

**IAS
2023**

GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

iascore.in

**PRELIMS
SAMPORNA**

**International
Relations**

Yearly

**CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

Compilation

- ❑ **Comprehensive Coverage of Last 2 Years Current Affairs for Prelims 2023**
- ❑ **Topic-wise Previous Year MCQs**
- ❑ **Practice MCQs to validate your learning**

Edited by

MANOJ K. JHA

YOUR **BOOSTER** DOSE

PRELIMS FACT FILE



**2+ YEARS PRELIMS
CURRENT AFFAIRS TESTS**



**ALL INDIA OPEN
MOCK TEST**



7+ YEARS UPSC PYQ



PIB COMPILATION



**GS ANALYST:
Daily CURRENT AFFAIRS**



NCERT REVISION TESTS



SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER / DOWNLOAD



1B, Second Floor, Pusa Road, Karol Bagh,
New Delhi - 110005 (Beside Karol Bagh
Metro Station Gate No. 8)



8448496262



iasscore.in

Contents

INTRODUCTION..... 7

1. DEFENCE EXERCISES 1

- Japan-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise – Jimex 2022 1
- Exercise Parvat Prahar..... 1
- Exercise Pitch Black in Australia 2
- Mission SAGAR IX 2
- Multinational Peacekeeping exercise ‘Ex Khaan Quest 2022’ commences in Mongolia 3
- Russia joins the race to supply light battle tanks to the Indian Army 4
- India begins cooperation with Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces 4
- Army inducts Russian MANPADS 5
- IONS MARITIME EXERCISE 2022 (IMEX 22)..... 6
- EX DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022 7
- Exercise Cobra Warrior 22..... 7
- India & Oman begins Eastern Bridge-VI Air Exercise 9
- Indo-French dialogue on bilateral defence cooperation..... 9
- China, Solomon Islands sign landmark security agreement..... 9
- In A First, India And Africa To Hold Joint Military Drill..... 10

2. MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS 11

- India Ports Global conduct workshop on linking Chabahar with INSTC..... 11
- Bill to terminate Pakistan’s ‘Non-NATO ally’ status 12
- India to amend 1960 Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan 12

- ECI hosts virtual meet of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) 14
- Universal Postal Union (UPU) 14
- India took over the leadership of APPU .15
- International Transport Forum (ITF) 15
- India’s Presidency of AIBD extends for one more year 16
- Interpol working out how to police the metaverse 16
- Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)..... 17
- G4 countries and consensus on UN Security Council 17
- World powers vow to prevent spread of nuclear weapons 17
- Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)..... 19
- India’s role in UN Peacekeeping Missions over the years..... 19
- Iran, Belarus to be newest SCO members..... 20
- India’s Take On UN’s ‘International Day To Combat Islamophobia’ Resolution 21
- India at UNSC backs convention prohibiting biological weapons..... 21
- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) comes into effect..... 22
- 5th BIMSTEC Summit 23
- Assessing G20’s event in Bali 24
- India attends EAS and ASEAN 25
- 19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers’ meeting 26
- Eastern Economic Forum and India’s balancing act..... 27
- Pandemic preparedness fund 27
- India-South Africa Bilateral Meet 28
- The global idea of “WHO’s first-ever pandemic treaty” 29
- India US 2+2 (past, present & future) 30

- Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue31
- U.S. 'Title 42' immigration policy32
- India-US Trade Policy Forum32

3. ASIA34

- Karakalpaks, residents of an unrest-hit Uzbekistan province34
- Bangladesh opens Padma multipurpose bridge35
- Bangladesh offers Chittagong port use to India36
- India Nepal ties, new cross border train 36
- Cross-border rail network between Bihar and Nepal.....37
- Bangladesh-India-Nepal to move MVA Pact37
- Pakistan out of FATF 'grey list'38
- Pakistan, China to build rail project to link Karachi with Peshawar38
- India, Iran on development of Chabahar Port40
- Israel approves Mammoth Golan Heights Plan40
- China Building Dam On Mabja Zangbo River Near Indian Border41
- China holds first China-Indian Ocean Region Forum41
- China calls to prevent 'colour revolution'42
- India backs China's plan for joint border activity.....42
- China inventing names for places in Arunachal Pradesh.....43
- Indian and Chinese soldiers clash near the Arunachal border43
- India's Central Asia discussion on Security issues44
- China's moves in the Indian Ocean45
- Connecting India's East with the Indo-Pacific.....46
- Pakistan, China to build rail project to link Karachi with Peshawar47
- China's 'nine-dash line' puts economic interest at risk: Indonesia49
- China's Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy50
- One year of Taliban 2.0.....51

- Rohingya and Refugee Policy for India ..51
- India-Tajikistan Bilateral Relations.....53
- India & Thailand54
- The changing relations of India, Maldives.....54
- India-Japan Relations.....55
- Shinzo Abe & his relations with India57
- Fishing Issue with Sri-Lanka57
- India-Nepal59
- West Seti power project60

4. INDO-PACIFIC & INDIAN OCEAN REGION61

- South Korea's first Indo-Pacific vision document.....61

5. RUSSIA-UKRAINE62

- Russia, Ukraine sign major grain deal to ease food crisis.....62
- Russia out of UNHRC62
- Russia-Ukraine conflict: Nuclear plant fire raises contamination scare.....63
- Nord Stream Pipeline65
- Russia re-joins Black Sea Grain Initiative.....67
- Russia blocks agreement on UN nuclear treaty68
- India's vote in UN on the Russia-Ukraine conflict69
- War crimes and the rules of war70
- G7 summit: Ukraine crisis and major takeaways for India.....71

6. INDO- US73

- White House supports 'EAGLE Act'73
- UN counter-terrorism meet.....73
- India and U.S led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework75
- CAATSA waiver76
- US makes lynching a hate crime76

7. EUROPE.....78

- Rishi Sunak becomes Britain's first non-white Prime Minister.....78

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Scotland becomes first country to make period products free for all.....78 ◦ Finland and Sweden are set to apply for NATO membership79 ◦ France backs out of submarine project..80 ◦ 6th India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations.....80 ◦ G7 and EU announce price cap on Russian diesel.....81 ◦ Trilateral Cooperative initiative83 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Falkland Islands Issue.....94 ◦ UN accuses China of Uyghur rights abuses95 ◦ Taliban’s public execution in Kandhar & International Conventions96 ◦ India, Turkmenistan sign MoUs for cooperation.....96 ◦ India’s ties with Egypt97 ◦ US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) Initiative98 ◦ 2nd India-Nordic Summit.....98 ◦ Seventh edition of the Raisina Dialogue.....99 ◦ Indians elections to UK Parliament (Dadabhai Naoroji and Rishi Sunak).....100 ◦ ZAPAD 2021100 ◦ India progress in LAC infrastructure development.....101 ◦ Arunachal Pradesh Frontier Highway along LAC102 ◦ International Lusophone Festival begins in Goa.....102 ◦ Barbados becomes the World’s newest republic102 ◦ Antigua, Barbuda joins International Solar alliance.....103 ◦ I2U2 holds its first-ever leader’s summit104 ◦ Other developments (miscellaneous) ..106 ◦ China’s balloon tested boundaries of international law107
<p>8. AUSTRALIA85</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Critical minerals & the new India-Australia collaboration85 ◦ India-Australia major trade pact comes into effect86 	
<p>9. MARITIME88</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lok Sabha passes Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022.....88 ◦ India’s Arctic Ambitions89 	
<p>10. MISCELLANEOUS90</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ India’s Patent regime90 ◦ Quad: Asian NATO or Arc of Democracy?91 ◦ Neighbourhood “FAST” Policy.....91 ◦ EU approved Digital Services Act to regulate large multinational tech companies’ activities92 ◦ India – UK & the changing dynamics.....93 ◦ Bill introduced in Lok Sabha to ban funding of ‘weapons of mass destruction’94 	<p>PRACTICE MCQS 108</p>



For Information, Contact: **8448496262**

| Website: <https://iasscore.in/>

GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

SUCCESS IS A PRACTICE **WE** DO!



R. P. SINGH



RAJEEV CHAUDHARY



RASHID YASIN



MANOJ K. JHA



GAURAV BANSAL



SIDDHARTH MITTAL



RAJNISH JINDAL



SHIVLAL GUPTA



RAJVARDHAN



SOURABH MISHRA



SMRITI RAO



ABHISHEKH SAXENA



VIRAJ C. RANE

THE MOST **EXPERIENCED & SEASONED** **SUBJECT EXPERT**

INTRODUCTION

Current affairs are “The Thread” which binds the various stages of the UPSC CSE together, it is also the ropeway to achieve success in this extremely challenging examination finally. Current affairs present themselves in varying forms in the examination- sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. They reflect themselves in the prelims in terms of direct as well as applied questions

GS Score Prelims Sampoorna Current affair Yearly compilation for UPSC CSE prelims 2023 offers holistic Coverage of the last 1.5 years of Current affairs with a special focus on Preliminary examination along with practice questions to validate your learning. The compilation offers pointed and quick notes for effective revision saving you the effort to make separate notes. We have also provided Previous Years Prelims Question at the end of each sectionn to give insight into the type of questions that come in the exam and the way the UPSC expects the aspirants to prepare the topics. The practice questions not only simulate the pattern of the questions asked in the examination but also season you better to navigate through the challenges which one might encounter in the real examination.

These notes are not just quick and handy but covers almost everything that one requires to get a good hold on the area of Current Affairs. With this much effort, current affairs would become a cakewalk for you! This compilation provides lucid and effective content making your learning easy, effective and efficient. A hassle-free logically arranged bouquet of current affairs to master the news in sync with concepts. So that you shine on May 28th, 2023 and beam with confidence that you know it all and how. Face the examination with confidence and attempt to win.

This edition covers current affairs from October 2021 to January 2023. We will release the second edition in the 1st week of May, covering the current affairs of February to April.

GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

IAS 2023

TARGET PT 2023

COMPLETE REVISION *of* PRELIMS
through 6000⁺ MCQs & 70⁺ CLASSES



CLASS & TEST

- ▶ 57 Concept cum Revision Classes with Tests
- ▶ 20 Prelims Current Affairs Classes + Test



PRELIMS TEST SERIES

- ▶ 6 Revision Tests
- ▶ 6 Sectional Tests
- ▶ 20 Mock Tests



STUDY MATERIAL

- ▶ Quick Revision Notes
- ▶ Prelims Current Affairs Compilation
- ▶ Prelims Fact File



SPECIAL CLASSES

- ▶ Special Classes on Economic Survey & Budget
- ▶ 20 Special Classes on India Year Book & Mapping



8448496262  iasscore.in



COURSE FEE
₹ 20,000 (+GST)

1

DEFENCE EXERCISES

1. Japan-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise – JIMEX 2022

Context The sixth edition of Japan India Maritime Exercise 2022 (JIMEX 22) hosted by Indian Navy commenced in the Bay of Bengal recently.

About JIMEX Series

- Started in: January 2012.
- Focus: maritime security cooperation.

Highlights of JIMEX 2022:

- JIMEX 22 seeks to consolidate the high degree of interoperability that exists between maritime forces of the two countries, through complex exercises in the surface, sub-surface and air domains.
- The Indian Navy is being represented by three indigenously designed and built warships:
 - ▶ Sahyadri, a multi-purpose stealth frigate and
 - ▶ Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvettes Kadmatt and Kavaratti.
- Japan is represented by Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) ships Izumo, a Helicopter Carrier, and Takanami, a Guided Missile Destroyer.

2. Exercise Parvat Prahar

Context Army chief General Manoj Pande visited the Ladakh sector recently to review Exercise Parvat Prahar and was briefed on operational preparedness by Commanders on ground.

About

- The exercise used newly inducted all-terrain vehicles transported by Chinook heavy lift helicopters and K9-Vajra howitzers.
- **Aim:** The aim of the Exercise is to undertake **disengagement from Patrolling Point 15** in eastern Ladakh.
- The exercise comes as India and China are undertaking disengagement from **Patrolling Point-15** in eastern Ladakh.

- On the western front, Exercise Gagan Strike culminated with a fire power display of attack helicopters supporting deep operations by Strike Corps.
- Responsible arm: Parvat Prahara Exercise is conducted by the One Strike Corps of the Indian Army.
- The exercise involved high-altitude infantry personnel, T-90S and T-72 tanks, mechanized infantry, K-9 Vajra, Bofors and M-777 howitzers, helicopters and aircraft.

3. Exercise Pitch Black in Australia

Context The Indian Air Force contingent participated in Exercise Pitch Black 2022 in Australia.

Exercise Pitch Black

- **Type:** biennial three-week multilateral air combat training exercise
- **Hosted by:** the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)
- It was conducted for the **first time in 1981** between different RAAF units.
- **Aim:** It ensures that the training and integration of forces that occur during this exercise directly supports the Air Force’s ability to conduct operations.
- Exercise Pitch Black 2022 is the RAAF’s most significant International Engagement activity with forces participating from a wide range of partner and allied nations developing and enhancing military relationships at all levels.

Highlights of Exercise Pitch Black 2022

- **Participants:** This year’s participants included Australia, Canada, India, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, the UAE, the UK and the US.
- Exercise Pitch Black features a **range of realistic, simulated threats** which can be found in a modern battle-space environment and is an opportunity to test and improve our force integration, utilising one of the largest training airspace areas in the world.

The Australian Navy was part of the **Malabar naval exercise** hosted by India in November 2020 as well as last year.

4. Mission SAGAR IX

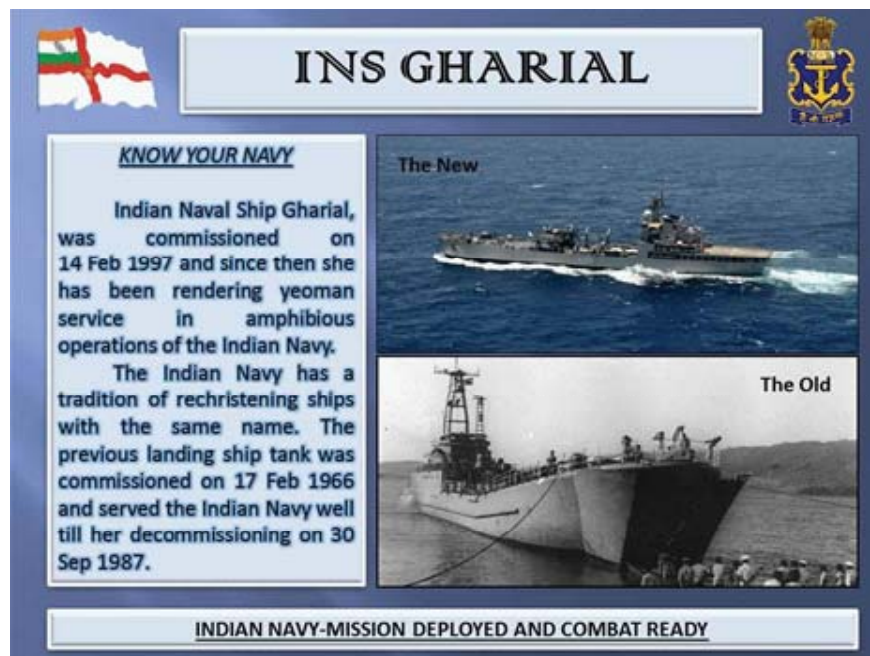
Context With the overarching aim of providing critical medical aid to Sri Lanka during the ongoing crisis, **INS Gharial** as part of **Mission SAGAR IX** reached Colombo.

About Mission SAGAR IX:

- INS Gharial delivered over **760 kg of 107 types of critical lifesaving medicines**.
- In line with GoI’s vision of **SAGAR – Security And Growth for All in the Region** – the Indian Navy undertakes several deployments titled ‘**Mission SAGAR**’ to assist friendly IOR littorals.

INS Gharial is a Magar-class amphibious warfare vessel of the Indian Navy.

- Since May 2020, Indian Navy has successfully concluded eight such missions, deploying ten ships to 18 Friendly Foreign Countries.
- With a steadfast intent of delivering a high quantum of humanitarian assistance to our neighbours, personnel from ships and shore organisations of Indian Navy have invested close to a million man-hours to bring succour to our friends, overseas.



5. Multinational Peacekeeping exercise 'Ex Khaan Quest 2022' commences in Mongolia

Context: A multinational peacekeeping exercise-Ex Khaan Quest 2022 featuring participation from military contingents from 16 countries including India commenced in Mongolia.

About:

- Khaan Quest 2022 is a **multinational peacekeeping operations exercise** conducted in Mongolia.
- It consists of a **United Nations Peacekeeping Mission command post exercise**, a UN PKO (Peace Keeping Operation) Mission field training exercise, at the Mongolian Armed Forces' Five Hills Training Area.
- **India:** 16 countries are taking part in this exercise including India. Indian Army was represented by a contingent from the Ladakh Scouts.
- **Aim:** Enhance interoperability, building military to military relationships, developing peace support operations and military readiness among participating nations.
- The military exercise will enhance the level of defence co-operation between Indian Army and participating countries especially with the **Mongolian Armed Forces** which will enhance bilateral relations between the two countries.



6. Russia joins the race to supply light battle tanks to the Indian Army

Context Russia has offered Indian Army the **Sprut SDM1 light amphibious tank** and has already submitted a technical proposal to the Indian side.

Details

- The project has received in-principle approval and is planned to be procured under the ‘**Make-I**’ acquisition category of the **Defense Acquisition Procedure (DAP)-2020**.
- ‘**Make-I**’ refers to government-funded projects while ‘**Make-II**’ covers industry-funded programmes.
- **Make-I** was involved in the development of big-ticket platforms such as light tanks and communication equipment with Indian security protocols.
- This is in line with the ‘**Make in India**’ initiative.

About Sprut-SDM1 Light Amphibious Tank:

- Project Type: Light amphibious tank
- Manufacturer: Tractor Plants Concern
- Crew: Three
- Length: 08m
- Maximum Amphibious Speed: 7km/h
- Maximum Road Speed: 70km/h
- Maximum Range: 500km

7. India begins cooperation with Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces

Context India joined the **US-backed Combined Military Forces-Bahrain (CMF-B)** – a counterterrorism coalition aimed at protecting international waters.

• 35th Member

- India becomes the 35th member of the maritime partnership that also includes **Australia, Bahrain, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, the Netherlands and New Zealand**.
- ▶ Pakistan is a full member of CMF.

What is CMF-B?

- Established in 2001 with only 12 members, the coalition – then called the **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)** – was formed as a coalition of regional and international like-minded partners to counter the threat of international terrorism and uphold the international rules-based order.
- The **United States Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT)** was tasked with leading the then CMF in 2001.
- **Role:** Protection of trade routes, Counter-terrorism, Counter-piracy and Curbing Illegal Fishing
- **Headquarter:** The coalition is headquartered in **Bahrain**, along with the NAVCENT and the 5th fleet of the US.
- **Commander:** U.S. Navy Vice Admiral

It is comprised of four task forces:

- CTF 150 (maritime security and counter-terrorism)
- CTF 151 (counter-piracy)
- CTF 152 (Arabian Gulf security and cooperation)
- CTF 153 (Maritime security in the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden)

- ▶ U.S. Navy Vice Admiral, who also serves as Commander US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) and US Navy Fifth Fleet. All four commands are co-located at US Naval Support Activity Bahrain. In the immediate neighbourhood.
- **Deputy Commander:** commodore of the United Kingdom's Royal Navy.

8. Army inducts Russian MANPADS

Context The Army has inducted a small number of **MANPADS, Igla-S systems** recently procured from Russia under emergency procurement.

What are MANPADS?

- They are the **short-range, lightweight, and portable surface-to-air missiles** that may be fired by individuals or small groups to kill aeroplanes or helicopters and are known as **Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems**.
- They aid in the protection of troops from aerial attacks and are particularly efficient against low-flying aircraft.
- **Man-Portable Anti-Tank Systems, or MANPATs**, are identical but are used to destroy military tanks.
- MANPADS can be fired from a helicopter or boat, or launched from atop a ground vehicle.



About Very short-range air-defence system (VSHORAD)

- **Very Short Range Air Defence Missiles** are regarded as critical for the defence of any major city or strategically significant location.
- The VSHORAD will replace the existing Igla in service, which is in desperate need of replacement, with a maximum range of 6 km, altitude of 3 km, and all-weather capability.
- VSHORADS are the soldier's last line of defense against enemy combat aircraft and helicopters in the multilayered air defense network.

Igla-S systems

- Igla-S systems are developed by Russia.
- It is a **man-portable air defence system (MANPADS)**.
- "Igla-S" is an **air defence system** that can be carried by a single person.
- It is designed to defeat all types of visible fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft, as well as small aerial targets, on head-on and pursuit courses.
- The Defense Ministry is reviewing a much larger contract for Igla-S systems as part of the **very short-range air-defence system (VSHORAD) deal**.
- It is designed for use against visible aerial targets at short range such as tactical aircraft, helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAVs), cruise missile, head-on or receding, in presence of natural (background) clutter and countermeasures.
- As per requirements of the Indian Army, it will have a maximum range of 6 km, altitude of 3 km along with all-weather capability.
- Igla-S missile system will replace the existing Igla in service which is in urgent need of replacement.

9. IONS MARITIME EXERCISE 2022 (IMEX 22)

Context The maiden edition of **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Maritime Exercise 2022 (IMEX-22)** was conducted at Goa recently.

About IONS MARITIME EXERCISE 2022 (IMEX 22):

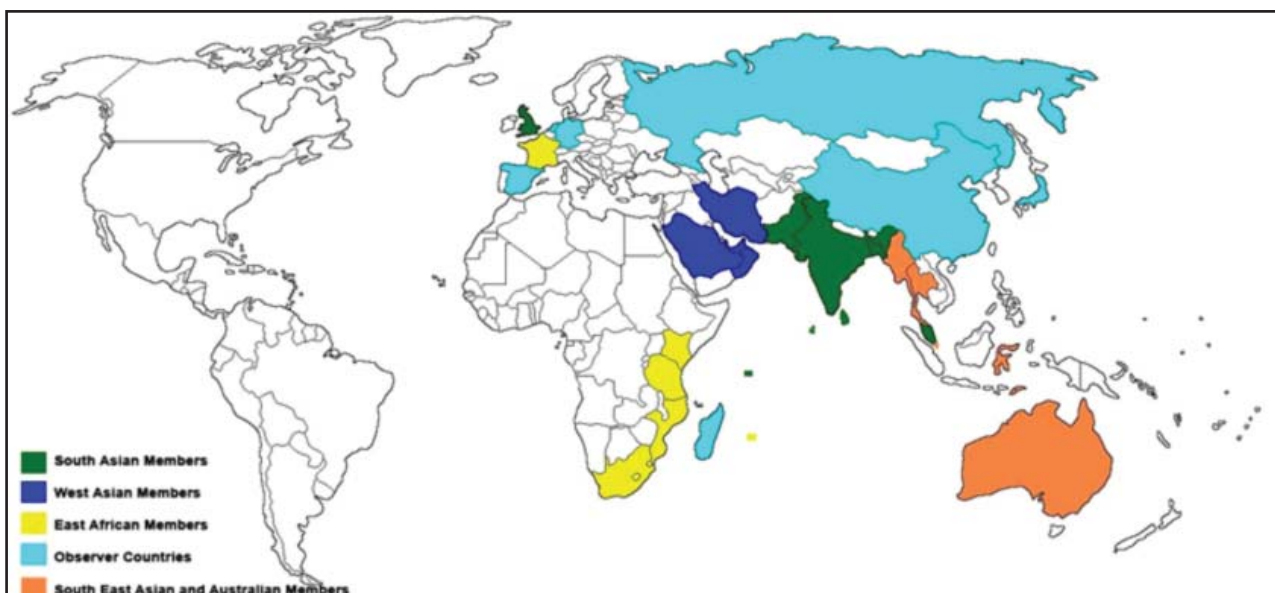
- The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability in **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations** among member navies.
- The exercise witnessed participation of 15 out of the 25 member nations of IONS.
- The participation included warships, Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft and helicopters from the Navies of **Bangladesh, France, India and Iran**.
- The exercise is seen as a significant stepping stone for regional navies to collaborate and respond collectively to natural disasters in the region and paves way for further strengthening regional cooperation.

About Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):

- The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), established in 2007, is a **premier forum** for cooperation and collaboration among navies of littoral states of the **Indian Ocean Region**.
- The forum has enabled discussions on regional maritime issues, promoted friendly relationships, and significantly improved maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region.

Members:

- IONS include 24 member nations that touch or lie within the IOR, and 8 observer nations.
- The members have been geographically grouped into the following four sub-regions:
 - ▶ **South Asian Littorals:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory)
 - ▶ **West Asian Littorals:** Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates
 - ▶ **East African Littorals:** France (Reunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania.
 - ▶ **South East Asian and Australian Littorals:** Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste.



10. EX DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022

Context The third edition of the joint military exercise “EX DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022” between India and Japan was conducted recently, at **Belagavi (Belgaum), Karnataka**.

What is Exercise Dharma Guardian?

- Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN is an **annual joint military exercise** conducted between **India and Japan since 2018**.
- **Aim:** To share experience gained during **various Counter Terrorism Operations in respective Countries**.
- The exercise will include **house interventions drills, raid on terrorist hideouts in semi urban terrain, unarmed combat & close quarter combat firing** where both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralisation of likely threats.

About “EX DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022”

Other exercises between India and Japan

- **SHINYUU Maitri**– It is a bilateral exercise between the **Indian Air Force and the Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF)**.
- **JIMEX**- It is a **bilateral maritime exercise between India and Japan**.
- **Sahayog-Kaijin** – Joint bilateral exercise between the **Indian Coast Guard and the Japan Coast Guard**.
- **The 15th Battalion the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment of the Indian Army and 30th Infantry Regiment of Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF)** are participating in this 12 days long joint exercise.
- The military exercise will **focus on operations in Jungle & Semi-Urban/Urban terrains**.
- **The exercise aims at enhancing the interoperability and fostering mutual understanding between the two Armies**.
- Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN is an **annual military training event, being conducted in India since 2018**.

11. Exercise Cobra Warrior 22

Context Recently, **Indian Air Force** participated in a multi-nation air exercise named ‘**Exercise Cobra Warrior 22**’ at Waddington, in the United Kingdom.

Key-points

- The Cobra Warrior Exercise is one of the **largest annual Royal Air Force exercises**.
- **Aim:** to train both pilots and other air specialists in planning and executing complex airborne missions.
- India participated in the exercise for the first time.
 - ▶ Other countries were the **United Kingdom, Sweden, Saudi Arabia and Bulgaria**.
- **IAF Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas** participated in the exercise along with fighter aircraft of the UK and other leading Air Forces.

- ▶ Five Tejas aircraft flew to the United Kingdom.
- ▶ IAF C-17 aircraft provided the necessary transport support for induction and de-induction.
- ▶ The Indian Tejas jets were stationed at the RAF Waddington air base.
- The exercise involved air-to-air operations such as aircraft interceptions and mock dogfights and simulated ground attacks.
- This was the first-ever outing of LCA-Tejas in the International air exercise.

About Light Combat Aircraft Tejas

- LCA Tejas is a **single-engine multirole light combat aircraft**.
- The **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme** was started by the Government of India in 1984 when they established the **Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)** to manage the LCA programme.
- LCA Tejas was designed and developed by India's **HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited)**.
- It replaced the ageing **Mig 21 fighter planes**.
- It is the second supersonic fighter jet that was developed by HAL (the first one being HAL HF-24 Marut).
- It is the lightest and smallest multi-role supersonic fighter aircraft in its class.
- It is designed to carry a range of **air-to-air, air-to-surface, precision-guided, and standoff weaponry**.

About the Organisations

Hindustan Aircraft Limited (HAL):

- It was started way back in December **1940** at **Bangalore** by industrialist **Seth Walchand Hirachand** with the support of an American aviation expert, William Douglas Pawley, who was the director of the erstwhile **Harlow Aircraft Company, California**.
- It was a quantum jump for India at a time when it was not even manufacturing an automobile or a bicycle.
- In January **1951**, **Hindustan Aircraft Limited** was placed under the administrative control of **Ministry of Defence, Government of India**.
- The government-owned company mainly engages in aerospace activities and is presently **involved in the fabrication & production of aircraft, design, helicopters, jet engines & their replacement parts**.
- It has many facilities scattered throughout India including **Bangalore, Kanpur, Nasik, Koraput, Korwa, Lucknow, Kasaragod and Hyderabad**.

Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA):

- ADA is a **Society under the Department of Defence Research and Development, Ministry of Defence, Government of India**.
- To undertake, **aid, promote, guide, manage, co-ordinate and execute research** in aeronautical science, design and development of various types of aircraft and rotorcraft.
- ADA is responsible for:
 - ▶ Co-ordinated management of full range activities leading to development of advanced technology flight vehicles.
 - ▶ Promoting development of a national base in Aeronautics.

12. India & Oman begins Eastern Bridge-VI Air Exercise

- Context**
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) and Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) organised a bilateral air exercise named Eastern Bridge-VI at Air Force Station Jodhpur in Rajasthan.
 - This was the sixth edition of the exercise.

About the Exercise

- In this Exercise, Oman has deployed its F-16 Fighters whereas the Indian Air Force has fielded its Sukhoi-30 MKIs, Jaguars and Mirage-2000s.
- The last combat Air Force Exercise between the two countries, i.e. Eastern Bridge – V was conducted in Masirah, Oman.

India – Oman Relations over the years

- The **Sultanate of Oman** is a strategic partner of India in the Gulf and an important interlocutor at the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** fora.
- For Oman, India was the **3rd largest (after UAE and China) source for its imports and 3rd largest market (after UAE and Saudi Arabia) for its non-oil exports** in 2018.
- Since 2008, Oman has been extending its support to Indian Navy's anti-piracy missions and Indian Naval Ships are regularly welcomed by Oman for Overseas Deployments.

Other Exercises

- **Naseem Al-Bahr** is the **naval exercise** conducted between both the countries.
- **AL Nagah** is the **joint bilateral exercise** between the armies of two countries.

13. Indo-French dialogue on bilateral defence cooperation

- Context** The conclusion of 20th edition of **India-France Joint Staff talks** held in Paris.

Background

- India and France signed a strategic partnership agreement in 1998.
- India and France have been expanding their relationship amid changing regional and global dynamics.
- France has been termed by India as its “Gateway to Europe”.

India-France Joint Staff talks

- The India-France Joint Staff talks is a forum.
- **Aim:** to enhance defence cooperation between the nations through regular talks at the strategic and operational levels.

14. China, Solomon Islands sign landmark security agreement

- Context** China and the Solomon Islands have signed a framework agreement on **security cooperation**.

What are the salient features of the agreement?

- The **Inter-Governmental Framework Agreement Security Cooperation** between the two countries seeks to enhance “social stability and long-term tranquility in the Solomon Islands.”
- According to the provisions on this agreement the two countries will conduct cooperation in such areas as:
 - ▶ Maintenance of social order
 - ▶ Protection of the safety of people’s lives and property,
 - ▶ Humanitarian assistance and natural disaster response

About Solomon Islands

- The Solomon Islands is part of the **ethnically Melanesian group of islands** in the Pacific and lies between **Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu**.
- The islands, which were initially controlled by the British Empire during the colonial era, went through the hands of Germany and Japan and then back to the U.K., after the Americans took over the islands from the Japanese during World War II.
- The **islands became independent in 1978** to become a **constitutional monarchy** under the **British Crown**, with a parliamentary system of government.
- The Solomon Islands had cultivated strong ties with Taiwan, which ended with the emergence of the current government in Honiara.
- In 2019, the new government headed by **Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare** switched Taiwan for China.



15. In A First, India And Africa To Hold Joint Military Drill

- Context**
- In a first, India and Africa will be holding a joint military exercise in order to strengthen their security cooperation and take the strategic ties to the next level (March 2023).
 - The joint military drill will be taking place in March in Pune
 - The first-ever military drill is an outcome of the last India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) that was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, during the DefExpo 2022.

Joint Maritime Exercise With African Countries

- In March 2019, India held its first-ever joint exercise with African countries, Africa-India Field Training Exercise-2019 (AFINDEX-19), which saw participation by 17 African countries. This was also held in Pune.
- However, both sides have developed maximum synergy in the maritime security domain keeping in mind **India’s SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All) with a special focus on Seychelles and Mauritius.
- In October 2019, Indian, Brazilian and South African navies participated in a joint multinational maritime exercise – IBSAMAR.

2

MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. India Ports Global conduct workshop on linking Chabahar with INSTC

Context The Shipping and Ports Ministry in collaboration with India Ports Global Ltd has conducted a workshop on linking Chabahar Port in Iran with the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

About

- INSTC is a 7,200 km-long transportation network offering the shortest connectivity route to its member states.
- It was established on September 12, 2000, by Iran, Russia and India
- The agreement has been ratified by 13 countries namely, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Armenia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Ukraine.
- INSTC links the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the Persian Gulf.



The INSTC route

- The INSTC envisages the movement of goods from Mumbai (India) to Shahid Beheshti Port – Chabahar (Iran) by sea, from Chabahar to Bandar-e Anzali (an Iranian port on the Caspian Sea)

by road, and then from Bandar-e- Anzali to Astrakhan (a Caspian port in the Russian Federation) by ship across the Caspian Sea, and after that from Astrakhan to other regions of the Russian Federation and further into Europe by Russian railways were highlighted by the speakers during the workshop.

Significance

- The strategic location of Chabahar has a great advantage for developing it as a trans-shipment hub.
- The Port's deep draft of 16 m is suitable for handling large shipment vessels.
- The Port lies close to some of the busiest trade routes in the world. The region comes under the Asia-Europe, Asia-Asia trade route, which carries large cargo volumes.

2. Bill to terminate Pakistan's 'Non-NATO ally' status

Context A US lawmaker has introduced a bill titled "To terminate the designation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a major non-NATO ally, and for other purposes" in the US Congress that seeks to cancel the designation of Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA).

What is Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA)?

- **Created in:** The MNNA status was first created in 1987.
- It is a designation that is a powerful symbol of a close relationship with the United States.
- While MNNA status provides military and economic privileges, it does not entail any security commitments to the designated country.
- With Afghanistan's status rescinded last year, the US has **17 major non-NATO allies**.
- They are **Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, South Korea, Thailand and Tunisia**.
- Pakistan was named a MNNA during the Bush administration in 2004.

3. India to amend 1960 Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan

Context India has announced to reconsider its **Indus Water Treaty (IWT)** with Pakistan citing disputes over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects in Jammu & Kashmir.

What is India's present stand on IWT?

- New Delhi has issued a notice to Islamabad seeking modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) under **Article XII (3)** of the IWT which deals with the "**final provisions**" of the treaty.
- The notice follows Pakistan's continued "intransigence" in implementing the treaty, by raising repeated **objections to the construction of hydel projects on the Indian side**.
- The notice, sent on January 25 through the Commissioner for Indus Waters, gives Pakistan 90 days to consider entering into intergovernmental negotiations to rectify the material breach of the treaty.

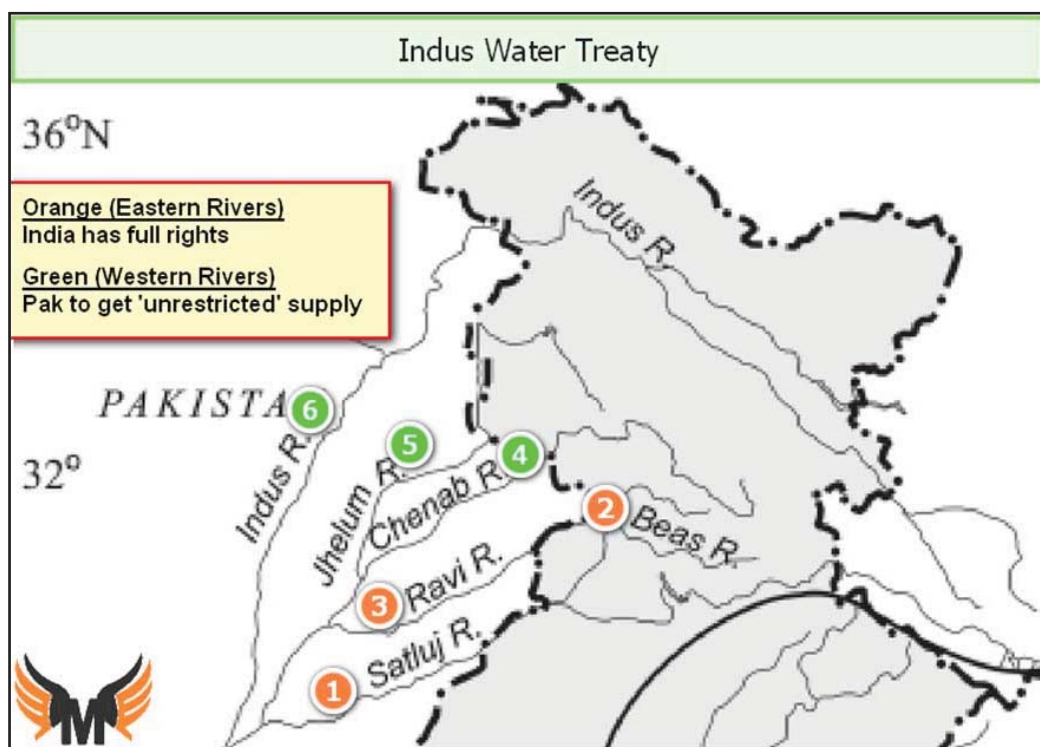
- India also boycotted the Pakistani case at the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** at The Hague in the Netherlands.
- India mentioned that they were left with no choice but to demand that Pakistan come to the table to negotiate amendments to the treaty.

Indus Water Treaty (IWT), 1960:

- The six-decade-old treaty governs the sharing of waters of six rivers in the Indus system between the two countries.
- **Main Rivers:** Indus River, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej.
- The basin is mainly shared by **India and Pakistan** with a small share of **China and Afghanistan**.
- Under the treaty signed between **India and Pakistan in 1960**, all the waters of
 - ▶ **Eastern rivers**, namely **Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas (Eastern Rivers)** were allocated to India for exclusive use
 - ▶ **Western rivers - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab** were allocated to Pakistan except for **specified domestic, non-consumptive, and agricultural use** permitted to India as provided in the Treaty.
- India has also been given the **right to generate hydroelectricity** through **run-of-the-river (RoR)** projects on the Western Rivers which, subject to **specific criteria** for design and operation is unrestricted.

River Indus: Geographic Location

- The Indus is a trans-boundary river of Asia and a trans-Himalayan river of South and Central Asia.
- The 3,120 km (1,940 mi) river rises in mountain springs northeast of Mount Kailash in Western Tibet, flows northwest through the disputed region of Kashmir, bends sharply to the left after the Nanga Parbat massif, and flows south-by-southwest through Pakistan, before emptying into the Arabian Sea near the port city of Karachi.



The objected projects

- India is constructing two hydroelectric power projects on:
 - **Kishanganga river**, a tributary of **Jhelum**
- **Chenab**
 - Pakistan has raised objections to these projects, and dispute resolution mechanisms under the Treaty have been invoked multiple times. But a full resolution has not been reached.

4. ECI hosts virtual meet of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Context The Election Commission of India (ECI) hosted a virtual meet of the 'Asian Regional Forum' on the theme "Making our Elections Inclusive, Accessible and Participative"

About ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

- Established in 1994, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is an important platform for security dialogue in the Indo-Pacific.
- It provides a setting in which members can discuss current security issues and develop cooperative measures to enhance peace and security in the region.
- The ARF is characterised by consensus-based decision-making and frank dialogue.
- **Members:** It comprises 27 members:
 - ▶ 10 ASEAN member states (**Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam**)
 - ▶ 10 ASEAN Dialogue Partners (**Australia, Canada, China, the European Union (EU), India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Russia and the United States**)
 - ▶ Other 7: Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste

Australia was a founding member of the ARF.

5. Universal Postal Union (UPU)

Context: Every year on October 9, people across the world commemorate the founding of the **Universal Postal Union (UPU)** and the introduction of letters as a revolutionary form of everyday communication.

What is Universal Postal Union (UPU)?

- **Established in:** 1874
- **Headquarters:** Swiss capital Berne
- UPU is the second oldest international organization worldwide.
- With its 192 member countries, the UPU is the primary forum for cooperation between postal sector players.
- It helps to ensure a truly universal network of up-to-date products and services.
- Any member country of the United Nations may become a member of the UPU.

Composition

- The UPU consists of 4 bodies
- **The Congress:** Congress is the supreme authority of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and meets every four years.
- **The Council of Administration:** The Council ensures the continuity of the UPU's work between Congresses, supervises its activities and studies regulatory, administrative, legislative and legal issues.
- **The Postal Operations Council:** The Postal Operations Council (POC) is the technical and operational mind of the UPU and consists of 48 member countries, elected during Congress.
- **The International Bureau:** Fulfilling a secretariat function, the International Bureau provides logistical and technical support to the UPU's bodies.

6. India took over the leadership of APPU

Context India took over the leadership of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) having its Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand from January 2023.

What is Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU)?

- **Founded:** 1 July 1982
- Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is an intergovernmental organization of 32-member countries of the Asian-Pacific region.
- APPU is the only Restricted Union of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in the region, which is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- The goal of APPU is to extend, facilitate and improve postal relations between member countries and to promote cooperation in the field of postal services.

7. International Transport Forum (ITF)

Context The U.S. Department of Transportation applauds the actions taken by the member countries of the International Transportation Forum (ITF) to restrict the participation of Russia and Belarus in the ITF in response to Russia's unprovoked and brutal invasion of Ukraine.

What is International Transport Forum (ITF)?

- The International Transport Forum at the OECD is an intergovernmental organisation with 64 member countries.
- It acts as a think tank for transport policy and organises the Annual Summit of transport ministers.
- ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes.
- The ITF is administratively integrated with the OECD, yet politically autonomous.

On 6th July 2022, a contract was signed to support the International Transport Forum (ITF) activities on the Indian Transport Sector.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental organisation with 38 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

8. India's Presidency of AIBD extends for one more year

Context In 2022, India's Presidency of the **Asia-pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development (AIBD)** has been extended for one more year.

About AIBD-

- It was established in 1977 under the auspices of **UNESCO**.
- It is a unique regional inter-governmental organisation servicing countries of the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP)** in the field of electronic media development.
- It is hosted by the **Government of Malaysia** and the secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur.
- **Members:** The AIBD currently has 26 Full Members (countries), represented by 43 organisations, and 50 Affiliate Members (organisations) with a total membership of 93 representing 46 countries and regions and over 50 partners in Asia, Pacific, Europe, Africa, Arab States and North America

India and AIBD

- With respect to India, the **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting** holds the Full Membership of the AIBD.
- **Prasar Bharati** being the **public service broadcaster** of India utilizes the various services of the AIBD.
- India has hosted the **Governing Council Meetings (GC)** in 1978, 1985, 2003 and 2022.

9. Interpol working out how to police the metaverse

Context Interpol, the global police agency is investigating how the organisation could police crime in the metaverse. Interpol has built its own virtual reality (VR) space, where users can do training and attend virtual meetings.

About Interpol

- **Headquarters:** Lyon (France)

What is Metaverse?

- The metaverse is a **3D version** of the Internet and computing at large.
- In his 1992 science fiction novel "**Snow Crash**," Author Neal Stephenson coined the term "metaverse" in which he envisioned lifelike avatars who met in realistic 3D buildings and other virtual reality environments.
- The intent of the metaverse is to give users the power to create their own experiences and also to interact with others in these spaces, and even collaborate with each other.
- The metaverse combines aspects of **physical reality, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence (AI), social media, online gaming, and cryptocurrencies**, allowing users to interact virtually.

- **Created in:** 1923
- INTERPOL is the world's largest international police organization, with 190 member countries, each represented by a National Central Bureau.
- INTERPOL facilitates international police co-operation via its global police communication system, databases, training and specific assistance in cross-border operations.

10. Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)

Context Kazakhstan's President called on the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) to help manage ongoing protests in the country.

About:

- **Headquarters:** Russian capital of Moscow.
- It is an intergovernmental military alliance (six countries) that came into effect in 2002.
- It started storming into Kazakhstan to curb the protests which threatened the very existence of the regime that has ruled the Central Asian country since it became an independent republic in 1991.
- It is an intergovernmental military alliance that was signed on 15th May 1992.
 - ▶ This is also referred to as the “**Tashkent Pact**” or “**Tashkent Treaty**”.
- **Members:** Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan.

11. G4 countries and consensus on UN Security Council

Context The **G4 countries** collaborated to reiterate support for each other's bids to become permanent members of the **UNSC**, and for representation of African countries in the **76th Session of the U.N. General Assembly**.

About

- The G4 nations comprises **Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan**.
- **Aim:** Unlike the G7, where the **common denominator is the economy and long-term political motives**, the G4's primary aim is the **permanent member seats on the Security Council**.
- Each of these four countries have figured among the elected non-permanent members of the council since the UN's establishment

India wrapped up its 2021-22 tenure as elected Council member on December 31, 2022.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and G4 Countries

- The UN currently has five permanent members with veto power in the Security Council: **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States**.
- The G4 nations are regularly elected to two-year terms on the Security Council as non-permanent members by their respective regional groups.
- Brazil and Japan were elected for five terms each, Germany for four terms (one term as West Germany and three terms as unified Germany) and India for four terms.

12. World powers vow to prevent spread of nuclear weapons

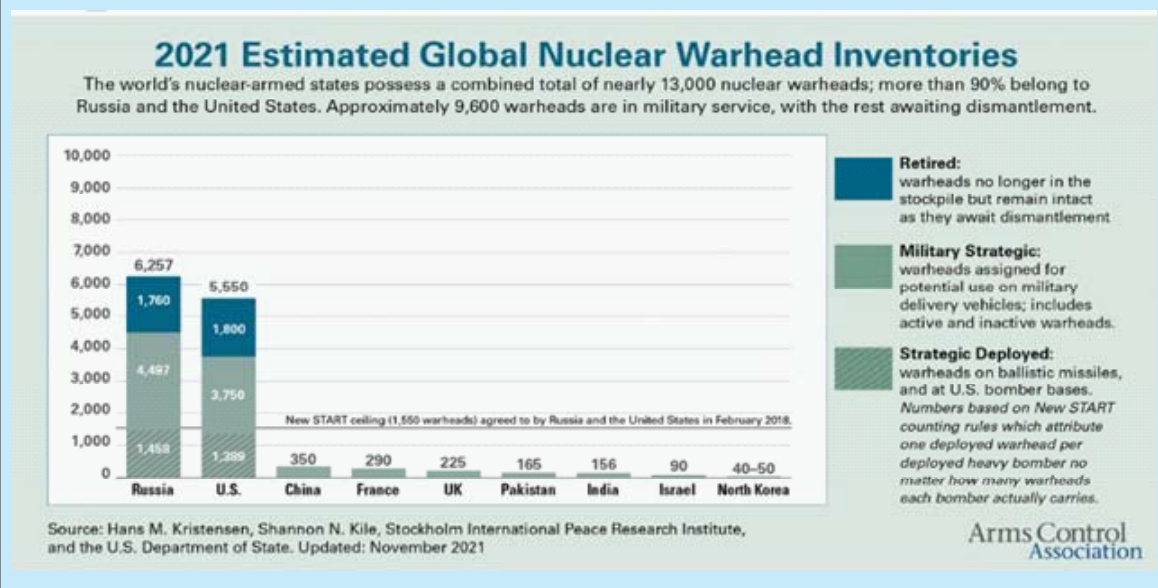
Context In a joint statement, permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) pledge to ensure a nuclear war is never fought, amid rising world tensions.

Important Treaties to prevent nuclear proliferation

- **UN Commission:** The United Nations has sought to eliminate such weapons ever since its establishment. The first resolution adopted by the **UN General Assembly in 1946** established a **Commission to deal with problems related to the discovery of atomic energy among others**. A number of multilateral treaties have been established since then. These include the
 - Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
 - ▶ Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests In The Atmosphere, In Outer Space And Under Water, also known as the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)
 - ▶ Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force
 - Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)
 - Other initiatives include:
 - ▶ the Nuclear Suppliers Group
 - ▶ the Missile Technology Control Regime
 - ▶ the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation
 - ▶ the Wassenaar Arrangement

The numbers

- France: About 290 warheads.
- United Kingdom: About 225 strategic warheads, of which an estimated 120 are deployed and 105 are in storage.
- United States: 5,550 warheads
- China: About 350 total warheads.
- India: Approximately 156 nuclear warheads.
- Israel: An estimated 90 nuclear warheads, with fissile material for up to 200
- Pakistan: Approximately 165 nuclear warheads.
- North Korea: Estimated to have approximately 40-50 warheads (as of January 2021)



Nuclear-weapon states (NWS)

- The nuclear-weapon states (NWS) are the five states—**China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States**—officially recognized as possessing nuclear weapons by the NPT.

- **Russia** is believed to have the world's biggest stockpile of nuclear warheads, with 6,255, followed closely by the United States at 5,550, according to the **Arms Control Association (ACA)**.
- **China (350), France (290) and the UK (225)** round out the top five.

13. Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)

Context Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted a one-week Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) operations & Search and Rescue (SAR) course in Mumbai between January 16-21, 2023.

What is MRCC?

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

International Maritime Organization

- The International Maritime Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations which is responsible for measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping and to prevent pollution from ships.
- It has an integral role in meeting the targets set out in **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**.
- It was established by means of a Convention adopted under the auspices of the **United Nations in Geneva** on 17 March 1948 and met for the first time in January 1959.
- It currently has 174 Member States.

14. India's role in UN Peacekeeping Missions over the years

Context Two BSF personnel, who were part of the **UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, were among five people killed during a protest in an eastern town near the border with Uganda.

Key-highlights

- They were part of **United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or MONUSCO**.
- A total 175 Indian peacekeepers have so far died while serving with the United Nations.
- India has lost more peacekeepers than any other UN Member State.

MONUSCO:

- MONUSCO took over from an earlier UN peacekeeping operation – the United Nations Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) – on 1 July 2010.
- The new mission has been authorized to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate relating, among other things, to the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence and to support the Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts.

What is the U.N. Peacekeeping mission?

- The U.N. Peacekeeping mission is a joint effort between the **Department of Peace Operations** and the **Department of Operational Support**.
- **Aim:** To assist host countries to transition from situations of conflict to peace.
- The U.N. began its Peacekeeping efforts in 1948 when it deployed military observers to West Asia.
- The Peacekeeping mission's role was to monitor the **Armistice Agreement between** Israel and its Arab neighbours.
- Peacekeepers provide security as well as political and peacebuilding support to conflict-ridden countries.

India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping Missions

- Over 200,000 Indians have served in 49 U.N. Peacekeeping missions since 1948.
- Currently, 5,581 Indians are part of various U.N. Peacekeeping missions.
- India has been among the largest troop-contributing countries to the U.N. peacekeeping missions.
- As of November 2021, India is the second-highest military (1,888) and fifth-highest (139) police-contributing country to the MONUSCO.

Role of women in Indian Peacekeeping

- India has been sending women personnel on UN Peacekeeping Missions.
- In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN Peacekeeping Mission.

15. Iran, Belarus to be newest SCO members

Context The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** is all set for expansion with **Iran joining the grouping as its ninth member**.

Details

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation admits Iran into the grouping as its ninth member while Belarus has applied for membership.
- This is the first expansion of the SCO after India and Pakistan were admitted to the grouping in 2017.
- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) follows the **system of consensus** in deciding admission of new members.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organization:

- SCO is a **permanent intergovernmental international organization**.
- It's a Eurasian political, economic and military organization aiming to maintain peace, security, and stability in the region.
- It was created in 2001. Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001, **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan** were members of the Shanghai Five.
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002 and entered into force in 2003.
- **India and Pakistan became members in 2017.**
- SCO Secretariat – Based in Beijing to provide informational, analytical & organizational support.
- The 2022 annual summit of the SCO will be held in September in Samarkand (Samarkand also known as Samarqand, is a city in south-eastern Uzbekistan).

Membership:

- The SCO currently comprises nine Member States (China, **India**, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, **Pakistan**, Tajikistan, **Iran**, and Uzbekistan), and six **“Dialogue Partners”** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Turkey).

16. India's Take On UN's 'International Day To Combat Islamophobia' Resolution

Context Recently, the UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution, introduced by the Pakistan envoy, to proclaim **March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia**.

What Is Islamophobia?

- Islamophobia is an extreme fear of and hostility toward Islam and Muslims.
- It often leads to hate speech and hate crimes, social and political discrimination, can be used to rationalize policies such as mass surveillance, incarceration, and disenfranchisement, and can influence domestic and foreign policy.

India's response at UNGA:

- India said at the United Nations General Assembly that the **denouncement of bigotry should apply to all religions**.
- India **did not oppose the resolution**, it is concerned about elevating the phobia against one religion to the level of an international day, to the exclusion of all the others.

17. India at UNSC backs convention prohibiting biological weapons

Context India at the **United Nations Security Council** meet raised concerns over the use of **biological weapons** in Ukraine amid reports of Russia's charge against US.

What are Biological Weapons?

- Biological weapons are **microorganisms like virus, bacteria, fungi, or other toxins** that are produced and released deliberately to cause disease and death in humans, animals or plants.

- ▶ Biological agents, like **anthrax, botulinum toxin and plague** can pose a difficult public health challenge causing large numbers of deaths in a short amount of time while being difficult to contain.
- Bioterrorism attacks could also result in an epidemic, **for example if Ebola or Lassa viruses were used as the biological agents.**

About Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC):

- The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) was the **first multilateral treaty** categorically banning a class of weapon.
- Came into force in **1975** and the Convention was negotiated by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Aim:** The treaty prohibits the development, stockpile, production, or transfer of biological agents and toxins of “types and quantities” that have no justification for protective or peaceful use.

Signatories:

- It has 183 signatories, including the United States, Russia, and Ukraine.
- India has signed and ratified this convention.

18. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) comes into effect

Context Recently, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, the world’s largest free trade agreement, entered into force.

What is RCEP?



- RCEP is a free trade agreement between **Asia-Pacific nations of Australia, Brunei, China, Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam.**
 - ▶ **India and the United States are not members of RCEP.**
- **The 15-member grouping accounts for 30% of the world's population and 30% of global GDP (2.2 billion people).** Thus, it is the largest trade bloc in history.
- By comparison, the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement (USMCA) covers 28% of world trade, while the European Union's Single Market is a distant third at nearly 18%.

Background

- Negotiations on the RCEP deal started in 2012.
- India was also part of the negotiations. However, India pulled out in 2019 because of concerns over lower tariffs.
- Before India, RCEP excluded the USA, which had withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2017.

19. 5th BIMSTEC Summit

Context Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently participated in the **5th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Summit** hosted in virtual mode by Sri Lanka, the current chair of BIMSTEC.

About 5th BIMSTEC Summit:

- The Summit's theme "**Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy People**" captures the main current priorities of member states.
- The main outcome of the Summit was the **adoption and signing of the BIMSTEC Charter**, which formalizes the grouping into an organization made up of members' states that are littoral to, and dependent upon, the Bay of Bengal.
- The Summit also saw considerable progress being achieved in the BIMSTEC connectivity agenda with the **adoption of the 'Master Plan for Transport Connectivity'** by Leaders which lays out a guidance framework for connectivity related activities in the region in the future.
- **Three BIMSTEC agreements** were signed which represent progress being achieved in ongoing cooperation activities:
 - ▶ **BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;**
 - ▶ BIMSTEC Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Cooperation in the field of Diplomatic Training.
 - ▶ **Memorandum of Association on Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility.**

About BIMSTEC:

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a **regional multilateral organisation.**
- Its members lie in the **littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal** constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- Headquarter is situated in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Out of the 7 members,

- ▶ Five are from South Asia –
 - ▶ **Bangladesh**
 - ▶ **Bhutan**
 - ▶ **India**
 - ▶ **Nepal**
 - ▶ **Sri Lanka**
- ▶ Two are from Southeast Asia –
 - ▶ **Myanmar**
 - ▶ **Thailan**

20. Assessing G20’s event in Bali

Context In a joint declaration brought out at end of the **G20 summit in Bali** where the multilateral organisation has several discussions on economic difficulties and insecurity worldwide.

Key Highlights of the G20 event:

- **On Russia-Ukraine Conflict:** The G20 summit had come on a common ground and addressed the impact that western sanctions against Russia have had on the global economy.
 - ▶ Clarified that G20 is not the forum to ‘**resolve security issues**’ but these issues can have significant consequences for the **global economy**.
- **On Food Security:** The declaration from the G20 leaders expressed concern about the challenges to global food security which has been intensified by the on-going conflicts and tensions, and committed to take ‘**urgent actions**’ to help developing economies.
 - ▶ The text of the outcome document also acknowledged the Russian donations of fertilizers facilitated by the **World Food Programme** and the **Black Sea Grain Corridor**.
- **Against Terrorism and Money laundering:** The G20 declaration also called upon the international community to step up efforts to counter money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing and urged the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** and FATF Style Regional Bodies to ‘lead global action to respond to these threats.
- **Against War:** The leaders at G20 have clearly mentioned that they all are against the war, as it causes great human sufferings and effects Global rule-based order.

Differentiating Previous Meet with the recent One:

G20 at Italy in 2021	G20 at Bali in 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Roadmap for COP 26: It urged leaders of the world’s biggest economies to put their action plans to tackle the global climate change crisis. ◦ Restricting Aid to Coal Based Plants: It included a pledge to halt financing of overseas coal-fired power generation by the end of this year (2021). ◦ PPP Model of Finance Mobilisation: Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) are the only way to achieve the trillions of dollars in annual investment needed to transition to clean, sustainable energy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Roadmap for COP 27: G20 has urged the leaders of developed economies to raise voice against the Carbon Border Tax imposed. ◦ Addressed the issues regarding Food supply chains and exports among the nations. ◦ Money laundering and illegal funds sanctions. ◦ Prevent war to address the economic instability and impacts associated with it.

The G20:

- The **G20 is an informal group** of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the **International Monetary Fund and the World Bank**.
- G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation representing around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.
- It includes 19 countries, including, **Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, Indonesia, Canada, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the USA, China, France, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the European Union (EU)**.



21. India attends EAS and ASEAN

Context India also attended the **40th East Asia summit** and **41st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** held in Cambodia and highlighted its stance on global issues and its agenda for upcoming G20 summit.

Highlights of the Summit:

- **Location:** Cambodian capital (**Phnom Penh**).
- The three-day summit also included the **East Asia Summit**.
- Major Participants other than ASEAN countries included **US. President Joe Biden, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and others**.
- India’s **external affairs Minister Mr. S Jaishankar** took part in the summit.
- **Major issues:** The following issues were discussed:
 - Crisis in Myanmar
 - Russia-Ukraine War and disrupted global supply chains
 - Global Consensus and coordination
 - For World’s common interest to cooperate to solve differences peacefully
 - Regional tensions between the US and China
 - Climate change

The ASEAN	The East Asia Summit (EAS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ ASEAN is a regional inter-governmental organisation consisting of 10 Southeast Asian countries -Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ EAS is the Indo-Pacific’s premier forum for strategic dialogue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Aim: to facilitate and promote cooperation in trade, security, education and culture integration and exchange. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ It is the only leader-led forum at which all key Indo-Pacific partners meet to discuss political, security and economic challenges facing the region, and has an important role to play in advancing closer regional cooperation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ India and several other countries, including the US, China, Japan and Australia, are its dialogue partners. ◦ It is collectively the third-largest economy in Asia after China and Japan and the seventh-largest in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The EAS has 18 members - the ten ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) along with Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. ◦ India is the founding member of the East Asia Summit. ◦ ASEAN leads the forum, and the chair position rotates between ASEAN Member States.
---	--

22. 19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers’ meeting

Context Recently, the 19th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers Consultations was held in the Siem Reap City, Cambodia.

Highlights of the Meeting:

- **Acknowledged Economic achievements:** Trade and economic relations between ASEAN and India are starting to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the two-way trade between ASEAN and India reached USD 91.5 billion in 2021 increasing by 39.2% year-on-year.
- **ASEAN India Business Council:** Recommendations made by ASEAN India Business Council (AIBC) to enhance the ASEAN India economic partnership were considered.
- **Supply Chain Connectivity:** The member countries welcomed ASEAN and India’s collective actions, through the launching of the **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)** Upgrade Negotiations in securing a robust supply chain to maintain the flow of essential goods and services.
- **ASEAN India Trade in Goods Agreement:** The Ministers endorsed the Scope of the Review of the AITIGA to make it more user-friendly, simple, and trade facilitative for businesses, as well as responsive to the current global and regional challenges including supply chain disruptions.
- The Ministers also **activated the AITIGA Joint Committee** to undertake the **review of AITIGA expeditiously.**

About the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):

Commodity trade between India and ASEAN

- Trade reached 98.39 billion in the period April 2021- February 2022.
- India’s main trading ties are with **Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand.**

- Established in 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, ASEAN is a **regional grouping** that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation.
- **Its chairmanship rotates annually**, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- ASEAN countries have a total population of 650 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 2.8 trillion.
- **Members:** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – into one organization.

23. Eastern Economic Forum and India's balancing act

Context Russia hosted the seventh **Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)** in Vladivostok; which provided a platform for entrepreneurs to expand their businesses into **Russia's Far East (RFE)**.

What is Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)?

- The EEF was established in 2015 to encourage **foreign investments** in Russia.
- The forum displays the economic potential, suitable business conditions and investment opportunities in the region.
- As of 2022, almost **2,729 investment** projects are being planned in the region.

The agreements focus on **infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, construction, industry and agriculture.**

Geography of the Region:

- The Russian Far East is a region in **Northeast Asia**.
- It is the easternmost part of Russia and the Asian continent; and is administered as part of the **Far Eastern Federal District**, which is located between **Lake Baikal in eastern Siberia and the Pacific Ocean**.

Russia's Far Eastern Federal District



© WorldAtlas.com

24. Pandemic preparedness fund

Context To counter financial obstacles, weak infrastructure, scarcity of healthcare, etc., the World Bank Board of Directors has approved setting up a **Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPR)**.

What is Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF)?

- FIF is aimed to **address critical gaps** through investments and technical support at the national, regional, and global levels.
- The **fund will provide a dedicated stream of additional, long-term financing to strengthen PPR** capabilities in low- and middle-income countries.
- Financial Intermediary Funds (FIFs) provide the global development community with independently governed multi-contributor collaboration platforms.
- FIFs are designed to **mobilize significant financial support** and **engender collective action** for development priorities, often contributing to global public goods.
- At the heart of each FIF is a type of trust fund for which the World Bank serves as trustee.

Who developed the plan?

- The FIF for pandemic PPR is **put forward by G20 in the presidency of Italy**.
- During a G20 Summit in 2021, under Italy's presidency, it was decided to establish **G20 Joint Finance-Health Task Force for pandemic preparedness**.
- The FIF is also established by the strong support of the G20 nations and beyond.
- At present, calls for the **proposal for investments funded by the FIF will open in November 2022**.

The FIF has commitments from India, the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, China, the European Commission, the Republic of Korea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Welcome Trust.

What is the structure of the PPR FIF?

PPR FIF will have four main elements:

- **Governing board** - the decision-making body of the FIF that sets the overall work program and makes funding decisions;
 - ▶ **A secretariat performing administrative functions**, including support to the governing board in the delivery of its responsibilities,
- **The World Bank serves as the financial trustee** for PPR FIF.
- The FIF implementing entities to carry out the FIF's work program at the country, regional and global levels.

25. India-South Africa Bilateral Meet

Context Recently India and South Africa in a meeting held, agreed to develop institutional mechanisms for tie-ups between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) & Skill Institutions.

Key Highlights of the Meeting:

- Discussions were aimed at strengthening the **academic & skill development partnerships and bilateral education cooperation**.

- The Ministers agreed to develop institutional mechanisms for tie-ups between HEIs & skill institutions, mutual recognition of skill qualifications & **capacity building in skill development**.
- Also, it was agreed to set up a joint **Working Group on Education** between the two countries.

India's role in international education

India has a long history of global interface in education. The ancient Indian universities: **Nalanda and Takshila** were truly international hubs.

- Introduction of National Education Policy (NEP) has already paved the way for the internationalisation of Indian education.
- **For domestic students**, the policy creates global immersion programs, encourages Indian universities to open branch campuses in other countries, and allows foreign universities to operate in India, facilitated through a new legislative framework.
- **To attract international students**, the policy provides low-cost, quality education; simplifies visa and internship policies; allocates funding for Indian universities to develop courses designed for international students; and encourages international research partnerships and agreements for mutual recognition of degrees.
- India has renewed its focus on becoming a destination country for international students and ramping up internationalization efforts on campuses across India.

Government's scheme to promote internationalisation

- GIAN
- SPARC
- Study in India

26. The global idea of "WHO's first-ever pandemic treaty"

- Context**
- Members of the World Health Organisation (WHO) held the first round of negotiations towards creating the '**first-ever pandemic treaty**'.
 - It was felt after the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the shortcomings of global health systems.

Key-highlights of the recommendations

- Suggestions range from accountability to more powers to developing countries to the insufficiency of the International Health Regulations (IHR) to deal with pandemics currently.
- **Global Public Health Convention (GPHC)** pushed for three other non-negotiable principles: Solidarity, transparency, and equity.
- It also suggested incentivising alerting any public health threat, making public health measures an obligation and sharing information, sequences and samples "rapidly and systematically" so everyone can benefit from it, essential.

Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR)

- The OBR, created in 2010, is a fiscal watchdog which provides independent economic forecasts and analysis of the UK economy.
- A similar body for health would increase scrutiny of and confidence in Britain's pandemic plans for future outbreaks.

- The **G20 Health and Development Partnership (HDP)** suggested creating a body similar to the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) for pandemic preparedness and health system resilience which would report annually to the British Parliament.
- The Geneva Global Health Hub released a report on the politics of a WHO pandemic treaty.
- It stated, “Whatever the route of the pandemic treaty, whatever the strategies for pandemic preparedness and response, it will not be possible for negotiators to side line how deeply unjust the international order is and to avoid positioning themselves vis á vis this conjuncture, worsened by COVID-19.”

International Health Regulations (IHR):

- Since IHR falls under **Article 21** of the **WHO’s Constitution**, countries have to explicitly opt out if they wish to do so.
- The potential treaty will be formed under Article 19 under which countries have to explicitly opt in.
- To address issues of inequity, developed countries have to undertake some positive obligations, which mean they must be party to the treaty. But if they are not, inequity will persist even with a treaty.
- The IHR, in its ambit, already covers all kinds of public health emergencies of international concern which includes a pandemic.

27. India US 2+2 (past, present & future)

Context The fourth ‘2+2’ dialogue between India and the United States took place in Washington DC.

Background

- The US is India’s oldest and most important 2+2 talk partner.
 - ▶ The first 2+2 dialogue between the two countries was held during the Trump Administration, in New Delhi in September 2018.
- The first India-Japan talks in the 2+2 format were held in November, 2019 in New Delhi.
- The inaugural 2+2 dialogue with Australia was held in September 2021 at New Delhi.
- India held its first 2+2 dialogue with Russia in December 2021.

What is 2+2 dialogue?

- The 2+2 dialogue is a format of meeting of the foreign and defence ministers of India and its allies on strategic and security issues.
- A 2+2 ministerial dialogue enables the partners to better understand and appreciate each other’s strategic concerns and sensitivities taking into account political factors on both sides, in order to build a stronger, more integrated strategic relationship in a rapidly changing global environment.
- India has 2+2 dialogues with four key strategic partners:
 - ▶ US
 - ▶ Australia
 - ▶ Japan
 - ▶ Russia
- Besides Russia, the other three countries are also India’s partners in the Quad.

US – India Defence Trajectory

- During the visit of Prime Minister to the U.S. in June 2016, the U.S. recognised India as a “Major Defence Partner”
- **Agreements Signed Recently**
 - ▶ Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Association (LEMOA)
 - ▶ Fuel Exchange Agreement
 - ▶ Technical Agreement (TA) on information sharing on White (merchant) Shipping
 - ▶ The Information Exchange Annex (IEA) Aircraft Carrier Technologies
- **Defence Acquisitions**
 - ▶ Aggregate worth of defence acquisition from U.S. Defence has crossed over US\$ 13 billion.
 - ▶ India and the United States have launched a Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) aimed at simplifying technology transfer policies and exploring possibilities of co-development and co-production to invest the defence relationship with strategic value.
- The two sides are also increasingly engaged in multi-lateral exercises such as the MALABAR, RED FLAG and RIMPAC, covering the broad expanse of the Indo-Pacific.
- The US has recently renamed its Pacific Command as the **US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)**, an acknowledgement of the seamless connectivity that binds the Pacific and Indian Oceans and India’s growing importance.
- The first-ever 2+2 dialogue was held in 2018 the backdrop of burgeoning joint exercises such as Cope-India (Air Force), Yudh Abhyas (Army) and Vajra Prahar (Special Forces).
- The **Indian Navy and the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT)** are set to deepen their maritime cooperation in the Western Indian Ocean.

28. Critical and Emerging Technologies Dialogue

Context India and the United States (US) held the inaugural meeting of the Critical and Emerging Technology initiative (iCET)

Background

- India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe-Biden announced the initiative in May 2022.
- The objective: “to elevate and expand our strategic technology partnership and defense industrial cooperation between the governments, businesses, and academic institutions of our two countries”.

What are Critical and emerging technologies?

- Critical and emerging technologies are a subset of **advanced technologies** that are potentially significant to U.S. national security”.
- They include **advanced computing, artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems and robotics, communication and networking technologies, financial technologies, quantum information technologies, and semiconductor technologies**, among others.

Initiatives by MeitY in Emerging Technologies

- Artificial Intelligence Committees Reports
- Centres of Excellence for Internet of Things (Gandhinagar, Bengaluru, Gurugram & Vizag)

- Centre of Excellence on Virtual & Augmented Reality (VARCoE) at IIT Bhubaneswar
- Centre of Excellence on Gaming, VFX, Computer Vision & AI at Hyderabad
- Centre of Excellence on Blockchain Technology at Gurugram
- Design, Development, and Deployment of National AI Portal (INDIAai)
- POC for AI Research Analytics and Knowledge Dissemination Platform (AIRAWAT)
- Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence

29. U.S. 'Title 42' immigration policy

Context The United States has announced that it will extend COVID-19 pandemic-era restrictions, known as '**Title 42**', to expel migrants from **Nicaragua, Cuba and Haiti** caught crossing the U.S.-Mexico border back to Mexico that would block more nationalities from seeking asylum in the United States.



About the 'Title 42' policy:

- **Title 42** is a clause of the 1944 **Public Health Services** Law that “allows the government to prevent the introduction of individuals during certain public health emergencies.
- The **Title 42 process** has allowed the U.S. to expel upward of two million migrants from the border including a surge of Haitian asylum seekers last year, Venezuelans who have been coming in larger numbers, and Mexicans, who make up the bulk of unauthorized migrants in the Southwest.

30. India-US Trade Policy Forum


Context Recently, the 13th Ministerial-level meeting of **India – United States Trade Policy Forum (TPF)** held in Washington, DC, on January 11, 2023.

What is the India-US TPF?

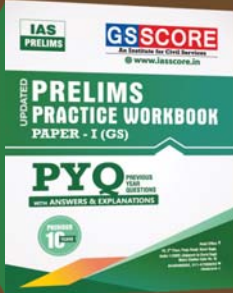
- The India-US TPF aims to activate its working groups in the fields of **agriculture, non-agriculture goods, services, investment, and intellectual property** to meet frequently and address issues of mutual concern in a mutually beneficial manner.
- The idea is to **deliver tangible benefits to both countries by resolving outstanding market access issues.**

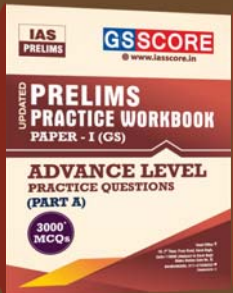
Highlights of the Meeting:

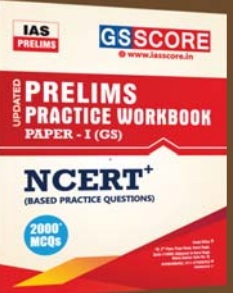
- While the two sides appreciated the **rise in bilateral trade in goods** and services (which reached **₹160 billion USD in 2021**), they also recognised that for economies of their size, **significant potential still remains unfulfilled.**
- The US welcomed India's participation in the **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).**
- Both the countries have **like-minded views about the efficiency of IPEF for continued growth, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.**
- The Ministers welcomed the finalization of the **Turtle Excluder Device (TED)** design with the technical support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- The TED will help in minimizing the **impact of fishing on sea-turtle populations.**
- **Anew TPF Working Group on Resilient Trade was launched** to help the officials deepen bilateral dialogue on a range of issues. Till the next TPF Ministerial meeting, it will focus on:
 - **Trade facilitation**
 - **Promotion of labour rights and workforce development**
 - **Circular economy**; role of trade in environment protection




UPDATED PRELIMS PRACTICE WORKBOOK









PRINTED NOTES
 ORDER NOW

1. Karakalpaks, residents of an unrest-hit Uzbekistan province

Context Several killed in crackdown on protests in Uzbekistan's autonomous province of Karakalpakstan. The protests had broken out in response to the government's plan to restrict the region's long-held autonomy.

Who are the Karakalpaks?

- The name Karakalpakstan is derived from the Karakalpak people, an ethnic minority group of around 2 million.
- Karakalpak translates to 'black hat', referring to their traditional headgear.
- The Karakalpaks consider themselves to be a distinct cultural group in Uzbekistan.



- Their Turkic language – Karakalpak – is closely related to Kazak and is one of the 7 languages of instruction in Uzbekistan's public schools.
- Their separate language is a crucial aspect of their cultural identity.
- In their genealogical narrative, the Karakalpaks claim to share a common point of origin with the neighbouring **Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Turkmen**.
- The Karakalpaks, who live south of the Aral Sea also face **serious health problems**, such as increased rates of throat cancer, kidney problems and the highest infant mortality rate in the world.

- This is because the fertilisers and pesticides that were used for cotton farming saturated the surrounding land and were carried across the region by wind blowing across the exposed seabed.



2. Bangladesh opens Padma multipurpose bridge

Context Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the country's new landmark multipurpose 'Padma Bridge' recently.

About

- This is the longest bridge in Bangladesh that will significantly reduce the distance between the **capital city of Dhaka to the Mongla sea port**, which is important for regional and international trade.
- The project was **initially expected to be funded by a consortium led by the World Bank**.
 - ▶ In 2012, it cancelled the proposed credit saying it had "credible evidence" of high-level corruption among Bangladeshi officials.
 - ▶ Bangladesh has all through denied these allegations and preferred not to approach the international global lender for funding.
- The construction was actually delayed due to the false and conspiratorial allegation of corruption brought by the World Bank which was the main financier of the project along with the **Asian Development Bank (ADB), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and Japan**.
- It is a mega project of Bangladesh completely financed by the Government of Bangladesh.
- The **Benapole land port and Payra seaport** will also be benefited due to the construction of the Padma Bridge.
- The main bridge is 6.15 kilometres long, while the railway viaduct is 0.532 kilometres long.
- The bridge stretches for a total of 10.642 kilometres with 41 spans attached to 42 pillars.

3. Bangladesh offers Chittagong port use to India

Context Bangladesh offered its main seaport - **Chittagong Port** - to India's north-eastern states like Assam and Tripura to enhance connectivity between the two neighbours.

Chittagong Port:

- The Chittagong or Chhatogram port is one of the important seaports of Bangladesh, located in the region of **Chittagong hill tracts**.
- Due to the sea port's close proximity with North-Eastern Indian states, the port facility has the potential to significantly boost economic activity in the North-East Indian states, providing close access to global shipping lanes.
- Earlier in the year 2010, India and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to allow for the use of **Chittagong and Mongla Ports** in Bangladesh for the movement of goods to and from India.

Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

- It is a forested area that sprawls over more than 13,000 sq km of the **Khagrachari, Rangamati, and Bandarban** districts of southeastern Bangladesh, bordering Mizoram to the east, Tripura to the north, and Myanmar to the south and southeast.
- The tribal population of the CHT has ethnic links with tribal populations in the adjacent areas of India, mainly in Mizoram.
- Mizoram shares a **318-km-long border** with Bangladesh.



4. India Nepal ties, new cross border train

Context Prime Minister and his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba recently jointly inaugurated cross-border passenger train services, **RuPay payment system** in Nepal and signed several MoUs.

Key highlights

- Four documents and MoUs were signed and exchanged between India and Nepal to expand ties in areas such as **railways and energy**.

- The Prime Ministers also inaugurated **Solu Corridor 132 KV power transmission line** and sub-station in Nepal built under the government of India's Line of Credit. Further, **Nepal joined the International Solar Alliance**.
- Prime Minister Modi and Nepal's PM Deuba also launched **RuPay payment card in Nepal**.
- The launch of the RuPay card in Nepal will add a new chapter to our **financial connectivity**: PM Narendra Modi issues joint statement with Nepal PM Sher Bahadur Deuba.

5. Cross-border rail network between Bihar and Nepal

Context PM Modi and Deuba inaugurated **cross-border rail network between Jaynagar in Bihar and Nepal's Kurtha**.

About

- This is going to be **Nepal's first broad gauge passenger train service**, all of which has been hand-held by India from the start.
- Part of the **73-km Jaynagar-Bardibas train service** from Nepal side beyond Janakpur had to be stopped due to flooding of some railway bridges in 2001, while service from Janakpur to Jaynagar continued until March 2014 when India and Nepal decided to go for converting the entire narrow gauge link into broad gauge.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is funding** the network between Jaynagar in Bihar and Bardibas in Nepal at a cost of Rs 784 crore.
- The length of the Jaynagar-Bijalpura-Bardibas rail link is 68.72 km, of which a 2.975-km stretch is in India and a 65.745-km stretch is in Nepal.

6. Bangladesh-India-Nepal to move MVA Pact

Context Recently, India, Bangladesh and Nepal finalised an enabling memorandum of understanding (MoU) for implementing the long-gestating **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA)** that is aimed at boosting regional trade and connectivity.

About BBIN MVA:

- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) had signed the Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) in 2015 at Thimphu, Bhutan.
- **Aim:** To provide **seamless people-to-people contact and enhance economic interaction** by facilitating cross border movement of people and goods.
- As per the agreement, member countries would allow vehicles registered in the other countries to enter their territory under certain terms and conditions.
- **Customs and tariffs will be decided by the respective countries** and these would be finalized at bilateral and trilateral forums.
- **Assistance:** **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has been providing technical, advisory, and financial support to the BBIN MVA initiative as part of its assistance to the **South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program**.

7. Pakistan out of FATF ‘grey list’

- Context**
- Pakistan won a major reprieve, as the FATF, an international watchdog on terror financing and money laundering agreed to remove Pakistan’s name from the ‘grey list’.
 - India’s other neighbor, Myanmar has been moved from the grey list to the “black list” due to actions by the military leadership after the 2021 coup and will face even more severe financial sanctions and an inability to procure IMF, World Bank, and ADB loans.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

- It was established in July 1989 by a Group of Seven (G-7) Summit in Paris, initially to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.
- In October 2001, the FATF expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing, in addition to money laundering.
- Since its inception, the FATF has operated under a fixed life span, requiring a specific decision by its Ministers to continue.
- Its secretariat is housed administratively at the OECD.

Black List	Grey List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A blacklist is given to the countries that FATF considers uncooperative tax havens. These countries are known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Grey list is a warning given to the country that it might come on the Black list. But even when a country comes under a grey list it faces many problems like problems in getting loans Economic sanctions Reduction in trade.

How many countries are there in the FATF?

- The FATF, which reportedly comprises 36 countries and two regional organizations (European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council), works to identify national-level vulnerabilities with the aim of protecting the international financial system from misuse.

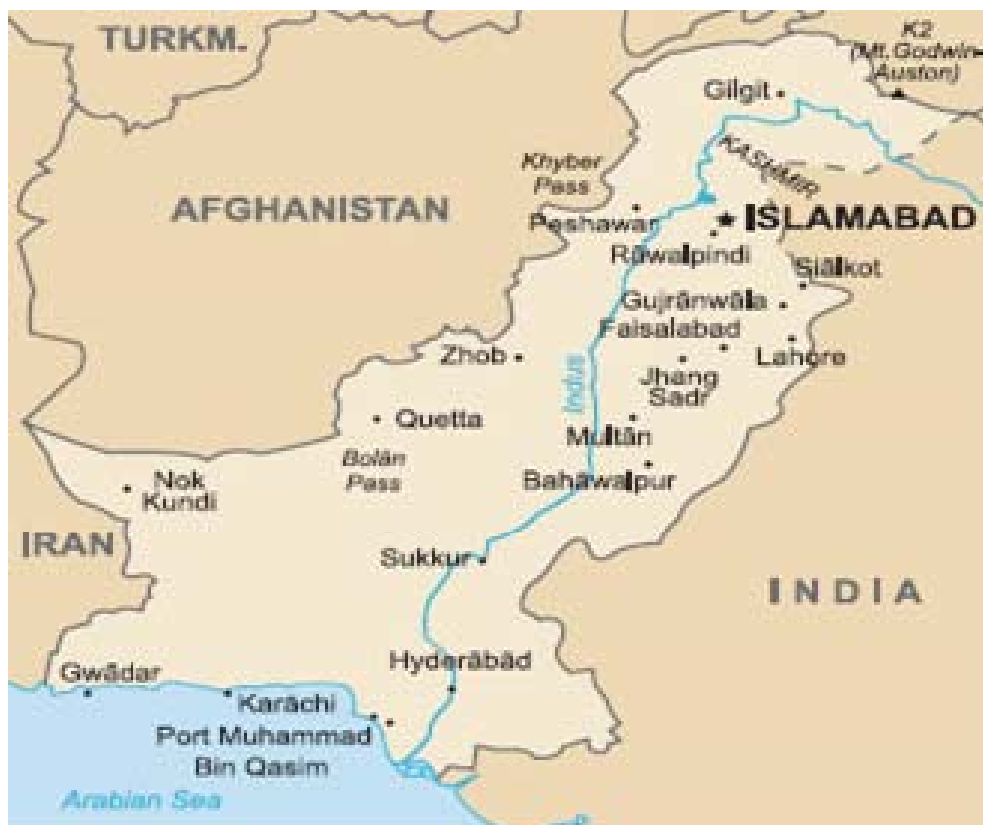
8. Pakistan, China to build rail project to link Karachi with Peshawar

- Context** With Pakistan’s Prime Minister’s Visit to China for the **Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting**, both countries have agreed to go ahead with the USD 10 billion **Karachi to Peshawar rail line** agreement as a key part of the ambitious **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** project.

Linking Karachi to Peshawar Rail line:

- The Karachi-Peshawar rail line is one of **four main railway lines** in Pakistan, operated and maintained by **Pakistan Railways**.
- The line begins from Karachi City station or Kiamari station and ends at Peshawar Cantonment Station.
- The total length of this railway line is **1,687 kilometers (1,048 mi)**.

- There are **184 railway stations** from Kiamari to **Peshawar Cantonment** on this line.
- The line serves as the main passenger and freight line of the country. 75% of the country's cargo and passenger traffic uses the line.
- The line is currently undergoing a six-year **1286.68 billion (US\$5.6 billion)** upgrade and renovation as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, with average rail speeds expected to be doubled to **160 kilometers per hour** upon completion.



The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC):

- It was launched in 2013 with the aim to build a corridor linking Pakistan's **Gwadar port** on the Arabian Sea with **Kashgar in northwest** China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights energy, transport, and industrial cooperation.

The massive infrastructure project connecting **China's Xinjiang province with Gwadar port** in Pakistan's Balochistan province has raised concerns of huge Chinese debt on Pakistan's fledgling economy, though China has recently played down the debt concerns.

- CPEC is part of China's ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- The CPEC was planned to be completed in three phases. The first phase of CPEC was to remove key economic bottlenecks namely energy and infrastructure.
- The current phase is about industrialization, socio-economic and agricultural cooperation, and promoting business and consolidating developments.

Upcoming Projects:

- The Karachi Circular Railway (KCR)
- Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (Multan-Sukkur Section)

9. India, Iran on development of Chabahar Port

Context Recently, Tehran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani visited India for foreign level talks on various issues.

About

- During the delegation level talks, the two sides reiterated their commitment to continue cooperation for development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal of the Chabahar Port.

The Chabahar Port:

- The Chabahar Port is a key pillar of India's India-Pacific vision to connect Eurasia with the Indian Ocean Region.
- The Chabahar Port located in Iran is the commercial transit center for the region and especially Central Asia.



International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

- INSTC is India's vision and initiative to reduce the time taken for EXIM shipments to reach Russia, Europe, and enter the central Asian markets.
- This route connects India and Russia through Iran and Azerbaijan.

10. Israel approves Mammoth Golan Heights Plan

Context The Israeli government approved a one-billion-shekel (\$317 million) plan for the development of the Golan Heights, in a bid to double the population of the territory occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.

About

- The Golan Heights, a rocky plateau in south-western Syria, has a political and strategic significance which belies its size.
- The heights give Israel an excellent vantage point for monitoring Syrian movements. The topography provides a natural buffer against any military thrust from Syria.
- The area is also a key source of water for an arid region. Rainwater from the Golan's catchment feeds into the Jordan River.
- The land is fertile, and the volcanic soil is used to cultivate vineyards and orchards and raise cattle. The Golan is also home to Israel's only ski resort.

Key-highlights of the Plan

- The plan aims to build 7,300 settler homes in the region over a five-year period.
- It calls for 1 billion Israeli shekels to be spent on housing, infrastructure and other projects with the goal of attracting roughly 23,000 new Jewish settlers to the area, seized during the 1967 Six Day War.

1967 Mideast War

- Israel occupied the Golan Heights in the 1967 Mideast war and later annexed the territory, promoting settlement and agriculture there as well as creating a thriving local tourism industry.
- The US was the first country to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan, which the rest of the international community regards as Israeli-occupied.

11. China Building Dam On Mabja Zangbo River Near Indian Border

Context In a recent development, China is constructing a dam on the Mabja Zangbo river in Tibet, close to the tri-junction border with India and Nepal, and opposite of the Kalapani area of Uttarakhand.

About

- The **Mabja Zangbo** originates in Tibet, flows through Nepal into the Ghaghara river before joining the Ganga in India.
- In addition to using water as leverage, the possibility of a military establishment by China near the tri-junction cannot be ruled out as the country had developed the same in the Yarlung Zangbo river near Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Yarlung Zangbo, as the Brahmaputra is known in Tibet, originates in the Himalayas in Tibet, enters India in Arunachal Pradesh, passes through Assam and then Bangladesh, before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

12. China holds first China-Indian Ocean Region Forum

Context Recently, The China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) held a meeting of the China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development Cooperation.

About the Meeting:

- China holds its first meeting with 19 countries in Indian Ocean region excluding India.
- Theme of the meeting: "Shared Development: Theory and Practice from the Perspective of the Blue Economy".
- **Objective:** The Chinese forum is aimed at countering India's strong influence in the Indian Ocean region where India-backed organizations like the Indian Ocean Rim Association, (IORA), which has a membership of 23 countries have taken strong roots.

China's trying to influence Indian Ocean region:

- China has established a full-fledged naval base in Djibouti, its first outside the country.
- It has also acquired the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka on a 99-year lease.
- Built the port at Pakistan's Gwadar in the Arabian Sea opposite India's western coast besides infrastructure investments in the Maldives.
- China is a dialogue partner in the Indian Ocean Rim Association formed in 1997.

13. China calls to prevent ‘colour revolution’

- Context**
- Chinese President Xi Jinping has warned his Central Asian neighbors against allowing outsiders to destabilize them with “colour revolutions.”
 - The statement was made during the recent SCO Summit in Samarkand.

What is Colour revolution?

- In 2019, Beijing had said the protests in Hong Kong had taken on “colour revolution characteristics”
- Colour revolutions refer to a series of uprisings that first began in former communist nations in Eastern Europe in the early 2000s, but are also used in reference to popular movements in the Middle East and Asia.
- Most have involved large-scale mobilization on the streets, with demands for free elections or regime change, and calls for removal of authoritarian leaders.

Important color revolutions

- Orange Revolution:** It refers to a series of protests that occurred in Ukraine between November 2004 and January 2005.
- Tulip Revolution:** Also called the First Kyrgyz Revolution, the movement led to the ouster of Kyrgyzstan’s President Askar Akayev in early 2005.
- Jasmine Revolution:** The popular uprising occurred during December 2010 to January 2011 in Tunisia. It was in response to the underlying corruption, unemployment, inflation and lack of political freedoms in the country.

Why this method is criticized?

- They are said to destabilize influences to overthrow regimes in order to further their own geopolitical interests.

14. India backs China’s plan for joint border activity

- Context** India has supported an initiative by China for all SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) member states, including Russia, Pakistan and Central Asian countries, to conduct “joint border operations” in 2023.

About

- India has supported an initiative by China to conduct a “joint border operation” in 2023 of all member countries of SCO
- The border operation called “Solidarity-2023” will be organised by China
- The Border Security Force (BSF) hosted the 21st meeting of Experts’ Group and Border Security Conference of SCO countries
- At the meeting participants exchanged information reflecting assessments of the situation on the State borders of the SCO member states, trends and forecasts of its development.

What is SCO?

- The SCO is an economic and security grouping.
- The member-states of SCO:
 - ▶ Russia
 - ▶ China
 - ▶ India
 - ▶ Pakistan
 - ▶ Kyrgyz Republic
 - ▶ Kazakhstan
 - ▶ Tajikistan
 - ▶ Uzbekistan

- The results of the Joint Border Operation “Solidarity-2019-2021” carried out in 2021 by the border services of the competent authorities of the SCO member states were discussed and highly appreciated.
- The plan for the preparation and conduct of the Joint Border Operation “Friendship Border – 2022, this year was reviewed and approved.

15. China inventing names for places in Arunachal Pradesh

- Context**
- China’s Ministry of Civil Affairs announced that it had “standardised” the names of 15 places in Arunachal Pradesh, acting in accordance with regulations on geographical names issued by the State Council, the equivalent of the Chinese Cabinet.
 - Among the 15 locations renamed by China are eight residential areas, four mountains, two rivers and a mountain pass.

China’s claims on Indian Territory

- China claims some 90,000 sq km of Arunachal Pradesh as its territory.
- It calls the area “Zangnan” in the Chinese language and makes repeated references to “South Tibet”.
- Chinese maps show Arunachal Pradesh as part of China, and sometimes parenthetically refer to it as “so-called Arunachal Pradesh”.

Border Dispute

- China shares its 22,457 km land boundary with 14 countries including India, the third longest after the borders with Mongolia and Russia.
- India claims that China is illegally occupying about 38,000 sq km of India’s territory in Aksai Chin, which borders eastern Ladakh.
- Pakistan ceded to China about 5,180 sq km in 1963 from the Indian territory illegally occupied by it.
- The India-China border is divided into three sectors
 - ▶ **Western:** The boundary dispute in the Western Sector pertains to the Johnson Line proposed by the British in the 1860s that extended up to the Kunlun Mountains and put Aksai Chin in the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ▶ **Middle:** In the Middle Sector, the dispute is a minor one. It is the only one where India and China have exchanged maps on which they broadly agree.
 - ▶ **Eastern:** The disputed boundary in the Eastern Sector of the India-China border is over the MacMahon Line.

16. Indian and Chinese soldiers clash near the Arunachal border

- Context**
- Recently, the Indian and Chinese soldiers were engaged in a face-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, which again ignited the clashes between India and China over the disputed region in the Arunachal border.

About the issue:

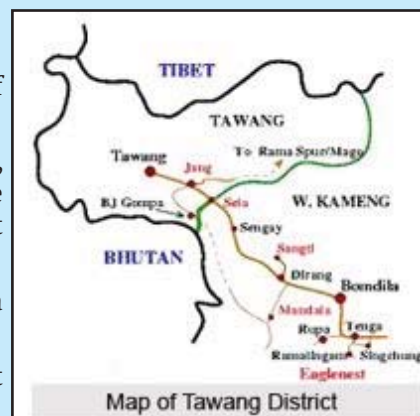
- **Location:** Tawang Sector in India's northeastern territory of Arunachal Pradesh, a remote, inhospitable region that borders southern China.
- **Outcome:** Soldiers from both sides sustained minor injuries in the face-off.
- In certain areas along the LAC in the **Tawang sector**, there are areas of differing perception, wherein both sides patrol the area up to their claim lines. This has been the trend since 2006.
- The clash occurred as a large PLA patrol came across the Indian side in the region.

Marking the India-China border:

- The border between India and China is not clearly demarcated throughout.
- Along certain stretches of its 3,488 km **length**, there is no mutually agreed **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- India, following Independence, believed it had inherited firm boundaries from the British, but this was contrary to China's view.
- China felt the British had left behind a disputed legacy on the boundary between the two newly formed republics.
- The India-China border is divided into **three sectors**;
 - ▶ **Western:** The boundary dispute in the Western Sector pertains to the Johnson Line proposed by the British in the 1860s that extended up to the Kunlun Mountains and put Aksai Chin in the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ▶ **Middle:** In the Middle Sector, the dispute is a minor one. It is the only one where India and China have exchanged maps on which they broadly agree.
 - ▶ **Eastern:** The disputed boundary in the Eastern Sector of the India-China border is over the **McMahon Line**.

The Tawang region:

- This district is situated in the westernmost part of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The area of this district is approximately 2,172 Sq.km, bounded by Tibet (China) to the north, Bhutan to the southwest, and Sela ranges separated from West Kameng district in the east.
- The inhabitants of this district are all of the Monpa tribe. The Monpa belongs to the Mongoloid stock.
- The Tawang Monastery is one the most important elements in the social and religious life of the Monpa.
- The Monpas are Buddhist by religion and religious beliefs and practices are centered around the Tawang Monastery.



17. India's Central Asia discussion on Security issues

Context Addressing the first meeting of the **National Security Advisors (NSAs)** of India and Central Asian countries, India seeks to focus on the challenge of terrorism, the situation in Afghanistan, and the importance of regional connectivity projects.

About

- **Participants:** The NSAs of India, Kazakhstan, the **Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**
- **Points discussed:**
 - ▶ The participants called for reiterating strong support for a “**peaceful, stable, and secure**” Afghanistan.
 - ▶ The security officials also emphasized that the **territory of Afghanistan** should not be used for sheltering, training, planning, or financing any terrorist acts.
- **Call for collective action:**
 - ▶ The officials agreed that the expansion of terrorist propaganda, recruitment, and fund-raising efforts have serious security implications for the region.
 - ▶ The misuse of new and emerging technologies, arms and drugs trafficking, using terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism, abuse of cyberspace to spread disinformation and unmanned aerial systems present new challenges in counter-terrorism efforts and call for collective action.

Central Asia:

- Central Asia is a **landlocked region**, which is located in the heart of Asia.
- Central Asia is composed of the 5 post-soviet countries: **Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.**
- The countries are also known as 5 “**Stans**” due to the same ending in their names.
- It is bounded in the north by Russia and in the south by Iran, Afghanistan, and China.

Recent developments:

- **India-Central Asia Dialogue:** As a part of moving India’s engagement with the region forward, the first India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 13 January 2019. The participants included India, the five Central Asian republics, and Afghanistan. The second India-Central Asia Dialogue was hosted virtually in October 2020.
- **Connectivity Initiatives:**
 - ▶ **TAPI Pipeline:** The long-delayed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, backed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), was first proposed in the mid-1990s and all four actors officially signed an intergovernmental agreement in 2010.
 - ▶ **Chabahar port:** The Chabahar port that was recently made partially operational gives New Delhi direct land access to CA.
 - ▶ **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):** In the last few years, India has invested in projects such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). India sees the INSTC as an import-export route to Russia, Europe, and Central Asia.

18. China’s moves in the Indian Ocean

Context China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) convened the first, “China-Indian Ocean Region Forum”. It can be seen as the latest Chinese initiative focusing on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Key Highlights of the Forum:

- It is “the first high-level official development cooperation forum jointly held by China and countries in the Indian Ocean Region” and has “over 100 participants.”

- **Theme:** ‘Shared Development: Theory and Practice from the Perspective of the Blue Economy.
- **Marine Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Cooperation Mechanism:**
 - ▶ China proposed to establish a marine disaster prevention and mitigation cooperation mechanism between China and countries in the Indian Ocean region.
 - ▶ China expressed its willingness to provide **necessary financial, material, and technical support to countries in need.**

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):

- It was established in 1997 and is a regional forum that seeks to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation through a consensus-based, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach.
- IORA has 23 member states and 9 Dialogue Partners.
- **Members:** Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
- China is a dialogue partner in the IORA.
- The IORA Secretariat is based in **Mauritius.**
- The association gains importance from the fact that the Indian Ocean carries half of the world’s container ships, one-third of the world’s bulk cargo traffic, and two-thirds of the world’s oil shipments.
- It is a **lifeline of international trade and transport and the Indian Ocean region is woven together by trade routes** and commands control of major sea lanes.

19. Connecting India’s East with the Indo-Pacific

Context An effective way to work for a ‘free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific is to involve our eastern regions, using the cultural, environmental, and historical linkages.

India’s Indo-Pacific Strategy via Northeast:

- **Common to India’s other policies:** India’s North-eastern states, situated between Delhi and Southeast Asia over the Bay of Bengal, anchor the convergence of Japan’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision and India’s Act East policy.

The North-eastern states joining hands with Indo-Pacific:

- The Northeast which comprises **seven States** has been witnessing transformation as it heads towards better security conditions and development.
- Since 2018, India’s **‘Look East’ and ‘Act East’ policies** have moved into the phase of Indo-Pacific policy and strategy.
- Recently, both Indo-Pacific conclaves were hosted by the **Asian Confluence**, a think tank leading in the study of India’s northeast.
 - ▶ The first was in partnership with the **Ministry of External Affairs and Manipur University**, and
 - ▶ The second had the **United States Consulate General** in Kolkata as the partner.
- But, there, the still issues that need to ensure adequate security, speed up economic development and connect better with the rest of India and Southeast Asian nations.

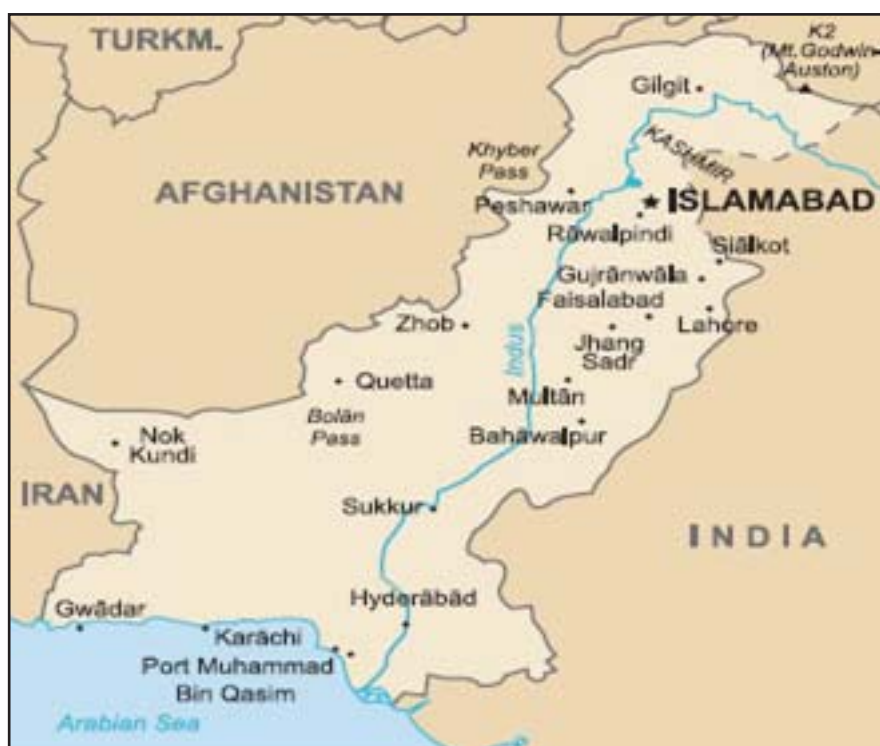
India's Act East policy:

- India's Act East Policy focuses on the extended neighbourhood in the **Asia-Pacific region**.
- India has upgraded its relations to a strategic partnership with **Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, Singapore, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** and forged close ties with all countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Further, apart from ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and East Asia Summit (EAS), India has also been actively engaged in regional fora such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- Other important schemes for North-east
 - ▶ Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)
 - ▶ North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS)
 - ▶ Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti Master Plan: for developing infrastructural facilities in North East region

20. Pakistan, China to build rail project to link Karachi with Peshawar

Context With Pakistan's Prime Minister's Visit to China for the **Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting**, both countries have agreed to go ahead with the USD 10 billion **Karachi to Peshawar rail line** agreement as a key part of the ambitious **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** project.

Linking Karachi to Peshawar Rail line:



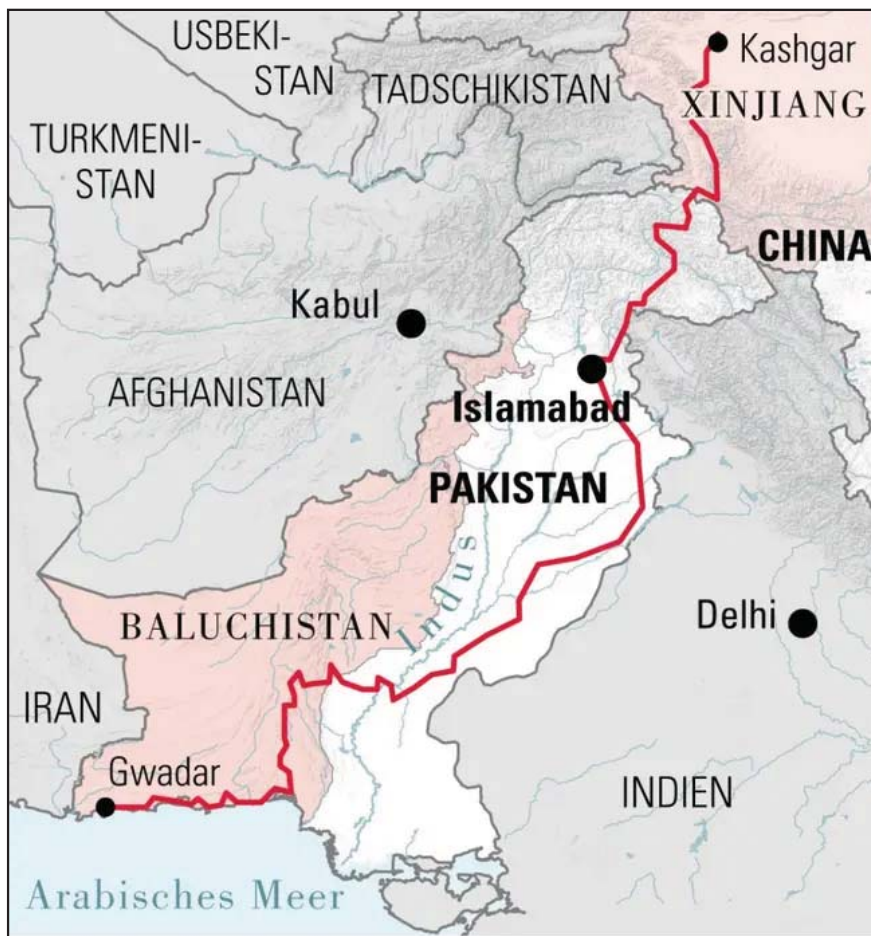
- The Karachi-Peshawar rail line is one of **four main railway lines** in Pakistan, operated and maintained by **Pakistan Railways**.
- The line begins from Karachi City station or Kiamari station and ends at Peshawar Cantonment Station.
- The total length of this railway line is **1,687 kilometers (1,048 mi)**.
- There are **184 railway stations** from Kiamari to **Peshawar Cantonment** on this line.
- The line serves as the main passenger and freight line of the country. 75% of the country's cargo and passenger traffic uses the line.
- The line is currently undergoing a six-year **1286.68 billion (US\$5.6 billion)** upgrade and renovation as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, with average rail speeds expected to be doubled to **160 kilometers per hour** upon completion.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC):

- It was launched in 2013 with the aim to build a corridor linking Pakistan's **Gwadar port** on the Arabian Sea with **Kashgar in northwest** China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights energy, transport, and industrial cooperation.

The massive infrastructure project connecting **China's Xinjiang province** with **Gwadar port** in Pakistan's Balochistan province has raised concerns of huge Chinese debt on Pakistan's fledgling economy, though China has recently played down the debt concerns.

- CPEC is part of China's ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.



- The CPEC was planned to be completed in three phases. The first phase of CPEC was to remove key economic bottlenecks namely energy and infrastructure.

- The current phase is about industrialization, socio-economic and agricultural cooperation, and promoting business and consolidating developments.

Upcoming Projects:

- The Karachi Circular Railway (KCR)
- Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (Multan-Sukkur Section)

21. China's 'nine-dash line' puts economic interest at risk: Indonesia

Context Recently, the Chinese government said it has “overlapping claims” with Vietnam over maritime rights in parts of the East Sea, Indonesia showed the concerns and rejected China’s offer for any negotiations and said that Jakarta’s economic interests are threatened by **China’s Nine-Dash Line**.

About

- China currently claims ‘indisputable sovereignty’ over the **South China Sea**.
- These nine dash lines are not geographical boundaries but are interpreted by China to advance its claims.
- The line runs as far as 2,000 km from the Chinese mainland to within a few hundred kilometres of the **Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam**.

Historical Background:

- The nine-dash line was originally an 11-dash line, and Chinese geographer Yang Huairan helped to draw it.
- In 1952, it became the nine-dash line when in a moment of Communist camaraderie with Vietnam; Mao gave up China’s claims over the Gulf of Tonkin.

Countries maritime Borders in South China Sea:

- Several countries are bordering the South China Sea: Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand (via the Gulf of Thailand), Philippines, Singapore, East Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, and Taiwan.

Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)

- It is a formula based on compromise and was recognized by the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1976.
- It covers an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea: it can extend to a maximum of 200 nautical miles from the baselines.
- The EEZ includes the territorial sea which extends to 12 nautical miles. While the countries have sovereign rights over the territorial sea, the EEZ provides them the right to existing natural resources.
- **Activities allowed in EEZ are -**
 - ▶ creation and use of artificial islands
 - ▶ Installations and structures
 - ▶ Marine scientific research
 - ▶ protection and preservation of the marine environment



22. China's Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy

Context With the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) **20th National Congress**, China's position and its diplomacy with world has been discussed. It saw many changes in world affairs over the years, Xi has advocated for a more intensive approach towards handling issues both domestically and internationally.

What is Wolf Warrior Diplomacy of China?

- Wolf warrior diplomacy is an aggressive style of diplomacy adopted by Chinese diplomats in the 21st century, under **Chinese leader Xi Jinping's administration**.
- It is confrontational and combative, with its proponents loudly denouncing any criticism of China on social media and in interviews.
- It is considered as 'great diplomatic philosophy' of Xi Jinping.

How China is using this Diplomacy against India?

- **Increasing presence:** China's increasing presence and involvement in the Indian Ocean is certainly a strategic and security problem for India.
- **Naval power:** China's overall naval capabilities have exceeded India's. China is continuously developing its naval capabilities and forging partnerships with strategically located states in the Indian Ocean.

- ▶ For example, in 2017, China established its **first offshore military base in Djibouti** that would provide it with a considerable capacity to monitor the Indian Navy's movements in the Indian Ocean.
- **Enhanced military presence:** The developments of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor along with Gwadar Port will also provide China with an enhanced military presence in the Indian Ocean region.
- **Influence on neighbours:** With the assertive and ambitious Belt and Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Road, China has consolidated its influence over the Indian neighbours as almost all the neighbour sans Bhutan have shown the keen interests in joining.
 - ▶ Recently, Sri Lankan parliament passes controversial Bill on China-backed Colombo Port City. Hambantota Port is already under China's control.

23. One year of Taliban 2.0

- Context**
- As a year after the Taliban returned to power in Kabul, India is concerned about its relations with Afghanistan.
 - Due to Afghanistan's geographic location and influence on Central Asia, it becomes important for India to maintain relations with it.

About Taliban

- The Taliban or the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is a Deobandi Islamic fundamentalist, militant Islamist, and jihadist political movement in Afghanistan.
- It ruled approximately three-quarters of the country from 1996–2001, before being overthrown following the United States

It recaptured Kabul on **15 August 2021** after years of insurgency, and currently controls all of the countries.

What is India's stand on the Taliban?

- India is critical to the terror activities of the Taliban, but has due endurance to the fact that it has to maintain ties with Afghanistan due to the following reasons:
 - **Road to Central Asia:** India's strategic interests in the region, including access to Central Asia, and ensuring that Pakistan is not able to relocate India-focussed terror groups to Afghanistan.
 - **Geographic significance:** Afghanistan enjoys a strategic location in South Asia and is particularly relevant to India as a geographical neighbour.
 - The country has the Central Asian Republics to the North, Pakistan to its East, and through Iran and Pakistan the Indian Ocean deeper south.
 - **Trade partnerships:** Afghanistan has been an important trading and craft centre for over 2000 years connecting the civilizations of **Persia, and Central Asia with India.**

24. Rohingya and Refugee Policy for India

- Context** India's approach towards refugees, in general about the Rohingyas has raised several questions about **India's policy on the Rohingyas.**

Background

- **India allowed Rohingya refugees to enter the country in 2012** and considered the eruption of violent **conflicts between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State** as an “**internal affair**”.
- Myanmar has classified them as “**resident foreigners**” or “**associate citizens**”. They were forced to leave Myanmar in large numbers after several waves of violence, which first began in 2012.
- **Officially, about 1,200 Rohingya** have been identified as among the **first batch** to have arrived in Delhi in 2012.

Who are Rohingya?

- The Rohingya people are a stateless Indo-Aryan ethnic group who predominantly follow Islam and reside in Rakhine State, Myanmar (previously known as Burma).
- Rohingyas are prescribed by the United Nations as the **most persecuted minority in the world**.
- They **fled their homes in 2017** to escape an alleged crackdown by Myanmar’s military.
- To escape discrimination and violence in Myanmar, minority Rohingya Muslims have for decades **fled from the Buddhist-majority country to neighbouring Bangladesh** and other countries, **including India**.

What is the issue?

- In June 2021, a fire ravaged one of the Rohingya camps, and after the incident displaced Rohingya were moved to an empty plot nearby that belonged to the **Zakat Foundation of India, an NGO**.
- It was later decided by the Delhi government to shift all Rohingya families to **EWS flats** and would be put under constant police watch.

Nature of assistance provided to Rohingyas in the detention camps:

- Relief assistance is provided by the Centre that includes **monthly cash dole, subsidized ration, clothing materials, utensils, cremation and shradh (last rites) grants, and infrastructure facilities** in camps.

What is India’s stand on refugees?

- According to the government the **infiltration from the Rakhine State** of Myanmar into the Indian Territory, besides being a **burden on the limited resources of the country** also aggravates the **security challenges posed to the country**.
- In addition, the rise in terrorism in the last few decades is a cause for concern in most nations and those illegal migrants are **more vulnerable to getting recruited by terrorist organizations**.
- **India is not a signatory** to the **1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees** and the **1967 Protocol**.

Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) is responsible for tracking foreigners and their visas. The FRRO is under the administrative control of the MHA. Since Delhi is a Union Territory, law and order are under the Central government, it has **erupted the matter of managing the refugee issues pertaining to Rohingyas** is between the Delhi Government and the Central Government.

- All **foreign undocumented nationals are governed** as per the provisions of:
 - ▶ The Foreigners Act, 1946
 - ▶ The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939
 - ▶ The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920
 - ▶ The Citizenship Act, of 1955
- **Foreign nationals who enter the country without valid travel documents** are treated as **illegal immigrants**.
- **There is no national law on refugees at present.** Only Standard Operating Procedures are issued by the MHA to deal with foreign nationals in India, who claim to be refugees.

The citizenship issue

- Indian Constitution defines the citizen of the country and the subsequent laws do not deal with refugees.
- In legal terms, a person living in India can be either a citizen or a foreigner defined under the **Foreigners Act, of 1946**.
- India has also not been a signatory of the **1951 UN Convention or the 1967 Protocol** - both relating to the Status of Refugees and included in the UNHCR statute.
- According to the UNHCR, a refugee is a person living in another country following persecution on his own on the grounds of "race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

25. India-Tajikistan Bilateral Relations

Context India's Union Minister for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh held a bilateral meeting with the Minister for Climate and Environment of Norway Mr Espen Barth Eide on the side-lines of the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal and discussed several issues of mutual interest.

Background

- **India and Tajikistan diplomatic relations were established on 28 August 1992**, since then regular high level visits between the two countries cemented the bilateral ties.
 - ▶ India was one of the first countries to recognize independence of Tajikistan and set up diplomatic relations. Indian embassy was opened in Dushanbe in
- Both the countries are celebrating 30 years of diplomatic ties.

Tajikistan

- Tajikistan, officially the Republic of Tajikistan, is a mountainous landlocked country in Central Asia.
- It borders Afghanistan to the south, Uzbekistan to the west, Kyrgyzstan to the north, and China to the east.
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan in Pakistan are separated from Tajikistan by the narrow Wakhan Corridor.

Key highlights of the recent meeting:

- **Water resource & energy:** The discussion revolved around water resources research, with special focus on Glaciers and their monitoring and understanding, Non-conventional Energy, etc.

- Tajikistan Minister requested India to support global water action and climate resistance on Water for sustainable Development.
- Agendas of the 11th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission of Tajikistan and India on trade-economic, scientific and technical cooperation in 2020 were discussed that included industry, agriculture, education etc.
- The Eight MoUs/agreements that were signed in 2018 between the two nations were revisited.
- Those were in the areas of Peaceful Use of Space Technology, Disaster Management, Renewable Energy, and Agricultural Research and Education to name important ones.

26. India & Thailand

Context Since 1947, India has enjoyed dynamic bilateral relations with Thailand. 2022 marks the **75th year of diplomatic ties** between the two nations.

Present Status of India-Thailand Relations

- **Cooperation at international level:** Both countries are important regional partners linking **South and Southeast Asia** and they cooperate closely on many international platforms:
 - ▶ ASEAN
 - ▶ East Asia Summit (EAS)
 - ▶ Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)
 - ▶ Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC)
 - ▶ Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)
 - ▶ Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
 - ▶ Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)
- **Trade relations:** In 2021, Thailand became India's fourth largest trading partner in ASEAN. In 2021-22, Thailand was India's 22nd top trade partner, with a total trade of US\$ 6.6 billion.
- **Defence cooperation:**
 - ▶ The MoU on Defence Cooperation between India and Thailand was signed on 25 Jan 2012.
 - ▶ Since 2015, India is participating in **Ex-Cobra Gold**, the largest Asia Pacific Military exercise in the 'Observer Plus' category.
- **India-Thailand Counter-Terrorism Cooperation**

27. The changing relations of India, Maldives

Context India's External Affairs Minister **Dr S Jaishankar** visited Maldives after he got an invite from his Maldivian counterpart and held extensive discussion on the bilateral relations between the two.

Background:

- Former Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen has been convicted by a Maldivian criminal court
- As opposition leader, he has **spearheaded the "India Out" campaign**.
- Yameen has been alleged of having **close links with China**.

How are these developments relevant to India?

- Abdulla Yameen is trying to **link his incarceration to pressure from India**.
- India needs to tread carefully regarding the domestic politics of the Maldives.

How have India's Relations with the Maldives been?

- **Security Partnership:** Recently, the National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPLE) was inaugurated by India's External Affairs Minister.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Tourism is the mainstay of the Maldivian economy. The country is now a major tourist destination for some Indians and a job destination for others.
 - ▶ In August 2021, **Afcons**, an Indian company, signed a contract for the largest-ever infrastructure project in Maldives which is the **Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)**.
- India is Maldives' **2nd largest trading partner** – rising from its 4th position in 2018.
- In 2021, bilateral trade registered a growth of 31% over the previous year – overcoming the pandemic-related challenges.

Neighbourhood First Policy:

- It is a core component of India's foreign policy, focuses on peaceful relations and collaborative synergetic co-development with its South Asian neighbors of the Indian subcontinent encompassing a diverse range of topics, such as economic, technology, research and education, connectivity (digital, surface and air transport, energy grid connectivity, logistic chains, etc), space program, defence security, environment and climate challenge.

Recent developments in India-Maldives Relations

- **MoU on Judicial Services:** The Government has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of judicial cooperation between India and the Judicial Service Commission of Maldives.
 - ▶ It is the **eighth MoU** signed between India and other countries in the field of Judicial Cooperation.
- **Male connectivity project:** The Greater Male Connectivity Project launch, a USD 500 million project funded by New Delhi.
- **Agreements:** The countries have signed six agreements to expand cooperation in a range of areas in the Maldives, including:
 - ▶ Cyber security
 - ▶ Capacity Building
 - ▶ Housing
 - ▶ Disaster Management
 - ▶ Challenges in India-Maldives Relations

28. India-Japan Relations

Context Visit of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to India.

Background

- Year 2022 marked the **70th anniversary** of India-Japan diplomatic relations.

- Prime Minister of both the countries concluded the **14th India-Japan Annual Summit** during this visit.
- India and Japan have enhanced their ties in past several years and the recent visit by Japanese Prime Minister **expanded the horizon of cooperation** between the two countries.
- The visit was also important as two countries **shared their views of the on-going Russia-Ukraine conflict**.

History of Japan's relations with India:

During ancient times:

- Exchange between Japan and India is said to have begun in the 6th century when **Buddhism** was introduced to Japan.
- In 752 A.D. consecration or eye-opening of the towering statue of Lord Buddha in **Todaji Temple (Nara)** was performed by an Indian monk, **Bodhisena**.
- Indian culture, filtered through Buddhism, has had a great impact on Japanese culture, and this is the source of the Japanese people's sense of closeness to India.
- It is important to note that since ancient time, **India and Japan have never been adversaries**.

During Colonial times:

- The **Japan-India Association was set up in 1903**, and is today the oldest international friendship body in Japan.
- **Japanese soil was used by Indian revolutionary Rash Bihari Bose** to spread the idea of fighting against the British rule for liberating India.
- It must also be remembered that **Azad Hind Fauz was organised with the help of Japanese Army** and both fought together against the British forces to free India during the Second World War.

After India gained Independence:

- In 1949, Indian Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru donated an Indian elephant** to the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo.
- Japan and India signed a peace treaty and established diplomatic relations on 28th April, 1952. This treaty was **one of the first peace treaties Japan signed after World War II**.
- **In 1958, India was the first country to receive loan for developed in Japanese currency**.

In the Post-Cold War Era:

- The **fall of Berlin Wall and collapse of USSR** gave further impetus to India-Japan relations.
- **India's East Asia Policy** and its need to fill the void, left by the termination of Soviet Union, cemented the bond of between India and Japan even more.
- Fostering of this relation though received a jolt when **India tested its nuclear weapons at Pokaran in 1998** and Japan being a victim of two atomic bombs condemned the former.
- The relationship between the two countries was soon revived as the then Prime Minister of Japan Yoshiro Mori visited India in the year 2000 and **"Global Partnership for India and Japan for 21st Century" was signed**.
- Further upgrade of this relation took place when in **2006**, the association between the two countries was elevated and termed as **"Global and Strategic Partnership"**.
- **In 2014**, the relation was ameliorated further to **"Special Strategic and Global Partnership"**.

29. Shinzo Abe & his relations with India

Context The unfortunate demise of Japan former PM and India's ally **Shinzo Abe** also affected India.

Shinzo Abe

- **Shinzo Abe (21 September 1954 – 8 July 2022)**, was a Japanese politician who served as prime minister of Japan and President of the **Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)** from 2006 to 2007 and again from 2012 to 2020.

India Japan – Major Diplomatic Initiatives

- **Social Security Agreement (SSA)**
- **Bilateral Swap Agreement:** A bilateral swap agreement between the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **Bank of Japan (BoJ)**.
- **Political and Security Cooperation** as mandated by the **Action Plan of 2009** witnessed steady progress in 2012.
- A **new Cyber Security Dialogue** was held at Tokyo on 5 November 2012, while a newly established **Maritime Dialogue**.
- The **60th Anniversary** of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Japan was celebrated through various events both in India and Japan.
- **QUAD** grouping initiated by Japan.

30. Fishing Issue with Sri-Lanka

Context Sri Lankan and Indian fishermen issue have been in news recently

Background

- There is a long-persisting conflict in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka.
- Previously, there was no clear demarcation of maritime borders between Indian and Sri Lanka.
- Later, in the 1970s, India and Sri Lanka concluded the **maritime boundary agreements** of 1974 and 1976, delimiting international boundaries in the **Palk Bay, the Gulf of Mannar, and the Bay of Bengal**, respectively.
 - ▶ Under the agreement, India ceded the island of **Kachchatheevu in the Palk Bay** by India to Sri Lanka which was protested by state of Tamil Nadu.
- Indian fishermen have been fishing near the island for centuries and they continued fishing even after the bilateral agreement.
- Earlier, Sri Lanka did not take much action against this activity due to civil war in the country.
- However, after 2009, it has increased surveillance which has caused tensions between the two countries.

What is Kachchatheevu island?

- Kachchatheevu island is the centre of a long-standing dispute between the fishermen of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.

- Katchatheevu is an uninhabited islet in the Palk Strait that was formed due to volcanic eruption in the 14th century.

- The 285-acre land, strategically important for fishing activities, was owned by the **Raja of Ramnad (Ramanathapuram)** and later became part of the **Madras Presidency** after the delimitation of **Gulf of Mannar** and **Palk Strait** during British rule between the then governments of Madras and Ceylon.

Why the island is the bone of contention?

- In 1921, both Sri Lanka and India claimed this piece of land for fishing and the dispute remained unsettled.
- Though the island is not strategically important for India, but for Indian fishermen it is a very important place associated with their livelihood since the surrounding seas of Kachachativu Island have an abundance of prawns.
- In 1974, Katchatheevu was ceded to Sri Lanka through the **Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime agreement** to settle the maritime boundary in the Palk Strait.



The Church

About 4,000 devotees from Rameswaram visit the 110-year-old St Anthony’s Church on the island every year on average.

The another agreement

- During Emergency (1976), another agreement was finalized to determine the boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal.
- It restricted both the countries’ fishermen from fishing in the other’s waters.
- With the establishment of the **Exclusive Economic Zones** by the two countries, India and Sri Lanka will exercise sovereign rights over the living and non-living resources of their respective zones.
- The fishing vessels and fishermen of India shall not engage in fishing in the historic waters, the territorial sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Sri Lanka
- The fishing vessels and fishermen of Sri Lanka will not engage in fishing in the historic waters, the territorial sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone of India, without the express permission of Sri Lanka or India.

About India-Sri Lanka relations

- India and Sri Lanka have a long history of cultural, religious, and trade ties dating back to ancient times.
- There are strong cultural ties between the two countries, with many Sri Lankans tracing their heritage to India. Buddhism, which originated in India, is also an important religion in Sri Lanka.
- Economic ties: India is Sri Lanka’s third largest export destination, after the US and UK. More than 60% of Sri Lanka’s exports enjoy the benefits of the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement. India is also a major investor in Sri Lanka.
- Defence: India and Sri Lanka conduct joint Military (Mitra Shakti) and Naval exercise (SLINEX).

31. India-Nepal

- Context**
- As witnessed in the past, Nepali politics has once again thrown a big surprise at the last minute with Prachanda walking out of the alliance with the Nepali Congress (NC) and joining hands with the rival KP Sharma Oli-led CPN-UML.
 - This political turmoil in Nepal should not become a hurdle to India-Nepal relations.

Important multilateral forums

- BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal), BIMSTEC, NAM, and SAARC

India-Nepal relations

- India and Nepal share the history of cordial relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- Border sharing:** Uttar Pradesh shares a 599.3-km-long open border with Nepal touching **Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich, Sravasti, Balrampur, Sidharthnagar and Maharajganj districts.**
- Cultural connection:** Nepal has been culturally and spiritually very close to India as a Hindu nation in the past.
 - Mithilanchal region of Bihar province of India and its culture spread till Nepal.
 - Apart from Nepali, Maithili is also taken as the second official language in Nepal.
 - According to mythology, Sita, the daughter of King Janak of Mithila. At that time, the capital of Mithila was **Janakpur**, presently a part of Nepal.

Contribution in Ram Mandir (Shaligram rock)

- Presently, when the construction work of the grand **Shri Ram temple** is going on in full swing in Ayodhya, the **Saints-Mahatmas** and ordinary people of Nepal are taking an active part in continuously contributing to this.
- The idols for the Ayodhya temple will be made from the rare **Shaligram rock** obtained from the **holy Kaligandaki river of Nepal** with the collective thought of **Shri Ram Mandir Trust and Saints of Nepal.**
- Gorkha Regiment:** More than 60 per cent of Nepali youths are recruited in the Gorkha Regiment of the Indian Army. The Gorkha Regiment has a golden history of contribution and sacrifice in the Indian Army.

Ups and downs of recent times

- Border disputes:** It is with respect to territories of **Limpiadhura, Lipulek and Kalapani**, between the two countries.
- Other disputes:** Condition of Nepali immigrants in India, growing influence of China in Nepal

Developmental Projects in Nepal:

- Since 2022, the **Jaynagar-Bardibas railway** started with India providing technical support.
- In 2019, the long-awaited **Motihari-Amlekhgunj oil pipeline** was inaugurated.
- Power generation in Nepal has picked up.

32. West Seti power project

Context India will be taking over an ambitious hydropower project in Nepal, West Seti, nearly four years after China withdrew from it.

Key-highlights

- The Government of Nepal has decided to hand over the agreement of the 750-megawatt (MW) West Seti Hydropower Project and 308 MW SR6 Storage Hydroelectric Project to India's National Hydro Power Company Limited (NHPC).
- **West Seti is a 750MW hydro power project.**
- It is planned on **West Seti river/basin in Seti, Nepal.**



What is the West Seti Power Project?

- It is a proposed **750-megawatt Hydropower Project**, which is to be built on the **Seti river in far-western Nepal**, which has remained on the drawing board for the last six decades.
- Lately, the government has **remodeled the project as West Seti and Seti River (SR-6)**, a joint storage project, with the capacity to generate 1,200 megawatts of electricity.
- This storage or reservoir will **fill up during the monsoon season and the water will be drawn to generate power during peak hours** each day in the dry season.

INDO-PACIFIC & INDIAN OCEAN REGION

1. South Korea's first Indo-Pacific vision document

Context The launch of South Korea's first Indo-Pacific vision document, namely the "Strategy for a Free, Peaceful and Prosperous Indo-Pacific," in December 2022 raised expectations for enhanced momentum in South Korea's strategic ties with a rising India.

The strategy

- South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy has a broad geographical scope, covering the Americas, parts of Africa, Europe, and Asia.
- However, given the centrality of Asia for the vision, two subregions that stand out are South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- Given India's burgeoning profile among the Indo-Pacific states, New Delhi will in the coming years become a strategic priority for Seoul.

India – South Korea Relations

- **Political:** In May 2015, the bilateral relationship was upgraded to 'special strategic partnership'.
- **Economic:** The current bilateral trade between India and South Korea is at USD 21 billion and the target that has been set is USD 50 billion by the year 2030.
- India and South Korea have signed the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, 2010 which has facilitated the growth of trade relations.
- To facilitate investment from Korea, India has launched a "Korea Plus" facilitation cell under 'Invest India' to guide, assist and handhold investors.
- **Cultural:** Korean Buddhist Monk Hyecho or Hong Jiao visited India from 723 to 729 AD and wrote the travelogue "Pilgrimage to the five kingdoms of India" which gives a vivid account of Indian culture, politics & society.
- Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore had composed a short but evocative poem – 'Lamp of the East' – in 1929 about Korea's glorious past and its promising bright future.

Notably, India-South Korea ties are still based on the 2018 Modi-Moon vision for peace and prosperity, along with the joint statement that upgraded their relationship to a "special strategic partnership," which allowed a synergy between South Korea's NSP and India's Act East Policy (AEP).

5

RUSSIA-UKRAINE

1. Russia, Ukraine sign major grain deal to ease food crisis

Context In the first deal between Russia and Ukraine ever since the former invaded the latter in February, the two nations signed UN-mediated deal that to allow the export of 5 million tonnes of grain per month from three Ukrainian ports.

Background

- Russia invaded Ukraine in **February 2022**, against its action of joining **NATO alliance**.
- This has led to global disorder and violation of Human rights at an extent.

Key highlights of the Deal

- Signed in **Istanbul**, the deal will allow ships carrying grain – and monitored and inspected by a **Joint Coordination Committee**.
- It comprised the representatives of **Turkey, Ukraine, Russia and the UN** who have pass through a **safe corridor in the Black Sea**, onwards through the **Bosphorus** in order to reach global markets.
- The deal, valid initially for **120 days** but can be extended for a similar period unless either Russia or Ukraine announces their intention to terminate it.
- Currently, about **20 million tonnes of grain** is stuck at Ukrainian ports due a sea blockade enforced by the Russian navy.

Bosphorus strait

- **Bosphorus strait** is a natural strait, located in **northwestern Turkey**, connecting the **Black Sea** to the **Sea of Marmara**.
- Also known as the **Strait of Istanbul**, this water way links the European part of the city from its Asian part and thus remains as a very strategic waterway in the region.
- Its importance lies in the fact that is a significant shipping route that links the **Black Sea** with the world's oceans.

2. Russia out of UNHRC

Context The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted on a draft resolution to **suspend Russia from the United Nations Human Rights Council** as part of the global response to the alleged war crimes in Bucha, a town outside Kyiv, where more than 300 bodies of civilians have been found after the withdrawal of the Russian forces.

Human Rights Council

- The Human Rights Council is an **inter-governmental body within the United Nations system**.
- It is responsible **for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights** around the world.
- It also addresses and makes recommendations on situations of human rights violations, and can discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations.
- The **Human Rights Council replaced the former UN Commission on Human Rights**.
- It was **created by the UNGA on March 15, 2006, and the body met in its first session in June, 2006**.
- In 2007, the Council adopted an **“Institution-building Package”** to set up its procedures and mechanisms.
- The Council meets at the UN Office **in Geneva, Switzerland**.

Membership of the Council

- The Council is made up of 47 UN Member States who are elected by **majority vote through a direct and secret ballot at the UNGA**.
- The UNGA takes into account the candidate States’ **contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights**, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- The membership of the Council is based on **equitable geographical distribution**.
 - ▶ African and Asia-Pacific states have 13 seats each,
 - ▶ Latin American and Caribbean states have 8 seats
 - ▶ Western European and other states 7 seats
 - ▶ Eastern European states 6 seats
- The **members serve for three years** and are **not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms**.
- With membership on the Council **comes a responsibility to uphold high human rights standards**.
- This is a criteria insisted on by States themselves when they adopted resolution 60/251 in March 2006 to create the Human Rights Council.

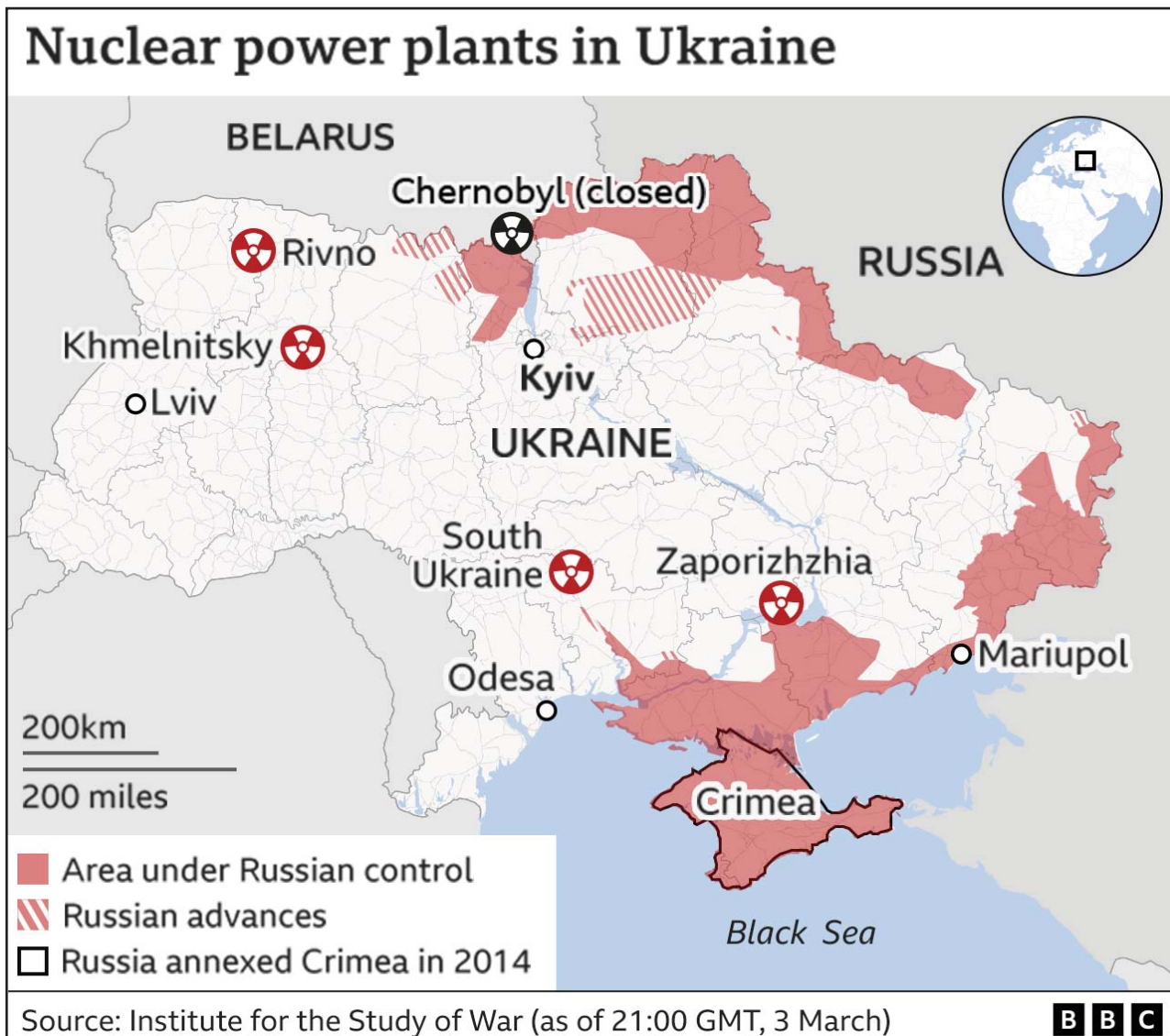
3. Russia-Ukraine conflict: Nuclear plant fire raises contamination scare

Context Russian troops seized the biggest nuclear power plant in Europe (Ukraine’s Zaphorizhzhia nuclear power plant).

About Ukraine’s Nuclear Power Plants:

- Ukraine is **heavily dependent on nuclear energy**.
- In 2020, the 4 plants generated 13,107 GWe power, the **third largest** in Europe after Russia and France.
- Ukraine operates **15 nuclear reactors** that generate around **54 per cent of the country’s electricity needs**.

- Ukraine has four nuclear plants, and all 15 “Water-water Energy Reactors”, or VVER, are located in these plants.
- VVERs are water cooled and water moderated.
- As many as 12 of the reactors were developed in the 1980s, while one came up in 1995 and the last two in 2004.
- The four plants are the:
 - ▶ **Rivne plant** in northwest Ukraine near the Belarus border
 - ▶ **Khmelnitskyi plant** located around 180 km (110 miles) southeast of the Rivne site
 - ▶ **South Ukraine plant** near Odessa
 - ▶ **Zaporizhzhia plant**



About Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant:

- The 6GW Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, located in Energodar, Ukraine, is the biggest nuclear power plant in Europe.
- Zaporizhzhya is one of the four operating NPPs in the country and generates up to 42 billion kWh of electricity, accounting for about 40% of the total electricity generated by all the Ukrainian NPPs and one-fifth of Ukraine’s annual electricity production.

- The Zaporizhzhya NPP consists of **six pressurised water reactor (PWR) units** commissioned between 1984 and 1995, with a gross electrical capacity of 1,000MW each.
- The Zaporizhzhya nuclear power facility is situated on a 104.7ha site **on the banks of the Kakhovka reservoir**.
- The Steppe zone of Ukraine was selected because of available infrastructure at the nearby Zaporozhe Thermal Power Plant, land unsuitable for agriculture and its distance from foreign territories.

4. Nord Stream Pipeline

Context Amid tensions between Russia and Ukraine, pressure is mounting on Germany to stop **the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project**.

The original project

- The original Nord Stream pipeline, with an annual capacity of 55 billion cubic metres (bcm), was finished in late 2012.
- The pipeline system's total capacity is set to double to 110 bcm following Nord Stream 2's completion.
- **Current status of project:** The pipeline falls in **German and Danish Territory**, and all but 150 km pipes for the project have already been laid.

Facts about Russia Energy Reserve-:

- Russia has the largest known natural gas reserves of any state on earth.
- This is the 32% of world proven natural gas reserves mainly owned and operated by Russian monopoly Gazprom, which produces 94% of Russia's natural gas Production.

What is Nord Stream 2 Pipeline Project?

- Nord Stream 2 is an underwater twin pipeline that would transport natural gas from Russia directly to Germany.

Natural gas is a lower-carbon fuel that can replace other fossil fuels in the energy mix and deliver a reliable output to complement intermittent renewable energy.

Largest natural gas fields in Russia

- **Urengoy field – 10.9Tcm:** Located in the northern West Siberia Basin, the Urengoykoye gas and condensate field has been in production since 1978.
- **Yamburg field – 8.2Tcm:** Yamburg, which is operated by Gazprom and located in Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug in Tyumen Oblast, is also the world's third biggest natural gas field.
- **Bovanenkovo field – 4.9Tcm:** Located in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the onshore Bovanenkovo field operated by Gazprom has been in production since 2012.
- **Shtokmn field – 3.9Tcm:** Discovered in 1988, the Shtokman gas and condensate field is located in the central part of the Russian sector of the Barents Sea, approximately 600km north-east of Murmansk and in water depths of ranging from 320m to 340m.
- **Zapolyarnoye field – 3.5Tcm:** The Zapolyarnoye field is located in the southern part of the Taz District, 220km away from Novy Urengoy, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area.

- At a length of 1,230 kilometres, it is to follow the route of the existing Nord Stream twin pipeline underneath the Baltic Sea.
- It will carry 55 billion cubic meter of gas per year.
- The pipeline crosses into the exclusive economic zones of five countries: Russia, Germany, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden.
- It would transport natural gas from Russia directly to Germany.
- Nord Stream 2 is being built by Nord Stream 2 AG, a consortium incorporated in Switzerland.
- Moscow-based, state-owned Gazprom is the project’s sole shareholder.



5. Russia re-joins Black Sea Grain Initiative

Context Recently, Russia re-joined the **Black sea Grain deal** which has drawn attention towards the significance and impacts of the deal on **Global food supply** chains where India is also looking forward for deal's inception.

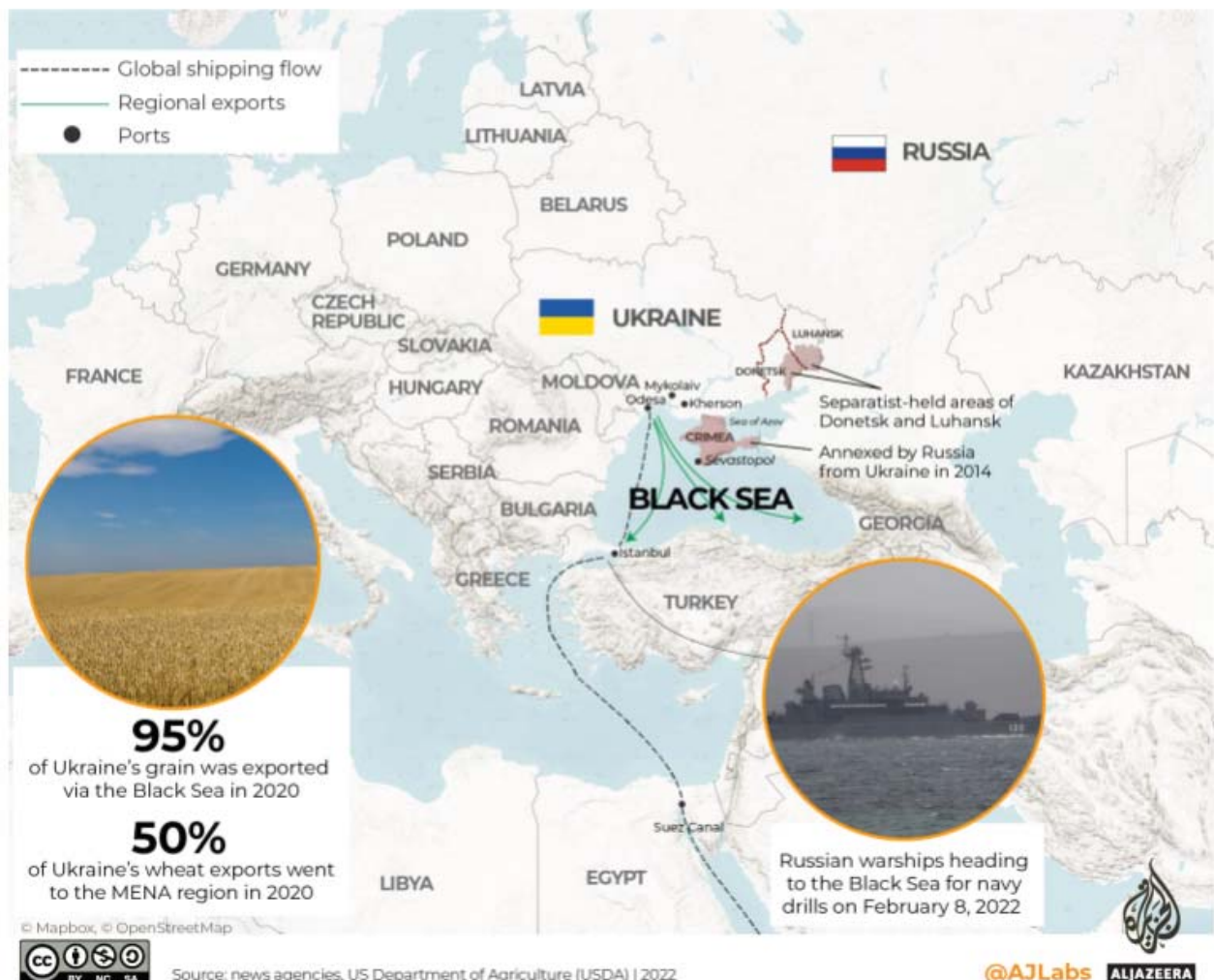
About the Black Sea Grain initiative:

- The deal was mediated by the **United Nations (UN) and Turkey**.
- **Objective:** To provide for a **safe maritime humanitarian corridor** for **Ukrainian exports** (particularly for food grains) from three of its key ports, namely,
 - **Chornomorsk,**
 - **Odesa and**
 - **Yuzhny/Pivdennyi in the Black Sea.**
- It aims to **tackle rising food prices** due to the geopolitical conflict.

TRADE

Geoeconomics of the Black Sea

Ukraine relies on **Black Sea ports to export** agricultural goods **around the globe**.



Do you know?

According to the European Commission, **Ukraine accounts for 10% of the world wheat market, 15% of the corn market, and 13% of the barley market.** With more than 50% of world trade, it is also the main player on the sunflower oil market.

India's say on Black sea grain Deal:

- **Supported the deal:** India has said the suspension of the Black Sea Grain initiative is expected to further exacerbate food security, fuel and fertilizer supply challenges faced by the world, particularly in the global South.
- **Seeking lift on Import bans:** India supported for the deal seeing the rise in global food prices and its shortage of Sunflower oils, fuel and fertilizer imports.

6. Russia blocks agreement on UN nuclear treaty

Context Russia has blocked the adoption of a joint declaration by a United Nations conference on nuclear disarmament.

About

- The **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** is reviewed by its 191 signatories every five years.
- It aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.
- The final document needed the approval of all countries at the conference that are parties to the treaty aimed at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons and ultimately achieving a world without them.

Why there is opposition to banning nuclear armament? (The Second Failure)

- The NPT review conference is supposed to be held every five years but was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This marked the **second failure** of its 191 state parties to produce an outcome document.

Under the NPT's provisions, the five original nuclear powers — **the United States, China, Russia (then the Soviet Union), Britain, and France** — agreed to negotiate toward eliminating their arsenals someday and nations without nuclear weapons promised not to acquire them in exchange for a guarantee to be able to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

- The **last review conference in 2015 ended without an agreement** because of serious differences over establishing a **Middle East zone** free of weapons of mass destruction.
- The issue that changed the dynamics of the conference was **Russia's invasion of Ukraine**, which brought Russian President Vladimir Putin's warning that Russia is a "potent" nuclear power and that any attempt to interfere would lead to "consequences".
- Although later, he rolled back by saying that "**a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought**".

Global fears of nuclear emergency (Russia-Ukraine War)

- Russia's occupation of the **Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant** in south-eastern Ukraine as well as the takeover of the Chernobyl nuclear plant has renewed global fears of another nuclear emergency.

- The Zaporizhzhia plant was temporarily disconnected from the power grid, raising fears of a possible radiation disaster.
- The draft final document recognizes Ukraine's loss of control and the International Atomic Energy Agency's inability to ensure the plant's nuclear material is safeguarded. It has also expressed grave concern for military activities.

Global Negotiations

- The Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains the "world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum" and India supports holding of negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention at the CD.
- India also remains committed to negotiations regarding a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the CD.
 - ▶ FMCT is a proposed international agreement that prohibits the production of two main components of nuclear weapons: highly-enriched Uranium and Plutonium.

7. India's vote in UN on the Russia-Ukraine conflict

- Context**
- India for the first time voted against Russia during a "procedural vote" at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Ukraine.
 - India voted for a procedural matter that Russia opposed at the UN Security Council.

- Going against Moscow's stance, India joined 12 other members of the Council to vote for inviting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to speak via a remote video link.
- While speaking at the meeting, India's Permanent Representative Ruchira Kamboj stuck to New Delhi's distinctive version of neutrality in the Ukraine conflict.

Points highlighted by Ukrainian President

- Zelensky demanded that the Russian Federation be held accountable for its actions against Ukraine.
- The Ukrainian President called on Russia to cease its "nuclear blackmail" and completely withdraw from the plan.

What was India's Stand on its voting in favour of Ukraine?

- India has not criticized Russia for its aggression against Ukraine. It is still on its 'NEUTRAL'
- It wants both countries to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue.
- It has also expressed its support for all diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between the two countries.

India's dependency on Russia

- **Russia standing with India in Global alliances:** India has relied on Russia's veto at the U.N. to protect itself from any adverse statement on Kashmir.
 - ▶ **For example,** during the East Pakistani crisis of 1971 - which led to the creation of Bangladesh - the Soviets protected India from censure at the U.N., vetoing a resolution demanding the withdrawal of troops from the disputed region.
- In all, the Soviets and Russia have used their veto power **six times** to protect India.

- **Defence:** India is also acutely dependent on Russia for a range of weaponry. In fact, **60% to 70%** of India's conventional arsenal is of either Soviet or Russian origin
- **Energy reliance:** It isn't just India's defense industry that is reliant on Moscow. India's energy sector is also inextricably tied to Russia.
- **Oil and gases:** India also has invested in Russian oil and gas fields. India's state-run Oil and Natural Gas Commission, for example, has long been involved in the extraction of fossil fuels off Sakhalin Island, a Russian island in the Pacific Ocean.
- **To wean Russia's dependence on China:** India may also be mute in its criticism of Russia in an attempt to mollify Russia and wean it off its increasing dependence on China.
- The India-Russia strategic relationship has weakened as China-Russia relations have strengthened.

8. War crimes and the rules of war

- Context**
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered a "military operation" in some parts of eastern Ukraine on 24th February, 2022.
 - Russia started the invasion and the crisis escalated with each day passing.

Background (Genesis of War Crimes)

- As per United Nations, the concept of war crimes developed particularly at the end of the **19th century** and the beginning of the **20th century**.
- During that time, the **International Humanitarian Law**, which is also known as the law of armed conflict, was codified.
- **The Hague Conventions** was adopted in 1899 and 1907.
- **The Hague Conventions** prohibited the warring parties of using certain means and methods of warfare.

Geneva Conventions:

- Apart from Hague Conventions, several other related treaties have also been adopted.
- The **Geneva Convention of 1864** and subsequent Geneva Conventions (four 1949 Geneva Conventions and the two 1977 Additional Protocols) focus on the protection of persons not or no longer taking part in hostilities.
- Hague Law and Geneva Law identify several of the violations of its norms, however, all violations are not war crimes.

What are war crimes?

- As per the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**, when it comes to war crimes, the court has jurisdiction when the crime is committed as part of a plan or policy or as part of a large-scale commission of such crimes.
- For the purpose of this statute, '**War Crimes**' means grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.
- Violation as per the above statute includes:
 - ▶ wilful killing
 - ▶ torture or inhuman treatment (including biological experiments)
 - ▶ wilfully causing great suffering (or serious injury to body or health)

- ▶ extensive destruction and appropriation of property
- ▶ compelling a prisoner of war or other protected person to serve in the forces
- ▶ wilfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial
- ▶ unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement, taking of hostages

What about 'Grey Areas' in the definition?

- As per the **UN Office on Genocide Prevention** and the Responsibility to Protect, war crimes are separated from **genocide** and **crimes against humanity**.
 - ▶ Genocide and crimes against humanity can happen in peacetime. It can happen during the unilateral aggression of a military toward a group of unarmed people.
- On the other hand, war crimes are defined as **occurring in a domestic conflict or a war between two states**.
- There is no white and black when it comes to identifying and defining war crimes, a lot of grey is also there because what constitutes a war crime may differ, depending on whether an armed conflict is international or non-international.
- UN states that war crimes contain two main elements –
- **A contextual element:** "the conduct took place in the context of and was associated with an international/non-international armed conflict".

9. G7 summit: Ukraine crisis and major takeaways for India

Context Prime Minister Narendra Modi, invited by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of Germany, participated in the G7 Summit meeting in Germany. The summit is being hosted by Germany in its capacity as the chair of G7.

What is G7?

- The Group of Seven (G7) is an inter-governmental political grouping consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the US.

Key takeaways from the summit

- **Climate change:** G7 nations are moving closer on their climate strategies, but differences over key details will prevent more concerted action for now.
- **Building back better and greener:** G7 countries will channel more international development finance into infrastructure and climate change projects, but they refused to label the initiative as a direct rival to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- **Shifting approach towards China:** The G7 conference official communiqué directly mentioned competition with China for the first time—a notable shift from previous summits, although countries differ in their approach.
- **Global Covid-19 vaccine rollout:** G7 countries are ramping up their vaccine diplomacy efforts; however, the implementation of pledges will remain to be seen, and G7 states have lost the public relations battle to China and Russia.
- **Global tax agreement remains elusive:** Leaders endorsed the 15% global minimum corporate tax plan, but major obstacles to its implementation remain.
- One important takeaway is India's inclusion in the Just Energy Transition Partnership.

- ▶ This was initiated with South Africa at COP26, as a long-term ambitious approach to support transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy.
- US has announced to lead the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment.
 - ▶ This PGII intends to cover the infrastructure gap in developing countries and strengthen global economic and supply chains and thus contribute to the security among the friends of the US.
- Other major outcomes included the
 - ▶ Global Alliance on Food Security
 - ▶ Climate Club
 - ▶ a \$600 billion Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment

IAS-2023

Prelims

Test Series

Total 65 Tests (GS + CSAT)

Questions based on UPSC Pattern

Discussion After each Test

Detailed Performance analysis including All India Ranking


GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

ENGLISH
& हिन्दी माध्यम

20+ OFFLINE
CENTERS

Online
&
Offline





1. White House supports 'EAGLE Act'

Context Recently, the White House supported the US Congress to pass legislation (EAGLE Act of 2022), whose aim is to eliminate the per-country quota on issuing green cards.

What is the EAGLE Act of 2022?

- It is known as **The Immigration Bill, HR 3648**.
- EAGLE stands for **Equal Access to Green cards for Legal Employment (EAGLE) Act, 2022**.
- It focuses on hiring immigrants based on merit, not their birthplace.
- It was originally introduced in House on June 1st, 2021.
- It was later re-introduced in 2022.

The goal of the Act:

- To allow US employers to “focus on hiring immigrants based on merit, not their birthplace, by eliminating the “per country” limitation on employment-based immigrant visas (green cards).”

Exceptions:

- During the transition period, some visas would be put aside for:
 - ▶ Physical therapists and nurses
 - ▶ employment-based immigrants and their family members who are not currently in the United States
- **Individuals waiting in the immigrant visa backlog:** The act includes provisions to allow individuals who have been waiting in the immigrant visa backlog for two years to file their green card applications.

Impact on less-populated countries:

- To reduce the impact of this on less-populated countries, the legislation plans to phase out the per-country caps over the course of nine years.

2. UN counter-terrorism meet

Context ◦ A special meeting of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee on ‘**Countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes**’, was held recently. The meeting was attended by the representatives of all 15 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members.

- **Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)** unanimously adopted the Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.
- India also gave 5 point suggestion to the committee.

About UN Counter-Terrorism Committee

- **A dedicated Counter:** Terrorism committee of the UNSC was established in 2001, in the aftermath of the 11 September attack against the United States.
- **Resolution:** The committee was formed after the UNSC resolution of 1373 (2001).
- **Members:** The Committee is composed of 15 Member States - Albania (2023), Brazil (2023), China, France, Gabon (2023), Ghana (2023), India (2022), Ireland (2022), Kenya (2022), Mexico (2022), Norway (2022), Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates (2023), United Kingdom and United States.
- **Thematic Areas:** The Counter-Terrorism Committee has a global mandate and focuses on specific thematic areas including Counter-terrorism strategies, countering the financing of terrorism, Border security and arms trafficking, Law enforcement, Human Rights, etc.

Delhi Declaration

- **Aim:** It aims to cover the main concerns surrounding the abuse of drones, social media platforms, and crowd-funding, and create guidelines that will help to tackle the growing issue.
- **Non-binding Document:** Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes is a non-binding document.
- **Thematic coordination:** Members of the Committee will draft recommendations on the three themes- namely:
 - ▶ Countering terrorist exploitation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)
 - ▶ Countering terrorism financing
 - ▶ Threats poses by terrorist use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)
- **Good practices:** A compilation of good practices on the opportunities offered by the same set of technologies to tackle threats will also be issued.

5-point suggestion

India made a 5-point suggestion for the UN Counter-terrorism Committee's consideration:

- **Curb Terror Financing:** Effective and sustained efforts at countering terror financing is at the heart of the issue of countering terrorism. Normative efforts at the UN need to be coordinated through collaboration with other fora like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Egmont Group.
- **Transparency:** We need to ensure the effective and transparent functioning of the Security Council sanctions regime and make sure that they are not rendered ineffective for political reasons.
- **International Cooperation:** International cooperation and concerted action against terrorists and their sponsors, including through the dismantlement of terrorist safe havens, sanctuaries, training grounds, and financial and ideological as well as political support structures, are critical imperatives to defeat this scourge.
- **Terror-crime nexus:** Terrorism's nexus with transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, and arms trafficking is now well established."
- **Technology misuse:** Over the years, terrorist groups have diversified their funding portfolio. They have also begun to exploit the anonymity afforded by new and emerging technologies such as virtual currencies for fundraising and finances.

3. India and U.S led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework

Context India has decided to join three pillars of the **United States-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)**--supply chains, tax and anti-corruption and clean energy--while opting out of the trade pillar for now.

About

- India was the only country not to join the declaration on trade.
- **Members:** India, USA, Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF):

- **The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** was launched by United States (US) President Biden in Tokyo in May, 2022.
- The IPEF has four pillars:
 - ▶ Trade
 - ▶ supply chains
 - ▶ clean energy, decarbonisation and infrastructure
 - ▶ tax and anti-corruption
- Except Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, other Southeast Asian nations are a part of the IPEF.
- The Framework will advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness for our economies.
- Through IPEF, the partners aim to contribute to cooperation, stability, prosperity, development, and peace within the region.
- The Framework will also offer tangible benefits that fuel economic activity and investment, promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and benefit workers and consumers across the region.
- The 14 IPEF partners represent 40 percent of global GDP and 28 percent of global goods and services trade.

Trade Pillar	Supply Chain Pillar	Clean Energy Pillar	Fair Economy Pillar
In the Trade Pillar, the IPEF partners will seek high-standard provisions in areas that are foundational to resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Labour, ◦ Environment, ◦ Digital economy, ◦ Agriculture, ◦ Transparency and ◦ Good regulatory Practices 	In the Supply Chain Pillar, the countries will seek to coordinate actions to mitigate and prevent future supply chain disruptions and secure critical sectors and key products for our manufacturers	In the Clean Energy Pillar, the countries will seek to expand investment opportunities, spur innovation, and improve the livelihoods of citizens as the partners unlock the region's abundant clean energy resources and substantial carbon sequestration potential.	In the Clean Energy Pillar, the countries will seek to expand investment opportunities, spur innovation, and improve the livelihoods of citizens as the partners unlock the region's abundant clean energy resources and substantial carbon sequestration potential.

4. CAATSA waiver

Context The US House of Representatives has made a historic decision and approved legislation that recommends an **India-specific waiver under CAATSA** as a part of an amendment during floor consideration of the **National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**.

Details

- The United States House of Representatives has passed by voice vote the legislative amendment that **approves waiver to India against the punitive CAATSA sanctions**.
- It was in the backdrop of India purchasing the **S-400 missile defense** system from Russia to help deter aggressors like China.

The **S-400** is known as Russia's most advanced **long-range surface-to-air missile defense system**. The US has already **imposed sanctions on Turkey under the CAATSA** for the purchase of a batch of S-400 missile defense systems from Russia.

About CAATSA sanctions:

- The **Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)** law was brought in 2017 and provides for punitive actions by the US government against any country engaged in transactions with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors.
- **CAATSA is a tough US law that authorizes the US administration to impose sanctions on countries that purchase major defense hardware from Russia**
- Besides Russia, CAATSA is aimed at enforcing sanctions against Iran and North Korea.
- This was in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its alleged meddling in the 2016 US presidential elections.

Sanctions on India:

- **Types of Sanctions:** The CAATSA contains 12 types of sanctions. There are only two sanctions that may impact either India-Russia relations or India-US relations.
 - ▶ **1. Prohibition of Banking transactions:** The first of these, which is likely to have an impact on India-Russia relations, is the "Prohibition of Banking transactions".
 - ▶ This was meant for making it difficult for India in making payments in US Dollars to Russia for the purchase of the S-400 systems.
 - ▶ **2. Export Sanction:** This is the "export sanction" which has the potential to completely derail the India-US Strategic and Defence partnership, as it will deny the license for, and export of, any items controlled by the US. The second sanction will have greater consequences for India-US relations.
- **Waiver Criteria:** The US President was given the authority in 2018 to waive CAATSA sanctions on a case-by-case basis.

5. US makes lynching a hate crime

Context United States President Joe Biden has signed into law the **first federal legislation** that makes **lynching a federal hate crime** in the country after civil rights groups pushed for such a measure for more than a century.

What is the Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Bill?

- It makes lynching a federal crime punishable by imprisonment of up to 30 years.
- The legislation is named after 14-year-old Emmett Till, who was brutally murdered in a racist attack in Mississippi in 1955.
- This law expressly terms lynching to be a hate crime.
- The abovementioned law was unambitiously passed by the US lawmakers with only 3 Republican legislators opposing it.
- Under this law, an action can be prosecuted as a lynching when a person conspires to commit a hate crime that results in death or serious injury.
- It has to be noted that in the legislative history of United States, the passing of an Anti-Lynching Bill was attempted about 200 times.
- In 1900, the first anti-lynching Bill was introduced by George Henry White, who was then the only black man in the Congress.

Lynching in India:

- In recent years India has also faced the problem of mob lynching.
- Most common reason for lynching in India have arisen due to cow vigilantism.
- People getting lynched in most cases are accused of smuggling cattle for slaughtering them.
- Rumors regarding crimes or wrong committed by a person may also become the reason for him being lynched by the mob.
- It has been found that in most cases of lynching, the incident was caused due to spread of rumors through social media.
- People belonging to minority community have mostly been the victims of lynching in India.

1. Rishi Sunak becomes Britain's first non-white Prime Minister

Context Recently, Rishi Sunak was elected as Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister, scripting an impressive political comeback in British politics. This has shown the diversity in Modern day Britain and is expected to strengthen India-UK relations.

About

- Rishi Sunak, 42 was elected Conservative Party leader and the youngest British Prime Minister in 210 years.
- He is also the First Non-white person elected as the Prime Minister of Britain of Hindu origin.
- He was born on 12 May 1980 and is a British politician who has served as the Leader of the Conservative Party.
- Sunak served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 2020 to 2022 and Chief Secretary to the Treasury from 2019 to 2020.
- He has also been the Member of Parliament (MP) for Richmond (Yorks) since 2015.

Significance of Indian Diaspora:

- According to the **Global Migration Report 2020**, India continues to be the largest country of origin of international migrants with a 5 million-strong diaspora across the world.
- It contributes by way of remittances, investment, lobbying for India, promoting Indian culture abroad, and building a good image of India through its intelligence and industry.
- Many people of Indian origin hold top political positions in many countries, in the USA itself; they are now a significant part of Republicans and Democrats, as well as the government.
- India's diaspora played an important role in the India-U.S. nuclear deal.
- Indian diaspora is not just a part of India's soft power, but a fully transferable political vote bank as well.

2. Scotland becomes first country to make period products free for all

Context The Scottish government has become the first in the world to legally protect the right to access free period products when its **Period Products Act** came into force recently.

About

- Scotland is the first country to offer period products free of charge on a national scale. Others, including New Zealand and Kenya, distribute products for free in public schools.
- Scotland has become **the first country in the world** to make period products free for all.
- There is now a **legal duty on local authorities** to provide free items such as tampons and sanitary pads to “anyone who needs them”.
- Products will be **distributed through councils and education providers** as the Period Products Act comes into force.
- The bill was **introduced by Labour MSP Monica Lennon**, who has been campaigning to end period poverty since 2016.
- Under the new law, schools, colleges and universities as well as local government bodies must make a range of period products available for free in their bathrooms.
- The Scottish government already invested millions of pounds since 2017 to fund free period products in educational institutions, but the law makes it a legal requirement.

What is period poverty?

- Period poverty is when those on low incomes can’t afford, or access, suitable period products.
- With average periods lasting about five days, it can cost up to £8 a month for tampons and pads, and some women struggle to afford the cost.

NOTE: In India, there is also a serious problem of period poverty with millions of women still using cloth during their menstruation days risking their health. There is still a considerable amount of taboo around the topic and the government has been spreading awareness in the matter.

3. Finland and Sweden are set to apply for NATO membership

Context Finland and Sweden could apply for membership of the 30-nation NATO alliance within days, ending decades of military non-alignment in a historic shift triggered by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

- NATO is an **intergovernmental military alliance** 30 different countries from Europe, North American and Asia.
- It was established by the North Atlantic Treaty (also called the **Washington Treaty**) of April 4, **1949**, which sought to create a counterweight to Soviet armies stationed in Central and Eastern Europe after World War II.
- **Original member:** Its **original members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**
- The heart of NATO is expressed in **Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty**, in which the signatory members agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and collective action must be taken to assist party or parties so attacked.
- **Headquarter:** The NATO **headquarters are located in Brussels, Belgium**, while the headquarters of Allied Command Operations is near Mons, Belgium.

- **Member countries:** Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, UK and USA.
- **North Macedonia is the latest entry in the organization**

4. France backs out of submarine project

Context Ahead of PM Modi's scheduled visit, France has denounced its participation in the **P-75 India (P-75I)** project under which six conventional submarines are to be built in India for the Indian Navy.

Why did France pull out?

- The reason was that the **Request for Proposal (RFP)** requires that the fuel cell AIP be sea proven, which not the case is for us yet since the French Navy does not use such a propulsion system.
- AIP refers to **Air-Independent Propulsion**, a technology for conventional — that is, non-nuclear — submarines.

Project 75 India (P-75I)

- P75I was first cleared in 2007, but lay dormant until now after undergoing numerous changes.
- The P75I project is part of a 30-year submarine building plan that ends in 2030.
- In 1999, the Indian government approved a plan for the navy to build and induct state-of-the-art indigenous submarines by 2030.
- The project cost is about Rs. **45,000 crore**.
- As part of this plan, India was **to build 24 submarines** — 18 conventional submarines and six nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) — as an effective deterrent against China and Pakistan.
- This project envisages the construction of **six conventional submarines with better sensors and weapons and the Air Independent Propulsion System (AIP)**.
- The project has been cleared under the strategic partnership model.
- As part of the initial program phase, **India signed a \$3.75 billion contract with France's Naval Group to build six Scorpene-class submarines**.
- The next phase of the program is for construction of six conventional submarines with improved sensors and weapons. They must also have an AIP system for better performance.
- Apart from Naval Group, four other companies are part of the bidding: **Russia's Rosoboronexport, Spain's Navantia, Germany's Thyssenkrupp, and South Korea's Daewoo**.

5. 6th India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations

Context Recently, the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and of the Republic of India held the sixth round of Inter-Governmental Consultations.

Highlights of 6th round of Inter-Governmental Consultations:

- The two countries signed agreements for collaboration on:
- Green and Sustainable Development Partnership

- The implementation of Triangular Development Cooperation projects in Third Countries
- Indo-German Development Cooperation Regarding Renewable Energy Partnership
- The Initialing of the Agreement on a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership
- Continuation of cooperation in the field of advanced training of corporate executives and junior executives from India.
- Agroecology
- Forest Landscape Restoration
- Indo – German Green Hydrogen Task Force

Joint declaration of Intent on Indo – German Green Hydrogen Task Force:

- India has huge **ambitions in energy transition**.
- It will add 500GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.
- India is coming out with bids for green hydrogen.
- Under the agreement which was signed today both countries will establish an Indo-German Green Hydrogen Task Force to strengthen **mutual cooperation** in production, utilization, storage and distribution of Green Hydrogen through building enabling frameworks for projects, regulations and standards, trade and joint **research and development (R&D)** projects.
- India has launched the **National Green Hydrogen Mission** with the goal to make India the global hub of Green Hydrogen production and export.
- Germany also has developed an ambitious **National Hydrogen Strategy** with the aim to assume global leadership in hydrogen technologies.
- Blessed with abundant renewable energy potential and experience of implementing renewable energy projects, India can produce low-cost Green Hydrogen to progressively decarbonize a range of industry sectors, and also export it to meet global demand.
- With strengths in innovation and manufacturing, Germany is already implementing numerous hydrogen projects.

India-Germany:

- India was the **first country** to end the state of war with Germany in 1951, and therefore was among the first countries to grant the Federal Republic of Germany **diplomatic recognition**.
- Germany established its Consulate General in Mumbai in 1951, leading to the establishment of a full-fledged Embassy in New Delhi in 1952.
- India and Germany maintain a '**Strategic Partnership**' since 2000-01.
- In May 2000, both countries adopted the '**Agenda for the Indo-German Partnership in the 21st Century**', which includes regular meetings of both Heads of Government as well as annual meetings of the Foreign Ministers.

6. G7 and EU announce price cap on Russian diesel

Context: The European Union (EU) has joined the United States and the United Kingdom in banning imports of Russian diesel and other refined oil products.

About the move:

- The price cap on **Russian refined fuel**.
- The ban on refined fuels — in particular, diesel with its **wide industrial and domestic usage** — has pushed the market into uncertainty amid historically **low diesel stocks** in Europe.

Price cap:

- A price cap is simply a process for **establishing rates or prices** that will be charged for a particular good or service.
- In some instances, there are **governmental organizations** that determine price regulation. One example is in the rates that may be charged for household utilities, such as water and electricity.

Background:

- The oil products embargo comes two months after a similar ban on **Russian crude oil** brought in by sea – both announced in June 2022 as part of the **EU's sixth sanctions package** against Russia in response to Russia invasion of Ukraine.
- The **crude oil embargo** and the **oil price cap** which came into effect on December 5 passed off without any major disruption.

Significance of European Union and G7 Countries:

- The Group of Seven (G7) is an inter-governmental political grouping consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the US.
- G-7 members comprising Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK and the US currently represent close to 45% of the global GDP and more than 10% of the world's population.
- The EU is a **political and Economic Union (EU) of 27 member states** which are located primarily in Europe.
- EU policies aim to ensure the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the internal market.
- It enacts legislation in justice and home affairs.

Impact on diesel prices:

- The sanction could lead to major disruptions in **diesel-reliant industries** such as transportation and agriculture, with fuel price rises further undermining **the fight against inflation**.
- The perceived disruption is already **driving up diesel prices**.
- While the situation has improved in recent months due to a mild winter, **diesel stocks remained Low**.
- An increase in **shipping costs as supplies** would now need to come from regions further afield, higher production costs in countries such as the **US**.

- The EU relied on Russia for **nearly half its diesel needs** before Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.
- That share dropped over the past year but remained significant with EU members buying in excess of 200 million barrels of diesel last year.

Demand-supply mismatches:

- The ban has left the EU with a void of about **600,000 barrels of diesel** and related oil products per day,
 - ▶ This gap that the EU intends to plug with increased supplies from the **Middle East, Asia and the US**.
- The large refineries such as the **Al-Zour plant in Kuwait** and the **Jazan refinery in Saudi Arabia** have increased their production and dependence on them by the EU.

- Additionally, Germany has inked a deal with UAE's **Abu Dhabi National Oil Co** that would see the oil firm provide **250,000 tons of diesel a month in 2023**.

Impact on India:

- **Increase in diesel exports:** India's diesel exports to Europe have soared since the invasion as refiners take advantage of low feedstock costs thanks to steeply discounted Russian crude and high diesel prices.

China's move:

- China has raised its first batch of 2023 **export quotas for diesel** and other refined oil products.
- The move is expected to keep its **diesel exports at record levels**, which could potentially help push barrels from other producers westward into Europe.

What would be the impact of the diesel price cap?

- The **European Union (EU)** and the **Group of Seven (G7)** industrialized countries, agreed to set a **\$100 (€91) per barrel price cap on Russian diesel** and a **\$45 per barrel cap** on discounted products like fuel oil.
- The price cap is meant to ensure that Russian diesel and other oil products can still be sold to third countries and prevent any massive spike in prices following the EU ban.
- The mechanism would allow **European insurance** and **shipping firms** to continue offering their services to shippers carrying Russian oil products to other regions as long as the fuel is purchased at or below an agreed cap level.
- The **oil products price cap** would have minimal impact on Russian refining crude runs and distillate exports.

7. Trilateral Cooperative initiative

Context: India, France and the United Arab Emirates declared their common intent to formalise a “**Trilateral Cooperative initiative**” to collaborate on nuclear energy and explore opportunities in the **Indian Ocean region**.

About the initiative:

- **Background:** The trilateral was first discussed when the three foreign Ministers had met on the sidelines of the **UN General Assembly in New York** in September 2022.
- All the three countries agreed to work together in the field of **solar and nuclear energy, climate change and biodiversity**.
- **Objective:** It will serve as a forum to promote the design and execution of cooperation projects in the fields of energy, with a focus on solar and nuclear energy, as well as in the fight against climate change and the protection of biodiversity, particularly in the Indian Ocean region.
- The countries have also agreed to cooperate in defence preparation and in countering infectious diseases.
- Following the alliance, multilateral organizations such as **World Health Organization (WHO), Gavi-the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund, and Unitaid** will be encouraged.
- The three countries will also attempt to identify tangible cooperation on implementing the “**One Health**” **approach**, and support the development of local capacities in biomedical innovation and production within developing countries.

A range of trilateral events will be held in the backdrop of the Indian Presidency of the G20 here and COP28 to be held in UAE in November-December 2023.

India-UAE relations:

- India and UAE have entered into a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** by signing the CEPA in February, 2022.
- This agreement will boost bilateral trade between the two countries and benefit both the economies.

Significance of UAE:

- UAE is the **third largest trading partner** of India after China and USA.
- The UAE has established itself as a major economic hub not just in the **Middle East/West Asia region**, but also globally.
- As a part of **Gulf Cooperation Council**, UAE can help in finalising the FTA between Indian and the GCC.
- India-UAE relations have become a focal point of **India's Extended Neighbourhood** and Look West policies in the region. This deal will further boost the relation between the two countries.

India's Extended Neighbourhood:

- In 2004 the Indian government affirmed that "the concept" of an "extended neighbourhood for India" included the region from the Suez Canal to the South China Sea and includes within it **West Asia, the Gulf, Central Asia, South East Asia, East Asia, the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region**.
- **Look West Policy:** In the year 2005, the government of India launched its Look West Policy which focused on India improving its relations with West Asian countries.
- The three main axes of India's Look West Policy are- The Arab Gulf countries, Israel and Iran.

India-France relations:

- India and France share a dynamic and multifaceted relationship.
- Both countries signed a strategic partnership agreement in 1998.
- Frequent interactions at the highest political levels, comprehensive defence cooperation and dynamic cultural linkages have further contributed to maturing the partnership.
- Convergence of their views on multi-polar world order and their belief in multilateralism for addressing international challenges help them in developing greater political synergy at the global level.
- India and France have been expanding their relationship amid changing regional and global dynamics.
- France has been termed by India as its "**Gateway to Europe**".

1. Critical minerals & the new India-Australia collaboration

- Context**
- India and Australia recently decided to strengthen their partnership in the field of projects and supply chains for critical minerals.
 - Australia committed \$5.8 million to the three-year **India-Australia Critical Minerals Investment Partnership**.

What are critical minerals?

- They are elements that are the **building blocks of essential modern-day technologies, and are at risk of supply chain disruptions**.
- These minerals are now **used everywhere from making mobile phones, computers to batteries, electric vehicles and green technologies like solar panels and wind turbines**.
- Aerospace, communications and defence industries also rely on several such minerals as they are used in manufacturing fighter jets, drones, radio sets and other critical equipment.

Steps taken by India:

- India has set up **KABIL or the KhanijBidesh India Limited**, a joint venture of three public sector companies, to “ensure a consistent supply of critical and strategic minerals to the Indian domestic market”.
- While KABIL would ensure mineral security of the nation, it would also help in realizing the overall objective of import substitution.
- Australia’s **Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO)** and KABIL had recently signed an MoU aimed at ensuring reliable supply of critical minerals to India.

KABIL

- The Mines Ministry has created a joint venture (JV) company — Khanij Bidesh India (KABIL) — with participating interest from National Aluminium Company (NALCO), Hindustan Copper (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Corporation (MECL).
- The equity participation is 40:30:30, respectively.

AUSTRALIA-INDIA PARTNERSHIP IN CRITICAL MINERALS

At the virtual summit, Prime Ministers Scott Morrison and Narendra Modi welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL), India and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO), Australia for joint cooperation on critical minerals projects.

The MoU, signed on 10th March 2022, aims to:

- provide a collaborative framework for building an Australia - India partnership in critical mineral eco-system;
- support strategic national interest and commercial investment in Australian critical mineral projects; &
- develop a robust and commercially viable critical minerals supply chain with the purpose to foster innovation.



75 AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES INDIA

#Outcomes #AusIndSummit

AUSTRALIA

2. India-Australia major trade pact comes into effect

Context: The Indian Commerce minister has formally operationalised one of the major free trade agreements (FTA) in 2022 – **the India-Australia Economic and Cooperation Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA)** – by issuing ‘**preferential certificates of origin**’ to export consignments related to textiles, jewellery and pharmaceutical sectors in Mumbai.

What are preferential certificates of origin?

- This type of Certificate of Origin is given towards goods that are subject to **preferential tariff treatment** in the payment of duties. These duties may be a reduction of the normal tariff, or it also may be a complete exemption of the tariffs.

Background

- In September 2021, Australia and India formally re-launched CECA negotiations with the intention of concluding **an Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA)**.
- It aims to swiftly liberalise and deepen bilateral trade in goods and services, and to then use this foundation to resume negotiations on the more ambitious CECA.

- The Australian Parliament has ratified in last month and has now come into effect, called as the **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)** with India. This pact has been seen as an opportunity for growing Indian Businesses.

The India-Australia ECTA:

- It covers almost all the **tariff lines** dealt in by India and Australia.

Tariff Lines: It is a product as defined in lists of tariff rates. A specific tariff is a tax imposed directly onto one imported good and does not depend on the value of that imported good. A specific tariff is usually based on the weight or number of imported goods.

- India will benefit from preferential market access provided by **Australia on 100%** of its tariff lines.
- India will be offering preferential access to Australia on over **70% of its tariff lines**.
- Under the agreement, Indian graduates from **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)** will be granted **extended post-study work visas**.
- It will provide **zero-duty access to 96% of India's exports** to Australia and will give about 85% of Australia's exports zero-duty access to the Indian market
- It will boost bilateral **trade in goods and services** to USD 45-50 billion over five years, up from around USD 27 billion, and generate over one million jobs in India, according to a government estimate.

1. Lok Sabha passes Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022

Context The Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022, passed in Parliament, seeks to protect the Antarctic environment and regulate activities in the region.

The region

- It is a cold terrain, located in a remote area in the **Southern Hemisphere** covered by the **Antarctic Convergence**—an “uneven line of latitude where cold, **northward-flowing Antarctic waters** meet the warmer waters of the world’s oceans.”
- Antarctica is an exclusive landmass without a native population, though there are human settlements with scientists and their support staff working round the year.
- The continent of Antarctica, including its ice-shelves, and all areas of the continental shelf adjacent to it along with all islands (including their ice-shelves), seas, and air space south of 60°S latitude, are part of the legislation’s jurisdiction.

About Antarctica Treaty:

- The Antarctic Treaty was signed in Washington on **1st December 1959** by the twelve nations that had been active during the IGY (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, and USSR).
- The Treaty, which applies to the area south of 60° South latitude, is surprisingly short, but remarkably effective.
- Through this agreement, the countries active in Antarctica consult on the uses of a whole continent, with a commitment that it should not become the scene or object of international discord. In its fourteen articles the Treaty:
- Later, more countries, including India, have become party to the treaty, and today it counts more than 54 members.
- The **Indian Antarctic Programme** is a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional program under the control of the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- India officially **acceded to the Antarctic Treaty System in August 1983**.

Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) includes the three international agreements are:

- Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (1972)
- Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (1980)
- Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (1991)

2. India's Arctic Ambitions

Context As per the contents of **India's Arctic Policy**, unveiled recently, India aspires to have a permanent presence, more research stations and establish satellite ground stations in the Arctic region.

What is the Arctic Policy?

- **Title: 'India and the Arctic: building a partnership for sustainable development'.**
- The policy is built on six central pillars —
- science and research
- climate and environmental protection
- economic and human development
- transportation and connectivity
- governance and international cooperation
- national capacity building

Arctic region

- The region surrounding the North Pole consists of a large ocean surrounded by land.
- This ocean, called the Arctic Ocean, is like no other ocean on Earth; and because of its special location and climate, the lands that surround it are unique.
- The Arctic region covers parts of eight countries: Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and the United States.

What is the status of India's prepublicance in Arctic as of now?

- India has had a **research base in the Arctic since 2008** and also has **two observatories** in the region.
- The country presently has a single station, **Himadri, in Ny-Alesund, Svalbard, a Norwegian** archipelago, where research personnel are usually present for 180 days.
- It is in the **process of procuring an ice-breaker research vessel** that can navigate the region.
- India, since 2007, has so far sent 13 expeditions to Arctic and runs 23 active science projects on the region.
- About **25 universities and institutes** in India are involved in Arctic research in India.
- India has **"Observer" status in Arctic Council.**

Arctic Council

- Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum that addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and the indigenous people of the Arctic.
- At present, eight countries exercise sovereignty over the lands within the Arctic Circle.
- Members of Arctic Council are- Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and United States.
- **Headquarters** of Arctic Circle is located at **Tromso, Norway.**

1. India's Patent regime

- Context**
- The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) said in a report that India was one of the most challenging major economies as far as IP protection and enforcement is concerned.
 - It has decided to retain India on its **Priority Watch List** along with six other countries — **Argentina, Chile, China, Indonesia, Russia and Venezuela.**

What is a patent?

- A patent is an exclusive set of rights granted for an invention, which may be a product or process that provides a new way of doing something or offers a new technical solutions to a problems.

What is India's Patent regime?

- India's Patent regime is governed by **India's Patent Act 1970**, with the provision:
- It should be novel
- It should have inventive steps or it must be non-obvious
- It should be capable of Industrial application
- It should not attract the provisions of **sections 3 and 4 of the Patents Act of 1970**

What does the Section 3 of Indian patent act deal with?

- **Section 3** deals with non-compliance as established under the Act.
- **Section 3 (d)** does not exclude “the discovery of a new type of known object that is not effective in developing the known success of that object.
 - ▶ or the mere discovery of any new space or new use of a known object
 - ▶ or just the use of a known process, machine or resources unless that known process results in a new product
 - ▶ or uses at least one new reactant ”to qualify for protection under copyright law.
- **Section 3 (d)** prohibits what is known as “**ever-greening**” of patents.
- It is a business, legal, business, and technical strategy to extend / extend the patent granted to an expired site, in order to save profits for them, by taking new patents.
- According to the Committee report, **Section 3 (d)** allows generic competition by authorizing only novels and real inventions.
- A minor decision in the **Novartis vs. case. Union of India (2013)**, proposed the validity of section 3 (d).

2. Quad: Asian NATO or Arc of Democracy?

Context Leaders of the four Quad nations met in Tokyo and discussed wide range of topics from the war in Europe to dealing with China, and their cooperation on non-security initiatives such as tech and infra.

About QUAD

- The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD)** also known as QUAD is an Inter-governmental security forum.
- It comprises of 4 countries India, the United States, Japan and Australia.
- The member countries of the QUAD organise summits, exchanges the information and military drills.
- The objective is to ensure and support a “free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.
- The idea of QUAD was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.

What is the structure of Quad?

- The Quad is not structured like a typical multilateral organisation and lacks a secretariat and any permanent decision-making body.
- Instead of creating policy along the lines of the European Union or United Nations, the Quad has focused on expanding existing agreements between member countries and highlighting their shared values.
- Also unlike NATO, the Quad does not include provisions for collective defence, instead it focuses on the conduct of joint military exercises as a show of unity and diplomatic cohesion.

3. Neighbourhood “FAST” Policy

Context ◦ New Delhi now stepping up engagement with India’s neighbours as a part of ‘**Neighbourhood first policy**’, now by shifting towards the ‘**Neighbourhood Fast Policy**’ declared at the **South Asian economic conference**.

◦ The conference was organised by the **Foreign policy Think tank and Research and Information System for Developing countries (RIS)** in the capital.

What is Neighbourhood First Policy?

- **Neighbourhood First Policy of India** is a core component of India’s foreign policy.
- It focuses on peaceful relations and collaborative synergetic co-development with its South Asian neighbours of the Indian subcontinent encompassing a diverse range of topics, such as
 - ▶ Economic
 - ▶ Technology
 - ▶ Research and education
 - ▶ Connectivity (digital, surface and air transport, energy grid connectivity, logistic chains, etc)
 - ▶ Space program
 - ▶ Defence security
 - ▶ Environment
 - ▶ Climate challenge

- This policy creates new avenues as well as leverages existing regional cooperation initiatives, such as **SAARC, SASEC, BBIN, and BIMSTEC**.
- **It compliments India's Look East policy focused on Southeast Asia and Look West Policy focused on Middle East.**

Why India puts its neighbourhood first?

- **Geostrategic importance:** The country's **geopolitical and geostrategic location** has prompted New Delhi to pursue unique relations with neighbours.
- **Disturbed history:** Important turning points in the history of relations have been **India's nuclear tests** of 1998, the **Kargil War of 1999** and the **2001 terrorist attacks in the US** and on the Indian parliament.
- With the background of **Gujarat's development model** and inspiration from the '**Gujral Doctrine**', Prime Minister has embarked on a pragmatic and proactive policy of putting the "**neighbourhood first**".

Gujral Doctrine

- The Gujral Doctrine is a set of five principles to guide the conduct of foreign relations with India's immediate neighbours as spelt out by **I.K. Gujral** (12th prime minister of India from April 1997 to March 1998), first as **India's foreign minister** and later as the **Prime Minister**.
- These principles are:
 - ▶ **First**, with neighbours like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity, but gives and accommodates what it can in good faith and trust
 - ▶ **Second**, no South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region
 - ▶ **Third**, no country should interfere in the internal affairs of another
 - ▶ **Fourth**, all South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
 - ▶ **Finally**, they should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations
- It now seems clear that India's "**neighbourhood first**" policy, which accords primacy to nations in India's periphery, includes in its ambit the **Bimstec**—a grouping that includes almost all countries of South Asia and some in **South-East Asia**.

4. EU approved Digital Services Act to regulate large multinational tech companies' activities

Context In a major development that could alter the entire social media landscape, the European Union has finally reached consensus on the **Digital Services Act (DSA)** to increase the regulation on social intermediaries.

Background

- European Union has introduced **E-commerce Directive in 2002** to regulate over the e-commerce platforms.
- Now, it has passed the new act to fill the gap and flaws remained untouched by the decade old act.
- With this, the European Union has continued its campaign to regulate large multinational tech companies' activities in Europe.

- The **Digital Services Act (DSA)**, which was approved by the **European Parliament**, follows the **Digital Markets Act (DMA)**.
- The DSA and DMA have two big goals:
 - ▶ Create a safer digital space in which the fundamental rights of all users of digital services are protected
 - ▶ Establish a level playing field to foster innovation, growth, and competitiveness, both in the European Single Market and globally
- In practice, this means overseeing how large social networks, search engines, and other tech companies do business, and limiting how they use consumer data.

What is the new law?

- Digital Services Act along with Digital Markets Act will replace the decade old legislation **E-Commerce directives of 2002**
- Digital Services Act (DSA), a landmark legislation to force big companies to act against disinformation.
- DSA ensures regulation over way intermediary.

5. India–UK & the changing dynamics

Context UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited India and met his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, where both the leaders reiterated their commitment to cooperate on defense and security issues.

Background

- Historically India was colonized under British rule for around two hundred years.
- British rule ended nearly 200 years later with Jawaharlal Nehru's famous speech on India's "tryst with destiny" at midnight on 14 August 1947.
- Today, India and the UK share a strong and multi-dimensional strategic partnership.
- Following India's **economic reforms in the early 1990s** that placed the Indian economy on a high growth trajectory, the two countries have taken several initiatives to expand bilateral relations.
- Recent developments after COVID and **Brexit** and in between power aspirations and territorial claims of various nations India and UK has decided to collaborate in various front including **Climate and Indo Pacific Region**.
- After the **Brexit** in 2020 UK has signed a **Roadmap 2030** for the future **India UK relation** which has the potential to elevate the relations into a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.
 - ▶ To advance trade and investment relations, they have formally launched negotiations for a **free trade agreement (FTA)** on January 13, 2022 and the first round of talks have been concluded on January 28, 2022.

Brexit

- On January 31, 2020 the United Kingdom left the European Union.
- The UK was the first country to leave the EU and this was known as Brexit - British exit.
- Brexit happened because a public vote - or referendum - was held in June 2016, to decide whether the UK should be in the EU.

Key-takeaways from the recent visit

- This was first visit to India as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and follows his Virtual Summit with Prime Minister Modi in May 2021 where both leaders agreed to elevate India-UK relations to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

- The two countries agreeing to conclude the **third round of negotiations on new free trade agreement** by the end of October.
- The deal in the works, like India's other regional and bilateral trade agreements is quite ambitious.
- India and the UK agreed to **double trade in goods and services** to about \$100 billion by 2030.

6. Bill introduced in Lok Sabha to ban funding of 'weapons of mass destruction'

Context External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar introduced the **Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022**, in Lok Sabha that seeks to prohibit the financing of **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)**.

What are Weapons of Mass Destruction?

- A weapon of mass destruction is a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, or other device that is intended to harm a large number of people.
- **Examples** include missiles or nuclear bombs, but as evident in the 9/11 terror attacks, even passenger jets can also be used as WMDs.

- Biological weapons are defined as - 'microbial or other biological agents, or toxins that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes'.
- Chemical weapons are defined as - the toxic chemicals and their precursors - used for activities other than the listed ones such as industrial, agricultural use, protective and military use.

Control over use of WMDs

- The use of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons is regulated by a number of **international treaties and agreements**. Among them are the:
 - **Geneva Protocol, 1925**, that banned the use of chemical and biological weapons
 - **Biological Weapons Convention, 1972**, and **Chemical Weapons Convention, 1992**, which put comprehensive bans on the biological and chemical weapons respectively.

- India has signed and ratified both the 1972 and 1992 treaties.
- There are very few non-signatory countries to these treaties, even though several countries have been accused of non-compliance.

- The use and proliferation of nuclear weapons is regulated by treaties such as
 - ▶ Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
 - ▶ Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

7. Falkland Islands Issue

Context Britain rejected a statement from China that affirmed Beijing's support for Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands.

About Falkland Island

- Falkland Islands, also called Malvinas Islands or Spanish Islas Malvinas, **internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom** in the South Atlantic Ocean.
- It lies about **300 miles northeast of the southern tip of South America** and a similar distance east of the **Strait of Magellan**.
- The capital and major town is Stanley, on East Falkland, **there are also several scattered small settlements as well as a Royal Air Force base** that is located at Mount Pleasant.
- The two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, and about 200 smaller islands. **The government of the Falkland Islands also administers the British overseas territory of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands**, including the Shag and Clerke rocks.

Britain's points

- The Falklands are part of the British family and we will defend their right to self determination. China must respect the Falklands' sovereignty.

Argentina's claim

- Argentina believes the Falklands were illegally taken from it in 1833 and invaded the British colony in 1982.
- The United Kingdom sent troops and Argentina lost the two-month war for the South Atlantic archipelago in a conflict that claimed the lives of 649 Argentines and 255 British soldiers.
- Argentina still claims the islands.
- London says the Falklands are a self-governing entity under its protection.

8. UN accuses China of Uyghur rights abuses

Context The U.N. accused China of serious human rights violations that may amount to **"crimes against humanity"** in a long-delayed report examining a crackdown on Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups. Beijing on Thursday denounced the assessment as a fabrication cooked up by Western nations.

Uyghur Community:

- The Uyghurs are Turkic-speaking Muslims from the Central Asian region.
- The largest population lives in China's autonomous Xinjiang region, in the country's north-west.
- The Uyghurs are one of a number of persecuted Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, including the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Hui.
- Many Uyghur communities also live in countries neighbouring China, such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, Australia.

Xinjiang and its importance to China:

- Xinjiang lies in the north-west of China and is the country's largest region.
- Like Tibet, it is autonomous, meaning - in theory - it has some powers of self-governance.
- But in practice, both regions are subjected to major restrictions by the central government.
- Xinjiang is a mostly desert region and produces about a fifth of the world's cotton.
- The region contains a wealth of natural resources, including oil, gas and rare earth minerals, but perhaps it's most important value is as a strategic buffer that extends China's influence westward.

- While China and Russia have largely aligned their foreign policies in recent years, Xinjiang was on the front line of their Cold War rivalry and remains important as an assertion of Chinese influence in Moscow’s back yard.

9. Taliban’s public execution in Kandhar & International Conventions

Context Despite international condemnation, the Taliban has resumed the flogging and the public execution of criminals following a decree by the hard-liners’ supreme leader in Ahmad Shahi Stadium in Kandahar.

International Conventions

- Public floggings and executions violate universal principles prohibiting torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Afghanistan is a **State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**, which prohibits torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.
- The public spectacle of these punishments makes them especially distasteful and undignified.

Kandahar

Kandahār is city in south-central Afghanistan. It lies on a plain next to the Tarnak River.

It is southern Afghanistan’s chief commercial centre and is situated at the junction of highways from Kabul, Herāt, and Quetta (Pakistan).



10. India, Turkmenistan sign MoUs for cooperation

Context India and Turkmenistan signed four agreements, including in financial intelligence and disaster management, and agreed to expand bilateral trade and energy cooperation to further strengthen the multifaceted partnership.

India-Turkmenistan

- Turkmenistan is an important partner for India in the India–Central Asia Summit framework, the first of which India hosted virtually in January this year.
- Turkmenistan is also strategically placed in Central Asia and connectivity is something.

Important Agreements (significant for India and Turkmenistan)

- International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)
- Ashgabat Agreement on International Transport and Transit Corridor
- Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline

11. India's ties with Egypt

Context Egypt's President **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi**, was invited as the **chief guest for the Republic Day** celebrations this year for the first time.

India-Egypt Relations:

- In the past, commercial connections between Egypt and India grew along the banks of the rivers **Nile and Indus**, which is when India's interactions with Egypt first developed.
- **Under Nehru's direction: Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt co-founded the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955.**
- **Nehru stood up for Egypt during the 1956 War** to the point of threatening to expel his nation from the British Commonwealth.
- **Bilateral relations and the Friendship Treaty:** The two countries grew further closer in the 1950s and signed the **Friendship Treaty in 1955.**
- The historically strong bilateral ties between the two nations have recently gotten a boost from the regular interchange of high-level meetings and contacts between the two sides.

Trade & Commerce:

- Egypt has long been among **India's top trading partners** on the continent of Africa.
- The **Most Favoured Nation** provision is the foundation of the bilateral trade agreement between Egypt and India, which has been in effect since March 1978.
- **Raw cotton, made and unmanufactured fertilizers, oil and oil products, organic and inorganic chemicals, leather, and iron goods are among Egypt's main exports to India.**
- **Sesame, lentils, coffee, herbs, and cotton yarn are among the top Indian exports to Egypt.**
- **India also exports mineral gasoline, car components, ship, boat, and floating construction parts, frozen slices of boneless beef, and electrical machinery and components.**
- India is widely represented in practically all fields in Egypt.

The defence alliance:

- With recent events like the Indian Navy ship's trip to Egypt, a month-long air force drill, and the leader of the Egyptian air force's trip to India, it is being revitalized.

Establishment:

- The Non-Aligned Movement was formally founded in **Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961**, building on the tenets outlined at the **Bandung Conference of 1955.**

About NAM:

- 120 nations that are not formally allied with or opposed to any major power bloc make up the forum. It is the largest federation of states in the world after the United Nations.
- Nearly **two-thirds of the United Nations' members and 55% of the world's population reside in the nations that make up the Non-Aligned Movement.**

12. US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) Initiative

Context New Delhi is working through diplomatic channels to fetch an entry into a new US-led partnership initiative called the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP).

What is Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)?

- Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) is a **US-led partnership initiative that aims to bolster critical mineral supply chains.**
- It will focus on the supply chains of minerals such as Cobalt, Nickel, Lithium and also the 17 'rare earth' minerals.
- The alliance is seen as primarily focused on evolving an alternative to China, which has created processing infrastructure in rare earth minerals and has acquired mines in Africa for elements such as Cobalt.
- **Partners:** The US and 10 partners — Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the European Commission — have come together to form the MSP.

What are rare earth elements?

- Rare earth elements include wind turbine magnets, solar cells, smart phone components, cells used in electric vehicles, among others.
- The 17 Rare Earths are cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd), praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Y).
- REEs are classified as **light RE elements (LREE) and heavy RE elements (HREE).**
- Some REEs are available in India — such as Lanthanum, Cerium, Neodymium, Praseodymium and Samarium, etc.
- Others such as Dysprosium, Terbium, and Europium, which are classified as HREEs, are not available in Indian deposits in extractable quantities.

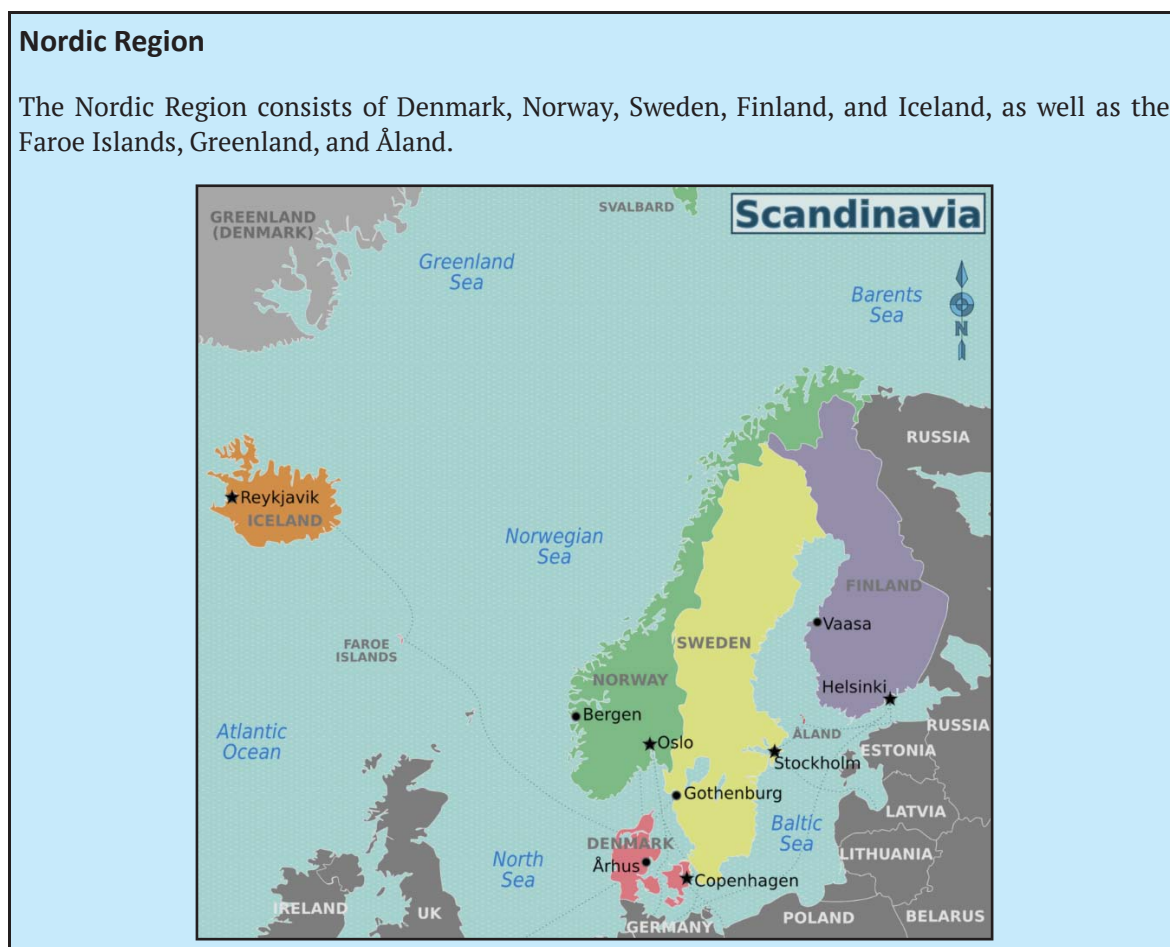
13. 2nd India-Nordic Summit

Context Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi participated in the 2nd India-Nordic Summit.

India-Nordic Summit

- The first India-Nordic Summit was held in Stockholm in April 2018.
- India and the Nordic states share a convergence in values in freedom of speech, religion and media; all are free-market economies and they all promote gender equality.

- Nordic countries collectively represent an economy of more than \$1.6 trillion.
- As per Nordic statistics, total bilateral trade in goods and services between India and the Nordic countries is \$13 billion.



14. Seventh edition of the Raisina Dialogue

Context Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the seventh edition of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi recently.

Raisina Dialogue:

- The Raisina Dialogue is an annual **conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics** addressing issues facing the **global community**.
- It takes its name from the Raisina Hill, the seat of the Indian government.
- It is organized by the **Ministry of External Affairs** in collaboration with the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)**.
- Since its inception, the Raisina Dialogue has emerged as a leading global conference on international affairs featuring the participation of heads of state, ministers, journalists, academics and researchers.

Theme of previous Dialogues:

- **2016:** “Asia: Regional and Global Connectivity”
- **2017:** “The New Normal: Multilateralism with Multipolarity”
- **2018:** “Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms”
- **2019:** “New Geometrics, Fluid Partnerships, Uncertain Outcomes”
- **2020:** “Navigating the Alpha Centurys”
- **2021:** “Viral World: Outbreaks, Outliers and Out of Control”

The Raisina Dialogue 2022 and its theme

- The 2022 edition had over 100 sessions with around 210 speakers from 90 countries and multilateral organisations.
- While the main event takes place in **New Delhi**, side events were held in **Berlin** and **Washington**.
- The **theme** for the 2022 Edition is **“Terra Nova: Impassioned, Impatient, and imperilled”**.

15. Indians elections to UK Parliament (Dadabhai Naoroji and Rishi Sunak)

Context Nearly 130 years ago, the Parsi professor from Mumbai (then still Bombay) became the first Indian ever to be elected to the UK parliament. The 130 years ago Dadabhai Naoroji began the journey that Rishi Sunak has completed.

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917)

- Dadabhai Naoroji is well known as the **“Grand Old Man of India”** and **“Unofficial Ambassador of India”**.
- He was a Liberal Party Member of Parliament in the British House of Commons, representing Finsbury Central between 1892 and 1895.
- He was the second person of Asian descent to be a British MP, the first being Anglo-Indian MP David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre.
- He served as 2nd, 9th, and 22nd President of the Indian National Congress from 1886 to 1887, 1893 to 1894 & 1906 to 1907.
- His book **Poverty and Un-British Rule in India** brought attention to his theory of the Indian **“wealth drain”** into Britain.

Key works

- Started the **Rast Goftar** Anglo-Gujarati Newspaper in 1854.
- **The manners and customs of the Parsees** (Bombay, 1864)
- **The European and Asiatic races** (London, 1866)
- **Admission of educated natives into the Indian Civil Service** (London, 1868)
- **The wants and means of India** (London, 1876)
- **Condition of India** (Madras, 1882)

16. ZAPAD 2021

Context India participated in multinational military exercise named **‘ZAPAD 2021’** at Nizhny in Russia.

Key- highlights of ‘ZAPAD 2021’ exercise

- **ZAPAD 2021** is one of the theatre level exercises of the Russian Armed Forces and will focus primarily on operations against terrorists.
- The exercise begins at Nizhny in Russia where the Indian contingent will participate.

- The **NAGA Battalion** group participating in the exercise will feature an all Arms combined task force.
 - ▶ The Naga Regiment is an **infantry regiment** of the Indian Army.
- India also participated in the **exercise TSENTR**, which is part of the annual series of large scale exercises that form part of the **Russian Armed Forces'** annual training cycle.

17. India progress in LAC infrastructure development

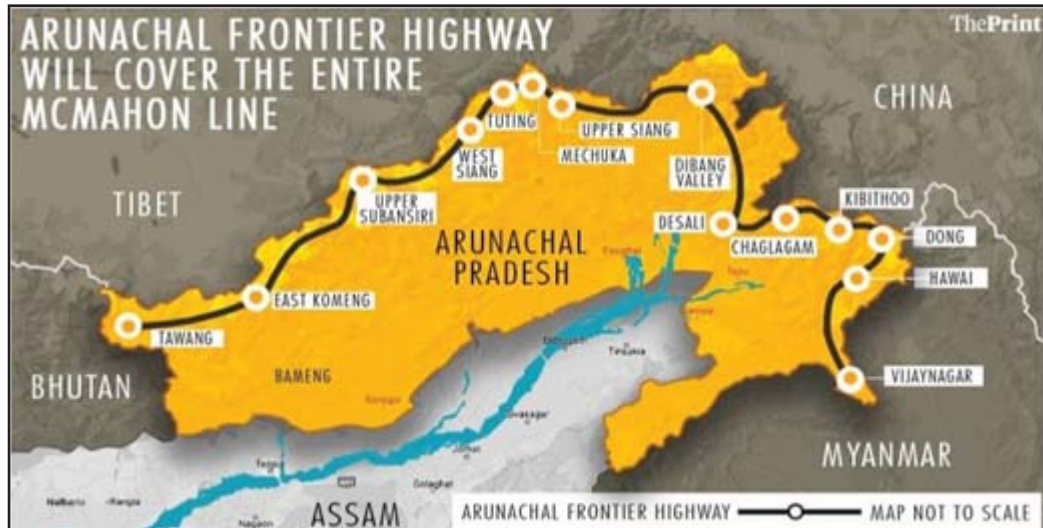
Context The Indian Army Chief has recently talked about the Infrastructure development on the Indian side of **Line of actual control (LAC)**, highlighting India's concern for border security and management against China.

Background

- After China's move for building and expanding its reach, connectivity and development projects near LAC, India has also started working in the development direction.
- In the past five years, the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** has constructed close to 6,000 km of roads pan-India; of this, 2,100 km has been along the northern borders.
- As for the **upgradation of bridges**, which are needed to carry guns, and tanks among others, as many as 7,450 metres of bridges were constructed.
- For **all-weather connectivity** in both Ladakh and Kameng in Arunachal, there is the Zojila tunnel and the Z-Morh tunnel, which will link the valley to Ladakh and will be operationalised by the end of the year.
- There is also a plan for **alternate connectivity** to the all-important **Darbuk-Skyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO)** road through **Saser la**, so not only plan for all-weather connectivity but also alternate connectivity.
- **In Arunachal Pradesh:**
 - China claims **90,000 square kilometres** in India's frontier region of the northeast, roughly including the whole of Arunachal Pradesh.
 - Among the projects currently being executed by the Indian government in the Border States is the construction of 73 roads of operational significance for better access to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
 - The government has informed Parliament that 2,094 kilometres of roads were constructed along the border at a cost of around \$1.8 billion over the past five years.
- **In Leh and Ladakh:**
 - Atal Tunnel at 10,000 feet in Rohtang was inaugurated by Prime Minister, not only shortening travel time between Manali in Himachal Pradesh and Leh, Ladakh but giving 12-month connectivity to people of Lahaul and Spiti in the hill state.
 - Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has proposed **eight tunnels** that will enhance connectivity to Ladakh; a couple of similar projects are also planned for Kashmir linking roads to the Line of Control.
- **In Sikkim:**
 - BRO's **Project Swastik** has constructed Samdong Bridge on Lachen- Kalep Road in Sikkim, also in the Eastern Sector of the LAC.
 - A 30 m-long **PSC box Girder Bridge** will provide vital connectivity to our troops and locals alike.
 - The bridge will be dedicated to the Nation along with other **27 infrastructure projects** by the Raksha Mantri on 27 Dec 2022.

18. Arunachal Pradesh Frontier Highway along LAC

Context Centre approved 1500-Km Arunachal Pradesh Frontier Highway along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).



About

- **To be developed by:** Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)
- The road will run close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.
- It is seen as one of India's biggest and toughest road construction projects.
- The proposed route will start at Mago, which borders Bhutan, and continue through **Tawang, Upper Subansiri, Tuting, Mechuka, Upper Siang, Debang Valley, Desali, Chaglagam, Kibithu, and Dong** before coming to an end at **Vijayanagar**, which is close to the Myanmar border.

19. International Lusophone Festival begins in Goa

Context The International Lusophone Festival has been launched in Goa.

What is Lusophone Commonwealth?

- The **Lusophone Commonwealth** or the Community of Portuguese Language Countries is a multilateral forum
- The forum was founded on 17 July 1996 at the 1st CPLP Heads of State & Government Summit in Lisbon.
- **Members:** The founding members were Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Sao Tome e Principe; while Timor Leste and Equatorial Guinea joined later.
- These 9 Lusophone countries comprise approximately 300 million people in 4 different continents (Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe).

20. Barbados becomes the World's newest Republic

Context Recently, **Barbados** has officially removed **Queen Elizabeth II** as its head of state and become the **World's newest republic**, around 400 years after it became a British colony.

The country profile

- Barbados is an island country in the Lesser Antilles of the West Indies, in the Caribbean region of the Americas, and the most easterly of the Caribbean Islands.
- It is in the western part of the North Atlantic, east of the Windward Islands and the Caribbean Sea.
- Its neighbours include Saint Lucia, to the north, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to the west, and Trinidad and Tobago to the south.
- Barbados is outside the principal Atlantic hurricane belt.
- On November 30, 1966, Barbados gained its independence.
- **Dame Sandra Prunella Mason** and **Mia Amor Mottley** are the current President and Prime minister of Barbados.
- Barbados is part of **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)** which was formed in 1973.
- While it is an Atlantic island, Barbados is closely associated with the Caribbean and is ranked as one of its leading tourist destinations.

Key-Highlights

- **After** removed Queen Elizabeth II as the head of the state.
- **Dame Sandra Prunella Mason** took over as the **President of Barbados**.
 - ▶ **Mason** was selected to become the **first President** of Barbados in **October 2021**.
 - ▶ **Mason** was selected as President of Barbados, at a joint meeting of both the **Houses of Parliament of Barbados**.
- His name was announced by **Speaker of the House of Assembly, Arthur Holder**.

- Barbados will not be the first former British colony in the Caribbean to become a republic.
- **Guyana took that step in 1970**, less than four years after gaining independence from Britain. **Trinidad and Tobago** followed suit in **1976** and **Dominica in 1978**.

21. Antigua, Barbuda joins International Solar alliance

Context Antigua and Barbuda recently joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as a 102nd member.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- ISA is an alliance of **more than 120 countries**, most of them being **sunshine countries**, most being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the **Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn**.
- The primary objective is to collectively work for **efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil based fuels**.
- This initiative was proposed by our Prime Minister of India first during his speech at **Wembley Stadium, London**.
- This initiative was launched at the India Africa Summit and a meeting was held among them before the conclave of **2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in November 2015**.
- This is a **treaty-based intergovernmental organization**. The alliance will take the shape of an international treaty once its rules are worked out.



- The Headquarters is in India with its Interim Secretariat being set up in Gurgaon.
- The agreement will become operational after at least 15 countries have ratified it.
- The framework agreement says that the members of ISA would take coordinated actions through programmes and activities that will aggregate the demands for solar finance, solar technologies, innovation, research and development, and capacity building.
- The ISA aims to develop cost-efficient solar technologies and applications.
- It is also expected to mobilise \$1 trillion for funding solar energy projects by 2030.

22. I2U2 holds its first-ever leader's summit

Context Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the first-ever I2U2 Virtual Summit.

About I2U2:

- I2U2 stands for India, Israel, the UAE, and the US.
- Moreover, the Ambassador of UAE to India, Ahmed Albanna, had referred to the new grouping as the 'West Asian Quad'.
- The genesis of this group took place in middle-east to harness the maritime traffic of the Strait of Hormuz, Bab Al Mandab and Suez Canal region.
 - ▶ Out of the 8 maritime choke points in the world, these three lie closer to each other around Israel and UAE.



Purpose of I2U2:

- **Strait of Hormuz:** The strait is approximately 167 km long, with a width of about 96 km at its widest to 39 km at its narrowest point.
- One third of the world’s liquefied natural gas and almost 25% of total global oil consumption passes through the strait making it a strategic choke point.



- **Bab Al Mandab Strait:** This is a vital strategic link in the maritime trade route between Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean via Red Sea and Suez Canal.
- On an average 60 ships pass through this strait each day. But unfortunately, this region has been infested with pirates and plagued by instability. This is another example of a choke point.



- **Suez Canal:** This is one of the more famous names of the three straits.
- This is an artificial sea level trade route via Egypt, a vital trade link between Europe and Asia.
- Statistics suggest 56 ships cross this canal each day.
- One block in the canal in April 2021 had caused a lot of monetary loss to myriads of countries.



Abraham Accords

- The **Israel–UAE normalization agreement** is officially called the **Abraham Accords Peace Agreement**.
- It was initially agreed to in a joint statement by the United States, Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in August, 2020.
- The **UAE thus became the third Arab country, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, to agree to formally normalize its relationship with Israel as well as the first Persian Gulf country to do so.**
- Concurrently, Israel agreed to suspend plans for annexing parts of the West Bank. The agreement normalized what had long been informal but robust foreign relations between the two countries.

23. Other developments (miscellaneous)

- New Zealand's PM Jacinda Ardern Announces Resignation
- Aruna Miller Becomes Maryland's First Indian-American Lieutenant Governor
- Equatorial Guinea Appoints Manuela Roka Botey As First Female PM
- Joe Biden Nominates Indian-American Astronaut Raji Chari for US Air Force Brigadier General Post
- UN Declares Pakistan Based Abdul Rehman Makki A Global Terrorist

24. China's balloon tested boundaries of international law

Context The U.S. military shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the Carolina coast after it traversed sensitive military sites across North America.

China's Balloon Incident

- From January 28 to February 4, 2023, a large, white high-altitude balloon operated by China crossed North American airspace, passing over Alaska, western Canada, and the contiguous United States.
- Then, a U.S. jet shot it down over the Atlantic and U.S. ships raced to gather the debris.

Who has sovereignty over the air?

- The international law is clear with respect to the use of these balloons over other countries' airspace.
- Every country has complete sovereignty and control over its waters extending 12 nautical miles (about 22 kilometres) from its land territory.
- Every country likewise has "complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory" under international conventions.
 - ▶ This means each country controls all access to its airspace, which includes both commercial and government aircraft.
- But the upper limit of sovereign airspace is unsettled in international law. In practice, it generally extends to the maximum height at which commercial and military aircraft operate, which is around 45,000 feet (about 13.7km).
- The supersonic Concorde jet, however, operated at 60,000 feet (over 18km).
 - ▶ The Chinese balloon was also reported to be operating at a distance of 60,000 feet.
- International law does not extend to the distance at which satellites operate, which is traditionally seen as falling within the realm of space law.
- There are international legal frameworks in place that allow for permission to be sought to enter a country's airspace, such as the 1944 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation.
 - ▶ The International Civil Aviation Organization has set an additional layer of rules on airspace access, including for hot air balloons, but it does not regulate military activities.

Regulations in US

- The US also has its own "air defence identification zone", a legacy of the Cold War.
- It requires all aircraft entering US airspace to identify themselves. Canada has its own complementary zone.

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Which of the following statements regarding Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is/are correct?

1. It is an intergovernmental organisation which is responsible for commemorating Commonwealth civilians who died as a result of enemy action during the Second World War only.
2. It maintains the graves and places of commemoration of Commonwealth of Nations military service members who died in both the World Wars.
3. India is not a member of CWGC.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1 and 3 only

2. Which of the following countries are the members of Cotton Four or C4 grouping?

1. Benin
2. Chad
3. Niger
4. Burkina Faso

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 2, 3 and 4 only

3. With reference to a 'Major Non-NATO Ally' (MNNA) status, consider the following statements:

1. It is a designation under U.S. law that allows the nations with such designation host U.S. war reserve stockpiles of material inside their countries.
2. It does not only provide military and economic privileges, but also entail security commitments to the designated country.
3. India was granted MNNA status in 2018.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

4. Which of the following statements regarding the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is/are correct?

1. It is an alliance of countries from Europe and North America that enables them to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.
2. So far, NATO's principle of collective defence has never been invoked.
3. NATO follows an open door policy with regard to enlargement i.e. any willing country can become its member.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

5. Consider the following statements:

1. The Chicago Convention provides for nine freedoms of air of which only five are officially recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
2. First Freedom Right is the right or privilege granted by one State to another State or state to fly across its territory without landing.
3. ICAO is a UN specialized agency that approves world flight routes for international air traffic.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

6. With reference to Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), consider the following statements:

1. It is an open, treaty based initiative that seeks to ensure security and stability of the regional maritime domain.
2. It was jointly launched by Australian and Japan.

Which of the above statements is/are *incorrect*?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. **Consider the following statements regarding East Asia Summit:**

1. It is the only leader-led forum at which all key partners meet to discuss political, security and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific.
2. All ASEAN countries participate in the annual East Asia Summit.
3. India has been its part since its inception in 2005.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

8. **In which of the following military exercise(s) does India and Thailand participate?**

1. MAITREE
2. SIAM Bharat
3. SITMEX
4. EKVURIN

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 4 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (d) 2, 3 and 4 only

9. **'Global Gateway Plan', a plan to mobilise public and private infrastructure investment around the world to challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative, is an initiative by:**

- (a) European Union
- (b) G7
- (c) QUAD
- (d) NATO

10. **With reference to Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs), consider the following statements:**

1. MLATs are the bilateral treaties entered between the countries for providing international cooperation and assistance in criminal matters.
2. Ministry of Law and Justice is the nodal Ministry and the central authority for seeking and providing mutual legal assistance in criminal law matters in India.
3. Indian Penal Code provides the legal basis for signing of MLATs with other countries.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 2 and 3 only

11. **Consider the following statements regarding India-Central Asia Dialogue:**

1. It is a ministerial-level dialogue to improve connectivity and stabilize war-ravaged Afghanistan.
2. For becoming a member of ICAD, a country must have a part of its territory in Asia.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

12. **With reference to the United Nations Convention on Laws of Seas (UNCLOS), consider the following statements:**

1. International Seabed Authority (ISA) under UNCLOS establishes the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles of a coastal state.
2. International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) is the only dispute resolution mechanism under UNCLOS.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

13. **With reference to Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), consider the following statements:**

1. It is an intergovernmental military alliance of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
2. It has observer status at United Nations General Assembly.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

14. **Which of the following countries are *not* the members of 'Five Eyes Alliance'?**

1. USA
2. Japan
3. Australia
4. France
5. Canada

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 3 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 4 and 5 only

15. Which of the following countries are the full members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)?

- 1. Turkmenistan
- 2. Iran
- 3. Tajikistan
- 4. Pakistan

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1 and 3 only

16. Exercise Mitra Shakti is a joint military training exercise between India and:

- (a) Myanmar
- (b) Nepal
- (c) Sri Lanka
- (d) Bangladesh

17. Consider the following statements:

- 1. 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.
- 2. India holds 2+2 dialogue with all QUAD countries at ministerial level.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

18. In which of the following groupings/forums, both India and Russia have the membership?

- 1. G33
- 2. G4
- 3. G20
- 4. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

19. Which of the following statements regarding the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) is/are correct?

- 1. It was signed in 2010 between the US and Russia, limiting each party to a specific numbers of various missiles.
- 2. The treaty will remain in effect until 5 February 2026.
- 3. It helped the United Nations to adopt and finalize the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

20. Consider the following statements regarding 'IBSA':

- 1. It is a quadrilateral grouping involving India, Brazil, South Africa and Australia.
- 2. IBSA has set up an IBSA facility fund with the aim to eradicate poverty and hunger.

Which of the above mentioned statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

21. Which of the following statements regarding International Criminal Court (ICC) are correct?

- 1. It is the world's first permanent international criminal court.
- 2. It has universal territorial jurisdiction.
- 3. India is not a party to Rome Statute along with the USA and China.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

22. 'Sinatra Doctrine', seen in news recently, relates to:

- (a) QUAD countries' commitment for a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- (b) Central and Eastern European countries' way to deal with increasing Chinese influence.
- (c) USA's policy of ending the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.
- (d) Resolving Tigray crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

23. With reference to BIMSTEC, consider the following statements:

1. It is an international organisation of a group of countries in South Asia and South East Asia region excluding China.
2. Its permanent secretariat is situated in Bangkok, Thailand.
3. It was formed through the Bangkok Declaration in 1997.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

24. Which of the following statements regarding G7 is/are correct?

1. There is no country from Asia as a member of G7.
2. All the members of G7 are also the member of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

25. With reference to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), consider the following statements:

1. It is a United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies.
2. It is responsible for allocating satellite orbits to countries.
3. It is the oldest existing international organization in the world.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

26. Which of the following are the non-euro area member countries?

1. Sweden
2. Poland
3. France
4. Malta

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d) 2 and 4 only

27. New York Convention, seen in news recently, relates to:

- (a) Safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships.
- (b) International settlement of agreements resulting from mediation.
- (c) Recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards.
- (d) International trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora.

28. Which of the following countries are NOT the members of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)?

1. Armenia
2. Poland
3. Turkmenistan
4. Estonia

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 3 and 4 only

29. Consider the following statements regarding Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI):

1. It is an independent international institute dedicated to research into arms control and disarmament.
2. It also undertakes research and activities on security, conflict and peace.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

30. Which of the following countries are not the members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)?

1. USA
2. New Zealand

- 3. UK
- 4. Peru
- 5. Colombia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 5 only
- (d) 1 and 4 only

31. The Hong Kong International Convention is related to which of the following?

- (a) Safeguarding sea lines of communication
- (b) Incentivizing public private partnership towards implementation of SDG
- (c) Issues around ship recycling
- (d) Issues around aviation sector

32. ‘Lalandar/Shatoot Dam’ is a part of the New Development Partnership between India and:

- (a) Afghanistan
- (b) Nepal
- (c) Bangladesh
- (d) Bhutan

33. With reference to the “United Nations Credentials Committee”, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a committee set up by the UN Security Council and works under its supervision.
- 2. It traditionally meets in March, June and September every year.
- 3. It assesses the credentials of all UN members before submitting a report to the General Assembly for approval.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1 and 2

34. Which one of the following statements best describes the ‘Polar Code’?

- (a) It is the international code of safety for ships operating in polar waters.
- (b) It is the agreement of the countries around the North Pole regarding the demarcation of their territories in the polar region.
- (c) It is a set of norms to be followed by the countries whose scientists undertake research studies in the North Pole and South Pole.
- (d) It is a trade and security agreement of the member countries of the Arctic Council.

35. With reference to the United Nations General Assembly, consider the following statements:

- (a) The UN General Assembly can grant observer status to the non-member States.
- (b) Inter-governmental organisations can seek observer status in the UN General Assembly.
- (c) Permanent Observers in the UN General Assembly can maintain missions at the UN headquarters.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

- (d) 1 and 2 only
- (e) 2 and 3 only
- (f) 1 and 3 only
- (g) 1, 2 and 3

36. With reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea, consider the following statements:

- 1. A coastal state has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baseline determined in accordance with the convention.
- 2. Ships of all states, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea.
- 3. The Exclusive Economic Zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea in measure.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

37. Consider the following international agreements:

- 1. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
- 2. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.
- 3. The World Heritage Convention.

Which of the above has/have a bearing on the biodiversity?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

38. Consider the following pairs:

International agreement/set-up Subject

1.	Alma-Ata Declaration	Healthcare of the people
2.	Hague Convention	Biological and chemical weapon
3.	Talanoa Convention	Global climate change
4.	Under2 Coalition	Child rights

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) (b) 4 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 2, 3 and 4 only

39. **The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty drawn at:**

- (a) United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 1972
- (b) UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 1992
- (c) World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002
- (d) UN Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, 2009

40. **The International Development Association, a lending agency, is administered by the:**

- (a) International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- (b) International Fund for Agricultural Development
- (c) United Nations Development Programme
- (d) United Nations Industrial Development Organization

41. **The term "two-state solution" is sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of**

- (a) China
- (b) Israel
- (c) Iraq
- (d) Yemen

42. **Southeast Asia has captivated the attention of the global community over space and time as a geostrategically significant region. Which among the following is the most convincing explanation for this global perspective?**

- (a) It was the hot theatre during the Second World War.
- (b) Its location between the Asian powers of China and India.
- (c) It was the arena of superpower confrontation during the cold war period.
- (d) Its location between the Pacific and Indian oceans and its pre-eminent maritime character

43. **Consider the following statements:**

1. 21st February is declared to be the International Mother Language Day by UNICEF.
2. The demand that Bangla has to be one of

the national languages was raised in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

44. **As a result of their annual survey, the National Geographic Society and an international polling firm GlobeScan gave India top rank in Greendex 2009 score. What is this score?**

- (a) It is a measure of efforts made by different countries in adopting technologies for reducing the carbon footprint
- (b) It is a measure of environmentally sustainable consumer behavior in different countries
- (c) It is an assessment of programs/schemes undertaken by different countries for improving the conservation of natural resources
- (d) It is an index showing the volume of carbon credits sold by different countries

45. **Which one of the following is not related to the United Nations?**

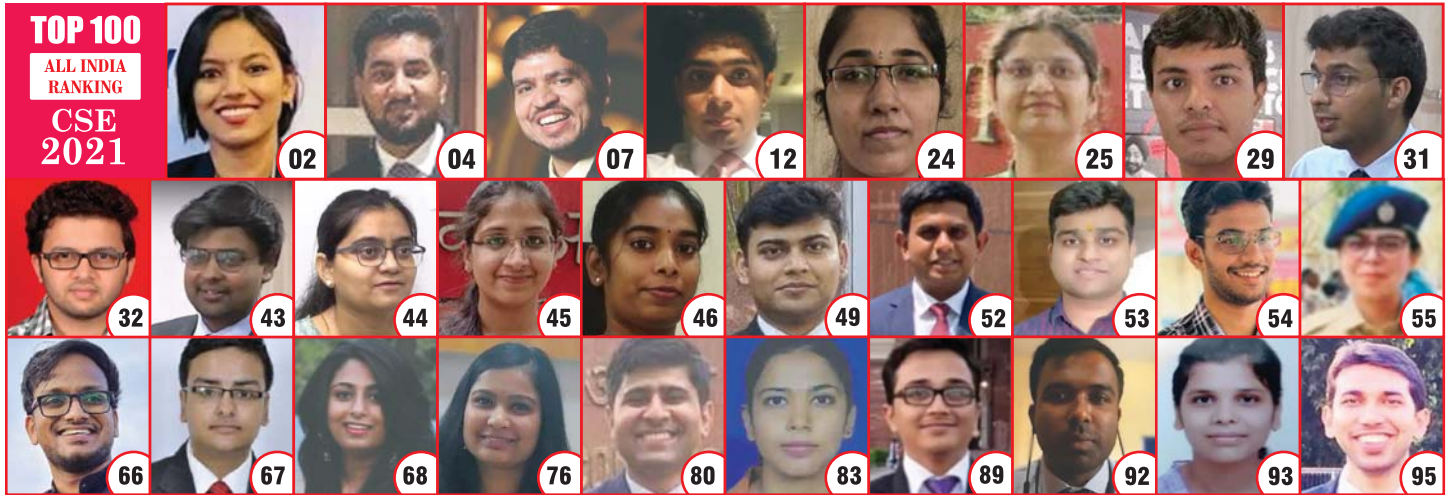
- (a) Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
- (b) International Finance Corporation
- (c) International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes
- (d) Bank for International Settlements

46. **The term 'West Texas Intermediate', sometimes found in news, refers to a grade of:**

- (a) Crude oil
- (b) Bullion
- (c) Rare earth elements
- (d) Uranium

ANSWER KEY

1. (a)	2. (b)	3. (a)	4. (a)	5. (a)
6. (c)	7. (d)	8. (c)	9. (a)	10. (a)
11. (a)	12. (d)	13. (b)	14. (b)	15. (d)
16. (c)	17. (c)	18. (a)	19. (d)	20. (b)
21. (b)	22. (c)	23. (b)	24. (d)	25. (a)
26. (b)	27. (b)	28. (c)	29. (c)	30. (c)
31. (c)	32. (a)	33. (a)	34. (a)	35. (d)
36. (d)	37. (d)	38. (c)	39. (b)	40. (a)
41. (b)	42. (d)	43. (c)	44. (b)	45. (d)
46. (a)				



SUCCESS IS A PRACTICE WE DO!

