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INDIA & NEIGHBOURS

India-China

1 Second India-China Informal Summit

Context: The second informal summit between India and China took place in Mamallapuram (Tamil Nadu).

More about the meet:

- The two leaders had an in-depth exchange of views in a friendly atmosphere on overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and regional importance.
- They also shared their respective approaches towards national development.
- They evaluated the direction of bilateral relations in a positive light and discussed how India-China bilateral interaction can be deepened to reflect the growing role of both countries on the global stage.
- Both leaders shared the view that the international situation is witnessing significant readjustment. They were of the view that India and China share the common objective of working for a peaceful, secure and prosperous world in which all countries can pursue their development within a rules-based international order.
- They reiterated the consensus **reached during the first Informal Summit in Wuhan, China in April 2018, that India and China are factors for stability in the current international landscape and that both sides will prudently manage their differences and not allow differences on any issue to become disputes.**
- The two leaders exchanged views on the age-old commercial linkages and people-to-people contacts between India and China in the past two millennia, including significant maritime contacts.
- The two leaders agreed on the establishment **of sister-state relations between Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province, exploring the possibility of establishing an academy to study links between Mahabalipuram and Fujian province on the lines of the experience between Ajanta and Dunhuang and conducting research on maritime links between China and India because of our extensive contacts over the centuries.**
- The two leaders have decided to **establish a High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue mechanism to achieve enhanced trade and commercial relations**, as well as to better balance the trade between the two countries.

- They have also **agreed to encourage mutual investments in identified sectors through the development of a Manufacturing Partnership** and tasked their officials to develop this idea at the first meeting of the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue.

Background:

- Over the past decade, three historical forces have been shaping India-China relations manifested in terms of conflicts and cooperation.
 - ▶ The first is a changing world order and the rise of Asia post-2008 global economic crisis.
 - ▶ Secondly, the West's declining capacity and inclination to responsibly manage international and Asian affairs are thrusting India and China into new order building roles that would require coordination and cooperation to preserve global stability and co-develop new governance institutions and norms.
 - ▶ The third is a changing South Asia with China's 2013 and 2014 policy declarations of deepening ties with its periphery including with subcontinental states, followed soon after with the ambitious Belt and Road initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in April 2015.
- All three factors contributed to the complexity of India-China relations in the period leading up to 2017 manifested in terms of a boundary dispute and Doklam standoff, the Belt and Road Initiative, Indian bid for membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and China's presence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.
- This, in essence, was the backdrop to the **April 2018 "informal summit" in Wuhan, where both sides decided to arrest the deterioration in the relationship and attempt to chart a fresh course.**
- **Wuhan 1.0 was an attempt to articulate some norms that could serve as a renewed set of guidelines to policymakers and bureaucracies in both countries.**

2 China halts India's entry into NSG

Context: China refused to dilute its stand on India's entry into the elite Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), asserting that New Delhi must sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty to gain entry as there is no precedent for the inclusion of non-NPT countries.

More on News:

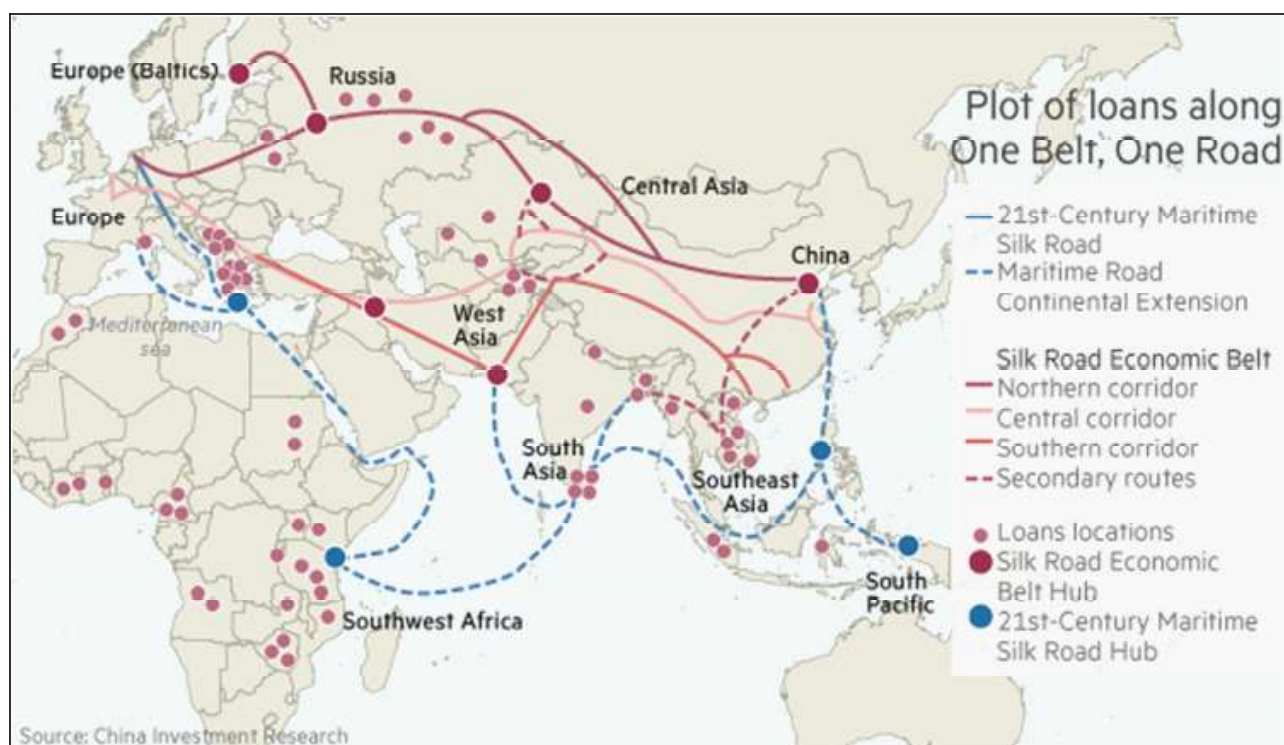
- China has sought to club India and Pakistan together, based on both being non-signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- Chinese representatives want NSG countries to adopt a **"criteria-based approach"** which essentially means that either **both India and Pakistan can get into the group or none.**
- But most of the NSG countries, including the **US, France, and the UK**, make a clear distinction between India and Pakistan's nuclear non-proliferation track record.

3 China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Context: CPEC under OBOR (one belt one road) initiative is expected to benefit only China.

One Belt One Road (OBOR)

The brainchild of Chinese President Xi Jinping is an **ambitious project that focuses on improving connectivity and cooperation** among multiple countries spread across the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe.



- Dubbed as the **“Project of the Century”** by the Chinese authorities, OBOR spans about 78 countries.
- The project involves building a big **network of roadways, railways, maritime ports, power grids, oil and gas pipelines, and associated infrastructure** projects.
- The project **covers two parts**. First is called the **“Silk Road Economic Belt”** which is **primarily land-based** and is expected to **connect China with Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe**.
- The **second is called the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”** which is **sea-based** and is expected to will **China’s southern coast to the Mediterranean, Africa, South-East Asia, and Central Asia**.

The names are confusing as the **‘Belt’** is a network of roads, and the **‘Road’** is a sea route. CPEC is **one** of its components.

- CPEC is a clutch of projects valued at **\$51 billion projects which aims at rapidly expanding and upgrading Pakistan’s infrastructure and strengthening the economic ties** between the People’s Republic of China and Pakistan.
- The 3,000 km-long CPEC consisting of **highways, railways, and pipelines** is the latest irritant in the India-China relationship.
- The **goal of CPEC is to modernize road, rail, air, and energy transportation systems—and to connect the deep-sea Pakistani ports of Gwadar and Karachi to China’s Xinjiang province**.
- The proposed project will be financed by heavily-subsidized loans that will be disbursed to the Government of Pakistan by Chinese banking giants such as **EXIM Bank of China, China Development Bank, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China**.
- The CPEC also envisages a terrestrial cable across the **Khunjerab pass to Islamabad**.
- A **submarine landing station of cable in Gwadar** is planned. Gwadar, as per the plan, “is positioned as the direct hinterland connecting Balochistan and Afghanistan”.
- Expanded bandwidth will enable a terrestrial broadcast of digital HD television, called **Digital Television Terrestrial Multimedia Broadcasting (DTMB)**. This is envisioned as more than just a technological contribution and help in cultural closeness between the two countries.

- Chinese economy claims that its goal through CPEC is to improve the agriculture sector of certain **western provinces like Kashgar.**
- The plan proposes to harness the work of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps to bring mechanization as well as scientific technique in livestock breeding, development of hybrid varieties and precision irrigation to Pakistan.
- **Xinjiang borders the countries of Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India,** and the ancient Silk Road ran through its territory. This would reduce the time and cost of transporting goods and energy such as natural gas to China by **circumventing the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea.**

India's concern

- Many experts are not in favour of India supporting CPEC. This is so because any Indian participation would inextricably be **linked to the country's legitimate claims on PoK.**
- CPEC rests on a Chinese plan to secure and shorten its supply lines through Gwadar with an enhanced presence in the Indian Ocean. Hence, it is widely believed that upon CPEC's fruition, **an extensive Chinese presence will undermine India's influence in the Indian Ocean.**
- It is also being contended that if CPEC were to successfully transform the Pakistan economy that could be a "red rag" for India which will remain at the receiving end of a wealthier and stronger Pakistan.

Besides, India shares a great deal of trust deficit with China and Pakistan and has a history of conflict with both. As a result, even though suggestions to re-approach the project pragmatically have been made, no advocate has overruled the principal strands of contention that continue to mar India's equations with China and Pakistan.

4

Sixth India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue Concludes

Context: India hosted the 6th India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue.

More on News:

The two sides through pragmatic and outcome-oriented deliberations of the six working groups arrived at following mutual agreements:

- **Policy Coordination:** The two sides undertook in-depth discussions reviewing trade and investment climates to mutually identify complementarities and harness synergies to this effect future engagement. Potential areas of collaboration across innovation and investment focusing on fintech and related technologies were highlighted. The two sides agreed to exchange an annual calendar of activities to further activate regular channels of communication.
- **Working Group on Infrastructure:** The two sides noted the significant progress made in the feasibility study on Chennai-Bangalore-Mysore railway upgradation project and personal training of Indian senior railway management staff in China, both of which have been completed.
- **Working Group on High-Tech:** The two sides assessed the achievements made since the 5th SED and exchanged views on regulatory procedures of ease of doing business, development of artificial intelligence, high-tech manufacturing, and next-generation mobile communications of both countries.

Background

- SED was **set up by the agreement between the erstwhile Planning Commission of India and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao to India in December 2010.**
- Since then SED has emerged as a crucial mechanism to facilitate bilateral trade and investment flows and enhance economic cooperation.
- SED is significant because the bilateral trade between India and China stood at \$87 billion in 2018-19 and the trade deficit stood at \$50 billion in favour of China.

India-Pakistan

5 India rejects UN chief's mediation offer on Kashmir

Context: United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has expressed concern over the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Referring to the Simla Agreement, which was signed by India and Pakistan in 1972, Guterres said the “final status of J&K is to be settled by peaceful means, under the Charter of the United Nations”.

Simla Agreement:

- It was signed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on 2 July 1972, after a full-blown war between India and Pakistan in 1971.
- The Agreement was “much more than a peace treaty seeking to reverse the consequences of the 1971 war. It was a comprehensive blueprint for good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan.
- Under it, both countries undertook to abjure conflict and confrontation which had marred relations in the past, and to work towards the establishment of durable peace, friendship and cooperation.
- The two countries agreed to:
 - Put an end to “conflict and confrontation”
 - Work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and
 - The establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing task of advancing the welfare of their peoples.

India had three Objectives at Shimla:

- The lasting solution to the Kashmir issue or, failing that, an agreement that would constrain Pakistan from involving third parties in discussions about the future of Kashmir.
- It was hoped that the agreement would allow for a new beginning in relations with Pakistan based upon Pakistan's acceptance of the new balance of power.
- It left open the possibility of achieving both these objectives without pushing Pakistan to the wall and creating a revanchist anti-India regime.

6 India-Pakistan trade freeze hits thousands

Context:

- The Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF) has released a report highlighting the impact of trade shutdown between India and Pakistan on people across borders. The report is called “**Unilateral Decisions, Bilateral Losses**”.
- Following the Pulwama attacks, trade between India and Pakistan across the Wagah-Attari border and the Line of Control (LoC) Salamabad-Chakhan da Bagh routes were closed in 2019. MFN (most favoured nation) status to Pakistan was also canceled.

Most Favoured Nation status:

- A treatment accorded to a trade partner to ensure non-discriminatory trade between two countries vis-a-vis other trade partners.
- It is the first clause in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Under WTO rules, a member country cannot discriminate between its trade partners. If a special status is granted to a trade partner, it must be extended to all members of the WTO.

MFN at the same time allows some exemptions as well:

- **Right to engage in Free Trade Agreements:** This means members can participate in regional trade agreements or free trade agreements where there is discrimination between member countries and non-member countries.
- Members can give developing countries special and differential treatment like greater market access. This special concession is in different forms like reduced tariff rates from developing country imports, concessions that allow developing countries to give subsidies to their production sectors, etc.
- Pakistan has also imposed a few counter-measures, including an airspace ban and suspension of trade relations.

India-Bangladesh

7 Joint Military Exercise-Sampriti concluded

Context: Joint military exercise-SAMPRTI was conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh in March 2019.

Recent Engagements on Border Security

- SAMPRTI aims to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and co-operation between the Armies of both countries.
- In a separate development, **an advanced electronic surveillance system along the 61-km border of India-Bangladesh was set up in Dhubri district of Assam to tackle cross border crime and help BSF personnel in round the clock patrolling.**

- The new project, under Comprehensive Integrated Border Management (CIBM), will equip the unfenced areas along the riverine border with sensors.
- The **BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception)** will cover the entire Brahmaputra River with a data network generated by microwave communication.
- India-Bangladesh border along Assam's Dhubri district will be equipped with underwater and underground sonar sensors to detect any illegal cross-border activities.

8

India, Bangladesh sign seven pacts, hail ties as 'Model Good Neighbourliness'

Context: Visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister in India, during which seven major deals were signed.

Significance of India Bangladesh Relations:

- **Security of North East:** A friendly Bangladesh can ensure that its soil is not used for anti-India activities.
- **Connectivity of North East:** The north-eastern states are land-locked and have no access to the sea directly. They can have a shorter route to sea through Bangladesh. Transit agreement with Bangladesh will spur socio-economic development and integration of North-East India.
- **Act East policy:** Bangladesh is a natural pillar of Act East policy. It can act as a 'bridge' to economic and political linkages with South East Asia and beyond.
- **Balancing China:** A neutral Bangladesh would ensure containment of an assertive China in this region and help in countering its a string of pearls policy.
- **Securing sea lanes of communication:** Bangladesh is strategically placed nearby important sea lanes. It can play a significant role in containing piracy in the Indian Ocean.

Major outcomes of the visit

The joint statement highlighted many priority areas of cooperation like Border security, boosting connectivity, defence cooperation, energy cooperation, etc.

The deals finalised were:

- MoU for providing a Coastal Surveillance System;
- Standard Operating Procedure on use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for movement of goods to and from India;
- MoU on withdrawal of water from Feni River by India for drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town, Tripura;
- Agreement concerning Implementation of the Lines of Credit (LoCs) committed by India to Bangladesh;
- MoU between the University of Hyderabad and University of Dhaka;
- Renewal of Cultural Exchange Programme and,
- MoU on Co-operation in Youth Affairs.

Major Developments in recent years:

- The India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) came into force following the exchange of instruments of ratification in June 2015.

- Several security-related agreements (**Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters; Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners, Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime, and Illicit drug trafficking, MoUs on Prevention of Human Trafficking and Extradition Treaty**) have been signed between both the countries and working groups have been constituted to curb illegal activities in the border areas.
- Train services in **Dhaka-Kolkata and Kolkata-Khulna** are doing well, the third one, the **Agartala-Akhaura route, is under construction**. Five additional bus services were introduced in 2018. Recently, the **first-ever Dhaka-Kolkata cruise ship was launched**

9 Electronic Surveillance of Indo-Bangla Border

Context: The “smart fencing” will be operationalised in the 61 km riverine section of the international border in Dhubri district of Assam where the Brahmaputra River enters into Bangladesh.

More about the Project:

- A “**highly porous**” riverine section of the Indo-Bangladesh border in Assam will be put under electronic surveillance in a bid to check illegal immigration and smuggling of arms, ammunition, drugs, and cattle
- The project is termed as **BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique)**, under the **Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System**.
- BOLD-QIT is the project to install technical systems which **enable BSF to equip Indo-Bangla borders with different kind of sensors in the unfenced riverine area of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries**.
- Now, the entire span of River Brahmaputra is covered with data networks generated by Microwave Communication, Optical Fibers Cable (OFC), Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) Communication, day and night surveillance cameras, and intrusion detection system.

Why is it important?

- **Border Security Force (BSF) is responsible for the safeguarding of 4,096 Km long International Border with Bangladesh**. At various places, it is not possible to erect Border Fence due to the geographical barriers.
- The **61 Kilometers of the Border area in District Dhubri**, Assam where River Brahmaputra enters into Bangladesh is **consisting of vast char lands and innumerable river channels thus making border guards in this area, a tough task especially during the rainy season**.
- To overcome this problem, in the year 2017, the Ministry of Home Affairs decided to go for a technological solution besides the physical presence of BSF.

Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS)

- It is a robust and integrated system that is capable of addressing the gaps in the present system of border security by seamlessly integrating human resources, weapons, and high-tech surveillance equipment.
- CIBMS is being implemented since 2016.
- CIBMS has three components which are using several different devices for surveillance, efficient and dedicated communication networks and data storage for a composite picture.
- Sensors like **Thermal Imager, Unattended Ground Sensor (UGS), Fibre Optical Sensors, Radar, Sonar, satellite imagery** are used in CIBMS.

India-Myanmar

10 Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

Context: India and Myanmar inked a crucial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to appoint a private operator for operation and maintenance of Sittwe port located at the mouth Kaladana River in the Rakhine state of Myanmar.

The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

- It is a project **connecting the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata** with **Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar** by sea.
- In Myanmar, it will then link Sittwe seaport to Paletwa in Chin State via the Kaladan riverboat route, and then from **Paletwa by road to Mizoram state in Northeast India**.
- It is expected to be operational only by 2019-2020.
- The Sittwe port in Myanmar is expected to **connect India's landlocked north-east region** to the Bay of Bengal through **Mizoram**. It will also provide an **alternate route to Kolkata**.
- The current MoU for the appointment of a private Port Operator also covers **operation and maintenance of Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities** that are part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project.



Benefits to India

- It will provide an alternative route to India to ship goods to the landlocked north-eastern States as it will provide access to the sea to landlocked north-eastern states via Myanmar.

- It will significantly lower the cost and distance of movement from Kolkata to Mizoram and beyond.
- It will also reduce dependency on only route narrow strip dubbed as Chicken's Neck in West Bengal, sandwiched between Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- It will be also instrumental for India's Act-east policy and strengthen India's trade and transport links with Southeast Asia.
- It will not only serve the economic, commercial and strategic interest of India but also contributes to the development of Myanmar and its economic integration with India.

11

India-Myanmar Joint Statement during the State Visit of the President of Myanmar to India

Context: Recently, India and Myanmar signed several agreements with a focus on the socio-economic development of Myanmar during the State Visit of the President of Myanmar to India. India, Myanmar sign 10 pacts with a focus on the development of conflict-torn Rakhine state.

More about the News:

- The focus of many agreements was on development projects under India's assistance, particularly in the conflict-torn Rakhine state.
- The agreements included an MoU on 'Cooperation for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons; Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation, and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking'.
- An agreement regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIP) was also signed between the two sides.
- Three agreements for development projects in the conflict-torn Rakhine state were also signed during the president's visit.
- India's provision of 250 pre-fabricated houses and relief materials for displaced persons in northern Rakhine in 2019.
- India reiterated its commitment to support Myanmar's efforts for promoting peace, stability and the socio-economic development in Rakhine State through the Rakhine State Development Programme.



Myanmar Should Matter to India

- **Geostrategic importance to India:** India shares a long land border of over 1600 Km with Myanmar as well as a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. Four north-eastern states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram share boundary with Myanmar.
- It is the only ASEAN country adjoining India and, therefore, seen as a gateway to South-East Asia and a key component of South and South-East Asian regional cooperation.

- Moreover, Myanmar is an important member of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), as well as Mekong Ganga Cooperation to impart significance in the context of our “Act East” policy.
- Co-operation in Regional Security

Rakhine State

- The Rakhine State of Myanmar is the region of the **ongoing conflict between the Buddhist community and the Rohingya community**. The Conflict began during World War II. During World War II, the Rohingya Muslims fought alongside the British against the Rakhine Buddhists in return for a separate Muslim state.
- The current Myanmar Government is facing **international condemnation including the United Nations. And is hence finding ways to develop the region. The agreement aims to help Myanmar develop the state of Rakhine.**

Note: India has joined hands with the Myanmar Government in building Sittwe port and the port is situated in the state of Rakhine. The port is also a part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project.

12 Rohingya issue in ICJ

Context: Recently, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Myanmar must take effective measures to protect its Rohingya Muslims, including protecting evidence relating to allegations of genocide.

About the ruling

- ICJ ruled that it has the right and the preliminary jurisdiction to hear a case seeking emergency measures to prevent Myanmar from committing genocide against its Rohingya minority.
- It ordered Myanmar to take all measures in its power to prevent genocide against the Rohingya.

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is dated 9 December 1948 and came into force on 12 January 1951. It defines genocide as any of a number of acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group:

- killing members of the group;
- causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

India ratified the treaty in 1959.

13 Operation Sunrise

Context: The armies of India and Myanmar have launched two phases of joint operations along with the Myanmar border targeting camps of insurgent

groups operating in North East. Named Operation Sunrise, the strategy is aimed at hitting militant groups that are impacting both India and Myanmar.

Highlights:

- Named Operation Sunrise, the strategy is aimed at hitting militant groups
- It is a coordinated operation by armies of India and Myanmar. It is a three-week-long operation carried out in their respective border areas, targeting several militant groups operating in Manipur, Nagaland, and Assam.

Background

- The **first phase of "Operation Sunrise"** was conducted in February 2019 along the Indo-Myanmar border when several camps were destroyed in Myanmar close to the border, **both in the north and south closer to Mizoram in India.**
- In "Operation Sunrise 2", the armies coordinated with each other to bust camps of militant outfits, including the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), the United Liberation Front of Assam (I) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland.
- Myanmar is one of the strategic neighbours of India and shares a 1,640-km border with a number of north-eastern states, including the militancy-hit Nagaland and Manipur.

India-Nepal

14 Nepal, China ink road connectivity deal

Context: China and Nepal signed agreements for all-weather road connectivity between Kathmandu and the Tibet Autonomous Region. An agreement for upgraded all-weather road connection that includes the building of Himalayan tunnels was reached between the Ministry of Finance of Nepal and the China International Development Cooperation Agency.

More from the Visit:

- A 28-km Kerung-Kathmandu road tunnel is also proposed to halve the distance between Kathmandu and the Chinese border.
- Chinese President has also promised to replenish the Arniko highway that links Kathmandu with the Tatopani transit point. The highway was badly damaged in the 2015 earthquake.
- Nepal and China have also signed around 20 deals covering water supply, trade, traditional medicines.
- Both countries have agreed to intensify the implementation of projects under the Belt and Road Initiative, now to be developed under the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network umbrella first announced in 2018.

China Nepal Economic Corridor

- In 2017, Nepal signed up to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which sought to create highways, airports and other infrastructure in the country.
- Through China Nepal Economic Corridor, Nepal seeks to end Indian dominance over its trade routes by increasing connectivity with China.
- Earlier China proposed a trilateral India-Nepal-China economic corridor, which sought to provide multidimensional connectivity through the Himalayas.
- However, India rejected this proposal on account of the \$50 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as it passes through the disputed territory of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

15 India, Nepal, Bhutan Plan Trans-Border Conservation Area

Context: India, Nepal, and Bhutan have drafted a memorandum of understanding to create a trans-boundary wildlife conservation 'peace park'.

More about the Project:

- The proposed park will include biodiversity-rich landscapes in adjoining areas of the three countries.
- "The trans-boundary parks present a fundamental shift in which wildlife conservation is done. From a species focused approach to a landscape-based approach.
- There is **already one trans-boundary Protected Area in India and Bhutan, which includes the Manas landscape of Assam**, and the new tripartite park will be an extension of this.
- This initiative was taken by India keeping in view the migratory wildlife species such as an elephant.
- This project will maintain the natural connectivity of wildlife species, undisturbed by political boundaries. The project will also help the local communities through ecotourism. It will also maintain the traditional and cultural continuity of villages that share similar traditions from time immemorial.

16 Kosi, Mechi River Interlinking Project

Context: Centre approved Rs 4,900-crore project to link Kosi, Mechi Rivers.

About Kosi-Mechi Interlinking project

- It envisages diversion of part of surplus water of Kosi River through existing Hanuman Nagar barrage to the Mechi River of Mahananda basin.
- Mechi River is an important tributary of the Mahananda River. Its basin is mostly deficient in providing adequate water for irrigation.
- It will not only relieve large swathes of north Bihar from the menace of recurring floods but also provide irrigation for a whooping over 2.14 lakh hectares of command areas spread across the districts of **Araria, Kishanganj, Purnia and Katihar in north Bihar**.
- This project is aimed at alleviating flood and resultant hardships in the entire region and has the potential to usher in the next green revolution in the **Seemanchal region**.

INDIA & WORLD

India - USA

1 India-US 2+2 Dialogue

Context: Recently, the second edition of India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue took place in Washington D.C., U.S.A.

Note: At the dialogue, both sides committed to further **deepen military-to-military cooperation, including between the Indian Navy and the US Navy Fleets under US Indo-Pacific Command, Central Command, and Africa Command and intend to expand similar cooperation between their respective Armies and Air Forces.**

About 2+2 ministerial dialogue

- The 2+2 dialogue is an official meeting between foreign & defense ministers of India & the U.S.A.
- This mechanism was conceptualized in 2017 to enhance the Indo-US engagement on multiple issues ranging from defense, trade, policies that affect both countries' relations, role in Indo-Pacific region & terrorism, etc.
- The inaugural '2+2' Indo-US dialogue was held in New Delhi in September 2018

Key Outcomes of the dialogue:

- Priority initiatives have been identified for execution under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) programme.
- The two sides also concluded a standard operating procedure for this process. These measures are expected to provide momentum to collaboration between the private defence industries of both India and the US.
- The signing of **Industrial Security Annex (ISA)** which will facilitate the exchange of classified military information between Indian and the U.S. defense industries.
 - ▶ It would enable US arms manufacturers to transfer sensitive technologies to entities beyond the Indian public sector, to even corresponding partners in the private sector.

- It will not only allow sharing of information during crisis through secure defence related channels but also helps in Make in India program in key items through collaboration between private companies of both sides.
- Finalization of Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
- **Cooperation in Space-** Both sides have agreed to cooperate for the exchange of information in Space Situational Awareness (SSA), including space debris and space traffic management.

2 Blue Dot Network

Context: India and the United States may not have signed the elusive limited trade deal during the visit of US President Donald Trump, but Washington was able to ask New Delhi to participate in the Blue Dot Network (BDN), an initiative under the quadrilateral mechanism that seeks to build and finance quality infrastructure projects.

About:

- The **concept of the Blue Dot Network was officially launched on 4 November 2019 at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand.**
- It will be **led by the US (International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)), along with Japan (Japanese Bank for International Cooperation) and Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)- the three countries, along with India, form the Quadrilateral grouping.**
- **Multi-stakeholder Initiative:** It is meant to be a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to bring governments, the private sector, and civil society together to promote “high quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development”.
- This means that as part of this initiative, infrastructure projects will be vetted and approved by the network depending on standards, as per which, the projects should meet certain global infrastructure principles.
- The projects that are approved will get a “Blue Dot”, thereby setting universal standards of excellence, which will attract private capital to projects in developing and emerging economies.

3 US-India Tax Forum

About:

- During President Trump’s maiden India visit, the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) launched the US-India Tax Forum, an initiative designed for industry and government to engage on global and local tax policy issues.
- The USISPF Tax Forum will bring over 50 tax experts from Fortune 500 companies together with senior officials from the Ministry of Finance, Central Board Direct Tax (CBDT), GST Council and Customs Board Indirect Tax & Customs (CBIC).
- The Forum will meet regularly with the government to share feedback on transparency and efficiency in tax policy.

- It will also work with the government to ensure tax policy harmonization between multilateral and unilateral tax treaties.
- USISPF together with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Observer Research Foundation (ORF) will also convene the U.S.-India Forum.

4 Generalised System of Preferences (GSP)

Context: The United States of America (USA) President Donald Trump has terminated India's designation as a beneficiary developing nation under the GSP (Generalized System of Preference) trade program with effect from 5th June 2019.

Generalised System of Preferences (GSP):

- It is a preferential tariff system extended by developed countries to developing countries (also known as preference receiving countries or beneficiary countries).
- It is a preferential arrangement in the sense that it allows concessional low/zero-tariff imports from developing countries.
- Developed countries including the US, EU, UK, Japan, etc., gives GSPs to imports from developing countries. GSP involves reduced/zero tariffs of eligible products exported by beneficiary countries to the markets of GSP providing countries.

Objective of GSP:

- The objective of GSP was to give development support to poor countries by promoting exports from them into the developed countries.
- GSP promotes sustainable development in beneficiary countries by helping these countries to increase and diversify their trade with the United States

The beneficiaries under GSP:

- The beneficiaries of GSP are around 120 developing countries. As of 2017, India and Brazil were the major beneficiaries in terms of export volume realized under GSP.
- Imports from China and some developing countries are ineligible for GSP benefits. The beneficiaries and products covered under the scheme are revised annually.

Product groups covered under GSP:

- The products covered under GSP are mainly agricultural products including animal husbandry, meat and fisheries, and handicraft products.
- These products are generally the specialized products of developing countries.

Difference between GSP and the usual trade arrangement under WTO

- Under the normal trade laws, the WTO members must give equal preferences to trade partners. There should not be any discrimination between countries. This trade rule under the WTO is called the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause.
- The MFN instructs non-discrimination that any favourable treatment to a particular country. At the same time, the WTO allows members to give special and differential treatment from developing countries (like zero-tariff imports).
- This is an exemption for MFN. The MSP given by developed countries including the US is an exception to MFN.

5 The US wants social media details of most Visa Applicants

Context: The United States government updated visa application forms to require nearly all applicants to provide their social media usernames, email addresses, and phone numbers for the past five years. The requirement to provide the additional information is in line with the Donald Trump administration's decision to ensure more stringent screening of potential immigrants and visitors to the United States.

Impact:

- The new policy will affect roughly 15 million US visa applicants around the world every year.
- More than a million non-immigrant and immigrant US visas are given to Indians every year.
- Government officials and diplomats are exempt from providing additional information.
- Critics say the sweeping surveillance potential of the new regulations could discourage a wide range of visa applicants.

US Concern:

- To improve screening processes to protect US citizens, while supporting legitimate travel to the United States.
- Collecting this additional information from visa applicants will strengthen the process for vetting applicants and confirming their identity.

How it will work?

- The change affects the non-immigrant visa online application form (DS-160), the paper back-up non-immigrant visa application (DS-156), and the online immigrant visa application form (DS-260).
- In the drop-down menu on the Consular Electronic Application Center (CEAC) site, applicants will be expected to choose from 20 online platforms, including Facebook, Flickr, Google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Myspace, Pinterest, Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter, Vine, and YouTube, and provide their usernames on the platforms. Among the social media platforms based outside the United States on the list are TencentWeibo, Twoo, and Youku.

Elsewhere in the World:

In 2015, Indians faced further scrutiny in **Schengen visas**, after it was made mandatory to provide biometric data through fingerprints and a digital photo. **That requirement was already in place in the US and Britain. Currently, the UK and Canada — popular destinations for Indian visitors and immigrants — do not have any policy of collecting social media information from visa applicants.**

6 US Senate clears proposal to bring India on a par with its NATO Allies

Context: The National Defense Authorisation Act or NDAA for the fiscal year 2020 that contained such a proposal was passed by the US Senate.

More about the News:

- **India is now on a par with America's NATO allies Japan, Australia and South Korea** following the passage of a bill by the US Senate **in a key move to increase defence partnership including advanced technology transfer.**

- The National Defence Authorisation Act or NDAA for the current financial 2020 contained this proposal.
- The legislative provision provides for increased US-India defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean in areas of humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism, counter-piracy, and maritime security.

Significance:

The US has already recognized India as a “major defence partner” in 2016. This allows India to buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from America on par with that of the closest allies and partners of the US and ensures enduring cooperation in this sphere. The passage of the NDAA clarifies in greater detail what the closer defence cooperation means and entails.

Background:

The National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) is the name for each of a series of United States federal laws specifying the annual budget and expenditures of the U.S. Department of Defense. The first NDAA was passed in 1961.

NATO

- It is an **intergovernmental military alliance**.
- Treaty that was signed on 4 April 1949.
- Headquarters — Brussels, Belgium.
- Its membership is open to “any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.”
- NATO also has what it calls the Membership Action Plan. It helps aspiring members prepare for membership and meet key requirements by providing practical advice and targeted assistance.

7 Ukieri Mobility Programme

Context:

- India and UK have joined hands together for UKIERI Mobility Programme: Study in India which will allow UK students to visit India for higher studies.
- This new India-UK scheme will fund UK students to visit India for higher studies

The programme will support national and institutional-level objectives to:

- Increase the levels of outward student mobility from the UK to 13% by 2020, as set out in UUKi’s Go International: Stand Out campaign
- Support the employability of UK graduates and help them prepare for a globally competitive workforce
- Support the internationalization of Indian higher education through the diversification of the student body, and the consolidation of inter-institutional partnerships

About the UK India Education & Research Initiative (UKIERI) Mobility Programme: Study in India:

- It will be a bilateral pilot programme which will support UK universities to collaborate with Indian partners to send UK students to India as part of their studies.
- It provides flexible grants to UK higher education institutions (HEIs) and their Indian partner institutions to design and deliver academically rigorous short-term mobility opportunities in India for undergraduate students from UK HEIs.

India-France

8 Indian Prime Minister's visit to France for a bilateral summit

Context: Recent Indian Prime Minister's visit to France for a bilateral summit marked a further consolidation of the strong Indo-French strategic ties.

Background:

- India and France became strategic partners in 1998 and this traditional relationship is enduring, trustworthy, like-minded, and all-encompassing.
- India- France relations are marked by mutual trust between two strategic partners who have always stood by each other.
- This relationship developed into a structured partnership, both at the bilateral level as well as in international bodies.
- France and India have decided to give a new ambition to this partnership by opening it to new areas of cooperation.

More about News:

- The discussions broadly focussed on reaffirming France and India as the key strategic and like-minded partners, strengthening of the defence partnership — including future defence acquisitions, progress on setting up of the Jaitapur nuclear power plant, convergent, strategic and political priorities **in the Indo-Pacific**.
- In **the digital space**, the two countries have adopted cyber-security and digital technology road map.
- A Cooperation Agreement was signed between the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing and Atos for developing cooperation in fields of quantum computing, Artificial Intelligence, and exascale supercomputing.
- Under the framework of their partnership for the planet, France and India reaffirmed their shared commitment to effectively combat climate change and loss of biodiversity.
- France and India agreed to significantly enhance people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges. It was agreed to set up a regular dialogue on consular matters, which will facilitate exchange and mobility.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction on the status of student mobility between the two countries, which has been aided by the teaching of French in India and the creation of the network of schools for Excellence in French.
- The leaders appreciated the strong potential of Indo-French cooperation in the field of culture which will be realised through participation in each other's major cultural events.
- It was decided that **India will be the Country of Honour for the 2020 edition of Livre Paris**, the Paris international book fair; the National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi will hold the first exhibition in India of French artist Gérard Garouste in January 2020, and the Musée national d'art moderne (Centre Georges Pompidou) will hold a dedicated exhibition of the works of Indian artist Sayed Haider Raza in 2021.
- India will **organise Namasté France, in 2021-2022**. The two countries will adopt a Plan of Action by the end of 2019 aimed at enhancing co-produced projects, distribution, and training in the fields of cinema, video games, and virtual reality.
- France and India agreed to cooperate shooting of films in both countries

India - German

9 India - German Relations

Context: Recently, German Chancellor Angela Merkel along with a business delegation and cabinet colleagues came to India for the fifth round of the biennial Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC).

More about the news

- Inter-Governmental Consultations are at the level of Head of Governments which allows for a comprehensive review of cooperation and identification of fresh areas of engagement, started in 2011.
- India and Germany signed 17 agreements and five joint declarations of intent in various fields including space, civil aviation, maritime technology, medicine, and education, etc.

Key outcomes of the visit

- Discussion between the two countries ranged in fields such as artificial intelligence and digital transformation, trade and investment, climate and sustainable development, “bringing people together” and sharing global responsibility.
- For the development and **use of AI**, Germany and India agreed to work closely **together to conduct bilateral and multilateral research and development activities**.
- Both countries called for the cooperation of all countries in uprooting terror infrastructure, disrupting terrorist networks.
- Germany will facilitate the export of **military equipment as well as technology sharing with India**.
- **Maritime projects** between the Indian and German naval industries (e.g. submarines) are encouraged because of the shared interest in the stability of the Indian Ocean region.
- Countries called to restart negotiations between the EU and India on the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA).
- They also stressed for restoring the full functioning of the WTO dispute settlement system and reform the WTO without undermining its fundamental principles.

India South East Asia/ East Asia

9 Mekong Ganga Cooperation

Context: The 10th Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Ministerial Meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand. India was represented by External Affairs Minister S Jai Shankar. During this meeting, the new MGC Plan of Action 2019-2022 was adopted.

New MGC Plan of Action 2019-2022:

- It envisages project-based cooperation among member countries in various areas including tourism and culture, education, public health and traditional medicine, agriculture and allied sectors, transport and communication, MSMEs and water resources management.

About Mekong Ganga Cooperation:

It is a sub-regional cooperation organisation comprising India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. It was launched in 2000 at Laos's capital Vientiane. It takes its name from Ganga and Mekong, the two civilisational rivers in Southeast Asia.

India - ASEAN

10

India- ASEAN agreed to review the Free Trade Agreement (signed in 2009)

Context: Recently, India and Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed to review the Free Trade Agreement (signed in 2009).

ASEAN:

- It is a geopolitical and economic organization with 10 member countries, formed in August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
- The membership expanded to include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

Overview of India ASEAN Trade relation:

- In 2009, the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AIFTA) was signed in Bangkok.
- Under the pact, two trading partners set timelines for eliminating duties on the maximum number of goods traded between the two regions. Also, the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area entered into force by the ASEAN-India Agreements on Trade in Service and Investments on 1 July 2015.
- 2017 marked 25 years of dialogue partnership between India and ASEAN, and five years of the strategic partnership.
- India has also engaged with ASEAN at both regional and sub-regional levels by signing economic cooperation agreements with its different members.

Impact of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on India:

- Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) database reveals that post-FTA, India's exports to ASEAN increased substantially, with the largest accesses gained in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.
- The bilateral trade between the two sides has increased to \$ 80.8 billion in 2018 from \$73.6 billion in 2017.
- The FTA has also been causing a significant trade diversion in the India-ASEAN region as the rest of the world experiences a significant market share loss in India and the ASEAN members. In particular, China is affected by a loss of market share in Cambodia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

11**Fourth East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation**

Context: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India in partnership with the Governments of Australia and Indonesia organized the fourth EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in Chennai in February 2020.

More about the News:

- The National Maritime Foundation (NMF) and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) were the knowledge partners of the Conference.
- The Conference was expected to serve as a platform for free and open dialogue among all the EAS partners on various issues of maritime security cooperation and to come up with useful suggestions on tackling challenges in the maritime domain in a cooperative manner.

East Asia Summit:

- It was established in 2005. It is a forum of 18 countries.
- The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.
- It comprises the ten member states of the ASEAN countries along with 8 members Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States.
- The first summit was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 14th December 2005.
- India is a founding member of the East Asia Summit

India - South Korea Defence Relations**12****India and South Korea inked a Naval Logistics sharing pact**

Context: In a significant upgrade in bilateral defence ties, India and South Korea inked a naval logistics sharing pact and have formulated a road map for joint production and research for military systems during a high-level visit by defence minister.

More about the visit:

- Extending logistical support to each other's navies will significantly enhance Indian reach in the Indo-Pacific and will place South Korea amongst close partners like the US and France that have similar bilateral pacts.
- A 'forward-looking roadmap' was formulated to take India South Korea's defense relations to the next level. The roadmap listed a number of proposed areas of co-operation in sectors of Land Systems, Aero Systems, Naval Systems, R&D co-operation and collaboration in Testing, Certification and Quality Assurance.
- A task force was proposed to set up, which will identify military systems that can be locally produced in India and will be economically viable for Korean companies to participate in.

- This will enhance Korean companies' participation in India e.g. the K9 Vajra mobile artillery guns are being made by L&T in collaboration with Hanwha Land Systems. This will help reduce the import bill for India.

South Korea's New Southern Policy (NSP)

- NSP is part of the South Korean government's broader strategy of promoting a 'Northeast Asia Plus Community for Responsibility-sharing' (NEAPC).
- The New Southern Policy intends to build stronger economic linkages with countries to Korea's south in Southeast Asia and India. The New Northern Policy, meanwhile, focuses on countries to Korea's north including Russia, Mongolia, and Central Asian countries.

Other areas of Engagement:

- The South Korean President who visited India, in 2018 has coined a new acronym '**3P Plus**' for boosting bilateral ties between India and South Korea, through cooperation for people, prosperity and peace.
- Buddhism acts as a common cultural connection between the two countries. On a recent visit, highlighting the common Buddhist linkages, India gifted a sapling of the sacred Bodhi Tree to South Korea.
- India-South Korea has signed **the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), 2010 which has facilitated the growth of trade relations.**
- To facilitate investment from Korea, India has launched "**Korea Plus**" facilitation cell under 'Invest India' to guide, assist and handhold investors.

India - Japan

13 2+2 Ministerial Meeting

Context: Recently India and Japan held the meeting of India-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue (2+2), in New Delhi.

More about News:

- ▶ The 2+2 ministerial dialogue is seen as an upgrade of the meeting between foreign and defence secretaries of the two countries, the first round of which took place in 2010.
- ▶ The ministerial-level meeting was held after the decision during the 13th India-Japan Annual Summit held in Japan in October 2018 to institute a Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue for further deepening bilateral security and defence cooperation.
- ▶ 2+2 meeting aimed to give further momentum to their special strategic partnership, particularly in the maritime domain.
- ▶ The two sides exchanged views on the situation in the Indo-Pacific region and resolved to work for achieving the shared objective of peace, prosperity, and progress in the region.

India Pacific & Indian Ocean Region

14 Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue

Context: The term Indo-Pacific has been gaining traction in Indian policy circles for some time now; it achieved operational clarity after the Indian vision was presented by Prime Minister in his keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2018.

Indo Pacific: Geographically, the Indo-Pacific refers to the Indian and the Pacific Oceans between the east coast of Africa and the American west coast and their several littoral countries. As a term to denote an economic and strategic community, it has been in use among scholars of international relations and geopolitics since the first decade of this century, around the same time as China's rise.

Note: India is **planning to expand its Indo-Pacific policy**. So far, the Indo-Pacific covered the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. With the expansion, **the region will now include the Gulf States and Africa**.

Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD):

- The idea of it was first conceptualized and conducted in 2018, as the apex level conference of the Indian Navy, organized by the National Maritime Foundation as the Navy's Knowledge Partner.
- Through this annual dialogue, the Indian Navy and the National Maritime Foundation, aim to provide a platform for substantive and insightful discussions about the geopolitical developments affecting the maritime domain of the Indo-Pacific and provide policy-relevant inputs to the policy-makers and the public at large.
- The permanent theme of this annual dialogue is a review of India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mechanisms for India to integrate with Indo-Pacific Policy:

- India's Act East policy remains the bedrock of the national Indo-Pacific vision and the centrality of ASEAN is embedded in the Indian narrative.
- India is an active participant in mechanisms like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- India conducts the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, in which the navies of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) participate.
- India has boosted its engagements with Australia and New Zealand and has deepened its cooperation with the Republic of Korea.
- India views the Indo-Pacific as a geographic and strategic expanse, with the 10 ASEAN countries connecting the two great oceans.

15 India proposes Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative

Context: The PM proposed an "Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative" for the safe, secure and stable maritime domain. The Focus areas include creating partnerships among interested states in Enhancing maritime security; sustainably using marine resources; Disaster prevention & management.

More about the News:

- The main objective of the initiative is to achieve a safe, secure and stable maritime domain.
- The initiative aims to achieve this by creating partnerships among interested states by sustainably using marine resources.
- To take the initiative forward, India will organize an Indo-Pacific Conclave in Chennai early next year.
- Japan, Australia, and Thailand support the initiative already. And many more ASEAN countries are expected to express their support to the initiative shortly.
- The initiative is considered by the experts as an incremental step to the Shangri la dialogue.

Indo-Pacific Maritime Cooperation

- The major focus of the Indo-Pacific is based on oceans, which is the common thread that connects all. Countries including India, Indonesia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, primarily maritime nations occupy the most important strategic positions in the Indian Ocean.
- The government has **introduced the concept of SAGAR** (Security And Growth for All in the Region) and believes in an Indo-Pacific that is free, open and inclusive, and one that is founded upon a cooperative and collaborative rules-based order.

INDIA - WEST ASIA**India Saudi Arabia****16 'Davos in the Desert'**

Context: Recently Prime Minister of India visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and attended Future Investment Initiative (FII) held in Riyadh.

Note: Prime Minister delivered a keynote address at the high-profile Future Investment Initiative (FII), dubbed as '**Davos in the desert**', where he **pressed for the United Nations reforms while expressing regret over some "powerful" countries using the global body as a "tool" rather than an "institution" to resolve conflicts.**

Major outcomes of the visit

- **Strategic Partnership Council was established** to coordinate on important issues. India to become the fourth country to sign such an agreement with Saudi Arabia. The SPC will have two parallel tracks:
 - Political, security, culture and society, headed by Foreign Ministers of both the countries;
 - Economy and investment, headed by India's Commerce Minister and Saudi's Energy Minister.
- **A memorandum of understanding** was also signed to **roll out RuPay card in the Kingdom - making Saudi Arabia the third country in the Persian Gulf after the UAE and Bahrain to introduce India's digital payment system.**

- Both countries signed 12 MoUs on issues such as preventing narcotics trafficking, renewable energy, security collaboration, etc.
- The joint statement **rejected all forms of interference in the internal affairs of countries**. This is seen as **Saudi Arabia's tacit support for India's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir**.

Future Investment Initiative (FII)

- It is an initiative by the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to diversify the kingdom's economy and reduce its dependence on petroleum products.
- FII brings together policymakers, investors and global experts, to discuss the role of investment in driving global prosperity and development.
- This year, the Indian Prime Minister delivered the keynote address "What's next for India?" at FII.
- FII is widely being described as "Davos in the desert". This informal name derives from the World Economic Forum's annual meeting that is held in Davos, Switzerland, where world leaders discuss and shape agendas for pressing international issues.

17 OIC'S Reference to J&K and India's response to it

Context: India has rejected the reference to J&K by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

More about news:

- The Indian government says the reference is 'unacceptable'
- The government also rejects the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's decision to appoint a special envoy for J&K

The organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) States:

- It is a 57-member grouping of Muslim majority nations.
- It is the second-largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents.
- The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavours to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

What did the OIC say?

- The OIC affirmed its support for the people of J&K for the realization of their legitimate right to self-determination, in accordance with relevant UN resolutions.
- It condemned the recent outbreaks of violence in the region and invited India to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions to settle its protracted conflict with its neighbour.
- It also called for the expedited establishment of a UN commission of inquiry to investigate the alleged HR violations in Kashmir.

India was also invited as "**guest of honour**" at the inaugural plenary 46th meeting of OIC foreign ministers. The move is seen as a major blow to Pakistan that has consistently opposed India's entry into the grouping despite having the third-largest Muslim population in the world. **India is not a member of the OIC** but was invited to the Abu Dhabi meeting as the guest of honour

- It called on India to allow this proposed commission and international human rights organizations to access Indian-occupied Kashmir.
- It approved the appointment of Saudi Arabia's Yousef Aldobeay as its Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir.

INDIA - CENTRAL ASIA

18 India, Uzbekistan sign three defence MoUs

Context: India and Uzbekistan signed three memorandums of understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in military medicine and military education.

More on News:

- India's Defence Minister and his Uzbekistan counterpart jointly presided over the curtain raiser of the first **India-Uzbekistan Joint Exercise, "Dustlik 2019"**.
- The bilateral exercise will be conducted from November 4 to 13 at Chirchiq Training Area near Tashkent and will be focused on counter-terrorism, in which "the two countries share a common concern".
- India has offered a concessional line of credit of \$40 million for the procurement of goods and services by Uzbekistan from India.
- The MoUs were signed on direct exchanges related to training, capacity building and education between the armed forces of both sides. The direct exchanges related to training, capacity building and education between the armed forces on both sides have also witnessed a significant upswing.

19 1st India-Central Asia Dialogue

Context: Recently, the 1st India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

About the Summit:

- The ministerial-level summit saw the participation of External Affairs Ministers of Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan.
- India also invited Central Asia Republics (CAR) to participate in the Chabahar Port project jointly undertaken by India and Iran to move Indian goods to landlocked Afghanistan.
- India also proposed the creation of a Regional Development Group for better coordination on economic and policy issues.
- India also proposed dialogue on air corridors with the countries of landlocked Central Asia. India already has opened air corridors for the transport of goods and perishables between India and several Afghan cities mainly to circumvent Pakistan that controls the overland trade.

India & Central Asia:

- India was among the first countries to recognize the five Central Asian states. It established diplomatic relations with them after they gained independence in the 1990s. India now considers the Central Asian countries as part of its 'extended and strategic neighbourhood'.

- At present, the five Central Asian republics account for trade of only about \$2 billion with India. It is less as compared to about \$50 billion with China that has made them a key to its Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) initiative.

20 India-Central Asia Business Council launched

Context: The Ministry of External Affairs along with FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) recently launched the India-Central Asia Business council.

More about the News:

- The nominated chambers from India, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan came together to formally declare their association to collaborate and provide an industry view to the governments of the six countries

Background

The Council is the outcome of **India and Central Asia Dialogue that was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in 2019**. The Dialogue and the Council formed are part of India's Central Asia Policy. Under Central Asia Policy India aims to build strong political relations and will aim to strengthen security cooperation

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

1 Pakistan to remain in the Grey List of FATF

Context: In a major setback for Pakistan, the country will remain on the FATF Grey List till June 2020 and has been warned of stern action if it fails to check the flow of money to terror groups like the LeT and the JeM.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989.
- The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- The FATF is, therefore, a “policy-making body” which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.
- The FATF has developed a series of recommendations that are recognised as the international standard for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- They form the basis for a coordinated response to these threats to the integrity of the financial system and help ensure a level playing field.
- First issued in 1990, the FATF Recommendations were revised in 1996, 2001, 2003 and most recently in 2012 to ensure that they remain up to date and relevant, and they are intended to be of universal application.
- The FATF monitors the progress of its members in implementing necessary measures, reviews money laundering and terrorist financing techniques and counter-measures, and promotes the adoption and implementation of appropriate measures globally.
- In collaboration with other international stakeholders, the FATF works to identify national-level vulnerabilities to protect the international financial system from misuse.
- India became an Observer at FATF in 2006. Since then, it had been working towards fulfilling edged membership. On June 25, 2010, India was taken in as the 34th country member of FATF.

What as FATF ‘grey list’ and ‘blacklist’?:

- **FATF has 2 types of lists:**
 - **Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

- ▶ **Grey List:** Countries that are considered a haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.
- ▶ Currently, there are 18 jurisdictions identified as having strategic deficiencies, including Mauritius and Pakistan, as per the FATF.

2 **3rd High-Level Global Conference on Road Safety**

Context: The 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety “Achieving Global Goals 2030” took place on 19–20 February 2020 in Stockholm, Sweden.

More on News:

- Hosted by **the Government of Sweden and co-hosted by WHO**, the Ministerial Conference is an opportunity for delegates to share successes and lessons from the implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, chart future strategic directions for global road safety, and define ways to accelerate action on proven strategies.
- The Ministerial Conference provides an opportunity to link road safety to other sustainability challenges.
- A number of countries have already committed to the declaration and Tomas Eneroth, the Swedish Minister for Infrastructure, has stated his intention to push the declaration with governments around the world to achieve the targets set in it.

Highlights of the conference

- The conference adopted the “Stockholm Declaration” which calls for a new global target for road safety for 2030 and a set of innovative solutions to save lives on the world’s roads.
- It also aims to share successes and lessons from the implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020.
- **India has reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations goal set under the UN Decade of Action of drastically reducing road accidents by the year 2030 during the event.**

Some Global Initiatives for Road Safety

- Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety
- UN Global Road Safety Week
- The International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP)

National Initiatives for Road Safety

- 4 E’s for Road Safety
- Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan Committee
- Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019

3 **BREXIT: Finally, The UK exits EU**

Context: On January 31, 2020, the United Kingdom left the European Union. This was made possible because of the withdrawal agreement.

About:

- A few years ago, the UK voted with 52% of the British electorate choosing to exit the European Union
- To ensure an orderly Brexit, EU and UK agreed on a transition period until the end of 2020 at least during which the UK would continue to participate in EU's Customs union and in the single market to apply European Union law, even if it is no longer a member state.

What do you understand by the free trade area?

- Here countries can trade with each other without paying tariffs.
- But, certain trade restrictions on specific commodities like agriculture may be there.
- Imported goods have to comply with the law of the land.
- Deliberations / Negotiations may take several years.
- Quite often, protectionist measures are taken by various countries.

EU follows a single market:

- It allows free movement of goods, services, money, and people within the EU as if it is a single country.
- There are no quotas, tariffs or taxes on trade. EU single market accounts for around 20-25% of global GDP.
- Regulations cover a wide range of issues like packaging, safety and standards and they are applicable throughout the region uniformly.
- Integration of "Single Market" for goods completed in 1992 and it is still in progress for services.
- It is possible to set up a business or take a job anywhere within it.
- Still, 27 nations of EU are strong 27 Member States are still strong with a single market of 450 million citizens and more than 20 million businesses.
- It remains the largest trading bloc in the World.
- It is still the World's largest development aid donor.

European Union's response

- European Union said that the new partnership between the EU & UK will be finalised after thorough discussions among the EU27 Member States.

4**The Maldives rejoins Commonwealth**

Context: The Maldives has re-joined the Commonwealth, bringing the total number of nations in the global organisation to 54.

What is the Commonwealth?

- The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent and equal countries.
- It is home to 2.4 billion people and includes both advanced economies and developing countries. 32 of our members are small states, including many island nations.
- Its member governments have agreed to share goals like development, democracy, and peace.
- The Commonwealth's roots go back to the British Empire. But today any country can join the modern Commonwealth.

- Eight governments (United Kingdom, Australia, India, South Africa, Canada, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, and Pakistan) came together on 28 April 1949 to form the modern Commonwealth.
- Since its formation, independent countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific have joined the Commonwealth.

Background:

- The republic quit the Commonwealth in 2016 after being threatened with suspension over its human rights record and lack of progress on democratic reform.
- The island nation has been readmitted after showing evidence of functioning democratic processes and popular support for being part of the family of nations.
- The Maldives, which last joined the Commonwealth in 1982, will now be part of the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, in June.
- The change came into effect just over an hour after the United Kingdom led the European Union.

Voluntary Membership:

- Members of the Commonwealth can leave at any time, as its membership is purely voluntary.
- Pakistan left the association in 1972 - only to re-join in 1989.
- Similarly, The Gambia left the Commonwealth in 2013 and was allowed to return in 2018.
- Zimbabwe's membership was suspended in 2002 on the grounds of alleged human rights violations and deliberate misgovernment.

India & the Commonwealth:

- India became a member of the Commonwealth in 1947, the first with chiefly non-European populations.
- India's new political interest in the Commonwealth is evident by the participation of Prime Minister at the 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London in 2018, marking the first Indian prime ministerial presence in a Commonwealth Summit after nearly a decade.
- There are few reasons behind India's political interest in the Commonwealth:
 - ▶ First, the membership of the Commonwealth, virtually spanning the entire globe. For India, membership and prospective leaders of the Commonwealth helps enhance its bilateral ties with individual countries.
 - ▶ The growing importance of small states for India's foreign policy. A high proportion of Commonwealth members, about 60 percent, are small states.
 - ▶ Commonwealth-wide presence of Indian diaspora.

China is not the member of the Commonwealth.

5 Brasilia Declaration (11th BRICS Summit)

Context: The 11th BRICS Summit took place in November 2019 in Brasilia, Brazil. The theme of the 2019 BRICS summit is "Economic Growth for an Innovative Future."

More on News:

- The 2019 BRICS summit is the eleventh annual BRICS summit, an international relations conference to be attended by the heads of state or heads of government of the five-member states Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

- The Sherpa meeting was held in the Brazilian city of Curitiba.
- The name of the chosen theme was: BRICS: economic growth for an innovative future.
- **BRICS countries adopted the Brasilia Declaration**

Brasilia Declaration:

- It advocates and **supports multilateralism, the central role of the U.N. in international affairs and respect for international law.**
- **Strengthening and reforming the multilateral system:** There is an urgent need to strengthen and reform the United Nations and other multilateral organisations, including the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to address the significant challenges being faced by the developing countries.
- **Support to Multilateralism:** The trade war between China and the U.S. and rising protectionism is hurting the global economy. Multilateralism is crucial for emerging countries to protect their interests.

BRICS:

- BRICS stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- In 2001, the British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
- The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers in 2006.
- South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- The BRICS Forum, an independent international organisation encouraging commercial, political and cultural cooperation between the BRICS nations, was formed in 2011
- It comprises 42% of the world's population, has 23% of the global GDP and around 17% of the world trade.
- The chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- The BRICS Leaders' Summit is convened annually.
- During the Sixth BRICS Summit in **Fortaleza (2014)** the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the **New Development Bank (NDB)**. They also signed the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

6 Indus Water Treaty

Context: Under the Indus Waters Treaty, India has decided to stop its share of water which was used to flow to Pakistan.

About:

- The Indus Waters Treaty is a water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank to use the water available in the Indus System of Rivers located in India.
- The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was signed in Karachi on September 19, 1960, by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then President of Pakistan Ayub Khan.
- According to this agreement, control over the water flowing in three "eastern" rivers of India the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej was given to India.
- While control over the water flowing in three "western" rivers of India the Indus, the Chenab, and the Jhelum were given to Pakistan.

- Since Pakistan's rivers receive more water flow from India, the treaty allowed India to use western rivers water for limited irrigation use and unlimited use for power generation, domestic, industrial and non-consumptive uses such as navigation, floating of property, fish culture, etc.

7 UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements

Context: The Union Cabinet had approved the signing of the UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements resulting from mediation by India.

About UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements:

- It is also known as the **"Singapore Convention on Mediation"**.
- It provides an efficient and harmonized framework for cross-border enforcement of settlement agreements.
- It ensures that a settlement reached by parties becomes binding and enforceable in accordance with a simplified and streamlined procedure.
- It is an essential instrument in the facilitation of international trade and in the promotion of mediation as an alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes India's other initiatives to promote mediation.
- The Government is in the process of establishing the **New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) as a statutory body**.
- **Commercial Courts Act, 2015** has been amended and an amendment to the **Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996**, is currently underway.

8 Gilgit- Baltistan Issue

Context: India protested against a recent order of the Supreme Court of Pakistan on the Gilgit-Baltistan.

About Gilgit-Baltistan region:

- The region was a part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir but has been under Pakistan's control since November 4, 1947, following the invasion of Kashmir by tribal militias and the Pakistan army.
- The region was renamed 'The Northern Areas of Pakistan' and put under the direct control of Islamabad. The Northern Areas were distinct from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), the part of J&K that Pakistan calls "Azad Kashmir". The Northern Areas are, however, more than six times the size of PoK.
- After the Pakistani government enacted the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order in August 2009, the 'Northern Areas' came to be known as Gilgit-Baltistan.
- Pakistan Government in 2018 had also passed orders towards incorporating the disputed region as its fifth province, while Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh being the other four.

9 Ashgabat Agreement

About:

- Ashgabat agreement is the establishment of an International Transport and Transit Corridor among Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan and came in force in 2011.
- **Kazakhstan joined in 2016 and India became a member in 2018.**
- The agreement envisages linking Central Asia with the Persian Gulf to facilitate transit and transportation of goods and investment in the trade.
- The Ashgabat corridor is intended to be complimentary and synchronized with the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and TIR Carnets for enhanced connectivity.
- India's membership to the agreement would diversify India's connectivity options with Central Asia through the Chabahar port to Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan (ITK) railway line which can be linked with the Chabahar- Zahedan railway line that India is aiding in formation.



International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

- INSTC is a land-and sea-based 7,200-km long network comprising rail, road and water routes that are aimed at reducing costs and travel time for freight transport in a bid to boost trade between Russia, Iran, Central Asia, India, and Europe.
- The network is expected to provide faster and more efficient trade connectivity between Europe and Southeast Asia

10 WTO ruling against Indian Subsidies

Context: The WTO's dispute settlement panel ruled that India's export subsidy schemes, including the provision for special economic zones, violated core provisions of global trade norms.

More about the News:

- Dispute settlement panel rejected India's claims that it was exempted from the prohibition on export subsidies under the special and differential treatment provisions of the **WTO's Agreement on Subsidies & Countervailing Measures (SCM)**.
- Some of the schemes that will be affected by the WTO's ruling include Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS), export-oriented units (EOU) scheme and sector-specific schemes, including Electronics Hardware Technology Parks (EHTP) scheme and Bio-Technology Parks (BTP) scheme, Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme; and duty-free imports for Exporters Scheme.
- The panel further ruled that India is not entitled to provide subsidies depending on export performance and said its per capita gross national product crossed \$1,000 per annum.

Export Subsidies

- Export subsidies are foreign trade policies undertaken by the governments to encourage export of goods and discourage the sale of goods on the domestic market through direct payments, low- cost loans, tax relief for exporters, or government-financed international advertising.
- It reduces the price paid by foreign importers.
- Export subsidies are seen as trade-distorting as they intend to increase the share of the exporter in the world market at the cost of others.
- It is a protectionist measure that is seen to promote inefficiencies and leads to high costs to consumers in the subsidizing country.
- **Most of the export subsidies in India consist of exemptions and deductions from customs duties and other taxes.**
- Subsidies under MEIS consist of government-issued notes (also known as scrips) that can be used to pay for certain liabilities vis-à-vis the government and are freely transferable.
- WTO prohibits most of the export subsidies directly linked to the volume of exports, except for the least developing countries (LDCs).

WTO ruling and its impact on India

- The ruling would put at risk India's subsidy programme worth \$7 billion and could impact producers of steel products, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, etc., who were the major beneficiaries of the subsidy programme.
- This ruling would further push countries to question India over its policies on sugar, pulses and skimmed milk. E.g. Countries have raised concerns on India offering soft-loans to sugar mills and doubling import duties on sugar. This might aggravate the farm income crisis in India.

11 UN Resolution on Torture

Context: General Assembly adopts texts on Torture-Free Trade, assisting Terrorism Victims, the anniversary of Cairo Population Conference.

The resolution:

- The resolution requests the secretary-general to seek the views of member states on the feasibility and possible scope of a range of options to establish common international standards for the import, export, and transfer of goods used for capital punishment and for torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- It asks the secretary-general to submit a report on the subject to the General Assembly at its 2019-20 sessions.
- It also requests the secretary-general to establish a group of governmental experts to examine, beginning in 2020, the feasibility and scope of the goods to be included, and draft parameters for a range of options to establish common international standards on the matter.
- It asks for the transmission of the report of the group of experts to the General Assembly for consideration at its 2020-21 sessions.

Note: **India joined ranks with Russia and 42 other nations to abstain from voting** on a General Assembly resolution aimed at examining options to end the trade in goods used for capital punishment and torture.

India's Argument:

- India stressed that it remains firmly committed to preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.
- India voted against the resolution as a whole, as it goes against statutory law in India. The death penalty is exercised in 'rarest of rare' cases, where the crime committed is so heinous that it shocks the conscience of the society.
- It also highlighted the fact that countries where capital punishment is statutorily provided for, it is "exercised after following the **due process of law**."

INTERNATIONAL/ REGIONAL GROUPINGS

1 OPEC and Its Allies decide to cut Oil Production

Context:

- OPEC group of oil-producing countries and their allies, including Russia, have decided to cut oil production by 500,000 barrels per day.
- They agreed to reduce production to stem pressure on prices from abundant reserves and weak global economic growth.

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):

- It is a group consisting of 14 of the world's major oil-exporting nations.
- OPEC was founded in 1960 to coordinate the petroleum policies of its members and to provide member states with technical and economic aid.
- OPEC is a cartel that aims to manage the supply of oil to set the price of oil on the world market, to avoid fluctuations that might affect the economies of both producing and purchasing countries.
- Countries that belong to OPEC include Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela (the five founders), plus the United Arab Emirates, Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, and five other countries.

2 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Context: In 2018, the United States announced its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

About:

- JCPOA is also known as the "Iran deal" or "Iran nuclear deal". The deal was made in July 2015. It is an agreement **on Iran's nuclear program made between Iran, the P5+1** (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany) and the European Union.
- JCPOA limits Iran's uranium enrichment programme until 2030 and contains monitoring and transparency measures that will remain in place long after that date. A few days after the JCPOA was agreed, it was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- However, in May 2018, the United States announced its withdrawal from JCPOA.

P5+1 Countries

The P5+1 countries are a group of world powers who are working on the Iran Nuclear Deal. The countries include the five permanent members of the United Nations security council with the addition of Germany. The U.N. security council consists of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The agreement is also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

3 India proposes emergency COVID-19 fund for SAARC Nations

Context: India pledged \$10 million toward a COVID-19 emergency fund and said it was putting together a rapid response team of doctors and specialists for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC):

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985.
- It comprises eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Secretariat of the Association was set up in Kathmandu on 17 January 1987.
- The objectives of the Association as outlined in the SAARC Charter are:
 - to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life
 - to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals with the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials
 - to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;
 - to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems
 - to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields
 - to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries.
 - to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests
 - to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

4 BBIN Agreement

Context: A meeting of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN) on the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) was held.

About:

- The BBIN project was conceived when SAARC at its 18th Summit in Kathmandu failed to sign a SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement in November 2014-chiefly because of Pakistan.
- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal have signed a sub-regional Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) in June 2015 for the regulation of passenger, personnel, and cargo vehicular traffic between the four BBIN countries.

- Originally, the BBIN MVA mentioned 30 identified priority transport connectivity projects with an estimated cost of over US \$8 billion that will rehabilitate and upgrade the remaining sections of trade and transport corridors in the BBIN countries.
- India, Nepal, and Bangladesh have ratified the Agreement while Bhutan failed to get its Parliament's nod to ratify the same. It has some reservations about its environmental impact owing to increased traffic of heavy-duty vehicles.
- Under South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) programme, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been providing technical, advisory, and financial support to this initiative.
- On November 1, 2015, a cargo vehicle made the first successful trial run from Kolkata to Agartala via Bangladesh that reduced the distance by over a thousand kilometers.



5 Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)

Context: All about Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and recent developments such as its support for India in getting a membership in UNSC.

About:

- The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) is a group of twenty developing countries in the Caribbean that have come together to form an economic and political community that works together to shape policies for the region and encourages economic growth and trade.
- **The seat of Secretariat: Georgetown, Guyana**
- The **fifteen full-time countries** are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The **associate members** are Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos.
- Fifteen of these countries are full-fledged members of the community while five of them only retain associate member status.
- These nations have collectively joined together to expand their trade and economic relations internationally, including further development of activity in international markets.

History:

- **CARICOM was formed in 1973 after the founders had enacted the Treaty of Chaguaramas.**
- The Caribbean Community and Common Market were established to replace the Caribbean Free Trade Area which had failed in its mission to develop policies in the region on labour and capital.

6 India's- BIMSTEC

Context: Recently, BIMSTEC leaders were invited for Prime Minister's swearing-in ceremony. This is seen as an indicator of India's policy of engaging neighbours and keeping Pakistan out as in 2014 SAARC leaders were invited for the swearing-in ceremony.

About BIMSTEC:

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- This sub-regional organization came into being on 6 June 1997 through the **Bangkok Declaration**. It constitutes seven Member States: **five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.**
- Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- It constitutes a bridge between South and Southeast Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries.
- BIMSTEC has also established a platform for **intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members.**

7 Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Context: The 26th round of negotiations for the RCEP are being held in Melbourne, Australia.

About Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP):

- It is a proposed pact between 10 ASEAN economies and six others (New Zealand, Australia, China, India, Japan, and South Korea) with which the grouping currently has FTAs.
- The objective of launching RCEP negotiations is to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN's FTA partners.
- It is often characterised as a China-led response to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) put forward by the US.
- RCEP will provide a framework aimed at lowering trade barriers and securing improved market access for goods and services for businesses in the region, through:
 - Recognition to ASEAN Centrality in the emerging regional economic architecture and the interests of ASEAN's FTA partners in enhancing economic integration and strengthening economic cooperation among the participating countries
 - Facilitation of trade and investment and enhanced transparency between the participating countries.
 - Facilitation of SMEs' engagements in global and regional supply chains.

What is the objective of RCEP?

- RCEP aims to create an integrated market with 16 countries, making it easier for products and services of each of these countries to be available across this region.

- The negotiations are focused on the following: Trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property, dispute settlement, e-commerce, small and medium enterprises, and economic cooperation

Why did India decide against signing the RCEP trade deal?

- On November 4, 2019, India decided against joining the 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade deal, saying **it was not shying away from opening up to global competition across sectors, but it had made a strong case for an outcome which would be favourable to all countries and all sectors.**
- Prime Minister in his speech at the RCEP Summit said "the present form of the RCEP agreement does not fully reflect the basic spirit and the agreed guiding principles of RCEP. It also does not address satisfactorily India's outstanding issues and concerns in such a situation."

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

S.No.	Organization	Members	Features
1	ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)	10 Countries: 1. Indonesia 2. Malaysia 3. Philippines 4. Singapore 5. Thailand 6. Brunei 7. Cambodia 8. Lao Pdr 9. Myanmar 10. Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accelerating economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, ➤ Protection of regional stability ➤ Providing a mechanism for member countries to resolve differences peacefully ➤ 'The ASEAN Way': Doctrine that the member countries will largely mind their own business when it comes to internal matters of member countries ➤ HQ: Jakarta, Indonesia ➤ Last summit: Singapore <p>Recent summit: Thailand (2019)</p>
2	APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation)	21 Countries: 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, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States, Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ It was established in response to the growing interdependence of Asia blocs in other parts of the world; ◦ To establish new markets for agricultural products and raw materials beyond Europe. ◦ India is not a member. India has applied but membership was denied because it does not border the Pacific Ocean ◦ India is an observer member in APEC ◦ HQ: Singapore ◦ Last summit: Papua New Guinea ◦ Next summit: Chile (2019)
3	BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor)	4 Countries: 1. Bangladesh 2. China 3. India 4. Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ It aims at greater integration of trade and investment between the four countries ◦ BCIM economic corridor is an initiative conceptualised for significant gains through sub cooperation within the BCIM.

S.No.	Organization	Members	Features
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The multi-modal corridor will be the first expressway between India and China and will pass through Myanmar and Bangladesh BCIM evolved from 'Kunming Initiative' (A platform in the 1990s)
4	Commonwealth of Nations	53 Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up after the Second World War (in 1949) by Britain, to maintain close economic ties with its erstwhile colonies that were now rapidly becoming independent. It is not a trade block. It aims to promote democracy, human rights, world peace, etc. Commonwealth countries, in theory, do not consider each other 'foreign', and hence send 'High Commissioners' and not 'Ambassadors'. Several countries (such as Britain, Caribbean islands) grant the right to vote to any commonwealth country citizen residing in their territory to vote in their elections HQ: London Last meeting: UK Next meeting: Rwanda (2020)
5	East Asia Summit	18 Countries: 10 ASEAN Nations, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, India, Russia, US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started in 2005 from Kuala Lumpur EAS meetings are held after annual ASEAN leaders' meetings. It is an ASEAN led initiative. Last summit: Thailand Next summit: Vietnam
6	EEU (Eurasian Economic Union)	5 Countries: 1. Armenia 2. Belarus 3. Kazakhstan 4. Kyrgyzstan 5. Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in 2015 The EEU introduces the free movement of goods, capital, services, and people and provides for common transport, agriculture, and energy policies. In future, it can evolve with provisions for a single currency and greater integration HQ: Moscow Last summit: Russia Next summit: Armenia
7	G4	4 Countries: 1. India, 2. Brazil, 3. Germany, 4. Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their economic and political influence has grown significantly in the last decades, reaching a scope comparable to the permanent members (P5) G4 campaigns for U.N. Reforms, including more representation for developing countries, both in the permanent and non-permanent categories, in the UNSC

S.No.	Organization	Members	Features
8	G7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canada, 2. France, 3. Germany, 4. Italy, 5. Japan, 6. The United Kingdom, 7. United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These countries are the seven major advanced economies as reported by the International Monetary Fund. G7 countries represent more than 64% of the net global wealth The common denominator among members is the economy and long-term political motives. The European Union is also represented within the G7.
9	G20	<p>20 members:</p> <p>Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, European Union</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aimed to review policy decisions to enhance international financial stability First Head of State Summit was held in 2008 (Due to Economic Crisis) G20 economies account for around 85% of the gross world product (GWP), 80% of world trade (or, if excluding EU intra-trade, 75%), and two-thirds of the world population G20 replaced G8 as the main economic council of wealthy nations Last summit: Buenos Aires Recent summit: Japan (2019)
10	India-Africa Forum	India and the countries of Africa chosen by the African Union.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summit 2015: Delhi Declaration Infrastructure building - "Cairo to Cape Town, Marrakesh to Mombassa" Credit at concessional rates of \$10 billion over 5 years (in addition to 4.7 billion that India had already pledged since 2008) Grant assistance of \$600 million (India-African dev fund, India-African Health Fund)
11	IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum)	<p>3 Countries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. India, 2. Brazil, 3. South Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forum provides the three countries with a platform to engage in discussions for cooperation in the field of agriculture, trade, culture, and defence among others. IBSA was formalised and launched through the adoption of the "Brasilia Declaration" in 2003. Brasilia Declaration (2003): An approved urgent need for reforms in the United Nations, especially the Security Council. Last summit: South Africa

S.No.	Organization	Members	Features
12	IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association)	22 Countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation was first established as Indian Ocean Rim Initiative in Mauritius on March 1995 and formally launched in 1997 by the conclusion of a multilateral treaty known as the Charter of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation Last Summit: Indonesia
13	OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)	36 Members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to stimulate economic progress and world trade Its members are committed to Democracy and Market Economy Most OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries India is not a member of OECD HQ: Paris, France
14	SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)	8 countries: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Afghanistan Bhutan Bangladesh India Pakistan Nepal Sri Lanka Maldives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar and China are not its members SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 9.12% of the global economy, as of 2015 The organization promotes development economics and regional integration SAFTA: South Asia Free Trade Agreement was launched in 2006 HQ: Kathmandu, Nepal Last summit: Pakistan Recent summit: Sri Lanka (2019)
15	SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation)	8 Members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> China Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCO evolved from Shanghai Five (All above minus Uzbekistan) On July 10, 2015, the SCO decided to admit India and Pakistan as full members, and they are expected to join by 2016 Main activities: cooperation on security, military activities, and economic and cultural cooperation Member countries are rich in energy resources (both fossil fuels and uranium)

S.No.	Organization	Members	Features
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ HQ: Beijing, China ◦ Last summit: China ◦ Next summit: Kyrgyzstan (2019)
16	TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership)	13 Countries: Australia; Brunei; Canada; Chile; Japan; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Peru; Singapore; Vietnam; Japan; New Zealand	Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ promote economic growth; ◦ support the creation and retention of jobs; enhance innovation, productivity, and competitiveness; ◦ raise living standards; reduce poverty in our countries; ◦ promote transparency, good governance, enhanced labor and environmental protections The agreement covers 40% of the world's economy
17	TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership)	European Union and the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Aims to promote trade and multilateral economic growth ◦ Its main three broad areas are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ market access; ➤ specific regulation; and broader rules and principles and modes of co-operation
18	EU (European Union)	28 Countries: Austria, Italy, Belgium, Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Croatia, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Malta, Czechia, Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Portugal, Finland, Romania, France, Slovakia, Germany, Slovenia, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Sweden, Ireland, United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ It is a political and economic union of 28 countries located primarily in Europe. ◦ Unlike members of most international organisations, the member states of the EU are subjected to binding laws in exchange for representation within the common legislative and judicial institutions. ◦ Subsidiarity is a founding principle of the EU.
19	Arctic Council	8 Countries: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canada, 2. Denmark, 3. Finland, 4. Iceland, 5. Norway, 6. Russia, 7. Sweden, 8. United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a high-level intergovernmental forum that addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and the indigenous people of the Arctic. • The first step towards the formation of the Council occurred in 1991 when the eight Arctic countries signed the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). • The 1996 Ottawa Declaration established the Arctic Council as a forum for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic States.

S.No.	Organization	Members	Features
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ: Tromso, Norway • Last meeting: US
20	GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council)	6 states: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bahrain, 2. Kuwait, 3. Oman, 4. Qatar, 5. Saudi Arabia, 6. The United Arab Emirates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Persian Gulf except Iraq. • Established in 1981, the GCC promotes economic, security, cultural and social cooperation between the six states and holds a summit every year to discuss cooperation and regional affairs. • HQ: Saudi Arabia
21	OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)	57 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the collective voice of the Muslim world and works to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony. • In 2019, India was present at the OIC meet in UAE for the first time. • HQ: Saudi Arabia
22	AU (African Union)	55 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim is to achieve greater unity, cohesion, and solidarity between the African countries and African nations. • To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of its Member States. It has vast socio-economic goals. • HQ: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia • Last summit: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23	Colombo Plan	27 countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States, Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a regional organisation that represents a collective intergovernmental effort to strengthen the economic and social development of member countries in the Asia-Pacific region. • The primary focus of Colombo Plan activities is on the development of human resources in the region. • HQ: Colombo, Sri Lanka
24	G 15	16 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Jamaica, Mexico, Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an informal forum set up to foster cooperation and provides input for other international groups, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Group of Seven. • It was established at the Ninth Non-Aligned Movement Summit Meeting in Belgrade, Yugoslavia with a common goal of enhanced growth and prosperity.

S.No.	Organization	Members	Features
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ: Geneva, Switzerland • Last summit: Sri Lanka
25	G 24	24 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is established to help coordinate the positions of developing countries on international monetary and development finance issues. • HQ: Washington, D.C., United States

1 United Nations

- It is an **organization of sovereign States**, which **voluntarily join** the UN **to work for world peace**. It formally came into being on **24 October 1945**. At that time, it had 51 countries as Members. Currently, **193 countries are UN members**; the most recent to join was **South Sudan in July 2011**.
- There are **six main organs of the United Nations**—
 - **The General Assembly** - The **main deliberative organ** of the United Nations comprised of all Member States, **each of which has one vote, no matter its size or influence**. It may discuss any matter arising under the UN Charter.
 - **The Security Council** - Unlike the General Assembly, the Security Council does not hold regular meetings. The **Council has 15 members, including 5 permanent members**: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States
 - **The Economic and Social Council** - it is the central **body for coordinating the economic and social work** of the United Nations and the UN System. The Council has **54 members** who are chosen for **equal geographical representation** and serve a **three-year term**. Voting in the Council is by **simple majority**; each member has one vote.
 - **The Trusteeship Council**- the Trusteeship Council was assigned under the UN Charter to supervise the administration of 11 Trust Territories—former colonies or dependent territories—which were placed under the International Trusteeship System.
 - **The International Court of Justice** - The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the **UN's main judicial organ, located in The Hague, Netherlands**. Established in 1945, the ICJ, or "World Court" assumed its functions in 1946. The Court settles legal disputes only between nations and not between individuals, in accordance with international law.
 - **The Secretariat** - The Secretariat is made up of an **international staff working at UN Headquarters in New York**, as well as UN offices in Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi, and other locations. It consists of departments and offices with a total staff of 16,000 drawn from most Member States. The Court has its seat at **The Hague, Netherlands**. **All other organs** are based at United Nations Headquarters in **New York**.

2 UN Security Council

- It is one of the organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of **international peace and security**.
- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council

resolutions; it is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.

- ▶ **Members: Fifteen members** with Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States—serve as the body's five permanent members.
- ▶ These permanent members can **veto** any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General.
- ▶ The Security Council also has **10 non-permanent members**, elected on a regional basis to serve **two-year terms**. The body's presidency **rotates monthly** among its members.

Proposed Reforms:

- ▶ Reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) encompasses five key issues: categories of membership, the question of the veto held by the five permanent members, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and its working methods, and the Security Council-General Assembly relationship.
- ▶ There is also a proposal to admit more permanent members.

3 Specialized Agencies related to UN



4 World Bank (WB)

The World Bank **focuses on poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards worldwide by providing low-interest loans, interest-free credit, and grants** to developing countries for education, health, infrastructure, and communications, among other things.

There are 2 goals for the world to achieve by 2030:

- **End extreme poverty** by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than \$1.90 a day to no more than 3%
- **Promote shared prosperity** by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40% for every country
- The World Bank works in over 100 countries through the **World Bank Group**. It is headquartered in **Washington. D.C, US**.

World Bank Group

- **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**
 - It is a global development cooperative owned by 189 member countries.
 - As the largest development bank in the world, it supports the World Bank Group's mission by **providing loans**, guarantees, risk management products, and advisory services to **middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries**, as well as by coordinating responses to regional and global challenges.
- **International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID):**
 - It is an international arbitration institution established in 1966 **for legal dispute resolution and conciliation between international investors**.
 - The ICSID is part of and funded by the World Bank Group, **headquartered in Washington, D.C. in the United States**. It is an autonomous, multilateral specialized institution **to encourage the international flow of investment and mitigate non-commercial risks by a treaty** drafted by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development's executive directors and signed by member countries.
- **International Development Association (IDA) :**
 - It is an international financial institution which offers **concessional loans and grants to the world's poorest developing countries**.
 - The IDA is a member of the World Bank Group and is headquartered in **Washington, D.C., United States**.
 - It was established in 1960 to complement the existing International Bank for Reconstruction and Development by lending to developing countries that suffer from the lowest gross national income, from troubled creditworthiness, or the lowest per capita income.
- **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**
 - It is an international financial institution that **offers investment, advisory, and asset management services** to encourage **private-sector development** in developing countries.
 - The IFC is a member of the World Bank Group and is headquartered in **Washington, D.C.** It was established in 1956, as the **private-sector arm of the World Bank Group**, to advance economic development by investing in for-profit and commercial projects for poverty reduction and promoting the development
- **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA):**
 - It is an international financial institution which offers political risk insurance and credit enhancement guarantees. These guarantees help investors **protect foreign direct investments** against political and non-commercial risks in developing countries.
 - MIGA is a member of the World Bank Group and is headquartered in **Washington, D.C.**
 - MIGA was established in 1988 as an investment insurance facility to encourage confident investment in developing countries.

5 World Health Organisation (WHO)

- It was established on 7 April 1948 and is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- The WHO is a member of the **United Nations Development Group**. Its predecessor, the Health Organisation, was an agency of the League of Nations.

- The WHO is responsible for the **World Health Report, the worldwide World Health Survey, and World Health Day.**
- WHO **ensures the safety of the air people breathe, the food they eat, the water they drink and the medicines and vaccines they need.**
- In the on-going WHO's South-East Asia regional meeting, Indian member **Dr. Poonam Khetrapal** was unanimously **re-elected as Regional director.**
- She has already served as the regional director for south-east Asia since 2014.
- She is the **first Indian National and the first woman** to hold this post.
- The WHO's south-east Asia region covers Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor-Leste.

6 International Labour Organisation (ILO)

- Headquartered at **Geneva, Switzerland**, the ILO **promotes international labour rights by formulating international standards on the freedom to associate, collective bargaining, the abolition of forced labour, and equality of opportunity and treatment.**
- The ILO has **187 member states**: 186 of the 193 UN member states plus the **Cook Islands** are members of the ILO.
- In **1969**, the organization received the **Nobel Peace Prize** for improving peace among classes, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.
- The Governing Body **decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference**, adopts the draft program and budget of the organization for submission to the conference, elects the director-general, requests information from member states concerning labour matters, appoints commissions of inquiry and supervises the work of the International Labour Office.
- International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a **tripartite organisation** where representatives from the **government, employers, and employees** openly debate and create labour standards.
- ILO is celebrating its **100th anniversary in 2019.**

7 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- Headquartered at **Rome, Italy**, the FAO leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- It is **both a forum for negotiating agreements between developing and developed countries and a source of technical knowledge and information to aid development.**
- Formed on Oct 16, 1945, presently having **194 members along with EU** (a member organization) and the Faroe Island and Tokelau which are associate members.
- FAO and the World Health Organization created the **Codex Alimentarius Commission** in 1961 to develop **food standards, guidelines, and texts such as codes of practice under the Joint FAO/ WHO Food Standards Programme.** The main aims of the programme are **protecting consumer health, ensuring fair trade and promoting co-ordination of all food standards** work undertaken by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

8 International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

- The IFAD, since it was created in 1977, has **focused exclusively on rural poverty reduction, working with poor rural populations in developing countries** to eliminate poverty, hunger, and malnutrition; raise their productivity and incomes; and improve the quality of their lives.

- **Headquartered in Rome, Italy**, it has 176 members including 174 UN member states along with Cook Island and Niue.

9 International Maritime Organization (IMO)

- Also known as Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), the IMO has created a **comprehensive shipping regulatory framework, addressing safety and environmental concerns, legal matters, technical cooperation, security, and efficiency**.
- The IMO was established in **Geneva in 1948** and came into force ten years later, meeting for the first time in 1959; **Headquartered in London**, United Kingdom, the IMO has **172 Member States** and three Associate Members.
- IMO is governed by an assembly of members and is financially administered by a council of members elected from the assembly.
- In 2017, **India was re-elected to Council of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** at an assembly of the body at its headquarters in London.
- India was elected under **category B** that represents nations with the largest interests in international seaborne trade. It secured second-highest 144 number of votes from member-countries, just after Germany's 146.

10 World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Basic Information

- Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23 March 1950.
- **Headquarter — Geneva, Switzerland**
- **Predecessor organization — International Meteorological Organization (IMO) —**
 - Founded in 1873
 - Members — of 191 member states and territories
 - Specialised agency of the United Nations for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences

Governance structure

- **World meteorological congress**
 - Each member state and territory is represented by a Permanent Representative
 - Congress meets every four year
 - World Meteorological Congress
 - Policymaking body
 - Elects the President and Vice-Presidents of the Organization and members of the Executive Council; and appoints the Secretary-General
- **The Executive Council (EC) — implements Congress decisions**
- **Six Regional Associations (RA)**
 - Coordination of meteorological, hydrological and related activities within respective Regions.
 - The president of each regional association is an ex officio member of the Executive Council.

- **Eight Technical Commissions** — studying meteorological and hydrological operational systems, applications and research.
- **The Secretariat**
 - ▶ Secretary-General — appointed by the World Meteorological Congress for a four-year term with a maximum tenure of 8 years
- **Reports**
 - ▶ Greenhouse Gas Bulletin
 - ▶ Status of the World Climate

11 World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

- The WIPO protects **intellectual property** throughout the world through 23 international treaties.
- Created in 1967, currently has **189 member states** 186 of the UN Members as well as the **Cook Islands, Holy See and Niue** are Members of WIPO.
- **Non-members** are the states of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, and East Timor. The Palestinians have observer status and its **headquarter is in Geneva, Switzerland.**
- **Reports**
 - ▶ World Intellectual Property Report (biennial)
 - ▶ Patent Landscape Reports
 - ▶ World Intellectual Property Indicators

12 International Civilian Aviation Organization (ICAO)

- The **ICAO** is a **UN specialized agency**, established by States in 1944 to manage the administration and governance of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (**Chicago Convention**), headquartered in **Montreal Canada.**
- ICAO works with the Convention's 191 Member States and industry **groups to reach consensus on international civil aviation Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and policies** in support of a safe, efficient, secure, economically sustainable and environmentally responsible civil aviation sector.
- **International Civil Aviation Day** is observed every year on **7 December** across the world to generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to social and economic development.

13 International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- The ITU is the **United Nations specialized agency** for information and communication technologies.
- It is **committed to connecting the entire world's people - wherever they live and whatever their means.** Through its work, it protects and supports everyone's fundamental right to communicate
- An organization **based on public-private partnership** since its inception, ITU currently has a **membership of 193 countries and almost 800 private-sector entities and academic institutions.** ITU is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and has twelve regional and area offices around the world.

- **India** was elected as a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council for another 4-year term **from 2019 to 2022**.
- The elections to ITU Council were held during the on-going ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 in Dubai, UAE. India got elected to Council from Asia-Australasia region by securing 165 votes and was among 48 countries elected to Council globally. They were elected by 193 member states of ITU.

14 United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

- **Headquartered in Vienna, Austria**, the UNIDO is the specialized agency of the United Nations that **promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization, and environmental sustainability**.
- **The Lima Declaration of 2013** mandates the mission of the organisation i.e. **to promote and induce inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) to achieve shared prosperity and environmental sustainability all over the world**. Hence, the organisational functions are moving around the interrelated thematic domain:
 - Poverty reduction through productive activities
 - Trade capacity-building
 - Energy and environment

15 Universal Postal Union (UPO)

- It is the primary forum for **cooperation between postal sector players**. It helps to ensure a truly universal network of up-to-date products and services.
- **Headquartered in Bern, Switzerland**, Formed on October 9, 1874, contains four bodies consisting of the Congress, the Council of Administration, the Postal Operation Council and the International bureau.
- It also oversees the **Telematics and EMS cooperatives**. Each member agrees to the same terms for conducting international postal duties.
- **World Post Day** is observed every year on **October 9** to spread awareness about the postal services and their role in the everyday lives of people and businesses. The day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern.

16 United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

- Formed in 1975, it is the United Nations agency responsible **for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism**.
- **Headquartered in Madrid, Spain**, presently its membership includes **157 countries, 6 Associate Members and 500 Affiliate Members** representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations, and local tourism authorities.
- World Tourism Day (WTD) is being observed every year on 27th September to raise awareness about the importance of tourism. Observance of day aims to foster awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value.

OTHER ENTITIES/AGENCIES

17 UN Peacekeeping

- United Nations Peacekeeping was created in **1948**. Its first mission involved the establishment of the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which served to observe and maintain a ceasefire during the **1948 Arab-Israeli War**.
- UN Peacekeeping maintains **three basic principles**: Consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and defence of the mandate.
- The UN Peacekeepers are led by the **Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DKPO)**.
- There are currently **17 UN peace operations** deployed on four continents.
- UN Peacekeepers are from diverse backgrounds, from areas all around the world. They include police, military, and civilian personnel. They are often referred to as **Blue Berets** or Blue Helmets because of their light blue berets or helmets.
- The UN Peacekeeping Force won the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1988**.
- The United Nations Charter gives the United Nations Security Council the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security. For this reason, the international community usually looks to the Security Council to authorize peacekeeping operations.

18 Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

- The **Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK)**, **India** and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect have jointly started the pilot "Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on Civilian Protection and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)" in Delhi.
- Role and important functions:**
 - The Centre conducts International Training Capsules for Military Contingent Officers, Military Observers, and Staff and Logistics Officers.
 - The Centre regularly organizes Seminars, Joint Working Groups and Command Post Exercises at the National and International level.
 - It is also a repository of information on India's involvement in UN Peacekeeping and is continuing to build and update its research on peacekeeping

19 UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

- The UN body was established in 2006 to promote and protect **human rights around the globe, as well as investigating alleged human rights violations**.
- It is made up of **47 member states**, which are selected by the UN General Assembly on a staggered basis each year for **three-year-long terms**.
- Members meet around three times a year to debate human rights issues and pass **non-binding resolutions** and recommendations by majority vote.

- The council also carries out the Universal Periodic Review of all UN member states, which allows civil society groups to bring accusations of human rights violations in member states to the attention of the UN.

20 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- IAEA is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.
- The IAEA was established as an autonomous organisation on 29 July 1957. Though established independently of the United Nations through its **international treaty**, the IAEA Statute, the **IAEA reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council**.
- The IAEA has its headquarters in **Vienna, Austria**.
- The IAEA has two "Regional Safeguards Offices" which are located in Toronto, Canada, and in Tokyo, Japan. The IAEA also has two liaison offices which are located in New York City, United States, and in Geneva, Switzerland. Also, the IAEA has laboratories and research centers located in Seibersdorf, Austria, in Monaco and Trieste, Italy.
- The IAEA serves as an intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology and nuclear power worldwide.
- The IAEA plays an active part in helping the international community achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It helps countries to use nuclear and isotopic techniques and thereby contribute directly to **attaining nine** of the 17 Goals

21 World Trade Organization (WTO)

- It is a forum for governments to **negotiate trade agreements and a place where member governments try to sort out the trade problems they face with each other**.
- WTO is an intergovernmental organization that is concerned with the regulation of international trade between nations. The WTO officially commenced on 1 January 1995 under the **Marrakesh Agreement**, signed by 124 nations on 15 April 1994, replacing the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, which commenced in 1948. It is the largest international economic organization in the world.
- The WTO **deals with regulation of trade in goods, services, and intellectual property between participating countries by providing a framework for negotiating trade agreements** and a dispute resolution process aimed at enforcing participants' adherence to WTO agreements, which are signed by representatives of member governments
- The WTO **prohibits discrimination between trading partners but provides exceptions for environmental protection, national security, and other important goals**. Trade-related disputes are resolved by independent judges at the WTO through a dispute resolution process.
- The highest decision-making body of the WTO, the **Ministerial Conference**, usually meets **every two years**. It brings together all members of the WTO, all of which are countries or customs unions.

22 Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

- It is an intergovernmental organisation and the implementing body for the **Chemical Weapons Convention**, which entered into force on **29 April 1997**. The OPCW, with its 193 member states,

has its **seat in The Hague, Netherlands**, and oversees the global endeavour for the permanent and verifiable elimination of chemical weapons.

- The **organisation promotes and verifies the adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention**, which prohibits the use of chemical weapons and requires their destruction. Verification consists both of the evaluation of declarations by member states and onsite inspections.
- The organisation was awarded the **2013 Nobel Peace Prize “for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons”**.
- The OPCW Member States work together to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

23 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

- It is an intergovernmental organization that **provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants**, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers.
- In September 2016, it became a **related organization** of the United Nations. It was initially established in 1951 as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) to help resettle people displaced by World War II.
- As of June 2018, the International Organization for Migration had 172 member states and eight observer states.
- It is the principal intergovernmental organization in the field of migration.
- IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, be they refugees, displaced persons or other uprooted people.

24 World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

- It is an **international non-governmental organization founded in 1961, working in the field of wilderness preservation, and the reduction of human impact on the environment**. It was formerly named the World Wildlife Fund, which remains its official name in Canada and the United States.
- **WWF is the world’s largest conservation organization with over five million supporters worldwide**, working in more than 100 countries, supporting around 1,300 conservation and environmental projects.
- WWF aims to “stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.” The **Living Planet Report** is published every two years by WWF since 1998; it is based on a **Living Planet Index and ecological footprint calculation**. Also, WWF has launched several notable worldwide campaigns including **Earth Hour** and **Debt-for-Nature Swap**, and its current work is organized around these six areas: food, climate, freshwater, wildlife, forests, and oceans.

25 Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

- It is a **multilateral development bank that aims to support the building of infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region**. The bank currently has **69 members** as well as 24 prospective members from around the world. The bank started operation after the agreement entered into force on 25

December 2015, after ratifications were received from 10 member states holding a total number of 50% of the initial subscriptions of the Authorized Capital Stock.

- The **bank was proposed by China in 2013** and the initiative was launched at a ceremony in Beijing in October 2014. It received the highest credit ratings from the three biggest rating agencies in the world and is seen as a potential rival to the World Bank and IMF.

26 World Economic Forum

- WEF is a Swiss non-profit foundation, based in **Geneva**.
- It is recognized as an **international institution for public-private cooperation**.
- It is committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.
- WEF is best known for its **annual winter meeting** for five days in **Davos**, a mountain resort in Graubünden, in the eastern Alps region of **Switzerland**.
- The meeting brings together some international political leaders, 2,500 top business leaders, selected intellectuals, and journalists to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world.

27 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

- It is a humanitarian institution based in **Geneva, Switzerland**, and a **three-time Nobel Prize Laureate**. State parties (signatories) to the four **Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977 (Protocol I, Protocol II)** and 2005 have given the ICRC a mandate **to protect victims of international and internal armed conflicts. Such victims include war wounded, prisoners, refugees, civilians, and other non-combatants**.
- The ICRC is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement along with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and 190 National Societies.
- It is the oldest and most honoured organization within the movement and one of the most widely recognized organizations in the world, having **won three Nobel Peace Prizes in 1917, 1944, and 1963**.

28 International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

- It was established by Austria and Switzerland in 1993 and has since grown to 17 member states.
- ICMPD was founded to carry out research, projects, and activities on migration-related issues and to provide policy recommendations to the governmental agencies of states, as well as to external governmental and intergovernmental agencies. ICMPD also has observer status at the United Nations.
- Although ICMPD has global operations, it is primarily focused on the European area and is headquartered in Vienna, Austria

29 International Energy Agency (IEA)

- It is a **Paris-based** autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) in **1974** in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.

- The IEA was initially **dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors.**
- The IEA acts as a **policy adviser** to its **member states** but also works with non-member countries, especially China, India, and Russia.
- The Agency's mandate has broadened to focus on the **"3Es"** of effectual energy policy: **energy security, economic development, and environmental protection.**

30 International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

- It is an **intergovernmental organization to promote the adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy.**
- It was founded in 2009 and its statute entered into force on **8 July 2010**. The agency is **headquartered in Abu Dhabi.**
- IRENA is an official United Nations observer.

31 African Development Bank Group (AfDB)

- It is a **multilateral development finance institution**. The AfDB was founded in **1964** and comprises **three entities**: The African Development Bank, the African Development Fund and the Nigeria Trust Fund.
- The AfDB's mission is **to fight poverty and improve living conditions on the continent through promoting the investment of public and private capital** in projects and programs that are likely to contribute to the economic and social development of the region.
- The AfDB is a financial provider to African governments and private companies investing in the regional member countries (RMC).

32 Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- It is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in Manila, Philippines.
- The company also maintains 31 field offices around the world to promote social and economic development in Asia.
- The ADB was modelled closely on the World Bank and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members' capital subscriptions.
- Japan and the United States hold the largest proportion of shares at 15.607%. China holds 6.444%, India holds 6.331%, and Australia holds 5.786%.

33 Bank for International Settlements (BIS)

- It is an **international financial institution** owned by central banks which **"fosters international monetary and financial cooperation and serves as a bank for central banks"**.
- The BIS carries out its work through its meetings, programmes, and the Basel Process – hosting international groups pursuing global financial stability and facilitating their interaction.

- It also **provides banking services, but only to central banks and other international organizations.**
- It is **based in Basel, Switzerland**, with representative offices in Hong Kong and Mexico City.

34 Financial Action Task Force

- It is an intergovernmental organization founded in **1989** on the **initiative of the G7** to develop policies **to combat money laundering.**
- In 2001 its mandate expanded to include terrorism financing. It monitors progress in implementing the FATF Recommendations through “peer reviews” (“mutual evaluations”) of member countries.
- The FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD **headquarters in Paris.**

35 International Criminal Court (ICC)

- It is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal that sits in **The Hague in the Netherlands.**
- The ICC has the **jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression.**
- The ICC is intended to complement existing national judicial systems and it may, therefore, exercise its jurisdiction only when certain conditions are met, such as when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute criminals or when the United Nations Security Council or individual states refer situations to the Court.
- The **ICC began functioning on 1 July 2002, the date that the Rome Statute entered into force.** The Rome Statute is a multilateral treaty that serves as the ICC’s foundational and governing document. States which become a party to the Rome Statute, for example by ratifying it, become member states of the ICC. As of March 2019, there are 124 ICC member states.

36 International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL)

- It is an international organization that **facilitates international police cooperation.**
- It was established as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) in 1923.
- To keep INTERPOL as politically neutral as possible, its charter forbids it from undertaking interventions or activities of a political, military, religious, or racial nature or involving itself in disputes over such matters.
- Its work focuses primarily on public safety and battling transnational crimes against humanity, child pornography, cybercrime, drug trafficking, environmental crime, genocide, human trafficking, illicit drug production, copyright infringement, missing people, illicit traffic in works of art, intellectual property crime, money laundering, organized crime, corruption, terrorism, war crimes, weapons smuggling, and white-collar crime.

37 Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

- Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is a multinational body concerned with reducing nuclear proliferation by **controlling the export and re-transfer of materials** that may apply to nuclear weapon development and by improving safeguards and protection on existing materials.

- NSG was set up in **1974** as a reaction to India's nuclear tests to stop what it called the misuse of nuclear material meant for peaceful purposes.
- Currently, it has **48 members**.
- India is **not** a member yet.
- India sought membership of the NSG in 2008
- India's application has not been decided upon because signing the **NPT** or other nuclear moratoriums on testing is a pre-requisite and India has not signed NPT.
- However, India has received a **special waiver** to conduct nuclear trade with all nuclear exporters.
- **India, Pakistan, Israel and South Sudan** are among the four UN member states which have **not signed the NPT**, the international pact aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons
- **Benefits of being an NSG member:**
 - ▶ Gets timely information on nuclear matters.
 - ▶ Contributes by way of information.
 - ▶ Has confirmed credentials.
 - ▶ It can act as an instrument of harmonization and coordination.
 - ▶ It is part of a very transparent process.

38 SCO Peace Mission

- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Peace Mission Exercise is conducted **biennially for SCO member states**.
- The joint exercise for the year **2018** will be conducted at **Chebarkul, Chelyabinsk, Russia** by the Central Military Commission of Russia.
- The upcoming peace mission is considered a historic occasion due to the participation of India after becoming a full member in 2017.
- It will involve tactical level operations in an international counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism environment under the SCO Charter.

39 International Air Transport Association (IATA)

- It is the trade association for the world's airlines, representing some 280 airlines or 83% of total air traffic. Formed in April 1945, it is the successor to the International Air Traffic Association, which was formed in 1919
- IATA supports airline activity and helps **formulate industry policy and standards**. It also provides consulting and training services in many areas crucial to aviation.
- It is **headquartered in Montreal, Quebec, Canada** with Executive Offices in Geneva, Switzerland.

40 Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

- It is the implementing body of the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**, which entered into force in 1997.

- The organisation was awarded the 2013 **Nobel Peace Prize** “for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons”.
- The Convention contains four key provisions:
 - Destroying all existing chemical weapons under international verification by the OPCW.
 - Monitoring the chemical industry to prevent new weapons from re-emerging.
 - Providing assistance and protection to States Parties against chemical threats.
 - Fostering international cooperation to strengthen implementation of the Convention and promote the peaceful use of chemistry

41 Inter-Parliamentary Union

Context: Recently, India criticises Pakistan for raising Kashmir Issue at Inter-Parliamentary Union.

About:

- **IPU had its 141 Assembly in October 2019 in Serbia.**
- IPU is a global inter-parliamentary institution.
- **It was established in 1889** and was the first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations.
- **It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.**
- Its initial objective was the arbitration of conflicts.
- It played an important role in setting up the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.
- Over time, its mission has evolved towards the promotion of democracy and inter-parliamentary dialogue.
- It has worked for the establishment of institutions at the inter-governmental level, including the UN.
- Initially, IPU was for individual parliamentarians but has since transformed into an international organization of parliaments of sovereign states.
- The national parliaments of 178 countries are its members and 12 regional parliamentary assemblies are its associate members.
- **The IPU has permanent observer status at UNGA.**
- **The slogan of IPU is “For democracy. For everyone.”**

Structure of IPU

- IPU has a four-fold structure:
 - Assembly (political organ),
 - the Governing Council (governing organ),
 - the Executive Committee
 - the Secretariat (separated tasks, management organ, and executive organ),
 - The IPU President (political head of the organization and ex officio President of the Governing Council).

42 Eastern Economic Forum

Context: Prime Minister of India and leaders of several other countries attended the 5th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) held in Russia.

About Eastern Economic Forum

- It was established by the 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.

About the Far East:

- The Far East is the easternmost part of Russia. The macro-region borders two oceans, the Pacific and the Arctic, and five countries (China, Japan, Mongolia, the United States, and the DPRK).
- The Far Eastern Federal District covers more than a third of the country's territory.

Resources:

- The Far East is rich in natural resources like diamonds, stannary, borax materials, 50 gold, tungsten, and fish and seafood. About 1/3 of all coal reserves and hydro-engineering resources of the country are here. Forests of the region comprise about 30% of the total forest area of Russia.
- Significant rivers include the Volga, Dnieper and Dvina (west), the Lena, Ob, and Yenisey (central) and the Amur in the far-east.

Other similar forum:

- The St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) is a unique event in the world of business and economics. SPIEF has been held since 1997, and since 2006, it has been held under the auspices of the President of the Russian Federation, who has also attended each event.
- Over the last 21 years, the Forum has become a leading global platform for members of the business community to meet and discuss the key economic issues facing Russia, emerging markets, and the world as a whole. The main events of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum took place on 6–8 June 2019 at the Expo Forum Convention and Exhibition Centre.

43 UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Context: The Global Study on Homicide 2019 has been published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Key findings of the report:

- Asia, which accounts for 60% of the global population, recorded the lowest rate of homicide in 2017 with only 2.3 killings per 1, 00, 000 people while the Americas had the highest homicide rate.
- About 4, 64, 000 people across the world were victims of homicidal violence in 2017, an increase from 395,542 in 1992. The number of homicides in 2017 far surpassed the 89,000 killed in armed conflicts in the same period.
- The global homicide rate, measured as the victims of homicide per 1, 00, 000 people, declined from 7.2 in 1992, to 6.1 in 2017.
- Asia accounted for 23% of total homicide victims worldwide.
- Asia's low continental average, however, can be partly explained by the huge populations of countries such as China, Japan, and Korea, which all boast less than one homicide per 100,000 people in a year. Also, their secret lies in the push for modernization policies – with a special emphasis on educational achievements – along with a culture that rewards long-term plans.
- Young men at the highest risk in all regions.
- While women and girls account for a far smaller share of victims than men, they continue to bear “by far the greatest burden” of intimate partner and family-related homicide, the report finds, adding that more than nine in 10 suspects in homicide cases are men.

About UNODC:

- Established in 1997 through a merger between the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, UNODC is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime.
- UNODC relies on voluntary contributions, mainly from Governments, for 90% of its budget.
- UNODC is mandated to assist the Member States in their struggle against illicit drugs, crime, and terrorism.

SUMMITS/CONFERENCES

1 Saudi Arabia hosts G20 Financial Leaders Meet

Context: Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors from G20 nations meet in the Saudi capital for a two-day gathering to discuss the global economy and the risks from the coronavirus epidemic.

About:

- The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier forum for its members' international economic cooperation and decision-making.
- Its membership comprises 19 countries plus the European Union.
- Each G20 President invites several guest countries each year.
- G20 leaders meet annually.
- Also, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meet regularly during the year to discuss ways to strengthen the global economy, reform international financial institutions, improve financial regulation and implement the key economic reforms that are needed in each member economy.
- The G20 started in 1999 as a meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis.
- In 2008, the first G20 Leaders' Summit was held, and the group played a key role in responding to the global financial crisis.
- The G20 is supported by international organisations, including the Financial Stability Board, the International Labour Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization.

G20 Summit, 2020

- Saudi Arabia became the first Arab nation to hold the G20 presidency in its capital, Riyadh.
- The theme of Summit- "Realising Opportunities of the 21st Century for All".

2 Budapest Convention

Context:

- Recently, the United Nations approved a Russian-led resolution that aims to create a new convention on cybercrime when Budapest Convention is already there. India has voted in its favour.

- Russia has opposed the Budapest Convention, arguing that giving investigators access to computer data across borders violates national sovereignty.

About:

- The Council of Europe's (CoE) Cybercrime Convention is also known as the Budapest Convention. It was open for signature in 2001 and came into force in 2004.
- The convention is the sole legally binding international multilateral treaty on cybercrime. It coordinates cybercrime investigations between nation-states and criminalizes certain cybercrime conduct.
- It serves as a guideline for any country developing comprehensive national legislation against Cybercrime and as a framework for international cooperation between state parties to this treaty.
- The Budapest Convention is supplemented by a Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism committed through computer systems.
- **India is not a signatory to Budapest Convention.**

REPORTS & INDEXES

S.No	Report/Index	Organization
1.	Ease of Doing Business	World Bank
2.	World Development Report	World Bank
3.	Global Economic Prospect (GEP) Report	World Bank
4.	Remittance Report	World Bank
5.	Ease of Living Index	World Bank
6.	India Development Update	World Bank
7.	Universal Health Coverage Index	World Bank
8.	The Service Trade Restriction Index	World Bank
9.	Global Financial Stability Report	International Monetary Fund (IMF)
10.	World Economic Outlook	IMF
11.	The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)	Organisation of Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD)
12.	World Trade Outlook Indicator	World Trade Organisation (WTO)
13.	Global Information Technology Report	World Economic Forum (WEF)
14.	Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report	WEF
15.	Global Competitiveness Report	WEF
16.	Enabling Trade Report	WEF
17.	Global Energy Architecture Performance Index Report	WEF
18.	Global Environment Performance Index	WEF
19.	World Power Language Index	WEF

S.No	Report/Index	Organization
20.	Inclusive Development Index	WEF
21.	Human Capital Index	WEF
22.	Global Gender Gap Index	WEF
23.	Global Financial System Report	Bank for International Settlements (BIS)
24.	Global Money Laundering Report	Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
25.	Global Education Monitoring Report	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
26.	Gender Parity Index	UNESCO
27.	Report on Regular Resources	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
28.	The State of the World's Children Reports	UNICEF
29.	Global Report on Trafficking in Persons	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
30.	World Drug Report	UNODC
31.	World Wildlife Crime Report	UNODC
32.	ICT Development Index	United Nations International Telecommunication Union (UN-ITU)
33.	E-government Readiness Index (EGDI)	United Nations Public Administration Programme (UNPAP)
34.	E-participation Index	UNPAP
35.	E-government Development Index	UNPAP
36.	The Global Report	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
37.	World Investment Report	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
38.	The Trade & Development Report	UNCTAD
39.	The Least Developed Countries Report	UNCTAD
40.	The Information Economy Report	UNCTAD
41.	The Technology and Innovation Report	UNCTAD
42.	Reports on Counterfeiting and Organized Crime	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

S.No	Report/Index	Organization
43.	Industrial Development Report	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)
44.	Global Assessment Report	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
45.	State of World Population Report	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
46.	World Economic Situation and Prospects Report	UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA)
47.	World's Women Report – Once in 5 Years	UN-DESA
48.	World Cities Report	UN-Habitat
49.	Habitat Commitment Index	UN-Habitat
50.	Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report	UN Inter-agency Group
51.	World Disaster Risk Index	United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNUEHS)
52.	World Happiness Report	UN-Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)
53.	World Social Protection Report	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
54.	World Employment and Social Outlook	ILO
55.	World of Work Report	ILO
56.	Global Wage Report	ILO
57.	Gender Inequality Index	UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)
58.	Education Development Index	UNDP
59.	Actions on Air Quality	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
60.	Global Environment Outlook	UNEP
61.	Emission Gap Report	UNEP
62.	The Rise of Environmental Crime Report	UNEP & INTERPOL
63.	World State of Forest Report	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
64.	World Health Statistics	World Health Organisation (WHO)
65.	World Tuberculosis Report	WHO
66.	Ambient Air pollution Report	WHO

S.No	Report/Index	Organization
67.	Safety Reports	International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)
68.	CORSIA	ICAO
69.	World Intellectual Property Report (WIPR)	World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)
70.	Technical Cooperation Report	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
71.	Nuclear Technology Review	IAEA
72.	Red Book	IAEA
73.	World Energy Outlook (WEO)	International Energy Agency (IEA)
74.	Southeast Asia Energy Outlook	IEA
75.	Red List	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
76.	The Energy Report & Living Planet Report	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
77.	Global Corruption Report (GCR)	Transparency International
78.	Corruption Perception Index	Transparency International
79.	World Press Freedom Index	Reporters Without Borders
80.	Death Penalty Report	Amnesty International
81.	Global Hunger Index Report	International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
82.	An Economy for the 99%	Oxfam
83.	Change the World List Data	Fortune
84.	Global Pension Index	Melbourne Mercer
85.	Global Slavery Index	Walk Free Foundation, Australia Based Human Rights Group
86.	Global Retail Development Index	AT Kearney (American Global Management Consulting Firm)
87.	Climate Change Performance Index	German Watch
88.	New Health Index	Global Burden of Disease
89.	India State of Forest Report	Forest Survey of India (FSI)
90.	Report Card of Swachh Bharat Mission	Quality Council of India
91.	National Air Quality Indices	Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

S.No	Report/Index	Organization
92.	National Ambient Air Quality Standard	CPCB
93.	Global Innovation Index	Cornell University, INSEAD & WIPO
94.	India Innovation Index	NITI Aayog, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
95.	Performance of Health Outcome Index	NITI Aayog
96.	Interest Subvention Report	Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
97.	Financial Stability Report	Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
98.	Internet Readiness Index	Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)
99.	RESIDEX	National Housing Bank
100.	Annual Survey of Education Report	PRATHAM
101.	School Education Quality Index (SEQI)	NITI Aayog and MHRD
102.	India Social Development Report	The Council of Social Development
103.	Red Data Book	Botanical Survey of India
104.	India State of Forest Report	Forest Survey of India (FSI)
105.	Report Card of Swachh Bharat Mission	Quality Council of India
106.	National Air Quality Indices	Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)
107.	National Ambient Air Quality Standard	CPCB
108.	Global Innovation Index	Cornell University, INSEAD & WIPO
109.	Global Talent Competitiveness Index	INSEAD, Adecco Group and the Human Capital Leadership Institute of Singapore
110.	City Momentum Index	JLL Real Estate Services, US
111.	State of Global Air 2017 Report	Health Effects Institute, Boston
112.	Global Ecological Footprint	Global Footprint Network
113.	Social Progress Index	Social Progress Imperative
114.	Index of Economic Freedom	Heritage Foundation
115.	Intellectual Property Index	US Chamber of Commerce
116.	Global Peace Index	Institute of Economics & Peace (IEP), Australia
117.	Global Terrorism Index	IEP

MAJOR DEFENCE EXERCISE

S. No.	Name of Exercise	Participating Countries	Nature of Exercise
1	Ajeya Warrior	UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Army ◦ Aimed to build and promote bilateral relations and enhance interoperability. ◦ Location: Mahajan Firing Range, India.
2	Mithra Shakti	India and Sri Lanka.	Army
3	Hand-in-Hand.	India-China	Army
4	Shakti IV	India and France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Army ◦ Aimed at a high degree of physical fitness, tactical drills, techniques, and procedures.
5	Nomadic Elephant	Indian and Mongolia	Army
6	Surya Kiran XIII	India and Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Army ◦ Aimed at training on jungle warfare, anti-terrorism combat and disaster response activities.
7	LAMITYE VIII	India and Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Army ◦ Aimed at conducting counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations
8	Al-Nagah	India and Oman	Army
9	EKUVERIN	India and Maldives	Army
10	SAMPRITI	India and Bangladesh	Army
11	GARUDA SHAKTI	India and Indonesia	Army
12	VajraPrahar	India and USA	Army

S. No.	Name of Exercise	Participating Countries	Nature of Exercise
13	YudhAbhyas	India and USA	Army
14	PRABAL DOSTYK	India and Kazakhstan	Army
15	KAZIND	India and Kazakhstan	Army
16	Maitree	India and Thailand	Army
17	DHARMA GUARDIAN	India and Japan	Army
18	AGNI WARRIOR	India and Singapore	Army
19	BOLD KURUKSHETRA	India and Singapore	Army
20	IMBEX	India and Myanmar	Army
21	KHANJAR	India and Kyrgyzstan	Army
22	INDRA	India and Russia	A joint, bi-annual military exercise conducted by India and Russia
23	Malabar	India, the United States, and Japan	Naval
24	Varuna	France and India	Naval
25	SLINEX	Sri Lanka and India	Naval
26	Simbex	Indian Navy with Republic of Singapore Navy	Naval
27	IBSAMAR	India, Brazil and South African navies.	Naval
28	KONKAN	Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Britain	Naval
29	AUSINDEX	Indian and Australian	Naval
30	Sahyog-Kaijin	India and Japan	Joint exercise of Coast Guards
31	Vinbax 1	India and Vietnam	Naval
32	IND-INDO CORPAT	India and Indonesia	Naval
33	SAMUDRA SHAKTI	India and Indonesia	Naval
34	Naseem-al-Bahr	India and Oman	Naval
35	Indradhanush or Rainbow IV	India-UK	Air Force
36	Garuda V	India-France Air Exercise	Air Force
37	AviaIndra	India-Russia aerial exercise	Air Force

S. No.	Name of Exercise	Participating Countries	Nature of Exercise
38	Cope India	The United States and India	Air Force
39	RED FLAG	The United States and India	Air Force
40	Pitch Black	India and Royal Australian Air Force	Air Force
41	BLUE FLAG	Israel and India	Air Force
42	SIAM BHARAT	India and Thailand	Air Force
43	DESERT EAGLE-II	India and UAE	Air Force
44	EASTERN BRIDGE-IV	India and Oman	Air Force
45	Samvedna	India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and UAE	Air Force

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

1 United States Trade Representative (USTR)

Context:

- The United States removed India from its list of developing countries that are exempted from investigations into whether they harm American industry with unfairly subsidised exports.
- The United States Trade Representative (USTR) eliminated a host of countries including Brazil, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Africa, and Argentina from getting special preferences under the methodology for countervailing duty (CVD) investigations, stating that the previous guidance that dated back to 1998 “is now obsolete”.

About:

- US internal list of developing and least-developed countries:
 - The list is brought by the USTR. The countries are divided into categories of Developing, Developed and underdeveloped. The main criteria for the division of the countries include:
 - Share in the world trade
 - The number of exports from the countries
 - It is a US-specific list that lists out the countries to get the various trade benefits while carrying out trade with the U.S.A.
- **Features of the listing of the countries as developing:**
 - The countries would be able to exempt from the investigations about the harm to the American industry by the bilateral or multilateral trade.
 - These investigations are related to the countervailing duty.
 - The countries would be getting the trade benefits.
 - The countries would be getting the exemptions in the countervailing duties.
 - The countries would be given preference in the Generalised System of Preference (GSP).
 - The Generalised System of Preference will bring about the various duty exemptions to the trade with the USA.
 - The countries will be able to enjoy trade with the USA.
 - There will be lesser trade barriers by the US government while trading with the developing countries.
- **Position of India:**
 - Previously, India was in the category of the developing nation. But USTR has removed India from this list.

- Now India will not be able to avail of the trade benefits which are given to the developing countries.

2 International Civil Aviation Day

Context: International Civil Aviation Day was established in 1994 as part of ICAO's 50th-anniversary activities.

About:

- In 1996, pursuant to an ICAO initiative and with the assistance of the Canadian Government, the United Nations General Assembly officially recognized 7 December as International Civil Aviation Day in the UN system.
- The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States, and of the unique role of ICAO in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.
- For 2015-2018 inclusive the Council has selected the following theme: "Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind".

Chicago Convention:

- **The Chicago Convention (also known as the Convention on International Civil Aviation), established the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations charged with coordinating and regulating international air travel.**
- The Convention establishes rules of airspace, aircraft registration and safety, and details the rights of the signatories in relation to air travel; it also exempts air fuels from tax.
- The Convention was signed by 52 states on 7 December 1944 in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., and came into effect on 4 April 1947.
- The Convention provided for the sovereignty of airspace above the territory of each state, together with five freedoms (later expanded to nine by the addition of four unofficial freedoms) which govern the freedom of states to operate air transport flights (including the carriage of passengers, cargo and mail) across, into and within the air space of other states.

3 Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

Context: The Plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) was hosted by India in November 2019 in New Delhi.

About Kimberley Process (KP):

- It is an international certification scheme that regulates trade in rough diamonds. It aims to prevent the flow of conflict diamonds while helping to protect legitimate trade in rough diamonds.
- The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) outlines the rules that govern the trade in rough diamonds. The KPCS has developed a set of minimum requirements that each participant must meet.
- The KP is not an international organization. It has no permanent offices or permanent staff. It relies on the contributions under the principle of the 'burden-sharing' of participants, supported by industry and civil society observer.

- **As of November 2018, 55 participants are representing 82 countries, with the European Community counting as a single participant.**
- The participants include all major rough diamond producing, exporting and importing countries. The diamond industry, through the World Diamond Council, and civil society groups are also integral parts of the KP.
- **India is a founding member of KP.**

4 China's One Country Two Systems Policy

Context:

- Protests in Hong Kong, now in its 13th consecutive week, have brought a decade's old policy of the People's Republic of China back into focus — One Country Two Systems.
- They want China to end its interference, while Beijing has likened the protesters to terrorists and has said that it won't tolerate any challenge to its sovereignty over Hong Kong.

About:

- One country, two systems is a constitutional principle formulated by Deng Xiaoping, the Paramount Leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC), for the reunification of China during the early 1980s.
- He suggested that there would be only one China, but distinct Chinese regions such as Hong Kong and Macau could retain their own economic and administrative systems, while the rest of the PRC uses the socialism with Chinese characteristics system.
- Under the principle, each of the two regions could continue to have its governmental system, legal, economic and financial affairs, including trade relations with foreign countries.

History

- The idea of two systems in one country resurfaced when Beijing started talks with Britain and Portugal, who were running Hong Kong and Macau, respectively.
- The British had taken control of Hong Kong in 1842 after the First Opium War. In 1898, the British government and the Qing dynasty of China signed the Second Convention of Peking, which allowed the British to take control of the islands surrounding Hong Kong, known as New Territories, on lease for 99 years.
- Similarly, in 1987, China and Portugal signed the Joint Declaration on the Question of Macau in which China made similar promises for the region of Macau after it was handed over to Beijing.

5 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

Context: Recently, the United States has decided to withdraw from the International Arms Trade Treaty.

About the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT):

- It is the first legally binding international agreement to regulate the global trade in conventional arms by establishing common international standards for member countries.
- **It has 102 states parties (Lebanon joined last month) and an additional 34 signatories, including the United States, which had signed but did not formally ratify the treaty. Countries that neither signed nor ratified included Russia, China, India, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.**

- It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in April 2013 and entered into force on December 23, 2014.
- It regulates ammunition or munitions fired, launched, or delivered by the conventional arms covered under the treaty.
- It requires states to monitor their arms exports and to ensure their weapons sales do not break existing arms embargoes.
- Nations also need to ensure the weapons they export do not end up being used for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or terrorist acts. If they do find out the arms will be used for any of these, they need to stop the transfer.

6 SAGAR Programme (Security and Growth for All in the Region)

- SAGAR is a term coined by PM Modi in 2015 during his Mauritius visit with a focus on the blue economy. It is a **maritime initiative that gives priority to the Indian Ocean region for ensuring peace, stability, and prosperity of India in the Indian Ocean region.**
- The goal is to seek a climate of trust and transparency; respect for international maritime rules and norms by all countries; sensitivity to each other's interests; peaceful resolution of maritime issues; and increase in maritime cooperation. It is in line with the principles of the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

7 Maitri Irrigation Project

- The project was launched in January last year **to boost growth to the Himalayan nation's agricultural sector through enhanced facilities.**
- The project is aimed at installing 2,700 shallow tube wells in 12 districts of Nepal.
- The project would **ensure all-season irrigation facility** to about 8,115 hectares of farmland; augment the productivity of wheat, rice and seasonal fruits, vegetables, and other crops, it said.
- It would also uplift the socio-economic status of farming families in the 12 districts covered under the project

8 No-first-use Doctrine

- India is committed to a 'No-First-Use' policy as **part of its nuclear doctrine.**
- Thus, second-strike capability - the capability to strike back after being hit by nuclear weapons first becomes important.

9 Accession to WIPO Treaty

- Union Cabinet has approved the proposal regarding accession to the **WIPO Copyright Treaty** and **WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty.** The treaty extends coverage of **copyright to the internet and digital environment.**
- The policy aims to get value for IPRs through commercialization by providing guidance and support to IPR owners about commercial opportunities of e-commerce through the Internet and mobile platforms.

10 WIPO Copyright Treaty

- The treaty came to force in 2002 and has been adopted by 96 contracting parties to date.
- It is a special agreement under the **Berne Convention** (for **protection of literary and artistic works**). It has provisions to extend the protection of copyrights contained therein to the digital environment.

11 WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty

- The treaty came to force in 2002 and has 96 contracting parties as to its members.
- WPPT deals with the **rights of Performers** (actors, singers, musicians, etc.) and **producers of Phonograms** (Sound recordings) in the digital environment.
- It recognizes the moral rights of the performers for the first time & provides exclusive economic rights to them in the digital environment.

12 Gaming University

- The **UNESCO**, specialised agency of United Nations, entered into an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board for the establishment of a gaming digital learning hub.
- **Visakhapatnam** will soon have a Design university for gaming.
- The hub is seen as a potential medium for creating around 50,000 jobs in 10 years.

13 Mattala Airport

- Mattala Airport is referred to as the world's "**emptiest airport**" located in Sri Lanka.
- India is negotiating a joint venture with Sri Lanka to operate this loss-making airport.
- It is located strategically very near **to the Hambantota port which is operated by China**.

14 Workshop on Greenhouse Gas Inventories in Asia (WGIA)

- WGIA is an initiative of the **Government of Japan**.
- It is to improve the quality of Greenhouse Gas Inventories of Asian countries by building capacities through training and exchange of experience.
- **Members of WGIA** - 15 countries including Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- India is hosting WGIA for the first time.
- The workshop has been organized by the Ministry of Environment, Government of Japan and is being hosted by **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** in New Delhi

15 Resolution 2427

The **UN Security Council** has adopted a resolution 2427, which won the unanimous approval of the 15 members of the council.

- The resolution aimed at a **framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle**.
- It also **condemns attacks against schools and hospitals** and the denial of humanitarian access by parties to armed conflict.
- It demands that all relevant parties immediately put an end to such practices and take special measures to protect children. Global Compact for Migration
- United Nations has **created a Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration for the first time**.
- It is the **first intergovernmental** negotiated agreement under the auspices of the UN to cover all dimensions of migration.
- The agreement was signed by adopting a non-binding political declaration "**New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants**" in 2016.
- Its objective is to address the challenges of migration, strengthen migrant rights.
- Under the agenda, Member States committed to cooperate internationally to safe facilitate migration.

16 Regional Aviation Partnership

- The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) amongst BRICS Nations.
- The Regional Aviation Partnership Cooperation will benefit **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**.
- The objective is that BRICS countries would benefit from the establishment of an institutional framework to cooperate in the **field of civil aviation**.
- The MoU has the potential to spur greater trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges amongst the BRICS Nations.

17 International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC)

- An International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) is about to be set up at **Dwarka, New Delhi**.
- IICC will reflect India's economic progress, rich cultural heritage and its consciousness towards the protection of the environment.
- IICC will give a **new identity to India** in the sphere of meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) which is a multibillion business.

18 CORSIA

- **Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORISA)** is a global scheme to **address the increase in total CO₂ emissions** from international aviation above 2020 levels.

- The aviation industry is committed to technology, operational and infrastructure advances to continue to reduce the sector's carbon emissions.
- On average (2021-2035), flights subject to CORSIA's offsetting requirements will account for over 600 million tons of CO₂ per year. This makes CORSIA one of the largest carbon pricing instruments in the world in terms of greenhouse gas emissions coverage.

19 Hague Abduction Convention

- The government has clarified that it is **not yet ready** to sign the Hague treaty on inter-country abduction of children by parents fleeing a bad marriage. On the other hand, the government is planning to follow the Japan example and put safeguards in place before acceding to the Hague treaty..
- The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980):
 - It is a multilateral treaty whereby the contracting states will have to cooperate in **expeditiously sending back the runaway parent and the child** to the country of the child's 'habitual residence'.
 - It seeks to return children abducted or retained overseas by a parent to their country of habitual residence for the courts of that country to decide on matters of residence and contact.
 - The convention shall apply to any child, **up to the age of 16 years** who is a habitual resident of any of the contracting states.

20 Pravasi Bhartiya Divas, 2019

Context: The 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was held in New Delhi.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

- PBD is a celebratory day observed on **9 January** to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. The day commemorates **the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa** to Mumbai on **9 January 1915**.
- PBD conventions are being held every year **since 2003**. These conventions provide a platform for the overseas Indian community to engage with the government and people of the land of their ancestors for mutually beneficial activities.
- PBD is celebrated **every year** to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots.
- It is sponsored by the **Ministry of External Affairs, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Confederation of Indian Industries** and the **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region**.
- During the Convention, selected overseas Indians are also honoured with the prestigious **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA)** to recognize their contributions in various fields both in India and abroad.
- PBSA is the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians.
- PBSA is conferred by the President of India as a part of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Conventions to a **Non-Resident Indian**, Person of Indian Origin or an organization or institution established and run by the Non-Resident Indians or Persons of Indian Origin, who has made a significant contribution.

21 India and WMO

- India has been designated as a nodal centre for preparing flash-flood forecasts by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
- India will develop a customised model that can issue a warning of floods in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand.
- The system is called the Flash Flood Guidance System which aims to provide forecasts six hours in advance.
- The WMO says flash floods account for 85% of flooding incidents across the world, causing some 5,000 deaths each year

22 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

Context:

- Ministerial meeting of Coordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held recently in Caracas, capital of Venezuela.
- The theme for 2019– Promotion and Consolidation of Peace through Respect for International Law.

India's Stand

- India strongly rejected Pakistan's references to Kashmir during the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and highlighted the fact that the global forum can never be a platform for a "self-serving narrative" that aims to undermine the territorial integrity of one nation by another state.
- The NAM needs to be in the vanguard of those addressing the primary issues of our times that cry for global cooperation, rather than become a platform for venting bilateral grievances between members.

About NAM

- Founded in 1961 in Belgrade.
- It was created by the heads of Yugoslavia, India, Egypt, Ghana, and Indonesia.
- The Non-Aligned Movement was formed during the Cold War as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union but sought to remain independent or neutral.
- The movement represented the interests and priorities of developing countries. The Movement has its origin in the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955.

Features of the NAM policy:

- The policy of non-alignment was based on the five principles of Panchasheel, which directed international conduct. These principles which were envisaged and formulated in 1954, **were mutual respect's territorial integrity and sovereignty; noninterference in each other's military and internal affairs; mutual non-aggression; equality and mutual benefit and finally, peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation**
- The policy of non-alignment meant the acceptance of the inevitability of war but on the conviction that it could be avoided.
- The non-aligned movement emerged from India's initiative for formulating an independent foreign policy.

- This independent foreign policy was based on a solid moral and sound political foundation.
- The non-alignment was a strategy designed to maximize newly independent India's gains from the world system. Nonalignment did not mean to choose to become a hermit kingdom.
