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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



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BILATERAL RELATION

'Buffer' zone along the Line of Actual Control

Context

- Indian and Chinese troops disengaged from Patrolling Point (PP) 17A near Gogra Post. However, the details of a temporary no-patrol zone differs from location to location.

What is a no-patrolling zone?

- When two forces disengage from a face-off point where they had been in close proximity to each other, **one way to prevent new face-offs is to create a zone** in which troops from neither side are allowed for a certain length of time.
- It is an area or a zone where **neither side is allowed to patrol**
- Between India and China, the idea of the no-patrolling zone can be traced back to the border war of 1962.
- Recently, the concept was used by India in 2013. When Chinese troops had pitched tents in an area known as the Bottleneck in the Depsang Plains, and India was negotiating to end the face-off.

India-Nepal relations

Context

- The Cabinet has cleared a plan to build a new bridge connecting India and Nepal. It will be built over the **Mahakali River** and link **Dharchula in Uttarakhand with Nepal's Dharchula**.
- It will be completed within three years and will strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Border dispute:

- Nepal unveiled a **new political map that claimed strategically important land Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh of Uttarakhand as part of its sovereign territory**.
- The map is in retaliation of Nepal's objection to construction of road by India from Dharchula to Lipulekh in Uttarakhand.
- This road connects close to the Line of Actual Control and opens a new route for Kailash Mansarovar yatra via Lipulekh pass.
- This will help pilgrims to avoid dangerous high-altitude routes through Sikkim and Nepal.
- India termed recent action by Nepal as a 'unilateral act' which is not based on historical facts and evidence and also stated that these areas have always been part of the Indian Territory.



Non-nuclear aggression agreement

Context

- India, Pakistan exchanged list of nuclear installations and facilities, covered under the **Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities** between India and Pakistan.

About Non-nuclear aggression agreement:

- It is a **bilateral and nuclear weapons control treaty** between the **India and Pakistan**,
- Objectives:**
 - It was signed to **limit nuclear arms race and pledged not to attack or assist foreign powers to attack on each's nuclear installations and facilities**.
 - It **barred its signatories to carry out a surprise attack (or to assist foreign power to attack) on each other's nuclear installations and facilities**.

- **Significance:** The treaty provides a confidence-building security measure environment and refrained each party from "undertaking, encouraging, or participating in directly or indirectly, any action aimed at causing destruction or damage to any nuclear installation or facility in each country".
- The treaty was drafted in 1988 and it entered into force on January 1991.
- Starting in January 1992, India and Pakistan have annually exchanged lists of their respective military and civilian nuclear-related facilities.

India-Oman defence relations

Context

- Oman top defence official Mohammed Nasser Al Zaabi, co-chaired the **Joint Military Cooperation Committee (JMMC)** with India's Defence Secretary.

About JMMC

- The JMCC is the **highest forum of engagement between India and Oman in the field of defence.**
- JMCC evaluates and provides guidance to the overall framework of defence exchanges between the two nations.
- The 10th JMCC is expected to comprehensively evaluate the ongoing defence exchanges and provide a roadmap for further strengthening defence ties in the coming years.

Why is Oman important from a defence and strategic point of view?

- **Access to Gulf region:** Oman is India's closest defence partner in the Gulf region and an important nation for India's defence and strategic interests.
- **Strategic partnership:** Oman is the only country in the Gulf region with which **all three services of the Indian armed forces conduct regular bilateral exercises** and staff talks. India has secured access to the key **Port of Duqm in Oman for military use and logistical support.** This is part of India's maritime strategy to counter Chinese influence and activities in the region.

Port of Duqm

Location: It is situated on the southeastern seaboard of Oman, overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Strategic significance:

- It is located, in **close proximity to the Chabahar port in Iran.**
- With the **Assumption Island** being developed in **Seychelles and Agalega in Mauritius**, Duqm fits into India's proactive maritime security roadmap.

Economic significance:

- It has a special economic zone, where about \$1.8 billion investments are being made by some Indian companies.
- In the context of strategic oil reserves near Duqm, India had extended an invitation to Oman to participate in building strategic oil reserves in India.

- **Defence cooperation:** Defence exchanges between India-Oman are guided by a Memorandum of Understanding on Military Cooperation. Oman also provides critical operational support to Indian naval deployments in the Arabian Sea for anti-piracy missions.
- **Bilateral training cooperation** between the two sides is also robust. Oman also actively participates in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).
- **Bilateral security collaboration** are undergoing in the fields of counter-terrorism, information-sharing and capacity-building.

Diplomatic relations:

- Sultan Qaboos, the longest-reigning leader of Oman, was a friend of India.
- Gandhi Peace Prize 2019 was conferred on late HM Sultan Qaboos, in recognition of his leadership in strengthening the ties between India & Oman.

People to people ties:

- There are about 6.2 lakh Indians in Oman, of which about 4.8 lakh are workers and professionals.

India-US Homeland Security Dialogue

Context

- India and U.S. review cooperation in counterterrorism and cyber security at a virtual Homeland Security Dialogue.

Highlights of the meet:

- Other issues were identified that can be taken to explore opportunities and synergies in advancing security cooperation.
- Ways to secure **critical infrastructure and global supply chains, maritime security, aviation security, customs enforcement and trade security** were discussed.

India-U.S. Counter-Terrorism and Internal Security cooperation

- Cooperation in counter-terrorism has seen considerable progress with **intelligence sharing, information exchange, operational cooperation, counter-terrorism technology and equipment.**
- **Zero tolerance for terrorism:**
 1. Both sides have called for strict action against all terrorist groups, including the Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen, the Haqqani Network, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, D-Company, and all their affiliates.
 2. Both United Nations and the United States, designated Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed as global terrorist.

India, U.S. Defence Technology and Trade Initiative

Context

- India, U.S. held 11th Defence Technology and Trade Initiative group meeting.

About Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)

- The meetings are **normally held twice a year**, alternating between India and the U.S.
- The aim of the group was **to bring sustained leadership focus to the bilateral defence trade relationship and create opportunities for co-production and co-development of defence equipment.**
- This forum offers an opportunity for Indian and U.S. industries to be directly involved in DTTI and facilitates dialogue between government and industry on issues that impact industrial collaboration

Key outcomes:

- They agree on revised Statement of Intent **to strengthen dialogue on defence technology cooperation.**
- As part of efforts for co-production and co-development of defence equipment under the **Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)**, India and the U.S. agreed on a revised Statement of Intent (SOI) to strengthen dialogue on defence technology cooperation by “pursuing detailed planning and making measurable progress”.
- Four Joint Working Groups focused on **land, naval, air and aircraft carrier technologies** had been established under DTTI to promote mutually agreed projects.
- The groups reported to the co-chairs on ongoing activities and collaborative opportunities, including a number of near-term projects targeted for completion on priority,”
- The two sides recently signed the first project agreement for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle under the Joint Working Group Air Systems.

Project Agreement (PA) for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (ALUAV)

Context

- India & US sign Project Agreement for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

About Project Agreement for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

- It is a significant step towards **deepening defence technology cooperation between India & US.**
- It **outlines collaboration between Indian Air Force & DRDO** towards design, development, demonstration, testing and evaluation of systems to co-develop ALUAV Prototype.
- The PA for ALUAV falls under the Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation (RDT&E) Memorandum of Agreement between Ministry of Defence and US Department of Defence, which was first signed in January 2006 and renewed in January 2015.

Indo-US nuclear deal

Context

- A decade after the historic Indo-US nuclear deal, the pact **did not lead to India setting up foreign-built reactors**, but it helped **fuel domestic power plants** and **give India access to critical technologies in strategic areas.**
- It gave India the **recognition of being a responsible nuclear weapon state with strong non-proliferation credentials.**

U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement or Indo-US nuclear deal

- The **123 Agreement** signed between the **United States of America and the Republic of India** is known as the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement or Indo-US nuclear deal.
- It was signed on October 10, 2008.
- It gave a fillip to the ties between the two nations, which since then have been on an upswing.

Why this agreement was signed?


- India conducted a **nuclear test in 1974**, following which **sanctions** hit the country's defence, nuclear and space programmes hard.
- India developed **Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)**, which are currently the **backbone of the Indian nuclear power generation.**
- In 1998, after conducting nuclear tests, **India declared itself a nuclear weapon state.**
- As the number of nuclear reactors rose, their performance had reduced 50-55 per cent due to shortage of nuclear fuel, as sanctions were there.
- At that time, the **concept of global warming** was also gaining ground, India required energy for its growing economy.

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MTCR

<p>WHAT IS IT?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MTCR membership will enable India to buy high-end missile technology and also enhance its joint ventures with Russia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ India's membership had been blocked in 2015 by Italy, which seemed to link it to the standoff over the detention of the Italian marines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ India's efforts got a boost after it agreed to join the Hague Code of Conduct, dealing with the ballistic missile non-proliferation arrangement.
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MTCR aims at restricting the proliferation of missiles, complete rocket systems, unmanned air vehicles and related technology for those systems capable of carrying a 500 kg payload for at least 300 km, as well as systems intended for the delivery of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). ■ China, which stonewalled India's entry into the 48-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group at the just-concluded Seoul plenary, is not a member of 34-nation MTCR. 		

What is Wassenaar Arrangement?

- It is an **elite club of countries**, which subscribe to **arms export controls**, similar to the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime.
- The body came into being in 1996 to succeed the Cold War-era Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls.
- The goal of the Arrangement is to "**promote transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies**".
- Participants are required to "**ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities which undermine the goal**".
- The aim, according to WA, is also to **prevent the acquisition of these items by terrorists**.

The Australia Group

- It is a **multilateral export control regime** and an **informal group** of countries established in 1985 to help member countries to **identify those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons**.

US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF)

Context

- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs participated in the Global Investors Roundtable organised by the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF).
- The event provided investors with an opportunity to engage with the Union Finance Minister and senior officials of Indian Government to discuss potential investment opportunities and deliberate on the role of ongoing policy reforms that will enable greater Ease-of-Doing-Business in India.

About USISPF

- The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) is a **non-profit organization**.
- Its primary objective is **strengthening the India-US bilateral and strategic partnership through policy advocacy** in the fields of economic growth, entrepreneurship, employment-creation, and innovation.

U.S.-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)

Context

- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the revamped U.S.-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP).

About SCEP:

- It is launched in accordance with **U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership** announced at the **Leaders Summit on Climate**.
- The SCEP organizes inter-governmental engagement across **five pillars of cooperation**:

1. Power and Energy Efficiency
2. Responsible Oil and Gas
3. Renewable Energy
4. Sustainable Growth and
5. Emerging Fuels.

More about news:

- A new **India-US Task Force on Biofuels** was announced to build on the scope of work on cooperation in biofuels sector.
- Both sides will **strengthen the electric grid in India**, to support large-scale integration of renewables, including through **smart grids, energy storage, flexible resources**, and distributed energy resources, and ensure reliable and resilient grid operations, as well as promoting energy efficiency and conservation measures.
- Both sides have **initiated institutionalization of India Energy Modeling Forum** with the constitution of Six Task Forces for carrying out research and modeling in different areas.
- **Joint Committees** have been set up to deliberate on **Energy Data Management, Low Carbon Technologies and Just Transition in Coal Sector**.
- The two sides agreed to **expand the scope of the work to include smart grid and grid storage as part of the second phase of the Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE)-R initiative anchored on the Indian side by the Department of Science & Technology.**

Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement

Context

- India is all set to conclude the **bilateral logistics agreement with Russia** soon while the agreement with the U.K. is in the final stages of conclusion.
- Negotiations with a few more countries including Vietnam are in the preliminary stages.
- It will help Navy to improve **operational turnaround and increase inter-operability on the high seas.**



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India's logistic agreement with other countries:

- India has signed several logistics agreements with all Quad countries, France, Singapore and South Korea beginning with the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with the U.S. in 2016.
- The agreements are administrative arrangements facilitating access to military facilities for exchange of fuel and provisions on mutual agreement simplifying logistical support and increasing operational turnaround of the military when operating away from India.


Logistics Sharing Pact Completes Quad Bedrock

THE PACT
India and Japan have signed an agreement for reciprocal provision of supplies and services between the armed forces of India and the self-defense forces of Japan. Both forces will get access to reciprocal provision of supplies and services at each other's bases and military facilities




THE BIG PICTURE
India has similar agreements with all other Quad members – the US, Australia and Japan. There is a similar agreement with France that has strategically located territories in the southern Indian Ocean. **This helps India in operating virtually across the world with a friendly port or warship within range**


With China fast opening up bases across the region – the Djibouti base being a stark example – these pacts give India the ability to keep some pace in terms of access, **without setting up its own expensive overseas military stations**



HOW IT WILL HELP
It will enhance interoperability and facilitate more bilateral defence engagements under the special strategic & global partnership. It will make it easier for Indian ships and aircraft to operate in areas like the South China Sea and the Pacific



WHAT IT MEANS
Indian and Japanese forces can share fuel, food or even spares during bilateral training activities, United Nations' peacekeeping operations and humanitarian international relief. If the need arises, the pact can be used for other mutually agreed activities as well



RELOS

- It will facilitate access to Russian facilities in the Arctic region, which is seeing increased global activity as new shipping routes open up and India's own investments in the Russian Far East.
- It comes at a time when both nations are looking at significantly scaling up the already broad military-to-military cooperation.

Foundational agreements with U.S.

- India has now signed all **four foundational agreements** with the US
- LEMOA in 2016
- Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018 and
- Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial cooperation (BECA) in 2020
- General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) as an extension to the Industrial Security Annex (ISA), was signed in 2019.


All logistics agreements are reciprocal.

FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENTS		
<p>Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide logistic support, refuelling & berthing facilities for each other's warships & aircraft on barter/equal-value exchange basis ➤ Will not involve stationing of US troops on Indian soil. Nor will India extend support if US goes to war with "a friendly country" ➤ Good for US forces re-balancing to Asia Pacific. Indian forces rarely operate far away from their shores but access to Djibouti & Diego Garcia could be useful 	<p>Communication Interoperability & Security Memorandum Agreement (CISMOA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Technology enabler to help transfer high-tech avionics, encrypted communication & electronic systems to India ➤ US says CISMOA will boost 'interoperability' as well as ensure secrecy of its C4ISR (command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) systems ➤ But fears that US will be able to track & snoop on Indian warships/aircraft equipped with such systems 	
<p>Basic Exchange & Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ US says BECA will help India with advanced satellite & topographical data for long-range navigation & missile-targeting ➤ But India, which has its own satellite imaging capabilities, unwilling for American digital sensors to be positioned on its soil 		




COMCASA

What


Legal framework to allow US to transfer high-end communication security equipment to India.




Why

-  Enable Indian and US forces to operate more closely, share information on secure networks
-  Improve performance of US-sourced platforms with compatible, secure communication systems
-  Establishes platform to share real-time operational information with US & its allies


• The Controversy •




UPA refused because it feared getting dragged into a US military alliance



The agreement may specify US personnel to be given access to US-sourced communication equipment for periodic inspection



The coding and keying systems will be same, allowing US access to Indian tactical information



Integration with existing Russian weapon system may be a challenge

Indo-Bhutan Relations

Context

- NPCI arm to extend BHIM UPI payments system to Bhutan.

More about news:

- National Payment Corporation of India's arm, NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL) has partnered Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) of Bhutan for implementing BHIM UPI in Bhutan.
- The collaboration between NIPL and RMA will **enable acceptance of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) powered BHIM App in Bhutan.**
- And RMA will ensure that the **participating NPCI mobile application through UPI QR transactions is accepted at all RMA acquired merchants in Bhutan.**

Chilahati-Haldibari route

Context

- First goods train on revived Chilahati-Haldibari route to left India for Bangladesh.

More about news:

- The Haldibari-Chilahati train route was opened last year for the operation of the goods train after a gap of 55 years.
- This route was **closed during the India-Pakistan war of 1965.**
- The reopened Haldibari - Chilahati line is the fifth cross-border line to be reinstated, following the:
 1. **Petrapole, India - Benapole, Bangladesh.**
 2. Gede, India - Darshana, Bangladesh.
 3. Singhabad, India - Rohanpur, Bangladesh, and.
 4. Radhikapur, India - Birol, Bangladesh lines.

India-Bangladesh relations

Context

- Bangladesh signs agreement to purchase 420 broad-gauge railway wagons from India.

More about agreement:

- **Project implementation:** It will be done by joint funding of the Government of Bangladesh and Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the **Rolling Stock Operation Improvement Project.**
- **Significance:**
 1. These are high speed bogies with automatic air brake systems that can reach the destination safely at low cost and in less time.
 2. It will help improve freight transportation by replacing old wagons of Bangladesh railway.
 3. It will increase rail connectivity across the country and the neighbouring countries.

"India Out Campaign"

Context

- The recent 'India Out' campaign in the Maldives is against the opposition to the Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF) harbor development deal with India in February 2021, which is being seen as a **way of allowing Indian military presence on native soil.**

More about news:

- The 'India Out' campaign, is widely spreading across social media platforms.
- Reports are being published in Maldives media alleging that the present incumbent government is **allowing India to establish a military base in the island by signing secret agreements, in exchange for financial assistance or other material benefits.**
- This allegation is made against the government because the leader of the current ruling party Mohamed Nasheed urged India to intervene militarily to restore peace and democracy in 2018.

- Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) of former President Abdulla Yameen and its coalition partner People's National Congress (PNC) are trying to **mobilise people against the current government by spreading misleading propaganda against India.**
- Indiaout campaign was launched by the opposition coalition **PPM and PNC both on the street as well as on social media demanding the expulsion of Indian military personnel present in the country.**

India, Australia to hold 2+2 meet

Context

- India and Australia will hold the inaugural '2+2' Ministerial meeting.

2+2 Dialogue mechanism

- The 'two plus two dialogue' is an expression used to indicate that two appointed ministers from each country, (**ministers of defence and external affairs in India's case**) will meet up to discuss the two countries' strategic and security interests.
- **Goal:** To establish a diplomatic conversation between the two countries'.
- India conduct 2+2 dialogue with **U.S., Japan and Australia.**

Joint Use of Chabahar Port

Context

- The **first Trilateral Working Group Meeting** between **India, Iran and Uzbekistan** on **joint use of Chabahar Port** was held virtually.

More about News

- India welcomed **interest of Uzbekistan** to use the Chabahar port as a **transit port**. It will open up economic opportunities for the traders and business community of the region.
- Besides Uzbekistan, other Central Asian countries have also shown interest in using this port.
- India wants to cooperate closely with regional countries on this issue. India's keenness to explore this option comes from its **desire to extend connectivity into Eurasia.**
- The port is being **developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan** to **boost trade ties** among the three countries in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to New Delhi.
- Located in the **Sistan-Balochistan province** on the energy-rich **Iran's southern coast**, the port can be easily accessed from India's western coast, bypassing Pakistan.
- It is considered to be a **major transit point to connect with several Central Asian countries.**

India-Central Asia Dialogue

Context

- Third India-Central Asia Dialogue hosted in New Delhi.

About India-Central Asia Dialogue

- India considers Central Asia as part of its extended neighborhood.
- Further strengthening of relations between India and Central Asian countries with particular focus on **trade, connectivity and development cooperation** was discussed.
- The **second** India-Central Asia Dialogue was also organized by India in October last year via video conferencing.
- It is symbolic of the interest on part of all member countries for greater engagement between them in a spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding.

Background:

- 1st meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in 2019 in **Uzbekistan.**
- **Outcome:** It established a platform for strengthening cooperation between India and the Central Asian countries in political, security, economic and commercial, development partnership, humanitarian and

cultural spheres as well as exchanging views on regional and international issues of mutual interest and enhancing cooperation under the framework of UN and other multilateral fora.

- **Importance:** It called for building a comprehensive and enduring India-Central Asia partnership on the basis of their historical, cultural and civilizational bonds as well as traditionally close people-to-people contacts.

Key outcomes of 2nd meet:

- It emphasized the need to continue close cooperation between the Sanitary and Epidemiological Services of India and the Central Asian countries in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.
- Launched India-Central Asia Business Council (ICABC) in New Delhi.

India-Central Asia Summit

Context

- Prime Minister Modi hosted the **first India-Central Asia Summit** in virtual format. It coincided with the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries.

Participant nations

- Summit was attended by Presidents of the Republic of **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.**

Key outcomes of Summit

- **“Delhi Declaration” joint statement:** To develop mutual connectivity for enhanced trade and commerce between India and Central Asian countries.
- Proposed a number of **high-level exchanges**, including bi-annual summits, and annual meetings of the Foreign, Trade and Cultural Ministers and Secretaries of Security to “strengthen cooperation in the areas of political and development, partnership, trade and connectivity, culture and tourism and security”.
- Adopted a plan to build a **“Central Asia Centre”** in New Delhi.
- Announced two **“Joint Working Groups” (JWGs)** on **Afghanistan and the Chabahar port** project.
- Stressed on **resuming TAPI gas pipeline project** that has run into issues over India-Pakistan tensions and the situation in Afghanistan.

India and UAE CEPA

Context

- India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA), GIFT City and the Abu Dhabi Global Market Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA).
- MoU on building food corridors also signed, that would welcome investment from the UAE into food processing and logistics sectors.

Salient features of the pact:

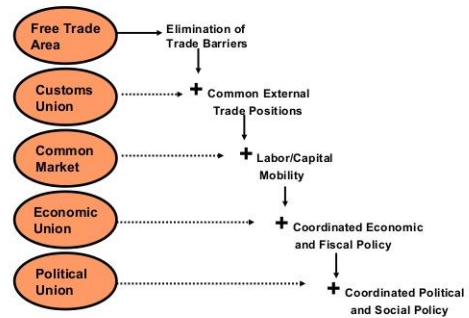
- This Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is set to reduce tariffs for 80 per cent of goods and give zero duty access to 90 per cent of India’s exports to the UAE.
- The agreement covers areas including goods, services, rules of origin, Customs procedures, government procurement, intellectual property rights, and e-commerce.
- It included robust rules of origin to protect both economies from misuse of the agreement by third countries, including a requirement of “melt and pour” for steel exports to qualify as domestically produced products from either country.
- It provides a permanent safeguard mechanism to protect businesses in both countries to prevent “any unnecessary or unwarranted surge in volumes of (imports) any particular product.
- Under the agreement, the UAE has agreed to facilitate market access and regulatory approval within 90 days for Indian pharmaceutical products and medical products that have been approved in developed jurisdictions such as the US, the UK, the EU, Canada and Australia.

- CEPA would have strong anti-dumping measures.
- Deal would cover 90% of India's exports to the UAE. Indian exports are expected to benefit from the "zero duty from day one of the entry into force of the agreement".

CECA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement) vs CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement)

- These are forms of economic agreements are India's way of forging economic ties with other Asian countries like Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (for CECA) and Japan, Sri Lanka, and South Korea.
- CECA is a stepping stone for CEPA. CEPA also has a broad scope in terms of its aspects and items.
- CECA deals mostly with the elimination or reduction of tariffs while CEPA's concerns are the same with the addition of investments and services.
- "Cooperation" in CECA and "Partnership" in CEPA denotes the degree of relationship between two parties. "Cooperation" implies a cohesive but distant effort, but a partnership can entail a more personal and deeper relationship between two parties.

A Hierarchy of Regional Economic Integration Initiatives



2-12

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OTHER COUNTRIES

Iran-US deadlock over nuclear capability

The story so far

- Iran, Russia, China and the European countries resumed negotiations in Vienna to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement, known as the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**.
- Iran has refused to hold direct talks with the U.S.
- European officials are negotiating between the Iranian and American delegations, exchanging talking points and seeking common ground.

The 2015 JCPOA agreement

- It sought to **cut Iran off** a possible path to a **nuclear bomb** in return for **lifting of economic sanctions**.
- Iran agreed to **cut its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98% to 300 kg** and keep them at a low purity level of 3.67%. In return, the **Obama administration lifted sanctions**.
- **Restrictions were introduced on the number of centrifuges** it could keep and **Iran agreed to open all its facilities to the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**.

Minsk agreements

Context

- The United States has warned Russia not to invade Ukraine and urged both countries to return to a set of **agreements** designed to end a **separatist war by Russian-speakers in eastern Ukraine**.

What are Minsk Agreements?

MINSK I

- Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a 12-point ceasefire deal in the capital of Belarus in September 2014.
- Its provisions included **prisoner exchanges, deliveries of humanitarian aid and the withdrawal of heavy weapons**
- The agreement **quickly broke down**, with violations by both sides.

MINSK II

- Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions signed a **13-point agreement** in February 2015 in Minsk.
- The leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine gathered there at the same time and issued a declaration of support for the deal.
- A major blockage has been **Russia's insistence that it is not a party to the conflict and therefore is not bound by its terms**.

'Diplomatic' Olympic boycott

The story so far:

- U.S. Government has not sent any official representation to the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, due to **"diplomatic boycott" of the games**.
- It is latest clash between the U.S. and China, adding to a **long list of differences on trade, Taiwan, human rights and the South China Sea**.
- U.S. took this decision because of China's "human rights abuses and atrocities in Xinjiang against Uighurs (Muslim minority)".
- **Australia, Canada, and New Zealand** has also announced that their officials will not be present at the games.

China reaction:

- It slammed the move as a **"political stunt"** and said Olympics "are not a stage for political posturing and manipulation".

What does a 'diplomatic boycott' of the games mean?

- It means **no government official will be present at the Olympics.**
- It is different from **complete boycott** that means the non-participation by athletes.

AUKUS

Context

- Formation of a **new trilateral security partnership** called AUKUS (Australia-U.K.-U.S.).

AUKUS aim: to "update and enhance shared ability to take on the threats of the 21st century."

What are the terms of the grouping?

- Intent for AUKUS is to **preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific in the long term.**
- It drew a sharp response from China, whose territorial ambitions across the Indo-Pacific may well have been a key factor behind the formation of this group.
- Beijing's consternation that **AUKUS will "undermine" regional peace and "intensify" an arms race.**
- **Cornerstone of AUKUS:** U.S. and the U.K. will **transfer technology to build a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia** within 18 months.

China opens first road-rail transport link to Indian Ocean

Context

- A newly-launched **railway line from the Myanmar border to the Chengdu in western China**, provides China a new road-rail transportation channel to the Indian Ocean.

The China-Myanmar New Passage

- The **transport corridor involves a sea-road-rail link.**
- This passage **connects the logistics lines of Singapore, Myanmar and China.**
- It is currently the **most convenient land and sea channel linking the Indian Ocean with southwest China,** "the one-way journey saves 20 to 22 days".
- China also has plans to **develop another port in Kyaukphyu in the Rakhine state**, including a proposed railway line from Yunnan directly to the port, but the progress there has been stalled by unrest in Myanmar.
- Chinese planners have also looked at the **Gwadar port in Pakistan as another key outlet to the Indian Ocean that will bypass the Malacca Straits.**
- **Gwadar** is being developed as part of the **China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** to the far western Xinjiang region, but has been slow to take off amid concerns over security. Plans are underway to develop Chin Shwe Haw as a "**border economic cooperation zone**" under the **Belt and Road Initiative.**



Morocco-Israel deal

Context

- Morocco has become the fourth Arab country to normalize ties with Israel in five months.

More about News

- On December 10, U.S. President Donald Trump announced the deal, claiming that the series of normalization agreements between Arab countries (the **UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and now Morocco**) and the Jewish state was bringing peace to West Asia.

- In return for Morocco's decision to establish formal ties with Israel, the U.S. has **recognized Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara**, a disputed territory in northwestern Africa, which has been under Moroccan control for decades.
- Morocco has long been campaigning internationally, using economic pressure and diplomacy, for recognition of its claims to Western Sahara.

Iran's calculated risk

Context

- Iran is enhancing its nuclear programme, which can be reversed if talks with the U.S. are revived.

Background

- The **P5+1 nations (China, France, Russia, the U.K. and the U.S., plus Germany)** reached an agreement with Iran in 2015 to scuttle the country's nuclear programme.
- It was expected that the agreement would lead to a new beginning in West Asia. However, this did not happen.

The Iran problem

- The Barack Obama administration's calculation was that denying Iran a path to the bomb was in the best interest of everyone, including Iran's rivals in the region.
- Washington saw Iran's nuclear programme, which was at an advanced stage in 2015, as a national security problem and tackled it via diplomacy.
- But Iran's regional rivals, mainly **Israel and Saudi Arabia**, who are also America's allies, saw the Iran problem differently.
- For them, Iran's nuclear programme was not the problem but Iran itself.
- As Tehran's influence across West Asia, its backing for non-state militias, and its ambition to emerge as a dominant pillar in the region based on the political heft of the **Shia community**.
- Mr. Obama's nuclear **deal lifted sanctions** and allowed Iran to move towards claiming its natural economic and political might. This upset the Israelis and the Saudis.

Bangladesh signs first Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) since its independence

Context

- Bangladesh signed its **first Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Bhutan** allowing **duty free access to a range of goods** between the two countries.
- This is the first PTA Bangladesh has signed with any country in the world.
- The agreement was signed on the occasion marking the **50 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries**.
- In 1971, Bhutan was the first country in the world, followed by India as the second, to recognise Bangladesh as an independent country.
- Under the PTA 100 Bangladeshi products will get **duty free access to Bhutan**.
- At the same time, 34 items from Bhutan will get duty free access into Bangladesh. Further items can be added in the list later on the basis of discussion between the two countries.
- The trade volume between the two countries is approximately 50 million dollars with 7.56 million of export and 42.09 million import into Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh is expected to sign 11 more PTAs and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with countries like Indonesia and Nepal by June next year.

China and Pakistan signed military deal

Context

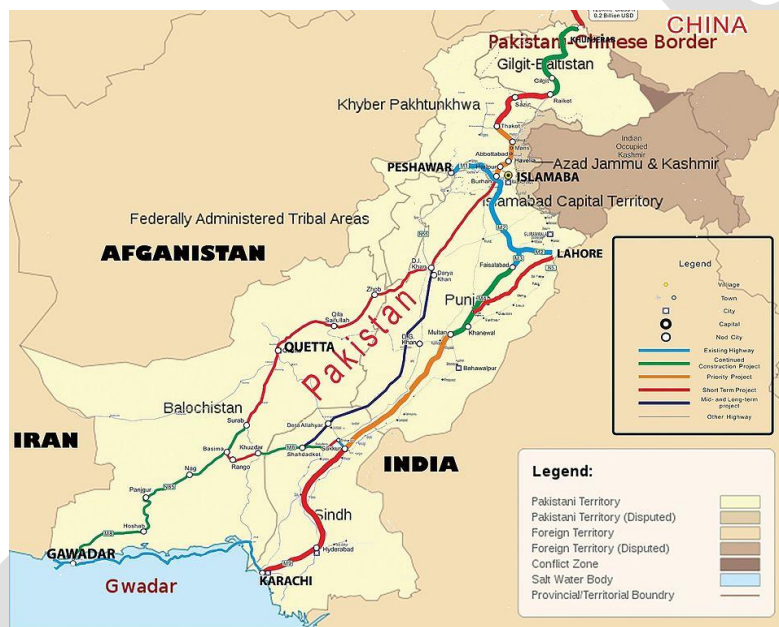
- China and Pakistan signed a new memorandum of understanding to boost their already close military relations.
- Both countries discussed “matters of mutual interest, regional security and enhanced bilateral defence collaboration” along with on-going projects under the **China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**, in which the Pakistani military is playing an increasingly prominent role.

‘All-weather friendship’


- Both sides “reaffirmed their **commitment to ‘iron brotherhood’ and ‘all-weather’ Friendship.**”
- While details of the new MoU signed by the two militaries were not immediately available, it follows another agreement signed last year.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an economic route stretching from western China through Pakistan to the Indian Ocean coast.
- It is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.



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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, PACTS AND AGREEMENTS

Quad Grouping

Context

- Quad officials discuss possible leaders' summit in September.

About QUAD:

- In the aftermath of Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, **Australia, Japan, India, and America formed a Regional Core Group in 2004.**
- Then **Japanese PM Shinzo Abe** proposed an “**Arc of Freedom and Prosperity**” in 2006.
- The first meeting of the initial Quad was held in **May 2007 as officials gathered for the ASEAN Regional Forum meeting.**
- Japanese PM Shinzo Abe after returning to office called for a “**democratic security diamond,**” a Quad 2.0.

The QUAD 2.0:

- The move to set up the quadrilateral also comes in the **backdrop of growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and China's aggressive posturing.**
- Since its revival in late 2017, the Quad met twice a year in 2018 and 2019.
- In New York in September 2019, the four countries held the first ministerial-level meeting of the Quad “to discuss collective efforts in shared commitments and close cooperation on counter terrorism, mentoring, assistance in disaster relief, airtime security, cooperation, development, finance and cybersecurity efforts.”

Community of Portuguese Language Countries

Context

- India joined Community of Portuguese Language Countries as Associate Observer in July.
- This sets a **new platform for strengthening India's historic bonds of friendship with Lusophone countries** and pursuing cooperation in areas of mutual interest.
- The move will further enrich and strengthen India's ties with the Portuguese speaking world.

About Community of Portuguese Language Countries

- It is also known as the Lusophone Commonwealth.
- It is an **international organization and political association** of Lusophone nations across four continents, where **Portuguese is an official language.**
- The CPLP operates as a privileged, multilateral forum for the mutual cooperation of the governments, economies, non-governmental organizations, and peoples of the Lusofonia.
- The CPLP consists of 9 member states and 32 associate observers, located in Europe, South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania, totaling 37 countries and 4 organizations.
- CPLP is a multilateral forum created to **deepen cultural, economic, and political cooperation** among the Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) nations of the world.

The prime objectives of the CPLP are:

- Promotion and dissemination of the Portuguese language
- Political and diplomatic cooperation between the member states of the CPLP
- Cooperation in all areas, including education, health, science and technology, defense, agriculture, public administration, communications, justice, public safety, culture, sports and media.

IBSA

Context

- India organises the IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Tourism Ministers' virtual meet.

About IBSA:

- IBSA is a **trilateral, developmental initiative** between the Government of **India**, The Government of Federative Republic of **Brazil** and The Government of the Republic of **South Africa** to promote South-South cooperation and exchange.
- On 6 June 2003, the Brasilia declaration was signed by the foreign ministers of India, Brazil and South Africa.
- The **aim** of the IBSA Tripartite Agreement is **for strengthening relations between the member countries for economic development and for promoting cooperation in the field of tourism and expansion of tourism relations with a view to understand and appreciate each other's history, culture and way of life.**
- Cooperation in IBSA is on **three fronts**:
 - As a **forum for consultation and coordination on global and regional political** issues, such as, the reform of the global institutions of political and economic governance, WTO/Doha Development Agenda, climate change, terrorism etc.;
 - Trilateral collaboration on concrete areas/projects**, through fourteen working groups and six People-to-People Forums, for the common benefit of three countries; and
 - Assisting other developing countries** by taking up projects in the latter through IBSA Fund. IBSA's success demonstrates, most vividly, the desirability and feasibility of South-South cooperation beyond the conventional areas of exchange of experts and training.

United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC)

Context

- The Global Geospatial Information Community was sensitized about the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) to be organized by India in October next year.
- It would show a glimpse of India's evolving geospatial ecosystem.

About United Nation Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM):

- It is an **initiative of the United Nations** to foster the **global development geospatial information.**
- UN-GGIM organizes the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) every **four years** with the objectives of **enhancing international collaboration among the Member States and relevant stakeholders in Geospatial information management and capacities.**
- The first UNWGIC was organized by China in October 2018.
- The UNGGIM has entrusted the responsibility of organizing the second UNWGIC to India during October 2022.
- India will organize the event as a part of the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (Celebration of 75 years of Indian Independence)".

ASEAN consensus on Myanmar

Context

- India chaired a closed **UN Security Council** meeting on Myanmar and welcomed the ASEAN five-point consensus.

The ASEAN five-point consensus:

- It states that there shall be an **immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar.**
- All parties shall **exercise utmost restraint; constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people.**
- A special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the secretary-general of ASEAN.

- ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre (ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management); and
- The special envoy and delegation shall visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned.

About ASEAN

- It is officially the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations**.
- It is an **economic union** comprising 10 member states in Southeast Asia. There are: **Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam**.
- It promotes **intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, educational, and sociocultural integration** between its members and other countries in Asia.

What is UNSC?

- It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).
- It is charged with ensuring international peace and security, recommending the admission of new UN members to the General Assembly, and approving any changes to the UN Charter.
- Its powers include establishing peacekeeping operations, enacting international sanctions, and authorizing military action.
- The UNSC is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions on member states.
- Like the UN as a whole, the Security Council was created after World War II to address the failings of the League of Nations in maintaining world peace.
- The Security Council consists of fifteen members, of which five are permanent: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- Permanent members can veto any substantive resolution, including those on the admission of new member states to the United Nations or nominees for the office of Secretary-General, but there is no veto right in emergency special sessions of the General Assembly.
- The other ten members are elected on a regional basis for a term of two years.

BRICS New Development Bank

Context

- India welcomes Egypt as 4th member of BRICS New Development Bank.

About New Development Bank:

- It aims to **mobilize resources for development projects in BRICS, emerging economies, and developing countries**.
- It formerly referred to as the **BRICS Development Bank**.
- It is a **multilateral development bank** established by the **BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)**.
- It support **public or private projects** through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.
- The bank is headquartered in **Shanghai, China**.
- In **September 2021, Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates and Uruguay** joined the NDB.
- In **December 2021, the NDB admitted Egypt as new member**.

Build BRICS Better

Context

- The 13th BRICS summit held under India's chairmanship.

Four priorities of BRICS

- Launched by a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of **Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2006** and riding on the political synergy created by regular summits since 2009.
- BRIC turned itself into **BRICS in 2010, with the entry of South Africa**.
- The grouping has gone through a reasonably productive journey. It serve as a **bridge between the Global North and Global South**.

- It developed a **common perspective on a wide range of global and regional issues**; established the **New Development Bank**; created a **financial stability net** in the form of **Contingency Reserve Arrangement**; and is on the verge of setting up a **Vaccine Research and Development Virtual Center**.

BRICS-Agricultural Research Platform

Context

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare announced the operationalization of BRICS Agricultural Research Platform.

About BRICS- Agricultural Research Platform:

- It is a global platform for **science-led agriculture**.
- It will **help in addressing the issues of world hunger, under-nutrition, poverty and inequality by promoting sustainable agricultural development** through strategic cooperation in agriculture and allied sector.
- It has been operationalized to **intensify cooperation in the areas of agricultural research, technology, policy, innovations and capacity building** including technologies for smallholder farming and to sustainably increase yields and farmers income in the BRICS member countries.
- The platform shall **escalate the exchange of research findings and innovation and best practices for up-scaling in the respective BRICS Nations**.
- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research** is the focal organization from India.

Key highlights of the BRICS Agriculture Ministers meet:

- Agro-biodiversity has a **prime role in addressing the food security and nutrition** and developing the resilient agri-food systems.
- **Action plan 2021-24 for agricultural cooperation** among BRICS countries adopted.
- By increasing agricultural production and increasing the income of farmers, the problem of income inequality and food price volatility can be overcome.
- India is actively promoting the diversification of its agri-food systems through countrywide programs such as pulses, oilseeds, horticultural crops, National Bamboo Mission and the recently launched National Palm Oil Mission.
- The objective of these programs is to **increase the income of the farmers along with providing diversification in both farm and plate**.
- United Nations has declared the year **2023 as the International Year of Millets** and preparations are being made to celebrate the International Year of Millets at the global level.
- India is focusing on **capacity building in research, teaching, policy-making, trade and farming of nutritious cereals**, which will benefit the farmers while conserving the amazing diversity available in this group of crops.
- After the meeting a Joint declaration of the eleventh meeting of BRICS Agriculture Ministers covering a wide range of focus areas for future cooperation amongst BRICS countries was adopted.
- The Action Plan of 2021-24 for Agricultural Cooperation of BRICS Countries provides for enhanced cooperation in the field of agriculture amongst BRICS nations and focuses on the themes of food security, welfare of farmers, conservation of agro-biodiversity, resilience of food and agricultural production systems, promotion of digital agricultural solutions etc.

About BRICS

- It is an **informal group of states** comprising the Federative Republic of **Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa**.
- **India held the chair in 2012 and 2016** too.
- The importance of BRICS is self-evident: it **represents 42% of the world's population, 30% of the land area, 24% of global GDP and 16% of international trade**.
- It is actually a forum than a traditional-type organization with **rigid membership and regulations**.
- Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC" (or "the BRICs"), before the **induction of South Africa in 2010**.

- At the **Fortaleza Summit (2014)**, in Brazil, the **New Development Bank (NDB)** and the **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)** were created
- Among other areas of collaboration, matters pertaining to **drug trafficking** is an important area of cooperation among the BRICS member states.



Artemis Accords

Context

- New Zealand became the **eleventh signatory to the Artemis Accords**.
- **It a blueprint for space cooperation.**
- It supports the U.S. space agency's (NASA) **plans to return humans to the moon by 2024 and to launch a historic human mission to Mars.**

About Artemis Accords:

- It ensures that space exploration is conducted in a **safe, sustainable and transparent manner and in full compliance with international law.**
- As more countries establish a presence in outer space, via research stations, satellites, or even rocket launches, these accords **provide a set of principles to create a safe and transparent environment that inspires exploration, science, and commercial activities.**
- The other signatories to the accords are the U.S., Australia, Britain, Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and Ukraine. Brazil also said it plans to sign.

African Union

Context

- The African Union suspended Mali's membership in response to military coup and threatened sanctions, if a civilian-led government is not restored.

About AU:

- The African Union (AU) is a **continental union** consisting of 55 member states located on the continent of Africa.
- The AU was announced in the **Sirte Declaration** in Sirte, Libya in 1999, calling for the establishment of the African Union.
- The intention of the AU was to replace the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) by 32 signatory governments.
- Within the African Union, there are official bodies, such as the Peace and Security Council and the Pan-African Parliament.
- The birth of the AU is a legacy of the Pan-African movement towards creating institutions to achieve the objectives of peace, political stability, democracy, economic integration and good governance.

The objectives of the AU are the following:

- To achieve greater unity, cohesion and solidarity between the African countries and African nations.
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States.
- To accelerate the political and social-economic integration of the continent.

India's commitment to AU:

- India is a member of the AU Partners Group (AUPG), which meets periodically in Addis Ababa.
- Since the inception of the African Union, India has been regularly participating in its various Summits.
- The first ever **India-Africa Forum Summit**, representing AU and the Regional Economic Communities of Africa, was held in New Delhi in 2008.
- The Summit adopted the Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Cooperation, which constituted the blueprint for cooperation between India and Africa in the 21st century.
- India undertook **Pan African E network Project (PANEP)** to support capacity building in education and medicine in Africa in association with the AU.

UN Economic and Social Council

Context

- India has been elected to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), **one of the six main organs of the United Nations** for the **2022-24 term**.
- India was elected in the **Asia-Pacific States** category along with **Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Oman**.
- India is currently serving the **2021-22 term as a non-permanent member** of the powerful UN Security Council and will assume the Presidency of the 15-nation UN organ in August.

ECOSOC

- The UN Charter established ECOSOC in 1945 as one of the six main organs of the United Nations.
- The 54-member ECOSOC is at the heart of the United Nations system to advance the **three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental**.
- It is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals.
- It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.
- ECOSOC's members are elected for **three-year terms by the General Assembly**.
- Seats on the Council are allotted based on **geographical representation** with 14 allocated to African states, 11 to Asian states, six to eastern European states, 10 to Latin American and Caribbean states and 13 to western European and other states.

Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC)

Context

- China is hosting foreign ministers from the 10 ASEAN countries with Beijing pushing for closer economic cooperation and aligning COVID-19 recovery efforts.

About Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC)

- It is a **multilateral format** established in 2016 for **cooperation between the riparian states of the Lancang River and Mekong River**.
- The Lancang is the part of the Mekong that flows through China.
- **Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand** are five downstream countries of the Mekong River.
- The central purpose of the format is for China to **manage water flow from its hydropower dams with the other riparian states**.
- LMC Special Fund was created in 2016 to **aid in small and medium-sized projects by the Lancang-Mekong countries**.



Mekong-Ganga Cooperation

Context

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar addressed the 11th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation meeting comprising six countries – **India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam**
- He also called for a **"collective and collaborative"** response to effectively deal with coronavirus pandemic, **saying the virus does not respect national boundaries.**

Mekong-Ganga Cooperation

- The MGC initiative comprising **six countries** – **India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.**
- It was launched in 2000 to **boost cooperation in a range of areas including connectivity, tourism and culture.**

'New Atlantic Charter'

Context

- **USA and UK** are looking forward to sign the New Atlantic against a backdrop of both political and personal differences.

New Atlantic Charter Aim:

- to **"defend the principles, values, and institutions of democracy and open societies."**

Atlantic Charter

- This declaration was signed by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in August 1941.
- It was signed for setting out **common goals for the world after Second World War.**
- Those goals included **freer trade, disarmament and the right to self-determination of all people.**
- It is often cited as a cornerstone of the trans-Atlantic "special relationship."
- The charter laid the **foundation for the United Nations and NATO.**

'Open Societies Statement' at G-7

Context:

- India signed off on a joint statement by G-7 and guest countries on "open societies".

'Open Societies Statement'

- It reaffirms and encourage the values of **"freedom of expression, both online and offline, as a freedom that safeguards democracy and helps people live free from fear and oppression"**.
- It also refers to **"politically motivated internet shutdowns"** as one of the threats to freedom and democracy.
- The joint statement was signed by the G-7 countries, and India, South Korea, Australia and South Africa, with host British Prime Minister calling them **"Democracies 11"**.
- It is directed at **China and Russia.**
- **India has been under scrutiny over Internet curbs in Jammu and Kashmir** even as the Government is locked in a face-off over its new IT rules with tech giants such as Twitter.
- It affirmed **"human rights for all, both online and offline, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and other human rights instruments.
- It is committed to **"strengthen open societies globally by protecting civic space and media freedom, promoting freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of religion or belief, and by tackling all forms of discrimination, including racism."**

ASEAN's Objectives:

- To accelerate economic growth and through that social progress and cultural development.
- To promote regional peace and stability based on the rule of law and the principle of United Nations charter.
- In 2003, ASEAN moved along the path of the European Union by agreeing to establish an ASEAN community comprising three pillars: **the ASEAN security community, the ASEAN economic community, and the ASEAN socio-cultural community.**

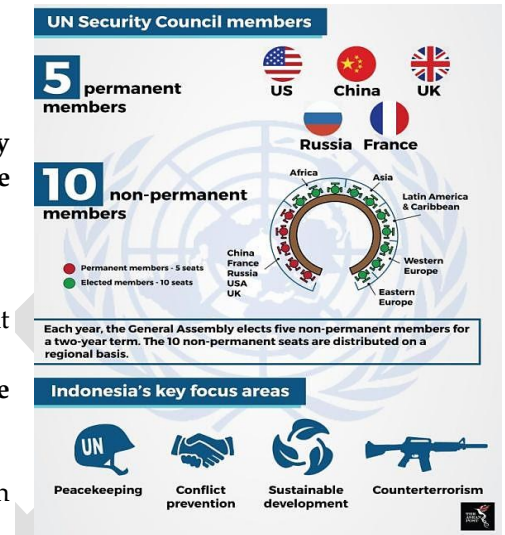
India's 5-point agenda to enhance maritime cooperation

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently **presided over a UN Security Council (UNSC) Open Debate on the topic- Enhancing Maritime Security.**

India's 5-point agenda

- The UN Security Council then adopted India's presidential statement on maritime security.
- **Five-point agenda laid down by PM to increase maritime cooperation:**
 1. Removal of barriers to legitimate maritime trade.
 2. Resolution of maritime disputes peacefully in accordance with international law.
 3. Fight threats from natural disasters, non-state actors.
 4. Conservation of marine resources.
 5. Promoting responsible maritime connectivity.



Open Skies Treaty

Context

- The US has told Russia it will not rejoin an arms control deal that permits unarmed aerial flights over dozens of participating countries.
- In November 2020, the United States left the OST first after accusing Russia of violating the pact- allegations that Russia denied.

What is the Open Skies Treaty?

- First proposed in 1955 by former US President Dwight Eisenhower as a means to deescalate tensions during the Cold War, the landmark treaty was eventually signed in 1992 between **NATO members and former Warsaw Pact countries** following the demise of the Soviet Union.
- It went into effect in 2002 and had **35 signatories**, including key players US and Russia, along with **one non-ratifying member (Kyrgyzstan)**.
- **Aims: Building confidence among members through mutual openness**, thus reducing the chances of accidental war.

What all is allowed under this treaty?

- Under the treaty, a member state can **"spy" on any part of the host nation, with the latter's consent.**
- A country can **undertake aerial imaging over the host state after giving notice 72 hours before, and sharing its exact flight path 24 hours before.**
- The information gathered **has to be shared with all member states.**
- **Only approved imaging equipment is permitted on the surveillance flights**, and officials from the host state can also stay on board throughout the planned journey.

BIMSTEC

Context

- PM Modi addressed on the occasion of 24th BIMSTEC Day.

What is BIMSTEC?

- It is a Bay of Bengal camp, but **two land-locked states – Nepal and Bhutan** – are also part of the seven member-group.
- Five of them are from South Asia – **India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka** – and two from South East Asia – **Myanmar and Thailand**.
- This region is home to around 1.5 billion people which make up for around 22% of the world's population.
- The region has a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$2.8 trillion.

What are the founding principles of the BIMSTEC?

- The cooperation within BIMSTEC will be based on respect for the principle of
 1. **sovereign equality**
 2. **territorial integrity**
 3. **political independence**
 4. **non-interference in internal affairs**
 5. **peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit.**

Global Corporate tax and India

Context

- G7 countries have reached a deal on taxing multinational companies.

More about news:

- It has been ratified is to **force multinationals to pay taxes where they operate.**
- The second decision in the agreement commits states to a **global minimum corporate tax rate of 15% to avoid countries undercutting each other.**
- The deal is now likely to be put before a G20 meeting in July this year.
- The deal **aims to end race to the bottom on corporate tax rates as countries compete to lure multinationals.**

Objectives:

- to **discourage multinationals from shifting profits – and tax revenues – to low-tax countries regardless of where their sales are made**
- to **address the low effective rates of tax shelled out by some of the world's biggest corporations, including digital giants such as Apple, Alphabet and Facebook.**

Financial Action Task Force

Context

- FATF's regional body retains Pakistan on 'enhanced follow-up' for sufficient outstanding requirements.

What is FATF?

- The FATF is an **inter-governmental body.**
- **Aim:** to "set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system".
- It currently has 39 members, including two regional organisations – the **European Commission and the Gulf Cooperation Council.**
- **India is a member** of the FATF consultations and its Asia Pacific Group.

What is 'Grey List' and 'Black list'?

- The FATF "greylist" refers to countries that are **under "monitored jurisdictions"**.
- "Blacklist" refers to those facing a **"call to action" or severe banking strictures, sanctions and difficulties in accessing loans.**

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Context

- Cabinet gives ex-post facto nod for signing, ratifying SCO agreement on mass media cooperation.

What is SCO?

- It is a **Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance.**
- The original five nations, with the exclusion of Uzbekistan, were previously members of the **Shanghai Five group.**
- Since then, the organisation has expanded its membership to eight countries when **India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.**
- **The Heads of State Council (HSC)** is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO.
- It is the **largest regional organisation** in the world in terms of **geographical coverage and population, covering three-fifths of the Eurasian continent** and nearly half of the human population.
- The SCO is widely regarded as the **"alliance of the East"**, due to its growing centrality in Asia-Pacific, and has been the primary security pillar of the region.

The **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)**, headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is a **permanent organ of the SCO**, which serves to **promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.**

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit

Introduction

- Prime Minister participated virtually in the 21st Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Prime Minister address highlighted

- Problems caused by **growing radicalisation and extremism in the broader SCO region**, which runs counter to the history of the region as a bastion of moderate and progressive cultures and values.
- Recent developments in Afghanistan could further exacerbate this trend towards extremism.
- He suggested that **SCO could work on an agenda to promote moderation and scientific and rational thought**, which would be especially relevant for the youth of the region.
- SCO could develop a **code of conduct on 'zero tolerance'** towards terrorism in the region, and highlighted the risks of drugs, arms and human trafficking from Afghanistan.
- He stressed that **connectivity projects should be transparent, participatory and consultative, in order to promote mutual trust.**
- The SCO Summit was followed by an Outreach session on Afghanistan between SCO and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO).
- The **Collective Security Treaty Organization** is an **intergovernmental military alliance in Eurasia that consists of selected post-Soviet states.** The treaty had its origins to the Soviet Armed Forces, which was gradually replaced by the United Armed Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States.
- Member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization are:
 1. Armenia
 2. Belarus
 3. Kazakhstan
 4. Kyrgyzstan
 5. Russia
 6. Tajikistan

Food and Agriculture Organization

Context

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare addresses the 42nd session of FAO Conference.

About FAO:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts **to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security**.
- FAO is composed of 197 member states.
- It is headquartered in Rome, Italy.
- It helps governments and development agencies coordinate their activities to improve and develop agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and land and water resources.
- It conducts research, provides technical assistance to projects, operates educational and training programs, and collects data on agricultural output, production, and development.
- The **FAO's Regular Programme budget is funded by its members**, through contributions set at the FAO Conference.
- This budget covers core technical work, cooperation and partnerships including the Technical Cooperation Programme, knowledge exchange, policy and advocacy, direction and administration, governance and security.

Codex Alimentarius Commission

- FAO and the World Health Organization created the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1961 to **develop food standards, guidelines and texts such as codes of practice under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme**.
- The main aims of the programme are **protecting consumer health, ensuring fair trade and promoting co-ordination of all food standards work** undertaken by intergovernmental and non-governmental organization.

International Labour Organisation

Context

- India completed its tenure as Chair of Governing Body of International Labour Organization after holding the position for the period October 2020- June 2021.
- India had assumed the Chairmanship after a gap of 35 years.
- During India's Chairmanship, the 109th session of the International Labour Conference held in June 2021 were conducted through virtual mode.

About ILO:

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a **United Nations agency** whose mandate is **to advance social and economic justice through setting international labour standards**.
- Founded in 1919 under the League of Nations, it is the **first and oldest specialised agency of the UN**.
- The ILO has 187 member states: 186 out of 193 UN member states plus the Cook Islands.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is a member of the **United Nations Development Group, a coalition of UN organization aimed at helping meet the Sustainable Development Goals**.
- Within the UN system this organization has a **unique tripartite structure**: all standards, policies, and programmes require discussion and approval from the representatives of **governments, employers, and workers**.

International Civil Aviation Organization

Context

- The United Nation's aviation safety watchdog, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), is expected to conduct a safety audit of the Indian aviation sector 'in a few months'.
- The audit was scheduled for June, but we sought postponement due to the severity of the second wave of COVID-19.

ICAO:

- The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a **specialized and funding agency of the United Nations**.
- The ICAO audits the aviation safety and aviation security oversight capacities of its 193 Member-States.
- These cover legislation, resources and other capacities, which State governments establish to effectively implement the ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).
- There are eight audit areas, which include **aircraft operations, airworthiness of civil aircraft, aerodromes, air navigation services and accident and serious incident investigations, among others**.
- It changes the principles and techniques of international air navigation and fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth.
- Its **headquarters is located in the Canada**.
- It adopts standards and recommended practices concerning air navigation, its infrastructure, flight inspection, prevention of unlawful interference, and facilitation of border-crossing procedures for international civil aviation.
- ICAO **defines the protocols for air accident investigation that are followed by transport safety authorities** in countries signatory to the **Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation**.
- The **Air Navigation Commission (ANC)** is the technical body within ICAO.
- **India is a founding member of ICAO**.

Central & South Asia connectivity conference 2021

Context

- Uzbekistan hosted a high-level International Conference titled "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity. Challenges and Opportunities" at Tashkent.
- It was attended by President of Afghanistan, Ministers from Central Asian, West Asian and South Asian countries, including Minister of External Affairs of India.
- Delegates from over 40 countries and about 30 international organizations, and heads of think tanks participated in the conference.

Central Asian Connectivity

- The Iranian port of Chabahar has the **potential to shift some of the regional dynamics in India's favor**.
- **Double landlocked Uzbekistan** has been interested in using the port to expand its trade and transit options.
- Uzbekistan has already developed **rail connectivity into Afghanistan** as a means to link with Iranian railway lines reflects Tashkent's seriousness.
- The region is viewed as **Russia's immediate backyard** and Moscow has traditionally maintained a dominant role in relations with Central Asia, **China has steadily strengthened its footprint**. India has also been **pursuing both geopolitical and economic ties** with the region.

OPEC

Context:

- The OPEC+ group of countries had, entered into a **two-year agreement**, which entailed **steep cuts in crude production to deal with a sharp fall in the price of oil as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic**.

About OPEC:

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is an **intergovernmental organization** of 13 countries.
- A larger group called **OPEC+** was formed in late 2016 to have more control on the global crude oil market
- **Mission:** To "coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets, in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers, and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry."
- The current OPEC members are: Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. Former OPEC members are Ecuador, Indonesia and Qatar.
- OPEC+ came into existence in late 2016 as a **means for the top oil-exporting nations to exert control over the price of the precious commodity.**
- OPEC+ is an **amalgamation of OPEC and 10 other oil-exporting nations** such as Russia and Kazakhstan.

G20 Troika

Context

- India has joined the G20 Troika.
- India will **assume the G20 Presidency** on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia, and **will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023.**

About G-20 troika:

- **Membership:** Troika refers to the **top grouping within G20** that consists of the **current, previous, and incoming** presidencies (**Indonesia, Italy and India**). Indonesia assumed the G20 Presidency and will convene various G20 meetings throughout the year.
- **Purpose:** to ensure consistency and continuity of the G20's agenda.

16TH G-20 SUMMIT

Context

- The 16th G20 Summit was **hosted by Italy in Rome**. The theme chosen by Italy for their Presidency of the G20 is **'People, Planet, Prosperity'** with a focus on four broad thematic areas-
 1. Recovery from the pandemic and global health governance;
 2. Economic recovery and resilience
 3. Climate Change
 4. Sustainable Development and Food Security.

Key Highlights

- **Global Health Summit** (in partnership with the EU), **First ever G20 Joint meeting of the Foreign and Development Ministers**, a **standalone meeting of the Development Ministers focused on food security**, the **first meeting of G20 Research Ministers**, a **Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment**, a joint meeting of the Health and Finance Ministers.
- **Rome Declaration** was adopted which called for promotion of strong multilateral cooperation towards ending the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting recovery, and to continue contributing joint efforts to better prevent, detect and respond to global health risks and emergencies.
- On efforts to mitigate the pandemic, **focus was on vaccine production and distribution**, with assurances of support to WHO's target of inoculating 40% of the global population by 2021.
- Signed the **'Matera Declaration on Food Security and Nutrition'** to address issues of food security, malnutrition, and hunger by focusing on transformation of the agriculture sector.
- Also endorsed the **Final Political Agreement** on a two pillar solution to address tax challenges, marking the most significant global tax reform in over a century which will mandate multinational companies to pay a minimum tax of 15% in the countries of their operation.
- **Extraordinary Leaders' Summit on Afghanistan** to discuss the G20's role in responding to the crisis in Afghanistan.
- On climate change, **G20 recommitted to providing \$100 billion a year toward adaptation, mitigation, and green technologies**, focusing on the needs of developing countries.

Rome Declaration:

- It consists of **16 mutually agreed principles, which aims to guide joint action for preventing future health crises and to build a safer, equitable and sustainable world.**
- Supporting and enhancing the existing multilateral health architecture for detection, response, prevention and preparedness.
- Working towards monitoring & implementation of multi-sectoral, evidence-based One Health approach in a bid to address risks emerging due to interface between human, animal & environment.
- Fostering all-of-society and health-in-all policies.
- Promotion of multilateral trading system
- Enabling equitable, affordable and global access to high-quality, safe & effective health systems.
- Supporting low and middle-income countries in a bid to build expertise, and develop local & regional manufacturing capacities.
- Focus on data sharing, capacity building, voluntary technology and licensing agreements.
- Enhancing support to existing preparedness and prevention structures.
- Investing in worldwide health & care workforce
- Investing in adequate resources, training, and staffing of diagnostic public & animal health laboratories.
- Investments for developing and improving inter-operable early warning surveillance, information, and trigger systems
- Investments in domestic, international & multilateral cooperation for the purpose of research, development & innovation
- Increasing effectiveness of preparedness & response measures by extending support and promoting meaningful & inclusive dialogue
- Ensuring effectiveness of financing mechanisms
- Coordination on pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical measures and emergency response with respect to sustainable and equitable recovery
- Addressing the need of streamlined, enhanced, sustainable and predictable mechanisms for financing pandemic preparedness, prevention, detection and response in long term.

Sherpa for G20 summit

Context

- The government has appointed Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textile Piyush Goyal as Sherpa for the G20, replacing former Union Minister Suresh Prabhu.

More about news:

- **Italy holds the presidency of the G20 formation**, India will be holding the presidency from December 1, 2022 and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit in 2023.

What is G-20?

- India has been a **member of the G20 since its inception in 1999.**
- G20 is a major international grouping that brings together 19 of the world's major economies and the European Union, with its members accounting for more than 80% of global GDP, 75% of trade and 60% of population.
- Apart from India, the G20 includes **Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, the U.K., the U.S. and the European Union.** Spain is invited as a permanent guest.

Who is a Sherpa?

- Sherpa is a **personal representative of the leader of a member country** at an international Summit meeting such as the G8, G20 or the Nuclear Security Summit.
- The term is derived from the **Nepalese Sherpa people**, who serve as guides for mountaineers in the Himalayas.
- The Sherpa engages in **planning, negotiation and implementation tasks** through the Summit.

- They **coordinate the agenda, seek consensus at the highest political levels, and participate in a series of pre-Summit consultations** to help negotiate their leaders' positions.
- Sherpas are **career diplomats or senior government officials** appointed by the leaders of their countries.
- There is **only one Sherpa per Summit** for each member country; he/she is assisted by several sous Sherpas.
- Sherpas meet much before the start of the Summit to iron out differences on various issues.
- At the G20 Summit, work progresses through broadly **two channels: the Finance Track and Sherpas' Track**.
- Towards the end of the process, the Sherpas, along with the Finance Track representatives, prepare the Leaders' "Declaration" or "Communique", which is the final outcome of the G20 Summit.

OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal

Context

- India joins OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal

OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting

- It is a solution for **addressing the tax challenges arising from the digitalization of the economy**.
- It consists of two components-
 1. Pillar One- **reallocation of additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions** and
 2. Pillar Two -**minimum tax and subject to tax rules**.

Why India joined this tax deal?

- India's has a greater share of profits in the markets
- Consideration of demand side factors in profit allocation,
- To address the issue of cross border profit shifting and
- To stop treaty shopping
- Needed a consensus solution that is simple to implement and comply.

About OECD:

- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an **intergovernmental economic organisation** with 38 member countries.
- It was founded in 1961 **to stimulate economic progress and world trade**.
- OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries.
- **India is not a member of OECD.**

Istanbul Convention on violence against women

Context

- Turkey's withdrawal from **Istanbul Convention on Violence Against Women** has led to protests across the country.
- Turkey has taken this step despite the **alarmingly high rates of violence and femicide in the country**.

What is the Istanbul Convention on violence against women?

- The **Council of Europe** established the Istanbul Convention, as a human rights treaty.
- It is the **first legally-binding instrument** which "creates a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women" and is focused on preventing domestic violence, protecting victims and prosecuting accused offenders.
- **Aim:**
 1. to prevent and prosecute all forms of violence against women
 2. promote gender equality and
 3. ensure protection and rehabilitation of women who are victims of violence.
 4. The treaty was opened for ratification in May 2011. From the European Union, 34 countries signed this treaty.
 5. India is **not a party of this convention**.
 6. Turkey was the first country to ratify the Istanbul convention and incorporated it into its domestic law.

BRICS Culture Ministers' Meet

Context

- The Minister of State (I//C) for Culture and Tourism, hosted 6th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting through video conference.
- **Aim:** advancement and expansion of cultural activities amongst BRICS countries.
- **Theme:** Bonding and Harmonizing Cultural Synergy.

Highlights of the meet:

- It emphasized on **collaborations in the field of online exchange of cultural experiences on knowledge of tangible and intangible heritage** amongst BRICS countries.
- Importance of culture for establishing vibrant international humanitarian dialogue is emphasized.
- **Formation of BRICS Alliance** in the field of conservation, preservation and digitization of ancient manuscripts is proposed.
- Need to protect our tangible and intangible cultural heritage through mutual help and support within the BRICS framework in addition to the compliance of prevailing UNESCO Conventions.

Declaration of the meeting

- It was agreed upon to strengthen and enhance cultural cooperation amongst BRICS Nations in the fields of museums, art galleries, theatre, libraries and promote use of modern technologies to conduct online events to overcome the adverse effects of pandemic like situations.

13th BRICS Summit

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 13th BRICS Summit through video conferencing from New Delhi.

More about news:

- 5-member group adopts **Counter Terrorism Action Plan**.
- The 13th BRICS summit called for an **"inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue" for stability in Afghanistan**.
- With the **agreement on Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation** between space agencies, a new chapter of cooperation has begun.
- The document, titled the **'New Delhi Declaration'**, also called for **addressing the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan** and urged the need to uphold rights of women, children and minorities.
- The summit emphasised the **importance of the principle of "non-interference"** in international affairs and disputes and conflicts should be resolved by peaceful means.
- Apart from Afghanistan, the BRICS leaders also took up the **conflicts in Myanmar, Syria, the tension in the Korean peninsula, Israel-Palestine violence and other territorial disputes**.
- The summit also discussed the **COVID-19 pandemic and the strategy to strengthen counter-pandemic cooperation and multilateral reform**.
- The **New Delhi Declaration** called against playing politics with the pandemic and the COVID-19 virus and urged for a **global effort to eradicate the virus**.
- The summit called for **reform of the UN Security Council** and urged to **"revitalise"** of the UN General Assembly.

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Context

- India said the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) **should not allow** itself be **"subverted"** by Pakistan, which may prompt it to interfere in India's internal affairs.

About Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

- It was formerly known as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.
- It is an international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with 49 countries being Muslim-majority countries.

- The organisation states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim world" and works to "safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony".
- The OIC has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Context

- Organization of Islamic Cooperation agreed to establish a humanitarian trust fund to address the growing economic crisis in Afghanistan.
- The fund will be set up under the Islamic Development Bank to channel aid to Afghanistan in coordination with other groups.

About Islamic Development Bank:

- It is a multilateral development finance institution that is focused on Islamic finance located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- There are 57 shareholding member states with the largest single shareholder being Saudi Arabia.
- The IDB is an observer at the United Nations General Assembly.

Global Gateway Plan

Context

- EU unveils 'Global Gateway' €300 billion global infrastructure plan.

About 'Global Gateway' plan:

- This international infrastructure plan is a "road map for investment" in the developing world.
- Aim:
 1. to mobilize €300 billion (\$340 billion) in public and private infrastructure investment.
 2. to make Global Gateway a trusted brand that stands out because of high quality, reliable standards and high level of transparency and good governance.
 3. to spread European technology and expertise out in developing countries.
- Countering China: It is being seen as a European effort to challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative, which was launched in 2013 and funds infrastructure projects in the developing world.

How EU's Global Gateway will work?

- It will mobilize fund between 2021 and 2027 by joining the "resources of the EU, member states, European financial institutions and national development finance institutions."
- It will require buy-in from international institutions and the private sector as well.
- Build Back Better World and Global Gateway will mutually reinforce each other.
- Debt trap policy of China: to help developing country from falling into China's debt trap policy through BRI.
- Democratic approach adoption: So that developing countries have sustainable and eco-friendly development.
- Transparent fund mobilization: based on values and without any dependencies.

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UNSC Resolution 2615

Context

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously passed a resolution permitting a carve out in sanctions against the Taliban to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

UNSC Resolution (2615):

- It is **put forward by the U.S.**
- It **“strongly encourages” providers of assistance to try and ensure that benefits do not accrue to entities designated on the 1988 Sanctions List.**
- It **“calls on all parties” to respect human rights and observe international humanitarian law.**
- Humanitarian assistance should be based on the **principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence** and disbursement to the age should be non-discriminatory and accessible to all irrespective of ethnicity, religion, or political belief.
- The assistance should **reach the most vulnerable first**, including women, children and minorities.”

Counter Terrorism Committee of UNSC

Context

- India to chair Counter Terrorism Committee of UNSC in January 2022 after ten yrs.

About Counter Terrorism Committee of UNSC

- It was established by Security Council **resolution 1373** adopted unanimously on 28 September 2001 in the **wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US.**
- **Responsibilities:**
 1. It is tasked with monitoring implementation of resolution 1373 which requested countries **to implement a number of measures aimed at enhancing their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home and around the world.**
 2. This includes taking steps **to criminalize the financing of terrorism, freezing any funds related to persons involved in acts of terrorism, deny all forms of financial support for terrorist groups, suppress the provision of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists** and share information with other governments on any groups practicing or planning terrorist acts.
 3. It monitors steps taken to cooperate with other governments in the investigation, detection, arrest, extradition and prosecution of those involved in terror acts and criminalizes active and passive assistance for terrorism.

World Trade Organization

Context

- China's status as a 'developing country' at the World Trade Organization has become a contentious issue.

About World Trade Organization:

- It was established on January 1, 1995 through the **Marrakesh Agreement**, as the successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).**
- It covers **trade in services and intellectual property** and introduced procedures for dispute settlement.
- It is a **Binding institution** and its working is Consensus-based.
- Presently 151 members that negotiate to reduce barriers in trade.
- This Geneva based organisation governs nearly \$23 billion of global trade.
- This 'member-driven' organization is viewed as an
- International platform to negotiate multilateral and plurilateral agreements dealing with trade
- Dispute settlement system for disputes arising out of negotiated agreements

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Context

- China, Russia, U.S., U.K., France five global nuclear powers pledged to **prevent atomic weapons spreading** and to avoid **nuclear conflict**, in joint statement ahead of a review of a key nuclear treaty.

Significance of this declaration:

- It would **reduce level of international tensions** currently growing between U.S. and Russia.
- Help to revive nuclear deal with Iran.

About Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

- It is an **international treaty**.
- **Objectives:**
 1. To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology
 2. To promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and
 3. To achieve nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.
- **Entered in force** in 1970.
- **Parties to the treaty:** 191 states have become parties to the treaty, though **North Korea**, which acceded in 1985 but **never came into compliance**, announced its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003.
- **Non-signatory states:** Four UN member states have never accepted the NPT, three of which possess or are thought to possess nuclear weapons: **India, Israel, and Pakistan**. In addition, **South Sudan**, founded in 2011, has not joined.
- **Defines nuclear-weapon states:** States that have built and tested a nuclear explosive device before 1 January 1967; these are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China.
- The treaty is **reviewed every five years** in meetings called Review Conferences.

Why India is reluctant to sign this treaty?

- India did not sign NPT because it found **NPT a flawed treaty with no basis of recognizing states** which should have the nuclear energy.

Africa50

Context

- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has signed a Joint Development Agreement with Africa50.

About Africa50:

- It is an **infrastructure investment platform** that was **founded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and African states**
- **Aim:** contributes to Africa's economic growth by developing and investing in bankable infrastructure projects by **catalyzing public sector capital**, and mobilizing private sector funding, with differentiated financial returns and impact.
- **Membership:** It currently has **31 shareholders**, comprised of 28 African countries, the African Development Bank, the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), and Bank Al-Maghrib.

NATO-Russia Council

Context

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Russia discussed the ongoing situation in Ukraine and its implications for security in Europe.
- The talks happened at the NATO-Russia Council (NRC).

About NRC:

- It was established by the **2002 Rome Declaration** on "NATO-Russia Relations: a New Quality".
- It is a **mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action**, in which the **individual NATO member states and Russia** work as equal partners on a wide spectrum of security issues of common interest.
- **Key focus areas:** fight against terrorism, crisis management, non-proliferation, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defence, logistics, military-to-military cooperation, defence reform and civil emergencies.
- Since **April 2014**, civil and military cooperation under the NRC with Russia has been **suspended in response** to Russia's military intervention in Ukraine and its **annexation of Crimea** from Ukraine

About NATO:

- It was **founded in 1949**.
- **Aim:**
 1. To ensure collective protection for its members – the **United States**, Canada, and American allies in Europe – against the threat of possible post-War communist expansion and aggression by the Soviet Union.
 2. NATO has traditionally **focused on Russia and the European neighbourhood**
 3. recognises the need to **deter "revisionist" and "militarily advanced" Russia**, and the threat posed by rogue nations such as North Korea.
- NATO allies do not recognise annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and have referred to as **"illegal" and "illegitimate"**.

Warsaw Pact

- It was **founded by the Soviet Union** for its own defence and political alliance with Eastern European nations as a counterbalance to NATO.
- Warsaw Pact that was signed in 1955.
- This alliance was **disbanded** after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) **in 1991**.

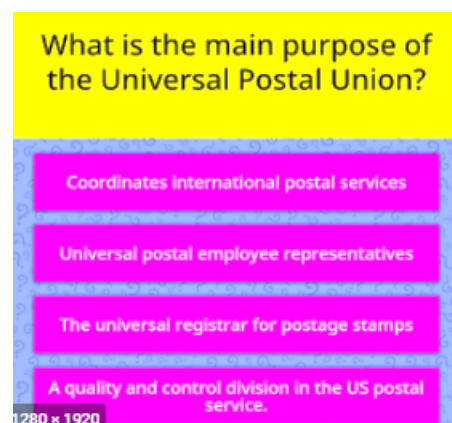
Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress

Context

- **India** has been elected to the **Council of Administration (CA)** at 27th **Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress** in Abidjan.

About Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress

- Created in Bern in 1874
 - **The International Bureau, the permanent secretariat of the UPU, is based in Bern**
- An intergovernmental organization and a United Nations specialized agency
- The principal forum for cooperation between governments, Posts and other postal sector stakeholders



Eastern Economic Forum

Context

- Indian Prime Minister delivered a video-address during the plenary session of the 6th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF).
- PM stressed on the importance of greater economic and commercial engagement between the two sides in line with the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership'.

About Eastern Economic Forum

- It is an international forum held each year in Vladivostok, Russia, for the purpose of encouraging foreign investment in the Russian Far East.

Comprehensive and Progress Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

Context

- China applies to join Asia-Pacific free pact, an 11-nation Asia-Pacific free trade group in an effort to increase its influence over international policies.

About Comprehensive and Progress Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP):

- The CPTPP originally was the **Trans-Pacific Partnership**, a group promoted by then-President Barack Obama as part of Washington's increased emphasis on relations with Asia.
- China was not included in the initial group and Obama's successor, Donald Trump, pulled out in 2017.
- The CPTPP, which took effect in 2018, includes agreements on market access, movement of labour and government procurement.
- Other members include Canada, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
- Britain is negotiating to join.

India - United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

Context

- India and United Arab Emirates have formally launched negotiations on the India-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Aim:

- Improving bilateral economic relations, including expanding the existing trade and investment relationship.

Current Situation:

- The UAE is currently India's third-largest trading partner with bilateral trade in 2019/2020 valued at USD 59 billion.
- The UAE is also India's second-largest export destination after the US, with exports valued at approximately USD 29 billion in 2019-2020.
- India was the UAE's second-largest trading partner in 2019, with bilateral non-oil trade valued at USD 41 billion.
- The UAE is the eighth-largest investor in India, having invested USD 11 billion between April 2000 and March 2021, while investment by Indian companies in the UAE is estimated to be over USD 85 billion.
- India's major exports to the UAE include petroleum products, precious metals, stones, gems and jewellery, minerals, food items such as cereals, sugar, fruits and vegetables, tea, meat, and seafood, textiles, engineering and machinery products, and chemicals.
- India's top imports from the UAE include petroleum and petroleum products, precious metals, stones, gems and jewellery, minerals, chemicals and wood and wood products.

SAARC

Context

- A meeting of foreign ministers from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, has been cancelled as the member states were unable to agree upon the participation of Afghanistan, with Pakistan and India in particular at loggerheads over the issue.

What is SAARC?

- SAARC is a **regional inter-governmental organization** of South Asian countries namely, **India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka**. **Afghanistan** joined the bloc in 2007.
- SAARC also includes nine formally recognized observers including the **European Union, the US, Iran and China**.
- According to the SAARC charter, the goal of the organization was to contribute to “mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another’s problems”.

East Asia Summit

Why in news?

- At East Asia Summit, PM Modi reaffirmed India's focus on **free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific and the principle of “ASEAN Centrality” in the region**.
- India remained committed to **strengthening respect for shared values of multilateralism, rules-based international order, international law and sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations**.
- The PM also raised the idea of developing global standards on cyber security.

About East Asia Summit:

- The East Asia Summit is a premier leaders-led forum in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Since its inception in 2005, it has played a key role in the strategic and geopolitical evolution of east Asia.
- Apart from the 10 ASEAN member states, East Asia Summit **includes India, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Russia**.
- **India, being a founding member of the East Asia Summit**, is committed to strengthening the East Asia Summit and making it more effective for dealing with contemporary challenges.
- ASEAN-India summits are held annually and provide the opportunity for India and ASEAN to engage at the highest levels.

Outcomes of the 16th East Asia Summit:

- Reaffirmed the EAS as the premier Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political and economic issues of common interest and concern.
- Underscored the importance of engaging in constructive dialogue to reinforce mutual trust and confidence, as well as advancing practical cooperation for mutual benefit.
- Committed to advance cooperation towards a holistic pandemic recovery, especially in the areas of vaccine distribution, mental health, sustainable economic growth, including revitalising the tourism sector and sustainable development to enhance ongoing efforts in climate action.
- Stressed the need to strengthen collaboration and uphold multilateralism to ensure regional resilience and preparedness against future crises, as well as maintaining an ASEAN-centred regional architecture.
- Adopted EAS Leaders’ Statements on “Mental Health Cooperation”, “Economic Growth through Tourism Recovery” and “Sustainable Recovery”, complementing the vision for an inclusive and comprehensive regional recovery.

Chicago Convention

Context

- Pakistan’s ‘no’ to airspace for Srinagar-Sharjah flight could be breach of freedom of air rules

What is the issue?

- A direct flight between Srinagar and Sharjah operated on a route that took it through Pakistani airspace before heading southwest and arriving in Sharjah.
- However, the **flight was denied permission to enter Pakistan** and flew south over Rajasthan and Gujarat before heading west over the Arabian Sea and flying through Omani airspace before entering the UAE.

What is freedom of air?

- Following the **Chicago Convention in 1944**, the signatories to the convention decided to set rules that would act as fundamental building blocks to international commercial aviation.
- As a part of these rules, initially, **six 'freedoms of air' were decided**.
- These freedoms or rights – which still operate within the ambit of multilateral and bilateral treaties that allow them – grant airlines of a particular country the privilege to use and/or land in another country's airspace.
- The **first freedom of air** grants the right to an airline of one country to fly over a second country and land in a third country.
- The **second freedom of air** grants the right to refuel or carry out maintenance in a foreign country without embarking or disembarking passengers or cargo.
- The **third and the fourth freedoms grant** the right to fly from the airline's home country to another and from a foreign country to the airline's own, respectively.
- Other freedoms of air – pertain to operation of an airline between two countries not including the country of its origin and within a foreign country with and without having a stop in the home country.

What is Chicago Convention?

- The **Convention on International Civil Aviation**, also known as the Chicago Convention, **established the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)**, a specialized agency of the UN charged with coordinating international air travel.
- The Convention **establishes rules of airspace, aircraft registration and safety, security, and sustainability, and details the rights of the signatories** in relation to air travel.
- The Convention also contains **provisions pertaining to taxation**.
- Convention on International Civil Aviation (also known as Chicago Convention), was signed on 7 December 1944 by 52 States including India. Thus, **India is founding member of this convention**.

UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

Context

- India's stand **against 'UN's selectivity on religions'** gains force from its secularism

More about News

- At the UN General Assembly discussing resolutions of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) on the 'Culture of Peace', India **criticised the world body** for what it called **"selectivity" in seeking to protect Abrahamic religions – Islam, Christianity and Judaism** – over others.
- Previous resolutions of the UNAOC had repeatedly decried the hatred against those religions – **"Islamophobia, Christianophobia and anti-Semitism"** – but **didn't condemn attacks on other religious groups including Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, who have suffered terror strikes** and seen their shrines destroyed in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- India said, the UNGA statement welcomed the **Kartarpur Gurdwara corridor** agreement between India and Pakistan, but failed to note that Pakistan's government has taken over the management of the Sikh shrine, which it called a **contravention of the agreement and a violation of Sikh beliefs**.
- India's delegate also accused Pakistan of a **"culture of hatred" against "religions in India"** and fostering cross-border terrorism and said a culture of peace cannot exist until that is changed.

UNAOC

- This organisation was set up in 2005 to **prevent polarisation between societies and cultures** and to bridge differences between them, only serves to further the theory of an inevitable **"clash of civilisations"** instead.
- UNAOC aims to **bridge divides, and promote harmony among the nations, all with a view toward preventing conflict and promoting social cohesion**.
- UNAOC issued a statement of **"grave concern"** over the **Delhi riots** in February this year that it said resulted in casualties of **"mostly Muslims"**.
- India is keen to push back on the UNAOC and other UN arms, like the UN Human Rights Council, that have criticised the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

Context

- Information and Broadcasting Minister has congratulated Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Sekhar Vempati on being elected as Vice President of Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union.

Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)

- It is one of the largest **broadcasting associations in the world**.
- Mr Vempati has been elected to the office of the Vice President, ABU for **three years** with immediate effect.
- Almost all of the Public Broadcasters of the member countries in the Asia Pacific region strongly supported the candidature of India's Public Broadcaster which was forwarded by Japan.
- The Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union was **formed in 1964** as a **professional association of broadcasting organizations** with over 286 members in 57 countries and regions, reaching the potential population of about three billion people.



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MISCELLANEOUS

Hazaras of Afghanistan

Introduction

- Despite the Taliban promising a new era of “amnesty”, peace and security, the terrorist group’s actions since their swift ascent to power has left thousands of ordinary Afghans, **particularly ethnic minorities like the Hazaras**, scrambling to escape a potentially brutal and repressive regime.
- **The Hazaras have long faced violent persecution from the Taliban and Islamic State for their ethnicity and religious beliefs.**

Who are the Hazaras?

- The Hazaras are **an ethnic and religious minority group** largely found in the rugged and mountainous central Afghan region of Hazarajat.
- They are believed to be **descendants of the founder of the Mongol empire, Genghis Khan**, and his army that overran the entire region during the 13th century.
- They are targeted by the Taliban because they are **primarily Shia Muslims**, as opposed to most Afghans who follow the Sunni branch of Islam.

Kanal Istanbul

Introduction

- The Kanal Istanbul, an **under-construction shipping route** running parallel to the strategically critical Bosphorus Strait, is gaining prominence as a major divisive issue in Turkey election to be held in 2023.

What is Kanal Istanbul?

- It is a new route through Istanbul **connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara**, for creating new source of income for the country.
- The planned canal will **run parallel to the Bosphorus Strait**, a natural waterway that **separates Europe and Asia**, which for centuries has served as a key outlet for Russian ships entering the Mediterranean Sea.
- Since 1936, passage through the Strait has been **governed by the Montreux Convention**, a multilateral treaty that allows ships to go across almost free of cost during peacetime, and which tightly restricts the movement of naval vessels.
- It is claimed that the new canal, will be **safer and faster to navigate** compared to the Bosphorus, making it a more attractive option for commercial ships.



World Food Program

Introduction

- 14 million people are facing severe hunger in Afghanistan says the World Food Program (The UN food agency).

The World Food Programme (WFP)

- It is the **food-assistance branch of the United Nations**.
- It is the world's largest humanitarian organization, the largest one **focused on hunger and food security** and the largest provider of school meals.
- Founded in 1961, it is **headquartered in Rome** and has offices in 80 countries.
- WFP offers technical assistance and development aid, such as
- building capacity for emergency preparedness and response,

- managing supply chains and logistics,
- promoting social safety programs, and
- strengthening resilience against climate change.
- The agency is also a **major provider of direct cash assistance and medical supplies, and provides passenger services for humanitarian workers.**
- WFP is an executive member of the United Nations Development Group, a consortium of UN entities that aims to fulfil the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), with a priority on achieving SDG 2 for "zero hunger" by 2030.

Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) programme

Context

- Bhutan's Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) programme launched in partnership with India.

Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)

- It is a joint initiative of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**.
- India was chosen as the **Partner Jurisdiction and has provided the Tax Expert for this programme.**
- This programme is expected to be of about 24 months' duration.
- India in collaboration with the UNDP and the TIWB Secretariat aims to **aid Bhutan in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical know-how and skills to its tax auditors, and through sharing of best audit practices.**
- The focus of the programme will be in the **area of International Taxation and Transfer Pricing.**
- This programme is another milestone in the continued cooperation between India and Bhutan and India's continued and active support for **South-South cooperation.**

Northern Ireland protocol

Context

- U.K. want to renegotiate the Northern Ireland Protocol

What is Britain proposing?

- The Britain administration informed the European Union (EU) that it wants to renegotiate the Brexit deal's Northern Ireland Protocol.
- The **EU has ruled out a renegotiation**, but says it is open to "practical, flexible solutions".

What's behind Northern Ireland Protocol?

- The sovereign territory of the U.K. includes **England, Wales, Scotland**, and what is known as **Northern Ireland**, which occupies a portion of the island of Ireland.
- Ireland has long seen **tensions between the Catholics/Nationalists**, who want a unified Irish republic, and the Protestants/Unionists, who are loyal to the British crown.
- The long and violent conflict between the two sides – known as **The Troubles** – ended with the 1998 **Good Friday Agreement**, whose fragile peace rests on a principle that Brexit has now disrupted: **there won't be a border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.**
- Northern Ireland is the only part of the U.K. that shares a land border with the EU, as Ireland is an EU member-state.
- Brexit took the **U.K. out of the EU's customs union.**
- It created a problem whose solution needed two seemingly contradictory outcomes: **preserving the sanctity of the EU's single market, as well as that of the U.K.'s domestic market.**
- The **Protocol's solution** was to **avoid a customs check** on the island of Ireland. Instead, it envisaged a 'sea border' at the ports of Northern Island.
- Certain goods – meant only for Northern Ireland but not for Ireland, which falls within the EU market – would undergo checks here before entering the island.

Statement of Guiding Principles on Triangular Cooperation for global development (The SGP Agreement)

Context

- **India, US** sign Second Amendment to Statement of Guiding Principles on Triangular Cooperation for global development

The SGP Agreement

- It was signed in **November 2014**.
- It underscores the contribution of India-US partnership to global stability and prosperity.
- It provides a framework for promoting cooperation between the two countries to meet the developmental aspirations of partner countries, particularly in Asia and Africa.

The Second Amendment to the SGP Agreement

- It **extends the validity of the SGP Agreement up-to 2026**.
- It expands the scope of capacity building activities undertaken jointly by India and the United States under this framework.
- It also provides a **consultative mechanism for joint biannual monitoring and review of activities undertaken under the SGP**.
- Under the Agreement, India and US will continue to offer capacity building assistance to partner countries in multiple sectors, focusing primarily on **agriculture, regional connectivity, trade and investments, nutrition, health, clean and renewable energy, and women empowerment**.
- The Agreement helps fulfil the joint commitment of both nations to work together and leverage their combined capacities to provide **demand-driven development partnership**.

Nord Stream 2 pipeline

Context

- The green signal to the Russia-Germany pipeline by U.S.
- The US, had previously imposed sanctions to prevent the completion of this gas pipeline between Russia and Germany.

What is the Nord Stream 2 pipeline?

- In 2015, the Russian energy major Gazprom and five other European firms decided to build Nord Stream 2, valued at around \$11 billion.
- The 1,200-km pipeline will run from Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany **through the Baltic Sea**, and will carry 55 billion cubic metres of gas per year.
- The under-construction pipeline will run along with the already completed Nord Stream 1 system, and the two together will supply an aggregate of **110 billion cubic metres of gas to Germany per year**.
- The pipeline falls in the **territory of EU members Germany and Denmark**, and is about 98% complete.



China's new maritime law

Context

- From September 1, China's new maritime rules **designed to control the entry of foreign vessels** in what Beijing calls "Chinese territorial waters" take effect.
- The move is expected to have far-reaching consequences for passage of vessels, **both commercial and military**, in the disputed **South China Sea, East China Sea and Taiwan Strait**, and is likely to escalate the existing tension with the US and its neighbours in the region.

What is the new law?

- Foreign vessels, both military and commercial, will be required to **submit to Chinese supervision in "Chinese territorial waters,"** as per the new law.
- Operators of submersibles, nuclear vessels, ships carrying radioactive materials and ships carrying bulk oil, chemicals, liquefied gas and other toxic and harmful substances are required to report their detailed information upon their visits to Chinese territorial waters.
- Vessels that **"endanger the maritime traffic safety of China"** will be required to report their name, call sign, current position and next port of call and estimated time of arrival.
- The name of shipborne dangerous goods and cargo deadweight will also be required.
- All these pronouncements **threaten the overall stability and security in the South China Sea, East China Sea, and across the Taiwan Strait.**



Age Appropriate Design Code

Context

- U.K. government brought into effect the **Age Appropriate Design Code or the Children's Code**, as an amendment to the **Data Protection Act, 2018**, operationalising a **set of regulations that will make using the digital space safer for children.**
- While the Code is officially in place **only in the U.K.**, tech majors such as TikTok, Instagram and YouTube have tightened safety rules for children, and campaigners hope this will become the norm globally.

What is the Children's Code?

- The Children's Code is a **data protection code of practice for online services** likely to be accessed by children.
- It has the **potential to completely transform the way that companies collect, share and use children's data, requiring them to offer children a high level of privacy protection by default.**
- It sets out **15 standards for online services**, including in apps, games, toy and devices and even news services.
- Unless the service provider is able to prove that **children do not access the service at all, it is required to consider making changes as per the Code.**

Delhi Declaration

Context

- India and 7 other nations adopt Delhi Declaration to form open govt in Afghanistan.

More about news:

- India's NSA Ajit Doval, along with security chiefs of **Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan**, during the **Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan** adopted the Delhi Declaration and reiterated strong support for a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan

Delhi declaration

- It underlined the need for forming an **open and truly inclusive government** in Kabul that represents the **will and representation of all sections of Afghanistan**.
- It emphasise the respect for **sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs**.
- It also stressed that **Afghanistan's territory should not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing any terrorist acts**.
- Recalling the relevant UN Resolutions on Afghanistan, the **United Nations has a central role to play in Afghanistan** and that its continued presence in the country must be preserved.
- Humanitarian assistance should be provided in an unimpeded, direct and assured manner to Afghanistan.



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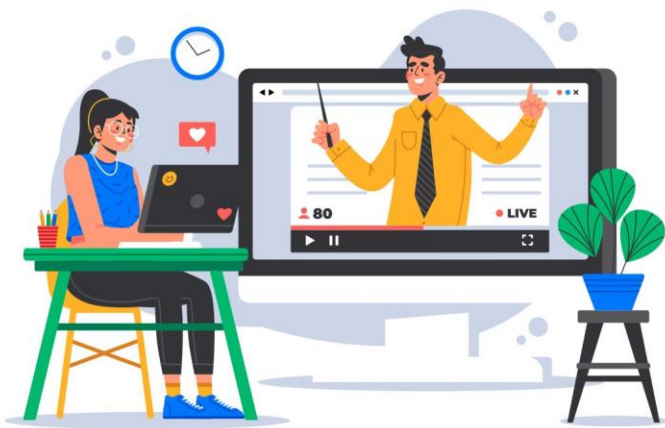
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