

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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**PT 365 document** comprehensively covers the important current affairs of last 1 year (365 days) in a consolidated manner to aid Prelims preparation.

In our endeavour to further enhance the document in the interest of the aspirants, following additions have been incorporated:



**Consolidated Maps:** They have been added to provide geographical and contextual information about different places in news. These include-

- **Individual maps for each Country or Place** mentioned in the news
- **Comprehensive Continent-wise maps** for quick reference
- **Maps depicting Multilateral Groupings**
- **Maps indicating bilateral military exercises**



**Summarised Infographics:** Indicating important facts to improve ease of understanding, provide for smoother learning experience and ensure enhanced retention of the content.



**Institutions/Organizations in News:** Important information about major Institutions and Organizations which have been recurrently in news has been provided.



**Quiz:** QR based Smart quiz has been added to test the aspirant's learnings and understanding.

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# 1. MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS

## 1.1. UNITED NATIONS

### Why in News?

During the 49th Group of Seven (G7) summit, India questioned the United Nations' (UN) ability to effectively prevent conflicts.

### About United Nations

- **HQ:** New York, US.
- **Genesis:** Established in 1945.
- **About:** UN is an international organization whose primary role is to maintain world peace and security.
- **Members:** 193 Member States. India is a founding member of UN.
- **Principal Organs of United Nations:** General Assembly, Security Council, International Court of Justice, Secretariat, Trusteeship Council, Economic and Social Council.
- **Purpose:** Maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development and upholding international law.



### Important United Nations Treaties

Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</li><li>• Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide</li></ul>
Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees</li><li>• Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees</li></ul>
Penal Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court</li><li>• Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court</li><li>• Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel</li></ul>
Terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</li><li>• Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</li><li>• Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</li></ul>
Law of the Sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea(UNCLOS)</li></ul>
Disarmament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty</li></ul>

### Related News: Article 99 of U.N. Charter

- U.N. Secretary-General invoked Article 99 of UN Charter to warn UN Security Council of impending Humanitarian crisis in Gaza.
- Article 99 states that the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.
  - Article 99 has been **invoked on only four occasions in the past**.
- UN Charter is **founding document of United Nations**, signed in 1945 in San Francisco.
- It **codifies major principles of international relations** like sovereign equality of States etc.

## 1.1.1. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

### Why in News?

The United States (US) formally re-joined the UNESCO after a five-year absence by proposing to pay its due of more than \$ 600 million.

### About UNESCO

- **HQ: Paris, France**
- **About:** Specialised agency of UN, established in 1945 to contributes to peace and security by promoting international cooperation in education, sciences, culture, communication and information.
- **Membership:** 194 countries and 12 Associate Members
- **Composition:** Secretariat, headed by Director-General, implements the decisions of General Conference and Executive Board.
- **Awards related to UNESCO**
  - **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme** (awarded to private individuals and organizations).
  - **UNESCO Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize** awarded (to living individuals, active institutions) for promoting peace.
- **Other key information:**
  - It is also a **member of United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**.
  - **Three UNESCO member states are not UN members:** Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine.
  - **Two UN member states are not UNESCO members:** Israel and Liechtenstein.

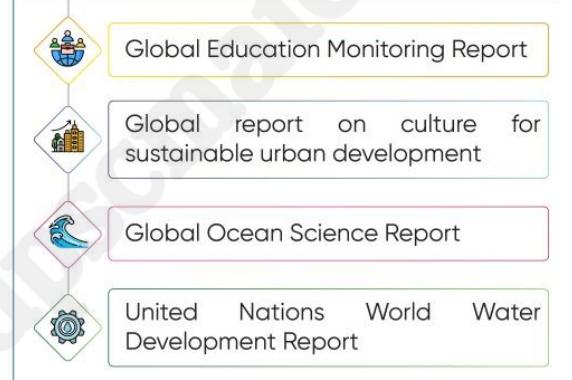
### Key Achievements of UNESCO

- UNESCO preserves 1199 World Heritage sites in 168 countries and the UNESCO designated sites represent 10 million sq.km.
- The Intangible Heritage Convention has 177 State Parties to it and is supporting innumerable cultural heritages.
- UNESCO's Education for All initiative has contributed to significant progress in global education.
- The Media Development Indicators (MDIs) provide a framework to assess media landscapes.
- A separate list of World Heritages in danger is maintained by the World Heritage Committee (Has 55 cites as of 2023).

### Objectives of UNESCO



### Reports by UNESCO



### Related News: Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development

- India was re-elected as president of AIBD for third successive term.
- **AIBD**, headquartered in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), was established in 1977 under **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**.
  - International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UN Development Programme (UNDP) are also its founding organisations.

- It has **26 Government Members countries (including India)** represented by their **48 broadcasting authorities**.
- **Functions:** To establish inter-regional links and cooperation for media and communications development

### 1.1.2. UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC)

#### Why in news?

The UN General Assembly elected 15 Member States to the Human Rights Council (HRC) and declined **Russia's bid to rejoin** the same. Russia was **ousted** from UNHRC after it invaded Ukraine.

#### About UNHRC

- **HQ:** Geneva
- **Genesis:** It was **created by the UN General Assembly in 2006**.
- **About:** It is the **principal intergovernmental body** within the UN for strengthening the **promotion and protection of human rights** around the globe.
- **Members:** 47 (**including India**) and membership is **based on equitable geographical distribution**.
  - Countries need a minimum of **97 UN General Assembly votes to get elected**.
  - **Tenure:** Members serve for a **period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election** after serving two consecutive terms.
- **Institutional structure**
  - **Bureau:** President and four Vice-Presidents who represent **each of the five regional groups**.
  - **Secretariat:** Staff from the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**.
- **Other Key Information:**
  - It can also establish **international commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions**.
  - Council adopted an '**institution-building package**', in **2007** to set up its procedures and mechanisms.
  - The **decisions** of the Council are **not legally binding**.

#### Other news related to Human Rights

<b>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023 marked the <b>75th anniversary</b> of the UDHR.</li> <li>• <b>Human Rights 75 initiative</b> was launched whose three main goals focus on universality, progress and engagement.</li> </ul> <p><b>About UDHR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was approved by the <b>U.N. General Assembly (UNGA)</b> on <b>Dec. 10, 1948</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Key features</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It declares that <b>human rights are universal</b> – to be enjoyed by all people, no matter who they are or where they live.</li> <li>○ <b>UDHR</b>, together with the following <b>International Covenants</b> make up <b>International Bill of Human Rights</b>:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)</b></li> <li>✓ <b>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Some of the rights under the declaration</b></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td>All human beings are born <b>free and equal in dignity and rights</b>.</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>No one shall be held in <b>slavery or servitude</b>.</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>No one shall be <b>subjected to torture</b>.</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>All are <b>equal before the law</b>.</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>No one shall be subjected to <b>arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile</b>.</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td><b>Economic, social, and cultural rights</b>, such as the rights to social security, health, and adequate housing.</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>No one shall be subjected to <b>arbitrary interference with his privacy</b>.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		All human beings are born <b>free and equal in dignity and rights</b> .		No one shall be held in <b>slavery or servitude</b> .		No one shall be <b>subjected to torture</b> .		All are <b>equal before the law</b> .		No one shall be subjected to <b>arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile</b> .		<b>Economic, social, and cultural rights</b> , such as the rights to social security, health, and adequate housing.		No one shall be subjected to <b>arbitrary interference with his privacy</b> .
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ While <b>not a legally binding treaty itself</b>, its principles are part of <b>legally binding international agreements</b>.</li> <li>● <b>India and UDHR:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ India was a <b>signatory to the UDHR</b> and <b>made many contributions</b> towards the formation of the UDHR on various themes such as: <b>Women's rights, Non-discrimination, Freedom of movement, Right to work, Secularism etc.</b></li> <li>○ At various stages of UDHR drafting, India was <b>represented by Hansa Mehta, M.R. Masani and Lakshmi Menon</b>.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Hansa Mehta is credited with altering "All men are born free and equal" to "<b>All human beings are born free and equal</b>" in Article 1 of the UDHR.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2023 marked the <b>30th anniversary</b> of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action</li> <li>● <b>VDPA are human rights declaration adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights</b> in 1993 in Vienna, Austria.</li> <li>● It paved a common plan for the establishment <b>of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</b>.</li> </ul>

### 1.1.3. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO UN

#### 1.1.3.1. UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

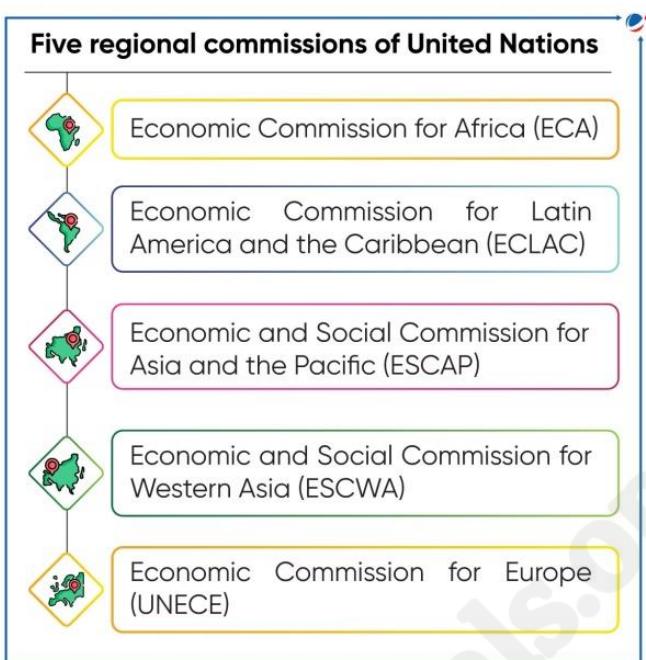
- Recently, the 75th anniversary of the beginning of UN Peacekeeping was celebrated.
- A ceremony was held to posthumously award the **Dag Hammarskjold medal** to peacekeepers who died in 2022.
- **About UN Peacekeeping**
  - **Genesis:** Formally created in 1992 as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO).
    - ✓ DPO traces its roots to 1948 with the creation of the first UN peacekeeping operations: **UN Truce Supervision Organization** and **UN Military Observer Group** in India and Pakistan.
    - ✓ Up to the late 1980s, peacekeeping operations were operated through the **UN Office of Special Political Affairs**.
  - **About:** Dedicated to assisting the Member States and the Secretary-General in their efforts to maintain international peace and security.
  - **Functions:** Provides political and executive direction to United Nation peacekeeping operations around the world and maintains contact with the Security Council, troop and financial contributors, etc.
  - **Other Key Information:** It has **three main offices** namely Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Office of Military Affairs and Policy, Evaluation and Training Division.

#### India's Contributions to UN Peacekeeping



### 1.1.3.2. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC (ESCAP)

- ‘Sustainable Finance: Bridging the gap in Asia and the Pacific’ Report launched by UNESCAP.
- About UNESCAP
  - Genesis:** First established by Economic and Social Council in 1947 as **United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and Far East (ECAFE)**. Renamed in **1974** as **ESCAP**.
  - HQ:** Bangkok, Thailand
  - It is **one of the five regional commissions of United Nations**.
  - Function:** It **supports inclusive and sustainable development in region by generating action-oriented knowledge**, and by **providing technical assistance** and capacity-building services in support of national development objectives, regional agreements.
  - Membership:** 53 member States (including India) and 9 associate members.
  - Other Reports by UNESCAP:** SDG Progress Assessment Report, Asia-Pacific Disaster Report.



### 1.1.3.3. UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW (UNCITRAL)

- India hosted inaugural **UNCITRAL South Asia Conference**.
- UNCITRAL** (established in 1966) is a **subsidiary body of General Assembly of UN** with a mandate for further **harmonization and unification of law of international trade**.
  - It is composed of 70 **Member States elected by General Assembly**.
  - Members are **elected for terms of six years (India is member till 2028)**.
- UNCITRAL** is **not a part of WTO**.
- WTO** deals with **trade policy issues** whereas **UNCITRAL** deals with **laws applicable to private parties in international transactions** and is not involved with "state-to-state" issues.

### 1.1.3.4. UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (UNCDF)

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, and United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) released a whitepaper for Agri-Tech innovation in India
- UNCDF** is **UN's flagship catalytic financing entity** for world's Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
  - It is **an autonomous, voluntarily funded UN organization, affiliated with UN Development Programme**.
  - It was **created in 1966 by UN General Assembly**.

### 1.1.3.5. GLOBAL CRISIS RESPONSE GROUP (GCRG)

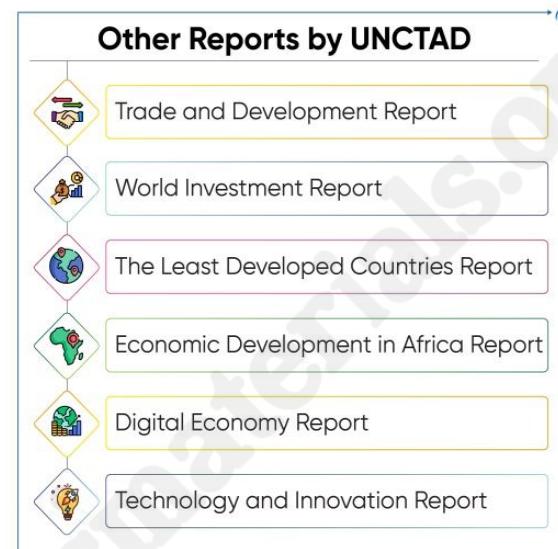
- India has joined **United Nations' GCRG**.
- The GCRG was set up by the **UN Secretary-General (UNSG)** in 2022 to address urgent and critical global issues about **interlinked crises in food security, energy, and finance** and to **coordinate an international response**.
- It is overseen by the **Champions Group** comprising the Head of State/Head of Government of Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia and Senegal.

#### 1.1.3.6. UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION

- India has been elected to United Nations Statistical Commission for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2024.
- About United Nations Statistical Commission**
  - HQ:** New York, USA
  - It was established in 1947 and is the highest body of global statistical system bringing together Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world.
    - ✓ It oversees the work of United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and is a Functional Commission of UN Economic and Social Council (UNESC).
  - Membership:** Consists of 24 member countries of UN elected by UNESC on basis of an equitable geographical distribution.
  - Members' Term of office:** Four years.

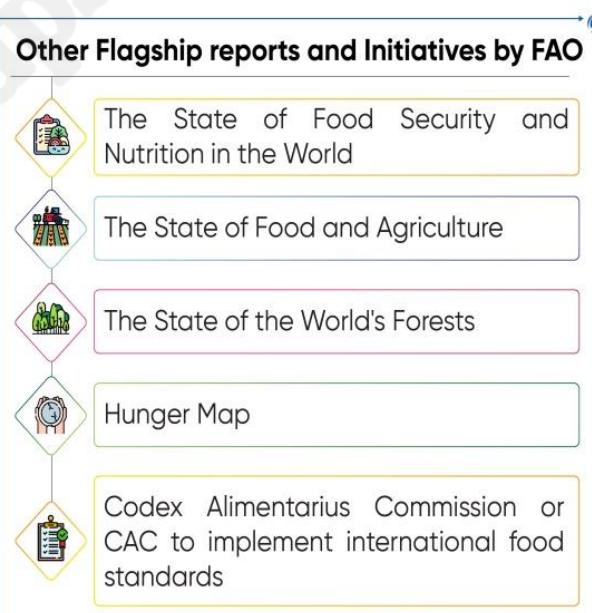
#### 1.1.3.7. UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)

- Trade and Development Report 2023 was released by UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)
- About UNCTAD**
  - Genesis** - A permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.
  - HQ: Geneva**
  - Functions:**
    - ✓ **Helps developing countries** participate more **equitably in the global economy**.
    - ✓ Supports developing countries efforts **to use trade, investment, finance, and technology as vehicles for inclusive and sustainable development**.
  - Members** -195 member states (including India).



#### 1.1.3.8. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

- FAO released **Food outlook** (biannual report) that contained forecasts of production, trade, utilisation and stock levels across the world's major basic foodstuffs.
- About FAO**
  - Genesis:** Founded in 1945, a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
  - HQ:** Rome, Italy
  - Members:** 194 countries (including India) and European Union.
  - Goals**
    - ✓ **Eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;**
    - ✓ **Elimination of poverty** and driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and
    - ✓ **Sustainable management and utilization of natural resources**, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources.



- **Other key information:**
  - ✓ **World Food Day** (16th October) is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO.
  - ✓ FAO works closely with **World Food Programme(WFP)** and the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**.

#### **1.1.3.9. INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION (ICO)**

- Fifth World Coffee Conference by International Coffee Organisation was hosted in India (being held for the first time in an Asian coffee-producing country).
- **About ICO**
  - **Genesis:** Established in 1963 under the aegis of the United Nations and following the approval of the first International Coffee Agreement in 1962.
  - It represents 93% of world coffee production and 63% of world consumption.
  - **Objectives:**
    - ✓ to strengthen the global coffee sector
    - ✓ promote sustainable expansion in a market-based environment for the benefit of all actors in the Global Coffee Value Chain (G-CVC).
  - **Members:** **49 Members** (42 exporting and 7 importing) as of 2022. (**India is an exporting member**).
  - **Other key information:** Only intergovernmental organization for coffee, bringing together exporting and importing Governments.

#### **1.1.3.10. L.69 GROUPING**

- L.69 grouping, in a meeting hosted by India, **called for reform of UNSC**.
- L.69 is a pro-reform grouping that **includes developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific**.
  - The countries were **united by a common desire to achieve comprehensive reform of UNSC** and strengthen **multilateralism**.
- **India** is a **leading country** in L.69.

## **1.2. G20**

### **Why in news?**

India recently held the Presidency of the G20 summit for the first time at New Delhi, with the **theme** “**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**” or “**One Earth, One Family, One Future**”.

### **Key Outcomes of the G20 Summit**

- Adoption of the **G20 New Delhi Leaders' Joint Declaration**: This Included themes like- Accelerating progress on SDGs, Women empowerment, Reforms of Multilateral Institutions, International taxation and Global Peace.
- **Launch of the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)** to increase the consumption of biofuels.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish **India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.
- Formal inclusion of the **African Union as a permanent member of the G20**.
- **Other outcomes-**
  - **Proposal to launch a G-20 Satellite Mission for Environment and Climate Observation for Global South**.
  - Global regulatory framework for **crypto-assets and use of Artificial Intelligence responsibly**.
  - Consensus on G20 framework for **GDPIR (Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository respectively)**.
  - **G20 2023 Financial Inclusion Action Plan (FIAP)** for individuals and MSMEs.
  - Members for the **first time unanimously endorsed the advancement of culture as a standalone goal**, under the document called **Kashi Culture Pathway**.
  - Establishment of the **Start-up 20 Engagement Group**.

- Adoption of **G20 Generic Framework for Mapping Global Value Chains (GVC)**
- **Proposal of the One Future Alliance (OFA)** and a **Social Impact Fund** to implement digital public infrastructure (DPI) in countries of the Global South.
- Initiatives like the **Resource Efficiency Circular Economy Industry Coalition (RECEIC)**, **Travel for LiFE** etc.
- **Promotion of thematic Roadmaps and Principles**
  - ✓ **Jaipur Call for Action** for enhancing MSMEs' access to information to promote the integration of MSMEs into international trade.
  - ✓ **Chennai High-Level Principles** for a Sustainable and Resilient **Blue/Ocean-based Economy**.
  - ✓ **Gandhinagar Implementation Roadmap (GIR)** and **Gandhinagar Information Platform (GIP)** for strengthening the **G20 Global Land Initiative** (aims to prevent, halt and reverse land degradation with an ambition to reduce degraded land by 50 percent by 2040).
  - ✓ **Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals** to achieve Sustainable Tourism.

#### About African Union

- **HQ:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **Genesis:** Launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999).
- **Members:** 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent.
- **Aim:** Promoting Africa's growth and economic development by championing citizen inclusion and increased cooperation and integration of African states.
- **Other key facts:**
  - It is the **second regional organization** to become a permanent member of the G20 (after EU).
  - Recently, AU has **suspended Niger** from all its activities due to a military coup.

#### Note:

- India is also engaged with two other important groups of Africa i.e. AfCFTA and Southern African Customs Union (SACU).
  - AfCFTA agreement was signed in **2018** between **55 African nations**, to create the largest free trade area in the world.
  - SACU is a **customs union** among five countries of Southern Africa: Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa.

#### About G20

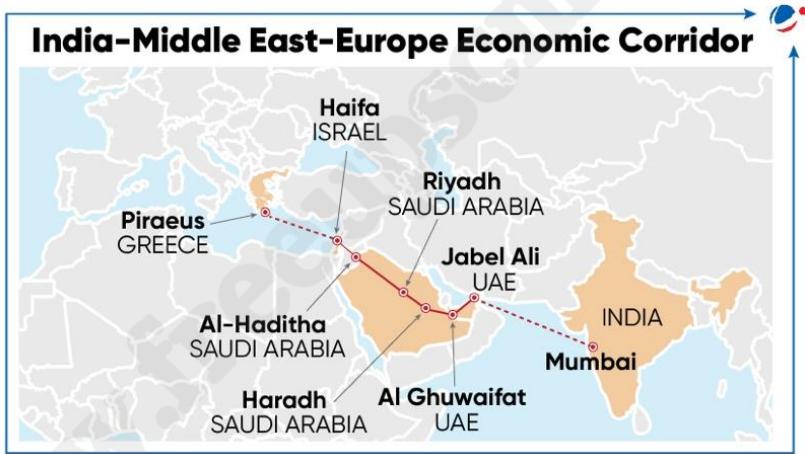
- **Genesis:** It was founded in **1999**, following the **Asian financial crisis**, as a forum for finance ministers and Central Bank Governors to discuss global economic and financial issues.
- **Purpose:** Plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.
- **Members:** Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, the United States, the African Union and the European Union.
  - India has been a **founding member of G20**.
- **Working:**
  - G20 Summit held annually, under the leadership of a **rotating Presidency**.
    - ✓ Presidency is supported by the **Troika** –current, previous and incoming Presidency.
    - ✓ In 2023, the troika consists of India, Indonesia and Brazil.
    - ✓ In **2024**, the troika will comprise **Brazil, India, and South Africa**.
  - Consists of **two parallel tracks**: Finance Track and the Sherpa Track.
  - **Does not have any permanent secretariat** or staff.



## Achievements of G20

- **Addressed financial crises** such as - the Global Financial Crisis 2008-09, the Eurozone Crisis in 2010, etc.
- A USD 10 trillion rescue package for the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- **US-China trade truce in 2018**.
- **Bringing tax reform** for the benefit of low-income countries.

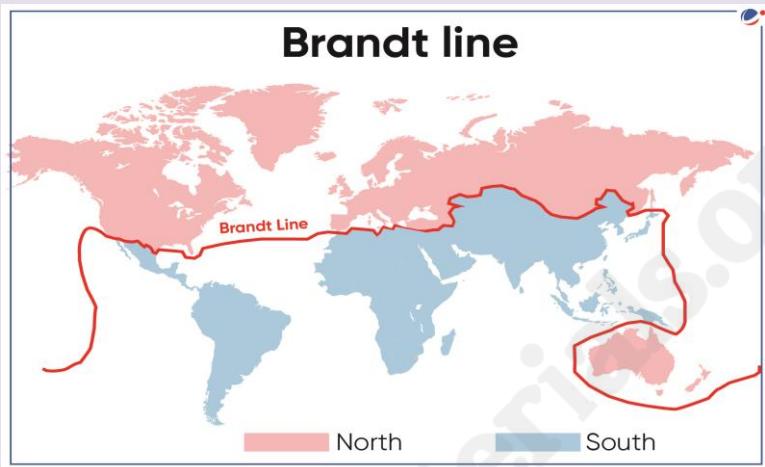
## Details on key initiatives

<b>Global Biofuel Alliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was launched by India along with the leaders of <b>Singapore, Bangladesh, Italy, USA, Brazil, Argentina, Mauritius and UAE</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Aim:</b> To serve as a catalytic platform, fostering global collaboration for the advancement and widespread adoption of biofuels.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The alliance will act as a <b>central repository of knowledge</b> and an expert hub.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Benefits of GBA for India</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Boost India's biofuel initiatives</b> such as PM-JIVAN Yojna, SATAT, and GOBARdhan scheme.</li> <li>◦ <b>Contribute to increasing farmers' income</b> and create new jobs.</li> <li>◦ <b>Reduce oil dependency</b> (India imports more than 80% of its crude oil).</li> <li>◦ <b>Achieve National Targets</b> (20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025-26).</li> <li>◦ <b>Additional opportunities for Indian industries</b> (meeting global biofuel demand and exporting technology and equipment)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Present GBA Members include-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>7 G20 countries:</b> Argentina, Brazil, USA, India, Italy, South Africa.</li> <li>◦ <b>4 G20 invitee countries:</b> Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, UAE.</li> <li>◦ <b>8 non-G20 countries:</b> Iceland, Kenya, Guyana, Paraguay, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Finland.</li> <li>◦ <b>12 International organizations</b> including World Bank, Asian Development Bank, World Economic Forum, International Energy Agency, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)</b>	 <p>The map illustrates the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). It shows a network of ports and rail connections. Key locations marked include Haifa (Israel), Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), Jabel Ali (UAE), Mumbai (India), Al Ghuwaifat (UAE), Al Haditha (Saudi Arabia), Haradh (Saudi Arabia), and Piraeus (Greece). Dashed lines indicate existing rail networks, while solid red lines represent proposed new rail connections. Arrows point from the Indian port of Mumbai towards the Middle East and Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoU to establish IMEC was signed between <b>India, US, Saudi Arabia, European Union, UAE, France, Germany, and Italy</b>.</li> <li>• The IMEC will consist of <b>railroad, ship-to-rail networks</b> (road and sea) and <b>road transport routes</b> (and networks), extending across two corridors-             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>The east corridor:</b> Connects India to the Arabian Gulf.</li> <li>◦ <b>The northern corridor:</b> Connects the Arabian Gulf to Europe.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Aim:</b> To provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network enabling goods and services to transit to, from, and between <b>India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe</b>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Other Key Information:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project forms part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PGII was announced in 2021 during the G7 summit in the UK and is seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).</li> <li>Other projects under PGII: Trans-African Corridor.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Significance of IMEC for India</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected to speed up trade between India and Europe by up to 40%.</li> <li>Reduce logistics costs as well as boost trade in goods and services between countries.</li> <li>Boost to Act West policy of India.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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#### Related Concept: Global South

- It refers to countries often characterized as developing, less developed, or underdeveloped.
  - These countries are primarily located in the Southern Hemisphere, largely in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Similarly, economically developed countries such as the United States, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia and New Zealand constitute Global North.
- The concept of the Global South can be traced back to the **Brandt Report of 1980**, which proposed a division between North and South countries based on their **technological advancement, GDP, and standard of living**.



#### 1.2.1. OTHER INITIATIVES BY G20

<b>G20 EMPOWER</b>	G20 Alliance for Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (G20 EMPOWER) is an alliance, between government and private sector, for accelerating women's leadership and empowerment in private sector.
<b>Millets And Other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative (MAHARISHI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants of G20 Meeting of Agriculture Chief Scientists on "Sustainable Agriculture and Food System for Healthy People and Planet" unanimously supported launch of MAHARISHI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Its secretariat will be housed at Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), Hyderabad with technical support from ICRISAT, One CGIAR Centres and other International organisations.</li> <li>It will focus on Research and Awareness about agro-biodiversity, food security, and nutrition aligning with International Year of Millets 2023.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Business 20 (B20)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme of recent B20 summit was R.A.I.S.E – Responsible, Accelerated, Innovative, Sustainable and Equitable Businesses.</li> <li>B20 was established in 2010 as the official G20 dialogue forum with global business community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It brings policymakers, business leaders and experts from across the world to deliberate and discuss B20 India Communiqué.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHO and G20 India presidency announced Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH), a key deliverable of third health priority under India's G20 Presidency.</li> <li>GIDH is a platform for sharing digital goods and knowledge to promote country capacity and strengthen international cooperation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIDH will operate as a WHO-managed network to support implementation of <b>Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020–2025</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Framework for Health, Social, and Economic Vulnerabilities and Risks from Pandemics (FEVR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On request by G20 task force, Framework has been <b>prepared by WHO, World Bank, IMF, and European Investment Bank</b> to better understand health and economic vulnerabilities, and their resulting risks, caused by pandemics.</li> <li>FEVR comprises <b>2 components</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Key health, social and economic indicators</b> that should be monitored to mitigate risks and shocks.</li> <li><b>Differential impact on health, social, and economic outcomes</b> of different policy and investment possibilities to inform decision making.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Related News: India – Indonesia Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD)

- Ministry of Finance has announced the launch of India – Indonesia EFD on sidelines of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Gujarat.
  - EFD assured **to enhance collaboration on bilateral and international economic and financial matters** by bringing together economic policymakers and financial regulators.
- Indonesia has emerged as **India's largest trading partner in ASEAN region** (\$38 billion in FY 2022-23).

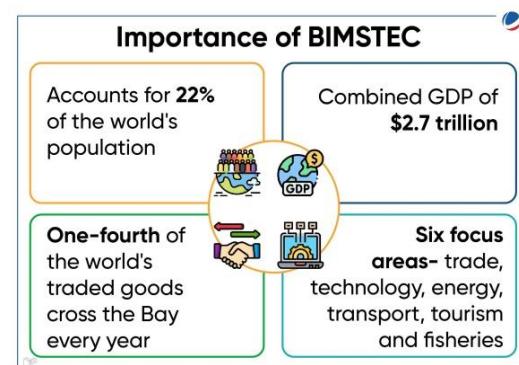
### 1.3. BIMSTEC

#### Why in news?

India has participated in the **first-ever Foreign Ministers' meeting** of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (**BIMSTEC**) in Bangkok, Thailand.

#### About BIMSTEC

- Genesis:** BIMSTEC is a **regional organisation established in June 1997** with the **signing of the Bangkok Declaration**.
  - Initially, it was established as **BIST-EC** with **four countries: Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand**.
  - Myanmar joined in December 1997** and the group was renamed **BIMST-EC**.
- Secretariat:** Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Purpose:** To create an enabling environment for rapid economic development and social progress and maintain peace and stability in the Bay of Bengal region.
- Current Members:** 7- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan (both joined in 2004).
- Founding principles of BIMSTEC:** Sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, no interference in internal affairs, peaceful co-existence, and mutual benefit.
- BIMSTEC Charter** was signed and adopted during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit in 2022 which **formalised the grouping into an organization**.



- Under it, members agreed to **reduce number of sectors/pillars of cooperation** from 14 to 7 (to be led by each of the member state). **India will lead the security pillar.**

## 1.4. ASEAN

### Why in the news?

Recently, the Prime Minister of India attended the **20th ASEAN-India Summit** in Jakarta, Indonesia.

### Key highlights of ASEAN-India summit

- India's **12-point proposal** for strengthening India-ASEAN cooperation includes:
  - Establishing multi-modal connectivity and economic corridor **linking South-East Asia-India-West Asia-Europe**.
  - Sharing **India's Digital Public Infrastructure Stack** with ASEAN Partners.
  - **ASEAN-India Fund for Digital Future** focuses on cooperation in digital transformation and financial connectivity.



### About ASEAN

- **Genesis:** ASEAN was **established in 1967** with signing of ASEAN Declaration (**Bangkok Declaration**) by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
  - The **Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)** was established in 1976 and embodies universal principles of peaceful coexistence and friendly cooperation among States in Southeast Asia.
- **Secretariat:** Indonesia, Jakarta
- **Members:** Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.
  - **Dialogue Partners:** Australia, Canada, China, India, the EU, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia Federation, the U.K, the U.S.
- **Other Key Information:**
  - **ASEAN Community:** Launched in 2015 and comprised of three pillars:
    - ✓ ASEAN Political-Security Community
    - ✓ ASEAN Economic Community
    - ✓ ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
  - **ASEAN Cross Sectoral Initiatives:** ASEAN Connectivity, ASEAN Smart Cities Network, Initiative for ASEAN Integration & Narrowing Development Gap (IAI & NDG).
  - **ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation** includes ASEAN member states, China, Japan and Republic of Korea.
  - **India is an active participant in ASEAN regional forums** like the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting + (ADMM+) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).

### India- ASEAN Relations: Key Facts

- **Trade:** Trade with ASEAN countries accounts for about **11.3% of India's global trade**.
  - ASEAN- India Trade in Goods Agreement (**ATIGA**) **was signed in 2009**.
- **Connectivity projects:** India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (IMT), the Kaladan Multimodal Project etc.
- **Security:** ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025), ADDM+ (platform for ASEAN and eight Dialogue Partners including India).

#### **Related News: East Asia Summit**

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India attended the **18th East Asia Summit (EAS)** in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- EAS is a **forum of 18 countries of the Asia-Pacific region** formed to further the objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity.
- Members:** Ten ASEAN Member States and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the USA.
- The East Asia Summit (EAS) process was initiated in 2005 with the convening of the 1st East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## **1.5. BRICS**

#### **Why in the news?**

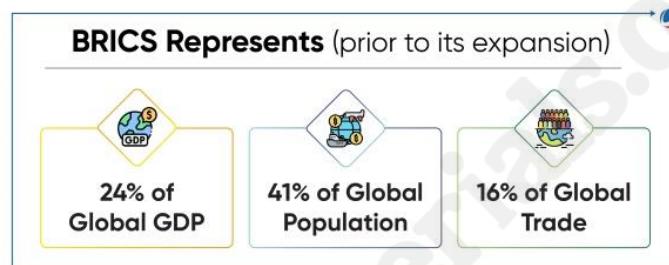
BRICS group **admitted five new members at the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit** held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

#### **More on news**

- Expansion of BRICS:** The five new members of BRICS are **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.**
- Johannesburg II Declaration:** Signed at the summit, it encapsulates significant BRICS viewpoints on global economic, financial and political matters.

#### **About BRICS**

- Genesis:**
  - Conceived of in the **2001** in a Goldman Sachs paper as a **grouping of the fastest growing developing economies** not in the G-7.
  - BRIC countries started their dialogue in 2006, with the **induction of South Africa in 2010**, BRICS came into existence.
- Secretariat:** No permanent secretariat or office
- Current Members:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
- Major initiatives of BRICS**
  - New Development Bank (NDB).**
  - Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA)** to provide short-term liquidity support to the members.
  - BRICS R&D centre for vaccines** to prevent and control infectious diseases.
  - BRICS alliance for Green Tourism** to accelerate the recovery and development of tourism on sustainable lines.



#### **Related News**

##### **New Development Bank (NDB)**

- NDB to set up a **regional office at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).**
- NDB was established** in 2015 to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in **emerging markets and developing countries.**
  - Members:** BRICS nations, Bangladesh, UAE, Egypt (**Uruguay is a prospective member** and will become official member once it deposits instrument of accession).
  - HQ:** Shanghai, China
- India is second-largest recipient** of NDB's financial support after China.

##### **Friends of BRICS Meeting**

- India's National Security Advisor has participated in **Friends of BRICS Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa.**
  - Friends of BRICS countries** are Belarus, Burundi, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kazakhstan and Cuba.
- Objective of **Friends of BRICS** initiative is to **promote interaction of BRICS with close allies and enhance its influence.**

## 1.6. SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

### Why in news?

Under India's first-ever Chairmanship, the 23rd Summit of the SCO Summit was held in the virtual format.

### More on news

- India assumed the rotating Chairmanship of SCO at the **Samarkand Summit in 2022**.
- Kazakhstan is the next chairman of SCO.

### Key Highlights of the Summit

- **Theme:** “**Towards a SECURE SCO**” (Security, Economic development, Connectivity, Unity, Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and Environmental protection).
  - The SECURE acronym was **coined by the PM of India** at the 2018 SCO summit.
- **New Delhi Declaration:** Signed to counter activities of terrorist, separatist and extremist groups, preventing spread of religious intolerance, aggressive nationalism, ethnic and racial discrimination, xenophobia etc.
- **India has established five new pillars of cooperation** within the SCO:
  - Startups and Innovation,
  - Traditional Medicine,
  - Youth Empowerment,
  - Digital Inclusion, and
  - Shared Buddhist Heritage.
- **Iran joined as the new permanent member(9<sup>th</sup> member)** of the grouping.
- ‘**Kashi’(Varanasi)** has been declared the **first tourism and cultural capital** of SCO.



### About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- **Genesis:** It was founded at the Shanghai summit in **2001** by Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as a **permanent intergovernmental organization**.
- **HQ:** Beijing, China
- **Major Goals and Objectives:**
  - To address security related concerns.
  - Resolving border issues.
  - Military Co-operation and intelligence sharing.
  - Countering terrorism.
  - Co-operation in education, energy, transportation, etc.
- **Members:** Iran, India, China, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
  - It includes **3 observer states** (Belarus, Mongolia and Afghanistan ) and **6 dialogue partners** (Armenia, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Cambodia).
  - India and Pakistan were admitted as a full member of the SCO at the **Astana Summit in 2017**.

- Structure:**
  - The Council of Heads of States:** Apex decision-making body
  - Council of Heads of Governments:** Second-highest council
  - Two permanent bodies** - the Secretariat in Beijing (China) and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.
    - ✓ RATS facilitate coordination and interaction between the SCO member states in the fight against terrorism, extremism and separatism. **India is a member.**
- Other Key Information:**
  - Official languages of the SCO:** Russian and Chinese.
  - SCO has been an **observer in the UN General Assembly** since 2005.

## 1.7. ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

### Why in news?

Asian Development Bank (ADB) launched a new **country partnership strategy (CPS)** for India.

### More on news

- The Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for India, 2023-2027** will advance ADB's **Strategy 2030's** seven operational priorities (refer infographic).
- The CPS India strategy focuses on 3 pillars**
  - 
  - Accelerate the structural transformation and job creation.
  - Promote climate resilient growth
  - Deepen social and economic inclusiveness.

### About ADB Country Partnership Strategy (CPS)

- CPS** is ADB's primary platform for designing operations to deliver development results at the country level.
- Under **Strategy 2030**, ADB aims to expand its vision to achieve a **prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific**, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- Cost-Sharing Arrangements:** ADB and domestic cost-sharing in the **ratio of 70:30**, for the overall loan portfolio during the CPS period.

### About Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- Genesis:** Established in 1966 as **regional development bank**.
- HQ:** Manila, Philippines.
- Mandate:**
  - **Assists members, and partners, by providing loans and technical assistance**, to promote social and economic development.
  - **Facilitates policy dialogues, providing advisory services and mobilizing financial resources.**
- Members:** 68 members of which 49 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
  - **India is a founding member.**



- **Shareholding:** US and Japan(non-borrowers) have the highest shareholding at 15.6%. China and India(borrowers) have 6.4 and 6.3% respectively.
- **India and ADB**
  - In 2022, ADB had committed **\$52.6 billion in 605 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance** in India, as well as **\$8 billion in private sector investments**.
  - **Important projects:**
    - ✓ Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor Development Program;
    - ✓ Nhava Sheva Container Terminal Financing Project;
    - ✓ Chennai Metro Rail Investment Project;
    - ✓ Assam South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Corridor Connectivity Improvement Project etc.



## 1.8. INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY (IPEF)

### Why in news?

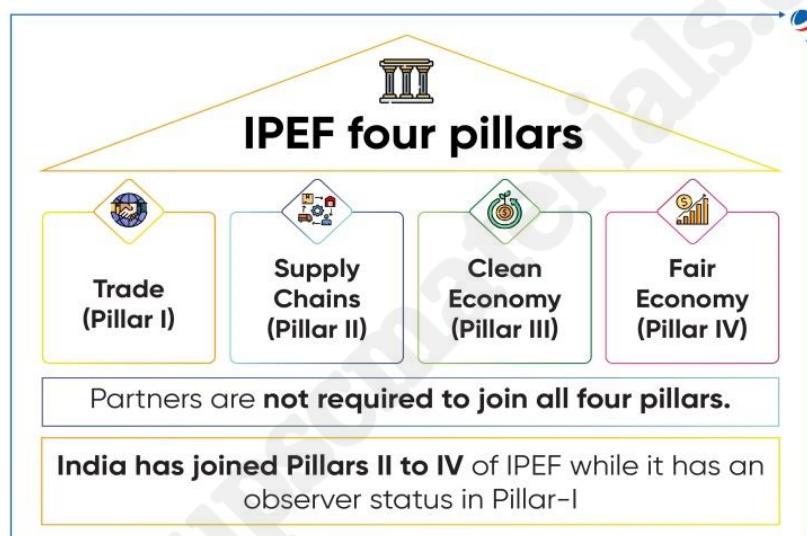
The third Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Ministerial Meeting was held in San Francisco, USA.

### About IPEF

- **Genesis:** IPEF was launched jointly by the USA and other partner countries of the Indo-Pacific region in 2022 at Tokyo.
- **Purpose:** To solidify their relationships and engage in crucial economic and trade matters that concern the region.
- **IPEF Member countries: 14** (The United States, India, Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam).
- **Significance of IPEF:** Enhancing supply chain resilience, Fostering a free and open Indo-Pacific, Providing an alternative to China in the region and Facilitating deeper integration of India into global value chains.

### Traditional trade agreements vs IPEF

- Unlike Traditional trade blocs (like the RCEP) or Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), **IPEF will not negotiate tariffs or market access**.
- Also, unlike in FTAs, where **everything is negotiated under a single umbrella**, IPEF negotiations under the **four module (pillars) are in silos, independent of each other**.
- IPEF merely focuses on increasing **regulatory coherence** between the member nations.



### Related News: India proposes Biofuel Alliance among IPEF members

- India has proposed collaboration on biofuels within the IPEF on the lines of the G20 Global Biofuels Alliance.
- The aim is to enhance energy security, affordability, and accessibility through sustainable biofuels.

## 1.9. INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION (IMO)

### Why in news?

India was re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council, with the highest tally at elections held for the 2024–25 biennium.

### About IMO

- **Genesis:** It is a specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1948.
- **HQ:** London
- **Purpose:** Promote safe, secure, environmentally sound, efficient and sustainable shipping through cooperation.
- **Members** - 176 members and 3 associate members (including India).
- **Structure:** The Organization consists of an **Assembly, a Council, and five main Committees** along with sub-committees.
- **Role of IMO for environmental protection**
  - IMO's **MARPOL Convention**: Key treaty to prevent and minimise pollution from shipping.
  - **Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA)**: It is a special area designated by the IMO for extra protection.
  - **London Dumping Convention and Protocol**: Regulating sea waste dumping, climate change mitigation like carbon capture and storage, etc.
  - **IMO 2020 rule**: In 2020, a new lower limit on the sulphur content in fuel oil used on board ships was implemented.
  - **Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index** From 2023, it is mandatory for all ships to calculate their attained Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI) to measure their energy efficiency and to initiate the collection of data for the reporting of their annual operational carbon intensity indicator (CII) and CII rating.
- **Role of IMO in Maritime safety and security:**
  - The International Convention for the Safety of Life (**SOLAS Convention**), 1974: It sets standards for ship construction, equipment, and operation to ensure the safety of life at sea.
  - **Djibouti Code of Conduct around the western Indian Ocean**: Prevent piracy and armed robbery against ships.
    - ✓ **Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct**: Expanded the code to include organized crime in the maritime sector, maritime terrorism, human trafficking, and illegal unreported and unregulated fishing.
  - **Suppression of Unlawful activities (SUA) Treaties**.
  - IMO's **Maritime Safety Committee (MSC)** and **Facilitation Committee (FAL)** cooperate to prevent drug smuggling on international ships.

### About IMO Council

- Executive organ of IMO and responsible for supervising the work of the Organization.
- Made up of **40 Member States**, elected by the Assembly for **2-years terms**.

### IMO Council Members are divided into 3 categories

#### Category (a)

- States with interest in providing international shipping services.

#### Category (b)

- States with interest in international seaborne trade.
  - India was re-elected in this category.

#### Category (c)

- States with Special interests in maritime transport or navigation and whose election will ensure the representation of all major geographic areas of the world.

## 1.10. G7

### Why in News?

49<sup>th</sup> Summit of G-7 group was recently held in Hiroshima (Japan) where **India** along with countries like **Australia, Brazil etc.** were invited to the summit.

#### About G7

- Genesis:** The G7, originally G8, originated in 1973 and was set up in 1975.
- About:** An informal forum of leading industrialised nations, which dominate global trade and the international financial system.
- Purpose:** It meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security and energy policy, besides a host of other issues topical to the prevailing situation.
- Members:** Canada, Japan, UK, US, France, Germany, Italy.
- Other Key Information:**
  - The G7 has no permanent secretariat or office.
  - Russia joined G7 in 1998, creating the G8, but was excluded in 2014 for its takeover of Crimea.
  - The EU is not a member of the G7 but attends the annual summit.
- Achievements of G7**
  - Played crucial role in setting up a Global fund to fight malaria and Aids in 2002.
  - In 2015, members launched the Global Apollo Program to tackle climate change through clean energy research and development.
  - G7 finance ministers agreed to back a global minimum tax of at least 15% on multinational companies.
  - Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) to meet the infrastructure needs of low and middle-income countries.



#### Related News: Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE)

- RISE is an initiative of World Bank and G7 under Japan's Presidency.
- RISE is a \$40 million partnership project to diversify supply chains for clean energy products.
- Aim:** to support low- and middle-income countries in playing bigger roles in the midstream (mineral processing and refining) and downstream (component manufacturing and assembly) in supply chains of clean energy products.

## 1.11. GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

### Why in news?

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs recommended legal assistance to Indian nationals imprisoned in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

#### About GCC

- Genesis:** GCC was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1981.
- HQ:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- About:** GCC is a political and economic alliance of countries in the Gulf region.
- Members:** 6 (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain).



- **Other Key information:**
  - Iran and Iraq are not members.
  - Official language: Arabic.
- **India and GCC**
  - GCC is currently India's largest trading partner bloc.
  - Recently, GCC has proposed to restart Free Trade Agreement talks with India.

#### About India's Legal Assistance Abroad

- Indian Missions provide initial legal assistance (in the form of financial assistance, interpreter facilities etc.) to distressed Indians, if he/she is unable to afford such legal help on his/her own.
- **Indian Mission does not fight Court cases by itself.**
- Expenditure on lawyers' fees is paid from **Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)**.
  - ICWF is used to provide legal assistance, boarding & lodging assistance, emergency medical care, air passage to stranded Indians and transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals, Legal/financial assistance to Indian women deserted by Overseas Indians/foreign nationals, etc.
  - **Persons of Indian Origin and Overseas Citizens of India Card Holders** are not eligible for individual financial assistance from ICWF.

## 1.12. DEFENCE AND SECURITY RELATED ORGANISATIONS

### 1.12.1. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

#### Why in news?

Finland and Sweden recently joined NATO and became its 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> members respectively.

#### More on news

- As a member of the Alliance, **Finland is part of NATO's collective defence** and is covered by the security guarantees enshrined in **Article 5** of the North Atlantic Treaty.
  - Collective defence means that an attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies.
  - Article 5 has been invoked just once, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

#### About NATO

- **Genesis:** NATO was established in 1949 by the Washington Treaty.
- **HQ:** Brussels, Belgium
- **Purpose:** It was established as a military alliance, against the then USSR in the European region.
- **Members:** 32 (30 European nations, US and Canada)
  - **EU members that are not a part of NATO** are: Austria, Cyprus, Ireland and Malta.
- **Other Key information:**
  - It derives its authority from **article 51 of the UN charter**.



- **Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) status:** It is a designation under U.S. law that provides foreign partners with certain benefits in the areas of defence trade and security cooperation.
  - ✓ It does not entail any security commitments to the designated country.
  - ✓ The US has designated 30 other countries including Japan, South Korea, Israel, etc as MNNA
  - ✓ India is not a MNNA.

#### Related news

##### NATO Plus grouping

- US Senator to introduce a bill to make India part of the NATO Plus grouping.
  - However, India had earlier already rejected the framework.
- NATO Plus (currently **NATO Plus 5**) is a security arrangement that brings together NATO and five aligned nations (Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel and South Korea) to boost defence and intelligence ties.

## 1.12.2. FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF)

#### Why in news?

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) team visited India to conduct the country's onsite assessment for the fourth round of mutual evaluations.

#### More on news

- The final review meeting is expected to take place in June 2024.
- **Mutual Evaluation** is in-depth country's report analyzing the implementation and effectiveness of measures to combat money laundering and terror financing.

#### About FATF

- **Genesis:** Established by the G-7 Summit held in Paris in 1989.
- **HQ:** Paris
- **About:** An inter-governmental body to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- **Members:** 37 member jurisdictions (including India) and 2 regional organisations (Gulf Co-operation Council and European Commission).
  - India joined FATF in 2010.
- **Working:**
  - Sets international standards, that aim to prevent illegal activities. These are -
    - ✓ Global anti-money laundering (AML) and Counter-terrorist financing (CFT) standards.
  - Relies on a strong global network of nine FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs) to implement its recommendations and provide input in FATF policymaking.
    - ✓ Example: Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering.
  - Countries which repeatedly fail to adhere to FATF Standards can be placed on its **Grey list or Black list**.
- **Recent developments**
  - FATF suspended Russia's membership over Ukraine war.
  - FATF added South Africa and Nigeria to its grey list of countries for failing to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.
  - Pakistan was removed from the FATF Grey List in 2022 due to significant improvements in the overall anti-money laundering (AML) / counter-terrorist financing (CFT) framework.
  - FATF released report on Crowdfunding for Terrorism Financing (TF).

### FATF's Grey and Black List

#### Grey List (Jurisdiction under Increased Monitoring):

- Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering.

#### Black List (High-Risk Jurisdiction subject to a Call for Action):

- It consists of Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs).

### 1.12.3. INTERPOL

#### Why in news?

91st General Assembly meeting of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) in Vienna celebrated its centenary year. Also, CBI Academy of India joined the INTERPOL Global Academy Network.

#### About Interpol

- **Genesis:** It was established in 1923 to help police work together to make the world a safer place.
- **HQ:** Lyon (France)
- **Purpose:** To facilitate information-exchange between national police forces.
- **Members:** 196 member countries (including India)
- **Organizational structure**
  - **General assembly** - Supreme governing body meets annually to take decisions related to policy, finances etc.
  - **General secretariat** - Runs Interpol's day-to-day activities to support members in international policing
  - **Executive committee:** Elected by the General Assembly has 13 members comprising a president, 3 Vice presidents and 9 delegates from 4 regions.
  - **National central bureaus (NCB):** A Country's focal point for all INTERPOL activities e.g., NCB in India is Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- **Other key information:**
  - It is the **only organization with the mandate and technical infrastructure to share police information globally.**
  - INTERPOL is **not a police force.** It has **no powers to arrest anyone**, investigate or prosecute crimes
- **Major Initiatives**
  - **International radio network** launched in 1935, providing an independent telecommunications system solely for the use of the criminal police authorities at national level.
  - **I-CORE programme:** To harness new technology to turn big data into actionable intelligence at the front line.
  - **Seven Global Policing Goals:** Form the basis for advocacy before national governments. The goals are aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- **Reports released:** INTERPOL's Global Crime Trends Report



#### Related News

##### Macolin Convention

- The **12th meeting of Interpol's Match-Fixing Task Force (IMFTF)** called for harmonized global efforts to curb competition manipulation and establishment of national platforms, as outlined by Macolin Convention.
- The **Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions**, known as the Macolin Convention, is a multilateral treaty aimed at checking match-fixing.

## 1.13. OTHER IMPORTANT ORGANISATIONS IN NEWS

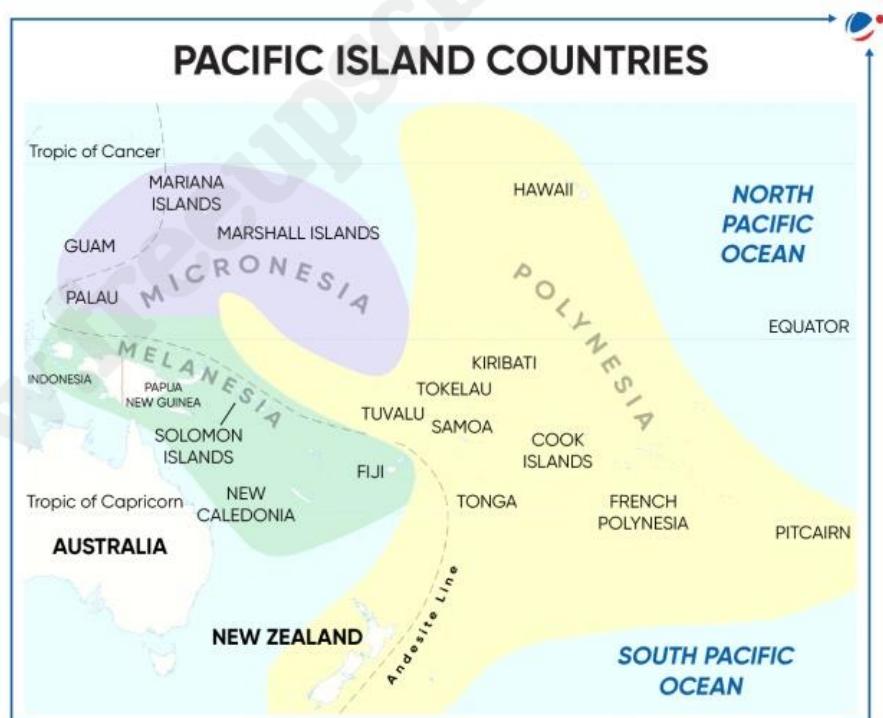
### 1.13.1. INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)

- IORA Council of Foreign Ministers (CoM) meeting held in Colombo (Sri Lanka).
- About IORA**
  - Genesis:** Inter-governmental organisation established in 1997, based on vision of Nelson Mandela.
  - Aim:** To strengthen regional cooperation and sustainable development within Indian Ocean region (IOR).
  - Members:** 23 members(including India).
  - CoM which meets annually is apex body.**
  - Other Key Information**
    - ✓ Represents 1/3rd of world's population
    - ✓ Accounts for 80% of global oil trade
    - ✓ Produces ~\$1 trillion in goods and services
    - ✓ Intra-IORA trade is around \$800 billion.
    - ✓ IORA Chairship was transferred from Bangladesh to Sri Lanka for 2023-2025.
    - ✓ **India will take chairship during 2025-2027.**



### 1.13.2. FORUM FOR INDIA-PACIFIC ISLANDS COOPERATION (FIPIC)

- Third Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit held at Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. India announced a **12-point development plan** for the Pacific Island nations.
- About Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC)**
  - Genesis:** It was launched in 2014.
  - Members:** It includes 14 island countries - Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.



- **Others key Information:**
  - ✓ Pacific Islands consists of the three major groups of islands: Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.
  - ✓ PICs have **large Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)** are sources of natural and mineral resources like LNG.
  - ✓ India is recently considering expanding International Solar Alliance's **STAR-C initiative to Pacific Island countries**.
  - ✓ **Solar Technology Application Resource Centre (STAR C) Initiative** is a project to build STAR centres which will act as **hubs of technology, knowledge, and expertise on solar energy**.
  - ✓ It is **jointly implemented by ISA and UNIDO**.

### 1.13.3. EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

- India participated at the 8th Eastern Economic Forum in the Russian port city of Vladivostok.
- The EEF was **established in 2015 to encourage foreign investments in the Russia's Far East (RFE) region**
- **About Russia's Far East (RFE) Region:**
  - Far Eastern Federal District (FEFD) is the **easternmost part of Russia and borders the Pacific and the Arctic ocean**, and five countries (China, Japan, Mongolia, the United States and the North Korea).
  - The region **encompasses 1/3rd of Russia's territory** and is rich with natural resources such as fish, oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds, coal and other minerals.
- **China is the biggest investor in the region** followed by South Korea and Japan.

### 1.13.4. PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC

- Recently, Foreign Ministers Meeting of Partners in the Blue Pacific initiative was held.
- PBP is a 5-nation **informal mechanism** to support Pacific islands and to boost **diplomatic, economic ties** in the region.
- **It was announced by US, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Japan in 2022.**

### 1.13.5. G77

- India reiterated its commitment towards **Global South at G77 Plus China Summit in Cuba**.
  - Group of 77 (G-77) is called G77 Plus China because while China works closely with the group, it does not officially consider itself a full member.
- **About Group of 77 (G77)**
  - **Genesis: Established in 1964** by seventy-seven developing countries.
  - **Aim:** Provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity within the United Nations system.
    - ✓ It also promotes South-South cooperation for development.
  - **Members:** 134 members (**including India**)
- **Other Key Information:** Largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations.

### 1.13.6. G24

- G24, a group of developing nations, has backed the recommendations of the independent expert group on reform of multilateral development banks.
- **About G24**
  - **Genesis:** Established in 1971 by the Group of 77 (G-77) as one of its Chapters, and formally created in 1972.
  - **About:** The Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development (G-24) coordinates the position of developing countries on monetary and development issues in the deliberations and decisions of the Bretton Woods Institutions.

- **Members:** 28 members (**including India**) plus China (special invitee).
- **Secretariat:** Washington D.C. in the IMF Headquarters.

### 1.13.7. I2U2

- India, Israel, the UAE under the I2U2 group have announced a new joint space venture aimed at creating a unique space-based tool for policymakers, institutions, and entrepreneurs.
- **About I2U2 initiative**
  - It is a **grouping of India, Israel, USA and UAE**.
  - It was **first mentioned in 2021**, following the Abraham Accords between Israel and UAE, to deal with issues concerning maritime security, infrastructure, and transport in region.
- **Objective:** It was established as an international forum to discuss common areas of mutual interest, strengthen economic partnership in trade and investment.

### 1.13.8. AUKUS

- AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, and United States) group has signed **agreement to jointly operate Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability (DARC)**.
  - DARC will enhance collective space domain awareness.
- **About AUKUS**
  - It is a **trilateral security partnership, launched in 2021**.
  - It is intended **to strengthen the ability of each government to support security and defense interests** (such as providing nuclear submarine to Australia).
  - It will promote deeper information sharing and technology sharing; and foster deeper integration etc.

### 1.13.9. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

- India and IAEA agreed to cooperate on extending nuclear technology applications in the Global South.
- **About IAEA**
  - IAEA is the **world's central intergovernmental forum** for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field.
  - **India has been a founding member** of the IAEA since 1957.
  - **HQ:** Vienna, Austria
  - To verify that nuclear materials are used solely for peaceful purposes, the IAEA has developed a system of '**Safeguards Agreements**'.
  - India and the IAEA signed an **Agreement for Application of Safeguards to Civilian Nuclear facilities** in India in 2009.

### 1.13.10. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

- IOM launches project **PRAYAS**.
  - **Promoting Regular Assisted Migration for Youth and Skilled Professionals (PRAYAS)**, was launched in **partnership with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for the year 2023-24**.
  - **Objective:** To facilitating **safe, orderly, and regular migration** for aspiring Indian migrant workers and students in collaboration with MEA, NITI Aayog, and State Governments.
- **About IOM**
  - **It was established in 1951**, it is leading **intergovernmental organization** in the **field of migration**.
  - **IOM is part of the United Nations system**, as a related organization.
  - **It has 175 member states (including India)**.
  - It works to help ensure the **orderly and humane management of migration** to promote international cooperation on migration issue.

### **1.13.11. ORGANIZATION OF THE PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC)**

- Recently, **Angola withdrew from OPEC**.
- **About OPEC**
  - **HQ:** Vienna, Austria.
  - **About:** OPEC is a **permanent intergovernmental organization** that coordinates and unifies the petroleum policies of its Member Countries.
  - **Objective:** To **co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies** among Member Countries, to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers and, ensure efficient, economic, and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations.
  - **Members (12):** Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, and Venezuela.
  - **Other key information:** OPEC uses **Brent Crude** as a benchmark for quality.
- Recently, **OPEC and OPEC+ reached a deal** to reduce overall production targets.
  - OPEC+, created in 2016, refers to group of **22 oil-producing countries**.
  - **Members:** All OPEC members and **10 other oil-producing countries** (Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, South Sudan and Sudan).

### **1.13.12. INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM**

- International Transport Forum (ITF) released **Transport Outlook 2023** report at Leipzig Transport Summit
- The Report **examines the impacts of different policy measures on global transport demand and carbon dioxide emissions** to 2050.
- **About International Transport Forum**
  - It is an **intergovernmental organization**.
  - It acts as a **think tank for transport policy and organizes the Annual Summit of transport ministers**.
  - The ITF is the **only global body that covers all transport modes**.
  - It is **politically autonomous and administratively integrated** with the OECD.
  - **Members:** 66 member countries (including India).

### **1.13.13. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF LEGAL METROLOGY (OILM) CERTIFICATE**

- India has become an **OIML certificate-issuing authority**.
- **OIML-Certificate system** is a system for issuing, registering, and using OIML certificates, and their **associated test** or reports for **measuring instruments e.g., thermometers, clinical thermometers, etc.**
- **Significance:** **increase in exports**, earning of foreign exchange, and generation of employment.
- **OILM was Established in 1955** and headquartered in Paris.
  - It develops **model regulations, standards**, and related documents for use by legal metrology authorities and industry.
  - India became a member in 1956.

### **1.13.14. PARIS CLUB**

- Sri Lanka reaches agreement with India and Paris Club on debt treatment.
- **About Paris Club**
  - **Genesis:** Its origin dates back to 1956 when Argentina agreed to meet its public creditors in Paris.
  - **About:** Informal group of mostly western creditor countries. All 22 are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) group.
  - **Objective:** To find sustainable debt-relief solutions for countries that are unable to repay their bilateral loans.
  - **Other key information:** **India and China are not its members**. India acts as an ad hoc participant.

### **1.13.15. TAX INSPECTORS WITHOUT BORDERS (TIWB)**

- TIWB launched a programme in **Saint Lucia** and India has been **chosen as the Partner Administration**.
  - India will provide **Tax Experts for this program**.
- **About TIWB programme:**
  - It is a **joint initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.
  - It facilitates **the transfer of tax audit knowledge and skills to developing country tax administrations** using a practical, "learning by doing" approach.

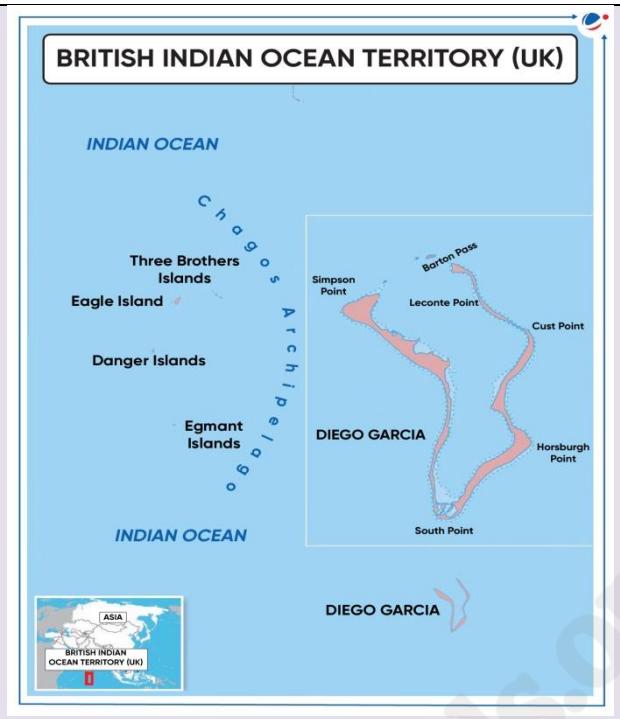
## 2. PLACES IN NEWS

### 2.1. INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD



Sr. No.	Place	Detailed Map
1.	<b>Colombo Port, Sri Lanka</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> China's state-owned firm China Merchants Group is building a <b>large logistics complex</b> at Sri Lanka's <b>Colombo Port</b>.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colombo port is the <b>largest and busiest port</b> in Sri Lanka.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Important ports in Sri Lanka</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major Ports: Colombo, Trincomalee, Galle, Hambantota</li> <li>Minor Ports: Kankesanthurai, Oluvil, Point Pedro</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Katchatheevu</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Tamil Nadu Chief Minister revived the debate over Katchatheevu, by reiterating the demand for retrieval from Sri Lanka.</li> <li><b>About Katchatheevu</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Katchatheevu is an <b>uninhabited speck</b>, between India and Sri Lanka <b>in the Palk Strait</b>.</li> <li>It lies <b>northeast of Rameswaram</b> (India) and <b>southwest of Jaffna</b> (Sri Lanka).</li> <li>It is <b>important to the fisherfolks</b> of the two countries who have been <b>traditionally using the islet for fishing</b>.</li> <li>In 1974, as part of '<b>Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime agreement</b>', India <b>ceded Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Kachchatheevu Island</p> <p>Rameswaram</p> <p>Mannar Island</p> <p>Gulf of Mannar</p> <p>INDIA</p> <p>SRI LANKA</p>
3.	<b>Siang River</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India to Counter China's dam with Barrage in Siang River.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India proposed to <b>construct a barrage</b> on <b>Siang River</b> to save it from <b>hazards posed by Chinese dam</b> being built in Tibet region.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>About Siang river</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Siang River</b>, known as Yarlung Tsangpo in China, is <b>principal constituent</b> river of Brahmaputra.</li> <li>It enters <b>Arunachal Pradesh</b> after the <b>Great Bend</b> (curving around Namcha Barwa peak) joins <b>Lohit and Dibang</b> to form Brahmaputra, and <b>empties</b> into Bay of <b>Bengal</b> via Assam and Bangladesh.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Zangmu dam (510 MW)</p> <p>Yarlung Tsangpo</p> <p>TIBET AUTONOMOUS REGION</p> <p>CHINA</p> <p>Great Bend</p> <p>Medog project: Proposed Chinese dam could generate up to 60 GW of electricity, nearly triple that of Three Gorges Dam in central China - world's biggest</p> <p>ARUNACHAL PRADESH</p> <p>SIANG RIVER: India could respond by building 10GW dam in Arunachal Pradesh</p> <p>BHUTAN</p> <p>INDIA</p> <p>Guwahati</p> <p>BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER</p> <p>MYANMAR</p>

4.	<p><b>British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Context:</b> 32 Indian fishermen have been detained by the British Navy for trespassing into the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) while fishing in the high seas.</li> <li>• <b>About BIOT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ BIOT is the <b>overseas territory of the United Kingdom in the central Indian Ocean</b>, established in 1965.</li> <li>◦ Since 1976 it has been coterminous with the Chagos Archipelago.</li> <li>◦ It <b>constitutes a semicircular group:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ comprising the Salomon Islands, Peros Banhos atoll, Nelsons Island, the Three Brothers Islands, the Eagle Islands, Danger Island, the Egmont Islands, and Diego Garcia atoll.</li> <li>✓ Diego Garcia Atoll, is the largest and southernmost landmass in the group and the location of a significant U.S. military base.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## 2.2. SOUTH EAST ASIA

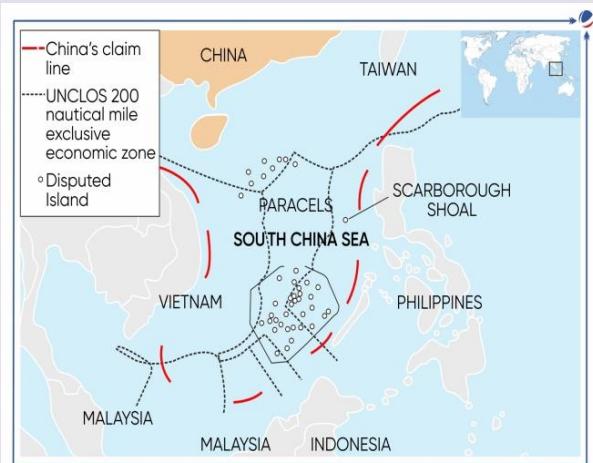


Sr. No.	Place	Detailed Map
1.	<b>Cambodia (Capital: Phnom Penh)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> INS Delhi and INS Satpura made a port-call at Sihanoukville in Cambodia.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> Thailand (west and northwest), Laos (northeast), Vietnam (east and southeast)</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Gulf of Thailand (southwest).</li> <li><b>Other Facts:</b> Home to famous World Heritage Site: Angkor Wat, largest religious monument in world.</li> </ul>	
2.	<b>Lao PDR or Laos (Capital: Vientiane)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is now the <b>second country after Bangladesh to eliminate lymphatic filariasis (LF) in 2023.</b></li> <li>Five MoUs were signed between India &amp; Laos for the implementation of five Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in the fields of education, health, water facility and IT.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> China(north), Vietnam (northeast and east), Cambodia (south), Thailand (west), and Myanmar(northwest).</li> </ul>	
3.	<b>Vietnam (Capital: Hanoi)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Recently India and Vietnam reiterated commitment to deepen strategic partnership.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> China (North), Laos and Cambodia (West)</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> The South China Sea (East and South).</li> </ul>	

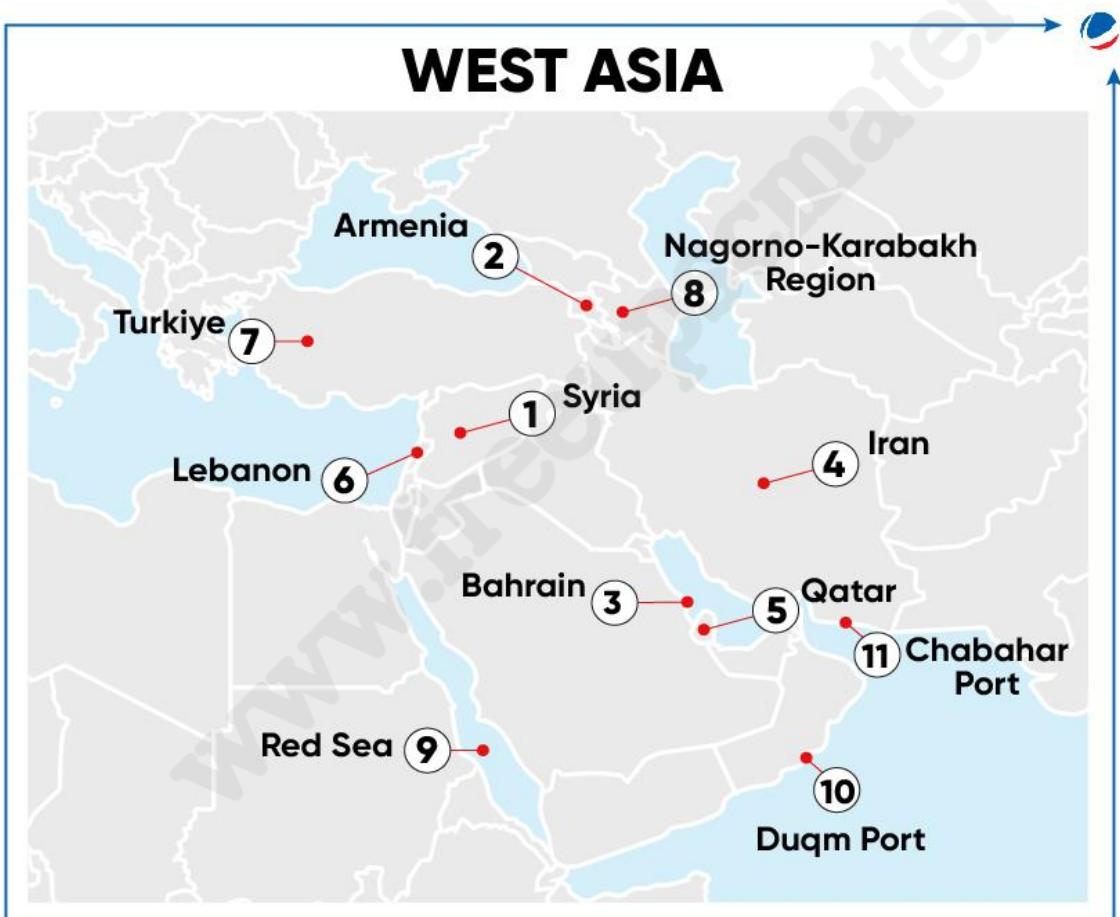
4.

#### South China Sea

- Context:** Philippines has removed a floating barrier installed by China in the Scarborough Shoal which blocked Philippines fishing boats from entering a contested area in the South China Sea.
- Land Borders:**
  - The Sea lies south of the Mainland China.
  - Its **littoral states** include the countries of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.
- Other Facts:** China claims around 90% of the region as its EEZ based on the **Nine-dash lines**, which it introduced in 1947 through historical claims over the Paracel and Spratly Islands in the region.
  - Till 1952, it was Eleven dash lines and the Communist China gave up its claim on Gulf of Tonkin.



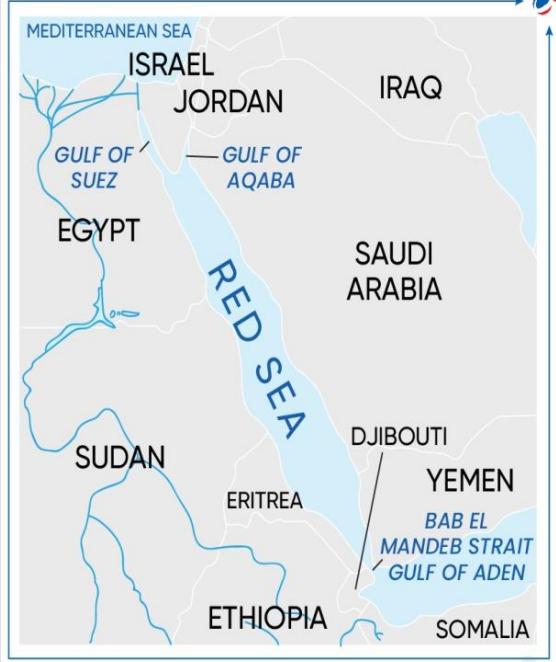
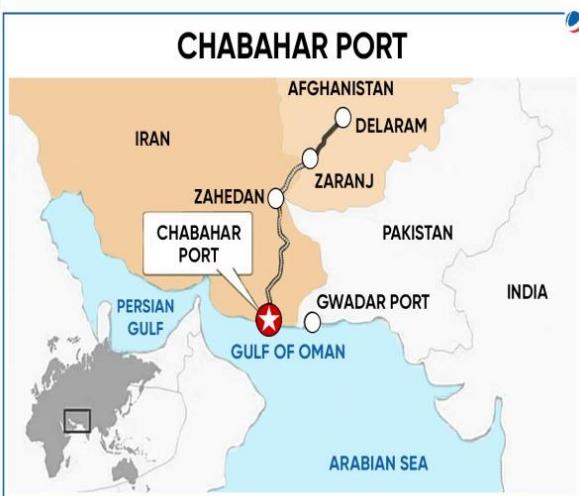
### 2.3. WEST ASIA



Sr. No.	Place	Detailed Map
1.	<p><b>Syria (Capital: Damascus)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Turkey steps up strikes on militants as <b>conflict escalates in Syria</b>.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turkey (north), Iraq (east and southeast), Jordan (south), Lebanon and Israel (southwest).</li> <li>Its area includes territory in the <b>Golan Heights</b> that has been occupied by <b>Israel since 1967</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Mediterranean Sea</li> </ul>	
2.	<p><b>Armenia (Capital: Yerevan)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Union Cabinet approved the MoU with Armenia on Cooperation in the <b>field of sharing successful Digital Solutions</b> implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (a disputed territory), Turkey, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (an exclave of Azerbaijan), Georgia, and Iran.</li> <li><b>Other fact:</b> Landlocked country of Transcaucasia (populated region to the south of the Caucasus Mountains).</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Bahrain (Capital: Manama)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> The Kingdom of Bahrain has recalled its ambassador from Israel.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> Qatar and Saudi Arabia</li> <li><b>Water body:</b> Persian Gulf</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> Bahrain is an archipelago consisting of <b>Bahrain Island</b> and some 30 smaller islands.</li> </ul>	

4.	<p><b>Iran (Capital: Tehran)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iran has decided to unilaterally cancel visa requirements for Indian visitors.</li> <li>Iran embassy in Riyadh set to reopen after seven year.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, and Caspian Sea (north), Pakistan and Afghanistan (east), Turkey and Iraq (west).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Persian Gulf (West), Caspian Sea(north) and Gulf of Oman (south).</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Qatar (Capital: Doha)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> UN holds crucial Afghanistan talks in Qatar, without the Taliban.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Persian Gulf.</li> <li><b>Other Facts:</b> There are no permanent bodies of freshwater in the country.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Lebanon (Capital: Beirut)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Lebanon is likely to be placed on a “grey list” of FATF.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> Syria and Israel.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Mediterranean Sea</li> </ul>	

7.	<p><b>Turkiye (Capital: Ankara)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> President of Turkey was re-elected to the post of President.</li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> Georgia and Armenia (northeast), Azerbaijan and Iran (east), Iraq and Syria (southeast), and by Greece and Bulgaria (northwest).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Black Sea (north), Mediterranean Sea and Aegean Sea (southwest and west).</li> </ul>	 <p>A map of the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea region. Turkey is highlighted in orange and labeled 'TURKIYE' with its capital 'ANKARA' marked by a star. Land borders are shown with white lines: Georgia to the northeast, Armenia to the east, Azerbaijan to the southeast, Iran to the south, Iraq to the southwest, and Syria to the west. Bulgaria to the northwest and Greece to the west are also shown. The Black Sea is to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the southwest, and the Aegean Sea to the west. Cyprus is located in the Mediterranean Sea to the south. Other countries like Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq are also labeled.</p>
8.	<p><b>Nagorno-Karabakh Region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India supports OSCE Minsk Group for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization with 57 participating states.</li> <li>The Minsk Group was created in 1994 to address the dispute and is co-chaired by the United States, France, and Russia.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land Borders:</b> It is a landlocked mountainous area in South Caucasus.</li> <li><b>Other Facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The region is referred to as Artsakh by Armenians and was claimed by both Azerbaijan and Armenia after the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917.</li> <li>The territory is recognised as part of Azerbaijan, but its inhabitants are predominantly ethnic Armenians.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 <p>A map showing the Nagorno-Karabakh region and surrounding countries. The region itself is shaded brown and labeled 'NAGORNO-KARABAKH'. To the west is Armenia, with 'ARMENIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORIES SURROUNDING NAGORNO-KARABAKH' also shaded brown. To the east is Azerbaijan, with 'AZERBAIJAN CONTROLLED TERRITORIES' shaded yellow. To the south is Turkey, and to the west is Georgia. A small exclave of Azerbaijan, 'NAKHCHIVAN (AZERBAIJAN)', is also shown, shaded yellow. The Black Sea is to the north. The map uses a color-coded system to distinguish between Armenian-controlled areas (brown), Azerbaijani-controlled areas (yellow), and neutral or disputed areas (light gray).</p>

9.	<p><b>Red Sea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US have deployed new forces and warships to Red Sea.</li> <li><b>India-bound cargo ship hijacked by Houthi rebels in Red Sea.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land Borders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is an <b>inlet of Indian Ocean between Africa and Asia.</b></li> <li>Boundary countries are Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Bab el Mandeb strait and Gulf of Aden.</li> <li><b>Other Facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupies a <b>part of Great Rift Valley</b> (Afro-Arabian Rift Valley).</li> <li>Lies in a fault depression that separates two great blocks of Earth's crust—Arabia and North Africa.</li> <li><b>One of the saltiest bodies</b> of water in world.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
10.	<p><b>Duqm Port</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India's National Security Advisor visited port of Duqm in Oman recently.</li> <li><b>Other Facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>India in 2018 secured access Duqm for military use and logistical support.</b></li> <li>Port can also provide India an easy access to Red Sea via the Gulf of Aden.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
11.	<p><b>Chabahar Port</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> First meeting of India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Chabahar port took place in Mumbai.</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2016, India signed a tripartite agreement with Iran and Afghanistan to develop the <b>Shahid Beheshti Terminal</b> at Chabahar.</li> <li>It is considered a <b>crucial gateway</b> that would enable India to bypass Pakistan and access Afghanistan, and ultimately Central Asia.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## 2.4. AMERICAS



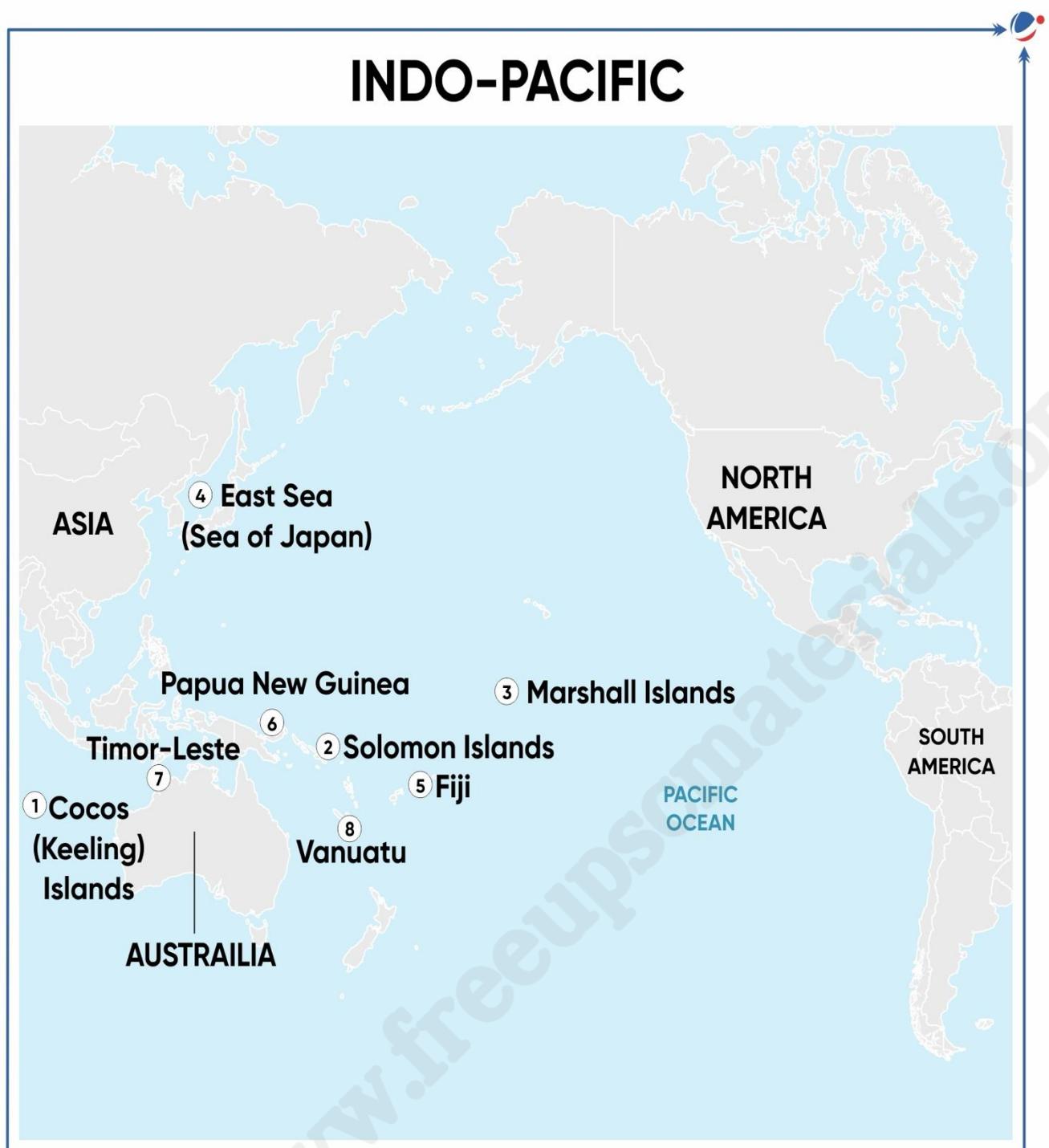
Sr. No.	Place	Detailed Map
1.	<p><b>Panama Canal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Shipping disruptions occurred in a drought hit Panama Canal.</li> <li><b>About Panama Canal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panama Canal is a <b>constructed waterway</b> that connects the <b>Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans</b>.</li> <li>✓ It <b>connects nearly 2,000 ports in 170 countries</b>.</li> <li>Panama is an <b>isthmus</b> connecting North and South America.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
2.	<p><b>Panama (Capital: Panama City)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India and Panama signed MoU on Electoral Cooperation.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Costa Rica and Colombia</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Caribbean Sea (an extension of the Atlantic Ocean) to north and Pacific Ocean to south.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Suriname (Capital: Paramaribo)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indian President was conferred with the <b>highest civilian honour of Suriname</b> 'Grand Order of the Chain of the Yellow Star' on the occasion of 150th anniversary of the arrival of Indians in Suriname.</li> <li>✓ In the year 1873, the first group of 399 Indian Indentured Labours reached Suriname, on board the ship Lalla Rookh.</li> <li>MoU signed between India and Suriname <b>for Recognition of Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP)</b> in Suriname.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> French Guiana (east), Brazil (south), and Guyana (west).</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Atlantic Ocean.</li> <li><b>Other fact:</b> It is <b>one of the top producers of Bauxite</b> in the world.</li> </ul>	
4.	<p><b>Cuba (Capital: Havana)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> US confirmed that China has had a spy base in Cuba since at least 2019.</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> <b>Atlantic Ocean</b> (north and east), <b>Gulf of Mexico</b> (west), and <b>Caribbean Sea</b> (south).</li> <li><b>Other fact:</b> Cuba, country of the West Indies, the <b>largest single island of the archipelago</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>A map of the Caribbean region. It shows the United States to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, and the Gulf of Mexico to the west. Cuba is highlighted in orange and labeled 'CUBA'. To its north are The Bahamas and the Atlantic Ocean. To its west is the Gulf of Mexico. To its south are Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Other countries shown include Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and Nicaragua.</p>
5.	<p><b>Belize (Capital: Belmopan)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> World Health Organization (WHO) has certified Belize as malaria-free.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Mexico (north), Guatemala (west and south)</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Caribbean Sea (east).</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Situated south of Yucatán Peninsula.</li> <li>Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>A map of Central America. It shows the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Caribbean Sea to the east. Belize is highlighted in orange and labeled 'BELIZE'. To its north is Mexico and to its south are Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. To its east are Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia. Other countries shown include the United States (to the north) and the Dominican Republic (to the east).</p>
6.	<p><b>Argentina (Capital: Buenos Aires)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Argentina signs <b>letter of intent with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)</b> to buy helicopters.</li> <li>India signs <b>Agreement for Lithium Exploration and Mining Project</b> in Argentina.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Chile (south and west), Bolivia and Paraguay (north), and Brazil, Uruguay (east)</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Atlantic Ocean (east)</li> </ul>	<p>A map of South America. It shows the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Argentina is highlighted in orange and labeled 'ARGENTINA'. To its north are Chile, Bolivia, and Paraguay. To its south is Uruguay. To its east is Brazil. Other countries shown include Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil.</p>

7.	<p><b>Ecuador (Capital: Quito)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Emergency has been imposed due to the assassination of a political leader.</li> <li><b>Political Boundaries:</b> Colombia (north), Peru (east and south)</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Pacific Ocean (west).</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Galapagos Islands come under its jurisdiction.</li> <li>Occupies part of the Amazon basin and is situated on the Equator.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Mexico (Capital: Mexico City)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Mexico's Supreme Court ruled that state laws prohibiting abortion are unconstitutional and violate women's rights.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> USA (North), and Guatemala and Belize (Southeast).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Pacific Ocean (West and South), Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea (East)</li> <li><b>Other Facts :</b> One of the countries along the Ring of Fire.</li> </ul>	
9.	<p><b>Trinidad and Tobago (Capital: Port of Spain)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India Signs MoU with Trinidad and Tobago on sharing India Stack(<b>set of open APIs</b> (Application Program Interface) <b>and digital public goods</b>).</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> island country consisting of two main islands—Trinidad and Tobago—and several smaller islands.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Caribbean Sea and separated from Venezuela by the Gulf of Paria.</li> </ul>	

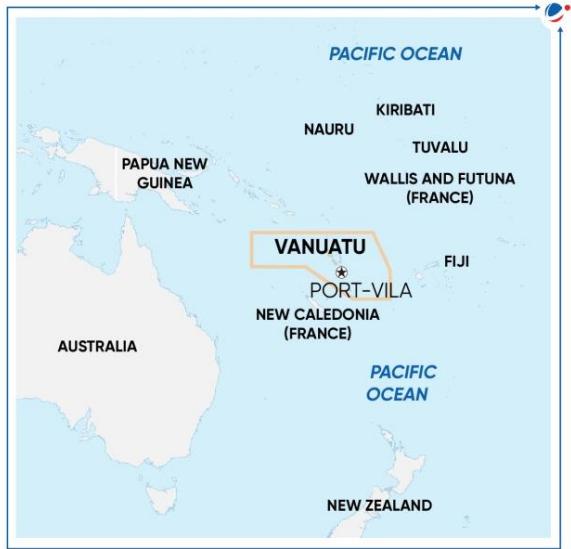
10.	<p><b>Guyana (Capital: Georgetown)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Venezuela and Guyana saw tensions over a border dispute around the <b>Esequibo river</b>, and an offshore area.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Suriname (east), Brazil (south), and Venezuela (west).</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Atlantic Ocean (north)</li> </ul>	
11.	<p><b>Venezuela (Capital: Caracas)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India set to resume import of oil from <b>Venezuela</b> after 3 years as US sanctions on Caracas ease.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Guyana, Brazil, and Colombia.</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> Home to Lake Maracaibo (largest lake in South America).</li> </ul>	

## 2.5. INDO PACIFIC REGION



Sr. No.	Place	Detailed Map
1.	<p><b>Cocos (Keeling) Islands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Indian Navy aircraft's visited Cocos Islands.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Cocos islands are <b>external territory of Australia</b> in the eastern Indian Ocean and is <b>close to strategic maritime choke points</b>.</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It comprises <b>two coral atolls</b> made up of <b>27 smaller islands</b>.</li> <li>It can be an <b>important base for refuelling and operational turnaround</b> as India aims to increase its military-to-military engagement, deepening interoperability in region.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
2.	<p><b>Solomon Islands (Capital: Honiara)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Recently China and Solomon Islands signed diplomatic agreements.</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Pacific Ocean</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> It is part of volcanic arc extending from extending from Papua New Guinea to Vanuatu.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Marshall Islands (Capital: Majuro)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> United States signed a new 20-year agreement on <b>economic assistance to the Marshall Islands</b>.</li> <li><b>Maritime borders:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Bordering nations:</b> Wake Island (north), Kiribati and Nauru (south), and the Federated States of Micronesia (west).</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Pacific Ocean</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Situated in two, almost-parallel island chains - <b>the Ratak (Sunrise) group and the Ralik (Sunset) group</b>.</li> <li>Home to <b>world's largest shark sanctuary</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

4.	<p><b>East Sea (Sea of Japan)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> China and Russia will start joint air and sea drill (<b>Northern/Interaction-2023</b>) in Sea of Japan i.e., East Sea.</li> <li><b>About East Sea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marginal sea of western Pacific Ocean.</li> <li>Bounded by Japan and Sakhalin Island (east) and Russia and Korea on Asian mainland (west).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Fiji (Capital: Suva)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Fiji reconsiders security ties with China amid Pacific tensions.</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Koro Sea</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tropic of Capricorn passes through it.</li> <li>The Fiji Islands are largely the product of volcanic action, sedimentary deposit, and formations of coral.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Papua New Guinea (Capital: Port Moresby)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM attended Forum for India Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) summit in Papua New Guinea.</li> <li>Also, recently \$1 million relief assistance was announced by India for the volcanic eruption at Mount Ulawun.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Maritime borders:</b> Eastern half of New Guinea (world's second largest island); Bismarck Archipelago; Bougainville and Buka (part of Solomon Islands chain) and other small islands.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Timor-Leste (Capital: Dili)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India has announced the opening of an embassy in Dili.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Western Timor (part of the Indonesian province, in southwest).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Timor Sea (southeast), the Wetar Strait (north), the Ombai Strait (northwest).</li> </ul>	

8.	<p><b>Vanuatu (Capital: Port-Vila)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted a resolution proposed by Vanuatu to seek an opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on legal obligations for nations to protect climate systems and people affected by climate change.</li> <li><b>Land border:</b> Australia(east)</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Pacific Ocean</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> It consists of a chain of 13 principal and many smaller islands (<b>Melanesian archipelago</b>).</li> </ul>	 <p>A map of the Pacific Ocean region. Vanuatu is highlighted with an orange box and a star indicating its capital, Port-Vila. Other labeled countries include Papua New Guinea, Australia, Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna (France), Fiji, New Caledonia (France), and New Zealand. The Pacific Ocean is labeled on both sides of the map.</p>
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## 2.6. EUROPE



Sr. No.	Place	Detailed Map
1.	<p><b>Italy (Capital: Rome)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India and Italy signed pact to deepen defence cooperation.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea (northeast), Ionian Sea (southeast), Tyrrhenian Sea (southwest), and Ligurian Sea (northwest).</li> </ul>	 <p>A detailed map of Italy and surrounding regions. Italy is shown in light blue, bordered by France to the west, Switzerland and Austria to the north, and Slovenia to the northeast. The map also shows the Adriatic Sea to the east, the Ionian Sea to the southeast, the Tyrrhenian Sea to the southwest, and the Ligurian Sea to the northwest. Major cities like Rome and Naples are marked. To the south are Sicily and Malta. To the west are Corsica and Sardinia. To the east are Greece, Albania, and Montenegro. The Mediterranean Sea is to the southeast. The map includes labels for Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.</p>
2.	<p><b>Malta (Capital: Valletta)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Indian Navy extended help to MV Ruen, a ship of Malta hijacked in Arabian Sea.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Mediterranean Sea.</li> <li><b>Other fact:</b> Island comprises three main islands—Malta (largest), Gozo, Comino.</li> </ul>	 <p>A detailed map of the Mediterranean Sea region. It highlights the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the east. Malta is shown as a small island group in the center, with Valletta marked as the capital. Other countries shown include Italy, France (Corsica), Spain (Sardinia), and Greece. The map also includes labels for Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. The Mediterranean Sea is to the east, and the Tyrrhenian Sea is to the west.</p>
3.	<p><b>Slovenia (Capital: Ljubljana)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> 23rd Meeting (COP23) of <b>Barcelona Convention</b> took place in Slovenia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Convention</b> provides for protection of the <b>Mediterranean Sea</b> against <b>pollution</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Italy (West), Austria (North), Croatia (South) and Hungary (North East).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Adriatic Sea.</li> </ul>	 <p>A detailed map of Central Europe and the Balkans. Slovenia is shown in light blue, bordered by Italy to the west, Austria to the north, Croatia to the south, and Hungary to the northeast. The Adriatic Sea is to the west. The map also shows Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Croatia. The Mediterranean Sea is to the south. The map includes labels for Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.</p>

4.	<p><b>Lithuania (Capital: Vilnius)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> India and Lithuania held a meeting to strengthen maritime bilateral relations.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Latvia(north), Belarus(east and south), Poland and the detached Russian oblast of Kaliningrad (southwest).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It also shares a <b>maritime border with Sweden</b> to the west.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Baltic Sea(west).</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the largest of the three Baltic states (<b>other two Estonia, and Latvia</b>).</li> <li>Lithuanian is considered the oldest surviving Indo-European language in the world.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Cyprus (Capital: Nicosia)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Cyprus wins cheese trademark case against Indian company.</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Mediterranean Sea</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> It is the third large island in Mediterranean Sea after Sicily and Sardinia.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Orkney Islands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Orkney Islands has proposed its intent to split from the U.K. and become a self-governing territory of Norway.</li> <li><b>About Orkney Islands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island is <b>situated on the North-Eastern coast of Scotland</b>.</li> <li>It is an <b>archipelago of nearly 70 islands</b>, of which only 20 are inhabited.</li> <li>It <b>was under Norwegian and Danish rule until the late 15th century</b>, after which it came under Scotland.</li> <li>It houses <b>four UNESCO world heritage sites</b>: Skara Brae, Ring of Brodgar, Standing Stones of Stenness, and Maeshowe chambered tomb.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

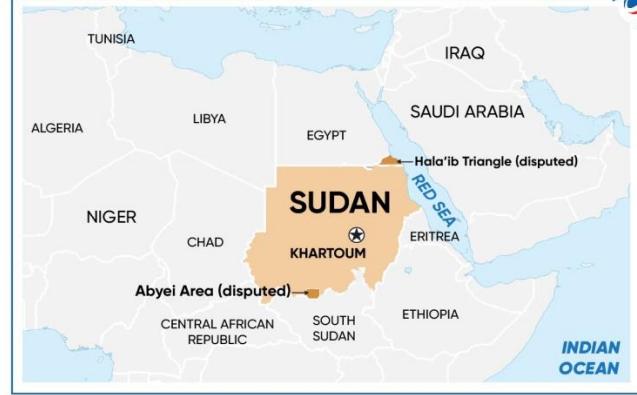
## 2.7. AFRICA



Sr. No.	Place	Detailed Map
1.	<p><b>Sahel Region:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Three Sahel nations-Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger- have signed a defence pact to cooperate against threats of armed rebellion or external aggression.</li> <li><b>About Sahel Region</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a semi-arid region of western and north-central Africa that stretches from Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea along Sahara desert's southern rim.</li> <li><b>Countries:</b> Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.</li> <li>It forms a transitional zone between Sahara desert to the north and savannas to the south.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>SAHEL REGION</b></p>
2.	<p><b>Tanzania (Capital: Dodoma)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> IIT Madras establishes first international campus in Tanzania's Zanzibar.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Uganda, and Kenya (north), Mozambique and Zambia (south and southwest), and Burundi, and Rwanda (west).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Indian Ocean, Lake Tanganyika (west), Lake Victoria (north), and Lake Malawi (aka Lake Nyasa) and River Congo.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TANZANIA</b></p>
3.	<p><b>Senegal (Capital: Dakar)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Recently witnessed clashes.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Mali (east); Guinea and Guinea-Bissau (south)</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Sénégal River (north and northeast), Atlantic Ocean (west).</li> <li><b>Other fact:</b> It lies in depression known as Senegal-Mauritanian Basin.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SENEGAL</b></p>

4.	<p><b>Comoros (Capital: Moroni)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> As part of Indian Navy's long-range deployment, INS Trishul visited port Anjouan, Comoros.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies: Indian Ocean</b></li> <li><b>Other Facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three of Comoro Islands (Grande Comore, Mohéli, Anjouan) in Indian Ocean, off the coast of East Africa.</li> <li>Fourth island Mayotte, is claimed by country of Comoros but administered by France.</li> <li>Islands emerged as a result of volcanic activity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Ethiopia (Capital: Addis Ababa)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethiopia will issue up to five banking licenses to foreign investors in next five years.</li> <li>Ethiopia's government has declared a state of emergency in its second-largest region, Amhara.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Eritrea (north), Djibouti (northeast), Somalia (east), Kenya (south), South Sudan and Sudan (west).</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlocked country on Horn of Africa.</li> <li>Largest and most populated country in Horn of Africa.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Nigeria (Capital: Abuja)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian Defence Minister attended the swearing in ceremony of Nigerian President.</li> <li>Nigeria has declared a State of Emergency over Food Security.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Niger (north), Chad and Cameroon (east), Benin (west).</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Gulf of Guinea</li> <li><b>Other fact:</b> Often called as Giant of Africa.</li> </ul>	

7.	<p><b>Guinea-Bissau (Capital: Bissau)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Guinea-Bissau exports almost the entire cashew crop (around 98 percent) to India for processing.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senegal (north), Guinea (east and south).</li> <li>It includes Bijagós (Bissagos) archipelago and other islands that lie off the coast.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Atlantic Ocean</li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Mali (Capital: Bamako)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> UN Mission backs constitutional referendum in Mali.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Algeria (north), Niger and Burkina Faso (east), Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea (south), and Senegal and Mauritania (west).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> River Niger</li> </ul>	
9.	<p><b>Mozambique (Capital: Maputo)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contexts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INS Sunayna visited Beira, Mozambique.</li> <li>The Cabo Delgado gasfield in Mozambique, in which Indian energy majors (ONGC Videsh, BPCL, Oil India Ltd) hold 30% stake, is expected to resume production.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Zambezi river, Limpopo river, Ruvuma river and Lake Malawi (Nyasa).</li> </ul>	

10.	<p><b>Sudan (Capital: Khartoum)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Heavy fighting raged across Khartoum.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Red Sea.</li> </ul>	
11.	<p><b>Niger (Capital: Niamey)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Military seized power in Niger.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Algeria (northwest), Libya (northeast), Chad (east), Nigeria and Benin (south), Burkina faso and Mali (west).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Niger River (3rd-longest river in Africa after the Nile and Congo rivers).</li> </ul>	
12.	<p><b>Malawi (Capital: Lilongwe)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Parliamentary delegation from Malawi is visited India.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Tanzania (north), Lake Malawi (east), Mozambique (east and south), and Zambia (west).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Lake Malawi (aka Lake Nyasa in Tanzania) (largest), Lake Chilwa.</li> </ul>	
13.	<p><b>Libya (Capital: Tripoli)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Clashes between two leading armed groups in Tripoli, only civilian airport, have led to its closure.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Egypt (east), Sudan (southeast), Niger and Chad (south), and Tunisia and Algeria (west).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Mediterranean Sea</li> <li><b>Other Facts:</b> Ghibli - a hot arid wind blows from south over entire country.</li> </ul>	

14.	<p><b>Gabon(capital-Libreville)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Gabon military officers declare coup after president wins disputed election.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and the Republic of the Congo.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Atlantic Ocean (west)</li> <li><b>Other Facts :</b> It is a country at the Equator.</li> </ul>	
15.	<p><b>Burkina Faso(Capital: Ouagadougou)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Burkina Faso orders the French embassy's defense attache to leave.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Mali(north and west), Niger(northeast), Benin(southeast), and Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo(south).</li> </ul>	
16.	<p><b>Zambia (Capital: Lusaka)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Indian Defence Secretary held a meeting with Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Zambia.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania and DRC.</li> </ul>	
17.	<p><b>Benin (Capital: Porto-Novo)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> MEA said India is Benin's largest trade partner and significant investor.</li> <li><b>Land border:</b> Burkina Faso (northwest), Nigeria (east), Togo (west), Niger (North).</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Niger River , Atlantic Ocean</li> </ul>	

18.	<p><b>Uganda (Capital: Kampala)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Minister of External Affairs visited Uganda.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> South Sudan (north), Kenya (east), Tanzania and Rwanda (south), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (west).</li> <li><b>Water bodies:</b> Lake Victoria</li> </ul>	
19.	<p><b>Zimbabwe (Capital: Harare)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Context:</b> Current President was re-elected in the recently concluded election.</li> <li><b>Land borders:</b> Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, and South Africa.</li> <li><b>Water Bodies:</b> Zambezi, Limpopo rivers</li> <li><b>Other facts:</b> Lake Kariba, located on border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, is the <b>world's largest man-made lake by volume</b>.</li> </ul>	

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### 3. BILATERAL RELATIONS

#### 3.1. INDIA-PAKISTAN

##### Why in News?

India rejected ruling by Permanent Court of Arbitration in dispute with Pakistan.

##### More on news

- The Court rejected India's objections and determined it is competent to consider matters under Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects.
  - Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project is a run-of-the-river hydroelectric project diverts water from the Kishanganga River to a power plant in the Jhelum River basin.
  - Ratle Hydroelectric Project (Chenab River) is a hydroelectric power plant being built by India with a capacity of 850 MW.
  - India has opposed it and contends that it is in contravention of the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

##### About Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

- HQ: Hague, Netherlands
- Genesis:** It was established by the first International Peace Conference held in 1899.
- Role:** It is an intergovernmental organization that offers the worldwide community a variety of conflict resolution services.
  - If parties choose arbitration for conflict resolution, the judgment of the arbitral tribunal is binding on them.
- India** is a member.

##### About Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- IWT was signed in 1960, between India and Pakistan and brokered by the World Bank.
  - IWT gives control over three eastern rivers Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej to India.
  - Pakistan has control over three western rivers Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.
  - IWT provides 3 Step Dispute Resolution Mechanism viz.**
    - Step 1: Permanent Indus Commission-** required to meet at least once every year for the dispute resolution.
    - Step 2: Neutral Expert-** to deal with unresolved differences on water-sharing.
    - Step 3: Court of Arbitration-** a Seven-member arbitral tribunal to deal with the Disputes.

##### India-Pakistan Relations : Key Facts

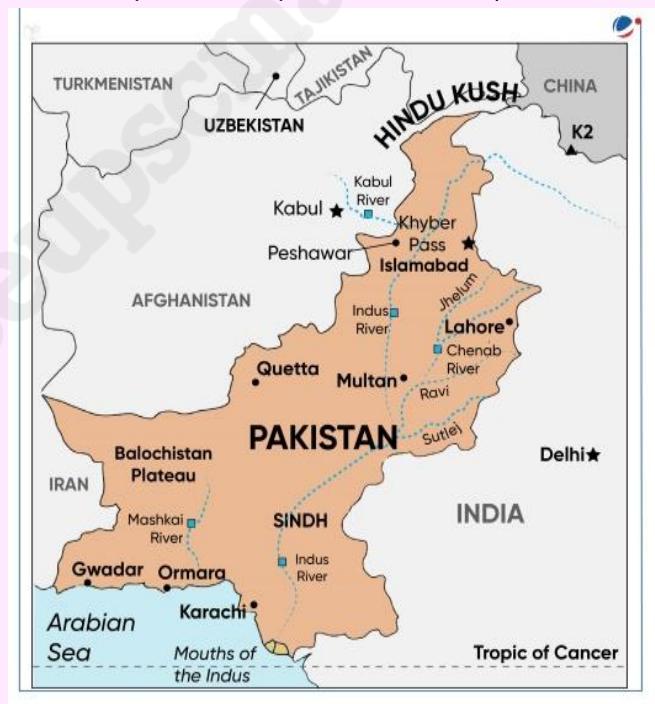
- Boundary:** India-Pakistan boundary is the result of partition in 1947 under the Radcliffe Award.
- Trade:** India has a trade surplus with Pakistan.

##### About the country

###### Pakistan (Capital: Islamabad)

###### Land Borders:

- Border runs along Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat for a length of 2300 Km (excluding the Kashmir border portion which is under partial occupation of Pakistan).



- Connectivity:**
  - Across LoC travel was started in 2005 and trade across J&K was initiated in 2009;
  - Kartarpur corridor** provides for Visa-free travel of India Pilgrims and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, to Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.
- Multilateral presence:** At SAARC, G33, WTO and UN.

#### Related Development

##### Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Project

- Pakistan and Turkmenistan have signed a **Joint Implementation Plan (JIP)** in a bid to expedite work on the TAPI gas pipeline project.
- TAPI project aims to export natural gas** annually through pipeline from Turkmenistan (Galkynysh gas field) to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (Fazilka).
- Funding is done by the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.



## 3.2. INDIA-NEPAL

### Why in news?

India and Nepal have **recently unveiled several initiatives and agreements** during the visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India.

### Key initiatives and agreements

- To resolve the vexed boundary dispute** (over Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh).
- First trilateral power trade** from Nepal to Bangladesh through India (for ~40 megawatts)
- Hydropower cooperation: Lower Arun Hydroelectric Project; Pacheshwar multipurpose project** on Mahakali River.

### India and Nepal Relations: Key Facts

- Diplomatic relations:** Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations.
- Trade:**
  - India is the **largest trading partner** and has a **trade surplus** with Nepal.
  - India is the **highest source of FDI** in Nepal.
- Defence:**
  - Recruitment of **Nepalese soldiers in Gorkha regiments** of the Indian Army;
  - Joint military exercises (e.g., **Surya Kiran**) etc.
- Energy:**
  - Power Exchange Agreement** since 1971;
  - South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline**, connecting Motihari (India) to Amlekhgunj (Nepal).
- Hydropower cooperation:**
  - MoU to develop the **West Seti and Seti River (SR6) projects** (1,200 MW);
  - Agreement to take forward the **Sapta Kosi high dam project** on Kosi river.
- Culture:** Vivekananda Centre to showcase Indian Culture (in Kathmandu).
- Multilateral Co-operation:**
  - At BBIN, BIMSTEC, Non-Aligned Movement, and SAARC;
  - Nepal signed a framework to join the India-led **International Solar Alliance**.

### About the country

#### Nepal (Capital: Kathmandu)

- **Land Borders:**

- Landlocked country between India and Tibet Autonomous Region of China.
- Shares an open border of over **1,800 km** with **five Indian states** of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and Sikkim.

- **Other Facts:**

- **75 percent of the country is covered by mountains.**
- **Home to many of the world's highest peaks** like Everest, Kanchenjunga, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna
- Recently, Nepal has become the **first South Asian nation to formally register same-sex marriage.**



## 3.3. INDIA-BANGLADESH

### Why in the News?

Fifth Annual Defence Dialogue was recently held between India and Bangladesh in Dhaka (Bangladesh).

### Other recent developments:

- Operationalizing the **Agreement on Use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports (ACMP)**
- Cross-border energy pipeline known as **India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFP)**, from Siliguri (India) to Parbatipur (Bangladesh) was inaugurated.
  - It is the **first cross border energy pipeline** between India and Bangladesh and **second in South Asia.**

### India-Bangladesh Relations: Key Facts

- **Trade:**
  - Bangladesh is **India's largest trading partner in South Asia.**
  - There is **bilateral trade in Indian rupees** and India has a **trade surplus.**
- **Water-sharing:**
  - Agreements to exchange technical information on cross border rivers.
  - **Framework for an interim agreement on sharing waters** of six rivers — Manu, Mahuri, Khowai, Gomti, Dharla and Dudhkumar.
- **Energy:** India's **first transnational project at Godda in Jharkhand** supplies power to the Bangladesh electricity grid.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Bangladesh to buy specialised vehicles, Tejas light combat aircraft, etc. from India.
- **Multilateral cooperation:** At **SAARC, BIMSTEC, BBIN etc.**

### Related news: Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)

- 6<sup>th</sup> IOC was jointly organized by the Bangladesh and India.
  - **Theme:** Peace Prosperity and Partnership for a Resilient Future.
- IOC is a **forum to discuss how the countries of the Indian Ocean region (IOR) can promote economic development** while maintaining peace and stability.
  - **First IOC was held in 2016** (Singapore).
- It provides a **common platform to deliberate upon the prospects of regional cooperation for Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).**
  - SAGAR was launched in 2016 to promote cooperation among the state actors and creates an environment of peace and stability.

#### About the country

##### Bangladesh (Capital: Dhaka)

- **Land borders:** India (4096 km border with Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Assam) and Myanmar (southeast).
- **Water bodies:** Bay of Bengal
- **Other fact:** Home to Sundarbans mangrove forest, one of the largest such forests in the world (140,000 ha)



## 3.4. INDIA-SRI LANKA

#### Why in news?

India and Sri Lanka marked their **75th anniversary of diplomatic relations** in 2023.

#### Key initiatives in recent times

- MoUs like operationalising **UPI digital payments in Sri Lanka**, designating the Indian Rupee as currency for trade, **renewable energy and economic development projects in Trincomalee**.
- To start passenger ferry services between **Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu)** and **Kankesanturai (Sri Lanka)**.

#### India-Sri Lanka Relations: Key Facts

- **Trade:**
  - **India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA)** signed in 1998.
  - **India is the largest trading partner** and has a **trade surplus** with Sri Lanka.
- **FDI:** India is one of the largest contributors to FDI in Sri Lanka.
- **Connectivity:** Agreements like **Open Sky, Air Bubble arrangements**.
- **Political affairs:** **Indo-Sri Lanka Accord** signed in **1987** in order to end the civil war between Tamil and **Sinhala, community**. The **13th Amendment** is the outcome of this accord.
  - Amendment provided for the **creation of Provincial Councils**, assured a **power sharing arrangement** to self-govern.
- **Multilateral cooperation:** At **SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA, NAM, ADB, UN, etc.**

#### About the country

**Sri Lanka** (Legislative capital: **Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte** and Executive and Judicial capital: Colombo)

- **Water Bodies:** Island country lying in **Indian Ocean** and separated from **peninsular India by Palk Strait**.
- **Other Facts:**
  - Ashoka sent his children Mahendra and Sangamitta to spread the teachings of Lord Buddha at the request of King Devanampiya Tissa of Sri Lanka.
  - **Two-thirds of the world's oil and half of the world's container transportation** passes through the south of Sri Lanka.



### 3.5. INDIA-MALDIVES

#### Why in the news?

Maldives' President has pitched to end the presence of Indian troops in the islands in accordance with his pre-poll promise made under "India Out" campaign.

#### About "India Out" campaign

- The "India Out" campaign was led by the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM).
- The campaign strongly opposed the Indian military's presence in the Maldives, on the grounds of sovereignty of the Maldives.

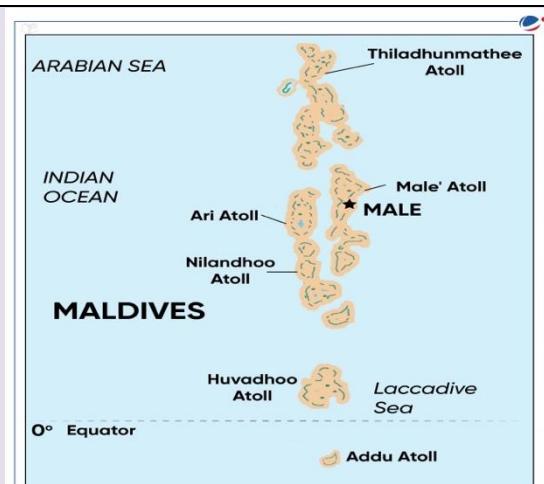
#### India and Maldives relations: Key Facts

- **Trade:**
  - India is Maldives' third-largest trade partner.
  - India has a trade surplus.
- **Security & Defence:**
  - India meets about 70% of Maldives' defense training needs;
  - India is building a new coast guard base at **Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF) atoll**(located near the capital Male).
  - Joint military exercise (**Ekuverin**);
  - India laid the foundation stone for the Maldives National Defence Forces Coast Guard '**Ekatha Harbour**';
  - India conducted **Operation Cactus, 1988** (to thwart a coup in Maldives) and **Operation Neer, 2014**( to help curb a water crisis).
- **Development Cooperation:**
  - India established **Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital and Institute for Technical Education**;
  - India provides grant for **High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs)**.
  - Maldives has been a partner of the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** and e-ITEC programmes.
  - Maldives has received the highest increase in budget allocation for the neighbouring countries in India's interim Budget.
- **Infrastructure Projects:** Greater Male Connectivity Project being developed by India.
- **Tourism:**
  - In 2023, India is the leading source market for Maldives.
  - Open skies arrangement and visa-free entry for tourism, medical and business purposes.
- **Multilateral cooperation:** At SAARC, SASEC, IORA, Indian ocean naval symposium, UN, WTO, ILO, G77.

#### About the country

##### Maldives (Capital: Male)

- **Water Bodies:** Indian Ocean
- **Other Facts:**
  - The Maldives Islands are a series of coral atolls built up from the crowns of a submerged ancient volcanic mountain range.
  - All the islands are low-lying, none rising to more than 6 feet above sea level.
  - Acts as a strategic link between major Indian Ocean chokepoints including **Gulf of Aden, Strait of Hormuz and Strait of Malacca**.
  - Maldives is separated from Lakshadweep island group by the **Eight Degree Channel**.



## 3.6. INDIA-MALAYSIA

### Why in news?

India and Malaysia have agreed to settle trade in Indian rupees in addition to current modes of settlement in other currencies.

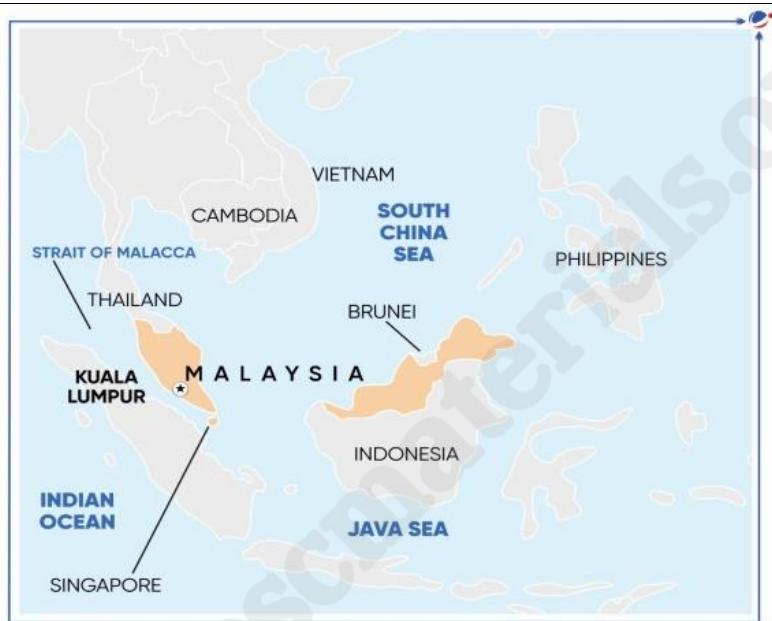
### India-Malaysia Relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:**
  - Established with the Federation of Malaya (predecessor state of Malaysia) in 1957.
  - Enhanced Strategic Partnership launched in 2015
- **Trade:**
  - **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** signed in 2010;
  - Malaysia along with Indonesia and Thailand are **major exporters of palm oil to India**.
- **Defence:** Exercise Harimau Shakti.

#### About the country

##### Malaysia (Capital: Kuala Lumpur)

- **Land Borders:** Thailand (north), Singapore (south), Indonesia (southwest) and Brunei.
  - **Malaysia consists of two non-contiguous regions:** Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) located in Malay Peninsula, and East Malaysia (Malaysia Timur), which is on island of Borneo.
- **Water Bodies:** South China Sea(north), Strait of Malacca (west), Sulu Sea (northeast), and the Celebes sea (southeast).
- **Other facts:** Malaysia has allowed Visa free entry for Indians for stay up to 30 days.



## 3.7. INDIA-PHILIPPINES

### Why in News?

India and Philippines during 5th meeting of the **Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC)** decided to expand their defence partnership.

### India-Philippines Relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** Established in 1949.
- **Historical and cultural link:**
  - The presence of numerous words with Sanskrit roots in Tagalog (the local language).
  - The **Laguna Copper Plate inscription**, the oldest artifact discovered in the Philippines written in Kawi derived from Pallava script.
  - The localized version of Indian epic Ramayana (**Maharadja Lawana**).
- **Defence:**
  - Contract was signed in 2022 to supply the **BrahMos missile system**;
  - Both navies are working on **Hydrographic Cooperation**.

#### About the country

**Philippines (Capital: Manila)**

#### Water Bodies:

- Philippines is an archipelago (of over 7,000 islands) in south-eastern Asia between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean.
- It is **divided into three island groups**: Luzon (largest island of country), Visayas, and Mindanao.
- Bounded by Philippine Sea, Celebes Sea, Sulu Sea and South China Sea.



## 3.8. INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA

#### Why in News?

Indian prime minister and Saudi crown prince co-chaired the first summit-level meeting of the **India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)**.

#### About India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council

- **Origin:** It was **set up in 2019**.
- **India is the fourth country** with which Riyadh formed such a partnership, after the UK, France, and China.
- **Aim:** To establish a high-level council to steer the Indo-Saudi relationship.
- **Two main pillars:** The Committee on Political, Security, Social and Cultural Cooperation; and the Committee on Economy and Investments.

#### India-Saudi Arabia Relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** Began in 1947 and elevated to a ‘Strategic Partnership’ in 2010.
- **Trade:**
  - India is **Saudi Arabia’s 2<sup>nd</sup> largest trade partner** and Saudi Arabia is **India’s 4<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner**.
  - **India has a trade deficit** with Saudi Arabia.
- **Energy security:** Saudi Arabia is the third-largest crude and petroleum products source for India.
- **Diaspora:** More than 2.4 million Indian expatriates gainfully employed in Saudi Arabia.
- **Culture:** Saudi is home to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina known for the annual Haj and Umrah pilgrimage.
- **Bilateral exercise:** Al Mohed Al Hindi.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** UN, G20, The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) etc.

#### About the Country

**Saudi Arabia (Capital: Riyadh)**

#### Land Borders:

- Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait (north), Qatar, UAE, and Oman (east); Yemen (south and southwest).

#### Water Bodies:

- Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba (west) and Persian Gulf (east).

#### Other Facts:

- The country **occupies about four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula**.

- Arabian Peninsula contains the world's largest sand area, the Rub' al-Khali ("Empty Quarter").
- Site of that Islam's holiest cities, Mecca and Medina.
- To the east, along the Persian Gulf, are the country's abundant oil fields.



### 3.9. INDIA-UAE

#### Why in News?

**India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) completed one year.** Also, Union Cabinet recently approved **Bilateral Investment Treaty** with UAE.

#### About India-UAE CEPA

- It entered into force on 1st May 2022.
- While a traditional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) focuses mainly on goods; a CEPA is more comprehensive and ambitious in terms of a holistic coverage of many areas like services, investment, IPR, government procurement, disputes etc.
- India-UAE CEPA Council was recently launched.
- India has also signed CEPA with Japan and South Korea.

#### About BIT with UAE

- The treaty is aimed at improving confidence of investors to increase foreign investments opportunities in India.
  - Existing Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement with UAE will expire in Sept 2024.
- BIT is a reciprocal agreement for according protection to investments by nationals and companies of one state in another state.
  - India signed BIT with 83 countries based on Model BIT text of 1993. New Model BIT text was adopted in 2015.

#### Other recent developments in relationship

- Pact signed to establish a Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS) to trade in local currencies.
- To link India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with UAE's Instant Payment Platform (IPP).
- NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Al Etihad Payments (AEP) signed a strategic partnership agreement for implementation of RuPay Domestic Card Scheme (DCS) in the UAE.
- MoU to establish the IIT-Delhi campus in Abu Dhabi, the second IIT abroad after Tanzania.

#### India-UAE Relations: Key Facts

- **Trade:**
  - UAE is India's third-largest trading partner and India's second-largest export destination.
  - India has a trade deficit with UAE.
- **Defence and Security:** Regular military exercises like Desert Eagle for maritime cooperation.
- **Diaspora:** UAE has the highest number of Indian Diaspora contributing high remittances to India.
- **Multilateral cooperation:** I2U2 Group and UAE is also a part of proposed IMEC.
- **Space cooperation:** ISRO launched UAE's first Nano-satellite Nayif-1.

#### **Related development: Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)**

- UAE withdrew its participation in CMF.
- CMF is a multinational maritime partnership (India also a member), that focuses on counter-narcotics, counter-smuggling, suppressing piracy, training etc.
  - CMF is Commanded by a U.S. Navy Vice Admiral.
  - HQ: Bahrain

#### **About the Country**

##### **UAE (Capital: Abu Dhabi)**

- **Land Borders:** Saudi Arabia (west and south) and Oman (east and northeast).
- **Water Bodies:** Persian Gulf (west), Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman (east).
- **Other Facts:**
  - UAE is the **federation of seven emirates** : Abu Dhabi(largest), Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah.
  - Some of the **world's largest sand dunes are located east of 'Arādah** in the oases of Liwā.
  - Important oases are at **Al-Ain, east of Abu Dhabi**.



## **3.10. INDIA-US**

#### **Why in News?**

Indian PM visited the US on **3<sup>rd</sup> Official State Visit** (the earlier two state visits happened during 1969 and 2009).

#### **Key Outcomes of the visit**

- **Trade:** An interagency-led **Strategic Trade Dialogue** was launched.
- **Semiconductors:** An MoU on Semiconductor Supply Chain and Innovation Partnership was signed.
- **Telecommunication:** A public-private Joint Task Forces co-lead by India's Bharat 6G and US Next G alliance, for the development and deployment of Open Radio Access Network (Open RAN) systems was launched.
- **Quantum Tech:** Indo-U.S. **Quantum Coordination Mechanism** was established.
- **Research and Innovation:** “Innovation Handshake” initiative started to connect the startup ecosystems of the two countries, which is **to support the US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)**.
  - iCET was set up in 2023, **to strengthen and broaden the defence industrial cooperation and strategic technological partnership** between the companies, and academic institutions of the two nations.
- **Clean Energy Partnership:** The India-U.S. New and Emerging Renewable Energy Technologies Action Platform (**RETAP**) was launched.
- **Critical Minerals:** India became the new member of the US-led **Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)**
  - MSP is a collaboration of 13 countries and the EU **to catalyze public and private investment in responsible critical minerals supply chains** globally.
  - MSP partners include Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union (represented by the European Commission).
- **Consulates:** The U.S is to open **two new consulates in India in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad** and India is to operationalize its new consulate in Seattle and open two more consulates in U.S soon.

#### **India-US Relations: Key Facts**

- **Trade:**
  - The US is the **major export hub for Indian goods**.

- **India-US Trade Policy Forum** was established in 2005.
- **Bilateral trade amounts to \$128.55 billion** and **India has a trade surplus** of \$19.59 billion.
- **Defence:**
  - US (11%) is India's **3rd largest defence supplier** after Russia (~45%) and France (~29%);
  - Military exercises like **Yudh Abhyas, Vajra prahar, Malabar, RIMPAC etc.** ;
  - **Major Defence agreements** signed with India like:
    - ✓ Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), 2016
    - ✓ Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), 2018
    - ✓ Industrial Security Agreement, 2019
    - ✓ Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) 2020
- **Diaspora:** Indian diaspora **forms the second largest immigrant group in US** after the Mexicans.

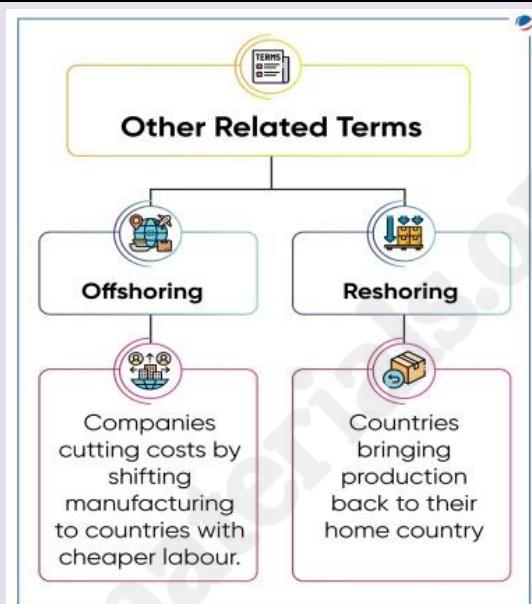
#### Related News

##### Investment Incentive Agreement (IIA)

- **India and USA signed an IIA superseding the 1997 IIA** between the two nations.
- IIA has been **signed, to keep pace with the additional investment support programmes, offered by DFC** (a development finance agency of USA), such as debt, equity investment, feasibility studies for potential projects and grants etc.
- IIA is **legal requirement for DFC, to continue providing investment support** in India.
- DFC or their predecessor agencies are **active in India since 1974 and have so far provided investment support worth \$5.8 billion.**

##### Friend-shoring

- India emerges as US's new destination for friend-shoring pharmaceutical supply chains.
- Friend-shoring is pitched (by US) as a **means to insulate global supply chains from external disruption or economic coercion.**
- Idea is for a **group of countries with shared values** to deploy policies encouraging companies to spread manufacturing within that group.



#### About the country

##### The United States (Capital: Washington, D.C.)

- **Land borders:**
  - US includes **48 conterminous states** and the **state of Alaska, and the island state of Hawaii.**
  - The conterminous states are bounded by **Canada (north) and Mexico (south).**
- **Water Bodies:**
  - Atlantic Ocean(east), Gulf of Mexico (south) and Pacific Ocean(west).
- **Other facts:**
  - The US is the **fourth largest country in the world** in area (after Russia, Canada, and China).
  - Home to the Great Lakes which including **Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario.**



### 3.10.1. INDIA US DEFENCE RELATIONS

#### Major Developments

The U.S.-India Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) was launched.	INDUS-X aims to expand the strategic technology partnership and to advance cutting-edge technology cooperation between governments, businesses, and academic institutions.
Agreement to Co-produce the GE F414 jet engine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GE-414 Jet engine</b> is a <b>turbofan engine</b> produced by the GE and has been used in the US Navy for more than 30 years.</li> <li>• <b>Eight nations have the F414-powered jets in operation</b> and is used in superior jets like Boeing Super Hornet and EA18G Growler.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India has agreed to procure <b>High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE)</b> Unmanned Aerial vehicles (UAV) named General Atomics (GA) <b>MQ-9B (Predator)</b> drones from the US.</li> </ul>	

#### Key highlights of roadmap for Defence Industry Cooperation

- To initiate negotiations for a '**Security of Supply**' (**SoS**) arrangement and a '**Reciprocal Defence Procurement**' (**RDP**) agreement.
  - **SoS:** Allows to **request priority delivery for contracts, subcontracts, or orders** from companies in either country.
  - **RPD:** **Complementary acquisitions of defense articles** from each other's country.
- Welcomed India's leadership role in **Quad Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness Initiative (IPMDA)**.
  - **IPMDA**, was announced by U.S. in **2022**, to promote a **free and open Pacific**.
  - It intends to **connect regional partners and allies with American technologies** to provide greater **maritime situational awareness in real-time**.

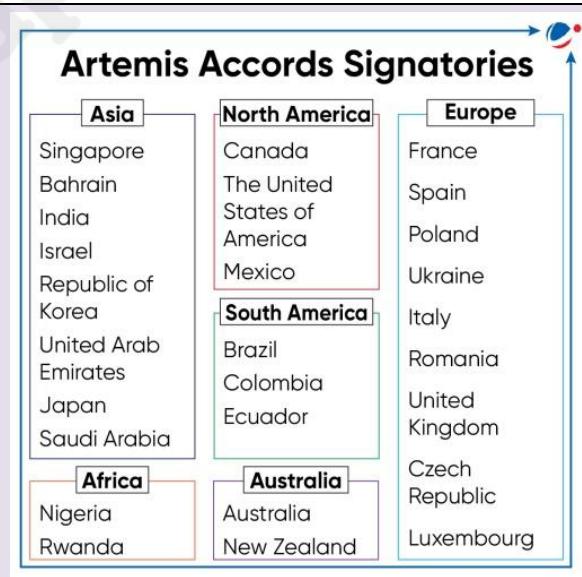
### 3.10.2. INDIA US SPACE RELATIONS

#### Major Developments

- **NASA will provide advanced training to Indian astronauts** with the goal of mounting a joint effort to the International Space Station (ISS) in 2024.
- **India signed the US led 'Artemis Accord' as its 27<sup>th</sup> Member.**
  - With NASA providing crew seats to the Gateway development contributors, India can also get its berth through the Accords and active participation.
  - **Gateway is an upcoming NASA-led international lunar orbital station for Artemis astronauts.**

#### About Artemis Accord

- The Accord was established by the U.S. State Department and NASA In 2020.
- It sets common principles to govern civil exploration and use of outer space, the moon, Mars, comets, and asteroids, for peaceful purposes.
- The signatories are committed to:
  - share national space policies and scientific information's resulting from their activities
  - implement MOUs between government or agencies in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty 1967.
  - preserve outer space heritage, including historic landing sites and evidence of activity on celestial bodies.
  - mitigate orbital debris and induce safe and timely disposal of spacecraft at the end of missions.



## 3.11. INDIA-CANADA

### Why in news?

Diplomatic tensions flared between Canada and India following the Canadian PM's accusation that Indian agents were involved in the murder of Sikh separatist leader in Canada.

### More on news

- The allegation was based on shared intelligence within the **Five Eyes Alliance**.
- Canada criticized India's demand for withdrawal of 41 Canadian diplomats from India, as a breach of the **Vienna Convention**.

### India-Canada Relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** Established in 1947.
- **S&T cooperation:**
  - Civil nuclear agreement signed in 2010.
  - Both are part of **Global Biofuel Alliance**.
- **Diaspora:** Canada hosts one of the **largest Indian diaspora** in the world, which is 3% of the total Canadian population.

### About Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance (FVEY)

- It is an **intelligence alliance** comprising the **US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand**.
- It originated from the **1946 UK-USA Agreement** for **sharing signals intelligence (SIGINT)**.
- **Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council** includes the **non-political intelligence oversight, review, and security entities** of member.

### About Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations

- **It was signed in 1961** and entered into force in 1964.
- Vienna Convention provides a complete **framework for the establishment, maintenance and termination of diplomatic relations** between independent sovereign States.
  - It **specifies functions privileges and immunities of diplomatic missions**, rules regulating appointments, etc.
  - Article 11.1 pertains to **size of international missions** within other countries.

#### About the country

##### Canada (Capital: Ottawa)

- **Land borders:** United States (south), Greenland (northeast) and the U.S. state of Alaska (west).
- **Water bodies:** Pacific Ocean(west), Arctic Ocean (north) Atlantic Ocean (east).
- **Other facts:**
  - Canada is the **second largest country in the world in area** (after Russia).
  - Largest of Canada's physiographic regions is the **Canadian Shield**.



## 3.12. INDIA-BRAZIL

### Why in news?

2023 year marked the **75th anniversary of diplomatic relations** between Brazil and India, as well as **20th anniversary of IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa)** forum.

## India-Brazil Relations Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** Elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2006.
- **Trade:**
  - **India-MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement** (regional grouping comprising Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay).
  - **India has a trade surplus** with Brazil.
- **Defence:** IBSAMAR, a joint multinational maritime exercise, among the Indian, Brazilian and South Africa navies.
- **Environment:** Both are **founding member of Global Biofuels Alliance**
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** At BRICS, IBSA, G-20, UN and WTO.

## About IBSA forum

- **Genesis:** The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum 2003 and Brasilia Declaration was issued.
- **About:** Trilateral forum which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.
- **Other key information:**
  - **IBSA does not have a headquarters or a permanent executive secretariat.**
  - **IBSA Fund jointly established by the countries in 2004**, aims to identify replicable and scalable projects for poverty and hunger alleviation and disseminating them to developing countries.
  - **India was the IBSA Chair under the theme “Democracy for Demography and Development” in 2021.**
  - **Brazil assumed presidency in 2023.**

### About the country

#### Brazil (Capital: Brasilia)

- **Land Borders:**
  - It shares borders with every South American country except Chile and Ecuador.
  - Uruguay (south); Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia (southwest); Peru (west); Colombia (northwest); and Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana (north).
- **Water Bodies:** Atlantic Ocean
- **Other Facts:**
  - It is the **fifth largest country in the world**.
  - Brazil contains **most of the Amazon River basin (world's largest river system)**
  - Brazil is the **only country that passes through both the equator and a tropic (Tropic of Capricorn)**.



## 3.13. INDIA-AUSTRALIA

### Why in news?

Cabinet approved Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) of Authorised Economic Operators (AEO) between India and Australia.

### About World Customs Organization

- **Genesis:** It was established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC)
- **HQ:** Brussels, Belgium
- **About:** It is an **independent intergovernmental body** to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.
- **Membership:** 185 members (**including India**).

## About Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)

- MRA of AEO aims to provide reciprocal benefits to exporters of both countries in the clearance of goods by the Customs authorities.
- Indian Customs has signed two MRAs with South Korea and Hong Kong and MRAs with USA and Taiwan are in the final stages of conclusion
- **About AEO**
  - AEO programme is a voluntary compliance programme under the aegis of the World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate Global Trade.
  - India's AEO Programme is also in sync with the commitments under Article 7.7 (related to additional trade facilitation measures related to import, export or transit formalities) of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).
- **About WCO's SAFE Framework**
  - It was adopted by the WCO council in 2005 to enhance international supply chain security and facilitate movement of legitimate goods.
  - An entity engaged in international trade is approved by Customs as compliant with supply chain security standards and granted AEO status & certain benefits.

## India-Australia Relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) signed in 2020.
- **Trade:**
  - The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ("IndAus ECTA") signed in 2023.
  - India has a trade deficit with Australia.
- **Energy Cooperation:** Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement signed in 2014, Australia joined International solar Alliance, India-Australia Green Hydrogen Task Force.
- **Defence:** 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, Defence exercises such as AUSINDEX, Exercise Milan, Exercise PITCHBLACK, AUSTRAHIND, EX TALISMAN SABRE, Kakadu, Exercise MALABAR.
- **Education:**
  - Deakin University will be the first Australian University to open campus at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).
  - Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA) was recently signed which aimed at promoting two-way exchange of students, graduates, researchers, and businessmen. Will be facilitated through a new skilled pathway named MATES (Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early Professionals Scheme).
- **Diaspora:** After England, Indians are the second largest migrant group in Australia.

### About the country

#### Australia (Capital: Canberra)

- **Water bodies:** Pacific and Indian oceans
- **Other fact:** It is the smallest continent and one of the largest countries on Earth lying between the in the Southern Hemisphere.



## 3.14. INDIA-SOUTH KOREA

### Why in news?

2023 marks **50th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between India and South Korea (Republic of Korea or RoK).

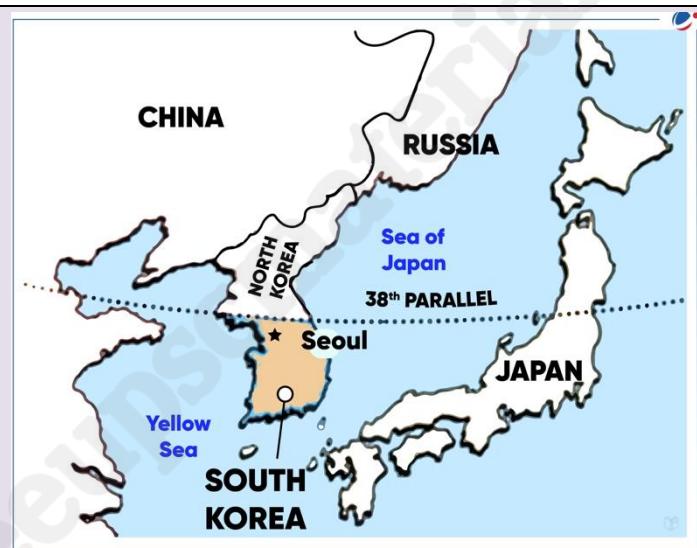
### India and South Korea Relations: Key Facts

- **Civilisational linkage:**
  - "SamgukYusa": Princess Suriratna from Ayodhya married King Kim-Suro.
  - Buddhist Monk Hyecho (Hong Jiao) visited India from 723 to 729 AD.
  - Rabindranath Tagore composed a poem in 1929 called '**Lamp of the East**' on Korea's history.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Established in 1973;
  - Upgraded to '**Special Strategic Partnership**' in 2015.
- **Trade:**
  - India has a **trade deficit** with South Korea.
  - **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** (CEPA) was signed in 2009.
  - **India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES)** was recently launched for the smooth implementation of CEPA.
- **Defence:**
  - **Joint research, production** (like K9 Vajra artillery gun);
  - India has a **2+2 Dialogue** since 2019.
- **Culture:** Sarang, festival of India in Korea is organised every year.

#### About the country

##### South Korea (Capital: Seoul)

- **Land borders:** North Korea
- **Water bodies:** Sea of Japan (east), East China Sea (south), Yellow Sea (west); Korea Strait (southeast) which separates it from the Japanese island of Tsushima.



## 3.15. INDIA-FRANCE

### Why in the news?

Marking **25 years of their strategic relations**, India and France, launched **the Horizon 2047 framework**.

### About Horizon 2047 framework

- The Horizon framework includes sectors from **defence, nuclear energy & space, to eliminating single-use plastic and a five-year Schengen visa**.
- **Other recent initiatives**
  - Opening of the **Consulate General of India in Marseille** and a **Bureau de France in Hyderabad announced**.
  - France to support the 2nd phase of **the Indian program on sustainable cities - CITIIS 2.0**, co-financed with **Germany and the EU**.

## India-France Relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** Established in 1947.
- **Defence:**
  - France is the second-largest exporter of defense equipment to India (P-75 Scorpene technology transfer and Rafale aircraft)
  - Defence exercises include Exercise Shakti (Army); Varuna (Navy) and Garuda (Air Force).
- **Trade:** Unified Payments Interface(UPI) was launched recently in France.
- **Environmental cooperation:** International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- **Diaspora:** Overseas Citizen of India cards are now being issued in Reunion Island (located in Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar)
- **Civil Nuclear cooperation:** Civil nuclear agreement signed in 2008.
- **Space cooperation:** France is cooperating in training project for India's Gaganyaan (human space flight programme).
- **Multilateral cooperation:**
  - France supports India's claim for permanent membership of the UNSC.
  - Helped India's accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and Australia Group (AG).

### About the country

#### France (Capital: Paris)

- **Land borders:** Germany and Belgium (north); Spain (south), Alps, Switzerland and Italy (east).
- **Water bodies:** Atlantic Ocean (west); and Mediterranean Sea (south)
- **Other fact:** France is home to Europe's tallest peak - Monte Blanc.



## 3.16. INDIA-UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

### Why in the news?

Recently, inaugural India-UK 2+2 Foreign and Defence Dialogue was held in New Delhi to discuss and review all aspects of India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

## India-UK relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** India-UK Roadmap 2030 provides a framework for UK-India relations across health, climate, trade, education, science and technology, and defence.
- **Trade:**
  - India has a trade surplus with UK;
  - India-UK Infrastructure Finance Bridge was announced to leverage expertise and investment in support of India's National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).
- **Defence:**
  - Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP) signed in 2015;
  - Joint exercises include Ajeya Warrior (Army), Konkan exercises (navy), Cobra Warrior (multi-national air exercise) etc.

- Climate and Environment:**
  - India-UK **Green Growth Equity Fund** is mobilizing institutional investments in renewable energy.
  - Cooperation at **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**.
- Diaspora:**
  - Indian diaspora forms **3.1% of the total population of UK**.
  - Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP)** agreement to facilitate **easy movement** of working professionals.

#### About the country

**UK (Capital: London)**

- Land borders:** Ireland
- Water bodies:** English Channel(south), North Sea (east), Irish Sea (west) and the Atlantic Ocean.
- Other facts:**
  - UK includes England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
  - Greenwich Meridian** passes through it.



## 3.17. INDIA-EGYPT

### Why in news?

2023 witnessed Indian PM's first State visit to Egypt.

### Key highlights of the visit

- Both sides signed an agreement to **elevate the bilateral relationship to a "Strategic Partnership"**.
- Indian Prime Minister conferred with '**Order of the Nile**' award, the Egypt's highest state honour.
- Prime Minister visited **Al Hakim mosque**, 11th-century mosque in Cairo, an important cultural site for Dawoodi Bohra community.

### About Dawoodi Bohra Community

- They are a **sect of followers of Islam** who adhere to the Fatimi Ismaili Tayyibi school of thought.
- Known to have **originated from Egypt, later shifting to Yemen**.
- They **settled in India in the 11th century**, and the seat of the sect was moved from Yemen to **Sidhpur (Patan district Gujarat)** in 1539.
- Community is **spread across Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh** and consider **Surat** (Gujarat) as their **base**.

### India-Egypt Relations: Key Facts

- Geopolitical:** Member in **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** and G77.
- Geostrategic:** Egypt is strategically located, making it a **hub for trade routes between Europe, Africa, and Asia**.
- Boost Defence Industries:** Egypt is interested in **procuring defense equipment** like Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, missiles like Akash, etc.
- Energy Security:** Egypt is an oil and gas exporter.

### About the country

#### Egypt (Capital: Cairo)

- **Land borders:** Libya, Gaza Strip, Sudan, and the Asian Sinai Peninsula.
- **Water bodies:** Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea



## 3.18. OTHER IMPORTANT BILATERAL DEVELOPMENTS

### 3.18.1. GREEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (GSP)

- India- Denmark reviewed progress of GSP signed in 2020.
- GSP is to advance political cooperation, expand economic relations and green growth, create jobs and strengthen cooperation on addressing global challenges and opportunities.
- Focus of GSP is on an implementation of Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### 3.18.2. STRATEGIC WATER PARTNERSHIP (SWP)

- Strategic Water Partnership (SWP) was signed between Ministry of Jal Shakti, India and Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Netherlands in 2022.
- SWP aims at leveraging Dutch expertise in sustainable water programs in India, promoting joint exploration of innovative and sustainable technology solutions/ nature based solutions, and knowledge exchange.

**ABHYAAS  
PRELIMS 2024  
ALL INDIA PRELIMS  
(GS+CSAT) MOCK TEST**

**21<sup>ST</sup>  
APRIL | 12<sup>TH</sup>  
MAY | 26<sup>TH</sup>  
MAY**

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A woman is standing on a large blue wave, holding a white pole, positioned next to a large red and white target symbol.

## 4. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

### 4.1. NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST POLICY

#### Why in the news?

A recent analysis has shown that India's post-pandemic trade with its South Asian neighbors has fallen to its lowest in some ten years, falling under 3%.

#### Key findings

- In 2021-22, India's **largest export market in the region is Bangladesh**, followed by Nepal and Sri Lanka
- **China's overall trade** with these countries was **65% higher than India** despite lower tariffs by India.
- **Reasons for Low Trade**
  - **Para-tariffs** (border charges and fees), **cumbersome rules, poor infrastructure, high logistics cost, informal trade, coupled with other non-tariff barriers etc.**
  - **Covid-19 pandemic** and the latest **economic crisis** in countries including **Sri Lanka and Pakistan**.

#### About India's Neighbourhood First Policy

- The Policy forges a strong neighbourhood relation **based on a consultative, non-reciprocal, outcome-oriented approach** with India's Neighbours.
- It uses the **principles of Samman (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Shanti (peace), Samriddhi (prosperity) and Sanskriti (culture)** for better engagement.

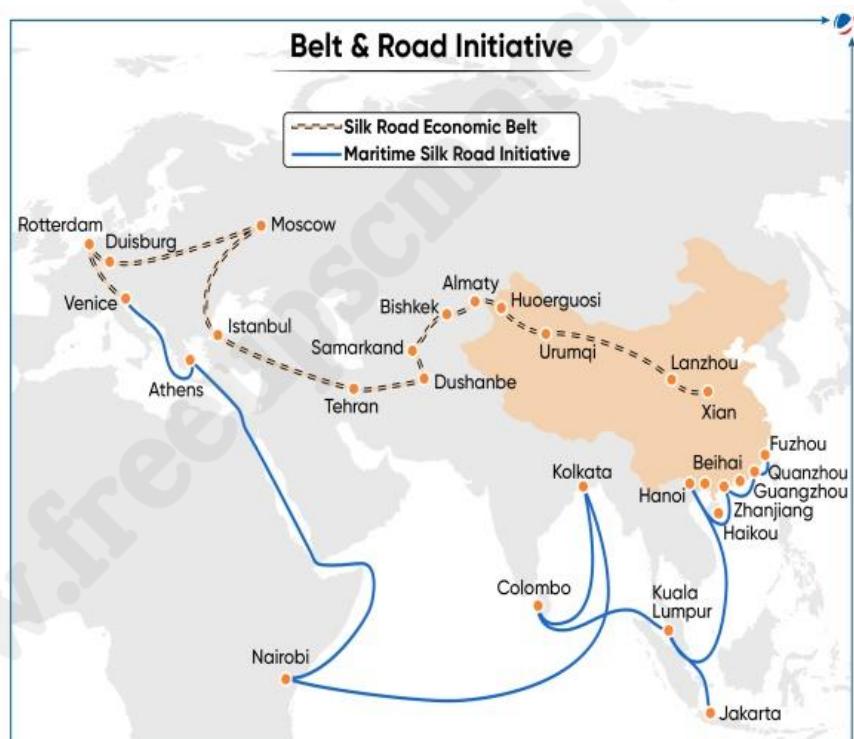
### 4.2. BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI)

#### Why in news?

- 2023 marked the **tenth anniversary** of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Also, recently, Italy withdrew from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
  - **Italy was the only G7 nation** to join BRI.

#### About BRI

- BRI is a massive **China-led infrastructure project launched in 2013**.
  - It seeks to **connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks** with the aim of improving regional integration, increasing trade and stimulating economic growth.
  - **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** was launched in **2015** as a part of the **BRI**.
    - ✓ It is a **3,000-km-long route of infrastructure projects** connecting **China's northwest Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region** and the **Gwadar Port** in the **western Pakistan province of Balochistan**.
    - ✓ It passes through the **Indian territory of Gilgit Baltistan**.



- **Efforts to Counter BRI**
  - **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)** by G7.
    - ✓ PGII is the repackaged version of the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative by G7.
  - **Global Gateway Initiative:** European Union (EU's) **€300 billion infrastructure fund plan**
  - **India's efforts**
    - ✓ **Proposed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** initiative during the recent G20 summit.
    - ✓ **International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** for connecting India to the Middle east and Russia.

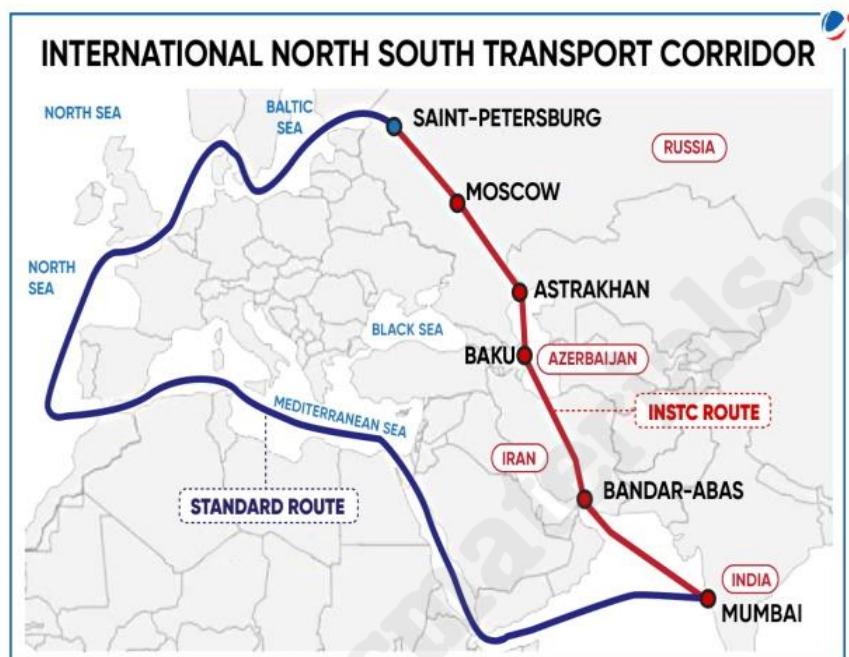
## 4.3. INTERNATIONAL NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORT CORRIDOR (INSTC)

### Why in news?

India and Iran to venture into long term collaborative framework for INSTC.

### About INSTC

- INSTC is a 7200 km **multi-modal transportation network**, first envisaged in 2000 by Russia, India and Iran, to promote transportation cooperation among the Member States.
- INSTC **connects Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to Caspian Sea** via Iran and is then connected to **Saint Petersburg and North European via Russia**.
- **Currently, it has 13 members:** India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Turkey, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Ukraine and Syria.



### INSTC Significance for India

- Will cut down the transportation costs of goods (by almost 30%)
- Will cut down transportation time (almost half compared to Suez Canal) between India and Russia.
- Reduce carriage cost between India and Russia by 30%.
- Bring down transit time to less than 25 days compared to 40 days.
- Will help India to gain smooth access into Central Asia and beyond.
- Reduce dependence on current trading partners.
- It is also being seen as India's answer to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- India's corridor to energy-rich Central Asia, Arctic, Nordic and Baltic region.

### Related News: Northern Sea Route

- Russia in talks with India to develop a Northern Sea Route (NSR).
- The Northern Sea Route (NSR), or the Northeast Passage (NEP), connects the eastern and western parts of the Arctic Ocean and lies within Russia's exclusive economic zone.
- It is a **5,600-km-long route**, and runs from the **Barents Sea to the Bering Strait** (Provideniya Bay).
- It spans four seas of the Arctic Ocean i.e., **Kara, Laptev, East Siberian, and Chukchi Sea**.
- It is the **shortest shipping route between Europe and countries of the Asia-Pacific region** (**one-third of the distance of the traditional route through the Suez Canal**).

- India's Engagement in NSR
  - The Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor (CVMC) project also known as Eastern Maritime Corridor(EMC) between India and Russia is an organized international container transit through the NSR.
  - CVMC route passes through Sea of Japan, South China Sea, and Malacca Strait.



## 4.4. ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

### Why in news?

Israel declared war on Palestine militant group Hamas under **Operation Iron Swords**, following their unprecedented attack under **Operation Toofan Al-Aqsa** (Al-Aqsa Flood).

### Key Events in Israel-Palestine Conflict

- Balfour Declaration by Britain (1917):** aimed to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.
- 1947:** UN voted to split Palestine into a separate Jewish and Arab state.
  - Rejected by **Arab states**, it led to declaration of state of Israel in 1948 and **first Arab-Israeli war**.
- 1956: Second Arab-Israeli War (Suez War):** Involving Israel, the UK, and France on one side against Egypt on the other.
  - The war marked the **decline of British and French influence** in the region, paving the way for the **United States to become the most influential power**.
- 1967: Third Arab-Israeli War (Six-day war):** Israel gained territorial control of Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt; West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan; and Golan Heights from Syria.
- 1973:** Yom Kippur War (Fourth Arab-Israeli War).
- 1987:** Hamas or Islamic Resistance Movement was founded after the **First Intifada to resist Israeli occupation** of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
  - The US, the EU, Israel, etc. have declared **Hamas a terrorist organisation**.

### About the country Israel (Capital: Jerusalem)



- Land Borders:**
  - Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt.
- Water Bodies:** Mediterranean Sea, Dead Sea, Jordan River, Sea of Galilee

- **1994: Palestinian Authority (PA)** was founded in by the **Oslo Accords as an interim body to govern parts of Gaza and the West Bank** (except East Jerusalem) till an agreed solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Currently, the **PA controls parts of the West Bank**.
  - The **Oslo Accords** (Signed between **Israel and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)**) aimed at **ending decades of conflict** through the implementation of the **two-State solution**.

#### **Other Landmark Peace Agreements between Israel and Arabs**

- **1978 Camp David Accords:** The Accords between **Egypt and Israel**, mediated by the US marked **a historic peace treaty between Israel and Egypt**.
- **Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty (1994):** With this, **Jordan** became **the second Arab country**, after Egypt, to make **peace with Israel**.
- **Arab Peace Initiative (2002):** Drawn up by Saudi Arabia, the initiative offered **Israel normalized relations** in exchange for a **Palestinian statehood** agreement and a complete **Israeli withdrawal from 1967-captured territory**.
- **Abraham Accords (2020):**
  - It refers to the **collective agreement between the United States (US), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel** that was signed in 2020.
  - These Accords were **later extended to the countries of Sudan, Bahrain and Morocco** (Sudan is yet to sign an agreement with Israel).
  - It marks the **first normalisation of ties between Israel and an Arab country** since Jordan in 1994.
  - The Accords were **called ‘the Abraham Accords’** as the three major monotheistic religions of the world, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, all find their roots in Prophet Abraham.
  - **Egypt was the first Arab State to sign a peace deal** with Israel in 1979. Jordan signed a peace pact in 1994.
  - Presently, **only five Arab states- Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Bahrain and Morocco have diplomatic relations with Israel**.

#### **India's stand on Israel and Palestine**

- India continues to **support two state solution**.
- At the UN **India voted against the partition plan** for Palestine and **Israel's admission to the UN**.
- India formally recognized Israel in 1950 and established full diplomatic relation with it in 1992.
- From **2017, India is following a ‘de-hyphenation Policy’** allowing for independent relationships with both Israel and Palestine.

#### **Related information**

**Operation Ajay:** India launched Operation Ajay to **facilitate the return of approx. 18,000 Indian citizens in Israel**, amidst the Israel-Hamas war.

### **4.4.1. YOM KIPPUR WAR**

#### **Why in the news?**

The attack by Hamas on Israel coincided with the **fiftieth anniversary of Yom Kippur War(1973)**.

#### **About Yom Kippur War (Fourth Arab-Israel War)**

- In October 1973, a coalition of Arab nations, led by **Egypt and Syria**, launched a **surprise, coordinated attack on Israel** on Yom Kippur, a Jewish holy day.
- **Purpose of war:** Egypt and Syria **hoped to reclaim lost territory after Israel's victory in the Six-Day War of 1967**.
- **Involvement of Superpower:** The **US supported Israel**, and the **Soviet Union supported Egypt** and Syria.
- **Ceasefire Attempts:** A ceasefire was achieved with the involvement of the **United Nations**.
- **Major Consequences of the war:** Israel took control of Golan Heights, Shift of Egypt's allegiance to US, Dent to the image of Israel and Oil Embargo against US.

## 4.4.2. INTERNATIONAL LAW ON WAR

### Why in news?

As per UN experts, Israel's war on Gaza breached international law.

### About the laws

- There are **two independent international laws related to wars**.
  - These laws emanate from **Just war theory** as per which 'taking human life is wrong but states have a **duty to defend** citizens and justice which may require willingness to use violence.

Law	Description
Jus ad bellum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defines the <b>legitimate reasons a state may engage in war</b>.</li> <li>It finds its source in <b>United Nations Charter of 1945</b>.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Article 2</b> prohibits members from use of force against <b>territorial integrity or political independence of any State</b>.</li> <li><b>Article 51</b> provides <b>inherent right of individual or collective self-defense</b> if an armed attack occurs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Jus in bello	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known as <b>international humanitarian law (IHL)</b> and provides <b>rules to be followed during armed conflict</b>.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finds its sources in <b>Hague Conventions</b> (1899 and 1907) and <b>1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols</b> (1977).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Its purpose is to <b>save lives and reduce suffering</b>.</li> <li><b>Both governmental forces and non-state armed groups</b> need to respect IHL.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Breach</b> of law may lead to prosecution for <b>War crime</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>In 1998 under Rome Statute an <b>international criminal court</b>, was established for repressing inter alia war crimes.</li> </ul>

## 4.5. GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

### Why in News?

Russian troops were accused of violating Geneva conventions in ongoing war.

### About Geneva Conventions

- Geneva Conventions are a **set of four treaties** (formalised in 1949) and **three additional protocols**.
- Geneva Conventions have been **ratified by 196 states**, including all UN member states.
- Three Protocols have been ratified by 174, 169 and 79 states respectively.



Geneva convention	What it covers?
First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Protects wounded and sick soldiers</b> on land during war.</li> <li>Also extends to medical and religious personnel, medical units, and medical transport.</li> </ul>
Second	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Protects wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel</b> at sea during war.</li> <li>Also extends to hospital ships and medical transports by sea.</li> </ul>
Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Applies to prisoners of war</b>, including a wide range of general protections such as humane treatment, maintenance, and equality across prisoners etc.</li> </ul>
Fourth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Protects civilians</b>, including those in occupied territory.</li> </ul>
<b>Three Additional Protocols</b>	
Protocol I and II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They <b>strengthen the protection of victims of international</b> (Protocol I) and <b>non-international</b> (Protocol II) armed conflicts and place limits on the way wars are fought.</li> </ul>
Protocol III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Created an additional emblem, the Red Crystal</b>, which has the same international status as the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems.</li> </ul>

### Related News amid Russia Ukraine War

#### Black Sea Grain Deal

- Recently, Russia withdrew from the Black Sea grain deal on the grounds of facing trouble exporting its own agricultural products and fertilisers.
- Black Sea Grain deal was brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye in 2022 between Russia and Ukraine.
- The deal tackled escalating food prices from supply chain disruptions due to the effective blockage of the Black Sea.
- It provided a safe maritime humanitarian corridor for Ukrainian exports from three of its key ports, namely, Chornomorsk, Odessa, and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi.
- The deal was for a period of 120 days with an option to extend or terminate. It was extended two times.



#### Scorched Earth Tactics

- Russia is being accused of using Scorched earth tactics in ongoing war against Ukraine.
- Scorched earth tactics form part of a military strategy which seeks to destroy anything that could be of use to enemy, including energy supplies, bridges, agricultural fields, road and railway links, etc.
- Strategy seeks to deplete the enemy's resources to sustain warfare, and also break their morale.
- Harming civilians as part of this strategy has been banned under the 1977 Geneva Convention.
- In India, armies of Chhatrapati Shivaji were known for their scorched earth tactics.

#### Dirty bomb

- Russia accuses Ukraine of continuing work on dirty bomb.
- Dirty Bomb is a bomb that contains radioactive material, such as uranium, which is scattered through the air when its conventional explosive detonates.
- It doesn't need to contain highly refined radioactive material, as is used in a nuclear bomb.
- This makes them much cheaper and quicker to make than nuclear weapons.

## 4.6. NORTH SEA SUMMIT

### Why in news?

Second North Sea summit held recently.

### About North Sea Summit

- North Sea Summit aims at making the North Sea the largest powerhouse of Europe by 2050 by taking its offshore wind capacity to 120 GW by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050.
- 7 European Union (EU) countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands), and 2 Non-EU countries Norway and United Kingdom participated.
- At the end of first summit in Denmark in 2022, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Netherlands signed the **Esbjerg Declaration**.
  - **Esbjerg Declaration** aimed at making the North Sea into the “Green Power Plant of Europe”, an offshore renewable energy system.



### About North Sea

- North Sea is a part of Atlantic Ocean and is located between Norway and Denmark (east), Scotland and England (west), and Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and France (south).
- It is connected to Atlantic by **Strait of Dover** and **English Channel**.

## 4.7. OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

### 4.7.1. COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (CPTPP)

- United Kingdom joined CPTPP.
  - It became the first new member and the first country in Europe to join the CPTPP.
- **About CPTPP**
  - **Genesis:** It was signed in March 2018 and came into force in December 2018.
    - ✓ It succeeded the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) after the United States withdrew from the TPP in 2017.
  - **About:** It is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between 11 nations.
  - **Member countries:** Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Peru, Mexico, and New Zealand.

#### 4.7.2. WINDSOR FRAMEWORK

- In 2023, UK and EU agreed on a new deal known as the '**Windsor Framework**', which **will replace the Northern Ireland Protocol** which led to disruptions in trade between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.
- **Features of Windsor Framework:** The introduction of a two lanes system and the '**Stormont Brake**'.
  - **The two lanes:** Goods from Britain destined for Northern Ireland will travel through a new "green lane", with a separate "red lane" for goods at risk of moving onto the EU.
  - **Stormont brake:** Under this, the democratically elected Northern Ireland Assembly can oppose new EU goods rules that would have significant and lasting effects on everyday lives in Northern Ireland.
- **About Northern Ireland Protocol:** It is a post-BREXIT agreement that created a custom border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom (UK).
  - **Under the protocol:**
    - ✓ Northern Ireland remains in the EU single market.
    - ✓ Trade-and-customs inspections of goods coming from Great Britain took place at Northern Ireland ports along the Irish Sea.
  - It was **proposed to protect the Good Friday Agreement (GFA)** for cross-border co-operation.
    - ✓ GFA was signed in 1998, between Northern Ireland, Britain and Ireland, to end 30 years of violence known as '**The Troubles**'.
    - ✓ Northern Ireland was created in 1921 and remained with United Kingdom when rest of Ireland became an independent state.
    - ✓ This resulted in violence between those who wished to remain with UK and those who wanted to join Ireland.
    - ✓ Recently, US President visited Northern Ireland to mark **25th anniversary of GFA**.

#### 4.7.3. LUSOPHONE WORLD

- **About Lusophone World (Portuguese-speaking countries)**
  - It is spread in **nine countries** across four continents.
  - Portuguese is the most spoken language in the Southern Hemisphere.
  - In 1996, Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), also known as Lusophone Commonwealth was formed.
  - CPLP is a multilateral forum with 9 member states and 32 associate observers (**India is associate observer**).

#### 4.7.4. SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY

- Japan and South Korea agreed to resume shuttle diplomacy to mend ties and move past lingering historical disputes.
  - The nations **share a complicated history**, tied to **atrocities committed when Japan colonised Korea**.
- Shuttle diplomacy is the **movement of diplomats between countries whose leaders refuse to talk directly to each other**, to settle the argument between them.

#### 4.7.5. WASHINGTON DECLARATION

- **On 70th anniversary of U.S.-South Korea bilateral relations** both side signed Washington Declaration.
- Declaration **advocates for nuclear deterrence policy in the region**, aiming to **balance power dynamics against North Korea**.
- **Note:** It is different from the Washington Declaration (1994) that formally ended state of war between Jordan and Israel.

#### **4.7.6. THE SPIRIT OF CAMP DAVID**

- Leaders of **United States, Japan, and South Korea** issued a joint statement titled 'The Spirit of Camp David'.
- Summit was held to project unity in the face of **China's growing power** and nuclear **threats from North Korea**.

**Note:** This is not to be confused with 1978 Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, mediated by the US.

# 5. ISSUES RELATED TO SECURITY

## 5.1. INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

### Why in news?

India is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the latest Global Terrorism Index (2023) released by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) and is one of the worst affected countries by terrorism.

#### Global Initiatives to counter terrorism

<b>United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS)</b>	Adopted in the form of a General Assembly resolution <b>in 2006</b> , to <b>enhance national, regional and international efforts</b> to counter terrorism.
<b>UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)</b>	It is tasked with <b>monitoring implementation of resolution 1373</b> (2001). The resolution requested countries to implement measures to enhance ability to counter terrorist activities at <b>home, in their regions and around the world</b> .
<b>Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)</b>	GCTF ( <b>India is a member</b> ) is an <b>informal, apolitical, multilateral</b> platform that facilitates <b>open discussions among stakeholders</b> , bringing together experts and practitioners from across the world's regions.
<b>United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme</b>	It is a <b>flagship global initiative</b> of the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT) that assists Member States in building their <b>capabilities to detect and counter-terrorists</b> . India is a <b>member of The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)</b> .
<b>Financial Action Task Force (FATF)</b>	It is the <b>international standard-setter</b> for Anti-Money Laundering and <b>Countering the Financing of Terrorism</b> to <b>build and implement international standards</b> in this regard.
<b>SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)</b>	It develops and strengthens <b>cooperation with international and regional organizations</b> to consolidate efforts towards <b>counter terrorism, separatism and extremism</b> .
<b>Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)</b>	It intends to <b>criminalise all forms of international terrorism</b> , denial of safe havens, access to funds, and arms to <b>terrorists and the financiers of terrorism</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ It is <b>proposed by India on 17 December 1996</b> in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).</li></ul>

#### Domestic policy initiatives by India towards counter terrorism

- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**, provides for the more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of **individuals and associations**.
- **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** functioning as Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency in country.
- **National Intelligence Grid or NATGRID** that aims to provide a “cutting-edge technology to enhance India’s **counter-terror** capabilities.
- **Creation of two new divisions (Counterterrorism and Counter-Radicalisation Division and Cyber and Security division)** in Ministry of Home affairs to give focused attention to the issues relating to terrorism, counter radicalization, cyber security etc.

### 5.1.1. UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT (UAPA)

#### Why in news?

Ministry of Home Affairs declared ‘Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party’ as an ‘Unlawful Association’ and also bans 9 Meitei extremist groups under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967.

#### About UAPA

- UAPA was enacted for effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations, for dealing with terrorist activities, and for matters connected therewith.
- **Key provisions**
  - Offences are **cognizable** (arrest could be made without a warrant).
  - **Penalty:** Death or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to a fine if such act has resulted in the death of any person.
  - **Unlawful Association**
    - ✓ **Declaration of an association unlawful:** By the Centre through an official gazette notification, by specifying the grounds.
    - ✓ **Reference to Tribunal:** On the declaration of being unlawful, the notification should be referred to Tribunal within 30 days.
    - ✓ **Investigation:** Cases can be investigated by both State police and National Investigation Agency (NIA).
    - ✓ **Other powers to centre**
      - to prohibit the use of funds of an unlawful association
      - To notify places used for the purpose of an unlawful association.
  - **Terrorist act:**
    - ✓ **Definition:** It includes any act intended to threaten the unity, integrity, security or sovereignty of India or strike terror people in India or in any foreign country among others.
    - ✓ **Forfeiture of proceeds of terrorism:** By the Investigating officer with the prior approval of the designated authority.

## 5.2. PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANY (PMC)

#### Why in news?

Recently, there was rebellion in Russia by Wagner Group, a Private Military Company.

#### About Private Military Companies (PMC)

- PMC refers to a **privately owned and operated organization** that provides military and security services on a contractual basis.
- **Operative Aspects:** Private military companies operate independently of government military forces and are distinct from official state military organizations.
  - They are **hired by governments, corporations, international organizations, or individuals** to carry out specific tasks, often in conflict zones or areas with security risks.

#### About Wagner Group

- The Wagner Group also known as PMC Wagner is controlled indirectly by the Russian military and intelligence which supply it weapons and also provide Russian military facilities for training.
- The group was first identified in 2014 while backing pro-Russian separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.
- The group has operated in conflict-ridden African and Arab countries.
- Western countries and UN experts have designated it a transnational criminal organization.

## 5.3. PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT (PMLA)

#### Why in news?

Ministry of Finance notified changes to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

#### More on news

- New rule has brought in **practicing chartered accountants, company secretaries, and cost and works accountants** carrying out **financial transactions on behalf of their clients** into the ambit of PMLA.

- Financial transactions that would be considered for monitoring include **buying and selling of any immovable property; managing of client money**, securities or other assets; **management of bank, savings or securities accounts** etc.
- It also includes individuals-
  - **functioning as formation agents** of companies or limited liability partnerships (LLPs).
  - acting as a **director or secretary** of a company.
  - who provide the company with an **office or correspondence address**.
  - **acting as a trustee of an express trust** or nominee shareholders on behalf of other persons.

#### About PMLA Act

- It was enacted in 2002 in response to **India's global commitment** (including Vienna Convention) to combat money laundering.
- It enables authorities to **confiscate property** earned from illegally gained proceeds.
- **Enforcement Directorate (ED)**, a financial investigation agency under Department of Revenue, **enforces PMLA**.

## 5.4. GLOBAL NUCLEAR REGULATIONS

#### Why in the news?

Recently, the Russian parliament passed a bill revoking Russia's ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

#### More about the news

- The passage of the bill **will “mirror” the stand taken by the U.S.**, which has signed but not ratified the CTBT.
- The move has raised concerns that Russia may resume nuclear tests.
- The incident sheds light on nuclear regulations and their efficacy across the globe.

#### International regulations regarding nuclear weapons

Regulations	Details	India's Status
<b>Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), 1996</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prohibits <b>any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion</b> anywhere in the world (not yet in force).           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>8 nations have not ratified the treaty yet:</b> China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel, Iran, Egypt, and the United States.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Not ratified the treaty</b>
<b>Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) - 1963</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water.</li> </ul>	<b>Signed and ratified</b>
<b>Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 1968</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limiting the spread of nuclear weapons through the three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>India, South Sudan, Israel, and Pakistan have never been signatories of the Treaty</b>, and North Korea withdrew from the Treaty in 2003.</li> <li>○ The <b>International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)</b> is entrusted with key verification responsibilities under the Treaty.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Not signed the treaty</b>
<b>Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is the <b>first legally binding multilateral agreement</b> to ban nuclear weapons adopted by UN (entered into force in 2021).           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is <b>signed by 91 states and ratified by 68 states</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Not signed or ratified</b>

<b>Multilateral Export Control Regimes (MECR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voluntary and binding agreements to prevent transfer of goods and technologies that support <b>proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD)</b>. These include:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Nuclear supplier groups (NSG)</b>, 1974 to prevent exports of nuclear related technology. It is a group of forty-eight nuclear supplier countries.</li> <li><b>Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)</b> for control of rockets and other aerial vehicles.</li> <li><b>Wassenaar Arrangement (WA)</b> for conventional Arms and Dual Use Technologies.</li> <li><b>Australia Group (AG)</b> for control of chemical and biological technologies that could be weaponized.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Member of MTCR, WA, AG.</li> <li>• Not a member of NSG.</li> </ul>	
<b>Concept of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a regional approach to <b>strengthening global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms</b> and consolidating international efforts towards peace and security.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Presently there are five treaties:</b> Treaty of Tlatelolco (For Latin America and the Caribbean), Treaty of Rarotonga (for south pacific), Treaty of Bangkok (for southeast Asia), Treaty of Pelindaba (for Africa), Treaty of Semipalatinsk (for Central Asia).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Other treaties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Outer Space Treaty (OST), 1967</b> : It prohibits the <b>placing of nuclear weapons in space</b>.</li> <li><b>Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)</b>: <b>Proposed international agreement</b> that would prohibit the production of the two main components of nuclear weapons: <b>highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium</b>.</li> <li><b>Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START I, START II, New START)</b>: A series of bilateral treaties between the United States and the Soviet Union/Russian Federation aimed at reducing and limiting strategic offensive arms.</li> </ul>	Signed the OST and supports FMCT

## 5.5. SPACE WARFARE

### Why in the news?

China has reportedly established the world's first 'near-space command,' equipped with powerful hypersonic weapons.

- The new command will act as China's 5<sup>th</sup> force, apart from the 4 current branches—Army, Navy, Air Force and Rocket Force.

### What is near space and China's near-space command?

- Near Space** refers to the area in Earth's atmosphere, approximately **20 to 100 kilometers from the Earth's surface**.
  - In this region, the air is very thin, **preventing military aircraft from flying**, and **satellites can't be placed due to strong gravity**, creating a No-Man's land region.
- China's near-space command** will be equipped with-
  - **Modern hypersonic missiles** to target critical military assets of enemies;
  - **Spy balloons, solar-powered drones** and other supporting equipment to carry out **High-altitude surveillance** around the globe.

## About Space warfare

- Advent of Space warfare **began in 1962** when the US exploded a ground-based nuclear weapon in space, which eventually led to the **Outer Space Treaty of 1967**.
- Today, Space is emerging as the 4th dimension of warfare.

## Types of Space weapons

- **Earth-to-space kinetic weapons:** Direct-ascent and briefly orbital Anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons.
- **Space-to-space kinetic weapons:** Debris-creating, co-orbital ASAT weapons.
- **Space-to-Earth kinetic weapons:** Fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS) –Space-based global strike.
- **Earth-to-space non-kinetic weapons:** Jammers, Lasers, Cyber-attacks, Spoofing, etc.
- **Space-to-space non-kinetic weapons:** Co-orbital jammers, high-powered microwaves (HPMs), lasers, etc.

## Global framework for maintaining peace in space

- **Outer Space Treaty (1967):** Prohibits the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space.
- **Liability Convention (1972):** It outlines the liability of Launching States for damage caused by their space objects both on the Earth or in space.
- **Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (1975):** Requires space-faring nations to register their space objects with the UN.
- **Moon Agreement (1979):** It states that the moon and other celestial bodies should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and their environments should not be disrupted.
- **Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), 1963:** It prohibits all testing of nuclear weapons in outer space.
- **Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS):** It is a UN resolution seeking a ban on the weaponization of space.
- **United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA):** To foster **global collaboration in the peaceful utilization and exploration of outer space**, as well as the effective application of space science and technology to achieve sustainable economic and social progress. 102 countries are part to it (**including India**).
- **Others:** Sino-Russian proposal of **Prevention of Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and Threat (PPWT)**, the European Space Agency's '**Code**', as well US' **Artemis Accords** focusing on preventing space arm race.

### India's steps for developing capabilities in space

- **Mission Shakti:** Anti- Satellite (ASAT) missile
- **Defence Space Agency (DSA):** Tri-service agency of the India Armed Forces
- **Defence Space Research Agency (DSRA):** Creating space warfare weapon systems and technologies
- **Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC):** Covered area includes India and a region upto 1500Km beyond Indian Boundaries.
- **IndSpaceEx:** Simulated space warfare exercise
- **Mission Def-Space** to make India Atmanirbhar in defence technologies in the space domain.

## 5.6. DRUG TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

### Why in news?

Recently, at least 2,500 kg drugs, suspected to be methamphetamine was seized near the Kerala coast in a joint operation by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and Indian Navy as part of **Operation Samudragupt**.

## About Operation Samudragupt

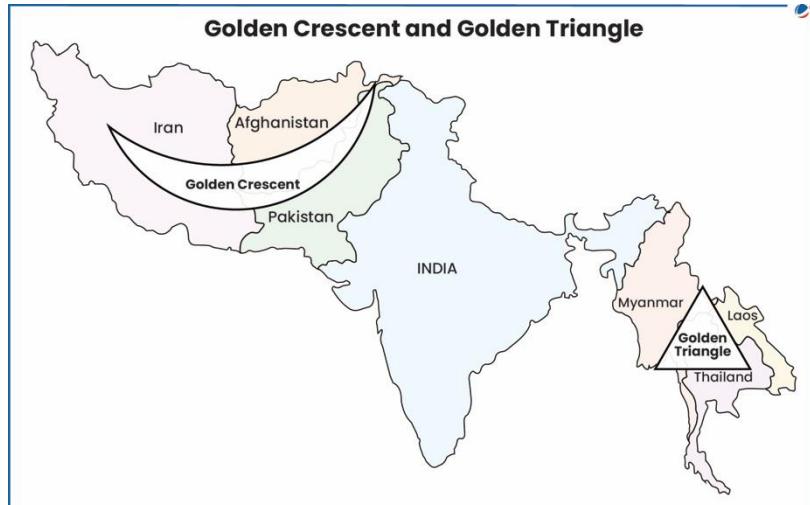
- Operation Samudragupt was **launched by the NCB in January 2022**, to intercept contraband that is brought into India through the marine channel.

- It is part of the Union government's plan to **make India drug-free by 2047**.

#### About Drug Trafficking In India

- India has become a transit hub as well as a destination for drugs produced in Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent.**
- In recent years, drug trafficking through sea routes** estimated to account for **around 70% of total illegal drugs smuggled into India**.
- Major trafficking of heroin** takes place through **Indo-Pakistan border – Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir**

#### Initiatives taken to prevent drug trafficking and abuse



- Signatory to UN conventions:** Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961; Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971; Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.
- Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:** Provides for **identification, treatment, rehabilitation, social re-integration** of the addict among others and instituted **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**.
- National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR)** for 2018-2025: Provides for a **multi-pronged strategy** involving awareness generation programmes, Community outreach, etc.
- Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA):** Launched in **272 most vulnerable districts** under which a massive community outreach is being done.
- e-portal called 'SIMS' (Seizure Information Management System)** for cases involving large seizures.
- Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) mechanism** for effective drug law enforcement and better coordination among Central and State agencies.

#### About NCB

- Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Genesis:** Established in 1986 under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act).
- Mandates:**
  - Co-ordination of action by various offices** under the NDPS Act, Customs Act, Drugs and Cosmetics Act etc.
  - Implementation of the obligation in respect of counter measures** against illicit traffic under the various international conventions.
  - Assistance to concerned authorities in foreign countries** universal action for prevention and suppression of illicit traffic in these drugs and substances.
  - Coordination of actions taken by the other concerned Ministries**, Departments and Organizations in respect of matters relating to drug abuse.
- Powers:** It has all the powers of a Civil court trying a suit under the code of Civil Procedure, 1908

## 5.7. CYBERSECURITY

#### Why in the news?

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) highlights that India encountered a considerable number of cybersecurity incidents in 2022, with a total of 13.91 lakhs reported cases.

## Key findings

- **The top three industries affected** by malware in India in 2022 were banking, government, and manufacturing.
- **Increased Ransomware Attacks:** There is a 53% increase in Ransomware incidents reported in 2022 Year over Year.
  - IT & ITeS was a majorly impacted sector followed by **Finance and Manufacturing**.

## About CERT-In

- CERT-In is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur.
- Operational since 2004.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- **Mandate:** Under the **Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008**, it is mandated to provide **Incident Prevention, Response, and Security Quality Management Services**.
- It operates 24x7.

## Other news related to CERT-IN

	<p><b>Initiatives for Cyber Security</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information Technology Act 2000</li><li>• National Cyber Security Policy 2013</li><li>• National Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security (NCoE)</li><li>• Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)</li><li>• National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)</li><li>• Cyber Swachhta Kendra</li><li>• Information Security Education and Awareness Project (ISEA)</li><li>• National Cyber Security Strategy 2020</li><li>• National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal</li><li>• A toll-free number- 1930</li><li>• Cyber Crisis Management Plan by CERT-In</li><li>• Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System (CFCFRMS)</li></ul>
<b>Guidelines on Information Security Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CERT-In issues “Guidelines on Information Security Practices” for government entities.</li><li>• These guidelines are issued under the powers conferred by <b>section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000</b>.</li><li>• It applies to all Ministries, Departments, and Offices specified in the <b>First Schedule to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961</b>.</li><li>• <b>Key guidelines</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Report security breaches within <b>six hours of being noticed</b></li><li>○ Mandatory <b>cyber security audits every six months</b></li><li>○ <b>Employees to be logged out</b> when inactive for more than 15 minutes</li><li>○ Admin access to the system only with the approval of the <b>chief information security officer</b></li></ul></li></ul>
<b>CERT-In exempted from the Right To Information (RTI) Act, 2005</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Department of Personnel and Training</b> issued a notification under section 24 (2) of the RTI Act, 2005 adding CERT-In in the Second Schedule of the RTI Act.</li><li>• <b>Section 24 of the RTI Act:</b> It says that this law is not applicable to the intelligence and security organizations specified in the Second Schedule.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ However, the information pertaining to the <b>allegations of corruption and human rights violations shall not be excluded</b>.</li><li>○ The second Schedule includes intelligence and security agencies under its ambit like RAW, IB, etc. After CERT-in it has 27 agencies.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Ransomware Report-2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>CERT-In releases Ransomware Report-2022</b></li><li>• <b>Lockbit</b> was the <b>most prevalent ransomware</b> variant in India, followed by <b>Makop</b> and <b>DJVU/ Stop ransomware</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>LockBit ransomware was found to be targeting Mac devices</b>.</li><li>○ <b>It was dubbed the “abcd” virus</b>, due to file extension used when encrypting victim’s files.</li><li>○ <b>It is categorised as a “crypto virus”</b> due to its requests for payment in cryptocurrency to decrypt files.</li></ul></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It operates on ransomware-as-a-service (Raas) model.</li> <li>New variants such as Vice Society and BlueSky were noticed in 2022.</li> <li>Makop and Phobos Ransomware families mainly targeted medium and small organizations, while Djvu/Stop variants were used at individual level.</li> </ul>	<pre> graph TD     A[Category of malware that gains access to systems and makes them unusable to its legitimate users] --&gt; B[Ransomware]     B --&gt; C[Crypto Ransomware - Encrypt different files on targeted systems]     B --&gt; D[Locker Ransomware - Lock the system's screen unless a ransom is paid]   </pre>
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### 5.7.1. OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Cyber-attacks in news	
Acoustic Side Channel Attacks (ASCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of laptops has increased the scope of ASCAs as laptop models have the same keyboard which eases the interpretation by AI-enabled deep learning.</li> <li>ASCA is a type of cyberattack wherein Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used to decode passwords by analyzing the sound produced by keystrokes.</li> <li>SCAs are a method of hacking a cryptographic algorithm based on the analysis of auxiliary systems (electromagnetic waves, power consumption, sound from keyboard, printer, etc.) used in the encryption method.</li> </ul>
Spear phishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% of Indian firms are victims of spear phishing in last 12 months, shows data.</li> <li>Spear phishing is a highly personalised form of email attack.</li> <li>Spear-phishing emails try to steal sensitive information, such as login credentials or financial information, which is then used to commit fraud, identity theft, and other crimes.</li> </ul>
Smishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian cyber agency warned against a new scam called Smishing.</li> <li>Smishing is a social engineering attack (uses psychological manipulation and exploits human error).</li> <li>Uses fake mobile text messages to trick people into downloading malware, sharing sensitive information, or sending money to cybercriminals.</li> <li>Combination of SMS (short message service) and phishing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phishing uses social engineering to trick victims into paying money, handing over sensitive information, or downloading malware.</li> <li>Voice phishing is commonly known as Vishing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
FluHorse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Android malware known as 'FluHorse' has been discovered,</li> <li>Targeted users with malicious apps that look like legitimate versions.</li> <li>Being deployed using targeted phishing techniques through emails.</li> <li>Designed to extract sensitive information, including user credentials and Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) codes.</li> </ul>
Spamouflage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meta has taken down thousands of Facebook accounts that were part of a campaign known as "Spamouflage".</li> <li>Spamouflage was a widespread online Chinese spam operation which posted praise for China and criticisms of the USA, western foreign policies, and critics of Chinese government.</li> <li>Similar campaign by Russia, named Doppelganger, was disrupted last year.</li> <li>It mimicked websites of mainstream news outlets in Europe and post bogus stories about Russia's war on Ukraine, then try to spread them online.</li> </ul>

Cyber initiatives by India	
<b>Zero Trust Authentication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre has established a <b>secure e-mail system for 10,000 users</b> across critical ministries and departments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>National Informatics Centre (NIC)</b> has designed this system, incorporating <b>Zero Trust Authentication (ZTA)</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>About ZTA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ZTA will address <b>rapidly evolving security risks</b> faced by IT systems.</li> </ul> </li> <li>It uses <b>multi-factor authentication, continuous monitoring</b> etc.</li> </ul>
<b>TTPs-Based Cybercrime Investigation Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TTPs ((Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures) -based cybercrime investigation framework was <b>developed by IIT Kanpur</b> with support from the <b>Department of Science and Technology (DST)</b> under <b>National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)</b>.</li> <li>It is a methodology and tool for apprehending cybercriminals' modes of operations in a crime execution lifecycle.</li> <li><b>NM-ICPS</b> aims to develop technology platforms to carry <b>out R&amp;D, translational research, product development, incubating &amp; supporting start-ups, and commercialization</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Chakra-II operation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBI recently searched many locations under "<b>Chakra-II</b>" operation.</li> <li>It is aimed at <b>combating and dismantling infrastructure of organized cyber-enabled financial crimes</b> in India.</li> <li><b>Chakra-1</b> was conducted by the <b>CBI in coordination with the Interpol, the FBI and police forces of multiple countries</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Command Cyber Operations and Support Wings (CCOSW)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Army to raise CCOSW for handling cyberspace challenges</b>.</li> <li><b>CCOSWs will assist</b> its formations in <b>taking up cyberspace security challenges</b> posed by the <b>growing warfare capabilities of adversaries</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>CCOSWs will safeguard the networks and increase preparedness levels</b> in this niche domain.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Army will also nominate 'Lead Directorates' and 'Test Bed' formations</b> for absorption of <b>niche technologies and enhancing fighting potential</b>.</li> </ul>
Global Cyber Initiatives	
<b>First Anti-Spyware Declaration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The USA and 10 other nations issued the <b>first-ever significant anti-spyware declaration</b>.</li> <li>It <b>recognized the threat posed by the misuse of commercial spyware</b></li> <li><b>About Spyware</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spyware is a <b>type of malicious software or malware</b> that is installed on a computing device without the end user's knowledge.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>It invades the device, steals sensitive information</b> and internet usage data, and relays it to advertisers, data firms, or external users.</li> </ul>

## 5.8. THEATRE COMMANDS

### Why in News?

Three Theatre Commands to be established as Armed Forces reach consensus.

### More on News

- Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force** have achieved a consensus on **establishment of three theatre commands** by 2024.
- Will be headed by a senior **three-star general** (Lieutenant Generals, Air Marshals, or Vice Admirals).
  - These commands will be responsible for managing-
    - ✓ **Northern borders with China**
    - ✓ **Western front with Pakistan**
    - ✓ **Maritime command** in peninsular India.

#### About Theatre Command

- Putting specific number of personnel from three services under a common commander in a specified geographical territory.
  - Shekatkar committee and Kargil review committee had recommended the creation of theatre commands.
  - India has 19 military commands with 17 (Army 7, IAF 7, and Navy 3) of them service oriented.
- Currently, India has two unified commands:
  - Andaman and Nicobar Command, which is geographical.
  - Strategic Forces Command, which is functional and handles the country's nuclear arsenal.

### 5.8.1. INTER-SERVICES ORGANISATION (COMMAND, CONTROL & DISCIPLINE) ACT, 2023

#### Why in the news?

Both houses of the Parliament passed this bill recently.

#### Key Highlights of the act

- Define Inter-services Organisation (ISO): as a body of troops including a Joint Services Command consisting of persons subject to the Air Force Act, 1950, the Army Act, 1950 and the Navy Act, 1957 or any two of the said Acts.
- Centre to constitute ISO: which has personnel belonging to at least two of the three services: the army, the navy, and the air force. This may also include a joint service command.
- Empowers the Commander-in-Chief: The Chief is empowered to take disciplinary and administrative actions over personnel serving in Inter-services Organisations in accordance with their respective service acts.
- Continuation of existing Organizations: Existing ISO includes the Andaman and Nicobar Command, the Defence Space Agency, and the National Defence Academy.
- Superintendence of Central Government: The ISO are placed under the oversight of the Central Government, allowing it to issue directions as needed for national security or general administration.
- Expeditious disposal of cases & greater integration: The provisions expedite the disposal of the cases and provide better integration and jointmanship (theaterisation) amongst Armed Forces personnel.

### 5.9. DEFENSE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (DRDO)

#### Why in the news?

The Ministry of Defense (MoD) has constituted a nine-member committee headed by Prof. K VijayaRaghavan to review the functioning of DRDO and suggest restructuring and redefining its role.

#### About DRDO

- HQ: New Delhi, India
- About: R&D wing of Ministry of Defence with a vision to empower the nation with state-of-the-art indigenous Defence technologies and systems.
- Mission:
  - To provide technological solutions to the Services to optimise combat effectiveness.
  - To equip armed forces with state-of-the-art weapon systems and equipment.
- Major products/systems developed: Agni and Prithvi series of missiles; BrahMos; light combat aircraft, Tejas; multi-barrel rocket launcher, Pinaka; air defence system, Akash; a wide range of radars and electronic warfare systems, Main Battle Tank 'Arjun Mk-I etc.

## 5.10. CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES (CAPF)

### Why in the news?

The Ministry of Home Affairs had mentioned that around 1532 Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel had died by suicide in the last 13 years.

### About Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)

- There are **7 CAPF forces** are under the authority of the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- **Total sanctioned strength of CAPFs** is around 11 Lakhs.
- **Representation of women** in all CAPFs is 3.76%.
- **Various Forces include:**

Forces	Mandate
Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Created in 1963</b> guarding <b>Bhutan and Nepal borders</b>.</li></ul>
Border Security Force (BSF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Created in 1965</b>, guarding <b>India's borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh</b>.</li><li>• It is also <b>thrusted with Anti Naxal operation</b>, United Nations Peace keeping operations, disaster management and Border Area development programmes.</li></ul>
Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Created in 1962</b>, guarding <b>India-China borders</b>.</li></ul>
Assam Rifles (AR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Created in 1835</b> as 'Cachar Levy' to protect British tea estates and was renamed as "AR" in 1917. It is the <b>oldest CAPF</b> in India.</li><li>• It <b>protects the Indo-Myanmar border</b>.</li><li>• Though the AR functions under the <b>administrative control of the MHA</b>, its <b>operational control</b> rests with the <b>Ministry of Defence</b>.</li></ul>
Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Created in 1939</b> to <b>maintain Rule of Law, Public Order and Internal Security</b> and Promote Social Harmony.</li></ul>
Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Created in 1969</b>, to provide integrated security cover to certain sensitive public sector undertakings.</li><li>• The CISF also protects important <b>government buildings, monuments, airports, nuclear installations, space establishments and the Delhi Metro</b>.</li></ul>
National Security Guard (NSG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Created in 1986</b>, to create a federal contingency force to tackle various manifestations of terrorism.</li><li>• <b>Modelled on lines of the SAS of UK and GSG-9 of Germany</b>, their role is to handle all facets of terrorism in any part of the country.</li></ul>

## 5.11. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

### 5.11.1. INFORMATION FUSION CENTRE FOR INDIAN OCEAN REGION (IFC-IOR)

- 2023 marked the completion of **5 years of IFC-IOR**.
- IFC-IOR, **hosted by Indian Navy**, was established by Government of India at **Information Management and Analysis Centre, Gurugram** in 2018.
- It aims at **strengthening maritime security in the region** by building a common coherent maritime situation picture and acting as a maritime security information sharing hub.
- IFC-IOR hosts **International Liaison Officers from 12 partner nations** including countries like Australia, France, USA and others.

### **5.11.2. COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE (CSC)**

- India attended **6th National Security Adviser level meeting of Colombo Security Conclave** held in Mauritius.
- CSC was **initiated in 2011** by India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.
  - Mauritius was added as a member, with Bangladesh and Seychelles as observers in 2021.
  - **Secretariat:** Colombo, Sri Lanka.
  - **Area of cooperation** includes maritime security, countering terrorism, cyber security etc.

### **5.11.3. MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE**

- The latest Munich Security Conference **celebrated its 60th anniversary**.
- The Munich Security Conference is an **annual conference on global security issues, which was founded in 1963**.
- After the end of the Cold War, the conference expanded its agenda to include issues such as climate change and migration.
  - It also started to invite leaders from eastern nations, including Russia, India and China.
- For the first time in 20 years, **Russia hasn't been invited to the event**, a response to its ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

### **5.11.4. MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE TREATIES (MLATS)**

- **India and Belgium have signed MLATs in criminal matters** to help both countries to execute each other's search warrants and summons against fugitives wanted by individual investigating agencies.
- MLATs is a mechanism whereby **countries cooperate with one another to provide and obtain formal assistance** to ensure that the criminals do not escape or sabotage the due process of law.
  - **Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry** for executing court orders under the MLATs.
- Section 105 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) explains the reciprocal arrangements to be made.

### **5.11.5. OPEN SKIES TREATY (OST)**

- **Russia pulled out of the Open Skies Treaty (OST)** citing earlier withdrawal of the USA from the treaty.
- **About Open Skies Treaty (OST)**
  - OST is an **agreement that permits each state-party to conduct short-notice, unarmed, reconnaissance flights over the other's territories** to collect data on military forces and activities.
  - **OST was signed in 1992 and came into effect in 2002**.
- Currently **33 states have ratified the treaty**.
  - **India and China are not members to the treaty**.
- **Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC)** comprised of representatives of all state parties, is responsible for implementation of OST.
- **It is different from the Open Sky Agreements** which are bilateral agreements that the two countries negotiate to provide rights for airlines to offer international passenger and cargo services.

### **5.11.6. NEW START (STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY)**

- Russia suspended New START treaty, last remaining major military agreement with US.
  - Russia claimed that the USA had not complied with the treaty's provisions and had attempted to undermine Russia's national security.
- **About New START**
  - **Genesis:** It entered into force in 2011.
  - **About:** It is a **treaty between US and Russia for reduction and limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms** and placed verifiable limits on intercontinental-range nuclear weapons.
    - ✓ It replaced the previous START treaty (between US and erstwhile USSR) that had expired in 2009.

- ✓ 2002 Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT, or Moscow Treaty) entered into force in 2003, followed New START.
- Under the agreement, both sides are committed to the following:
  - ✓ **Deploying no more than 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads** and a maximum of 700 long-range missiles and bombers.
  - ✓ **A limit of 800 intercontinental ballistic missiles** in deployment.
  - ✓ Each side **can conduct up to 18 inspections** of strategic nuclear weapons sites yearly to ensure the other has not breached the treaty's limits.
  - ✓ In 2021, United States and the Russian agreed to extend the treaty till 2026.

#### **5.11.7. OPERATION PROSPERITY GUARDIAN**

- United States launched Operation Prosperity Guardian.
- **About Operation:**
  - It is **multinational security initiative** under structure of existing **Combined Task Force 153 (CTF 153)**.
    - ✓ **CTF-153** was set up in 2022 to **improve maritime security** in Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden.
    - ✓ It brings together countries including United Kingdom, Bahrain, Canada, France, Seychelles, Spain, etc.
    - ✓ It was **launched in the backdrop of escalation in attack on commercial ships** such as recent hijack of ship by Houthi's (key party in Yemen Civil war).

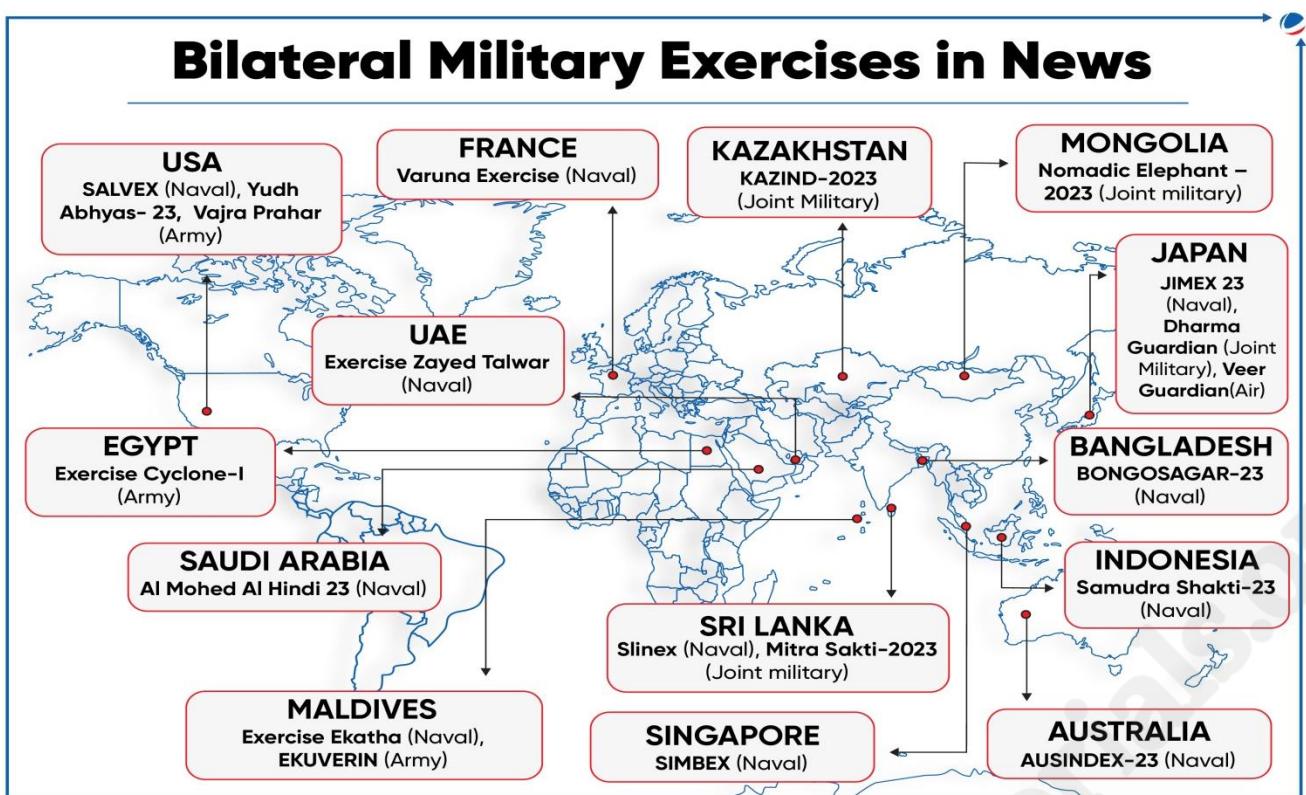
#### **5.11.8. CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

- **United States has destroyed the last of its declared chemical weapons stockpile**, a milestone in the history of warfare.
- The US and the Soviet Union agreed in principle in 1989 to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles and later the US ratified the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)** in 1997.
- **About CWC**
  - It is the **world's first multilateral disarmament agreement to provide for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction** within a fixed time frame.
  - It is **administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** headquartered in Hague, Netherlands.
  - **Members:** 193 state parties (**including India**) and 165 signatories.
  - **Israel has signed but not ratified.** Three states have neither signed nor ratified (**Egypt, North Korea, and South Sudan**).
  - **Unique feature of the convention:** '**Challenge inspection**', whereby any State Party in doubt about another State Party's compliance can request a surprise inspection.

#### **5.11.9. TRENDS IN WORLD MILITARY EXPENDITURE, 2022 REPORT**

- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2022 Report.
- SIPRI is a **Sweden-based independent international institute** dedicated to **research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament**.
- **Key highlights of report**
  - **Five biggest** spenders in 2022 were **United States, China, Russia, India and Saudi Arabia**, which together accounted for **63% of world military spending**.
    - ✓ With military expenditure of **\$81.4 billion**, India was **fourth largest spender** in 2022.
- **India's defence exports** have reached an **all-time high** of **Rs. 16,000 crore** in FY 2022-23 (**target- ₹35,000 crore** by 2025).

## 5.12. MILITARY EXERCISES IN NEWS



### Other Military Exercises in News

Tri Service Exercises	
Exercise Kavach	Conducted by Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), it is joint military exercise involving the assets of Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.
Exercise BRIGHT STAR- 23	BRIGHT STAR-23 is a biennial multilateral tri-service exercise held in Egypt. For the first time, Indian Air Force participated in it.
Multinational Exercises	
Operation Southern Readiness – 2023	It is an annual multinational exercise (India, USA, Italy, UK, Seychelles) conducted by Combined Maritime Forces.
Ex Khaan Quest 2023	Indian Army participated in Ex Khaan Quest (in Mongolia), a multinational peacekeeping joint exercise.
INIOCHOS-23	Indian Air Force participated in Exercise INIOCHOS-23, a multi-national air exercise hosted by the Greece Air Force.
Exercise Orion	India, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and United States of America participated.
Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise (FTX) 2023	Multinational joint military exercise conducted by ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus Expert Working Group. India participated in the exercise being held in Russia.
Exercise Malabar	Joint naval exercise between 4 Indo-Pacific partner nations: Australia, India, Japan and the United States.
Operation Southern Readiness – 2023	It is an annual multinational exercise (India, USA, Italy, UK, Seychelles) conducted by Combined Maritime Forces.
Desert flag	Multilateral air exercise in which Air Forces from UAE, France, Kuwait, Australia, UK, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, Republic of Korea, and USA participated.

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