



CAP2024

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS

Crisp and Comprehensive Coverage of One Year Current Affairs for Prelims 2024

International Relations



volume **01**

KEY FEATURES OF CAP 2024

- Interactive classes with live doubt resolution by faculties.
- Comprehensive yet concise study material.
- Lectures that promote both conceptual clarity and interlinkage with Current Affairs.

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BILATERAL RELATIONS

INDIA-US RELATIONS

During a three-day state visit to the United States, the Prime Minister of India engaged in the signing of multiple strategic agreements and partnerships.

Significance:

- **Bilateral Trade:** In the fiscal year 2022-23, the bilateral trade between India and the U.S. reached **USD 128.55 billion**, marking the U.S. as **India's largest trade partner in FY23**.
- **Technological Cooperation:**
 - ♦ **Innovation Handshake:** Launched to connect the startup ecosystems of the two nations, supporting the **US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)**. This initiative seeks to bolster strategic technology partnerships and defense industrial cooperation.
 - **iCET (Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology):** Established in January 2023 to enhance and expand defense industrial collaboration and strategic technology partnerships across companies and academic institutions from both countries.
 - It is managed by the National Security Council Secretariat in India and the National Security Council in the United States.
 - ♦ **Mineral Security Partnership (MSP):** India has become a member of this US-led coalition focused on securing the supply of critical minerals.
 - The MSP aims to develop diverse and sustainable supply chains for critical energy minerals by collaborating with host governments and the industry, providing financial and diplomatic support for strategic projects.
 - Partner countries include Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union (represented by the European Commission).
- **Defense Cooperation:** Four foundational Agreements (as mentioned in table)

AGREEMENT	DESCRIPTION
General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)	Facilitates the sharing of classified military information between the two countries, ensuring that shared military intelligence is protected and securely handled.
Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)	Allows military forces of India and the USA to use each other's bases for logistics support, including refueling and replenishment, enhancing operational flexibility.
Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)	Enables the sharing of secure communication and exchange of information on approved equipment during bilateral and multinational exercises and operations, ensuring interoperability.
Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA)	Allows for the sharing of geospatial intelligence, improving the accuracy of missile systems and drones by providing access to topographical, nautical, and aeronautical data.

- ♦ **India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X):**
 - It was launched at an event in Washington DC in 2023.
 - The INDUS X event was co-organised by **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)**, Ministry of Defence, and **US Department of Defence (DoD) and hosted by US-India Business Council (USIBC)**.
 - The initiative will expand the strategic technology partnership and defense industrial cooperation between the start-up ecosystems, businesses and academic institutions.
 - The collaboration agenda under the Defence Innovation Bridge includes launch of Joint Challenges in production, Innovation Partnership Program, Academia partnership, Joint Innovation Fund, establishing of Testing & Certification facilities in India etc.
- **Energy Cooperation:** The **U.S.-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)** was initiated as part of the dual-track engagements under the US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership. This agenda, unveiled in 2021, aims to fast-track achievements in meeting mutual climate and clean energy objectives.

5 EYES ALLIANCE

- **Members:** 5 (United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand).
- **Purpose:** Established during the Cold War, the primary objective of the alliance is intelligence-sharing, particularly in the realm of **signals intelligence (SIGINT)**. This includes surveillance, code-breaking, and sharing information on national security matters.
- **Collaboration:** Member countries closely cooperate to gather and analyze intelligence, leveraging their collective resources and expertise.
- **Focus Areas:** The alliance focuses on monitoring global communications, identifying security threats, and addressing common challenges to national security.

SCORPENE CLASS SUBMARINES

- It is part of Project-75 and is equipped with diesel-electric propulsion systems.
- These advanced submarines are designed for a wide range of missions, including anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare, intelligence collection, mine-laying, and area surveillance, making them among the most versatile and capable in their class.
- **Submarines:** Under P75, 6 submarines—**INS Kalvari, INS Khanderi, INS Karanj, and INS Vela, INS Vagir, INS Vagsheer.**

Project-75

- **Initiation:** It is a key component of India's submarine construction program, initiated alongside Project-751, based on a 1999 approval for building indigenous submarines with foreign technology collaboration.
- **Contract Details:** In October 2005, **Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL)** was awarded the contract to build six submarines under P75.
- **Technology Partnership:** The project involves a technology transfer from the **French Naval Group (formerly DCNS)** to MDL, highlighting international collaboration in enhancing India's defense capabilities.

INDIA-FRANCE

Celebrating a quarter-century of strategic partnership, India and France recently set forth the future direction of their bilateral relationship through the initiation of the **Horizon 2047 framework** during their latest meeting.

About:

- **Horizon 2047 Framework:** This ambitious framework charts the course of India-France relations up to the year 2047, marking a roadmap for long-term collaboration.
- **Areas of Cooperation:** The Horizon 2047 encompasses a wide range of sectors including **defense, nuclear energy, and space exploration**, alongside environmental initiatives such as the eradication of single-use plastics and the introduction of a five-year Schengen visa, etc.

Significance:

- **Facilitation of International Group Accessions:** France has played a key role in aiding India's entry into major international control regimes such as the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), and the Australia Group (AG)**, enhancing India's participation in global non-proliferation efforts.
- In 2018, India and France agreed on a '**Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region**'.
- France has emerged as one of the largest exporters of defense equipment to India. **P75 Scorpene submarines** technology transfer and **Rafale aircraft** are some major examples.

RAFALE AIRCRAFT


- **Launched in 2001**, the Rafale, a versatile twin-engine fighter aircraft, was developed and manufactured by **Dassault Aviation for the French Air Force** and the carrier-based operations of the **French Navy**.

IAF receives Rafale boost

India has received its first batch of five Rafale jets




The jets — 3 single-seat & 2 twin-seat — will be stationed at Ambala airbase


Rafale is a twin-engine multi-role combat aircraft



DEVELOPED BY FRENCH AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURER DASSAULT

Specifications

 Top speed: 2,223km/h	 Max weight: 24,500kg	 Range: 3,700km
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Load-carrying capacity: **9,500kg**

CAPABLE OF

- Ground support
- Aerial reconnaissance
- In-depth strikes
- Interception
- Nuclear deterrence

FOUR MULTILATERAL EXPORT CONTROL REGIMES

Feature/Regime	Australia Group (AG)	Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)	Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)	Wassenaar Arrangement
Established	1985	1987	1974	1996
Objective	To prevent the spread of chemical and biological weapons.	To prevent the proliferation of missile and unmanned aerial vehicle technology capable of carrying a 500 kg payload over 300 km.	To prevent nuclear proliferation by controlling the export of materials, equipment, and technology that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.	To promote transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilizing accumulations.
Membership	43 countries	35 countries	48 countries	42 countries
Main Controls	Chemicals, biological agents, and dual-use production facilities and equipment.	Rockets, drones, and related technology that could be used in delivery systems for WMD.	Nuclear material, nuclear reactors and equipment, non-nuclear material for reactors, and nuclear-related dual-use equipment and material.	Conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.
Decision-making Process	Consensus	Consensus	Consensus	Consensus
Key Activities	Harmonizing national export control measures, sharing information on chemical and biological weapons proliferation.	Exchange of information, coordination of national export licensing efforts.	Guidelines for nuclear exports, nuclear-related exports, and adherence to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) principles.	Establishing and updating control lists, sharing information on risks associated with transfers of arms and dual-use items.

Note: Except NSG, India is member of 3 other export control regimes.

GRAND CROSS OF LEGION

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become the **first Indian Prime Minister** to have been conferred with the **Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour**, France's highest civilian and military honor, by **French President Emmanuel Macron**.

Bastille Day (14th July)

- Bastille Day is often credited with initiating the decade-long French Revolution, a pivotal event that brought about significant changes in French political and social structures and had a profound impact on the global spread of democratic ideals.
- This historic day marked the storming of the Bastille, a **medieval fortress-prison** in Paris where political detainees, including notable figures like the writer and philosopher **Voltaire** and the notorious **Marquis de Sade**, had been held.
- It popularized slogans such as "**Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité**" (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity), which became emblematic of the revolutionary spirit and ideals.

- **Defense Cooperation:** The **Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP)** agreement of 2015 lays out a strategic framework for evolving defense relations.
- **Climate and Environmental Initiatives:** The **India-UK Green Growth Equity Fund** focuses on mobilizing investments in renewable energy and electric mobility in India.
- **Diaspora:** Furthermore, the **Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP) agreement** facilitates the movement of professionals, enhancing bilateral relations in the workforce sector.

INDIA'S PARTNERS IN 2+2 DIALOGUES

- The **United States** stands as India's first and most significant partner for 2+2 discussions.
- India also engages in 2+2 dialogues with ministers from **Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Russia**.

INDIA-UK RELATIONS

The 2+2 dialogue in 2023 underscores the multifaceted and deepening relationship between India and the UK, addressing global challenges and leveraging mutual interests in defense, trade, technology, and environmental sustainability.

Significance

- The inaugural India-UK 2+2 Foreign and Defence Dialogue, held in New Delhi, signifies a pivotal step in enhancing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations.
- **India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership:** Both India and the UK share concerns over China's assertive posture in the Indo-Pacific, leading to a strategic convergence between the two nations.
 - ♦ The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership established in 2021, including the **India-UK 2030 Roadmap**, underscores this alignment, covering health, climate, trade, education, science and technology, and defense.
- **Trade and Investment:** The **Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP)** aims to double this trade volume by 2030, alongside ongoing negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

INDIA-AUSTRALIA

Recently, India conducted 2+2 dialogue with two of its ally countries (Australia and United Kingdom) where foreign Affairs Ministers and Defence Ministers of both countries attended the Meeting.

About:

- **Geostrategic:** Australia is in India's extended neighborhood.
 - ♦ To strengthen the ties, Australia and India upgraded bilateral relationship from 'Strategic Partnership' in 2009 to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** in 2020
- **Geo economic:** In recent times, to develop a strong economic relationship with India, the Australian Government commissioned the **India Economic Strategy to 2035** and also signed **India Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement** ("Ind Aus ECTA") to define a pathway to unlock opportunities offered by the emerging Indian economy.

INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS

2023 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and South Korea (Republic of Korea or RoK), highlighting a significant milestone in their bilateral partnership.

Significance:

- **Historical and Cultural Ties:**
 - ♦ A 13th-century text, "**Samguk Yusa**" or "**The Heritage History of the Three Kingdoms**," recounts the marriage of Princess Suriratna from Ayodhya to King Kim-Suro in Korea in 48 AD.
 - ♦ Buddhist **Monk Hyecho** visited India between 723 and 729 AD, documenting his observations of Indian society in "Pilgrimage to the Five Kingdoms of India."
 - ♦ Rabindranath Tagore's 1929 poem '**Lamp of the East**' highlighted Korea's rich past and envisioned a promising future.
- **Post-World War II Contributions:**
 - ♦ India led the UN Commission for Korean elections in 1947.
 - ♦ An Indian-sponsored resolution was pivotal in the 1953 Korean War ceasefire.
 - ♦ India chaired the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) post-war, aiding in humanitarian resolutions.
- **Diplomatic Evolution:**
 - ♦ Formal diplomatic ties were initiated in 1973, elevated to a 'Strategic Partnership' in 2010, and further to a '**Special Strategic Partnership**' in 2015.
 - ♦ India's 'Act East' policy and South Korea's '**New Southern Policy**' (NSP) both aim to enhance regional cooperation, reflecting shared priorities.
- **Economic and Trade Interactions:** Since 2009, both nations are participants in the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, with bilateral trade hitting US\$ 27.8 billion in 2022.
- **Cultural Exchange:** The "**Sarang**" festival, an annual event in South Korea, celebrates Indian culture by presenting a variety of Indian art forms across multiple locations in South Korea.

INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA RELATION

In recent news, the Indian Prime Minister and the Saudi Crown Prince jointly presided over the inaugural summit-level meeting of the **India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)**.

About

- **Established:** In 2019

Aims:

- ♦ To elevate bilateral relations between the two nations to new heights.
- ♦ The discussions encompassed an extensive array of sectors, spanning defense, energy, security, education, technology, transportation, healthcare, tourism, culture, space exploration, and semiconductor industries.
- ♦ This broad spectrum underscores the depth and breadth of economic cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia.

INDIA-CHINA RELATION

Recently China issued **stapled visas** to three athletes from the team who belong to Arunachal Pradesh for the Summer World University Games.

About:

- A '**stapled visa**' is an **unstamped document** affixed with a pin or staples onto a passport page instead of being directly stamped.
- Unlike a traditional visa, this unstamped paper can be easily torn off or detached as it lacks any official stamp from the issuing authority.
- China disputes India's internationally accepted sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh. It calls the area "**Zangnan**" in the Chinese language and makes repeated references to "**South Tibet**".
- China has made it a practice to issue stapled visas to Indian nationals from Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.
- It says the visas are valid documents, but the Government of India has consistently refused to accept this position.

WHAT IS A PASSPORT

- A passport is an **official document** issued by a national government that **verifies your identity and citizenship**. It's essentially your travel document, containing your photo, biographical information, and nationality.
- **Purpose:** It serves as proof of identity and nationality at border crossings, allowing you to enter and exit your own country and travel to other countries that recognize your passport.
- **Validity:** Passports typically have a validity period of 5 to 10 years, after which you need to renew them.

VISA

- A visa is a **permit issued by a foreign government** that allows you to enter, stay within, or leave their territory for a specific period and purpose. It's **usually stamped or glued directly** into your passport.
- **Purpose:** Not all countries require visas for all nationalities. However, if you need a visa, it signifies that you have met specific requirements to enter the country, such as demonstrating sufficient funds, having valid travel insurance, or fulfilling specific work or study objectives.

Other Issues

- **Border Disputes:**
 - ♦ The boundary separating India and China is not distinctly marked along its entire length, with certain sections lacking a mutually recognized **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
 - ♦ The concept of the LAC emerged following the **1962 Indo-China war**.
 - ♦ The extensive India-China border is segmented into three distinct sectors: **Western, Middle, and Eastern**.
- China's **string of pearls** policy to encircle India specially in Indian Ocean Region.

CHINA'S CLAIM OVER INDIAN TERRITORY

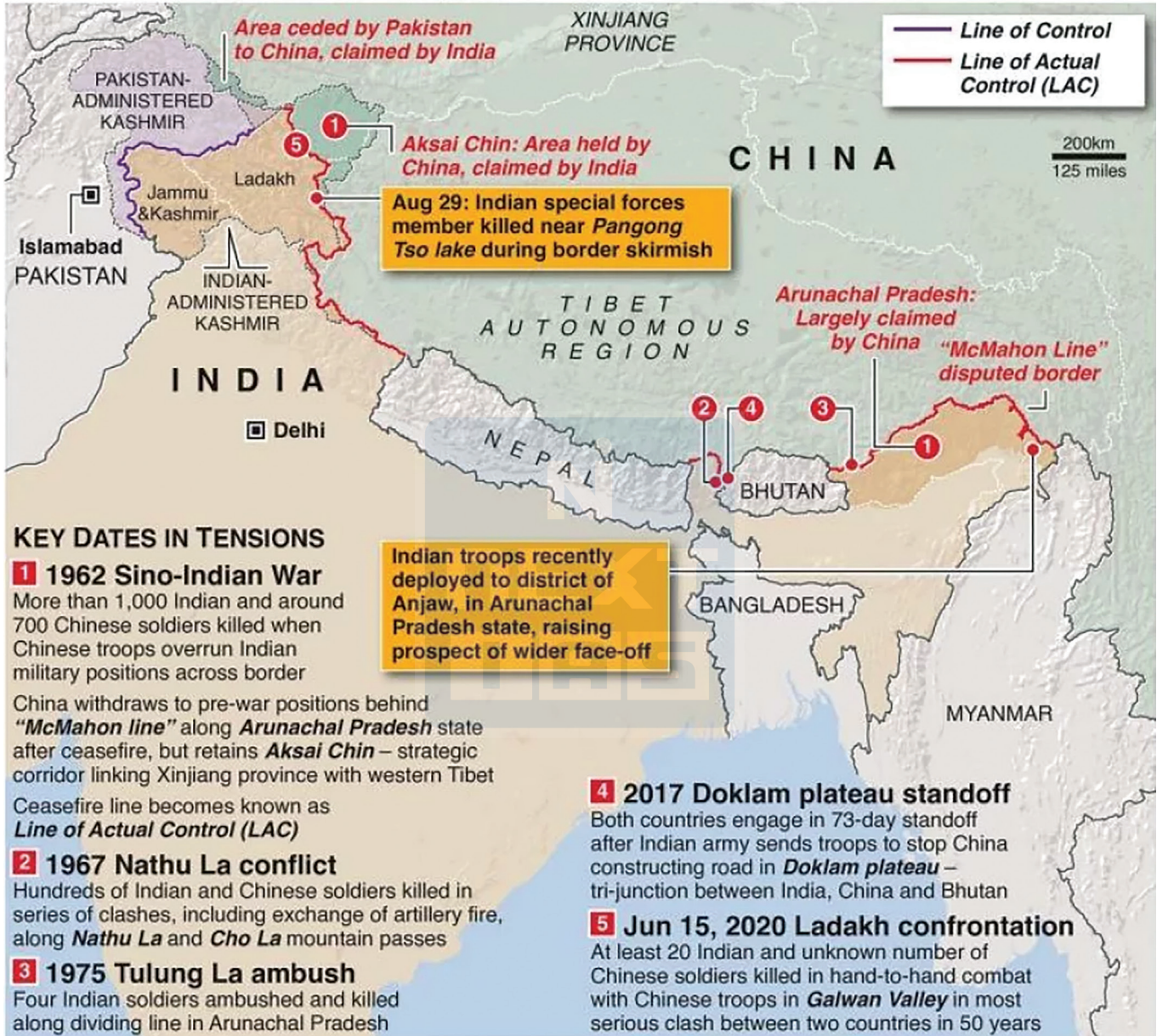
- **Issues with McMahon Line:** China challenges the legal status of the McMahon Line, the boundary between Tibet and British India that was agreed at the Convention Between Great Britain, China, and Tibet at the **Simla Convention of 1914**.
- It is this disagreement that lies at the heart of Chinese claims over the position of the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, and its repeated transgressions into Indian territory.



SECTOR	REGION	DISPUTE DESCRIPTION	INDIA'S STAND	CHINA'S STAND
Western	Ladakh	The dispute arises from the British-proposed Johnson Line in the 1860s, which placed Aksai Chin within the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.	Adheres to the Johnson Line, claiming Aksai Chin as part of its territory.	Rejects the Johnson Line in favor of the McDonald Line, placing Aksai Chin under Chinese control.
Middle	Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand	The dispute here is minor, with the LAC being least controversial except for the precise alignment in the Barahoti plains.	Both countries have exchanged maps and broadly agree on the LAC's alignment.	Same as India's stand; both countries have exchanged maps indicating a broad agreement.
Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim	The dispute centers around the McMahon Line decided in 1914 at a meeting between representatives of China, India, and Tibet in Shimla.	Asserts that according to the McMahon Line, the Tawang Tract is part of India (according to the 1951 position).	Claims the Tawang Tract as part of its territory, disputing the McMahon Line's validity.

India and China face off again at border

Indian and Chinese troops have clashed again along their disputed border, in a sign that the deadly tensions that erupted in June between the nuclear-armed rivals remain



ONE-CHINA POLICY

- The One-China Policy is a diplomatic acknowledgment that there is only one state under the name China.
- This policy implies that the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is the sole legitimate government of China, encompassing disputed territories such as **Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang** as integral parts of it.

United States and One-China Policy

- Since the 1970s, the US has officially recognized the One-China Policy, acknowledging Taiwan as part of China.
- However, it simultaneously engages with Taiwan through unofficial ties, balancing its formal acknowledgment of China's sovereignty with strategic interests in the region.

India's Stance on Taiwan

- India has recognized the **One-China Policy since 1949**, maintaining no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan.
- Nevertheless, in **1995, India and Taiwan** opened representative offices in each other's territories, focusing on commerce, culture, and education.
- Despite this, India's explicit acknowledgment of the One-China Policy ceased in 2010 amid escalating tensions with China at the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- Since halting the use of the One-China rhetoric, India has engaged more directly with **Taiwan**, signing agreements on double taxation avoidance and bilateral investment.

INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS

Recently, during the visit of Nepal's Prime Minister to India, the two countries announced a series of new initiatives and agreements.

Significance

- **Infrastructure Development:**
 - ♦ **Integrated Check Posts (ICPs):** Inaugurated twin ICPs located at **Rupaidiha (India) and Nepalgunj (Nepal)** to facilitate easier cross-border movement.
 - ♦ **Dodhara Chandani Check Post Development:** An MoU was signed to develop this check post along the India-Nepal border, enhancing connectivity and trade.
 - ♦ **Extension of Petroleum Pipelines:** Agreed upon the laying of a second cross-border petroleum pipeline from Siliguri (India) to Jhapa (Nepal) and the extension of the existing Motihari-Amlekhganj Pipeline to Chitwan.
- **Energy Cooperation:**
 - ♦ **Phukot-Karnali Hydroelectric Project:** Signed MoUs for the development of this hydroelectric project, marking a significant step in energy collaboration.
- **Boundary Dispute Resolution:** India and Nepal committed to addressing their longstanding boundary dispute in a spirit of friendship.



TRI-JUNCTION TROUBLE

Lipulekh mountain pass at the 80-km-long Uttarakhand-Nepal border

Kalapani
 Lowest point 11,980 ft
 Highest point 20,280 ft (Lipulekh Pass)

➤ Nepal has two tri-junctions with India and China

➤ The one in dispute now is Lipulekh in Kalapani, at the border of Uttarakhand with Nepal

➤ In 1816, the Sugauli Treaty signed by Nepal and British India identified Kali river as

Nepal's boundary with India

➤ Nepal claims the river to Kalapani's west is the main Kali, and thus Nepal has territorial rights to it

➤ India holds that a ridgeline to Kalapani's east is the border, thus Kalapani falls within its territory

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- India and Nepal enjoy a distinctive relationship marked by friendship and cooperation, underpinned by an open border policy and strong cultural and kinship bonds between their people.
- The two nations share a lengthy border stretching over **1,850 kilometers** across five Indian states: **Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.**
- The cornerstone of their specialties is the India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, established in 1950, which allows Nepalese citizens to access the same facilities and opportunities as Indian citizens, in line with the treaty's provisions.

VARIOUS OPERATIONS RELATED TO MALDIVES

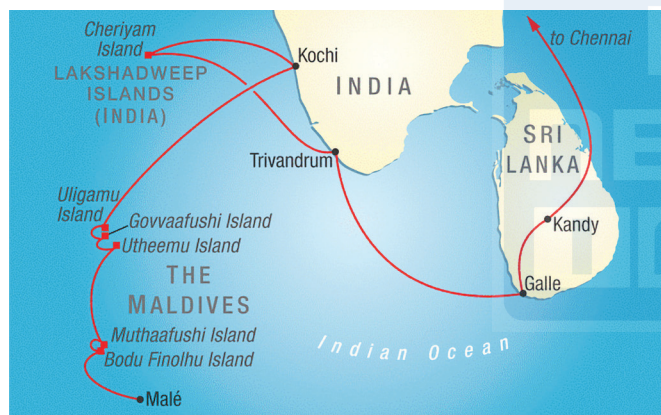
- **Operation Cactus (1988):** The Indian Armed Forces played a crucial role in assisting the then-Maldivian government in thwarting a coup attempt, marking the successful implementation of Operation Cactus.
- **Operation Neer (2014):** India provided swift assistance to Maldives on its request during the Male Water crisis, which erupted due to a fire in the complex of Male Water and Sewerage Company on December 4, 2014.
- **Operation Sanjeevani:** As part of efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, India contributed 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines to the Maldives under Operation Sanjeevani, aiding the country in its response to the health crisis.

GREATER MALE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

- A catalyst for the Maldivian economy as it is the largest ever infrastructure project in Maldives
- Funded by USD 400 million LoC & USD 100 million special Gol grant.
- Connects capital Male to Villingili island, Gulhifalhu port & Thilafushi industrial zone through bridges, causeways & roads.

INDIA-MALDIVES

The Maldives, located south of India, elected a president perceived to be aligned with China, raising concerns for India.



About

- The newly elected president and his party were associated with the **India Out Campaign**, fueling anti-India sentiments.
 - ♦ It is a political movement in the Maldives aimed at rallying public sentiment against India, particularly opposing the presence of the Indian military on Maldivian territory.

'INDIA FIRST' POLICY

- In 2018, the then President, Ibrahim Solih worked to improve the relationship by initiating an 'India First' policy.
- The policy prioritized India for economic and defense partnerships, and showed greater sensitivity to Indian concerns emanating from Chinese investments and activities in Maldives



INDIA-BANGLADESH

PM Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina virtually inaugurated the Agartala-Akhaura rail link connecting Northeast India with Bangladesh.

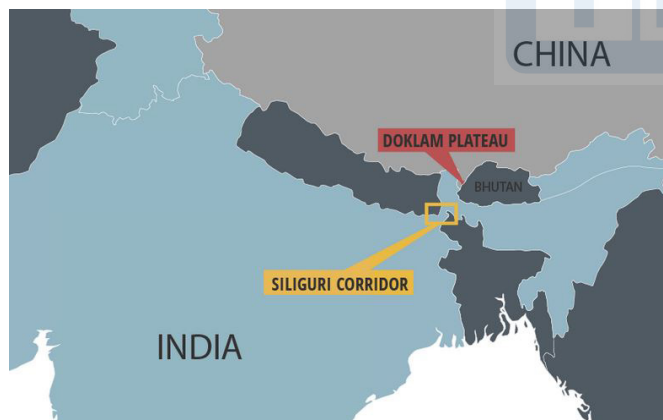
Significance

- **Political:**
 - ♦ **Land Boundary Agreement (LBA):** The historic 100th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2015 resolved the undemarcated land boundary dispute between the two countries.

- ◆ It facilitated the transfer of 111 enclaves from India to Bangladesh.
- ◆ India received 51 enclaves in return.
- **Economic:** Bangladesh is **India's biggest trade partner** in South Asia and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh in Asia. The bilateral trade achieved the status of 19.5 Billion dollars in 2022-2023.
- **Connectivity:**
 - ◆ **Chattogram (Chittagong) and Mongla ports** in Bangladesh are used for the movement of goods to and from India, particularly from North-eastern India.
 - It significantly reduces the time and cost needed to transport goods to India's northeastern states and West Bengal.
 - ◆ **Maitri Setu (Friendship Bridge) over Feni River** started allowing landlocked northeast easy access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh. It is widely known as "the Gateway of North East"
- **Connectivity:**
 - ◆ **Cross-Border Rail Link:** The agreement between India and Bhutan signed on conducting a final location survey for a proposed cross-border rail link connecting **Kokrajhar in Assam to Gelephu in Bhutan**.
 - ◆ Both nations also expressed their intention to explore the establishment of a rail link between **Banarhat in West Bengal and Samtse in Bhutan**
 - ◆ Both countries decided to reinforce trade infrastructure, including upgrading the existing **Land Customs station at Dadgiri (Assam) to an Integrated Check Post with India's support**.
 - ◆ **Immigration Check Posts: Darranga (Assam) and Samdrup Jongkhar (Bhutan)** are designated as immigration check posts, facilitating the entry and exit of third-country nationals by land route.
 - ◆ **Concessional Financing for GyalSung Project:** The Project to endow every young Bhutanese with the personal attributes/discipline and professional skills and capabilities needed to succeed in the 21st Century.

INDIA-BHUTAN

Bhutan's King Wangchuck visited India amidst its renewed efforts to resolve the longstanding boundary dispute with China.



Significance

- **Hydropower Cooperation:** India has successfully completed three operational Hydroelectric Projects (HEP) in Bhutan—**336 MW Chukha HEP, 60 MW Kurichhu HEP, and 1020 MW Tala HEP**—exporting surplus power to India.
- The **720 MW Mangdechhu** was commissioned in August 2019 and handed over to Bhutan in December 2022

OPERATION "ALL CLEAR" BY BHUTAN

- **Coordinated Offensive:** On December 15, 2003, the Royal Bhutan Army, with backing from the Indian Army, initiated 'Operation All Clear,' concurrently targeting ULFA, NDFB, (Government of India has already imposed ban on these secessionist groups) etc. camps.
- **Indian Assistance:** India extended logistical and medical aid, sealing the Indo-Bhutan border to thwart insurgent escape into India during the operation.

MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS

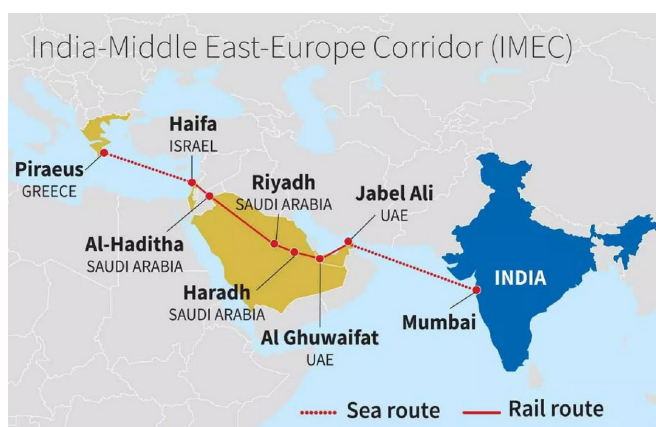
G-20

- The 18th G20 Summit took place in New Delhi, India, marking India's inaugural hosting of the G20 Leaders' Summit.
- The summit centered around the theme "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**," signifying the idea that "The world is one family."

Outcomes:

- **New Delhi Declaration:**

- ◆ The G20 expressed support for the **G20 Principles on Harnessing Data for Development (D4D)** and approved the launch of the Data for Development Capacity Building Initiative.
- ◆ Additionally, efforts were made to enhance transparency in agricultural markets by reinforcing the **Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS)** and the **Group on Earth Observations Global Agricultural Monitoring (GEOGLAM)**, aiming to mitigate food price volatility.
- ◆ Furthermore, there was a focus on advocating for the adoption of a comprehensive **one-health approach**.
- ◆ The **G20 2023 Financial Inclusion Action Plan (FIAP)** was designed with the objective of promoting financial inclusion for both individuals and **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**.
- ◆ **The One Future Alliance (OFA)** presents a voluntary initiative aimed at assisting the implementation of **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in low and low-middle-income countries**.
- ◆ Additionally, India intends to establish and manage a Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR), serving as a virtual repository of DPI, voluntarily contributed by G20 member nations.
- ◆ Encourage efforts to **triple renewable energy capacity by 2030**
- ◆ **The Jaipur Call for Action** seeks to improve access to information for **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** to facilitate their integration into international trade. **Additionally, the Chennai High-Level Principles aim to establish a sustainable and resilient blue/ocean-based economy.**
- **Admittance of the African Union to the G20 (Now G21):**
 - ◆ G20 leaders agreed to grant permanent membership to the African Union in the G20, aiming to bolster representation of developing nations.
 - ◆ AU's inclusion offers an opportunity to reshape global trade, finance, and investment, amplifying the voice of the Global South within the G20.
- **Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA):** Led by India, GBA aims to form an alliance advocating for widespread adoption of biofuels.
 - ◆ **Objective:** Position biofuels as a vital component of the energy transition, fostering economic growth and job creation.
 - ◆ **Accelerates India's biofuels programs:** PM-JIVAN Yojna, SATAT, and GOBARdhan scheme.
- ◆ **Formation and Founding Members:** Founded by nine nations: India, US, Brazil, Argentina, Bangladesh, Italy, Mauritius, South Africa, UAE.
- **Membership:** Nineteen countries and twelve international organizations have committed to join the GBA, demonstrating broad support.
- **India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):**
 - ◆ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the Governments of **India, US, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the UAE, France, Germany, and Italy** to inaugurate the IMEC.
 - ◆ IMEC serves as a significant infrastructure venture linking India, the Middle East, and Europe.
 - ◆ The project aims to establish a comprehensive network of transportation corridors, encompassing railways and sea routes.
 - ◆ IMEC is perceived as a strategic response to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), offering an alternative infrastructure framework.
 - ◆ IMEC is a component of the broader **Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)**.
 - ◆ PGII was introduced during the **G7 summit in the UK in June 2021** with the objective of funding infrastructure projects in developing nations through a blend of public and private investments.



- **Commitment to Global Food Security and Nutrition:**
 - ◆ Their objective is to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, recognizing that global challenges such as poverty, climate change, pandemics, and conflicts disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, especially women and children.

- The G20 declaration underscores the human suffering and repercussions of the conflict in Ukraine on global food and energy security, supply chains, inflation, and economic stability.
- During the G20 Presidency, the agriculture working group achieved a groundbreaking consensus on two fronts: **the Deccan G20 High-level Principles on Food Security and Nutrition and the Millet initiative named MAHARISHI.**
- **MAHARISHI** (Millets And OtHer Ancient Grains International ReSearch Initiative) aims to advance research collaborations and raise awareness about millets and other ancient grains, particularly during the **International Year of Millets 2023** and beyond.

G-20

- The G20 was **founded in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98** as an **informal forum for the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors** of the most important industrialised and developing economies to discuss international economic and financial stability.
- The G20 was **upgraded to the level of Heads of State/ Government** in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis of **2007, and in 2009**, when it became apparent that the necessary crisis coordination would only be possible at the highest political level.
 - Since then, the G20 Leaders have met regularly, and the G20 has become the premier forum for international economic cooperation.
- The G20 Presidency also **invites other guest countries and international organisations (IOs)** to participate in the G20 meetings and Summit.
- The Group of Twenty (G20) **comprises 19 countries** (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and United States) and **European Union.**
- The G20 members represent around **85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.**
- The G20 does not have a **permanent secretariat or staff.**

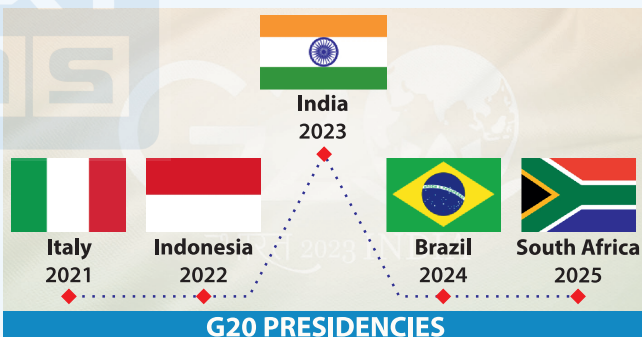
How G20 Presidency is decided

- The G20 Presidency **rotates annually among the members and is selected from a different regional grouping of countries.**

- The **19 member countries** are therefore divided up into **five groups** comprising a **maximum of four countries** each. The **EU, the 20th member, is not a member of any of these regional groups.**
- **Most of the groups are formed on a regional basis**, that is countries from the same region are usually put in the same group. **Only Group 1** (Australia, Canada, Saudi Arabia and the United States) and **Group 2 (India, Russia, South Africa and Türkiye)** do not follow this pattern.
- **Group 3** includes Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico; **Group 4** includes France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom; and **Group 5** includes China, Indonesia, Japan, and Republic of Korea.
- **Each year another country from a different group assumes the G20 Presidency.** The countries in a group are each equally entitled to take on the Presidency when it is their group's turn, though.

G20 Structure

- **Troika System:** Three members – the current, previous, and upcoming presidents – form the Troika, providing continuity and facilitating smooth transitions between presidencies.



- **Sherpa Track:** It is **headed by Sherpa who is the representative of the Leader. Focus areas:** Socio-economic issues such as agriculture, anti-corruption, climate, digital economy, education, employment, energy, environment, health, tourism, trade and investment.
- **Finance Track:** It is headed by the **Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors**, who generally meet **four times a year**, with two meetings being held on the side-lines of WB/IMF meetings.
 - **Focus areas:** Fiscal and monetary policy issues such as the global economy, infrastructure, financial regulation, financial inclusion, international financial architecture, and international taxation.

• India's G20 Presidency

- ♦ India inherited the G20 presidency from Indonesia (the former G20 chair) for the period **1st December 2022 to 30 November 2023**.
- ♦ Vasudhaiva Kutumba-kam, or "**One Earth, One Family, One Future**," was the theme of India's G20 Presidency.
- ♦ India has **invited** Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and UAE as guest countries during its G20 Presidency.
 - **For Guest IOs, India has invited** ISA, CDRI and ADB in addition to the regular G20 International Organizations (UN, IMF, WB, WHO, WTO, ILO, FSB and OECD) and Chairs of Regional Organizations (AU, AUDA-NEPAD and ASEAN).
- ♦ **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil** is currently holding the G20 presidency in 2024.

Cultural Aspect of G20

- **Bharat mandapam:** G20 summit took place in this Mandap. It is also known as the **International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC)** complex, located in New Delhi's Pragati Maidan.
 - ♦ During the G20 Summit, Bharat Mandapam **also referred to as the "culture corridor"** showcased **diverse traditions from 29 countries**, including India and the special invitees to the G20.
 - ♦ A **27-ft-tall bronze statue of Nataraja**, made of Ashtadhatu and weighing about 18 tons, was also installed at Bharat Mandapam.
 - ♦ Bharat Mandapam **draws inspiration from "Lord Basaveshwara's concept of Anubhav Mandapam"**, originally a platform for public ceremonies.
 - ♦ The building's **shape is inspired** by the elegant **form of the Shankha, or conch shell**.
 - Different walls and facades of the Convention Centre intricately depict '**Surya Shakti**', symbolizing India's commitment to harnessing solar energy, '**Zero to ISRO**', celebrating the nation's achievements in space exploration, and '**Pancha Mahabhuta**', representing the fundamental elements of the universe - **Aakash (Sky), Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), Jal (Water), Prithvi (Earth), and more**.
- **Logo and theme of G20:** India introduced the **lotus as its logo** and the Sanskrit phrase '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — One Earth, One Family, One Future**' as the theme.

- ♦ The **G20 Logo draws inspiration** from the vibrant colors of **India's national flag** – saffron, white and green, and blue. It juxtaposes planet Earth with the lotus, **India's national flower that reflects growth amid challenges**.
- ♦ The Earth reflects **India's pro-planet approach to life**, one in perfect harmony with nature.

AFRICAN UNION

- It is a continental organization comprising the **55** member states of the African Continent.
- **Established:** In **2002**, it succeeded the **Organization of African Unity (OAU)**, which was formed in 1963.
- **Primary aim:** To foster unity, cooperation, and development among African nations while advocating for the continent's interests globally.
 - ♦ It seeks to enhance political, economic, and social integration among African countries, envisioning an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa.
- **Headquarter:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,
- **Structure includes:**
 - ♦ **Assembly:** consisting of heads of state and government;
 - ♦ **Executive Council:** comprising foreign affairs ministers, responsible for policy matters.
 - ♦ **AU Commission:** Based in Addis Ababa, which serves as the administrative body tasked with implementing decisions made by the Assembly and the Executive Council.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

23rd Summit of SCO held in India in 2023.

About the Summit

- Under **India's first-ever Chairmanship**, the 23rd Summit of the SCO Council of Heads of State was held in the virtual format on 4 July 2023, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- The theme of the Summit was '**Towards a SECURE SCO**'.
- The **SECURE acronym was coined by the Prime Minister at the 2018 SCO Summit** and stands for **Security; Economy and Trade; Connectivity; Unity; Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity; and Environment**. These themes were highlighted during Chairmanship of SCO by India.

- India has set up new pillars of cooperation under its Chairmanship - **Startups and Innovation; Traditional Medicine; Digital Inclusion; Youth Empowerment; and Shared Buddhist Heritage.**
- India has worked towards **fostering greater people to people ties** that celebrate the historical and civilizational bonds between nations of SCO.
 - These include the various socio-cultural events **hosted by Varanasi** under the framework of the **first-ever SCO Cultural and Tourist Capital for 2022-23.**
- Iran was included** as a new member of the group.
- New Delhi Declaration:** the Member States will seek to develop common principles and approaches to form a unified list of terrorist, separatist and extremist organizations whose activities are prohibited on the territories of the SCO Member States.
 - They opposed the militarization of information and communication technologies.

IRAN AND THE SCO

- The case for Iran's full membership of the SCO has been made for several years.
- In 2021, Iran was declared a member with **observer status.**
- At the **21st SCO summit held in the Tajikistan capital Dushanbe**, all existing members unanimously agreed to change Iran's status from observer state to a full member.
 - This led to the beginning of the procession of accession of Iran as a full member of SCO.

SCO

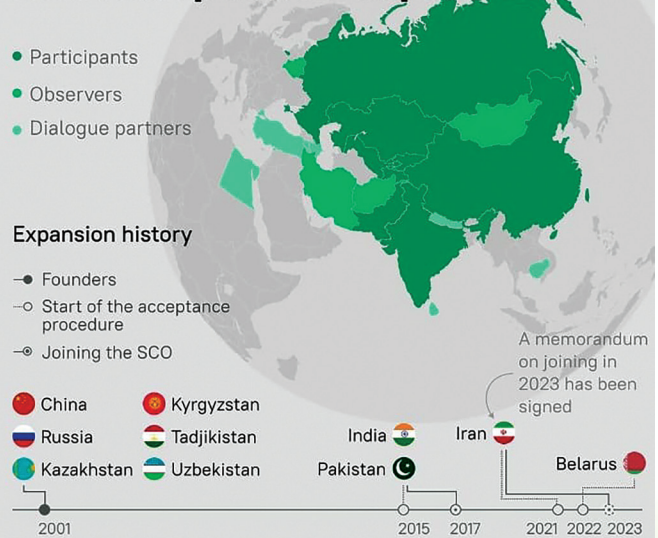
- The SCO is an **intergovernmental organization** founded in **2001** with **six members.**
- Objective:** To enhance regional cooperation for efforts to curb terrorism, separatism, and extremism in the Central Asian region.
- Members:** China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran and the four Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- India and Pakistan** Joined SCO in June 2017. **Iran** Joined SCO in **23rd Summit of SCO** held virtually in 2023 chaired by India.
- Observer status:** Afghanistan, Belarus, and Mongolia.
- Dialogue Partner status:** **14 countries** currently have dialogue partner status.

- These are:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Egypt, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Qatar, Bahrain, Maldives, Myanmar, UAE and Kuwait.
- Secretariat: Beijing.** It is headed by the **Secretary-General.**
- The SCO has been an observer in the UN General Assembly since 2005.

REGIONAL ANTI-TERRORIST STRUCTURE (RATS)

- Establishment:** The SCO RATS was established in June 2001, alongside the formation of the SCO itself, which includes countries from Eurasia, primarily focusing on the security and stability of the region.
- Headquarters:** Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Members:** Membership of SCO RATS corresponds with the SCO's membership, which includes countries like China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan.
- Objectives:** The main objectives of SCO RATS are to coordinate the efforts of SCO member states against terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
 - This includes enhancing cooperation in preventing and combating terrorist activities.
 - It also includes sharing intelligence and best practices, conducting joint exercises, and working towards the harmonization of national laws to effectively combat these threats.

SCO: the path to expansion



GROUP OF GLOBAL CRISIS RESPONSE GROUP

About

- The Global Crisis Response Group (**GCRG**) was set up by the **UNSG in March 2022 to address urgent and critical global issues** pertaining to interlinked crises in food security, energy, and finance and to coordinate a global response.
- It was established to **respond to the war in Ukraine** and its global impacts on food, energy, and finance.
- **India joined the Group of GCRG in July 2023**, accepting an invitation from United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) António Guterres to PM Narendra Modi.
- **The GCRG is overseen** by the Champions Group composed of HOS/ HOGs of **Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia and Senegal.**
- The United Nations Global Crisis Response Group Briefs will **help decision-makers to mobilise solutions and develop strategies** to help countries address the interlinked crisis with food, energy, and finance.

Briefs and Reports Published By GCRG

Till date it has **published 2 briefs and one Report** as given below:

- **Brief No. 1:** It was published in April 2022. It was titled **"Global Impact of war in Ukraine on food, energy and finance systems"**.
- **Brief No. 2:** It was Published in June 2022. It was titled **"Global impact of the war in Ukraine: Billions of People face the greatest cost of living crisis in a generation"**.
- **"A world of Debt" Report:** It was published in July 2023.

INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION

The IORA Council of Foreign Ministers (COM) convened in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

About:

- **Theme:** The meeting centered around the theme of **"Strengthening Regional Architecture: Reinforcing Indian Ocean Identity."**
- **Key Documents:** The **"Colombo Communiqué"** and the **"IORA Vision 2030 and Beyond"** were both endorsed during the meeting, outlining the shared vision and goals for the region.
- **New Dialogue Partner:** Saudi Arabia was formally welcomed as the 11th Dialogue Partner of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), expanding the collaboration within the region.

- **Chair:** The chairmanship of the IORA was transitioned from Bangladesh to Sri Lanka for the term spanning 2023-2025.
 - ◆ Additionally, it was announced that India will assume the chairship for the subsequent term, spanning 2025-2027.

IORA

- **Establishment:** Founded in 1997, the IORA is an intergovernmental organization.
- **Objective:** IORA aims to strengthen regional cooperation and promote sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region (IOR).
- **Membership:** The organization comprises 23 member states situated within the Indian Ocean region.
- **Apex Body:** The Council of Ministers (CoM) serves as the apex body of IORA, convening annually to discuss and address regional issues and initiatives.

VOICE OF GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT (VOGSS)

India hosted the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November 2023, in virtual format under the overarching theme – **'Together, For Everyone's Growth, With Everyone's Trust'**.

About

- The second VOGSS focused on enhancing solidarity among Global South nations and promoting collective growth and trust. The themes highlighted the commitment to mutual growth and trust across developing nations.
- A primary objective was to share the outcomes of the G20 summit hosted by India, aiming for the effective implementation of decisions beneficial to the interests of developing countries.

Key Outcomes

- **Global South Center of Excellence 'DAKSHIN':** Launched by the Indian Prime Minister, DAKSHIN aims to facilitate collaboration among developing nations through knowledge sharing and policy research.
- **Call for Restraint in Israel-Hamas Conflict:** India emphasized the need for restraint and prioritization of civilian safety in the Israel-Hamas conflict, urging for de-escalation.
- **5 'Cs' for Global South:** The summit advocated for **consultation, cooperation, communication, creativity, and capacity building** among Global South countries.

Understanding the Global South

- The Global South transcends geographical boundaries, including nations primarily characterized by their developmental challenges rather than their physical location.
- This grouping includes countries across **Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America**, many of which are located in the northern hemisphere, such as India and China.

BRANDT LINE

- Introduced by Willy Brandt in the 1980s, the Brandt Line visually represents the economic division between the **Global North and South**.
- It illustrates a divide based on per-capita GDP, encapsulating nations with varying development challenges across continents while excluding more developed nations like Australia and New Zealand.

COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Britain has signed a treaty to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) as the 12th member.

About:

- (CPTPP) is also known as **TPP11**.
- **Present Members:** It is a free trade agreement between 11 countries - **Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Australia, Singapore, Brunei, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Peru and Chile**.

- China also launched a bid to join in 2021.
- **Background:** The CPTPP started as the **Trans-Pacific Partnership**, with the US negotiating to join under President Obama.
- But in 2017, Trump withdrew from the deal and the remaining countries continued talks, eventually signing the CPTPP in 2018 in Santiago, Chile.
- **Objective:** The pact requires countries to eliminate or significantly reduce tariffs and make strong commitments to opening services and investment markets.
 - It also has rules addressing competition, intellectual property rights and protections for foreign companies.
- **Comparison with EU:** It does not have a single market for goods or services, and so regulatory harmonization is not required, unlike the European Union, whose trading orbit Britain left at the end of 2020.
- **Significance:** The eleven signatories have combined economies representing 13.4 percent of global gross domestic product, at approximately US\$13.5 trillion, making the CPTPP one of the world's largest free-trade areas by GDP, along with the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement, the European single market, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic partnership.



IMO COUNCIL

India secured re-election to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council for the 2024–25 term, achieving the highest number of votes in the elections.

About:

- The Council, serving as the executive body of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), oversees the organization's work.
- It consists of 40 Member States, which are elected by the Assembly for terms of two years each.

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)

- **Nature:** A specialized agency of the United Nations.
- **Established:** In 1948, operational from 1959.
- **Members:** 174 Member States and 3 Associate Members.
- **Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom.

Objectives and Functions

- Enhance maritime safety and security.
- Prevent marine pollution from ships.
- Develop international maritime regulations and standards.
- Assist countries in implementing IMO conventions.
- Address maritime security, including piracy and armed robbery at sea.
- **Key Conventions**
 - ♦ **SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea):** Ensures safety standards for the construction, equipment, and operation of ships.
- **MARPOL (Marine Pollution):** Aims to prevent pollution of the marine environment by ships due to operational or accidental causes.
- **STCW (Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers):** Establishes standards for the training and certification of seafarers.

REFORMS FOR MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS

A G20 expert panel on strengthening Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) wants the institutions to shift from financing individual projects to prioritizing programmes with sectoral focus and long-term transformation plans.

About:

- Multilateral Development Banks are institutions whose members include multiple developed and developing countries, which have to fulfill certain lending obligations to facilitate developmental objectives.
- They provide financing and technical assistance to countries and organizations undertaking projects across sectors including transport, energy, urban infrastructure, and waste management.
- **Lending operations:** Usually, developed countries in MDBs contribute to the lending pool while developing countries primarily borrow from these institutions to fund development projects.

NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

- **Established in 2015** by BRICS countries, the New Development Bank is a multilateral development bank aimed at mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other EMDCs.
- It was formerly known as **BRICS bank**.
- The Bank is **headquartered in Shanghai, China with regional offices in South Africa and Brazil**.
- It has **8 members** currently. The **founding members of this bank are: India, China, Russia, South Africa and Brazil**. **Other 3 members of this bank are Bangladesh, UAE and Egypt**.
- **Prospective members** are those members who have been **admitted by NDB's Board of Governors and will officially become a member country** once they deposit their instrument of accession.
- **Votes share:** India, Russia, China, Brazil and South Africa have **equal vote share of 18.98% each**. **Bangladesh has a vote share of 1.79%, Egypt has a vote share of 2.27% and UAE has a vote share of 1.06%**.
- NDB **funds projects in areas such as** sustainable infrastructure, clean energy, social safety, public health, education, water, sanitation and flood protection, renewable and green energy, transport, infrastructure, irrigation, agriculture, smart cities etc.

WORLD BANK

- The World Bank was **established in 1944 as part of the Bretton Woods Agreements**.
- The World bank has **189 countries as members**.
- **Top 8 countries with voting rights are:** USA (15.51%), Japan (7.09%), China (5.92%), Germany (4.22%), United Kingdom (3.86%), France (3.86%), India (3.04%), Russia (2.82%).
- It is a **group 5 institutions:** IBRD (The international bank for Reconstruction and Development), IDA (international Development Association), IFC (International Finance Corporation), MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee agency), ICSID (The international centre for settlement of Investment Dispute).
- India is a member of 4 out of 5 of these groups. India is not a member of ICSID.
- India is one of the **founding members of IBRD, IDA and IFC**.
- **World Bank resident mission** was established in **India in 1957**.
- World Bank lends around **US\$27.1 bn to India**, which makes it one of the largest country of IBRD support.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, established in **1944 as part of the Bretton Woods Agreements**, serves as a unique and central institution in the global financial system.
- **Members:** 190 countries (including **India as founding member**)
- The IMF has **three critical missions**:
 - ◆ furthering international monetary cooperation,
 - ◆ encouraging the expansion of trade and economic growth, and
 - ◆ discouraging policies that would harm prosperity.
- **Kinds of Financial assistance Provided by IMF:**
 - ◆ **Providing loans and concessional financial assistance** to member countries experiencing actual or potential balance-of-payments problems is a core responsibility of the IMF.
 - ◆ **The IMF also provides capacity development, which is technical assistance and training of government officials** to help member countries strengthen economic institutions and statistics, as well as capacities in areas such as taxation and administration, expenditure management etc.
- India has **not taken any financial assistance from the IMF since 1993**. Repayments of all the loans taken from the International Monetary Fund were completed on **31 May, 2000**.

ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL OFFICE OF UPU IN DELHI

About

- The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is a **United Nations specialized agency** and the postal sector's primary forum for international cooperation.
- **Established in 1874**, the Universal Postal Union (UPU), with its **headquarters in the Swiss capital Berne**, is the **second oldest international organisation worldwide**.
- With its **192 member countries**, the UPU is the primary forum for cooperation between postal sector players. It helps to ensure a truly universal network of up-to-date products and services.
- Any **member country** of the United Nations may become a member of the UPU.
- Any **non-member country of the United Nations** may become a UPU member provided that its request is approved by at least two-thirds of the member countries of the UPU.
- **UPU** is celebrating its **150 years** of establishment.

Bodies of UPU

It consists of 4 bodies:

- **The Congress:** Congress is the supreme authority of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and **meets every four years**.

OTHER BANKS

Feature	Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
Established	1966	2016
Headquarters	Manila, Philippines	Beijing, China
Membership	68 members (49 from the region)	105 members (as of my last update in April 2023, including regional and non-regional members)
Objective	To reduce poverty in the Asia-Pacific region through inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.	To support the building of infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region that promotes regional development and connectivity.
Focus Areas	Broad focus on development issues, including education, health, infrastructure, environmental protection, and regional cooperation.	Primarily focused on financing infrastructure projects like transportation, energy, urban development, and water management.
Key Initiatives	Asian Development Fund (ADF), Strategy 2030 focusing on a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific.	Sustainable infrastructure, promoting regional cooperation and partnership, and mobilizing private capital for infrastructure.
Member Countries' Influence	Japan and the United States hold significant influence, reflecting their substantial financial contributions.	China is seen as having significant influence, given its role in establishing the AIIB and its contribution to the bank's capital.

- **The council of administrators:** The Council ensures the continuity of the UPU's work between Congresses, supervises its activities and studies regulatory, administrative, legislative and legal issues.
- **The Postal Operations Council (POC)** is the technical and operational mind of the UPU and consists of 48 member countries, elected during Congress.
- **The International Bureau:** Fulfilling a secretariat function, the International Bureau provides logistical and technical support to the UPU's bodies.

Establishment of Regional Office of UPU in India:

- The **Union Cabinet approved** the establishment of a **Regional Office** of the Universal Postal Union (**UPU**) in **New Delhi in May 2023**, to undertake UPU's development cooperation and technical assistance activities in the region by entering into an agreement with UPU.
- Establishment of the UPU Regional Office in India is a significant step towards **India's commitment for South-South cooperation** and its active role in global postal development.

INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA)

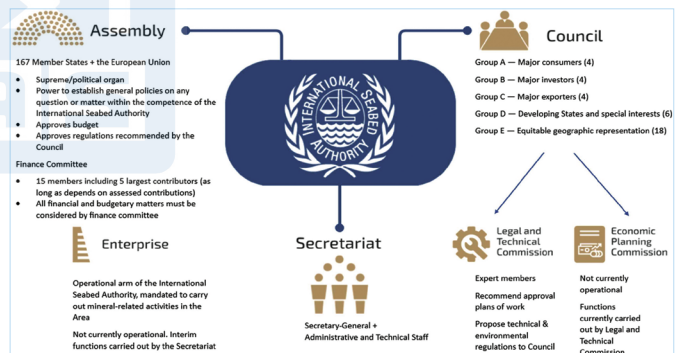
About

- The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is an autonomous international organisation established under the 1982 UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea** (1994 Agreement).
- ISA has its headquarters in **Kingston, Jamaica**, came into existence on **16 November 1994**, upon the entry into force of UNCLOS.
 - ♦ It became **fully operational as an autonomous international organization in June 1996**, when it took over the premises and facilities in Kingston, Jamaica, previously used by the United Nations Kingston Office for the Law of the Sea.
- In accordance with **UNCLOS, Article 156(2)**, all States Parties to UNCLOS are ipso facto members of ISA.
 - ♦ As of **18 May 2023**, ISA has **169 Members, including 168 Member States and the European Union**.
- ISA Area covers around **54 per cent of the total area** of the world's oceans.

India and ISA

- In 2022, ISA and the Ministry of Earth Sciences extended the **PMN (Polymetallic Nodules) exploration** extension contract for 5 years.

- ♦ This contract was **initially signed on 25th March 2002 for a period of 15 years**, which later was extended by the **authority twice for a 5 years period**, during 2017 and 2022.
- **On 18 January 2024**, the Government of India **submitted two applications** to the International Seabed Authority (ISA) for approval of two plans of work for exploration in the international seabed area (the Area) of the Indian Ocean.
 - ♦ **One application has been submitted** for the exploration for **polymetallic sulphides** in the Indian Ocean Ridge (**Carlsberg Ridge**).
 - ♦ The application region, located in the Area in the Central Indian Ocean, covers a total **area of 10,000 km²** made up of 100 blocks, each 10 km by 10 km in size, with none exceeding 100 km².
 - ♦ **The second application was submitted for the exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts of the Afanasy-Nikitin Seamount** in the Central Indian Ocean.
 - ♦ The area of the application covers 3,000 km² and consists of 150 blocks, with none exceeding 20 km² in size.



PMN (POLY METALLIC NODULES) EXPLORATION PROGRAM

- Ministry of Earth Sciences has been conducting PMN exploration program.
 - ♦ It is covering components like **Survey & Exploration, Environmental Impact Assessment, Technology Development** (Mining), and **Technology Development** (Extractive Metallurgy) through its nodal institute **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)** and other associated national institutes like **National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT)**.

- The **ultimate objective** of the program is to complete preparatory work to demonstrate the pilot mining at **Test Mining Site (TMS)**.
- The various activities under this programme are under implementation and significant progress has been made towards the preparatory work, which has been communicated to the ISA time to time through submission of annual reports.

Afanasy Nikitin Seamount

- The Afanasy Nikitin Seamount (ANS) is a major structural feature (**400 km-long and 150 km-wide**) in the Central Indian Basin, situated at the southern end of the so-called **85 degree E Ridge**.

MEKONG GANGA COOPERATION (MGC)

The 12th Mekong - Ganga Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting (12th MGC FMM) was held on 16th July 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand in a hybrid format.

About

- The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by **six countries – India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam** for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. It was **launched in 2000 at Vientiane, Lao PDR**.
- The grouping was initially called **Ganga Suvarnabhumi Programme (GMSP)**.
- Both the Ganga and the Mekong are **civilizational rivers**, and the MGC initiative **aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people** inhabiting these two major river basins.
- The MGC is also **indicative of the cultural and commercial linkages** among the member countries of the MGC down the centuries.
- The **1st MGC Ministerial Meeting** was held in **Vientiane from 9-13 November 2000**. It issued the **Vientiane Declaration on MGC** covering cooperation in the 4 traditional areas.

Areas of Cooperation

- The **four foundational areas** of cooperation under MGC include **tourism, culture, education, and transport & communication**.
- It has **further expanded** to include new areas like **health and traditional medicine, agriculture and allied sectors, small and medium enterprises**, water resources management, science and technology, skill development, and capacity building.

ASEAN (ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS)

- It was **founded in 1967 by the five South-East Asian nations** of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- **Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999**, making up ten Member States of ASEAN.
- **Purpose:** ASEAN's purpose is to **promote economic and cultural exchange among its member countries**, maintain **peace and stability in Southeast Asia**, and establish relationships with foreign powers with similar aims.



ASEAN Summit:

- It is the **highest policy-making body in ASEAN** comprising the Head of States or Government of ASEAN Member States.
- Summit is **held twice annually**.
- The **First ASEAN Summit** was held in **Bali, Indonesia in 1976**.
- ASEAN today has an **anthem, a flag and biannual summits (twice a year) with a rotating chairmanship**.
- An example of the focus on unity, its **official motto is "One Vision, One Identity, One Community"**.

INDIA AND ASEAN

Engagement with ASEAN is a multi-level interaction process.

- India and ASEAN **started to hold summits together in 2002 — a decade after the country established formal engagement with the group**.
- In **2010, a Free Trade Agreement was signed** and entered into force between India and ASEAN.
- At the apex is the **annual summit "ASEAN-India Summit"**
- India shares a deep connection with ASEAN and has continued its active engagement in many areas contributing to **regional peace and stability**, particularly through ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as:
 - East Asia Summit.

- ◆ ASEAN Regional Forum.
- ◆ ADMM-Plus.
- The ADMM Plus is an annual **meeting of Defence Ministers** of 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries and **eight dialogue partner countries – Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States.**
- **Delhi Dialogue:**
 - ◆ The 'Delhi Dialogue' (DD) mechanism is hosted **by India annually.**
 - ◆ It is traditionally **inaugurated jointly by India and ASEAN at the Foreign Minister's level.**
 - ◆ It serves as the **main Track 1.5 mechanism** for our engagement.
- India sent **INS Satpura and INS Delhi** to participate in the first ever **ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME 2023)** in May 2023.
- **ASEAN Plus Three:**
 - ◆ It is a forum that functions as a coordinator of co-operation between the ASEAN and the three East Asian nations of **China, South Korea, and Japan.**
- **ASEAN Plus Six:** The group includes **ASEAN Plus Three as well as India, Australia, and New Zealand.**

EAST ASIA SUMMIT (EAS)

- **Origin:** The origins of EAS dates **back to the 1990 proposal for an East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG).**
 - ◆ The project was later revived through the ASEAN Plus Three or APT (China, Japan, and South Korea) Summit of Heads of State and Government that first met in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997.
 - ◆ It eventually found expression through the **creation of the EAS in 2005.**
- **Membership:** Since its establishment, the membership of the EAS has increased from the original 16 to 18 countries comprising the **ten ASEAN countries, along with Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the United States, and Russia.**
- **Lead & the Chair position:** ASEAN leads the forum, and the chair position rotates between ASEAN Member States annually.
- There are seven evolving priorities of regional cooperation within the framework of the EAS. These include
 - ◆ Environment and energy,
 - ◆ Education,
 - ◆ Finance,
 - ◆ Global health including pandemics,

- ◆ Environment and disaster management,
- ◆ ASEAN connectivity, and
- ◆ Maritime cooperation.

MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE (MWL)

About

- MWL is an **international NGO headquartered in Makkah, with members from all Islamic countries and sects.**
- The Muslim World League was **founded** in accordance with a resolution adopted during the meeting of the **General Islamic Conference**, which was held in Holy Makkah on the **14th of Dhul Hijjah 1381 Hijra** corresponding to the **18th May 1962.**
- **Its goal** is to clarify the true message of Islam. It **aims to present the true Islam** and its tolerant principles, provide humanitarian aid, extend bridges of dialogue and cooperation with all, engage in positive openness to all cultures and civilizations.
- **Councils and Subsidiaries of the MWL:** The Supreme Council, The World Supreme Council for Mosques, Islamic Fiqh Council, Organization of Muslim Scholars. The MWL also has offices in the majority of the countries around the world.
- **Finances:** The Muslim World League relies on its financial management on its **endowments.** The MWL's investments from "Endowments" constitute a major source.
- Recently, Muslim World League **Secretary-General Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa** was on a **visit to India in 2023.**

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is a large **intergovernmental organisation with 57 member states spread over four continents.**
- It was **founded in 1969** following the arson attack on the **Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.**
- **Its stated objectives** include promoting cooperation and development among member states, safeguarding the interests of the Islamic world, and promoting international peace and harmony.
- **In 1970** the first ever meeting of **Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM)** was held in **Jeddah** which decided to **establish a permanent secretariat in Jeddah.**

- India had been invited to the founding conference at Rabat in 1969, but was humiliatingly ejected at Pakistan's behest.
 - ♦ Then Agriculture Minister Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was dis-invited upon arrival in Morocco.
- Currently India is not a member of this group and also doesn't hold observer status in this group.

Secretariat General

- The Secretariat General of the Muslim World League is the **executive wing of the organisation**.
- It **supervises the day to day activities** of the 'League' and implements the policies and resolutions adopted by the Constituent Council, under the direction of the Secretary General, the assistant secretaries and the general staff.

EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM (EEF)

About

- Eastern Economic Forum is an international forum held each year in **Vladivostok, Russia**, for the purpose of **encouraging foreign investment in the Russian Far East**.
- It is **held each year since 2015 in September**, at the Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok, Russia.
- The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways represented India at the **eighth Eastern Economic Forum** in Vladivostok in September 2023.
- In **2023**, more than 7,000 participants and media representatives from **62 countries** and territories, including Russia, took part in the Forum. **The largest delegations were sent by China, India, Myanmar, the Philippines, Laos, and Mongolia**.

ABOUT THE FAR EAST REGION OF RUSSIA

- It is the easternmost part of Russia.
- It borders **two oceans, the Pacific and the Arctic**, and **five countries** (China, Japan, Mongolia, the United States and the DPRK).
- The Far Eastern Federal District covers about **40% of Russia's Territory**.
- It consists of **50 % of forestland and gold reserves of Russia**. It also has more than **70% of Russia's Fish and Diamond reserves**.
- Over 30% of Copper and titanium reserves of Russia are here.
- **China** is the biggest investor in the region as it sees potential in promoting the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative and the Polar Sea Route in the RFE.

L.69 GROUPING

About

- The L.69 Group **comprises developing nations from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific**, including Small Island Developing States.
- **Their primary goal** is to achieve comprehensive and enduring reform of the United Nations Security Council. Presently, the group consists of **32 member countries**.
- The Group is bound by the firm conviction that **expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership of the Security Council** is imperative to better reflect contemporary world realities, and achieve a more accountable, representative, transparent and more importantly a 'relevant' Security Council.
- **India** is one of the leading countries of this group.

WORLD LOCAL PRODUCTION FORUM

About

- **Initiated by: WHO**
- **The World Local Production Forum: Enhancing access to medicines and other health technologies (WLPF)** provides Member States and the global community with a **regular platform to shape strategies, galvanise collective action, and foster partnerships** on sustainable local production to improve timely and equitable access to quality assured health products.
- The WLPF **serves as a platform to generate actionable recommendations** and outcomes that support local production, with a focus on improving access to quality, safe, and effective health products, and strengthening global, regional, and national health security.
- It aims to emphasise the importance of health product production as a vital long-term infrastructure and promote the implementation of the resolution **WHA74.6**.
- **1st Edition of WLPF:** Organised in a virtual **format in 2021** to reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global events.
- **2nd Edition of WLPF:** Organised in **November 2023 at Hague, Netherlands**. It has following outcomes:
 - ♦ To **provide a global platform** for discussions on key challenges related to promoting local production and technology transfer in the healthcare sector.

- ♦ To explore **opportunities and mechanisms** to overcome bottlenecks in local production.
- **Relevance of India's Participation:** India is recognized as a major player in the pharmaceutical supply chain and global public healthcare, offering affordable and quality healthcare solutions.

WHA74.6

- The World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution 74.6 was **adopted in May 2021**.
- It **focuses on** a critical aspect of global health: **strengthening local production of medicines** and other health technologies to improve access.
- It encourages **LMICs (Low and Middle Income Countries)** to develop and manufacture essential medicines and technologies, reducing reliance on imports and improving affordability.
- It also **facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills to LMICs**, enabling them to produce medicines and technologies themselves.

ARCTIC COUNCIL

About

- It was founded in **1996 through the Ottawa Declaration**.
- **Member states(8):** Canada, USA, Russian Federation, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden.
- **6 Permanent Participants:** The category of Permanent Participants is a unique feature of the Arctic Council. **Six organisations representing Arctic Indigenous Peoples** have status as Permanent Participants. This category was created to provide a means for active participation of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples within the Council.



- **Aleut International Association (AIA):** Represents the Aleut people residing in both the United States and Russia.
- **Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC):** Represents the Athabaskan people across Alaska, Yukon, and Northwest Territories in Canada.
- **Gwich'in Council International (GCI):** Represents the Gwich'in people living in Alaska, Canada, and the United States.
- **Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC):** Represents the Inuit people throughout Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Russia.
- **Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON):** Represents the various Indigenous peoples across the Russian Arctic.
- **Saami Council:** Represents the Saami people residing in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Russia.
- The Council's **activities are primarily conducted in six working Groups and one standalone expert Group** that cover a broad field of subjects, from climate change to emergency response, from mental health to sustainable development.
- The **Working Groups and Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM)** provide a broad and scientifically-sound knowledge-base upon which informed decisions can be taken.
 - ♦ They also develop best practices and recommendations for safe and sustainable operations in the Arctic.
- **In 2011**, the Arctic Council achieved a landmark by forging the first legally binding agreement under its authority: **the Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement**.
- **India has a status of Observer state in the Arctic council.** India got this status in **Kiruna Ministerial meeting of Arctic Council in 2013**.
- **Every two years**, the **chairmanship of the Arctic Council shifts**, with each of the eight member states taking turns leading the organisation.

OBSERVER STATES IN ARCTIC COUNCIL

- It has **38 Observers out of which 13 are countries**.
- **These countries are:** Germany, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, France, Spain, China, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Switzerland.

- Observers **may propose projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant** but financial contributions from observers to any given project may not exceed the financing from Arctic States, unless otherwise decided by the SAOs.
- At the **2013 Kiruna Ministerial Meeting** an Arctic Council Observer Manual was formally adopted.

- **1964:** The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded, leading to the 1967 Six-Day War and Israel's occupation of several territories.

Intifadas and Peace Efforts

- **1987:** The First Intifada, a Palestinian uprising, ended in 1993 with the Oslo Accords, establishing limited Palestinian self-rule.
- **2000:** The Second Intifada began, followed by Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005.
- **2014:** Operation Protective Edge was launched by Israel in Gaza, governed by Hamas since 2007.
- **2021:** Escalations included clashes in East Jerusalem and Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, leading to an 11-day conflict.

MISCELLANEOUS

ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT

In October 2023, Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades initiated Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, attacking Israeli settlements and military bases.

Historical Timeline

- **19th Century:** The **Zionist movement**, advocating for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, emerged in Europe.
- **1917:** The British government's Balfour Declaration supported establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine.
- **1920:** Britain received a mandate from the League of Nations to govern Palestine, leading to increased Jewish immigration and rising tensions with the Arab population.

Establishment of Israel and Subsequent Conflicts

- **1947:** The UN proposed partitioning Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an international city.
- **1948:** Israel declared independence, leading to the Arab-Israeli War with neighboring Arab countries.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Yom Kippur War:** The conflict started on October 6, 1973, with Arab states led by Egypt and Syria attacking Israel, leading to a ceasefire on October 25, 1973.
 - ♦ This war had profound effects on regional diplomacy and led to the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979.
- **Abrahamic Religions:** These refer to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, which share a spiritual lineage to Abraham and have significant theological connections and distinct tradition.
- **Oslo Accords:** Partial control of the West Bank was transferred to the Palestinian Authority.
- **Abraham Accords:** These agreements normalized relations between Israel and several Arab states, named after the patriarch Abraham, a key figure in both Judaism and Islam.

ORGANIZATION	FORMATION	FOUNDERS/KEY FIGURES	OBJECTIVES AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT	KEY EVENTS AND CHANGES
Fatah	Late 1950s in Kuwait	Yasser Arafat	A secular nationalist organization formed after the 1948 Israeli-Arab War with the aim of liberating Palestine through armed struggle against Israel.	Became the dominant party in the PLO after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)	1964, Cairo, Egypt	Arab League Summit	Founded with the aim of liberating Palestine through armed struggle. Recognized as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" by the Arab League and the UN General Assembly.	Gave up armed struggle in the early 1990s and endorsed a two-state solution, leading to the rise of Hamas. Fatah became dominant within the PLO post-1967 war.

<p>Palestinian Authority (PA)</p>	<p>July 1994</p>	<p>Oslo Accords</p>	<p>Established by the Oslo Accords to govern parts of Gaza and the West Bank (except East Jerusalem) until a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict is found. Acts as an agency of the PLO.</p>	<p>Led by a directly elected president, who appoints a prime minister. Currently headed by Mahmoud Abbas, who is also the chief of PLO and Fatah.</p>
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Mediterranean Sea (west), Israel (east and north), and Egypt (south).

- ◆ **Governance:** Since 2007, Hamas has controlled the Gaza Strip following a violent takeover.
- **Sinai Peninsula:**
 - ◆ **Location:** This triangular region is in northeastern Egypt, bordered by the Mediterranean Sea (north), the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Red Sea (east), with Israel and the Gaza Strip to the northeast.
 - ◆ **Sovereignty:** Post the Camp David Accords (1978) and the subsequent Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1979), Egypt regained control and sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula.
- **Jerusalem:**
 - ◆ **Significance:** Jerusalem hosts pivotal holy sites for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, including the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the Dome of the Rock.
 - ◆ These sites are situated on the Temple Mount, known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif.

Important Geographical Locations

- **Golan Heights:**
 - ◆ **Location:** Bordered by Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.
 - ◆ **Historical Context:** Captured by Israel from Syria during the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel has controlled the area since. The United States is the exception in recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, a stance not shared by the wider international community.
- **West Bank:**
 - ◆ **Location:** Nestled between the Jordan River (east) and the Green Line, marking the 1949 armistice line (west), it is surrounded by Israel on three sides (west, north, south) and Jordan to the east.
 - ◆ **Current Status:** Since the 1967 Six-Day War, the West Bank has been under Israeli military occupation.
- **Gaza Strip:**
 - ◆ **Location:** Positioned on the eastern Mediterranean coast, the Gaza Strip is bordered by the

INDIA'S POSITION ON THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

- India has historically been supportive of a **two-state solution**.
- This stance advocates for the peaceful coexistence of both Israel and Palestine as independent, sovereign states, living side by side within secure and recognized borders.
- India's support for the two-state solution is rooted in its broader commitment to the principles of justice, dignity, and the right to self-determination for all peoples.
- This approach aligns with United Nations resolutions and international consensus aiming to address the Israel-Palestine issue through dialogue and negotiations, ensuring peace and security in the region.

- India's diplomatic relations with both Israel and Palestine are informed by this perspective, maintaining a balance between its growing ties with Israel, particularly in areas such as defense, agriculture, and technology, and its historical support for the Palestinian cause.

OPERATION AJAY

- To evacuate Indian citizens from conflict-affected Israel.
- Highlights India's focus on the safety and well-being of its nationals abroad.
- Evacuation strategy includes special chartered flights and additional measures for the safe return of Indian citizens.

OTHER RESCUE MISSIONS

Operation Name	Year	Description
Operation Poomalai	1987	Indian Air Force mission to airdrop supplies over Jaffna, Sri Lanka, supporting Tamil Tigers during the Sri Lankan Civil War.
Kuwait Airlift	1990	Evacuation of over 170,000 Indians from Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion.
Operation Sukoon	2006	Naval rescue mission to evacuate Indians and others from Lebanon during the Israel-Lebanon conflict. Known as the largest naval rescue since Dunkirk.
Operation Safe Homecoming	2011	Evacuation of 15,400 Indian nationals from conflict-affected Libya using air and sea routes.
Operation Maitri	2015	Joint relief and rescue operation in Nepal post-2015 earthquake, evacuating over 5,000 Indians and 170 foreign nationals.
Operation Raahat	2015	Evacuation of nearly 5,600 people from Yemen amid conflict, despite a no-fly zone imposed by Saudi Arabia.
Operation Sankat Mochan	2016	Indian Air Force evacuation of Indian citizens and foreigners from South Sudan during the Civil War.

Brussels Evacuation	2016	Evacuation of 242 Indians following terrorist attacks in Brussels, Belgium.
Operation Insaniyat	2017	India's humanitarian assistance to Bangladesh for Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, providing essential supplies.
Operation Nistar	2018	Naval operation to evacuate 38 Indian nationals from cyclone-hit Socotra Island, Yemen.
Operation Samudra Setu	2020	Naval operation to repatriate 3,992 Indian citizens stranded overseas during the Covid-19 pandemic.
Vande Bharat Mission	2020	Repatriation of about 60 lakh Indians stranded abroad due to the Covid-19 pandemic as of April 30, 2021.
Operation Devi Shakti	2021	Evacuation of Indian nationals from Afghanistan following the fall of Kabul and the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
Operation Ganga	2022	Evacuation mission for Indian nationals stranded in Ukraine amid tensions with Russia.
Operation Dost	2023	Search and rescue operation to assist Syria and Turkey after a devastating earthquake, focusing on humanitarian aid.
Operation Kaveri	2023	Rescue operation for over 3,000 Indian nationals stranded in Sudan due to conflict, with efforts including transportation to safe locations and repatriation through ships and aircraft.

ABRAHAM ACCORDS

About

- The Abraham Accords, signed in **September 2020**, normalised relations between **Israel, the US, and the UAE**. Subsequently, **Sudan, Bahrain, and Morocco** joined the agreement.
- The Abraham Accords** were named in reference to the shared belief in the prophet Abraham (known as Ibrahim in Islam) across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

- Under the Abraham Accords, the **UAE has opened its embassy in Israel**, and Israel has opened its embassy in Bahrain.

HISTORY OF PEACE ACCORDS WITH ISRAEL

- Egypt** was the first Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel, in **1979**, in return for an Israeli withdrawal from the **Sinai Peninsula it occupied in 1967**.
- Jordan followed in **1994**, a year after **Israel and the PLO recognized each other via the Oslo Accords**.
- Progress toward Israeli-Palestinian peace enabled Israel to establish ties with other Arab states, but these were cut after the outbreak of the **second intifada in 2000**.

BEN GURION CANAL PROJECT

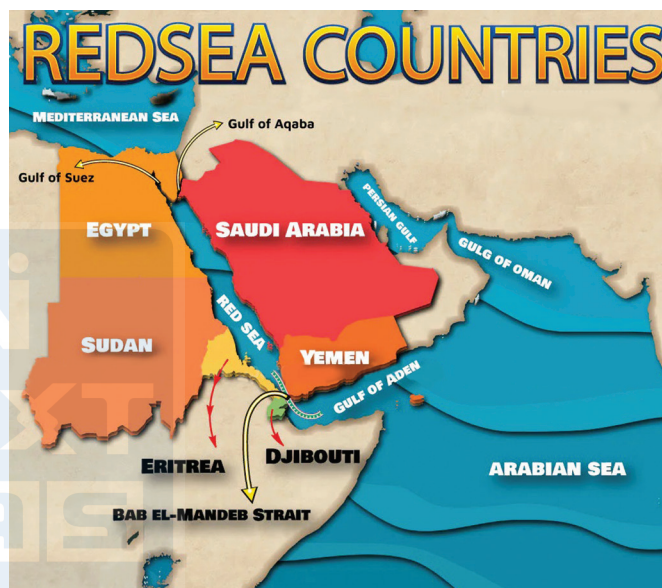
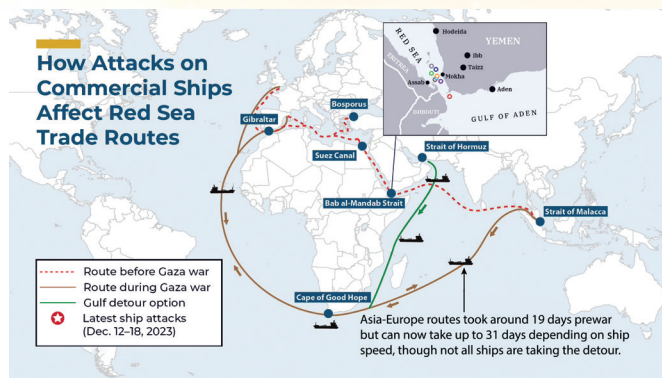
The Ben Gurion Canal Project is an alternative to the Egyptian-controlled Suez Canal that starts from the western arm of the Red Sea and passes to the south eastern Mediterranean through the northern Sinai peninsula.

About:

- The Ben Gurion Canal Project is a proposed canal project through the state of Israel.
- It is named after Israel's founding father **David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973)**.
- It envisages the canal through the Israeli-controlled **Negev Desert** from the tip of the **Gulf of Aqaba** — the eastern arm of the Red Sea that juts into Israel's southern tip and southwestern Jordan — to the Eastern Mediterranean coast.
- It was first envisioned in the 1960s. If it were to be actually completed, it will transform global maritime dynamics by taking away Egypt's monopoly over the shortest route between Europe and Asia.

SUEZ CANAL

- It was opened in 1869 and revolutionized global maritime trade by connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas through the Isthmus of Suez.
- The canal, however, has its issues like despite being widened and deepened over the years, it remains perennially congested, with long queues at either end.
- It was estimated that the resulting "traffic jam" held up an estimated \$ 9.6 billion of goods every day.
- The Suez Canal was also the focal point of both the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, and was shut from 1967-75.

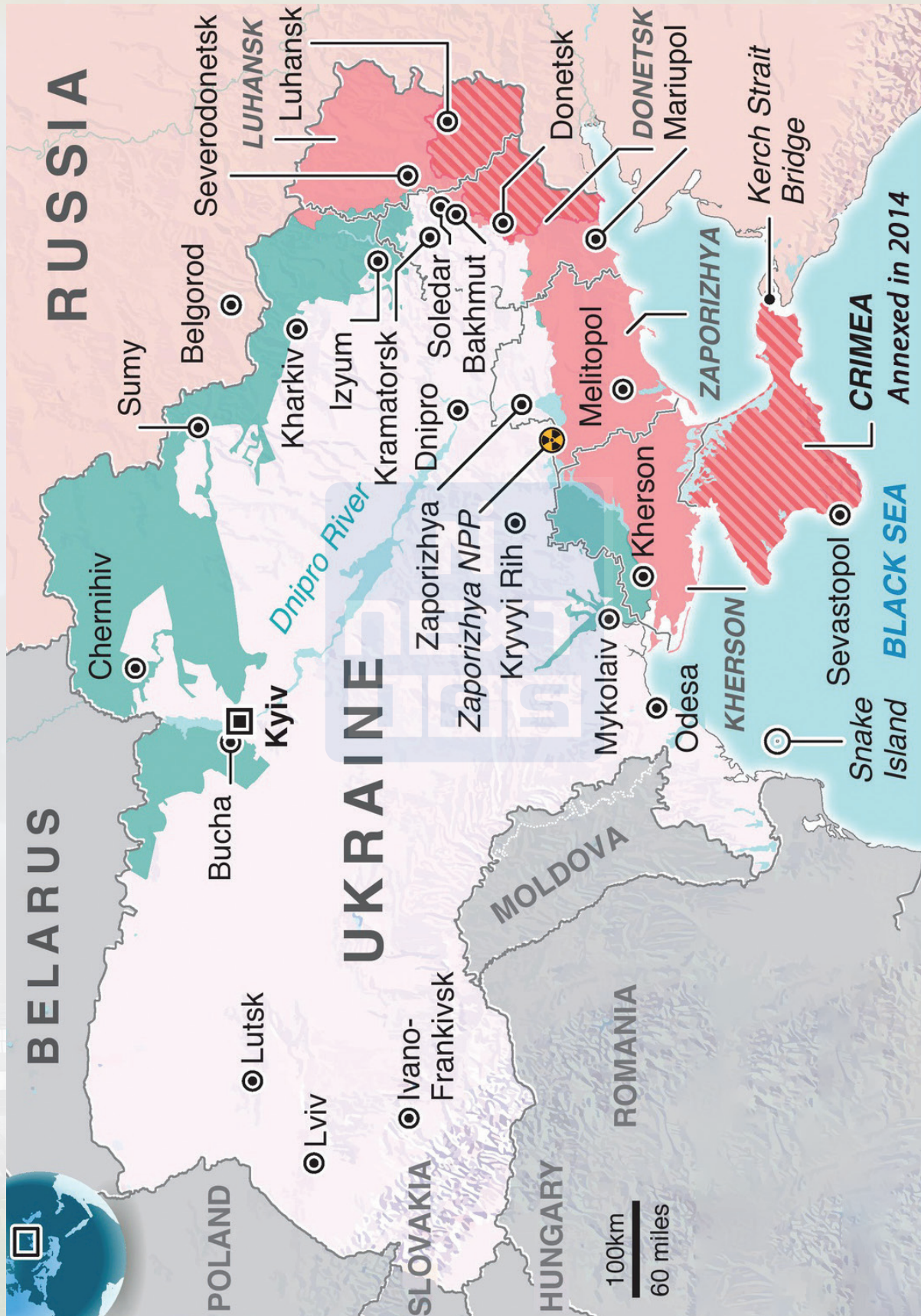


RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Russia-Ukraine War has entered in the 3rd Year Which started in feb 2022.

EUROMAIDAN MOVEMENT

- Origin:** November 2013 saw the start of mass protests across Ukraine, but particularly in Kiev's Maidan, or central square.
- Protest:**
 - Protesters were angry at Ukraine's then pro-Russia President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to join the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union instead of the EU.
 - The protests, known as the Euromaidan movement, saw massive clashes between the protesters and security forces that reached their peak in February 2014 and led to the ouster of Yanukovich.



- **Russia's reaction:** Attacking Ukraine and annexing Crimea:
 - ◆ Amid fears of growing Western influence in Ukraine, Russia decided to take action by invading Crimea, which was a part of Ukraine.
 - ◆ It also began fomenting a separatist movement in eastern Ukraine, which is home to many who are ethnically Russian.

MINSK I:

- Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed on 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 Organisation 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.
- **The 13 points were, in brief:**
 - ◆ An immediate and comprehensive ceasefire
 - ◆ Withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides
 - ◆ To start a dialogue on interim self-government for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in accordance with Ukrainian law, and acknowledge their special status by a resolution of parliament.
 - ◆ Constitutional reform in Ukraine including decentralisation, with specific mention of Donetsk and Luhansk.
 - ◆ Elections in Donetsk and Luhansk on terms to be agreed with their representatives.
 - ◆ Intensify the work of a Trilateral Contact Group including representatives of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE etc.

India's Stand

- India's response to the Ukraine war showcases its **strategic autonomy**.
- Adopted neutrality, maintaining relations with Moscow and supporting global peace.

- Navigated Western sanctions to purchase oil from Russia, increasing its oil imports from Russia to 25% from less than 2% before the conflict.
- India **abstained** from voting on a UNGA resolution on the war's first anniversary, citing the resolution's limitations in achieving lasting peace.
- Maintained a consistent stance of abstention in all three UN General Assembly votes on the **Ukraine crisis** since the Russian invasion.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIMES (UNTOC)

The 20th anniversary of UNTOC was celebrated in Italy, marking two decades of international efforts to combat transnational organized crime.

About:

- Transnational organized crime encompasses illegal activities carried out by coordinated groups or networks across borders, utilizing violence and corruption to achieve financial or material gains.
- The UN General Assembly adopted UNTOC in 2000, and it came into effect in 2003. It stands as the first global, **legally binding** agreement dedicated to fighting transnational organized crime.
- The convention is enhanced by **three supplementary Protocols**. Nations must first join the Convention before adhering to any of these Protocols.
 - ◆ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.
 - ◆ Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air
 - ◆ Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.
- India ratified it in 2011.

INDIA'S INITIATIVES

- The **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** serves as the national nodal authority for addressing and coordinating responses to transnational crimes within India.
- The **Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2013**, which specifically defines human trafficking, represents a significant legislative initiative under India's commitment to UNTOC.

PROJECT PRAYAS

Recently, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India launched Project Prayas.

About:

- **Objective:** Facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration for Indian migrant workers and students in collaboration with MEA, NITI Aayog, and State Governments.
- **Strategies:** Promotion of communication materials on safe and orderly migration pathways. The Indian Diaspora is over 32 million globally as of December 2021. India is the world's largest recipient of remittances.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

- **Nature:** Intergovernmental organization within the United Nations system, focusing on migration.
- **Mandate:** Promote humane and orderly migration for all.
- **Established:** 1951.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva
- **Member States:** 175, including India.
- **Key Publication:** World Migration Report.

VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Recently, India asserted that it did not violate diplomatic norms as enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, while dealing with Canada.

About:

- **According to Canada's Foreign Minister**, unilateral revocation of diplomatic privileges and immunities is contrary to international law, including the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.
- However, India claims that reduction in the number of Canadian diplomats in India in fact did not impact the staff requirement in the Canadian consulates, and it does not violate the Vienna Convention.

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations:

- The Convention was adopted in 1961, is a foundational document of modern diplomacy. It updated and codified diplomatic practices that had evolved over centuries.

- It is a comprehensive treaty that covers various aspects of diplomatic relations, including the establishment of diplomatic missions, the status and privileges of diplomatic agents, and the termination of diplomatic relations.
- It has been ratified by 193 countries, making it one of the most widely accepted international treaties.
- The convention says that persons working as diplomats are "inviolable" and can therefore not be arrested or detained.
- Host nations hold the responsibility to protect diplomats from attacks on their freedom and dignity.
- The treaty says that foreign envoys cannot be prosecuted or punished by the host country for actions carried out in the line of duty. It also gives host countries the **right to expel envoys**.

INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY (IPEF)

About

- In **May 2022**, the **United States** launched the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) in **Tokyo, Japan**.
- **Partner Countries(14):** USA, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, **India**, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- It seeks to **strengthen economic engagement among partner countries** with the goal of advancing growth, peace and prosperity in the region.
- The framework is structured around four pillars relating to Trade:
 - ◆ **Pillar I-** Fair and Resilient Trade.
 - ◆ **Pillar II-** Supply Chains.
 - ◆ **Pillar III-** Clean Economy.
 - ◆ **Pillar IV-** Fair Economy.
- **India has joined Pillars II to IV of IPEF while it has an observer status in Pillar-I.** India has an **observer status on Fair and resilient Trade Pillar**.
- **Reason For not Joining Trade Pillar:** India is wary of signing up for binding commitments that could limit its policy flexibility in areas like agriculture, data privacy, and labour standards. The government fears these commitments could be used to pressure India to adopt reforms that are not in its best interests.

- **The third** Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) **Ministerial Meeting** was held in **San Francisco, California in 2023**.
- **Recent Developments:** Members have **signed a supply chain resilience agreement** that would provide benefits such as the potential shifting of production centres in critical sectors and mitigating risks of economic disruptions from supply chain shocks.
- **Implementing Agency:** The trade pillar of the IPEF is spearheaded by the **USTR(US Trade Representative)**, while the Department of Commerce oversees the remaining three pillars.

- It consists of civilians, police and military personnel.

FACT SHEET ON UN PEACEKEEPING

- No. of Operations since 1948: 71
- Current Peacekeeping operations: 12
- **1042** experts on Mission
- **Total Fatalities** in all Peacekeeping Operations since 1948: 4345
- Approved budget from July 2021 to June 2022: \$ 6.38 billion.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- IPEF countries account for **40% of World's GDP**.
- They also account for **28% of global goods and services trade**.
- **The IPEF framework does not have any provision for tariff cuts among member states.** Unlike traditional trade agreements that focus on market access through tariff reductions, IPEF prioritises non-tariff barriers, supply chain resilience, clean energy, and anti-corruption measures.
- IPEF countries comprise **60% of Global Population**.
- The IPEF negotiations on each Pillar are independent of the other Pillar.

What is Peacekeeping?

- **UN Peacekeeping is guided by 3 basic principles:**
 - ◆ Consent of the parties;
 - ◆ Impartiality;
 - ◆ Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.
- Peacekeeping is flexible and over the past two decades has been deployed in many configurations. There are currently **12 UN peacekeeping operations deployed on three continents**.
- Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are **called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate the political process**, Protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, Demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants; support the organisation of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law.

INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

- Connected Economy**
Digital Economy including standards in cross border data flows and data localisation, SME Growth and e-commerce
 - Resilient Economy**
Mapping critical mineral supply chains, coordinating on trade diversification
 - Clean Economy**
Clean energy, decarbonisation, energy efficient standards, high-ambition targets
 - Fair Economy**
Effective tax, anti-money laundering, anti-bribery mechanisms, anti-corruption.
- 14 Countries**
40% of Global DFP
60% Global Population



India's contribution to peacekeeping

- An **all-female Indian peacekeeping platoon** set off for the **UN mission in Abyei in January 2023**, bolstering security on the Sudan-South Sudan border.
- India has contributed more than **2,53,000 troops, the largest number from any country**, participated in more than **49 missions and 175 Indian peacekeepers** have made the **supreme sacrifice** while serving in UN missions.
- India has so far provided **17 Force Commanders** in various UN missions.
- India also had the honour of providing **two Military Advisors** and **one Deputy Military Advisor** to the Secretary General of the United Nations, **two Divisional Commanders** and **seven Deputy Force Commanders**.
- The **first all women contingent in peacekeeping missions**, a Formed Police Unit from India, was **deployed in 2007** to the UN Operation in **Liberia (UNMIL)**.

75 YEARS OF UN PEACEKEEPING

About

- It was founded in **May 1948**, when the UN Security Council authorised the deployment of a small number of UN military observers to the Middle East to form the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (**UNTSO**) to monitor the **Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours**.
- **Theme for the 75th Anniversary:** "Peace Begins with me".

- So far the **following gallantry awards** have been won by our gallant soldiers in UN Missions. (a) Param Vir Chakra - 01 (b) Mahavir Chakra - 06 (c) Kirti Chakra - 02 (d) Vir Chakra - 20 (e) Shaurya Chakra - 09 (f) Yudh Seva Medal - 04 (g) Sena Medal - 32.

UNITED NATIONS

- The United Nations is an international organisation **founded in 1945**.
- **The League of Nations, founded in 1919** under the **Treaty of Versailles** in the aftermath of World War I, preceded the United Nations. Its purpose was to foster international cooperation and uphold peace and security in the world.
- The UN's **Membership** has grown from the **original 51 Member States in 1945 to the current 193 Member States**.
- **All UN Member States are members of the General Assembly. States are admitted** to membership by a decision of the General Assembly upon the **recommendation of the Security Council**.
- The **UN Charter, ratified in 1945**, serves as the fundamental treaty for the United Nations, an intergovernmental organisation.

MANDATE OF UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations has a broad and multifaceted mandate, **encompassing several key areas:**

- **Maintaining International Peace and Security:** This is arguably the UN's most central role, as outlined in its founding document, the Charter of the United Nations. It includes:
 - ♦ **Preventing conflict:** Through diplomacy, mediation, and peacekeeping operations.
 - ♦ **Resolving conflicts:** By promoting peaceful settlements and advocating for the rule of law.
 - ♦ **Post-conflict reconstruction and development:** Assisting nations recovering from conflict to rebuild their societies.
- **Promoting Sustainable Development:** The UN works to address global challenges like poverty, hunger, climate change, and inequality through its **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. This involves:
 - ♦ **Promoting economic development:** Providing technical assistance and financial aid to developing countries.
 - ♦ **Addressing social issues:** Investing in education, healthcare, and human rights.
 - ♦ **Protecting the environment:** Promoting sustainable practices and combating climate change.

- **Upholding Human Rights:** The UN plays a crucial role in promoting and protecting human rights for all people globally. This includes:
 - ♦ Monitoring and reporting on human rights violations.
 - ♦ Supporting human rights defenders and activists.
 - ♦ Developing and implementing human rights treaties and conventions.
- **Delivering Humanitarian Aid:** The UN provides emergency relief and humanitarian assistance to people affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and other crises. This includes:
 - ♦ Providing food, water, shelter, and medical care.
 - ♦ Supporting refugees and internally displaced persons.
 - ♦ Coordinating the international response to humanitarian emergencies.
- **Promoting International Cooperation:** The UN serves as a platform for dialogue and cooperation between countries on various global issues.
- **This includes:**
 - ♦ Addressing global health challenges like pandemics.
 - ♦ Promoting disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons.
 - ♦ Fighting terrorism and organised crime.

'ANGOLA' LEAVES OPEC

Africa's second-biggest oil producer 'Angola' is leaving OPEC after disagreements over production targets.

About:

- The producer group lowered Angola's oil output target as part of a series of cuts led by Saudi Arabia to help prop up prices.
- Hence Angola clashed with Saudi Arabia at recent meetings and decided to leave the group.

OPEC:

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was established in 1960 at the Baghdad conference.
- **Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria
- **Member:** Currently, it has 13 members including Angola, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Venezuela.
- Angola had joined OPEC in 2007.

ANGOLA

- Angola, is a country located in southwestern Africa.
- **Bordering Nations:** It is bordered by Namibia to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the northeast, Zambia to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.



EUROPEAN SKY SHIELD INITIATIVE

About

- It was **launched by Germany in October 2022** to strengthen NATO’s integrated air and missile defence system in Europe in wake of the Russia- Ukraine war.
- **19 countries along with Germany in 2022** signed a MoU.
 - ♦ **The signatories were:** Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, the UK, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, Austria and Switzerland also joined the initiative.
- **In October, 2023** defence Ministers from **10 NATO Allies** came together to sign a MoU to **further develop** the European Sky Shield Initiative.
- **Under Germany’s leadership**, the initiative **aims** to bolster European air and missile defence through the **joint acquisition of air defence equipment and missiles by European nations**.
- **The European Sky Shield Initiative enables** participating nations to **jointly procure an air and missile defence system** in an efficient and cost-effective way using interoperable, off-the-shelf solutions.

INDIA HAS SIGNED 13 FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS (FTAs)

S.N.	Name of the Agreement
1	India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
2	Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan)
3	India-Nepal Treaty of Trade
4	India-Bhutan Agreement on Trade, Commerce and Transit
5	India-Thailand FTA - Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)
6	India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)
7	India-ASEAN CECA - Trade in Goods, Services and Investment Agreement (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam)
8	India-South Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)
9	India-Japan CEPA
10	India-Malaysia CECA
11	India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)
12	India-UAE CEPA (*)
13	India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) (*)

(*) Signed, but yet to be implemented.

PLACES IN NEWS WORLD

Borealis Mud Volcano

It is an underwater volcano at the bottom of the Barents Sea off the coast of Norway. It is 7 m in diameter and 2.5 m tall.

Crawford Lake (Canada)

It is meromictic, which has sequentially deposited seasonal sediment laminations at the bottom. It is a prime site for archeological and geochemical studies.

Gulf of Mexico

It is an ocean basin and a marginal sea of Atlantic Ocean and is mostly surrounded by the North American continent.

Panama

It is a transcontinental country spanning the Central America and the northern part of South America. It is bordered by Costa Rica, Colombia, the Caribbean Sea, and the Pacific Ocean.

Suriname (South America)

Situated slightly north of the equator, it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, French Guiana to the east, Guyana to the west, and Brazil to the south.

Ubinas Volcano (Peru)

Ubinas is located in the Moquegua region of Peru. It is the country's most active volcano. The zone is part of the "Ring of Fire" along the edges of the Pacific Ocean.

Serbia (Europe)

It is situated at crossroads of Pannonian Basin and Balkans. Its longest river is Danube and the largest lake is Đerdap Lake.

Canary Islands (Spain)

The Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago off the coast of northwestern Africa, are rugged volcanic islands known for their black volcanic isles known for their black.

Sargasso Sea

It is a region of the Atlantic Ocean bounded by four currents namely Gulf Stream, North Atlantic Current, Canary Current, & North Atlantic Equatorial Current, forming an ocean gyre.

Kakhovka Dam (Ukraine)

It is in the city of Nova Kakhovka in the Kherson region. The dam on the Dnieper River (Dnipro), built in 1956.

Helmand River (Afghanistan)

It originates in Sanglakh Range of the Hindu Kush mountains. The river empties into Lake Hamun.

Janaki Temple (Nepal)

The temple is located in Janakpur the capital of Madhesh province and is a destination under the Ramayana Circuit.

Najaying Mosque (China)

It is located in Yunnan Province and was originally built during Ming Dynasty, 1370.

Tam Pà Ling Cave (Laos)

It is a cave in the Annamite Mountains, Laos. It is situated at the top of Pa Hang Mountain, 1,170 m above sea level.

Halayeb Triangle

It is an disputed area between Egypt and Sudan.

Zanzibar (Tanzania)

It is an archipelago off the coast of east Africa that united with Tanganyika in 1964 to form the Tanzania.

Fraser Island (Australia)

It is the largest sand island in the world, located off the coast of Queensland. Australia has changed the name of the Fraser Island to its traditional name K'gari.

PLACES IN NEWS WORLD

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK (USA)
It is a UNESCO World Heritage site. It has 3 distinct ecosystems: Subalpine forest & wildflower meadow, Temperate forest, and Rugged Pacific coast.

BALTIC SEA
The Sea is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean and it is enclosed by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the North and Central European Plain.

KILAUEA VOLCANO (HAWAII)
It is an active volcano located in the Pacific ocean.

RIO GRANDE RIVER
The river rises in Colorado (USA). It is the fourth longest river system in the USA. It is the international border between the USA and Mexico.

COSTA RICA (CENTRAL AMERICA)
The country borders Caribbean Sea to the east, Pacific ocean to the west, Nicaragua to the North, Panama to the South. The capital is San José and Irazú Volcano is the highest volcano of it.

AMAZON RAINFORESTS (SOUTH AMERICA)
The region belongs to eight nations namely Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname, and Venezuela—and French Guiana, an overseas territory of France.

CAMPI FLEGREI (ITALY)
It is a large region of super volcanic calderas situated to the west of Naples, Italy.

GREECE (EUROPE)
It is a country in Balkan Peninsula and bordered by the Aegean Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Ionian Sea. It shares land borders with Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and North Macedonia. Its capital is Athens.

KARAKALPAKSTAN (UZBEKISTAN)
It is an autonomous republic located in western Uzbekistan near the Aral Sea. Nukus is its capital.

BATAGAIKA CRATER (RUSSIA)
It is the world's biggest permafrost crater in Sakha Republic, Russia.

KURIL ISLANDS
It is an archipelago in Sakhalin oblast province of far-eastern Russia. The island is disputed between Japan and Russia.

SECOND THOMAS SHOAL
It is a submerged reef located in the Spratly island of South China sea. Claimed by several nations, it is currently occupied by Philippines.

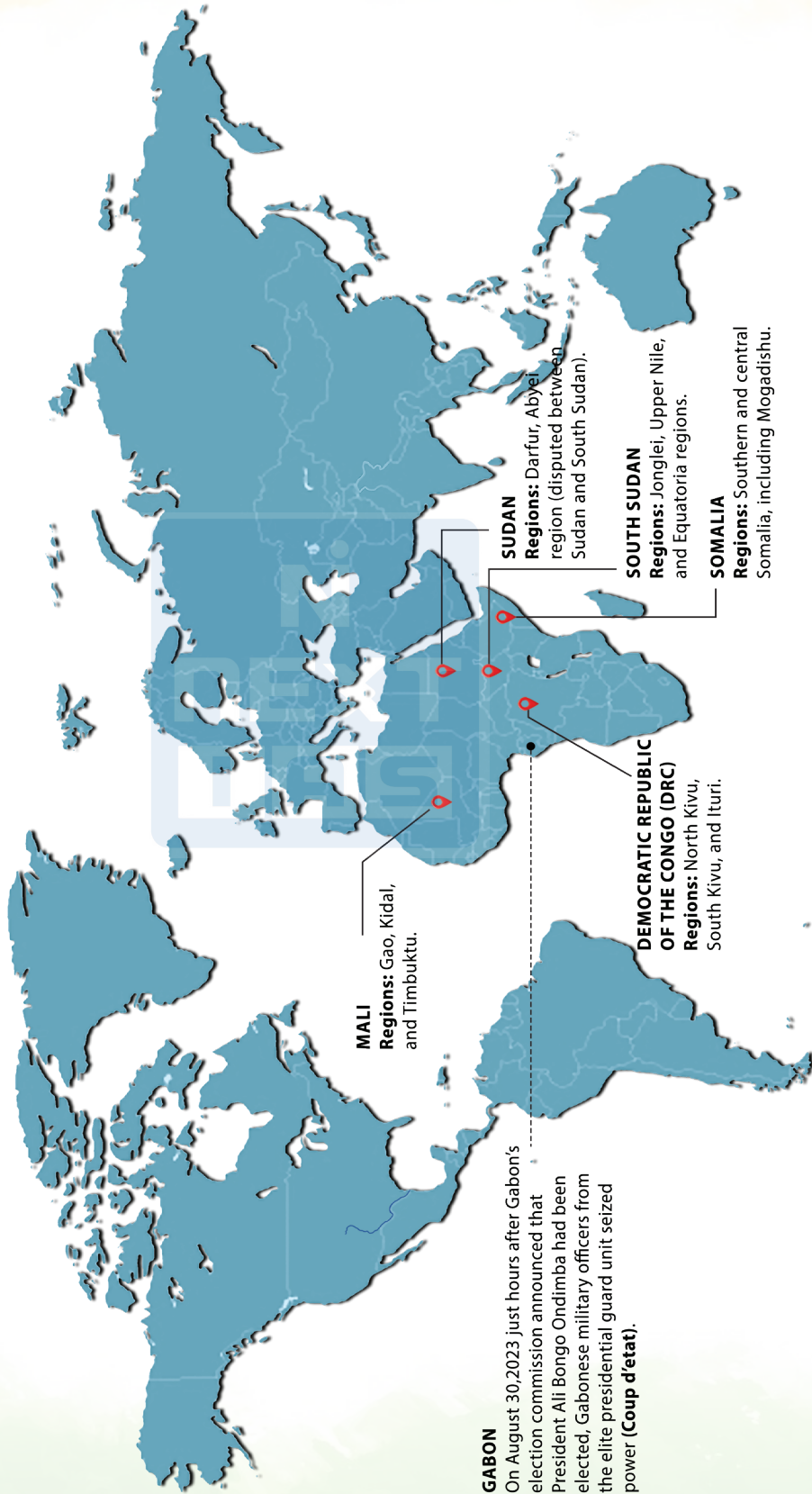
SEYCHELLES
The country consists of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean. Its capital is Victoria.

JENIN CITY
It is a Palestinian city in the Israeli occupied West Bank.

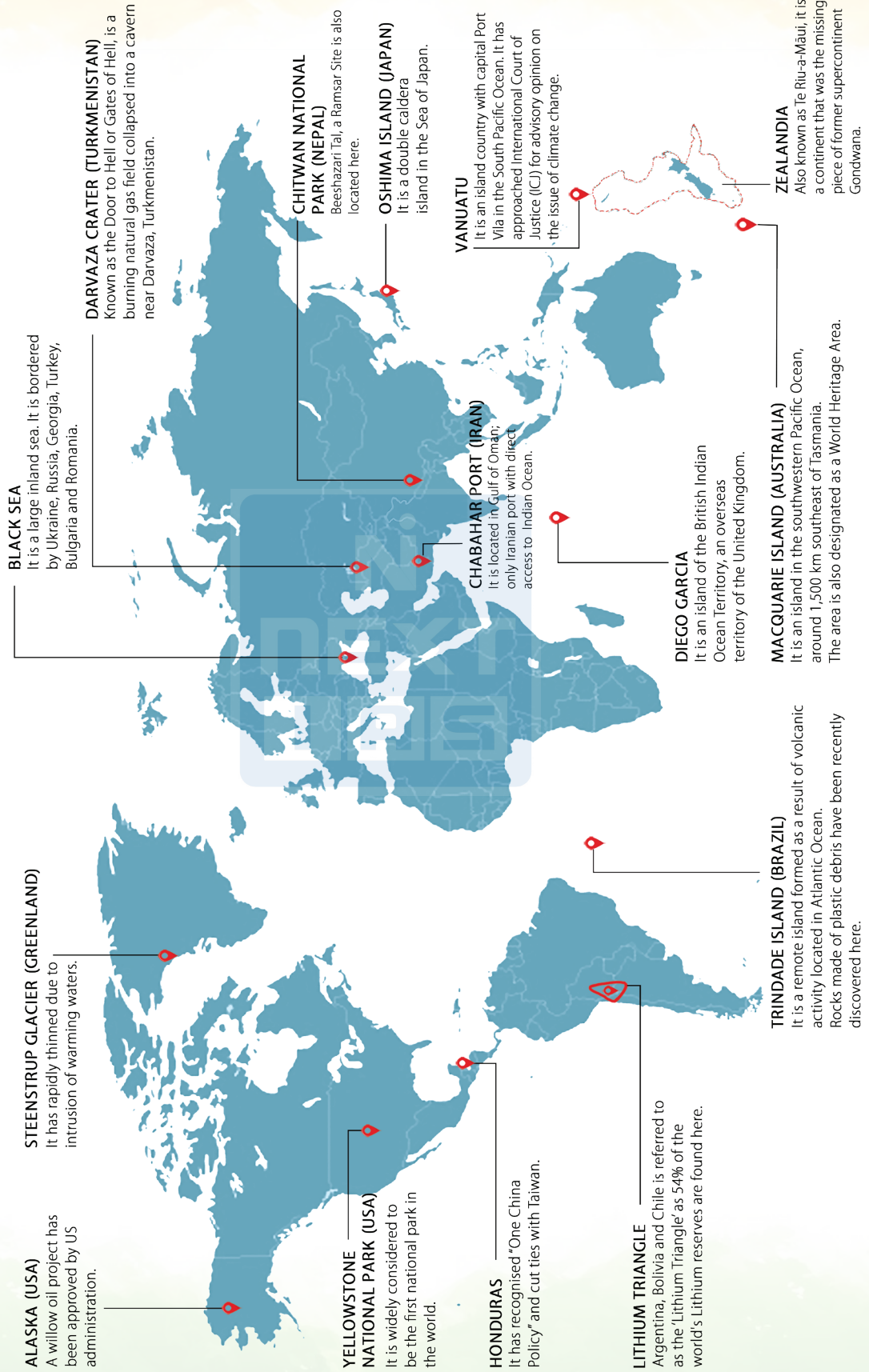
COCOS ISLANDS
The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are a remote territory of Australia in the Indian Ocean.

PLACES IN NEWS WORLD

📍 Civil War Areas



PLACES IN NEWS WORLD



ALASKA (USA)

A willow oil project has been approved by US administration.

STEINSTRUP GLACIER (GREENLAND)

It has rapidly thinned due to intrusion of warming waters.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK (USA)

It is widely considered to be the first national park in the world.

HONDURAS

It has recognised 'One China Policy' and cut ties with Taiwan.

LITHIUM TRIANGLE

Argentina, Bolivia and Chile is referred to as the 'Lithium Triangle' as 54% of the world's Lithium reserves are found here.

BLACK SEA

It is a large inland sea. It is bordered by Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania.

DARVAZA CRATER (TURKMENISTAN)

Known as the Door to Hell or Gates of Hell, it is a burning natural gas field collapsed into a cavern near Darvaza, Turkmenistan.

CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK (NEPAL)

Beeshazari Tal, a Ramsar Site is also located here.

OSHIMA ISLAND (JAPAN)

It is a double caldera island in the Sea of Japan.

VANUATU

It is an island country with capital Port Vila in the South Pacific Ocean. It has approached International Court of Justice (ICJ) for advisory opinion on the issue of climate change.

CHABAHAR PORT (IRAN)

It is located in Gulf of Oman; only Iranian port with direct access to Indian Ocean.

DIEGO GARCIA

It is an island of the British Indian Ocean Territory, an overseas territory of the United Kingdom.

MACQUARIE ISLAND (AUSTRALIA)

It is an island in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, around 1,500 km southeast of Tasmania. The area is also designated as a World Heritage Area.

TRINDADE ISLAND (BRAZIL)

It is a remote island formed as a result of volcanic activity located in Atlantic Ocean. Rocks made of plastic debris have been recently discovered here.

ZEALANDIA

Also known as Te Riu-a-Māui, it is a continent that was the missing piece of former supercontinent Gondwana.

PLACES IN NEWS WORLD

GREAT LAKES

These are interconnected freshwater lakes that connect to the Atlantic Ocean via the Saint Lawrence River. There are 5 lakes: Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario.

AL-AQSA MOSQUE

The mosque is located in Jerusalem. It is known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif and to Jews as Har ha-Bayit.

LACHIN CORRIDOR

It is a road that links Armenia and the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

KAMCHATKA PENINSULA

Located between the Sea of Okhotsk & Bering Sea, it lies in far east of Russia. From the Sredinny Range of this peninsula, Kamchatka River rises.

CHICHEN ITZA (MEXICO)

Located on Yucatan peninsula, a 1000-year-old stone scoreboard has been found here recently. It is a UNESCO world heritage site and one of the main archaeological centres of the Maya civilization.

RED SEA

It extends from Suez (Egypt) to Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which further connects with the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea.

LOP NUR (CHINA)

A former endorheic Salt Lake which now has largely dried up.

EAST CHINA SEA

It connects with the Sea of Japan through the Korea Strait and opens to the north into the Yellow Sea. Contested Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands between China and Japan lies in this sea.

NEVADO DEL RUIZ VOLCANO

It is one of Colombia's highest peaks and a stratovolcano. It is fed by magma generated above the boundary between subducting Nazca and overriding South American tectonic plate.

YANOMAMI TERRITORY (BRAZIL)

It stretches across Roraima and Amazonas states in Brazil. It is home to Yanomami and Ye'kuana people. The region is facing the humanitarian crisis due to illegal mining.

MT. KILIMANJARO (TANZANIA)

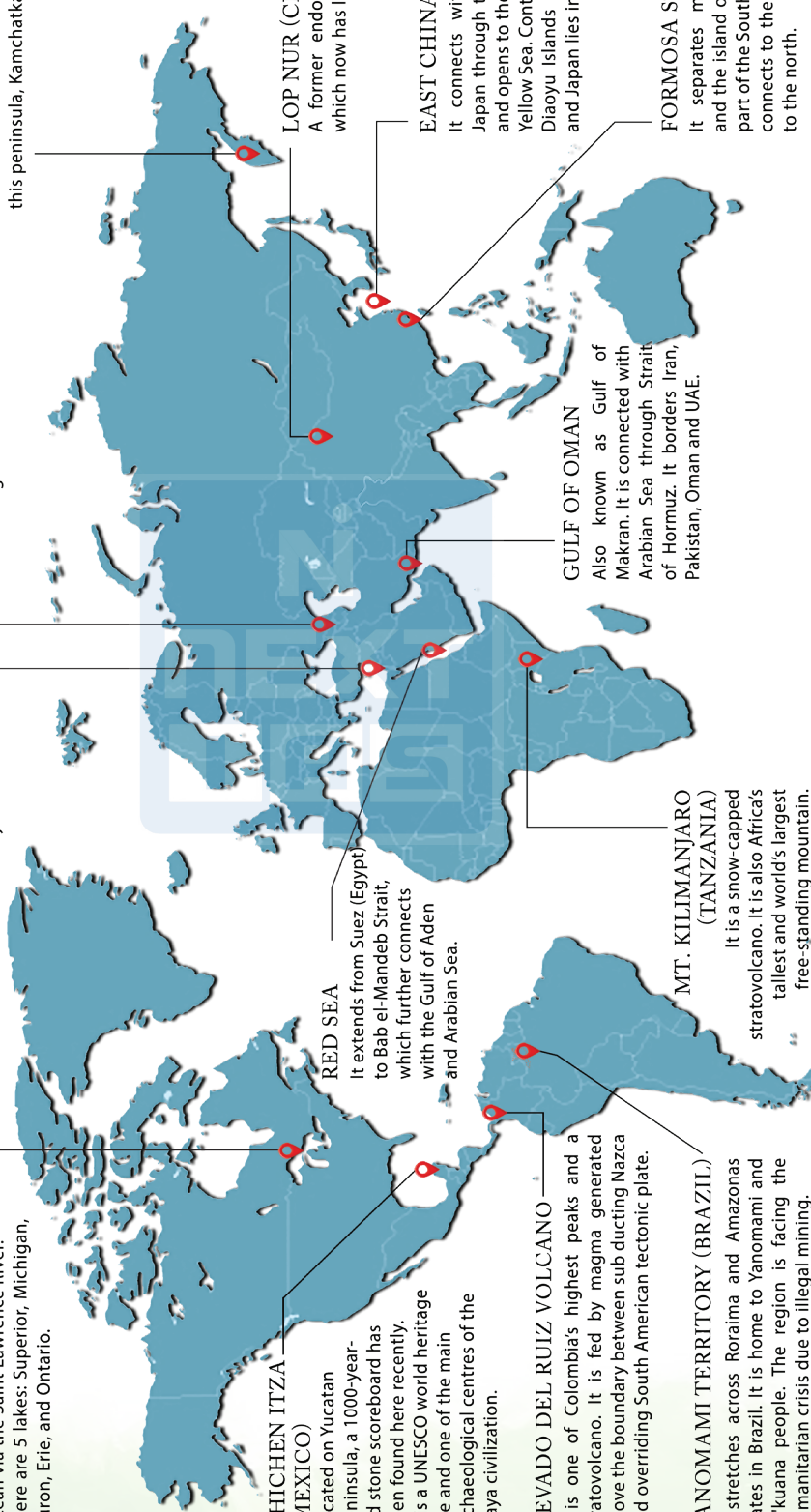
It is a snow-capped stratovolcano. It is also Africa's tallest and world's largest free-standing mountain.

GULF OF OMAN

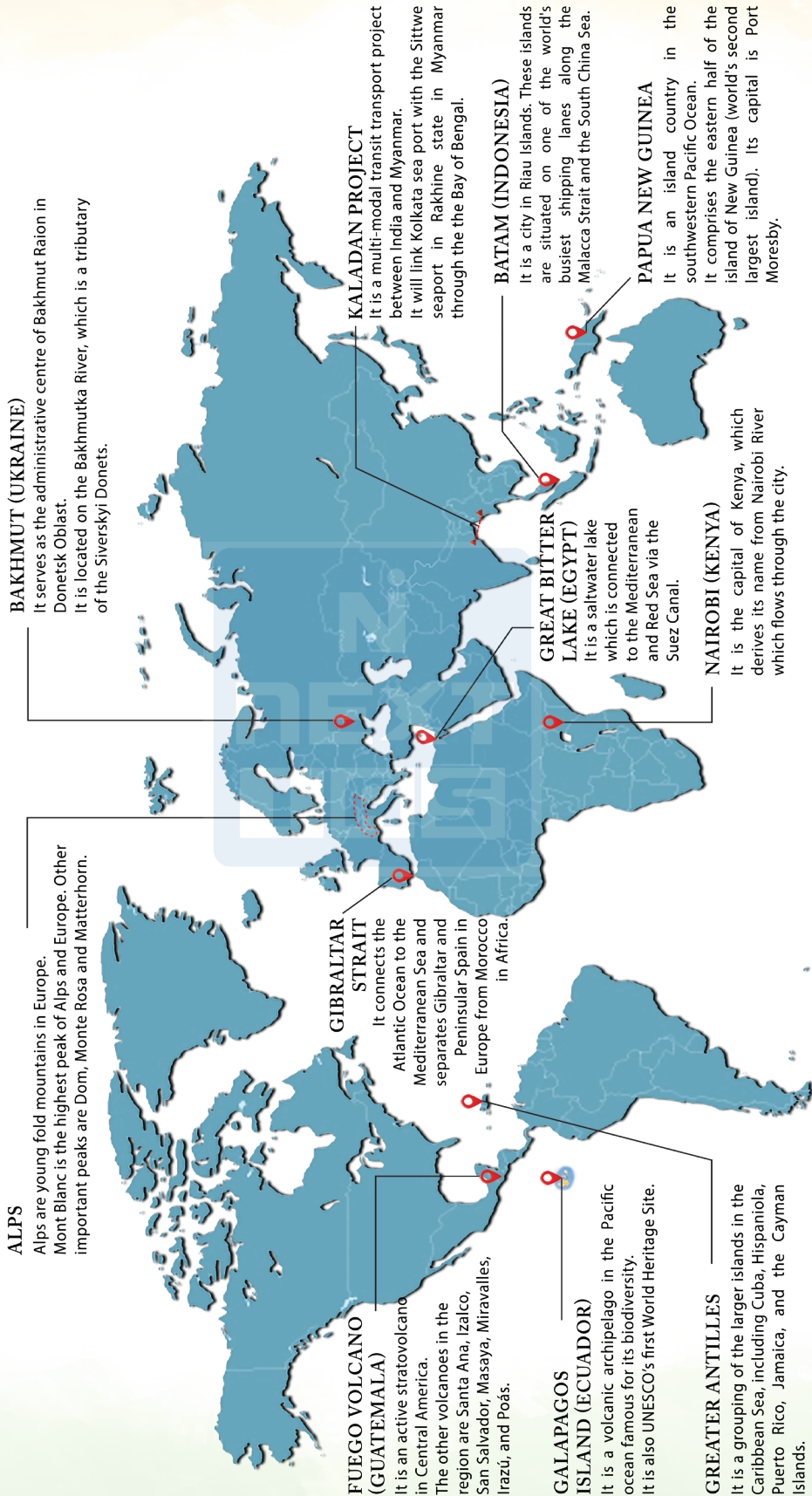
Also known as Gulf of Makran. It is connected with Arabian Sea through Strait of Hormuz. It borders Iran, Pakistan, Oman and UAE.

FORMOSA STRAIT

It separates mainland China and the island of Taiwan. It is a part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north.



PLACES IN NEWS WORLD



ALPS

Alps are young fold mountains in Europe. Mont Blanc is the highest peak of Alps and Europe. Other important peaks are Dom, Monte Rosa and Matterhorn.

FUEGO VOLCANO (GUATEMALA)

It is an active stratovolcano in Central America. The other volcanoes in the region are Santa Ana, Izalco, San Salvador, Masaya, Miravalles, Irazú, and Poás.

GALAPAGOS ISLAND (ECUADOR)

It is a volcanic archipelago in the Pacific ocean famous for its biodiversity. It is also UNESCO's first World Heritage Site.

GREATER ANTILLES

It is a grouping of the larger islands in the Caribbean Sea, including Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and the Cayman Islands.

GIBRALTAR STRAIT

It connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and separates Gibraltar and Peninsular Spain in Europe from Morocco in Africa.

BAKHMUT (UKRAINE)

It serves as the administrative centre of Bakhmut Raion in Donetsk Oblast. It is located on the Bakhmutka River, which is a tributary of the Siverskyi Donets.

KALADAN PROJECT

It is a multi-modal transit transport project between India and Myanmar. It will link Kolkata sea port with the Sittwe seaport in Rakhine state in Myanmar through the Bay of Bengal.

BATAM (INDONESIA)

It is a city in Riau Islands. These islands are situated on one of the world's busiest shipping lanes along the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

It is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It comprises the eastern half of the island of New Guinea (world's second largest island). Its capital is Port Moresby.

GREAT BITTER LAKE (EGYPT)

It is a saltwater lake which is connected to the Mediterranean and Red Sea via the Suez Canal.

NAIROBI (KENYA)

It is the capital of Kenya, which derives its name from Nairobi River which flows through the city.

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