

**IR, SECURITY  
& WORLD MAP  
PRELIMS SPECIAL**

**KSG**

An Institute For **IAS** Exam...

# YEARLY COMPILATION

(PART - 2: JANUARY - APRIL 2024)

**2024**



**BOOKLET  
2/8**

(MAY 2023 - DECEMBER 2023)

**PART ONE**



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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### Maldives Vs Lakshadweep

#### News Excerpt:

The Indian Prime Minister's visit to the Indian archipelago Lakshadweep triggered an unexpected row that has soured ties with the Maldives.

#### Background:

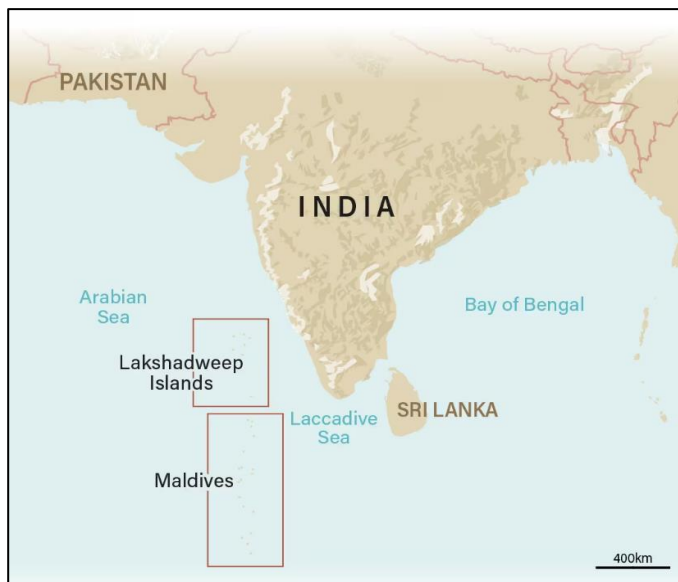
##### Maldives:

- The Maldives, an archipelago of **1,190 coral islands and sandbanks** clustered in 20-odd atolls sprawls over a patch of the North Central Indian Ocean southwest of Kerala and Sri Lanka.

##### Lakshadweep:

- Lakshadweep, which translates into Sanskrit and Malayalam as “**hundred thousand islands**”, is a group of **36 coral islands with a total area of only 32 sq km — India’s smallest Union Territory.**
- The islands, which are at distances between 220 km and 440 km from Kochi, lie to the North of the Maldives.

Both archipelagos are part of the same chain of coralline islands that extend southward beyond the equator to the **Chagos archipelago.**



#### Why is there such a vast gulf between the Maldives and Lakshadweep?

- The Lakshadweep occupies a far smaller area — **only 10 islands are inhabited** — and the scope for tourism is limited.
  - However, India has never invested in its tourism potential, in part **due to concerns over environmental damage and the destruction of local livelihoods.**

- Bangaram, the uninhabited island that the Prime Minister visited, has the largest carrying capacity of 200 cottages. Among the inhabited islands, Kavaratti has a capacity of 243 cottages.

#### Raveendran Committee

- In May 2012, the Supreme Court appointed a panel under **Justice R V Raveendran (retd)** to look into the environmental and developmental challenges on the Lakshadweep islands.
- The committee recommended that all infrastructure development proposals should be in accordance with an Integrated Island Management Plan and should be implemented in consultation with elected local self-government bodies.
- The report noted the “**fragile ecology of the islands and the need for conservation of the corals, lagoons and other ecosystems**” and laid down the carrying capacity of each island.

#### Recent development projects in Lakshadweep:

##### Fiber Optic Connectivity

- The PM of India inaugurated the Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Connection (**KLI - SOFC**) project, marking a significant leap in communication infrastructure.
- This initiative ensures internet speed enhancement by over 100 times, from 1.7 Gbps to 200 Gbps.
- The dedicated submarine optic fibre cable transforms Lakshadweep's connectivity landscape, facilitating faster and more reliable services in healthcare, education, e-governance, digital banking, digital currency usage, digital literacy etc.

##### Water Infrastructure

- The **Low-Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD)** plant at Kadmat will generate 1.5 lakh litres of clean drinking water daily.

#### Low-Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD)

- **The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** launched a program to develop LTTD technology for converting seawater into potable water, suitable for installation in the island territories and near the coastal Power Plants.
- The LTTD is a process under which the warm surface seawater is flash evaporated at low pressure, and the vapour is condensed with cold deep seawater.
- The LTTD technology does not require any chemical pre and post-treatment of seawater; thus, the pollution problems are minimal and suitable for island territories.

- This pivotal project addresses Lakshadweep's water scarcity challenges, especially significant given the minimal availability of groundwater due to its coral island nature.
- **The Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC)** in Agatti and Minicoy islands further strengthen the islands' water resources and support tourism-related opportunities.
- Under the **Swadesh Darshan scheme**, water villa projects are being developed on the **Kadmat and Suheli islands**.
- **Renewable Energy**
  - Lakshadweep also got **its first-ever battery-backed solar power project in Kavaratti**. This solar power plant aims to reduce dependency on traditional Diesel-based Power Generation, aligning with the government's commitment to sustainable and renewable energy solutions.
- **Healthcare, Education & social initiatives**
  - The foundation stone was laid for the renovation of the Primary Health Care facility in Kalpeni. The construction of five model Anganwadi Centres (Nand Ghars) on the five islands of Androth, Chetlat, Kadmat, Agatti, and Minicoy was also initiated.
  - The government distributed laptops to students and bicycles under **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**.
  - **PM Kisan Credit Cards** were distributed to farmers and fishermen beneficiaries.

## Israel & the ICJ hearing

### News Excerpt:

South Africa filed an **application with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) instituting proceedings against Israel**, alleging that Israel is committing a "Genocide."

### South Africa's Claim:

On December 29, 2023, South Africa filed the application with ICJ, basing its case on two claims:

- The first is the **scale of civilian death and destruction in Gaza**.
- The second one is about various **statements issued by Israeli officials or former officials**, which they claim **prove the necessary special intent of committing genocide**.

### What is a Genocide?

- The definition of genocide was coined in 1944 by a Jewish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin, who was a key figure in the establishment of the **United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** of 1948.

- Often seen as the "crime of crimes", genocide is defined by the **special intent to "destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group"**.
- According to ICJ, the use of force, even on a significant scale, "cannot in itself constitute an act of genocide".

### About Ratification of the Genocide Convention:

- The **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** (Genocide Convention) is an instrument of international law that codified for the first time the crime of genocide.
- The Genocide Convention was the **First Human Rights Treaty** adopted by the **General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA)** on **December 9, 1948** (effective from **Jan 1951**) and signified the international community's commitment to 'never again' after the atrocities committed during **World War II**.
  - **India** signed with it on 29 Nov 1949 and **ratified** it on **27 Aug 1959**.
- **Definition:** According to the Genocide Convention, genocide is a crime that can take place both in times of war as well as in times of peace. The definition of the crime of genocide, as set out in the Convention, has been widely **adopted at both national and international levels**, including in the 1998 Rome Statute of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**.
  - According to **Art. 94(1) of the UN Charter and Art. 60 of the Statute of the ICJ**, the decisions of the ICJ are **binding and final on the States Parties** to the case and are **not subject to appeal**.

## Controversies regarding recruitment of workers for Israel

### News Excerpt:

Labour activists and trade unions have raised concerns regarding the recruitment of Indian workers for jobs in Israel.

### Recruitment Controversy:

- **Trade Union Opposition and Legal Challenge:** Trade unions have opposed this move, citing the **Emigration Rules under the Emigration Act**. They are planning to challenge this employment drive legally.
- **Ethical Concerns and Opposition to Conflict Zone Employment:** According to the central trade unions, such a move is against the Indian ethos of bringing back citizens from conflict zones. They also pointed out that paid recruitment in a war zone facilitated by governments violates provisions of the Emigration Act.

### Emigration rules:

- **Conflict Zones Registration:** Workers going to conflict zones or places without sufficient labour protections are required to register with the Ministry of External Affairs 'e-migrate' portal.

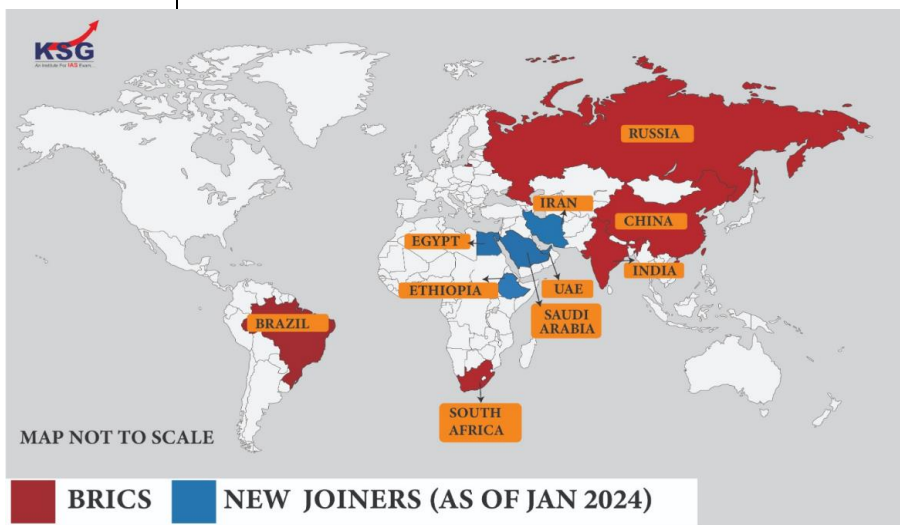
- **ECR Passport Scheme:** Passports issued under the ECR (Emigration Check Required) scheme cover workers travelling to 18 countries. Israel is not on this list, and the 'e-migrate' system will not be used for those going to Israel despite continuing violence due to Israel's bombing of Gaza.
- **Limitation on Service Charges:** The Rules say that no recruiting agent shall collect from the worker service charges more than a maximum of ₹30,000, and the service charges shall include costs of domestic travel or lodging and boarding for conducting interviews by the recruiting agent.

**International Practices for the protection of migrant workers**

- The international practices for the protection of migrant workers are governed by two conventions of the **International Labour Organisation:**
  - **The Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97):** The 1949 convention says, "Each Member for which this Convention is in force undertakes that it will, so far as national laws and regulations permit, take all appropriate steps against misleading propaganda relating to emigration and immigration. For this purpose, it will, where appropriate, act in co-operation with other Members concerned."
  - **Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143).**
- While India has **not ratified** both conventions, Israel ratified the 1949 convention in 1953.

**Significance of the new members joining the BRICS:**

- **Economic Heft:** The expansion adds economic heft to BRICS, as the new members bring significant energy resources and contribute to the group's combined GDP.
- **Global Shift:** It signifies a notable shift in the global landscape, characterized by increasing multipolarity and assertive middle powers challenging the established order.
- **Geopolitical Influence:** The expansion with new members from the Middle East and Africa enhances the geopolitical influence of the bloc, counterbalancing to Western dominance.
- **Potential for a Multipolar World:** Newly added members are energy-exporting nations, so they could help BRICS countries with their energy demands.
  - It will reshape the global order into a multipolar world, with voices from the Global South taking a more prominent role on the international stage.



**BRICS Expansion: 5 new members join**

**News Excerpt:**

Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates will become the 5 new members with its expansion.

**About BRICS:**

- In 2006, Brazil, Russia, India, and China created the "BRIC" group. South Africa joined in 2010, making it "BRICS".
- The group was designed **to bring together the world's most important developing countries to challenge the political and economic power of the wealthier nations of North America and Western Europe.**

**Weimar Triangle**

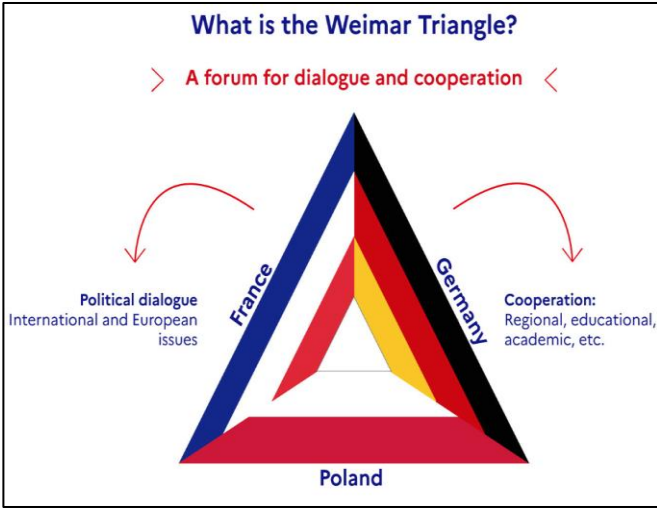
**News Excerpt:**

Poland, France, and Germany discussed reviving the Weimar Triangle, a long-dormant regional grouping that was designed to promote cooperation between the three nations.

**About Weimar Triangle:**

- It was established in the German city of Weimar in **1991**, aimed at assisting Poland's emergence from Communist rule as a platform for political cooperation among the three nations and, identifying shared fundamental interests regarding Europe's future, and extending cross-border cooperation.

- In a 10-point declaration, the ministers underscored the major responsibility the three countries shoulder for the European integration process.



**Why the need to revitalize now?**

- The Russia-Ukraine war** results are not going as per NATO, and there is a need for a further increase in military spending to support Ukraine.
- Israel-Hamas war and unrest in the Middle East**, with turmoil in West Asia increasing due to Iran-backed militia organisations like Houthis taking military actions. US attention is diverted away from Europe.
- To fight disinformation:** France, Germany and Poland would unveil a new cooperation agreement to combat

foreign disinformation operations, particularly those originating in Russia.

**India-France Ties**

**News Excerpt:**

**French President** Emmanuel Macron was the **chief guest** of the **Republic Day 2024** event. This is the **sixth time** a **French leader** has been the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations.

**About India-France ties:**

**25 years of Strategic Partnership:**

- The India-France Strategic Partnership, the **first signed** between India and any **Western country**, has strength that comes from **shared strategic autonomy**, a **desire for a multi-polar world**, and a natural **affinity for democratic values** and the **rule of law**.
  - Defence and security, civil nuclear matters, and space** constitute the principal **pillars** of this partnership, which now also includes a strong **Indo-Pacific component**.
- The **comprehensive roadmap** between India and France, which was adopted last year during the Prime Minister of India’s visit as Guest of Honour for Bastille Day, was classified under **three pillars**:
  - Partnership for Security and Sovereignty
  - Partnership for the Planet
  - Partnership for People.

**Major pillars of cooperation:**

<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France is one of the largest investors in India, with an <b>FDI inflow</b> of <b>US\$ 659.77 million</b> for <b>FY 2022-23</b> (as of June 2023).</li> <li>There are over <b>70 Indian companies</b> employing <b>over 8,000 employees</b> in France.</li> <li>For <b>FY 2023-24</b> (till August 2023), <b>Indian exports</b> to France <b>totalled \$3.06 billion</b>, and <b>imports</b> from France totalled <b>\$2.36 billion</b>.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India’s main <b>exports</b> include <b>engineering goods, petroleum products, pharmaceutical products, electronic equipment</b> and <b>ready-made garments</b>.</li> <li>The main <b>imports</b> from France are <b>aviation, machine, electrical, and chemical products</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Defence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bilateral defence cooperation is reviewed under the <b>Annual Defence Dialogue</b> (Defence Minister level) and the <b>High Committee on Defence Cooperation</b> (Secretary level).</li> <li>A Defence Research and Development Organisation (<b>DRDO</b>) <b>office</b> was opened in the <b>Embassy in France</b> in 2023 to strengthen technology cooperation.</li> <li>The procurement of <b>Rafale jets</b> as part of India’s air power is a testament to the deep defence ties.</li> <li>The <b>India-France joint defence exercises</b> have grown in scope and complexity over the years.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Varuna</b> – Naval exercise</li> <li><b>Garuda</b> – Air exercise</li> <li><b>Shakti</b> – Army exercise</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An agreement on mutual recognition of degrees was signed in 2018.</li> <li>The <b>Indo-French Campus for Health</b> was also launched in <b>2022</b> to offer double degrees.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A scheme that <b>allows Indian students</b> to stay in France for <b>up to five years</b> after finishing their <b>Master's degree</b> to look for jobs was renewed in 2023.</li> <li>• In 2023, it was agreed to <b>increase</b> the number of <b>Indian students</b> in France to <b>30,000 by 2030</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ It is estimated that there are about <b>10,000 Indian students</b> in France <b>currently</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Support on International fora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• France has continued to support <b>India's claim</b> for - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Permanent membership</b> of the United Nations Security Council (<b>UNSC</b>) and the reforms of the United Nations.</li> <li>◦ Accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (<b>NSG</b>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>France's support was vital</b> in India's accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime (<b>MTCR</b>), Wassenaar Arrangement (<b>WA</b>) and Australia Group (<b>AG</b>).</li> <li>• India and France have resolved to work together for the <b>adoption</b> of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (<b>CCIT</b>) in the UN.</li> </ul>
<b>Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for <b>over 50 years</b> between <b>ISRO</b> and the <b>French Space Agency</b>, Centre National D'Etudes Spatiales (<b>CNES</b>).</li> <li>• France remains a <b>major supplier</b> of <b>components</b> and <b>equipment</b> for the Indian space programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Civil Nuclear Cooperation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) discussions have been going on among both nations.</li> <li>• The two sides have also agreed to establish a <b>partnership</b> on Small Modular Reactors (<b>SMR</b>) and Advanced Modular Reactors (<b>AMR</b>).</li> </ul>
<b>Digital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ In 2023, the Unified Payments Interface (<b>UPI</b>) was <b>launched</b> from the <b>Eiffel Tower</b>, offering secure and convenient transactions for Indian visitors and NRIs.</li> <li>• <b>C-DAC</b> and <b>M/S Atos</b>, a European multinational IT service and consulting company based in France, has developed <b>14 supercomputers for India</b> so far, including the fastest supercomputer, <b>Param Siddhi</b>, at 4.6 petaflops/second.</li> </ul>
<b>Diaspora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainland France has an estimated <b>1,19,000 Indian community</b> (including NRIs) members, largely originating from erstwhile French colonies of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore and the States of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Punjab.</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About <b>2.5 lakh French</b> travelled to India in <b>2019</b>, while about <b>7 lakh Indians</b> visited France for tourism.</li> <li>• <b>Rajasthan</b> continues to lead among all Indian destinations for French tourists. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Foreign tourist arrivals into Rajasthan are <b>growing</b> at a <b>double digit</b> since 2016.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Myanmar's Civil War and India's Interests

### News Excerpt:

The **Arakan Army** captured **Paletwa** in the **Chin State**, which lies on Myanmar's western borders with Bangladesh and India.

### About the news:

- The town of **Paletwa** has sparked a **conflict** between the **Chin and Arakan ethnic groups**.
  - Paletwa is a **commercial town** on the **Kaladan River**, and therefore, any armed group with a significant presence in the town would **benefit** from the **economic activity** in the region.
  - Paletwa's strategic location on the **western border** makes it a good **launchpad** for **Arakan Army operations**.
- The **majority** of Paletwa's residents are **Chin**, who view the town as part of their homeland. However, some in the Rakhine State, previously known as Arakans, argue that

the town was historically part of the **Arakan Hill Tracts** during colonial rule and should have been part of their province.

### Concerns for India:

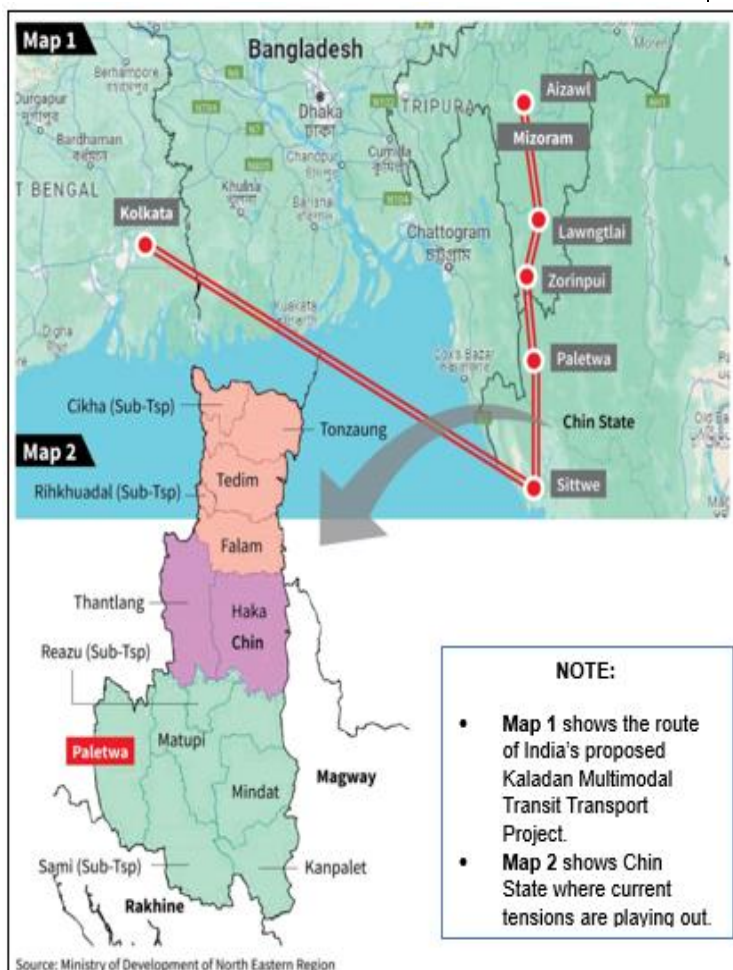
- **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP):**
  - The developments in Paletwa will impact the Indian government's Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (**KMTTP**) in Myanmar, which has already faced significant delays.
- **China's tacit support to armed groups:**
  - There are reports which suggest that the **Arakan Army** receives considerable **funding** and **military equipment** from China. If such reports are true, there will be concerns for India that **China is using armed groups** to slow down India's connectivity projects in Myanmar.

- The Arakan Army, along with the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, is part of the **Three Brotherhood alliance**. The alliance has pledged to protect Chinese investments in Myanmar.
- **China's investments in the region:**
  - China has operationalized **oil and natural gas pipelines** from the **Shwe gas fields** near Kyaukpyu in the **Rakhine State** to **Yunan province** in China.
  - Recently, China signed supplementary agreements with the Myanmar military to operationalize the **deep sea port** and a **special economic zone** near **Kyaukpyu**.
  - There were renewed efforts to construct a **railway line** from China's **Yunnan to Kyaukpyu via Mandalay** as part of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (**CMEC**).
- **Perception of Chinese influence:**
  - Unlike India, **China** is a **permanent member** of the **United Nations Security Council**, which prompts many state and non-state actors in **need of**

**international support** to be relatively more accommodating of China's concerns.

**Major reasons behind the delay:**

- The Kaladan project has been delayed for multiple reasons, including the **Rohingya crisis that erupted in 2017**.
  - The Rohingya crisis is rooted in religious and ethnic differences between the junta in Naypyidaw and Muslim Rohingyas.
- Due to COVID-19, most of the daily wagers have returned to their hometowns. Owing to the pandemic, contractors who were brought from other states in the country had been facing hardships in assembling daily wagers for the project.
- **Both Chin and Rakhine states**, through which the KMTTP runs, are **insurgency-wracked** and work on projects has been impacted by the poor security situation in the region.
  - **The rebel Arakan Army (AA) captured the Paletwa township near the Mizoram border in January.**
  - This move has also roused concern about a **tripartite conflict** involving the junta's forces, the AA, and rebels of the Chin State, **as Paletwa has traditionally been a Chin-majority township.**



**Bilateral Investment Treaty with UAE**

**News Excerpt:**

During the Indian Prime Minister's seventh visit to the Gulf kingdom, India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed **eight pacts**, including a Bilateral Investment Treaty and a framework deal to foster regional connectivity.

**What is a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)?**

- They are reciprocal agreements between two countries to **promote and protect foreign private investments in each other's territories.**
- BITs establish minimum guarantees between the two countries on the following matters:
  - Regarding the treatment of foreign investments, such as national treatment (treating foreign investors at par with domestic companies)
  - Fair and equitable treatment (in accordance with international law)
  - Protection from expropriation (limiting each country's ability to take over foreign investments in its territory)

**Pacts Signed:**

- **Bilateral Investment Treaty:** This agreement will be a key enabler for further promoting investments in both countries. India has signed both a Bilateral Investment



Treaty and a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with UAE.

- **MoU on cooperation in the field of electricity interconnection and trade:** This opens new areas of collaboration in the field of energy, including energy security and energy trade.
- **Inter-governmental Framework Agreement concerning Cooperation for the Empowerment and Operation of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor:** This would build on previous understandings and cooperation on this matter and foster India and the UAE cooperation, furthering regional connectivity.
- **MoU on Cooperation in Digital Infrastructure Projects:** This will create a framework for wide-ranging cooperation, including investment cooperation, in the digital infrastructure sector and facilitate the sharing of technical knowledge, skills, and expertise.
- **Cooperation Protocol between the National Library and Archives of the UAE and the National Archives of India:** This protocol will shape extensive bilateral cooperation in this field, including restoration and preservation of archival material.
- **MoU on Development of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC):** This would foster engagement between the two countries aimed at supporting the Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat.
- **Agreement on interlinking of the instant payment platforms – UPI (India) and AANI (UAE):** This will facilitate seamless cross-border transactions between the two countries. This follows the MoU on interlinking payment and messaging systems signed in July last year during Hon'ble PM's visit to Abu Dhabi.
- **Agreement on inter-linking domestic debit/credit cards – RuPay (India) with JAYWAN (UAE):** An important step in building financial sector cooperation, this will enhance the universal acceptance of RuPay across the UAE.

## India Oman Defence Sector Collaboration

### News Excerpt:

**India and Oman** signed an **agreement** that would provide a framework for collaboration in new areas of **defence engagement**.

### About the News:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) was signed at the **India-Oman** Joint Military Cooperation Committee (**JMCC**) meeting in Muscat.
- The two sides also comprehensively reviewed their **defence cooperation** and explored ways to boost their shared **strategic interests**.

- Both countries also discussed the overall situation in West Asia, including **security concerns** arising out of the targeting of cargo vessels in the Red Sea by **Houthi militants**.

### Key Points of JMCC held between India and Oman:

- During the meeting, the discussion took place on new areas of cooperation such as **training, joint exercise, information sharing, oceanography, shipbuilding** and **MRO** (maintenance, repair, and operations) **facilities** that would build **mutual trust** and **interoperability** between militaries of both nations.
- Both sides discussed effective and practical initiatives to boost **bilateral defence engagements further**, focusing on **defence industry collaboration**.
- An **MoU on procurement of defence material** was signed, following the joint vision document titled '**A Partnership for the Future**'.

### Importance of Oman for India:

- While **people-to-people contact** between India and Oman can be traced back 5000 years, **diplomatic relations were established in 1955**, and the relationship was upgraded to **Strategic partnership in 2008**.
- Oman is one of India's closest **defence partners** in the **Gulf region**, and defence cooperation has emerged as a key pillar of the strategic partnership between the two sides.
- Oman is the **first Gulf country** with which all **three wings** of India's defence forces hold **joint exercises**.
  - **Joint Military Exercise Al Najaf**
  - **Naval Exercise Naseem Al Bahr**
  - **Air Force Exercise Eastern Bridge**
- In recent years, both countries have cooperated to ensure **maritime security** in the **Indian Ocean** and **Gulf regions**.
- The Sultanate of Oman is a **strategic partner of India** and an important **interlocutor** at the Gulf Cooperation Council (**GCC**), **Arab League** and Indian Ocean Rim Association (**IORA**) fora.
- India and Oman are linked by **geography, history** and **culture** and enjoy warm and cordial relations.
  - There are about **624,000 Indians in Oman** (February 2021), of which about 4,83,901 are **workers and professionals** (May 2021).
- Negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement (**FTA**) between India and Oman are also going on, and an FTA is **likely to be signed** in the near future.

## Munich Security Conference

### News Excerpt:

The External Affairs Minister of India attended the 60th Munich Security Conference (MSC) in Germany.

### About Munich Security Conference:

- **Historical Background:**
  - The MSC was founded by a German official and publisher, **Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist**, at the peak of the Cold War (1947-1991).
    - **Starting in 1963**, the conference initially only focused on military issues and was mainly attended by Western countries and their high-profile officials, who came together **to display a united front in their struggle with Soviet communism**.
  - After the end of the Cold War, the conference expanded its agenda that went beyond defence and security matters to include issues such as **climate change and migration**.
  - It also started to invite leaders from **eastern nations**, including Russia, India, and China.
- It is an annual conference on **global security issues**.
- For more than 50 years, the Munich Security Conference has been promoting international dialogue, offering a **platform for global decision-makers**.
- It provides a venue for official and non-official diplomatic initiatives and ideas to address the **world's most pressing security concerns**.
- **Objective:**
  - Its objective is to build trust and to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts by sustaining a continuous, curated and informal dialogue within the international security community.
  - Involving the next generation in this exchange has always been a primary goal of the MSC.
- It covers a wide range of security-related topics, including transatlantic and European issues, as well as **emerging challenges for the international community**.

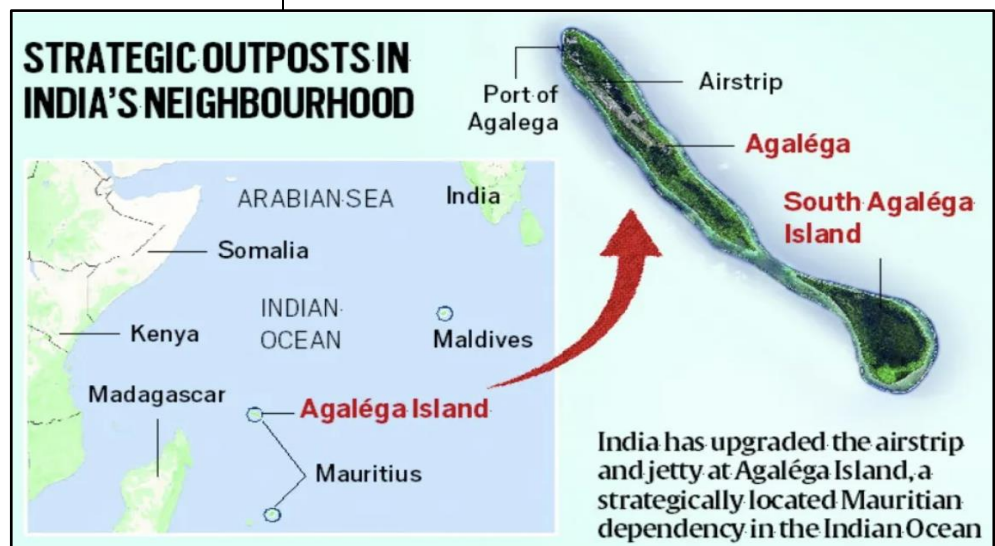
## Agalega airstrip inaugurated: Mauritius and India.

### News Excerpt:

The Prime Minister of India and his Mauritian counterpart inaugurated India-assisted development projects at Agaléga Island.

### Overview of the Developments:

- India signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** for the "improvement in sea and air transportation facilities" at Agaléga island in **2015**.
- It provided for setting up and upgrading infrastructure to improve **sea and air connectivity on the Outer Island of Mauritius**, enhancing the capabilities of the Mauritian Defence Forces in safeguarding their interests there.
- The presence of India on Agalega would lead to more effective monitoring of Mauritius' vast 2.3 million sq km **Exclusive Economic Zone** and equip it to better counter piracy, terrorism, narcotics and human trafficking, and illegal and unregulated fishing.
- The opening of the upgraded 3-km-long **airstrip**, which can handle bigger aircraft, and a **harbour** that can anchor big ships was announced.
- **Six civilian projects** were also inaugurated, including a **medical facility** and a **school**.



### Chinese Angle in the Indian Ocean:

- China sees great value in having a powerful presence in the Indian Ocean region.
- **Nine of China's top 10 crude oil suppliers transit the Indian Ocean**, which is also the primary region of transit for China for engagements with Africa, the Middle East, island nations, and littorals across the vast ocean.

- The Indian Ocean is also the main trading route between China and Europe.
- **China is the only nation with an embassy in each of the six islands** in the Indian Ocean: **Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, and Comoros.**
  - None of the traditional players—the United States, the UK, India, or France—have embassies in all six island countries.
  - China had gone beyond diplomatic and trade partnerships in the region and had begun to **maintain a consistent military presence.**
- In 2017, China opened its **first overseas military facility** in the Indian Ocean in **Djibouti on the Horn of Africa.**

#### India's stance:

- India understands the importance of working with the governments of all these island nations.
- The domestic politics of these nations often **impact their behaviour and policies abroad.**

#### Global Power Dynamics:

- The **Indian Ocean region** has emerged as the axis of global power.
  - The **US**, the **UK**, with the **Diego Garcia base**, and **France**, with Reunion Island, are already active in the region.
  - **China**, too, joined them, investing heavily in the region. It has built many assets in the Western Indian Ocean, such as the **bases in Djibouti and Gwadar**, and developed **extensive influence** over Africa.
- For **India**, which depends on the Indian Ocean for **almost 90% of its imports and exports**, growing **Chinese activities** in the region are a considerable **challenge.**
- India has nurtured the ambition of rising as an influential **blue-water power** and **the Global South's** voice.

## India and Brazil hold first '2+2' Defence and Foreign Ministerial Dialogue.

#### News Excerpt:

India and Brazil explored ways to expand cooperation in **energy, critical minerals, technology, and counter-terrorism** at their first '2+2' Defence and Foreign ministerial dialogue.

#### About 2+2 Dialogue:

- The 2+2 meetings involve the attendance of two prominent ministers or secretaries from the Defence and Foreign Affairs sectors of both nations, intending to enhance dialogue between them.

India currently holds the 2+2 dialogue with the **USA, UK, Russia, Japan, and Australia.**

- This framework enables partners to gain deeper insights into each other's strategic priorities, fostering a stronger and more cohesive strategic partnership.

#### Why Brazil is Important to us?

**Strategically significant for India:** Due to Brazil's **abundant natural resources and expanding markets.**

**Critical supplier of minerals and hydrocarbons:**

Brazil, particularly in crude petroleum oil, supports India's economic growth trajectory.

**Largest economy in Latin America:**

Attractive destination for Indian investors and businesses, fostering bilateral economic engagement.

**Both influential players in the Global South,** collaborating closely on various global issues within multilateral forums, advocating for the interests of developing nations and promoting multilateralism.

#### Areas of Cooperation between India and Brazil:

- **Institutional Mechanisms:** As strategic partners, both maintain several institutional mechanisms to facilitate coordination across different facets of their bilateral relationship, including strategic dialogue, trade monitoring, defence cooperation, and joint committees on science and technology.
- **Trade and Investment:** The bilateral trade between them has witnessed substantial growth, with India emerging as Brazil's fifth-largest trading partner in 2021. Major exports from India include agrochemicals, synthetic yarns, and auto components, while Brazil exports crude oil, gold, and vegetable oil to India. Investments between the two countries span various sectors, such as automobiles, IT, mining, energy, biofuels, and footwear, reflecting the diversification and depth of their economic collaboration.
- **Defence and Security Cooperation:** They signed a defence cooperation agreement in 2003, institutionalizing mechanisms like the Joint Defense Committee to enhance collaboration in defence and security. The two nations also engage in strategic dialogue, addressing regional and global challenges of mutual concern, with recent agreements focusing on cybersecurity cooperation.
- **Cooperation in Biofuels, Oil & Gas:** With Brazil boasting significant crude oil reserves, the collaboration between

them extends to the energy sector, particularly in biofuels and oil & gas.

- **Science and Technology:** Cooperation spans space exploration, satellite monitoring, and agricultural research, facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Cultural Relations:** Cultural exchanges between them, supported by initiatives like the Cultural Exchange Programme, foster mutual understanding and appreciation for each other's heritage, with yoga and Ayurveda gaining popularity in Brazil.
- **Challenges in the Bilateral Relationship between India and Brazil:** Despite the growing partnership, challenges persist, including trade competition in agricultural products, concerns over sugarcane subsidies, limited people-to-people contacts, and the influence of China in the region.

**IMEC**

**News Excerpt:**

Due to the Red Sea crisis, global supply chains are increasingly grappling with inflated freights, delayed vessel schedules, and product shortages.

**About the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):**

- On the sidelines of the **G20 Leaders' Summit**, Leaders of **India, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the USA** announced an MOU committing to work together to develop a new India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- The IMEC will **comprise two separate corridors:**
  - the **east corridor connecting India to the Gulf** and

- the **northern corridor connecting the Gulf to Europe.**
- The corridor will provide a **reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network to supplement existing maritime routes.**
- It intends to **increase efficiency, reduce costs, secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility, enhance economic cooperation, generate jobs, and lower greenhouse gas emissions**, resulting in a transformative integration of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East (West Asia).
- The **corridor is estimated to cut the journey time from India to Europe by 40% and slash transit costs by 30%.**

**Why is the Red Sea route important?**

- The Red Sea is strategically important for global trade with the **Bab el-Mandab Strait** between Yemen and Djibouti.
- It is one of the **world's busiest cargo and oil transit points**, with almost **12% of international merchandise trade** passing through it.
- An immediate consequence of the Red Sea conflict has been that **major container and oil carriers have been forced to re-route shipments** via the **Cape of Good Hope.**
- The **re-routing has led to rising ocean freight, inflated insurance costs, and longer voyage times**, leading to **delays and shortages of products.**
- It has also **driven up transportation costs.** The higher shipping costs will be passed onto consumers in the form of increased commodity prices.

**India signs a trade agreement with EFTA.**

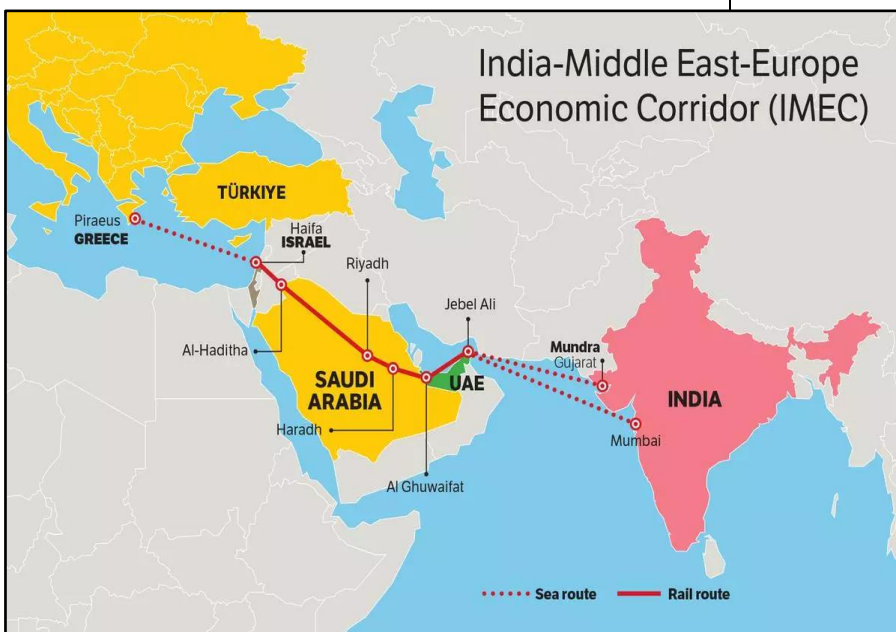
**News Excerpt:**

India and the European Free Trade Association, comprising **Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, and Liechtenstein**, signed a free trade agreement in March 2024.

**Key Highlights of the Agreement:**

The agreement, officially called the **Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**, aims to encourage investments and enhance trade in goods and services between India and the EFTA nations.

- The **agreement consists of 14 chapters** covering various aspects such as trade in goods, rules of origin, trade in services, investment promotion, intellectual property rights (IPRs), and more.
- This is **India's fourth such agreement since 2014**, with previous agreements signed with Mauritius, the UAE, and Australia.



- EFTA countries have committed to **investing \$100 billion in India** over the next 15 years, reflecting the potential for economic growth and job creation.
- Negotiations for the agreement began in 2008, with 13 rounds of talks held until 2013. After a hiatus, negotiations resumed in October 2023 and concluded swiftly.
- The two-way trade between India and EFTA countries was \$18.65 billion in 2022-23, **with Switzerland being India's largest trading partner in the EFTA bloc, followed by Norway.**

#### The European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

- The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is an intergovernmental organization set up for the promotion of **free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its four Member States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland** – and the benefit of their trading partners around the globe.
- EFTA was founded by the **Stockholm Convention in 1960.**
- Since the beginning of the 1990s, EFTA has actively pursued trade relations with third countries in and beyond Europe.
- In 2021, EFTA was the **tenth-largest trader in the world in merchandise trade and the eighth-largest in trade in services.** EFTA is also among the most important trading partners in goods and services for the EU. **EFTA's budget is prepared in two currencies: Swiss francs (CHF) and euros (EUR).**
- In 2022, the combined EFTA-India merchandise trade surpassed USD 6.1 billion. **The primary imports to the EFTA States consisted of organic chemicals (27.5%), while machinery (17.5%) and pharmaceutical products (11.4%), excluding gold, constituted the main exports to India.** Furthermore, services trade and foreign direct investment have also reached substantial levels.

## India's Right of Reply

### News Excerpt:

India exercised its **Right of Reply** at the **55th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** in Geneva.

### About the news:

- India exercised its **Right of Reply to respond to Turkiye and Pakistan** after the two countries made references to Kashmir in their statements.
- India highlighted **three points** in its response to the UN platform:

- **Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are an "integral and inalienable part of India"**, and the constitutional measures taken by the Indian government to ensure **"socio-economic development and good governance"** in the Union territories are **"matters internal to India"**.
- A country that has institutionalized the systematic persecution of its minorities and has a truly abysmal human rights record, commenting on India is not merely **ironic but perverse.**
- A country that hosts and even celebrates UNSC-sanctioned terrorists, commenting on India, whose **pluralistic ethos** and **democratic credentials** are examples for the world, is a contrast for everyone to see.

### About the Right of Reply in UNHRC:

- "The Right of Reply in response to a statement" is made **in writing by a Head of State.**
- The number of interventions of the Right of Reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to **two per item.**
- The first intervention should be limited to **ten minutes**, and the second intervention should be limited to **five minutes.**
- Member states are allowed to exercise the right of reply, in which **they can rebut criticism voiced during the General Debate.**

## Raisina Dialogue - 2024

### News Excerpt:

The **9th edition** of the Raisina Dialogue was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in **New Delhi.** **Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis** joined the inaugural session as the chief guest.

### Raisina Dialogue:

- **Started in 2016**, the Raisina Dialogue is India's premier **conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics**, committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the world today.
- The conference is hosted by the **Observer Research Foundation** in partnership with the **Ministry of External Affairs.**
- The **theme of the 2024** edition is **"Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create."**
- Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion involving heads of state, cabinet



ministers, and local government officials, who are joined by leaders from the private sector, media, and academia.

## EU launches Operation Aspides

### News Excerpt:

The **European Union** launched **Operation Aspides** to protect maritime traffic in the **Red Sea**, which Houthi rebel attacks have disrupted.

### About Operation Aspides:

- Operation Aspides is a defensive maritime security operation that restores and safeguards **freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden**.
- It will send **European warships and early warning systems** to the **concerned areas**.
- Its objective is to preserve freedom of navigation in the region plagued with instability since the Houthi rebels began targeting vessels navigating the waterway with drones and rocket attacks.
  - The Houthis are an **Iran-backed rebel group that controls a part of Yemen**.
  - They say their attacks are in **retaliation for Israel's war in Gaza**.
- Aspides has an **exclusively "protective" mandate** and will only act when there is a threat, with minimum force.
- **France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium** have confirmed that they plan to contribute ships to the EU mission.
- **Greece** will provide a commander for its operational headquarters.
  - Aspides vessels, whose operational command centre will be in the Greek city of Larissa, will have orders to fire on the Houthis only if they attack first and will not be authorized to shoot pre-emptively.

## India- Columbia MoU

### News Excerpt:

India and Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on **Cooperation in the field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions** to be implemented at **Population Scale for Digital Transformation**.

### About the MoU:

- It was **signed** between the Indian **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** (MeitY) and **Colombia's Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications**.
- The MoU intends to **promote digital transformation** (viz **INDIA STACK**) through **capacity-building**

**programs, the exchange of best practices, and the exchange of public officials and experts.**

- Both sides discussed the **importance of Digital Public Infrastructure**.
  - These infrastructures constitute a set of **shared digital systems** that are **secure and interoperable**.
  - They can be built on open standards to deliver and provide equitable access to public and private services.

### About India Stack:

- It refers to the Indian government's ambitious project to **create a unified software platform** to bring **the country's population into the digital age**.
- India Stack (a **set of APIs** that allows governments, businesses, start-ups, and developers to utilize a **unique digital Infrastructure to solve India's problems** and to attain a **presence-less, paperless, and cashless service delivery model**).
- Aadhar, UPI, and DigiLocker, eBooks, podcasts, and other tech-driven citizen-centric services are part of the digital public good.
- The vision of India Stack is not limited to one country; it can be applied to any nation, be it a developed one or an emerging one.

## Sweden officially joins NATO

### News Excerpt:

**Sweden** formally joined NATO as the **32nd member of the transatlantic military alliance**, ending its decades of post-World War II neutrality.

### Sweden's position regarding NATO:

- **Sweden's neutrality** began as a **response to catastrophic wars** - mainly **against Russia** - in the **18th and early 19th centuries**, and **its policies** have always been a **mix of principle and pragmatism**.
- It **supplied Nazi Germany with vital iron ore during World War II** and, during the Cold War, **secretly exchanged intelligence with the United States**.
- In recent decades, **Sweden has leaned closer to NATO** - in part because its military was slashed after the collapse of the Soviet Union - and has **contributed to missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Libya, and Iraq**.
- **Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022** left it with a pivotal choice: **join NATO or run the risk of standing alone** against an increasingly aggressive neighbour.

### About the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was **created in 1949 by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations** to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.
- The **alliance members** include the **12 founding countries of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.**
- Greece and Turkey joined in 1952; Germany in 1955; Spain in 1982; Czechia, Hungary, and Poland in 1999; Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined in 2004; Albania and Croatia in 2009; Montenegro in 2017; North Macedonia in 2020; Finland in 2023 and finally Sweden in 2024.
- **NATO's Article 5** guarantees that **an attack on any member is considered an attack on all.**

### China's Panda Diplomacy

#### News Excerpt:

The **China Wildlife Conservation Authority** has signed **cooperation agreements to loan a pair of giant pandas** to San Diego (USA) and Madrid (Spain).

#### What is panda diplomacy?

Giant pandas are native to **central China**, particularly the **Yangtze River basin**. The Chinese government **gifts or loans** these **endemic pandas** to other countries as a **symbol of friendship** or **soft diplomacy**, hence the phrase "panda diplomacy."

#### History of Panda Diplomacy:

- Although panda diplomacy picked up in the **mid-to-late 20th century**, some experts believe that a version of it existed as early as during the **Tang Dynasty (7th—10th century)**.
- There are multiple records of China gifting or donating pandas to countries like the U.S., the U.K., France, and Japan, but **1972** is often believed to be the **start of modern panda diplomacy** when, under Mao Zedong's rule, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai **gifted giant pandas to America** following U.S. President Richard Nixon's state visit.
- China stopped gifting pandas in the early 1980s and instead **started loaning** them at a **fee of around \$1 million per year**.
  - Conditions to lend pandas may also include **other requirements**, like building facilities for their care and agreements to return offspring to China.

### India-US Homeland Security Dialogue

#### News Excerpt:

During the dialogue, both states discussed cooperation in internal security, intelligence sharing, pro-Khalistani elements, online radicalization, cyber-attacks, and digital fraud.

#### Key issues discussed:

- India and the US reviewed ongoing cooperation in **counter-terrorism** and **security domains**, which has been a key pillar of the India-US strategic partnership.
  - Both countries also discussed steps that can be taken to bolster bilateral efforts to **combat terrorism and violent extremism, drug trafficking, and organized crime** and ensure **transportation security**.
- The two sides also reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the vibrant **people-to-people ties** "by taking steps to enable **safe and legal migration, counter illegal migration, human trafficking, money laundering, cyber-crimes**, and misuse of the cyber domain for illegal activities including **terror-financing**."
- Both sides also focused on curbing the rampant increase in **narcotics trafficking**, particularly of the drug **Fentanyl**.
- Both countries reiterated their keen interest in consolidating the mutually beneficial **collaboration between their respective law enforcement agencies** through **information exchange, capacity building, technical assistance**, and regular meetings of sub-groups.
  - During the dialogue, the **US Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre** and **India's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy** signed a memorandum of cooperation on law enforcement training.
    - This Dialogue was **first held in 2011** and was re-established in 2021.
    - The **last** India-US homeland security dialogue was held in **January 2022, and this year, it was held in New Delhi.**

#### Issues of contention between the two states:

- The meeting was held against the backdrop of a row over the alleged assassination attempt on a **Khalistani separatist** who is a US citizen. The US has been demanding accountability in the matter.
- India is also seeking action against the pro-Khalistan elements involved in the **July 2023 attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco**. The **National**

**Investigation Agency (NIA)** has identified over 50 **pro-Khalistan activists** who had attacked the consulate.

- India is also pushing for the **extradition** of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused **Tahawwur Hussain Rana**. A US court had earlier dismissed Rana's appeal against extradition.

## Henley Passport Index

### News Excerpt:

India has improved its ranking and **moved up to the 82nd spot** on the Henley Passport Index.

### About the news:

- The Henley Passport Index is the original, authoritative ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations **their holders can access without a prior visa**.
- The index is based on exclusive data from **the International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- The index compares the visa-free access of 199 different passports to 227 travel destinations
- The Henley Passport Index is **updated monthly**.
- Six countries (**France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Singapore**) still jointly hold the top position in the 2024 Henley Passport Index, offering their citizens visa-free access to a record-breaking number of destinations.
- India has improved three places from **85th in February to 82nd in the March** rankings, having visa-free access to 62 destinations. **Last year, countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Kenya added India to their visa-free lists.**

## Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

### News Excerpt:

Greece has decided to join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

### About IPOI:

- Amid the competitive agendas, a promising discourse that moves **beyond traditional military or political spheres** has emerged in the form of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- It is an initiative of the Government of India and **builds upon the "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR)** initiative announced by Prime Minister Modi in 2019.
- SAGAR encourages States to cooperate and synergize efforts towards a **safe, secure, and stable maritime domain** and also take meaningful steps for the conservation and sustainable use of the maritime domain.

- The IPOI is premised on the liberal theoretical vistas and endorses an open, inclusive, **non-treaty-based global initiative** for mitigating challenges, especially in the maritime domain through practical cooperation.
- The IPOI comprises of **seven thematic areas** that cover a wide spectrum of issues.
- The seven pillars of the IPOI** are:
  - Maritime Security;
  - Maritime Ecology;
  - Maritime Resources;
  - Capacity Building and Resource Sharing;
  - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management;
  - Science, Technology, and Academic Cooperation;
  - Trade, Connectivity and Maritime Transport.

## Algiers Declaration

### News Excerpt:

The 7th **Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) Summit** concluded with the Algiers Declaration.

### About:

- The 7th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member Countries of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) convened in the historic city of **Algiers, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**.
- This significant gathering convened heads of state and government from 14 countries, including prominent players such as Russia, Iran, Qatar, and Venezuela.
- The 7th GECF Summit revolved around the **theme "Natural Gas for a Secure and Sustainable Future."** This theme holds particular significance due to the growing importance of natural gas as an affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy resource.
- The accession of **new member countries, including Mozambique, Mauritania, and Senegal**, signifies a significant milestone in the evolution of the GECF as a global platform for energy cooperation and dialogue.
- The Algiers Declaration represents a significant stride towards advancing global energy security and sustainability.

## India invites IPEF members to invest in a clean economy.

### News Excerpt:

The Union Minister for Commerce & Industry participated in **the ministerial meeting of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)**.



**About IPEF:**

IPEF was launched in Tokyo in May 2022, jointly by the USA and other partner countries of the Indo-Pacific region.

**IPEF has 14 partner countries**, including Australia, Brunei, Fiji, **India**, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the USA.

This framework will advance **resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness for our economies**.

The launch began discussions on its **four pillars**:

- **Trade;**
- **Supply Chains;**
- **Clean Energy, Decarbonization, and Infrastructure; and**
- **Tax and Anti-Corruption.**

The IPEF is designed to be flexible, meaning that **IPEF partners are not required to join all four pillars**.

**India has joined Pillars II to IV of IPEF** while it has an **observer status in Pillar I (Trade)**.

**Key Highlights:**

- IPEF partners welcomed the entry into force of the IPEF Supply Chain Agreement with effect from 24 February 2024.
- The texts of the proposed Clean Economy Agreement, Fair Economy Agreement, and Agreement on IPEF were also made public.
- The IPEF partners also announced plans to provide \$33 million in initial grant funding for the IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund under the Pillar III Clean Economy Agreement
  - These funds will be instrumental in catalyzing up to \$3.3 billion in private investment for climate infrastructure projects in IPEF economies party to the IPEF Clean Economy Agreement.
- The IPEF partners took stock of the Cooperative Work Programs (CWP) on hydrogen announced in May 2023.
  - The CWPs are a mechanism through

which the IPEF partners or a group of partners prioritize their focus and resources on a common goal.

- The IPEF partners also announced four new CWPs based on proposals put forward by partners:
  - On carbon markets, Interested IPEF partners initially seek to understand existing regional carbon market priorities and improve the enabling conditions for cooperation.
  - Interested IPEF partners are also pursuing clean electricity enhancements to facilitate increased decarbonization and access to clean energy in the region, including through public-private cooperation.
  - To advance the promotion of employment creation and labour rights, interested IPEF partners endeavour to pursue workforce development efforts to ensure a just transition towards achieving a clean economy.
  - Interested IPEF partners will collaborate on sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) to enhance the availability and affordability of SAF and its feedstocks and develop regional SAF value chains.

**Iran’s drone attack on Israel**

**News Excerpt:**

**Iran** has counter-attacked **Israel** after it bombed its consulate in Damascus, Syria, sending waves of tensions in West Asia.



### Iran-Israel Ties:

- The **Iran-Israel** relationship **has not always been as fraught** as it is today. **Iran was one of the first countries in the region to recognize Israel** after its formation in **1948**. It was only after **1979** that their diplomatic ties ended.
- A religious state was established in Iran after the **Shah** was overthrown in the **1979 Islamic Revolution**. The regime's view of Israel changed, and it was seen as an **occupier of Palestinian land**.
- While Israel and Iran have **never engaged in direct military confrontation**, both have attempted to **inflict damage** on the other through **proxies** and **limited strategic attacks**. **Israel has attacked Iranian nuclear facilities from time to time**.
- **Iran, meanwhile**, is seen as responsible for **funding and supporting** several **militant groups** in the region that are anti-Israel and anti-US, such as **Hezbollah in Lebanon** and **Hamas in the Gaza Strip**.

### Impact of Iran-Israel conflict on the World:

The Iran-Israel conflict has significant implications not only for the two countries involved but also for the **broader Middle East region**. Here are some of the key impacts:

- **The immediate impact will be higher oil prices.**
  - **Crude oil**, already trading near **six-month highs**, may cross \$100 per barrel if tension worsens.
  - **Supply chain disruptions can happen** as Iran can severely restrict movement in the **Strait of Hormuz**.
  - The conflict will **push inflation** up when developed countries want to reduce interest rates.
  - Global **economic growth could fall below the 3.1%** projected by the International Monetary Fund for 2024.
- **Regional Destabilisation:**
  - The conflict **exacerbates tensions** in an already volatile region.
  - Both Iran and Israel wield significant influence in the Middle East, and their confrontation can escalate into **broader regional conflicts** involving other countries and non-state actors.
- **Global Security Implications:**
  - Given the strategic importance of the Middle East and its energy resources, instability in the region can have global ramifications, affecting energy markets, trade routes, and international security.
- **Trade and travel disruptions:**
  - Apart from oil prices being affected, trade and travel could also be hit in the likelihood of an all-out war

between Israel and Iran. The aviation and shipping sectors could also be disrupted.

- Several countries in the region, including **Iran, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Israel, temporarily closed their airspaces**, opening them later but with restrictions.
- These proxy wars can **prolong existing conflicts** and make regional stability elusive.
- **Nuclear Proliferation Concerns:**
  - **Iran's nuclear program** has been a source of tension with Israel and the international community.
  - The conflict raises concerns about the **potential for nuclear proliferation** in the region and the risk of a nuclear arms race.
- **India-Iran:**
  - India has managed to maintain a **strategic relationship with Iran**, as Tehran has been one of the **major suppliers of crude oil** — which has suffered setbacks due to sanctions.
  - Both countries have **shared concerns about terrorism** emanating from **Pakistan and Afghanistan**.
  - The two countries also have similar concerns about the **Taliban's treatment of minorities** and the lack of an inclusive and representative government in Kabul.
  - **Chabahar** is another strategic economic project that acts as a gateway to **Afghanistan** and **Central Asia** since **Pakistan denies land transit** to Indian goods.

### Permanent status: on Palestine and the UN

#### News Excerpt:

The **United States** has **vetoed** the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution granting Palestine **full membership status at the UN**.

#### More about the news:

- The resolution, **proposed by Algeria**, was one more step in the world body's attempt to fulfil the promise made in 1947 when the UN General Assembly originally adopted its resolution, **partitioning the then-mandated Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab**.
- The proposal received **12 votes in favour**, with the **United States casting a negative vote** and **Switzerland and the United Kingdom abstaining**.
- A Council resolution requires at **least nine votes in favour** and **no vetoes** from its five permanent members — China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — to pass. **The Algerian draft failed, owing to a negative vote cast by a permanent member**.

- Only **Israel** became a full member of the UN in 1949. The state of **Palestine** received **permanent observer status** in 2012.

#### Significance of Palestine's permanent membership in the UN:

- A Palestine in the UN fold would **ensure** that the **obligations of all UN members would bind the new state**.
- The contention that **Palestine** could **only be a state through "dialogue between the parties"** has a flaw:
  - As **Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu** has **declared recently that he would never accept a Palestinian state** and intended to retain "full Israeli security control over all the territory west of Jordan.

### GCC's 'Vision for Regional Security'

#### News Excerpt:

For the first time since its inception, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) announced its '**Vision for Regional Security**' at a ceremony held in its **headquarters in Riyadh**.

#### Key Points:

- The '**Vision for Regional Security**' is based on the principles of **shared destiny** and **indivisible security** of the member states, and any threat to one is a threat to all the member States.
  - This was also earlier mentioned in the **Joint Defence Agreement of the GCC**, signed in **2000**.
- The vision document is based on the principles of respecting **sovereignty and non-interference** in state internal affairs.
- Vision for Regional Security is a **political commitment and an ethical dedication that unites all**.



#### Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC):

- It is an **economic and political bloc** formed in **1981** amid regional conflict and tensions.
- It is a **regional cooperation system** between the Arab States of the Gulf created to meet the challenges imposed by surrounding circumstances.
- It includes **Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman**.
- These six nations have huge oil resources and some of the highest GDPs per capita worldwide.

#### What issues does the vision cover?

- The vision is outlined in **15 specific points**, including issues relating to **regional security and stability, economy and development, and climate change**.
- The vision seeks to resolve the issue of **Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories**, reaffirming the GCC's commitment to the **Arab Peace Initiative** that was first endorsed by the **Arab League in 2002**.
- The vision also calls for the end of Israeli settlements in the **occupied West Bank** and notes that the conflict is a key issue destabilizing the region.
- It addresses **nuclear non-proliferation in the region**, a long-standing issue due to Iran's nuclear program, as well as a commitment to the **right to civil nuclear use**. Both the **UAE and Saudi Arabia has sought this policy**.
  - Iran also says that its nuclear program is for civilian purposes, but Gulf states suspect this could be cover for manufacturing an atomic bomb.
- The vision stresses the **need to maintain maritime and waterway security**, as well as **combating terrorism** and its **financing**, and prevent **weapons** - including "**ballistic missile technology and drone systems**" - from reaching armed groups.
- In particular, the vision demands "the **criminalization** of all **groups carrying out terrorist acts**, irrespective of their political or sectarian affiliation, or ties to state institutions".
- Other points include addressing **cyber security issues, global energy market stability, climate change**, and the advancement of implementing a '**circular carbon economy**' and securing **water security**.

### AUKUS Alliance

#### News Excerpt:

Australia is set to provide (\$3bn) to British industry to help support the construction of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS deal with the United Kingdom and the United States.

### What is AUKUS?

AUKUS, or the **Australia-United Kingdom-United States Security Partnership**, is a **trilateral security alliance** established in **September 2021**. It aims to enhance member countries' security and defence capabilities by fostering deeper cooperation in various areas.

- The first initiative under AUKUS involves supporting **Australia in acquiring nuclear-powered submarines** for the Royal Australian Navy, aimed at bolstering Australia's maritime defence capabilities and enhancing its strategic position in the Indo-Pacific region
- The second initiative enhances **joint capabilities and interoperability** among the AUKUS partners. This initiative aims to deepen collaboration in key **technological domains** such as **cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and additional undersea capabilities**.

### Significance of AUKUS:

- AUKUS allows member countries to enhance their **security and defence capabilities** through joint initiatives, increased interoperability, and technology sharing.
  - This collaboration strengthens integrated deterrence against adversarial actors, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.
- AUKUS contributes to **regional stability by Strengthening Australia's defence capability and enhancing** its role as a security partner in the Indo-Pacific region.
- AUKUS supports an integrated **industrial base** among the member countries, facilitating more efficient and coordinated development and support of advanced capabilities, which enhances the resilience and competitiveness of the defence industries in the partner nations.

## India-Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) FTA Negotiations

### News Excerpt:

Indian officials and the **Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)** representatives held extensive talks last month to begin **formal negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA)**.

### More about the news:

- The proposed FTA will provide **greater market access to Indian goods and services** in the **EEU countries**.
- In such agreements, two or more **trading partners** either **eliminate** or significantly **reduce customs duties** on the maximum number of goods traded between them.

### Eurasian Economic Union (EEU):

- The Eurasian Economic Union comprises five member states: **Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia**.
- The **EEU treaty was signed on 29 May 2014 in Astana (now Nur-Sultan) and came into force on 1 January 2015**.
- It is an ambitious project for **economic integration in the former Soviet region**. Its formal objective is to **create a common market** like the **European Union (EU)**.
- It aims to achieve this by **coordinating economic policy, eliminating non-tariff trade barriers, harmonizing regulations, and modernizing the economies of its five member states**.
- The EEU has its own institutions, mirroring those of the EU. These include the **Eurasian Economic Commission in Moscow**, which is its regulatory body, and a **Court of the Eurasian Economic Union based in Minsk, Belarus**.

### India and the EEU trade relations:

- India has a long **political and economic history** of cooperation with **Russia and the Soviet Union**.
- In the **EEU bloc, Russia is India's top trading partner**, with a bilateral trade worth **USD 49.4 billion** in fiscal year **2023 (FY23)**.
- **India's exports to Russia** stood at **USD 3.14 billion** in **2022-23**, while **imports** were at **USD 46.2 billion** due to **increased crude oil imports**.

### Significance of India-EEU FTA:

- Indian exporters from **engineering goods, electronics, and agriculture sectors may benefit from the India-EEU FTA**.
- An agreement with the bloc will open the **lucrative Central Asian consumer market to Indian goods**.
- It will also entrench the **expansion of Indian products in Russia**, which has **suffered a flight of Western brands and goods** after Russia attacked Ukraine early last year.

## India and US to reactivate Indian Ocean observation system

### News Excerpt:

India and the US have decided to reactivate the **Indian Ocean Observing System (IndOOS)**, which fell into **neglect and disrepair** during the years of the **COVID-19** pandemic.

### More about the news:

- The closing of IndOOS led to **gaps in observational data**, which is considered crucial by **weather forecasting**, particularly since the links between the Indian Ocean Dipole phenomenon and monsoons were established.
- The reactivation of IndOOS was discussed last month during a meeting of the Earth Sciences Secretary of India with the Administrator of the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** of the US.
- **NOAA** will provide the **instrumentation**, and **India will give ship time** starting in July to restart the **IndOOS** and **RAMA** array.

### Indian Ocean Observing System (IndOOS):

- It is a **network of 36 moored buoys** on the high seas to collect **high-resolution ocean** and **atmospheric data** for **weather forecasts**.
- It is a **coordinated system** of **sustained ocean-based observing systems** in the **Indian Ocean** designed to **complement the constellation of earth-observing satellites**.
- The **moored buoys** are part of the **Research Moored Array for African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis and Prediction (RAMA)** programme that was born from a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and **NOAA**.

### Research Moored Array for African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis and Prediction (RAMA)

- RAMA is the **moored buoy component** of the **Indian Ocean Observing System (IndOOS)**.
- It is a system of **moored observation buoys** in the **Indian Ocean** that collects **meteorological and oceanographic data**.
- It addressed **fundamental questions** about the **ocean's role in monsoon dynamics**.
- **RAMA moored buoys** are usually **replaced once a year** because sensors fall out of calibration and batteries run down.

## SCO's NSA Meet

### News Excerpt:

India's National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval attended the **19th Meeting of Secretaries of the Security Council** of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Astana, Kazakhstan.

### About the news:

- Kazakhstan hosted the meeting, which is the president of the SCO only till July 2024.

- He spoke about respecting all SCO members' **sovereignty and territorial integrity** while implementing connectivity projects. India is the only country not endorsing China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- India also reiterated its stance against **double standards in the fight against terrorism and voiced apprehension about the security situation in Afghanistan**.
- Condemning the terror attack at the **Crocus city hall in Moscow** last month, Doval expressed India's solidarity with Russia in **combating terrorism in all its manifestations**.

### About the Shanghai Cooperation Organization:

- It is a **permanent intergovernmental international organization** established in 2001 in Shanghai (PRC) by **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**.
- In June 2017, **India and Pakistan** were inducted as full members of the SCO. This was the organization's first expansion since its formation in 2001.
- Its supreme decision-making body is the **Council of Heads of States (CHS)**, which meets once a year.
- Its **official languages** are **Russian and Chinese**.
- Currently, the SCO countries include:
  - **9 Member States** — India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
  - **3 Observer states** - Afghanistan, Belarus, and Mongolia.

## Israel approves reopening of Erez crossing into Gaza

### News Excerpt:

Israel said it approved the reopening of the **Erez crossing into northern Gaza** and the temporary use of **Ashdod port in southern Israel**, following U.S. demands to **increase humanitarian aid** supplies into Gaza.

### About the news:

- U.S. President Joe Biden demanded "specific, concrete" steps to alleviate the **humanitarian crisis in Gaza**, saying conditions could be placed on U.S. aid if Israel did not respond.
- The growing pressure on Israel came after the **killing of seven aid workers** in an Israeli strike, which triggered global outrage at the continuing problems with aid deliveries into the besieged enclave.

- In addition to reopening the Erez crossing point, Israel also approved increasing Jordanian aid through the **Kerem Shalom crossing point**.
- The decision to reopen the **Beit Hanoon (Erez) crossing**, the main crossing point from Israel into northern Gaza before the war, represented a major shift after Israeli officials previously rejected calls for more entry points into Gaza to be opened up.



- India had **implemented export bans on wheat in May 2022**, non-basmati rice in July 2023, and onions in December.

### The city of Quito

#### News Excerpt:

Mexico has **severed diplomatic relations** with Ecuador after heavily armed police raided the Mexican embassy in Quito in a direct violation of international norms.

#### Background:

- On April 7, local police **entered the Mexican embassy in Quito**, Ecuador's capital, to arrest former Ecuadorian Vice President **Jorge Glas**, who had requested political asylum in the embassy.
- The violation of the sovereignty of Mexico's Embassy **sets a dangerous precedent**, especially as it involves questioning or rejecting international norms and standards.
- It is a serious violation of the **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961**. This convention lays down the rules of engagement between countries. **Article 22 states: "The premises of the mission shall be inviolable. The agents of the receiving State may not enter them, except with the consent of the head of the mission."** Here, "mission" refers to the diplomats, the staff and other representatives in a host country.
- It **further states**, "The premises of the mission, their furnishings and other property thereon and the means of transport of the mission **shall be immune from search, requisition, attachment or execution."**
- The **Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963**, similarly states that the consent of the head of the

### India imposes port restrictions on Maldives

#### News Excerpt:

Amid tensions between **Maldives and India**, the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** issued a notification imposing **port restrictions for the export of essential commodities** to the island nation during the **fiscal year 2024-25**.

#### More about News:

- **India's DGFT** has introduced port restrictions on the **export of several prohibited and restricted essential items to the Maldives**.
- **Export of essential commodities** from India to the Maldives will now be permitted only **through four customs stations: Mundra Sea Port, Tuticorin Sea Port, Nhava Sheva Sea Port (JNPT), and ICD(Inland Container Depot) Tughlakabad**.
- On April 5, 2024, India authorized the export of **specific quantities of essential goods to the Maldives using a bilateral mechanism** for 2024-25 at the request of the **Maldives government**.
- Earlier, on April 5, India had **removed restrictions on the export of nine products**, including - potatoes, onions, eggs, rice, wheat flour, and sugar to the Maldives for 2024-25.



consular post is required for authorities of the receiving state to enter the consular post.

### About the city of Quito:

- Isolated in the **Andes** at 2,818 m. altitude, the city of Quito is spread along the slopes of the **Pichincha Volcano** and is bordered by the hills of Panecillo and Ichimbia.
- Founded by the Spanish in 1534 on the ruins of an **Inca city, Quito** proudly possesses one of the **most extensive and best-preserved historic centres of Spanish America**.
- The city was inscribed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978**.
- The city of Quito, the cradle of pre-Columbian cultures and an important witness of Spanish colonization, maintains **unity and harmony** in its urban structure despite centuries of urban development.

## India, Mauritius revise tax treaty

### News Excerpt:

India has signed a protocol to amend the **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** with Mauritius, aiming to prevent treaty abuse for tax evasion or avoidance.

### Key points:

- The amendment introduces the **Principal Purpose Test (PPT)**, which denies treaty benefits if obtaining such benefits is one of the principal purposes of a transaction or arrangement.
- The **two nations** have revised the treaty preamble to focus on preventing tax avoidance and evasion.
  - The earlier goal of "**mutual trade and investment**" has been changed to "**eliminating double taxation**" without enabling non-taxation or reduced taxation through tax evasion, avoidance, or **treaty shopping for the indirect benefit of third-jurisdiction residents**.
- The **DTAA** was a major reason for a large number of **foreign portfolio investors (FPI)** and foreign entities to route their investments in India through Mauritius.

### Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)

- It is a **tax treaty** signed between India and another country (or any two or multiple countries) so that **taxpayers can avoid paying double taxes** on their income earned from the source country and the residence country.
- The need for DTAA arises **out of the imbalance in tax collection** on individuals' global income.

- **Mauritius is India's fourth largest source of FPI investments, following the US, Singapore, and Luxembourg.**

## 30 years of the Marrakesh Agreement

### News Excerpt:

The Marrakesh Agreement that established the World Trade Organization (WTO) completes 30 years.

### Marrakesh Agreement:

- The Marrakesh Agreement refers to the **foundational document that established the World Trade Organization (WTO)**. It was signed on April 15, 1994, in Marrakesh, Morocco, by representatives of over 123 countries, marking the culmination of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations.
- The agreement officially establishes the World Trade Organization as the **successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, which had governed international trade since 1948. The agreement enshrines key principles of non-discrimination, transparency, and predictability in international trade relations, aimed at promoting open and fair trade practices among member countries.
- **Key Components:**
  - **Institutional Framework:** It outlines the organizational structure of the WTO, including its decision-making bodies such as the Ministerial Conference, General Council, and Dispute Settlement Body.
  - **Rules-Based System:** It emphasizes the importance of a rules-based system for international trade, providing a framework for negotiations, dispute resolution, and the enforcement of trade agreements.
  - **Trade Agreements:** It incorporates various trade agreements negotiated during the Uruguay Round.

## Migration and Mobility Agreement between India and Italy

### News Excerpt:

India's Migration and Mobility Agreement with Italy has received ex-post facto approval from the Indian Union Cabinet.

### Key provisions:

- Indian students wishing to gather initial professional experience after completing **academic/vocational training** in Italy may be granted temporary residence in Italy for up to **12 months**.

- **Non-Seasonal Workers:** The total reserved quota stands at **12000** for non-seasonal workers. The Italian side has reserved an initial quota of **5000 for 2023 and will take increments of 1000 for the next two years, respectively**, under the current Flows Decree.
- **Seasonal Workers:** The total reserved quota stands at **8000** for seasonal workers. Additionally, the Italian side has reserved an initial quota of **3000 and will take increments of 1000 for the next two years, respectively**, under the current Flows Decree.

#### About the Flows Decree:

- It is a system that establishes the **number of visas for non-EU citizens** who can enter Italy for employment, self-employment, or seasonal work.
- It will also help India and Italy **formalize the irregular migration** of workers from India.
- Under the Flows Decree, Italy has offered **incremental reserved quotas** for both seasonal and non-seasonal workers from 2023 -25.

## India features yet again on U.S. 'Priority Watch List'

#### News Excerpt:

The **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** again placed India on the **'Priority Watch List'** because of a lack of adequate **intellectual property rights** protection and enforcement.

#### More about News:

- There has been progress under the **US-India Trade Policy Forum** in addressing issues with trademark infringement investigations and pre-grant opposition proceedings. Still, numerous long-standing concerns

#### 2024 Special 301 Report:

- The Office of the **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** released its **2024 Special 301 Report** on the adequacy and effectiveness of U.S. trading partners' protection and enforcement of **intellectual property (IP) rights**.
- USTR placed **27** of all those reviewed on the **Priority Watch List or Watch List**.
- **Seven trading partners** on the **Priority Watch List** present the most significant concerns regarding **insufficient IP protection, enforcement, or actions** that otherwise limited market access for persons relying on intellectual property protection.
  - **Argentina, Chile, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, and Venezuela.**

remain, per the **US Trade Representative's 2024 Special 301 Report**.

- The US continues to urge India to join the **Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks**, which expands protectable subject matter to include non-traditional marks such as sensory marks, colour, position, and movement marks.
- **No action** is threatened by the US against countries on the **'priority watch list'**, but if a country slips further and is categorised as a **'priority country'**, the US may impose **'retaliatory' measures**.

## Indo- Sri Lanka agreement on Aadhaar-Like Identity Verification System

#### News Excerpt:

Sri Lanka and India have agreed to start work "on basic level issues" to fund an Aadhaar-like identity verification system for its citizens.

#### About:

- In February 2022, the Indian government offered to provide a grant to implement a **"Unitary Digital Identity Framework"** modelled on India's Aadhaar cards.
- The personal identity verification program is a **digital tool** that can represent individuals' identities in cyberspace and identify individual identities that can be accurately **verified in digital and physical environments** by combining the two devices.
- The **Philippines and Morocco have already implemented an Aadhaar-like system**, and countries such as Kenya, Vietnam, Brazil, Mexico, Singapore, and Egypt have shown interest in the Aadhaar infrastructure.
- The reason for the keenness to learn more about Aadhaar ties to the **SDG 16.9** states that all people should have a **legal entity by 2030**.

#### Aadhaar authentication:

- It is a process by which the Aadhaar number, along with demographic information and biometric information of an individual, is submitted to UIDAI's Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR) for its verification. UIDAI verifies the correctness of the details submitted, or the lack thereof, based on available information.
- UIDAI uses face authentication as a process by which an Aadhaar number holder's identity can be verified.



**Disputed Islands between UAE and Iran**

strategic **Strait of Hormuz**, a key waterway through



**News Excerpt:**

Tehran has protested against the statement issued in the 6th Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum challenging Iran’s claim to the three disputed islands in the Persian Gulf region.

**About the dispute:**

- The dispute involves Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) concerning three islands: **Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb.**
- Iran has governed the three islands since 1971, when its navy took control of the island after British troops withdrew from the UAE at its independence from Great Britain. The three islands dominate the approach to the

- which about **one-fifth of the world’s oil supply** passes.
- Iranian armed forces have a presence on the islands, which are crucial to the country’s maritime defence from
- where both warships and oil tankers pass.

Iran’s Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran claims these three islands have been historically a part of Persian territory and thus considers them <b>"inseparable"</b>.</li> <li>• Iran cites an agreement with Sharjah, asserting that this agreement gives Iran the right to administer <b>Abu Musa</b> and station troops there. However, it’s crucial to note that there is <b>no such agreement regarding the other two islands.</b></li> </ul>
UAE’s Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UAE also claims sovereignty over the three islands, has consistently pressed for a negotiated solution to the dispute, and <b>rejects Iran’s historical claims.</b></li> <li>• According to the UAE, the islands belonged to the emirate of <b>Ras al-Khaimah</b> until Iran <b>allegedly seized</b> them by force just days before the formation of the Emirati Federation.</li> </ul>

**Global South**

**News Excerpt:**

The term Global South came into light by looking at the current conditions, stages of development, aspirations, and interests in the world order.

**Evolution of the Global South:**

- The word **Global South (GS)** was possibly first used by **Carl Oglesby** in 1969 during the Vietnam War.
- It gained a boost from the **Willy Brandt** (former German Chancellor) **Report, "North-South: A Program for**



**Survival” (1980), which highlighted the massive gap in standards of living between the North and the South.**

- He even **drew a line on the world map separating the two.**
- He **argued for a much larger transfer of resources** from the rich North (comprising mostly the United States, Europe and Japan) to the poor South.
- He also **advocated for reducing protectionism in the North** to help reduce this gap.
- The Global South term has **evolved as a synonym for “developing countries”** over the last 40 years.

## Maldives, China: Global Security Initiative (GSI)

### News Excerpt:

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu and Chinese President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of 20 bilateral agreements.

### Key agreements:

- Both countries have agreed to elevate China-Maldives relations to -
  - **Comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership,**
  - Better leverage the **political guidance of high-level engagement,**
  - Expand practical cooperation between the two countries in various fields,
  - Strengthen **collaboration on international and multilateral affairs,**
  - Enhance the **well-being of the two people,**
- Both countries agreed to draw an **“action plan” for building a “China-Maldives Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership from 2024 to 2028.”**
- Both agreed to **cooperate in several areas,** including the **blue economy, digital economy, infrastructure development projects** linked to the **Belt and Road Initiative,** and **disaster and risk mitigation.**

### Global Security Initiative (GSI):

- **It has been proposed by the Chinese government.**
- It aims to create a **new path to security** that features dialogue over confrontation, partnership over alliance and win-win over zero-sum.
- As per the Chinese Government, the core concepts and principles of the GSI can be summarized as the **“Six Commitments”**.
  - vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security,

- respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries,
- abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter,
- taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously,
- peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation,
- maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains.

## India to sign energy MoU with Guyana.

### News Excerpt:

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Republic of Guyana, on **cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector.**

### About the MoU:

- **Comprehensive Scope:** It covers various aspects of the hydrocarbon sector, encompassing sourcing crude oil from Guyana.
- **Involvement of Indian companies in Guyana's exploration and production (E&P) sector,** cooperation in crude oil refining, capacity building, bolstering bilateral trade, collaboration in the natural gas sector, joint efforts in developing regulatory policies for Guyana's oil and gas industry, and cooperation in clean energy including biofuels and renewables like solar energy.
- **Diversification of Oil Sources:** Guyana has recently emerged as a significant player in the global oil & gas sector, marking itself as the **world's newest oil producer with substantial discoveries.**
- **Bilateral Trade and Investment:** The agreement is anticipated to **bolster bilateral trade and encourage investments** between both nations, providing Indian companies with opportunities to participate in Guyana's E&P sector. It is seen as a step towards enhancing energy supply security for India, **aligning with the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'** or self-reliant India.



## INTERNAL SECURITY

## ULFA Peace Accord

## News Excerpt:

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Assam government have **signed a memorandum of settlement with the pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA)**.

## Emergence of ULFA:

- Amidst all this, a group of more **radical thinkers based on ethnic nationalism and left ideology formed ULFA on April 7, 1979**.
- They wanted to **establish a sovereign Assamese nation through an armed struggle against the Indian state**.
- The region's growing tea, coal, and oil economy attracted migrants from all over in the 19th century, and the exodus of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan in the 1970s **made the indigenous population insecure**.
- **International linkages of ULFA:**
  - It had **bases in five neighbouring countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal, and Myanmar** - allowing for a strategic Northeast encirclement.
  - ULFA has **links to other insurgent outfits in the Northeast and Myanmar**, as well as Islamic terror outfits like Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami and Al-Qaeda.

## Government of India's response:

- The **Indian state's response has been unsparing**.
  - In 1990, the Centre launched **Operation Bajrang, leading to the arrest of 1,221 ULFA insurgents**.
  - Assam was declared a '**disturbed area**', and **President's rule** was imposed. Eventually, the **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)** was invoked.
- Yet, the ULFA has survived, in some part due to help from outside India.

## Other peace agreements signed with insurgent groups in North-East:

- NLFT agreement in 2019
- Bru and Bodo pacts in 2020
- Karbi in 2021
- Adivasi agreement in 2022
- Assam-Meghalaya border agreement
- Assam-Arunachal border agreement
- Agreement with UNLF in 2023

## Resurgence of Pirates

## News Excerpt:

Two separate incidents of piracy have sparked fears of the return of Somali pirates in international waters.

## Three major hotspots identified in IOR:

- **South East Asia:** A larger pattern of maritime security concerns in the **Straits of Malacca and Singapore** has exhibited a sharp increase in incidents from **45 in 2019 to a peak of 83 in 2023**, as per the International Maritime Organization's **Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS)**.
- **Gulf of Guinea:** There is a rise in the intensity of piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea.
- **Horn of Africa:** The rise in conflict-related incidents in the **Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea** involving attacks using drones and missiles is a growing concern and poses serious risks.

## India's steps for maritime security:

- The Indian Navy is a part of the **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)**, a 39-nation group of naval forces looking at maritime security.
- Indian Naval ships and aircraft are regularly deployed on '**Mission Based Deployments**' in the Indian Ocean Region to enhance maritime security. It also undertakes surveillance to enhance **Maritime Domain Awareness and address** contingencies that may arise.
- These are consistent with the Government of India's vision of **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** and the **Maritime Security Strategy**, which aims to position India as the "**Preferred Security Provider**".

## Donkey Flights

## News Excerpt:

The case of a chartered flight with Indian passengers from the UAE flying to **Nicaragua** has raised questions about illegal immigration.

## About the news:

- In recent months, there has been a notable increase in interest among Indians to travel to **Nicaragua, a Central American** nation not traditionally popular among Indian travellers.
- While some may genuinely be interested in **tourism or business**, sources suggest that Nicaragua is becoming a gateway for illegal immigration to the **United States and Canada**.

## What are 'donkey flights'?

- It refers to an **illegal method in which people cross a country's borders** through a back-door route with multiple stops in other countries.
- The use of donkey flights by **undocumented**

**immigrants** can be traced back to an era when people relied on donkeys for travel, a practice considered unconventional in today's world.

- While the conventional legal route involves obtaining visas for education and work in countries like the US and UK, the '**donkey flight**' method is chosen by those who cannot do so through legal or financial means.
- Central American countries such as **Mexico and Nicaragua** are commonly perceived as the easy nations from where one can land in the US without much hassle.
- The term "donkey flight" finds its roots in the **native language of Punjabi** where it means the act of hopping from place to place.
- This process involves **illegal border crossings, hiding in ships and containers**, and also poses the risk of being caught and being deported.

## Free Movement Regime (FMR)

### News Excerpt:

The Union government is all set to **scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the Myanmar border.**

### Background:

- The **British demarcated the border** between India and Myanmar in **1826**.
- India and Myanmar share an **unfenced border**, and people on either side have familial and ethnic ties, which prompted the arrangement in the 1970s.
- The migrants belonging to the **Kuki-Chin-Zo ethnic group** share ethnic ties with communities in Mizoram and Manipur.
- **What is FMR: It is a mutually agreed agreement under which**, every member of the hill tribes, either a citizen of India or a citizen of Myanmar, who **resides within 16 km on either side of the border**, can **cross the border** on the production of a **border pass**.
- The border pass **remains valid for a year**, and they can **stay for up to two weeks per visit**.
- The **FMR was implemented in 2018** as part of the Indian Government's Act East policy when diplomatic relations between India and Myanmar were on the upswing.
- Under the **upcoming regulation**, around **300 km of the border will be fenced**.
- The Ministry had constituted a **committee headed by Rina Mitra** to examine various methods to **curb the misuse of free movement along the Myanmar border**.



### Need to scrap FMR:

- The move comes in the wake of the **large-scale displacement of Rohingya people from the Rakhine State in Myanmar to India.**
- The free movement regime is **misused by militants and trans-border criminals who smuggle weapons, contraband goods, and fake Indian currency notes.**
- Taking advantage of the free-movement regime, they enter India, **commit crimes, and escape to their relatively safer hideouts.**
- After a **military coup in Myanmar in February 2021**, there has been an **influx of undocumented migrants.**

## Defence Upgrade Roadmap: Vijay Raghavan Committee

### News Excerpt:

The nine-member **Vijay Raghavan panel** was set up by the Government last year to **review the functioning of the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** against the **backdrop of several of its projects suffering from huge delays.**

### Major recommendations of the committee:

- A top body **chaired by the Prime Minister, with the Defence Minister and the National Security Advisor as its Vice Presidents**, should determine the country's defence technology roadmap and decide on major projects and their execution.
- **This top body called the Defence Technology Council (DTC)**, is proposed to have an executive committee chaired by the Chief of Defence Staff. The Principal

Scientific Advisor, along with the three service chiefs and their vice chiefs, will also be its members.

- The panel has also suggested the creation of a separate **Department of Defence Science, Technology, and Innovation** under the Defence Ministry.
- This department, proposed to be **headed by a technocrat**, will not only promote defence research and development in the academic and start-up ecosystem but also serve as the **secretariat for the DTC**.
- DRDO should **focus on its original goal of research and development for defence** and refrain from involving itself in productization, production cycles, and product management, tasks that are more suitable for the private sector.

## Cyber Kidnapping

### News Excerpt:

A Chinese student who was a victim of 'cyber kidnapping' has been found unharmed. Experts believe that with the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), such crimes can rise.

### What is cyber kidnapping, and how does it work?

Cyber kidnapping refers to a crime where the 'kidnappers' convince their victims to hide and then contact their loved ones for ransom.

- **Through pictures:**
  - The victim is made to send pictures that **make it look like they are being held captive** — showing them bound or gagged. These are then shared with the family. Both parties believe their loved ones will be harmed if they don't do as the kidnappers ask.
  - The 'kidnappers', though not physically present, monitor the victim online through video-call platforms.
- **Through Voice:**
  - Experts believe that with the **rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, such crimes can rise, as scammers can send people **voice notes that sound exactly like a loved one in distress**.
  - This can also evolve into a much larger crisis as they can **specifically target a racial class in a foreign land, leading to more hate crimes**.

## INS Imphal

### News Excerpt:

**INS Imphal**, the **third of four warships (Other three Vishakapatnam, Mormugao, Surat)** of **Project 15B** that together form the **Visakhapatnam class** stealth-guided missile **destroyers**, has been commissioned into the Indian Navy.

### Key points:

- INS Imphal is the **first warship** to have been **named after a city from the Northeastern region** after the approval of the President of India.
- This is a **befitting tribute to Manipur's sacrifices and contributions in India's freedom struggle**, be it the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891 or Netaji Subash Chandra Bose's hoisting of the INA flag for the first time on 14 April 1944 at Moirang, or the pitched Battle of Imphal between British and Imperial Japanese forces, with Indians on both sides.

### Strategic Significance:

- These Destroyers are warships with **high speed, manoeuvrability, and endurance** designed for naval formations like fleets or carrier battle groups.
- Its stealth feature gives it the **radar signature of a small ship**, while its high indigenous component gives it a **strategic edge**.
- The Visakhapatnam class is one of the most advanced ships in the Indian Navy, capable of **operating independently** even without a large formation.
- **INS Imphal** is a **key asset in network-centric warfare**, using information technology and computer networking tools to form networks of force elements in **conflict scenarios**.

## Project SAMBHAV

### News Excerpt:

Army initiates Project SAMBHAV (**Secure Army Mobile Bharat Version**) – an **end-to-end encrypted mobile ecosystem**, representing a major leap forward in India's defence capabilities.

### Features of SAMBHAV:

- **End-to-end Encryption:** This means that the data transmitted between devices is encrypted, and only authorized parties with the corresponding decryption keys can access the information.
- **5G Technology:** This allows for **high-speed and reliable communication**, making it suitable for dynamic and mobile military operations.
- **Network Agnosticism:** This **can seamlessly operate across different types of networks**, including various cellular networks. This adaptability ensures that secure communication is maintained regardless of the specific network infrastructure available.
- **Indigenous Operating System:** It is designed to meet the security and operational requirements of the Indian Army, reducing reliance on commercial or foreign systems.

- **Dual-Use Infrastructure:** It may leverage both civilian and military infrastructure for enhanced functionality, thus being of 'Dual-Use'.
- **Scalability:** It is designed to be scalable, aiming to configure a significant number of sets. This scalability is essential for widespread adoption within the Indian Army, providing secure communication capabilities across a large user base.

## Operation Sarvashakti

### News Excerpt:

The Indian Army launched **Operation Sarvashakti** on the lines of **Operation Sarp Vinash**.

### About Operation Sarvashakti:

- The Indian Army launched Operation Sarvashakti, involving security forces from both sides of the **Pir Panjal range** in Jammu and Kashmir to flush out terrorists who have been involved in a series of ambushes on Indian troops.
- **Pakistani proxy terrorist groups** have tried to revive terrorism in the **South of Pir Panjal ranges in recent times**, and it is suspected that they are hiding in the dense jungles, mountains and caves dotting the area.

### About Operation Sarp Vinash

- Operation 'Sarp Vinash' was undertaken by the Army to flush out terrorists who had made bases in the Hilkaka Poonch-Surankot area of the Pir Panjal range during **April-May 2003**.

## Sadbhavana Scheme

### News Excerpt:

The Indian Army has rolled out fresh measures to reach out to the locals and started its initiative by **adopting Topa Pir village in Poonch district**.

### What is Operation Sadbhavana?

- Launched by the Indian Army in **1998**, it is a unique humane initiative undertaken in J&K and Ladakh to address the aspirations of people affected by scrooge of terrorism.
- It focuses on improving the core social indices of **Education, Women & Youth Empowerment, and Health care** with a simultaneous thrust on capacity building by implementing community/infrastructure development projects.
- Operation Sadbhavana is aimed at helping the people to help themselves. Under it, the **Army acts as a facilitator and catalyst for development projects** that are identified jointly with the state administration and the people.

- **Major Programs under the Sadbhavana scheme:**
  - **Running Army Goodwill Schools in Kashmir** that provide quality education at an affordable cost to children in remote areas where schooling facilities are either non-existent or primitive.
  - Operating centres for **community development, skilling, women empowerment and youth guidance**.
  - Conducting tours outside Kashmir **to enhance awareness amongst locals**.
  - **Regularly conduct medical and veterinary camps** in remote areas.
  - Launching **employment-generating initiatives**.
  - **Inculcating interest in extracurricular activities** and pursuing talent and hobbies by organizing events where the youth can demonstrate their talent and proficiency in music, art and sports.
  - **Conduct coaching for all-India competitive exams** and establish Youth Employment Guidance Nodes.

## Ugram Rifle

### News Excerpt:

The Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) has unveiled an indigenously developed rifle named 'Ugram' in less than 100 days.

### About the Rifle:

- The rifle will be able to deploy rounds of **7.62 mm calibre**, which will make it more ferocious compared to rifles that use 5.62 mm caliber rounds.
- The rifle weighs **4 kg and will have an effective range of 500 metres**, which is nearly five football fields.
- **The rifle has 20 rounds and fires both single and automatic modes**.
- The rifle has been developed in accordance with the **Army's General Staff Qualitative Requirements (GSQR)**.



### About GSQR:

- Formulating the GSQR is one of the initial processes of any new capital procurement.
- It broadly lays down the reason **why the equipment is required, its physical and operational details, as well as the maintainability and quality requirements.**
- The onus of formulating the GSQR rests with the parent directorate that wants the equipment or a nominated directorate in case the equipment is required by more than one arm/service.

### New Android 'Chameleon' Trojan Malware

#### News Excerpt:

A potent variant of the Chameleon Trojan malware is **threatening Android users by turning off biometric defences and exposing PINs.**

#### About 'Chameleon Trojan' malware:

- It poses a substantial risk as it can disable even **fingerprint and face lock features** to access sensitive information sneakily.
- The malware strategically **attaches itself to legitimate Android applications**, such as the widely used **Google Chrome**, effectively **avoiding immediate detection.**
- Chameleon Trojan's modus operandi **varies depending on the Android version, i.e. it is highly adaptable.**
- The malware actively **pilfers on-screen content**, elevates its permissions, and utilizes gestures to navigate the device.
- By capturing entered PINs and passwords, the Trojan gains unauthorized access, paving the way for the **theft of sensitive information such as credit card details and login credentials.**
- The malware **collects data on users' app usage habits**, determining optimal periods for launching **attacks when users are least likely to be actively engaged with their devices.**

### NIA to build its terror database

#### News Excerpt:

The **National Terrorism Data Fusion & Analysis Centre (NTDFAC)**, modelled along the lines of the US Global Terrorism Database, has been inaugurated by the Union Home Minister.

#### About the news:

- The details of the terrorists and their associates, including their **case history, fingerprints, videos, pictures, social media profiles**, and information on the terror groups they belong to, have been compiled.

- At the NTDFAC, the NIA has the **National Automated Fingerprint Identification System** with over 92 lakh fingerprint records -
  - **Integrated Monitoring of Terrorism**, which includes data from more than 22,000 terrorist cases along with their case studies.
  - **National Integrated Database on Arrested Narco-Offenders** with data of more than 5 lakh narco offenders, their source of funding, their involvement along with their cases registered in India, their latest pictures, and social media profiles.
- The NTDFAC will also have a **face recognition system**, which will **help them scan pictures of suspects from any CCTV footage.**

#### National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS):

- It is a **biometric system used by law enforcement agencies and government organizations** in various countries to **store and manage fingerprint data.**
- It is designed to facilitate the rapid and accurate identification of individuals by comparing their fingerprints with a database of known fingerprints.
- It enables law enforcement agencies to **upload, trace, and retrieve data from the database in real-time on a 24x7 basis.**
- It assigns a **unique 10-digit National Fingerprint Number (NFN)** to each person arrested for a crime.
  - This unique ID is used for the person's lifetime, and **different crimes registered under different FIRs are linked to the same NFN.**
  - The ID's first two digits are that of the state code in which the person arrested for a crime is registered, followed by a sequence number.
- By automating the collection, storage, and matching of fingerprints, along with digitizing the records of fingerprint data, it **provides the much-needed unique identifier for every arrested person in the CCTNS** (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems) database as both are connected at the backend.

### Personally Identifiable Information

#### News Excerpt:

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs recently **fixed a critical vulnerability in its online portal.**

- The **vulnerability** reportedly exposed **personal details** — like **Aadhaar, PAN, voter identity, passport, date of birth, contact number and address** — of more than 98 lakh directors of Indian companies.

### What is Personally Identifiable Information?

- Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any **data or information** maintained by an organization or agency that can **potentially be used to identify a specific individual**.
- This could include information such as Aadhaar, PAN, voter identity, passport, date of birth, contact number, communication address, and **biometric information**.
- The constituents of PII vary depending on an individual's home country.
- However, **non-PII** can be used to **identify an individual in tandem with additional information**.
  - **Non-PII information** includes **photographic images** (especially of the face or other identifying characteristics), **place of birth, religion, geographic indicators, employment information, educational qualifications, and medical records**.

### What is the difference between sensitive and non-sensitive PII?

- **Non-sensitive PII** is **publicly available information** and can be stored and transmitted unencrypted.
  - This includes **zip code, race, gender, and religion**.
  - They cannot be used to **identify an individual accurately**.
- **Sensitive PII**, when exposed, can be used to **identify individuals and potentially cause harm**.
  - **Sensitive PII is stored by employers, government organizations, banks, and other digital accounts used by individuals**.

## 7th Indian Ocean Conference 2024

### News Excerpt:

The 7th Indian Ocean Conference was held in **Perth, Australia**, which brought together leaders, ministers, and officials from **Indian Ocean rim countries** to discuss diverse issues.

### About the news:

- The India Foundation organized the 7th edition of the Conference in association with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- The theme of the conference is "**Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean.**"

### Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)

- The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) is an **annual event** with over 300 delegates from 22 countries, including **ministers, political leaders, diplomats, strategic thinkers, academics, and media**.

- The Conference endeavors to bring critical states and principal maritime partners of the region together on a common platform to deliberate upon the prospects of regional cooperation for **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**.
- The 6th Indian Ocean Conference 2023 was held in **Dhaka, Bangladesh**.

### Indian Ocean Region

- The Indian Ocean is a vast theatre stretching from the **Strait of Malacca and the western coast of Australia** in the **East to the Mozambique Channel** in the West.
- It encompasses the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea in the North, all the way down to the southern Indian Ocean.
- The Indian Ocean's key subregions are **South Asia, the Middle East, the eastern coast of Africa**, and the islands dotting the ocean from Sri Lanka in the East to the Comoros Archipelago in the West.

## 'Xiaokang' border defence villages

### News Excerpt:

The Chinese have started occupying several of the country's model 'Xiaokang' border defence villages along its border with India's northeastern region.

### Xiaokang border defence villages:

- Since 2019, China has been constructing 628 such **Xiaokang or "well-off villages"** along India's borders with the **Tibet Autonomous Region** for over five years now.
- These have been constructed all along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, including the Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh borders.
- The exact purposes of these villages have remained unclear, but they were understood to be **dual-use infrastructure** (can be used both for civil and military purposes) and have thus been a concern from an Indian defence perspective.
- The strategic community looks at it as a way for the Chinese to assert claims over certain areas along the LAC.

### India's response:

- India has also focused on **strengthening its border infrastructure** and improving forward connectivity with the construction of new roads, bridges, and helipads. There has also been a push to develop alternate routes to the LAC and improve **inter-valley connectivity** in the northeast.
- The Indian government announced the **Vibrant Villages Programme** in 2022 to develop its border villages into



modern villages with all amenities and as tourist attractions. The program builds on the existing **Border Area Development Programme (BADP)** under the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs**.

- Under the program, India plans to develop **663 border villages** into modern villages in the first phase. Of them, at least 17 such border villages along the borders with China have been selected for development as a pilot project.

## Operation Nanhe Faristey

### News Excerpt:

**Launched by Indian Railways**, under the mission **Railway Protection Force (RPF)**, played an important role in **reuniting 549 children** who were lost/separated due to several reasons from their families.

### Other similar initiatives by RPF:

- **Human Trafficking & Operation AAHT:** To curb Human Trafficking.
- **Operation "Jeevan Raksha":** For passenger safety around platforms.
- **Women Security initiative "Meri Saheli":** To provide security to lady passengers in long-distance trains.
- **Operation "Uplabdh":** To ensure ticket availability and arresting touts.
- **Operation "NARCOS":** To seize NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances), which gets transported through rail.
- **Emergency Response & Operation 'Yatri Suraksha':** To redress security-related complaints of passengers in distress and for immediate assistance. RPF also supplements the efforts of police to prevent and detect crimes against railway passengers.
- **Ensuring Safety through "Operation Sanraksha":** In a resolute effort to maintain passenger safety and protect railway services.
- **Assisting Those in Need (Operation Seva):** With a humanitarian approach, RPF assists elderly, sick, or injured passengers during their rail travels.
- **Curbing Illegal Goods Transport (Operation Satark):** Under "Operation Satark," the Railway Protection Force (RPF) seizes illegal tobacco, liquor, and other intoxicating substances.

## VAYU SHAKTI-24

### News Excerpt:

The Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted 'Exercise - VAYU SHAKTI-24' at Pokhran air-to-ground range in Rajasthan.

### About the Exercise Vayu Shakti:

- It is a **triennial** (conducted once every three years) exercise that has been going on since 1954.
- It aims to showcase the capability of the IAF to **conduct full spectrum operations** (Day and Night).
- Last held in 2019, this year's **theme** was, '**Lightning Strike from the Sky**'.
- Over 120 IAF aircraft, including **Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Tejas, C-17 and C-130J**, took part in the exercise.
- Keeping up with the technological advancements in the combat domain and the lessons learned from recent conflicts, the IAF also displayed a **long-range unmanned drone**, which destroyed a simulated enemy radar site with pinpoint accuracy.

The indigenous Air Defence Systems, **Akash, and SAMAR missile** systems were also showcased, destroying multiple aerial targets.

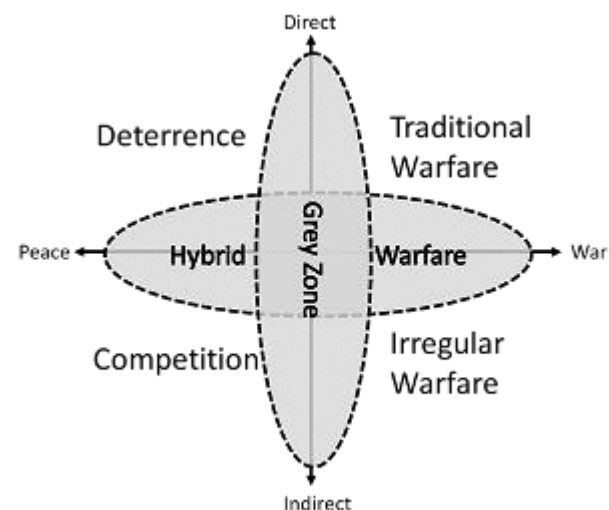
## Grey Zone Warfare

### News Excerpt:

Grey zone warfare has become the latest in informal warfare.

### About Grey Zone Warfare

- It generally means a **middle, unclear space between direct conflict and peace** in international relations.
  - **The grey zone describes** a set of activities that occur between peace (or cooperation) and war (or armed conflict).



- Many activities fall into this murky middle ground—from nefarious economic activities, influence operations, and cyberattacks to mercenary operations, assassinations, and disinformation campaigns.

- Generally, grey-zone activities are considered **gradualist campaigns by state and non-state actors that combine non-military and quasi-military tools and fall below the threshold of armed conflict.**
  - **They aim** to thwart, destabilize, weaken, or attack an adversary and are often tailored to the vulnerabilities of the target state.
- Countries such as China use these measures to achieve their sovereignty goals while minimizing the risk of escalation.

### Here are some ways Grey Zone warfare is waged:

- **Cyber Operations** - This includes system intrusions to deny the availability of information systems, hacking and stealing data, corrupting data, spreading disinformation, and conducting cyber espionage to disrupt or influence a target country's critical infrastructure, political systems, or economy without causing direct physical harm.
- **Information Warfare:** Propaganda, rumours, fake news, social media manipulation, and psychological operations are used to shape public opinion, create divisions, and undermine trust in institutions within the target nation.
- **Support to Proxy Forces** - Providing support to non-state actors, insurgents, or militias in a way that enables them to advance the supporting nation's agenda without officially engaging in direct conflict. During the 80s and 90s, Chinese support for various insurgent movements in India's northeast was widely known, and it continues to this day.
- **Economic Coercion** - Imposing sanctions, trade restrictions, or manipulating financial markets to undermine the target nation's economy or coerce policy changes without military action. Australia's support of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong led China to levy a 212 per cent tariff on Australian wines in 2020.
- **Political Subversion** - Using covert **means to influence elections, manipulate political processes, or support political groups** or movements that align with the aggressor's interests.
- **Irregular Warfare** - Deploying unconventional military tactics such as **guerrilla warfare, sabotage, or asymmetric attacks** by leveraging smaller, specialized units or non-traditional military forces forms part of Irregular Warfare.
- **Legal and Diplomatic Maneuvering**—China is careful when exploiting legal or diplomatic loopholes, leveraging international institutions, or manipulating alliances to weaken the target country's position on the global stage while offering a justification for its own actions based on precepts and conventions of law.
- **Military Intimidation** - This involves using military assets to convey the threat of a potential military attack or a risk of military escalation.

## Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) and Sankalan app

### News Excerpt:

In a significant boost to India's **fight against terrorism and organized crime**, the Union **Home Minister** virtually inaugurated a unique digital **Criminal Case Management System (CCMS)** and a **mobile app** called **Sankalan**.

### About the Criminal Case Management System (CCMS):

- The newly developed Criminal Case Management System is designed by the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**.
- It will enable the **NIA** personnel to **better coordinate in terrorism and organized crime cases**, thereby improving justice delivery.
- The two new office complexes in Jammu and Kochi and the residential complex in Raipur will **strengthen the agency's reach and presence**.

### Sankalan app:

- The newly launched **Sankalan app** is a **compendium of New Criminal Laws** by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**.
- It has been designed to **help users navigate new criminal laws, acting as a bridge between old and new laws**.
- The app will work **offline** as well, and its availability has been ensured in far-flung areas so that all stakeholders have access to desired information around the clock.

## MIRV technology used in Agni-5 missile

### News Excerpt:

The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has conducted the first successful flight test of an indigenously developed Agni-5 missile with **Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV)** technology under the name **Mission Divyastra**.

### Agni-5 missiles:

- Agni is a long-range missile developed indigenously by the DRDO.
- The family of Agni missiles has been in the arsenal of the Indian armed forces since the early 1990s.
- This latest variant of the missile is equipped with MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle) technology.

### About Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology:

- MIRVs were originally developed in the early 1960s to allow a **single missile to carry multiple nuclear warheads**, each capable of striking **different targets independently**.

- The inception of MIRV technology was done by the **United States** by deploying a MIRVed **Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)** in 1970 and a MIRVed **Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM)** in 1971.
- MIRV technology requires the combination of **large missiles, small warheads, accurate guidance**, and a complex mechanism for releasing warheads sequentially during flight.
- MIRVs permit a missile to **deploy multiple nuclear warheads to different targets** in contrast to a traditional missile that carries one warhead. This strengthens the country's strategic deterrence capability.
- The warheads on these missiles can be released at different speeds and directions.
- Currently, the **United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and India** are among the nations that possess the MIRV technology.

### Navy demonstrates twin-carrier operations.

**News Excerpt:**

The Indian Navy displayed its formidable maritime capabilities through an exhibition of twin-carrier operations during the **Commander's Conference 2024**.

**Twin-Carrier Operations:**

- A **twin carrier operation** refers to a naval operation in which **two aircraft carriers** are **deployed together** to maximize their combined effectiveness.
- As part of the operation, **MiG-29K** jets took off simultaneously from **INS Vikramaditya** and **INS Vikrant** and then **landed on opposite decks**.
- The exercise was part of the **first edition** of the **Naval Commanders' Conference of 2024**.



**Naval Commanders' Conference of 2024:**

- The **commanders' conference** is an **institutional forum** that enables deliberations on **important maritime security issues** at the **military-strategic level**.
- The forum provided an opportunity to **engage** with **MSMEs, innovators** and **Academia** to deliberate ways, means and novel avenues to further **Atma-nirbharta** initiatives and enhance **self-reliance** in **defence production**.

### INDUS-X Summit

**News Excerpt:**

The India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem Summit, **INDUS-X**, was hosted in **New Delhi**.

**About the summit:**

- The summit aims to enhance strategic technology partnerships and defence cooperation between India and the USA.
- It is **organized** by India's **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** and the **U.S. Department of Defence** in **collaboration** with the US-India Business Council and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM).
- Participants include representatives from **governments, academia, research organizations, investors, defence startups, technology incubators, and industry associations**.

**INDUS-X initiative:**

- **iDEX**, has been launched as part of the vision to build a **'defence innovation bridge'**.
- **INDUS-X aims to:**
  - Pave the way towards the goals established in the US-India roadmap for **defence industrial cooperation**.
  - Capitalize on the tech-releasability outcomes that the industry anticipates from the US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (**iCET**).
  - Explore joint **opportunities** in high-tech defence innovation, research and development.
  - Strengthen bilateral **trade relationships** and defence establishment linkages.
- According to the **US Chamber of Commerce**, INDUS-X has the **potential to help India** achieve its target of **USD 5 billion** in **defence exports** by **2025** and **diversify its defence supply chain**.

**India's Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)**

- The iDEX initiative was **launched in 2018**. It is funded and managed by the **Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)**.
- The **objective of the scheme** is to provide **financial support to nearly 300 Startups/MSMEs/individual innovators** and about 20 Partner Incubators through the **Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)**.

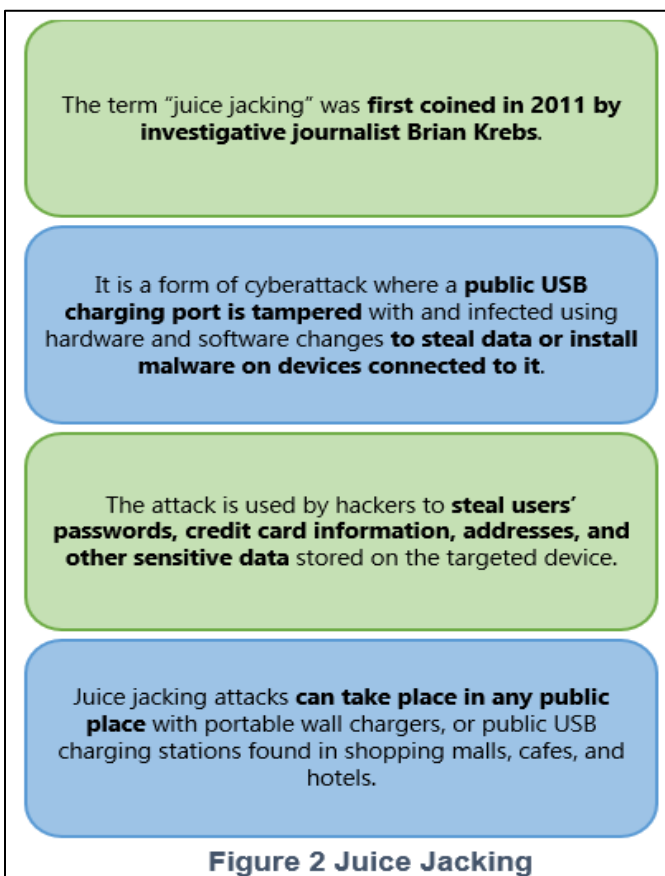
### Juice Jacking

**News Excerpt:**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a cautionary message to all mobile phone users advising them **against charging their devices using public ports**.

### How does juice jacking work?

- To perform the attack, hackers **infect USB ports** or charging cables in public areas before the users connect to them.
- Most attacks **target both Android and iOS mobile devices**, with older devices being particularly vulnerable due to their outdated software.
- USB ports have multiple pins, but **only one pin is used for charging**, while the other pins are used for data transfers.
- When users connect their devices to compromised USB ports, hackers use the connection to access mobile devices, steal personal data, or deliver malware.
- Juice jacking attacks **also target laptop USB ports, which are similarly capable of transferring data.**



### Indian Navy's newest base on Minicoy Island

#### News Excerpt:

The Indian government has commissioned a **new naval base, "INS Jatayu,"** in the Lakshadweep islands to **upgrade its military capacity significantly.**

#### About INS Jatayu:

- It will function under the operational control of the Naval

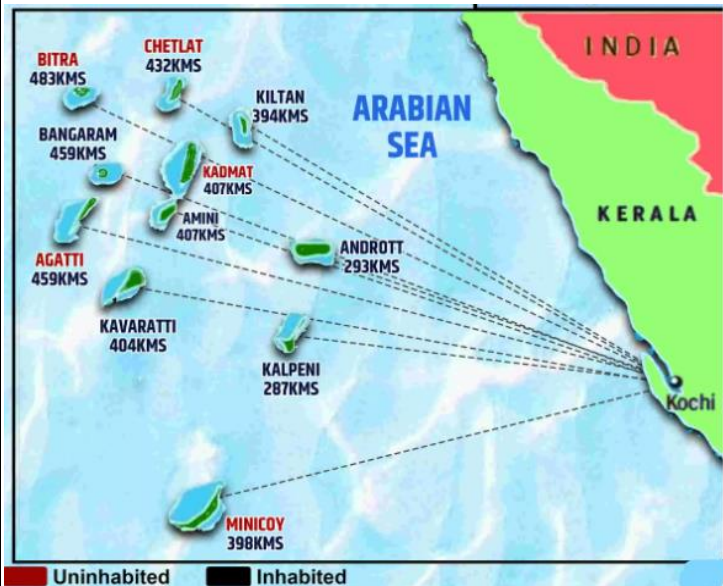
Officer-in-Charge (Lakshadweep), Southern Naval Command.

- **Radars, jetties, an airport, and BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles** will be among the features of the Indian Navy's newest station, **INS Jatayu**, which is being built on Minicoy Island in Lakshadweep.
- The base on Minicoy, **the southernmost island of Lakshadweep** that straddles vital sea lines of communication (SLOCs), is named after Jatayu, the **mythical creature in the Ramayana who tried to stop Sita's abduction.**
- INS Jatayu is **the second naval base in Lakshadweep after INS Dweep prakshak in Kavaratti.**
- The new base will be **just about 130 km** from Thuraakunu, the **northernmost island of Maldives.**

### Go's ongoing efforts for infrastructure development in Lakshadweep:

- **NITI Aayog** has joined hands with the **Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India** to **expand Agatti Airfield** amid increased tourist demand.
- **Larsen & Toubro** has been given a **₹4,500-crore** contract to **expand the runway to 2,800 metres.**

For Minicoy, there is a plan to develop a greenfield dual-use airfield with a longer runway, making it capable of handling the **Navy's P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft** and medium- and long-endurance Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.



### Suspension of Operations pact with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups

#### News Excerpt:

Two months after the Manipur government refused to send a representative to a meeting called by the Centre to extend

the **Suspension of Operations (SoO)** pact with **Kuki-Zo insurgent groups**, there is a **“status quo”** on the agreement on the ground.

**Suspension of Operations (SoO) pact:**

- The Suspension of Operations (SoO) pact is a **tripartite agreement** signed between **the United Peoples’ Front (UPF)** and the **Kuki National Organization (KNO)**, an umbrella of 25 insurgent groups, the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** and the **Manipur government**.
  - Of these insurgent groups, 17 come under the **Kuki National Organization (KNO)**, and 8 belong to the **United People’s Front (UPF)**.
- The agreement was signed in the wake of the **Kuki-Naga clashes in the 1990s** when hundreds were killed. The insurgent groups demanded an independent land for the **Kuki-Zo**.



**What are the terms of the SoO pact?**

- The **Suspension of Operation agreement is for one year**, but it is **extendable** according to the progress of its implementation.
- To oversee the effective implementation of the SoO pact, a committee called the **Joint Monitoring Group (JMG)**, with representatives from all the signatories, has been formed.
- According to the pact, the Centre and state governments agreed that the **security forces would not launch any operations against these groups**. In return, the **insurgent groups will also not launch any such operation**.
- The pact also requires these groups to **abide by the Indian Constitution**, the **laws of the land**, and the **territorial integrity of Manipur**.
- The SoO pact further bars these groups from committing any activity that amounts to **atrocities or, extortion**, or any other **unlawful operation**.

- The militant cadres are to be confined to **designated camps** identified by the government. **Arms are deposited** in a safe room under a double-locking system. The groups are given arms only to guard their camps and protect their leaders.
- As part of the **rehabilitation package**, the cadres living in the designated camps are given a **monthly stipend of 6000 Rs**. Financial assistance is also being provided to maintain the designated camps.

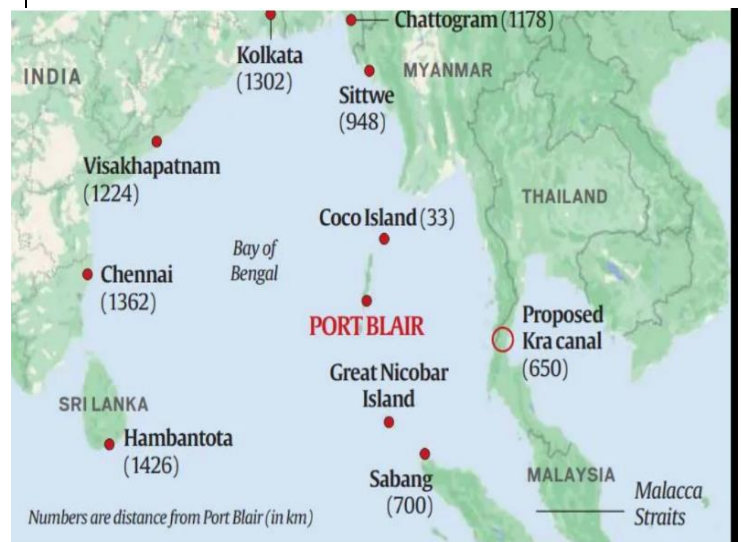
**Strategic military infra upgrade for A & N Islands**

**News Excerpt:**

The **Andaman and Nicobar (A & N) Islands** are undergoing a **significant upgrade** in military infrastructure.

**Key points regarding the infrastructure upgrade in the A & N Islands:**

- The **enhanced infrastructure aims** to facilitate the deployment of **additional military forces, larger warships, aircraft, missile batteries, and troops**.
- There are plans to significantly **enhance the surveillance infrastructure** at one of the **northern islands** and construct a **permanent habitat for troops** there.
- The **length of an airstrip** at a vital naval air station is being increased to enable the landing of larger aircraft like **P8Is and fighter jets**, and its **jetty is also being expanded** for use by larger ships.
- There are **836 Islands** in A&N, of which only **38 are inhabited**.
- The **Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC)**, established in **2001**, is the first and only **tri-service command** in the islands.



### Other major infrastructure upgrades:

- The **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** and the **Navy Chief** have inaugurated various facilities to enhance the **operational capability of the ANC**, including:
  - a **modern hangar and dispersal system at INS Utkrosh in Port Blair**,
  - a **Precision Approach Radar (PAR)**
  - an **Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System**,
  - **Naval Communication Network (NCN) Centres**

### What is the strategic importance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands?

- The island chain is located **700 nautical miles (1,300 km)** southeast of the **Indian mainland**.
- The **Malacca Strait**, the main waterway that connects the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, is less than a day's steaming from Port Blair.
- The islands share **four of India's international maritime zone delimitations** with **Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, and Bangladesh**.
- They also give India **substantial ocean space** under the **United Nations Conference on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS)** in terms of **exclusive economic zone and continental shelf**.

### Doxxing

#### News Excerpt:

Doxxing allows abusers and criminals who are thousands of miles away to target victims by putting their private details online for others to exploit.

#### What is Doxxing?

- Doxxing is the intentional revelation of a **person's private information online without their consent, often with malicious intent**.
- It includes **sharing phone numbers, home addresses, identification numbers, and essentially any sensitive and previously private information**.
- E.g., Personal photos could make the victim identifiable and potentially exposed to further **harassment, humiliation and real-life threats, including stalking and unwanted encounters in person**.

#### Legal provisions against Doxxing in India:

- **In India, there is no law in place** to prevent and/or punish doxxing directly, though there are laws in place against voyeurism (Section 354C IPC and IT Act), divulging sexually explicit content (The IT Act) and obscene content (Section 292 IPC), defamation (Section 499 IPC) and online stalking (Section 354D IPC).
- **Doxxing violates the victim's Right to Privacy (A Fundamental Right) and threatens their Right to Dignity (Article 21 – Constitution of India)**.

- The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, which is intended to protect citizens' data privacy, specifically states that it does not apply to "personal data that is made or caused to be made publicly available."
- But if a person is affected by doxxing, then he/she can register a complaint at his/her nearest cybercrime police station or register an online complaint on [cybercrime.gov.in](https://cybercrime.gov.in).

### Patriot Air-Defense System

#### News Excerpt:

Germany has agreed to send Ukraine a **Patriot air defence system** and missiles for existing systems.

#### About Patriot air-defense system:

- **PATRIOT (Phased Array Tracking Radar to Intercept on Target)** is a theatre-wide **surface-to-air missile defence system** built by **Raytheon Technologies Corp**.
- It is considered one of the **most advanced air defence systems in the U.S. arsenal**.
- The system was first used in combat during the **1991 Gulf War**, with batteries protecting **Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Israel**, and later used during the **U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003**.
- Its latest modification, **PAC-3**, is designed to engage and intercept targets at up to 24 km altitudes.
  - **Newer variants of Patriot** are capable of **engaging ballistic and cruise missiles, loitering munitions, and aircraft**.
  - A typical **Patriot battery** includes a **radar set, engagement control station, power generation and other support vehicles**, and several launch stations.
- The main feature of the **latest PATRIOT modification** is its ability to shoot down **ballistic missiles** (including Iskanders, which Russia uses to attack Ukraine), as well as **Kinzhals (Russian hypersonic air-launched missiles)** and **Zircons** (a Russian **hypersonic anti-ship missile**)
- The average effective range of a **PATRIOT launcher is 150 km**.
- The air defence system can track targets moving at speeds of up to 2,200 m/s at a distance of up to **180 km**.
- The system has different capabilities depending on the **type of interceptor used**.
  - The **PAC-2** interceptor uses a **blast-fragmentation warhead**,
  - while the newer **PAC-3** missile uses more **advanced hit-to-kill technology**.

## Igla-S

### News Excerpt:

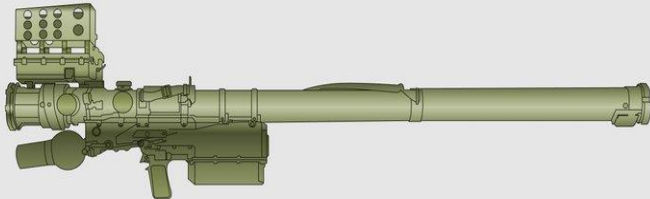
The Indian Army has received the first batch of **Igla-S Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS)** from Russia.

### More about the news:

- The Igla-S Air defence systems will be deployed at the China and Pakistan borders.
- These systems enhance the Army's **Very Short-Range Air Defence (VSHORAD)** capabilities, particularly in high mountainous terrain along the northern border.
- The procurement **includes domestic production in India**, with one regiment already deploying the systems.
- This acquisition **replaces outdated Igla-1M systems** and aligns with plans for future indigenous VSHORAD advancements.

### Igla-S portable anti-aircraft missile system

Designed to engage all types of aircraft and helicopters, as well as small airborne targets such as cruise missiles, at any time of day in visible conditions on collision and pursuit courses against background and artificial thermal interference.



- 500 to 6,000 m**  
Firing range
- 10 to 3,500 m**  
target altitude
- no more than 12 s.**  
mobile-to-combat position transition time
- no more than 5 s.**  
ready to start time from activation
- Target speed:  
**up to 400 m/s**  
on collision courses
- up to 320 m/s**  
on catch-up courses
- Homing head type:  
● tracking ● passive ● thermal ● bispectral

### Capabilities of Igla-S:

- The Igla-S is a **hand-held defence system** that can be operated by an individual or crew.
- It is designed to **bring down low-flying aircraft and can also identify and neutralize air targets** such as cruise missiles and drones.
- The Igla-S systems are **intended for new air defence formations for high mountainous terrain along the northern border.**

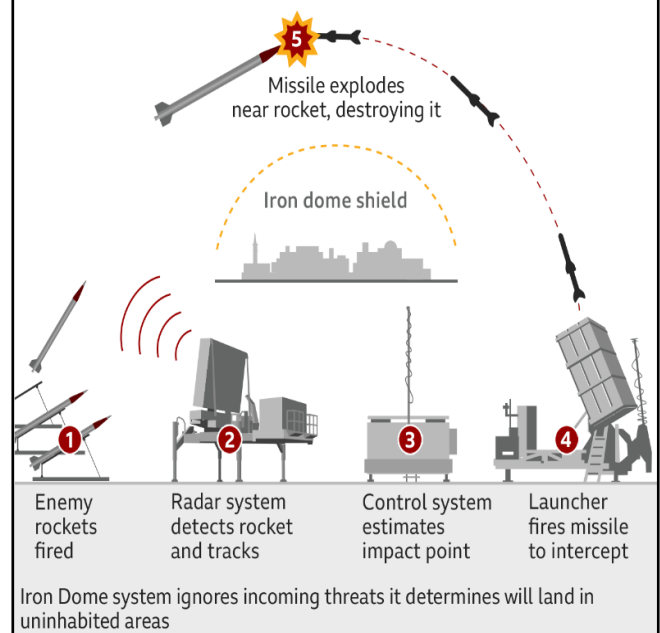
- **MANPADS** are **portable surface-to-air missile** systems.
- The air defence units in high mountainous regions use MANPADS to neutralize low-altitude aerial threats such as aircraft, drones, and missiles.

## C-DOME Naval Area Defense System

### News Excerpt:

Israel, for the first time, has deployed its ship-mounted defence system, called the **C-Dome**, against a **"suspicious"** target that entered the country's airspace.

### How Israel's Iron Dome defence system works



### More about C-Dome:

- The **C-Dome** is a **naval version of the Iron Dome air defence system, which shields against rocket and missile attacks.**
- It is mounted on **Sa'ar 6-class corvettes**, German-made warships, and uses the **same interceptor as the Iron Dome.**
- C-Dome has three components:
  - **TAMIR interceptors**
  - **A modular Vertical-Launch Unit (VLU)**
  - **A Command & Control (C2) component.**
- **C-Dome does not require dedicated radar** and uses the **ship's surveillance radar** to detect and track threats.
- A highly advanced air defence system ensures **high kill probability** against a wide range of targets.
- The C-Dome interceptor is extremely agile and has a **high rate of turn, enabling the interception** of even the **most maneuverable targets.**

**Iron Dome air defence system:**

- Iron Dome is a **short-range anti-rocket, anti-mortar, and anti-artillery system** with an **intercept range of 4-70 KMS**.
- It was developed by the **Rafael Advanced Defence Systems of Israel**.
- Israel has put Iron Dome's **interception rate** at as high as **97%**.

**Parivartan Chintan****News Excerpt:**

The heads of **all tri-service Armed Forces** gathered in **New Delhi** for the first-ever tri-service planning conference called the '**Parivartan Chintan**'.

**Key highlights:**

- This pioneering **tri-service conference aims to generate** new and fresh ideas, **initiatives and reforms** to propel **jointness and integration efforts**.
- The conference was to be chaired by the **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)**.
- It took place against the backdrop of the three services planning to establish **Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC)**, which would contain elements of the **Army, Navy, and Air Force**.
- This was the **first-ever conference of the Heads of all Tri-Services Institutions, the Department of Military Affairs, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, and the three Services**, recommending measures to swiftly achieve the desired "**Joint and Integrated**" end state.

**Sittwe Port Agreement****News Excerpt:**

After the Chabahar Port in Iran, India has gained the right to operate a **second overseas port, Sittwe**, in **Myanmar**.

**About the news:**

- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** has approved a proposal for **India Ports Global (IPGL)** to take over the operations of the **Sittwe port** located on the **Kaladan River**.
- **IPGL is 100 per cent** owned by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India.

**Significance of the decision:**

- **Kaladan project** is aimed at connecting the **port of Kolkata** with the **port of Sittwe** in **Rakhine or Arakan State** which would then be connected to **Mizoram by road** and the Kaladan river which flows by Paletwa.
- The **Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project** was jointly identified by India and Myanmar to create a **multi-modal mode of transport** for shipment of cargo

from the eastern ports of India to Myanmar as well as to the North-Eastern part of India through Myanmar.

- This project, which will connect Sittwe Port in Myanmar to the India-Myanmar border, is expected to contribute to the **economic development of the North-Eastern States of India** by opening up the sea route for the products.
- It also provides a strategic link to the North-East, thereby **reducing pressure on the Siliguri Corridor**.

**Akashteer Command and Control Systems****News Excerpt:**

The Indian Army has initiated the induction of control and reporting systems under '**Project Akashteer**' to enhance its air defence capabilities.

**About the news:**

- The **Indian Army** has declared **2024 as the 'Year of Technology Absorption'** and is undertaking various initiatives to **induct niche technology and systems** into its inventory.

**Project Akashteer**

- '**Project Akashteer**' is a cutting-edge initiative designed to **automate air defence control and reporting processes by digitizing them**.
- It was developed by **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** as part of the '**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**' initiative.
- This project is poised to significantly enhance the **operational efficiency and integration of the Army's air defence mechanisms**.
  - '**Project Akashteer**' will empower the **Air Defence units** of the Indian Army with an **indigenous, state-of-the-art capability**, to effectively operate in an integrated manner.
  - Akashteer will enable **monitoring of low-level airspace** over the battle areas of the Indian Army and effectively control the **Ground Based Air Defence Weapon Systems**.
  - This will enable the Indian Army to **respond swiftly to hostile threats** while minimizing the risk of friendly fire incidents.
  - '**Akashteer**' integrates **radar and communication systems** into a unified network, providing the Indian Army with unprecedented situational awareness.

**OPERATION ATALANTA****News Excerpt:**

A compliance operation of **Op-Atlanta** has revealed that **Somali pirates** used an Iranian fishing vessel to hijack the **MV Ruen** vessel off the coast of Yemen.



### OPERATION ATALANTA

- **Operation Atalanta**, which was earlier known as the **European Union Naval Force for Somalia**, is an ongoing **counter-piracy military operation** at sea off the **Horn of Africa** and in the **Western Indian Ocean**.
- The operation was launched in **2008** by the **European Union** to support the **Coastal States** in the combined effort for **peace, stability and Maritime security**.
- With up to **95% of EU Member States' trade (by volume)** transported by sea and **20% of global trade passing through the Gulf of Aden**, EU NAVFOR makes considerable effort to **safeguarding trade and freedom of navigation through this strategic area**.

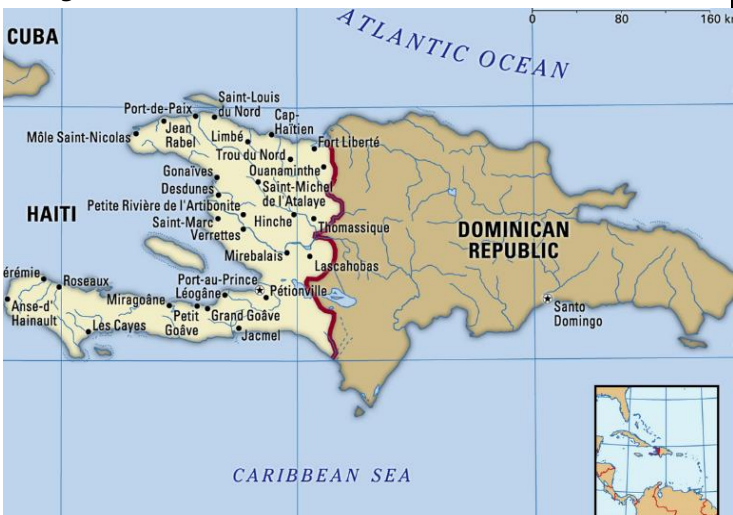
### OPERATION "INDRAVATI"

#### News Excerpt:

India launched 'Operation Indravati' to evacuate its nationals from **violence-torn Haiti** to the **Dominican Republic**.

#### Operation Indravati:

- **India doesn't have an embassy in Haiti**, and the situation in the country is being monitored by the Indian mission to **Santo Domingo**, the capital of the **Dominican Republic**.
- 12 citizens have been successfully rescued to the **Caribbean nation Dominican Republic by the government of India**.



#### About Haiti:

- Located between the **Caribbean Sea** and the **North Atlantic Ocean**, Haiti occupies the western one-third of the island of Hispaniola.
- The **Dominican Republic borders Haiti** on the eastern side of the island. **Haiti's closest neighbours**

**include Jamaica to the west and Cuba to the northwest.**

- Hayti means "**land of the mountains**" in the Indigenous, or native, Taïno language.
- The **country's highest peak, Pic la Selle**, is part of the Massif de la Selle range located in southeastern Haiti and reaches nearly 9,000 feet (2,715 meters).

## EXERCISES

### Exercise Gagan Shakti

#### News Excerpt:

Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted its 10-day Gagan Shakti war drill to test its capabilities.

#### About the exercise Gagan Shakti:

- The exercise involved **all Air Force bases and assets** scattered across the country.
- The exercise sought to test the IAF's readiness for a two-front war with China and Pakistan.
- The Indian Army also moved ammunition and about 10,000 IAF personnel on 12 passenger trains in order to validate the IAF's Operational Rail Mobilization Plan.
- The passenger trains were named **Sanyukta Express** to denote the inter-service camaraderie.
- 'Gagan Shakti' was last held in 2018.

### Exercise Steadfast Defender 24

#### News Excerpt:

NATO has started its largest military exercise since the Cold War called Steadfast Defender 2024.

#### About the exercise:

- It is split into two overlapping parts. Each phase of the exercise includes a range of associated exercises hosted by different countries.
- The first part of the exercise focuses on securing the Atlantic up to the Arctic; the second part focuses on moving troops across Europe, from the High North to Central and Eastern Europe.
- It aims to demonstrate NATO's ability to defend every inch of its territory and the commitment of NATO Allies to protect each other from any threat.

## IMT TRILAT 24

### News Excerpt:

The second edition of the **India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise** was conducted at **Nacala, Mozambique**, in March 2024.

### About the IMT TRILAT Exercise:

- The week-long exercise underscores the importance of enhanced maritime cooperation and interoperability between the **Navies of India, Mozambique, and Tanzania**.
- **INS Tir** and **Sujata** participated in **IMT TRILAT 24** through a series of joint exercises, training sessions and collaborative activities, providing invaluable opportunities for all three Navies to exchange knowledge, enhance capabilities and bolster maritime security in the region.

## Exercise Desert Cyclone

### News Excerpt:

The UAE Land Forces contingent arrived in India to participate in the **1st edition** of the **India - UAE Joint Military Exercise**.

### About the exercise:

- The Exercise was conducted in the **deserts of Bikaner in the Mahajan range, Rajasthan**.
- The Exercise aimed to **enhance cooperation and interoperability in Sub-conventional Operations, such as in desert/semi-desert terrain, under the United Nations Charter on Peacekeeping Operations**.
- **Drills** planned to be rehearsed include establishing a **Joint Surveillance Centre, Cordon and Search Operation, Domination of Built-Up Areas and Heliborne Operations**.

### Other exercises between India and UAE:

- **Exercise DESERT EAGLE:**
  - Desert Eagle is a bilateral exercise between the Indian Air Force and United Arab Emirates Air Force.
- **Exercise Zayed Talwar**
  - It is a bilateral exercise between the Indian and UAE navies.

## Tri-service military exercise 'Bharat Shakti'

### News Excerpt:

The Army's **Pokhran range in Rajasthan** bore witness to the live **tri-services fire and manoeuvre** exercise '**Bharat Shakti**'

### Participants:

- **LCA Tejas, ALH Mk-IV, LCH Prachand, mobile anti-drone system, BMP-II** and its variants, **NAMICA** (Nag Missile Carrier), **T90 tanks, Dhanush, K9 Vajra,** and **Pinaka rockets** were among the platforms demonstrated during the exercise.
- The exercise included various types of **Radars, UAV-launched precision-guided munitions, Quick Reaction Fighting Vehicles, drones of various types, including logistic drones and swarms of drones, and 3D-printed bunkers**.
- During the exercise, the **integration** of individual **communication systems** of the tri-services, the '**e-Tarang**' software tool, **GIS-related** systems, topographical maps, hydrographic charts, and air navigation charts with analysis and operational planning capabilities was showcased.

## Milan Navy Exercise

### News Excerpt:

The Indian Navy's largest-ever **multilateral naval exercise - Milan 2024** - kicked off in **Visakhapatnam** with several warships from the Indian Navy and foreign navies participating in the **Harbour Phase of the event**.

### Objective:

- The naval exercise **aims to enhance regional security, foster cooperation among over 50 countries,** and share ideas for a secure maritime future.
- **Theme:** "Forging Naval Alliances for a Secure Maritime Future."

### About the Exercise:

- **Visakhapatnam is hosting MILAN 2024,** an international maritime event.
- Delegations from 50 countries, foreign navies, and the Indian Navy's naval ships, aircraft carriers, and aircraft are participating.
- Indian Navy's ships, **Vikrant** (indigenous design) and **Vikramaditya** (extensive refurbishment) will participate.
- Participating navies will hold **advanced air defence, anti-submarine, and anti-surface warfare drills during the Sea Phase**.
- In total, around **20 Indian warships from different classes** will be participating in the show, which includes **INS Chennai, the Kolkata-class stealth-guided missile destroyer**.

## Bilateral Exercises in News

Name of the Exercise	Partnering Country	About
Dosti-16	Maldives and Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a <b>trilateral</b> coast guard exercise held between <b>India, Sri Lanka</b>, and the <b>Maldives every two years</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Bangladesh</b> participated in the exercise as an <b>observer</b> in its 16th edition.</li> <li>Exercise <b>Dosti-15</b> was held in <b>2021</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The 'Dosti' series of naval exercises <b>began in 1992</b> with only <b>Maldives and India</b>.</li> <li><b>Sri Lanka</b> joined the exercise for the first time in <b>2012</b>.</li> </ul> <p>Indian Coast Guard ship Samarth, Abhinav, and Sri Lanka Naval Ship Samudura participated in the Dosti-16 exercise.</p>
Samudra Laksamana	Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian <b>Naval Ship Kiltan</b> and <b>Royal Malaysian Ship KD Lekir</b> participated in the <b>3rd edition</b> of this exercise.</li> <li>It had a <b>harbour phase at Visakhapatnam</b> followed by the <b>operational phase</b> at sea.</li> <li>At the harbor phase, the crews of both ships engaged in various <b>professional interactions, Including Subject-Matter Expert Exchange</b> on topics of mutual interest, sports fixtures, and other interactions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These interactions aim to <b>enhance the knowledge base, share best practices and further cooperation on maritime aspects</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>During the <b>sea phase</b>, units of both navies conducted various operations at sea.</li> <li>The exercise aims to strengthen bonds and enhance interoperability between the <b>Indian and Royal Malaysian Navy</b>.</li> </ul>
Dharma Guardian	Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 5th edition of the exercise between <b>the Indian Army</b> and the <b>Japan Ground Self Defence Force</b> was conducted at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.</li> <li>Both sides' contingents comprised 40 personnel each. The Indian Army contingent was represented by a Battalion from the <b>Rajputana Rifles</b>.</li> <li>Exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' will enable the two sides to share their best practices <b>in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures</b> for conducting <b>tactical operations</b>.</li> <li>It will help promote military cooperation and to conduct joint operations in <b>semi-urban environments</b>.</li> </ul>
Sea Defenders	United States of America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was held at Port Blair by the <b>Indian Coast Guard (ICG)</b> and the <b>United States Coast Guard (USCG)</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Exercise included a variety of scenarios, including a <b>Pollution Response Demonstration, Counter-drug interdiction exercises and simulated medical evacuation to enhance readiness in emergencies</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It also simulated <b>Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) Operations</b> for <b>inspecting vessels suspected of illegal activity</b>.</li> <li>• During the exercise, the Indian Coast Guard helicopter and Dornier aircraft conducted <b>Search &amp; Rescue</b> and <b>Pollution Response demonstrations</b>, showcasing <b>ICG's ability to undertake aerial surveillance and rescue missions</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Lamitiye 2024</b>	<b>Seychelles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lamitiye, which in <b>Creole means friendship</b>, is a biennial training event being conducted in Seychelles since 2001, between <b>the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF)</b>.</li> <li>• The aim is to build and promote bilateral military relations in addition to exchanging skills, experiences and good practices between both armies.</li> <li>• It is significant in terms of security challenges faced by both the nations in the backdrop of the current global situation and <b>growing security concerns in the Indian Ocean Region</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Tiger Triumph-24</b>	<b>USA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the third time U.S. and Indian forces have come together for Tiger TRIUMPH, which stands for <b>Tri-Services India U.S. Amphibious Exercise</b>.</li> <li>• This year's exercise will focus on advancing large-scale joint and combined interoperability for <b>humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations</b>.</li> </ul>

PLACES IN NEWS: WORLD

**KSG**  
An Institute For IAS Exam...

**MAP NOT TO SCALE**

**POKHARA**  
Nepal has officially declared this town as the tourism capital of the Himalayan nation.

**TIAN SHAN MOUNTAINS**  
In these mountains of Kyrgyzstan, villagers have made an artificial glacier to provide water for their drought-hit farms.

**DRICHU RIVER, TIBET**  
Over 1,000 people, including monks, were arrested for opposing the Dege hydropower dam project on this river.

**BADWATER BASIN**  
The Driest place in North America, this basin in Death Valley, has been home to a lake for 6 months.

**KINMEN ISLANDS**  
Taiwan urged China not to change the status quo around waters near these islands.

**NICARAGUA**  
It has become the first Spanish-speaking nation to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia.

**TATAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**  
Cambodia plans to import four tigers from India this year to revive big cats.

**Darrien Gap**  
Illegal migrants trying to claim asylum in the US pass through this stretch of jungle across northern Colombia and southern Panama.

**GULF OF TONKIN**  
Vietnam urges respect for international law as China draws a disproportionate baseline in the Gulf of Tonkin. Under UNCLOS 1982, baselines determine territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones.

**SELOUS GAME RESERVE**  
Tanzania has switched on the first turbine of a new hydroelectric plant in this World Heritage Site.

