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DECODECIVILS

Neighbourhood

Pakistan

Indus Water Treaty

Why in news: Following the **Pahalgam terror attack** by The Resistance Front killing 26 tourists, the **Cabinet Committee on Security** decided to hold the **IWT of 1960 in abeyance**.

- The IWT has **no exit clause** or provision for unilateral abrogation.
- **Article XII (4):** The treaty can only end with a **“duly ratified treaty”** between both governments.
- Indian analysts cite **Articles 60 and 62 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT)** to justify revocation, though **India is not a party** and **Pakistan hasn’t ratified** it.
- **“Abeyance”** is not recognised legal term under **VCLT**, which only allows for **“suspension”** under specific conditions. **Article 62 of VCLT:** Permits suspension if there’s a **“fundamental change of circumstances”**.
- **Legal Precedent:** In **1997 Gabcikovo–Nagymaros case**, ICJ rejected **Hungary’s** termination of a treaty on the basis of political, economic, environmental shifts as not constituting fundamental changes.

India’s leverage and limitations:

- India may stop sharing **water flow data, flush reservoirs**, alter **hydro project operations**.

Do you know?

- **Baglihar dam’s sluice spillway gates** have been **lowered to restrict water flow to Pakistan’s Punjab** as a **short-term punitive action**.
- **Baglihar dam**, built on the **Chenab river**, is a **run-of-the-river hydro power project**.
- **Salal Dam**, also called the **Salal Hydroelectric Power Station**, is a **run-of-the-river project** on the **Chenab River** in **Reasi district, Jammu and Kashmir**. It is the **first hydropower project** built by India in **Jammu and Kashmir under the Indus Water Treaty**.
- **Run-of-the-river hydroelectricity** involves **little or no water storage**, relying on natural river flow.
- Such plants may have **no storage** or **limited pondage**, used to manage short-term variations in water flow.

- **India uses only ~1 MAF of permitted 3.60 MAF storage** on western rivers.
- Has developed irrigation on only **0.642 million acres**, though permitted for **1.34 million acres** in **J&K and Ladakh**.
- On **eastern rivers** (Sutlej, Beas, Ravi), India uses **90%+ of the 33 MAF** allocation, aided by **Bhakra, Pong, and Ranjit Sagar dams**.
- Major hydroelectric projects on **western rivers** include: **Kishanganga** (18.35 MCM), **Ratle** (78.71 MCM), **Salal** (285 MCM) and **Baglihar** (475 MCM). **Upcoming: Kiru, Pakal Dul, and Ratle** to tap Chenab and its tributaries.

Impacts on Pakistan:

- **Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab** form the

backbone of **Pakistan’s agriculture, domestic use, and hydropower**.

- **Over 80% of Pak’s agriculture** and **33% of hydropower** rely on Indus basin waters.
- Disruption may cause **tensions**, particularly b/w **Punjab vs. Sindh** over canals like **Cholistan**.
- Pak fears **droughts in dry months** and **floods in monsoons** due to India’s control over flow.

India’s Surprise Reservoir Flushing:

- India released water from **Baglihar** and **Salal dams** in **J&K**. The activity, termed **“flushing the reservoir”**, clears silt and is a routine practice, but **Pakistan was not notified**, contrary to IWT norms.
- **Baglihar:** 900 MW, reservoir capacity of 475 MCM.
Salal: 690 MW, gates opened partially or fully.

Hydropower Disputes:

- Projects like **Kishanganga (Jhelum), Ratle (Chenab)** have drawn objections from Pak.
- In **2013**, the **Court of Arbitration** permitted diversion by India under strict conditions (e.g., minimum flow).
- In the **Ratle case**, India sought a **neutral expert**, Pakistan preferred the **Court of Arbitration**; the **World Bank allowed both**, causing India to boycott proceedings.

Regional and International Ramifications

IMPACT ON PAKISTAN

WITH the IWT in abeyance, India is no longer required to share water-flow data with Pakistan. It can flush its reservoirs, which can result in a sudden release of water.

UNSCHEDULED closing or opening of dam gates will cause disruptions downstream.

PADDY is the main kharif crop in Pakistani Punjab. Farmers start cultivating paddy in nurseries in May, and planting takes place in June.

- **China**, the **upper riparian** to many Indian rivers, may cite India's IWT suspension to **refuse data-sharing** from **Tibet**. MoUs on the **Sutlej** and **Brahmaputra** with China have expired, renewal is pending. During the **2017 Doklam standoff**, China withheld data from India but not Bangladesh.
- As **India and Bangladesh** prepare to **renew the Ganga Water Treaty in 2026**, the IWT episode may **strain talks**.

Do you know?

Indus River system:

- It consists of **six rivers: Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej**.
- **Indus and Sutlej** are **antecedent rivers**, originating in **Tibet** and cutting **deep gorges through the Himalayas**.
- **Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Beas** originate in **India**.
- The **Indus Basin** spans **China, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan**.
- In India, it covers **Ladakh, J&K, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan**.
- The **total drainage area** of the Indus Basin in India is **approximately 3,21,289 sq. km**, accounting for **9.8% of India's geographical area**.

Indus Water Treaty:

- It was signed in **1960** in **Karachi** by **Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** and **Pakistani President Mohammad Ayub Khan**. **Broker & Signatory: World Bank**.
- It divides the **Indus river system's waters** — **India controls the three eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej)** and **Pakistan controls the three western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab)**.
- About **80% of the water volume** is allocated to **Pakistan** and **20% to India**.
- **India's rights on western rivers: Limited to non-consumptive uses** such as **hydropower, navigation, irrigation**, without substantially altering the flow.
- The treaty established a **Permanent Indus Commission** with representatives from both countries to **exchange data and resolve routine issues**.
- A **3-tier dispute resolution mechanism: Commission → Neutral Expert → Court of Arbitration**.

Do you know?

Various Operations:

- **Operation Riddle (1965)** was India's military response to Pakistan's **Operation Gibraltar and Grand Slam**, targeting **Lahore and Kasur** in **1965**.
- **Operation Ablaze (1965)** was a **pre-emptive mobilisation** plan by the Indian Army in **1965**, signalling readiness during border tensions before the war.
- **Operation Cactus Lily (1971)** was an **air assault during the Bangladesh Liberation War**, enabling Indian forces to **cross the Meghna River** and bypass Pakistani positions.
- **Operations Trident and Python (1971)** were **Indian Navy offensives** on **Karachi**, with **Trident** marking the **first use of anti-ship missiles** in the region.
- **Operation Meghdoot (1984)** was launched to **secure the Siachen Glacier**, countering Pakistan's cartographic aggression; it involved **high-altitude troop deployment**.
- **Operation Vijay (1999)** was India's operation during the **Kargil War** to **evict Pakistani intruders** and **reclaim occupied positions**.
- **Operation Safed Sagar (1999)** was the **IAF's air campaign** during the **Kargil War**, marking the **first major use of air power** in the region since 1971.
- **Operation Bandar (2019)** was India's **air strike on Balakot**, targeting a **Jaish-e-Mohammed training camp** after the **Pulwama terror attack**.
- **Operation Brahma (2025)** was launched by India to assist **Myanmar and Thailand** after **earthquake** killed over **3,000 civilians**, providing **Search and Rescue (SAR), humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and medical support**.
- **Operation Sadbhav (024)** was initiated by India following **Typhoon Yagi**, sending **aid to Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar**, including **10 tons of rations, clothes, and medicines** via **INS Satpura**.
- **Operation Ajay (2023)** was launched to **repatriate Indian citizens** from **Israel and Palestine** amid the **Israel-Hamas conflict escalation**.

FATF:

- Formed in 1989 as a **G7 initiative**, It is a global watchdog for money laundering and terrorist financing, with its mandate expanded in **2001 to include terror funding**.
- Demanding a 'grey list' status for Pakistan requires a member-led nomination and **Plenary approval**.
- The plenary is the **decision-making body of the FATF**, which meets **three times** a year.

- The FATF has **40 members**.
- **Pakistan is not a member of FATF**, but of Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), the largest FATF-Style Regional Body. **India is a member of APG as well as of the FATF**.
- Although **GCC is a full Member of the FATF**, five of the individual Member countries of the GCC (**Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates**) are not. **Saudi Arabia** is an FATF member since 2019.

India 'vehemently opposed' ADB's funding to Pakistan

Why in news: The Indian government has "vehemently opposed" the Asian Development Bank's decision to provide **additional funding to Pakistan**, citing concerns over military spending.

- The **ADB approved \$800 million** to Pakistan under its **Resource Mobilisation Reform Programme**.
- India pointed out that **Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio** fell from **13% in 2017-18 to 9.2% in 2022-23**, much lower than the **Asia-Pacific average of about 19%**.
- Despite this, India highlighted a "**significant increase**" in **Pakistan's defence spending** during the same period.

Do you know?

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** was **founded in 1966** and is headquartered in **Manila, Philippines**.
- Its **primary mission** is to **foster economic growth and cooperation** in the **Asia-Pacific region**.
- ADB supports member countries through **loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments** to promote **social and economic development**. It funds operations through **international bond markets, member contributions, retained earnings, and loan repayments**.
- ADB aids **developing member countries, the private sector, and public-private partnerships**, and regularly facilitates **policy dialogues and advisory services**.
- It also engages in **co-financing operations** using **official, commercial, and export credit sources**.

IMF:

- **Established:** In **1944** at **United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference (Bretton Woods Conference)**, along with World Bank. **Bretton Woods Institutions:** IMF and World Bank are collectively referred to as such.
- **Mandate:** Promote **global macroeconomic and financial stability**, provide **short- and medium-term loans** for balance of payments issues, and extend **technical assistance and training** for better economic policies.
- **Membership:** **191 countries** (India is a member).
- **Condition:** To join the **World Bank**, a country must first be a member of the **IMF**.
- **Board of Governors:** Highest decision-making body, with **1 governor and 1 alternate governor** from each member country.
- **Executive Board:** 25 members overseeing daily work; decisions normally by **consensus**, sometimes by vote.
- **Voting system:** Based on **basic votes** (equally distributed) + **quota-based votes** (dependent on country's quota). **India's quota: 2.75%** (8th largest). **US quota: About 17%**.
- **International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC):** 25-member advisory body representing countries or groups.
- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., USA.
- **Key Reports:** World Economic Outlook, Global Financial Stability Report.

Bangladesh

India Restricts Bangladeshi Exports via Land Ports

Why in news: India has **prohibited import of Bangladeshi garments** via all **land ports**.

Do you know?

- **Seaports Permitted for Import (Bangladeshi Garments):**
 - **West Bengal:** Kolkata Port (Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port)
 - **Maharashtra:** Nhava Sheva Port (Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust/JNPT)
- **Major Land Ports (Now Prohibited/Restricted):**
 - **West Bengal:** Changrabandha, Fulbari
 - **Tripura:** Agartala (Ram Nagar/Akhaura Border), Srimantapur, Muhurighat
 - **Assam:** Sutarkandi, Dhubri, Mankachar
 - **Meghalaya:** Dawki, Borsora, Gasuapara
 - **Mizoram:** Kawrpuichhuah, Zorinpui, Zokhawthar
- **Key Rule:** All Bangladeshi garment imports now allowed only via Kolkata and Nhava Sheva seaports, with mandatory inspections.

- DGFT issued the directive, which also includes **Changrabandha and Fulbari land customs stations**.

- **Banned Categories through Land Ports:** Ready-made garments, fruit and juices, fruit-flavoured drinks, processed food (e.g., baked goods, snacks, confectionery). Plastic and PVC finished goods (except pigments, dyes, granules). **Wooden furniture, cotton yarn, and dyes.**

Exempted Items:

- Imports of **fish, LPG, edible oil, and crushed stone** are unaffected.
- **Bangladesh's reciprocal restrictions** led to India's action:
 - Allowed **Indian yarn exports only via seaports**, banning land port access.
 - **Banned Indian rice exports** via Hili and Benapole ICPs in West Bengal.
- Move reflects **India's discontent** with Bangladesh's **China outreach**. Interim Bangladeshi leader **Yunus** described **India's northeast as "landlocked"** and pitched Bangladesh as a **"guardian of the ocean"** for **Chinese access**.
- India's restrictions deny Bangladeshi goods access to **northeastern markets**. India's trade move may **hurt Bangladesh's \$700 million garment exports**.
- India clarified that **Bangladesh's trade with Nepal and Bhutan** via Indian transit routes remains **unaffected**.



Afghanistan

Afghanistan has its 'sharpest surge' ever of child malnutrition, says UN

Why in news: Afghanistan is witnessing its **sharpest-ever surge of child malnutrition**, according to the **World Food Program (WFP)**. About **WFP**:

- It was **established in 1961** by the **United Nations General Assembly** and **Food and Agriculture Organization**, with **HQ in Rome**, and won the **Nobel Peace Prize 2020** for **combating hunger as a weapon of war**.
- It is the **world's largest humanitarian agency**, aiding **120+ countries** with **emergency food, school meals, and nutrition** for **150M+ people annually**, focusing on **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)**.
- The organisation is governed by a **36-member Executive Board**, relies on **voluntary funding**, partners with **FAO and IFAD**, and leads **Logistics and Food Security Clusters** in crises.
- About **two-thirds of operations** are in **conflict zones**; in the **India context**, it supports **nutrition and disaster response**, with links to **food security schemes like NFSA**.

India-Taliban Engagement

Why in news: Taliban's **Acting Foreign Minister** visited **India**. The visit marks India moving **one step closer to recognising the Taliban**. He is on the **UN Security Council's list of banned terrorists** but was granted **special travel permission**. He will be accorded **full protocol** as a visiting **Foreign Minister**.

Multilateral Engagement & Russia's Role

- **India's Ambassador to Russia** attended the **Moscow Format Consultations** hosted by the **Russian Foreign Minister**. Representatives from **Pakistan, China, Iran, and Central Asian countries** were present.
- Since the **Taliban takeover of Kabul in 2021**, its representatives have attended such meetings only as **observers**.

Upgrade of India's Kabul Mission

- India will **upgrade its technical mission in Kabul to a full Embassy**. Both sides will **exchange diplomats**, taking India a step closer to **recognising the Taliban government**. India had **closed its Embassy in 2021** after the **U.S.-led withdrawal and Taliban takeover**.
- **India-Afghanistan trade** crossed **\$1 billion** in the past year, highlighting **growth potential** if barriers are removed.
- It was **assured that Afghan territory will not be used against India**. This marks a shift from **2001-2021**, when Taliban forces **targeted Indian missions and infrastructure projects**.
- India has announced **1,000 e-scholarships** for students through the **Indian Council of Cultural Relations**.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Tensions

- **Saudi Arabia and Qatar** intervened to ease tensions after recent hostilities. **Pakistan conducted airstrikes** on targets in **Kabul**, prompting **Afghan retaliation across the Durand Line**.
- **Kabul may be the first city in the world to completely run dry by 2030**. Years of war have taken their toll on projects.

- India's reiteration of an earlier offer to build the **Shahtoot dam on the Kabul river** will cause **alarm in Pakistan**, given a **reported drop of 16% in flows**. **Kabul river is a part of the Indus river system**.

China

First batch of pilgrims visit Mansarovar, appeal for more slots

Why in news: In 2025, India and China mark 75 years of diplomatic engagement. Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake lie in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Mansarovar Lake is the world's highest freshwater lake at 4,588 metres.

- The pilgrimage marks first resumption of a people-to-people mechanism between India and China since the 2020 LAC standoff. The yatra happens for only three months.
- Pilgrims regard the waters of Mansarovar Lake as sacred, believing it absolves sins and grants salvation.
- In 2015, the Nathu La Pass (Sikkim) route was added to the Lipulekh Pass (Uttarakhand) route.



About Mansarovar Lake:

- Lake Mansarovar is located at ~4,600 meters elevation near Mount Kailash in Tibet.
- It is one of the world's highest freshwater lakes.
- Holds immense religious significance for Hindus and Buddhists.
- Believed to be created by Lord Brahma; considered sacred for rituals and pilgrimages.
- Associated with the origins of major rivers: Indus, Sutlej, Brahmaputra, Karnali.

More

- India's decision to restart issuing tourist visas for Chinese nationals signals progress in diplomacy after the LAC standoff and Galwan clash of 2020.
- China's export restrictions on fertilizers and critical minerals are affecting India's technology sector and worrying Japanese and S.Korean automotive firms in India over supply chain disruptions.

Do you know?

- There are two primary routes to reach Lake Mansarovar – Lipulekh Pass route and Nathu La Pass route.
- Lipulekh Pass lies at 5,115 metres on the Uttarakhand–TAR (Tibet) border, near the trijunction with Nepal, and has been an ancient passageway for traders and pilgrims. It is the most direct, with the lake about 50 km from the border, but involves 200 km of hard trekking; it was operational since 1981 until 2020. Lipulekh lies in the contested Kalapani–Lipulekh–Limpiyadhura region claimed by Nepal.
- Nathu La Pass lies at 4,310 metres on the Sikkim–TAR border and is one of two ancient passes (the other being Jelep La) connecting Sikkim and Tibet. It is around 1,500 km long but fully motorable, requiring only 35–40 km trekking for Mount Kailash circumambulation; it became operational in 2015.
- No private operators run services on the two official routes, but a third route through Nepal exists where private companies operate. Nepal route has been accessible to Indians since 2023 after China reopened its border, but visa and permit hurdles and high China-imposed fees mean few pilgrims use it.

Connecting restive Xinjiang to Tibet, a new Chinese railway



Why in news: China established Xinjiang–Xizang Railway Co Ltd. Importance of the Railway

- Will connect Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (northwest) with Tibet/Xizang Autonomous Region(south).
- Regions: large, unique demographics, harsh terrain & climate → infrastructure projects challenging.
- Proposed line to run close to the LAC.
- Route: Hotan (Xinjiang) → Shigatse → Lhasa (Xizang). Part of five planned railway corridors into Tibet.

Strategic & Policy Objectives

- Military mobility:** facilitates troop mobilisation & movement of defence equipment, esp. in Xinjiang deserts.
- Linked to China's "Go West" strategy (2000) for western region development.
- Populations: Muslim Uyghurs (Xinjiang) & Buddhist Tibetans (Tibet).
- Railway may pass through Aksai Chin (disputed territory with India).

Do you know?

- Xinjiang is an autonomous region within China, the largest region, rich in minerals, and shares borders with

eight countries including **India, Pakistan, Russia, and Afghanistan**. Xinjiang's **Uighurs** are **Muslim**, do not speak **Mandarin** as their native language, and have a **distinct ethnicity and culture** from mainland China.

- **China** has begun construction of a **massive dam** on the **Brahmaputra river** near **Arunachal Pradesh**. The **dam on Yarlung Zangbo (Tsangpo)** is being built at the **"Great Bend"** in **Medog county**, before the river enters India at **Gelling, Arunachal Pradesh**, where it is called the **Siang**.

Sri Lanka

Exemption to Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees under Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025

Why in news: Union Home Ministry exempted Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who entered India before January 9, 2015 from **penal provisions** under the **Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025**.

- Exemption applies to lack of **valid passport, visa, or travel documents**.
- **Registered Sri Lankan Tamils will not be treated as illegal migrants**.

Legal Background

- India **does not officially recognise refugees**, but extends **administrative protection** to select groups.
- **Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025** penalises undocumented entry or stay with **fine up to ₹5 lakh, imprisonment up to 5 years, or both**.
- In **immigration and Foreigners (Exemption) Order, 2025 Section 3 (1), (2), (3)** requirements relating to **passport, visa, travel documents** will **not apply**.
- Covers **Indian citizens (specified categories), Nepalese, Bhutanese, Tibetan refugees, six minorities, and Sri Lankan Tamils**.

Extension to Other Groups

- Order also exempts undocumented **six minority communities: Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Christians**.
- Applies to migrants from **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan** who entered **before December 31, 2024**.
- Protection from **penal action and deportation**.
- Intended to facilitate **Long-Term Visas (LTVs)**, a precursor to citizenship.

Clarification on Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019

- Government clarified **CAA cut-off date (December 31, 2014)** is **not extended to December 31, 2024**.
- **CAA, 2019** grants citizenship only to eligible minorities who entered **on or before December 31, 2014**.
- **2025 exemption** prevents **penal action or deportation** but **does not grant citizenship**.

Citizenship by Naturalisation

- Under **Citizenship Act, 1955**, citizenship by naturalisation requires **11 years of residence** in total.
- Exempted migrants may apply later through **normal naturalisation route**.

Ineligibility of Sri Lankan Tamils for Long-Term Visas

- **Sri Lankan Tamil refugees** are **not eligible for Long-Term Visas (LTVs)**.
- Home Ministry order removes **"illegal migrant"** label but **does not create a citizenship pathway**.
- **LTVs** are issued for **1–5 years** and considered a **precursor to citizenship**.
- Sri Lankan Tamils remain excluded despite exemption.

Official Position on Citizenship

- **2021 Home Ministry statement:** any foreigner, including **Sri Lankan citizens**, may acquire citizenship by **registration or naturalisation** under **Citizenship Act, 1955** and **Rules**.
- **1986 Home Ministry letter** directed States **not to entertain citizenship applications** from Sri Lankan refugees.
- Refugees arriving **in or after July 1983** were barred from **naturalisation or registration**.
- Sri Lankan Tamils were **excluded from CAA, 2019**. Order provides **limited relief**, but **legal status remains unclear**.

East and South East Asia

Myanmar

Myanmar ethnic crisis drives 4,000 Chin people to Mizoram

Why in news: A **battle between two ethnic armed groups** in Myanmar has forced around **4,000 Chin people** to take refuge in **Mizoram**. The **Tiau river demarcates part of the 510-km India-Myanmar border**.

- The **Chins of Myanmar** and the **Mizos of Mizoram** belong to the **greater Zo community**, which also includes **Kukis, Zomis, Hmars, and Kuki-Chins (Bangladesh)**.

About Tiau River:

- **Tiau River (Tyao/Tio River)** originates in the **Mizo Hills** and forms an **international boundary** between **Mizoram** and **Myanmar (Chin State)** for about **159 km**.
- It **flows southward** through **forests** and **Mizo villages**, merging with the **Tuipui River**, vital for **agriculture, fishing, and biodiversity** including **hornbills** and **gibbons**.
- The river features a **border crossing** at **Zokhawthar–Rikhawdar** with a **bridge**, enabling **trade and connectivity**, relevant for **India–Myanmar relations** and the **Act East Policy**.

West Asia

Israel–Iran

Israel–Iran Conflict: Comprehensive Analysis

Why in news: Israel launched a **blistering attack** using **warplanes and drones** smuggled into Iran to target **key nuclear and military facilities**, killing **top Generals and scientists**.

- The attack specifically targeted the **Natanz nuclear enrichment facility**.
- Iran’s programme has **enriched uranium to 60% purity**, well beyond **civilian requirements**. In **2015**, Iran restricted its programme under the **JCPOA** in exchange for **sanctions relief**.
- Israel initiated **Operation “Rising Lion”**, while Iran responded with **Operation “True Promise 3”**. Iran retaliated with **370+ ballistic missiles** targeting cities like **Haifa** and **Rehovot**.
- **U.S. joined the conflict militarily**, using **B-2 bombers** and **Tomahawk missiles** to hit **Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan**. Iran launched missiles at **U.S. bases** in **Qatar** and **Iraq**, targeting **al-Udeid** airbase, the largest American base in the region. **Iranian parliament** voted to **close the Strait of Hormuz** in response.
- Under **international law, Article 2(4) of UN Charter** prohibits force, except under **Article 51 self-defence** in case of an actual attack. **Pre-emptive self-defence** is controversial, and **Caroline doctrine** allows it only when threat is **imminent and overwhelming**. Permissive interpretation risks **normalising aggression** and **undermining global norms**.
- **Restrictive interpretation:** Self-defence is permissible only when an **armed attack is underway**. **Permissive interpretation:** Allows for **anticipatory self-defence** when an **attack is imminent**.
- Iran’s nuclear infrastructure is **deeply buried** (e.g., **Fordow** under mountains), requiring **GBU-57 MOP bombs** that only **U.S. B-2 bombers** can deliver. Israel lacks capacity to **destroy these bunkers**.



<p>Fordow: Iran’s most heavily fortified nuclear site used for uranium enrichment, which is built deep beneath a mountain</p>	<p>Natanz: Largest uranium enrichment facility in Iran</p>	<p>Isfahan: Iran’s largest nuclear research site, which was targeted by Israel 2 times since the crisis began on June 13</p>
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Nuclear

- Iran is a **NPT signatory**, but may **exit** due to Israeli and U.S. aggression.
- Israel, a **non-signatory**, avoids **international nuclear oversight**.

Impact on India

- Israel–Iran conflict caused **Brent crude** to surge by **8–9%**.
- **Strait of Hormuz**, through which **20% of global oil** passes, is under threat of closure. Rerouting via **Cape of Good Hope** adds **15–20 days** and **\$500–1,000 per container**, increasing **export costs by 40–50%**.
- **India imports 80% of its oil**, with 40% of crude and 54% of LNG flowing via Hormuz.
- **Gold prices** rose above ₹1 lakh per 10 grams due to market volatility.
- Conflict threatens **India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor**, **Chabahar Port**, and **regional outreach**.
- India launched **Operation Sindhu**, evacuating **110 students** from Iran via **Armenia**.

Do you know?

IAEA:

- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** was established in **1957** in response to concerns and expectations regarding the **increased use of nuclear technology**.
- IAEA was a result of **U.S. President Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace”** address to the UN General Assembly in **1953**. In **2005**, IAEA and its Director General **Mohamed ElBaradei** were awarded **Nobel Peace Prize**.
- The Nobel Committee recognized their efforts to **prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes** and to ensure its **safe use for peaceful purposes**.
- **IAEA Safeguards** are embedded in **legally binding agreements** accepted by states after concluding such

agreements with the agency.

- The IAEA plays a **central role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons** through **independent verification of States' compliance** with non-proliferation obligations.
- In **2014**, India ratified the **Additional Protocol (AP)**, granting **greater access to IAEA** over India's civil nuclear programme.
- **India, Pakistan, and Israel** have signed **item-specific safeguards agreements** under the IAEA, despite being **nuclear-power states not part of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**.

Additional information:

- **Enrichment** is the process of **extracting uranium-235** from naturally occurring **uranium-238**, enabling its use in **nuclear weapons production**.
- The **authority to reimpose sanctions under the 2015 nuclear deal expires in October 2025**, prompting the West to **increase pressure on Tehran**.

Begin Doctrine:

- The **Begin Doctrine** asserts that even the **potential of an enemy acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)**, particularly **nuclear weapons**, can **justify preventive strikes** by Israel.
- A **nuclear bomb** is fundamentally different from **traditional chemical explosives** used in warfare.
- **Traditional bombs** use **chemicals** that **explode on impact**, heat, or friction, and can cause **accidental blasts** even during storage. In contrast, **nuclear weapons** cause damage by **releasing extremely high energy in a very short time**, not by chemical explosion.
- **Nuclear weapons** are typically **designed to detonate mid-air**, unlike conventional bombs that **explode on impact**.
- They release energy in **milliseconds**, heating air to **millions of degrees Celsius**, which creates **blast waves** — bubbles of **extremely hot, expanding air**. The **major damage** from nuclear weapons is caused by these **blast waves**.



Bordering areas:

- The **44-km-long Iran-Armenia border** is the **most viable evacuation route** for Indians, due to good connectivity via the **Tehran-Nurduz-Agarak highway (730 km)**.
- With **Turkey and Pakistan backing Azerbaijan**, India has supported **Armenia** in its **conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh**.
- **Zangezur Corridor:** Türkiye urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to take steps to open the Zangezur Corridor.
 - **Location:** Proposed **43-kilometer transport route** through **Armenia's Syunik Province**.
 - **Objective:** Connect **Azerbaijan's Baku Port (Caspian Sea)** to **Nakhchivan Autonomous Region** (Azerbaijan's western exclave) and further to **Turkey**.
 - **India's concerns:** May **undermine India's investments** in **Chabahar Port** and the **International North South Corridor (INSTC)** by offering a **competing pathway**, reducing India's **regional leverage**.
- **Armenia**, located in the **southern Caucasus**, is a **key node in the INSTC**.
- **INSTC aims to connect India to Europe** via **Iran and Armenia**. India has friendly ties with **Turkmenistan and Iraq**.
- India has **no formal diplomatic ties with Afghanistan**.

Red sea and Suez Canal:

SUEZ HISTORY

- Pharaoh Senausret III dug the first canal in 1887-1849 BC
- Finally built between 1859-69, with 1.5 million workers, in Ottoman-ruled Egypt
- After two world wars, Britain relinquished canal authority to Egypt in 1956
- Closed five times in the past — after Abdel Nasser's government nationalised it in 1956; for 8 years after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war



- The **Red Sea** spans nearly **2,000 km** and connects the **Mediterranean Sea** to the **Indian Ocean** via the **Suez**

Canal.

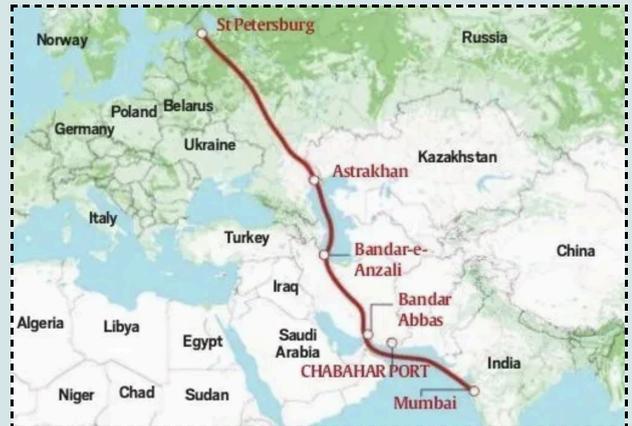
- Before the **Suez Canal**, ships had to **navigate around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa** to travel between **Europe and Asia**.
- The **Suez Canal**, a **193-km artificial waterway**, officially **opened in 1869**. It connects the **Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea** through the **Isthmus of Suez**.
- The canal **reduces the sea route between Asia and Europe by up to 7,000 km**, avoiding the southern tip of Africa. It is one of the **world’s busiest and most strategic maritime routes**.

Strait of Hormuz:

- The **Strait of Hormuz** is a narrow maritime channel (55–95 km wide) that connects the **Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea**.
- It lies between **Iran and the Arabian Peninsula** and facilitates oil and gas exports from **Persian Gulf nations**—Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait.
- Around **20 million barrels of oil per day** (a quarter of global supply) passed through it in 2024.
- Over **80% of oil passing through** is destined for **Asian markets**.

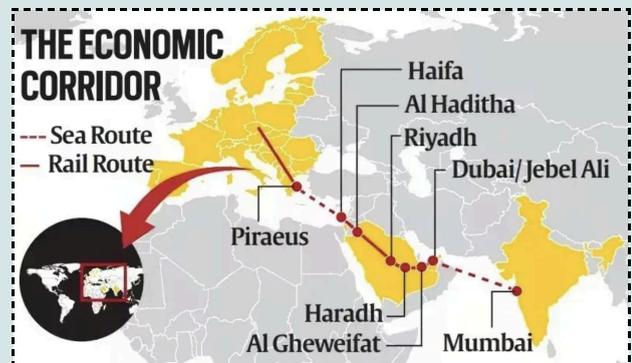
Chabahar Port:

- **Chabahar** is a **deep water port** in **Iran’s Sistan–Baluchistan province**.
- It is the **closest Iranian port to India**, located in the **open sea**, enabling **easy and secure access for large cargo ships**.
- **Chabahar port** is part of the proposed **International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.
- The port holds **strategic importance for India**, offering an **alternative trade route that bypasses Pakistan**.
- It allows **India access to Afghanistan and Central Asia**, as **Pakistan does not permit Indian land access** for this trade.



IMEC:

- The **India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** is a **landmark project** announced during the **G20 Leaders’ event in New Delhi, 2023**.
- It aims to **stimulate economic development** through **enhanced connectivity and integration** between **Asia, the Middle East, and Europe**.
- IMEC consists of **two corridors**:
 - The **East Corridor** connecting **India to the Arabian Gulf**
 - The **Northern Corridor** connecting the **Arabian Gulf to Europe**, including a **railway route** to boost trade between **India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe**.
- An **MoU for IMEC’s development** was signed by **India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, Germany, Italy, the European Union, and the United States**.
- IMEC is linked to the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)**, first announced during the **G7 Summit (UK, 2021)**. PGII is considered an **alternative to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**. **Israel and Greece** are two important **nodal sites** in IMEC and have **expressed interest in joining the project**.



Indian community in Qatar:

- The **Indian community** is the **largest expatriate group** in **Qatar**, a country with one of the **highest per capita incomes** in the world.
- Over **20,000 Indian companies** (wholly-owned or joint ventures) operate in Qatar in sectors like **infrastructure, communications, IT, and energy**.
- The **Indian diaspora** in Qatar is over **8.3 lakh strong**, engaged in professions like **medicine, engineering, education, banking, business, media, blue-collar work**.
- Over **60,000 Indian students** are enrolled in **19 Indian schools** and some **international schools** across Qatar.

Geneva Convention:

- **Article 56 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions** prohibits attacks on **“works and installations containing dangerous forces”**, such as **nuclear plants**, if **civilian harm** may result.
- **India has a major stake** in the global **nuclear stability debate**, as it aims for **100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047**, up from the current **~8 GW**.
- In **2014**, **India ratified the Additional Protocol (AP)**, granting the **International Atomic Energy Agency**

(IAEA) greater access to its **civil nuclear programme**.

- India has signed an **item-specific safeguards agreement** with the **IAEA**, similar to **Pakistan and Israel**.
- India, Pakistan, and Israel are **nuclear-power states** but **not members** of the **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**.

Houthis:

- The **Houthis** are **Zaydi Shias**, a **sub-sect of Shia Islam** that supports **Prophet Muhammad’s lineage** as **political leaders**.
- The Houthis have been involved in a **civil war in Yemen** for **over a decade**, with the **balance shifting in their favour** recently. They currently **control Yemen’s capital, Sanaa**.
- **Iran**, a **Shia-majority** nation, is believed to **support the Houthis**.
- **Saudi Arabia** (a **Sunni-majority** nation) and **Western allies like the US** support the **Yemeni government**.

B-2 Spirit Stealth Bomber

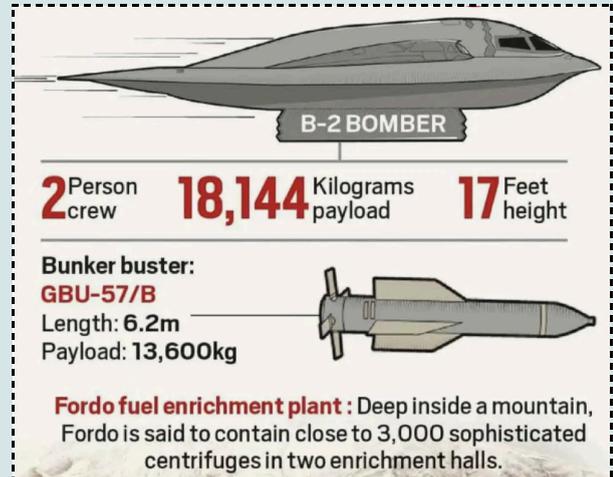
- **Only fully stealth bomber** in USAF fleet; **21 built**, only **19 operational**.
- Each B-2 costs **over \$2 billion**; dual-capable, long-range heavy bomber.
- **Range:** 6,000 miles (un-refuelled)
- Features: **low radar, acoustic, infrared visibility**, capable of **deep-strike missions**.
- Known for **longest combat mission** (44 hours, Afghanistan, 2001).
- Requires **100 hours of maintenance per flight hour**, needs **climate-controlled hangars**.

GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP)

- Designed to destroy **deeply buried nuclear facilities** like **Fordow** (80–90m underground).
- **GPS-guided**, Can **penetrate up to 200 ft** underground or **25 ft of 10,000 psi reinforced concrete**.
- **B-2 is the only aircraft** capable of deploying MOP bombs (can carry two at a time).
- **20 MOPs produced**, more powerful than **GBU-28 and BLU-109**.

Next Generation: B-21 Raider

- Successor to B-2, currently under development.
- **Smaller, more efficient**, with **open systems architecture** for quick upgrades.



U.S. to revoke waiver on Chabahar port sanctions

Why in news: US has taken another harsh step by **revoking the U.S. waiver of sanctions** over the **Iranian port of Chabahar**, ending the special waiver given to India in 2018.

- India secured a six-month **extension** for the waiver, allowing continued humanitarian trade with Afghanistan via the port.
- The move is part of U.S.’s **“maximum pressure on Iran”** policy.
- The decision will affect India’s plans to develop the **Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar port**.
- **Chabahar** was envisioned as an **alternative trade route** for India to reach **Afghanistan and Central Asia**, circumventing Pakistan.
- As per **Shipping Ministry (2024)**, India has spent **₹200 crore** out of **₹400 crore** allocated for Chabahar project since 2016. The port recorded a **43% rise in vessel traffic** and a **34% increase in container traffic in 2023-24**.
- In 2017-18, India ended all oil imports from **Iran and Venezuela** under **U.S. pressure**.



Israel–Palestine

State for the stateless

Why in news: After the **Gaza war in 2023**, more European countries shifted stance, with **Spain, Ireland, Norway, and Slovenia** recognising Palestine. **France, U.K. and Canada** have recognized too. Over **140 countries**, including **India**, have already **recognised Palestine** as a state.

Do you know?

- The **Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933)** identified four conditions of a state: **permanent population, defined territory, government, and capacity to enter into relations with other states.**
- Formal recognition of independent states depends on **how the rest of the world views them.**
- The **United Nations** has a broad criterion for accepting states as Members under **Article 4 of the UN Charter.** It states that **membership is open to peace-loving states** which accept the Charter's obligations and are able and willing to carry them out.
- **Admission to the UN** as a Member State requires a **two-thirds majority vote** in the **UNGA.**
- The **UNGA** considers candidature **only upon recommendation** of **UNSC.** **UNSC** has **five permanent members** — US, UK, Russia, China, and France — and **10 temporary members** chosen on a rotational basis.
- For UNSC recommendation to pass, there must be **at least nine members in favour** and **no veto** from any permanent member. The **P5** essentially determine the fate of an issue in the **UNSC.**
- **Palestine** is a **Permanent Observer State** at the UN, not a **Member State.** The other **Permanent Observer State** is the **Holy See** (Vatican City).
- As a Permanent Observer State, **Palestine** can participate in all UN proceedings **except voting** on draft resolutions and decisions in its main organs and bodies.

Man-made famine

Why in news: The **UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** has confirmed that a **"man-made famine" is unfolding in Gaza**, the first officially declared famine in West Asia. The famine is directly linked to **Israel's blockade and control of aid distribution**, amid a war ongoing for 22 months.

- **IPC** is a **global initiative** partnering with **21 aid groups, international organizations, and UN agencies** to assess hunger levels.
- The IPC has classified famine **four times: Somalia (2011), South Sudan (2017, 2020), and Sudan (2024).**

Criteria of the IPC Report

- **One in five households** faces extreme food shortages.
- **Over one-third of children** are acutely malnourished.
- **Two deaths per 10,000 people daily** due to starvation or malnutrition-linked diseases.

Causes of the Crisis

- In **2025**, after ceasefire collapse, Israel imposed a **total three-month blockade on all goods.**
- Food distribution shifted from UN-led system to **Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF)** backed by **U.S. and Israel.**

Larger Implications

- Crisis goes **beyond defeating Hamas or hostage release**, pointing towards an intent to **destroy Palestinian life and society in Gaza.** Allegations of **war crimes and genocide** gaining ground.
- West Bank witness to largest displacement since 1967: UN. An **Israeli military operation** launched in **northern West Bank** has displaced **tens of thousands of Palestinians.** The Israeli operation, named **"Iron Wall"**, has left **about 30,000 Palestinians forcibly displaced.**

Is Israel committing genocide in Gaza?

Why in news: In 2024, **South Africa filed a case against Israel at the ICJ**, accusing it of genocide in Gaza.

- **Definition of Genocide:** Coined by **Raphael Lemkin (1944)**, genocide was recognised under international law by the **Genocide Convention (1948).** Defined as acts with **intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.**
- Allegations include systematic destruction of **residential areas, hospitals, universities, mosques, agriculture, and cultural sites.**
- Over **90% of schools/universities destroyed; 58,000+ killed**, including **17,000+ children**; Gaza now has the **highest per capita child amputees.**
- ICJ's **strict evidentiary standard** requires intent to be the **only reasonable inference**, limiting genocide findings.

Implications and International Response

- In 2024, the **UNGA adopted a resolution** calling for **economic sanctions** and an **arms embargo** on Israel.
- **Article 6 of UN Charter** allows expulsion of members violating core principles. However, key Western powers limited responses to **diplomatic criticism**, while **U.S. continues to veto UNSC ceasefire resolutions.**
- **Brazil** has finalised its **submission** to join **South Africa's genocide case** against Israel at the ICJ.

ICJ vs ICC

Points	ICJ (International Court of Justice)	ICC (International Criminal Court)
Establishment	1945 under UN Charter	2002 under Rome Statute
UN Relationship	Principal judicial organ of UN	Independent, but UNSC can refer cases
Jurisdiction	Disputes between states; advisory opinions	Individuals for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, aggression
Parties Tried	States only	Individuals only
Composition	15 judges, 9-year term, elected by UNGA & UNSC	18 judges + Prosecutor, 9-year term, elected by Assembly of States Parties
Membership	All 193 UN members	123 state parties (India not a member)
Location	The Hague, Netherlands	The Hague, Netherlands
Enforcement	Relies on UNSC & state compliance	Arrest warrants via state cooperation & UNSC
Funding	UN budget	State party contributions & voluntary funds

Israel–Hamis Ceasefire

Why in news: A ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect in Gaza. The declaration was signed by the U.S. President and leaders of Egypt, Qatar, and Turkiye as guarantors.

India’s Participation in Gaza Peace Summit

- India will be represented by the Minister of State for External Affairs at the Peace Summit on Gaza in Sharm el-Sheikh. The summit is co-hosted by Egypt and the United States.

India–Egypt Diplomatic Engagement

- The Egyptian Foreign Minister is expected to visit Delhi for the India–Egypt Strategic Dialogue. This will be his first visit since his appointment in 2024. The visit follows the Sisi–Modi Strategic Partnership Agreement (2023).
- Discussions will explore alternative alignments for IMEC through Sharm el-Sheikh due to security challenges at Israel’s Haifa port.

Qatar

Israeli Air Strike on Qatar

Why in news: Israel carried out an air strike on Qatar, targeting Hamas leaders.

- Qatar, a U.S. ally, hosts Al Udeid Air Base, America’s largest military base in West Asia, and has been a key mediator in Israel–Hamis ceasefire talks.
- At the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) session in Geneva, India defended Qatar’s sovereignty. India’s statements on Israeli bombings in Lebanon, Yemen, Tunisia, Syria, and Iran were far more muted.
- As an observer state at the ICC, Qatar cannot directly refer cases to the court.

Russia and Ukraine

Minerals gamble

Why in news: After painstaking negotiations, Washington and Kyiv have signed an agreement granting the U.S. access to Ukraine’s critical mineral and oil and gas resources through a joint investment fund.

Do you know?

- Minerals are defined as ‘critical’ by countries based on their needs, broadly using two parameters:
 - Their importance for economic development and national security.
 - Their lack of availability.
- India identified 30 critical minerals: antimony, beryllium, bismuth, cobalt, copper, gallium, germanium, graphite, hafnium, indium, lithium, molybdenum, niobium, nickel, phosphorus, potash, rare earth elements (REE), rhenium, silicon, strontium, tantalum, tellurium, tin, titanium, tungsten, vanadium, zirconium, selenium, and cadmium. (Uranium is not a part of it).
- Ukraine holds 22 of the 50 strategic materials.

- The pact, known as the United States–Ukraine Reinvestment Fund, marks a significant shift in the economic partnership between the two countries.
- Zelenskyy pitched opening up Ukraine’s untapped critical minerals — lithium,

graphite, uranium, titanium, and rare earths — in exchange for **continued USA military support**.

- Under the deal, a **United States–Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund** will **finance extraction projects**, and **Kyiv will share 50% of revenues** toward the fund.
- While the deal **omits reference to past U.S. aid**, **future American assistance** will be treated as **capital contributions**— to be **repaid via resource revenues**.

Do you know?

- Russia accuses the US of undermining key Cold War arms control agreements, such as the **1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty** and the **1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty**. **US withdrawal** from INF Treaty in 2019, citing Russian violations. **US withdrawal** from ABM Treaty in 2002.
- **US deployment of missiles** in Europe and Asia, especially in the **Philippines**, stokes a **strategic offensive arms race**, according to Russia.
- In **2023**, Russia **suspended participation** in the **New START Treaty**, which limits strategic nuclear weapons, citing US support for Ukraine.
- **INF Treaty (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty)**: Signed in 1987 between the USA and USSR to eliminate land-based missiles with ranges between 500–5,500 km. Marked a major step in Cold War disarmament, but the U.S. withdrew in 2019, citing Russian violations.
- **ABM Treaty (Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty)**: Signed in 1972 between the USA and USSR, it limited ABM systems to one site per country to maintain nuclear deterrence. The USA exited the treaty in 2002, arguing it restricted defense against newer threats like rogue states.
- **New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)**: Signed in 2010 between the USA and Russia, it limits each to 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 delivery systems. It is the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty between the two; extended till 2026 despite rising tensions.

New start

Why in news: **U.S. President** and **Russian President** met at the **Alaska Summit 2025**. Leaders shook hands warmly before hours of discussions on the **Ukraine war** and **U.S.–Russia relations**. Meeting took place at **Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson**. **B-2s** and **F-22s flyovers** symbolised **Cold War-era rivalry**. Summit was held in **Anchorage, Alaska**, focused on the **Ukraine war**. **No breakthrough** was achieved, but both sides indicated **narrowing of gaps**.

Russia’s Core Demands

- Recognition of **annexed Ukrainian territories**, Ukrainian **neutrality** (no NATO membership), Ukrainian **demilitarisation**.

Possible Settlement Options

- **Russia open to:** **Freezing war along southern frontlines** (Zaporizhzhia, Kherson), **Retaining full control of Donbas (Donetsk & Luhansk)**, Possible withdrawal from **Kharkiv (northeast)**.
- Ukraine so far rejects **land-for-peace deals**.



India, Russia discuss BRICS grain exchange plan to boost agriculture trade ties

Why in news: **Common agricultural food exchange to boost agriculture trade among BRICS member countries.**

- Meeting at **World Food India 2025** highlighted strengthening **cooperation in agriculture, fertilizers, and food processing**.
- Both sides discussed the **ongoing negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** between **India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)**.
- Embassy also confirmed discussions on establishing a **BRICS Grain Exchange to boost mutual agricultural trade**.

Related News:

- India is facing **rising trade frictions with the US** and sharp rhetoric against a **BRICS currency**.
- The **RBI unveiled measures to deepen financial markets**, give banks a larger role in **corporate consolidation**, and move towards **internationalising the rupee**.
- Banks will now be allowed to **finance corporate takeovers**, a domain they were previously barred from.
- Indian banks and their overseas branches can now **extend rupee-denominated loans to residents of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka**.
- The RBI expanded the list of currencies benchmarked by **FBIL** beyond the US dollar, euro, pound, and yen.

- Surplus balances in **Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVAs)** can now be invested in **corporate bonds and commercial papers**, instead of only government securities. This move gives foreign participants more investment options and boosts **liquidity** in India's corporate bond market.
- These steps aim to **make the rupee a preferred settlement and investment currency** in India's neighbourhood and eventually globally.

Russia moves to withdraw from plutonium agreement with the U.S.

Why in news: Russia's lower house of parliament approved a move to **withdraw from Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA)** with United States.

- PMDA was a landmark agreement aimed at **reducing stockpiles of weapons-grade plutonium** from Cold War-era nuclear warheads.
- The agreement came into force in 2011.

UK

An anchor for India-U.K. ties, economic partnership

Why in news: India and the United Kingdom signed the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** in 2025. CETA deal is expected to take **months for approval** and may not be implemented before early 2026.

About CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement)

- A **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**, the **Vision 2035 document**, and a new **Defence Industrial Roadmap** were signed. The key pillars of **India-UK Vision 2035** include **growth and jobs** in the UK and India. It includes an **education and skills partnership** to nurture the next generation of global talent.
- Serves as a **strategic foundation** for India-U.K. relations, aimed at expanding **trade, investment, and cooperation** across sectors. Expected to **double bilateral commerce by 2030**.

Supporting Agreements and Economic Linkages

- **Double Contributions Convention (DCC):** Exempts **Indian professionals** in the U.K. from **double social security contributions** for up to **3 years**. Facilitates **mobility** and **reduces costs** for businesses in **services sectors**.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (ongoing negotiations):** Expected to **boost U.K. investments** in India. The U.K. is the **6th largest investor**, contributing nearly **5% of India's FDI**.

India's Expanding Trade Partnerships

- **TEPA (Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement)** with **EFTA** came into effect recently. First agreement linking **market access to investment commitments**. **\$100 billion investment** pledged over **15 years**.
- **Negotiations with EU** advancing; **EU is India's 2nd-largest trading partner** with **\$136.5 billion trade (2024-25)**.
- **India is the U.K.'s 11th largest trade partner.**

Strategic Roadmaps and Cooperation

- **Vision 2035 Roadmap** for deeper collaboration in **defence, technology, climate action, education, and mobility**.
- **Defence Industrial Roadmap (2025)** for **joint development** and **co-production** of **advanced defence platforms**.
- **Technology Security Initiative (TSI, 2024):** Joint effort by **NSAs** of both nations. Collaboration in **AI, quantum, semiconductors, critical minerals, advanced materials**.

Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) Analysis:

Dimension	Pros (Gains)	Risks (Concerns)
Goods Trade & Tariff Reductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.K. removes tariffs on 99% of product lines, covering \$6.5B Indian exports (textiles, footwear, carpets, seafood, autos, fruits). - India reduces/eliminates duties on 90% of tariff lines, covering 92% of U.K. exports (whiskey, cars, engineering goods, cosmetics, medical devices). - Automobiles: first-time inclusion; luxury cars duty cut 110% → 10% over 15 yrs under quotas; mid-sized cars 50% initially, then 10% by yr 5; no EV/hybrid concessions for 5 yrs. - Indian exports of footwear, jewellery, seafood, engineering, agriculture to expand; farm exports projected +20% in 3 yrs. - Tariffs on 99.7% processed food lines cut (70% → zero), giving India advantage over U.S. & China. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitive sectors excluded: dairy, apples, oats, edible oils → reflects India's defensive stance.

<p>Services & Professional Mobility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - India opens accounting, auditing, financial, telecom, environmental services to U.K. firms without local presence. - India to recognise U.K. qualifications in law & accounting (excluding practice). - U.K. grants commercial presence rights to Indian IT, consultancy, environment firms. - Double Contribution Convention (DCC): 75,000 Indian workers on short stints exempt from dual social security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.K. allows just 1,800 visas annually for niche roles (yoga instructors, classical musicians). - Broader categories (IT professionals, business visitors) excluded, limiting labour mobility benefits for India.
<p>GCCs & Digital Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global Capacity Centres recognised as key collaboration; India hosts 1,500+ GCCs, 1.9M employees. - Digital trade chapter avoids source code disclosure, ensuring tech firm confidence. - India retains flexibility on data localisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Misalignment between India's strict localisation norms (e.g., RBI) and U.K.'s preference for free data flows may create friction.
<p>Investment, Procurement & Rules of Origin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local sourcing norms (RoO): goods must be significantly transformed in India/U.K. → prevents Chinese rerouting. - Encourages FDI in Indian manufacturing. - U.K. firms gain access to 40,000 Indian central govt contracts (transport, green energy, infrastructure). - U.K. clean energy sector gets procurement access. - India's MSMEs retain Class-I supplier status; U.K. firms treated as Class-II suppliers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.K. access to procurement may challenge Indian firms, even if MSMEs protected. - FDI may concentrate in stronger states, leaving smaller states behind.
<p>Public Health Concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic survey & Dietary Guidelines (2024) recommend tighter food regulations. - SC (2025) directed govt to act on warning labels (FOPNL). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tariff-free entry for U.K. biscuits, chocolates, soft drinks → risks HFSS consumption. - India lacks binding HFSS ad bans unlike U.K.
<p>Intellectual Property & Pharma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zero-duty access for 99% Indian pharma & med-device exports. - India's generics exports to U.K. already \$910M (FY24). - U.K. pharma market projected to grow \$45B → \$73B by 2033, opening opportunities. - Boost for high-quality niche Indian manufacturers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IP provisions favour patent owners, undermining generic drug access. - Evergreening concerns under Section 3(d) of Patents Act. - Reliance on voluntary licences may limit affordability of medicines.

Do you know?

- EU is group of **27 countries in Europe**. India established **diplomatic relations** with the **European Economic Community** (precursor to the EU) in **1962**.
- The **Joint Political Statement (1993)** and the **Cooperation Agreement (1994)** strengthened **India-EU ties**.

Europe

PM Modi's Visits to Cyprus and Croatia

Why in news: PM Modi's visit to Nicosia, Cyprus reaffirms India's traditional foreign policy priorities.

- The visit serves as a **political signal to Turkiye**, which supported **Pakistan during Operation Sindoor**.
- **Cyprus is set to assume the Presidency of the EU Council in early 2026**, enhancing **strategic importance**.
- PM reaffirmed support for **Cyprus's unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity**.
- **Cyprus has been divided since 1974** into **Republic of Cyprus & Northern Cyprus**, the latter supported by **Turkey**.
- **Cyprus consistently supports India** on **Kashmir, cross-border terrorism**, and India's aspirations for **UNSC permanent membership, NSG, and IAEA**.
- PM received **Cyprus's highest civilian honour**, the **Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III**, dedicating it to **India-Cyprus friendship**.

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- Cyprus is also seen as a **potential participant and investor in the IMEC** launched at the **G-20 Summit 2023**.

Zagreb, Croatia Visit

- The visit marks the **first-ever Indian Prime Ministerial visit to Croatia** since its **independence in 1991**.
- Croatia’s **Adriatic Sea ports and maritime facilities** are seen as **strategically important for IMEC**, enhancing India’s **connectivity with Europe**.

Do you know?

- **Adriatic Sea:** a **northern arm of the Mediterranean Sea**.
- **Location:** between **eastern coast of Italy** and **western Balkans (Croatia, Slovenia, Albania)**.
- **Northern part:** shallowest | **Southern part:** deepest.
- Contains **1,300+ islands**, mainly along **eastern Croatian coast**.
- Connects to **Ionian Sea** through the **Strait of Otranto**.
- **Countries bordering Adriatic Sea:**
 - **West & North:** Italy.
 - **East (Balkan Peninsula):** Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania.
 - Lies between **eastern coast of Italy** and **western Balkan Peninsula**.

US

India-U.S. Tariffs Row

Why in News: The U.S. has imposed **50% tariffs** on Indian imports (25% earlier + **Executive Order 14066 adding 25%**), citing India’s **Russia oil and defence ties** and **trade barriers**.

Background & Triggers

- **Trump’s tirade:** Criticised India’s **Russia links, BRICS membership, high tariffs**, “obnoxious” barriers; labelled India and Russia “**dead economies**.”
- **Penalty talk:** Possibility of **+10% add-on** for BRICS and a **draft U.S. bill** suggesting up to **500% tariffs** (not law yet).
- **Pakistan angle:** Trump touted an **oil exploration deal with Pakistan**.

What’s Exempt & Still Flowing

- **Fuel exports:** Indian **diesel/jet fuel** exempt from tariffs.
- **Exclusion list:** Pharma (India supplies **40%** of U.S. generics), ICT goods (chips, smartphones, SSDs, PCs), crude/LNG/refined fuels, coal, electricity. **No penalty yet** on Russian oil imports (despite threats).

India’s Pushback

- **Energy compulsions:** Russian oil now **35-40%** of India’s crude; “not simple to stop overnight.”
- **Comparisons:**
 - **EU** = largest Russian LNG buyer (**51%**), pipeline gas (**37%**), crude (**6%**).
 - **China** = top crude buyer (**47%**). India = **38%**.
 - **EU** contributed **€212B** (22%) of Russia’s fossil revenues since Feb 2022.
 - **U.S.** imported **\$800M Russian fertilisers** in 2025.

Economic Exposure & Deficit Asymmetry

- **U.S. share of India’s exports:** ~18-20%.
- **Tariff asymmetry:** U.S. deficit with India **\$49.5B** (10th-highest), but higher deficits with **9 other countries** (Mexico, Vietnam, Germany, Japan, etc.) carry **lower tariffs**. **Competitors advantaged:** Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines face **lower duties**.

GOODS SUBJECT TO 50% U.S. TARIFF	
Product Group	Exports to US in 2024-25
Textiles and apparel	\$ 10.9 bn
Diamonds, gold and jewellery	\$ 10 bn
Machinery and mechanical appliances	\$ 6.7 bn
Agriculture, meat and processed food	\$ 6.0 bn
Steel, aluminium, copper	\$ 4.7 bn
Organic chemicals	\$ 2.7 bn
Shrimps	\$ 2.4 bn
Handicrafts	\$ 1.6 bn
Carpets	\$ 1.2 bn
Leather and footwear	\$ 1.2 bn
Furniture, bedding, mattresses	\$ 1.1 bn

Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, GTRI analysis

MOST AFFECTED SECTORS: IMPACTED AREAS, POTENTIAL GAINERS		
PRODUCT GROUP	PRODUCTION CENTRES LIKELY TO BE MOST AFFECTED	LIKELY GAINERS
Textiles and apparel	Tiruppur, Noida-Gurugram, Bengaluru, Ludhiana, and Jaipur	Bangladesh, Vietnam, Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic
Shrimps	Visakhapatnam and West Godavari	Ecuador, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand
Organic chemicals	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh	EU, China, Mexico and South Korea
Handicrafts	Jodhpur, Jaipur, Moradabad, and Saharanpur	Vietnam, China, Turkey, and Mexico
Carpets	Bhadohi, Mirzapur, and Srinagar	Turkey, Pakistan, Nepal and China
Furniture, bedding, mattresses	Jodhpur and Moradabad	Vietnam, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Mexico, Pakistan, Turkey
Diamonds, gold and jewellery	Surat, Mumbai, and Jaipur	Israel, Belgium, China & Mexico
Machinery and mechanical appliances	Ludhiana, Jalandhar and NCR	China, Mexico, Germany and Taiwan
Agriculture, meat and processed food	Basmati, spices, and tea producing regions	Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, Kenya and Sri Lanka
Steel, aluminium, copper	NCR and Eastern India	Mexico, Canada, EU, UK, Asia
Leather and footwear	Agra, Kanpur, and Tamil Nadu’s Ambur-Ranipet clusters	Vietnam, China, Indonesia and Mexico

Worst-Hit Sectors

- **Shrimp:** \$2.4B exports (32% of total); tariffs now ~60%.
- **Diamonds/Gems/Jewellery:** \$10B exports; tariff **2.1%→52.1%**; U.S. still has **no alternative** to India’s cutting/polishing.
- **Textiles/Apparel:** \$10.8B exports; tariff **13.9%→63.9%**.
- **Carpets:** \$1.2B exports; tariff **2.9%→52.9%**.
- **Handicrafts, leather/footwear, furniture, basmati, spices, tea, pulses, sesame** also hit.

Moderately Affected

- **Organic chemicals:** \$2.7B exports; tariff **4%→54%**;
- **Metals** (steel, aluminium, copper): \$4.7B exports;
- **Machinery/mechanical appliances:** \$6.7B exports.

Macro Impact

- **GDP growth:** Could fall **0.2–1%** (6.6→5.9%).
- **CAD:** 0.6→**1.15%** of GDP (FY25).
- **Trade deficit:** Could widen to **7.84% of GDP**.
- **Buffers:** UK/EU FTAs, competitor tariffs elsewhere, rupee depreciation, but crude import shift may worsen FX, CAD, inflation.

Postal Shock – End of De Minimis

- **U.S. ends \$800 duty-free threshold;** mandates **pre-paid duty + advance customs data**. **India Post** suspends all high-value parcels to U.S. (only letters/docs/gifts ≤ \$100 allowed). **Implication:** Hurts MSMEs dependent on low-value duty-free access.

India–Russia Trade Track

- **Indian EAM (Moscow IRIGC–TEC):** Flagged tariffs/NTBs, logistics, payments; called for **early EAEU FTA**.
- **India–Russia trade:** \$13B (2021) → **\$68B (2024–25)**, mostly hydrocarbons.

Do you know?

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU):

- **India and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)** have kick-started **trade deal negotiations** after talks with the **US broke down**.
- **EAEU** has a **combined GDP of \$6.5 trillion**. **Trade talks with EAEU** were **stalled** in early 2022 after the **Ukraine war**. **EAEU members:** Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Russia.

Do you know?

- **Tariffs** are **taxes or duties** imposed by a **government on imported goods and services**. Their main objective is to **make foreign products more expensive than domestically produced goods**. This encourages **consumers to prefer local products**. **Tariffs protect domestic industries from foreign competition**. They also act as an **important source of revenue for the government**.

Related news:

- **Indian diamond and jewellery exporters** are shifting focus to **West Asia**, particularly **Saudi Arabia**.
- The first-ever **Saudi Arabia Jewellery Exposition (SAJEX) 2025** will be held at the **Jeddah Superdome** aiming to tap into the region’s growing jewellery market.
- India remains the **world’s largest exporter of cut and polished diamonds**, with **14 out of every 15 diamonds globally cut and polished in India**.
- **India’s diamond and jewellery sector** has been **hit by the U.S. tariffs**, with the U.S. imposing a **50% import duty on India’s cut and polished diamonds** and **50–57% on studded and non-studded jewellery**.
- The **U.S. is the largest importer of diamonds from India**. The **U.S. accounts for 30% of India’s gem and jewellery exports**, largely fulfilled by **MSMEs**.
- **85% of exporters** are **MSMEs**, which **cannot absorb the loss** of the U.S. market in the short term.
- The **worst-hit States** are **Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra**.

Key Policy Reliefs Sought

- **Extension of export obligation period** for exports to the U.S. **from 90 days to 270 days**. Currently, jewellery exporters must **export within 90 days of importing gold**; otherwise, they pay **6% import duty + 3% GST**.
- **Allow reverse job work** in Domestic Tariff Areas (DTAs) by jewellery manufacturing SEZs. **Reverse job work** will help **utilise idle SEZ machinery, retain skilled workers, and keep factories operational**.

	GDP current prices*		GDP in 2025 relative to GDP in 1995	GDP in 1995 as %age of US GDP in 1995	GDP in 2025 as %age of US GDP in 2025
	1995	2025			
Argentina	288	684	2.4	3.8%	2.2%
China	738	19,232	26.1	9.7%	63%
Germany	2,595	4,745	1.8	34%	15.6%
India	360	4,187	11.6	4.7%	13.7%
Japan	5,546	4,186	0.8	72.6%	13.7%
Pakistan	99	373	3.8	1.3%	1.2%
Russian Federation	336	2,076	6.2	4.4%	6.8%
UK	1,345	3,839	2.9	17.6%	12.6%
US	7,640	30,507	4	100%	100%

- Permit SEZs to sell in the domestic market on payment of duty foregone instead of the current 20% duty on finished products.

Related news:

- The United States has urged G7 countries to impose tariffs on nations purchasing oil from Russia.
- The G7 group includes the U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the U.K.
- The U.S. has frequently criticized India for continuing to import Russian oil despite sanctions.

Why is India on the U.S. blacklist on fentanyl?

Why in news: In the latest Major's List submitted to the U.S. Congress identified 23 countries as significant sources or transit sites of illicit drugs, particularly fentanyl, posing threats to the U.S.

- The list includes India, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan among others.

What is the Major's List?

- Compiled annually by the U.S. government, the Major's List highlights regions contributing to narcotics flow through geography, commerce, or industry.
- A country's inclusion **does not necessarily indicate weak counternarcotics efforts**; it reflects whether **drugs or precursor chemicals** are produced or transported in **significant quantities**.
- However, **Afghanistan, Bolivia, Myanmar, Colombia, Venezuela** were named as having **"failed demonstrably"** to meet international drug-control obligations.

What is Fentanyl?

- Fentanyl is a **synthetic opioid**, first developed in the 1960s for **medical pain management**.
- It is **50 times more potent than heroin** — just 2 mg can be fatal.
- It acts as an **agonist of the mu-opioid receptor** on nerve cells, suppressing brainstem functions that **control breathing**. Excessive binding leads to **hypoventilation and respiratory depression**, causing death within minutes.
- **Naloxone**, a **mu-opioid receptor antagonist**, can **reverse overdose effects** if administered **quickly**.

Why is Fentanyl Hard to Regulate?

- Unlike **heroin or cocaine** (plant-derived), fentanyl is **synthetic**, made in **laboratories using precursor chemicals**.
- **Key precursors:** N-phenethyl-4-piperidone (NPP), 4-anilino-N-phenethylpiperidine (4-ANPP).
- These precursors have **legitimate industrial and pharmaceutical uses**, making regulation difficult.
- Small quantities of precursors can yield **large amounts of fentanyl**, and their **easy concealment and shipment** complicate enforcement.
- **Simple laboratory setups** and **common solvents** suffice for production, making illicit synthesis highly accessible.

Drug precursors

The following are two precursors highly suitable for illicit manufacture of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues

- **4-piperidone**
- **1-boc-4-piperidone**

Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are very potent narcotic drugs that continue to result in overdose deaths, according to the International Narcotics Control Board



Paraguay

India, Paraguay can strengthen trade ties: PM

Why in news: PM Modi stated that India and Paraguay can partner to **expand regional commerce** in Latin America.

- He welcomed **Paraguayan President** and highlighted **MERCOSUR** as a key platform for cooperation.
- India and MERCOSUR have a **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)** signed in **2004**.
- **India-Paraguay diplomatic ties** date back to **1961**, and India opened its **embassy in Asuncion in 2022**.
- India sees strategic value in **Paraguay's natural resources and minerals**, making it a **reliable regional partner**.

Do you know?

- Mercosur is an economic and political bloc consisting of **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay**.
- **Venezuela was suspended** indefinitely in 2016, while **Bolivia became a full member in 2024**.
- Founded in **1991**, Mercosur aims to **create a common market, spur development, and bolster democracy**.
- Mercosur achieved **early success with a tenfold increase in intra-bloc trade in its first decade**.
- In **2024**, Mercosur made significant progress towards a **trade agreement with the European Union**. **Trade deals with the United States and China** remain elusive.
- In 2023, the four founding countries had a **combined GDP of nearly \$3 trillion** (World Bank data).

- Mercosur is one of the **world’s largest economic blocs**, larger than **Latin America’s second-largest trade group, the Pacific Alliance**, with a GDP of \$2.8 trillion.

Africa

Why does peace seem so elusive to eastern DRC?

Why in news: Over the past eight weeks, the **conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** has seen two major developments — a **U.S.-brokered peace agreement** in Washington, DC and a **Doha ceasefire deal** mediated by **Qatar**. However, **M23 resumed its offensive**, undermining the peace objectives.

- **Rwanda**, under **international pressure** over its alleged support to M23.

U.S. Interests

- The U.S. seeks **access to DRC’s \$24 trillion worth of critical mineral reserves**.
- DRC holds **70% of global cobalt reserves**, and is the **world’s largest producer**.
- The region is rich in **coltan, copper, diamond, gold, and tin**.
- U.S. presence aims to **end Chinese monopoly** in the DRC’s mineral sector.

Failure of the Peace Agreement

- The **Doha ceasefire collapsed quickly** as **M23 continued offensives** in **North and South Kivu** provinces.
- **Past failures and deep-rooted ethnic tensions** since the **Rwandan genocide (1994)** continue to threaten stability.

PM Modi’s Five-Nation Tour

Why in news: PM is on a **five-nation tour** covering **Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia**, focusing on **defence, rare earths, counter-terrorism, South-South cooperation, Africa outreach, and diaspora**.

Country	Key Outcomes / Highlights
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talks on defence: Scorpene submarine maintenance, Akash air defence, Garuda artillery guns. - Attended BRICS Summit (Rio De Janeiro) with agenda: Reform of Global Governance, Peace & Security, COP 30, Global Health, AI, economic & financial issues. - India to chair BRICS in 2026.
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus areas: defence, rare earths, agriculture, energy, trade.
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions: agriculture, vaccine hub in West Africa, critical minerals, DPI. - Modi awarded Companion of the Order of the Star of Ghana (highest state honour). - Ghana aspires to be Africa’s vaccine hub. - Important role in African Union & ECOWAS.
Trinidad & Tobago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First PM-level visit since 1999. - PM hailed 35 million diaspora as India’s “pride”. - OCI cards announced for sixth-generation Indian-origin citizens. - Strong ties with Girmitiya community (Bihar, UP). - Trinidad joined CDRI and Global Biofuel Alliance.
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modi paid tribute to Sam Nujoma; recalled India’s support to SWAPO since 1946. - Conferred Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis (highest civilian award). - Adopted India’s UPI digital payments system. - Namibia first African country to adopt India’s UPI digital payments system. - Friendship compared to Welwitschia mirabilis (enduring strength). - PM Modi’s visit to Namibia marked the first by an Indian head of government in nearly three decades. - Bilateral trade with Namibia: \$800 million. India’s Africa-wide development partnership: \$12 billion. - Projects: IT Centre of Excellence at Namibia University of Science & Technology; India Wing at University of Namibia (₹12 million grant). - Politically stable, rich in mineral resources (notably uranium), and with a growing technological base. - Seen as a key partner in Global South coalition-building. - Namibia joined the Global Biofuels Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. - Gap: No major deal on Namibia’s critical mineral reserves, despite its importance for low-carbon supply chains.

Treaties, Regional and International Groupings

PM Modi's G-7 Canada Visit and India-Canada Relations

Why in news: PM Modi's visit to **Kananaskis, Alberta** as a **special invitee to the 2025 G-7 Summit**.

- Over **1.86 million Indian-origin people** settled in Canada.

2025 G-7 Summit

- The **2025 G-7 Summit** marks the **50th anniversary** of the group and is being hosted by **Canada in Kananaskis, Alberta**. Canada has hosted **six previous summits** in **1981, 1988, 1995, 2002, 2010, and 2018**.
- G-7 is an **informal forum** of **7 major economies: U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the U.K.**
- Together, G-7 countries account for **40% of global GDP** and **10% of global population**.
- The group has **no legal status, secretariat, or binding authority**; its decisions require **independent ratification**.
- The G-7 originated in **1973** with finance ministers' meetings in Paris and held its first summit in **1975 in Rambouillet, France**. **Canada joined in 1976**, and the **European Union** has participated since **1977**.
- **Russia joined in 1998**, forming the **G8**, but was **expelled in 2014** after the **Crimea annexation**.
- The G-7 agenda has expanded from **economic issues** to **foreign policy, security, and global challenges**.
- Canada holds the **2025 presidency** and invited **Ukraine** and **Australia** as **guest nations**.
- The summit issued statements on **AI, quantum computing, critical minerals, wildfire prevention, and transnational repression**, but **not on terrorism**, which India had expected.

Modi's China Visit and SCO Summit 2025

Why in news: PM Modi arrived in **Tianjin**, marking his **first visit to China since 2018**.

- **First in-person SCO attendance** in **three years**, after skipping **2024 summit**, attending **2023 meeting online**.

Key Issues Discussed at SCO

- **Tianjin Declaration:** The declaration condemned the **cross-border movement of terrorists** and equally addressed attacks in **Pahalgam (India)** and **Balochistan (Pakistan)**.
- **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** India continued its opposition to the **BRI**, although the initiative was highlighted in the SCO discussions.
- **Civilisational Dialogue:** India suggested starting a "**Civilisational Dialogue**" among SCO members to foster deeper cultural exchanges.
- 2014 was declared as the **Year of China-India Friendly Exchanges**. The **25th SCO Summit in Tianjin** and the **19th in-person Xi-Modi meeting** during the summit were **highly anticipated**.
- **Tianjin Declaration:** Announced establishment of **4 security centres**, including **SCO Universal Center for Countering Security Challenges & Threats**, **SCO Anti-drug Center**. Approved creation of **SCO Development Bank**.
- **Focus on Development:**
 - Adoption of the **SCO's development strategy for the next decade**.
 - China announced **three major cooperation platforms** in **energy, green industry, and the digital economy**.
 - Proposed **three cooperation centres** for **scientific innovation, higher education, and vocational training**.
- Highlight of the **Tianjin summit** was the **Global Governance Initiative (GGI)** based on **five basic principles**.
 - First, **stay committed to sovereign equality**.
 - Second, **stay committed to international rule of law**.
 - Third, **stay committed to multilateralism**.
 - Fourth, **stay committed to the people-centered approach**.
 - Fifth, **stay committed to real results**, as effective global governance resolves real problems.
- With the aim of addressing the **deficit of global governance**, the GGI stems from the **purposes and principles of the UN Charter**.

Do you know?

- **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** established in **2001** in **Shanghai (PRC)** by **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan**.
- **Charter signed in 2002 at St. Petersburg**, came into force on **19 September 2003**.
- **Goals:** strengthen **trust, friendship, good-neighbourliness**; promote **cooperation in politics, trade, economy, science & technology, culture, education, energy, transport, tourism, environment**; ensure **peace, security, stability**; promote a **fair, democratic, rational international order**.
- **Member States (10):** Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India (since 2017), Pakistan (since 2017), Iran (joined 2023), Belarus (joined 2024).
- **Observer States (2):** Mongolia, Afghanistan (inactive).

- **Dialogue Partners (14):** Sri Lanka, Turkey, Cambodia, Azerbaijan, Nepal, Armenia, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Myanmar, Maldives, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

ASEAN Summit

Why in news: The ASEAN Summit will formally welcome **East Timor (Timor Leste)** as the **11th member** of the bloc. This is the **first new admission in 26 years**. East Timor had applied for ASEAN membership in 2011.

- The last country to join ASEAN was **Cambodia in 1999**.
- The summit will include key **dialogue partners** such as **China, Japan, India, Australia, Russia, South Korea, and the United States**.

India–ASEAN Strategic Partnership

- **PM Modi**, addressing **22nd ASEAN–India Summit** virtually from **Kuala Lumpur**, reaffirmed **India's commitment** to ASEAN. He described **ASEAN as a cultural partner of India**, citing **deep civilisational and historical ties**.
- India announced plans to deepen **maritime security cooperation in 2026**, focusing on **peace, stability, and freedom of navigation** in the **Indo-Pacific**.

Institutional Evolution & Missed Opportunities

- **India became an ASEAN dialogue partner in 1995**. The partnership was upgraded to the **Summit level in 2002**.
- The **East Asia Summit** includes **ASEAN countries** along with the **U.S., China, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and India**.
- India reaffirmed support for **ASEAN Unity, ASEAN Centrality, and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)**.
- **2026** will be celebrated as the **ASEAN–India Year of Maritime Cooperation**. Focus areas include **humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), maritime security, and the blue economy**.
- Both sides agreed to **expedite the review of the ASEAN–India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)** to make trade more **balanced, simplified, and mutually beneficial**.

ASEAN Chairmanship & Regional Security Focus

- **Malaysia** handed over the **ASEAN chairmanship** to the **Philippines**. **Territorial disputes in the South China Sea** are expected to dominate the agenda when **Manila takes charge in 2026**.

China–ASEAN Economic Engagement

- **China and ASEAN** signed an **upgrade to their free trade agreement**.
- The **11-member ASEAN bloc is China's largest trading partner**, with **\$771 billion** in bilateral trade last year.
- The **ASEAN–China FTA 3.0** was signed at a summit in **Malaysia**. The **original FTA** came into force in **2010**.

RCEP & Regional Trade Architecture

- Both **China and ASEAN** are members of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**.
- **RCEP covers one-third of the global population** and about **30% of global GDP**.
- **Malaysia hosted an RCEP summit in Kuala Lumpur**, the first in five years.

Do you know?

- **ASEAN** = Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- **Established: 1967** via **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)** in **Bangkok, Thailand**.
- **Founding members:** Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand.
- **New members:** Brunei (1984), Vietnam (1995), Laos & Myanmar (1997), Cambodia (1999), Timor Leste (2025).
- **Aim:** accelerate **economic growth, social progress, cultural development**.
 - Promote **regional peace & stability**, esp. as a **collective front against communism** during the **Cold War**.
 - Cooperation in **economic, political, security, social, cultural, technical, scientific, administrative fields**.
- **Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia.

UN

Pakistan assumes presidency of the UN Security Council for July

Why in news: Pakistan assumed the **Presidency of the UN Security Council** for the **month of July**. The presidency is part of **Pakistan's two-year term** as a **non-permanent member** of the **UNSC**, which **began in January 2025**.

Congo, Colombia, Latvia among new UN Security Council members

Why in news: The **UN General Assembly** elected **Bahrain, Colombia, DR Congo, Latvia, and Liberia** as **non-permanent members** of the **UN Security Council** for the **2026–2027 term**. These countries will **replace Algeria, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and South Korea** on **January 1, 2026**.

- **United Nations** was established in **1945**, ratified by **51 nations**, including the **five permanent members (P5)**.
- The first **UN General Assembly** meeting took place in **1946**.
- Currently, the **UN has 193 member countries**.
- The **UN Charter** created **six main organs**, including the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**.
- The **UNSC** held its **first session in 1946** in **London**, and now operates from **New York**.
- The **UNSC has 15 members** – **5 permanent (China, France, Russia, US, UK)** and **10 non-permanent members** elected for **two-year terms** by the **General Assembly**.

Misc

India must rethink its Arctic outlook

Why in news: The **Arctic**, once a space for **scientific cooperation** and **environmental protection**, is becoming a zone of **military and geopolitical contestation**. **Russia's assertiveness**, **China's Arctic ambitions**, and **U.S. interest in Greenland** signal a **renewed strategic contest**.

- The shift is driven not just by **geopolitics**, but by **climate change**, which has opened **new maritime routes** and **resource frontiers**. **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**, previously seasonal, is now **virtually open year-round**.
 - **Northern Sea Route (NSR):** Shortest shipping route connecting western Eurasia to the Asia-Pacific region.
 - About **5,600 km** long along the Arctic coast of Russia from Kara Strait to Bering Strait.
 - Offers up to **50% distance savings** compared to the Suez Canal route. Reduces shipping time from **around a month to less than two weeks**.
- India's **Arctic Policy (2022)** emphasises **climate science**, **environmental protection**, and **sustainable development**. It draws links between the **Arctic** and the **Himalayan "Third Pole"**.
- India operates a **research station in Svalbard**, takes part in **polar expeditions**, and holds **observer status** in the **Arctic Council**.
 - **Himadri research station:** India's first permanent Arctic research base.
 - **Inaugurated in 2008** at **Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, Norway**.
 - Conducts studies in **glaciology**, **atmospheric sciences**, **biological sciences**. Enables **observations** to study **Arctic climate impacts** and fill **scientific knowledge gaps**, especially during **polar winters**.

Venezuela's María Machado wins Nobel Peace Prize

Why in news: Venezuelan Opposition leader **María Corina Machado** won the **2025 Nobel Peace Prize** for her struggle to achieve a democratic transition in Venezuela.

- The **Norwegian Nobel Committee** described her as a **"key, unifying figure"** who has kept **"the flame of democracy burning amid growing darkness"** in her country.
- **Machado** was **barred from contesting the 2024 presidential election** by the Maduro government despite being the **main Opposition contender**.
- **María Corina Machado** is the **20th woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize**, highlighting her role in **advocating democracy and human rights** in **authoritarian Venezuela**.

Necropolitics: who is allowed to live and who may die

Why in news: The concept of **Necropolitics**, coined by **Achille Mbembe** is gaining renewed attention in light of ongoing conflicts like **Gaza** and systemic neglect witnessed during crises such as **India's COVID-19 migrant crisis**, where certain populations are rendered disposable.

- Refers to **use of political power to decide who may live and who must die**. Goes beyond **Foucault's biopolitics** (managing life) to examine how states deliberately expose populations to **death, neglect, or violence**. **Biopolitics:** "make live and let die." **Necropolitics:** actively **make die**.
- **Gaza:** bombing of hospitals, aid centres, children dismissed as collateral damage.

Healthicide: war against healthcare

Why in news: Researchers from the **American University of Beirut, Lebanon** coined a new word **healthicide**.

- The term describes an **extreme pattern of violence against health systems** that routine talk of "attacks on healthcare" does not capture. **Healthicide** refers to the **deliberate, large-scale destruction of whole health ecosystems** in conflict zones such as **Gaza**.

- It can include strategies to **kill clinicians, bomb hospitals, block ambulances, and dismantle supply chains** to erase a population’s capacity for care. It is akin to **genocide**, as it involves the **intentional destruction of a collective good essential to life and dignity**, demanding **stronger legal protections**.
- Naming aims to **galvanise the medical community** against the **weaponisation of healthcare**.

Global Peace Index 2025

Why in news: There are **59 active state-based conflicts** in 2025, the **highest since WWII**, according to the **Global Peace Index (GPI) 2025** by the **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**.

- The GPI 2025 covers **163 countries**, representing **99.7% of the world’s population**.
- There was a **0.36% deterioration in global peacefulness**, marking the **13th deterioration in 17 years**.
- The GPI uses **23 indicators** across **three domains: Societal Safety and Security, Ongoing Conflict, and Militarisation**.
- **Geopolitical fragmentation, major power competition, and rising middle powers** are driving the **internationalisation of conflicts**.
- Only **9% of conflicts** result in **decisive military victory**, and just **4% end with negotiated settlements**, showing a trend toward **‘forever wars’**.
- Since 2008, the **world has become 5.4% less peaceful** on average; **17 of 23 GPI indicators have deteriorated between 2008 and 2023**. **Every nuclear-armed state has expanded or maintained its arsenal since 2022**, fueling an **arms race in AI-enabled and counter-space systems**.
- **SIPRI 2025 report** confirms **intensifying nuclear arms race**, especially in **Asia**.
- **Iceland** remains the **most peaceful country** since 2008, followed by **Austria, New Zealand, and Switzerland**.
- **India ranks 115th** in GPI 2025 with a **score of 2.229**, showing a **0.58% improvement**.
- India’s ranking improved gradually: **116 in 2024, 126 in 2023, 139 in 2020, 141 in 2019**.
- **South Asia** showed **largest regional deterioration**, especially **Bangladesh and Pakistan**.
- **Afghanistan** remains the **least peaceful country in South Asia**, which is the **second least peaceful region globally**.

GPI Rank 2025	Country	Region	GPI Score 2025
1	Iceland	Europe	1.095
2	Ireland	Europe	1.260
3	New Zealand	Oceania	1.282
4	Austria	Europe	1.294
115	India	South Asia	2.229
162	Ukraine	Europe	3.434
163	Russia	Europe/Asia (Eurasia)	3.441

Rank	Country	Score
1.	Burkina Faso	8.581
2.	Pakistan	8.374
3.	Syria	8.006
4.	Mali	7.907
14.	India	6.411
49.	China	1.863

Do you know?

- The **Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2025** is published by the **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**, founded in **2007 by Steve Killelea AM**.
- IEP publishes key global reports including the **Global Peace Index, Global Terrorism Index, and Ecological Threat Report**.
- **Terrorism remains a persistent global threat**, according to the **GTI 2025**.
- The number of countries experiencing at least **one terrorist incident** rose from **58 to 66**, the **highest since 2018**.
- **Pakistan** is identified as one of the countries where **terrorist activity has increased since 2007**.