

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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1. MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS

1.1. UN80 INITIATIVE

Why in the News?

A progress report on third workstream of UN80 Initiative was recently released.

About UN80 Initiative

- It was launched by Secretary-General in March 2025 as UN marks its 80th anniversary.
- **Aim:** To streamline operations, sharpen impact, and reaffirm the UN's relevance. It also seeks to improve efficiency and reassert the values of multilateralism at a time when trust is low and needs are high.
- **Three main work streams:**
 - **Identifying efficiencies** and improvements in the way the UN works.
 - **Reviewing the implementation of mandates** received from Member States.
 - **Examining possible structural changes** and programme realignments in the UN system.
- **Coordinated by:** UN80 Task Force, which is chaired by Under-Secretary-General for Policy.



United Nations (UN)



New York

 **Genesis:** 1945, Charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco.

 **Charter Principles:** International peace and security, Sovereign equality, cooperation, human rights.

 **Main Organs:**

- ▶ **General Assembly (UNGA):** All UN Member States are its members.
 - ▷ Has Equal vote; elects non-permanent UNSC members.
- ▶ **Security Council (UNSC):** 15 members (P5 with veto + 10 elected); maintains peace & security.
- ▶ **Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC):** 54 members; coordinates economic, social, environmental work.
- ▶ **International Court of Justice (ICJ):** Judicial organ; settles disputes between states (Peace Palace in The Hague).
- ▶ **Trusteeship Council:** Inactive since 1994.
- ▶ **Secretariat:** Headed by UN Secretary-General; administrative & coordination functions.

 **Specialized Agencies** (Autonomous, linked via agreements with UN) (15 Organizations)

- ▷ **FAO** – Rome, **ICAO** – Montreal, **IFAD** – Rome, **ILO** – Geneva, **IMF** – Washington, DC, **IMO** – London, **ITU** – Geneva, **UNESCO** – Paris, **UNIDO** – Vienna, **UN Tourism** – Madrid, **UPU** – Bern, **WHO** – Geneva, **WIPO** – Geneva, **WMO** – Geneva, **World Bank** – Washington, DC.

 **Membership:** 193 countries. (India is a founding member).

- ▶ States are admitted to membership by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

 **Funds and Programmes:** UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, UN-HABITAT etc.

1.2. UN SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

Why in the News?

5 countries **Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Latvia, and Liberia** were **elected to serve as non-permanent** members of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**.



UNSC



Genesis: Established in 1945 through the UN Charter as one of the 6 principal organs of the UN.



Purpose: Maintaining international peace and security.



Composition: 15 Members:

- **5 Permanent Members** (China, France, Russia, UK, and US) – Enjoy **veto power**.
- **10 Non-Permanent Members**, elected by UNGA for a **two-year term** through secret ballot.
 - > Africa (3), Asia (2), Latin America (2), Western Europe and others (2) & Eastern Europe (1).



Decision Power: UNSC has the power to make binding decisions that member states must implement under the UN Charter.



India has been elected to the non-permanent seat of the UNSC eight times, with the most recent term being 2021-2022.

- **UNSC Reform Proposal (2024)**

- Proposed by G4 Nations (India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan).
 - > **Also C10 (Committee of Ten)** 10 African Union states – Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, Kenya, Libya, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia represents **Africa's Common Position** on UNSC reform.
- **Opposition Groups:** The "Uniting for Consensus/Coffee Club" coalition opposes the creation of new permanent seats.
- **Structural Barriers:** Requires a UN Charter amendment, needing a two-thirds General Assembly vote and ratification by all five permanent members.

1.3. UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

Why in the News?

India has been elected to the **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** for the term **2026–2028**.

More on the News

- **Membership** in ECOSOC is region-based and divided among five geographic groups Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern European, Latin American & Caribbean, and Western European and other States.
- India is elected under the **Asia-Pacific group**, alongside **China, Lebanon, and Turkmenistan** (4 seats available).



UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)



New York (USA)

Genesis: Established in 1945 as one of the six main organs of the United Nations.

Purpose: 54 (elected by the UN General Assembly for a 3-year term; 18 elected each year).

Key Role:

- Advance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental
- Coordinates work of UN bodies and specialized agencies
- Issues policy recommendations to the UN system and member states

8 Functional Commissions of ECOSOC

- Statistical Commission
- Commission on Population and Development
- Commission for Social Development
- Commission on the Status of Women
- Commission on Narcotic Drugs
- Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Commission on Science and Technology for Development
- United Nations Forum on Forests

1.4. UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Why in the News?

“Global Trends Report: Forced Displacement in 2024” is released by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Initiatives Undertaken for Forced Displacement:

- **Global Compact for Migration (2018):** Adopted by majority of UN Members, Provides framework for international migration.
 - It is **non-legally binding**.
- **Global Program on Forced Displacement (GPFD):** Established in 2009 by World Bank to enhance the global development response to forced displacement.



UNHCR



Genesis: Established by General Assembly of United Nations in 1950.



Purpose: Protecting rights and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution.



Achievement: It Received Noble Peace prize in 1954 and 1981.

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

Why in the News?

US decides to pull out of **UNESCO** citing the agency's support for **woke and divisive causes** and **anti-Israel bias**.

More on the News

- This marks **the third US exit from UNESCO** and the second under the current leadership.
- Additionally, the US also took steps to withdraw from other UN bodies and agencies, such as the WHO, and significantly reduced funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine.
- UNESCO nominates the **first Arab leader as Director-General**.



UNESCO



It is a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.



Purpose: To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture.



It has **194 Members and 12 Associate Members**.



Key Reports and Initiatives:

- Global Education Monitoring Report
- World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development
- UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

1.6. UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

Why in the News?

United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025 concluded recently in Berlin, Germany.

About UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025

- It was co-organised and hosted by **Germany**.
- The meeting coincided with the 10-year anniversary of the 2015 New York Summit on Peacekeeping.
- At the ministerial, India pledged one **Quick Reaction Force (QRF) Company**, one **women-led Police Unit**, a **SWAT Police Unit** and **peacekeeping training, capacity building and partnerships**.



United Nations
Peacekeeping

United Nations Peacekeeping



Origin: Began in 1948 with the establishment of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).



It is also known as **Blue helmet**.



Deployment Mechanism: **UN Security Council** provides mandates to Missions by adopting a resolution.

- **Budget and resources** are subject to **General Assembly** approval.



Governance: **Department of Peace Operations (DPO)** of UN, formally created **in 1992, provides political and executive direction** to peacekeeping operations.



Award & Honour: Nobel Peace Prize in 1988.



Doctrines:

- **Capstone Doctrine:** It sets out the guiding principles and core objectives of UN Peace operations.
- **Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine (2005):** It embodies a **political commitment** to end the worst forms of violence and persecution.

India's Key Contribution to UN Peacekeeping

- **Capacity Building:** India's Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), established by the **Indian Army in New Delhi**, serves as the nation's focal point for peacekeeping training
- **Promoting Gender Parity:** India became the **first country** to deploy an all-women Formed Police Unit (2007, Liberia).

1.6.1. UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Why in the News?

India was elected unopposed for a three-year term (2026–28) to UN Human Rights Council for the seventh time.

About UN Human Rights Council

- **Overview:** It is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system that promotes and protects human rights globally.
- **Genesis:** Established in 2006 by the General Assembly by replacing the **Commission on Human Rights**.
- **Membership:** It has 47 members elected annually by the UN General Assembly, serving three-year terms with a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- **Function:** Provides a global forum on human rights, adopts resolutions, reviews member states, and mandates investigations and special procedures.

1.7. OTHER UN ORGANIZATIONS

1.7.1. UNTOC & UNCAC

Recently, UNTOC and UNCAC have been invoked by India in the extradition request of a fugitive offender.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)

- A UN treaty to combat transnational organized crime, adopted in 2000 and entered into force in 2003.
- It is supplemented by **three protocols** targeting human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and illicit firearms manufacturing and trafficking.
- **UNTOC (also known as Palermo Convention)**, it is the only global, legally binding instrument through which governments commit to act and cooperate against organized crime.

- The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) serves as Secretariat to UNTOC.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

- The **only** legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument adopted in 2000 and entered into force in 2003.
- Covers** a wide range of corruption forms, including bribery and embezzlement.
- It **focuses** on prevention, criminalization, international cooperation, and asset recovery.

1.7.2. UN REPORTS/INITIATIVES

Initiative	organization	Key facts
Taliban Sanctions Committee- Resolution 1988 (2011)	UNSC	Pakistan has been elected as the Chair of the Committee .
Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)- Resolution 1373 (2001)	UNSC	Pakistan has been elected as Vice-Chair for 2025.
ISIS and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee- 1267 sanctions Committee	UNSC	Established in 1999 , to focus on combating terrorism linked to ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and related groups.
Victims of Terrorism Associations Network (VoTAN)	UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A global network to support victims and survivors of terrorism. Outcome of the 2022 UN Global Congress on Victims of Terrorism.
UN Spotlight Initiative	European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that all women, especially those marginalised and vulnerable, live free from violence and harmful practices.
World Investment Report	UNCTAD	Trends in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) worldwide.
World of Debt Report 2025	UNCTAD	External debt statistics and analysis for the low- and middle-income countries.
State of World Population 2025: The Real Fertility Crisis	UNFPA	About UNFPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded: in 1969 as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). Renamed in 1987 to the United Nations Population Fund (retaining the original acronym, UNFPA).

1.7.3. INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ)

ICJ delivered landmark decision on **global responsibilities toward climate action**, especially to **protect vulnerable Small Island Developing States (SIDS) led by the Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu**.

- SIDS are a distinct group of 39 States and 18 Associate Members** of UN regional commissions that face unique social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities.
 - They were **recognized** as a special case both for their environment and development **at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**.

Key Highlights of ICJ Ruling

- Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment is Human Rights:** States are bound by treaties like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and must act on climate change to protect these rights.
- States Obligated to Limit Emissions:** States must prevent harm from greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and ensure meeting the Paris Agreement target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- Consequences for Non-Compliance:** If states fail to meet obligations, they:
 - incur legal responsibility** and may be required to cease the wrongful conduct.



International Court of Justice (ICJ)



Genesis: In 1945 as the **main judicial body of the UN**.



Key Function:

- **Settling disputes** between countries.
- **Provides advisory opinions** on legal questions that have been referred to it by other authorised UN organs.



Limitation: Can only hear cases **when requested by states**



Composition:

- **15 judges** elected for **9-year terms** by the UN General Assembly and Security Council
- Judges act **independently**, not as government representatives



Relevance: Known as the "**World Court**", **ICJ is the only international court** for resolving disputes among **193 UN member states**.



In **2023**, the **UN General Assembly** adopted a resolution requesting the ICJ to issue an advisory opinion on:

- States' **obligations under international law** to protect the environment
- **Legal consequences** for failing to meet these obligations.

1.8. INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Why in the News?

Concerns were raised by India over IMF's Lending to Pakistan as IMF's Executive Board completed the first review of Pakistan's economic reform program supported by the **Extended Fund Facility (EFF) Arrangement**.

More on the News

- IMF allowed the disbursement of around \$1 billion (**Special Drawing Rights (SDR)**) 760 million under EFF.
 - **EFF:** It assists countries experiencing serious payment imbalances because of structural impediments or slow growth and an inherently weak balance-of-payments position.
 - **Special Drawing Rights (SDR):** It is an international reserve asset, created by the IMF in 1969 to supplement its member countries' official reserves.
 - > It is not a currency but serves as the unit of account of the IMF and other international organizations.
 - > Its value is based on a basket of five currencies US Dollar, Euro, Chinese Renminbi, Japanese Yen, and British Pound Sterling.
 - > Individuals and private entities cannot hold SDRs.



International Monetary Fund (IMF)



Washington, D.C. (USA)

Genesis: Established in the **United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference**, 1944 (also known as **Bretton Woods Conference**) along with the World Bank.
↳ IMF and World Bank are referred to as **Bretton Woods Institutions**.

Mandate:
↳ Promoting **global macroeconomic and financial stability**.
↳ Providing **short-and medium-term loans** to help countries that are experiencing balance of payments problems.
↳ Providing **technical assistance and training** to help governments to implement better economic policies.

Membership: 191 Countries (**India is a member**)
↳ To become a member of the World Bank, a country must first join the IMF.

Organizational Structure:
↳ **Board of Governors:** Highest decision-making body of IMF composed of 1 governor and 1 alternate governor from each member countries.
↳ **Executive Board:** 25-member board oversees day-to-day work.

- **Normally makes decisions based on consensus**, but sometimes takes formal votes.
- The votes of each member are equal to the sum of its basic votes (equally distributed among all members) and quota-based votes, so that a member's quota determines its voting power.
- **India's quota is 2.75%** (8th largest) while the US's Quota is about 17%.

↳ **International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC):** A 25-member advisory body represents member countries or groups of countries.

Key Reports: World Economic Outlook, Global Financial Stability Report etc.

Key Lending Instruments of IMF Funds		
General Resources Account (GRA)	Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT)	Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lending on non-concessional terms through the Financial Transactions Plan mechanism. Aim: To resolve a country's balance of payments (BoP) problems. Members can take loans with limits corresponding to their quota. Lending Facilities: Stand-by Arrangement (SBA); Extended Fund Facility (EFF); Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI); Flexible Credit Line (FCL); Short-term Liquidity Line (SLL); etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longer duration and Concessional financial support, including interest-free financing to the poorest for low-income countries (LICs). Aim: To address BoP crisis. Lending Facilities: Rapid Credit Facility (RCF); Standby Credit Facility (SCF) and Extended Credit Facility (ECF). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers longer-term financing at affordable interest rates to low-income and vulnerable middle-income countries. Aim: To build resilience to external shocks. Lending Facilities: Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)

1.9. SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

Why in the News?

The 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2025 was held in Tianjin, China.

More on the News

- The Summit adopted the **Tianjin Declaration** and the **SCO Development Strategy until 2035**.
- Chairmanship for 2025–26** passed to the **Kyrgyz Republic**.
- Observer and dialogue partner categories merged into a single **SCO partner countries** status.
- Laos admitted as a partner**; SCO now comprises **10 members and 17 partner countries**.
 - India became an observer in 2005 and a full member in 2017.
- SCO was granted **Observer status in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**, an organization of former Soviet republics (excluding Baltic States).
 - Russian Federation, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are the members of CIS.

Key Outcomes of the Summit

- Security & Counter-Terrorism:**
 - Agreement to establish an **SCO Anti-Drug Centre** and a **Universal Center for Countering Security Threats**.
- Global Governance & Trade:**
 - Endorsement of China's **Global Governance Initiative (GGI)**.
 - Steps toward an **SCO Export Credit and Investment Mechanism** and an **SCO Development Bank**, aimed at offering non-dollar financing for Eurasian infrastructure.
- Technological Cooperation:** Permission for SCO members to use China's **BeiDou navigation system (BDS)**.
- Other Key Outcomes:** Recognition of India's vision of "**One Earth, One Family, One Future.**"
- India proposed a **Civilisation Dialogue Forum** to promote cultural exchange and soft power.



Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)



Genesis: It emerged from the "Shanghai Five" mechanism in 1996. It was officially established at the Shanghai Summit in 2001 by Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



Key Objectives:

- To strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighborliness between the Member States.
- To jointly ensure and maintain peace, security and stability in the region
- To promote a new democratic, fair and rational international political and economic international order.



Membership (10 members):

China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran (2023) and Belarus (2024).

- It includes 3 observer states and 6 dialogue partners.



Structure:

- **The Council of Heads of States:** Apex decision-making body
- **Council of Heads of Governments:** Second-highest council
- **Two Standing bodies** – the Secretariat in Beijing (China) and the RATS in Tashkent, Uzbekistan



Other key details:

The UN General Assembly has entitled observer status to it.

1.10. WTO AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

Why in the News?

The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies entered into force after two-thirds of WTO members submitted their instruments of acceptance.

More on the News

- The Agreement was adopted at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference in 2022.
- It is the WTO's first multilateral agreement centered on environmental sustainability and supports SDG 14.
- India has not joined the agreement, seeking to protect subsidies for small fishers, livelihoods, and food security.
- Recently, India called for reforms to the WTO during a high-level mini-ministerial meeting in Paris ahead of 14th Ministerial Conference in Cameroon, 2026.
- Global Trade Outlook and Statistics 2025 released by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Key Features of the Agreement

- **Prohibited subsidies:** Subsidies that support illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, affect overfished stocks, or support fishing in unregulated high seas.
- **WTO Fish Fund:** Supports developing and least-developed countries in implementation through voluntary contributions.
- **Special and differential treatment:** Flexibility in implementation for developing countries.

Key Agreements of WTO



Umbrella	Goods	Services	Intellectual Property
Agreement	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)	General Agreement on Trade in Services	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)
About	Binding commitments on tariffs for goods and combinations of tariffs and quotas for some agricultural goods .	Covers all internationally-traded services . E.g., Banking, telecommunications, tourism, professional services, etc.	Covers Copyright Trademarks, Geographical indications, Industrial designs, Patents , etc.
Additional Details/ Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on Agriculture • Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement • Antidumping Agreement • Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most-favoured-nation (MFN) treatment: Favour one, favour all Principle of non-discrimination. • Commitments on market access and National Treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National treatment (treating one's own nationals and foreigners equally). • MFN treatment.



WTO



Genesis: 1995 post the **Marrakesh Agreement**.

▷ Successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**.

▷ **1986-94 Uruguay Round** negotiations led to **WTO's creation**.



Functions: Administering **Trade Agreements**, Forum for trade negotiations, settling **trade disputes**, reviewing **national trade policies**, building **trade capacity of developing organisations**.



Members: 166 constituting 98% of World Trade. (**India** is a member since **1995**).



Decision Making: Based on **Consensus**.



Ministerial Conference: Top-Level decision-making body meeting **every two years**.



Dispute Settlement Body (DSB): It is a body established for resolving the disputes between the conflicting parties.

▷ It consists of a Chairman and representatives of all WTO members (usually government representatives).

▷ India's supports proposal for a **"30 for 30" initiative**, suggesting 30 incremental reforms to mark the WTO's 30th anniversary in 2025.

▷ **Important report:** Global Trade Outlook and Statistics, etc.

Related News

WTO Committee on Safeguards

India sought consultations with the US under the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) safeguard agreement over 50% tariffs imposed on certain **copper products**.

About WTO Committee on Safeguards

- The **Committee on Safeguards** provides **WTO members** the opportunity to **discuss** any matters relating to the operation of the **Agreement on Safeguards**.
 - The **Agreement on Safeguards** sets forth the **rules** for application of **safeguard measures**.

- **Safeguard measures** are “emergency” actions with respect to **increased imports** of particular products, which potentially **threaten to cause serious injury** to the importing Member's **domestic industry**.
- **Functions:** Monitor/report Agreement implementation to the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG); Assess procedural compliance upon member request and report findings.

Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures

China alleged that 3 Indian PLI schemes related to EV and battery provide **financial benefits** to companies operating in India contingent on Domestic Value Addition (DVA).

- DVA requirements under these PLI schemes incentivise companies to use domestic goods rather than imported goods are a violation of Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (“SCM Agreement”) of WTO under **prohibited category**.

About SCM Agreement of WTO

- **Article 1** defines a subsidy as a financial contribution by a government or a public body that confers a benefit.
- The SCM Agreement creates 2 categories of subsidies: **Prohibited** and **Actionable**.
- **Prohibited: 2 categories of subsidies are prohibited by Article 3.**
 - **First:** It consists of subsidies contingent, in law or in fact, whether wholly or as one of several conditions, on export performance (“export subsidies”).
 - **Second:** It consists of subsidies contingent, whether solely or as one of several other conditions, upon the use of domestic over imported goods (“local content subsidies”).
- **Actionable:** They are subject to challenge, either through multilateral dispute settlement or through countervailing action.

1.11. GROUP OF SEVEN (G7)

Why in the News?

India had participated as an Outreach Country in **51st G7 Summit (2025)** held in **Kananaskis, Canada**.

Key Outcomes of 51st G7 Summit (2025) Summit

- **Kananaskis Wildfire Charter:** Adopted a "whole of society" approach, including Indigenous knowledge, sustainable forest management, and awareness campaigns (**endorsed by India**).
- **G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan:** Secure sustainable and resilient supply chains for critical minerals.
- **Key Initiatives on Artificial Intelligence (AI):** G7 GovAI Grand Challenge and a shared G7 AI Network (GAIN).

Other important initiatives of G7

- **Promote economic resilience:** Through supply chain diversification (e.g., G7 PGII initiatives (launched in 2007), IMEC, etc.), coordinated initiatives on critical minerals (e.g., **Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement, the Mineral Security Partnership**), etc.
- **Energy:** The Energy for Growth in Africa initiative to invest in sustainable development and will provide Africa with an alternative investor to China.
- **Health and food security:** G7 launched Apulia Food Systems to enhance food security and sustainable agriculture.



Group of Seven (G7)



Genesis: 1975 in response to economic and financial cooperation due to energy crisis.



An informal bloc of industrialized democracies comprising: France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Canada.

- ▷ Russia was a member from **1998 to 2014**, during which the forum was called the **G8**.
- ▷ Russia's **annexation of Crimea in March 2014** led to its suspension from the group.
- ▷ The European Union is not a G7 member but participates in the annual summit.



Working Mechanism: The G7 lacks a permanent structure; its rotating Presidency sets the agenda annually.



Purpose and Agenda: Meets **annually** to deliberate on key global issues such as: Global economic governance, International security, Energy policy, etc.

1.12. BRICS RIO DE JANEIRO DECLARATION

Why in the News?

At the 17th BRICS Summit, BRICS leaders signed the **Rio de Janeiro Declaration** entitled "**Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance**".

Key Highlights of the BRICS Summit

- The summit was the first to convene **11 full member states, 10 partner countries**, eight invited nations, and representatives from international organizations.
- **New members:** Indonesia
- **Addition of new Partner Country:** Vietnam
 - **BRICS partner countries added during Kazan Summit 2024:** Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.
- **Partnership for Elimination of Socially Determined Diseases (SDDs):** Launched to mobilize resources with 5 core principles:
 - Resilient Health Systems & Access,
 - Whole-of-Society Action on Determinants, R&D,
 - Capacity & Technology Transfer,
 - Sustainable & Innovative Financing and
 - Global Alignment & SDG Coherence.
- **BRICS Leaders' Declaration on Global Governance of AI:** Based on principles including digital sovereignty, UN-centered multilateralism, etc.
- **BRICS Leaders' Framework Declaration on Climate Finance:** Lays out a five-year roadmap to strengthen the bloc's capacity to mobilize resources for climate action.
 - **Tropical Forest Forever Fund (TFFF):** It recognized the **TFFF** as an innovative mechanism to mobilize long-term financing for tropical forest conservation.
- **Launched at COP28 in the UAE with mobilization**, aiming USD 4 billion annually.
- **BRICS Land Restoration Partnership launched** at the 15th BRICS Agriculture Meet in Brazil.
- BRICS Labour & Employment Minister's Meeting 2025 adopts Declaration addressing two pivotal themes: "**Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Future of Work**" and "**The Impacts of Climate Change on the World of Work and a Just Transition**".
 - **Supported by: ILO** for advancing labour rights.



BRICS



Genesis: Coined by British economist **Jim O'Neill in 2001**; BRIC formalized at the G8 Outreach Summit (2006).

- **1st BRIC Summit held in Russia (2009).**



Members: **Original 5:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa.

- **New Members: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, United Arab Emirates and Indonesia.**

○ **Indonesia has become the first Southeast Asian Member of BRICS.**

○ **Saudi Arabia still had not made a formal decision.**



BRICS partner countries: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan, Nigeria.



Secretariat: No permanent secretariat or office.

BRICS initiatives

- **New Development Bank (HQ: Shanghai, China):** Fund infrastructure in BRICS and emerging economies, ensure equal representation and voting power for all members.
 - **Genesis:** Founded at the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza Brazil in 2014.
- **Contingent Reserve Arrangement:** Provides essential short-term liquidity support to member nations encountering balance of payment challenges.
- **BRICS Grain Exchange:** A Russian-led initiative focused on creating a fair and equitable trading system for agricultural products within the BRICS community, enhancing food security.
- **BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative (BCBPI) or BRICS Pay:** A blockchain-based payment service for settlements, offering an alternative to SWIFT for BRICS nations.

1.12.1. NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

Why in the News?

Algeria became 9th member of NDB.

About NDB (HQ: Shanghai, China)

- **Genesis: 2015 by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) countries.**
- **Purpose:** It is a **multilateral development bank** for mobilising resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in **emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs)**.
- **Members:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Bangladesh, UAE, Egypt, Algeria.
 - The membership is open to members of the **United Nations**, including **both borrowing and non-borrowing members** (Article 2 of the NDB).
 - **Uruguay** is listed as the **prospective member** (admitted by NDB's Board of Governors but will officially become a member after depositing its instrument of accession).
- **Capital and Shareholding:** Out of the **initial authorized capital of \$100 Billion**, all **5 founding members have an equal share totaling \$50 Billion.**
- **Voting Power:** Combined voting power of founding members to be **at least 55%**.

Other Prominent Regional Financial Institutions



Institution	Genesis	Purpose	Members
Asian Development Bank (HQ: Manila, Philippines)	1966	Social and economic development, regional integration across Asia and the Pacific.	69 (50 from Asia-Pacific, 19 from outside the region), including India.
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (HQ: Beijing, China)	2016	Finances sustainable infrastructure and development projects, primarily in Asia with global reach.	110 approved (100 Full + 10 Prospective) members, (India, a full member).
African Development Bank (HQ: Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire)	1964	Poverty reduction and socio-economic development across Africa.	54 African countries and 27 non-African countries (including India).

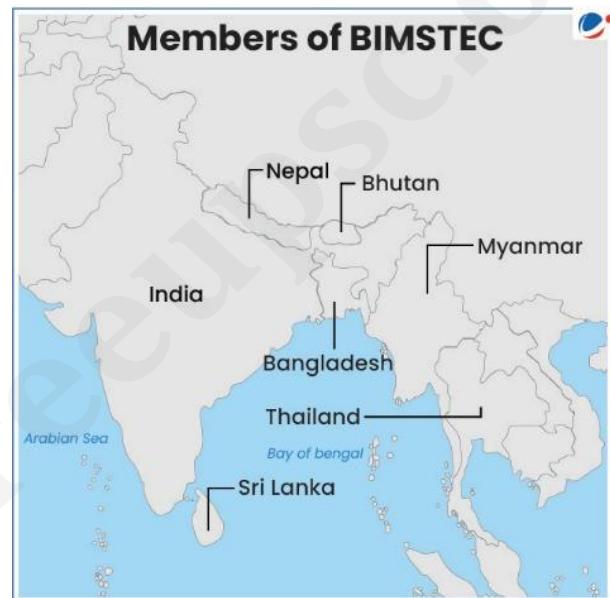
1.13. BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BIMSTEC)

Why in the News?

The 6th BIMSTEC Summit with the theme “**BIMSTEC: Prosperous, Resilient and Open**”, concluded in Bangkok under the chairmanship of Thailand.

Major India-led Initiatives launched at 6th BIMSTEC Summit

- BIMSTEC Centres of Excellence:** To be set up in India on Disaster Management, Sustainable Maritime Transport, Traditional Medicine, and Research and Training in Agriculture.
- BODHI (BIMSTEC for Organized Development of Human Resource Infrastructure):** For skilling the youth through training & scholarships.
- Digital Public Infrastructure:** India to conduct a pilot study assessing its need in the region.
- Strengthening P2P linkages:** India to host first BIMSTEC Games in 2027. India would host BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival.



Other Outcomes

- Establishing BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce:** With the organization of BIMSTEC Business Summit annually.
- BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030:** First-ever vision outlining a strategic plan to build a Prosperous, Resilient and Open or “**PRO BIMSTEC**” by **2030** focusing on economic integration, connectivity, and human security.
- Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation**
- Adoption of Rules of Procedure for the BIMSTEC Mechanisms.**



Genesis: It is a regional organization established in **1997** with signing of the **Bangkok Declaration**.

It was originally formed with **4 Members** (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka & Thailand) with the acronym 'BIST-EC'.



Member States (7): Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.



BIMSTEC Charter: Foundational document that outlines the **goals, principles, and structure** of the BIMSTEC. It was finalized in the 5th Summit (2022) in Sri Lanka.

- Charter confers **legal personality** on the grouping and paves the way for external partnerships and admission of observers and new members.



7 Priority Areas/Pillars (each led by 1 Member country): Trade & Investment (Bangladesh); Environment & Climate Change (Bhutan); People-to-People Contacts (Nepal); Agriculture & Food Security (Myanmar); Science & Technology and Innovation (Sri Lanka) and Connectivity (Thailand).

- India** is the **Lead Country** for **Security pillar** under which there are 3 sub-sectors – **Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Disaster Management, and Energy Security**.

1.14. ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

Why in the News?

22nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India Summit held in Malaysia and they elevated their ties from Strategic Partnership to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** in 2022.

More on the News

- Also, **47th ASEAN Summit** was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
 - ASEAN Summits take place twice a year, hosted by the country holding the ASEAN Chairmanship.
 - Theme:** Inclusivity and Sustainability.
 - Kuala Lumpur Accord:** Joint ceasefire agreement between Thailand and Cambodia.

Key Highlights of the Summit

- Support for **ASEAN-India Plan of Action** to implement **ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026-2030)**.
- Adoption of the **ASEAN-India Joint Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Tourism**.
- Designating **2026** as "**ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation**".
- Proposed establishment of a **Centre for Southeast Asian Studies** at **Nalanda University**.
- Holding **East Asia Summit Maritime Heritage Festival** at Lothal, Gujarat.

ASEAN-India Relations

- Genesis:** India began formal engagement with ASEAN in 1992.
- India became a **Dialogue Partner in 1996**, Summit-level Partner in 2002, and forged a **Strategic Partnership in 2012**.



- **Exercises:** ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise, ASEAN Solidarity Exercise.
- **Trade:** **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA)** is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed in 2009 to boost trade ties. (8th Meeting recently)
 - **Mandates:** Each party shall accord National Treatment to goods of other parties in line with GATT, 1994.
- **Development of India's North East:** ASEAN countries lie closest to **India's Northeastern states** with connectivity projects like **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project** passing through the region.
- **ASEAN Future Forum:** Proposed by Vietnam at the 43rd ASEAN Summit in 2023.
 - **It is a common platform** for ASEAN member states as well as partner countries to share new ideas.
 - India is a founding member.
- **ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS)**'s **SAFE Agromet Project** is implemented by ISRO with other space agencies.
 - **AFSIS** is a project led by Thailand to provide the reliable information on food security.
 - **SAFE Project** was established by Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency in 2008 which uses space technology in understanding environmental changes and climate change related issues.

About ASEAN

- **Genesis:** Established in **1967 in Bangkok**, Thailand, with the signing of the **ASEAN Declaration** (Bangkok Declaration).
- **Aims:** Accelerate regional economic and cultural progress; Promote peace, stability, and the rule of law; Foster collaboration across education, trade, agriculture, and industry.
- **Secretariat:** Jakarta (Indonesia).
- **Member Countries:** 11 countries (see map)
 - Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are founding members.
 - **Timor Leste joined ASEAN as the 11th member in** during the 47th ASEAN summit 2025; it is Asia's youngest nation.
 - **Timor-Leste** is the only Asian Nation to be completely located in the Southern Hemisphere.
- **ASEAN Summit:** It is the highest policy-making body in ASEAN comprising the Heads of State or Government of ASEAN Member States.
- **Article 1.15** of the ASEAN Charter emphasises that the grouping's primary goal is to uphold the **centrality and active role of ASEAN** as the main driving force behind its relations and cooperation with external partners.

1.15. WILMINGTON DECLARATION OF THE QUAD

Why in the News?

The Coast Guards of India, Japan, the United States, and Australia have launched the first-ever '**QUAD at Sea Ship Observer Mission**' under the **Wilmington Declaration**.

More on the News

- **Wilmington Declaration** is an outcome of the **QUAD Leaders' Summit in 2024**, held in Wilmington, USA.
- In another development QUAD partner countries launched **QUAD Critical Minerals Initiative**.
 - Initiative will strengthen cooperation on priorities such as securing and diversifying reliable supply chains, and electronic waste (e-waste) critical minerals recovery and re-processing.

Key Highlights of the Wilmington Declaration

- **QUAD Cancer Moonshot:** Initial focus on cervical cancer in Indo-Pacific.
- **Digital Health:** India to offer DPI technical support for cancer care via WHO's digital health initiative.
- **Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI):** Regional partnership to boost maritime monitoring and law enforcement using **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)**.
- **QUAD maritime legal dialogue:** To uphold the rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific.

- **QUAD-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission:** To improve interoperability and advance maritime safety and policing.
- **QUAD Ports of the Future Partnership:** Sustainable port development in Indo-Pacific.
- **Open Radio Access Network (RAN):** Expanding trials & Asia Open RAN Academy in Philippines.
- **Semiconductor Supply Chains Contingency Network:** Collaboration on supply chain resilience.
- **BioExplore Initiative:** AI-driven exploration of biological data across QUAD.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)



Members: India, Australia, Japan, and the USA.



Timeline:

- **2004:** Originated from Tsunami relief efforts, fostering collaboration among the four nations.
- **2007:** Formalized by Japan; first Quad meeting held during the ASEAN Regional Forum.
- **2017:** First official talks held in the Philippines during the East Asia Summit.
- Guidelines for the '**Quad Partnership on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**' in the **Indo-Pacific** was announced in **Tokyo, 2022**.



Objective: To work as a **force for global good** and to support an **open, free, and inclusive Indo-Pacific** that is prosperous and resilient.



Working Mechanism: QUAD work is taken forward through six leader-level working groups on Climate, Critical and Emerging Technologies, Cyber, Health Security Partnership, Infrastructure, and Space.

Related News

Indo-Pacific Logistics Network

Quad partners – Australia, India, Japan and USA – conclude Indo-Pacific Logistics Network simulation in Honolulu, Hawaii.

About Indo-Pacific Logistics Network

- It enables Quad partners to leverage shared logistics capabilities in the Indo-Pacific to support civilian response to natural disasters.
- Along with the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, it reflects the Quad's commitment to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific.

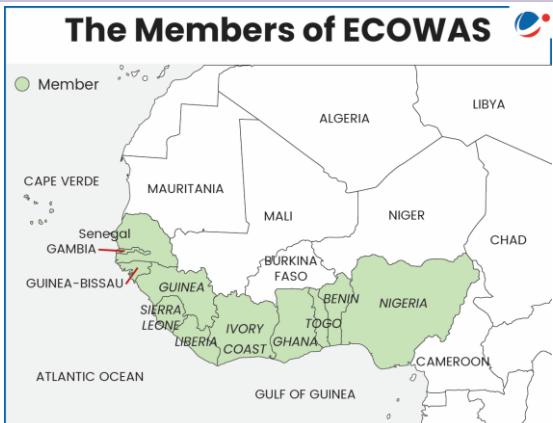
1.16. ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

Why in the News?

ECOWAS marked its 50th anniversary this year.

About ECOWAS

- **Established:** Established on **28 May 1975** by **15 West African countries** through the **Treaty of Lagos**.
- **Headquarter:** Abuja, **Nigeria**.
- **Regional Bloc:** ECOWAS comprises 12 West African countries (June 2025).
- **Aim:** To promote cooperation and integration for an **economic union in West Africa**, improving living standards, ensuring economic stability, strengthening member relations, and contributing to Africa's development.
 - ECOWAS established its free trade area in 1990 and adopted a common external tariff in January 2015.



1.17. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

Why in the News?

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Declares Iran in Breach after 20 Years and **19 out of 35 IAEA Board members voted to censure Iran** for failing to meet nuclear non-proliferation commitments.

More on the News

- The resolution was moved by **France, UK, Germany (E3)** and the **US**.
- The Move follows an IAEA report noting Iran has enough **60% enriched uranium** to potentially make **nine nuclear bombs**.
- The issue may now go to the **UN Security Council**, which could **reimpose sanctions** under the 2015 nuclear deal.

About the 2015 Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)

- Participants:** Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between Iran and P5+1 (France, Germany, Russia, UK, US, and China).
 - In 2018, the US withdrew from the deal, and **since 2019, Iran has increasingly breached restrictions**
- Purpose:** To limit Iran's nuclear program in return for **sanctions relief**.
- UN Endorsement:** Endorsed by **UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015)**.

Iran's Major Nuclear Facilities



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)



Genesis: Established in 1957 as an autonomous international organisation within the UN.

Motto: Atoms for Peace and Development

Members: 180 (India is a member)

▷ **North Korea:** Joined in 1974, withdrew in 1994

General Conference: All member states meet annually in Vienna.

Recognition: Awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2005** for promoting peaceful nuclear use and global safety.



Role of IAEA: nuclear cooperation, Peaceful Applications, Assists Member States

Safety Standards, Develops nuclear safety standards, Verifies States comply with commitments.



IAEA and NPT: The **IAEA is not a member** of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) but plays key verification responsibilities under the Treaty.

▷ Each **non-nuclear-weapon** State party is required under NPT to conclude comprehensive safeguards.



The NPT is a binding international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology.

▷ It **came into force in 1970** and was extended indefinitely in 1995. (**191 countries have joined**).

▷ **India, Israel, and Pakistan** have never joined, while **North Korea withdrew in 2003**

1.18. OTHER IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS

1.18.1. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

Why in the News?

The NATO members agreed to increase defense spending from **2% to 5% of gross domestic product, by 2035.**

About NATO

- Origin:** In 1949 through the North Atlantic Treaty (also known as the Washington Treaty).
- Objective:** To deter Soviet expansion in Europe after World War.
- Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium
- Nature:**
 - It is a **political and military alliance** of 32 countries from Europe and North America (Sweden is the latest member).
 - It operates on the principle of **collective defense (Article 5)**, meaning an attack on one member is considered an attack on all.



Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA)

Dayton Peace Agreement was reached at the **NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Dayton** (Ohio, USA).

About Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA)

- Signed:** 1995 in Paris (Peace agreement was earlier reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton).
- Significance:** Also known as **General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, it had put an end to the three and half year-long **Bosnian War**, in the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.
 - Current Constitution of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is the Annex 4 of the DPA.

1.18.2. INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger recently withdrew from International Criminal Court (ICC).

About ICC (HQ: Hague, Netherlands)

- It is the **world's first permanent international criminal court.**
- Origin:** Founded by **Rome Statute** (Adopted in 1998 and entered in force in 2002)
- Jurisdiction:** investigate, prosecute, and try **individuals (not groups or States)** accused of committing serious crimes
 - Crimes under ICC's jurisdiction:** Genocide, Crimes against humanity, War crimes, crime of aggression.
- Membership:** 125 member countries
 - India, Israel, the US, Russia and China** are not parties to the Rome Statute.
- Funding:** mainly by States Parties
- Enforcement:** ICC's decisions are binding.

1.18.3. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MEDIATION (IOMED)

China formally established the IOMed as a global alternative to traditional institutions such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

About IOMed

- **Purpose:** Dedicated to resolving international disputes through mediation.
- **Members:** Over 30 countries joined as founding members including Indonesia, Pakistan, and Belarus.
 - Most founding members are from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, highlighting its non-Western orientation.
- **Scope:**
 - Disputes between states,
 - Disputes Between a state and nationals of another country,
 - International commercial disagreements.

1.18.4. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)

Why in the News?

The 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) concluded in Geneva.

Key Highlights

- **Adopted Biological Hazards in the Working Environment Convention, 2025 (Convention No. 192):** 1st international instrument addressing biological hazards in the working environment.
- **Approved Amendment to Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC):** The changes call for the right to shore leave and repatriation, and call for recognizing seafarers as key workers.
 - MLC is a binding international law. India ratified the MLC in 2015.
- **Decent Work in the Platform Economy:** It held its 1st standard-setting discussion on decent work in the platform economy.
- **Other:** Formal approval was given to the ILO's tripartite contribution to the Second World Summit for Social Development, set for November 2025 in Doha.
 - It is an initiative of the ILO, launched in 2023. It aims to bring together global, regional, and national actors to advance social justice through policy and action coherence.
- Indian Government has signed MoU with ILO to promote the International Reference Classification of Occupations (ISCO).
 - ISCO is a statistical system that classifies jobs into well-defined groups based on the tasks and duties performed. It is useful for research as well as for specific decision-making.
- **The 2nd edition of the Global Coalition for Social Justice annual forum** took place on the side lines of the 113th ILC in Geneva.



ILO



Established: In 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War



Based on: The principle that social justice is essential for achieving lasting and universal peace.



Nobel Peace Prize to ILO: 1969



Mission:

○ **Strengthen cooperation:** Among governments, employers, and workers through dialogue.

○ Set and promote standards (**Rights at work**), expand **opportunities for both women and men** and **social security** for all.

1.18.5. EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION

India and Eurasian Economic Union recently signed Terms of Reference for Free Trade Agreement.

About Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

- Overview:** It is an **international organization** for regional economic integration.
- Genesis:** Established by the **Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (2014)**.
- Member states:** Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Russia.
- Benefits:** Provides for free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour, etc.



1.18.6. ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

India has formally assumed the Chairmanship of the Asian Productivity Organization for 2025-26.

About Asian Productivity Organization (APO)

- Genesis:** It is an intergovernmental organization established in **1961** by 8 founding members.
 - India** is one of the **founding members**.
 - Objective:** To increase productivity in the Asia-Pacific region through mutual cooperation.
 - Members:** Comprises **21 economies** in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - Key roles:** Conducts research on emerging needs of members for their follow-up, promotes bilateral and multilateral alliances among members, surveys the economic and development policies and performance of each member, etc.

1.18.7. OTHER REPORTS/INITIATIVES

Initiative	Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Global Competitiveness Report (GCR)Global Gender Gap ReportTravel and Tourism Competitiveness ReportGlobal Information Technology Report	WEF (World Economic Forum)
Global Money Laundering Report	Financial Action Task Force
World Intellectual Property Report (WIPR)	WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">World Development ReportGlobal Findex 2025Financial Sector Assessment Program (FSAP) Report	World Bank
<ul style="list-style-type: none">World Social Protection ReportGlobal Wage ReportWorld Employment and Social OutlookWorld of Work Report	International Labour Organisation (ILO)

2. PLACES IN NEWS

2.1. CONFLICT AFFLICTED AREAS

Myanmar (Sagaing Region)	<p>Over a million Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar now live as refugees in Bangladesh, where their human rights are being violated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lies at the northwesternmost part of mainland Southeast Asia. Bordered by: China (North and Northeast), Laos (East), Thailand (South East), Bangladesh (West), India (Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh in the North West). Bordering water bodies: Andaman Sea (south) and by the Bay of Bengal (southwest). Rakhine State is the most western state in Myanmar where violence in 2020 displaced Rohingyas in large scale. 	
Madagascar (Antananarivo, the capital city)	<p>Anti-government Gen Z protests in Madagascar have led to the fall of the government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bordered by: Mauritius and Réunion (territory of France) (east). The French territory of Mayotte and the island country of Comoros (northwest). Located off the coast of East Africa in the Indian Ocean. The second-largest island country in the world. Approximately 90% of Madagascar's flora and fauna is found nowhere else. 	
Sudan (Darfur, Khartoum, South Kordofan, Blue Nile States, El Fasher, capital of North Darfur)	<p>Sudan plunged into a civil war in April 2023 after a vicious power struggle broke out between its Army and a powerful paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Force (RSF).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located in Northeast Africa. Third-largest country in Africa. Land Borders: Egypt (north), Eritrea and Ethiopia (East), South Sudan (South), Central African Republic and Chad (West), and Libya (Northwest). Maritime Boundary: Red Sea The Nile River system (White Nile and Blue Nile) runs through Sudan. <p>Refugee Camps/conflict areas in Sudan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zamzam camp: Located south of El Fasher town, the state capital of North Darfur, Sudan. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abu Shouk Camp ("Naivasha Camp"): Situated north-west of El Fasher town. Tuti Island conflict at the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile, Khartoum, Sudan. 	
Ukraine (Kyiv, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Cherkasy and Chernihiv, and Kharkiv).	<p>A Russian attack damaged Saint Sophia Cathedral a UNESCO world heritage in Kyiv.</p> <p>About Ukraine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Eastern Europe and is the 2nd largest country in Europe after Russia. Land Borders: Belarus (north), Russia (east), Moldova & Romania (southwest), Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland (west). Water bodies: The Sea of Azov & Black Sea are located to the south of Ukraine. The Dnieper River flows through Kyiv to the Black Sea. Carpathian Mountains in the west and Crimean Mountains in the south. 	
Democratic Republic of Congo (North Kivu, Ituri province).	<p>Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have committed to a permanent ceasefire in eastern Congo.</p> <p>M23, or March 23 Movement primarily consists of ethnic Tutsis is a major armed group fighting Congolese forces in mineral-rich eastern DRC.</p> <p>About DRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located in central Africa and the 2nd largest on the continent. Congo river basin- 2nd longest river in Africa. Congo rainforest- 2nd largest tropical rainforest. Mineral Rich-Cobalt, Copper, and Gold, etc. 	
Baltic Sea	<p>Germany deployed fighter jets after a Russian military aircraft entered Baltic Sea airspace.</p> <p>About Baltic Sea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: North Atlantic Ocean, extending north from southern Denmark to near Arctic Circle. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surrounding Countries: Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany. Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the youngest sea on our planet. Largest expanse of brackish water in the world; semi-enclosed & shallow. Kiel Canal (Germany) links the Baltic with the North Sea. Gulf of Bothnia, Gulf of Finland, and the Gulf of Gdańsk are important gulf. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Baltic Sea</p>
Zangezur Corridor	<p>Türkiye urged Armenia and Azerbaijan take steps to open the Zangezur Corridor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two countries have been in conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) since 1917. The region is internationally part of Azerbaijan, but mainly ethnic Armenians live there. <p>About Zangezur Corridor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: It is a proposed 43-kilometer transport route through Armenia's Syunik Province. Objective: Connecting Azerbaijan's Baku Port in Caspian Sea to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Region, a western exclave of Azerbaijan separated by Armenian territory, and further to Turkey. India's concerns: It can undermine India's investments in Chabahar Port and International North South Corridor (INSTC) by offering a competing pathway, reducing India's regional leverage. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Türkiye-Azerbaijan route through Zangezur Corridor</p>
Taiwan Strait	<p>China launched new military drills named "Strait Thunder-2025A" in middle and southern parts of Taiwan Strait.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strait is a narrow body of water that connects two larger bodies of water. <p>About Taiwan Strait (Or Black Ditch)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Named Formosa ("Beautiful") by Portuguese navigators in the late 16th century. Location: Lying between China's Fukien province and Taiwan. Connecting seas: Strait extends from southwest to northeast between South and East China seas. Significance: Major global shipping corridor, with 44% of world's container fleet moving through it. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Median Line or Davis Line: Runs approximately down the middle of the Taiwan Strait. (Not recognised by China). 	<p>Taiwan Strait</p>
Red Sea	<p>Red Sea cargo ships face new attacks as Houthis (Yemen) claim to have sunk vessel.</p> <p>Red Sea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Sea marginal sea in the north-west of the Indian Ocean. It is connected to the Gulf of Aden via Strait of Bab El Mandeb and to the Mediterranean sea via Suez Canal. Bordering Nations: Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea(West), Israel & Jordan(North East) via the gulf of Aqaba and Saudi Arabia & Yemen(East). Northern Split: Red Sea in its northern part splits into two parts, the Gulf of Suez (Northwest) and Gulf of Aqaba (Northeast). It contains one of the world's most saline seawater. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Red Sea receives very little precipitation in any form, and no water enters the Red Sea from rivers. 	<p>Red Sea</p>
Tiexian Reef	<p>China seizes disputed Tiexian Reef near a key Philippine military outpost of Thitu Island, also known as Pag-asa Island in the South China Sea.</p> <p>About Tiexian Reef</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate name: Sandy Cay is part of Spratly Islands. Significance: China claims Sandy Cay is a natural feature and not man-made entitling it to a 12-nautical-mile (22-km) territorial sea under international law that would overlap with Thitu Island. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A territorial sea claim around Sandy Cay would provide a boost for nearby Subi Reef, one of China's reclaimed and militarized deep-water ports. 	<p>Tiexian Reef</p>

Kerch Strait	<p>Recently, Ukraine claimed responsibility for the underwater explosion that damaged the Kerch bridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 19km Bridge over the Kerch Strait is the direct link between the transport network of Russia and the Crimean peninsula. <p>About Kerch Strait</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: The Kerch Strait connects the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strait is a narrow body of water that connects two larger bodies of water. Significance: Key route for exports of Russian grain and crude oil, fuel oil, LNG, etc. 	<p>Kerch Strait</p> <p>The map shows the Kerch Strait separating the Black Sea (bottom) from the Sea of Azov (top). The strait is located between the Crimean Peninsula (Russia) to the west and the Ukrainian mainland to the east. Key locations marked include Odessa and Sevastopol on the Ukrainian side, and Mariupol, Berdyansk, and Kerch on the Russian side. A red dot marks the location of the Kerch Bridge. A curved line indicates the path of the bridge across the strait.</p>
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2.2. OTHER CONFLICT AREAS IN NEWS

South-East Asia/ south Asia	
1.	Cholistan Desert (Pakistan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following protests in Sindh, Pakistan suspended its canals project that includes Cholistan Canal meant for irrigating Location: Western part of Thar desert, Pakistan.
2.	Southern Thailand (Patani Conflict) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Thai government vs. Malay-Muslim separatists. Reasons: Ethnic and religious tensions, autonomy demands.
3.	Doklam (India) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After Nathu La, Sikkim to open Doklam, Cho La for battlefield tourism, eight years after India-China standoff. Significance for India: To protect Siliguri Corridor ("Chicken's Neck") that links Northeast India with mainland India.
West Asia	
4.	Blue Line (Lebanon–Israel) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status: Israel and Lebanon have no officially demarcated international border; the Blue Line serves as the de facto separation line Established by: United Nations in 2000 Features: Marked by blue barrels; runs from the Mediterranean Sea to the Golan Heights. in the east.
5.	Green Line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Green Line is the 1949 ceasefire boundary, marking the separation between Israel and the West Bank. It was delineated in the armistice agreements that formally ended the war between Israel and Arab armies.
6.	Yellow Line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It refers to a temporary military demarcation established under a U.S.-brokered ceasefire separating Israeli-controlled eastern Gaza from Palestinian-held areas.

7.	Syria (Al Hol Refugee Camp) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue: The High-Level International Conference on the Repatriation of Persons from Al Hol highlighted urgent humanitarian, human rights, and security challenges due to prolonged detention in northeast Syria.
8.	Hodeidah Port (Yemen) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Israel Launched Naval Strike on Yemen's Hodeidah Port and al-Salif Ports. Location: Western Yemen on the coast of Red Sea.
Africa	
9.	Cabo Delgado (Mozambique) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Local Islamist militants Ansar al-Sunna VS. the Mozambican government. Importance: Natural gas reserves.
10.	Sahel Region (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Governments vs. jihadist groups, ethnic militias. Reasons: Insurgency, ethnic tensions, weak governance.
Europe	
11.	Kursk Region (Russia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Ukrainian drone attack reportedly sparked a short-lived fire at the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant. Location: In European Russia; western border adjoins Ukraine.
12.	Transnistria (Moldova) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Moldovan government vs. Transnistrian separatists (Russian-backed). Reasons: Independence declaration in 1990.
13.	South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Georgia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Georgian government vs. Russian-backed separatists. Reasons: Independence declarations, Russian influence.

2.3. PLACES FEATURING INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Costa Rica	Costa Rica (Capital: San José) <p>Poás Volcano erupts in Central Costa Rica.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Lies in Central America. Bordering Countries: Nicaragua (North) and Panama (South-East). Bordering Water Bodies: Caribbean Sea (East) and Pacific Ocean (West). Other volcanoes: Irazú, Arenal 	
Greenland	Greenland (Capital: Nuuk) <p>Denmark's Prime Minister has called for increased Arctic defence collaboration; firmly dismissing US desire to annex Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish territory.</p> <p>Political Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: In the North Atlantic Ocean, Greenland is the world's largest island. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighboring countries: Its nearest neighbor is Canada's Ellesmere Island, which is located 16 miles to the north; Iceland is its nearest European neighbor. <p>Geographical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-thirds of Greenland lies above the Arctic Circle. Arctic climate sustains the island's massive ice sheet, which covers about 80 percent of the island. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ice Sheet is the second largest in the world after the Antarctic Ice Sheet. Significance: Strategic location for Arctic geopolitics (US has a base), Future Trans-Arctic Shipping, large deposits of rare earth elements (REEs), oil and gas, fresh water source, fisheries etc. 	
Northern Sea Route (NSR)	<p>India has proposed to conduct a joint feasibility study for operationalising the Northern Sea Route (NSR) with Norwegian agencies.</p> <p>About NSR or Northeast Passage (NEP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Maritime route along northern coast of Russia, connecting Atlantic Ocean to Pacific Ocean via Arctic waters. Geography: NSR begins at the border between Barents Sea (near Norway) and Kara Sea and ends in the Bering Strait (between Russia and Alaska). Shortest route: NSR has a distance of 13,000 kilometres between Europe and Asia. (Suez Canal route- 21,000 kilometres) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will reduce distance between Asia and Europe by 10-14 days compared to the Suez Canal route. Ports: Five main ports (Sabetta, Dudinka, Khatanga, Tiksi, and Pevek). Polar Silk Road Initiative by: China. 	
Qatar	<p>Qatar (Capital: Doha)</p> <p>Iran launched missile attacks at the al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the largest American base in West Asia.</p>	

	<p>Political features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: It is a peninsula located on the west bank of the Arabian Gulf. • Land Border: Shares its only land border with Saudi Arabia. • Maritime Borders: with Iran, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. <p>Geographical feature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The country has very little variations in its geography, most of the surface being plain with small, scattered carbonate mountains in the north (Dukhan area) and sand dunes in the south East (Ummsaieed, Khor-aludaid). • Rivers: There are no rivers or lakes in the country, thus the primary source of water comes from rainfall and ground water. 	
Chagos Archipelago	<p>United Kingdom (UK) handed over the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius.</p> <p>About Chagos Archipelago (British Indian Ocean Territory)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: Central Indian Ocean, ~1,600 km south of the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent. • Comprises: Seven Atolls with Diego Garcia being the largest. • History: Britain purchased it for three million pounds in 1965 however, Mauritius claims it was forced into the deal for its independence. • Biodiversity: Great Chagos Bank supports good quality reefs. • Strategic: USA' military base on Diego Garcia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ UK to pay Mauritius \$136 million annually to lease back the base for at least 99 years. 	
Persian Gulf	<p>USA President aborted move to rename the Persian Gulf as the 'Arabian Gulf' or 'Gulf of Arabia'.</p> <p>About Persian Gulf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a shallow marginal sea of the Indian Ocean that lies between the Arabian Peninsula and southwestern Iran. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strait of Hormuz link the Persian Gulf (west) with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea (southeast). ● It is bordered by Iran, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. ● The small freshwater inflow into the gulf is mostly from the Tigris, Euphrates, and Karun rivers. 	
Tokara Islands	<p>More than 1,000 earthquakes have rattled the Tokara Islands in southern Japan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Japan is one of the world's most seismically active countries, sitting on top of four major tectonic plates along the western edge of the Pacific "ring of fire". <p>About Tokara Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is an archipelago in Japan, south of Kyushu and north of Amami Islands. ● Toshima (Japan's longest village) is located here. 	
Bitra island	<p>Lakshadweep administration is considering acquisition of Bitra for defence purposes.</p> <p>About Bitra Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is the smallest inhabited island in the territory of Lakshadweep having a land area of 0.105 sq km. ● Location: Near the Agatti Island, Arabian Sea. ● Climate: Categorised as 'Aw' i.e., tropical savannah according to the Köppen-Geiger system of climate classification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The average rainfall received is ~1600 mm a year. <p>About Lakshadweep</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is India's smallest Union Territory. ● Lakshadweep Island consists of 36 coral islands, located in the Arabian Sea. Atoll, lagoon and reefs are the three main geographical features. 	

Easter Island	<p>Easter Island (Capital: Hanga Roa)</p> <p>Rising sea levels due to climate change could submerge coastal areas by 2080, threatening the moai and archaeological heritage.</p> <p>Political features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: It is the easternmost Polynesian island, lying west of mainland Chile and east of Pitcairn Island in the Southeastern Pacific Ocean • Political Status: Chilean special territory. <p>Geographical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volcanic: Small, triangular volcanic island formed by three extinct volcanoes. • Climate: Subtropical maritime climate with mild winters and warm summers. • Global Recognition: UNESCO World Heritage Site (Rapa Nui National Park). 	 <p>Easter Island</p> <p>HAWAII (U.S.)</p> <p>PACIFIC OCEAN</p> <p>Easter Island</p> <p>CHILE</p>
New Caledonia	<p>France announces an agreement to give New Caledonia more autonomy.</p> <p>New Caledonia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: French overseas territory in the Pacific Ocean. • History: During the 1840s, Islanders were kidnapped by European traders as slaves or for forced labour in sugarcane plantations, later in 1853 annexed by France. • Present Demand: Deep divisions between its indigenous Kanak population and Europeans, over its independence. 	 <p>New Caledonia</p> <p>INDONESIA</p> <p>EAST TIMOR (TIMOR-LESTE)</p> <p>AUSTRALIA</p> <p>PAPUA NEW GUINEA</p> <p>CORAL SEA</p> <p>SOLomon ISLANDS</p> <p>Fiji</p> <p>VANUATU</p> <p>New Caledonia</p> <p>NEW CALEDONIA (FR.)</p> <p>TASMAN SEA</p> <p>NEW ZEALAND</p> <p>INDIAN OCEAN</p>
Israel	<p>Israel</p> <p>Israel became first OECD country to sign bilateral investment agreement with India. The previous BIT signed between India and Israel in 1996 got terminated in 2017.</p> <p>Political Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ North: Lebanon ◦ Northeast: Syria (Golan Heights region) ◦ East: Jordan (separated largely by the Jordan River) ◦ West: Mediterranean Sea ◦ Southwest: Egypt (Sinai Peninsula) ◦ Southeast: Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea access) <p>Geographical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiography: Includes coastal plains, central highlands, Jordan Rift Valley, and the Negev Desert • Lowest Point: Dead Sea (lowest land point on Earth) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Bodies: Mediterranean Sea, Dead Sea, Sea of Galilee. About Erez Crossing: It is a border crossing between Israel and the northern Gaza Strip. 
Maldives	<p>Recently, Indian Prime Minister paid an official visit to Maldives marking 60 years of diplomatic ties where agreement was also signed for launching UPI in Maldives.</p> <p>Political Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island nation in South Asia, located south of India and Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean. Composed of 26 natural atolls forming over 1,190 coral islands, grouped into administrative atolls. Water Bodies: Indian Ocean (all sides), Eight Degree Channel (north), One and a Half Degree Channel (south). Maldives is an example of Coral Atoll. <p>Geographical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important Atolls: Malé Atoll (capital), Ari Atoll, Baa Atoll, etc. Highest Point: Approximately 2.4 meters above sea level (on Villingili Island, Addu Atoll), one of the lowest elevations in the world. <p>Channels in Indian Ocean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Degree Channel: Separates the island of Minicoy from the Maldives 9 Degree Channel: Separates Minicoy from the main Lakshadweep archipelago 10 Degree Channel: Separates the Andaman Islands and the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. 

Cyprus	<p>Cyprus (Capital: Nicosia)</p> <p>The Prime Minister of India Visited Cyprus after 23 years and signed a Joint Declaration on the implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership.</p> <p>Political Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An island country in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea • It is a member of the European Union (EU) despite being geographically in Asia. • It got independence from the British in 1960; however Since 1974 Cyprus has been divided between Turkiye-backed Northern Cyprus and Republic of Cyprus. It is known as Cyprus Question/problem. • India supports a bi-zonal bicommunal federation based on UN Resolutions as a solution to the Cyprus problem. • Maritime neighbours: Turkey (North), Syria (East), and Lebanon (Southeast). <p>Geographical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is third largest island in Mediterranean Sea after Sicily and Sardinia. 	
Chile	<p>Chile (Capital: Santiago)</p> <p>Indian Prime Minister and Chilean President held bilateral talks during the latter's visit to India.</p> <p>Political Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated along the western seaboard of South America. • Boundaries: Peru and Bolivia (North); Argentina (East) • Surrounded by Pacific Ocean in the West. • The Argentina–Chile border is the longest international border of South America and the third longest in the world after the Canada–United States border and the Kazakhstan–Russia border. <p>Geographical Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape dominated by Andes Mountains. • Atacama Desert in the North- driest nonpolar desert in the world. • Lies in the Pacific Ring of Fire. • Highest Peak: Ojos del Salado the highest active volcano in the world. • Top copper producer in the world. • Part of the “Lithium Triangle” with Argentina and Bolivia. 	

Philippines	<p>The Philippines and India formally elevated their bilateral ties through a declaration on establishing a Strategic Partnership guided by the Plan of Action (2025-2029).</p> <p>Philippines (Capital: Manila)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: An island country in Southeast Asia located in the western Pacific Ocean. Water bodies: Philippine Sea (east), Celebes Sea (south), Sulu Sea (southwest), and South China Sea (west and north). 	
Singapore	<p>Prime Minister of Singapore paid an official visit to India commemorating 60 years of India-Singapore diplomatic relations.</p> <p>Political Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. Lies off the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, separated from Malaysia by the Johor Strait and from Indonesia by the Singapore Strait. Borders: Shares land and maritime boundaries with Malaysia to the north and Indonesia to the south. Strategic Importance: Situated along the major shipping route connecting the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean via the South China Sea, making it a global hub for trade and commerce. E.g., Malacca Strait & Sunda Strait. 	

3. BILATERAL RELATIONS

3.1. INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

Why in the News?

Marking 75 years of diplomatic ties, Chinese President called for a “**Dragon-Elephant tango**” relations between India and China to symbolize a harmonious partnership between the two nations.

More on the News

- The term “**Dragon-Elephant Tango**” is a **metaphorical phrase** used to describe a vision of **peaceful and cooperative relations** between **China and India**.
- Indian Prime Minister and Chinese President met on the side-lines of the **SCO Summit 2025 in Tianjin, China**.
 - It was his first visit to China since 2018.

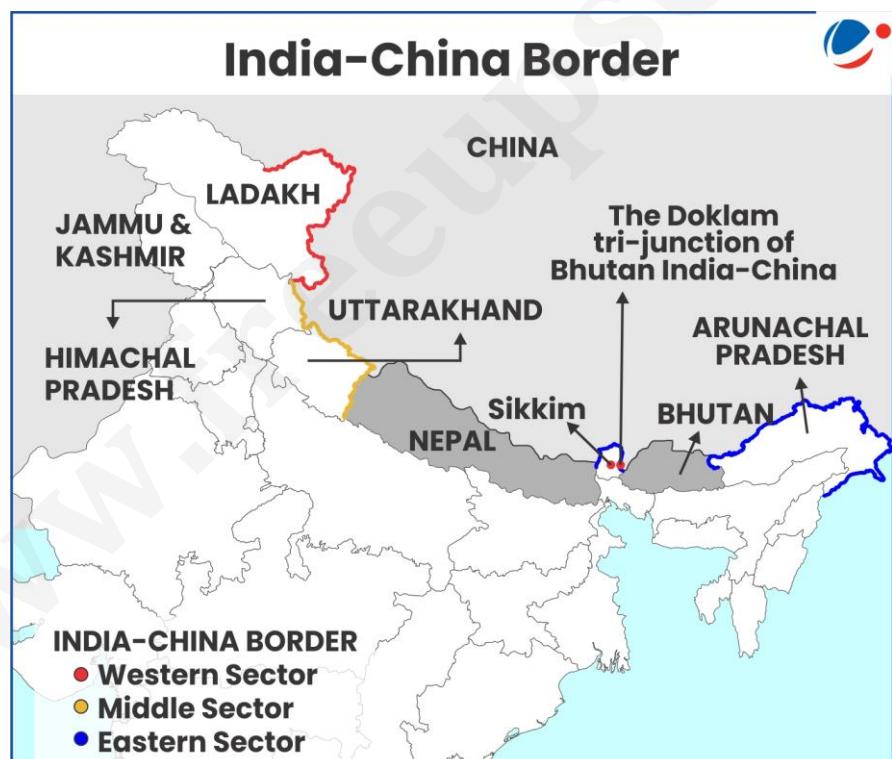
India-China Relations: Key Facts

- Trade:** China is the largest trading partner of India with a significant trade deficit for India.
 - Trade through **Lipulekh Pass (Uttarakhand)**, **Shipki La Pass (Himachal Pradesh)**, and **Nathu La Pass (Sikkim)** will be reopened soon.
- Border Issues:**
 - Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the dividing line between the two nations. However, border between India and China is **not formally demarcated** and there is **no mutually agreed LAC**.
 - India considers the **LAC to be 3,488 km long**, while the China considers it to be only **around 2,000 km**.
 - LAC is divided into three sectors**

- > **Western Sector (Ladakh):** India considers the Johnson Line (of 1865) as the border whereas China claims the **Macartney-MacDonald Line** (of 1899) as the true border.
- > **Middle sector (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand):** Largely undisputed area.
- > **Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim):** China claims the state of AP as part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

✓ **LAC in this region is along the McMahon line** drawn during the Simla Convention of 1914 (between British India, China, and Tibet).

- Military Engagements:** Joint military exercises: **Hand-in-Hand**, suspended post-2020 tensions.
- The String of Pearls**



- The String of Pearls refers to a geopolitical and strategic framework in which **China is developing a network of commercial and military assets** (or “pearls”) along the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** to **secure its energy routes and expand its influence**.
- **Network of Ports and Bases:** China has invested in and developed port facilities in countries like Pakistan (Gwadar), Sri Lanka (Hambantota), Bangladesh (Chittagong), and Myanmar (Sittwe and Coco Islands), and has a military base in Djibouti.
- China is using South China Sea-Style “**Salami Slicing**” tricks in the Yellow Sea to capture new territory.
 - It is a **divide-and-conquer tactic** used to dominate opposition territory, piece by piece.
- **India's Response – Necklace of Diamonds” strategy**
 - **Developing Naval Bases and Access:** E.g., Iran (Chabahar), Oman, Singapore (Changi Naval Base), etc.
 - **Strengthening Regional Partnerships:** **Act East Policy** and enhanced ties with **ASEAN, Japan, and Australia**. Strategic partnerships through **Quad and Indo-Pacific initiatives**.
 - **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) & MAHASAGAR** India’s vision for maritime cooperation.

China's Hydropower Project on the Brahmaputra River

China started construction of its **Medog mega dam project** on the Yarlung Zangbo (Brahmaputra in India) River in Tibet.

About the Medog Hydropower Project

- **Scale and Capacity:** Will surpass Three Gorges Dam as the world's largest, potentially generating three times more energy.

Existing River Water Cooperation Mechanism between India and China

- **Expert Level Mechanism (2006):** Annual dialogue on flood season data, emergency protocols and trans-border river issues.
- **Hydrological Data Sharing on Sutlej:** MoU covers June to October data from Tibetan station. Expired in 2020 and renewal is pending.
- **Umbrella MoU (2013):** Expanded Brahmaputra and Sutlej data period to 15 May to 15 October and provides a broader framework for water cooperation.

3.1.1. CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (CPEC)

Why in the News?

The foreign ministers of China, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to extend the China Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan.

What is China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)?

- Flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) **launched in 2015**.
- Links Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road.
- 3,000 km of roads, railways, and pipelines transport oil and gas from **Pakistan's Gwadar Port to Kashgar City in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- Proposed by China in 2013 to enhance transcontinental connectivity and cooperation.
- Also known as One Belt One Road (OBOR):
 - **Silk Road Economic Belt ("Belt"):** Overland route linking China to Central/South Asia and Europe.



- **New Maritime Silk Road ("Road"):** Maritime route connecting China to Southeast Asia, Gulf countries, East/North Africa, and Europe.
- **Recently expanded:** China and Colombia signed BRI cooperation pact.

3.2. INDIA-PAKISTAN

Why in the News?

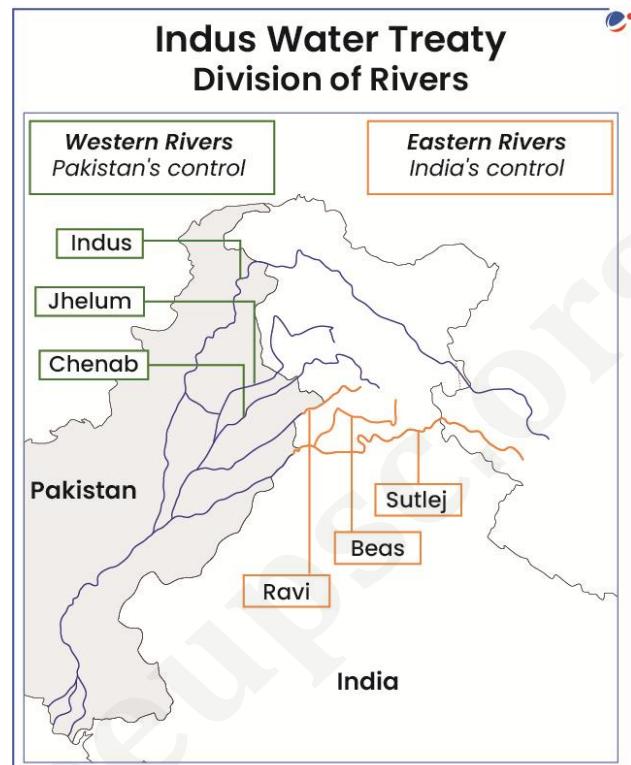
India announced the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960** with Pakistan will be held 'in abeyance' with immediate effect, until Pakistan stops its support for **cross-border terrorism**, after recent terror attack.

More on the news

- **No Treaty Provision for Abeyance:** Neither IWT nor the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT) 1969 provides 'abeyance' as grounds for halting treaty obligations.
- **No Unilateral Suspension Allowed:** IWT lacks provisions for unilateral suspension.

About Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- **Genesis:** Signed between **India and Pakistan and brokered by the World Bank in 1960**.
- **Objective:** Fixed and delimited the rights concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.
- **Provisions for water usage rights:**
 - India: unrestricted use of **Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej**.
 - Pakistan: **Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab**.
 - > Can be used by India with for irrigation, transport, etc.
- **Implementation:** Created Permanent Indus Commission to maintain a channel for communication; meet at least once every year.
- **Indus Waters Treaty Dispute Resolution Process**
 - **Permanent Indus Commission:** Resolves issues related to treaty implementation.
 - **Neutral Expert:** Appointed by the World Bank to address unresolved water-sharing differences and provide a binding decision.
 - **Court of Arbitration (CoA):** If the neutral expert fails, the dispute is referred to the CoA, a seven-member tribunal that decides by majority vote.
- **Neutral Experts:** Is inspecting Kishenganga and Ratle Hydroelectric Projects.
 - **Kishenganga HEP:** Run-of-the-river project diverting water from Kishenganga to Jhelum in J&K.
 - **Ratle HEP:** Located on Chenab River in Kishtwar, J&K.



International principles on international water sharing

- **Helsinki Rules, 1966:** Adopted by the International Law Association and regulating "the use of water of an international drainage basin".
- **Helsinki Convention, 1992:** Provides a legal framework for preventing and controlling water pollution across national borders.
- **UN Watercourses Convention, 1997:** United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention) codified international law on trans-boundary water resources.
 - India, China and Pakistan have not signed.

3.2.1. SIMLA AGREEMENT

Why in the News?

Pakistan declared it would hold “in abeyance” its participation in all bilateral agreements with India, including the Simla Agreement.

Simla Agreement

- **Background:** The Agreement was signed between India and Pakistan in 1972 as a peace measure after the India-Pakistan 1971 War.
 - The 1971 war led to the creation of the new nation of Bangladesh out of East Pakistan.
- **Key Provisions of the Simla Agreement**
 - **Normalization of Relations:** The principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter shall govern the relations between the two countries.
 - > It also facilitated the **repatriation of prisoners of war and civilians** detained during the conflict, marking a humanitarian gesture.
 - **Establishment of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir:** The agreement converted the 1971 ceasefire line into the LoC.

Other Important India-Pakistan Agreements

- **Nehru-Liaquat Pact (1950):** Addresses treatment of minorities in both countries.
- **Bilateral Protocol on Religious Pilgrimages (1974):** Facilitates Hindu and Sikh pilgrims to 15 temples and gurdwaras in Pakistan, and Muslim pilgrims to five mosques and shrines in India.
- **Nuclear Installations Agreement (1988):** Both countries exchange information on nuclear installations and facilities annually on January 1st.
- **Air Space Violations Agreement (1991):** Prevents airspace violations and enables cooperation for military aircraft overflights and landings.
- **Ballistic Missiles Pre-Notification Agreement (2005):** Requires advance notification of land or sea-launched surface-to-surface ballistic missile flight tests.
- **Kartarpur Corridor Agreement (2019):** Enables visa-free travel for Indian pilgrims to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan.

3.2.2. INDIA MAKES A NEW CONTINENTAL SHELF CLAIM

Why in the News?

Recently, India has increased its **claim in the Central Arabian Sea**, as part of its ‘extended continental shelf’ by nearly 10,000 square km but also **modified an earlier claim to avoid a long-standing dispute with Pakistan**.

Dispute over the maritime boundary

- **Exclusive Economic Zone:** Coastal countries have an “exclusive economic zone,” (EEZ) which gives exclusive mining and fishing rights, upto **200 nautical miles from their coastlines**.
 - This area **extends unbroken from their landmass all the way till the sea bed**.
 - All of this oceanic area is considered part of a **country’s extended continental shelf**.
- India made its first claim in **2009 in vast stretches of sea** to a UN body, called the **Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf** (CLCS).
- **Pakistan in 2021 objected claiming** that the area was under ‘dispute’, specifically, **Sir Creek**.
- In March 2023, **CLCS rejected the entirety of India’s claim in the Arabian Sea region**. However, the Commission allowed countries to submit ‘modified claims.’

About Sir Creek

- It is a **96-km-long disputed tidal estuary**.
- It **extends into the Arabian Sea** and roughly **divides the Sindh province of Pakistan from the Kutch region of Gujarat**.

- In 1947, India wanted it to be settled according to international principles of maritime law, called the **Thalweg Principle** (boundary can be fixed only in the middle of the navigable channel) in 1947.
 - **Pakistan**, however, **claimed that Sir Creek was not navigable**, so the dispute could not be settled according to the Thalweg principle.

About Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS)

- CLCS meets at the **UN Headquarters in New York**.
- **Objective:** To facilitate implementation of the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982** in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles beyond baseline.
- **Nature of Recommendations:** Final and binding on coastal states.

3.3. INDIA-BANGLADESH

Why in the News?

India formally revoked transshipment facility for Bangladesh exports from India.

More on the News

- The **2020 agreement facilitated export of Bangladeshi goods through Indian Land Customs Stations (LCSs)** to ports for destinations in third countries in Europe, West Asia, and beyond.
- **India cited** logistical challenges such as **significant congestion at Indian ports and airports** hindering India's own export processes, as primary reason.

India- Bangladesh relations: Key Facts

- **Important trade partners:** Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh in Asia.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Military exercises like **SAMPRITI and MILAN**.
- **Engagement at multiple multilateral platforms:** E.g. SAARC, BIMSTEC, BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal), IORA.
- **Enhanced Connectivity:** E.g., Protocol on Inland Waterways Trade and Transit (PIWTT), operationalization of Agreement for the usage of Chittagong and Mongla Ports.
 - Bangladesh joined Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) in 2024.
 - > IPOI was by the PM of India in 2019 during 14th East Asia Summit in Bangkok.
 - India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant.
- **Concerns in relationship:** Reports have claimed that the US wanted to establish a military base in St. Martin's Island of Bangladesh.
- **Increasing proximity to China and threat to India's Chicken's neck (Siliguri corridor)** a critical bridge between **mainland India and the northeastern states**.

Political Features

- **Location:** A country of South Asia, located in the delta of the **Padma (Ganga)** and **Jamuna (Brahmaputra)** rivers in the northeastern part of the Indian subcontinent.
- **Boundaries:** **Malaysia:** Bangladesh is bordered by the **Indian states of West Bengal** (west and north), **Assam** (north), **Meghalaya** (north and northeast), and **Tripura and Mizoram** (east). **Myanmar** (southeast). The southern part of Bangladesh opens into **Bay of Bengal**.
- **India shares longest land border** with Bangladesh.



Geographical Features:

- **The longest:** the Jamuna - part of Brahmaputra.
- Bangladesh constitutes **two-thirds of the deltaic plain.**
- In its southern region, it's fringed by **Sundarbans.**

3.4. INDIA-AFGHANISTAN

Why in the News?

Recently, Afghanistan's Foreign Minister arrived in New Delhi to hold bilateral discussions with India's External Affairs Minister.

More on the News

- This visit follows a special travel exemption granted to Afghanistan's Foreign Minister by **United Nations Security Council** to travel to India.
- It is the **first ministerial-level visit to India** since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan 2021.

Key outcomes of the Visit

- **Diplomatic Engagement:** India restored Technical Mission in Kabul to full Embassy status.
- **Connectivity:** commencement of India-Afghanistan Air Freight Corridor.
- **Infrastructure and Energy:** Both side appreciated India's support for **India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam (Salma Dam) in Herat.**

Global and Regional Perspectives

- **Moscow Format Unity:** India participated in the **7th Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan** alongside China, Iran, Pakistan, Central Asian nations, and Russia.
- **Russia's Recognition:** Russia has **formally recognized Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.**
- **U.S. Strategic Posture:** The United States has signaled a renewed interest in **Bagram Air Base**, suggesting a possible re-entry into Afghanistan's strategic sphere.
- **China's Strategic Initiative:** China has promoted trilateral cooperation among **China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan** under the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**

Afghanistan (Capital: Kabul)

Political Features

- It is a **landlocked mountainous country** in Southern Asia.
- Often referred to as the "**Gateway to Asia**".
- **Bordering Countries:** Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north, Iran to west, Pakistan to the southeast, India and China to the northeast.
- The **Durand Line** is the 2,640-kilometer international land border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.



Geographical Features

- **Major rivers:** Amu Darya, Helmand river, Kabul River
- **Mountain ranges:** Hindu Kush, Pamir Mountains in the northeast and Safed Koh range in the south.

3.5. INDIA-SRI LANKA

Why in the News?

Prime Minister of India was honored with Sri Lanka's highest civilian award, **Mithra Vibhushana** during his two-day state visit to Sri Lanka.

Key Outcomes of the Visit

- **Energy Collaboration:** India, Sri Lanka, and the UAE agreed to jointly develop an **energy hub in Trincomalee**.
- **Digital Transformation:** India announced support for Sri Lanka's Unique Digital Identity project.
- **Grant Assistance:** India announced grant assistance for the development of **Thirukoneswaram temple** in Trincomalee, **Sita Eliya temple** in Nuwara Eliya, and **Sacred City Complex project** in Anuradhapura.
- **Others:**
 - India agreed on the conversion of 100 million US dollars in loans to grants and 2.4 billion Lankan rupees package for the **Eastern Province**.
 - India also announced comprehensive **capacity-building programme** in India covering 700 Sri Lankans annually.

India-Sri Lanka Relations: Key Facts

- **Regional Forums:** Both are members of Commonwealth, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), BIMSTEC.
- **Military Exercises:** SLINEX (Naval), MITRA SHAKTI (Army), **also** Sri Lanka participates in MILAN (multilateral naval exercise).
- **Economic Support:** Kankesanthurai Port renovation assistance in Jaffna.
- **Trade & Investment:** India is largest trade partner, top FDI contributor, and biggest tourist source.
- **Challenges**
 - **Hambantota Port** under Chinese control.
 - **Chinese research vessels** (Shi Yan-6, Yuan Wang-5) conducting surveillance with potential military implications.
 - **Fisheries Disputes:** Kachchatheevu Island territorial dispute (ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974) where Indian fishermen claim traditional fishing rights.
 - **Tamil Reconciliation:** Delayed implementation of 13th Amendment post-civil war, this amendment resulted from Indo-Lanka Accord (1987).

<p>Sri Lanka (Capital: Colombo)</p> <p>Political Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is an island nation located in the Indian Ocean, just off the southern tip of India.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It is separated from India by the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar.• Maritime Boundaries: India (northwest), and the Maldives (southwest). <p>Geographical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest point: Adam's Peak.• Islands: Controls several smaller islands, including the Jaffna Peninsula, Mannar Island, and the Nainativu islands.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The Adam's Bridge (Rama's Bridge) is a chain of natural limestone shoals between India and Sri Lanka.	
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3.6. UNITED STATES-INDIA

Why in the News?

US imposed 50% tariffs on India.

India-US Relations: Key Facts

- **Trade:** India-US Trade Policy Forum was established in 2005. India has a trade surplus of \$19.59 billion.
- **India-US cooperation milestones on defence**
 - The US designated India as a **Major Defence Partner in 2016**.
 - The **2+2 meetings between India-US (2018)**.
 - The roadmap for **defence industrial cooperation (2023)**.
 - **Military partnership:** The **Malabar exercises** (India hosted Australia, Japan and U.S. forces in 2024), **Cope India** (Air Force), **Tiger Triumph** (Army, Navy, Air Force), **Yudh Abhyas** (Army).
 - **Defence agreements include:**
 - Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) in 2024;
 - > India is **the 18th SOSA partner** of the US. It is **legally non-binding**.
 - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016;
 - Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018;
 - Industrial Security Agreement in 2019; and
 - Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) in 2020.
- **Industrial growth:** The growing synergies in defence ecosystems under the INDUS-X.
 - INDUS-X was launched in June 2023 under Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).
- **Geopolitical convergence:** The US Congress passed 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act', which mandates that the Tibet-China dispute must be resolved by adhering to international law including the UN Charter.
- **Issue of H-1B Visa Fee:** The \$100,000 H-1B visa fee was imposed by the United States on new visa applications.
 - **Specialty Occupations:** These fields typically include IT, engineering, and medicine, which demand a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience.
 - **In this backdrop China's new Visa: K Visa**, a new visa category by China which will be effective from October 1.
 - > All foreign nationals, including those without a confirmed job, can enter China.

United States of America (Capital: Washington)

Political Features

- **Country in North America**, spanning from Atlantic to Pacific Ocean across the continent.
- **Composed of 50 states** and several territories including Puerto Rico, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands.
- **Land boundary:** Canada (North; the longest international land border in the world), Mexico (South).
- **Water Bodies:** Pacific Ocean (West), Atlantic Ocean (East), Gulf of Mexico (Southeast), Arctic Ocean (Alaska), Caribbean Sea (Southeast).

Geographical Features

- **Important Rivers:** Mississippi (longest), Missouri, Colorado, Columbia, Rio Grande.
- **Important Lakes:** Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario), Great Salt Lake, Lake Champlain.
- **Important Straits:** Bering Strait (separates Alaska from Russia), Florida Strait (between Florida and Cuba).
- **Notable Mountain Ranges:** Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, Cascade Range, Sierra Nevada.
- **Notable Deserts:** Mojave, Great Basin, Sonoran, Chihuahuan.

3.7. INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Why in the News?

Recently, the 25th anniversary of the Declaration of Strategic Partnership between Russia and India has been celebrated.

More on the News

- The Declaration was signed in the year 2000.
- Since then, 22 annual summits, regular leader-level meetings, ministerial dialogues and working groups across sectors have institutionalised the partnership.
- Russia officially joined the India-led International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) as its 19th member.



India-Russia Relations: Key Facts

- Military collaboration:** Joint production of BrahMos cruise missile and Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles.
 - Russia has approved the sale of BrahMos missiles to Philippines.
 - Russia supplies India platforms like the S400 air defence system and newer frigates such as 'Tushil' frigate.
 - Russia approves the draft Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS) with India. It would enable the militaries of both countries to access logistics and support facilities at each other's bases and ports.
 - Conducts military exercise INDRA and Avia Indra.
- Defence:** Russia is India's top military supplier accounting for 36% of total defence imports during 2020-24 (SIPRI Report).
- Connectivity:** International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the Northern Sea Route and the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor.
- Energy:** Promotes nuclear energy development. E.g., Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant, Tamil Nadu.
- Technological cooperation:** E.g., Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (supplying 2000 MW of energy, 4000 MW of reactor capacity in the pipeline), GAGANYAAN mission, etc.
- Trade:** 90% trade between Russia and India is conducted in local currencies i.e. Rubles and Rupee.

Political Features	Geographical Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Country in Northern Eurasia, spanning Eastern Europe and Northern Asia:Land Boundaries:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Russia shares borders with 16 countries.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Europe: Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland (via Kaliningrad), Belarus, and Ukraine.Asia: Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and North Korea.Maritime Boundaries:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Russia has extensive coastlines bordering several oceans and seas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Arctic Ocean (north): Includes the Barents Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, East Siberian Sea, and Chukchi Sea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Landforms:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ural Mountains: A natural divide between Europe and Asia.Caucasus Mountains: Include Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe.Important Rivers:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Volga River: Longest river in Europe.Amur River: Forms a natural border with China.Important Lakes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lake Baikal: The world's deepest and oldest freshwater lake, located in Siberia.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pacific Ocean (east): Includes the Bering Sea, Sea of Okhotsk, and Sea of Japan. > Atlantic Ocean (west): Access through the Baltic Sea. > Caspian Sea (south): Largest enclosed inland body of water, shared with Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. ○ Maritime boundaries with the following countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > United States: Via the Bering Strait. > Japan: Via the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan. > Norway: Delimited in the Barents Sea. ● Key Disputes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kuril Islands dispute with Japan. ○ Crimean Peninsula dispute with Ukraine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Caspian Sea: Largest enclosed inland body of water, shared with other nations. ○ Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega: Largest lakes in Europe, located in northwestern Russia. ● Notable Straits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tatar Strait: Separates mainland Russia from Sakhalin Island. ○ Kerch Strait: Connects the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. ● Forests and Biodiversity: Largest forested area in the world often referred to as the "lungs of Europe." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rich biodiversity, including species like the Siberian tiger, brown bear, and Arctic fox.
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3.8. INDIA-UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

Why in the News?

India and the UK signed the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**, marking a major milestone in their partnership.

More on the News

- **Major developments apart from CETA:**
 - **India-UK Vision 2035** was adopted; **Pillars of Cooperation in Vision 2035**,
 - > **Trade & Economic Growth:** Signing of **India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** and work towards **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)**.
 - > **Technology and Innovation:** Creation of **UK-India Research & Innovation Corridor**.
 - > **Defence and Security:** Co-development of **Jet Engine Advanced Core Technologies (JACT)** and **Electric Propulsion**
 - **Defence Industrial Roadmap** adopted for co-design, co-development, and co-production.
- India and the UK announced the conclusion of a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** after three years of formal talks.
 - FTA will be implemented after the finalization of the legal document.
 - > It will consist of 27 chapters such as digital trade, environment, etc.



Key Highlights of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

- **Comprehensive Tariff Elimination and Market Access**
 - **Tariff Elimination:** Over 99% of tariff lines will be eliminated, covering almost India's entire trade basket.
 - > Meanwhile, India has opened 89.5% of its tariff lines, covering 91% of UK exports.
 - **Sensitive Sector Safeguards:** India has safeguarded sensitive sectors like dairy, cereal, millets, gold, jewellery, lab-grown diamonds, etc.

- **Bilateral Safeguards:** Measures to control sudden import surges that could hurt domestic industries.
- **Services:** India has secured wide-ranging commitments from the UK, covering all 12 major service sectors.
- **Mutual Recognition and Professional Mobility**
 - **Mutual Recognition Agreement:** Both countries will recognise professional qualifications in areas like nursing, accountancy, and architecture within a year, easing mobility and reducing barriers.
 - **Temporary Entry for Professionals:** UK allows Indian business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, service suppliers, independent professionals, and investors to stay from 90 days to 3 years.
 - **Double Contribution Convention (DCC):** It exempts Indian workers and their employers from social security contributions in the UK for up to three years when on temporary assignments.
 - **Simplified Rules of Origin:** Exporters can self-certify product origin, small consignments under £1,000 need no documents and Product Specific Rules of Origin (PSRs) align with India's current supply chains for key sectors such as textiles, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and processed food.

India-UK Relations: Key Facts

- **Investment:** The UK is the **6th largest inward investor in India**, with a cumulative equity investment of US \$ 35 billion till September 2024.
- **Defence Cooperation:** India and the UK hold regular military exercises, including **Konkan** (naval), **Cobra Warrior** (air), and **Ajeya Warrior** (army).
- **Education cooperation:** UK universities plan to open **campuses in India**, with the **University of Southampton**'s Gurugram campus being the first under the New Education Policy.
- **UK India Infrastructure Financing Bridge (UKIIFB):** It is a collaborative initiative led jointly by **NITI Aayog and the City of London** aimed at **unlocking infrastructure investment and leveraging the City of London's expertise**.

3.9. INDIA-JAPAN PARTNERSHIP

Why in the News?

Prime Minister of India visited Japan and signed key agreements further strengthening the India-Japan partnership.

Key Outcomes of the Prime Minister's Visit

- **India - Japan Joint Vision for the Next Decade:** A **10-year strategic prioritization for economic and functional cooperation** in eight lines of effort viz., Economic Partnership, Economic Security, Mobility, Ecological Sustainability, State-Prefecture Engagements, etc.
 - **State-Prefecture partnerships** have been established between Andhra Pradesh and Toyama, Tamil Nadu and Ehime, Uttar Pradesh and Yamanashi, Gujarat and Shizuoka.
- **Economic Security Initiative:** To **promote supply chain resilience** in strategic sectors such as semiconductors, clean energy, telecom, as well as new and emerging technologies.
- **Space Cooperation:** Agreement for cooperation between India and Japan on Joint Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (Chandrayaan 5).

India-Japan Relations: Key Facts

- **Current status:** Upgraded to **Special Strategic and Global Partnership** in 2014.
- **Economic Cooperation:** **India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** came into effect in 2011 and covers trade in goods and services, movement of natural persons, investments, IPR, etc.
 - **India-Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership (IJICP)** was launched in 2021 to enhance India's industrial competitiveness.
- **Security Cooperation:** Key agreements include **2025 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation** and 2015 pacts on defense equipment transfer and protection of classified information.
 - **2+2 Ministerial Dialogues** between both countries' defence and foreign affairs ministers.
 - Both countries participate in **bilateral exercises** like JIMEX and Dharma Guardian, and in **multilateral exercises** like MILAN and MALABAR.
- **Technology:** Collaborations like the Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX) by ISRO and JAXA.
 - U.S., Japan and South Korea signed Digital Infrastructure Growth Initiative for India Framework (DiGi Framework).
- **Development Cooperation:** e.g., **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) flagship project.**
 - **India Japan Act East Forum** provides a platform for India-Japan collaboration.
- **African Development:** **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)** was jointly established (in 2017).
 - **Japan-India Cooperation Initiative for Sustainable Economic Development in Africa** has also been launched.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Both nations collaborate with Australia in the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative.**

Japan (Capital: Tokyo)

Political Features

- **Location and Composition:**
 - Japan is an island nation located off the eastern coast of Asia, consisting of a chain of islands in the western North Pacific Ocean.
- **Boundaries:**
 - **West:** Bordered by the Sea of Japan, separating it from South Korea, North Korea, and southeastern Siberia (Russia).
 - **North:** Bordered by the Sōya Strait, separating it from Sakhalin Island (Russia).
 - **Northeast:** Lies near the southern Kuril Islands, a region of geopolitical tension with Russia.
 - **East and South:** Bordered by the Pacific Ocean.
 - **Southwest:** Adjacent to the East China Sea, separating it from China.



Geographical Features

- **Island Composition:** Japan is composed of four main islands: **Hokkaido, Honshu (the largest), Shikoku, and Kyushu.**
- Japan lies along the western edge of **the Pacific Ring of Fire**.

3.10. INDIA-UAE RELATIONS

Why in the News?

Recently, the Crown Prince of Dubai made his first official visit to India.

Key Announcements during the visit

- **Bharat Mart & Virtual Trade Corridor (VTC):** To boost bilateral trade and strengthen the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC).
 - **The Bharat Mart** is India's warehousing facility which would help the Indian exports showcase their products under one roof, similar to **China's Dragon Mart**.
- **Ship Repair Clusters (Kochi & Vadinar):** Expected to enhance India's maritime sector.
- **Other Initiatives:** **India-UAE Friendship Hospital (in Dubai)**, IIM Ahmedabad's Dubai campus and Dubai Chamber of Commerce's India office.

India-UAE Relations: Key Facts

- **Growing Political Relationship:** Since PM's 2015 visit—**first in 34 years** led to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2017)**.
- **Strategic Global Partnership:** Part of BRICS, I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA), and the UAE-France-India (UFI) Trilateral.
- **Joint Exercises:** Bilateral drills, e.g., Gulf Star 1 and PASSEX, alongside **Desert Cyclone (India-UAE)** and trilateral **Desert Knight** (India-France-UAE).
- **Currency Pact:** 2023 RBI-UAE Central Bank Local Currency Settlement (LCS) System.
- **Digital Payments:** NPCI enables UPI for Indians in UAE.
- **Food Security Corridor:** Agreement signed in 2022.

- **Nuclear Cooperation:** Focus on operation and maintenance of the **Barakah Nuclear Power Plant by India**.
- **Key Energy Partner:** UAE is India's **4th largest source** of crude oil and the **2nd largest** source of LNG & LPG.
 - **Strategic Oil Reserves:** UAE is the only nation in the region to offer to store strategic oil reserves in India.
- **Robust Trade Relations:** UAE is India's **3rd largest trading partner** and **2nd largest export destination**.
- **Deepening Economic Integration:** UAE is the **only country** with which India has both a **trade agreement—CEPA, 2022**—and an **investment agreement—Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT, 2023)**.
 - UAE is the **7th largest in the total FDI received in India (2000- 2024)**.
- **Cultural Ties:** The Indian community in the UAE is the **largest ethnic group**.
 - **Remittances:** India's remittance inflows in FY24, accounting for 19.2%.
 - **Cultural Milestone:** 'BAPS Mandir', first Hindu temple in UAE, is the largest of its kind in the Gulf region.
- **Challenges in India-UAE relationship**
 - The UAE's Kafala system has been criticized for contributing to labor abuses.
 - > **The Kafala system** is a sponsorship-based labor system in Gulf countries, where employers have control over foreign workers' legal status, including their visas and employment conditions.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Capital: Abu Dhabi)

Political Features

- The UAE is a **federation of seven emirates** including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah.
- **Bordering Countries:** Saudi Arabia (west and south), Oman (southeast).
- **Maritime Boundary:** Gulf of Oman (east), Persian Gulf (north and northwest).

Geographical Features

- It is located in the **Eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula**.
- Strategic location along the **Strait of Hormuz**, a transit point for crude oil.
- **Tropic of Cancer passes through UAE** (Abu Dhabi emirate).



3.11. INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA

Why in the News?

Recently Prime Minister visited Saudi Arabia.

List of Outcomes

- **Strategic Partnership Council (SPC):** The 2nd India-Saudi Arabia SPC created **2 new Ministerial Committees on Defence Cooperation & Tourism and Cultural Cooperation** under it.
 - Formed in 2019, India is the 4th country after UK, France and China to form such a council with Saudi Arabia.
- **High Level Task Force on Investment (HLTF):** Aims to fast-track Saudi Arabia's **\$100 billion investment** in energy, tech, infrastructure, and other key sectors in India.
 - **Also**, both sides agreed to collaborate on establishing two refineries in India.

India-Saudi Relations: Key Facts

- **India-Saudi ties reflect India's Middle East policy shift:** Upgradation of "hydrocarbon energy partnership" to a "comprehensive energy partnership" for renewable, petroleum and strategic reserves.
- **Strengthening Bilateral Relations:** Diplomatic relations between India and Saudi Arabia were established in **1947**.
 - **Consequently, the Riyadh Declaration (2010)** elevated ties to a **Strategic Partnership**.

- **Bilateral Defence Engagements:** Al Mohed Al Hindi (Naval), **SADA TANSEEQ** (Army).
- **Both Partners in Regional Maritime Security and Trade Corridor:** E.g., Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (**IONS**), Combined Maritime Forces (**CMF**), Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (**CICA**).
- **Saudi Arabia is a Key Supplier of Crude and Petroleum Products:** India's **3rd largest source** of crude oil and petroleum products (2023–24). Also, it was **the 3rd largest LPG supplier** (2023–24).
- **Khaliji Capital and Investment:** India aims to leverage **Khaliji capital** (sovereign wealth funds) for its economic growth.
- **Strengthening P2P and Cultural Ties:** In 2024, Saudi Arabia contributed **6.7%** of India's total inward remittances.

Saudi Arabia (Capital: Riyadh)

Political Features

- **It is an absolute Monarchy located in the Middle East.**
- Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the **Arabian Peninsula**, occupying nearly four-fifths of its total area.
- **Bordering states:** Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Yemen; Maritime (Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Aqaba)
- Home to Islam's 2 holiest shrines in **Mecca and Medina**.

Geographical Features

- It is the **largest country in the world without a river**.
- **Climate:** Harsh, dry desert with temperature extremes.
- **Natural resources:** Oil, natural gas, iron ore etc.



3.12. INDIA-MAURITIUS

Why in the News?

While on a state visit to India, Mauritius' PM said **India has been and remains a time-tested and trusted partner of Mauritius**.

India-Mauritius Relations: Key Facts

- **Cultural:** Around 70% of Mauritius's population is of Indian origin.
 - **Girmityas (Indentured Indian labourers)** were first brought to Mauritius from Puducherry in 1729.
- **As part of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**, Mauritius serves as a key gateway for India's trade and investment in Africa.
- **Owing to India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)**, it is a major route for investment into India.
- It is part of the **Colombo Security Conclave** alongside India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh.
- India has developed infrastructure on Mauritius' Agaléga island, a **new airstrip and jetty on the Agaléga island** of Mauritius.
- Known as the "**Star and Key of the Indian Ocean**".
- China has established **its base in Djibouti**, which has made Mauritius a strategic hotspot.

Mauritius (capital is Port Louis)

- Physiographically it is part of the **Mascarene Islands**.
- **Volcanic island** and almost entirely surrounded by coral reefs.
- **Chagos Archipelago** is disputed territory with UK
 - Recently, US has approved the UK's plan to hand over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius.



3.13. INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA

Why in the News?

Fourth India-Central Asia dialogue concludes in New Delhi.

Key Highlights of Joint Statement of 4th Dialogue

- Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan participated in dialogue.
- Central Asian nations condemned the Pahalgam terror attack and also expressed interest in joint exploration of rare earth & critical minerals.
- Ministers welcomed the designation of 2025 as the "International Year of Peace and Trust" in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution.
- Ministers commended First High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation, held in Tajikistan as part of observing International year of Glaciers' Preservation (2025).

India-Central Asia Relations: Key Facts

- Connectivity & Infrastructure Development:** Through initiatives like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), Chabahar port etc.
- Energy Security:** E.g., TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) pipeline is a natural gas project designed to transport gas from Turkmenistan's Galkynysh field to India.
 - India has been importing yellow cake (Uranium oxide) for its nuclear plants from Kazakhstan since 2009.
- Trade & Economic Cooperation:** E.g. India and Kyrgyzstan's Bilateral Investment Treaty, establishing India-Central Asia Business Council etc.
- Security and Defense:** Through annual military exercises e.g. Khanjar (Between India and Kyrgyzstan), "KazInd" (Between India and Kazakhstan).
- India's Trilateral Engagements:** The first India-Iran-Uzbekistan trilateral meeting at the foreign ministries' level was held in Tehran.
 - India-Iran-Armenia also held its trilateral with focus on INSTC and use of Chabahar Port through Armenia.



3.13.1. INDIA-KYRGYZSTAN

Why in the News?

The Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) signed in June 2019, entered into force with effect from 5th June 2025.

India-Kyrgyzstan Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

- This new BIT replaces the earlier agreement enforced in 2000, ensuring continuity in the protection of investments between the two nations.

About Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

- Definition:** Also called International Investment Agreements (IIAs), they assure foreign investors protection from adverse actions while upholding a state's regulatory sovereignty.
- Dispute Resolution:** Allow investors or home countries to sue the host country for investment-related disputes.
- Policy Update:** India approved new Model BIT Text in 2015, which replaced Indian Model BIT, 1993.
- Since 2015 India signed BITs with:** Uzbekistan (2024), UAE (2024), Brazil (2020), Belarus (2018).

3.14. INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

Why in the News?

Prime Minister of India completed his recent visit to African nations of Ghana and Namibia and he reiterated that “**Africa’s goals are India’s priority**”.

More on the News

- Prime Minister also **addressed a special session of the Parliament of Ghana** and was conferred the **national honour of Ghana - Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana** - by the President of Ghana.
- He also welcomed the establishment of the **Ghana-India Parliamentary Friendship Society**.
 - Both sides also agreed to elevate ties to a **Comprehensive Partnership**.
- India’s Africa policy follows a **consultative, demand-driven approach, working as equal partners under the Kampala Principles** highlighted by the **Prime Minister of India in 2018**.
- **Namibia** decided to sign a **licensing agreement to adopt the UPI system**.
 - Previously, in its Annual Report for 2023-24, **RBI**, in collaboration with **NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL)**, set an **ambitious agenda to work on expanding UPI to 20 countries by 2028-29**.

India-Africa Relations: Key Facts

- **Strategic and Geopolitical:** African Union’s (AU) G20 membership, representing voice of global south, and Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC).
 - AAGC was **established in 2017** by **India and Japan**.
- **Defence:** Africa participated in **multinational maritime exercises like MILAN and Cutlass Express**.
 - **Indian Navy** recently launched a large-scale multilateral maritime engagement exercise with African Countries, titled as **Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME)**.
- **Economic:** Africa accounts for 48.1% of cobalt and 47.7% of manganese.
 - India is Africa’s **third-largest trading partner (after EU and China)**.
- **Market Access:** India is the first developing country to provide **non-reciprocal duty-free market access to Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** through its Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme.
- **India’s Soft Power Diplomacy:** **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation** and **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** scholarships, along with the **e-VidyaBharati & e-ArogyaBharati (e-VBAB)** tele-education/ tele-medicine network.
- **Technology:** Digital connectivity is emerging as a **new pillar with sharing of India Stack technologies** with the African Nations such as the launch of UPI/ RuPay in Mauritius.
- **International Solar Alliance** in Africa through pilot projects and financing mechanisms (e.g., Global Solar Facility, STAR-C Initiative, Virtual Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre, etc.)

Namibia (Capital: Windhoek)

Political Features

- Located on the **Southwestern Coast of Africa**.
- **Bordering Countries:** Angola (North), Zambia (Northeast), Botswana (East), South Africa (South).
- **Bordering Water Bodies:** Atlantic Ocean.

Geographic Features

- **Rivers:** Kunene (Cunene), Okavango, Zambezi, Orange etc.
- **Desert:** Namib Desert, Kalahari Desert.
- **The Great Escarpment** also extends into Namibia.
- **Sossusvlei Sand Dunes** are some of the highest in the world.
- **Fish River Canyon** is the world’s second largest canyon.
- Namibia boasts of the **world’s richest marine diamond deposits**.



Ghana (Capital: Accra)

Political Features

- **Location:** Western Africa, situated on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea.
- **Land Boundary:** Ivory Coast / Côte d'Ivoire (West); Burkina Faso (North); Togo (East).
- It was known as '**Gold Coast**' before its independence in 1957.

Geographical Features

- **Major River:** Volta River, Black Volta, etc.
- **Lake:** Lake Volta is the world's largest artificial lake (manmade reservoir) by surface area
- **Natural Resources:** One of the world's largest producers of gold and cocoa.
- **Prime meridian** passes through Ghana.



3.15. INDIA LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES TIES

Why in the News?

The Prime Minister's recently visited **Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina and Brazil**, and participation in the **17th BRICS Summit** in Rio de Janeiro.

More on the News

- **Highest Civilian Honours:** The Prime Minister was conferred **Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago**.
- **Trinidad & Tobago:** India announced **the extension of OCI cards to the sixth-generation diaspora**.
- Indian PM was conferred with **Brazil's highest civilian award, the Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross**.

India-Latin America and Caribbean Relations: Key Facts

- **Strategic:** India and Brazil have deepened defence cooperation with **Joint Defence Committee** meetings and established a **2+2 Political-Military dialogue**.
 - **Critical Minerals Security:** KABIL signed an agreement with CAMYEN to acquire five lithium blocks in Argentina, marking the **first lithium exploration and mining project by an Indian state-owned company**.
 - > Chile, Argentina and Bolivia, called the **Lithium Triangle**, hold over **75% of global reserves**.
 - **Food Security:** Latin America has become a key supplier of food commodities to India such as **edible oils and pulses**.
 - > Argentina is one of the **primary suppliers of edible oils**, especially soybean oil, to India.
- **Economic & Trade Relations:** India has a **Preferential Trade Agreement** with MERCOSUR.
 - **Energy Security:** Crude oil imports from **Venezuela, Mexico, and Brazil**, accounted for 30% of India's total import from the region.
 - > India extended a **US\$ 140 million Line of Credit** to **CARICOM** for climate-change related projects.
 - ✓ **CARICOM** is a regional organization to promote economic integration and cooperation in the Caribbean Region.
 - > India is partnering with Brazil to promote **biofuel research and production** through the **Biofuture Platform**.
- **Cooperation at Regional and Multilateral Fora:**
 - **Significant cooperation in groups like G20** (With Argentina and Brazil) and Groups like **BRICS, IBSA and G4** (with Brazil).
 - **Regional Groupings:** India has an active participation and meetings with **Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), CARICOM, and Central American Integration System (SICA)**.



MERCOSUR



Overview: It is a **Southern Common Market** (MERCOSUR for its Spanish initials) in Latin America.

Genesis: Formed in 1991 with the objective of free movement of goods, services, capital and people.

State parties: Argentina, Bolivia*, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay. (Venezuela is currently suspended).

- The membership was ratified by Bolivia in July 2024 and it is in transition phase of 4 years to **incorporate** the normative acquis of the bloc.



Associate Members: Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Surinam.

Brazil (Capital: Brasília)

Political Features:

- It is the largest country in **South America** and the **fifth largest** nation in the world.
- Faces **Atlantic Ocean** and shares **inland borders** with every South American country except Chile and Ecuador.

Geographical Features:

- Both the **Equator** and the **Tropic of Capricorn** pass through it.
- **Major River:** Amazon has the world's largest **river system** and the world's **largest remaining virgin rainforest**.
- **Mining:** World's **top producer** of niobium and **second-largest** producer of iron ore, manganese, tantalite, and bauxite.



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4. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

4.1. ISRAEL-US-IRAN CONFLICT

Why in the News?

Recently, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched “**Operation Rising Lion**”, a major strike against Iranian nuclear infrastructure and ballistic missile capability.

Key Developments of the conflict

- **Israel's strikes:** It followed a **vote** by the **IAEA Board of Governors (35 member states)** declaring Iran in breach of a **1974 agreement**—the first such finding since **2006**.
 - Israel activated its new aerial defence system '**Barak Magen**' or '**Lightning Shield**', against Iran's attack.
 - > It is a special version of Barak MX missile defence system, built to protect navy ships from various aerial threats like drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles.
 - > It complements Israel's existing systems—Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow, plus future laser Iron Beam.
- **Retaliation by Iran:** It launched '**Operation True Promise 3**'.
- **Participation of United States:** It launched “**Operation Midnight Hammer**”, a series of **precision airstrikes** targeting **3 Iranian nuclear facilities**— **Natanz** (Iran's primary uranium enrichment facility), **Isfahan**, and **Fordow**.

Implications of the Iran-Israel-US Conflict

- **Threat to Trade and Energy Security:** Iran's Parliament has approved a proposal to close the **Strait of Hormuz** as **35%** of global seaborne oil and **20%** of LNG pass through the Strait.
- **Disruption of undersea cable infrastructure:** Several high-capacity routes like Europe India Gateway (EIG), FLAG (Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe).
- **Infrastructure and Connectivity Projects:** India's investment in projects like Chabahar port, International North-South Transport Corridor etc. for trade and connectivity to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Eurasia will be affected.
 - E.g., Iran's missile attacks on **Israel's Haifa port** disrupted its role in the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor**.
 - India launched **Operation Sindhu** to evacuate Indian nationals from conflict zones in Iran and Israel.



4.2. GAZA PEACE SUMMIT

Why in the News?

Recently, **USA and Egypt** co-hosted the **Gaza Peace Summit** in **Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt** to advance peace in Gaza and overall stability in the Middle East.

More on the News

- During the summit, four ceasefire mediators—the **US, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey** signed a declaration to inaugurate the USA's 20-point peace plan or the **Trump Declaration for Enduring Peace and Prosperity**.

- Peace plan declares that **future disputes will be resolved via diplomatic engagement and negotiation**, not through force or protracted conflict.
- Plan calls for Hamas's disarmament and an internationally supervised reconstruction of Gaza.
- Long term, Trump's twenty-point plan stipulates that **no Palestinians will be militarily forced to leave Gaza**, and that Israel will agree not to occupy or annex the Gaza Strip.
 - Importantly, 20-point plan for Gaza does **not guarantee a two-state solution** or the creation of the state of Palestine.
- **India's Minister of State for External Affairs** attended the summit and appreciated the efforts towards a **lasting peace in the region**.

Key Milestones in Israel–Palestine Conflict

- **1917 – Balfour Declaration:** Britain took control of Palestine after World War I and supported Jewish homeland in Palestine.
- **1947 – UN Partition Plan:** Divides Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international control.
- **1967 – Six-Day War:** Israel occupies the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights.
- **1993 – Oslo Accords:** Grants limited self-governance to Palestinians in parts of the West Bank and Gaza.
- **2006 – Hamas wins Palestinian legislative elections:** Causing tensions between Fatah and Hamas.
- **2020 – Abraham Accords:** To normalize relations between Israel and Arab States.

Key Strategic Locations in the Region

- **Gaza:** Small piece of land on the **Mediterranean Sea** bordering Egypt to the south. Under the semi-autonomous **Palestinian Authority since 1993**.
 - It **borders Israel** on the north and east, and **Egypt** on the southwest.
 - UN officially **declared famine** in August 2025, with **half a million people** at risk of starvation due to **Israel's prolonged blockade** and restricted aid entry **post Hamas attack on Israel**.
 - **Important places affected in Gaza:** Khan Younis, Rafah, Jabalia, Dier al-Balah, An Nuseirat and Az Zawaida
- **West Bank:** **Landlocked region** to the west of Jordan and East of Israel. **Territories divided into three:** fully controlled by Israel, fully controlled by Palestine, and ones shared between **Israel and Palestine**.
- **Golan Heights:** Bounded by the **Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee** on the west. Contentious between Israel and Syria.
- **Sinai Peninsula:** Lies between **Suez Canal** and the **Gulf of Aqaba**, bounded by **Mediterranean Sea (North) and the Red Sea (South)**.
- **Jerusalem:** Ancient city wholly under Israel. Important for three major monotheistic religions- Jews, Christians, and Muslims.
- **Morag axis:** This area consists mainly of **agricultural land located between Khan Younis and Rafah**, stretching from east to west across the Gaza Strip.
 - The name "**Morag**" refers to an illegal Israeli settlement that was established in the region between 1972 and 2005.



4.3. PALESTINIAN STATE RECOGNISED BY MULTIPLE NATIONS

Why in the News?

The four western nations, United Kingdom, Canada, Portugal and Australia, joined over **140 UN member states in recognizing Palestine as a state.**

About Recognition of States

- India recognized the **Palestinian State in 1988.**
 - Recently, India voted in favour of a **resolution in the UN General Assembly** endorsing the '**New York Declaration**' on the **peaceful settlement and implementation** of the **Two-State Solution.**
- **Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States defines the criteria for statehood:** Permanent population, definite territory, government and capacity to enter into relations with other states.
- **Effects of State Recognition**
 - It acquires the **capacity to enter into diplomatic relations** with other states.
 - It acquires the **capacity to enter into treaties** with other states.
 - The state is able to **enjoy the rights and privileges** of international statehood.
 - The state can become a **member of the United Nations organisation.**
 - > Palestine is a UN "**Permanent Observer State,**" not a full member.
- Only States and Governments can recognize a new State/Government.
- UN, being neither a state nor government, has no such authority.
- UN can only admit new States as members or accept credentials of their representatives.



4.4. GEELONG TREATY UNDER AUKUS

Why in the News?

Recently, Australia and United Kingdom (UK) signed a **bilateral defence cooperation agreement** also known as **Geelong treaty**, under **AUKUS Pillar I** for the next 50 years.

About Geelong Treaty

- Also known as **Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Treaty.**
- **Objective:** Enable comprehensive cooperation on the **design, build, operation, sustainment, and disposal of SSN-AUKUS submarines** and enable development of **resilient trilateral supply chains.**
- It is in line with international nuclear non-proliferation obligations and trilateral **AUKUS Naval Nuclear Propulsion Agreement (ANNP).**

AUKUS

Genesis: Established in **2021**, it is a security partnership between **Australia, the UK, and the US.**

It has two pillars:-

- **Pillar 1:** Focuses on **developing shipbuilding capacities** of the three nations, which includes **Australia's acquisition of its first SSNs** (Nuclear-powered Submarines).
- **Pillar 2:** Focuses on joint development of **eight advanced military capability** areas such as, (AI).

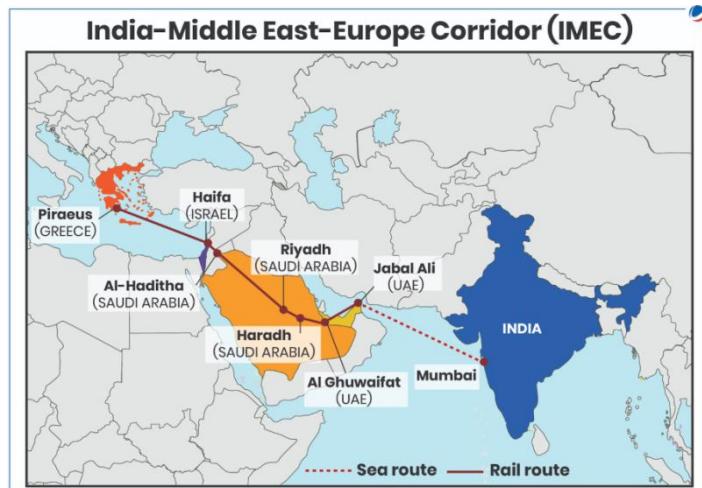
4.5. INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEC)

Why in the News?

The Minister highlighted that IMEC will bring down **logistics costs by up to 30%**, reduce **transportation time by 40%**, and create seamless trade linkages across continents.

About IMEC

- A multi-modal connectivity project, formalized by MoU signed between India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and the US at the **G20 Summit (2023) in New Delhi**.
- **Strategic Importance:** bypass maritime chokepoints like **Suez Canal**.



4.6. INDIAN DIASPORA

Why in the News?

Standing Committee on External Affairs (2024-25) released report on **Indian Diaspora Overseas**.

About Indian Diaspora

- **Categories:**
 - **Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs):** Person or ancestor was Indian national, now holds foreign citizenship/passport.
 - **Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs):** Registered under section 7A of The Citizenship Act, 1955.
 - > Note: PIO and OCI merged into single OCI category in 2015.
 - **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs):** Indian citizens ordinarily residing outside India, holding Indian passports.
- **Current Status (January 2024):** 35.42 million totals (15.85 million NRIs; 19.57 million PIOs/OCIs).
- **Geographic Distribution:** Major populations in the US, the UK, Canada, Gulf countries, Australia, Southeast Asia, and Caribbean.
- **Remittances:** India is world's top recipient at USD 118.7 billion (2023–24).

Initiatives taken by India for Indian diaspora

- **Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY):** Launched in **2017** to provide an insurance of Rs. 10 Lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability at a premium of Rs 275 (for two years) and Rs 375 (for 3 years).
- **Know India Programme (KIP):** It is an initiative launched in **2003** for Indian Diaspora between the age group of 21-35 years to familiarize the People of Indian Origin (PIO) youth with contemporary India.
- **Knowledge Sharing Programmes:** Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme, Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS), Vaishvik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) fellowship programme etc.
- **Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD):** January 9 marks the day Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915, to Honor this event PBD was initiated in **2003** to celebrate the contributions of the Indian diaspora.
- **Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) (2009):** In the Indian Missions of 17 Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) Countries and Maldives to meet contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various on-site welfare activities for Overseas Indian Citizens under stress.

4.7. CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Why in the News?

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) convened the meeting in collaboration with India's **National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC)**.

More on the News

- This regional meeting is part of the OPCW's ongoing efforts to support the effective implementation of the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**.
- OPCW is the **implementing agency** of the **CWC**.

Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC)



Genesis: In 1992, a draft Convention was formally adopted by the **Conference on Disarmament**. And, it came into force in 1997.

► 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.



Parties: It has 193 States Parties.

► India is an original signatory to the Convention.



Recognition: OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 2013.



India & CWC: National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC) under Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for implementing the Convention in India. NACWC was established under the **Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000**.

► In 2024, **Indian Chemical Council (ICC)** was awarded the **OPCW-The Hague Award**, marking the first time a chemical industry body **anywhere in the world** received this honour.

► The award acknowledged **ICC's contributions** to advancing the goals of the Convention and improving **industry-wide safety** and security practices in India.

► ICC is India's **oldest Chemical Industry Association**.

4.8. OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

4.8.1. EXTRADITION

26/11 Mumbai Terror Attack Accused Extradited to India from the US.

What is the framework for Extradition?

- **In India:**
 - The **Extradition Act 1962 (substantially modified in 1993)** consolidated the law relating to the extradition of criminal fugitives from India to foreign states.
 - > **The Ministry of External Affairs** is the nodal authority for Extradition in India.
 - > India has **extradition treaties with 48 nations**, including Bangladesh and the USA.
 - The **Government of India finally decides on Extradition** and this decision **can be appealed in a higher court**.
- **Globally:** **United Nations Model Treaty on Extradition** (1990), **UN Model Law on Extradition** (2004), **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime** (2000), etc. are some of the international frameworks which deal with various principles of extradition.
- **Extradition Principles**
 - **Reciprocity;** Encourages mutual cooperation between states for extradition.

- **Double Criminality:** Requires the act to be a crime in both jurisdictions.
- **Double Jeopardy:** Prevents extradition for already punished crimes.
- **Speciality:** Limits prosecution to specified offenses in extradition.
- **Fair Trial:** Ensures just and impartial legal proceedings.

4.8.2. E-PASSPORT

Ministry of External Affairs rolled out e-Passport and Passport Seva Programme 2.0.

About e-Passport

- An ePassport is a **combined paper and electronic passport** with a **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Chip and an antenna embedded as an inlay of passport** that contains the personal particulars and biometric information of the passport holder.
 - The underlying technology supporting the security of the ePassport is the **Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)** solution.
- ePassport **safeguards the passport from forgery and potential fraudulent activities** like fake passports while confirming the genuineness at border controls.

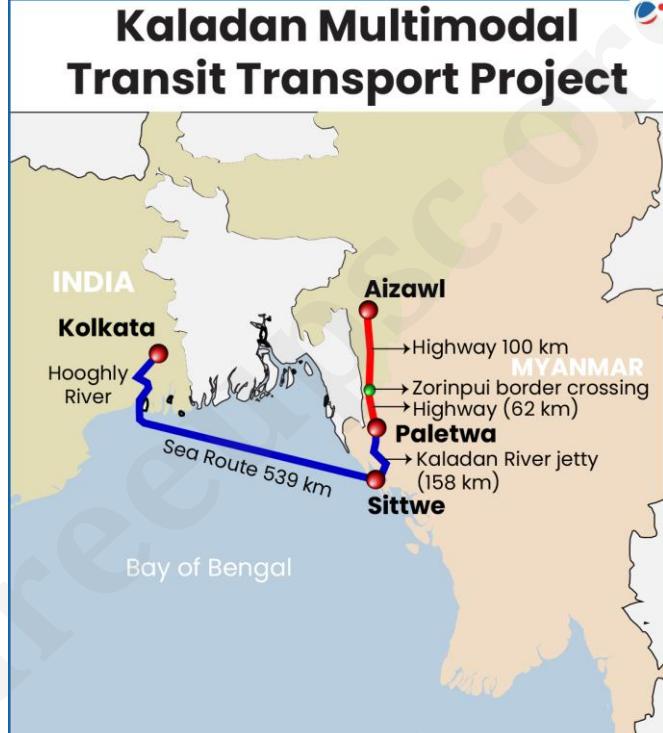
4.8.3. KALADAN MULTIMODAL TRANSIT TRANSPORT PROJECT (KMTTP)

Union Minister said that KMTTP will be Operational by 2027.

Jointly identified by India and Myanmar, it offers multi-modal transportation of cargo from Eastern Ports of India to Myanmar and to India's North-Eastern Region (NER) through Myanmar.

About KMTTP

- **Framework Agreement:** Signed in **2008**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of **External Affairs**.
- **Project Development Consultant (PDC):** Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).
- **Transit Components**
 - **Waterway Component:** On **Kaladan River** from **Sittwe Port** (Rakhine, Myanmar) to **Paletwa** in **Myanmar**.
 - **Road Component:** From **Paletwa** to **Zorinpui** on India-Myanmar border in **Mizoram**.



Other Connectivity Projects for NER

- **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project:** Connects Moreh (Manipur, India) to Mae Sot (Thailand) via Myanmar.
- **Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWT&T):** Between India and Bangladesh allowing inland vessels/cruises of one country to ply on the designated waterway routes of another.
- **Others:** **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN)** Motor Vehicle Agreement; **MoU** for the use of **Chattogram** and **Mongla Ports** of Bangladesh.

4.8.4. SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE

The annual Shangri-La Dialogue is being held in Singapore.

About Shangri-La Dialogue

- **Genesis:** Inspired by post-Cold War multilateralism and evolving defence diplomacy post-9/11, the dialogue was established in 2002.
- **Naming:** After the **Shangri-La hotel** where the 1st summit took place.
- **Organised by:** International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, with support from the Singapore government.

4.8.5. OTTAWA CONVENTION

Finland's Parliament approves withdrawal from Ottawa Convention or Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

- Earlier, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland also announced their withdrawal from the Treaty.

About Ottawa Convention

- **Genesis:** Concluded by the Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Land Mines at Oslo in 1997.
- **Objective:** End harm from anti-personnel mines by promoting global participation, clearing mines, destroying stockpiles, and helping victims.
- **Membership:** 165 countries have joined the treaty. **India is not one of them.**

4.8.6. SEVILLA FORUM ON DEBT

The forum is launched at the 16th session of the **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16)** to tackle the **entrenched debt crisis in developing countries**.

About Sevilla Forum on Debt

- It is led by Spain, supported by the **UNCTAD** and **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)**.
- It will bring together all stakeholders, creditors, borrowers, international financial institutions and academia on debt sustainability, management and innovative solutions.
- It is one of the **outcomes** of the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)** and part of **Sevilla Platform for Action**.
 - The other three outcomes are **Debt Swaps for Development Hub**, **Debt-for-Development Swap Programme**, and **Debt “Pause Clause” Alliance**.
- This initiative will complement the **Sevilla Commitment**.
 - **Sevilla Commitment** lays out a path to close the \$4 trillion annual SDG financing gap in developing countries.
 - It is the **first inter-governmentally agreed** financing for development framework since 2015.

4.8.7. PLUTONIUM MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSITION AGREEMENT (PMDA)

Russia's lower house **approved withdrawal from Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA)** with the U.S.

- Previously, Russia in 2016 suspended implementation of the agreement, citing U.S. sanctions.

About PMDA

- The agreement **signed in 2000** commits the U.S. and Russia to each irreversibly dispose of **at least 34 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium**.
 - **Plutonium (atomic number 94)** is a radioactive material with a **high melting point, and the heaviest naturally occurring element**.
- **Disposition goal:** Convert plutonium into safer forms (MOX fuel, reactor irradiation).

4.8.8. DRUZHBA PIPELINE

Ukrainian attack suspends Russian oil flows to Hungary, Slovakia.

About Druzhba (Friendship) Pipeline

- It is one of the **biggest crude oil pipeline** networks in the world.
- The Druzhba pipeline begins in Russia and transports oil through Belarus and Ukraine to Slovakia and Hungary.

4.8.9. POWER OF SIBERIA 2 PIPELINE

Russia and China signed legally binding deal to build **Power of Siberia 2 (PoS 2)** gas pipeline.

About PoS 2 Pipeline (formerly known as the Altai pipeline)

- It will transit gas reserves in **Russia's West Siberia to northern China via eastern Mongolia**.
- It aims to increase supplies via the existing Power of Siberia pipeline, which runs from Eastern Siberia to China.

4.8.10. AWAZA PROGRAMME OF ACTION (2024-2034) (APOA)

Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) opened in Awaza, Turkmenistan.

- Conference serves as a crucial platform to implement the newly adopted APoA.

About APoA

- Adopted by consensus at the **UN General Assembly in December 2024**
 - Offers a **comprehensive framework to tackle persistent development challenges faced by LLDCs**.
- **Key deliverables include:**
 - Establishment of **Regional Agricultural Research Hubs** to strengthen food security;
 - **Launch of an Infrastructure Investment Finance Facility** to mobilize critical funding;
 - Development of a **UNFCCC Negotiating Body to advance trade and climate resilience** etc.

4.8.11. THE GREAT GREEN WALL INITIATIVE

Despite ambitious goals, **Great Green Wall project** faces significant challenges in Africa.

About Great Green Wall Initiative

- **Launched in:** 2007 by African Union
- **Objective:**
 - To restore 100 million hectares of currently degraded land; sequester 250 million tons of carbon and create 10 million green jobs by 2030.
 - Aims to increase the **amount of arable land in the Sahel Region, the region bordering Africa's Sahara Desert**.



4.8.12. GLOBAL PEACE INDEX, 2025

19th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI) has been released by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

About Global Peace Index (GPI)

- It included 163 independent state and territories.
- It uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators across three domains:
 - Level of Societal Safety and Security.
 - Extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict.

- Degree of Militarisation.
- **Ranking:** Iceland has been placed at first place.
 - > India's rank is 115th.
 - > Russia (163 Rank) is the least peaceful country.

4.8.13. HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX 2025

India's ranking in **Henley Passport Index** jumps from **85 (2024)** to **77 (2025)**.

- Indian citizens can now travel to **59 destinations** without needing to secure a visa beforehand.

About Henley Passport Index

- It is based on exclusive data from the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- **Singapore** holds the top spot in the Index.

5. ISSUES RELATED TO SECURITY

5.1. THE ARMED FORCES (SPECIAL POWERS) ACT (AFSPA)

Why in the News?

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has been extended for six months in certain areas of Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh to address insurgency and maintain order amid ethnic violence.

About AFSPA, 1958

- It is a special law granting extraordinary powers to the military to maintain law and order.
- Objective:** To empower the armed forces to operate in “disturbed areas” where public order is seriously threatened.
- Currently, AFSPA is in effect in parts of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh.
 - It was lifted from Tripura in 2015, Meghalaya in 2018 and Mizoram in 1980s.
- AFSPA also remains in force in Jammu and Kashmir through the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990.

Key Provisions of the Act

- Declaration of Disturbed Area (Section 3):** Governor, Administrator, or Central Government can declare part or whole state/UT as “disturbed” if they believe the situation requires armed forces to aid civil authorities.
- Special Powers of the Armed Forces (Section 4):** Grants special powers to armed forces personnel in areas declared as “disturbed” -
 - Use force, including shooting to kill, against anyone violating law.
 - Arrest and Enter/Search premises without warrant based on suspicion.
 - Prohibit assembly of 5 or more persons.
 - Destroy any arms dump, fortified position from which armed attacks can be made or any training camp for armed volunteers
- Immunity to Armed Forces personnel (Section 6):** Protection from prosecution and legal suits for acts under AFSPA without the Central government’s sanction.
- Treatment of arrested person:** Armed forces required to hand over the person to the nearest police “with least possible delay.”

Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee about AFSPA

- Repeal** of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).
- Amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) to include provisions of AFSPA specifically for the Northeast states.

5.2. CYBERCRIME IN INDIA

Why in the News?

A Parliamentary panel on home affairs presented a report, titled ‘Cyber Crime – Ramifications, Protection and Prevention’, highlighting the evolution and growing complexity of cyber threats in India.

Types of Cybercrimes

Terms	Definition
Pig Butchering	It is a sophisticated scam that blends romance scams with investment fraud, particularly targeting cryptocurrency investments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scam's name reflects the process of "fattening" the victim with trust before "slaughtering" them financially.
Phantom Hacking	Also referred to as "Phantom Hacker" scam, it is an evolution of tech support scams, particularly targeting vulnerable or senior citizens.
Juice Jacking	It is a type of cyberattack where public USB charging ports are used to steal data from or install malware on your device.
Cryptojacking	It is a type of cyberattack in which cybercriminals hijack the computing resources of victims' devices in order to mine cryptocurrency without permission .

Government Initiatives to Tackle Cybercrime

- Legal Framework:** NCRB categorizes cyber offences under IT Act 2000, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and Special and Local Laws (SLL).
 - Key IT Act sections: 69A (blocking information access), 79 (intermediary liability and "safe harbour"), 70B (establishing CERT-In).
- Agencies and Institutions**
 - I4C (2020):** National coordination hub operating Helpline 1930 and National Cybercrime Reporting Portal.
 - CERT-In:** Manages cybersecurity incidents and advisories (e.g., AI-driven phishing alerts).
 - NCIIPC:** Protects Critical Information Infrastructure (power, banking, telecom).
 - CBI & NIA:** Handle cyber fraud and terrorism-related crimes (e.g., Operation Chakra against dark web fraud).
 - State initiatives:** Kerala (Cyberdome) and Maharashtra lead in cyber labs and forensics.

5.2.1. DIGITAL ARREST SCAM

Why in the News?

Recently, NITI Aayog published an article titled '**Digital Arrest: The Modern-Day Cyber Scam**'.

What is Digital Arrest?

- It is a scam designed to **extort money from victims using fear, deceit, and intimidation**.
- Method:** Victims receive a **phone call, email, or message claiming they are under investigation for illegal activities**, such as identity theft or money laundering.

5.2.2. I4C

Recently, Department of Revenue under the Union Ministry of Finance issued notification to include **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** under the **Section 66 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**.

- This would help I4C to share and receive information from the **Enforcement Directorate and other law enforcement agencies, so as to strengthen the country's fight against cyber-enabled financial crimes**.

Section 66(Disclosure of information) of PMLA Act, 2002

- Enables the Director (Directorate of Enforcement) or any other authority specified by him to share the information with the concerned agency** for necessary action.
- Sharing of information shall be on the basis of **information or material in his possession**, that the **provisions of any other law for the time being in force are contravened**.



Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)



Genesis: Officially inaugurated in **2020**, it is an initiative of the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs**, envisaged to act as the nodal point to curb **Cybercrime** in the country.

○ In **July 2024**, it was made an **attached office** on the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.



Objective: To provide a **framework and eco-system for Law Enforcement Agencies for dealing with Cybercrime in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.**



Verticals of I4C: National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (NCTAU), National Cybercrime Ecosystem Management Unit (NCEMU), Joint Cyber Crime Coordination Team (JCCT), etc.

5.2.3. UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CYBERCRIME

Why in the News?

Recently, 72 of the 193 member states signed the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime in Hanoi, Vietnam.

About United Nations Convention against Cybercrime

- Convention was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 24 December 2024.
- It will enter into force 90 days after the 40th State deposits its ratification.
 - The signing process will remain open until 31 December 2026.
 - India has not signed the treaty yet.
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) served as secretariat to negotiations.
- UN Convention against Cybercrime is the first universal legally binding framework for the collection, sharing and use of electronic evidence for all serious offences.
 - Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (2001), drafted by the Council of Europe, was the first international treaty focused on combating cybercrime and strengthening cross-border cooperation.
 - A number of states such as Russia and China have rejected the Budapest Convention and have long advocated for a new international cybercrime convention.

Key features of the Convention against Cybercrime

- Expanded Scope: Criminalizes cyber-dependent crimes including online fraud, child sexual abuse, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images.
- International Cooperation: Establishes 24/7 network to enhance cross-border collaboration.
- Sovereignty Protection: States must fulfill obligations while respecting sovereign equality, territorial integrity, and non-intervention in domestic affairs.
- Victim Support: Encourages States to provide victims with recovery services, compensation, restitution, and content removal according to domestic laws.
- Human Rights: Implementation must be consistent with international human rights law.

5.3. MISSION SUDARSHAN CHAKRA

Why in the News?

Prime Minister announced the launch of **Mission Sudarshan Chakra** during the 79th Independence Day celebrations.

More on the News

- The mission seeks to develop Air Defence system aimed at neutralising enemy defence infiltrations and enhancing India's offensive capabilities.

- Additionally, the Indian Air Force is pressing for rapid progress on **Project Kusha**, an indigenous initiative led by **DRDO** to develop a **long-range air defense missile system**.

About Sudarshan Chakra Mission

- **Objectives:**
 - To strengthen India's deterrent and offensive capabilities by expanding, strengthening and modernising **national security shield**.
 - It will be part of **multi-Layered Missile Defence System** of India.
- **Features:**
 - **Timeline:** Mission to be completed by **2035**.
 - **Comprehensive Protection:** It will **safeguard India's strategic, civilian, and religious sites/assets** (e.g. hospitals, railways).
 - It will cover all public places with an expanded nationwide security shield across air, land, and sea.
 - > The mission will be integrating advanced surveillance, cyber protection, and physical infrastructure safeguards.
 - > It will be a system for **targeted precise action**.
 - **Indigenous technology:** It will be entirely researched, developed, and manufactured in India.

5.4. BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (BWC)

Why in the News?

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) celebrated 50th anniversary Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

About Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

- Formally known as "**The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction**".
 - **Biological Weapons:** Weapons that disseminate disease-causing organisms (bacteria, viruses, fungi, prions or rickettsiae) or toxins (poisons derived from animals, plants or microorganisms) worldwide to harm or kill humans, animals or plants.
 - **Historical biological weapons programmes have included efforts to produce:** aflatoxin; anthrax; botulinum toxin; foot-and-mouth disease; glanders; plague; Q fever; rice blast; ricin; Rocky Mountain spotted fever; smallpox; and tularemia, etc.
- **Genesis:** Negotiated in **Geneva, Switzerland** within the **Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC)** and **Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD)** from 1969 until 1971.
 - Opened for signature in **1972** and entered into force in **1975**.
- **Membership:** Almost universal membership with **188 States Parties (India signed and ratified in 1974)** and **4 Signatory States** (Egypt, Haiti, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic).
 - States Parties **meet approximately every 5 years** to review its operation.
 - **States Parties to BWC** have strived to ensure that Convention remains relevant and effective, despite the changes in science and technology, politics and security since it entered into force.
- **Key facts about the BWC**
 - **1st multilateral disarmament treaty** banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
 - **Effectively** prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons.
 - > **Supplements the 1925 Geneva Protocol**, which had prohibited only the use of biological weapons.
 - **Implementation Support Unit (ISU)** to provide administrative support to meetings agreed by Review Conference, comprehensive implementation, universalization of the Convention.
 - **5 States- Israel, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea and Kiribati** **have neither signed nor acceded** to the Convention.

Measures taken by India to implement Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

- **Hazardous Micro-organisms Rules, 1989:** Regulates manufacture, use, import, export, and storage of hazardous micro-organisms and genetically engineered organisms.
- **WMD Act, 2005:** Prohibits unlawful activities (manufacturing, transport, transfer) related to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- **SCOMET List:** India's National Export Control List covering dual-use items, munitions, and nuclear-related materials, including software and technology.
 - Category 2 covers micro-organisms and toxins.
- **India-France initiative:** Jointly proposed establishing a database to facilitate assistance under Article VII of BWC, which addresses aid to States exposed to danger from BWC violations.



United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

 **Genesis:** Established in **1998** as the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

 **About:** It provides substantive and organizational support for **norm-setting in the area of disarmament** through General Assembly and its First Committee, Disarmament Commission, Conference on Disarmament.

 **Functions:**

- ❖ **Fosters disarmament measures** through dialogue, transparency and confidence-building on military matters, and encourages regional disarmament efforts.
- ❖ **Provides objective, impartial and up-to-date information on multilateral disarmament issues** and activities to Member States, States parties to multilateral agreements, etc.
- ❖ **Supports the development and implementation of measures after a conflict**, such as disarming and demobilizing former combatants and helping them to reintegrate in civil society.

5.5. INTERMEDIATE-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES (INF) TREATY

Why in the News?

Russia officially end commitment to 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty citing **recent US military actions as key reason** including the US order of repositioning two nuclear submarines closer to Russian shores and deployment of Typhon missile system in Philippines.

About INF Treaty

- Signed between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1987, the treaty required **destruction of all ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500–5,500 km**.
- It was the **first major agreement to reduce nuclear arsenals**, remove an entire class of weapons, and allow on-site inspections for verification.
- INF Treaty had **already weakened after the US withdrew in 2019**.

Global Nuclear Treaties and Agreements



Space and Arms Control Treaties

Outer Space Treaty (OST), 1967



Prohibits placing nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit around Earth, installing them on the Moon or any other celestial body, or stationing them in outer space

Status: Signed and Ratified



Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)

Proposed international treaty to prohibit production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, including highly enriched uranium and plutonium

Status: Not Signed



Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START)

Series of bilateral treaties between USA and Russia for nuclear arms reduction

Status: Not Applicable

Nuclear Security and Prevention Measures

International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT), 2005



Criminalizes acts of nuclear terrorism and promotes police/judicial cooperation to prevent, investigate and punish those acts

Status: Signed



Nuclear Security Summits (NSS) & Conference on Disarmament (CD)

NSS: High-level global forums focused on preventing nuclear terrorism

CD: Multilateral forum for negotiating arms control and disarmament agreements

Status: Participant in NSS, Member of CD



International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

Coalition of non-governmental organizations promoting adherence to and implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

Status: Not Signed



Nuclear Security Regulations

CPPNM (1979): International convention for physical protection of nuclear material during transport and facilities

UNSCR 1540 (2004): Legally binding resolution preventing non-state actors from acquiring nuclear, chemical, biological weapons and their delivery systems

Status: Supports Resolutions

India Status: Participant-Member Non-Participant Not Applicable

Related News

Japan's Hiroshima marks 80 years since US Atomic Bombing

On August 6 and 9, 1945, atomic bombs ‘**Little Boy**’ and ‘**Fat Man**’ struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively, causing massive destruction and long-term radiation effects.

Geopolitical Impacts post Hiroshima

- **End of World War II:** The war ended with Japan's signing of the instrument of surrender on September 02, 1945.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established in 1957 for international cooperation on civilian nuclear research.

5.6. SILVER NOTICE

Why in the News?

The INTERPOL has issued the **first silver notice on India's request**.

About Silver notice

- Silver Notice is the **newest addition to the INTERPOL's colour-coded Notices**.
 - INTERPOL's **colour-coded notices** are **international requests for cooperation or alerts** allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information (**refer to the infographic**)
- **Purpose:** Allows tracing and gathering information on assets of fugitives and key accused, even if the assets are in foreign countries.
- **Global Collaboration:** India is one of 51 countries participating in the first phase of this Interpol pilot project, running at least until **November 2025**.
- **First Use:** The **first Silver Notice** was issued in **January** on behalf of **Italy**.
- **Limit:** Each country can request up to **9 Silver Notices** during the pilot phase.

About INTERPOL

- **Headquarters:** Lyon, France.
- **Genesis:** Established as **International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC)** during 2nd International Police Congress in Vienna in **1923** and **established as INTERPOL in 1956**
- **Members:** 196 countries (India a founding members).
- **National Central Bureau (NCBs):** Established by member countries as a **point of access for INTERPOL affairs**.
 - **CBI is India's NCB** to the INTERPOL, and it has also developed **Bharatpol portal** for better coordination
- **Governing Bodies:** The General Assembly and Executive Committee.

Interpol Notices



RED NOTICE
Wanted persons



ORANGE NOTICE
Imminent threat



YELLOW NOTICE
Missing persons



PURPLE NOTICE
Modus operandi



BLUE NOTICE
Additional information



GREEN NOTICE
Warnings and intelligence



BLACK NOTICE
Unidentified bodies



SILVER NOTICE (Pilot Phase)
Identification and tracing of criminal assets



INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE
Entities and individuals subject to UNSC sanctions

5.7. REPORTS

Reports	Organization
Comprehensive Update on Terrorist Financing Risks	Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
SIPRI Yearbook 2025, Trends in World Military Expenditure Report, 2024	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

5.8. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

5.8.1. UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT (UAPA), 1967

UAPA tribunal upholds Centre's decision to declare Meghalaya's Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) as 'unlawful association' for another five years

About UAPA 1967

- **Aim:** Effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations and for dealing with terrorist activities.
 - It was amended in 2019 to include the provision of designating individuals as terrorists, not just organizations.
- **UAPA Tribunal**
 - The Central Government can constitute the Tribunal by notification in the Official Gazette.
 - It consists of one person, who must be a High Court Judge.
 - The Central Government provides necessary staff and covers all expenses from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- It has powers of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure (1908).

5.8.2. NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD (NSAB)

The Government of India has appointed a new chairman along with 7 new members in the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB).

About NSAB

- It was first **constituted in December 1998**, as an **advisory body of eminent persons outside the government**, including industry, media and civil society, among others.
 - It is assisted by the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)**.
- **Functions:** To **undertake long term analysis** and to provide perspectives on the national security issues to the National Security Council (NSC).
 - It also **recommends measures and policy options** on the **issues referred to it by the NSC**.

5.8.3. FINANCIAL FRAUD RISK INDICATOR

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has introduced a Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI) to combat mobile-based cyber fraud.

- The Indicator allows for swift, targeted, and collaborative action against suspected frauds in both telecom and financial domains.

What is Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)?

- It is a **risk-based metric** that classifies a **mobile number** to have been associated with **Medium, High, or Very High risk of financial fraud**.
 - This classification is an **outcome of inputs obtained from**: National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), DoT's Chakshu facility and Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP) and Intelligence shared by banks and financial institutions.
- It empowers stakeholders such as **banks, NBFCs, and UPI service providers** to prioritize enforcement and take additional customer protection measures **in case a mobile number have high risk**.

Measures Against Cyber Financial Frauds in India				
Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP): Real-time intelligence sharing among LEAs, banks, and financial bodies.	Chakshu on Sanchar Saathi: Allows citizens to report fraud calls, SMS, or WhatsApp messages.	Mulehunter: RBI's AI tool to detect money mules, advised for bank use.	Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System: Launched in 2021 for instant fraud reporting and prevention under I4C.	E-Zero FIR: Automatically converts cyber fraud complaints above ₹10 lakh into FIRs via helpline or portal.

5.8.4. NATIONAL SECURITY GUARD (NSG)

Government is setting up NSG hub in Ayodhya, with six other NSG hubs functional in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Jammu.

About NSG

- NSG is Federal Contingency World Class Zero Error Force to deal with **anti-terrorist activities in all its manifestation**.
 - NSG was modelled on the pattern of the **SAS of the UK and GSG-9 of Germany**.
 - It is a task-oriented Force and has two complementary elements in the form of the **Special Action Group (SAG) and the Special Ranger Groups (SRG)**.
- **Established:** 1986 through National Security Guard Act, 1986.
- **Ministry:** Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

5.8.5. INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL SYMPOSIUM (IONS)

Recently, an Emerging Leaders Panel Discussion was held under the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) at Kochi.

About IONS

- It is a voluntary initiative **launched by the Indian Navy in 2008**.
- **Aim:** To increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region
- Its **inaugural session** was held in 2008 in New Delhi
- **Membership:** 25 members and 9 observers
 - **Eligibility** -A nation state with permanent territory or border with Indian Ocean and which maintains a Navy or maritime agency
 - **Chair** of IONS will be rotated every **2 years**. India to chair during 2025-27.

5.8.6. PEACE PACT WITH KUKI-ZO GROUPS

Recently, a **tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO) Agreement** was **renewed** between the Centre, the Manipur government, and insurgent groups comprising Kuki-Zo, Zomi, and Hmars.

About the Agreement

- **Came into force:** From August 22, 2008.
- **Objective:** To end hostilities by initiating political dialogue and finding a **political settlement within the Constitution** of India.

Other Peace Pacts in North East India

- **NLFT (SD) Agreement (2019):** signed with **National Liberation Front of Tripura**.
- **Bodo Accord (2020):** with **Bodo groups (Assam)**; disbanded by March 2020.
- **Karbi Accord (2021):** with **Karbi groups (Assam)**; over 1,000 cadres joined mainstream.

5.8.7. SAKSHAM SYSTEM FOR REAL-TIME COUNTER-DRONE DEFENCE

Indian Army initiated procurement of indigenously developed **SAKSHAM (Situational Awareness for Kinetic Soft and Hard Kill Assets Management)** Counter-Unmanned Aerial System (CUAS) Grid System.

About SAKSHAM System

- It is a **modular, high-end Command and Control (C2)** system operating on the secure Army Data Network (ADN).
- It can detect, track, identify, and neutralise hostile drones and unmanned aerial systems in **real time**, ensuring comprehensive airspace security across the newly defined **Tactical Battlefield Space (TBS)**.
 - TBS is a domain extending up to 3,000 metres (10,000 feet) above ground level.
- Developed in collaboration with the **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**.

5.8.8. HAWKEYE 360 TECHNOLOGY

The US has recently approved sale of HawkEye 360 technology to India to boost the country's surveillance capabilities.

About HawkEye 360 technology

- It uses clusters of **three satellites** in **Low Earth Orbit** to detect, geolocate, and **analyze radio frequency (RF) signals**.
- It can detect vessels that **turn off their Automatic Identification System (AIS)** to avoid tracking in disputed or sensitive areas.

5.8.9. IGLA-S

Indian Army received new Russian Igla-S missiles to counter drones, choppers, jets.

About Igla-S

- It is a man-portable, shoulder-launched **surface-to-air missile (SAM) system** designed for mobile ground units operating in high-threat environments
 - It is an improved version of **Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORADS)**.
- **Key Features:**
 - It uses infrared (IR) homing to detect and lock onto the heat signatures of aerial targets.
 - Once the missile is launched, it automatically follows the heat coming from the target's engine.
 - > This makes it very good at hitting fast and small targets like drones and helicopters.
 - **Range:** It can engage targets at ranges up to 6 km and altitudes up to 3.5 km.

5.8.10. MIG LA PASS

Project Himank of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has constructed the **world's highest motorable road** at Mig La Pass, 19,400 feet above sea level in Ladakh.

- Road forms a **critical link in the Likaru-Mig La-Fukche axis**, connecting to the **Fukche airfield** near Line of Actual Control with China.
- Mig La Pass is located on the **Changthang Plateau** in Ladakh.
- **Project Himank:** The Project was raised in **1985 at Leh** for the **development of road communication** in Ladakh region.

5.8.11. ZOJILA PASS

Zojila pass is now open to tourists and does not require prior authorisation or a no-objection certificate (NOC).

About Zojila Pass

- **Elevation:** Around 3528 m (11, 649 ft) above sea level.
- It is an important link between **Ladakh and Kashmir**, separating the Kashmir Valley from Drass Valley.
- Nestled on **National Highway 1** between Srinagar and Leh, this pass is considered to be the **second-highest pass** after Fotu La.
- In 2018, the **Zojila tunnel project** was launched.
 - When completed, it will be the **longest bi-directional in Asia**.

5.8.12. PROJECT VARSHA

INS Varsha, under Project Varsha to be operational by 2026.

About Project Varsha

- It is a classified **naval project** aimed at strengthening India's underwater nuclear capabilities.
- Objective: To develop a **secure underground base** to house a fleet of over **12 nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs)**.
- **Location:** Coastal village Rambilli in Andhra Pradesh.
- Similar to Project Varsha from the east, Karwar base in Karnataka under **Project Seabird** safeguards the west coast.

5.8.13. OPERATION BLACK FOREST

'Operation Black Forest' is the **biggest anti-Naxal operation** ever conducted on Karregutta hill situated along the **Chhattisgarh-Telangana border**.

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has informed that the number of **most affected LWE districts reduced from 6 to three** (Bijapur, Sukma, Narayanpur- all in Chhattisgarh).

Other anti-Naxal mission

- **Mission Sankalp'**: launched on sprawling hills of Karregutta and adjoining hills along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border
- **Operation Green Hunt**: Began in late 2009. It takes place across five states - West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa and Chhattisgarh.

5.8.14. OPERATION SPIDER WEB

Under Operation Spider Web, Ukraine carried out its most devastating **drone strike** of the war.

Operation Spider Web

- Conducted by **Ukraine's SBU (Security Service/Agency)**.
- It is a **drone attack** (using **first-person view (FPV) drones**) on **strategic bomber aircrafts at Russian air bases**.
 - The attack was planned on **four air bases**. E.g. **Belya air base in the Irkutsk region of Siberia**.

5.8.15. OPERATION HAECHI-VI

CBI has arrested eight key operatives of transnational cybercrimes in Interpol Operation HAECHI-VI.

About Operation HAECHI-VI

- Financially supported by the **Republic of Korea**.
- It is the **sixth iteration** of a series of global operations to combat various forms of transnational cyber-enabled financial crimes.

5.9. EXERCISES IN NEWS

Bilateral	
Exercise 'Dustlik'	<p>6th edition of Exercise Dustlik started in Pune, Maharashtra.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a yearly Joint military Exercise event conducted alternatively in India and Uzbekistan.
Exercise Tiger Triumph	<p>The Fourth edition of Exercise Tiger Triumph has commenced at Vishakhapatnam coast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the Bilateral Tri-Service India-US Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise.
Operation ATALANTA	<p>European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA has proposed a joint exercise with the Indian Navy.</p>
Exercise Bold Kurukshtera	<p>14th Edition of India-Singapore Joint Military Exercise, Exercise Bold Kurukshtera 2025 commenced.</p>
SIMBEX Exercise	<p>Indian Navy participated in 32nd Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) exercise in Singapore.</p> <p>About SIMBEX Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis: It began as Exercise Lion King in 1994.
Nomadic Elephant	<p>17th edition of India- Mongolia Joint Military Exercise Nomadic Elephant is to be conducted in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted annually and alternatively in India and Mongolia.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last edition (2024) was conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya.
PASSEX	PASSEX, a joint naval exercise between the Navies of India and the UK , is being held in the northern Arabian Sea.
Jaa Mata	<p>Japanese Coast Guard ship, Itsukushima, arrived in Chennai for joint exercise, Jaa Mata.</p> <p>About Jaa Mata ('See you later' in Japanese)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a joint sea exercise between Japan and India Coast Guard.
SLINEX	<p>Indian Naval Ships INS <i>Rana</i> (a Guided Missile Destroyer) and INS <i>Jyoti</i> (Fleet Tanker) arrived at Colombo to participate in the 12th edition of Sri Lanka India Naval Exercise (SLINEX-25).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilateral naval exercise between India and Sri Lanka started in 2005.
Exercise Maitree	<p>The 14th edition of Exercise MAITREE-XIV commenced at Meghalaya, India.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instituted in 2006, it is one of the important joint training exercises between India and Thailand.
Yudh Abhyas	Indian Army contingent is participating in the 21st edition of military exercise India-US Joint Military Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2025 .
Operation ATALANTA	<p>European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA has proposed a joint exercise with the Indian Navy.</p> <p>About Operation Atalanta</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It operates in the Western Indian Ocean and the Red Sea region.
Exercise Shakti	<p>The exercise will be conducted at Camp Larzac, La Cavalerie, France</p> <p>About Exercise Shakti (Army)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type: Biennial joint military exercise between India and France. Other Joint Exercises with France: Exercise Varuna (Navy) & Exercise Garuda (Airforce).
KONKAN-25 Exercise	Joint bilateral exercise between Indian Navy and United Kingdom's Royal Navy .
AUSTRAHIND 2025	India-Australia joint annual military exercise.
Samudra Shakti Exercise	India-Indonesia joint bilateral maritime exercise.
JAIMEX -2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biennial naval exercise between the Indian Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

Trilateral

Exercise Freedom Edge	South Korea, US and Japan began their first trilateral multi-domain exercise, Freedom Edge.
IMT TRILAT- 2024	It is a Tri Lateral (TRILAT) maritime exercise between India, Mozambique, Tanzania (IMT).

Multilateral

Exercise Bright Star	India will participate in 2025 edition of Exercise Bright Star .
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 1995, multiple nations included.

INIOCHOS-25	Indian Air Force to Participate in Multinational Air Exercise in Greece. About INIOCHOS-25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an annual multinational air exercise hosted by Greece's Hellenic Air Force.
Exercise Desert Flag-10	Indian Air Force is participating in Exercise Desert Flag-10 . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a premier multinational air combat exercise being hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
IMDEX Asia 2025	Indian Naval Ship INS Kiltan arrived in Singapore to participate in 14th edition of International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX) Asia 2025 .
Exercise Khaan Quest	Indian Army contingent reached Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia for the 22nd Multinational Military Exercise Khaan Quest . About Exercise Khaan Quest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis: Bilateral initiative between the United States and Mongolia in 2003. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First multilateral exercise KHAAN QUEST: 2006.
Talisman Sabre Exercise	Australia's largest multilateral military exercise, Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, officially commences in Sydney .
Exercise Zapad	India participated in the Russia and Belarus launched joint military exercise Zapad-2025 , held in Russia.
Pacific Reach 2025	Indian Navy's latest indigenously designed and constructed Diving Support Vessel (DSV) INS Nistar is participating in Pacific Reach 2025 exercise in Singapore. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a biennial, multilateral exercise.
Exercise Desert Flag-10	Indian Air Force is participating in Exercise Desert Flag-10 . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a premier multinational air combat exercise being hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
Exercise Ocean Sky	Multinational air exercise hosted by the Spanish Air Force. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the first time a non-NATO country (India) is participating in this exercise.
Exercise Malabar	Annual maritime exercise between Australia, Japan, the United States and India.
Exercise Tarang Shakti	Indian Air Force (IAF) hosted Phase-I of the Exercise Tarang Shakti , India's first multinational air exercise .

Humanitarian	
Operation Sadbhav	India launched Operation Sadbhav to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) to Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. NOTE: Operation SADBHAVANA is an initiative of the Indian Army for civic actions in certain part of the country like Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Sikkim.
Tiger Triumph	It is a Bilateral Tri-Service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Amphibious Exercise between India and the US.

Miscellaneous	
Bharat NCX	<p>Bharat NCX 2025 had been officially inaugurated.</p> <p>About National Cybersecurity Exercise (Bharat NCX 2025)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted by National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in collaboration with Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
Exercise Siyom Prahar	<p>The Indian Army conducted Exercise Siyom Prahar in Arunachal Pradesh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim: To validate drone integration in tactical operations under battlefield-like conditions.
Exercise Yudh Kaushal	Indian Army has conducted Exercise Yudh Kaushal 3.0 in the Kameng region in Eastern Himalayas.
Operation Chakra-V	<p>CBI Launched Operation Chakra-V against Transnational Organized Cybercrime/Digital Arrests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earlier Operation Chakra-IV was initiated by CBI to combat organized cyber enabled financial crime networks through a globally coordinated law enforcement response leveraging INTERPOL channels.
NATPOLREX-X	<p>The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) begins the 10th edition of the National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-X).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATPOLREX is a biennial flagship exercise which aims to evaluate and enhance India's national preparedness to respond to marine oil spill incidents.