



INSIGHTSIAS
SIMPLIFYING
IAS EXAM PREPARATION

Insights PT 2017 Exclusive

International Relations and Organisations

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International Relations and Organisations

Bilateral Relations

India – China

1. Chinese scholars may soon get India visa easily

- India is planning to remove China from the **prior referral category (PRC)** for issuing of **research visas**.
- This will follow a similar concession announced for **conference visas** sought by Chinese citizens.
- **PRC restrictions will still apply to Chinese citizens seeking business or employment visas**, apart from certain categories of even conference and research visas.
- **Implications:**
 - India seeks to **facilitate research projects/assignments** of Chinese scholars on Indian soil.
- **Prior referral category (PRC):**
 - Prior referral category (PRC) country means visas are issued by the respective Indian missions and consulates after running a **thorough background check on individual applicants**.
- **Countries in PRC:**
 - **Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, foreigners of Pakistani origin and stateless persons** come under the restricted category, requiring prior security clearance from the intelligence agencies for obtaining a visa.

India – Africa

1. India eyes uranium from Africa

- India is planning to ask African countries to relax commitment to the **Pelindaba Treaty** which controls **supply of uranium** from key mineral hubs of Africa to the rest of the world.
- Namibia is the fourth largest producer of uranium.
- **About Pelindaba treaty:**
 - The Pelindaba Treaty also known as the **African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty**, aims at **preventing nuclear proliferation and preventing strategic minerals of Africa from being exported freely**.
 - The treaty was signed in 1996 and came into effect with the 28th ratification on 15 July 2009.
 - The Treaty prohibits the **research, development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession, control or stationing** of nuclear explosive devices in the territory of parties to the Treaty and the dumping of radioactive wastes in the African zone by Treaty parties.
 - The Treaty also prohibits any attack against nuclear installations in the zone by Treaty parties.
 - It also requires all parties to apply **full-scope International Atomic**

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Energy Agency safeguards to all their peaceful nuclear activities.

- It covers the **entire African continent** along with few islands. Presently, the treaty has been ratified by 40 countries.

2. Operation 'Sankat Mochan'

- The Union Government had started the operation 'Sankat Mochan' to **evacuate Indian citizens stranded in South Sudan's capital Juba**.
- The operation was undertaken by **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and was headed by Union Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs General (Retd.) VK Singh.

3. Solar Mamas

- Solar Mamas, a group of **rural women solar engineers from African countries** who have been **trained under India's developmental support for harnessing solar energy**.
- They have been trained to fabricate, install, use, repair and maintain solar lanterns and household solar lighting systems in their villages.

India – US

1. Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)

- India and the United States have signed Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (**LEMOA**) that will enable both countries to **use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of defence supplies**.
- It requires both countries to provide their bases, fuel and other kinds of logistics support to each others' fighter jets and naval warships.
- LEMOA is another name for **Logistics Support Agreement (LSA)**, an agreement that US has signed with many of its allies.
- Logistical support with regard to weapons facilities would involve **non-offensive military equipment**. This support will involve cashless transactions on a reciprocal basis.
- It would be particularly beneficial at the time of disaster relief operations like the one India undertook in the wake of the Asian Tsunami in 2004.
- **LEMOA is one of the three foundational agreements that guide US high technology cooperation in defence sector** with other countries.
- Other two are Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (**CISMOA**) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (**BECA**).
- **CISMOA:**
 - CISMOA will allow the US to supply India with its propriety **encrypted communications** equipment and systems.
 - Thus, it will allow to **secure peacetime and wartime communication** between high-level military leaders on both sides.
 - So far US has blocked sale of some of its advanced technologies and sensitive equipments to **India** on account of **non-signing this agreement**.
- **BECA:**
 - BECA would facilitate **exchange of geospatial information** between

India and US for both military and civilian use. India has not signed the BECA.

NOTES**2. India designated as major US defence partner**

- India has been designated as a **major defence partner** of the United States.
- It puts India on a **par with the closest allies and partners of the US**.
- So far, US has bestowed this status upon the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) countries and the US treaty allies such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Philippines.
- India's Major Defence Partner status has been made a part of the India Amendment in the **National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA), 2017** of US.
- It will facilitate US to **transfer of advanced defence technology** to India.

3. Terrorist Screening Centre (TSC)

- The Home Ministry has signed an agreement to join the **global terror database maintained by the Terrorist Screening Centre (TSC) of the U.S.**
- The U.S. has already finalised such agreements with 30 countries and the Terrorist Screening Centre has **details of 11,000 terror suspects on its database**
- Under this arrangement, **both sides will give each other access to terrorism screening information** through designated contact points, subject to domestic laws and regulations.

4. US-India Clean Energy Finance (USICEF)

- India and the US have announced the setting up of **two financial assistance programmes** worth \$60 million for **supporting India's clean energy initiatives** including in solar power and other renewables.
- This includes a creation of a \$20 million US-India Clean Energy Finance (USICEF) initiative, **equally supported by the United States and India**.
- The two countries have also agreed on a \$40 million **US-India Catalytic Solar Finance Programme**.
- This would provide much needed liquidity to **smaller-scale renewable energy investments**, particularly in poorer, rural villages.

5. EB-5 Programme

- It is popularly called as the **'Green Card for greenback'** scheme. The EB-5 programme was **created in 1990** with the approval of the US Congress — America's highest law-making body.
- Simply put, the programme **grants rich entrepreneurs** — as well as their spouses and unmarried children below the age of 21 — **an opportunity to bag the coveted U.S. Green Card** (or status of permanent residence) and Citizenship.
- The programme is named EB-5 as it is the **fifth preference category under the Employment-Based (EB) immigration visas**.
- **How this scheme operates?**
 - Rich entrepreneurs have to **invest in over half a million dollars** in the U.S. and ensure that the **funds help generate at least ten full-time**

NOTES**jobs for qualified U.S. workers.**

- The visa, given in exchange for investments, grants the holder a **conditional permanent residence status**.
- **After two years, the conditions may be removed**, when it becomes permanent green card that can lead to citizenship, provided it has resulted in the creation of 10 jobs.
- **Why Indians are concerned?**
 - In 2015, the U.S. authorities issued 111 EB-5 visas to Indians — that is 15 more than the previous year, and 74 more than the number of such immigrant visas issued in 2011.
 - **The rapid rise in the number of EB-5 visas to Indians in the last few years** had led to the filing of over a thousand applications under that category from India in 2016.
 - However, in the backdrop of allegations of fraud and corruption — including against Indian-origin individuals — related to the programme, the U.S. Congress is planning to consider whether to renew it or to pay heed to growing criticism and wind it up altogether.
- **Key facts:**
 - According to U.S. government data, applicants from China managed to get 8,156 visas under this programme.
 - This was followed by Vietnam (280), China/Taiwan-born (139), South Korea (116), India (111), Russia (88), UK (84), Mexico (77) and Iran (62).

6. H1B visa


- The H1B visa is a **non-immigrant visa in the United States** that allows companies to employ foreigners for a period of **up to six years** under the **Immigration and Nationality Act**.
- The minimum salary for an employee holding the H1B visa is set at \$60,000 per year. H1B visa holders are **allowed to apply for permanent residency** in the US as well as buy or sell property in the country.
- Every year, the US government grants 65,000 H1B visas, while an additional 20,000 are given to foreign students who have completed their masters course from a US university.
- If a foreign worker in H-1B status quits or is dismissed from the sponsoring employer, the worker must either apply for or be granted a change of status to another non-immigrant status, find another employer or leave the United States.
- **What does the new H1B reform bill propose?**
 - **Increasing the minimum salary** for visa holders to be \$130,000, more than double the current minimum.
 - This would mean that companies would have to either pay rather highly for the skilled workers, or not choose foreign employees in favour of American citizens.
 - The H1B visa bill **removes the 'per country' cap** for employment-based immigrant visas.

- It sets aside **20% of the annually allocated H1B visas for small companies and start-up employers** (50 or fewer employers) to ensure small businesses have an opportunity to compete for high-skilled workers.

India – Pakistan

1. Indus Water Treaty

- The **Indus river basin** spans parts of **4 countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China)** in an area that is more than 30% arid.
- **Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, Indus, Chenab and Jhelum** from the Indus water system that flows from India to Pakistan.
- **Signed in 1960** by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then Pakistan President Ayub Khan, **the treaty allocates 80% of water from the six-river Indus water system to Pakistan.**
- Under the treaty, control over six north Indian rivers was divided between the two countries. **India got control over the rivers Beas, Ravi and Sutlej** whereas **Pakistan got control over Indus, Chenab and Jhelum.**
- It was brokered by the **World Bank**. The Treaty also provides **arbitration mechanism** to solve disputes amicably.
- **A Permanent Indus Commission** was set up as a bilateral commission to implement and manage the Treaty. The Commission solves disputes arising over water sharing.
- It is most successful water treaty in world. Even, it has survived India-Pakistan wars of 1965, 1971 and the 1999 Kargil standoff besides Kashmir insurgency since 1990.
- **Kishanganga and Ratle dam projects:**
 - **Kishanganga is a tributary of the river Jhelum** and the project is coming up in Bandipora.
 - Pakistan argues that the project cannot be built in a way that will divert the river tributary. Its case was rejected by a Court of Arbitration in 2013.
 - Pakistan also has objections on the **Ratle project on the river Chenab** in Doda district; it wants the water storage capacity to be reduced drastically, saying that the project will reduce the river flow into Pakistan.

KISHENGANGA PROJECT	RATLE PROJECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is in Bandipore on the river Kishenganga, a tributary of Jhelum ● Installed capacity: 330 MW ● A 'Court of Arbitration' was set up due to Pakistan's objection to the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is in Doda on the Chenab river ● Installed capacity: 850 MW ● Project includes construction of a 195m long and 133m high concrete dam ● Commission: 2018 ● Cost (approx.): ₹ 6,400 crore
 <p>A view of the Kishenganga project</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commission date: 2016 ● Project cost: ₹ 5,783 crore (revised) 	

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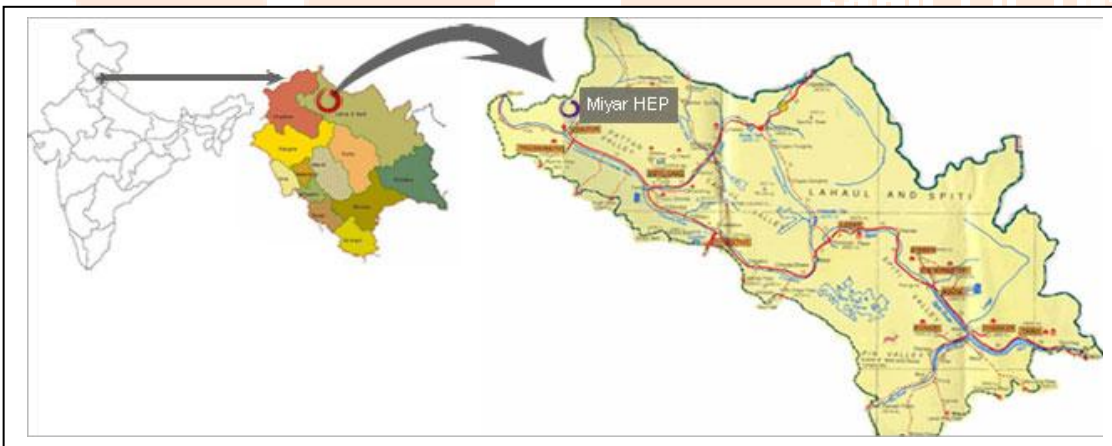
2. India, Pakistan exchange lists of nuclear sites

- India and Pakistan recently exchanged for the **26th consecutive year** the **list of their nuclear installations** under a bilateral agreement that prohibits them from attacking each other's atomic facilities.
- The exchange was carried out under the **Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations** between India and Pakistan.
- The agreement, which was signed on December 31, 1988, and entered into force on January 27, 1991.

3. Cold Start Doctrine

- Cold Start is a **military doctrine developed by the Indian Armed Forces to put to use in case of a war with Pakistan.**
- The Cold Start doctrine is intended to allow **India's conventional forces to perform holding attacks in order to prevent a nuclear retaliation from Pakistan in case of a conflict.**
- According to the Cold Start Doctrine, battle Groups will be well forward from existing garrisons. India's elite strike forces will no longer sit idle waiting for the opportune moment, giving Pakistan the luxury of time.
- Cold Start Doctrine was developed as **the limitations of the earlier doctrine – Sundarji Doctrine** – were exposed after the attack on the Indian Parliament.
- State-run Chinese media has observed that Indian Army's "Cold Start" doctrine to seize control of Pakistani territory might be intimidating but will not lead to a "landslide" victory against nuclear-armed Pakistan.

4. Miyar Hydroelectric project

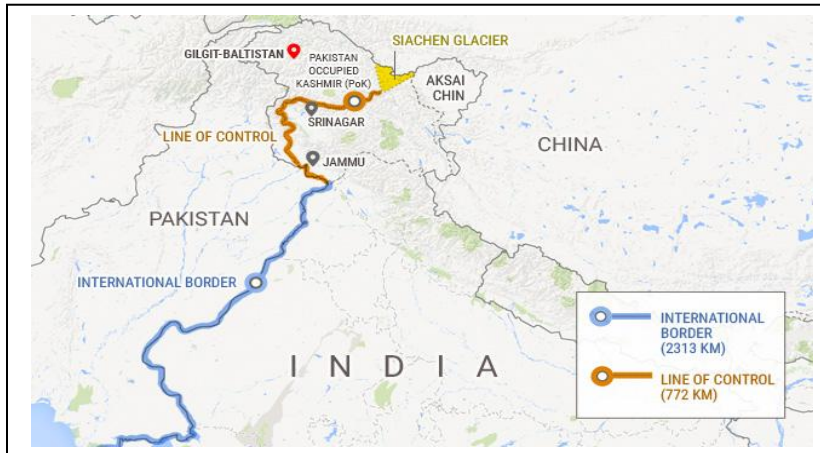


- India and Pakistan agreed on redesigning the Miyar Hydroelectric project.
- It is built on the right bank of **river Chenab** near Udaipur town, Himachal Pradesh.
- Pakistan has been flagging concerns over the designs of five Indian hydroelectric projects: 1000MW **Pakal Dul**, 850MW **Ratle**, 330MW **Kishanganga**, 120MW **Miyar** and 48MW **Lower Kalnai**. The projects are being built or planned in the Indus river basin.

5. Gilgit-Baltistan

- Pakistan is planning to declare the strategic Gilgit-Baltistan region as its fifth

Province, a move that may raise concerns in India as it borders the disputed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.



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- **Where is Gilgit Baltistan located?**
 - It is **located in the northern Pakistan**. It borders China in the North, Afghanistan in the west, Tajikistan in the North West and Kashmir in the south east.
- **India sees Gilgit-Baltistan as part of Indian Territory illegally occupied by Pakistan.**
- The USD 46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (**CPEC**) also passes through this region.

6. UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)

- UNMOGIP has been **established by UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution**. It had started its operations in 1949.
- It observes and **reports on ceasefire violations** along and across the Line of Control (**LoC**) between the India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Major General Per Lodin from Sweden was appointed as chief military observer and head** of the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

India – South Korea

1. Korea Plus initiative

- India and Korea have unveiled a **Korea Plus initiative to promote and facilitate Korean investments in India**.
- Korea Plus comprises of a representative each from the Korean ministry of industry, trade and energy, Korea Trade Investment and Promotion Agency as well as three representatives from Invest India — the **national investment promotion and facilitation agency** of India.
- It includes supporting **Korean enterprises entering the Indian market** for the first time, looking into issues faced by Korean companies doing business in India.

India – Afghanistan

1. Amir Amanullah Khan Award

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been conferred with **Amir Amanullah Khan Award**, Afghanistan’s highest civilian honour.
- The award is named after the Afghan national hero, **Amanullah Khan (Ghazi), who championed the cause of Afghanistan’s freedom.**
- The award was instituted by the Afghanistan government in 2006. **Previous recipients** include: **US President George Bush**, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, NATO General James Jones, former Afghan President spiritual leader Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, and Afghan Chief Justice (CJ) Abdul Salam Azimi.

India – Nepal

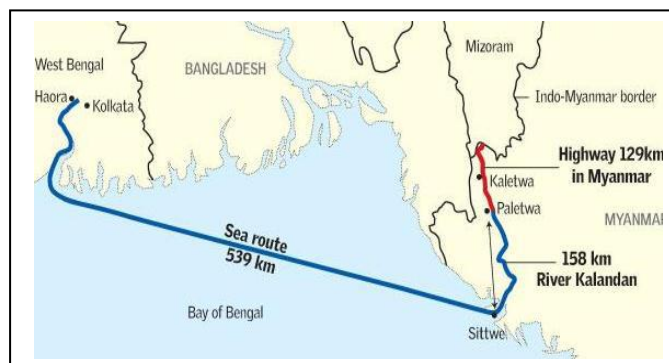
1. Arun-3 Hydro Electric Project

- **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved** Investment for generation component of **Arun-3 HEP (900 MW)** for an estimated cost of Rs. 5723.72 crore.
- The project is located on **Arun River in Sankhuwasabha District of Eastern Nepal.**
- The project will provide **surplus power to India** strengthening power availability in the country and will also strengthening economic linkages with Nepal.
- The power from the project shall be exported from Dhalkebar in Nepal to Muzaffarpur in India.

India – Myanmar

1. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTT)

- KMTT is a multi-modal transport project **involving shipping, Inland Water and road transport** stretches.
- The longest among them is **shipping segment from Kolkata to Sittwe port** in Myanmar.
- Significance
 - Provides **alternative route to India** to ship goods to the landlocked north-eastern States.
 - Significantly lower the cost and distance of movement from **Kolkata to Mizoram** and beyond.
 - Reduces dependency on Chicken’s Neck corridor in West Bengal.



India – Bangladesh

1. Petrapole Integrated Check Post

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina recently jointly inaugurated the **Petrapole Integrated Check Post**.
- Petrapole ICP will be the **second ICP on the India-Bangladesh** border after the Agartala ICP at the Agartala (India)-Akhaura (Bangladesh) land border.
- It will also be the **biggest land port in South Asia**.
- The Petrapole ICP will provide better facilities for effective and efficient discharge of functions such as **security, immigration, customs, quarantine**, etc. while also providing support facilities for **smooth cross-border movement of persons, goods and transport**.
- **Background:**
 - Petrapole-Benapole is an important **land border** crossing for India-Bangladesh trade.
 - More than 50% of the India-Bangladesh trade passes through Petrapole.

India – Russia

1. Yamal LNG – Arctic

- Russia has offered Indian oil companies a stake in the second phase of **Yamal LNG**, the **biggest project to produce liquefied natural gas in the Arctic**.
- The Russian firm holds 50.1% stake in the project.

India – Sri Lanka

1. Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement (ETCA)

- The **Indo-Lanka Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement** better known as ETCA (**formerly CEPA**) is a trade agreement.
- The ETCA agreement seeks to boost cooperation in technical areas, scientific expertise and research amongst institutions, boost standards of goods and services able to compete on the global market and improve opportunities for manpower training and human resource development.
- Conclusion of ETCA with India is **opposed by some interest groups and political parties in Sri Lanka**.

2. Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries

- India and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a **Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries** and **hotline between their Coast Guards** to address long-standing **issue of fishermen** from Tamil Nadu.
- These mechanisms aim to help find a **permanent solution to the fishermen issues**.
- **Terms of reference of the JWG:**
 - Expediting the transition towards **ending the practice of bottom**

trawling at the earliest.

- Framing procedures for **returning fishermen arrested** by both sides.
- Possibility of **joint patrolling**.
- According to Tamil Nadu government, the sufferings of Indian Tamil fishermen is a direct consequence of ceding **Kachchatheevu** to Sri Lanka and sacrificing the traditional fishing rights enjoyed by Indian fishermen.

India and Germany

1. India and Germany join hands on skill agenda

- India and Germany are deepening their collaboration in the area of **skill development**.
- In this regard, an implementation agreement has been signed between the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** and (**German International Cooperation (GIZ)**), to initiate a new project focused on adapting elements of the **German dual system** in select industrial clusters in India.
- The project will be implemented in three selected clusters, which include the Automobile cluster in Maharashtra and Electronics cluster in Bangalore.
- **German technical assistance** will be used to **enhance industry institute partnerships** between Indian and German organizations, **build capacity of local training institutions** and foster industry linkages which will help adapt elements of the German dual system, into the Indian context.

2. Social Security Agreement

- India and Germany have ratified the Social Security Agreement (SSA), to help **promote more investment flows between the two countries**.
- Bilateral social security agreements **protect the interests of Indian professionals**, skilled workers working abroad by providing the following benefits:
 - **Avoiding making double social security contributions:** SSA exempts the Indian worker (working on short term contracts abroad) from making a social security contribution in that foreign country. This exemption is provided only if the Indian worker is covered under the social security system of India and continues to pay his/her contribution during the period of overseas contract.
 - **Easy remittance of benefits (Exportability):** An SSA between India and a foreign country enables the Indian worker/professional to remit his/her accumulated social security contribution made in a foreign country, in case of relocation to India/third country.
 - **Aggregating the contribution periods (in two countries) to prevent loss of benefits (Totalization):** An SSA allows aggregating residency periods of social security contribution made by the Indian worker / professional in India and the foreign country to qualify for retirement benefits.
- Till date, **India has signed and operationalised similar agreements with 18 countries**, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, South Korea,

Germany and Japan.

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India – Fiji

1. Air Services Agreement

- Air Services Agreement is an **agreement which two nations sign to allow international commercial air transport services between their territories.**
- The Union Cabinet gave its approval for signing of **new Air Services Agreement (ASA) between India and Fiji.**
- The Agreement is for **updation of the existing Air Services Agreement (ASA)** between the two countries which was signed in January, 1974.
- Both countries shall be entitled to designate **one or more airline.**
- The designated airlines of either country shall have **the right to establish offices in the territory of the other country for the promotion and sale of air services.**
- The designated airlines shall have **fair and equal opportunity to operate the agreed services** on specified routes.
- The designated airline will be **free to decide tariffs** in respect of the agreed services at reasonable levels based on the commercial considerations.

India – Greece

1. India signs open skies pact with Greece

- India has signed an **open skies agreement with Greece, the first after the finalisation of the civil aviation policy.**
- The open skies agreement will allow airlines from India to **operate unlimited number of flights** to Greece while Greek carriers have been granted unlimited traffic rights to six Indian metro cities.
- Prior to this, India had entered into an open skies agreement with the **US and Britain.**
- **What is open sky agreement?**
 - According to the civil aviation policy, the government can enter into an 'open sky' air services agreement with **SAARC nations** as well as countries with territory located entirely beyond a **5,000 kilometre radius from New Delhi.**
 - Under the 'open-sky' agreement, there is **no restriction on flights or seats.**
 - Among SAARC countries, **India doesn't have any 'open sky' agreement with Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan.**

India – Japan

1. Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC)

- A Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with **Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC)** and the **Ministry of Earth Sciences,** Government of India has been approved by the Cabinet.

- The collaboration with JAMSTEC will **enhance capability in the field of atmospheric and climate research, ocean technology observation, hazard mitigation** and provide much needed exposure and hands-on experience to Indian scientists.
- The **advancement of academic research in the field of Earth Sciences for the benefit of the peace and human welfare** is the prime objective of the MOU.

2. India – Japan Civil Nuclear Deal

- India has signed a historic **civilian nuclear deal** with Japan during the annual bilateral summit held recently in Tokyo.
- **Background:**
 - The nuclear deal had been **under negotiation for six years** and was firmed up during the 2015 visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to India when the principles of the agreement were frozen.
 - Japan has 13 civil nuclear agreements with countries such as France and the U.S.
- **Key facts:**
 - **India is the first non-member of the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) to have signed such a deal with Japan.** The deal will help India access Japan's nuclear market.
 - The deal includes the option that **Japan can give a year's notice before terminating it in case India breaks the nuclear testing moratorium** that it had extended to the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2008.
 - The deal is significant as it will help guarantee **Japan's continued support to India's civil nuclear programme.**
 - The deal will bring Japan into the Indian nuclear market where France and Russia already have a strong presence.

India – UAE

1. India-UAE strategic oil reserves deal

- India had signed a deal with the United Arab Emirates that allows the Gulf OPEC country to fill half of an **underground crude oil storage facility at Mangalore, Karnataka.**
- The deal is part of **New Delhi's strategic petroleum reserve system**, an emergency underground storage of 36.87 million barrels of crude oil which can supply about 10 days of the country's average daily oil demand.
- India has already filled the other half of the Mangalore storage facility with 6 million barrels of **Iranian oil.**
- The country has another storage site in **Vizag, Andhra Pradesh** with 7.55 million barrels of Iraqi oil and a third such facility in **Karnataka's Paduran**, with a storage capacity 18.3 million barrels.

Protocols / Conventions / Treaties

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1. India joins The Hague Code of Conduct

- India has joined The **Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC)**.
- India's joining the Code signals its readiness to further strengthen the global non-proliferation regimes.
- **About HCoC:**
 - HCoC is a **global ballistic missile proliferation regime** established in **2002**.
 - It is a **voluntary legally non-binding multilateral body** aimed at **preventing the spread of ballistic missiles** that can deliver weapons of mass destruction.
 - It is the **only multilateral code in the area of disarmament** which has been adopted over the last years.
 - The HCoC **does not ban ballistic missiles**, but it does call for restraint in their production, testing, and export. Presently, there are 137 signatories.
 - The Code is meant to **supplement the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**.
 - Under the Code, States make politically binding commitments to curb the proliferation of WMD-capable ballistic missiles and to exercise maximum restraint in developing, testing, and deploying such missiles.
 - The Code also introduces **transparency measures** such as annual declarations and pre-launch notifications regarding ballistic missile and space launch programs.
 - **Austria is the administrative Central Contact of the Code**, coordinating the information exchange under HCoC.

2. Shangri-La Dialogue

- The dialogue, also called as **IISS Asia Security Summit**, was launched in 2002 by British think tank the **International Institute for Strategic Studies** and the **Singaporean government**.
- This annual dialogue brings together **defence ministers and military chiefs from 28 Asia-Pacific countries** to talk about security in the region.
- It gets its name from the location of the meeting, the Shangri-La hotel in Singapore.
- **Why is the Shangri-La Dialogue important?**
 - The dialogue gathers military representatives from some of the world's most powerful countries to **discuss pressing and significant defence and security issues**.
 - The meeting is a chance for defence ministers, military chiefs and high-ranking defence officials to **hold bilateral meetings** on its sidelines.
 - It is also attended by legislators, academic experts, journalists and business delegates from around the globe, making it a vehicle for **public policy development and discussions on defence and security**

in the Asia-Pacific.

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3. Raisina Dialogue

- Raisina Dialogue is an **annual conference held in New Delhi**.
- It is **India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics**.
- The conference is held jointly by **Ministry of External Affairs** and the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)**, an independent think tank based in India.
- The name of conference comes from **Raisina Hill** which is the elevation in New Delhi where Rashtrapati Bhavan is located.
- The **first edition** of the conference was held in March **2016** with the theme '**Asia: Regional and Global Connectivity**'.
- The **second edition** of Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi with the theme '**The New Normal: Multilateralism in a multipolar world**'.
- It is organized **on the lines of the Shangri-La Dialogue** held in Singapore.
- It is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectorial conclave, involving **policy and decision makers**, including cabinet ministers from various Governments, high-level Government officials and policy practitioners, leading personalities from business and industry etc.

4. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

- The RCEP is among the proposed three **mega Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)** in the world so far – the other two being the TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership, led by the US) and the TTIP (Trans -Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the US and the EU).
- The agreement is **proposed between** the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) (Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) **and the six states with which ASEAN has existing FTAs** (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand).
- RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia.

5. International Continental Scientific Drilling Program (ICSDP)

- It is a multinational program to further and **fund geosciences in the field of Continental Scientific Drilling**.
- It was founded in February 1996 as a result of the **German Continental Deep Drilling Program**.
- The **GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences** serves as the headquarters for the ICDP.
- **Members of ICDP:** Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, **India**, Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the UK, the USA and UNESCO.
- The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval for Indian membership of the International Continental Scientific Drilling Program (ICDP).
 - ICDP will provide technical / operational support; facilitate capacity

building in terms of manpower training in key scientific areas, and support workshops for the **Koyna scientific deep drilling project** undertaken by Ministry of Earth Sciences.

- As a member of ICDP, scientists/engineers from India would have right to **participate in all ICDP co-funded workshops** and drilling projects and have access to all data results from ICDP projects.

6. Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)

- The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is an **international treaty** that **addresses the humanitarian consequences** and unacceptable harm to civilians **caused by cluster munitions**, through a categorical prohibition and a framework for action.
- The Convention prohibits all use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions.
- A **cluster munition** is a form of **air-dropped or ground-launched explosive weapon** that releases or ejects smaller submunitions.
- In addition, it establishes a framework for **cooperation and assistance** to ensure **adequate care and rehabilitation** to survivors and their communities, clearance of contaminated areas, risk reduction education and destruction of stockpiles.
- Adopted in May 2008 in Dublin, Ireland, the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force on 01 August 2010.
- As of 16 June 2016, a total of 119 states have joined the Convention, as 100 States parties and 19 Signatories.
- **Why in News?**
 - Peace activist in **Sri Lanka** have pitched strongly for an early ratification of the **Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**.
 - Experts say, this move will not only **provide solace** to those who were traumatised by the decades-long war in Sri Lanka but also **reassure** people of the country that **such a heinous practice will not be resorted to in future**.

7. Ulaanbaatar Declaration

- The **11th edition of the Asia-Europe Meeting Summit (ASEM11)** was recently concluded in Ulaanbaatar, capital of Mongolia.
- The theme of the Summit is **'20 Years of ASEM: Partnership for the Future through Connectivity'**.
- **Ulaanbaatar Declaration** was adopted as an **outcome document of the Summit**, in which the participating leaders from Asia and Europe renewed their political will and strong resolve to work together to promote mutually beneficial partnership and co-operation between the two continents, with a view to **building a better future for the peoples of Asia and Europe**.
- **Highlights:**
 - The declaration has reaffirmed ASEM's commitment for greater partnership through informal **political dialogue and initiatives in economic and socio-cultural fields**.
 - It also has expressed its commitment for united **fight against**

terrorism and violent extremism.

- The declaration will also focus on **maritime security and cyber security.**
- **ASEM:**
 - The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an **informal process of dialogue and cooperation** bringing together the **28 European Union member states, 2 other European countries, 21 Asian countries and the ASEAN Secretariat.**
 - The ASEM dialogue addresses political, economic and cultural issues, with the objective of **strengthening the relationship between the two regions**, in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership.
 - It was officially established on 1 March 1996 at the **first summit in Bangkok, Thailand.**

8. Hague Abduction Convention

- The **Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction** or Hague Abduction Convention is a **multilateral treaty developed by the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH).**
- It provides an expeditious method to **return a child internationally abducted by a parent from one member country to another.**
- The Convention was drafted to ensure the prompt return of children who have been abducted from their country of habitual residence or wrongfully retained in a contracting state not their country of habitual residence.
- The Convention applies **only to children under the age of 16.**
- The **United States has urged India to join 'Hague Abduction Convention'** to safeguard the rights of children born to Indian-American couples.
- **Why?**
 - Almost a hundred children born to Indian-American couples are facing an uncertain future due to the trauma of separation of their parents and the complex legal issues involved.
- **What is Inter-country parental child abduction?**
 - Inter-country parental child abduction is a situation that is attained **when one parent takes a child or children to a foreign country to prevent the other parent from seeking custody of the child.**
- **India's Response:**
 - The Union government has decided that **India will not ratify the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.**
 - Signing the convention would require all those women who have escaped bad marriages abroad to send back their child to the country of father's residence.

9. Sendai Framework

- The **"Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030"** was adopted during the **Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction** held in Sendai, Japan in March, **2015.**

Seven Global Targets in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction	
(a)	Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower the average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015;
(b)	Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015;
(c)	Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030;
(d)	Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030;
(e)	Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020;
(f)	Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030;
(g)	Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.

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- It is the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, with **seven targets and four priorities for action**.
- It was endorsed by the **UN General Assembly** following the 2015 Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR).
- The Framework is for 15-year. It is a **voluntary and non-binding agreement** which recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders.
- The new Framework is the successor instrument to the **Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters**.
- **The Four Priorities for Action under the Framework:**
 - Understanding disaster risk.
 - Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.
 - Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.
 - Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

10. Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR)

- The **Government of India hosted** the Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (**AMCDRR**) in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (**UNISDR**).
- AMCDRR 2016 recently came to an end with the adoption of the ‘**New Delhi Declaration**’ and the ‘**Asian Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework**’.
- The hosting of the Conference re-affirms India’s commitment to the cause of Disaster Risk Reduction.
- This was the first AMCDRR after the adoption of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR)**.
- AMCDRR 2016 will focus on collaboration, consultation and partnership with governments and stakeholders to **mainstream DRR in the region’s**

development narrative.

- **Background:**
 - **Established in 2005**, AMCDRR is a **biennial conference** jointly organized by different Asian countries and the UNISDR.
 - So far, six AMCDRR conferences have been organised. India had also hosted the second AMCDRR in New Delhi in 2007.
- **First World Tsunami Awareness Day:**
 - AMCDRR 2016 commemorated the first **World Tsunami Awareness Day (Nov 5)** to spread awareness on tsunami.
 - The observance of the day stressed on the importance of early warning systems and preparedness of communities in order to mitigate damage from the often devastating natural hazard.

11. Vienna Convention

- It's a treaty that came into force in 1964, which lays out the **rules and regulations for diplomatic relations** between countries as well as the various **privileges that diplomats and diplomatic missions enjoy**.
- One of these privileges is **legal immunity for diplomats** so that they don't have to face prosecution as per their host country's laws.
- Pakistan had accused India of violating the international convention for protection of diplomats after New Delhi briefly detained a staffer of the Pakistan High Commission.

12. International Chemical Weapons Convention

- The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a **multilateral treaty that bans chemical weapons** and requires their **destruction within a specified period of time**.
- CWC negotiations started in 1980 in the **UN Conference on Disarmament**. The convention opened for signature on January 13, 1993, and entered into force on April 29, 1997.
- The CWC is implemented by the **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**, which is headquartered in The Hague.
- The OPCW receives states-parties' declarations detailing chemical weapons-related activities or materials and relevant industrial activities.
- After receiving declarations, **the OPCW inspects and monitors states-parties' facilities and activities** that are relevant to the convention, to ensure compliance.
- The CWC is **open to all nations and currently has 192 states-parties**.
- **Israel has signed but has yet to ratify the convention. The non-signatories include Egypt, North Korea, Palestine and South Sudan.**
- In 1993, when Russia signed the CWC, the country declared that it possessed 40,000 tons of toxic chemicals.
 - Russia has indicated that it will destroy all of its chemical weapons by the end of 2017 – a year earlier than previously announced.
- **The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits:**
 - Developing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, or retaining chemical weapons.

- The direct or indirect transfer of chemical weapons.
- Chemical weapons use or military preparation for use.
- Assisting, encouraging, or inducing other states to engage in CWC-prohibited activity.

13. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)

- The **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)** is the **first global evidence-based public health treaty** that recognises the right of all people to the highest standard of health.
- There are currently **180 Parties** to the Convention.
- **India** provided a leadership role in the negotiations of FCTC and was also the **Regional Coordinator for the South-East Asia Region**.
- **India ratified the treaty in 2004** and is therefore obligated to comply with the treaty provisions and its guidelines to reduce tobacco consumption globally.
- **Seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP7)**
 - The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) was held in Delhi. **It is the first occasion that a COP meeting was held in India.**
 - **COP7 brings together the FCTC's parties** – This includes almost every country in the world, as well as regional economic integration organizations like the European Union.
 - The Conference of the Parties (**COP**) is the **Governing Body of the WHO FCTC** and is comprised of all Parties to the Convention.
 - It keeps under regular review the implementation of the Convention and takes the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation.
 - The regular sessions of COP are held at two yearly intervals.

14. International Agrobiodiversity Congress

- The **1st International Agrobiodiversity Congress** was recently held in **New Delhi**.
- Based on the deliberations of the congress the **Delhi Declaration on Agrobiodiversity Management** was adopted.
- It calls upon nations to accord **top priority to the agrobiodiversity conservation** and their sustainable use towards achieving targets of SDGs relating to poverty alleviation, food and nutritional security, good health, gender equity and partnership.
- It recognises the **importance of traditional knowledge on agrobiodiversity** of farm men and women, pastoralists and other tribal and rural communities and their central role in its conservation and use for a food and climate resilient world.
- It reemphasises the necessity of **global exchange of plant, animal, aquatic microbial and insect genetic resources** for food and agriculture to meet the ever-growing food and nutritional needs of each country.
- It invites researchers to **employ modern technologies** for characterization, evaluation and trait discovery using genetic resources.
- The UN is also urged to consider declaring soon a 'Year of Agrobiodiversity' to draw worldwide attention and to catalyze urgent action.

15. Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR)

- The **Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Convention** is a multilateral treaty that was concluded at Geneva on 14 November 1975 to **simplify and harmonise the administrative formalities of international road transport**.
- The 1975 convention replaced the TIR Convention of 1959, which itself replaced the 1949 TIR Agreement between a number of European countries. The conventions were adopted under the auspices of the **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**.
- On 6 March 2017, India's Union Cabinet approved the signing of the TIR Convention as it eyes seamless trade connectivity with both Eurasian region and Southeast Asia.
- **India will become the 71st signatory of the convention.**
- **Significance of this convention:**
 - TIR is the **only global customs transit system** that provides easy and smooth movement of goods across borders in sealed compartments or containers under customs control from the customs office of departure to the customs office of destination.
 - It plays an important role in **boosting regional connectivity and facilitating cross-border trade flows**, according to connectivity experts.
 - The TIR system has a globally accepted electronic control system for **integrated transit operations**.
- **Benefits for India:**
 - This will allow India to take **full benefit of International North South Transportation Corridor** or INSTC, which enables access to Eurasian region.
 - Aligning with the TIR system will also enable India to take **full advantage of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)**.
 - The TIR system can also make **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement efficient** for sub-regional cooperation on India's eastern flank.

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International Organisations / Groupings

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1. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- It is a **Eurasian political, economic and military organisation** which was founded in **2001** in Shanghai by the leaders of **China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**.
- These countries, except for Uzbekistan, had been members of the **Shanghai Five**, founded in 1996; after the inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001, the members renamed the organisation.
- The SCO is seen as a **counter to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**.
- With observer states included, its affiliates account for about half of the world's population.
- The SCO has established relations with the United Nations, where it is an **observer in the General Assembly, the European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**.
- **India and Pakistan** were accepted as full members of the organization in July 2015.
- **Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia enjoy observer status**.

2. International Seabed Authority (ISA)

- The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is an **intergovernmental body** based in Kingston, Jamaica, that was established to **organize, regulate and control all mineral-related activities in the international seabed area** beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, an area underlying most of the world's oceans.
- It was established in 1994.
- It is an organization established by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (**UNCLOS**).
- ISA **governs non-living resources** of seabed lying in international waters.
- The Authority obtained its **observer status to the United Nations** in October 1996.

3. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a **regional economic forum** established in **1989** to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-
- **Functions:**
 - APEC works to **help all residents of the Asia-Pacific** participate in the growing economy.
 - APEC projects provide **digital skills training** for rural communities and help indigenous women export their products abroad.
 - Recognizing the impacts of climate change, APEC members also implement initiatives to **increase energy efficiency** and promote sustainable management of forest and marine resources.
 - The forum deals with important new challenges to the region's economic well-being. This includes ensuring **disaster resilience, planning for pandemics, and addressing terrorism**.

- **Members:**
 - APEC's **21 member economies** are Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; Vietnam.
- In APEC, **all economies have an equal say and decision-making is reached by consensus.**
- There are **no binding commitments** or treaty obligations.
- The APEC process is supported by a **permanent secretariat based in Singapore.**

4. Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

- Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is a **multinational body** concerned with **reducing nuclear proliferation** by controlling the export and re-transfer of materials that may be applicable to nuclear weapon development and by **improving safeguards and protection on existing materials.**
- The NSG was set up in **1974** as a **reaction to India's nuclear tests** to stop what it called the misuse of nuclear material meant for peaceful purposes.
- NSG's members are allowed to trade in and export nuclear technology.
- Currently, it has **48 members** and **works by consensus.**
- **Once admitted, an NSG member state:**
 - Gets timely information on nuclear matters.
 - Contributes by way of information.
 - Has confirmed credentials.
 - Can act as an instrument of harmonization and coordination.
 - Access to the advance technology.
- **China** has remained the last **major obstacle in the way of India's membership bid in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.**
- The NSG works under the principle of unanimity and **even one country's vote against India will scuttle its bid.**

5. Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

- MTCR was **established by G-7 countries in 1987.**
- **The voluntary MTCR aims to limit the spread of ballistic missiles and other unmanned delivery systems that could be used for chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks.**
- The MTCR regime urges its **34 members**, which include most of the world's key missile manufacturers, to restrict their exports of missiles and related technologies capable of carrying a 500-kilogram payload at least 300 kilometers or delivering any type of weapon of mass destruction.
- **India became the 35th full member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).**
- **China is not a member of MTCR.**
- **Benefits for India:**
 - India's entry into the MTCR is a step closer to its Nuclear Suppliers

Group (NSG) membership.

- The entry into this group will shape the future of India's engagement with not just the MTCR but also the broader **global non-proliferation community**.
- Admission to the MTCR would **open the way for India to buy high-end missile technology**.

6. Contact Group of Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS)

- The **Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia**, commonly abbreviated as **CGPCS**, is an international governance mechanism established in New York on January 14, 2009 to facilitate the discussion and coordination of actions among states and organizations **to suppress Somali piracy**.
- CGPCS was set up as a group of interested and affected nations, industry associations and multilateral agencies to take pro-active steps for **checking piracy in the Indian Ocean region through a UN Security Council resolution**.
- The 19th Plenary Session of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) took place in Mahe, Seychelles during 31 May – 3 June 2016.
- **Seychelles is the current chairman** of the CGPCS for the biennium 2016-17. **India was chosen to co-chair** the important Working Group on Improving Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA) in the Region through consensus.

7. Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

- The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) is an **international organization** based in The Hague, the Netherlands.
- The PCA was created in The Hague by treaty in 1899.
- It is **not a court and does not have permanent judges**.
- The PCA is a **permanent bureaucracy that assists temporary tribunals to resolve disputes among states (and similar entities), intergovernmental organizations, or even private parties arising out of international agreements**.
- The cases span a range of legal issues involving territorial and maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international and regional trade.
- The organization is **not a United Nations agency**.

8. International Criminal Court (ICC)

- The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an **intergovernmental organization** and international tribunal that sits in **Hague, Netherlands**.
- The ICC has the jurisdiction to **prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes**.
- ICC is not a substitute for national courts.
- ICC may exercise its jurisdiction when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute criminals or when the United Nations Security Council or individual states refer investigations to the Court.
- It was established by the **Rome Statute** which was adopted in July 1998 and entered into force in July 2002.
- Currently there are **124 members** of the ICC.

- **India and China are non party and non-signatory states.**
- **Russia signed the Rome Statute in 2000 and recently exited from the ICC.**

9. Bangladesh China India Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM)

- The Bangladesh China India Myanmar Economic Corridor is a **sub-regional economic cooperation within the BCIM.**
- The **multi-modal corridor** will be the **first expressway between India and China** and will pass through Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- The project will **link Kolkata with Kunming**, the capital of China's Yunnan province, passing through Myanmar and Bangladesh, with Mandalay and Dhaka among the focal points.
- The **economic advantages** of the BCIM trade corridor are: access to numerous markets in Southeast Asia, improvement of transportation infrastructure and creation of industrial zones.
- This interconnectedness would **facilitate the cross-border flow** of people and goods, **minimize overland trade obstacles**, ensure greater market access and increase multilateral trade.



10. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative

- The **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN)** Initiative is a sub regional architecture of countries in South Asia.
- The BBIN agreement was signed on June 15, 2016 in Thimphu, Bhutan to facilitate **cross border movement of both passengers and cargo vehicles** for overall economic development of the region.
- India is in a bilateral motor vehicle agreement with Nepal and Bangladesh, but a multilateral pact would go a long way in boosting trade in the region.

RECONNECTING THE NORTH-EAST

On Monday, transport ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) will sign a motor vehicles agreement in a bid to boost trade and sub-regional connectivity among the four nations. The BBIN pact will also set the stage for a new connectivity paradigm in India's north-east, which is looking for easier access not just to mainland India but also to South-east Asia, a high growth area of the continent.

Mint takes a look at the operational and proposed transportation links.



OPERATIONAL RAIL LINKS

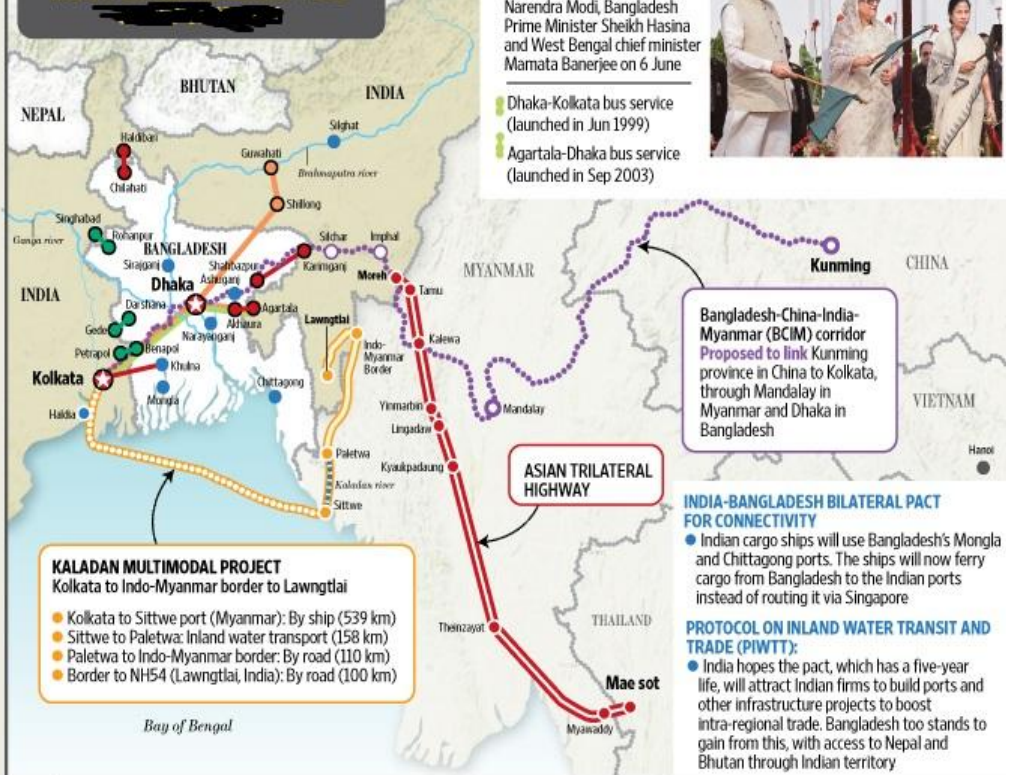
- Petrapol (India)-Benapol (Bangladesh)
- Gede (India)-Darsana (Bangladesh)
- Singhabad (India)-Rohanpur (Bangladesh)

PROPOSED RAIL LINKS

- Maitree Express between Khulna (Bangladesh) and Kolkata
- Akhaura (Bangladesh)-Agartala railway link
- Radhikapur (India)-Biroi (Bangladesh)
- Karimganj/Mahisasan (India)- Shahbazpur (Bangladesh)
- Haldibari (India)-Chilhati (Bangladesh)

BANGLADESH-BHUTAN-INDIA-NEPAL (BBIN)

MOTOR VEHICLE AGREEMENT TO BE



11. Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA)

- The Asia Pacific Trade Agreement or APTA (formerly the **Bangkok Agreement**) is an initiative under the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)** for trade expansion through **exchange of tariff concessions** among developing country members of the Asia Pacific Region.
- The current membership of APTA consists of **six countries** namely, **Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, South Korea, and Sri Lanka**.
- **Signed in 1975**, it is the **oldest preferential trade agreement** between countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- APTA's key objective is to **hasten economic development** among the six participating states opting **trade and investment liberalization measures**.
- APTA is open to all members of the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which serves as the APTA Secretariat**.
- APTA is also the **ONLY operational trade agreement which links India and China**.

12. MERCOSUR

- Mercosur is a sub-regional bloc. Its full members are **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay**.
- Mercosur **suspended Venezuela** from it for **violating the bloc's democratic principles** and failing to meet its basic standards.
- Its **associate countries** are **Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Suriname**.
- It was established in 1991 and its headquarters are located at Montevideo (Uruguay).

- Its purpose is to **promote free trade** and the fluid movement of goods, people, and currency.
- **Brazil urges India to broaden MERCOSUR presence.**
 - Brazil has asked India to expand its commercial and multilateral footprints in South America.
 - **India at present has over 450 tariff lines with MERCOSUR. But, the plan now is to raise the tariff line to 4000.**

13. BRICS

- BRICS is the acronym for an association of **five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.**
- Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC" before the induction of **South Africa in 2010.**
- The BRICS members are all leading developing or newly industrialized countries. **All five are G-20 members.**

Summits	Year	Location	Importance
1 st	June 2009	Russia	
2 nd	April 2010	Brazil	
3 rd	April 2011	China	First summit to include South Africa alongside the original BRIC countries.
4 th	March 2012	India	The BRICS Cable announced an optical fibre submarine communications cable system that carries telecommunications between the BRICS countries.
5 th	March 2013	South Africa	
6 th	July 2014	Brazil	BRICS New Development Bank and BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement agreements signed.
7 th	July 2015	Russia	Joint summit with Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) - Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)
8 th	October 2016	India	Joint summit with BIMSTEC

14. 8th BRICS summit

- The 8th BRICS summit ended with the adoption of the **Goa Declaration.**
- The theme for the summit was **“Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions”.**
- **Key highlights of the Goa declaration:**
 - The Declaration urged the **dismantling of terror bases** and said nations should adopt a comprehensive approach that includes **tackling radicalisation, recruitment, cutting off terror funding systems** and address terrorism on the internet and social media. The declaration mentions ISIS, Al Qaeda and Jubhat ul Nusra.
 - The declaration calls for a **“holistic approach”** and says all counter-terrorism measures should **“uphold international law and respect human rights”.**
 - The declaration also emphasized the need for adaptation of **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** in the UN General Assembly and the urgent need to reform the United Nations, including UN Security Council, to increase representation of developing countries.

- The declaration also **condemned unilateral military interventions and economic sanctions** in violation of international law and universally recognised norms of international relations.
- Concerns about the **situation in the Middle East and North Africa** were also expressed.

15. Jaipur Declaration

- The **meeting of women Parliamentarians from BRICS** nations concluded recently in Jaipur.
- At the end of the meeting, **'Jaipur Declaration' was adopted.**
- The Declaration calls upon international financial institutions to extend support to developing and least developed countries and help them gain easier access to new and affordable technologies as envisaged under **the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.**
- The Declaration mentions the need to address **climate change and protection of ecological system** and forest as well as food security, expeditious parliamentary approval of **SDG** related legislation and adequate budgetary resources.
- It also emphasizes on plans for incorporating **gender concerns** and greater involvement of women parliamentarians in integrating citizens in the development process.

16. BRICS Young Scientists Conclave

- The **Department of Science & Technology (DST)**, Government of India, under the BRICS framework **hosted the 1st BRICS Young Scientists Conclave.** It was held in Bengaluru.
- The meet provided a platform for engaging, connecting and networking among young scientists to hold discussions and find solutions to some of the common challenges and problems being faced in BRICS countries.

17. BRICS convention on tourism

- The two-day long BRICS Convention on Tourism was recently inaugurated in **Khajuraho Madhya Pradesh.**
- BRICS leaders proposed to constitute a **permanent BRICS Working Stream on Tourism** comprising of the stakeholders of the Government and private sector.
- The leaders also emphasized **greater cooperation among the member countries** for the mutual benefit for the growth of tourism and looked at the convention as a platform to interact with the travel industry partners.

18. BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement

- BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement has become operational. This arrangement is being seen as a **crucial economic mechanism to help BRICS member nations deal with economic crisis, like balance of payments pressures.**
- The BRICS CRA proposes to provide **short-term liquidity support** to the members through **currency swaps** to help mitigating BOP crisis.

- It would also contribute to **strengthening the global financial safety net** and complement existing international arrangements (from IMF) as an additional line of defence.
- So far IMF support is the primary safety net that is available to India in case any BOP crisis situation arises.

19. 2016 BRICS U-17 Football Cup

- The **2016 BRICS U-17 Football Cup** was the **first edition** of the BRICS U-17 Football Cup.
- It took place in the **Indian state of Goa** during the 8th BRICS summit which was also held in India.
- The BRICS U – 17 Football Tournament will be **played among the ‘BRICS’ countries**.
- Brazil has lifted the 1st BRICS U-17 Football Tournament 2016.

20. African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO)

- The AARDO, which has its **headquarters in New Delhi**, is an **autonomous, inter-Governmental organization** established in 1962 with the objective of **promoting cooperation among the countries of the African – Asian Region** in the direction of eradicating thirst, hunger, illiteracy, disease and poverty in the region.
- AARDO currently has **31 countries** of the African – Asian Region under its fold.
- **India is one of the Founder Members** of the Organization and is the largest contributor in terms of membership contribution, scholarships for Human Resource Development Programme and for Capacity Building Programmes of AARDO for the benefit of Member Countries.

21. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an **international organization** involving a group of **countries in South Asia and South East Asia**.
- The BIMSTEC comprises of seven countries, **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand**.
- The main objective of BIMSTEC is **technological and economical cooperation** among South Asian and South East Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal.
- The **headquarters of BIMSTEC is in Dhaka**.
- **What this grouping means in numbers?**
 - The BIMSTEC region is home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around **22% of the global population**.
 - The region has a combined gross domestic product (**GDP**) of **\$2.7 trillion**.
 - In the last five years, BIMSTEC member states have been able to sustain an average 6.5% economic growth trajectory despite global financial meltdown.

22. International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH)

- International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH), established in 2006, is a **global network of regulatory authorities created by World Health Organization (WHO)** responsible for **regulation of herbal medicines**.
- Its mission is to **protect and promote public health and safety** through improved regulation for herbal medicines.
- The **9th Annual Meeting** of International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH) **was held in New Delhi**.
- The **Ministry of AYUSH** had organized the meeting. Being an active member of IRCH network since 2007 the Ministry of AYUSH has been represented in IRCH meetings held so far.
- **Objectives of IRCH:**
 - Globally **promote and facilitate the safe use of herbal medicines**, through regional initiatives, sharing information and fostering dialogue.
 - Facilitate and strengthen **cooperation between national regulatory authorities** by sharing experience, information and knowledge related to the regulation, quality, safety and efficacy of herbal medicines.

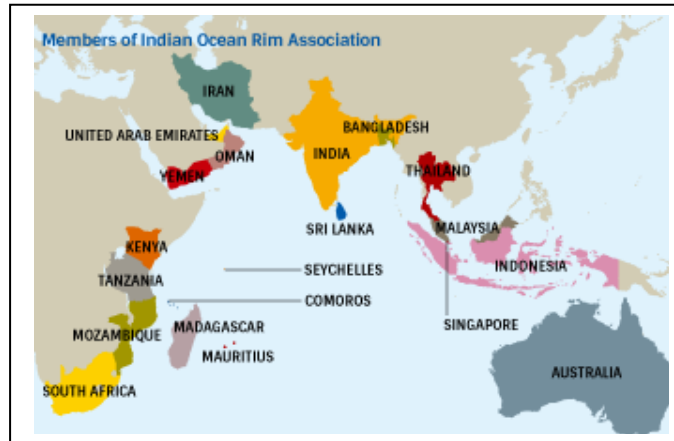
23. High Level Meeting of Interior Ministers of the Indian Ocean Region

- High Level Meeting of Interior Ministers of the Indian Ocean Region to **Counter Drug Trafficking** was recently held in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**.
- The delegates resolved to work towards **making the Indian Ocean a “Drug Free Zone”**.
- The meeting concluded with the adoption of the **Colombo declaration**.
 - The declaration states that narcotic drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean poses a **threat to peace and security** in the region and its possible link to **organized crime and funding of terrorism**.
 - It stresses upon the expansion and development of communication through the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC’s)** Indian Ocean Prosecutors Network.

24. Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)

- Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) is an **international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean**.
- The IORA is tripartite in nature, bringing together **representatives of Government, Business and Academia**, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.
- The group came into being in March 1995 in Mauritius. The **Coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at Ebene, Mauritius**.

- It is based on the principles of **Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation** particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.
- **Members:**
 - The IOR-ARC, which is the **only pan-Indian ocean grouping**, has **20 members**.



25. European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)

- CERN is the **world's largest nuclear and particle physics laboratory**, where scientists and engineers are probing the fundamental structure of the Universe.
- CERN is **based in Geneva** on the French-Swiss border.
- Presently CERN has **22 member states and 4 Associate Members**. **Israel is the only non-European country granted full membership.**
- CERN is also the birthplace of the **World Wide Web**.
- **India becomes Associate Member of CERN.**
- In 2003, India was awarded the Observer status of CERN.
- **How this membership helps India?**
 - As an Associate Member of CERN, **India will be a part of the huge scientific and technological endeavour.**
 - Becoming Associate Member of CERN will enhance **participation of young scientists and engineers in various CERN projects** and bring back knowledge for deployment in the domestic programmes.
 - It will also open opportunities for **Indian industries to participate directly in the CERN project.**
 - Through the **Teachers programme**, teachers teaching in the higher secondary schools would also be able to participate in the programme and pass on the knowledge and quest for high-end science to their students, thereby encouraging large number of students to pursue their career in science.

26. SAARC

- SAARC stands for **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation**. It is a geopolitical cooperation maintained for mutual benefits between eight south Asian nations: **India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Maldives.**
- SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8th December, 1985.
- SAARC Summits are held annually. There have been, however, times when the summits skipped a year.

- The diplomatic summits can only take place when all the members of SAARC are present.
- **SAARC Secretariat is based in Kathmandu.** It is responsible for monitoring the activities of the cooperation.
- Apart from its members, SAARC has **nine countries with observer status:** Australia, China, Iran, Japan, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Korea, the United States, and the European Union.
- It is in **permanent diplomatic relations with the United Nation** as an observer.
- The 2016 SAAARC Summit was cancelled that was scheduled to be held in Islamabad. The Summit had been cancelled in the heightened tensions following the terrorist attack on a military camp in Jammu and Kashmir's Uri.

27. Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban

Development

- The Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development has adopted the **New Delhi declaration.**
- This was the **first such meeting held to discuss ways of realising the New Urban Agenda that was finalised during the United Nations-Habitat III conference in Quito** in October 2016.
- **What is Urban plus approach?**
 - This approach will address ways to **make urban expansion sustainable** and manageable. This would mean an emphasis on planning for urban and its adjoining peri-urban and rural areas in an integrated manner.
- **About the New Delhi Declaration:**
 - It is a **global document** and it will be localised as per the specific needs of the region and the country.
 - The declaration also stresses on the need to review existing policies and draft new ones that will take forward the aims of the New Urban Agenda.
 - Noting **governance as the key to sustainable development**, the Declaration stressed on the need for effective governance structures in urban areas.

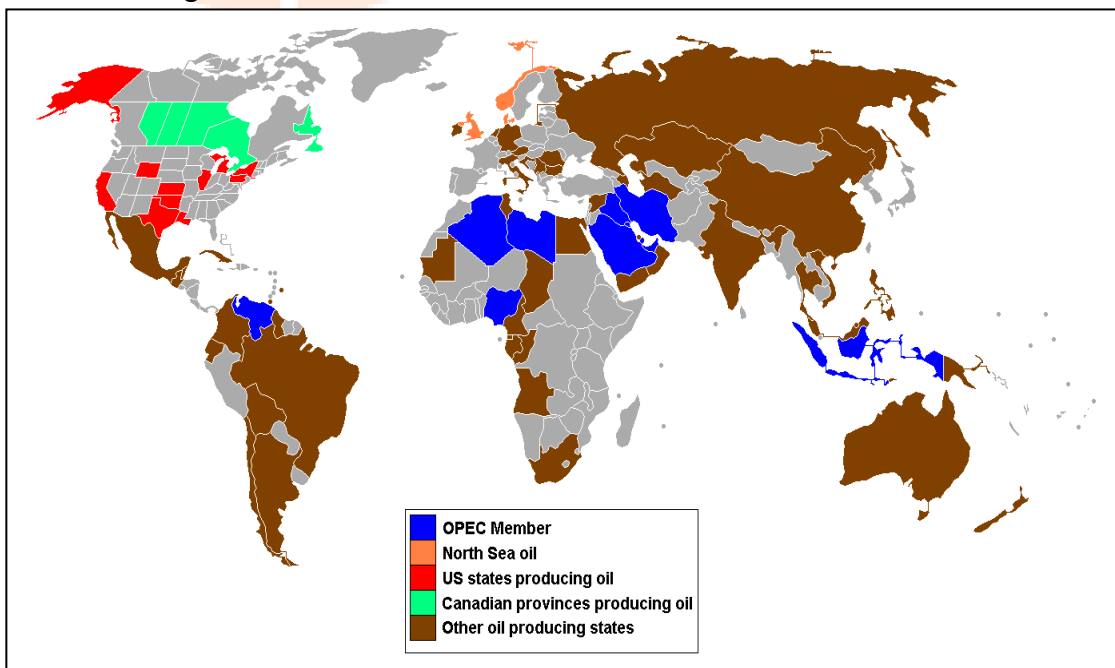
28. Heart of Asia Conference

- The **Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process** presents a new vision of cooperation and confidence building for the region with **Afghanistan at its centre.**
- The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process was **launched in 2011** and the participating countries include **Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and the United Arab Emirates.**
- The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process articulates a set of principles, such as **respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity**, and promoting cooperation in the areas of common challenges and shared interests in the region.
- It provides a platform for discussing key regional issues among participating states.

- Since its inception in 2011, the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process has been **lead by two co-chairs: Afghanistan as a permanent co-chair, and one of the Heart of Asia countries hosting the annual ministerial meeting as the co-chair.**
- **The 6th Ministerial Conference (2016) of Heart of Asia summit was held in Amritsar, India.**
- **Amritsar Declaration:**
 - The declaration recognises **terrorism as the biggest threat** to peace and security.
 - The declaration states the **urgency to respond to the nexus between drug menace and its financial support for terrorist entities** in Afghanistan.
 - The declaration welcomes the MOU on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road between China and Afghanistan.

29. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a group of **oil-producing nations** that was first established in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1961.
- OPEC is one of the most powerful international organizations in the world and was a **major player in the shift towards state control over natural resources.**
- It helped ensure that private companies could not unilaterally cut prices throughout the world.
- Before OPEC was formed, the oil market was dominated by a group of multinational companies.
- **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela** are the founding Members of the Organization.



- Today, **OPEC is comprised of 13 members** and still has a massive impact on oil production and price around the world.

- As of January 2017, OPEC's members are Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia (the de facto leader), United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.
- As of 2015, the 13 countries accounted for an estimated 42 percent of global oil production and 73 percent of the world's "proven" oil reserves, giving OPEC a major influence on global oil prices.

30. Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAFT)

- **The Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAFT) was created by Saudi Arabia in December 2015 to combat the Islamic State and other groups.**
- Currently, it has 39 members. It is based at a command centre in **Riyadh**.
- The coalition was envisaged to serve as a platform for **security cooperation**, including provision of **training, equipment and troops**, and involvement of **religious scholars** for dealing with extremism.
- The coalition includes countries like **Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Sudan, Malaysia, Egypt, and Yemen** among others.
- **Former Pakistan Army chief Raheel Sharif** has been made the **head of the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAFT)**.

31. International Vaccine Institute (IVI)

- **International Vaccine Institute (IVI), Seoul, South Korea**, established in 1997 is an international organization devoted to developing and introducing new and improved vaccines to protect the people, especially children, against deadly infectious diseases.
- Created initially as an **initiative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP)**, IVI began formal operations as an independent international organization in 1997.
- Currently, IVI has 40 countries and the World Health Organization (WHO) as signatories to its Establishment Agreement.
- The Institute has a unique mandate to work exclusively on vaccine development and introduction specifically for people in developing countries, with a focus on neglected diseases affecting these regions.
- **The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the proposal for India's taking full membership of the International Vaccine Institute (IVI) Governing Council.**
- The move involves payment of annual contribution of US \$ 5,00,000 to the International Vaccine Institute (IVI).

32. Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations

- A **global coalition to create new vaccines** for emerging infectious diseases, designed to help give the world an insurance policy against epidemics was recently **launched at the World Economic Forum** in Davos, Switzerland.
- The coalition is named- **Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations**.
- CEPI is a "**public-private coalition** that aims to derail epidemics by speeding development of vaccines".

- CEPI will initially target the MERS-CoV, Lassa and Nipah viruses, which have known potential to cause serious epidemics.
- CEPI also hopes to **shorten the time it takes to develop new vaccines** to protect against viruses that emerge suddenly as public health threats, as Zika did recently.

33. CLMV conclave

- **4th India – CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) Business Conclave was recently held in Jaipur.**
- The CLMV conclave is an annual feature which provides an opportunity for Indian business leaders to interact with government and business stakeholders representing the four countries.
- Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam collectively, are the **third largest economy in ASEAN**, followed by Indonesia and Thailand.
- Due to close proximity, India is looking to boost trade and investment with the CLMV region as part of the **'Act East' policy**.

34. International Smart Grid Action Network (ISGAN)

- ISGAN is an agreement under **International Energy Agency (IEA)** and consists of representatives from 25 countries across the globe.
- **India is one of the founding Member of ISGAN** and Joint Secretary (Distribution), **Ministry of Power, is the member representative of India.**
- ISGAN creates a mechanism for multilateral **government-to-government collaboration** to advance the development and deployment of smarter electric grid technologies, practices and systems.
- ISGAN is also open to select **private sector and industry associations and international organizations.**
- Membership in ISGAN is **voluntary.**
- ISGAN facilitates dynamic knowledge sharing, technical assistance, and project coordination
- The Ministry of Power, Government of India hosted the **13th Executive Committee (ExCo) Meeting** of the International Smart Grid Action Network (ISGAN) at POWERGRID Corporate Centre, Gurugram. This is the first ever Executive Committee Meeting of ISGAN being held in India.

35. Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA)

- The **Afghanistan–Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement** (also known as **APTTA**) is a bilateral trade agreement signed in 2010 by Pakistan and Afghanistan that calls for **greater facilitation in the movement of goods amongst the two countries.**
- The 2010 APTTA allows for both countries to **use each other's airports, railways, roads, and ports** for transit trade along designated transit corridors.
- The agreement does not cover road transport vehicles from any third country, be it from India or any Central Asia country.
- The APTTA agreement allows Afghan trucks to transport *exports* to India via Pakistan up to the Wagah crossing point, but does not offer Afghanistan the

right to *import* Indian goods across Pakistani territory.

NOTES**36. Commonwealth of Nations**

- The Commonwealth of Nations, at one time known as **British Commonwealth**, is an organisation of fifty three states that were **principally below the colonial rule of British Government**.
- They came into existence with the **proclamation of sovereignty of the state from the colonial rule of British Empire** and were later given self-governance.
- It proclaims that the Commonwealth nations are **“free and equal.”** The insignia of this Commonwealth Association is **Queen Elizabeth II who is considered the Supreme of the Commonwealth nations**.
- The **member states** of the commonwealth are **not legally liable or bound to each other**. They are rather united by language, history, culture, likeness of the democracy, human rights and the rule of law.
- The last two countries to join The Commonwealth are Rwanda and Mozambique.
- **Former British mandates that did not become members of the Commonwealth** are Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, British Palestine, Sudan, British Somaliland, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.
- The most **recent departure was the Maldives**, which severed its connection with the Commonwealth on 13 October 2016.

37. Wassenaar Arrangement

- **The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies** is a multilateral export control regime (MECR) with 41 participating states.
- The Wassenaar Arrangement was established to contribute to regional and international security and stability by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.
- It is the **successor to the Cold War-era Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM)**.
- A **Secretariat** for administering the agreement is located in **Vienna, Austria**.
- **India is not a member of Wassenaar Arrangement.**

38. Australia Group

- The Australia Group is an **informal group of countries** (now joined by the European Commission) established in 1985 (after the use of chemical weapons by Iraq in 1984) to help member countries to **identify those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons**.
- It now has **42 members**, including the European Commission, all 28 member states of the European Union, Ukraine, and Argentina.
- The name comes from **Australia's initiative** to create the group. Australia manages the secretariat.
- **India is not a member of Australia Group.**

39. International Organization for Migration (IOM)

- **UN General Assembly has unanimously adopted a resolution to make the International Organization for Migration (IOM) a Related Organization of the UN.**
- Making IOM as a related organization to the UN is expected to play a vital role in **protecting the rights of the migrants.**
- IOM is an **intergovernmental organization** in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental entities to promote humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all.
- Its headquarters is in **Geneva, Switzerland.**
- The organization was established in 1951 in the wake of World War II to resettle refugees from Europe.
- IOM was granted **Permanent Observer status to the UN General Assembly** in 1992.
- **India is one among the 165 member states of IOM.**

40. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states that are **not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.** As of 2012, the movement has **120 members.**
- The organization was founded in **Belgrade in 1961.**
- The idea of NAM was jointly conceived by **India's PM Jawaharlal Nehru, Indonesia's President Sukarno, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah and Yugoslavia's President Josip Broz Tito.**
- **The first summit was held in Belgrade in 1961.**
- The **17th edition** of 2016 Non Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit was held at **Margarita Island in Venezuela.**
- The NAM Summits are among the largest gathering of countries, after the United Nations.

41. Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- ASEAN is a group of **10 South Asian nations** which came into existence on August 8, **1967 after ASEAN declaration** (also known as **Bangkok declaration**).
- It is a regional organisation that aims to promote **intergovernmental cooperation** and facilitates economic integration amongst its members.
- Its Motto is **"One Vision, One Identity, One Community"**.
- The 10 members are **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.**
- Founder countries of ASEAN are Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines and Thailand.
- The **Secretariat of ASEAN is at Jakarta, Indonesia.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the **14th ASEAN-India Summit and 11th East Asia Summit in Vientiane, Laos.**

42. East Asia Summit (EAS)

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- The East Asia Summit (EAS) is a forum held annually by leaders of, initially, 16 countries in the East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian regions.
- Membership expanded to 18 countries including the United States and Russia at the Sixth EAS in 2011.
- EAS meetings are held after annual ASEAN leaders' meetings.
- Apart from the **10 ASEAN Member states**, East Asia Summit includes **India, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, United States and Russia.**
- Since its inception in 2005, it has played a significant role in the **strategic, geopolitical and economic evolution of East Asia.**
- **India, being a founding member of the East Asia Summit**, is committed to strengthening the East Asia Summit and making it more effective for dealing with contemporary challenges.



INSIGHT
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United Nations Organisations

NOTES

1. UN Specialized Agencies

- Specialized agencies are **autonomous organizations** working with the United Nations.
- Specialized agencies **may or may not have been originally created by the United Nations**, but they are incorporated into the United Nations System by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- At present the UN has in total **15 specialized agencies** that carry out various functions on behalf of the UN.
- **The specialized agencies are listed below:**
 - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
 - International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
 - International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
 - International Labour Organization (ILO).
 - International Maritime Organization (IMO).
 - International Monetary Fund (IMF).
 - International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
 - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
 - United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).
 - Universal Postal Union (UPU).
 - World Bank Group (WBG).
 - The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD),
 - The International Finance Corporation (IFC),
 - The International Development Association (IDA),
 - The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and
 - The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).
 - World Health Organization (WHO).
 - World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
 - World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
 - World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- **Former Specialized Agencies:**
 - The only UN specialized agency to go out of existence is the **International Refugee Organization**, which existed from 1946 to 1952.
 - In 1952, it was replaced by the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** which is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly.

2. UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

- It is an **inter-governmental body** within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the **promotion and protection of human rights** around the globe and for **addressing** situations of **human rights violations** and make **recommendations** on them.

- It meets at the UN Office at Geneva.
- The Council is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly.
- The **term** of each seat is **three years**, and **no member may occupy a seat for more than two consecutive terms**.
- The council works closely with the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** and engages the United Nations' special procedures.
- The General Assembly can suspend the rights and privileges of any Council member that it decides has persistently committed gross and systematic violations of human rights during its term of membership. The suspension process requires a two-thirds majority vote by the General Assembly.
- **Russia**, facing allegations of war crimes in relation to its policies in Syria, **lost its seat on the UN Human Rights Council**.

3. International Maritime Organization (IMO)

- The International Maritime Organization – is the **United Nations specialized agency** with responsibility for the **safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships**.
- It has 171 Member States and three Associate Members.
- The IMO's primary purpose is to develop and maintain a comprehensive **regulatory framework for shipping** and its remit today includes **safety, environmental concerns, legal matters, technical co-operation, maritime security and the efficiency of shipping**.
- IMO is governed by an assembly of members and is financially administered by a council of members elected from the assembly.
- **Captain Radhika Menon, first woman captain of the Indian Merchant Navy received IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.**

4. UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

- UNCTAD is an **organ of UN General Assembly**.
- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was **established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body**.
- The organization's goals are to: "**maximize the trade, investment and development opportunities of developing countries** and assist them in their efforts to integrate into the world economy on an equitable basis."
- The conference ordinarily meets once in four years; the permanent secretariat is in Geneva.
- The first conference took place in Geneva in 1964, second in New Delhi in 1968. The **14th UNCTAD conference** (July 2016) took place at **Nairobi Kenya**.

5. International Court of Justice (ICJ)

- ICJ is the primary **judicial branch of the United Nations (UN)**.
- Seated in the Peace Palace in The **Hague, Netherlands**, the court settles **legal disputes submitted to it by states**.
- It provides **advisory opinions** on legal questions submitted to it by duly authorized international branches, agencies, and the UN General Assembly.

NOTES

- Established in **1945 by the UN Charter**, the Court began work in 1946 as the **successor to the Permanent Court of International Justice**.
- **Composition:**
 - The ICJ is composed of **fifteen judges elected to nine-year terms** by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council from a list of people nominated by the national groups in the Permanent Court of Arbitration.
 - Judges may be **re-elected for up to two further terms**.
 - Elections take place every three years, with one-third of the judges retiring each time.
 - No two judges may be nationals of the same country.
 - There is an informal understanding that the **seats will be distributed by geographic regions**.
 - The **five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council** (France, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States) **always have a judge on the Court**.
- **Jurisdiction:**
 - **All 193 UN members are automatically parties to the Court's statute**.
 - Non-UN members may also become parties to the Court's statute under the Article 93(2) procedure.

6. New Secretary-General of UN

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has formally elected **Antonio Guterres** as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations.
- He will serve for **five years** starting from January 1, 2017.
- The UN Secretary-General is the **head of the United Nations Secretariat** and is de facto spokesperson and leader of the UN.

7. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

- The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), created in December 1999, is the **successor to the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction**.
- It was established to ensure the implementation of the **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**.
- It is **part of the United Nations Secretariat** and its functions span the social, economic, environmental as well as humanitarian fields.
- UNISDR supports the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted by the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan.
- **UNISDR's vision is anchored on the four priorities for action set out in the Sendai Framework:**
 - Understanding disaster risk.
 - Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.
 - Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.
 - Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

8. United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

- India hosted the **golden jubilee celebrations of United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)**.
- UNCITRAL was **established by the UN General Assembly in 1966** to promote the progressive harmonisation and unification of international trade law.
- It is the **core legal body of the United Nations** system in the field of international trade law.
- It also aims to modernize and harmonize rules on international business.
- The Commission comprises 60 member States elected by the United Nations General Assembly for a term of six years.
- Membership is structured to ensure representation of the world's various geographic regions and its principal economic and legal systems.
- **India is a founding member of UNCITRAL**. India is only one of eight countries which have been a member of UNCITRAL since its inception. In 2016 it was re-elected for a term of six years (2016-2022).

9. Indian elected to UN International Law Commission

- **Aniruddha Rajput**, a young Indian lawyer, has been **elected to the UN International Law Commission**. He bagged the highest number of votes in the **Asia-Pacific group**.
- Aniruddha Rajput is among 34 individuals elected by the **UN General Assembly** as members of the International Law Commission that is tasked with the progressive **development of international law and its codification**.
- The **five-year term** of the newly elected members commenced from January 2017.
- The members to the Geneva-based body have been **elected from five geographical groupings** of Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Caribbean and Western Europe.
- The commission was established by the UNGA in 1947.

10. UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

- UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- In July 2010, the **United Nations General Assembly created UN Women**, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
- The creation of UN Women came about as part of the **UN reform agenda**.
- **It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment:**
 - Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW).
 - International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).
 - Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI).
 - United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

- **The main roles of UN Women are:**
 - To **support inter-governmental bodies** in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
 - To help Member States to implement these standards, provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
 - To hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.
- Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and the United Nations Entity of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

11. World Food Programme (WFP)

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is the **food assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.**
- The WFP strives to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, with the **ultimate goal in mind of eliminating the need for food aid itself.**
- It is **a member of the United Nations Development Group** and part of its Executive Committee.
- Born in 1961, WFP pursues a vision of the world in which every man, woman and child has access at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life.
- The WFP is governed by an **Executive Board which consists of representatives from member states.**
- The **WFP operations are funded by voluntary donations from world governments, corporations and private donors.**
- WFP food aid is also directed to **fight micronutrient deficiencies, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat disease, including HIV and AIDS.**

International Banks / International Financial Institutions

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1. Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- It is a **regional development bank** established on **22 August 1966** and is **headquartered in Philippines**.
- It aims to facilitate **economic development of countries in Asia**. It also aims for an **Asia and Pacific free from poverty**.
- **Membership and voting:**
 - The bank admits the members of the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP**, formerly known as the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East) and **non-regional developed countries**.
 - Currently, it has **67 members** – of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- ADB was **modelled closely on the World Bank, and has a similar weighted voting system** where votes are distributed in proportion with member's capital subscriptions.
- **Funding:**
 - ADB raises funds through **bond issues on the world's capital markets**.
 - ADB also rely on its **members' contributions**, retained earnings from its lending operations, and the repayment of loans.
 - **Japan holds the largest proportions of shares at 15.67%**.
 - The United States holds 15.56%, China holds 6.47%, **India holds 6.36%**, and Australia holds 5.81%.
- **Board of Governors:**
 - It is the highest **policy-making body** of the bank.
 - It is composed of **one representative from each member state**.
 - The Board of Governors also elect the bank's President who is the chairperson of the Board of Directors and manages ADB.
- **Loans:**
 - It offers both **Hard Loans and Soft loans**.
 - The ADB offers "hard" loans from **ordinary capital resources (OCR)** on commercial terms.
 - **The Asian Development Fund (ADF)** affiliated with the ADB extends "soft" with concessional conditions.
- **ADB focuses on five core areas of operations:** infrastructure; the environment, including climate change; regional cooperation and integration; finance sector development; and education.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a **\$500-million loan to build a bridge across the Ganga in Bihar**.
- Details:
 - The 9.8-km road bridge in Bihar will be **India's longest river bridge** and will provide vital transport link between the northern and southern parts of the State and neighbouring Nepal.

2. BRICS' New Development Bank

- It is a **multilateral development bank** operated by the **BRICS countries**

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(Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

- It is seen as an **alternative to the existing US-dominated World Bank and International Monetary Fund.**
- The New Development Bank was agreed to by BRICS leaders at the **5th BRICS summit held in Durban, South Africa in 2013.**
- The bank will be headquartered in **Shanghai, China.**
- Unlike the World Bank, which assigns votes based on capital share, in the New Development Bank **each participant country will be assigned one vote and none of the countries will have veto power.**
- BRICS' New Development Bank **headed by eminent Indian banker K V Kamath.**
- **What it does?**
 - The New Development Bank will mobilise resources for **infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries**, to supplement existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.
- The Union Cabinet has given its nod to **Exim Bank of India** for entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU on general cooperation with the New Development Bank (NDB).**)
 - The MoU is a **non-binding umbrella agreement** aimed at establishing a cooperation framework in accordance with the national laws and regulations, besides **skills transfer and knowledge sharing** amongst the signatories.

3. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

- The AIIB was established as a **new multilateral financial institution** aimed at providing “financial support for **infrastructure development in the Asia – Pacific region.**”
- It was founded in October, 2014, with its **headquarters in Beijing.**
- Its goals are also to boost economic development in the region, create wealth, prove infrastructure, and promote regional cooperation and partnership.
- The value of AIIB's **authorized capital amounts to \$100 billion**, with almost \$30 billion invested by China.
- **China, India and Russia are the three largest shareholders of AIIB**, taking 30.34%, 8.52%, 6.66% stake respectively. Their voting shares are 26.06%, 7.5% and 5.92% respectively.
- The share of non-Asian countries is restricted to a maximum of 30 per cent.
- The AIIB has a total of 57 members including 37 regional and 20 non-regional prospective founding members. **India is the founding member of AIIB.**

4. African Development Bank (AfDB)

- The African Development Bank (AfDB) was established in **1963.**
- **India became member of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in 1983.**
- Member governments are officially represented at the AfDB by their **Minister of Finance.**

- The Union Finance Minister and Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance are the Governor and Alternate Governor of the Bank respectively.
- The AfDB's mission is **to fight poverty and improve living conditions** on the continent through promoting the **investment of public and private capital** in projects and programs that are likely to contribute to the economic and social development of the region.
- **India will be hosting the next Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group in Ahmedabad in May 2017.**

5. International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an **international organisation headquartered in Washington, D.C.**
- Working to **foster global monetary cooperation**, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and **sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty** around the world.
- Formed in 1944 at the **Bretton Woods Conference**, it came into formal existence in 1945.
- It now plays a central role in the **management of balance of payments difficulties** and international financial crises.
- Countries contribute funds to a pool through a **quota system** from which countries experiencing balance of payments problems can borrow money.
- **India is the founding member of IMF.**
- **Executive Board:**
 - **24 Executive Directors** make up Executive Board. The Executive Directors represent all **187 member countries** in a geographically based roster.
 - Countries with large economies have their own Executive Director, but most countries are grouped in constituencies representing four or more countries.
 - **The IMF is led by a managing director**, who is head of the staff and serves as Chairman of the Executive Board.
- **Voting power:**
 - Voting power in the IMF is based on a **quota system**.
 - A member's quota in the IMF determines the amount of its subscription, its voting weight, its access to IMF financing, and its allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs).
 - **United States** has by far the **largest share of votes** (approx. 16.5 percent) amongst IMF members.
- **IMF Reforms:**
 - The IMF reforms came into effect on January 27 which was approved by it in 2010.
 - **India's voting rights increased to 2.6 per cent from the current 2.3 per cent**, and China's, to six per cent from 3.8.
 - More than six per cent of the quota shares will shift to emerging and developing countries from the U.S. and European countries.
 - **The reforms bring India and Brazil into the list of the top 10**

members of IMF, along with the U.S, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, China and Russia.

- **International Monetary and Finance Committee (IMFC):**
 - The IMFC has 24 members, drawn from the pool of 187 governors.
 - Its **structure mirrors that of the Executive Board and its 24 constituencies**. As such, the IMFC represents all the member countries of the Fund.
 - The Committee **discusses matters of common concern affecting the global economy** and also advises the IMF on the direction its work.
 - There is no formal voting at the IMFC, which operates by consensus.
 - Although the **IMFC has no formal decision-making powers**, in practice, it has become a key instrument for **providing strategic direction to the work and policies of the Fund**.

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International Events

1. Brexit

- People of United Kingdom (UK) in a historic **Brexit referendum** voted in favour of leaving European Union (EU).
- This is the **second referendum on UK's relationship with the EU**.
- In 1975, in a referendum on whether the UK should stay or leave the EU, the country voted for staying with 67.2% votes.
- The vote to leave the EU now has triggered a **two-year 'withdrawal process'** which will determine the future of UK's relationship with the EU.
- At the end of withdrawal process, UK exits the single market, and then EU countries will start imposing tariffs on British products.
- **Exit Process:**
 - Under the **Lisbon treaty**, a member state wishing to leave the EU should first notify the European Council its decision, triggering **Article 50**.
 - This would set in motion a process by which the member and the EU leadership will negotiate the terms of the departure and reach an agreement in two years.
 - This means even if the British government invokes the Article 50 now, the earliest exit of Britain will take place after two years.
- **Is there any other option?**
 - Some economists have suggested that one of the options Britain could follow in the wake of a Brexit vote is the **Norway model**.
- **What is Norway model?**
 - **Norway, along with Liechtenstein and Iceland** are members of the **European Economic Area (EEA)**.
 - They have access to the single market while staying out of the EU.
 - They also make contributions to the EU budget.
 - There is separate secretariat in Brussels to manage the relationship between the EU and EEA countries.

2. Astana Expo 2017

- **Expo 2017** is an International Exposition which was held in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- The theme chosen for the Expo 2017 is "**Future Energy**".
- The main Theme of the Expo is to **showcase cutting edge technologies**. The subtitle for the Exhibition is '**Reducing Co2 emission**'.
- **India's solar dome project** was nominated for display in the Astana Expo 2017.

3. South China Sea Dispute

- The **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)** in The Hague, Netherlands, has ruled that **China's claims of historical rights over South China Sea (SCS) have no legal basis**.
- China has boycotted the hearings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration, saying it does not have jurisdiction to decide on the matter.

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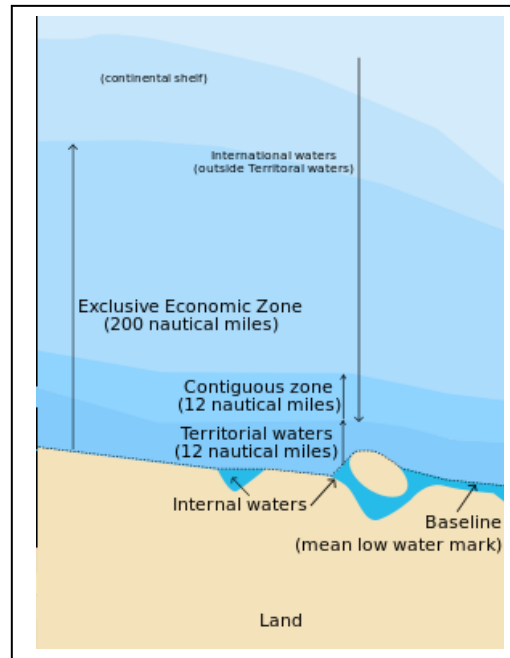
- **Background:**

- The case against China was **initiated by the Philippines.**
- The Philippines formally lodged its arbitration case under the **United Nations' 1982 Convention of the Law of the Sea, known as UNCLOS**, in January 2013.



- **What did the arbitration panel rule?**

- It said **Beijing “had no historic rights** to resources in the waters of the South China Sea”
- “Such rights were extinguished to the extent they were **incompatible with the exclusive economic zones** provided for in the Convention.”



- **So what is the dispute about?**

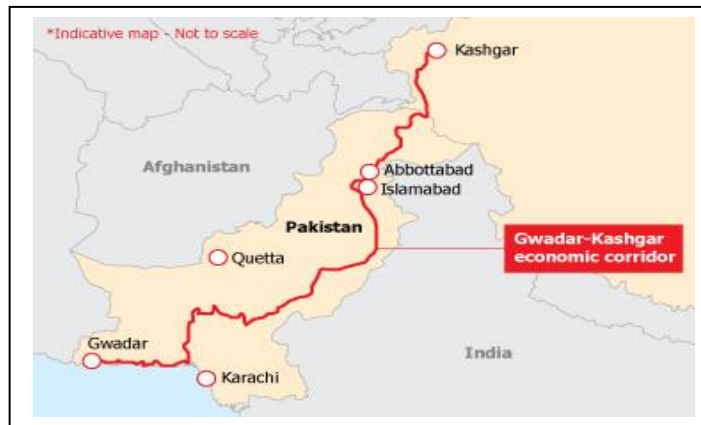
- There are a few hundred small islands in the SCS, a part of the Pacific Ocean.
- Some of the main ones are **Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands and Scarborough Shoal** — the bone of contention between *China and the Philippines.*
- **China claims most of these islands as its own.**
- Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.
- China has said it will not permit other nations to infringe on what it considers its sovereign rights in the strategically vital area.

- **What is the ‘nine-dash’ line?**

- The ‘nine-dash line’ stretches hundreds of kilometers south and east of its southerly **Hainan Island, covering the strategic Paracel and Spratly island chains.**
- China buttresses its claims by citing 2,000 years of history when the two island chains were regarded as its integral parts.

4. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

- The 3,000-km CPEC connecting ancient Chinese trading town Kashgar with Pakistan's Gwadar Port through PoK is stated to cost \$46 billion.
- This project will shorten the route for China's energy imports from the Middle East by about 12,000 kms.
- CPEC is intended to rapidly **modernize Pakistani infrastructure** and strengthen its economy by the construction of: modern transportation networks, numerous energy projects, and special economic zones.
- The project includes building of highways, railways as well as pipelines.
- It is among the **six economic corridors conceived under China's Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road i.e, OBOR Initiative.**
- The CPEC will give **China land access to the Indian Ocean**, cutting the nearly 13,000 km sea voyage through the Strait of Malacca and around India to 2,000 km road journey from Gwadar to Kashgar.
- **India's Concerns:**
 - **CPEC passes through the PoK**, which we consider as our territory and construction of CPEC would further strengthen the Pakistan's claim over the region.
 - China's presence in the strategic location of PoK as a connecting point to South, West, Central and East Asia may **limit the India's outreach to the Eurasian region.**
 - Gwadar port further expands the **China's "String of Pearls"**.



5. Syrian Army recaptures historic city of Palmyra from ISIS

- The **liberation of the historic city of Palmyra from the ISIS terror group** was undertaken by joint efforts of Syrian Army with support of national aviation and Russian Aerospace Forces.
- **About Palmyra:**
 - Palmyra is a **UNESCO designated World Heritage site** and home to some of the world's most magnificent ancient ruins.
 - The city is mentioned in the **Hebrew Bible** and was eventually incorporated into the Roman Empire, before passing to almost all empires to have operated in the region over some 2,000 years.
 - Ancient city of Palmyra dates back to the **first and second Century when it was under Roman rule.**
 - Palmyra was **once a Silk Road hub** and one of the cultural centres of the ancient world.
 - It is home to some of the most beautiful and well-preserved ruins of antiquity, including the **Temple of Bel, built in 1st century.**

Military Exercises

1. Malabar naval exercises

- It is a **trilateral naval exercise** involving the **United States, Japan and India** as permanent partners.
- **Originally a bilateral exercise** between India and the United States, **Japan became a permanent partner in 2015.**
- The navies of India, Japan and the U.S. conducted the annual **Malabar naval exercises** in Japan, close to islands contested by China.
- In **2016 it is the 20th edition** of the exercise, and the first after the formal expansion of the bilateral exercise to a trilateral.
- The primary aim of this exercise is to **increase interoperability among the three navies** and develop common understanding of procedures for maritime security operations.

2. Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)

- The **United States-led biennial maritime warfare exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)** was held in **Hawaii**, bringing together 27 countries around the Pacific Ocean to increase their interoperability at sea.
- 2016 RIMPAC, the 25th time it has been held, is the largest ever in scale since the regional exercise was first held in 1971.
 - Participating countries include **India, South Korea, China, Japan and Singapore** as well as European nations like Denmark, France, Germany and Britain.
- Indian Navy's association with RIMPAC commenced with participation as an 'Observer' in 2006, 2010 and 2012.
- **In 2014, Indian Naval participation was enhanced** with deployment of Indian Naval ship **Sahyadri** in the 24th edition of the exercise.

3. Operation Megh Prahar

- The battle exercise "Operation Megh Prahar" has been conducted by **Indian Army** on the banks of the Yamuna River.
- Megh Prahar would help in **testing the effectiveness of the T-90 & BMP-2 tanks of the Army in fighting along river obstacles.**

4. PRABAL DOSTYK – 16

- It is a joint exercise between **Indian & Kazakhstan Army.**
- The exercise was conducted in **Karaganda region of Kazakhstan.**
- The primary aim of the exercise will be to **enhance interoperability** while undertaking **Counter Terrorism & Counter Insurgency Operations** in rural & semi-urban environment under the umbrella of United Nations.
- 'Prabal Dostyk' meaning '**Robust Friendship**' will be a significant step towards fostering military as well as diplomatic ties between both countries.

5. Exercise YUDH ABHYAS 2016

- It is a **joint military training exercise of Indian and US Armies.**
- It was conducted at Chaubattia, Uttarakhand.
- It is the **12th edition** of the joint military exercise hosted alternately by the

two countries.

- The purpose of the exercise is to **counter insurgency and counter terrorism (CICT) in mountainous terrain under UN charter.**

6. INDRA-2016

- The **9th edition** of exercise INDRA NAVY, an annual bilateral maritime exercise between **Indian Navy and Russian Navy** was held in the Bay of Bengal.
- Main focus of this edition of the joint exercise is on **'Counter-Terrorism Operations** in semi mountainous and jungle terrain **under United Nations Mandate'**.
- Indra series of bilateral exercises is one of the major bilateral defence cooperation initiatives between India and Russia **since 2003.**

7. Druzhba-2016

- It is the **first military exercise between Russia and Pakistan** which recently began in Pakistan.
- It aims at bolstering and building **military cooperation** between the two countries.

8. Hand-in-Hand 2016

- It is a **joint military exercise between India and China** which recently began in Pune. India has organised this joint military exercise.
- The exercise is aimed at sharing the expertise in drills and practices while **tackling insurgency and terrorism** and thereby **promote healthy military-to-military relations** between India and China.
- This is the **sixth such joint exercise** being organised between the two countries.
- First such exercise was held in China at Kunming of Yunnan province in 2007.

9. Surya Kiran XI

- **Indo-Nepal Joint Military Exercise** Surya Kiran-X was held Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.
- The Surya Kiran series of Exercises are being conducted annually, alternatively in Nepal and India.
- Surya Kiran series with Nepal is the **largest in terms of troop's participation.**

10. Sampriti-7

- It is a 14-day joint military exercise by **Bangladesh and India.**
- It is to practise **counter-terrorism and disaster-management** operations.
- The joint exercise will simulate a scenario where both nations are working together in a counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism environment under the **U.N. Charter.**
- The first exercise in this series was held at Jorhat in **Assam in 2010.**

11. Konkan 16

- The annual bilateral **maritime exercise** Konkan 16 between the **Indian Navy**

and the Royal Navy (British Navy) was held in Mumbai and Goa.

- Exercise **KONKAN**, named after the **Western coastal region** of India, was institutionalised in **2004**.
- The exercise will involve sharing of best practices and lessons learnt from recent operations, especially in the field of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (**HADR**) and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (**NEO**).

12. EKUVERIN

- **Seventh edition of Exercise EKUVERIN** was held at Kadhdhoo, Laamu Atoll, Maldives.
- The Exercise is a 14 day platoon level **joint military exercise** between the **Indian Army & the Maldives National Defence Force** conducted on a yearly basis.
- The aim of the exercise is to conduct military training with emphasis on amphibious & counter insurgency/ counter terrorism operations with a view to enhance interoperability between the two armies.
- The previous edition of the exercise was held in India at Trivandrum, Kerala.

13. Khanjar-IV

- During the recently held bilateral talks, **India and Kyrgyzstan** had finalised plans for joint military exercises **Khanjar-IV** at Kok Jhangak, Kyrgyzstan.
- The “Khanjar-II” exercises were held in March 2015 in Kyrgyzstan and “Khanjar-III” in March-April 2016 in **Gwalior**.

14. TROPEX 17

- The **Indian Navy’s Annual Theatre Readiness Operational Exercise (TROPEX)** has begun off the Western Seaboard.
- The exercise is aimed at **testing combat readiness of the combined fleets** of the Indian Navy, and the assets of the Indian Air Force, Indian Army and the Indian Coast Guard.
- It will also **strengthen inter-operability** and joint operations in a complex environment.

15. Al Nagah-II 2017

- The armies of **India and Oman** conducted their **second bilateral exercise**, Al Nagah-II 2017, in March with a focus on counter-terrorism.
- The **navies** of the two countries have been holding the bilateral maritime exercises called ‘**Naseem Al Bahr**’ since 1993.

16. Desert Eagle II

- Desert Eagle II is the bilateral exercises between **Indian Air Force (IAF) and United Arab Emirates Air Force (UAE AF)**.
- These air combat exercises provide exposure towards mission planning and execution in a simulated high threat combat environment, apart from building bonhomie with friendly Air Forces of India and United Arab Emirates (UAE).

17. Other Military Exercises

Red Flag	Air Forces of India and the U.S.
Harimau Shakti	India and Malaysia
Exercise Nomadic Elephant	Indo-Mongolia joint training Exercise
Exercise Shakti	Indian and French armies
Indradhanush exercises	India and UK air force
IBSAMAR	Navies of India, Brazil, South Africa
Cobra Gold	Asia's largest multinational drill held in Thailand every year and is among the largest multinational military exercise in which the United States participates. For the first time, India has participated in the Cobra Gold 2016
Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)	India-Indonesia Bilateral Maritime Exercise
LAMITYE	Indian Army and the Seychelles People's Defence Forces (SPDF)
Simbex	Indian Navy with Singapore Navy

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Miscellaneous

1. UNGA-HIV

- **UNGA member states** have adopted a **new political declaration**, including time-bound global targets, to be reached over the next five years and **end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030**.
- **India has proposed a five-point strategy to end AIDS**. The five point strategy includes:
 - Adoption of the fast-track target.
 - Reaching 90 per cent of all people in need with HIV treatment.
 - Commitment to maintain the TRIPS flexibilities.
 - Creating an inclusive society with programmes that work towards restoring the respect and dignity of individuals.
 - Global solidarity.

2. Big Brother Law

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin** has given his assent to the **legislation consisting of a package of controversial anti-terror amendments**.
- The legislation is dubbed as **Big Brother law**.
- Some of the Controversial **provisions in the law**:
 - **Tougher sentences for extremism and heightened electronic surveillance of Russian citizens**.
 - Telecommunications operators are required to **store recordings** of their customers' phone calls and text messages for six months.
 - Messaging services such as Facebook and Telegram have to provide **decryption keys** to Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB.

3. One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative

- The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road also known as One Belt, One Road is a development strategy and framework initiative of China that focuses on **connectivity and cooperation among countries primarily between the People's Republic of China and the rest of Eurasia**.
- It consists of two main components, the land-based "**Silk Road Economic Belt**" (SREB) and oceangoing "**Maritime Silk Road**" (MSR).
- The coverage area of the initiative is **primarily Asia and Europe**, encompassing around 60 countries. **Oceania and East Africa** are also included.



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- (OBOR) initiative aims to connect major Eurasian economies through **infrastructure, trade and investment**.
- The “**Belt**” is a network of **overland road and rail routes**, oil and natural gas pipelines, and other infrastructure projects that will stretch from Xi’an in central China through Central Asia and ultimately reach as far as Moscow, Rotterdam, and Venice.
- The “**Road**” is its **maritime equivalent**: a network of planned **ports and other coastal infrastructure projects** that dot the map from South and Southeast Asia to East Africa and the northern Mediterranean Sea.

4. Chabahar port

- It is located on the **Makran coast, Chabahar in southeastern Iran**.
- Its location lies in the **Gulf of Oman**.
- This coast is a relatively underdeveloped free trade and industrial zone, especially when compared to the sprawling port of **Bandar Abbas** further west.
- Also, it is the **only Iranian port with direct access to the ocean**.
- **For India, Chabahar is of strategic importance for the following reasons:**
 - It is the **nearest port to India on the Iranian coast**, which provides **access to the resources and markets of Afghanistan and Central Asia**.
 - It is located 76 nautical miles (less than 150km) west of the **Pakistani port of Gwadar**, being developed by China. This makes it ideal for keeping track of Chinese or Pakistani military activity based out of Gwadar.
 - Also, Chabahar port acts as link with **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** to which India is one of the initial signatories.
 - The port will cut transport costs/time for Indian goods by a third.
 - From Chabahar, the existing Iranian road network can link up to Zaranj in Afghanistan, about 883 kms from the port.
 - The **Zaranj-Delaram road constructed** by India in 2009 can give access to Afghanistan’s Garland Highway, setting up road access to four major cities in Afghanistan — Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif.



5. Sri Lanka is malaria free

- The World Health Organisation has certified that Sri Lanka is a malaria-free nation.
- Sri Lanka had been among the most malaria-affected countries in the mid-

20th century.

- The country had begun an anti-malaria campaign that successfully targeted the mosquito-borne parasite that causes the disease, not just mosquitoes.

6. International Literacy day

- Celebrated on **September 8**, 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of International Literacy Day and **UNESCO is celebrating** it under the banner “**Reading the Past, Writing the Future**”.
- Fifty years ago, UNESCO officially proclaimed 8 September International Literacy Day to actively **mobilize the international community and to promote literacy as an instrument to empower individuals, communities and societies**.
- **Literacy is a part of Sustainable Development Goal 4**, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.
- The target is that by 2030 all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
- **Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL)**
 - **Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL)** has been launched as part of International Literacy Day.
 - This is a new and ambitious initiative to make all major stakeholders pull together to **promote literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning**.
 - It aims to mobilize **investment and promote innovative initiatives**, with a focus on gender and new information and communication technologies.

7. Nuclear Triad

- **India has completed its nuclear triad** by inducting the **indigenously built strategic nuclear submarine INS Arihant into service**.
- With this India joins the **select group of countries which have a nuclear triad, i.e. capable of delivering nuclear weapons by aircraft, ballistic missiles and submarine launched missiles**.
- **What does this mean for the world?**
 - India’s deployment of a nuclear-armed submarine **could put the nation into a naval arms race with regional powers**, potentially prompting China to assist its nuclear-armed allies Pakistan and North Korea in developing similar technologies.
 - **Both India and China subscribe to a No First-Use policy on nuclear weapons**. They regard nuclear-armed submarines as a deterrence aimed at preventing the outbreak of war.
- **Which other countries have nuclear-armed submarines?**
 - The UK, USA, France, Russia and China already have nuclear-armed submarines.

8. ICN 2018 Annual Conference

- Recognising the growing stature of Competition Commission of India (CCI) in

the world, **International Competition Network (ICN)** has accepted that **Competition Commission of India would host the 2018 ICN Annual Conference.**

- CCI has also been inducted as an **ex-officio member of the steering group member of the ICN** for a period of 3 years.
- **About ICN:**
 - ICN is an **international body** comprising 132 members from 120 competition jurisdictions exclusively devoted to **international competition enforcement.**
 - ICN provides **competition authorities** with a specialised platform for **addressing practical competition concerns**, sharing experiences and adopting international best practices.
 - Its **members** are national competition authorities and NGA (Non-governmental Advisers) which include reputed law firms, eminent persons, and think tanks of international repute.
 - The ICN holds an Annual Conference which is hosted by a member competition agency.
 - **CCI is a member of the ICN since 2003.**

9. PETROTECH – 2016

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated **India's flagship biennial international oil and gas conference and exhibition, PETROTECH-2016.**
- Petrotech is Asia's largest oil and gas event.
- The theme for this event is **"Hydrocarbons to fuel the future – Choices and Challenges"**.
- This global event aims at bringing Energy Ministers, industry leaders, professionals, academicians and domain experts from the energy sector on a common platform.

10. Extradition

- Extradition refers to the **surrender of a criminal to one country by another.**
- The process of extradition is **regulated by treaties between the two countries.**
- **What are the internationally accepted conditions for extradition?**
 - The crime done by the accused should fall in the category of **dual criminality.** This means that it should be a punishable offence according to the laws of both countries – the one where the accused has taken refuge, and the one that seeks extradition.
 - **Persons charged for political reasons are generally not extradited.**
 - There are countries where capital punishment is banned. If a fugitive has taken refuge in such a country, and if the establishment of that country thinks that, if extradited, the accused might get capital punishment, the country most likely refuses to extradite.
- **Extradition laws in India:**
 - In India, the **Extradition Act, 1962**, regulates the surrender of a person to another country or the request for arrest of a person in a foreign land.

- The process of extradition is to be initiated by the **central government**. Currently, India has extradition treaties with 38 countries.
- If there is no treaty with the country from which the fugitive is to be extradited, in such a scenario, a lot depends on the cooperation and coordination between different authorities of the two countries.
- If the extradition request comes from two or more countries, then the government has the right to take the call to decide which country is fittest for the request.
- Since 2002, India has extradited 44 fugitive criminals to various countries. On the contrary, India has got 61 criminals extradited to itself from different countries since 2002.

NOTES



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