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SUMMARY**

**22 MAY 2024**

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# IRANIAN PRESIDENT'S DEATH AND ITS IMPACT ON GEOPOLITICS

## Syllabus: International Relations

**Context:** Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash raises questions on middle east geopolitics.

### About Ebrahim Raisi:

Born December 14, 1960, he rose from a **clerical family in Mashhad, Iran**, to hold prominent positions in the government, including Tehran's prosecutor and Iran's judiciary chief. He ran for presidency in 2017 and won in 2021.

Notably, **he strengthened ties with Russia and China** while resuming diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. His support for **Palestine and alleged involvement in human rights violations** drew international attention. As president, he faced **criticism for crackdowns on protests and escalated conflicts** with Israel and the West.

### Iranian Internal Politics:

In Iran, politics has long been defined by a **struggle between conservatives (to which Raisi belonged) and reformists** since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Conservatives advocate **strict adherence to Shi'ite Islam's** principles and view the Revolution as anti-Western imperialism, enjoying support from poorer sectors.

**Reformists, while loyal to the Revolution**, seek greater flexibility domestically and internationally, advocating for women's rights, civil society, free elections, and improved relations with the West. Despite economic challenges from sanctions, conservatives have largely retained power, even amidst protests.

### Impact of his death:

- Iran's Political Structure:** The President operates under the Supreme Leader's authority, with upcoming elections within 50 days. Since Iran has a robust public institution, smooth transition is anticipated. Constitutional provisions dictate Mohammad Mokhber, Iran's First Vice President, assumes the acting presidency.
- Global Implications:** Iran's policies towards South Asia and Arab states are expected to persist. Gold prices surged post-Raisi's death, reflecting global market concerns.
- Impact on India:** Chabahar Port development might slow, affecting global oil markets due to Iran's significant production. Increased oil prices could impact India's economy. Potential tensions in West Asia could further influence India, depending on developments.

### Different aspects of India-Iran Relations:

Aspect	Details
<b>Historical Relations</b>	Millennia-long interactions, dating back to ancient times. Trade between southern Iran and India through Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea
<b>Political Relations</b>	Friendship treaty signed in 1950; Tehran Declaration (2001) and New Delhi Declaration (2003) set strategic vision; Trilateral Agreement on Trade, Transport, and Transit
<b>Connectivity</b>	MoU signed in 2015 for Shahid Beheshti Port development at Chabahar; Strategic cooperation for Chabahar Port as regional and international hub
<b>Trade Relations</b>	Bilateral trade reached <b>US\$2.5 billion</b> in 2022; India among Iran's top trade partners; Major Indian exports: rice, tea, sugar, pharmaceuticals, electrical machinery, artificial jewelry; Major imports: dry fruits, chemicals, glassware
<b>Cultural Cooperation</b>	Civilizational links foster robust people-to-people ties; Indian Cultural Centre renamed Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC); Farsi included in New Education Policy as classical language

<b>Energy Security</b>	Iran ranks 2nd globally in gas reserves; Iran presents opportunity for fuel diversification, decarbonization, and gas share in India's energy mix
<b>Strategic Importance (For India)</b>	Strategic location between Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea; Provides alternative connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asian republics; Access to crude oil and natural gas reserves
<b>Strategic Importance (For Iran)</b>	Access to large market for oil sales; Improving trade ties and investment opportunities in India; India can be leveraged for its ties with West as India enjoys good relations with most of the countries.
<b>Areas of Convergence</b>	<b>Engagement with Afghanistan:</b> Potential for common policy with open channels to Taliban; <b>Rebalancing in West Asia:</b> Opportunity to strengthen ties amid regional dynamics

For: [Israel-Iran Conflicts: Challenges and Solutions: Click Here](#)

### Challenges:

Indo-Iranian ties have faced challenges, including **India's halt of oil imports from Iran** due to U.S. sanctions post the Iran nuclear deal revocation in May 2019, impacting India's energy security. Moreover, **India's close relations with Israel** contrast with Iran's ties with China, underlined by a 25-year strategic partnership agreement. Additionally, **Iran-backed Houthis** in Yemen have targeted Saudi Arabia and UAE, both key partners of India. **Iran's criticism of India's abrogation of Article 370**, granting special status to Kashmir, further strained relations.

### Way forward:

1. **Unlocking Bilateral Potential:** Strengthening India-Iran ties could unlock vast potential for regional and global cooperation, benefiting both nations.
2. **Cheaper Crude Oil:** Resuming oil imports from Iran could lower crude oil prices globally, benefiting multiple countries and encouraging market stability.
3. **Connectivity with Eurasia:** Enhancing cooperation on the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) could significantly reduce transit times for goods between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe, boosting trade.
4. **Energy Security:** Advancing projects like the Iran-Oman-India gas pipeline (IOI) could enhance energy security for India

### Conclusion:

**Ebrahim Raisi's tragic death** in a helicopter crash is not expected to significantly impact domestic markets unless it triggers geopolitical tensions.

India-Iran should focus on **areas of mutual interest and convergence**, working together to achieve common goals. **India's assertive diplomacy**, emphasizing cooperation with neighbors and friends, presents an opportunity for renewed engagement with Iran and unlocking vast cooperation potential. A reset in relations is timely and promising.

### Insta Link:

[Gaza conflict: India-Israel Relations](#)

### Prelims Link:

**Q) What is the importance of developing Chabahar Port by India? (UPSC 2017)**

- (a) India's trade with African countries will enormously increase.
- (b) India's relations with oil-producing Arab countries will be strengthened.
- (c) India will not depend on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- (d) Pakistan will facilitate and protect the installation of a gas pipeline between Iraq and India.

Ans: C

## ANTARCTIC PARLIAMENT MEETS IN KOCHI

**Conext:** India has hosted the **46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 46)** in **Kochi**, organized by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research through the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

### What is ATCM (also called Antarctic Parliament)

The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) is an annual gathering of the parties to the **1959 Antarctic Treaty**, including the original twelve signatories and other nations conducting significant research in Antarctica.

At this year's ATCM, **India will introduce a new working group focused on formulating regulations to monitor tourism** and protect the continent's fragile ecosystem. Representatives from the **56 member countries of the Antarctic Treaty** will attend. This is the first time India is hosting the meeting since 2007.

### Key Agenda at ATCM 46

1. Promoting peaceful governance in Antarctica.
2. Introducing a new working group to regulate tourism and mitigate its impact on the fragile ecosystem.
3. Discussing sustainable management of resources, biodiversity, research collaboration, and climate change impacts.
4. Presenting India's plan for the construction of Maitri II.

### About Antarctic Treaty

The Antarctic Treaty, **signed on December 1, 1959**, and in force since June 23, 1961, is an **international agreement governing activities in Antarctica**. It designates the continent as a **scientific preserve**, ensuring it remains exclusively for peaceful purposes. Initially signed by 12 countries, the treaty now **includes 56 signatories, with India joining in 1983**. Key provisions prohibit military activities, promote scientific cooperation, and ban nuclear explosions and radioactive waste disposal.

### India in Antarctica

Since 1983, India has been a **consultative party to the Antarctic Treaty**, participating in governance decisions. India operates three research stations: **Dakshin Gangotri (1983-1990)**, **Maitri (since 1989)**, and **Bharati (since 2012)**. India plans to establish a new station, Maitri II, by 2029. In 2022, **India enacted the Antarctic Act** to reaffirm its commitment to the treaty's principles.

## ICC ISSUES ARREST WARRANT AGAINST ISREAL'S PM AND HAMAS LEADER

**Context:** The Prosecutor of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** requested arrest warrants against leaders of Hamas and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel about the October 7, 2023 attacks and the war in Palestine.

### What is the International Criminal Court?

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a permanent international court headquartered in **The Hague, Netherlands. Established by the Rome Statute in 1998 (entered into force on July 1, 2002)**, it investigates, prosecutes, and tries individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. With 124 countries as States Parties to the Rome Statute, **India, US, China are notably not a member**. The ICC comprises **18 judges serving non-renewable 9-year terms** and operates alongside, rather than replacing, national criminal justice systems, complementing their efforts. Palestine became the 123rd member of the Rome Treaty on April 1, 2015. **Israel is not a Party to the Rome Statute.**

### Are ICC decisions binding? What happens next?

**The ICC's decisions are binding.** However, it relies on the cooperation of States for support, particularly for making arrests and transferring the arrested individuals to the ICC detention centre, for freezing assets, and enforcing sentences.

Previously, ICC issued **an arrest warrant for war crimes for President Vladimir Putin ( first time that the ICC has issued an arrest warrant against one of the five permanent members** of the United Nation Security Council)

# ICJ vs. ICC

	International Court of Justice (ICJ) La Cour Internationale de Justice (CIJ)	International Criminal Court (ICC) La Cour pénale internationale (CPI)
<b>Year Court Established</b>	1946	2002
<b>UN-Relationship</b>	Official court of the U.N., commonly referred to as the "World Court."	Independent. May receive case referrals from the UN Security Council.
<b>Location</b>	The Hague, The Netherlands	The Hague, The Netherlands
<b>Types of Cases</b>	Contentious between parties & Advisory opinions	Criminal prosecution of individuals
<b>Subject Matter</b>	Sovereignty, boundary, & maritime disputes, trade, natural resources, human rights, treaty violations, treaty interpretation, and more.	Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes of aggression
<b>Funding</b>	UN-funded.	Assessed contribution from state parties to the Rome Statute; voluntary contributions from the U.N.; voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

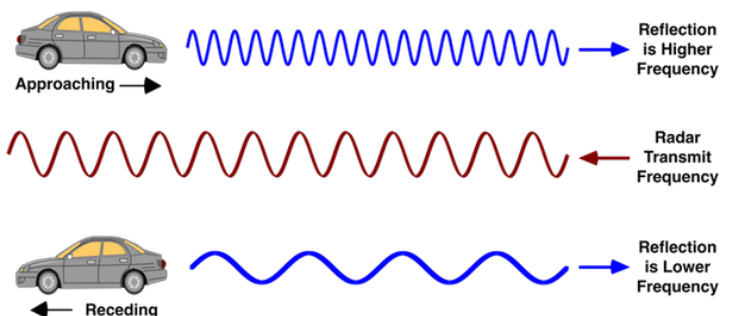
## DOPPLER RADAR SPEED GUNS

**Context:** The Consumer Affairs Ministry has **proposed new rules for radar speed guns** used to measure vehicle speeds on roads.

According to the draft rules, **radar equipment installed after the finalization of the rules must be verified and stamped within one year**. Existing equipment should also undergo verification whenever re-verification is due. Conditions are outlined for the use of speed measurement results in legal proceedings.

### About Doppler radar:

It utilizes the **Doppler effect to collect velocity data**. The Doppler effect, proposed by **Johann Christian Doppler in 1842**, describes the change in **wave frequency** when there's relative motion between a wave source and its observer. This phenomenon is observed in **sound waves and electromagnetic waves**. Doppler radar finds applications in astrophysics and vehicle speed monitoring by law enforcement.



## VENUS

**Conext:** A new study suggests that **Venus is losing water much faster than previously thought**, with researchers identifying a mechanism in the **Venusian ionosphere responsible** for this accelerated water loss.

Venus may have **once had oceans, but now only 0.002%** of its atmosphere is water vapor. The process of non-thermal hydrogen escape, where solar radiation splits water molecules and hydrogen escapes into space, is a key factor.

### About **Venus**:

Venus, the **second planet from the Sun and the closest to Earth**, is renowned as the **brightest planet** in the night sky. It lacks a satellite and its atmosphere is primarily composed of **carbon dioxide**, with clouds of sulfuric acid droplets. Notably, **Venus rotates in the opposite direction to most planets**, from east to west. Alongside Mercury, Earth, and Mars, Venus is classified as a **terrestrial planet**.

## MANIPURI PONY

**Context:** Manipur has taken decisive steps to safeguard its iconic Manipuri Pony, known as Meitei Sagol, from extinction.

### About **Meitei Sagol**:

**It is one of India's seven recognized horse and pony breeds**, and is known for its short stature yet remarkable attributes **like stamina, agility, and intelligence**. Originating from Manipur, they are esteemed as the **original polo pony**, tracing back to the traditional Sagol Kangjei sport.



However, their population faces threats such as **habitat shrinkage and the lack of polo grounds**. To address these challenges, the Manipur government declared them an **Endangered Breed in 2013** and introduced the **Manipuri Pony Conservation and Development Policy in 2016**. Recent resolutions aim to safeguard the breed, including immediate actions for pony protection, forming a task force, and conducting a comprehensive census.

## F-16 FIGHTER JET PILOTED BY AI

**Context:** In a groundbreaking development at Edwards Air Force Base, an experimental F-16 fighter jet was recently piloted by artificial intelligence (AI) rather than a human.

### **What is F-16 Fighting Falcon?**

It has been developed by **Lockheed Martin, is a multi-role fighter jet** renowned for its agility and versatility. It has been widely used by various air forces around the world since its introduction in the 1970s.


**In India, the equivalent to the F-16 is the HAL Tejas.** Developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the Tejas is a **lightweight, multirole fighter aircraft** designed for the Indian Air Force.

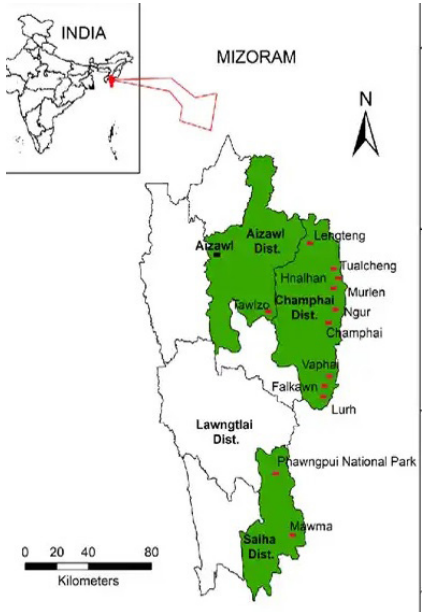
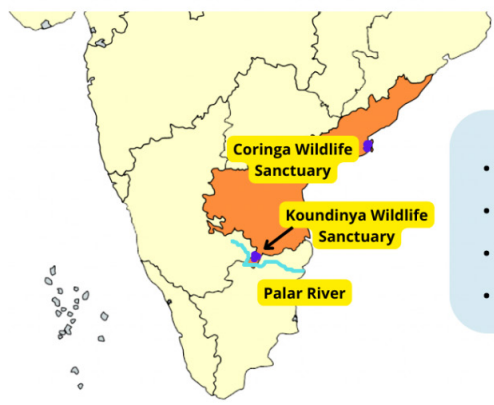

### **AI adoption in the Indian military:**

In 2019, the **Defence AI Project Agency (DAIPA) and the Defence AI Council (DAIC)** were established to oversee AI initiatives. In 2022, the government identified **75 priority projects** aimed at leveraging AI for defense purposes. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has established specialized laboratories, such as the **Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR)** in Bengaluru, dedicated to conducting application-oriented research in AI for military applications.

Mapping:

## PLACES IN NEWS

Places	Description
<b>Rotterdam, Netherlands</b>	<b>World Hydrogen Summit 2024</b> held in Rotterdam, Netherlands
	The summit featured <b>India's Ministry of New &amp; Renewable Energy</b> showcasing advancements in green hydrogen technology at its pavilion.
	<b>India's initiatives:</b> <a href="#">National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM)</a> in 2023; <a href="#">Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme (SIGHT)</a> ; <a href="#">Hydrogen Valley Innovation Clusters</a>
	Hydrogen, a colourless, odourless, tasteless, and flammable gas, is the most abundant element in the universe and the third most abundant on Earth's surface, resembling alkali metals and halogens.
	

<p><b>Phawngpui National Park of Mizoram</b></p>	<p>A rare <b>hemi-parasitic terrestrial plant (Phtheirospermum lushaiorum)</b> has been found in Phawngpui National Park of Mizoram. Lushaiorum is named after <b>“Lushai” tribe of Mizoram.</b></p> <p><b>Phawngpui National Park, also known as Phawngpui Blue Mountain National Park,</b> is one of two national parks in Mizoram, India, the other being the larger <b>Murlen National Park.</b> Located about 300 km from Aizawl in the Lawngtlai district near Burma, it encompasses Phawngpui, Mizoram’s highest peak at 2,157 meters, along with the surrounding reserve forest.</p> <p>The <b>Lushai tribe, part of the Kuki-Chin group,</b> is commonly known as Mizos and is of Mongoloid origin. Their main occupations are Jhum and orange cultivation, and they are historically known as a headhunter community. The <b>popular Bamboo Dance (Cheraw-dance)</b> is a cultural highlight. Lushai society is organized as a patrilineal joint family with patrilineal descent and inheritance rules.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<p><b>Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary (Andhra Pradesh)</b></p>	<p>The <b>Sri Lankan golden-backed frog</b> has been rediscovered in India after 200 years at Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary.</p> <p>Located in the <b>Kuppam and Palmaner Ranges of Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh,</b> it is the only sanctuary in the state known for <b>Asian elephants.</b> The Kaundinya and Kaigal tributaries of the <b>Palar River flow through it.</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p> <p>Kaundinya Wildlife Sanctuary is a wildlife sanctuary and an <b>elephant reserve</b> situated in Andhra Pradesh, India. It is the <b>only sanctuary</b> in Andhra Pradesh with a population of Asian elephants</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is also an <b>Elephant Reserve</b> located in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.</li> <li>Has <b>dry deciduous forests</b> with thorny scrubs</li> <li><b>Kaundinya and Kaigal,</b> tributaries of Palar River pass through the sanctuary.</li> <li>Kalyan Revu Water falls</li> </ul> </div>