

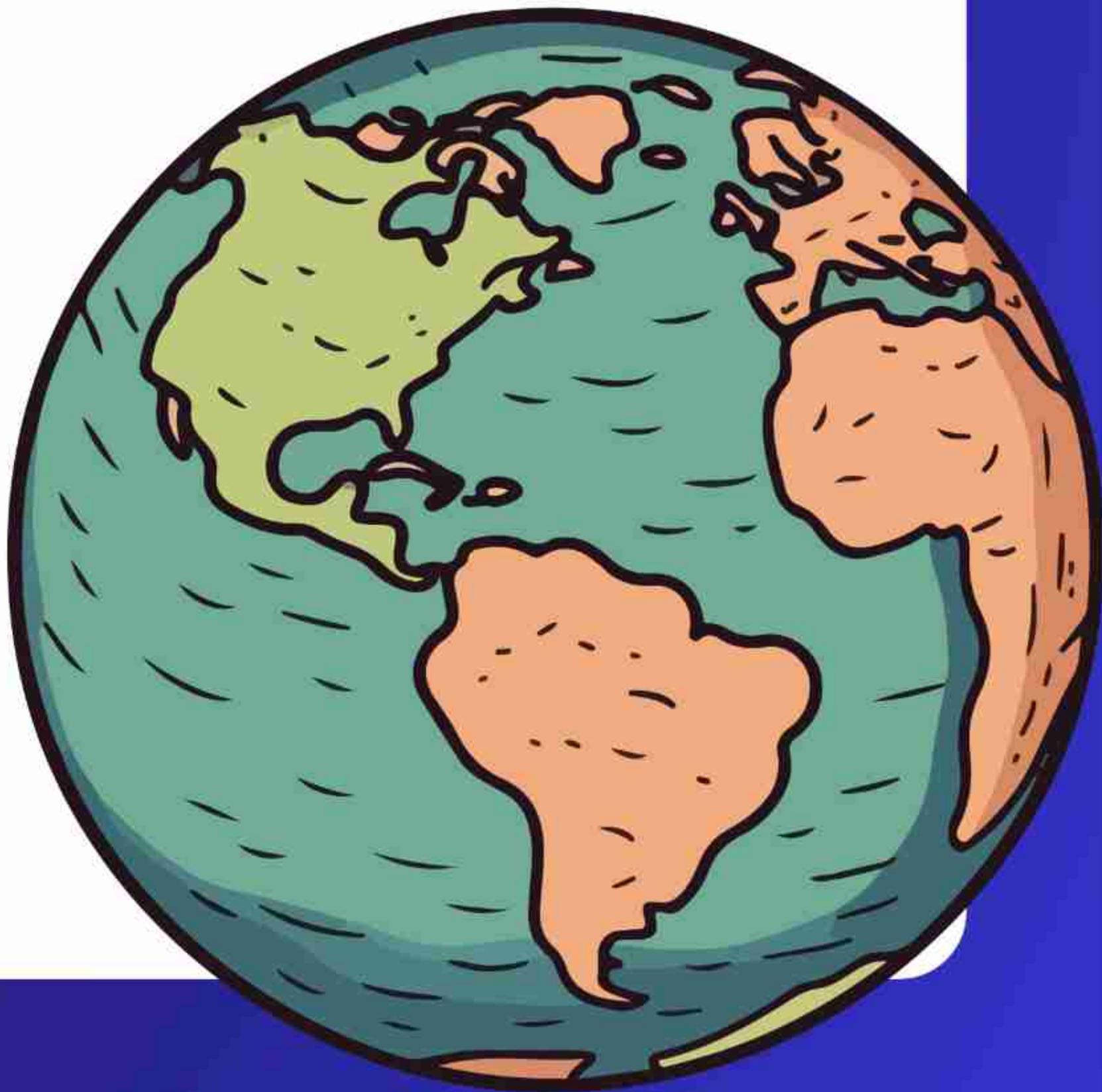
LET'S STUDY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



India & it's neighbors

- India-Pakistan
- India-Bangladesh
- India-Nepal
- India-Sri Lanka
- India-Afghanistan
- India-Myanmar





India- Pakistan

India 🇮🇳 -Pakistan 🇵🇰

Historical Background:

- India and Pakistan became independent nations in 1947, following the partition of British India.
- The partition resulted in communal violence and significant population displacement.



Wars and conflicts between India and Pakistan

1947-48 First Kashmir War:

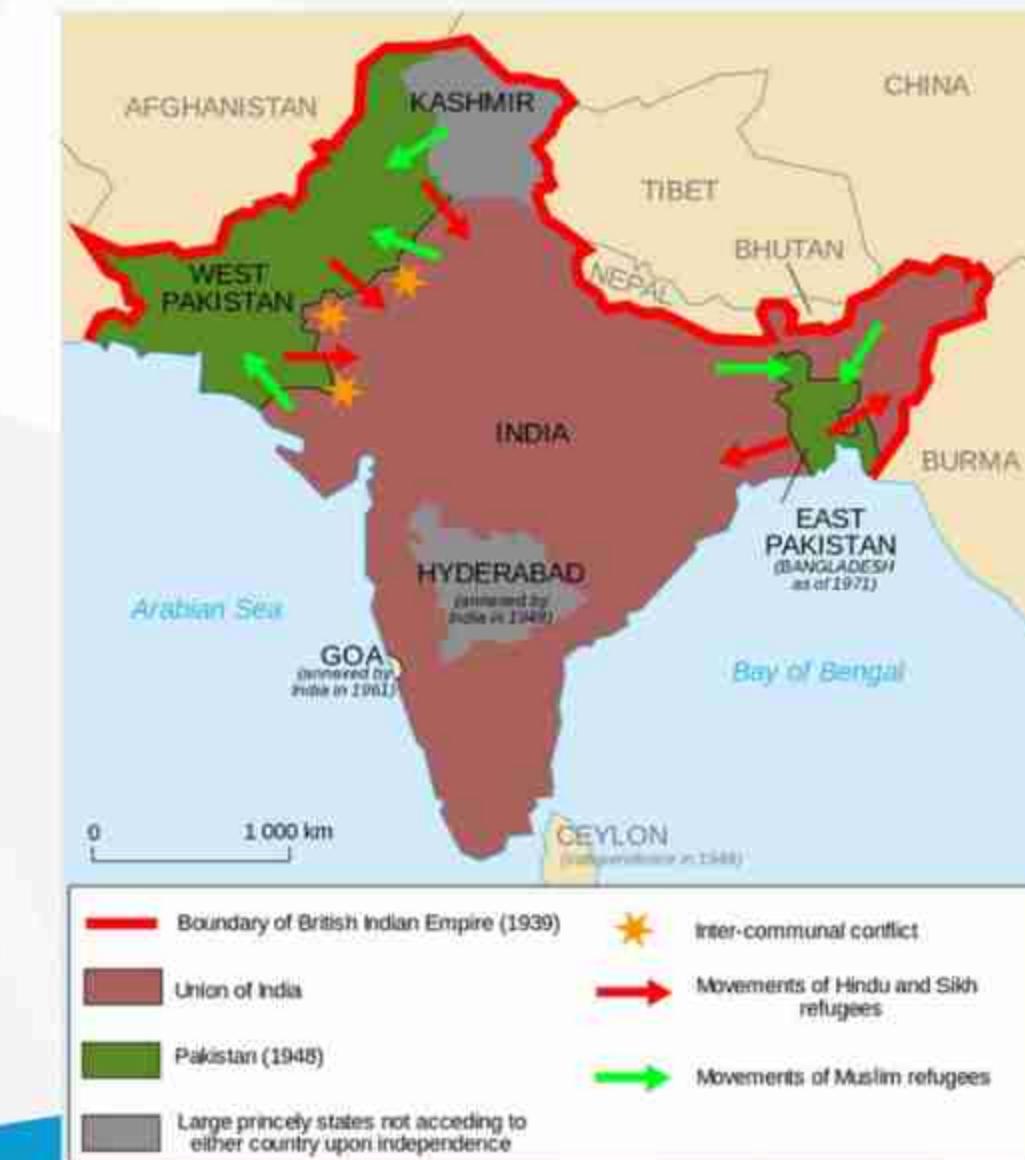
Soon after the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the first war erupted over the Kashmir region. This led to the Line of Control (LoC) dividing the region, with both countries claiming it.



Wars and conflicts between India and Pakistan

1965 Second Indo-Pak War: This conflict was primarily over Kashmir as well. It ended in a ceasefire, with no significant territorial changes.

1971 Bangladesh Liberation War: This war resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. India supported the Bangladeshi independence movement, leading to a conflict with Pakistan.



Wars and conflicts between India and Pakistan

Kargil War (1999): The Kargil War took place in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir. It was a limited conflict between India and Pakistan but had significant international attention.



Wars and conflicts between India and Pakistan

Tensions and Skirmishes: There have been numerous instances of cross-border tensions and skirmishes along the Line of Control in the years since the Kargil War.

Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan

Kashmir Dispute:

The Kashmir dispute centers on the region of Jammu and Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan claim the entire territory, and it has been a major source of conflict since the partition in 1947. The Line of Control (LoC) separates the two sides.

Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan



Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan

Siachen Glacier Dispute:

The Siachen Glacier, situated in the Karakoram Range, has been a contentious area. India and Pakistan have had military deployments in this inhospitable region since the mid-1980s. It's important to know the strategic significance and environmental challenges associated with this dispute.

Siachen Glacier Dispute



Indira Col

$35^{\circ}39' \text{ N}, 76^{\circ}47' \text{ E}$

tripoint where territories controlled by India, Pakistan and China meet.

NJ9842

$35^{\circ} \text{ N}, 77^{\circ} \text{ E}$

northernmost demarcated point of the India-Pakistan cease fire line known as the Line of Control

What is the Siachen Glacier?

- Located in the eastern Karakoram range in the northern part of Ladakh (India).
- World's highest battlefield, with altitudes exceeding 20,000 ft (6,000 m).
- Lies between Saltoro Ridge (held by India) and the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL).
- Strategically located near the India-Pakistan-China tri-junction.

Background of the Dispute

- Post-1972 Simla Agreement, the Line of Control (LoC) was defined only up to point NJ9842, after which it said: “thence north to the glaciers”.
- Pakistan interpreted this as extending the LoC northeast to the Karakoram Pass, giving it control over the glacier.
- India maintained that the line should run north along the Saltoro Ridge, effectively placing Siachen in Indian territory.

1984 – Operation Meghdoot (Turning Point)

- In April 1984, India launched Operation Meghdoot and occupied the Saltoro Ridge including key passes: Bilafond La, Sia La, and Gyong La.
- Pakistan tried to dislodge Indian troops but failed.
- Since then, India controls the strategic heights, while Pakistan holds lower positions to the west.

Why is Siachen Important?

1. Strategic Significance:

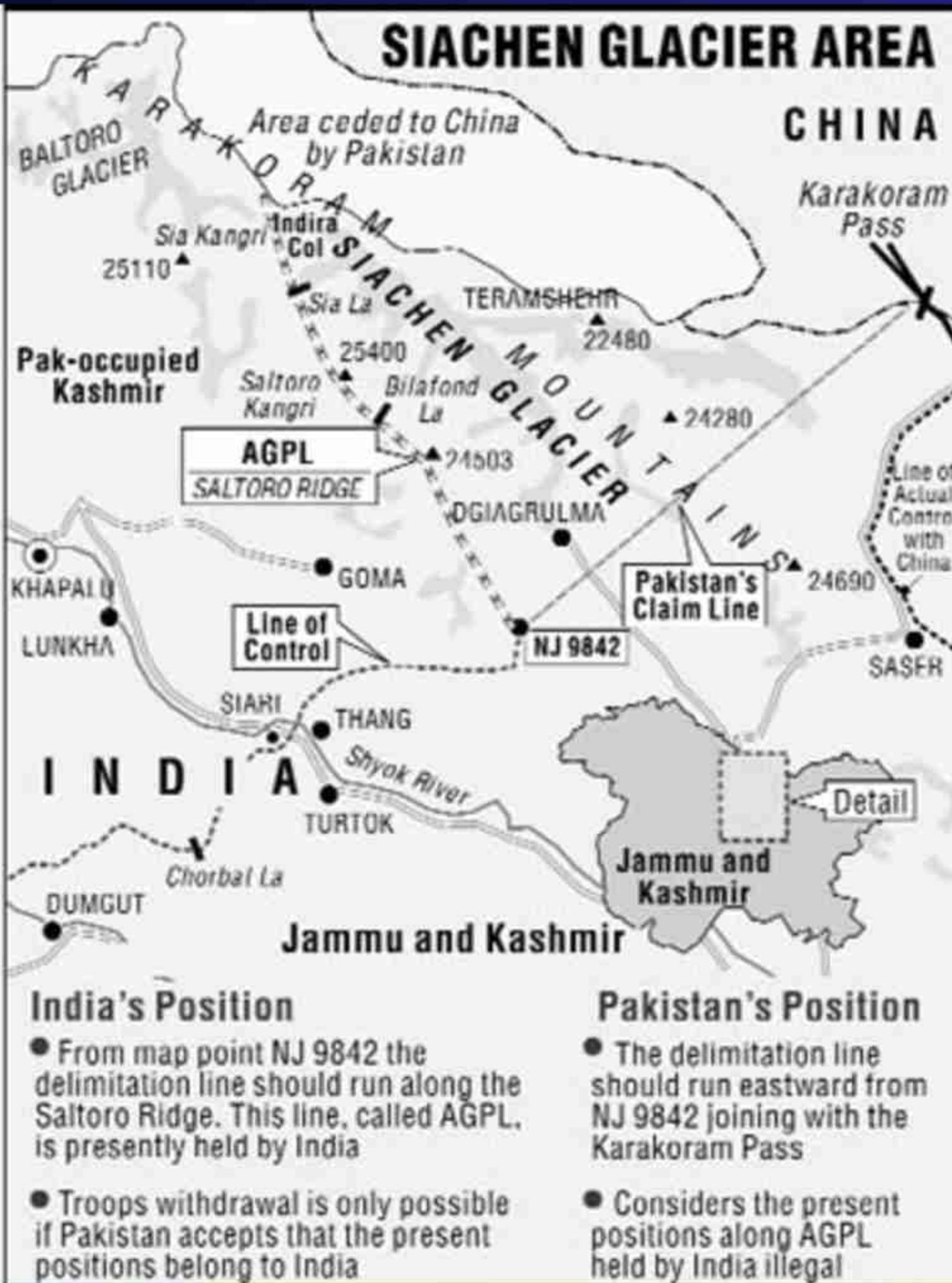
- Prevents Pakistan-China collusion in the region.
- Secures the Shaksgam Valley (ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963, claimed by India).
- Acts as a buffer between Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan and China.

2. Military Advantage:

- Holding Saltoro Ridge gives India dominant surveillance and defense position.

3. Symbolic Sovereignty:

- Both countries view it as a matter of national pride and territorial integrity.



Way Forward

1. AGPL Authentication: India must insist on official demarcation before withdrawal.
2. Demilitarized Zone: Consider creating a UN-monitored neutral zone.
3. Confidence-Building Measures: Joint scientific expeditions or glacier research.
4. Strengthen Surveillance: Use drones/satellites to monitor if troops are withdrawn.

Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan

Sir Creek Dispute:

The Sir Creek dispute involves a marshy area in the Rann of Kutch region along the India-Pakistan border. Both countries have competing territorial claims in this area.

Sir Creek Dispute – India–Pakistan

Border Issue

What is Sir Creek?

1. A 96-km long tidal estuary located in the Rann of Kutch marshlands between Gujarat (India) and Sindh (Pakistan).
2. It opens into the Arabian Sea and is influenced by tides and seasonal flows of the Indus delta.



Sir Creek Dispute – India–Pakistan Border Issue

SIGNIFICANCE OF SIR CREEK

1. Maritime Boundary:

- Determines the starting point of the India–Pakistan maritime boundary, which impacts Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claims.

2. Fisheries and Coast Guard Jurisdiction:

- Rich in marine resources; both countries depend on the area for fishing.
- Ambiguity leads to frequent arrests of fishermen from both sides.

3. Strategic Military Significance:

- Adjacent to India's Kutch and Pakistan's Karachi naval bases.
- Close to international sea lanes; important for naval surveillance.

Sir Creek Dispute – India–Pakistan Border Issue

Origin of the Dispute

- Rooted in differing interpretations of the 1914 agreement between the British Government of Bombay and the princely state of Kutch.

India's Claim

Boundary runs **mid-channel** of Sir Creek as per **Thalweg doctrine**.

Pakistan's Claim

Entire creek belongs to Pakistan based on 1914 agreement's **eastern bank reference**.

- Pakistan says **eastern bank** is the border → giving Pakistan the entire creek.
- India says the **center of the creek** is the border → splitting it midway.

Sir Creek Dispute – India–Pakistan Border Issue

Implications of the Dispute

1. Maritime Boundary Delay:

- Without agreement on creek boundary, the demarcation of EEZ and continental shelf remains disputed.
- Both nations claim overlapping zones rich in oil and gas resources.

2. Fishermen's Arrests:

- Due to lack of clear boundary, Indian and Pakistani fishermen often inadvertently cross into each other's waters and get arrested.

3. Security and Surveillance:

- Disputed region is vulnerable to terrorist infiltration and drug trafficking, especially post-26/11.

Sir Creek Dispute – India–Pakistan Border Issue

Attempts at Resolution

1. Technical-level talks held several times since the 1960s.
2. Joint survey conducted in 2007 for maritime boundary delimitation, but final agreement stalled due to political mistrust.
3. Talks resumed occasionally (last round in 2012), but remain frozen due to overall India–Pakistan tensions.

Sir Creek Dispute – India–Pakistan Border Issue

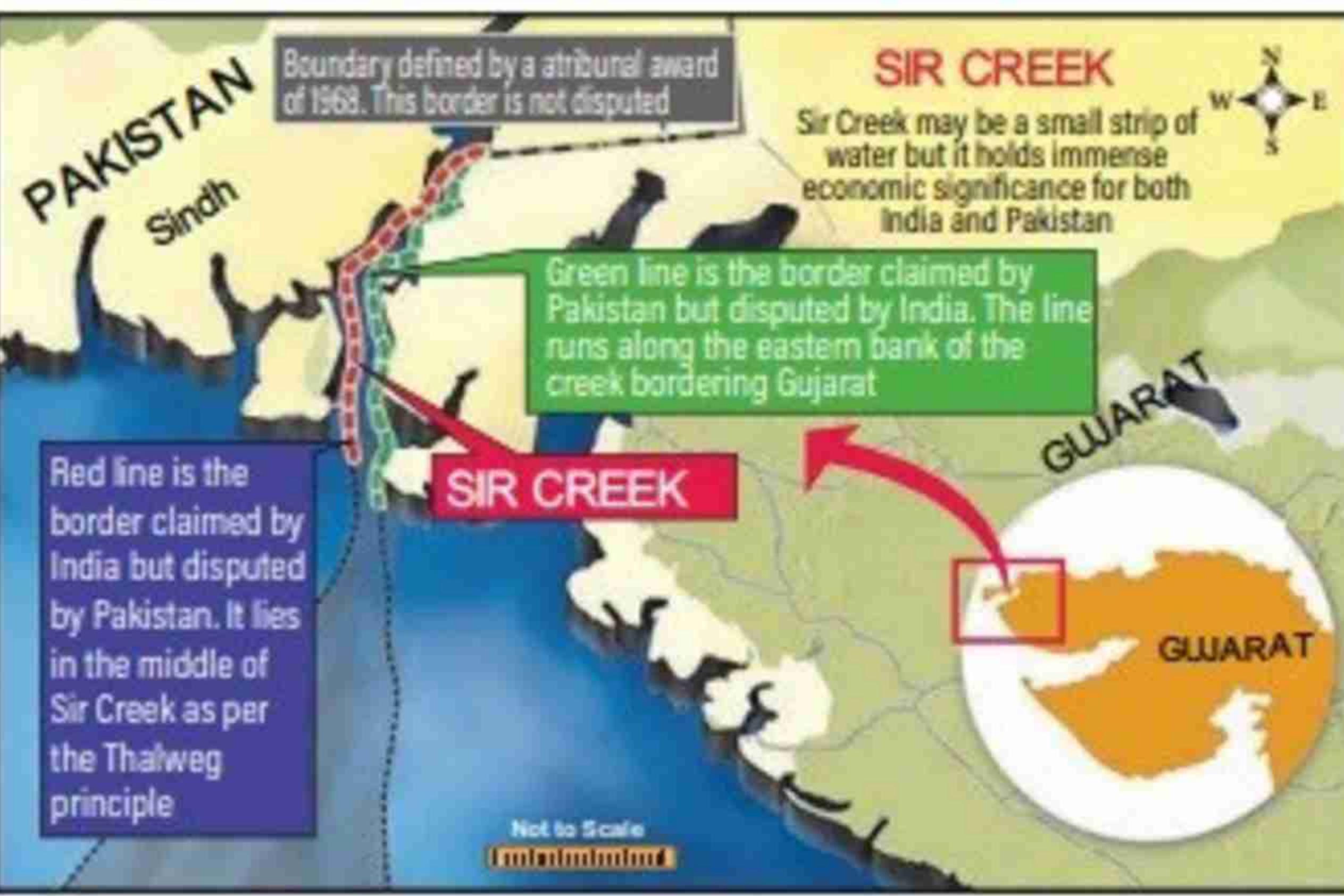
Challenges

1. **Trust Deficit:** Indo-Pak ties remain hostile due to terror attacks and cross-border firing.
2. **Lack of Political Will:** Domestic politics and military dominance in Pakistan delay resolution.
3. **Security Concerns:** Strategic location makes both sides reluctant to compromise.
4. **Environmental Shifts:** The creek shifts its course due to tides and silting, complicating fixed boundary lines.

Sir Creek Dispute – India–Pakistan Border Issue

Way Forward

1. **Bilateral Technical Talks:** Resume formal dialogue and revalidate joint surveys.
2. **Legal Framework:** Consider arbitration under UNCLOS, but requires mutual consent.
3. **Confidence-Building Measures:**
 - Release detained fishermen.
 - Set up joint patrolling or early warning systems.
4. **De-link from Other Issues:** Resolve as a standalone issue, not tied to Kashmir or terrorism talks.

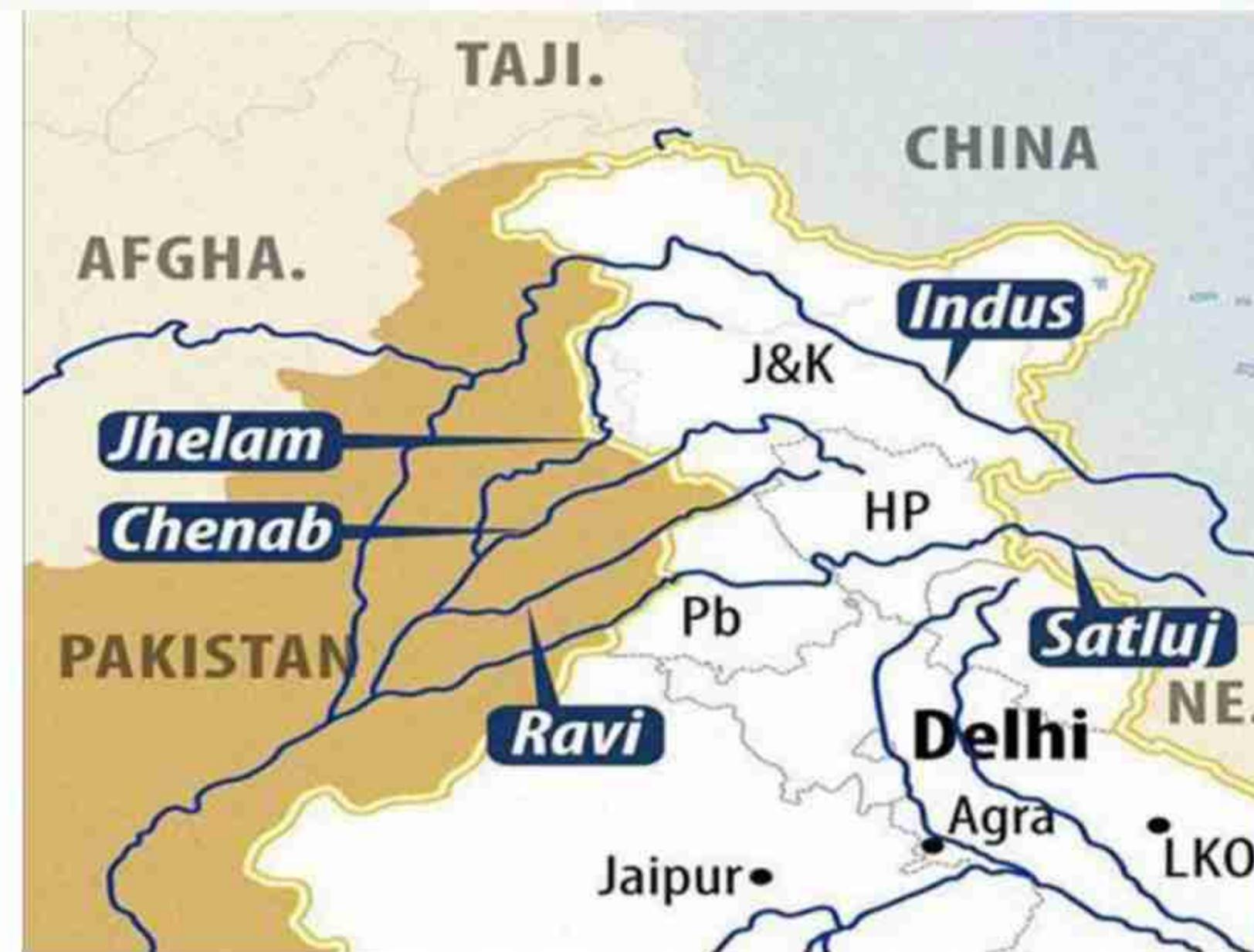


Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan

Water Dispute

India and Pakistan have water-sharing agreements for the Indus River system, primarily governed by the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960. However, disputes over water allocation, hydropower projects, and potential violations of the treaty have arisen.

Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan



Aimed to create a framework for fair sharing of **Indus river** waters and its **tributaries**.

Brokered by the **World Bank** and signed on **Sept 19, 1960**, by former **PM Jawaharlal Nehru** and then **President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan**.

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KEY PROVISIONS OF IWT

Water Sharing

India can develop '**run of the river**' **hydropower projects** with **minimum storage** for **conservation** and **flood management**.

PAKISTAN
Indus, Chenab and Jhelum allocated to Pakistan for unrestricted use.



Dispute Resolution Mechanism

Provides a three-tiered mechanism:

- Permanent Indus Commission:** A platform for direct negotiations, meeting at least once a year.
- Neutral Expert:** Appointed by World Bank to address **technical disagreements**.
- Court of Arbitration:** If not satisfied by above mechanisms.

INDIA'S CALL FOR MODIFICATION OF IWT: REASONS

Other Objections Raised by Pakistan Under IWT

Salal Dam Project: Built on the **Chenab River** in the Reasi district, J&K.

Baglihar Hydropower project: Built on the **Chenab River** in the Doda district, J&K.

Pakal Dul Project: Built on the **Chenab River** in the Kishtwar district, J&K.

Lower Kalnai Project: Situated on the Kalnai River in Kishtwar and Doda districts, J&K.

Kiru Project: Built on the **Chenab River** in the Kishtwar district, J&K.

Population growth and **climate change** have intensified the demand for water resources.

Treaty limits India's ability to develop "**run-of-the-river**" hydropower projects.

Incorporate "**equitable and reasonable utilisation**" and the "**no harm rule**" in the IWT.

Pakistan objects to projects like **Kishanganga** (Jhelum) and **Ratte** (Chenab).

Achieving **clean power** goals via hydropower requires increased river usage flexibility.

Inadequate actions for current climate issues, like shifting glaciers and river flows.

INDUS WATERS TREATY: A SUCCESS



India cooperatively allocates 80% of water to Pakistan as an **upper riparian state**.



Successful transboundary water cooperation despite conflicts.



Maintained during tensions in 2001, 2008, and the Uri/Pulwama incidents.

A SUSTAINABLE AND COOPERATIVE IWT

Align treaty with global norms (e.g. **Brisbane Declaration**) to protect river ecosystems.

Include clauses for adapting to climate change and unpredictable water flow changes.

Modernize the treaty to reflect global standards, like the **1997 UN Watercourses Convention**.

SUMMARY OF INDUS WATER TREATY

INDUS WATER TREATY

Background of Indus Water Treaty.

- A bilateral agreement was signed between Punjab and J&K in 1979 for construction of RanjitSagar Dam (Thein Dam) and Shahpurkandi Dam was to be taken up by Punjab Govt.
- RanjitSagar Dam was commissioned in 2000. The foundation stone for the Shahpur Kandi Barrage Project was laid in 1995. However, the project faced several disputes between the governments of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, leading to its suspension for over four and a half years.



About Indus Waters Treaty(IWT)

1. **Genesis:** IWT was signed in 1960, between India and Pakistan and brokered by the World Bank (which was also a signatory).
2. **Objective:** The treaty fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.
3. **Provisions for water usage rights:**
 - IWT allows India unrestricted use of three eastern rivers Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej.
 - Pakistan has control over three western rivers Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.
 - Can be used by India with certain restrictions (for irrigation, transport and power generation).
4. **Implementation:** The treaty required the creation of a Permanent Indus Commission, with a commissioner from each country, to maintain a channel for communication and is required to meet at least once every year.

Mechanism for resolving disputes

IWT provides 3 Step Dispute Resolution Mechanism viz.

1. **Step 1: Permanent Indus Commission**- to resolve questions about implementation of the treaty.
2. **Step 2: Neutral Expert**- Appointed by World Bank to deal with unresolved differences on water sharing and involves rendering a binding decision.
3. **Step 3: Court of Arbitration (CoA)**- If a neutral expert fails, the dispute goes to CoA. It is a seven-member arbitral tribunal, determines its own procedures and decisions by majority vote.
 - Neutral Expert and CoA steps are mutually exclusive, i.e. only one of them can be used at a time to address a particular dispute.

Issues with the treaty

1. **Pakistan's frequent opposition to the Indian projects:** The opposition is majorly on the issue that whether these projects adhere to the technological criteria outlined in the treaty. It is evident from Pakistan's opposition to Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project (KHEP) on Jhelum River and Ratle Hydroelectric Project on River Chenab.
2. **Limitations of Judicial Recourse:** India seeks resolution of differences through a neutral expert (interprets the treaty in spirit), while Pakistan has opted to approach the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) which interprets the treaty in letter.
 - PCA unanimously rejected India's concerns in July 2023, rendering a legally binding decision on both sides without an appeal, although India rejected the verdict.

Issues with the treaty

1. **Strained bilateral relations:** Treaty gets affected by the overall developments in the India-Pakistan relationship. For instance, the biannual talks between the commissioners of the Indus treaty were suspended due to the frequent use of state-sponsored terrorism by Pakistan.
2. **Impact of climate change:** Climate change has altered the form, intensity and timing of precipitation and runoff. The partitioning of rivers prescribed by the IWT does not account for potential shifts in water availability caused by climate change, undermining its efficacy in ensuring equitable water allocation.

Issues with the treaty.

1. Conflict-resolution method through a third-party guarantor: The World Bank is the guarantor of IWT and relies on the riparian to report any issue related of illegal intervention in the river flows. However, there is no definite way of knowing if illegal intervention really happened or it is only a case of low seasonal flows due to climate variability.
2. No regular data sharing as planned in the treaty: The flow data sharing is significantly important to understand the dynamics of river basin in totality.
3. Technical nature of the Treaty: The treaty's provisions are highly technical in nature, prompting diverse and wide-ranging interpretations.

Way Forward

1. Revisiting the IWT:

- Water experts believe that countries need to take into account the technological advances, which were absent at the time of drafting the IWT.
- **Inclusion of Principles of International Water Law:** Principles of Equitable and Reasonable Utilisation (ERU) and No Harm Rule (NHR) can help bridge differences between the countries and ensure predictability to a certain extent in water allocation.

2. Indus Water Commissioners from both sides should be empowered to work together and make rational decisions uninfluenced by the political situations. Regular meetings between both sides and sharing of designs and data can help to prevent future problems.

3. Implement adaptive measures, such as improving water storage and management practices, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the river and its tributaries so as to address the challenges posed by climate change.

4. Promoting open data policy for promoting transparency and applied scientific research.

INDUS WATER TREATY

Key Provisions

River Water Distribution	Eastern Rivers- Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas with India. Western Rivers- Chenab, Indus and Jhelum with Pakistan India's Share- 20% and Pakistan's Share- 80%
Western River Water utilization permitted for India	Non Consumptive Use of Western River Water like construction of Run of River Hydroelectric Plants Permitted to India.
Dispute Resolution Mechanism	3 stage Dispute Resolution Mechanism Stage 1- Permanent Commission Stage 2- Neutral Expert (NE) Stage 3- Court of Arbitration

Significance of the Treaty

- Successful Model- Only cross border water sharing treaty between two nations in Asia. Treaty between two rivals.
- Generous towards lower riparian state- Pakistan's share is about 90% greater than Mexico's share in the 1944 treaty with US.
- Passed the Crisis test- The Permanent Commission has met even during the 1965 and 1971 wars.

Concerns with the Treaty

India's Concerns

- Dispute over India's Hydroelectric Projects- Pakistan has raised objections on Rati and Kishanganga Projects.
- Climate Change Impact- Indus River System is the most water stressed according to NASA.
- Loss to Indian States in the Indus Basin- J&K and Punjab Complain of million dollar losses

Pakistan's Concerns

- Lower Riparian Concerns- infrastructure developments will reduce downstream flows
- Accusations of 'Water Terrorism'- Pakistan has raised objections regarding the Shahpurkandi barrage project.

Way Forward

- Integration of Ecological Perspectives and Recognition of Climate Change Impacts.
- Enhanced Water Data-Sharing
- Incorporation of International Legal Standards like 1997 UN Watercourses Convention and 2004 Berlin Rules on Water Resources for sustainable water use
- Pro activeness on India's Part in utilization of allocated water share like desilting of canals and run-off river hydroelectric plants.

Other areas of contentions

Cross-Border Terrorism:

India has long accused Pakistan of supporting and harboring terrorist groups that launch attacks on Indian soil. The 2008 Mumbai attacks and the 2019 Pulwama attack are notable examples. The role of Pakistan-based militant organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) is a significant concern.

Other areas of contentions

Ceasefire Violations:

Ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir have been frequent occurrences. Understanding the pattern, reasons, and consequences of such violations is crucial.

Other areas of contentions

Kulbhushan Jadhav Case:

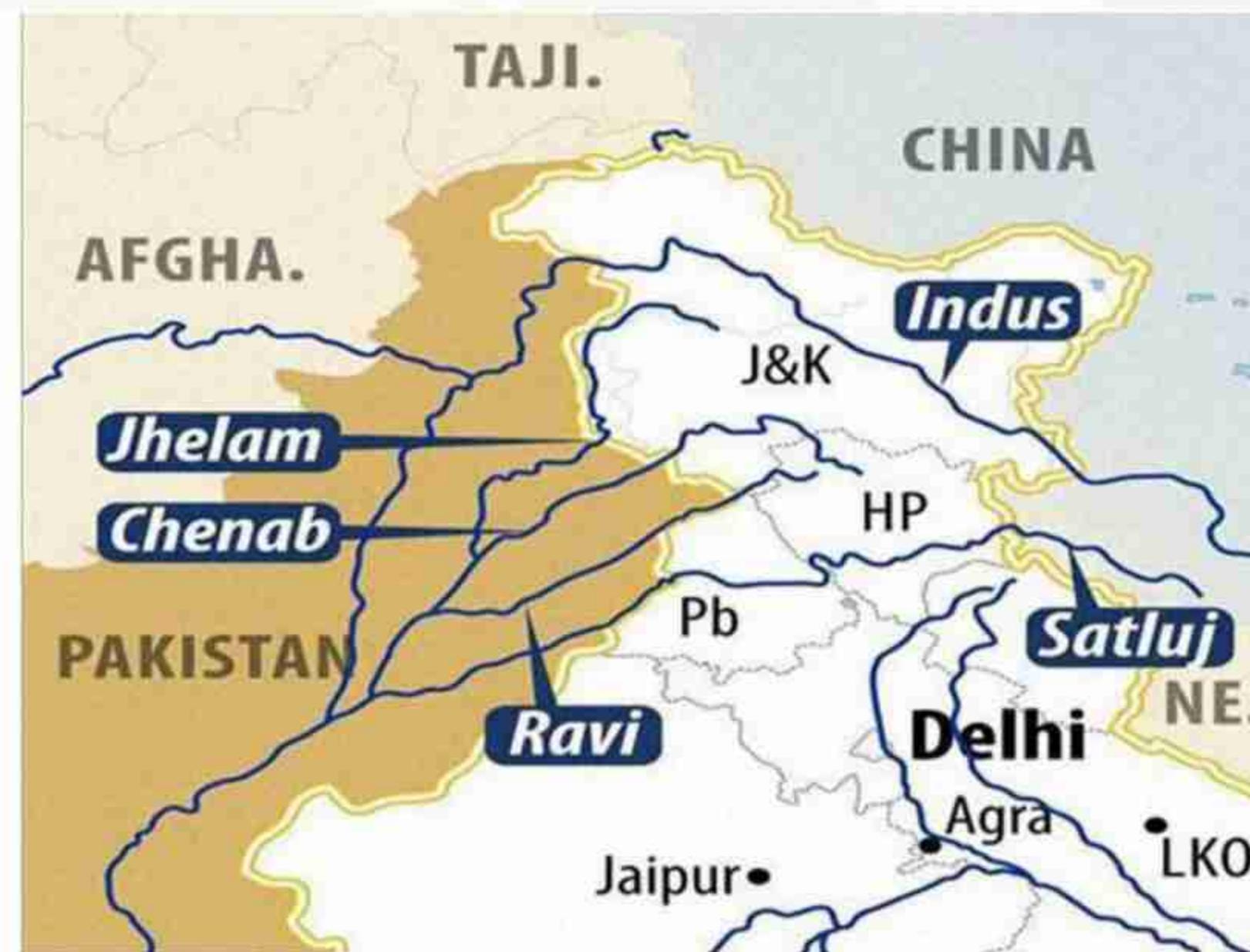
Kulbhushan Jadhav is an Indian national who was arrested by Pakistan in 2016, claiming he was a spy. The case has been a point of diplomatic tension, with India alleging Jadhav's wrongful arrest and detention and seeking his release.

Past Confidence-Building Measures

Liaquat-Nehru Pact (1950): This pact was signed between India and Pakistan to address the security of their respective minorities. It aimed to ensure the protection of minorities and their rights in both countries.

Indus Waters Treaty (1960): This treaty is one of the most important water-sharing agreements globally. It governs the distribution of waters from the Indus River system between India and Pakistan. The World Bank played a significant role in mediating this treaty.

Past Confidence-Building Measures



Past Confidence-Building Measures

Tashkent Agreement (1966): After the 1965 Indo-Pak War, this agreement was signed in Tashkent (now in Uzbekistan) between Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani President Ayub Khan. It aimed to restore diplomatic and economic relations and ensure a ceasefire.

Rann of Kutch Agreement (1965): This agreement resolved the dispute over the Rann of Kutch region between India and Pakistan. It led to the withdrawal of troops and the establishment of a boundary line.

Past Confidence-Building Measures

Shimla Accord (1972): After the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, the Shimla Accord was signed between Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It facilitated the release of prisoners of war and addressed issues related to Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing a bilateral approach to conflict resolution.

Salal Dam Agreement (1978): This agreement pertains to the Salal Hydroelectric Project on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir. It established water-sharing arrangements between India and Pakistan.

Military Confidence-Building Measures

The 2003 Ceasefire Agreement: This agreement was reached between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir. It aimed to reduce hostilities and ceasefire violations, though violations have occurred sporadically.

Hotline Communication: Both countries established a hotline between their Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) to facilitate direct and timely communication during crises.

Military Confidence-Building Measures

Munitions of War Agreement: Signed in 1989, regulates the number and location of certain types of military units in specified areas along the international border and LoC.

Advance Notification of Military Exercises: Both countries agreed to notify each other about their military exercises near the international border. This is intended to prevent misunderstandings that could lead to escalation.

Border Meeting Points: The two countries have established several border meeting points, where military commanders from both sides can meet to discuss issues and defuse tensions.

Military Confidence-Building Measures

People-to-People Contacts: While not purely military CBMs, initiatives such as the exchange of prisoners of war, repatriation of fishermen, and visits by civilian and military officials promote confidence-building.

Cross-LoC Trade and Travel: These measures aim to facilitate trade and travel across the Line of Control, contributing to people-to-people contact and confidence-building.

Military Confidence-Building Measures

No First Use (NFU) Policy:

Both India and Pakistan have declared NFU policies, which means they pledge not to use nuclear weapons as a first strike. These policies are aimed at reducing the risk of nuclear conflict.

Non Military Confidence-Building Measures

Delhi-Lahore Bus Service:

The Delhi-Lahore Bus Service, launched in 1999, aimed to enhance people-to-people contact and promote goodwill between India and Pakistan. It provided a regular bus service connecting the capitals of the two countries. Although it has faced suspensions due to political tensions, it remains a symbol of diplomatic engagement.

Non Military Confidence-Building Measures

Samjhauta Express: The Samjhauta Express is a bi-weekly train service that operates between Delhi and Lahore. It has been in operation since 1976, serving as a vital means of transportation and cultural exchange between the two nations. However, it has also faced disruptions due to tensions.

Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief: In times of natural disasters or humanitarian crises, both India and Pakistan have provided assistance to each other. These acts of goodwill help in fostering positive relations and cooperation during times of need.

Failures in the Confidence-Building Measures

Ceasefire Violations: Despite the 2003 ceasefire agreement, both countries have experienced frequent ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir. These violations have resulted in casualties and have strained relations.

Kashmir Dispute: The core issue of Kashmir remains unresolved despite various attempts at dialogue and confidence-building. The Shimla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999 did not lead to a lasting solution, and tensions persist.

Failures in the Confidence-Building Measures



Failures in the Confidence-Building Measures

Terrorism: Cross-border terrorism remains a significant issue. Terrorist attacks, such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the 2019 Pulwama attack, have derailed diplomatic efforts and undermined trust-building measures.

Samjhauta Express Attack: The Samjhauta Express, a symbol of diplomatic engagement, was targeted in a terrorist attack in 2007, resulting in casualties and straining relations.

Disputes Over Water Sharing: Despite the Indus Waters Treaty, disputes over water allocation and hydropower projects have emerged, causing tensions in the relationship.

Failures in the Confidence-Building Measures

Lack of Progress on Trade: Economic engagement can be a confidence-building measure, but trade relations between India and Pakistan have been limited due to various political and security-related issues.

Limited Progress on Cultural Exchanges: While there have been cultural exchanges, these have often been affected by political tensions, leading to disruptions in people-to-people contact.

India -Pakistan

Way Forward:

- A peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute remains essential for regional stability.
- Continued dialogue, confidence-building measures, addressing terrorism, and respecting the Indus Water Treaty are key steps forward.



India- Bangladesh

India - Bangladesh

Historical Context:

- In 1947, British India was divided into India and Pakistan, with East Bengal becoming East Pakistan.
- Tensions arose between East and West Pakistan due to economic and political disparities.
- In 1971, after a brutal Liberation War, Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation with India's support.



Significance of Bangladesh to India

Geopolitical Significance:

- Bangladesh shares a long land border with India, making it a strategically important neighbor in South Asia.
- Its location can influence India's security dynamics in the region.

Economic Cooperation:

- Bangladesh is a growing economy and a potential trade partner for India.
- Improved trade relations can benefit both countries and enhance regional economic integration.



Significance of Bangladesh to India

Cultural: India and Bangladesh have a shared history, culture, and heritage. The people of the two countries are linked by strong cultural and familial ties, and there is a large population of Indian-origin people living in Bangladesh.

Strategic: Bangladesh is located at the crossroads of South Asia and Southeast Asia and is important for India's Act East Policy, which aims to build closer ties with the countries of Southeast Asia.

Significance of Bangladesh to India

Environmental concerns: Bangladesh and India share trans-boundary rivers and ecological systems, making it important for the two countries to cooperate on issues such as water management and flood control. For example, coordinated efforts are needed for the conservation of Sunderbans.

Areas of Cooperation b/w Bangladesh and India

Economic Cooperation:

- Bangladesh is India's biggest trading partner in the subcontinent. India's export to Bangladesh stood at USD 8 billion during April – November 2022.
- India enabled the export of cargo from ICDs within India to Bangladesh through inland waterways.
- Also, the transshipment of containerized export cargo from Bangladesh to third countries through India gained a streamlined process.

Areas of Cooperation b/w Bangladesh and India

Economic Cooperation:

- Utilizing both riverine and land routes, this measure reinforces trade routes and opens up new possibilities for cargo movement.
- India has provided duty free quota free access to Bangladesh on all tariff lines except tobacco and alcohol under South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) since 2011.
- Bangladesh and India in July 2023 launched a trade transaction in rupees, a move aimed at reducing dependence on the US dollar and strengthening regional currency and trade.

Areas of Cooperation b/w Bangladesh and India

Defence Cooperation:

- India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of border; the longest land boundary that India shares with any of its neighbors.
- Assam, West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Tripura share borders with Bangladesh.
- The two also conduct Joint Exercises - Army (Exercise Sampriti) and Navy (Exercise Bongosagar)

Areas of Cooperation b/w Bangladesh and India

Energy and Connectivity:

- The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline connecting Siliguri in West Bengal and Parbatipur in Dinajpur district of Bangladesh, will transport one million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA) of High-Speed Diesel to Bangladesh.
- India and Bangladesh have been cooperating in developing cross-border infrastructure projects, such as the Akhaura-Agartala rail link and Maitri Setu.

Areas of Cooperation b/w Bangladesh and India

Multilateral Cooperation:

- India and Bangladesh are also engaged in regional cooperation through multilateral forums such as SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

Existing challenges b/w Bangladesh and India

Sharing of Transboundary River Waters:

- India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers, but only two treaties have been signed so far of Ganga Waters Treaty and The Kushiyara River Treaty.
- The other major rivers, such as the Teesta and Feni are still under negotiation.

Existing challenges b/w Bangladesh and India



Existing challenges b/w Bangladesh and India

Illegal Migration:

- Illegal migration from Bangladesh to India, involving refugees and economic migrants, remains a pressing issue.
- This influx strains Indian border states, impacting resources and security. The problem intensified with Rohingya refugees entering India through Bangladesh.
- The National Register of Citizens (NRC), aimed at curbing such migration, has raised concerns in Bangladesh.

Existing challenges b/w Bangladesh and India

Drug Smuggling & Trafficking: There have been many incidences of cross border drug smuggling & trafficking. Humans (especially children & women) are trafficked & various animal & bird species are poached through these borders.

Growing Chinese Influence in Bangladesh: At present, Bangladesh is an active partner in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (India is not a part of BRI). China's increasing involvement with Bangladesh could potentially undermine India's regional standing and impede its strategic aspirations.

Teesta River Dispute – India & Bangladesh

- The Teesta River originates in Sikkim and flows through West Bengal before entering Bangladesh.
- It is the 4th largest transboundary river between the two nations.
- Sharing its waters has been a long-standing issue, symbolizing both cooperation and friction in India-Bangladesh relations.

Mapping The River Flows of Bangladesh's Teesta & India's Brahmaputra River



Teesta River



Brahmaputra River

Water (River) Flow from
Bangladesh's Teesta River



Water (River) Flow from India's
Brahmaputra River

Background of the Issue

- The 1951 agreement allocated 36% of Teesta water to India and 39% to Bangladesh. However, it was never formalized.
- In 2011, a water-sharing agreement was drafted allocating:
 - 42.5% to India
 - 37.5% to Bangladesh
 - This agreement failed due to opposition from West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, citing potential harm to North Bengal farmers.

Why the Teesta is Important to Bangladesh

- Vital for irrigation in Rangpur region (NW Bangladesh), especially during dry season (Dec–March).
- Impacts food security, livelihoods of farmers, and regional development.

India's position

1. India argues that:

- Water flow reduces drastically during the dry season.
- Needs of West Bengal farmers must be considered.
- Internal Centre-State coordination is essential before signing any treaty.



Challenges in Resolution

1. **Federal Structure:** Water is a State subject; Centre cannot finalize without State consent.
2. **Hydrological Uncertainty:** Flow varies drastically; difficult to commit exact volumes.
3. **Political Sensitivity:** Opposition in both countries politicizes the issue.
4. **China Factor:** Bangladesh turning to China for Teesta River management has strategic implications for India.

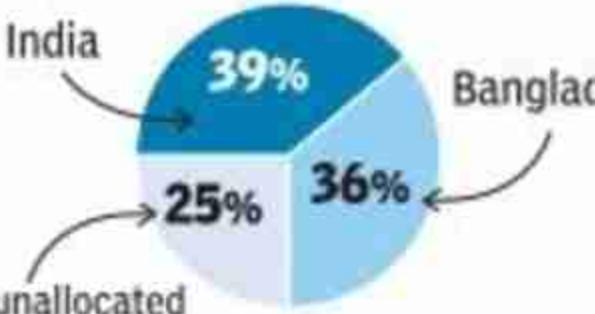
Implications for India–Bangladesh Ties

- 1. Stalled Teesta deal creates distrust and hampers progress in other areas.**
- 2. Bangladesh sees India as non-committal, despite shared history and cooperation.**
- 3. Provides strategic opening for China in Bangladesh's infrastructure and river management.**

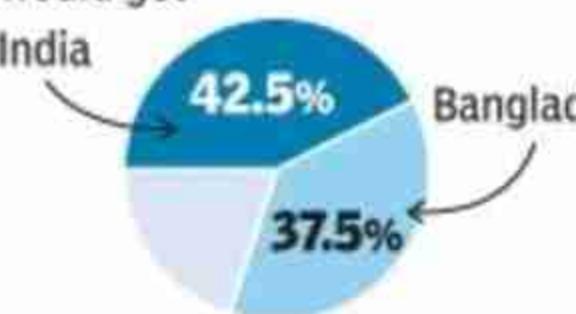
What is the dispute

- Bangladesh wants **50% of Teesta's water** between Dec and May annually; **India claims a share of 55%**

Negotiations on since 1983, preliminary deal gave



In 2011, Delhi & Dhaka struck interim deal for 15 years – India would get



► But Banerjee opposed it; signing shelved to later that year

► Teesta water-sharing agreement waiting to be signed since 2011

Hydropower on Teesta is another point of conflict: At least **26 projects** on the river mostly in Sikkim, aimed at **producing some 50,000MW**

Teesta barrage



What is the Teesta

- Teesta originates in Sikkim from the Khangse and Zemu glaciers
- Its major tributary – Rangeet – joins it at Darjeeling's Teesta Bazaar
- At Mekhligunj in north Bengal's Cooch Behar, it enters Bangladesh, joins Brahmaputra
- Teesta is Bangladesh's fourth largest transboundary river for irrigation and fishing
- Teesta floodplain covers 2,750sq.km in Bangladesh
- Of Teesta's catchment, 83% in India; 17% in Bangladesh
- Its catchment supports about 10m people – and 14% of crop
- Nearly 1 lakh hectares across 5 districts impacted by upstream drawals from the Teesta in India

SUMMARY OF TEESTA WATER DISPUTE

Way Forward

1. **Centre-State Consensus:** Build political consensus with West Bengal through dialogue.
2. **Joint River Management:** Enhance data-sharing, flood control, and basin-level cooperation.
3. **Alternative Water Sharing Models:** Seasonal sharing, dynamic flow-based allocations.
4. **Confidence-Building Measures:** Continue cooperation in other sectors to maintain trust.
5. **Track-II Diplomacy:** Academic and expert dialogues can depoliticize the issue.

Conclusion

The Teesta River dispute is not just about water—it's about trust, regional equity, and strategic balance. India must resolve internal political hurdles and engage Bangladesh with sincerity to uphold its image as a reliable neighbour and regional leader.

Measures to enhance Indo-Bangladesh Relations

Addressing the Teesta river water dispute: To establish a consensus towards demarcating the extent of Teesta river water sharing and reaching a mutual agreement in a time-bound manner.

Better connectivity: There is a need to enhance connectivity in the region through strengthening cooperation in coastal connectivity, road, rail, and inland waterways.

Measures to enhance Indo-Bangladesh Relations

Energy security: As the global energy crisis continues to rise, it is imperative that India and Bangladesh cooperate in making use of clean and green energy to make South Asia Energy self-sufficient.

India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline: which will help move high-speed diesel to Northern Bangladesh from India, needs to be fastened.

Shifting focus towards Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations since 2018:

It will strengthen economic ties between India and Bangladesh.

Measures to enhance Indo-Bangladesh Relations

Countering China: Assisting Bangladesh with critical technologies and financial assistance will further strengthen India's relationship and help India counter China's influence to a greater extent.

Tackling the refugee Crisis: India and Bangladesh can encourage other countries in the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to develop a SAARC declaration on refugees, laying down a specific procedure for determining the status of refugees and economic migrants.



India- Nepal

India - Nepal

Historical Context:

- India and Nepal share deep historical, cultural, and geographical ties.
- The Sugauli Treaty of 1815-16 between the British East India Company and the Kingdom of Nepal defined the modern borders.

India 🇮🇳 - Nepal 🇳

Which States/Union Territories
Share Boundaries with Nepal?



India - Nepal

Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1950):

- The Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 is a significant agreement that governs the relationship between India and Nepal.
- It includes provisions for a close and special relationship, mutual security interests, and economic cooperation.

India - Nepal

Open Border and Free Movement:

- The India-Nepal border is open, allowing citizens of both countries to move freely across without visas.
- This open border has fostered strong people-to-people ties.

Economic Cooperation:

- India is Nepal's largest trade partner and the source of significant foreign investment.
- Both countries cooperate in various sectors, including hydropower, trade, and infrastructure development.
- **Total bilateral trade: ~USD 8.5 billion**

India - Nepal

Development Assistance:

- India has provided development assistance to Nepal, supporting projects in areas like education, healthcare, and transportation.

Political Relations:

- India has played a role in Nepal's political developments, including its transition to a federal democratic republic.
- However, interference concerns have at times strained bilateral ties.

India - Nepal

Blockades and Disputes:

- Periodic disputes, such as border disagreements and trade blockades, have impacted relations.
- These issues, while temporarily straining ties, have generally been resolved through diplomatic efforts.

China Factor:

- Nepal's growing engagement with China has introduced a new dynamic to the relationship.
- Both India and China compete for influence in Nepal, making it a geostrategic concern.

India 🇮🇳 - Nepal 🇳🇵



India 🇮🇳 - Nepal 🇳

Recent Developments:

- Tensions have emerged over Nepal's revised political map, which claims certain territories currently administered by India.
- The Kalapani border dispute remains unresolved.



India - Nepal

Way Forward:

- India and Nepal have a shared interest in maintaining stable and cooperative relations.
- Addressing outstanding issues like border disputes and trade imbalances is important.
- Promoting people-to-people ties and cultural exchanges can further strengthen relations.



India- Sri Lanka

India - Sri Lanka

Historical Background:

- Ancient Ties: India and Sri Lanka have deep-rooted historical and cultural ties dating back to ancient times. Buddhism, which originated in India, played a crucial role in shaping Sri Lankan culture and religion.
- Colonial Era: Both countries were under British colonial rule, which further intertwined their histories. India's struggle for independence inspired Sri Lankan leaders in their quest for freedom.

India - Sri Lanka



India - Sri Lanka

Diplomatic Relations:

- Independence: Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948, and India followed suit in 1947. They established diplomatic relations shortly after.
- Bilateral Agreements: Over the years, the two countries have signed various bilateral agreements covering trade, defense, culture, and technology exchange.

India - Sri Lanka

Strategic Significance:

- Geopolitical Location: Sri Lanka's strategic location in the Indian Ocean has made it crucial for India's maritime security and trade routes. India is concerned about any external power gaining undue influence in Sri Lanka.
- Security Cooperation: Both countries have cooperated in security matters, particularly regarding counter-terrorism and maritime security. India has helped Sri Lanka in its fight against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

India - Sri Lanka

Strategic Significance:

- China Factor: India has been wary of China's growing influence in Sri Lanka, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Hambantota Port, a Chinese-funded project in Sri Lanka, raised concerns in India.

India - Sri Lanka

Economic Relations:

- Trade and Investment: India is one of Sri Lanka's largest trading partners. The two countries have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in place, which has led to a significant increase in bilateral trade.
- Development Assistance: India has provided developmental aid to Sri Lanka in various sectors, including infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

India - Sri Lanka

Cultural and People-to-People Relations:

- Cultural Exchanges: The cultural ties between India and Sri Lanka are evident in their shared traditions, festivals, and religious practices, primarily Buddhism and Hinduism.
- Tourism: Both countries attract tourists from each other, contributing to people-to-people ties and economic benefits.

India - Sri Lanka

Challenges and Controversies:

- Tamil Issue: The treatment of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, especially during the civil war, has been a contentious issue. India's role in mediating the conflict and later supporting reconciliation efforts has been a subject of debate.
- Fishermen Dispute: The dispute between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen over fishing rights in the Palk Strait remains unresolved, occasionally leading to tensions.

India 🇮🇳 - Sri Lanka 🇸LK



Economic Cooperation

- India has historically been one of Sri Lanka's biggest trading partners, and in the SAARC, Sri Lanka continues to be one of India's main trading partners.
- In 2020, India was Sri Lanka's second-largest trading partner, with a bilateral goods trade of around \$3.6 billion.
- Sri Lankan exports to India have expanded significantly since the implementation of ISFTA in 2000, with more than 60% of total Sri Lankan exports to India using ISFTA benefits in recent years.
- However, in recent years, only around 5% of India's total exports to Sri Lanka have utilized ISFTA rules, demonstrating their overall competitiveness in the Sri Lankan market.
- India is not just Sri Lanka's greatest trading partner; it is also one of the largest contributors to foreign direct investment in the country.
- Several eminent Indian businesses have made investments and established bases of operations there. According to the Bank of India, FDI from India totaled around US\$ 1.7 billion from 2005 to 2019.
- India's major investments include petroleum retail, tourist and hospitality, manufacturing, real estate, telecommunications, banking, and financial services.
- Similarly, investments by Sri Lankan businesses in India are increasing, taking advantage of India's dynamic economy and larger market.
- To improve connectivity between the two countries, India and Sri Lanka signed an Open Skies Agreement, which allows Sri Lankan Airlines to operate an unlimited number of flights to six Indian airports.

Fishermen's Issue Between India and Sri Lanka

- The fishermen's issue between India and Sri Lanka is a long-standing maritime conflict in the Palk Strait region.
- It involves Tamil Nadu fishermen, especially from Rameswaram, crossing into Sri Lankan territorial waters, leading to arrests, detention, and sometimes alleged harassment by the Sri Lankan Navy.
- The issue is deeply intertwined with livelihoods, national sovereignty, marine ecology, and diplomacy.



What Is the Issue?

1. Proximity of fishing zones:

- The Palk Strait is narrow (as little as 12 nautical miles at its narrowest point), and Indian fishermen often inadvertently or deliberately cross into Sri Lankan waters in search of better catch.

2. Use of Bottom Trawlers:

- Indian fishermen use mechanized bottom trawlers which drag nets across the seabed, harming marine ecology and affecting Sri Lankan fishermen's catch.

3. Post-war sensitivity:

- After the Sri Lankan civil war (ended in 2009), the Northern Province fishermen (mostly Sri Lankan Tamils) resumed fishing and objected to Indian trawlers encroaching on their livelihood.

4. Disputed maritime boundaries:

- Though a maritime boundary was agreed upon in the 1974 and 1976 Indo-Sri Lankan agreements, Indian fishermen still fish near Katchatheevu Island, which was ceded to Sri Lanka but remains a point of contention.

Effects of the Issue

1. On Indian Fishermen:

- Arrests and detentions by Sri Lankan Navy.
- Confiscation or destruction of boats and fishing gear.
- Loss of livelihood, leading to economic distress.

2. On Sri Lankan Fishermen:

- Depletion of fish stock due to bottom trawling.
- Reduced catch and income due to overfishing by Indian trawlers.
- Tension and conflict in Tamil-majority Northern Province.

3. On Bilateral Relations:

- Diplomatic strain in India–Sri Lanka relations.
- Domestic political pressure in Tamil Nadu against the Indian central government for not resolving the issue.

Challenges

1. Economic dependence on trawling:

- Indian fishermen invested heavily in trawlers and are dependent on high-volume catch, making it hard to shift to sustainable methods.

2. Weak enforcement and patrolling:

- Lack of effective monitoring mechanisms in Indian waters to prevent cross-border fishing.

3. Political sensitivities:

- The Tamil identity on both sides complicates political and diplomatic responses.

4. Environmental degradation:

- Trawling causes loss of biodiversity, which worsens the long-term sustainability of fishing for both countries.

5. Legal and humanitarian issues:

- Arrested fishermen face prolonged detention and sometimes alleged human rights violations.

Way Forward

1. Phasing out bottom trawlers:

- Implement Buy-back or Rehabilitation schemes to help Indian fishermen switch to deep-sea or sustainable fishing methods.

2. Joint patrolling and early warning:

- Enhance coordinated patrolling and GPS tracking to prevent illegal crossings.
- Install warning systems and awareness campaigns.

3. Diplomatic and technical dialogue:

- Regular meetings of the India–Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on Fisheries.
- Develop a bilateral agreement on regulated fishing access or time-sharing models.

4. Alternative livelihood development:

- Encourage fishermen's diversification into aquaculture, fish processing, or marine tourism.

5. Revise the Katchatheevu agreement (if politically feasible):

- Explore traditional fishing rights restoration or mutual access near the island under supervision.

6. Involving Tamil Nadu stakeholders:

- Decentralized decision-making with involvement of state government and local fisher communities.

Conclusion

- The India–Sri Lanka fishermen issue is not just a maritime border dispute;
- it is a humanitarian, ecological, economic, and diplomatic challenge.
- Resolving it requires a multi-pronged approach balancing livelihood security, environmental sustainability, and regional diplomacy.
- A humane and farsighted resolution will strengthen India–Sri Lanka ties and promote peaceful coexistence in the shared waters of the Palk Strait.



Katchatheeuvu Island Issue Between India and Sri Lanka

The Katchatheeuvu Island dispute is a sensitive maritime and sovereignty issue between India and Sri Lanka involving an uninhabited islet in the Palk Strait. Though ceded to Sri Lanka by India in 1974, the issue remains politically and emotionally charged in Tamil Nadu, especially due to its connection to fishing rights, traditional access, and national interest.



What Is the Issue?

1. Location and Background:

- Katchatheeju is a 285-acre uninhabited island located about 33 km off the Indian coast, geographically closer to Tamil Nadu than Sri Lanka.
- Historically used by Tamil fishermen for drying nets and by pilgrims visiting St. Anthony's Shrine (a Catholic church on the island).

2. 1974 Agreement:

- India ceded Katchatheeju to Sri Lanka through the Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime Boundary Agreement of 1974 to settle maritime boundaries peacefully.
- In 1976, a further agreement denied fishing rights in each other's waters, intensifying Indian fishermen's problems.

3. Controversy:

- The agreement is criticized in Tamil Nadu for being signed without the consent of the state legislature.
- Fishermen claim traditional rights have been violated.
- Tamil Nadu political parties frequently demand retrieval of the island.

Challenges

1. International Treaty Obligations:

- India has committed to the 1974 treaty, and unilateral revocation would violate international law and affect India's credibility.

2. Sovereignty and Precedents:

- Reclaiming Katchatheevu could set a dangerous precedent affecting other border agreements with neighboring countries.

3. Lack of Clear Historical Ownership:

- The island was under the Ruler of Ramanathapuram, then British India, but also contested by Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).
- No strong legal documentation proving Indian sovereignty before 1974.

4. Ecological and Strategic Considerations:

- While small, the island has strategic importance in the Palk Strait.
- Its future use can affect maritime security and ecological conservation.

Way Forward

1. Bilateral Dialogue for Joint Access:

- India and Sri Lanka can explore a bilateral framework for joint usage, allowing regulated fishing and pilgrimage access for Indian citizens.

2. Permanent Access to St. Anthony's Shrine:

- Ensure uninterrupted religious access under a bilateral protocol, as promised during the 1974 agreement.

3. Joint Marine Conservation Zones:

- Develop eco-sensitive fishing zones and enforce sustainable fishing practices to prevent overexploitation near Katchatheevu.

4. Legal Clarification:

- The Indian Supreme Court may be approached for constitutional interpretation regarding the validity of ceding territory without parliamentary approval.

5. Depoliticizing the Issue:

- Avoid excessive politicization and approach the issue with a pragmatic, diplomatic, and humanitarian perspective.

Conclusion

- The Katchatheevu Island issue is not merely about territorial claims but reflects deeper issues of livelihood, sovereignty, federalism, and diplomacy.
- While India's international commitments must be upheld, it is equally important to protect the traditional rights and cultural sentiments of its coastal communities.
- A balanced and sustainable resolution, ensuring access without compromising sovereignty, remains the best path forward.

India - Sri Lanka

Recent Developments:

- COVID-19 Cooperation: During the COVID-19 pandemic, both countries cooperated in the supply of essential medical equipment and vaccines, strengthening their ties.
- Economic Projects: India has been involved in several development projects in Sri Lanka, including infrastructure development, housing, and transportation.
- Political Changes: Changes in leadership and political dynamics in both countries have occasionally affected bilateral relations.

India - Sri Lanka

Future Prospects:

- Enhanced Cooperation: Both countries have expressed their commitment to strengthening ties in various sectors, including trade, security, and culture.
- Managing External Influences: India will continue to monitor and manage the influence of external powers like China in Sri Lanka.
- Addressing Outstanding Issues: Resolving long-standing issues such as the Tamil question and the fishermen dispute will be essential for fostering deeper cooperation.

India - Sri Lanka

In conclusion, India-Sri Lanka relations are multifaceted, with both countries sharing historical, cultural, and economic ties while also addressing contemporary challenges and opportunities.



India- Afghanistan Relations



Overview

India and Afghanistan shares a deep historical cultural and political relationship, dating back centuries. In the modern era, their relationship has been based on strong economic ties, development cooperation, and mutual strategic interests. Afghanistan holds geopolitical importance for India, and despite the recent challenges following the Taliban's takeover, India continues to focus on maintaining stability and fostering ties with Afghanistan.



Historical Context

- 1. Civilizational Ties** India and Afghanistan have shared close civilizational links through trade, culture, and religion for centuries, influenced by the spread of Buddhism, Indo-Persian culture, and Mughal rule.
- 2. Diplomatic Ties** Post-India's independence, relations between India and Afghanistan were friendly. However, the relationship fluctuated due to Soviet influence, the Taliban rule (1996–2001), and later, the post-Taliban era after the US-led invasion in 2001. India has consistently supported Afghanistan's government and reconstruction efforts.

Economic Relations

1. Trade and Investment India has been one of Afghanistan's largest trade partners, particularly in sectors like textiles, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture. India exports wheat, tea, and pharmaceuticals to Afghanistan, while Afghanistan's exports to India include dry fruits, nuts, and saffron.



2. Infrastructure Development

- India has invested over \$3 billion in Afghanistan's reconstruction, funding major infrastructure projects like: **Zaranj-Delaram Highway**: Improving connectivity between Afghanistan and Iran, enhancing trade routes.
- **Afghan Parliament Building**: Symbolizing India's commitment to Afghanistan's democracy. **Salma Dam (Afghan-India Friendship Dam)**: A major hydroelectric and irrigation project.

PROJECT ROADMAP





3. Chabahar Port

actively involved in developing Iran's Chabahar Port, which provides alternative bypassing Pakistan. This has facilitated greater economic connectivity between Afghanistan's Pakistani



International Cooperation

- 1. Development Aid and Humanitarian Assistance** India has been a key development partner for Afghanistan, offering substantial financial aid, educational scholarships, and medical assistance. India's initiatives in health, education, and rural development have significantly benefited Afghan society.
- 2. Regional Cooperation** India has worked through regional forums like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and bilateral platforms to promote peace, stability, and economic development in Afghanistan.

Defence Cooperation

- 1. Military Training and Capacity Building** India has provided extensive military training to Afghan forces, focusing on building capacity through training programs, leadership development, and medical support.
- 2. Security Assistance** India has provided non-lethal military equipment and supported Afghanistan's defense infrastructure, though India's involvement in security has remained limited to avoid antagonizing regional powers like Pakistan.

Space and Science and Technology Cooperation

1. **Digital Connectivity** India launched the South Asia Satellite in 2017, providing communication and connectivity benefits to Afghanistan and other regional partners. This satellite enables better access to education, healthcare, and communication infrastructure.
2. **Technology and IT** India has focused on building Afghanistan's technological capacity by offering scholarships and training programs in IT, science, and technology fields.

Major Challenges between India and Afghanistan

- 1. Taliban's Return to Power** The takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2021 has posed serious challenges for India's engagement. The uncertain political scenario has led to concerns over regional stability, terrorism, and the future of bilateral cooperation.
- 2. Terrorism and Security Threats** India's primary security concern is the rise of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, especially the nexus between the Taliban, Haqqani Network, and groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which have targeted Indian interests in Afghanistan.

- 3. Influence of Pakistan and China** The growing influence of Pakistan in Afghanistan post-Taliban takeover limits India's diplomatic leverage. China's increasing involvement in Afghanistan's reconstruction and its strategic interests through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) add further complications
- 4. Instability and Economic Collapse** Afghanistan's economy is on the brink of collapse due to the withdrawal of international aid, sanctions, and lack of international recognition for the Taliban regime. This makes it difficult for India to engage effectively in trade and economic projects.

Way Forward

- 1. Diplomatic Engagement with the Taliban** While India has maintained its principled stance on not recognizing the Taliban regime, it has made initial contact to ensure the safety of its interests and the Afghan people. Continued engagement with all stakeholders is necessary for maintaining regional stability.
- 2. Focus on Humanitarian Aid** India should continue to provide humanitarian assistance, including food, medicine, and financial aid, to prevent a complete collapse of Afghan society. India's recent provision of wheat and medical supplies underlines its commitment to Afghan people, regardless of the regime.

3. Strengthening Chabahar Port India should focus on developing Chabahar Port as a strategic trade route to bypass Pakistan and maintain connectivity with Afghanistan. Enhancing this connectivity could help India sustain trade and developmental cooperation with Afghanistan.

4. Regional Cooperation and Multilateral Diplomacy India should work with regional partners such as Iran, Russia, Central Asian nations, and multilateral platforms like SCO to push for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. Engaging with the UN and international bodies to ensure a collective approach toward peace is crucial.

5.Counter-terrorism **Cooperation**

India must strengthen its counter-terrorism efforts and intelligence-sharing with international allies to curb terrorism threats emanating from Afghanistan. This will help India secure its interests and mitigate security risks.



Conclusion

India-Afghanistan relations, built on historical and cultural ties, have evolved into a strategic partnership in areas like trade, infrastructure, and development. The return of the Taliban has posed significant challenges, including security threats, terrorism, and geopolitical shifts involving Pakistan and China. However, India's commitment to Afghan people through humanitarian assistance, regional cooperation, and strategic engagement in projects like Chabahar reflects a pragmatic and forward-looking approach. A stable Afghanistan is crucial for regional peace, and India must balance diplomatic efforts with safeguarding its interests in the changing landscape.



India- Myanmar Relations



Overview

India and Myanmar share a long-standing geographical proximity, historical ties, and cultural linkages. Both nations share a 1,600 km-long border, and Myanmar is India's gateway to Southeast Asia, making it an essential partner for regional connectivity, trade, and security. India's "Act East" policy prioritizes Myanmar as a key partner for both economic and strategic reasons.



Historical Relations

India and Myanmar's relations date back to the colonial era when both were under British rule. After Myanmar's independence in 1948, both countries maintained friendly ties. However, their relationship witnessed occasional setbacks due to Myanmar's military rule, and after the 2021 military coup, India's approach became more cautious. Despite these political fluctuations, India has continued to engage with Myanmar, recognizing its strategic importance.

Economic Relations

1. **Trade and Connectivity** India and Myanmar have a growing economic partnership, with bilateral trade valued at approximately \$2 billion. The two countries are part of several key regional connectivity projects:
 - **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway:** This road project aims to connect India to Southeast Asia, facilitating greater trade and investment.
 - **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project:** India is developing this route to improve connectivity between its northeastern states and Myanmar, enhancing trade and reducing reliance on other routes.



Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project



- 2. Investment and Energy Cooperation** Indian companies have invested in Myanmar's oil and gas sector. Projects like the Shwe Gas Pipeline and India's exploration in Myanmar's offshore energy fields reflect the deepening energy ties. Myanmar is a key partner in India's energy security strategy.
- 3. Border Trade** The border regions between India's northeast and Myanmar have witnessed increased economic engagement. Cross-border trade includes agricultural products, textiles, and consumer goods. However, this trade is still underdeveloped and faces logistical challenges.

International Cooperation

- 1. Act East Policy** Myanmar is pivotal to India's Act East Policy, which focuses on building economic, cultural, and strategic ties with Southeast Asia. Through this policy, India seeks to enhance connectivity, trade, and people-to-people relations with ASEAN nations via Myanmar.
- 2. Regional Forums** India and Myanmar collaborate in regional groupings like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). These platforms enhance cooperation on regional security, economic development, and connectivity.

Defence Cooperation

1. Military Training and Exchanges

India provides training to Myanmar's personnel, contributing to capacity-building and this professional development of Myanmar's cooperation enhances capabilities, particularly in the northeastern states of India.



2. Border Security Both countries face common security challenges along their shared border, including insurgency, illegal immigration, smuggling, and drug trafficking. India and Myanmar coordinate security measures and conduct joint operations to tackle insurgent groups operating along the border.

3. Naval Cooperation India and Myanmar's navies collaborate on security in the Bay of Bengal, focusing on anti-piracy operations and ensuring maritime safety. These engagements contribute to regional stability

Space and Science & Technology Cooperation

- 1. South Asia Satellite** Myanmar benefits from the South Asia Satellite, launched by India in 2017, which provides communication, tele-education, and telemedicine services to regional partners.
- 2. Technology Transfer and Capacity Building** India has assisted Myanmar in building its technological and scientific capacities through scholarships and technical training programs. Indian institutions collaborate with Myanmar on agricultural research, healthcare, and ICT development.

Major Challenges between India and Myanmar

- 1. Political Instability and the Military Coup** The military coup in Myanmar in February 2021 has complicated India's diplomatic engagement. India is cautious in balancing its strategic interests and promoting democratic values. The international community's sanctions and Myanmar's internal strife also affect India's projects and bilateral ties.
- 2. Insurgency and Border Issues** The India-Myanmar border is often a hotspot for cross-border insurgency and smuggling activities. Groups operating in India's northeast frequently use Myanmar as a base for refuge, posing a security challenge for both countries.

3. **China's Influence** China's growing presence in Myanmar, through infrastructure projects under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and military ties, presents a strategic challenge for India. Myanmar's dependence on China for economic and military support could marginalize India's influence.
4. **Rohingya Crisis** The Rohingya refugee crisis has been a sensitive issue. While India has provided humanitarian aid to the displaced populations, balancing relations with Myanmar, where the crisis originated, has been a diplomatic challenge

Way Forward

- 1. Balanced Engagement** India must continue engaging with Myanmar, balancing its strategic interests with humanitarian and democratic values. While it cannot completely disengage from Myanmar's military regime due to security concerns, it should also promote peace and democracy through dialogue.
- 2. Enhance Connectivity and Economic Cooperation** India should prioritize completing key connectivity projects like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and the Kaladan Multimodal Project to boost trade and investment. These projects are vital for regional integration and development of India's northeastern states.

3. Strengthen Border Security Cooperation Improved security cooperation along the India-Myanmar border is essential to combat insurgency and illegal activities. Both countries should enhance intelligence-sharing, joint operations, and infrastructure development in border areas.

4. Diplomatic Maneuvering in Regional Forums India should use platforms like BIMSTEC and ASEAN to increase its engagement with Myanmar and balance China's growing influence. Multilateral diplomacy can help India maintain strategic ties with Myanmar while addressing regional security concerns.

5. Continued Humanitarian Assistance India must continue to provide humanitarian aid, particularly in light of the Rohingya crisis and Myanmar's political instability. Humanitarian diplomacy can help India maintain its influence without taking a direct stance on Myanmar's internal politics.

Conclusion India-Myanmar relations are built on a foundation of shared history, economic cooperation, and strategic interests. Myanmar's role in India's Act East Policy and its position as a gateway to Southeast Asia make it a key partner for India. However, challenges such as political instability, border security issues, and China's growing influence require India to adopt a connectivity, strengthening border security, and maintaining regional diplomacy, India can navigate the complex dynamics of its relationship with Myanmar and continue to foster mutual growth and stability.



A large, white, sans-serif font text "thankyou" is centered over a blurred background of bookshelves. The books have various spines, including shades of blue, green, red, and brown.

thankyou

