balochistan to China's northwestern Xinjiang region.
- CPEC is a **part of China's most ambitious project 'Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**
  - The BRI, launched in 2013, aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.
- It will pave the way for China **to access the Middle East and Africa** from Gwadar Port, enabling China **to access the Indian Ocean** and in return China will **support development projects in Pakistan** to overcome the latter's energy crises and stabilising its faltering economy.
- India has repeatedly registered its protests over CPEC.

1.2.4. GILGIT BALTISTAN REGION

Why in news?

Recently, demonstrations have erupted in Gilgit-Baltistan due to a dearth of fuel, food, and electricity.

History

- Gilgit was **part of the princely state of Jammu & Kashmir.**
- Following the **India-Pakistan ceasefire of 1949, "provisional government" of "Azad Jammu & Kashmir" ceded administration of Gilgit-Baltistan to Pakistan.**
- **In 2021, India criticised Pakistan** for its attempt to accord provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan.
  - **UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, including 'Gilgit-Baltistan', are an integral part of India** by virtue of the accession of Jammu & Kashmir to Union of India (1947).
- The **area's strategic importance for India has increased in light of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor agreement.**

1.3. INDIA-BANGLADESH

Why in News?

Recently, India and Bangladesh **announced several initiatives** to further cooperation between two nations.

Key decisions/initiatives announced

- **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):** Both sides **will soon commence negotiations on a CEPA.**
  - CEPA is a **bilateral agreement that covers trade in goods and services, investment, competition** and intellectual property rights (IPRs).
- **Water sharing** Signed **MoU on sharing of waters of Kushiyara river**, first such pact since signing of Ganga water treaty in 1996.
  - **Kushiyara forms** on India-Bangladesh border **as a branch of Barak River,** when Barak separates into Kushiyara and Surma.

Other Major Connectivity Projects between the two countries:

- **Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT)** connecting the inland waterways of India and Bangladesh for commerce and trade.
  - **Second addendum to the protocol** included two new routes (Sonamura-Daudkandi on river Gomti and extension of Dhulia to Godagiri up to Aricha on river Padma), five new ports of call and two extended ports of call.
- **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline Project,** will connect Siliguri (West Bengal) and Parbatipur (Dinajpur district of Bangladesh) to provide a stable supply of diesel.
- **Railway link between Chilahati (Bangladesh) and Haldibari (India).**
- **Feni Bridge (Maitree Setu)** over the Feni river connects Subroom (Tripura) and Ramgarh (Bangladesh).
- **Chattogram and Mongla Ports** in Bangladesh are used by India for transporting goods to bordering North Eastern States.
- **Agartala-Akhaura rail link** is also expected to open up markets of India's north-eastern states for Bangladesh.

India-Bangladesh Relations- Key Facts

- India and Bangladesh share **4,096 km** of international border (with five Indian states–**Assam, West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya,** and **Tripura**).

- Bangladesh is **India's biggest trade partner** in South Asia.
- India is the **second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh** after China.
- Bilateral trade is around **$18 billion**.

- **Bangladesh has been the largest recipient of Indian Lines of Credit** (LoC) amounting to US$ 8 billion.
  - Recently, India offered USD 500 mn line of credit for **Joint Production of Defence Equipment.**

- After the 1971 India-Pakistan War, India and Bangladesh signed a **Treaty of Peace and Friendship, in 1972.**

- India shares **54 trans-boundary rivers** with Bangladesh with several disputes including Teesta, Ganga, Tipaimukh Hydro-Electric Power Project on the Barak River etc.

- **India and Bangladesh cooperate on International Forums** like SAARC, BIMSTEC, BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal), Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional

- **Connectivity projects**
  - **Inauguration of Rupsha bridge,** a key part of Khulna-Mongla Port rail project.
  - **Khulna Darshana railway link project** upgrading existing infrastructure from Gede-Darshana (India) to Khulna (Bangladesh).
  - **Parbatipur -Kaunia railway line** will connect to existing border rail at Birol (Bangladesh)-Radhikapur (West Bengal).
- **Others: Maitree power plant at Rampal, Khulna** is being set-up as Indian Development Assistance under Concessional Financing Scheme (CFS).
  - Under CFS, Government of India has been **supporting Indian Entities bidding for strategically important infrastructure projects abroad.**

1.4. INDIA- NEPAL

Why in news?

India, Nepal ink eight pacts.

Key decisions under the pacts

- **Railways:** Cross-border railway line linking **Jaynagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal** (the **first broad-gauge passenger rail link** between the two sides).
- **Power:** India handed over the **Solu Corridor, a 90-km, 132 kV power transmission line built** under an **Indian line of credit.**
  - Inaugurated the **Kataiya-Kusaha and Raxaul-Parwanipur** cross-border power transmission lines.
  - Both sides will expedite implementation of the **Pancheshwar Multipurpose project**.
- **Connectivity:** inked an agreement for the construction of a **bridge over the river Mechi (**part of the Asian Development Bank's South Asian Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation Road connectivity programme**).**
- Nepal joined India led **International Solar Alliance.**
- **Launched India's RuPay card in Nepal** (RuPay is live in **Bhutan, Singapore and the UAE** also).

Other recent developments

- **India International Centre for Buddhist Culture & Heritage**: Indian PM Laid foundation of India International Centre for Buddhist Culture & Heritage by International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), India in **Lumbini, Nepal**.
- **Sister cities:** India and Nepal agreed in principle to establish sister city relations between **Lumbini (birthplace of Lord Buddha) and Kushinagar (death place of Lord Buddha).**
- **Sapta Kosi dam project:** India, Nepal agree to take forward Sapta Kosi high dam project (on **Saptakoshi river**) to control floods in south-east Nepal and northern Bihar and to generate hydropower.
  - India is also involved in other projects such as the **Mahakali Treaty** (6,480 MW), the **Upper Karnali Project** (900 MW) and the **Arun - III projects** (900 MW) **in western and eastern Nepal, respectively.**
- **West Seti and Seti River (SR6) projects:** Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Nepal and India to develop the West Seti and Seti River (SR6) projects (**a tributary of Karnali River)** which was abandoned by China.
- MoU with Nepal on biodiversity conservation **Transboundary Protected Areas (TPA) with Nepal. For ex:**
  - **Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) l**ocated in the northeast corner of Nepal near the border with India and Tibet.
  - **Terai Arc Landscape (TAL)** spread across the Indian states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and the low-lying hills of Nepal.
  - **Sacred Himalayan Landscape** whose 74% area falls in Nepal, 25% falls in Sikkim of India and the remaining falls in Bhutan.

India-Nepal Relations- Key Facts

- India and Nepal share an approximately an **1,800 km long open border running along West Bengal,** Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Sikkim.

- **India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950** forms the bedrock of the special relations between India and Nepal.
  - Nepalese citizens in India (nearly 8 million) avail facilities and opportunities on par with Indian citizens in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty.
- **India is the largest trading partner of Nepal.**
- Bilateral Trade is more than **$7 Billion**.
- India provides **assistance to the Nepalese Army** in its modernisation and conducts joint exercise **Surya Kiran**.
- **Energy Cooperation:**
  - **Power Exchange Agreement since 1971** for meeting the power requirements in the border areas
  - **South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline,** constructed and funded by India, **connecting Motihari in India to Amlekhgunj in Nepal**
- **Swami Vivekananda Centre for Indian Culture in Kathmandu** showcases the best of Indian culture.
- Both countries **cooperate on multilateral platforms like BBIN , BIMSTEC, Non Aligned Movement, SAARC etc**
- **Border dispute: Kalapani, a trijunction between Nepal and China, is in India's** control but Nepal claims the region because of historical and cartographic reasons.

1.5. INDIA-SRI LANKA

Why in news?

India and Sri Lanka have signed a MoU for the Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) to set up a state of the art **Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)** in Colombo.

More on news

- MRCCs are **part of an international network under the UN's International Maritime Organisation** to **monitor the sea lanes** with the objective of swift response to emergencies, such as vessels in distress, rescue and evacuation of people, and prevention of and containing environmental disasters such as oil spills etc.
- Each country is responsible for its own Search and Rescue Region.
- MRCC is **co-ordinated by the Navy or Coast Guard** in each country.
  - **In India, the Coast Guard is the co-ordinating agency.**

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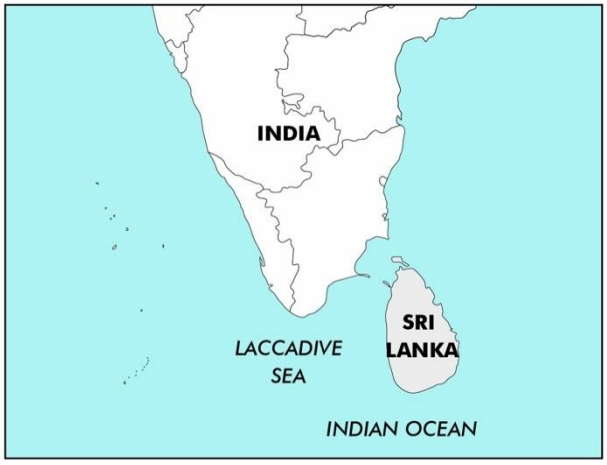
India-Sri Lanka relations- Key Facts

- India-Sri Lanka signed **Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA)** in 2000.
- Sri Lanka remains **among the largest trade partners of India in the SAARC.**
- India is also **one of the largest contributors to Foreign Direct Investment in Sri Lanka**



- Sri Lanka is **one of India's major development partners** (Indian grants amount to around **USD 570 million**).
  - **Indian Housing Project, country-wide 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service** are among the India's flagship grant projects in Sri Lanka.
- **Buddhism is one of the strongest pillars** connecting the two nations from the time when the Great Emperor Ashoka sent his children **Arhat Mahinda and Sangamitta** to spread the teachings of Lord Buddha at the request of King **Devanampiya Tissa** of Sri Lanka.
- **India-Sri Lanka Foundation** was set up in 1998 as an intergovernmental initiative, to enhance cooperation through civil society exchanges and the younger generations.
- Government of India launched the **e-Tourist Visa (eTV) scheme** for Sri Lankan tourists.
- India and Srilanka are members of multilateral groups such **as SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA, NAM, ADB, UN etc**

1.5.1. KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND

Why in News?

During Prime Minister's visit to Tamil Nadu, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has asked for retrieval of Katchatheevu Island from Sri lanka.

About Katchatheevu island

- Katchatheevu is a **small uninhabited island in Palk Strait, which connects the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea.**
  - Katchatheevu island was **formed due to volcanic eruptions in the 14th century.**
  - It **was jointly administered by India and Sri Lanka during British rule.**
- The Kachchatheevu issue emerged when both the **countries signed four Maritime Boundary Agreements between 1974-76.**
  - The island became part of Sri Lanka according to India-Sri Lanka Agreements
  - However, the **continuing dispute is over Sri Lanka repeatedly denying access to Indian fishers to rest and dry their nets, as provided under the 1974 Accord.**

Katchatheevu Island

1.6. INDIA-AFGHANISTAN

Why in news?

India has reopened its Embassy in Kabul after nearly ten months of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

Other facts on India in Afghanistan after Taliban takeover

- India conducted **Operation Devi Shakti** to evacuate people including its citizens and Afghan partners from Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.
- At **Fourth Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan** in **Dushanbe (Tajikistan),** the Indian National Security Adviser (NSA) called for enhancing Afghanistan's capability to counter terrorism.
- India had earlier taken a strong position **against any kind of engagement with Taliban.** However, **considering its own geopolitical and strategic interest, India is engaging** with Taliban but on its own terms.

OTHER RESCUE OPERATIONS

- **Operation Sukoon, 2006** to evacuate Indians, Sri Lankans and Nepalese citizens from war-hit **Lebanon.**
- **Operation Safe Homecoming, 2011** to evacuate Indian citizens fleeing from the Civil War in **Libya.**
- **Operation Raahat, 2015** to evacuate Indians Was well as foreign citizens from conflict-hit **Yemen.**
- Operation Ganga, 2022: To evacuate Indians from Ukraine.

India-Afghanistan Relations – Key Facts

- India shares land border of **106 km** with Afghanistan along the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- **India-Afghanistan Relations can be traced back to Indus Valley Civilization.**
- **Treaty of Friendship between India and Afghanistan was signed in 1949.**

- India is the **major export destination of Afghanistan.**
  - India and Afghanistan signed a **Preferential Trade Agreement** under which India allowed substantial duty concessions, ranging from 50% to 100%, to certain category (38 items) of Afghan dry fruits.
- India is by far **one of the top donors to Afghanistan.**
- **India-Afghanistan Air Freight Corridor** became operational in 2017.
- From 2002 to 2021, **India spent $4 bn in development assistance in Afghanistan.** This includes:
  - Afghanistan's Parliament in Kabul
  - Reconstruction of Salma Dam(Afghan India Friendship Dam),
  - Constructution of Zaranj Delaram road etc.

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1.7. INDIA-MALDIVES

Why in news?

Recently, India, Maldives signs six agreements **in the area of cyber security, disaster management, social housing etc.** to maintain stability in the Indian Ocean Region.

Other recent developments

- India announced a **US$ 100 million** fresh line of Credit for the **Greater Male Connectivity Project** (GMCP).
  - GMCP is an India funded **infrastructure project** to link Male with its nearby islands of **Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.**
- Both countries have signed a **security cooperation pact with a credit line from India** for capacity building in the maritime domain.
- **Maldives is part of the Colombo Security Conclave (Initiated by India)** which envisages peaceful cooperation in Indian Ocean along with Sri Lanka and Mauritius.
- **National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPLE),** India's largest grant project in Maldives was recently inaugurated in **Addu City, Maldives.**
- Maldives President issues decree banning **'India Out' campaign**.
  - **'India Out' campaign** was regarded as an organised campaign that aims to **disrupt relations** between the two countries by inciting unrest.
  - One of the reasons for this was cooperation between the two sides in 2021 to develop a **harbour on the Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF) atoll for the Maldivian coast Guard** as it was rumoured that there were Indian military personnel stationed there.

India-Maldives relation- Key facts

- India is Maldives **2nd largest trading partner**.
- Bilateral trade crossed the **$ 300 mn** mark for the first time in 2021.
- Maldives has a special place in India's **'neighbourhood first policy'.**
- India-Maldives resolved the politically contentious issue over Minicoy Island through the **Maritime Boundary Treaty of 1976-** recognising **Minicoy** as part of **India.**
- In **2016,** India-Maldives signed a **Comprehensive Action Plan for Defence.**
- **Ekuverin** is a major joint military exercise between the Indian and Maldives Army.
- Maldives is also part of **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).**

1.8. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network	**China and Nepal agreed to build the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.** **About The Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network** • The **Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network (THMCN)** also referred as the **Trans-Himalayan network** is an economic corridor proposed in 2019 between Nepal and China as a **part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.** • The corridor **aims to enhance connectivity in ports, roads, railways, aviation, and communications.** • The THMCN aims to **pave the way for more integration between China and the rest of South Asia,** solidify border controls and aid in the economic development and integration of China's TAR.
Global Security Initiative	• It is an initiative proposed by China. • According to China, the new Global Security Initiative will work against the **Cold War Mentality** or hegemonism, power politics and bloc confrontation. • It will **counter the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, Quad** (India, US, Australia and Japan grouping) and AUKUS (Australia, UK and US).
Porcupine strategy	• **Taiwan is focusing on porcupine strategy** to fight back in case China attacks it. • Porcupine is a strategy of **asymmetric warfare focused on fortifying a weak state's defences** to exploit enemy's weaknesses rather than taking on its strengths. o It was proposed in 2008 by US professor William S Murray. • Aim is to **make Taiwan's defence so secure that any attacker faces a ruinous cost.** • **Three defensive layers in this approach are:** o Outer layer is about **intelligence and reconnaissance**. o **Guerrilla warfare** at sea. o Innermost layer relies on **geography and demography of island**.
Spectrographic Investigation of Nebular Gas (SING) project	• Tensions between India and China is worrying Indian scientists involved in SING project. • **SING is a collaboration** between Indian Institute of Astronomy (IIA) and the Russian Academy of Sciences **for designing payloads for Tiangong** (China's new permanent space station). • SING primarily **deals with sending and positioning a spectrograph,** an instrument that splits light into constituent frequencies and wavelengths, **to study ultraviolet radiation.**
Wolf Warrior diplomacy	• Wolf-warrior diplomacy describes **offensives by Chinese diplomat to defend China's national interests,** often in confrontational ways. o Wolf Warrior diplomacy **symbolises an aggressive and confrontational, even hostile, type of diplomacy on a public stage, including on social media.** o Wolf-warrior diplomacy is **evidenced not only in combative words but aggressive actions.** • **From China's perspective**, wolf-warrior diplomacy is a **direct response to "unfair" approaches by other countries, especially the U.S., toward China and the Chinese people.**
China-Plus-One strategy	• India could **emerge as semiconductor manufacturing hub as part of 'China Plus One' diversification strategy**. o China-Plus-One, is a business strategy to **avoid investing only in China** and diversifying business into other countries. o It **started becoming popular in 2018** and gained prominence after the Covid outbreak.
Asian Clearing Union	• **RBI announced that all eligible current account transactions including trade transactions with Sri Lanka** may be settled in any permitted currency **outside the Asian Clearing Union (ACU, an initiative of UNESCAP, 1974) mechanism** until further notice. o ACU's **objective is to facilitate payments among member countries for eligible transactions** on a multilateral basis, thereby economising on the use of foreign exchange reserves and transfer costs. o Asian Monetary Unit **(AMU) is the common unit of account of ACU and is denominated as 'ACU dollar', 'ACU euro' and 'ACU yen'.**

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1.9. PLACES IN NEWS

India and its Neighbours

Sr. No.	Place
1.	**West Seti Dam (Nepal)** **Context:** MoU was signed between Nepal and India to develop the West Seti dam and Seti River (SR6) projects. • Seti (meaning **white river),** also known as Seti Gandaki, is a Western Nepal river which **originates at Annapurna Massif.** • It cuts through the **Mahabharat range** before joining the **Trishuli River** as a **left bank tributary** near Devghat area.
2.	**Lumbini (Nepal)** **Context:** Prime Minister of India visited Lumbini, Nepal for the first time in the last few decades. • **Lumbini is famous for birthplace of Lord Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama,** born in 623 B.C. • Located in **Terai plains of southern Nepal or** Rupandehi district of Nepal, 125 kms from Gorakhpur in Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. • Site is now being developed as a **Buddhist pilgrimage centre.**

	• Protected by **Ancient Monument Preservation Act 1956**. • It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
3.	**Gogra-Hotsprings area** **Context:** India and China's troops begin **disengagement from Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in Gogra-Hot Springs in eastern Ladakh.** • Earlier, China had refused to pull back its troops from **Hot Springs and Gogra Post which, along with Depsang Plains,** remain the friction points between the two sides. • **PP15 is located in an area known as Hot Springs**, while **PP17A is near an area called the Gogra post**. o Both are **close to Chang Chenmo River in Galwan** in eastern Ladakh. o Area is **north of Karakoram Range of mountains, which lies north of Pangong Tso lake**, and southeast of Galwan Valley.
4.	**Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie Road (DSDBO)** **Context:** The **225-km road connects Leh to the Karakoram Pass** - separating Ladakh from China's Xinjiang province. • DS-DBO road **provides connectivity to the India's northernmost outpost of Daulat Beg Oldi.** • It has the **world's highest airstrip**, originally built during the 1962 war but abandoned until 2008. • The DSDBO highway provides the Indian military **access to the section of the Tibet-Xinjaing highway** that **passes through Aksai Chin. The road runs almost parallel to the LAC at Aksai Chin.**
5.	**Pangong Tso** **Context:** The Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed the building of a second bridge on the Pangong Tso lake close to 2020 border standoff. • Pangong Tso, meaning high grassland lake in Tibetan, is the **world's highest saltwater lake** situated at a **height of 4,350 m** situated in the **Himalayan range** on **India-China Border**. • It is an **endorheic (sinking) lake** and out of its total length of around **160 km, one-third lies in India** (Ladakh region) while the remaining **two-thirds lie in China**. • It is **known to change colors,** appearing blue, green and red at different times.
6.	**Shinku La Pass** **Context:** Border Roads Organisation will **build the world's highest tunnel at Shinku La Pass to connect Himachal to Ladakh under Project Yojak by 2025.** • It is located between **Zanskar Valley in Ladakh and Lahaul Valley in Himachal Pradesh.** • The world's **longest tunnel is the Atal tunnel at Rohtang.**
7.	**Mana La (Mana Pass), Uttrakhand** **Context:** PM laid foundation of **connectivity project from Mana Village** (**Chamoli District**) **to Mana Pass.** • **Mana Pass** (Ht. 18,192 ft) is the **last point between India and China Border** and an **ancient trade route** between **India and Tibet.** • It is **also known as Dungri La** and **located within** the **Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve.** • Mana village rests on the banks of **River Saraswati** and is home to the **Bhotias (Mongol tribe).**
8.	**Nechiphu Tunnel** **Context:** Border Roads Organisation (BRO) conducted **final break through blast of Nechiphu Tunnel**. • Nechiphu tunnel is **located along the Balipara-Charduar-Tawang Road,** which connects Balipara in Assam to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh bordering China. • It has been **completed under the Project Vartak** of BRO

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2. INDIA-SOUTHEAST ASIA

2.1. INDIA-MYANMAR

Why in news?

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has suggested to create **Myanmar/ Malaysia-India-Singapore Transit (MIST) corridor in Chennai** for Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance.

Myanmar/Malaysia–India–Singapore Transit (MIST) corridor

More on news

- MIST is an **international submarine cable communication network** that will traverse undersea to **connect India with Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.**
  - It will **provide secure, reliable, robust and affordable telecom facilities** in Asia with main trunk route being from **Tuas in Singapore to Mumbai in India.**
  - MIST cable system has a **total length of 8,100 km.**

India-Myanmar Relations- Key Facts

- Myanmar is the **only ASEAN country adjoining India.**
- Myanmar **shares a land border of 1643 kms with north–eastern India (with states– Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram).**
- Bilateral trade between the two countries has, for long, remained at around **$2 billion.**
- India's development assistance portfolio in Myanmar is now over **$1.75 billion.** The development projects include the **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project; the Trilateral Highway Project; the Rakhine State Development Programme and restoration and conservation of Ananda Temple** in Bagan .
- Both countries are members of multilateral organisations like **BIMSTEC, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Mekong–Ganga Cooperation (MGC), UN, WTO etc**

2.2. INDIA-VIETNAM

Why in news?

India and Vietnam sign mutual logistics agreement.

More on news

- India and Vietnam have signed a **logistics support pact to allow militaries** of both sides to **use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies.**
  - The MoU on mutual logistics support is the **first such major agreement that Vietnam has signed with any country.**
- **Other major agreements**
  - **Joint Vision Statement on defence partnership towards 2030** to enhance the scope and scale of existing defence cooperation.
  - Early finalisation of the **500-million-dollar Defence Line of Credit extended to Vietnam.**
  - India's Defense Minister visited **Tran Quoc Pagoda, a revered Buddhist temple** which **reaffirmed age-old civilizational and people-to-people linkages**.

KNOW THE TERM

- Logistics agreements (LA) are **administrative arrangements facilitating access to military facilities for exchange of fuel** and provisions on mutual agreement simplifying logistical support.
  - India has signed several **logistics agreements with all Quad countries, France, Singapore and South Korea.**

India–Vietnam Relations–Key facts

- Bilateral trade between India and Vietnam is nearly **US$ 11 billion**.
- India supports Vietnam through a number of programs such as **Mekong-Ganga Project, Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and e-ITEC initiatives, etc.**
- India and Vietnam closely cooperate in various regional forums such as **ASEAN, East Asia Summit, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) besides UN and WTO.**

- **Cultural convergence:**
  - Buddhist Monks- **Mahajavaka and Kalyanacuriare**- are credited with establishment of Buddhism in Vietnam during **2nd centuryBC**.
  - **Mahatma Gandhi and Ho Chi Minh,** regarded as the Father of Nation in India and Vietnam respectively, led people in their heroic struggle.

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2.3. INDIA-THAILAND

Why in news?

India and Thailand complete 75 Years of Diplomatic Ties.

India–Thailand Relations–Key Facts

- Bilateral trade reached an all-time high of around **USD 15 billion** in 2021-22.
- Thailand initiated a **'Look West' policy** in 1997 that complements with India's 'Look East' policy,
- Connectivity projects between the two countries include **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Asian Highway Network (under UNESCAP), BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS)** under BIMSTEC framework.

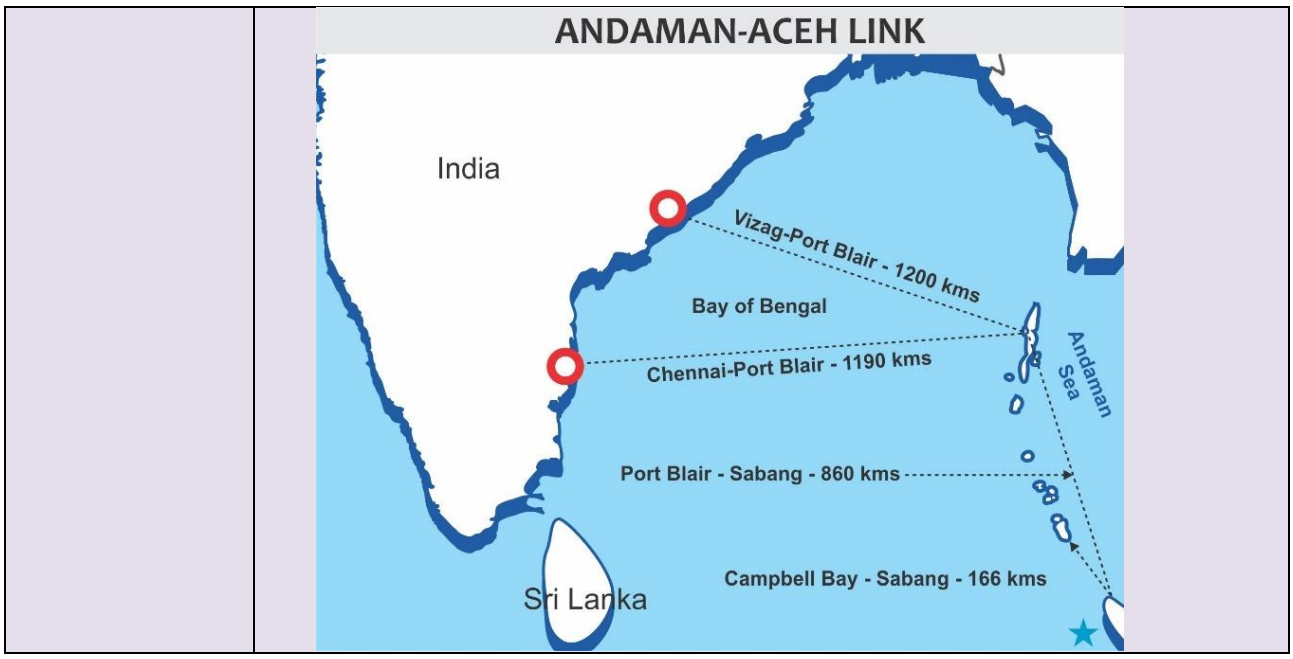
- **Buddhism** is a common thread and millions of Thai Buddhists visit Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Kushinagar.
- Both sides cooperate closely in **ASEAN, East Asia Summit, BIMSTEC, Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) etc.**

2.4. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

Digital Nomad Visa (DNV)	• To deal with the economic impacts of Covid-19, **Indonesia has announced DNV for travellers**, to attract more foreign tourists. ○ DNV would allow **remote workers to stay tax-free.** • **Digital Nomads:** They are people who **work remotely while travelling to different places** and **spending their earned income in the country they are travelling to.** • They embrace a **location-independent, technology-enabled lifestyle** that allows them to travel and **work remotely, anywhere in the Internet-connected world.**

Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid (EWCTG)	• Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways plans to **develop Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid (EWCTG) to boost regional integration and trade** with South Asia and Eastern South Asia.
	  ○ EWCTG, **part of India's Act East policy**, builds on the existing network **of India-Bangladesh protocol route.**
	  ○ This will be **linked further to Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.**

Andaman-Aceh Link	• **India-Indonesia joint task force** reviewed challenges in forging connectivity between **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A&N)** and **Aceh province.** • Envisioned in 2018 under "Shared Vision of Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific", **Andaman-Aceh Link connects the Sabang city of Aceh Province, Indonesia with A&N-Islands.** ○ Around 90 nautical miles from A&N, the **Great Channel** (or the **Six Degree Channel**) **separates Nicobar from Aceh Province.** • **Sabang overlooks the Andaman Sea and Strait of Malacca**, making it strategically important for India with other benefits like boosting tourism in A&N.



2.5. PLACES IN NEWS

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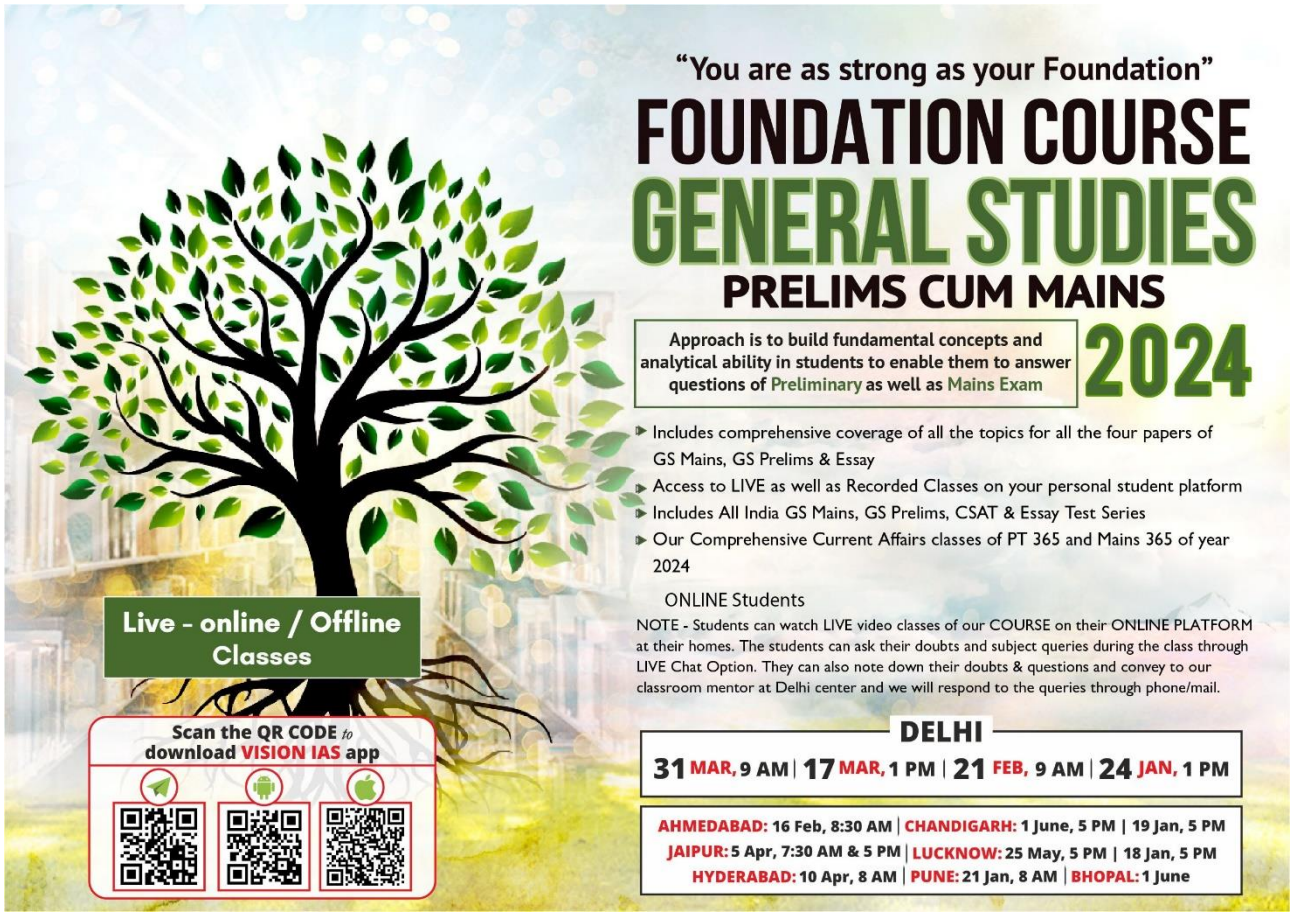
S.N.	Place
1.	**Philippines (Capital: Manila)** **Context:** India, Philippines to expand ties in fintech, education and defence. • **Also, Bongbong Marcos Jr** is set to be the new President of Philippines after Rodrigo Duterte. • The Philippines is an **archipelagic nation** with over **7,000 islands** with the 5th **largest coastline** in the world (36, 290 km) with **no shared land border** with any country. • It shares **maritime borders with China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Palau, Vietnam, and Taiwan.**
2.	**Strait of Malacca** **Context:** I**ndia-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT)** between Indian and Indonesian Navy was conducted in Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca. • Strait of Malacca is a **waterway connecting Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean) and South China Sea (Pacific Ocean).** o It is crucial to flow of global trade as it provides shortest sea route between Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. o Roughly a quarter of all oil transported by sea passes through the straits.
3.	**Cambodia (Capital: Phnom Penh)** **Context:** China is set to build its second foreign outpost (First at Djibouti) at **Ream Naval Base** of **Cambodia** on the **Gulf of Thailand.** • Cambodia is a **Southeast Asian country** surrounded by **Thailand, Laos** and **Vietnam.** The **Gulf of Thailand** gives it maritime access. • **Angkor Wat,** an ancient temple complex built by **Suryavarman II,** located in northern Cambodia is the **world's largest religious structure.**



3. INDIA-WEST ASIA

3.1. INDIA-ISRAEL

Why in news?

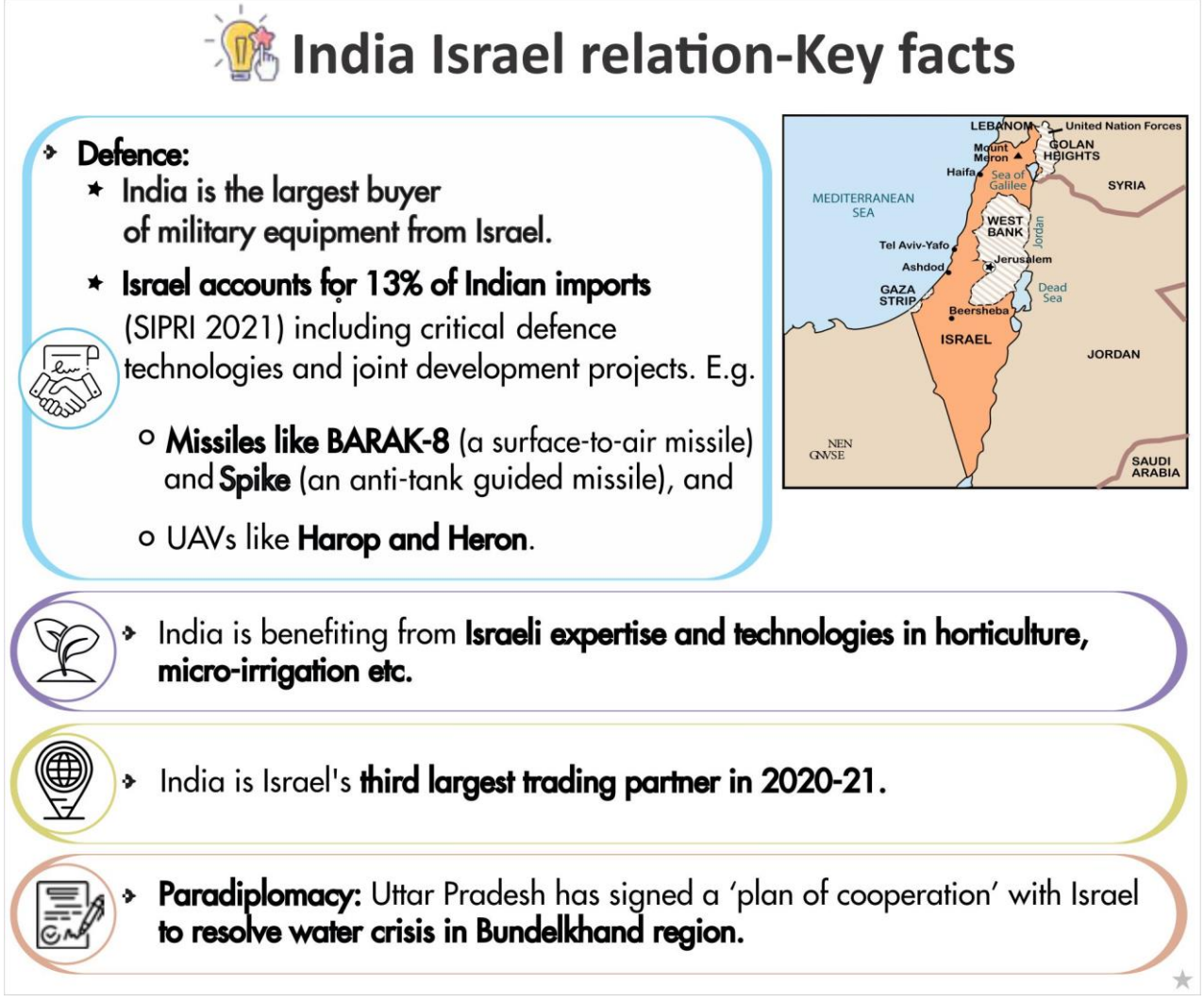
India-Israel Defence Ministers held bilateral talks where **India-Israel Vision on Defence Cooperation was adopted for** enhancing cooperation in the field of Futuristic Defence Technologies.

Other initiatives with Israel

- **India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F)**
  - **I4F** is a cooperation between India, and Israel to promote, facilitate and support joint industrial R&D projects between companies from India and Israel to address the challenges in the agreed 'Focus Sectors'.
- Both countries have signed a **three-year work program (2021-2023)** for development in **Agriculture cooperation** to benefit local farmers.
- **India and Israel are negotiating a Free Trade Agreement.**

KNOW THE TERM

- **Paradiplomacy:** It is defined as the "foreign policy capacity of sub-state entities (which includes states of federations and the autonomous entities of otherwise unitary states), their participation, independent of their metropolitan state, in the international arena in pursuit of their own specific international interests.



3.1.1. TWO STATE SOLUTION

Why in news?

At a recent UNSC session, India asserted that **long-term peace in Israel and Palestine** can be achieved through negotiation on the **Two-State Solution.**

About Two-State Solution

- It means that an independent, sovereign **Palestine state** and an independent, sovereign **Israeli state** would coexist in peace.
- **Two State Solution** was agreed upon in 1991 during US mediated **Madrid Peace Conference.**

India's Israel-Palestine Policy

- **India voted against the creation of Israel** in historic Palestine in **1947** in the UN General Assembly.
- During the Cold war era, **India remained a strong supporter of Palestinian freedom**, taking a **moral** and **legal position** against the Israeli occupation, in line with international laws and norms.
- India established **full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992.**
- since 2018, India is adopting a **de- hyphenation policy** which meant that **India's relationship with Israel** would stand **on its own merits, independent and separate** from **India's relationship Palestine.**

3.2. INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA

Why in news?

Recently, the Ministerial meeting of **India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)** was held.

More on news

- SPC was **instituted in 2019** during the visit of Indian Prime Minister to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- It has **two main pillars** i.e. **Political, Security, Social and Cultural Committee** and **Committee on Economy and Investments.**

Related News

Middle East Green Initiative (MGI)

- **MGI 2022 summit was held** recently.
- It is a **Saudi Arabia led regional dialogue on climate** launched in 2021 to bring together **leaders from across the MENA region** (Middle East/North Africa) and beyond.
- **Aims of MGI**
  - **Reducing carbon emissions** from regional hydrocarbon production by **more than 60%.**
  - **Plant 50 billion trees** across the Middle East and restore an area equivalent to **200 million hectares** of **degraded land.**
- It can help in **reducing global carbon levels** by **2.5%**

India-Saudi Arabia Relations- Key facts

- Saudi Arabia is India's **fourth-largest trading partner** with bilateral trade valuing at $42.86 billion in FY 22.
- Saudi Arabia is a **key supplier of hydrocarbons** to India, supplying 18% and 30% of India's crude oil and LPG requirements respectively.
- There are over **2.8 million Indian expatriates** gainfully employed in the Kingdom.

- **India's e-Migrate system has been integrated with the Kingdom's e-Thawtheeq system** to streamline the migration process for workers
- **Cultural Cooperation:**
  - Saudi Arabia is **home to the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah** where thousands of Indians visit for the annual **hajj and umrah pilgrimages.**
  - **MoU on Yoga Cooperation was signed recently (first time by any country in the Gulf region).**
- **Defence Cooperation**
  - Bilateral exercise **'AL – Mohed AL – Hindi'**
  - **India-Saudi Arabia Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation (JCDC)** to comprehensively review & guide all aspects of bilateral defence cooperation.
- India and Saudi Arabia are members of multilateral forums such as **UN, G20, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) etc.**

3.3. INDIA-UAE

Why in news?

India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) entered into force.

More in News

- **It is expected to increase the total value of bilateral trade in goods to over US$100 billion and in services to over US$15 billion within five years.**
- The CEPA is likely to benefit about $26 billion worth of **Indian products that are currently subjected to 5% import duty by the UAE.**
- Around **90% of products** exported from India to UAE will **attract zero duty**.
- Provides for a **permanent safeguard mechanism** to deal with sudden surge in imports of any product.

KNOW THE TERM

- **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):** It is a bilateral agreement that covers **trade in goods and services, investment, competition, and intellectual property rights.**
- **Rules of origin (ROOs):** ROOs are used to determine **if products are eligible** for **duty-free or reduced duties under trade agreements.**

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- **Automatic registration and marketing authorisation** of Indian generic medicines, once they are **approved in developed countries.**
- It also **has stringent 'rules of origin'** reflecting requirements for substantial **processing of up to 40% value addition.**

India-UAE Relations- Key facts

UAE is India's third-biggest trading partner behind the US and China.

Defence and Security: regular military exercises like Desert Eagle for maritime cooperation

★ **Both countries jointly committed to fight extremism and all forms of terrorism,**

UAE has the highest number of Indian diaspora (3.5 million) contributing high remittances to India ($17.06 billion in 2019).

ISRO launched UAE's 1st nanosatellite **Nayif-1.**

NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), an International arm of National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced that **BHIM UPI is now available at NEOPAY terminals, across the UAE.**

★ Globally, **UPI is accepted in Bhutan and Nepal,** and is likely to go live in **Singapore later 2022.**

India and UAE are members of multilateral forums such as **UN, WTO, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) etc.**

3.4. INDIA- ISRAEL- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - USA (I2U2)

Why in news?

Recently, the first Leaders' Summit of I2U2 (India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and United States) was held virtually.

About I2U2

- I2U2 was **first mentioned in October 2021,** following the **Abraham Accords between Israel and UAE,** to deal with issues concerning **maritime security, infrastructure, and transport** in region.
  - It was established as an **international forum** to discuss common areas of mutual interest, strengthen economic partnership in trade and investment in respective regions and beyond.
  - The I2U2, **referred to as the 'West Asian QUAD'.**
  - I2U2 **lacks a military angle and focuses on the economy.**

Abraham Accords

- Abraham Accords is a series of **peace agreements between Israel and several Arab countries, UAE being the first.**
  - In 2020, it was **mediated by USA** between **UAE, Bahrain and Israel.**
- The name **"Abraham" refers to the great father of the faith of the three Abrahamic religions:** Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- It's a symbolic title that **promotes unity between Arabic and Jewish people** by recognizing the shared patriarch.

- It has identified **six areas of cooperation** in **water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.**
    - It intends to **mobilize private sector capital and expertise** to help modernize infrastructure, low carbon development pathways for industries, improve public health, and promote development of critical emerging and green technologies.

3.5. GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

Why in news?

India's bilateral trade with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) grows at rapid pace.

- **Significance of India-GCC relations**
    - **Trade and Commerce:** GCC is currently **India's largest trading partner** bloc with bilateral trade in FY 2021-22 valued **at over USD 154 billion**.
    - **India**-GCC does not have a FTA.
    - GCC along with Iraq accounted for nearly one-fifth of India's total trade in 2021-22.
    - **Energy Security:** GCC's substantial oil and gas reserves are of utmost importance for India's energy needs. Saudi Arabia & UAE are the leading sources of Crude Oil imports for India.
    - **Remittance:** GCC countries accounted for more than 50% of total remittance flow into India.
    - **Expatriate population:** UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait together account for over half of all non-resident Indians (NRIs).

3.6. PLACES IN NEWS

S.N.	Place
1.	**Red Sea** **Context:** The US Navy has created a new task force with allied countries to patrol the Red Sea amid the Yemen War. • Red Sea is the **world's northernmost tropical sea** between **Asia and Africa**- connecting the **Gulf of Suez** and **Gulf of Aqaba** in the **North** with the **Strait of Bab el-Mandeb** in **South**. • Part of the **Great Rift Valley**, **Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti** lies on its Western Shore, and **Yemen and Saudi Arabia** lies on the Eastern Shore. • Due to **high heat** and **lack of precipitation**, it has **high salinity.** • The Red Sea is also the **world's northernmost tropical sea** and part of **Global 200** ecoregions from World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
2.	**West Bank** **Context:** Israel court paves way for eviction of 1,000 Palestinians from West Bank area. • **Location** o West Bank is a landlocked territory of Palestine, which is to the west of the Jordan River. o It is **bounded by Israel on the north, west and south.** On the east lies Jordan country. o Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 **Mideast war**, and Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state. o Presently there are approx. **132 Israeli settlements and 124 unauthorized settlements,** along with military outposts.
3.	**Nagorno-Karabakh Region** **Context:** Armenia is witnessing growing anti-govt unrest over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. • **Political & boundaries** o It is a disputed territory **between Armenia and Azerbaijan**. o **Conflict**- Karabakh Armenians demands transferring Karabakh from Soviet Azerbaijan to Soviet Armenia. o **The Minsk Group** was created by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to facilitate talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. ✓ The Group was co-chaired by Russia, the United States and France.
4.	**Türkiye, erstwhile Turkey (Capital: Ankara)** **Contexts:** • **7.8 magnitude earthquake** struck Turkey and western Syria leading to widespread damage and thousands of fatalities. • **UN has changed the name of Turkey to Türkiye** after the Turkish Government requested it to do so. • President of Turkey approved the **changes in Electoral Laws** to bolster his rule. • Türkiye is a **large peninsula** that **bridges continents of Europe** (via. Eastern Thrace) and **Asia** (via. Anatolian Plateau). • **Geographical Features:** o It constitutes major part of **Anatolia plateau.** o It is **predominantly mountainous country**, and lowland is confined to coastal fringes. o Narrows straits include **Bosporus, Sea of Marmara, and Dardanelles**—are known collectively as **Turkish straits** part of it.
5.	**Jordan (Capital: Amman)** **Context:** Amid challenges to fertilizers, India and Jordan have signed current year and long term MoUs for **assured fertilizers supply to India**. • Jordan is a **Middle Eastern Country** located in the **Arabian Peninsula**. • **Al-Aqabah**, only port of Jordan, provides a short coastline to Jordan at the **Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea)**.
6.	**Qatar (Capital- Doha)** **Context:** India's Vice President visited Qatar. Also, Centre recently organized Virtual Networking Meet for Geographical Indication Products with Qatar. o **Qatar is an independent emirate** (an Arabic Islamic monarchy) on west coast of the Persian Gulf.
7.	**Syria (Capital: Damascus)** **Context:** US airstrikes hit militia-controlled areas in Syria. • **Political and Boundaries:** o It is located on **east coast of Mediterranean Sea in southwestern Asia.** o Its **area includes territory in Golan Heights** that was annexed by Israel in 1981.

4. INDIA-RUSSIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

4.1. EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM (EEF)

Why in news?

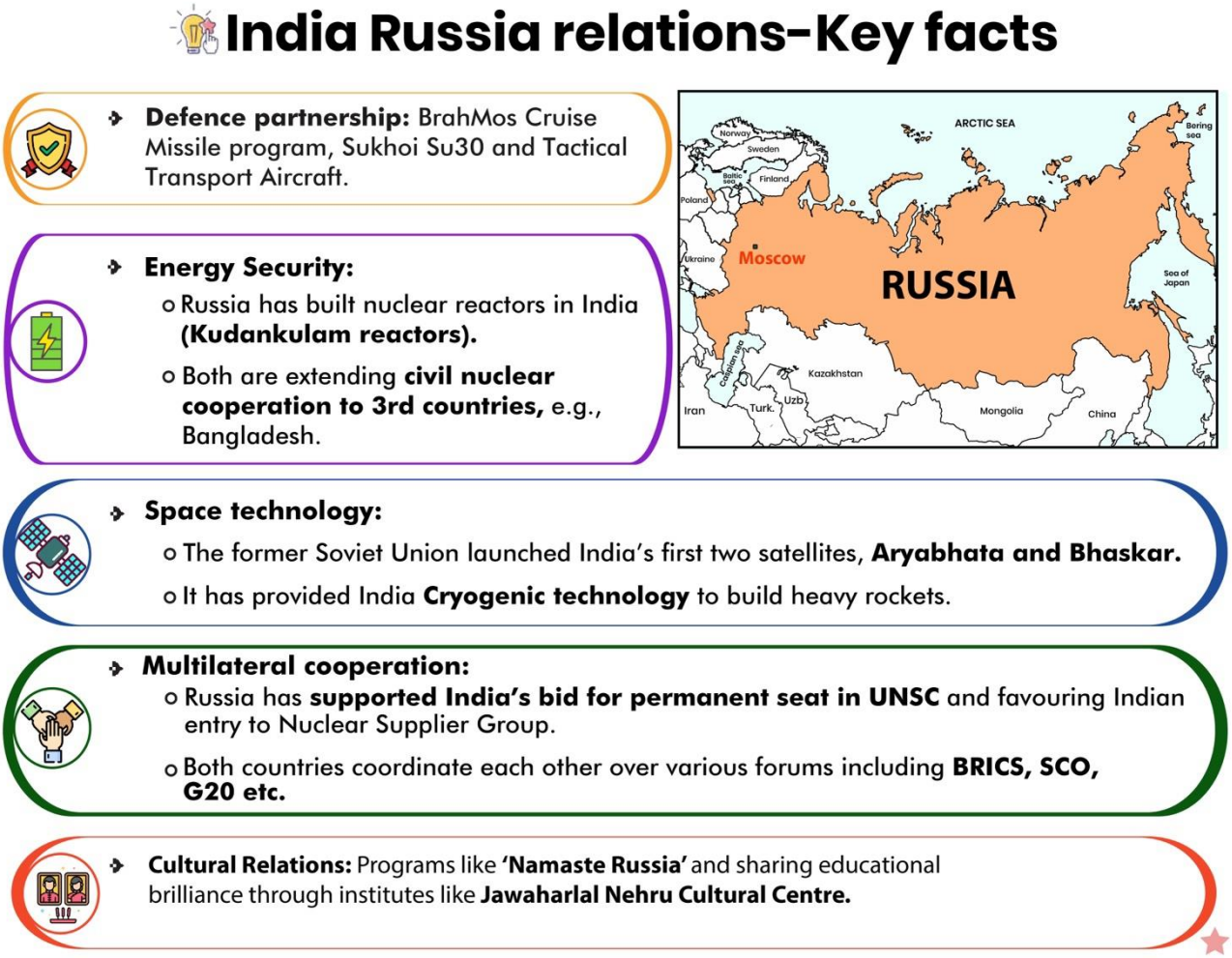
Prime Minister virtually attended the seventh Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) hosted by Russia in Vladivostok.

About Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)

- The EEF was established in 2015 **to encourage foreign investments in the Russia's Far East (RFE) region.**
- EEF displays the **economic potential, suitable business conditions and investment opportunitie**s in the region.
- The forum aimed at **connecting the Far East with the Asia Pacific region.**
- **About Russia's Far East (RFE) Region:**
  - Far Eastern Federal District (FEFD) is the **easternmost part of Russia** and **borders the Pacific and the Arctic ocean, and five countries** (China, Japan, Mongolia, the United States and the North Korea).
  - The region encompasses **1/3rd of Russia's territory** and is **rich with natural resources s**uch as fish, oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds, coal and other minerals.
  - The Russian government has strategically developed the region with **the aim of connecting Russia to the Asian trading routes.**
  - **China:** It is the biggest investor in the region (account for 90% of the total investments). Followed by South Korea and Japan.

Initiatives by India in RFE region

- **NITI Aayog and Ministry for Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic** are working on a plan to develop the Arctic and Russia's Far East between 2020 and 2025.
- **India offered a $1 billion line of credit** to develop infrastructure in the region.
- **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation** purchased stakes in the Sakhalin-1 project in the region.
- **India, Japan and Russia concluded their first Track II** negotiations about joint Far East projects.



4.2. GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Why in News?

Russian troops were accused of violating Geneva conventions in ongoing war.

About Geneva Conventions

- Geneva Conventions are a **set of four treaties (formalised in 1949) and three additional protocols**.
  - Geneva Conventions have been **ratified by 196 states, including all UN member states.**
  - Three Protocols have been **ratified by 174, 169 and 79 states respectively**.

Geneva convention	What it covers?
First	• Protects **wounded and sick soldiers** on land during war. • Also **extends to medical and religious personnel**, medical units, and medical transport.
Second	• **Protects wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel** at sea during war. • Also **extends to hospital ships and medical transports** by sea.
Third	• **Applies to prisoners of war**, including a wide range of general protections such as humane treatment, maintenance, and equality across prisoners etc.
Fourth	• **Protects civilians,** including those in occupied territory.
Three Additional Protocols	
Protocol I and II	• They **strengthen the protection of victims of international** (Protocol I) **and non-international** (Protocol II) **armed conflicts** and place limits on the way wars are fought.
Protocol III	• **Created an additional emblem, the Red Crystal,** which has the same international status as the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems.

4.3. INDIA-TURKMENISTAN

Why in news?

President of India paid a state **visit to Turkmenistan** which is the **first ever visit by an Indian President** to Turkmenistan.

About India-Turkmenistan relations

- Archaeological finds in south Turkmenistan have revealed contacts with **Indus Valley Civilization**.
- **'Turkmen Gate' built in Delhi** in 1650's also testifies to centuries-old ties between India and Turkmenistan.
- India was **one of the first countries to recognize** Turkmenistan's independence in 1991 and establish **formal diplomatic relations in 1992.**
- **Central Asia's first Yoga and Traditional Medicine Centre** was inaugurated in Ashgabat in July 2015.

Major Initiatives with Central Asian Countries

- **Connect Central Asia Policy**: A broad-based approach including **political, security, economic, and cultural** connections.
- **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):** It encompasses **ship, rail and road** routes connecting India with **Russia, Central Asia and Europe via Iran**. India is also planning **to include Chabahar port** in the INSTC framework.
- **TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) project:** The project aims to transport 33 billion cubic metres of gas from **Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gas field** to Afghanistan, Pakistan and **finally India** through the proposed 1814-km long pipeline, also called the **'Peace Pipeline'.**
- **Ashgabat Agreement (India joined in 2018):** It aims to establish an international multimodal transport and transit corridor between **Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.**

India- Central Asia Relationship-Key facts

- Part of India's **extended neighbourhood,** India has strategic relations with most of the Central Asian countries.
- In January 2022, India hosted the **1st India-Central Asia Summit,** coinciding with 30 years of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries.
- India is a member of both the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC),** and the **Ashgabat Agreement.**

- India has taken steps to expand connectivity through Chabahar port in Iran for a **secure, viable and unhindered access** to the sea for the Central Asian countries.
- India has signed a MoU to provide grant assistance for implementation of **High Impact Community Development Projects** for socio-economic development in Central Asia.

4.4. INTERNATIONAL NORTH-SOUTH TRANSIT CORRIDOR (INSTC)

Why in news?

Iran started transfer of Russian goods to India by using International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

About INSTC

- INSTC is a 7200 km **multi-modal transportation network**, first envisaged in 2000 by Russia, India and Iran, to promote transportation cooperation among the Member States.
  - INSTC **connects Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to Caspian Sea** via Iran and is then connected to **Saint Petersburg** and **North European via Russia.**
  - **Currently, it has 13 members**: India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Turkey, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Ukraine and Syria.
- **INSTC Significance for India**
  - **Will cut down the transportation costs of goods** (by almost 30%) as well **transportation time** (almost half compared to suez canal) between India and Russia.
  - **Reduce carriage cost** between India and Russia by 30% and **bring down transit time** to less than 25 days compared to 40 days.
  - Will help India to **gain smooth access into Central Asia and beyond** and will help to expand trade and investment links.
  - **Reduce dependence on current trading partners**, especially energy connectivity, through **realignment of supply chains.**
  - It is also being seen as **India's answer to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**
  - **India's corridor** to energy-rich Central Asia, Arctic, Nordic and Baltic region.

- **Other Planned Corridors Connecting India with Russia and Europe**
  - **Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor** connecting India-Russia.
  - **India's Arabian-Mediterranean (Arab-Med) Corridor** connecting India with mainland Europe via Piraeus port of Greece and Middle East.

4.5. CHABAHAR PORT

Why in news?

Recently, India observed 'Chabahar Day' where India and Iran reviewed the progress of **Chabahar port and the INSTC transcontinental trade route.**

More about Chabahar Port

- Chabahar Port is located in Sistan and Baluchestan province in the South-eastern part of Iran, **on the Gulf of Oman.**
- It is the **only deep-sea port in Iran with direct ocean access.**
- Its geographic proximity to countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, as well as its status as a **key transit center on the burgeoning International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).**
- **India, Afghanistan and Iran signed a deal** to establish the **International Transport and Transit Corridor** (Chabahar Agreement) in 2016.
  - This involved construction of a **rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan** along the border with Afghanistan **and linking it** to the Zaranj-Delaram Highway**,** as an **alternate trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia.**
  - Zaranj-Delaram Highway in Afghanistan is a 215 km long highway that was already built in Afghanistan through assistance provided by India.

- India aims to make Chabahar Port a **transit hub under the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to reach out to CIS countries.**

India's other cross border connectivity initiatives

- **The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility:** The sea, river, land transport system linking Indian ports and Sittwe port in Myanmar and then through riverine transport and by road to Mizoram (India).
- **The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project:** The 1360 km cross-border transportation network would link Moreh (India) to Mae Sot (Thailand) through Bagan (Myanmar).
- **The Mekong India Economic Corridor:** The corridor proposes to connect Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam) with Dawei (Myanmar) via Bangkok (Thailand) and Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and further linking it to Chennai (India).
- **The Stilwell Road (the Ledo Road and the Burma Road):** The WW II overland road linking Ledo in Assam (India) to Kunming in Yunnan (China) through Myanmar.
- **The Delhi-Hanoi Railway Link:** It proposes to link India with Vietnam via Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore.
- **The Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo Friendship Road:** The 160 km cross-border road from Tamu to Kalemyo in Myanmar's Sagaing Region and forms part of the India-Myanmar Thailand Trilateral Highway.
- **The Rhi-Tiddim Road in Myanmar:** The 80 km cross-border road from Rhi to Tiddim in Myanmar's Chin State.
- **The BCIM Economic Corridor:** The cross-border transportation network linking China's Kunming to India's Kolkata from Myanmar and Bangladesh.

4.6. PLACES IN NEWS

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Sr. No.	Place
1.	**Tajikistan (Capital - Dushanbe)** **Context:** Recently, Indian envoy handed over the India-Tajikistan Friendship Hospital (ITFH) in Bokhtar to the Tajikistan side. • **Political boundaries:** Tajikistan is a **landlocked Central Asian** country sharing its borders with **Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan** and **China.** • **Topography:** 93% of its land is mountainous with **Alay Range** in North and **Pamir Mountains** (part of the **roof of the world, High Asia**) in the **southeast as main mountain ranges**.

2.	**Kyrgyzstan (Capital: Bishkek)**
	Context: Recently, people were killed and injured in violent border clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
	• **Political boundaries**
	  ○ Located in **Central Asia**.
	  ○ Bounded by **Kazakhstan** (northwest and north), **China** (east and south), and **Tajikistan** (south) and **Uzbekistan** (west).

3.	**Uzbekistan (Capital Tashkent)**
	Context: Recently, **unrest broke out in the Karakalpakstan region** of Uzbekistan over plans to curtail its autonomy.
	  ○ Also, at least 18 children died in **Uzbekistan's Samarkand** allegedly after consuming India-manufactured syrup due to **ethylene glycol.**
	• Uzbekistan is a **doubly landlocked Central Asian Country**
	  ○ **Doubly Landlocked** means that it is surrounded by countries that are themselves **landlocked**.
	  ○ Globally, only **two nations** are doubly landlocked with **Liechtenstein** as the other one.

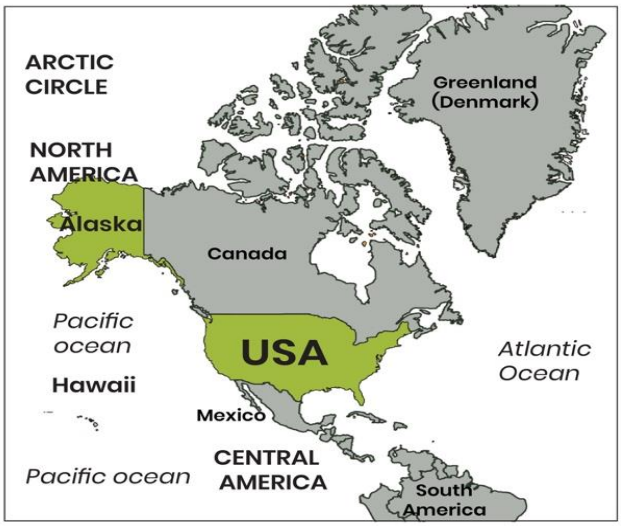
4.	**Kazakhstan (Capital- Nursultan)** **Context:** A sharp and sudden spike in fuel prices triggered a national crisis in Kazakhstan. • **Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia and the ninth largest in the world.**
5.	**Kherson** **Context:** The **proxy government** in the Kherson region **announced that all newborns would be granted Russian citizenship.** • Also, Russia has installed a **new administration** and started to introduce the **Rouble as a currency** in Kherson Region of Ukraine. • Kherson is an **important port city** in Southern Ukraine, which is **situated on the Dnieper River** that **flows into the Black Sea.** • In 1778, it **became the first naval base and shipyard of the Russian Navy on the Black Sea Coast**. • It **became the first major urban centre to fall under the Russian forces** during the ongoing invasion of Ukraine.
6.	**Transnistria Region** **Context:** Russia is opening a **new front on Ukraine's western border, in Transnistria region of Moldova.** • **Location**: On east bank of **Dniester River**. • **Boundary**: Lies **between Moldova to its west and Ukraine towards its east**. • Often described as a **"remnant of the Soviet Union".** • It is **not recognised as independent by Russia** and it**s economy is dependent on Russia for subsidies and free gas.** • Majority of people in Transnistria **speak Russian** and use **cyrillic script like Russians.**
7.	**Snake Island** **Context:** Ukraine has caused significant losses to Russian military in airstrikes on Snake Island. • **Zmiinyi Island, also known as Snake or Serpent Island.** • It is a small piece of rock less than 700 metres from end to end, that has been described as being **"X-shaped".** • Located **35 km from coast in Black Sea**, to **east of mouth of Danube** and roughly **southwest of port city of Odessa**. • There are **no snakes on Snake Island**. • It **belongs to Ukraine.**
8.	**Kerch Strait** **Context:** During ongoing Russia Ukraine war, blast took place on **Kerch Bridge**, connecting Russia with Crimea. • Also known as the **Crimean Bridge**, the Kerch Bridge is **Europe's Longest Bridge** built over the **Kerch Strait**. • The Kerch Strait is located between the Kerch **Peninsula of Crimea from the Taman Peninsula** of Russia's Krasnodar Krai. • It connects the **Sea of Azov** with **Black Sea**.

5. INDIA-INDO-PACIFIC

5.1. INDIA-US

India US relations– Key facts

- **Trade and Economic relations: US was India's top trading partner in 2021-22, surpassing China.**
  - US replaced Mauritius as **second largest source of foreign direct investment** into India **during 2020-21**
  - US is one of the **top 5 investment destinations** for Indian FDI.



- **Defence cooperation:** India-US defence cooperation is based on **"New Framework for India US Defence Cooperation",**
  - US recognized India as a **"Major Defence Partner in 2016.**
  - Several **defense agreements** have been signed like
    - **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Association** (August 2016);
    - **Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement** (September 2018);
    - **Industrial Security Agreement** (December 2019);
    - **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement** (October 2020).

- **Bilateral military exercises like Yudh Abhyaas, Vajra prahar, etc.**
  - In 2019 a **tri-services exercise– Tiger Triumph-** was conducted.

- **S&T and Space Cooperation: India-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement** signed in 2005, which was renewed for a period of ten years in 2019.
  - The **ISRO and NASA are working together to realize a joint microwave remote sensing satellite** for Earth observation, named **NISAR.**

- **Diaspora/People-to-People ties:** The Indian Americans (3.18 million) constitute the **third largest Asian ethnic group** in the US.

- **International cooperation:** United Nations, G-20, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization.

5.1.1. 2+2 DIALOGUE

Why in news?

The **fourth '2+2' dialogue between India and the United States** was held in Washington DC.

Key highlights

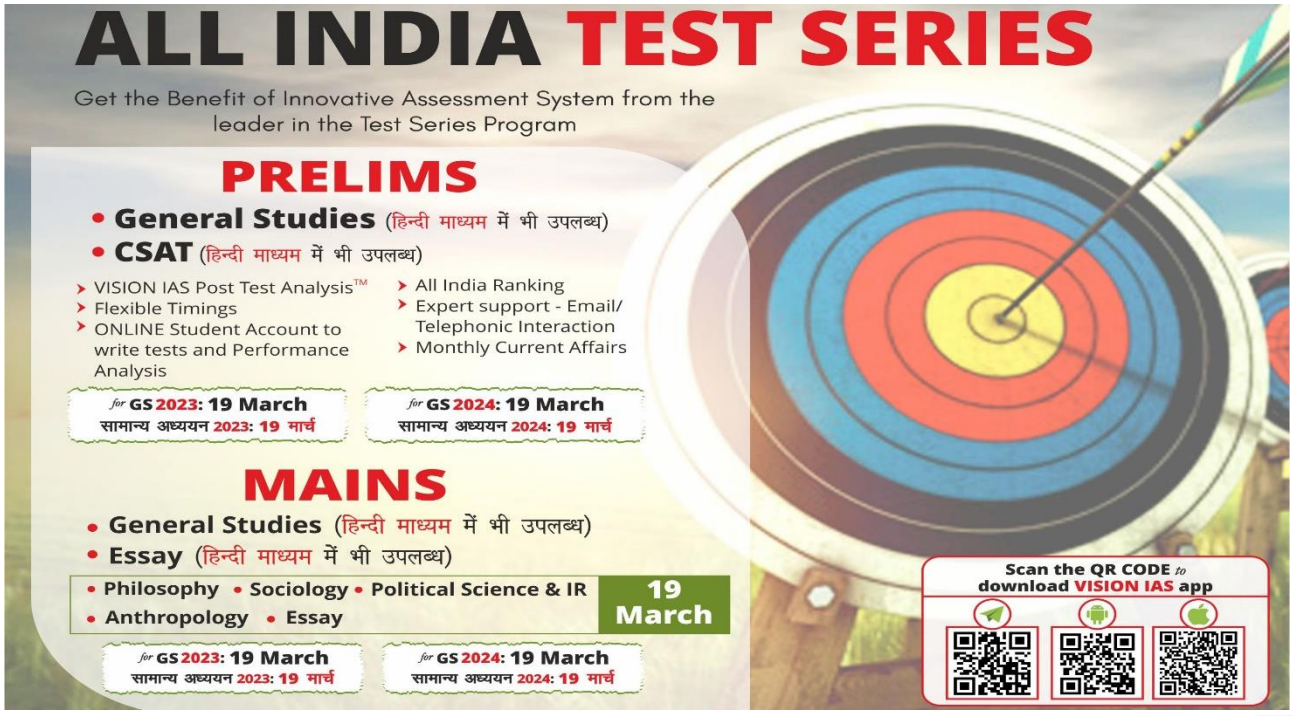
- Both sides look forward to India's co-hosting of the **Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (IPACC) and Indo-Pacific Armies Management Seminar (IPAMS)** in 2023.
- Both countries looked forward to **expansion of the USAID-supported COVID-19 Learning Exchange virtual platform** to include programs for more population groups and allow cities and health officials to **share best practices**.
- Discussed **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite**, planned for launch from India in 2023.
- To revitalise the **Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)** with joint projects on advanced, emerging and critical military technologies.
    - **India and USA signed project agreement for Air-launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (ALUAV) under DTTI.**

Related News

Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)

The US House of Representatives passed a legislative amendment that **exempts India from economic sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for purchasing the S-400** missile defence system from Russia in 2018 **to help deter aggressors like China.**

- CAATSA is a law that came into effect in the US in 2017 and was **meant to punish countries having deep engagements with Russia, North Korea, and Iran using economic sanctions.**
    - However, the application of CAATSA is **not limited to the S-400, and may include other joint ventures for manufacturing or developing weapons in the future**, or any other kinds of major deals with Russia.
    - The US has already **imposed sanctions on Turkey under CAATSA for purchase of S-400 missile systems** from Russia.
- S-400 is a **mobile long-range surface-to-air missile (LR-SAM) system.**
    - S-400 Triumf has the capability to protect against almost all sorts of aerial attacks, including drones, missiles, rockets and even fighter jets.



5.2. INDIA-JAPAN

Why in news?

Recently, the India and Japan completed 70 years of establishment of diplomatic relations.

India and Japan relations- Key facts

- **Economic and Commercial Cooperation:**
  - A **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** exists between the two since 2011.
  - Japan is the **biggest bilateral donor to India with Japanese Official Development Assistance** (ODA) extended to some of the major infrastructure projects of India, like Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.
  - Japan is one of the largest investors in India with nearly **$35 billion** of FDI in the last two decades.
  - India and Japan are working with Australia on the **Supply Chains Resilience Initiative (SCRI).**

- India and Japan are working with Germany and Brazil for permanent membership of UNSC (as G4 or Group of Four).

- ISRO and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are working on a joint **lunar polar exploration (LUPEX)** mission. The mission aims to send a **Lander and Rover to the Moon's south pole** around **2024.**

- India and Japan signed a mutual logistics agreement- **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA).**

- **Both countries** launched '**India-Japan Emerging Technology and Innovation Fund**' in 2019.

- Indian and Japanese forces regularly hold joint exercises like **Shinyuu Maitri (Air Force), Dharma Guardian (Army), JIMEX (Navy), Sahyog-Kaijin (Coast Guard) and Malabar (Navy, multilateral).**

- **Japanese 'Zen Garden – Kaizen Academy'** was inaugrated at the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) in Gujarat.

- **Key Bilateral cooperation in Indo-pacific:** Integrated Indo-Pacific strategy, Mutual Logistics and Supply Agreement (MLSA), Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad and Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI).

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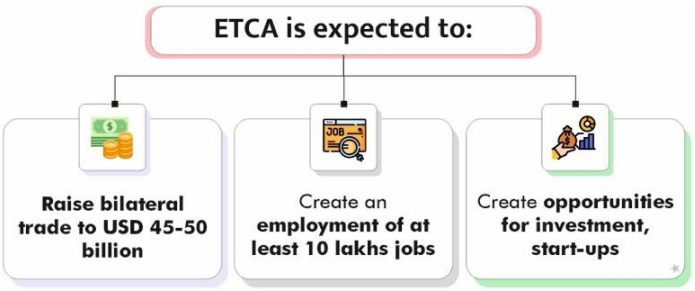
Related News

- Former Japan Prime Minister (PM) Shinzo Abe Assassinated
  - India finds a special mention in his book **Utsukushii Kuni E** (Toward a Beautiful Country).
- **His contributions to India-Japan Relationship**
  - **Special Strategic and Global Partnership** between India-Japan for Peace and Security in the region,
  - Under Abe, **Japan made for a tenth of India's FDI with support for major projects** including the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-speed rail corridor.
  - He **supported India's entry into four international export control regimes** with increased cooperation in defence equipment and technology
- For his contributions, **Indian Government gave the prestigious Padma Vibhushan to him in 2021.**

5.3. INDIA AUSTRALIA

Why in news?

India Australia Economic and Cooperation Trade Agreement (ECTA) recently came into force.



About Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)

- ECTA **provides an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade** between two countries and **covers almost all tariff lines** dealt by India and Australia.
- It is the **first trade agreement of India with a developed country** after more than a decade.
- After **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement,** ECTA will be the **second trade agreement for India that will be operationalized this year.**

Key provisions of the agreement

- **Provide zero-duty access to 96 percent of India's exports to Australia** including shipments from key sectors such as engineering goods, gems and jewellery, textiles etc.
- **Indian graduates from STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) will be **granted extended post-study work visas.**
- Australia agreed to **amend its domestic tax law to stop taxation of offshore income of Indian firms** providing technical services in Australia.
- **A separate Annex on Pharmaceutical products** which will enable fast-track approval for patented generic and biosimilar medicines.
- Covers areas like **Rules of Origin, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement,** Movement of Natural Persons etc.

Other Recent developments:

- Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Indian Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Australia for Technical Cooperation for **Australia-India water security initiative (AIWASI)** to support cooperation between Australia and India on urban water security and management.
- **Cooperation in joint projects involving Rare Earth Minerals** like lithium and cobalt.

5.4. INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY (IPEF)

Why in News?

Recently, **India agreed to be a part of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).**

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)

About IPEF: IPEF is a U.S.-led framework for **14 participating countries to solidify their relationships and engage in crucial economic and trade matters that concern the region,** such as building resilient supply chains battered by the pandemic.

Key Features

- The grouping is intended to **counter the aggressive and non-transparent trade** and economic policies of Chinain the Indo-pacific.
- **It is not a free trade agreement.**
- IPEF is **more about standard setting and facilitating trade and will not involve more market access for its members.** Nor will it negotiate lower tariffs.
- The framework would be open to other countries willing to join in the future.

Current IPEF Members

Four pillars of- IPEF*

- Trade
- Supply chain
- Clean Energy, Decarbonization and Infrastructure
- Tax and anti-corruption

Note- Countries **are free to join (or not join) initiatives** under any of the stipulated pillars but are expected to adhere to all commitments once they enroll

- As of now, **India agreed on three out of four pillars related** to supply chains, tax and anti-corruption and clean energy.

Significance of IPEF for India

- Participation in **regional trade.**
- Provides **platform for negotiations** on a range of issues like environmental restrictions on fossil fuels, data localization etc.
- Better **economic opportunities**
- **Countering China** in the Indo-Pacific
- Participation in **resilient supply chains**

About Indo-Pacific

- It is a geographical construct that has emerged as a substitute to the long prevalent "Asia-Pacific".
- Different countries interpret the region differently.

Importance of Indo pacific

- 44% of the world's land area
- 65% of the world's population
- 62% of world-GDP
- 46% of the world's merchandise trade.

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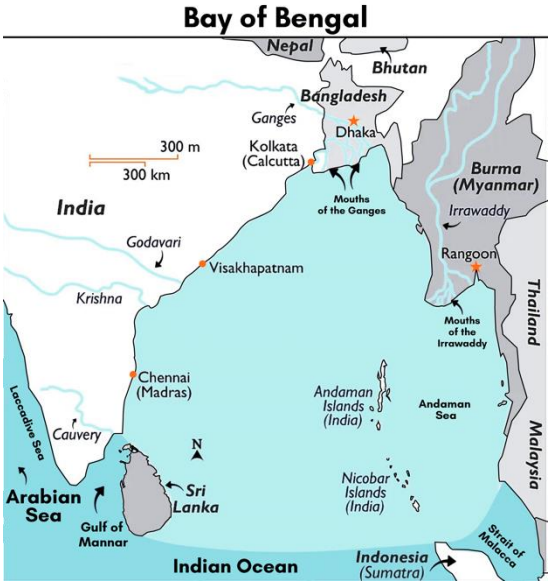
5.5. BAY OF BENGAL

Why in news?

Recently, Nalanda University has launched **multidisciplinary research Centre for Bay of Bengal Studies** (CBS) on occasion of World Maritime Day (29th September).



More on news

- Opening of CBS was announced by India at **4th BIMSTEC (BoB Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Summit** in Nepal in 2018.
- CBS will offer collaborations in areas such as **geo-economics and geopolitics, ecology, trade and connectivity, maritime security and law, cultural heritage**, and **blue economy** to generate opportunities for Bay region.
- This will **strengthen India's overall framework for maritime engagement**.

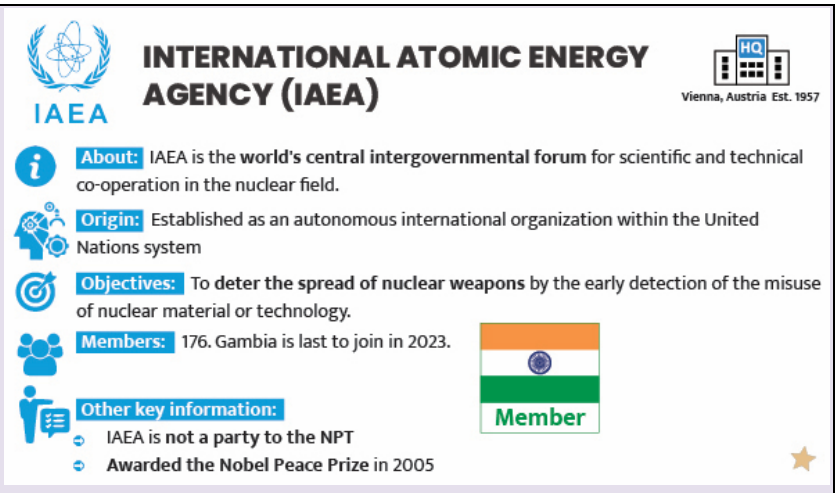
Initiative taken by India with respect to BoB

- **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):** It is led by Indian Navy that provides a platform for military leaders of region to discuss regional challenges. For e.g. terrorism, piracy etc.
- **Naval exercise:** India hosts **exercise MILAN**, a **biennial naval exercise** among the littoral navies of BoB, Southeast Asia, and Indian Ocean community to enhance better understanding among navies of the region.
- **White Shipping agreements**: It allows for **exchange of information on commercial shipping.**
  - India currently has White Shipping agreements with **Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka** and has ongoing conversations to sign the agreement with Thailand and Indonesia.
- **Tsunami warning system:** National Tsunami Early Warning Center been set up at INCOIS (Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services), Hyderabad, to **provide early warning in case of a Tsunami and avoid devastation** caused by 2004 tsunami.
- **Project Mausam**: Initiative of **Ministry of Culture** to **collaborate with several countries of Indian Ocean region to understand the knowledge and manipulation of monsoon winds** in pre-modern period.

5.6. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

AUKUS

- China has reportedly withdrawn its draft resolution against AUKUS grouping at the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).**
  - This has come in the backdrop of **India's "deft and impactful" diplomacy** whereby India helped many smaller countries take a clear stand on the Chinese proposal.



- AUKUS is a new **three-way strategic defence alliance between Australia, the UK and US.**
  - **Key objective –** build a class of nuclear-propelled submarines, work together in the Indo-Pacific region, where the rise of China is seen as an increasing threat, and develop wider technologies.

Partners in the Blue Pacific' (PBP)	• As a response to **China's aggressive outreach** to Pacific Island states, the **US - along with Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Japan** - announced a new PBP initiative. o Earlier, China had released a draft agreement called "**Common Development vision**" that spoke about China wanting to expand law enforcement **cooperation with pacific nations.** • **About PBP:** o It is a 5-nation**informal mechanism** to support Pacific islands and to boost **diplomatic, economic ties** in the region. o It aims to enhance "**prosperity, resilience, and security" in the Pacific** through closer cooperation. o It will "**elevate Pacific regionalism"**, and forge stronger ties with the Pacific Islands Forum. o Its **areas of cooperation** includes climate crisis, connectivity and transportation, maritime security etc.
Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)	• **Recently, Japan, Australia sign Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)** • RAA is a new agreement to cooperate closely on defence **to bolster security ties against the backdrop of rising Chinese military and economic might in the Indo-Pacific region.**
India, UAE and France Trilateral meet	**India, UAE** and **France to hold their maiden Trilateral meeting** • Objective of the meet is to **explore potential cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region** including in **Maritime Security, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Blue Economy**, Regional Connectivity, Cooperation in Multilateral Fora, Energy and Food Security, Startups etc. • **India-UAE-France Trilateral and its Significance** o **Boost the cooperation in the Indo-Pacific under the trilateral framework.** o **Advance strategic autonomy** in the Western Indian Ocean Region or Arabian Sea to ensure energy and regional security. o Critical for **India's global footprint** as well as the success of India's **Act East Policy, Look West Policy, Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** etc. o **Opportunity to work towards shared goals** of 'free and open Indo-Pacific'.
Minerals Security Partnership	• India raised concern over not being part of the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP). • MSP is an **international partnership for stable and diverse mineral supply chain.** o MSP ensures that **critical minerals are produced, processed, and recycled to support the ability of countries** to realize full economic development benefit of their geological endowments. o It involves 11-members i.e. **Korea, US, Canada, Japan, Germany, UK, EU Commission, Finland, France, Australia, and Norway**. o Alliance will focus on supply chains of minerals such as **Cobalt, Nickel, Lithium** and **also 17 "rare earth" minerals.**
Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund	• As part of their cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, India and France agreed to **work towards the establishment of an Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund** o This **fund aims to support India-based innovators and start-ups** in taking their innovations to third countries, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. o It will also **explore opportunities to undertake development projects** under the framework of the International Solar Alliance and its STAR-C project. • India's **Global Innovation Partnership (GIP)** launched with the UK will **provide a template to use the TDC Fund** for trilateral projects with other countries like Japan, Germany, France and the EU. • India's **contribution to GIP will be channelized through** the TDC Fund.
US-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (USISCEP)	• Ministerial dialogue of US-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (USISCEP) held in USA. • The revamped USISCEP **was launched in accordance with U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030.** • The partnership continues to advance energy security and innovation; scaling up emerging clean energy technologies; and deploying technical solutions **through 5 pillars:** o Responsible Oil and Gas Pillar o Power and Energy Efficiency Pillar o Renewable Energy Pillar o Sustainable Growth Pillar o Emerging Fuels and technologies.
Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific	U.K.'s application to join CPTPP is underway.

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<tr>
<td>Partnership (CPTPP)</td>
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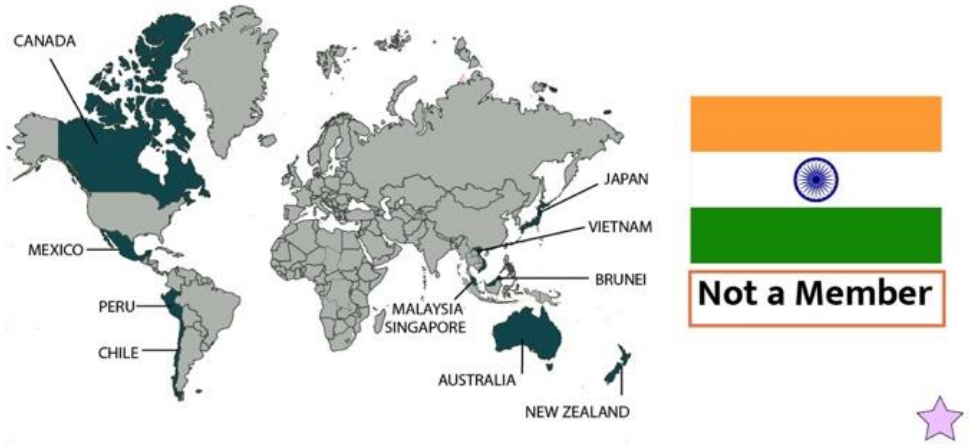
CPTPP Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership(CPTPP)
Origin: It entered into force in 2018 and was formerly known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).
◆ After U.S. withdrawal from TPP, it was renamed as CPTPP.
About: It is a free trade agreement between 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific. It also covers the protection of the environment and labour rights.
Members: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam


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<td>Investment Incentive Agreement (IIA)</td>
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• India and USA have signed an IIA superseding the 1997 IIA between the two nations.
• IIA has been signed, to keep pace with the additional investment support programmes, offered by DFC (a development finance agency of USA), such as debt, equity investment, feasibility studies for potential projects and grants etc.
  ○ IIA is legal requirement for DFC, to continue providing investment support in India.
  ○ DFC or their predecessor agencies are active in India since 1974 and have so far provided investment support worth $5.8 billion.
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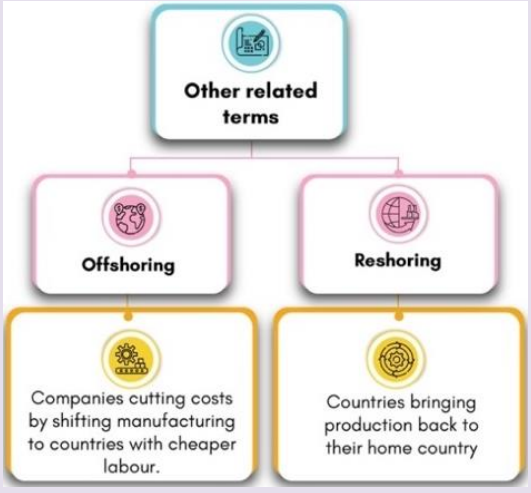
<td>Friend-shoring Plan</td>
<td>
US Keen to Deepen India Ties Under ‘Friend-shoring’ Plan
• Friend-shoring is pitched (by US) as a means to insulate global supply chains from external disruption or economic coercion.
• Idea is for a group of countries with shared values to deploy policies encouraging companies to spread manufacturing within that group.
  ○ Sectors under importance are semiconductor industry, green energy, telecommunications and mineral industries.
• Significance of Friend-shoring
  ○ Will prevent nations (like China and Russia) from unfairly leveraging their market position in key raw materials, technologies or products to disrupt global economy.
  ○ Diversifying global supply chains that will also help businesses become more resilient to external shocks.


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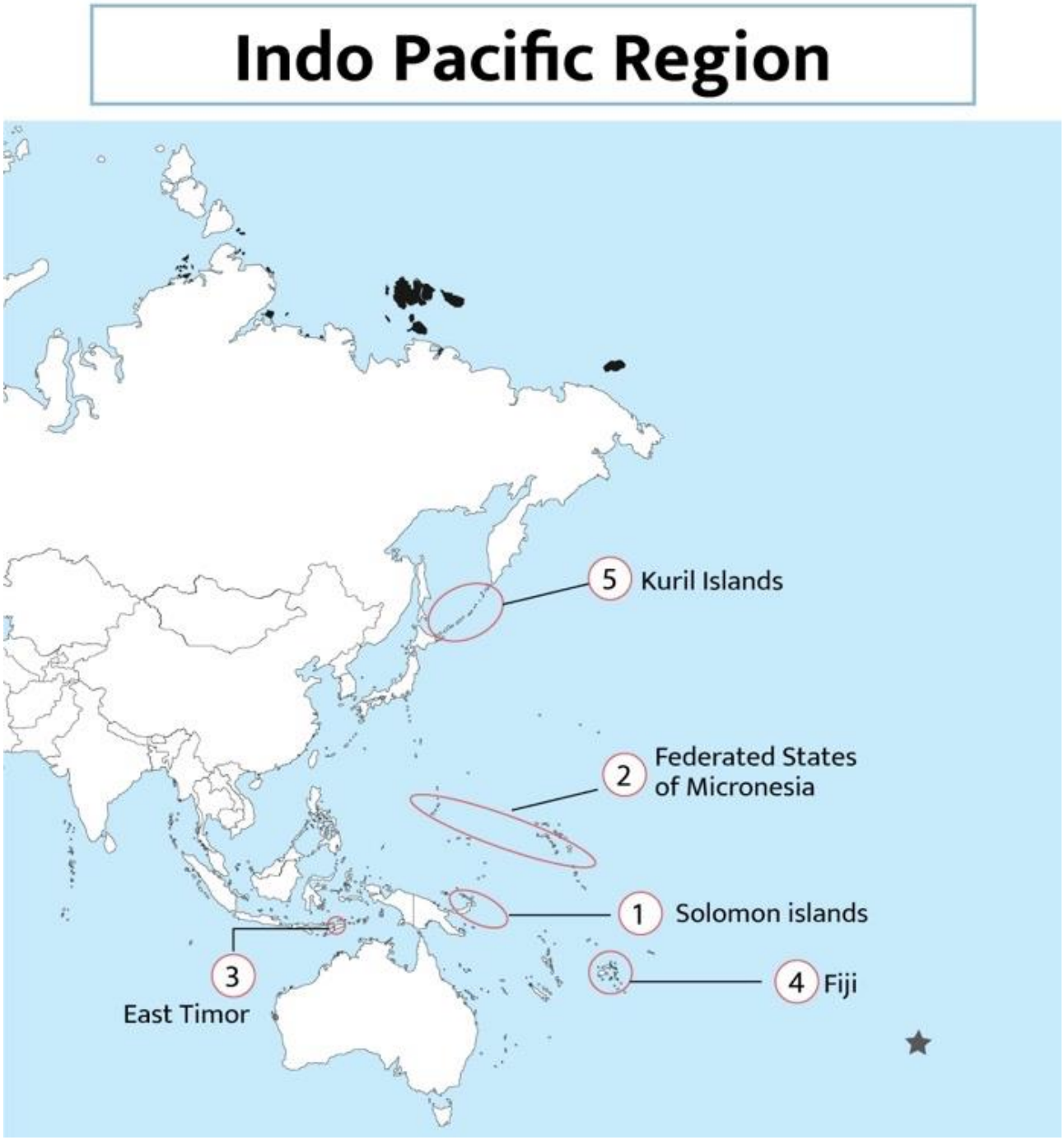
5.7. PLACES IN NEWS



S.N.	Place
1.	**Solomon Islands (Capital: Honiara)** **Context:** A recent document revealed that Solomon Islands and China reached a deal for an **unprecedented level of security cooperation.** • **Physical location**: Solomon Islands are an archipelagic state in **Melanesia**, located in **southwest Pacific Ocean.** • **Neighbours:** It is situated to the southeast of **Papua New Guinea and to the northwest of Vanuatu.**
2.	**Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)(Capital: Palikir**) **Context:** FSM is experiencing an outbreak of Covid-19, after two and a half years of successfully protecting itself from the virus. • **Political Boundaries:** o It is a sovereign island nation and an associated state of the United States. o **Divided into 4 island states:** Chuuk , Kosrae, Pohnpei (Ponape) and Yap o **Maritime neighbours:** Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Guam.

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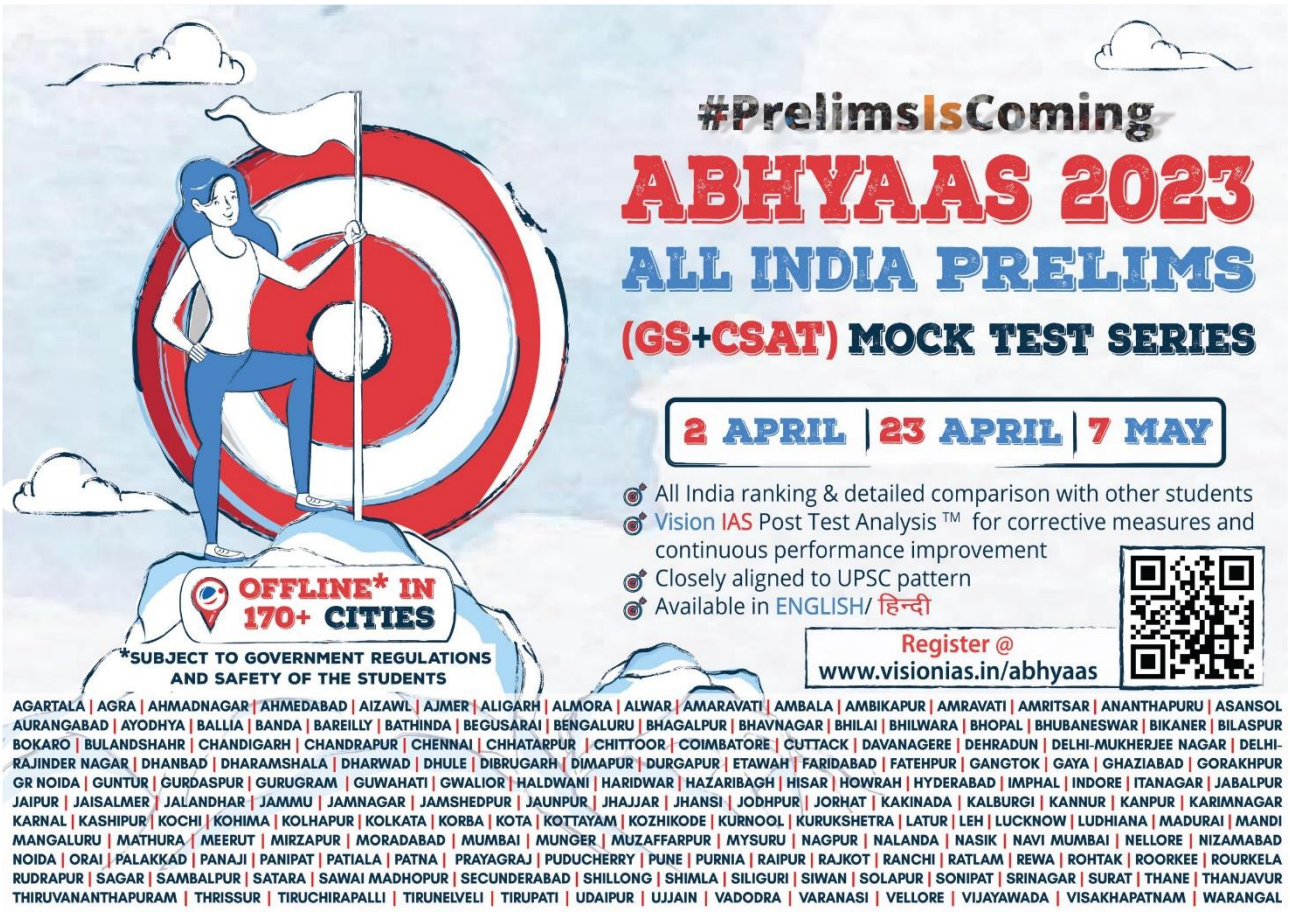
3.	**East Timor (Capital: Dili)** **Context: ASEAN has agreed in principle to admit East Timor** as the group's 11th member. • East Timor is **Officially called the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.** • **Location: Southeast Asia**, on the southernmost edge of the **Indonesian archipelago, northwest of Australia.** ○ Bordered by **Indonesia in west.**
4.	**Fiji (Capital: Suva)** **Context:** Sitiveni Rabuka became **Fiji's Prime Minister** • Situated in the south pacific, Fiji is referred to as "300 islands in the sun". • It is an island group **located in Oceania** between **Hawaii and New Zealand.** • **Three biggest islands**: Viti Levu, Vanua Levu and Taveuni.

5.	**Kuril Islands**
	Context: As per Japan, the **disputed islands are illegally occupied by Russia.**
	• **Japan have called these islands - the Northern Territories** - while Russia calls them the southern Kurils.
	  ○ Japan claims the **Iturup, Kunashir, Shikotan and Habomai islands** in Kuril Island chain.
	• **Location:** Chain of volcanic island archipelago stretches north across the Pacific Ocean from the Japan's Hokkaido to the southernmost tip of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula.
	  ○ It separates the **Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific Ocean.**



6. INDIA-EUROPE

6.1. INDIA- EUROPEAN UNION

Why in news?

India and the European Union (EU) concluded the **first round of negotiations of Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreements (BTIA).**

More about news

- Talks on BTIA, the **Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was resumed after a gap of about nine years** since the earlier negotiations were left off in 2013 due to difference in the scope and expectations from the deal.
  - FTA involves **agreements on trade, investments and Geographical Indications (GI).**
- **Significance of India-EU FTA**
  - It will help **Indian exporters gain competitive advantage in EU markets** while helping domestic manufacturers get cheaper access to imports from EU.
  - EU is considered **India's main source of technology transfer and development.** FTA will provide boost to Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
  - EU is also looking for a **large market as intra-EU trade remains stagnant** and trade with the UK shrinks.

India and EU

- India's bilateral trade with EU amounted to USD 116.36 billion in 2021-22.
- **Besides FTA,** negotiations were also launched for a stand-alone **Investment Protection Agreement (IPA) and a Geographical Indicators (GIs) Agreement.**
  - GI pact will **establish a transparent and predictable regulatory environment,** to facilitate trade of GI products.
- Both sides have agreed to institute **the EU-India Trade and Technology Council** for strengthening economic and technological ties.
- **India and the European Commission agreed to launch India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC)**
  - This **strategic coordination mechanism** will allow both partners **to tackle challenges at nexus of trade, trusted technology and security,** and thus deepen cooperation in these fields between EU (European Union) and India.
  - **1st for India and 2nd for EU** (after the US-EU TTC of 2021), TTC signifies enhanced political value of India in uncertain global strategic environment.

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European Union (EU)

Brussels, Belgium
Est. 1993

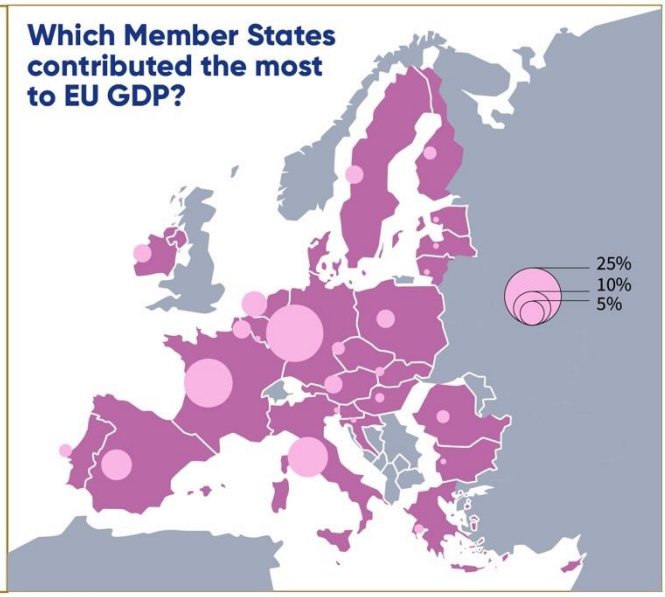
About: It is a **political and economic union of 27 sovereign European member states.** It was created by the **Maastricht Treaty (1993).**

Objective:

- To promote peace, follow the EU's values and improve the wellbeing of nations.
- Establish an internal market
- Protect and improve the quality of the environment

Members:

GERMANY	CZHEK REPUBLIC
FRANCE	PORTUGAL
ITALY	GREECE
SPAIN	HUNGARY
NETHERSLANDS	SLOVAKIA
POLAND	LUXEMBOURG
SWEDEN	BULGARIA
BELGIUM	CROATIA
AUSTRIA	LITHUANIA
IRELAND	SLOVENIA
DENMARK	LATVIA
FINLAND	ESTONIA
ROMANIA	CYPRUS
MALTA	



Other European Institutions

European Council
Brings together the heads of state or government of every EU country and decides on the political direction of the EU.

European Parliament
Only directly elected institution of the European Union. Together with the Council, the European Parliament has **legislative power (preparing and adopting the EU laws) but no power to initiate legislation**

European Commission
EU's **politically independent executive arm.** It is responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, and it **implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council.**

Other key information:

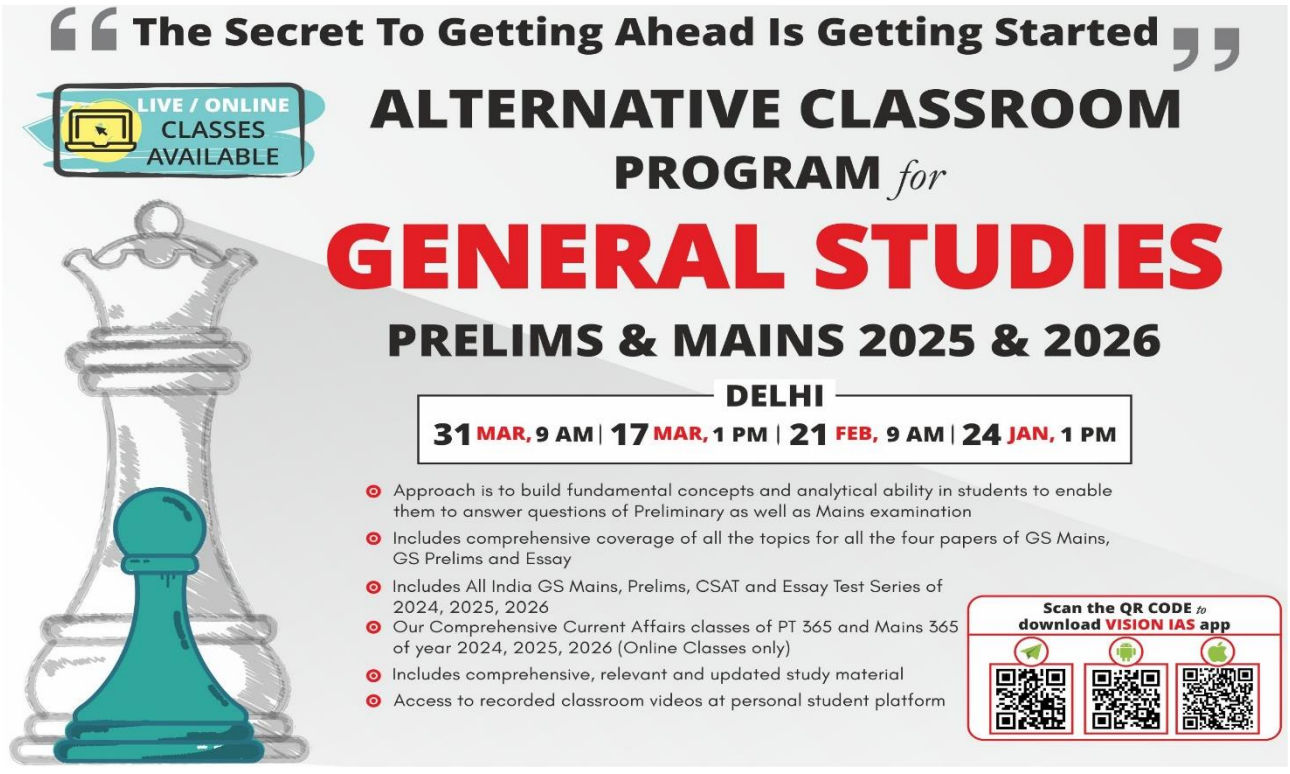
- The United Kingdom, (a founding member of the EU), left the organization in 2020.
- **Euro area (Countries adopted Euro as currency) numbers** 20 EU Member States, Croatia is latest to join in 2023.
- EU has its own flag, anthem, and motto: "United in Diversity".

6.2. INDIA-UK

Why in news?

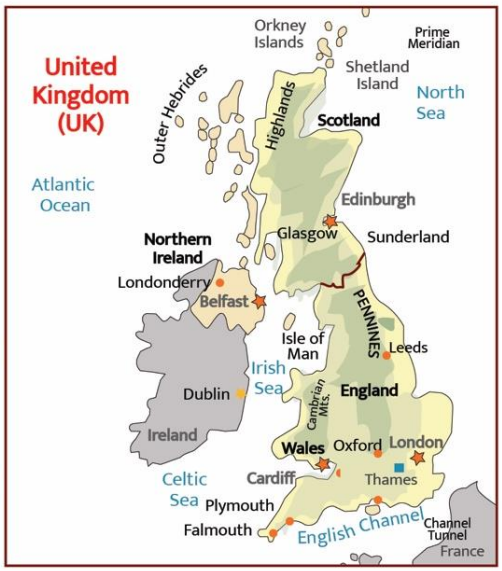
Various initiatives have been signed between India and UK in the recent times.

Area of Cooperation	Major Agreement/Development
Trade and prosperity	• Target to **conclude the majority of talks on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** by the end of October 2022. • **Finalisation of India-UK Global Innovation Partnership (GIP)** implementation arrangements to scale up climate-smart inclusive innovations from India to third countries in Asia, Africa and the Indo-Pacific.
Defence and Security	• UK announced an **open general export license** to facilitate technology engagement with India. • Establishment of a **Joint Working Group on India-UK Electric Propulsion Capability Partnership.** • **Joint Cyber Statement to deepen cooperation across cyber governance,** deterrence and strengthening cyber resilience. • Agreed to constitute a **sub-group on countering extremism** in order to further enhance cooperation.
UK India Young professional scheme	• It was announced recently by United Kindom Prime Minister. • Under the scheme, UK will offer 3,000 places to **18–30-year-old degree-holding Indian nationals to live and work** in the UK for up to two years. • It was signed as **part of the UK-India Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP).** • The scheme will commence in early 2023 and be on a **reciprocal basis.**
UK-NITI Aayog collaborative initiatives on electric mobility	• In the backdrop of COP 26 President visit to India, NITI Aayog launched two initiatives namely, ○ **E-AMRIT (Accelerated e-Mobility Revolution for India's Transportation) mobile application** to raise awareness on electric mobility. ○ **Report on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Reuse** supported by UK's Green Growth Fund Technical Cooperation Facility. • Report aims to **promote battery recycling of current and evolving battery technologies**. • ACC are **new generation technologies that can store electric energy either as electrochemical or as chemical energy** and convert it back to electric energy as and when required.
Others	• **MoU on Cooperation on Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership** between Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India and Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, UK. • **Strategic Tech Dialogue**- Ministerial-level dialogue on new and emerging communication technologies such as 5G, AI etc.



India UK relations- Key Facts

- Bilateral trade amounts to **$ 41billion.**
- The UK is the **sixth largest investor in India,** with a cumulative investment of approximately **$ 33 billion**
- India is the **second-largest source of foreign**
- India and UK signed a **Civil Nuclear Cooperation Declaration** in 2010.



- UK has been **supportive of India's permanent membership of UNSC** and **NSG.**
- India and the UK signed the **Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP)** in 2015.
- The population of Indian origin is estimated to be around **1.8 - 2 million** (single largest segment of ethnic population).
- **India is the second largest source of students** studying in UK.
- The **UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI)** was launched in 2005.
- **India-UK Green Growth Equity Fund** is mobilising institutional investments in the renewable energy, waste management, electric mobility and environment sub-sectors in India
- India and UK are members of multilateral forums such as **UN, WTO, Commonwealth and G20.**

6.3. INDIA- FRANCE

Why in news?

Indo-French dialogue on bilateral defence cooperation concludes in Paris.

India France Relations–Key facts

- India has **trade surplus** with France and bilateral trade stood at nearly **$ 8 billion.**
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** is joint initiative of both countries, launched during COP21 to promote solar energy.
- **Defence Cooperation:**
  - India purchased Rafale aircraft and signed a contract for 6 Scorpene submarines (P-75 Project) from France.
  - Both sides carry out **three biennial training exercises** namely, **GARUDA (Airforce), VARUNA (Navy) and SHAKTI (Army).**
  - Two countries has signed the Agreement regarding the Provision of **Reciprocal Logistics Support.**

- **India and France signed an agreement for cooperation for India's first human space mission Gaganyaan.**
- India is a member of **International Thermouclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), a multi-national consortium formed to construct a experimental fusion reactor** located in **Cadarache, France**.
- Both signed a **civil nuclear agreement** in 2008.
- India joined the French-led initiative called the **High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People which aims at protecting at least 30% of the world's Lands and** oceans by 2030.
- Both countries are members of multilateral organisations like **G 20, UN, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), etc.**

6.4. INDIA- GERMANY

Why in News?

India, Germany Sign $10.5 Billion Green Deal (**Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (SDGs)**) to Boost Clean Energy Use.

More on news

- **Various deliverables under the partnership include:**
  - **Develop an Indo-German Green Hydrogen Roadmap.**
  - Establish an **Indo-German Renewable Energy Partnership** with focus on **innovative solar energy and other renewables.**

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- Establish a lighthouse cooperation on **"Agroecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources".**
- **Deepen cooperation in restoring forest landscapes under the Bonn Challenge.**
- Furthering **Collaboration on Green Energy Corridors,** e.g. Leh-Haryana transmission line and project of carbon neutral Ladakh.

- **Other initiatives:**
  - **Indo-German Partnership on Green Urban Mobility** to support the integration of sustainable modes of transport, such as metros, light metros etc.
  - **NITI Aayog-BMZ Dialogue** aimed at **strengthening SDG localization** at the city level.
  - **Indo-German Energy Programme (IGEN) to support the implementation of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001**
  - In June 2022, India and the G7 had agreed to work towards **a Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)**

6.5. INDIA-DENMARK

Why in news?

India, Denmark to further strengthen **Green Strategic Partnership (GSP)** in the recent meeting.

About GSP

- **GSP,** established in 2020, is a **5-year action plan for green growth and focuses** on green hydrogen, renewable energy, circular economy, water management etc.
  - It specifically focuses **on an ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement and the UN SDGs.**
- **Other outcomes of the India-Denmark meeting**
  - Launched **"India Green Finance Initiative"** to finance green projects in India for accelerating green growth and job creation in India
  - India agreed to join the **International Centre for Anti-Microbial Resistance (ICARS)** as **mission partner.**
    - ✓ **ICARS** is a **One Health research partnership platform** to support the development and implementation of context-specific and cost-effective solutions to tackle Anti-Microbial Resistance in Low and Low Middle Income Countries.
  - Denmark confirmed its accession to the **Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP).**
    - ✓ **GDHP** is a collaboration of governments and territories, government agencies and the WHO, formed to support the effective implementation of digital health services.
    - ✓ **India is a part of GDHP.**

6.6. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

Global Gateway	It is European Union (EU's) €300 billion infrastructure fund plan to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
	• Plan promises **to promote high social, environmental, fiscal and labour standards.**
	• **Other initiatives for Infrastructure development**
	  ○ **Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative:** launched during the G-7 meet, is a values-driven and transparent infrastructure partnership to help narrow USD 40+ trillion infrastructure needs in the developing world.
	  ○ **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor:** an Indian-Japanese collaborative vision regarding development, connectivity and cooperation between Asia and Africa.

6.7. PLACES IN NEWS

S.N.	Place

1.	**Nordic Countries**
	Context: India and Nordic countries are **going to host the 2nd India-Nordic Summit** at Copenhagen, after the 1st summit of 2018 in Stockholm.
	• Nordic countries represents the **five countries of Nordic region**, i.e. **Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland** and **Iceland.** It also includes:
	  ○ **Faroe Islands** and **Greenland** as part of the Kingdom of **Denmark**, and
	  ○ **Aland** which is part of **Finland**.
	• All of them have **Scandinavian roots** and share a similar **state, law** and **culture**.

2.	**Poland (Capital: Warsaw)** **Context:** India and Poland have **signed a mutual legal assistance treaty** on criminal matters. **Political boundaries:** • Located on the Baltic Sea, Poland shares maritime borders along Denmark and Sweden and • Territorial boundaries with: Belarus, Czechia, Germany, the Kaliningrad Oblast, an exclave of Russia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Ukraine.
3.	**Bosnia and Herzegovina (Capital: Sarajevo)** **Context:** The European Union has agreed to grant membership candidate status to **Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

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	• **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is a **Balkan country** situated in **Southeastern Europe**.
	  ○ Earlier, it was a state of the **Federation of Yugoslavia**.
	• It is bordered by **Croatia, Serbia** and **Montenegro**.
	  ○ The **Adriatic Sea** gives it **maritime** access.

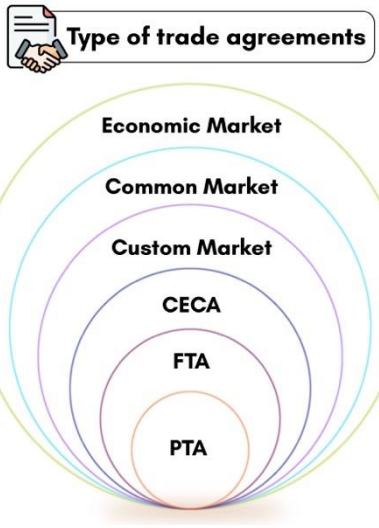
4.	**Croatia (Capital: Zagreb)** **Context: Croatia switched to Euro** (bidding farewell to its **Kuna** Currency) **and joined** Europe's passport-free **Schengen Zone**. • Situated in **southeast Europe**, Croatia lies on the north western edge of **Balkan Peninsula**. ○ **River Danube** (2nd biggest river of **Europe**, after **Volga**), forms its far north-eastern border with Serbia.
5.	**Lithuania (Capital: Vilnius)** **Context:** The Cabinet has approved the opening of a **new Indian Mission** in Lithuania in 2022. • Lithuania is the **largest** and most populous **Baltic Country situated in North Eastern Europe.** • It shares a maritime border with Sweden.
6.	**Belarus (Capital: Minsk)** **Context:** The 11th Session of India-Belarus Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation was held. • Belarus is an **Eastern Europe** country, erstwhile part of **USSR.** • **It is the largest landlocked** country in Europe.

7.	**Ireland (Capital: Dublin)**
	Context: Indian-origin Leo Varadkar has returned as Ireland's Taoiseach (PM) in rotation agreement.
	• **Political boundaries**
	  ○ Island nation on **western Europe**, lying west of **Great Britain.**
	  ○ **Second-largest Island** of Europe, after **Great Britain.**

8.	**Kosovo (Capital:** Pristina) **Context:** Kosovo closed its main border crossing with Serbia amid ethnic tensions. • Kosovo is a **landlocked country** in Balkans region of Europe. • Kosovo **unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in 2008**, after years of strained relations between its Serb and mainly Albanian inhabitants.
9.	**Scotland** (Capital: Edinburgh) **Context:** Scotland has **announced a fresh independence referendum vote on October 2023**. • Aslo, Scotland votes to lower age to legally change gender. • In **2014 referendum**, Scottish voters **rejected independence**, with 55% saying they wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom (UK). • **UK is made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**. **Located in Northern Europe**, Scotland makes up around **one-third of Great Britain island**.
10.	**Gibraltar** **Context:** British Overseas Territory of **Gibraltar has officially been declared a city** after a 180-year delay. • **Gibraltar was ceded to Britain** (in 1713) under a peace treaty signed **following War of Spanish Succession.**
11.	**Nord Stream pipeline** **Context:** Recently, 4th leak was discovered in the two damaged offshore pipelines that comprise the crucial Nord Stream pipelines (Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2), designed to carry gas from Russia to Europe via the Baltic sea. • Nord Stream **1 is a 1,224 km underwater gas pipeline running from Vyborg in northwest Russia to Lubmin in northeastern Germany** via the Baltic Sea. Nord stream 2 run **from Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany through the Baltic Sea.**

7. INDIA-AFRICA

7.1. INDIA-MAURITIUS



Why in news?

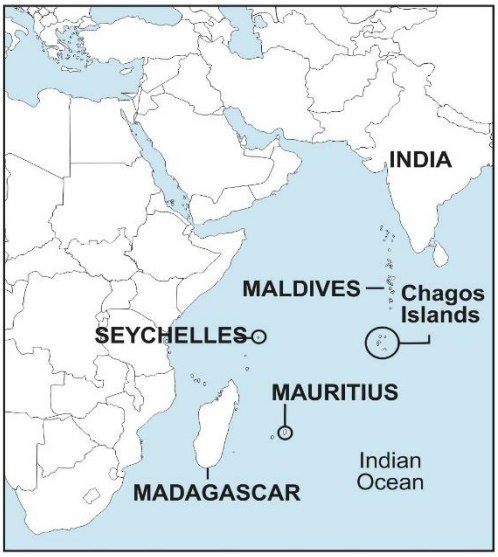
Recently, India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) entered into force.

About CECPA

- CECPA is the **first trade Agreement signed by India with a country in Africa.**
- It covers **Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services,** Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, **Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons,** Telecom, Financial services etc.

India Mauritius Relations–Key Facts

- India is **Mauritius' largest trading partner.**
- Bilateral merchandise trade is around **USD 780 million.**
- Mauritius was **third top source of FDI in India (2020-21) after Singapore and USA.**
- Mauritius occupies a **special place in India's vision of SAGAR (Security and** Growth for All in the Region).
- India and Mauritius have signed a wide range of bilateral agreements such as **Double Taxation Avoidance, Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, MOU on Cooperation in Biotechnology (2002), Extradition Treaty (2003) etc.**



- **Indian origin people comprise nearly 70% of Mauritius's population.**
- November 2 is observed as the **'Aapravasi Day'** in Mauritius. On this day, in 1834, **ship 'Atlas' docked in Mauritius carrying the first batch of Indian indentured** labourers.
- The**National Day of Mauritius is celebrated on March 12 (the date of launch of** Dandi Salt March) as a **tribute to Mahatma Gandhi** and the Indian freedom struggle.
- India and Mauritius are a part of various International Organisations like **WTO, Commonwealth of Nations, and UN.**
- **Defence cooperation** including transfer of a Dornier aircraft and Advanced Light Helicopter, Mk III and Dhruv by India

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7.2. IBSA TRILATERAL MINISTERIAL COMMISSION

Why in news?

10th India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) Trilateral Ministerial Commission (ITMC) held in September 2022.

India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA)

About:
- It is a trilateral grouping of countries from different regions of the world

Establishment: In 2013 (Brasilia Declaration)

Objective:
common positions on issues of international importance
- To **promote trade and investment opportunities** between the three regions of which they are part.
- To **promote international poverty alleviation and social development.**

Members:

India

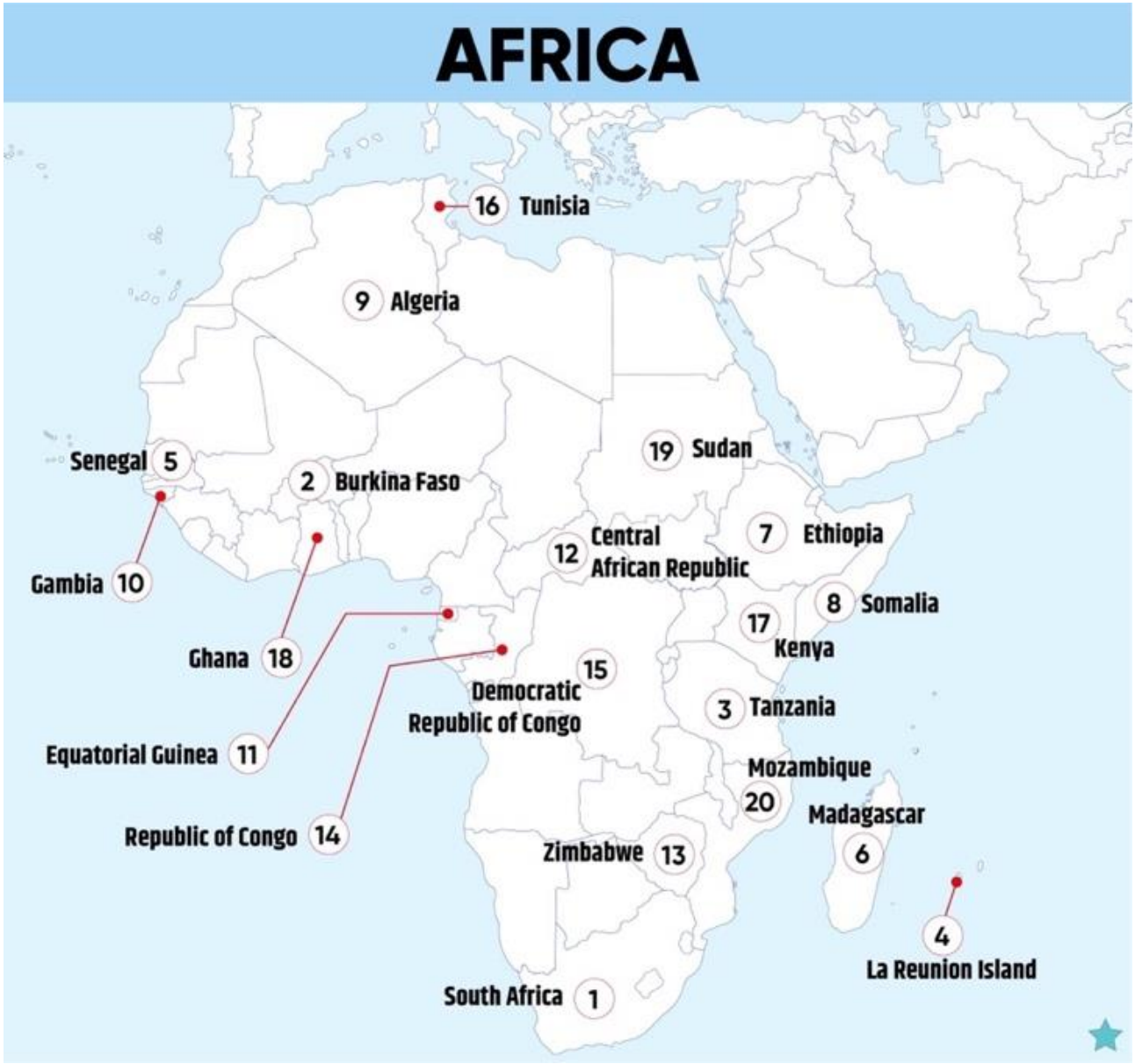
Brazil

South Africa

Key Initiatives under IBSA:
- **IBSA Fund** for poverty and hunger alleviation developing countries on a demand driven basis
- **14 Joint Working Groups f**or cooperation in areas, Transport; Health; Education; Defence; Science & Technology; etc.
- **IBSA Business Forum** was launched in 2005 and CII coordinates India's participation.

Other key Information:
- India will be hosting the **6th IBSA** Summit on the side-lines of the G20 Summit

7.3. PLACES IN NEWS



S.N.	Place
1.	**South Africa (Capital: Pretoria**(administrative), Cape Town (legislative) and Bloemfontein (judicial)) **Context:** South Africa has witnessed worst civil unrest since 1994. • The **Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho** is landlocked by South African territory in the south-east.
2.	**Burkina Faso (Capital: Ouagadougou)** **Contexts:** • Recently, Burkina Faso witnessed a **coup by military**. • A military court in Burkina Faso handed down a **life term to former president.** • **Burkina Faso is a** landlocked country located in Western Africa.

3.	**Tanzania (Capital: Dar es Salaam (administrative captial), Dodoma (legislative capital))**
	Context: Samia Suluhu Hassan became the **first female President** of Tanzania.
	• Tanzania, country in East Africa, **includes the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mafia.**
	  ○ **Mount Kilimanjaro** is located in Tanzania is the highest point in Africa.
	  ○ Lake Victoria (the world's second-largest freshwater lake) is located in north Tanzania.

4.	**La Reunion Island (Capital Saint-Denis)** **Context:** Recently, the **navies of India and France carried out the 2nd joint patrol** in South-Western Indian Ocean from the French Island of La Reunion. • **It is a** part of the **Mascarene group of Islands** and one among the **12 French overseas territories** located in **Western Indian Ocean**- southwest of **Mauritius** and east of **Madagascar**. • It is **elliptical in shape** and of **volcanic origin**.

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5.	**Senegal (Capital: Dakar)** **Context:** India signed three MoUs with Senegal for cultural exchange, cooperation in youth matters and visa-free regime for officials. • Senegal is an **African country** located on the bulge of **West Africa**.
6.	**Madagascar (Capital: Antananarivo)** **Context:** Recently, **India and Madagascar signed a MoU** on tele-education and tele-medicine. • Madagascar is an **island country**, which is **located in the southwestern Indian Ocean**, separated from the African coast by **Mozambique Channel**. o It is the **fourth-largest island** in the world. • It **shares maritime borders** with Comoros, France (Mayotte and Réunion), Mauritius, Mozambique and Seychelles.
7.	**Ethiopia (Capital: Addis Ababa)** **Context:** A peace deal between Ethiopian Government and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has been signed. • **Ethiopia It is a landlocked country on the Horn of Africa split by the Great Rift Valley.** • Ethiopia was at a risk of a civil war with continued fighting between the Ethiopian government and rebel Tigray forces.
8.	**Somalia (Capital: Mogadishu)** **Context:** Siege of an upscale hotel in Somalia by al-Shabab ended after a 30-hour ordeal. • Somalia is the **easternmost country of Africa**, lying on the **Horn of Africa Peninsula** in **Northeastern Africa**. • **Gulf of Aden** and the **Indian Ocean** provides maritime connectivity to it. • **Equator** passes through Somalia.
9.	**Algeria (Capital: Algiers)** **Context:** India is in talks with Angola and Algeria to procure **liquefied natural gas** (**LNG**) on long-term contracts. • **It is situated in North Africa.** • The **Sahara Desert and its extreme climate** dominate the country**.**
10.	**Gambia (Capital: Banjul)** **Context:** After WHO, India has launched an investigation on death of children in Gambia due to Indian Cough Syrup. • **Gambia is** the smallest non- island country of **mainland Africa.** • Capital, Banjul is situated where Gambia River flows into Atlantic Ocean. • Surrounded by Senegal on three sides and Atlantic Ocean as its maritime access.
11.	**Equatorial Guinea (Capital: Malabo)** **Context:** Equatorial Guinea President, **world's longest serving president** (in power since **1979**), won the 6th term. • Equatorial Guinea is an oil rich **small tropical country** on the **west coast of Africa with five islands** including **Bioko**, where its capital is located. o The mainland is known as Rio Muni. o It shares **maritime borders** with **Nigeria** and **Sao Tome and Principe.**
12.	**Central African Republic (Capital: Bangui)** **Context:** Central African Republic **seeks Indian investments** to mine gold, uranium. • It is a **Landlocked country** located **in centre of Africa.**
13.	**Zimbabwe (Capital: Harare)** **Contexts:** • Inflation soars more than 130% in Zimbabwe. • Zimbabwe **debuts gold coin as legal tender** to stem inflation and boost currency. • **It is a landlocked country** of southern Africa lying **north of Tropic of Capricorn**. • **Lake Kariba** is world's **largest reservoir by volume.**
14.	**Republic of Congo (Capital: Brazzaville)** **Context:** Republic of Congo has got its first ever Marine Protected Areas (a section of the ocean human activity is limited). • Republic of Congo was **formerly part of the French colony of Equatorial Africa.** • It is the **only place to find the Bonobo**(species of chimpanzee is considered to be the closest relative to human beings).
15.	**Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC) (Capital: Kinshasa)** **Context:** DRC is going to auction forest land to oil companies. • DRC is located in Central Africa and is the **second largest country on continent.** • It is **home to one of the largest old-growth rainforests** on Earth. • It houses **Virunga National Park,** the world's most important gorilla sanctuary.
16.	**Tunisia (Capital: Tunis)** **Context:** Political protests have erupted in Tunisia's capital against the President **over a planned referendum** on constitutional changes and firing of dozens of judges.

	• **Tunisia** is a **North African country** sharing its land borders with **Libya** and **Algeria**.
	  ○ Along with **Morocco** and **Mauritania, these five countries** are known as **Maghreb countries**.
	  ○ In **2011**, the **Arab Spring** started in Tunisia as the **Jasmine Revolution**.

17.	**Kenya (Capital: Nairobi)**
	Context: ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) is in talks with investment in onshore oil projects in Kenya.
	• Also, William Ruto was declared winner of Kenya presidential election amid dispute.
	  ○ **Lake Turkana:** World's largest **permanent desert lake** and **world's largest alkaline lake** is located in Kenya.
	  ○ **Lake Victoria:** Largest Lake of Afric is shared with Uganda and Tanzania .

18.	**Ghana (Capital: Accra)** **Context:** Ghana initiated **talks with the International Monetary Fund** to **support a government economic program.** • Ghana is a country of western Africa, situated on the coast of the **Gulf of Guinea.** • **Gold Coast** is a former British colony in West Africa known as the Republic of Ghana.
19.	**Sudan (Capital: Khartoum)** **Context:** As per UN, the tribal clashes in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region killed around 100 people. • Sudan is a **Northeast African Country** sharing borders with **7 countries** (**Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia** and **Eritrea**). ○ **South Sudan** was separated from it in **2011**.
20.	**Mozambique (Capital: Maputo)** **Context:** Amid growing acts of terrorism, India and Mozambique agreed to step up counter-terrorism efforts and initiate de-radicalisation measures. • Mozambique is situated in **Southern Africa**, sharing its borders with **six African countries**: **Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Eswatini**. • **Zambezi River, largest African river** and The **Limpopo River**, which cuts the **Tropic of Capricorn twice**, flows through the country.

8. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

8.1. THE UNITED NATIONS

Why in news?

India has proposed reforms in United Nations via **NORMS (New Orientation for Reformed Multilateralism)** to determine a global order that best **reflects contemporary realities**.

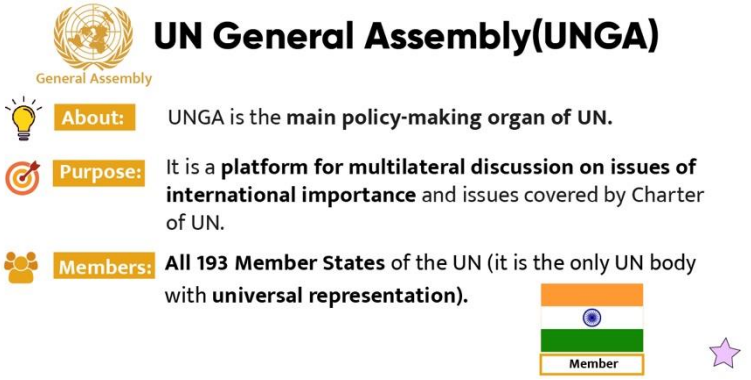
More about NORMS

- NORMS envisages reform in **all three pillars of the current multilateral architecture** (peace and security, development, and human rights), with the **UN at its centre.**
- It calls for a **representative multilateral structure** which is needed to **address emerging challenges** such as terrorism, radicalism, pandemics, threats from new and emerging technologies and so on.
- India **proposed the idea while presiding on the UN Security Council open debate** on 'Maintenance of International Peace and Security'.

8.1.1. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA)

Why in news?

Recently, UNGA adopted some important resolutions.



Key Resolutions

Access to clean and healthy environment as Universal Human Right.	• It is **not legally binding.** • It was **not included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.** • **India has voted in its favour.** • Earlier in 2021, the **UN Human Rights Council in Geneva** passed a resolution recognising access to a healthy and sustainable environment as a universal right. • 50 years ago, the United Nations Conference on Environment **in Stockholm concluded in 1972 with a resolution placing environmental issues at global forefront.**
Resolution on multilingualism that mentions Hindi language for first time.	• **It was sponsored by India.** • Resolution **encourages UN to** continue **disseminating important communications in official as well as non-official languages,** including Hindi. • **Six official languages of UN are** Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish

Resolution for developing an international tax co-operation framework	• The resolution was **submitted by Nigeria on behalf of a consortium of 54 African countries.**
	  ○ The aim is to **end global tax abuse** by multinational enterprises and the super-rich.
	• The decision is likely to **mark the beginning of the end of the OECD's** (Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development's) 60-year reign as the **world's leading rule maker on global tax.**
	• In 2021, 136 countries reached an agreement on **'Two-Pillar Solution'** spearheaded by OECD.
	  ○ **Pillar One**: Covered **taxation in digital economy** giving **taxing rights & allocation of profits of global giants to countries** where customer base is important.
	  ✓ In all, **taxing rights over $125 bn were to be reallocated annually** for 100 of world's most profitable MNEs to consumer-centric countries.
	  ○ **Pillar two**: Sought for a **global effective minimum tax rate of 15%,** with a mechanism for tax back by another country if the if the minimum rate was not adhered to.

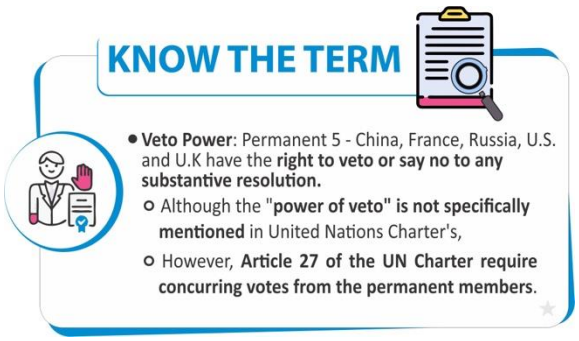
8.1.2. UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL(UNSC)

Why in news?

Five countries elected to serve on UN Security Council (UNSC).

More on news

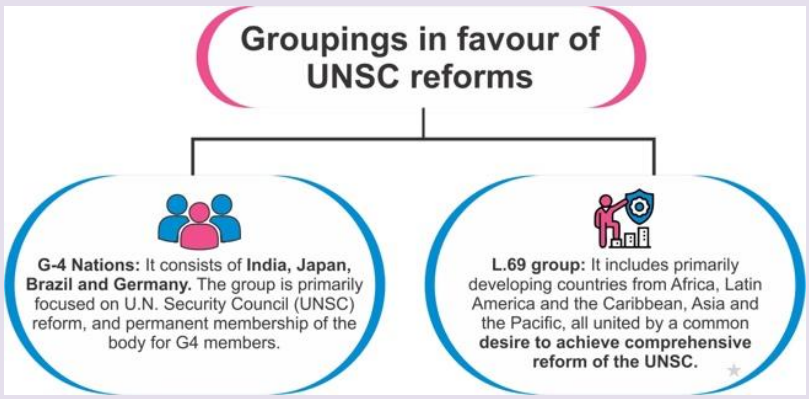
- **Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland** were elected to UNSC as non-permanent members for 2023-2024 term.
  - They will **replace India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway** (term ending at the end of 2022).
    - ✓ **India was a non-permanent member of UNSC for eight terms, latest in January 2021.**
- **Other non-permanent members are:** Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and UAE.



Other Recent development at UNSC

Recently, the G4 countries have highlighted the need for urgent reforms in United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

- The process of UNSC Reforms is being presently discussed under the **Inter-Governmental Negotiation (IGN) framework of the UN General Assembly.**
  - **Except China all permanent members** of the UNSC have bilaterally expressed support for India's candidature to a permanent seat in an expanded UNSC.
- India is also working alongside other reform-oriented countries through its membership in **G-4** and the **L.69 Group.**



8.1.3. UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

Why in news?

India gets elected to four UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) bodies.

More on news

- **India was elected to the UN ECOSOC for the term 2022-24,** last year, in the Asia-Pacific States category along with Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Oman.

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- **Four bodies** of ECOSOC are:

Body	Function
Commission for Social Development	To advise ECOSOC on **social policies of a general character** and, in particular, on **all matters in the social field not covered** by the specialised inter-governmental agencies.
Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations	Consideration of **applications for consultative status** and requests for reclassification submitted by NGOs and consideration **of quadrennial reports** submitted by NGOs.
Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)	Holds an **annual intergovernmental forum** for discussion on **timely and pertinent issues** affecting science, technology and development.
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)	Monitors implementation of the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** by its state parties.

8.1.4. UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC)

Why in news?

UNGA **adopted a resolution suspending Russia from the** UNHRC over its war in Ukraine.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

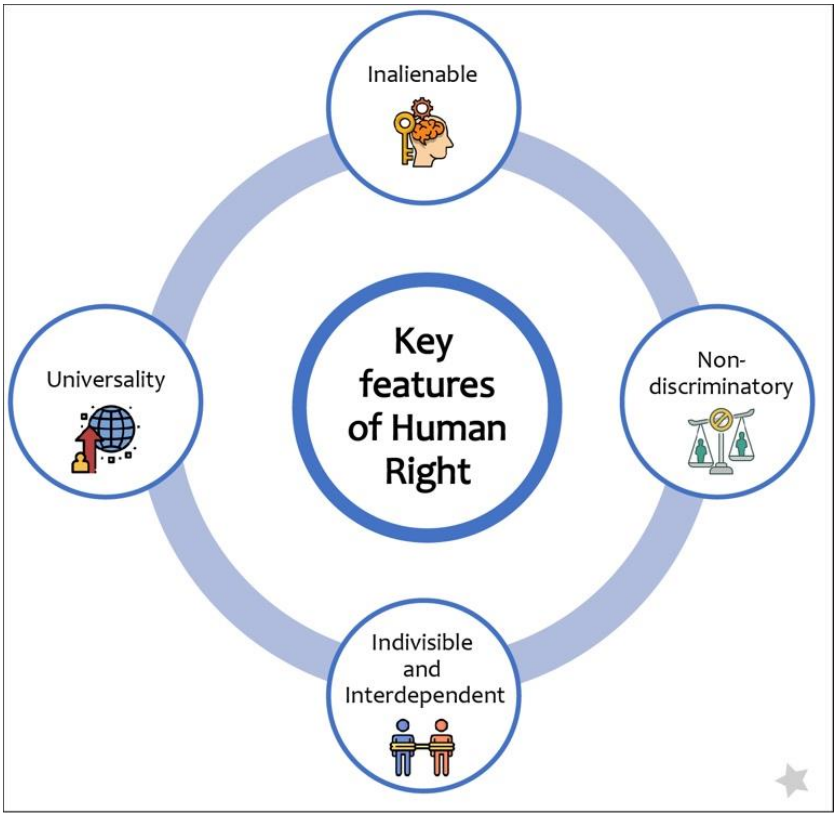
- A global organization **dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees**, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
- **Created in 1950**, during the aftermath of the Second World War.

More on news

- UNGA, by a **two-thirds majority of the members present and voting,** may **suspend the rights of membership in the Council of a member** of the Council.
  - **Abstentions do not count** and the resolution requires two-thirds of yes/no votes to be adopted.
- Before Russia, **Libya** was the last member to be suspended in **2011.**

What are human rights?

- These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status.
- They **range from the most fundamental – the right to life – to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty.**
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected.
- UDHR, together with the 2 covenants make up the International Bill of Rights. They are
  - International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, and
  - International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.



UN Human Rights Council

Geneva, Switzerland
Est. 2006

About UN Human Rights Council

- It is an **inter-governmental body** within the United Nations system, **made up of 47 States.**
- It **reports directly to the General Assembly.**
- It receives substantive and technical support from the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), an office within the U.N. Secretariat.
- Its decisions, resolutions, and recommendations are **not legally binding.**
- It **replaced the former Commission on Human Rights,** which operated from 1946 to 2006.
  - Commission on Human Rights was created in 1946 as a subsidiary body of the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Mandate

- To prevent and combat human rights violations and to make recommendations thereon
- To promote and coordinate the mainstreaming of human rights within the UN system.
- Manages the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR),** a process through which each UN Member State's overall human rights record is reviewed

Status of India

In October 2021, India was **re-elected to the UNHRC for a sixth** term (2022-2024)

Members

Region	Number of seats
African States	13
Asian-Pacific States	13
Latin-American & Caribbean States	8
Western European & Other States	7
Eastern European States	6

Eligibility

- All **U.N. members are eligible** to run for a seat on the Council
- Countries are nominated by their regional groups and elected by the General Assembly through secret ballot with an absolute majority required.
- The General Assembly takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Term

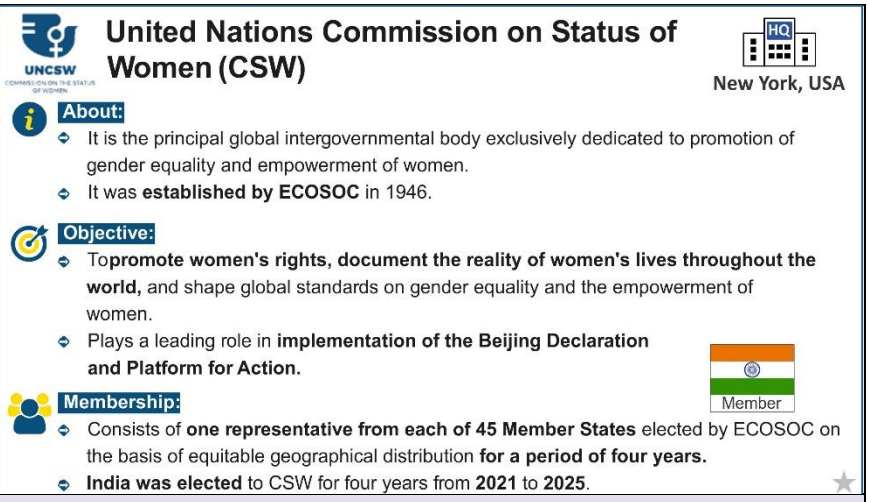
- **Three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election** after serving two consecutive terms.
  - If a Council member commits "gross and systematic violations of human rights," the General Assembly may suspend membership with a two-thirds vote of members present.

8.1.5. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS RELATED TO UN

India-UN Development Partnership Fund	Recently India-UN Development Partnership Fund **celebrated 5 Years of South-South Collaboration**	**India-UN Development Partnership Fund** **About:** • It is a **dedicated facility established in 2017** in partnership **with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).** • It is **managed by the UNOSSC** and **implemented in collaboration with the United Nations system.** → The UNOSSC **hosted by UNDP since 1974, was established by the UN General Assembly.** **Objective:** The Fund aims to support **sustainable development projects** in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), and African countries. **Other key information:** The Government of India has **committed $150 million over 10 years to the India-UN Fund.**

United Nations Commission on Status of Women (CSW)	• UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) **adopted a resolution to remove Iran from CSW.**

Nansen Refugee Award	• **Angela Merkel,** former Chancellor of Germany, has won 2022 **UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award for protecting refugees** at Syria crisis.
	• Award, established in 1954, honor **individuals, groups or organizations** who go above and beyond call of duty to protect refugees, internally displaced or stateless people.
	  ○ It is named after Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplomat and humanitarian **Fridtjof Nansen.**
	  ○ He was **first High Commissioner for Refugees** for **League of Nations** and won **Nobel Peace Prize** in **1922.**
	  ○ **First Laureate: Eleanor Roosevelt,** first chair of the **UN** in 1954.



8.2. GROUP OF 20 (G20)

Why in news?

The 17th G20 summit concluded recently with the adoption of Bali declaration.

More on News

- The motto for this G-20 summit was **Recover Together, Recover Stronger**.
- Also, India took over the presidency of G20 from Indonesia.

Key Highlights of the Bali Declaration-2022

- The Group **highlighted its differences in the on-going war in Ukraine** and asked for Russia's complete withdrawal from the territories of Ukraine.
- Group also reassured its Commitment to secure **Global Food security.**
  - **The Group welcomed the Black Sea Grain initiative brokered by Turkey and UN.**
    - ✓ **It is an** MoU **signed between Russia and UN Secretariat** to allow export from Russia and Ukraine on food products and fertilizers, to ease the tension in the region.
- The Group has welcomed the provision of additional financial resources, to assist in financing critical gaps in **implementing International Health Regulations (2005)**
  - It also applauded the establishment of a new **Financial Intermediary Fund for Pandemic PPR (the 'Pandemic Fund') hosted by the World Bank.**

India's G -20 Presidency

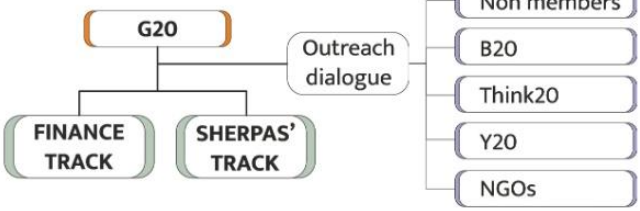
- **The theme of India's Presidency - "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth · One Family · One Future"**
- The theme affirms the value of all life on the planet Earth and spotlights **LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment),** both at the level of individual lifestyles as well as national development.
- **Logo:** it draws inspiration from **India's national flag**. It juxtaposes **planet earth** (reflecting India's pro-planet approach to life) with the **Lotus** (reflecting growth amid challenges).
- India has created a new working group on disaster risk reduction to encourage collective work by the G20.

G20

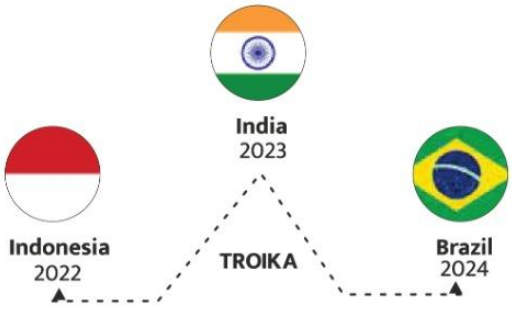
- A premier forum **for international economic cooperation.**
- Founded in 1999 **after Asian financial crisis** as a forum for Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors **to discuss global economic and financial issues.**
- **Annual Summit held** under leadership of a rotating Presidency.
- **No permanent secretariat.**
- Past, present, and incoming presidents—**Troika—support Presidency.**

Importance of G20

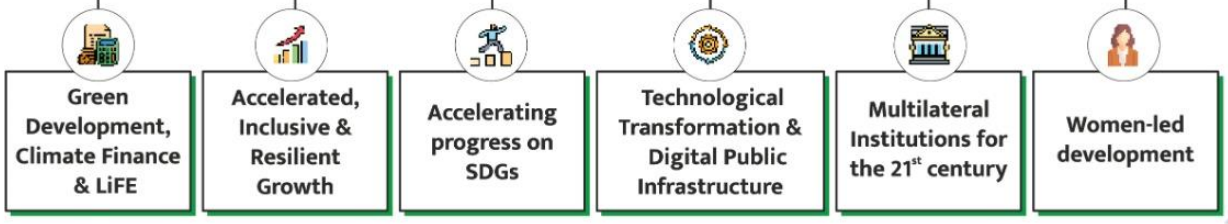
Structure of the G20 preparatory process



G20 Presidencies



India's G20 Priorities:



Other Related News	
Sherpa Track	• India **underlined significance of Global South at first G20 Sherpa track** meeting under its Presidency. • Sherpas' Track **involves technical and policy analyses by working groups** comprising officials from each member country and international organisations.

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	○ It **focuses on development-oriented issues** such as agriculture, fighting corruption etc. • Sherpa is a **personal representative of the leader of a member country** at an international Summit meeting such as G8, G20 etc. ○ It is **derived from Nepalese Sherpa people**, who serve as guides for mountaineers.
G20 Finance Track	• First G 20 Finance track meeting was held in Bengaluru. • Finance track is led by **Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of G20 countries.** ○ It provides an **effective forum for global economic discourse and policy coordination.** ○ It focus on managing **global debt vulnerabilities,** advancing **financial inclusion, financing for climate action** and SDGs etc. ○ Other track under G20 is **sherpa track which oversees negotiations, discussion agenda** and coordinates substantive work.
Urban-20 (U20)	• **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is organizing U20 event.** • U20 provides a platform for cities from G20 countries **to facilitate discussions on various important issues of urban development** including climate change, social inclusion etc. **and propose collective solutions.** • It **facilitates a productive dialogue between the national and local governments** and helps promote the importance of urban development issues in the G20 agenda.
G20 Digital Innovation Alliance (DIA)	**Ministry of Electronics and Information and Technology (MeitY)** launched G20 Digital Innovation Alliance (DIA). **About G20-DIA** • Its objective is to **identify, recognize, and enable the adoption of innovative and impactful digital technologies** developed by start-ups, from G20 nations as well as the invited non-member nations. • It seeks digital solutions in the six themes viz. Agri-tech, Health-tech, Ed-tech, Fin-tech, Secured Digital Infrastructure, and Circular Economy.

8.3. QUAD

Why in news?

4thQUAD Leaders' Tokyo Summit 2022 concluded.

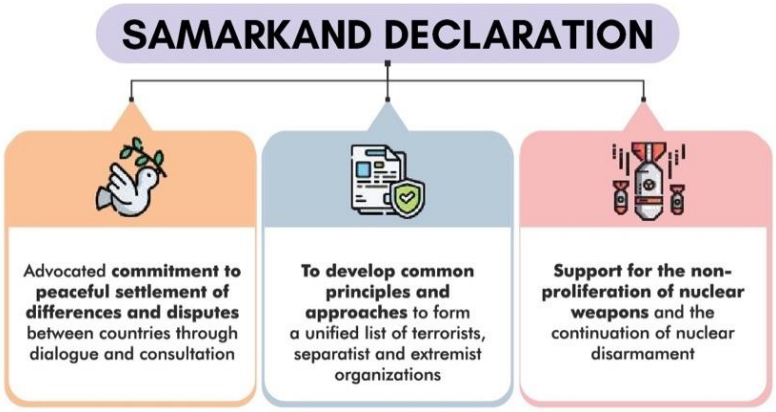
- **Key highlights of 4th QUAD Summit**
  - Quad nations agreed to create an **Earth observation-based monitoring** and **sustainable development framework** to combat illegal, unregulated and unprotected (IUU) fishing.
    - ✓ It will include sharing of space-based civil Earth observation data and a **"Quad Satellite Data Portal"** to aggregate links to respective national satellite data resources.
  - To extend over **50 billion USD of infrastructure assistance** and **investment** in the Indo-Pacific, over the **next five years**.
  - Strengthen the capacities of countries in need **to cope with debt issues** under the **G20 Common Framework.**
    - ✓ Also, promote debt sustainability and transparency through **Quad Debt Management Resource Portal**.
  - Launched **Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)** with **mitigation** and **adaptation** as its two themes.
  - Established **Quad Partnership on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the Indo-Pacific** to strengthen collaboration and effectively respond to disasters in the region.
  - To initiate the first-ever **Quad Cybersecurity Day** to help individuals across Quad, the Indo-Pacific region, and beyond to better protect themselves from cyber threats.

8.4. SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

Why in news?

22nd Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Key highlights of the meeting



- **Samarkand declaration** was adopted.
- **SCO Presidency was handed over to India** and India will host the SCO 2023 summit.
- **Varanasi, was declared as the SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital for 2022-2023** to promote the rich heritage and the tourism potential of SCO member states.
- **Iran was accepted as a permanent member of the SCO.**
- **India's take in the Summit:**
  - **Food Security:** India emphasised the initiative to promote millets and address issues related to food security.
  - **Traditional Medicine:** India to take initiative for new SCO working group on traditional medicines.

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SCO

About

A permanent intergovernmental organisation, founded in Shanghai (China) in 2001.

SCO has been an **observer in the UN General Assembly** since 2005.

Major Goals of SCO

- Security-related concerns
- Resolving border issues
- Military cooperation
- Intelligence sharing
- Countering terrorism
- Countering American influence in Central Asia

Members and Partner Countries

Member States

- China
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Russia
- Tajikistan
- Uzbekistan
- India
- Pakistan
- Iran

Observer States

- Afghanistan
- Belarus
- Mongolia

Dialogue partners

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Cambodia
- Nepal
- Sri Lanka
- Turkey

SCO represents

- 41% Global Population
- 25% Global Land Area
- 24% Global GDP

WORKING STRUCTURE

- **The Heads of State Council (HSC)**: This is the highest decision-making body.
- **The Heads of Government Council (HGC)**: Discusses the strategy for multilateral cooperation and priority directions.
- **Two permanent bodies**
- **The SCO Business Council for expanding** economic cooperation
- **SCO Interbank Consortium for expanding** bank services

The Secretariat coordinates the activity of the SCO and provides informational, analytical, legal, organisational and technical support.

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure RATS) works for combating regional terrorism, separatism and extremism.

8.5. SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

Why in news?

Recently, South Asian University (SAU) in Delhi, an international university established under the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) witnessed month long student protests.

SAARC

About

It is an intergovernmental organization that promotes economic, cultural, and social cooperation among its member nations in South Asia.

Objectives:

- To promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life,
- To accelerate economic growth, territorial integrity, mutual trust, strengthen collective self-reliance etc.

Key facts

- **Establishment:** 1985, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- **Headquarter:** Kathmandu, Nepal.
- **Population:** 24% of the world's total population
- **Area:** 3.4% of the habitable area
- **GDP:** 4.2% of the global economy
- **Last SAARC summit:** 2014 in Kathmandu

Member

Achievements of SAARC

- **South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA):** Agreement was signed to reduce customs duties of all traded goods to zero by the year 2016. It is confined to goods only.
- **South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):** For promoting trade amongst the member countries, came into effect in 1995.
- **SAARC Food Bank** was established to facilitate as an emergency source for facing a crisis in shortage or a natural disaster, floods, earthquakes, and such other issues.
- **SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS):** SATIS is following the GATS-plus 'positive list' approach for trade in services liberalization.
- **SAARC university** established in India.
- **SAARC Arbitration Council** at Islamabad to provide a legal forum for the South Asian nations for solving conflicts.
- **SAARC Development Fund** to promote the welfare for the people of the South Asian region.
- **South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO)** in Dhaka to develop harmonized standards for the region to facilitate intra-regional trade and to enhance access to the global market.

Related News

Currency Swap Agreement (CSA)

- RBI has signed a **Currency Swap Agreement (CSA) with Maldives Monetary Authority** under SAARC Currency Swap Framework.
  - CSA between the two countries is **an agreement or contract to exchange currencies with predetermined terms** and conditions.

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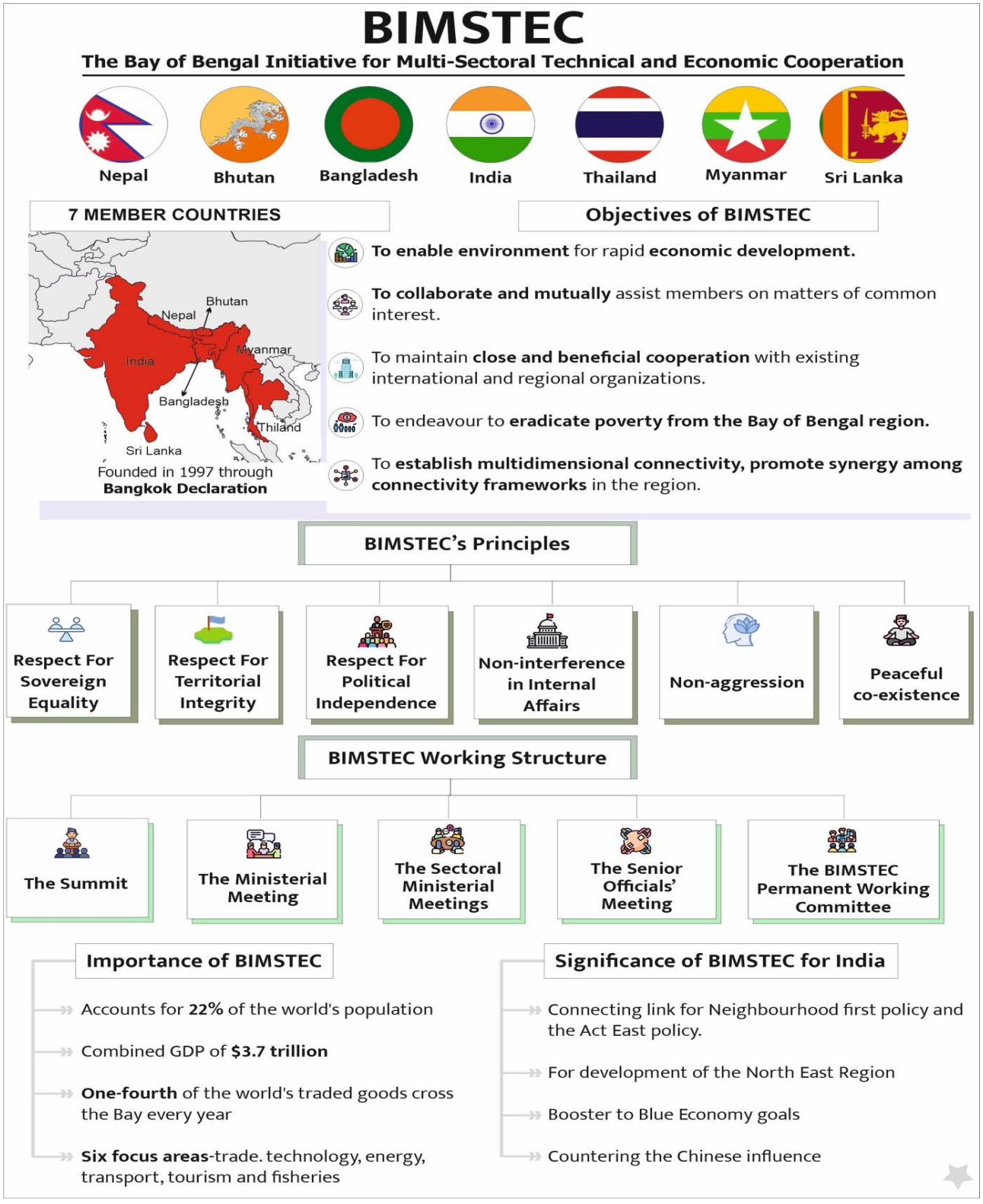
- SAARC Currency Swap Facility **came into operation in 2012 with** to provide a backstop line of **funding for short term foreign exchange liquidity requirements** or balance of payment crises **till longer term arrangements are made.**
  - The drawals can be made **in US Dollar, Euro or Indian Rupee.**

8.6. BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BIMSTEC)

Why in News?

Experts have suggested that there is a need to look for better Regional Forum like BIMSTEC for the South Asian region.



8.7. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

Why in news?

NATO Summit was held recently in Madrid (Spain) amid Russia-Ukraine War.

Some Key outcomes of the summit

- NATO **approved the new Strategic Concept,** which describes how NATO will address threats and challenges in its security environment in coming years.
  - The document **defines Russia as the most significant and direct threat to NATO's security.**
  - For the **first time, NATO recognised China's threat** to the alliance's security, interests and values.
- **NATO Membership Invitations for Finland and Sweden,** after Turkey lifted its veto on their membership.
- Launch of the **NATO Innovation Fund**, which will invest EUR 1 billion over the next 15 years in start-ups developing dual-use emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

About: NATO is a **transatlantic political and military alliance.**

Objective:

- To provide **mutual defense through military and political means** if a member state threatened by an external country.
- To **promote democratic values, support international security, and enhance cooperation** among member states and other international organizations.

Origin: It was created with the signing of the **North Atlantic Treaty,** popularly known as the **Washington Treaty,** with **12 founding members.**

- ★ Currently, it has **30 members** with **North Macedonia** as the last member to join it in **2020.**

Key features:

- Derives its authority from **Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.**
- NATO Treaty **established a system of collective defense,** stating that an attack against one member country is considered an attack against all member countries.
- **NATO's Open-door policy** allows any European country that can enhance and contribute "to the security of the North Atlantic area" to join.

Not a member

Major Non-NATO Ally Status: It is a designation **given by the US government** to close allies that have strategic working relationships with the US Armed Forces but are not members of the NATO.

- The **US has designated 30 other countries** including Japan, S.Korea, Japan, Israel etc. as major non-NATO allies.
  - ★ **India is not a Major Non-NATO Ally.**

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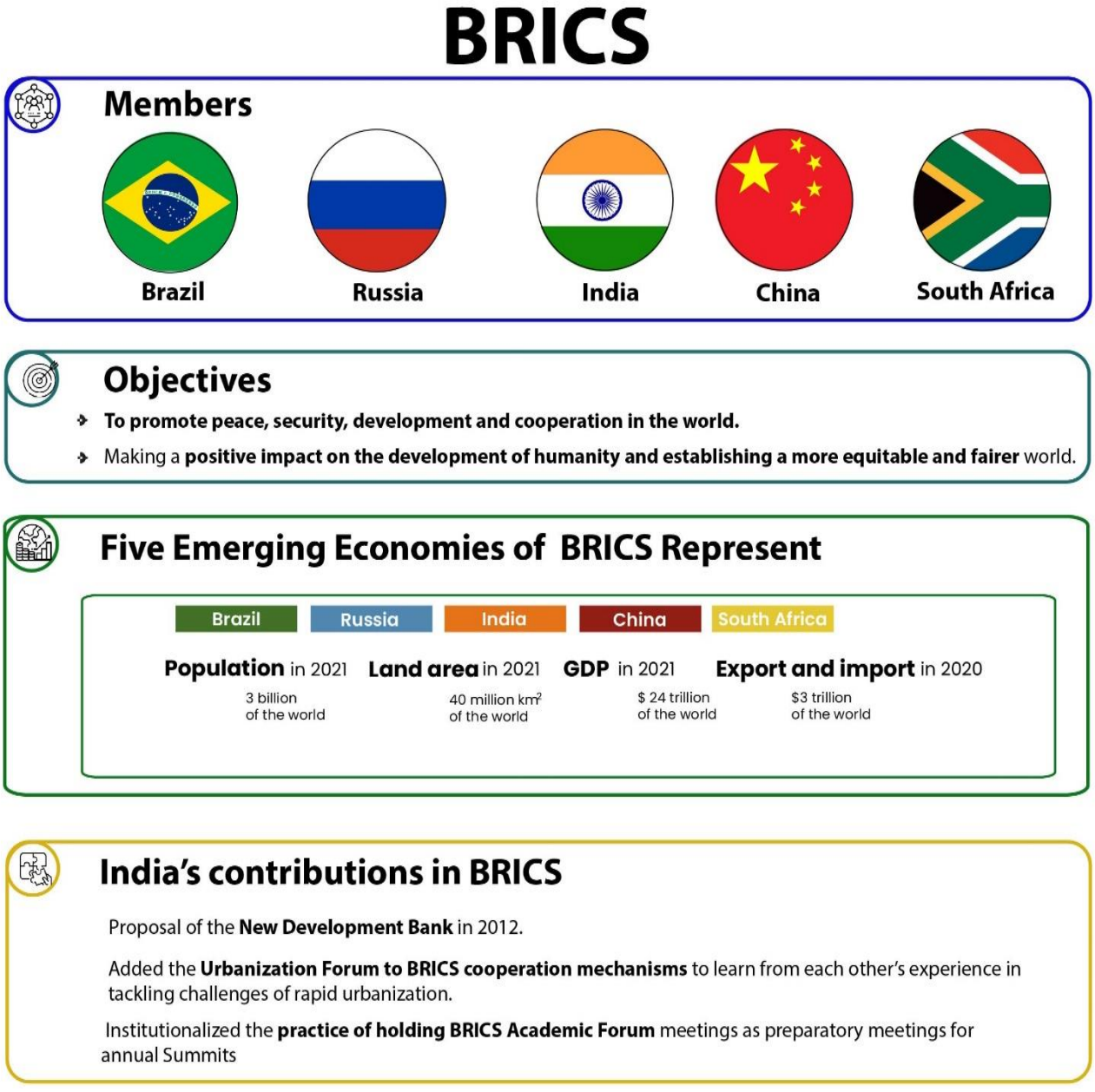
8.8. BRICS

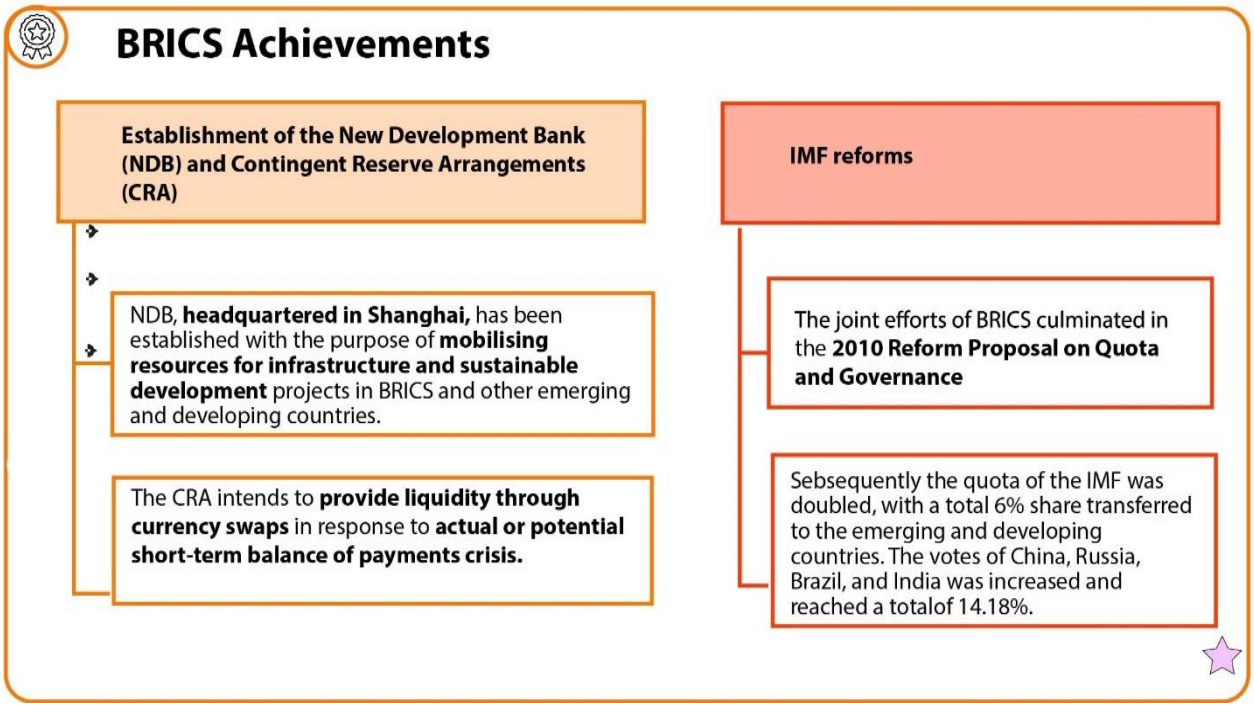
Why in news?

Recently, 14th BRICS Summit, convened under the Chairmanship of China, in virtual format.

Highlights of the Summit

- Theme of the summit was- **"Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development"**
- BRICS Leaders adopted the **'Beijing Declaration'.**
- **India proposed initiatives:** India called for strengthening of the BRICS Identity and **proposed establishment of Online Database for BRICS documents**, BRICS Railways Research Network, and **strengthening cooperation between MSMEs**.
  - India will be organizing **BRICS Startup event** this year to strengthen connection between Startups in BRICS countries.
- **Denial of Safe Haven to Corruption:** BRICS welcomed the BRICS Initiative on **Denial of Safe Haven to Corruption** which further strengthen anti-corruption capacity building.





8.8.1. NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

Why in news?

New Development Bank (NDB) has announced the launch of its Indian Regional Office (IRO) in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).

More about BRICS NDB

- The New Development Bank (NDB) is a **Multilateral Development Institution** (MDI) established by BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa during the **6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza** (2014).
- **The Bank's membership is open to members of the United Nations.**
  - NDB has admitted four new members in 2021: Bangladesh, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Uruguay.
- **Purpose:** With an **authorized capital** of **US$ 100 billion**, NDB supports public and private infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS nations, and other emerging and developing economies.
- **Governance Structure:** It functions through a Board of Governors, a Board of Directors, a President and Vice-Presidents, with the President being elected from one of the founding members on a rotational basis.

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Major Global and Regional MDIs with Indian Membership

Name of MDI	Years	Headquarter	Total Member	Type of Financing
World Bank Group *	IBRD - 1944, IFC- 1956, IDA-1960, MIGA-1988 ICSID-1966	Washington D.C., USA	IBRD - 189, IFC- 185, IDA-173, MIGA-182	**Concessional and Non- Concessional loans,** equity investments, Grants and loan guarantees with some differences within the sub-institutions.
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	1944	Washington D.C., USA	190	**Mainly policy based loans** with financing in exchange of particular policy reform like Privatisation, Agriculture or electricity policy reforms.
African Development Bank Group (AFDB)	AFDB-1964, African Development Fund- 1972	Abidjan (Ivory Coast)	81	Non-concessional and concessional loans, equity investments and loan guarantees. **Grants by African Development Fund.**
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	ADB- 1966, Asian Development Fund- 1973	Mandaluyong of Metro Manila(Philippines)	68	Non-concessional and concessional loans, equity investments and loan guarantees. **Grants by Asian Development Fund.**
New Development Bank	2014	Shanghai, China	9	Guarantees, syndicated loans with private investors, equity investment, project bonds and **co-financing arrangements with other MDIs**
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	2016	Beijing, China	106	**Loans, investing in equity capital of an enterprise,** and guaranteeing with open option of underwriting.

*The World Bank Group includes International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), The International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation(IFC), The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). **The term World Bank is collectively referred for IBRD and IDA.**
Note that India is not a part of ICSID.

8.9. ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

Why in news?

India co-chaired **special meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers (Delhi Dialogue)** virtually with Singapore.

Highlights of the meeting

- The **Year 2022 was announced as India-ASEAN Friendship Year** on account of 30th anniversary of India-ASEAN partnership.
- The focus of the meeting was **to review the progress of cooperation under all three pillars of Partnership** –economic and socio-cultural, political-security, and also on **taking steps for further implementation of ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2021-2025).**

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Jakarta, Indonesia
Est. 1967

About: It is a regional intergovernmental organization.

Objective: To promote regional cooperation and stability, economic growth and development, and cultural exchange among membercountries.

Key facts:

- **Population:** 8.5% of world
- **Gross domestic product (GDP):** 3.5% of world

Members: Ten members:

Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

Members: Dialogue partners

Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United states

Regional cooperation Mechanism

ASEAN Plus three (APT)	East Asian Summit (EAS)
Members: Ten ASEAN Member States and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea	**Members:** Ten ASEAN Member States, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and USA.
Objective: The forum aims to deepen economic integration by promoting regional trade and investment, developing regional infrastructure, and strengthening financial cooperation	**Objective:** To further the objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity

Major contributions by India in the past

- India partnered with Australia **on Maritime Security Cooperation**
- India in partnership with Australia and Singapore also organised the EAS workshop on **Combating Marine Pollution**
- India announced the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** at the 14th EAS

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8.10. GROUP OF SEVEN (G7)

Why in news?

Indian PM participated in the G7 summit, recently held in Germany.

Highlights of the summit

- **G7 leaders launched Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) scheme** to mobilise USD 600 billion by 2027 to deliver transparent and game-changing infrastructure projects in developing and middle-income countries, in a move
  - PGII is being considered as **a rebranding of Build Back Better World initiative** (rolled out at G7 summit last year) **and is** seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- G7 agreed on Establishing a **Climate Club** to support the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

G7

About

An **informal forum of leading industrialised nations,** which dominate global trade and the international financial system.

Purpose

It meets annually **to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security and energy policy,** besides a host of other issues topical to the prevailing situation.

Member

Russia joined G7 in 1998, creating the G8, but was excluded in 2014 for its takeover of Crimea.

The **EU is not a member of the G7** but attends the annual summit.

Achievements of G7

- Played crucial role in setting up a **Global fund to fight malaria and Aids** in 2002.
- G7 finance ministers **agreed to back a global minimum tax of at least 15% on multinational companies.**
- In 2015, members launched the **Global Apollo Program** to tackle climate change through clean energy research and development.

G7 by the Numbers

25%	of global carbon dioxide emissions in the infographic
46%	of global GDP is represented by the countries that make up the G7
1/10th	of the world's population lives in G7 countries

Related News

India, with G7 countries and four invited countries (Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa) **signed the '2022 Resilient Democracies Statement (RDS)'.**

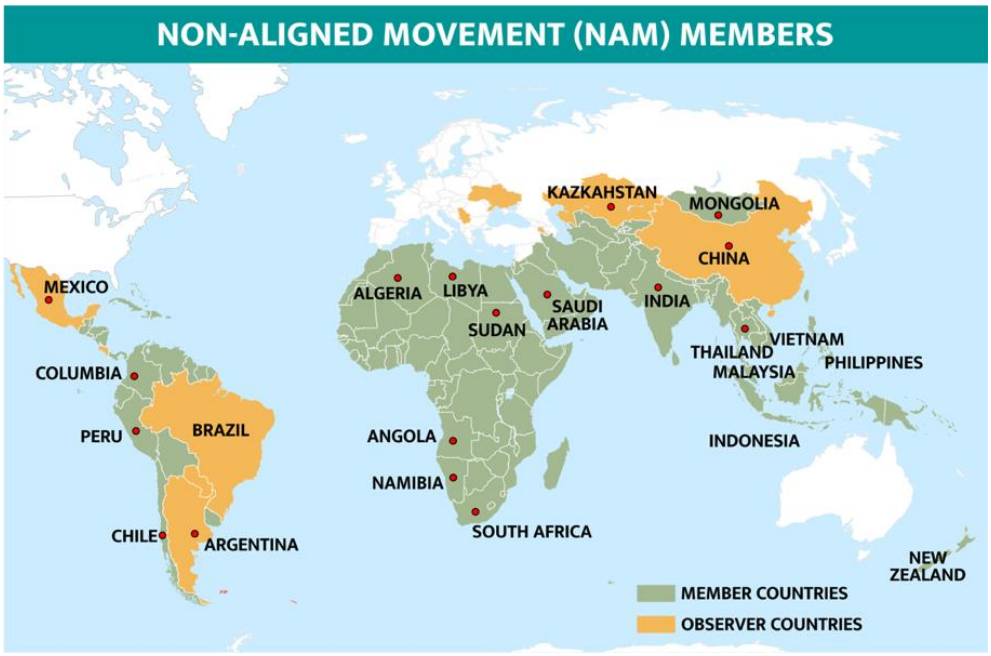
- Countries **affirm their commitment to work towards equitable, inclusive and sustainable solutions to global challenges** (climate change, COVID-19) and **reaffirm to the rules- based international order.**
- **Principles of RDS**
  - **Global Responsibility- To** promote respect for other states' territorial integrity and sovereignty; supporting democracy worldwide and free & fair elections etc.
  - **Information Environment**- protecting freedom of expression and opinion online and offline; ensuring open, free, global, interoperable, reliable and secure internet etc.
  - **Civil Society**- guarding freedom, independence and diversity of civil society actors; building resilience against malign foreign interference etc.
  - **Inclusion and Equality**-protecting freedom of thought, conscience, religion/ belief and promoting interfaith dialogue; social cohesion and inclusion etc.

8.11. NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

Why in news?

Recently, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has completed 60 years.

About Non-Aligned Movement



- NAM was created and founded during the **independence struggles of Africa, Asia, Latin America** and at the **height of the Cold War.**
  - **The idea was to declare themselves** as "non-aligned" from either of the **two nascent military blocks (NATO and the Warsaw Pact).**
  - A key role was played in this process by the then Heads of State of **Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Yugoslavia**, who later became the **founding fathers of the movement.**
- **Origin: Asia-Africa Conference** held **in Bandung, Indonesia** in **1955.**
- **"Ten Principles of Bandung"** proclaimed during Bandung Asian-African Conference (April, 1955) were adopted later as the **main goals of NAM.**
- **NAM's first conference** - The **Belgrade Conference** held in 1961 under the **leadership of India, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Ghana, and Indonesia.**
- The policy of NAM was **based on the 5 principles of Panchsheel.**
- **After end of cold war, movement seemed to have lost its relevance but during Havana summit (2006),** member countries **reaffirmed their commitment** to the ideals, principles and purposes upon which the movement was founded and with the **United Nations Charter.**
- It has **120 members** comprising 53 countries from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 2 from Europe (Belarus, Azerbaijan).
  - There are 17 countries and 10 international organizations that are Observers at NAM.

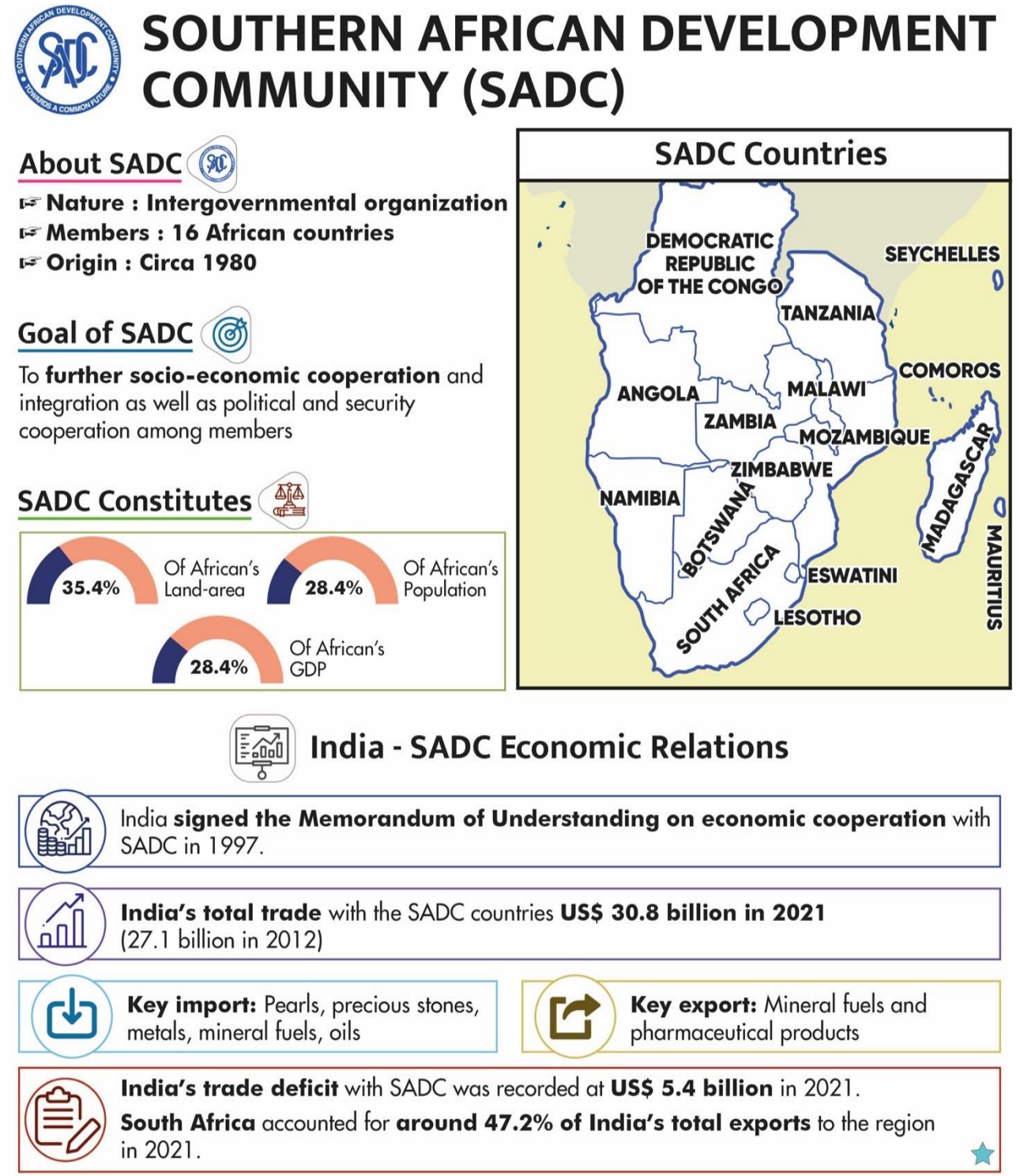
8.12. SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

Why in News?

Recently, the CII-Exim Bank Regional Conclave on India-Southern Africa Growth Partnership was held.

More in news

The Conclave serves **as a platform for dialogues between India Southern African Development Community (SADC).**



8.13. MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS/PLATFORMS/CONVENTIONS IN NEWS (OF WHICH INDIA IS A MEMBER/PARTICIPATING/ SIGNATORY)

International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)	• **India recently won IEC Vice Presidency and Strategic Management Board (SMB) Chair for the 2023-25 term.**
International Finance Corporation (IFC)	• IFC has launched a **$6 billion Global Food Security Platform** to strengthen the **private sector's ability** to respond to the crisis and help support food production. o The platform will focus on **improving resilience of the global food system** and lessen its climate and ecological footprint.
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)	• Former RBI governor Urjit Patel was appointed vice-president of the AIIB.
International Court of Justice (ICJ)	• Ukraine had filed an application against Russia before the International Court of Justice. • Ukraine filed an application against Russia under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide **About Genocide Convention** • The Genocide Convention was the **first human rights treaty** adopted by the UNGA in 1948. • According to the Genocide Convention, genocide is a crime that can take place both in time of war as well as in time of peace.

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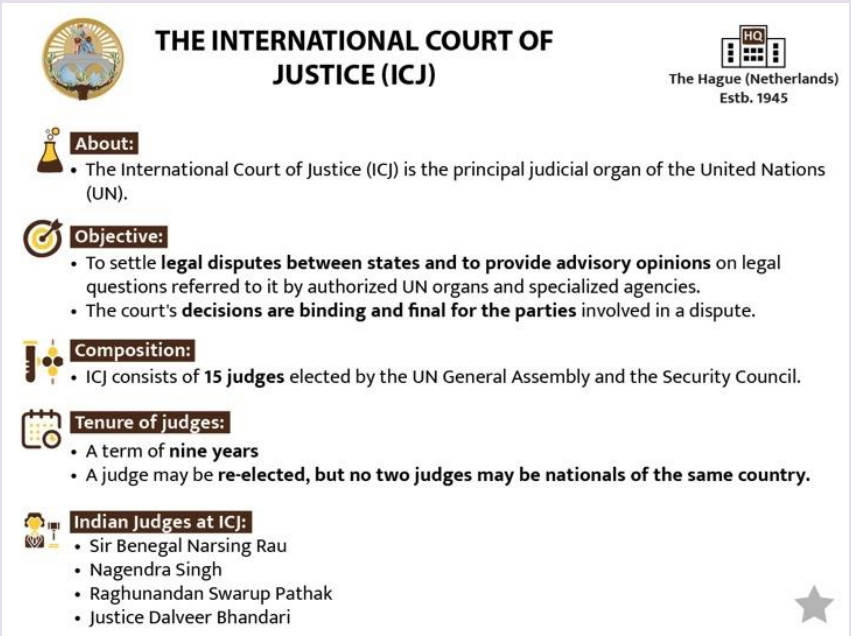
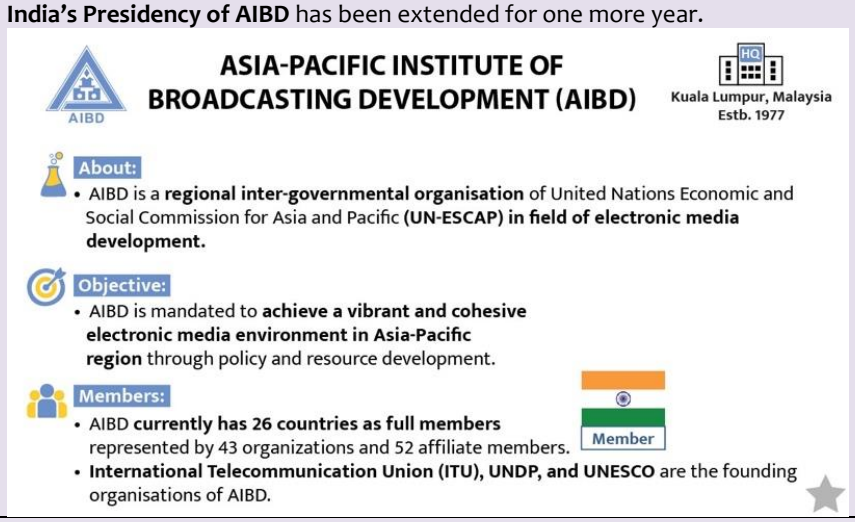
	• Its adoption marked a **crucial step towards the development of international human rights and international criminal law** as we know it today. • The Convention **establishes on State Parties the obligation to take measures to prevent and to punish the crime of genocide,** including by enacting relevant legislation and punishing perpetrators (Article IV). 
Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development (AIBD)	• **India's Presidency of AIBD** has been extended for one more year. 
G33	• G33 or **'Friends of Special Products (FoSP)' in agriculture** is **coalition of developing countries** pressing for flexibility for developing countries to undertake **limited market opening in agriculture.** • Under this, **both members India and Pakistan are working closely at WTO** despite fractious bilateral relation. • It has **proposed special rules for developing countries** at WTO negotiations on issues affecting food security and livelihood of farmers, **like allowing them to continue to restrict access to their agricultural markets.**
Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)	• CCSCH has recommended **quality standards for three spices** - nutmeg, saffron, chilli and forwarded these standards to CAC for adoption. • CCSCH was formed in 2013 to **develop and expand worldwide standards for spices and culinary herbs.** o It was **set up under Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Rome.** o **India hosts and chairs** this Codex Committee **and Spices Board India serves as its secretariat.** • CAC, set up in 1963, is an intergovernmental body established jointly by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO). o **India became member in 1964.**

8.14. MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS/PLATFORMS IN NEWS (OF WHICH INDIA IS NOT A MEMBER/PARTICIPATING)

OPEC Plus (OPEC+)	• OPEC+ agreed deep cuts to oil production curbing supply cut, which could increase oil prices.	**ORGANIZATION OF THE PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC) PLUS** HQ Vienna, Austria Estb. 2016 **About:** • It is an **alliance of oil-producing countries.** **Objective:** • **To coordinate and stabilize global oil prices** through production cuts or increases, depending on market demand. **Members:** • **13 members of OPEC** (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, and Venezuela) and o **OPEC was founded in 1960** • **10 other oil-producing countries** (Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, South Sudan and Sudan). Not a Member
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	• The 4th India-CARICOM Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly in New York.	**Caribbean Community (CARICOM)** HQ Georgetown, Guyana Est.In 1973 **About:** It is an **intergovernmental organisation** that is a political and economic union of 15 member states throughout the Caribbean **Establishment:** **Established through the Treaty of Chaguaramas,** later revised in 2002 to establish a single market and a single economy **Objective:** To promote economic integration, cooperation, and development among its member states. **Members:** **15-member states are** Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Not a Member
League of Arab States (Arab League)	Indian Foreign Secretary calls for alignment between UN and League of Arab States.	**League of Arab States (Arab League)** HQ Cairo, Egypt Est.In 1945 **About:** It is an **intergovernmental organization (IGO),** a voluntary association of independent **African and Middle East countries** whose peoples are **mainly Arabic speaking.** **Objective:** To **strengthen ties** among the member states, coordinate their policies, and promote their common interests **Members:** **22 member states of the Arab League** are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen Not a Member
United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)	• USCIRF has designated **India as a "Country of Particular Concern (CPC)"** for **third consecutive year**. o Designation is reserved for **worst violators of religious freedom.** o Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, North Korea and Russia are also designated as CPCs.	

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9. ISSUES RELATED TO SECURITY

9.1. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD)

Why in news?

Recently, Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Act, 2022 to ban funding of weapons of mass destruction was enacted.

Key provisions

- It amends the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.
  - The 2005 Act **prohibits unlawful activities (such as manufacturing, transport, or transfer) related to weapons of mass destruction**, and their means of delivery.
  - The **recent amendment extends the scope of banned activities** to include financing of already prohibited activities.
- It **bars persons from financing any prohibited activity** related to WMD and their delivery systems directly or indirectly.
- It **empowers the central government to freeze, seize or attach financial assets** and economic resources of people engaged in such activities.

Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.

- Its primary objective is **to provide an integrated and overarching legislation** on prohibiting unlawful activities in relation to all three types of WMD (i.e., Nuclear, Chemical and Biological), their delivery systems and related materials, equipment and technologies.
- It instituted **penalties for contravention** of these provisions such as imprisonment for a term not less than five years (extendable for life) as well as fines.
- The Act was passed to meet an international obligation enforced by the **UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540** of 2004.
  - UNSCR 1540 established binding obligations on all UN member states to take and enforce effective measures against proliferation of WMD, their means of delivery and related materials to non-state actors.

Definitions of WMDs as per India's WMD Act, 2005

Nuclear weapons	Chemical weapons	Biological Weapons
Those which are categorized as having nuclear capabilities and recognized by the Government of India. In general, these machinery and weapons use the process of nuclear fission in order to facilitate an explosion.	Toxic chemicals and their precursors (except where used for peaceful purposes); munitions and devices specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals; and any equipment specifically designed for use in connection with the employment of these munitions and devices.	Microbial or other biological agents, or toxins of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes; and weapons, equipment or delivery systems specially designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

About Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

- There is **no single, authoritative definition of a WMD in international law** and the expression is usually understood to cover nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons.
- According to the **United States Department of Homeland Security**, "A weapon of mass destruction is a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, or other device that is intended to harm a large number of people.

Global efforts to outlaw several classes of WMDs

Treaties/Conventions/Codes	Purpose	Has India signed and ratified it?
Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BWC), 1972	Prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. • It supplements the 1925 **Geneva Protocol,** which had prohibited only the use of biological weapons.	**Yes**
Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), 1992	Prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons.	**Yes**

	• It led to the establishment of **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons** (OPCW) headquartered at Hague, Netherlands.	
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT), 1970	To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.	**No.** India opposes NPT's discriminatory nature and argues for the universal ban of nuclear weapons.
Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW),2017	Prohibits participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons and also to provide assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities.	**No.** India believes that this Treaty does not constitute or contribute to the development of customary international law; nor does it set any new standards or norms.
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 1996	It bans all nuclear explosion tests on Earth. It also establishes a CTBT Organization (CTBTO), located in Vienna, to ensure the implementation of its provisions. • It is yet to enter into force.	**No.** India opposes CTBT's discriminatory nature and supports universal ban of nuclear weapons
Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) formerly known as "The International Code of Conduct" (ICOC), 2002	To regulate access to ballistic missiles which can potentially deliver weapons of mass destruction.	Yes
Multilateral Export Control Regimes (MECR)	Voluntary and non-binding agreements created by the major supplier countries to co-operate in their effort to prevent transfer of certain military and dual use technology that support proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). There are currently four such regimes under MECR: • **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)** for the control of nuclear related technology. • **Australia Group (AG)** for control of chemical and biological technology that could be weaponized. • **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)** for the control of rockets and other aerial vehicles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. • **Wassenaar Arrangement** for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.	India is member of three of the four MECRs, except the Nuclear Supplier Group.

Related News
World's stockpile of nuclear weapons increasing: Report by Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor (NWBM)

- **About NWBM**
  - It is established as **research programme in 2018**, produced and published by **Norwegian People's Aid (NPA),** a partner organization of **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).**
    - ✓ ICAN is a coalition of NGOs promoting adherence to and implementation of UN nuclear weapon ban treaty.
  - It **evaluates nuclear-weapons-related policies and practices of each of the 197 states** that are party/not party to global treaties on nuclear weapon reduction.

9.2. NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

Why in news?

Recently, NPT's five-year review meeting took place.

More on news

- NPT completed 50 years in 2020.

DELHI | JAIPUR | PUNE | HYDERABAD | AHMEDABAD | LUCKNOW | CHANDIGARH | GUWAHATI | RANCHI | ALLAHABAD | BHOPAL © Vision IAS

- NPT's five-year review was supposed to take place in 2020 but was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

About: NPT is an international agreement aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and promoting disarmament.

Establishment: In 1968

Objective:

- To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology.
- To promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- To further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

Members: **All countries of the world except South Sudan,** India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

Other key information:

- **Nuclear-weapon states (NWS):** Those that have built and tested a nuclear explosive device before 1 January 1967;
  - These are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China.
- **NPT Review Conference is held every five years** to review the operation of the treaty.
- **Zangger Committee** was formed following coming into force of NPT.
  - It maintains a **Trigger List** (triggering safeguards as a condition of supply) of nuclear-related strategic goods.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency **(IAEA) verifies Non-NWS (NNWS) compliance with commitments under the NPT** not to acquire nuclear weapons.

India's stand on NPT :

- **India has not signed or joined the NPT.**
- **India supports the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention in the Conference on Disarmament,** which is the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum working on the basis of consensus.
- **India supports the proposed Fissile material cut off treaty** under it that would prohibit the production of two main components of nuclear weapons: highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium.

Treaties and initiatives establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Asia and the Pacific:

- **Treaty of Rarotonga** (South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, 1986)
- **Bangkok Treaty** (Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, 1995)
- **Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone** (2006)
- **Mongolia declared itself the first single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone (SS-NWFZ) in 1992,** which was later recognized by P5 (five nuclear-weapon states) as well. This has set a precedent for other states to follow in declaring themselves SS-NWFZs.

9.3. INTERPOL

Why in news?

The 90th Interpol General Assembly meeting was held in New Delhi.

More on news

INTERPOL has launched the **first ever police metaverse specifically designed for law enforcement agencies** worldwide during its 90th General Assembly in New Delhi.

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

HQ
Lyon ,France
Est.1923

About: **Interpol** is an **inter-governmental organization** which helps the police in all member countries to **work together to make the world a safer place.**

Objective: To **strengthen ties** among the member states, coordinate their policies, and promote their **common interests.**

Members: 195 countries.

Member

Organisational Structure

General Assembly
- Supreme governing **body,** comprising **representatives from each of member countries.**
- **It meets once a year.**
- Works on the principle of **one country, one vote**

Executive Committee
- Governing body in charge of supervising the execution of the General Assembly's decisions.

General Secretariat
- coordinates the day-to-day activities to fight a range of crimes.

Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB) in each country provides the central point of contact for General Secretariat and other NCBs.
- **NCB in India** is in New Delhi and **acts as a branch of the Central Bureau of Investigation**

Other key functions:
- **Three crime programme** – counter terrorism, cybercrime and organised and emerging crime.
- **Global policing Goals (launched in 2018),** focus on collective efforts of the international law enforcement community to create a safer and more sustainable world.
- **ID-ART:** a mobile app, launched by Interpol, to **identify stolen cultural property, reduce smuggling, and recover stolen works** and artefacts.

INTERPOL NOTICES

RED NOTICE WANTED PERSONS	**GREEN NOTICE** WARNI NG AND INTELLIGENCE
YELLOW NOTICE MISSING PERSONS	**ORANGE NOTICE** IMMINENT THREAT
BLUE NOTICE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	**PURPLE NOTICE** MODUS OPERANDI
BLACK NOTICE UNIDENTIFIED BODIES	**INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE** GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS SUBJECT TO UNSC SANCTIONS

- **INTERPOL Notices:** International requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.
  - **Issued by General Secretariat** at the request of a member country's **Interpol** NCB.

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9.4. FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE

Why in News?

Recently, Pakistan is out of FATF 'grey list' on terror funding

Financial Action Task Force

HQ
Paris, France
Est. 1968

About:
It is an **inter-governmental body established by a Group of Seven (G-7)**

Objective:
To protect the global financial system against money laundering, terrorist financing and financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Members:
37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations (Gulf Co-operation Council and European Commission).

Functions

- **Sets international standards,** to prevent illegal activities such as: Global anti-money laundering (AML) and Counter-terrorist financing (CFT) standards.
- **Maintains 'Black' and 'Grey' lists of the countries.**
  - Countries are **removed from grey list based** on their progress **on the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime.**

Grey List vs Black List

	Grey List or "Jurisdictions under increased monitoring"	Black List or "High-risk jurisdictions subject to Call for Action"
Why countries come under these lists?	They have **strategic deficiencies** in their regimes to counter ML/TF/PF.	They have **significant strategic deficiencies** in their regimes to counter ML/TF/PF.
What are the implications of being in these lists?	• Countries have to **Formally commit to develop** action plans to address strategic deficiencies, in their regimes. • Comply with certain conditions laid down by the FATE, failing. which they run the risk of being **"blacklisted"** by the watchdog.	Countries have to apply enhanced due diligence, and, in most serious cases, countries are called upon to **apply counter measures.**

ML: Money Laundering; TF: Terror Financing; PF:Proliferation Financing

9.5. MISSION DEFSPACE

Why in news?

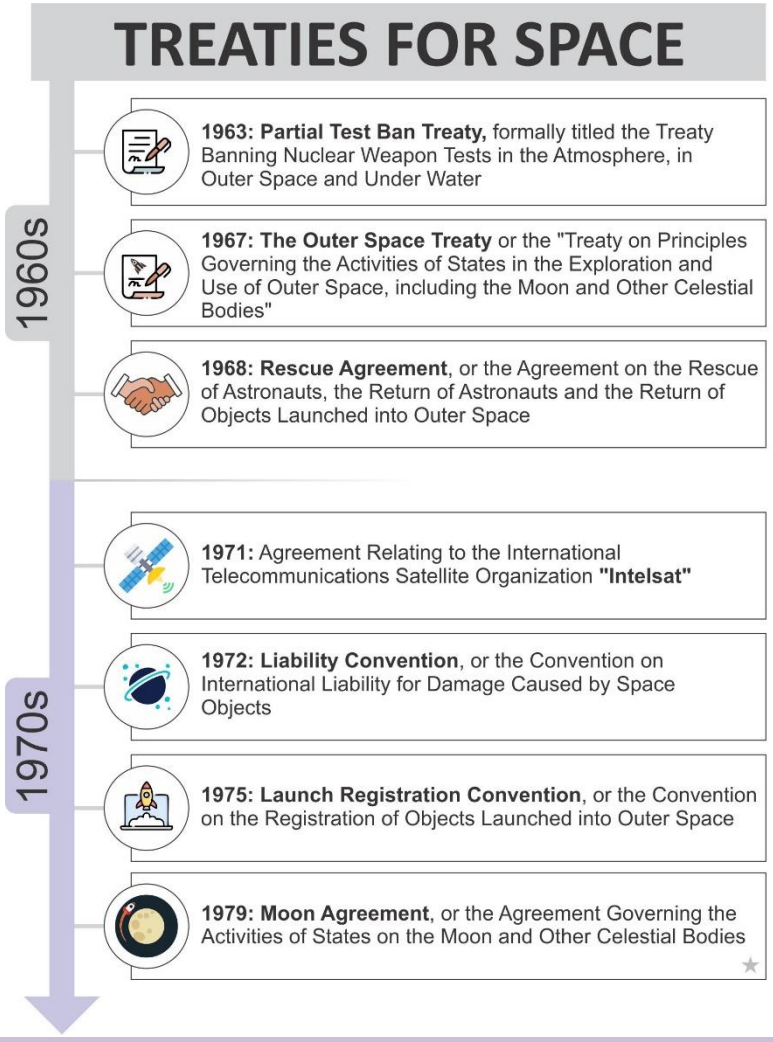
Mission DefSpace was launched at the **annual Defense Expo** held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

About Mission DefSpace

- **Mission DefSpace has been** to develop **innovative solutions for the Armed Forces in the space domain through industry and start-ups** at DefExpo 2022.
  - Also, the **'Fourth Positive indigenisation List'** of **101 items** under the **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020** to boost self-reliance was announced.
- **Militarisation of Space and Mission DefSpace**
  - Though a number of **treaties (refer infographic)** exist for space and its peaceful uses, a number of challenges/ threats exist to space assets.
    - ✓ **US (Space force) and China (PLA Strategic Support Force)** are also pursuing dedicated military space institutions.

- Under **Mission DefSpace**, 75 such challenges (launch systems, satellites, etc) are identified to get innovative solutions for armed forces.

- India's **space diplomacy**:
  - India launched the **South Asia satellite** to boost **regional communication** and **improve disaster links** among its six neighbours.
  - In 2019, India conducted **Mission Shakti**, an **anti-satellite missile test.**
  - Also, in 2019, India operationalised **Defence Space Agency (DSA) for operating in the domain of space warfare.**



9.6. DEFENCE ACQUISITION PROCEDURE, 2020

Why in News?

Government gave in-principle approval to indigenous defence projects light tanks, airborne stand-off jammers, communication equipment and simulators under Defence Acquisition Procedure(DAP), 2020.

What is offset?

- Under the offset policy, the foreign defence entities were mandated to **spend at least 30% of the total contract value in India** through procurement of components, transfer of technologies or setting up of research and development facilities.
- This condition was for all contracts worth **more than Rs 2,000 crore.**
- It was meant to **improve the domestic defence manufacturing.**

Salient features of Policy

- DAP will **ensure timely acquisition of military equipment, systems and platforms as required by the Armed Forces** in terms of performance, capabilities and quality standards, through optimum utilisation of allocated budgetary resources.
- It has come into effect from October 1, 2020 and will **supersede the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) of 2016.**
  - Defence Ministry had constituted **Committee under Apurva Chandra** for preparation of DAP-2020.
- DAP will **cover all Capital Acquisitions** other than Works and Land undertaken by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Service Headquarters (SHQ) both from indigenous sources and ex-import, **except for medical equipment.**

Overall Enhancement in Indigenous Content (IC)

Sr no	Category	DPP 2016	DAP 2020
1	Buy (Indian-IDDM)	Min 40%	Min 50%
2	Buy (Indian)	Min 40%	Indigenous design - Min 50% Otherwise - Min 60%
3	Buy & Make (Indian)	Min 50% of Make	Min 50% of Make
4	Buy (Global-Manufacture in India)	–	Min 50% of Buy plus Make
5	Buy (Global)	–	Min 30% for Indian Vendors

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Key points in policy

- **Offset policy revised.**
- **Notify a List of Weapons/Platforms for Ban on Import**
- **For Indigenisation of Imported Spares:**
  - **New Category of Buy (Global – Manufacture in India)**
  - **Request For Information (RFI)** to confirm that the equipment has been indigenously designed and developed.
  - **Reservation in Categories for Indian Vendors**
  - **Other proposed measures:** These includes making after sales support part of capital acquisition contract, higher indigenous content in acquisitions and incentives for local material and software and emphasis on product export under offsets.
- **Leasing:** It has been introduced as a new category for acquisition in addition to the existing 'Buy' and 'Make' categories to substitute huge initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments.
- **Strategic Partnership Model (SPM):** Strategic Partnerships will seek to enhance indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities through the private sector over and above the existing production base.

Related News

Draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020

- Recently, Ministry of Defence proposed Draft Defence Production and Export Policy 2020 with an aim to double India's defence production in five years.
- The policy is envisaged as a guiding document to overcome aforesaid challenges by providing a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production capabilities of the country for self-reliance and exports.
- **It aims to** achieve a **turnover of Rs 1,75,000 Crores** including export of Rs 35,000 Crore in Aerospace and Defence goods and services by 2025.

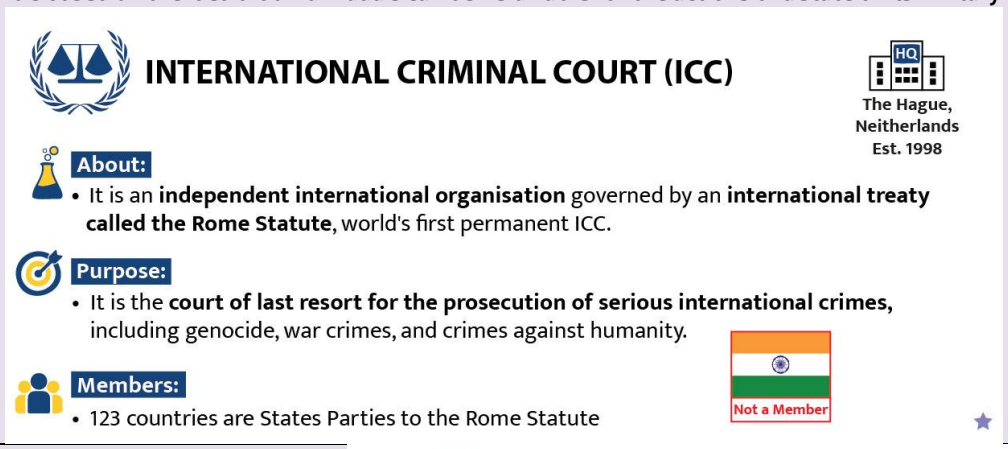
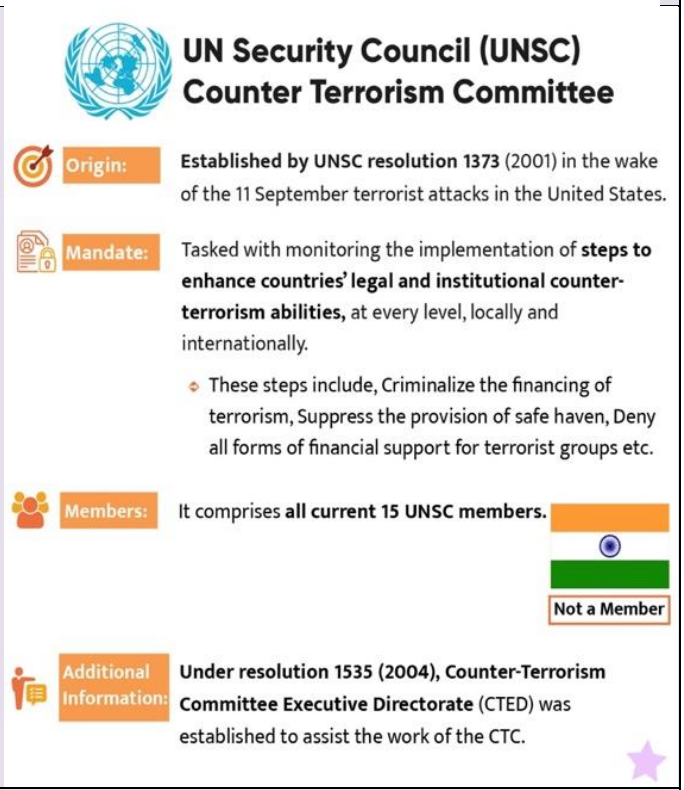
- **Its objective** is to:
  - **implement research and analysis focused on energy sector opportunities** throughout South Asia.
  - **equip USAID partner governments with critical information** to enable strategic investments.
  - **contribute towards achieving the goals of Asia Enhancing Growth and Development through Energy (Asia EDGE)**, a United States Government initiative to support the growth of sustainable and secure energy markets across the Indo-Pacific.

9.7. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

Scorched Earth Tactics	• Russia is being **accused of using Scorched earth tactics in ongoing war against Ukraine**. • Scorched earth tactics **form part of a military strategy which seeks to destroy anything that could be of use to enemy,** including energy supplies, bridges, agricultural fields, road and railway links, etc. ○ Russia has used **missiles to destroy civilian infrastructure,** including power and water supply lines. • Strategy seeks **to deplete the enemy's resources to sustain warfare, and also break their morale**. • **Harming civilians** as part of **this strategy has been banned** under **the 1977 Geneva Convention.** • In India, **armies of Chhatrapati Shivaji** were known for their **scorched earth tactics.**

Macolin Convention	• The 12th meeting of **Interpol's Match-Fixing Task Force (IMFTF)** called for **harmonized global efforts** to curb **competition manipulation** and establishment of **national platforms**, as outlined by **Macolin Convention**.
	  ○ It was the 1st major event under the newly created **Financial Crime and Anti-corruption Centre** (IFCACC) from **Interpol**.
	  ○ From India, CBI participated in it.
	• The **Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions**, known as the **Macolin Convention**, is a multilateral treaty aimed at **checking match-fixing**.

'Dirty bomb'	• Russia has claimed **that Ukraine is planning to use a dirty bomb**. • **Dirty Bomb is a bomb that contains radioactive material,** such as uranium, which is scattered through the air when its conventional explosive detonates. • It **doesn't need to contain highly refined radioactive material**, as is used in a nuclear bomb. • Instead, it uses radioactive materials from **hospitals, nuclear power stations or research laboratories.** ○ This makes them **much cheaper and quicker to make** than nuclear weapons.

War Crimes	• According to the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC),** war crimes refer to serious **violations of humanitarian laws during a domestic conflict or a war** between two states. ○ **Genocide and crimes against humanity can happen in peacetime** or during the unilateral aggression of a military towards a group of unarmed people. • This definition is derived from the **1949 Geneva Conventions** (regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seeks to limit its effects) • It is based on the idea that **individuals can be held liable for the actions of a state or its military.** 
UN Security Council (UNSC) Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC)	UN Security Council (UNSC) Counter Terrorism Committee's (CTC) **special meeting held in India** ended with the adoption of **Delhi declaration,** which called for: • Issuing new set of **non-binding guiding principles in countering digital terrorism threat.** • **Counter terrorist exploitation of Information and Communications Technology** (like payment technologies and misuse of drones etc). • **Countering use of technologies for terrorist purposes,** while **respecting human rights** and fundamental freedoms. **Deepen engagement with civil society,** including women's organizations, private-sector entities etc. 

TVS-2M Nuclear Fuel	• Russia has supplied first batches of TVS-2M nuclear fuel to India for Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant.
	• TVS-2M contains **mixed Uranium-Gadolinium oxide with Uranium enrichments,** but without Burnable Absorbers Rods (BARs).
	  ○ BARs contain neutron-absorbing material that is inserted into guide tubes of a pressurized water reactor.
	• **Significance of TVS- 2M**
	  ○ **More efficient and more vibration-resistant** due to rigidity of a fuel bundle.
	  ○ **Increased uranium capacity-** one TVS-2M assembly contains 7.6% more fuel material as compared to earlier fuel.
	  ○ Efficiently operated in an 18-months fuel cycle.

Open Skies Treaty (OST)	**Russia pulled out of the Open Skies Treaty (OST)** citing earlier withdrawal of the USA from the treaty.

 © Vision IAS

	About Open Skies Treaty (OST)
	• OST is an agreement that permits each state-party to **conduct short-notice, unarmed, reconnaissance flights over the other's territories** to collect data on military forces and activities.
	• OST was **signed in 1992** and came into **effect in 2002.**
	  ○ Currently **32 states are party to the treaty**.
	  ○ **India and China are not members** to the treaty.
	• **Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC),** comprised of representatives of all states-parties, is responsible for implementation of OST.
	• It is **different from the Open Sky Agreements** which are bilateral agreements that the two countries negotiate to provide rights for airlines to offer international passenger and cargo services. Recently, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has expressed interest to have an Open Sky Agreement with India.

Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT)	The G20 Bali Declaration, 2022 is pushing the commitment of all G20 members to continue the discussion on Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT). **About DFFT** • It aims to **eliminate restrictions on cross-border transfer of information by electronic means**, including personal information, and storing data in foreign servers, for productivity, innovation, and sustainable development. • It was **first proposed by former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe**, as a basic principle for rulemaking in the field of cross-border data transfers. After its debut in Davos, DFFT was endorsed in 2019 by members of the G20 group of nations under the **Osaka Track.** ○ Osaka Track is a process that aims to intensify efforts on international rulemaking on digital economy, especially on data flows and e-commerce, while promoting enhanced protections for intellectual property, personal information, and cybersecurity.

Integrated Battle Groups	The Indian Army is in advanced stages of putting together Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs).
	About Integrated Battle Group
	• IBGs are brigade-sized, agile, self-sufficient combat formations, which can swiftly launch strikes against adversary in case of hostilities.
	  ○ They will be able to mobilize within **12-48 hours based on the location**.
	  ○ The integrated units for the border will be **all-encompassing, with artillery, armoured, combat engineers and signal units.**
	• The IBGs are to perform both **offensive roles**, involving cross-border operations, **and defensive roles** to withstand an enemy attack**.**
	• Each IBG would be **tailor-mad**e based on **Threat, Terrain and Task**
	• Each IBG will be **headed by a Major General** and comprise around 5,000 troops**.**
	• IBG will help in effectively implementing the **Cold Start doctrine**.
	  ○ Cold Start' doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces **envisages swift deployment of troops on the western border within** days if a situation of a full-blown war arises.

National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)	**Government recently inaugurated NATGRID campus in Bengaluru.**
	About NATGRID
	• NATGRID is an attached office of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
	• It is the **integrated intelligence grid** which connects databases of core security agencies.
	• It was **proposed after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks**.
	• It will **assist intelligence and law enforcement agencies** in ensuring national and internal security, **with the ultimate aim to counter terror.**
	• NATGRID **will link 10 user agencies with certain databases** that would be procured from 21 organisations.
	  ○ **Database involves data related to** credit and debit cards, tax, telecom, immigration, airlines and railway tickets, passports, driving licenses.
	• NATGRID also **has access to Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** database under National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
	  ○ All State police are mandated to file First Information Reports (FIR) in the CCTNS.

10. MISCELLANEOUS

10.1. INDIAN ANTARCTIC ACT, 2022

Why in news?

Recently, the **Indian Antarctic Act, 2022** was enacted.

About Indian Antarctic Act, 2022

- This act aims to
  - provide national measures for protecting the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems and
  - **to give effect to the Antarctic Treaty, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.**
- **Key Objectives of the Act**
  - **Prohibit Indian expedition to Antarctica or carrying of certain activities** in Antarctica **without a permit;**
  - **Eliminating mining or illegal activities.**
  - **Fulfilling India's obligations under Antarctic Treaty and related conventions.**
  - **Facilitating India's interest and pro-active involvement** in the management of growing Antarctic tourism and sustainable development of fisheries resources in Antarctic waters.
  - **Increasing international visibility, credibility of India in Polar governance.**
  - Building a well-established legal mechanism for **efficient and elective operations of Indian Antarctic Programme.**
- **Key Provisions of the Act**
  - **Applicability**: Provisions applicable to **any, Indian or foreign Citizens**; entities incorporated, established or registered under any law in force in India; vessel or aircraft registered in India or involved in any Indian expedition to Antarctica.
  - **Establishment of a Committee on Antarctic Governance and Environmental Protection** to be chaired by the **Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.** Various functions of the Committee include:
    - ✓ **Grant, suspension or cancellation of permits** for various activities;
    - ✓ **Monitoring, implementing and ensuring compliance** of relevant international laws, emission standards and rules for protection of Antarctic environment;
    - ✓ **Negotiating fees/charges with other parties** for activities in Antarctica;
    - ✓ Establishment of **waste classification system and waste management plans** etc.

- **Permit system:** A permit by the Committee or written authorisation from another party to the Protocol (other than India) will be required for various activities such as**:**
  - **Entering and staying in Antarctica,**
  - **Mineral resource activities,**
  - **Introduction of non-native animals and plants or microscopic organisms,**
  - **Removal of biological specimen,**
  - **Entering into Antarctic Specially Protected Area or Marine Protected Area,**
  - **Waste disposal** etc.
- **Constitution of the Antarctic fund** for Antarctic research work and protection of Antarctic environment.
- **Stringent penalties for contravention of its provisions:** E.g., Conducting a **nuclear explosion** in Antarctica could lead to **imprisonment of 20 years** etc.

India's other endeavours in Antarctica

- The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Environmental Protocol or **Madrid Protocol**) **entered into force for India in 1998.**
- India is also **a member of** Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programme **(COMNAP**), Scientific Committee of Antarctica Research **(SCAR)** and Commission for Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Recourses **(CCAMLR).**
- **India's Research stations: Maitri** at Schirmacher Hills, **Bharati** at Larsemann Hills (Dakshin Gangotri was the first Indian base established in 1984).
- The Antarctic operations of India are currently funded from the **budget allocated to the Ministry of Earth Sciences** under relevant head.

- **Designated court to try punishable offences.**
- **Grant of Special permit for commercial fishing in Antarctica.**

Antarctica treaty

About Antarctic Treaty

This treaty came into force in 1961 after ratification by 12 original members: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand,Norway, South Africa, USSR (now Russia) the UK, and the US.

Objective

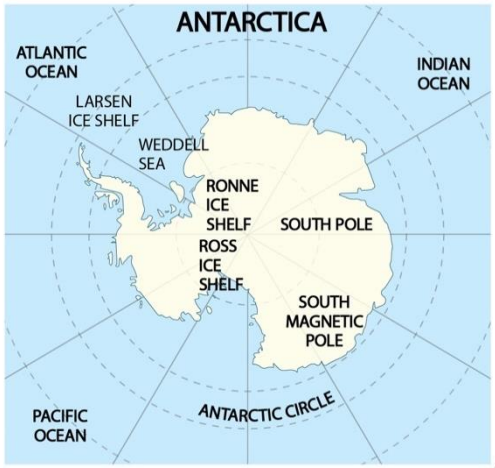
- **Demilitarize Antarctica,** making it free of nuclear tests and the disposal of radioactive waste.
- **Establish it as a zone for peaceful research activities.**
- **Set aside disputes over territorial sovereignty.**

Parties: Currently 54 countries have acceded it.

Member

About Antarctica

- It is **world's 5th largest,** southernmost and the **driest, windiest, coldest, and iciest** continent.
- It is **not a country** and **has no government and no indigenous population.** Instead, the entire continent is set aside as a scientific preserve.
- **Just 2% of this continent is free of ice,** allowing a small toe-hold for hardy animals and plants.
- **It holds 90% of the Earth's total ice volume** and **70% of its fresh water.**



Antarctic Treaty System

Three international agreements which govern activities in Antarctica-

Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals, 1972	Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), 1980 (ratified by India in 1985)	Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (Madrid Protocol), 1991 (signed by India in 1998).

10.2. SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE INITIATIVE (SCRI)

Why in News?

India recently adopted US' joint statement of the 2022 Supply Chain Ministerial Forum on cooperation of global supply chains.

More in News

- A partnership of 18 economies, **including India, US and European Union** has unveiled a four-point roadmap for building collective, long-term resilient supply chains (RSC) to counter risks arising from supply dependencies and vulnerabilities.
  - Roadmap was formulated in the backdrop of **supply chain summit that was held in US, in 2021.**
- India, Japan and Australia have also launched **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) (first proposed by Japan)** to counter China's dominance of supply chain in the Indo-Pacific region.

About SCRI

- It is an approach that helps a country **to ensure that it has diversified its supply risk** across a clutch of supplying nations instead of being dependent on just one or a few.
- **Objective is to-**
  - Attract foreign direct investment to turn the **Indo-Pacific into an economic powerhouse.**
- Build a mutually **complementary relationship among partner countries.**

10.3. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

Paris Club	• Paris Club creditor nations are proposing a 10-year moratorium on Sri Lankan debt to resolve the Sri Lankan debt crisis. • Paris Club is an **informal group of official creditors** whose **role is to find coordinated and sustainable solutions** to the **payment difficulties** experienced by debtor countries. • The origin of the Paris Club **dates back to 1956**. • It is a group of **22 permanent members, including Australia, UK, USA, Japan etc.** ○ India **is not a member. It acts as an ad-hoc participant.**
Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC)	• Myanmar held its **first multinational ministerial meeting**, of LMC countries**, since military takeover**. • **LMC was formed in 2016** between the riparian states of Lancang/Mekong River **to help ease tensions over development projects.** ○ Lancang is the Chinese name of the Mekong River. • **Originating in the Tibetan Plateau**, River **Mekong flows through** China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam before **draining into the South China Sea.**
Group of Friends	• **India, Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Morocco and Nepal** are co-chairs of the **'Group of Friends to Promote Accountability for Crimes Against Peacekeepers'** • The Group of Friends represents the **"political will"** of member states, to champion the **implementation of the provisions of UN Security Council resolution 2589.** • **Resolution 2589**—it calls upon member states to take **all appropriate measures** to bring to **justice perpetrators of the killing and all acts of violence** against United Nations personnel.
Kafala System	• Hosting **2022 Football World Cup**, **organisers in Qatar are condemned** for its treatment of migrant workers. • Many Middle East Countries, including Qatar, follow **Kafala System- a sponsorship system which defines the relationship between migrant workers and their local sponsor** or Kafeel. • Under it, local sponsors get **almost total control over migrant workers' employment and immigration status.** ○ E.g. sponsor permission is required to leave or change jobs, enter or exit the host country etc. • Primarily used to **meet cheap labour demand**, it is used by them for **widespread human rights abuses** and exploitation of workers.
Caspian summit	• **6th Caspian summit was held** in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan). • Summit, between **Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan** (Countries bordering Caspian Sea), discuss **topical issues of cooperation in the Caspian Sea.**
Black Sea Grain deal	Recently, Russia resumed participation in Black Sea Grain deal. **About Black Sea Grain Deal** • The deal was **brokered by the United Nations (UN) and Turkey** between **Russia and Ukraine.** • It endeavors to **tackle escalating food prices** emanating from **supply chain disruptions** due to effective blockage of Black Sea. • Deal was to provide for a **safe maritime humanitarian corridor for Ukrainian exports** (particularly for food grains) from three of its key ports, namely, **Chornomorsk, Odesa and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi.** ○ Ukraine is among the largest exporters of wheat, maize, rapeseed, sunflower seeds and sunflower oil, globally.
International Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI)	• In the face of enhanced ransomware attacks globally, **CRI has decided to deepen its institutional collaboration.** • CRI is a **grouping of 36 countries** (including **India**) and **European Union** that aims **to disrupt ransomware attacks** and strengthen international cybersecurity agenda. ○ India, along with Lithuania, leads the network resilience working group of CRI. • In the recent summit, **CRI also decided to establish an International Counter Ransomware Task Force** (ICRTF) to coordinate resilience, disruption, and counter illicit finance activities.

Lusophone World	• India hosted the **International Lusophone Festival** in Goa.
	  ○ It seeks to further India's connection with the **Lusophone world**.
	  ○ The Portuguese rule over Velha Goa (or Old Goa) started in **1510** and lasted till **1961**.
	• Lusophone World (**Portuguese-speaking countries**)
	  ○ **It** is spread in **nine countries** across **four continents**.
	  ○ **Portuguese** is the most spoken language in the **Southern Hemisphere (see image).**

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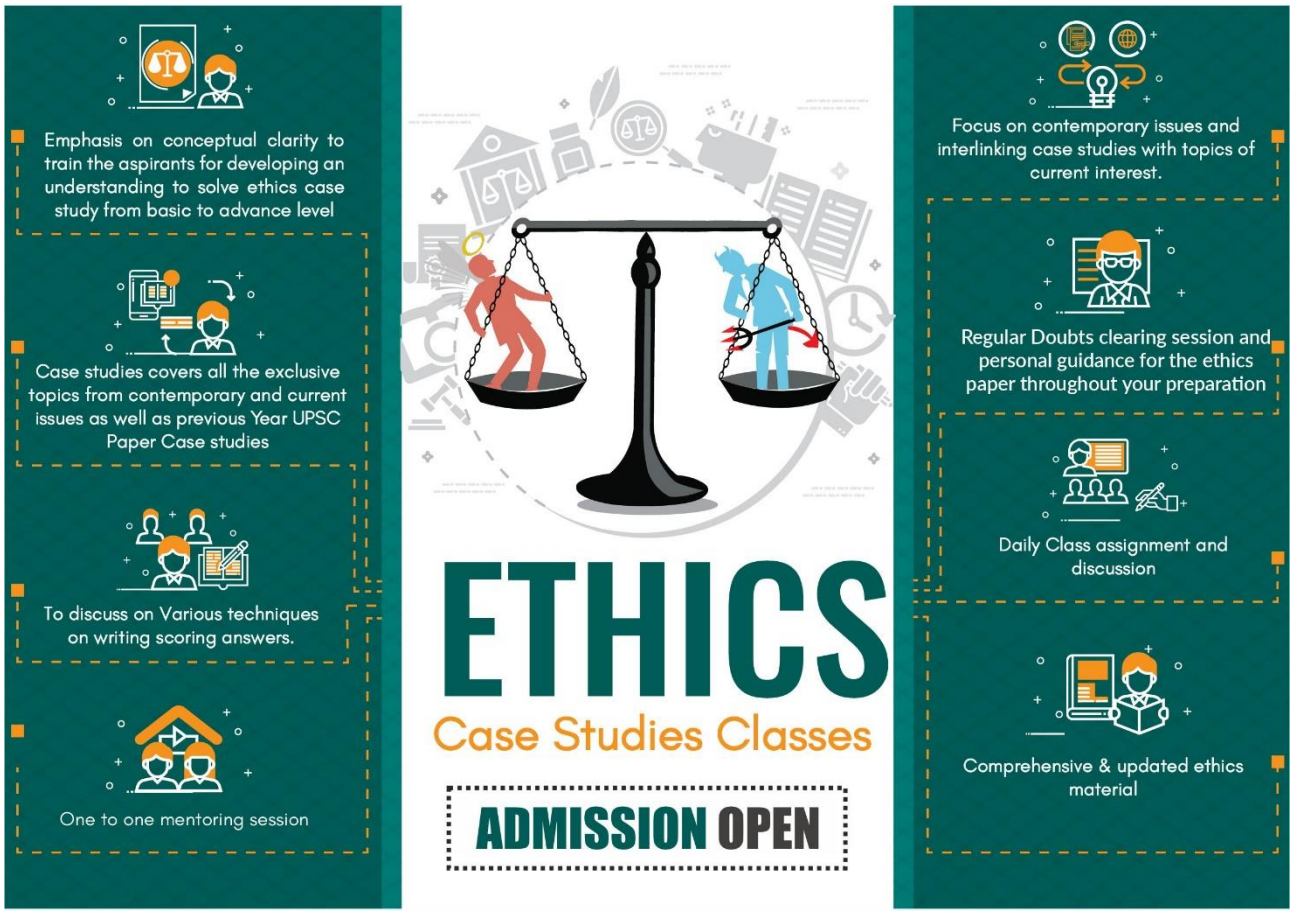
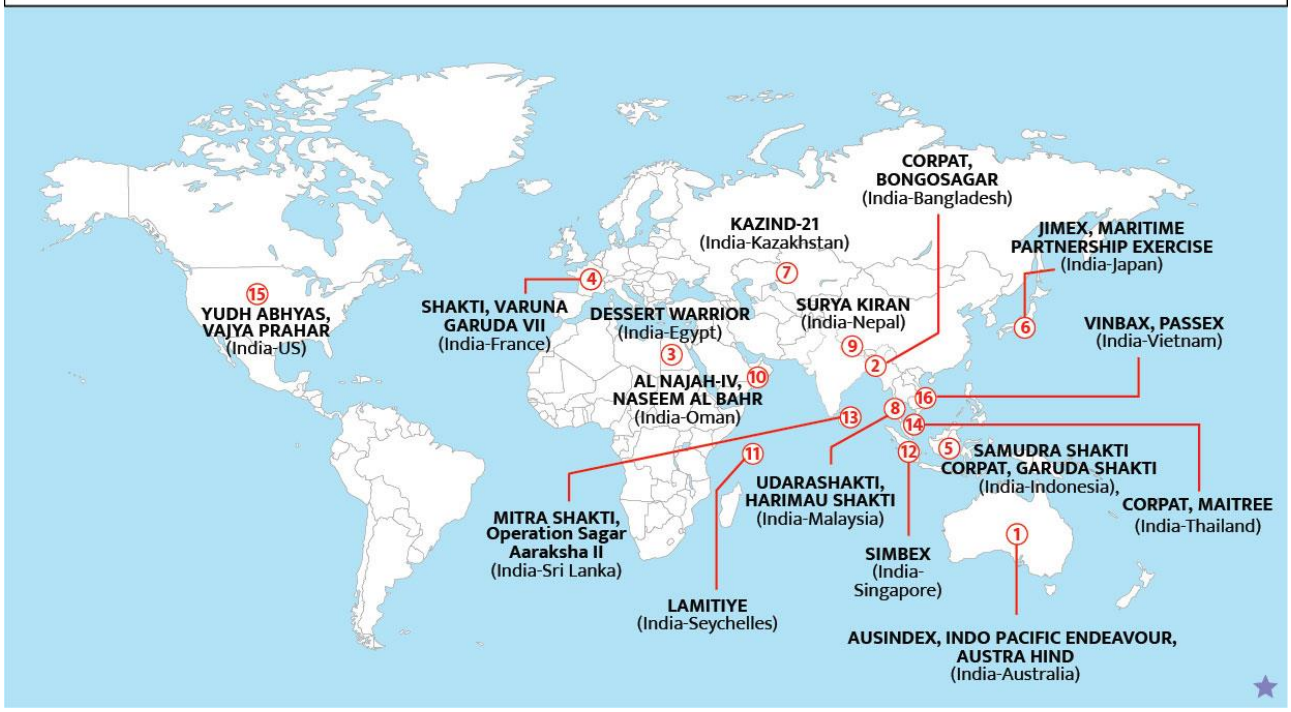
	○ In **1996, Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP),** also known as **Lusophone Commonwealth** was formed. ✓ CPLP is a **multilateral forum** with **9 member states** and **32 associate observers (India is associate observer).** • **India-Lusophone relations** ○ In **2014,** Goa organized the **3rd Lusofonia Games** involving athletes from **Lusophone World.** ○ **Six-fold** rise in **India's trade** with CPLP countries in the last decade. ○ India offers training to **all CPLP member states,** except Portugal, under the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC)** and **India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) framework.**
South Asia Energy Security	SAGE has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). **About SAGE** • It is a **consortium of energy-sector experts partnering with South Asian governments** to enable sustainable energy development in the South Asia region. ○ Consortium comprises USAID, the United States Department of Energy (DOE) and three national laboratories: the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL).
Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)	India to take over the Chair of Global Partnership on AI (GPAI) from France. • Launched in 2020, **GPAI is an international and multistakeholder initiative** to guide the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence consistent with human rights, fundamental freedoms, and shared democratic values. ○ The alliance will look to **bridge the gap between theory and practice** by supporting advanced research and applied activities on AI-related priorities. • At present, **GPAI has twenty-five member states** including the US, the UK, EU, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, etc. ○ **India joined the group as a founding member in 2020.** ○ **Its secretariat** is hosted at the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).**
Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF)	• A new **FIF for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR)** has been established internationally, with **financial commitments from multiple countries including India.** • **Hosted by World Bank** and with technical support from WHO, **FIF will:** ○ Provide **long-term financing to strengthen PPR capabilities** in low- and middle-income countries. ○ Address **critical gaps at national, regional, and global levels.** ○ FIF will help in **strengthening PPR capacity in areas such as zoonotic disease surveillance,** laboratories, emergency communication, **critical health workforce capacities** etc.
2Africa Pearls	• Facebook parent Meta **will partner with Bharti Airtel to expand 2Africa Pearls to India.** • 2Africa Pearls is **one of world's longest subsea cable systems** that will ultimately **interconnect countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe.** ○ Once completed, the system will **provide connectivity to total of 3 billion people.** • 2Africa Pearls **will improve connectivity of fixed-line broadband** internet **in India.**
Arctic Region	To strengthen **Russia's status as a "great Arctic power"**, Russia launched **two nuclear-powered icebreakers** at St. Petersburg.

	• **Nuclear-powered icebreaker uses nuclear fuel** to generate momentum and to **push its bow up on** the ice, which causes the ice to break off. • Currently**,** Russia is the **only country constructing nuclear-powered icebreakers** in the world. • Significance of the move: **Clears the Northern Sea Route,** which cuts down time to reach Asia by up to two weeks compared to the current route via the Suez canal. • The Arctic is key to Russia's aims to gain a **20-percent share in global LNG market by 2035.**



11. MILITARY EXERCISES IN NEWS

Bilateral Defence Exercises in News



Important Multilateral Exercises

Sr. No.	Countries involved	Name of exercise
1.	India and ASEAN Countries	**Samanvay**
2.	India, Mozambique and Tanzania	**IMT TRILAT**
3.	India, Brazil and South Africa	**IBSAMAR**

Important Multilateral Exercises where India participated

Sr. No.	Name of Exercise	Hosted by
1.	**Kakadu -22, Pitch Black**	Australia
2.	**Cobra Gold**	Thailand

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