



An Institute for Civil Services

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE SERIES

IAS
2023

**CURRENT AFFAIRS
& MAJOR DEBATES**

of

**INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**



An Institute for Civil Services

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE PROGRAMME 2023

Give **Mock Interview** with the **India's Most Eminent Panel**
of **Acclaimed Civil Servants & Academicians**



Dr. J. N. Singh
Retd. IAS,
Former Chief
Secretary Gujarat



U Venkateswarlu
Ex. Chief
Secretary,
Tripura



R.P. Sinha
Retd. IAS,
Former Secretary,
Govt. of India



Akhil Shukla
Ex DGP,
Tripura



Sumeet Jerath
IAS (Retd),
Former Secretary,
Govt. of India



Dakshita Das
Former Additional
Secretary,
Govt. of India



B.K. Pandey
IES,
Former Adviser -
Niti Aayog



S.B. Singh
Well known
IAS Interview
Mentor



S.D. Muni
Member
Exe. Council,
IDSA



Sudhir Tiwari
Ex. Additional
Secretary, Gol



Dr. N.K. Sahu
IES,
Former Joint Secy.
HRD Ministry



Manoj K. Jha
Director,
GS SCORE



Anurag Mishra
Ex IIS
Chief Editor
Yojna



Devi Prasad
IES, Celebrated
Budget & Economic
Survey Expert



K.D. Singh
IFoS, Ex Principal
Conservator of
Forests



Prof. C. Mahapatra
Ex. Prof,
International
Relations

To get Customized
Questionnaire on your DAF &
Contemporary issue notes

Mail Your **DAF** at
daf@iasscore.in
or

REGISTER AT



For any query call at  **9899448458**

Contents

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1. | RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR | 5 |
| 2. | WAR CRIMES AND RULES OF WAR: | 5 |
| 3. | NATO AND INDIA'S STRATEGIC AUTONOMY: | 5 |
| 4. | WOLF WARRIOR DIPLOMACY OF CHINA:..... | 6 |
| 5. | INDIA'S REFUGEE POLICY: | 6 |
| 6. | INDIA-NEPAL: MOVING BEYOND THE HURDLES OF THE PAST: | 7 |
| 7. | INDIA'S ADVANCE DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON ACT EAST POLICY:..... | 7 |
| 8. | INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY AND OPPORTUNITIES:..... | 7 |
| 9. | INDIA-US 2+2: | 8 |
| 10. | ROLE OF UNHCR: | 8 |
| 11. | INDIA'S ANTARCTIC BILL, 2022:..... | 8 |
| 12. | INDIA-UK AND CHANGING DYNAMICS: | 9 |
| 13. | INDIA-AUSTRALIA BILATERAL RELATIONS: | 9 |
| 14. | INDIA-GERMANY MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT:..... | 9 |
| 15. | INDIA'S SOFT POWER:..... | 10 |
| 16. | INDIA'S AFRICA OUTLOOK:..... | 10 |
| 17. | FATF AND PAKISTAN: | 10 |
| 18. | US-CHINA RELATIONS:..... | 10 |
| 19. | US-RUSSIA RELATIONS: | 11 |
| 20. | UN REFORMS:..... | 11 |
| 21. | WHO'S ROLE IN RECENT TIMES..... | 11 |
| 22. | RESTRUCTURING OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: | 12 |
| 23. | CHANGING WORLD ORDER:..... | 12 |
| 24. | EMERGING CLIMATE DIPLOMACY: | 12 |
| 25. | INDIA-EGYPT SIGN PACT TO ELEVATE TIES TO 'STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP' | 12 |

26. INDUS WATER TREATY:13

27. EU’S NEW CRYPTO-LEGISLATION:13

28. INDIA-GREECE TIES UPGRADED TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP:14

29. INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEC):14

30. INDIA-CANADA DIPLOMATIC ROW14

31. HAMAS-ISRAEL WAR.....15

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

- ◆ **Type:** internationally considered a war of aggression
- ◆ **Preface:** Armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine was the result of NATO's growing influence in East Europe which Russia considers to be its 'near abroad'.
 - ◆ The problem has also been aggravated by Russia's action in Crimea in 2014.
- ◆ **Region of the war (eastward expansion):** From the start of the invasion, Moscow's key goal was to capture the Sea of Azov port of Mariupol to secure a coastal corridor to Crimea.
- ◆ **Why the war has become "so-prolonged"?** Russia's military miscalculation, Unprecedented Ukraine responses, NATO's role in supporting Ukrainian, No dialogue mechanism to end war
- ◆ **Impact:** The armed conflict has caused fuel and food inflation all over the world.
- ◆ **Failure (of all):** International forums including UN have failed to stop the conflict.
- ◆ **India's position:** India's position has been to ask both parties to halt aggression at the earliest and come to negotiation table. With its neutral approach, India has emerged as a big, strategically important swing state inviting a lot of global attention.

2. WAR CRIMES AND RULES OF WAR:

- ◆ **Definition:** War Crimes are not specifically defined but mean serious violations of humanitarian laws during conflict.
 - ◆ Rome Statue of ICC and Geneva Convention 1949 take cognizance of war crimes.
 - ◆ India is a party to Geneva Convention of 1949 but not the Rome Statue of ICC.
- ◆ **Rules of war:** Principal points of international humanitarian law makes up the rules of war,
 - ◆ The civilians cannot be attacked as the impact of warfare on them should be limited.
 - ◆ No torture or inhumane treatment to detainees
 - ◆ Safe passage to civilians to flee, Safe hospitals and aid workers
 - ◆ Access to humanitarian organisations, No unnecessary or excessive loss and suffering.

3. NATO AND INDIA'S STRATEGIC AUTONOMY:

- ◆ **Background:** During the cold war years, India and NATO were mostly seen opposite to each other, the situation though has improved seen the fall of Soviet Union.

- ◆ **Current engagement:** First meeting between India and NATO was held in 2019 with the aim to **assess cooperation on regional and global issues of mutual interest**, the talk though was **primarily political** in Character.
- ◆ **Mutual interest:** The interests of NATO and India though are also convergent in certain areas e.g. Russia's war with Ukraine, level of engagement with both China and Taliban etc.
- ◆ **Significance of India-NATO engagement:** Engaging with NATO is essential for India as it will balance the formers attitude towards Pakistan (ally of NATO since cold war), balancing NATO's perceptions about the situation in regions and issues of concern to India, containing China, ensuring better maritime security in Indian Ocean, engaging with Taliban in Afghanistan etc.
- ◆ **Concerns for India:** By getting close with NATO, India's long-standing and strong ties with Russia may get deteriorated.
 - ◆ An alliance with NATO might ask for the establishment of NATO bases on India's territory and it may even be considered an infringement of our sovereignty.
- ◆ **Way forward:** India therefore needs to keep its strategic autonomy intact depending upon its national interest. Convergence of most issues between India and NATO does not at all mean India following the trail of NATO with respect to all important issues.

4. WOLF WARRIOR DIPLOMACY OF CHINA:

- ◆ **Meaning:** An unofficial term used to describe tactic of Chinese government to extent its ideology beyond China and counter the west and defend itself.
- ◆ **Recent example:** Authoritarian tendencies of Xi Jinping's regime, deteriorating relations between US and China, accusations on China by rest of the world with respect to spread of COVID etc. are the main reasons for the implementation of this tactic.
- ◆ **How China is using this Diplomacy against India?** China's increasing presence and involvement in the Indian Ocean, its overall naval capabilities, enhanced military presence. China's assertive **Belt and Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Road** has consolidated its influence over the Indian neighbours.
- ◆ **Influential factors:** Use of social media has and will play a big role in wolf warrior diplomacy, mainly for the purpose of countering accusations on China, projecting its positive image and making counter accusations.
- ◆ **Ways to counter China:** Strengthening ties with US with initiatives like QUAD, Increase ties with India Neighbourhood like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc., Using India's Soft powers and Cultural significance with China.

5. INDIA'S REFUGEE POLICY:

- ◆ **Preface:** India's refugee policy is being highlighted due to Rohingya Refugee Crises which arose due to the atrocities conducted by Myanmar's defense forces and people on the Muslims of Rakhine province of the country.
 - ◆ Rohingyas in Rakhine province are original muslim inhabitants of Bangladesh who were brought to Myanmar by Britishers as cheap labourers.
 - ◆ They have been denied of the Right of Citizenship in Myanmar and the atrocities conducted on them have resulted in they migrating mostly to India and Bangladesh.
- ◆ **India's policy towards Rohingyas:** India has let few thousands of these refugees to stay in India without any rights.

- ◆ **India's policy on refugee:** The policy is ambiguous and the country is not signatory to **1951 Refugee Conference nor its 1967 Protocol**.
- ◆ **New drivers of migration:** Economic collapse in Sri Lanka, food insecurity in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the imminent threat of rising sea levels on Bangladesh and the Maldives evoke an urgent need for India to reconsider its policy frameworks and humanitarian obligations toward non-citizens.
- ◆ **Way forward:** An all-encompassing framework that abides both by Indian constitutional law and international customary law is vital.

6. INDIA-NEPAL: MOVING BEYOND THE HURDLES OF THE PAST:

- ◆ **Background:** History of India-Nepal relations has in its foundation the Friendship Treaty between the two countries signed in 1951. Traditionally India and Nepal have had cordial relations with former being the only window for the latter to the world.
- ◆ **Strains:** Relations to a certain extent have been strained due to India's elder brotherly attitude in the past, China's emergence in Nepal, Rise of Maoist in Nepal polity and Blockage on Nepal with the support of India.
 - ◆ Most recent bone of contention has been the border dispute between the two countries in Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand) and Susta (Bihar).
- ◆ **Areas of improvement:** Apart from the above issues between India and Nepal, relations between the two countries with respect to almost all parameters have improved.
- ◆ **Significance:** India and Nepal both are indispensable to each other and hence their engagement with goal oriented resolution of disputes is necessary.
 - ◆ The above is also important from India's point of view to halt China's expanding influence in Nepal.
- ◆ **Required measures:** Mutual understanding, Focus on resolving issues and Government-to-Government bonding

7. INDIA'S ADVANCE DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON ACT EAST POLICY:

- ◆ **Preface:** Act East Policy is evolution of India's engagement with the countries of East Asia in multiple fields such as Culture, Trade, Defense etc.
- ◆ **Advancement:** With respect to defense cooperation India sees itself as Net Security Provider, Reliable weapons supplier, partnering in weapons manufacturing, countering China's military treat with respect to the countries of the region.
- ◆ **Reforms:** The above is seen possible due to India opting for reforms in its military sector.

8. INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY AND OPPORTUNITIES:

- ◆ **Background:** India hosted G20 summit this year leading to it getting the opportunity of engaging with major countries on the world with respect to important global issues concerning the country.
- ◆ **Challenges posed by China:** China's aggressive posture, return of COVID, Russia's war with Ukraine, India's relations with west getting stressed in recent past etc., are major challenges faced by India at the summit.

- ◆ **Objective of the Indian Presidency:** Primarily India shall be focused on global economic vulnerabilities:
 - ◆ **Dealing with Energy Security:** Under investment in energy infrastructure
 - ◆ **Dealing with Food Securities:** Geopolitical developments
 - ◆ **Other key priorities** are climate, digital, and health.
- ◆ **Opportunity for India:** This will also be the biggest opportunity for India position itself as a leading country on a world stage, be the voice of global south, portray India as a viable investment destination, set the agenda of the summit and counter-China.

9. INDIA-US 2+2:

- ◆ **Meaning:** India-US 2+2 means India's and US's foreign and defense ministers meeting each other with the intent of enhancing the security and strategic relations between the two along with finding common grounds on important global issues.
- ◆ **Outcome:** This framework has led to both countries signing three important agreements i.e. **LEMOA, COMCASA and BECA**, along with it becoming the ground for foundation of **QUAD**.
- ◆ **Other significant development:** The forum is also taking into consideration issues like establishing partnership in space awareness, engaging in dialogue on Artificial Intelligence, becoming Net Security Provider in Indo-Pacific region, Exchanging each-other's views on Russia-Ukraine conflict etc.

10. ROLE OF UNHCR:

- ◆ **About:** It is an UN Refugee Agency, dedicated to saving lives and protecting the **rights of refugees** and the appointed protector of the **1951 Convention** Relating to the status of Refugees. Every year the organization releases **Global Trends Report** and **bestows Nansen Award**.
- ◆ **UNHCR & India:** With respect to India, the organization works very closely with governmental and non-governmental organisations to assist the refugees in the country.
- ◆ **Increasing role:** The role of UNHCR in the recent years has increased to a large extent due to crises in West Asia, Russia-Ukraine crises, climate change migration etc.
- ◆ **Way forward for UNHCR:** UNHCR needs to work closely with India and other countries to provide viable relief to refugees without being prejudiced.

11. INDIA'S ANTARCTIC BILL, 2022:

- ◆ **Purpose:** With the purpose of protecting the environment of Antarctic, Government of India introduced the **Antarctic Bill, 2022** in the Lok Sabha provisions of which would be applicable to Citizens of India and foreigners.
- ◆ **Important provisions:**
 - ◆ The Bill involves regulating the conduct of visitors, protecting the mineral resources, plant and animal resources of the region.
 - ◆ The Bill will allow Indian Scientist in Antarctica to work within the purview of law and showcase India's adherence to **Antarctica Treaty**.
- ◆ **Need of the Bill:** To increase India's activities in the region (Maitri, Bharati, etc.)

- ◆ Lack of domestic legislation have forced India to be circumscribed by International Law.
- ◆ India is a signatory to the Antarctic treaty which makes it mandatory for the member countries to have provisions to check unlawful activities at the research station.
- ◆ Extending jurisdiction of Indian courts

12. INDIA-UK AND CHANGING DYNAMICS:

- ◆ **Preface:** Historically India was colonized under British rule for around two hundred years. Today, India and the UK share a strong and multi-dimensional strategic partnership.
- ◆ **The fresh counter:** After the Brexit in 2020 UK signed a **Roadmap 2030** for the future India UK relation to elevate the relations into a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.
- ◆ **India-UK relations in this contemporary times (important pillars):** People to people contact, trade and commerce, defense and security, clean energy, health and multilateral cooperation are the pillars on which India-UK relations stand.
- ◆ **Way forward:** Both countries have moved a long distance since severing their colonial past and look upon each-others as partners for their respective development.

13. INDIA-AUSTRALIA BILATERAL RELATIONS:

- ◆ **Background:** India and Australia enjoy excellent bilateral relations that have undergone transformative evolution in recent years, developing along a positive track, into a friendly partnership.
- ◆ **Emergence of relations:** The bilateral relations between India and Australia have emerged as one of the most important in **Indo-Pacific relation** with the establishment of **Quad** and naval exercise between the two named **AUSINDEX**.
 - ◆ Both countries have signed **Strategic Partnership Agreement** with their relation revolving around People-to-people contact, economic relations and military relations.
- ◆ **Significance of Indo-pacific region for both India and Australia:** The reason being maritime routes, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific provide the sea lanes. Majority of the world's trade passes through these oceans.
- ◆ **Asia-Pacific plus India:** A lot of India's special partners, including Australia look at Indo-Pacific as Asia Pacific plus India.
 - ◆ They try to embed India into the strategic dynamic of Asia Pacific.
 - ◆ They want India's presence in the South China Sea, East China Sea, basically to counter China.

14. INDIA-GERMANY MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT:

- ◆ **Preface:** India and Germany have signed a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement to help citizens of both countries to study, do research and work in each-others country.
- ◆ **Agreed items:** The agreement will facilitate mobility for students, trainees and professionals; joint action against irregular migration; and clear procedures for forced returns.
- ◆ Both countries have convergence with respect of freedom of Navigation in Indo-Pacific, cross-border terrorism, situation in Afghanistan and Renewable Energy.

15. INDIA'S SOFT POWER:

- ◆ **Meaning:** "A country's ability to influence the preferences and behaviours of various actors in the international arena (states, corporations, communities, publics etc.) through attraction or persuasion rather than coercion." -- **Joseph Nye**
- ◆ **Policy:** There is no official policy of India with respect to soft power but country's civilization, culture, diaspora, cinema, soft power etc. has helped enhance its reputation beyond economic and military standing since independence.
- ◆ **Tools for soft power:** India's rich culture, Great Mythologies, Title of 'Golden Bird', Birthplace of Buddhism, Ancient universities, Intangible Art, Non-threatening leadership, Soft power assets (Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, literature, music, dance, software industry, Ayurveda, etc.), Cinema and Sports
- ◆ **Increasing importance (global context):** Significant impact on decision making, Ability to shape the preferences, Tool for goodwill creation

16. INDIA'S AFRICA OUTLOOK:

- ◆ **Preface:** India's relations with Africa is centuries old and it still holds a special place in former's foreign policy space, which has resulted in it executing more than 150 developmental projects in the continent.
- ◆ **India's focus:** Along with bilateral trade, India has focused on food and energy security of Africa also emphasizing on the health of the people in the continent, which is evident from the assistance provided during the time of COVID pandemic.
- ◆ **Goal:** Digitalization of Africa has been one of the goals of India.
- ◆ **Area of interest:** Africa has been one of the important destinations of India's exports, most of its countries support India's bid to UNSC and its mineral will no doubt help India.

17. FATF AND PAKISTAN:

- ◆ **About:** It is an international watchdog on terror financing and money laundering which tags the countries into black and grey list depending upon efforts taken by them or efforts neglected by them (as the case may be) with respect to terror financing from the countries.
- ◆ **Recent development:** Pakistan was recently removed by FATF from its grey list as the country could show to the world body that it has increased vigilance on terror funding and money laundering that is used for it.
- ◆ **India's response:** India is disappointed by FATF as it has established and exhibited linkages between terror funding and terrorist used to target it by Pakistan.
- ◆ **Way forward for India:** India should continue to monitor the situation in Pakistan and keep sustaining the pressure on FATF with respect categorize its neighbor in grey list if terror funding from the country continues.

18. US-CHINA RELATIONS:

- ◆ **Background:** In last one decade, relations between US and China have deteriorated with US and China standing opposite to each other.

- ◆ **China's rise & concerns:** The rise of China has concerned US and the attitude of later to contain the former has caused heated political exchanges between the two.
- ◆ **Outcome:** The same has resulted into trade war between the two, strategic stand-off especially in the waters of Indo-Pacific etc.
- ◆ **Impact on India-China on global level:** Differences between US and China would have huge repercussions on global-affairs, both therefore have responsibilities of managing their relations in ways that are not detrimental to international politics.
- ◆ **Way forward:** Engaging and fruitful diplomacy between two has to be looked by both.

19. US-RUSSIA RELATIONS:

- ◆ **Preface:** US-Russia relations have transformed since the time of the collapse of USSR, from being allies under the policy of Atlanticism to standing opposite to each other in last one decade.
- ◆ **Russia's Concerns:** Russia is concerned in recent years with respect to militilisation of its neihbourhood by NATO forces.
- ◆ **US's Concerns:** US on the other hand is more concerned with re-emerge of Russia as a global power and as an ally of China.
- ◆ **Major bone of contention:** Ukraine War has been a most important flashpoint between the two.
- ◆ **Required intervention:** Both US and Russia have to take responsibility of world peace and need to understand global situation from each-others perspective.

20. UN REFORMS:

- ◆ **Current structure:** The present structure of UN is on the basis of political situation in the post-world war era.
- ◆ **Required reforms:** It therefore needs to be recalibrated according to the contemporary situations and requirements of world politics.
- ◆ **Questioning power:** The most important question to be addressed through these proposed reforms is enlargement of UNSC and rationalizing the use of veto power.
 - ◆ These though would not be easy and has to be fought out based on the response to the proposed reforms by P-5 countries and countries that are part of Koffee Klub.

21. WHO'S ROLE IN RECENT TIMES

- ◆ **Preface:** WHO is primary global organization dealing with health issues throughout the World.
- ◆ **WHO & Pandemic:** The organization was found to be less than effective during Covid pandemic and could not effective gauze the enormity of the situation along with locating the culpability of China.
- ◆ **Questionable actions:** To a large extent the position of WHO has been questioned due to the attitude towards China and the financial support that it has received in recent years from the same.
- ◆ **Required restructuring:** Re-structuring of the organization with greater powers to Executive Committee and democratization of the same is necessary.

22. RESTRUCTURING OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS:

- ◆ **Preface:** Global Financial Institutions like IMF and World Bank were established in the background of galvanizing the resources of world economy after the destruction of World War II.
- ◆ **Current challenge:** Their organizational structure and leadership still shadows the same time period. The situation though has changed dramatically.
- ◆ **Required interventions:** Developing countries like India and China have proved to be growth engines of the world and therefore their voting percentage in the organisations need to improve leading to more democratization of the organisations.

23. CHANGING WORLD ORDER:

- ◆ **Preface:** Since the fall of Soviet Union, the world had become Unipolar with US as the only Super power.
- ◆ **Emerging individual ambitions:** The global situation though now is changing with many developing countries having ambitions dominate atleast their respective neighbourhood.
- ◆ **Multi-polarity:** The era of global police man therefore seems to have come to an end and the world therefore is fast moving towards multi-polarity.
- ◆ **Emerging conflicts:** Emergence of conflicts between ambitious countries in the same region and the efforts taken by US to resist the same will make peace a casualty.
- ◆ **Way forward:** Greater role of UN and other multilateral organization for the purpose settling the disputes between different powers is necessary.

24. EMERGING CLIMATE DIPLOMACY:

- ◆ **Preface:** The world has come to realize that climate change is a reality and the same therefore has to be dealt by the entire global community.
- ◆ **Increasing coordination, deteriorating climate:** Since the 1970s co-ordinations between the nations of the world has increased for obstructing the climate change.
- ◆ **Global diplomacy:** The extent to which sacrifices have to be made by different countries to achieve the same has brought into focus a new dimension in global diplomacy.
 - ◆ This has caused multiple Conferences being organized at global levels to focus on particular aspects of environment e.g. **Montreal Protocol, Kyoto Protocol etc.**
- ◆ **India's approach:** India's approach to global environmental hazard is that of "shared but differential responsibility" which literally means all the countries have responsibility towards environment but the extent of responsibility is different.
- ◆ **Need of accountability (for all):** The position of India, along with other BASIC countries, with respect to climate change is demanding greater accountability from the developed countries as it was their development that has caused deterioration of climate to such an extent.

25. INDIA-EGYPT SIGN PACT TO ELEVATE TIES TO 'STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP'

- ◆ **Preface:** Visit by Indian Prime Minister to Egypt.

◆ **Result of visit:**

- ◆ During the PM Modi's visit, India and Egypt has elevated their relationship to a 'Strategic Partnership' with a particular focus on enhancing political and security cooperation.
- ◆ Besides the agreement on strategic partnership, the two countries also signed three more pacts on — agriculture and allied sectors; protection and preservation of monuments and archaeological sites; and competition law.

◆ **History:** India and Egypt are founding members of NAM and have signed Friendship Treaty in 1955.

◆ **Trading Relations:** Most Favored Nation status has been provided by both Nations to each other. Major products of trade are raw cotton, oil, chemicals, Sesame, lentils, coffee, herbs, and cotton yarn are among the top Indian exports to Egypt.

◆ **Technical and scientific fields:** In accordance with the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, Egyptian applicants visit India (ITEC).

◆ **Cultural Relations:** Maulana Azad Center for Indian Culture (MACIC) in Cairo teaches Hindi, Urdu, and yoga and promotes Indian culture, the Centre also hosts cultural events, also "India by the Nile" festival is a yearly cultural event held in Egypt.

26. INDUS WATER TREATY:

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

◆ **Dispute:** The Kishanganga dispute involves India building hydropower project on the Kishanganga River, a tributary of the Jhelum River.

◆ **Objection of Pakistan:** Pakistan raised objections to the project, arguing that the diversion of the river's waters by India would affect the flow downstream, impacting agricultural activities and water availability in Pakistan-administered areas.

◆ **Arbitration Award:** In 2013, the neutral expert of International Court of Arbitration ruled in favor of India, allowing it to continue with the construction of the Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant. The ruling specified certain operational parameters to address concerns raised by Pakistan.

◆ **Status of Project:** Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant became operational in 2018. However, concerns about its impact on downstream water flows in Pakistan persist.

27. EU'S NEW CRYPTO-LEGISLATION:

◆ **Preface:** The European Parliament, the legislative body of the 27-country block European Union, has approved the world's first set of comprehensive rules to bring largely unregulated cryptocurrency markets under the ambit of regulation by government authorities.

◆ **About the law:** The regulation is called the Markets in Crypto Assets (MiCA). MiCA is the most comprehensive regulatory framework for digital assets to date.

◆ **Utility:** The rules will impose a number of requirements on crypto platforms, token issuers and traders around transparency, disclosure, authorization, and supervision of transactions.

◆ **Coverage:** The MiCA legislation will apply to 'cryptoassets' (Bitcoin, Ethereum and stablecoins).

◆ **Requirement of law:** Size of crypto investments have increased with time and lack of regulations with respect to the market has let to investors losing their money.

28. INDIA-GREECE TIES UPGRADED TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP:

- ◆ **Preface:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi became India's first head of government to recent visit Greece, during which both nations upgraded their relations to a 'strategic partnership'.
- ◆ **Strategic Partnership:** It involves a shared understanding between the two or more states involved on the nature of threats in the environment and the place of their collective power in helping mitigate the threats.
- ◆ **History of ties:** The two countries have developed a warm relationship based on a common commitment to democracy, peace and development in the world and to a social system imbued with principles of justice and equality.
- ◆ **Significance of relation:**
 - ◆ **Geopolitical Balance:** Both countries are strategically positioned at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Strengthening ties allows them to contribute to regional stability and balance in these regions.
 - ◆ **Maritime Cooperation:** India's 'Act East' policy aligns with Greece's focus on maritime connectivity through its Blue Growth strategy. Enhanced cooperation can boost trade, investment, and connectivity along sea routes.

29. INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEC):

- ◆ **Preface:** India and Saudi Arabia have joined the European Union and the United States in launching India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- ◆ **Objective:**
 - ◆ The corridor aims to provide a reliable and cost-effective ship-to-rail transit network between Asia, Middle East and Europe.
 - ◆ This will enable goods and services to transit to, from, and between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe.
 - ◆ Along the railway track, the members want to lay a cable for clean hydrogen export.
- ◆ **Implementation:** The corridor is part of Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) and will comprise of two separate corridors:
 - ◆ The Eastern corridor - will connect India to the Arabian Gulf.
 - ◆ The Northern corridor- will connect the Arabian Gulf to Europe.
- ◆ **Member Nations:** Apart from India, the other participants will include Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, Germany, Italy, USA and the European Union.
- ◆ **Benefits:**
 - ◆ It is seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
 - ◆ Key for connectivity of Global South
 - ◆ Strengthening supply chains amid Russia-Ukraine War.

30. INDIA-CANADA DIPLOMATIC ROW

- ◆ **Preface:** The bilateral ties between India and Canada have deteriorated after the latter alleged "potential" Indian links to the killing of Khalistani separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

- ◆ **Khalistani Movement:** It is a separatist and identity movement that advocates, among other things, for carving out an independent Sikh homeland from the Indian state of Punjab.
- ◆ **Canada in Khalistani Movement:**
 - ◆ The Khalistan movement found supporters among the large and scattered Sikh diaspora, predominantly in Canada, the UK and Australia.
 - ◆ Canada is home to the largest Sikh population outside Punjab, comprising more than 2% of the country's population, a significant number of whom are supporters of Khalistani movement.
 - ◆ Khalistani supporter hold significant say in politics of Canada.
- ◆ **Canada's claim:** Trudeau claimed that Indian government was involved in Khalistani leader Hardeep Nijjar's killing on Canadian soil which has now highlighted the 'Five Eyes' alliance.
- ◆ **'Five Eyes' Alliance:** It is a multilateral intelligence-sharing network shared by over 20 different agencies of five English-speaking countries — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- ◆ **Effect on bilateral ties:** Both countries have significantly expelled each other's diplomatic staff resulting in all time low in the bilateral relations.
- ◆ **Way out:**
 - ◆ The only way out is for Canada to take the first step in proving its allegations, which, in the absence of verifiable evidence, seem to have been levelled prematurely.
 - ◆ In absence of above-mentioned evidence, Canada needs take initiative and resume the bilateral ties.
 - ◆ Intelligence co-operation of both the countries needs to be strengthen to eliminate ideologies and nab terrorist elements.

31. HAMAS-ISRAEL WAR

- ◆ **Preface:** Israel-Hamas war started after the latter launched an unprecedented attack on Israel in October 2023.
- ◆ **Reason for attack:** Hamas has said it was motivated to launch the attack essentially as the culmination of long-building anger over Israeli policy, including recent outbreaks of violence at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, but more generally over the treatment of Palestinians and the expansion of Israeli settlements.
- ◆ **Response from Israel:** The country has retaliated with an all-out attack on Gaza.
- ◆ **War crimes:** The war has resulted in death of civilians on both sides and includes war crimes like firing indiscriminate rockets and taking hostages.
- ◆ **India's position:** A balanced approach has been taken by India in the conflict between Israel and Hamas though it has criticized the attack on the former by the latter.
- ◆ **Way Forward:** International community (including India) should make diplomatic efforts to bring Israel and Palestine on negotiation table and end the violence at the earliest.

