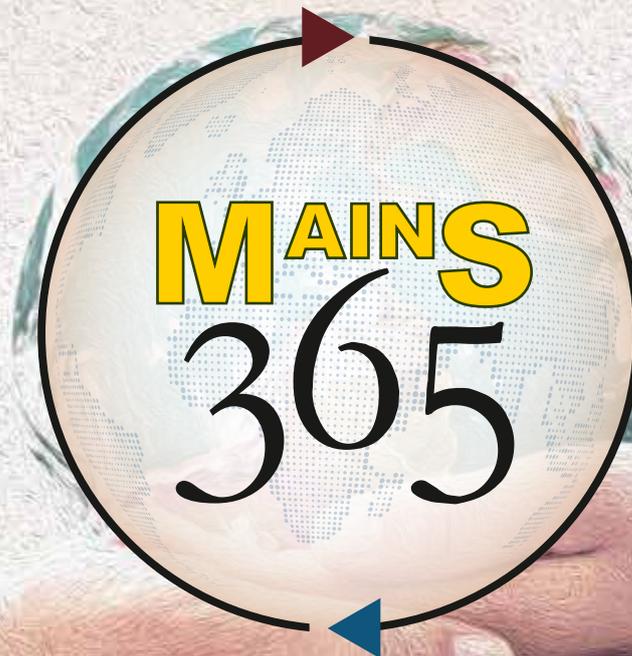


INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Classroom Study Material 2023

(August 2022 to May 2023)



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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1. INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS

1.1. INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

INDIA CHINA TRADE RELATIONS AT A GLANCE



India's bilateral trade with China reached a record \$135.98 billion in 2022 and trade deficit of more than \$100 billion.



China is second largest trading partner with major exports being petroleum products and major import electrical machinery, nuclear product, etc



China stands at 20th position with only 0.43% share in FDI equity inflow into India during April, 2000 to December, 2021.



Reasons for Rising Trade Deficit

- ⊖ **Growing Imports** for product like electrical machinery.
- ⊖ **Low Value Export:** India's export to China mainly includes primary goods with low monetary value such as iron ore etc.
 - Also, India has narrow basket of commodities for export.
- ⊖ **Market Access:** China imposes tax and non-tax barrier for high potential export sector of India such as pharmaceuticals, IT/IteS, etc.
- ⊖ **Dumping of Products** in Indian market at low cost to capture market.
- ⊖ **Exchange Rate Policy of China:** It revalued the renminbi in relation to the US dollar, which makes export expensive for India.
- ⊖ **Price Competitiveness:** Chinese product are cheaper..



INITIATIVES TAKEN BY INDIA TO CHECK TRADE DEFICIT



Reducing Imports:

- ⊖ **Protective Measures: Anti-dumping and countervailing duties** are being imposed on Chinese products.
- ⊖ **Atmanirbhar Bharat:** Under this initiative, government is **promoting domestic products.**
 - **India did not join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership** to protect Indian industry.
- ⊖ **Global Supply Chain Management:** India, Japan and Australia launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative.
- ⊖ **Products Ban:** India has banned certain products such as **several Chinese applications, power equipment's etc.**



Enhance Exports:

- ⊖ **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) (2020):** Under it, the government provides incentives to Indian companies based on the sales of their products.
- ⊖ **Make in India (2014):** Its objective is to make India **a hub of manufacturing in world.**
- ⊖ **Promotion of Specific Sector: In 2020, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry** identified 12 sectors - to make India a global supplier and cut import bills.



Way Forward

- ⊖ **Self-Reliant:** The policy needs to be formulated to promote self-reliance in the sphere of electrical, API's etc.
- ⊖ **Market Access:** By using diplomatic channel and soft power, more access to high value export could be provided.
- ⊖ **Import Substitution:** India can effectively substitute Chinese import by domestic products.
- ⊖ **Competitiveness of Indian Products:** India should enhance the cost-effectiveness of Indian Products.

India should formulate strategic policy to reduce the trade deficit. Also, it should raise its concerns with the China about the skewed trade deficit so that effective steps for market access can be taken.

1.1.1. INDIA-CHINA BORDER DISPUTE

Why in News?

India described China's new law on land borders as a concern as it can affect existing bilateral pacts on the management of the border and the overall boundary question.

More on news

- The **Article 8 of the Act is of particular concern for India**. It states that declares that any organisation or individual who commits acts that are detrimental to China's national interests shall be held accountable by law.
- Also, **Article 33 states that government has the right to take, measures to counter** measures against acts that endanger its sovereignty or fundamental norms governing international relations.

About Border Dispute with China

- There is **no mutually agreed Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
 - **LAC is divided into three sectors:** Western sector (Ladakh), Middle Sector (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim).
 - ✓ There are certain areas along the **LAC** that are areas of differing perception and **China reportedly has been building infrastructure on its side**.
 - ✓ It is part of the **Chinese Salami Slicing tactic or Cabbage strategy. It is a strategy of acquiring new territories**, at the expense of its neighbours.
 - **India-China have a series of 5 arrangements to address border disputes**, with the latest one being the Border Defense Co-operation Agreement signed in 2013.

Reasons for unresolved border dispute

- **Border Demarcation:** The Indo-China border, though about 3000km long, is not clearly defined. This has led to **multiple perceptions of the border**.
- **Resourceful/strategic sections:** Ladakh supplies freshwater, geothermal resources etc to India and it connects the Chinese Xinjiang province with western Tibet, therefore is of great significance to both.
- **Perceived threat from India's geopolitical interests:** India's **Neighbourhood First policy**, closer ties with the United States and its allies and growing influence in the Indian Ocean region.
- **Growing Power imbalance:** China is challenging India's position, in South Asia and Indian Ocean Region especially with CPEC.
 - Recently, China convened a first "**China-Indian Ocean Region Forum**" to **establish a marine disaster prevention and mitigation cooperation mechanism** between China and countries in Indian Ocean region **except India**.

Way forward

- **Better understanding of each other's regional initiatives** through open dialogue is important to build trust.
 - The Indo-Pacific vision is as much a developmental necessity for India as the BRI may be to China.
- **Mutually demilitarising the armed forces** deployed by both countries.
- **A balanced trade and economic relationship.**
- **Acknowledgment of India's multilateral aspirations** by China can allow both to collaborate on emerging issues like climate change.
- **Accommodate the legitimate interests on key partnerships:** China's with Pakistan and India's with the United States.

1.1.2 INDIA TAIWAN RELATIONS

Why in News?

Recently the annual India-Taiwan deputy economic minister-level meeting was held in India.

Key outcome of the meet

- Giving India priority under its '**New Southbound Policy (NSP)**'.

- **NSP launched in 2016** aims to leverage Taiwan's **cultural, technological and economic assets** to enhance its regional integration and promote broader development of **Indo-Pacific region**.
- India expressed its interest to provide **Taiwanese industries opportunity for expansion** in sectors like **electronics, automotive engineering, and green technologies, etc.**
- Setting up a **semiconductor facility in India**.

Need for developing stronger relations between India and Taiwan

- **For success of India Semiconductor Mission (ISM): Taiwan is a leader in semiconductor manufacturing** and accounts for India's 74% import of semiconductor.
 - Also, critical for **semiconductor supply chain resilience**.
- **Free and open Indo-Pacific:** Taiwan is a key linking point for India's commercial ambition in the South China Sea along with dealing with China's assertiveness.
- **Geopolitical shift:** Emergence of the Indo-Pacific region, and Quad motivate India and Taiwan to expand the horizons of their bilateral collaboration.

About India Taiwan relations

- India follows the **'One-China' policy**, and has **not provided any formal diplomatic recognition** to Taiwan or Republic of China (ROC) as it is known officially.
 - One China Policy 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 **Tibet, Hong Kong and Xinjiang** to be an inseparable part of mainland China.
- However, **India does share a non-diplomatic (unofficial) linkages** with Taiwan which is facilitated by economic and cultural cooperation between both.
- Yet, **since 2010, India has stopped using the term "one-China" policy**.
- Recent developments in relationship-
 - India has signed a **Double-Taxation Avoidance Agreement and a Bilateral Investment Treaty** with Taiwan.
 - In 2018, **Parliamentary committee has recommended to strengthen India-Taiwan relations** to tap the full potential.
 - **Vedanta and Foxconn (Taiwan)** signed a MoU with the Gujarat government to set up **semiconductor chip manufacturing plant in Gujarat**.

Challenges in India-Taiwan relations

- **China factor:** India's is overly cautious about China's sensitivities while dealing with Taiwan and Tibet. For example, Taiwan has not been a central element of India's 'Look East', and now 'Act East' policy.
- **Lack of consistency:** Despite compelling reasons for convergence, much of the **relationship has been episodic, characterised by momentary highs**.
- **Limited economic engagement:** The bilateral trade which grew from \$934 million in 1995 to **\$7.5 billion in 2011** shows slow growth since then. The bilateral trade was **\$8.9 billion in 2021-22**
- **Limited people to people contact:** Sectors like education and tourism largely remains untapped. There is only a modest contingent of Taiwan-focused scholars in Indian universities and vice-e-versa.

Way forward for enhancing India-Taiwan Economic Cooperation

- **Early conclusion of FTA:** An FTA would facilitate co-operation in sectors like Precision farming, Renewable energy, Healthcare, etc.
- **Convergence in the South China Sea:** Exploration of resources and promoting commercial activities in South China Sea are India's key motives.
- **Restoring regular political interaction:** Meeting of **India-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Forum should be regularised** and other mechanisms should be established to facilitate similar interactions.

Related Information: Background of China-Taiwan conflict

- Taiwan (earlier known as Formosa) first came under full Chinese control in the 17th Century when the **Qing dynasty** began administering it. Then, in 1895, they gave up the island to Japan after losing the **first Sino Japanese war**.
- China took the island again in 1945 after Japan lost **World War II**.
- The communists won after the civil war in China in 1949 and took control in Beijing. Chiang Kai-shek and the nationalist party - known as the **Kuomintang** - fled to Taiwan, where they ruled for the next several decades.
- China points to this history to say that Taiwan was originally a Chinese province. But the Taiwanese point to the same history to argue that they were never part of the modern Chinese state that was established under Mao in 1949.

What is US policy for Taiwan?

- 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** (unclear about whether or how it would defend Taiwan in the event of an attack).

ISLAND CHAIN STRATEGY

The map illustrates the US Island Chain Strategy. A solid black line represents the 'Proposed Island Chain', which includes Djibouti, Gwadar, Pakistan, Hambantota, Sri Lanka, and Diego Garcia, British Territory. Dashed blue lines represent 'Existing Island Chains', labeled as the First, Second, and Third Island Chains. The map also shows the Fifth Island Chain in the Indian Ocean region.

- US supplies the island with arms and spare parts (by far the **largest arms dealer for Taiwan**) to maintain sufficient self-defense capabilities under its **Taiwan Relations Act, 1979**.
- Traditionally, 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.
 - 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**.
 - It is a part of **Island Chain Strategy** formulated by the US in 1951 to contain the erstwhile USSR and China with a string of naval bases.

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1.2. INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and Bangladesh share a unique relationship, intertwined by a common history (till 1947 partition), language, culture etc. and quest towards a collective future.



Bilateral trade stood at \$18.2 billion



Bangladesh is the largest trading partner of India in South Asia.



Bangladesh is biggest beneficiary of Line of Credit



Areas of Cooperation

- ⊕ **Defence and Security:** Military exercises such as MILAN and SAMPRITI, intelligence sharing and India's supply of military equipment and technology transfer and also for ensuring security in northeast
- ⊕ **Traditional Sectors** such as tourism healthcare education etc, as well as Frontier technologies like Nuclear, Space, Information Technology etc.
- ⊕ **Foreign Policy:** Bangladesh is at the centre of Neighborhood First and Act East' Policies.
- ⊕ **Multilateral Cooperation:** SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA, etc.
- ⊕ **Border Management:** Land Boundary Agreement (2015), Delimitation of Maritime boundary (2014).
- ⊕ **Governance and Cultural ties:** Indian Council for cultural relations offers scholarships to students from Bangladesh.



Challenges

- ⊕ **Sharing of Testa and Barak river water**
- ⊕ **Increasing Chinese Interference** through increased FDIs and infrastructure offers.
- ⊕ **Illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya Immigrant** creating concerns to internal Security.
- ⊕ **Porous borders giving rise to illegal activities.**
- ⊕ **Rising radicalization:** ill treatment of minorities and presence of fundamentalists/radical groups like Harkat-al-Jihad-al-Islami(HUI) in Bangladesh.
- ⊕ Spill over of India's **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC).**



Steps taken

- ⊕ **Increasing Trade:** reduction in customs and immigration documents, land customs stations, boarder Haat, integrated check posts etc, E.g. Sutarkandi in Assam
- ⊕ **Development Cooperation:** India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline, Akhaura Agartala rail link, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant by India and Russia in Bangladesh
- ⊕ **Improving Connectivity:** Protocol on inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) and building bridges like Feni Bridge
- ⊕ **India's assistance during COVID pandemic.**
- ⊕ **Resolving river disputes:** Mol was signed in 2019 on water sharing of Feni river.



Way Forward

- ⊕ **Cross border immigration management** through digitalization at grass root level.
- ⊕ **Managing water resources** through basin wide approach, regular JRC meetings
- ⊕ **Encouraging people to people interaction.**
- ⊕ **Expediting projects** like Maitree super thermal power project.
- ⊕ **Operationalizing the Agreement** on the use Chattogram and Mongla ports for transshipment of goods to and from north east of India.

Deepening relationship with Bangladesh has become a necessity in the face of shifting geo-economics. There is scope for India-Bangladesh ties to move to the next level, based on cooperation, coordination, and consolidation.

1.2.1 BANGLADESH PM'S VISIT TO INDIA

Why in News?

On Bangladesh PM's recent visit, India and Bangladesh **announced several initiatives** to further cooperation between two nations.

Key decisions/initiatives announced in the recent meet

| | |
|---|--|
| Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both sides will soon commence negotiations on a CEPA. |
| Water sharing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed MoU on sharing of waters of Kushiyara river (branch of Barak river), first such pact since signing of Ganga water treaty in 1996. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pact will benefit people residing in southern Assam and Sylhet division of Bangladesh. |
| Connectivity projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inauguration of Rupsha bridge, a key part of Khulna-Mongla Port rail project. Khulna Darshana railway link project upgradation. Parbatipur -Kaunia railway line. |
| Others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maitree power plant at Rampal, Khulna unveiled. It is being set-up as Indian Development Assistance under Concessional Financing Scheme (CFS). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under CFS, Government of India has been supporting Indian Entities bidding for strategically important infrastructure projects abroad. |

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1.3. INDIA-BHUTAN RELATIONS

INDIA-BHUTAN RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

Diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968 with the establishment of a Special Office of India in Thimphu. The foundation of India- Bhutan bilateral relations has been the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949 between the two countries, which was revised in February 2007.



India has committed an assistance package of **INR 4500 crores** to Bhutan for the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP)



India is Bhutan's largest trading partner and bilateal trade is around **\$1422 Mn** for 2021-22.



India remains the leading source of investments in Bhutan, comprising **50% of the country's total FDI**.



Importance of Bhutan for India

- ⊕ **Geostrategic importance:** Bhutan's strategic location makes it crucial for India's national security.
- ⊕ **Economic significance:** Abundant hydropower resources in Bhutan to meet India's energy needs.
- ⊕ **Environmental cooperation:** Due to the shared Himalayan ecosystem, both countries can collaborate on conservation, climate change adaptation, and disaster management.
- ⊕ **Regional integration:** Better relations can lead to greater regional cooperation within SAARC and BIMSTEC.



Areas of Cooperation

- ⊕ **Hydropower:** Mutually beneficial hydro-power cooperation with Bhutan forms the core of bilateral economic cooperation.
- ⊕ **Cultural Relations: Buddhism** connects both countries with similar ideologies.
 - **The India-Bhutan Foundation**, established in 2003, aims to enhance people-to-people exchanges in the cultural field.
- ⊕ **Security:** The Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) is permanently based in western Bhutan and assists and trains the Royal Bhutan Army.
 - India's Border Road Organisation, has built the majority of roads in Bhutan **under project 'DANTAK'**



Challenges in improving the relationship

- ⊕ **China's presence:** Bhutan's border disputes with China like at Doklam raises security concerns for India.
- ⊕ **Issues in hydropower trade:** India's past changes in power purchasing policy, refusal to admit Bhutan into the National Power Grid, etc have created a rift in the relationship.
- ⊕ **Hideout for militants:** Militant outfits like the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Democratic Front of Bodos (NDFB), etc uses Bhutan for the hideout.
- ⊕ **BBIN initiative:** The Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement, is on hold by Bhutan due to environmental concerns.
- ⊕ **Access to trade:** Bhutan is diversifying its market and signed a preferential trade agreement in 2021 with Bangladesh



Way forward

- ⊕ **Initiating Trilogue with china:** Opening such communication channels can minimize uncertainties with regard to border disputes.
- ⊕ **Diversifying economic engagements:** Strengthening collaboration in fields such as fintech, space tech, and biotech between the two countries can lead to a stronger partnership.
- ⊕ **Improving people-to-people ties:** Soft power diplomacy can be induced through Buddhism and by encouraging more tourist activities.
- ⊕ **Security measures:**
 - **Establishment of contact points** between countries and mechanisms for real-time sharing of information in criminal matters.
 - **Development of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** on repatriation for the Indo-Bhutan border.

India being the bigger country owes more responsibility in taking more concrete steps for strengthening relation with Bhutan for regional stability and peace. ★

1.3.1. BHUTAN KING'S RECENT VISIT TO INDIA

Why in News?

The King of Bhutan recently visited India to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

Key outcomes of the recent visit

- **Support to Bhutan:**
 - **Additional Standby Credit Facility (SCF)** for a period of five years.
 - ✓ **SCF provides financial assistance to low-income countries** with short-term balance of payments needs.
- **Hydropower:** Discussion on Hydroelectric Power Plants in Bhutan like Mangdechhu, Chhukha, Basochhu, Punatsangchhu-I, Sankosh project etc.
- **Security:** Established **first integrated check post at Jaigaon** (West Bengal, India) and Phuntsholing (Bhutan).
- **Connectivity:** Expedited **Kokrajhar (Assam)- Gelephu rail link** and supported Gelephu airport construction for investment attraction.

1.4. INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS

INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

Nepal is an important neighbour of India and occupies special significance in its foreign policy because of the geographic, historical, cultural and economic linkages that span centuries. But the relationship took a nosedive in 2015, with India first getting blamed for interfering in the Constitution drafting process and then for an unofficial blockade that generated widespread resentment against India.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Bilateral trade over US\$ 11 billion |  India is Nepal's largest trade partner and source of largest FDI |  India's export to Nepal has grown over 8 times in the past 10 years |
|--|--|---|

Bilateral Relations



Areas of cooperation

- ⊕ **Defence:** India assists the Nepal Army in its modernization, Military exercises like Surya Kiran to boost interoperability.
- ⊕ **Water resource:** Kosi Treaty, Mahakali Treaty to discuss issues relating to cooperation in water resources, flood management etc.
- ⊕ **Energy:** Power Exchange Agreement for meeting the power requirements in the border areas, Cross-border oil product pipeline from Motihari(Bihar) to Amlekhganj(Nepal), hydroelectric projects in Solu corridor
- ⊕ **Connectivity projects:** Raxaul-Kathmandu Railway project, BBIN.
- ⊕ **Education:** India provides scholarships to Nepalese students for various courses.
- ⊕ **Culture:** Strong historical and cultural links in terms of religion, language, cuisine, movies etc. (Roti-Beti ka Naata).



Challenges in relationship

- ⊕ **China's rising influence** in Nepal's economy, politics and society impacting India's traditionally dominant influence.
 - **Pr Anti-India rhetoric** is running high in Nepal.
 - **Nepal's aggressive stance** over border disputes (Kalapani boundary issue)
 - **Nepal has joined China's BRI.**
- ⊕ **Nepal's discontent in bilateral trade** due to huge trade deficit that it incurs.
- ⊕ **Distrust towards India** as a result of India's big brother attitude, lackadaisical approach towards revisiting the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 and approach of dealing with river treaties.
- ⊕ **Unrestricted cross-border movement of people** particularly impacted Nepal's domestic industry, local livelihood opportunities, law and order, and national security during COVID.



Recent Initiatives to restore normalcy in the bilateral ties

- ⊕ **6th India-Nepal Joint Commission** meeting was held that discussed cooperation in a range of areas, including power, oil and gas, water resources, capacity building and tourism.
- ⊕ **India's assistance during COVID-19** and collaboration between Indian and Nepali health professionals.
- ⊕ **Operationalisation of cross-border rail link** from Jayanagar (Bihar) to Kurtha (Nepal).
- ⊕ **Indian PM lay a foundation stone for a Buddhist Vihara**, being built with Indian assistance, in Lumbini- an step towards reinforcing Buddhism links and promoting India's soft power in Nepal.
- ⊕ Taking forward **Sapta Kosi High Dam** project.



Road Ahead

- ⊕ **Focussing on multimodal connectivity** between India and Nepal.
- ⊕ **Setting up appropriate bilateral mechanisms to discuss contentious issue.**(boundary dispute resolution between India and Bangladesh should serve as a model)
- ⊕ **Multilateral forums** such as BBIN, BIMSTEC, NAM, SAARC etc. must be utilized to serve common interests.
- ⊕ **Sustained engagement and limited interference with Nepal** across the political spectrum.
- ⊕ **Strengthening Economic cooperation**
- ⊕ **Leverage people-to-people links** to ensure a stable and mutually-productive state-to-state relationship.
- ⊕ **Revisiting Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950** as recommended by Eminent Persons' Group set up jointly by the two countries.

India's long-term interest in this sensitive neighboring country requires interdependence between the two countries which is best served by a stable multi-party democracy and economic prosperity in Nepal.

1.4.1. INDIA-NEPAL HYDROPOWER RELATIONSHIP

Why in news?

Recently, India and Nepal have signed a MoU to develop the hydropower projects.

More about news

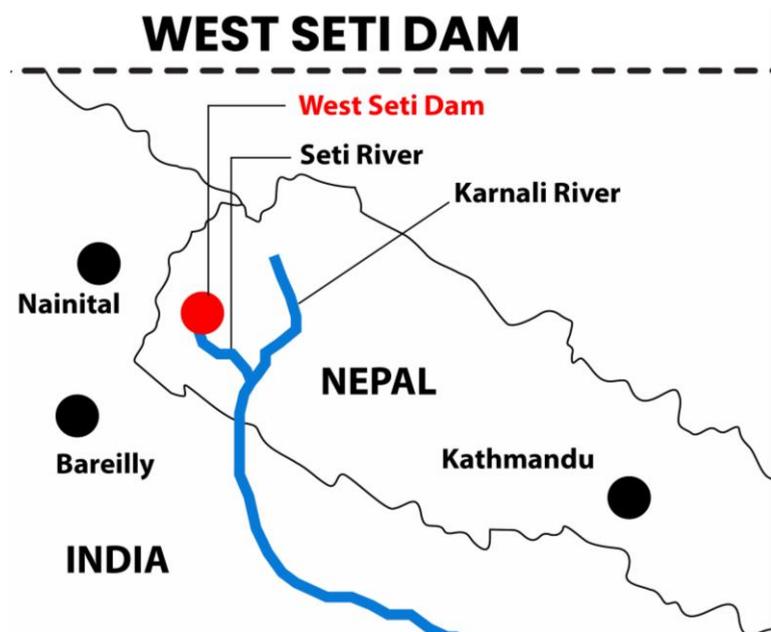
- Project is to **develop the West Seti and Seti River (SR6) projects.**
 - Also, projects like Seti Hydro project, which was to be originally build under the Chinese BRI, is now being built by India. Thus, the **hydroelectric relationship is seen as a counter to China in Nepal.**
 - **West Seti River is a tributary of Karnali River located in the far western region of Nepal.**
- India and Nepal have also agreed to take forward the **Sapta Kosi high dam project.**
 - India is also involved in other projects such as the **Mahakali Treaty**, the **Upper Karnali Project** and the **Arun - III projects** in western and eastern Nepal, respectively.

Challenges in development of hydropower relations

- **Mountain Topography:** Difficult terrain, environmental considerations, and population densities.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Lack of transport facilities, transmission grid and other infrastructures, **increases the cost of hydropower development.**
- **Policy and regulatory issues:** There is a **lack of policy, regulatory mechanism** for the third-party access to the grid due to:
 - **Lack of transparency in calculating cost and benefit calculations;**
 - **Lack of institutional support to lead the implementation;**
 - **Lack of financial resources to implementation;**
 - **Power market not guaranteed.**
- **Water sharing issues:** The issue of right to downstream water use interferes with cooperation for benefit with regulated water, flood control with bigger multipurpose projects.
- **Incompletion of earlier project:** Projects like Mahakali and Upper Karnali Projects have not been completed since many years.

Way Forward

- **Careful study of investment scenarios,** distribution and transmission network and cost of resettlement and rehabilitation related to the project.
- **Collaboration with other countries:** The hydropower project can be **extended to other regional partners under the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) framework** for cross-border energy cooperation.



1.5. INDUS WATER TREATY (IWT)

INDUS WATER TREATY (IWT) AT A GLANCE

The Indus Waters Treaty was signed in 1960 after nine years of negotiations between India and Pakistan with the help of the World Bank, which is also a signatory.



At current usage, India utilises a little over 90% of its quota of Indus water.



Recently, Pakistan has raised concerns regarding Kishanganga dam in Kashmir and the Ratle hydroelectric power station on the Chenab.



About the treaty

- ☉ **Sharing of water**
 - **Eastern rivers** (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) were **allocated to India for unrestricted use.**
 - **Western rivers** (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab) were **allocated largely to Pakistan.**
 - ☉ **India is permitted for certain agricultural uses,** to build 'run of the river' hydropower projects with limited storage.
- ☉ **Permanent Indus Commission (PIC):** Commissioners are appointed by both the countries **for cooperation and information exchange** regarding their use of the rivers.
 - The treaty provides a **3-tier dispute resolution mechanism** of which PIC is the first stage, neutral expert is second stage and then Court of Arbitration..
- ☉ **IWT does not have a unilateral exit provision,** and is supposed to remain in force unless both the countries ratify another mutually agreed pact.



Issues with the IWT

- ☉ **Dissatisfaction over water apportionment:** Since 80% water is allocated to Pakistan.
- ☉ **Ambiguous and room for conflict:** technical nature of the treaty and the western rivers flow through the conflicted region of Jammu and Kashmir that paves the way for conflict.
- ☉ **Lack of mutual trust:** Lack of trust building mechanism between India and Pakistan.
- ☉ **Suboptimal data sharing** due to diplomatic tensions.
 - Also, the **quality of shared data is questioned** many times and there is no mechanism for the research community to get access to it.
- ☉ **Limited role of the Guarantor:** For example, in the current disputes of Kishanganga and Ratle Hydroelectric Projects, the World Bank had to appoint the Neutral Expert and chairman of CoA simultaneously.
 - Such **concurrent appointments may pose practical and legal risks.**
 - However, the **World Bank lacks the power to decide which one should take the precedence.**
- ☉ **Lack of adequate environmental safeguards.**



Reforms needed to make IWT more effective

- ☉ **Ratification of the UN Water Convention:** To **ensure the sustainable use of transboundary water resources** by facilitating cooperation.
- ☉ **Global forum on transboundary rivers:** For solving water conflicts can **assist in comprehensive policy-making.**
- ☉ **Promoting open data policy** to international supervisory bodies and other stakeholders for promoting transparency and applied scientific research.
- ☉ **Optimisation of the treaty:** Since unilateral exit is not possible, India should ensure full utilisation of all accessible water of the rivers.
- ☉ **Renegotiate the treaty:** Both the countries should undertake joint research on the rivers to study the impact of climate change for 'future cooperation' (underlined in Article VII of the IWT).

With a history of protracted rivalry, the Indus Waters Treaty is a rare example cooperation between India and Pakistan. The treaty shows how international mediation can be instrumental in reaching of agreement between the two countries. ↑

1.5.1. CROSS BORDER FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Why in news?

The South Asian region collectively faces the problem of floods every year with change of season or variation in river flows necessitating a need cross border flood management mechanism.

Need for a cross border flood management mechanism for India

- **Frequent floods in the Kosi region** (the Mithilanchal region) are a major point of discussion between India and Nepal.
- **Large dependency on rivers:** Close to **80% of India's population** is dependent on 14 major rivers for food and livelihood.
- **Flood-control mechanism needs an integrated approach:** For example, infrastructural developments on Brahmaputra in China impacts both India and Bangladesh.

| India's current mechanism of cooperation in river water sharing | |
|---|--|
| Countries | Mechanism for cooperation |
| India-Nepal | • Treaties for Kosi and Mahakali Rivers. |
| India-Pakistan | • Indus Waters Treaty |
| India-China | • Hydrological data sharing treaty for Brahmaputra and Sutlej Rivers. |
| India-Bangladesh | • Treaties for Ganga, Teesta, Brahmaputra, and Barak Rivers. |
| 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. |

- **Emerging threats like climate change:** Rising sea levels or melting of glaciers could drive changes in the river ecosystem whose mitigation demands regional cooperation.

What are the major issues in cross border flood management?

- **Limited Sharing of Hydrological Data:** The water sharing among the South-Asian states has been sporadic in nature and remains contingent upon the status of their political relationship.
 - For example, China stopped sharing **hydrological data on the Brahmaputra** with India during the Doklam standoff in 2017.
- **Asymmetric control between upper and lower riparian states:** For instance, China is **using its leverage over water flows as a stick to win concessions from downstream South-east Asian states** on other issues, including its Belt and Road Initiative.
- **Enforcement: Bilateral arrangements** have limited effectiveness and are rarely enforceable at international level.
- **Problem of Water Nationalism:** For instance, Pakistan has time and again challenged India's **Baglihar dam project on the Chenab River** before the World Bank.
- **Issues with the prevalent treaties:**
 - **Not futuristic in nature:** E.g., the Kosi treaty **did not make enough provisions for the maintenance of embankments and the rivers changing their course.**
 - **Poor implementation of the treaties:** For instance, the **Mahakali Treaty** is in force, but there have been **ups and downs in its implementation.**
 - **Absence of multilateral treaties:** For example, the India-Bangladesh cooperation is contingent upon usage by Nepal as an upper riparian state in the river ecosystem.

What approach can be adopted for overcoming these challenges?

- **Exploring avenues of Cooperation:** on issues like sharing of major rivers during lean period, hydropower generation and distribution. etc.
- **Need for Political will:** Concerns like water sharing and usage must not be combined with larger security or border concerns.
- **Recommendations of Standing Committee on Flood Management:**

| Some of the international treaties and best practices |
|--|
| • United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, 1997: dealing with measures of protection, preservation and management related to the uses of those watercourses and their waters. |
| • Treaty for Amazon Co-operation in 1978: signed for equitable sharing in South America. |
| • Mekong River Commission: It is major multilateral development in Asia for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River, 1995 signed by Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. |

- The Committee recommended to **renegotiate the treaty with Pakistan** to address the impact of climate change on water availability in the Indus basin.
- **Learning from best practices:** South Asia as a region has much to learn from the experiences of international treaties (*given in the box*) and river basin organizations.
- **Long term Planning** by both the countries to end the crisis of flooding every year.

1.6. INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH TALIBAN

Why in news?

Recently, **Taliban regime appreciated India's humanitarian and development efforts** in crisis-hit Afghanistan and expressed desire for positive bilateral relations.

More on news

- Taliban wants India to **complete Shahtoot Dam project in Kabul**.
- It is also keen to **revive connectivity through Iran's Chabahar port and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project**.
- **Earlier, India reopened its Embassy in Kabul** after nearly ten months of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

Why should India engage with Taliban?

- **Important stakeholder in Afghanistan:** India's Development Assistance to Afghanistan has been significant.
- **Rising International Engagements:** Many other countries are now starting to engage Taliban.
 - Afghanistan has been **included under China's BRI by extending CPEC**; Iran has started **resuming its projects and connectivity links** with Afghanistan.
- **National Security:** Taliban also has ties with the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. An engagement with the Taliban would give an **opportunity to convey Indian concerns directly**.
- **Greater possibilities of diplomatic engagement:** Taliban in power is more divided than they were as a fighting force, and the situation may provide room for a layered political and diplomatic engagement.
- **Reconnecting with natives:** Indian outreach to the Taliban will help it reconnect with the Afghan people, a link that snapped after the Taliban takeover.

Downsides of India's engagement

- **Shows inconsistency in India's policy:** India has always supported **"an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled" process for enduring peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan**.
- **Security concerns:** Recently a UN report shows that terror groups are continuing to find safe haven on Afghan soil with the Taliban's support.
- **No change in the ideology of Taliban:** Taliban has not changed from its previous medievalism. Attacks on minorities are continued and restrictions on women have increased.
- **Pro-China Neighbours of Taliban:** As India increases its engagement with Taliban, it would need to redefine its relationship with Tajikistan as the latter has a deeply adversarial relationship with Afghanistan and has moved close to China in the past decade.

Conclusion

India's engagement with the Taliban is based on India's historic ties with Afghanistan. It is necessary for both sides now to take into account each other's concerns and improve diplomatic and economic relations.

| Indian investments in Afghanistan | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Assistance in constructing, upgrading, rebuilding or restoring buildings and various type of infrastructure. Examples-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan's Parliament in Kabul. • Reconstruction of the Salma dam (Afghan-India Friendship Dam). • Construction of Zaranj-Delaram road. • High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) program |
| | <p>Transfer of various objects like ambulances, buses, biscuits, medicine military vehicles and helicopters, etc.</p> |
| | <p>People-to-people exchanges. Examples-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering scholarships for Afghan students. • Organizing training for Afghan soldiers, policemen and public servants. |

1.7. INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS

INDIA- MALDIVES RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial links steeped in antiquity. Except for a brief period between February 2012 to November 2018 (when there was pro-China government in Maldives), relations have been close, cordial and multi-dimensional. In the recent visit of Maldives President to India, both countries signed six pacts thereby upgrading their strategic partnership.



Bilateral trade stands at US\$ 323 million, heavily in favour of India.



India emerged as Maldives' 3rd largest trade partner in 2021.



Areas of cooperation

- ☉ **Bilateral Economic and Trade Relations: Greater Male Connectivity Project** to be developed by India will be a major catalyst for the Maldivian economy.
- ☉ **Security and Defence Cooperation: Comprehensive Action Plan** for Defence to consolidate defence partnership, **Composite Training Centre**, Coastal Radar System (CRS) etc.
- ☉ **Development Assistance projects by India: Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Maldives Institute of Technical Education, Technology Adoption Programme** in Education Sector in Maldives etc. and projects under **High-Impact Community Development projects scheme**.
- ☉ **Humanitarian Assistance by India:** During the **1988 coup attempt, the 2004 Tsunami, during 2014 water crisis in Malé (Operation NEER), supply of measles vaccine and rapid and comprehensive assistance** since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ☉ **Other areas** such as tourism including medical tourism, cultural exchange, people to people contacts etc.



Significance of Maldives for India

- ☉ **Geostrategic:** Important member of India's '**Neighbourhood First**' policy and **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** vision.
- ☉ **Geopolitical:** China's '**Belt and Road**' Initiative (BRI), involving the Maldives has widened the Chinese sphere of influence that has potential to **adversely impact India's interests**.
- ☉ **Geoeconomics:** 50 per cent of India's external trade and 80 per cent of her energy imports transit through the Sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the vicinity of the Maldives.
- ☉ **Role of Net security Provider:** Maldives is positioned like a '**toll gate**' between the **western Indian Ocean** and the **eastern Indian Ocean**.
- ☉ **Regional Cooperation** through platforms like SAARC, SASEC, IORA and IONS.



Challenges

- ☉ **Domestic Politics in Maldives:** Till 2018, political leaders openly displayed their hostility towards India and preference for China. Later on, as regime changed, India-First Policy was announced in 2018.
- ☉ **China's influence:** Maldives growing proximity to China and endorsement of belt and road initiative.
- ☉ **Concerns of expatriate workers** particularly the unskilled workers in Maldives.



Way Forward

- ☉ **Deepening security cooperation** through mechanisms like '**Colombo Security Conclave**'.
- ☉ **Adhering to Gujral doctrine of 5 basic principles** to guide India-Maldives relations

India-Maldives are perfectly placed to complement each other's strategic interests. In accordance with the Neighbourhood First Policy of the government, India remains a committed development partner for a stable, prosperous and peaceful Maldives.

1.8 INDIA AND NORTH EASTERN NEIGHBOURS

INDIA'S NORTH-EASTERN NEIGHBOURS AT A GLANCE

External Affairs Minister recently indicated that **Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Nepal** were India's most trusted global partners along with Japan and members of the ASEAN.



The northeast region shares international borders of **5,812 km**



Neighbouring countries include **China, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar.**



Significance of trusted relation with North-eastern neighbours for India

- ⊖ **Development in Northeast region (NER):** Better trade with East Asia can spur rapid growth of India's underdeveloped NER.
- ⊖ **Security of North-eastern region:** Engagement with neighbouring nations is pertinent in presence of an aggressive China.
- ⊖ **Geopolitical:** Greater engagement with region provides India a stronger diplomatic and economic foothold.
- ⊖ **To Connect with Southeast Asia under the Act East policy.**
- ⊖ **Integration with regional and global supply chains:** with countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia becoming major manufacturing hubs.



Measures taken to improve relation with North-eastern Neighbours

- ⊖ **Act East policy:** It strengthen India's interaction with its south-eastern neighbours in three important domains: commerce, culture, and connectivity.
- ⊖ **Partnership with regional and Multi-lateral organization** in the East such as ASEAN, ARF, EAS, BIMSTEC, ACD, MCG and IORA to develop better relationships with its neighbours.
- ⊖ **Connectivity projects:** Infrastructure projects are underway, such as the India-Myanmar- Thailand(IMT) Trilateral Highway, Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport (KMMTT), and a railway that links Akhaura in Bangladesh to Agartala etc.



Major issues/areas of concern

- ⊖ **India's Security Concerns:** Lack of resources, poor border infrastructure, and boundary disputes with countries like China.
- ⊖ **The Narcotics Industry fuelling crimes against the State:** The sub-region joining Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar(called the "Golden Triangle") promotes Drug trafficking and insurgent groups.
- ⊖ **Refugee problems in northeast India:** due to low population density, open borders etc.
- ⊖ **Long delay in completion of connectivity projects** like trilateral IMT highway due to bureaucratic and procedural issues on the Indian side.
- ⊖ **India's economic slowdown and inward orientation,** expressed through the decision to stay out of the RCEP agreement, disappointed regional business.
- ⊖ **India's Limited capacity** to provide development assistance, market access and security guarantees.



Way Forward

- ⊖ **Improving connectivity:** Apart from completion of existing projects, improving air and maritime connectivity should also be high on the agenda.
- ⊖ **Focusing new areas of cooperation** like digital technologies.
- ⊖ **Leveraging cultural linkages:** India's cultural diplomacy through Indian Government's "**Buddhist Circuit**" initiative, should resonate with East Asian nations.
- ⊖ **Strategic cooperation:** Particularly in the maritime domain, where China has demonstrated increasingly assertive behaviour.
- ⊖ **Enhancing bilateral trade** through regular high-level consultations and meetings.
- ⊖ **Strengthening institutions like SAARC.**

This centrality of neighbours in India's foreign policy stems from the clear understanding that a peaceful periphery is essential for India to achieve her multifarious developmental goals. Moreover, India firmly believes that a stable and prosperous South Asia will contribute to India's own prosperity. ★

1.9. INDIA-INDIAN OCEAN REGION

Why in news?

Recently, 6th Indian Ocean Conference held in Bangladesh discussed ways to promote economic development, peace and stability in the region.

India as a Net security provider in Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

- **India's policies:** India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Prime Minister's vision of SAGAR (Security & Growth for All in the Region).
- **Assistance in wake of natural disasters and calamities:** India has been regularly conducting exercises to deepen the Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) cooperation and coordination among neighbours.
- **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):** It is a forum that seeks to enhance maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states and helps to preserve peaceful relations.



Significance of IOR for India

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Trade India imports about 70% of its oil through the IOR and 90% of India's international trade by volume is dependent on sea. | Resources India depends heavily on Indian Ocean resources with her fishing and aquaculture industries being a major source of export as well as providing employment to more than 14 million people. | Counteracting China's influence China's aggressive soft power diplomacy has widely been seen as arguably the most important element in shaping the IOR environment, transforming the entire region's dynamics. ★ |
|--|--|---|

Impediments to India for being a Net Security Provider

- **Resource Availability vs Requirement:** This status can put enormous strain on country's finite resources and calls for manifold increase in existing military hardware.
- **Existing Civil-Military Relationship:** The ambiguous civil-military relationship existing in India not only manifests itself in serious

What is a Net security provider?

- Net security provider is usually meant as **enhancing the mutual security of more than one country** by addressing common security concerns, including dealing with transnational piracy, or responding to disasters, etc.
- It encompasses **4 different activities:**
 - **Capacity building through training of foreign forces**—both civilian and military, either at home or by deploying trainers abroad.
 - **Military diplomacy** through **military visits and exercises**.
 - **Military assistance** primarily by supplying arms and ammunition.
 - **Direct deployment of military forces** to stabilise a conflict situation or disaster.

differences and lack of clarity over strategy formulation but also over undistorted execution of formulated policies.

- **Non-alignment Policy:** India's principle of military non-alignment with any super power so as to retain its strategic autonomy limits opportunities for deeper security partnerships with other countries.
- **Past Experience of Overseas Deployment of Armed Forces:** The **experiences in Sri Lanka** continues to have a dragging effect on any thought process involving overseas deployment.
- **Shifting US Policy:** Uncertainty in Indo-Pacific policy of US would leave a vacuum in the IOR, which China would be more than obliged to fill. Consequently, for India, this would greatly increase the scope of maritime conflict with China, singly or collusively with Pakistan.
- **Frequency of resurgence and occurrence of non-traditional threats:** Such as piracy, maritime terrorism, drug trafficking, illicit weapons trafficking, climate change etc.

Approach needed for Net Security Provider

- **Focus on capacity building and military diplomacy.**
- **Higher Defence Organisation** to facilitate establishing clearly defined priorities of defence acquisitions.
- **Formulation of a National Defence Policy** to inspire confidence, within India and also amongst the small littoral nations of IOR.
 - **A Coherent IOR Strategy** would help in overcoming any potential inhibition towards gauging India through the prism of 'Big Brother' syndrome.
- **Development of Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands:** This includes Infrastructure up-gradation in these islands and their development as a potent military base.
- **Capability Enhancement of IOR Nations** would accrue immense benefit for the entire IOR. India is already involved in training of naval personnel from various IOR nations as part of exchange programmes.

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1.10. INDIA-SOUTH ASIA

INDIAN LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH ASIA

South Asia is a partly continental and partly sea region. It consists of seven countries: India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Maldives. Some international organization (e.g.the world bank) include Afghanistan as well.



10 % of the area of the Asian Continent



Population of more than 1.65 billion



Importance of the Region

- ⊕ **The rising role and position of India**
- ⊕ **Active policy of China** towards South Asian countries
- ⊕ **Instability in Afghanistan and the intervention** of US and other countries
- ⊕ India and Pakistan having **achieved nuclear capability and signing of the India-United States Civil Nuclear Agreement in 2006**
- ⊕ South Asia is widely viewed as a **central pillar of the wider Indo-Pacific maritime geography**
- ⊕ **Important for global trade through sea**



Major Challenges of the region

- ⊕ **Double crises at Economic and Political front for countries**
 - **India** -brewing economic issues such as inflation, currency depreciation and jobless growth
 - **Sri Lanka's** political crisis and economic crisis
 - **Nepal** - Huge, External Debt. and natural disasters
 - **Myanmar** -Power struggle between the military junta and the elected government
 - **Bangladesh** - Potential economic crisis
 - **Pakistan** - Political instability has made it difficult for the leader ship to manage the dire economic crisis effectively.
 - **Afghanistan**-Taliban takeover
- ⊕ **Economic Integration** - South Asia is of the world's least integrated subregion, according to World Bank
- ⊕ **Impact of COVID 19**
- ⊕ **Climate change**-rising vagaries of monsoon, melting Himalayan glaciers and sea level rise.



India's Initiatives for the South Asian Region

- ⊕ **Security provider:** SAGAR initiative.
- ⊕ **Technological advances:** Extension of National Knowledge Network (NKN) to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Bhutan.
- ⊕ **Trade:** Setting up integrated check posts with Bangladesh, Nepal. Proposed facilitation of cross-border trade settlement in rupees.
- ⊕ **Facilitating space-based communication** system through **South Asian Satellite.**
- ⊕ **Disaster management:** SAARC Disaster Management Centre in Gujarat.
- ⊕ **Regional connectivity:** Neighbourhood First policy.
- ⊕ **Development assistance:** Allocated Rs 6,292 crore for development assistance.
- ⊕ **During COVID:** 'SAARC COVID-19 Information Exchange Platform (COINEX)' .



Way Forward

- ⊕ **India to take centre stage:** Strong and effective role in the SA region diplomacy will check China rising dominance.
- ⊕ **Regional connectivity:** Realization of full potential can lead to enhanced trade incomes, establishment of inter-link age industries across countries and stronger people to people connect.
- ⊕ **Increasing effectiveness of SAARC and SAFTA**
- ⊕ **Increasing bilateral agreements, strengthening trade relations and enhancing people to people contact.**

India's rise as a serious global player today allows it to leverage its role in mobilising multilateral institutions and other major powers to support its neighbors in tiding over the present crisis.

1.10.1 SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

SAARC AT A GLANCE

SAARC is a **regional intergovernmental organization** established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka in 1985 and Its **secretariat is in Kathmandu, Nepal**. **Experts and business leaders underscored the need for effective cooperation among SAARC countries for harnessing regional strengths overcoming all challenges including political dispute and climate change.**



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



SAARC comprises **3%** of the world's land area, **21%** of the world's population and **5.21%** (USD 4.47 trillion) of the global economy.



Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.



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.
- ⊕ **South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA), 1995:** For promoting trade among member countries.
- ⊕ **SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS):** to promote and enhance **trade in services**.
- ⊕ **SAARC University** was 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 of the people of the South Asian region.
- ⊕ **South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO)** to develop harmonized standards to facilitate intra-regional trade and to enhance access to the global market.



Failures and challenges of SAARC

- ⊕ **Strained relations between India and Pakistan** escalated tensions and conflicts which severely hampers the prospects of SAARC.
 - **Last SAARC summit was held in 2014.**
- ⊕ **Lack of dispute resolution mechanism.**
- ⊕ **South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA):** Given the presence of sensitive lists, **SAFTA is yet to be implemented in spirit.**
- ⊕ **Failure in reaching a common ground** on issues faced by member countries.
- ⊕ **Dealing with Terrorism:** The organization has not been able to evolve a common and comprehensive approach to counter terrorism.
- ⊕ **Asymmetry between India and other member countries:** They perceive India as "Big Brother".
- ⊕ **Lack of resources for members.**



Need for revival of SAARC

- ⊕ **Representative of the entire South Asian Region:** It reflects the South Asian identity of the countries.
- ⊕ **Dealing with common issues of the region like** terrorism, energy shortage, hydro-politics, and climate change among many others.
- ⊕ **Critical for economic integration of the region:** As per the World Bank report, with intra-regional trade at less than 5% of total trade, South Asia is the least integrated region in the world.
- ⊕ **The central pillar of India's Neighbourhood first policy.**
- ⊕ **No real alternative:** BIMSTEC cannot replace SAARC for reasons such as lack of a common identity and history among all BIMSTEC members



Way forward

- ⊕ **Conduct of SAARC meeting,** physical or virtual is quintessential.
- ⊕ **Resolving differences among countries:** Setup a mechanism for informal discussions, formal mediation and resolution mechanisms tailored to the region's specific needs and problems.
- ⊕ **Economic integration is the key to all the problems:** South Asian Region must identify economic and social element as priorities rather than being marred by the security element.
- ⊕ **Redefining the SAARC charter,** which includes removal of excessive safeguards, the inclusion of the 'SAARC Minus' concept, and focus on Trade Facilitation, Energy Trade Connectivity, etc .

As SAARC is lauded for its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, expectations of its revival as the predominant regional grouping in South Asia have increased. Ultimately, its success will depend on the ability of the member States to put aside their differences and work towards a shared vision of economic and cultural cooperation. ★

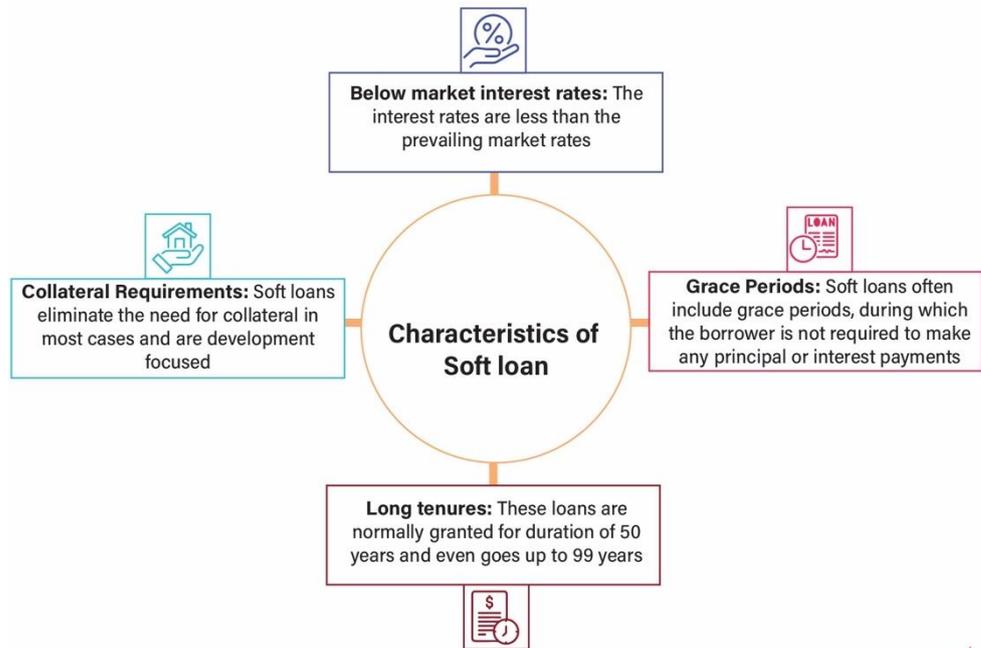
1.10.2. SOFT LOAN DIPLOMACY

Why in news?

The volume of India's soft loans to neighbouring countries has increased from \$3 billion to almost \$15 billion in the last eight years.

About India's Soft loans

- In 2003, the Centre launched “The Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme” (IDEAS) to provide concessional financing for projects in developing countries.
- In 2012, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) created the ‘Development Partnership Administration’ (DPA) to ensure coordinated measures and improve bilateral relationships with countries.
- The budget allocation for Soft loans went up from around \$500 million in 2010 to \$ 1.32 billion in 2019-20 (0.3% of the entire budget that fiscal year).



Significance of Soft loan diplomacy

- Improve the trading prospects of India with the receiving countries.
- Address own demands (for e.g. soft loan to Bhutan for a hydro energy project can eventually address India's energy needs).
- To Counter Chinese ‘debt trap diplomacy’ and influence.
- Fosters South-South Cooperation.
- Helps to achieve SDGs specially in least developed and developing countries.

Challenges in soft loan disbursal

- **Absence of a consolidated agency/framework** as currently multiple depts like Ministry of External affairs, Finance, Commerce, etc are involved in the process of granting Soft loans
- **Misconceptions about soft loans** that they can interfere with the growth prospects/performance of our economy.
- **Diplomatic delays** like delay in disbursement of the funds in most cases.
- **Chinese influence:** China has already spread its influence in the region through its debt trap diplomacy and providing a soft loan to the same country at par with China becomes difficult.

Conclusion

Creation of a Consolidated framework, reducing diplomatic delays and utilising it as a tool to propagate Indian goods needs to be prioritised for India to leverage its soft loan diplomacy.

2. BILATERAL GROUPING AND AGREEMENTS INVOLVING INDIA AND/OR AFFECTING INDIA'S INTEREST

2.1. INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

Russia has been a longstanding and time-tested partner for India. Since the **Strategic Partnership 2000** India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship. In 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a **Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership**. Year 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the Indo-Russian Friendship Treaty of 1993.



Areas of Cooperation

- ⊕ **Peaceful use of nuclear energy:** Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) in India, Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh.
- ⊕ **Space Exploration:** Peaceful uses of outer space, including satellite launches, GLONASS navigation system, remote sensing and other societal applications of outer space; Human Spaceflight Programme.
- ⊕ **Science and Technology:** India-Russia Bridge to Innovation, cooperation in telemedicine, creation of a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), and the Russia India Network (RIN) of universities.
- ⊕ **Annual summit** between India's PM and Russian president, dialogue mechanism since strategic partnership of 2000.



Significance of Russia for India

- ⊕ **Balancing China and its assertiveness.**
- ⊕ **Emerging New Sectors of Economic Engagement** like mining, high end technologies, India's footprint in the Russian Far East and in the Arctic.
- ⊕ **Combating Terrorism:** Both countries are calling for early finalization of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at UN.
- ⊕ **Support of Russia at Multilateral Forums** like UNSC and NSG.
- ⊕ **Russia is a major supplier of India's major defense items** (e.g. S-400 missile system, INS vikramaditya)



Prominent Challenges in relationship

- ⊕ **Growing military partnership between Russia and China.**
- ⊕ **Commercial ties with Russia are stagnant** despite good political relations.
- ⊕ **India's concerns regarding supply and servicing of Russian defence supplies.**
- ⊕ **Russia's criticism of the idea of the Indo-Pacific and the Quad.**
- ⊕ **Ongoing Russia-Ukraine War.**
- ⊕ **India's growing relations with the US.**



Way Forward

- ⊕ **Broaden collaboration on bilateral and regional issues** by working on new theatres of cooperation such as Eurasian region, Arctic, Afghanistan etc.
- ⊕ **Upgrading Defence Cooperation through Make in India:**
- ⊕ **Joint manufacturing of Spare parts and Logistics Support.**
- ⊕ **Work on Rules-based International Order** through greater cooperation at UN and other forums (BRICS, SCO etc.)
- ⊕ **Deepening economic cooperation:** Operationalization of the 'Green Corridor' project; International North-South Transport Corridor, and the signing of an FTA with EaEU.

With systemic changes underway in international relations, India and Russia will have to diversify their areas of cooperation beyond energy and defence to build a strong economic and strategic partnership.

2.2. INDIA-JAPAN RELATIONS

INDIA-JAPAN RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

The friendship between India and Japan has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilization ties. Throughout the various phases of history, the two countries have never been adversaries and bilateral ties have been singularly free of any kind of dispute.



Bilateral trade stands at **US\$ 20.57 billion** during FY 2021-22.



Japan is the **largest Official Development Assistance (ODA) partner** for India.



In 2021, India was the **18th largest trading partner** for Japan, and Japan was **13th largest** trading partner for India.



Significance of the relationship

- ⊕ **Multilateral cooperation** through platforms like Quad, G20, G4, etc.
- ⊕ **Economic cooperation:** CEPA and Currency Swap Agreement.
- ⊕ **Defense cooperation:** Defense exercises such as Dharma Guardian, Shinyuu Maitri; JIMEX.
- ⊕ **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)** to exchange supplies and services.
- ⊕ **Strategic Cooperation:** Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative; Supply Chain Resilience Initiative; 2+2 Dialogue; Asia-Africa Growth Corridor etc.
- ⊕ **Culture:** Partner City Affiliation Agreement between Varanasi and Kyoto in 2014.
- ⊕ **Historical ties:** Buddhism, has had a great impact on Japanese culture.
- ⊕ **Science & Technology:** India-Japan Emerging Technology and Innovation Fund, India-Japan Digital Partnership; LUPEX mission.
- ⊕ **Japan is the only country whom India has actively invited to help in socio-economic development** in northeast.



Concerns

- ⊕ **Trade:** India-Japan trade remains just a quarter of trade with China; Limited Success of CEPA; entry barrier for Indian companies and products.
- ⊕ **Difference on Cross-border Data Flow:** While India is looking at data localization, under 'Osaka Track' Japan proposed standardization of cross-border data flow.
- ⊕ **Scepticism on the feasibility of the AAGC.**
- ⊕ **Different interests:** India's exit from RCEP was disappointing from Japan's view.
- ⊕ **Common ground:** India and Japan relation is developing in backdrop of rising China but not because of mutual grounds of development such as- trade, science & technology cooperation etc.
- ⊕ **Pending projects:** Flagship bullet train project between Ahmedabad and Mumbai is still a work-in-progress with land acquisition still not complete.



Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Investment:** Improved logistics, a more open, stable and consistent trade policy regime, and the establishment of a 'centralized single window clearance system' will increase India's attractiveness for Japanese investors.
- ⊕ **Robust trade:** Both leaders must recognize the need for enhancing bilateral trade and encourage further review of the implementation of CEPA through existing mechanisms.
- ⊕ **Counter China:** The annual trilateral Malabar exercise, which also includes United States, can give a vision where the three nations can combine militarily to counter the Chinese threat in the region.
- ⊕ **Energy security:** Develop stronger partnerships through a **Green Energy Partnership** and **creating new innovative partnerships** in Manufacturing and MSME sectors.

As India expanded its footprint in East and Southeast Asia, it has found support from Japan which has also been steadfast in its support for New Delhi's position on its border disputes with China.

2.3. INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS

INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India-South Korea diplomatic ties completed 50 Years. The India-Republic of Korea (RoK) relations has made great strides in recent years and has **become truly multidimensional, spurred by convergence of interests, mutual goodwill and high level exchanges.**



Annual bilateral trade reached
US\$ 27.8 billion in 2022



India is South Korea's **seventh-largest export market**



Areas of engagement

- ⊖ **Political**- Rok's open market policies and the New Southern Policy finds resonance with India's economic liberalization, Look East Policy, Act East Policy and Indo-pacific strategy.
- ⊖ **Economic**- CEPA signed in 2010
- ⊖ **'Korea Plus'**, to promote and facilitate Korean Investments in India in 2016.
- ⊖ **Defence and strategic relations**- In 2020, India and South Korea signed a Roadmap for Defence Industries Cooperation
- ⊖ **Energy** - July 2011 when the Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement was signed.
- ⊖ Both signed Strategic Partnership in 2010 which was **upgraded to 'special strategic partnership' in 2015**



Significance of RoK for India

- ⊖ **Tilt away of South Korea from China** - It is bound to bring new economic opportunities and synergies in other domains like public health, green growth, digital connectivity, and trade.
- ⊖ **Indo-Pacific outlook** - South Korea could be the fourth pillar in India's Indo-Pacific strategy along with Japan, Australia, and Vietnam which can bring about a paradigm shift in India's position and influence in the region.
- ⊖ **Trilateral security dialogue** - The shift in South Korean policies will enable a strong India, South Korea and Japan defence policy coordination that could effectively forge new joint regional security policies.



Challenges

- ⊖ **Divergence in national objectives** - There was a clear drift by South Korea away from QUAD countries meanwhile, India has been actively participating in them.
- ⊖ **Sluggish economic ties**- India and South Korea were trying to upgrade the CEPA agreement, but to no avail.
- ⊖ **Pressure from China** - the current emerging alignment between India and South Korea may prove short lived if proper attention is not paid to countering pressure from China.
- ⊖ **Pressure from North Korea** - Any breakout of hostilities on the Korean Peninsula can derail South Korea's Indo-Pacific project.



Way Forward

- ⊖ **Similar Challenges** - Pressure to balance equations between the United States and China whilst collaborating with other regional powers in South and Southeast Asia.
- ⊖ **Possibility of Maritime Partnerships** - These include shipbuilding joint capacity building humanitarian aid and disaster relief, search and rescue, marine pollution, anti-piracy, anti-terrorism and anti-trafficking, and prevention of marine pollution.
- ⊖ **Opportunity for maritime domain awareness (MDA)** - as Indian Navy has also established an Information Fusion Center (IFC) in the Indian Ocean region.
- ⊖ **Developing stronger People to people and cultural relations.**

India can help South Korea withstand Chinese pressure and North Korean threats. An independent, strong, and democratic South Korea can be a long-term partner with India, that will add significant value to India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

2.4. INDIA-VIETNAM RELATIONS

INDIA VIETNAM RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and Vietnam, with historical roots in the common struggle for liberation from colonial rule and the national struggle for independence, share traditionally close and cordial bilateral relations. Recently India and Vietnam marked 50 years of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations in 2022



India's investments in Vietnam are estimated at around US\$ 2 billion.



Bilateral trade between India and Vietnam posted a growth of 27% and reached US\$ 14 billion last year.



Vietnam was India's 4th largest trading partner within ASEAN.



Significance of Vietnam for India

- ⊖ **Critical component of India's foreign policy:** Act east policy, Indo-pacific vision, SAGAR policy.
- ⊖ **Support to India on international platform** like membership to India in expanded UNSC.
- ⊖ **Strategic partner for countering China in South China sea.**
- ⊖ **Energy security:** Oil and petroleum exploration in South China sea.
- ⊖ **Maritime security and safety.**



Recent developments

- ⊖ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on **Mutual Logistics Support has been signed.**
- ⊖ **India is taking Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)** to bring direct benefits to communities at the grassroots level
- ⊖ The Defence Ministers signed the '**Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030**' to bolster bilateral defense cooperation.



Concerns in relationship

- ⊖ **Chinese claims over South China sea** can threaten India's prospect of exploring hydrocarbons in the region.
- ⊖ **India's decision to opt out from RCEP** can adversely impact growth of trade relations.
- ⊖ **Inconsistent trade growth** due to difference in foreign policy.



Way forward

- ⊖ **Promoting closer people to people exchange:** Buddhist and cham cultures, direct flights, ease of travelling etc.
- ⊖ **Enhancing economic cooperations** within subregional framework such as in Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), BIMSTEC.
- ⊖ Need for **advance collaboration between maritime security agencies.**

Strategic diplomatic and military engagements between India-Vietnam will help strengthen the ties given their shared concerns about China's growing maritime coercion.

2.5. INDIA-THAILAND RELATIONS

Why in news?

The year 2022 marked 75 years of diplomatic ties between India and Thailand.

India-Thailand Relations

- **Political:** India's 'Act East' policy has been complemented by Thailand's 'Act West' policy in bringing the two countries closer.
- **Economic:** Bilateral trade reached an all-time high of around USD 15 billion in 2021-22.
- **Defence Cooperation:** MoU on Defence Cooperation (2012), Indo-Thai CORPAT, Exercise Maitree, since 2015, India is participating in Ex-Cobra Gold, largest Asia Pacific Military exercise etc.
- **Bilateral institutional mechanisms:** Joint Commission Meeting, Foreign Office Consultations, Joint Task Force etc.

- **Connectivity:** through initiatives such as India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Asian Highway Network (under UNESCAP), BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS) under BIMSTEC framework.
- **Cultural:** Buddhism is a common thread and millions of Thai Buddhists visit Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath.
- **Regional cooperation:** Both sides cooperate closely in ASEAN, East Asia Summit, BIMSTEC, Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), etc.
- **People-to-people connect:** There are an estimated 250,000 people of Indian origin in Thailand.

Challenges

- **Stalled trilateral highway project:** Trilateral Highway most of which falls under Myanmar is engulfed in protests and violence since the February 2021 coup.
- **The rising role of China:** China through its one belt one road initiative is making increasing efforts to make its presence and power felt in the region.
- **Security concerns:** Insurgent groups use Thailand as a territory for the shipment of small arms, as well as planning and recruitment for terrorist activities.
- **Lack of democracy in Thailand:** Following five years of military dictatorship, Thailand transitioned to a military-dominated, semi-elected government in 2019.
- **Tension in the region:** The region is the pivot of the emerging Indo-Pacific security architecture, which is witnessing growing great power rivalry and competition for external balancing in the region.

Way forward

- **Regional grouping:** Explore opportunities that Thailand holds in the context of BIMSTEC, ASEAN, APEC, IORA etc. for India in the manufacturing and services sector.
- **Boost connectivity:** Emphasis should be given to minimizing delays and resolution of roadblocks in the completion of infrastructure projects.
- **Realizing the potential of trade** by addressing issues regarding the tariff lines and reducing trade barriers.
- **Strengthening people-to-people contacts:** Promoting research collaborations, and facilitating cultural immersion programs.

Recent developments and cooperation

- The **second edition of the North-East India Festival** was organized in Bangkok.
- The Embassy in association with the Triratnabhoomi Society of Thailand organized **an exposition on Buddhist heritage sites in India**.
- The celebrations of '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**' was launched in Thailand.
- Under the Quad's Vaccine Partnership, India, Australia, Japan the US jointly presented **Made in India Covovax vaccines to Thailand**.

“ **The Secret To Getting Ahead Is Getting Started** ”



ALTERNATIVE CLASSROOM PROGRAM *for*

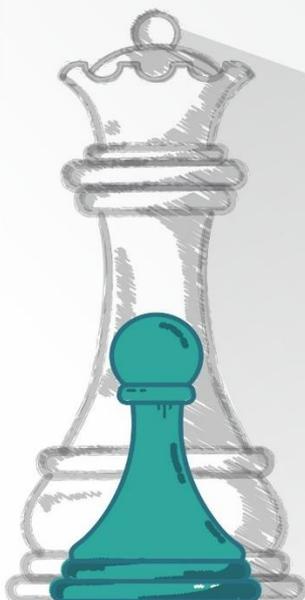
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2.6. INDIA AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

INDIA- AUSTRALIA RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and Australia have much in common, underpinned by shared values of a pluralistic, Westminster-style democracies, Commonwealth traditions, expanding economic engagement and increasing high level interaction. Recently, First India-Australia Summit was held.



Bilateral Relations



Areas of cooperation

- ⊕ **Economic and commercial relations:** Australia's "An India Economic Strategy to 2035" to shape bilateral ties and **Grains Partnership**, to use Australia's expertise in post-harvest management.
- ⊕ **Defence and security cooperation:** Military exercises (AUSINDEX, Exercise Malabar), Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation and Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement.
- ⊕ **Regional and multilateral cooperation** through platforms like G-20, Commonwealth, IOR-ARC, ASEAN Regional Forum, QUAD etc.
- ⊕ **Science and Technology:** Australia-India Strategic Research Fund and Agreement on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology.
- ⊕ **Global cooperation:** Both share common concerns like Chinese aggression and shared interests in Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- ⊕ **People to People Relations:** Indian diaspora including students (nearly 7 lakh) in Australia.



Challenges

- ⊕ **Differences in approach towards Indo-pacific:** For India, the **entire Indian Ocean** take precedence, while for Australia it is **southwest Indian Ocean**, its immediate north, and **vast stretches of the South Pacific**.
- ⊕ **Asymmetric priorities and worldviews:** For India, defence engagements have taken precedence in the Indo-Pacific. By contrast, Australia placed a higher priority on economic and trade engagement
- ⊕ **Discrimination and racism** against people of Indian origin in Australia.
- ⊕ **Lack of movement on trade agreements:** **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** is pending and **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** from which India opted out.
- ⊕ **Trade deficit:** In FY 22, India had a trade deficit of US \$ 8.5 billion.



Recent Developments

- ⊕ **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)** was signed recently and is **first free trade agreement (FTA) of India with a developed country** after more than a decade.
- ⊕ **SAIEP (Study Australia Industry Immersion Program)** for current Indian students at Australian universities to enhance their employability.
- ⊕ **Maitri Scholars** to provide support to Indian students to study in Australia's world-leading universities.
- ⊕ Both countries have discussed finalisation of CECA in the recent summit.



Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Deepen technological cooperation.**
- ⊕ **Improve interoperability** in defence sector and in maritime sphere
- ⊕ **Enhancing coordination in regional institutions and forums**, such as the East Asia Summit and IORA.
- ⊕ **Deepening and broadening trade and economic linkages**

The overall relationship between India and Australia has the potential to assume greater prominence and the prospects for bilateral relationship are recognised in both countries as strategically useful, economically productive and aligned with each other's new agenda.

2.7. INDIA-UNITED KINGDOM (UK) RELATIONS

INDIA-UK RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and UK are bound by strong ties of history and culture and their shared commitment to democracy, fundamental freedoms, multilateralism and a rule based international order.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  Bilateral trade stands at \$25.7 billion with a trade surplus in favour of India. |  India as the 2nd largest investor in the UK and UK is the 6th largest investor in India. |  UK is the largest market in Europe for Indian IT services. |
|--|---|--|



Areas of Cooperation

- ⊕ **Defence: Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP)**, tri-services joint exercise (Konkan Shakti)
- ⊕ **Education, Research and Innovation:** UK-India Education and Research Initiative and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) programmes.
- ⊕ **Climate and Environment: Ministerial Energy Dialogue, India-UK Green Growth Equity Fund** for mobilising institutional investments.
- ⊕ **Cultural Linkages:** Nehru centre in the UK have been actively promoting Indian culture. 2017 was celebrated as India-UK year of Culture.
- ⊕ **Indian Diaspora** is one of **the largest ethnic minority communities** in UK contributing **6% of the country's GDP**.



Impact of Brexit Deal on India

- ⊕ **Advantage for Service sector:** In sectors such as IT, R&D, architecture and financial services, India **may gain in both the markets** in UK as well as EU.
- ⊕ **Trade deal from both sides:** Brexit opened the opportunity for India to **sign trade deals separately** with both the EU and the UK.
- ⊕ **Operational issues for exporters in meeting different standards and registrations** for both the markets.
- ⊕ **Challenges to Indian companies** headquartered in UK or EU due to restrictions on the movement of professionals.



Issues in India-UK relations

- ⊕ **Colonial Legacy:** Anti-colonial resentment against Britain.
- ⊕ **British Intervention in India's domestic politics** including providing sanctuary to financial offenders, on Kashmir issue and in farmers' agitation.
- ⊕ **Business environment in India:** Complicated laws on tax, imports, and FDI hinders doing business in India.
- ⊕ **UK's immigration policies** limits the movement of people.
- ⊕ **Closeness to Pakistan and China:** UK's advocacy of Pakistan and its concerted effort to make China the anchor of **post-Brexit** economic policy.
- ⊕ **Diego Garcia issue:** The contention **between Mauritius and the UK** over the sovereignty of the Diego Garcia, where India supports Mauritius claim.



Road Ahead

- ⊕ **Strengthening institutional mechanism and avenues for people** to people connect in education, capacity building, employment etc.
- ⊕ Strengthen **cooperation and coordination in the UN, G-20, WTO, WHO, IMF** etc.
- ⊕ **Migration and Mobility:** Implementing the comprehensive **Migration and Mobility Partnership**, signing a **Social Security Agreement** and Enhanced cooperation under the **bilateral Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties**.
- ⊕ **Furthering the negotiations on the India-UK FTA.**

As India seeks to carve out a new role for itself in the evolving global order as a 'leading power' and the U.K. recalibrates its strategic outlook post-Brexit, this is a unique moment in India-U.K. ties. Need is to steer bilateral relations towards a Vision 2047 for shared security and prosperity of their people and the planet.

2.8. INDIA-EUROPEAN UNION RELATIONS

INDIA-EU RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

The relationship between India and the European Union (EU) are based on shared values and principles such as democracy, rule of law, rules based international order and multilateralism. **Factors shaping India-EU relations in current times include Changing geopolitical developments** such as Russia-Ukraine war, rise of China, **Convergence of interests in the Indian Ocean** and **New emerging world order** after COVID-19.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Bilateral trade amounts to USD 116.36 billion in 2021 | EU is India's second-largest trading partner after the US | EU is the second largest destination for Indian exports after US. |
|--|--|--|



Significance of EU for India

- ⊕ **To counter China.**
- ⊕ **Post-Brexit scenario**, India recognizes that its own economic prospects depend on the continued growth and internal stability of this region.
- ⊕ **Economic logic:** India has been a **beneficiary of preferential tariffs** under the EU's **generalised system of preferences**, European companies in India provide **millions of jobs**, trade agreement with EU would help India in further expanding and **diversifying its exports and securing the value chains.**
- ⊕ **Potential relationship** with smaller countries of EU like Denmark, Estonia, and Portugal.
- ⊕ **FDI inflows from the EU** stand at \$ 101.26 Bn between 2000-2022.



Areas of Cooperation

- ⊕ **Blue Economy:** The EU's **Blue Growth Initiative**, corresponds with India's call to embrace a **"Blue Revolution."**
- ⊕ **Defending multilateralism and rule based order:** both sides are considering each other important partner on **several reform agendas like UN, WTO and so on.**
- ⊕ **Indo-pacific:** EU's Indo-Pacific strategy has much to **complement New Delhi's goals in the region.**
- ⊕ **Fighting climate change** and facilitating the transition to a sustainable economy through **Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.**
- ⊕ **Connectivity:** India and EU have announced **comprehensive Connectivity Partnership** that will provide an **alternative to China's BRI.**



Concerns in India-EU relations

- ⊕ **Inadequate diplomatic attention.**
- ⊕ **Untapped Trade potential** due to absence of a FTA(BTIA).
- ⊕ **Human rights:** EU members expressed concerns about the deteriorating human rights situation in India.
- ⊕ **Lack of people to people ties.**



Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Early conclusion of BTIA** is crucial.
- ⊕ **Strengthening yearly political dialogue.**
- ⊕ **Launching concrete trilateral/cooperation projects** in pilot partner countries such as Africa, Central Asia.
- ⊕ **Enhancing cultural dialogue with all countries of Europe**

Over 60 years of friendship, both India and the EU have maintained robust strategic relation, however, in some critical areas, there is still room for enhanced cooperation.

2.8.1. INDIA-GERMANY RELATIONS

Why in news?

India and Germany agreed to **enhance cooperation in Innovation and Technology.**

Flagships of India-Germany Cooperation

| | |
|---|---|
| Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (GSDP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed in 2022, under this, Germany will provide additional development assistance of €10 billion till 2030 to support India's green growth plans. |
| Indo-German Science and Technology Centre (IGSTC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports projects on national priority areas such as Advanced Manufacturing, Embedded System and ICT, Sustainable Energy/Environment, etc. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Triangular Development Cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed in 2022, it represents development projects in third countries by India and Germany. Four projects are at an advanced stages of implementation under it with Cameroon, Malawi, Ghana and Peru as third countries. |
| Clean technologies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indo-German Green Hydrogen Task Force was constituted in 2022. Collaboration on Hydrogen Energy Clusters being set up by DST. It focuses on integrating FhG's technologies with Indian technologies. |

2.9 INDIA-NORDIC RELATIONS

INDIA NORDIC RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India–Nordic strategic relations are based on strong foundations of democratic values, institutional affinities, people-to-people contact, pluralistic society, sustained security and trade cooperation, innovation, and climate justice. Recently, 2nd India-Nordic Summit was held in Copenhagen, Denmark



Nordic countries represent the five countries of the Nordic region, i.e., Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland.



The total bilateral trade in goods and services between India and the Nordic countries is **around \$13 Billion in 2022**



Four of the five Nordic countries are among the top 20 trading partners of India in Europe.



Areas of co-operation

- ⊕ **Blue Economy:** India and Nordic countries are working to deepen their maritime cooperation.
- ⊕ **Climate Change and Sustainable Development:** The **Nordic Sustainable Solutions mission** has worked in Indian cities.
- ⊕ **Arctic Council:** India is an observer in the Arctic Council in which all the Nordic countries are members.
- ⊕ **Nordic countries support India's membership** in groups like NSG, Permanent member seat in UN Security Council.
- ⊕ **Diaspora:** Indian diaspora migrates to the region for IT and other professional services.



Challenges

- ⊕ **Ties with Russia:** Nordic countries are against Russia's aggression in the Arctic region, whereas India's close relationship with Russia acts as an irritant.
- ⊕ **Differentiated interests of members:** Achieving a common point of collaboration is difficult with five countries.
- ⊕ **Trade barriers:** Issues such as tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and complex regulations limit trade and investment opportunities.



Way Forward

- ⊕ **Promoting Cultural exchanges:** Strengthening people-to-people connections.
- ⊕ **Improving Collaboration:** Sharing best practices, expertise, and research in areas such as renewable energy, climate change mitigation, and waste management.
- ⊕ **Leveraging technology on** various fronts like digital start-ups, healthcare, food processing, and renewable energy.
- ⊕ **Facilitating frequent diplomatic dialogues.**

The heightened India–Nordic partnership has been increasingly recognised globally as a reckoning force towards strengthening the international rules-based system in the evolution of the 21st-century world order.

2.10. INDIA AND WEST ASIA/MIDDLE EAST RELATIONS

INDIA-MIDDLE EAST RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India has enjoyed exceptionally close, historic and civilizational ties with Middle East/West Asia which is a part of its extended neighborhood.

CHANGING DYNAMICS OF INDIA-MIDDLE EAST RELATIONS



Past: India's need to develop economically made the Middle East increasingly important, both as a source for fuel imports and for Indian labour and remittances.



Present: India is now following the same course, but intensified the approach as "Look West" policy, by focusing on three main axes: the Arab Gulf countries, Israel and Iran.



New areas of cooperation with various countries in the region include:

- ⊕ **Israel:** Defence, agriculture, science and technological relations.
- ⊕ **Iran:** Projects such as INSTC and Chabahar port development.
- Other countries:**
 - ▷ **Iraq, UAE and Saudi Arabia** are potential trade partners and investors.
 - ▷ **Saudi Arabia:** Increasing number of Indian pilgrims performing Hajj in Saudi Arabia.
 - ▷ **Jordan** supplies rock phosphate and is also a link for Palestine.
 - ▷ **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries** finally recognized the potential dangers to the region of Pakistani-sponsored terrorism against India



Constraints Associated with the Look West Policy

- ⊕ **Israel's improving status with the Arab world may not endure:** Revival of support for the Palestinians by the wider Arab public could put pressure on Gulf regimes to reverse their current rapprochement with Israel that could impact India's growing closeness with Israel.
- ⊕ **Modest scale of India's efforts in Central Asia BRI and the Middle East,** compared to China's Belt and Road.
- ⊕ **Vulnerability of Indian Diaspora in the Region:** This was evident during the current COVID crisis induced protectionism with regard to employment.
- ⊕ **India's susceptibility to regional conflicts:** Saudi-Iranian rivalry and the boycott of Qatar by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Similarly, Israel suspects Iran of sponsoring Hamas and Hezbollah against it.



Steps taken in recent times

- ⊕ **Economic diversification drive in the Gulf economies** (Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030) has created an accelerating pace of engagement.
 - ▷ The major oil companies of the region- ARAMCO and ADNOC are deepening their engagement with the Indian companies both public and private.
- ⊕ **Indian's pandemic response in the region** by providing medicines and sending medical professionals.
- ⊕ **India has recently signed FTA with UAE and revived FTA negotiations** with Israel and GCC.



Way ahead

- ⊕ **Mediating Role:** India can help mitigate sanctions and ease the US 'maximum pressure' strategy by using its leverage with the US, Saudi Arabia and Israel.
- ⊕ **Humanitarian assistance** to promote cooperation.
- ⊕ **Strategic partnership and sustained soft power diplomacy** with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel.
- ⊕ **Substitutes for Oil:** India should be relooking at options for oil supply.
- ⊕ **Extending collaborations in** areas like semiconductor design and fabrication and space technology with countries like UAE and Israel.

There is a strong and growing multifaceted partnership between India and Middle East countries and the region offers real opportunities for India to grow and develop in mutually beneficial way. As in the Indo-Pacific, so in the Middle East, regional coalitions are bound to widen India's reach and deepen its impact.

2.10.1. NEW GROUP IN WEST ASIA

Why in News?

Saudi Arabia hosted a special meeting of the National Security Advisers (NSAs) of India, the U.S. and the UAE.

More on News

- Coming together of all these countries is referred as a formation of **Second Quad of West Asia in the making after the First Quad-I2U2** (India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and United States).
 - However, this Quad is different from the **Indo-Pacific Quad having India, US, Japan and Australia.**
- It is also seen as a **success of India's "Look West" policy.**

Significance of this development for India

- Improve Ties with West Asia and compliment earlier initiatives.**
 - Additionally, it will enhance opportunity to expand ties with the US.
- Strengthen global position:** It may further align India with other major powers like Russia, Europe, and China to address its national and regional concerns strategically.
- Peace and Security:** It would help to **minimise regional threats** like maritime piracy, illegal smuggling of drugs, terrorism etc.
- Access to market:** It will help to enhance bilateral trade, facilitate access to strategic markets in West Asia, starting with the UAE.
 - Also, it can be utilised to promote acceptance of Indian rupee in the region for the oil import payments.

- Countering China:** China facilitated diplomatic breakthrough between Saudi Arabia and Iran indicated a significant escalation of the Chinese diplomatic footprint in the region.
 - In 2021, Iran and China have signed a 25-year cooperation.

Issues associated with this New Group

- Lack of clarity:** Strategic goals of this group not clearly stated as It is in initial stage of its formation.
- Asymmetry among members** as USA is militarily stronger.
- Cooperation:** Countries in this group have conflicting positions on how to deal with China, Russia.
 - For instance, India abstains from voting on Russia- Ukraine war.
- Strategic autonomy:** US-sponsored security deal would complicate India's 'strategic autonomy' in the Middle East as a state that chooses not to take sides.



Why West Asia is Important for India and World?

- Energy Resources:** Countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates are major producers and exporters of oil.
- Geostrategic Location:** It is **strategically** located between Europe, Africa, and Asia, serving as a crossroad between different continents and trade routes.
 - At least 12 percent of world trade passes through the Suez Canal.
- Conflicts and Security:** the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Syrian civil war, and the ongoing tensions between Iran and its neighboring countries have had regional and global implications, impacting stability, crude oil prices, etc.
- Religious and Cultural Significance:** It is the birthplace of major world religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- Economic and Trade Opportunities:** **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, have been investing in infrastructure development, attracting foreign investments and promoting business partnerships.



India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and United States (I2U2)



Genesis: 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.



Objective: It was established as an **international forum** to discuss common areas of mutual interest, strengthen economic partnership in trade and investment



Areas of Cooperation :

- 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.

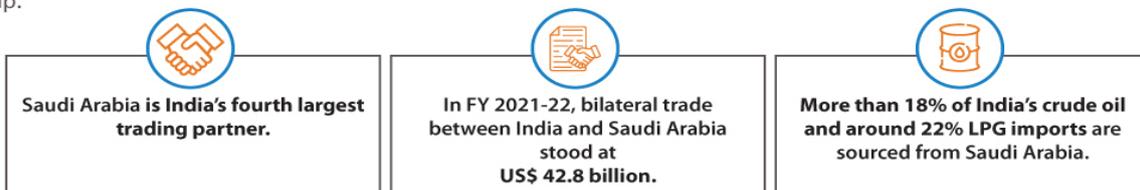
Way forward

- **Addressing bilateral concerns:** Balancing the rival countries diplomatically and strategically to maintain friendly relations can be done through cooperation among the four countries.
- **Advancing cooperation in new areas** in the future or by pursuing cooperation with other partners in both the Middle East and South Asia.
- **Development:** Concentrated efforts to strengthen infrastructure, climate change mitigation, public health, can help in development of west Asia.
- **Maintain peace:** Group should aim to address growing concerns like energy, food security and economic growth in the west Asia region and South Asia along with steps towards maintaining peace in the region.

2.10.2. INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting the centuries old economic and socio-cultural ties. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 and in 2010 the bilateral relationship elevated to a 'Strategic Partnership'.



Significance of Relations

- ⊕ **Geostrategic ally:** Saudi Arabia's strategic location in West Asia makes it crucial to India's foreign policy priorities in the region.
- ⊕ **Home to India's overseas community**
- ⊕ **Collaboration in tough time** like during COVID pandemic
- ⊕ **Cultural convergence:** Saudi Arabia is home to the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah known for annual haj and umrah pilgrimages.
- ⊕ **Shared interests at multilateral cooperations** at platforms like UN, G20 and GCC.
- ⊕ **Cooperation in dealing with terrorism:** In 2012, Saudi Arabia helped India arrest 2008 Mumbai attacks suspect.
- ⊕ **Increasing Convergence in Defence and Security:** Closer security and defence related contacts, such as sharing of information, military exercises and military training, etc.



Challenges in the relationship

- ⊕ **Regional Instability:** The complex and multidimensional politics of the Middle East region pose a challenge.
- ⊕ **Inordinate Delays in Saudi Investments in India:** Aramco's plans to purchase a 20-percent stake in Reliance Industries was called off and its involvement in the Ratnagiri integrated refinery and petrochemicals complex project was stalled.
- ⊕ **Diaspora Issues like 'Saudization'** policy to provide more jobs to its citizens is likely to affect Indian expatriates and the 'family tax'.
- ⊕ **Issues related to crude oil:** OPEC countries charge **Asian Premium** (extra charge) from Asian countries when selling oil in comparison to western countries.
- ⊕ **Influence of Pakistan:** Pakistan maintains close military ties with Saudi Arabia.



Recent Developments

- ⊕ **Defence and Security:**
 - **First-ever bilateral naval exercise "AL MOHED AL HINDI"** was held in 2021.
 - Both countries aim to establish a '**Comprehensive Security Dialogue**' at the level of National Security Advisors and set up a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.
- ⊕ **Culture:**
 - On International Yoga Day 2021, an **MoU on Yoga Cooperation** was signed for the establishment of formal Yoga standards and courses. (**first time by any country in the Gulf region**)
 - The **Haj Quota was increased** in 2019, enabling more Indians to perform Hajj in 2019.
- ⊕ **Diaspora: Integration of India's e-Migrate system with the Kingdom's e-Thawtheeq system** to streamline the migration process for workers.



Way ahead for strengthening the relations

- ⊕ **Enhancing Cultural engagement**
- ⊕ **Balancing trade relations:** India should focus more upon **promoting exports**.
- ⊕ **Addressing diaspora disputes:** Saudi Arabia may revisit the existing policies impacting the Indian Diaspora.
- ⊕ **Collaboration in climate change mitigation**
 - Like India, Saudi Arabia is also willing to play a leading role through the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative.
- ⊕ **Exploring other areas of cooperation such as** Health, information technology, etc.
- ⊕ **Ensuring regional peace and stability** under the Indo-Abrahamic framework.

At a time when the world is at crossroads India-Saudi strategic collaboration holds the promise of shared growth, prosperity, stability, security and development in the region beyond.

2.10.2.1 MEA FIRST VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

Why in news?

Minister of External Affairs recently had his **first visit to Saudi Arabia**.

Highlights of the recent visit

- India initiated talks with Saudi Arabia for **Rupee-Riyal trade**.
- Both countries agreed to **cooperate in joint projects** such as a west coast refinery, LNG infrastructure, and strategic petroleum storage facilities.
- **MoU on Mechanism of Consultations between India and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**.

2.10.3. 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**.
- It has the **potential to develop into one of the most important commercial hubs** in the region.
 - 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.**

Geopolitical significance of the Chabahar port for India

- **Strengthen Indo-Iranian trade, diplomatic, and military ties**, which could balance out growing Sino-Pakistani cooperation.
- **Development of Chabahar Port** a transit hub under the INSTC to reach out to Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.
 - Chabahar Port development **will also supplement the Ashgabat agreement**.
- **Establishing a sea-based trade route to Western and Central Asia** would allow India to **bypass Pakistan**.
 - Shahid Beheshti port in Iran, built by India, has **played a key role in connecting India with Afghanistan**.
- **Strategic Importance:** This port is just 170 km away from Gwadar port operated by China in Pakistan.
- **Humanitarian Operations:** Port could be used as a point from where humanitarian operations could be coordinated.



| TRADE CORRIDOR TO BE COMPLETED | PARTIALLY COMPLETED | COMPLETED |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chabahar Port to Zahedan 1,380km | Zahedan to Zaranj 200km | Zaranj to Delaram 218km |

Related News

International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978

- **India, Iran have signed MoU for smooth movement of seafarers** between both countries as per STCW provision.
- **STCW Convention** is a multilateral convention to **establish basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers** on an international level.
 - It was **adopted in 1978** and it **entered into force in 1984**.
 - **India notified it in 1984**; effective from **1985**.
 - Compliance and implementation to convention is looked after by **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**, established in **1948** (HQ: Geneva) as a **specialized UN agency**.

Challenges in execution of the Chabahar project

- **Iran's Stand:** In 2020, Iran decided to proceed with the rail line construction on its own, citing **delays from the Indian side in beginning and funding** the project.
- **US sanctions:**
 - India is **hesitant to deal with the construction company** which has links with the **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** and is under the sanctions.
 - Although the project has **secured a special waiver from the USA**, it was **difficult to find equipment suppliers and partners** due to worries of being targeted by the USA.
- **Iran's closeness with China:** **Proposed Comprehensive Plan for Cooperation between Iran and China'** will include **Chinese involvement** in Chabahar's duty-free zone and an oil refinery nearby.

Way ahead for India

- **Keeping timelines and delivery of India's commitments** will be the key.
- India needs to play a **balancing act** between the USA and Iran and proactively protect its interest.
- Recently, Uzbekistan also shown interest to jointly use the Chabahar port as a transit port. It will be important to **operationalise and jointly use the port with regional countries**.
- As an emerging power, a **peaceful extended neighbourhood** (Iran-Afghanistan) is **not only good for trade and energy security** but also plays a **vital role in India's aspirations of becoming a superpower**.

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 to Caspian Sea via Persian Gulf onwards Russia and Northern Europe**.
 - **Currently, it has 13 members including India**.
 - Recently, INSTC began operation with the first shipment from Russia to India via Iran.
- **INSTC Significance for India**
 - **Reduce carriage cost** between India and Russia by 30% and **bring down transit time** (almost half compared to suez canal).
 - Will help India to **gain smooth access into Central Asia and beyond to Arctic, Nordic and Baltic region** and will help to expand trade and investment links.
 - **Reduce dependence on current trading partners**, through **realignment of supply chains**.
 - It is also being seen as **India's alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- **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.

CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS.

2.10.4. INDIA-QATAR RELATIONS

Why in news?

2023 marks 50 years of establishment of full diplomatic relations between India and Qatar since 1973.

Key Areas of Co-operation

- **Geopolitical:** Qatar is a key player in the Middle East and has a significant voice in the Arab World.

- **Economic and Energy Security:** Qatar has large reserves of gas and it is a key component of trade with India.
- **Defence and Security:** Defence exercises like DIMDEX, Zair-Al-Bahr are conducted.
- **Cultural Relations:** Yoga and Ayurveda form a key feature of the relations. Qatar has allowed the practise of complementary medicine including ayurveda.
- **People to People Connect:** Qatar has a huge diaspora presence of Indian origin.

Challenges in development of India-Qatar Relation

- **Gulf diplomatic crisis (2017-2021): Saudi and UAE hostility toward Qatar** is likely to persist.
- **Human rights violations in building** World Cup facilities.
- **Presence of China:** China signed a 27-year deal for LNG supply with Qatar in 2022.
 - Their geopolitical orientation and interests seemed to converge on **Afghanistan, Iran, and the larger regional security questions in West Asia.**
- **Other issues:** Long custody (since August 2022) of the **retired Indian Navy personnel** by Qatar.

Way forward

- **Protecting diaspora:** India should prioritize negotiations for the protection of Indian expatriate workers.
- **Energy transition:** India could seek to collaborate on developing a cleaner and energy efficient environment.
- **Soft power diplomacy:** India should seek to boost its “soft power” influence through cultural exchange.
- **People to people contact:** Continued cooperation in the **education sector.**

DAKSHA MAINS MENTORING PROGRAM 2024

(A Strategic Revision, Practice, and Enrichment Mentoring Program for Mains Examination 2024)

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| DATE | DURATION |
| 4th July : Batch A 18th July : Batch B | 5 Months |

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAMME

| | |
|--|---|
| Highly experienced and qualified team of mentors | Emphasis on score maximization and performance improvement |
| Scheduled group sessions for strategy discussions, live practice, and peer interaction | Personalized one-to-one sessions with mentors |
| Well-structured revision and practice plan for GSMains, Essay & Ethics | Subject-wise strategy documents based on thorough research |
| Access to Daksha Mains Practice Tests | Continuous performance assessment, monitoring and smart interventions |

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2.10.5. INDIA-ISRAEL RELATIONS

INDIA-ISRAEL RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and Israel are strategic partners and share values of democracy and pluralism. The two countries have continued to deepen their strategic partnership, with a focus on innovation and research as two knowledge-based economies.



Bilateral merchandise trade stood at US\$ 5.66 billion with the balance of trade being in India's favour.



India is Israel's third largest trade partner in Asia



Trade in diamonds constitutes close to 50% of bilateral trade



Areas of Cooperation

- ⊕ **Political Relations:** Full diplomatic relations were established in 1992, which were upgraded to a strategic level in 2017. Both countries are members of I2U2 initiative along with US and UAE
- ⊕ **Economic and Commercial Relations:** India has benefited from Israeli expertise and technologies in horticulture mechanization, micro-irrigation and post-harvest management etc.
- ⊕ **Defence & Security:** India imports critical defence technologies from Israel; Joint production and development of key defence items such as **Barak missile**.
- ⊕ **Culture and Education:** India is an attractive, alternative tourist destination for Israel; New funding programme of joint academic research.
- ⊕ **Indian Community:** Around 85,000 Jews of Indian-origin in Israel.



India's De-Hyphenated Policy: Israel and Palestine

- ⊕ In international politics, de-hyphenation means **dealing with two countries, having adversarial relationship between them, in an independent manner.**
- ⊕ Traditionally, India's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine has been a hyphenated foreign policy. However, **hyphenating the ties** with Israel – linking them to ties with the Palestinian Authority – essentially **prevented India from pursuing a pragmatic policy** of what was in India's best interests.
- ⊕ India in the recent year has been following a de-hyphenation policy between Israel and Palestine. It means **India's relationship with Israel would stand on its own merits, independent and separate from India's relationship with the Palestinians.** The de-hyphenation is a balancing act, with India shifting from one side to another as the situation demands.



Areas of Concern

- ⊕ **Trade and investment potential is not harnessed fully:** Trade is mainly confined to diamonds and defence.
 - FTA talks are stagnated for more than a decade.
- ⊕ **Emerging fissures in the West Asian region:** Growing closeness of Israel and Saudi Arabia against Iran creates challenge for India to balance its relations with the three.
- ⊕ **Human Rights violation by Israel against Palestine:** India has been vocal about human rights violations, however India faces strategic dilemma in dealing with the issue.
- ⊕ **In defence domain:** Israeli companies are concerned about uncertainties related to India's protracted defence acquisition procedure.
- ⊕ **Israel's close ties with China**



Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Enhancing people to people connect**
- ⊕ **Education:** India's institutes of higher education could benefit from the strong culture of research and innovation that thrives in Israel.
- ⊕ **Learning from Israel's Water Management Technologies**
- ⊕ **Cooperation in Semiconductor Manufacturing**
- ⊕ **Mutual learnings on community practices**

India and Israel form an indomitable alliance, driving innovation, prosperity, and peace in the global arena, exemplifying the true potential of strong bilateral relations. ↑

2.10.6. ABRAHAM ACCORDS

Why in News?

Citing certain agenda problems and unfavourable circumstances, Morocco has postponed the next round of Abraham Accords Summit.

About Abraham Accords

- The Accord is a **normalization agreement between UAE and Israel** to establish formal diplomatic relations and was brokered by USA in 2020.
- With this, **UAE became the third Arab country to recognise Israel** after Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994).
- Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco have also joined the Accord in 2020.

Key Features of the Accord

- **Eases Connectivity:** The launch of direct flights between the countries has increased connectivity between the nations.
- **Establishes peace in the region** and reduce military aggressions of Israel.
- **Access to Holy site** of Islam, Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem to the citizens of the signatory countries.
- **Can advance two state solution** in a positive direction by opening new channels of communications between the countries.

Significance of Accord for India



Challenges faced by the Accord:

- **The Palestinian Cause:** Saudi has already put forth that it would not advance its ties with Israel as long as there is no progress in the stalled peace process with the Palestinians.
- **Change of administration in the US:** The newly formed US Government has reduced interest in pushing the accord forward, which was evident from the delay in appointment of a head to the \$3Bn Abraham Fund, put forward by the US itself.
- **Increasing Chinese influence in the region:** China recently hosted the peace talks between Iran and Saudi, which were considered as arch adversaries to each other.
- **The Iran Factor:** Deterring Iran has been a major driver of cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Israel will not be appreciating the peace talks initiated between Iran and Saudi.
- **Continuing Israel Aggression:** Israel is still on-going with its occasional attacks in the Gaza and West bank region, which obstructs further advancement in the accord.

Challenges for India:

- **Chances of Polarisation:** The Israel-GCC ties can provoke new polarisations and give rise to new proxy wars in the Gulf, especially between Iran and Israel.
- **Balancing the diplomacy:** Pushing for improved relationship with Israel, while the Accord having been not acknowledged by all the members of the Gulf, can irk them and affect our energy supply and Indian diaspora in the region.
- **Employment of Indian migrants:** Israel has the potential to supply skilled and semi-skilled manpower to the GCC states, which directly affects job prospects of many Indians.
- **Disruption in the existing politico-economic ties with GCC:** Israel's foray into the Gulf may disrupt the existing politico-economic architecture that India has carefully built with the GCC states over years.

Way Forward

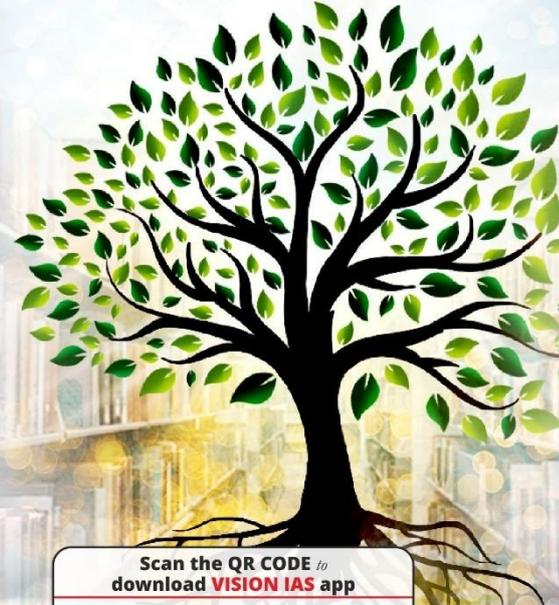
- **Utilise the I2U2 as a forum:** The newly formed I2U2 can help India to establish its influence in the West Asia better.
- **Push for the Palestinian Cause:** While the stand regarding the Palestine stands same, India should also push for initiation of talks between the countries.
- **Ensure Energy Security:** While the diplomacy to ensure peace is on track, India should re-establish cordial relationship with Iran and other Gulf countries to ensure its energy security.

- **Protect the interests of Indian diaspora:** Talks and initiatives should start with the countries to ensure the job security of Indian diaspora and their investments in the region.

2.10.7. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN WEST ASIA

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India-GCC decided to pursue resumption of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Negotiations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Earlier in 2006 and 2008, both sides had negotiated a trade pact however it stopped later on. • GCC is a political and economic alliance of 6 countries in Gulf region - Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain. • GCC was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1981. <p>India-GCC relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic relations: Gulf constitutes “immediate” neighbourhood of India separated only by Arabian Sea. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Both share desire for political stability and security in the region. • Trade and economic relations: GCC is currently India’s largest trading partner bloc with bilateral trade in valued at over USD 154 billion. • GCC countries contribute almost 35% of India’s oil imports and 70% of gas imports. • Approximately 50% of India’s remittances (largest recipient in world in 2021) comes from GCC region. • Diaspora: GCC countries together host approximately 6.5 million Indians. |
|--|---|

Mains 365 – International Relations



फाउंडेशन कोर्स

सामान्य अध्ययन

प्रारंभिक एवं मुख्य परीक्षा 2024

इनोवेटिव क्लासरूम प्रोग्राम

- प्रारंभिक परीक्षा, मुख्य परीक्षा और निबंध के लिए महत्वपूर्ण सभी टॉपिक का विस्तृत कवरेज
- मौलिक अवधारणाओं की समझ के विकास एवं विश्लेषणात्मक क्षमता निर्माण पर विशेष ध्यान
- एनीमेशन, पॉवर प्वाइंट, वीडियो जैसी तकनीकी सुविधाओं का प्रयोग
- अंतर - विषयक समझ विकसित करने का प्रयास
- योजनाबद्ध तैयारी हेतु करंट ओरिएंटेड अप्रोच
- नियमित क्लास टेस्ट एवं व्यक्तिगत मूल्यांकन

- सीसेट कक्षाएं
- PT 365 कक्षाएं
- MAINS 365 कक्षाएं
- PT टेस्ट सीरीज
- मुख्य परीक्षा टेस्ट सीरीज
- निबंध टेस्ट सीरीज
- सीसेट टेस्ट सीरीज
- निबंध लेखन - शैली की कक्षाएं
- करेंट अफेयर्स मैगजीन

DELHI: 21 जून, 1 PM | 25 जुलाई, 9 AM **BHOPAL: 8 अगस्त, 9 AM**

JAIPUR: 17 जुलाई, 7:30 AM & 4 PM **LUCKNOW: 22 जून, 9 AM**

लाइव/ऑनलाइन कक्षाएं भी उपलब्ध

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2.11. INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India has a **long history of partnership** with Africa, with **solidarity and political affinity** going back to the early 1920s. India's economic engagement with Africa began **intensifying since early 2000s** both **bilaterally and with the regional economic communities** such as African Union (AU).

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  <p>Bilateral trade amounts to \$46 billion in 2020-21.</p> |  <p>India is fourth largest partner for Africa</p> |  <p>India is fifth largest investor in Africa</p> |  <p>India's FDI flows to Africa are concentrated in the service sector.</p> |
|---|--|---|---|



Significance of Africa for India

- ⊕ **Geostrategic:** Critical to **India's security** as threat of **radicalism, piracy, organized crime** emerges from Horn of Africa region; Emerging as a theatre for **major power rivalry** having **substantial military presence** on the continent.
- ⊕ **Geopolitical:** Support of African countries is important for India's aim of **gaining a permanent seat in UNSC**; Provides a space for displaying both **India's soft and hard power**.
- ⊕ **Economic:** Africa's **growing middle class**; **Ample agricultural land** which can address **India's food security**.
- ⊕ **Energy security:** Africa is home to about 30% of the **world's mineral reserves** and has substantial **presence of oil and natural gas reserves**.



Initiatives for cooperation with African countries

- ⊕ **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme**
- ⊕ **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) Initiative.**
- ⊕ **Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) for enhancing connectivity.**
- ⊕ **India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD)**
- ⊕ **Initiatives by EXIM Bank:** Commercial Lines of Credits to various regional financial institutions and parastatal entities in Africa.
- ⊕ **Humanitarian aid** amid crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ⊕ **'Ten Guiding Principles for India-Africa Engagement'** as outlined by the prime minister.



Concerns related to India's engagement with Africa

- ⊕ **Modest economic engagement** when compared with **China**.
- ⊕ **Slow project delivery by India** especially in comparison to China.
- ⊕ **Lack of synchronisation** between LoCs, grants and capacity building initiatives.
- ⊕ **Lack of resources** with India.
- ⊕ Few agribusiness firms have been criticised for **land-grabbing and displacing local population**.
- ⊕ **Cumbersome bureaucracy** on both sides.
- ⊕ **Numerous cases of violence and discrimination against African students** in India.
- ⊕ **Interstate and intrastate conflicts in Africa.**



Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Focused Africa strategy** for the next decade and identification of a **few areas for closer cooperation**.
- ⊕ **Explore greater collaboration with Indian civil society organisations, NGOs, and Indian diaspora**
- ⊕ **Timely completion of projects.**
- ⊕ **Promote development-friendly private investments**
- ⊕ **Annual India-AU dialogue at the track 1.5 level** i.e. involving government representatives, academia, business leaders and functional sectors of both sides.

Africa's development is fundamental to India's foreign policy and the latter's rise as one of the global system's poles is both desirable and necessary. India must maintain and further strengthen pan-African engagement.

2.11.1. INDIA-AFRICA DEFENCE RELATIONS

Why in News?

India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) was held recently on the sidelines of DefExpo 2022 in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.

About India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD)

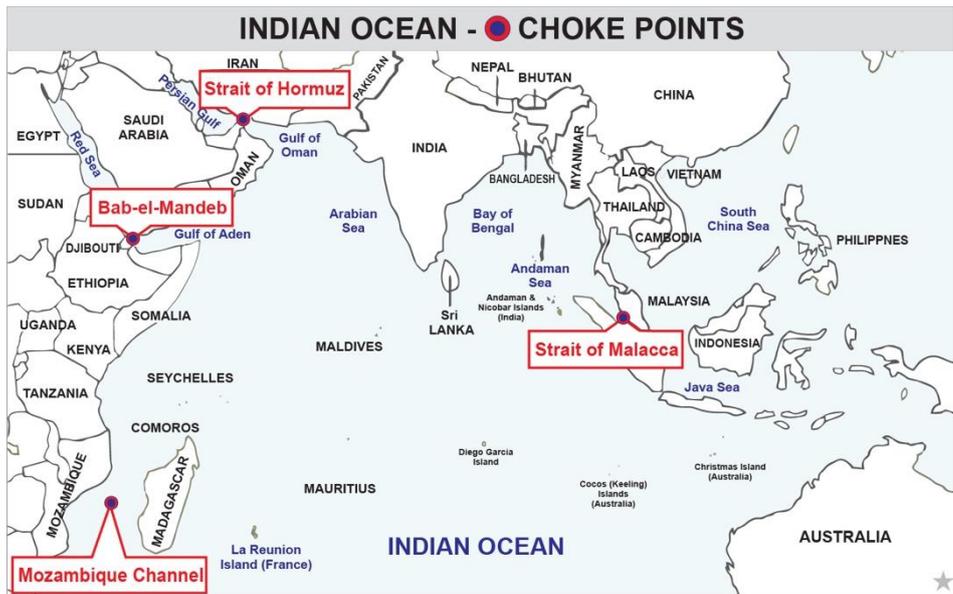
- IADD was institutionalized (in 2020) to be held **biennially** during successive DefExpos.
- **Gandhinagar Declaration** was adopted as an outcome document of IADD 2022.
 - It proposes to **enhance cooperation in the field of training in all areas of mutual interest**.
 - India offered **fellowship for experts from African countries** through Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis.

OBJECTIVE OF IADD

- Build on the existing defence partnerships** between African countries & India
- Explore new areas of convergence for mutual engagements** including areas such as capacity building, training, cyber security, maritime security and counter-terrorism

Importance of India-Africa Defence Relations

- **Geopolitical:** To enhance India's influence in the region:
 - **To Secure African States Interest:** To remain neutral in the intensifying great power rivalries (between US, Russia and China).
 - **Counter Chinese influence.**
- **Maritime Security:** To deal with maritime security challenges, in IOR.
- **Securing Sea-lanes of communications (SLOCs)** like Bab-el Mandeb, the Gulf of Aden, Strait of Hormuz and the Mozambique Channel.
- **Fight against terrorism:** Africa and India have been victims of terrorism and radical extremism (from Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, Jaish e-Mohammad, al-Qaeda etc.).
- **Boosting Defence exports:** Defence exports grew by 334% in the last five years.
- **Support to peacekeeping missions:** A strong defence partnership could help to grasp the changes that are underway in the nature and role of contemporary peacekeeping operations.



India's contribution to peace and security in Africa

- Providing training to African defence,** military, naval and civilian personnel in Indian institutes
- Ensuring maritime security** predominantly through anti-piracy efforts and joint patrolling of the seas
- Contributing troops and police units** (including women force) to UN peacekeeping operations.

Challenges in India-Africa Defence Relations

- **Rising China's presence** including Defence Attaché presence, naval ship visits, arms sales etc.
- **Low capital allocation** as the Indian Navy continues to face budgetary constraints.

- **Interstate and Intra-state conflicts in Africa** makes it difficult to have a defence partnership with relevant stakeholders.
- **Gap between promises and delivery** on the Indian part in converting capital into deliverables or influence.
- **Maritime crimes threats** like high incidence of piracy off the East African coast in Gulf of Aden and in the Niger Delta Region and Gulf of Guinea in West Africa.
- **New and emerging threats** (such as cross-border terrorism, transnational organised crime, illegal immigration etc.) makes it difficult to identify mutual priorities.
- **Lack of synchronisation** between Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs impacts India's engagement in the region as the resource pool is limited.

Initiatives taken by India

- **Africa-India Field Training Exercise 2019 (AFINDEX-19).**
- **India-Africa Defence Ministers Conclave (IADMC)** in 2020 that led to the **adoption of the Lucknow Declaration**, which pertains specifically to defence, military, and security cooperation.
- **African countries are among the foremost beneficiaries of Indian Navy's HADR operations.**
- **India has participated in several UN peacekeeping missions** implemented in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique etc.
- **Bilateral Institutional mechanisms** like the Joint Defence Cooperation Committees and MoUs /Agreements for defence collaboration have been put in place with key countries.

Way Forward

- **Develop a Pan-African approach** in accordance with African needs and priorities.
- **Enhance bilateral engagement** with leading countries like South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Ghana and Kenya as part of strategic level framework.
- **Prioritise security cooperation with Africa** as it remains an under- exploited area of the India-Africa strategic partnership as compared to trade, investment and development.
- **Explore new areas of cooperation** including capacity-building, training, cybersecurity, maritime security and counter-terrorism.
- **Increase visibility of Indian defence firms in African markets:** India should conduct **multilateral defence cooperation events** involving select Africa nations, India and US AFRICOM components.

2.11.2. INDIA-MAURITIUS RELATIONS**Why in news?**

1st session of High-Powered Joint Trade Committee (JTC) under India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) was recently held.

India-Mauritius CECPA

- CECPA, which entered into force in 2021, 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** etc.
- **India- Mauritius Relations**
 - **Economic:** Bilateral trade rose to **USD 787 million** in 2021-22. Mauritius was **third top source of FDI** in India (2020-21).
 - **Strategic:** Mauritius occupies a special place in India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), proximity to important Sea lines of communications.
 - **People to people connect:** Indian origin people comprise nearly 70% of Mauritius's population.
 - **Defence cooperation:** including transfer of a Dornier aircraft and an Advanced Light Helicopter, Dhruv.
- **Challenges for India- Mauritius relations:** China's growing presence and influence in the Indian Ocean region, round-trip of investments in India through Mauritius etc.

2.11.3. SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)**Why in news?**

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

Need for enhancing India's Engagements with SADC

- **Sourcing critical minerals:** Southern Africa region is richly endowed in lithium, graphite, cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earth minerals.

- **Preventing China's Monopoly:** With the rising demand of Rare Earth Elements, the risk of China forming a monopoly on the industry has also increased.
 - Africa is one of the regions targeted as an alternative source of REE commodities.
- **Maritime security:** Due to large coastlines, SADC is an important stakeholder in ensuring a safe and secure maritime environment, especially in the IOR.

• **South-South Cooperation:** With the increasing diversification of India's global trade towards other developing countries, SADC has emerged as important trading partner for India.

- **Investment Opportunities for India:** SADC countries offer opportunities in the economic sector, including transport, energy, and ICT, healthcare, and education.
- **Economic Sustainability for the region:** Scaling up private sector investment would also ensure better debt sustainability and management, innovation and efficiency, and enhance the competitiveness of their economies.

Challenges in enhancing India's Engagements with SADC

- **Poor Governance System:** Corruption, mismanagement, violence, insufficient infrastructure and political instability may enhance the risk for businesses.
- **The China Challenge:** China's strategic approach and vast resources give her a formidable edge in Africa as compared to India.
- **Lacks a clear strategy for cooperation:** Indian development aids have not been designed to achieve a larger development goal such as food and health security, education for all or clean energy.
- **Diversity:** There are multiple cultures and a number of different languages spoken in South Africa, which means adopting a bespoke approach to different regions is crucial.
- **Skilled labour:** Due to the poor state of the public education system, skilled labor can be difficult to find in many technical and professional segments.
- **Limits on Foreign Control:** For example, South Africa requires levels of company ownership and participation by black South Africans to obtain bidding preferences on government tenders and contracts.

Way ahead to enhance India's engagements with SADC

- **Strategic Alliance for Critical Minerals** like cobalt and lithium.
- **Developing Manufacturing Value Chains** by providing foreign capital and technical know-how for the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap.
- **Increasing Circularity in Africa's Mining Sector** by using **water saving technologies**, providing **renewable energy solutions** etc.
- **Access to Trade Finance in Southern Africa:** For this, DFIs could develop financial instruments like risk participation and transaction guarantee agreements.



SADC at a glance

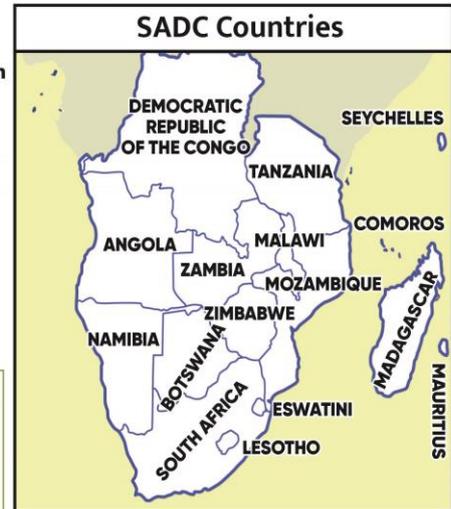
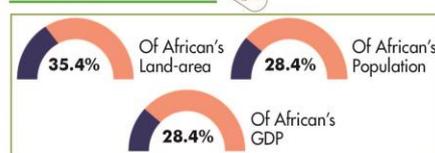
About SADC

- ☞ **Nature :** Intergovernmental organization
- ☞ **Members :** 16 African countries
- ☞ **Origin :** Circa 1980

Goal of SADC

To further socio-economic cooperation and integration as well as political and security cooperation among members

SADC Constitutes



India - SADC Economic Relations

India signed the **Memorandum of Understanding on economic cooperation** with SADC in 1997.

India's total trade with the SADC countries **US\$ 30.8 billion in 2021** (27.1 billion in 2012)

Key import: Pearls, precious stones, metals, mineral fuels, oils

Key export: Mineral fuels and pharmaceutical products

India's trade deficit with SADC was recorded at **US\$ 5.4 billion** in 2021. **South Africa** accounted for **around 47.2% of India's total exports** to the region in 2021.

3. REGIONAL, AND GLOBAL GROUPING AND AGREEMENTS INVOLVING INDIA AND/OR AFFECTING INDIA'S INTEREST

3.1. INDIA-EURASIA RELATIONS

INDIA - EURASIA AT A GLANCE

Eurasia has arose as a very strategic area given the fact that geographically the region is surrounded by the Atlantic, Pacific, and by the Arctic Ocean and its southern side by Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
|  <p>Eurasia region is geographically represented by Eurasian tectonic Plate comprising about 93 countries.</p> |  <p>It is home to over 5 billion people.</p> |  <p>Resources in the region: natural gas, oil reserves, iron ore, gold, and copper.</p> |
|--|--|---|



Significance of Eurasia in present world order

- ⊖ **China's assertiveness:** China with projects like BRI and China-Russia relationship has been cemented by the **growing animosity between China and USA.**
 - For example, China and Russia signed declaration on **"Great Eurasian Partnership"** in 2015 aimed at **synchronizing BRI and Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).**
- ⊖ **Regional alliances:** Russia and Iran have deepened diplomatic and economic relations due to sanctions.
- ⊖ **Countermeasure to Indo-Pacific Region:** China and Russia as a countermeasure to western block are developing Eurasia as a power block.



Significance of Eurasia for India

- ⊖ **Alternate to BRI: INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor)** along with the **Ashgabat Agreement** can act as a counter to opaque BRI.
- ⊖ **Economic:** India is working towards joining the **Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)** that will **give access to Indian goods to entire geographic space** through a single tariff.
- ⊖ **Social:** Central Asian e-network by India is an attempt to leverage its prowess in IT sector.
- ⊖ **Alternate to Suez Canal:** Euro-Asian inland transport links provides an alternate to the congested Suez Canal.



Challenges for India in Eurasian Region

- ⊖ **Delayed projects:** Most of the **INSTC projects (except for Azerbaijan and KTI i.e., Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran Railway Corridor)**, Chabahar Port, and Ashgabat Agreement are waiting for funding.
- ⊖ **Rise of China amidst sanctions:** China's increasing footprint through BRI initiative and bilateral ties in this region especially after sanctions on Russia and Iran.
- ⊖ **Regional turmoil:** Since the beginning of Eurozone crisis in 2009, EU has experienced a series of challenges like **influx of refugees, BREXIT, Covid pandemic, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.**
- ⊖ **Diplomatic challenge:** Balancing west (USA and NATO) and east (Russia).



Way forward for India

- ⊖ **Free Trade Agreements (FTA):** India must **prioritize investments in Eurasia and expedite FTAs.**
- ⊖ **Engaging NATO and EU:** India's Eurasian policy must involve **greater engagement with both the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).**
- ⊖ **Regional Platforms:** India should strive towards **regular engagement with Russia and China by utilizing platforms of SCO, BRICS, and RIC** for ensuring Eurasian security.
- ⊖ **Improve connectivity:** India should seek to join Russia's "Greater Eurasian" corridor and the Northeast Passage to connect to the Far East and even Japan.
- ⊖ **Collaboration with Iran and Arabia:** India's partnerships with these countries can overcome Turkey's alliance with Pakistan and connectivity to Afghanistan.

India's engagement with Eurasia represents a significant opportunity for economic and strategic collaboration contributing to shared development and mutual understanding between India and the Eurasian nations.

3.2. INDIA-LATIN AMERICA RELATIONS

INDIA- LATIN AMERICA RELATIONS AT A GLANCE

India and Latin America shared post-colonial history but have barely managed to maintain minimal bilateral ties for the last several decades. However, recently the region is increasingly gaining salience in India's foreign policy.



India's annual trade with Latin America amounts to **US\$50 billion**



Region contributes around **15 percent of India's energy imports** Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, and Cuba are some important suppliers of oil to India.

Overall relations



Significance of India-Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) relationship

- ⊕ **Trade:** India's exports to Latin America **increased by 48%** to reach **18.89 billion dollars in 2021-2022**.
- ⊕ **Investment:** Indian investments in the region are estimated **between US\$ 12 billion to US\$ 16 billion** in value-added sectors such as pharmaceuticals, automobiles, information technology, energy, and power transmission.
- ⊕ **Food and energy security:** Latin America has vast swathes of **fertile land**, Brazil's **cutting-edge food storage technologies**, collaboration with Brazil in **eco-friendly ethanol**.
- ⊕ **Strategic significance:** Latin America accounts for 40 % of global production of copper, supplies 35 % of the world's lithium.
- ⊕ **Strategic Orientation:** The region is important for India in order to achieve its global ambitions such as in order to pursue its membership of the UNSC, the NSG and at various other negotiations like climate change, terrorism, trade, etc.
- ⊕ **Multilateral cooperation:** **Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS), South-South cooperation, ISA.**
- ⊕ **Development assistance:** India has recently announced a 14 million US dollar grant for **community development projects** and a 150 million line of credit for solar, renewable energy, and climate change-related projects.
- ⊕ **South-south Cooperation:** India held the first voice of Global South Summit which had 29 latin America countries



Challenges

- ⊕ **Insufficient diplomatic attention**
- ⊕ **Trade:** India's **high tariff on Latin American agricultural goods** (more than 5 times that of China's)
- ⊕ **Lack of connectivity:** India has **no direct shipping services to this region.**
- ⊕ **Lack of sufficient institutional presence**
- ⊕ **Language barriers:** Lack of fluency in Spanish and Portuguese is a major disadvantage for Indian companies, Unfamiliarity with India's ethos burdens Latin American companies in India.
- ⊕ **Competition with China:** China is a largest investor in many LACs. China has direct shipping lanes through Panama canal.
- ⊕ **Lack of mechanism to engage region** as a whole.



Way forward

- ⊕ **Trade diversification:** LAC exports to India are presently heavily concentrated in extractive products, accounting for 72% of exports.
- ⊕ **Development of financial institutions** to facilitate a joint step forward toward deeper South-South cooperation for a brighter future.
- ⊕ **Promote Latin American studies**, invest in shipping industries, and conclude preferential trade agreements and free trade agreements.
- ⊕ **Revive 'Focus:LAC' programme** to encourage and support Indian exporters to explore business opportunities in the region.
- ⊕ **Upgrade the current PTAs with Chile and MERCOSUR Countries to FTAs.**

India and Latin America are emerging as major growth engines of the world economy and must reap the mutual benefits of a growing partnership with each other. ★

3.2.1. MEA VISIT TO LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Why in news?

Indian External Affairs Minister paid visit to four of the Latin American countries- Panama, Guyana, Colombia and Dominican Republic.

Significance of the recent meet

- **Guyana:** Commissioned an **India-made ferry MV Ma Lisha** to improve connectivity and mobility within Guyana.
- **Panama:** India's **largest Central American trade partner**, with US \$610 million in annual trade in 2022.
 - Positioned to **serve as India's gateway to the Latin American region**, offering unique **logistical capabilities as a maritime hub**.
- **Colombia:** Signed the **Cultural Exchange Program for 2023-26**.
- **Dominican Republic:** Inaugurated the **Embassy of India** in the Dominican Republic.

3.3. INDO PACIFIC REGION

INDIA-INDO-PACIFIC AT A GLANCE

It's a **geopolitical construct** substituting "Asia-Pacific" and representing an **integrated theatre that combines the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean**. However, Various stakeholders have differing interpretations of what constitutes it.

65% of the world's population

63% of the world's GDP

Dominates 50% of the world's maritime trade.

Key elements of India's vision for the Indo-Pacific (PM's Shangri La Dialogue, 2018) includes

- ⊕ A free, open, inclusive region.
- ⊕ Southeast Asia at the centre of Indo Pacific.
- ⊕ A common rules-based order for the region
- ⊕ Equal access to common spaces on sea and in the air, as a right under international law Circumventing power rivalries through partnerships.

India's policy towards the Indo-Pacific Region

- ⊕ **Strengthening and preserving traditional roles in IOR** such as Security Provider and First Responder etc.
- ⊕ **Naval Strategy:** Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through institutions like- Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC); Expanding/maintaining India's naval presence through Mission Based Deployments (MBDs) and Joint Exercises.
- ⊕ **Initiatives:** Indo Pacific Oceans' Initiative, Trilateral Development Corporation (TDC) fund, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, Asia Africa Growth Corridor, International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure etc.
- ⊕ **Partnerships:** IPEF, QUAD, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, Forum for India-Pacific Islands cooperation (FIPIIC), Minilaterals such as Trilateral dialogue with France and Australia.
- ⊕ **Foreign Policy: Separate** Indo-Pacific Division (IPD) under **Ministry of External Affairs, Utilizing Soft Power** (Project Mausam), Act East Policy, SAGAR etc.

Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Issue based Coalitions and Partnerships** framed by a model of burden sharing.
- ⊕ **Enhancing engagements** with non-traditional players such as Micronesia.
- ⊕ **Strategic use of Island Territories.**
- ⊕ **Debt solutions for vulnerable countries.**
- ⊕ **Innovative mechanisms** such as QUAD+ (minilateral engagement in Indo-Pacific to include other crucial emerging economies.)

India's interests in the Indo-Pacific

- ⊕ **Peace and security** in the Indian Ocean.
- ⊕ **Expanding its presence in the region**, especially in Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.
- ⊕ **Maintain its role as a net security provider.**
- ⊕ **Countering China.**
- ⊕ **Enhancing Trade and Investment Cooperation** and Promoting sustainable development.
- ⊕ **Other Interests:** Combating marine pollution, Regulating illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, deep sea mineral exploration and effective disaster risk management.

Challenges faced by India

- ⊕ **Limited Naval Capacity and Lack of military bases.**
- ⊕ **Challenges to trade:** Emergence of insulating tendencies amongst economies after COVID, Tariff and non-tariff measures (NTMs) and poor infrastructure connectivity.
- ⊕ **Slow pace of developments of initiatives.**
- ⊕ **Balancing Continental and Maritime Strategies.**
- ⊕ **Challenges to MDA:** submarine deployments, grey shipping and dark shipping.
- ⊕ **Disapproval from within** due to divergence from traditional positions on nonalignment.
- ⊕ **Barriers to fruitful partnerships:** Lack of definitional consensus and differences in priorities.

Collective efforts will contribute to the maintenance of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, where there is respect for territorial integrity, peaceful resolution of disputes and adherence to international rules and norms.

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

Why in News?

India participated in the Second Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) Negotiating Round in Bali, Indonesia.

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.**
 - It is not a free trade agreement. IPEF is more about standard setting and facilitating trade.
- Member states:** US, Australia, Brunei, India, etc. Together, these countries account for 40% of the global GDP.
- 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.
 - India has chosen to opt out from joining the trade pillar (pillar 1) only as it is apprehensive of the possibility of binding conditionalities on matters like labour and public procurement.

Significance of IPEF for India

- Participation in regional trade:** For India, which walked out of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the IPEF membership keeps it in the room on Asian trading arrangements.
- Aligned to domestic requirements:** IPEF's non-specific and flexible nature also suits India, providing enough scope of negotiations on a range of issues like environmental restrictions on fossil fuels, data localization etc.
- Better economic opportunities:** IPEF is providing India another opportunity to be part of a mega economic arrangement, but outside the influence of China.
- Participation in resilient supply chains:** India can consider members as alternative sources for its raw materials requirements.

FOUR PILLARS OF ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK



Trade

- High-standard rules in the digital economy, including standards on cross-border data flows and data localization.
- Strong labor and environment standards and corporate accountability provisions.



Supply chains

- Supply chain commitments to create a more resilient economy and guard against price spikes that increase costs.
- Establishing an early warning system, mapping critical mineral supply chains, improving traceability in key sectors, and coordinating on diversification efforts.



Clean Economy

- Commitments on clean energy, decarbonization, and infrastructure that promote good-paying jobs.
- Concrete, high-ambition targets that will accelerate efforts to tackle the climate crisis, including in the areas of renewable energy, carbon removal, energy efficiency standards, and new measures to combat methane emissions.



Fair Economy

- Enact and enforce effective tax, anti-money laundering, and anti-bribery regimes that are in line with existing multilateral obligations.
- Enforcing regimes that cut down on corruption and ensure fair taxation

India's reasons for not joining RCEP

- Apprehensions from local industries** like dairy, agriculture, steel, plastics etc. about cheap foreign products.
- Lack of Service component** in the negotiations.
- The trade imbalance with RCEP members:** Out of 15 countries, India had trade deficit with 10 countries.
- Geopolitical considerations:** India wanted RCEP to exclude Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) obligations due to geopolitical reasons.
- The e-commerce chapter has some clauses that **affect data localization norms** in India.
- Lack of credible assurances** on market access, non-tariff barriers, and restriction on circumvention of rules of origin.

Concerns for India

- Stated objectives of IPEF include **pursuing rules in digital economy**, such as standards on cross-border data flows and data localisation.
 - This is **something India has been avoiding in all its free trade deals** as it does not want to lose sovereignty over its data.
- The IPEF also wants to **frame rules on labour standards, environment norms and decarbonization, which India has never been keen on**, including in its free trade pacts.
- US could also use IPEF** to pressurise India on supporting a **permanent moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions** at the WTO.

Issues with IPEF

- **Lack of clarity:** Currently, it neither constitutes a 'free trade agreement,' nor a forum to discuss tariff reductions or increasing market access.
- **Short in countering China:** In its current format, the IPEF might not be able to
- counter China's economic dominance in the region owing to the lack of direct incentives offered in IPEF.
- **Fear of U.S. domination:** U.S. appears to be making the deal more about benefits to the U.S. economy than to the Indo-Pacific region as a whole.
 - For instance, dominating the rules and standards of digital technologies like artificial intelligence and 5G
- **Overlap with BDN and B3W:** The objectives of IPEF has already appeared and been tested in both the **Blue Dot Network (BDN)** launched in 2019 and the **Build Back Better World (B3W)** initiative launched in 2021.
- **Possible violation of WTO rules:** In the absence of an FTA, WTO rules will not permit granting of preferential treatment amongst IPEF members.
- **Absence of dispute settlement mechanism** to avoid unilateral actions by signatory countries.

Significance of IPEF for U.S.

- IPEF is **part of the U.S.'s more than a decade old "Pivot to Asia" programme**, re-imagining the Indo-Pacific as a geographic construct including America (QUAD is also part of the same pitch).
- IPEF **will help U.S. to reclaim economic leadership** after the previous administration walked out of Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP, originally the TPP) in 2017.
- **IPEF is part of U.S. way of showing** that despite its current focus on the war in Europe, and Russia through economic sanctions, **it has not lost sight that Asia.**

Why U.S. focuses on Indo-Pacific?

- With nearly half of the earth's population, **one-third of global GDP, and some of the world's most capable militaries**, region is critical to **advancing U.S. commercial, diplomatic, and strategic interests.**

Conclusion

3Ts—Trust, Transparency, and Timeliness—mentioned by the Indian Prime Minister during the launch ceremony are very important for the success of this initiative. Trust and transparency will be built only if members, particularly the US, accommodate each other's interests.

3.3.2. REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN INDO-PACIFIC

Why in news?

Recently, Quad countries signed **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Agreement**.

More about news

- This partnership was announced as part of a shared vision for a free, open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific region.
- The Partnership has been designed to
 - **respond to the vulnerabilities** of the Indo-Pacific region.
 - **serve as a dedicated framework** to coordinate their disaster response operations in the region.
 - **augment their capacity and capability**, interoperability and operational synergy to undertake HADR operations.
 - **promote inclusion** by ensuring that vulnerable sections of society are agents and beneficiaries of humanitarian action.

Other supporting initiatives by QUAD countries

- **NASA-SERVIR** by US to provide satellite and geospatial information to developing countries.
- **Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform (AP-Plat)** by Japan.
- **Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac)** by Australia.

Vulnerabilities of the Indo-Pacific Region

- **Highly disaster prone** region accounting for more than three-quarters of the global number of tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, landslides, cyclones etc.
- The **region faces a wide array of challenges** such as higher temperatures, abnormal fluctuations in rainfall, home to small island states and developing littoral countries etc
- Areas of co-operation can include Early warning systems, emergency preparedness, disaster resilience, etc.

Significance of regional cooperation in disaster risk management

- **Critical for reducing the risk:** By sharing of data and forecasts on severe weather, monsoons, floods, and tropical cyclones.

- **For better response post disaster:** Through the coordination and sharing of information, expertise, and resources, countries can help one another during the critical 48 hours following a disaster.
- **Crucial for support in recovery phase:** Partnerships and networks in the region can share approaches, tools, technologies, and good practices that can lead to more viable development outcomes.
- **Betterment of diplomatic ties:** HADR operations and response plans can build confidence and improve diplomatic ties in the region.
- **Emerging need:** As climate change is a cross-border issue, this makes regional cooperation even more important.

Global initiatives for regional cooperation for disaster management

- **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030** outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks.
- **Disaster Risk Management under IORA**, to facilitate and enhance regional cooperation on preparedness and response strategies to fragile and unpredictable situations.
- **Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Network (APDRN)** has been established by UNESCAP.

Challenges in effective cooperation in the region

- **Sovereignty issues:** Competitive and complex geopolitical realities leads to an aversion to data sharing brought about by concerns of sovereignty.
- **Capacity constraints:** As a result of lack of resources and training **disaster management remains focused only on preparedness and emergency response.**
- **Pre-dominance of armed forces in disaster preparedness and emergency response hinders regional cooperation,** as each country is wary of inviting neighboring armed forces into their territory.
- **Developmental priorities restrict needed investment** in strengthening the existing disaster management frameworks and agencies in south Asian nations.
- **Presence of China:** China has been scaling up its presence in the Indo-Pacific with implications for both disaster response and maritime security.

Way Forward

- **Building Trust:** Countries must balance the challenges of both current perceptions and historical precedents, and the trade-offs that they can lead to diminished trust.
- **Sharing of critical data:** Establishing a cooperative means of sharing critical data meteorological data, vehicle geolocations or cell phone data before disasters.
- **Integrating technology** can help automate the process of managing the various disciplines, such as quick processing of large amounts of data and the establishment of a centralized/accessible database.
- **Incorporating pandemic learnings:** Increasing input from health experts and combine their consultations with disaster experts to improve the effectiveness of disaster recovery.
- **Realising potential role of private citizens and local groups** by creating coordination and response frameworks that will allow volunteers to interface with the formal organizations and agencies.
 - An example of such a training program is the **Citizen Emergency Response Training (CERT)** program in the United States.

3.3.2.1. INDIA'S DISASTER RELIEF DIPLOMACY

Why in News?

India launched **Operation Dost** for earthquake hit **Türkiye** and **Syria**.

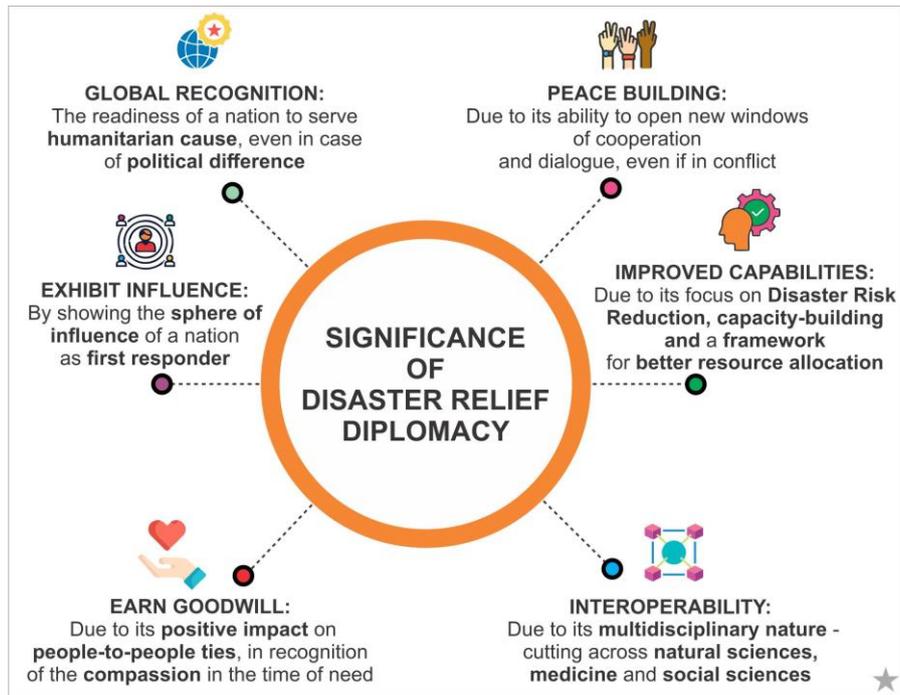
About Disaster Relief Diplomacy: Meaning and its Guiding Principles

- **Disaster Relief Diplomacy**, also known as **HADR Diplomacy**, refers to 'a country's efforts to provide aid and support to other countries affected by natural disasters or conflicts'.
 - It includes **sharing of expertise** and **resources** or **deployment of human resources** as assistance.
- **HADR has emerged as a sophisticated diplomatic tool for strategic competition.** E.g.
 - In the **Bosnia crisis** (1990s), only **16 donor governments** officially pledged support.
 - Whereas, during the **Indian Ocean Tsunami** (2004), **92 countries** pledged their support.
- **Oslo Guidelines:** Guidelines on "The Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief" in **1994**, re-launched in **2006**, sets the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance for **UN humanitarian agencies**.

India's Disaster Relief Diplomacy

Guided by India's **civilizational ethos**, its philosophy of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** and the principles and purposes of the UN, India's humanitarian interventions started soon after its independence.

- **Contribution:** Over **200,000 Indians** have served **49 of the 71 UN Peacekeeping missions** established since **1948** including the missions in **Korea, Congo** etc. (This includes disaster relief operations as well).
- **Other major disaster relief operations-**
 - **Operation Castor** and **Operation Rainbow** were launched in **2004** to help the Tsunami hit **Maldives** and **Sri Lanka** respectively.
 - ✓ Present day **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)** between **India, Japan, Australia** and **USA** has its genesis in an **ad-hoc Tsunami Core Group** created in response to the **Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2004**.
 - **Vaccine Maitri**, starting from India's immediate neighborhood, it supplied Covid-19 vaccines around 94 countries.
- **Disaster relief devoid of geopolitics:** The help to **Türkiye**, despite its unsolicited comments on India's internal matters, is part of India's **consensus Approach** to conflict management; helping India to **focus on what unites it with others** rather than **what divides the two**.



India as part of Global efforts in Disaster relief diplomacy

- **Launching of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):** CDRI has launched 'Infrastructure for Resilient Island States' initiative to support Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- India is a **signatory to the Sendai Framework**.
- India is taking a leading role in **strengthening regional cooperation among South Asian countries**. For example- SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters, BIMSTEC identifies "environment and disaster management" as a priority sector of cooperation.
- **Partnership with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)** and The World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) among others.
- **Bilateral/ multilateral agreements with the several countries** like Switzerland, Russia, Japan and Tajkistan for cooperation in the field of disaster management.

Limitations/Risks of Disaster Relief Diplomacy

- **Limited Human and Technological Resources** which leads to **heavy dependence/use** of Armed Forces in disaster relief efforts.
- **Limited long-term impact** as its influence is short-lived. E.g., India-Nepal ties became strained soon after the **2015 relief operations**.
- **Political and Financial Conflict supersede disaster-related activities** as no example of its significant influence in conflict resolution. E.g.
 - The assistance between **Türkiye** and **Greece** post 1999 earthquake succumbed to old political enmity patterns due to prevalent lack of trust.
- **Risk of Refusal** from affected countries due to old enmity. E.g.
 - Cuba refused American aid during the 1998 drought.
 - Similarly, Pakistan refused India's humanitarian aid post 2022 floods.
- **Threat of conditional or tied bilateral aid**, i.e., strings attached to the help in the form of economic ties or security cooperation in the future.

Way Forward

India's efforts under **Operation Dost** demonstrated India's ability of **fast** and **capable** response. The scope and importance of disaster relief diplomacy will only increase in the emerging time. Therefore, it needs to be further strengthened by:

- **Capacity-building**, i.e., providing enough manpower and technology to National Disaster Response Force and other concerned organizations through international collaboration.
 - The 2024 launch of **NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) Mission** holds significance in this regard.
- **Developing long-term multilateral framework on disaster relief.**
 - The **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Pillar of Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** can be of great help in building a **long-term support mechanism**.
- **Strengthening existing diplomatic endeavors** by using HADR initiatives as catalysts if pursuance of other diplomatic initiatives is not feasible.
- **Improving People-to-People ties** through HADR initiatives by gaining **trust** and promoting **compassion** to overcome political and financial conflicts.

3.3.3. INDIA AND PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES (PIC)

Why in News?

Third Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit held at Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea.

Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC)



Genesis: It was launched in 2014.



Members: It includes 14 of the island countries - Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu



Others key Information: Pacific Islands consists of the three major groups of islands: Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

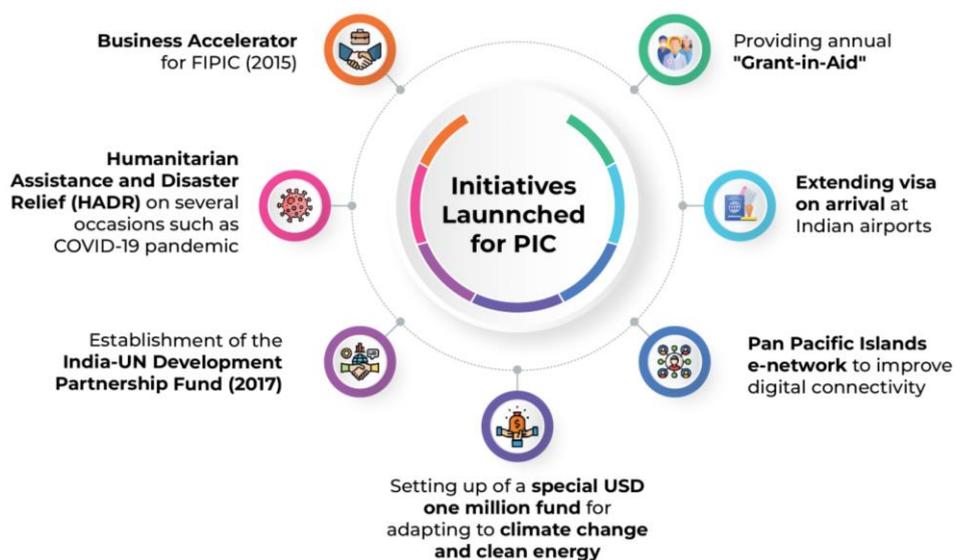


More on News

- India announced a **12-point development plan** for the Pacific Island nations which focuses on a range of areas including healthcare, renewable energy, and cyber-security.
- FIPIC is a manifestation of India's **Act East Policy** and **Indo-Pacific policy** and a key pillar of **South-South Co-operation**.

Significance of Pacific Islands Countries (PIC)

- **Geo-Strategic-** Sea-lanes of the **Indo-Pacific region** are critical to **international commerce** and the Pacific Islands are at the centre of region
- **Maritime Security-** The PIC's would become inevitably significant in India's **broader maritime strategy**.
- **Economic-** PICs with their resource rich Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) are **sources of natural and mineral resources** like LNG.
- **Regionals and Global Engagements:** Engagement with PIC allows India to strengthen its network of alliances and partnerships in regional and global organisations such as United Nation.
- **Cultural Ties:** Fiji and Papua New Guinea have significant **Indian diaspora communities**.



Challenges in Strengthening Relationships

- **Competition from Global Powers:** India finds it **challenging to counter the substantial influence** of China, Japan, the United States and Russia in PICs.
- **Unutilized Trade Potential:** Total annual trade is about a meagre \$300 million between the Indian and Pacific Island countries.
- **Emphasis on Traditional Approach:** **India's foreign policy** is focused much more on the **Indian Ocean region** and the Pacific region including the **PICs was relatively neglected**.
- **Limited Engagement:** India's interaction with the PICs still largely revolves around its engagement with Fiji and Papua New Guinea, mainly driven by the presence of sizeable Indian Diaspora.
- **Geographical Distance:** These countries are located far away from India, making **physical connectivity** and **regular engagement** difficult.
- **Less emphasis on People-to-people contacts** with PIC's in comparison to western and eastern countries.

Way Forward

- **High-level Engagements:** Need to initiate **high-level visits** and exchanges with leaders from the PIC.
- **Development Assistance:** India can enhance development assistance (grants, concessional loans, and technical cooperation etc.) to the Pacific Island Countries.
- **Trade and Investment Promotion:** India can explore avenues to enhance trade and investment relations with the PIC's.
- **Cultural Exchanges:** Promoting cultural exchanges is a valuable way to foster **people-to-people** contacts and mutual understanding.
- **Connectivity and Infrastructure Development:** India can **explore opportunities for investment** in ports, airports, roads, and digital infrastructure in the Pacific Island Countries.

3.4. INDIA-USA-CHINA TRIANGLE

Why in News?

Chinese government raised its contention over the 18th edition of 'Yudh Abhyas', the annual India-U.S. military exercise concluded recently in Uttarakhand (just 100 kms away from the Line of Actual Control (LAC)).

More on news

- **China has claimed that India has violated the 1993 and 1996 agreements** on LAC and also advised the US not to interfere in India-China relations.
- Experts point that the relations between these **three super-states are very important** for the emerging world order.

Triangle relationship and India-US-China

- In a triangle set-up, **the way Country "A" deals with Country "B" will affect Country C's behaviour indirectly or directly** due to the established model of interaction among the three parties.
- The preconditions for a triangular relationship are that **each player recognize the strategic salience of the three principals**.
 - With the **current dynamics of India-US-China triangle, it is still in its evolving stage** as both divergences and convergences exit amidst their relations.
- A triangle **relationship will not exist among three parties when two parties are friends or allies with the third being their common enemy**.

1993 and 1996 India- China agreements:

In 1993 agreement, both sides agreed to

- **Strictly respect and observe the line of actual control** between the two sides.
- To **keep the military forces in the areas along the line of actual control to a minimum level**.
- Not to **undertake military exercises in mutually identified zones**.
- Each side **shall give the other prior notification of military exercises** near the LAC.

In 1996 agreement, they agreed that

- Neither side **shall use its military capability against the other side**.
- No **armed forces to be deployed by either side in the border areas along the line of actual control**.

Areas of divergence in India-USA-China triangle

- **The conflicting foreign policies:** China sees India's Tibet policy and USA's Taiwan policy as hindrance to its sovereign territorial claims.

- Similarly, India is irked by China's close alliance with Pakistan through its military and economic ties, USA sees China as an immediate threat to its Superpower status.
- **India's apparent closeness to USA:** China sees India's closeness to USA as an issue. For instance:
 - **United States designated India as a Major Defence Partner and provided India with Strategic Trade Authorization tier 1 status.**

○ The two countries have already signed **four defence cooperation agreements** between them namely

- ✓ **General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).**
- ✓ **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).**
- ✓ **Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA).**
- ✓ **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).**

South China Sea dispute

- China stakes claim to **90% of the South China Sea**, and this claim is based on the U-shaped **nine-dash line**.
- **Territorial disputes:** Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam contest China's claim to South China Sea.
- **India interest in the SCS:** Commercial linkages with region, freedom of navigation, and a rules-based regional order.

South China Sea Dispute

- **Challenging Hegemony:** China wants to exert its influence over the **Indo Pacific region by displacing the position of India in the region and has plans to encircle India through its "String of Pearls"**.
 - **India-US engagement in the QUAD group** is also an irritant to China.
 - **China has been aggressive in the region.** For instance, issues with **Southeast Asian nations with respect to South China Sea**.
- **China's Belt and Road Initiative** is used as a debt trap and to cripple the other country's economy for its own benefits.
- **The Power Struggle:** China considers India as its 'Asian Rival' which possesses the inherent capacity to halt its hegemonistic ambitions in Asia.
 - Similarly, it sees USA as its 'Global Rival', whereas both India and USA see China in the prism of an aggressor who intrudes into their sovereignty.
- **China's stance in multilateral forums:** China's stance with respect to keeping India away from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the UN Security Council (UNSC) is evidently visible.
 - Whereas USA is trying to include India as a member in the same forums to balance China.
- **China using Trade as its weapon:** China is the source of around 16% of our overall imports and USA is also dependent on China as it acts as its major manufacturing hub.
 - It has also implied many non-tariff barriers on goods from India, thereby maintaining its upper hand in balance of trade.

Areas of Convergence in India-USA-China triangle

- **Trade and Commerce:** China is one of the biggest trading partners for both India and USA.
 - On the other hand, both India and USA are important to China as no other countries can procure such high volumes from its factories.
- **Investment needs:** India needs huge investment to develop its infrastructure and economy for which China has a deep pocket.

- **Stability in peace:** Except for the two episodes of Indo-China war in 1962 and 1967, both the countries have tried to maintain the peace in the region by de-escalation of minor clashes in the border lines.
 - Similarly, China and USA have not been at direct military conflict with each other.
- **Tackling Environmental Challenges:** Being the largest emitters, they are also strongly committed to reduce their emissions gradually and aid to reach the Paris climate targets.
- **Building ties:** The informal summit between India and China's Premier's in Wuhan (2018) and Mamallapuram (2019) and the continued interactions between the three countries on global forums like G20, UN has helped to converge their differences.
 - India-China also converge in the **Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and BRICS.**

Between 1995 and 2018, China nudges past US in global trade



Conclusion

India should continue to exercise its strategic autonomy in the triangle. For India, over reliance on USA's aid is not an advisable option, as USA has proved for itself that it is not an all-weather friend of India. Whereas a cordial relationship with China is also important as it is our geographical neighbor, but curtailing its aggressions in our borders and other spheres also needs to be given an upper hand.

3.4.1. ALTERNATIVES TO BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI)

Why in news?

The United States aims to **raise \$200 billion over five years** to fund needed infrastructure in developing countries under a G7 initiative aimed at countering **China's Belt and Road project.**

More about news

- The effort is now called the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, or PGII.**
- The announcement is an **official launch and a rebranding** of what had been rolled out last year at the G7 in the UK as **"Build Back Better World" (B3W).**

About BRI (Belt and Road Initiative)

- Launched in **2013** as **One Belt One Road**, BRI is a Chinese infrastructure development project to fund the development of **land and sea routes to link Asia, Africa, and Europe** along the route of the **historic Silk Road.**



Why Alternatives to BRI are emerging?

- **Fragmented nature:** Belt and Road is not a **unified, coherent strategy**, but rather as a **fragmented collection of bilateral arrangements** made on **different terms**.
- **Opaque nature causing mistrust:** The Chinese government has never published **detailed information about the size and terms** of Belt and Road loans.
- **Debt trap diplomacy:** According to reports, over 40 lower- and middle-income countries (LMIC) now have levels of debt exposure to China **higher than 10 per cent of their national GDP**.
 - China took Sri Lanka's Hambantota port on a 99-year lease, on account to Sri Lanka's failure to pay Chinese debt.
- **Slow progress due to implementation issues:** As per a report, **35% of the BRI infrastructure project** portfolio has encountered **corruption scandals, labour violations, environmental hazards, and public protests**.
- **Environmental costs:** The BRI has been criticized for causing **severe and irreversible impacts** on the environment and jeopardizing progress towards **long-term sustainable development**.

What are the other alternatives to BRI?

- **EU's Global Gateway Project:** The project aims to **mobilise up to €300 billion** in investments between 2021 and 2027 to underpin a **lasting global recovery**.
 - It will support **smart investments**, respecting **highest social and environmental standards**, in line with **international norms** and standards.

About Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)

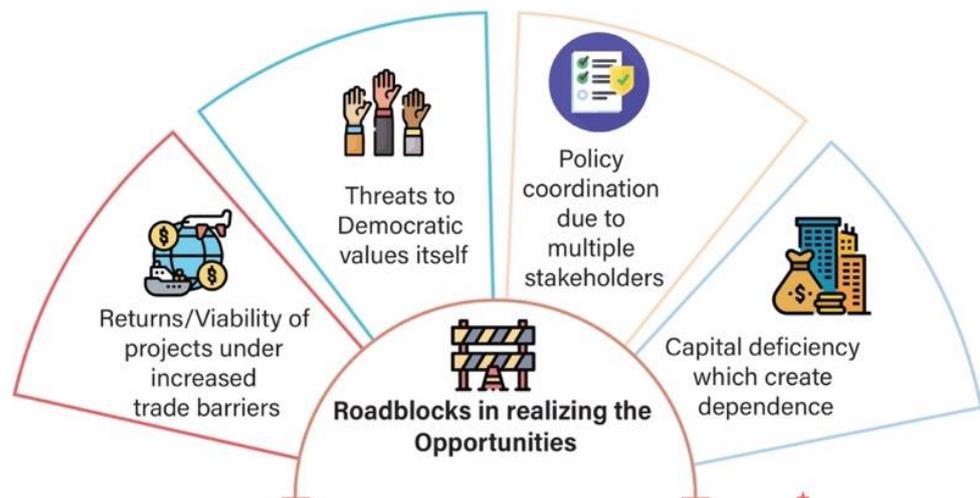
- It seeks to provide an alternative to **China's estimated \$1 trillion in hard infrastructure** investment around the world in the last decade.
- This G7 initiative is funding projects in **four major categories**:
 - **clean energy,**
 - **health systems,**
 - **gender equality**
 - **information and communications technology.**
- At the centre of PGII is a different approach to financing infrastructure projects: using **limited official finance** to catalyse **greater volumes of private capital**.
 - This stands in contrast to BRI, which provides financing largely via **state-to-state channels creating unsustainable debt levels**.
- The idea is to **combine government funding with private capital** from pension funds, private equity funds and insurance funds, among others.

India's concerns over BRI

- **Geopolitical concerns:** India is particularly concerned about the BRI infrastructure and connectivity projects in the **smaller South Asian countries and Indian Ocean littoral states**.
- **Sovereignty and security concerns:** India is **opposed to one of the flagship projects** of the BRI: **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** which connect China's Xinjiang autonomous region with Pakistan's Balochistan Province.
 - It contends that the project runs through **(Pakistan-controlled) Kashmir** and hence it **'violates Indian sovereignty'**.

India's response

- **MAUSAM project** to strengthen bilateral ties with countries in the Indian Ocean region.
- **SAGAR (security and growth for all in the region)** concept with multiple objectives such as:
 - protecting **maritime interests,**
 - enhancing economic and security cooperation in the littoral,
 - **promoting collective action** to deal with maritime threats,
 - building **greater trust and promoting respect** for maritime rules, norms and peaceful resolution of disputes.
- Increased **aid, investment and other economic engagements** to counter Chinese influence in neighbouring countries.



- **Clean Green Initiative:** Launched by UK at COP26, a with over 3 billion pound of climate financing for clean and resilient infrastructure in sectors such as clean energy, transport and urban development in **developing countries** over the next **five years**.
- **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC):** This bilateral partnership between India and Japan intends to foster **quality and sustainable infrastructure, development projects, and connectivity** in Africa.

Opportunities for India in Global Infrastructure

- **Partnership with EU:** Recently, **EU signed a Comprehensive Connectivity Partnership with India** to support 'resilient and sustainable connectivity projects' in Africa, Central Asia, and Indo-Pacific for **digital, energy, transport** and **people-to-people** connectivity.
- **Bilateral engagements:** The space created due to distrust over China and the ills of BRI lends can be filled by India especially in **development projects in African and South-east Asian countries** (where traditionally both China and India have been competing).

Way Forward for India

- **Improving Policy Coordination:** Plan and support large scale, high impact infrastructural development projects by streamlining the bureaucratic web and creating single-point processes.
- **Enhancing Viability of Projects:** Promote economic cooperation by facilitating cross-border investments and deepen supply chain integration to address the damaging impact of Covid-19.
- **Overcoming Capital deficiency:** By deepening the bilateral and multilateral financial Integration among like-minded nations with use of private sector-to-private sector financing model.
- **Promoting Democratic Values:** Promote people to people cultural exchange with visible performance improvements through projects to gain people's trust and confidence.
- **Building domestic capabilities** with a long-term perspective to offer more services from creating infrastructure to offering mobility and other solutions.

3.5. RISE OF THE MINILATERALS

Why in news?

The present geopolitical landscape has witnessed a widespread emergence of multifarious groupings, popularly referred to as Minilaterals, based upon the shared understanding and threat perceptions, with regards to strategically viable areas.

About Minilaterals

Minilaterals refer to **informal and more targeted initiatives** intended to address a specific threat, contingency or security issue with fewer states sharing the same interest for resolving it within a finite period of time. For example,

- Minilaterals formed for security cooperation, such as the **Quad, the India-Japan-US trilateral, and the India-France-Australia trilateral**.
- Regional and diverse clubs for international economic cooperation, such as the **EU and ASEAN and G20**.

Factors responsible for the rise of Minilaterals

- **Easier to strike convergence in interests:** Smaller partnerships can focus on specific mutual objectives and goals.
- **Strategic rationale:** The India-France-Australia trilateral is a natural fit for all three because of their stake in ensuring a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific order.
- **Moving beyond uncertainties created by certain partners:** Partners of larger groupings might find in their interest to move to smaller partnerships. For example- To overcome unpredictability of American policies.
- **Seeking Informal dialogues:** Trilaterals are an effective way to discuss emerging issues in a flexible manner without establishing rigid commitments and going through lengthy formal negotiations.
- **Overcoming challenges pertaining to multilateralism and multilateral institutions:**
 - **Polarization and ideological infighting:** Multilateral institutions/groupings are often led by a few influential leaders. This leaves little or no space for addressing individual standpoints.

- **Reverse globalization and rise in protectionist tendencies:** Countries have started looking inwards and find it difficult to cooperate on multilateral platforms beyond their national interests.
- **Institutional sclerosis:** It is a phenomenon where institutions fail to adapt and change at a sufficient pace. Existing Multilateral institutions are facing difficulties to address new and emerging global challenges such as climate change, data privacy, cyber security etc.

Can Minilaterals replace Multilateral groupings?

Minilaterals are being seen as an alternative route to form partnerships and coalitions “of the willing” to resolve issues of regional and global concern but **they have their own shortcomings:**

- They present the dangers of **undermining critical international organizations** and reducing accountability in global governance.
 - For instance, the **G20’s Mutual Assessment Process (MAP)**—where members share national economic plans and disclose their potential negative impacts—has been criticized for being ‘toothless’.
- They **promote** soft law mechanisms i.e. **voluntary and non-binding targets, and not legally binding commitments.**
 - It results to be less effective in shaping state policy, interests, and behavior and can hamper the existence of a rules-based framework in the global order.
- They may reduce the incentive for **countries to engage with multilateral frameworks (such as WHO or UNICEF)**- a possibility that impacts their relevance and hamper their programmes.
- They may have a **detrimental effect on countries that are not part of negotiations.**
 - For developing countries, their numbers are their greatest bargaining power. In minilateral, **they can be influenced by the developed countries.**
- As a result, while minilaterals cannot replace multilateral groupings to achieve true global cooperation, they can **supplement the work of multilateral organizations by providing a platform for diplomacy, confidence-building, and cooperation.**

3.5.1. INDIA, IRAN, ARMENIA TRILATERAL

Why in news?

India, Iran and Armenia held a round of political consultations in Yerevan and agreed to hold future meetings in a trilateral format.

Significance of the trilateral

- **Revitalise the INSTC:** India intends to **extend the INSTC through Armenia** to connect the Chabahar port and the Indian Ocean to Eurasia and Finland.
- **Seen as counter to the Pakistan-Azerbaijan-Turkey trilateral:** In 2021 **Baku Declaration**, **Pakistan-Azerbaijan-Turkey** agreed to support each other’s territorial integrity, while underlining their respective priorities. The declaration is seen as an expression of overt support for
 - Azerbaijan’s campaign in Karabakh,
 - Pakistan’s claims in Jammu and Kashmir, and
 - Turkey’s standpoint vis-à-vis the Cyprus, Aegean and East Mediterranean disputes.
- **Nagorno-Karabakh:** This disputed territory between Armenia and Azerbaijan, is also a key factor in these two different trilaterals.
 - Nagorno-Karabakh is **internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan**, but most of the region is controlled by Armenian separatists.



- The Minsk Group was created in 1994 to **address the dispute** and is co-chaired by the **United States, France, and Russia**.
- ✓ Turkey and Pakistan have traditionally supported Azerbaijan in the conflict, Iran and India have supported Armenia.

Points of Convergences

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| India and Armenia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrated 30 years of bilateral diplomatic relations in 2022. • Enjoy active political ties and effective cooperation within international bodies. • Under a newly inked export agreement, India would send military weapons such as missiles, rockets, and ammunition to Armenia. • India's External Affairs Minister visited Armenia in 2021. It was the first visit by an Indian Foreign Minister since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992. • Free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is currently being negotiated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Since Armenia is an EAEU member, the conclusion of this FTA would contribute to boosting bilateral trade. |
| India and Iran | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relations span millennia with both countries having historic ties and sharing a common cultural heritage. • The Chabahar port in Iran has been key to connectivity between the two nations. • Both are signatories to INSTC agreement. |
| Iran and Armenia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share a border and enjoy robust ties. • Two countries have been focusing on deepening their trade and economic cooperation. • Armenia serves as a transit route for Iran to access the EAEU. |

Conclusion

In trilateral terms, the Iran-India-Armenia would-be axis is focused on trade, in particular a Persian Gulf-Black Sea trade route that would allow Indian goods to be shipped West. Also, this regional cooperation is going to strengthen the Asian and Eurasian regions of the world.

3.5.2. INDIA-JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA TRILATERAL

Why in news?

Experts believe that with the improvement in relationship between Japan and South Korea, India can reapproach the possibility of steering the trilateral initiative that was conceptualised over a decade ago.

Need for India-Japan-South Korea trilateral:

- **To create a level playing field in Indo-Pacific:** The increased aggression of China in the Indian Ocean region and the South China Sea can only be checked by the culmination of regional powers.
- **To establish mutually beneficial relationship:** India's ambition to improve its manufacturing abilities can be better fuelled by investments from Japan and technology from South Korea.
- **To create Supply Chain Resilience:** reducing the dependence on Chinese imports is an important parameter and the three countries can counter-balance the necessity of imports from China.
- **To tackle hostile neighbours better:** Hostile neighbourhood is a common feature for the trio due to the presence of Pakistan for India and Russia (Kuril Islands), China (Senkaku Islands) and North Korea for Japan and South Korea.
- **To curtail the territorial ambitions of China:** China making inroads in Arunachal and Ladakh also infringes the sovereignty of Korea in Yellow Sea and that of Japan in the Senkaku island region of East China Sea.

Challenges pertaining to the trilateral:

- **Historically Bitter relationship between Japan and South Korea:** The Colonial rule of Japan over Korea has created a rift between the two countries on many fronts.
- **India's association with Russia:** While both Japan and South Korea have very close ties with USA and sanctioned Russia for its Ukraine aggression, India's alignment with Russia can irk the other two countries.
- **Existing Trade deficits:** With respect to India, the trade deficits are in favour of Japan and South Korea, and Indian goods still face large number of barriers in these two countries.

- **Language Barrier:** The lack of a common language acts a barrier in establishing better people to people connect and the percentage of English-speaking population in all the three countries is also competitively low.

Way Forward

- **Utilise the forums of G20 and G7:** While India spearheads the G20, the G7 is currently under the presidency of Japan. These forums can be used as opportunity to strengthen the trilateral relationship.
- **By establishing better people to people connect:** Establishment of cultural centres between the countries and exchange of students between their premier educational institutions can be improved.
- **By utilising India's Soft power:** Buddha and his ideas can be used to spearhead the soft power of India over the two countries, which have sizeable number of Buddhist population.
- **By including South Korea in QUAD:** Including South Korean in the QUAD grouping will strengthen its position against China in its limits, thereby strengthening the trio's stand against China.
- **By improving the military exercises:** While military exercises between India and Japan like JIMEX, Dharma Guardian, Quad are already active, avenues for trilateral military exercises needs to be explored.

3.5.3. INDIA-FRANCE-AUSTRALIA TRILATERAL

Why in News?

The **Second Ministerial level, India-France-Australia (IFA) trilateral focal Points meeting was held** recently after a gap of 2 years.

More about IFA

- The IFA trilateral was **initiated by France in 2021**, with the **objective of creating an independent alternative to the U.S led regional architecture in Indo-Pacific.**
- The trilateral partnership is **focused on maritime security, global commons, blue economy and humanitarian relief efforts in the Indo-Pacific.**
- Later by end of 2021, **France pulled out of the alliance citing Australia's involvement in AUKUS.** However, the alliance was revived recently.
- Now, they are **discussing to elevate the trilateral to the leader's level.**

Significance of the trilateral

- **Territorial Presence in the region:** France has its territorial possessions in Reunion and other islands of the Indian Ocean.
 - There is a **natural congruence between India's SAGAR vision, France's Indo-Pacific vision and the Australia's Security and Stability stand** in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Impetus to the Blue Economy: Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the region accounts for 16% to 34% of all catches** in the region and this can be reduced by continuous monitoring, control and surveillance arrangements between IFA.
- **Union of like-minded states: All the three countries respect a rules-based order informed by the sovereign equality of nations** and the need to guard against coercion and interference, whether from states or from terrorism.

Challenges faced by the trilateral

- **Australia's inclination towards USA: France had already pulled out of the trilateral once and had also cancelled one of its 'Attack-class' submarine project** due to Australia's inclination with USA in the region.
- **Increasing Chinese presence in the region:** China's strategic thrust into the Southern Pacific, push to exercise administrative control over claimed areas in the East and South China Seas and on its border with India.
- **Paucity of resources:** None of the three nations have the resources to achieve their regional objectives on their own; and they will require cooperation with like-minded partners and regional nations.
- **Need to widen the area of cooperation:** The trilateral partnership currently focuses only on **maritime security, the blue economy and humanitarian relief efforts.**

Way forward

- **Strategic division of the Indo-Pacific: A Strategic division of the entire Indo-Pacific to be done, similar to the Japan-Australia alliance** that strategically divided the Indo-Pacific into two (East and West Pacific), adopting different strategic approaches towards balancing China.
- **India to take the lead:** As India maintains a cordial relationship with the other two Countries; it **should come forward in mitigating French reservations and achieve a common meeting ground for all.**
- **Pushing for the leader level summits** to improve the ties and areas of cooperation at a faster pace.
- **Building structures of Cooperation** for other areas of cooperation like intelligence sharing, maritime domain awareness, etc.

Related news

- **Australia-India-Indonesia trilateral** meeting recently took place along the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 77).
 - The objective of the trilateral is to strengthen cooperation under the framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Indo-Pacific, G20 and the blue economy.

3.5.4. INDIA-BRAZIL-SOUTH AFRICA (IBSA) TRILATERAL

Why In News?

Brazil assumed the chair of the IBSA forum in March 2023 from India and the grouping also completes its 20 years of existence in 2023.

More on News

- The Brazilian Presidency is planning **to strengthen IBSA in its three pillars**-political coordination, trilateral cooperation and cooperation with other developing countries, **through the IBSA Fund.**

About IBSA

- It was **established in 2004 and is managed by the UN Office for South-South Co-operation.**
- It seeks to facilitate the **execution of human development projects for the advancement of the fight against poverty and hunger** in developing countries.
- For India, **IBSA presents an opportunity to put forth stronger voice in global affairs, increase trade and commerce with MERCOSUR and gain support for India's UNSC reform with Brazil via G4.**

Challenges in IBSA

- **The advent of BRICS:** The evolution of the BRICS forum in 2009, in which all the three countries are members is currently more active when compared to the earlier formed IBSA.
- **No Scheduled meetings of the heads on a regular basis** and they have met for only 5 times since the beginning and no meeting has taken place since 2011.
- **Mixed Security Concerns:** The **IBSA National Security advisors meeting is yet to take place** after its inaugural run in 2021.
- **Trade talks:** The proposed **FTA between India-MERCOSUR-SACU** is yet to be established to connect the major economies of the three continents.

Conclusion

By regular meetings and working collectively, IBSA as a platform has the potential to leverage better say for the developing world in the global geopolitics. In this process, it will aid better people to people connect among the three IBSA nations.

3.6. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

Why in news?

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

About NATO

- NATO was **formed in 1949** with the aim of acting as a deterrent to the threat of Soviet expansion in Europe after World War II.
- **Purpose:** The organization **acts as a collective security alliance** with the aim of providing mutual defense through military and political means if a member state is threatened by an external country. (**Article 5** of the NATO charter).

- Article 5 has been invoked once, by the United States, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in 2001.
- **Members:** It had **12 founding members** including United States, the United Kingdom, France and the **total number of member states today are 31**.
 - NATO's **Opendoor policy** (Article 10 of the charter), allows any European country that can enhance and contribute "to the security of the North Atlantic area" to join.
- **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.
 - The status **confers a variety of military and financial advantages** that otherwise are not obtainable by non-NATO countries.

Relevance of NATO in contemporary times

- **To deal with a rapidly changing security environment:** NATO **condemned Russia's aggression** against Ukraine and offers unwavering **support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity**.
 - For nearly 20 years, NATO Allies and partner countries had **military forces deployed to Afghanistan** to ensure that the country would not again become a safe haven for international terrorists.
 - NATO **remains a key pillar in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)** with its support of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.
 - **It is the longest surviving inter-governmental security organisation** of the world and its membership has increased over the period of time.
- **Response to COVID:** NATO responded to the COVID-19 crisis by protecting military personnel, facilitating the airlift of critical medical supplies, and harnessing resources to deliver innovative responses.
 - **NATO's Eastward Expansion:** Key decisions taken at the recent summit point towards NATO's eastward expansion from Europe to Asia-Pacific. This **highlights its ensuing role in establishing peace and stability in the Asian region**.
 - China has been named in the NATO's document for the first time.
 - For the first time, four Indo-Pacific countries- **Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea joined a NATO summit**, to deepen cooperation and address global challenges.

Related news

China Select Committee of US House recommends making India part of **NATO Plus Five**.

- **NATO Plus Five** is a security **arrangement** bringing **together NATO and five aligned nations** (Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel, and South Korea) **to boost global defence cooperation**.
- **Importance of recommendation**
 - **For the US**, it is aimed at **winning the strategic competition with China** across the Indo-Pacific region and ensuring the **security of Taiwan**.
 - **For India**, it would facilitate **seamless intelligence sharing between these countries and India**.

Issues with NATO

- **Conflicts and Difference of opinion among members:** NATO leaders have fundamentally different views about terrorism, Russia, and European security.
 - Conflicts among NATO members — for example, Greece and Turkey — have sharpened.
- **Lack of a clearly-defined mission**
- **The alliance is losing its edge in strategic competition** with an increasingly technologically advanced, militarily capable and politically aggressive Russia.

Why NATO is focusing on China?

NATO has justified its new focus on China as a **"collective defence"** against what it views as Chinese encroachment on European interests:

- **Key ports, such as the Port of Piraeus in Greece, one of the largest in Europe**, are now majority-owned by Chinese companies.
- **Increased Chinese naval patrols in the Atlantic ocean region.**
- **China's rising interest in the Arctic Sea.**
- **Extensive cyberattacks** on Western commercial and military targets by Chinese state.
- **Claims of Chinese ownership** over the resource-rich waters of South China Sea, an strategically vital waterway.

3.7. SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO) AT A GLANCE

It is a permanent intergovernmental political, economic and military organization founded in 2001 with the main goals as strengthening mutual trust and promoting effective cooperation among the member states, ensuring peace, security, and stability in the region; and establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <p>Represents 60% of Eurasia's territory</p> | <p>42% of the world's population</p> | <p>20% of the global GDP</p> | <p>Considered a counterweight to NATO</p> |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|



Relevance of the SCO for India

- ⊕ A potential platform to advance India's Connect Central Asia policy and formulate an appropriate Eurasian strategy.
- ⊕ Controlling regional terrorism: SCO's defense-centric structures and activities of RATS have achieved considerable successes in curbing regional terrorism.
- ⊕ Afghanistan issue: SCO member States expressed their support for Afghanistan as an independent State, free of terrorism, war and drugs which will benefit India.
- ⊕ Political: At annual summit of the SCO, India gets opportunity to renew bilateral ties with regional countries.
- ⊕ Economic: CAR is rich in iron-ore, coal, oil, gas, uranium etc. Frequent meeting of leaders and the India-Central Asia Business Council under the SCO would give fillip to the economic cooperation.
- ⊕ Energy Cooperation: SCO can unblock India's access to Eurasia and provide a fillip to projects like TAPI.



Challenges for India in SCO

- ⊕ Dominance of China: Barring India, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been endorsed by all the members.
- ⊕ Eurasia's emerging geopolitical reality entailing shifting great power rivalries, undercurrents of geostrategic and geo-economic cooperation and competition, and desire of Central Asian states for greater strategic manoeuvre.
- ⊕ India-Pakistan Rivalry
- ⊕ Russia-Pakistan-China axis- Growing closeness of Russia-China and China -Pakistan create hurdles for India at strategic level in furthering its interest in SCO.
- ⊕ Weak fight against terrorism: SCO has not taken any visible counterterrorism measures against threats emanating from Af-Pak region.
- ⊕ Lack of a unified approach for dealing with Taliban.



Way ahead for India

- ⊕ Maintaining strategic autonomy: India should retain its independent voice against dominance of other members in the grouping.
- ⊕ Revitalise connectivity projects: The opening of Chabahar port and entry into Ashgabat agreement should be utilized for a stronger presence in Eurasia.
- ⊕ Improving relations with China and Pakistan: It will promote economic cooperation, trade, energy and regional connectivity.
- ⊕ Play a constructive role in CAR: India could play a role in de-radicalisation of youths in Central Asia and leverage its soft power.
- ⊕ Strengthen People-to-people connectivity and strengthen educational cooperation.

India's engagement with the SCO reflects its commitment to regional cooperation, mutual understanding and addressing shared challenges.

3.7.1. SCO MEETING

Why in news?

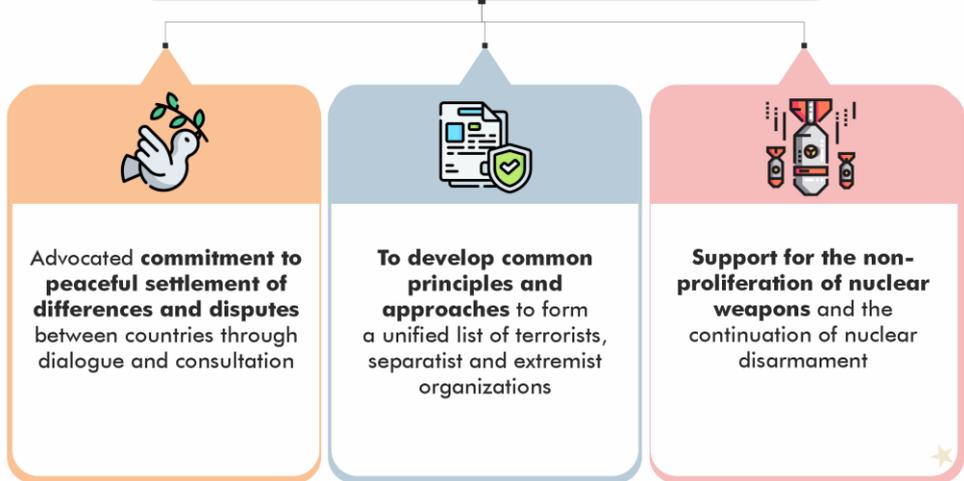
22nd Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

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.

Samarkhand declaration



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3.8. QUAD

QUAD AT A GLANCE

Quad is an **informal strategic forum of India, United States, Australia, and Japan** with an objective to **secure a rules-based global order**, freedom of navigation and a liberal trading system.



Significance of Quad for India

- ⊕ **Balancing China's influence:** India can work with Quad partners to offer alternatives to China's Initiatives.
- ⊕ **Rising importance of Indo-Pacific:** QUAD provides India with a powerful platform to advance East Asia's interests, Act East policy and Asia Africa Growth Corridor.
- ⊕ **Evolving Foreign policy strategy:** Aligning with likeminded countries without making a formal alliance or discounting its relationship with countries outside Quad.
- ⊕ **Supplementing India's defense capabilities:** Quad can help India overcome its limitations in defence field like finance, technology etc.
- ⊕ **Additional collaboration on emerging threats** like persistent cyberattacks emanating from nation-state-supported institutions, notably from China.



Challenges for India

- ⊕ **Implication on India's other bilateral/multilateral engagements** like India-China and India-Russia relations and halted progress in the development of BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.
- ⊕ **Unclear objectives** and it is perceived as an anti-China alliance.
- ⊕ **Critical Technologies and Resilient Supply Chains:** India is not part of the Osaka track, that includes other Quad countries.
- ⊕ **Conflicting signals from US:** Along with quad, the US announced a new trilateral defence partnership with Australia and the UK (AUKUS)
- ⊕ **China's influence:** China has strong economic ties with Quad members, especially Australia.



Way forward for Quad

- ⊕ **Collective action:** Collective security among the Quad nations has to be worked to safeguard the member nations' freedom and security.
- ⊕ **Need for clear vision:** Quad nations need to explain the Indo-Pacific Vision in an overarching framework. This will reassure the littoral States that the presence of QUAD benefits the region.
- ⊕ **Expanding the Quad:** India can invite more countries from Indo-pacific region like Singapore and Thailand
- ⊕ **Need for a Maritime Doctrine:** India should develop a comprehensive vision on the Indo-Pacific to ideate on the current and future maritime challenges.

Bearing the strategic lessons in mind, the four countries should take incremental steps to deepen their economic and military cooperation, in ways that do not reasonably provoke an outsized reaction from Beijing, while developing the capacity to act credibly together if the need arises.



3.8.1. QUAD SUMMIT

Why in news?

2023 Quad Summit was held recently on the side lines of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima.

Key Outcomes of the Summit

- **'Quad Infrastructure Fellowships Programme':** To support policymakers and practitioners in the region to design, build and manage sustainable and viable infrastructure in their countries.
- **Partnership for Cable Connectivity and Resilience:** To leverage Quad's collective expertise in the design, manufacturing, laying, and maintenance of undersea cables.
- Quad support for a **small-scale Open Radio Access Networks(ORAN) deployment** in Palau, the first in the Pacific region.
- **India to host next Quad summit in 2024.**

3.9. EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM (EEF)

Why in news?

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

More about news

- Year 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Consulate of India 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 opportunities in the region and aimed at connecting the Far East with the Asia Pacific region.
- As of 2022, almost 2,729 investment projects are being planned in the region.
- The agreements focus on infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, etc.
- 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 such 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.

India's opportunities and Interest in RFE

- To boost the strategic partnership between India and Russia by strengthening cooperation in trade, economics and investment.
 - India's 'Act Far-East' policy has become a key pillar of the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' of India and Russia.
- Complementing India's Indo-Pacific Vision:** Act far east policy also helps India to take a more considered stand regarding the South China Sea since the proposed maritime route with Russia goes through it.
- Employment and investment opportunities for Indians:** Indian professionals like engineers and teachers can help in the region's development.
- Resource Rich Region:** The region has an abundance of energy including alternative source of energy and land suitable for agriculture, two resources that India will need in to sustain economic growth.



Major actors and their interests in the RFE region

- China:** It is the biggest investor in the region (account for 90% of the total investments).
 - It is promoting the Chinese BRI and the Polar Sea Route in the RFE.
 - It is also looking to develop its Heilongjiang province which connects with the RFE.
 - Collaborating with Russia on connecting the cities of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe, supplying natural gas, and a rail bridge connecting the cities of Nizhneleninskoye and Tongjiang.
- South Korea:** It has invested in shipbuilding projects, manufacturing of electrical equipment, gas-liquefying plants, etc.
- Japan:** It sees RFE as market for its agro-technologies.

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.

- **Connectivity:** The plans to connect the port of Chennai with Vladivostok would provide both India and Russia an alternative sea-route with respect to the Suez Canal.

Way ahead for India

- **Harness the soft power potential** to gain leverage in the Far East and enhance its engagement.
- **Labour migration** is a crucial step in strengthening India’s engagement in the FAR needs to be promoted.
- **Explore the possibility of investing in infrastructural projects** like Chabahar port project in the Far East to gain leverage in commercial benefits.
- **Examining prospects in other areas:** Timber, tourism, healthcare and pharmaceuticals hold potential for future cooperation.
- **Balancing in the Indo-pacific:** Russian opposition to the Indo-Pacific and the Quad as a containment strategy needs to be dispelled through more significant Russian involvement in the IOR through India’s SAGAR initiative.

3.9.1. INDIA IN ARCTIC

Why in News?

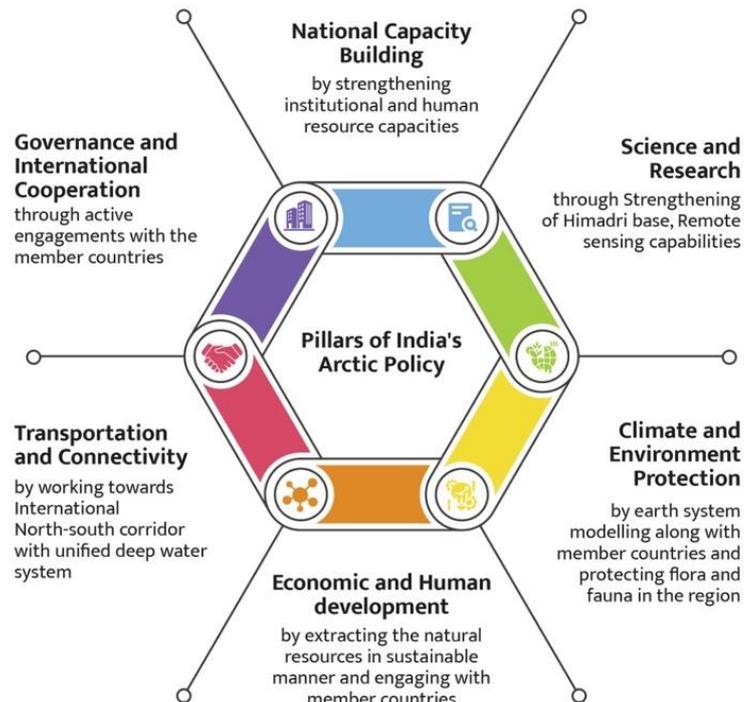
Norway has taken over the presidency of the 8 member Arctic Council from Russia till 2025.

About Arctic Council

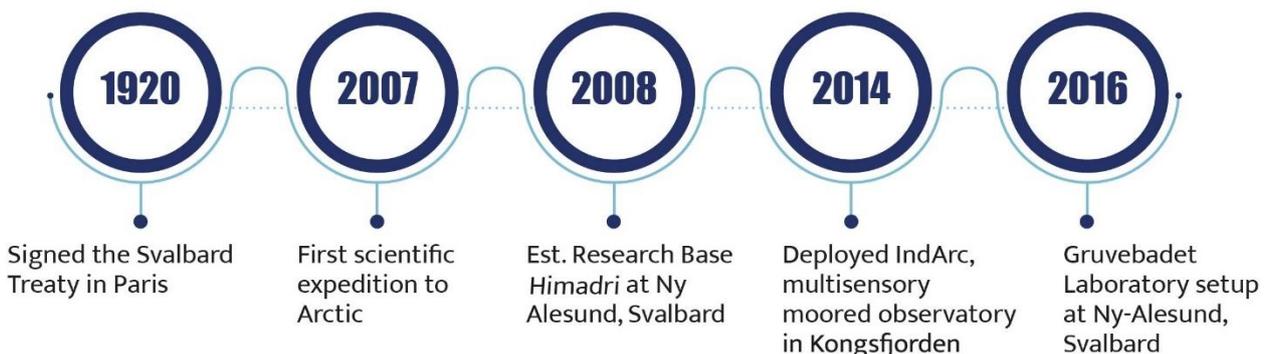
- It was established by 8 Arctic Countries (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and USA) through the Ottawa Declaration of 1996.
- India has observer status till 2024.

Current state of Arctic Council

- As a protest against Russia’s aggression on Ukraine, the other seven Arctic members announced a suspension of participation in all activities of the Council in March 2022.
- In June 2022, the Council resumed the activities on a limited scale over the areas which do not involve Russian participation but all new projects and initiatives are stalled.
 - In 2014, Russia created a new Arctic Command and it has opened hundreds of new and former Soviet-era Arctic military sites, including airfields and deep-water ports.
- India is currently an Observer member on the Arctic Council. Recently, the government unveiled India’s Arctic policy document.



History of India's Arctic Research



Significance of Arctic engagement to India:

- **Enhances Connectivity:** The **Northern Sea Route** which would connect the North Atlantic to the North Pacific- linking Europe with Asia - through the short polar arc, can help India at various levels.
- **Building Geopolitical network:** By Engaging with the members of the Council in multi-disciplinary areas.
- **Utilization of its Resources:** The **Arctic Sea is estimated to have around 13% of the world's oil and nearly 30% of natural gas**, it also hosts vast reserves of Rare Earth minerals.
- **Understanding Indian Monsoon:** The study of the Arctic is critical to Indian scientists, **as the region influences the Monsoon pattern over Indian Subcontinent.**
- **Understanding Glacial melt in Himalayas:** The research over the Arctic melt can help Indian scientists to better understand the glacial melt in the Himalayas.

Challenges pertaining to India's engagement in Arctic:

- **Defunct nature of the Council:** The current defunct nature of the council has **interrupted various on-going studies and research by the Indian Scientists in the region.**
- **Reduced role of Observers in the Council:** The **observer states have no say in the decision-making process of the council** and the status is provided only for a period of 5 years.
- **China's ambitions:** China is actively pushing to establish its **polar silk road** in the region and the fast-melting ice in the region is aiding its ambition.
 - In 2018, China declared itself a **'Near-Arctic State'** with interest in **shipping, research and exploration projects** in the Arctic to exploit regions' oil, gas, minerals etc.
- **Increased affiliation of Russia towards China:** Having been side-lined by the other members of the Council, Russia is actively engaging with China in various fronts to establish its supremacy in the region.
- **On-going Territorial disputes:** The region is already marred with various territorial disputes and the current division in the Arctic Council will make activities like exploration of minerals more difficult in the region.

Way forward

- **Build consensus among the Observer countries:** **13 Observer countries** in the Council, by engaging collectively, **can vouch for uninterrupted Research and Exploration in the region.**
- **Balancing the stance between the divide:** While Russia is actively exporting its arctic oil to India, a **balanced stand with the other seven members of the group is also essential** for India's Geopolitical interests.
- **Passively curtail the influence of China:** The growing influence of China, which is also an observer in the Council needs to be checked by diplomatic efforts.
- **Fine-tune internal mechanisms:** A **single Arctic coordinator can be appointed** by the Government **instead of the existing four divisions in Ministry of External Affairs** to deal with the region.

Arctic: Debate of a Global Common

- Global Common refers to **areas and natural resources that are not subject to the national jurisdiction** of a particular state but are shared by other states, if not the international community as a whole.
- The **high seas, the deep seabed, outer space, the Moon and other celestial bodies** can be viewed as global commons.
- As per current understanding, the **central part of the Arctic region is considered as a High Sea, thus a global common.**

Logic Behind Arctic to be considered as a global common:

- Experts cite that in **2017, the Arctic Five and key fishery industry leaders** — the EU, China, Iceland, Japan, South Korea — signed an **international agreement to temporarily ban commercial fishing for 16 years in the Arctic's high seas.**
- Negotiating with states like the EU and China shows that the Arctic Five acknowledge that they don't have sole authority to determine what happens in the central Arctic Ocean.

Challenges in Arctic's Governance

- **Waterways:** The three routes in order of the possibility of being opened up (**refer map**) when the Arctic Ice Melts.



- **Militarisation:** Experts point out that global warming and a race for resources could lead to conflict in the Arctic. Already the region has seen military presence from US, Russia, Canada, etc.

Way ahead

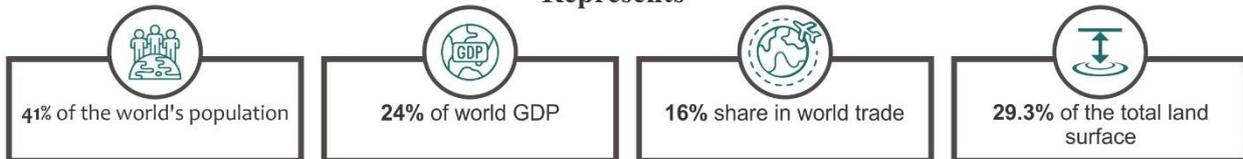
Before resources extraction, **preserving the Arctic Ice is necessary for Earth's Albedo. Arctic sea ice acts as a huge white reflector at the top of the planet**, bouncing some of the sun's rays back into space, helping keep the Earth at an even temperature. The **region's governance is thus very crucial.**

3.10. BRICS

BRICS AT A GLANCE

It was started in 2001 as BRIC, an acronym coined by Goldman Sachs for Brazil, Russia, India, and China with an aim to promote peace, security, development, and co-operation in the world. South Africa joined in 2010.

Represents



Significance of BRICS for India

- ⊕ **Voice of developing countries** against terrorism and for protection of their rights from WTO to climate change.
- ⊕ **Safe space to modulate rivalry:** During the Doklam standoff of 2017 and the recent Ladakh standoff, both China and India remained engaged through BRICS.
- ⊕ **Providing a transcontinental reach** with the presence of Brazil and South Africa.
- ⊕ **Boosting India's demand for institutional reforms** such as UNSC, WTO, etc.
- ⊕ **Contribution in creating an inclusive** international financial architecture.
- ⊕ **Import dependency**, 34% of India's total imports are from the other four BRICS nations.
- ⊕ **Achieving SDG goals to eradicate hunger and poverty with the help of initiatives like the BRICS Agricultural Research Platform.**
- ⊕ **Balances India's growing partnerships with the West** (such as through QUAD) highlighting its commitment to strategic autonomy and multi-aligned foreign policy.



Achievements of BRICS

- ⊕ **Establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Arrangements (CRA).**
- ⊕ **Bringing incremental changes in the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** such as doubling of quota.
- ⊕ **BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Framework Programme** in 2015 facilitated a common response to COVID-19.
- ⊕ **Medical cooperation:** Ufa Declaration was adopted at the 7th summit in 2015.
- ⊕ **India's contribution to BRICS**
 - Launching of BRICS Vaccine R&D Centre.
 - Proposal of the New Development Bank.
 - Urbanization Forum for tackling challenges of rapid urbanization for all members.
 - Institutionalised the practice of holding BRICS Academic Forum.
- ⊕ **Other important initiatives related to online education, a virtual university, BRICS language schools, Young BRICS Forum, disaster management, etc.**



Challenges faced by the BRICS

- ⊕ **Dominant role of China** within the group.
- ⊕ **Disparities among the members** due to a mix of democratic and authoritarian regimes.
- ⊕ **Approach towards institutional reforms:** BRICS is interested only in selective reform of the UNSC.
- ⊕ **More investment** is needed in the NDB.
- ⊕ **Low Intra-country trade**, imports and exports among BRICS nations are low due to geographical distance and restrictive trade environments.



Way Forward

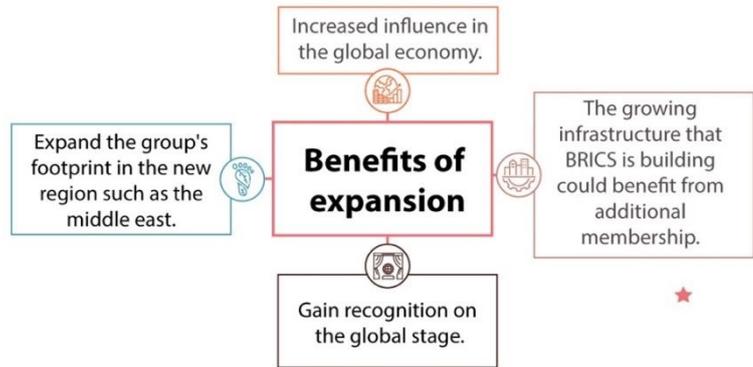
- ⊕ **Overcome diversities and seek common interest.**
- ⊕ **The BRICS nations need to move towards a bottom-up approach** to increasing private sector and citizen involvement.
- ⊕ **Reprioritising Counterterrorism in BRICS agenda:** Finalising a result-oriented action plan for implementing the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy
- ⊕ **Push for much enhanced multilateral efforts by furthering its deep connect with the Global South.**

BRICS has managed to begin a process of institutionalisation as well as increased intra-BRICS cooperation in diverse fields. With talks about trade in a BRICS currency, the relevance of BRICS for India has increased and efforts must be made to further streamline and engage with the BRICS nations.

3.10.1. BRICS EXPANSION

Why in News?

BRICS is considering expanding its membership, and countries including Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have expressed interest in joining.



Underlying challenges of Expansion

- **Still at developing stage:** The BRICS grouping is yet evolving as an organization and needs time to develop its institutions and governance structure.
- **Various levels of development:** BRICS countries differ significantly in terms of economic development. Expansion may further limit the cooperation among countries.
- **Lack of consensus building:** There is a lack of extensive dialogue and consensus-building among member states about expansion as **India is not in favor of outright expansion.**
 - India is insisting on **establishment of a well-defined criteria** for the proposed addition of new members.
- **Managing the group:** Expansion could generate resistance from BRICS members and the fairly informal group might be even more difficult to manage after expansion.
- **Geopolitics:** Many countries interpret the development as the China's move towards expanding its sphere of influence by getting in more like-minded countries.

Way forward

- **Socioeconomic convergence:** The existing member countries must prioritize economic and social cohesion among themselves.
- **Selective expansion:** By carefully selecting new members, BRICS can ensure a smooth integration process and preserve the organization's core objectives.
- **Impartial selection:** Inclusion in BRICS should solely be based on the merits of a member state and their ability to contribute to the objectives and future agenda of the grouping.
- **Building trust:** its member states should focus on institution building, fostering trust, sharing knowledge, promoting trade and development, and advancing developmental finance.

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3.11. ASEAN

ASEAN AT A GLANCE

India began its formal engagement with ASEAN in 1992 and became a strategic partner in 2012. Recently, Year 2022 was announced as India-ASEAN Friendship Year on account of 30th anniversary of India-ASEAN partnership. Recently, 19th India-ASEAN summit held at Cambodia.



Merchandise trade between India and ASEAN countries rose to \$110.40bn



ASEAN is India's 4th largest trading partner



Significance of ASEAN for India

- ⊕ **Centrality in India's Act East Policy** and SAGAR initiative and in Indo-pacific policy.
- ⊕ **Economic:** India-ASEAN FTA and India's CECA with various countries of the ASEAN region.
- ⊕ **Common Security Threats:** ASEAN-India Work Plan to combat Transnational Crimes.
- ⊕ **Financial Cooperation** through ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund (AIF), ASEAN-India Green Fund (AIGF) etc.
- ⊕ **Connectivity Projects:** India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral (IMT) Highway, Kaladan Multimodal Project. Maritime Transportation Agreement and a Railway link between New Delhi to Hanoi are in pipeline.
- ⊕ **Cultural Cooperation:** Special Training Course for ASEAN diplomats, Exchange of Parliamentarians, etc.
- ⊕ **Defence and Security Cooperation** through Joint Naval and Military exercises.



Challenges faced by India in its dealings with ASEAN

- ⊕ **Conflicts in priorities:** India's opposition to the BRI and its withdrawal from RCEP.
- ⊕ **Skewed trade relations:** ASEAN's share in India's foreign trade and inflows of FDI is higher than India's share in ASEAN's.
- ⊕ **Maritime challenge:** By deepening defence cooperation in the South China Sea, India risks getting embroiled in future maritime conflict between China and one or more ASEAN nations.
- ⊕ **China's influence:** China's ability to sow divisions within ASEAN is against India's economic and security interests in the region.
- ⊕ **Centrality of ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific is under jeopardy** due to inability to counter China, decline in the relevance of the East Asia Summits, and presence of QUAD, AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific.
- ⊕ **Lack of a custodian and strong institutions** for ASEAN
- ⊕ **Divergent interests and priorities of ASEAN members.**



19th India-ASEAN summit

- ⊕ Both side elevated ties to **comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP)** to focus on specific areas.
- ⊕ **CSP will enable cooperation** in areas like energy, health, investment, make in India, technology, climate change, etc.
- ⊕ **India announced an additional outlay of \$ 5 million** for ASEAN-India science partnership.



Way ahead to strengthen the relations

- ⊕ **Collective dialogue to promote** common interests under **ASEAN-India Plan of Action.**
- ⊕ **Trade facilitation:** Reviewing ASEAN-India FTA, establishing supply chain networks under the **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).**
- ⊕ **Enhancing policy prioritization** for sustainable finance and growth.
- ⊕ **Enhancing Maritime Cooperation** through convergence between India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific.
- ⊕ **Capitalise in technology**
- ⊕ **Collaborate on energy transition through initiatives like ISA and One World One Grid.**

Reciprocity and mutual understanding on common concerns will help both ASEAN and India to overcome some of the challenges facing their relationship.

3.11.1. INDIA-ASEAN SUMMIT

Why in news?

Recently, 19th India- ASEAN summit was held in Cambodia.

More about news

- 2022 is being celebrated as **ASEAN-India Friendship Year** as the summit also marked 30th anniversary of India-ASEAN dialogue.
- **Key highlights of the summit**
 - Both sides **elevated ties from strategic to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** to focus on **specific areas** including **Maritime security, projects in Indo-Pacific, Cybersecurity** and inter-operability of digital financial systems etc.
 - ✓ **CSP will enable cooperation** in areas like **energy, health, investments in Make in India, technology, climate change, etc.**
 - India announced an **additional outlay of \$5 million for ASEAN-India Science and Technology Fund**.
 - ✓ **The Fund, established in 2008, facilitates** support to R&D projects and associated project development activities.
 - Expedite **review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA)** to make it more user friendly.

ABHYAAS

MAINS 2023

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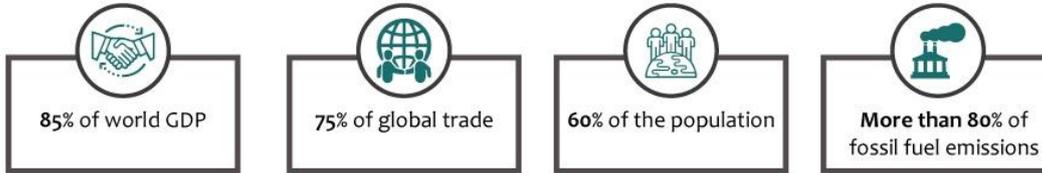
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VISAKHAPATNAM

3.12. G20

G20 (GROUP OF TWENTY) AT A GLANCE

An **strategic multilateral platform** connecting the world's major developed and emerging economies. Objectives include **policy coordination** between its members, **promoting financial regulations** and **creating a new international financial architecture**.



Achievements of G20

- ⊕ **Setting the path for the future of global economic growth.**
- ⊕ **Addressing global crisis such as** 2008 financial crisis, the Iranian nuclear program, COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.
- ⊕ **Bringing Tax reforms** for the benefit of low income developing countries. **Rome summit** led to an agreement of a 15 percent minimum tax as well as new rules to redistribute tax revenue from big multinational companies.
- ⊕ **Recast bilateral ties:** Bilateral meetings on the summit's side lines have occasionally led to major international agreements. For instance, US, China trade truce in 2018.
- ⊕ **Human Resource Development and Employment:** Commitment to **reduce the gender gap** in workforce participation by 25% and **the share of young people at risk of being left behind** in the labour market by 15% by 2025.



India and G20

- ⊕ India has been a **founding member** of G20
- ⊕ **India took the presidency** of G20 from December 2022 to November 2023.
- ⊕ The theme of India's presidency-**"vasudhaiva kutumbakam"**.
- ⊕ **Some of the proposals that India made in the previous G20 summits:**
 - International action on terrorism.
 - Dealing with the economic offenders.
 - Global Taxation: Base Erosion and Profit Sharing (BEPS) framework.
 - Dealing with issues arising from New Digital Technologies.



Challenges faced by G-20

- ⊕ **Lack of effective power:** G20 is not a legally binding institution.
- ⊕ **Transparency and Accountability** due to **absence of a formal charter**.
- ⊕ **Protectionism:** Some of the group's policy prescriptions have also been unpopular, especially with liberal groups.
- ⊕ **Ineffective measures:** Delinquency in combating climate change, **addressing social inequality** and **global threats to democracy**.
- ⊕ **The exclusivity of its membership has attracted criticism:** Disproportionate non-representation of African countries.
- ⊕ **Multilateral commitments on aid and trade are faltering.**



Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Continuity of issues** taken up across presidencies.
- ⊕ Provide the **vision to bind all the countries** especially the emerging markets.
- ⊕ **Strengthen its ties with the UN** in promoting development.
- ⊕ Focus on **infrastructure and food security**.
- ⊕ Post COVID, **critical role to build robust global supply chains**.
- ⊕ Establishing a code of conduct for the members.

The world is so interconnected and integrated now that countries have to work together to resolve all global issues. G20 has a vital role to play in this.

3.12.1. BALI DECLARATION

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** and welcomed the Black Sea Grain initiative brokered by Turkey and UN.
- 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.

Significance of G20 Presidency for India

- **India Taking Centre Stage:** India's presidency of the G20 is seen as an important platform for advancing its interests and for promoting the country's profile on the global stage.
- **Economic Order Strengthening:** With the theme of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,' India is steering an ambitious, people-centric agenda to address global challenges and facilitate sustainable economic development.
 - India has also used **its membership in the G20 to promote economic cooperation and integration** between developed and developing countries.
- **Multilateralism:** Through a range of activities and events, India is able to demonstrate its commitment to multilateral cooperation and building bridges between different countries and regions.
- **Diverse Engagement areas:** India has been active in G20 meetings and has taken a leadership role in several areas, such as promoting inclusive growth, increasing investment in infrastructure, and strengthening financial regulation.
- **Soft Power Diplomacy:** India's celebration of its G20 Presidency can be seen as a demonstration of its emerging soft power, as it showcases the country's growing influence and reputation on the global stage.

The platform is expected to be a mirror of India's independent foreign policy driven by its increasing economic might.

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3.13. GROUP OF SEVEN (G-7)

G7 AT A GLANCE

The G7 is an informal forum of leading industrialised nations, which dominate global trade and the international financial system. It was established as an intergovernmental organization in 1975.

It meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security and energy policy.



It represents **46 percent of global GDP.**



10 percent of world's populations lives in G7 countries.



Countries of the group are responsible for **25 percent of carbon emission.**



Significance of G7 for India

- It provides an **opportunity to contribute to the larger international cause.**
- Gives India a greater exposure** to be closely embedded in the international system of governance.
- Developing focused relationships and partnerships** with G7 countries.



Significance of India for G7

- India's economy** is larger than three member countries France, Italy and Canada of the G-7.
- To engage more with **the Indo-Pacific region.**
- India has **cordial ties with both Russia and the West.**
- Huge population of India in **working age group.**
- Countering China** as China's rising aggression is one of the most important issues of G7 summits.



Achievements of G7 and its current relevance

- G7 played crucial role in setting up a **Global fund to fight malaria and Aid.**
- 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.
- Played a key role in the creation of international financial institutions like **the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).**
- Political influence** G-7 Countries have strong voice in shaping global agendas.
- It represent a select group of **Democracies with shared values.**
- Economic Power** allows them to shape global economic policies and address economic challenges.



Challenges with G7

- Internal disagreements among group members:** For e.g. on taxes on imports and action on climate change.
- Perceived as an exclusive group**
- China's rise:** There is a growing sense that China poses a threefold threat to G7 countries- economically, ideologically, and geopolitically.
- Substandard progress on tackling global problems:** Such as phasing our fossil fuels, terrorism, climate change etc.
- Perceived as outdated:** The group no longer reflects the current state of geopolitical realities.
- Non-Binding nature:** the G7 has no legal existence or a permanent secretariat.
- Implementation of agreed upon policies is hindered by **Domestic political consideration.**



Way forward

- More Representation:** The grouping should become more representative in nature by including new countries member.
- Catering to the global challenges:** Group should reflect a global outlook rather than merely focusing on the myopic interests of the developed world.
- Group should work on prudent tackling** of global problems like climate change.

G7 is one of the most important groups after Global Multilateral Institutions like WTO, WB etc. Close cooperation with the G7 will be beneficial for India and fulfilling aspiration like reforming the global economic order, mitigating climate change, promoting greener growth, making the world immune to future pandemics, and constructing trusted supply chains into concrete outcomes. ★

3.13.1. G7 SUMMIT

Why in News?

49th Summit of G-7 group was recently held in Hiroshima, Japan.

More on News

- India along with countries like **Australia, Brazil etc.** was invited to the summit.
- India gave **10-point action plan** to address food, health, and development-related problems currently facing the world.

Major Outcomes of the Summit

- **Economic resilience and economic security:** Agreed to set up a **Coordination Platform on Economic Coercion** to counter any attempts to "**weaponize**" trading and **economic dependencies** in "critical and emerging technologies such as microelectronics."
 - They agreed on "de-risking" commercial ties with China.
- **Standards for Artificial intelligence (AI):** Development and adoption of international technical standards for "trustworthy" AI.
- **Climate and energy:** Members pledged to achieve **net-zero emissions** by **2050** and to limit global warming to 1.5°C.
 - They also endorsed the **G7 Clean Energy Economy Action Plan**, which emphasizes the importance trade policies will play main role in reaching net-zero emissions.
- **Resilient Global Food Security:** G7 produced a **Hiroshima Action Statement** on food security.

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3.14. BIMSTEC

BIMSTEC AT A GLANCE

BIMSTEC marked its 25th year in 2022. Conceived through the **Bangkok Declaration in 1997**, the grouping aims to revive the connectivity and common interests of the Bay of Bengal region members. BIMSTEC's principles are **Respect for sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, no interference in internal affairs, peaceful co-existence, and mutual benefit.**



22% of the world's population



combined GDP of US\$ 3.7 trillion



India's percentage of annual trade with BIMSTEC countries as a percentage of its total foreign trade was 4% as of 2020.



Significance of BIMSTEC for India

- ⊖ **Strategic:** BIMSTEC is key to fulfill the country's strategic aspirations to cater to the wider concept of 'Indo-Pacific' and an Indian Ocean community.
- ⊖ **Economic:** Connectivity with Southeast Asian markets is important for the growth and development of eastern coastal states, the Northeastern region, and the Indian economy in general.
- ⊖ **Regional cooperation:** BIMSTEC acts as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia, making it a natural platform to fulfill our key foreign policy priorities of 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East'.
- ⊖ **Security:** BIMSTEC presents an opportunity to enhance India's Blue Economy and Maritime Security through regional cooperation.
- ⊖ **To counter Chinese influence due to BRI.**



Challenges with BIMSTEC

- ⊖ **Untapped potential** due to lack of close internal economic integration among the countries.
- ⊖ **Lack of political will:** Only 4 summit level talks since 1997.
- ⊖ **Stalled progress in FTA:** Adopted a framework to negotiate an FTA in 2004 but still pending.
- ⊖ **Regional geopolitics:** Reluctance to convey the impression of anti-china.
- ⊖ **Physical Infrastructure:** Poor road and rail connectivity, insufficient last-mile links and cumbersome customs and clearance procedures.
- ⊖ **Absence of strong institutional framework:** Inadequacy of secretariat, negligible budget, etc.



Major connectivity initiatives in the region

- ⊖ **Kaladan Multimodal project:** The project envisages connecting Kolkata to Sittwe port in Myanmar, and then Mizoram by river and road.
- ⊖ **IMT Trilateral Highway:** It will connect India and Thailand through Myanmar.
- ⊖ **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA)** for the **free flow of goods and people** between them.



Way forward

- ⊖ **Strengthening political engagement:** The decision taken in Colombo to host a **summit every two years** is welcome if implemented.
- ⊖ **Concluding FTA.**
- ⊖ **Increasing its membership base:** Membership to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, etc.
- ⊖ Prioritize **sustained physical connectivity** and high-quality infrastructure.
- ⊖ Prioritising multilateralism including facilitating **tourism diplomacy, academic and student-exchange programs, and cross-border public health initiatives.**

BIMSTEC region has come a long way. Solidarity and cooperational among countries student-exchange programs, and cross-border is the need of the hour to make Bay of Bengal, a bridge qush native ridge of Prioritising multilateralism including facilitating prosperity, a bridge of security. ★

4. EFFECT OF POLICIES AND POLITICS OF DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON INDIA'S INTERESTS

4.1. TRANS-HIMALAYAN MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

Why in news?

China and Nepal agreed to build the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.

About The Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network (THMCN)

- THMCN is an **economic corridor** proposed in 2019 between Nepal and China as a **part of China's BRI**.
- 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 Tibet autonomous region (TAR).



Concerns for India

- **Himalayan Quad:** Many experts observe that China is trying to form a Himalayan Quad consisting of four Himalayan countries i.e. China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal.
- **Impact on relations with Nepal:** China's infrastructure diplomacy has promised growth and development, while also **providing Nepal with alternative trading routes that ameliorate its reliance on India**.
- **Challenging India's role in South Asia:** China can present an alternative to South Asian nations.
- **Security concerns:** The THMCN infrastructure initiative will **pass near Lumbini, which is close to the Indian border**.
- **Environmental impacts:** Infrastructure projects running through fragile alpine ecosystems could exacerbate landslides and floods in the upper Himalayan states in India.
 - The new roads **will also open up access for illegal loggers and help fuel the trade in endangered species**, such as parts from tigers, rhinos and elephants, which are highly prized in China.

China's outreach in the Himalayan region

- China's outreach in the region has been characterized by **comprehensive security agreements, infrastructure-oriented aid, enhanced focus on trade, public-private partnerships, and increased economic and security cooperation during the recent COVID-19 pandemic**. Examples witnessing the same include:
 - **The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**
 - **China has invested in Wakhan Corridor Fiber Optic Survey Project** to create cross-border fiber linkages connecting Afghanistan and China.

India's strategy in Himalayan Region

- India began to formulate its own plans for regional connectivity in the Himalayas in 2013.
 - For instance, the **Himalayan Rail Express** aims to connect India's northern territory of Leh in Jammu and Kashmir to the eastern territory of Hwai in Arunachal Pradesh.

Limitation for India

- India-driven connectivity developments have so far been limited due to **unsettled boundary issues with Pakistan and Nepal**.
- **A lack of a strategic vision on India's part** led to slow implementation and delays.
- **Tough Himalayan terrain on the Indian side** compared to better conditions on the Tibetan Plateau.

Way ahead for India

- **Consolidate relation with Nepal:** India must introduce **new economic, developmental and infrastructure initiatives with Nepal**.
- **Address Environmental concern:** Himalayan region should come together to form a **"Third Pole Council"** and collectively tackle the environmental concerns plaguing the mountain range.
- **Improve connectivity in border region:** Building up its border regions as opposed to keeping them disconnected will help India facilitate the movement of goods as well as troops.

4.2. AUKUS

Why in news?

AUKUS (US, UK and Australia) unveiled details of plan to create a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines.

About AUKUS

- Announced in 2021, it is a new **three-way strategic defence alliance** between **Australia, the UK and US**.
- It aims to boost **defense capabilities, accelerate technological integration, and expand the industrial capacity** of all three nation.
- For facilitating sharing of critical technology, a **legally binding tripartite agreement** known as the **Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (ENNPIA)** was signed in 2021.

Implications of AUKUS

- **Shifting US Priorities in Asia:** AUKUS is seen as US's **strong commitment to security** of Indo-Pacific region.
- **Re-establish UK's strategic footprint:** After UK **abandoned its security responsibilities** East of Suez in late 1960s, it had become **marginal to Asian security** all these decades. AUKUS will **renew its claim** for a **long-term role in Indo-Pacific security**.
- **Strategic implication for Indo-Pacific:** By **strengthening the defence capabilities** of Australia, AUKUS aims to achieve the **vision of free, open, resilient and inclusive** Indo-Pacific.
- **Model for similar collaboration:** This template may be used to **build the defence capabilities of other nations** in the region. It would go a long way to **contain the Chinese expansionist policy** and thereby **bring stability and peace** in the region.
- **Others:**
 - AUKUS has **reinvigorated the idea of an "Anglosphere"** that speaks of the **enduring geopolitical bonds** between the **US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand**.
 - Along with **QUAD, Five Eyes and ANZUS**, AUKUS can be viewed yet another indicator of the **primacy of the US–Australia Strategic Depth** across the Indo-Pacific.

Concerns related to AUKUS

- **Lack of clarity:** There is a lack of clarity about **AUKUS's strategic purpose** and how AUKUS narrative would be rolled out to **allies, partners, and adversaries**.
 - All three countries say that AUKUS will **stabilise the Indo-Pacific**, but none of them have **yet explained how it will do that**.
- **Undermines Nuclear non-proliferation:** AUKUS requires Australia to become the **first non-nuclear weapons state** to remove material **from the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**. This undermines the **spirit and objectives of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**.
- **Opposition by China:** Experts have raised concerns that it **may provoke China to act more aggressively** in disputed areas like the South China Sea and the East China Sea.
- **Widened divide in trans-Atlantic relationship:** AUKUS has also **widened the divide in the trans-Atlantic relationship** between the **US and Europe**.
 - Australia had scrapped a **diesel-powered submarine agreement** with France in favour of AUKUS, undermining **strategic partnership between France and Australia**.

Conclusion

AUKUS is **progressing, but there's a long way to go**. There is a need to give clarity **regarding specific objectives AUKUS partners seek to achieve** across vastly different technology sectors. AUKUS's potential to **tangibly impact the Indo-Pacific geopolitical discourse** can perhaps only be seen in the long term.

AUKUS
partnership



Pillar I

Trilateral effort to support Australia in **acquiring conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs)**.



Pillar II

Focuses on **expediting cooperation in critical technologies**, including cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence etc.

KNOW THE TERM



- **Five Eyes:** It is an **intelligence alliance** consisting of the **US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand** to spy on the world.
- **ANZUS Treaty:** It was **signed by Australia, New Zealand and the United States**, came into force in 1952.
 - The ANZUS treaty recognised that an **armed attack in the Pacific area on one member would endanger the peace and safety of the others**.

India and AUKUS

Significance

- **Complements the Quad in geostrategic arena:** It can be a game changer alliance for Quad as well by **increasing the cumulative capacity of Quad** to deal with China as a common threat. Leveraging AUKUS would strengthen Quad to keep the Indo-Pacific region free, open and inclusive.
- **Strategic collaboration with France:** It also provides a window of opportunity for **strategic collaboration with France and deepening trust** with European nations.

Concerns

- **Erosion of India's regional influence:** There is a concern over possibility of **erosion of India's regional pre-eminence** in Eastern Indian Ocean with the **crowding of nuclear attack submarines** in the future.
- **May Increase Chinese aggressiveness:** AUKUS could push China into assuming a **more adventurous posture** by deploying more warships and submarines in the **Eastern Indian Ocean**. Critics argue that AUKUS could push **India-China maritime dynamics into a negative spiral**.
 - It also **does not mitigate the strategic threat** India faces in the Himalayas.
- **May shift balance of power in Indo-pacific:** As AUKUS partners **expand cooperation in advanced capabilities**, balance of power in the Indo-Pacific could shift in ways that **India has not entirely accounted for**.
- **Impact on Quad:** Critics argue that AUKUS **diminishes the value and usefulness** of the Quad.

4.3. COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (CPTPP)

Why in news?

Recently, the **United Kingdom** agreed to **join CPTPP**. It will become the first new member and the first country in Europe to join the CPTPP.

Significance of CPTPP

- **Trade in goods:** Elimination of tariffs and reduction in non-tariff barriers in CPTPP export markets.
- **Equal treatment in Government procurement** to foreign as well as domestic suppliers.
- **Predictability and transparency:** Common and transparent trade and investment rules.
- **Labour and the environment:** Clear commitments to uphold CPTPP members' respective standards on labour and environment.
- **Addressing governance and emerging issues:** It includes rules against corruption, reducing unfair competition by state-owned enterprises, and ensuring a liberalized environment for electronic commerce.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

Origin

It was signed in **March 2018** and came into force in **December 2018**.

- It succeeded the **Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)** after the United States withdrew from the TPP in 2017.

About

It is a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** between **11 nations**.

Member Countries

Member countries: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Peru, Mexico, and New Zealand.



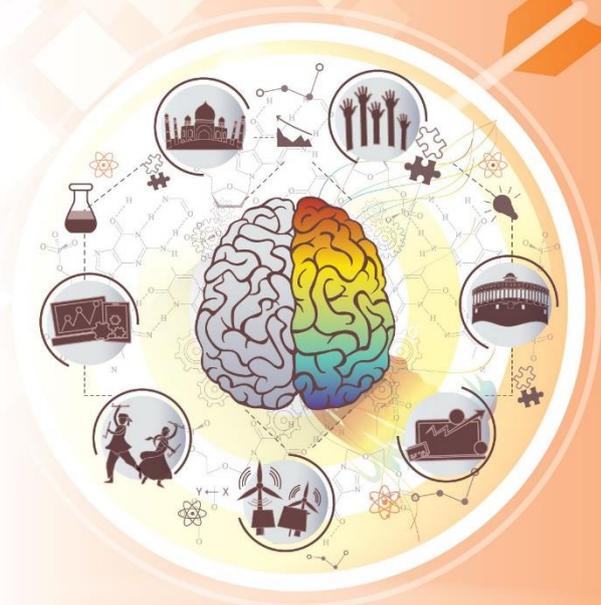


■ Signed and ratified CPTPP
■ Signed CPTPP

| How CPTPP is different from Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)? | | |
|---|---|---|
| | RCEP | CPTPP |
|  Members | FTA in 15 countries (largely Asia-Pacific region). | FTA in 11 countries (has countries on either side of the Pacific Ocean). |
|  Size | Accounts for 31% of global GDP . | Accounts for 13.5% of the global GDP . |
|  Domain | The requirements in CPTPP are more comprehensive than under the RCEP . For instance, RCEP does not include disciplines on support for state-owned enterprises (SOEs) or provisions on labour and environmental issues . ★ | |

| Why India did not join the CPTPP? | What is India missing by not joining CPTPP? |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stringent standards on intellectual property rights: It can extend pharmaceutical company monopolies. • CPTPP Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism: It hinders regulation of the investment ecosystem and by passes economic sovereignty of India. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ISDS is a mechanism that provides foreign investors, with the right to access an international tribunal to resolve investment disputes. • Required economic concessions: India has recognized that the sweeping economic concessions required to join CPTPP are too drastic to take from an Indian perspective. • Possibility of de-industrialisation: Rules on market access to goods, could pose severe challenges to India's manufacturing sector. This may harm the industrial sector in the long term. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitiveness: Reduced tariffs would have made Indian exports less expensive in partner countries. • Access to new clients: New preferential access to key markets in Indo-pacific regions including Japan, Malaysia, and Chile. • Market transparency and stability: With improved protection, predictability, and transparency for conducting business in partner markets. • Exclusion from the Global Value Chain (GVCs): The Rules of Origin (RoO) under the CPTPP coupled with the tariff reduction will encourage creation of new GVCs. Not joining CPTPP decreases this opportunity for India. |

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4.4. RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR

RUSSIA- UKRAINE WAR AT A GLANCE

The Russian Ukraine war has been going on for more than one year.



After a brief period of autonomous existence (1917-20), Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union and separated after Soviet Union collapse.



What are Minsk Agreements?

Minsk Agreement – I (2014) : It is a 12-point ceasefire agreement signed between Russia, Ukraine Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the pro-Russia leaders from Donetsk and Luhansk at Belarus.
Minsk Agreement – II (2015): It was signed between France, Germany, Ukraine, and Russia after failure of Minsk Agreement-I. It gave 13-point package to facilitate implementation of Minsk Agreement.



Reasons for the conflict

- ⊖ Attempts by Ukraine to end cultural ties built with Russia,
- ⊖ Protect the **autonomous existence of Ukraine**, and
- ⊖ **Growing influence of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** in erstwhile Soviet Union region with Ukraine as a major remaining territory between direct Russia-NATO faceoff.



Response from other Nations

- ⊖ **Resolutions against Russia** at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), UN Security Council (UNSC), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) etc., use of sanctions and diplomacy to put pressure on others, including India.
- ⊖ **India's Response**
 - **India abstained from voting** in all resolutions
 - **Committed to work towards** a safe and sustainable solution based on international norms and principles.
 - It does not vilify any side but **provides humanitarian relief and assistance** to people rather than arms to them.
 - For instance, India sent 90 tonnes of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.



Concerns for India due to Ukraine crisis

- ⊖ **To maintain balance between Russia and US.**
- ⊖ **Brings Russia-China closer:** Russia is already averse to the Indo-Pacific concept and the Quad as a revival of Cold War bloc politics and views them as being against its Asia-Pacific interests.
- ⊖ **India's Investment in Russia:** India's plans in Russia's energy sector and in the development of its Far East policy, in general, would become problematic due to sanctions of US.
- ⊖ **Arms Trade with Russia:** Russia remains the major arms supplier of India.



Way forward

- ⊖ **International cooperation** is needed to solve the ever-increasing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.
- ⊖ **Proactive role of international institutions** like United nation security council (UNSC).
- ⊖ **Both the countries should** restrain from any move leading to escalation of the tension.
- ⊖ **India can play a role of mediator** to settle the issue between two countries as India has good relation with both countries.

The Minsk Agreement's failure in bringing conclusion to the geopolitical tension between Russia and Ukraine highlights the need for a permanent peaceful solution. ★

5. IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES, AND FORA, THEIR STRUCTURE, MANDATE

5.1. UNITED NATIONS

5.1.1. UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

UNSC AT A GLANCE

United Nations Security Council was established by the UN Charter in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the UN. Its primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. UNSC recently adopted the UNSC Resolution 2593 to ensure that Taliban-ruled Afghanistan doesn't become a breeding ground for terror.



The council has **5 permanent members and 10 non Permanent members** elected for two-year term



Its decisions (known as solutions) are **binding on all member states.**



India is a **founding member of UN** and has served as a non-permanent member of UNSC for **8 terms.**



Need for reform in UNSC

- ⊖ **Outdated institution:** with no permanent representation from Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, it is no longer representative of the present world order.
- ⊖ **Wide-ranging power of UNSC**-e.g. the imposition of sanctions-encroach on state sovereignty.
- ⊖ **Lack of recognition to countries** such as India, Japan, and Germany that make considerable contributions to the UN.
- ⊖ **Veto power:** Frequent divisions within the UNSC P-5 end up blocking key decisions using veto power
- ⊖ The ineffectiveness of **the council discourages multilateralism.**



Challenges in front of India

- ⊖ **Lack of consensus on the definition of terrorism:** The CCIT is facing a deadlock due to differences between various countries.
- ⊖ **China's assertion at the global stage** and its support for Pakistan
- ⊖ **Post COVID Global Order:** Recession, narrow nationalism challenges the prospect of global cooperation
- ⊖ **Global geopolitics:** Russia Ukraine War, deteriorating relations between superpowers
- ⊖ **Lack of resources for multilateral diplomacy-** staff, finances, intellectual and institutional infrastructure
- ⊖ **Regional rivals opposed** to the G4 seeking permanent membership in UNSC



India's Contribution in UNSC

- ⊖ **India chaired the Taliban and Libya sanctions committees and the Counter-Terrorism Committee** of the UNSC during its tenure.
- ⊖ **Active participant in all UN initiatives** such as SDGs, UNFCCC.
- ⊖ Formulation of **the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**
- ⊖ First country to **raise apartheid issue at UN**
- ⊖ Largest **UN Peace Keeping troops provider** and first country to deploy all women contingent
- ⊖ Instrumental in **establishing the G77, UNICEF, UNEP, UNCTAD etc.**
- ⊖ Drafting of a **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in 1996**



India Contribution as non-permanent member

- ⊖ Sought to be the **voice of the global south**
- ⊖ **Brought many theme of contemporary relevance like** maritime security, technology, UN peacekeeping.
- ⊖ **Strengthen India bid for permanent seat**
- ⊖ **Worked for rule based order**

As a founder member, India views the UN as a forum that could play a crucial role to guarantee and maintain international peace and security.

5.1.2. ROLE OF UN IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Why in News?

During the 49th Group of Seven (G7) summit, India questioned the United Nations' (UN) ability to effectively prevent conflicts.

More in News

- India also raised questions regarding why UN hadn't been able to arrive at a definition of terrorism.
- India also retreated for the reform in the United Nation and other international organisation.

Role Played by United Nation historically

- **Maintenance of Peace and Security:** Successfully negotiated and implemented peace agreements, such as the **Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland** and the **Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan**.
 - UN **peacekeeping missions** have also contributed to maintaining stability and facilitating political transitions in various conflict-affected regions.
- **Decolonization and Self-Determination:** UNGA adopted the **Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in 1960** which helped numerous territories in transitioning from colonial rule to sovereign nations.
- **Human Rights and International Law:** are being set by it with the help of initiatives like **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**, etc.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** In 2015, the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 SDGs. It is **making efforts** for **international cooperation** to achieve the objective of SDGs.
- **Humanitarian Assistance and Relief:** with the help its specialized agencies and initiatives, such as the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **World Food Programme (WFP)**, it has transformed the life of millions of people

Why UN is not able to prevent the Conflict and resolve them?

- **UNSC Dynamics:** Permanent members in UNSC have Veto power, which they used to serve their interest or their partner's interest. For instance, China uses Veto power for its interest in Pakistan.
- **Limited Enforcement Mechanisms:** Resolutions passed by UN General Assembly (UNGA) lacks enforcement mechanism.
 - For the implementation of the decisions is **dependent on member states** to contribute troops and resources to peacekeeping missions, and their participation is voluntary.

Sovereignty and National Interests:

These values of the nations **hinders collective action** and **compromise** the effectiveness of UN interventions.

Complexity and Divisions:

Involvement of the **multiple stakeholders** and **interests** make it

difficult for UN to provide a solution which is accepted to everyone.

- Conflict often involves deep-rooted political, economic, social, and religious factors that are difficult to address comprehensively.
- **Lack of Financial Resources:** This limits the UN's capacity to implement its initiatives and provide adequate support to countries affected by conflicts and terrorism.

Role of India in resolving global Conflicts

- **Mediation and Diplomacy:** It focuses on **promoting dialogue, encouraging peaceful resolutions**, and facilitating reconciliation among conflicting parties.
- **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):** India, as a founding member of NAM, has advocated for peaceful resolutions to global conflicts and supported the principles of **sovereignty, self-determination, and non-interference** in the affairs of other nations.
- **Development Cooperation:** India's approach to addressing global conflicts also emphasizes development cooperation. For instance, development assistance for the people of Afghanistan etc.
- **Peacekeeping Operations:** India has **deployed more than a quarter of a million troops** over the years in as many as 49 UN Peacekeeping Missions.
 - Indian peacekeepers have played vital roles countries like Lebanon, Congo, South Sudan, and Haiti, among others.

How UN can be more effective?

- **Strengthening Conflict Preventive Efforts:** Emphasis should be given on **preventive diplomacy** and instruments like mediation and reconciliation can be effectively utilised.
- **Reforms in UNSC:** More representation to Asian and African nation need to be given in UNSC.
 - Inclusion of a country like India as a permanent member will promote effective use of Veto power.

- **Improving Peacekeeping Operations:** Enhancing the **training, capabilities, and mandate** of peacekeepers, will enhance their effectiveness on the ground. They shall not be used as a tool to fulfil the interest of powerful nations.
- **Enhancing Cooperation with Regional Organizations:** such as the African Union, European Union, or **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** can strengthen the UN's capacity to address conflicts.
- **Addressing Root Causes of Conflict:** Sometimes real cause of conflicts are neglected by the concerned authorities. It may include causes such as poverty, inequality, governance issues, and human rights violations.
- **Mobilizing Sufficient Resources:** Member states should fulfil their **financial commitments**, and alternative funding mechanisms, such as peacebuilding and prevention funds, can be explored to support long-term peacebuilding initiatives.
- **Strengthening the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle:** It will promote the trust of people and countries in UN.

Conclusion

It is biggest **multilateral organisation** of the world and it has enough capability to prevent and resolve the conflicts around the world, but it need to be utilized in pro-active way. Reforms in UN are need of the hour to make it more effective.

| India's other contributions to UN | |
|---|---|
| Fight against colonization and apartheid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India was the co-sponsor of Declaration on Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. • India was the first country to raise Apartheid issue at UN. • India was among the earliest signatories of Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. |
| Development and Economic issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India was instrumental in the setting up of UNCTAD in 1964. • India has emphasized the need for enhanced flows of official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries. • Other issues raised: transfer of technology to developing countries, more equitable terms of trade, accelerating industrialization. |
| Terrorism/Human Rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India took the initiative to pilot a draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. • India played an active role in drafting the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. |
| Reform & Restructuring of UN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is collaborating with G-4 (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan) and L.69 (Group of like-minded countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America) on reform and expansion of the UN Security Council. |
| Representation in UN bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India has been elected to several UN bodies including UNSC, Human Right Council, Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice (ICJ) etc. |

5.1.3. UN PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Why in news?

India deployed a women-only platoon of peacekeepers to the UN Mission in Abyei on the border of Sudan and South Sudan as part of the Indian Battalion in the **United Nations Interim Security Force, Abyei (UNISFA).**

More on News

- Also, Recently, the 75th anniversary of the beginning of UN Peacekeeping was celebrated.

About UN Peacekeeping mission

- The first UN peacekeeping mission was established in **1948**, when it **deployed military observers to West Asia** to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.
- It aims to build **sustainable security and peace** in countries affected by conflict.
- **Mandates:**
 - **Maintain peace and security:**
 - ✓ Protect civilians and promote human rights
 - ✓ Assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants
 - **Facilitate political processes:**
 - ✓ Support constitutional processes and the organization of elections,

- ✓ Assist in restoring the rule of law and extending legitimate state authority.
- The **decision** to send a peacekeeping mission to a country is made by the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**.
- UN member states **contribute military and police personnel under UN command**, for which they are paid from UN funds.
 - **Other interested states** may send their own separate armed forces to support the UN mission objectives but are not under UN command.

Relevance of the mission

- **Absence of alternatives:** There is no other organisation with as much recognition and membership which has stood the test of time.
- **Higher cost benefits ratio:** The mission costs only **0.4% of world military expenditure**, bulk of the missions are in areas, where there are bright chances of conflict arising again.
- **Rise in threats:** Today a **large number of countries are facing asymmetric threats** but do not have adequate resources to fight the same.

Challenges faced by UN peacekeeping missions

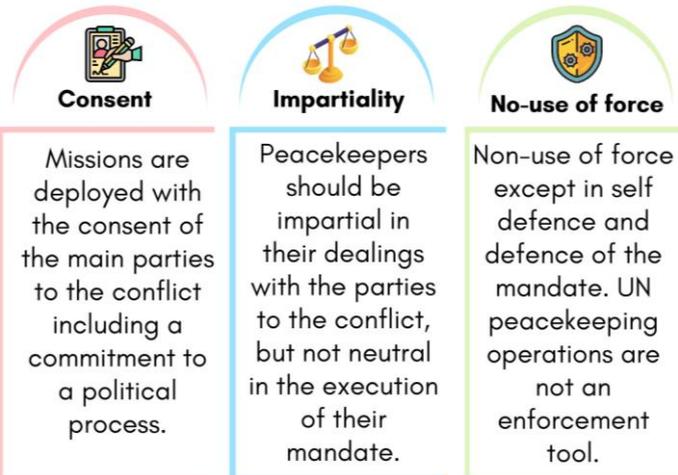
- **Organisational challenges**
 - **Non-inclusive:** Troop and police contributing developing countries do not have a role in the decision-making process.
 - **Financing:** UN peacekeeping missions are facing cash-flow problems and financial strains due to the late payment and withholding of assessed contributions.
 - **Inadequate power with UN secretariat:** **Military forces deployed on UN missions are accountable to their own national commanders and governments.**
 - **Redundant missions:** For example, the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was established in 1949 **to supervise the ceasefire between India and Pakistan.**

✓ However, it has **“outlived its relevance”** after the Shimla Agreement of 1972 and the establishment of the Line of Control.

Operational challenges

- **Waning international support:** The failures of Missions in the 1990's most visibly in Somalia and Rwanda, led to a reduction in the number of missions and a **loss of confidence**.
- **Rise of regional organisation:** Many times the regional organisations like Organisation of African Unity (OAU) have brokered peace, and the UN has carried out only monitoring roles.
- **Safety issues:** Safety of peacekeepers are compromised due to rising incidents of:
 - ✓ organized crime,
 - ✓ breakdowns in law and order, and
 - ✓ attacks by extremists.

Three basic principles of UN Peacekeeping missions



India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping

- India served in 49 of the 71 UN Peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948.
 - **Currently, India is the fifth largest troop contributor (TCC)** with 5,323 personnel deployed in 8 out of 13 active UN Peacekeeping Missions.
- **India was the first country to contribute to the Trust Fund** on sexual exploitation and abuse, which was set up in 2016.
- India recently launched a **'Group of Friends'** to promote accountability for crimes against peacekeepers by **implementing the provisions of UN Security Council resolution 2589.**

Women in Indian Peacekeeping

- **Women peacekeepers from India have served in several countries, including Congo, Liberia, South Sudan, and Haiti.**
- In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN Peacekeeping Mission.
- In the year 2014, Indian **cop Shakti Devi was awarded the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award.**

Reforms proposed by India for the UN peacekeeping mission

- **Decision making:** Troop and police-contributing countries should have a role in the decision-making process.
- **Clear and realistic mandates:** Peacekeeping missions should be given “clear and realistic mandates” that are matched with adequate resources.
- **Prudent deployment:** Peacekeeping missions should be “deployed prudently, with full recognition of their limitations.
- **Assessing the mission:** The performance of all mission components, military and civilians, and its leadership should be considered while evaluating a mission.
- **Regional approach:** Support regional and sub-regional organisations in:
 - Mediation
 - Monitoring of ceasefires
 - Assistance in implementing peace accords, and
 - Post-conflict rebuilding
- **Exit strategy:** Peacekeeping missions should factor in an “exit strategy from their very inception”.
- **Cooperation with host:** Establishing trust and smooth coordination between a peacekeeping mission’s leadership and the host state is essential.
- **Safety of peacekeepers:** All-out efforts to bring the perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers to justice.
- **Security of civilians:** A host government has the primary responsibility to protect civilians from non-state groups across its territory.
- **Technology:** Introduce advanced technology in peacekeeping missions to overcome security challenges.



5.1.4. DOHA POLITICAL DECLARATION

Why in news?

The **Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5)** concluded with adoption of the ‘**Doha Political Declaration**’ by the world leaders.

About Doha Programme of Action (DPoA)

- DPoA manifests a new generation of renewed **commitments between the LDCs and their development partners**, including the private sector, civil society, and governments **at all levels**.
- It is a **10-year plan (2022-2031)** to put world’s 46 most vulnerable countries back on track to **achieving the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

About Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

- LDCs are **low-income countries** confronting severe **structural impediments** to sustainable development.

Least Developed Countries (LDC)



Host about **40% of world's poor**.



Account for **13% of world population**.



About **1.3% of global GDP**.

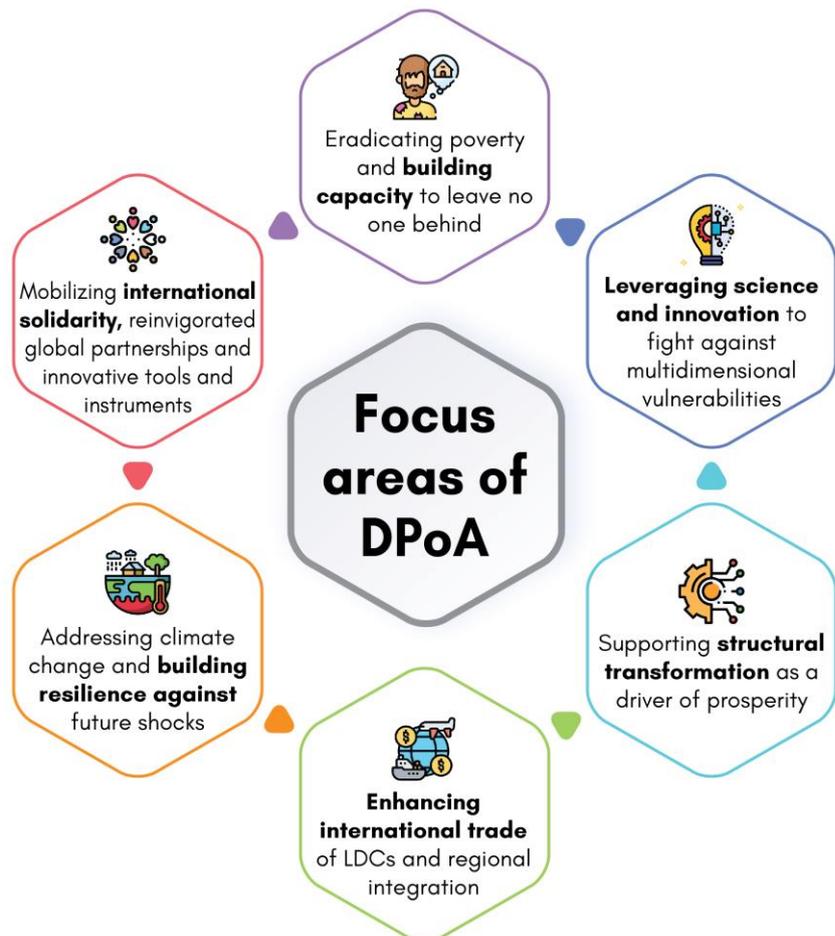


Less than 1% of global trade and FDI.



Only a **fifth of the population** has **access to the internet**.

- They are **highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks** and have low levels of human assets.
- There are **currently 46 countries** (Africa 33, Asia 9, Caribbean 1 and Pacific 3) on the list of LDCs which is **reviewed every three years** by the **Committee for Development (CDP)**, a subsidiary body of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council**.
- **LDCs Identification Criteria:** CDP make recommendations on the **inclusion and graduation** of eligible countries using the **following criteria:**
 - **Gross national income (GNI) per capita.**
 - **Human Assets Index (HAI).**
 - **Economic and Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI).**



Initiatives to support LDCs:

- **Trade-related international support measures (ISMs):** These include **preferential market access** for goods and services and service suppliers, **special treatment** regarding obligations under WTO rules and **certain regional agreements**.
- **Financial and technical assistance:**
 - **UNDP:** The primary criteria for allocation of UNDP's core resources are per capita income and population.
 - **UNCTAD** supports LDCs to achieve structural economic transformation, increase productive capacity, reduce poverty and build resilience to adverse factors.
- **LDCs in international forums:** Support measures are in place to help them participate in international forums, like **caps and discounts on contribution** to UN budgets; **capacity-building** for negotiators etc.
- **Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF):** It is enabling LDCs to prepare for a **more resilient** future. Funding helps recipient countries reduce their **climate change vulnerability** in priority sectors and ecosystems.

5.2. ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

Why in news?

Asian Development Bank (ADB) launched a new **country partnership strategy (CPS) 2023-27** for India.

Key highlights of the strategy

- **The Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), 2023-2027** will advance ADB's **Strategy 2030's** seven operational priorities.
 - Under **Strategy 2030**, ADB aims to expand its vision to achieve a **prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific**, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
 - **Cost-Sharing Arrangements:** ADB and domestic cost-sharing in the **ratio of 70:30**, for the overall loan portfolio during the CPS period.
- **There are 3 pillars of strategy**
 - **Accelerate structural transformation and job creation.**
 - **Promote climate-resilient green growth**
 - **Deepen social and economic inclusiveness**

Challenges faced by ADB in case of India:

- **Differential Approach:** India being a diverse nation, ADB faces **difficulties in approaching various states** with different developmental achievements.
 - Support to lower-income states focuses on basic infrastructure and services to accelerate inclusive growth.
 - Support to higher income states includes transformative projects marked by replicable innovation and good practices.
- **Private Sector Investment:** ADB support to boost government infrastructure financing through non-sovereign operations remains limited due to more or less stagnant private sector investment in India.

Conclusion

CPS for India is well aligned with India's national development priorities to be achieved by 2047. Also, it will leverage India's unique position to deepen regional cooperation and integration in South Asia.



Asian Development Bank

Asian Development Bank

Asian Development Bank



Manila, Philippines

Genesis: Established in 1966.

Members: 68 members—of which 49 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside. **India- a founding member.**

Shareholding: In Non-Borrowing members category **US and Japan have the highest shareholding at 15.6%.**

○ In Borrowing category, **China and India have 6.4 and 6.3% resp.**

Mandate

○ Assists members, and partners, by **providing loans, technical assistance**, to promote social and economic development.

○ Facilitates **policy dialogues, providing advisory services, and mobilizing financial resources** and export credit sources.

Key Reports published by ADB

○ Asia in the Global Transition to Net Zero: **Asian Development Outlook 2023**

○ Asian Economic Integration Report 2023

○ Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2022

India and ADB

○ As of the end of December 2022, ADB had committed **\$52.6 billion** in 605 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance in India, as well as **\$8 billion** in private sector investments.

○ **Important projects include:** Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor Development Program; Nhava Sheva Container Terminal Financing Project; Chennai Metro Rail Investment Project; Assam South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Corridor Connectivity Improvement Project etc.

Heartiest Congratulations to all candidates selected in **CSE 2022**

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| 7 AIR | 8 AIR | 9 AIR | 11 AIR | 12 AIR | 13 AIR | 14 AIR | 15 AIR | 16 AIR |
|  WASEEM AHMAD BHAT |  ANIRUDDH YADAV |  KANIKA GOYAL |  PARSANJEET KOUR |  ABHINAV SIWACH |  VIDUSHI SINGH |  KRIKITA GOYAL |  SWATI SHARMA |  SHISHIR KUMAR SINGH |
| 18 AIR | 19 AIR | 20 AIR | 21 AIR | 22 AIR | 23 AIR | 25 AIR | 26 AIR | 27 AIR |
|  SIDDHARTH SHUKLA |  LAGHIMA TIWARI |  ANOUSHKA SHARMA |  SHIVAM YADAV |  G V S PAVANDATTA |  VAISHALI |  SANKHE KASHMIRA KISHOR |  GUNJITA AGRAWAL |  YADAV SURYABHAN ACHCHELAL |
| 28 AIR | 29 AIR | 30 AIR | 31 AIR | 32 AIR | 33 AIR | 34 AIR | 37 AIR | 38 AIR |
|  ANKITA PUWAR |  POURUSH SOOD |  PREKSHA AGRAWAL |  PRIYANSHA GARG |  NITTIN SINGH |  THARUN PATNAIK MADALA |  ANUBHAV SINGH |  CHAITANYA AWASTHI |  ANUP DAS |
| 39 AIR | 40 AIR | 41 AIR | 42 AIR | 43 AIR | 44 AIR | 46 AIR | 48 AIR | 49 AIR |
|  GARIMA NARULA |  SRI SAI ASHRITH SHAKHAMURI |  SHUBHAM |  PRANITA DASH |  ARCHITA GOYAL |  TUSHAR KUMAR |  MANAN AGARWAL |  AADITYA PANDEY |  SANSKRITI SOMANI |

6. DYNAMICS OF CHANGING WORLD ORDER

6.1. RULES BASED WORLD ORDER

RULE BASED WORLD ORDER (RBWO) AT A GLANCE

Recent years experienced globally transformational events and the term “rule-based international order” has become common to preserve the conditions needed for peace and prosperity.

Rule Based Order described as a shared commitment by all countries to conduct their activities in accordance with agreed rules that evolve over time such as international law, regional security arrangements, trade agreements, cultural arrangements etc.



India is emerging market for Western technology, equipment and evolved to world's fifth largest almost \$3 trillion economy.



Since 1990-2008, trade has slowed to 52% of world GDP in 2020, while protectionism has risen driven by an increase in non-tariff and, tariff barriers.



Institutions that seek to ensure RBWO

- ⊕ **Political:** United Nations work to maintain peace and security, protect human rights and uphold international law.
- ⊕ **Economic:** Bretton Wood Institutions- IMF and World Bank created to restore and sustain benefits of global integration.
- ⊕ **Social:** UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is responsible for promotion and protection of human rights.
- ⊕ **Environment:** United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been working towards promoting coherence in implementation of environmental dimension.
- ⊕ **Dispute redressal:** International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and tries individuals charged with crimes concerning genocide, crimes against humanity etc



India's role in changing world order

- ⊕ **Political:** India's increasing interaction with island states under Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Pacific Island Forum contributes for more than 40 members at UN.
- ⊕ **Security:** Due to China's increasing footprints, India came up with its necklace of diamonds strategy to counter China's string of pearls scheme.
- ⊕ **Geo-politics:** From era of non-alignment to bilateral strategic partnerships to memberships of multilateral groupings such as SCO, BRICS and now I2U2.
- ⊕ **Environment:** From pledging to become net zero emitter of carbon by 2070 to achieving 500 giga-watts non-fossil energy capacity by 2030.



Challenges faced by Rule Based World Order

- ⊕ **Equity:** RBWO must work to advantage of the majority and not a minority.
- ⊕ **Geopolitical:** Russia and China use veto power to reject any resolution in UNSC.
- ⊕ **Socio- Economic:** Global financial crisis of 2008-09 exposed structural weaknesses and unfairness of established international economic system
- ⊕ **Security:** RBWO is unable to address proliferation of WMD, curb terrorism and outright wars like Russian of annexation Crimean Peninsula and ongoing war with Ukraine.
- ⊕ **Environment:** Developed countries pulling out of climate agreements under UNFCC highlights implementation issues of climate deals.



Way forward

- ⊕ **Renew Bretton Woods System:** Executive boards of IMF and World Bank need reform of composition and structure.
- ⊕ **Balance of Power:** Reform to international institutions should reflect changes in balance of power, but should also be accompanied by fundamental reassessment of nature of global governance.
- ⊕ **Global Trade:** Urgent measures are needed to increase the effectiveness of WTO to boost global trade
- ⊕ **Outer space:** Norms and rules governing outer space needs to be revised.
- ⊕ **Dispute settlement:** International community should take steps to adjudicate and resolve complex/sensitive matters of international, regional, and national concern.
- ⊕ **Human Rights:** International community should, in words of preamble of UN Charter, re-affirm faith in fundamental human right.

The International community should work towards strengthening principles of the UN charter and commit to strengthening transparent and accountable governance systems to achieve the goal of a peaceful, prosperous and just world. ★

6.2. EVOLVING DYNAMICS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

DYNAMICS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AT A GLANCE

India's foreign policy is guided by the **Panchsheel or the five principles of Peaceful Co-existence**. It talks about mutual respect, co-existence, non-interference, equality and mutual benefit.

India's foreign policy goals

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Protect India from traditional and non-traditional threats.</p> | <p>Create an external environment which is conducive for India's inclusive development.</p> | <p>Ensure that India's voice is heard and India is able to influence world opinion on global issues.</p> | <p>Engage and protect Indian Diaspora.</p> |
|---|--|---|---|

Core principles of India's foreign policy

- ⊕ **Strategic Autonomy** For example, by abstaining from voting against Russia in the UNSC while insisting on cessation of violence, India have managed to showcase its neutrality.
- ⊕ **Opposition to Export of Ideologies and Change of Regimes** or violation of territorial integrity.
- ⊕ **Intervention over interference** in internal affairs of other countries(Ex. Bangladesh(1971), IPKF in Srilanka(19870-90), Maldives(1988)).
- ⊕ **Constructive Engagement over Aggression**
- ⊕ **Global Consensus on Issues of Global Dimensions**
- ⊕ **Diplomatic Outreach** leading to bilateral relationships and partnerships

Specific Thrust areas of India's foreign policy

- ⊕ **Prioritizing an integrated neighbourhood** through Neighbourhood First Policy and Outreach towards extended neighbourhood.
- ⊕ **Leveraging international partnerships** to promote India's domestic development which includes strategic Balancing of relations between major powers, Outreach to middle powers etc.
- ⊕ **Ensuring a stable and multipolar balance of power** and emphasising on a rules-based international order.
- ⊕ **Advancing Indian representation and leadership** on matters of global governance with its ethos of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**.
- ⊕ **Leveraging Soft Power Potential** in fields like spiritualism, yoga etc. to advance India's global influence.

Challenges to India's foreign policy

- ⊕ **Regional Instability** due to factors like border disputes, terrorism etc.
- ⊕ **Non-conducive external environment** as a result of rivalry between major powers, Russia-Ukraine war.
- ⊕ **Stressed global economic situation** post COVID.
- ⊕ **India's dependency** for its energy security such as coal and crude oil, continues to be very high.
- ⊕ **Disintegrating global frameworks for cooperation** for example, the Doha round of trade talks has been abandoned.
- ⊕ **Domestic Systemic constraints** and lack of resources for effective engagement with Diaspora population
- ⊕ **Rise of Non-traditional challenges** and threats like maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific, Nuclear weapons, Pandemics and emerging technologies.

Way forward

- ⊕ **Tactful dealing with China** and defending India's territorial integrity.
- ⊕ **Mindful efforts to stabilise Pakistan** yet be prepared to deal with any eventuality.
- ⊕ **Expanding the domain of strategic autonomy** by engaging with developing and emerging economies.
- ⊕ **Pursuit of multi-alignment** where all major relationships, remain positively in play.
- ⊕ **Secure national interests** like border security, energy and food security, non-discriminatory global trade practices etc.
- ⊕ **Focusing on self-development** by accelerating domestic economic reforms, strengthening institutions, etc.
- ⊕ **Nurturing a feminist dimension in its Neighbourhood First policy** to better achieve regional interests.
 - For eg-HARD operations must include specific needs of women and children in crisis areas.
- ⊕ **Playing a leadership role** in enhancement of the international rule of law.

India has clearly demonstrated its will to play a leading role in the global arena and be counted as pole in its own right. Continued stability and prosperity at home and political consensus on broad foreign policy parameter, will help India reach its goal. ★

6.2.1. INDIA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

INDIA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AT A GLANCE

Economic diplomacy is a foreign policy tool that involves the use of economic instruments in conduct of **international relations for serving the country's economic, political, and strategic interests.**



Between 2008 and 2020, India disbursed approximately **US\$8.35 billion** as grants and loans under various development compacts.



Objectives of Economic Diplomacy

- Projecting the country as a major economic power.
- Securing favourable multilateral trade negotiations.
- Access to foreign resources and promotion of foreign investments in the country.
- Promotion of exports and businesses abroad.
- Realization of political objectives through economic actions



The FDI inflow in India was at its highest ever at **USD 81.97 billion** in 2020-21.



Key Instruments of Economic Diplomacy

- ⊕ **Attracting investments and promotion of exports:** It helps a country become an economic power.
- ⊕ **Mobilizing finances for partner countries:** It bolsters the country's image as a credible development partner.
- ⊕ **Building support to set and enforce international rules:** It acts as leverage to shape the international order for meeting the interest of one's own country.
- ⊕ **Economic sanctions:** To elicit favorable policy response from a country with which, otherwise, the political terms are not good.



India's success in using Economic Diplomacy

- ⊕ Various initiatives have been taken like **liberalizing FDI norms, PLI schemes, and Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** to increase the economy's competitiveness on a global scale.
- ⊕ **Financing through multilateral platforms:** India-UN Development Fund, International Solar Alliance (ISA), etc.
- ⊕ **Bilateral development aid to partner countries** in the form of grants as well as lines of credit (LoCs).
- ⊕ India has emerged as a leader for **South-South Cooperation (SSC) for coalition**
- ⊕ India complies with **sanctions by the UN but resorts to unilateral sanctions**



Challenges for India in pursuing Economic Diplomacy

- ⊕ Inability to gather majority support for **reforms in multilateral platforms like WTO.**
- ⊕ **Lack of a clear strategy** for development cooperation.
- ⊕ **Regional discrimination and poor implementation** of development aid due to scarcity of resources.
- ⊕ **Compartmentalized bureaucratic structures** affect the integration of economic and strategic goals.
- ⊕ **The decline of the share of merchandise in the Global Value Chain (GVC).**
- ⊕ **Competition from China** in the South Asian region.
- ⊕ **Emerging issues** like protectionism, weakening multilateral institutions, humanitarian crisis, etc.



Way Forward

- ⊕ **Domestic reforms:** To build a new narrative around strengths, offerings, and new engines of growth and productivity, etc.
- ⊕ **Devise an economic diplomacy policy.**
- ⊕ **Improving aid program:** Focused country-wise strategy, establish International Development Cooperation Agency, etc.
- ⊕ **Climbing-Up the GVC Export Ladder:** Effective implementation of PM Gati Shakti and National Infrastructure Pipeline.
- ⊕ **Leverage Emerging opportunities:** Pursue Health diplomacy, engage domain experts for digital sector, play leadership role in minilateral organisations, etc.
- ⊕ **Promoting Brand India, Flexibilities in policy making, etc**

Economic diplomacy should seek for balance between competition and cooperation, aspirations and the achievable, and regional and global. It should be navigated on the strong foundation of rules-based collaboration. Also, India's concerted actions at home will determine its evolution as a key player on the global platform.

6.2.2. PARADIPLOMACY

PARADIPLOMACY AT A GLANCE

Concept was first proposed in 1990 by John Kincaid. It is the foreign policy capacity of non-central governments and their participation, independent of the central government, in the international arena also known as **Foreign Policy Decentralisation**. Over the past three decades, India's state governments have become important stakeholders in India's ties with the outside world highlighting the importance of paradiplomacy.



As per Indian Constitution, Foreign affairs is exclusively a "union" subject under Union List in the 7th Schedule.



Emerging trends in paradiplomacy:

- **Vibrant investment summits** by Gujarat, Goa, Punjab.
- **Greater cross-border trade** through border haats.
- **Rising foreign collaborations** in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu
- **High-powered ministerial delegations.**
- **Chief Ministerial presence** in international bodies and summits



Significance of Paradiplomacy

- ⊕ **Strengthens the federal structure** as it places greater emphasis on states acting as equal partners in the development.
- ⊕ **Propels the competitive advantage of sub-national government.**
- ⊕ **Facilitates globalisation of localism** by bringing regional issues on the global stage and finding local solutions to global problems.
- ⊕ **Strengthen public leadership**
- ⊕ **Allows exchange of best practices at local levels.**
- ⊕ **Facilitates resources and cost sharing of foreign policy-making** with federal governments.



Factors contributing to paradiplomatic activities in India

- ⊕ **Historical Factors** like contested borders, shared cultures, and economic ecosystem.
- ⊕ **Emergence of coalition and regional political parties** since 1967.
- ⊕ **Economic liberalization and globalisation.**
- ⊕ **Government initiatives** like Digital India, Make-in-India.
- ⊕ **Creation of States Division in the MEA.**
- ⊕ **Sister-city agreements** such as Mumbai-Shanghai, Varanasi-Tokyo etc..



Challenges in Paradiplomacy

- ⊕ **Lack of coherence in foreign policy** when states speak in different voices from centre.
- ⊕ **Me-tooism** i.e. mere imitation of the Para diplomatic behaviour by states.
- ⊕ **Limited financial space of states.**
- ⊕ **Lack of data or theory** on effective participation of states in international arena.
- ⊕ **Diversity among states** in India
- ⊕ **Security concerns** particularly in North Eastern States.
- ⊕ **Low level of awareness** and a lack of experience.



Way Ahead

- ⊕ **Balancing of the roles** of central and non-central governments.
- ⊕ **Effective institutional mechanisms** through the creation of consulates in individual states and training of officials.
- ⊕ **Introducing formal legislations.**
- ⊕ **Exploring the role of border states** in security of national borders.
- ⊕ **Strengthening existing coordination mechanisms** such as the Inter-State Council.
- ⊕ **Identifying and showcasing good practices.**
- ⊕ **Leveraging technology** to encourage states participation

Paradiplomacy is still in its nascent stage in India. By harnessing the potential of paradiplomacy, India can tap into its diverse regional strengths and effectively contribute to global diplomacy while empowering subnational entities to shape their own international engagements.

6.3. INDIA AND GLOBAL SOUTH

Why in news?

Recently, a special virtual summit, the **Voice of Global South summit** was hosted by India.

More on News

- The Summit called for a **global agenda of 'Respond, Recognize, Respect, and Reform'** to re-energise the world.

Initiatives launched in the Summit

- Arogya Maitri (Wellness Friendship):** India will provide essential medical supplies to any developing country affected by natural disasters or humanitarian crisis.
- Global South Center of Excellence:** It will undertake research on development solutions or best-practices of any of Global South countries, which can be scaled and implemented in other members of the Global South.
- Global South Science and Technology Initiative:** India will share its expertise with other developing nations.
- Global South Young Diplomats Forum:** It will connect youthful officers of foreign ministries.
- Global South Scholarships:** It will provide scholarship to students of developing countries to pursue higher education in India.

Global Agenda of 'Respond, Recognize, Respect, and Reform' to re-energise the World

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  Respond to the priorities of the Global South by framing an inclusive and balanced international agenda |  Recognize that the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' applies to all global challenges |  Respect the sovereignty of all nations, the rule of law and peaceful resolution of differences and disputes |  Reform international institutions , including the United Nations, to make them more relevant |
|---|---|---|--|

Mains 365 - International Relations

INDIA AND GLOBAL SOUTH



Brandt Line

The Rich North

The Poor South

 In the 1980s, the **Brandt Line** geographically split the world into **relatively richer and poorer nations**.

 **Global South** is an expression for those countries which **are relatively disadvantaged, they don't have a voice in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Bretton Woods institutions**.

Importance of Global South


Climate change
 Fulfil the obligation on climate finance and technology


Energy Common concern of energy security, energy justice, and sustainable energy transition


Poverty and inequality
 Countries share their experience to tackle issues like poverty and inequality.


Natural resources Global South is rich in natural resources, such as oil, gas, minerals, and timber.


South-South cooperation
 Countries can share their experience to tackle issues like poverty and inequality

Common Links Between India and Global South

01

Colonial Past

02

Socio-economic Issues

03

Under representation

04

Diaspora

India's approach to Global South


Consultative in nature


Outcome oriented


People centric


Demand driven


Equal treatment

Challenges in Engaging with Global South

- Difficulty in uniting the Global South:** due to the deep economic differentiation and sharp political divisions among the developing nations.
- Domestic Issues:** India is itself facing many developmental challenges such as lower per capita resources.

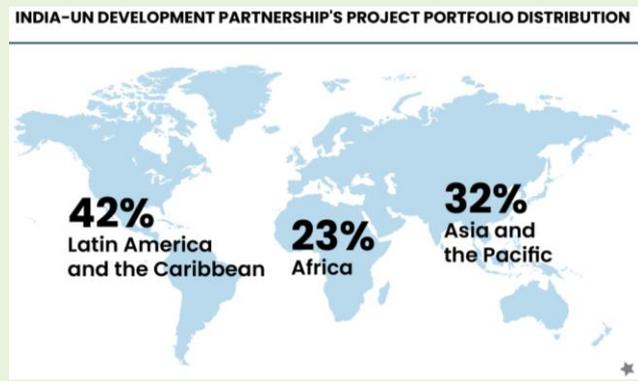
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DELHI | JAIPUR | PUNE | HYDERABAD | AHMEDABAD | LUCKNOW | CHANDIGARH | GUWAHATI | RANCHI | ALLAHABAD | BHOPAL © Vision IAS

- **Past Experiences:** Groups like Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), G-77 etc. are not much effective in raising the voice of developing countries.
- **Western Hegemony in Finance:** India is not much financially strong to fulfil the developmental need of the developing countries.
 - Western countries like USA, France etc. take leverage of their financial resources.

India-UN Development Partnership Fund (UNDPF)
 Recently India-UN Development Partnership Fund (UNDPF) celebrated 5 Years of South-South Collaboration. South-South Co-operation is based on Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA).
About UNDPF

- It is a **dedicated facility established in 2017.**
- It supports **Southern-owned and led, demand-driven, and transformational sustainable development projects** across the developing world.
 - It focuses on least developed countries and small island developing states.



Enhancing Engagement with Global South

- **Cooperation:** Summits should be organised on regular time period to enhance cooperation.
- **Mutual Trust:** Cultural exchange programmes and confidence building measures will help in enhancing mutual trust.
- **Developments Projects:** With the help of like-minded countries, India can implement development projects in other global south countries. For example, India-Japan partnership in Asia-Africa Growth Corridor(AAGC).
- **Promoting Interest:** The interest and aspiration of the global south countries needs to be given priority by India in forums like G-20 etc. India's Presidency of G-20 provides it with this opportunity.

Key terms related to Global South

- **North-South Debate** is a cold war between **developed North** and **developing and underdeveloped South**. They have different perspective on issues such as energy, climate change etc.
- **North-South cooperation:** It is the most traditional type of cooperation, occurs when a developed country supports economically or with another kind of resources a less favored one, for example, with financial aid during a natural disaster or a humanitarian crisis.
- **South-South Cooperation:** South-South Cooperation is a broad framework for **collaboration and exchange** among countries of the **South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains**.
- **Triangular cooperation:** It involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country(ies)/or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programmes and projects.

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

- It was formed during the Cold War, as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union. **India, Egypt, Indonesia, and Yugoslavia** pioneered the formation of the movement.
 - The policy of NAM was based on the **5 principles of Panchsheel**.

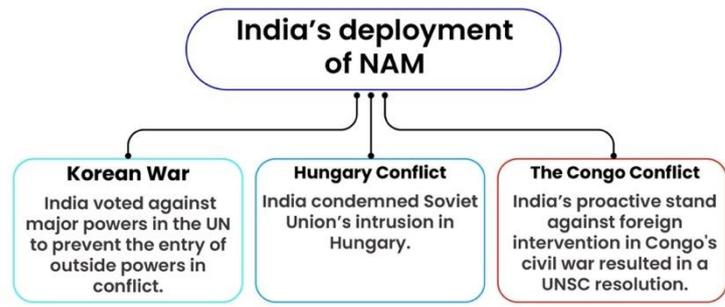
Reasons for the declining importance of NAM

- **Change in world order** from bipolar to a more complex and multipolar global system
- **Lack of Economic Pragmatism:** Many NAM members are rooted in ideas of socialism and state control which lack relevance.
- **Regional organizations** such as the G7, ASEAN, and BRICS have gained prominence.
- **Disagreements and differing priorities** among member countries.
- **Nature of global security challenges** has evolved significantly since the formation of NAM

Current Relevance of NAM

- **An integral part of foreign policy:** Many developing countries like India still follow the NAM policy.
- **Platform for South-South Cooperation:** NAM provides a platform for developing countries to come together and discuss common challenges and interests.
- **Solidarity and Collective Voice:** NAM provides a platform for smaller and developing countries to have a collective voice and exert influence in global affairs.

- **Promoting Multilateralism and Global Peace:** NAM upholds the principles of multilateralism, diplomacy, and peaceful coexistence.
- **Safeguarding National Sovereignty:** NAM countries support the principles of self-determination, respect for territorial integrity, non-aggression, and safeguarding the independence and autonomy of member states.



6.4. SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY

SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY AT A GLANCE

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Soft power is **ability to influence others through appeal and attraction**, using **non-coercive means**. It is **different from hard power** that relies on **tangible power resources** such as armed forces or economic means.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  India has been ranked 28th in Global Soft Power Index 2023 . |  In 2014, the United Nations adopted the resolution proclaiming 21 June as International Yoga Day . |  Public Diplomacy Division was setup within the Ministry of External Affairs in 2006 to utilise the soft power assets to reach the global audience. |
|--|---|--|



Instruments of India's soft Power Diplomacy

- ⊕ **Large diaspora** with over 31 million including 13 million NRIs and 18 million PIOs
- ⊕ **Tourism** due to programme like Buddhist circuits and so on.
- ⊕ Regular goodwill **exchange visit by Parliamentarians**.
- ⊕ Spread of **ayurveda, Yoga and traditional medicine**.
- ⊕ Cooperation **through multilateral platforms** like BRICS, G-20, ASEAN etc.
- ⊕ Emergence of **Bollywood as global entertainment**.
- ⊕ **Schemes to showcase India's rich cultural heritage**.



Importance of soft power for India

- ⊕ **Key determinant in success of foreign policies.** For ex, India's use of soft power in Afghanistan has played out in favour of India.
- ⊕ **Only Known nuclear weapon state that is not part of Non-Proliferation treaty** but still permitted to engage in nuclear commerce.
- ⊕ **Hard power cannot be exercised** effectively if soft power is ignored, because of consequence associated.
- ⊕ Can **earn respect and elevate its global position**.



Issues with India's soft power diplomacy

- ⊕ **Issues highlighted by Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) inhibiting effective conduct** of soft power and cultural diplomacy.
 - Lack of timely and adequate **budget allocation**.
 - Need for **greater coordination and consultation** among multiple institutions, both in the government and private sector.
 - Shortage of **skilled, motivated manpower**.
 - Lack of clarity on the mandate of **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)**.
- ⊕ **Impact of domestic issues reported in international media** like pollution in urban areas, child labor and violence against women, trafficking have detracted visitors.
- ⊕ **Sub-Par performance in religious tourism** compared to South East Asian nations. **Thailand and Indonesia are the prime recipients** of such tourism.



Measures to strengthen India's soft power

- ⊕ **Recommendations made by Parliamentary panel on external affairs:**
 - A **formal study of international best practices** should be done.
 - To develop **objective metrics** for evaluating soft power outcomes through a '**Soft Power Matrix**'.
 - Need for **greater synergy** among MEA and other ministries, departments and agencies involved.
 - To **increase the number of tourism offices** abroad and adopt a **country-specific approach** for promotional activities.
 - To **proactively interact** with Indian diaspora.
- ⊕ **Promote tourism: A multi-pronged approach** focusing on product enhancement, bettering connectivity, and **creative promotion**.

While soft power is increasingly important, it has to be backed by sufficient hard power capabilities and India needs to achieve higher economic growth levels to wield greater influence.



6.4.1. RELIGION AS SOFT POWER TOOL

Why in news?

Four Holy Relics of Lord Buddha were taken to Mongolia for an exposition to coincide with **Mongolian Buddha Purnima celebrations**.

India's strength in Religion as a soft power in diplomacy

- **India's religious diversity is its biggest strength:** India is fortunate to have **all the major religions** of the world. **Four were founded here:** Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. **Four came from outside:** Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- **Home to various religious sites:** India has **numerous sites of importance to the various faiths** like:
 - **Hindu religious sites** like Varanasi, Tirupathy, Madurai etc.
 - **Buddhist religious sites** like Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Nalanda.
 - Historic **Churches and Synagogues** in South India.
 - **Dargahs** of Sufi saints like Moinuddin Chishti and Nizamuddin Aulia etc
- **Role in its policy:** India's Look East Policy is being built up by emphasizing India's historical links with Buddhism.
 - The **relationship between Buddhism and state diplomacy** dates back to the days of **Emperor Ashoka**, who following his adoption of the religion began the practice of **dharmavijaya or conquest through Dharma**.
- **Religious diplomacy has been integral to India's tradition:** The principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam ('the whole world is but one family) was enshrined in Maha Upanishad.
 - **Ashoka sent Buddhist Missionaries** to far off places such as Ceylon, Egypt, Macedonia, Tibet, etc.
 - **The address of Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893** by Swami Vivekanand brought the much-needed recognition and respect for India particularly its culture and traditions.
- **Religion is a cohesive bond for Indian subcontinent:** Various religions of India help it to connect with all the neighboring countries. Thus, religions provide south Asia its unique identity.

About Soft Power

- Coined by **Joseph Nye** in the late 1980s, the term "soft power" refers to the ability of a country to **persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion**.
- In practice, it entails countries projecting their **values, ideals, and culture** across borders to foster goodwill and strengthen partnerships.
- Soft power usually originates **outside government** in places like schools, religious institutions, and charitable groups. It is also formed through **music, sports, media etc**.

Buddhism & India

India claims legitimacy in its promotion of Buddhist diplomacy in spite of the fact that it is host to a relatively small population of Buddhists due to following reasons-

- **Buddhist faith originated in India**, therefore granting it singular historical legitimacy.
- India has **numerous sites of importance** to the Buddhist faith, such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Nalanda.
- India has nurtured an **image of being a protector of the persecuted** through the presence of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan parliament-in-exile in Dharamshala.
- **Historical links to Theravada Buddhism** mean that India is in a good position to further relations with other Buddhist countries and create conversation between multiple streams of this faith.

Recent Instances where India showed strength of religion as a soft power

- **Organising conferences:** For example: In 2011 India hosted the **Global Buddhist Congregation** to mark the **2,600th anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment**.
- **Visit of leaders to religious sites:** In 2015, **Japanese PM** was invited to **Banaras**, famous for hosting religious sites of **Hinduism as well as Buddhism**.
 - In Singapore, Indian prime minister visited the **Goddess Mariamman temple and Buddha's Tooth Relic temple**.

Yoga as soft power tool

- One of the major recognitions of **India's soft power** was the United Nations' approval of **21 June as International Yoga Day**.
- India managed to win the **support of 175 member states** at the General Assembly for the **resolution setting an International Day of Yoga**.
- On a 2015 trip to Turkmenistan on the Central Asian circuit, Indian PM was invited to **inaugurate a traditional medicine and Yoga center** in the capital of Ashgabat.
- As the yoga industry is still very much dominated by **Indian voices, and authentic instruction in yoga is still perceived to be found only in India**.

- **Promoting religious tourism:** Ministry of Tourism is promoting a number of tourist circuits that transgress national borders.
 - An example is **Buddhist tourist circuit** that also includes visits to various sites in Nepal, such as Lumbini and Kapilavastu.
- **Membership for OIC:** India has sought **membership to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** on the grounds that it has the 2nd largest Muslim population in the world.

Concerns/limitations of religion as soft power tool

- **Poor performance in religious tourism:** India receives **less than 1% of global Buddhist tourism**. South-East Asian nations such as **Thailand and Indonesia are the prime recipients** of such tourism.
- **Domestic policies:** A series of policy initiatives Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC), etc has triggered religious tensions.
- **China is emerging as a competitor:** China promotes the religion of Buddhism on the grounds of its historical association, largest Buddhist population, working through different projects like Lumbini project in Nepal.
- **Structural loopholes in the efforts to propagate India's culture:** The performance of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), with centres in about many countries for promoting Indian culture, has been lackadaisical.

Measures to strengthen religion as soft power tool

- **To nurture a favourable ecosystem for religious tourism:**
 - **A multi-pronged approach** focusing on product enhancement, bettering connectivity, and **creative promotion and marketing** of products could help achieve an **effective strategy for inbound tourism**.
 - **Various levels of interaction and coordination** at the international and sub-national level is needed.
- **Soft Power dissemination should be neutral:** There should not be any reference to our interests while propagating our civilization and cultural heritage.
- **Others:**
 - **Effective revitalisation of the Nalanda University** project and encouragement of Buddhist studies in well-established universities across the country must take place.
 - **Civil society needs to help spread awareness** among locals through programmes on heritage awareness and conservation.

Comparison between India and China in soft power diplomacy

According to Brand Finance's Global soft power index 2022, while **China is ranked at 4th** position, India is far behind at **29th** position.

Areas where India lacks behind China

- **Lack of monetary resources:** China is estimated to **spend about US\$ 10 billion** a year just on its Confucius Institutes and soft power promotion whereas ICCR and other agencies put together **spend around 300-400 crores**.
- **Culture promotion through state:** Indian cultural centres are **far few in number** and Indian culture has seen **popularity naturally** and through Indian immigrants rather than through a **mixture of immigration and government effort**.
- Though in **recent time**, state has started **playing proactive role** in popularizing culture.

Advantages of India over China

- **Consistently using soft power since long time:** Since independence, India has shown **more inclination towards soft power, unlike China**(concept rapidly rose to popularity in the mid-2000s).
- **Benign development partner:** Further, unlike China, India's development Programme is **free from accusations of trampling sovereignty or integrity** of its partners or burdening them financially with **unbearable debt trap**.
- **Democratic credentials:** India's **democratic values and openness** makes it a more **trustworthy and dependable** partner.

6.4.2. INDIAN DIASPORA

INDIAN DIASPORA AT A GLANCE

The Indian Diaspora is a generic term to describe the people and their descendants who migrated from Indian territories. Diaspora composed of "NRIs" (Indian citizens not residing in India) and "PIOs" (Persons of Indian Origin who have acquired the citizenship of some other country).



India has the **largest diaspora population** with over 31 million including 13 million NRIs and 18 million PIOs.



UAE, the US and Saudi Arabia host the largest number of migrants from India. Others include Australia, Canada, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar and the United Kingdom.



India is the first country to get **\$100 billion annual remittance in 2022**.



Significance of Diaspora population

- ⊕ **Economic:** Remittance, flow of tacit information, business ideas, and technologies into India, bringing down disguised unemployment in India.
- ⊕ **Diaspora diplomacy** is an important part of India's "soft diplomacy". For eg. Indian diaspora played a critical role in the fructification of Indo-US Nuclear deal.
- ⊕ **Trans-national entrepreneurship:** Diaspora emerged as a significant source of trade and investment in India.
- ⊕ **Diffusion of experience and exposure:** Diaspora spread the Indian Culture and traditions abroad. Example: Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian Cuisine etc.
- ⊕ **Development of the host country:** Silicon Valley, for example, represents the success of the Indians in the US.



Steps taken for the betterment of Diapora

- ⊕ **Dedicated Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.**
- ⊕ **Organization of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas**
- ⊕ **Know India Programme** familiarizes Indian-origin youth (18-30 years) with their Indian roots.
- ⊕ **Overseas Citizenship of India Scheme (OCI)** provides for benefits comparable to citizens in certain fields.
- ⊕ **Swarnaprasav Yojana- New Plan Scheme** for promoting the employability of Indian workers abroad.
- ⊕ Indian government signed **social security agreements with many foreign countries.**
- ⊕ **New Embassies in Latin America and African countries** to help the Diaspora.



Challenges faced by Indian Diaspora

- ⊕ **West Asia specific:**
 - **Low oil prices owing to Shale gas boom**, resulting in job cuts for Indians.
 - **Rising conflicts and instability** due to the Shia-Sunni conflicts and the radical Islamism affecting security of Indians.
 - **Exploitative Kafala labour system.**
 - **Nitaqat law** prefers locals in Saudi Arabia.
- ⊕ **US, Canada and UK specific:**
 - Discriminative practices, Protectionism and Stricter H-1B visa norms in US
 - Revision of visa norms in UK post-Brexit.
 - Demands for Dual Citizenship
- ⊕ **Challenges due to Covid-** Non fulfilment of basic needs of migrant workers, loss of wages, concerns about the family and anxiety, harassment and negative response of the local community.
- ⊕ **General Economic Issues:** violation of contractual terms, adverse working conditions, etc.



Way ahead

- ⊕ Negotiating a **Standard Labour Export Agreements** with the host countries.
- ⊕ **Monitoring and supervision** of our overseas workers by our Missions.
- ⊕ **Compulsory insurance schemes** covering the risks faced by our overseas workers.
- ⊕ **Greater focus on promoting tourism** among 2nd generation PIOs.
- ⊕ Consider setting up of **Special Economic Zones**, exclusively for projects to be set up by NRIs/PIOs
- ⊕ **Issuing special infrastructure bonds** for attracting NRI/PIO investments on the lines of the Israel Bonds.

Overseas Indian community does serve as an important 'bridge' for the development of the country. The success of this bridge depends on the ability of the Diaspora to develop and project a coherent, intrinsically motivated and progressive identity and the capacity of the country.



6.5. COMMON SECURITY

Why in news?

Recently, Palme International Center, International Peace Bureau (IPB) and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) released a report on Common Security 2022.

What is the concept of Common security?

- Common security is a notion based on the assumption that no nation, community or individual can be secure without other nations, communities and individuals enjoying the same level of security.
 - Any conflict in one part of the world has cascading effects on the people of another.
 - The effect can be seen in the Ukraine or Afghanistan conflict on other developing countries, particularly, on the supply of food grains, fertiliser and fuel.
- The concept of common security goes beyond the narrow traditional and realist approach to security.
 - The **traditional idea of security** was the protection or defence of states against external threats or attacks.
 - While the notion of **common security is about non-violent approaches** to the universal need to be secure.

Risks to common security in the current era

- Challenges to Multilateralism in a Multipolar World:** Respect for the core principles of international humanitarian law and rules-based system is increasingly under threat, as witnessed in recent conflicts such as Iraq, Palestine/Israel, Yemen, Syria, and Ukraine.
- Militarisation:** Massive investments in faster, more lethal nuclear weapons, coupled with increasing tensions between nuclear-armed states and new technological developments.
 - The **Korean peninsula** represents one area of particular concern, where nuclear tensions remain high and there is increasing militarisation.
- Authoritarian Regimes-Shrinking Democratic Space:** The past 15 years have seen a growing democracy gap, with a consistent expansion of authoritarian rule and a decline in major democracies.
- Global Warming and the Climate Crisis:** Of the 15 countries facing the worst ecological threats in the world, 11 are currently in conflict.
- Inequality:** Nearly half of the world's population survives on less than \$5.50 a day.
 - Rising income inequality **leads to increasingly polarised politics, and the ascendance of populism and nationalism** which may spiral into violence and war.
- Current and Future Pandemics:** Underfunded health services and social protection systems, coupled with growing health inequality, prevented vaccine equity exposed the weakness in recent pandemic preparedness, and prevention and highlights vulnerabilities for future pandemics.

Six Principles of common security



All people have the right to human security
freedom from fear and freedom from want.



Building **trust between nations and peoples** is fundamental to peaceful and sustainable human existence.



Global and regional cooperation, **multilateralism and the rule of law** are crucial to tackling many of the world's challenges.



Dialogue, conflict prevention and confidence-building measures must replace aggression and military force as a means of resolving disputes.



Better regulation, international law and responsible governance also need to be extended to cover new military technologies, such as in the realms of cyberspace, outer space and artificial intelligence. ★



Ways to achieve common security

- **Strengthen global architecture for peace**
 - **Encouraging regional bodies**, such as SAARC, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the African Union to develop frameworks that incorporate the principles of common security.
 - **Immediate resumption of strategic stability talks between the USA and Russia** and the resumption of strategic dialogue between the USA and China.
 - **Integrating climate-related security risks into United Nations** conflict-prevention strategies.
- **Linking disarmament with development:** Finding innovative ways to utilise nuclear equipment and expertise for peaceful purposes and to support the transition of military personnel to non-military professions – the idea of “**transforming weapons into windfarms**”. This entails:
 - **Reduction in military spending to generate a ‘global peace dividend’** to fund the UN Sustainable Development Goals, UN peacebuilding, and a just transition to climate friendly jobs.
- **Revitalised Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament**
 - **Reinstate arms control treaties**, particularly regarding nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, for example the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF).
 - **States that carried out nuclear testing must provide immediate victim assistance and environmental remediation**, particularly to indigenous communities.
- **Regulation of New Military Technologies and Outer Space Weapons**
 - **Ban cyber-attacks on nuclear command and control systems**, accompanied by a disentanglement of conventional and nuclear weapon command and control systems.
 - **Prohibit autonomous weapons systems**, to ensure that humans keep control over weapons and armed conflict.
 - **Strengthen the Outer Space Treaty** and establish a new culture of responsible space governance to prevent further militarisation of the domain.
- **Engage and involve civil society:** Civil society must act as a watchdog, a motivating force, and a counterweight to political posturing – with the support of the verification and trust-building measures included in existing and new treaties.

6.6. GEOPOLITICS OF FOOD SECURITY

Why in news?

Experts are of the view that the world is moving towards an unprecedented time amid Russia Ukraine war as global food prices are skyrocketing and affecting countries across the world.

About Food security

- According to Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN food security refers to ‘**a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food** that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life’.
- Such food insecurity represents a political failure as global food production has long surpassed the level necessarily to keep all people fed. The global **food crises** have also served to entrench the idea of **food as an object of strategic national importance**.

OTHER KEY INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN GLOBAL FOOD SUPPLY

12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO

The World Trade Organisation **announced to exempt food purchased by the UN's WFP** for humanitarian purposes, **from any export restrictions**.

Global Alliance for Food Security

It was **launched in May 2022 by the G7 Presidency & the World Bank Group to tackle the unfolding global hunger crisis** due to Russia and Ukraine war

Global Alliance for Climate - Smart Agriculture (GACSA)

- It is a **voluntary platform** and **supported by UN's FAO**
- Its members include governments , inter - governmental organizations, NGOs, civil society, etc.

Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme

Launched by the G20, in the wake of the global response to the 2007-08 food price crisis, **to build resilient and sustainable agriculture** and food systems in low - income countries.

- Currently, **World Food Program, International Fund for Agricultural Development, FAO and World Bank** are key institutions working towards strengthening global food supply.

Impact of Geopolitics on Food Security

Geopolitics has a **more prominent impact** across a range of areas that **directly affect food security** as given in the following table.

| Factors | Threats to food security |
|--|--|
| Compulsion to Trade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic nodes or chokepoints of the global food system remains vulnerable to politically motivated restrictions. • Economic unilateralism and protectionism and trade war have accelerated. • Geopolitical frictions also make reform to multilateral institutions like WTO difficult. For, example the failure of the WTO's Doha Development Round of trade talks. |
| Armed conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrupts agricultural production, trade, transport and access and humanitarian aid. • Armed conflicts and concomitant social unrest could lead to geopolitical repercussions. Example, Arab Spring of 2010–11. |
| Competition for natural resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green grabbing: It refers to trade-offs between environmental sustainability and food security that happens due to production of biofuels. • Resource grabbing: China is the largest supplier of phosphorous (essential in fertilizers) despite having only 5% of the reserves rendering importing countries like India vulnerable to supply shock during adverse geopolitical events. |
| Climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food insecurity is currently concentrated in developing countries in low latitudes which are more vulnerable to climate change. |

Way ahead

- **Insulating food forum from geopolitics:** Dedicated forums for multi-stakeholder dialogue, coordination and cooperation on world hunger need to be protected from the spill over of geopolitics.
- **Shifting models of global governance:** Diversify the governance system by including non-state and market-based organizations, to establish new interest coalitions and partnerships that can **potentially bypass interstate rivalries** and zero-sum logic.
- **Maintaining open trade:** Allow food to flow from surplus areas to those in need by urgently phasing out export bans imposed by major food producers.
 - **Increasing trade financing and reinforcing supply chains** is vital to addressing the food price shocks.
- **Intensify efforts to recycle nutrients:** Step towards regenerative agriculture and nature-positive solutions needs to be taken for reducing dependency on a few countries.
- **Increase productivity in developing countries:** This will bridge the geographical yield gap and strengthen their resilience against any global shock to food supply.
- **Climate resilience:** Investing in climate-resilient agriculture with a focus on low-cost, high-impact measures, such as: Investing in new crop varieties, Improving water management and Information dissemination.

6.7. GEOPOLITICS OF TECHNOLOGY

Why in news?

Global transition to future technologies like Artificial Intelligence, 5G and Big Data among others have started affecting the global geopolitics.

What is the relationship between geopolitics and technology?

The technology development and adoption not only affect the nature of geopolitics but also gets affected by it. For example, Russia's military technological development was largely driven by its susceptibility on its western borders.

Following can be cited as **key geopolitical factors affecting technological** access, adoption and development:

- **Geographical position:** For example, due to its harsh geography and scarce water resources, Israel has spent considerable time and resources to develop technologies that conserve, reuse and desalinate water.
- **Relative access to resources:** For example, large scale availability of labour puts China at a comparative advantage in labour intensive sectors.
 - Whereas large scale availability of capital in US puts it at a comparative advantage for Research and Development.

- **Relationship with other countries:** Relationship among countries enables sharing of technology, thus enabling collective development. For example, a major facet of India-Israel relations is sharing of agricultural technology between them.
- **National Priorities and domestic constraints:** For example, tech-driven private sector moves towards nations with conducive environment such as a country having a strong start-up culture.

How can these technological changes potentially alter the geopolitical landscape?

- **Security:** New technologies creates new challenges in the realm of Cybersecurity, Hybrid Warfare and exploiting vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure like telecommunications. The **relative deprivation of these technologies within countries** alters the **security balance among countries**.
- **International Standing:** For instance, Israel despite being a small country, in a volatile neighborhood has considerable global influence due to the technological development in the country.
- **Economic Growth: Control of data driven technologies** is being seen as key technological variable which will drive the future economic competition among countries.

How the current geopolitics of technology is playing out globally?

The emergence of new technologies is eliciting different reaction from different countries. Broadly these reactions can be divided into two categories:

- **Technologically authoritarian reaction:** Countries that have closed their data markets and restricted the flow of technology- such as China- would come under this category.
- **Technologically democratic reaction:** Countries that are guided by judicial standards, the rule of law, and support the freer — but not always free — movement of data and technology can be classified under this category.

The interplay between these two types has created political, ideological and economic tensions in the global realm and have generated following geopolitical debates:

- **What effect will technology have on future of US-China relationship?**
 - The way this issue moves forward will have large impact on future of technology and associated geopolitics.
- **Will internet break into ‘splinternet’?**
 - As internet governance thickens, the worldwide web could segment into a collection of independent digital ecosystems or “splinternets.” This emerging model could be attractive to states and businesses that seek to exert greater market control in cyberspace and exclude foreign competition.
- **Is creation of a global regulatory regime possible?**
 - Although the current trends point towards a deglobalized and segmented world, but the growth of technology has been fastest when it was accompanied with global coordination. Keeping this idea in mind, it is possible that gradually national and regional regulatory regimes may come together in the near future.

Way forward for India

- **Digital Personal Data Protection Law (DPDPL):** Accelerate the enactment of the DPDPL as it will provide clarity on cross-border movement of data and regulate use of personal data among others.
- **Regulatory clarity on new technologies:** Clear approach on new technologies like Blockchain, Drone technology etc. will pave the way for faster adoption both by Public and Private sector.
- **Evolve a clear stand for global stage:** Having a clear stance on how technologies like 5G, Blockchain need to be governed lends more credibility to India’s position.
- **Tech diplomacy:** The ministry of external affairs created the new, emerging, and strategic technologies (NEST) division in 2020. This idea can be taken further by appointing dedicated **technology ambassadors or technology coordinators**.
- **Making technological access a key part of diplomatic relations:** Access to technology should be a key feature of bilateral relations in the future especially for a developing country like India which has a large absorptive capacity.

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WEEKLY FOCUS- INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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|-------|--|------------|-------|--|------------|
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| 2. | India's economic engagement with China | | 8. | Paradiplomacy_The Pros and Cons of Foreign Policy Decentralisation | |
| 3. | Globalisation Ending or Transforming? | | 9. | Decoding Democracy from Evolution to Threats to Revival | |
| 4. | Covid-19 and World Order | | 10. | Evolving Dynamics of India's Foreign Policy | |
| 5. | India and the Indo-Pacific | | 11. | Understanding India's Economic Diplomacy | |
| 6. | Regional Connectivity: India's Role in the Great Game | | 12. | World Order_The Rise and Potential Decline | |

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to all candidates selected in CSE 2022

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| 85 AIR BHARAT JAI PRAKASH MEENA | 105 AIR DIVYA | 120 AIR GAGAN SINGH MEENA | 173 AIR ANKIT KUMAR JAIN | 226 AIR GAURAV KUMAR TRIPATHI | 240 AIR SHASHI SHEKHAR | 268 AIR AAKIP KHAN | 296 AIR MOIN AHAMD | 378 AIR NARAYAN UPADHYAY | 381 AIR MUDITA SHARMA | |
| 454 AIR BAJRANG PRASAD | 467 AIR POOJA MEENA | 468 AIR VIKAS GUPTA | 478 AIR MANOJ KUMAR | 482 AIR VIKASH SENTHIA | 483 AIR BHARTI MEENA | 486 AIR PREMSUKH DARIYA | 507 AIR RAKESH KUMAR MEENA | 522 AIR MANISHA | 557 AIR ASHISH PUNIYA | |
| 567 AIR ROSHAN MEENA | 571 AIR RAJNISH PATEL | 605 AIR JATIN PARASHAR | 636 AIR RISHI RAJ RAI | 644 AIR ISHWAR LAL GURJAR | 667 AIR RAM BHA JAN KUMHAR | 674 AIR HARISH KUMAR | 685 AIR PREM KUMAR BHARGAV | 708 AIR VIPIN DUBEY | 710 AIR MOHAN DAN | |
| 726 AIR AKANKSHA GUPTA | 732 AIR RANVEER SINGH | 733 AIR SUSHMA SAGAR | 751 AIR PANKAJ RAJPUT | 786 AIR MANOJ KUMAR | 819 AIR MUKTENDRA KUMAR | 826 AIR MITHLESH KUMARI MEENA | 830 AIR AMAR MEENA | 877 AIR ANJU MEENA | 880 AIR RAJESH GHUNAWAT | 889 AIR DINESH KUMAR |



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Lakshya Mains Mentoring Program 2023 is a targeted revision, practice, and enrichment Program that aids students in achieving excellence in the UPSC Mains Examination 2023. The Program adopts a strategic approach by providing smart preparation strategies, developing critical thinking and analytical skills, and advanced answer-writing abilities.



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Aspirants can undertake the scheduled LMPTs in online/Offline modes to put their knowledge and skills to the test and validate their preparation strategies.

Emphasis on High-Scoring Potential Subjects



The Program lays special emphasis on subjects like Ethics and Essay and provides ample opportunity for students to inculcate the learnings and effect their implementation in the answer writing.

Expert Evaluation



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Regular Group Sessions



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Feedback Session with Assigned Mentor



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Aspirants can benefit from a comprehensive support system in the form of online/offline Groups and One-to-One sessions, telephonic support, and a dedicated Telegram platform for immediate assistance whenever needed.

With its intelligent design, effective implementation, dedication from Senior Mentors, and active participation of Students, the Program has achieved tremendous success in a short period of time with **Waseem Ahmad Bhat** securing an impressive All India Rank (AIR) of 7, **Siddharth Shukla AIR 18**, and **Anoushka Sharma** securing AIR 20.

Heartiest Congratulations

to all Successful Candidates

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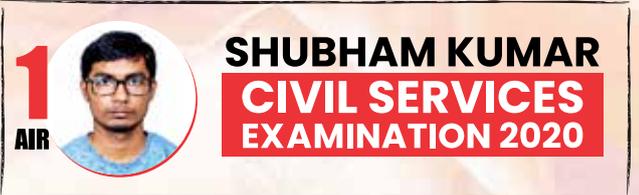


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