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FACT FILE

**International
Relations**

**INTERNATIONAL
AGREEMENTS
& SUMMITS**



PRELIMS SAMPOORNA

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INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS & SUMMITS

NAM SUMMIT 2020

Context

The online NAM Contact Group Summit on “United against COVID-19” was hosted by current NAM Chairman and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev.

Key Highlights of the Summit

- **Theme** – “United against COVID-19”
- Creation of a **task force** to identify requirements of member countries through a common database reflecting their basic medical, social and humanitarian needs in the fight against COVID-19.
- Leaders adopted a Declaration underlining the importance of international solidarity in the fight against COVID-19.
- Over 30 Heads of State and other leaders joined the summit.
- India flagged the issues of “**terrorism**” and “**fake news**”, calling them “deadly viruses” at a time when the world fights the novel coronavirus.
- **18th Summit** of the Non-Aligned Movement was held October 25 and 26, 2019 in **Baku, Azerbaijan** will hold the NAM presidency for 3 years until the 19th summit in 2022.

About Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The core idea of the non-alignment originated in the Asia-Africa Bandung conference held in Indonesia in 1955.

- The first conference of Non-aligned movement held in **1961 in Belgrade**, known as the Belgrade conference.
- It was founded under the leadership of **by Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia.**
- All five leaders believed that developing countries should not help or align with either the Western or Eastern blocs in the Cold War but instead remain non-aligned.
- The major goal of the formation of non-Alignment movement was to end colonialism and all kinds of imperialism.

Members of NAM

- The Movement recognizes three categories for participation: Full Member, Observer and Guest.
- Today, NAM comprises **of 120 member** states with 17 states and 10 international organisations as its observers.
- It is the second largest grouping of states worldwide, after the United Nations.

ASEAN SUMMIT 2021

Context

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), gathered for the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits on 26 October 2021 under the Chairmanship of Brunei Darussalam.
 - ▶ The **theme** of the Summit was - "**We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper**", which focuses on harnessing the caring nature of ASEAN.

Key Declaration of ASEAN Members

- Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (**ASEAN SHIELD**).
- Consolidated Strategy on the **Fourth Industrial Revolution** for ASEAN.
- ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on **Care Economy**.
- ASEAN Community of Greater Understanding, Tolerance and a Sense of Regional Agendas among Peoples of ASEAN.
- ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC COP-26**).
- ASEAN **Declaration on Promoting Competitiveness, Resilience and Agility of Workers** for the Future of Work.
- ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the **Reformulation and Production of Healthier Food and Beverage Options**.
- ASEAN Leaders' **Declaration on Upholding Multilateralism**.
- ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the **Blue Economy Declaration** on the Elimination of Bullying of Children in ASEAN.
- ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Cooperation in Support of the ASEAN.
- Comprehensive Recovery Framework ASEAN-China **Joint Statement on Enhancing Green and Sustainable Development Cooperation**.
- ASEAN Leaders' **Statement on Advancing Digital Transformation** in ASEAN.
- **Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration** on the Importance of the Family for Community.

ASEAN Summits

- The ASEAN Summit is the highest policy-making body in ASEAN comprising the Head of States or Government of ASEAN Member States.

- The ASEAN Summit is held **twice annually** at a time to be determined by the Chair of the ASEAN Summit in consultation with other ASEAN Member States.
- The summit is to be hosted by the ASEAN Member State holding the ASEAN Chairmanship.
- The **First ASEAN Summit** was held in Bali, Indonesia on 23-24 February 1976.
- ASEAN's **current chair is Brunei**.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or **ASEAN**, was established on **8 August 1967** in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (**Bangkok Declaration**) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Brunei Darussalam then joined on 7 January 1984, Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999.
- Today, it is a **ten** Member States of ASEAN.
- **Members** - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam

INDIA – ASEAN SUMMIT, 2021

Context

- The 18th ASEAN-India Summit was held via videoconference on 28 October 2021. The ASEAN-India Summit is an important annual event in ASEAN's calendar.

Key Highlights of the Summit

- ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership and the current Plan of Action to Implement the **ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2021-2025)** was highlighted.
- Year 2022, was designated as the "**ASEAN-India Friendship Year**".
- India's support for ASEAN's efforts to recover from the pandemic, including India's contribution of USD 1 million to the **COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund** was acknowledged.
- It encouraged India to further support ASEAN's recovery efforts, including through the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies (RRMS) for Public Health Emergencies, the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan.
- The summit highlighted the need to strengthen cooperation on cybersecurity through supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy.
- It asks for the Meeting on **Transnational Crime (SOMTC) + India Work Programme** on Transnational Crime.
- It emphasized the need to implement the **Bali Work Plan 2019-2025** and **Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025**.

Agreements

- India and ASEAN agreed on the following points:

- To narrow the development gap and strengthen economic relations. An important part of this is social infrastructure development (including vaccine and pharmaceutical research) and people-to-people connectivity.
- The two sides also agreed to link the various forums such as:
 - ▶ Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA),
 - ▶ the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC),
 - ▶ the Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA),
 - ▶ Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT),
 - ▶ Mekong sub-regional cooperation frameworks
 - ▶ Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS).
 - ▶ Capacity building for MSMEs.
 - ▶ Cooperation for energy security and environment protection.
 - ▶ Development of agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors.
 - ▶ Sustainable management of marine resources (blue economy).
 - ▶ Biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and management

QUAD SUMMIT

Context

- In a signal development, the **first** QUAD (Quadrilateral Cooperation) summit held virtually between **India, US, Japan and Australia**.

About:

- **What is Quad?**
 - ▶ The Quad, or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, comprises the United States, India, Japan and Australia.
 - ▶ It is an informal group of the four nations that hold semi-regular meetings, joint military drills, and discussions about regional, economic and development assistance.
 - ▶ The framework was established in 2007, but it took on a new level of importance in 2019 with a discussion among foreign ministers amid China's increasing influence.
- **Why Quad assumes significance for four nations?**
 - ▶ **United States:** For the United States under Joe Biden, Quad assumes greater significance as it looks to strengthen its commitment in Asia and counter China after the tumultuous Trump era.
 - ▶ **Japan, India and Australia:** For Japan, India and Australia, China has emerged as a security threat in several positions, making the Quad meeting a key opportunity to strengthen strategic ties.

Chinese Maritime Aggression in the Region

- **String of Pearls:** to encircle India and limit its maritime expansion
- **Belt and Road Initiative:** viewed as model of Neo Imperialism
- **Debt Trap Diplomacy** (Hambantota Port, Pakistan's CPEC)
- **Weaponization of Supply Chain** : deployment of naval vessels at Chinese-controlled ports

Key-highlights of the virtual Summit:

- **The Spirit of the Quad:** A joint statement, titled ‘**The Spirit of the Quad**’ was presented after the summit
- The cooperation decided to pool their financial resources, manufacturing capabilities and logistics to ramp up manufacturing and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region
- **Expanding vaccine diplomacy:** The leaders finalised a landmark initiative under which huge investments will be made in India to create additional production capacities to roll out a billion coronavirus vaccine doses by 2022 for exports to the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Free Indo-Pacific:** The Quad leaders vowed to strive for an **Indo-Pacific region** that is free, open, inclusive, healthy, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion, sending an apparent message to China.
- **Working groups:** Three working groups in areas of vaccine, climate crisis and critical and emerging technology would also be created.

Importance of Indo Pacific Region (IPR):

- It is the geographical connotation of the area which covers the Eastern Coast of Africa through Indian Ocean and Western Coast of United States of America.
- **Countries of Indo-Pacific region:** Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor Leste, United States, Vietnam.

Significance:

- **Minerals:** IPR houses deep sea minerals on deep sea floor consisting of polymetallic nodules (PMN), crusts, and accumulations of metallic sulfides from deep vents. mining the PMN—which contain quantities of manganese, iron, copper, nickel, titanium, and cobalt
- **Hydrocarbons:** Deposits of petroleum and natural gas under the seafloor are the most valuable and sought-after fuels.
- **Fisheries:** The main fisheries in IPR are Bombay duck, catfish, tuna and tuna-like species, ponyfishes, croakers, mullets, sardines, anchovies, mackerel, sharks, prawns, shrimps and lobsters.

India's initiatives in Indo-Pacific

- **SAGAR:** To promote its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean, India launched the SAGAR vision in 2015.
- **Indian Pacific Ocean Initiative:** On 4 November 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the IPOI at the East Asia Summit in Bangkok.
- The main objective of the IPOI is to ensure the safety, security, and stability of the maritime domain, and to do that, seven pillars have been laid out.
- IPOI is being built on the pillars of India's ‘Act East’ policy (focusing on the Eastern Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific) and ‘Act West’ (focusing on the Western Indian Ocean).
- **India's theatre command:** The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), India's first and only tri-service theater command of the Indian Armed Forces is located in IPR which aids immensely in protecting India's strategic interest in the region.

EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

- Prime Minister of India (PM) addressed the plenary session of the 6th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) via video-conferencing held on 3 September 2021 in Vladivostok.

Key Points:

- The PM highlighted the importance of India-Russia relations and potential areas of cooperation in line with the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership'.
- Applauded Russia's vision for the development of the Russian Far East region and reiterated India's commitment (as part of its "Act East Policy") of being a reliable partner of Russia in this regard.
- Highlighted the significance of health and pharma sectors as important areas of cooperation that have emerged during the pandemic.
- Referred to other potential areas of economic cooperation including diamond, coking coal, steel, timber etc.

About Eastern Economic Forum:

- It was established by decree of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in **2015** to support the economic development of **Russia's Far East** and to expand **international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region**.
- In accordance with the Decree, the Eastern Economic Forum takes place each year in Vladivostok.
- Every year, the Eastern Economic Forum serves as a platform for the discussion of key issues in the world economy, regional integration, and the development of new industrial and technological sectors, as well as of the global challenges facing Russia and other nations.
- Events at the Forum traditionally take place in the form of panel sessions, roundtables, televised debates, business breakfasts, and business dialogues devoted to Russia's relationships with various countries.
- The Forum business programme includes a number of business dialogues with leading partner countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and with ASEAN, a key integration organization of dynamically developing nations in Southeast Asia.



17TH MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF BIMSTEC MEMBER COUNTRIES

Context

- The External Affairs Minister of India participated in the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on April 1, 2021. The meeting, chaired by Sri Lanka, was held in virtual mode with the participation of all BIMSTEC Member States.

Key Highlights

- 17th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Ministerial meet, chaired by Sri Lanka, was held recently.
- The meeting drew participation from all the seven-member States, including Myanmar which is witnessing a large-scale crackdown against anti-military protesters.
- Indian External Affairs Minister pushed for further bolstering regional cooperation through the platform and making it "stronger, vibrant, more effective, and result-oriented."
- India called for enhanced cooperation to expand regional connectivity, which would be "an important step towards fulfilling the aspirations of the people of our region for better connectivity and integration."
- India urged the members to finalise a legal framework, along with expediting the completion of a coastal shipping deal and a motor vehicles agreement, to augment connectivity.
- Member states endorsed the signing of multiple legal instruments in the upcoming meet, including:
 - ▶ BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;
 - ▶ Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka;
 - ▶ Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States.
- The text of the BIMSTEC Charter has been finalised. With this, the organisation will soon have the common set of rules and goals.
- The Member States have finalised the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity which is expected to be adopted at the fifth BIMSTEC Summit
- The 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial, chaired by Sri Lanka, however, avoided any reference to Myanmar's current crisis.

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organisation of seven nations of South Asia and Southeast Asia
- BIMSTEC is an economic bloc that came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- It aims to accelerate economic growth and social progress among members across multiple sectors — trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries, agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change.
- The grouping holds annual meetings hosted by member states based on alphabetical rotation. Sri Lanka is the host nation this time.

- Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four countries with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation). With the entrance of Myanmar in 1997, the grouping was renamed 'BIMST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- Finally, with the entrance of Nepal and Bhutan at the 6th Ministerial Meeting in 2004, the grouping was named Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

Structure:

- Fourteen priority sectors of cooperation have been identified and several BIMSTEC centres have been established to focus on those sectors.
- A BIMSTEC free trade agreement is under negotiation, also referred to as the mini SAARC.
- Leadership is rotated in alphabetical order of country names. The permanent secretariat is in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Members:

- BIMSTEC, which now includes five countries from South Asia and two from ASEAN, is a bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- BIMSTEC is a regional organisation comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANSPACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (CPTPP)

Context:

- On 1 February 2021, the United Kingdom (UK) formally requested accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and on 2 June 2021, the CPTPP Commission agreed to formally commence accession negotiations with the United Kingdom.

About CPTPP:

- The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is a free trade agreement (FTA) between Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam.
- The CPTPP was signed by the 11 countries on 8 March 2018 in Santiago, Chile.
- The CPTPP entered into force on 30 December 2018 for:
 - ▶ Australia
 - ▶ Canada
 - ▶ Japan
 - ▶ Mexico
 - ▶ New Zealand

- ▶ Singapore
- This Agreement is a separate treaty that incorporates, by reference, the provisions of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement (signed but not yet in force), with the exception of a limited set of suspended provisions.
- The 11 countries have a shared vision of the CPTPP as a platform that is open to others to join if they are able to meet its high standards.
- The CPTPP recognizes the challenges facing Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in establishing export markets, and includes outcomes to help make this task easier in the CPTPP region.
- The CPTPP Commission is the decision-making body of the CPTPP, which was established when the CPTPP entered into force on 30 December 2018.

CHINA PAKISTAN INK NEW CPEC AGREEMENT

Context:

- Recently, Pakistan signed a new agreement with China to start the second phase of **USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**.

Key-Highlights:

- The industrial cooperation agreement is a key part of what is being called **“phase two” of CPEC**.
- The first phase primarily involved **Chinese investments in energy projects as well as road infrastructure**.
- **The agreement between Pakistan’s Board of Investment and the NDRC** is aimed at **boosting Chinese investment in Pakistan as well as transferring Chinese industrial capacity**.
- The framework will **“promote industrialisation and development of economic zones, and initiate, plan, execute, and monitor projects, both in public as well as private sector”**.
- **CPEC** was a project of **“strategic significance for both countries”** and called for both sides to **“expedite” measures to develop the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar**.
- China has described CPEC as a **“flagship project” of the Belt and Road Initiative**.
- The corridor links **Xinjiang with Gwadar, and also passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) where China is investing in a number of projects**.

About China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

- **The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** is a part of **China’s ambitious One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative to link China with Europe**.
- **This was started in 2013**, the CPEC is a developmental project between Pakistan and its all-weather friend China.
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Is a whopping 46 billion dollar project which will **connect Kashgar in Xinjiang province of China, with Gwadar port in Balochistan which is the largest province in Pakistan**.
- It is connected through a vast and complex network of roads as well as other infrastructure projects **such as dams, hydropower projects, railways, and pipelines**.

INDIA - SKAO

Context:

- Recently, India inked an interim agreement confirming its commitment to work on **the mega science project — Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO)** — proposed to be the **world's largest radio telescope**.

Key-points:

- The signing of the Cooperation Agreement between India, represented by **TIFR – National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA)**, and **SKA**, was held virtually.
- NCRA is within the Tata institute of fundamental research (TIFR)**, working in SKA's development since the **1990s**.
- The SKA Organisation graduated to becoming the **SKA Council — an umbrella body to plan, undertake and oversee the construction of SKA Observatory** and also manage operations of the facility in the decades to come.
- India is a participating country in the setting up of the **world's largest radio telescope**, yet to get the central government's approval to become a **Member Country in SKA council**.

About Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO)

- SKAO is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy.**
- The operation, maintenance and construction of SKA will be overseen by **Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO)**.
- SKAO is headquartered in the UK.**
- The telescope in **South Africa will have 197 dishes and will be located in the Karoo region.**
- The telescope in **Australia will have 1,31,072 antennas**, and will be installed on the campus of the **Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory**.
- India is also participating in SKAO through **the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.

FIRST INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA SUMMIT

Context:

- Recently, the first India-Central Asia Summit was hosted by Prime Minister of India with the Presidents of **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**.
- This first India-Central Asia coincided with the **30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries**.

Key-Points:

- India-Central Asia Summit was held virtually** between India and Central Asian Countries.
- India and central Asian Countries agreed to institutionalize the **Summit mechanism by deciding to hold India-Central Asia Summit every 2 years**.

- They also agreed on regular meetings of **Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers and Secretaries of the Security Council** to prepare the groundwork for the Summit meetings.
- **At the First India-Central Asia Virtual Summit**, it was decided to set up an **India-Central Asia Secretariat in New Delhi** to support the **new India-Central Asia Summit mechanism**.
- In this Summit, the leaders discussed proposals to further **cooperation in areas of trade and connectivity, development cooperation, defence and security, and cultural and people-to-people contacts**. These include-
 - ▶ Round-Table on Energy and Connectivity.
 - ▶ Joint Working Groups at senior official level on Afghanistan and use of **Chabahar Port**.
 - ▶ Showcasing of Buddhist exhibitions in Central Asian countries.
 - ▶ Commissioning of an India-Central Asia dictionary of common words.
 - ▶ Joint counter-terrorism exercises.
 - ▶ **Visit of 100 members youth delegation annually** from Central Asian countries to India.
 - ▶ Special courses for Central Asian diplomats.
- In the summit, the leaders reiterated their strong support for a **peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan with a truly representative and inclusive government**.
- The Prime Minister conveyed India's continued commitment to providing **humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people**.

Significance of the Summit:

- The countries share their boundaries with Afghanistan. Afghanistan was **taken over by Taliban after the US left Afghan soil in August 2021**.
- This left Indian developmental works in Afghanistan incomplete. Also, the Indian investments made towards the development of Afghanistan went in vain.
- **Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic share their boundaries with China**. India is now involved in a **21 – month standoff with China**.

About Central Asia

- Central Asia is a region in Asia which stretches from the **Caspian Sea in the west to China and Mongolia in the east, and from Afghanistan and Iran in the south to Russia in the north**.
- It includes the former **Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan**.
- All five nations became independent states after the collapse of the **USSR in 1991, post-Cold war**.



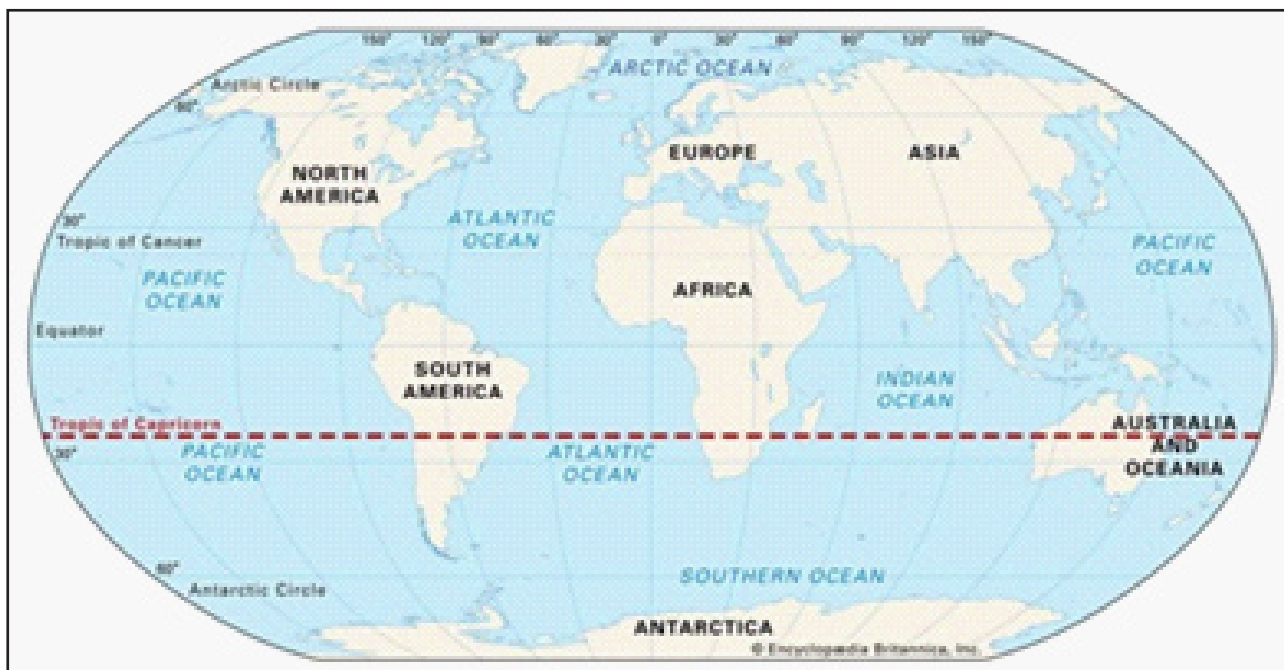
ANTIGUA, BARBUDA JOINS INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE

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**, which come **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**.

Why is this important for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS)?

- Antigua & Barbuda is one of the small island developing states (SIDS) in the Caribbean.
- The nation is vulnerable to climate change and its electricity generation is totally from fossil fuels.
- Electricity production and transportation, petroleum is used extensively. And with this agreement in place, the country would have access to not only funding but also new renewable energy technologies.
- India is working with the government of Antigua and Barbuda towards finalizing proposals to avail USD 10 million line of credit assistance in the solar energy sector.



REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP)

Context:

- The RCEP will come into effect on January 1, 2022, marking the formation of the **world's largest free trade zone in terms of trade volume**.

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.

Why is India not a part of RCEP?

- India did not join RCEP raising a concern that this deal would open it up to Chinese goods, and thus increase its trade balance with China.

Objectives of RCEP

- **To lower tariffs, open up trade in services and promote investment** to help emerging economies catch up with the rest of the world.
- **To help reduce costs and time for companies by allowing them to export a product anywhere** within the bloc without meeting separate requirements for each country.
- It also touches on intellectual property, but will **not cover environmental protections and labour rights**.

9TH BRICS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION MEETING

Context:

- In order to increase cooperation in the areas of Science, Technology and Innovation, India requested the BRICS countries to come forward and collaborate.
- This was the 9th BRICS science and technology ministers meeting chaired by India's Minister for Science and Technology.

Key-Highlights:

- During the meeting, BRICS countries come together and innovate cost-effective, sustainable, affordable, accessible, and scalable scientific solutions, because they face similar and unique challenges.
- They are working towards a rightful place for BRICS countries, in the Global Innovation Index.
- The year 2021 marks the completion of 15 years of BRICS cooperation and the overall theme adopted was 'BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for continuity, consolidation and consensus'.
- India has prepared the Innovation Cooperation Action Plan 2021-24 with support from BRICS countries.
- This action plan consists of new initiatives that will not only benefit the citizens but will expand to the BRICS nations.

Aim of the meeting:

- To innovate and make innovation cost-effective, affordable, accessible, sustainable and scalable

- Offer scientific solutions to the upcoming challenges.
- To increase preparedness and response to pandemic-like situations.

INDIA, UAE FORMALLY LAUNCH CEPA NEGOTIATIONS

Context:

- India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) formally launched negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with an early harvest to be concluded by end December.

About:

- It is a new strategic economic agreement between both nations.
- It is expected to increase bilateral trade in goods to \$100 billion within five years of the agreement being signed and increase trade in services to \$15 billion.
- Both sides aim to conclude negotiations by December 2021 and sign a formal agreement in March 2022.
- CEPA will create new jobs, raise living standards, and provide wider social and economic opportunities in both nations.

India-UAE's trade relations:

- The UAE is currently **India's third-largest trading partner** with bilateral trade in FY20 valued at \$59 billion.
- India was the **UAE's second-largest trading partner** in 2019, with bilateral non-oil trade valued at \$41 billion.
- The UAE is the **eighth-largest investor** in India, having invested \$11 billion between April 2000 and March 2021.
- The UAE is also **India's second-largest export destination** after the US, with exports valued at approximately \$29 billion in FY20.
- **Items of exports:** petroleum products, gems and jewellery, minerals, food items such as cereals, sugar, fruits and vegetables, tea, textiles and chemicals.
- **Items of imports:** petroleum and petroleum products, precious metals, stones, gems and jewellery, minerals, chemicals and wood and wood products.

CEPA with other countries:

- CEPA between India and South Korea was signed in 2009.
- CEPA between India and Japan was signed in February 2011.

RENEGOTIATION OF BTIA: INDIA-EU

Context:

- Recently, government officials have revealed that India and the European Union (EU) are set to resume negotiations for a Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA). The BTIA talks have been suspended since 2013.

About BTIA

- **Background:** India and the EU had launched talks for having a wide-ranging Free Trade Agreement (FTA), officially called broad-based BTIA, long ago in 2007.
 - ▶ The BTIA was proposed to integrate trade in **goods, services and investments**.
 - ▶ However, the talks stalled in 2013 over differences on market access and movement of professionals.
- **Scope:** The EU was India's largest trading partner in goods 2019-20, ahead of China and the US, with total trade close to USD 90 billion.
 - ▶ With the signing of the BTIA, India and the EU expect to promote bilateral trade by removing barriers to trade in goods and services and investment across all sectors of the economy.
- **Challenges:** The pursuit of self-confidence has been accelerated by the Covid-19 crisis under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission. This is perceived by the European Union as India's "protectionist stance".
 - ▶ India may find it difficult to meet the sustainable standards in labour and environment on which the EU now lays greater emphasis.
- **Significance:** India seeks to signal that it means business and is not averse to signing trade agreements after it opted out of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** at the last moment.
 - ▶ The EU, meanwhile, wants to diversify its value chain away from China to India and, hence, there is interest on its part also to have a trade agreement with India.

Connectivity roadmap:

- **More than Physical connectivity:** It is an ambitious and comprehensive connectivity project, focused not only on physical infrastructure but also aims to improve digital, energy, transport and people-to-people connectivity.
- **Components:** India-EU roadmap covers three main areas - **trade and investment, science and technology and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- **Regional and Multi-Stakeholder Approach:** The main focus areas were connectivity within the country, building connectivity with Europe and in that process work with other countries in South Asia and Indo-Pacific.
 - ▶ It will promote private and public funding for connectivity projects.
- **Counterfoil to BRI:** A report entitled India-EU Connectivity-Partnership for Development, Demand and Democracy 'emphasizes that the roadmap of communication is indirectly seeking to challenge China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
 - ▶ As it emphasizes principles such as democracy, the rule of law, inclusion and transparency and the avoidance of debt.

CO-DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR ALUAV

Context:

- India and the United States had signed a Project Agreement (PA) for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (ALUAV) under the ambit of the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI).

About Project Agreement:

- The PA was signed between the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and U.S. Department of Defence (DoD) by the co-chairs of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Air Systems, under the DTTI.
- The PA outlines the collaboration between Air Force Research Laboratory, Indian Air Force, and Defence

Research and Development Organisation towards Design, Development, Demonstration, Testing and Evaluation of systems to co-develop an ALUAV prototype.

- The PA for the ALUAV fell under the Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation Memorandum of Agreement between MoD and U.S. DoD, which was first signed in January 2006 and renewed in January 2015.
- It was a significant step towards deepening defence technology collaboration between the two nations through co-development of defence equipment.
- The Aeronautical Development Establishment at the Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Aerospace Systems Directorate at the Air Force Research Laboratory, along with the Indian and U.S. Air Forces were the principal organisations for the execution of the PA.

What is the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)?

- The DTTI mechanism was launched in 2012. It is **not a treaty or a law**.
- It is a flexible mechanism to ensure that senior leaders from our nations are persistently focused on the opportunities and challenges associated with growing our defense partnership.

The DTTI aims to:

- Transform the bilateral defense relationship into one that is limited only by independent strategic decisions, rather than bureaucratic obstacles or inefficient procedures.
- Strengthen India's defense industrial base by moving away from the traditional "buyer-seller" dynamic toward a more collaborative approach.
- Explore new areas of technological collaboration from science and technology cooperation through co-development and co-production.
- Expand U.S.-Indian business ties.
- The first four projects under the DTTI were announced during President Barack Obama's visit to New Delhi as chief guest for the 2015 Republic Day celebrations.
- India and the US are currently working on six projects under the DTTI framework and two more American proposals are under consideration.
- The whole idea of the DTTI was to cut through the government bureaucracies on the two sides. As a mechanism for defence cooperation, it has to focus on advanced technologies.

21ST SCO SUMMIT

Context

- The 21st Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of State was recently held recently via video Conferencing in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Key- highlights of the meeting:

- The focus was primarily on the ground situation in Afghanistan and its global repercussions.
- Members of the China and Russia-led Shanghai Cooperation Organisation endorsed Iran's future membership of the bloc that already includes South Asian rivals India and Pakistan.
- The organisation seeks to combat ethnic separatism, religious extremism and terrorism in Central Asia.

- Afghanistan holds observer status at the SCO, but was not invited to observe proceedings in the wake of the Taliban's seizure of power.

India's stand in the meeting:

- The Indian delegation was led by Prime Minister. He took a strong stance against '**radicalisation**' and '**extremism**', urging the eight-member panel to come up with a **joint approach**.
- Recent developments in Afghanistan will have the greatest impact on neighbouring countries like India and there was a need for regional focus and cooperation on the situation in the country.
- Continued instability and fundamentalism in Afghanistan would encourage terrorist and extremist ideologies all over the world.
- India is committed to increasing its connectivity with **Central Asia**.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent international intergovernmental organization.
- It was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the Presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and entered into force in 2003.
- India was made an **Observer** at the SCO in 2005.
- In the historical meeting of the **Heads of State Council of the SCO** held in June 2017 in **Astana**, the status of a **full member** of the Organization was granted to the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

| Members countries of SCO | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 8 Member States | 4 Observer States | 6 Dialogue Partners |
| China | Afghanistan | Armenia |
| India | Belarus | Azerbaijan |
| Kazakhstan | Iran | Cambodia |
| Kyrgyzstan | Mongolia | Nepal |
| Russia | | Sri Lanka |
| Pakistan | | Turkey |
| Tajikistan | | |
| Uzbekistan | | |

US, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA REVIVING 'BLUE DOT NETWORK'

Context

- The US, along with the Japanese and Australian governments, is reviving the 'Blue Dot Network' infrastructure initiative to provide an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

About 'Blue Dot Network':

- The Blue Dot Network was formally announced on 4 November 2019 at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand during the 35th ASEAN summit.

- The project is led by the US's International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

Objective:

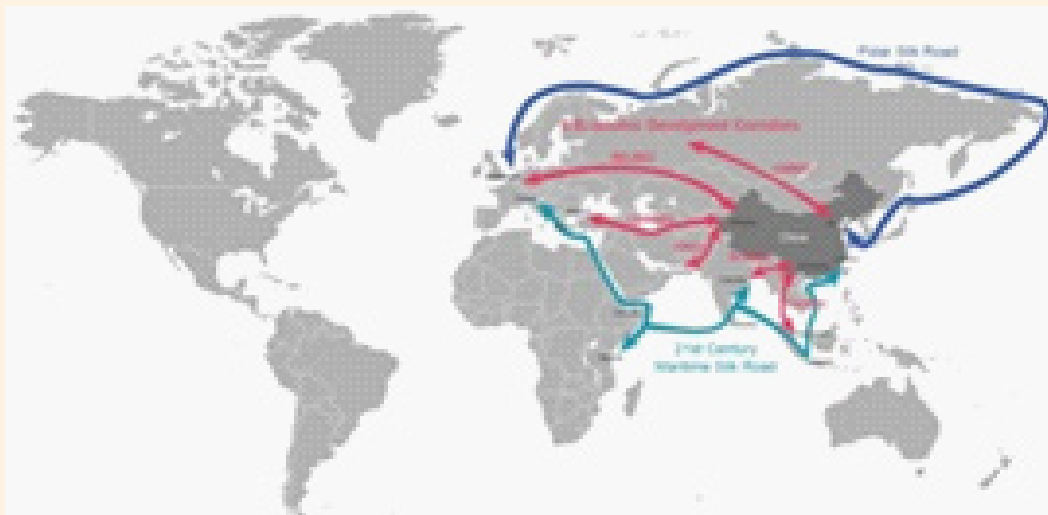
- The initiative is meant to galvanize the private sector investment in infrastructure development in emerging markets.
- It is expected to serve as a global evaluation and certification system for roads, ports, and bridges with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region.
- The projects that are approved will get a "Blue Dot", which would set universal standards of excellence to attract private capital to projects in developing and emerging economies.
- It will be a globally recognized symbol of market-driven, transparent and sustainable infrastructure projects.
- It will foster sustainable economic growth by promoting excellence in infrastructure development and supporting alternatives to predatory lending.
- **Principles:** The Blue Dot Network will use infrastructure development principles set by the G20 and G7 nations as a foundation for its standards.
- **Support:** OECD will provide technical and operational input to the global certification process.

India's role:

- The US wants India on board for the project, as it remains the only member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) to not be a part of the Blue Dot Network.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- It is also known as the **One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative**.
- It is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by **China in 2013**.
- It aims to invest in nearly 70 countries and international organizations.
- The infrastructure investments include ports, skyscrapers, railroads, roads, airports, dams, and railroad tunnels.
- The initiative includes the **ancient 'silk route' revival and the maritime silk route** also.



RAISINA DIALOGUE-2021

Context:

- The prestigious Raisina Dialogue - 2021, **was jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.**

About the Raisina Dialogue-2021:

- It was the 6th Edition of the dialogue.
- **Theme:** The theme of the 2021 Edition is “#ViralWorld: Outbreaks, Outliers, and Out of Control”.
- **Observations:** The dialogue mainly addressed the efforts and actions for the fight towards the Covid-19.
- The joint efforts were emphasized to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Raisina Dialogue:

- The **Raisina Dialogue** is a multilateral conference that is held on an **annual basis in New Delhi, India.**
- The first such conference took place in 2016.
- It is designed on the lines of Singapore’s Shangri-La Dialogue.
- The name “*Raisina Dialogue*” comes from Raisina Hill (President’s palace).
- **Strategic:** It is India’s flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics.
- **Collaboration:** The conference is hosted by Observer Research Foundation, an independent think tank with the Ministry of External Affairs of India.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND MAURITIUS

Context

- In a positive development, the Union Cabinet has approved signing of the **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)** between India and Mauritius.

What is in the India-Mauritius CECPA?

- The India-Mauritius CECPA will be the **first trade Agreement** to be signed by India with a country in Africa.

India has implemented free trade pacts with countries like Japan, Korea and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). It is also negotiating similar agreements with Australia, New Zealand and European Union.

- The Agreement is a **limited agreement**. It will cover:
- Trade in Goods
- Rules of Origin
- Trade in Services
- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures
- Dispute Settlement
- Movement of Natural Persons
- Telecom
- Financial services
- Customs Procedures and Cooperation in other Areas
- The CECPA between India and Mauritius covers 310 export items for India, including food stuff and beverages (80 lines), agricultural products (25 lines), textile and textile articles (27 lines), base metals and articles thereof (32 lines), electricals and electronic item (13 lines), plastics and chemicals (20 lines), wood and articles thereof (15 lines), and others.
-
- Significance of the Agreement:
- **Improvement in trade:** CECPA provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- **Preferential market access for Mauritius:** Mauritius will benefit from preferential market access into India for its 615 products, including frozen fish, speciality sugar, biscuits, fresh fruits, juices, mineral water, beer, alcoholic drinks, soaps, bags, medical and surgical equipment, and apparel.
- **Wide access to service sectors:** As regards trade in services, Indian service providers will have access to around 115 sub-sectors from the 11 broad service sectors. On the other hand, India has offered around 95 sub-sectors from the 11 broad services sectors.

INDIA JOINS G20 TROIKA

Context:

- Recently, India joined the G20 'Troika' and with this **India has started the procedure** for taking over the **G20** presidency next year. The G20 Troika is made of Indonesia, India and Italy.

About:

- **What is Troika?**
 - ▶ Troika means a group of three people working together. It is an English word.
 - ▶ The Troika of G20 is made of the current, next and immediate past host countries.
 - ▶ The Troika ensures continuity and provides presidency support. With this move, India has started the procedure for taking over the G20 presidency.
- **What is G20 forum?**
 - ▶ The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation, which reflects recognition that global prosperity is interdependent and the economic opportunities and challenges are interlinked.

- ▶ The G20 comprises nineteen countries with some of the world's largest economies, as well as the European Union (EU).
- ▶ The countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States. Spain is invited as a permanent guest.

- India will assume the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia, and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023.
- Indonesia took over the G20 presidency this year.

What is the need of Troika in G20?

- The G20 operates without a permanent staff or secretariat. The chair of the group rotates annually among its members.
- The current chair establishes secretariat temporarily. This secretariat organises meetings and coordinates the working of the group.
- Thus, there is need for Troika to help with the secretariat so that there is continuity in the works of G20.

What is importance of G20?

- The G20 (19 countries and the European Union) was born in 1999 as a consultation forum between finance ministers and central bank governors of the world's major economies.
- Following the 2008 economic crisis, it became a forum between Heads of State and Governments, aimed at improving coordination on the main global issues.
- At present, G20 nations represent 60% of the global population, 80% of global GDP and 75% of global exports.

The objectives of the G20 are:

- Policy coordination between its members in order to achieve global economic stability, sustainable growth
- To promote financial regulations that reduce risks and prevent future financial crises
- To create a new international financial architecture.

India and G20:

- As a founding member of the G20, India has used the platform to raise issues of vital importance and those that impact on the most vulnerable around the world.
- The global economic agenda making forum is to be presided over by India in 2022, it's a challenge as well as an opportunity for India to foster its presence in the international arena.
- But due to the rising toll of unemployment rates and poverty in the domestic portion, it's hard to take the lead effectively.

INDIA, JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA LAUNCHES SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE INITIATIVE (SCRI)

Context:

- In a move to counter China's dominance of supply chain in the Indo-Pacific region, trade ministers of India, Japan and Australia formally launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI).

About

◦ What is SCRI?

- ▶ The Supply Chain Resilience Initiative is a trilateral push to create a free and transparent trade and investment environment.
- ▶ The initiative was launched after high-level consultations since September last year, among the three countries.
- ▶ **Focus area:** Initially, SCRI will focus on sharing best practices on supply chain resilience and holding investment promotion events and buyer-seller matching events to provide opportunities for stakeholders to explore the possibility of diversification of their supply chains.
- ▶ **Aim:** The SCRI aims to create a virtuous cycle of enhancing supply chain resilience with a view to eventually attaining strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth in the region.

The Indo-Pacific region

- In terms of geo-spatiality, the Indo-Pacific is broadly to be understood as an interconnected space between the **Indian Ocean** and the **Pacific Ocean**.
- Its expanse is debated to be ranging from the eastern shores of Africa to the western coast of the United States, albeit with variations in definitions depending on each actor and their own geographic positioning in the vast expanse

G-20 LEADERS' SUMMIT 2021

Context:

- 2021 G20 Summit was held in Rome, Italy. The Group of 20 countries, which represent more than three-quarters of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, had been looking for common ground and solid commitments on how to reduce emissions while helping poor countries deal with the impact of rising temperatures.

Key Highlights:

- Leaders committed to the key Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- They also pledged to reach a target of net zero carbon emissions "by or around mid-century", instead of setting a clear 2050 date, as campaigners and summit host Italy were hoping for.
- They agreed to stop funding new dirty coal plants abroad by the end of 2021.

- They reaffirmed the so far unmet commitment to mobilise \$100 billion for developing countries for climate adaptation costs.
- They approved on an agreement that will subject multinationals to a minimum 15 percent tax, as part of an effort to build “a more stable and fairer international tax system”.
- They decided to pursue the recognition of more vaccines by the World Health Organization under a “One Health approach” for the world, and providing finances and technology for vaccine production at “mRNA Hubs” in South Africa, Brazil and Argentina.

What is G20 forum?

- The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation, which reflects recognition that global prosperity is interdependent and the economic opportunities and challenges are interlinked.
- The G20 comprises nineteen countries with some of the world’s largest economies, as well as the European Union (EU).
- The countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States. Spain is invited as a permanent guest.

New Developments

- India will assume the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia, and will convene the G20 Leaders’ Summit for the first time in India in 2023.
- Indonesia took over the G20 presidency this year.

G7 SUMMIT 2021

Context:

- This year’s summit of the Group of Seven industrial countries hosted by the United Kingdom in the picturesque Cornwall region promises to be a definitive moment in the political evolution of the West.
- The summit, which saw the digital participation of Prime Minister of India, also marks an important step towards a new global compact between India and the West.

Background:

- This year G-7 summit happening at a time when global economy is facing its worst crisis since the great depression of 1930 due to the global covid pandemic.
- Unlike last year when the scheduled summit in the USA had got cancelled due to coronavirus outbreak, this year summit is being conveyed physically which itself reflects a sense of hope.

Analysis:

- **What is G7?**
 - ▶ The G7 (Group of Seven) is an organization of the world’s seven largest so-called advanced economies.
 - ▶ They are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the United States.

- ▶ Representatives from the European Union are usually present while India, South Korea and Australia have also been invited this year.
- ▶ The UK is holding the G7 presidency for 2021 so this is where the summit is taking place at the Carbis Bay Hotel near St Ives in Cornwall.
- ▶ Ahead of this year's summit, the G7 finance ministers agreed to make multinational companies pay more tax (minimum of 15%).

Key takeaways from this year summit:

2021 summit is the first global tour of newly elected US president Joe Biden after assuming office.

- **Multilateralism:** US signaled **return of multilateralism** as the core theme of American foreign policy. Joe Biden "America is back" slogan signifies re-strengthening trans- Atlantic alliance with members of G-7 like U.K, France, Germany and Italy.
- **New Atlantic Charter:** President of USA and PM of United Kingdom signed the "New Atlantic Charter" which updates the previous war time charter signed between their predecessors Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.
- Unlike the previous charter which is directed against Nazism of Hitler's Germany this charter address 21st century challenges like climate change, bio-diversity, AI, cyber operations etc.
- **B3W initiative:** Rise of China and its growing competition with west dominates this year G7 summit. "BUILD BACK BETTER WORLD" B3W initiative is launched to support infrastructure investment in low- and middle-income countries is seen as a counter to **China's belt and road initiative** which is accused by western countries of promoting predatory financing.
- **Global taxation:** Another key theme of this year summit is to make globalization more functional through steps like proposing a minimum 15% tax on multinational corporations and commitment by G7 countries to make available 1 billion doses of COVID vaccines.
- **Carbis Bay Declaration:** Another key initiative is "CARBIS BAY DECLARATION" which aims at tackling future pandemic within 100 days thus signifies importance of public health in current geopolitical scenario.

G7 history

- As the world reeled from the first oil shock and subsequent financial crisis, the heads of state and government of the six leading industrial countries met in 1975 at the Chateau de Rambouillet, France, for the first time to discuss the global economy.
- They were joined in 1976 by Canada and in 1998 by Russia.
- Following the Russian annexation of Crimea, the G7 nations decided in March 2014 to meet without Russia until further notice.

India's stake in this year G7 summit:

- India has been invited as special guest at 2021 G7 summit along with South Africa, Australia and South Korea. This invitation comes at a time when India's relation with China is under severe strain due to last year Galwan incident and subsequent military standoff at LAC.
- In March this year India also participated in QUAD leader's Summit. Both this development signifies a growing convergence among India and West to counter balance China.
- Further, this year invitation is also a continuation of India's long term desire of becoming part of global high table of diplomacy.
- Commitment of USA to provide 500 million COVID vaccines without any strings attached also come as a breather to countries like India who are emerging from deadly second wave of COVID and grappling with acute shortage of vaccines.

- Signing of new Atlantic charter is a key stepping stone in India interaction with the west since during signing of last charter Britain PM Churchill specifically excluded Indians from the principles of self determination which form the core of previous charter.
- This had poisoned India's relation with west in its initial years and cast a long shadow of mistrust in years to come.
- New Atlantic charter deals with challenges like climate change, biodiversity, rise of authoritarianism in which India is a key stakeholder thus can hold the promise of heralding a new chapter in India relationship with the west.

Challenges:

- **Expected conflicts of interest:** The growing convergence of interests between India and the West does not mean the two sides will agree on everything as there are many areas of continuing divergence from the economic role of the state to the democratic regulation of social media and the technology giants, etc.
- **Difficult convergences:** The broad convergences between India and the West into tangible cooperation will not be easy. It would require sustained negotiations on:
 - ▶ converting shared interests
 - ▶ reforming the global economic order
 - ▶ mitigating climate change
 - ▶ promoting greener growth
 - ▶ making the world immune to future pandemics
 - ▶ constructing trusted supply chains, into concrete outcomes

EAST ASIA SUMMIT 2021

Context:

- Recently, the Prime Minister attended the 16th East Asia Summit (EAS). The 16th EAS was held on 27 October 2021, chaired by Brunei Darussalam via video-conference.

Key Highlights:

- It reaffirmed India's focus on a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific and the principle of "ASEAN Centrality" in the region.
- Highlighted the synergies between ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- It emphasised the importance of a resilient global value chain and reiterated India's commitment to providing Quad-sponsored vaccines to Indo-Pacific countries.
- It recalled India's support of USD1 million to the ASEAN Covid-19 Recovery Fund.
- The idea of developing global standards on cyber security has also been raised.
- The EAS leaders adopted three statements on mental health, economic recovery through tourism, and sustainable recovery, which have been co-sponsored by India.

East Asia Summit

About:

- EAS was established in 2005.
- It is a forum of 18 regional leaders for strategic dialogue and cooperation on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region.
- The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.

Priority Areas

- There are six priority areas of regional cooperation within the framework of the EAS.
- These are – Environment and Energy, Education, Finance, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Natural Disaster Management, and ASEAN Connectivity.

Membership:

- It comprises the ten member states of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) which are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, along with 8 other countries namely Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA.
- Brunei Darussalam is the chair for 2021

ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC) SUMMIT 2021

Context:

- The summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was held on 12 November. It is among the most impactful and yet lesser-known meetings in the region.
- It was chaired by New Zealand and held virtually. It was the last among the major summits normally held in the last quarter of a year.

Key Highlights:

- APEC consolidated ideas which emerged at several of the summits. Unlike other summits, the APEC is actually a leader's meeting from the 21 economies of the region. The economies include Taiwan and Hong Kong, and thus are not called a summit of States.
- The Aotearoa Plan of Action, (APOA) which was approved by the leaders, covers most of the current global crisis. It dealt with efforts to overcome the impact of the pandemic, respond to climate change, enhance economic recovery, and build inclusive growth. It feeds into the Putrajaya Vision 2040, a plan for APECs work until 2040.
- While focusing on expansion of economic activity the APOA grasps issues of decarbonisation and empowering indigenous peoples.

- Sectoral Ministerial Meetings for Trade, Structural Reform, Food Security, Health, Women and the Economy, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Finance are held.
- A Voices of the Future Forum, which looked at the role of youth and their agenda, was added.

Joint Declaration:

- The Joint Declaration had five focal points:
 - ▶ It turned down vaccine nationalism and noted APEC members had reduced tariffs on vaccines and pandemic related medical equipment. Export bans were not supported.
 - ▶ Second, support the **digitalisation of trade processes** to provide facilitation and reduce transaction costs. These reforms figure in the processes of most APEC members.
 - ▶ Third, APEC decided to take further practical steps towards **decarbonisation**. Subsidies to fossil fuels were discouraged.
 - ▶ About 270 million indigenous people live in the APEC region, thus emphasising their importance.
 - ▶ APEC determined that it would find ways to reduce bureaucratic costs of doing business and the ease of setting up businesses would be enhanced.

India and APEC:

- India has not been a member of APEC, and from time to time has shown interest in it.
- An effort was made in 2013 by Indonesia as APEC Chair, to admit India. As in other fora, the Chinese withheld support.
- Since APEC works on a consensus model, the moment passed without India's admission.
- Since then, India's enthusiasm to join APEC has withered though its profile in the region through the Indo-Pacific policies has enhanced.

What is APEC?

- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established in 1989.
- APEC is a 21 members forum with members - Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; Vietnam.
- It aims to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.
- It brings together 21 Pacific Rim countries which accounts for about 60% of global GDP.
- APEC was hosted in 2020 by Malaysia and Thailand will host in 2022.

COP26 – UNFCCC (2021)

Context:

- 26th COP summit, hosted in partnership between the UK and Italy.
- The annual UN climate change conference. held in Glasgow from 1-12 November 2021 in the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow, UK, a year later than planned due to delays caused by the COVID pandemic.

What is COP?

- COP stands for Conference of the Parties.
- COP comes under the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC) which was formed in 1994.
- The UNFCCC was established to work towards “stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.”
- COP members have been meeting every year since 1995 (COP1 was held in 1995 in Berlin).
- It laid out a list of responsibilities for the member states which included-
 - ▶ Formulating measures to mitigate climate change.
 - ▶ Cooperating in preparing for adaptation to the impact of climate change.
 - ▶ Promoting education, training and public awareness related to climate change.

- The summit was attended by the countries that signed the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.

What was agreed in COP26?

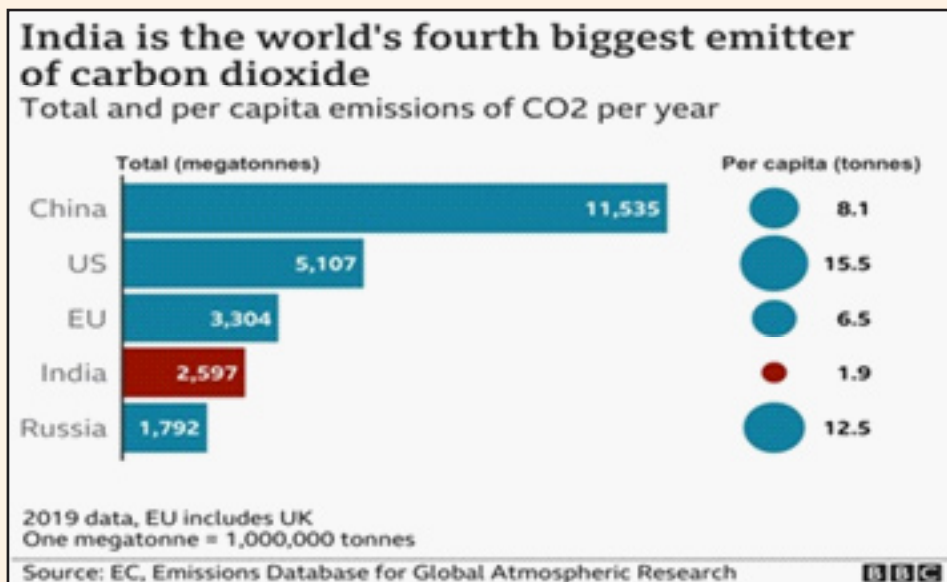
The agreement - although not legally binding - will set the global agenda on climate change for the next decade:

- **Global Methane Pledge:** The United States and Europe led the biggest climate goal, the Global Methane Pledge, to bring down global methane levels significantly by 2030; this was signed by as many as 104 countries.
- **India:** Despite being the third-largest methane emitter, **India was not signatory.**
- **Deforestation Pledge:** More than 100 national leaders pledged to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of the decade, underpinned by USD 19 billion in public and private funds to invest in protecting and restoring forests.
 - ▶ In 2020, the world lost 258,000 sq km of forest — an area larger than the United Kingdom, according to WRI’s Global Forest Watch.
- The agreement vastly expands a commitment made by 40 countries as part of the 2014 New York Declaration of Forests, and promises more resources.
 - ▶ India: India also was not part of the pledge to deforestation despite hosting the world’s largest contiguous mangrove forest: the Sundarbans.
- Emissions: It was agreed countries will meet next year to pledge further cuts to emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) - a greenhouse gas which causes climate change. This is to try to keep temperature rises within 1.5C - which scientists say is required to prevent a “climate catastrophe”. Current pledges, if met, will only limit global warming to about 2.4C.
- **Coal:** For the first time at a COP conference, there was an explicit plan to reduce use of coal - which is responsible for 40% of annual CO₂ emissions.
 - ▶ However, countries only agreed a weaker commitment to “phase down” rather than “phase out” coal after a late intervention by China and India.
- **Climate finance for developing countries:** The agreement pledged to significantly increase money to help poor countries cope with the effects of climate change and make the switch to clean energy.
- India requested the LMDC members to join hands with India to support the global initiatives it has pioneered, including the:

- ▶ International Solar Alliance (ISA)
 - ▶ Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
 - ▶ Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)
- **Fossil fuel subsidies:** World leaders agreed to phase-out subsidies that artificially lower the price of coal, oil, or natural gas. However, no firm dates have been set.

India's Commitments at COP26 Glasgow- Key Commitments made by India

- India is the world's fourth biggest emitter of carbon dioxide after China, the US and the EU.
- India emitted 1.9 tonnes of CO₂ per head of population in 2019, compared with 15.5 tonnes for the US and 12.5 tonnes for Russia that year.



- India called the COP26 summit a "success", saying it put across the concerns and ideas of the developing world quite "succinctly and unequivocally" in front of the world community.
 - ▶ India will ensure **50% of its energy** will be sourced from renewable energy sources.
 - ▶ India will reduce its **carbon emissions by 2030** by a billion tonnes.
 - ▶ India will also reduce its emissions intensity per unit of GDP by **less than 45%**.
 - ▶ India would also install **500 Gigawatt of renewable energy by 2030**, a 50 GW increase from its existing targets.
- **India's Target by 2070:**
 - ▶ India will aim to achieve **net-zero emissions by 2070**.
- This is in contrast to India's run-up to the COP where it had strongly resisted demands by developed countries to take on net-zero targets.
- **Impact on India:** Taking on net-zero targets, requires a sharp shift to clean energy sources that several experts have opined, which will impose a steep cost on India.

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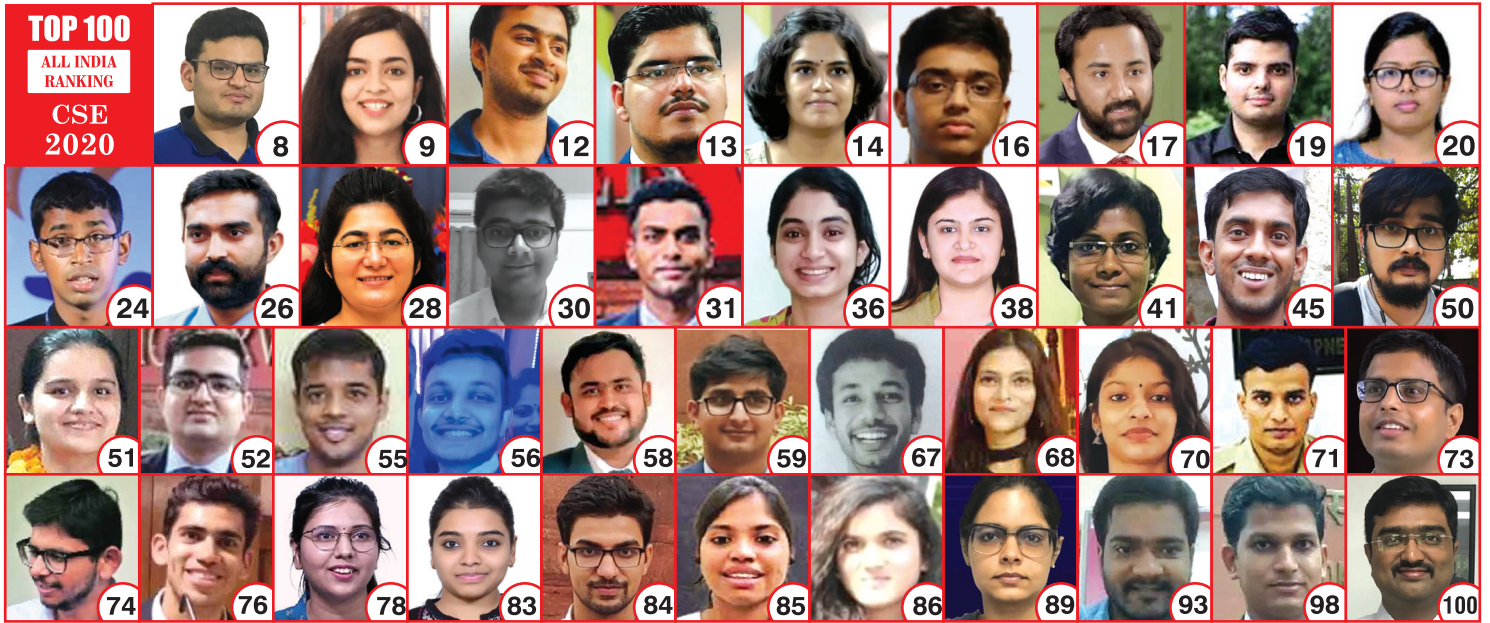
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