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SYLLABUS

1. Bilaterals

- ❖ India – Usa
- ❖ Strategic Partnership, New initiatives/Agreements
- ❖ India – Russia
- ❖ Ukraine war and Diplomatic autonomy, Impacts
- ❖ India – China
- ❖ Staple visa issue, border dispute, china global security alliance
- ❖ India – Pakistan
- ❖ Indus Water Treaty

2. Regional

- ❖ South Asia and Neighbours
- ❖ Neighbourhood First Policy, BIMSTEC, SAARC
- ❖ South East Asia and Look/Act East
- ❖ Far act east
- ❖ Indo pacific
- ❖ Quad, Pacific Island Nations
- ❖ Middle East
- ❖ I2U2
- ❖ Central Asia
- ❖ SCO, Connect Central Asia

3. Global

- ❖ G20
- ❖ BRICS
- ❖ UN- UNSC,
- ❖ UNPK
- ❖ Global South

4. Indian Diaspora

5. Miscellaneous Topic

- ❖ Soft Power and Diplomacy

BILATERAL RELATIONS OF INDIA USA

Strategic Partnership

1. Based on **shared democratic values and Increasing convergence** of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues
2. **Bilateral trade** between the two countries has grown tenfold since 2000, to USD 191 billion in 2022
3. In 2016, the U.S. recognised India as a “**Major Defence Partner**”, India bought USD 20 billion worth of arms over the last two

decades. Bilateral exercises : Yudh Abhyas, Tiger Triumph, Vajra Prahar, Cope India, Malabar Ex.

4. Cooperation in Indo pacific Region (IPEF, QUAD) grouping, **India will host the next Quad Leaders’ Summit** in 2024
5. Another grouping in the Middle East - I2U2 termed as the new Quad.

Recent PM visit aimed to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries.

New Areas of Cooperation:

1. “**Innovation Handshake**” to connect the startup ecosystems of both countries, supporting the **US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)**.
2. **Defense Partnership:** to co-produce **GE-s F414** combat aircraft engines in India. India intends to procure armed MQ-9B SeaGuardian UAVs. Master Ship Repair Agreements with Indian shipyards, **The India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X)**.
3. **USA supported India in expansion of the UN Security Council’s** permanent and non-permanent membership in 2028-29.
4. **Strengthening India-US Trade and Investment Partnership:** Exploring restoration of India’s status under the U.S. Generalised System of Preferences program and recognition as a Trade Agreements Act-designated country.
5. **People-Centric Efforts:** New consulates in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad, fostering closer diplomatic ties.
6. **NASA-ISRO Collaboration in Space:** A strategic framework for human spaceflight cooperation between NASA and ISRO is being developed by the end of 2023.
7. **Strengthening Semiconductor Supply Chains, Critical Minerals Partnership, Bharat 6G** from India and the US Next G Alliance , **Fibre Optics Investments, Renewable Energy Technologies Action Platform [RE-TAP]**.
8. **Quantum, Advanced Computing, and Artificial Intelligence:** The Joint Indo-US Quantum Coordination Mechanism, India’s leadership as **Chair of the Global Partnership** on AI was commended
9. The Indian prime minister **addressed the joint session** of the US Congress where he refer Artificial Intelligence (AI) as America and India (AI).

U.S.-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology

A Significant step towards strengthening their strategic partnership and driving technology and defense cooperation.

A roadmap for enhanced collaboration in high-technology areas.

1. Addressing regulatory barriers, aligning export controls, and fostering deeper cooperation in critical and emerging fields.
2. Both countries have **identified six areas of cooperation** which would include co-development and co-production, that would gradually be expanded to QUAD, then to NATO, followed by Europe and the rest of the world.
3. Under iCET, **India is ready to share its core technologies** with the US and **expects Washington to do the same.**
4. It aims to promote collaboration in critical and emerging technology areas, **including AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, and wireless telecommunication.**

Focus Areas of the Initiative:

1. AI research agency partnership.
2. **Defense industrial cooperation, defense technological cooperation, and defense startups.**
3. **Innovation Ecosystems.**
4. **Semiconductor ecosystem development.**
5. **Cooperation on human spaceflight.**
6. **Advancement in 5G and 6G technologies, and adoption of OpenRAN network technology in India.**

New Defence Agreements

1. GSOMIA 2002
2. LEMOA 2016
3. COMCASA 2018
4. BECA 2020

India and the United States have agreed to initiate negotiations for a **‘Security of Supply’ (SoS) arrangement** and a **‘Reciprocal Defence Procurement’ (RDP) agreement**, aiming to promote long-term supply chain stability and enhance security and defense cooperation between both countries.

1. A SoS agreement is a bilateral or multilateral agreement between countries aimed at **ensuring the availability and stability of critical supplies**, particularly in the field of defense and security.
2. An RDP agreement is a bilateral agreement between countries in **the field of defense procurement**. It is designed to facilitate reciprocal procurement of defense items and promote cooperation in research,

development, and production of defense equipment.

Challenges

1. India cannot be termed as a ‘US ally’ due to its foreign policy **approach of non-alignment.**
2. India’s **‘Multi-Aligned’ Foreign Policy**, seeking positive ties as far and as widely as possible.
3. Two countries have quite **contradictory responses towards the Russia Ukraine crisis**, Afghanistan issue and Iran.
4. India’s Engagement with **US Adversaries** Russia and Iran, Member of SCO, buy S-400 Triumf long-range missiles from Russia
5. America withdrew special trade privileges granted to India under the **Generalised System of Preferences (GSP)**
6. **US cap on H-1B visas** or restrictions on work visas that inhibit Indian workers to move to the US
7. The US has **criticised India’s data localisation and the draft e-commerce policy**, calling it “most discriminatory and trade-distortive”

Way Forward

1. Moving Ahead with Multi-Alignment
2. Stabilising the Asian balance of power and coping with Beijing’s assertiveness in Asia.
3. India’s economic rise would be in the US’ interest just as much as US leadership of technology enablers and global affairs would be in India’s.
4. This reality must not be lost in noise over India’s neutrality on the world stage and its refusal to be bound by a NATO-like-bloc.

BILATERAL RELATIONS OF INDIA – RUSSIA

India and Russia relationship is based on ‘deep mutual trust’, common foreign policy goal of multipolar world order and long term partnership in the military, security and nuclear energy fields

India-Russia signed Strategic Partnership in 2000 elevated to “special and privileged strategic partnership” in 2010

Areas of Cooperation

1. **Defence:** Russia accounts for 60% of total arms imports by India, Working together on Brahmos Missile, S-400 deal, **Indra Tri-Service exercise**
2. **Trade:** India extended \$1billion line of credit for development of far right region of Russia.
3. **Energy:** Russia has one of the largest reserves of Natural Gas in the world. India’s ONGC videsh has acquired 20% stakes in Sakhalin oil and gas plant
4. **Nuclear:** Russia is the only foreign country involved in Nuclear Energy production in India. Both are also

working to jointly develop nuclear energy plant in Bangladesh (Rooppur power plant).

5. Russia has also support **India's claim for permanent seat in UNSC** and stood by India on J&K issue
6. Common Member on multilateral forum like SCO, BRICS, INSTC, etc
7. Recently, Russia has expressed its interest in importing manufacturing equipment, including machinery, from **India to replace those of Western** origin.
8. Both sides are in talks to resort to the **Rupee-Ruble mechanism** to safeguard bilateral trade from the impact of western sanctions.

How did India handle the Ukraine Crisis?

1. **Following Non-Alignment Policy:** balance in the growing polarisation between the U.S. and the European Union on one side, and Russia on the other.

On one side the Indian Prime Minister made his discomfort with the war calls **“This era is not for war”** to Russian President and On the other hand **refused to accept western sanctions on Russia**

2. **Refusing to Vote on the Resolution seeking to censure Russia for the invasion and humanitarian crisis, India chose to abstain.**
3. Prime Minister Modi reiterated his call for **dialogue and diplomacy** in addressing the situation.

Impact of War:

Increase in Trade Cooperation:

1. India's total **bilateral trade** with Russia stood at ~USD 13 Billion in 2021-22 and USD 8.14 Billion in 2020-21.
2. Russia is **India's seventh biggest trading partner**, up from 25th position in 2021.
3. The sudden jump in imports from Russia, mainly **oil and fertilizers**, which began to surge earlier in 2022, is the main driver behind this increase in bilateral trade.
4. Petroleum oil and other fuel items accounted for 84% of India's total imports from Russia, while Fertilizers were second.
5. Together, fertilizers and fuel accounted for over 91% of the total imports from Russia this year.

Challenges Faced by the Defense S-400 Deal:

1. The S-400 deal has faced complications, including concerns about **U.S. sanctions Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)** and delays in milestone payments. The war in Ukraine has compounded challenges in executing the deal.
2. **Delays in S-400 Deliveries** While three regiments

have been delivered, the delivery of the remaining two regiments is delayed. The revised schedule remains uncertain until payment issues are resolved.

3. **Delivery of two Krivak-Class Stealth Frigates** under construction in Russia for the Indian Navy is further delayed.

Payment Crisis:

1. An estimated USD 3 billion payments are currently held up due to payment challenges. Efforts to resolve this crisis through a Rupee-Rouble Arrangement have not been successful due to trade imbalances and accumulating Rupees on the Russian side.
2. Due to Russia's Exclusion from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system, India and Russia had adopted a Rupee-Rouble payment mechanism to settle payments for defence deals.
3. While small payments have resumed, larger payments remain stuck, creating challenges in completing ongoing and future deals.

Challenges

1. India's desire to **diversification of its defence imports**, Sanctions on Russia under CAATSA
2. Growing India-US relationship
3. Various issues in Indo-Russia trade are **Lack of involvement of private sector, Poor connectivity-stalling of International North-South Transport corridor and Weak banking links.**
4. The sanctions on Russia post Ukraine War by the **West has pushed Russia closer to the China**
5. **Weak Diaspora** and People to people ties between the country
6. Russia has also removed **Arms embargo on Pakistan in 2014** and since then both countries have also conducted **joint military exercise.**

WAY FORWARD

1. Establishing new areas of cooperation such as trade, connectivity etc.
2. Creation of FTA between India and Eurasian Economic Union
3. India can explore possibility of Russian involvement in Chabahar project to ensure access to Afghanistan and central Asia and speed up INSTC
4. Both countries have shared interest in Multipolar world order.
5. Both can work in global platforms to avoid the new cold war between the USA and China with the help of like-minded countries.

BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH CHINA

India's foreign policy is currently facing its largest test in managing relations with China. Recently, India and China commemorated the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between them on April 1, 2023,

Areas of Cooperation

1. Bilateral trade reaching US\$100 billion by 2022.
2. combined market of over 2.7 billion people and a GDP: 20% of the world
3. Joint military exercise: 'Hand in Hand'
4. India and China are both members of **BRICS**, **The New Development Bank (NDB)** and the **Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA)** are initiatives under BRICS
5. Both India and China are members of the **SCO**, allows for engagement and collaboration on regional and international affairs.
6. The **RIC platform** brings together Russia, India, and China to facilitate common positions on global challenges, discuss radical ideas, counter terrorism threats, and address issues related to Afghanistan and West Asia.
7. Both India and China are founding members of the **AIB**, a multilateral development bank that aims to address infrastructure needs in Asia.
8. India and China have **collaborated within the WTO framework** on various issues related to trade and agriculture.

Challenges

1. **Border Disputes:**
 - ❖ **Western Sector:** The Aksai Chin region is a territorial dispute where both countries claim it as part of their own territory.
 - ❖ **Middle Sector:** China stakes claim over an area in Uttarakhand, creating a border dispute.
 - ❖ **Eastern Sector:** The McMahon Line, the boundary between India and Tibet, is disputed by China.
 - ❖ **Johnson Line vs. McDonald Line:** India and China hold different positions on the demarcation of the border.
2. **Water Dispute:** China's construction of dams in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra River (Tsangpo) without a formal water-sharing treaty poses a threat to India, leading to concerns over water availability and flooding.
3. **Dalai Lama and Tibet:** protests staged by Tibetans against China in India
4. China issuing stapled visas to residents of Arunachal Pradesh **questions India's sovereignty and**

territorial integrity.

5. China **criticizes India's role and relationship with Bhutan and Nepal**, attempting to influence their ties and play the "China card" against India.
6. **India opposes China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through Indian territory claimed by Pakistan.
7. **China-Pakistan Nexus:** China's support to Pakistan in military, nuclear, and missile capabilities, along with blocking India's efforts at the UN, creates concerns for India's security.
8. **String of Pearls:** China's strategic presence and infrastructure development in various countries surrounding India, such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, raise concerns about encirclement.
9. **South China Sea:** China's territorial claims pose concerns for freedom of navigation and stability in the region, which affects India's strategic interests.

These challenges have contributed to strained relations between India and China and require diplomatic efforts and negotiations to address and resolve the disputes

RECENT ISSUES

Stapled Visas:

- **Unlike regular visas that are affixed and stamped directly on the passport**, stapled visas are detachable.
- Issuing stapled visas to Indian nationals from **Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir** is part of China's efforts to undermine India's sovereignty

Border Problem:

- **"2023 edition of the standard map of China"**, which continues to show the entire State of Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin region within China's borders.
- China claims approximately 90,000 sq km of Arunachal Pradesh as part of its territory, referring to it as **"Zangnan" or "South Tibet"** in Chinese maps.
- It **disputes the legality of the McMahon Line** which was agreed upon at the Simla Convention of 1914 between Tibet and British India.



Military Confrontations:

- 2020 Galwan Valley confrontation in Ladakh
- 2017 Doklam plateau standoff at Bhutan and Sikkim Border
- 2015 Depsang plains in Northern Ladakh
- 2014 Chumar in eastern Ladakh

Way forward

1. A major problem in bilateral relations between China and India is a lack of trust. **Track II diplomacy** can take a more active role in resolving this issue. For instance, track II talks resulted in the BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) economic corridor.
2. Talks at the highest-level **international gatherings**, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the BRICS, and the G-20, need to happen more frequently.
3. Before the boundary dispute is finally resolved, India and China should work together to **keep the border regions peaceful and serene**. They should work to find a quick resolution to the border issue.

GLOBAL GROUPING OF CHINA AFFECTING INDIA'S INTEREST

China's Global Security Initiative (GSI)

Global Security Initiative (GSI) was put forward by Chinese President. The GSI looks to counter the US Indo-Pacific strategy and the Quad (India, US, Australia, Japan grouping).

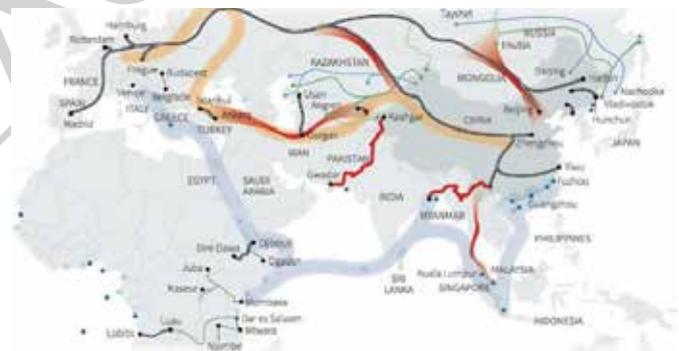
1. **Asian Security Model:** GSI calls for a «common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable» security

and building an Asian security model of mutual respect, openness and integration”.

2. **Opposing Sanctions:** This would oppose the use of unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction, appearing to refer to Western sanctions.
3. **Tackling New Cold War:** Indo-Pacific’ strategy to divide the region and create a ‘new Cold War’, and the use of military alliances to put together an ‘Asian version of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
4. With growing threats posed by unilateralism, hegemony and power politics, and increasing deficits in peace, security, trust and governance, mankind is facing more and more intractable problems and security threats. **Thus, China held that the Global security initiative is envisaged to uphold the principle of “indivisible security”.** The principle of “indivisible security” means that no country can strengthen its own security at the expense of others.

Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative, formerly known as One Belt One Road or OBOR, is a **global infrastructure development strategy** adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 to invest in nearly 70 countries and international organizations.



1. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the most emblematic of China’s economic and industrial might, as of its ambitions for **global, political and strategic influence**.
2. China to leverage its influence around the world, **potentially altering the established rules of the global order and challenging western powers**.
3. Finding Market in least developed and developing Nations
4. BRI will strengthen China’s presence in the Eurasian region and puts it in a commanding position over Asia’s heartland.

Concern over BRI

1. Western critics have attacked the initiative as **new colonialism**, or Marshal Plan for the 21st century.

- BRI is also being seen as a part of **China's debt trap policy**, wherein China intentionally extends excessive credit to another country with the intention of extracting economic or political concessions from the debtor country.
- China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** is one of the flagship projects of BRI which is seen by **India as infringing its sovereignty**.
- China's increasing **footprints in the South Asian region is detrimental to India's strategic hold e.g. construction of the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka** provided China critical strategic location in the Indian Ocean.

Recently, PGII comes in news after its repeated mention in G20 meetings, looked as alternative of BRI

PGII (Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment) initiative

The PGII (Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment) initiative (**announced in 2021 during the G7 summit in the UK**) is a collaborative effort by G7 countries to fund infrastructure projects in developing nations.

It serves as an **alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** and aims to mobilize funds for critical infrastructure development, focusing on transparency, sustainability, and gender equality.

- PGII emphasizes loans over charity, benefiting both lending and receiving countries.

Other initiatives under PGII announced previously are:

- Trans-African Corridor:** It will connect the port of Lobito in Angola with Katanga province in Congo and the copper belt in Zambia
- Clean Energy Projects in Indonesia:** The PGII announced clean energy projects in Indonesia to support sustainable energy sources and infrastructure development.
- Investments in India's Health Infrastructure:** The US government's International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) pledged over \$15 million to invest in India's health infrastructure, including eye clinics and women's hygiene products.
- EU's Global Gateway Program:** The European Union (EU) committed to activating 300 billion USD in investments for critical connectivity projects, with a focus on Africa and various regions around the world.

BILATERAL RELATIONS OF INDIA PAKISTAN

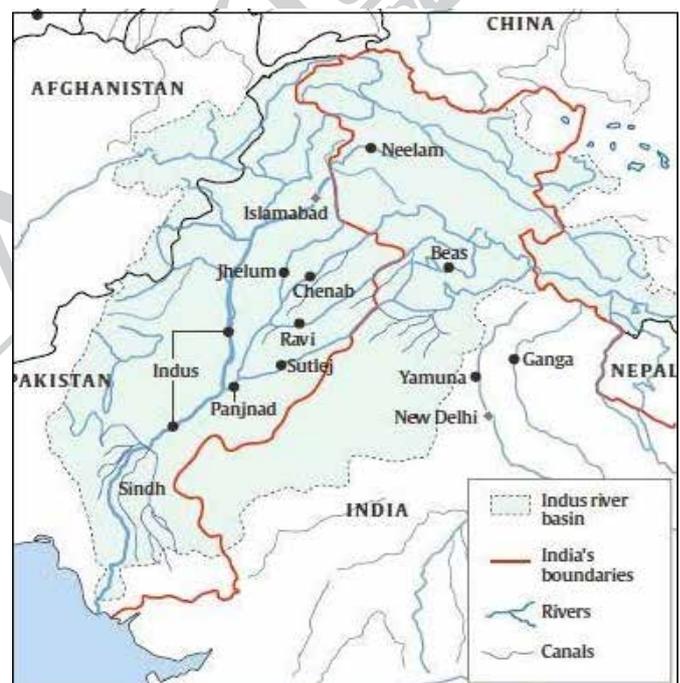
Indus Water Treaty (IWT)

Recently, India announced the desire to modify the

62-year-old Indus Water Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan, citing what it called Pakistan's unwillingness to find a solution to disputes over the Kishanganga and Rattle hydropower projects, both in Jammu and Kashmir. India also protested Pakistan's "unilateral" decision to approach a court of arbitration at The Hague in the Netherlands.

India called for modifications to the treaty as per Article XII (3) of the IWT which specify that provisions of the treaty may from time to time be modified for any specific purpose between the two Governments. India also boycotted the court process as the first hearing of the Pakistani case began at the Permanent Court of Arbitrage at The Hague.

The decision to issue notice to Pakistan, with a request for a response within 90 days, is a major step and could lead to the unravelling and renegotiation of the water sharing treaty. The treaty is often seen as a rare example of India-Pakistan consensus, at a time when the two countries have snapped trade and cultural exchanges, and most bilateral talks.



| EASTERN RIVERS | WESTERN RIVERS | TOTAL AREA OF INDUS BASIN: |
|--|---|--|
| Sutlej, Beas, Ravi | Indus, Jhelum, Chenab | 11.65 lakh sq km |
| 11 cubic km | 232.5 cubic km | 47% in Pakistan |
| Annual flow before entering Pakistan. | Annual flow before entering Pakistan. | 39% in India, |
| India has full rights on all waters. Pakistan can use whatever flows into its territory. | India can use only about 62.2 cubic km; 170.3 cubic km reserved for Pakistan. | 8% in China, 6% in Afghanistan. |
| | | Source: India Water Resources Information system |

- Indus Water Treaty (1960)** is a water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank (WB), to use the water available in the Indus River and its tributaries.
- The Treaty gives control over the waters of the **three**

“eastern rivers” – the Beas, Ravi and Sutlej (BRS)-to India.

3. Control over the waters of the **three “western rivers”** – the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum -has been given to Pakistan.
4. **India has about 20%** of the total water carried by the Indus system **while Pakistan has 80%**.
5. The treaty allows India to use the western river waters for **limited irrigation use** and unlimited non-consumptive use for such applications as power generation.
6. India has the right to generate hydroelectricity through run-of-the-river (RoR) projects on the western rivers which, subject to specific criteria for design and operation, is unrestricted.
7. **The dispute redressal mechanism provided under the IWT is a graded 3-level mechanism.**
8. Under the IWT, whenever India plans to start a project, it has to inform Pakistan.
1. The concerns have to be cleared at the levels of the Indus Commissioners → Neutral Expert → Court of Arbitration, in a graded manner.

Present Contention:

1. Exercising judicial recourse to settle the competing claims and objections.
2. They arise out of the construction and design elements of the **run-of-river hydroelectric projects** that India is permitted under the IWT to construct on the tributaries of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab before these rivers flow into Pakistan.
3. **Pakistan initiated arbitration at the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration** to address the interpretation and application of the IWT to certain design elements of two run-of-river hydroelectric projects:
 - ❖ On the Kishanganga (a tributary of the Jhelum)
 - ❖ Rattle-a hydro-electric project on the Chenab.
4. **India raised objections** as it views that the Court of Arbitration is not competent to consider the questions. Such questions should instead be decided through the neutral expert process.
5. Court unanimously passed a decision (which is binding on both parties without appeal) rejecting each of India’s objections.

Future supply of water:

1. Judicial recourse appears to be the only rational strategy by the IWT parties.
2. It is not likely to address the rapidly growing industrial needs of the two countries, apart from food and energy needs.
3. The IWT provides only “some element of

predictability and certainty with regard to the future supplies of water to the riparian states.

4. It needs to incorporate mechanisms that allow flexibility to changes in the quantity of water available for allocation among the parties(Paper in Water Policy, the official journal of the World Water Council)

Issues with IWT:

1. Bilateral water agreements are “**vulnerable to climate change.**”
2. Most of them include **fixed allocation of amounts of water:** concluded under the assumption that future water availability will remain the same as today.
3. Under the partitioning logic in the IWT vesting of proprietary rights in the eastern rivers to India, and the vesting of proprietary rights in the western rivers to Pakistan, does not take into account future water availability.
4. The IWT requires Pakistan that it is under obligation to let flow and shall not permit any interference with the waters of the eastern rivers.
5. India is obligated to let all the waters of the western rivers flow.
6. It shall not permit any interference with these waters except for certain uses.
7. which include generation of hydro-electric power on the rivers and tributaries of the western rivers before they flow into Pakistan.
8. With climate change altering the form, intensity and timing of precipitation and runoff.
9. assumption regarding the supplies of water for agricultural purposes and industrial needs does not hold true.
10. The partitioning of the rivers goes against the logic of treating the entire river basin as one unit which is needed to build its resource capacity.

Way Forward

Article 7 of treaty: It talks about future cooperation — discussing and broadening transboundary governance issues in holistic terms. It could be the starting point for any potential diplomatic handshake.

It is suggested in Article 10 of the 1997 Convention to lean on “vital human needs” in the context of the ERU and the NHR. The inclusion of these principles in the IWT will help in erasing the differences.

Equitable and Reasonable Utilization (ERU): ERU, as defined in the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, involves factors like climate change and prioritizes water usage for “vital human needs.”

Principle of No Harm (NHR): The NHR places a due diligence obligation on riparian states to prevent harm to other states when undertaking projects with potential transboundary effects on shared watercourses.

The ERU and NHR are binding on both countries as they are customary international law rules generating the binding obligation to both parties. The inclusion of these principles in the IWT will ensure predictability to a certain extent.

The World Bank (party to the IWT) may use its forum to forge a transnational alliance of epistemic communities (who share a common interest and knowledge of the use of the Indus waters).

Thus, revisiting the IWT is a much needed step.

REGIONAL -SOUTH ASIA

Role of India in Development of South Asia

India’s vision of regional economic integration in South Asia is based on enhanced intra-regional trade, investment flows and regional transport and communication links in South Asia.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and India’s Neighbourhood First Policy are the two vehicles in this process.

India’s Neighbourhood First Policy

Under its ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy, India is committed to developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all its neighbours.

1. Focuses on creating **mutually beneficial**, people-oriented, regional frameworks
2. India’s engagement is based **non-reciprocal** and outcome-oriented approach,
3. India is an **active development partner**

Purpose:

1. Priority is to **improve the relations** with immediate neighbours
2. **Focuses** on vigorous regional diplomacy and building **political connectivity** through dialogue.
3. Various MoUs and agreements ensuring a free flow of resources, energy, goods, **labour**, and **information** across borders.

4. Enhancing **trade ties** with neighbours and invested in SAARC as a vehicle for development in the region. Eg. **BBIN grouping** for energy development, motor vehicles, waterpower management and inter-grid connectivity.
5. Focusing on deepening security in the region through military cooperation by conducting as well as participating in various defence exercises.
6. **Also Focuses** on disaster response, resource management, weather forecasting & communication and also capabilities and expertise in disaster management for all South Asian citizens.

Challenges regarding Regional Cooperation in South Asia

1. Intra-regional trade is the lowest **globally**, ie; only 5% of the region’s total trade.
2. **Nations** seeking to balance India’s influence through closer relations with external powers, eg. USA, at the moment it is China.
3. Recent **Chinese actions and policies** in South Asia BRI, String of Pearls make it.
4. Territorial disputes in South Asia remain a challenge to the peace, stability, and prosperity.
5. **Region** is way less integrated into global value chains compared to East Asia.

Wayforward:

1. The linkage between effective governance and sustainable development also needs to be acknowledged Eg. Strengthen efforts on the protection of biodiversity and responding to the climate crisis.
2. Strengthen the South Asian Free Trade Agreement as a game-changer for the region
3. Regional food security is another area to integrate roles as facilitator and component to this economic bloc.
4. **Sub-regional initiatives** such as BIMSTEC can provide new Platform to increase engagement.
To promote the interests of South Asian nations as a group, India can be the voice of South Asia in international forums. A secure regional environment will also help India reach its ambitious development goals.

REGION- INDO-PACIFIC

India and Indo-Pacific

The term Indo-Pacific express Indian Ocean and the Pacific are a linked strategic theater.

The shift from Asia-Pacific to ‘Indo-Pacific’ shows the salience of India in the new construct.

The term 'Indo-Pacific' is interpreted differently by different stakeholders .

1. India considers the region as an inclusive, open, integrated and balanced space.
2. The U.S. trying to contain the role of China in the region.
3. The ASEAN countries look at Indo-Pacific as a consociational model, thus bringing in China not only for the sake of giving it some stakeholdership but looking for ways to cooperate with it in the region.

Strategic significance of Indo-Pacific region for India:

1. **Strategic significance:** Indo-Pacific is a multipolar region, contributing more than half of the world's GDP and population.
2. **Mineral Resources:** Vital resources ranging from fish stocks to minerals and offshore oil and gas.
3. **Economic Growth:** Asian Development Bank (ADB) report noted that countries in the Indo-Pacific produce over 60% of global GDP, making the region the largest single contributor to global growth.
4. **Commerce:** World's vital choke points for global commerce in this region, including the Straits of Malacca which is very critical for the growth of world economy.
 1. **Maritime Trade:** Pacific islands are strategically significant from New Delhi's point of view as they sit astride important sea lines of communication through which important maritime trade is conducted.

Chinese threat and increasing presence:

1. The Chinese regime claims that it has historical ownership over nearly the entire region (**nine dash line**) of the South China Sea. The International Court of Arbitration rejected the claim in 2016.
2. China considers disputes in the South China Sea as territorial disputes and therefore considers that UNCLOS does not have a locus standi to pass the judgement over disputes.
3. China's increasingly active presence in the Indian Ocean region as well as its efforts to expand geopolitical reach in Asia and beyond (**String of Pearls**)

Way forward

1. It is important to adhere to freedom of navigation, adherence to rules-based order and stable trade environment. Also for free sea and air lanes, connectivity and upholding international rules and norms.
2. India should focus on the link between Indo-China border area and the East China Sea. It is important

for India to cooperate with Japan and the US to deal with Chinese front.

3. Furthermore, developing infrastructure in other countries of the region is useful, too. E.g. Bangladesh has already chosen Japan's Martabali port project instead of China's Sonadia port project.
4. The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), a result of Indo-Japanese cooperation, will also counter China's growing influence in Africa.

REGION- SOUTH EAST ASIA

Look East Policy

Post 1991 India sought to build up a relationship with the USA and allies of the USA in Southeast Asia.

In this pursuit, Look East policy was launched in 1992

1. To give a strategic push to India's engagement with the South-East Asia region
2. to bolster its standing as a regional power
3. counterweight to the strategic influence of the People's Republic of China.

Important Features:

1. Look East policy focused on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries + **Economic Integration.**
2. India became a dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1996 and summit level partner in 2002. In 2012 the relationship got up-graded into a Strategic Partnership.
3. India's trade with ASEAN was USD 2 billion in 1992. After signing the Free Trade Agreement in 2010 with ASEAN, the trade has grown to USD 72 billion.

The Act East Policy was launched in November 2014 as the successor of the Look East Policy. Act East aims at the **extended neighborhood in Asia-Pacific** and also **involves security cooperation.**

1. Act East Policy focused on ASEAN countries + Economic Integration + East Asian countries + Security cooperation.
2. Prime minister of India highlighted 4C's of Act East Policy
 - ❖ Culture
 - ❖ Commerce
 - ❖ Connectivity
 - ❖ Capacity building
3. Security is an important dimension of India's Act East Policy. In the context of growing Chinese assertiveness in the [South China Sea](#) and the Indian Ocean, securing freedom of navigation and India's

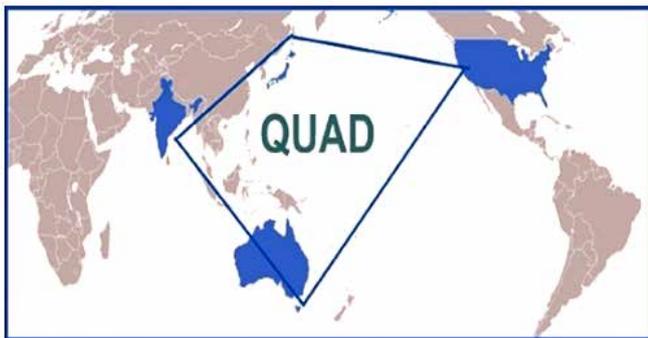
own role in the Indian Ocean is a key feature of Act East Policy.

4. In pursuance of this, India has been engaged under the narrative of Indo-pacific and informal grouping called **Quad**.

QUAD

It is the grouping of four **democracies –India, Australia, the US, and Japan**. All four nations find a common ground of being democratic nations and also support the common interest of unhindered maritime trade and security.

1. It aims to ensure and support a **“free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region**.
2. The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn’t move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
3. Finally in 2017, India, Australia, the US and Japan, came together and formed this “quadrilateral” coalition.



Significance of grouping

1. **Countering China:** In the event of any Chinese aggression on borders, India by cooperating with Quad countries can potentially disrupt Chinese trade.
2. **Merging as a Net Security Provider:** With India, located right at the centre of the Indo-Pacific geopolitical imagination can realise **the vision of a ‘broader Asia’ that can extend its influence away from geographical boundaries**.
3. Further, India with **Quad countries can check imperialist policies** of China in Indian ocean region and ensure Security and growth for all in the region.

Challenges

1. **Undefined Vision:** Although there is potential for cooperation, the **Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission**.
2. **Maritime Dominated:** The entire focus on the Indo-Pacific makes the **Quad a maritime, rather than a land-based grouping**, raising questions whether the cooperation extends to the Asia-Pacific and Eurasian

regions.

3. **India’s Aversion of Alliance System:** The fact that India is the only member that is averse to a **treaty alliance system**, has slowed down the progress of building a stronger **Quadrilateral engagement**.

Way Forward

The Quad nations need to **better explain the Indo-Pacific Vision in an overarching framework** with the objective of advancing everyone’s economic and security interests.

India has many other partners in the Indo-Pacific; therefore, **India should pitch for countries like Indonesia, Singapore** to be invited to join in the future.

INDIA - ASEAN

Areas of Cooperation

1. **ASEAN-India has Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, ensuring substantial benefits for both sides.
2. ASEAN is India’s **4th largest trading partner**
3. The bilateral trade between India and ASEAN in **2022-23 amounted to USD 131.5 billion**, constituting 11.3% of India’s global trade for the same period.
4. India has been undertaking several connectivity projects like **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral (IMT) Highway** and the **Kaladan Multimodal Project**.
5. Key areas for cooperation identified are **robust Supply Chains, Food Security**, energy security, health, and financial stability.
6. Recent, **20th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers’ meeting include** thorough review of the **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)**, originally signed in 2009.
7. The initiation of the **AITIGA review addresses** a longstanding demand from Indian businesses and promises to make the **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** more conducive to trade and mutually beneficial.

Challenges

1. For a long time, the **assumption of China as the primary economic partner** and the **US as the primary security guarantor**
2. China is trying to increase its presence in the area through its one belt one road initiative which is opposed by India.
3. **ASEAN member states** are enmeshed in **territorial disputes** with interested powers for a long time
4. Many bilateral deals with these nations are **yet to be finalised**, leading to the halting of various aspects of

economic ties.

Way forward

India’s geostrategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region depend on India’s bilateral and multilateral engagements with the countries in the region.

ASEAN countries, particularly Myanmar, Vietnam and Malaysia can potentially contribute to India’s energy security. Also oil and natural gas deposits in the South China Sea region should be explored through regional cooperation. Similarly, India with huge demographic dividend can provide a human resource base to ASEAN who is going to experience a burden of lower share of working age population and a higher median age of workers.

REGION-MIDDLE EAST

After recognizing the significance of Middle East in India’s Foreign Policy, it started increasing its ties with Gulf.

First, The landmark shift towards this was seen with the formation of a four-nation grouping — unveiled in October 2021 — called I2U2 that brought the US, India, Israel, and the UAE together.

Second, On the sidelines of the [G20 Summit](#) in New Delhi, an MoU was signed between **India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the UAE, France, Germany, and Italy** to establish the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEE-EC).



Thirdly, We have close to 9 million Indian people majority working in blue color jobs.

| Indian diaspora in Middle East (8.4 million) |
|--|
| Saudi Arabia 41lakhs |
| United Arab Emirates 34lakhs |
| Kuwait 10lakhs |
| Oman 7.8lakhs |
| Qatar 7.5lakhs |

1. Area of Cooperation
2. The Gulf Arab states provide 50 percent of Indian crude oil and 85 percent of its natural gas requirements.
3. Israel is increasingly regarded not just as a “strategic defence partner” but as a “model of counter-terrorism”. India has also strengthened strategic cooperation with Saudi Arabia and UAE.
4. Connectivity projects such as INSTC, Chabahar port in Iran can provide connectivity to India to west Asia as well as Eurasia.
5. Ensuring the stability and security of the Persian Gulf region, including the protection of the large Indian expatriate community
6. Gulf is one of the strategically important regions where more than 8 million Indian diaspora community lives. One fourth of total Indian diaspora lives in this region.
7. Remittances from the Gulf into India were 38 billion U.S. dollars

Saudi Arabia and UAE has invested more than 100 billion dollar in India.

1. **Challenges**
2. Various Middle Eastern countries have conflicting interests or each others rivals. For example, Israel and Palestine, Saudi Arabia-Iran etc
3. Challenge of countering terrorism and maintaining the security of its nationals in the Middle East, especially in conflict-prone areas like Iraq and Yemen.
4. Middle East is a theater for global and regional powers like the U.S., Russia, China, and Iran.
5. Geopolitical tensions in the region can disrupt stable and affordable supply of oil and gas is crucial for India’s energy security

The Middle East is prone to sudden crises and conflicts. India needs robust crisis management strategies to protect its interests and citizens during emergencies and diversifying economic partnerships in the region can be challenging.

In navigating these challenges, India must maintain

a pragmatic and flexible foreign policy that serves its national interests while respecting the sovereignty and sensitivities of Middle Eastern nations.

I2U2 GROUPING

1. INDIA-ISRAEL-UAE-USA
2. I2U2 also referred to as the 'West Asian Quad'.
3. I2U2 was initially formed in October, 2021 following the Abraham Accords, to deal with issues concerning maritime security, infrastructure and transport.
4. The Abraham Accord is the first Arab-Israeli peace deal in 26 years mediated by the USA.

India shifted its policy by rejecting the notion that India can't be visibly friendly to Israel and maintained a fine balance of ties with both Israel and Arab.

Objectives:

1. Its stated aim is to discuss "common areas of mutual interest, to strengthen the economic partnership in trade and investment in our respective regions and beyond".
2. **Six areas of cooperation** have been identified by the countries mutually, and the aim is to encourage joint investments in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security
3. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced to invest USD 2 billion in India to develop Food Parks across the country.
4. The Grouping declared to support a "hybrid renewable energy project» in Gujarat, consisting of 300 megawatts (MW) of wind and solar capacity.

The US and Israeli private sectors will be invited to lend their expertise and offer innovative solutions that contribute to the overall sustainability of the projects under the Grouping.

Significance of I2U2

1. Exploring security cooperation within the framework of these new groupings.
2. Developing Technological hub for Biotechnology, Startups, Clean Energy
3. Joint efforts to tackle and reduce the consequences of food security and safety.
4. I2U2 can revitalise and re-energise the system of trade and commerce. After the US, UAE is the second-largest export destination of India.
5. Connectivity through Arabian gulf across the Arabian peninsula to Israel, Jordan and from there to the European Union.

If this corridor is completed then India will be able to cut the cost of moving a container significantly (for instance from Mumbai to Greece by over 40%).

1. Challenges :

2. Abraham Accords are a major breakthrough in Arab-Israeli problem, But at the grassroot level, the Israel-Palestine conflict is still a major area of concern.
3. Internal Conflicts of the Arab World: eg. The Shia-Sunni conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia is also going on which is also running through Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.
4. The developing situation might lead to the creation of two groups one with China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran and Turkey while India, Israel, USA and UAE are likely to be on the other side.

India must also look at the presence of China which has been expanding its footprint in the region.

Wayforward

The I2U2 is a win-win proposition for all the countries concerned. India needs to play a more active role as far as cooperation with West Asia is concerned.

INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (IMEE-EC)

1. On the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, an MoU was signed between **India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the UAE, France, Germany, and Italy** to establish the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEE-EC).
2. It is an infrastructure development project that aims to **create connectivity through rail and shipping networks, energy cables, and data links.**
3. **Objectives:** IMEC seeks to boost trade, clean energy, and economic growth while providing an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

It is part of the Partnership for Rail and Shipping Corridors Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) and focuses on enhancing global trade and cooperation through critical infrastructure development

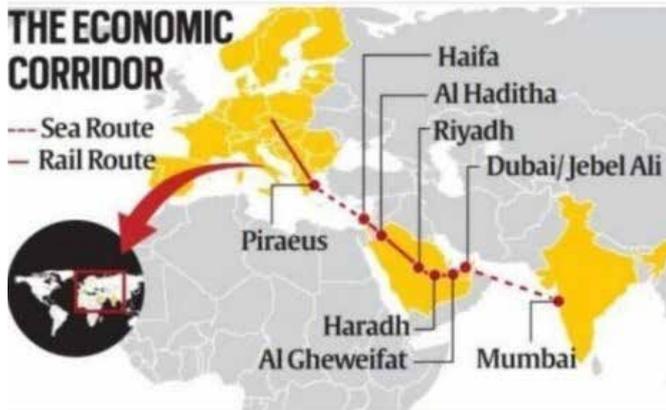
- Eastern Corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf,

Northern Corridor connecting Arabian Gulf to Europe

Corridor includes

1. Reliable cross-border ship-to-rail transit network connecting India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe.
2. Electricity cable and a clean hydrogen pipeline to foster clean energy trade.

- High-speed data cable to link innovative digital ecosystems in the world and create business opportunities



Enhancing food security, regional supply chains, trade accessibility, environmental considerations, economic cohesion, job creation, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Benefits for India

- Railway lines (make trade between India and Europe 40% faster).
- It offers India a crucial role in global commerce, digital communication, and energy networks vis-à-vis China's BRI

Geographical Advantage: It firmly positions India along the trade route spanning South East Asia to the Gulf, West Asia, and Europe.

INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA



India formulated its **Connect Central Asia Policy in 2012**, which is a broad-based approach including political, security, economic, and cultural connections.

- The Connect Central Asia Policy is based on - 4Cs:

- Commerce,
- Connectivity,
- Consular and
- Community.

Significance of Central Asia for India:

- Central Asia is strategically positioned as an access point between Europe and Asia.
- It offers extensive potential for trade, investment, and growth. The economic development of Central Asia benefits India with huge market in sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals and tourism
- Mineral Resources such as crude oil, natural gas, cotton, gold, copper, aluminium, and iron.
- Energy security - uranium and oil and gas.
- Indias Projects in Region: TAPI pipeline, only overseas airbase at Farkhor, Tajikistan. **Chabahar** and INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor)
- Instability in Central Asia due to terrorism, illegal arms trade or Golden Crescent region will have a spillover effect on India. The region is crucial in maintaining stability in Afghanistan.
- Central Asian countries are important for India's bid to become a permanent member of UNSC.

India-Central Asia link will be re-energized due to India's participation in multilateral fora like Eurasian Economic Union, Heart of Asia Conference and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (India recently became a permanent member of SCO).

Challenges for India

- India doesn't share borders with central Asian countries, the issue of connectivity between the two regions becomes of paramount importance.
- Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are not secure and stable countries, so even if India shared good relations with Pakistan, this route to Central Asia from India is not a safe and reliable path for trade and commerce.
- China has made deep inroads (Belt and Road Initiatives) in the Central Asian republics in terms of investments in and with the region.
- Politically, Central Asian countries are highly fragile and prone to threats like terrorism & Islamic fundamentalism making the region a volatile and unstable market.

Porous border and unbridled corruption along with the proximity with regions of soaring opium production (Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle) makes the region a powerhouse for drug and money trafficking.

Way Forward

5. Central Asia provides India with the right platform to leverage its political, economic and cultural connections to play a leading role further in Eurasia.

The signing of Ashgabat agreement, International North-South Transport Corridor, Chabahar port agreement are all steps in the right direction Addressing the implementation deficit regarding these multilateral agreements will resolve fundamental geographical problem between India and central Asia.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO)

1. India has chaired 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) virtual Summit, leaders called for the formation of a “more representative” and multipolar world order in the global interest.
2. Iran officially joined the SCO as the Ninth Member, grouping now comprises 9 members China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
3. The theme of India’s chairpersonship of SCO is ‘Towards a SECURE SCO’, which is derived from the acronym coined by the Indian PM at the 2018 SCO Qingdao Summit.
4. It stands for: S: Security, E: Economic development, C: Connectivity, U: Unity, R: Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, E: Environmental protection.

New Delhi Declaration:

The New Delhi Declaration was signed by the member nations, which states that the international community must come together to “counter the activities of terrorist, separatist and extremist groups, paying special attention to preventing the spread of religious intolerance, aggressive nationalism, ethnic and racial discrimination, xenophobia, ideas of fascism and chauvinism.”

Joint Statements:

The leaders adopted two thematic joint statements –

- one on cooperation in countering the radicalisation leading to separatism, extremism, and terrorism &
- the second one cooperation in the field of digital transformation.

Areas of Cooperation

1. The SCO provides a platform for India to enhance economic cooperation with Central Asian countries, which have vast reserves of natural resources.
2. Central Asia has vast reserves of oil and gas, and

India is looking to tap into these resources to enhance its energy security.

3. The Samarkand Declaration, signed at the 22nd Summit, centralizes connectivity which is a priority for India, as well as energy and food security.
4. Sharing Heritgae: SCO member countries have decided to designate one city (from SCO member countries) as tourism and cultural capital every year under a rotating initiative. “Kashi” (Varanasi) has been designated as the first cultural capital of the SCO under this initiative.
5. The SCO has a strong focus on counterterrorism cooperation. **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** to promote cooperation among member states in the fight against terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
6. RATS provides a platform for sharing intelligence, conducting joint exercises and operations, and coordinating actions to prevent and combat terrorism in the region.

New Pillars of Cooperation: India has created five new pillars and focus area for cooperation in the SCO, which include,

1. Startups and Innovation
2. Traditional Medicine
3. Youth Empowerment
4. Digital Inclusion
5. Shared Buddhist Heritage

Challenges of SCO

1. **SCO lacks a formal mechanism** for resolving disputes between member states.
2. **Divergent Interests and Disagreements** of member states
3. **Limited geographical scope** limited to Eurasia and neighboring regions
4. **Western skepticism and criticism** for its lack of democratic credentials
5. **Conflicts Exist within SCO Countries:** India and China over Border Issues, India and Pakistan over Terrorism, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan over Border Issues, several conflicts between Taliban-led Afghanistan and Pakistan

Conclusion

The SCO’s main objective is to promote peace in Eurasia, but its ability to cope with intra-state and inter-state conflicts among member states is under scrutiny

Russia’s muscle and China’s money provide a basis for their strategic division of labour in Central Asia to keep the Western powers out of the region. India can provide a sensible alternative and responsible power in the group.

G 20 GROUPING AND INDIA'S PRESIDENCY

The G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The G20 Presidency rotates annually according to a system that ensures a regional balance over time.

The G20 does not have a permanent secretariat or Headquarters.

India's Agenda: Benefits India highlighted from G20 Presidency:

1. India, as chair of the G20, has offered a vision of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** (One Earth, One Family, **One Future**) to bring all citizens of the world together and make the world better for everyone.
2. India has also proposed an approach of **LiFE** (lifestyles for sustainable development) to the G20. It requires "coherent actions amongst stakeholders at all levels rooted in collective actions across society". It also recognizes and amplifies the role of local communities, local and regional governments and traditional knowledge in supporting sustainable lifestyles.
3. The G20 Summit demonstrated **India's convening power**.
4. The hosting of the G20 summit will be one of the **biggest portrayals of India's rise** at the global stage
5. India has already positioned itself as the "**voice of the Global South**"— a reference to the developing and the less-developed countries — and will seek to put its priorities on the global forum.
6. India will also **seek to bring Russian and Western interlocutors and leaders together and end the conflict in Europe**. If India manages to do so, it will claim a diplomatic win, which will go down well with its domestic constituency.
7. India calls for **African Union (AU) to become a member of the G20**, the club of the world's richest countries
8. India's ability to generate a consensus at a platform, whose genesis may have been in the **financial crises**
9. G20 as the most important forum engaged with the world's most consequential problems.

Outcome of G20 meet:

1. It addressed key **global issues** including climate change, gender equality, SDG goals, financial inclusion, terrorism, money laundering, etc.
2. G20 countries sign off on a **statement** that includes a **lengthy section on the Ukraine war**
3. The Summit **and 200-odd meetings** held all over India brought the diversity, color and genius of the Indian people on to the world stage.

4. India will be perceived as the key destination for dialogue and debate over the most contentious of issues, while experiencing the most breathtaking hospitality.
5. The New Delhi summit will go down where much of the rest of the world recognised **India as an if not the alternative to China**.
6. The announcement of the **economic corridor connecting Europe with the Middle East and India** through a combination of rail and sea routes during a session at the G20 Leaders' summit.
7. It was clearly a response to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (which seems to hold the main stakeholder countries in a debilitating debt trap).
8. India as the G20 Chair launched **The Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)** initiative intends to expedite the global uptake of biofuels through facilitating technology advancements, intensifying utilization of sustainable biofuels, shaping robust standard setting and certification through the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders

India's leadership role:

1. India has become the voice for an alternative **vision in the global south**.
2. The possibilities offered by the **Indian Stack: Open APIs and digital public goods**
3. India may make it available as open-source software. It aims to unlock the economic primitives of identity, data, and payments at population scale for much of the world
4. The World Bank's **G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion document** endorsed the transformative impact of DPIs in India.
Example: JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) Trinity has propelled the financial inclusion rate from 25 percent in 2008 to over 80 percent of adults in the last six years
5. India's insistence on the **African Union's inclusion in what is now the G21** was also rooted in this "alternative" vision of not losing your heart even while being dictated by your head.

The Prime Minister announced India's emergence on the global stage during this Amrit Kaal up to 2047, making science and economy deliver for humanity at large under the philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' – One Earth, One Family, One Future.

G21/AFRICAN UNION (AU) BECOME A MEMBER OF THE G20

African Union is Based in Addis Ababa , capital of Ethiopia , the AU has 55 member countries, totaling three trillion dollars in GDP. Only one African country, South

Africa, is currently a member of the G20,

Significance of AU’s Inclusion in G20

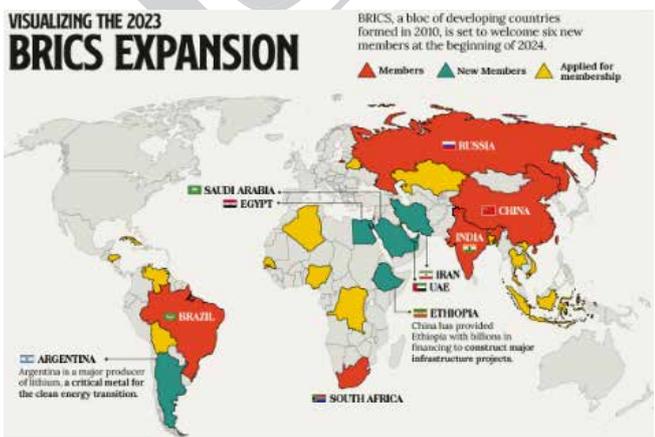
1. The AU’s membership in the G20 offers an opportunity to reshape global trade, finance, and investment structures. It provides African interests and perspectives with a voice and visibility in the G20, potentially influencing global policy decisions.
2. Social Infrastructure: India-Africa cooperation involves education, health, and skills enhancement at various levels. India-Africa Partnership (Achievements, Challenges and Roadmap 2030)

Indian-African Relations

1. **Common Geo-Political Interests:** India and Africa share interests in UN reforms, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, and cybersecurity.
2. **Economic Cooperation:** Trade amounted to USD 63.3 billion in 2018-19, contributing to economic ties.
3. **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor – an economic cooperation agreement** between India, Japan and multiple African countries.
4. **Addressing Food Security:** India and Africa can cooperate to ensure food and nutritional security, leveraging India’s agricultural expertise.
5. **Scope:**
 - ❖ **Combating Neo-Colonialism:** Differentiating from neo-colonial approaches, India focuses on building local capacities and equal partnerships.
 - ❖ **Preventing Global Rivalries:** As global players engage with Africa, India and Africa can prevent rival ambitions and maintain cooperation.

BRICS 2.0 / BRICS-XI

Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE — to join BRICS as full members and keep its doors open for further expansion will open a new era. Full membership will take effect on January 1, 2024.



BRICS 2.0 will have global repercussions:

1. GDP Share : 29%
2. Population Share: 46%
3. Oil Production: 43%
4. Exports of Goods: 25%
5. On the role of the US-led Western alliance centered around G7
6. Emerging economies and developing countries
7. Engagements between the two worlds ie Global North and Global South.

Significance of increase in membership:

1. Represent a larger share of world population, global GDP and international trade.
2. Argentina was brought in to expand Latin American representation.
3. Egypt and Ethiopia to expand African representation.
4. The inclusion of Saudi Arabia and the UAE will help in recapitalisation of the New Development Bank enhancing its capacity to finance development projects.
5. Iran’s entry reaffirms its strategic location as a bridge between West, Central and South Asia.
6. BRICS 2.0 will also have six of the top 10 oil-producing countries: Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, UAE, Brazil, and Iran
7. BRICS was initially driven by China with the backing of Russia and South Africa: But once India and Brazil accepted the principle of expansion, the choice of six new members was based on consensus.
8. At least 23 countries of the Global South had conveyed interest in seeking BRICS membership It is a recognition of the grouping’s value, notwithstanding the negative view taken by the West. A definite global power shift and one not defined by the West.

The new BRICS-XI will have more political clout, but the extent of its increased influence will depend on building inner unity.

PM MODI put forward some suggestions for further broadening close cooperation:

“Diversity is a great strength of India. The solution to any problem in India comes out at the test of this diversity. That’s why these solutions can be easily implemented in any corner of the world.”

1. **Space:** BRICS already working on the BRICS satellite constellation. Suggests creating a BRICS Space Exploration Consortium, work for global good in areas like space research, weather monitoring.
2. **Education, Skill Development and Technology:** To make BRICS a future ready organization and to make societies future ready share a list of platforms developed in India with BRICS partners.

3. DIKSHA i.e. Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing platform to provide education to the children of remote and rural areas.
4. Atal tinkering labs to promote innovation among school students
5. Bhashini, an AI-based language platform, is being used in India to remove language barriers.
6. CoWIN platform has been created for vaccination.
7. Public service delivery is being revolutionized through Digital Public Infrastructure i.e. India Stack.
8. **Skills mapping together to identify each other's Strengths:** To complement each other in the journey of development.

Big Cats. make joint efforts for their protection. Under the International Big Cat Alliance,

1. **Traditional Medicine:** ecosystems of traditional medicine in BRICS countries.

Internal challenges within BRICS:

1. The IBSA trio within the BRICS expected that China and Russia would fully back their bid to secure membership of the UN Security Council; they were disappointed. Supporting 'the aspiration' of Brazil, India and South Africa to play a greater role in the UN, figures in every BRICS communiqué
2. The Chinese dramatic economic rise and, more importantly, military assertiveness. This disturbed the group's inner balance.
3. The post-Ukraine consolidation of Russia-China cooperation, economic malaise in South Africa that accelerates dependence on China
4. Brazil's long fling with rightist policies followed by the return of a tired Lula da Silva as the President, have generated new tensions.
1. China's push for a common currency for intra-BRICS trade is also symptomatic of the group's inner troubles.

Way Forward

1. The challenge before India is to choose between a China-centric world order or a West- centric world order, or balance the two.
2. It must make sure not to alienate other countries in the global South who may see merit in China's efforts at expanding the membership of those forums.
3. India must keep its eyes firmly fixed on its goal to promote a more representative and equitable global governance ensure that such an order does not end up undercutting its own national interests.

UNITED NATIONS AND INDIA

India's Contributions in UN Peacekeeping

1. India has contributed **approximately 2,75,000 troops** to peacekeeping missions so far.
2. 179 soldiers losing their lives in the line of duty.
3. The Indian Army has established the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi. This center provides specialized training for more than 12,000 troops every year.
4. India has taken proactive measures to promote gender equality in peacekeeping operations.
5. India has deployed **Female Engagement Teams in United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and **United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei**, which is the second largest women contingent after Liberia.
6. India has also deployed **Women Military Police in United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and women staff** officers and military observers in various missions.

Recent Initiatives:

Memorial Wall for UN Peacekeepers:

- record co-sponsorship by 190 out of the 193 member-states of the UNGA of India's resolution
- an agreement on constructing the Memorial Wall where the existing stone slabs are located next to a small fountain in the North Lawn (near the East Riverside)

India-ASEAN Initiative for Women in UNPK operations

- A collaborative effort between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- India providing training and support to women personnel from ASEAN member-states who are interested in serving as peacekeepers.

Under this initiative, India has announced two specific initiatives:

1. **Specialized courses at the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK)** in New Delhi. These courses will offer targeted training in peacekeeping operations to women peacekeepers from ASEAN countries.
 The aim is to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to UNPK missions.
2. **Table Top Exercise for women officers from ASEAN** This exercise will simulate various scenarios

and challenges faced by UN peacekeepers, allowing participants to enhance their understanding and preparedness for UNPK operations.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

Recently, the UN General Assembly president has said the UN Security Council (UNSC) has become “paralysed” and “dysfunctional” in its “present form”, as it has not been able to take any decision since the Russia-Ukraine war started.

- The UNSC was established by the UN Charter in 1945.
- It is one of the 6 principal organs of the United Nations.
- UNSC has 15 members: 5 permanent members (P5) and 10 non-permanent members elected for 2-year terms.
- The permanent members were “historically not enthusiastic” about reform of the UN system but they have all agreed that it is necessary for introducing changes in the Security Council.
- India has served eight times in the UNSC as a non-permanent member.

Issues with Regarding to UNSC

1. **Lack of Adequate Representation:** most pertinent absence being that of Africa, a continent of 54 countries. Furthermore, It is a matter of concern that globally important countries such as India, Germany, Brazil, and South Africa are not represented on the UNSC permanent members list.
2. **Misuse of Veto Power:** always criticized by many experts as well as by most States calling it a” self-chosen club of the privileged” and non-democratic.
3. **Geopolitical Rivalry within P5:** has prevented the UNSC from coming up with effective mechanisms to deal with global issues.
4. **Threat to State’s Sovereignty:** UNSC decisions are binding on all member countries, unlike the General Assembly’s. This means that any state’s sovereignty can be encroached upon if necessary by taking action, such as imposing sanctions.

Way Forward:

1. **Democratization of UNSC.**
2. **Expansion of UNSC:** including expanding its permanent and non-permanent seats
3. **Equitable Representation:** of all the regions in the UNSC
4. The decentralization of the UNSC’s decision-making processes will enable its transformation to a more representative, participatory body.

India made a push for UNSC reform hosting a meeting of two separate groupings – G-4 and L-69 – in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

The L. 69 Group is a group of developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific.

As India leads Global South, it needs to revitalise its engagement with its traditional partners in the “global south” by articulating their peace and security concerns in the UNSC.

GLOBAL SOUTH:

1. The term Global South was first coined in 1969 by political activist Carl Oglesby.
2. It gained momentum after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, which marked the end of the “Second World.” Previously, developing nations were commonly referred to as the “Third World”.



3. The term Global South does **not have a strict geographical definition**. It signifies a combination of political, geopolitical, and economic similarities among nations.
4. The Global South refers to countries often characterized as **developing, less developed, or underdeveloped**, primarily located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
5. These nations typically experience **higher levels of poverty, income inequality, and challenging living conditions** compared to the wealthier nations of the Global North.
6. Many countries in the Global South have a **history of Imperialism and Colonial Rule**, particularly evident in African countries.
7. The “Global North” is richer nations that are located mostly in North America and Europe, with some additions in Oceania and elsewhere.

Significance of Global South

1. **Shifting Economic and Political Power:** The World

Bank (WB) projections indicate that by 2030, three of the **four largest economies will belong to Global South countries**, with China and India leading the way.

2. **Impact on Geopolitics:** Asian nations are predicted to play a significant role in what experts call the “Asian Century.” Additionally, there is talk of a “post-Western world” as the influence of the Global South challenges the historical dominance of the Global North.
3. **Cultural Diversity:** The Global South is culturally diverse, with a rich tapestry of languages, traditions, and histories. This diversity contributes to global cultural richness and provides **opportunities for cross-cultural exchange**.
4. **Development Challenges:** The Global South faces unique development challenges, such as **poverty, inequality, and access to basic services**. Addressing these challenges is crucial for global efforts to **achieve sustainable development**.
5. **Global South-South Cooperation:** Countries in the Global South often collaborate with each other through initiatives like South-South cooperation, sharing knowledge, technology, and resources to address common challenges.
6. **Decolonization and Empowerment:** Many Global South countries have a history of colonization, and their struggle for independence and self-determination has been influential in shaping global politics and decolonization movements.
7. **Environmental Impact:** The Global South is home to some of the world’s most ecologically diverse regions and is disproportionately affected by climate change. Addressing environmental issues in the Global South is vital for global sustainability.
8. **Humanitarian Concerns:** The Global South frequently experiences humanitarian crises, including conflicts, natural disasters, and public health emergencies. International support and cooperation are often needed to mitigate these crisis.

Challenges to the Global South

1. **Issue of Green Energy Fund:** Despite Global North countries’ higher contribution towards global emissions, they are neglecting to pay for funding green energy, for which the ultimate sufferers are the least emitters – the lesser developed countries.
2. **Impact of Russia-Ukraine War:** concerns related to food, energy and finance, thereby, threatening the development prospects of LDCs.
3. **China’s Interference:** The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) for developing infrastructure still questionable whether BRI will be a win-win situation for both parties or it will focus only on China’s Profit.
4. **US Hegemony:** US is dominant in International affairs

with largest economy and international acceptance of Dollar. Multipolar world is still irrelevant for Global South

5. **Inadequate Access to Resources:** Global North-South divergences have been historically characterised by major gaps in the access to resources required for crucial developmental outcomes. Industrialisation, for example, has been skewed in the favour of advanced economies since the early 1960s, and no major evidence of global convergence was found in this regard.
6. **Impact of Covid-19:** Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already existing divides. The social and macroeconomic implications being faced today have been far worse for the global South.
7. **The vulnerability of the domestic economies** is far more apparent now in countries ranging from Argentina and Egypt to Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

India’s Focus on Global South

Indian Prime Minister announced five initiatives to support the development of other developing countries in “Voice of Global South Summit” hosted by India in January 2023.

1. The “**Global South Centre of Excellence**” will research development solutions and best practices which can be implemented in other developing countries.
2. The “**Global South Science and Technology Initiative**” aims to share Indian expertise in areas such as space technology and nuclear energy.
3. The “**Aarogya Maitri**” project will provide essential medical supplies to any developing country affected by natural disasters or humanitarian crises.
4. The “**Global South Young Diplomats Forum**” will connect young officers of foreign ministries,
5. The “**Global South Scholarships**” will provide higher education opportunities in India for students from developing countries.

Conclusion

The rise of the Global South as an economic and political force has challenged traditional power dynamics and brought attention to the changing global order.

As the Global South continues to assert itself, it reshapes geopolitics, heralding a new era where nations from Africa, Asia, and Latin America play increasingly significant roles in shaping the future of international relations.

INDIAN DIASPORA

The Indian diaspora comprises over **18 million persons of Indian origin and 13 million non-resident Indians** –

making it the largest overseas community globally.

1. According to the **Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs, there were 4.7 (four point seven) crore Indians (including students also) as of December 31, 2021.**

❖ Parliamentary panel to the government in its report titled **“Welfare of Indian diaspora: Policies & Schemes”** recommends The profile and geographical distribution of the Indian diaspora presents a great opportunity to promote the country’s soft power and cultural diplomacy abroad.

❖ The committee also said there is **need to prepare a clear and comprehensive policy framework to engage more proactively with the Indians living abroad. Of the 55 recommendations made, the government has accepted 43 recommendations.**



2. According to the **World Bank Migration and Development Brief, released in 2022**, for the first time a single country, India, is on track to receive more than USD 100 billion in yearly remittances.
3. The **World Migration Report** notes that India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt are (in descending order) among the top five remittance recipient countries.

Significance of the Indian Diaspora

1. They serve as an important **‘bridge’** to access knowledge, expertise, resources and markets for the development of the country of origin with the rest of the world.
2. Indian Diaspora is an important part of India’s **“soft diplomacy” or “diaspora diplomacy”**. **For example**, Indian Diaspora played a critical in the fructification of Indo-US Nuclear deal.
3. They have also **contributed to the growth and development of the country of their residence. For example**, Silicon Valley represents the success of Indians.
4. The Indian Diaspora has played an important role in

the field of Science & Technology.

5. **Trans-national entrepreneurship:** They are a significant source of trade and investment in India.
6. Source of large inflows of **remittances**, which has been helping balance the current account. **It further aids in socio-economic development and poverty reduction.** According to the World Bank, Indian Diaspora is the largest earner of remittances in the world currently.
7. **Diffusion of experience and exposure:** They spread the Indian Culture and traditions abroad benefitting India in general. Example: Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian Cuisine etc.

Challenges posed by the Diaspora:

1. The Parliamentary Committee stated that conventions such as the PBD appear to exclude a **large segment of the diaspora that is not wealthy (low/semi-skilled and blue-collar workers).**
2. Low oil prices owing to Shale gas boom and slower global growth is resulting in **job cuts for Indians.**
3. **Discriminative practices owing to a racist, colonial mindset still persists.** This makes it difficult to secure jobs and work visas.
4. Support of the diaspora is neither automatic nor continuous
5. **Example:** the Indian community in the US was not vocal enough in criticising Trump’s proposal to restrict the H-1B visa programme that has benefited many Indians.
6. **Majority of Indian Diaspora want to retain their Indian citizenship along with the citizenship of the country of their residence.**
7. **Terror Funding:** Another challenge is that **remittances may not always be used for beneficial purposes. Example:**India faced problems due to foreign funding for extremist 29 movements like the Khalistan movement.
8. **Brain Drain:** Indians prefer to do higher studies abroad and work as scientists and economists abroad causing India **loss of talent in areas of research and development.**
9. Reports suggest that the **e-Migrate system and the Minimum Referral Wages** policy have been detrimental to India as companies now find it easier to hire labour from countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Way Forward:

1. To ensure that Diaspora members feel welcomed on their arrival in India, easier procedures for immigration and customs clearances that are marked by courteous service are essential.
2. The participation and involvement in the PBD convention should be more broad-based, including

vulnerable segments of the diaspora community.

3. Address the problems of our overseas blue-collar workers and
4. Negotiating a Standard Labour Export Agreements with the host countries
5. Monitoring and supervision of our overseas workers by our Missions
6. Compulsory insurance schemes covering the risks faced by our overseas workers
7. Welfare of Indian Women married to NRIs/PIOs
8. The Government should consider issuing special infrastructure bonds for attracting NRI/PIO investments on the lines of the Israel Bonds.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

Hard Power:

Power in international relations has traditionally been understood in the context of military and economic might. It is known as Hard power (which is quantifiable).

Hard power is deployed in the form of coercion:

1. Using force
2. the threat of force
3. economic sanctions etc.

Example: Strength of Army, Numbers of Nuclear Weapon, Economic Sanctions.

Soft Power:

Soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. Concept of soft power emerged in post-cold war world.

The three pillars of soft power are:

1. Political values
2. culture and
3. foreign policy

India's Soft power: Democracy, Vasudaiva kutumbakam, Indian Diaspora, Yoga, etc

A Nation need both hard and soft power, the ability to coerce others as well as the ability to shape their long-term attitudes and preferences to build successful foreign policy.

The Committee on External Affairs has recently presented its 16th Report on the prospects and limitations of India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy.

India's Soft Power and Diplomacy

In addition to economic and military power, the idea of Soft Power has gained traction during the past few

decades. Indian arts, culture, yoga and spiritualism, culinary varieties, festivals, music and dance forms etc, have attracted people from all around the world for centuries.

1. **For creating Goodwill:** Indian ethos and practices has helped it build a benevolent image and tremendous goodwill globally, but it has to be backed with quality project delivery.
2. **As a Strategic Investment:** To become a leading strategic investor in commercially viable and financially attractive public-private partnership infrastructure projects, India needs to deliver on its promises.
3. **Post-Pandemic Changes:** With increased scope of cooperation and the realisation that global problems require global efforts, India's role has gained prominence as the pharmacy of the World.
4. **Trade and Investment Flow:** To build an image of a trusted and reliable partner, India needs to make other countries believe in its commitment to deliver. This will lead to rising trade and investment flows to growing Indian markets.
5. **Agreements and Communication:** The projection of Soft power can help India establish agreement and communication between states through peaceful methods. It also helps build a brand for itself by promoting its Non-aligned commitments, Democratic values, morals, ethos, etc.
6. In order to **Reach Globally:** There is no denying the fact that India can use these instruments of soft power to reach out to the global audience—in turn, making an all-embracing impact on the worldwide market.
7. India's ancient **wisdom and spirituality** needed to be utilised to capitalise on India's leadership role in the world.

Challenges:

1. **Lack of Funds:** With limited capacity to fund infrastructure projects, India needs to rationally allot its funds, keeping in mind its strategic objectives. Moreover, improving the Indian economy and opening up the market can help India to accumulate funds for international projects.
2. **Lack of Institutional Framework:** India needs an independent development partnership agency that develops long-term and short-term strategies, identifies priorities, builds knowledge and facilitates learning. It needs to remove Internal institutional hurdles, such as policy and bureaucratic delays, to meet its infrastructure targets.

Recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee

1. **Overseas Centres:** Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) should facilitate the opening of more AYUSH(Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homeopathy) centres

overseas in a “strategic and planned manner”.

2. **Yoga Certification Board:** In the context of the government’s push to popularise yoga through initiatives such as the International Day of Yoga and setting up of other related facilities, the panel recommended that the ministries of AYUSH and external affairs should set up a ‘Yoga Certification Board for certifying Indian yogic practices and therapies’.
3. **Diaspora Collaboration:** The Indian diaspora, too, is a major asset of India’s soft power diplomacy. Collaboration with the Indian diaspora should also be encouraged to disseminate India’s soft power in regions where it is not yet widely known.
4. **In the Field of Medicine:** Concerted efforts to get recognition of Ayurveda as a system of medicine and adopt the pharmacopeia of India so that the products can be exported as medicine.

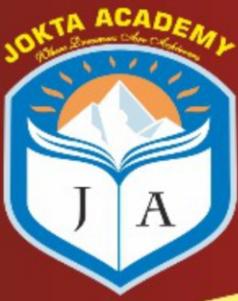
Ayurveda does not have a recognised pharmacopeia, which is why such products are being exported as dietary supplements and nutraceuticals. The products are still not recognised in most of the foreign countries.
5. **Pricing System:** On the issue of the differential pricing of tickets to monuments for foreigners and Indians, the panel suggested that the pricing system “may be revisited” since such a policy is unnecessary in a globalised world.

Such differential pricing leads to a loss of a large segment of foreign travellers.
6. **Budgetary Allocation:** The panel sought an enhanced annual budgetary allocation of Rs 500 crore for the Indian Council For Cultural Relations (ICCR) for “conducting India’s soft power and cultural diplomacy in a robust and extensive manner”.
7. **Coordination Committee:** Establishment of a coordination committee consisting of representatives from the MEA and other ministries to overcome the lack of coordination among multiple institutions in projecting India’s soft power and cultural diplomacy.
8. **A Policy Document:** The MEA should also prepare a policy document on “India’s soft power projections, delineating India’s soft power toolbox and manner in which it is being projected abroad along a vision statement for the future”.

Way Forward

In its capacity as the biggest democracy in the world, India’s soft power should extend beyond simply sharing election best practices, to also countering executive overreach through a sophisticated framework of democratic institutions.

The other way to overcome a shortage of money and minds on the job is to examine how the private sector can be included to fill some of the gaps left by official agencies.



JOKTA ACADEMY

IAS/HAS

Our Books

