

International Relations Class 11

24th January, 2024 at 1:00 PM

THE CLASS STARTED (IN CONTINUATION) AT: (01:10 PM):

CHALLENGES IN INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS: (01:12 PM):

- **1) Political Challenge:**
- Political instability creates grounds for social and economic instability, creating a conducive ground for radical ideologies to propel if not properly governed.
- India's Neighborhood First Policy underwent a diplomatic test when in 2015 President Nasheed was arrested for terrorist charges.
- There are reports that a large number of Maldivians have been recruited into terrorist groups like ISIS and Pakistan-based Jihadi groups.
- These terror groups use the Maldives as a launching pad for terror attacks on Indian soil and create Maldives as a terrorist hub.
- **2) Economic Challenge:**
- India and Maldives still have not signed Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).
- **3) Growth Of Anti-India Sentiment (India Out Campaign):**
- During President Abdullah Yameen's regime from 2013-2018, there was a pro-China tilt and many Indian projects were halted and a series of Chinese infrastructural projects started.
- Maldives became part of China's Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) major Indian initiatives were misinterpreted and the anti-Indian campaign was launched.
- There was a controversy regarding two Dhruv Light Advanced Helicopters which India gave to the Maldives in 2010 and 2015.
- India's attempt at capacity building and training regarding Dhruv Light Advanced Helicopters were projected as grounds for India's military presence in the country.
- Even if there was a misunderstanding regarding the UTF Harbour Project sponsored by India.
- With the coming back of the pro-China regime under President Muizzu, the India-out Campaign is again posing a serious challenge between the two countries.
- **4) Lack Of Transparency:**
- Many projects started during President Solih's regime have witnessed a lack of transparency and divulgence of information.
- **5) Misunderstanding Of India's Efforts.**
- **6) China's Angle:**
- From 2013 to 2018 under the Abdullah Yameen regime, it was seen that Maldives was losing to China.
- China began to invest heavily in the Maldives and also owns the Finaloo Islands of Maldives.
- Maldives has also signed an FTA with China and right now owes 1.4 Billion Dollars to China.
- China's String of Pearls Diplomacy is also demonstrated along its grand idea of its expansion of China's Maritime Silk Route through the BRI.
- Due to the presence of China, the GMR Contract with India for building the Male Airport was also canceled which again brought the two Asian giants at loggerheads in the Maldives.
- Similarly, the Tri-lateral Agreement for the construction of the Columbo Port was also canceled in 2021, and the contract was given to a Chinese-based company.
- Maldives also affirmed the One-China Policy further making it close to China.

- **Way Forward:**
- a) India needs to be extremely cautious in its approach towards the Maldives, especially when there is a danger of the India-out Campaign becoming a national sentiment.
- b) India needs to keep IoR and the Indo-Pacific Region as a priority and subsequently Maldives has to be the focal point.
- c) India needs to sign an FTA with the Maldives as soon as possible.
- d) Information sharing (**the 'I' component of the HIT**) to combat the security threats, radicalization, terrorism, and managing anti-Indian sentiments should be in priority.
- e) Trust deficit needs to be decreased with better People-People Contact (Soft Diplomacy).
- f) With regards to the Maldives and 38 other countries in the IoR, Project Mausam appears to be extremely significant.

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Project Mausam:The Ministry of Culture launched with the ASI as a Nodal Agency and the Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts as its research units.

The Word Mausam refers to the season when the ships can sail easily in the IoR and thus signifies the importance of the seasons in this area.

The aim is to position India at two levels:

a) Macro Level: It aims to reconnect and establish communication among countries in the IoR which will lead to an enhanced understanding of common cultural values, and concerns.

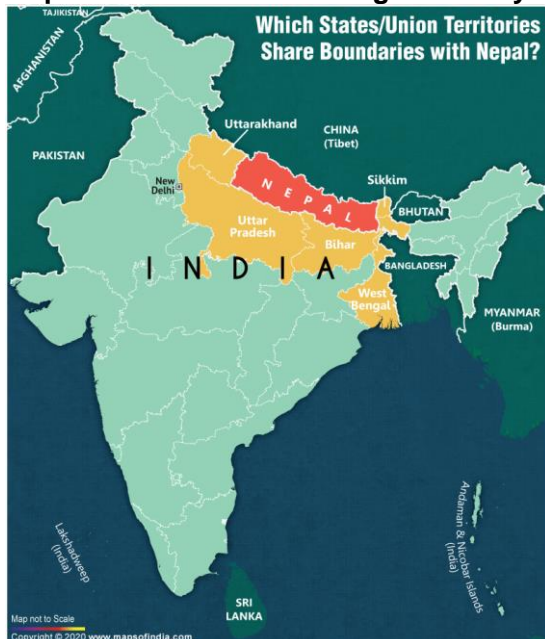
b) Micro Level:The focus is on understanding National Cultures in their Regional Maritime Space. This was an attempt by India to showcase its Soft Diplomacy, with 39 countries and Maldives is one of them.

This is an attempt by India to increase its strategic depth within these countries thereby creating a counter check for China.

As per a few analysts, this project is India's answer to the Maritime Silk Route of China.

INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS: (02:31 PM):

- **Map of Indian States Sharing Boundary With China:**



- **Why Nepal is Important For India:**
- Indo-Nepal relations have been characterized by deep cultural, familial, and economic ties.
- The phrase Roti-Beti Rishta signifies the close-knit and interdependent nature of the relationships between the two countries.
- This relationship is the bedrock of the Indo-Nepal Relationship.
- **1) Location:**
- Nepal is a land-locked country hence it is dependent either on India or on China for trade and connectivity.
- Thus, instability in Nepal will affect the five Indian states which share boundaries with Nepal.
- **2) Strategic Importance:**
- Nepal acts as a buffer state for India, it acts as a cushion in case of possible Chinese incursion.
- In this regard, King Prithvi Narayan Shah even categorized Nepal as a yam between two boulders.
- **3) Security Concerns:**
- Proximity to Chicken's Neck (Siliguri Corridor).
- Issue of fake currency notes.
- Nepal is bordering the TAR of China, and China seeks Nepal's support in keeping an eye on the Tibetan Exiles residing in Nepal.
- It has been argued after Pakistan in terms of Strategic Calculus Nepal comes second in the list of priorities for China.
- China's main concern regarding Nepal is the USA, there is a growing fear that the USA and its allies are trying to use Nepal as their larger strategy to encircle China.
- Nepal has also supported the One China Policy and also is a part of China's BRI, under the proposed Trans-Himalayan, multi-dimensional connectivity project.

MANIFESTATION OF INDIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD FIRST POLICY: (03:10 PM):

- **Nepal's Hydro-Electric Potential:**
- Nepal is a region of perennial rivers.
- On one hand, China requires electricity for the development of the TAR and also for economic projects under the BRIs.
- On the other hand, India also wants to use the hydroelectricity from Nepal, apart from using this for domestic consumption, India has a larger idea to integrate this hydroelectric potential of Nepal within the SAARC Countries and even BBIN and BIMSTEC countries.
- This is guided by the idea of grid development of sub-region within the South-Asian Region (SAR).
- Good collaboration in the R&D due to the high altitude of Nepal w.r.t climate change, etc.
- The potential of the mountain economy for tourism, adventure sports, etc.
- **Political Transition In Nepal:** (Refer to the PPT).
- **In May 2023 Nepal's PM Prachnda's visit to India:**
- India and Nepal have a multi-dimensional and dense relationship, yet the relationship is marked by contradictions, however, during the visit of Nepal's PM on June 2023, contentious issues were not discussed rather attention was given to the new opportunities.
- Neither the issue regarding the revision of the Indo-Nepal Treaty was taken nor was the issue regarding the recruitment of Nepal's Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army under the Agnipath Scheme discussed.
- At the same time, border issues were not also taken up. China also did not come up during the talks between the two leaders.
- The overall sense is that both India and Nepal have realized that political and psychological barriers have hampered our relations in the past.
- This is the time to cement our relationship for mutual prosperity and growth.
- This could be illustrated by the remark made by the Indian PM, on this occasion, 'Border should not become a barrier for cooperation'.

TOPICS OF THE NEXT CLASS: Challenges in Indo-Nepal Relations, etc.