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#PM MODI IN QUAD LEADERS' VIRTUAL MEETING

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will participate in a **Quad Leaders' virtual meeting** along with US President Joe Biden, **Australian PM Scott Morrison**, and **Japanese PM Fumio Kishida**.

- The **Quad Leaders** will also review ongoing efforts to implement the Leaders' initiatives announced as part of the Quad's contemporary and positive agenda.

- The QUAD leaders will have an opportunity to continue their dialogue after the September 2021 Summit in Washington DC. The meeting was not previously scheduled, as Japan is scheduled to host the next in-person summit of the Quad in the first half of 2022.
- The **four QUAD nations** are yet to finalise a date for this meeting due to a variety of scheduling reasons.



Key Agenda

- **The main agenda of the current virtual summit is to discuss developments in the Indo-Pacific.** MEA said in a statement that the virtual summit will provide the leaders with an opportunity to continue their dialogue and they will exchange views about important developments in the Indo-Pacific.

Significance

- **The QUAD leaders' virtual summit will be held at the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.**
- The agenda, however, does not include the Ukraine crisis. India had chosen to abstain three times in a vote against Russia at the United Nations, while other three QUAD members had voted in favour of Ukraine. India has though repeatedly urged Russia to cease its military operations in Ukraine.

Background

- The **QUAD leaders had met last in September 2021 at Washington DC.**
- The latest meeting comes as the United States and its Western allies are leading the international community in bringing crippling **sanctions against the Vladimir Putin-led Russian regime.**

#QUAD FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING AT MELBOURNE

- On 11th February 2022, Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the **Fourth Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting held at Melbourne – Australia.**
- The meeting was attended by his counter parts from **US, Australia and Japan.**
- At the **4th Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting**, EAM Jaishankar called for a free and open Indo-Pacific and urged member nations to work towards ensuring a rule-based international order.

Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting

- Australia is hosting the 4th Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting in Melbourne. Foreign Ministers from all 4

members' nations of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) – i.e., Australia, India, Japan and the United States are meeting to discuss global order and rising geo-political and geo-economic challenges in the global order.

- Australia was being re-presented by Foreign Minister Marise Payne who was joined by Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Hayashi Yoshimasa, and **United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken**.

EAM's Jaishankar 1st Official Visit to Australia

- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar** is also on his 1st Official Visit to Australia from 10th to 13th February 2022. During his visit, Mr Jaishankar will also co-chair the 12th Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue on 12th February 2022.
- On 12th February, Foreign Ministers of India and Australia will also co-chair the inaugural Foreign Ministers' Cyber Framework Dialogue (FMCDF) with **Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne**.
- During the dialogue, ministers will assess the implementation of India-Australia Framework Arrangement on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation which was signed in June 2022 by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison**.

RELATED: 1ST IN-PERSON QUAD SUMMIT

The first in-person meeting of **Quad** leaders was hosted by the US. Issues like climate change, Covid-19 pandemic and challenges in the Indo Pacific, amidst China's growing military presence in the strategic region, were discussed in the meeting.

Background:

- In **November 2017**, **India, Japan, the US and Australia** gave shape to the long-pending proposal of **setting up the Quad** to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.
- **China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea**, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it.
- The South China Sea is an arm of the Western Pacific Ocean.
- In **2020**, the trilateral **India-US-Japan Malabar naval exercises expanded to include Australia**, marking the first official grouping of the Quad since its resurgence in 2017.
- Further, it is the first joint military exercises among the four countries in over a decade.
- In **March 2021**, the **Quad leaders met virtually** and later released a joint statement titled '**The Spirit of the Quad**,' which outlined the group's approach and objectives.
- Further, just before this meeting, the US has announced a new trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific, between **Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS)**.
- **Major Highlights of the Quad Summit:**
 - Discussed **Afghanistan** and agreed to deepen their cooperation in South Asia.
 - **Quad Vaccine Initiative:** Under this, the Quad countries have pledged to donate more than 1.2 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses globally, in addition to the doses financed through **Covax**.

- **Building Back Better Health Security:** Supported the call for a "global pandemic radar" to improve viral genomic surveillance and expand the **WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)**.
- **Quad Infrastructure Coordination Group:** The **G7 grouping** has recently announced the **Build Back Better World (B3W)** initiative.

#DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUAD & AUKUS?

- **Prime Minister Modi** has arrived in **Washington DC** for his visit to the United States of America. He was invited by US President Joe Biden.
- This is PMs first visit to any country beyond the neighbourhood since Covid-19 pandemic. He would also attend the QUAD summit along with **Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga**.
- However, this is different from the AUKUS (Australia- UK-US) Alliance that was recently announced.

What is QUAD?

- The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or QUAD** is a strategic dialogue between four countries.
- These are the **United States, India, Australia and Japan**.
- The dialogue began in 2007 by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe along with the US Vice President Dick Cheney, Australian PM John Howard and Indian PM Manmohan Singh. **The military exercise associated with it was the Malabar exercise.**

What is AUKUS?

- AUKUS is a trilateral security alliance between the **United States, United Kingdom and Australia**. It was initiated on September 15, 2021.
- The pact would allow the US and UK to help Australia develop nuclear powered submarines and **deploy them in the Pacific region**.
- This would increase the **presence of Western military in the Pacific**. As of now no other country has been mentioned by the founding countries to be a party in this alliance and it is speculated that it may be a counter to China's increasing presence in the region.

AUKUS	Quad
It is a security pact between three countries	It is a dialogue between 4 countries
The countries under it are Australia, USA and UK	United States, India, Japan and Australia come under it
It was announced on 15th September 2021	It was initiated in 2007
The treaty covers AI, Cyber warfare, underwater capabilities etc	The alliance envisions a shared vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific

Australia would be helped to develop nuclear powered submarines

Here military exercises like Malabar are conducted but no nuclear submarines are developed

Nuclear Submarine Alliance: AUKUS

Recently, **Australia, the US and the UK** signed an agreement allowing the exchange of sensitive “**naval nuclear propulsion information**” between their nations.

- It is the first agreement on the technology to be publicly signed since the three countries announced the formation of a **defence alliance, AUKUS**, to confront strategic tensions in the Pacific where China-US rivalry is growing.
- Under the AUKUS deal, Australia would obtain **eight state-of-the-art, nuclear-powered but conventionally armed submarines** capable of stealthy, long-range missions.

Five Eyes Alliance

- The Five Eyes alliance is an **intelligence-sharing arrangement** between five English-speaking democracies: **the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand**.
- The alliance was created during the **Cold War (1946-1991)** that was fought between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as their respective allies.
- The alliance was needed to share sensitive information regarding their adversaries on all possible fronts available.
- It is often described as the **world's most successful intelligence alliance**.

#14TH INDIA-JAPAN ANNUAL SUMMIT

Recently, the Japanese Prime Minister was on an official visit to India for the **14th India-Japan Annual Summit** between the two Countries.

- The Summit took place at a time when the two countries were celebrating the **70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations** and India was celebrating its **75th anniversary of Independence**.
- Earlier, the Indian PM virtually inaugurated a Japanese ‘**Zen Garden - Kaizen Academy**’ at the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) in Gujarat.



What are the Key Points of the Summit?

- Investment by Japan:** Japan will invest Rs 3.2 lakh crores in the next five years in India.
- 7 JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) loans for projects in connectivity, water supply and sewerage, horticulture, healthcare, and biodiversity conservation in various States.
- An MoU has been signed to introduce **Johkasou technology** in India by Japanese companies for decentralised wastewater treatment. It is used in areas where sewage infrastructure has not yet been developed.

- **Sustainable Development Initiative for the North Eastern Region of India:** It has been launched with an eye on India's infrastructure development in the Northeast, and includes both ongoing projects and possible future cooperation in connectivity, healthcare, new and renewable energy, as well as an initiative for **strengthening bamboo value chain**.
- **India-Japan Digital Partnership:** On **cyber security**, the leaders discussed "India-Japan Digital Partnership" with a view to enhancing the digital economy through promotion of joint projects **in the area of IoT (internet of Things), AI (Artificial Intelligence) and other emerging technologies**.
- Japan is looking forward to attracting more highly skilled Indian IT professionals to contribute to the Japanese ICT sector.

Clean Energy Partnership:

- It was launched for cooperation in areas such as electric vehicles, storage systems including batteries, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, development of solar energy; hydrogen; ammonia; etc.
- The objective is to encourage manufacturing in India, **creation of resilient and trustworthy supply chains in these areas** as well as fostering collaboration in R&D (Research and Development).
- It will be implemented through the existing mechanism of **Energy Dialogue**.
- **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR):** India appreciated **Japan's cooperation on the MAHSR and various Metro projects in India** and looked forward to the planned preparatory survey for the Patna Metro.

On Indo-Pacific:

- The two leaders expressed their commitment to promoting **peace, security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region**.

QUAD:

- The two PMs affirmed **the importance of bilateral and plurilateral partnerships among like-minded countries in the region** including the **QUAD grouping** between India-Australia-Japan and the United States.
- The Japanese Prime Minister **invited PM Modi for the QUAD Summit Meeting in Tokyo**.
- **Terrorism:** The two leaders reiterated "**condemnation of terrorist attacks in India, including 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks, and called upon Pakistan to take resolute and irreversible action against terrorist networks** operating out of its territory and comply fully with international commitments, including to **FATF (Financial Action Task Force)**."
- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty:** The Japanese PM stressed the **importance of early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**.
- The Treaty intends to ban all nuclear explosions - everywhere, by everyone. It will enter into force after all 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty will ratify it.
- **India has not yet signed** the Treaty.

On Situation in Other Countries:

- **Ukraine:** Talked about the **serious invasion of Russia into Ukraine** and **sought** a peaceful solution on the basis of international law.
- **China:** India **informed Japan about the situation in Ladakh**, about the attempts of **amassing troops** and India's talks with China over border-related issues.
- The Japanese PM also briefed India about his perspective of the **East and South China sea**.

Afghanistan:

- On Afghanistan, the PMs expressed their intention **to collaborate closely to realize peace and stability in Afghanistan**, and stressed the importance of addressing the humanitarian crisis, promoting human rights and ensuring establishment of a truly representative and inclusive political system.
- They also **referred to the UNSC Resolution** that unequivocally demands that "Afghan territory not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing terrorist acts".
- **North Korea:** The PMs condemned **North Korea's** destabilising ballistic missile launches in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs).
- **Myanmar:** They called on Myanmar to urgently implement **ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus**.

What are other Recent Developments between India and Japan?

- Recently, **India, Japan and Australia** have formally launched the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** in a move to counter China's dominance of the supply chain in the Indo-Pacific region.
- In **2020**, India and Japan **signed a logistics agreement** that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as the **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)**.
- In 2014, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to '**Special Strategic and Global Partnership**'.
- The India-Japan **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force in **August 2011** covers trade in goods, services, movement of natural persons, investments, Intellectual Property Rights, custom procedures and other trade related issues.
- Japan is India's 12th largest trading partner, and trade volumes between the two stand at just a fifth of the value of **India-China bilateral trade**.
- **Defence Exercises:** India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely, **JIMEX** (naval), **SHINYUU Maitri** (Air Force), and **Dharma Guardian** (Army). Both countries also participate in **Malabar exercise** (Naval Exercise) with the USA and Australia.
- Both India and Japan are members of **G-20** and **G-4**.
- They are also member countries of the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)**.

#BIMSTEC 2022 SUMMIT

- **India will** provide the BIMSTEC secretariat USD 1 million to increase its operational budget, announced PM Narendra Modi at **5th BIMSTEC Summit on March 30, 2022**.
- He urged that it is important to strengthen the capacity of BIMSTEC secretariat and suggested the Secretary-General create a roadmap for the same.
- PM Modi said that the time has come to make the Bay of Bengal the **bridge of connectivity, prosperity and security**. He called on BIMSTEC nations to dedicate themselves to working with new enthusiasm to achieve the goals they achieved together in 1997.

BIMSTEC SUMMIT 2022 | CONVERSATIONS



- The **BIMSTEC Summit 2022 is being hosted in a hybrid mode by Sri Lanka**, the current chair of BIMSTEC. Sri Lankan President is chairing the 5th BIMSTEC Summit with the virtual participation of leaders of **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Thailand**. **Myanmar** Foreign Minister is representing the nation at the summit.
- The **BIMSTEC Senior Officials (SOM)** meeting had taken place on March 28, followed by meetings of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers on March 29 to prepare for the summit.
- **BIMSTEC Summit 2022 Theme**
- **The BIMSTEC Summit 2022 theme was** "Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy People". The theme captures the main current priorities of member states.
- **The main topic of deliberations during the BIMSTEC Summit 2022 included:**
 - COVID-19 pandemic related challenges.
 - Uncertainties within the international system.
 - Progress of BIMSTEC as a regional group.
 - Establishment of basic institutional structures and mechanisms of the group.

BIMSTEC Summit 2022: Key Outcome

- **The main outcome of the BIMSTEC Summit 2022 was the adoption and signing of the BIMSTEC Charter, which formalizes the grouping into an organization with an emblem, flag and formally listed principles to be adhered to.**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with other BIMSTEC leaders also witnessed the signing of 3 BIMSTEC agreements that represent progress being achieved in ongoing cooperation activities.

BIMSTEC Agreements:

- BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
- BIMSTEC MoU on Mutual Cooperation in diplomatic training
- Memorandum of Assn on **Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility**
- The Summit also saw considerable progress in BIMSTEC connectivity agenda with adoption of the 'Master Plan for Transport Connectivity', **which lays out a guidance framework for connectivity related activities in the region in the future.**

BIMSTEC Charter

- PM Modi added saying that the recent developments in Europe have raised questions about the stability of the international order. "In this context, it has become a greater priority to have regional cooperation. Today we are **adopting BIMSTEC charter** to develop institution architecture for our group," he said.
- The 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)' is a regional multilateral organisation.
- BIMSTEC members are seven countries that lie in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal. The BIMSTEC member nations include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

When was first BIMSTEC summit held?

- The first BIMSTEC Summit was held on July 31, 2004. The grouping then got its name BIMSTEC or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- BIMSTEC was initially formed with four member states- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand on June 6, 1997. **BIMSTEC was then called BIST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Cooperation).**
- It was renamed BIMST-EC in **December 1997, following the inclusion of Myanmar.**

What is the main purpose of BIMSTEC?

- BIMSTEC main purpose is to accelerate economic growth and social progress and collaboration in the sub-region through joint initiatives.
- The 15 priority areas of cooperation for BIMSTEC include trade and investment, energy, tourism, transport and communication, public health, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, environment and disaster management, technology, fisheries, agriculture, poverty alleviation, cultural cooperation, people-to-people Contact and Climate Change and Blue Economy.

#PM MODI & SCOTT MORRISON VIRTUAL SUMMIT

- PM Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison will hold the **2nd India-Australia Summit in a virtual mode on March 21, 2022.**
- The summit has come two years after the historic first virtual summit which was held in **June 2020 when the two nations had elevated their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership.**
- **During India-Australia Virtual Summit 2022,** the leaders of the two countries are likely to take stock of the progress made on various initiatives under the 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'.



India- Australia Summit 2022: What will be on agenda?

- Apart from the Russia-Ukraine, Indo-Pacific on the agenda during India-Australia Summit, the two leaders are expected to also commit to closer cooperation in critical minerals, in trade, migration, and mobility, among others.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Scott Morrison** will also share their views on the international and regional issues of mutual interest.
- India-Australia Summit is also expected to witness the largest ever trade pact by the Government of Australia in India with Canberra set to announce worth Rs. 1,500 crores in India across multiple sectors.
- **India and Australia** are also expected to conclude an early harvest agreement by the end of this month.
- During India-Australia Summit, the two countries will sign an MoU in the field of critical minerals. It will help in increasing India's access to **metallic coal and lithium in Australia and will cater to the country's growing demand for electric vehicles and growing infrastructure.**

What is an early harvest agreement between India and Australia?

- An early harvest agreement between the Governments of India and Australia is aimed at liberalizing the tariffs on the trade of certain goods between the two nations or the trading blocs before a comprehensive agreement.
- **India-Australia continued close relations despite pandemic**
- Despite the widespread COVID-19 pandemic, India and Australia continued their close collaboration in various areas including defence, cyber, science and technology, critical and strategic materials, public administration and governance, and water resource management.
- The two leaders had met in Washington DC for the first in-person meeting after the pandemic in September 2021 **on the margins of the QUAD Leaders' summit.**

India-Australia Virtual Summit 2020

- **During India-Australia Virtual Summit 2020**, the two countries delivered eight landmark agreements to drive India-Australia cooperation.

#WHAT IS MONTREUX CONVENTION?

- The **Montreux Convention** Regarding the Straits Regime, or simply Montreux Convention, is an international treaty that governs Turkey's Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits.
- It was signed on July 20, 1936, in the **Montreux Palace in Switzerland**, and took effect on November 9, 1936.
- This convention was signed to address the long-running Straits Question of who should manage the strategically **important route between the Black and Mediterranean Seas**.
- The maritime traffic through the **Black Sea is regulated by the Montreux Convention**.
- During peacetime, it grants full freedom of passage for all civilian vessels and allows **Turkey to limit the movement of navies who do not belong to the Black Sea states**.
- During wars, this pact gives **Turkey the right to regulate** the naval warship transits and blocking of the strait for warships of the countries in conflict.
- Military warships are restricted in terms of **tonnage, number, and weaponry, with specific rules that govern their duration of stay and mode of entry**.
- Advanced notifications have to be provided by warships to the Turkish authorities, who then must notify the parties to the Convention.



Implementation of the Montreux Convention

- The provisions of the Convention reflected the **world situation in the mid-1930s to a great extent**.
- They primarily benefited the Turks and Soviets by allowing Turkey to reclaim military control of the Straits and ensuring Soviet control of the Black Sea.
- Although the Convention limited the Soviet Union's ability to send naval forces into the Mediterranean Sea, **it also ensured that outside powers could not use the Straits to threaten the Soviet Union**.

What is the Location of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits?

- The Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, also known as **Turkish Straits or the Black Sea Straits**, connect the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea via the Sea of Marmara.
- It is the only passage **through which the Black Sea ports can access the Mediterranean and beyond**.
- Over **three million barrels of oil**, about **3% of the daily global supply**, mostly produced in **Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan**, pass through this waterway every day.
- The route also **ships large amounts of iron, steel, and agricultural products** from the Black Sea coast to Europe and the rest of the world.

What is the Role of Turkey in the Present Crisis?

- In the current situation, the Turkish government finds itself in a **difficult position**, as both **Ukraine and Russia** are important partners in **critical energy and military trade agreements**.
- Turkey, a **NATO member since 1952**, wants to strengthen its ties with the **West while not upsetting Russia**. Its control over these key straits may test its **balancing act**.
- In this context, Turkey has held that it cannot block all Russian warships accessing the Black Sea **due to a clause in the pact exempting** those returning to their registered base.
- **Article 19 of the treaty contains an exception** for the countries on the Black Sea that can effectively undermine **Turkey's power in blocking the Russian warships entering or exiting the Black Sea**.
- Vessels of war belonging to belligerent powers, whether they are Black Sea Powers or not, which have become separated from their bases, may return thereto.
- This exception provides Russia with an alternate way to exploit the **Montreux Convention**, which would be to reassign some of its vessels to the Black Sea.

#RELATED: UNGA RESOLUTION ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE

Recently, **India has abstained** at the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The **emergency special session** was convened by UNGA for discussing a resolution **that called for Russia to unconditionally withdraw its troops**.

- The resolution was discussed under the rubric of the **"Uniting for Peace" resolution**.
- The General Assembly session was convened after a similar resolution had failed to pass the **U.N. Security Council (UNSC)** when Russia exercised its veto.

What is uniting for Peace Resolution?

- **About:** UN General Assembly **resolution 377(V)** is known as the Uniting for peace resolution which was **adopted in 1950**. The most important part of resolution is section A which states that where the **Security Council, because of lack of unanimity** of the permanent members, fails to exercise its **primary responsibility** for the **maintenance of international peace and security**, the **General Assembly** shall seize itself of the matter.
- **Origin:** The Uniting for Peace resolution was **initiated by the United States**, in October 1950, as a means of **circumventing further Soviet vetoes** during the course of the **Korean War**.
- **Objective:** Under this, the UNGA granted to itself the power to deal with threats to the peace if the UNSC fails to act after a veto by a permanent member.
- Such an interpretation sees the **UNGA as being awarded 'final responsibility'** for matters of international peace and security, by the UN Charter.
- **Emergency Special Session (ESS):** If not in session, the General Assembly may meet using the mechanism of the emergency special session. To date, 11 emergency special sessions have been convened.
- First ESS was instigated **after France and UK veto over UNSC resolution 119** during the **Suez Crisis 1956**.

What are the Key Points of the resolution?

- The resolution, **co-sponsored by 96 countries**, needed **two thirds of those present and voting to support it, for it to pass**.
- It condemns the 24th February 2022 '**special military operation**' by Russia over Ukraine.
- It says **no territories acquired through force (Donetsk and Luhansk) will be recognised and calls for Russia to "immediately, completely and unconditionally" withdraw from Ukraine**.

#RUSSIA RECOGNIZED TWO REGION OF UKRAINE AS INDEPENDENT

- Recently, Russia recognised the Ukraine rebel regions in eastern Ukraine - **Donetsk and Luhansk** – as independent areas despite calls from the west to put an end to the **tensions** driven by fears that Russia may attack Ukraine.
- This paved the way to provide them **military support — a direct challenge to the West** that will fuel fears that Russia could imminently invade Ukraine.
- Tensions have peaked over the last few weeks as Russia amassed over 1,50,000 troops at Ukraine borders in one of the worst crises since the **Cold War**.
- The announcement shatters a **2015 peace deal signed in Minsk** requiring Ukrainian authorities to offer a broad self-rule to the rebel regions.

What is Russia's Stand?

- It blamed the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** for the current crisis and called the US-led alliance an existential threat to Russia.
- Charged that **Ukraine had inherited Russia's historic lands** and after the Soviet collapse was used by the West to contain Russia.
- It **wants Western Countries to guarantee that NATO won't allow Ukraine** and other former Soviet countries to join as members.
- It has also **demanding the alliance halt weapons deployments to Ukraine** and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe.
- The **western countries have rejected the demand**.

What is the Background of the Crisis?

- Ukraine and Russia **share hundreds of years of cultural, linguistic and familial links**.
- For many in Russia and in the ethnically Russian parts of Ukraine, **the shared heritage of the countries is an emotional issue** that has been exploited for electoral and military purposes.
- As part of the Soviet Union, **Ukraine was the second-most powerful Soviet republic after Russia**, and was crucial strategically, economically and culturally.
- The **Donbass region, comprising the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine, has been at the centre of the conflict** since March 2014 when Moscow (Russia) invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula.
- In April, **pro-Russia rebels began seizing territory** (with Russia supporting them through hybrid warfare) in Eastern Ukraine and in May 2014, the **rebels in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions held a referendum to declare independence** from Ukraine.

- Since then, these **predominantly Russian speaking regions** (more than 70% speak Russian) within Ukraine have been **witnessing shelling and skirmishes between the rebels and Ukrainian forces** leading to the loss of over 14,000 lives by most estimates, creating around 1.5 million registered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and destruction of the local economy.
- What has changed now is that the **shelling has intensified since last October 2021 when Russia began amassing troops along the borders with Ukraine.**
- If the situation in the Donbass escalates, the **possibility of a war cannot be dismissed.** One way to prevent the outbreak of a war would be to implement the Minsk agreements immediately, as Russia has suggested.

#WHAT IS CAATSA SANCTION?

- **Amid Russia and US conflict over Russia's invasion of Ukraine,** the United States has announced that the country has been looking whether to **apply or waive sanctions on India for its purchase of S-400 Triumf missile defence system from Russia,** under the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
- The **latest remarks from the United States** came as India drew criticism from the US lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans, at a hearing on the US relationship with India for being among the 35 countries that abstained on March 2 from a UN vote to rebuke Russia's invasion.
- For India, not voicing against Russia has become a critical issue as the **country relied heavily on the Russian Military exports. In 2020, Russia contributed 49% to India's total military imports.**



What is CAATSA Act?

- The '**Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**' is a piece of US legislation that imposes sanctions on the American Adversaries- North Korea, the States of Iran, and Russia. CAATSA Bill was passed back in 2017.

What sanctions are under CAATSA?

- **The sanctions under CAATSA Act cover:**
- **Countering Iran's destabilizing activities act of 2017:** It required the US president to impose sanctions against Iran's ballistic missile or weapons of mass destruction. The President may also impose sanctions against persons responsible for the violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against individuals.
- **Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017:** The act had imposed new sanctions on Russia for the interference in the 2016 US elections and its involvement in Ukraine and Syria, among others.
- **Korean interdiction and Modernization of Sanctions Act:** Among other impositions, under the act US

financial institutions are not to establish or maintain any correspondent accounts used by the foreign financial institutions for providing indirect financial services to North Korea.

- **The sanctions under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)** are intended to economically hurt the countries. As part of the sanctions, the United States can also economically push any country which will try to engage in the transactions with the nations against whom sanctions are imposed.

How and Why US can impose sanctions against India?

- As Russia progresses day by day in controlling Ukraine's cities, **the US has been imposing sanctions against Russia over its actions and violence in Ukraine, whether they are economic or defence.**
- With India's 'no stand' against Russia's actions in Ukraine and the latest decision of abstaining from the UN vote to rebuke Russia's invasion, the US's mounting pressure on the country to take sides has become a problem point for India.
- Under CAATSA, US can consider sanctions against **India for continuing with defence deals with Russia amid the international crisis.**
- A concern that stood out repeatedly during a hearing on the US relationship with India was the India-US defence security cooperation and whether India will be sanctioned for its **purchase of the S-400 Triumph missile defence system from Russia.**
- However, Biden Administration is yet to decide on applying sanctions on India under CAATSA.
- **As the United States strengthens its ties with India as a pivotal regional counterweight to China, Joe Biden's administration has delayed the enforcement of a law ordering sanctions on India for trading with Russia.**

Background

- **The latest move by the US against India** has come as the country abstained from a UN vote to rebuke Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- The voting results that were displayed on the screens at the United Nations General Assembly showed that 141 countries had voted in favour of condemning **Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while 5 nations were against it, with 35 countries, including India, abstaining.**

#INDIA & CANADA RE-LAUNCH CEPA NEGOTIATIONS

- **India and Canada** agreed to re-launch **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) Negotiations.**
- The decision regarding the re-launch of CEPA negotiations was announced following the fifth India- Canada ministerial dialogue on trade and investment, held on 11th
- The ministerial dialogue was **co-chaired by Piyush Goyal (India's Minister of Commerce)** and Mary Ng (Canadian Minister for Export Promotion and International Trade).
- Both ministers highlighted the importance of ensuring supply chain resilience in critical sectors and exchanged views on collaboration in this regard. The ministers agreed to enhance cooperation in sectors



such as pharmaceuticals, rare earth minerals, and in areas like tourism, urban infrastructure, mining, etc.

Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA)

- India and Canada agreed to consider the **Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA)**, which can be concluded early as a transitional step in the process of CEPA. **EPTA will include high-level commitments from both sides on the following aspects of the trade:**
- Goods, services, and rules of origin
- Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures
- Technical barriers to trade, and dispute settlement
- Any other areas mutually agreed upon by both countries.
- India seeks to gain market access in Canada for its agricultural goods such as sweet corn, baby corn, and bananas, while Canada's focus is to export its cherries and lumber to India.

Bilateral Investment Agreement

- At the ministerial dialogue, both countries also agreed to intensify negotiations towards signing the Bilateral Investment Agreement. **This agreement will promote & protect bilateral investments.**
- The negotiations to conclude CEPA were going on since 2010, but did not see much progress. **Till now 10 rounds of negotiations were held between both countries.**
- The last round of negotiations was held in 2017 and later the talks derailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- CEPA will help in expanding **India- Canada bilateral trade** by unlocking the potential across various sectors.

#HISTORIC INDIA-UAE CEPA SIGNED

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a virtual summit with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan on February 18, 2022.**
- The joint statement issued by the two leaders establishes a clear roadmap for a future-oriented partnership between India and UAE. It also identifies focus areas and outcomes.
- The two leaders **released a Joint Commemorative Stamp** to celebrate 75th anniversary of India's independence and the 50th year of UAE's foundation.
- India and UAE also signed a **historic India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**. The CEPA was signed Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and UAE's Economy Minister Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri.
- India and UAE also signed two other MoUs, one to expand cooperation in **climate action and another on education.**



India-UAE CEPA

- India and UAE signed the historic **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, which is aimed at boosting the bilateral trade between the two countries to USD 100 billion in the next five years.

- **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** is a complete and comprehensive economic partnership agreement finalised in the shortest possible time.
- The CEPA is expected to lead to increase in bilateral trade from the **current USD 60 bn to USD 100 bn in the next 5 years.**
- The agreement will provide significant benefits to Indian and UAE businesses, including enhanced market access and reduced tariffs.
- The India-UAE CEPA is the **first bilateral trade accord concluded by the UAE.** It is also India's first bilateral trade agreement in the MENA region.
- The agreement will transform bilateral economic and investment ties between the two nations and could possibly open up emerging **trade routes between Asia and Africa.**

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

- It is a **kind of free trade pact** which covers negotiation on the trade in **services and investment**, and other areas of economic partnership. It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and **Intellectual Property Rights.**
- Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than **Free Trade Agreements.**
- CEPA also looks into the **regulatory aspect of trade** and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.
- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.

Other Types of Trade Agreements

- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** It is an agreement in which **two or more countries agree to provide preferential trade terms, tariff concession etc.** to the partner country.
- India has negotiated FTA with many countries e.g. Sri Lanka and various trading blocs as well e.g. **ASEAN.**
- **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA):** In this type of agreement, two or more partners give **preferential right of entry to certain products.** This is done by reducing duties on an agreed number of tariff lines.
- Tariffs may even be reduced to zero for some products even in a PTA. **India signed a PTA with Afghanistan.**
- **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA):** CECA generally **covers negotiation on trade tariff and TRQ (Tariff Rate Quotas) rates only.** It is not as comprehensive as CEPA. India has signed CECA with Malaysia.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):** It is a bilateral agreement in which **two countries sit together and decide the conditions for private investments** by citizens and firms of the two countries.

India-UAE Bilateral Relations

- India and UAE have strengthened their bilateral ties in all areas in recent years. The two nations had initiated negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in September 2021 and they got completed now.
- The **United Arab Emirates is already India's third-largest trade partner.**
- The two nations have shared robust bilateral trade, investment and energy relations and is expected to get a further boost.
- The two nations have also witnessed high-level visits on both sides. While PM Narendra Modi had visited the UAE in 2015, 2018, and 2019, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi visited India in 2016 and 2017.
- Several ministerial visits have also taken place between the two sides including **three visits of External Affairs Minister and a visit of Commerce and Industry Minister to UAE in 2021.**
- The two sides had also signed an **Air Bubble Arrangement during the pandemic in 2020** to ensure seamless movement of people between the two countries despite the challenges posed by Covid-19.
- They are also strengthening their cooperation in new areas including startups, renewable energy and fintech. **India had participated in the Dubai Expo 2020 with one of the largest pavilions.**
- Indian diaspora in UAE**
- UAE is home to a large Indian community that numbers to almost 3.5 million.** The UAE leadership has been extremely appreciative of the Indian community's contribution in the country's development.

Gulf Cooperation Council

- GCC was **established by an agreement** concluded in 1981 among **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE** in view of their special relations, geographic proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objectives.
- The **structure** of the GCC consists of the Supreme Council (the highest authority), the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General. The **Secretariat** is located in **Riyadh**, Saudi Arabia.
- It is a **political, economic, social, and regional organisation** according to its charter.

India's Relations with the GCC

- Political:** The governments of the GCC members are **India-friendly** and **Indian-friendly.**
- The Prime Minister of India has received the '**Order of Zayed**', the highest civilian order of the UAE and the '**King Hamad Order of the Renaissance**', the third-highest civilian order of Bahrain.
- In the recent past, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have **not adopted hostile posture** to India's domestic developments such as **removing the special status for Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370.**

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#YOON SUK YEOL AS NEW PRESIDENT OF SOUTH KOREA

- **Yoon Suk Yeol has been elected as South Korea's new President**, after winning the South Korean Presidential Elections 2022.
- Yoon Suk Yeol, the **conservative beat Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung** in one of the most closely fought elections, with the final count separated by less than 1 percent vote.
- Yoon Suk Yeol received 48.6 percent of the votes, while his rival Lee Jae-myung received 47.8 percent of the votes.
- Yoon Suk Yeol is scheduled to be sworn in as **the next President of South Korea in May 2022**. He will serve for a term of five years. His democratic rival Lee, who is a former governor of Gyeonggi province, gracefully accepted his defeat and congratulated Yoon for his victory.



Election of the Unfavourables?

- As per various reports, both the presidential candidates were widely unpopular throughout the campaign. The local media in fact had dubbed the elections as the election of the unfavorable.
- Yet, there was a high turnout on the polling day, **with 77 percent of eligible voters turning up to cast their votes.**
- The top concerns of the South Korean people have been **raising house prices, stagnant economic growth, unemployment among the youth and gender inequality.**
- While South Korea has a Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, its work has been almost negligible when it comes to the promotion of equality for women.
- **Yoon had pledged to abolish the Ministry if he comes to power.**
- The **South Korea Presidential Elections 2022** were fought hard in the bitterest way, with the candidates ripping down each other with more focus on mudslinging and personal attacks.
- Both had failed to present a clear strategy on how they would ease the threat from North Korea and its nuclear weapons. The voters were also skeptical about how they would handle international relations amid the US-China rivalry and address widening economic inequality.

- Yoon had promised to make an **enhanced alliance with the US** centre of his foreign policy and be **more assertive towards China**.
- He had accused North Korean leader Kim Jong Un of trying to influence the results of the South Korean election in favour of his **Democratic rival Lee after North's latest ballistic missile launch**.
- Lee had, on the other hand, called for greater reconciliation with North Korea and a diplomatic pragmatism amid the US-China faceoff.

Who is Yoon Suk Yeol?

- Yoon Suk Yeol had previously served as prosecutor general of South Korea from 2019 to 2021 under South Korean President Moon Jae-in's regime. He had played a major role in the conviction of former President Park Geun-hye as the chief prosecutor of South Korea.
- **Why did South Korean President Moon Jae-in not run for second term?**
- The incumbent **South Korean President Moon Jae-in**, could not seek reelection, as the nation's constitution limits a president to a single five-year term. Moon Jae-in had come to power in 2017 after the impeachment of conservative President Park Geun-hye over a huge corruption scandal.
- **Yoon Suk Yeol had been Moon Jae-in's prosecutor general but he resigned and joined the opposition party in 2021.**

#HUNGARY'S 1ST FEMALE PRIME MINISTER

- **Katalin Novák**, a close ally of **Prime Minister Viktor Orban**, has been elected as Hungary's first female president by the Hungarian parliament.
- Novák, who was most recently a minister for family policy, described her victory as a win for women.
- She won 137 votes to 51 in the parliament, **which is dominated by Orban's right-wing Fidesz party, defeating opponent Peter Rona, an economist.**
- Novák will be succeeding Janos Ader, a co-founder of Orban's ruling Fidesz party who has served as prime minister since 2012.
- Novák has been the face of government initiatives which include encouraging young families to have more children, as well as giving significant tax breaks.

About Katalin Novak

- **In 1977, Katalin Novák** was born in Szeged and she attended the National University of Public Service (NKE) in Budapest, the University of Szeged.
- Novák began her **political career as an advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001 which she left in 2003.**
- In 2010, she became an advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in 2012, she became the Minister of Human Resources' Head of Cabinet.
- Novák rose to State Secretary for Family and Youth after the 2014 elections. She was even one of **Fidesz's deputy party leaders between 2017 and 2021**, and she has been a member of parliament since 2018.
- She had been **Hungary's Minister of Family and Youth since 2020, but resigned when she decided to run for president.**

#EAM'S ON A VISIT TO SRI-LANKA

Recently, **India's External Affairs Minister** visited **Sri Lanka**. The visit finalized an MoU that provided **India to set up hybrid power projects in three Islands (Nainativu , Delft or Neduntheevu , and Analaitivu) off Jaffna**.

- In this Project, India will effectively **replace the Chinese venture**.
- It is the **third Indian energy project** coming up in Sri Lanka's north and east.
- Earlier, **India extended a USD1-billion short-term concessional loan to Sri Lanka** to help the island nation cope with one of the **worst economic crisis** in decades.

What are the Highlights of the Visit?

- **Fending Off Chinese Threat:** In January 2021, Sri Lanka's Cabinet decided to award renewable energy projects in Nainativu , Delft or Neduntheevu , and Analaitivu islands to Chinese company Sinosoar-Etechwin, following an **Asia Development Bank**-backed competitive bid.



- India was quick to express concern to the Sri Lankan side over the Chinese project coming up in the **Palk Bay**, barely 50 km off Tamil Nadu.
- Thus, India offered to execute the same project with a grant rather than a loan.
- **MRCC:** Further, India and Sri Lanka have also agreed to set up a **Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC)**, signaling greater defence sector collaboration between the neighbours.
- MRCCs are **part of an international network under the UN's International Maritime Organisation** to monitor the sea lanes with the objective of swift response to emergencies, such as vessels in distress, rescue and evacuation of people, and prevention of and containing environmental disasters such as oil spills.
- The agreement **appears to be part of India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region) initiative** in the Indian Ocean, which has also seen India, Sri Lanka and Maldives give a new push to their 2011 **Colombo Security Conclave** that now includes Mauritius.
- **Fisheries Harbours:** India will also help develop fisheries harbours in Point Pedro, Pesalai, and Gurunagar in the Northern Province, and Balapitiya, south of capital Colombo.

- **Capacity Building:** India also assured supporting education, extending a grant for Sri Lanka's Unique Digital Identity project, and collaborating in diplomatic training.
- **Resolution of Tamil Question:** On developments in regard to **Sri Lanka's long-pending Tamil question**, India has welcomed the recent talks between President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) representing war-affected Tamils of the north and east.

What are Recent Issues in India-Sri Lanka Relations?

- **Killing of Fishermen:** Killing of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy is a lingering issue between these two nations.
- In 2019 and 2020, a total of 284 Indian **fishermen were arrested** and a total of 53 Indian boats were confiscated by the Sri Lankan authorities.
- **Influence of China:** China's rapidly growing economic footprint (and political clout as a corollary) in Sri Lanka is straining India-Sri Lanka relations.
- China is already the largest investor in Sri Lanka, accounting for **23.6%** of the total **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** during 2010-2019 as against **10.4% from India**.
- China is also one of the largest export destinations for Sri Lankan goods and holds over 10% of its external debt.
- **13th Amendment of the Sri Lankan Constitution:** It envisages devolution of necessary powers to the provincial councils to address the just demand of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace, and respect within a united Sri Lanka. India supports its implementation.

Significance of SAGAR Vision

- SAGAR provides a mechanism for India to expand strategic partnerships with other IOR littorals in Asia and Africa.
- SAGAR indicates the leadership role and responsibilities India is ready to play in the region on a long-term basis in a transparent manner through its capacity building and capability enhancement programs.
- The key relevance of SAGAR emerges when seen in conjunction with India's other policies impacting the maritime domain like **Act East Policy, Project Sagarmala, Project Mausam, India as 'net security provider', focus on Blue Economy** etc.
- This symbolises India's maritime resurgence, as maritime issues are now centre of India's foreign policy.
- With effective implementation of all these policies, India can **act as an enabler to create a positive environment in the IOR**.

#GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY SIGNED AMONG NATIONS

- **Global Plastics Treaty** will be one of the most significant international environmental laws in history.
- UN member states have agreed to start international negotiations on drawing up a **global plastics treaty that could set rules for the production, use, and disposal of plastics**.
- The decision was made at a meeting of the **UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi**.
- An **International Negotiating Committee (INC)** will be tasked with drafting and ratifying the mandate by 2024. The main aim is to end global plastic pollution.
- According to the agreed mandate, the treaty makes it legally binding for the signatories to tackle the whole life cycle of plastic, from production to disposal and not just post-consumer waste. **Previous approaches focused on plastic as a “marine litter” issue.**
- The text also recognizes the significant contributions of waste pickers and workers in the informal economy, who are vulnerable to occupational health risks.



India's proposal

- While the majority of countries favor binding commitments, **India proposed voluntary actions. The term voluntary was retained as an option upon insistence by India.**
- India was also keen on the insertion of the words “national circumstances and capabilities” in the text which is in alignment with its position of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) under the Paris agreement, 2015.

India's initiatives

- India **has banned single-use plastic, which will come into effect on July 1, 2022.**
- Recently, the **Central government** has also issued fresh guidelines for manufacturers, brand owners, importers of plastics making it mandatory to recycle plastic.
- Central government has drawn up a pathway to incorporate the large informal sector, which is involved in plastic recycling, in a more formal circular economy.
- The creation of this mandate recognizes the urgency of addressing the plastic crisis. Solving the plastic problem is crucial to protect human rights and **achieve UN sustainable development goals (SDG).**

RELATED: INITIATIVES TO CURB PLASTIC WASTE

Swachh Bharat Mission

- SBM-U 2.0, announced in **Budget 2021-22**, is the continuation of SBM-U first phase. The government is trying to tap **safe containment, transportation, disposal of faecal sludge, and septage from toilets**.
- **SBM-U** first phase was launched on 2nd October 2014 aiming at making urban India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste. It lasted till October 2019.
- It will be implemented over five years **from 2021 to 2026** with an outlay of Rs.1.41 lakh crore.
- **Aim:** It focuses on **source segregation of garbage, reduction in single-use plastic and air pollution**, by effectively managing waste from construction and demolition activities and **bioremediation of all legacy dump sites**.
- Under this mission, all wastewater will be treated properly before it is discharged into water bodies, and the government is trying to make maximum reuse a priority.

India Plastics Pact

- The India Plastics Pact is an ambitious, **collaborative initiative that aims to bring together businesses, governments and NGOs across the whole value chain** to set time-bound commitments to reduce plastics from their value chains.
- While the India Plastics Pact **will be active in India**, it will **link globally with other Plastics Pacts**.
- The Pact will develop a road map for guidance, form action groups composed of members, and initiate innovation projects.
- **Members' accountability** is ensured through ambitious targets and annual data reporting.
- The vision, targets and ambition of the India Plastics Pact are **aligned with the circular economy principles of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy**.
- **Un-Plastic Collective**
- **Un-Plastic Collective (UPC)** is a voluntary initiative launched by the **UN-Environment Program-India, Confederation of Indian Industry and WWF-India**.
- The Collective seeks to **minimise externalities** of plastics on the **ecological and social health** of our planet.
- As a part of **UPC initiative** companies set time-bound, public targets to:
 - Eliminate unnecessary use of plastic.
 - Reuse and circulate plastics through the **circular economy**.
 - Replace plastic with sustainable alternative or recycled plastics.
 - Turn commitments to meaningful and measurable action.

#PERMANENT INDUS COMMISSION B/W INDIA & PAKISTAN

The 117th Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) between India and Pakistan was held.

- Earlier, the Central government has decided to adopt a new criterion for selecting members of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB).



What are the Highlights of the Meeting?

- Both sides discussed the exchange of hydrological and flood data during which the Indian side underscored that all its projects are fully compliant with the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty.
- The issue of the Fazilka drain was also discussed and Pakistan assured that all necessary action will continue to be taken to ensure the free flow of Fazilka drain into the river Sutlej.
- Fazilka drain is one of 22 drains and water bodies, where untreated water of Malwa district (Punjab, India) is discharged.
- The drain is closed at the borderline of countries, leading to stagnation in the shape of ponds and deterioration of quality of groundwater in the border area.
- Technical discussions were held regarding ongoing projects including PakalDul, Kiru and Lower Kalnai.
- The PakalDul Hydro Electric Project (1000 MW) is proposed on river Marusudar, a tributary of Chenab river in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Kiru Hydro Electric Project (624 MW) is proposed on River Chenab, located in Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Lower Kalnai project is a hydroelectric power project in the Doda and Kishtwar districts of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Indian side explicitly conveyed that as an upper riparian State, India has been providing information on extraordinary discharges of water from reservoirs and flood flows every year, as mandated under the treaty.

What is the History of the Indus Waters Treaty?

- The Indus river basin has six rivers- Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej, originating from Tibet and flowing through the Himalayan ranges to enter Pakistan, ending in the south of Karachi.
- In 1947, the line of partition, aside from delineating geographical boundaries for India and Pakistan, also cut the Indus river system into two.
- Both the sides were dependent on water from the Indus river basin to keep their irrigation infrastructure functional and therefore, equitable distribution was needed.
- Initially, the Inter-dominion accord of May, 1948 was adopted, where both countries, after meeting for a conference, decided that India would supply water to Pakistan in exchange for an annual payment made by the latter.

- This **agreement however, soon disintegrated as both the countries** could not agree upon its common interpretations.
- **In 1951, in the backdrop of the water-sharing dispute**, both the **countries applied to the World Bank** for funding of their respective irrigation projects on Indus and its tributaries, which is when the World Bank offered to mediate the conflict.
- Finally in 1960, after nearly a decade of fact-finding, negotiation, proposals by the World Bank and amendments to them, an agreement was reached between the two countries, and the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was signed by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan.

What are some of its Key Provisions?

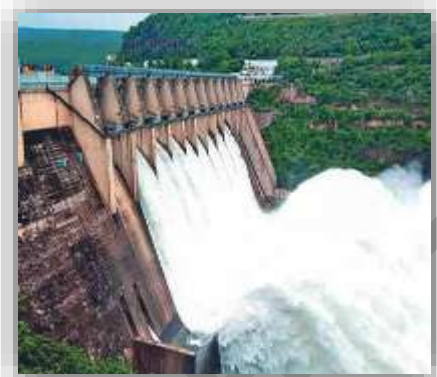
- **Sharing Water:** The treaty prescribed **how water from the six rivers of the Indus River System would be shared** between India and Pakistan.
- It **allocated the three western rivers—Indus, Chenab and Jhelum—to Pakistan** for unrestricted use, barring certain non-consumptive, agricultural and domestic uses by India and the **three Eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—were allocated to India** for unrestricted usage.
- This means that **80% of the share of water or about 135 Million Acre Feet (MAF) went to Pakistan**, while leaving the **rest 33 MAF or 20% of water for use by India**.
- **Permanent Indus Commission:** It also **required both the countries to establish a Permanent Indus Commission** constituted by permanent commissioners on both sides.
- **Rights over Rivers:** While Pakistan has **rights over the waters of Jhelum, Chenab and Indus**, Annexure C of the IWT allows India certain agricultural uses, while **Annexure D allows it to build 'run of the river' hydropower projects**, meaning projects not requiring live storage of water

What is the Permanent Indus Commission?

- It is a **bilateral commission of officials from India and Pakistan**, created to implement and manage goals of the **Indus Waters Treaty, 1960**.
- The Commission, according to the treaty, **shall meet regularly at least once a year**, alternately in India and Pakistan.
- The functions of the Commission include:
 - To study and report to the two Governments on any problem relating to the development of the waters of the rivers.
 - To solve disputes arising over water sharing.
 - To arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works.

#RELATED: KRISHNA RIVER WATER DISPUTE

- On February 18, 2022, government of Karnataka moved to Supreme Court and sought to set up of a bench to hear a plea related to **dispute over allocation of water of Krishna River**.
- The Krishna River flows in states of **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana**.
- SC bench comprising of Justice D Y Chandrachud from Maharashtra, and Justice A S Bopanna from Karnataka, had recused from the case on January 10, 2022, arising out of the decision of water tribunal.
- The judges recused themselves, because they were upset with the tone of mails and letters against them for being part of this bench on water dispute.



What is the issue?

- Karnataka had sought the vacation on a SC order of November 16, 2011, that restrained Central government from publishing the final order of **Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal II (KWDT)** in official gazette.
- This order was pronounced in 2010 and allocated the river water to Karnataka, Maharashtra and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.
- KWDT had further modified its final order and reported on in November 2013, to allocate surplus water to **Karnataka, Maharashtra, and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, while preserving the allocation of 2,130 TMC**.
- However, after the bifurcation of erstwhile **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana & Andhra Pradesh** had moved to the **Supreme Court and challenged the allocation share of the KWDT**.

Stalled projects

- Karnataka argued that its dam and irrigation projects to provide water in its parched northern areas were stalled for all these years due to 2011 order of not publishing KWDT decisions in **Official Gazette in line with Section 6(1) of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956**.

#RECUSAL OF JUDGES FROM THE CASE

Recently, two judges of the **Supreme Court** have **recused** themselves from hearing a matter related to the distribution of **Krishna water dispute** between **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka**.

- They cited the reason that they **did not want to be the target of partiality** since the dispute is related to their home states.

Recusal of Judges

- It is the **act of abstaining from participation in an official action** such as a legal proceeding due to a **conflict of interest** of the presiding court official or administrative officer.
- When there is a **conflict of interest**, a **judge can withdraw from hearing** a case to prevent creating a perception that he carried a bias while deciding the case.

- There are **no formal rules governing recusals**, although several SC judgments have dealt with the issue.
- In **Ranjit Thakur v Union of India (1987)**, the SC held that the test of the likelihood of bias is the reasonableness of the apprehension in the mind of the party.
- The judge needs to look at the mind of the party before him, and decide that he is biased or not.

Background:

- **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal:** In 1969, the **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)** was set up under the **Inter-State River Water Dispute Act, 1956**, and presented its report in 1973.
- At the same time, it was stipulated that the KWDT order may be reviewed or revised by a competent authority or tribunal any time after 31st May, 2000.
- **Second KWDT:** The **second KWDT was instituted in 2004**. It delivered its report in 2010, which made allocations of the Krishna water at 65 % dependability and for surplus flows **as follows: 81 TMC for Maharashtra, 177 TMC for Karnataka, and 190 TMC for Andhra Pradesh.**

Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 262** of the Constitution provides for the adjudication of **inter-state water disputes**.
- Under this, Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.
- The Parliament has enacted the two laws, the **River Boards Act (1956)** and the **Inter-State Water Disputes Act (1956)**.
- The **River Boards Act provides** for the establishment of river boards by the Central government for the regulation and development of Inter-state River and river valleys.
- The **Inter-State Water Disputes Act** empowers the Central government to set up an ad hoc tribunal for the adjudication of a dispute between two or more states in relation to the waters of an inter-state river or river valley.
- Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to have jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which may be referred to **such a tribunal under this Act**.

Krishna River

- **Source:** It **originates near Mahabaleshwar** (Satara) in Maharashtra. It is the second biggest river in peninsular India after the Godavari River.
- **Drainage:** It runs from four states **Maharashtra** (303 km), North **Karnataka** (480 km) and the rest of its 1300 km journey in **Telangana** and **Andhra Pradesh** before it empties into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Tributaries:** Tungabhadra, Mallaprabha, Koyna, Bhima, Ghataprabha, Yerla, Warna, Dindi, Musi and Dudhganga.

RELATED: TELANGANA-ANDHRA PRADESH WATER DISPUTE

- Telangana and Andhra Pradesh share stretches of the **Krishna and the Godavari** and own their tributaries.

- Both states have proposed several new projects without getting clearance from the river boards, the **Central Water Commission** and the **Apex Council**, as mandated by the **Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014**.
- The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014** mandates for the constitution of an Apex Council by the Central Government for the supervision of the functioning of the **Godavari River Management Board** and **Krishna River Management Board**.
- The **Apex Council** comprises the **Union Water Resources Minister** and the **Chief Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh**.
- The Andhra Pradesh government's proposal to increase the utilisation of the Krishna water from a section of the river above the **Srisailem Reservoir** led to the Telangana government filing a complaint against Andhra Pradesh.
- The Srisailem reservoir is constructed across the Krishna River in Andhra Pradesh. It is located in the **Nallamala hills**.
- The Andhra Pradesh government retaliated with its own complaints saying that **Palamuru-Rangareddy, Dindi Lift Irrigation Schemes** on the Krishna River and **Kaleshwaram, Tupakulagudem schemes** and a few barrages proposed **across the Godavari** are all new projects.

#RUSSIA'S LIST OF UNFRIENDLY COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES

- The **Government of Russia** has approved a **list of the 'unfriendly' countries and territories with Russia** that imposed sanctions against the country after the **start of a military operation of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine**.
- The list of 'unfriendly' countries released by Russia includes the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, EU states, among others.
- Along with the list of 'unfriendly' countries and territories, Russia also declared that all the corporate deals with the companies and the individuals from these countries will have to be approved by a government commission.
- Why Russia has released list of unfriendly countries?**
- The **Russian Government** has approved a **list of the unfriendly countries** and territories as the tensions between the West and Russia escalates amid Kremlin's tightening grip on Ukraine's invasion. The move of declaring unfriendly nations has come in the wake of severe economic sanctions faced by Russia over the Ukraine conflict.



Russia releases list of 'unfriendly' countries

S. No.	Countries
1.	United States
2.	Canada
3.	European Union States

4.	United Kingdom (including Jersey, the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Gibraltar)
5.	Ukraine
6.	Montenegro
7.	Switzerland
8.	Albania
9.	Andorra
10.	Iceland

Russia to pay foreign currency debt in Ruble

- **The List of 'unfriendly' countries by Russia** has come following a presidential decree on March 5, 2022, which allowed the Government of Russia, companies, and the citizens to temporarily pay their foreign currency debts owed to the overseas creditors from '**unfriendly countries**' in Rubles.
- Russian Government, to make such payments, said that the debtors must open a special type of Ruble account with Russian bank and transfer into it the Ruble equivalent of the foreign currency amount owed as per the Central Bank's official exchange rate on the day of the payment.
- The new temporary procedure applies to payments exceeding 10 million rubles per month (or a similar amount in foreign currency).

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- US President Joe Biden on March 8, 2022 announced a **complete ban on all Russian oil, natural gas and coal imports to the United States**, in an effort to impose harsher sanctions amid Putin's war in Ukraine.
- The United States has banned oil and energy imports from Russia in a unilateral move. The European nations are yet to follow suit, with some of them including Denmark pledging to become independent of Russian natural gas.
- Recently, India abstained on a vote at the **UN Human Rights Council** in Geneva. The Council moved the resolution to set up an **international commission of enquiry into Russia's actions in Ukraine**.
- The move is significant in the terms that the vote followed even after **India's meeting with Quad countries**.
- India has also abstained from similar resolutions in the **United Nations General Assembly** and **United Nations Security Council**.
- India also abstained from the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** resolution that was related to safety at four nuclear power stations and a number of nuclear waste sites including Chernobyl, as the Russians seized control of them.

What is the UN Human Rights Council?

- The HRC is an **inter-governmental body within the United Nations system** responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of **human rights** around the world.
- **Formation:** The Council was **created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006**. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

- The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** serves as the **Secretariat** of the Human Rights Council.
- OHCHR is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

Members:

- It is **made up of 47 United Nations Member States** which are **elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA)**.
- The UNGA takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:
 - African States: 13 seats
 - Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats
 - Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats
 - Western European and other States: 7 seats
 - Eastern European States: 6 seats
- Members of the Council **serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms**.

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