

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Classroom Study Material
(April 2024 to October 2024)



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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Table of Contents

1. MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS	4
1.1. UN General Assembly (UNGA)	4
1.2. United Nations Security Council (UNSC)	5
1.3. UN Peacekeepers (UNPK)	5
1.4. Other Important Developments Related to UN	6
1.4.1. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)	6
1.4.2. The United Nations Trade and Development	6
1.4.3. UN Global Supply Chain Forum (UN-GSCF)	7
1.4.4. G4 Nations	7
1.5. International Criminal Court (ICC)	8
1.6. BRICS	9
1.7. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	9
1.8. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)	11
1.9. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)	11
1.10. QUAD	12
1.11. AUKUS	13
1.12. Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)	14
1.13. India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)	15
1.14. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	16
1.15. Group of 7 (G7)	17
1.16. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)	18
1.17. The Commonwealth	18
1.18. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)	20
1.19. NATO	20
1.20. Geneva Conventions of 1949	21
1.21. Other Important Organizations	22
1.21.1. C10 & L69	22
1.21.2. Universal Postal Union (UPU)	23
1.21.3. Five Eyes Alliance	23
1.21.4. World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)	23
1.21.5. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) +	24
1.21.6. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	24
1.21.7. Arab League	25
2. PLACES IN NEWS	26
2.1. Conflict Afflicted Areas	26
2.2. Other Conflict Areas In News	29
2.3. Places featuring International Developments	31
3. BILATERAL RELATIONS	44
3.1. India-China	44
3.2. India-Nepal	45
3.3. India-Bhutan	46
3.4. India-Bangladesh	47
3.4.1 Cross-border electricity trade	48
3.5. India-Maldives	48
3.6. India-Russia	49
3.7. India-United States (US)	50
3.8. India-United Kingdom (UK)	51
3.9. India-Australia	52
3.10. India-Japan	53
3.11. India and South East Asia	54
3.11.1 India-Singapore	55
3.11.2. India-Vietnam	55
3.11.3. India-Malaysia	55
4. IMPORTANT EVENTS IN NEWS	57
4.1. Chabahar Port	57
4.2. India and Global South	58
4.3. Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)	59
4.4. India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement	59
4.5. TAPI Gas Pipeline Project	60
4.6. Other Recent Developments	61
4.6.1. Path to Peace Summit	61
4.6.2. MERCOSUR	61
4.6.3. Colombo Process	61
4.6.4. Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)	62
4.6.5. World Press Freedom Index (WIFI) 2024	62
5. ISSUES RELATED TO SECURITY	63
5.1. Chief of Defence Staff	63
5.2. National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)	63
5.3. Kargil War	64
5.4. Weaponisation of Space	65
5.5. Regulations of Chemical Weapons	65
5.6. Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	66
5.7. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	67
5.8. Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)	68
5.8.1. Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (Globe)	
Network	70

5.9. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	70
<hr/>	
5.10. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	72
<hr/>	
5.11. Other Important Developments	72
5.11.1. Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)	72
<hr/>	
5.11.2. Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)	72
<hr/>	
5.11.3. U.N. Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund	73
<hr/>	
5.11.4. World Military Expenditure, 2023 Report	73
<hr/>	
5.12. Exercises in News	74

1. MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS

1.1. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA)

Why in News?

UNGA passes a Resolution calling the Security Council (SC) to admit Palestine as a member of the UN.

More on the News

- The Resolution **does not grant Palestinians full membership** but **recognises it as qualified to join the UN**.

Process for Admission of New Members to the UN

- Application Submission:** State submits an application to the Secretary-General, accepting the UN Charter commitments.
- Recommendation from the Security Council requires:**
 - 9 out of 15 affirmative votes** of the Security Council members
 - With **none of the five permanent Council members** ("P-5": China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States) **voting against recommendation**.
- General Assembly Approval:** Two-thirds majority vote needed if recommended by the Security Council.
- Membership Effectiveness:** Membership becomes effective upon adoption of the resolution.

Quick Overview of UNGA



Genesis: Founded in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.



Members: Comprises all 193 UN member states.



Voting: Each member state has one vote; decisions on important issues require a two-thirds majority



Sessions: Meets annually in regular sessions starting in September, with special sessions as needed.



Presidency: Rotates annually among member states, elected from five geographic groups.

Overview of UN General Assembly Functions



Pass Resolutions

Issue non-binding resolutions with political and moral influence.

Elect Members

Elect non-permanent Security Council members and other UN bodies.

Approve Budget

Sanction the UN budget and assess member states' financial contributions.

Discuss Global Issues

Engage in dialogue and provide recommendations on worldwide challenges.

Related News

Pact for the Future

- **UN Adopts Pact for the Future at the UN Summit for the Future.**
- **About Pact for the Future**
 - **Purpose:** The Pact is designed to address 21st-century challenges.
 - **Annexures of Pact for the Future:**
 - > **Global Digital Compact:** A global agreement on regulating AI and digital technologies to promote sustainable development while addressing digital divides, cybersecurity, and misuse of technology.
 - > **Declaration on Future Generations:** Aims to secure the well-being of future generations by protecting the environment and promoting intergenerational equity.

1.2. UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

Why in News?

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) elected **Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama, and Somalia** to serve as non-permanent members on the UNSC for two-year terms.

Quick Overview of UNSC



United Nations
Security Council





Role: UNSC holds the primary responsibility for maintaining **international peace and security**.



Established: By UN Charter in 1945.



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).

Other Key facts on UNSC

- **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**.

Related News

Common Pledge Initiative

- **Common Pledge Initiative** was launched recently at a UNSC debate on women, peace, and security.
- **About “Common Pledge” initiative**
 - It is **designed to bring together mediators, governments, and civil society** to ensure the full, equal and meaningful engagement of women in peace processes.
 - It **involves appointing women as lead mediators** and including them in mediation teams.

1.3. UN PEACEKEEPERS (UNPK)

Why in the News?

India-led **Group of Friends** (GOF) launched a **new database designed to record crimes against Peacekeepers** & monitor progress in **holding perpetrators accountable**.

About Group of Friends (GOF)

- The GOF was launched by India in 2022 to promote accountability for crimes against the Blue Helmets during its presidency of the UN Security Council.
- UN peacekeeping forces are employed to maintain or re-establish peace in an area of armed conflict. However, they sometimes face violence in deployed regions.

Quick Overview of UN Peacekeeping



Genesis: Started in 1948 with UN military observers in West Asia for the Armistice Agreement.



Aim: Assists countries in transitioning from conflict to peace.



Principles: Consent, impartiality, non-use of force except in self-defence/mandate defence.



Blue Helmets: UN peacekeepers wear distinctive blue helmets.

- Deployment Of Peacekeepers**

- The Security Council determines UN Peacekeeping (UNPK) deployment by adopting a resolution.
- The budget and resources are subject to General Assembly approval.
 - Every Member State of the UN is legally obligated to pay their respective share towards peacekeeping.
- The Department of Peace Operations (DPO) of the UN provides political and executive direction to peacekeeping operations.

- Success:** UNPK received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988.

- India's Contribution:**

- India was the first to send an all-women unit under UNPK, which was sent to Liberia.
- India is one of the largest UNPK contributors of military personnel.

1.4. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO UN

1.4.1. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (UNESCAP)

“Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2024” Released. It’s an annual flagship publication since 1947.

HQ: Bangkok, Thailand.



Quick Overview of UNESCAP



Genesis: Established in 1947 as Economic Commission for Asia and Far East (ESCAP)
↳ Renamed ESCAP in 1976.



Membership: 53 members (India is a full time member) and 9 associate members.



Function: Forum for governments to discuss economic and social issues

1.4.2. THE UNITED NATIONS TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Trade and Development formerly known as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had celebrated its 60th Anniversary.

HQ: Geneva, Switzerland



Quick Overview of UN Trade and Development



Genesis: Established in 1964 by UN General Assembly.
→ UNCTAD has rebranded to 'UN Trade and Development'.



Objective Aid developing countries in integrating into global economy



Membership: 195 nations (including India)

- **Other key facts on UNCTAD**

- **Key Reports:** Trade & Development Report, World Investment Report, Least Developed Countries Report.
- **Key Achievements:** Implementation of Financing for Development, as mandated by the global community in the Addis Ababa Agenda (2015); Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) Programme.

1.4.3. UN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN FORUM (UN-GSCF)

Inaugural Edition Hosted by UN Trade and Development and Government of Barbados.

About UN-GSCF

- **Objective:** Address escalating disruptions in global supply chains caused by climate change, geopolitical tensions, and interdependencies.
- **Key Outcomes:**
 - Launched the Manifesto for Intermodal, Low-Carbon, Efficient, and Resilient Freight Transport and Logistics to meet global climate targets.
 - Introduced digital solutions like guidelines for an electronic single window for trade and the UNCTAD Trade-and-Transport Dataset to optimize trade flows.
- **Focus Areas:** Strengthening supply chain resilience, particularly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

1.4.4. G4 NATIONS

The Minister of External Affairs meets foreign ministers of G4 nations in New York.

- The group reaffirmed its **commitment to urgent reform of the United Nations Security Council** through text-based negotiations.

Quick Overview of G4 Nations



Participants: Includes Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan.



Aim: Supports each other's bids for permanent UNSC seats.



Objective: Proposes increasing UNSC membership to 25-26 with six permanent and 4-5 non-permanent

About Uniting for Consensus (UfC)

- It is a group of countries that oppose the **G4 nations' request for permanent seats** on the United Nations Security Council.

- **Countries:** Consist of Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Spain, Türkiye
- The UfC is also known as the **Coffee Club.**

1.5. INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

Why in the news?

ICC prosecutor sought arrest warrants for Israel's PM and Hamas leaders for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

More about the news:

- In March 2023, ICC issued an arrest warrant against Russia's President over Ukraine.
- **Consequences of ICC arrest warrants:** Accused face arrest or restricted movement, as member states must comply.

Quick Overview of ICC	
	Establishment: First permanent international court to prosecute serious international crimes.
	Rome Statute: Adopted in 1998, enforced in 2002.
	Types of Crime: Genocide, Crimes against humanity, War crimes, Crimes of aggression.
	Membership: 124 States Parties (e.g., Palestine 123rd member in 2015, Malaysia 124th member in 2019). → India, Israel, US, Russia, and China are not members.
	Enforcement: ICC decisions are binding.

Comparison between ICC and ICJ	
Parameters	ICC
Genesis	Rome Statute
HQ	Hague (Netherlands).
Composition	18 judges , with 9-year, non-renewable term, in 3 divisions: Pre-Trial, Trial, and Appeals elected by Assembly of States Parties.
Cases	Holds only individuals criminally responsible for offences.
	The court can rule on two types of case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Contentious cases": Legal disputes between States who are parties to ICJ and explicitly given consent. • "Advisory proceedings": Requests for advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by United Nations organs and certain specialized agencies.

1.6. BRICS

Why in News?

16th BRICS Summit held in Kazan, Russia.



Quick Overview of BRICS



Genesis: It has been 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** joined the group in 2010.

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 as of the end of 2024.



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.
- **Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation:** Strengthens partnership in space technologies.
- **BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative (BCBPI) or BRICS Pay:** A blockchain-based payment service for settlements, offering an alternative to SWIFT for BRICS nations.

1.7. ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

Why in News?

Prime Minister (PM) of India participated in the **21st ASEAN-India Summit** in Vientiane, Lao PDR.



HQ: Jakarta, Indonesia.



Quick Overview of ASEAN



Genesis: It was **established in 1967** in Bangkok with the signing of the **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)** by **five members** (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand).



Members: Presently it has **10 members**.



Delhi Dialogue is an annual **track 1.5** forum for discussing issues between ASEAN and India.



Dialogue Partners: Australia, Canada, China, India, the EU, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia Federation, U.K, U.S.

- Key ASEAN Institutions
 - ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF):
 - > Established: 1994. India joined ARF in 1996.
 - > It comprises 27 members: 10 ASEAN member states 10 ASEAN Dialogue Partners.
 - > Objective: Platform for dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues among ASEAN member countries and their partners.
 - 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 and policy recommendations.
 - > India is a founding member.



- Other Key ASEAN Institutions
 - ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation includes ASEAN member states, China, Japan and Republic of Korea.
 - India is an active participant ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting + (ADMM+) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).

About India-ASEAN

- 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.

Related News

East Asia Summit (EAS)

- Prime Minister of India attended the 19th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- About EAS
 - Established: 2005, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - Nature: Leaders-led forum for dialogue on strategic, political, and economic issues.
 - Members: 18 Members: ASEAN + Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, US.
 - 6 Priority Areas of Cooperation: Environment and energy, Education, Finance, Global health issues, Natural disaster management, ASEAN Connectivity

ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)

5th Joint Committee Meeting: Recently held in Jakarta to review ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA).

- About ATIGA
 - Years Signed: 2009.
 - Objective: Reduce trade barriers & deepen economic ties between ASEAN and India.
 - Trade Relations: India has a trade deficit with ASEAN.

1.8. SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

Why in the News?

RBI announces SAARC Currency Swap Framework for **2024-2027**.

Currency Swap Agreement (CSA)

- **CSA** is a **contract** under which two counterparties agree to exchange two currencies at a set rate and then to re-exchange those currencies at an agreed upon rate at a fixed date in future.
- **Other Significant CSA of India**
 - **BRICS Contingent Reserve Agreement** signed in 2015.
 - **India-Japan bilateral CSA** amounting to \$75 billion.
 - **Others:** India-UAE CSA, India-Sri Lanka CSA, etc.

Secretariat: Kathmandu, Nepal



Quick Overview of SAARC



Established in 1985, through SAARC Charter in Dhaka.



Membership: India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



Objective status: 9 Countries. Australia, China, the European Union, Iran, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar and the United States of America.

Other key facts on SAARC

- **Decisions** at all levels in SAARC are **taken on the basis of unanimity**. **Bilateral and contentious issues are excluded** from its deliberations.
- **Some key SAARC initiatives:** South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) Agreement – 2006, **SAARC Food Bank – 2007**, **SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS) – 2010**, India launched the **South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9)** in 2017, etc.
- **SAARC has been largely dysfunctional since 2016**.

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

Why in the News

BIMSTEC acquires 'legal personality' after **BIMSTEC Charter** comes into force

More on the News

- **BIMSTEC charter** was signed and adopted during the **5th summit of the grouping in Sri Lanka, in 2022**.
 - **BIMSTEC Charter** is a foundational document that outlines the goals, principles, and structure of the BIMSTEC.
- With the **endorsement of the charter by Nepal**, all member states completed the ratification of the foundational document and the charter **came into force on May 20, 2024**.

Quick Overview of BIMSTEC



Genesis: Established in 1997 with the signing of the **Bangkok Declaration**.



Membership: Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan



Objective: Promote rapid economic development, social progress, and ensure peace and stability across the Bay of Bengal region.

- **Other Key facts on BIMSTEC**

- **Major Projects:** BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity
- **BIMSTEC's Principle:** Sovereign equality, Territorial integrity, Political independence, Non-interference in internal affairs, Peaceful co-existence, etc.
- **7 Focus areas:** Trade; Environment and Climate Change; Security; Agriculture and Food Security; People-to-People Contact; Science, Technology, and Innovation; Connectivity.
- **Exercises:** BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise (DMEX)

1.10. QUAD

Why in the News?

US House of Representatives has passed '**Strengthen US-Australia-India-Japan Cooperation**' or **Strengthening the Quad Act**.

More on the News

Also, the Prime Minister of India attended the Quad Leaders' Summit in Wilmington (US).

- The Quad Leaders' Summit adopted the **Wilmington Declaration**.
- **Key Announcements in Wilmington Declaration**
 - 'Quad Cancer Moonshot' partnership to combat cervical cancer.
 - 'Quad Ports of the Future Partnership' for sustainable port infrastructure development.
 - 'Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI)' to maximize tools from the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (2022) and other Quad initiatives.
 - 'Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission' in 2025 to improve interoperability and maritime safety.
- India will host the **2025 Quad Leaders' Summit**. Also, in January, 2025, QUAD has marked 20 years of cooperation.

About Strengthening the Quad Act

- **Aims** to strengthen joint cooperation between Quad's four members, to promote a free, open, inclusive, resilient and healthy Indo-Pacific.
- **Established:** Quad Intra-Parliamentary Working Group in order to facilitate progress of the newly formed Quad Working Groups (**See Image**)

Six Leader-level Working Groups



Health: Quad Health Security Partnership in 2023.



Climate: Launched the Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP) in 2022.



Critical and Emerging Technology: Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiative, 2021 to diversify technology supply chains.



Maritime: In 2022, it launched the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA).



Infrastructure: Launched the Trilateral Partnership for Infrastructure Investment in the Indo-Pacific (TIP), in 2018.



Cybersecurity: In 2022, established the Quad Cybersecurity Partnership.

Quick Overview of QUAD



Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: A plurilateral framework comprising **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.



Objective: Promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region

About SQUAD

- **Genesis:** The US institutionalized and launched the ‘Squad’ in 2024.
- **Members:** The Squad is a new four-way security arrangement involving **the US, Australia, the Philippines, and Japan**.
- **Aim:** Deepen integration in the Indo-Pacific to counter China's militarization in the South China Sea.

1.11. AUKUS

Why in the news?

AUKUS completes 5 years of establishment.

Quick Overview of AUKUS



Genesis: Announced in 2021.



Nature: A new three-way strategic defense alliance.



Member: Australia, the UK, and the US (India is not a member).



Objective: To boost defense capabilities, accelerate technological integration, and expand the industrial capacity of all three countries.

• Key Features of AUKUS

- AUKUS aims to **counter China's** growing influence in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- AUKUS is **not a formal military alliance** like NATO.
- AUKUS primarily serves as a framework for **advancing defense technologies**.
- For facilitating the sharing of **critical technology**, a **legally binding tripartite agreement** known as the **Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (ENNPIA)** was signed in **2021**.

AUKUS' Structure



Pillar I – Conventionally Armed, Nuclear-Powered Submarines:

- UK and USA are helping Australia acquire nuclear-powered submarines.
- Supporting Australia to acquire its first conventionally armed, SSN submarine fleet



Pillar II – Advanced Capability Development:

- Focused on developing joint capabilities to enhance interoperability.
- **Cooperation in advanced military capability areas:** cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, etc.
 - E.g., Hypersonic Flight Test and Experimentation (HyFiTE) Project Arrangement.

1.12. INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY (IPEF)

Why In the News?

Recently, India signed and exchanged first-of-its-kind agreements under **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) for Prosperity**.

More on the News

- The Agreements focused on **Clean Economy**, **Fair Economy**, and **IPEF Overarching arrangement** under **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) for Prosperity**:
 - **Clean Economy Agreement (Pillar-III):**
 - > Promote clean energy technology development and deployment.
 - > Investments and capacity building for MSMEs via initiatives like the **IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund** and **IPEF Accelerator** to integrate Indian companies into global value chains.
 - **Fair Economy Agreement (Pillar-IV):**
 - > Ensure a transparent trade and investment environment through anti-corruption measures, improved **tax transparency**, and resource mobilization.
 - > Strengthen **information sharing**, asset recovery, and cross-border investigations.
 - **Overarching IPEF Agreement:** High-level **Ministerial oversight** for coordinating individual IPEF agreements.



Quick Overview of IPEF



Launch: Initiated on 2022, in Tokyo by the United States.



IPEF is structured around 4-pillars:

» **Pillar I:** Trade

» **Pillar II:** Supply Chain Resilience

» **Pillar III:** Clean Economy

» **Pillar IV:** Fair Economy

⌚ India had joined Pillars II to IV of IPEF while it has maintained an observer status in Pillar-I.



Member: Includes 14 countries: Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States.



Objective: To advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.

IPEF Initiatives

- **IPEF Upskilling Initiative:** Launched in 2022, it provides digital skills training, primarily for women and girls in emerging economies.
- **Critical Mineral Dialogue:** Focuses on mapping mineral resources, trade flows, and fostering recycling collaboration.
- **Cooperative Work Program:** Advances clean economy goals via collaborative projects among IPEF countries.

Related News

Supply Chain Agreement

- **India has been elected Vice-Chair of IPEF's Supply Chain Council.**
- **Under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework's Supply Chain Agreement, India and 13 partners established three bodies:**
 - **Supply Chain Council:** Focuses on strengthening critical supply chains.
 - **Crisis Response Network:** Provides a platform for collective emergency responses to disruptions.
 - **Labor Rights Advisory Board:** Brings together workers, employers, and governments to enhance labor rights and workforce development in regional supply chains.

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

Why in the News?

Minister of External Affairs, while addressing **CII India Mediterranean Business Conclave**, said that IMEC will be a cornerstone of global connectivity.



Quick Overview of IMEC



Genesis: Announced on the sidelines of the 2023 G20 summit, for integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East.



- IMEC is considered a part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) initiative.
- It will consist of railroad, ship-to-rail networks and road transport routes.



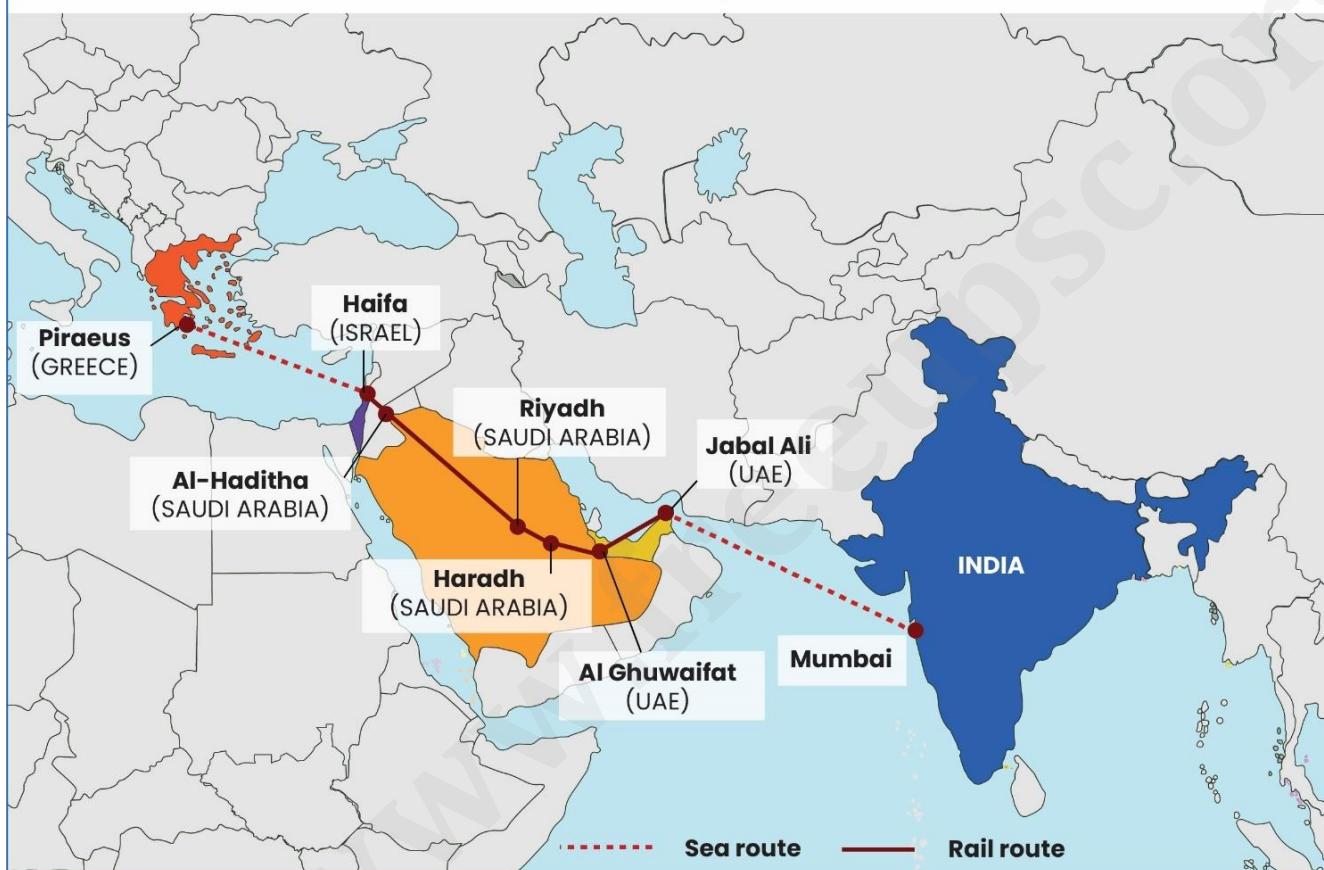
Components:

- Eastern Corridor:** Connects India to the Arabian Gulf through ports in India (like Mumbai and Mundra) to ports in the UAE (like Fujairah and Jebel Ali), and potentially others in Oman and Saudi Arabia.
- Northern Corridor:** Links the Arabian Gulf to Europe via ports in countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel, then through Haifa to Greece and further into Europe using existing rail and road networks.



Members: India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and US.

India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)



1.14. SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO)

Why in the News?

The 24th summit of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO held in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Key outcomes of summit

- Belarus becomes 10th Member to join SCO.

- Cooperation Program to Counter Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism for 2025-2027, Anti-Drug Strategy for 2024–2029, SCO Development Strategy until 2035.
- SCO member states endorsed the Initiative ‘On World Unity for a Just Peace, Harmony and Development’.

HQ: Beijing, China.



Quick Overview of SCO



Genesis: It was founded at the Shanghai summit in 2001 by Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



SCO has 10 members: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran (2023) and Belarus (2024).



In **2015** at Ufa, Russia, the SCO decided to admit **India** and **Pakistan** as full members.



Observer States: Afghanistan and Mongolia have observer status.



Objective: Addresses issues like terrorism, separatism, and extremism through the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.



‘**Kashi**’(**Varanasi**) has been declared the first tourism and cultural capital of SCO.

1.15. GROUP OF 7 (G7)

Why in the News?

India participated in the **50th Group of Seven (G7) Summit in Apulia, Italy**, where India was invited as an Outreach Country.

Quick Overview of G7



Genesis: Established in 1975 in response to the need for economic and financial cooperation following the 1973 energy crisis.



Nature: Informal group of advanced democracies addressing global economy, migration, climate change, and conflicts.



Member: The United States, Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, Italy, and France.

➢ **Russia joined** the group **in 1998**, forming the **G8**, but was excluded in **2014** for its **annexation of Crimea**.

➢ **The European Union is not a G7 member** but participates in the annual summit.

• Other Key facts on G7

- **Working Mechanism:** The G7 lacks a permanent structure; its rotating Presidency sets the agenda annually.
- **Initiatives:**
 - > **The Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII):**
 - ✓ Launched in **2022** to fund infrastructure projects in developing nations.
 - ✓ It aims to mobilize up to **\$600 billion by 2027**, focusing on sustainable, inclusive, and quality infrastructure.

- > **The "Energy for Growth in Africa" initiative** is a G7-led effort aimed at facilitating access to external investment for clean energy projects in Africa
- > **Other Initiatives:** G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans Initiative (FSOI), G7 Oil Price Cap Coalition, Apulia Food Systems to enhance food security and sustainable agriculture.

1.16. THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)

Why in the News?

NAM Calls for Cuba's Removal from Unilateral Terrorism List of US

More on the News

- USA's unilateral list of '**State Sponsors of Terrorism**' comprises countries that **allegedly sponsor international terrorism**.
- Countries in such a list face **unilateral** economic, commercial and financial **coercive measures** by US.
- **North Korea, Iran and Syria** are also part of this list in addition to Cuba.
- **NAM's stand favouring Cuba** highlights its **importance to Global South countries**.

Quick Overview of NAM

	Origins: Traces roots to the Bandung Conference (1955), which laid non-alignment principles.
	Formation: Formally established at the first NAM Summit in Belgrade, Serbia (1961).
	Principles: Advocates independent foreign policies, reducing Cold War tensions, and providing a platform for newly independent nations.
	Membership: Comprises 120 countries, primarily developing nations.
	Policy of Non-Alignment: Members pledge to avoid formal alignment with major power blocs.

1.17. THE COMMONWEALTH

Why in the News?

2024 marks **75 years** of the modern Commonwealth, commemorating the **London Declaration (1949)**.

India's Relations with the Commonwealth

- **Largest Member:** India represents nearly **60%** of the Commonwealth's total population.
- It is the **fourth largest contributor** to the Commonwealth.
- **Hosted Events:** Organized **CHOGM (1983)** and **Commonwealth Games (2010)** in New Delhi.
- **Commonwealth Sub Window:** Established under the **India-UN Development Fund (2018)** with **\$50 million** over 5 years.

Quick Overview of the Commonwealth



Members: Voluntary association of 56 countries (including India), mainly former British colonies, focusing on democracy, trade, and climate change.



Genesis:

- » 1926: British Commonwealth of Nations formed at the Imperial Conference.
- » 1947: India remained a member after independence.
- » 1949: London Declaration enabled republics to join, forming the Modern Commonwealth.



Working of CHOGM: Held over 2 years (latest in Rwanda, 2022) to address key issues and issue a communiqué.

- **Other Key facts:**

- Decisions made by **consensus**; all members are considered equal.
- Members choose the **Head of the Commonwealth**.
- **Past Leaders:** Examples include Queen Elizabeth II (longest-serving Head) and King Charles III (current Head).
- **King Charles** is the head of state in **14 Commonwealth countries - or realms** - in addition to the UK.
- Most countries in the club are republics - with **Barbados the last to remove the UK monarch as its head of state in 2021**.

Major Initiatives of the Commonwealth



Agreements such as the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and the 1991 Harare Commonwealth Declaration.



Commonwealth charter (2012) sets out 16 core shared principles such as Rule of Law, etc.



Commonwealth's advocacy and support played a significant role in ending apartheid in South Africa.



Only intergovernmental organisation to have a dedicated youth programme, **Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)**.



Commonwealth Cyber Declaration (2018) to support the development of a cyberspace.



Commonwealth Secretariat Countering Violent Extremism Unit.

Related News

Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

- India participated at **Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Annual Board** meeting in Sri Lanka, with theme “**Reinforcing Social Resilience through Women’s Political Representation.**”
- **About CLGF (HQ: London, UK)**
 - **Genesis: 1995.**
 - **Unites Local Government**, Ministries of Local Government, national associations of local government, and individual councils from 56 Commonwealth countries (including India).
 - Dedicated to support women’s full and active participation in public life, especially in achieving **equal representation in local governance**, aligning with **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**

1.18. GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

Why in the News?

At the recently held **India-GCC Joint Ministerial Meeting for Strategic Dialogue**, the **Joint Action Plan 2024-2028** was adopted.

HQ: Riyadh

Quick Overview of GCC

 **Established in 1985.**

 **Membership:** The GCC consists of **six Gulf states: UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait.**

 **Aim:** Foster **coordination, integration, and interconnection** between the member states in all fields, including politics, economy, and security.

India-GCC Relations

- **Political Relations**
 - The **first India-GCC Political Dialogue** was held in **2003**.
 - Currently, India maintains **strategic partnerships** with **Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Oman**, with increasing cooperation in multiple domains.
- **Bilateral trade:** GCC is currently **India's largest trading partner bloc**. India has a **trade deficit** with GCC Countries.
- **Diaspora and Remittances**
 - Over **2/3rd of the Non-Resident Indian (NRI)** population resides in GCC countries.
 - GCC Countries share **30%** of India's total remittances in **2020-21**.
- **Energy Cooperation:** They contribute to **35% of India's oil imports** and **70% of India's gas imports** (2021-22).



1.19. NATO

Why in the News?

Recently, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) marked 75 years of its formation and **Sweden** has joined NATO as its **32nd member**.



Quick Overview of NATO



Genesis: 1949 with the North Atlantic Treaty.



Nature: Political and military alliance of 32 countries



Membership: 12 founding members; Notable additions: Finland (2023).



Core objective: Collective defence: An attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies. (Article 5)

- **Other Key facts on NATO**

- **Ukraine** has applied in 2022 and is not a member yet.
- **Functions:** Provides transatlantic link between Europe and North America; Facilitates defence cooperation and crisis management.
- **Funding:** Contributions from all members based on **Gross National Income (GNI)**.
- **Programs:** Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

Other related terms

- **Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) status:** Under U.S. law it provides foreign partners with certain benefits in the areas of defense trade and security cooperation. Currently **19 countries** are MNNA (India is not a member).
- **NATO plus five:** The countries are Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and Israel.

NATO Member Countries



1.20. GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949

Why in the News?

2024 marks the **75th anniversary** of the **Geneva Conventions of 1949**, the cornerstone of **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**.

About International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

- **Definition:** IHL, also known as the **law of war** or **law of armed conflict**, seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict for humanitarian reasons. It protects persons who are **not** or **no longer** participating in hostilities, such as civilians, prisoners of war, and the wounded.

Geneva Conventions of 1949

- The 1949 Geneva Conventions (GC) form the cornerstone of modern International Humanitarian Law (IHL), consisting of four key treaties:

- **GC I:** Protects wounded and sick soldiers on land during armed conflict.
- **GC II:** Safeguards wounded, sick, or shipwrecked military personnel at sea.
- **GC III:** Ensures humane treatment and rights for prisoners of war.
- **GC IV:** Protects civilians, particularly in occupied territories, during conflicts.
- **Additional Protocols:** The **Additional Protocols of 1977** and **2005** supplement the **Geneva Conventions**.
 - **Protocol I (1977):** Focuses on the protection of victims of international armed conflicts.
 - **Protocol II (1977):** Protects victims of non-international armed conflicts.
 - **Protocol III (2005):** Introduced the **Red Crystal** as an additional emblem for humanitarian organizations.
- **India's Commitment to IHL: Ratification:** India has **ratified all four Geneva Conventions of 1949**.
- **Other Key Treaties in International Humanitarian Law:**
 - **1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property:** Safeguards cultural property during armed conflict.
 - **1972 Biological Weapons Convention:** Prohibits the development and use of biological weapons.
 - **1993 Chemical Weapons Convention:** Bans the use, production, and stockpiling of chemical weapons.
 - **1998 Rome Statute for International Criminal Court (ICC):** Established the **International Criminal Court** to prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

1.21. OTHER IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS

1.21.1. C10 & L69

Indian External Affairs Minister participated in the **first-ever** Joint Ministerial Meeting of the **C-10** and **L.69 groupings**.

Quick Overview of C-10 Group



Genesis: Committee of Ten African Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors (C-10) was created in 2008.



Members: Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, the Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS), and the Central Bank of Central African States (CBCAS).



Mandate: Advocating enhanced African participation in governance of international financial institutions (IFIs), etc.

Quick Overview of L.69 groupings.



Genesis: Established in 2007 by a group of developing countries to push for UN Security Council reform



Advocacy: Advocates for an expansion in both categories of **UNSC membership** to include more developing countries and to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities.



Members: L69 is a grouping that includes countries from Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific Island states and Asia.

→ **India is also member.**



Name Origin: Named after the document "**L.69**" which was a resolution tabled in the General Assembly in 2007-2008, leading to the Intergovernmental Negotiation (IGN) process on UNSC reform.



Activities: Engages in regular consultations and meetings to align strategies on UNSC reform, often in coordination with other reform-minded groups like the African Group.

1.21.2. UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

Department of Posts, India has released commemorative postage stamps to mark the 150th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union.



Quick Overview of Universal Postal Union (UPU)



Genesis: Established as **General Postal Union in 1874, through Treaty of Bern.**



Second oldest international organization after International Telecommunication Union (ITU), formed in 1865.



World Post Day is celebrated on anniversary of establishment of UPU.



Members: 192 countries. **India** is one of its oldest and most active members.

Other key facts

- UPU is a **United Nations specialized agency**.
- India Post, world's largest postal network is also observing 170 years of its formation.

1.21.3. FIVE EYES ALLIANCE

Australia decides to allow non-citizen residents from the **Five Eyes Alliance** to join its armed forces.

Quick Overview of Five Eyes alliance



It's a multilateral intelligence-sharing network.



Members: US, UK, Canada, Australia, & New Zealand.



Nature:

- These partner countries share a broad range of intelligence with one another.
- It includes the **non-political intelligence** oversight, review, and security entities of the **Five Eyes countries**.

1.21.4. WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS)

India participates in International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) **WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024** in Geneva, Switzerland.

- **WSIS+20 Forum** marks 20 years of progress made in implementation of outcomes of WSIS, which took place in two phases in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005).



Quick Overview of WSIS



Genesis: It was organized in two phases **Geneva 2003** and **Tunis 2005**.



Organised annually by **ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD**.



Aim: Create multi- stakeholder platform to address issues raised by information and communication technologies through inclusive approach at national, regional and international levels.

1.21.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC) +

OPEC+ agreed to extend its deep oil output cuts into 2025.



Quick Overview of OPEC+ & OPEC



Genesis

- » **OPEC+ Formation:** Established in 2016 when OPEC signed an agreement with 10 other oil-producing countries.
- » **OPEC Formation:** Founded at the Baghdad Conference in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.



Members:

- » **OPEC Members:** Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria, Congo, UAE, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.
- » **Non-OPEC Members:** Russia, Mexico, Kazakhstan, Oman, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Bahrain, South Sudan, Brunei, and Sudan.



About OPEC

- » **Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria.
- » **Objective:** To coordinate and unify petroleum policies among Member Countries to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers.

1.21.6. ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK

Union Finance Minister asked **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** to assist low-income countries to avail financial resources.



HQ: Beijing (China)

Quick Overview of AIIB



Genesis: It is a **multilateral development bank** established in 2016.



Mission: Financing Infrastructure for tomorrow in Asia and beyond.



Members: 110 members (World wide) – 96 Full Members and 14 Prospective Members. (India is a member)



China is the largest shareholder, with 26.6% of the current voting share and veto power, followed by India (7.6%), Russia (6%).



In 2018, AIIB was granted **Permanent Observer status in the deliberations of United Nations General Assembly and UN Economic and Social Council**

1.21.7. ARAB LEAGUE

The 2024 Arab League Summit was held in Bahrain.

HQ: Cairo, Egypt



Quick Overview of Arab League (League of Arab States)



It is an **intergovernmental organization** encompassing all Arab states in Middle East and North Africa.



Genesis: Established in Cairo, Egypt, in **1945** following adoption of **Alexandria Protocol in 1944**.



Mandate: Strengthening relations between member states, coordination of policies, and cooperation on political, security, economic front.



Members: 22 member states (**India has observer status**).

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2. PLACES IN NEWS

2.1. CONFLICT AFFLICTED AREAS

Nagorno-Karabakh Region

- Context:** Russian peacekeepers have begun withdrawing from Nagorno-Karabakh following Azerbaijan's recapture of disputed territory from Armenian separatists.
- About Nagorno-Karabakh Region:**
 - Known as Artsakh by Armenians.
 - A landlocked mountainous region officially recognized as part of Azerbaijan.

Nagorno-Karabakh Region



Ukraine (Capital: Kyiv)

- Context:** Russian missiles attacked Ukraine's Snake Island, also known as Zmiinyi Island, located in the Black Sea.
- Location:** Eastern Europe.
- 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.

UKRAINE



Nord Stream

- Context:** New study reveals thousands of tonnes of methane may have dissolved in the Baltic Sea after explosions damaged the Nord Stream pipelines.
- About Nord Stream:** It is a network of offshore pipelines (Nord Stream 1 and 2) supplying natural gas from Russia to northern Germany.

Nord Stream



Kursk Region

- **Context:** Russia declared an emergency in the Kursk Region.
- **Location:** Situated in the central part of the Eastern European Plain, bordering Ukraine.
- **River Basins:** Includes the basins of the Dnieper and Don rivers.
- Also, armed militants launched an attack in **Russia's southern republic of Dagestan**



Lebanon (Capital: Beirut)

- **Context:** In recent escalations, Israel has intensified its offensive against Hezbollah by deploying more troops along Southern Lebanon.
- **Location:** Narrow strip of territory along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, situated in the Northern Arabian Peninsula in West Asia.
- **Bordering Countries:** Syria (north and northeast), Israel (south).
- **Maritime Boundary:** Cyprus.



Baltic Sea

- **Context:** Reportedly, Russian SU-24 bomber breached Swedish airspace near the strategically vital Baltic Sea Island of Gotland.
- **Baltic Sea** is an arm of the North Atlantic Ocean, connected to it through the Danish Straits.
- The **world's largest inland brackish sea**, with low salinity due to an influx of river waters.



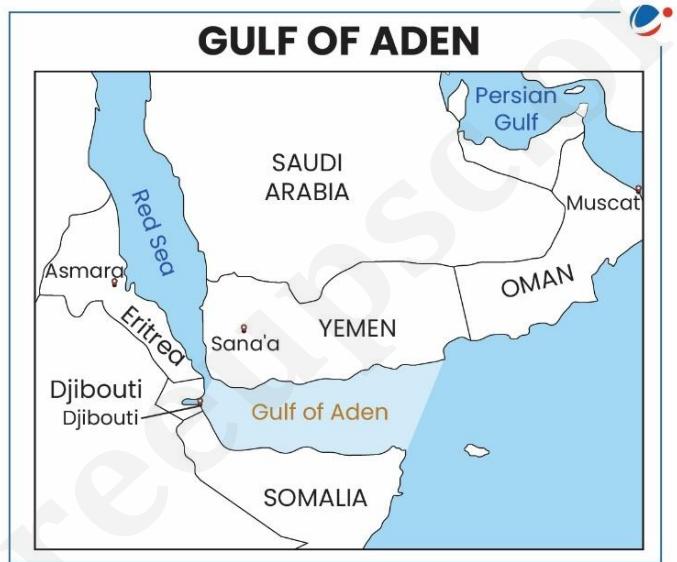
Turkiye (Capital: Ankara)

- Context:** Turkiye launched strikes targeting Kurdish militants in Iraq and Syria.
- Location:**
 - The **smaller northwestern** part of Turkey, including **the city of Istanbul**, lies in **Southeastern Europe** (the Balkan Peninsula). This region is known as **Eastern Thrace**.
 - The **larger portion** of Turkey, called **Anatolia (or Asia Minor)**, is located in **Western Asia**.
- Borders:** Georgia and Armenia (northeast), Azerbaijan and Iran (east), Iraq and Syria (southeast), Greece and Bulgaria (northwest).
- Water Bodies:** Bounded by the Black Sea (north), Mediterranean Sea (southwest), and Aegean Sea (west).



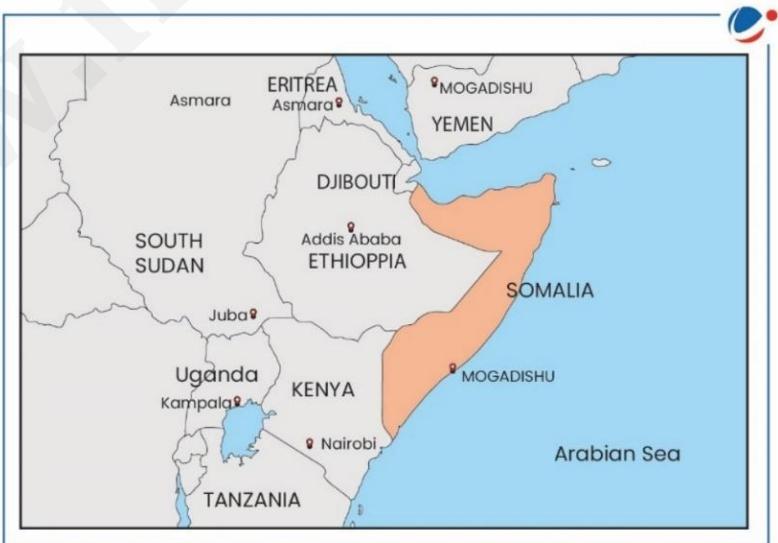
Gulf of Aden

- Context:** Pirates' attack in the Gulf of Aden raises concern.
- Gulf of Aden:** A deepwater basin that forms a natural sea link between the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.



Somalia (Capital: Mogadishu)

- Context:** A suicide bombing and gun attack in Mogadishu resulted in the deaths of many civilians.
- Location:** Situated on the Horn of Africa, it is the easternmost country in continental Africa.
- Borders:** Djibouti (northwest), Ethiopia (west), and Kenya (southwest).
- Water Bodies:** Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.



Abu Musa Island

- Context:** Iran summoned China's envoy over a China-UAE statement questioning Iran's sovereignty over the disputed Abu Musa Island and two other islands, Greater Tumb and Lesser Tumb.
- Disputes over Islands:** Claimed by both Iran and the UAE but has been held by Iran since 1971.
- Strategic Importance:** Located close to the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway through which about a fifth of the world's oil passes daily.



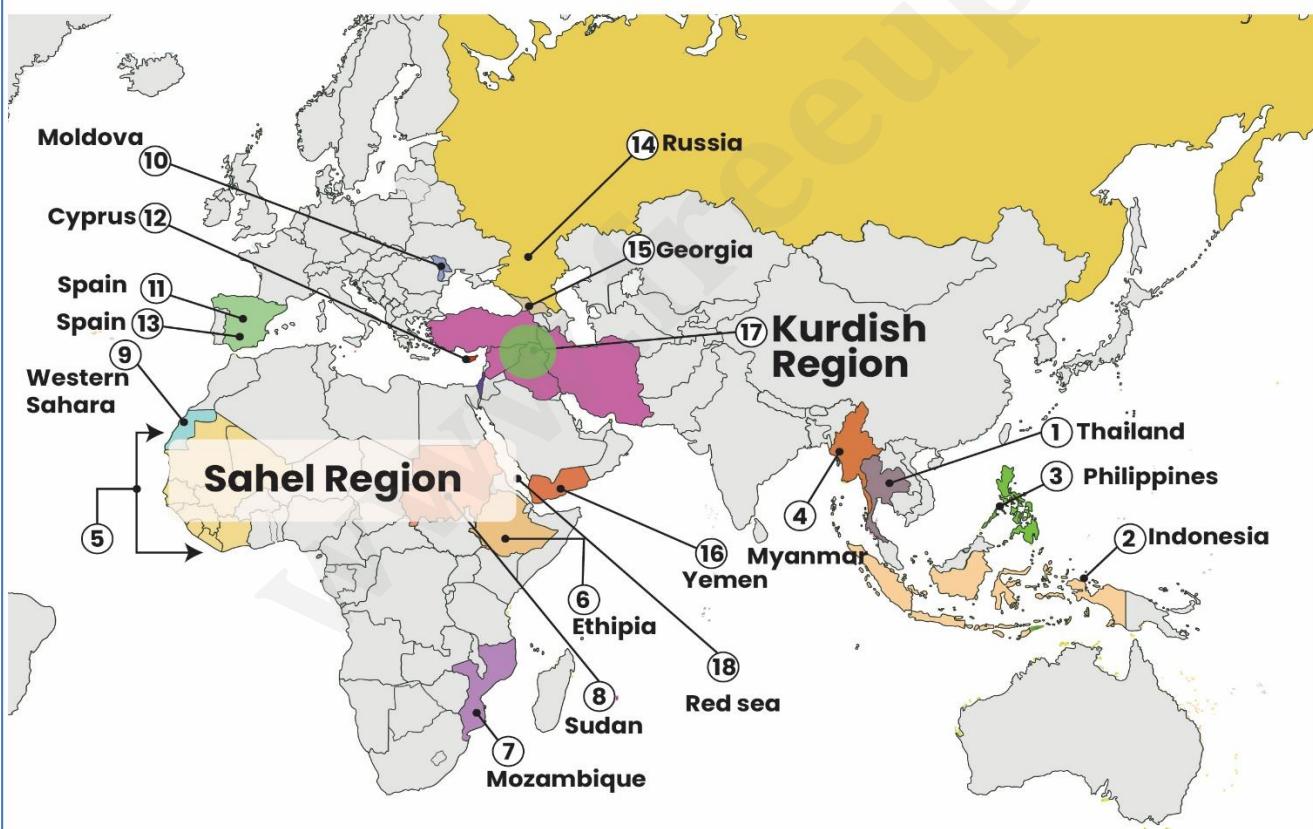
Senkaku Islands

- Context:** A joint statement by Japan and the USA recently opposed any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo of the Senkaku Islands by China.
- About Senkaku Islands:**
 - Also known as Diaoyu in Chinese.
 - Located in the East China Sea, approximately 410 km west of Okinawa Island.



2.2. OTHER CONFLICT AREAS IN NEWS

Other Conflict Areas in News



SOUTH EAST ASIA	
1	Southern Thailand (Patani Conflict) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Thai government vs. Malay-Muslim separatists. Reasons: Ethnic and religious tensions, autonomy demands.
2	West Papua (Indonesia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Indonesian government vs. Free Papua Movement (OPM). Reasons: Independence movement, resource exploitation, and cultural suppression.
3	Mindanao (Philippines) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Philippine government vs. MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front). Reasons: Autonomy, Islamic governance, and extremism.
4	Kachin State (Myanmar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Myanmar military vs. Kachin Independence Army (KIA). Reasons: Ethnic autonomy, resource control.
AFRICA	
5	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.
6	Tigray (Ethiopia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Ethiopian government vs. Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Reasons: Political power struggle, autonomy demands.
7	Mozambique (Cabo Delgado) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Government vs. ISIS-Mozambique. Reasons: Islamist insurgency, resource exploitation.
8	Sudan (Darfur and Post-Coup Unrest) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Military vs. civilians, Rapid Support Forces vs. rebel groups. Reasons: Power struggle, ethnic violence.
9	Western Sahara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Morocco vs. Polisario Front. Reasons: Independence dispute over territory.
EUROPE	
10	Transnistria (Moldova) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Moldovan government vs. Transnistrian separatists (Russian-backed). Reasons: Independence declaration in 1990.
11	Basque Country (Spain) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Spanish government vs. Basque Homeland and Liberty". Reasons: Basque independence movement.
12	Cyprus (Greek-Turkish Divide) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Greek Cypriots vs. Turkish Cypriots. Reasons: Ethnic and political division since 1974.
13	Catalonia (Spain) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Spanish government vs. Catalan independence movement. Reasons: Autonomy and independence demand.
14	Chechnya (Russia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Russian government vs. Chechen separatists. Reasons: Independence movement, religious extremism.
15	South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Georgia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Georgian government vs. Russian-backed separatists. Reasons: Independence declarations, Russian influence.

WEST ASIA	
16	Yemen (Civil War) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Houthi rebels vs. Yemeni government (Saudi-backed). Reasons: Sectarian tensions, political power struggle.
17	Kurdish-Turkish Conflict (Northern Syria/Iraq) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Turkey vs. Kurdish groups (PKK, YPG). Reasons: Kurdish autonomy demands, Turkish security concerns.
18	Red Sea and Houthis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factions: Houthi rebels: A Shia militant group primarily based in Yemen Vs. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, etc. Reason: Control over the Red Sea as the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, located at the southern end of the Red Sea, is a critical chokepoint for global trade, especially for oil shipments. India's Operation Sankalp: The Indian Navy has launched 'Operation Sankalp' as a measure to assure the safety and security of the Indian vessels.

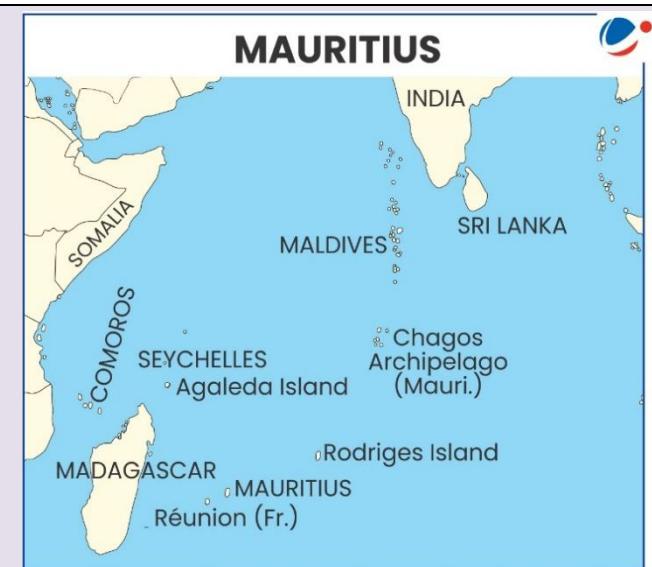
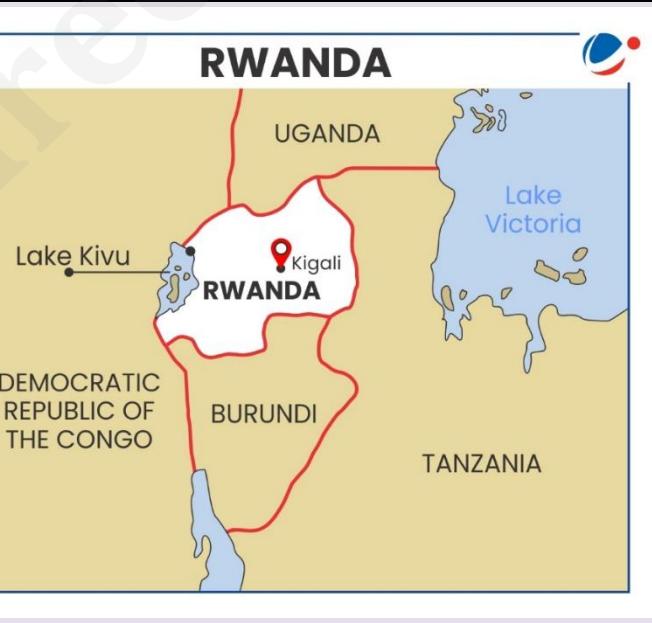
2.3. PLACES FEATURING INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

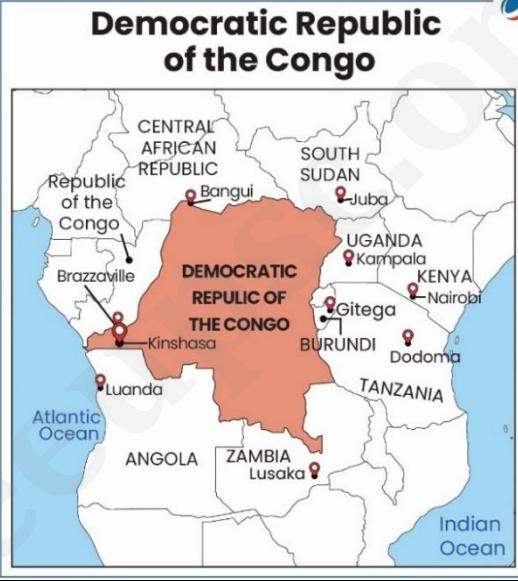
1	<p>Israel (Capital: Jerusalem [proclaimed capital; status: Disputed]; many countries recognize Tel Aviv as the diplomatic capital).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Israel has approved the reopening of the Erez crossing to allow the flow of more humanitarian aid into Gaza. Location: Israel is a country located in the Middle East. Boundaries: Lebanon (north), Syria (northeast), Jordan (east), and Egypt (southwest). Water Bodies: The Sea of Galilee; the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba); the Dead Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea It includes East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, both areas of territorial dispute. About Erez Crossing: It is a border crossing between Israel and the northern Gaza Strip. 	
2	<p>Blue Line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: UN warns of escalating tensions on Lebanon-Israel 'Blue Line' frontier. About Blue line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Israel and Lebanon have no official border separating them, except the Blue Line. It was set by the United Nations in 2000. It is made of blue barrels and runs from the Mediterranean to the Golan Heights to the east. 	

	<p>3 Jordan (Capital: Amman)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Jordan as the first country in the world to eliminate leprosy. Borders: Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Palestine (West Bank). Water Bodies: Jordan River, Dead Sea, and Gulf of Aqaba. 	
	<p>4 Armenia (Capital: Yerevan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Armenia has officially recognized Palestine as a state. Location: Landlocked country in Transcaucasia, a region south of the Caucasus Mountains. Borders: Azerbaijan, Turkey, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (an exclave of Azerbaijan), Georgia, and Iran. Nagorno-Karabakh: A disputed territory between Armenia and Azerbaijan. 	
	<p>5 Iraq (Capital: Baghdad)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: UNSC voted to end the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), established in 2003 following the United States-led invasion. Territorial Boundaries: Türkiye (north), Iran (east), Syria and Jordan (west), Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait (south). Maritime Boundaries: Opens into the Persian Gulf. 	

	<p>6 Iran (Capital: Tehrān)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Iran's President dies in a helicopter crash. Land Boundaries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan (north); Afghanistan and Pakistan (east); Iraq (west); Turkey (northwest). Maritime Borders: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Surrounding Water Bodies: Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. 	
	<p>7 Uzbekistan (Capital: Tashkent)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: The Chief of the Army Staff inaugurated a high-tech IT laboratory at the Academy of Armed Forces in Uzbekistan. Location: A double landlocked country in Central Asia. Bordering Countries: Kazakhstan (North), Kyrgyzstan (East), Tajikistan (South-east), Afghanistan (South), Turkmenistan (South-west). 	
	<p>8 United Arab Emirates (Capital: Abu Dhabi)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: The UAE successfully completed the Arab world's first nuclear power plant. Neighbors: Saudi Arabia (west and south), Oman (east and northeast). Maritime Borders: Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf. 	

9	<p>Thailand (Capital: Bangkok)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Thailand's senate has approved a bill to legalize same-sex marriage. Land Borders: Myanmar (northwest), Cambodia (east), Laos (northeast), and Malaysia (south). Water Bodies: Andaman Sea and Gulf of Thailand. 	
10	<p>Lao PDR (Capital: Vientiane)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Prime Ministers of India and Lao PDR held bilateral talks on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit. Location: Landlocked country in Southeast Asia. Borders: China (north), Vietnam (east), Cambodia (southeast), Thailand (west), and Myanmar (northwest). 	
11	<p>Philippines (Capital: Manila)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Recently, the Philippines Ambassador stated that BrahMos missiles offer a "credible defense" for the Southeast Asian country. Water bodies: Philippine Sea (east), Celebes Sea (south), Sulu Sea (southwest), and South China Sea (west and north). 	

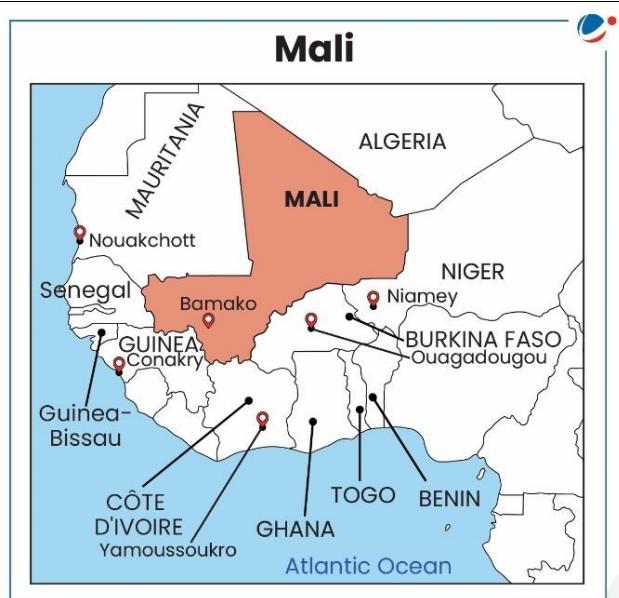
12	<p>Mauritius: (Capital: Port Louis)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra (JAK) inaugurated in Mauritius. Location: Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, located to the east of Madagascar and off the southeastern coast of Africa. Neighbouring Islands: Reunion Island (France) to the west & Seychelles in the northwest. 	
13	<p>Chagos islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: U.K. to restore sovereignty of Chagos islands to Mauritius Location: Island group in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), south of Maldives. 	
14	<p>Rwanda: (Capital: Kigali)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: UK Parliament passed the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill which will give Britain's immigration authorities power to send any asylum seeker entering the UK "illegally" after January 2022 to Rwanda. Location: Landlocked country in Central Africa Border: Uganda (north), Tanzania (east), Burundi (south), and Democratic Republic of the Congo (west). Lake Kivu, which forms part of the western border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. 	

15	<p>Togo (Capital: Lomé)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: India and Togo have recently reviewed their bilateral relations. Location: Western Africa. Borders: Ghana (west), Benin (east), and Burkina Faso (north). Water Bodies: Gulf of Guinea (south). 	
16	<p>Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Capital: Kinshasa)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: The first secretary-level meeting between the defence ministries of India and the DRC was held. Location: Largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa, second largest in Africa (after Algeria). Borders: Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola. Maritime Boundary: Access to the Atlantic Ocean. 	
17	<p>Ghana (Capital: Accra)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: India and Ghana agreed to strengthen trade ties at the 4th Joint Trade Committee meeting in Accra. Location: West Africa, on the Gulf of Guinea. Land Borders: Burkina Faso (north), Togo (east), Côte d'Ivoire (west). Maritime Border: Atlantic Ocean (south). 	

18

Mali (Capital: Bamako)

- Context:** Mali has banned media from reporting on activities of political parties and associations.
- Location:** Landlocked country in western Africa.
- Borders:** Algeria (north), Niger and Burkina Faso (east), Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea (south), Senegal and Mauritania (west).
- Geographic Zone:** Mostly lies in the Sahel region, a transitional zone between the Sahara Desert (north) and humid savannas (south).



19

Zambia (Capital: Lusaka)

- Context:** India-Zambia hold 6th Session of Joint Permanent Commission
- A landlocked country in south-central Africa.**
- Bordering Countries:** Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania (north), Malawi and Mozambique (east), Zimbabwe and Botswana (south), and Namibia and Angola (west).



20

Mexico (Capital: Mexico City)

- Context:** Mexico became the first country to approve the popular election of judges.
 - Also, Claudia Sheinbaum elected as the first woman president of Mexico.
- Territorial Boundaries:** USA (north), Guatemala and Belize (southeast).
- Maritime Boundaries:** Pacific Ocean (west/south), Gulf of Mexico (east), and Caribbean Sea (southeast).



21

Bolivia (Capitals: La Paz [administrative], Sucre [constitutional])

- Context:** Bolivia is experiencing economic turmoil due to dependence on the U.S. dollar, depleting reserves, and rising debts.
- Borders:** Brazil (north and east), Paraguay (southeast), Argentina (south), Chile (southwest and west), and Peru (northwest).



22

Panama (Capital: Panama City)

- Context:** Panama becomes the first nation to evacuate the island community of Gardi Sugdub Island due to climate change impact.
- Location:** Country of Central America, located on the Isthmus of Panama.
 - Isthmus of Panama:** A narrow bridge of land connecting North and South America.
- Borders:** Costa Rica (west) and Colombia (east).
- Maritime Boundaries:** Caribbean Sea (north) and Pacific Ocean (south).



23

Trinidad & Tobago (Capital: Port of Spain)

- Context:** Trinidad & Tobago has become the first country in the Caribbean region to adopt India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform.
- Location:** Island country in the southeastern West Indies in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Proximity:** Lies close to South America, northeast of Venezuela, and northwest of Guyana.



24	<p>New Zealand (Capital: Wellington)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: New Zealand has recognized India as the 'Country of Honour' for the year 2024. Location: Island country in the South Pacific Ocean, situated between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Antarctic Circle. Components: Comprises two main islands, North Island and South Island, separated by Cook Strait. 	 <h3>New Zealand</h3>
25	<p>Croatia (Capital: Zagreb)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: The incumbent Croatian Prime Minister secured office for the third consecutive time. Location: Southeast Europe, part of the Balkan Peninsula. Boundaries: Hungary and Slovenia (north), Serbia (east), Bosnia and Herzegovina (south and east), and Adriatic Sea (west). 	 <h3>Croatia</h3>
26	<p>Republic of Ireland (Capital: Dublin)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: The Ireland Parliament elects a new Prime Minister. Location: Occupies most of an island west of Great Britain. Borders: Northern Ireland (north, part of the United Kingdom). Surrounding Water Bodies: Atlantic Ocean (west), Celtic Sea (south), Irish Sea (east). 	 <h3>Ireland</h3>

27

Greece (Capital: Athens)

- Context:** A recent report warns that Greece is facing an alarming population decline.
- Location:** Southernmost country of the Balkan Peninsula.
- Borders:** Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey.
- Surrounding Water Bodies:** Aegean Sea (east), Mediterranean Sea (south), Ionian Sea (west)



28

Netherlands (Capital: Amsterdam)

- Context:** The 12th India-Netherlands Foreign Office Consultations were held in The Hague, Netherlands.
- Location:** Northwestern Europe, also known as Holland.
- Land Boundaries:** Belgium (south) and Germany (east).
- Water Bodies:** North Sea (north and west).



29

Latvia (Capital: Riga)

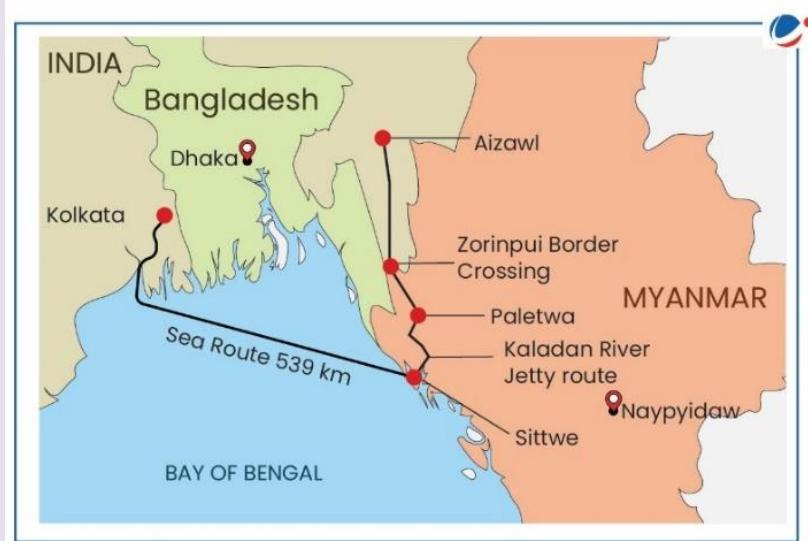
- Context:** India has operationalized the new resident mission in Latvia.
- Member of the European Union (EU) and NATO.**
- Located** in northeastern Europe.
- Land Boundaries:** Estonia (North), Russia (East), Belarus (Southeast), and Lithuania (South).
- Maritime Boundaries:** Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga.



30

Sittwe Port, Myanmar

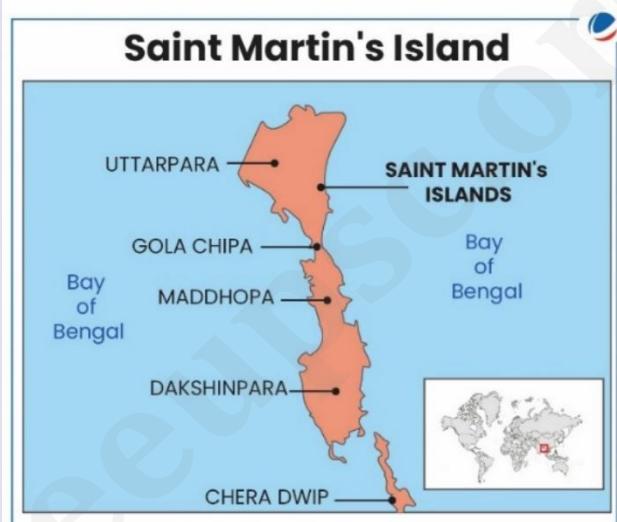
- Context:** India has secured the right to operate its second overseas port, Sittwe, after approval from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- About Sittwe Port:** A deep-water port located at the estuary of the Kaladan River in Rakhine State, Myanmar.
- Significance:** It will enhance trade and transit opportunities for India's Northeast and improve commerce between India and Myanmar.



31

Saint Martin's Island

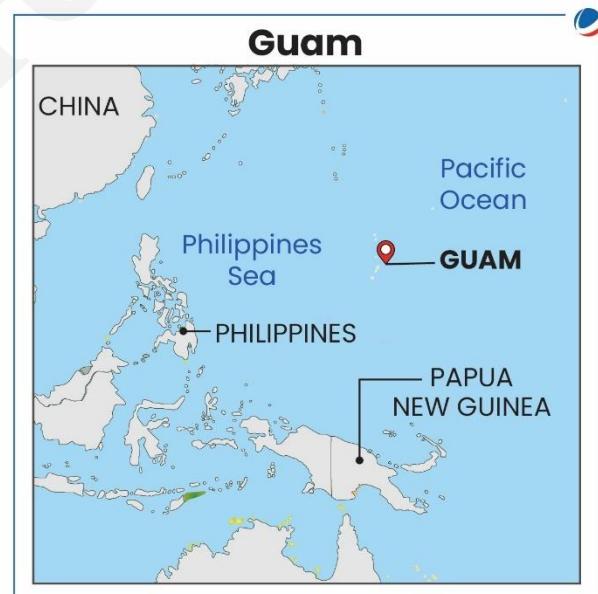
- Context:** Reports have claimed that the US wanted to establish a military base on Saint Martin's Island of Bangladesh.
- Location:** A small coral island in the northeastern part of the Bay of Bengal.
- Sovereignty Agreement:** In 1974, Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed that the island would belong to Bangladesh.



32

Guam Island

- Context: India's INS Shivalik** had visited Guam, an island territory of the United States.
- Location:** The largest and southernmost island in the Mariana Islands chain, situated in the North Pacific Ocean.



33 The Seine River

- **Context:** Paris mayor took a pre-Olympics dip to prove the Seine is clean ahead of the 2024 Games.
- **Length:** France's second-longest river (after the Loire).
- **Flow:** Flows in a northwesterly direction through Paris before emptying into the English Channel at Le Havre.
- **Origin:** Near Dijon, France.
- Major Tributaries: Marne, Aube, and Yonne.



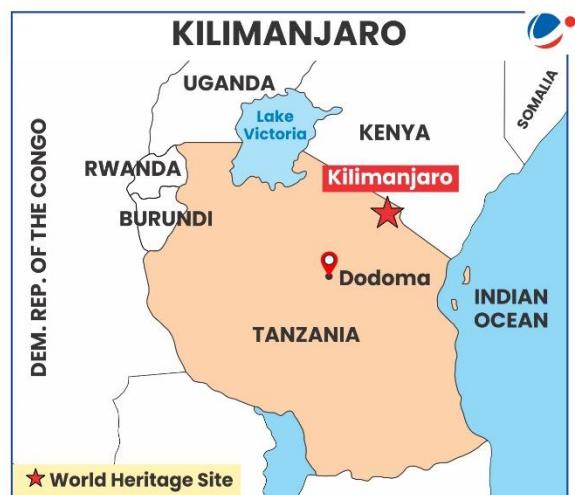
34 Lake Turkana

- **Context:** A comprehensive survey, held for the first time in 50 years, reveals high fish potential in Lake Turkana, led by UNESCO and the World Food Programme (WFP).
- **Location:** Situated in northwestern Kenya and southwestern Ethiopia.
- **Significance:** Africa's 4th largest lake and the largest permanent desert and alkaline lake in the world.
- **Water Source:** Omo River, located in Ethiopia.



35 Mount Kilimanjaro

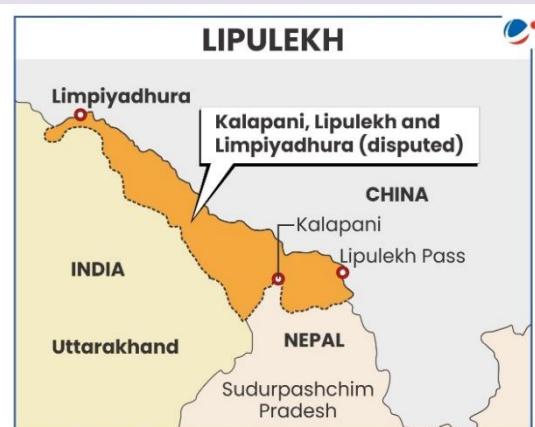
- **Context:** An expedition team, under the aegis of the Ministry of Defence, unfurled the Indian national flag atop Uhuru Summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.
- **Location:** Tanzania, Africa.
- **Height:** The highest peak of Africa.
- **Significance:** The largest free-standing mountain rise in the world, meaning it is not part of a mountain range.
- **Type:** Stratovolcano, made of ash, lava, and rock.



36

Lipulekh pass

- Context:** Indian traders are demanding resumption of border trade with China through Lipulekh pass which was closed during Covid-19 pandemic.
- Location:** Located close to the **tri-junction of India, China (Tibet) and Nepal** and is situated in **Uttarakhand (Pithorgarh district)**.
- It is a major pass of **Kumaun region** situated in Kali Valley.
- Lipulekh Pass significantly reduces travel time for Kailash Mansarovar Pilgrimage.**



37

Suez Canal Route

- Context:** India's Fuel Exports to Europe Shifted from Suez Canal to Cape of Good Hope.
- Location:** Egypt.
- Suez Canal connects Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea.**
- It's the **shortest maritime route between Asia and Europe.**



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Performance and Progress Analysis

3. BILATERAL RELATIONS

3.1. INDIA-CHINA

Why in the News?

Recently, India and China agreed for disengagement and resume patrolling in the Depsang Plains and Demchok areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), as it was before the tensions in May 2020.

More on the News

- Under the current agreement, **disengagement** in areas of friction in eastern **Ladakh**, such as **Galwan**, **Hot Springs**, **Gogra**, and **Pangong Tso**, has been completed.
 - The **Galwan incident of 2020** was the deadliest since 1962.
- Significance of the agreement:** The **Depsang Plains**, 30 km **southeast of Daulat Beg Oldie** near the **Karakoram Pass**, are strategically important for military offensives, similar to the **Spanggur Gap** in Chushul.



India-China Relations: Key Facts

- Trade:** China is India's largest trading partner in goods (2023); significant trade deficit for India.
- Border Issues:**
 - India and China share a 3,488 km disputed border, divided into the **Western (Ladakh)**, **Middle (Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand)**, and **Eastern (Arunachal Pradesh)** sectors.
 - 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**.
 - LAC is divided into three sectors:**
 - Western Sector (Ladakh):** India considers the Johnson Line (of 1865) as the border whereas China claims the **McDonald Line (of 1899)**. Chinese claims are based on **Macartney-MacDonald Line**.
 - Middle sector (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand):** Largely undisputed area.
 - Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim):** China claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh 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.

Related News

Pangong Tso

- China completes 400-meter bridge near Pangong Lake: Report
- **About Pangong Tso**
 - It is an endorheic lake situated in Leh district of Ladakh.
 - World's highest saltwater lake.
 - One-third of the lake lies in India and the other two-thirds in China.
 - Neither a part of the Indus River basin, nor a Ramsar Site.
 - Formerly, Pangong lake had an outlet to Shyok River (tributary of Indus) but it was closed off due to natural damming.



About China (Capital: Beijing)

Important features

- **Important Rivers:** Yangtze River, Yellow River, Mekong River, Amur River.
- **Desert:** Taklimakan Desert is the largest desert in China and second largest in the world.
- **Mountain ranges:** Kunlunshan Mountains, Tianshan Mountains.



3.2. INDIA-NEPAL

Why in the News?

Nepal has decided to introduce a new currency note featuring Indian territories.

More on the News

- Nepal cabinet has recently approved printing of new denominations of 100 of Nepalese currency featuring a map that includes Indian territories of Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani.
- **Kalapani** is the largest territorial dispute between Nepal and India and is a tri-junction between India, Nepal and Tibet (China).
- **Origin of the dispute**
 - Treaty of Sagauli (1816) between British East India Company and the then Nepali Gurkha rulers demarcated Uttarakhand's Kumaon with River Kali as a boundary between India and Nepal.
 - Key to the disagreement is the origin of River Kali.
 - > Nepal considers the river which flows to the west of Kalapani as the main River Kali, originating at either Limpiyadhura or the nearby Lipulekh pass. Hence, justifying the area as inherent part of Nepal.

- > **India**, however, argues that **River Kali originates from a smaller rivulet named Pankhagad**, lying on the southern portion of Kalapani and the subsequent ridge on the eastern part of this area as true border.

India and Nepal Relations: Key Facts

- **Diplomatic relations:** Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations.
- **Trade:**
 - India is the largest trading partner and has a trade surplus with Nepal.
 - India is the highest source of FDI in Nepal.
- **Joint military exercises:** e.g., Surya Kiran.
- **Energy:**
 - Power Exchange Agreement since 1971.
 - South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline, connecting Motihari (India) to Amlekhgunj (Nepal).
 - Arun-3 Hydro Electric Project
- **Multilateral Co-operation:**
 - At BBIN, BIMSTEC, Non-Aligned Movement, and SAARC;
 - Nepal signed a framework to join the India-led International Solar Alliance.

About Nepal (Capital: Kathmandu)

Important features

- **Boundaries:** Landlocked country between India and Tibet Autonomous Region of China.
- **Open border with 5 Indian states:** Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and Sikkim.
- **Mountain Peaks:** Kanchenjunga, Dhaulagiri, Mount Everest (Sagarmatha).
- **River basins:** Koshi River Basin & Gandaki River Basin.



3.3. INDIA-BHUTAN

Why in the News?

During his visit to Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India was conferred the "**Order of the Druk Gyalpo**", the **highest civilian honor** in Bhutan.

India-Bhutan Relations

- **Diplomacy:** Relationship based on the **Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949**, which was renewed in **2007**.
- **Trade:**
 - India is **Bhutan's top trade partner** (**balance of trade in India's favour**); FTA signed in 2016.
 - India is the **leading source of investments in Bhutan**.
- **Connectivity:** Bhutan is planning to build an international city- **Gelephu Mindfulness City**- that will **connect its border with Assam**.
- **Hydropower:** India **constructed four major hydroelectric projects** in Bhutan which are supplying electricity to India- **Kurichhu, Tala, Chukha and Mangdechhu**.

- Security:** The Indian Military Training Team (MTRAT) is permanently based in western Bhutan; India's Border Road Organisation (BRO) has built the majority of roads in Bhutan under project 'DANTAK'.
- New initiatives of Cooperation:** Launch of RuPay, and BHIM app; join development of 'India-Bhutan SAT', etc.
- Bangladesh - Bhutan - India - Nepal (BBIN):** Nepal has decided not to endorse the initiative over sustainability and environmental concerns.

About Bhutan (Capital: Thimpu)

Important features

- Shares border with four Indian states:** Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, and Sikkim.
- Landforms:** A mountainous country with rugged terrain, part of the Eastern Himalayas.
- Key rivers:** Amo Chu (Flows into West Bengal and is called Torsa); Manas River (Flows into Assam).
- Important Peaks:** Gangkhar Puensum.
- Other Key Facts:**
 - Bhutan is the world's first carbon-negative country.
 - Bhutan was the first to adopt the **Gross National Happiness (GNH)** Index as the development indicator.



3.4. INDIA-BANGLADESH

Why in the News?

After the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus had taken oath as the head of an interim government of Bangladesh.

India- Bangladesh relations

- 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.
- Recent developments in India-Bangladesh Relations**
 - Bangladesh joined Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.
 - India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant.

About Bangladesh (Capital: Dhaka)

Important features

- **Boundaries:** 5 Indian states of **West Bengal** (west and north), **Assam** (north), **Meghalaya** (north and northeast), **Tripura and Mizoram** (east) & **Myanmar** (southeast).
- **Water bodies:** Bay of Bengal (south).
- **River:** The Jamuna - part of the Brahmaputra - is the longest
 - **Forest:** About 60% of the Sundarbans mangrove forest is in Bangladesh.



3.4.1 CROSS-BORDER ELECTRICITY TRADE

Why in the News?

Nepal, India, Bangladesh sign pact to facilitate cross-border electricity trade

Initiatives for Cross-Border South Asian Energy Co-operation

- **India-Bangladesh:** Upcoming Electricity corridor from Katihar in Bihar to Bornagar in Assam.
- **India-Nepal-Projects** like Arun III, Upper Karnali hydropower projects (UKHP).
- **India-Bhutan:** E.g. Kurichu, Tala, Chukha and **Mangdechhu**.
- **Energy Pipelines:** TAPI Pipeline to transport natural gas, India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, Motihari-Amlekhganj pipeline etc.

3.5. INDIA-MALDIVES

Why in the News?

The president of Maldives made his maiden bilateral state visit to India after winning the presidential elections.

Key outcomes of the visit

- Both sides announced adoption of **vision for “Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership”**.
- India has launched **RuPay card in Maldives**.
- Both sides signed **Currency Swap Agreement (CSA)** to help Maldives in managing their foreign exchange reserves.
 - **A currency swap agreement** is a financial arrangement between two countries to exchange currencies at a predetermined rate to stabilize exchange rates and enhance liquidity.

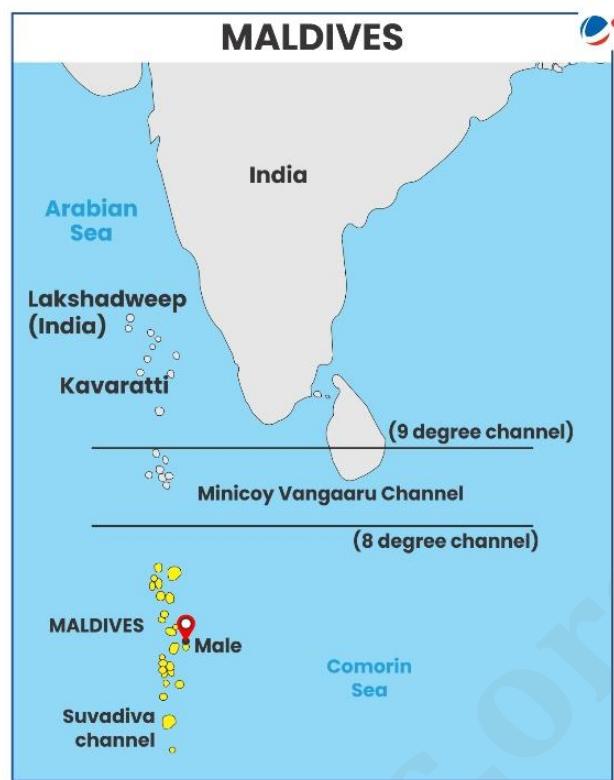
India-Maldives Relations

- **India Out Campaign:** Maldives President pushed for the withdrawal of Indian military personnel, adopting pro-China policies.
- **Crisis Response: Operation Neer (2014):** Provided water during a crisis; **Vaccine Maitri:** Supplied vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **India's Initiatives to Strengthen relation with Maldives**
 - India is building a new Coast Guard base at **Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF)** atoll.
 - India provides grant to Maldives for **High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs)**.
 - **Greater Male Connectivity Project** being developed by India is the Maldives' largest infrastructure project.

About Maldives (Capital: Male)

Important features

- It is composed of **natural atolls**.
- **Water Bodies:** Indian Ocean (all sides).
- **Channels in Indian Ocean**
 - **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



3.6. INDIA-RUSSIA

Why in the news?

Prime Minister of India officially visited Russia in July 2024 for the **22nd India-Russia Annual Summit**.

India-Russia Relations

- **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 had approved the draft **Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS)** with India. It would enable access logistics and support facilities at each other's bases and ports.
- **Multilateral:** Both countries cooperate actively in **multilateral forums** like UN, BRICS, SCO.
- **Geopolitical:** Russia **ranks fourth among all India's trading partners**.
- **Connectivity:** International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the Northern Sea Route and the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor.
- **Energy:** Russia became **India's top crude oil supplier**.
- **Technological cooperation:** E.g., **Kudankulam Nuclear Power**, **GAGANYAAN mission**, etc.

About Russia (Capital: Moscow)

Important features

- **Landforms:** Ural Mountains (divides Europe and Asia); Caucasus Mountains: Include Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe.
- **Important River:** Volga River (Longest River in Europe)
- **Important Lakes:** Lake Baikal (world's deepest and oldest freshwater lake); **Caspian Sea:** Largest enclosed inland body of water.



3.7. INDIA-UNITED STATES (US)

Why in the News?

India and the US have signed a **Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA)** during the Defence Minister's visit to the US.

About Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA)

- Objective:** It enables governments to secure the mutual timely provision of defence-related goods and services during peacetime, emergency, and armed conflict.
- India is the 18th SOSA partner of the US. It is legally non-binding.**
- Other Defence agreements include:** 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.

India-US Relations

- 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.** E.g., 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).
- 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).
 - INDUS-X facilitates partnerships among U.S. and Indian defense companies, incubators and accelerators, investors, and universities.
- 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.

- **Challenge**

- US State Department warned India of sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) after India-Iran deal on Chabahar port.
- **About CAATSA**
 - > It is a **US federal law**, enacted in **2017**, which aims to punish countries having **deep engagements with Russia, North Korea, and Iran** using economic sanction.
 - > In 2018, US House of Representatives passed an amendment to exempt **India from economic sanctions** under CAATSA for purchasing **S-400 missile defence system from Russia**.

About US (Capital: Washington D.C.)

- **Important Features**

- **Important River:** Mississippi (longest).
- **Important Lakes:** Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario).
- **Notable Mountain Ranges:** Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, Sierra Nevada.
- **Notable Deserts:** Mojave, Great Basin, etc.



3.8. INDIA-UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

Why in the News?

Recently, India and UK have signed an agreement to strengthen collaboration in Health and Life Sciences

India-UK Relations

- **Strategic Partnership:** Elevated to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) during the India-UK Virtual Summit in 2021.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Collaborate in QUAD, Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), and UK's "Indo-Pacific Tilt" complements India's strategic interests in the region.
- **Defense and Security Relations:** Signed the Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP) in 2015, Advanced defense cooperation through the 2+2 mechanism.
 - **Military exercises:** Ajeya Warrior, Konkan, and Cobra Warrior.
- **Economic and Trade Relations:** India is the UK's 12th largest trading partner.
- **Technology Security Initiative (TSI):** Launched to enhance cooperation in Critical and Emerging Technologies (CET). Focus areas: Telecom, critical minerals, semiconductors, AI, quantum technology.

About UK (Capital: London)

- **Important features**
 - **It comprises four countries:** England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
 - **Land Boundary:** Ireland (west).
 - **Mountain ranges:** The Pennines.



3.9. INDIA-AUSTRALIA

Why in the news?

Australian Government in its National Defense Strategy (NDS) 2024 identified India as 'top-tier security partner' in the Indo-Pacific Region (IPR).

India-Australia Relations

- **Strategic Partnership: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2020.**
 - Also, includes a **2+2 Ministerial dialogues** (2021), as well as a **Joint Declaration on Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific (2020)**.
- **Defense: QUAD Partnership:** India and Australia, alongside the US and Japan.
 - Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement (MLSA) and Defense Science and Technology Implementing Arrangement & Australia-India Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Partnership (AIPOIP).
 - **Military Exercises:** **AUSINDEX** (maritime), **PITCH BLACK** (Air force), **AUSTRAHIND** (annual training event), Malabar Exercise (Quadrilateral).
- **Economic:** Both countries signed Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement in 2022.
- **Clean Energy cooperation:** Letter of Intent signed in 2022 on New and Renewable Technology.
- **Critical Mineral Investment Partnership:** MoU signed in 2022 between AU Critical Minerals Office and Khanji Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL).
- **Nuclear cooperation:** Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement signed in 2014.
- **Space:** Space MAITRI (Mission for Australia-India's Technology, Research and Innovation) mission
- **Regional and Multilateral cooperation:** Includes G-20, WTO, IOR-ARC, ASEAN Regional Forum, QUAD etc.

About Australia (Capital: Canberra).

- Important features
 - Important Rivers: Murray River (Longest River).
 - Great Barrier Reef: World's largest coral reef system, located off the northeast coast in the Coral Sea.
 - Australia has the **longest national coastline**.
 - Other Key Facts: Australia is the flattest continent and has the oldest known geological formations.



3.10 INDIA-JAPAN

Why in the News?

Prime Minister of India and Japan held a bilateral meeting on the side-lines of the G-7 Summit in Apulia, Italy.

India-Japan Relations

- **Strategic Partnership:** In 2014, the relationship between the two countries were upgraded to '**Special Global and Strategic Partnership (SGSP)**' from '**Strategic and Global Partnership**'
- **Strategic Interests:** Convergence of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- **Connectivity:** Initiatives include the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), linking South Asia to Southeast Asia via India's Act East Policy and Japan's Partnership for Quality Infrastructure.
- **Defence:** Enhanced cooperation through the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and military exercises like Dharma Guardian, Shinyuu Maitri, and JIMEX.
- **Economic Relations:** The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed in 2011.
- **Energy Cooperation:** Includes the India-Japan Clean Energy Partnership (CEP) and cooperation in peaceful nuclear energy & **India-Japan Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (2017)**
- **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 Assistance:** Japan is India's largest bilateral donor, supporting projects like the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project.

About Japan (Capital: Tokyo).

- Important 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**.



3.11. INDIA AND SOUTH EAST ASIA



3.11.1 INDIA-SINGAPORE

Why in the News?

The Prime Minister of India visited Singapore.

About India-Singapore Relations

- **Strategic Partnership:** Established in **2015** was elevated to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** in **2024**.
- **Trade and Economic Cooperation:** Singapore is India's largest trade partner in ASEAN and its **6th largest trade partner globally** (2023-24).
 - Both signed the **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)**. India is a net importer.
 - The **Direct Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** was signed in **2016** to check tax evasion.
 - Singapore was the **largest source of FDI** into India in 2023-2024.
- **Key bilateral exercises:** Exercise Agni Warrior (Army); Exercise SIMBEX (Navy); Joint Military Training (Air Force).
- **Fintech:** "Project Nexus" is a collaborative initiative between Singapore and India aimed at enabling fast and efficient cross-border payments by connecting their domestic **Fast Payment Systems (FPSs)**
 - India's **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** and FPSs of **Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand** will be interlinked through Nexus which is a project of Bank of International Settlements (BIS).
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Both countries are part of multilateral groups like the **East Asia Summit, G20, Commonwealth, IORA, and IONS**. Singapore joined the **International Solar Alliance** and **Global Bio-fuel Alliance**.

3.11.2. INDIA-VIETNAM

Why in the News?

The Prime Minister of Vietnam undertook a State visit to India.

India-Vietnam Relations

- **Strategic Partnership:** Bilateral relations between the two countries were elevated to a '**Strategic Partnership**' in 2007 and a "**Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**" in **2016**.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Exercises PASSEX, VINBAX, and MILAN.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM).
- **Initiatives taken by India to strengthen relations**
 - **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC):** An initiative by India and **five ASEAN countries- Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam**.
 - India handed over an indigenously built missile corvette **INS KIRPAN** to Vietnam in **2023**.

3.11.3. INDIA-MALAYSIA

Why in the News?

The Prime Minister of Malaysia paid a State visit to India.

Key Outcomes of the visit

- **Enhanced Strategic Partnership** established in 2015 was elevated to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.
- Malaysia decided to join the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** as its founding member.

About India-Malaysia Relations

- **Diplomatic relations:**
 - Enhanced Strategic Partnership launched in 2015.
- **Economic:** Malaysia is India's 16th largest trading partner. Malaysia is India's **3rd largest trading partner in ASEAN**.
 - **Trade:** Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) signed in 2010.
- **Oil palm diplomacy:** Malaysia along with Indonesia and Thailand are major exporters of palm oil to India.
- **Defence Cooperation:** **Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM)** meets annually to review the progress in defence cooperation. First regional office of HAL was also inaugurated in Kuala Lumpur 2023.
 - **Exercise Harimau Shakti**
- **People-to-people connect:** 3rd largest diaspora after the United States and the United Arab Emirates.
- **India's initiatives:** Joint Committee Meeting of Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (MICECA) for deepening economic partnership, accept UPI payments.



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Highlights of the Program

- Coverage of the entire UPSC Prelims and Mains Syllabus
- Highly experienced and qualified team of senior mentors
- Development of Advanced answer writing skills
- Special emphasis to Essay & Ethics

4. IMPORTANT EVENTS IN NEWS

4.1. CHABAHAR PORT

Why in the news?

Recently, India signed a 10-year agreement with Iran for the development of the **Shahid Beheshti Port Terminal at Chabahar Port**.

About Chabahar Port

- **Genesis:** India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed a tripartite agreement in 2016 to develop the Shahid Beheshti Terminal at Chabahar Port.
- **Geostrategic location:** Located on the **Gulf of Oman**, Chabahar Port offers a direct sea route to **Afghanistan**, bypassing Pakistan.
- **Significance:** This agreement is a landmark in strengthening India-Iran-Afghanistan relations.
 - The port will **minimize the distance from India's west coast to landlocked Afghanistan, Central Asia and European nations**.
 - **Gateway to Central Asia:** Chabahar serves as a gateway for India to **Central Asia**, with the potential to connect with **landlocked countries like Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan**.
 - > It aligns with the broader INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor) initiative, an alternative to Suez Canal.



About INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor):

- Genesis:** INSTC is a 7,200 km-long multi-modal transportation network established in 2000 through an agreement signed by India, Iran, and Russia.
- Aim:** To connect India with Russia and Europe through Iran and Central Asia.
- Key Route:** The corridor runs from Mumbai (India) to Moscow (Russia) via Chabahar (Iran), Bandar Abbas (Iran), and Bandar Anzali (Iran) before entering Central Asia and Russia.



4.2. INDIA AND GLOBAL SOUTH

Why in the news?

India hosted the **Third Voice of Global South Summit** in virtual format.

More on the News

- India hosted the **1st Voice of Global South Summit** in **January 2023** and the **2nd edition** was held in **November 2023**, both in virtual format.
- The Voice of Global South Summit is an **extension of India's philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**, or "One Earth, One Family, One Future" **to the international arena**.

Key Highlights of the 3rd VOGSS

- Participation:** 123 countries (**China & Pakistan not invited**)
- Theme:** An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future.
- India has proposed a comprehensive and human-centric "**Global Development Compact**" (GDC) to address the rising debt of the developing countries for the Global South.
 - Comprises four elements:** Trade for development, Capacity building for sustainable growth, Technology sharing, Project specific concessional finance and grants.
 - No Debt Burden:** Ensure that development and infrastructure financing do not impose a debt burden on developing countries.
- India will also launch a special fund of **\$2.5 million to boost trade promotion activities**, and **\$ 1 million fund for capacity building** in trade policy and trade negotiation.



What is Global South?

- It refers to technically and socially less developed countries which are located in Southern Hemisphere, primarily in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- **Brandt Report** proposed a division between North and South countries based on various parameters such as technological advancement, GDP etc.

India's Initiatives showcasing advocacy for Global South

- **Social Impact Fund:** India will contribute \$25 million for accelerating Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in Global South.
- **Global South Young Diplomat Forum:** Launched to promote education and capacity building.
- **Induction of African Union into G20:** As a permanent member during India's G20 Presidency.
- **Vision of Aarogya Maitri:** One World-One Health is India's mission for health security.

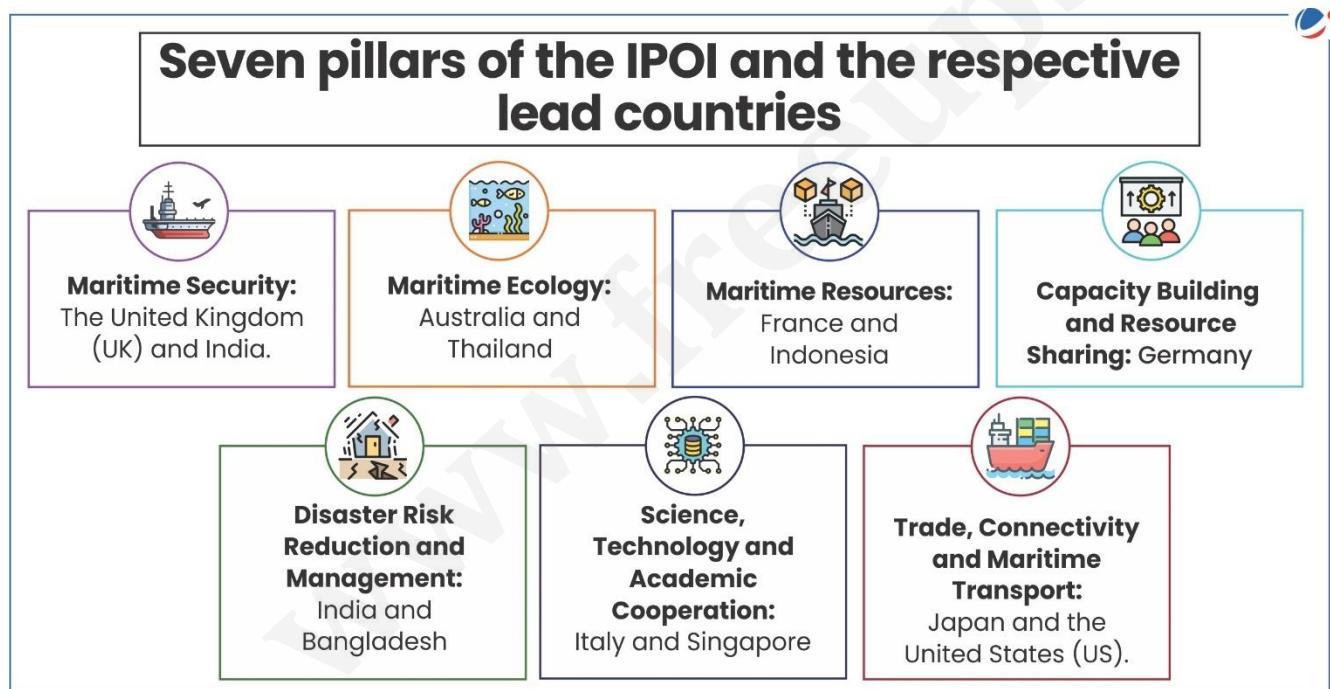
4.3. INDO-PACIFIC OCEANS INITIATIVE (IPOI)

Why in the News?

The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) completes 5 years.

About the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

- It is a **non-treaty-based voluntary arrangement** that promotes cooperation for a **free and open Indo-Pacific** and the rules-based regional order.
- **Genesis:** It was launched **by India in 2019 at the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok (Thailand).**
- **Philosophy:** Builds upon India's '**Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**' initiative of 2015.
 - SAGAR vision is to have inclusive **development joining economic assistance and maritime security concerns** on a common platform while respecting international maritime laws and norms.



4.4. INDIA-EFTA TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Why in the news?

India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a **Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**.



Quick Overview of EFTA



Established in **1960** through the **Stockholm Convention** with 7 founding members (Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).



Members: **Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein** (not part of the EU).



Objective: To promote free trade and economic integration between its members and their trading partners.

- **Other Key facts**

- **Not a Customs Union:** Unlike the EU, EFTA is not a customs union, meaning member countries have their own external tariffs for countries outside the association.
- **Relations with the EU:** Three EFTA members (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) participate in the **European Economic Area (EEA)**, which allows them to access the EU's single market.
-> Switzerland has a series of bilateral agreements with the EU instead.

- **India-EFTA Trade Relations**

- **Largest trading partner among EFTA:** **Switzerland** is the largest trading partner followed by Norway.
- India has a **trade deficit with Switzerland due to gold imports**.

Key Highlights of TEPA

- **For the first time, India has signed an FTA with Members of EFTA.**
- **Aim:** Increase FDI by \$100 billion and facilitate the generation of 1 million jobs in India.
- **Legal Commitment:** First time in the history of FTAs, a legal commitment is made about promoting target-oriented investment and the creation of jobs.
- **Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs):** TEPA has provisions for MRAs in Professional Services like nursing, architects, etc.
- **Tariff Reduction:** Eliminate tariffs on 92.2 % of its tariff lines, covering 99.6 % of India's exports.
- **Market Access:** EFTA's market access offer covers 100% of non-agri products and tariff concession on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP).

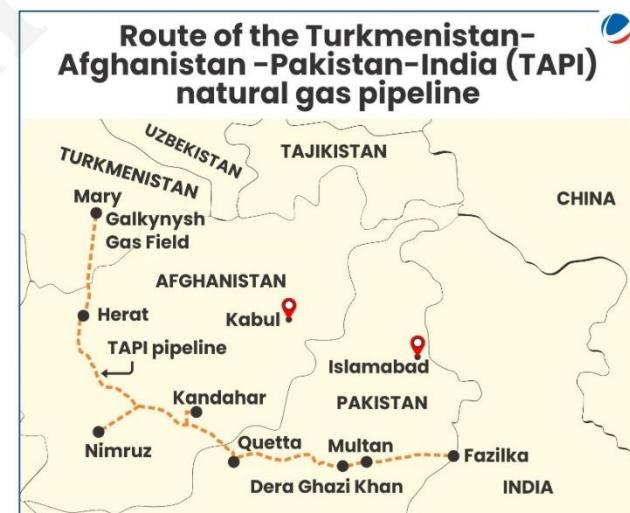
4.5. TAPI GAS PIPELINE PROJECT

Why in the News?

Recently, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan officials jointly inaugurated Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project on Turkmenistan side and Afghanistan said to begin work on TAPI pipeline.

About TAPI Project

- TAPI Pipeline, **emerged in mid-1990s**, is designed to transport natural gas extracted from the **Galkynysh gas field** in southeastern Turkmenistan.
 - The **Galkynysh gas field** (previously called **Ýolöten Gas Field**) was **discovered in 2006**.
 - It is located 75 km southeast of Mary, Turkmenistan.
 - It is **one of the world's five largest gas fields**.
- It spans approximately **1,800 kms** from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.



4.6. OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

4.6.1. PATH TO PEACE SUMMIT

Recently, the **Summit on Peace in Ukraine** was held in Switzerland.

About Peace summit

- **Objective:** To develop a common understanding of a path towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.
- **India's Representation:** The **Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs attended the summit.**
- **India abstained from signing the joint communique released at the summit,** advocating for practical engagement through dialogue between the conflicting parties.
- While India has not explicitly condemned the Russian invasion, it has called for an international probe into the **Bucha massacre** and expressed **concern over nuclear threats** issued by Russia.

4.6.2. MERCOSUR

Bolivia became a full member of **MERCOSUR**.



Quick Overview of MERCOSUR



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



Genesis: in 1991.



Members: **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in 1991** and subsequently joined by Venezuela and Bolivia.

► India has a **Preferential Trade Agreement** with MERCOSUR.

► **Venezuela** has been suspended since December 1, 2016.



Objective: Facilitating the free movement of goods, services, capital and people among the four member countries

4.6.3. COLOMBO PROCESS

India chaired its first meeting as Chair of the Colombo Process.



Quick Overview of Colombo Process



Genesis: 2003 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Members: 12 Member States of Asia such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc. India is one of the **founding members**.



Objective: Regional Consultative Process that provides platform for consultations on the management of **overseas employment** and **contractual labour**.



Thematic priority areas are: Skills and Qualification Recognition Processes; etc.



Support: UN's **International Organization for Migration** provides technical and administrative support to the Colombo Process.

4.6.4. COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE (CSC)

Recently, CSC officially included **Bangladesh** as its fifth member.



Quick Overview of CSC



Genesis: Formed in **2011** as a **trilateral maritime security grouping of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives**. Later joined by **Mauritius and Bangladesh**.



It was re-branded as the CSC in 2020.



Seychelles is an observer member.

4.6.5. WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX (WPFI) 2024

India ranked **159** among **180 countries** in annual **WPFI 2024**.

About WPFI

- It is released **by Paris based Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, one of the world's leading NGOs in defense and promotion of freedom of information.
- It is **published on World Press Freedom Day (3 May)**.
- **Theme:** "A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the face of the Environmental Crisis".
- **About WPFI 2024**
 - Top 3 rankers are **Norway, Denmark and Sweden**.

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CSAT

CRASH COURSE PRELIMS 2025

Start

English Medium | Hindi Medium

21 January, 1 PM | 30 January, 1 PM

(Offline/Online)

(Approach is to revise and strengthen fundamental concepts, enhance problem-solving abilities, hone analytical skills, foster critical thinking, and improve comprehension skills for Prelims 2025.)

PROGRAM OUTCOMES



Efficient Time Management and Exam-taking Strategies



Problem-Solving Techniques Including Tips and Tricks



Proficiency in Interpreting and Analyzing Data Presented in Various Formats



Firm command on Mathematical Concepts and Development of Quantitative aptitude



Reading Comprehension and Language Proficiency



Logical and Analytical Thinking Skills



Reinforced Learning Through Regular Practice and Tutorials



Development of Confidence to Tackle the Exam

5. ISSUES RELATED TO SECURITY

5.1. CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

Why in the news?

Recently, the appointment of Vice Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Deputy CDS is being considered by the armed forces.

About Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- CDS post was created in 2019 the **rank of a four-star General** equivalent to a Service Chief.
 - A Group of Ministers (GoM) in 2001 had recommended creation of the post based on **Shri K Subrahmanyam Committee Report**.
- **Roles and Powers of CDS**
 - CDS **head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA)**, created within **Ministry of Defence** and function as its secretary.
 - CDS is the **Permanent Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee, member of Defence Acquisition Council** chaired by Ministry of Defence and **Defence Planning Committee** chaired by National Security Advisor.
 - CDS acts as **Principal Military Adviser to Ministry of Defence** on all tri-services (**Army, Navy and Air Force**) matters of the military and **Military Adviser to Nuclear Command Authority**.
 - CDS do **not exercise any military command**, including over the three Service Chiefs.
 - Tri-service agencies/organisations/commands **related to Cyber and Space will be under the command of the CDS**.

Integrating Theatre Command (ITC)

- **Theaterisation** involves **creating unified tri-service organisations that would be responsible for combat operations** (as well as internal security duties) in specified geographic area.
- Currently, there are **19 existing commands**:
 - 17 single-service oriented commands (7 Army, 7 Air Force, and 3 Navy).
 - **Andaman and Nicobar Command and the Strategic Forces Command** (in charge of the country's nuclear stockpile) function as tri-services commands.

Related News

Inter-services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act, 2023

- Inter-services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act, 2023 is notified.
- Act seeks to **empower Commander-in-Chief (C-i-C) and Officer-in Command (O-i-C)** of Inter-Services Organizations (ISOs) **with all disciplinary and administrative powers** over the serving or attached personnel.
 - ISO is a **body of troops including a Joint Services Command** consisting of persons, subject to Air Force Act, 1950, Army Act, 1950, and Navy Act, 1957, or any two of the said Acts.

5.2. NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARIAT (NSCS)

Why in the news?

Recently, the government has appointed the **Additional National Security Advisor (NSA)** to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS).

About National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)



National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)



Core Characteristics

Establishment and Purpose

- » Created in **late 1990s** as secretariat for **National Security Council (NSC)**
- » Apex advisory body for internal and external security matters
- » Provides strategic direction and long-term vision for national security

Leadership

- » **Headed by National Security Adviser (NSA)**
 - » NSA holds rank of Cabinet Minister
 - » Can generate **Cabinet notes** and access relevant papers



Governance and Amendments

2019 Business Rules Amendment

- » NSA and **NSCS** brought under specific governance rules
- » Expanded powers to generate and access **Cabinet documents**
- » Enables participation in **inter-ministerial consultations**

National Security Council (NSC)

- **Constituted in 1999 based on K.C. Pant-led task force recommendations.**
- **Apex advisory body headed by the PM**, comprising Ministers of Finance, Defense, Home, and External Affairs.
- **Structure of NSC**
 - **Strategic Policy Group (SPG)**: Headed by NSA, ensures inter-ministerial coordination for national security policies.
 - **National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)**: Headed by NSA, provides long-term analysis and policy recommendations to NSC.
 - **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)**.

5.3. KARGIL WAR

Why in the News?

India is celebrating **25 years of Kargil War victory**, marking the success of **Operation Vijay** (1999).

About Operation Vijay

- **Objective**: Launched by the Indian Army to evict Pakistani soldiers and militants who infiltrated the **Kargil district** of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Key Operations**:
 - **Operation Safed Sagar**: Conducted by the Indian Air Force to target Pakistani troops on high-altitude positions.
 - **Operation Talwar**: Launched by the Indian Navy to blockade Pakistan's navy in the Arabian Sea.
- **Key Locations**: Tololing, Tiger Hill, Batalik, Drass, Mushkoh Valley, Kaksar, and Chorbat La.
- **Kargil Vijay Diwas**: Observed annually on **July 26** to commemorate the victory.

Aftermath of the Kargil War

- **Kargil Review Committee (KRC)**: Established in July 1999, chaired by **K. Subrahmanyam**, to review the war and suggest improvements in India's defence architecture.

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5.4. WEAPONISATION OF SPACE

Why in the News?

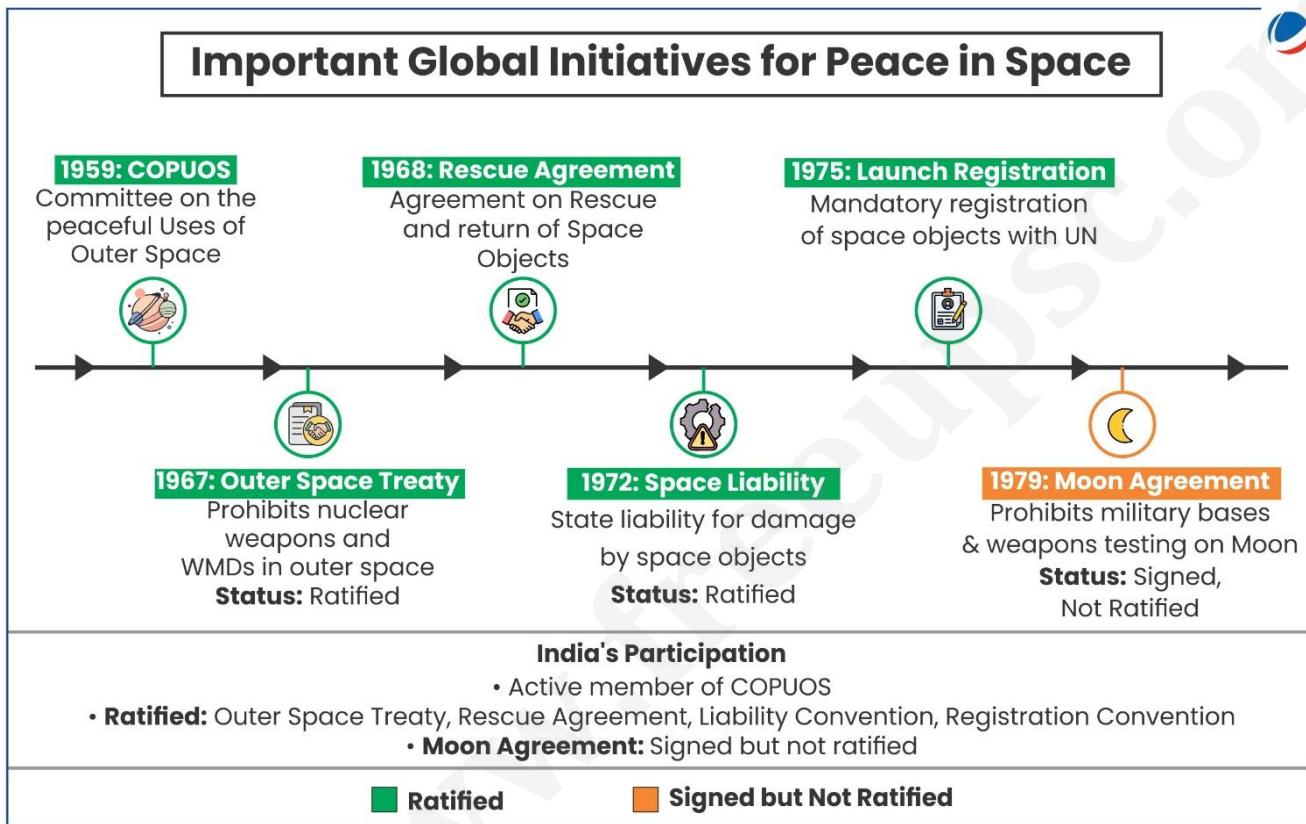
Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) draft resolution on a weapon-free outer space jointly proposed by the **United States and Japan**.

About UNSC resolution

- Vetoed resolution aimed to enforce **1967 Outer Space Treaty**, banning **WMDs** in orbit or on celestial bodies.
- Russia vetoed, arguing it **focused only on WMDs/nuclear arms**, ignoring other potential space weapons.

About Weaponisation of Space

- **Weaponization of space:** Deployment of weapons in space, enabling conflict by targeting objects in orbit or on Earth.
- **Militarization of space:** Use of space to support ground, sea, and air-based military operations without deploying weapons.
- Both concepts highlight growing military use of outer space.



5.5. REGULATIONS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Why in the News?

The United States accuses Russia of employing the chemical agent chloropicrin in Ukraine.

More on the News

- **Chloropicrin** is a broad-spectrum fumigant chemical that can be used as an **antimicrobial, fungicide, herbicide, insecticide, nematicide and also** as a warfare agent.
- **Geneva Protocol 1925:** Prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons in the field of conflict.

- The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is the key international treaty that completely bans chemical weapons.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

- Adopted:** The CWC was adopted in **1992**, and entered into force in **1997**.
- Objective:** Eliminate **chemical weapons** and prevent the use of such weapons in the future. It seeks to **ban the development, production, stockpiling**, and use of chemical weapons and their precursors.
- Signatories:** The CWC currently has **193 member states**, making it one of the most universally ratified arms control treaties.
- Key Provisions:**
 - Destruction of Chemical Weapons:** All chemical weapons stocks of member states must be destroyed within a specific timeframe.
 - Verification:** The CWC includes detailed **verification measures** to ensure compliance, including inspections of chemical weapons stockpiles, facilities, and research programs.
 - Non-Diversion:** The Convention prohibits the diversion of **chemical materials** to use as weapons or for military purposes.
- Non-signatories:** Only **four countries** are not parties to the CWC: **Israel, Egypt, North Korea, and South Sudan**.
- Implementation:** Member states are required to adopt **national laws** and regulations that align with the CWC's provisions and provide for the destruction and monitoring of chemical weapons.
- India is a signatory** and party of CWC and enacted Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000.

HQ: The Hague, Netherlands



Quick Overview of Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)



Genesis: 1997, in accordance with the CWC.



Members: 193 States committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention.



Chemical Weapons Destruction: Verifying the destruction of chemical weapons, like those in **Syria** (destroyed it under OPCW supervision) and **Libya**.



Nobel Peace Prize: In **2013**, the OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for its efforts to eliminate chemical weapons globally, particularly in Syria.

5.6. FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF)

Why in the News?

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary in Singapore adopted the Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) of India, assessing its measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

About Mutual Evaluation Report (MER)

- Purpose:** Assesses a country's measures to combat: Money laundering; Terrorist financing & Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- Process:** Peer-reviewed by FATF members.
- India's MER:** First adopted in 2010.
- India's Measures to Combat Money Laundering**
 - Legislative Frameworks:**
 - > Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002

- > Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967
- **Institutions:**
 - > Financial Intelligence Unit of India (FIU-IND); Established in 2004.
 - > Directorate of Enforcement (ED); Established in 1956.
- **Initiatives:** Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) Portal; Launched in 2022 for international cooperation.

HQ: Paris, France



Quick Overview of FATF



Genesis: 1989.



Members: 40 (38 jurisdictions + 2 regional organizations: Gulf Cooperation Council and European Commission). India joined in 2010.

» **Russia:** Suspended in February 2023.

Objective: Protect financial systems from money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing.



Functions: Promotes **financial inclusion**; Launched '**project on unintended consequences**' which includes a focus on financial exclusion.



High-Risk Jurisdictions

» **Black List:** Countries with serious deficiencies (e.g., North Korea, Iran, Myanmar).

» **Grey List:** Countries under increased monitoring for strategic deficiencies.

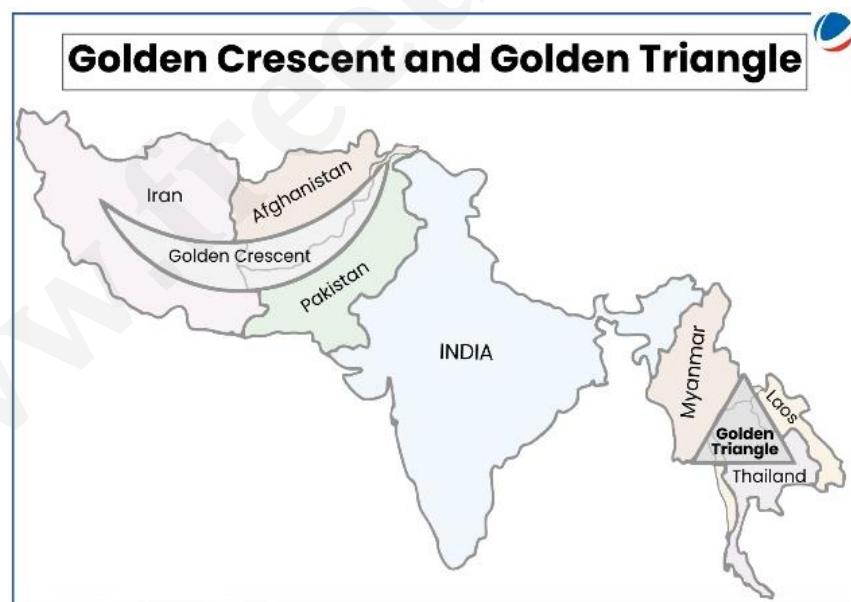
5.7. THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

Why in the News?

The **UNODC** released two key reports: **Annual Report on World Drug Day** (International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking) & **World Wildlife Crime Report 2024**.

Key Highlights of the World Drug Day Report

- **Most Abused Drugs:** Cannabis (most abused), followed by opioids, amphetamines, cocaine, and ecstasy.
- **Most Affected Regions:**
 - **Triple Frontier Area:** Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay.
 - **Golden Triangle (renamed as Death Triangle):** Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand.
- **Other Region: Golden Crescent (renamed as Death Crescent):** Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.
- **Cannabis Legalisation:** Legalised in Canada, Uruguay, and 27 US jurisdictions.



Quick Overview of UNODC



Genesis: 1997.



Members: Works with all UN member states.



Objectives: Combat **drug abuse, illicit trafficking, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism.**



It supports international conventions like **UNTOC** and **UN Convention against Corruption.**



Initiatives for the Drugs Abuse

Global

- Commission on Narcotic Drugs (**CND**) was established by the **UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution in 1946.**
- **UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.**
- The **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961** aims at combating drug abuse and controlling the supply of narcotics.

India

- **Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA)** by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPA), 1985.**
- **Operation Broader Sword** in collaboration with the U.S. to stop international shipments of illegal drugs.

Related News

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

- India's Jagjit Pavadia has been **re-elected to INCB** for the third term from 2025 to 2030.



Quick Overview of International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)



Genesis: 1998.



Members: 13 members (elected by UN Economic and Social Council for five years).



Objectives: **Independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body** for implementing

- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961;
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971 &
- United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.

5.8. COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (CCPCJ)

Why in the News?

The **33rd Session of the CCPCJ** called for steps to combat **Transnational Organised Crimes (TOC)** and launched the **Generation Justice (GenJust)** initiative to engage youth in crime prevention and criminal justice.

Key Mechanisms to Tackle TOC

- **UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), 2000 (Palermo Convention):**
 - Ratified by India.
 - Supplemented by the **UN Convention Against Corruption, 2003**.
- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):**
 - Acts as the secretariat for UNTOC.
 - Initiatives: **Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment (TOCTA); Global Firearms Programme (GFP)**.
- **Regional Initiatives:**
 - **SAWEN (South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network)**: Established in 2011; India is a member.
 - **SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002**.



CCPCJ
Commission on
Crime Prevention and
Criminal Justice



Quick Overview of CCPCJ



Genesis: 1992 by UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).



Members: 40 member states elected by ECOSOC for three-year terms.



Functions: Principal UN policy-making body for crime prevention and criminal justice.



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5.8.1. GLOBAL OPERATIONAL NETWORK OF ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES (GLOBE) NETWORK

Why in the News?

India has been elected to steering committee of **GlobE (Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities)** network.



Quick Overview of GlobE Network



Genesis: Established in 2021 at UN General Assembly Special Session against Corruption (UNGASS).



Members: Includes **121 member countries**.

- » **Ministry of Home Affairs** serves as Central Authority for GlobE Network in India.
- » **While CBI and ED** represent India as member authorities.



Objective: Operational law **enforcement authorities with an anti-corruption mandate** can join forces to counter transnational corruption cases.



Governance: Governed by its members and supported by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (**UNODC**) (**Its secretariat**).

5.9. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

Why in the News?

IAEA's **Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB)** reported 168 incidents of nuclear material theft by 31 states in 2023.



HQ: Vienna, Austria

Quick Overview of IAEA



Genesis: 1957 as an autonomous organization under the UN.



Members: 180 members (India is a member).



Functions: Monitors compliance with the NPT and independently verify governments' adherence to peaceful nuclear technology commitments.



Reporting: Reports annually to the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council.

Key IAEA Programmes:

- **Incident and Trafficking Database:** From 1995 and focuses on monitoring and reporting illicit nuclear trafficking.
- **Atoms4Food:** Uses nuclear techniques to improve global food security.
- **Atoms4NetZero:** Promotes nuclear energy to help achieve net-zero emissions.
- **International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles:** Innovates in nuclear reactor technologies.
- **Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action:** Integrates nuclear science in managing zoonotic diseases



Other 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



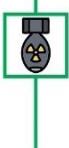
Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START)

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

5.10. INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

Why in the News?

ITU Released Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024 which will **assess** country-level cyber security commitments.

Key highlights

- **India among role model countries:** 46 countries (including India) are in **Tier 1** i.e., “role modelling” countries demonstrating **a strong commitment to all five cybersecurity pillars**.
- **Expansion of digital services:** Most countries are either “establishing” (Tier 3) or “evolving” (Tier 4).



Quick Overview of International Telecommunication Union (ITU)



Genesis: On 17th May 1865, the first International Telegraph Convention signed in Paris by established the International Telegraph Union (the first incarnation of ITU).

➤ ITU is the UN's **oldest specialized agency** and, **17th May** became **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day**.



Members: 193 Member States (including India) other members include companies, universities, etc.



Flagship reports: Global Connectivity Report, Global e-waste Monitor.

5.11. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

5.11.1. COMBINED MARITIME FORCES (CMF)

Indian Navy seized drugs in Arabian Sea as a part of multi-nation Combined Task Force-150 under CMF.

- Drugs were seized under **Operation Crimson Barracuda**, first such operation conducted by an Indian Navy after India joined CMF in 2022.

Quick Overview of CMF



Genesis: 2001.



Members: 46 countries. India joined in 2022. Participation is purely **voluntary**.



It comprises **five Combined Task Forces**.



Aim: It is a multinational maritime partnership, which aims to uphold the **Rules-Based International Order** by countering **illicit non-state actors** on the high seas and promoting security, stability and prosperity in international waters.



It is commanded by a **U.S. Navy Vice Admiral**.

5.11.2. ARMED FORCES (SPECIAL POWERS) ACT (AFSPA)

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, **1958** (AFSPA) has been extended to parts of **Nagaland** and **Arunachal Pradesh**.

About AFSPA

- AFSPA grants special powers to armed forces to bring back order in “disturbed areas”. They can **open fire** against any person in contravention to law, **arrest and search premises without warrant**, etc.
- AFSPA is in effect in **parts of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh**.

- **AFSPA remains in force in Jammu and Kashmir** through the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990.
- **Applicability:** Parts of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Key Provisions**
 - **Disturbed areas:** A part or whole state/UT is declared disturbed area when **use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary** to restore order.
 - Declaration is made by **Governor** of state, **administrator** of UT or by **Centre**.
 - **Immunity to Armed forces personnel:** Prohibition legal proceeding against them except **with the previous sanction of the Central Government**.

Major Peace Accords and Initiatives:

- **Shillong Accord (1975):** Agreement between the Government of India and the Naga National Council (NNC) to end insurgency in Nagaland.
- **Mizoram Peace Accord (1986):** Signed with the Mizo National Front (MNF), bringing peace and stability to Mizoram.
- **Bodo Accord (1993, 2003, 2020):** Addressed demands of the Bodo community, leading to the establishment of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) and later the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).
- **Assam Accord (1985):** Resolved the Assam Agitation regarding illegal immigration and citizenship issues.
- **NLFT Peace Accord (2019):** Agreement with the National Liberation Front of Tripura, ensuring their surrender and reintegration.
- **Bru-Reang Agreement (2020):** Ended the decades-long displacement issue of the Bru community in Tripura and Mizoram.
- **Karbi Anglong Agreement (2021):** Resolved the Karbi ethnic conflict in Assam with armed groups surrendering and accepting a developmental package.

5.11.3. U.N. COUNTER-TERRORISM TRUST FUND

India contributes half a million dollars to **U.N. Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund** in UN Security Council's **Counter Terrorism Committee** meeting, held in 2022 under India's presidency.

- India's contribution would **support UNOCT's global programmes** mainly Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) and Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (CTTP).
 - **CFT** aims at **strengthening capacity of member-states to understand risks of terrorism**.
 - **CTTP** assists beneficiary Member States in building capabilities to detect and counter-terrorists.

About Global Measures taken to Counter- Terrorism

- **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** to enhance national, regional and international efforts.
- **Regional Anti-terrorist Structure** of Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- **United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)**. Established in **2017**.
 - **UN Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund** was established in **2009** by Secretary-General and **transferred to UNOCT**.

5.11.4. WORLD MILITARY EXPENDITURE, 2023 REPORT

World Military Expenditure, 2023 Report published by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

About SIPRI

- **Genesis:** Established in 1966.
- **Key findings:** India was **fourth largest military spender** in world in 2023 with an expenditure of \$83.6 billion after United States, China and Russia.
- **SIPRI also released 'Multilateral peace operations in 2023: Developments and trends'** on important developments related to multilateral peace operations during 2023.
 - **Key Findings on multilateral peace operations**
 - > India was the **highest contributor of military personnel for UN peacekeeping forces** in 2023.
 - > **Largest deployment** of peacekeeping forces was in **Sub-Saharan Africa**.

5.12. EXERCISES IN NEWS



Sl. No	Bilateral	Description
1	Exercise Yudh Abhyas	Joint Military Exercise held annually between India- USA.
2	SALVEX	India-US Naval exercise held.
3	Vajra Prahar	India US army exercise.
4	Sea Defenders-2024	It is a maritime security exercise between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) & United States Coast Guard (USCG).
5	Exercise Tarkash	The Indo-U.S. joint counter-terrorism exercise 'Tarkash' was recently held in Kolkata.
6	Exercise 'Shakti'	A joint military exercise between India and France.
7	Exercise Varuna	It is bilateral naval exercise between India and France. 2024 edition was conducted in Mediterranean Sea.
8	Exercise KAZIND-2024	India-Kazakhstan Annual Joint Military Exercise.
9	Nomadic Elephant	Joint Military Exercise between armies of India and Mongolia will be conducted in Meghalaya.
10	Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)	Recently Indian Naval Ship Tabar participated in Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) between India and Russia
11	Indra	Bilateral exercise between India and Russia.
12	Exercise HOPEX	It is a joint military exercise between Indian Air Force (IAF) and Egyptian Air Force held in Egypt.

13	Exercise Lamitiye 2024	It is a Joint Military Exercise between Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces.
14	EXERCISE AL NAJAH V	INDIA- OMAN Joint Military Exercise AL NAJAH V.
15	Naseem-Al-Bahr	It was conducted between the Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman in Goa.
16	Exercise Eastern Bridge VII	The 7th edition of the Exercise Eastern Bridge between Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO)
17	Exercise Zayed Talwar	UAE-India naval exercise.
18	SIMBEX 2024	Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise which began as 'Exercise Lion King' in 1994.
19	Exercise MAITREE	Joint military Exercise between India-Thailand was conducted in Thailand.
20	Exercise Udara Shakti	It is a joint air exercise of India and Malaysia.
21	Exercise Samudra Laksamana	It is a bilateral Naval Exercise between India and Malasiya.
22	JIMEX	Bilateral Japan – India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) 2024 commenced at Yokosuka in Japan. its inception in 2012.
23	Dharma Guardian	It is a Joint Military Exercise between the Indian Army and Japan. It is an annual exercise and conducted alternatively in India and Japan.
24	Exercise Mitra Shakti	It is an annual military exercise between India and Sri Lanka.

Trilateral	
Exercises	Description
Exercise Malabar	Annual maritime exercise between Australia, Japan, the United States and India.
Exercise Freedom Edge	South Korea, US and Japan began their first trilateral multi-domain exercise, Freedom Edge. It took place in South Korea's southern island of Jeju.
IMT TRILAT- 2024	It is a Tri Lateral (TRILAT) maritime exercise between India Mozambique Tanzania (IMT).
Multilateral	
Exercise Tarang Shakti	Indian Air Force (IAF) hosted Phase-I of the Exercise Tarang Shakti, India's first multinational air exercise.
Khaan Quest	Indian army participated in Multinational military exercise , conducted at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
IBSAMAR VIII	Joint multinational maritime exercise among Indian, Brazilian, and South African Navy.
RIMPAC Exercise	It is world's largest international multilateral maritime exercise (India also takes part in it)
Exercise Pitch Black	It is held every two years and is a multinational air exercise.
Exercise Cutlass Express	Indian navy participated in U.S. Naval Forces led multinational maritime Exercise Cutlass Express in Seychelles.
Exercise Orion	India, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and United States of America participated.

Desert Flag	Multilateral air exercise in which Air Forces from UAE, France, Kuwait, Australia, UK, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, Republic of Korea, and USA participated.
Operation Southern Readiness	It is an annual multinational exercise (India, USA, Italy, UK, Seychelles) conducted by Combined Maritime Forces.
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 2024	It is a Bilateral Tri-Service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Amphibious Exercise between India and the US.

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